



Between the Lines

Issue 3 | January 2023

Welcome to the third edition of Between the Lines, South Western Railway's community rail newsletter. Lots of exciting events have been happening all across the network. Our wonderful station adopters and Community Rail Partnerships have been working hard to brighten up their stations and bring them back into the heart of the communities they serve.

If you have any community rail stories to be included in the next edition of the newsletter, please email me at matthew.parkinson@swrailway.com.

(Front Cover): Winter Warmers at Petersfield The Hub - more information on the next page)

(Below): New artwork at Andover by Smannell Field School, and The Enham Trust. Andover Station is adopted by The Arts Society Test Valley.

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Jurassic Coast Films

The Purbeck CRP has now published three promotional Jurassic Coast videos to promote sustainable travel to the area by train. The series encourages onward journeys to Lulworth Cove and Durdle Door by bus, as well as to Swanage and Corfe Castle via the Swanage Railway - the region's most popular heritage railway.

The videos were produced by the Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership for Purbeck CRP as part of a wider campaign in West Dorset and East Devon to promote journeys by train and connecting bus services. While these are more aimed at tourists in the main season, they also help to raise awareness of what the region has to offer with its many attractions, both natural and man-made, when planning a holiday, short break, or day trip. They are particularly aimed at young people, creating a sense of wonder at beautiful surroundings as well as showcasing sustainability and environmental responsibility by using public transport.

You can watch the videos on YouTube by clicking/searching the link below:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3H-3PUd_kmZuPSIBrdkKBw

These videos will soon join the Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership's own ones on their dedicated www.jurassicbytrain.com page.



Winter Warmers

The Free Shop, managed by East Hampshire CRP, at The Hub Petersfield Railway Station recently ran a 'winter warmer' session, putting out a call to the local community to donate their good quality coats, hats, scarves, and gloves. They were not disappointed with the generous supply of items donated.

Volunteers enjoyed meeting a variety of both regular and new Free Shoppers. More than 122 coats found new homes as well as plenty of gloves, hats, and scarves.

The few leftover items at the end were donated to local homeless charities, and the childrens' coats and hats were given to Butser Ancient Farm to keep young visitors warm as they brave the elements during their visit.



Lucy Lomax, East Hampshire CRP Officer, with Roy from SWR showing off hats from the Winter Warmer event at Petersfield.

Students Spruce Up Stations

SWR is proud to give space to budding young artists to display their artwork through our station adoption scheme. Some great examples are below.

The Vyne School in Basingstoke was delighted to use several of our waiting rooms. The students said:

“I’ve always wanted to have my artwork displayed, and now that it has been for people to see, I feel really proud and happy” - Angela C.

“I’m happy as well as proud that all the nights spent painting were worth it” - Katherin B.

Tim Poet, Head of Art at the Vyne is delighted that we have given him an opportunity to showcase his students’ talents.

Art @ The Station is supported by Arts Society Basingstoke and offers a platform for young artists to exhibit their work.



Students from The Vyne School showing their artwork and celebrating their achievements.

Kiki’s Painting at Fareham

Following on from creating a fabulous Platinum Jubilee dress for a previous competition held at Fareham Station, Kiki, who is a budding young artist, has just had a piece of her artwork installed there too.

Just before Christmas, her school came to celebrate the unveiling at the station.

Fiona Berryman, Fareham Station adopter and SWR colleague, is on a mission to find young talent in the Fareham and Gosport area. She has launched a competition to find local young artists to display their work in Fareham waiting rooms.

We look forward to seeing the colourful results.



Kiki and students from her school standing by her artwork.

Redundant Spaces

As part of our commitment to local communities, we have made redundant spaces in some of our station buildings available for use by local groups. We have a dedicated Community Rail Network Officer to support this project and we are keen to work with anyone interested in a community-based project. Some of our recent successes are below:

Norbiton

Kingston Hospital Radio has a new home. The team has moved into the ground floor of the former Station House at Norbiton Station. It is now sharing the building, which previously housed a taxi company, with the Jiu Jitsu Gym. This means that the entire former Station House has been relet and is being brought back into use to benefit the local community.

Mortlake

Discussions are taking place with a local food bank to use the redundant space at Mortlake Station. They hope to be using the space by mid-February.

Witley

Witley Station House has been completely refurbished and is ready to be let out to the local community on a peppercorn rent. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the charity that was originally going to occupy the space has unfortunately not been able to do so. Therefore, SWR is currently seeking a local charity or community group that may be interested. Please get in touch with us if you would like some more information.

You can find out about some available redundant spaces on our website:

<https://www.southwesternrailway.com/other/about-us/community-and-rail-station-adoption/community-use-spaces>



Witley Station House.



Shawford Station, recently refurbished by Three Rivers CRP as a community cafe.

Christmas on the SWR network

It's the most wonderful time of the year! Across the SWR network, we had lots of Christmas celebrations. Here are just some of the highlights.

Sherborne Christmas Carols Steam Train

On Tuesday 6th December, for the first time since 2019, The Railway Touring Company's 'Sherborne Christmas Carols' excursion arrived into Sherborne from London Victoria, packed with travellers for the annual Christmas Carol Service in the Abbey. The train was hauled by a 'Black Five' steam locomotive, number 44871, built in 1945.

While the passengers were enjoying the carols, the train moved onto Yeovil Railway Centre to turn the locomotive on the turntable, ready for its return journey to London.

In celebration of this event, Friends of Templecombe Station hosted a fabulous Christmas Coffee Morning for steam buffs, rail users, and spectators as the steam train puffed through the station on its way to Sherborne. There were drinks, cakes, treats, and much more on offer.



Wool Christmas Tree Festival

Members of the parish church in Wool announced that they were holding a Christmas Tree Festival, inviting various volunteer groups in the village to supply a tree decorated to reflect their group's activities.

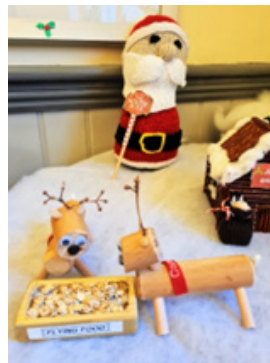
Friends of Wool Station rose to the challenge, installing a tree with a 'Great Railway Journeys' theme.

They hung the tree with colourful jackets and trousers in true Michael Portillo style, and took the opportunity to display their 'Stations in Bloom' certificate, and a 'help-yourself' tray of leaflets. The trees were on display during the week following Advent Sunday.

Christmas Greetings from the Blackmore Vale Line

The Christmas spirit was also alive and kicking along the Blackmore Vale Line with Station Friends Groups doing what they do best, celebrating and providing plenty of festive cheer!

Friends of Crewkerne Station took a stall in the marketplace at the recent Crewkerne Christmas Market, selling their fabulous calendars and books, raising funds, and recruiting new volunteers for the station.



The attention to detail of Sherborne Station's Christmas display was amazing. Station adoption volunteer, Anne Dibble's, knitting needles were clicking away non-stop, producing some unique and fabulous Christmas decorations to brighten the ladies waiting room at the station. Anne even managed to embroider the little name collars on the hand-crafted reindeer.

Hedge End Christmas Event

The day featured children from the local Berrywood School attending a morning with Father Christmas while he read them a Christmas story in the waiting room. In the evening, Berrywood School Choir sang carols under the Christmas tree while the Salvation Army Band played music, and over 250 visitors tucked into their mulled wine and mince pies. As an added bonus, there was also a surprise visit from the Polar Express, or at least a steam train passing through on a raitour.



SWR Sustainability

Our Christmas Appeal

At SWR, we are passionate about supporting local charities and those in need. As part of our annual Christmas Appeal, over 1,200 shoeboxes and gifts were donated by colleagues, customers and local schools. These were donated to local charities for homeless, elderly, and vulnerable people including:

- Ace of Clubs in Clapham
- Baby Necessities in Romsey
- Three Rivers CRP for their Swaythling food bank
- Not Forgotten Group in Fratton
- Salvation Army
- The Way Point Church Fareham



Our colleagues also raised almost £500 from our Christmas Jumper Day and Pie for a Pound sales. This was donated to our specially chosen charity, Winston's Wish.

Our Journey to a Better Future

In December 2022, we launched our new sustainability strategy, which seeks to create a future that is better for our planet, our places, and our people.



You can read the full strategy at <https://www.southwesternrailway.com/other/about-us/our-plan/sustainability> or access our summary videos at <https://youtu.be/kHuAU1a3KSs>

Habitats everywhere

Each of our stations can provide a unique habitat for local plants, animals, and insects to thrive. As part of our mission to increase biodiversity, we have been working closely with the RSPB to design seven 'wild gardens'.

Our vegetation team have started to make some of these changes, and over the next couple of months, we will be busy adding bird boxes, wildflower seeds, native species, and hedgehog homes to make our stations even more welcoming for nature.

The stations are: Effingham Junction, Oxshott, Hinchley Wood, Sunningdale, Ashurst, Havant, and Brading (to complete 2023/24). Get in touch with the Sustainability team (sustainability@swrailway.com) to find out more.



Alton Local Food Initiative

Alton Station is home to the ALFI (Alton Local Food Initiative) plot. It has recently gained a new and improved access point, which allows it to be more accessible and safer than it was before. This can be seen in the photograph to the right.

Alton Local Food Initiative was formed in 2009 to encourage and enable people in the local community to be involved in growing, sourcing, and eating local, seasonal, and responsibly produced food. Alton Station is just one of their many plots.

You can find out more about ALFI here:

<https://altonlocalfood.org.uk/>

Community Live

On Monday 28th November, we held our last Community Live of the year. Community Live is a Teams meeting which happens bi-monthly and allows station adopters to hear updates from SWR and also from guest speakers. Invites are sent to station adopters.



The dates for upcoming Community Lives in 2023 are:

- 27th March @ 16:00
- 5th June @ 16:00
- September: Community Rail Conference
- 23rd October @ 16:00

Martin Long, Friends of Honiton Station, had some comments about Community Live:

"Thanks for another very useful Community Live online meeting. It continues to be a very valuable resource, with a good range of colleagues from SWR, Network Rail, Community Rail Network etc. attending. I only wish that more station adopters could be persuaded of its value and attend. They are missing a hugely valuable opportunity."



Totton Mural

At the end of October, a mural was installed at Totton Station, after the winning design was chosen.

It was designed by a local student, Ceara Taggart, and features local scenery.

Left to right Councillor Neville Penman, Councillor Amy Hardingson, artist Ceara Taggart, and Totton College Art Tutor Clayton Lovell.

Haslemere Bus Shelter

A vibrant gateway to Haslemere and its beautiful surrounding countryside has been completed with the renovation of a rundown bus shelter. The community has rallied around to transform the welcome for visitors stepping off the train and catching a bus at Haslemere. The new-look bus shelter, adorned with a colourful mural about the town and wider landscape, was unveiled in early October - a year after a large bus shelter across the road was also treated to a makeover.



The inspiring project has been a partnership between South Western Railway, Community Rail Network, South Downs National Park Authority, Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (ANOB), Stagecoach, and a team of dedicated local volunteers.

Dementia Friendly Try the Train

Try the Train events are run by SWR Community Ambassadors, and on 25th November 2022, Stacey Retter from Feniton Ticket Office had the pleasure of taking Dementia Friendly Honiton (Honiton Memory Cafe) on a Try the Train trip from Honiton to Axminster. When they arrived at Axminster, some of the group went for a wander, while the rest paid a visit to the Railway Kitchen Cafe at the station and enjoyed a cream tea.

They covered many topics including railcards, accessibility, ticketing, plus one of the ladies was telling them about how her husband used to be Station Master at Waterloo. They also put down ramps to help those with mobility issues, and to demonstrate how staff can help assist them onto the train. All those who attended thoroughly enjoyed their trip! Thanks too to Rebecca Catterall of the Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership who helped organise the trip and on the day.

You can find out more about Try the Train trips here:

<https://www.southwesternrailway.com/other/about-us/community-and-rail-station-adoption/try-the-train>



The group enjoying a cream tea at The Railway Kitchen, Axminster.

Our Community Rail Success

2022 was a great year for Community Rail at SWR. We've introduced two new Community Rail Partnerships: Wey Valley CRP and Chessington CRP, plus two new CRP Officers, see below. We've also welcomed many new station adopters, and at the time of writing have a grand total of 92 across our network.

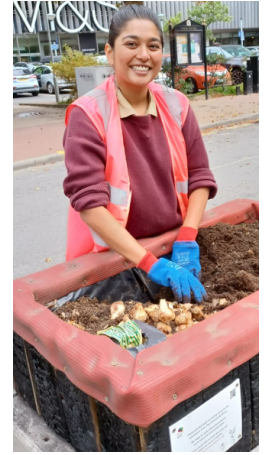


Steven Booth Purbeck CRP

"My background is mainly with tourism and have a passion for travel. I look forward to working and engaging with the community and many stakeholders associated with CRPs to make a difference to the experience of rail users."

Himali Patel Chessington CRP

"We adopted Tolworth Station about three years ago and have since attempted to turn Tolworth Station into a fun destination for the neighbourhood. I came into the CRP officer role through my work in and around Tolworth as a visual designer."



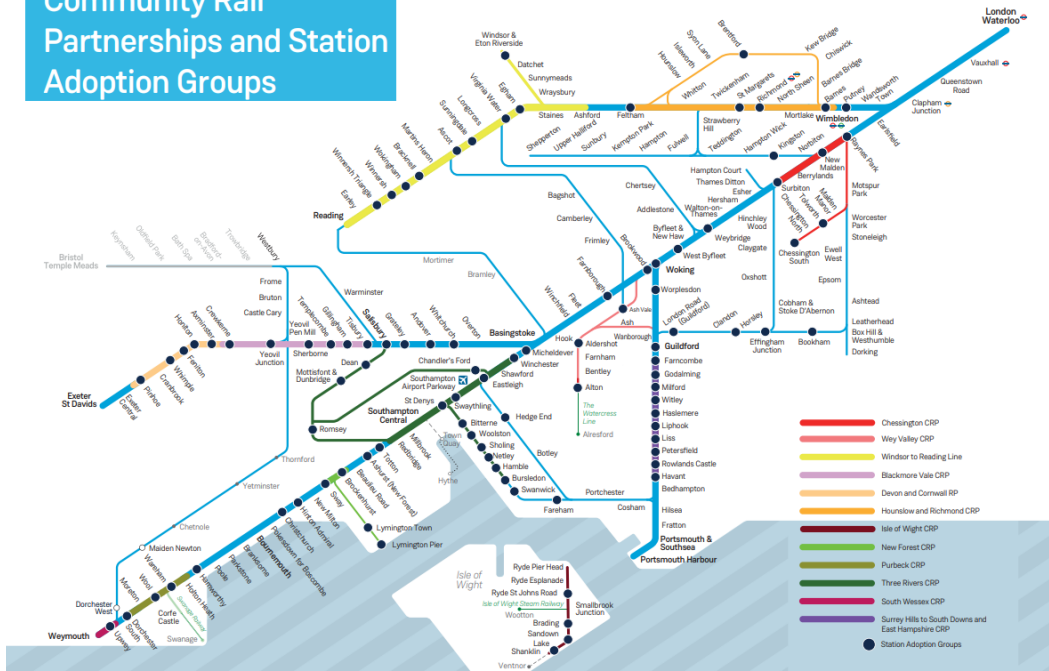
Plaques

Many station adoption plaques are appearing across the network, as seen here with Paula Aldridge, SWR, and Tony Smale, Wool Station Adopters posing by Wool's.



A new station adoption group at Weymouth Station.

Community Rail Partnerships and Station Adoption Groups



CRP and Station Adoption Groups Map, as of December 2022.



Kiki stood by her artwork at Fareham Station.