



Rebuilding and running a community railway through the Purbecks

SWANAGE RAILWAY RESTORATION FACTS AND FIGURES

By Andrew P.M. Wright

Swanage Railway official photographer & press officer

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It took British Rail's contractors just seven weeks to lift the six and a half miles of track from Swanage to Corfe Castle and beyond to half a mile east of Furzebrook for scrap – and dedicated Swanage Railway volunteers 30 long years to relay them.

The value of work by the Swanage Railway's 500 regular volunteers is some £2 million a year – if they were to be paid for their dedicated work.

And the award-winning heritage railway from Norden Park & Ride to Corfe Castle, Harman's Cross, Herston and Swanage carries more than 200,000 passengers a year – and contributes £14 million a year to the Purbeck and Dorset economy.

The relaying of the six and a half miles of track between Swanage and the start of the national railway system near Furzebrook – as well as station loop tracks and sidings – has involved the laying of 880 sixty feet-long track panels weighing a total of 3,000 tonnes; the equivalent of 60,000 25 kilo bags of coal.

Some 1,760 rails have been used, along with:

- 3,600 fishplates to connect the rails
- 22,000 wood and concrete sleepers
- 44,000 track chairs to fix the rails to the sleepers
- 100,000 chair screws
- 44,000 track keys
- 15,000 nuts and bolts
- 18,000 tonnes of stone track ballast
- 25 sets of track points
- 8 catch points for safety
- One wooden sleeper weighs between one and two cwt (hundred weight).
- One concrete sleeper weighs five cwt – or a quarter of a ton.
- One 60 feet long bullhead rail weighs 2,000 lbs – or almost a ton.
- One metal track chair – holding the rail to the sleepers – weighs 45 lbs.

ENDS

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