



Volunteer Liaison Department
Swanage Railway Trust Ltd.
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USEFUL INFORMATION FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT - GUARDS

The Swanage Railway normally operates passenger trains comprising a steam locomotive with 5 carriages, including the Wessex Belle dining train on selected evenings, and also a two or three car diesel multiple unit (DMU). From time to time and during special events, up to four trains can be operating at once, sometimes including a demonstration goods train. In addition to this we also run Driver Experience trains, for which customers have paid to drive the train in one direction and to fire it during its return trip; these usually consist of a steam locomotive with two carriages. There are also Full Day Railway Experience trains which include classroom instruction. During some special events, two goods brake vans are attached to a diesel shunter and are used to give the customers brake van rides. During normal working, every train that travels up the line requires a Guard to be on board as it is the Guard who is in charge of the train; the Driver cannot start the train without permission from the Guard.

During the low season we normally have only one 5 carriage steam train in service, but during the high season two 5 carriage steam trains are run daily passing each other at Harmans Cross, with our popular evening DMU service running from 17.45 until 23.11. During the mid season, the 5 carriage steam train is supplemented with a DMU, again passing at Harmans Cross. The Driver Experience trains are run during the low and mid season usually on a Friday or at the weekend. Our prestigious "Wessex Belle" dining train runs on selected evenings and Sunday lunchtimes doing two round trips up the line whilst the customers are served with a five course meal. The same train formation runs on some evenings during the summer season as the less formal "Wessex Belle Bistro" on which customers can order simpler meals. Thus, it can be seen that during the high season, a minimum of 5 Guards can be required to run the services on one day. During special events even more can be required in one day.



The steam trains are currently run with Mark 1 carriages, although we are in the process of restoring some of our Bulleid carriages and it is hoped to have these available for passenger trains at some time in the future. The Wessex Belle dining set consists of the Bar Car, which was specially converted by our volunteers, a purpose built Kitchen Car, and two dining cars. The Guard controls the train from a fifth brake carriage.

GUARD TRAINING

The Guard is responsible for the safety of the train, including the passengers and staff on board. There are about 40 passed Guards on the Railway, and most of these will be able to assist with your training. The trainers are Martyn Curtler, David Norton, Brian Whitbread, Steve Rawlins, Graham Cope and Trevor Sheppard and with whom you will spend most of your time training. If you have no previous railway experience, then you will need to train as a Porter in the first instance. The majority of Porter training will take place at Corfe Castle station. Once you have qualified as a Porter, you can then proceed to your Guard training.

You will have to spend a minimum of 15 turns training, during which time you will learn how to prepare and dispose of the train, learn the geography of the line, and attain a thorough understanding of the Swanage Railway Rule Book. This training will be a mixture of theoretical and practical training. In addition, most months there is a theoretical and practical training session at Swanage on either a Saturday or a Sunday, which includes shunting, safety and signalling. The railway operates a Vocational Qualification type of training, and you will be issued with a training book which you will need to keep up to date. Once training is completed, you will be examined, which takes the form of a practical exam where the examiner travels on the train with you, followed by a verbal questioning on the Swanage Railway Rule Book. Once qualified, you can expect to be regularly assessed in the following years. You will be expected to undertake 15 turns a year after qualification to maintain your knowledge.

The minimum dress code for passed Guards is black trousers (or black skirt for ladies), white shirt and tie, black jacket, and black safety shoes/boots. Once qualified, a Guard's hat completes the uniform. A medical examination may be required; good vision with spectacles, if worn, 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 Guards Training Officer is Martyn Curtler Telephone: 01202 849962 or Email: martynandkathycurtler@tesco.net
Or contact the Volunteer Liaison Department as above.

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