

Dear Colleagues

Update on AIMREC's plans for the Ashford 180 Celebrations - the 180th Anniversary of the railway coming to Ashford

The Ashford Model Railway Education Centre (AIMREC) is now in the final stages of planning the celebrations that will mark the 180th anniversary of the first train, with fare paying passengers, to arrive in Ashford on the 1st December 1842.

To be held over the weekend of the 19 and 20 November, venues linking the town centre with the home of the Railway Works in Newtown, will feature a wide range of exhibitions, displays and activities with a strong link to Ashford's local railway history.

Current events and activities are as follows:

Ashford Museum - Open days, displays of local railway history and related exhibits.

Ashford Gateway - Photographic Exhibition from 1 - 30 November featuring exhibits by the Railway Photographic Society from the NRM Shildon "Rail Cameramen" Exhibition, alongside Railway Scenes of Ashford from the 1940s to the present day captured by local photographers.

The Elwick Club* - Two floors of model railways curated and mostly built by AIMREC's volunteer team including first time layouts built by the Saturday morning group of younger model makers, new layouts celebrating the classic years of Tri-ang and Hornby Dublo as well as a recreation of Lenham Station. Special guests are also bringing layouts to inspire and entertain.

Ashford College* - Heritage railway and preservation society stands, model railways, model engineering and displays over two floors including Mike Turner GRA premiering his specially commissioned Ashford 180 artwork, Bob Pryor's superb large-scale models of famous locomotives and legendary Ashford film-maker Sonny Hanson's record of a visit to the Railway Works in 1947.

The Coachworks - Beer festival featuring a range of railway-themed real ales and music.

The Alfred Arms - Displays on the history of Newtown, Ashford's own model village for workers, compiled by Ann Austin of Tales from the Tracks, who will also be giving guided walks of the Newtown area.

The SWAN Centre* - Ashford Model Railway Club present a model railway exhibition with support from well-stocked trade stands.

A classic Volvo B10M PS coach* normally based at the East Kent Railway will provide a regular service linking the venues helping people who might otherwise have difficulty covering the 1.4-mile distance.

Venues marked * require a wristband for entry, wristband prices are Adults and over 14

- £10, under 14 - free. You can purchase the wristbands online and from The Beehive and Made in Ashford from 1 November. Alternatively you can purchase on the day at each main location.

For the latest details about the Ashford 180 celebrations please visit

<https://aimrec.co.uk/ashford180>

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Distribution: All Members of the Parish or Town Council, and representatives of the Community Forums (Please do not circulate beyond the above recipients).