



# Swanning Around

A Look At What's Happening Around The Swanage Railway

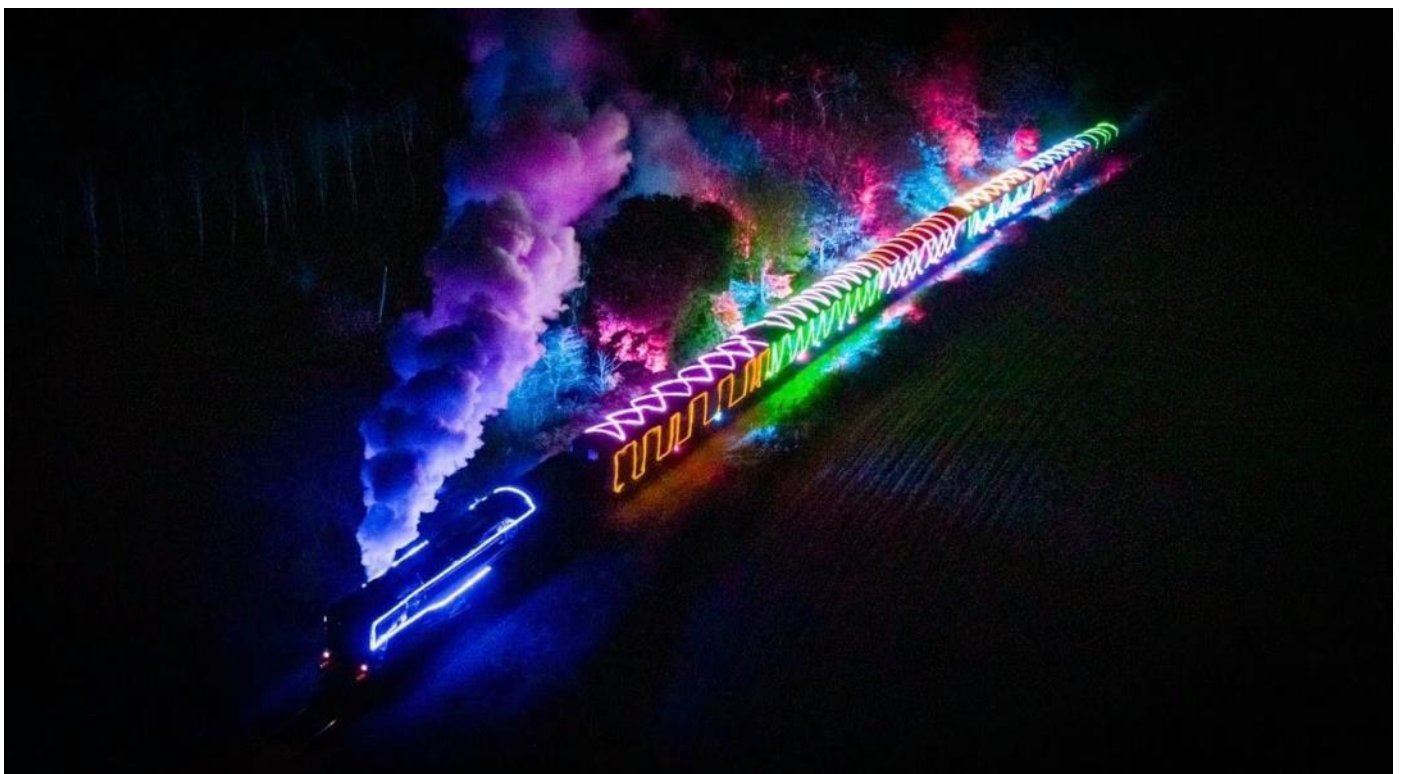
Issue 67 – October 25<sup>th</sup> 2020

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As advised last time, the management was in process of firming up a replacement for Santa, and this is it! Yes! It's **Steam and Lights!** For those with black and white TV, it's **Steam and Lights!**

Is it a good idea? Judging by the speed that tickets sold out when initially on sale, then Yes. Judging by the investment required and the potential return, then Yes again!

But there's always a But, and that's Covid-19. It's still with us, it's not going away any time soon, so there's always a chance that it could be a spanner in the works. But for now, it's a goer, along with the Christmas Luncheon trains. Check out the Swanage Railway web site at <https://swanagerailway.co.uk/> for details. Extra days were added to the Steam and Lights schedule, and the web site was indicating some availability as this issue was prepared.





One reason that the Swanage Railway is able to continue operating is conformance with regulations and guidance about Covid-19. That we are able to do so requires the continued vigilance of our staff and visitors. That seems to be working very well.

Another reason is that we are able to keep head above water financially, and that is largely thanks to the Save-our-Service appeal, which has now reached **£322,154.67** on 23rd October. In addition, we have recently received a grant of £223,200 from the Government's Culture Recovery Fund. This grant is for specific purposes and does not affect operational finances, and, bearing in mind that the Company has borrowed money that has to be repaid to assist with operations, the need for donations continues.

You know where to help us. It's Save Our Service at <https://www.saveourservice.co.uk/>

For more info about the Culture Recovery Fund, see here <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication/culture-recovery-fund-data>

It's all been going very well so far. Here's Corfe Castle station on 17<sup>th</sup> October, with platform stewards on hand to ensure conformance with our Covid risk assessment.

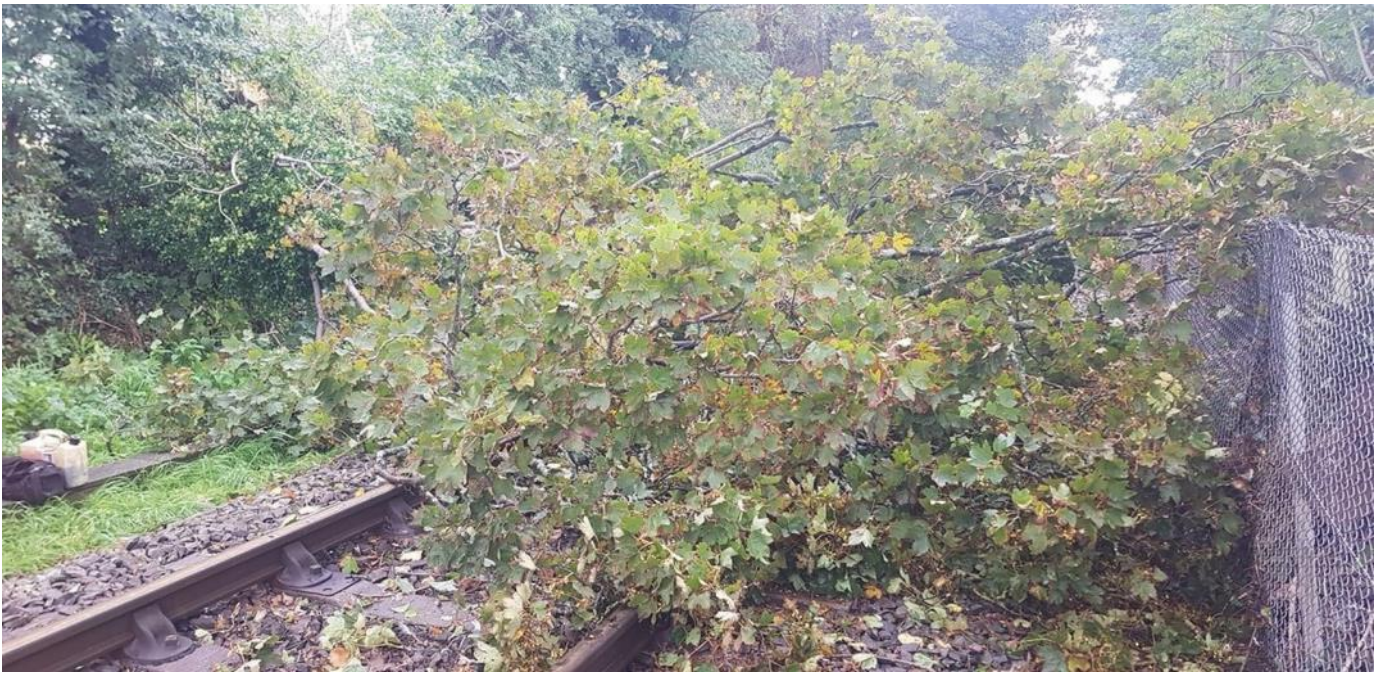
There's actually only one train in service. The other platform is in use as a coach park!



Weather's getting colder, so station manager David Scott has the bin ready to receive some coal for the waiting room fire from the loco crew, fireman Darren Pilton and Driver Oscar Martin.

Guard Ian Coane flags the train away, watched by Station Master Peter Brice, incognito behind the mask!





There's been an awful lot of stuff to keep the Permanent Way staff and volunteers occupied, and the results can be seen clearly all along the line.

Firstly, remember Storm Alex? He left his calling card on 2<sup>nd</sup> October in fallen trees and flooding, which the team had to get cleared quickly before services could run.

In Swanage a tree, at Norden a small flood. Big Daddy visited the farmer's field to clear his drain such that it didn't overflow onto our land!





Flooding at Norden caused by poorly maintained (or not!) drainage over the fence on the farm. Our chaps sorted it out with Big Daddy, see previous picture.

Other works over the last month have included keeping our own drainage channels clear, like here at Afflington Bridge.



So if you need access to get to the ditch at the bottom, no problem! Make an access with Li'l Sis!  
Then clearing the drainage channel is easy.



Pictures from Adam Woodman— Swanage Railway Permanent Way Department

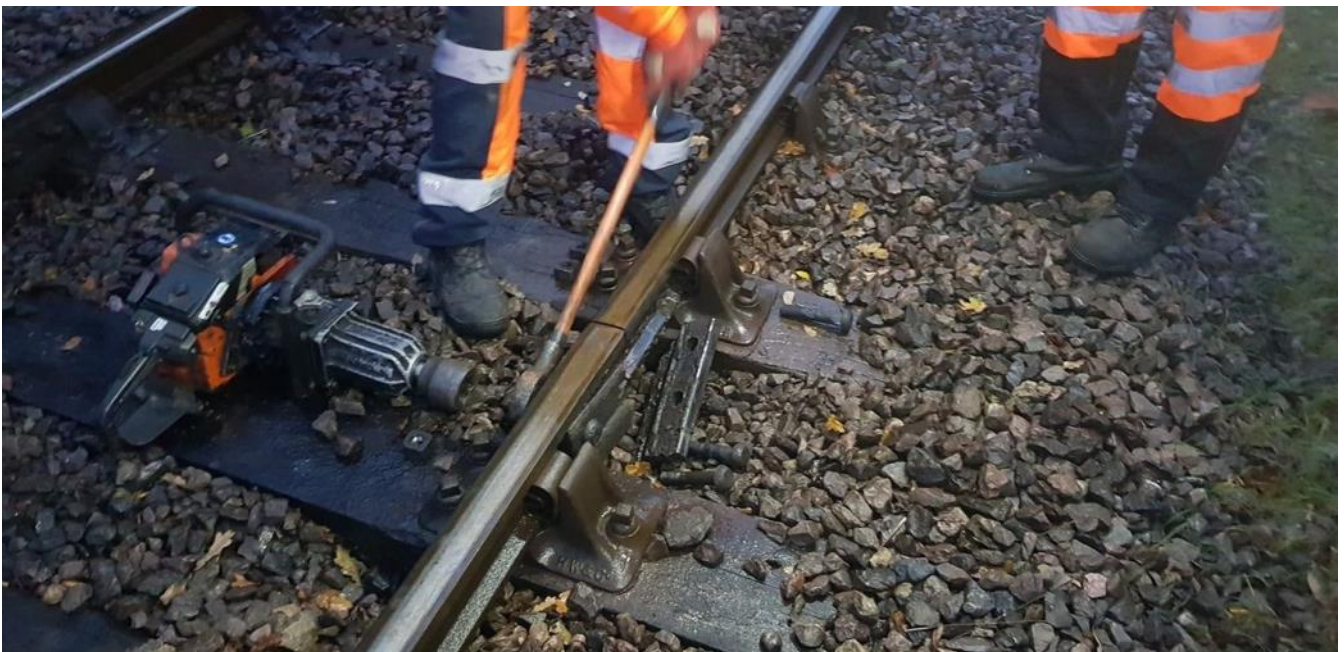
As we've seen in previous editions of Swanning Around, the P'Way team has removed an awful lot of growth at the lineside that has been getting larger every year, and even more so this year. Trouble is, they find the old British Railways fence has been unfit for service for many a year, so volunteer staff members Alan I'Anson and Phil Kimbrey stand the original concrete posts up on 13<sup>th</sup> October, ready to receive new wire, which then looks like a proper job!



Pictures from Adam Woodman—  
Swanage Railway Permanent Way  
Department



Haven't we had enough of P'way in this issue? Probably, but here's some more! Travel on the train and you can look out of the window and see where they have been. You can also feel where they have been with the smooth running, and this is partly achieved by lifting the rail joints where they have sunk a bit. This is done by lifting the rail and blowing stone chippings into the void under the sleepers, as demonstrated here.



Rail joints are the weak points, and if not sorted early, movement under the train can break the fishplate, as seen here. This is very unusual. More usual with these dipped joints is a larger repair bill for spring replacements, so the work that P'Way does is vital to keep operating costs down.

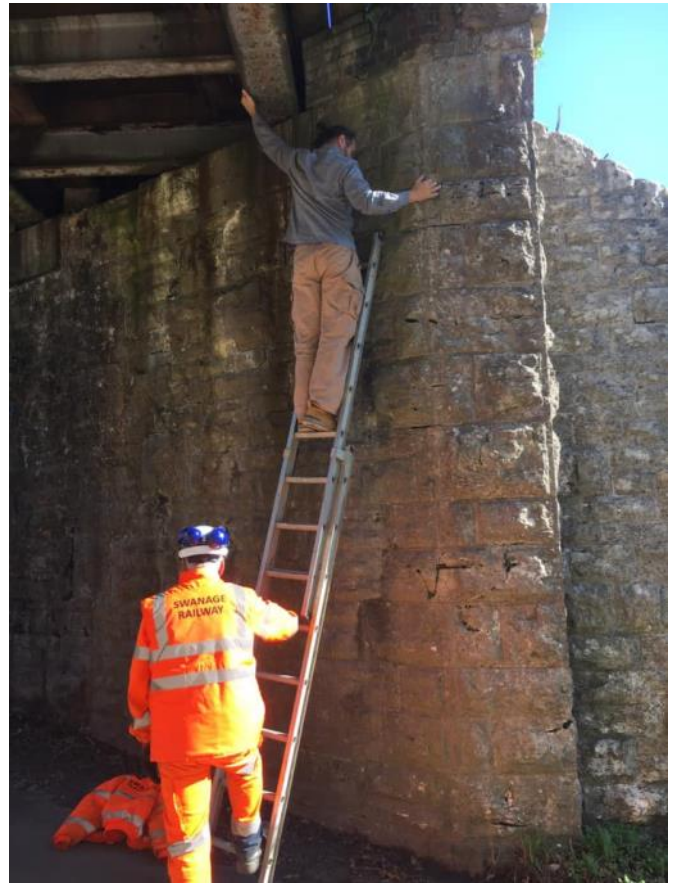


We presently have a speed limit over New Barn Bridge, something to do with the bridge beams, we understand.

Now there must be all sorts of technology out there to assess the bridge's condition, but not for us. We've brought in the Bridge Whisperer!

Or perhaps he's actually holding it up when the trains go by!

Picture from Adam Woodman— Swanage Railway Permanent Way Department



And now for something completely different! On 19<sup>th</sup> October, the Harmans Cross station team roped in Estates manager Pat Cattle to help put a new roof covering on Annabel, their LSWR coach body.

Pat controls the heat for the torch-on felt, ably assisted by Bob Bunyar on the roof and Mike Ellis tidies the edges. Looks like a nice job!

Picture from David Castle



There are no trains stopping at Harmans Cross while the Covid emergency is on, but that doesn't stop the station team keeping the place in good order. David Castle does an awful lot of the gardening there, and this picture from team leader Jeff Gregory on 26<sup>th</sup> August sees David at work on the rockery on the up platform.



Harmans Cross also has the starter signal box for training new signalmen, and, although there's no operational need for it to be open, the box is being switched in and used for training.

This picture from station team member Graham Jakes shows signalman Stephen Earwicker with trainee William Miles on the platform, having just exchanged single line tokens with the driver of the class 117 3-car diesel unit, out on a test run on 28<sup>th</sup> September.



More signalman training in Corfe Castle signal box on 17<sup>th</sup> October. Trainee Jonathan Evans had a whole shift having to operate the Tyers No. 6 tablet instrument which communicates with Swanage signal box. Always a bit unnerving at first, you have to get the sequences right and it can be frustrating for a first-timer!



A nice part of being the trainer is that in inclement weather, you can send the trainee outside to exchange the tokens!

With signal number 6 cleared for the 10.00 service from Swanage on 24<sup>th</sup> October, trainee James Mercer and Battle of Britain class no. 34072 257 Squadron are framed by the signal box window in this picture by Robin Moira White.



Another class 117 test day on 2<sup>nd</sup> October sees driver Peter Frost collecting the token for the Norden Gates to Worgret Junction section from Norden crossing keeper Randy Coldham. This is another opportunity for training, as, like many other signalmen, Randy has been trained but this is his first turn to put it into practice. The number of turns available for this job is limited, so it's quite possible for someone to be trained here but never actually do the job!

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Clive Hardy has advised that the following people have been sent long-service badges. If yours hasn't arrived, get in touch with him.

For October:

David JEFFS - Heritage Coaches - 15 years

John SLAUGHTER - Passenger Services - 5 years

For November:

Brian Grant - Santa - 5 years

Ian Jameison - Operations - 5 years

Lyn Wakefield - Museums - 15 years

WELL DONE everybody!



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](mailto: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!

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Compiled and edited by John Denison

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Swanning Around also appears on line at:

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

and

<http://swanagerailway.co.uk/volunteers-diary>