Category 8 - Best Social Media Promotion
RailFuture - Rail User Group Awards 2015 nomination

Promotion of the "Weymouth Wizard" train, August 2015

Submitted by: Graham Ellis, Community Rail Officer, TransWilts Community Rail Partnership, on the CRP's behalf
Based at: 48, Spa Road, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 7NY. Phone 0845 459 0153 (CRP) or 01225 708225 (Graham)
email: grahamellis@transwilts.org

https://www.facebook.com/TransWilts

Background

* In the summer of 2013, *it wasn't possible to take a Saturday day trip to Weymouth via the TransWilts by train*

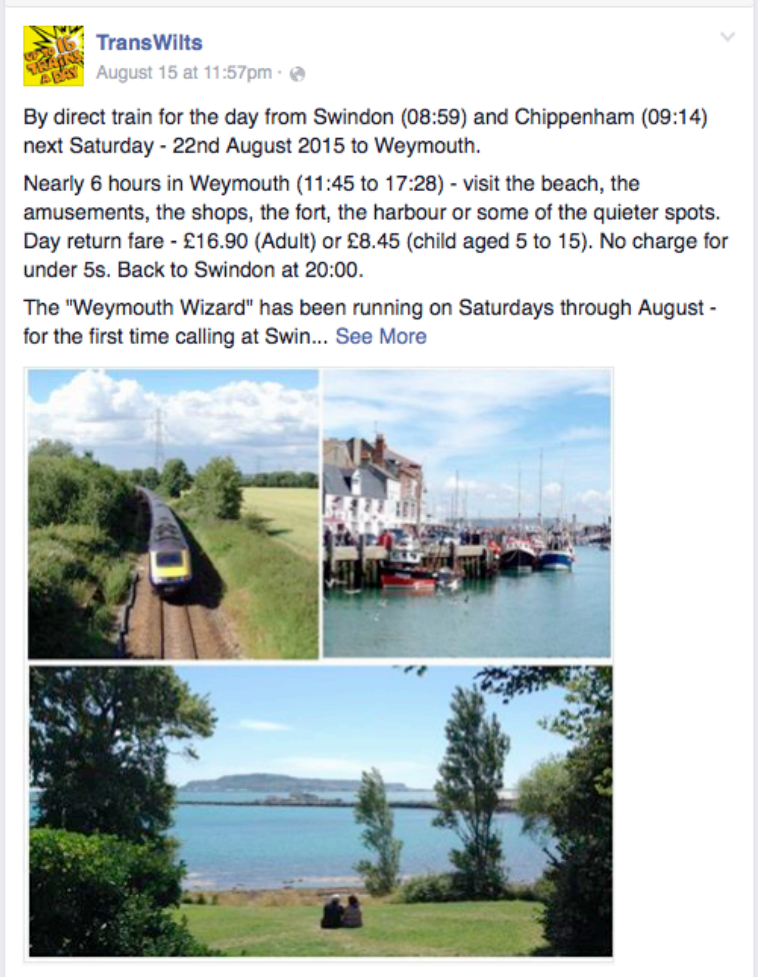
* In the summer of 2014, *a single carriage train made it possible via a connection at Westbury*

* In the summer of 2015, *an eight carriage high speed train made the journey direct from Swindon and Chippenham to Weymouth*

The objective of our Facebook campaign in late July and early August was to encourage residents of the towns this train doesn't normally serve, and who are not regular rail users, to try the train. Secondary objectives were to build customer base for future travel by rail, and wider knowledge of TransWits and other public transport in Wiltshire, with TransWilts "brand awareness" / building up a following.

Campaign

This was a short, sharp campaign initiated on 26th July. Prior to that point, engineering works resulted in the majority of trains being replaced by buses, and that was not an opportune time to encourage rail newcomers along for a great experience.



26.07 "Fancy a day at the Seaside" - Facebook - 36000 reach 302 likes, 240 comments, 306 shares. Promoted in Swindon and Chippenham

30.07 "Day out at the seaside by train from Pewsey" - Facebook - 12000 reach, 39 likes, 23 comments, 60 shares. Promoted in Pewsey and Marlborough

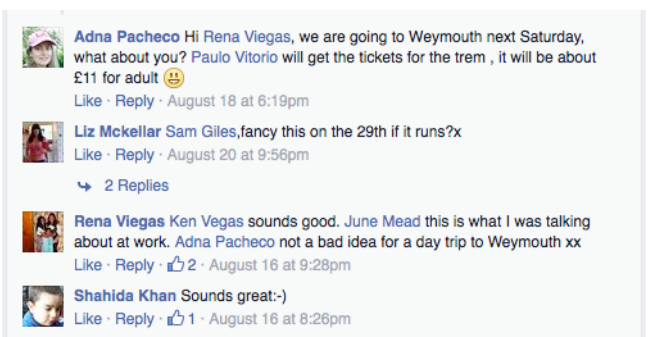
09.08 "August Saturdays ..." - Facebook - 7500 reach, 65 likes, 12 comments, 30 shares. Swindon and Chippenham

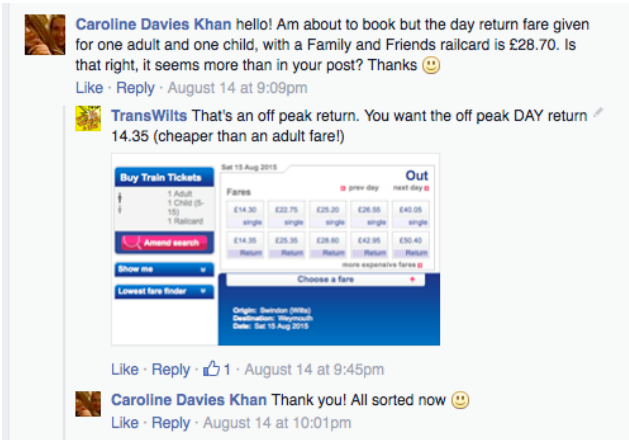
15.08 "By direct train for the day from Swindon" - Facebook - 9100 reach, 74 likes, 19 comments, 22 shares. Swindon and Chippenham

early August - posts in "Swindon and area for sale" groups, and Chippenham and Wiltshire Groups

All comments / questions followed up quickly as appropriate, with note made for future work of constructive feedback / where people had issues.

Campaign / Marketing cost about 20p per passenger.





Results

"Weymouth Wizard" - August 2015 via TransWilts / Passenger counts

on departure from ...	1st	8th	15th	23rd August 2015
Bristol Temple Meads	20	29	69	51
Swindon	142	192	279	158
Chippenham	180	210	307	200
Yeovil Pen Mill	247	340	385	317

Weather excellent to 15th; 23rd forecast was cloudy rather than sunny, with a chance of some rain (which we got). Weymouth was noticeably quieter on 23rd than on 1st (when I also went all the way) and local traders were looking bored and commenting on the quietness.

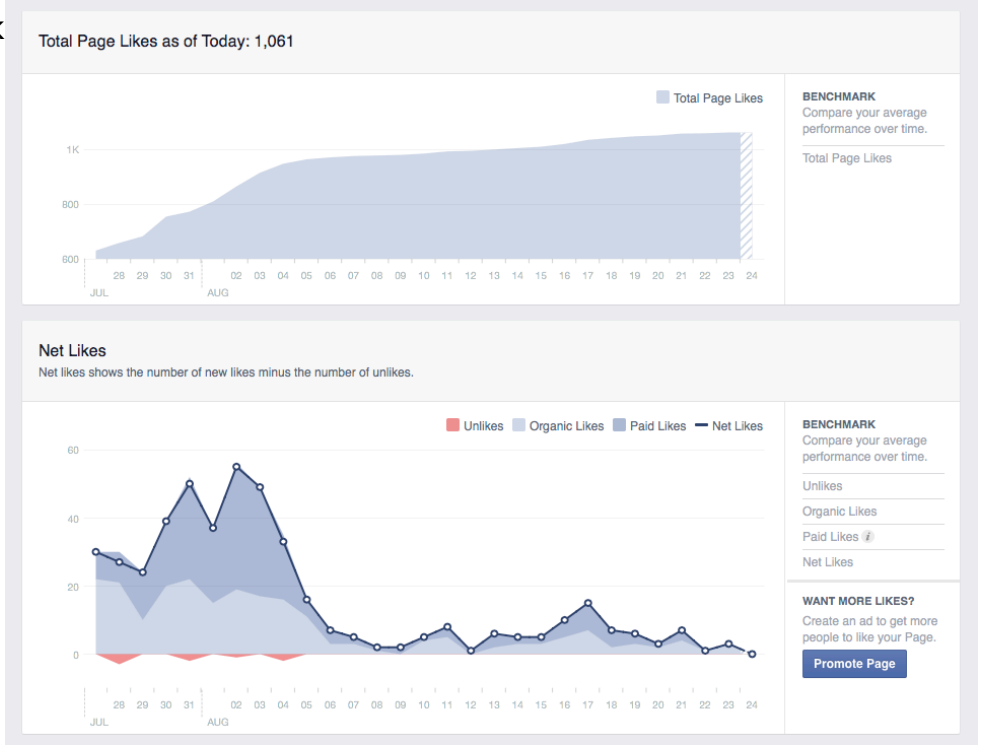
TransWilts team travelled on each of the above dates, and ensured that people knew the time of their return train. We also stood around in conspicuous TransWilts T shirts at Weymouth station and helped people find the right train to return on.

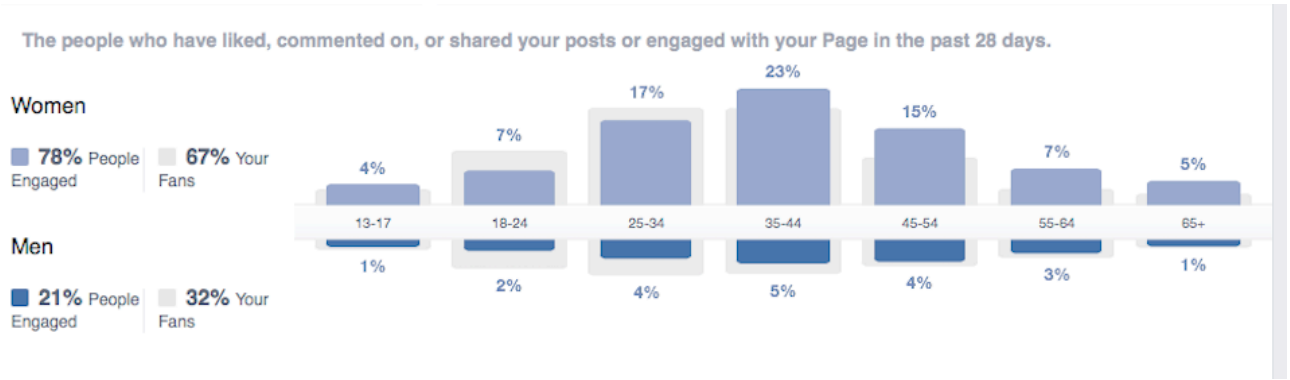
Talking with Chippenham and Swindon joiners for Weymouth on 1st, split was about 50% Station and national rail advertising, 35% Social Media and 15% staff / enthusiast. By 23rd, my estimate is that it had moved to 40% Station, 50% Social Media, 10% staff / enthusiast. Customers had a great day / very happy with their trips - many of them will be making more rail trips.

TransWilts FaceBook page now has 1061 likes which is rather good for a Community Rail Partnership.

That's almost doubled in a month.

And we've reached a demographic not commonly reached in traditional rail user groups – the younger and female audience, and families with children.





The purpose of this train is provide an extra service and relief capacity from Bristol and especially Trowbridge and Westbury onwards to Weymouth on summer Saturdays.

In past years / when there's no engineering, the train has run shortly behind a regular train and it's been hard to persuade too many people to "wait for the nice train" - I have seen it myself at Westbury where a 4 or 5 car train has left packed and then 25 minutes behind it a very sparsely occupied 8 coach HST. Our objective has been to get the train (with around 500 to 550 seats) bustling – even though on the direct route the numbers often struggle to get much over 100 passengers. **Our social media campaign succeeded!**