



# Swanning Around

## A Look At What's Happening Around The Swanage Railway

Issue 84 – April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2022

March 25<sup>th</sup> saw the start of daily running for the 2022 season . Nothing new there, but there is a threat of increased costs and decreased revenue hanging over not just heritage railways, but all other attractions, too. This means that the management of the Swanage Railway is having to keep a constant eye on the effect of increased fuel costs, variations in travel patterns, and any number of other things that can affect the railway's bottom line.

A press release with a statement from the chairman about business prospects and priorities is included in full in this issue. The most noticeable, to some, is the deferment of the Wareham trial service to 2023, as the business conditions are uncertain. This is a big decision, and what the statement doesn't mention is that the insurance premium before we even roll a wheel is about £60,000. In the current financial climate, that's a lot of investment up front with uncertain payback. Sounds like a good decision!

Also in this issue, another press release in full telling us all about the new passenger information systems that Passenger Services has installed with the operators of the Realtime Trains company who provide live train information for trains on the national network, and now for the Swanage Railway, a heritage railway first! How did we afford it? A grant from the Government's Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage!



## **WAREHAM TRIAL TRAIN SERVICE POSTPONED TO SUMMER 2023**

***Dedicated Swanage Railway volunteers have postponed their planned trial diesel train service to the main line at Wareham until the summer of 2023 because of challenging trading conditions and economic uncertainty.***

*It had been hoped to operate the 90-selected day trial public service – using restored 1950s British Railways heritage diesel multiple units upgraded for main line running – during the summer of 2022.*

*Delays in completing the Swanage Railway's submission to the Government's Office of Rail and Road (ORR) to obtain permission to run the trains, the option of bringing in a contractor to operate the trains being uneconomic and main line passenger numbers having not returned to pre-Covid levels – have prompted the postponement decision.*

*Swanage Railway chairman Gavin Johns said: "We can only run trains to Wareham when the conditions are commercially viable and it's important that we operate the trial as economically as possible and when commercial conditions are at their best.*

*"We will continue with our main line train operating licence application to the Office of Rail and Road as quickly as practicable.*

*"The Swanage Railway's business is still recovering from Covid, which badly affected customer and staff confidence, against a background of challenging trading conditions and economic uncertainty.*

*"Trading conditions during 2022 are very unpredictable because they are being heavily affected by significant price rises being borne by our customers and our business – such as the increased cost of coal – as well as the tragedy unfolding in Ukraine.*

*"Concentrating on providing viable heritage train services between Norden, Corfe Castle, Harman's Cross and Swanage remains the Swanage Railway's first priority.*

*"The current challenging economic reality has affected our plans for operating a trial 90-selected day trial train service from Swanage and Corfe Castle to the main line at Wareham during 2022 and we are working to deliver that service during 2023, trading and economic conditions permitting.*

*"The business case does not currently exist to place external contracts to provide the trial train service to Wareham but we remain fully committed to securing all necessary consents and commencing services with a view to operating to Wareham during 2023. This is the most pragmatic way to proceed," added Mr Johns who is a volunteer Swanage Railway signaller.*

*A 60-selected day trial train service from Swanage and Corfe Castle to Wareham operated during the summer of 2017 using heritage diesel locomotives and carriages hired in as well as the contracting of a main line train company to operate the trains.*

*Gavin Johns explained: "The extensive work required to put in an application to the Office for Road and Rail (ORR) for operating trains to Wareham has been very detailed and has taken longer than expected – it has probably been the most challenging project in the 45-year history of the Swanage Railway.*

*"Trading conditions and economic uncertainties permitting, we plan to run a 90-selected day trial train service to the main line Wareham during 2023.*

*"I would like to thank everyone who has worked so hard on the Wareham project which has been a Swanage Railway ambition since British Rail closed the branch line to Corfe Castle and Swanage in January, 1972," he added.*

*The two 1950s former British Railways heritage diesel multiple unit trains that the Swanage Railway has refurbished and upgraded, for running on to the main line at Wareham, are a three-carriage Class 117 and a one-carriage Class 121 'Bubble Car'.*

***In an attractive and engaging heritage style, constantly updated live train information has come to the Swanage Railway in a first for a preserved railway – thanks the Realtime Trains company and a grant from the Government’s Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage.***

*Housed in traditional 1950s notice board-style frames, digital screens giving train times – as well as information about the locomotive hauling the train and the facilities in its carriages in an innovative visual ‘Know Your Train’ form – have been installed at Swanage and Corfe Castle stations, with more to follow at Norden and Harman’s Cross stations.*

*And in another national first for a heritage line, the live Swanage Railway train information will also be available on the main Realtime Trains website at [realtimetrains.co.uk](http://realtimetrains.co.uk).*

*The pioneering development in constantly updated train information for the public has been possible thanks to a partnership between the Swanage Railway and the Realtime Trains company which provides three million passengers a year, across the national railway network, with continually updated train information via the Internet and mobile phones.*

*The new system for the popular Isle of Purbeck heritage line works thanks to high-tech global positioning system (GPS) tracking equipment installed in the carriages which constantly relays the position of the trains thanks to a variety of mobile phone networks.*

*As well as giving Swanage Railway passengers live up to date train running information, the new station display screens include locomotive details, what carriages make up the train and accessibility information.*

*Swanage Railway passenger services director Trevor Parsons said: “We are very grateful for the innovative and imaginative technical expertise of Realtime Trains in producing such an attractive, clear, concise and engaging continually updated train information system for our passengers.*

*“Housed in traditional 1950s notice board-style frames – the sort that used to display timetables in the days of steam trains – the new digital screens are a very effective blend of old and new; the best of our railway heritage with the very best in up to date information technology.*

*“The Swanage Railway is always looking for ways to further improve the information we give to our passengers to keep them informed and we are very grateful to the Government for its £223,200 Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage grant – awarded to us in the Autumn of 2020 – part of which has been used to pay for this important improvement,” added Trevor who is also a volunteer guard and signaller on the heritage line.*

*Tom Cairns, founder and operator of the Realtime Trains company, said: “It’s wonderful to see the new system up and running – I wanted to incorporate the visual look of the Swanage Railway’s heritage branding with a modern twist that was visually attractive and engaged the public’s interest.*

*“We designed the hardware and software for the new system from scratch. Train passengers everywhere – whether it’s on the main line or on a heritage line – want more information so finding a way of delivering accurate, live and helpful information to customers is important.*

*“Realtime Trains built a new software package combining the strengths of our main line information platform with the understanding of heritage and private railway train operation to provide passengers with clear and up to date information in the same way as the main line train operators can.*

*“The Swanage Railway has helped in the development of the new system and we are delighted with the results. The work is new compared to my national railway network main line train information system currently in operation and has required me to follow a different technical development path,” added Tom who lives in Bournemouth.*

*Tom started Realtime Trains in 2012 – while he was studying at Southampton University – with the enterprising 29-year old covering train operations on Network Rail ever since with several upgrades of his system taking place to improve the presentation of information and the system’s ease of use by the public.*

*Over the last 14 months, Tom has been working with main line train operators to improve customer information through an innovative ‘Know Your Train’ visual system which gives easily accessible detailed, information about the carriages running on a train service, including its facilities.*

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What the passengers see is a constantly refreshing noticeboard, as below, including the train formation, with similar notifications as those to be found on Realtime Trains’ own web site for main line trains.

Not only that, but the system includes the facility for automated train announcements through public address speakers, like this one seen on a lamp standard at Corfe Castle station.

Both press releases by the Swanage Railway press officer Andrew P M Wright

**Train Departures** 12:47  
Powered by Realtime Trains

NEXT DEPARTURE  
**12:42 Swanage** At platform  
Harmans Cross  
Herston Halt (request stop)  
Swanage

Coach E D C B A  
Bicycle icon

SUBSEQUENT DEPARTURES  
**13:47 Norden** On time  
Norden only  
**14:12 Swanage** On time  
Harmans Cross, Herston Halt, Swanage

**2022 TICKETS**

**To Swanage**

Adult Return	£17.00	Adult Single	£12.00
Child Return (5-15)	£ 8.50	Child Single	£6.00
Family Return (2+3)	£47.00		
Under 5's	FREE	Under 5's	FREE

**Dogs**

Dog Return	£ 3.00
Dog Single	£ 2.00

**Notes**  
Fares to intermediate stations are available on request.  
Child Rates - 5 to 15 inc. Under 5's FREE.  
Family Return - 2 adults and 2 or 3 children or 1 adult and 4 children.  
Registered Disabled - Accompanying carer travels free.  
Bicycles - Carried free of charge, subject to space.  
Special Event - Different fares may apply.

**UNDER 5s TRAVEL FREE**



Sorry I picked a time to take a photo when the train was late!

Shows that the system works!

-Ed.



The first dining train of the year on March 20<sup>th</sup>, with 34028 *Eddystone* on the front at Harmans Cross, waits for the passenger train with visiting Great Western 2-6-2 tank engine 5526 to pass. *Eddystone*'s fireman Alex Atkins takes the opportunity for some photography.

Maunsell coach 1381 had some flats on its wheels, so had to go away to Bristol to get its tyres turned. 'Crompton' diesel 33 111 has brought the coach to the loading point at Norden for onward road transport on March 7<sup>th</sup>. It was soon back again the same week.





Barely a week goes by without some shunting somewhere on the railway, and on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, it was Beryl's turn. Here she is shunting the crane siding at Norden.

OK, so it wasn't April 1<sup>st</sup>! Beryl hasn't got an engine! The 08 shunter 08 436 is on the other end! Just a repositioning move for the stuff in the siding, and a lift for the T3 class 563's tender from its rolling chassis.

Although most of the donations and funding are in place for the tender repair, there is still an outstanding financial requirement to complete the loco. Click [here](#) to see the appeal page for information and to help with donations .



There's always something for the folks in the Estates department to do, and on March 8<sup>th</sup>, they were doing a biggie.

Swanage signal box steps were reaching end of life (that means going rotten!), so carpenter John Piper made a new set.

Having had the assistance of the Permanent Way and their road/rail excavator/craning machine to lift it, Pat Cattle, John Piper, and Mel Smith secure the new assembly. As usual, other 'helpers' are just out of the picture, to ensure the railway's ratio of doers to watchers is maintained!



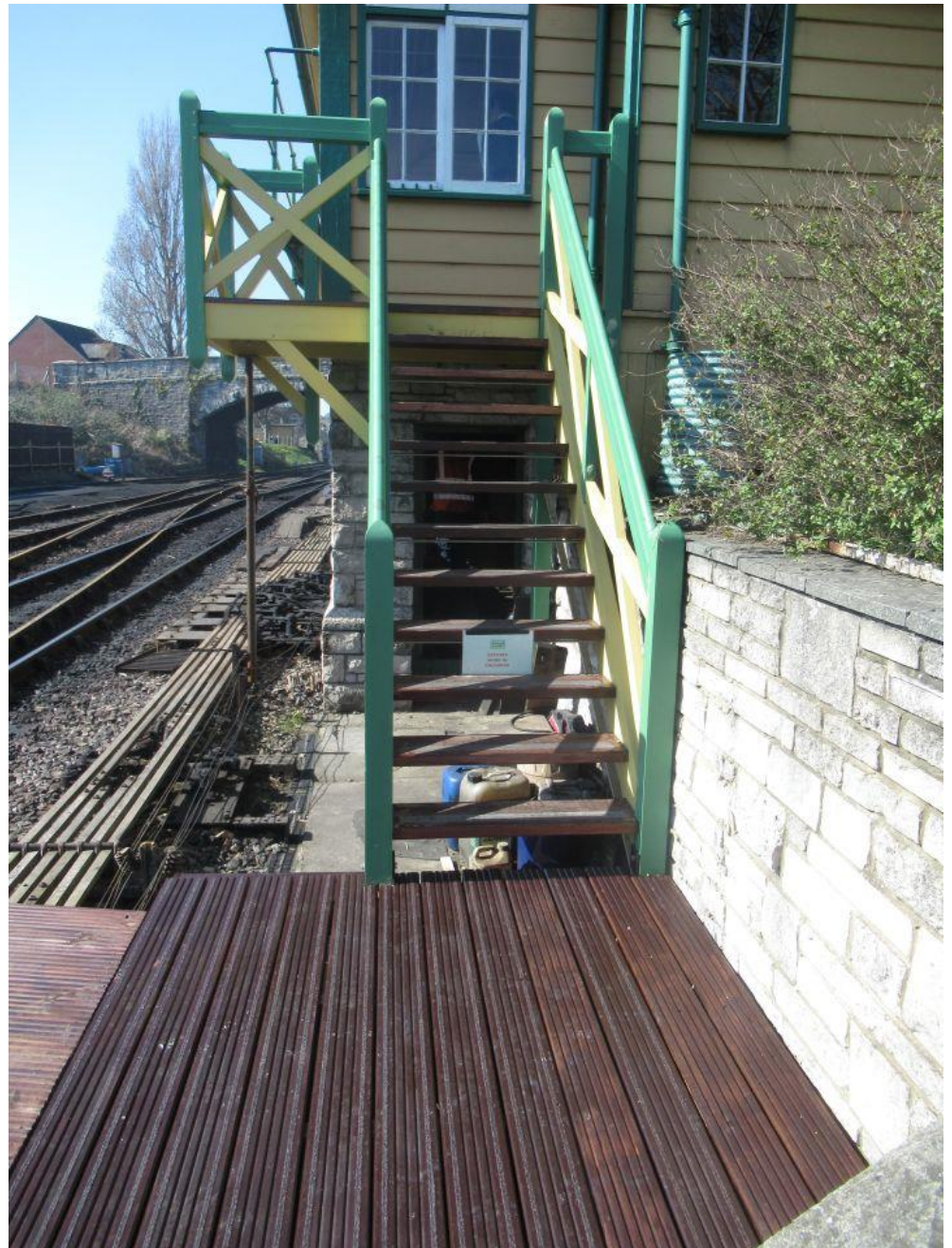
And here's the nearly finished article on March 20<sup>th</sup>.

We say nearly finished as the incoming signalman would have been greeted by a note from Estates indicating work in progress, but not stating what that work was.

Seeing that notice, would you risk it?!

We are sure they meant that it was just awaiting the top coat of paint, but what's that Acrow prop doing?

Another great job from the team in Estates!





In issue 83 we reported on the signalmen's or signal person's or signaller's, etc., Mutual Improvement Class (MIC). This time it is the turn of the general Operations department MIC at Harmans Cross village hall on March 12<sup>th</sup>.

Traditionally, railwaymen's MIC is an internal thing with senior staff giving the benefit of their experience and knowledge to lesser mortals. These Swanage Railway events differ as they are more a training experience with an agenda to impart information to all grades.

This time we had a visitor, the Office of Rail and Road inspector for heritage railways, Simon Smith. He gave us a presentation about human error, competence management, and improving safety, with help from the experience of Guy Martin on the screen. Perhaps it's a good job we don't drive trains like Guy rides a bike, but the application of non-technical skills is good for both.





Further presentations from our own Chris Lemon, who used to be a trainer on the main line railway, about non-technical skills , above, and from Josh Voce and Jon Cooper, below, about communications and their importance towards safety.

Another explanation of the pending introduction of HOPS, as we saw in the previous signalling MIC, from Jonathan Evans completed the presentations.

These events are another contribution to the continuous training at the Swanage Railway.





Continuing the training theme, on March 20<sup>th</sup>, several trainee guards were in Swanage signal box with trainer Ian Walters and signalman Simon Hanney, getting an overview of signalling from Alan Blackman, who is also our signalman roster clerk.

However, as new guards are trained, so some guards retire, and it was Martyn Curtler posing with driver Peter Frost and fireman Mike Odam at Swanage on completion of his last turn of duty on March 21<sup>st</sup>, after 18 years of service to the railway. Always a character, if you'd been on a train with Martyn guarding, you'd have known about it! Have a happy retirement, Martyn!.

Photo: Andrew P M Wright



There's progress in Herston Works on Manston. We'll have to check for the next issue of SA how long it will be before it's ready for service..

Progress looking good with the nameplates going back being fixed on March 15<sup>th</sup>.



Photo: Stuart Magnus

Much of Swanning Around's content comes from, well, swanning around! And it's while doing so that SA staff comes across stuff like this.

What was Nick Gosden doing grovelling around under the vehicles in the goods shed road at Corfe Castle on April 1<sup>st</sup>? It turns out he and Paul Smith, both of the Estates electrical department, were feeding through a power supply cable for the imminent installation of the Corfe Castle refreshment 'kiosk'.

This 'kiosk' is the Birds Nest catering vehicle, which has been re-sited to Corfe from Swanage.





Further to the refurbishment of the printer room in Corfe Castle goods shed museum, as reported in issue 83, on March 29<sup>th</sup> Heather Denning is finishing the decorating on a new window made by John Piper.

The new glass door in the picture below has an etched museum signage which, interestingly (is that a proper word?), is at the right height for kids to see that it's glass in that door!





Great Western Railway 2-6-2T 5526 will be returning to its home on the South Devon Railway on April 12<sup>th</sup> , we are told, so here's a couple of pics before it leaves.

The picture above, from Harmans Cross station volunteer Graham Jakes, shows the loco working a driver experience turn on March 7<sup>th</sup> , while, below, 5526 is in company with 34028 *Eddystone* being prepared for the day's service on March 26<sup>th</sup> .

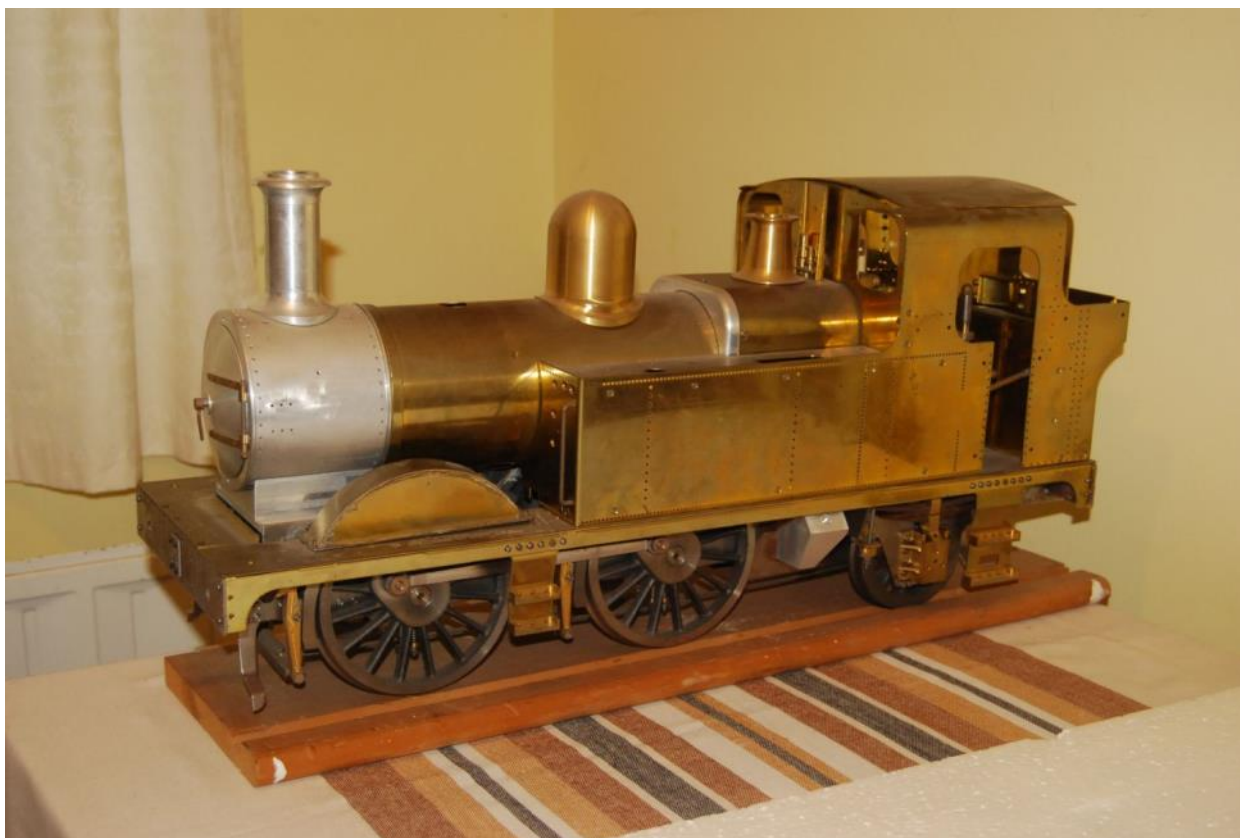


Another Harmans Cross volunteer who has provided pics for Swanning Around, and does a lot of gardening at the station, is David Castle. Now, a lot of people involved with heritage railways may have some models at home, may be OO scale or even O scale. But David has had for many years a Winson 5 inch gauge model of a Great Western 14xx class 0-4-2T, and a push-pull coach. There is still some finishing work to do, but David says he would like to dispose of it as he hasn't the skills to finish it.

So if anyone's interested in acquiring these fine models, contact Swanning Around via the email address on the next page and we will put you in touch with David.

ps. it's big and it won't be cheap!

Photos from David Castle



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](mailto:iwanttovolunteer@swanagerailway.co.uk) or by calling 01929 408466 to contact Jonathan Evans, our Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Officer.

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