



# *Swanning Around*

A Look At What's Happening Around The Swanage Railway

Issue 93 – December 24<sup>th</sup> 2022

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Merry Christmas and a great New Year to all our readers!



While 34070 *Manston* simmers at the Swanage end of the Train of Lights on 17<sup>th</sup> December, we look back on the year 2022, and look forward to 2023. But what is there to look forward to? Swanage Railway management has been taking a long serious look at prospects for 2023, but Swanning Around is no place for speculation.

So here's a message from the Chairman of the Swanage Railway Trust, Gavin Johns, primarily aimed at the working members, and gives an insight into the thinking of our management teams with regard to the challenges ahead.

## ***Seasons greetings.***

*As we approach the end of the year, and with a new year about to start, it's a good opportunity to reflect on our experiences and to plan.*

*You will have read that the economic conditions during the year have impacted on our trading and we, like many similar railways, are having to reconsider our plans and our offer to remain safe, relevant and viable.*

*The new Trust Treasurer's first task has been an overall review of our financial position. He regards the cash position for Group (both Trust and Company) as sound and that although the year ahead is challenging given the current economic forecasts, by providing services that respond to customer need we have every prospect of trading well through the next year. Careful decisions will be needed to prioritise spend but the overall prospect is of positive optimism.*

*Equally as important is a recent open letter to your Directors making a compelling case to listen to the views of others before firming up on plans for 2023. This is a well timed reminder to become more open with issues, to explain choices and to achieve consensus over our plans and the use of all our resources: the debate we will now have early in the new year will do that.*

*Trading conditions will remain tough. As our customers discretionary spend remains under pressure and our costs rise or other factors impact, we must continue to respond and to tailor what we do to meet our customers needs. We learnt through Covid that we have to be ready to respond to changing conditions: flexibility was the key then and it will be now.*

*We also plan some great special events across the year. We will also have the T3 back in steam, resplendent in full LSWR lined livery for use on our line. We are planning services to connect with Wareham. So there is much to look forward to.*

*Although the next year will be challenging, with more open dialogue, engagement and support we can collectively ensure that the Swanage Railway will continue to provide a great experience.*

*On behalf of the Trustees can I thank you for your commitment and support during the year, and wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Johns', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Gavin Johns**



Photo: Andrew P M Wright

There are many pictures of the Train of Lights to choose from, but we have picked just a small number which represent a bit more than just a picture of a train.

Firstly, on 20<sup>th</sup> December, the train is seen departing Swanage, with the old part of town in the background. Perhaps Andrew has a pilot's licence to get this one!

On 9<sup>th</sup> December, we have the train passing the display at Afflington. Each of these displays is powered by a small generator which the crew of a class 33 Diesel switches on before the first Train of Lights.



Photo: Andrew P M Wright





The Train of Lights on 17<sup>th</sup> December, seen near New Barn with 34028 *Eddystone* leading.

And another aerial view of the same train returning from Norden, with 34070 *Manston* leading, passing under Afflington Bridge.

The National Trust has put some money in the meter to light up Corfe Castle for Christmas!

Both photos: Andrew P M Wright





Photo: Andrew P M Wright

In addition to the two crews required to operate each end of the Train of Lights, another crew ran the class 33 diesel used on 4<sup>th</sup> December ahead of the train to switch on the lineside illuminations at several points. Here, 33 111 has paused at Herston Halt to allow the crew to switch on the lighting display.

After initially working the Christmas Luncheon trains, *Manston* was rostered to the Swanage end of the Train of Lights. To facilitate pointing in the right direction, the loco was turned on Swanage turntable on 14<sup>th</sup> December. This entailed separating the loco from its tender as the turntable is not long enough for both together. And, to make up the numbers for the usual Swanage working/watching ratio, the P'Way team is on hand as the tender and loco are re-coupled.

Photo: Jamie Smith





Did we happen to mention *Manston* on test on 25<sup>th</sup> November in issue 92? Mmm...We did!  
And here it is again! (yawn!) Only this time it's a reference to Michael Hall's video on  
YouTube of the loaded test climbing to Harmans Cross past Quarr Farm crossing. Click on  
the link below and turn up your volume!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3gbxvdC5eI&t=6s>



And into revenue-earning service on the Christmas Luncheon train on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, as seen by the  
Svanage webcam.







Our Permanent Way team is out every day ensuring that our track is safe to run trains on, and this will continue throughout 2023. Looks like a suitable job for any volunteer, so if you fancy saving money on that gym membership, this is the job for you! Also keeps the older ones of us in fit condition!

December work has included sleeper replacements at New Barn, above, and near Corfe Castle below. Clearing lineside growth was also on the cards. Handy for a bit of firewood?

Photos: Adam Woodman







Not only do we find a picture of the Swanage Railway with *Flying Scotsman* inside the latest issue of Heritage Railway magazine, we are also featured with *FS* on the front page of the Heritage Railway 2023 calendar, issued with the magazine.

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Jeremy Haskings GWR 2-8-0 No. 4200 approaches Great Tunnel on October 30 during a Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway gala. JOHN TILLOW

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300 not out!

Heritage Railway is celebrating its 300th issue of providing comprehensive news coverage of the complete preservation scene. Founding editor Robin Jones looks back at that very first issue in May 1991... and the outcome of the developments that were predicted.

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**Slate Running**

Built between 1832 and 1836, the Ffestiof Railway served the slate mines of Blaenau Ffestiof in North Wales for more than 100 years. Now a popular tourist and enthusiast destination, the railway has not overlooked its reason for existence - with its gravity train a significant part of its special events and draw for enthusiasts.

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Bachmann's winter announcement included 009 Penryn Hunslett and Portsmouth Harbour station buildings. Plus a new Locomotion Models exclusive, and a Rapido Hunslett update.

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**'Secondary' Eastern Stars**

Locomotives like A4 No. 4498 may steal the show at galas, but thanks to groups such as the LNER Coach Association, we can also enjoy authentic paintings of locomotives and stock. Owen Heywood looks at some of the projects LNERCA is currently progressing with.

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*In December, the Sygnets once again entered a tree in the Purbeck Christmas Tree Festival. It's an annual event but since our last entry in 2018, we missed 2019 and the event had then been suspended for two years due to Covid. With a theme of "Christmas songs", the festival included 42 trees from local groups, and attracted over 1000 visitors over the three days. The Sygnets' entry represented the "12 Days of Christmas" and featured gifts such as "two Hi-viz vests", "four paint brushes", "eleven signals warning" and of course "twelve Sygnets learning"; the last being photos of Sygnets being instructed in signalling, driving, painting, scrub clearance and other educational tasks.*

Many thanks to Derek Pattenson for providing the words and picture.







Photo: Neville Crook

Replacement side tanks for the M7 were due to be provided by a contractor, but this work is now being carried out in-house. Here's half the tank being test fitted to the M7 frames. Still some work to do before that can hold water!

Also in Herston Works, work continues on the chassis and wheels of the T3 tender. Stuart Magnus and Chris Worby are applying undercoat to one of the wheelsets.







Photo: Andrew P M Wright

We don't mention every volunteer who retires from the railway, but Alan Greatbatch is one of those who warrants some praise in SA for, as a signalling inspector, he has spent many years ensuring that this volunteer-led organisation operates to the highest professional standards. His expertise in signalling comes from many years working on the national rail system in the Bournemouth/Poole area.

Alan's last turn as a Swanage Railway signaller was on 16<sup>th</sup> December in Swanage box. He will still be amongst us occasionally as a volunteer with the museum team. Incidentally, the museum has recently been awarded full accreditation to the Arts Council England scheme. Well done all!

Also this month, more awards, this time to John and Julie Trott, seen here in their usual dining train habitat getting their long service awards.

But there's more! They also spend a lot of time doing the Swanage station garden, for which they received a Silver Award for their work. This competition was across six Community Rail Partnerships in Devon/Dorset/Hampshire. Well done!

Photo provided by Gavin Johns



So what's happening after Christmas?

From 27<sup>th</sup> December to 2<sup>nd</sup> January, a Winter Explorer DMMU service operated by the diesel unit in the picture below.



Photo: Andrew P M Wright

Then on 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> January, a Winter Warm Up Gala, with both passenger and goods trains, hauled by both steam and diesel locos, including class 50 no. 50 026. All locos subject to availability of course. Keep an eye on the Swanage Railway web site for details.



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 475212 to contact Mike Whitwam, our Volunteer Liaison Officer.

-----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!

-----ooOoo-----

Compiled and edited by John Denison

Email to [swanning.around@swanagerailway.co.uk](mailto:swanning.around@swanagerailway.co.uk)

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