



York Society of Engineers

7:30 pm. Wednesday 11 November 2026

Live Lecture

**Room P/L/002, Physics/Electronics Building, Campus West,
University of York**

Derwent Valley Light Railway – 1913 to the Present Day

by

Tony Simons



This talk explores the fascinating history of the Derwent Valley Light Railway, from its original concept in 1899, through its opening in 1913, to its closure in 1981 and its subsequent revival as a heritage railway.

We will explore questions such as:

- Why was the railway needed?
- What did it carry?
- Did Dr Beeching have anything to do with its closure?
- What caused the railway's decline?
- Why are two of our locomotives named after York Normandy Veterans?

We will also take a look at some of the engineering projects we have completed, those currently under way, and some of the projects still waiting to be started.

Tony spent 40 years working in education, beginning his teaching career at Archbishop Holgate's Grammar School. He then became Head of Technology at York Sixth Form College, followed by three years as Head of Schools Programmes at the National Railway Museum.

He later returned to York College, where he became Team Leader for Mechanical Engineering.

Following his retirement, he continues to support the engineering profession by running courses for railway employees working towards Chartered Engineer status. He is currently Treasurer, Trustee, CME and Guard at the Derwent Valley Light Railway (DVLR), continuing his long-standing interest in engineering, education and railways.

The railway is run entirely by volunteers, and the DVLR is always looking for people who would like to get involved and help keep the railway's history alive.

CPD: This talk is considered to be relevant to Mechanical Engineering, and Railway Engineering.

Please note, this lecture will be a live talk in Room P/L/002, Physics/Electronics Building, Campus West, University of York.

Wearing of masks is encouraged (but not mandatory); taking a lateral flow test prior to the meeting (with negative result) is also recommended. There is plenty of space in the lecture theatre for "social distancing".

Please see the Covid-19 guidance below from the University of York:

The safety of our audience members and staff is our priority, and the University of York continues to have strict cleaning regimes and enhanced ventilation in place.

Please note that the University of York is promoting a message of protect, respect and be kind in relation to Covid-19 and we therefore politely ask that all attendees consider wearing a face covering whilst moving around indoors, washing hands regularly and taking a lateral flow test in advance of the event. We also ask that you do not attend if you experience any symptoms that could relate to a Covid-19 infection OR if you are self-isolating. Events staff will wear face coverings (unless exempt) and clear signage will be available to access hand sanitizer and hand-washing facilities.

The **York Society of Engineers** welcomes applications for membership from those engaged or interested in Engineering. Membership brings several benefits; please search “York Society of Engineers” on your browser, or visit our website directly at <https://www.yorksocietyofengineers.org> for more details and an application form.

Our events support Continual Professional Development (CPD) and, where applicable, the event will publicise in which engineering discipline it resides.

Members attending our events can request a CPD record certificate. To qualify you must be a member and sign an attendance sheet on the evening of the event and apply to the secretary via the Society’s email address; yorksocietyofengineers@hotmail.co.uk