

Swindon Society Summer Outing Review

Swindon & Cricklade Railway - 14th June 2017

The evening of our outing was perfect, beautifully warm and sunny, it couldn't have been better.

On arrival, the museum and Whistle-Stop Café were open for those who had time to kill before the train ride, then at around 6.50pm we were all told to make our way down to the platform. Angie presented everyone with a souvenir ticket and we all boarded the train which was to be pulled by the steam engine named Spartan.

Then, we were off, down the line to Taw Valley Halt. The carriage windows were all open due to the warm evening and this enhanced the sounds and sensations of travelling on a steam train; a slight smell of smoke and the clickety-clack sound of the rails as we went along.



When we stopped at Taw Valley most of us got out of our carriage to watch as Spartan was uncoupled and transferred to the rear of the train in order to pull us back down the line. It was lovely to be so close to a steam engine.

Then back down the line, through Blunsdon Station and onwards to Hayes Knoll where we stopped for around thirty minutes or so. We were given the chance to wander around the workshop and see the work in progress on other engines and carriages while Spartan was moved back to the front of the train.

A few members were happily distracted by the station cat who was curled up outside the workshop. He was ginger and covered in dirt, but so friendly!

Some of us ventured to the signal box where the signalman gave a very interesting talk about how the signals worked. Those who wanted to, were allowed to operate one of the signal levers, which was much harder than it looked.

Then we were back on board and down the line, through Blunsdon Station stopping again at Taw Valley Halt. Once again, we were up close and personal with Spartan as the engine was moved to the rear of the train; and then we were on our final journey back to where we started.



When we alighted at Blunsdon Station, we were able to browse the gift shop before returning to the Whistle-Stop Café for refreshments. A few members indulged in a curry (which smelled lovely) whilst others had cake and a cuppa.

What an evening it was... I think it's fair to say everyone had a thoroughly enjoyable time.

Angie Phillips

