



Swanning Around

A Look At What's Happening Around The Swanage Railway

Issue 111 – July 14th 2024

Whatever happened to summer? To quote the Southern Railway's 1936 poster, "Summer Comes Soonest in the South". Well, maybe it did, but it soon cleared off again!

If June was reputedly the driest for some years, it certainly wasn't the warmest! And as we got closer to and into July, the rain added to the mix. We can usually tell it's summer in Britain—the rain is warm! Not this time! Temperatures are below average. Here's hoping for an improvement in the weather as we approach the school holidays and our high season.

Our events over the last few weeks have been largely unaffected by the "changeable" weather, thankfully. Since the previous issue of Swanning Around, we have had a visit from an excursion train from London, the Roads To Rail event at Norden and the dinosaur experience at Corfe Castle. For all the Swanage Railway events forthcoming, check out the events page of the Swanage Railway web site at <https://www.swanagerailway.co.uk/events>

Just to give you a feel for the changeable weather, the 10.00 service from Swanage on 7th July arrived at Corfe Castle in dry, sunny conditions. That's not how it left Swanage, below! A Purbeck monsoon!





After that epic Strictly Bulleid 2 reported in issue 110, we are still returning the visiting locos to their homes or next locations. On 18th June, 35006 *Peninsular and Oriental S. N. Co.* has been towed to the road/rail interchange at Norden for loading on the same lorries that have brought our own 31806 back from its visit to the Kent and East Sussex Railway.

Meanwhile, 34072 *257 Squadron* had a week on our normal services while waiting for transport to its next location, and is seen here in the Goods Shed siding on 19th June ready to be moved to Norden. 34053 *Sir Keith Park* has taken over the services, and will do so for the next few days, when 34028 *Eddystone* will take over.





34072 257 Squadron has been a Swanage engine for many years, and was clearly not in a hurry to leave, as will be seen from these two pictures, being towed to Norden for road transport. Check the dates in the top left corner.

Yes, on 20th June, the loco was moved to Norden where the tender was loaded onto one lorry, and then it was discovered that the other lorry had broken down, so the first lorry had to be recalled. The tender was required to enable the loco to be towed back from Norden to avoid it being the target for vandals whilst waiting.

So here it is on 24th June making that journey again through Corfe Castle, this time for successful onward transport.



photo by Beavis from NatPres forum.



On 26th June, we were visited by the Swanage Belle excursion train from London Victoria. This was hauled by Black Five 44871 and tailed by class 47 no. 47826.

It was an eventful day for the train owing to difficulties with signalling on the line and a lineside fire near Christchurch which was, and we have to say allegedly, set by this train in passing. This meant that the return train was diesel-hauled with 44871 resting with us until recovery by another diesel some days later.

Above, the train passes Harmans Cross and below arrives at Swanage. You can see that not much coal has been used on the journey as the diesel was doing much of the work on the way down, so it is surprising that a fire was set.

34028 *Eddystone* has taken over the service trains and is waiting to take the next train to Norden out from platform 1.



photo: Bob Bunyar



We were blessed with fine weather for the **Roads To Rail** event at Norden, over the weekend 28-30th June. As usual, the event was in the field next to Norden station, containing the Roads part, and below, the rail part was the T3 no. 563 in steam and open for visitors, and the service trains in the charge of U class 31806 and the diesel multiple unit.

There's too much going on to show everything in this issue, but following is a picture-fest of some of it.





On the T3, Shaun Philpot is explaining the workings, or maybe it was something else, to a visitor
“..it was this big!...”

And Dave Clayton is suggesting they make a contribution in the collecting tin, or maybe something else! Make up your own caption!



photos: Andrew P M Wright



On the gate, Robin James and Andrew Hext are manning the computers and taking your money, cashless of course!

Further down the field Gary Cox is not firing or driving today, but still manages to get grubby being the coal man for the engines on the field.





This is the Saturday of the event, and you can see that it is well attended with plenty of people using the train to get there.





Although it may be billed as a steam rally, there was much more, including displays of tractors, cars, motorcycles, etc., and fairground attractions.



That's a big swing with the mallet, but was this customer able to get it up?!



These photos:
Andrew P M Wright

The Swanage Railway was represented by a number of departments under gazebos, including volunteering, and the Heritage Carriage Group had their display with their big tent.



A lot of tractors displayed, and unusually, a combine harvester. Don't often see these at events as they aren't easy to transport, as you will know if you've met one on a country lane!

Not too many cars and motorcycles, but of interest is this Royal Enfield Flying Flea of 1940s/50s vintage, accompanied by a 1965 Lambretta scooter.

For more cars and motorcycles, don't forget the Classic and Steam Vehicle Show at Harmans Cross on 6-8th September.



On the trains on Saturday 29th June, Ticket Inspector, or should we call him a Revenue Protector (?), Robin Hargraves is either checking electronic ticketing or comparing iPhones. You decide!

Further down the train, Ben Ford is the guard. What other jobs does he do, apart from being a trustee/director, a cleaner, porter, Sygnets leader? He's a busy boy!





On Roads to Rail Saturday 6th July, at the front of the train we find driver Nathan Au, Fireman Steven Duncalfe, and third man cleaner Adam Travers exchanging single line tokens with Corfe Castle signalman Jon Riding.

The class 117 Diesel Multiple Unit has been out regularly as the second train in the green timetable, and on 2nd July, the class 121 Bubble Car has been substituted for the Swanage end power car. That makes a change, and ensures that the 121 gets some regular action.

The DMU will be running a Sunset Shuttle evening service on selected dates in connection with events from 26th July. Check out the dates and prices at

<https://www.swanagerailway.co.uk/events/view/sunset-shuttle>



The Dinosaur event at Corfe Castle on 6/7th July featured a fearsome Tyrannosaurus, apparently eating a child in the picture here, or if you were wearing hi-viz on the platform, a sticky fate awaited you! At least the hi-viz can be saved!



photo: Alex Willatt

These two children enjoyed meeting Betsy the Triceratops, even if the boy's arm is about to be eaten.

They do have real faces by the way, just blobbed out for protection!





Not to be outdone, Dave Edbrooke, with assistance from the crane and S & T departments, created this herbivore Diplodocus replica (or is it a Cranosaurus? Ed.) at Norden. It is ,of course, diesel-electric crane FBC2 having found another use in vegetation control!

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In issue 109 of SA, we featured Estates department working on the picnic area at Norden. It's now finished, and on 14th June, Estates volunteer David Budd and Norden porter Jo Guess perform the ceremonial opening, cutting the special ribbon.

photo: Mike Brown



Purbeck Mining Museum - The Purbeck Mining Museum recently welcomed 226 cub scouts, scouts, explorers and leaders from the Bournemouth District Scouts Association



photo and words: Peter Sills

Hundreds of cub scouts delve into Purbeck's mining heritage

After welcoming well over 500 visitors during a hectic period over the school half-term, the Purbeck Mining Museum recently hosted an organised visit of more than 200 cub scouts, scouts and explorers from the Bournemouth District Scouts Association. The trip to the heritage attraction was part of a special camping weekend in Purbeck that also included a visit to Durlston Country Park and National Nature Reserve. The visit to the mining museum followed a planning meeting with volunteers at the Museum earlier in the year and was organised by Matt Spendley, one of the District Scout Leaders.

“Our aim was to provide a fun and enjoyable environment for the youngsters to learn about Purbeck’s industrial heritage and to see for themselves what it was like down a clay mine in years gone by,” says Paola Hobson, one of the museum’s volunteers.

“A series of activities was organised as part of the visit, including time in the engine shed to see historic narrow gauge locomotives, hands-on experiences using old mining tools, a clay mining quiz and a visit to the underground clay tunnel in the Museum’s restored mining building. Judging by their smiles and enthusiasm they certainly enjoyed their visit and were clearly fascinated with the equipment and yesteryear’s pull-cord bell communication used by the miners as they extracted clay from the mine.”

The Purbeck Mining Museum is attracting more and more group visits as the venue continues to build on its popularity as an important educational and heritage attraction. Recently we have also had a group of professional Civil Engineers, members of the SW Group of the Southern Railways Group and Railway and Canal Heritage Society visit us for educational and informative group tours. Later this summer, plans are already in place to welcome many school groups, a large group of Brownies as well as various local history and industrial heritage groups.

Such group visits are dependent, however, on having enough visitor reception guides and marshals at the museum as the venue is run entirely by volunteers. If you are interested in joining the friendly group of volunteers just visit <http://purbeckminingmuseum.org/contact-us/> to find out more.

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.

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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> (not password protected)

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