



# Swanning Around

## A Look At What's Happening Around The Swanage Railway

Issue 71 – February 28<sup>th</sup> 2021

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Boris has spoken! In response to his road map out of Covid restrictions, the Swanage Railway Trust and Company have produced our own road map towards reinstating services.

From Chairman of the Trust and the Board, Gavin Johns :

*The Board has reviewed the detail of the Government's road map to get back to high degrees of normality from the effects of Covid-19. Although there are some final checks to be made, the Board believes that we can start services in stages using the Government's steps as follows:*

*Step 2 (not earlier than (net) 12 April) - services SW-CC-NN can start using the same model successfully deployed last summer ensuring full compliance with Covid regulations. The Swanage shop can also re-open from that date.*

*Step 3 (net 17 May) - museums, catering and the Wessex Belle can re-open.*

*Step 4 (net 21 June) - HX and Herston can re-open.*

*With this broad plan the detailed work will now start to ensure infrastructure, locomotives and rolling stock is declared fit to use/run by the end of March. Staff on furlough, supported by essential volunteers, will be asked to return to work to support work for service restart.*

*There will then be a period of train operation without customers to refresh competencies across all operating grades before starting public services on the Step 2 date. These services could start on the 29th March. Marketing and on-line bookings will open in advance of the public operating date.*

What this means is that we are optimistic about restarting services soon, and we will be consulting volunteers to ensure we have sufficient numbers able and willing to attend. Subject to a few final checks, we will be making further announcements shortly.

He continues:

*Once we are up and running, work will start on planning a mini-gala to welcome Eddystone back into steam; an Autumn Gala and a summer peak evening DMU service aimed at valley stations with high numbers of temporary campsites. These plans are contingent on progress with the Steps and for resources to support delivery being available **in addition** to those needed to deliver the core heritage operation.*

*Staff and member travel privileges will be reinstated in full but as on-line booking is currently not supported it will be necessary to pre-book at ticket offices before travel.*

*There are good grounds for optimism that the season ahead will be a real uplift after the past twelvemonth. I don't doubt though that there may be times when the demands placed on us, if the forecast summer staycation boom becomes reality, will stretch us to the limit but, and I hope you will agree, the opportunity presented to make up ground lost last year and to provide cover for the winter ahead is too good to be missed.*

*Now we just need to hope that the Government can confirm each Step at each stage.*

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Some financial facts:

2020's income was less than half that for 2019, even including the input from Government contributions and the SOS appeal. The target for the appeal has been reached, with donations from our generous supporters at **£364,993.73** by 26<sup>th</sup> February. That sounded like a lot of money last March, but clearly more is needed. The money raised has at least enabled us to keep the railway in Care and Maintenance mode ready for restarting.

So the message is still "Save Our Service" and keep donating if you are able. We have good reason to be optimistic this year, but it will be some time before we are back to 2019 levels, when even back then we had several appeals for help for essential projects, which are mostly still on hold.

You can donate to the Swanage Railway SOS appeal at:

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

Information on other fundraising appeals is on the same page.

# New Barn Bridge

Subject to a speed restriction for some time, the opportunity has been taken to carry out the necessary work to the bridge to enable normal running.

Although originally the job may have been thought to be only the replacement of the timber waybeams, previous inspections located a crack in the bridge abutment wall which has indicated that further work is required to ensure continued safety of the structure.

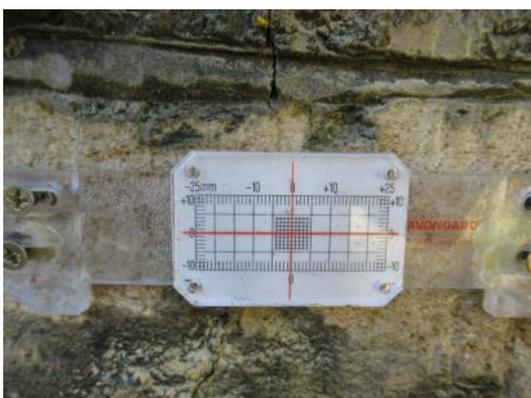
Here's a short storyboard of work over the last week.



Above, the bridge a while ago, with a geological bore being taken to ascertain what's holding up the bridge and the embankment. Several samples have been taken, along with bores to establish water levels in the embankment.

(Picture: Swanage Railway P'Way)

Right, project manager Nick Coram points out the crack and the sensors that have been attached to monitor any movement of the right side of the abutment wall.



It's Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February, and diesel-electric crane FBC1 (**Flippin' Big Crane 1**, or something like that!) is on site to remove the track panel and the waybeam, see right.

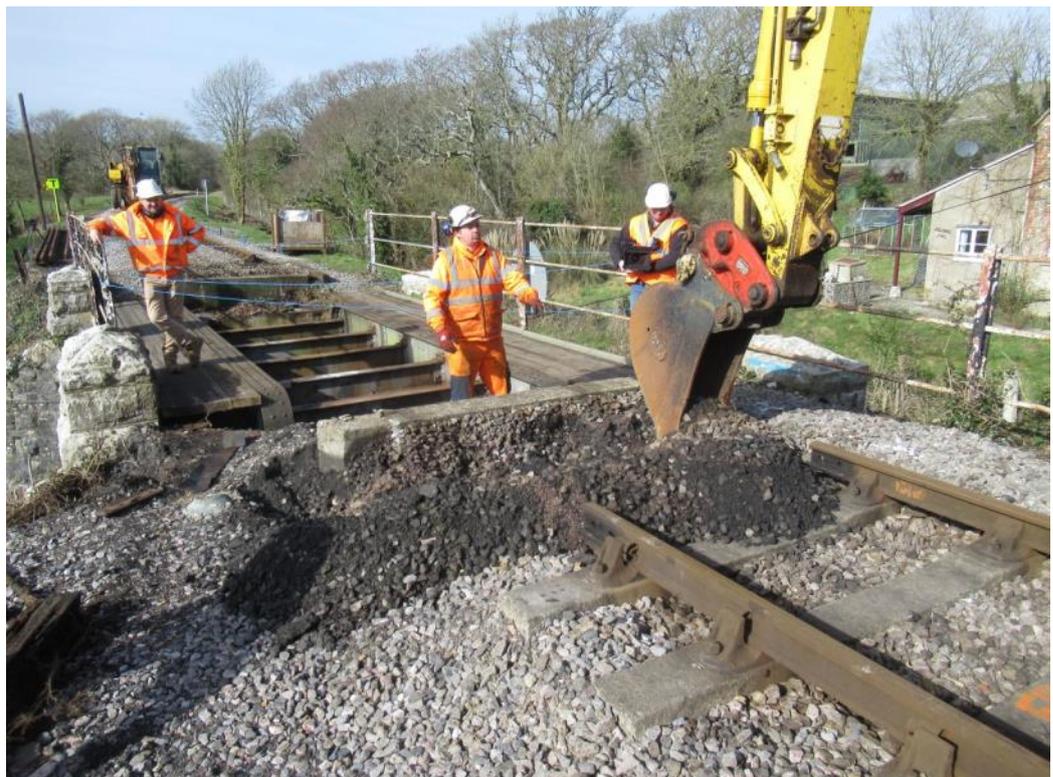
(picture: SR P'Way)

Now the concrete block supporting the end of the timbers is exposed, showing that it is also cracked.



Digger time! In with the bucket to remove the concrete block, and dig down to remove material adjacent to the abutment stonework.

Billy Johnson directs operator Barry Light, while Nick Coram looks on, and Kevin Babey has the big camera out getting footage for a future Swanage Railway video.





Having dug out a big hole to remove soft material, the void is now partially filled with compacted type 1 aggregate (picture: SR P'Way) to support a new concrete block, followed by erecting timber shuttering and making up rebar reinforcement caging fixed into the stonework. This work was planned and supervised by consulting engineer Jim Peters in conjunction with project manager Nick Coram.

On site on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February in the picture below, shuttering and rebar fixing is in progress with (l-r) Billy Johnson, Jim Cartwright, Adam Woodman (in the hole), Jim Peters, Barry Light, Steve Froud, and Ken Orchard. Concrete pour is scheduled for Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March.

Before you ask, what appears to be a one-sided work site is because the bridge abutments are not at a right angle to the track, but the waybeam support is.





A crew had to be rostered on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February to get the crane and the new waybeam for New Barn bridge down to Swanage. At Norden station, shunter Josh Voce directs driver Ashley Haines, with guard Paul Simons, as they form up the train at Norden.

After working at the bridge, the crane is stabled over the inspection pit at Swanage for some maintenance until it is required to put the bridge back together.



The Estates team has been about, ensuring that our infrastructure is good for welcoming people back to the railway.

Just two examples of the extensive work.

Estates manager Pat Cattle and volunteer John Watt are bringing the toilet at the signing on point up to a standard suitable for both sexes.

At Norden, there's some new running-in boards and a new platform fence to replace the previous fence which was hanging on to life, and the platform, just!

In this picture, Ashley Haines is running class 33 no 33 111 round the train with the crane and materials for New Barn bridge.





U class 31806 now has the overhauled boiler in the frames, with a new ashpan, and is in the process of being re-assembled at Swanage. On the face of it, with cab, boiler cladding and other external items fitted, it looks like a lot of progress has been made by fitters Chris Birmingham and Bob Jones assisted by James Forster. But there's a lot more work to do before it is ready to run.

A steam test is due imminently.



Remember 80104? The BR Standard class 4 tank loco has been sidelined in siding 1 at Swanage for the last year with leaking firebox stays, and is looking a bit grubby having received little attention in the Covid period. But the loco fitters are putting a fire in it for a steam test with a view to using the loco for staff refresher runs prior to resuming services in April, and to get some use out of it on passenger services until the boiler certification expires in mid-May.

All this subject to Steam Superintendent Graham Froud passing it fit to run, of course!

Here, on 25<sup>th</sup> February, fitter Rob Tuck delivers materials for lighting up, while a hose fills the boiler.

Might even get a clean-up next week!



Harmans Cross station hasn't seen any passenger action for around 12 months, but the station team has been busy when permitted, so that the station will be ready to receive trains again. Might not be till June, but at least the birds will be looked after.

David Castle pops in to keep the birds fed and has been fortunate to record some of the lucky recipients.

Spring is springing on the station, too, with the snowdrops on show.

Pictures: David Castle





So what's the M7 bunker doing at the Dean Forest Railway? Is it lost? No! It's there so that Western Steam Engineering can build a new one.

Picture kindly sent in by Nigel Benning.

Nearer to home in Herston Works, the M7's cylinders have been re-bored.

In the Goods Shed at Swanage, the tender for West Country class 34028 *Eddystone* has been shunted in for painting and finishing work. Southern Locomotives' Chris Hardy is fitting the electric lighting conduit on 25<sup>th</sup> February.





Picture: Andrew P M Wright

The Swanage Railway Trust and the National Railway Museum are pleased to announce that they have reached agreement for the National Collection's Victorian London & South Western Railway T9 class steam locomotive No. 30120 to remain on the Swanage Railway. The new agreement will see the 1899-built locomotive stored at the Swanage Railway, in Dorset, following expiry of its boiler certificate in August 2020. The agreement includes provision for limited disassembly, including a boiler lift, for the Swanage Railway Trust to assess the potential for the locomotive to be returned to steam.

Anthony Coulls, Senior Curator of Rail Transport and Technology at the National Railway Museum, said:

*"The National Railway Museum's Operating Rail Vehicle Strategy, published in 2019, is due for review but we still see a working future for No. 30120 which is dependent on the practicality of another overhaul to working condition ."*

No timetable has yet been set for the engineering assessment of No. 30120, although the Swanage Railway is keen to complete this as soon as possible for it to be included in its overall motive power plan.

The full press release is published on the SRStaff web site for those with access.

One day, we may be re-creating the scene above, but with three London and South Western Railway locomotives well past their 100th birthdays!

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](mailto: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.**

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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

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