



Swanning Around

A Look At What's Happening Around The Swanage Railway

Issue 86 – May 27th 2022

What's been happening in May? Diesel Gala and Beer Festival! So there'll be a lot of that in this issue!

But as usual, there's plenty more happening on the railway, not least of which is the normal service train timetable which, this year, is being adjusted to suit the demand in order to ensure that costs are more controlled than with the annual timetables used previously.

The previous model of timetable with Blue, Green, and Yellow in force at pre-set times of year is not used this year, and travellers may have noticed that the Blue timetable used prior to 3rd May is different from the one used post 3rd May. This timetable manipulation will continue with management deciding what level of service is appropriate. Will we have a Green service with one steam and one diesel, or a Yellow with two steam, or perhaps a steam/diesel combination?

The cost and availability of coal may be the deciding factor! We'll just have to wait and see. In the meantime, the current Blue timetable is featuring haulage by U class 31806 this week, seen here running round its train at Swanage on 25th May.





CORRECTION!

Yes, Swanning Around issue 85 contained some duff gen!

We said that the M7's new bunker was being manufactured by the Flour Mill Workshop. WRONG!

We have since been informed that the bunker was built by Andy Channon Engineering in the workshops at Norchard, Dean Forest Railway .

Thanks to Nigel Benning for providing this updated info, and for providing the picture above with old and new bunkers at Norchard.

The bunker has since been delivered to Swanage and is shown on the frames of the M7 in Herston Works, picture provided by Stuart Magnus.



And now for the Diesel Gala and Beer Festival.

A very well attended event, supported by good weather,. Although final figures were not immediately available, the Finance Director was sporting a smile, and indications were that a fine surplus was certain.

So we have plenty of pictures of diesels, but none of the beer festival. With Swanning Around staff busy elsewhere, and other participants more interested in pictures of the trains, it is not surprising that pictures of beer are not popular. What we must say is that praise is due to all the Swanage Railway volunteers who manned the bar over several days, and thanks to Purbeck Kitchens for their input. Note made to include the festival in SA next year!

Following are a lot of pictures and a few words.

You've already seen the arrival of class 50 no. 50 026 Indomitable and the class 25 D7612 in issue 85. The rest of the visiting diesels came in a convoy hauled by class 31 no. 31 128.

Even as they arrived at Wareham station on 3rd May, there's plenty of interest on the platform.



Photo: Andrew P M Wright

Thursday 5th May was gala preview day, with one diesel and one steam train running. Here we see both trains crossing at Harmans Cross. 34028 *Eddystone* runs in, observed by secondman James Forster on class 37 no. 37 703, or is it 37 067. Depends which side of the loco you're looking at!

Photo: Andrew P M Wright



Later the same day, another arrival for the gala was these two locos from GBRailfeight. The leading loco is class 69 no. 69 004 one of a small fleet of former class 56 locos being re-engined for further use by GBRf. It was accompanied by class 73 electro-diesel 73 136. Neither loco was included in the gala schedule, but were here to show support for the gala by GBRf. 69 004 was available for cab visits at Swanage for contributions to the GBRf chosen charity Prostate Cancer UK.

Photo: Andrew P M Wright



The Purbeck Mineral and Mining Museum joined in the diesel action.

They welcomed back Ian Bradshaw, a founder member of the museum, to rededicate newly-restored Ruston and Hornsby type 48DL industrial diesel no. 283871.

The first picture shows Ian doing the honours with the scissors, helped(?) by PMMM chairman Peter Sills, while the lower picture has volunteer Rob Barrett, on the left in the upper pic, driving on the museum's demonstration line above the platform at Norden station.

There's a video of the event on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V2bkHvHaVL8>



Photos

Andrew P M Wright



Many of the trains were routed along the extension section to the railway's limit of operations at Frome River bridge 4, with a loco at each end.

Above, Norden crossing keeper Paul Clements is ready to exchange single line tokens with the loco crews as class 33 D6515(aka 33 012) crosses the Wytch Farm Road with a service for Bridge 4.

Below, class 44 D4 *Great Gable* is at Creech Bottom heading a service returning from Bridge 4.

Both on 7th May.

Both photos: Andrew P M Wright



It's 8th May, last day of the gala, at Corfe Castle.

Signalman Jim Russell hands the single line token to driver Pete Davies on class 31 no. 31 128.

D4 *Great Gable* passes class 37 no. 37 703 (it is on this side!) in the siding awaiting its next duty on the tail of a train to bridge 4.

As a change from previous years, Corfe Castle was the location for much of the action including loco changes. Class 33 D6515 waits in the up platform while class 31 no. 31 128 arrives from Norden with a train for Swanage.

All these photos: Andrew P M Wright



Substitutes!

No diesel gala would be complete without some repair or tlc needed. Many visiting locos do little work with vacuum brakes until they hit the gala. That's when the owners find the bits that need attention!

On preview day 5th May, 37 703 needed the vacuum brake control system sorting out, so Swanage Railway's 'thunderbird' 33 111 was substituted while the owners fixed the problem. 34028 *Eddystone*, with fireman Andy Croggon driving, waits at Harmans Cross for the delayed train to arrive.

31 128 also had a braking problem after the first day, and was taken out of service for a short time until a replacement part arrived from its base at Burton-on-Trent.

GBRf's class 73 no 73 136 had an unscheduled outing as sub for the ailing 31, seen here at Cat's Eye bridge leading a service to bridge 4.



Photo: Andrew P M Wright

When the gala is over, the visitors have to leave us, and just like when arriving, some go out as a convoy. This time, on 10th May, the convoy is going to the Severn Valley Railway for their forthcoming gala, and our D6515 went too, so led the string to Kidderminster. Pictured here crossing bridges 4 and 3 on the way to the junction with the main line at Worgret..

Photo: Andrew P M Wright



After a successful visit to the Severn Valley for their gala, D6515 was entrusted with returning D4 *Great Gable* to its home at the Midland Railway Centre at Butterley on 23rd May. D6515 returned to Swanage on 24th May after an overnight visit to Nemesis Rail at Burton-on-Trent to have an in-cab radio problem fixed.

this photo from Phil Viles via Facebook



50 026 is still with us and was used on the curry night Bistro on 21st May.

Three great pictures from Andrew P M Wright around Corfe Castle, including signalman Clive Morris.



The new badges that we showed in issue 85 have been delivered, and here's what the 50 year looks like. And yes, it will be a rarity, even though a couple of likely candidates may be receiving these this year in recognition of continuous service to the railway right from the start of the re-opening campaign in 1972. Many others will qualify for the other range of badges.



Talking of badges, John Coulbert, who volunteers with the Estates team, will be seen, usually on Saturdays, at Norden with a new "Customer Information" badge. More info in the next issue.



Legacy of a Legend

There's a great new video out now, starring the 563 Group's chairman Nathan Au. So to make a change from Swanning Around waffling on about the T3, go to YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1iAsg4BoD4&t=4s> and see a star at work!

The old Bird's Nest Buffet has now been re-branded in its new location as the Corfe Castle Buffet.

Catering volunteer Val Cole serves a customer on 24th May.



The kiosk at Swanage, however, has not been fully operational until a satisfactory wash-up area has been provided.

Estates volunteer (and Norden station manager) David Budd is on his knees in the sink location in Station House on 5th May. Is he praying for help? Looks like he needs it! You too could be helping—you know how to get in touch!



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 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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