

Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership

E-NEWSLETTER

January 2010



A 'Three Rivers' service approaches Southampton Tunnel prior to engineering works



Welcome to the latest Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership e-newsletter, which is full of reports about our recent activities; what is happening at the stations along the 'figure of 6' route and information about some of the interesting projects that we have coming up.

Southampton Tunnel improvements

Major engineering work took place in Southampton Tunnel from December 2009 into January of this year.

As part of an upgrade of the railway line to accommodate larger freight containers, the tracks under the tunnel were renewed and lowered. Whilst the process caused some disruption to passengers, and included a closure of the line over Christmas, the long-term effects will benefit our region considerably. Congratulations to *South West Trains* and *Network Rail* for managing the process and closure so well and to the contractors who worked so hard - day and night - to finish the job on time.

A number of other structures in the area were either altered or removed to accommodate the new taller containers. The brick road-bridge carrying one half of St. Denys's Road over the railway north of **St. Denys** station was demolished and a new concrete box-structure bridge was built. Also, part of the canopy over Platform 2 at **St. Denys** station needed to be removed as it was too low for the containers to fit underneath.

Southampton Central footbridge repainted

After several months closure for refurbishment, the public footbridge (*right*) located at the Civic Centre end of **Southampton Central** station has re-opened and now looks much smarter in a coat of blue paint. Please remember there are cycle troughs on the bridge so cyclists do not have to bump their bicycles up and down the steps, which makes life a lot easier.



Above: Southampton Tunnel during the rail engineering works.



Our website

Train information, maps and useful links are featured on this website.

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The disused platform at Chandler's Ford station before clearance of vegetation

'Blooming' hard work gets results at Chandler's Ford!



Last Spring, Chandler's Ford Gardening Club - some of whom are past Chelsea Flower Show winners - supplied four planters (right) for **Chandler's Ford** station to brighten up the Waiting Room. They then organised a rota of care for the planters to ensure they continued to look wonderful throughout the year. These have been much appreciated by staff and passengers alike.



© Mark Miller

Left: Valerie Collins (far left), with other members of the Chandler's Ford Gardening Club.

Shortly afterwards, with permission from Network Rail, the Chandler's Ford Gardening Group Club joined forces with the Station Volunteers Group to begin clearing the redundant platform opposite the station building. Although not used by passengers since the late 1960s, the platform is visible to rail users and had become untidy and overgrown. Over the next year the platform will be cleared and replanted. The Gardening Club has kindly provided experts to advise the Adoption Group on which plants to keep, which plants to remove and how best to design suitable outdoor planter displays. Keep an eye on progress as you travel through the station.



Above, left to right: Mark Miller - Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership Officer, transport consultant Graham Ellis, Mike Franklin - Network Rail Community Rail Executive, and Sid and Dave of the Chandler's Ford Gardening Club begin work on the disused platform.

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Swaythling Station joins the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership Adoption Scheme

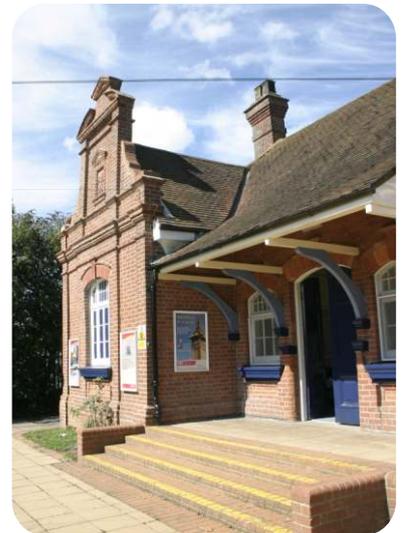
Swaythling Station adoption

At a signing ceremony on 14 October 2009 at the *Fleming Arms*, the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** formally adopted **Swaythling** station with *South West Trains*. A group of local volunteers will now keep a closer watch on the station, providing extra eyes and ears at quiet times and undertaking station surveys to check on its condition including signing, lighting, seating, paintwork and weed control. It is hoped in the near future to commence a weekend litter pick up rota.

This station adoption is the fifth that the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** has created to encourage local communities to become involved with their local station. There are so many dynamic and enthusiastic people in Swaythling who want to see improvements at the station and this is one way to help them achieve that. Special thanks must go to these volunteers and to *South West Trains*, *Southampton City Council* and *Swaythling Housing Society* for making it all happen.

A meeting was held immediately after the signing to discuss the continuation and expansion of the now very popular circular 'Nature Walks' from the station, the planting of spare railway land for community use, improvements to signing and the cleaning, decorating and utilisation of spare rooms in the station building. To assist in these objectives, the volunteers were delighted to receive some funding from *Southampton City Council* through the Neighbourhood Services Grant.

Above. Standing, from left to right: Mark Miller (Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership Officer), Samantha Barnes-Evans (The Image Team), Stephanie Stanley (Community Involvement Officer, Swaythling Housing Society), Bob Painton (Nature Walks Leader), Ellie Wong (Active Communities Team, Southampton City Council), Helen Littler (volunteer) and Simon Bell (Principal Transport Planner, Southampton City Council). Seated: Janet Ticehurst (volunteer) and Nicky Holland (South West Trains Duty Manager).



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A blaze of colour under the canopy at the front of Romsey station

'Blooming' marvellous Romsey!

For the second year running we have had hanging baskets under the entrance canopy of **Romsey** station, creating a beautiful welcome for passengers. This year's were even more magnificent than last. The platform tubs were also filled with blooms which lasted well into late Autumn

Many thanks once again to *First Great Western*, *ACoRP* (Association of Community Rail Partnerships) and the *Romsey & District Society* for their support and financial contributions to this project. Thanks also go to *Choice Plants*, Timsbury for supplying the plants again this year and to our volunteers who diligently kept the flowers watered.

Stunning flower displays were also provided at **Dean** and **Mottisfont & Dunbridge** stations where volunteers reliably and lovingly tended them throughout Summer.

Gordon and Cathie Wood at **Mottisfont & Dunbridge** have even replanted the tubs at the station with winter flowering displays to ensure there is all year colour there. Well Done!

Right: One of Romsey's beautiful hanging baskets brimming with geraniums, fuchsias and petunias.



Romsey-Mottisfont Free Bus 2009

After the success of the 2008 service, we were delighted to arrange the operation of the **Romsey - Mottisfont FREE BUS** again in 2009. The service links **Romsey** and **Mottisfont & Dunbridge** stations and was slightly amended, based on customer feedback, to call additionally at *Romsey Abbey*, *Choice Plants* at Timsbury and *Kimbridge Gift, Food and Deli* (formerly *Kimbridge Farm Shop*) in addition to the *Sir Harold Hillier Gardens* and *Mottisfont Abbey*.

Over 600 passenger trips were made (up from over 400 the previous year) which was tremendous. Word of this fantastic rail bus link is spreading far and wide. Thanks go to all the sponsor attractions along the route and to the *Association of Community Rail Partnerships* and *Test Valley Borough Council*, who helped fund the operation of the bus.

Look out for its return this Summer!

FREE BUS

Operates every Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday from 3 May to 27 September 2009

Explore the **Test Valley...**

- ✿ Romsey Abbey
- ✿ Romsey ⇄
- ✿ Sir Harold Hillier Gardens
- ✿ Choice Plants, Timsbury
- ✿ Kimbridge Gift, Food and Deli
- ✿ Mottisfont Abbey
- ✿ Mottisfont & Dunbridge ⇄



The Bus is free to everyone and runs in both directions.

01794 340757 OR **01794 369317/8**

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An atmosphere of festive cheer in the waiting room on Romsey station

Station welcomes late night shoppers to Romsey

Friday 11 December was Late Night Christmas Shopping in Romsey and, although it didn't snow, it was quite cold. Hundreds of people were drawn to the Christmas lights in the Town Centre which was full of traditional stalls, music and events, including the spectacle of Santa being 'rescued' from the roof of the HSBC bank by the local Fire Brigade, before taking his place in his grotto at Bradbeers Department Store.

The **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** volunteers at Romsey organised free mince pies and mulled wine in the waiting room at the station to welcome shoppers arriving by train. Volunteer Shirley Rogers (*above, wearing pink*) had the idea originally, and on the night between 6pm and 9pm, the volunteers did a stalwart job offering the travelling public warm hospitality. John Ormiston ushered passengers from the platform into the Waiting Room, which had been decorated with holly and ivy by Susan Hartley, for Gary Jones to administer the wine and mince pies. The evening went very well despite a power cut when emergency back-up lighting, including candles, were brought into action to add to the cosy and festive atmosphere.

Test Valley Borough Council very kindly provided a minibus and friendly driver Robin, free of charge, to shuttle rail passengers in and out of Romsey Town Centre. During the evening Romsey Mayor John Ray and his wife Rose used the bus to visit the volunteers at the station and to sample the seasonal fare.



Nature Walks at Swaythling

In 2009, we were delighted to help organise three more weekends of nature walks - in the Spring, Summer, and Autumn. As in the previous year, each free, two-hour walk was hosted by one of our **Swaythling** station volunteers - Bob Painton. Bob is very knowledgeable about the wildlife of the locality and introduced even more local people (*left*) to the flora and fauna along Monks Brook stream and its adjacent meadows.

A new feature for the 2009 season was the addition of some local history information along the circular walk from the station, including a visit to the beautiful 12th century St. Mary's Church.

Left: Local Swaythling children learning about the wildlife in their area on the Spring Nature Walk.

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Passengers and volunteers mingle at the official opening of the Romsey Station Café

Romsey station café opens

A chilly Monday 14 December 2009 saw the official opening date of the Station Café on Platform 2 at **Romsey** station. Mark Miller, Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership Officer, opened the café with a short speech and ribbon-cutting ceremony. The café is the culmination of 18 months of planning and hard work to turn a disused building into a useful facility. Now, approximately half a million rail passengers a year who use the station can purchase hot and cold drinks and tasty snacks whilst they await their trains.

Sally Lamb and Sandra Rispin, who have run the popular refreshment kiosk in Romsey's Memorial Gardens for the last eight years, were delighted to have been approached by the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** to run this café. "We are so excited to be opening to the public today", enthused Sally.

Sally's son Jason and Sandra's daughter Georgie will be the friendly faces at the window, serving refreshments Monday to Thursday 7am-3pm, Friday 7am-6pm, and Saturdays 8am-3pm.

Special thanks to Peter Jobson - Station Manager, *First Great Western*, David Harrison - Estates Manager, *First Great Western*, Mike Franklin - *Network Rail* Community Rail Executive, the Architects and Planners, and local Council, without whose support and expertise the venture could not have been possible.



Above left top: The disused building 18 months ago.

Above left bottom: The menu.

Above right: Mark Miller opens the Station Café run by

Sandra Rispin and Sally Lamb.

Right: Mark and Sally raise

another toast to the new café



Another Romsey station room 'revived'.

As part of ongoing aspirations to bring more empty rooms back into use at **Romsey** station, *Catch 22*, a community payback work programme, has provided several young people to clean, tidy and repaint a room on Platform 1. The work is part of a community rehabilitation scheme programme for young offenders and lets them put their energy into constructive projects from which they hopefully will gain a sense of purpose, self esteem and great satisfaction. This room has been allocated by *First Great Western Trains* as a **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** volunteers' room, from where they can help look after the station. The room will also provide the venue for future station adoption volunteers meetings, bringing more activity to the station overall.

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Shiny and new - the overbridge at Southampton Airport (Parkway) station shortly after completion

New footbridge now open to passengers at Southampton Airport (Parkway)

The much-needed new footbridge at **Southampton Airport (Parkway)** station opened for passenger use at the end of October and there was an official opening ceremony held on the bridge on 2 December 2009.

Anyone who has used the station will be familiar with the narrow, open concrete footbridge which linked the two platforms. This did not cater well for cyclists, people with disabilities or those with heavy luggage. Given the volume of passengers using the station between the booking office and the airport terminal, the new covered footbridge will make access easier for everyone. The bridge also forms a useful crossing of the railway for Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 23 linking Eastleigh and Southampton.

The fully enclosed bridge features lifts up to the walkway deck from both platforms and is largely glass-sided making it feel spacious and light.

Access across to the airport terminal is also improved and a new ramped path leads to the pedestrian

Above right:

The steps of the new covered overbridge at Southampton Airport (Parkway) seen from Platform 2.



Above: Transport Minister Chris Mole MP and Andy Pitt - MD of South West Trains, officially open the overbridge.

Southampton Airport Travel Options guide

A new edition of the *Southampton Airport Travel Options* leaflet has been produced. The October 2009 guide (*left*) now comes in booklet format.

BAA Southampton Airport is a stakeholder of the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** and this handy guide provides plenty of information about getting to and from the airport by public transport, including via our **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** services. By providing these travel options in one publication, airport passengers and staff can ascertain which public transport options are available to them.

From October 2009

Southampton Airport TRAVEL OPTIONS

- Transport information
- Cruise Terminal information
- Popular tourist destinations

Includes transport operator contact details

The local airport you can breeze through
www.southamptonairport.com

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The FREE BUS picks up two more passengers at Marwell Wildlife during the summer

Marwell Free Bus success

Following the success of the **Romsey-Mottisfont FREE BUS** service, the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** began to work with *Marwell Wildlife* to see if a similar rail-bus link could be introduced. Working closely with *One Community*, an independent charity providing voluntary transport services in Eastleigh, such a service was introduced in the Summer of 2009.

The free service ran every Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday from 7 June until 27 September 2009 linking **Eastleigh** rail station and town centre to *Marwell Wildlife* east of Winchester. *One Community* provided fully accessible minibuses for the service and several wheelchair users took advantage of this helpful feature. The bus was branded with the *Marwell Wildlife* logo. A bright and colourful timetable leaflet was also produced to promote the service and *Marwell Wildlife* advertised the link on their website. The **Marwell FREE BUS** also featured on the hampshireattractions.co.uk website.

Nearly 700 journeys were made in the period of operation, which was extremely encouraging. *Marwell Wildlife* and a grant from the *Association of Community Rail Partnerships* covered the costs of the service.

Without this free link many visitors would either have had to pay a costly taxi fare from Eastleigh Station or travelled by car, which would not have helped meet carbon footprint targets, whilst others would have been unable to visit at all.



Above: Marwell FREE BUS at Eastleigh Station



Left: The leaflets and poster promoting the Bus Link showed a cheetah cub - just one of the many wonderful creatures to be seen at Marwell Wildlife.



Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership e-newsletter



'Three Rivers' passengers at St. Denys station

Passenger surveys - St. Denys and Redbridge

Passenger surveys are a very useful way of obtaining feedback about the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** train services and the stations they serve. Periodically, we undertake these surveys at stations along our route and recently it has been the turn of **Redbridge** and **St. Denys** passengers to tell us their views.

Redbridge station is somewhat hidden away from public view in an area which suffers sporadic acts of vandalism. Whilst undertaking the survey, we found most passengers were very satisfied with the train service with some walking to and from Totton specifically to use it. Working with *Hyde Housing* and *South West Trains*, we are now trying to see whether one or two of the empty station rooms could be converted to a youth centre, shop or community drop-in centre to bring some life to the station and deter anti-social behaviour in the area.

The feedback from such surveys is most enlightening and brings up many interesting points. Our passenger survey at **St. Denys** station was conducted on a bright but chilly 13 October. Over 100 passengers boarding the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** service were interviewed about this service and the station in general. **St. Denys** is another of our busy urban stations; close to large numbers of houses and not too far from Southampton University. We noted that a considerable number of passengers used the station to interchange between our services and those on the Southampton to Portsmouth line, for which **St. Denys** is the junction station. Good connections meant this was more convenient for them than travelling to and from **Southampton Central**.

Again, general satisfaction levels were high and we have gained some great ideas for improvements which we will be progressing with *South West Trains* and *Southampton City Council*.



Station Travel Plans

The **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** has been successful in gaining national pilot status for an innovative Station Travel Plan study. Initiated by the *Association of Train Operating Companies*, we submitted **Romsey, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh** and **St. Denys** to be included in the national project to develop Station Travel Plans and all four stations were accepted.

Work has been undertaken over the past few months with local authorities to audit how passengers arrive at each station and to develop action plans to improve cycling, walking and bus access. The aim is to reduce the proportion of passengers arriving at these stations solely by car and to develop more sustainable access plans and facilities. We will report progress we make with these action plans in future newsletters.

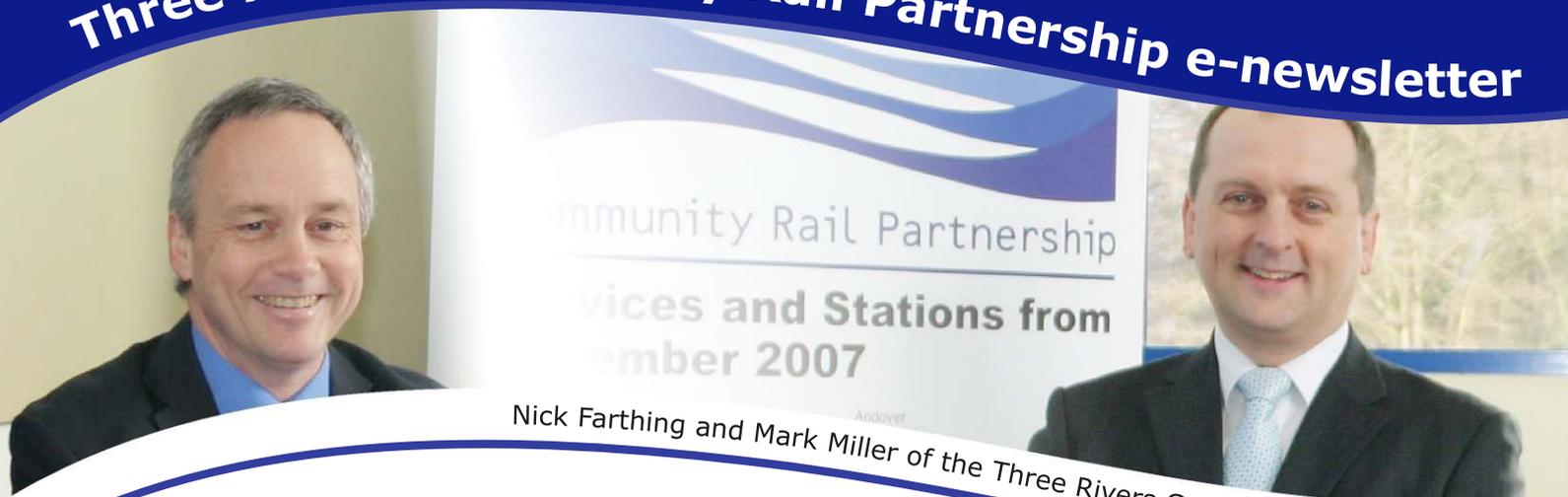
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Nick Farthing and Mark Miller of the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership

Art and Poetry in Motion

Users of the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** website will see additional information placed under a new heading of 'Rail Art'. This includes music specifically composed by the *Itchen Navigation Heritage Trail Project* to reflect the rhythm of the Itchen Navigation and rail services. In fact, the piece of music lasts exactly the same time that rail services take to travel between Winchester and **Swaythling***!

In addition, train-related poems by local and national poets have been placed on the website, which we hope will provide a different and enjoyable perspective on rail travel. If you should feel inspired to write a poem about any aspect of the '**Three Rivers**' route we would be delighted to hear from you.

*You can join the **Itchen Navigation Walk** at **Swaythling** or **Eastleigh** station. For more information visit www.hwt.org.uk/pages/itchen-navigation.html



Stakeholder Meeting

The third annual Stakeholder Meeting of the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** was held at Hampshire County Council, Council Chamber on 24 September 2009 and was well attended by a large and diverse group of interested representatives.

Following a presentation on current activities, the meeting split into workshops to develop ideas on future projects. Ideas included: more walks from stations, better signing, greater involvement with Police Community Support Officers, new bus links from stations, more train travel incentives and a great deal more. We will be sorting through these ideas, many of which will be implemented over the coming year. We would like to thank everyone who came to support the Partnership with such enthusiasm and creativity and thank all our partners and volunteers for their continued support and diligence in making the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** such a vibrant and practical organisation. Here's to a great 2010!

Contact us...

The **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** exists to promote the use of the rail service on the **Salisbury-Southampton-Romsey** route. Involvement from local businesses and individuals is most welcome to help us in our aims.

If you have any ideas or comments on the items covered in this e-newsletter, or on how we can fulfil our role, or if you wish to volunteer some of your time to help with other projects, please contact **Mark Miller**: markmiller10@tiscali.co.uk or **Nick Farthing**: nick.farthing@dial.pipex.com

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