



After ten years, No. 178 bowed out of traffic in style hauling 'The Pioneer' Photo: Jonathan Barnes

The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway Members, Staff and Supporters

October 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

How do you plan for a year like 2020? At the time of writing it is exactly two months since the Railway re-opened; in those two months almost every operating assumption present in 2019 has had to be reviewed and revised, from the safe flow of passengers round our stations to the programme of routine carriage maintenance.

Nonetheless, we are once again an operational railway, and plans are being made on that basis. At the end of October, we will once again be holding an enthusiast gala, "Off the Rails", with visiting road vehicles and goods trains to the fore. We will also be running a full week of services during the school half term – as always, details are on our website.

There has also been the very welcome sight of track replacement work under way this week on Freshfield Bank, as clear a signal as any of confidence in investing in the long-term future of the Railway.

We are not, though, free from Covid, and there is still a risk that conditions can change in the future, adding to the financial pressure on the Railway. Thus it is vital that all our services run as successfully as possible. Our Christmas services – the Santa Specials and newly-introduced SteamLights events – have been very successful in terms of bookings. Now we need to deliver those services to our usual high standards, which will require many volunteers to help. If you would like to be involved, and help secure the future of the Railway, please see the appeal for volunteers on page 2 of this issue.

Tom James, Editor

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SteamLights Volunteers

By Chris Knibbs, Operations Manager and Julia Pique, Santa & SteamLights Co-ordinator

Those of you who took part in our Railway's 50th Anniversary event back in 2010 will have experienced what to us and very many other volunteers was one of the top events of all time with the pride we all had in displaying Bluebell at its best and providing a show for our members and visitors alike. The camaraderie amongst the volunteers and staff was amazing and the memories still live on today. Three faultless days when all aspects of Bluebell were on display and we delivered a stunning show that we were all so proud of what we had all achieved.

We followed this up in 2017 when we planned and delivered a seven-day event featuring the visit of Flying Scotsman. Again, we all enjoyed working together and produced a stunning faultless week that brought so much joy to our members and visitors. A week of long turns of duties seemed a daunting task for any roster clerk to have to cover but they did us proud and again the camaraderie between volunteers and staff was equally amazing. Graham Aitken remembers that he was rostered on duty as one of the Sheffield Park Station Masters for six of those seven days, along with Nick, a Porter who lives in Holland, and they had a great time being part of the excitement generated by our visitors. It was sad when the last day came to an end and what had become the new normal was over.

Obviously Covid stopped our Railway's 60th Anniversary from taking place this August, when we were planning to recreate – and aiming to better – our 50th Anniversary event, which will now take place from 6 - 8 August next year.

We do, however, have a golden opportunity to recreate the spirit of the above with this winter's Santa Trains and our new product, SteamLights. As a result of Covid and the resulting social distancing guidelines, these events will be quite different from the original plans made back at the start of the year. Both products have sold very well, resulting in more trains being added to the original programmes, which we must start to plan

how we can deliver them, meeting the expectations of visitors.

Santa Trains are booked to operate on 9 days between 5 and 24 December and we will need Stewards on each date. The good news is that we have an established group of Santa Trains Stewards who will shortly be contacted and asked to put themselves forward to cover these turns of duty.

SteamLights will be operating on an astonishing number of 39 days between 13 November and 5 January and will need five Stewards on each of them. With no existing SteamLights Stewards group, we now need to create one. What an opportunity this is for volunteers, members and employees to work together and be part of a winning team, knowing that while you have enjoyed yourselves, you will have earned our Railway a significant amount of revenue in what has been a very difficult period. We need to find cover for almost 200 turns of duty, all involving evening working – the clue is in the name, SteamLights – and all based at Sheffield Park.

So, what happens next? The roster clerks in the Operations Department will be working flat out to ensure that enough Drivers, Firemen, Guards, Signalmen and Station Staff are on duty to ensure that all trains and stations operate safely while following social distancing guidelines.

We are therefore asking all our existing Bluebell Railway volunteers – from any department – plus you, our members with BN, BR, CR, RH, SN and TN postcodes, plus members of staff to put your names forward and play your part in making SteamLights a successful event for our visitors.

You will be based at Sheffield Park station and need to sign on for duty at 15:30 and off at 21:30 when there is a two train SteamLights service operating, and at 14:30 and 22:30 on dates when there are three.



Photo: North Norfolk Railway

Your duties will include working with the station staff and:

- ➔ welcoming visitors and directing them where to park their cars
- ➔ advising them where on the station their viewing area is located for a great view of the big switch-on of the train lights
- ➔ escorting visitors to their carriages and reserved compartments
- ➔ travelling on the train and experiencing SteamLights for yourself; and on arrival at Horsted Keynes:
- ➔ assisting the station staff there by helping to guide visitors around the platforms while they take photographs of the locomotive and carriages
- ➔ returning to Sheffield Park and assisting with the disembarkation of visitors
- ➔ helping with making the train ready for its next trip and repeat the process one more time when two trains operate and another two times when three trains are operating

- ➔ enjoying a complimentary hot meal washed down by unlimited hot drinks between trains

No previous experience of any of the above duties is necessary but you will need to be aged 18 or over. A detailed duty sheet will be sent to you once you have been rostered and a full briefing will also be given by the Sheffield Park Station Master when you sign on for duty.

We appreciate that while these will be fairly long turns of duty, there will be lots to keep you occupied because in addition to looking after our visitors, there will still be time to have a chat, laugh and joke with other volunteers. We are confident that you will enjoy yourself which, after all, is why our regular volunteers do so much to keep our Railway running. If we didn't enjoy ourselves, we wouldn't do it!

For our members who haven't volunteered before, we hope that you may wish to become a regular volunteer yourself, knowing that you have 'done your bit' for our Railway and its visitors while enjoying yourself in the process and being part of a winning team.

Dates when SteamLights train operate and when we need Stewards are:

November 13, 14, 15, 18*, 19*, 20 - 22, 25 - 29

December 2 - 6, 9 - 13, 16 - 23, 27*, 28*, 29*, 30*

January 2 - 5

* dates when three trains operate

Extra dates have been added for the Santa Specials. Trains will now run on Saturday 28 and Sunday 29 November in addition to the dates in December.

The Station Staff at Sheffield Park are genuinely looking forward to working with you during SteamLights and, hopefully, at further events in the future – or perhaps as a member of the station staff yourself.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

If you would like to help, please fill out a [SteamLights volunteering form on our website](#)

If you are an existing volunteer please add which department you currently work for e.g. Operations, Train Guides, C&W etc.

Diamond Anniversary Update

By Robert Hayward, chairman of the Diamond Anniversary Steering Group

We successfully “steamed through 60” on 7 August and I hope that you enjoyed the anniversary events. It wasn’t exactly how we had planned to celebrate but the closedown due to the Covid pandemic stopped what we wanted to do. As it happened, it became a hybrid event marking 60 years of operation virtually, with a huge amount of archive and specially produced material online, and because restrictions were lifted and the day coincided with the reopening, we also ran trains – which is what we all really wanted to do albeit with a grander event. And for the event it was possible to have live webcam video of the trains which I know many of our members and supporters still watch.

We were overwhelmed by the support of the media – both national and local TV and radio but also many well-known celebrity friends who sent us video messages of congratulations for which we were very grateful. It was a very memorable day and set a new standard to meet in the future.

Company chairman Chris Hunford announced that we would celebrate our Diamond Anniversary on 6-8 August 2021 – in reality it’ll be 61 years of operation but we’re referring to it as ‘60+1’ so as to remind ourselves of our milestone achievement. We have already started the planning, but we have

to have in mind that restrictions on what we are able to do may still apply – both Covid-related and financial.

We have a lot of ideas from what we had planned to do this year, but others are being developed which we can work on to make the best ones happen. Mostly though, over the next few months, we’re concentrating on activities where there is little or no expense – just expertise and planning.

The concept we’re still working on is to showcase to family and enthusiast visitors all the massive achievements of the Bluebell Railway since 1960 and in particular the work that goes on behind the scenes, particularly the craft skills and the way in which our employees and volunteers make the Railway what it is – more than just a ride on a train through the beautiful Sussex countryside.



Off the Rails

A transport-themed gala will take place over two weekends in the first organised event since reopening.

The gala will give people to explore the Bluebell Railway on and [off the rails](#).

Alongside the regular train service there will be displays at the stations of vintage vehicles including buses, cars, tractors, traction engines and much more. 'Off the Rails' takes place on Saturday 24 - Sunday 25 October and Saturday 31 October - Sunday 1 November.

Goods wagons will feature over the two weekends. A steam-hauled goods train will be in operation up and down the line on Saturday, and on Sunday there will be shunting displays with a selection of wagons at Horsted Keynes station.

News in Brief

BLUEBELL NEWS PRINTED COPIES

The Autumn issue of Bluebell News will be a printed edition and posted out to BRPS members.

In addition, the Spring and Summer issues – which had been digital-only and [available from the Railway's website](#) – will be printed along with the Autumn edition and mailed to members at the same time.

The decision to produce digital copies of the quarterly magazine was taken entirely due to the extenuating financial and logistical circumstances caused by the shutdown.

The Railway promised to resume the standard magazine format at the earliest opportunity and so all three issues will be sent out at the same time.

EMERGENCY APPEAL TOPS £400,000

The total raised from the Emergency Appeal has now reached more than £400,000.

The money is from direct contributions to the appeal and from the Virtual Track Trek held in June.



Flashback to the 2018 Vintage Bus Running Day showing Brighton, Hove & District No. 352, and preserved Stagecoach East Kent Volvo No. 389, at Sheffield Park. Photo: Steve Lee

We will also be running Half-Term Specials from Monday 26 – Friday 30 October with a special offer on ticket prices on [The Pioneer](#) service.



Bluebell Railway Trust funding governor Trevor Swainson said: "The initial target for the appeal was £300,000 and there were plenty of people who thought that was over-ambitious. What happened was that we reached £300,000 which allowed us to reopen and, by mid-September, we had received the magnificent sum of £400,000.

"This is a truly remarkable response from members, shareholders and friends of the Bluebell

Railway. The appeal remains open if anyone would like to make new or additional donations in the coming months.”

The Bluebell Railway Trust says money is still coming in from people who set up monthly standing orders and direct contributions can be made to the [Virgin Money Giving site](#).

VOLUNTEERING FILMS



The final two films about volunteering on the line have been completed and published.

The videos look at life on the station and being a train driver.

They were made in association with Forge Photography and most of the filming was carried out last year before the lockdown.

[Episode 4](#) examines the variety of roles for station staff and on-board volunteers. [Episode 5](#) looks at driving the engine and controlling the locomotive along the line.

All the previous episodes are available on the [Bluebell Railway's YouTube channel](#).

BESSEMER ARMS BACK IN BUSINESS

The Bessemer Arms has reopened for passengers and people with platform tickets.

To comply with Government guidelines the catering staff are providing table service and the seating area will be open only to guests dining from the menu. There will be no booking of tables.

Customers are allowed onto the platform before travelling to use the Bessemer Arms. Platform tickets are £4 for adults and £1.50 for children.

The venue will be open at weekends in October and throughout the half-term week including both weekends of the 'Off the Rails' event.

Opening hours are 9.30am to 4pm with breakfast from 9.30am to 11am and lunch 12pm to 2pm. On Saturdays the bar will be open from 6.30pm until 7.30pm for a drinks table service for 'The Blue Belle' customers only.

The Bessemer Arms will be open on the following dates: Saturday 10 October, Sunday 11 October, Saturday 17 October, Sunday 18 October, Saturday 24 October, Sunday 25 October, Monday 26 October, Tuesday 27 October, Wednesday 28 October, Thursday 29 October, Friday 30 October, Saturday 31 October, Sunday 1 November.

COVID CHECK-IN POSTERS

Posters have been produced and displayed around Sheffield Park and Horsted Keynes stations that work with the NHS Covid-19 app.

By scanning the Quick Read (QR) code on the poster, visitors can check in to the Bluebell Railway with details for the [NHS Test and Trace scheme](#).



Help Support Bluebell Railway at No Cost to Yourself

By Trevor Swainson, funding governor, Bluebell Railway Trust

For many years, we have received donations generated through EasyFundRaising ('EFR') and AmazonSmile ('Smile'). At one stage, particularly during the project to complete the line to East Grinstead, this proved to be very popular but in more recent years use of these sources of donations has declined as attention was diverted to the big appeals made in recent years.

The attraction of both EFR and Smile is that everyone can support the Railway without it costing them a single penny.

EASYFUNDRAISING

EFR is a simple system whereby, when you spend money doing online shopping with any of a large number of retailers, the Railway receives a small commission on such purchases. Some retailers are more generous than others and among the best are insurance-related purchases when renewing your household, motor and other policies. All that is required is that you register with EFR and then go via their website to make your purchases. You will pay the same prices as normal and you will be helping the Railway at no cost to you.

For more information, either check the [Bluebell website](#) or go directly to [EFR website](#).

AMAZONSMILE

AmazonSmile is a simple system just like EasyFundRaising except that the Railway receives a fixed percentage of 0.5% every time you spend money on Amazon. Not a massive amount by any means but if enough people sign up and use Smile, the Railway will benefit a lot.

All that is required is that you register with Smile and then remember to go via the Smile website whenever you make any qualifying purchases. The prices you will pay for any purchases are exactly the same as going via the main Amazon website.

For more information, either check the Bluebell website or go directly to the [Smile website](#).

OTHER WAYS TO DONATE

If you prefer to make a direct donation to The Bluebell Railway, you can still do this by using VirginMoneyGiving, or by cheque or by bank transfer.

Donations can be made to The Bluebell Railway Trust via [VirginMoneyGiving](#). This is a secure form of transaction that is very cost effective. It is set up to claim Gift Aid on your donation, subject to your approval.

The principal beneficiary has been the Emergency Appeal but donations can also be made to a number of other funds.

FIND OUT MORE

The Trust is still happy to receive donations by cheque or bank transfer.

In the case of donations by cheque, please send your cheque to the Trust plus, where applicable, a Gift Aid declaration.

In the case of donations by bank transfer, please instruct your bank to make payment of the donation to:

The Bluebell Railway Trust
Account no. 61059056
Sort code 60-10-26

Please advise us of your donation by completing the form on our website and, where applicable, your declaration to enable the Trust to claim Gift Aid on your donation. Please complete and return the declaration form by post to:

The Bluebell Railway Trust
Sheffield Park Station
East Sussex
TN22 3QL

If you require a receipt/acknowledgement, please let us know.

Five Minutes With ... Tony Hillman

Name

Tony Hillman

Role

Assistant Museum Curator and Treasurer. I also spend much time working in the Archive.

How long have you been involved with the Bluebell Railway?

About 35 years, I would think.

How did you first become involved?

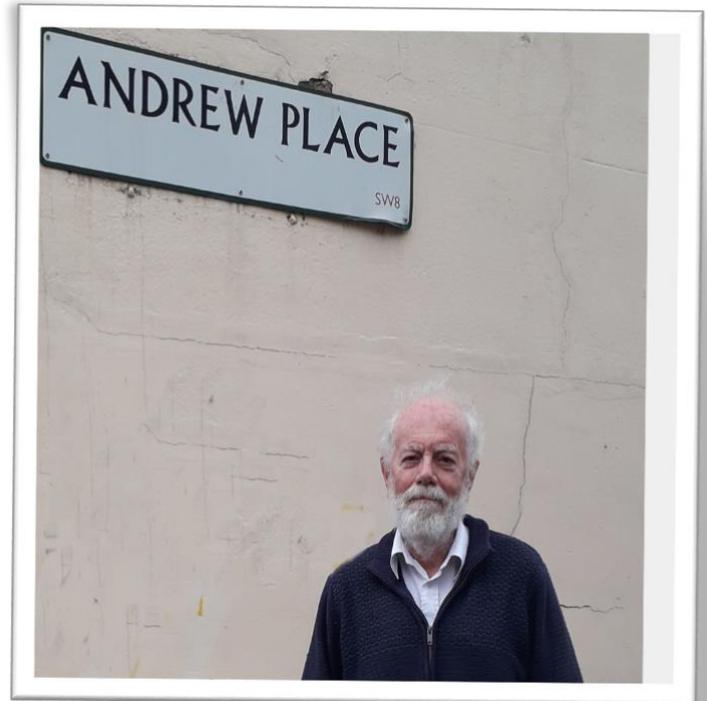
I was visiting Horsted and bought a LSWR Gradient Diagrams book from one of the stalls on the platform. After visiting Sheffield Park I returned to the stall at Horsted and asked the trader if he had any SR or LSWR material. He replied that he did have a LSWR Gradient Diagrams book but had sold it. This meeting, with Barry Jones, started a friendship which continues to this day and got me involved with the Carriage Shop for many years in its earliest days. Later Terry Cole asked me to join the Museum Management Committee.

What was your professional career?

I worked in various computing areas at the National Physical Laboratory (NPL). Initially I worked on the operating system software on the mainframe computers. NPL was at the forefront of networking which today we know as the internet and I led a team of programmers writing software to interface computers to the network. Nothing really changes much - we were building ISPs and the Cloud back in the 1980s.

What does your Bluebell Railway job involve?

Looking after the Museum accounts including emptying and banking the collecting boxes, liaising with the Trust over Museum funding support, trying to think of ways the Museum can raise funds to purchase enhancements, for example, by selling donated material for the Museum with my wife Sue on event days.



I also search Railwayana Auction Catalogues for items that might be of interest to the Museum and, if so, visit the auctions to try to buy them.

In the Archive I look after the master paperwork catalogue and the catalogue of photos for sale on the website. I also get the orders for photos processed and posted.

How often do you normally volunteer at the Railway?

Twice a week on average. Also, an hour or two a day at home.

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

Just the Museum and Archive.

Do you have a nickname? If so, what is it and how did it come about?

Tony 2 because museum curator Tony Drake is known as Tony 1. This sort of happened without me being involved.

What's the best part of your job?

Seeing the results of what the Museum team do in the Museum being appreciated by the visitors.

What's the worst part of your job?

The journey home taking three hours because of a problem with the M25.

What is your earliest train memory?

Standing with Mum on the overbridge just outside Wandsworth Road station watching the trains going by.

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

I did have a layout in the loft, but no more

What was the most frustrating aspect of not being able to visit the Railway during lockdown?

Nothing really. There was plenty I could do at home during lockdown.

What was the first thing you did when the Railway reopened?

Installed, in the Museum, the rolling displays I had been working on at home.

Did any of your family work for the Railways?

My great grandfather was a driver ending his career with the Southern Railway working trains between Waterloo and Bournemouth driving King Arthurs. His father was also a driver at Dorchester. My grandmother's family were one of the companies that provided cartage facilities for the LSWR at Nine Elms. Their name was Andrews and Andrew Place still exists off Wandsworth Road. The building that was the stables is still there used as a studio.

Anything else you want to tell us?

Since the early 1970s I have been collecting SR publicity and have well over 1,000 books, leaflets etc in my collection. Also, green totem and target signs, hang on our walls. Pretty much every station from Waterloo to Southampton and local London branches. Barry Jones and I run Railway Collectors' Fairs around the country.

**BLUEBELL BITES****LBSCR or Southern Railway**

SR or LSWR. (Sorry it's in the blood)

Railway hammer or auctioneer's hammer

Auctioneer's

Totem signs or totem poles

Signs.

Downton Abbey or The Railway Children

Can I admit to never watching Downton Abbey, so it's "Daddy, my Daddy!"

Tea or coffee

NPL was part of the Civil Service, so coffee in the morning and tea in the afternoon.

A Closer Look at ... *Sharpthorn*



Photo: Derek Hayward

We're taking a closer look at one of our locomotives which has a very special place in the history of the line.

Contractor's locomotive Sharpthorn was owned by Joseph Firbank, the contractor who built the Lewes and East Grinstead Railway, of which the Bluebell is a part. Sharpthorn was delivered to West Hoathly (just north of the tunnel) and was used throughout the construction of the line, taking its name (albeit mis-spelt) from the neighbouring village of Sharpthorne.

It was the property of Samuel Williams & Sons and used to shunt the company's coal dock at Dagenham until it was withdrawn from service. It was subsequently placed on loan to Bressingham

Steam Museum and came to the Bluebell in 1981 for the line's centenary celebrations in 1982, during which it took part in a locomotive cavalcade at Horsted Keynes. So here's everything you wanted to know about ... Sharpthorn.

SHARPTHORN IN FACTS AND FIGURES

Number	<i>4 (maker's number 641)</i>
Class	<i>K</i>
Wheel arrangement	<i>0-6-0ST</i>
Built	<i>1877, by Manning Wardle & Co., Leeds</i>
Cylinders	<i>Two, 12 ins diameter x 17ins stroke</i>
Boiler pressure	<i>120 psi (pounds per square inch)</i>
Tractive Effort	<i>6,600 lbf</i>
Length	<i>19 ft oins</i>
Weight	<i>19 tons</i>
Driving wheel diameter	<i>3 ft 1.5 ins</i>
Coal and water capacity	<i>ca. 1 ton coal, 450 gallons water</i>
Valve gear	<i>Manning-Wardle</i>

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. Additional information from the [Locomotives page](#) of the Bluebell Railway website.

A Day With 847

By Tom James, Locomotive Department
Photo by Martin Lawrence

Opening of the Bluebell's northern extension to East Grinstead allowed charter trains to reach the railway from the mainline for the first time since the early 1960s. One of the first such charters was the Cathedrals Express service on 2 October 2014, almost exactly six years ago. The editor was lucky enough to be the acting fireman on the Bluebell service run in connection with the charter, and wrote this account of the day, originally published in the Maunsell Locomotive Society Newsletter.



One of the joys of being in the loco department is the variety of turns on offer. While the weekend pattern is fairly fixed, midweek often throws up more varied turns that give useful experience for people like myself looking towards a firing test. Thus when a midweek turn of "feeder for incoming charter" was offered to rules-passed cleaners (having failed to be claimed by any firemen) I was quick to put my name forward. At that point I didn't know the duty, but it was obvious that it would involve a heavy load and a big engine, so would make a change from the diet of shunt turns that I seemed to have had all year. Just how big a load I wasn't to find out until the day! Even so, the thought of the booked seven coaches with steam heat led to a broken night's sleep, imagining all the possible ways in which the trip could go wrong on a high-profile day – especially as my sole experience on 847 amounted to two trips on a Saturday afternoon a few weeks before.

I signed on just before 7am to meet driver Tommy Dobson. The loco had only just returned from repairs to the regulator, so had been in light steam the day before and was still hot. Thus, steam was raised quickly – the first of the previous evening's nightmares about non-flammable wood and wet rags consigned to the dustbin – and at 10:15 we moved out into the station, took water and

coupled to five coaches in the Newick siding. Once the Autumn Tints service had departed we shunted to pick up our remaining two coaches in platform 1 and, with a decent back end by now well burnt through, set off for a non-stop run to Kingscote. Any worries about the load and my ability to make 847 steam soon disappeared: the loco settled down to about 185psi where it sat all the way up Freshfield Bank. A couple of rounds about a third of the way down the box, where the rear axle runs under the ashpan, kept the fire nicely hot and we rolled through Horsted under clear signals with the water well up and all going well. I knew we had an hour to wait at Kingscote, so was careful not to over-fire on the way up to the tunnel, with the result we arrived with about 165psi and the water at about 2/3 of a glass. Round one to the cleaner!

The incoming charter arrived on time at 12:30, hauled by West Country 34046 "Braunton", and while the passengers moved from the charter to the Bluebell train, Braunton and support coach shunted to the south end of our train – we of course stayed on the back. At 12:50 we set off south, with little to do except keep an eye on the water levels, maintain an even fire across the grate and pick up the tokens as required. At Sheffield Park, Braunton and its support detached for

servicing. We then ran a full trip to East Grinstead and back for the charter passengers. By now the previous evening's worries were starting to fade, and we had an enjoyable trip: no record breaking, but no worries either. Despite the long firebox (well, long relative to a P class!) and – by Bluebell standards – big load, 847 proved to be a superb engine: she steamed well, but controllably. The safety valves would start to feather at about 190psi and be blowing off by about 195psi, so I found keeping her between 180 and 190 led to a stress-free journey!

Once back at Sheffield Park, we ran round and took water, while *Braunton* and support coach coupled on the back. I built the fire up in the usual way and looked behind for the "right away". Then, with about three minutes to our scheduled departure, Operations Manager Chris Knibbs climbed onto the footplate. "The crew on *Braunton* don't have a booked water stop on the way back (to Alresford). So they want to save water and they won't be doing anything at all before East Croydon." Underneath the soot, no doubt the colour drained a little from my cheeks. The guard walked up to give the load: "It's 8 for 281tons, plus a West Country", as if we had forgotten! With the West Country dead and over 400 passengers on board, that gave a load of about 420 tons tare, probably around 450 tons gross. Ahead lay nine miles mostly climbing at 1 in 75, a suddenly very unconfident cleaner on the shovel and umpteen lineside photographers ready to capture the full gory spectacle ...

"Well, let's see how this goes," I said, with a bit of false confidence. "You'll be alright mate," replied Knibbsy, as the guard gave the right away. We eased out of the station very gently, but once properly on the move, the driver opened up a bit, and magically the fire responded to the extra draft! As we approached the temporary speed restriction on Freshfield Bank, the pressure was pushing past 190psi and I put the injector on to stop her blowing off; with a long train, it seemed to take an age to clear the speed restriction before the driver opened up again. I knocked the injector off until we approached Town Place Bridge, then let it run to Tremains Crossing. The run up to Horsted went in similar fashion, with the boiler

maintaining pressure against the injector. Even so I was amazed when we stopped at Horsted to find the pressure was at 180psi and the water was within an inch of the top of the glass. Even with 450 tons on the drawbar, it seemed 847 had hardly broken a sweat!

The down Autumn Tints service was late arriving by several minutes, so we left late with the loco by now blowing off hard and the boiler full. For some reason, we were diverted out via the loop, so it was another slow start (there is a 5mph restriction over the platform 3 to loop crossover) but past Leamland Bridge, the driver really opened up – at least judging by the sound! Yet I was struck by how little I seemed to fire: a few shovelfuls down the front, then a couple in each back corner, three or four down each side and keeping the section over the rear axle from burning through seemed to be about it. By the entrance to the tunnel the noise was echoing loudly off the cutting sides, but the pressure was still holding up above 180psi. In the tunnel the loco slipped for the only time all day and the driver shut the regulator and then opened again to first valve so we made a slightly pedestrian exit – until then, cut off had been 45% and the regulator no more than ¾ open on the banks, despite the load. With the injector on, we emerged from the tunnel at about 165psi, just below half a glass of water and a thin fire across the grate. I took a drink of water from my can and for probably the first time looked across at Knibbsy and Tommy Dobson, who were both grinning from ear to ear. "Oh yes," said Tommy (and some other less polite, but generally approving, words!) "That was [...] excellent!"

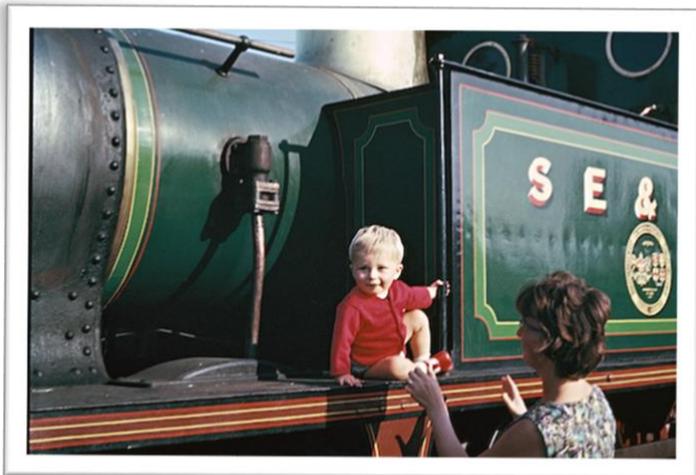
The empty coaching stock trip back was almost an anti-climax. With no desire to shovel out a load of fire, I kept things to a minimum, and we seemed to drift along at about 165psi. Once on shed and the boiler filled, the pressure was below 100psi and the fire starting to go out. "It doesn't get better than that," said Tommy, as he climbed down from the engine for the last time. Behind us 847 hissed and gurgled and dozed and, if engines have minds, no doubt dreamed of her youth when hauling similar loads up Honiton Bank would have been part and parcel of daily life. For one day, we got to relive those times!

Down Memory Line

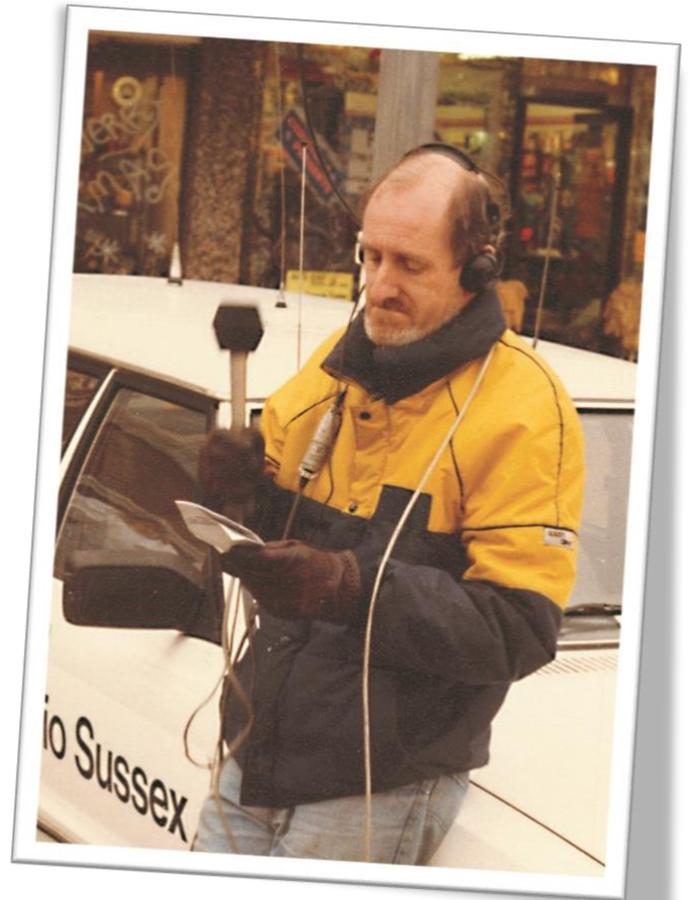
Words and photos by Chris English, BRPS member and radio presenter

As a child whose daily trips to school between Shoreham and Steyning were always behind a steam loco, and our house overlooked both the airport and the same line, it was perhaps inevitable that I would grow up with something of an unconscious love of railways and, in particular, steam. While that was somewhat dormant during my early career, it was further fostered when I joined British Rail in the 1950s as an electrician, a job which although entailed working in filthy loco sheds, I did find time to sneak onto various footplates for illicit trips around the yards.

Then came marriage and a family and sometime in 1967 a trip with a very young son to the fledgling Bluebell Railway where no time was lost in introducing that child, who is now 55, to what I now believe to have been No. 27 somewhere in the yard at Sheffield Park. And so the lure of that smell of hot metal, steam, oil and coal was rekindled and while I never became an active volunteer, both I and that young child were to be forever hooked by all things Bluebell and, of course, steam.



Not long after this visit something started that was to lead to a dramatic change in my life – for that something was the establishment of the first BBC local radio station in my hometown of Brighton. While I wasn't involved in the very early days, I was very soon deeply involved with the dark art of



broadcasting as not only the presenter of my own live 'Seasports' boating programme (which is another childhood obsession that my wife puts up with) but countless other topics including, perhaps inevitably, an occasional series called 'Motive Power' which needless to say involved all forms of traction, especially that which was steam powered - and, of course, the Bluebell Railway.

My dual obsessions of broadcasting and steam very often meant visits to Sheffield Park to interview various railway personalities such as Bernard Holden and Keith Sturt who kindly always found time to allow me to record both complete 15-minute programmes as well as shorter items. In addition there was coverage of various locomotive cavalcades and, on one occasion, the loading of the BBC's outside broadcast unit onto a low loading machinery wagon for a trip down the line, complete with elevated aerial mast - and all live on air. Sadly this all came to an end when the BBC combined what was then BBC Radio Sussex with a sister station in Surrey, closed the studios in Brighton and moved to Guildford, a move that was the death knell of truly local BBC radio.

Meanwhile, although my “day job” with the electricity board had become increasingly demanding, I made sure that I was still able to do my bit for the Bluebell by arranging for an overhead power supply to the water tower at Sheffield Park and the relocation of the original rope-powered overhead crane from Brighton’s North Road power station to the then new workshops at SP.

Following my retirement, and to celebrate both my 65th birthday and our 40th wedding anniversary, I was delighted to be able to be able to charter both the GN Saloon and No. 65 for a day-long series of trips with family and friends up and down the line.

In addition to being able to continue to indulge my boating hobby, a then very young man who was then in residence at the Station House at Isfield, otherwise known as (operations manager) Chris Knibbs, was instrumental in inspiring me to discover a dormant love of miniature steam by inviting me to visit a private railway that had been built by his inspirational school teacher. Some time later I was pleased to be able to help Chris facilitate the filming of the ITV production of ‘The Railway Children’ and we, together with other Bluebell characters, even fleetingly feature in the final film.

In recent times I have been able to further indulge my love of the airwaves and am now once again to be found behind the microphone, this time on Brighton’s Radio Reverb. It is perhaps unsurprising that the Bluebell once again features strongly with both interviews with Network Rail boss Peter Hendy during the Flying Scotsman visit, a progress report on Beachy Head and recent pieces with communications director Paul Bromley – and, of course, most recently my trip on the ‘The Pioneer’ on Reopening Day with my great granddaughter. She is 18 months old and it was her first trip on any train.

Photos, top to bottom:

65th birthday and 40th wedding anniversary trip behind No. 65

With Chris Knibbs during the filming of ‘The Railway Children’

Granddaughter and great-granddaughter on the railway’s re-opening day, 7 August 2020.



Spreading the Word

By David Jones

As well as the modern ways of promoting the Bluebell Railway through social media and websites, more traditional methods include the use of volunteer speakers who give illustrated presentations to a variety of organisations. At the present time these are on 'hold' due to coronavirus as many venues used by these groups have been closed and we await re-scheduling of such events. In normal times, however, the Bluebell has a pool of speakers scattered throughout the South East who can be called upon to give talks about the Railway.

When a group such as a Model Railway Club, Historical Society, Rotary Club, U3A or Women's Institute contacts the Sheffield Park office, the request is passed to Mike Pettit as co-ordinator and he sends out an email to all those speakers on his list and awaits a response. Usually someone will offer to do the talk within days, but occasionally there could be a delay if the location of the group is a long way from any speaker. This is not too bad for an afternoon talk, but evening talks involving a long journey afterwards could mean a late arrival home.

Most speakers nowadays use PowerPoint presentations and provide their own digital projector and laptop as this can guarantee that they work together. In the past, one was able to borrow the Bluebell's digital projector, but as prices of these units tumbled it was more convenient to purchase one's own as sometimes the one at Sheffield Park had already been booked. Not many speakers use slides these days, although I still have my set available if required. Digital images are so much brighter, especially in a non-darkened room, and can be updated to the latest scenes rather than wait until a picture is processed as in the case of photographic slides. Speakers have their own sequence of images, and in my case I explain the history of the Bluebell and how the expansion has progressed over the years. This is followed by an explanation about the locomotive fleet and how it evolved from one engine to the current fleet, then an outline of the

carriages and special events. A separate section covers the 'Golden Arrow' Pullman train as over the years I have found that many societies have either been or are contemplating organising a group visit to go on this train or the Wealden Rambler. There have been suggestions that speakers be given discount vouchers to hand out to groups to encourage booking these trains but these have not yet materialised.

Speakers often receive requests for talks direct from organisations such as Care Homes, Family Roots and Church Fellowship Groups, and this is usually because a member of such groups has been in the audience of a nearby presentation and suggests it as a suitable talk for their own organisation. There does seem to be a general shortage of speakers these days. Mike Pettit is usually informed of these 'direct' talks so that he can include them in his annual review. Over the years, I find that organisations sometimes ask if I can speak on other subjects associated with railways, so I have put together additional presentations such as 'Pullmans in Preservation', 'The Night Ferry', 'Brighton Atlantic Project', 'Maunsell Locomotive Society', 'Thomas Brassey – Railway Builder', 'Bringing back the Brighton Belle' and 'Filming on the Bluebell Railway', the latter being very popular with non-railway groups as many in the audience have seen 'Poirot', 'Downton Abbey', 'Christopher Robin' and 'Muppets Most Wanted'!

If any programme secretary of an organisation would like a Bluebell Railway talk they should contact Customer Services at Sheffield Park with details of the group, venue and convenient date so that it can be passed on to Mike Pettit who will process the request. It is accepted that dates can sometimes be many months away as programme secretaries have to plan a long way ahead.

Just the Ticket Reprinted

Readers may recall that we ran a series of articles in *The Bluebell Times* about the printing of Edmondson tickets using the former British Railways printing press in our print room at Sheffield Park.

The series was published in three parts in issues 3-5 and was compiled by museum steward Malcolm Johnson with help from printing co-ordinator Gerry Brown.

Peter Salisbury, a volunteer who also helps in the print room, suggested the story of the Edmondson tickets would make a nice feature in the magazine of the British Printing Society. Peter is the society's secretary and its membership secretary is Chris Green who also helps with the printing and is a volunteer at Horsted Keynes.

The series of articles were collated into one story and were published in the July edition of the British Printing Society's magazine 'Small Printer'. The magazine credited *The Bluebell Times* for first printing the articles.

A photo by Peter Edwards of Camelot No. 73082 was used on the front cover.

The limited edition 60th anniversary souvenir Edmondson tickets produced by the museum team (as featured in issue 9 of *The Bluebell Times*) are selling well. So far more than 200 tickets have



been sold resulting in more than £1,000 for the Emergency Appeal.

These special mementos of the Bluebell Railway are available through the [Bluebell Railway Shop](#).



Museum Morsel - Tavern Car Lamp

By Tony Drake, museum curator

Whilst reviewing the Museum collection of items in one of our stores, I came across a Tavern Car lamp in a rather sorry state. It would appear that the lamp might have been used at one time in a porch or outside location. The label indicated that it was kindly donated by Mr D Cox and that it was thought to be the only one surviving. It seemed to be worthwhile to restore it and put it on display.

Oliver Bulleid had an idea to create a tavern. Between 1949 and 1951, Bulleid took the standard buffet/refreshment car and gutted the whole interior. He then furnished the entire carriage in a style similar to that of a typical English country tavern. It is believed that he modelled his 'tavern' on The Chequers Inn at Pulborough, West Sussex.

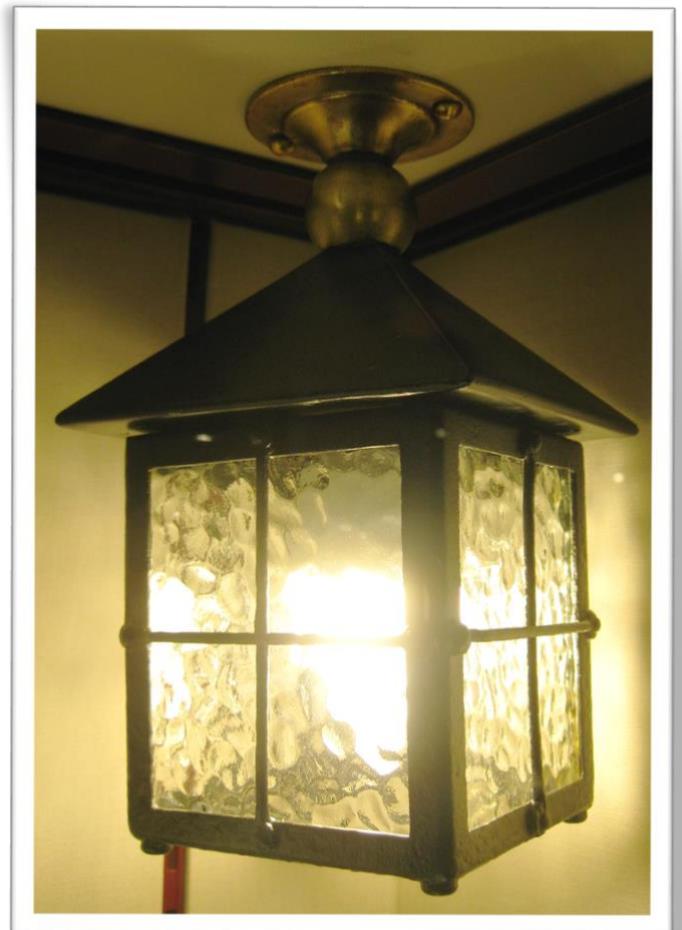
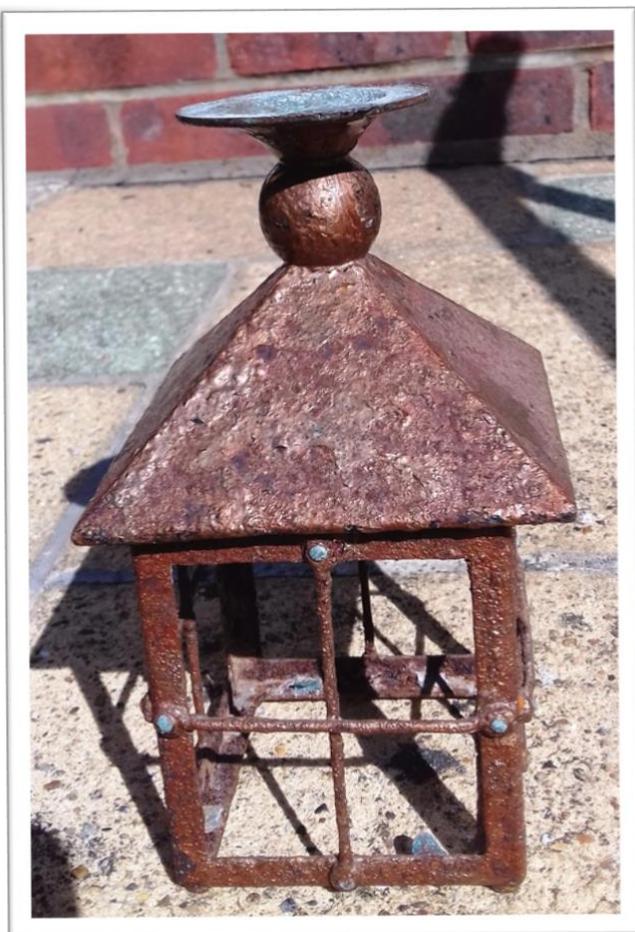
Internally, the 'tavern' compartment consisted of a low ceiling with the addition of fake oak beams. Settles and benches abutted onto panelled or

rough-rendered walls. Long narrow leaded windows were set high up in the carriage sides and illumination came from miniatures of the carriage lamp type.

The restored lamp is now resplendent in the Museum in the display case showing crockery, glassware and silverware used in railway catering.

For more information, see an article 'New Restaurant-Buffer Car Sets for British Railways' in The Railway Magazine, September and October 1949.

Before (left) and after restoration views of the lamp



On This Day, 9 October

By Tony Hillman, assistant museum curator

Two pictures from the Bluebell Photographic Archive taken on 9 October. Thanks to John Sharp, Martin Elms, John Creed and Roger Merry-Price for finding the pictures and providing the notes.



SR U Class 2-6-0 No. 31634, on 9 October 1959, passing Queens Road (now Queenstown Road) Battersea en route from Stewarts Lane to Nine Elms goods yard with an exhibit destined for the Clapham Transport Museum. The exhibit is the West Coast Joint Stock (LNWR/CR) 42' radial Postal Sorting Van. Originally numbered 186 it was renumbered by the LMS as 3234 and subsequently 30384. It was built at Wolverton in 1885 and withdrawn from service in 1934. Clapham Transport Museum opened in 1960 but nine years later the government decided it should be closed and a new museum created at York which became the National Railway Museum. No. 186 is now an exhibit there. Maunsell Mogul No. 31634 lasted until December 1963.

Photo: John J Smith

The splendid array of Down Home semaphore signals at the east end of Lewes station platforms, on 9 October 1961, in fact conveys a very simple message. It consists of four identical sets of three arms. Take for instance the largest set, just above the locomotive: the highest arm is on the right, for the principal route towards Eastbourne and Hastings. To its left is a slightly lower arm, for the secondary route towards Tunbridge Wells and London. In between, and lower still, is a smaller arm with a stencil letter "S" superimposed. This allows a train to shunt past the signal, in either direction, but only as far as is necessary for station purposes. These same destinations apply to all four groups of signals. From the left these are for the Down London Loop and Down Main, both behind the loco, the Down Brighton Loop nearest the camera, and the Down Brighton, framed under the water crane.

The freight train hauled by Q Class 0-6-0 30533, at the time allocated to Brighton, is heading towards London from the Hastings direction. The caption merely records the location as Lewes. It has not been possible to positively identify the train which probably came from Newhaven.

Photo: Alan Postlethwaite



Guess the Year



This photo marks a significant milestone in the history of the Bluebell Railway.

- ➔ What occasion is captured in this photo?
- ➔ Which was the year?
- ➔ Which locomotive came to the Bluebell on loan from the National Railway Museum in the same year?
- ➔ When did that loaned locomotive leave the Bluebell Railway? Answers in the next issue.

Information from [Bluebell Railway Sixty Years of Progress](#) by Colin Tyson, available from the Bluebell Railway's online shop

ANSWERS TO QUIZ IN ISSUE 12

We showed you this picture of Fenchurch and No. 541 double-heading a train north in the last issue.

The answers were:

- ➔ The celebrations were for the 25th anniversary
- ➔ The year was 1985
- ➔ Marjorie Bessemer, the saviour of the line, died in the same year aged 87
- ➔ The former Lingfield station footbridge was put in place at Sheffield Park in the same year.



Information from [Bluebell Railway Sixty Years of Progress](#) by Colin Tyson, available from the Bluebell Railway's online shop.

Word Search

We've another word search puzzle for you. This time all the words relate to our forthcoming 'Off the Rails' event which takes place on the two weekends 24– 25 October and 31 October – 1 November. The event includes displays at the stations of vintage vehicles including buses, cars, tractors, traction engines and much more.

Goods wagons will feature over the two weekends. A steam-hauled goods train will be in operation up and down the line on Saturday. And on Sunday there will be shunting displays with a selection of wagons at Horsted Keynes. [Full details of the train timetables and displays](#) are on the Railway's website.

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.

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

OFF
 THE
 RAILS
 VINTAGE
 BUSES
 CARS
 TRACTORS
 TRACTION
 ENGINES
 GOODS
 WAGONS

SOLUTION TO WORD SEARCH IN ISSUE 12

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

- ➡ Steam
- ➡ Lights
- ➡ Santa
- ➡ Specials
- ➡ The
- ➡ Pioneer
- ➡ Rocket
- ➡ Cream
- ➡ Tea
- ➡ Riviera
- ➡ Blue
- ➡ Belle

Just for Kids

Organisers of the Stepney Club have produced a digital version of their magazine 'Footplate'.

The [latest issue](#) is now available to view online along with several previous editions.

In this issue of The Bluebell Times, we feature a word puzzle from the recent edition of 'Footplate', along with a story about the day one of our locomotives joined some children for a fashion shoot.

There's more information about activities for children including how to join the Stepney Club (three- to eight-year-olds) and gF club (ages nine and over) on a [special section of the Bluebell Railway website](#).

PICTURE THE WORD

To complete each of these words, just look at the picture clue for each word and write the name of that picture in the box.



1.

L	I		
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2.

	L	I	
--	---	---	--



3.

				L	I		
--	--	--	--	---	---	--	--



4.

L	I		
---	---	--	--



5.

L	I		
---	---	--	--



6.

L	I			
---	---	--	--	--

7.

	L	I		
--	---	---	--	--



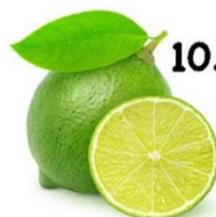
8.

L	I		
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9.

L	I		
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10.

L	I		
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A VERY FASHIONABLE ENGINE

The O1 was very excited. She had been told that she was to be doing some filming work at Horsted Keynes, and she imagined herself as the famous Green Dragon in *The Railway Children*, steaming past the station with the children waving to her over the fence with hankies. “You’re going to be in a fashion shoot” Mr Knibbs the controller told her, “Taking photos of children’s clothes around the station.”

Well, that wasn’t quite what the O1 had in mind! She didn’t really consider herself to be very fashionable, as she is 110 years old, but she had never done anything like this before, so she was looking forward to her day.

She steamed up to Horsted Keynes without a train, and arrived early in the morning. At that time of day, Horsted Keynes would normally be a very quiet country railway station, with only a few staff about and one or two passengers. Instead, it was a very busy station.

There were a lot of people about, cameras and equipment everywhere, suitcases being built up into a pile, and plants and hanging baskets ready to be put out around the platform.

The train was already in the platform, and she coupled on to it and went to wait for her instructions. The Director, who was in charge of the fashion shoot, came along and asked her to pose beside a huge pile of old trunks and suitcases, with lots of plants arranged around it.

A little boy in the new clothes for the fashion photos came out from the station to stand by the suitcase pile, and the Director asked the O1 for some steam from her draincocks, to make the photos look steamy.

However, as soon as she did that, the little boy ran away and hid behind a bench. The Director had to go and find a little girl in a smart dress and coat, who wasn't afraid of steam engines!

After that, the O1 had to go out of the station whilst the fashion crew set up a scene on Platform 2 with all the children who were there for the photos, more luggage, and some old fashioned toys. It took a long time, and the O1's crew had plenty of time for drinking tea and washing the footplate. When they were ready, the O1 was asked to come into the platform with her train, making a lot of noise, steam and smoke. She set off and did that, chuffing noisily, smoking from her chimney and letting steam out of her draincocks all the way.

"Was that alright?" she asked, when she had stopped.

"No" said the director, "The children didn't like it. Can you come into the station again, but slowly and quietly, without steam or smoke?"

The O1 sighed. She set off again when she was told to, this time quietly and with no steam and smoke.

"No, stop!" shouted the Director. "We've changed our minds – we're not ready yet."

When they were ready, she was told to come in gently and stop under the canopy, so she set off slowly, and rolled gently into the platform to

stop beautifully under the canopy.

“No, stop!” shouted the Director, “We’ve changed our minds – we want you to stop here instead!”

“I don’t think he realises” said the O1’s driver, “That it’s not easy to stop a hundred tons of train in a moment.”

Whilst all the children were having their photos taken in the train, the shunter came up and explained to the O1 and her crew what they would have to do to put the two trains in the station in the right place for the next day. He gave them their instructions, and the O1 felt much happier. Now she knew exactly what she had to do, where to put everything and where to stop, and she knew that the shunter wouldn’t suddenly change his mind.

At the end of a long day, with all the photos taken and the trains in the right place, the O1 trundled home to Sheffield Park. It was very peaceful as she steamed through Lindfield Wood with the sun low among the trees.

“I’m not sure that I like being fashionable” she said. “There seems to be far too much mind changing involved – I think I’ll stick to shunting and pulling trains.”

And her driver and fireman both nodded in agreement.





Museum Website Help

We are currently expanding the Bluebell Railway Museum website and are seeking a volunteer to assist with the work.

Among the areas we wish to develop further are sales from our photographic and document archive and harmonisation with other Bluebell Railway websites.

You would need to have website development experience with knowledge and skills in the following:

- ➔ HTML, CSS
- ➔ JavaScript
- ➔ PHP
- ➔ UX
- ➔ MySQL
- ➔ Online sales
- ➔ CSS Responsive frameworks (Bootstrap)

It will involve remote working as part of the museum group as well as at Sheffield Park when coronavirus allows.

We are a small experienced and enthusiastic team.

If you are interested please contact assistant museum curator Tony Hillman tony.hillman@lineone.net

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.

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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The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway Members, Staff and Supporters

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