

NEWS FROM QUANTON



MEMBERS'
NEWSLETTER

November 2024

NEWS FROM QUANTON

GET IN TOUCH

Please contact the committee with any questions or suggestions

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



How time flies!!

Let me first say how proud I am of all of our working volunteers and staff who have pulled out all the stops since our last newsletter.

So much is documented within these pages so I will not spoil your reading. Again, none of this could have taken place without the hard work and dedication of all those involved.

For me, it has very much been a rollercoaster steam ride as we have welcomed so many new faces, but have unfortunately had to say goodbye to others. We have faced a great many challenges and overcome most with huge success. It shows how much of a bond this Society and Centre have, not just between ourselves, but with our visitors and local community. We still have a long journey ahead of us, but I am certain that we will continue to lay the tracks for our future.

To do this, we still need all the help we can get; be it ten minutes, a day, or a year. If you or someone you know can volunteer any amount of time, please get in touch with the Office; they don't bite!

My sincerest thanks to each and every one of you for everything you do and all your support. I hope that you are able to spend some much needed time over the holidays doing all those things that make you smile.

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year!

Barry Payne, Chairman

November 2024

A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER



What a year we are having! The fourteen months since I took over have gone by in the blink of an eye! Everyone has pulled together and worked so hard to give us a list of achievements that we can be proud of. Our site is expanding, and we now have a showground, the Brixton Buildings, woodland and a mainline connection. Not to mention our own Thomas/Arthur now up and running!

There are too many names to list and thank, everyone who has played a part however big or small deserves our heartfelt appreciation. Without you all we could not survive!

The old site joke came true for the engineering team “It will be ready for Easter” but not saying which year? Arthur was completed and entered service as Thomas! I have never had to deal with complaints about people not wanting to go home before! But this was the case, such was the enthusiasm for the job. Tony’s Paint shop, night shifts and red cross food parcels for the team were all part of the process, but it was ready for Easter!

After the successful collaboration with Hsz, EKFB, Network rail and the main Buckinghamshire Council, the arches of the Station Road bridge were filled with foaming concrete to increase its load capacity, and work was completed just before Christmas 2023. As a thank you for our help, Network Rail gave us a 5-year lease on the line for half a mile.

The P-way team have nearly completed the third point and are lining the sleepers up to the last connection in the down yard line. This herculean effort will mean not only will we run on the MCJ line but also link the site together for the first time ever.

After 18 months of negotiating, Winwood Trust leased us the Brixton buildings and the land behind the signal box. This has given a workshop to the new vehicle group, and a future home for the Princess Risborough Model Railway Society, who are currently installing a 26ft display model of Aylesbury station in 1911 in the old schools coach in the museum.

The land behind the signal box has been turned into a showground. It was used for the first time on August Bank Holiday Monday, for our new Auto Fest rally which was an enormous success. This was the same day we ran into the mainline platform 1 and held an opening ceremony with Tim Dunn (Secrets of the Underground) cutting the ribbon.

SHOWBUS at the end of September was a baptism of fire. Who knew so many people loved buses?! We recorded 2,500 visitors plus each bus had up to 6 people on board. The showground was wet, so we have moved the date to July next year as it is such a successful event. We are now the custodians of this event for the future and people are already signing up for 2025!

Halloween saw a new event “Fright Night” and I have to say Belinda excelled herself here! The weather was foggy which added to the atmosphere, the live band was great, plus a bar, what’s not to like? But the fright staged in the museum was incredible! And frightening, from bodies hanging from the beams to people jumping out on you! Bigger and better for next year!

We are currently in the middle of creating Christmas. This year it’s all new because we are running out of platform 1. At Quainton, Christmas starts in February when the office girls go to Kayes of Cardiff to choose all the presents. This year we also had a trip to Halifax to view a new attraction, The Enchanted Elevator (Think Willy Wonka). We are operating in a tough market and our competitors are people like all the big garden centres, John Lewis, Hogshaw Farm Park, and Mead Open Farm. People who come to the site now expect National Trust standards, so we have to increase our offering to attract our customers. We have over 90% families with children now, so we are in a completely different marketplace to what we were four years ago.

Again, a big thank you to everyone helping keep the centre alive and let’s have a great Christmas!

Stephen Green, General Manager

INTRODUCING OUR NEW TRUSTEE

ASHLEY WAITE



I first became involved with the railway centre through my work as a local councillor within Buckinghamshire council. As chairman of the community board, I develop a council-run enterprise that strives to enhance local communities through help, advice and financial support. This functions through the small grant scheme.

One of the schemes was the lending library: "I'd like to borrow". This is housed within the railway centre and offers users the opportunity to borrow a number of useful items at a low cost, aiding those in times of crisis.

I have now joined the executive committee at the railway. I aim to bring a range of help and contacts with local partnerships. I am focused on relationships between local organisations, charities, and the council to help the centre move to its next phase.

November 2024

THE END OF A WONDERFUL SEASON

After a busy year of events, we want to take a moment to reflect on the fun and growth that we have experienced. We are thankful to our amazing volunteers who make it all possible.





GALLERY



GALLERY



November 2024

AUTO FEST 2024

What an amazing event this was, Auto Fest – our re-branded Pre-88 Vehicle Rally!

It was great to see so many of you there. For those who couldn't make it – it was a truly momentous occasion, for more than one reason! Firstly, we used our new 7-acre Showground for the first time and filled it with dozens of classic vehicles. Secondly, it was the first time since we took over the site in 1969 that we have ever steamed an engine into Platform 1!

Broadcaster and railway historian Tim Dunn accepted our invite to come and officially open the line for us. We also had a visiting steam engine here to do the honours – GWR loco no.9965 from Swindon & Cricklade Railway.



The site was buzzing with visitors, members, enthusiasts and families, with dozens and dozens of vintage vehicles all over the site for everyone to admire. We can't wait to do it all again next year!



November 2024

Welcome home,

SHOWBUS

This September we welcomed SHOWBUS onto site and we couldn't be happier to be named as its new home. We welcomed around 180 buses through our gates this year, alongside passionate stallholders and excited customers, with approx. 2,500 visitors on site. We are keen to grow and adapt as a venue, with many ideas and plans in the pipeline ready for next season's events. We can't wait to share it with you all.

In the face of heavy rainfall and soggy ground conditions, this wonderful day was paved by enthusiasm and determination. We were overwhelmed by the drive of volunteers and staff to accommodate the changing circumstances. We are so grateful for the encouragement and support we received in hosting and we hope to see many more friendly faces again next year.

SHOWBUS 2025 will be on Sunday 13th July - SAVE THE DATE NOW!



November 2024

VEHICLE RESTORATION TEAM

It's very exciting times in the vehicle group this year. Our building is finished and we have now fully moved in, naming the building the Ashton workshop after all the hard work Chris does for the centre.

We have a 1921 Leyland RAF type bus come in on long term loan. We have a plan to start using this for bus rides later in 2025. We have just finished a Ferguson tractor head gasket that we will be using on the showground to help us set up events including SHOWBUS. The Dennis F8 restoration has started, we are looking to get the engine running by the end of the year ready to use as the fire engine at our Thomas events.

Watch this space for 2025 for more exciting exhibits.

Thanks to the team: Ricky Sutcliffe, Chris Ashton, Phil Jewson, Nathaniel Smith, Dann John



TERROR ON THE TRACKS!

Within the whirlwind of seasonal events and Christmas prep, our events team has been working tirelessly on two Halloween celebrations.

This month saw our first Halloween evening event take place, and it was a screaming success! This seasonal event was framed around a horror tour through our very own museum. Our museum possesses a notoriously eery setting after dark, and we couldn't be more thrilled with how this lent to the atmosphere of the evening. The wonderful band 'Petite Rouge' brought everyone to the dance floor to shake out the adrenaline!

The success of this evening was attributable to Belinda's acute eye for detail and storytelling. We are so pleased that our team's creativity and hard work translated into the fantastic evening it was for all those who dared to join. Keep your eyes peeled for next year's dates!

On the Sunday, we saw plenty of fun unfold at our Spooktacular event for families and children. This involved a steam train ride with Frankenstein and friends, a hilarious panto, and a day filled with ghost hunts and games!

We were pleased to see so many smiling faces and amazed by the creative costumes on show!



Q-BRANCH REPORT

By Q-Brancher, Laura W-Smith

Q-branch was re-started a few years ago. As one of the members who was part of the original Q-branch, it has been great to see it grow into what it is today.

Q-branch has been great for many teenagers, as it means we get to make new friends with similar interests, as well as getting us useful experience. Getting these experiences - such as car park marshalling, working on the entrance ticket gate and assisting on the platform and clearing tables in the café - means we interact with the public and develop our social skills in an environment where it is okay to make mistakes. We know there are people who can help us out when we need them to or when we make a mistake.



Volunteering on the platform has helped us work on problem solving skills. Q-branch has been a good way to build up our confidence, along with interacting with the public. Another benefit of Q-branch is that we get to put experiences on our CV so that we stand out from others. The Halloween Spooktacular event was a great example of when our team welcomed some new members. It was an opportunity for the old members to bond with the new members who then immediately felt included.

Finally, a huge thank you to the adults who run Q-Branch – it is making such a difference to my life and to the lives of many other young QRS members/volunteers.



November 2024

QUANTON STEAM WORKS RIDES AGAIN!

Do you enjoy watching what's happening on site? Well, now you will be able to see weekly updates on Youtube!

The Quanton Steam Works channel is going to be regularly updated with plenty of videos, long and short, about projects and goings-on around the site.

Why not check out the latest video of the boiler lift for 'Scotty' our Bagnell 0-4-0 No. 2469, or watch Isabel being delivered!

With behind the scenes footage and explanations of some of the engineering work taking place, it's a great way to see and learn more about upcoming overhauls and projects!

You can also follow on TikTok and Instagram!

Any questions, please email quantonsteamworks@bucksrailcentre.org



FULL STEAM AHEAD!

CROSSOVER TRACKS ON PLATFORM 1



Since April, teams have been hard at work connecting the yards and leased section of Network Rail main line by rail. It began with severing our Up Yard running line. The running line, complete with new point, was passed as fit to run on by April's end. Work then continued to install the first point into the main line. This was completed by August Bank Holiday, monumentally allowing our passenger trains to run into the old station's Platform 1 for the first time for Auto Fest

2024.

Since then, we have severed the main line to install points to connect the Down Yard. On November 10th, the team finished the point from the main line towards the Down Yard, by shovelling 15 tons of ballast to jack and pack through the new point. This section still needs tamping but excitingly will be ready for use at the upcoming Christmas events.

The final point connecting the Down Yard to the main line will be installed during our closed season after Christmas. If anyone wishes to help with this 'final link' you will be more than welcome.

A truly herculean effort by everyone involved, thank you all very much indeed!



OUR MUSEUM

Vickie Aylward, Curator



It has been an exciting time here in the Museum. The Halloween celebrations turned the building into a horror movie set and proved to be a great success for both the adults and the children. The “Fright Night” proved to be very popular and made what is a spooky place on a good night into a very spooky place for the main event. Often, I am in the Museum after dark, and I can vouch for just how eery it can be. But I have never seen it quite like that before, and I will never see it quite the same again! A big thanks to Belinda and all her efforts.

On a more heritage note, the donations of artefacts have continued at pace throughout the last quarter and here I can only mention a small selection of them. A large amount has been put aside for a future project, so keep an eye out for exciting news in the next issue!



The main display items which have been put up are a TPO coach name plate, a new totem, a pair of car park signs, a trespass sign and a crossing sign. These have all come from different donors - a big thank you to all of them. Why not take a look in our breathtaking Museum and see if you can spot the new arrivals!

ALL ABOARD THE PANTO EXPRESS

Preparations for Christmas have been underway for many weeks now and we're nearly ready to go! We are producing our own pantomime this year, under the direction of our Events Manager Belinda Sandon, who has already written and directed two Halloween plays since she started working here. She has written her own funny version of Jack and The Beanstalk for our Panto Express event and we can't wait to open our doors for the first showing on Saturday 30th November!



We're also excited to launch our brand-new Santa's Grotto experience - Santa's Magical Elevator (above right). This year, Santa will give each child a Golden Ticket on the train and guests will then make their way over to the museum where they enter at the side entrance, work their way up and down the platforms in the museum, which have been turned into a winter wonderland by Belinda and her team of merry helpers! The visitors will admire all the elf displays until they make their way to the top end of the museum where they'll come to Santa's Magical Elevator. Visitors go into the elevator where they will experience the feeling of flying high above the world! They will then land back down in the North Pole and the lift doors will open into Santa's Workshop. The children swap their golden ticket for a gift of their choice!

As always, if you have any Christmas trees that you no longer need, please let Belinda know. She will happily take them off your hands! events@bucksrailcentre.org



TRAVELLING POST OFFICE GROUP



The Travelling Post Office (TPO) service ended early in 2004 and we marked the 20th anniversary with a special Moving the Mail (MTM) event on Sunday 21 July 2024. On the same day there was a display of Morris Commercial vehicles marking 100 years of Morris and a display of preserved Royal Mail and Post Office Telephones vehicles belonging to members of the Post Office Vehicle Club.

The event included two illustrated talks. The first was by Steve Griffith, Royal Mail's last TPO Manager, who spoke about why TPOs ceased in 2004. The second was by Cyril Parsons, our Senior Steward and a Postal Historian, who outlined the history of TPOs in Britain.

Our introduction to Steve Griffith came from a conversation the year before when he was at the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre (BRC) attending the Pre-1988 Vintage Vehicle Rally on August bank holiday with the Veteran-Cycle Club, of which he is a member. Their display of bicycles was located outside the Old Station, and one of our TPO stewards, Jan Sandy, got into conversation with Steve when he walked across to the TPO to have a look round.

Our carriages and displays provided a centrepiece for this anniversary event, including exhibition panels telling the story of the TPO service from 1838 until it ceased 166 years later in 2004.

The event also became a reunion for former TPO staff, invited through the TPO Facebook Group of which Bob Frise, a founder member of our TPO group, is a member. Those former TPO staff attending the event enjoyed the opportunity to be in a TPO once again, and to reminisce and exchange stories with others. As a result, the day was also a learning occasion for our TPO stewards, speaking to former TPO staff about their experiences, and being involved in their conversations.

Louisa Richards and Cyril prepared a poster for the event, and Louisa arranged to publicise it through advertisements in railway publications. Cyril also prepared a press release and through that had an article about the event in Gibbons Stamp Monthly. One of our stewards who works for Royal Mail, Terry Smith, used social media to publicise the event to colleagues and others.

CONT'D OVERLEAF

TRAVELLING POST OFFICE GROUP CONT'D

One of the former TPO staff who attended was Peter Bartolo. He filled different TPO roles during his career, including at the time of the end of the TPO service being selected by Steve Griffith to be part of the final TPO Management closure team. He brought with him a number of items of TPO memorabilia which he has generously donated to BRC's collection.

These items include the nameplate "M G Berry" which used to be on a TPO carriage, one of only twelve such carriages to carry a name. The carriage was named after a Distributions Director who had overall responsibility for moving the mail, including by rail. The original nameplate now forms part of the display in the Museum, and Tony Lyster has kindly made a resin copy which will be displayed in the TPO. (If it was not for the fact that the original and the copy will be in different locations, it would be a case of 'Try to spot the difference'!) The items received from Peter also include two framed sets of Night Mail covers.

Our MTM day was a special occasion when we sought to appeal to a particular audience. On other steaming days during the year, particularly when there are stewards on duty, we aim to be very much an 'all age family attraction', with opportunities for both posting and sorting the mail, something which even quite young ones can enjoy, where necessary with some assistance from those who are with them.

Our MTM day in 2025 will be on Sunday 14 September when we will celebrate the role of the Travelling Post Office in accelerating the speed of personal and business communications. As we know, the development of the railways made a difference in so many ways. Making it easier for people to write to each other and keep in touch, even over long distances, was one of them.

Roland Gillott

Chairman

TPO Group (Photos by Bob Frise)



November 2024

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

A reminder that from next year, all membership will be due to be paid in January. Reminders will be sent out at the end of December. Thank you so much for another year of supporting Quainton Railway Society and everything we are working towards! Thank you from me and everyone else in the office - we hope you have a great Christmas!

An email was sent to you recently, which explained that you will be able to renew your membership through your membership account which can be accessed through the main Buckinghamshire Railway Centre website. A separate email with an activation link was also sent. A few members have expressed some concern that this email might be spam. Please be assured it came from us and is safe to activate, if you wish to do so.

Any questions, please let me know. Zoe Dann, Membership

Come to our
**Volunteer
Recruitment Day**
and find out more about
how you can help!

Sunday 26th January 2025
11am-2pm

Are you interested in volunteering opportunities are available?
Are you looking for something to keep you busy but not sure what?
We would love to hear from you and see if we can introduce you to one of our departments and for you to meet the team. There are lots of different ways to volunteer and help out around the site.



By the end of January, all members should have been issued with one of our new scannable membership cards!
If you haven't received yours, please do let me know.

If you have any questions or just want to find out more, please email me or give me a ring on Mondays & Wednesdays.

I look forward to chatting with you.

membership@bucksrailcentre.org

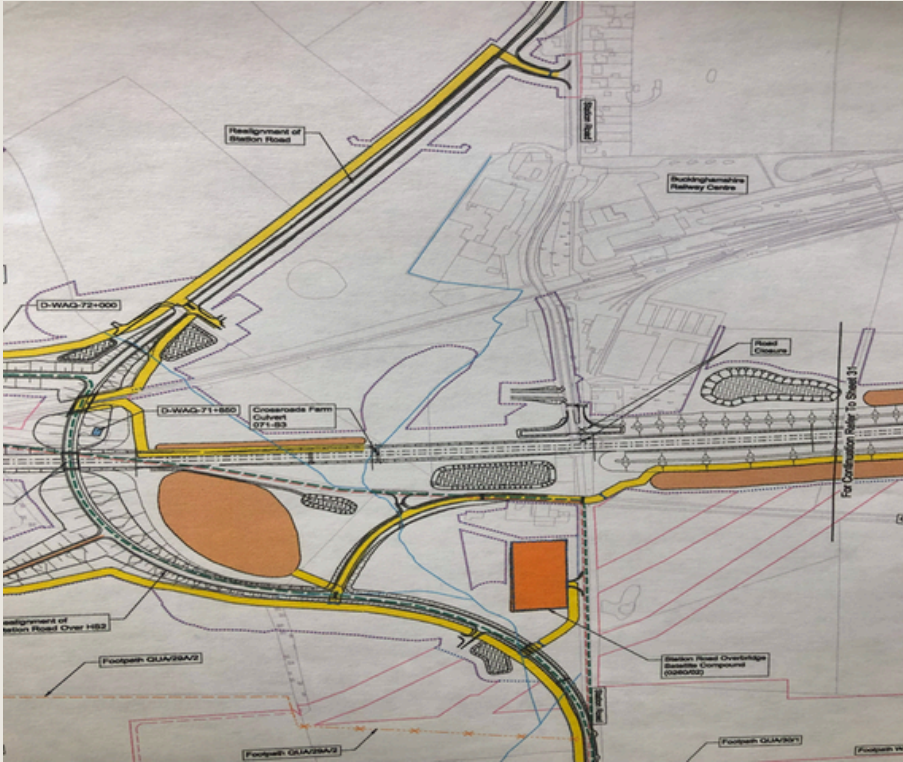
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Zoe Dann

WHAT THE FUTURE LOOKS LIKE

HS2, EKFB & Network Rail



I thought I would share the image of the new road layout and HS2 formation coming past our site to give you all an idea of what we are up against. 2025 will see a lot of changes happening around us. The road junction on station road will be built and at the same time the bridge will be partly dismantled so the centre arch can be reopened. We are now a stakeholder in the new MCJ line reinstatement. The hope is to have the line up and running by December 2028.

The original Aylesbury Spur was suspended due to cost, but the government has now given planning to the Universal Studios theme park in Bedfordshire. This is the size of euro Disney and will require infrastructure capable of delivering 30k people a day to the site. The department of transport has started a low-cost alternative to the original project which we have been part of since May. The plan is for HS2 to rebuild the line from Calvert to our bridge, Network Rail to rebuild the bridge and the embankment at the end of our site, enabling the line to be replaced to Aylesbury.

The new line will be single track on a double formation as there is insufficient funding or business case for double track. The bridge work begins in August 2025. Originally 6 weeks ago they were going to close our level crossing to do the bridge. This, combined with Hs2 blocking our rear entrance would have led to our closure permanently next August. We have successfully fought against this and had that decision overturned. We are now moving forward with HS2, EKFB and Network Rail on the project, but on our terms. We are also part of the political stakeholder group on how the line will be run. Trains running through at 60mph will cut the site in half and lead to security fences along the platforms to keep people safe.

November 2024

HOUSE OF LORDS

with the Heritage Railway Association



On Wednesday the 13th of November I was invited to the House of Lords in Westminster to talk to an all-party parliamentary group on heritage railways. The discussion was about what we do for the economy, the tourist sector and local community.

The HRA is part of "The Heritage Alliance" which unites 200 heritage organisations and creates a powerful and effective advocate for heritage. Members include the National Trust, English Heritage, Canal and River Trust to name but a few. Our sector is covered by the Heritage Rail All Party Parliamentary Group whose CEO is Baroness Lizz West.

At the reception I met with Lord Faulkner (2nd left) our president, and Lord Younger of Bucks to discuss our expanding site, our interaction with HS2 and the new Network Rail project to open the MCJ line by 2028. My main concern is the opening of the MCJ line and trains going through at 60mph cutting our site in two. We cannot halt progress, but we can be part of it and shape our future.

Last year I discussed with our MP Gregg Smith about running trains out of Marylebone and stopping in our site. This would be the re-creation of Metro land and having a day out in the country by train. I discussed this idea of trains stopping in our station once the line opens, which would take cars off the road and make us a focal point of the area. Local people could catch the train from our station like they do at Parkway. In the future our visitors can arrive by train. The possibilities are endless.

We now have the support of Lords, Younger, Faulkner and Hendy to help achieve this goal which is more preferable than trains going through at 60 mph. They advised me to bring our new MP Callum Anderson on board as well as Gregg Smith. I have now met Callum and invited him to the centre in the future. Gregg Smith remains a friend of the centre even though his area has now changed. The future now looks much brighter.

by Stephen Green

CALENDAR 2025

What's On During 2025

JANUARY							FEBRUARY							MARCH							APRIL							
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MAY							JUNE							JULY							AUGUST							
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SEPTEMBER							OCTOBER							NOVEMBER							DECEMBER						
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29	30	27	28	29	30	31	27	28	29	30	31	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	29	30	31						

 Steaming Day	 Day Out With Thomas
 Café-only Day	 Panto Express
 Diesel Day	♥ Quirky Wedding Fayre
 Special Event	 CLOSED

OPENING HOURS
Steaming Days & Special Events
 10.30am-5pm Last Admissions 3pm
Monday-Friday
Railway Café 9.30am-2pm

Whilst every effort is made to run as advertised, Quainton Railway Society reserves the right to vary this programme and may substitute locos should operational circumstances dictate.

Admission

	ADULT	SENIOR	CHILD*	FAMILY 1 / 2**
Steaming/Diesel Day	£12.50	£11.50	£8.50	£24.00/36.50
Special Event †	£14.50	£13.50	£10.50	£30.00/44.50
Day Out With Thomas	£19.00	N/A	£15.00	£40.00/59.00
Season Ticket	£70.00	£65.00	£40.00	£130.00/190.00
Café-only Day	FREE ENTRY			

* Children under 3 are free to all events except Thomas and Christmas. Children under 2 are free at a Day Out With Thomas.
 ** Family tickets offer discounts for families with more than one child: **Family 1** is for one adult and up to four children. **Family 2** is for two adults and up to four children.
 *** **Day Out With Thomas** family tickets include two children.

On most days, you can buy tickets on the gate when you arrive, however, for our special events we recommend pre-booking online as sometimes these events sell out. At Christmas, pre-booking is essential. † Ticket prices for Halloween and Christmas will be advertised nearer the time (see overleaf). For discounts on groups of 15+ please call us on **01296 655720**



COME AS OFTEN AS YOU LIKE!
 Our **annual season ticket** includes entry to open days and special events, including all Day Out With Thomas events. Holders get entry even if an event is sold out and don't need to pre-book. They also get discounts on site.
 (Excludes Christmas & evening events)