



# *Swanning Around*

A Look At What's Happening Around The Swanage Railway

Issue 66 – September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020



*"There are unquestionably difficult months to come.*

*And the fight against Covid is by no means over. I have no doubt, however, that there are great days ahead.*

*But now is the time for us all to summon the discipline, and the resolve, and the spirit of togetherness that will carry us through."*

So said Boris Johnson on TV on 22<sup>nd</sup> September.

Hopefully, the revised Covid restrictions won't have any effect on the level of services we are offering up to 1<sup>st</sup> November. Four return trips a day on the Plum timetable, followed by five trips a day on the Blue timetable over half-term week.

Christmas time may be somewhat different, and could depend on whether people take any notice of Boris, but Swanage Railway management continues to plan ahead for the period.

Santa has been identified as vulnerable, so he won't be coming, sadly, but this would be difficult, or perhaps impossible, to manage under social distancing rules, and would need to have been firmed up months ago. So that is a non-starter.

There will be Christmas lunch trains, see picture following, and other seasonal offerings are currently being worked on, but any info about these in this edition of Swanning Around would be premature. Keep watching Swanage Railway website and social media for up-to-date information.



A lot of information on the preceding pictures. This is the electronic notice board in Corfe Castle Booking Hall. Not heritage? It's a good representation of an original style notice board, but can carry much more passenger information, and is hard to miss right next to the platform entrance.

So, how are we doing? The latest information, as of 18<sup>th</sup> September, is that the emergency appeal has generated **£285,501.25** towards the £360,000 target, for which we are mighty thankful. That sounds like an awful lot, but is a fraction of the amount we would expect to have generated over the summer period, which then would carry the railway over the lean Winter period up to the start of seasonal services from around Easter 2021.

Running such services as we are able at present keeps the railway and its staff in operating condition, and we can say that the level of trading over the summer period has been around 50% of last year's income. Good enough to cover associated costs, but we still need help to ensure that we are still in business for next year.

Even in a good year, the fare box doesn't cover all costs, so it's a continuing appeal to everybody to keep donating!

Go to <https://saveourservice.co.uk/> and help us ensure that we have services to offer in 2021.

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U class 31806 has been shouldering the bulk of the services, with Battle of Britain class 34072 257 *Squadron* helping.

Driver Bryan Hardwick looks out for the green flag from the guard at Corfe Castle on 21<sup>st</sup> September.





257 Squadron enters Harmans Cross station on 7<sup>th</sup> September.

Harmans Cross station is open on most operating days for signalman training, even though none of our trains are scheduled to stop there during the Covid crisis.

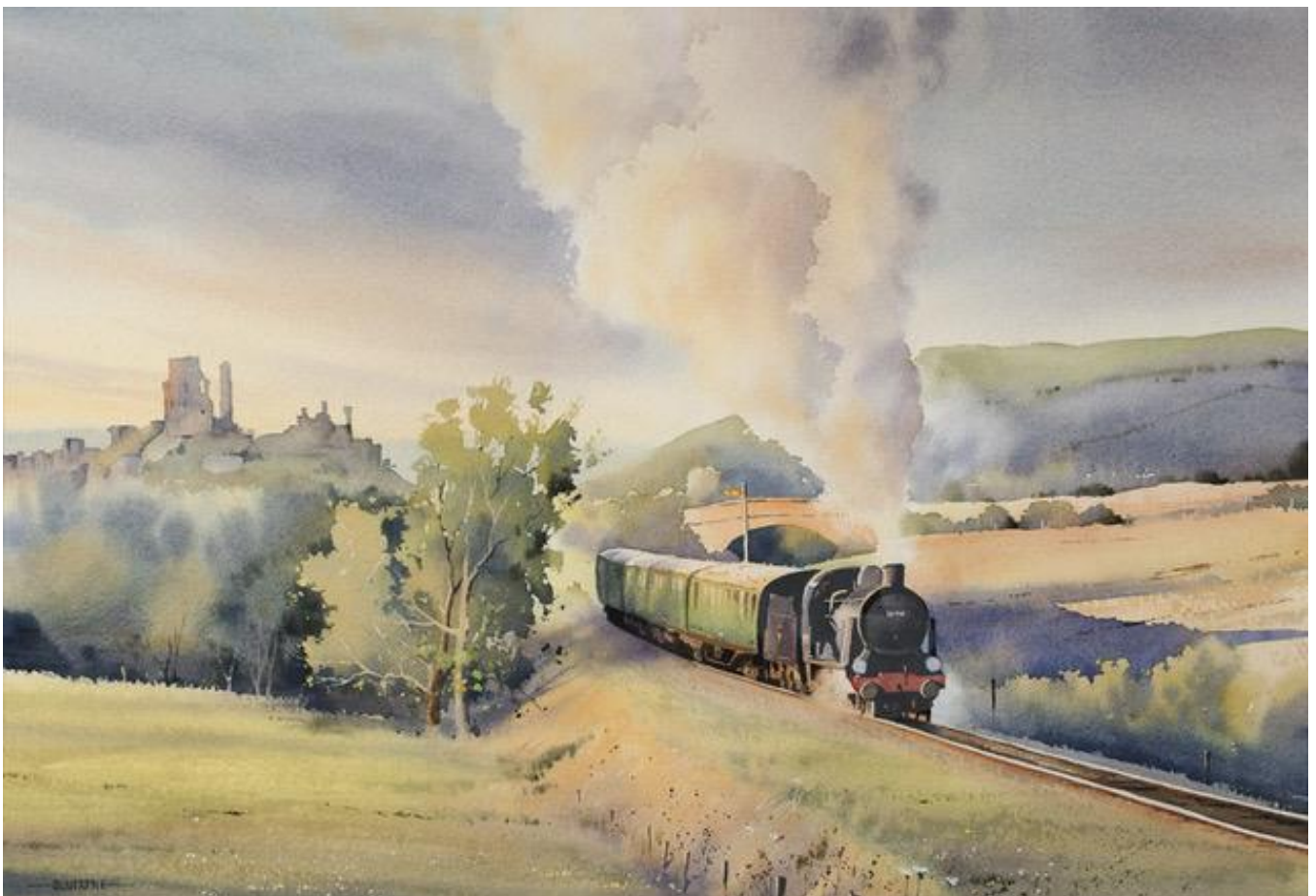
Picture from Graham Jakes



As part of the “Save Our Service” appeal, there is another opportunity to donate by purchasing specially-commissioned prints of paintings by artist Oliver Pyle through the Mulberry Tree Gallery in Swanage. The artist and gallery are assigning all their commission and profits from these prints to the “Save Our Service” appeal. These details from fundraising group chairman Randy Coldham.

You can purchase these at <https://www.mulberrytregallery.co.uk/collections/swanage-railway-save-our-service-appeal>

Following are images of the four paintings on offer.











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Change of subject. Volunteers!

Now you'd think in these difficult times that we would be struggling for volunteers. And you'd be right! We're always short of volunteers! Swanning Around will always peddle the benefits of being a volunteer on the Swanage Railway. See the last page of each issue for details of how to apply.

Covid-19 won't prevent you applying, as it didn't for Nick Munson. A recent recruit to the Signal and Telegraph team, Nick was set to work giving a very secondhand-looking signal spectacle plate the chance of a useful life, on 20<sup>th</sup> September.

Picture from Fraser White





As usual, there's plenty more going on around the railway, and the staff of Swanning Around is most grateful for contributions to this newsletter when it is more difficult to get around to bring the news to you.

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As you will know, the proposed Wareham service is on hold until such time that it can be operated safely, but those involved are not sitting on their hands! No! Why sit when you can lie down!

On 21<sup>st</sup> September, Diesel fitters Andy Garrett and Vic Turp are in the guard's compartment looking into a hole above one of the driving bogies on the class 117 three-car unit. They are not having a rest, they are tracing a fault with the axle position indicator electrics.



On 7<sup>th</sup> September, the single coach 'Bubble Car' is given a run out to the railway boundary near Wareham, seen here passing Corfe Castle ruins.

This also ensures that crews retain competence so that when the service is ready to go, so are they.

Picture from Andrew P M Wright



Right through the Covid-19 shutdown, a skeleton Permanent Way presence has ensured that we had a railway to run on when services resumed. Since restrictions were eased, volunteers and paid staff have been expanding the activities to a level more in keeping with a live railway, which means they start work well before the trains do!

When you were just getting up on 21<sup>st</sup> September, the track gang had this view, while they were checking dipped joints by the camp site at Woodyhyde.

Pictures from Adam Woodman





Once the trains start running, it is better not to be in the middle of the track, so it's down the embankment at New Barn to clear the foliage. A clear embankment is better for seeing any faults which may occur through unusual weather patterns, as has happened on other railways after excessive rainfall earlier this year.



The bridge beams at New Barn need some attention, so a speed limit has been applied at that location, where 31806 is seen passing the work site at caution on 15<sup>th</sup> September.

Both pictures from Adam Woodman





As we have seen in a previous edition of Swanning Around, the heritage coach restorers have been busy under Covid restrictions, and on 15<sup>th</sup> September, they were able to fit new luggage racks into the Maunsell coach S1381, that has been in service on the railway without them.

On 14<sup>th</sup> September, diesel shunter 08 436 was sent to Harmans Cross to collect the coach from the sidings.

Picture from Bob Bunyar



Nick Nicholls cleans up a new luggage rack bracket casting.

Paul Kingston assembles a luggage rack.



Both pictures from Pete Short



Nick Arnold and Chris Stone are installing one of the racks in S1381, on 15<sup>th</sup> September.



If you look carefully, you can see where they have installed them!

More good news for the heritage coach group is that they have acquired, through another carriage group on another railway, several sliding ventilators for Bulleid coaches, just what they need for nos. 4366 and 1457.

All pictures this page from Pete Short



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.**

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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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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>