



Swanning Around

A Look At What's Happening Around The Swanage Railway

Issue 105 – January 11th 2024

Happy New Year to everyone, and we look forward to a happy new year for the Swanage Railway. As you will see in SITREP, management is working on the process for positive financial performance going forward, but we still need your help if you are able. You can contribute to cash flow by travelling on our trains or by giving us a donation at <https://swanagerailwaytrust.enthuse.com/saveyourrailway#!/>

As we go to press we have no figures to show you for income from Polar Express, New Year diesel, or Winter Warm Up trains, but loadings looked very encouraging.

So this issue has some Polar Express, DMU diesel and warm up content, and more.

The winter shut down is now with us until February half term, when a blue timetable is planned, followed by a Community weekend, details enclosed. Also in February/March there are some driver experiences available. See the Swanage Railway web site for details.

Below, *Eddystone* approaches Townsend Bridge with a Polar Express in an unusual view of Corfe Castle.



photo: Andrew P M Wright



SITREP Summary - January 2024

All working volunteers & staff should have access to Heritage Operations Processing System (HOPS). For access and other information please contact the SR HOPS Administrator Ben Dolman: ben.dolman@swanagerailway.co.uk

For SR Staff access, and to be added to the 'Volunteer Information' email group, please contact Peter Milford on pete.milford@swanagerailway.co.uk

SITREP is also posted on the Swanage Railway Trust website which provides members with information on the history of the modern Swanage Railway. Some areas require a password, which is available from membership@swanagerailway.co.uk or by calling 01929 475202, leaving your name, membership number and contact number. Please note the office is not staffed daily.

Welcome

Will Sheret and I would like to thank you for the many favourable comments received regarding SITREP over the past few weeks. Last week I visited Corfe Castle station, and four further volunteers came forward with feedback, and a number of NEW ideas, which is heartwarming.

Published most weeks, in each edition we are keen to publish a feature item, a Profile, and would like to start advertising specific tasks, projects or roles where we need volunteer support under the banner 'Job Shop.' Of course, all the above are dependant on your contributions, which are most gratefully received.

Winter Warm Up

We started 2024 in style with our annual 'Winter Warm Up' weekend. Given the heavy rain earlier in the week, the lashings of sunshine we were blessed with were most welcome, let us hope all our special events this year are blessed with such good weather! Thanks to all who supported this event and made it possible.



563 at the head of an engineering train at the Winter Warm Up, Andrew PM Wright

Polar Express – Gavin Johns

Can I express my thanks to everyone who had a part to play in delivering our part of the Polar Express event. It was a new concept for the Railway requiring a different approach with our partners and it is really good to note through teamwork that we operated safely all the services we were contracted to provide. We are now reviewing the whole experience. The review is being led by Neville Crook – if you have any feedback to offer, please contact neville.crook@swanagerailway.co.uk

Business Recovery Plan 2024-27

Progress on the draft Business Recovery Plan has been slow, and there are some hurdles still to overcome. However, we continue to refine the plan so it can be sent out for 'scrutiny'. Then the critical path really needs to be presented to the Board, then the CoM, proceeding then to the staff and then the wider working members. We hope this process might be as follows:

Thu 25 Jan Board meeting (1000hrs)

Sat 27 Jan CoM Meeting (0930hrs)

Thu 01 Feb Engagement Meeting (employees) (1400hrs)

Sat 03 Feb Open Forum (in Swanage & Online) (1700hrs)

Save Your Railway Appeal

Our **Save Your Railway** appeal as of writing now stands at £82,996, a nice welcome into the New Year when you consider how tight cash can be over the Christmas period, however! Our wonderful finance team are still processing the donations received over the festive period, so I expect this number to increase in due course and will be reported in next week's SITREP accordingly.

Now that we have entered 2024 the focus is turning onto producing the SOS style videos for the appeal, filming is due to start tomorrow with the beginning of our Winter Warmup services, and once produced will appear across our websites and social media. Thanks go to Josh Voce and Kevin Babey for once again stepping up to help in our time of need.

As we all know, once the Winter Warmup event has concluded, the Railway will "shutdown" for the winter to allow our PWay team the access they need for major repairs and renewal. What you may not know however, is that with no trains running the opportunity is taken for the

Sygnets to walk the length of the line, normally raising funds for the group. This year the group have opted to put all funds received toward the SYR appeal. They are the future of our railway, as is evident by the number of ex-Sygnets we have across most departments, so they want to do their bit to help the railway survive. If you are on or about the railway on Saturday 13th do give them a wave as they walk between Furzebrook and Harmans Cross.

If you wish to sponsor the Sygnets on their walk you can do so via this link: <https://swanagerailwaytrust.enthuse.com/sygnets>

The main SYR appeal page can be found here: <https://www.swanagerailway.co.uk/save-your-railway>

photo: Andrew P M Wright



There were plenty of views of the Polar Express in issue 104, so we have only a few this time. On the last day of The Polar Express on the Swanage Railway, 30th December, we have the very last train passing Corfe Castle, with signalman Stuart Magnus exchanging single line tokens firstly with secondman James Forster on the up train to Norden, and with the crew of *Eddystone* on the last down train to Swanage.

Still some of the locals on the platform thinking they could see the train of lights! That was last year!

photo: Andrew P M Wright





On page 6, Mike Walshaw will give you an idea about what happens in the Norden Gates level crossing cabin during the Polar Express timetable. It's clear that there are some long waits with nothing happening. On 22nd December, crossing keeper Graham Hale demonstrates what to do between trains!

So where was the North Pole? Swanning Around discovered it located at Norden, and on 22nd December, The Polar Express has just passed with Santa by his sleigh. If you are wondering, that's *Eddystone* on the rear of the train as it negotiates the level crossing at Norden Gates.



Volunteers come and go in organisations like ours that are volunteer-led, and for all sorts of reasons, which is why we are always advertising for more.

Swanning Around is more about people doing stuff than not doing stuff, but we'll make an exception for Mike Walshaw, who has stopped doing stuff in the signalling department. His reason for leaving? Early retirement, we would guess, as he's only 88 years old! Plenty of life left yet, and he will be continuing to volunteer in the museums department.

Now Mike will always be associated with the signalling system in place between Corfe Castle and Wareham operated from the Dorset Coast panel at Basingstoke signalling centre. He was responsible for the system design in association with the Network Rail contractor Signalling Solutions Ltd.

Mike joined the Railway in October 2001 when he moved from the West of Scotland to Swanage, recently decided that, due to the declining health of his legs, it was time to hang up his Signalman's Duster. *Swanning Around's* roving reporter caught him at work at Norden Gates signalling the 'Polar Express' on Saturday 16 December, 2023, his last day of service. Mike points out that it is not the most exciting of duties on the Swanage Railway and here is the timetable of his tasks in the first hour of his 5-hour turn of duty:

10:45. Sign on duty, check emergency phone to Swanage, check all indicators, speak to Corfe Castle Signalman, get his permission to set from ABSENT to MANNED, switch Signal 5 ON, set Points 25 to Reverse, take a break.

11:05. The 11:00 Up Polar Express has just left Swanage and Corfe Castle sends 1-5 bells to release a Norden Gates - Worgret Token, check Signal 4 Released, place Token in pouch, take another break.



Thanks to Mike for the words to go with these pictures.

11:35. Time for Action!

The 11:00 Polar Express stops at the North Pole (Norden Station), check approach road clear, lower Barriers, check 'Crossing Clear', set Signal 4 Switch OFF, go outside to Up Token Exchange Platform, observe Diesel Driver (Wareham-end loco) deposit Corfe Token on Up Token Set-Down Hook, display Worgret Token to Diesel Driver, and hand it up to Steam Driver at Swanage end of train,



Retrieve Corfe Token from hook, observe tail lamp, return to cabin, set Signal Switch 4 ON, raise barriers, deposit Corfe Token in Token Instrument, send 2-1 bells to Corfe, receive 2-1 then 5-1 bells, withdraw same Corfe Token, check Signal 32 Released, place Token in pouch, check approach road clear, lower Barriers, check 'Crossing Clear', set Signal 32 Switch OFF, go outside to Down Token Exchange Platform, observe Steam Driver deposit Worgret Token on Down Token Set-Down hook, hand Corfe Token up to Steam Driver, retrieve Worgret Token from hook, observe tail lamp, return to Cabin, set Signal Switch 32 ON, raise Barriers, deposit Worgret Token in Token Instrument, send 2-1 bells to Corfe.



11:43. The 11:41 Down Polar Express is timed to pass the North Pole. Gosh, that was a busy eight minutes! Nothing will happen now until about 12:50 when the Worgret Token is released for the 12:44 Up Polar Express. Time to read the daily paper or SRM or enjoy your picnic lunch.

13:20. The 12:45 Up Polar Express stops at the North Pole, so repeat above *ad nauseam*.



Photo: Robin Brasher

The Polar Express finished on 30th December, so the services for the New Year on 31st December and 1st January were in the hands of the heritage class 117 diesel unit. Loadings were very good considering it wasn't steam. The view above shows the train at Swanage on New Year's Eve, with the train leaving Corfe Castle on New Year's Day.



Photo: Robin Brasher



The main event in this issue is the Winter Warm Up, which took place over the weekend 6th/7th January. Offering steam and diesel hauled passenger and freight trains, the big draw was, of course, the T3 4-4-0 no. 563. As we reported in issue 104, a change to the boiler draughting ensured a performance upgrade, and four coaches were managed easily on the first day. Loadings on the steam trains on Saturday were standing room only, so an additional coach was attached for the Sunday steam services, again handled easily by 563.

Events like this bring out the cleaners, here on both 563 above and 34028 *Eddystone* below.

On *Eddystone* are Richard Millington, Ben Ford, Arron Harrison, and Dan Saunders, with driver Stuart Cotton oiling round.





© David Ensor Travel Photography

When you're planning an intensive weekend, you'd better make sure your star offering is working ok. In this view from David Ensor, 563 is on a test train of five coaches running wrong road through Corfe Castle station. The rain is lashing down on Thursday 4th January as this test is run, but the weekend was clear skies, as in the picture below on Saturday 6th with 563 running under East Hill at Corfe.



Photo: Daniel Gosling



On Saturday 6th January, 563 approaches Afflington bridge with a freight train.

As usual, you can find many more pictures and videos on [Swanage Railway Unofficial Facebook](#) page and on YouTube. The Southerner has done another great video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cMAn1fvDJro> Other videos are also available!

On Saturday evening, 563 finds itself double-heading with 34028 *Eddystone* at Corfe Castle.





The class 33 diesels had their own 4 coach set with electric train heating, and also took their turns on the freight set.

On 7th January, both locos were rostered to double-head the first train of the day.

And D6515 approaches Corfe Castle past the diesel depot where class 117 and 121 units are in repose.





Photo: Andy Moody

Two bonus pictures from 6th January.

Above, 563 leaves Corfe Castle for Norden, with the exhaust from *Eddystone* in the top right corner as it heads for Swanage.

Below, T9 30120 has been cleaned and posed with 563 at Swanage station for Swanage Railway official photography. The 563 Group is liaising with the T9's owners the National Railway Museum, with a view to fundraising and overhauling, much like they did successfully with the T3.



Photo: Dan Saunders



On Sunday 7th, Corfe signalman Mick Gould exchanges single line tokens with the loco crew. Not sure who the fireman is, but the driver is young Les Frampton!

As indicated earlier, the steam train set was augmented with an additional coach on the Sunday, as seen here with 563 powering up the gradient from Corfe Castle towards Harmans Cross.





photo: Andrew P M Wright

Winter Warmer services ran into the early evening on both days, which included running the later trains in the dark.

Signalman Mick Gould has the lights on in Corfe Castle signal box on 7th January, while driver Chris "Jiffy" Lemon waits on 563 to run round his train at Norden.



Photo: Gary Packer

Vote for 563!

The [Swanage Railway Trust 563 Locomotive Group](http://www.steamrailway.co.uk/read/hra-awards) is delighted to have been nominated for the [Steam Railway Magazine Award](http://www.steamrailway.co.uk/read/hra-awards) and need your vote!

www.steamrailway.co.uk/read/hra-awards

This award is decided by the public and will be announced at Heritage Railway Association's annual ceremony on February 10th and you can now cast your vote online until the 18th January!

The recognition of our fairytale story is really appreciated and it's thanks to our very own Engineering team, the Flour Mill and all our supporters from across the world for helping to raise over £650,000 and making it all possible!



PLEASE VOTE FOR 

for the restoration of LSWR 'T3' No.563 and returning it to steam for the first time in 75 years.
www.steamrailway.co.uk/read/hra-awards

STEAM RAILWAY
HERITAGE RAILWAY ASSOCIATION



Oh Dear! A broken spring on the class 08 shunter 08 436! Operations volunteers to the rescue!

One of the centre driver springs needed replacement, carried out by Charlie Rogers, Gavin Brown (pictured below) and camera-shy Nick Lloyd (perhaps he took the picture?).

Kadin Jacques finished the job by painting the strap to match the others.

Can you see the broken leaf on the old spring?

Another loco fit for further service!

Photos provided by Charlie Rogers





Just few words about the 4TC progress.

Things are happening with coach 70824 which is currently suspended on the jacks at Swanage.

Firstly, we see Dan Bennett is proving the operation of the air brakes using the workshop air line, while some of the electrics are now working, as shown by a finger on the light switch!

You can help by contributing to this project via the website at

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



From:

Andy Haddon

Health, Safety & Compliance Manager

Swanage Railway

Tel; 07788 924364

VOLUNTEER HEALTH & SAFETY ASSISTANT

We are looking for a keen individual to help make the difference in delivering the requirements of the Swanage Railway safety management system, including the quality and assurance of suppliers providing safety critical and safety related goods and services in support to the Health, Safety & Compliance Manager.

The post holder should ideally have a working knowledge or understanding of health & safety management (IOSH or NEBOSH qualification would be advantageous but not essential) and a basic understanding of quality management processes, but training and mentoring will be provided as appropriate. For more information and a copy of the full role profile, please contact Andy Haddon on 07788 924364 or email andrew.haddon@swanagerailway.co.uk

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On the subject of volunteering, a date for your diaries.

The weekend of 16th/17th February will be a **Community Open Weekend ***, with access to some of the parts that the public generally doesn't go, some demonstrations, and some experiences and tours. Some of the experiences and tours need to be booked ahead, so take a look at the Swanage Railway website at <https://www.swanagerailway.co.uk/events> for info. The website will be updated soon with more information.

(* may not be the correct title.)

So if you are interested in volunteering, or what makes the railway tick, this is the weekend for you!

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

To use your existing skills or to learn new ones, contact us about being a Swanage Railway volunteer by either sending an email to iwanttovolunteer@swanagerailway.co.uk or by calling 01929 475212 to contact Lisa Gravett, our Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Officer.

-----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

Email to swanning.around@swanagerailway.co.uk

Swanning Around also appears on line at:

<http://www.srstaff.co.uk/swanningaround> (not password protected)

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