



Friends of Appledore Station Summer Planting

By-line: FoAS Ladies

Whilst few of us have taken train journeys recently, mainly due to the strangest period in modern history, not a war but a disease which, like the Black Death in 1348 and latterly the Spanish Flu in 1919, has stopped humankind in its tracks, the desire to begin again and to put the last 18 months behind us is strong and never so strong as in Appledore this summer.



Many of you will have seen the wonderful work being done on the old station building, a Grade II listed and much-lamented bastion of the old railways, when every station had staff, toilets and a welcome smile. Its decline has been watched with sadness, but with a little tenacity and a lot of badgering by active members of the Friends of Appledore Station (FoAS), they have managed to encourage the Railway Heritage Trust to find money for its refurbishment, now only weeks from completion. We none of us know what the final outcome will be. It is unlikely to have toilets as the station is not manned, but the building will be ready for new occupancy once its value to the railway has been determined and a plan put into place for its use. Exciting times.

Meanwhile, however, the planters are a major highlight on the platforms. Planters whose installation was the inspiration for all the activity and hard work that has been going on over the past two years and more. How could we have known when asked to form a group of interested residents and to put a few pretty flowers onto the platforms, that the idea would 'literally' blossom and where once was desolation, now a true sense of ownership and pride has come back, evidenced with the complete refurbishment of the once majestic station building.

On Friday (11th June), a few brave ladies (brave because of the very hot afternoon), collected new plants from our stalwart friend Dean (**Pine Cove Nurseries Tel: 01580 765429**), and set about refreshing the planters. Having removed the winter pansies, the new plants were put into place and are already looking beautiful. Dean has been providing us with stock for the past two years and this year his suggestions (based loosely around our budget), are blush cosmos, red geraniums, blue scaevola and mixed nemesis. Dean and his wife have been most generous to us, so would urge you to support them in return, if you can.

Watering was a mission as the water has to be carted by hand back and forth from the recently installed standpipe (another amazing outcome resulting from the cajoling and tenacity of FoAS members in encouraging Southeast Water to instal the supply for us), but the watering was finally complete, and the plants left healthy and pretty for everyone to enjoy. The ladies in question then repaired to the Black Lion for well-earned refreshment. FoAS has a regular band of happy helpers, with a formal watering rota and regular work parties and we thank everyone involved very sincerely for your continued help and generous support.

We always get a wave from the train drivers and guards when they see us working on the platforms. It seems strange that they should care, but then again why would they not, having seen the changes brought about since FoAS was created and watching our enthusiasm to get things done and the difference it is making?

So, as the world begins to wake up and we take our first cautious steps back to our former lives, please enjoy the work being done at Appledore station for the benefit of the whole village. Better still, why not take a trip down to the station and see for yourself; no need to take the train to get the Appledore Station experience!



FoAS is funded by anyone who is prepared to help, and we are not shy to ask – so if you are feeling generous, the FoAS contact number is below. To coin a much-used phrase, '*every little helps*' and that includes both monies to support our work and/or your valuable time, if you are disposed to join us.

FoAS contact: Terry Blaney Tel: 01233 758628