

A Look at What's Happening Around the Swanage Railway

Issue 17 – June 15th 2016

Flaming June? Well, the first week's been flaming cold, or something!

But last week is making up for it, with muggy heat, and thunderstorms everywhere except here. With no cooling wind, Harmans Cross signal box has been more like a sauna!

But enough of the weather, there's plenty to report on the railway, and the hot news is that the Norden Level Crossing has been signed off. Also in this issue, Page 3 has found a suitable victim, and there's news of Beryl. Who? Read on!

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Yes, there's been a lot happening at Norden in the last few weeks. The most anticipated being the completion of testing, signing off, and handing over of Norden Level Crossing and its control systems in and around Norden Gates crossing keeper's cabin.

Independent Competent Person John Tilley was on hand all day on Friday 10th June to ensure that all aspects of the new installation conformed to the required specification. This included such things as road barrier height, road light location, rail signal sighting, and numerous other details, etc., etc., as well as the correct operation of the facility.

Testers Dave Fry and Dave Helliwell were doing much of the hard work all day to check and demonstrate the functionality.



This is it!

Chief tester Dave Fry signs the paperwork at around 16.30 on June 10th, observed by (l to r) John Tilley, Dave Helliwell (in that fine shirt!), and Swanage Railway Signal and Telegraph department manager Tony North.

By 16.40, Tony had completed the handover by signing on as the first crossing keeper to be able to fully use all the controls, and five minutes later, signed off again as there were no trains to cross the road!

More pictures on page 7.

Norden Gates also has the approval of our feathered friends.

Sammy and Selina Swallow have made their nest in the porch of the cabin, and have not been put off by comings and goings through the door.

Here, Sammy, or is it Selina (who cares – they aren't their real names!), slams on the brakes at the approach to their nest when he realises the door is open.



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Who or what is Beryl?

Beryl is a petrol-powered 4-wheel Planet locomotive, and was the first loco acquired by members of the fledgling Swanage Railway in 1976, from Corralls coal merchants at Hamworthy Quay.

A previous attempt at restoration in the 1990s was abortive and Beryl has lain dismantled and unnoticed in Woodpecker siding for some time. Until now!



Beryl is lifted from Woodpecker siding by crane FBC1 on 3rd June, and loaded onto the 'Salmon' bogie flat wagon.



The freight train carrying Beryl passes through Harmans Cross, with "Manston" providing the power. Beryl is a diminutive loco, and you can just see her on the flat wagon if you look hard! One of the Queen Mary brake vans brings up the rear, with guard Tim Marshall in the leading end.



Beryl is unloaded onto the Goods Shed road at Swanage.

Both crantage photos from Fraser White.

The Queen Mary Appreciation Society members are twiddling their thumbs after their efforts on two brake vans, so Beryl has been transferred to the Goods Shed, where the gang will set about her on weekends.

With 54 horsepower and weighing in at around 12 tons, Beryl is unlikely to be seen on front line work at Swanage, but has a place in the history of the Swanage Railway 'living museum'.

More history and details in a future issue of SA.

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Page 3

It's glamour, of a sort!

Could it be a

Grumpy Guard of the Month

or perhaps a pointy pugilist?!

And doesn't he look smart in that orange sack!



It's guard Tim Marshall gesticulating with vigour!

What's he saying? "Go forth and", or perhaps "Your Railway needs you!"

You can make up your own mind, I'm going for the latter.

The railway needs volunteers in all departments, but we are competing with all sorts of other charitable organisations for a small pool of willing volunteers.

Yes, the Swanage Railway is a registered charity, and I can tell you that any new volunteers will receive the warmest of welcomes, and will soon be part of a friendly organisation, just like Tim!

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"History was made" on 11th June, as Swanage Railway official photographer and media relations officer Andrew P M Wright might say, and he was there to record the first train to pass through Norden Gates under operating signals. His picture below has everything in it.

The crossing, the train, the signal, and Corfe Castle!



Here, the "Purbeck and Bomo Explorer" charter train, 12 coaches hauled by two heritage class 50 diesels, passes through Norden Gates level crossing under a clear signal, on its way back to Derby. Single line tokens are being exchanged by the conductor driver, Dave Gravell, and the crossing keeper, yours truly. (I could have selected one of Andrew's pictures without me in it, but it wouldn't have been as good, would it?!)

Also in the cab were GBRailfreight driver Ian Shonhard, with the locos' owner, Neil Boden occupying the secondman's seat. Ian knows his way to Swanage already, having been here for diesel galas with GBRf locos.

Observing from the cabin window, S&T manager Tony North looks relieved that he has had nothing to do on this first day of full operation. It all worked perfectly!

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Recent activity in and around the Goods Shed at Swanage has consisted of someone outside putting windows in and someone inside taking windows out!



Outside, Eric Hudson, aka Purbeck Décor, trims and fits the final pane of glass to one of the three new bespoke cast

window frames, completing the work started some months ago on the external refurbishment of the building.



Inside, Jason Kingdon has removed the windows from BR Mark 1 2nd class open coach S4961, and is sealing the frames prior to applying a new coat of paint.

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The Harmans Cross station team is always busy doing something, and has been adding to the authentic air of the station, we are led to believe!

Check out this new appearance on the down platform. What is it?

It's clearly not a bird or a plane, so perhaps it's a greenhouse or may be a barber's shop, or even for shoe repairs? Chicken shed? That's the sort of thing signalmen and station staff got up to in the 1950s, so it could be perfectly authentic? Orders for tomatoes, anybody?

We'll find out when they finish it!



At the signal box at Harmans Cross, David Wall continues his signalman training, and has just delivered the single line token for Corfe Castle to the driver of the U class 31806. Passengers on the train on the other side are going nowhere – it's got no wheels!

The LSWR coach "Annabel" has been in use as a store and workshop for the station team, and has

recently had the attention of team member Don Butler's son-in-law, who is an artist. These passengers look like they've been in there since the coach was built!



Here's a closer look at some of the incumbents, in both first and third class. Photos from Jeff Gregory.



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Also in training, this time as a guard, Tim Drage prepares to flag away a train for Norden at Corfe Castle station, under the watchful eye of guard Mike Green.



You too could be a signalman or a guard, and the place to start is by training as platform staff. Yes, even porters receive training, and you could be one if you have a few days a year to spare. Yes, as Tim Marshall might have been saying (but probably wasn't!) on Page 3, the Swanage Railway needs you! Contact details are, as always, at the end of this newsletter.

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It's about time the Sygnets appeared in Swanning Around!

The Swanage Sygnets is the group that gives young persons, largely under 16 years, experience of the Swanage Railway, and will hopefully lead to them joining as volunteers when they are old enough.

Supervised by several adults, members are able to take part in various railway related activities, and have fun doing it!



Supervised on this fine day in May by Jo Guess, Steve Barker, Derek Pattenson, Aidan Wright, and Michael Brereton, the Sygnets are trained the Swanage Railway way, by taking a break with tea and cake!

The van is dedicated to the Sygnets' use, and is maintained by them.



Here, one of the Sygnets gets a taste of signalman's duties, by collecting a single line token from fireman Gary Cox, while supervisor Steve Barker delivers the token for the next section.

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10th June again, and there's other stuff happening at Norden. It's not all about the level crossing!

Crane gang participants Keith Bowers and John Wight pause their crane safe load indicator calibration testing to come to a 'clear understanding' with the crew of "Manston", Bob Payne and Steven Duncalfe.

"If you move your engine, I won't hit it with my crane!"

The load indicator is the electronic item in the cab of FBC1 (see issue 4 of SA)



Nearby, S&T technician Robin Sowter checks the electricals on a track circuit.



Meanwhile, a train has just departed, allowing Gill Miles to take a break from the Kiosk, with Peter West helping to eat the stock, and porter Peter Hunt giving direction!

Do we need more volunteers for the Kiosk and for station staff? You bet we do! Come along and experience the ambience and the people – you'll be welcome!



On the other side of the crossing, the Permanent Way team has installed the Arne Road siding headshunt, occupied here by road/rail vehicle "Little Sis".

In the foreground, another ground signal from the S&T manager Tony North's garden shed workshop!



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4th June saw another members' Open Forum, conducted by Swanage Railway Trust chairman Gavin Johns. A small number of members were in attendance, and, without going into details, a broad range of questions from the floor were answered honestly by the panel.

Among these was the situation regarding late delivery of boilers for the N class and for Southern Locos' "257 Squadron". Matt Green, General Manager, stated that the lateness was due largely to additional work identified by the boiler inspector, and the quality of work being provided. Regular visits by SR management have ensured that satisfactory progress is being made, and that no payment issues are found.

The Open Forum is a less formal version of 'any other business' that we get at AGMs, and if you are a member of the Swanage Railway Trust and would like to know what's happening in Swanage

Railway management and elsewhere on the railway, or you have questions about anything to do with the railway, come along to the Open Forums (Or is it Fora?) and put your sixpenny'th into helping the organisation to be what you, the members, expect.

Swanning Around will endeavour to publish dates for future meetings.

It's your railway – be part of it!

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More pictures from Andrew P M Wright from Norden Crossing commissioning on Friday 10th June.



John Tilley checks operation of the electrically-operated points near the crossing, ably assisted by Tony North.



Dave Fry travelled all the way to Wareham station to check the operation of both electric token machines.

And as a final shot at the Wogret/Norden section, the answer to a sneaky signalling inspector question – where does Swanage Railway control of a train from the main line commence?

Limit of Swanage Railway operations at Bridge 4?
No!

Swanage Railway/ Network Rail boundary at Bridge 2?
No!

It's 31.25 chains (that's 687.5 yards to you!) into Network Rail territory where the trap points are located at Worgret Junction.

And here's the sign at Worgret Junction that says so!



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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 mike.whitwam@corfestation.f2s.com or volunteer@swanagerailwaytrust.org.uk
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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Swanning Around also appears on line at:
<http://www.srstaff.co.uk/swanningaround>
and
<http://www.swanagerailway.co.uk/volunteers-diary>

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