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USEFUL INFORMATION FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS
THE PURBECK MINERAL AND MINING MUSEUM GROUP



The Purbeck Mineral & Mining Museum Group was set up in September 2002 as an affiliated group of the Swanage Railway Trust.

A BRIEF HISTORY: Norden has long been associated with the mineral industry, with recorded evidence stretching back to Roman times. Indeed, the Swanage Railway's Norden Park & Ride site was, until recent years, a clay processing area, and underground clay mining continued in the area until as late as 1999. Those who have known the area for a while may well remember the little trains of clay that crossed the main Corfe road on their journey from the mines and quarries to the interchange with the Swanage Railway. Purbeck has been renowned for 'ball' clay for many centuries and it has been used diversely, from the finest Wedgwood pottery to modern electrical insulators. Large scale extraction started in the 1700's and Norden had one of the first railways in the country, used to transport the clay across the heath to waiting ships. In 1854 this horse-worked plateway was joined by another at Goathorn. In the 1870's the horses at Goathorn were replaced by a steam engine. This railway was extended to Norden in 1907 to replace the Middlebere plateway. Another large clay operation at Furzebrook resulted in yet another narrow gauge railway. Firstly gravity-worked to Ridge, this was expanded to link up the many pits and mines beyond Furzebrook and Creech, with a complete fleet of steam locomotives. This, too, interchanged with the Swanage Railway, resulting in much freight traffic. Today the old quarrying companies, their quarries and mines, are just memories, although the clay industry continues at Furzebrook under the ownership of Imerys Minerals Ltd. The mineral story continues at Norden, however, with the Wytch Farm oil operation near the Park & Ride.

OUR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES ARE TO:

- Create a working museum at Norden Station dedicated to the extraction of minerals within Northern Purbeck, focusing especially on the ball clay and oil industries.
- Provide visitors to the Swanage Railway with an experience of the local clay mining industry, and the role that railways played in its development.
- Preserve buildings related to the clay industry at Norden.
- Operate a working clay mining building, complete with simulated mine, underground railway, winched incline and wagon haulage.
- Re-lay and operate part of the former narrow gauge railway system to demonstrate clay haulage.
- Create a local educational and social history resource.
- Operate a passenger narrow gauge railway to transport visitors around the site.
- Create a trailway to show the methods of clay extraction used in the Norden area, and to explain the value of old workings for wildlife today.
- Provide a base for the many items related to the Purbeck clay industry that are preserved elsewhere.
- Provide a permanent living record of Purbeck Clay Mining and of those people who worked in the industry.



PROGRESS SO FAR INCLUDES:

- Construction of a museum adjacent to Norden Station, with Planning permission obtained.
- Dismantling of the Norden No.7 mine stage and re-erection as a central museum building.
- Preservation of mine equipment, ex Norden Hudson wagons, compressors and tools.
- Purchase of a Ruston & Hornsby 48DL locomotive, and a large quantity of track.
- Loan of Furzebrook Tramway locomotive *Secundus*, now on display at Corfe Castle Goods Shed Museum.
- Loan agreements secured for several narrow gauge locomotives and rolling stock, including Furzebrook Tramway sledge brake No.28. and the purchase several ex Purbeck waggons
- We have received support from the local miners through donations of equipment, documents, photographs, stories and art work.
- We have given talks/ tours to local groups to raise the awareness of the importance of the clay industry to the British economy.
- Constructed an Engine Shed to house both the Group's and visiting locomotives.



With the full support of the Swanage Railway Trust (SRT) behind the Group, donations of buildings from Imerys Minerals Ltd and significant funding from the EU via the Chalk & Cheese program, we have an ambitious plan to establish the full working museum. Join us as a working member on: building work, track laying, and restoration of equipment, project management, historic research, museum guides, archives, and administration. We have the need for volunteers of any age or sex and look forward to meeting you.

The Swanage Railway operates a documented Youth Protection Policy to safeguard children.

The policy of the Swanage Railway Trust is that all Volunteers should be Members. For further information please contact:

Email: administrator@pmmmg.org Website: www.pmmmg.org

Or contact the Volunteer Liaison Department as above.

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