

Railway project given extra grant

Wheelchair users will be able to travel in comfort

by Stephanie Tye

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A RENOVATION project in Swindon which has been hit by delays has been awarded a grant of £6,000.

Swindon and Cricklade Railway has secured the extra cash from The Hills Group after its coach renovation project suffered a setback due to two extreme winters.

The extra money will now ensure the project is finished and the fully accessible coach is in use for Easter 2013.

The recent grant is in addition to £21,000 awarded in 2009 through the Landfill Communities Fund, which is administered for Hills by Community First, the Rural Community Council for Wiltshire.

Mike Hill, the chief executive of The Hills Group, said: "We have long supported the work of the Swindon and Cricklade Railway which not only provides a marvelous facility for local people and visitors, but maintains a piece of heritage which would otherwise be lost.

"The renovation project will provide them with much-needed extra resources, but they have been hampered by poor weather, a daunting set of repairs and marshalling the volunteers.

"We're happy to help to make sure all the hard work put in so far is not lost.

"I certainly look forward to rid-

ing in it once all the repairs are complete."

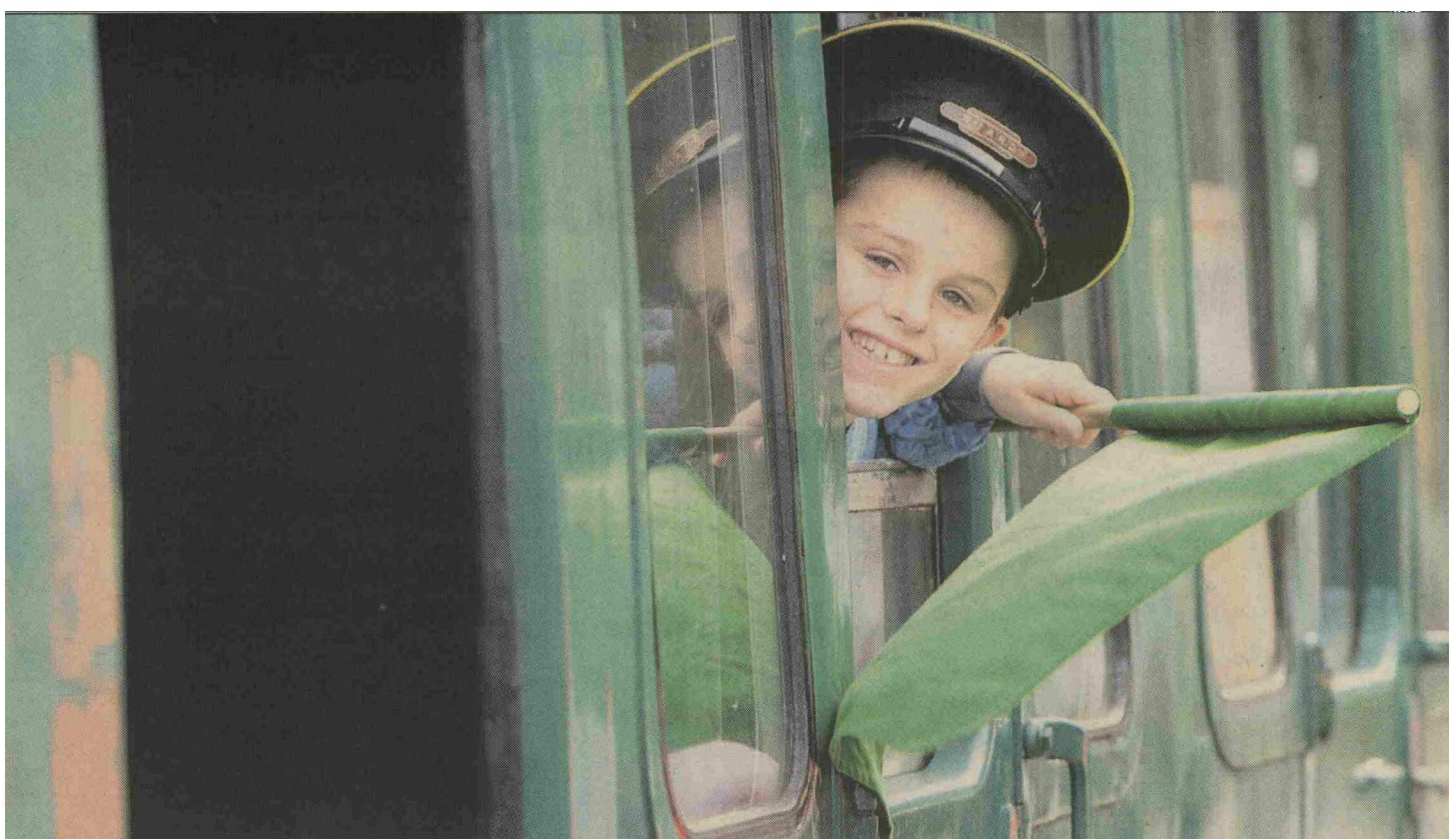
Swindon and Cricklade Railway is Wiltshire's only standard gauge railway and run by volunteer enthusiasts.

It runs for three miles between Mouldon Hill and Hayes Knoll.

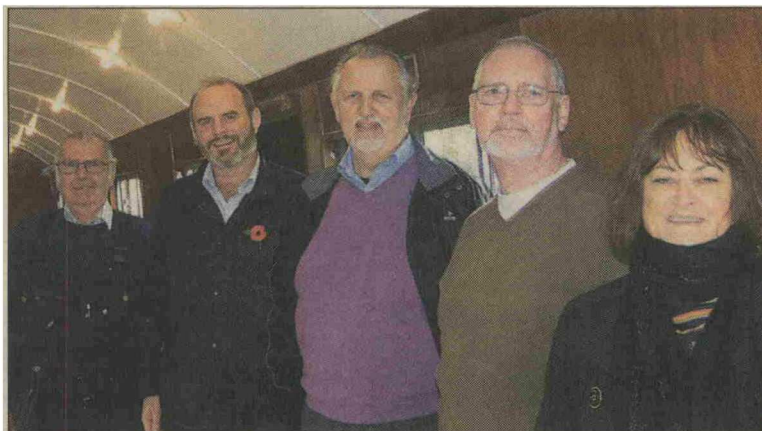
In 2009, Hills made the first grant to help convert a 1959 corridor coach into an open and integrated vehicle with wheelchair access including an onboard disabled toilet.

It was badly damaged by rust and work repairing it was delayed by two ferocious winters and the loss of a volunteer.

Brian Pound, the chairman of Swindon and Cricklade Railway, said: "Having the use of this coach will be a great asset to the railway as it means that wheelchair users can ride in the same carriage as non-wheelchair users and do so in a much more comfortable manner."



ENJOYING THE RIDE A young passenger on the Swindon and Cricklade Railway



CASH HELP Mike Hill, the chief executive of The Hills Group, second left, with Swindon and Cricklade volunteers, from left, Mick Hicks, project leader; Chris Palmer, deputy project leader; Brian Pound, chairman and Mary Hardwidge, the grants officer for Community First