

HALSGROVE RAILWAY SERIES

SWANAGE RAILWAY

Don Bishop

The branch line from Wareham on the Southampton – Boumemouth – Weymouth mainline through Corfe Castle to Swanage was opened in 1885 by the London & South Western Railway, later to become part of the Southern Railway and British Railways Southern Region. The line closed to all traffic in January 1972 and the track was quickly lifted. However, a group of enthusiasts got together with the aim of reopening the line as tourist attraction and in 1975 were granted a licence to occupy the vacant Swanage Station. Track was re-laid and restoration work commenced with the line being opened in stages from Swanage, reaching Corfe Castle and a new Park & Ride station at Norden by 1995. The line has since been reconnected to the national rail network for the occasional passage of special trains and it is hoped soon to reintroduce a regular service between Swanage and Wareham. The Park & Ride facility at Norden has proved very popular for helping to get holiday-makers and day trippers into Swanage, without the parking problems that would otherwise occur, and the line today carries around 200,000 passengers per year.

Using mainly appropriate Southern Region motive power and green coaches the Swanage Railway today recreates very well an authentic Southern Railway/BR Southern Region branch line.

Through this book Don Bishop shows the line in action today through mainly "trains in the landscape" type images which also show how the line blends very well into the Purbeck scenery. Through around 150 magnificent pictures included in the book Don portrays the Swanage Railway at its best – a striking reminder for those who know the line, and an enticement to those who have yet to visit to do so and contribute towards its ongoing success.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Don Bishop has been a keen railway photographer for over 20 years and travels widely around the UK looking for that seemingly elusive "master shot". Since 2006 Don has worked as professional freelance photographer concentrating on UK landscapes and his steam images. Don has an extensive collection of good quality images of the UK steam scene and regularly has work published in magazines including a number of features exclusively featuring his work. He also runs photo workshop days for people to learn about his techniques in getting quality shots, UK landscapes and steam at work in the landscape. Through his Steam Recreations brand he has organised many private photographic charter events at steam railways around the UK, including the Swanage Railway, in an attempt to recreate scenes from the past with a particular emphasis on the 1950/60s'. Full details are available on his website www.donbishop.co.uk.

Away from his photography Don knows the heritage railway industry well, having been involved with his local line, the West Somerset Railway, as a volunteer for 22 years including special event planning and as Heritage Director for West Somerset Railway Association.

Don is also author of *The South Devon Railway*, *West Somerset Railway*, *West Somerset Railway Revisited* and *Spirit of the West Somerset Railway* also for Halsgrove.

HALSGROVE CATALOGUE

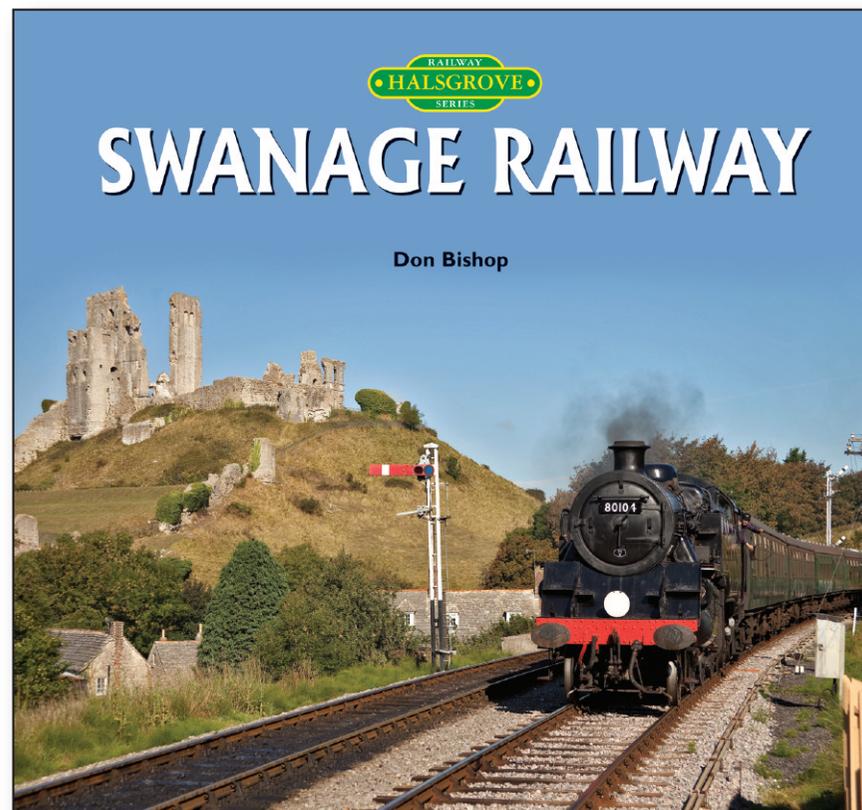
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Cab detail of the M7. (AT)



A member of the station staff watches as Standard tank No. 80104 arrives at Corfe Castle with a Swanage-bound train on 10th August 2008.



Bulleid Pacific No. 34028 "Eddystone" runs round at Swanage whilst the 08 diesel shunter station pilot waits in the bay with some coaching stock. 13th Sept 2008.



A wonderful view of the castle from West Hill with BR Standard tank No. 80104 leaving Corfe Castle Station on 27th December 2009.



Rebuilt "West Country" No. 34028 "Eddystone" leaving Corfe Castle towards Norden with the Devon Belle observation car as the first vehicle in the train on 13th September 2008.



A rather different-looking Corfe Castle Station taken during the closure period of the line. This image demonstrates what an excellent effort the volunteers at Swanage Railway have done to bring the station back to life today. A picture taken from a similar position in 2009 appears later in the book. (AT)

Opposite: M7 No. 30053 arriving at Corfe Castle with a two-coach photo-chamber recreating a scene from BR days on the Swanage branch. 24th November 2008

Example of a double-page spread.