

 **Date of Release:** 18 July 2024                                                                **Ref:** 4348

**New exhibition at The Novium Museum, Chichester, tells the story of the Selsey Tramway**

The fascinating but ill-fated story of Selsey Tramway is featured in a new exhibition at The Novium Museum, Chichester, which has just opened.

The exhibition recounts how a railway line was proposed to link the then remote and isolated village of Selsey with Chichester. By August 1897, the Selsey Tramway was born, operated by The Hundred of Manhood and Selsey Tramway Company.

The line linked the outlying villages south of Chichester, known as the Manhood Peninsula, and consisted of approximately seven-and-a-half miles of track, with 11 stops in total, including Chichester, Hunston, Sidlesham, and Selsey, as well as privately owned farms and the Selsey Golf Club.

On 27 August 1897, the tramway was officially opened at the Chichester station, while the Selsey station was still under construction. Crowds were disappointed when the first train arrived an hour late, setting the standard for the rest of its run.

The tramway was possibly the most problematic railway of the area. Delays were expected, with drivers seldom sticking to schedules and frequent breakdowns occurring. However, in 1916, annual passenger numbers peaked at 105,169.

By the 1930s, bus services were more reliable and there was only one daily service on the tramway by November 1934. Sadly, after thirty-eight years of operation, the tramway’s last service ran on 19 January 1935.

The exhibition has been curated with the help of the Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group, who have helped to develop the exhibition content, providing information and images. As well as items already held within the museum collection, the Colonel Stephens Railway Museum and local historian Alan Green have loaned objects for display.

Councillor Jess Brown-Fuller, Cabinet Member for Culture and Events at Chichester District Council, says: “We’re so pleased to have been able to work with The Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group to tell this fascinating story, which many Selsey residents are familiar with. The film which accompanies the exhibition recounts memories from local people and is worth a watch when visiting the exhibition.”

Each year the Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group also organise the anniversary six-mile Tramway Walk, which this year takes place at 10am on **Saturday 24 August**.

Bill Martin, from the Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group, says: “Starting at East Beach car park in Selsey, the walking route passes the site of eight out of the 11 stations on the route of the tramway, ending at The Anchor Inn in Sidlesham. By re-tracing the route, it’s a free, fantastic and enjoyable way of discovering more about the story of the tramway.”

To walk the route, an interactive map can be downloaded from the MWHG website: [**www.mwhg.org.uk/**](http://www.mwhg.org.uk/)

Alternatively, the Selsey Tramway walk leaflet can be purchased for £1 from The Novium Museum’s shop.

The free exhibition can be found on the first floor of The Novium Museum. Find out more at: [**www.thenovium.org/selseytramway**](http://www.thenovium.org/selseytramway)

Anyone wishing to join the anniversary Tramway Walk should contact Bill Martin by email: **billm89@hotmail.com**

**ENDS**

**For further information, please contact Terri Foster, Senior Communications Officer at Chichester District Council on 01243 521298 or** **tfoster@chichester.gov.uk**

**Notes to editors**

* **Some images are attached for use with this release — please credit Peter Langdown Photography.**

* **About Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group**

The mission of the Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group (MWHG) is to preserve the unique character of the Manhood Peninsula and inspire local people to care for its wildlife and heritage.

In 2021, volunteers from the group updated a walking guide to explore the Selsey Tramway. It is not possible to walk the exact route of the tramway as much of it now crosses private land.

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| A logo with text on it  Description automatically generated | **Terri Foster**Senior Communications OfficerCommunicationsChichester District Council |

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