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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. This horse-worked plateway was later replaced by a narrow gauge steam-worked railway to Goathorn, and in turn this was later rebuilt to serve the Norden area. Just down the road, and centred on what is now known as the Blue Pool, was another large clay operation which resulted in yet another narrow gauge railway. Firstly gravity-worked to Ridge, this was expanded to link up the many pits and mines around 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 BP 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 the remaining buildings related to the clay industry at Norden by relocation to the Norden site.
- 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.



PROGRESS SO FAR INCLUDES:

- Construction of a museum adjacent to Norden Station, with Planning permission obtained.
- Dismantling of the Norden No.7 mine stage for re-erection as a central museum building.
- Preparation of several other relevant buildings for removal to the museum site.
- Preservation of mine equipment, ex Norden Hudson wagons, compressors and tools.
- Purchase of Ruston & Hornsby 48DL locomotive.
- 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.



With the full support of the Swanage Railway Trust (SRT) behind the Group, donations of buildings from Imerys Minerals Ltd and offers of relevant narrow gauge locomotives and rolling stock, we have an ambitious plan to establish the full working museum. Join us as a working member on: building work, track laying, restoration of equipment, project management or administration.

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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