



From the Chairman

I would like again to take this opportunity to wish all members a happy and healthy new year. As the state of world finances has advanced so little (with the possible exception of 'bonuses') I will continue to avoid the use of the word 'prosperous' as those who are, seem intent on staying so to the detriment of those who are not.

Despite the financial gloom it is pleasing to be able to report that the Swanage Railway had a good year last year and looks likely to have a similar one this. The Running Contract has been re-negotiated to the relief and satisfaction of both parties and the locomotive would seem to have a secure fiscal, and stable operating, future.

The locomotive will be venturing to distant climes in late August to fulfill a long-standing commitment made when the boiler was removed to the Bodmin & Wenford Railway at the beginning of the overhaul in 2004. It will attend the B & W's Steam Gala which runs from the 1st to the 6th September 2010. Unfortunately, it is not economically possible to move the loco to Bodmin by rail thus it must travel by road. There have been requests for 53's presence on other preservation sites but the only likely candidate so far is to Yeovil Junction *if and only if* it can make the journey by rail. As other locomotives based on the Swanage Railway have also been requested including (possibly) a diesel passed for main-line running; this may happen.

Locomotive Report

The annual boiler examinations took place on June 9th (cold) and June 16th (steam test) with no problems.

The piston rod packings were changed in September as the old ones were worn out. As these have been a constant source of leakage and cost several hundred pounds to renew,

we have decided to go over to a soft packing arrangement. This will require removal of the pistons and rods to fit a suitable housing.

In October the reverser was recorded as creeping from its set position toward full gear in the chosen direction. Examination revealed that the nut was loose on one side of the seals in the lock cylinder and this had allowed one seal to spread in the centre and let oil by. The old seals had been in place for about 15 years – new seals were fitted and we now have a reverser that behaves itself.

During the shut-down the boiler and lubricator were drained to prevent frost damage. The lubricator oil valve has been modified to give better control over oil feed to the front end.

The next few weeks should see new patterns made for the water gauge spindles (due to excess clearance) and the steam heat valve (see later).

Operation

Month	Days	Miles
June	8	550
July	9	539
August	4	281
September	3	122
October	<u>7</u>	<u>182</u>
	31	1674

The M7 is occasionally taken out on a Friday when the Railway is running passenger services only on weekends, usually in concert with a hydraulic crane (DS3150). This has the added benefit that at the end of the day the locomotive is thoroughly warmed ready for the weekend service. On so many occasions it is necessary to block the line whilst a lifting task is performed for a department thus jobs like these are 'saved up' for when no trains are running and a possession can be taken. During these forays, the locomotive sits quietly whilst the craning job is performed but is always ready to move the train to the next location (so different from a diesel...).

Mounted on the boiler back-head in front of the fireman is a valve block containing two steam valves; one is the 'carriage warming' cock (also known as the steam heat valve) and the other was originally the supply for the reverser. This has been modified so that it also supplies the steam for the displacement lubricator which was previously taken from the top of the driver's-side gauge glass. This has an additional benefit in that the driver's side gauge glass now reads the same as that on the fireman's side. Sadly, this duplex valve block has reached the end of its useful life – there is no more metal inside from which a

new valve seat can be cut. One of our share-holders has been producing drawings from which a pattern will be made, so that some new bodies can be cast and machined.

Latest Situation (as of 5th February 2009)

The M7 is to be in charge of the Brake Van rides during the Fun Week to be held during the Half-Term holiday