

FOOTPLATE

THE MAGAZINE OF
THE STEPNEY CLUB



SPRING 2018

**Stepney works too hard
The signa!man is busy
and Building the line**

**AN
OTHER
ISSUE**

THE STEPNEY CLUB



Bluebell Railway



A Letter From Stepney

Hello BOYS and GIRLS!

One of the things that I enjoy most about the winter is being able to snuggle down in a warm engine shed, as the wind blows and the rain falls outside. So, as you can imagine, I wasn't too pleased to find out that I was going to have to move out of my shed this winter. There are big changes taking place in the engine shed, which is being made into a new display centre, and we all had to move out! I was lucky. With my friend the Adams, I was found a new home in the carriage shed. Not as cosy as our own shed, but warm and dry, and at least we have each other for company, and we can talk about the old days. One of our adventures is a story in this magazine.

Not all of our friends were so lucky, and some of the engines have to be out in the cold all winter, which they don't like at all!

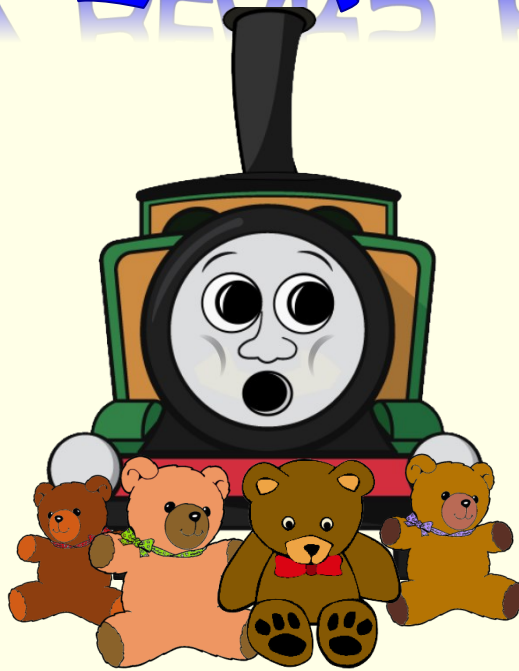
Looking forward to the summer, we have a day out planned at the South Downs Light Railway, at the Wyevale Garden Centre at Pulborough, when we have been invited to go to the Teddy Bears Picnic. One of the Terriers from Ingfield will be coming too, and teddies will be made very welcome. I hope that you can all come!

LOTS OF LOVE



Stepney Club

TEDDY BEARS' PICNIC!



Saturday 21st July

***South Downs Light Railway, Wyevale
Garden Centre, Pulborough, RH20 1DS***

From 11am

Half price tickets for Stepney Club members at £2.50 each (adult or child) which will entitle them to unlimited train rides all day!

Bouncy Castle  Swingboats  Games  Model Railways

Bring a picnic and your Stepney card or badge to show at the booking office – and of course, your teddy! Restaurant at the garden centre.

BUILDING

For a few weeks in the winter, all is quiet at the railway and there are no trains running, but this doesn't mean that nothing is happening. This is the time to repair the railway line, which gets very worn out when trains are running on it every day.

The railway track is built in several layers, as it needs to be very strong to take the weight of the heavy trains, day after day. The very bottom layer is made up of ballast, which is the name for the bed of small stones under the track, which are packed together tightly to support the rails, with room for the water to run away in between the stones. The sleepers are laid on top of the ballast, to support the rails. In the old days, sleepers were all made of wood, and many of the ones along the Bluebell line still are. Wood is bendy enough not to break easily, but it does rot away after a time, which leads to a bit of a bumpy ride! Modern sleepers are made of concrete, which does not rot away, but the sleepers are very heavy to lift into place, and they can sometimes break.



THE LINE

Once the sleepers are in place, the rails are laid on top and fixed down.

The sleepers have 'chairs' on them – not the sort of chairs that anyone can sit on, but a heavy metal clip for the rail to sit in, screwed firmly down to the sleeper. The rails themselves have to be joined together all the way along, for many miles. They are held in place with metal bars screwed onto both rails, and these bars have a strange name – fishplates. They have nothing to do with fish at all!

The rails are held onto the chairs with pieces of metal called keys. Once again, rather a strange name, as they don't look anything like keys and certainly don't unlock anything. These keys are knocked firmly into place with a 'keying hammer' to make sure that they don't come loose.

Once the ballast, sleepers and rails are in place and secure, the railway line is once again ready for even the heaviest trains to run safely over it – without giving the passengers a bumpy ride and spilling their tea!



The signalman is busy



The signalman is busy, arriving at his box
Unlocking the door and hanging up his hat
He signs on in the register and reads the notices
Switches on the kettle and feeds the station cat

The signalman is busy – the first train is coming in
Whistling at the outer home, smoke rising to the sky
He dashes down the steps and out onto the crossing
Changing over tokens as the engine flashes by

The signalman is busy, pulling levers on the frame
Any moment now there will be two passing trains
He needs to set the signals to continue both their journeys
To Sheffield Park or Kingscote, and both from Horsted
Keynes

The signalman is busy, locking out the box
Setting back the signals at the end of the day
He's putting on his hat and locking the door
Another shift over and the signalman walks away



PASSENGERS

A family stands by the buffet
Mum would like a cup of tea
Dad is checking the timetable
To catch the half past three

Granny's in the gift shop
She'd like a birthday card
She'll have to come back later -
On the platform there's the guard

He's about to blow his whistle
The train is ready to leave
Grandad's keen to get aboard
He tugs at Granny's sleeve

A little dog is sniffing round
So many new smells he's found today
The last door slams, the engine whistles
The train full of passengers pulls away

Tornado is coming!

Tornado is coming back to visit us at the Bluebell !

We're all very excited about him coming back to visit again. He last visited four years ago and then he was blue, as in the photo below from his last visit. Now he's been painted green, so he'll look a bit different. He'll be here from 25th—29th May and he'd love to see everyone if you're planning to visit the railway!

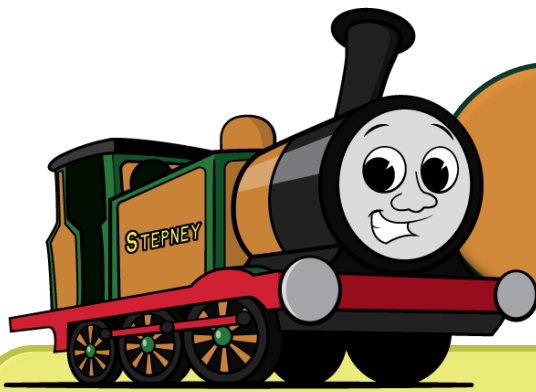
Tornado had a starring role in the film Paddington 2 and Paddington will also be at the railway on 28th and 29th.

Book your tickets online as it
will be busy!



The signalman can't work out which lever he needs to pull to change the points. Can you help him?





DEAR
STEPNEY...

Dear Stepney,

You don't know how lucky you are, having a nice warm shed to live in. I have to live outside in the yard and it was blooming freezing in the Winter, especially when it snowed! I'm only joking, I don't mind being outside at all. I took a selfie of me in the snow, I hope you like it.

Love from Normandy (No. 96)

Dear Normandy,

Thank you for the selfie and I'm sorry you have to live outside. You are very welcome to come and visit whenever you want.

*Best wishes,
Stepney*



Dear Stepney,

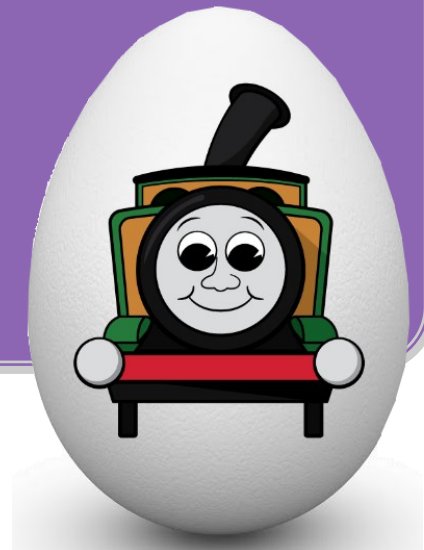
Well, I must say I'm a little disappointed. I hid eggs all over the railway for the engines to find at Easter, but none were found at all. Then I thought about where I could hide them so that they would be easier to find. So, I spent ages balancing them all on the railway line and do you know what happened? That clumsy oaf, Camelot squashed them all with his huge wheels! Honestly, I don't know why I bother.

Love from The Easter Bunny

Dear Easter Bunny,

Thank you for your letter. Camelot is a very large engine and I'm guessing the eggs you balanced on the line were quite small, so it would have been very hard for him to see them. I'm quite sure he didn't do it on purpose, but I'll pass on your comments and I'm sure he'll take more care next year. Incidentally, I don't think you hid any in the carriage shed, because I didn't find any. I would have loved to have an Easter egg!

*Best wishes,
Stepney*



Dear Stepney,

I wanted to write on behalf of all us Diesels for the lovely welcome you all gave us when we visited the Bluebell for the Diesel Gala. It was wonderful trundling up and down your beautiful line and we all had a great time. Sometimes, we diesels are a little worried that you steam engines will think we're a bit too noisy and smelly, but you proved us wrong, so thank you!

Love from Dolores (No. 45041)

Dear Dolores,

Thank you for your letter. I'm very glad you had a good time at the Bluebell, as are all the other engines. Sometimes, we steam engines are a little worried you'll find us all a bit too old and boring, but you proved us wrong too! We were all able to share some really good stories about the old days on the Main Line and we were sad to see you go at the end of your visit. We are all looking forward to next year!

*Best wishes,
Stepney*



Dear Stepney

I just wanted to let you know that all the engines here at the South Downs Light Railway are so excited that the Stepney Club is coming to visit in July for the Teddy Bears' Picnic. Everyone will love our railway, it's not as big as yours, but we're all very friendly and welcoming!

Love from Peggy (No. 334)

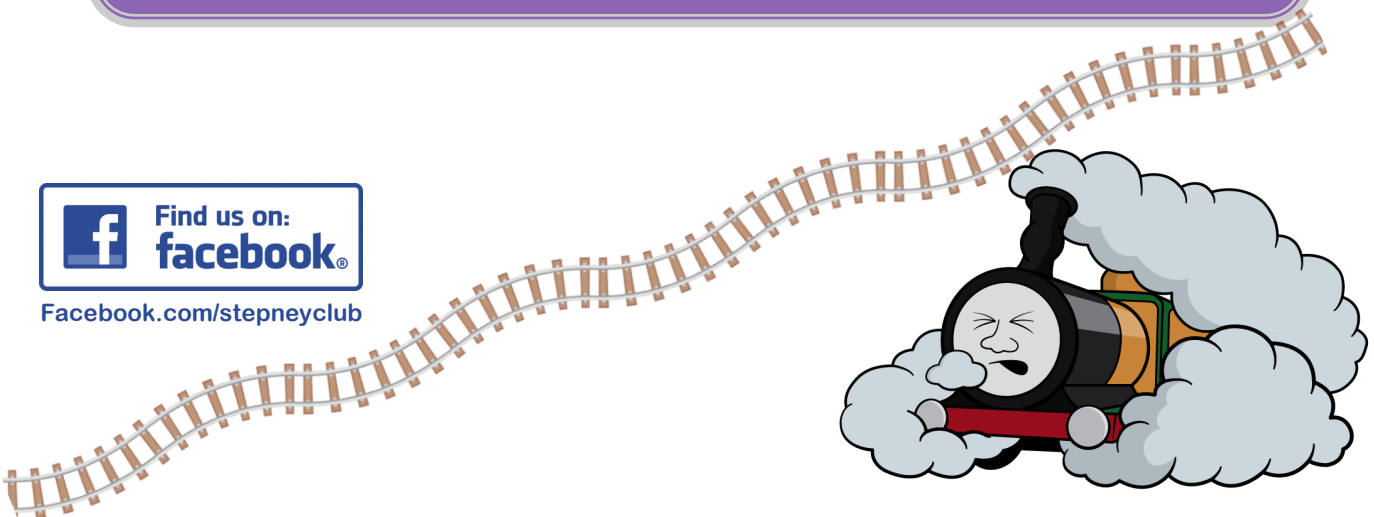
Dear Peggy,

Thank you so much for your letter, I know everyone is looking forward to the Teddy Bear's Picnic; I'm just sorry I won't be able to come too! Let's hope everyone takes lots of photos so I can see the fun.

*Best wishes,
Stepney*



Facebook.com/stepneyclub



DEAR STEPNEY,

PLEASE FIND ENCLOSED A DRAWING OF YOU,
IT WAS DRAWN BY JAKE ALDRIDGE AGED 5. HE
DECIDED TO DRAW YOU STEPNEY BECAUSE JAKE LOVED
RECEIVING YOUR STEPNEY CLUB MAGAZINE. HE HOPES YOU
LIKE IT, AND IS LOOKING FORWARD TO YOUR NEXT MAGAZINE.

LOVE FROM

JAKE ALDRIDGE (5 YRS OLD)

Jake to
Stepney



9.12.17

Dear Stepney,

I have loved reading your magazine it has been interesting to read your stories from the past. I have loved being in the Stepney club but I have to move on to the 9F Club in February 11th 2018. Thank you for the free Bluebell news.

Love From John

Hatherill



The 9F Club is for young people aged 9 - 16 and many children, like John, join when they become too old for the Stepney Club. It gives young people a chance to actually work on the railway and make some great friends!

**For more information, go to
www.bluebell-railway.co.uk and search for 9F Club**

STEPNEY WORKS TOO HARD

Stepney and the Adams weren't too happy about having to move out of their cosy engine shed, where they could see everything that was going on, and into the carriage shed. They were surrounded with carriages, and couldn't see the station or the loco yard at all.

They soon took to chatting about the good old days, when they were both busy working engines, and remembered one day in particular.

It was a Saturday morning and there was great excitement in the engine shed, as it was the first morning of a special weekend with seven engines in steam, including Stepney and the Adams, and Stepney's friend Bluebell, wearing a coat of new blue paint. Stepney and the Adams were in a siding waiting to go on their train, which was six coaches long, so they were going to pull it together.

"Look at all those people on the platform" said Stepney, with great excitement, "All come to see me!"

"They haven't just come to see you" answered the Adams, "They've come to see all of us."

Soon they were coupled onto their train and ready to go, and Stepney's fireman was carefully making up his fire.

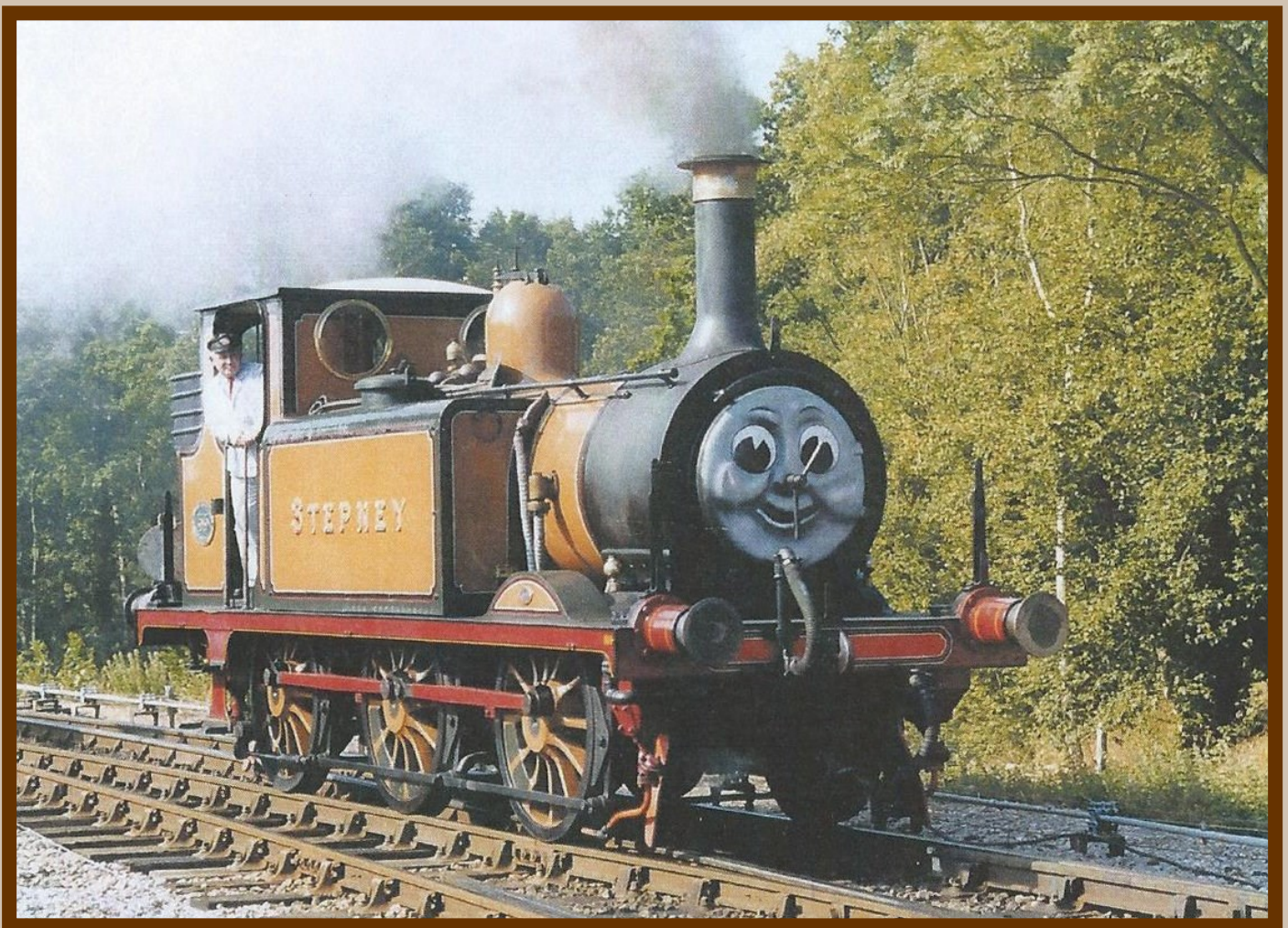
"Now then Stepney" he said, "This is a very heavy train, even for both

of you, so you and I are both going to have to work hard.”

Stepney promised that he would do his best, and then the guard waved his green flag, and they were off. They hadn't gone very far before Stepney began to complain.

“This is hard work, this is hard work” he grunted.

“I told you it would be” replied his fireman, putting some more coal on the fire, “Now come on, you can do it.”



When they arrived at Horsted Keynes, Stepney was worn out. In those days, the railway only went as far as Horsted Keynes, but at the time, Stepney thought that was quite enough.

“How many more trains have we got to pull?” he asked his driver.

“Three more” was the reply. Stepney groaned.

“Oh, do stop complaining” said his driver, “Just think how pleased everyone is to see you and ride on your train.”

Stepney cheered up a bit after that, but when he and the Adams got back to their shed that night, they were both very tired indeed.

The next day, the railway was even busier, and the two friends had to pull even more trains with even more people. They were both up early to do the shunting when they were still half asleep, and, as the day went on, they became more and more tired, and when they arrived at Horsted Keynes, tempers were short.

“You didn't do a thing ”snapped Stepney, “I did all the work!”

“That's not true” replied the Adams, “No way could you pull a six-coach train by yourself.”

“I might as well, for all the help you are. I had to push you all the way from Three Arch Bridge, as well as pull the train.”

“You! You couldn't pull the skin off a rice pudding!”

In the end, both their drivers had to get off the engines and stop the argument, but Stepney and the Adams continued to grumble.

The next train was harder work than ever. As they came up the hill to the station, Stepney gasped: “I can't do it I can't do it!”

“No, you're right” answered his driver, “We'll have to stop and get some more water into your boiler.”

The train came to a stop. “Oooh!” said the Adams, “I don't feel well.” When they limped into the station, Stepney's driver phoned the Running Foreman and told him what had happened. It was agreed that Stepney would go home on another train, and his friends Bluebell and the North London Tank pulled him home again, with poor Stepney feeling very disappointed. He was told that he needed a good rest, and he was resting in the yard and feeling sorry for himself when the Adams came back later.

“I don't feel at all well” he moaned, “Somebody fetch a fitter!”

The fitter came out and examined him, and told him that the problem was his water. He needed some fresh, clean water in his boiler and then he would feel better. As the Adams came over the pit beside Stepney, she noticed that he looked very gloomy.

“I'm sorry I was rude” she said. “I didn't realise you were so poorly.”

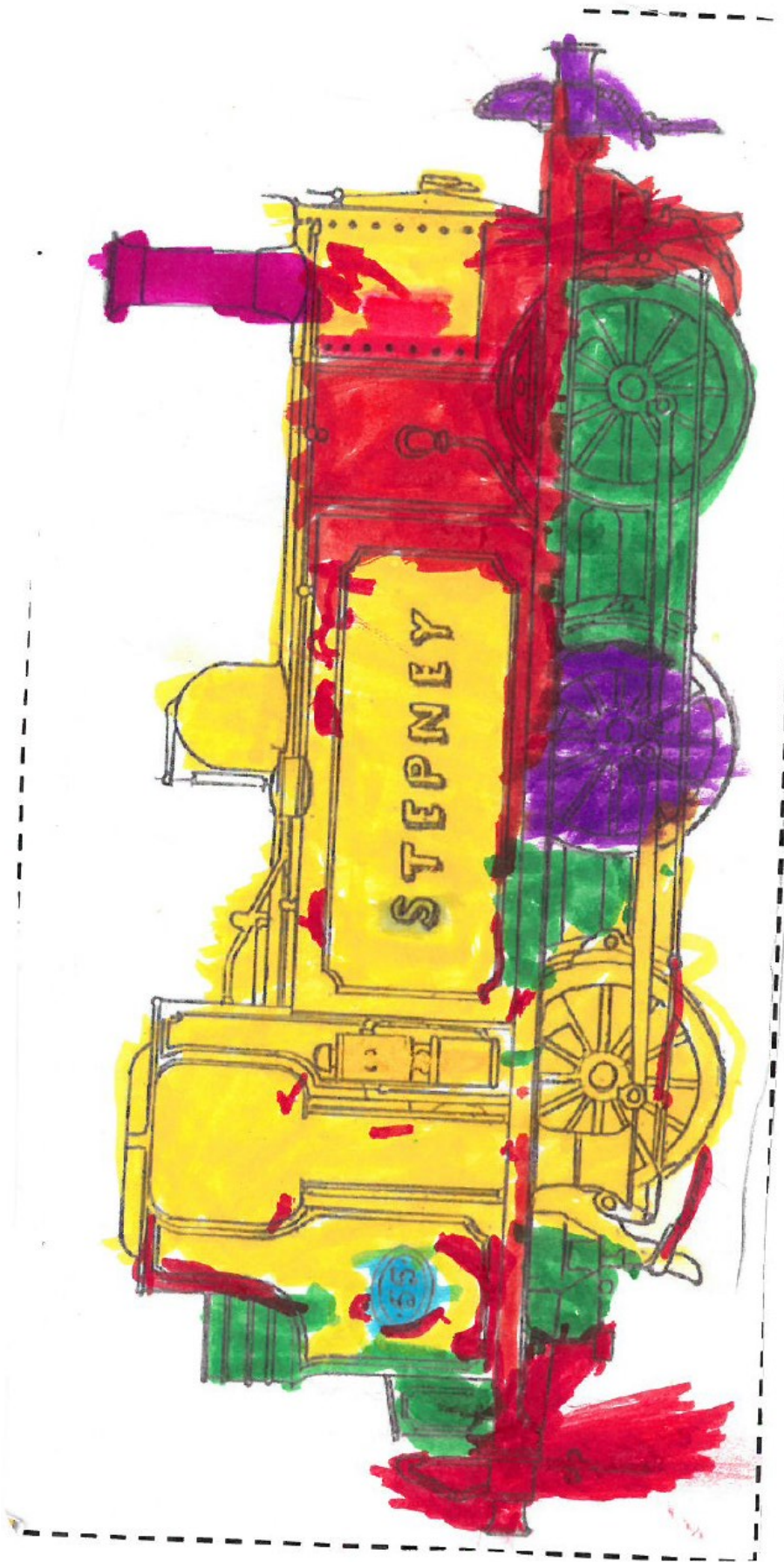
“I expect I shall be alright again soon” sighed Stepney.

The Adams had spotted the Running Foreman coming over the yard towards them, and whispered to Stepney that he would be in for a ticking off for leaving his train.

“I've come to congratulate you both” said the Running Foreman, to their surprise.

“You are two of the oldest engines on the railway, but you have worked the hardest this weekend, and set a very good example to the others.”

And the two tired old engines went to sleep quite contented that night!



Lewis Conway (aged 5) coloured in this picture of me and sent it to the Stepney Club.

Thank you Lewis!



Facebook.com/stepneyclub

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