



Swanning Around

A Look At What's Happening Around The Swanage Railway

Issue 53 – August 24th 2019

August Bank Holiday upon us and hot weather promised means plenty of visitors to Purbeck. But there's always a down side! The chain ferry between Sandbanks and Shell Bay is broken, and traffic through Corfe Castle and on to Swanage will ensure that we may get some extra passengers via the Norden Car park, or they may not show up at all!

But we're ready for them, mostly. The visiting Ivatt mogul which has been helping to maintain our two steam train service has failed with a leaky boiler tube, but we should be able to make the end of the peak yellow timetable without further recourse to diesel help. (Edit: spoke too soon! Smoke on the horizon from lineside fire!)

In this issue, as usual, there are all sorts of activities being reported, but this is a fraction of what's happening on the railway. To maintain the levels of service that we're used to, substantial numbers of volunteers are needed, and if you have been reading the press or other outlets, you may be aware that volunteers training for the operational roles, driver, fireman, guard, etc. are urgently needed to replace those of us retiring, etc.

For those who haven't seen it, check out what is being said in the Daily Telegraph at

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/08/21/steam-driver-shortage-britains-heritage-railways-call-goes-new/>

It was brought home to us again recently, when former British Railways, Bodmin and Wenford, and Swanage Railway engineman Tony Hallworth passed away. His passing was commemorated with wreaths on our service engines.

So now's your chance to get trained. It doesn't happen overnight and we need several new crews every year.

Do it now!

We have a willing(?) volunteer for Page 3 this time, and much more, so read on!

Any railway environment can be an unsafe place, and steam railways don't get much relief from health and safety requirements.

Recently all the wheelchair ramps, enabling disabled passengers to get on the trains, have been replaced. Just whose health and safety benefits from this change could be a discussion point!

Here, Harmans Cross Stationmaster Peter Foster shows us the old versions which are now waiting for recycling.

Station staff and guards operating these folding ramps invariably had to check that all their fingers had survived!



Below, station manager Jeff Gregory and volunteer Bob Bunyar fix the location brackets and install one of the new ramps, on 21st August.



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Yes! Another example of the glamorous life with steam locomotives!

Cleaner* James Forster has carelessly volunteered to clear the ash and other detritus out of 257 Squadron's smokebox on 18th August.

* see also page 14 for some hot news!



Swanage Railway pays its respects to Tony Hallworth on 4th August with a smokebox wreath on Ivatt mogul 46521.

Alongside in Platform 1 is a UK Railtours' "Swanage Sunday Special". More later.



The continuing story of the Wareham Diesel Unit inspection pit at Corfe Castle.

On 31st July, our Track Team is on site positioning the rails on the new concrete pit sides and dropping ballast on the approach track, as the Ivatt 46521 passes with the 12.00 service from Norden to Swanage.



The 12.00 may have passed, but it left a present for the track team to deal with!

Good job they were there, or it might have triggered another visit from the fire brigade!

Two of them take fire beaters to put out the lineside fire.



And here's the pit on 19th August. Rails are fixed, handrails installed, but still electrics and drainage amongst others things to be completed.



The track team does all sorts of stuff within the railway boundary, including some serious gardening, strimming the embankments at Corfe Castle.

Another job you can volunteer for! They need you, get in touch!



Here at Swanning Around we like to show people doing stuff. But there are times when waiting is required.

These times allow our staff to check the structural integrity of the infrastructure.

Driver Bryan Hardwick tests the fence by Harmans Cross station on 10th August, waiting for the down train to arrive.



Guard Trevor Parsons tests the structure of the ground frame cabin at Norden while waiting for the engine to run round the train on 29th July.

Driver Les Frampton does another strength test on the fence at Harmans Cross, with guard Rudi Rich on 13th August.

Fortunately, all tests successfully passed!

These three pictures from Gary Packer.



So what's the waiting all about at Harmans Cross? Waiting for the signalman, that's what.

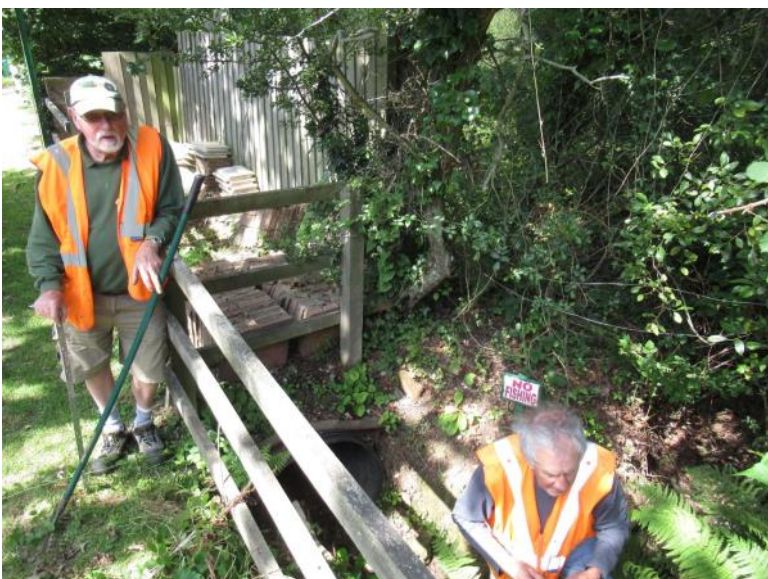
In this picture, again from Gary Packer, signalman John Denison takes the single line key token for the section Harmans Cross to Corfe to driver Les Frampton on 21st August.



Also at Harmans Cross on 21st August, Mike Ellis has been found behind the grounded carriage body "Annabel" fixing weatherproofing sheets. This side may not be generally seen, except by the campers in the site next door, but it still needs to be protected against deterioration.

And below, on 19th August, Jeff Gregory checks the integrity of the fence while David Castle does some gardening in the ditch!

All these little jobs seem to have nothing to do with running trains, but are just as important. You can do this stuff—you know where to volunteer!



On the subject of signalmen, here are some more.

For some time, the chairs in Swanage signal box have been looking past their best. New comfy chairs from the secondhand shop across the road have been acquired for this 'box and for Harmans Cross. Now the train approaching warning equipment will come into its own making sure the signalman is awake when the train turns up!

Signalman and signalling inspector John Alexander is swinging the levers in Swanage on 13th August.



Outside, John prepares to hand the single line token to fireman Chris Lemon on 257 Squadron.



On 18th August, Graham Colborne is ready to hand the token to fireman Gary Cox.



Been plenty of activity off the main line at Wareham during the peak period. South Western Railway has continued with the summer Saturday services to Corfe Castle from London Waterloo, and UK Railtours has operated four Swanage Sunday Specials from Waterloo, using the London Underground 4-car TC set, top and tailed by two GBRf class 73 electro-diesel locomotives. The fourth of these, however, featured our own class 33 D6515 on the leading end.

On 27th July, the train crew poses for the camera alongside the South Western Railway 3-car class 159 diesel unit. In the picture are SWR drivers Shaun Philpot, Malcolm Smith, and Mick White, SWR guard Phil Dominy, and our own guard David Dow and conductor driver Barry Light.



Unusually, on the 3rd August, two 2-car SWR class 158 sets were used, 158 883 and 158 884, still in the old South West Trains livery, captured here by the Corfe web cam.



The "Swanage Sunday Special" is captured by the Swanage web cam as it arrives at its destination on 4th August, led by class 73 electro-diesel 73 201.

See page 3 for the other end of this train, with 73 107.



On 18th August, the service was led by class 33 D6515, with 73 107 bringing up the rear. The web cams show it at Corfe, with signalman Stuart Magnus exchanging tokens with conductor driver Dave Gravell, passing the 12.00 ex Swanage with 80104, and at Swanage with the 12.40 waiting to depart with 33 111.



Our class 33/0, D6515 has, as you have seen, been in action on the main line on the “Swanage Sunday Special”

It has also been from Waterloo to Warminster with the same TC set the day before, and is due to do some trips on the old Great Central route from Marylebone to Rickmansworth and Quainton Road on 25th and 26th August.

Here’s a view of the train arriving at Warminster, borrowed from YouTube.



In support of this mainline work, a B1 exam was carried out, and 71A Group members Kevin Hare and Alan Hawkins are in the workshop on 13th August inspecting and cleaning the brake feed cut off valves.

Below is what the valves look like in one piece and with the innards on display.



What do they do?

Mmmm! errr! That’s above our pay grade at Swanning Around!

A second unrestored coach from the railway's TC set was received by road, and was hauled to join its unrestored partner in Harmans Cross sidings on 14th August.

Gary Packer has supplied this view of the coach being shunted at Arne Road bridge.



On 24th July, the 'bubblecar' single vehicle diesel unit for the Wareham service was returned to the railway from overhaul at Eastleigh Works. The view left is from Mervyn Turvey, and shows D6515 shunting the vehicle out of the works prior to hauling it to Norden.

This view from Jim Wheeler shows the unit on a test run on 26th July past the works for the inspection pit that it may soon be parked on.



Signal and Telegraph department is often around on Tuesdays to inspect and adjust, and that's just what's happening on 13th August.

Firstly, checking the detectors on the point locking arrangement outside Swanage signal box.



And checking the operation of the calling-on signal on the inner home signal post. John Blyth is on the phone to the signaller, while Paul Smith, all the way from Spain to help out, pauses from painting the shunt signal apparatus.



Hot news! Well, it certainly is today (24th), with temperatures nudging 30 degC, just what you need on a steam loco!

The news is that our star of Page 3 this time, James Forster, just recently passed his firing exam, and is now a cleaner passed for firing. Today was his first turn as fireman, and at 18 years, he is our youngest doing that job.

Swanning Around was waiting to catch him in action, but was thwarted by the intervention of some lineside conflagrations which meant that we didn't get the scoop this time!

Shows what you can do from being in the Sygnets.

The same would apply to anyone else. You don't have to be in the Sygnets to achieve a place on the footplate, just volunteer!

Here's another cleaner on the way up. Not doing anything on the footplate, but a necessary job nonetheless.

Emergency couplings don't get used too often, and can get a bit corroded if left about. James Taviner has got two of them on 13th August, and is giving them a good clean up so that they are fit to use when needed. No good waiting till they're wanted to find out they're seized!



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

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>