



Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway Volunteer Case Studies.

15 years ago I was looking for a diversion from a high pressure job in TV, something outdoors, physical and working in a team.

Well I certainly found all of that when I joined the GWSR permanent way department. The gang are a friendly bunch and there is great team spirit. We are out and about all year round in beautiful countryside looking after the track. The work is varied and there is a real sense of achievement to be had, ensuring a smooth and safe journey for our thousands of customers.

More recently I have become a director of the PLC, which is a great privilege and has introduced me to a whole new group of friends and colleagues.

All in all I am really glad that I became a volunteer on our great railway.

Alan

I have been volunteering for the GWSR since 2008. My husband had been a volunteer for some years before this, and we decided to join the Railway Catering Services as part of our retirement plan. Whilst working we have been given appropriate training including a Food Safety course.

I am also responsible for printing and sending out all the pre-booked tickets for railway travel, and managing the lettings of our overnight cabin accommodation for volunteers. My husband and I worked with other volunteers to produce a 'Railway Walks' booklet that is still on sale at the Railway.

All of our activities have been hugely enjoyable and fulfilling, gaining us genial friends and work colleagues along the way. I would never have expected there were so many varied roles available as a GWSR volunteer.

Julia

In the summer of 2008 I took early retirement from my Risk Management role with a leading Insurance Broker following treatment for and recovery from cancer.

I needed a new challenge. I have always had an interest in railways so joining the GWSR as a Travelling Ticket Inspector seemed a good idea. It gave me the challenge I needed as I went on to qualify as a Guard, a safety critical role that carries a lot of responsibility. At the end of the day I was able to say I had delivered a professional job which gave me a lot of pleasure.

I have made a lot of good friends and have been able to put my business skills and experience to good use as I have gone on to join the Railway's supporting charity as a Trustee Director.

Philip



Born into a railway family in Woodford Halse, on the old Great Central line, I have always had a keen interest in and love of Steam Engines. My father was a Boiler Smith and his Dad was a main line Engine Driver. I was no stranger to the inside of the loco sheds, (or boilers, for that matter!).

In his youth, my husband was an avid train spotter so it was not surprising, we share an interest in visiting many of the heritage railways all over the country. We had never considered volunteering until we had both retired. We chose to look at the GWSR because it had no paid staff and a reputation for being "The Friendly Railway". My husband started as a Travelling Ticket Inspector and I joined the Station Staff Team as a Booking Office Clerk. Today my husband is a Guard Inspector and I am a Lady Station Master

We enjoy being part of a friendly, dedicated team who bring professionalism to their volunteering roles and whose efforts bring much pleasure to those who visit our Railway. It has widened our horizons, allowed us the opportunity to make new friends and we have both felt a sense of achievement as we have progressed in our respective departments.

Ann and John

Having worked for over 20 years running a video production unit within the Civil Service, redundancy brought me to my current role working as a technician in a large secondary school.

I have always had a keen interest in steam railways and a visit to a GWSR open day 15 years ago got me hooked. Having worked my way through the ranks in the steam locomotive department I finally qualified as a steam driver in 2014. The range of tasks within the department are many and varied and the camaraderie and team spirit experienced within the department is fantastic.

I really enjoy every aspect of working at the railway and find it very rewarding. I decided it was time to give something back to our Railway and have joined the steam loco department management team as the Volunteer Liaison Manager where I am able to share my enthusiasm with new volunteers to the department.

Cliff

In 2010, I attended the GWR175 event and was taken with the friendliness and helpfulness of the volunteers. Approaching retirement, I decided to re-join the Railway (I had been a member in the late 70's/early 80's) but made the mistake of ticking the "volunteer" box on the application!

I initially trained as a Travelling Ticket Inspector and then Guard. Unfortunately, knee problems caused me to relinquish the role of Guard. Now being involved, I needed more and joined the Station Staff and trained as a Booking Office Clerk subsequently progressing to Stationmaster, latterly with the addition role of Station Staff Training Officer. I am also involved with the recruitment and induction of new volunteers!



My fellow volunteers, from all departments, have proved to be helpful, friendly and, above all, professional in their duties. They have become a second family!

John

I am retired after working in the hospitality industry in hotels and care homes, always dealing with people which I loved and missed after I retired. I saw an advert for a volunteer weekend for the GWSR and thought YES, and as a result I work in the admin cabin once a week answering the telephone, emails and general public enquiries from people who visit the station.

I also enjoy working with other volunteers and seeing all the other jobs they do that are involved in getting the trains running and giving the numerous visitors to our Railway a great and memorable day out.

Working at Toddington has given me something to look forward to and great personal satisfaction when I have helped someone and they have memories of a great day out.

Rachel

I found the railway by chance in 2005 and enjoyed it so much I became a member and in 2007 joined Lineside Clearance on Saturdays.

My working life was in sales and being DIY useless, after early retirement in 2010 I looked to help in a non-technical role. There are lots! With my wife we joined the Carriage Cleaning and On Train Catering departments. With the good of the Railway being the "glue" it is easy to make many new friends. Now I also contribute to the Marketing and Commercial departments.

With its "can do" and forward looking attitude our Railway has overcome significant technical challenges and being part of a successful group of volunteers is very satisfying.

Roger

I have always loved railways so as a young lad in 1970 I joined the London Underground as an apprentice. Most of my time with LUL was as a Signaller, a role I loved, retiring in 2013 from the Baker Street Signalling Centre on the Metropolitan Line.

I joined the GWSR at the 2015 Recruitment Fair initially as a Travelling Ticket Inspector and Meet and Greeter. As I had the time I also qualified as a Booking Office Clerk and then onto Station Master. I have since joined "On Train Catering" and help with Recruitment and Promotions.



I think with these 7 or 8 different jobs I have enough to do to be at our Railway most of the time which suits me down to the ground as it is a lovely place to be and everyone is so friendly and because we are all volunteers everybody wants to be here.

Rob

I moved to the Cotswolds in 2014 having retired from my career as a dental surgeon with NHS Tayside.

I knew the area well since my mother in law had lived in Churchdown. My husband and I were members of the Railway, and always visited when we were in the area. Once we moved down, my husband was very keen to be 'hands on' and qualified first as a TTI and then as a Guard.

My husband knew that the Railway was in need of volunteers in the shop and arranged for me to meet up with the volunteer Retail Manager. After a chat I felt that volunteering in the shop was something I could take on and enjoy.

I look forward to, and enjoy my days in Toddington's shop. I meet people from all over the country and indeed from all over the world. My previous career required good communication skills and I find this aspect of working in the shop most satisfying.

Sally

My working life was spent in the computer/telecomms industries, most recently as a technical author. Railways have always fascinated me, so when my husband and I moved here in 2009, I was delighted to discover the GWSR at Toddington, just around the corner from our rented farmhouse. And you could not only ride the trains but volunteer to work with them!

I signed up straightaway and after attending the induction course joined the lineside clearance team, as I really enjoy working outside. It's wonderful being out in all this magnificent countryside, and in the running season there's a superb close-up view of the trains as well. Later on I also became a Friend of Toddington, which is rather like household maintenance – painting, gardening, mending fences etc. – but on a slightly larger scale.

My writing skills have also been useful in providing regular contributions for the Cornishman. So 'retired' might be the wrong word but I've made lots of new friends and can now tell a flat-bottomed rail from bullhead.

Rose



I can remember my first day working on the railway on April 1st 2012. On a cold but bright day I received a very warm welcome from the other volunteers. The lineside clearance work seemed to be fairly light and easy, which was a good introduction for me.

How wrong I was, for a couple of weeks later we moved to the viaduct embankment. As we arrived we realised the enormity of the task ahead. The site was totally overgrown with brambles, hawthorn, blackthorn and nettles, so it was hard to see where to start. Months later we had finished the Cotswold side, leaving a beautiful apple tree full of ripe fruit.

The next week delight turned to dread as we realised that we still had to clear the Malvern side, which was even steeper and more treacherous. But finally after another six months the day came when we had finished, and with great satisfaction at a job well done we moved on to the next task.

The friendship and togetherness of the lineside clearance team makes the tasks more of a pleasure than a chore. And it's fun waving to the public, and seeing the excitement on the children's faces.

Weekdays I work as a passenger assistant on a school minibus. My passion for everything to do with railways drove me to join the GWSR. Lineside clearance is a very worthwhile occupation and an enjoyable way to spend Saturdays.

Mike