



Swanning Around

A Look At What's Happening Around The Swanage Railway

Issue 80 – December 6th 2021

Christmas is coming and we've already had two successful weekends of Steam and Lights and Christmas Luncheon trains. In line with Government advice, we are applying enhanced Covid protection for our customers and staff, and this doesn't appear to have affected take-up of our services.

This issue of Swanning Around, like last time a bit later than normal owing to staffing (or lack of it!), contains not only items from the last week or three, but also some items left over from the previous issue. It's not all about lights! And maybe by the next time, we may have a December issue in December!

Photo: Andrew P M Wright





When we see the Steam and Lights trains in action, it's easy to forget the work that goes into preparing for such events. An external supplier provides the lighting equipment, but our own staff and volunteers are in there helping to install it. Gavin Brown and Ben Dolman are at Corfe Castle on 23rd November assisting with the strings of lights.

On 24th November, fitting staff and shed volunteers are on site preparing U class 31806 and West Country class 34028 *Eddystone* for use next day on the test runs.



Train crews prepare for the 'dress rehearsal' trial runs on 25th November.



Both photos: Andrew P M Wright





Illuminated tableaux are part of the Steam and Lights offering, at various places along the lineside, as above, and also on the station at Corfe Castle, below.

Both photos: Andrew P M Wright





Photo: Gary Packer

Standard class 4 tank loco 80078 had the honour of leading the first train of the Christmas services, the Christmas Luncheon train on 27th November, seen here by Townsend bridge at Corfe Common.

The sharp-eyed amongst you will have noticed that there are only four coaches in this dining set, there being no guards brake coach. That's because it's in the Goods Shed being refurbished, as seen in the picture below on 23rd November.

The guard does, however, have a handbrake in the leading end of the kitchen car. It may be small, but it's warm and closer to the tea!

Photo: Andrew P M Wright



On 19th November, members of the 563 loco group visited the Flour Mill Workshop to view progress and were pleased to see that a workshop reorganisation found all the 563 loco parts in one place, as seen in their pictures reproduced here.

In the top picture, wheels, chassis with new smokebox, and upturned boiler are in view, and middle right, the old and new inner fireboxes.



The target is to have this exceptional loco running in 2023, which is entirely possible with help from supporters.

For further info, and the opportunity to contribute, visit the 563 Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SRT563LG/>

For donations, the 563 website at <http://563locomotivegroup.co.uk/>

or Swanage Railway appeals at <https://www.swanagerailwaytrust.org/t3-appeal>

Or to join the tender club go to www.563locomotivegroup.co.uk/t3tender-club/



In issue 79, Battle of Britain class pacific 34072 *257 Squadron* was waiting for its new main steam pipe. In this issue, we can see it being fitted, held up by a fork lift truck and under the watchful eye of Swanage Railway Steam Superintendent Graham Froud.

Photo: Neville Crook



And on 30th November, *257 Squadron* is back on the railway at Swanage.

Photo: Andrew P M Wright





On 30th November, 257 Squadron is on shed at Swanage, coaled and ready for steam testing, the finish a credit to the volunteers who have been working on it at Herston, one of whom the photographer David Ensor.

A random outing by Swanning Around finds more volunteers out in almost freezing weather on 2nd December at Corfe Castle painting the fence. Porter Alan Keys, Estates volunteer Norman Reid, and station manager David Scott are getting on with essential work while the rest of us keep warm!





Last time we saw Alan English and Will Rudge lifting a coach on the jacks outside the Goods Shed at Swanage. This time, we see Alan carrying out repairs to the steam heating pipework.

Also at Swanage, Signal and Telegraph technicians Mike Southey and Michael Paul carry out maintenance on an electrical point detector at Swanage on 1st November.

Both photos: Andrew P M Wright





A special three-day New Year heritage diesel service is to operate on the Swanage Railway to mark the 50th anniversary of the last British Rail train from Wareham to Corfe Castle and Swanage in January, 1972 .

Find out all about it, why volunteer signalman Malcolm Munro has been selected for a chilly promotional photo at Corfe Castle, and how to get tickets, by going to the Swanage Railway's website at

<https://www.swanagerailway.co.uk/news/view/special-heritage-diesel-railbus-service-to-mark-50th-anniversary-of-last-british-rail-train-to-swanage>

Below, the last British Rail service at Corfe Castle on January 1st 1972.

Both pictures From Andrew P M Wright



Swanage Railway Museum wins some grants!

Swanage Railway museum volunteers at Corfe Castle station are celebrating after winning their first grants - the money being used to further improve the experience for visitors. Attracting 48,000 visitors a year before the 2020 coronavirus pandemic, the free admission museum - established in the goods shed of the restored Victorian station in the year 2000 - tells the fascinating story of the Swanage branch line from the 1880s.

Operated by the Swanage Railway Trust, the museum has been largely funded by public donations and was ranked twelfth in a Visit England tourist body survey during 2019. The National Lottery Heritage Fund has awarded a grant of £23,700 for the museum to create audio pods so visitors can enjoy a typical 1950s branch line station 'sound scene' and listen to recordings of evocative memories from Swanage branch line staff and passengers during the 1950s and 1960s.

The money will also be used to improve 'front of house' facilities at the museum so that visitors can talk to staff about the Swanage Railway's history and access the archives.

The South West Museum Development Programme has also given the Swanage Railway Trust museum a grant of £4,000 which will pay for professional management advice and mentoring to the volunteer museum staff during the project.

Photo: Andrew P M Wright



On 9th November, *Eddystone's* repaired bogie was reinstated, releasing Wadebridge's bogie for return, with thanks, to the Mid Hants Railway.

On the same day, the frames for West Country class 34010 *Sidmouth*, which have been residing on a flat wagon at Norden for some time, are at last on the move.

The lorry below has been loaded and is on its way to Sellinge in Kent, an outpost of Southern Locomotives, for shot blasting and preparation work by volunteers at that site.

Both photos: Stuart Magnus





This looks like a 'what's going on here' page!

The picture above from Bob Bunyar shows our permanent way folks unloading a large parcel at Harmans Cross on 11th October. There's another one for Norden. What can it be? We'll show you in a future issue of Swanning Around!

And who has got the Corfe Station Master, Peter Brice, out in full dress, our official photographer Andrew P M Wright, a film crew, and a train on a non-public timetable day on 1st November? And who goes around railways wearing loud jackets? I'm sure we'll find out what this was all about for a future issue!

Photo from train guard Tim Marshall



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!

-----ooOoo-----

Compiled and edited by John Denison

Email to swanning.around@swanagerailway.co.uk

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