

Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership

E-NEWSLETTER

May 2009



Mayor Cllr Brian Parnell addresses the crowd at Swaythling station's birthday party!



Welcome to the latest Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership e-newsletter, which is full of reports about our recent activities, and information about some of the interesting projects that we have coming up.

Swaythling Station's 125th birthday

It is not every day that a birthday party is held for a railway station, but with balloons, dozens of guests, and a birthday cake in the shape of a train, that is exactly what took place at **Swaythling** station on 19 October last year. The idea to have a party was suggested by Marvin Shotter (*main photo, fourth from left*), until recently the friendly face in the ticket office. The Sunday nearest to the actual date of the station's opening in 1883 was selected to be the best for a party.

The Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership organised all sorts of events for the big day, and the weather was very kind after a chilly start. There was something for everyone, with a display of photographs of the station down through the years, an artwork exhibition themed on railways from Mansbridge Primary School, balloon-modelling, cycle-coding by officers from nearby Portswood police station, and a visit from the Mayor of Southampton.

An excellent display of wildlife photography was provided by local photographer Bob Painton, who surprised and delighted visitors with some amazing shots of the range of plants, birds and other animals to be seen along the nearby *Monks Brook* river.

Passengers using the hourly Sunday train service were surprised to see all this activity at the normally peaceful and charming little station, as were bus passengers on the frequent *uni-link* buses passing the front of the station. Members of Swaythling Scout Group, who had performed a litter-pick prior to the start of the fun, then helped to run the event with great enthusiasm, offering visitors refreshments, along with handing out leaflets. Everyone agreed that as 125th birthday parties go, this was a very good one!



Above: Swaythling station

See next page for more birthday photographs!

Our website

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

Why not explore www.threeriversrail.com and see what you can find out?

Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership e-newsletter

Swaythling Station's 125th birthday cont.



Left: One of Portswood's Community Support Officers cycle-coding a bicycle for a local resident. Centre: The Birthday cake. Right: Local photographer Bob Painton shows the Mayoress one of his local nature images.



Left: The Mayor and Mayoress judge the Swaythling Station Art Competition entries from the children of Mansbridge Primary School. Centre: Local children meet the Balloon Man. Right: Swaythling Scouts meet the Mayor, Cllr. Brian Parnell.

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Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership e-newsletter



Everyone enjoying Chandler's Ford station's 5th birthday party.

Chandler's Ford Station's 5th birthday

Chandler's Ford station celebrated its fifth birthday since re-opening in 2003. The opportunity to mark this milestone on 19 October and link it with the party at **Swaythling** was too good to miss, and so a smaller event was held in the foyer of this smart and busy station. An equally impressive artwork exhibition by Hiltingbury Infants School was on display, and the regular helpers from the station's Adoption Scheme were busy chatting to passengers and handing out leaflets and refreshments. The two events were of course linked by the hourly train service, so many from **Swaythling** took advantage of this travel option to pop up and see the activities at **Chandler's Ford** and vice versa.



Left: Artwork by the children of Hiltingbury Infants School. Centre: Guests on their way to Chandler's Ford station's birthday celebrations. Right: Chandler's Ford station.

Chandler's Ford platform tidy

Agreement has now been reached with Network Rail for volunteers from the Station Adoption Group to tidy up, litter-pick and re-plant the unused platform at **Chandler's Ford** station. Although not used by passengers, the platform is visible to all rail users, and given the smart and clean appearance of the station building itself, smartening this platform will add to the attractiveness of the whole station. Several lovely planters have recently been installed in the Booking Hall, expertly planted by Chandler's Ford Garden Group.

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Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership e-newsletter



FREE BUS



The fully-accessible minibus lets you explore the Test Valley

2009 FREE BUS



Following the success of last year's FREE BUS service which linked **Romsey** station, the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, Mottisfont Abbey and **Mottisfont & Dunbridge** station, we are delighted to be operating it again in 2009. There are some minor changes to the timetable and route, with **Romsey Abbey** www.romseyabbey.org.uk, **Choice Plants** at Timsbury www.choice-plants.com and **Kimbridge Gift, Food and Deli** www.kimbridgeonthetest.com being added to the route this season.

Left: Volunteer driver Michael from Sir Harold Hillier Gardens.

The FREE BUS operates every Sunday and Bank Holiday from 3 May to 27 September. It is driven by volunteer drivers and a fully-accessible minibus has again been provided by our friends at Test Valley Community Services. It is jointly funded by: **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership**, **Sir Harold Hillier Gardens**, **Hampshire County Council**, **Test Valley Borough Council**, **Kimbridge Gift, Food and Deli** and **Mottisfont Abbey**.

Full details of the FREE BUS are available on our website.



Above: A happy couple of FREE BUS passengers alight the easy-access bus.

Romsey Station update

Much is happening at **Romsey** station at present. This location is one of three stations on our route (*Mottisfont & Dunbridge, and Dean are the other two*) which are under the control of First Great Western Trains. Litter-picking and rubbish removal has taken place on the embankment alongside the approach road, which is the former Station Master's garden from many years ago. This was originally performed by 'Hope In Romsey' - an active member of the Station Volunteer Group.

We have been very pleased to receive some wonderful artwork which has been produced by pupils of The Romsey School. The large murals were created as part of GCSE coursework. Once the necessary listed buildings consent has been obtained, we hope to be able to mount this artwork, which will make a bright and colourful backdrop for passengers using and passing through the station.

Further improvements for **Romsey** are also due in the coming year. As part of a successful 'Access For All' grant application, a long-awaited accessible ramp to the Southampton-bound platform will be provided. Other work will be improvements to station parking and the provision of a bus turning circle at the front of the station.

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Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership e-newsletter

ACoRP



The presentation of the ACoRP Award

ACoRP awards

The Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership, along with our two sister organisations, **I.O.W. Community Rail Partnership** www.isleofwightcrp.co.uk and the **Lymington-Brockenhurst Community Rail Partnership** www.lymington-brockenhurstcrp.co.uk, were delighted to be named as joint winners at the annual Community Rail Awards, which were held in Plymouth last autumn. The event was organised by the Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP) www.acorp.uk.com which promotes over 60 Community Rail Partnerships across the country.

The award was presented to the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** and **South West Trains** in recognition of the company's commitment to delivering the Department for Transport's Community Rail Strategy.



New FREE BUS 'sprints' to Marwell...

The success of the Romsey area FREE BUS service, has led to discussions between Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership and Marwell Wildlife, Colden Common www.marwell.org.uk with a view to providing something similar for rail passengers wishing to visit this world-renowned centre. A FREE BUS link is to be introduced from **Eastleigh** station which connects with the 'Three Rivers' service.

A fully-accessible minibus will carry passengers from **Eastleigh** station to Marwell on Sundays and Bank Holidays from 7 June to 27 September. See the timetable on our website.

Stakeholders Meeting

Our annual Stakeholders Meeting was held on 24 September 2008 at the Eastleigh Borough Council offices. This event was very well attended, and featured presentations reviewing the achievements of the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership over the previous twelve months, along with project updates and news from other Community Rail Partnerships around the region. In a question and answer session, a number of interesting points were raised, all of which were noted for action. All present agreed that a great deal had been done in a very short space of time, and that 2009 was shaping up to be very exciting.

The date of the next Stakeholders Meeting will be 24 September 2009. Details to be advised.

The Three Rivers Community Rail Partners are: • BAA Southampton Airport • Eastleigh Borough Council • First Great Western • Hampshire County Council • Network Rail • Salisbury & Stonehenge Tourism Partnership • Southampton City Council • South West Trains • Test Valley Borough Council and • University of Southampton

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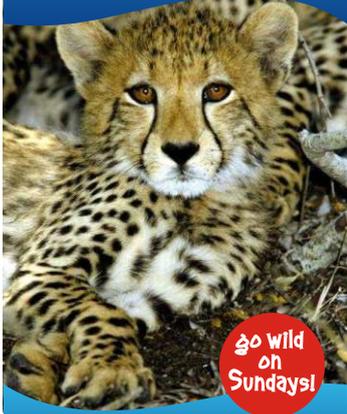
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7 June to 27 September 2009

FREE BUS

on Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays

Eastleigh - Marwell Wildlife

go wild
on
Sundays!





Three Rivers



Community Rail Partnership

Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership e-newsletter



Don't board your train without a copy of the Line Guide

Line Guide

As mentioned in the previous edition of the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership e-newsletter, we are working on the production of several leaflets to inform and generate interest amongst regular passengers or occasional visitors to the route. The first of these is the **Line Guide** - a general route guide, which provides historical information about the line and stations, and features detailed notes of what you may see out of the train window from your seat on the train. The **Line Guide** also has contact details for some of the attractions along the route, plus information about walks and other activities on offer. It is available from stations along the route, and is stocked at certain libraries, tourist information centres, and pubs close to the line. The production of the **Line Guide** has kindly been funded by Three Rivers Community Rail Partners **BAA Southampton Airport** and **University of Southampton**.

There is a downloadable PDF of the Line Guide on our website.

We hope to produce further guides in the future, covering the wildlife and nature to be seen along the line, and with ideas for eating out within easy reach from local stations.

Southampton Central update

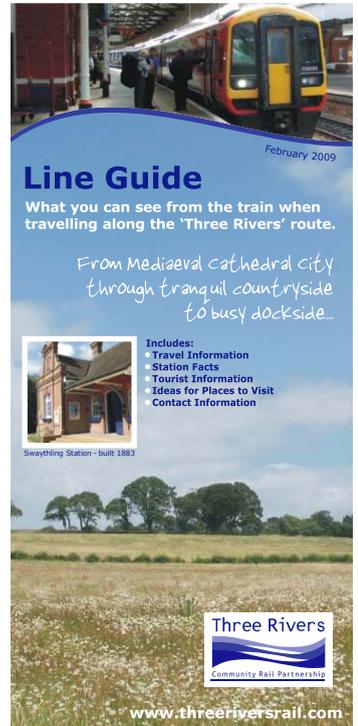
Although not directly the result of Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership action, we are delighted to report that South West Trains are providing a brand new enclosed waiting area on platforms 2 and 3 at **Southampton Central**. These two platforms are used by the Three Rivers services most of the time. The work is part of a general investment and improvement project at the station and should greatly improve comfort of passenger journeys.

'At your self service'...

Passengers will now find self-service train ticket machines at most of the stations along the 'Three Rivers' route. These machines have been installed by South West Trains and First Great Western to provide passengers with a ticket purchasing option outside of the normal booking office times.

Some of you will also have seen new metal poles with small screens mounted on the top, which are appearing at most South West Trains stations. When operational, this equipment will be used for passengers that have electronic smartcards, to touch-in or touch-out when making train journeys, rather like passengers do on the London Underground.

Right: The self-service train ticket machine on Platform 2 at St. Denys station.



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Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership e-newsletter



A train on the 'Three Rivers' route passes through lush countryside near Dean station.

Mottisfont & Dunbridge and Dean station adoptions



The **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** has formally adopted **Dean** station with First Great Western Trains. At a short signing ceremony at the Mill Arms in Dunbridge, a group of local volunteers gained approval to keep a closer eye on **Dean** station.

The group will also undertake litter-picks and station surveys to check on the condition of walkways, signage, lighting, seating, paintwork, foliage and so on, reporting any damage and ideas for improvement to the Station Manager.

Special thanks must go to the local volunteers, West Dean Parish Council and First Great Western Trains for coming together in such a positive fashion.

Dean station is the third to join the Adoption Scheme, only a week after **Mottisfont & Dunbridge** station.

Standing, from left to right: Mark Miller, Sam Barnes Evans, Andy Simmonds, Cathy Wood, Gordon Wood, Nick Farthing and Gordon Wood. Seated: Peter Jobson - First Great Western Station Manager and Joanne Wilkinson from West Dean Parish Council.

Service changes 14-12-08

Following feedback from passengers and ourselves, South West Trains scheduled extra trains to call at **Dean** and **Mottisfont & Dunbridge** stations. The previous two-hourly service during the middle of the day has been improved, with trains now calling at these stations every hour. The two-hourly service remains on Sundays.

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Romsey Station joins the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership Station Adoption Scheme

Romsey Station adoption

The **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** has formally adopted **Romsey** station with First Great Western Trains. At a short signing ceremony, officiated over by Disney the cat, a group of local volunteers gained approval to keep a closer eye on Romsey Station. The group has agreed to start regular litter-picks at the station on a rota each Sunday to keep all public areas tidy when the booking office is closed. They will also provide extra eyes and ears at the station at quiet times. The volunteers will also undertake station surveys to check on its condition including signing, lighting, seating, paintwork, weed control and so on, reporting any damage and ideas for improvement to the Station Manager.

This station adoption is the 4th that the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** has agreed to encourage local communities to look after their stations more, so that they return to be a cherished and active part of the area. There are so many dynamic and enthusiastic people in Romsey who want to see improvements at the station, and this is one way to help achieve them. Special thanks must go to these volunteers and First Great Western Trains for making it all happen.

Other ideas planned at **Romsey** include a further clearing of the old station master's garden, the provision of hanging baskets and tubs of flowers, and the use of spare railway land to grow fruit and vegetables.

Efforts are also being made to use of some of the spare rooms in the station building. It is hoped that a small café will be opened in summer 2009, which should prove very popular, and the **Romsey** station volunteers will be making use of another room.

All in all, this fine old station is starting to see new life breathed into it.

Above. Standing, from left to right: Gary Jones, Mark Cooper, Simon Scott, John Franklin, Disney the cat, Carolyn Nixon, John Stormiston, Susan Hartley, Mark Miller. Seated: Peter Jobson - First Great Western Station Manager and Shirley Rogers.

Right: Disney the cat keeping an eye on proceedings...



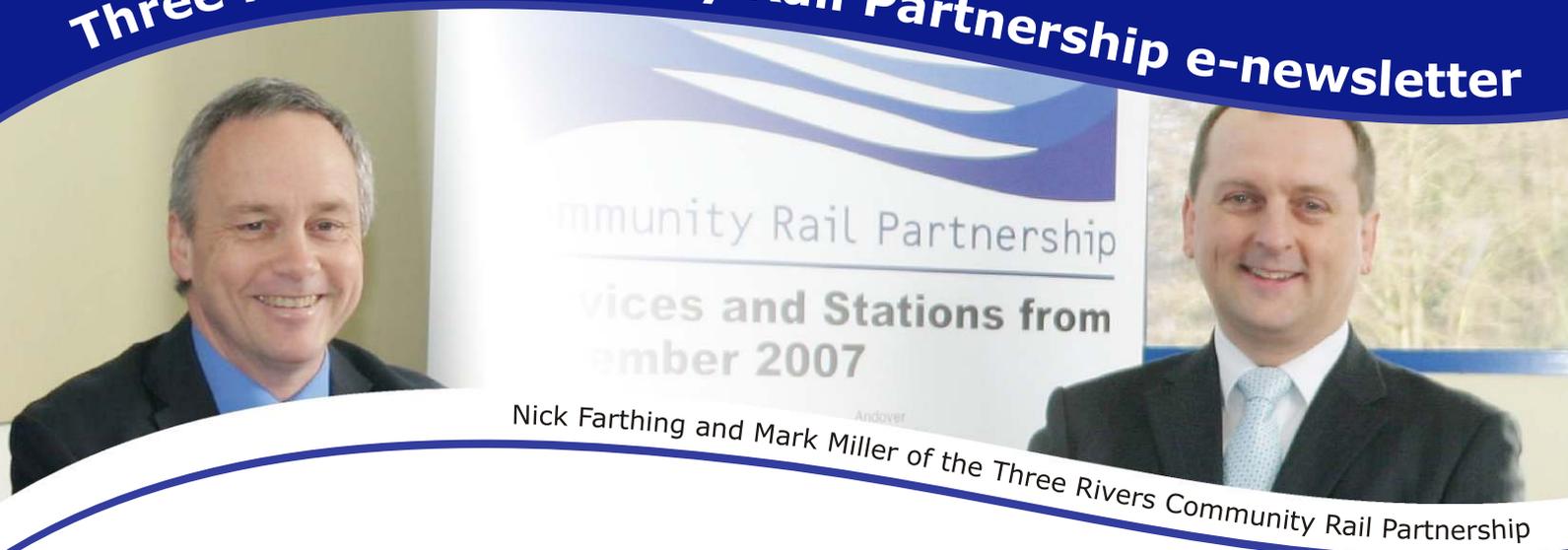
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Nick Farthing and Mark Miller of the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership

Dean and Redbridge station surveys

We have undertaken Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership passenger surveys at both **Dean** and **Redbridge** stations, which proved very interesting, with useful feedback and comments. The information gathered, along with suggestions made, will be passed to the operational managers involved. In general, passengers were very pleased with the reliability and frequency of the services, and the clean and pleasant condition of the refurbished trains on the route. Partly as a result of the findings of the passenger survey, we are examining several ideas for making **Redbridge** station more 'user friendly' for passengers and the local community. There is potential for some relatively inexpensive enhancements, and many of the residents who live nearby are keen to help us. We will keep you in touch with progress at **Redbridge** over the coming months.

Spring Walks 2009

In April, wildlife photographer Bob Painton conducted some free, guided nature walks that started from **Swaything** station. The route that took around two hours to walk included St. Mary's Church at South Stoneham, The Grange, Monks Brook Greenway and Monks Brook Meadow (Village Green). Monks Brook Greenway is of particular significance for conservationists for both its flora and fauna, and those who joined the walk from the station were treated to the site of rare plants such as 'Summer Snowflake' and 'Purple Toothwort' and rare reptiles such as slow worms and lizards! Bob explained to adults and children alike the importance of respect for our local plants and creatures. The walk was a great success.

You can download a map of the route of the Spring Walk from our website. Our 'Line Guide' gives train passengers more ideas for walks to make from stations along the 'Three Rivers' route.

Right: Bob leads the way on the Spring Walk.



Southampton Airport (Parkway) Station update

Steelwork is in place for **Southampton Airport (Parkway)**'s new accessible footbridge at the north end of the station. The bridge, with lifts and ramps as well as steps, will provide a welcome improvement for passengers using the station with bicycles, buggies, luggage or wheelchairs.

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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