



# *Swanning Around*

A Look At What's Happening Around The Swanage Railway

Issue 62 – May 21<sup>st</sup> 2020

---



The Government has changed the logo, softened the lockdown, and left us confused, trying to work out what it all means. Some have assumed that it is the green light to do what they want, others are just as careful as before in the full knowledge that the virus is still out there somewhere.

This in itself doesn't mean there is any change to the position the Swanage Railway finds itself in. The continuing requirement for social distancing in the railway's assessment of risk ensures that we will not be running normal services anytime soon.

However, while the railway is not carrying passengers there are still bills to be paid, and what should be a turnover in a few millions of pounds for this year can probably be estimated in a few thousand at best, if we are lucky. Hence the appeal for funds.

As a major contributor to the tourist economy of the Isle of Purbeck, like many other heritage railways in their own area, the railway must survive. Sounds a bit dramatic, but the visitors to the railway contribute more to the local economy than they do to the railway!

Needless to say, the volunteer directors are working hard to ensure that we are able to restart services in one form or another, subject to risks being mitigated, of course.

In response to an enquiry from Swanning Around, we have some information from the Directors for inclusion in this issue, below. Some of it has been paraphrased, hopefully without affecting the message.

In the light of the recent relaxation of lockdown, and retention of social distancing,

*Maintaining such social differences on our trains will be a challenge and will restrict capacity able to be carried. This in turn will have a financial impact on any services we run and has to be seriously considered. Several thoughts are being pursued currently with regard to this.*

*The position regarding restarting services remains unclear. The Board is keen to restart some kind of service as soon as is possible and practicable. When that might be we cannot currently say. Many factors are being looked into; a restart this summer will not be before July if then. Should we wait until 2021? What about Christmas? All questions we cannot answer currently, A piece of work by both Trust and Company called the Forward Operating Model is in its 3<sup>rd</sup> week of action and is forming some views. We will update of course as soon as we can. Discussions with regard to Herston Works are frequently held. Liaison with locomotive owners working within this location is also taking place and locomotive owners generally.*

*We all wish for volunteers to be able to return to the railway. This will be with the necessary procedures in place (risk assessments, social distancing, hand sanitisers, good cleaning regimes, masks/safety screens as required) However this will also need careful risk assessment and monitoring whilst present as with most of our paid staff furloughed, clear instruction processes will need to be firstly set and secondly complied with. Roles are being identified currently as needing to be done and risk assessed. Assistance with PWay for example on track checking, fish plate greasing, general maintenance is all being considered. Similarly maintenance at station where gardening needs becoming more pressing now summer is arriving.*

*In order to help establish the thoughts of volunteers with regard to the above a SurveyMonkey survey is in hand and should be circulated very shortly, if not ahead of your reading Swanning Around. We would ask all to read and respond as only by knowing answers to the questions asked will we be in a position to know what volunteers we may be able to have helping this summer and into the autumn. There is not an automatic belief amongst us that “everything will work out, everyone will return” – far from it.*

*In order to help establish the thoughts of volunteers with regard to the above, a SurveyMonkey survey is in hand and should be circulated very shortly, if not ahead of your reading Swanning Around. We would ask all to read and respond, as only by knowing answers to the questions asked will we be in a position to know what volunteers we may be able to have helping this summer and into the autumn. (more about this on page 10) There is not an automatic belief amongst us (i.e. the directors—Ed.) that “everything will work out, everyone will return” – far from it.*

We are aware at the moment that we haven't been contacting volunteers directly. We hope you are all still there somewhere! The survey indicated above will help to ensure that volunteers are kept up to date with what's needed, so when you get it, fill it in and send it back, even if the answer is negative! It's all good management data! Swanning Around will be there to get the messages out, and we may increase the frequency to do it.

For those readers who are not volunteers, there is still time! And for non-staff and potential visitors, we are in the process of revising the public-facing Swanage Railway website, but you can get to some of the latest info by finding the Swanage Railway Trust web site through the above site, or right here:-

<https://www.swanagerailwaytrust.org/>

If anybody reading this newsletter feels they are not receiving adequate information, get in touch! The Swanning Around email address is on the last page. All communications will be forwarded to the appropriate authority.

Gavin Johns, Chairman of the Swanage Railway Trust, has just issued a letter to all staff, paid and volunteer, setting the scene as we know it today. We won't repeat it here. It should be with you by email and it is on SRStaff web site. If you are staff and haven't seen a copy, make contact.

Please do what you can to help our appeal for funds to get us through this critical time.

You can find the appeal on all the web sites or go straight to [saveourservice.co.uk](https://www.saveourservice.co.uk)

There is a number of videos in support of the appeal, and you can find these, amongst many others, on the Swanage Railway YouTube channel. Some more videos are in the pipeline, so look out for those as well.

Look in:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9NsLXnZR7kU&t=24s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzoC9iQQ0Lk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XU3k15fGKE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0-WQJk9peA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fkaLhGwlqSc>



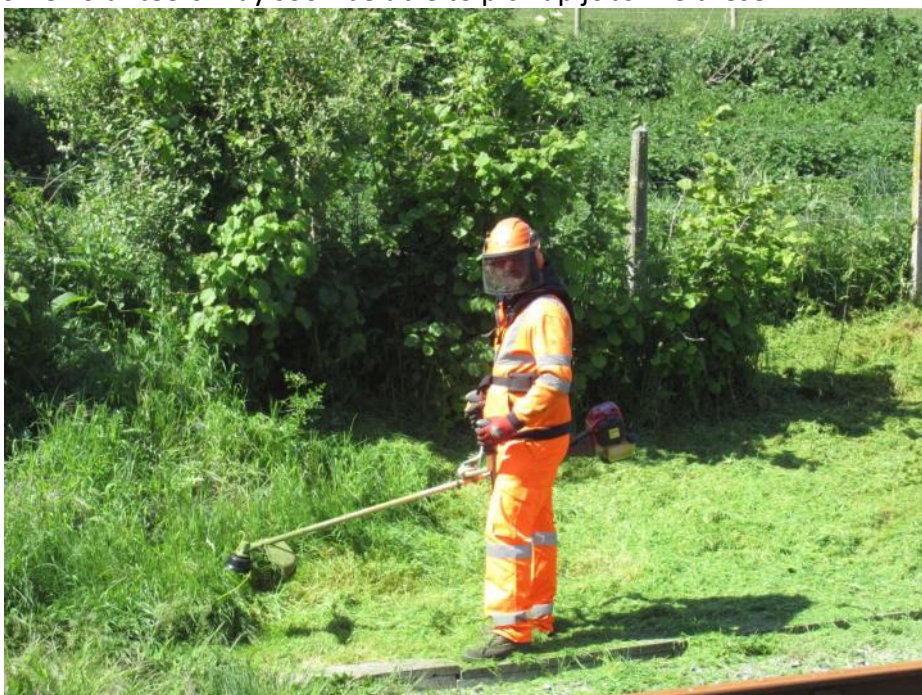
Although most of the paid staff has been furloughed, a small number is employed on care and maintenance.

Up to three volunteers have been used as well for their skill sets where necessary, one such being driving the crane FBC1 for testing and certifying lifting equipment.

Fraser White supervises while the contractor tests the chains and straps hanging from the crane on 17<sup>th</sup> May at Norden.



While he's waiting for the PWay lifting apparatus to be tested and certified, Billy Johnson busies himself strimming the grass at Norden. This is a job that would normally be done by the station team. Hopefully, some volunteers may soon be able to pick up jobs like these.





Also at Norden,  
nature is taking  
over the crane  
siding.

Picture from Fraser  
White



And Fraser sorts out the lifting chains for crane FBC2. Green tags? All passed? Good news!





Fraser is on site as the Signal and Telegraph technician when he isn't busy doing his other responsibility with the cranes, so he has been carrying out some maintenance, and finding some squatters!

Not the sort of surprise you want when you lift the lid on the loop shunt signal at Norden! Is this a nest of wasps or hornets? Answers on a fiver to the usual address!

Picture from Fraser White



Another of Fraser's jobs has been lubricating the linkages for operating the points. First, though, you have to find the grease nipples, not always so easy in the environs of the shed at Swanage.

Here, on 15<sup>th</sup> May, Fraser digs out the crud around one of the bellcranks. He changed the nipple for an angled one to make it easier to get the grease gun attached.

Picture from Ashley Haines



Time for a quiz!

Trust member Alan Appleton has submitted this one to tax your knowledge (looks a bit cryptic to me – Ed.!)

See how many you can do without having to get your ABC out, or cheat by looking up the answers on page 12!

## **NAME THAT LOCO. ALL STEAM. ALL SR**

- 1. Jumping off point? (6,4)**
- 2. Off we go – to the North Devon Coast! (8,2)**
- 3. This loco goes like the wind (9)**
- 4. It costs a lot to get to France. (7,6)**
- 5. Music played backwards (4)**
- 6. Royal tennis? (5,9)**
- 7. Sounds like an OK trip (3,3)**
- 8. Put it away with energy. (4)**
- 9. Treatment for boils? (7)**
- 10. Nun's habit – with husband! (7)**
- 11. The blue team? (8)**
- 12. Pick up the ball and try (5)**
- 13. Sounds like the Church should be abolished (9)**
- 14. Its like riding on a carpet (6)**
- 15. Clickety-click up in the air (2,8)**
- 16. The pensioners have gone bananas (6,6)**
- 17. Of Scottish descent? (4,4)**
- 18. Are swimmers carried here? (10)**
- 19. B&B on the Isle of Wight? (7)**
- 20. Bonfire night? (3,3)**



Earlier, we mentioned that some staff were on site for 'care and maintenance'. Not for them, but for the railway! And here's a cracking example!

On a couple of occasions, we've had a period of high winds, which brought down a tree across the track between the gardens of King's Road West and the Pitch-and-Putt on 11<sup>th</sup> May.

Richard Williamson was on hand in his garden to provide these pictures of the Pway team removing the evidence, with Barry Light on the saw.





Along with just about everything else in the country, Covid-19 is giving some serious financial difficulties for the Swanage Railway, such that non-essential projects requiring financial support are largely now on the back burner while the critical stuff is dealt with.

Just so with the carriage shed project, as that is subject to an appeal for funding, as previously noted in SA. The stage 1 groundworks job itself was stopped in February due to bad weather making the site too wet for work, but it has been deemed appropriate to finish stage 1, and this was completed and the contractors have left the site.



On 27th April, a hole has been found and our team is looking into it. Sorry! But they say the old ones are the best!

This is how one hole was left in February.

The hole should look like the one below with the fixings for the steel framing, which will be stage 2. This, of course, is now on hold “indefinitely”, says project manager Nick Coram, who has provided the report and these pictures.

In order to protect the fixings, the heritage carriage group is manufacturing some covers at home in their garages/sheds/kitchens/dining rooms.





Picture from  
Nick Coram

PWay was on hand to remove the spoil from the carriage shed site on 27<sup>th</sup> April. Posing on the brake van are PWay manager Barry Light and Operations Manager Ashley Haines.

Yes! Ashley has just started his second stint as Operations Manager. He's a glutton for punishment! Welcome back and good luck! We think you might need some!

One of the things that Ashley will be handling is the availability of volunteers when we eventually restart our services. Competencies for volunteers carrying out safety-critical functions have to be up to date to satisfy regulations. Biennial examinations will need to be carried out for footplate crews, guards, and signalmen, and many bi-annual visits from the inspectors will have been missed. When we restart, many of us may be more rusty than the railhead and need a refresher!

We will also need to know the status of our volunteers. We will shortly be issuing an email survey to all volunteers we have addresses for to understand their attitude to restarting.

It will be coming from [survey@swanagerailway.co.uk](mailto:survey@swanagerailway.co.uk) and link to a tool called Survey Monkey which receives the returns and converts it to anonymous statistics that the railway can then use to help with its planning for recovery.

Please ensure you complete it and submit it, even if everything is in the negative! Management needs to know.

The email addresses are only used for distributing the survey and can not be linked back to the responses given. Swanage Railway is also careful to be fully compliant with all the requirements of GDPR in the distribution of the survey.

If you are a current volunteer and you don't get an email, get in touch. We need a response from everyone! This is no time for guesswork!



If you are of a mind to see the progress made by the Swanage Railway since it started with the access for the original volunteers to Swanage station, you could do worse than to check out Nick Hanham's photo web site at

<https://5929.co.uk/swanage-railway/nggallery/the-swanage-railway/SR-diary-1:-1973-to-1992?swanage-railway>

Check out the Swanage Railway album for photo diaries from its inception. Nick, a retired Swanage Railway driver, has been with the project since the beginning, and has taken thousands of photos along the way. See how far we've come since the first days, and why we don't want to lose it. You may also be interested in his other transport albums. Keeps you out of trouble on the beach!

Amongst the pictures you will find these taken when the Two Ronnies made a short film in Purbeck.

Find it on YouTube here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGYGkDP2pWg&list=PLdUGA0NFlvcBdHOuClDn4vJ6-QrYyyTJo&index=2>

Enjoy the film and the other Two Ronnies classic "The Picnic" which follows it. Warning! It's 1982 comedy, a bit Benny Hill-ish.



TTI Clive Hardy continues to distribute Long Service badges by post, and June's recipients are :-



Harry BARRETT = 5 years  
 Anthony BOSSOM = 5 years  
 Matthew RICHTER = 5 years  
 David WALL = 5 years  
 Alka THAKKER = 10 years  
 Joanne CURTIS = 15 years  
 Gavin JOHNS = 15 years



And some recipients from earlier months

Vicki SEARLE - March = 10 years  
 Lorna LOCKE - April = 20 years

The badges were posted out during early May, but not all of them, as Clive doesn't have access to everyone's home address.

If you're in the list above and haven't received your badge then email [long.service@swanagerailway.co.uk](mailto:long.service@swanagerailway.co.uk), otherwise just wait until the Railway re-opens when they will be sent to your department.

And the answers to Clive's quiz in the last issue:

92 Squadron - Lord Dowding - Sir Archibald Sinclair - Manston & Sir Keith Park

249 Squadron - 257 Squadron - Sir Frederick Pile - Winston Churchill

Braunton - City of Wells & Wells - Sidmouth - Bodmin & Wadebridge

Bonus points for squadron names! 92 East India, 257 Burma, 249 Gold Coast.

1. Beachy Head 2. Westward Ho! 3. Hurricane 4. Channel Packet 5. Eton 6. King's Wimbledon 7. Yes Tor 8. Stowe 9. Lancing 10. Whimble 11. Downside 12. Rugby 13. Axminster 14. Wilton 15. 66 Squadron 16. Elders Fyffes 17. Clan Line 18. Fishbourne 19. Seaview 20. Sir Guy



The Swanage Railway parking spaces in Victoria Avenue car park have found an alternative use during the pandemic. To provide social distancing for the queue for the fruit and veg stall in the Friday market!

Picture provided by Fraser White



Also, you may be interested to know (or not!) that Dorset Council contractors have been refurbishing the walkway around the car park building at Norden Park. (remember, **not** Park and Ride!)

And summer must be here—the swallows have returned to Norden Gates crossing box.



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](mailto: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!

-----ooOoo-----

Compiled and edited by John Denison

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

Views expressed in 'Swanning Around' are those of the author(s) and are not necessarily the views of the Swanage Railway Trust or the Swanage Railway Company. No liability accepted for errors or inaccuracies.

Prepared by John Denison for the Swanage Railway Trust including content and images provided by others. All rights recognised.

(c) Copyright: Swanage Railway Trust 2020

Swanning Around also appears on line at:

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

and

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