



Swanning Around

A Look At What's Happening Around The Swanage Railway

Issue 37 – April 19th 2018

Swanage Railway is now running trains daily until October, so things are ramping up in support of daily services.

Not only normal services from Swanage to Norden, but also we have recently held a gala at the end of March, and we have a diesel Gala coming up in May.

Throw in the history-making excursion of our own train onto the national rail system, a visit from a national railtour in April, and you have a really busy time for the railway and its volunteer and paid staff.

The fact that all these events are successfully achieved says something about the people who work in all weathers to ensure everything works, and those who interact with other organisations to ensure everything goes to plan. Well done!

There is also an announcement from the Swanage Railway Trust in this issue about the position of Volunteer Recruitment Officer.

Read on!

Also in this issue are some jottings from the General Manager, Matt Green.

While he had a PA, there was a regular issue of Staff News on the staff website, but workload has prevented the continuation of this.

In future, Staff News, or GM's Jottings, will be included in Swanning Around, this time tacked on the back for convenience.

Hopefully, from the next issue of SA, the format will be revised to make it easier to construct and to present the content to read better on electronic devices. Yes, the SA production office has acquired a publishing software package! Now to work out how to use it!

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The Works Outing Spring Gala, 23rd to 25th March.

This was a gala with a difference, though, as we used only resident locos, and, as it was advertised as a steam gala, we used a diesel as well!

Trips on the extension to the boundary at the River Frome, assisted by class 33 diesel D6515, added to the attraction.

The forthcoming Diesel Gala on May 10th to 13th will go one better by including trips to Wareham. Find full details on the Swanage Railway website at <http://swanagerailway.co.uk/events>

A variety of visiting locos, and the return of the London Transport 4TC coach set, including incoming and outgoing charter trips from London, will make this a gala to remember.

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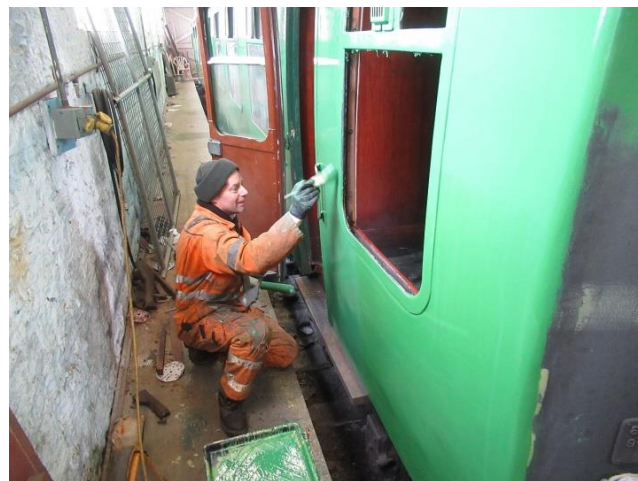
Swanning Around prides itself on bringing you news of the action on Swanage Railway, but there will always be exceptions!



On 23rd March, Swanage porters are taking a break, while super recycler Mike Leach reads Swanning Around! Top man!

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Now this is action! If you look carefully, you can see that Jason Kingdon's paintbrush is a blur! That's another coat of paint on TSO coach 4416 on 10th April. The floor in the vestibule area of the coach in front of Jason that was shown missing in issue 35 has now been replaced in steel.



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In issue 35, we saw carpenter John Piper installing some fine gate posts on the coal dock at Swanage shed. Now look at the gate! Clearly too good for us irks to use!



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Who enjoys the Diesel Gala? Lynne MacGrath for one! Husband Colin has provided a picture of Lynne enjoying last year's Driver Experience. Lynne was one of the better ones at getting to grips with the controls on the run to the River Frome and back.



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Page 3 this time is taken over by the most exciting thing to happen in the first half of April. The loaded test run on the main line of our U class no. 31806 with five main line certified coaches, and D6515 for company.

You will have read in previous issues of Swanning Around of the work to bring this loco and these coaches up to the standards required for running on the national network, and 13th April saw the reward for all this work with a loaded test run to Yeovil and back, via Weymouth, operated by our friends at West Coast Railways.

Photographers were out in force, so here's a small selection of pictures offered to SA.

Firstly, 31806 puts its wheels off the Swanage Railway and onto the national network for the first time, at Worgret Junction.



(Peter Milford)

Climbing the gradient to Bincombe tunnel, south of Dorchester, on the run from Weymouth to Yeovil.



(Andrew P M Wright)

Further up the line towards Yeovil, the train approaches the tunnel at Evershot.



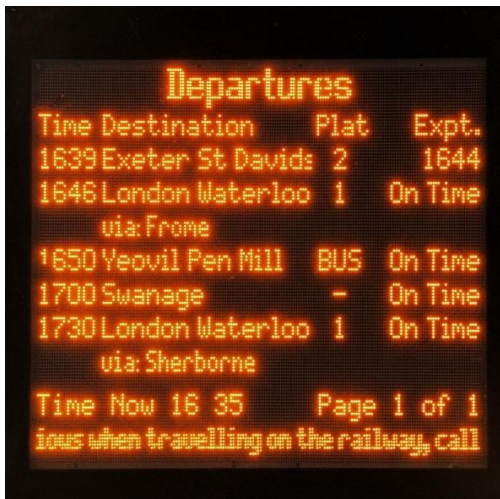
(Andrew Moody)

The train has arrived at Yeovil, has been serviced, and is awaiting departure for the return trip. From here, 31806 will lead to Yeovil Pen Mill, where the train will reverse and D6515 will lead back to Weymouth.



(Andrew P M Wright)

The train was even shown on the Yeovil Junction departure board!



(Peter Milford)

Here's the other end of the train, with D6515 stopped at a red signal at Maiden Newton on the return trip, waiting for authority to proceed to Weymouth, where 31806 will again lead back home to Wareham.



(Peter Milford)

Did it all go according to plan, was it all a success? Steam Superintendent Graham Froud, on the left, and Swanage fitter and fireman Chris Birmingham seem fairly pleased with the result!



(PeterMilford)

For some action videos of 31806's test run, check out YouTube where there are many showing various stages of the trip. Just search for 31806. Well worth a look.

31806's next foray onto the main line will be to Yeovil again to assist the Great Britain XI round Britain railtour to Weymouth and Swanage on 26th April.

The upgrade of No. 31806 – so it could haul a train on the main line – was made possible thanks to a £75,000 Government grant to the Swanage Railway Trust from the Department for Transport as part of its Heritage and Community Rail Tourism Innovation Competition. The Trust supplied £25,000 of labour towards the work.

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D6515 is going to be busy on the main line. After its outing with 31806, it is now going to London to take part in a London Transport Museum Metropolitan Railtour charter train on 29th April to the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre at Quainton Road.

On 10th May, D6515 will return to Swanage at the head of the Purbeck Explorer railtour to Swanage for the Diesel Gala.

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Although our signal boxes get superficial cleaning by the duty signalmen, sometimes they need a little more.

On 27th March signalman Graham Colborne has come all the way from home in Lincoln to organise a deep clean for Corfe and Swanage signal boxes.

At Corfe, David Wild, Paul Clements, George Rashbrook, Graham White and Graham Colborne (hiding behind the frame), are really giving the box a good seeing-to,



while, at Swanage, Randy Coldham, Mike Walshaw, Gail Coldham, and Peter Parascandolo make sure we can see where they have been!



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Training of all operational grades at Swanage is a continuous theme.

For signalmen, after initial training to operate Harmans Cross signal box, training for other boxes is achieved mostly by practical sessions with a duty signalman.

Here, on 10th April, Robert Prance makes sure that Alan Grove pulls the right levers in Swanage signal box.



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And now for something completely different.

Harmans Cross was having some new tarmac in the last issue. Did you see it?

Here's one section, on 31st March, with Battle of Britain class no. 34053 *Sir Keith Park* entering on a Swanage to Norden train.



Looking the other way, *Sir KP* waits while Standard Tank 80104 enters with a train for Swanage, with signalman Alan Greatbatch handing over the single line token for the Harmans Cross to Swanage section.



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In Harmans Cross signal box, the signalman's chair has had a makeover by Jacqui Hagger, practising her upholstery skills.

Here's what the seat of the chair looked like before:

(Jacqui Hagger)



This chair is on loan to the railway from Bill Trite, a trustee and director of the Swanage Railway Trust.

It was acquired by him in around 1988 from the Eastleigh Works drawing office at a time when it was being downsized.

By the look of it, it had probably been at the Works since the early 1900s.



And after!
That's
better!

-----ooOoo-----

Jacqui's been proper busy, what with the chair above, and the announcement below, and fundraising suggestions.

Try this one.

You can contribute to the Swanage Railway while you do your shopping online.

Yes, when you buy through Amazon, you can contribute to a charity, so don't forget Swanage Railway.

Here's how:

Amazon donates 0.5% of the net purchase price (excluding VAT, returns and shipping fees) of eligible purchases to the charitable organisation of your choice.

AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service.

Support your charitable organisation by starting your shopping at smile.amazon.co.uk

Make sure you select Swanage Railway as your chosen charity.

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An Announcement from the Swanage Railway Trust

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT OFFICER

The Trustees are pleased to announce the appointment of Jacqui Hagger to the post of VRO with immediate effect.

Improving how we recruit volunteers is a key part of the work the Railway is doing to become more responsive to changes in volunteering.

Jacqui will be leading on the external activity, proactively placing volunteering opportunities identified by the Railway, in front of potential recruits to our cause. This is a significant shift for the Railway as we move from a reactive to more proactive stance on volunteering.

The Trustees hope you will afford Jacqui all the support you can in this vital work.

When we caught up with Jacqui she stated that the "VRO role is just one part of the Volunteer Engagement Process which the M&V group is developing to meet the needs of the organisation. The days when rail enthusiasts came knocking on our door to volunteer are long gone and the local competition to attract volunteers has grown. Just take a look on our door step at how many organisations are calling out for people to volunteer."

The Trust and Company have been busy in generating role profiles and identifying each department's need for volunteers. The VRO role is primarily concerned with going out to get potential volunteers, rather than wait for them to come to us.

She plans to explore a variety of different methods from attending volunteer/ careers

events at local colleges, corporate employee volunteering schemes, broaden the areas where we advertise our opportunities, the use of social media and attending local events.

The VRO role works harmoniously with that of the Volunteer Liason Officer and other roles that may evolve as the Volunteer Engagement process is developed.

If you have any suggestions/ideas to help her then feel free to contact her via email at:

iwanttovolunteer@swanagerailway.co.uk

So who is Jacqui Hagger?



This is Jacqui in charge of some expensive-looking stuff in Car 14. (photo from Jacqui)

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On 4th April, Network Rail engineers carried out an inspection of their section of the Swanage branch, from Worgret Junction to Bridge 2, the Swanage Railway boundary.

Now you would think that it would just be a case of turn up, walk around, look at stuff, and clear off. No!

Network Rail has its own set of rules for access to its lineside, and it also has to work under the protection of the Swanage Railway's single line token, which is effective from the junction.

So it was arranged that Swanage Railway would transport the Network Rail personnel to site accompanied by our own Permanent Way people.

Swanning Around was invited along, but not allowed onto Network Rail property – too much paperwork!

Getting to the site was in the Swanage Railway's luxury inspection saloon, with guard Alan Blackman, propelled by D6515 driven by Paul McDonald.



Swanage Railway Permanent Way Manager Barry Light and our P'Way consultant Jim Wheeler welcomed Network Rail Project Manager Chris Jackson and Assistant Engineer Alex Johns for the ride from Norden to Bridge 2.



Seen from the veranda of the inspection saloon, the tracks are inspected, track gauges at the ready. One working, three watching! Perfect!



On a particularly wet and windy day, of which we've had many this year, it can be seen that the River Frome flood plain is doing its job! No wonder our fences fall over in this area – it's a bog!



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This week, the toilets at Corfe Castle station have been out of use owing to remedial work being carried out on the septic tank drainage.



Unfortunately, Swanning Around staff has done a crap job and arrived to get a sniff of the works only after the movement had taken place, and we are only able to offer a picture of the site after the big job has been done!

Drainage contractors have replaced the old septic tank with a sewage processing tank with an electrically powered agitator, which uses bacteria to break down the raw stuff and allows only water to exit to the drains.

The picture above shows the site between the end of the up platform and the starting signal. The new tank is under that green manhole cover near the hedge.

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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

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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Swanning Around also appears on line at:

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

and

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

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GM's Jottings

It's been too long! With the sheer volume of work going on and personnel changes, Staff News had disappeared off of the face of the earth. Happily and with the help of John Denison, we bring you my notes but now within Swanning Around. I hope this means there will be more regular updates from myself.

As a brief update the first three months of the year performed well. It's always a challenge judging month by month how we are doing as traffic levels are slight, Easter moves and we are beholden to the weather. In the period January to the end of March we operated on 21 days. This is a 10 day drop on average to allow us to focus on work behind the scenes. A great deal of project work was undertaken and this has been covered most excellently in Swanning Around. Passenger numbers to the end of March were 9058. Or an average of 431 people per day. Previous years saw an average of 200-400 passengers per day. I know it's statistics but it's encouraging. What's not encouraging was the weather over Easter. I've seen plenty of attractions in Dorset reporting a dip and this is so with us and the reports from colleagues on some other major heritage lines. Friday for us was atrocious both weather wise and passenger number wise. Saturday and Sunday fared ok and Monday was below average. It's a disappointing start, but the rest of the Easter Holidays performed reasonably well. Looking back at the data we should focus on weekly totals and these are certainly comparable with previous years.

The Works Outing performed well and I'd like to thank everyone involved. The event had a really nice feel to it, and while it was no Strictly Bulleid, performed well given the lower cost base. It was great seeing four engines in steam in the home fleet.

Looking forward we want to hold an open forum, hopefully the first of many in a revised format. We intend to give some details of what we are doing, how we are doing and why we do some of the things we do in the way that we do it.

Thanks for all of your help, here's to a good season and I hope to see you on the railway soon!

Matt