



# Swanning Around

## A Look At What's Happening Around The Swanage Railway

Supplement 1 to Issue 102 – October 14<sup>th</sup> 2023

---

At the time of publishing Issue 102, *SITREP!* was not available, and with the forthcoming T3 launch weekend on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> October, we could cover two items with one supplement, so here it is!

Launch of the T3 into service on the railway was of course the high point of the week/month/year for the railway, the culmination of six years hard work by the 563 group and the contractors/suppliers/staff/volunteers. The launch event on the 7<sup>th</sup> was attended by a number of dignitaries.

We won't be spending too much effort in this supplement to Swanning Around in telling you what went on, but we can recommend that you visit the YouTube videos from The Southerner and Derek TP and others which cover not only the special trains and the first public services, but also the speeches, etc. on Swanage station.

You can find the videos at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uypDHYcJX5E>

And [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvxQ3Sz\\_2IE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvxQ3Sz_2IE)

And you can find the rest yourselves!



The night before the launch event and we find the T3 getting a final clean up before its big day.

both photos: Nathan Au







It's launch time on 7<sup>th</sup> October at Swanage station, and Swanage Railway patron Sir Philip Williams does the honours by cutting the ceremonial ribbon, assisted(?) by Lord Lieutenant of Dorset Angus Campbell. Many of those attending came in suitable Victorian dress.

Posing on the front of the loco are the 563 Loco Group, representatives of the Flour Mill Workshop, and the curator of the National Railway museum Anthony Coulls, who was responsible for the ceding of the loco to the Swanage Railway Trust.

both photos: Andrew P M Wright







Photo: Peter Milford

The first train with invited guests and dignitaries aboard leaves Swanage.

The second special train, although scheduled as non-stop to Norden, still has to wait to pass the service train hauled by U class 31806 at Harmans Cross.







At Norden, 563 has run round its train and is waiting departure time. Another opportunity for supporters to view the locomotive close up.

And another of those superb pictures of Corfe Castle with the return train from Norden approaching Afflington bridge on the A351 road.

photo: Andrew P M Wright







Wouldn't be a special train without a special ticket, and as a bonus, 563-featured cup cakes!







The first day of public services behind 563 on 8<sup>th</sup> October sees the train crossing the Studland Road viaduct, and crossing New Barn Bridge.

both photos: Andrew P M Wright







Prior to transmission on BBC South Today on 12<sup>th</sup> October, senior reporter Tom Hepworth with cameraman Ian DaCosta were at Swanage conducting interviews on 5<sup>th</sup> October. With Swanage Railway Trust chairman Gavin Johns in one of the Maunsell carriages above, and with 563 Locomotive Group vice chairman Matt McManus below. Don't step back, Matt!

Both photos: Andrew P M Wright





So who were the stars of BBC South Today on 12<sup>th</sup> October?

Pictures taken direct from the telly to the usual high standard of Swanning Around!





## **SITREP! (Updated on 12 Oct 23)**

This 'Situation Report' is an update of general information focusing on current Railway news & future events. If you have any material that you would like included, feedback, suggestions or you feel the efforts of another should be recognised please email: [frank.roberts@swanagerailway.co.uk](mailto:frank.roberts@swanagerailway.co.uk)

**This SITREP was drafted before the General Announcement from the Chairs of the Swanage Railway Trust and the Swanage Railway Company, issued around midday on Wednesday. Some extracts of the Announcement are included in this update.**

## **Increasing Our Revenue.**

Can you help raise the profile of the Swanage Railway amongst your family and friends, on Facebook & social media or across local community groups that you are a member of?

**Please encourage others to visit the main Swanage Railway website and encourage potential visitors to subscribe to receive 'Regular News & Updates' from Passenger Services – see the green strapline at bottom of most pages on the main Swanage Railway website.**

### **Forecast of Main Events**

Sat 07 Oct - **Fish & Chip Special** – starts at Norden.  
Sun 08 Oct

Sat 07 Oct **563 Returns to Steam** – **Special trains on inaugural day.**

Sat 21 Oct - **563 Returns to Steam.** We are inviting passenger to book in advance to travel behind your  
Sun 29 Oct newly restored locomotive, travelling in one of three **Royal Wessex carriages or Car 14.**

Sun 22 Oct **Book signing by John Woodham** – author of William Adams: His Life and Locomotives.  
1230-1600hrs **@Swanage Station**

Tue 24 Oct- **Book signing by Simon Hall.** Beastly times on the Jurassic Line  
Wed 25 Oct

Fri 17 Nov – **The Polar Express**™ use the Event & Experiences link below.  
Sat 30 Dec

**Please note.** Swanage Railway does not take nor administer bookings, Swanage Railway gift cards, memberships, Season Tickets or promotional vouchers cannot be used against this product. The Railway does not have access to the booking system for this event, **please email [ticketing@crosstownconcerts.com](mailto:ticketing@crosstownconcerts.com) for all enquiries.**

**See:** [Events & Experiences - Swanage Railway](#)

### **2024**

Sat 06 Jan- **Winter Warm Up.** A combination of Steam and Diesel locomotives hauling both  
Sun 07 Jun passenger and freight trains.

Fri 10 May - **Diesel Gala & Beer Festival.** *Further details to follow.*  
Sun 12 May

Fri 28 Jun - **Roads to Rail.** *Further details to follow.*  
Sun 30 Jun



# THE POLAR EXPRESS™

## Train Ride

We look forward to welcoming you aboard THE POLAR EXPRESS™ Train Ride at Swanage Railway. These are our FAQ's – frequently asked questions! If we have missed anything we will update these FAQs regularly to enhance your experience and knowledge of what to expect on your journey.

**THE EXPERIENCE** The experience consists of approximately an hour long return train journey leaving from the Swanage Railway Station, Railway Station Approach, Swanage, Dorset BH19 1HB. The train cannot be boarded at any other station. The nearest long stay car park (Pay and Display) is in Victoria Avenue, BH19 1AP. We regret there is no parking available at the station.

On board each train will be actors appearing as characters from the book and film of THE POLAR EXPRESS™. There will be singing, dancing and interaction with our customers. All customers will receive a cup of hot chocolate and a cookie on the journey, and a special present on the return journey from the North Pole.

**ARRIVAL** Please arrive at the station at the time stated on your ticket. Our trains are scheduled to leave the station at 11am, 12.45pm, 2.45pm, 4.45pm and 6.45pm. (Times may be slightly subject to change but we will do our utmost to keep to these timetables). Please note that we will be running trains based on demand – if a particular train time you prefer is not advertised feel free to keep checking details at SeeTickets.com as extra trains and carriages will be added once demand reaches appropriate levels.

**TICKETS** Your E-ticket will be scanned on arrival at the station and exchanged for a Golden Ticket to board the train. We will not be sending out any Golden Tickets in the post. Please arrive at the time stated on your E-ticket, and on the correct day! We are selling multiple rides/carriages/train rides daily so do please check before you leave for Swanage!

**PARKING** The nearest parking to the station is Main Beach Car Park (Pay and Display), Victoria Avenue, Swanage BH19 1AP. This car park is approximately 10 minutes walk from the station. It's on an accessible route but it does include a short hill so please bear that in mind. Failing that, the station is very central in Swanage – we cannot offer an official drop off point due to the local road system, but if you do need to drop friends or family off nearby, please do it carefully and be courteous to other drivers. Please allow plenty of time for your journey to Swanage, trains cannot be delayed by late arrivals.

**TRAVEL** Sadly there is no main line rail station at Swanage, so please allow plenty of time to reach Swanage by road. If for any reason you arrive too late to board the train you are booked on, we will do our best to accommodate you on the next available train, but we cannot always guarantee this will be possible on the same day due to the large demand expected for the experience.

**SEATING** Our carriages have seating arranged in 4's around a table. We have six main carriages – Rudolph, Blitzen, Comet, Dasher, Prancer and Vixen, and Cupid is our accessible carriage (details below). Our stewards will direct you to the correct carriage, your seat numbers will be on your E-ticket. Please direct any queries regarding seating to the onboard stewards who are there to help you.

Due to the high demand for tickets, it is likely you will be sharing the fun of your THE POLAR EXPRESS™ Train Ride with another family. All our seats are sold in chronological order, so any multiples of tickets should always be in the same vicinity.

**ACCESSIBLE SEATING** Initially we will be offering accessible tickets on all rides on Saturday and Sundays only. If these sell out, we will then add them as demand dictates – firstly by adding them on the Friday trains, then Thursdays and so on.

Our accessible Cupid carriage can accommodate two wheelchair positions and a table of four, maximum. Personal Assistant tickets are available in the ratio 1 Personal Assistant:1 Access Seat/Wheelchair Space, any other accompanying travellers (up to 4) are welcome to sit in the Cupid carriage but must purchase a full price "ACCOMPANYING TRAVELLER" ticket which you'll find under the Cupid heading on our See Tickets page. If any customer is able to transfer from a wheelchair to a standard seat then please purchase a standard ticket, and our stewards will be on hand to help you to your seat in the relevant carriage. Please note Cupid is the only wheelchair accessible carriage, due to the age of our train set.

A ramp is available at the stations to provide wheelchair access to Cupid, and our stewards and train crews will be happy to assist. Please note that our ramps have a safe weight limit of 300kg. The maximum dimensions of any wheelchair or electronic scooter is: Length: 1200mm (3ft 11in approx.) Width: 700mm (2ft 3in approx.) Maximum combined weight of user and scooter: 300kg (47st 3lb approx.)

**GROUP BOOKINGS** For any bookings over 12 seats, please contact [groups@seetickets.com](mailto:groups@seetickets.com) and we will try to accommodate your requests.

**THE JOURNEY** Just for clarification the train DOES move! It leaves from Swanage station then travels for approximately 30 minutes before reaching the North Pole, at which point the train will stop, then return to Swanage. In case of mechanical malfunction, we reserve the right to replace the steam engine with a diesel alternative and in extreme cases the show may take place on a static train – but rest assured we will be doing our utmost to make sure this does not happen!

**LUGGAGE/PUSHCHAIRS** Other than handheld bags that can be stowed beneath the seats, no luggage is allowed on board. Pushchairs and car seats are also not allowed on board, but can be stored on the platform – just speak to one of our stewards at the station for assistance.

**DOGS** We will allow guide dogs and assistance dogs on all trains. We will also allow therapy/emotional support dogs on certain trains, but these need to be discussed with us directly at [ticketing@crossstownconcerts.com](mailto:ticketing@crossstownconcerts.com) and we reserve the right to not allow these dogs access to the station if our staff deem their behaviours unsuitable for a busy train carrying many customers and children. All dogs must stay under seats/tables and not in the aisles, as the aisles are busy with the show performance.

**TOILETS** Please note that due to the age of our train set, no toilets or baby changing facilities are available on board the train. All toilets are on the station platform so please make sure to use the toilet facilities at the station before we leave as the train ride lasts an hour.

**ALLERGIES** All customers are offered a cup of hot chocolate and a cookie on board. We will offer an alternative to anyone with allergies (ask one of our stewards on boarding the train). Please note because of the large number of people using the train each day, we cannot make the train safe for anyone with extreme nut allergies.

**TRAIN SET** The Swanage Railway operates Heritage Train services. The train you will be travelling on consists of THE POLAR EXPRESS™ steam locomotive at the Swanage Railway end, and a diesel locomotive at the London end. Our carriages include a beautiful 1930s Maunsell coach (Rudolph), and five 1950s, British Railways, Standard Carriages.

**CLOTHING** We encourage all our customers to wear pyjamas and dressing gowns (as in the book). This adds to the overall magical experience, but we suggest wearing closed shoes, not slippers or open-toed shoes/sliders/flip-flops. Please dress for the potential of inclement British weather in November and December.

**ADDITIONAL QUERIES** If there are any questions you cannot find here or on the Swanage Railway website <https://www.swanagerailway.co.uk> then please email [ticketing@crossstownconcerts.com](mailto:ticketing@crossstownconcerts.com)

**GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS** The operators of the event are Fused Productions, in association with Crossstown Concerts and Swanage Railway. Tickets are non-transferable – if you cannot attend the event then please refer to See Tickets terms and conditions. Only tickets purchased via SeeTickets.com are permissible, any tickets purchased via Viagogo or any other third party sites are not valid and will be refused entry. Your tickets permit you passage on board the experience only, at the time stated on your E-ticket from See. If we have to vary the times of any trains due to any reason, we will always seek to reschedule you to a new suitable date wherever possible.

Please note that as on general mainline trains, we will close the doors to the trains before departure and any latecomers will not be able to board the train unless our staff view it as safe to do so. If for any reason we have to suspend or cancel the train rides then all customers are entitled to a refund on their booking or are offered a replacement ticket on another time and date.

All children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult at all times. Any unaccompanied people who appear to be under the age of 16 will require proof of age in order to board the train. Please note, there is no discount for any children, all seats are sold at full price at all times. Under two year olds can be seated on an adult's lap without purchasing a ticket, but any children aged 3 and over will need their own seat.

Events outside our control – We will not be held liable for any failure to provide any performance or train ride that is prevented by events outside our control – these include but are not limited to: Earthquake, subsidence, epidemic, pandemic, any natural disaster, government travel ban, or anything that prevents travel in and out of Swanage (such as severe weather, heavy snow etc).

We will contact customers as soon as possible if we foresee any delays to trains, and where possible we will always offer an alternative booking if we are able to do so.

All tickets for the event are sold via SeeTickets.com. If for any reason you cannot locate your actual tickets, please visit [www.seetickets.com/customerservice](http://www.seetickets.com/customerservice). You will need to fill out your reference number and your postcode etc, in which case your tickets should be able to be accessed.

Please note if you are not able to attend on the date and time you booked, for whatever reason, we are not obligated to honour your booking. If we can accommodate your request we will try to do so, but due to the high levels of demand for tickets we advise you to visit SeeTickets.com and refer to their resale options.

Tickets cannot be resold, used as raffle prizes or competition prizes unless agreed in advance with Crossstown Concerts. No refunds at any point will be available for any raffle or competition prize tickets issued.

By entering Swanage Station and the train ride provided you consent to your image being recorded for use in promotional videos for subsequent THE POLAR EXPRESS™ rides. If you do not wish to allow this consent, you must make this known before having your E-tickets exchanged for Golden Tickets on entering the station.

General behaviour – Please behave appropriately and lawfully on board the train, given that many families will be in attendance. Any customers deemed intoxicated will be prevented from entering the station or boarding the train. No alcohol, other than any purchased at Swanage Station will be allowed on the platforms or trains, and any customers who are evidently using their own alcohol will be requested to leave the station. We will not tolerate any abusive or threatening behaviour to any of our staff. We will be doing our utmost to provide a positive magical experience for all attendees – our staff are working long hours to achieve this so please treat them with respect and tolerance at all times.

Please note any personal items you bring into the station are entirely at your own risk (unless stored in a paid for cloakroom/storage area on the station).

We ask guests to arrive at the check-in time shown on your E-ticket. Once your experience is over you can spend as much time in our gift shop as you wish but we tend to find guests spend around 15min here before leaving. We look forward to welcoming you to Swanage Railway for a magical experience.



Train equipment and event elements vary by location. Register at your local venue for full details.  
THE POLAR EXPRESS and all related characters and elements © & ™ Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. WB SHIELD TM & © WB. 1/20

**This notice is posted on the Swanage Railway website**



## A MESSAGE TO ALL EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS, MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS OF THE SWANAGE RAILWAY.

Since the pandemic the Swanage Railway has found it challenging to recover customers and to address the strong inflationary and economic pressures that face all of us.

Customer numbers are recovering, indeed over the summer there has been good year on year growth, but that growth is not back to 2019 levels or has been fully reflected in our income. Inflationary pressures on our costs continue and although coal prices, as an example, now seem to have plateaued there is no sign of their falling back to pre-March 2022 levels.

We reported a loss in 2022-23 and anticipate a further loss this year. These losses have depleted the Company's cash reserves and the need to plan to address this situation quickly and with a commitment to deliver must now be the focus of our immediate attention.

This will also afford us the opportunity to start the process of moving over the short term, perhaps two to three years, to a more sustainable basis, where surpluses are generated to reinvest in maintenance and repair of assets.

Being a seasonal business, the Company has for many years relied on a winter cash loan from the Trust to get it through winter and the early spring period when fewer train run. The Trust can support the Company, but this will require some difficult choices such as re-designating cash specifically reserved for projects. We will need to act now, by launching a fundraising campaign, to backfill the financial resources deployed to support the Company. Any re-financing plan will have to be fully compliant with the conditions imposed by the Charity Commission.

To develop and commit to a re-financing plan that provides a sustainable basis for the future we are [summary of main text]:

- gaining expert independent opinion on the state of our finances.

- Looking at several short and more medium and longer-term solutions. As a priority, we will need to identify enhanced income and expenditure savings of approximately £350,000.

- This will involve several difficult decisions.

- Identifying the expected financial benefit flowing from the conversion of the Company to a charity as proposed in the Governance Review. This could realise up to £200,000 pa in gift aid.

- Launching an emergency appeal to raise £250,000 targeted to go directly to the Company.

<https://swanagerailwaytrust.enthuse.com/saveyourrailway>

We will shortly be asking for your help and support not only on the short-term actions, but of equal importance practical help in delivering initiatives and plans into the future.

We have gaps in our management structure that need filling by willing volunteers holding relevant skills and experience. We will set out these needs and invite participation. The longer-term survival of our railway will in no small part depend on a positive response now to our **“Call to Arms”**. This will be launched at the Trust's AGM on 14<sup>th</sup> October, and details will be sent out to members.



***The railway's future now lies in all our hands, but we need to act quickly and decisively.***

The Trust has agreed to the creation of a small task group consisting of Gavin Johns, Robert Patterson and Frank Roberts. This Group will report to both the Board and the Trust. They will need your help and support in this project if it is to succeed and will be calling on advice from relevant people as the work progresses. This is a challenge for all of us, but it is an opportunity to shape the railway for the future.

Signed by:

Gavin Johns. Chair, Swanage Railway Trust

Trevor Parsons. Chair, Swanage Railway Company Ltd

**Comment.** There is much to be proud of at Swanage Railway. In the last 12 months most of us have been a part of some fantastic achievements. From welcoming the return of the Flying Scotsman, our Train of Lights and Winter Warm Up events, hosting "Britannia" and being the first railway to offer driver experiences, the spectacular Steam, Diesel and 'Road to Rail' Galas, a Leeds to Swanage HST through to delivering the second trial of Wareham services - and now the launch of the T3. On the face of it, we've had a very successful year.

The reality is that, as the summer sun drifts south, we are going to have to roll our sleeves up, and with some vigour work hard to ensure the very survival of our Swanage Railway. In the coming weeks we will be asking everyone who supports the Railway what you might do to support *your* Railway.

Many can support a rostered turn, or work in a department where the work is more bespoke & flexible. Others can spare half a day supporting a retail role in catering, the shop or passenger services – including the selling of tickets on trains; *every penny of which supports our income stream, which otherwise would be lost!* Many others can help sell the Railway to family colleagues or friends, by simply spreading the word, visiting our website, or indeed signing up for regular weekly updates. Even better join the Swanage Railway; or gift a membership for a family or friend this Christmas.

In the coming weeks we will launch a *Save your Railway* to ensure we survive this winter period.

**News from the Volunteer Recruitment & Retention Officer – Lisa Gravett.** I have received such a warm welcome since starting my new job at Swanage Railway and would like to thank everyone for their help and support.

My previous job roles managing volunteers for the Dorset Wildlife Trust and Portland Museum has given me the experience which I can now draw on to help the Swanage Railway to recruit more volunteers and to provide continuous support while they are here.

One initiative has been to set up a table at the Swanage Market to attract more local people. This took place on September 29th, and it was good to see so many people come over for a chat and express an interest in volunteering. I am planning to make this a regular event at least once a month with the aim of increasing the number of local people available to participate in all areas of the railway.

Interest in volunteering has been very positive so far and it's been a pleasure to meet our new team members.

**Frances Price** in heritage carriage restoration, **John Maddison** in Permanent Way, **Carl Thorpe** in Maintenance, **Janet Smith** in Catering, **Gary Pollentine** in Maintenance and **Matt Godfrey** in Permanent Way and Signalling; and the good news is there are five more people still to come this month for their initial visit, so things are looking very positive indeed!

I would like to extend my thanks to the managers and volunteers who have given their time to talk to our new volunteers about their roles, it really has helped a great deal in them making that decision to join us and begin their volunteering journey.





**Rudy Simmons 22 months at Swanage Market**



**The Roberts family from Swanage (L to R)  
Robbie (96 years old!), Sally and Kate**

*Thank you to Lisa Gravett for obtaining permission to use these images.*

### **Volunteer Retention & Recruitment Officer.**

This post is now held by Lisa Gravett, who can be contacted by email [lisa.gravett@swanagerailway.co.uk](mailto:lisa.gravett@swanagerailway.co.uk) or at Station House in Swanage, where Lisa is based, or on 01929 475212. In addition, Lisa is now the recipient of emails received via the email address: "iwanttovolunteer".

### **Railway Vacancies**

We continue to seek high quality volunteer applicants for some of our most significant governance roles. In particular:

**Directors for the Company Board especially covering Finance, Commercial and other portfolios.**

**Secretaries for both the Trust & the Company**

**Fundraiser (paid) for the Swanage Railway Trust – interviews due shortly.**

**Vacancies across the Swanage Railway**

If you have skills that would enable you to carry out one of these roles, and want to work with others in a team, please consider an application. Further information will be seen on HOPS or srstaff (for members & staff with access to these restricted internal sites) **OR** please email: [iwanttovolunteer@swanagerailway.co.uk](mailto:iwanttovolunteer@swanagerailway.co.uk)



## **Raising the Profile Visit – Mick Stone and Steve Booth**

Swanage Railway and Purbeck Community Rail Partnership (PCRP) worked together this spring/summer to invite senior figures from the Rail Industry to experience the Swanage to Wareham Service. The primary objective was to raise the profile of the service with external decision-makers with a view to assistance and support going forward.

Chief among the visitors was the Rail Minister, Huw Merriman MP, who was accompanied by Richard Drax MP (South Dorset) and representatives from South Western Railway. The Minister was met by representatives of both SR and PCRP, whilst being shown not only the service itself but also meeting with staff and enjoying a footplate ride on 'Eddystone'. A bonus was that the Dorset Council Cabinet member for Travel and Transport, Cllr Ray Bryan, also attended and he was keen to speak to the Minister and colleagues too.

The following week the same SR/PCRP team hosted Claire Mann, the Managing Director of South Western Railway, who had been invited on the day of the Minister's visit but had been unable to attend due to being on holiday. Claire, a former train driver herself, was also treated to a footplate ride, in between meeting with staff and visiting both the Corfe Museum and signal box.

Earlier in August, we hosted a visit by Andrew Haines, Chief Executive Officer of Network Rail. Andrew brought his own office 'team' with him, and he treated them to fish and chips on the seafront as part of their visit. They were all impressed with the heritage railway and what it has achieved.

During May we invited the Network Rail Strategic Planning Team down to ride the service. This was beneficial with regard to the Wareham Strategic Plan currently being developed by this team as part of becoming the main rural hub for Purbeck. SR is a stakeholder in this process and has the opportunity to help shape station plans going forward with the Wareham Service.

Why did we arrange these visits? It is clear that the efforts of the SR to operate the Trial Service is highly appreciated and recognised by our peers in the rail industry. They all want us to succeed. Hopefully the visits will have 'opened some doors' in the minds of our visitors and their own teams to what we are trying to achieve here in Purbeck. Only time will tell, however we do not intend to rest on our laurels and will attempt to influence outcomes with our industry colleagues.

Just as important and of potential benefit, were the various 'one-to-ones' which took place during these visits, including with senior civil servants, which gave opportunities to share thoughts and ideas. We hope to make these discussions ongoing and are pleased with the connectivity we help create.

A word about PCRP - one of its chief aims is to give all the support it can to make SR generally and Swanage to Wareham services in particular, a success going forward. Its officer, Steve Booth, is particularly active in terms of promoting all things SR, especially via social media. Steve also designed the questionnaire which has been filled out by our passengers on Wareham services, and which will help to give us some hard data on which to assess future plans. We fully support and endorse with all our partners joined-up sustainable travel plans reducing car usage and congestion wherever possible.





**Visit of Rail Minister, Huw Merriman MP, accompanied  
by Richard Drax MP (South Dorset)  
and representatives from South Western Railway**



**Rail Minister, Huw Merriman MP (second from left in this photo)  
engaging with SR staff at Corfe Castle on 22 Aug 23**

### **Purbeck Mining Museum**

[extract from [Dorset Museum Association Newsletter – Sep 23](#)]. Ron Dyson book, Dorset's "Hidden Gem" is no longer so hidden. It has been quite a summer at the Purbeck Mining Museum near Norden. Not only have visitor numbers and donations far exceeded previous years, it has also featured in a national TV programme. The visit of the Owen family from Stoke-on-Trent earlier in August saw the number of visitors so far this year top 4,000. The family were delighted to hear fascinating stories and first-hand insight about life in a Purbeck clay mine from the latest member to join the growing team of volunteers at the Museum.

### **Mercury Siding – Herston Halt**

The headshunt under Washpond Lane was formally named Mercury Siding in a recent SR Rule Book amendment. This proposal was part of the marking of the Centenary of the Royal Corps of Signals in 2020. Next June we will celebrate 40 years of the Link between Swanage and the Royal Signals – the Army's communicators. Previous milestones have been celebrated with an appropriate project, and we are investigating if the Siding can be extended in length. To this end, Jim Wheeler has recently surveyed the site; Jim is thanked for his continuing support.

### **Environmental Working Group - Sue Wale**

The Board of the Swanage Railway Company and the Council of Management approved an Environmental Management Policy for the railway in September 2020. This policy recognises that the railway operates in a sensitive environment that includes Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and at Swanage, is part of the UNESCO designated World Heritage Site of 'The Jurassic Coast'. The aim of this policy is to encourage the railway to consider its use of natural resources and its environmental impact, while celebrating the beauty of the countryside we run through.

In July 2022, an Environmental Working Group was set up to encourage the staff and volunteers at the railway to become more environmentally conscious by recognising the magnificence of the area they are working in.



In our first 12 months we have established ourselves on the website at: <https://www.swanagerailway.co.uk/environment> where you can find our Environmental News and the photos we have been sent by volunteers, staff and members of the public, such as these Sika Deer:





We are also active on social media so that the general public can see the environmentally diverse landscape we run through, our solar panel powered signals and the range of species that can be seen through the train window as seen here:



We have also been promoting the railway as a green corridor between Wareham and Swanage, as travelling on our trains keeps 60,000 vehicles off the road every year.

The railway took an active part in the National Bird Box week in February 2023, in collaboration with Durlston Country Park and we would like to thank the 39 people who replied to our Environmental Survey over the summer. There are some great ideas coming out of the survey which we will progress, along with the Education Offering that we are working on which shows that we are a living and working museum, acting to preserve our heritage and environment.

When the new Chief Executive Officer is appointed, we expect objectives being set so that the railway can focus on its environmental impact, supported by the Environmental Working Group, in addition to the work that is already going on.

### **Fundraising**

Applications were recently sought for a new professional Fundraiser post that will be jointly hosted by us and the Swanage Pier Trust. This has the advantage of pooling costs and at the same time offering a competitive salary that can hopefully attract a high calibre individual, who will deliver high returns.... Interviews will take place shortly.

### **Minutes of Meetings**

The minutes from both **Company Board and Swanage Railway Trust CoM meetings** are published in the member's area of the Swanage Railway Trust website. Access to the Member's Area is restricted to SRT members only. This is a password protected site, the current password can be obtained from [membership@swanagerailway.co.uk](mailto:membership@swanagerailway.co.uk) or by calling 01929 475202, leaving your name, membership number and contact number. Please note the office is not staffed daily.

[HOME | Swanage Railway Trust | The People Behind the Swanage Railway, Dorset, UK](#)

### **Recognition of your efforts.....**

The Trust is considering the best and most appropriate way to recognise the efforts of the hundreds of people who have supported the Railway this year, and the operation of trains over the summer months including the Wareham service.

*And finally, best of luck to the four SR stations who have been shortlisted at the Blackmore Vale Line Community Rail Partnership awards in Sherbourne next Tuesday; whilst we wish everyone well, there is of course only one clear winner.....*

*Thank you to Andrew P.M. Wright for photos (not credited to others) in this edition.*

Frank Roberts  
13 Oct 23



As usual, volunteers are required in all departments, so,

To use your existing skills or to learn new ones, contact us about being a Swanage Railway volunteer by either sending an email to [iwanttovolunteer@swanagerailway.co.uk](mailto:iwanttovolunteer@swanagerailway.co.uk) or by calling 01929 475212 to contact Lisa Gravett, our Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Officer.

-----ooOoo-----

If you are not a member of the Swanage Railway, don't be put off! Contact us and volunteer (or at least make an enquiry)! You know you want to! You will be most welcome!

-----ooOoo-----

Compiled and edited by John Denison

Email to [swanning.around@swanagerailway.co.uk](mailto:swanning.around@swanagerailway.co.uk)

Swanning Around also appears on line at:

<http://www.srstaff.co.uk/swanningaround> (not password protected)

Views expressed in 'Swanning Around' are those of the author(s) and are not necessarily the views of the Swanage Railway Trust or the Swanage Railway Company. No liability accepted for errors or inaccuracies.

Prepared by John Denison for the Swanage Railway Trust including content and images provided by others. All rights recognised.

(c) Copyright: Swanage Railway Trust 2023