



Swanning Around

A Look At What's Happening Around The Swanage Railway

Issue 85 – May 1st 2022

Welcome to issue 85! Not so much a bumper issue, as they all seem to be recently, but more a whopper issue! In order to reduce the preparation time, this issue will be long on pictures and short on words, so if the descriptions applied to each picture don't tell the whole story for you, you can make up your own! Or send Swanning Around an email for the full story.

Also, short on appeals this time, but all you have to do is refer back to previous issues to remind yourselves of details for donating to 71A group, Southern Locos, T3 no. 563, 4TC, and all the others we've not mentioned here. All issues from number 1 are at <https://srstaff.co.uk/swanningaround/index.php>

Of course, there is no let up in pushing for more volunteers as the railway depends on them to be able to run trains at all. But volunteers are always needed for the catering and retail outlets. There's a pic or two about the Swanage station shop in this issue, and they could definitely do with some assistance as the shop manager, Vicki Dyke, is on maternity leave just now. You know how to get in touch—it's on the last page of this and all other issues.

There's been a lot happening as services have been ramped up for Easter, and next weekend, from 5th to 8th May, it's the Diesel Gala and Beer Festival. Make sure you're there!

To get you in the mood for the gala, here's a picture of 71A group's class 33 D6515 fresh from its cab overhaul at Eastleigh Works, leaving Eastleigh and bringing class 50 no. 50 026 *Indomitable* with it back to Swanage on 14th April.



Picture: Mervyn Turvey

On 27th April, we said *Goodbye* to the Great Western Small Prairie no 5526 and *Hello* to class 25 diesel D7612, both from the South Devon Railway.

Of course, we got full value from 5526 by using it for a shunting job on the way to Norden, then using it to collect the diesel from the lorry before being loaded itself for the trip back to Devon!

Here they are side by side at Norden—one in, one out! D7612 is here to take part in the gala.



And 5526 was still hot when it was winched onto the lorry!



With the departure of 5526, Battle of Britain class 34072 *257 Squadron*, having passed its annual inspections, is now in service, along with West Country class 34028 *Eddystone*. 34072 is seen here on the 28th April leaving Swanage with the 15.00 service to Norden, on the blue timetable.



After the cab overhaul, class 33 D6515 arrives back on the railway from Eastleigh with class 50 no. 50 026, on 14th April.

Photo: Andrew P M Wright



50 026 *Indomitable* will be one of the stars of the forthcoming diesel gala, but has arrived early as its owners have been carrying out power unit maintenance, and are taking the opportunity to use the railway's Worgret extension for test runs.

On 22nd April, 50 026 is seen passing Furzebrook oil sidings on a solo test run.



On 23rd April, it was loaded test runs with the trailing load provided by D6515 and several of the permanent way wagons.

Here D6515 shunts the wagons away at Eldon sidings prior to the pair returning to Swanage, with Operations Assistant Ben Dolman acting as shunter.





On 28th April, emergency works were started to rectify a track fault on the southern approach to Harmans Cross station. Ever since the railway opened to Harmans Cross, the embankment on the west side has been slipping towards the track. A previous effort to retain the bank using stone-filled gabions has had a limited effect, with the clay now encroaching under the gabions and under the track through rotational slippage. This has pushed the nearside rail and the signal detectors, picture below, in an upward direction, misaligning the rails and causing excessive wear on some parts of the points. Not to mention affecting the drainage.

The Permanent Way volunteers turned out in force to help get this sorted and signed on after the last train of the day for a long shift into the night.





The last train of the day slips past the work site with driver Paul Williams and fireman Andy Croggon observing the temporary speed limit.

Once trains are clear, the engineering team takes possession of the railway and work begins in earnest using the road/rail vehicle for the heavy lifting. Billy Johnson driving, Adam Woodman steadying the sleeper load.





Photo: Andrew P M Wright

The team had to work into the night to ensure that the railway was safe to run trains the next morning. Use of the road/rail vehicle for lifting the track was essential to enable some sleepers to be changed, and to enable adjustment of the point nose, seen below, and of course to correctly re-align the track.

There will still be some fettling work to do in the week before the diesel gala, but long term another expensive solution may be needed to provide a more permanent fix.



Photo: Andrew P M Wright

The former Bird's Nest Buffet has been moved from its long term home at Swanage to Corfe Castle station, to provide a refreshment kiosk outlet. Too soon to report financials, although the first week of opening had good throughput. Some volunteers are in place to ensure that the facility can be open when trains are running, but, as usual, more are required! You know how to get in touch with us!

The coach is located alongside the Book Wagon, as seen here on 23rd April, with Amanda McDavid on duty serving some customers.



So how's the M7 overhaul coming along at Herston Works? Getting into the re-assembly stage for most of the rolling chassis, as can be seen from the pictures in these pages. The side tanks and bunker are in need of overhaul, to the extent that the bunker is being scrapped and a new one manufactured by the Flour Mill Works, the people who are also overhauling the T3.

With a very comprehensive boiler overhaul, and everything else being done to a very high standard by the Swanage Railway Company in Herston, the finished article is hoped to be ready for testing by Spring 2023, and will be as good as new, if not better!

If you would like to be a benefactor for this loco, Swanning Around can put you in touch with the directors of the owners, Drummond Locomotives Ltd.



The leading driving axle, with bearing journals and valve eccentrics all nice and shiny!

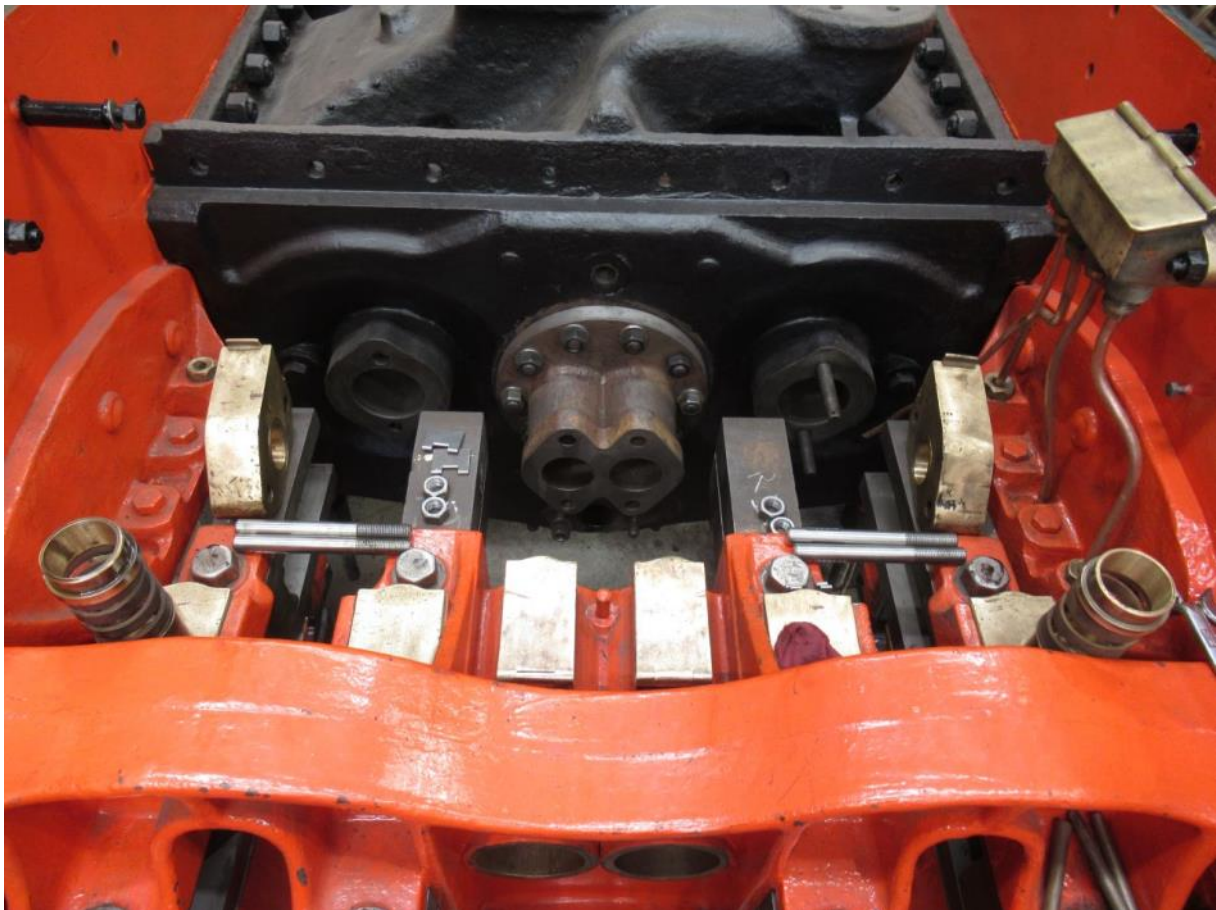


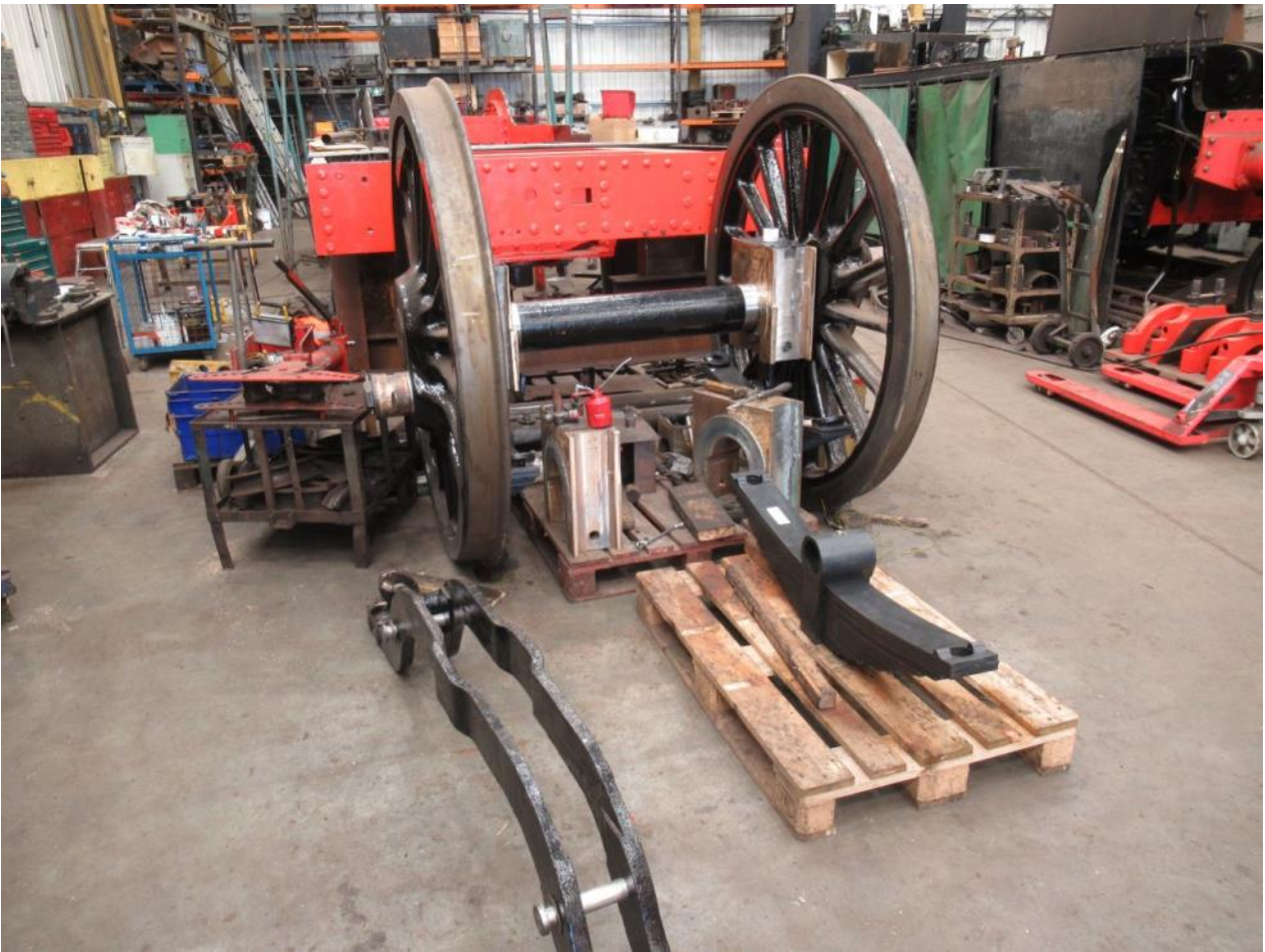
Inside the frames, looking forward.

You'd think these spring hangers were good enough to re-use. No! Crack testing has revealed that they are not, so new ones are needed.



The cylinder block and slide bars are being made ready for the piston and valve rods to be installed.



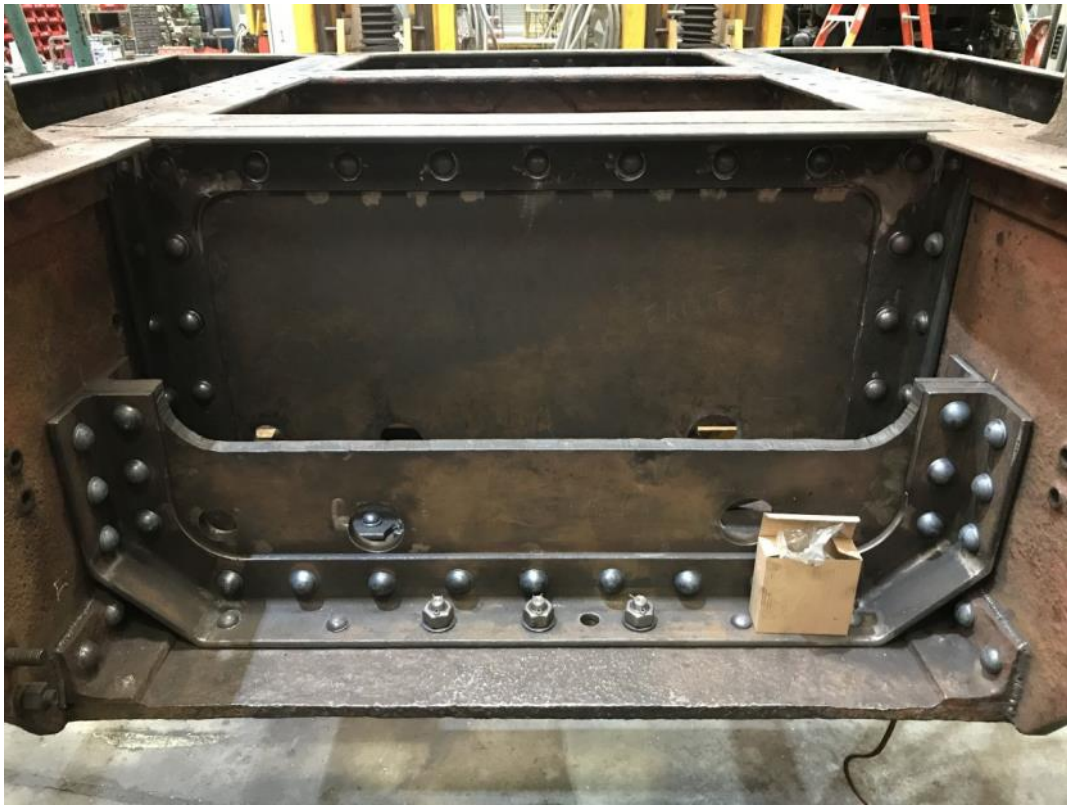


Overhauled axle boxes, new springs



Refurbished piston rods

Picture from Malcolm Munro



A couple of M7 pictures from some months ago, showing some new frame stretchers installed, and the new front tubeplate for the boiler at the contractor, the North Norfolk Railway. Now is the boiler man about to adjust the tubeplate with that small hammer, or has the photographer just said the wrong thing?

The boiler has been in Norfolk for about three years, so why isn't it finished? We don't want the boiler completed too soon, or its 10-year certification will be ebbing away before it has a chassis to go in, so no point in having it complete before the rest of the loco is ready to accept it.

Pictures provided by Malcolm Munro



And now some people pictures.

Fireman Martin Sheret and guard Phil Eakins spend a moment in the sun at Harmans Cross while they wait for the down train to arrive behind 34028 *Eddystone* on 14th April.



Guard Martin Boscott is not trying to hide behind the ground frame cabin at Norden on 20th March. He's just waiting for the train loco to commence running around!

photo: Steve Bulley



On 19th April, early shift guard Trevor Sheppard hands over to late shift guard Paul Simons.



Change at the top of the Swanage Railway Company sees Bob Patterson, below, take over from Gavin Johns as Chairman, from 21st April.

Gavin will remain as a director, and will retain his chairmanship of the Swanage Railway Trust.

Photo: Andrew P M Wright





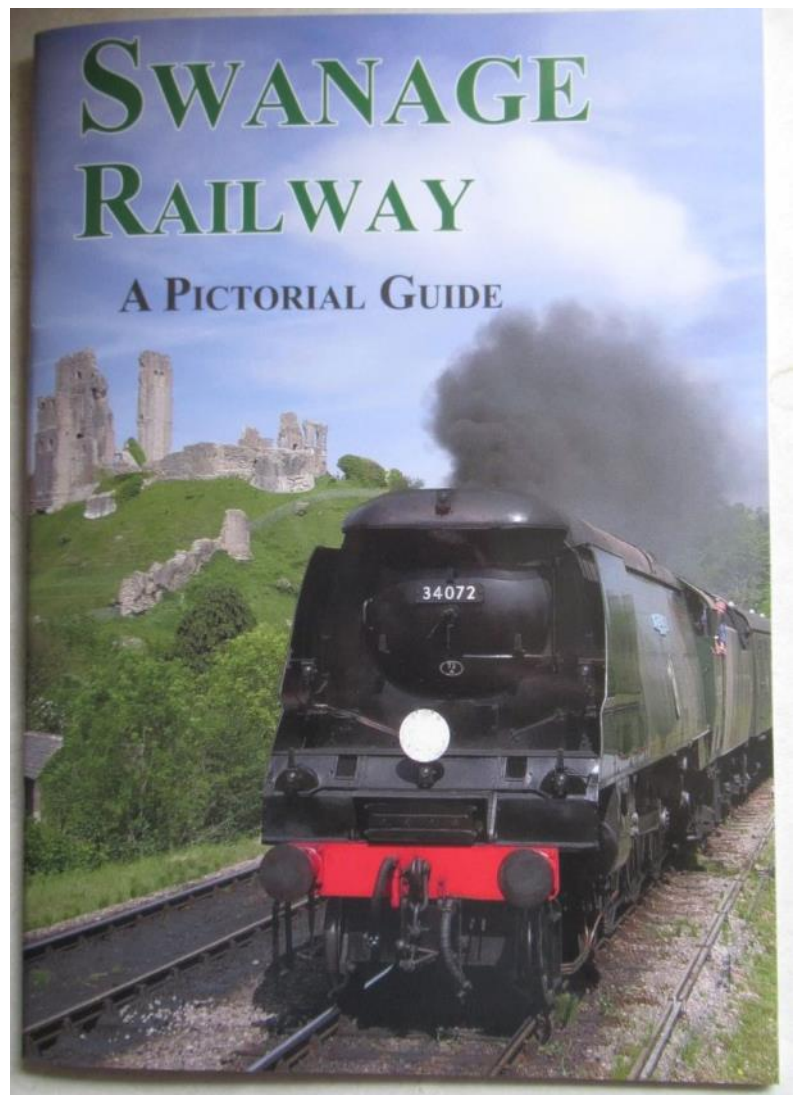
We mentioned earlier that the Swanage station shop manager was on maternity leave, so there are opportunities to help the hard pressed volunteers in this area.

On 29th April, volunteers Val Travers and Sheila Taylor are behind the desk.

The shop is well stocked with books DVDs, model railway items and much more, so pop in there or check them out on line at

<https://www.swanagerailway.co.uk/shop>

There is also the very latest version of the Swanage Railway Pictorial Guide on sale in the shop. It's got excellent pictures! It's cheap! Buy one!





Cleaner Andy Hannaford is on a training turn on 20th April, firing 34028 *Eddystone* under the supervision of fireman James Forster.

On 19th April, fireman Andy Croggon takes a break from feeding the hungry firebox of the visiting Great Western Small Prairie 5526.





At Harmans Cross on 3rd April, *Eddystone's* driver Bryan Hardwick exchanges pleasantries with Alex Atkins driving 5526,

Then Bryan collects the single line token from signalman Graham Colborne, to enable him to take The Dorsetman luncheon train into the next section to Corfe Castle.

Both pictures from Gary Packer



34070 *Manston* is moving towards being available to support the summer high season services.

Nameplates applied.



And signwriter Steve Blackwell applying the cab side numbers on 21st April. There's still plenty to do, and you may be able to see Southern Locomotives' Tom Rayner behind the steps making up new conduit for the electric lighting cabling from the steam-powered generator under the cab floor.





Quite what Chris Warby and Chris Hardy are doing in the space above the middle cylinder is open to guesses. Valve gear and lubrication spring to mind. Either way, you'd better not suffer from claustrophobia to do that job!

But what do SLL's *Manston* team do when they have a break? Amongst other things, a biscuit dunking challenge!

Charles Bernstein on the right was the winner with Rich Tea biscuits, while Andy Crooks and Bailey England watch the winner being consumed! What were the rules for this epic contest? Who knows? Who cares? We think it had something to do with the ability of the biscuit to stay in one piece after being dunked. But for completeness, Rich Tea biscuits won by a short margin over Hob Nobs and Gingernuts.

Swanage Railway master machinist Mark Smith looks on from behind wondering what on earth's going on!

photo: Dave Ensor



On 10th April, a volunteer engagement presentation at Harmans Cross was organised by our volunteer recruitment and retention officer, Jonathan Evans. In an organisation of our size, it is often not possible to know what's going on in other departments or to know how what they do affects others, or even to know who they are! So some presentations were put together. These covered Footplate, H&S, Museum, Signalling, Portering, Permanent Way, Financial, Heritage Coaches, Governance, History, Guarding,

Mining Museum,
With Peter Sills



Telecomms,

With Graham
Holliday



Not only did we learn what they did, but also who was involved, as these two screens showed.



Another of the presenters at the event was Sygnets leader Ben Ford, giving us an insight into what it takes to bring on the under-16s.

Prior to this event, on 2nd April, the morning services were in the hands of what is probably our first train fully crewed by volunteers who have come through the Swanage Sygnets youth group.

Left to right, Aidan Wright the guard, Alex Atkins the driver, and James Forster, at 20 our youngest fireman.

Looks like a familiar picture on Ben's screen above!

Photo: Andrew P M Wright





Signal and Telegraph at work. Bill Lynch and Bruce Gridley are sitting down on the job carrying out maintenance at Swanage on 19th April, while below, S & T and Telecomms had an emergency job to do at Corfe Common on 17th April after a passing train not only set fire to the trackside, but also the communications cabling! Both the token system and the telephones were out of order, with pilot working taking the place of the token for the morning.



Photo: John Lindsay

In issue 83, we suggested that the brake coach from the Wessex Belle dining set was having a "spruce up".

Seems we weren't too near to the truth as it has had most of the metal replaced on one end, and the other end is showing a tendency to require something similar.

So a lot of work for the boys in Carriage and Wagon, and we shouldn't expect to see it out very soon!

This was the progress on 20th April.



The weekend wagon gang (not sure if they have an official title!) has been working on a goods brake van which has now been outshopped from Swanage goods shed, with all the superstructure finished. It's not possible to do the underframe in the shed. There's a platform in the way as you can see from the picture below.



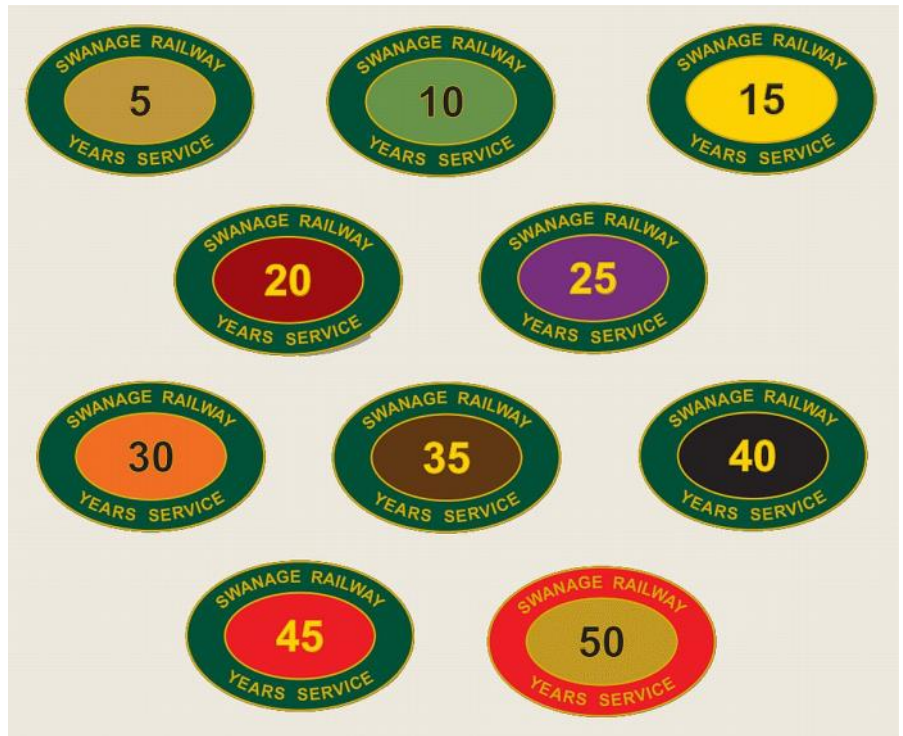
Having finished the brake van, they have now taken delivery of the Southern Railway box van that we showed in issue 83. It looked quite presentable then, but they have made a proper job of it below. Perhaps someone was short of firewood! Seems that the timbers were worse than they looked!

Photo: Richard Kells



Here's a new picture from Clive Hardy. Seen it before in Swanning Around? No!

There are some extra long service badges in this one, and these will soon be available for issue to those who qualify. That one in the bottom right hand might be a rarity! Will anybody qualify for it before 2026?



The Diesel Gala—what's coming:

According to the official blurb, it will be:

Class 25 No. D7612 (British Rail No. 25 262) courtesy of South Devon Diesel Traction.

Class 31 No. 31 128 courtesy of Nemesis Rail.

Class 37 No. 37 703 courtesy of the Harry Needle Railroad Company.

Class 44 No. D4 'Great Gable' (British Rail No. 44 004) courtesy of the Peak Locomotive Company.

Class 46 No. D182 (British Rail No. 46 045) courtesy of the Peak Locomotive Company.

Class 50 No. 50 026 'Indomitable' courtesy of PTG Tours.

Plus our own class 33s D6515 and 33 111

Further details on the Swange Railway web site.

All subject to availability and any others sneaking in!

D4 *Great Gable* seen at the Nene Valley Railway



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 408466 to contact Jonathan Evans, 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-----

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