



Watercress Line to treat grandparents to 1940s revival at spirit of the Blitz railway weekend

Press release: 17.05.2017



Re-enactors at War on the Line

The Mid-Hants Railway Watercress Line is giving free tickets to its War on the Line event to people born before the end of World War II.

Taking place on 10 and 11 June, War on the Line will give visitors the chance to experience the spirit of the Blitz – and those ‘alive in ‘45’, who were already born by the end of WWII, have been invited to do so free of cost.*

Passengers will get to enjoy unlimited train travel, mingle with civilian and military re-enactors and hop off along the line to explore period displays.

Each station along the Watercress Line provides a different experience of life in wartime Britain, from helping to run a recreated RAF plotting room, dancing alongside GIs, learning about wartime railway manufacturing or having hair styled for the 1940s.

Caroline Appleton, marketing manager at the Watercress Line, said: “War on the Line is a huge hit with families every year, as well as people who experienced the war and have memories of the railways during that time. We encourage families to treat grandparents with a trip back in time and enjoy the sights and sounds of a 1940s railway.

“As well as seeing re-enactors, passengers will experience music, dancing and vintage vehicles, and even have the option to dress up.”

Visitors to War on the Line can expect to see servicemen and women dashing about, loved ones saying goodbye to each other and evacuees boarding trains. 'Spivs' are seen peddling black market wares while trying to avoid the police, the Bomb Disposal Unit is kept very busy and there are opportunities to find out more about life on the Home Front as well as joining in a '40s jive.

Caroline said: "The War on the Line experience is also incredibly educational for children, as it gives them a chance to see what life was like during the war. For generations who will only get to read about what went on during the 1940s, it's a totally different experience visiting with members of the family who may have lived through it and have their own stories to tell.

"War on the Line is as much about reliving this period as enjoying the rush of the steam engine, and there's guaranteed to be something for everyone over the weekend."

Visitors to War on the Line are encouraged to dress in 1940s period costume if they wish, or can attend in their regular clothes.

*Tickets for War on the Line can be booked at: www.watercressline.co.uk. People wishing to use the 'alive in 45' offer will need to pre-book tickets online and show proof of their date of birth by contacting educationlinks.midhants@btconnect.com. **Visitors will not be able to take advantage of this offer by turning up on the day without pre-booking.**

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About The Mid-Hants Railway Ltd 'Watercress Line'

The Mid Hants Railway Ltd, famously nicknamed 'The Watercress Line' in the early 20th century for its role in transporting the crop to London, is Hampshire's only standard gauge heritage railway. It runs for 10 miles through idyllic countryside along the border of the South Downs National Park, between the market towns of Alton and Alresford. Opened on the 2nd October 1865 as the Alton, Alresford and Winchester Railway, it became part of British Railways until its hotly contested closure in 1973. The line and services were quickly reinstated by a dedicated preservation group and today the Watercress Line is one of the South's premier visitor attractions, attracting 125,000 visitors annually with a turnover in excess of £2m.

The Railway employs 50 staff and 8 engineering apprentices, but is supported by over 450 dedicated volunteers without which it could not function. It is committed to preserving Hampshire's railway heritage and maintains a fleet of steam and diesel locomotives, rolling stock and infrastructure that create the essence of a bygone age. As a living history attraction, it provides a comprehensive timetable from February to October and throughout December with standard running days and many special events including 'Day Out With Thomas', War on the Line, Wizard Weekend, Steam Galas and Santa Specials. Other popular services include the famous Real Ale Train (RAT), The Watercress Belle and the Countryman Dining trains.

The Mid Hants Railway is a not for profit organisation which has always been funded by the generosity of its supporters and visitors. All profit generated from your visit is reinvested in the railway to ensure that this piece of Britain's railway heritage will still be here for future generations to enjoy. We thank you for your generosity and your support of this aim.

The MHRPS (reg.Charity 284406)

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