



Swanning Around

A Look at What's Happening Around the Swanage Railway

Issue 26 – May 16th 2017

After the amazing Strictly Bulleid steam gala, we have just had another successful diesel gala 4th to 7th May.

This event just gets bigger and bigger, and requires more and more organisation.

So let's spare a thought for those people behind the scenes who spend an awful lot of their own time arranging the hire and transport of all the visiting diesel locos.

And, of course, well done to those people putting together a timetable that keeps the visiting enthusiasts happy!

Ten visiting diesels, including four from national network operating companies GBRailfreight and Colas Railfreight – well done everybody!

So you think that's the last of things to get excited about this year? Not a bit of it!

There's an official handover of the T3 by the National Railway Museum at Corfe Castle on 27th May, see page 5.

Now, part of the ethos of Swanning Around is to be upbeat about everything we do, and show you, the reader, what's good about the Swanage Railway apart from the trains. However, this time, we are making an exception following the untimely passing of our long time fitter Frank Mead. Appropriately, a short tribute to him on Page 3, where he has featured before.

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When Swanning Around started, it was hoped that progress on projects happening in the background could be communicated to Swanage Railway Trust members and other parties with a view to generating interest among potential volunteers.

Mostly, this hasn't happened owing to a lack of movement on many of the projects in the pipeline, principally due to funding restrictions. As a volunteer-led organisation, not a PLC, we are unable to generate funds through share issues, and rely heavily on grants and other sources.

However, this doesn't stop you volunteering to help move projects forward. All you have to do is ask what you can do for your railway! And it will keep you off the streets!

In this issue, we have a short report from the Council Of Management (COM) about some of these. You can be sure that any offer of practical help and/or ideas to help move these projects along at minimal cost would be joyfully welcomed by those on the COM currently trying to push forward. Remember, the COM members are also volunteers, and it isn't their job, per se, to be project managers.

You can make a difference!

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With all these galas going on, it's hard to think that there are other things happening on the railway.

One of these, or should we say two, are the volunteer facilities at Norden station. First, the Staff Room on the platform has had a makeover, courtesy of the Estate Management team. All mod cons, but shouldn't there be an alarm clock in there?!

George Bailey tests the facilities for us on 16th May.



For the rest, there's a portakabin behind Lakeside Siding. That's been sorted out recently, but a visit by your roving reporter was very short owing to the heating not switched on. It was warmer outside!



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While we are at Norden, let's see what the station team is up to, that's those people ensuring that the place is looked after.

Mike Brown and Peter Ball are found refurbishing a platform seat on a sunny 9th May.



And later, Mike is helping Roger Stevens dispose of the grass cuttings from behind Lakeside Siding.



And now a reminder that the Purbeck Mineral and Mining Museum at Norden is open for visitors, opening days and times

shown in this picture.

No Page 3 in this issue, but a short tribute to a previous holder of the Mucky Man of the Month title.

Frank Mead, a fitter at Swanage, passed away on 14th April from natural causes whilst doing the job he loved. His funeral will take place in his home town of Salisbury on 18th May, starting at Swanage behind his favourite engine, well supported by his friends and colleagues from the Swanage Railway.

There have been many words written in tribute to Frank in recent days, and I don't intend to repeat all of them here.

A more well-thought-of person would be hard to find.

Frank was over-qualified for his job as a fitter, having two university degrees, one in physics, and was always passing on his knowledge to others.

He was also Director of Engineering for the group owning the M7.

So let's just remember Frank doing the job he loved. Here he is, sitting in the smokebox of Standard Tank 80104 preparing the washout plugs for re-fitting after washing out the boiler.

RIP Frank. You are missed by us all.



Photo: Andrew P M Wright

The Diesel Gala! Yes, another success!
But it's not all about the locos.

Take for instance the scene at Corfe Castle station, where the Beer Festival took place. You can get booze, bangers, books, and ice cream.



In Swanage signal box, our signalling inspector Alan Greatbatch takes a turn. Why go the gym when you could spend your time pulling levers?
And there's no joining fee!



On a train from Swanage, TTI Cameron Williams takes a break, while Gill Miles heads for Norden to relieve the catering assistant in the Norden Kiosk.

Meanwhile, guard Steve Jenkins lives up to his email signature!



Steve Jenkins
Head of Tea Drinking
(a department most can only aspire to)

Again, at galas, let's not forget the shunters, who make the turn round as swift as possible. Paul Mackay (didn't we see him doing this at the steam gala?) sees class 50 *Indomitable* onto the train at Norden on 5th May, with Darryl Tebbs from the owning group doing the driving. Head shunter Jon Jon Kerr stands on the platform looking interested!



In the next picture, it's driver Darryl again on 6th May receiving a birthday present – yes, it was his birthday! This picture is really there to show that our gala services don't stop at 6 o'clock, they go

on till midnight. That's value for money for our customers!



Sometimes at galas things may not go totally according to plan!

There are just a few at Harmans Cross to record the most overpowered train of the day on May 6th.

Three locos on the front,



and two more on the back!



Some locos found themselves out of sequence owing to an earlier issue, so are tacked on to this train for the return to Swanage!

-----ooOoo-----

Some groups had no input into the gala, like the crane gang at Norden, whose normal working day is Friday.

So, on 5th May, they are keeping out of the way of the constant movement of trains by hiding round the back of the wagons in Lakeside Siding, doing some maintenance.



-----ooOoo-----



Want to see what's under this stylish tarpaulin? Of course it's the T3, as seen on page 9 of the bumper issue 25 of Swanning Around.

At midday on Saturday 27th May, Andrew Mclean, Senior Curator at the National Railway Museum, will formally hand this over to the Railway and one of our patrons, Sir Philip Williams, will represent us. All members and staff are welcome to this ceremony which will be in the goods yard

at Corfe Castle. We are hoping that descendants of the locomotive designer's family will be present as well.

There's no parking at Corfe, so come by train. There will be refreshments available.

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And now for some project updates from the COM.

Furzebrook sidings.

Lease negotiations are progressing well, target completion end 2017. We have established the base line site condition with regard to contamination. Work about to start on designing the site drainage system that requires approval and installation before we can use the site. Contact Gavin Johns.

Herston.

Work to establish ability to develop a rail connected site continues. Significant site constraints (gas main, flood plain) will feature in analysis. The result, expected Autumn 2017, will determine progress in negotiating acquisition of industrial units. Contact Nick Coram.

Six car railway (incl Water Tower).

Work to identify civil works to facilitate six car operation is now under way. At each location the local site complexities need working through, planning and costing and then bringing together into a business case to determine how to proceed. Contact Jim Wheeler.

As mentioned on page 1, if you think you are able to add value to the work required to implement these projects, then get in touch, if only to find out what's what.

The six-car railway plan includes such things as extending platforms at Swanage and Norden, erecting the Salisbury water tower and water crane, and trackwork and signalling changes to suit, amongst other things.

Want to know more? Get in touch!

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For those who want to know how Beryl's getting on, she nearly has a cab!



Outside, Alan English and Greg Murray replace a gangway floor plate in Car 14, our Pullman Observation Car.



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As with everything else on the railway, there's always some maintenance to do, and painting fences seems never-ending!

On 9th May the painting gang of Phil Minshall, Brian Crouch, and Dave Taylor are attacking Swanage station fence in force!



-----ooOoo-----

Once a year, it falls to the Permanent Way Department to carry out fishplate greasing. In ten miles of running line there are thousands of the things, so it's a good job the weather's been fine recently.

Will Fooks (with the hat) and Tyler Herrington loosen the bolts and apply the grease to fishplates near Bridge 7 at Holme Lane on 10th May.

Only ¾ mile to go to the finish down there in the distance!



Meanwhile, down at the bottom of the gradient in the picture above, near to Tidmore crossing, John Stockley (with hat) and volunteer Anton Keep are as happy as pigs in ****, as they stand in a bog repairing and stabilising a fence, after

the local cattle decided to go for a walk on the line.



This is a continuing problem at many points on the line. Here are some of the culprits, on the River Frome flood plain, with Wareham's Lady St Mary Church in the background. If you had to live in a bog, you'd probably want to go for a walk somewhere else!



-----ooOoo-----

It's a good job we have S & T people on site each day, as maintenance on signalling and associated equipment is a daily occurrence. None more so than the recalcitrant Norden /Worgret token machine in Norden Crossing cabin. It's 16th May and technician Mike Southey is cleaning the electrical contacts *again!*



-----ooOoo-----

And just in time to get a token out to allow a megashunt at Eldon's siding to extract a wagon buried deep in the encroaching bushes. Dave Gravell drives class 33 no 33 111, while Interim Operations Manager Ashley Haines acts as shunter. No trees were hurt during this shunt – not so sure about the wagons!



-----ooOoo-----

While all this is going on, summer has come to Norden Crossing – the swallows are back in the cabin! Here they pose for the camera on the fence outside.



-----ooOoo-----

And another arrival on the railway on 15th May is a TC unit driving trailer, which was going to be stored elsewhere, until someone saw the bill!
More on this next time.



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To finish off, Shock! Horror!
Corfe Station Master Peter Brice has been caught fondling a bird in the Ladies Room!



In fact, he rescued a young Blackbird that got lost in there, and Booking Office Clerk Alka Thakker caught him at it!
Photo from Alka.

-----ooOoo-----

There is more news this month about an award to the Swanage Railway that may require a change to the header of Swanning Around. Umm!
As SA goes to press or pc or whatever, full information has not been obtained, so you will have to wait until next time!

-----ooOoo-----

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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