ON TRACK with your Director

Ed Carnegie:

You know Spring has sprung when Swanton starts it’s two work weekends a month, when flowers start to bloom, and weeds are taking over in full force! The first weekend [14/15] most volunteers concentrated on cleaning, organizing the cabooses, car-barn, and Christmas tree field. With cold rainy conditions most of us took on inside jobs to stay dry. And they say “it never rains in CA!” Hah—and especially this time of the year and on both May work weekends!

The Memorial Day weekend [28/29] had us pick-up some new fencing materials on the way up as a project to do for the weekend. By Friday, a few other volunteers arrived and worked on either the cabooses, the Christmas tree field, a new fence entrance to the north of the station, or on endless weeding/gardening projects. Saturday the caboose renovation project continued; as did gardening with new plants being planted; with the sand-blasting of signs; the continuation of moving everything out of the OSH caboose to the Cal Barn; the forklift is almost ready to get its new engine to become operational; our retired phone people discovered some corroded connectors in the lines and repaired them.

A work party—before dinner was drafted by Pete and Bob to “stuff envelopes” for a note being sent to members. After a great collaborative dinner by our volunteers, a trip down Swanton’s memory lane from 1991-1992 via modern day DVD’s was taken. How time flies—to see the changes made, and how much younger, thinner, and less gray hair we all had. Between the years, and the showers of the day—so much is and has been accomplished by a great bunch of volunteers. I shall hope to see many of you in the coming work days, and as you will see from Fitz’s article there are numerous tasks to take on. Remember to share the fun and enjoyment of Swanton with your friends or others interested in projects of these sorts and bring them on over.

Down Behind the Railway

With your President, air monkey, & car-barnist.
Reynold 'Fitz' FitzPatrick
RGBFitz@aol.com 650.737.9584

My Fellow Swantoons:

Is it midsummer or the beginning of summer, that is the question. It seems that it is both. The summer solstice is a Quarter Day, you remember that the first of May was a Cross Quarter Day, and in this case ‘mid’ means centered around rather than middle. Isn’t English a fun language, just ask Puck.

The 1913’s boiler and tender are major projects in their own right, however we have not as yet determined the future of 13’s tender. Three options are available now: a) just patch the inspection holes we made and run until we have more funds available, b) coat the inside of the tender with a polythingy [that’s a technical term] coating, or c) have a stainless steel insert made. Any wisdom on your part if you have experience with water tanks will be appreciated.

Due to the Ranch’s use of the bunkhouse facilities this year we will have our Summer Camp a week earlier than usual – July 17th thru the 23rd – and the major repair will be the OSH caboose which was Al’s office and now serves as our historic repository. By the time of the Summer Camp we will have all the materials in place to make the repairs and on our second workday in June, the 25th, will assign the work team.

Here are some things that need work this year:

The Diesel Fuel shed needs a new roof- a day’s work.
The oil/flammable building needs a new walkway – maybe two days.
The water filter shed needs roof repair – four or five hours work.
Lay the pathway for the new wheelchair access next to the OSH caboose.
Below is the list of projects we would like to see done, some are in progress and others are just patiently waiting.

Facilities and Grounds
- Cal barn
  - Display and store archives
  - Find the roof leak
  - Seal the windows with foam
- Roundhouse
  - Paint and replace gutters
  - Automate turntable and illuminate
- Machine Shop
  - Repair side door
  - Extend air line to mill and lathe
- Car shop
  - Extend air line to workbench and door
  - Inventory car parts and organize the mess
  - Remove excess air compressors, they need a good home.

BBQ & College Park Station
- Repair outlets where needed.
- Run communication wiring underground between Station and podium.
- Build 4” high slicing board at BBQ to sit on existing tables.
- Install north semaphore signal

All cabooses
- Paint with “Snow Roof” or equal.
- Santa Fe caboose
  - Finish sealing cabinet.
  - Inspect floor and repair as necessary
- 73 caboose
  - Finish insulation and drywall.
  - Install shelving
- Pete’s Billboard – see Pete
  - Most of our mechanical equipment needs routine maintenance and some needs repair of replacement or parts, or both.

Well, a lot to be done and as we cannot operate any farther than the bridge now seems to be a good time to get some of these pesky items out of the way.

Pick out one you like and make it happen and we’ll have fun doing it.

Fitz

UPCOMING EVENTS/PUBLICITY
Mary Ann Carnegie

- June 11/12 volunteer work weekend
- June 25/26 volunteer work weekend
- July 09/10 volunteer work weekend
- July 17/24 Swanton Family Camp Week

Though Summer months are now upon us—this also means that the Ranch is offering summer educational classes to different students. Many will be enjoying the full experience of Swanton by living on-site. Our volunteer weekends will continue as scheduled, but facility accommodations will be modified to coordinate with the University’s educational commitment. To facilitate our involvement it becomes necessary for us to know in advance when any of you plan to be on site so that any conflicts can be minimized. Be sure to email or call us of your plans to be at Swanton.

With summer supposedly arriving, June 21—and hopefully with warmer, dryer days, we will schedule more events down in the meadow during the summer months.

**Reminder:**

Membership for Swanton Pacific is being accepted. See attached membership form.

Work train returning for lunch

GEORGE BARLOW'S 2nd VISIT TO SWANTON, IN 1983

(A continuation of the previous article on Barlow's 1st visit in 1982)

George Barlow's account of his 1983 visit to Swanton was found recently among Al Smith's memorabilia. This copy appears to be a photocopy of
the report published in a British historical railroading journal. A handwritten inscription on the cover page reads "To Al Smith from George Barlow." The article describes in much detail his visit for the second time within a year to examine and operate the 1/3 scale locomotives of the Swanton Pacific Railroad and Wildcat Railroad. George Barlow was a distinguished member of the narrow gauge railroad community in Great Britain. After serving in the Railway Operating Department of the Royal Engineers during World War II, he started in 1948 as a driver for the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway (RH & DR). He soon became the Foreman Driver and, in 1968, the Operating Manager. He retired in 1980 or 1981.

In these articles, he relies upon his professional experience with the RH&DR's 1/3 scale Pacifics to assess and compare the performance and the design of MacDermot's 1/3 scale Pacifics with those of the RH & DR. His extensive background with such locomotives allows him to point out the technical similarities and differences of the two sets of engines. He is very gracious and enthusiastic in describing his visits with many members of the narrow-gauge organizations in the San Francisco Bay and mid-California regions.

These two articles provide an authoritative account of the early Swanton Pacific Railroad's personnel and operations in 1982 and 1983, just 5 years after Al Smith began to collect and restore the MacDermot locomotives. Having these remarks from an outside expert are most welcome for our historical records. He tells how his interest in MacDermot's locomotives started years ago in the 1920's when he read about them in an English railroading book.

The following reprint is taken verbatim from the original publication with the British format of spelling, punctuation, etc. More information about the RH & DR and its locomotives can be found at its website, http://www.rhdr.org.uk. The Heywood Society's website is at http://www.theheywoodsociety.co.uk/. RUNNING THE VENICE AND OVERFAIR ONE-THIRD SCALE LOCOMOTIVES

{By George Barlow, Operating Manager of the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway}

From The Heywood Society Journal, No. 16 May 1984

When I wrote the account of seeing the ex-Venice and Overfair one-third scale locomotives in California, in 1982, which was published in the May 1983 (No. 14) issue of the Journal, I expressed the desire to hear an Overfair engine puff one day. Little did I realize, when I penned those lines, that in a little over a year I would not only be hearing one talk but that I would be the man at the regulator.

It all started when Jack Smith and his wife Pat visited New Romney later in 1982 to see the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway. Jack is a driver on the Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad, the 18in. gauge railway at Los Gatos, and John Snell arranged things so that Marian and I could meet the Smiths over a meal. Since then, Jack and I have corresponded regularly, exchanging slides and so forth and when he learned how very keen I was to see an Overfair Pacific in steam and that Al Smith was planning to run No. 1913 over a steam weekend at Swanton last August, he and Pat offered us hospitality at their home at Pleasanton, when Jack was having his annual holiday, so that we could not only attend the steaming but visit a number of other railways and have some non-railways days too.

On Saturday 20 August 1983, we arrived at the engine shed of the Swanton Pacific Railroad. Since our last visit not only had work proceeded on the bridge, track and Pacific 1912, but Al Smith had purchased the other two Pacifics Nos. 1914 and 1915 from San Pedro, where those engines had lain derelict for some years, and his friend Neil Vodden, a Southern Pacific locomotive engineer, had purchased No. 1500, the 0-6-0 tank engine used in the construction of the original railway at San Francisco. So all MacDermot's splendid locomotives stood together again, in one building with the boiler from the tankie outside, upside down, being retubed. While Charlie Hoyle lit up and prepared No. 1913 for running, Neil Vodden took me on a tour around all that had been acquired with the locomotives; this really brought home to me how thorough Louis MacDermot had been in providing for the maintenance of his 19in. gauge railway.

Neil explained to me how MacDermot had increased the bogie side play on No. 1913 a small amount by a little judicious grinding, but the movement had never been sufficient until Erich Thomsen, designer, builder and operator of the 15in. gauge Redwood Valley, took the matter in hand when overhauling the Pacific some years ago. Erich completely redesigned the bogie, fitting equalisers with a deeper drop and heart-shaped swing links; this works extremely well, as I was to discover later in the day when I was given the opportunity to run the machine.

After Charlie Hoyle, another Southern Pacific man and one-time friend of Louis MacDermot, had run a few trips with the Pacific while we took our pictures, he was relieved and he then produced a number of MacDermot relics for us to see. Among them were Mac's records, kept during the building of the Overfair, all in meticulous detail. I also looked in the boiler on No. 1915, the last Pacific which was never quite completed and never steamed, and it was as good as new. Slightly stock rusty would be a fair description of the internal
condition and I am sure that the boiler could be used at the designed working pressure. Looking around the parts of the 0-6-0, I was surprised to see that a different pattern had been used for the cylinders, although the stroke is the same as the 4-6-2s and that the legend 'OVERLAND RAILWAY' still survived on the cabsides.

I also learned from Charlie that day, that before embarking on the Overfair project, Mac had built a 3½ in. gauge London & North Western Whale 'Precursor'. A few days later, when I gave a slideshow in Pleasanton, this engine, a magnificent job still unpainted, was brought along for me to see and run on air for my benefit. That was not the only locomotive brought along that evening for John Haines of the Golden Gate Live Steamers, who has built a half-size 7½ in. gauge Green Goddess Pacific, brought her along in a truck, complete with tender. The engine was not quite completed then but has since been finished and steamed and really looks fine in the photograph I have seen. Of course, a half-size Romney is a big machine for 7½ in. gauge.

After taking my pictures at Swanton, I was invited to run No. 1913 and members will understand what a great day this was for me. Here was a one-third scale Pacific which I had first learned about from Henry Greenly's Model Steam Locomotives nearly sixty years ago when at school in the 1920s, and here was I, 5,000 miles from home, rolling her off the shed. With Neil Vodden on the burner, I propelled the train to the then end of the line, a distance of about 1½ miles, en route rumbling over the showpiece of the railway, a high bridge made from a standard gauge flat car frame, which carried the track over a river. I was at once impressed with the steady, buoyant ride - you ride on the locomotive at Swanton and not on the tender as on the Romney and Ravenglass - and so one is able to feel the engine's movement immediately. The road was good, although some of the curves were very sharp for an engine of this size, but on the return journey, chimney first, I was better able to assess the machine and the experience was fascinating. Apart from the sheer elegance of the ride, helped no doubt by the equalised springing, I loved the positive way the bogie took the front end of No. 1913 into those curves, very different from the action of the bogies on the Romney, always the weakest part of the riding of the Greenly RH & DR locomotives. As I had expected, I found the sideways seats on No. 1913 quite awkward, as one could only use the seat and see where one was going, either forwards or backwards, with a good deal of twisting, but she was a grand engine with great potential and I could not help but wonder how fast she could gallop on a straight road. This could be tried one day, as I heard Al Smith and his friends have given serious thought to laying a long straight stretch of track, in a different direction from the present railway where curves are unavoidable. As I have thought so many times before, there is no doubt that the Americans with their often rough roads - particularly in their early days - and sharp curvature just had to learn how to get engines along such railways, we can learn from them when it comes to suspension on indifferent roads. What impressed me when looking around different railways in the United States was the rarity of bright and thin flanges, despite their curves, even on engines standing derelict after running thousand of miles since wheel turning.

We had a great weekend at Swanton, No. 1913 being steamed for two days with a grand barbecue on the first night, just outside the engine shed. There was another machine in steam in the meadow which was once used for all kinds of timber in the woods and mounted on the vertical boiler was a whistle from a Mississippi stern wheeler - I think that is where it came from - and this was blown from time to time, echoing around in a grand way. There was also a rally of Ford Model Ts and Miriam and I enjoyed trips up the road in a wonderful old Ford Roadster.

“I propelled the train...over the showpiece of the railway, a high bridge made from a standard gauge flat car frame...” from George Barlow’s account of his visit to Swanton Pacific RR on August 1983.

Continued next month with Barlow’s second visit to SPRR in 1983.