

# Railway relic returns home to Halesworth after being purchased by museum at auction

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*Halesworth Museum Friends proudly showing off the newly acquired station sign.  
Picture: Halesworth and District Museum*

**A relic of railway history is to return home to Halesworth, after being snapped up at a memorabilia auction.**



*Pauline Wilcock, museum chairman, Sallyanne Cockrell, Mark Punchard and Sadie Church, Peter Punchard's children. Picture: Halesworth and District Museum*

The iconic ‘Halesworth for Southwold’ enamel sign, which once greeted rail passengers to the town, was one of the lots up for grabs at the recent Railwayana auction in Diss.

The 10ft blue sign fetched the largest sum at the auction, which saw a vast array of railway rarities once belonging to former signalman Peter Punchard placed under the hammer.

The sign was purchased by the Halesworth and District Museum - supported by a donation from Sallyanne Cockrell - for £3,100, meaning it will soon have pride of place back in the town.

Pauline Wilcock, museum chairman, said: “I am thrilled this important part of Halesworth history will once again be on view for visitors and residents.



*A postcard showing how the Halesworth for Southwold line looked.*

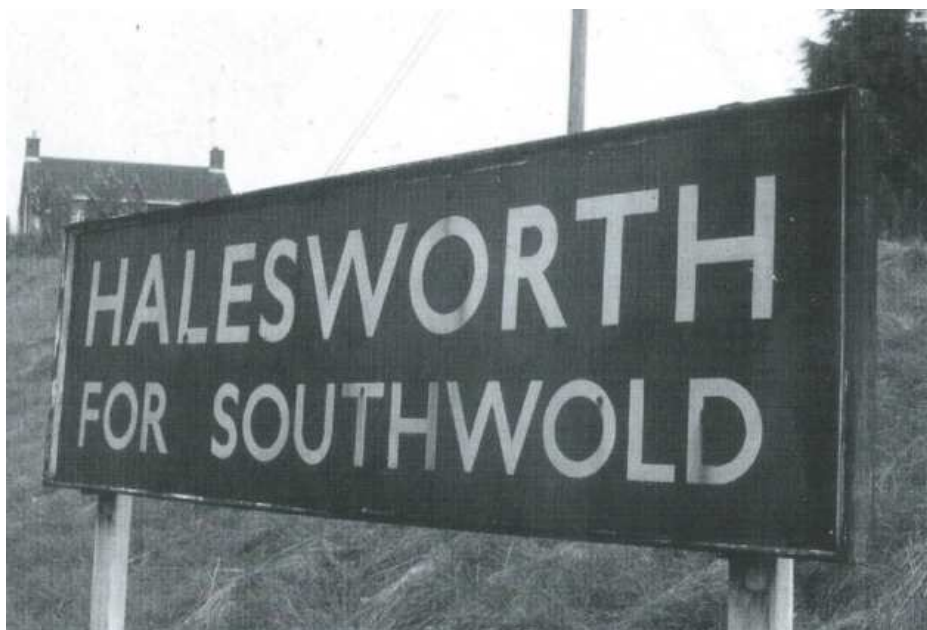
*Picture: Halesworth and District Museum*

“The Southwold Railway was once really important for both towns and has long been remembered with affection. It’s great that local generosity has enabled us to see it again.”

While the museum is currently closed for essential structural work, by the time it reopens in the Spring the sign will have a prominent position inside.

The relic originally signposted a narrow gauge branch line linking the towns, which was closed before the Second World War.

Vic Gray, of the museum, said: “The sign was a reminder that once a much-loved narrow gauge railway would carry holidaymakers from Halesworth to the seaside town.



*An original picture of the Halesworth for Southwold railway sign.*

*Picture: Halesworth and District Museum*

“That line was closed in 1929 but the sign remained for many years until it was finally removed and had not been seen by the public since.”

Prior to his death in 2016, Mr Punchard developed a strong reputation for his railway enthusiasm, having spent decades of his life working within it, and often gave lectures illustrated by his expansive collection.

A Halesworth stalwart, he comfortably filled an entire garden shed with collectables, gathered during his years working on the region’s railways.

More than 400 lots went on sale at the auction, which was held at TW Gaze auction house in Diss, accumulating a total of around £42,000.