



Swanning Around

A Look At What's Happening Around The Swanage Railway

Issue 108 – April 10th 2024

The main event for March has been the Victorian Weekend, a three day attraction based around our own Victorian locomotive the London and South Western Railway T3 class 4-4-0 no. 563, and a visitor from the Bluebell Railway, the South Eastern and Chatham Railway O1 class 0-6-0 no.65. We have tried to give you a flavour of this event in pictures here, but as usual, we recommend you have a look at YouTube for some action. Just enter "Swanage Railway Victorian". That should do it!.

Meanwhile, we have just had Easter come and go with the new look Green timetable utilising the diesel multiple unit in the second path.

This month is the start of daily running of public services, excepting some Mondays and Fridays in April, check the calendar, which is scheduled to carry through to the first week of September.

Note for special events forthcoming, check out the Swanage Railway web site at

<https://www.swanagerailway.co.uk/events>

Also in this issue, a short SITREP summary from the Council of Management.

SECR No. 65 leaves Corfe Castle with a train for Norden on 24th March

photo: Andrew P M Wright





SITREP Summary - April 2024

All working volunteers & staff should have access to Heritage Operations Processing System (HOPS). For access and other information please contact the SR HOPS Administrator Ben Dolman:

ben.dolman@swanagerailway.co.uk

For SR Staff access, and to be added to the 'Volunteer Information' email group, please contact Peter Milford on peter.milford@swanagerailway.co.uk

SITREP is also posted on the Swanage Railway Trust website which provides members with information on the history of the modern Swanage Railway. Some areas require a password, which is available from membership@swanagerailway.co.uk or by calling 01929 475202, leaving your name, membership number and contact number. Please note the office is not staffed daily.

Victorian weekend feedback

Our Victorian spring gala attracted nearly 2000 (1896) passengers over the 3 days and grossed revenues including retail and catering approaching £50,000. (£47,500) This excludes any donations we received over the 3 days.

The costs of running the event and associated cost of sales were about £27,000, resulting in an immediate surplus towards our fixed costs of just over £21,000. This surplus exceeded what we had budgeted for and has to date produced three days generating the most income of the season so far.

We would like to thank all our volunteers who made this event possible, in particular, I'd like to highlight the volunteers who ensured all of our catering facilities were open over the weekend.

A Good Easter for Swanage Railway

The results for the four day Easter break are in and show more positive news in our recovery plan. Over the four days we carried 3,555 passengers and generated income of over £47,500.

This is a consistent 26% increase compared to Easter 2023 and follows on similar results for the February half term .

For those who like statistics we also gave out 650 Easter eggs in our competition which was clearly enjoyed by a large number of families.

Open Forum

A reminder to volunteers and supporters that our next Open Forum will be on the 25th April at 19:00, held online, with a link to follow.



Here's what many people have come to see, away from its normal home at the Bluebell Railway in Sussex, the South Eastern and Chatham Railway class O1 No 65, arriving at Corfe Castle on Friday 22nd March. This loco was originally built at the Ashford Works in Kent of the South Eastern Railway in 1896 as class O and subsequently rebuilt as class O1. The rest of its history you can Google yourself!

Below, The O1 waits impatiently while the T3 rolls in from Norden.

both photos: Andrew P M Wright





Now on Friday 22nd, the brake coach in the three-car set seen behind No. 65 on page 3 suffered an axle bearing failure, and the only other brake coach available was in the class 117 diesel multiple unit, which was duly substituted. Hardly ideal, but in the circumstances, no choice! So we had a Victorian loco on a Victorian Weekend running with a 1950s diesel unit in tow! Engines not running of course! Here is the combination approaching Harmans Cross on 24th March.

On the same day, the T3 No. 563 is crossing the Studland Road viaduct approaching Norden.

both photos: Andrew P M Wright





As usual with Swanage Railway events of this kind, double-headed trains are expected, none more so than with our two stars as seen at Quarr Farm on 24th March.

More unexpected was the pairing of the U class 31806 and West Country class 34028 *Eddystone* on 22nd March as this only happened owing to a train cancellation because of that naughty axle bearing. The U did all the work – great sound!

both photos: Andrew P M Wright



Many of the railway's staff added to the Victorian aura with some form of suitable attire. At Norden, Jo Guess is giving the tip to the guard, dressed, we think, in the uniform of the London and South Western Railway Senior Lady Porter :) (or perhaps she's just mourning the loss of Prince Albert!)

these photos: Andrew P M Wright



Lead shunter at Norden Ethan Waller looks the part above, with the period shunter's hat, and has dual roles as he prepares sustenance for his fellow shunters Robert Craine and Sam Smith. Yes! That really is him in that smoke, you can see the hat!

photo: Gary Packer





The Purbeck Mineral and Mining Museum was open for the event with Peter Sills and some volunteers in suitable attire for the mining event and Peter looking the business with authentic clay dirt!

Don't forget to visit the museum when you are at Norden. It's right by the station.

both photos: Andrew P M Wright





There seems to have been a run on wedding attire for this weekend! This is Corfe Castle Station Master Peter Brice with porter Melanie Davy, and Station Manager David Scott.

both photos: Andrew P M Wright





Down at Swanage, things are altogether a bit more serious. Some members of the Nothe Fort garrison from Weymouth have been hired to keep order and prevent the rampant hordes of angry railway enthusiasts from assaulting Swanage Railway staff when they see a three car DMU arrive behind a Victorian steam engine!

And members of the Hardy Players theatre group from Dorchester were brought in to hold the attention of the Madding Crowd on the platform whilst the Victorian pickpockets boosted the railway's finances!

both photos: Andrew P M Wright



Of course, we didn't really hire any pickpockets, did we? But signalman David Over brought his friend Clive Williams to masquerade as a Superintendent of the line, and with his wife Christina shaking the bucket, they managed to extract £171 and €1.02 for the railway from unsuspecting passengers!

Clive, below with porters David Hales and Peter Maffey, and David Over, right.

photo: Christina Williams



While we're here, that brings us neatly back to the cashless issue. Clearly, relieving people of their small change isn't part of going cashless, so to follow up what we were saying last time in *Swanning Around*, let's make it clear what's happening.

Put simply, cash is expensive to manage, and represents less than 10% of income through purchases, i.e. tickets, shop, etc., and removing cash payments saves the railway a substantial amount of money.. Now this is a **trial** exercise which started at the end of March which we didn't make clear in the last issue, so we will have to wait to see what the effect is going forward.

BUT that doesn't mean we won't be accepting cash donations for the many projects on the railway! I'm sure you will find a box with a slot in it somewhere around the railway to lose all that change that's cluttering up your house! (and all those notes you're not using!)

But let the Swanage Railway Treasurer Robert Patterson tell you all about it in a lot more words on the next page.

WE'RE GOING CASHLESS



You will have seen our recent publicity over the railway company deciding to trial cashless operations from Easter. I wanted to take this opportunity to address some of the concerns that have been raised as a result of this announcement.

I also wanted to reassure everyone that we have not taken the decision lightly – and most importantly without considerable robust examination.

Put quite simply cash is very expensive to manage and is a declining source of income for the railway. Cashless payments rose during the pandemic and have remained at a high level. At the current time over 90% of our income is derived from electronic and card payments. With the potential outsourcing of catering outlets on the railway this will rise to about 96%.

With the improvements of wi-fi connections across the railway we can now take electronic payments on the train, and this includes TTI and revenue protection collections.

We have evaluated that by removing cash the net benefit to the railway from removing payment for cash collections and reconfiguring staff time in Passenger Services (less the additional card fees) we can save over £10,000 per annum.

As you are aware the railway company is making strenuous efforts to save costs and ensure we spend our resources on the important things to keep the railway going. This is an example where we can refocus our resources on better priorities and reflect the spending trends of our passengers.

I am of a generation that may find decisions such as this difficult, but we have to accept change. As a retired auditor I am also mindful that the ancillary benefit of removing cash on the railway reduces the potential risk of fraud and theft.

As a reminder this is a trial. We can't get it right all the time, but I do hope that this reassures you that this decision, like everything we decide, is coming from a good place and is designed to benefit our railway. The 'old ways' of doing things have generated sizeable annual deficits in our core service – if we don't change and adapt the outlook for our railway will be very bleak. Conversely those heritage railways that adapt and transform and reflect the demands of their customers are the ones that will survive. This is one small example of change that will ensure we are going to be one of the survivors!

As a reminder cash collections for Trust fundraising and museums will still be available.

In the Swanage ticket office at the end of the day on Sunday 24th March, Keith Mitchell has gone cashless and is cashing up for the last time!

photo: Alka Thakker

Carpenter John Piper has built a new running-in board for Swanage platform. On 14th March, John, in the red, and Estates manager Pat Cattle on the left, with help from Carriage and Wagon department's Alan English and Jacob O'Hara, are installing the new sign.

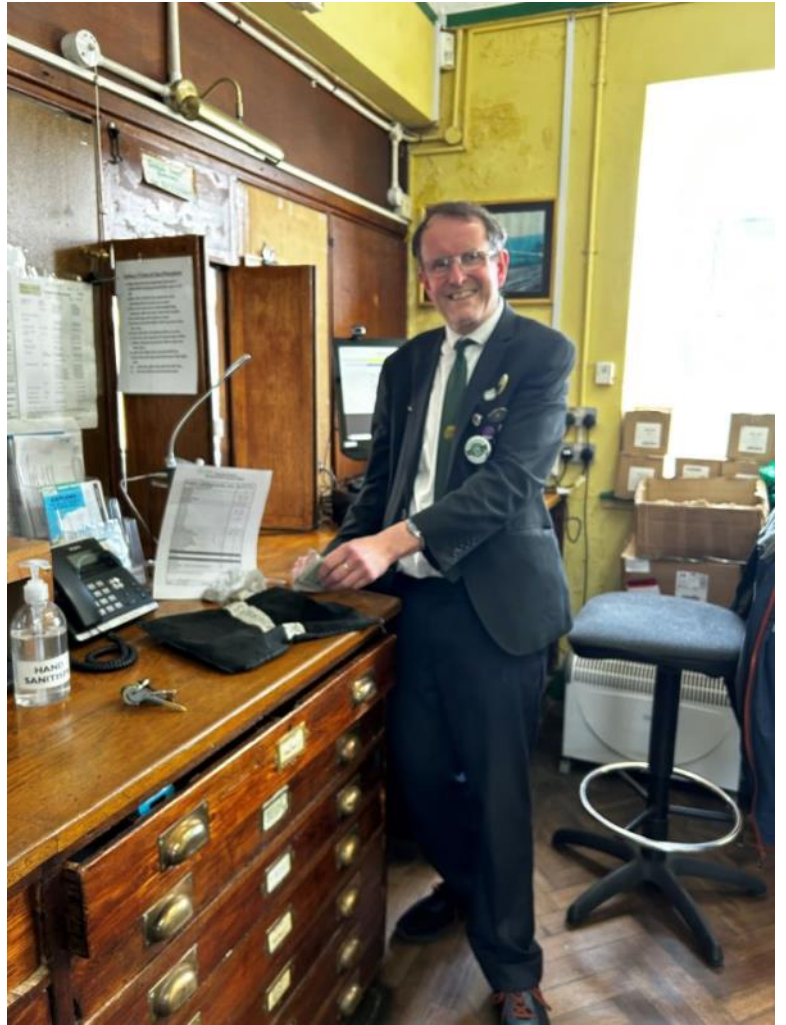
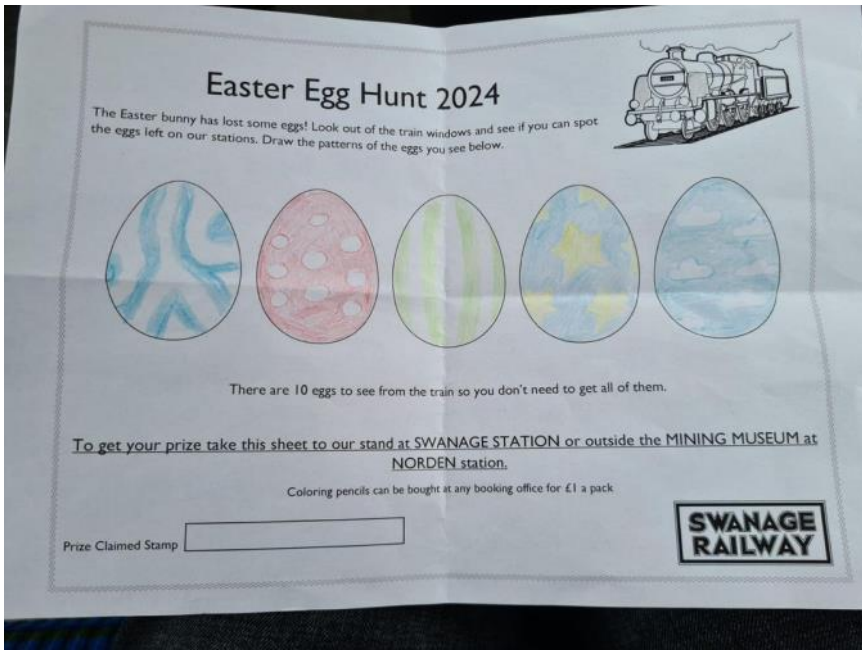


photo: Andrew P M Wright



Well it's safe to say our Easter Egg Hunt was a hit - we carried over 3,500 passengers across the Bank Holiday weekend and handed out over 650 Crème Eggs as prizes!

Well, that's the official view, but Swanning Around has evidence that all might not be as it seems!



To win a prize of a crème egg, each child has to spot some eggs along the line and fill in the form, but we think this form was done by a bit of an artist!

Perhaps it was one of these below.

Signalman Alan Grove seems to have won an awful lot of crème eggs!

And so does porter Peter Maffey! Surely it wasn't him who filled in that form?



Of course, these are just publicity pictures! They didn't have to eat them as well, did they? urghh!

We put these pictures in 'cos we couldn't find any pictures of kids winning any!

these two photos from Andrew P M Wright, top one nicked from Facebook





As we have said, Easter sees the commencement of daily passenger services through to September, excepting some Mondays and Fridays in April, with the new Green two-train timetable which is shared between the class 117 diesel unit and steam.

In amongst these services you will find ***champagne afternoon tea in the 'Devon Belle' Pullman observation car*** and ***Prosecco cream tea***.

That's what 34028 *Eddystone* is hauling on 7th April arriving at Corfe Castle below.

If you want to find out about these special catering services, just go to the Swanage Railway web site at <https://www.swanagerailway.co.uk/events> for availability and prices.





On 5th April, our resident mainline certified class 33 D6515 *Lt Jenny Lewis RN* ventured out to Eastleigh Works to collect 50 026 *Indomitable* for testing at Swanage. No space at Eastleigh for a good run. Above, the two locos arrive at Swanage on the Friday evening.

On Saturday morning, *Indomitable* is across the Wytch Farm road at Norden ready for a day's test running between Norden and the Swanage Railway's limit of operations at bridge 4 at the River Frome. Just time for the official photographer to take a gratuitous group photo of the hangers-on!

Indomitable's support crew Rhys Poole, Graham Hill and Ben Spracklen, Swanage's Jamie Smith, and your editor masquerading as the Norden crossing keeper.

photo: Andrew P M Wright





Indomitable passes the former Wytch Farm oil sidings and Furzebrook ball clay works while on a test run on 6th April.

Don't forget that the Swanage Railway 2024 Diesel Gala is over 10th to 12th May. Details can be found on the Swanage Railway web site at

<https://www.swanagerailway.co.uk/events/view/diesel-gala>

In case you missed it, our friends at Southern Locomotives made an important announcement in early April on their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=southern%20locomotives%20Ltd> copied below to save you some bother.

[SLL - Southern Locomotives Ltd](#)

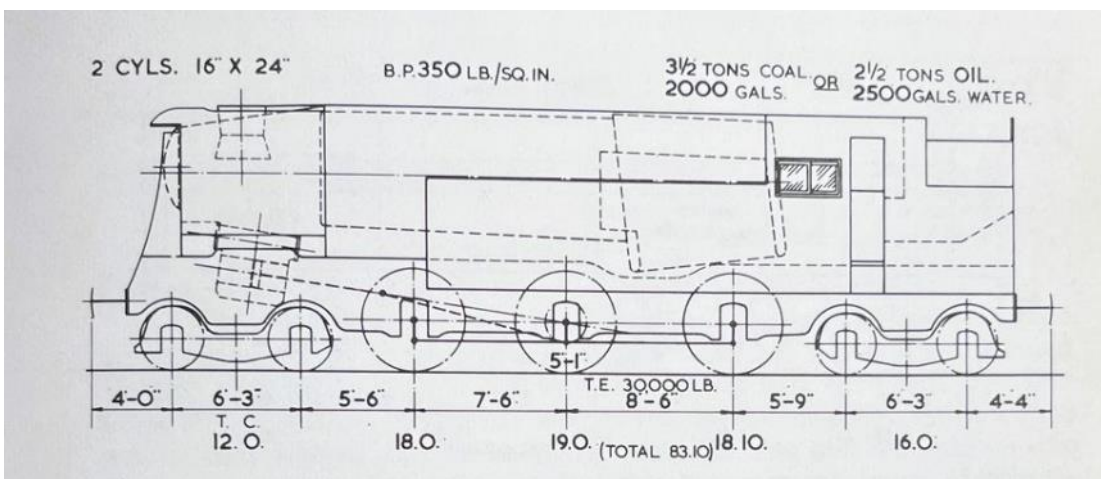
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Bulleid Baltic project to ease head shunt and turntable issues on heritage lines.

34070 Manston was removed from Swanage Railway earlier this year and was reported as moving to the Mid Hants Railway. In fact the low loader carrying Manston travelled only as far as Herston works and the loco was set on a short length of track behind the workshop. To keep this project away from the media videos showing it to be running at the MHR were generated by AI. For the last six weeks all SLL's resources were focused on converting the loco to a 4-6-4 Baltic tank locomotive, the design being based on an early plan from the Leader project, which subsequently used the well-known 0-6-6-0T configuration.

An SLL spokesman explained that the Baltic tank was shorter than the tender form. It uses the front bogie of Sidmouth to replace the Bissell truck with the coal bunker from Standard Class 4MT loco 80104 currently being overhauled at Tyseley. As a Baltic tank it addresses head-shunt limitations at some heritage railways, and those without turntables. It also provides a tender for 34010 Sidmouth which SLL are currently restoring.

The Baltic tank's first test run was yesterday evening and is seen here running round at Swanage station. It still carries 34070's number and name plates, however a new name will be unveiled during the Strictly Bulleid Two gala in June. No final decision on the new name has been made, and suggestions from enthusiasts are welcome.



As usual, volunteers are required in all departments, so,

To use your existing skills or to learn new ones, contact us about being a Swanage Railway volunteer by either sending an email to iwanttovolunteer@swanagerailway.co.uk or by calling 01929 475212 to contact Lisa Gravett, our Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Officer.

-----ooOoo-----

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!

-----ooOoo-----

Compiled and edited by John Denison

Email to swanning.around@swanagerailway.co.uk

Swanning Around also appears on line at:

<http://www.srstaff.co.uk/swanningaround> (not password protected)

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