



AUTUMN 2026 NEWSLETTER

Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter.



The station looks good at any time of the year, but perhaps more so in autumn when the trees change colour and start to lose their leaves. Why not come along and see for yourself - the station is open every day and entry is free!

Just as this Newsletter was being sent out, a lovely old Meccano/Hornby tinplate train set was donated to us. We already have plans for this – more details next time!

May was a busy month at the station. The first train since 1956 arrived but, before you get too excited, this one is made of wood! Earlier in the year we were contacted by Spetisbury parish councillor Stephen Dunhill. Stephen had spotted a second-hand play train for sale and kindly offered to co-ordinate the purchase and delivery of it from Hampshire. Even better, when the seller Peter Morton learned all about the Spetisbury Station Project, he generously offered it free of charge! Peter even arranged for an inspection report by a qualified person as required by Dorset Council. The train arrived on 7th May, assisted by our own volunteer Paul. This in itself was no easy task, as access onto the Trailway at Blandford St Mary had to be arranged to get the vehicle and trailer along the former trackbed to Spetisbury. Some repairs are necessary before it can be moved to its permanent location on the 'down' platform, but we are making good progress with these and hope to have the train ready for next summer.



On 9th May our second running-in board was installed on the 'up' platform. As with the first one, it has been made by Vic Whiting and his team in the workshops at Shillingstone station, using hardwood timber left over from a wagon restoration project. Vic was joined by fellow North Dorset Railway volunteer Malcolm, with Kev, Paul and Carl from Spetisbury Station Project also assisting.



With no accessible mains water supply at the station, we struggle during the summer months to keep the plants watered as the butts soon ran dry in the recent hot, dry weather. In addition to the existing ones, we have installed another large water butt on the 'up' platform, catching rainwater off the roof of the plant swap hut. Plus, a big thank you to one Spetisbury villager who kindly donated a further water butt, which will also come in very handy.

We continued to be busy into June and July ensuring the station looked its best for our summer event. We have purchased custom-made paint from a commercial paint manufacturer to the same specifications as the Southern Region green and cream colours used at Shillingstone station. The fencing around the signal box and station building foundations has already been repainted whilst the platform shelter is currently being repaired before it too gets a fresh coat of paint. One of our volunteers has repainted the small fence around the wildlife pond. We have also sanded and treated the timber picnic tables and benches, and for this we chose a black Ronseal product which gives a very pleasing and hopefully long-lasting finish.

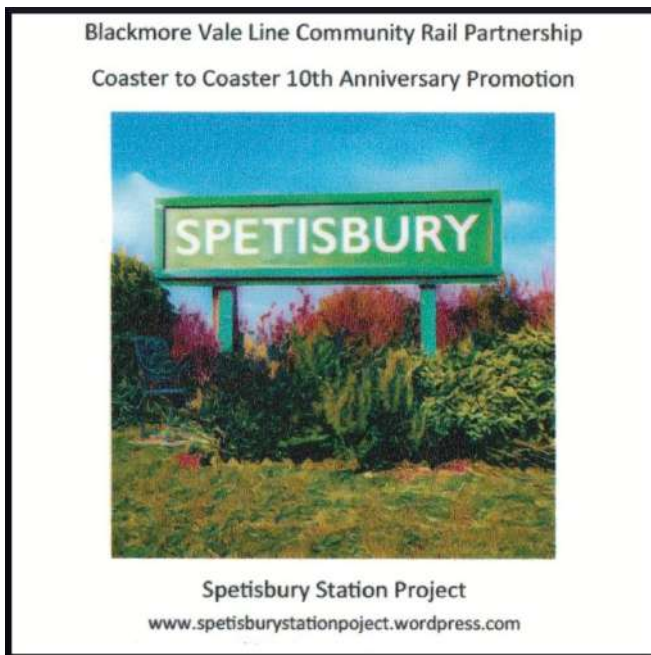
During the summer we reported to Dorset Council that the fence on the Trailway ramp at the station had collapsed. We were pleased to see that a new fence had been put up during July.

New signage and information panels have been produced by a local printer. The two panels follow the same design as the one at the signal box. One details the history of the station, whilst the other recalls the last passenger train to stop at Spetisbury Halt.

A smaller sign has also been placed near the entrance to the North Dorset Trailway at Spetisbury Primary School, pointing the way to the station.



We were delighted to be invited to the **S&DJR Shillingstone 1960s Gala Weekend** on 6th / 7th June. Although we were only able to attend on the Saturday, it was a good opportunity for our volunteer Kev to meet other railway and transport organisations, and promote the Spetisbury Station Project and our summer Railway Extravaganza. The wet and windy conditions during the day meant the displays were housed in the restored General Utility Van rather than on the platform. It was also a last chance to view Project 62's restored steam locomotive 30075 before its departure on loan to a heritage railway in Devon.



During June we took delivery of a stock of commemorative coasters produced by the **Blackmore Vale Line Community Rail Partnership** as part of a 10th anniversary 'Coaster to Coaster' promotion. Similar to last year's postcard promotion, people are encouraged to collect free limited-edition coasters from 90 participating venues across Wiltshire, Somerset and North Dorset to claim a variety of free gifts. Spetisbury coasters are still available at any of our work parties (see website for dates).

Our **Railway Extravaganza** took place on Sunday 12th July. We had planned to put on a bigger event than usual to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the closure of Spetisbury station as well as the 60th anniversary of the closure of the Somerset & Dorset railway. Four S&D organisations were invited to attend although only two were able to make it on the day. Peter Smith, a well-known S&D driver and fireman, was also invited to come along and sign copies of G.A. Richardson's excellent book capturing the Somerset & Dorset line. Unfortunately, poor health meant Peter was unable to accept our invitation, but we are grateful to the S&D Railway Trust for contacting him on our behalf.

The day itself was hot and sunny, and our volunteers (ably assisted by our supporters Anne and Liz) were kept busy serving Pimms and light refreshments including homemade scones with jam and cream. Information was available from the S&DJR Shillingstone and North Dorset Trailway organisations, and the newly-formed Blandford Ukelele Band kept visitors entertained. Attendance was a little disappointing, possibly due to the hot weather, but everyone enjoyed themselves and it was good to see so many local people come along. Importantly, we raised

awareness of the work we are doing as well as donations which will go towards station improvements.



Did you know...?



the original cart track to the 'down' platform



the steps to the 'up' platform

Due to its position high above the village, access to Spetisbury station has always been tricky. At first, a cart track gave access to the 'down' platform from the village High Street (today the A350). When the 'up' platform was built, a flight of 30 steps was added adjacent to the bridge, with a timber barrow crossing connecting the two platforms. For this reason, goods traffic never amounted to much although local produce including milk and watercress could be loaded into the guard's compartment of passenger trains. In 1897 the inhabitants of nearby Charlton Marshall petitioned the Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway to rebuild Spetisbury station at another location more convenient to both villages, and with easier access. The estimated cost was £2,000 plus £670 for a goods siding. This plan was not approved, possibly because of the nearby larger stations at Blandford and Bailey Gate (Sturminster Marshall). The residents of Charlton Marshall had to wait until 1928 before they got their own halt, however this was short-lived and closed on the same day as Spetisbury in 1956. Today, the steps are still in use but an adjacent Trailway ramp makes life much easier!



Charlton Marshall Halt

BRITISH RAILWAYS

October 1st, 1955 to March 31st, 1956, inclusive

"WINTER"

CHEAP TICKETS

TO BOURNEMOUTH & POOLE

DAILY (Service Permitting) BY ALL TRAINS AFTER 9.30 a.m.

→ RETURN BY ANY TRAIN SAME DAY ←

FROM	RETURN FARES, THIRD CLASS, TO			FROM	RETURN FARES, THIRD CLASS, TO		
	Bournemouth Central	Bournemouth West	Poole		Bournemouth Central	Bournemouth West	Poole
ASHLEY HEATH HALT ..	s. d. 2/6	s. d. 2/5	s. d. A	REDBRIDGE ..	s. d. 4/3	s. d. 2/7	s. d. 5/9
BAILEY GATE ..	—	3/5	A	RINGWOOD ..	5/9	—	6/9
BLANDFORD FORUM ..	—	4/6	3/9	ROMSEY ..	5/6	—	6/6
BREAMORE ..	1/6	1/6	A	ST. DENYS ..	—	6/-	6/-
BROADSTONE ..	—	—	A	SALISBURY (D) ..	—	4/6	4/-
CHARLTON ..	—	—	A	SHILLINGTON ..	—	—	—
CHARLTON MARSHALL HALT ..	3/5	—	2/6	SOUTHAMPTON ..	5/3	—	6/3
CORFE CASTLE ..	—	—	A	SOUTHAMPTON CENTRAL ..	—	2/9	5/-
CORFE MULLEN ..	—	—	A	SPETISBURY HALT ..	—	5/8	—
CREEKMOOR HALT (B) ..	1/4	1/2	1/-	STALBRIDGE (B) ..	—	—	—
DAGGONS ROAD ..	—	3/9	3/2	STURMINSTER ..	—	—	—
DOWNTON ..	—	4/6	4/2	SWANAGE (D) ..	3/10	4/8	4/4
FORDINGBRIDGE ..	—	4/-	3/4	SWAYTHLING ..	5/9	—	6/9
HAMWORTHY JUNCTION ..	1/6	—	5/3	TOTTEN ..	4/9	2/6	2/5
HENSTRIDGE (C) ..	—	5/11	A	VERWOOD ..	—	—	—
HOLTON HEATH ..	2/-	—	4/9	WAREHAM ..	2/6	2/1	A
LYMINGTON TOWN ..	3/9	—	5/6	WEST MOORS ..	2/4	1/11	A
LYNCHURST ROAD ..	A	—	6/3M	WIMBORNE ..	1/11	—	A
MILLBROOK ..	5/3M	—	—				

A—For details of Cheap Day Tickets issued daily by any train, see separate announcements.
 B—Tickets from Corfe Mullen Halt, will be issued for travel by the 8.55 a.m. train on weekdays.
 C—Tickets from Henstridge, will be issued for travel by the 9.19 a.m. train on weekdays.
 D—Tickets from Salisbury, will be issued for travel by the 9.25 a.m. train on weekdays.
 E—Tickets from Stalbridge, will be issued for travel by the 9.23 a.m. train on weekdays.
 G—Tickets from Swanage, will be issued for travel by the 9.24 a.m. train on weekdays.
 M—Passengers may, if desired, return to Southampton Central.

Passengers may alight at a station short of destination in either direction upon surrender of the ticket and commence the return journey from an intermediate station

This year marks 70 years since the station's closure in 1956, so here is a British Railways poster from that year offering cheap day return tickets from a variety of local stations to Poole and Bournemouth. The residents of Spetisbury could enjoy a day out at the seaside for only two shillings and ninepence third class return!

Unfortunately, the number of passengers using the station was always low. Competition from more convenient buses meant that Spetisbury station became an unstaffed halt during August 1934, then closed altogether during September 1956.

Spetisbury Halt closed on 17th September 1956. Reg Darke, along with fireman Basil Foot, drove the last 'down' passenger train to stop at the station. This train was the 4.10pm from Evercreech Junction to Bournemouth (West).

Reg recalled that *"On this particular evening we stopped at Charlton Marshall Halt and picked up a family of four who alighted at Spetisbury Halt, the next stop along. They then wanted to go over the other side of the platform. The guard had to conduct them across the track. I asked the guard later what they were playing at; he replied that they wanted to take their two young children on the last train. We were the last 'down' train and the 5.18pm was the last 'up' train to stop at the halts. The facts had not sunk it that it was the last official stop at these halts; they were closed that day."*

CLOSING OF
STOURPAINE & DURWESTON HALT
CHARLTON MARSHALL HALT
SPETISBURY HALT
AND CORFE MULLEN HALT

On and from Monday, 17th September, 1956, the passenger train service stops will be withdrawn and the following halts closed:-

STOURPAINE & DURWESTON	SPETISBURY
CHARLTON MARSHALL	CORFE MULLEN

Dates for your diary

Saturday 17th & Sunday 18th October: Poole & District Model Railway Society exhibition at Corfe Hills School, Broadstone, Dorset BH18 9BG

Sunday 13th December: Spetisbury Station Project Christmas work party from 10am. Warming mulled wine, hot drinks and a selection of tasty festive snacks will be available to visitors in exchange for a small donation.

Discover much more at www.spetisburystationproject.wordpress.com



Find us on Facebook



Online donations can be made via our JustGiving page at www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/spetisbury or scan the QR code.

Every penny raised goes towards maintaining and improving Spetisbury Station. Thank you.

If you no longer wish to receive our Spring and Autumn Newsletters, please email kevmitchell541@gmail.com