



Swanning Around

A Look At What's Happening Around The Swanage Railway

Issue 58 – January 25th 2020

Global warming? There's certainly something happening at Harmans Cross. The daffodils are out already, and it's only January! Perhaps it's a good sign for the rest of the year. We shall see.

In the meantime, our shutdown period up to the school half-term week means there's lots of stuff going on for Swanning Around, so much so that this is a bumper edition! Read on!



Herston Carriage Shed

Woo Hoo! It's 21st January and work has started on the site at Herston!

There has been a lot of work in the background to get to this point of the project, particularly by project manager Nick Coram, so it's a red letter day when physical work actually starts.

Refer back to issue 55 of SA for more info and the site map.

Below, the first engineering train has arrived at the site, conveying an 8-ton digger and some materials. The construction contractors are on site, setting up the site boundary.



This was the scene in early January after the Track Team had removed the sidings.

Both these pictures from Andrew P M Wright.



Another view of the site in early January.



The site manager has fenced off the construction site, the digger and materials have been unloaded, and cleaner/trainee fireman Dave Clayton is doing what he does best—starting a fire! - to dispose of the remaining vegetation and waste matter.



Both these pictures from Andrew P M Wright

Meanwhile, the rest of the engineering train has been disposing of some carriage wheelsets at Herston Bank, delivering the 6-wheel tank wagon for the site water supply, and obtaining an electrical cabinet from Herston Bank for use in this construction.

Below, Peter Harris in the shunter 08 436 pushes the tank wagon into position,



.... and the Atlas crane drops the cabinet on site.

Both these pictures from Andrew P M Wright



Perhaps there should have been a ceremony with a polished spade wielded by a dignitary, but the initial ground-breaking was by JCB for the first geological test pit.

The site manager looks on while the test engineer and the project manager check out the material. The hole was filled in again afterwards.

Next week, groundwork should be in progress.



This is a major, long-awaited project to protect some of our coaching stock from the worst of the weather. There is still some funding outstanding for finishing this project, so an appeal is being prepared, and should be in circulation in a few days.

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There's much more going on at the moment, taking advantage of the shutdown throughout January and early February.

Track Re-Laying

The biggest job is the track re-lay in the vicinity of Dickers crossing.

This view from Dickers crossing towards Cowpat crossing was taken by Gary Packer on 10th January. The existing track has been removed by the Track Team ready for all the work required to renew it.

Note the new welfare unit (tea hut). You may remember that the storm at the beginning of November took the roof off the old one. With the weather we've had recently, it's a wonder that this one hasn't floated away!



By 17th January, the new track bed had been prepared, new track laid between the crossings, and a lot of drainage work in hand.



The drainage works include replacement of the pipes under Dickers crossing.

If there was a Page 3 in this issue, these two would certainly qualify for mucky men of the month!

Glamorous it isn't! Adam Woodman and Jamie Wrightson are up to the top of their wellies in mud, while Permanent Way Manager Barry Light offers some helpful advice!

Many railways, both main line and heritage, have suffered from excessive rain recently, so it makes sense, while they're there, to ensure that local drainage has somewhere to go, and they've made a nice job of clearing the ditch and waterway.



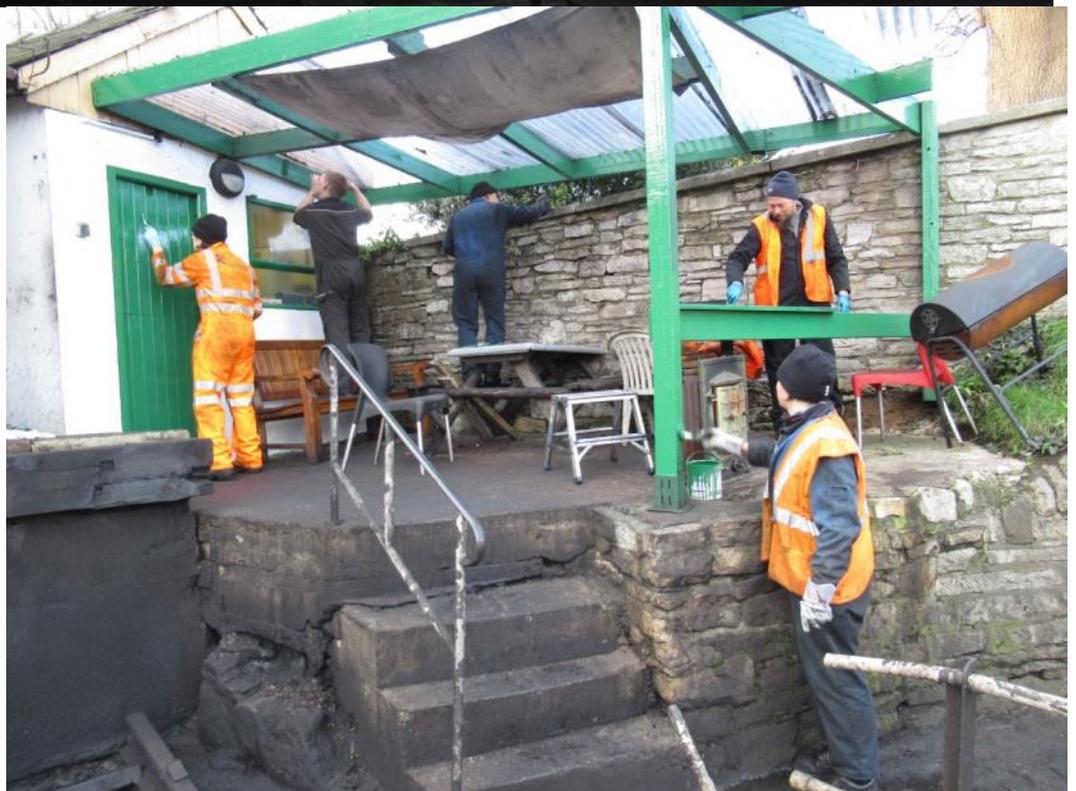
Shed Cleaning

The shed cleaning day is an annual event now, and over thirty people turned up on 18th January to help clean up the mess we have made over the last twelve months.

In case you have counted the numbers in the group photo below, some had sneaked off early for other commitments, they said!



It was a great day for painting, so the veranda of the Drivers Cabin got some freshening, as did the shed water tank.



While Fireman (or should it be Firewoman?) Pat Platt concentrates on painting the cabin's kitchen door, there is activity cleaning the pit area in the background.

The interior of the cabin had a good clean up, and Henry finishes off with the broom.

Look! You can see the worktop! And who knew the sink was that colour?



The drains were cleared and the turntable area had the benefit of the steam cleaner.

With all the people, you would expect the whole area to look like new, but there was still more that we didn't get round to.

Same again next year—be there!



With cost saving uppermost in management's minds, it was decreed that manpower would replace the diesel shunter to get the tender for the U class into the shed. Hasn't the U class already got a tender, you ask? It's got the one for the N class, so this tender, which is the original one off the U will be updated with the electrics and communications for main line running and will be attached to the U class.

The other tender behind the U will then be freed up for use behind the N class. Are you keeping up?

Now the N class has been in Herston Works for ages without a boiler, but we can reveal that the said boiler is presently having its flue tubes installed at the contractors, and as all other parts are available, return of the boiler may be expected in the near future. Swanning Around will be there for the event!



If it's Wednesday, S&T volunteers will be about.

At Harmans Cross on 22nd January, Tony North and John Blyth are working to re-route a signal wire, as others are carrying out maintenance.

Note that the signal box is surrounded by scaffolding to enable painting, but not on this day as the air was too damp.



At Swanage station, Robin Sowter was busy checking track circuits., and having some difficulty as somebody had parked some vehicles on them!



Sygnets Sponsored Track Walk



Picture: Ben Ford

On 11th January, our young persons group, the Sygnets, had a sponsored track walk between Furzebrook and Harmans Cross covering roughly five miles, raising funds for group activities and a planned trip to the North Yorkshire Moors Railway in July .

Didn't hear about it before? Nor did we at SA. But it isn't too late for more sponsorship.

If you would like to contribute something to their funds, you can contact Ben Ford on ben.ford@swanagerailway.co.uk or Aidan Wright on aidan.wright@swanagerailway.co.uk to find out how.



Picture: Anthony Bossom

The Bird's Nest buffet is getting a makeover

While this is happening, the buffet facilities have been moved into the booking hall.



On 22nd January, Estates manager Pat Cattle was there to show Swanning Around the work in progress. Seating capacity is going to be increased by moving the counter area from the end where Pat is standing to where that new hatch is at the end of the kitchen.



Might not look like much work is happening in the Bird's Nest itself, but away in the workshop, on 23rd January, John Piper is making the new counter, with framework in progress and the new counter tops in the background.



Swanning Around relies on information received or sought out in order to find stuff to put in this fine publication.

What we don't expect is that the Estates department would keep quiet about receiving the Volunteer Group of the Year award from the Volunteer Centre Dorset in October 2019.

Fortunately, Bob Bunyar of the Harmans Cross station team has tipped us off and provided this image.

Well done, Estates!

You may remember that the Sygnets won this award in 2018, see SA issue 48. We must be doing something right!



Now, John Piper isn't restricting his talents to buffet counters, he is also repairing the Indicator and switch plunger casing from the Tyers No. 6 Tablet Instrument from Swanage signal box.

The veneer on the cover was past it's view-by date, so John has made a new casing to go with the original front. Now the difficult part—matching the colour!



So you can see where the casing goes, here's a picture of the similar tablet instrument in Corfe Castle signal box, alongside its younger cousin the Tyers key token instrument.

Don't know what they do? You'll have to Google it! Or sign up for signalman training! We don't have room in SA today to explain it all!

Suffice to say these instruments are vital to ensure that there is only one train on the single line section at any one time.

Corfe Castle Station Refurbishments

Out of sight, the Corfe Castle Station Master's office and the ladies waiting room have been getting some attention. Also, the yard outside the goods shed is getting some new tarmac, but this hasn't been laid yet, so there's no picture for you.

The Station Master's office has been relieved of its furnishings, and 22nd January finds porter Keith Fullbrook with a paintbrush in his hand.

It looks like he may be painting with his head too!



Meanwhile, away at the workshop in Swanage, Station Manager David Scott (seated) and porter Alan Keys are giving a bench from the ladies waiting room a good sanding, prior to re-varnishing.

We may be mentioning those green things behind them in the next issue. Estates are busy on all sorts of other things too numerous to include this time.



The M7 Overhaul

Work continues apace with the frames stripped of virtually everything. One part remaining in the frames is the cylinder block, which has a bit of the same wastage problem that was fixed on the T9 a couple of years ago. A patch that had been affixed to a hole some years ago has been replaced by a proper cast iron stitched repair.

On the right is the hole.

Below, the hole has been filled.



And here is the cast iron repair contractor, Neil Stenicker, finishing the job on 23rd January.

This is just like the T9 cylinder block, and Neil was doing that one in SA issue 32 Nov 2017.



Here's the M7's driving axle, with Swanage Railway engineering fitter Bob Jones working to remove the valve eccentrics.



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In the Goods Shed

Alan English and Will Rudge would normally be seen working on the railway's coaching stock, but, now for something completely different!

You may remember that the railway acquired two more Turbot wagons for use by the Permanent Way Department, and they were not immediately fit for use.

Alan and Will have got the job of converting them into Super Turbots, just like our other two.

On 22nd January, they are part way through fixing the new steel sides.



Wareham service crew training

Practical training continues on most Fridays.

On 10th January, drivers Dave Gravell and Andy Hawkins, guard Martyn Curtler, and fitter Andy Garrett do the pre-service checks on the class 121 single unit “Bubble Car” at the Swanage Railway’s mainline depot at Corfe Castle.



Deputy Operations Manager and driver Paul McDonald phones the signalman to set the route out of the sidings at Corfe.



The train between Corfe Castle and Harmans Cross, with Andy Hawkins in the driver’s seat.



All these pictures from Andrew P M Wright

But what's happened to the other unit for the Wareham service, we hear you ask?

The class 117 three-car diesel unit was ready to come back to the Swanage Railway in early January, but route clearance from Network Rail to tow it back from Eastleigh was denied as their computer said it would be foul of a structure at Brockenhurst!

Measures are in hand to avoid the structure and get it back around the end of this month. Here's hoping it works out this time!

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On 13th January, Battle of Britain class 34053 *Sir Keith Park* was loaded at Norden for a ride back to Tyseley Locomotive Works for completion of the works from last year.

Gareth Buscombe's lorry is nearly ready to load it, while Class 33 diesel D6515 waits patiently with two wagons which have been sold and are due to be picked up for their new owners.

Picture from Richard Penny



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Fitter Mark Lowry - Swanning Around says Get Well Soon!

To finish off this super-bumper issue, here are two pictures from Andrew P M Wright taken at Corfe Castle on 28th December towards the end of the day of the Winter Warm Up.



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!

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Compiled and edited by John Denison

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

and

<http://swanagerailway.co.uk/volunteers-diary>