



The Pioneer – see news, page 2 Photo: Martin Lawrence

The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway Members, Staff and Supporters

Issue 9

IN THIS ISSUE

We're good to go! Four months after the Railway was – literally – stopped in its tracks by the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, we are on the brink of resuming services. After months of effort in planning and preparations, the railway has obtained the Visit England kitemark certifying our preparedness to start welcoming visitors again. Tickets for a variety of services are now on sale; the marketing department has put together a detailed set of web pages explaining to potential visitors what to expect when we re-open, and a video has been made to support the re-opening. Fittingly, the train used during filming carried 'The Pioneer' headboard, a name with a long Bluebell Railway history. The re-opening itself will be on 7 August, sixty years to the day from when Bluebell Railway trains first ran up the line from Sheffield Park. The very first train will be reserved – on a first-come, first-served basis – for BRPS members to travel for free, to recognise the essential support they provide to the railway. One very tangible measure of that support has been the success of the recovery appeal, now standing at over £390k.

Elsewhere around the railway, there has been a phased return of staff in critical roles, and certain planned projects that were interrupted back in March are now continuing, including the fitting of a wheelchair-accessible platform to allow access to C class No. 592 in SteamWorks!, and the arrival of new sleeping carriages to replace the time-worn examples currently on the railway.

Tom James, Editor

| | |
|---|----|
| <i>We're Good to Go</i> | 2 |
| <i>Steam Railway Magazine</i> | 4 |
| <i>Book Deal</i> | 4 |
| <i>Pressing Matters</i> | 5 |
| <i>Five Minutes With ... Heidi Mowforth and Mick Blackburn.</i> | 6 |
| <i>A Closer Look at ... Fenchurch</i> . | 9 |
| <i>How Sheffield Park Station Got Its Name</i> | 10 |
| <i>Tales from the Shed: Goods Working – 1</i> | 11 |
| <i>A Day in the Life of ... a Museum Steward</i> | 14 |
| <i>Museum Morsel – The John J Smith Collection Part 1</i> | 16 |
| <i>On this Day</i> | 17 |
| <i>Word Search</i> | 18 |
| <i>From the Archive Quiz</i> | 19 |
| <i>Kids' Section</i> | 20 |
| <i>Tail Lamp</i> | 22 |

We're Good to Go

By Paul Bromley, communications director

The pace has quickened as we move up a gear in our preparations for reopening.

Some staff and volunteers returned to work at the Railway this week. They are the safety critical people needed to get the Railway ready to welcome back our first visitors three weeks from today.

We were delighted to receive the “We're Good To Go” green tick kitemark from Visit England to confirm we have taken the necessary steps on public health and safety to provide reassurance to customers that the Bluebell Railway continues to be a safe place to visit.

And the first tickets went on sale with [people able to book](#) for the public service trains and the range of dining trains for August.

All the services have been rebranded for the reopening. Service trains will carry the headboard of “[The Pioneer](#)” to remind visitors of our roots and the early days of the Bluebell Railway as the pioneer line. Dining services have been renamed to reflect not only the food on offer but also to use the names of historic services – the aim is to show that we are still providing people with an enjoyable day out. The morning service will be “[Breakfast Belle](#)”, the luncheon trains will be “[The Rocket](#)”, afternoon tea will be “[Cream Tea Riviera](#)” and the evening trains will be “[The Blue Belle](#)”.



The marketing team has produced a [special video to highlight what visitors can expect](#) when they return to the Bluebell Railway. It involved a special day of filming to show the [extra measures](#) which will be in place including hand sanitisers, carriage cleaning and food preparation.

The video has a retro feel and the commentary is by actor Martin Clunes who wishes the Bluebell Railway a happy 60th birthday.

And Bluebell Railway plc chairman Chris Hunford recorded a special [video message](#) to welcome back visitors.

It formed part of the tourism drive across West Sussex and was promoted on YouTube and other social media channels by Experience West Sussex which is a

partnership between local councils and businesses to attract visitors to the area.

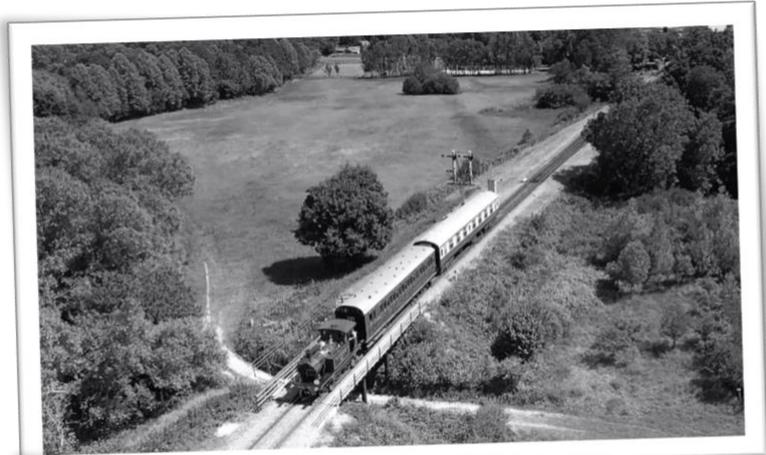
We have also updated the [FAQs section on our website](#) with more information about the changes.

The FAQs also include details of the “ghost trains” which will run in the days prior to reopening to refamiliarise staff with their duties.

So all in all it’s been a busy fortnight since the last edition of The Bluebell Times – and an even busier three weeks lie ahead.

The sight and sound of steam trains running on our line is not far off.

Thank you to everyone who has stood by the Railway in the four months since we closed. Now for the final push towards Friday 7 August and a 60th birthday to remember.



Scenes from the marketing video showing potential visitors how the railway is preparing to restart services.

(From top)

“The Pioneer” heads north from Sheffield Park

Thorough cleaning of carriages between trips

“SteamWorks! will be open

(Left):

Food will be prepared and available in boxes.

Steam Railway Magazine

By Paul Bromley, communications director

The next issue of Steam Railway magazine is expected to include articles, photos and interviews to mark the Bluebell Railway's 60th birthday.

The chairmen of the three parts of the Railway were interviewed by the magazine's editor Nick Brodrick. Plc chairman Chris Hunford, acting Society chairman Steve Bigg and Trust chairman Vernon Blackburn spoke at length about the past, present and future of the Bluebell Railway.

Steam Railway issue 508 is due to be published next week. It has an on-sale date of Friday 24 July with regular subscribers receiving their copies a few days earlier.



The three chairmen being interviewed for Steam Railway magazine. Clockwise from top left:

BRPS Acting Chairman Steve Bigg

Plc Chairman Chris Hunford

Steam Railway editor Nick Brodrick

Bluebell Railway Trust Chairman Vernon Blackburn

SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

Details of how to buy print and digital issues of Steam Railway magazine and the latest subscription offers are available from <https://www.greatmagazines.co.uk/steam-railway-magazine>

Book Deal

The Bluebell Railway now has a deal with [Strathwood Publishing](#) which publishes titles under the names of Strathwood books and Irwell Press books.

They are offering [Bluebell Railway customers 10% discount on all books](#) ordered through the Strathwood website and also a percentage of the book sales will come directly to the Bluebell Railway. It means customers will not only get their discount but they will also be benefiting the Railway.

The discount is live now and all customers need to do to get the discount is to put BLUEBELL (important to be all upper case) into the discount code box at the checkout.

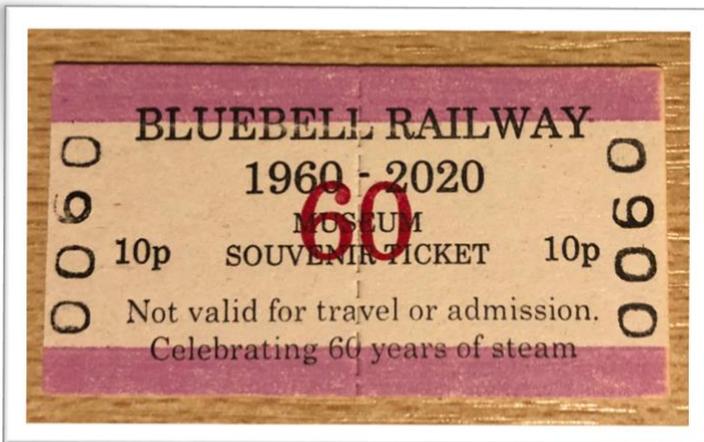
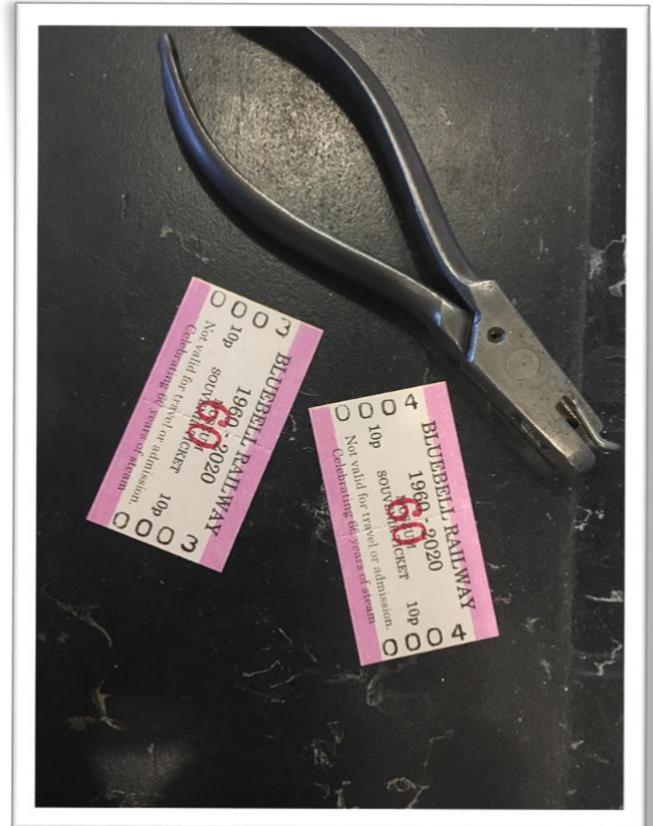
Pressing Matters

Here's a chance to get your hands on a [limited edition 60th anniversary souvenir](#).

The railway's museum team has produced 2,000 individually numbered Edmondson tickets which were printed on the special printing press at Sheffield Park.

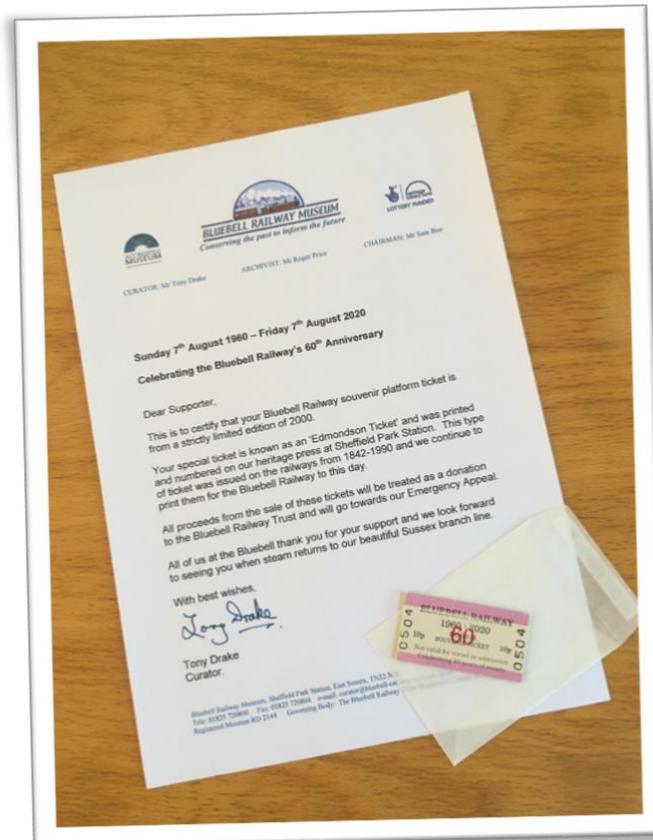
The souvenirs are now on sale in the Railway's online shop for £5 with all the proceeds going to the Emergency Appeal to fund the costs of reopening. They come in a special plastic folder with a letter of authenticity from museum curator Tony Drake.

The cardboard tickets are known as Edmondson tickets after Thomas Edmondson who invented the printing system which was in use on Britain's railways from 1842 to 1990 (see The Bluebell Times issues 3-5 for the full story of these tickets).



ORDER ONLINE

You can order souvenir tickets through the Bluebell Railway Shop from <https://www.bluebell-railway.com/product/60th-anniversary-platform-ticket/>



Five Minutes With ... Heidi Mowforth and Mick Blackburn

Names

Heidi Mowforth and Mick Blackburn

Role

Steam Locomotive Drivers

How long have you been involved with the railway?

Mick Blackburn: I came on Opening Day in 1960 with school friends, one of whom was Chris Saunders, now a Society Trustee. I couldn't afford the joining fee of 5 shillings at the time and so joined in March 1961.

Heidi Mowforth: I joined the Bluebell in 1982.

How did you first become involved?

MB: I lived in Hassocks and travelled to school by train and used to go to Brighton Shed to look around on a Sunday afternoon. On one occasion a P Class appeared on shed and Chris and I wanted to find out more, so we joined as volunteers. We worked in the car park to start with, and then I volunteered in the Carriage & Wagon department, then called the 'Alf Brown Gang'. In 1981 I joined the loco dept as a cleaner.

HM: I went on a couple of steam-hauled main line trips with my father and joined the Bluebell in order to become more involved. Mick and I met on the Yank Tank 30064 in 1983 and have been sharing the footplate ever since, although the Yank is no longer part of the story.

What is/was your professional career?

MB: British Gas service engineer.

HM: Classroom Assistant at St Giles Primary School in Horsted Keynes.



What does your Bluebell Railway job involve?

Both: Preparing the loco for the day's work, driving, taking responsibility for the safety of the train and its passengers, training the crew and disposal at the end of the day.

How often do you volunteer at the railway?

Both: As much as time allows with work and other commitments. We both tend to work on weekdays more than weekends and like to do a week in the summer.

Are you involved in any other departments or areas of the railway?

Both: We founded the Stepney Club for young children over 30 years ago and still run it today, and we founded the 9F Club for young volunteers with Norman Blake after our respective sons grew out of the Stepney Club and wanted to know what they could do next.

MB: I supervise film location work and keep an archive of filming photographs and films made at the Bluebell on DVD and video.



Mick on 'Flying Scotsman' Photo: Mike Shepherd

HM: I write the film reports for Bluebell News and the Stepney Club 'Footplate' magazine and have published a book 'The Line to the Stars' documenting 50 years of filming on the Bluebell.

Do you have nickname and how did it come about?

MB: Not that I know of.

HM: Possibly, but I would be the only one not to know what it is!

What's the best part of your job?

MB: Being in charge of a living, breathing machine that can easily catch you out, and explaining to children how an engine works. I also meet a lot of interesting people during filming!

HM: The opportunity to give the crew and passengers a good day, and the variety of wildlife that can be seen from the footplate over the changing seasons. Sometimes, it has to be said, when the going gets tough, the best bit of the job is signing off at the end of it!

What is the worst part of your job?

MB: Helping the fireman dig clinker out of the grate in the early morning.

HM: Ashpans before dawn.

What is your earliest train memory?

MB: Travelling to the Lake District for family holidays. We used to change at Carlisle. On one

occasion an express went through showering everyone with sooty water and my dad was not impressed.

HM: During a family holiday in Wales we went on the Ffestiniog Railway. Apparently, my dad was telling me how old the carriages were and I asked him if it wasn't time that they got some new ones.

Do you have a model railway at home or in the garden?

MB: Plenty of models but as we live in the railway cottages at Horsted Keynes station, the only layout goes past the front garden and is full size!

HM: During my lockdown I took to avidly reading next door's Railway Modeller magazines over breakfast. Thank goodness we went back to school when we did, or who knows what might have happened...

What is the funniest thing that has happened to you on the railway?

MB: In the early days of the Pullman, when it was called the Regency Belle, we travelled at very low speed from Sheffield Park to Horsted Keynes. I was driving the C Class one evening and as we approached Freshfield, the catering manager appeared behind us on the footplate. He had climbed over the tender to inform us that all the chicken for the main course had been left in the oven at Sheffield Park. He requested us to stop so that he could go and use the phone in a nearby cottage – no mobile phones then. The chicken



Heidi driving at the Ingfield Light Railway

arrived at Horsted by road at the same time as we did.

HM: When we were building the line to West Hoathly in the early 1990s, we ended one day's work by propelling the works train with the C Class from Horsted Keynes to Sheffield Park, with a brakevan on the south end. We had all had a long day and, somehow, everyone assumed that somebody else had coupled up said brakevan. All was well until we breasted the rise coming out of Horsted. The men leaning out of the front of the van commented on the smoothness of the ride before realising that they were, by now, well ahead of the rest of the train. Once the two portions were brought to a stand and reunited, the journey was completed. The signalman made a comment about our having been a long time in section, but we were a little vague in our explanations about why this was.

What has been the most frustrating aspect of not being able to visit the Bluebell during lockdown?

MB: Not being able to do the job that I enjoy.

HM: Missing out on the loco yard banter and the pointless arguments, and not having a shoppers' special to East Grinstead.

What is the first thing you are going to do at the Railway after reopening?

MB: Look forward to meeting our friends again.

HM: Wish that I had actually cleared out my toolbag, thrown away all the sachets of ancient brown sauce in the bottom and found that thingy for opening stiff steam valves when I had the time.

Anything you wish to tell us?

MB: I'm interested in vintage commercial vehicles, tractors etc. We have a 4" scale Foster traction engine for our fix of steam!

HM: We also drive on the North Norfolk Railway, where we go on holiday, and I drive on the Kent and East Sussex Railway. Our son, Henry, is a boilersmith at the Bluebell, and also drives on the KESR and NNR as well as the Bluebell.

BLUEBELL BITES

Fireman or Driver

MB: Driver

HM: Driver with a go on the shovel sometimes

Sharphorne Tunnel or Imberhorne Viaduct

MB: Tunnel

HM: Tunnel on the Up

Bessemer Arms or King George V Buffet

Both: Green Man Horsted Keynes

Railway Children or The Woman in Black

MB: The Woman in Black

HM: Railway Children 1970s film

Tea or Coffee

MB: Tea

HM: Tea on the footplate. Stewed, teabag fished out with a spanner, film of coal dust on top.



On the footplate of Furness Railway No. 20 in 2010.

A Closer Look at ... *Fenchurch*

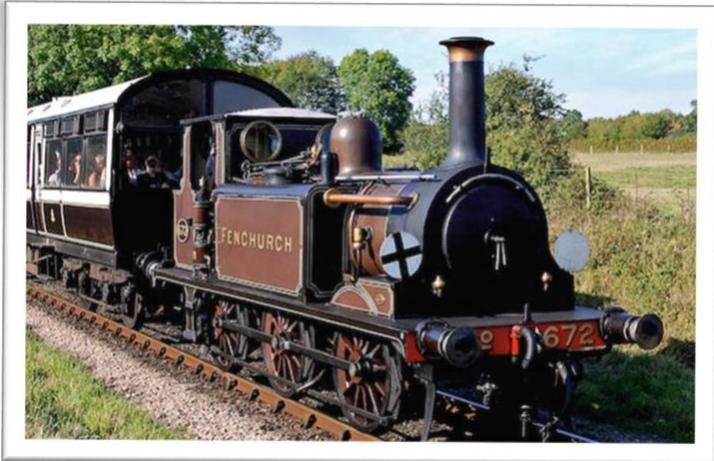


Photo: Derek Hayward

There has been a lot of coverage in the heritage railway press recently for a planned 150th anniversary get-together of the ten surviving Terriers in 2022.

The Bluebell Railway has two Terriers – Stepney (as featured in Issue 1 of The Bluebell Times) and Fenchurch.

Fenchurch is the oldest locomotive at the Bluebell having been built in 1872.

So here's everything you wanted to know about ... Fenchurch.

FENCHURCH IN FACTS AND FIGURES

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Number | 72, later B636, 2636, 32636, 672 in Bluebell service |
| Class | A1x Terrier |
| Wheel arrangement | 0-6-0T |
| Built | 1872 |
| Designer | William Stroudley |
| Cylinders | Two, 14 $\frac{3}{16}$ " x 20" |
| Boiler pressure | 150 pounds per square inch |
| Tractive Effort | 10,693 lbf |
| Length | 26 ft $\frac{1}{2}$ ins |
| Weight | 28 tons |
| Driving wheel diameter | 4 ft 0 ins |
| Coal and water capacity | Approx. 18 cwt coal, 500 gallons water |
| Valve gear | Stephenson |

Information taken from '[Locomotives, Carriages & Wagons preserved on the Bluebell Railway, 2020 Edition](#)' produced by Michael Philpott, available from the Bluebell Railway's online shop



'Fenchurch' when newly constructed in 1872. Loco aficionados will spot the lack of Westinghouse pump and air brakes; wooden brake shoes; three-link couplings; and the steam balance pipe in front of the cab, a feature fitted to only the first six Terriers to be constructed, and soon removed.

Source: [Grace's Guide](#), Creative Commons ShareAlike licence [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

How Sheffield Park Station Got Its Name

By Malcolm Johnson, museum steward

Many people know the name Sheffield Park because of the beautiful gardens run by the National Trust and because of the Bluebell Railway station named after the location. But who was Lord Sheffield and would the Bluebell Railway exist if there hadn't been a Lord Sheffield?

John Baker Holroyd, the grandfather of Lord Sheffield, was created an Irish peer in 1781. He had bought Sheffield Park estate in 1769 from Earl De La Warr. He took the title of Baron Sheffield of Roscommon. In 1802 a British barony was added to his titles. The name Sheffield is derived from the name Siefeld which means sheep clearing and goes back at least to the Domesday Book.

Henry North Holroyd, the 3rd Earl of Sheffield (1832 to 1909) was the leading light in getting Parliamentary consent to construct a railway line between East Grinstead and Lewes with a view to eventually extending the line to Croydon. He was chairman of the directors on the Lewes & East Grinstead Railway Company. He set up a consortium of landowners along the route to form the company, the most notable being the Earl De La Warr. Earl Sheffield had been an MP and was President of Sussex County Cricket Club and no doubt his good connections with those in power enabled a rapid acceptance of his application to construct the railway. The LBSCR fully supported the Bill and undertook not to compete.

If it was not for Lord Sheffield, it is likely the Lewes & East Grinstead Railway would never have been built and hence the Bluebell Railway would not exist.

Earl Sheffield was a generous man to say the least. He revitalised an ailing Sussex County Cricket Club and made it a glamorous club in the heyday of cricket. He financed the 1891-92 England tour of Australia and formed his own team to play at Sheffield Park. He organised and financed a wide range of sporting events at Sheffield Park all of which were free of charge to the many thousands of spectators. In addition to cricket matches against Australia, there were matches against West Africa, Parsees (India), MCC and South Africans. Other sports that took place there were rugby (international level), football (top English teams), cycling, swimming and stoolball. Winter sports were



Photo: Paul Bromley

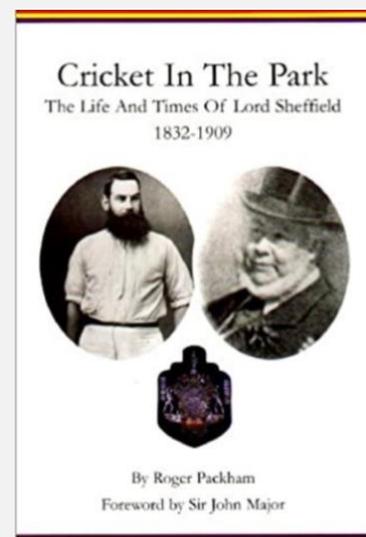
curling, skating races and cricket on ice! He brought in trains full of children from the East End of London to enjoy Sheffield Park and in the winter gave employment to the otherwise workless local men to work in the garden.

Lord Sheffield paid for the Sheffield Shield, the premier cricket honour in Australia, and instigated the national competition for its award.

He was the Colonel of the 1st Sussex Royal Engineer Volunteer Battalion which he financed and on one of his more colourful manoeuvres "captured" Newick & Chailey Railway Station and ran it with nine of his own men!

Lord Sheffield did not marry and his only sibling, Douglas, died without children. It is fair to say that he spent the family fortune on bringing pleasure to others. He was a remarkable man.

FURTHER READING



There is an excellent book by Roger Packham on the life of the 3rd Earl Sheffield entitled "[Cricket in the Park: The Life and Times of Lord Sheffield 1832-1909](#)".

Tales from the Shed: Goods Working - 1

By Russell Pearce, Driver

To protect readers from Mr Editor's "Tales from the Riverbank", I have been asked to write a few lines of more immediate interest to subscribers of "The Bluebell Times". So, after some cogitation I thought a monograph on the working of loose coupled goods trains might be of some interest.

The steam railway was a very ordered and hierarchical organisation with everyone proceeding through the ranks in a very strictly observed line of seniority. The green cleaner started as the lowest of the low and did not get to clean boilers or cabs until he had first grovelled around in the motion between the frames, only then being allowed to even aspire to move on. When he got made a fireman and was allocated into a link, he also progressed through the links on a seniority basis as others were promoted or left the shed for pastures new. In other words, promotion depended on "dead man's shoes" to a great extent. These links all had allocations of work of increasing importance, at the bottom: shunting; then maybe local goods or trip working; then local passenger links. And so on all the way up to the No 1 link which worked the top jobs on the shed, usually the crack expresses or long-distance trains. The idea being that knowledge picked up on the way gave the experience needed to work the harder trains. Having got to the top link, the fireman might then see the Inspector and be passed out for driving – and then it was back to the bottom link to start all over again.

I raise all this because it emphasises the point that working goods trains was seen as less important in the link system than the crack expresses. However all the learned writers of footplate memories are unanimous on the one point: that a "rusty buffer" train (as the ex-fireman and folk singer Don Bilston had it) was the hardest train of all

to handle which makes it odd that the glamour and prestige always attended the "high-flying" passenger jobs. Sheds like "Top Shed" at King's Cross, and Camden, always attracted more kudos for working trains like the "Flying Scotsman" or the "Irish Mail", than sheds like Saltley whose top job was a Birmingham to Carlisle freight, arguably a harder train to work and probably economically more important.

But just why was an unfitted goods train the hardest work on the shed? That is one of the things which we as a heritage railway need to understand, because in working such trains we preserve an otherwise wholly-lost skill. We also must realise the far from incidental point that the railways were built to move coal primarily, manufactured goods and agricultural produce second, and passengers a very poor third. Incidentally, goods trains were equally testing for the guard, and there is a piece of doggerel which sets out to explain that teamwork was essential and not always achieved as evidenced by footplate attitudes to the guard. "The guard is a man, who sits in a van, and rides at the back of the train. The driver in front, thinks the guard is (expletive deleted) and the guard thinks the driver's the same!" So, let's take a look. In part 1 we look at the way in which these trains were made up,



6-coupled goods loco and unfitted train. Photo: Matt Nightingale



The guard's view. Photo: Neil Glaskin

and in part 2 we will take a trip up and down our line to see what the issues are in practice.

The first point to remember is that no trains were braked throughout, until the companies were forced to apply an automatic brake system to every passenger train by the Regulation of Railways Act 1889. The companies fought this tooth and nail but having lost made no effort to go beyond passenger trains, until they found it expedient to do so once it became more important to speed up goods trains. So, until quite late no wagon or van, although provided with a handbrake, was capable of being braked by the driver, who had to rely on the power of the brake on the engine alone to do the job.

Furthermore, there was little incentive to provide engines for these trains that were capable of high speeds or had the boiler capacity to work trains at any sustained high output of power. Provided an engine could get a train on the move and plod along, that was enough. This is why the medium-sized 0-6-0 tender engine, of which 65 and 592 are examples, were constructed by the thousand in Britain by all the railway companies. They are more or less identical in layout, moderately powered, simple, and cheap to build, and easy and cheap to work and maintain. And they were the mainstay of the railways until at least the grouping, and the type lasted across the country until the very end.

So, we have unbraked wagons strung together in long trains that were just about within the capability of the engine to move and stop. Thus, the question arises as to how the men were able to keep the traffic moving so effectively for so long which such archaic equipment – the answer being “with great skill”. One key point with the starting and stopping of an un-fitted train is that, like the eating of an elephant, you start with the tail. In

other words, you don't try to move or stop the whole train in one go; unfitted vehicles were provided with simple “three-link” couplings (a glorified chain) of such length as to make sure that the buffers were not maintained in permanent contact. This is at complete variance with passenger working where couplings are kept as tight as possible at all times to prevent clashing and a rough journey for the occupants. Coal is impervious to be shunted back and forth the whole time. Another issue is the crucial importance of knowing precisely how much brake force the engine is capable of providing in order to stop an unfitted train on its own and also knowing precisely how much the train weighs in total.

A rather arcane snippet is that when weighing trains for passenger work, we are only interested in how much it weighs in respect of the empty carriages. Thus, a guard will list the consist in his (or her) journal and write the down the weight of the vehicles as displayed on a plate on the end of the car. That is totted up and the result advised to the driver as “x” carriages for “y” tons. On our railway a typical six-car rake of corridor coaches might weigh around 222 tons, for six Mk 1s mark-ones weighing 37 tons each. They vary: Pullmans and Kitchen cars are heavier, Bulleids and Maunsells lighter.

But the goods guard has a more difficult job. He lists a vehicle in the journal, notes the “tare” weight of each but has also to estimate the weight of the contents and add that in to give a gross weight for the vehicle. The side of a wagon is noted with the tare weight along with the overall carrying capacity (take a look at the side of a brake coach and there is always a note of the carrying capacity of the brake van in tons). Thus, one of the guard's duties is to see that the train is correctly loaded, that vehicles are not overloaded, and that loads are safe and will not fall off or out, and that they are loaded with weight evenly distributed. A van with the load all at one end is likely to de-rail

While he is doing this, the guard will note whether the vehicle is full and make an estimate as to what fraction of the overall carriage weight is used (is it full, half, a third full? and so on). (Quick lesson 14lbs in a Stone, 2 stones in a Quarter (qtr), 4 qtrs. in a Hundredweight (cwt) and 20 cwts in a ton.) So, a van with tare weight of 12 tons and a capacity of 10 tons and 2 qtrs, might be visually half full and the contents are thus assumed to be 5 tons and one qtr in weight which is added to the tare weight to go on the journal as 17 tons and 1 qtr. Capacity weights are often shown to the nearest quarter. Over a train of say 50 wagons all those odd qtrs might add up to several additional tons which could be of critical importance in stopping an

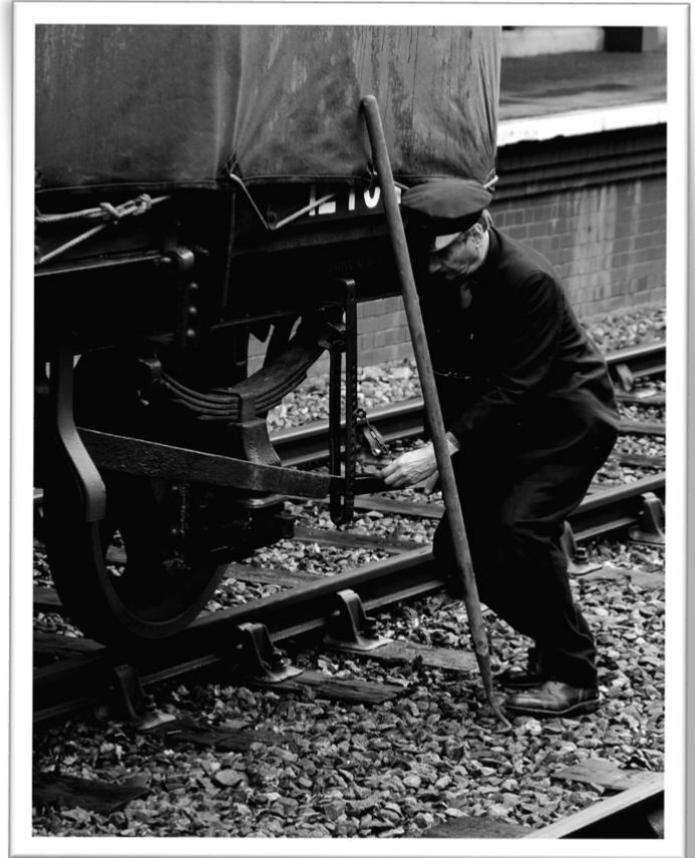
unbraked train. So, the job of the guard in this respect is highly skilled in itself, mistakes can lead to disaster.

We need to take a short excursion into the question of brake force. This a fairly simple calculation of the amount of force in tons that can be applied to the wheels to retard them, which also considers the adhesive weight of the engine. This last is the weight on wheels which do work to either move a train or stop it, as opposed to wheels, and are neither powered nor braked, and simply help distribute the weight of an engine more evenly. So, when working out adhesive weight we want to know how much weight is on driving wheels, and for braking those which are also braked on a tender. When you think of that, it is obvious why it is almost unheard of, at the Edwardian zenith of the railways to find a goods-train worked with an engine that was not of (at least) the 0-6-0 plus tender layout. All the weight is adhesive for braking purposes. One final point is that in all these brakeforce calculations the brake van is ignored. That is there to convey the guard, and to be available as additional braking in an emergency, and unless asked otherwise the guard should control the van so that it is neither doing the driver's job, nor making his life more difficult.

Descending an incline, the van should be neither holding the train up, not adding to the weight that the engine is trying to stop. There is more to it, this scratches the surface of the teamwork referred to above and what happens when this doesn't work, and we explore that further in part 2.

The driver is thus advised that "the train is of 'x' wagons weighing 'y' tons, unfitted, plus a brake van". He will understand that this is the total weight of the whole train, plus the weight of the van. He also knows, because it is stated in the Sectional Appendix, the maximum weight of a train he is permitted to work over the lines booked with his engine. And crucially here, it is the brake force at his disposal which is being referred to, not the starting effort of the engine.

So, if the train is overweight for the engine in this respect, the driver can insist on one of two things: he can either ask that the train be reduced or he can ask for additional brake force. This is also achieved in two ways: he can ask for wagons to have handbrakes applied before descending an incline and so add to the brakeforce that way; or latterly he might ask if there are fitted vehicles in the train to be marshalled next to the engine which can be braked using the automatic brake so also supplementing the available brake force. Both these are quite technical because there is a calculation of the additional force provided by braking individual wagons, which the guard must make, to



Pinning down brakes. Photo: Martin Lawrence

ensure that sufficient extra force is provided. I am not going to go into that here. In the latter case the guard would then report the train as 'x' wagons for 'y' tons, including 'z' tons 'fitted head'.

Readers will hardly be surprised to learn that it was by no means uncommon for all these calculations to be either wrong to start with, be ignored for expediency or simply be inadequate for the later turn of "events". Stories from the Rev. Awdry's books to a long line of footplate memories and folk songs all tell of engines failing on uphill gradients for shortage of steam or water, or engines failing because they simply are incapable of getting a train to the summit despite having plenty of both. And there are plenty of stories about trains running away downhill, whether it's James and his wooden brake blocks on fire, the break-away wagons finally coming to rest at the "bottom of Pinwherry Dip" or accounts of trains running through Bromsgrove station and coming to rest some hundreds of yards beyond signals and water columns having got out of hand on the "Lickey". There are also tales of guards being catapulted over the back rails of their vans due to bad starting of trains and snatching.

Some of what underlies these tales we will look at next time.

A Day in the Life of ... a Museum Steward

By Geoff Davis and Lance Hodgson, museum stewards

Photos by Tony Drake, museum curator

We're taking a closer look at some of the roles at the Bluebell Railway. The railway has about 750 volunteers who give up their time to ensure visitors have a memorable day out. In fact, most of the people customers meet during their visits to the Bluebell Railway are unpaid volunteers. In this article, Geoff Davis and Lance Hodgson explain what it takes to be a Museum Steward.

The day starts at Sheffield Park station building, where I meet my fellow steward for the day. There are always at least two stewards in the museum when it is open. There is an army of 750 or so working volunteers to keep the railway going, but there's always room for more.

We walk out to the platform and over the footbridge on to platform 2 chatting as we go about news in general and what is planned for the day. Today, as with several days, we are expecting a visit from a class of children from a local school. How the Victorian railway boom changed the country being today's theme, along with a trip on the train, all very exciting!

We arrive at the museum and let ourselves in. My fellow steward goes off to open the Withyham signal box, also not forgetting to say hello to London Jack our favourite dog on display in the



The museum entrance on Platform 2 of Sheffield Park

museum. I start by clearing the ashes from the coal fire and topping up the coal. Some people think it's a fake fire, but we know better!

It's 10.00am and we are open for business. Our first visitors arrive, a group of four regular railway enthusiasts. They come in to check what's new in the museum since their last visit. They are always full of praise. A good way to start the day.

Soon after there's a great sound of children's voices from platform 1. This heralds the arrival of our school visit. They are led over the footbridge by a Bluebell Railway Guide. For about an hour the place is full of 8-year-olds looking at everything and asking lots of questions, with our other visitors making their way around them, all with good humour. The Withyham signal box is in full swing with the children ringing the bells and pulling the levers, under the watchful eye of a steward. It's time for the children to leave and board their train. It goes a lot quieter, time for a cup of tea out on the platform!

A lady clutching a carrier bag enters the museum and produces a couple of photo albums she found in her grandad's loft. She explained that he had worked on the Southern Region for years, the albums had fascinating old pictures of bygone railway times. Would we like them? We take them from her saying we would, and Tony our curator would be in touch to thank her for thinking of us.

London Jack

The first train arrives in from East Grinstead, bringing many more visitors. So again the museum is filled with families and children doing the museum quizzes including hunting for the three black metal mice randomly hidden in the display cabinets. Every completed quiz warrants the ceremony of presenting a badge to the quizzier, all very serious. Also more sessions in the signal box. How many times do we go through the signal box talk? I think we go through it in our sleep.

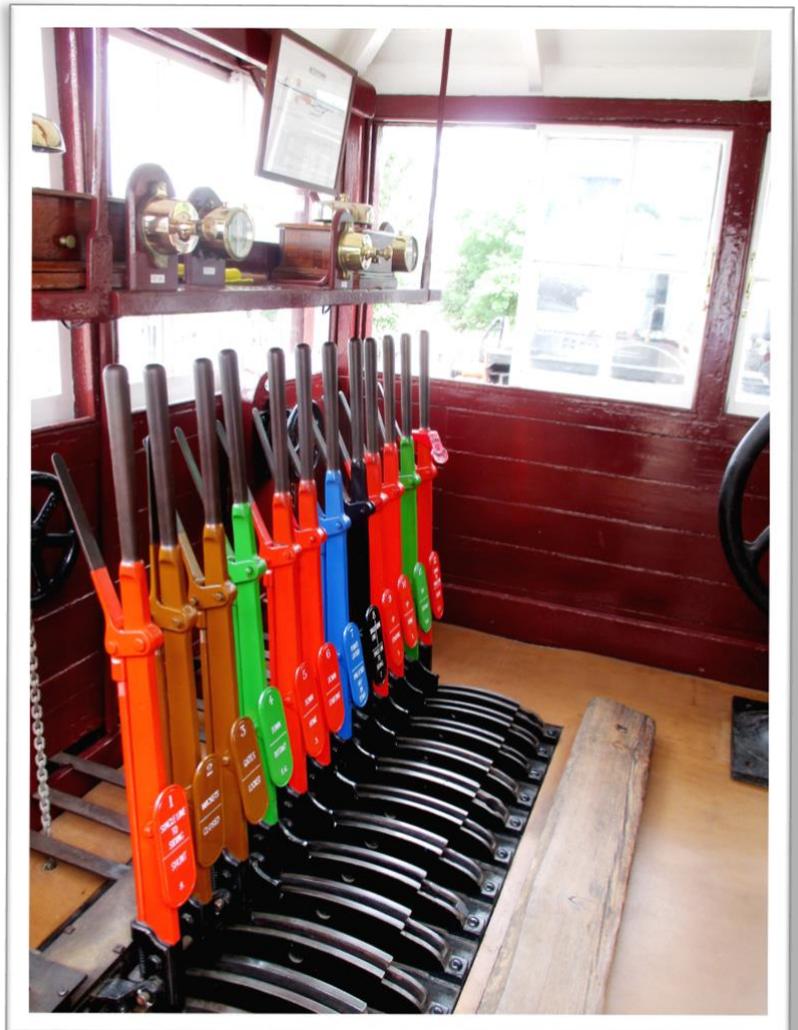
Lunch time arrives. It's Tuesday and that means the day trippers in from Eastbourne on their coach excursion. Tuesday is Sheffield Park Gardens and the Bluebell Railway. Our mates on platform 1 direct the trippers over to the museum and in they come just after lunch. Senior Citizens out for a fun day, all reminiscing about train journeys and how things have changed. And again the signal box is back in action. Ringing bells and pulling levers is not confined to the youngsters!

Two ladies are looking into the ticket office and remembering when they worked in an office and used the typewriter like ours or the "Victorian Computer" as I call it when explaining it to the children. This causes a laugh all round. The coach driver comes in to round up his passengers. It's time for them to go to the Bessemer Arms for a cup of tea, so peace returns to the museum.

It's nearly time to close the museum. There's a handful of visitors still in, they drift off and we go and close the signal box. We make our way back through the museum checking that there isn't a stray visitor still engrossed in the displays. We don't want to leave anybody in the museum overnight!

So another day ends at the Bluebell Railway Museum, a last check that the fire is ok for the night!

It's been busy and today's number of visitors has contributed to the over 45,000 visitors that we have every year. We close the door and make our way down the platform. Ready for two other stewards to do it all again tomorrow.



(Top): The museum's typewriter

(Above): The interior of Withyham Signal Box

Museum Morsel – The John J Smith Collection Part 1

Words and pictures by Tony Hillman, assistant museum curator

It was an interesting coincidence that the last edition of The Bluebell Times, which contained comments about John Smith, should be published on the 13th anniversary of an incredibly significant date in the history of the Bluebell Archive.

However, the story starts earlier in 2007. One afternoon I received a phone call from Chris Turner – some of you might recognise the name as a prolific writer on Great Western matters. He told me that his friend John J Smith had died leaving a huge collection of Southern-related material. Chris explained that John had wanted his collection to go to the Bluebell but, unfortunately, had not left a will. John had no living relatives, so the estate was being handled by the Treasury Solicitor. Fortunately, Chris had managed to contact the Treasury Solicitor before the council visited the house and skipped all the contents as it was, in their opinion, all rubbish.

Once the Treasury Solicitor knows the contents of a house has value, he has to try to recover as much money as he can, just in case a relative turns up within 30 years to claim the estate. Chris asked if I would be interested in speaking to the Treasury Solicitor. I said 'yes' and he phoned that same afternoon. I explained that I was sure we would be interested in the collection. We agreed to meet at John Smith's home in Eastbourne on 3 July 2007.

When we opened the door, we were staggered. The amount of 'stuff' was incredible. It was everywhere – in all the rooms, the hall, up the stairs, just everywhere. We tried to comprehend the enormity of what we could be letting ourselves in for, but decided we just had to try to preserve the collection.

A few weeks of discussion followed with the Treasury Solicitor and in the end the agreement was that we would clear the house, give the Treasury Solicitor the personal and hardware items we might find for him to resell, and we

would pay for the paperwork etc. A further visit by two Treasury Solicitor representatives and us took place on 25 July.

I remember well that the plan was that these two would check round and make sure we were not going to cheat. On arrival they said they needed to go into the loft. On being shown the rickety step ladder, they both declined: the young man was afraid of spiders and the young lady thought the length of her skirt was not conducive to climbing a ladder! I

visited the loft and found a box of battered O gauge models which seemed to be enough for them to tick the box. Three of us put up the money to buy the collection and we started a month of intensive work.

There is no doubt John Smith was a hoarder – not just of railway-related material but pretty much everything that he took into his house. He worked for British Railways (Southern) and we are told that he scavenged from other colleagues' bins before going home. It is a good job he did as he saved much valuable paperwork.

We visited the local rubbish dump on numerous occasions and finally at the end of August a house



clearance company removed the furniture. Job done. As John Smith rented his house, the final act was to take the key back to the management company who sold the house.

Unfortunately, there was nowhere to store the material we had saved so we rented a 100 sq ft lockup in Horsham and we filled it side to side and top to bottom. We are asked 'Why Horsham?'. Simply because it is equidistant from where the

three of us who had bought the collection live and not too far from the Bluebell.

It quickly became clear that as well as a fantastic Southern paperwork and photographic collection, John had amassed a similar collection of Irish material. He visited Ireland often and one time returned with the locomotive nameplate Enniskillen. That, of course, was handed to the Treasury Solicitor. How, and where, it went is a story for next time.

On this Day

By Tony Hillman, assistant museum curator

Two pictures from the Bluebell Photographic Archive taken on 17 July.



4-SUB 4535, standing at London Bridge forming the 2.38pm Charing Cross - Hayes via Lewisham Service on 17 July 1949. The leading motor brake is an arc-roofed LBSCR bodied vehicle whilst the third vehicle is a Bulleid ten compartment 'six-a-side' augmentation trailer. These trailers were added to many three-car units in the closing days of the Southern Railway and the dawn of British Railways to form 4-SUB units although these all-steel modern trailers stuck out like a sore thumb against the pre-grouping bodywork of the remainder of the units. Photographer John J Smith.

Drummond M7 class locomotive No. 30055 at Partridge Green on 17 July 1959. It is propelling a Horsham to Brighton train. The fireman can be seen looking out of the cab. The driver will be in the front coach. The signal box here was one of the last built by contractor Saxby and Farmer to this austere-looking design, classified as "Type 3a", and opened in 1875 along with the similar box at Southwater, two stations to the north. Photographer Joe Kent.



Word Search

We've another word search puzzle for you. The story of the early days of the railways and the Rainhill Trials in issue 7 prompted us to produce a puzzle based on the names of early locomotives.

Some of the engines in the list below took part in the Rainhill Trials in 1829.

The answers are hidden horizontally, vertically or diagonally and in a forwards or backwards direction.

As ever, no prizes but we will reveal the answers in the next issue. Good luck.

L T T Y L L I B L J M V C G Y
 I P B B X E R N O V E L T Y H
 E H P L F J N E B P L A N E T
 R Y U I M I I E Q O E T L M Q
 A P E R S E V E R A N C E X E
 P F K Z J H R H R M Y I V S A
 M Z X Z J H R C Y G Y V A X D
 O G O L K S V D V U A N Q K Y
 Y V I G N I F F U P S I Y S O
 O A X C S K N S G B R L X S M
 M I C B Y R O C K E T L F W C
 L X H E H O E J M C S L K L F
 Q I C M T P G V U V Z Z S G L
 Q K O T L D J R K W C L Z M X
 D Z X N E P C N C Z X O T Z T

ROCKET
 NOVELTY
 PERSEVERANCE
 LION
 PLANET
 INVICTA
 PUFFING
 BILLY
 SANS
 PAREIL

SOLUTION TO WORD SEARCH IN ISSUE 8

B B K L P D Q N J E E R I J W
 L G N C O Q W N X Y M E R Y O
 K R X Z T H J I T D F O E C E
 E C T K E Y K R H P Y G D J J
 L Q X Q R V T W N R B V N C R
 H N Y A A T N O V Q T Q E M N
 X E N Z M Y T B U R V R T U X
 Y T B I I S C P Y M C E Y U O
 N X I P I R Y I R E P G J E B
 Y X Q P E E X Z S W B U R C E
 M F X L N T R E D N I L Y C R
 X V I M V C B C J E L A T C I
 E O I Q C D B W H I S T L E F
 B H X H A R I L V F K O Q Y M
 C G E S B S W M Q K V R H N L

- ➡ Boiler
- ➡ Piston
- ➡ Firebox
- ➡ Cylinder
- ➡ Tender
- ➡ Cab
- ➡ Whistle
- ➡ Dome
- ➡ Chimney
- ➡ Regulator

From the Archive Quiz

By Roger Price, archivist



For this issue's picture quiz, we show the four founder members of the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society (with Chris Cooper, behind) – but can you name them?

And for our other photo, what happens when a locomotive runs out of steam! When was this event at Sheffield Park, and what was going on?

Answers to both questions in Issue 10.



Kids' Section

STORYTIME

There are more episodes now available of the 'Storytime with Bluebell Railway' book readings for youngsters.

Episode 5 of '[Crossing Time on the Blueberry Line](#)' by Simon Hall is on the YouTube playlist. This episode is read by education volunteer Ruth Rowatt.

The book is aimed at children aged 4 to 9+ and is [available in our online shop](#).



SHUNTING PUZZLE SOLUTION

By Michael Clements, education department

In the last issue we asked you to shunt some trucks so that they were in the right order for dropping off at the stations.

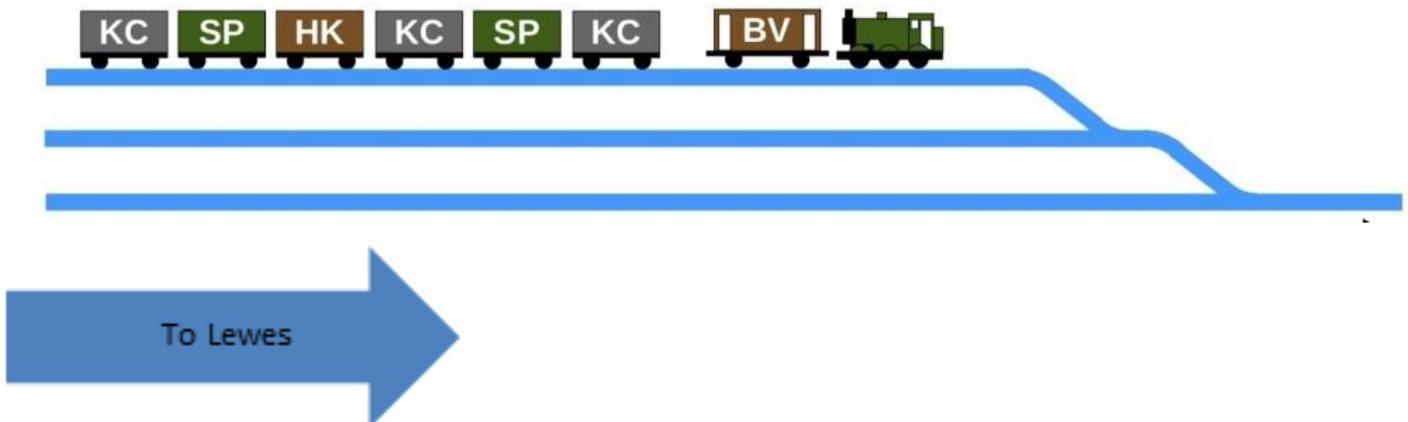
BV = brake van

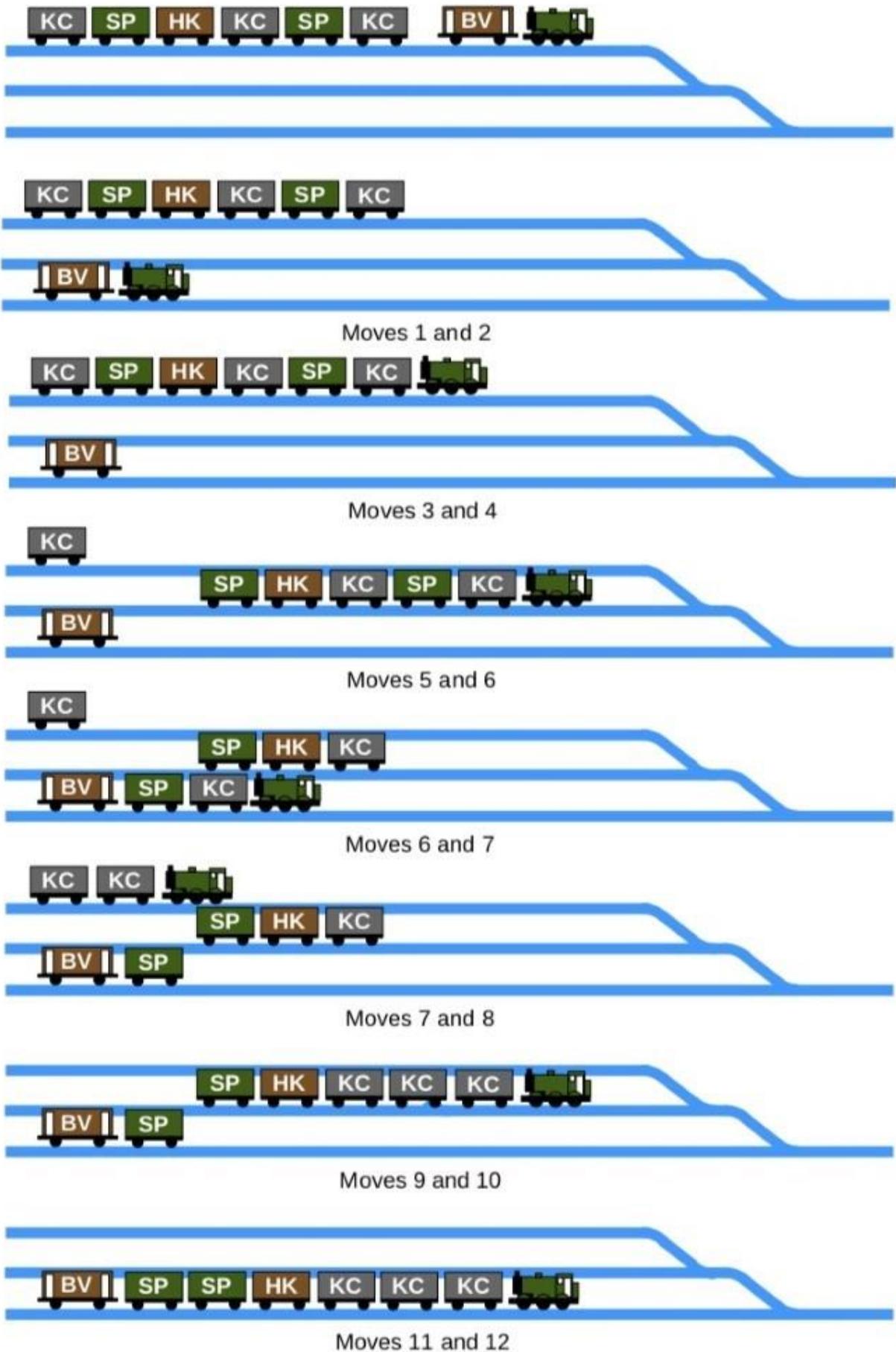
SP = wagon for Sheffield Park

HK = wagon for Horsted Keynes

KC = wagon for Kingscote

The goods yard had three sidings and the engine and trucks were like this before shunting:







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*If you have any comments
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future articles or features,
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Tail Lamp

If you've enjoyed this issue of The Bluebell Times, feel free to pass it on to other people you think might also want to read it.

To find out when the next issue is out and for other updates about the Bluebell Railway, check our website www.bluebell-railway.com or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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