
The Swanage Railway

Introduction

The preserved Swanage Railway arose out of the questionable closure of the branch line serving the popular coastal resort in the 1960s. It starts from a large Park & Ride facility at Norden, shortly passing through the picturesque village of Corfe Castle, with a cross-country run before reaching Swanage and its terminus, a good 5 minutes walk from the beach.

From the title picture, with wisps of steam just visible from a train passing Corfe Castle, it is clear that the scenic setting of the railway is one of its major attractions. The images in this slideshow will concentrate more on the immediate railway context, with a brief detour for a view of the coast at Swanage.

The photographs were taken during a visit in August 2012 - the captioned ones from my 2012 railway album, supplemented by additinal non-captioned but self-explanatory material. The coastal views were taken in much brighter weather early in 2011.

Tony Bartlett, Hungerford Camera Club

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Visiting the 'Isle' of Purbeck for time on the Swanage Railway. The light is rather gloomy as BR Standard 4 2-6-4T no. 80104 draws into Corfe Castle station with our train to the coast. The freshly painted station buildings help to lift the scene - the signal box in particular is an imposing structure (of which there is absolutely no sign in a 1960's Mike Pope photograph, unlike the adjacent rustic waiting shelter). The train is making its first stop on from Norden, the current landward terminus of the line for regular workings, although the railway does occasionally take through workings from the national network. Tue 21Aug 11:24 f4 1/640 iso220 66mm


80104


80104











As usual there is much interest to be gained from the stock distributed around the station and depot at the Swanage end of the line. West Country Pacific no. 34028 Eddystone has been drawn out of a siding by diesel shunter 08436. Although the big steam loco looks well-weathered it appears to be useable and in light steam - so perhaps the rusty patches are just a consequence of storage in the open air rather than neglect. The DMUs behind the loco and stabled in the bay platform are used to provide the late evening services - which run in spite of the competition from the other side of the fence! Tue 21Aug 12:14 f4 1/640 iso360 51mm


34028
Eagle Castle



No. 34028 Eddystone has made its way to the coaling stage at Swanage depot (under its own steam!) - clearly being prepared for duty. The railwayman takes a break from trimming the coal in the almost filled tender to watch ex-GWR 0-6-2 tank engine no. 6695 coming in with the next passenger service. The absence of a leading truck under the front of the tank loco betrays its origins as a freight locomotive (in the S Wales coalfields). Its smaller driving wheels can safely negotiate curves at the modest speeds required for that purpose. Aesthetically, the front-end overhang makes it look incomplete and unstable. Tue 21Aug 12:29 f4 1/640 iso360 40mm


S. R.
TRESPASSERS
WILL BE
PROSECUTED
8010
PULLMAN OBSERV


80104



Our return journey was taken in the supplementary (£1) comfort of the Devon Belle observation car, with the opportunity to study no. 80104's work at close quarters, its smokebox just a few feet from the picture windows. On leaving Corfe Castle for another round trip to Swanage, the Belle's new occupants have the more usual unobstructed view receding before them - not an experience to everyone's taste and liable to be nausea-inducing. Although only a single-track branch line, this railway shows the maturity gained from years of operation with comprehensive signalling for multiple train operation. Tue 21Aug 15:34 f4 1/800 iso320 99mm


The Burma Star
PARCELS AND LEFT LUGGAGE
TEA SOLD HERE
PRIVATE
WARNING
STOP LOOK & LISTEN
BEFORE CROSSING THE LINE
THE PURBECK
SWANAGE


THE GREYHOUND
Food all day



The terrain in the neighbourhood of Corfe Castle station provides the adventurous photographer with much exercise to get those special shots. However I've taken an easy option - the station approach road looks out onto the track passing through a gap in the Purbeck Hills, next to the Castle outcrop. In spite of the civil engineers' efforts, trains face a stiff climb on the way into the station and 6695 is just shutting off steam in readiness for its platform stop. With a green loco and (different) green coaches set against the natural greens all around, thank goodness for the red signal and buffer beam! Tue 21Aug 16:06 f4 1/800 iso560 87mm


S 4945
8695





Perversely the light is much improved on 'going home' day, prompting a call in at Harman's Cross, the main intermediate station and passing point between Corfe and Swanage. A pair of 'portrait' shots show the 0-6-2T waiting for the road as the big Bulleid Pacific, no. 34028 brings in a coast bound service, and then the other train pulling away under a clear signal, with the onward single line token safely in the keeping of its driver. If only the express engine had been facing the other way, but it will be well into the afternoon before the sun will be shining on its smokebox door.

Wed 22Aug 10:54 f4.5 1/800 iso200 36mm



At the other end of Harman's Cross station platform, no. 34028 Eddystone is now ready to depart, tender first, for Swanage. Comparison with yesterday's photo of the engine on the shed being prepared for service shows that the cleaners have been hard at work, turning the work-stained and weathered thoroughbred into a handsome representative of the West Country class of locomotives. Passengers need to be sure which platform they need at this station since it's a 5 minutes walk to cross to the other side via the distant bridge. Similarly swapping between passing trains is a considerable challenge! Wed 22Aug 10:55 f11 1/50 iso200 40mm


Good
bye!!