

Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership

ANNUAL REVIEW

2020

Three Rivers

Community Rail Partnership

Welcome to the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership 2020 Review, which - despite the Coronavirus epidemic - is full of reports about our activities, what has happened at the stations along our routes and information about some forthcoming interesting projects.

"None of us could have foreseen what 2020 had in store for us. It was a difficult year for everyone in many different ways. The Coronavirus lockdown in March saw most of our volunteers staying at home. Passenger numbers were severely affected and rail operators and staff valiantly kept essential services running with enhanced cleaning processes and safety precautions. We have not been able to meet in person, hold our usual public Open Days, market the rail network, take our stalls to events or run our usual rail-bus services. However, like everyone else we have tried to make the most of a challenging situation when we were allowed to. Thank you to all involved in our partnership, for doing your best, in the safest possible way, during this pandemic. We now look forward to when we can all be together again: to help reopen and regenerate our rail services and stations."

Nick Farthing (Chair) and Mark Miller (Rail Officer)



Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership Rail Officer Mark Miller, Chair Nick Farthing, Volunteer Chris Tope, CrossCountry Stakeholder Liaison Manager David Jones and Volunteer Sam Barnes-Evans gathered to officially open the new shed at Woolston's Signal Box Community Garden on 12 February.

Partnership gets new community shed at Woolston

On a perishingly cold day in January, **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** volunteers Nancy, Chris and Lucy Tope turned out to help local firm Elford Sheds construct a new shed for us at **Woolston** station garden. Funded through the generosity of CrossCountry Trains Community Engagement Fund and Southampton City Council's Community Chest Fund - the shed is now a fine place fit for gardening tools and gardeners.

On the occasions that we have made visits to check on the security of the garden, the new shed has given much appreciated cover from scorching sun and lashing rain. There are some more exciting structural projects planned for Woolston that will hopefully come to fruition next year. See Pages 26 and 27.



© Three Rivers CRP Volunteer- Lucy Tope

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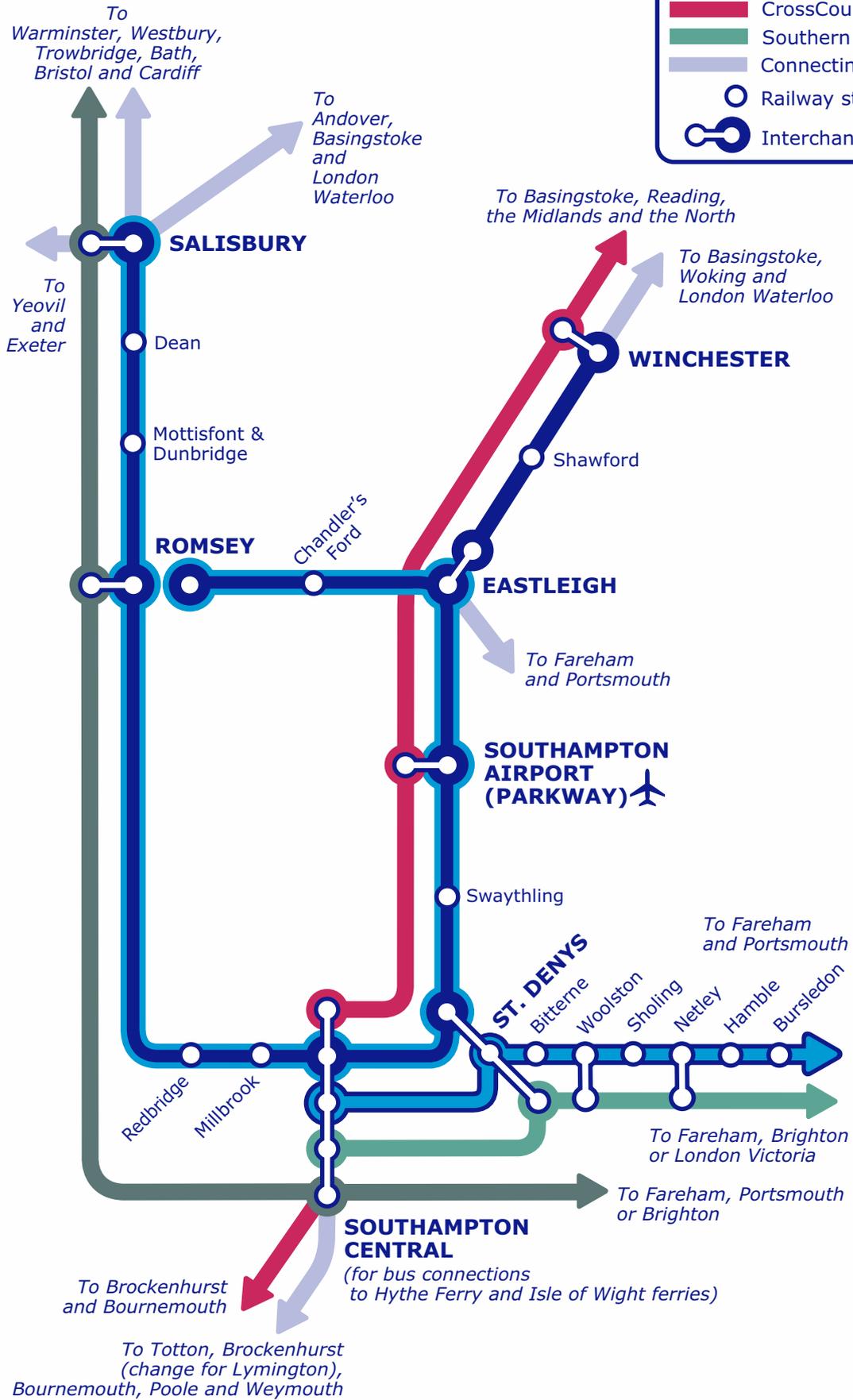
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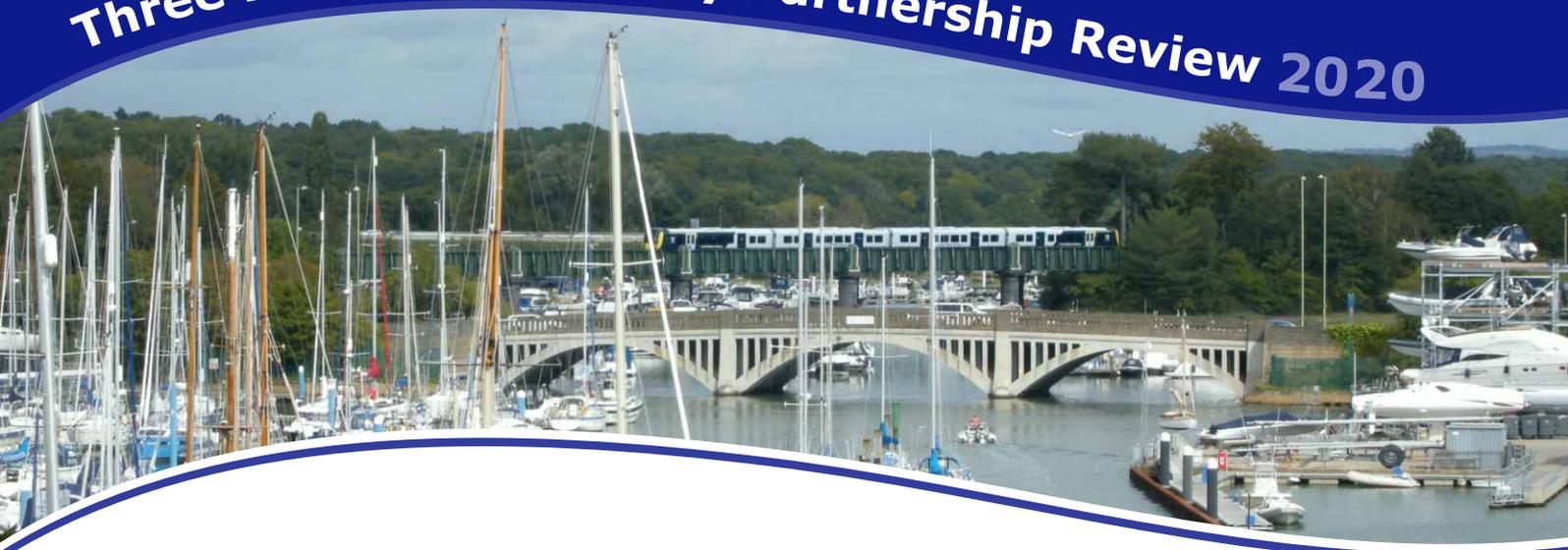


Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership stations and services

	South Western Railway Salisbury to Romsey service
	South Western Railway Southampton to Portsmouth service
	South Western Railway services between Eastleigh and Winchester
	Great Western Railway services
	CrossCountry services
	Southern services
	Connecting rail services
	Railway stations
	Interchange stations



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Bursledon goes wild

As most volunteers stayed at home, many of our station planters went back to nature. In some cases, such as at **Bursledon**, this produced some wonderful natural displays.



A train calls at Bursledon station, prior to crossing the railway bridge over the picturesque Hamble river (Top).



In August, wild and self-seeded flowers from last year had taken over the wooden planters on the station. The orange of the California poppy, pink and purple of Common Mallow and white of Alyssum (inset) presented a colourful show for those local people passing on their daily walk for exercise and provided sustenance for passing insects.

Bursledon's car park gets a make-over!

For some time **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** volunteers have been asking Eastleigh Borough Council for improvements to their car park at **Bursledon** station.

In April our pleas were answered when the Council relaid the surface, which had been pitted with immense potholes filled with rainwater. This will make parking at the station much easier and more comfortable for rail passengers!

Thanks to all involved.



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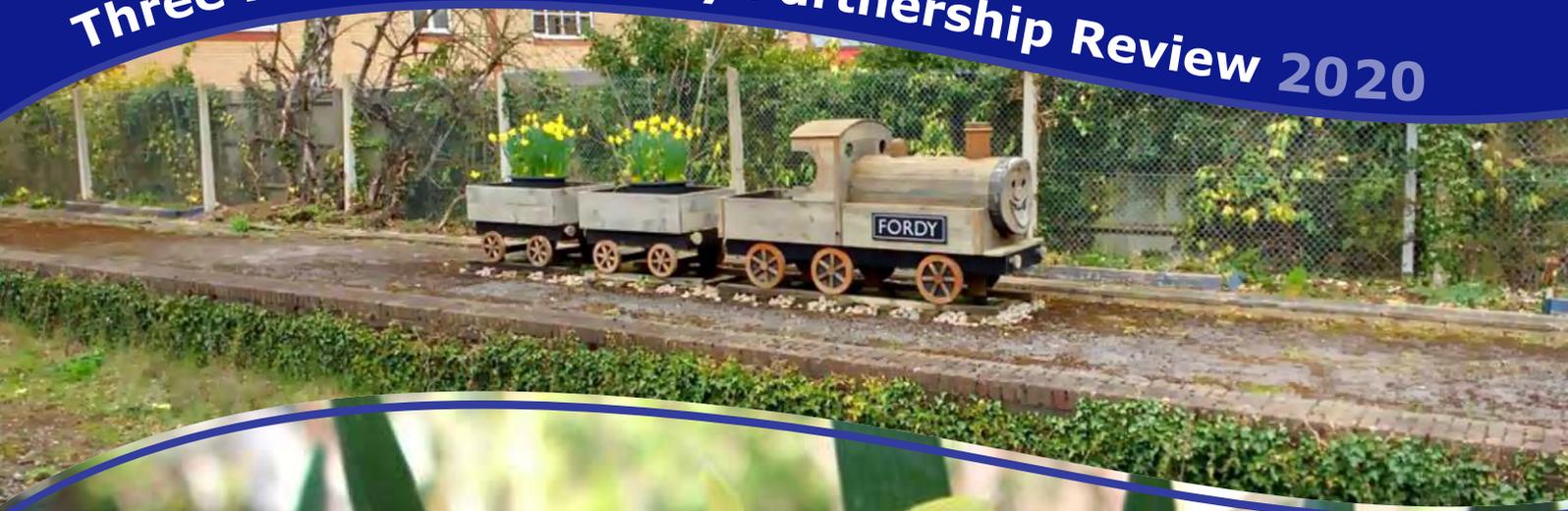
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Springtime comes to Chandler's Ford

When using the public footbridge over the railway line at **Chandler's Ford**, locals have a great view over the station. To enhance this view, a **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** volunteer placed buckets of bright daffodils in the 'Fordy' steam train planter situated on the disused platform, thus bringing a smile to all on their permitted daily walks for exercise.

A nice touch and very thoughtful. Thank you!

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Dean, Mottisfont & Dunbridge and Romsey are now South Western Railway stations

From 1 April 2020 **Dean, Mottisfont & Dunbridge** and **Romsey** stations transferred from Great Western Railway to South Western Railway. Consequently, new SWR branded information and signage was installed at all three stations.

Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership would like to sincerely thank all those at GWR who have worked with us over the past 13 years to significantly improve these stations. There have been consistent increases in patronage over this period and the train service has improved dramatically as well.

Between us and through our dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers we have made a huge difference in the appearance, infrastructure and facilities of these stations. The station transfer to SWR is welcomed as GWR have not stopped their trains at Dean and Mottisfont & Dunbridge for some time.

We look forward to our continued partnership working with GWR as they develop their train service through the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** area.

All our usual activities will continue at Dean and Mottisfont & Dunbridge and Romsey as we have a great deal of support available from SWR to help promote and develop the stations and volunteers further. It's business as usual!

West Dean Village History Trail

The poster cases on Platform 1 at **Dean** station and opposite by the Village Hall record some fascinating history about the area. As part of the West Dean Village History Trail they cover the history of the station, the old signal box and the railway sidings. Researched by Christine Warry - the sheets are well illustrated with some wonderful old photographs. They are well worth a read.

Mentioned in the history of Dean's railway sidings is Silcocks goods shed; once used to store all manner of supplies to be loaded and unloaded from trains calling at the station, including milk churns, livestock, parcels, coal, timber, newspapers and even moss for Covent Garden Flower Market! If you walk along Platform 1 you will see some of the old infrastructure amidst the undergrowth.



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Mottisfont & Dunbridge is in good hands

Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership Volunteers Liam O'Connell and Caroline Smith have been keeping an eye on the station all year, and in June they braved a heatwave to plant up **Mottisfont & Dunbridge** station tubs with drought-tolerant Lavender, Cotton Lavender, Cosmos and Marigolds.



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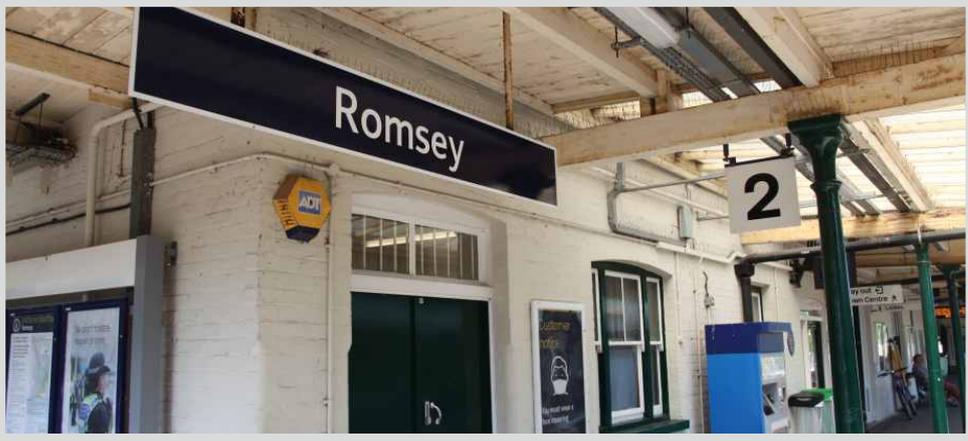
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Romsey is looking blooming lovely



In the absence of volunteers, station staff have done a great job in keeping the station looking good all year. Paul, a star in the Ticket Office, was a star on the platforms too. He planted up the flower tubs on the station with bright red and pink Geraniums and 'Bizzie Lizzies' and an Oxalis that looks like Four-Leaf Clovers to bring us all good luck! He watered and tended to the plants throughout the hot weather and even hid some small toys in the foliage for younger children to discover (see inset)!

Netley is repainted into SWR colours

This year, South Western Railway have invested £1.5 million refurbishing and upgrading 15 of their stations. Phase 1 included **Bitterne**, **Bursledon**, **Hamble** and **Netley**. It is hoped that Phase 2 will include **Romsey**.

Part of the refurbishment at Netley was a re-paint of the station building into SWR colours. Features such as window surrounds and corner quoins have been picked out in mid grey, and the once fading red front entrance doors are now a smart looking glossy dark blue.



© Our Hampshire

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New customer car park at Romsey

Over many years **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** volunteers have worked to keep **Romsey** station lower car park clear under a Network Rail Community Licence. It was often overgrown, poorly lit and unattractive. We have regularly litter-picked, cleared the area of mud, leaves and debris and cut back vegetation to improve the area and increase the numbers of people able to access Romsey station more easily.

Our hard work and lobbying for improvement paid off; Great Western Railway, with joint funding from Test Valley Borough Council, upgraded the area to form a new car park and access path and to generally improve the site for rail users. The whole area has had new borders, tarmac clearly marked out with car parking spaces, pedestrian walkways and safety bollards installed to improve facilities for station users.

Thanks to all involved in progressing this long-awaited improvement. From Three Rivers CRP volunteers clearing the old area, to this, is a remarkable transformation. It is amazing what we have been able to achieve over the years at Romsey.



© Three Rivers CRP Volunteer Neil Kearns

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Wreaths laid at the Poppy Memorial, Romsey Station Approach

Romsey residents Kelly Coomber and Bob Ormiston laid wreaths at our Poppy Memorial at Station Approach on behalf of Romsey Royal British Legion Club and the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** Station Volunteers respectively. This took place during a short, socially distanced private ceremony over the Remembrance weekend in November.

After the wreath-laying, Revd. Sally Womersley, Associate Priest at Romsey Abbey, led prayers to remember the fallen in two world wars and other conflicts.

A small display of ceramic poppies complemented the wreaths. As in previous years, the poppies were made in the studio at Choice Plants Garden Centre

The **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** installed the war memorial in 2016. It was carved from Welsh Slate by local resident Caroline Dear who was present at the ceremony. The Memorial is now a major landmark and feature of Romsey Town.



*Bob Ormiston lays a wreath on behalf of all the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** Romsey station volunteers at the Remembrance Ceremony in November together with Shirley Rogers, our lead-volunteer at **Romsey**, paying her respects.*



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Eastleigh planters spruced up ...and still bringing cheer

Right at the beginning of March before lockdown, cubs from the local Bishopstoke 12th Eastleigh Scouts Group helped to spruce up the four planters at the front of **Eastleigh** station before conducting a station-wide litter-pick and a washing of the station's windows. Fantastic work was done by all and the effects are really appreciated.

The station forecourt planters - that can be seen clearly by passing pedestrians and road-users - are usually stocked and maintained diligently by the cubs, throughout the year. In their absence we are pleased to report that South Western Railway station staff have stepped in. The Station Supervisor, ticket office staff and Trespass & Welfare Officers have continued to care for and water the plants and have even added a few of their own. Without their help, the displays would have withered away - so HUGE THANKS goes to them!



Towards the end of the year, **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** volunteers gave the planters an overhaul. Still working within guidelines, they removed the Geraniums, Petunias and 'Bizzie Lizzies' that would have perished due to winter frosts and added new plants to the silver foliage and perennial Lavenders already there.

The planters would now look cheery for station users and passers-by over the winter months.

Skimmia japonica 'Rubella', Senecio, Helleborus niger 'Christmas Carol' and Cyclamen were just some of the flowers planted to brighten up the four planters at Eastleigh station.



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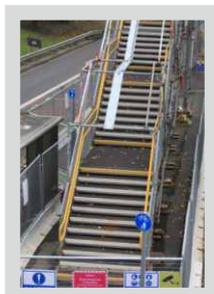
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What's going on at Millbrook Mum?



Dockside ramp due for permanent removal.



Temporary steps.



Information sign.



Above: Millbrook lad Harry had come with his mum to see what was happening at his local station. There were no trains, but lots of interesting engineering work nearby. We gave Harry a Three Rivers CRP Station Walks book and he went home happy as he loves anything to do with trains!



Roadside ramp demolished.



Nearby track work in progress.

Millbrook station is an island platform, reached via a footbridge over the tracks. This footbridge which is made of concrete, dates from the 1930s and needed replacing. The main public access route to Millbrook station is from Foundry Lane over the busy A33 dual carriageway via an adjoining high-level metal footbridge - also in need of improvement. So in November, a temporary scaffold replacement access bridge to the station was craned in and erected by Network Rail.

In December, demolition began in sections and over the Christmas closure period the remaining parts of the concrete structure were demolished and preparations for the planned new bridge made. Once all phases of the work have been completed, the station will have a new footbridge with provision for lifts at a future date. By making these improvements, it is hoped in the long-term to encourage more people to use the station, especially as it is so well placed to encourage more sustainable integrated transport; being adjacent to Route 1 of the Southampton Cycle Network (SCN1) and close to local bus routes.

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Restoring your Railway - Three Rivers CRP is looking forward to 'reversing Beeching'

Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership has been working hard in leading a number of organisations over recent months with the aim of restoring a passenger train service to the Fawley branch line in Hampshire. This work included attending meetings, giving presentations to councils from County level down to Parish level, providing information to various business groups and talking with public transport providers and economic development organisations. Our Chair, Nick Farthing, further liaised with local MPs to encourage Hampshire County Council to submit the case to the Department for Transport as part of the national 'Restoring your Railway' governmental programme.

The 'Waterside Railway' as it is being promoted, runs from its junction on the main London-Weymouth line at Totton for around ten miles to the entrance to the Exxon Mobil Fawley oil refinery. The single-track line is still regularly used by freight trains serving the Solent Gateway port facility at Marchwood, but the remaining section which served the oil refinery has been out of use since the last oil train ran in 2016.

The restoration of a passenger service along the line is being championed by Three Rivers CRP and so we were all delighted that Nick Farthing was invited to travel on a special train on 28 July, named 'The Fawley Explorer', organised by Network Rail and operated by South Western Railway. Adhering to Government guidelines, on board the train was a small group of passengers all involved with the proposed re-opening. This included Network Rail Chair Sir Peter Hendy, Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Hughes, the Interim Managing Director of South Western Railway Mark Hopwood and Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, together with representatives of Hampshire County Council and Southampton City Council.



On the platform at Marchwood, Journalist Paul Clifton interviewed Chair Nick Farthing for BBC South Today.

Local BBC TV transport correspondent Paul Clifton reported on this momentous occasion, resulting in local TV and national trade press coverage.

Hampshire County Council has recently been awarded a £50,000 grant from the Department for Transport's 'Restoring your Railway' funds to undertake a business case review for the re-opening by examining the overall cost and the economic impact this would have in the area. A separate public consultation on these proposals will take place in Spring 2021.

Restoring passenger trains will involve refurbishment of Marchwood station together with two new stations along the line and upgrading the track and signalling amongst other tasks. This nationwide project aims to re-open sections of railway, some of which were closed during the Dr. Beeching cuts of the 1960s, where now there is potentially an economic case to do so. Three Rivers CRP was delighted that the Waterside Railway was in the initial group of ten schemes submitted for consideration for funding to research the viability of making the routes part of the national rail network once more. The CRP has played a key role in pressing for the line to be promoted in the selection process and we will

continue our efforts to see it reopened to passenger use.

The existing line has a major practical advantage to re-opening in that the track is still in place. This reduces the cost of restoring the service and also the timescale for achieving the aim. Benefits to the local community are many. By providing a new travel option in the area the line is a way to reduce traffic on the busy A326 road which is the only main road to and from Fawley. It will complement the existing public transport options for Marchwood, Dibden, Hythe and also the new Fawley Waterside housing project which will see around 1300 new homes built on the site of the former Fawley power station.

The special train allowed all those on board to see for themselves that the line is in reasonable condition. Marchwood's original station building still exists and is used as a signalling centre for the line. The train called at Marchwood with those on board being the first passengers to alight at Marchwood station in more than 50 years.

The Waterside Railway is high on the list of achievable schemes and this train proved it is not far from becoming a reality. Mark Hopwood is keen that the line could be a catalyst to the wider area, and he has said publicly that trains on the line could be eco-friendly and not diesel powered. The route may be electrified, or it may simply use electric/battery hybrid units.

Three Rivers CRP hopes to organise a special day at a future point when both invited guests and members of the public could ride trains along the line. Watch this space!



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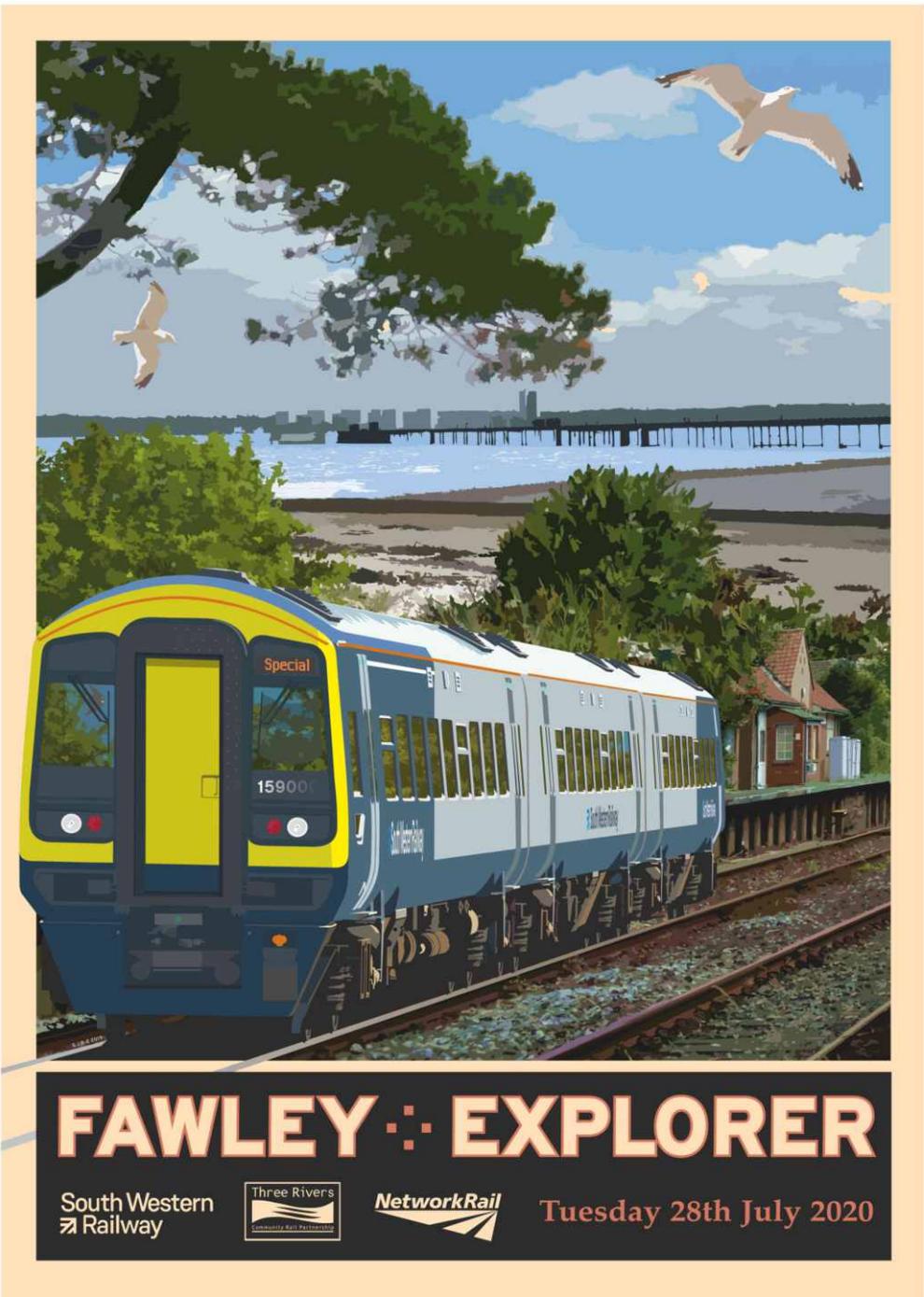
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Original artwork by The Image Team - imageteam@btinternet.com on behalf of Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership - www.threeriversrail.com

The poster that was designed on behalf of Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership by The Image Team has been reproduced by South Western Railway and displayed at many of the Company's stations.

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Partnership promotes rail travel at 'Excursions 2020' Exhibition

At the beginning of the year **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** and other CRPs attended the 'Excursions 2020 Exhibition' at Alexandra Palace, London to promote rail travel to the South of England amongst tour operators. We were delighted to receive such positive feedback about visiting Hampshire by rail in the future, so attending the event was well worth the effort!

Well done to what was then ACoRP (Association of Community Rail Partnerships) for organising the exhibition under the 'Scenic Rail Britain' brand.

ACoRP becomes CRN

The Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP) has been re-branded and is now the Community Rail Network (CRN) with a new logo and a new web address - communityrail.org.uk. We are pleased to see additional resources and support for community rail partnerships provided. We are delighted that Dan Wright (*featured on the left in the above photo, and right in the below photo*) remains our fantastically supportive Community Rail Support Officer at the organisation.



Swaythling Station Leaseholder Ceremony photo short-listed for award



A number of Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) and station adopters given funding and support by South Western Railway (SWR) this year were short-listed as part of the coveted national **Community Rail Awards**.

The awards celebrate the important and often unsung work carried out by Community Rail Volunteers, Partnerships, Station Friends and Community Groups, in bringing local people together, running community engagement and rail accessibility initiatives, as well as helping communities get the most from their local railway lines and stations.

The **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** photo - "OK, we've got the lease, now what do we do with it?" was short-listed in the Photo Competition category. It didn't win, but we certainly knew what we wanted to do with the lease! See Pages 20 to 22.

For the article about Swaythling station that the above photograph illustrates - see the Annual Review 2019 on our website.

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Long-awaited structural improvements begin at St. Denys



St. Denys station booking office, public waiting room and toilet have suffered from rain ingress for many years, resulting in the closure of all facilities early in 2020. After years of **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** requesting repair work, Network Rail allocated funds to completely replace the old roof and canopies over platforms 2/3 and platform 4. The work began in October 2020 and is being done in several major sessions during Engineering Works when trains are not running. The roof areas have been scaffolded and temporary lighting installed allowing the station to remain open for passengers. All the old and heavy reinforced roof glass and timber canopy structures have been dismantled and new steel supports installed over the island platform. The project is scheduled to finish in April 2021, when both platform canopies will be fitted with lighter roofing materials, allowing the booking office to re-open. At a later stage, as a follow up to this great work, Three Rivers CRP hope to lease some of the spare room space at St. Denys for community use.



Over the year St. Denys station adopters Sam and Nigel Barnes-Evans have litter-picked the station and its car parks, planted bulbs, trimmed the Lavender and swept the leaves. In November, Southampton City Council undertook major tree and shrub clearance along Thomas Lewis Way including under the disabled access ramp and the footbridge to the station. Consequently, station safety has been dramatically improved.

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St. Denys is buzzing

The Lavenders in the planters on Platform 4 at **St. Deny's** are evergreen in the Winter and in the Summer when the sun is shining they are covered in bees. **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** volunteers trim the Lavender every year after flowering and they grow back even stronger.

Because the now well-established bushes shade their own roots, these resilient plants withstood the Summer heat and lack of water during lockdown.

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Summertime station users replaced by many other creatures at sunny Sholing!

Sholing station seems to have a microclimate of its own. The garden on its south-facing bank, that was knowledgeably planted up by volunteers Nancy and Lucy Tope several years ago now, enjoys a sheltered aspect. The access path leading down to the station is only used by rail passengers and occasionally by local people who bring their children to watch the trains.

During the travel restrictions over the Summer, the station was very quiet as far as human visitors were concerned, but it absolutely teemed with wildlife!

Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership volunteers visited the station during June and found a local cat transfixed by grasshoppers and crickets jumping up and down all over the place! Bees covered the fragrant white flowers of a Privet and Blue Rock Bindweed had run riot and was being enjoyed by the insects. The volunteers cut back brambles from the platform, did some weeding and swept the paths, but otherwise left nature to itself.



Above: A Silver Y Moth, Chinese Plumbago, Grasshopper on Blue Rock Bindweed, male False Oil Beetle on Blue Rock Bindweed, female Jumping Spider on dried Honesty, Acanthus, and Honey Bee on Asters (inset). **Below:** Common Mallow and Senecio.



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We Love Sholing...

When travel restrictions were eased in September, **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** volunteers spent a morning litter-picking, sweeping and tidying the station. We pruned shrubs, cut back overgrowth and did lots of weeding and after posting this on social media, we were amazed to get 276 'likes' on the I LOVE SHOLING Facebook page! The comments quoted on the right are for all the Sholing volunteers.

Spurred on by the kind words from the local community about the Partnership's efforts, we went back in October and planted mixed daffodil bulbs on the Platform 2 bank ready for the Spring.

Then, a small planting scheme was designed for a prominent area near the ticket machine on Platform 2. As we were planting at the station, the children of a local family using the train told us that they were 'looking forward to seeing the pretty flowers'.

• Looks splendid. Well done all.

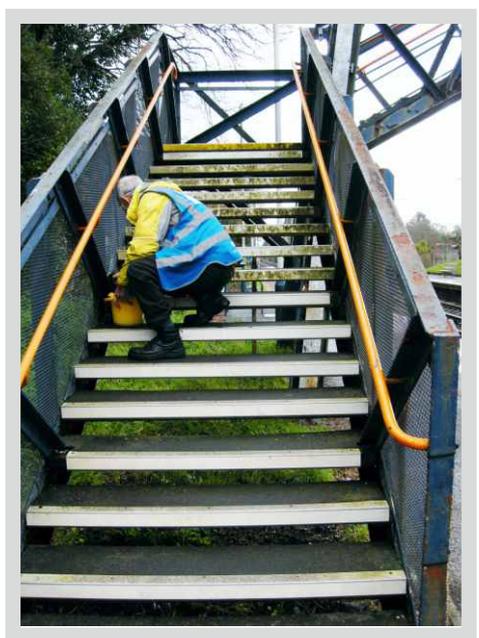
• Noticed the difference myself over the years I am really impressed love what you are doing.

• Always enjoy the station's border planting. Thank you.

• Absolutely beautiful to see when waiting for the train u are amazing.

• It was lovely to see it all tidy and spruced up. Thank you, I really appreciate the time you spent so that we can enjoy x

I LOVE SHOLING Facebook page



Rosemary, Lavender, Euphorbia, Hibiscus, Silver Bush and Heathers were planted near the ticket machine along with Daffodil and Allium bulbs for early and late spring colour. The border was then mulched with bark chippings. The area behind the shelter on Platform 2 was litter-picked and cleared. Bridge step risers on the footbridge between platforms were cleaned of mildew to make them more visible, so safer for station users.

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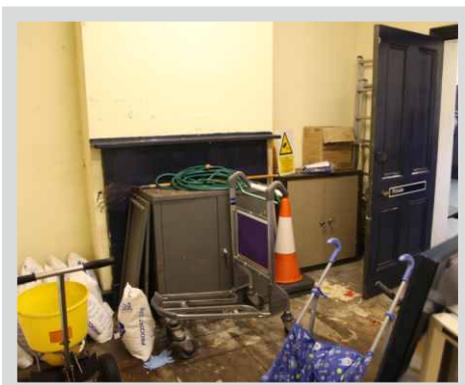
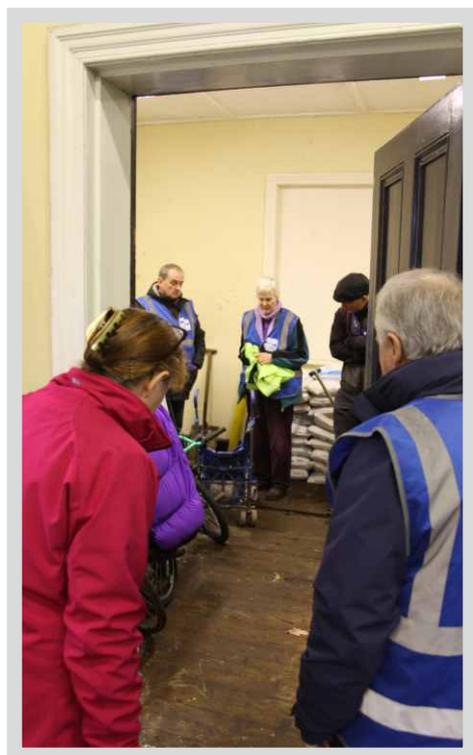
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WORK
IN
PROGRESS

Refurbishment of Swaythling Community Rooms



Above: At the end of last year, Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership Chair Nick Farthing, CRN Community Rail Officer Dan Wright and South Western Railway Community Rail Manager Andy Harrowell discussed the condition of the disused rooms at Swaythling station.

The damp, dirty and dim rooms would have to be cleared for the builders and decorators to come in and start work.

...So a group of volunteers got together and got clearing.

Thanks to SWR, **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** (through its umbrella organisation Hampshire Community Rail Partnership) has been able to lease two rooms and a toilet on a peppercorn rent to use for community events.

This year, work began on transforming our leased rooms at **Swaythling** station, ready for use by local community groups. Initially we had thought that we would only need to replace a limited number of joists and floorboards, but the extent of woodworm damage made the lifting of the entire floor and joists necessary. So the floor was repaired, floorboards put down and a tough carpet laid. Electrical sockets, updated lighting and some heating was also installed. The room has been decorated and a washbasin has also been installed in the toilet area.

Our next major goal is to reinstate the main window at the front of the historic building, so that natural light will flood into the larger of our two rooms. We are also planning to provide furniture and a refreshment area for meetings in that room.

We look forward to working with local Community Groups to bring both the rooms fully into use. As well as provision of space for meetings, other ideas put forward so far have been: a school uniform swap service, ad hoc jumble sales, repair shops, an information centre and a Free Shop. The latter has come to fruition, as you will read next!

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'Free Shop' experiment at Swaythling Station Community Rooms now a regular event and expanding!

Following our colleagues at East Hampshire Community Rail Partnership's successful initiative at Petersfield Station, we decided to instigate a 'Free Shop' food waste reduction scheme at **Swaythling** station.

On Friday 4 September 2020, **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** volunteers at **Swaythling** station started the new project distributing - free of charge - spare produce from supermarkets and private donations in association with the national Fareshare charity.

COVID meant that we could only serve one person at a time, filling their one reusable bag with great produce. People had to queue at the front of the station, while wearing a face mask and ensuring social distancing. We provided hand sanitiser for all visitors with those in attendance providing their name and address for Track and Trace.

We were delighted that on the first day 20 people came to pick up the selection of bread, fruit and vegetables, with everything being handed out!

Once we worked out the patterns of supplies from the supermarkets, we decided to hold regular Free Shops at the station and advertised via social media including on a local 'Swaythling Matters' community page.

The number of people coming to the Free Shop has been steadily growing, and on the third Saturday in December we had our largest number yet - 51!



We have expanded the Free Shop to encompass a 'Swaythling Baby Store'. Baby products, spare food, clothes and toys are available free of charge to those parents who really need them for their children.



Above: 'Swaythling Baby Store' in action at Swaythling station with 'Southampton Community Connect' volunteer Richard Callen.

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free shop

Every Saturday*

Swaythling Station 

10.30-12.00

Avoiding food going to waste.

Everyone welcome...

As long as you:

- Wear a mask and socially distance.
- Use the hand sanitiser provided.
- Provide your name and address for Track and Trace.
- Bring one re-useable bag only.

Donations of spare food will also be gratefully accepted.

For further information visit [facebook.com/threeriversrail](https://www.facebook.com/threeriversrail)



South Western
Railway

**Unless the station is shut due to circumstances beyond our control.*

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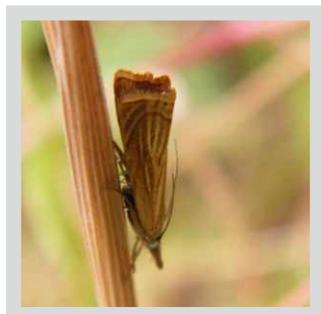
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Nature Walks were cancelled, but nature thrived at Swaythling

Because of COVID, this year's Spring, Summer and Autumn Nature Walks from **Swaythling** station had to be cancelled. But the wildlife in the station gardens was thriving. In the main station forecourt border, the previous planning and hard work of volunteers Bob Painton, Angela Cotton and Sue Smith was really paying off; the summer planting scheme of Iris, white Peony, Sisyrrinchium, Lamb's Ears (inset) and roses was enchanting.



Above: In a year when we were all learning to look more closely at nature, Nettle Weevils were found hiding in a rose in the station forecourt border.

Above: A Grass Moth, 7-Spot Ladybird, Meadow Brown Butterfly, Lady's Bedstraw, female False Oil Beetles and Ox-Eye Daisies were just some of the plants and insects in the varied ecosystem of Swaythling station's Wild Flower and Wildlife Garden in the month of June.

We hope that the nature walks from Swaythling Station will resume at some time in 2021. Watch our Facebook page for updates.

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Well done to our **Swaythling** station volunteers who have been awarded a certificate by the Royal Horticultural Society and South & South East England in Bloom for their gardening efforts at the station. The garden was described by the judges as "thriving". This accolade is very well deserved. Congratulations to Bob, Angela and Sue.



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THREE RIVERS COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP

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Friends Partnership Teamwork Fun Greening Social Cohesion Connection Giving
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Fresh Air Growth Sustainability Worthwhile Information
Rail-Bus Volunteer Friends Connection Partnership Information
Teamwork Greening Wellbeing Friends Giving Pride Help
Connections Worthwhile Social Cohesion Fun Teamwork Excercise Achievement
Fulfilling Positive Pathways Cycling Improvements Constructive Environment Fun

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493 Facebook 'Likes'



Another busy year in Woolston's Signal Box Community Garden

March

Two days before the country's first Coronavirus 'lockdown', we tidied and secured the garden (and our new shed). Nobody returned to the garden before May.



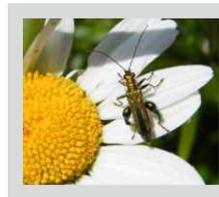
The day after a severe freak storm in May we visited the garden to check on it, only to find that the high winds had blown down one of our wooden gates! We secured the site with a temporary metal mesh barrier that actually works very well and allows the public to see into the garden.



It had always been our plan to replace the wooden gates with railing gates. So, the original Victorian station garden railings have been salvaged for restoration and extra new railings will be made in a similar style. We aim to have this project completed in 2021.



Looking around the garden we were excited to find the birch log nesting box, that Chris had put up early last year, being used by Bluetits again!



In May there were Sloe Bugs, Honey Bees, False Oil Beetles and Ladybirds in the garden and out in the Platform border - Purple Toadflax, white Campion, red Valerian and blue Cranesbill and Iris were giving a magnificent display of colour.

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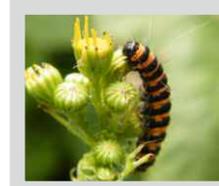
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While weeding and watering, volunteers were surprised by the sound of a small but very loud 'helicopter' whirling around and around in dizzying fast circles. When it finally alighted - it revealed itself to be a beautiful iridescent green Rose Chafer, a first sighting of one in the garden we think.



In July the garden was a riot of Ox-Eye Daisies and Common Mallow, with the roses and Hollyhocks in full bloom. The apple trees were laden with fruit and the insects were busy; there were Skippers, Cinnabar Moth caterpillars, Bumble Bees, Honeybees and Grasshoppers everywhere. Even a rare Lesser Stag Beetle was seen wandering on the log pile!



September

We trimmed the Lavender and the Box hedges and planted bulbs for the Spring.

November

Even in the more dull rainy days of November, Marigolds and Nasturtiums were still flowering!



In August the Large White Butterfly and its caterpillars fed in the garden, while we rigged-up a makeshift gutter and new water butt to catch much-needed rain off the Signal Box roof.



We put the garden to bed.

As well as the improvements to the garden perimeter, there are some very exciting plans in the pipeline regarding the restoration of the Signal Box in 2021. It's early days, but watch our Facebook page for updates.

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Looking back...

Once again, a huge **THANK YOU** to all our hard-working volunteers, all our community helpers and all our sponsors

Keep safe in 2021

Find out more about the work of Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership by reading the pages of our past Annual Reviews - available to download from our website.



Bursledon Station.

Want to get involved?

The **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** exists to promote the use of the rail service in your area. 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 further fulfil our role, or if you wish to volunteer some of your time to help with other projects, please contact

Mark Miller: info@threeriversrail.com or **Nick Farthing:** nickfarthing57@btinternet.com

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