



Swanning Around

A Look At What's Happening Around The Swanage Railway

Issue 69 – December 23rd 2020

A graphic with the words "Merry Christmas" in a red, cursive font. The word "Merry" is on the top line and "Christmas" is on the bottom line. There are two holly leaves with red berries, one to the right of "Merry" and one to the left of "Christmas".

Merry Christmas

*Swanning Around wishes you a
Happy Christmas and a New
Year that's better than 2020!*

Needless to say, nearly everyone's efforts during December have been supporting the Steam and Lights services, and many pictures have been circulating on social media. So why should we be any different?

Following is a selection of pictures from various points along the line, some you may have seen before, and some not.

As a Covid-compliant alternative to the usual Santa trains, Steam and Lights has been an outstanding success, so much so that these services have now been extended until 31st December.

Steam and Lights arriving at Norden, led by U class 31806, in sight of the illuminated ruins of Corfe Castle.

Picture by Andrew P M Wright





Steam and Lights has attracted plenty of lineside attention, and to prevent safety issues from distraction of road traffic, the lights are switched off between Corfe station and Castle View. Not so at Afflington, where observing train and lineside attractions from the road bridge has become very popular, and a bit risky in the dark!

This picture from Peter Milford was taken of a test run on 3rd December, before people had twigged what a good view it was!

And, below, through Corfe station, from the web cam.





Swanage station on a wet evening (that's most of them!) with the 19.15 Steam and Lights awaiting departure.

Above, we see 257 Squadron bringing up the rear of the train, and the raffle ticket kiosk sharing the view with Swanage town's Christmas tree.

Below, it's all lights on the platform, and there's a lot of stewards to ensure compliance with Covid regulations. It's a big thank you and well done to all those volunteers turning out to make sure we can continue to run trains in these trying times.



And there's a show all of its own in the booking hall, with a dynamic video show projected onto the vaulted ceiling.

Here's just a few quick snaps of what is a continuous display.



Another fund-raising activity devised by the ladies of the Finance Department, Lorna Lock, Vicki Searle, and Nichola Watts, was a raffle for a Christmas hamper, for each Steam and Lights train.

Also on sale are Disco wands to add to the theme of lights.

The hampers were filled with donations from Swanage Railway people and supporters, and the Swanage Chamber of Trade, with a donated hut turned into a suitable kiosk by our own Estates team with donations from Travis Perkins. And more help provided by others too many to mention, but you know who you are! Phew! That's a real team effort!.



Above, Vicki and Josephine Foley (l), Community Rail Partnership Officer, newly recruited in December, demonstrate the goods, while in the kiosk, Nichola is waiting to take people's money!

All proceeds are going to the Save Our Service appeal.

Both pictures provided by Lorna Lock, Finance Manager, who would have been in the pictures if she hadn't been taking them!



Out at Harmans Cross station there is a display provided as part of Steam and Lights, and decorations provided by the station team.

David Castle has taken these pictures for Swanning Around.



A lot of people on the bridge at Harmans Cross waiting for the vision of light to appear....



..... and pass through the station.

These pictures from David Castle.



Although the present train services in this festive period are consuming a good amount of our attention, Save Our Service is still foremost in our minds, and is crucial in sustaining our ability to continue in future. We could mention (again!) that the Finance Director won't be embarrassed if the appeal reaches more than the desired £360,000 target, but as we have said before, this is well short of what the railway could have made if running trains in a normal year. So let's just leave it to another excellent video featuring fireman Josh Voce. Another top job he's done!

Click on the image below to view the video.



The appeal has generated **£341,148** as at 22nd December. Nearly there!

You can still donate by all the means identified on the Swanage Railway web page at

<https://www.swanagerailwaytrust.org/giving>

where you will find details of all the Swanage Railway appeals for financial help.

So what's happening about the Wareham Service? We at Swanning Around can't predict what's going to happen about the trial service in 2021, with Covid restrictions looking likely for some time, but the Swanage Railway has won a grant for a feasibility study. You can read the press statement yourself, reproduced here.

2 December 2020

**SWANAGE RAILWAY WINS GOVERNMENT GRANT FOR UPDATED FEASIBILITY STUDY INTO WAREHAM
TRAIN SERVICE**

Swanage Railway volunteers have won a Government grant of up to £50,000 to pay for an updated feasibility study and business case aimed at reinstating a train service to reconnect Swanage and Corfe Castle with the main line at Wareham.

South Dorset MP Richard Drax has welcomed the awarding of the grant from the Department for Transport's national 'Restoring Your Railway Fund' as "an important step to ensure our iconic railway sustains its place in our hearts and our livelihoods."

The regular train service between Swanage and Wareham was controversially axed by British Rail in January, 1972, with six and a half miles of the single track line from Furzebrook to Corfe Castle and Swanage being lifted in just seven weeks that summer.

The Swanage Railway has been rebuilt from nothing since 1976 and in 2014 the heritage line was connected with the national railway system – near Worgret Junction, south of Wareham, on the main London to Weymouth line – thanks to an innovative signalling system linking the heritage line with Network Rail.

Richard Drax said: "I am delighted that the Swanage Railway's submission to the 'Restoring Your Railway Fund' has been successful.

"This will allow a detailed scoping exercise to be done to see how train services can be expanded to the main line Wareham, bringing more trains to the stunning resort of Swanage which, in turn, will bring more economy benefit to the local area.

"More money will be needed before expansion plans can be executed but this is an important step to ensure our iconic railway sustains its place in our hearts and our livelihoods," added Mr Drax.

Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris said: "For towns and villages left isolated and forgotten by Beeching cuts, restoring a rail line or a station has the potential to revitalise a community. It breathes new life into our high streets, drives investment in businesses and housing, and opens new opportunities for work and education.

"The dedication and determination shown in Swanage, with volunteers painstakingly restoring the line, underlines just how important these connections are. The potential to transform a steam train service

“By building back with a real focus on better connections, and supporting left behind communities, we are delivering our promise to level up this country,” he added.

Swanage Railway chairman Gavin Johns said: “We’re delighted that a updated and detailed feasibility study and business case into our plans to operate train services from Swanage and Corfe Castle to the main line at Wareham have been successful in this round of funding for the Government’s ‘Restoring Your Railway Fund’.

“The grant will pay for a fully updated feasibility study, and we hope a positive business case, for a passenger train service between Swanage and Wareham once the Coronavirus pandemic is over,” added Mr Johns who is a volunteer signman on the popular heritage line.

Swanage Railway Project Wareham director Mark Woolley explained: “We hope that the new feasibility study and business case – last carried out 12 years ago in 2008 – will be wide-ranging and fully take into account our existing award-winning heritage railway.

“We look forward to working closely with the Government and our stakeholders in the next stages of the ‘Restoring Your Railway’ process as we further develop our business case and plans for reinstating and running a train service from Swanage and Corfe Castle to the main line at Wareham.

“Funded by the Government grant, we hope that the outcome of the feasibility study and business case work will provide us with an updated way ahead on how to operate a sustainable train service to Wareham.

“We are also hopeful that the work will also help us identify potential sources of further funding to provide the necessary train servicing and maintenance facilities to achieve this,” added Mr Woolley who has been a dedicated Swanage Railway volunteer for more than 35 years.

During the summer of 2017, the Swanage Railway ran a 60 selected day trial diesel train service to Wareham which saw four trains a day operate from Swanage and Corfe Castle to the main line at Wareham.

The Swanage Railway always welcomes new volunteers so, for a chat, contact Swanage Railway volunteer co-ordinator Mike Whitwam on 01929 475212 or email iwanttovolunteer@swanagerailway.co.uk.

The permanent way team has some toys that are in demand for other jobs.

On 26th November, they were at Swanage extricating parts of the M7 from behind the shed.

The cab roof is lifted out, to join



..... the side tanks and other components on Big Daddy's trailer

Pictures from Swanage Railway Permanent Way





Corfe Castle school has what they call a “forest school” adjacent to the railway. They were concerned that some of our trees were trying to join in with classes! So the P’way team was down there in December clearing the culprits.

What’s a forest school? Answers on a fiver to the usual address!

As we have seen in previous issues of Swanning Around, the P’way team has spent a lot of time clearing overgrowth that has thrived in the last few years. One of the issues that comes up then is that they find the old British Railways fences, or what’s left of them, that also need repair. It’s a never-ending job!

Anybody fancy a nice outdoor job? You know where to volunteer!

Pictures from Swanage Railway Permanent Way





And here's a sniff of things to come.

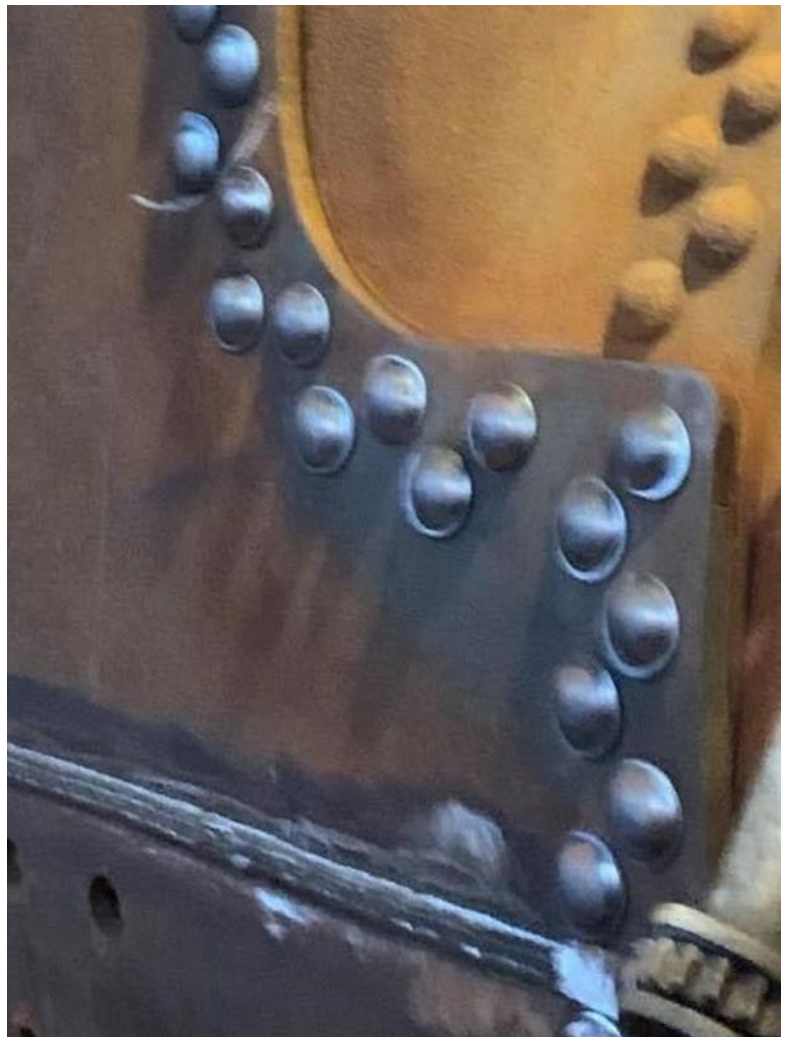
Above, N Class 31874's boiler all loaded up and ready to return to Swanage, at last!

Will be used to replace U class 31806's current boiler which will soon be out of certification, and it will be a much faster turnround than putting it onto 31874 itself.

(picture from Swanage Moguls Fund)

To the right, the 563 group is teasing us with this rivetting picture. Authorisation to continue with the restoration was given by the Swanage Railway Trust, and we hoped for more news of progress for this issue. Next time, perhaps!

(picture from the SRT 563 Group)



So who has Clive Hardy sent long service badges to this month?

January's badge recipients, and an apology!

Elizabeth ATTFIELD HAINES - Operations - 5 years

David CASTLE - Estates - 20 years

Andrew MOODY - Operations - 25 years

Roger MOORE - Passenger Services - 5 years

Stephen MORNS - Operations - 5 years

Justin WARD - Passenger Services - 5 years

Mike WHITWAM - Operations - 25 years



Clive made a bit of a boo-boo with the postage recently, he says:

They were posted in early December.

Unfortunately the wrong postage was put on the December badges - mea culpa - and Royal Mail has been asking for a £1.50 payment for the packet to be delivered.

If that's happened to you DON'T collect the package but send me an email and I'll send out another badge with the correct postage.

Taking all the costs and inconvenience into account, especially you travelling to the sorting office, that's the better option.

Email Clive at long.service@swanagerailway.co.uk should you need to contact him about this issue.

MERRY
CHRISTMAS

From Santa



Santa is self-isolating this Christmas, so is unable to be with us this year.

Santa says

“ Enjoy the Steam and Lights, have a great Christmas and let’s hope for a better New Year.”

See you next Christmas! Cheers!”

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

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