



Swanning Around

A Look At What's Happening Around The Swanage Railway

Issue 73 – April 28th 2021



We're open for business again! After staff training as noted in the last issue of Swanning Around, public services were re-started on Monday 12th April.

These services are operated under the same Covid-compliant conditions that were used before Xmas 2020, and were kicked off with Battle of Britain class 34072 257 Squadron heading the first trains.

From the Swanage Railway news release:

Gavin Johns, Chairman of the Swanage Railway Company and Trust says:

“The Swanage Railway is Covid-19 compliant with a long-life anti-bacterial spray being used on its trains and stations while the trains are cleaned, and the tables wiped, after every round trip,” added Gavin who is also a volunteer signaller on the heritage line.

Trevor Parsons explained: “We strongly recommend on-line booking in advance, via our upgraded and improved website, to avoid disappointment as seat numbers are reduced – to ensure the prescribed social distancing – with any unsold seats being available for sale on the day at our Norden, Corfe Castle and Swanage station ticket offices.

“Passengers still have to wear face coverings on our platforms and trains – unless they are exempt – with hand sanitiser points available on our stations. Children under the age of 11 do not need to wear a face covering,” he added.

Subject to the lifting of Government restrictions, the Swanage Railway hopes to re-open its Corfe Castle station museum, return catering facilities to Swanage and Norden stations and re-introduce its dining trains, in a Covid-safe manner, from 17 May, 2021.

The Swanage Railway’s Harman’s Cross station and Herston Halt will remain closed – in compliance with current Government guidance – and are set to re-open when the Government lifts the Covid-19 restrictions regarding social distancing.

Signalman Duncan Light hands the single line token to the crew of the first train since lockdown, leaving Swanage on 12th April.



Picture: Andrew P M Wright

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Ethan Waller is

Mucky Man of the Month!

This is what happens when you volunteer to clean out the smokebox of 34072 257 Squadron!



Picture : Ethan Waller/Rob Tuck

So why has Ethan been getting filthy in *Squadron's* smokebox? Some people will do anything to get in Swanning Around!

Seriously, though, although *Squadron* had the honour of operating the first train since the Covid-19 restrictions were eased from 12th April, a problem with the main steam pipe inside the boiler has meant that the loco has been withdrawn from service temporarily while it is fixed in Herston Works. All that dirty stuff in the smokebox will have to come out and those nice people in the works don't like to get dirty, so Ethan got the job of cleaning it!

Here's another picture of *Squadron* on the first train, this time at Harmans Cross.

While we are running just the one train service under Covid conditions, you ask why we have the signal box open. We have a number of trainee signalmen who need to continue their training with operational experience, and Harmans Cross 'box is the starter location, and has been opened specially for this purpose.

Here, trainee signalman James Mercer exchanges single line tokens with fireman Paul Mackay.



Picture: David Castle



In training at Harmans Cross on 21st April is Aidan Wright, under the supervision of signalman Richard Penny. That's Aidan with the mask on, and Richard is the other one with the other mask on!

Aidan is also outside exchanging single line tokens with fireman Martin Sheret, while third man David Wale observes from the cab window of 80104.



Creating additional excitement this week, has been the transfer of West Country class 34028 *Eddystone* from Herston Works to the railway. This, and the movement of 257 *Squadron* into the works took place on 26th April. *Eddystone's* move has just been in the news on BBC South Today, including the very picture below!



To re-unite *Eddystone* with its tender, Pete Pickering is lying underneath to couple the two together, assisted by what looks like Bailey England's legs! We expect the rest of Bailey was out of sight assembling the coupling components!



Picture: Stuart Magnus



Eddystone and tender were drawn into Corfe Castle station, then the class 08 diesel shunter D3591 took *257 Squadron* to Norden to be loaded on the lorry for transit to Herston Works.

No words are needed! Doesn't it look just right?

80104 comes to the party, entering Corfe with a service train.

Picture: Andrew P M Wright





Picture: Andrew P M Wright

After all the excitement at Norden, both diesel shunters had to return to Swanage, so *Eddystone* was in a double-headed consist, seen passing under Afflington bridge.

In a change to previous practice, these loco loads were not taken the usual pretty way round, to avoid overhanging trees scratching the paint! And SA Smith's newish trailer can negotiate Corfe Castle village without too much difficulty. *257 Squadron* is frightening the traffic approaching Afflington from Corfe, escorted by Rob Teahan, on its way to Herston Works.



Picture: Andrew P M Wright

Picture: Stuart Magnus



You might think that there isn't much to do on a shift operating the level crossing at Norden. Not always!

While we wait for some *Eddystone* action on 26th April, there's farmer Ramm's cattle to help along the road (that's me there! - Ed.). Or there's a crossing malfunction that keeps the road traffic stopped and requires the road barriers to be manually raised! Grrr!

So, while 257 *Squadron* is loaded onto the road trailer, S&T technician Mike Southey attends to the signal position detector that's been accused of causing the problem!



Carrying a wreath in memory of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, 80104 coasts past the Permanent Way track team, who are again busy greasing rail fish plates on 19th April. Just another regular track maintenance function that means they never have nothing to do!

Also helping out with the train service is U class 31806 now all back together with its replacement boiler. A bit different, however, running without its smoke deflectors.

With 80104 soon out of service, 257 Squadron in the works, and *Eddystone* being in commissioning, 31806 will be running the service in late May on its own.

Or will it?

Picture: P'Way team



Picture: Jon Riding





The Carriage Shed Appeal steps up a gear with the release of a new video.

Check it out on Facebook at <https://fb.watch/4HTH-17RU/>

Or on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ArPwVn988LA&t=4s>

To donate, the usual place is www.swanagerailwaytrust.org/carriage-shed-appeal

The site has been cleared ready for action to re-start, as 80104 rolls past on a refresher train early in April.





With the restoration of the LSWR T3 proceeding apace at the Flour Mill workshop, the tender needs to catch up. The 563 group has launched the T3ENDER Club with a view to creating the funding needed.

Check out the 563 web site at

<http://563locomotivegroup.co.uk/restoration/563lg-launches-the-t3nder-club/>

For details of how you can help.

At the Flour Mill, the boiler can be seen upside down, and work is in progress on the new copper inner firebox centre right.

Picture: 563 Group



Class 33 "Crompton" no. D6515 (33 012) Body Repairs

From the last issue of SA you will have seen this loco at Eastleigh undergoing some serious bodywork repairs. Below and on the next page are some more pictures showing the severity of the problems encountered once the cab roof, windows and instruments have been removed.

The first picture shows most of one cab window framing being renewed, and over the page, two pictures of the section below the window frame centre right of this picture, showing before and after views.

Now this loco is needed back in service for some mainline duty later in the summer, so the 71A Group is looking for some funding assistance to ensure this can happen. Have a look at their donation page at http://71alocogroup.co.uk/71A_donate.htm where they have listed most of the work that needs doing and some options for donations or sponsorship of major repair items. Even the smallest of donations is welcome, but if you choose to donate £50 or more, you will get a year's free membership of the support group, and copies of "Spitfire" - cab overhaul news. And we will all have the benefit of seeing the loco back in service soonest, whether it be on the Swanage Railway or the main line.

Pictures provided by Alan R Hawkins, 71A Locomotive Group Fundraising and Publicity Officer





Always plenty of work for loco cleaners to do. On 21st April, Josh Webb is sweeping up the mess left by the loco preparation, while David Wale is about to appear around the corner having chopped some firewood before doing his third man shift on the loco in the afternoon.



British Railways Standard Class 4 Tank Locomotive no. 80104 has given sterling service to the railway, but now has just until 11th May before its current boiler certificate expires and it will have to be withdrawn for overhaul. Steam Superintendent Graham Froud has a driving turn on 21st April, about to leave Swanage. Since the loco appeared in the last issue of SA, volunteers and staff have made sure that the loco can go out looking as good as ever.





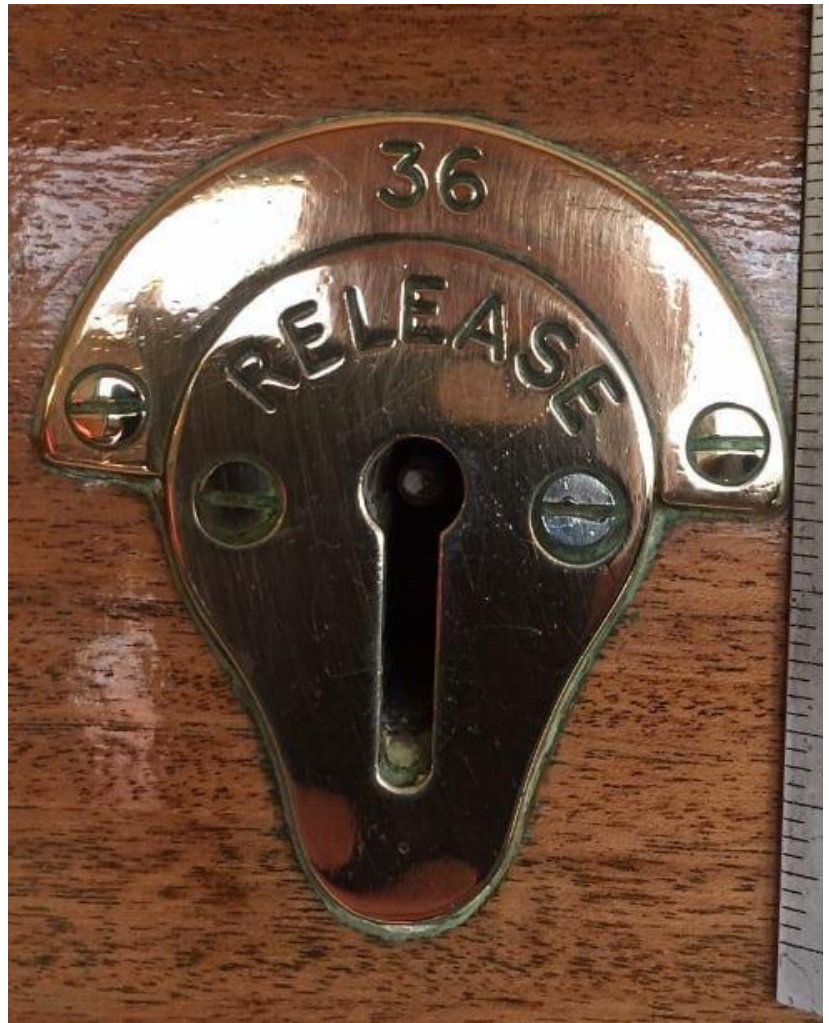
Now here's something you don't see every day. A hand-operated rail drill! Jon Riding from the Signal and Telegraph department (S&T) is using this museum-piece to drill holes for track circuit bonding wires, while Roy Harrison prepares the wires, at Swanage on 21st April.

Only about 80 turns to drill a hole, we are told! Now where's that Black and Decker?!

This drill was Made in England by ABTUS probably some time in the first half of the last century, but these are still being made, and used in places like India where they have many hands to do the winding!



So what happens if S&T needs a proper Sykes lock escutcheon, and there's not an original to be found?
Make one!



They use their engineering talents and start like this!

For the rest of the story, go to their Facebook page at

<https://www.facebook.com/SwanageRailway.SignalandTelegraph>

The Sykes lock is in the Norden North ground frame cabin, which was featured in the previous edition of Swanning Around, although the lock was not fitted then.

Pictures from S&T Facebook



Coaches under repair.

Annabel is having some attention at Harmans Cross with Mike Ellis and Jeff Gregory preparing a new panel for the carriage side, while Alan English and Will Rudge are giving corridor brake coach S21205, from the Wessex Belle dining train, a makeover in the Goods Shed at Swanage.





The Permanent Way team has been busy recently, re-laying the loop/reception line at Herston, and tidying the embankment.

They've made good use of our four Super Turbots and Rudd engineering wagons, transporting the spoil to reinforce the embankment near the Wareham end of our line.

Pictures by the P'Way team



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

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

iwanttovolunteer@swanagerailway.co.uk

or the volunteer contact phone number

01929-475212, where you can leave a message.

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.

-----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

swanning.around@swanagerailway.co.uk

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<http://www.srstaff.co.uk/swanningaround>