



Swanning Around

A Look at What's Happening Around the Swanage Railway

Issue 25 – April 12th 2017

Haven't we just had the most successful gala ever?

Yes, the "Strictly Bulleid" Spring Steam Gala broke all records, and, even on the Friday, a working day, there was no room for more on Swanage station platform.

But these events don't just happen. Over several months there are people amongst both our volunteer and paid staff who have worked tirelessly to make this event the success that it was and we applaud them!

We won't mention any names for fear of missing someone – you know who you are!

Now, some of our readers who are not railway enthusiasts may be wondering what all the fuss is about.

Well, it's all about commemorating, or should that be commiserating, the demise of steam traction on the railways of southern England in the summer of 1967, 50 years ago.

The "Bulleid.." part refers to the locomotives built by the Southern Railway and the Southern Region of British Railways, designed under the direction of the Southern Railway's Chief Mechanical Engineer Oliver Bulleid.

These locomotives in their original and rebuilt forms were operating trains between London Waterloo and Southampton, Bournemouth, and Weymouth right up to the last day in July 1967.

A goodly number of them have since been rescued from the scrap man and consequently it has been possible to assemble together a number of those currently in operable condition to put on this amazing gala over three days 31st March to 2nd April.

Yes! Five working Bulleid pacifics at Swanage. What a gala!

This sort of event also requires a lot of input from all staff before, during, and after the event, and we hope to show some of it in this edition of Swanning Around. There was far more going on than can be reported in these few pages, so well done to everybody!

There might also be some other exciting stuff in this issue. Read on!

p.s. No page 3 in this issue – it's **all** glamour this time!

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Preparing for the Event

After months of negotiating and organising those things we hear little about, the participants start arriving. Three locos came by road and 34046 Braunton (masquerading as 34052 Lord Dowding) arrived on its wheels from the national network. It's a mainline-certified loco so can do this.



Here, 34081 92 Squadron, from the Nene Valley Railway, arrives at Norden and is offloaded. As the tender is prepared to hit the rails by the folks from Allelys Heavy Haulage, the engine part arrives.

Then, Steam Superintendent Graham Froud supervises coupling the two halves together,



And our Class 33 diesel D6515 tows it away to Swanage.



On another day, 34092 City of Wells, from the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway, another unrebuilt version, arrives, and the whole performance happens again.



Photo: Tim Marshall

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You may ask how our small water tank at Swanage is going to cope with the thirst of five large tender locos.

It isn't!

So, as part of the preparations, two spare tenders and a couple of tanker wagons were purloined and filled from various sources, including the bus yard next door, and these were equipped with pumps to transfer the water to the loco tenders.



They are seen here in the Goods Shed road, while Ian McDavid shunts the visiting locos around with the diesel shunter D3591 to get the tenders filled and to park them in the right places for the start of the gala.

Below, shunter Steven Duncalfe directs Ian in the diesel shunter shoving 34081 and 34052 into position.



The support crews who come with the visiting locos pause from their preparation tasks to watch our own 34070 Manston pass Swanage Signal Box with a service train.



Almost like Bournemouth shed in 1967, except they weren't that clean then!



Amazing how many volunteers show up when there's a gala on! Looks like they're busy watching Nina Camplin finishing off the Muriel mural on the concrete wall.



It's another Bulleid pacific loco depicted, but this time a Merchant Navy class, slightly heavier than the participants in this gala, which are known as Light Pacifics.

How can you tell the difference between West Country Class and Battle of Britain Class light pacifics? It's all in the name! (that was for our non-enthusiast readers!)

There's more about Nina's work on page 10.



The fires on these locos need plenty of softwood to get them started in the morning, so some cleaners and firemen have volunteered to cut up another delivery of scrap pallets.



At Corfe Castle, 34010 Sidmouth's frames have been recovered from storage, and have been parked for display at the event.

Other parts of Sidmouth were on display at Herston Works. Hopefully, more work may start on this loco once 257 Squadron leaves the works later this year. And we mustn't forget 34028 Eddystone, whose cab and tender chassis are around the railway somewhere! That's a lot of Bulleid around the railway this weekend!



photo: Andrew P M Wright

Got to get up early to prepare the locos. 34053 Sir Keith Park's brasswork and lubrication is attended to while the sun comes up.

On the first day, Friday 31st March, in the yard at Corfe, museum team Roger and Heather Denning get the books and magazines out for display and sale, and yet another Bulleid pacific is brought out!

Yours for a song!



And the Tea Truck Company arrives and gets ready to provide tea and snacks for visitors in the yard at Corfe station.



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During the Event

While the gala was in progress, it was sometimes difficult to make your way through the crowds at our main stations.

At Swanage, this is just Friday and the platform is packed.



And Norden was worse than this at times!



Wot? No water? That's the swimming lessons finished, then!



Photo: Helen Cole

That's why we see water monger Chris Lemon (l) and chief water supervising/managing/directing person John Collard watering 34053 Sir Keith Park from the tankers.



Sir Keith Park – that's a Battle of Britain class! See, it's all in the name! He was an Air Vice Marshal in 1940.

While all this was going on, Herston Works was open to view more Bulleid stuff.

Southern Locomotives was also having a working weekend, and both 34072 257 Squadron (yes, it looks just the same as 34092 City of Wells but has a Battle of Britain name – geddit? Well, actually, we believe it was sporting a Battle of Britain (Runner Up) name for the weekend, but we won't go there!) and 34010 Sidmouth – it's a place in the West Country - were having their bits worked on.



Sidmouth's bogie and trailing truck wheels get a clean up from the team, while 257 Squadron's

central side cladding gets another layer of paint from Ron Bennett and Dave Ensor before being attached to the loco after the weekend.



Inside the works, 257 Squadron has been joined by the cab front from the Southern Locomotives new build Bulleid 'Leader' class locomotive No. 36000, a design that wasn't perpetuated back in the 1940's. A special announcement about the proposal was made by the company at the Strictly Bulleid Gala on 1st April. We look forward to further developments!



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Swanning Around is more about things happening around the railway rather than the trains themselves, but for this bumper Strictly Bulleid issue we will make an exception.

Down on the extension at Furzebrook, 34081 92 Squadron, was crossing the Pikes Tramway bridge and nearing the top of the grade by the clay works,



Photo: Andrew P M Wright

and our main-line registered visitor 34052 Lord Dowding looks a picture pulling the equivalent of nine coaches up the 1 in 78 gradient between Holme Lane Bridge and Furzebrook.



Photo: Andrew P M Wright

Climbing these gradients requires a decent fire and a good head of steam, so, presenting the photographer with his best side, fireman Nick Coram places another shovelful of Russia's finest into the firebox of 34081 92 Squadron. Note the replica Nine Elms greasetop headgear being sported for the occasion!



Photo: A N Other

In support of the intensive timetable for the event, a team of shunters is rostered to carry out the coupling and uncoupling of the locos and to direct them to their next location.

At Norden, Gavin Brown waits to collect the section token so that he can operate the Norden North Ground Frame, while James Heatley stands poised to uncouple the trailing loco from the back of the train.



Same thing at Swanage, with shunter Jon Jon Kerr uncoupling 34053 Sir Keith Park from the freight train.

Incidentally, for those who don't know, 34053 is owned by and was restored by Southern Locomotives at Herston Works, and is normally resident at the Severn Valley Railway in Worcestershire. This is the first time it has been on Swanage Railway rails.



Signalmen worked two shifts at all our signal boxes and Norden Gates crossing box. Here, signalman Mike Walshaw is ready to hand the Norden to Worgret token to Driver Les Frampton on 34053 Sir Keith Park on the tail end of the train as it crosses the road, heading for the Swanage Railway limit of operations at the Frome River bridge 4.



Late shift in Swanage box and Robin White looks up from writing in the register as a train is shunted by outside.



And let's not forget the Standard tank. Not a Bulleid, but used as station pilot at Swanage during this event. 80146 was the last steam loco to pull a train out of Swanage in 1967
Photo: Peter Harris

Then late on Sunday 2nd April, it's nearly all over. Just time for a line-up of locos. The five Bulleid pacifics line up with the M7 and the class 33 diesel in no. 1 siding.



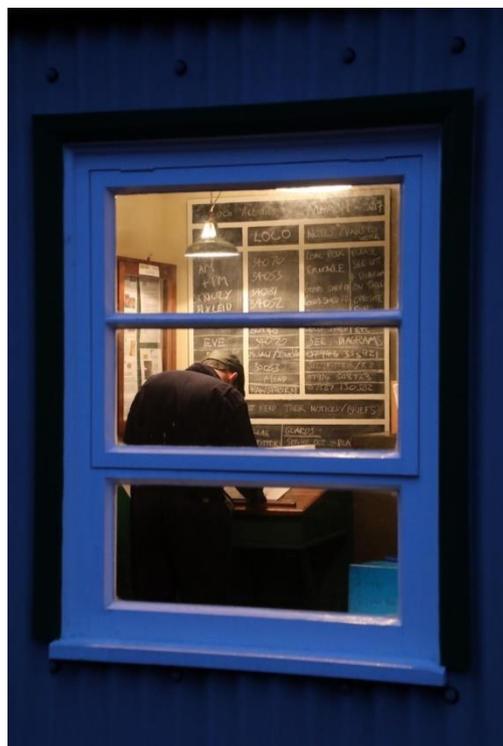
Driver Stuart Cotton leans from the cab of 34070 Manston in this fine picture by Nathan Au.

While all this has been going on there's been some other stuff to report which you may find interesting, or not!

Yes, on Thursday 30th March, cleaner Gavin Brown passed his firing test! Was he pleased?



Gavin leans from the cab of 34070 Manston while the rostered fireman Bill Patten looks on. Well done!



Then, when all the locos have been properly stabled for the night, it's time to sign off.

Photo: Andrew P M Wright

This gala has, without doubt, been the best ever held on the Swanage Railway, both for its content and financial return. There will be other galas at Swanage. Make sure you're part of them!

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Not everything going on is to do with the gala. While everybody else is engaged in gala activities, diesel fitter Andy Garrett and carriage and wagon fitter Jason Kingdon are in the Goods Shed fitting new sides to one of our Turbot wagons. Soon be back in service ready to take a bashing from Big Daddy, the Road/Rail excavator thingy!

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Up at the Mining Museum, Jake Sque was giving the Ruston diesels a run out. You saw them last in issue 15 of SA.



If we had sound with this picture, you would be thinking the one with the racing exhaust pipes sounded a bit cool. Might sound even better with all the cylinders working though!

Note that the mining museum is now open at selected dates through the season. Come and see the latest exhibits.

Here's April's schedule.

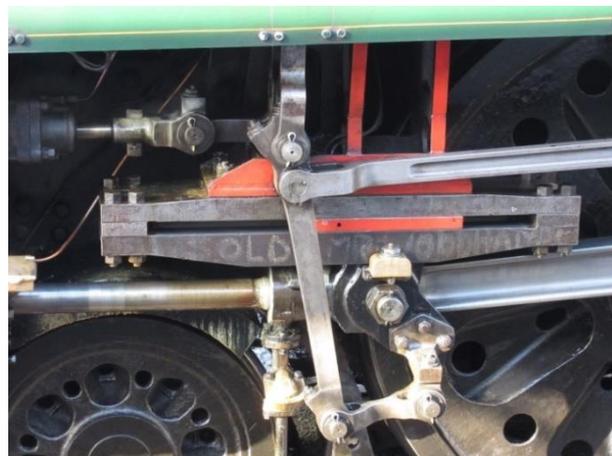


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Don't forget the Swanage Railway **Diesel Gala**, May 4th-7th. There's a great line-up of power. See <http://swanagerailway.co.uk/events/detail/diesel-gala-and-beer-festival-2017> For details.

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Seen on the slide bar of 34053 Sir Keith Park, a clue to its former owner, Woodham Brothers scrap yard at Barry, South Wales, from where it was purchased in 1979 and moved around various locations until being acquired by Southern Locomotives in 2000.



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And now the big news!

The National Railway Museum (NRM) has gifted, yes given, the former London and South Western Railway T3 class 4-4-0 No. 563 to the Swanage Railway.

Recently, this loco has been engaged in theatrical performances of The Railway Children in Canada and London, and may be shipped down to Swanage for a formal handover very soon. More info in a future edition of Swanning Around! Want to be involved? Then get down here as a volunteer!"



Photo: NRM

If you wondered what the finished mural looks like, here it is with 34092 City of Wells just leaving the shed.



Photo: Peter Harris

This is a representation of the advertising often seen at the lineside for Strong and Company of Romsey, Hampshire, who produced BEER! Sadly they have been out of business for many years. Other breweries are available – and often used!

Nina Camplin has produced other artworks around Swanage. Check out the small house above Swanage signal box next to the bridge for more railway scenes.

And there are more cracking murals on a disused building near the pier at Swanage. Nothing to do with the railway, but well worth a look. It will soon be gone, so if you can't get there to see it, here's a photo!



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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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Compiled and edited by John Denison
swanning.around@swanagerailway.co.uk

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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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