



Volunteer Liaison Department
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USEFUL INFORMATION FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT (TRAFFIC) - SIGNALMEN

SIGNAL BOXES

There are three signal boxes on the Swanage Railway. The largest is at Swanage and has a 40 lever Westinghouse frame controlling the arrival and departure of trains at the terminus, shunting movements around the station, yard and engine shed, and also acting as the nerve centre of railway operations. It was built from scratch by our volunteers and was commissioned in February 2003, having won the prestigious Westinghouse Signalling Award for 2002 as part of the National Railway Heritage Awards. It contains a Tyers No. 6 Tablet Machine to control the single line section between Swanage and Corfe Castle, and a Tyers Key Token Machine to control the section to Harmans Cross when that signal box is open. The lever frame came originally from Brockenhurst "B" Signal Box and fortunately was rescued after its closure in 1978.



Next up the line is the signal box at Harmans Cross which contains a 22 lever Stevens frame. This 'box was also built from scratch and was commissioned in July 1997, winning the Westinghouse Signalling Award for that year. It contains two Tyers Key Token Machines, one controlling the section to Swanage the other controlling the section to Corfe Castle. Harmans Cross is basically a passing loop, being presently the half way point on the single line railway where two passenger trains can pass. There are also two sidings where wagons can be stabled, and which can also be used as a refuge for additional trains during special events. The lever frame originates from Gunnersbury Signal Box in Middlesex and came to us when that 'box closed in 1980.

Our third signal box is situated in the main station building at Corfe Castle Station and was used by British Railways from 1956 until the Branch was closed in January 1972. It contains a 12 lever Stevens frame which miraculously survived the scrap dealer when everything else on the Railway was ripped out later that year. It also contains the other Tyers No. 6 Tablet Machine which is used when Harmans Cross 'box is closed, and a Tyers Key Token machine used when Harmans Cross is open. Volunteers had restored this 'box over a period of years and it was re-commissioned in February 2005. We were once again the lucky winners of the Westinghouse Signalling Award! This unusual little signal box, which was formerly the Porters' Lodge, was commissioned by British Railways in 1956 to replace the original 1885 structure on the Down Platform. The old box had been demolished in 1956 as its mostly timber fabric had deteriorated beyond redemption. Currently under construction is a new signal box on the Down platform at Corfe Castle to replace the original. This new box will be completed by 2012 to replace the current system at Corfe, and will enable more versatility at the Station as well as controlling movements further up the line and the interface with the National Network. This 'box will have a 32 lever Westinghouse frame which was formerly situated in the Brockenhurst "A" box. This lever frame was rescued when the current panel was installed in the 1970's.

SIGNALMAN TRAINING

We have a very competent and well trained team of about 40 Signalmen who will assist you during your training. If you have no previous experience of railway operation your training will start by working as a Porter, usually starting at Corfe Castle Station. This will give you an insight of railway operations, and once qualified as a Porter you move on to a series of eight modular classroom based instruction sessions which cover all aspects of railway signalling as used on the Swanage Railway; these are each followed by a short exam. Practical training starts in Corfe Castle signal box and is sandwiched between the classroom modules so that you attain theoretical and practical experience simultaneously. Starting from scratch your training will take between six and twelve months depending on your commitment.

Once passed out for the current signal box at Corfe Castle you can then move on to train at Harmans Cross and after sufficient experience has been gained, usually twelve months, you can move on to train in our senior signal box at Swanage. When the new signal box at Corfe Castle is commissioned in 2012, Harmans Cross will become the initial training 'box. We have Signalling Inspectors from Network Rail who monitor our training and who will also do your "passing out" in the signal boxes, as well as maintaining continuous assessment of all our Signalmen. Once qualified you will be expected to do a minimum of fifteen turns each year to maintain your knowledge. The minimum dress code for our Signalmen is black shoes, black trousers (or skirt for ladies), white shirt and a tie. A medical examination might be required; good vision with spectacles is permissible but colour blindness is not. 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 Signalling Training Officer is Mike Whitwam Telephone: 01929 475212 or Email: mike.whitwam@corfestation.f2s.com
Or contact the Volunteer Liaison Department as above.

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