

## A Look at What's Happening Around the Swanage Railway

Issue 23 – February 17<sup>th</sup> 2017

As this issue of Swanning Around is assembled, half term services are in full swing, ably handled by 'Manston' on the Blue timetable.

We also had BBC Radio Solent delivering a live programme from the railway on 15<sup>th</sup> February, and you can see the videos.

Videos? on radio? what?

It was a live programme on the radio station's Facebook page.

They did a couple of video presentations, including a trip up the line in the rain using a GoPro camera (other cameras are available!) attached to the front of 'Manston'. Spot the editor in the second clip!

Check them out here:

<https://www.facebook.com/BBCRadioSolent/videos/1227001250753301/>

<https://www.facebook.com/BBCRadioSolent/videos/1226974760755950/>

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There's been a lot happening at Harmans Cross in the last few weeks.

S&T department has been very busy moving the Up Home signal post to its new location, with the help of crane FBC1.



On 30 January, Graham Froud was sequestered from the works to cut the posts with the oxy-acetylene gas axe,

then the whole lot was lifted away by the crane. Saved having to dig the thing out!



After removing some redundant items from the post, it was re-erected 66 yards away, and new dolls attached. (dolls? = those sticky-up things on top to carry the signal arms!)



This picture from Guard Tim Marshall (from his usual place of safety in the brake van! )

While this signal is out of service, there are some revised instructions for train crews, which are good if you remember to read them! You know who you are!

A few days later, and Nick Gosden is busy extending the track circuit up to the new signal position.



So, why's it been moved? To provide space to install faster points into the up platform, but that won't be too soon as there are other works

required before that can happen, and SA will be there to report!

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Also at Harmans Cross, platform improvements are being carried out, and, in support of these, the PWay department is re-seating the platform edging slabs.

On February 1<sup>st</sup>, Tyler Herrington and Will Fooks re-set the slabs, while Richard Fry takes it easy in the cab of the Road-Rail vehicle Big Daddy lifting and replacing the slabs.

Meanwhile, on the Up platform, David Castle does tidying in the award-winning wildlife-friendly garden.



The station team has also been busy re-using redundant materials from a neighbouring building site to good effect!

This is at the Swanage end of the Down platform.



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Double glamour for Page 3 this time!

British Railways-built Standard class 4 tank locomotive no. 80104, usually referred to as the Standard tank, is almost ready for service, and is looking quite fetching in its new paint. Masquerading as scrapped classmate 80146 for the 2017 season, which is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 80146 hauling the last steam-hauled passenger train on the Swanage branch, the loco may be in service in a couple of weeks after this issue of SA hits your inbox.



Just a few tweaks required for the springs to set loading and height.

Instrumental in spring adjustments is Southern Locomotive Engineering's Ian Dunford, and this involves some working in the pit underneath, and a lot of grease.

Look at the state of him!



**Ian Dunford is**

**Mucky Man of the Month!**

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**At Herston Works,** the N Class refurbished tender tank was re-united with the overhauled chassis on 15<sup>th</sup> February.

Here it is outside the works, having just been lifted off the lorry and parked on the chassis.



At Adam Dagleish's workshop in Stockton, The N Class's boiler repairs are in progress.



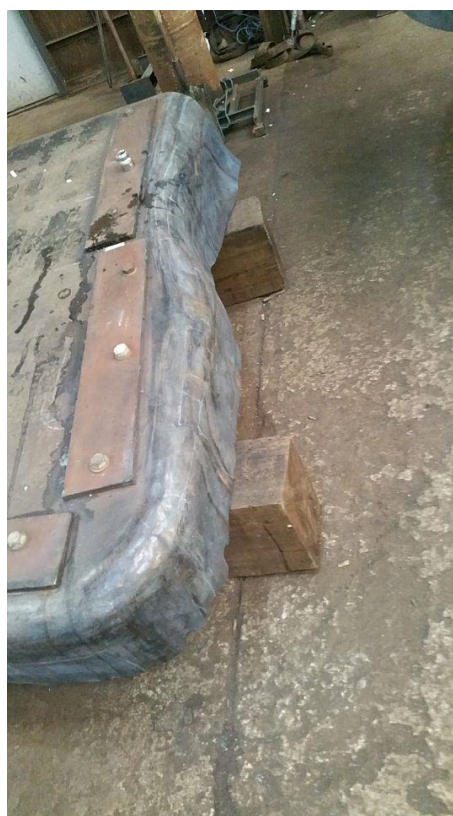
At the smokebox end of the boiler, a new front tubeplate has been fitted.



A new lower section of firebox throat plate, that's the bit at the front of the firebox, has been fabricated and welded on, with new stays.



At the firebox rear end, the outer backhead is being cut away prior to fitting a new one. (see next picture also)



How to make a new backhead? Fix the steel to a former, then heat it and hit it! Here it is waiting to be trimmed and fitted.

p.s. the boiler is upside-down in these pictures, it's not the picture up the wrong way!.

These pictures courtesy of Steam Superintendent and Herston Works manager Graham Froud.

At the back of Herston Works, 'Battle of Britain' class 34072 '257 Squadron' makes progress, although it will not be in action for the forthcoming 'Strictly Bulleid' steam gala.



The works will be open for viewing, though, and bits of 'West Country' class No. 34010 'Sidmouth' will also be there! Here are most of the wheelsets with their new tyres, outside the works.



Remember Southern Locomotives' volunteer Ron Bennett from issue 16? He's 90 years young now! What's your excuse for not volunteering? Can't be age now, can it?

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On shed on 14<sup>th</sup> February, U Class 31806 has been parted from its tender, and is being cleaned up in advance of entering Herston Works for some remedial work to pistons, valves, bearings, etc..



Also on shed, as mentioned last time, 'Beryl' is looking prettier with some blue paint having been applied. Still a long way to go.



The coal storage area extension is moving forward with just the retaining wall shuttering to be fixed and concrete poured.



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There is a policy of continuous training and retention of competence on the railway, in one form or another, and none more so than for signalling.

On January 28<sup>th</sup>, there was a signalmen's MIC (Mutual Improvement Class) at Harmans Cross village hall, organised and presented by our signalling inspector, Alan Greatbatch.

Amongst the items discussed were rules amendments, updates for Norden Gates crossing, and counter terrorism!

Driver George Crouch, who runs the loco crew MIC, was invited to give a driver's view of signals and signalmen! With his advice, you can be sure we won't need the counter-terrorism training when dealing with loco crews!

A group activity followed, with signalman Mike Rodgers in control(?), generating issues for discussion, in the picture below.



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## 26 years ago

The weather in February has been much like we would expect at this time of year in the South, and, with temperatures hovering around 0 deg C, February 6<sup>th</sup> felt a bit chilly for us southern softies.

Your editor casts his mind back to the same day 26 years ago, when temperatures were hovering around -15 deg C, or worse, overnight! And we complain about a bit of frost!

The water tower had an icicle almost touching the ground, until the thin bit at the bottom broke off,



and the frozen injectors on '257 Squadron' were thawed out the old-fashioned way!



I can personally vouch for the fact that the heaters in the sleeping coach alongside the water tower were no match for the weather that week!

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## Carriage Cleaning

A reminder that David Chant advises that carriage cleaning exercises will take place on 21<sup>st</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> February, and 2<sup>nd</sup> March.

Again the usual fun and tea and biscuits!

Further details for this item on the Staff web site, for those who have access.

## **Other News.**

### **As last month:**

Check out the Swanage Railway website

<http://swanagerailway.co.uk>

or Facebook for the latest news about the Strictly Bulleid spring steam gala on March 31<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

Five Bulleid Pacifics, in both rebuilt and unrebuilt forms, are confirmed for this event.

Make sure you have the annual Diesel Gala and Beer Festival in your diary – it's on 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> May.

British Pathe TV has a film about the Story of the Swanage Railway on free viewing at the moment. Check it out at

[https://www.britishpathe.tv/#/details?feed\\_id=6wkAATkGz5LmS&group\\_id=hcezLk2wgJdw9](https://www.britishpathe.tv/#/details?feed_id=6wkAATkGz5LmS&group_id=hcezLk2wgJdw9)

### **Also:**

Our Operations Manager, Nick Lloyd, is jumping ship at the end of February, and going to work for Network Rail as a signaller at Brockenhurst. Can't understand why a young man would want to leave such a great place to work to do a job for twice the money and half the effort!

Now, the hot news this week is that **M7exit** has been given a reprieve!

Yes, the expected withdrawal from service of the M7 has been put back to November.

This has come about owing to the condition of the boiler being such that an extension to the boiler ticket has been granted. The boiler had a re-tube and hydraulic test around five years ago, so is in better condition than might have been expected for a normal 10 years in service.

Here she is on shed at Swanage having a steam test on 17<sup>th</sup> February.



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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](mailto:mike.whitwam@corfestation.f2s.com) or [volunteer@swanagerailwaytrust.org.uk](mailto: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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