



LONDON AREA

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MONTHLY SPEAKER MEETINGS : OCTOBER 2026 – APRIL 2027

Please check the IRRS website www.irrs.ie for any updates to this programme

LIVE MEETINGS at 18.00 : in The Gallery
at Alan Baxter, 77 Cowcross Street,
Farringdon LONDON EC1M 6EL.

Entry is £3 for IRRS members, £5 for non-members (cash or card). There is usually a raffle (cash) and there may be a sales table offering the latest books of Irish railway interest (cash or card).

ZOOM ONLY MEETINGS at 19.30 : Those on the London Area e-mail list will be sent advice on how to join via Zoom. To be added to our e-mail list, please apply to london@irrs.ie. Zoom participants are invited to make a donation to the London Area through the link on the Branches > London page of our website www.irrs.ie

LIVE + ZOOM : 18.00 – 20.40 Friday 16 October 2026

“Great Victoria Street part 2 – this time it’s personal” by Robert White

Robert returns to finish his story of the Great Northern's Belfast terminus. He will look at how it evolved during the final quarter century of its existence, from 1951 onwards. Even with the appearance of diesel railcars and line closures, the elimination of steam was still some way off. The takeover of rail services by the Ulster Transport Authority saw different loco classes and new liveries along with major alterations to the layout and function of the station. Drawing from several photographic archive collections as well as his personal memories, Robert tracks these changes through until closure in 1976.

ZOOM ONLY: 19.30 – 22.00 Friday 13 November 2026

“Next Generation Luas Fleet - What's Next for Luas Rolling Stock” by Stephen Cooke

Stephen is a professional rolling stock engineer with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and will play a key role in managing the procurement and introduction of the next generation of LUAS vehicles, expected by the end of the decade. Stephen explains how the procurement process works, the parties involved, and will offer an insight into the complex challenges of delivering large scale capital-funded projects for public transport like the new LUAS fleet. Illustrated with images from the TII archive, he will cover vehicle specification, tendering, delivery, testing, commissioning, and finally entry into service.

LIVE + ZOOM : Friday 4 December 2026 : 18.00 – 20.40

“Tralee and Dingle” by Michael Whitehouse + London Area AGM (at 20.05)

Michael, a life-long enthusiast and chair of Vintage Trains, revisits the story of this remarkable railway using his father's (Pat Whitehouse) photographs and research notes, describing not only the railway but setting it in its political, economic and social context. Visitors in the early 1950's saw the last rites of the monthly cattle train to the Dingle fair and experienced the thrill of a lifetime riding or footplating the narrow gauge train as it rushed the steep gradients and flew down the other side, spiced by the general hazards of near derelict rolling stock running on grass covered and barely maintained 3' gauge track.

followed by London Area AGM

continued overleaf



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MONTHLY SPEAKER MEETINGS : OCTOBER 2026 – APRIL 2027 (continued)

ZOOM ONLY : 19.30 – 22.00 Friday 15 January 2027

“Belfast & County Down Railway” by Patrick Davey

Patrick is a lifelong BCDR enthusiast and will present an extensive collection of photos from multiple sources of the BCDR system, many of which have not been seen in public before. Patrick will take us on a tour from Belfast – Bangor – Comber – Donaghadee – Downpatrick – Ardglass – Newcastle and Castletwellan, showing both historical photos and scenes of the system as it is today. In addition to many rare photographs, his talk brings the BCDR to life by including many real-life stories and anecdotes handed down through his railway-related family. Not to be missed.

LIVE + ZOOM : 18.00 – 20.40 Friday 19 February 2027

“Travels with Mac Arnold” by Michael McMahon

Author, Michael McMahon presents a wide ranging selection of images from the photographic archive of R M "Mac" Arnold. Mac travelled extensively throughout Ireland with his camera and stopwatches recording the end of steam haulage in the 1950s & 60's. As well as having an eye for the everyday, he also recorded the unusual with particular interest in the railwaymen and their stories. Michael will show steam photographs from almost every county in Ireland, covering many of the more rarely visited branches.

LIVE + ZOOM : 18.00 – 20.40 Friday 19 March 2027

“A Class locos of CIE/Irish Rail, 1965-95” by Tony Cooke

Tony is a career-served railwayman with Irish Rail, mainly as a driver and driving examiner. Combining his own photos with those of David Boyle, he tells the fascinating story of the A Class, the first major diesel loco fleet in Ireland. His images will show the locos operating throughout the Republic, including closed branches, shed and yard shots, and covering passenger, freight and engineering duties. He will also explain the introduction of the class in the 1950's, the performance of the Crossley engine and subsequent re-engining with GM power units, through to mentioning some early casualties, and withdrawal and scrapping of the class. They were versatile workhorses, well deserving their place in Irish railway history.

LIVE + ZOOM : 18.00 – 20.40 Friday 16 April 2027

“The Derry Road Remembered” by Charles Friel

Irish railway preservationist, photographer and historian, Charles Friel, returns with a fully-illustrated journey along the fondly-remembered Derry Road, the Great Northern Railway (Ireland)'s line between Portadown and Londonderry (Foyle Road) which sadly closed on 15 February 1965. With the help of many previously-unseen pictures, travel again past the bogs of Annaghmore and among the hills of Pomeroy to Omagh and follow the river Strule / Mourne / Foyle through Sion Mills and Strabane to the Maiden City taking in, en route, the trains and the people who worked them, the connecting standard and narrow gauge lines, some notable accidents and a few stories that can now be told plus some of the happenings after the trains had gone.

end of programme