



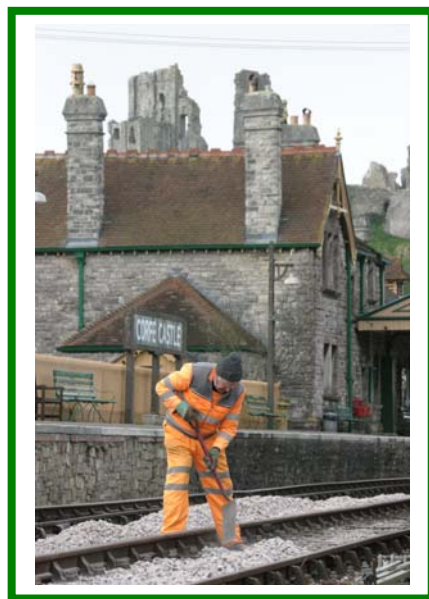
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USEFUL INFORMATION FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS INFRASTRUCTURE DEPARTMENT - PERMANENT WAY

A HISTORY OF THE TRACK

In January 1972 British Railways closed the line to Swanage and later that year all the original track was lifted and sold to scrap merchants. The early pioneers wanting to reinstate Swanage's railway connection negotiated for five years with the local Councils and eventually in 1977 the Swanage Railway volunteers obtained permission from the Town Council to start laying track outside the 1885 Goods Shed towards the Northbrook Road Bridge. In those embryonic days there were no cranes to assist them and the track had to be laid by hand, no easy task. Later on a rail mounted hand crane was purchased to assist the volunteers in their heavy task. By Easter 1980 the area next to the station building received its rails after being cleared of the debris left when British Railways bulldozed part of the original platform to fill in the track bed. By then the track had also been laid as far as the Engine Shed and later that year trains started running up to the Victoria Road Bridge, a distance of some three quarters of a mile. Track laying continued to Herston where a simple platform was built from timber and a loop installed allowing the locomotive to "run round" its train for the return trip to Swanage. That first station is now called "Herston Halt"

Track laying continued in earnest, and by late 1987 they had reached Harmans Cross where again a platform had to be constructed as well as a run round loop. Today Harmans Cross Station looks as if it had always been there, but before 1987 there was nothing, the old British Railways line running from Swanage to Corfe Castle with no intermediate stations. In 1990 the line reached Corfe Castle where the little Victorian Station had been restored to its former glory in readiness for the trains, but the local authorities would not allow trains to terminate there due to the dire shortage of parking space around the Village. The volunteers therefore had to continue to lay track as far as Norden where a clever individual had suggested building a Park and Ride to deal with the traffic accessing the Railway. This was achieved by 1992 and trains could finally achieve the six mile journey from Swanage in 1995. Purchasing all the track and materials to get there had cost us dear and it was then that the Swanage Railway nearly became bankrupt but for a friendly Bank; it took us several years to repay the vast sum of money by an intensive fund raising initiative called "Operation Millstone". This is still as far as the passenger trains can run at the moment, but track has gradually progressed upwards since 1992 and from 1999 it was laid across the road to Wytch Farm and eventually reached the connection with Railtrack in January 2002.



Steel toe-capped boots and physical fitness are essential and you will also be required to undergo an internal track safety course for safety critical work. 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:

The Permanent Way Manager is Tony Andrews Telephone: 01929 427462 or 07798 743016
Or contact the Volunteer Liaison Department as above.

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