

# 'CLIFF RAILWAY TIMES'

FBCR Aims To Preserve, Protect, and Promote The Babbacombe Cliff Railway



Friends of Babbacombe Cliff Railway

FBCR Newsletter May 2005

Issue No 1

Welcome to the first issue of the quarterly 'CLIFF RAILWAY TIMES' publication, which we trust, you find both interesting and informative.

Please ask if you require additional copies to pass on to other interested parties thereby helping FBCR to achieve its aims to promote, preserve and protect the cliff railway.



**FBCR**  
Membership 300  
since its formation  
three months ago.

**Elected Committee**  
**5th April 2005.**



**Chairperson** John Ayres  
*(St Annes Hall & Local History Society)*

**Membership** Derek Latham  
*(Retired businessperson & local resident)*

**Secretary** Arthur Christian  
*(Babbacombe & St Marychurch Traders)*

**Treasurer** Janet Dann  
*(Retired bookkeeper and local resident)*

**Events Co-ordinator** Adele Farrell  
*(Oddicombe Beach Café)*

**Events sub-committee**  
Richard House, Jefferson Rose and  
Gayle Farrell

**April 2005**

Opened FBCR account  
Britannia Building Society.



**Three signatories**

Treasurer Janet Dann  
Chairman John Ayres  
Secretary Arthur Christian

**John Ayres**



The runaway success of recruitment for the Friends of the Cliff Railway has taken us all by surprise. To have nearly 300 members in such a short time is amazing. It is I believe a measure of the local interest in the Cliff Railway and the concerns of the consequences in closing it.

Babbacombe cliff railway has become part of the heritage of the community and plays a part by encouraging the tourists who provide the major source of income and employment for the area.

We have set out very clearly our main objectives, to Preserve, Protect and Promote the Railway, and to this end, we have established a continuing dialogue with the council over the management of the cliff railway a number of the constructive suggestions we have put forward already being acted on.

However, we must continue to keep up the pressure and make our presence felt. If you can assist us during the planned clear up weekend or if you are willing to be trained to become a volunteer operator of the railway please pass your name to the Secretary or myself.

These activities will enable the members to gain some 'hands on' experience of the railway and raise the profile of the Friends, which can only help our cause.

I look forward to meeting you at the open meeting on 20 June and listening to your views and opinions on the progress, we are making.

**Cliff Railway**  
**Brief History.**



Commissioned in 1923 Waygood Otis Ltd appointed contractors, opening ceremony Monday 1st April 1926.

World War Two security required closure, reopened in 1951 after modernisation by Messrs J & E Hall of Dartford.

Major refurbishment in 1993 track relaying and repainting two new cars provided by H H Martyn of Cheltenham.

**Technical.**



720-ft track 5 ft 8 ins gauge two-car (combination of lift and railway) top drive system (drive equipment located at the top station)

Drive system a DCW (direct current wattage) type incorporating Ward Leonard system (servomotor-operated controller).

The two cars of traditional funicular design with a 40 person standing capacity rated speed of 2.5 m/s (two point five metres a second).

Hoisting ropes attached to upper ends of car chassis supplemented by a compensating rope system to balance load due to car position on track.


**Volunteers.**



Four responses from recent press and local radio broadcasts.

Two retired railway engineers from Teignmouth, South Devon Railway member and Jim Whittle of Powderham Castle Miniature Steam Railway.

## Calendar of Events 2005.

(Notes for your diary) 

### 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> June.

Volunteers please come along and help in this three-day clean up of the vicinity around the railway. Come along for full or half day lunch refreshments provided free to all helpers. Equipment is available bring your own if you wish however sturdy footwear and gloves advisable!

### 15<sup>th</sup> June.

Babbacombe Fayre on the Downs always well attended friends in partnership with Torbay Council are offering concessionary fares two for the price of one return trip £1.30 as an incentive for visits to Oddicombe and Babbacombe Beaches via the cliff railway. Adult FBCR members please use this fare reduction why not come along or send friends and/or family to experience riding the rails at these reduced fares.

There will be an opportunity for cliff railway operator training on a one to one basis by staff and learn about the operation of the machinery. Those who wish to become an authorised operator add your name to the list or call the secretary at 07989536450.

Member volunteers contact the secretary if you are able to help with the recruiting effort during the day our team will be located at the Babbacombe & St Marychurch Traders & Hoteliers Association 'TOMBOLA' stall located nearest to the slip road down to Oddicombe Beach.

### 20<sup>th</sup> June.

General Meeting David Cooper a renowned international funicular railway expert will be the special guest speaker.

### 9<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> July

For a week the cliff railway will close at 7 p.m. in order to determine the option of remaining open an extra two hours during certain times of the season. Why not volunteer as an operator for an hour or two come along and help.

### 31<sup>st</sup> August.

Second Edition of 'Cliff Railway

Times' newsletter


### 13<sup>th</sup> September.

General Meeting with a specialist guest speaker and buffet supper

### 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> October.

Volunteer Days groundwork, preparation for refurbishment also another training opportunity.

#### Kind Offer.

Some of the committee met  David Cooper a widely respected lift engineer, funicular rail enthusiast and Chairman of local Chamber of Trade (Eastbourne) engaged by the council to keep the Cliff Railway running. A constructive and supportive discussion he freely offered to write a pamphlet for sale and give a formal presentation to friends members on Funicular Railways.

#### Easter Opening Day

Friends arranged a Good Friday morning trip on the cliff railway, coffee and hot cross buns were served at the cafe on Oddicombe Beach. Mrs Jenny Richmond and Phyllis two who rode on the Cliff railway opening day 79 years ago and were able to re-live their experience along with others.

While all were enjoying the views across Lyme Bay as with many 79 year olds, the cliff railway from time to time gets tired and unfortunately decided then it was time for a rest, leaving many left stranded at the bottom station. However, friends rallied round and all safely made it back to the top of the hill. The incident re-enforced the importance of the FBCR thereby encouraging more to join on the day.

#### Open For 79 Years

Friends arranged to celebrate 79 years since the opening of the cliff railway with a children's drawing competition. Children 12 and under were invited to draw a picture of the cliff railway. Over 40 young enthusiastic children spent the day on the beach drawing their pictures. Mrs Jenny Richmond kindly judged the competition.

Miss Holly Cosgrove Age 9 from Paignton was our winner with

an excellent watercolour, winning tickets for a family of four to see Scooby Doo at the local Princess Theatre. Runners up included Eleanor Parkin age 8, Georgina Caffery, Beth Davis age 6 and Becca Farrell age 5.

All the pictures are on display at the bottom station of the Babbacombe Cliff Railway for a limited period.

#### Celebrate 80 years.

The Friends are to ensure the Cliff Railway is open in time for the 80th Anniversary on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2006 and would appreciate any ideas members may have.

In addition to the local people who attended the inaugural run, a nation-wide appeal launched for anyone who may have been at the opening in 1926.

There may well be a full twenty's costume event at and around the Cliff Railway on the day; local theatres and amateur dramatics groups are being approached to take part.

#### Next Meetings

General Monday 20<sup>th</sup> June 7.30 p.m. St Marychurch Precinct Centre.

Committee Meeting: Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> June at the Norcliffe Hotel, Babbacombe

#### Contacts

John Ayres: Chairperson 01803 391415 jayres@blueyonder.co.uk  
Arthur Christian: Secretary 07989536450 achrissmc@aol.com  
Adele Farrell: Events 01803 324799 adele@oddicombebeach.wanadoo.co.uk

#### Sponsorship & Contributions

The Norcliffe Hotel, South Devon Residential Landlords Association, St. Marychurch & District Rent Agency, Pro-Graphics Printers, Babbacombe & St Marychurch Traders & Hoteliers Association, Torbay & District Funeral Services, The Babbacombe Cliff Railway Café, St Marychurch Precinct Centre, Oddicombe Beach Café, Babbacombe Local History Society, & St Marychurch & District Action Group.

Appreciation to Pro-Graphics Warbro Road suppliers of membership cards, newsletter designed and compiled by John Lawrence of the St Marychurch & District Action Group.

Note: All copy material for inclusion in August Issue 2 of 'Cliff Railway Times' in by August 15<sup>th</sup> no later please.

<http://beehive.thisissouthdevon.co.uk/fbcrl>