

A Look at What's Happening Around the Swanage Railway

Issue 11 – December 8th 2015

December is here, and you know what that means – **Bah Humbug** season!

I have to repeat what I saw on a Facebook post – 'There are twelve days of Christmas, and none of them are in November!'

I wonder if we could run pre-Christmas trains in October, sponsored by the supermarkets to help shift their September stocks of mince pies?!

But heritage railways, and ours is no exception, rely on events like Santa trains to bring in welcome funds and keep the interest levels up at what is a slack period in the year for most visitor attractions.

Our Santa Specials have started on 5th December, and will be running through to Christmas Eve. Still time to volunteer to help on the trains or platforms!

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You may also want to make a note of the **Winter Warmup on 28th December.**

The plan is to run a three-train service, two passenger, one freight, with both steam and diesel.

It is planned to use M7 no. 30053, T9 no. 30120, and class 33 'Cromptons' nos. 33 201 and 33 111, subject to availability, of course.

You may want to check the Swanage Railway web site and/or social media nearer the date to confirm the loco roster and timetable.

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At this time of year, there are few scheduled services for the class 108 DMU, so any outing is news.

In November, Dorset County Council bridge inspectors were out doing their two-yearly appraisals of the railway bridges carrying or crossing public rights of way, and the diesel unit provided the transport for the four inspectors. On Nov 19th, the DMU looks on with interest as two engineers collect data for the condition record of Bridge 28, Victoria Avenue.



The DMU was also brought out to transport staff to two Mutual Improvement Class events at Harman's Cross, and also to carry staff and dignitaries on a Project Wareham inspection trip to the Swanage Railway/ Network Rail boundary. A busy month when there are no scheduled DMU services!

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Think back to issue 7 of SA, and the report of the passing of the shed cat, Ringwood.

A memorial has now been fixed on the place of her interment at the viewing point, in sight of the shed she loved so much.



Picture by Nick Hanham

-----ooOoo-----

Trains? Who needs trains? November is party time!

(so's December, January, February, etc.!)

The annual Swanage Railwaymen's Ball, ably organised by Nearly Fireman and general good bloke Gary Cox and Guard and generally fine fellow Martyn Curtler, was held again this month. A new location at the Knoll House Hotel this year ensured more space for more people, and it's for everyone who works on the railway.

There was a broad range of revellers, from the company chairman and directors, right down to the reprobates on the School Children table (managers on that table too!). The food was excellent as was the entertainment provided by our band, Rolling Stock. Misbehaviour, as always, from the usual suspects!

The Barker Awards (The Barkers). Mmmm! Being on the committee for determining these awards (for aahem, achievements(?) in the course of duty) does not guarantee that you won't get one, as Ann Clark has discovered!

Previously called The Framptons, it's a long time since Clive demolished the Norden bufferstop and gave his name to the awards, and there have been some better(?) achievements in the meantime, hence the change of name! But we haven't forgotten, Clive!

Gary reports that the band was formed mostly of our own staff:

Malcolm Drysdale on drums

Mel Cox on guitar

Mick O'Hara on lead guitar

Martin Smith on bass

Emma Fidler on vocals

Liam Trott on the sofa



Another quality picture (!) from Hon. Ed., showing band and dancing left, tables etc. to the right, much more space than we have been used to!

Book up early for next year! (assuming they'll let us back!)

Martyn is standing down from organising, so any offers to help Gary for next year?

-----ooOoo-----

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Sorry, it's Billy again! Yes, Billy Johnson is

Mucky Man of the Month!



That's loco maintenance for you! It's not a white collar job, even if it was white when you started work!

-----ooOoo-----



In conditions rather typical of this November, 34028 'Eddystone's' tender tank is being made ready for recycling, by Southern Locos (SLL) staff. When 34072 '257 Squadron' is finished, SLL will be restoring 34010 'Sidmouth', and 'Eddystone' will be lending some components to enable this to happen, including this tender chassis.

If you've forgotten what 'Sidmouth' looks like, here's a reminder.



Sidmouth's frames on a wagon in Eldon's siding. There are more parts elsewhere, but still many new parts to acquire.

This will be the eighth loco recovered from Woodham Brothers scrapyards at Barry Docks to be restored by SLL – quite an achievement! And that doesn't include the industrial saddle tank 'Norman'.

Check out their web site at

http://www.southern-locomotives.co.uk/34010/34010_Appeal.html

for the whole story, and details of how to contribute to 'Sidmouth' and its return to steam.

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Down at Corfe Castle, porter Matthew Richter has been busy with the paintbrush, not only on the platform edging, seen here, but also on the canopy ironwork.



For H&S for our visitors, an alternative step-free route to the Goods Shed is being constructed behind the down platform, still to be completed by the contractors.



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Work in progress at Harman's Cross includes upgrading the entrance to the down platform, making it more visitor-friendly..



HX team members (l to r) Bob Bunyar, Mike Ellis, and John Dainton set about removing the existing material ready for concreting.

Ps. get well soon to Harman's Cross station manager Jeff Gregory, whose excuse for not working will soon expire, as he has recently had his dodgy knee adjusted by the NHS.

-----ooOoo-----

At Norden, as you'd expect, most of the activity concerns the changes required to enable the new level crossing installation. You may have seen pictures elsewhere of the gates in action, and here's another one!



On several days in November, the installation team from Schweizer, in company with our own staff, used temporary traffic lights to stop the traffic whilst adjustments to the barriers were carried out. The gates will not be used to stop traffic until full commissioning with the signalling is completed, expected in February.

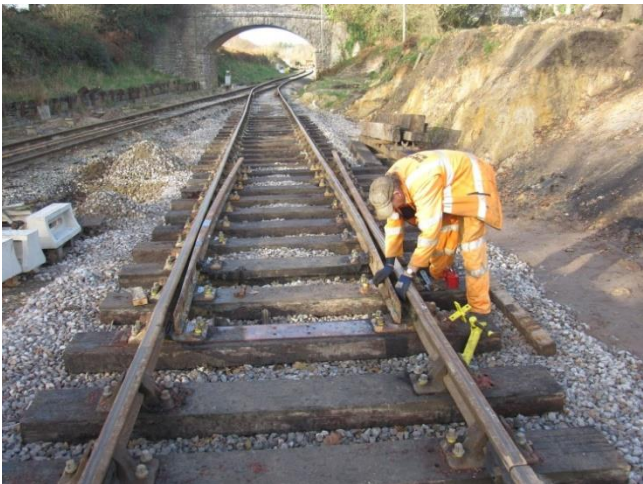
With the barriers completed, Small Works volunteers, including Phil Minshall and Stuart Magnus get the paling fence assembled.



Brian Crouch poses on 7th December with the majority of the roadside fence completed.



At the other end of the new Road/Rail interchange, John Stockley works at attaching the operating bits to the trap/headshunt points, recently installed by the Permanent Way staff.



-----ooOoo-----

A little coach outing was arranged by the Project Wareham team for people associated with the project to have a tour of the Wytch Farm oilfield, guided by Suzie Baverstock from Perenco.



Here, Suzie explains what Wytch Farm and Perenco are all about, while we view the Gathering Station . This is where the products coming from the various wells are separated into natural gas, liquefied petroleum gas, crude oil, and water, and processed. The polluted water is about 94% of what comes up, and is mostly pumped straight back down!

You may be interested to know that Well Site M has some wells drilled horizontally for some 10 kilometres.

Can you believe that this environmentally-unassuming oilfield is the second largest consumer of electricity in southern England, after Heathrow airport? Phew!!

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While trains were not running during the week, the crane gang took the opportunity to extricate diesel-electric cranes FBC 1 and FBC 2 from

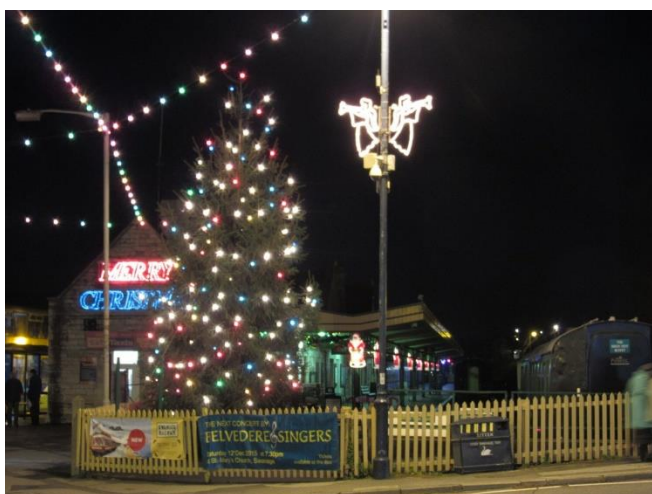
Lakeside siding at Norden on 4th December and carry out some maintenance.

(FBC? Flipping Big Crane, or something like that!)

They are not often seen with jibs up in unison.

Driver Richard Winslade and second man Martin Smith were on hand to give the shunter some TLC when they weren't required to shunt the train, which was most of the time!

-----ooOoo-----



Swanage station looks resplendent with seasonal decoration, helped by the Town Council which uses the end of the station to park the town's Christmas tree.

Saves us buying one!

Completes the festive atmosphere for our Santa trains, and even humbugs might get some Christmas spirit!
But those tunes!

It only remains for me to wish you sincerely a Happy Christmas and a prosperous and healthy New Year.

See you next year for more exciting issues of Swanning Around!

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If you fancy volunteering for something, or need more info about a project, department, or anything else on the railway, then contact **Volunteer Liaison Officer Mike Whitwam** on mike.whitwam@corfestation.f2s.com or volunteer@swanagerailwaytrust.org.uk
You will get a prompt response.

NOTE: All new volunteers MUST go through Mike Whitwam for induction and registration before they can start on the railway.

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If you are not a member of the Swanage Railway, don't be put off! Contact us and volunteer (or at least make an enquiry)! You know you want to!
You will be most welcome!

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Swanning Around also appears on line at:
<http://www.srstaff.co.uk/swanningaround>
and
<http://www.swanagerailway.co.uk/volunteers-diary>

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