



Swanning Around

A Look At What's Happening Around The Swanage Railway

Issue 74 – June 1st 2021

What a difference some decent weather makes! In what must be the wettest and coldest May for many years, and also with the Covid restrictions in place prior to roadmap step 3 on 17th May it must have made it difficult for people to enjoy our railway, and consequently to contribute to the railway's income.

Then along comes the Spring Bank Holiday and school half term, and a remarkable change in the weather. We are told, by those who dared to venture in that direction, that "Swanage is rammed!", "the Co-op shelves are bare!", "car parks are full!"

Sounds like a normal summer in Swanage, and numbers carried on our trains are looking more like normal, although the railway is still applying the appropriate anti-Covid measures. Will we really be back to normal soon? We wait on the Government's confirmation of the lifting of restrictions in line with roadmap step 4 on 21st June —or not!

There's still plenty going on around the railway that has little or nothing to do with Covid, and some of it is in this issue of Swanning Around (SA).

There's an awful lot more that could be put into this issue, but shortage of editorial resource (other things to do!) means some reports will have to wait!

Can we remind you to refer back to issue 73 and the appeals for financial help for the carriage shed and for the class 33 diesel D6515 (aka 33012), which are urgent (isn't everything?) . At the time of publishing, the shed appeal had raised over £42,000 of the £65,000 required, so still a way to go. More details of progress with D6515 at Eastleigh Works in the next issue.

There's been some activity on the locomotive front, subsequent to last month's loco transfers between the railway and Herston Works.

Steam Superintendent Graham Froud and fitter Chris Birmingham have been carrying out the necessary work to ensure newly-overhauled West Country class 34028 *Eddystone* is fit for service. Several light and loaded tests were run in the early part of May prior to the locomotive's return to service on 24th May.

The first test runs on 10th May find *Eddystone* running light engine between Norden and Corfe Castle near Castle View. Graham Froud driving, with Chris Birmingham firing.



Picture: Andrew P M Wright

Picture: Andrew P M Wright

A stop at Harmans Cross to pass the service train with U class 31806 allows time for Graham and Chris to check that all is well with the engine, on a loaded test run on 18th May.



As one engine comes into service, another goes out. British Railways Standard 4 tank loco 80104's boiler certification ran out on 11th May, requiring the loco to undergo a major overhaul and re-certification before returning to service.

On 10th May, 80104 is performing one of its last duties before withdrawal the next day, passing *Eddystone* undergoing a steam test, witnessed by fitters Chris Birmingham and Rob Tuck.



Picture: Andrew P M Wright

Penultimate day in service, and has it ever looked better?

Approaching Afflington bridge with Corfe Castle in the background. And it's not raining!



Picture: Andrew P M Wright

Eddystone starts its first service train from Swanage as signalman Roger Pleasant prepares to hand the single line token to the crew.

Picture: Andrew P M Wright



With the Battle of Britain class 34072 257 *Squadron* in the works for repairs (see later), it has been deemed necessary to acquire another loco to support the services, so, on 11th May, British Railways standard class 2 2-6-0 no 78018 arrived on hire from our friends at the Great Central Railway at Loughborough.

Guard Paul Simons has provided this picture of the loco having just rolled off the road trailer at Norden.



A minor hiccup with *Eddystone* (driver said ***** brakes, fitter said operator error!) allowed 78018 to substitute and operate its first service train on 25th May, seen here starting from Swanage past the U class 31806, which was undergoing normal scheduled maintenance at this time.

Picture: Gary Packer



On 26th May, the loco crew taking water is Driver Paul Williams on the tender, passed cleaner Phil Minshall on the water valve chain, and cleaner Andy Hannaford moving the train describer disc.



What's in the works?

A visit to Herston Works, with the permission of the works manager, Graham Froud with his other management hat on, finds 34072 257 Squadron under repair by owners Southern Locomotives. In a previous SA, we indicated that there was to be a bogie swap, and the premature entry to works caused by a leak in the main steam pipe in the boiler.



A piston and valve exam has been included, amongst other things, and while it's in works, what better place for a thorough check over.

But the big issue, which will require some serious boiler work, is the hole in the main steam supply pipe from the regulator inside the boiler, which has been located during an hydraulic test.

Pictures provided by Graham Froud below show the location of the perforation, arrowed, next to the joint between the pipe and the front tubeplate, directly behind the superheater header. No easy fix for that one!

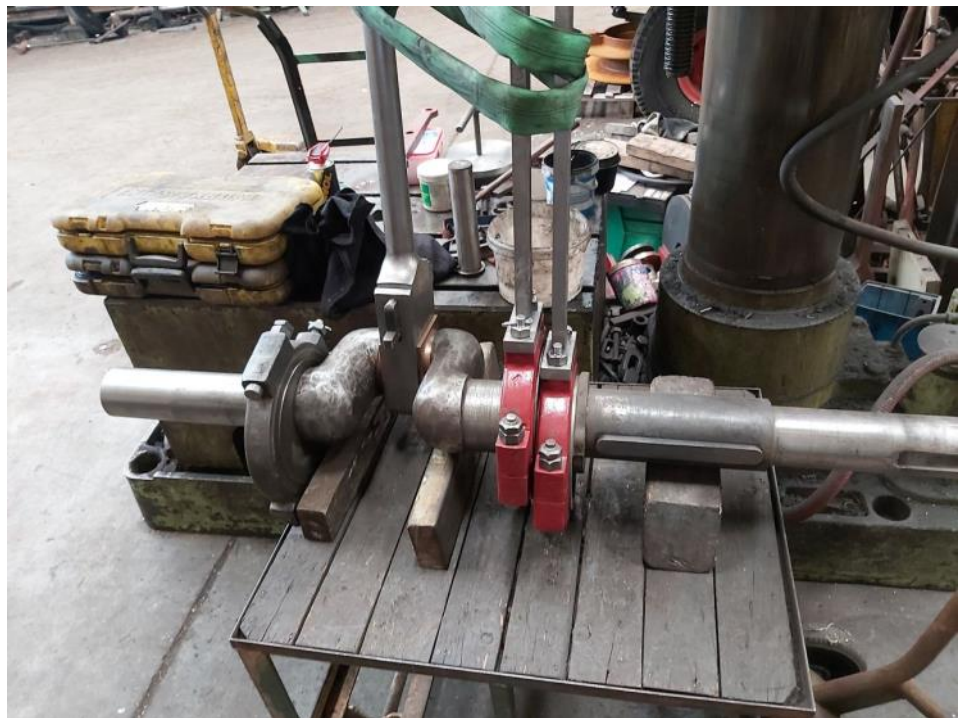


Also seen in the works, some new piston heads for the M7 30053, currently on a contract overhaul by the Swanage Railway engineering department for the loco's owners.



Also part of the engineering department's contract work are these components from a 6hp Robey traction engine.

Refurbishing and manufacturing new parts for traction engines gets additional income for the railway, keeps employees in work, and can be achieved without affecting the department's ability to provide its primary commitment to the Swanage Railway's engineering requirements. Must be a winner!



In the goods shed, work has restarted for the wagon group currently overhauling a brake van.

Only three of them in on 29th May, with Rob Score painting the underside of the cabin roof, with Jeremy Weller in attendance, and outside in the sunshine Doug Chick repairs one of the doors for the Sygnets Van, located at Corfe.

Plenty of work here for potential volunteers.



Swanage Railway has a new volunteer recruitment and retention officer, Jonathan Evans, a paid position, but not out of our budget! No, it's funded by the South Western Railway's Customer and Communities Improvement Fund. But SWR isn't being totally generous to us as his role is to cover Purbeck, and that means working with the Purbeck Rail Partnership and station support groups on the main line at Wareham, Holton Heath, Wool, and Moreton, as well as us. Being familiar with the Swanage Railway as a signaller, Jonathan has been able to start the job running, and is seen above showing new loco department volunteer Terry Howlett around at Swanage. That's Jonathan on the right.



On the next page is a Volunteer Focus from Jonathan, highlighting the need for someone to help with gardening at Harmans Cross, seen here being done by David Castle, with help (?) from station manager Jeff Gregory.



Volunteer Focus

Harmans Cross - Gardening Skills Needed

Harmans Cross station may have had to remain closed for well over a year but that has not stopped Station Manager Jeff Gregory and his team from meeting twice a week to continue the important maintenance and building work that is needed to keep the station platforms and grounds in top condition, ready for reopening.

The volunteers have made the most of the low levels of train activity in the last few months to undertake and complete some much-needed major projects. Firstly, with the help of Estates Manager Pat Cattle, they have fitted a new, watertight roof to Annabel, the vintage passenger coach which now serves as a workshop and store. Once that was completed they turned their attention to the path leading to the Down platform which had been damaged due to rain overflow from neighbouring properties. They worked with the Village Hall to improve run-off from the car park into a field and also installed channels across the width of the path to allow for improved drainage.

Now that we are all hoping for restrictions to be lifted to allow us to return to full operations, Jeff and his team have switched into a higher gear to make sure Harmans Cross is fully ready for when reopening is allowed, getting both paths ready for customers as well as putting the finishing touches to building exteriors and the station gardens.

Long-term volunteer David Castle has spent many years laying out and maintaining the beds which line the Up Platform, but is now finding the work to be harder from a physical point of view, so Jeff and his team are looking for more keen gardeners to help David and, in time, take over the care and maintenance of the grounds.

The team currently meets on Mondays and Wednesdays at Harmans Cross station, although once integrated in the team, working alone on a different day may be possible. If you enjoy gardening and have some time to spare then the Harmans Cross Estates Team would love to welcome you to the railway.

The Swanage Railway exists thanks to its wonderful volunteers and if you are interested in joining us, either as a gardener or any other role, then please contact our Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Officer, Jonathan Evans on 07436 792026 or iwanttovolunteer@swanagerailway.co.uk

It is no surprise that Swanage Railway has announced that it is looking for more volunteers. The end of visitor restrictions next month and with a new big attraction coming 'online', means the charity needs more people to help out this summer, and has recently been on Meridian TV to push the appeal.

Trevor Parsons says hopefully the warmer weather and lockdown easing will help: "The majority of our volunteers are retired and obviously we need to replace them all the time. But I think that as restrictions ease, more people will come out and that brings the volunteers out."

From the oily and dirty jobs on the engines and in the sheds, to helping passengers on the platform and important backroom help, the range of roles at Swanage is huge.

Jonathan Evans says there's a place for everyone: "People that have existing skills, be that painting, be that gardening, be that accounting, but equally who are able to learn new skills with driving, signalling, guards, porters, those sort of things, so anybody who has any free time."

For many people here, being involved in the railway has been a way of life for decades, others are happy to give just a few hours a week.

So there you have it! You don't have to have a particular skill to volunteer here, we'll train you!

And here are some examples of training in progress in May.

Firstly, loco department cleaners undergoing shunting training at Norden. With trainers Steven Duncalfe and Josh Voce on the ground and driver Nathan Au in the cab, were trainees Joe Rawlings, Ethan Waller, Dave Clayton, and Ben Ford , on 9th May.





On 24th May, porter trainer Peter Foster (I) is showing new recruit Matt Dicks around Corfe signal box as part of his porter training, prior to him training as a guard. Shouldn't be too difficult for him as he's previously been a guard on the Great Central Railway.

And age is no barrier, old or young.

On 9th May, Corfe signalman Duncan Light is showing two youngsters how to do it, under Covid conditions, of course, and given them an easy job to start them off. You never know, they may be volunteering one day!





Now here's something new for a heritage railway. It's a Realtime Trains output on a digital display in a heritage look-alike frame at Corfe Castle station booking hall.

Realtime Trains (other suppliers are available!) provides live realtime running information for the Great British railway network using open data, and Swanage Railway is the first heritage railway to use this system for passenger information.

As you can see from the pictures, the top half of the display shows train times and punctuality info, along with identification of the loco hauling the train. Swanage station has a similar display board.

On a heritage railway representing a point in history, this is great for passenger information, but is it in keeping with the heritage environment around it?

Answers or arguments on a tenner to Swanning Around HQ!

The masked men in the picture are Swanage Railway director Trevor Parsons and Tom Cairns from Realtime Trains.



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!

-----ooOoo-----

Compiled and edited by John Denison

swanning.around@swanagerailway.co.uk

Views expressed in 'Swanning Around' are those of the author(s) and are not necessarily the views of the Swanage Railway Trust or the Swanage Railway Company. No liability accepted for errors or inaccuracies.

Prepared by John Denison for the Swanage Railway Trust including content and images provided by others. All rights recognised.

(c) Copyright: Swanage Railway Trust 2021

Swanning Around also appears on line at:

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