



No. 65 approaches Medhurst Farm, July 2017 Photo: Derek Hayward

The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway Members, Staff and Supporters

January 2022

IN THIS ISSUE

In recent years, the concept of 'Blue Monday' has become a favoured story of news editors, supposedly a Monday in January that is the most depressing day of the year. Short hours of daylight, dreary damp weather and – this year at least – the continuing spread of the Omicron variant, are not calculated to cheer the soul. Yet nothing could be further from the truth here, for we have two wonderful stories on which to lead this January.

Firstly, the unique ex-South Eastern Railway locomotive No. 65 has had its long-term future on the Railway secured after acquisition by the Bluebell Railway Trust – see page 4. The locomotive has been a stalwart performer on the line since arriving about 25 years ago.

Secondly, the Jewel in the Crown appeal has reached its initial target of raising £500,000 towards the restoration of Horsted Keynes – see page 5. This will allow the project team to start the work on the restoration itself, starting with the station house and platform 5.

Those are two highlights of what has been a busy month – far from facing a "slow news day" when this issue was put together, as editor it was more a case of what to leave out. At Horsted Keynes, the Bluebell Railway Goods Division – looking after our historic wagon fleet – has been making great progress on their projects, and the infrastructure team have commenced relaying another section of track between Sheffield Park and Horsted Keynes, part of a long programme of such work which is transforming the ride quality on the line. I'll try to include an update on both areas in February – by which time, public service trains will have resumed, including – for the first time in a couple of years – our Pullman dining trains.

Welcome to 2022!

Tom James, Editor

<i>From Mee to You</i>	2
<i>Bluebell Railway Trust Acquires No. 65</i>	4
<i>Jewel in the Crown Appeal Update</i>	5
<i>Events Diary for 2022</i>	7
<i>Golden Arrow Dining Trains Return</i>	10
<i>Volunteer Workshops</i>	11
<i>Volunteer Review Update</i>	12
<i>IT Director Appointed</i>	13
<i>News in Brief</i>	14
<i>Commercial Report for 2021</i> ..	16
<i>Loco Workshop Progress</i>	18
<i>OP4 Emerges Like a Flower in Springtime</i>	20
<i>Archive on the Move</i>	22
<i>On This Day ... 14 January</i>	24
<i>Tail Lamp</i>	27

From Mee to You

By Geoff Mee, chairman, Bluebell Railway Plc

A very Happy New Year to you all. I hope that it will be a healthy and prosperous year for the Railway and for all who work so hard to make it a success.

And what a success we had as the end of last year provided one of the most successful Christmas programmes that we have hosted. I firstly want to thank all of the teams that made that success happen. The organisation worked like clockwork and our guests were very appreciative of the experience that they had, both for Santa and SteamLights. I was fortunate enough to witness first hand as a customer and volunteer how well the events went and the enthusiasm and good humour shown by all really proved what the Bluebell is capable of delivering. We have developed a great reputation for putting on spectacular events and that encourages more people to come and try us out.

We sold every seat on every train, Santa, SteamLights and all the catering services. A special thank you to the commercial team for managing the task so well, despite the pandemic meaning that some customers had to cancel. The team were able to resell all the returns - very well done.

The Railway had two very special Christmas presents this year, which I am really pleased and excited about.

Firstly, the success of the Jewel in the Crown Appeal which met its initial target and means that we can start the work on the ground in earnest this Spring. Thank you to all who contributed to the terrific funding of this important project.

A big personal "thank you" to appeal co-ordinator Trevor Swainson and the team that made it happen in what is a relatively short timescale.

A second present was securing the future of a very special locomotive: our unique No. 65, an O1 type loco built in 1896 for the SER. Paul Russell, our locomotive engineering director, supported by

Trust chairman Vernon Blackburn, Society chairman Paul Churchman and myself were able to arrange the purchase of the loco from the then owners. So thanks to Paul Russell for his quick action to secure this valued loco for the Bluebell collection.

As you read this, we still have some restrictions due to Covid and I hope that some of these restrictions will be eased in the coming weeks and we will be monitoring the situation closely as it may impact on some of our planned activities and meetings in order to limit the spread of the virus.

I had hoped to have our January board meeting in the newly completed Heritage Skills Centre at Horsted Keynes but have had to take the view that getting all of our directors in one room for an extended meeting was too much of a risk so we will have the board meeting virtually this month and then prepare for a big launch of the new facilities as soon as possible.

This month the board will be looking at our priorities for capital projects. Thanks to some great work by Society Trustee Roger Kelly, the board directors and the Preservation Society and Trust, we at last have a comprehensive list of all the projects that are on our wish list. Inevitably the list is longer than we have the funds to complete at present so we are going to have to prioritise our investment to meet safety and business requirements. This process will also inform the way that we shape our business plan which will be developed alongside our Vision Document and Mission Statements which we will need to support the business but also to support any bids, planning applications and awards that we might enter in the future.

At the board meeting we will also be looking at proposals for East Grinstead station development led by senior station master Roy Watts and his project team and getting an update on the Western Extension Project from Graham Flight who is leading this project.

Commercial and marketing director Paul Lelew and the commercial team will also be outlining the plan for our core service and events for 2022 including how we are going to tap into a greater proportion of the London market via East Grinstead. I am pleased that this week we have relaunched the Golden Arrow dining trains on the website and tickets are already on sale for February and shortly for the rest of the year. Also launched this week is the '[Kids for a Quid](#)' promotion for the February half-term break.

Those of you who regularly navigate the Bluebell website will notice that there are [a number of vacancies](#) being advertised for additional staff for specialist staff for C&W restoration work and for the catering team. Please help to spread the word. There are exciting things going on to build our capability and make us a more attractive destination for visitors.

The whole future of the Bluebell is linked to all of us as volunteers attracting more members and more volunteers. I am really impressed that Graham Aitken as our volunteer co-ordinator is managing to get more people coming forward to help and we are having some real success but more people are needed as we continue to grow. We will also be asking for more people to help with events planning and preparation. We get lots of help for Christmas and it's really well planned but we need more for our big events and regular service throughout the year.



When we think about how we attract volunteers, we have to start young and the Stepney and 9F clubs are a great introduction to the Bluebell. It was great to see the 9F elves out in force with Santa. The picture above epitomises the Bluebell Christmas spirit: Charlotte, a five-year-old Stepney Club member, was so pleased to meet the REAL Santa and Ewan from the elf team made up from 9F Club members. It made the day special and adds to the overall experience. Feedback from our visitors was excellent and Horsted Keynes station was alive with carousels, mulled wine and roast chestnuts. I am looking forward to more events at Horsted Keynes as it goes through its renaissance. We have some great plans for the place so watch this space.

Again, many thanks to our staff, volunteers and supporters for a great 2021. Let's look forward to a great 2022.

JOB VACANCIES

As mentioned above, the Bluebell Railway currently has a number of vacancies, as follows:

- ➔ Events Co-ordinator
- ➔ Pullman Car Restoration Fitter
- ➔ On-Train Supervisor
- ➔ Caretaker – Horsted Keynes Station
- ➔ Catering Supervisor
- ➔ Chef de Partie
- ➔ Casual Catering Staff

Further details about all roles, including how to apply, can be found on the [Bluebell Railway website](#).

Bluebell Railway Trust Acquires No. 65

By Vernon Blackburn, Chairman, Bluebell Railway Trust Photo by David Cable



O1 Class No. 65, built in 1896, is the last surviving South Eastern Railway locomotive, rebuilt by the SECR in 1908. It has been owned by the Lewis-Evans family since it was bought from British Railways in 1963. After a chequered early history in preservation, it was brought to the Bluebell in 1997, although continued to be owned by the same family.

At the end of last year, we were advised that the family wanted to sell the locomotive. Although the Bluebell Railway was the family's preferred buyer, there were several other potential purchasers who would have been very keen to acquire it.

We are pleased to announce that The Bluebell Railway Trust, the charity that supports the Railway, has been able to buy the O1 and to secure it for the Railway. The Trust now owns three SECR locomotives - the C class

No. 592, the H class No. 263 and now the O1 class No. 65. Each of these locomotives is ideal for our operations and, when coupled with our stock of vintage carriages, they present a wonderful sight not only for our visitors, but they are also in high demand for filming.

The precise details and terms of the purchase have to remain confidential and therefore we can only reveal that the amount paid was substantial and reflects the historic nature of the engine and its value to the Railway.

A detailed article about the very interesting history of the O1 together with information on how people can contribute to the cost of the locomotive will appear in the February edition of *The Bluebell Times*.

Jewel in the Crown Appeal Update

By Trevor Swainson, Jewel in the Crown Appeal Co-ordinator

To quote Del Boy in Only Fools and Horses, 'We only gone & done it'.

WE'VE HIT THE TARGET

As a result of the truly magnificent response from members, shareholders, staff and friends of the Railway, not only have we reached the initial target of £500,000 of donations, etc. but, even better, the total on 11 January now stands at over £528,000. This excludes Gift Aid of approximately £31,500 that will be recovered eventually from HMRC.

Donations are still coming in so, if you can help, it is not too late to send a donation. See below for details of how to donate.

A FURTHER £20,000 OF MATCHED FUNDING FROM THE TRUST

It sounds almost negative but we have reached the matched funding limit of £150,000 from the

Bluebell Railway Trust. As a result, any additional donations would not qualify for matched funding.

However, in recognition that donations are still coming in, the Trust has generously agreed to increase its matched funding by another £20,000 taking its contribution to £170,000.

THANK YOU EVERYONE!

It is quite a surreal and humbling experience to have raised so much money. Many thought that we were being over-ambitious in setting a target of £500,000 so soon after last year's life-saving Emergency Appeal. However, the support that is always forthcoming for such appeals continues unabated, despite the impact of the dreaded COVID.

Therefore, thank you once again for your support and generosity.



Horsted Keynes in 1912. Photo Bluebell Railway Museum Archive

SO, IS THAT IT?

There is no fixed end-date for the Appeal and the extension of the Trust's matched funding means that we are pleased to continue accepting new donations.

Remember, every penny raised will be used only in the restoration of our 'Jewel in The Crown'.

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

So now, it is over to infrastructure director Barry Luck, project manager Melissa Jordan and the infrastructure team to translate our financial success into the real work of restoring Horsted Keynes to its former glory. There is much planning going on at the moment but the actual physical work will commence in the early spring once (hopefully) the bad winter weather is behind us. Please don't mention the snow that greeted the East Grinstead opening in March a few years ago!

The first area of work will be the Station House and Platform 5 and then moving across to Platforms 3 & 4 and Platforms 1 & 2.

Whilst we have a broad view of the work to be undertaken based on Jim Hatfield's survey, nonetheless, we do not know what lies beneath and out of sight. This may lead to a few surprises but, as we have demonstrated over and over again in the past, the infrastructure team will no doubt rise to the occasion.

... AND THE NEXT APPEAL

Well, after two major appeals in the last 18 months, our donors will no doubt be relieved to know that there are no new appeals planned for the time being. That is not to say that we have run out of worthwhile projects to raise money for – that will never happen! – but, hey guys, you deserve a break.

THANKS TO EVERYONE ONE WHO HAS HELPED

There have been far more people than you might imagine who have helped to set up, run and administer the Appeal. The danger is that I will fail to mention everyone, so, apologies in advance if your name is missing:

- ➔ **Planning:** Steve Bigg & Roger Kelly
- ➔ **Horsted Keynes Station Staff:** Tim Baker, James Young, and all Station staff
- ➔ **Printing and advertising:** Colin Tyson
- ➔ **Promotion and PR:** Paul Bromley and Tom James
- ➔ **Administration:** Keith Riggs
- ➔ **Trust Governors:** Vernon Blackburn and all the Trust Governors
- ➔ **Bluebell Railway Preservation Society:** Funding support
- ➔ **And many others** across the whole Railway who have helped in so many ways.

HOW TO DONATE

To donate, you can:

- ➔ Go to www.bluebell-railway.com/donate/ - it is completely secure and no credit/debit card details are retained
- ➔ Make a direct Bank transfer to The Bluebell Railway Trust, Account Number : 61059056, Sort Code : 61-10-26. Please quote reference : [Surname]/JIC. Please let us know if you want to make a Gift Aid declaration.
- ➔ Send a Cheque payable to The Bluebell Railway Trust at Sheffield Park. Please quote reference : [Surname]/JIC. Please let us know if you want to make a Gift Aid declaration.

Thank you again to everybody for your support.



Events Diary for 2022

Words by Paul Lelew, commercial and marketing director Photos supplied by Ruth Rowatt, marketing and communications manager

Event dates are provisional and may be subject to change. Look out for updates, details and further events via our social media channels and on our [website](#). Go to our website and subscribe to our email newsletter to be the first to hear about ticket releases. There is also a handy events guide on the last page of this issue of *The Bluebell Times*.

February half-term will see the return of Kids for a Quid. Giving parents a great value-for-money activity to keep children amused in the holidays. This will also run during other half-term weekdays in 2022.

The return of the Golden Arrow has been greatly anticipated and we are pleased to announce that our fine dining services aboard the exquisite Pullman and first-class carriages will resume in time for Valentine's Day. The Golden Arrow is set to continue serving delicious luncheons and superb evening meals throughout 2022.

ROAD MEETS RAIL

28 – 30 May

Traditional steam fair featuring working traction engine displays, miniature engines, goods trains and a steam-driven children's fair.

Our 2022 Road Meets Rail event will be taking place at Horsted Keynes station.

The working steam event returns! Featuring working traction engines – come and see what these powerful giants were actually designed for.

Step back in time for a weekend of steam-powered demonstrations and vintage fairground fun. Traction engines, road rollers, steam wagons, showman's engines, crane engines and more – bringing Horsted Keynes station to life with recreations of a bygone age.

We bring road steam and rail steam together for a weekend of enjoyment and interest, suitable for all ages! See how road building, wood sawing, timber haulage and lifting were carried out in the early 1900s. Experience fairground rides powered by a showman's engine. Watch as deliveries are made to the station by steam wagon, traction engine and pantehnicon. Steam-hauled passenger trains will be passing through the station and a goods train will be shunting in and out amid the activity!



As it is half-term school holidays, we have extended the event by an extra day. Miniature Monday will feature small scale steam traction engines with lots of activity and fun for younger visitors.

TOY AND RAIL COLLECTORS FAIR

Exciting days out for all toy and model railway collectors and enthusiasts!

The 2022 Toy and Rail Collectors Fairs will be held on the following dates:

➡ Sunday 1 May

Sunday 31 July

Catering for everyone from avid collectors, enthusiasts, to just about anyone who is interested in (or just curious about) collectable toys, model trains and vintage railway artefacts.

In an extensive layout of stalls on Horsted Keynes station platforms and car park, you'll find model railways (new and second-hand), die-cast models, collectables, railway books and ephemera, photographs and Preservation Societies – the list is endless.

Come and join us to search out those models you have always wanted, from the likes of Hornby, Bachmann, Bassett-Lowke, Dinky and many, many more.

MODEL RAILWAY WEEKEND

2 – 3 July

Enjoy steam train rides, explore our stations and visit the exhibitions!

Join us at the Bluebell Railway for our Model Railway Weekend. This firm favourite is back for 2022.

Come and see a variety of layouts across the railway and experience unique access to non-public areas such as the Maintenance Shed at Sheffield Park Station and the Carriage and Wagon Workshop at Horsted Keynes Station.

Have you ever attended a model railway exhibition before? Well, expect an array of tiny worlds, all expertly modelled and brought to life by the steam and diesel locomotives that wind their way along



the tracks. It takes patience, time and skill to bring these fascinating layouts to life.

We have a great selection of Model Railways including N gauge, O gauge, double O gauge and gauge 1 layouts from across the country.

To complement our displays, we also have several trade stands offering a variety of modelling products including engines, rolling stock, and local produce. Don't forget you can also visit our railway shop at Sheffield Park where we have a great selection of products available from beginners sets to full layouts.

During this event, we will be running a busy steam-hauled service from Sheffield Park to East Grinstead stations across the weekend.

TERRIER GALA

29 – 31 July

Come and celebrate Terrier No. 72 Fenchurch's 150th birthday. Fenchurch is currently in overhaul and expected to feature in the gala alongside other visiting engines.

Celebrate the small, but tenacious engines that were a common sight along the branch lines of the South. Like the Bluebell Railway's other Terrier – Stepney – Fenchurch was built locally at Brighton Works. These engines should appeal to a younger audience, especially in households that like Thomas the Tank Engine. Did you know Stepney had a Thomas the Tank Engine book written about him? Expect a busy and interesting timetable and Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths activities for families.



TEDDY BEARS' PICNIC

6 – 7 August

Our Teddy Bears' Picnic is the ideal summer holiday day out!

And there's free travel for all children who bring their favourite teddy!

We all know that teddies love adventures, so pack a picnic and your Teddy for a steam train ride.

You can join this event at any of our stations – Sheffield Park, Horsted Keynes, Kingscote or East Grinstead. Adults buy an All-Day Rover ticket to travel up and down the line on the timetabled service trains, but children who bring a teddy go free!

Get off at Kingscote Station to enjoy your picnic in the picnic area and make sure to give Teddy a big push on the swings and roundabout in the playground.

What do teddies love? Picnics and pals! Why not take Teddy with you on a bear hunt at Kingscote Station. Pick up a trail and get searching. How many teddies will you spot?

THE BLUEBELL RAILWAY BEER FESTIVAL

23 – 25 September

In association with CAMRA, join us for a huge selection of beers, cider and perry. With more great music planned for this year and regular buses from nearby mainline Haywards Heath station, we can promise you a superb festival in a fabulous setting.

GIANTS OF STEAM

14– 16 October

Thundering giants join our home fleet locos for our annual autumn gala! Details of visiting engines, timetables and further information will be released soon, so keep an eye on the website!

FESTIVE EVENTS

November – January

Our popular Santa Specials will be back for 2022. Take the children on a magical steam train ride and meet Santa. With traditional fairground rides, Santa's Grotto and plenty of Christmas snacks and treats in the very festive setting of Horsted Keynes Station, make some special memories with the little ones.

SteamLights is also back for 2022 and is something for the whole family.

Brighten up the chilly winter evenings with a seasonal lights spectacular!

Sparkle, glow and shimmer on a magical steam train covered by thousands of colourful lights.

Illuminate the dark landscape as you journey and feast your eyes on an amazing light show along the way. With festive displays, music and narration, this is a steam train experience not to be missed!



Golden Arrow Dining Trains Return

Bluebell Railway's Golden Arrow train is the perfect setting for a special meal with friends or an intimate evening for two.

With luxurious Pullman Cars Christine, Fingall, and 1st Class Dining carriage Sapphire, the train recreates the fabulous Golden Arrow which once linked London and Paris with the style and panache which made it one of the most glamorous and famous trains in the world. On board you will enjoy fine food and wine served to the standards of yesteryear.

'Christine' and 'Fingall' evoke the heady days of the 1920/30s with their unique wooden wall panel Marquetry and plush seating. 'Sapphire' hails from the 1950s and provides equally comfortable and plush surroundings, being built to convey 1st Class passengers from Waterloo to board Transatlantic liners at Southampton in the glory days of ocean travel.

This premier dining service includes a three-course meal and travel on a steam-hauled train through the beautiful countryside of the Sussex Weald to East Grinstead. Your journey will last approximately 3 ½ hours.

A cup of tea or coffee at the end of your meal is included in the cost, and all other drinks may be purchased and paid for on the train.

All Golden Arrow services begin and end at Sheffield Park Station. The Golden Arrow Dining will depart at 7:00pm selected Saturday evenings in 2022, while The Golden Arrow Luncheon will begin at 12:30pm on selected Sunday afternoons.

Tickets for our [February The Golden Arrow Luncheon trains are now on sale](#). Tickets for the rest of the year will be on sale in early February.



1920s elegance brought to life. Photo: Chris Hewison

Volunteer Workshops

By Gordon Dudman, Volunteer Workshop co-ordinator

In the December edition of *The Bluebell Times*, our two chairs, Geoff Mee and Paul Churchman, highlighted proposals for a series of Volunteer Workshops. A chance conversation with infrastructure director Barry Luck and I found myself writing a piece to outline the nature of those workshops, becoming a focal point for volunteers to contact.

Very quickly the first emails arrived asking for places (so far everyone has been offered their first choice); then more extensive emails arrived over the ensuing two weeks; some seeking further information, others offering ideas and suggestions. Everyone I have received has been supportive and correspondents clearly had taken time to articulate their ideas and frustrations.

As I write this item for the first *The Bluebell Times* of 2022 there are suggestions that Omicron variant infections in the UK may have peaked, leaving in their wake many organisations facing large scale absences. Fingers crossed that Government guidelines will allow our first workshop on 29 January to proceed as planned. I know from emails that some colleagues are still hesitant to begin mixing with fellow volunteers. If you fall into this category, please consider putting your name forward for our last session on 5 March; if circumstances are little changed by then, you can always cancel.

So, what are we aiming to achieve? We want this to be a two-way process with Geoff and Paul setting out some of the challenges our Railway faces and then for you to share, via small group sessions, your ideas on how you think we can collaboratively start to shape the railway going forward. We are not seeking to solve major organisational or structural challenges, rather identify small scale challenges which we, as volunteers, working in small ad-hoc groups, can draw up plans to tackle.

In my 10 years of volunteering, first as a steward and more recently as a guard, I have had the opportunity to meet with a lot of amazing volunteers. I am certain every one of us has something we can contribute. As the 5th Century Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu observed, "Every journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step". Please join your colleagues in making those first steps and email me at gordon.dudman@bluebell-railway.com

Those workshop dates again: Saturday 29 January; Saturday 12 February and Saturday 5 March. All taking place at Horsted Keynes in our new Heritage Skills Centre. The workshops run from 10am to 3.30pm with lunch and refreshments provided.

HOW TO SIGN UP

If you would like to participate, please email gordon.dudman@bluebell-railway.com. It would help to know your preference as regards the three proposed dates:

- ➔ Saturday 29 January
- ➔ Saturday 12 February
- ➔ Saturday 5 March

Volunteer Review Update

By Graham Aitken, volunteer co-ordinator

With no trains operating on Christmas Day, Boxing Day or New Year's Day – not even SteamLights – I was expecting a few Bluebell-free days but on all three of these days potential volunteers contacted me. This meant that in slightly over three months 101 potential volunteers have made contact – way in advance of the numbers I expected. So, if you are one of those new volunteers reading this article, thank you and I hope that you are enjoying yourself.

As I mentioned in the December issue of *The Bluebell Times*, I am receiving details from managers of the number of volunteers they need in each of their relevant departments along with the numbers they currently have. This will identify where more volunteers are most needed, allowing targeted appeals to be created and launched.

I have been active during the very demanding, and very successful, Santa and SteamLights season talking to many volunteers and managers asking them for their experiences and suggestions of how we can improve our staffing arrangements. I will be feeding their comments into the Santa and SteamLights feedback sessions that have already started, and I am confident (hopeful) that we can produce a better product by identifying exactly what we want our volunteers to do, resource the actual numbers needed and avoid those last-minute panics

seeking volunteers only to find on the day that there is sometimes not a lot for them to do. There are few things more demoralising for volunteers than to turn up for a turn of duty lasting for four hours and spending no more than 10 minutes of actual work. Yes, that actually happened!

The exciting developments I hoped to be able to share with you in this issue of *The Bluebell Times* will have to be deferred until the February issue as, in common with my colleagues personnel and admin manager Lisa Boyle and Society vice-chairman Steve Bigg, we have all been so busy during November and December that it was not possible to arrange a suitable meeting date. This meeting is now taking place on the day before this issue is published.

Finally, you may remember in the November issue of *The Bluebell Times* that I mentioned an article I was preparing for publication in *Trackside* magazine about volunteering at the Bluebell Railway. It was published in Issue 6 dated January 2022 which is available from the magazine's website.

As ever, if you want to get in touch to find out more about volunteering opportunities at our wonderful Bluebell Railway just contact me at volunteer.coordinator@bluebell-railway.com

VIEWPOINT

Blooming Bluebell

Since a recruitment revamp in September, the Bluebell Railway has seen a jump in interest. Volunteer coordinator Graham Aitken explains.



A key task: Maintaining a rail range present at Inbarrow on the Bluebell Railway. Permanent Way volunteer Steve Higgins (left) is assisted by David Lilly (right).

Following 40 years with the 'big railway' in train planning, it was time to take a step back and reassess. After no months to reflect on the 'big railway' I realised I was missing the camaraderie and excitement with my colleagues. As well as the railway itself. So I volunteered as my first project on the Bluebell.

David Higgins in 2007 was surprised to find that only 10% of volunteers had a background in railway work. This was an encouraging sign for me. In 2010, I was asked to lead the recruitment team. I had a long list of ideas, a plan to recruit and to encourage. Some people had no interest in railways, but for me it was all about the railway. I was asked to lead the recruitment team at Inbarrow on the Bluebell Railway. Permanent Way volunteer Steve Higgins (left) is assisted by David Lilly (right).

44 With such a successful start to our new system, why did we not introduce it before?



This could be being done, showing an express 4-6-2. National Collection 'Steamy' No. 20123 Chatterbox (picking from the West Herts Railway) along the Bluebell Railway on 17 October. (Jim Jones)

Constant since 1958

With the time and talent available necessary to build the railway, it was time to take a step back and reassess. After no months to reflect on the 'big railway' I realised I was missing the camaraderie and excitement with my colleagues. As well as the railway itself. So I volunteered as my first project on the Bluebell.

44 Surely, this is what being a volunteer is all about? Getting out, meeting people, and enjoying ourselves...

By the time we returned to the railway, the general volunteer base was in a state of flux. Some people had no interest in railways, but for me it was all about the railway. I was asked to lead the recruitment team at Inbarrow on the Bluebell Railway. Permanent Way volunteer Steve Higgins (left) is assisted by David Lilly (right).

44 Surely, this is what being a volunteer is all about? Getting out, meeting people, and enjoying ourselves...

VIEWPOINT

44 Surely, this is what being a volunteer is all about? Getting out, meeting people, and enjoying ourselves...



Some folks don't even have a garden. They are looking for a way to get out and meet people. This is what being a volunteer is all about. Getting out, meeting people, and enjoying ourselves.

By the time we returned to the railway, the general volunteer base was in a state of flux. Some people had no interest in railways, but for me it was all about the railway. I was asked to lead the recruitment team at Inbarrow on the Bluebell Railway. Permanent Way volunteer Steve Higgins (left) is assisted by David Lilly (right).

44 Surely, this is what being a volunteer is all about? Getting out, meeting people, and enjoying ourselves...

IT Director Appointed

By Paul Bromley, communications director, Bluebell Railway Plc

The board of Bluebell Railway Plc has appointed Nigel Page as the company's first IT director.

Nigel is an experienced senior IT leader across all technologies, delivering strategic business and IT outcomes for multi-national customers. He is currently a senior manager with Amazon Web Services.

He said: "I am very excited about taking on this role with a long tenure in the IT Industry. This is my first non-executive director role and I bring my technology experience and expertise in both the IT processing and business side.

"I ultimately want to create a vision of how the Bluebell uses technology while retaining its heritage over the next five years."

Nigel also said he wanted to "develop the use of data and information to attract new visitors and look for ways to enhance the visitor experience as well as for members and employees."

He lives in Highbrook with his wife Lisa. They have three grown-up children.

Nigel regularly passes alongside and around Horsted Keynes station when he takes Hallie, his 10-year-old Sprocker Spaniel, for walks.

He was the chairman of Cuckfield Parish Council for nine years and says he learned the power and importance of communities. "The Bluebell Railway has a place in that community and is at the heart of Mid Sussex tourism," he said.

His first visit to the Bluebell Railway was on a school trip in 1975 and he remembers visiting Horsted Keynes station which sparked an interest in electrical engineering and this led into IT. Nigel has been a member of the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society since returning from overseas several years ago.

Geoff Mee, chairman of Bluebell Railway Plc, said: "We are delighted Nigel is joining us and look forward to working with him on improving all



aspects of the Railway's IT and digital systems. How we communicate with our staff, volunteers, customers and the wider world will be crucial to our success as a company in the next few years.

"We will always retain our status as a heritage railway but we also have to make sure our systems keep up with modern technology."

Nigel's appointment was confirmed at the Bluebell Railway board meeting in November.

News in Brief

STAMFORD LOCO SALE COMPLETED

The sale of quarry steam locomotive 'Stamford' has been completed and it will now stay in Rutland.

'Stamford', built in 1927, is one of only a very few steam locomotives which worked in Rutland's ironstone quarries to survive into preservation.

Following its retirement in 1969, the locomotive came to the Bluebell Railway on loan.

Rocks by Rail museum in Cottesmore launched a fundraising campaign to acquire 'Stamford' for it to go on public display close to where it spent its working life. The sale has now been completed with a cheque presentation ceremony at Sheffield Park station.

Bluebell Railway locomotive engineering director Paul Russell said: "We are pleased that we have been able to relocate 'Stamford' back to the area that it worked at for so long. I know that Rocks by Rail will be good custodians and 'Stamford' will have the chance to steam again one day."

LOCO CLEANING CLOTHS APPEAL

By John Hutchins, Acting Shed Foreman

In the loco department we get through a prodigious quantity of cleaning cloths, both during the daily cleaning of our loco fleet ready for the days service as well as both cleaning up around the yard and lighting up our locos using the dirty rags left over from cleaning.

At present we are desperately short of suitable cloth and I would like to appeal to our members and supporters to donate suitable old towels and T shirts etc that we can cut up for cleaning.

We need absorbent cloths, either towelling or cotton material (without zips), with old bath towels, cotton sheets and cotton T shirts being ideal.

Unfortunately, synthetic fibres and duvets etc are not usable as they do not absorb the oil and paraffin mix used for loco cleaning, leaving a



Bluebell Railway locomotive engineering director Paul Russell (left) receives the final payment from Rocks by Rail museum trustee David Atkinson. Photo: Tom Lawson

smear and unsightly finish, while zips etc risk scratching the paintwork of the locos.

If you have any suitable materials you can donate, please leave them in the trunk outside the Stationmasters office on platform 1 at Sheffield Park which has been labelled for the collection of rags.

Thank you in advance for your help and donations,

BARCOMBE BRIDGE SAVED FROM INFILLING

Plans to infill the former railway bridge at Barcombe [have been halted](#).

National Highways had planned to fill fractures in the bridge with concrete but residents, councillors and campaigners wanted to save the structure.

The bridge was built in the 1880s as part of the Lewes to East Grinstead line. Residents believe it

is now an important wildlife corridor for animals such as badgers and deer.

Campaign organiser Hazel Fell Rayner was quoted by [The Argus](#) as saying: “We’re obviously delighted to hear that National Highways has listened to the views of residents and councillors, heard the strength of feeling locally and lifted the infill threat.

“From the outset, this was an ill-conceived scheme reflecting a lack of understanding as to the environmental and ecological damage it would have inflicted on a sensitive habitat and its wildlife.”

FOOTPLATE TASTERS RETURN

[Footplate Tasters sessions](#) return next month giving people a chance to experience a ‘turn’ on the footplate of H-class No. 263 under the guidance of experienced crews.

The experience is being held on selected dates from 1 – 11 February and will be the last chance to see the H-class ahead of its withdrawal from traffic next month.



Photo: David Cable

BLUEBELL RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY - CHANGE OF STATUS

By Gavin Bennett, BRPS General Secretary

At the October 2021 EGM, Society members gave their final approval for the Society to proceed with incorporation and I am pleased to report that this has now happened. The new company was set up in November but has been kept dormant, apart from appointment of the Directors, so as not to muddle the Society accounts for 2021. On 1 January 2022, all paid-up Society members were transferred from the old unincorporated association to the new company along with all assets – including the majority shareholding in Bluebell Railway Plc – and liabilities.

The key change for members is that all Adult Society Members are entitled to vote at General Meetings either in person or by proxy. This includes election of Trustees (Directors) and on resolutions proposed at the AGM. As membership secretary Don Brewer explained in *Bluebell News*, joint members and both adults in family memberships retain their existing right to one vote each instead of the normal company practice of only one vote per membership. Another significant change is that the Society is now recognised in company law as a ‘Person of Significant Control’ in Bluebell Railway Plc.

We have also been granted an exemption from using the word ‘Limited’ in our name so membership cards etc all remain the same.

At the 2022 AGM all the Trustees will stand for election - elections for the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary posts are held separately but at the same time. In other words, you get to choose those people instead of the BRPS Board selecting a Chairman from amongst themselves.

MINIATURE RAILWAY APPROVED

As we went to press, we heard the welcome news that Lewes District Council had approved our planning application for a miniature railway, to be constructed at Sheffield Park. We will now form a steering group to progress this project, which will form another attraction for our younger visitors.

Commercial Report for 2021

Words by Paul Lelew, commercial and marketing director Photos supplied by Ruth Rowatt, marketing and communications manager

For the first time in the Railway's history, the Plc management team had a commercial plan for 2021. This plan detailed every service running each day, valued the service at both 100% capacity and at 75% loading and showed the projected revenue. The plan also included all proposed events, expected visitor numbers and revenue. This plan was put together with the help of all the stakeholder departments in the Railway and circulated throughout the organisation, so everyone knew exactly what was taking place and what goals needed to be achieved to make 2021 a commercial success.

Despite all the painstaking planning, 2021 did not commence until after 17 May due to another Covid lockdown and the commercial plan was then adapted. Much work already done by the commercial department, including ticketing and advertising, had to then be re-done. It was crucial that we offered visitors Covid-safe events and travel as best we could, but we also had to squeeze all our planned events and services into a seven-month period to maximise our potential revenue.

As we move into the new year, I can only thank employees and volunteers for their hard work and success in delivering those events and services. They have helped to secure the future of our Railway and as we go forward in 2022, we can look back on some of those successes with a sense of achievement.

We kicked off the year with Road Meets Rail in July. It was our first event of the year and was hugely popular. Showcasing working traction engines at Horsted Keynes station, the outdoor setting and incredible weather encouraged families and enthusiasts to visit. This was followed by a later than normal Model Railway Weekend at the end of that month, which again was extremely well attended by not only visitors, but exhibitors with their amazing layouts. It was clear that people wanted to visit attractions again and the open-air setting for Road Meets Rail and the large,



Last year's beer festival takes over the running shed

airy sheds housing the model railway layouts gave visitors confidence in these tricky times.

In August, we ran our 60+1 celebration weekend. This was the delayed 60th anniversary celebration which could not be delivered in 2020 due to the pandemic and although it was still a more toned-down celebration than originally planned, it was a great event. We still marked the special occasion with style. The event exceeded our expectations in terms of attendance, despite some bad weather!

In September we staged our first ever Bluebell Railway Beer Festival in decades. The festival was contained mostly in the locomotive shed at Sheffield Park station, which created a unique atmosphere and was appreciated by the attendees. Over the Friday, Saturday and Sunday we were assisted greatly by CAMRA, who helped in the organisation and running of the festival and guided us through the go beers we stocked, providing fantastic tasting notes, expertise and experience. We had good attendance at the festival and fabulous feedback to say how much people had enjoyed the beer, music and steam trains. It was notable that many were first time visitors to the Railway. It was a great start to build on and we are planning our second Beer Festival in 2022. I would urge you to save the dates Friday 23,

Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 September for both volunteering and attending!

October saw our STEM Family Fair return in the guise of The Brickworks Adventure which covered the nine days of October half-term and provided great interactive entertainment for families. A range of professionally built brick models based on Outer Space featured in SteamWorks! alongside hands-on activities to allow children and adults to create their own brick creations. Feedback from families was extremely positive. The graffiti wall was a particularly creative space. This was another event that had been moved twice already due to the pandemic, so it was great to finally put it on!

October also saw our hugely popular annual Autumn Gala – Giants of Steam. Another victim of the pandemic last year, this was the first time the event had run since 2019 and it was a huge success both financially and operationally. The revenues generated were 30% more than the 2019 event, which was a great result. The newly refitted shop was a real success with visiting enthusiasts, and they enjoyed a busy gala. Look at the virtual tour of the shop on our website and see the refit for yourself – it is superb!

The visiting engines were a real attraction, in particular the Merchant Navy Class Locomotive No. 35028 'Clan Line', which is based on the mainline and not normally seen at heritage railways. At the Bluebell Railway, it was hugely accessible for visitors for both photographs and to ride behind. Alongside Clan Line, Schools Class No. 30925 'Cheltenham' visiting from the Watercress Line and our own recently overhauled BR Standard 5MT No. 73082 'Camelot' gave the gala a real Southern flavour.

November and December are our strongest trading months with SteamLights trains and Santa Specials which were 100% fully booked. They had sold out very quickly and passengers clearly loved the fact that we continued to use compartment stock which provided privacy for families and the most Covid-safe experience we could offer. The magic and luxury of travelling in your own compartment cannot be ignored either! To be able to use compartment stock and switch to open carriages during the summer months when

restrictions eased has enabled us to maximise revenue. We are lucky to have such a range of heritage rolling stock and thanks must be given to the Carriage and Wagon Department for ensuring the stock was ready for use at the appropriate times.

Throughout the year, we have provided many dining experiences on board our trains. With staff shortages, largely due to the pandemic and possibly Brexit too, it has been a heroic struggle by that part of the commercial team to deliver everything that was planned. The contribution to the overall revenue by our Catering Department is substantial and there is huge appreciation for all the staff efforts and for making our visitors feel welcomed and treated to an excellent dining experience.

In early 2022, limited tickets will be available on our website as we implement our new Electronic Point of Sale (EPOS) system during January. Running all our ticketing and sales across the Railway locations and website through one powerful system will give us great data to use to market events in the future and make commercial decisions based on up-to-date information. In February the website should be fully populated with the available tickets for upcoming events and services using the new EPOS system. Don't worry, the new system will not affect the great heritage experience visitors enjoy when using our booking offices on the day.



'Clan Line' leaves Sheffield Park during Giants of Steam. Photo: Stef's Photography and Drone Services

Loco Workshop Progress

Words and photos by John Fry, workshop volunteer

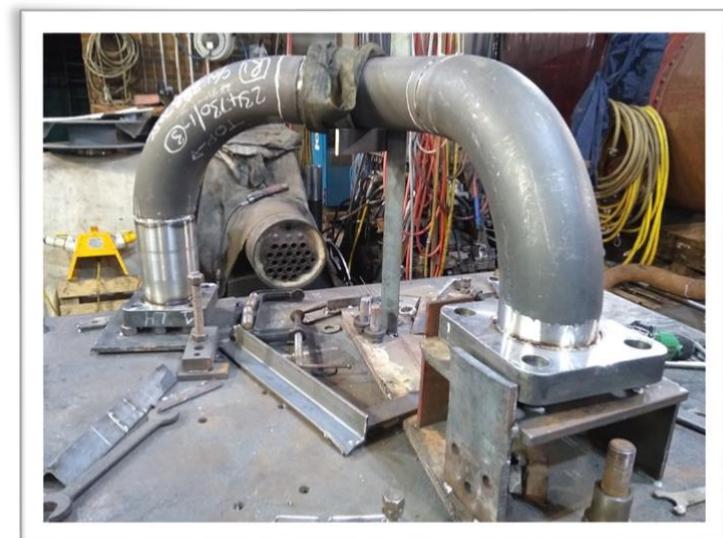
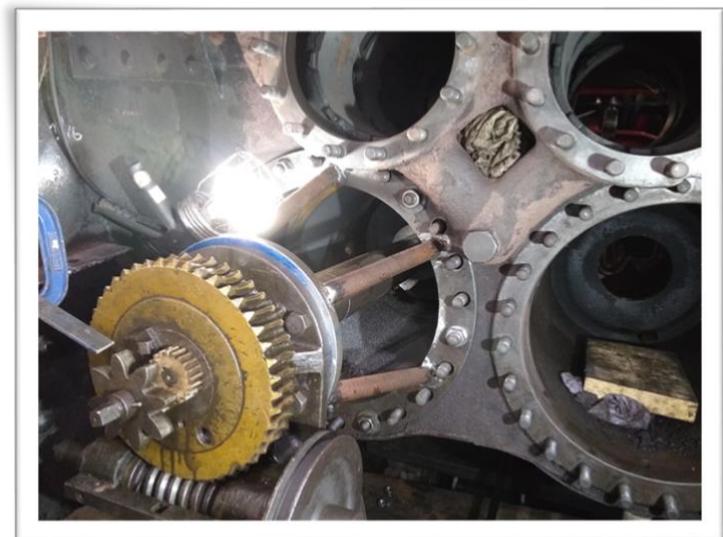
STROUDLEY TERRIER No. 72, FENCHURCH

Progress on the boiler is now at the front end of the barrel. With the new front ring in place the replacement front tube plate can be seen adjacent to the firebox. The tubeplate will be rivetted in place with careful alignment to ensure that the tube plates in both the firebox and smokebox tubeplates are aligned. Inside the barrel the longitudinal stays on view will locate with the appropriate apertures in the new tube plate, providing appropriate strength to resist the boiler pressure.

MAUNSELL Q CLASS No. 30541

Piston and valve examination is a routine procedure on steam locomotives, with this process being undertaken at anything from 20,000 miles upwards. An indication that the examination should be undertaken can be lack of power, problems with the drain cocks such as blockage and failure of the cocks to close due to broken pistons rings. To remove the pistons and valves some dismantling of structures in front of the cylinders is often necessary and the piston and valve covers themselves have to be removed. After extracting the pistons and valves the rings on these components are examined and measurements are made of the diameter along the bore of the piston and valve. Any changes in the diameter can be corrected by reboring the piston or valve, a process which has been undertaken on No. 30541. The boring equipment used originated at Eastleigh Works and consists of an electrically driven worm gear operating a shaft with a cutter head attached. Central alignment is obtained by a front mounted cage, bolted to the studs used to hold the cylinder cover as seen in the attached photograph. Once the bored diameter is consistent throughout the length, new pistons and valve heads can be machined and new rings ordered.

The motion has been removed and re-erection is starting with the slide bars now in place. In addition to this work, new main steam pipes have



Top to bottom: Progress on Fenchurch's boiler – new front ring and smokebox tubeplate. Boring the cylinders for No. 541. New steam pipes for No. 541

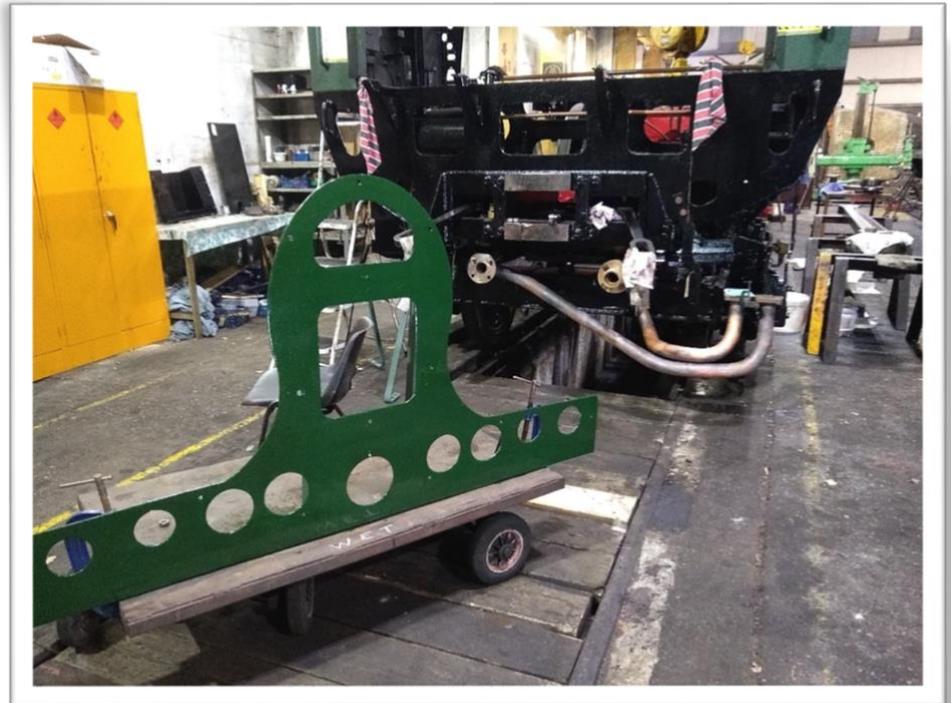
been fabricated with the new items seen in the adjacent photograph.

BULLEID BATTLE OF BRITAIN No. 34059, 'SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR'

There is a report on progress on the overhaul of No. 34059, overseen by Steve Czech, in the latest *Bluebell News* so this is merely an up-to-date indication of the overhaul. The aim towards the end of 2021 was to complete the erecting of the motion with that in the middle engine completed some weeks ago. Partial success was achieved, with the connecting rod now up on the left-hand side. New bushes were required for the right-hand rod but delays in the supply of the bronze will result in this side not seeing completion until early in 2022. The bush has now been machined with the rod awaiting erection.

With the completion of the motion, work is now starting on the large pipe work for the injectors, seen in the photograph with the nameplate shields, now resplendent in their initial gloss paintwork. It is hoped that the smoke deflectors will receive attention from the painters in the near future.

There has been significant progress on the engine's overhaul in 2021 but the tender is still awaiting attention and there is the completion of the knocking over of the firebox stays.



Top: Injector pipework and newly-painted nameplate and plaque holder for No. 34059 'Sir Archibald Sinclair'

Bottom: Reassembled motion and connecting rod and coupling rods on the left-hand side of 'Sir Archibald Sinclair'

OP4 Emerges Like a Flower in Springtime

By Bob Pamment, rolling stock director [Additional contributions from Barry Luck](#), infrastructure director, [and Steve Bigg](#), trimming team leader

Planning is under way for a special ceremony this Spring to mark the formal opening of the Heritage Skills Centre at Horsted Keynes Carriage Shed, affectionately known as OP4.

Mid Sussex District Council building control officers visited last October and confirmed that we were able to occupy the new Heritage Skills Centre. We still have a few items to address such as signage which we need to complete before obtaining full sign-off, but we are well on our way to having complete control of the building.

This is a moment that we have spent many years waiting for. Massive amounts of organisation and work have gone into getting us this far. I remember well the struggles that were experienced by the late Chris White until 2017 when Barry Luck was appointed as Project Manager which coincided with the start of some real progress. Latterly Barry handed over the reins to Melissa Jordan who has ramped up the progress still further. In addition to all the tactical work managed by the project team there has, on the ground, been much activity. Infrastructure manager Matt Crawford and his team have laid concrete, track and much more. A small team of volunteers has been beavering quietly away with the fitting out and decorating of the workshops, stores, offices and classrooms. They have put in many hours of – what could be considered, tedious – work and have made the Heritage Skills Centre fit for occupation. This merry band of decorators has included: Robin Cane, Paul Chitty, Pete Sulsh, Tom Simcock, John Arkell, Robin Steadman and Martyn Longstaff. My thanks go out to all of the above plus those whose names I have failed to mention in connection with the fire alarms, electrical work and plumbing etc. Significantly the trimming team, led by Steve Bigg, has now moved all their material and machines into their new workshop – no mean feat – and Steve has included a little account below followed by some detail from Barry Luck on the structural side of things.

Steve Bigg writes: Following the final visit of the Buildings Inspector to the Heritage Skills Centre (HSC), the trimming team were permitted to complete the main part of their move from the temporary portable building to the new and much larger workshop facility in the HSC. This workshop will be supplemented by the

adjacent moquette store that will now provide in one location the ideal storage conditions for such valuable materials.

The move to the larger workshop has come at the most opportune time, as it has coincided – post-Covid lockdowns – with a significant increase in the number of volunteers who have joined the team, which now totals fifteen. There will now be the space to properly accommodate these new volunteers so they will be able to learn the skills of heritage coach trimming, which will potentially provide them with the satisfaction of assimilating new skills as well as benefitting the Railway through increased coach trimming productivity.

The established members of the team are now laying out the new workshop to facilitate the training processes required, and they're also reviewing the accompanying programmes to accommodate the number of trainees involved. Further updates will be provided.

The team would like to record its appreciation to the C&W and Infrastructure management teams for their support in relation to the provision and scope of the new facilities.

Barry Luck adds: This project was kicked off more than 15 years ago when a small group within C&W conceived the idea of a new carriage shed to protect the railway's stock of unrestored carriages. In 2008 the Plc board gave approval to the project, but with the restriction that no fund-raising could take place outside C&W until the northern extension project was completed. C&W volunteers rose to the challenge and raised more than £32k, and with £20k from the Trust, forged ahead, obtaining planning permission in 2011.

Work on the ground started in 2014 and the main structure of the carriage shed was in place by 2017. The first road inside the shed was laid in August of that year, and the first of the stock was shunted into the shed in November with a modest opening ceremony.

The stabilisation of the 'Dingley Dell' embankment was carried out by the infrastructure team during 2018, enabling the Skills Centre structure to be erected, followed by the external walls during 2019. This was unfortunately interrupted by the first lockdown in 2020

when the finishing line was in sight. The internal fit-out of the HSC has been completed during 2021 with Melissa Jordan as project manager.

There is still work to be done, including the E-road tramway (in hand) and the completion of the firewall. Work is also in hand to complete the external landscaping, and fencing.

I would like to pay particular thanks to Matt Crawford and Andy Palmer, and all the infrastructure volunteers who have contributed so much to the success of the project, and wish to echo Bob's comments regarding the C&W volunteers who have put a huge amount of effort into the internal decoration of the Skills Centre. Paul Baker deserves a mention for his work on the IT system.

We should also acknowledge the key contractors who have played a major part in the project:

- ➔ JJ Hatfield for planning and design
- ➔ Robin Stevenson LLP for the main structure
- ➔ Mark Padgham for the internal walls, flooring, partitions, and much more
- ➔ Paul Padgham for the air-source heat pump installation
- ➔ Tim Gray for the electrics
- ➔ Mike and Stuart Brooks for the plumbing and associated work
- ➔ Jeff Woodward for the alarm system

We should also, of course, acknowledge all those who donated so generously to the project, without whom the project would never have been started, let alone completed.

I would particularly like to thank Melissa Jordan for her unending efforts to get this project over the finishing line. Melissa joined us in August 2020, not long after I took on the role of Infrastructure Director, and it is safe to say that the project would not be where it is today without her dedication and drive.

Despite all the above there still remains some significant work to complete. This includes filling the four-road shed with the carriages that we wish to shelter from the ravages of the elements. *[The list of carriages agreed for storage in OP4 was set out in the latest issue of Bluebell News – Ed]* This has necessarily had to wait until the track has been completed along with all the rolling stock perturbations and alterations

as a result of the shifting sands of the coronavirus. All being well, after the all-consuming work on the Christmas celebrations, the coming months will see the vehicles nominated by the BRPS take up their designated positions in this superb new facility.

All of this being made possible of course by the generosity and far sightedness of our wonderful supporters. My thanks to all involved in this significant project.



Two views inside the trimming shop. Photos: Steve Bigg

Archive on the Move

Words and photos by Roger Price, BRPS archivist

Some members may not be aware that the Society's Museum department boasts a large archive of material related to the Southern Railway and its constituent companies. The foundation for this collection originates from 2012 when John J. Smith of Eastbourne passed away and Bluebell inherited his house and all the contents. These consisted of many years of special traffic notices and working timetables as well as a large photograph collection images from which are online on the [Museum website](#) and available for purchase. This first collection has been enriched over the past ten years with a number of donations of publications and photographic collections as well as drawings of locomotives, carriages and wagons and track layouts. There is a comprehensive collection of commercial books relating to the Southern. A collection of more than 2,000 OS maps covers the whole of the south of England.

Until recently the collection was housed in six lock-up units at Horsham but following some water ingress problems and other issues, new premises became a priority as a temporary accommodation until the planned Research and Records Centre becomes a reality. Almost by chance we became aware of a two-storey industrial unit for rent on a farm at Beare Green close to Holmwood station. It appeared to offer the right facilities and an affordable rental was agreed. We had then to plan the transfer of all our assets from Horsham. These consisted of 320 plastic crates of publications, 500 tubes containing drawings, 200 miscellaneous boxes of material together with racking and furniture. The firm BigManRemovals from Haywards Heath were contracted to undertake the work and they supplied two lorries and up to four men for three days making two return journeys on two of those days. The photographic collection which consisted of over 200 boxes was transferred separately by utilising several cars driven by members of the photographic archive team – again some of them made two return journeys. Members of the archive team were rostered to be



*Top to bottom:
Arrival of some of the 320 plastic crates of material*

Photo unit ready for business!

The tube racking completed

at Horsham and Beare Green to supervise the collection and delivery of all the items. Everything was moved as planned and we then had several weeks organising things at our new site.

Since the move we have been given a number of cupboards, filing cabinets, electric heaters computers, printers and a large quantity of library book shelves which has enabled us to better store and catalogue the collection.

On the ground floor of the building are situated the books and publications and office desks and on

the first floor are located the drawings, OS maps and photographic collections. Here there are also located toilets and small kitchen area to make us self-contained and comfortable!

We plan to open the Archive during 2022 to pre-booked visitors for research and details will be announced when they are finalised. Meanwhile if you are considering disposing of any timetables, drawings or photographs (pre-1970 only please!) let us know on archivist@bluebell-railway-museum.co.uk

HELP US PLAN THE FUTURE!

As we start to plan for a permanent archive, and to help inform its design and operation, we are interested in understanding how Society members would use the new facility. If you can spare a few minutes, we would be very grateful if you could take time to answer a few short questions on the following link: <https://forms.gle/TPZiUAXJNjyUug39>

Your answers will be treated confidentially, but will be very useful as we plan for the future.



John J Smith, whose collection acted as the seed of the Bluebell Railway Archive, had a familiarity with the railway that went back to pre-preservation days. Two of his photographs are shown here.

On the left is class H2 Atlantic No. 32426 'St. Albans Head', photographed just north of Sheffield Park on 14 August 1955. The train is the 'RCTS Wealden Limited' and consists of a long rake of mostly Maunsell vehicles, but including one Pullman – a scene that the Bluebell can aspire to recreate in the future.

Pictured below is No. 323 'Bluebell' shown on the first day of operation of the Bluebell Railway, 7 August 1960.

Prints of both photographs are available for sale on the Bluebell Railway Museum website.

Both photos: John J Smith / Bluebell Railway Museum Archive



On This Day ... 14 January

By Tony Hillman, assistant museum curator

Three pictures from the Bluebell Photographic Archive taken on 14 January. Thanks to Martin Elms, John Creed, Richard Peirce, Roger Merry-Price and Chris Wilson for finding the pictures and providing the notes.



On Monday 14 January 1952, Class N15X No. 32327 *Trevithick* is seen passing Preston Park Pullman works, Brighton. This engine and another were originally built at the nearby LBSCR Brighton Works in 1914, as Class L 4-6-4 (Baltic) express tank engines for services from Victoria to the south coast. It was numbered 327 and initially named *Charles C. Macrae* (a director of the LBSCR since 1893, and who later became Chairman). However, once it had entered service it was quickly realised that modifications were required.

Over the next three years, both engines underwent radical changes, which greatly improved their performance to the extent that five more were ordered and entered service in 1921/22. Based at Brighton they had a reputation for fast running on tight schedules. But by the early 1930s, as main line electrification progressed, they were displaced. Since they were

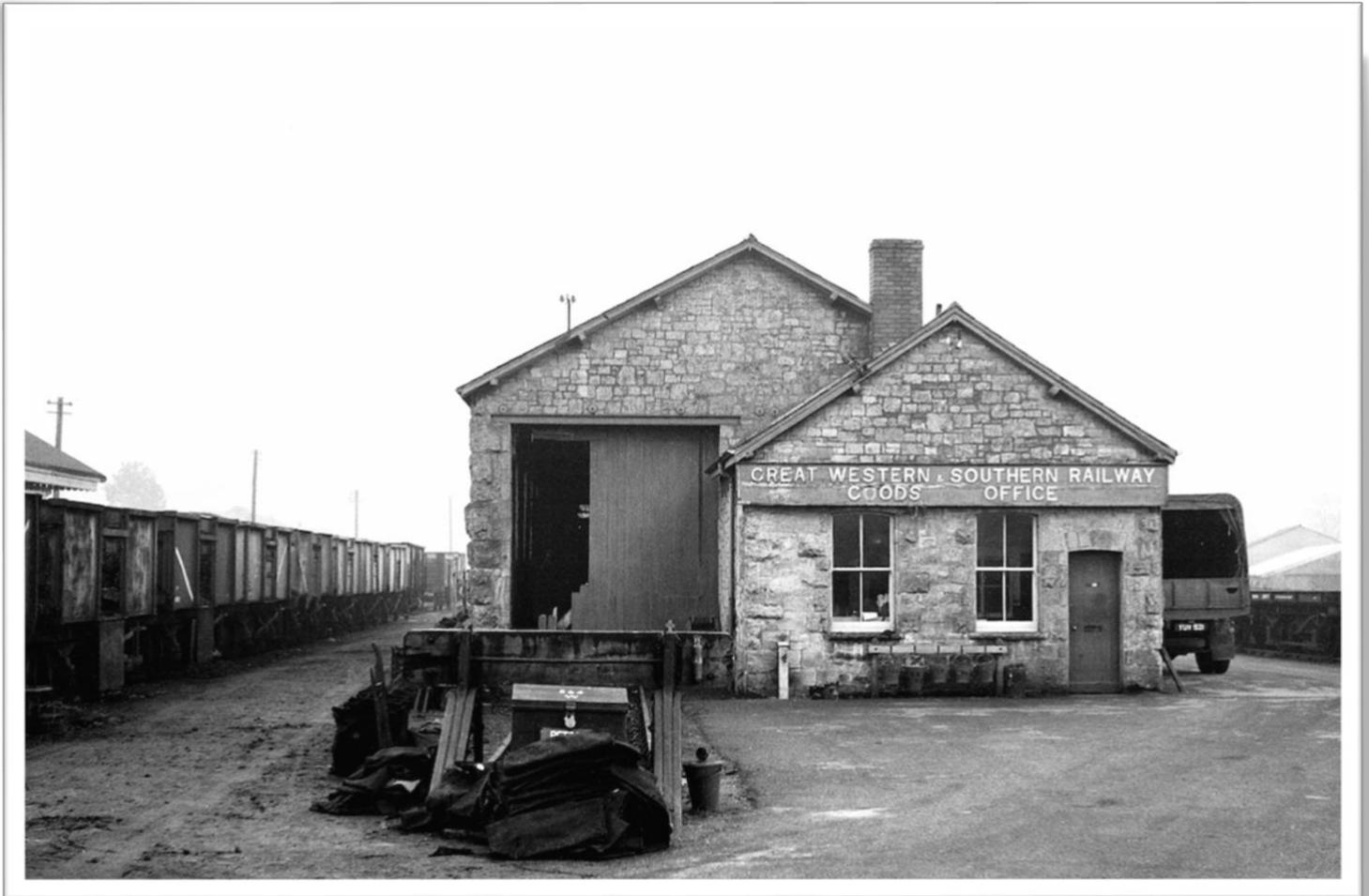
relatively new, it was decided to convert the class from tank to tender engines; the rebuilds were outshopped between December 1934 and April 1936. With similar looks to the N15 King Arthur Class, they were designated N15X. At the same time what by then was No. 2327 was re-named *Trevithick*, after the steam and mining engineer Richard Trevithick.

After conversion the N15X locos were moved to Nine Elms for use alongside the King Arthur and Lord Nelson classes, although it was soon apparent they lacked sufficient power and they were relegated to secondary duties. During World War 2, from 1941–43, all seven were loaned to the GWR at Old Oak Common. Post-1945 the N15Xs went to Basingstoke for use on the Waterloo semi-fast trains. The class were taken out of service between 1955 and 1957, *Trevithick* being withdrawn in January 1956. None was preserved.

The last engine in the class, No. 333, was named *Remembrance* when first built as a memorial to all the LBSCR staff who died in World War 1. It carried the

name throughout its service and one of the plates can be seen in the Bluebell Railway Museum.

Photo: Joe Kent



The former LSWR stone-built goods shed at Chard Town, photographed on 14 January 1961. On the left, above the coal wagons, can be seen the canopy of the LSWR station, officially called Chard Town but known by the locals as the "Tin" Station.

The history of the lines around Chard is complex. The first station to serve the town was Chard Road on the LSWR main line between Yeovil and Exeter. In May 1863 the LSWR opened a branch from that station, which was renamed Chard Junction in August 1872, to a terminal station at Chard Town. Meanwhile, in September 1866, the Bristol & Exeter Railway opened a broad-gauge line from Taunton to its own station at Chard. This was known as Chard Joint, then simply Chard and, in BR days, Chard Central.

In December 1866 a connection was installed between the LSWR branch and Chard Joint, bypassing Chard Town. Thereafter the LSWR trains either terminated at Chard Town or ran into the B & E (later GWR) station at

Chard Joint where a bay platform was provided for their use. Even after the line from Taunton was converted to standard gauge the passenger service carried on as before, with the LSWR running services between Chard Junction and Chard Town or Chard Joint, while the GWR ran services between Chard Joint and Taunton.

During the Great War economies, both financial and in staff, had to be made and from 1917 Chard Town closed to passengers and all trains used Chard Joint. The GWR took over the passenger service completely although the LSWR, and later the SR, ran freight from Chard Junction to Chard Town which was retained for that traffic. Passenger services from Chard Junction to Taunton were withdrawn with effect from 10 September 1962, but Chard Town remained open for freight traffic until April 1966.

Photo: John J Smith



The closed station at Goudhurst on the Hawkhurst Branch is pictured on 14 January 1965, looking north, having closed on 12 June 1961. Despite the intervening 3½ years it is largely intact apart from the lifted track. Situated in the valley of the River Teise at the crossing of the East/West A262 road, it is located 1 mile from the hilltop village of Goudhurst to the east, but also 300 feet below it.

After many fits and starts the Hawkhurst Branch finally opened on 1 October 1892 between Paddock Wood and Goudhurst (initially named Hope Mill). The Resident Engineer was none other than Holman F. Stevens, later to become famous for his light railways. The branch was extended on to Hawkhurst on 4 September 1893, but later plans to further extend to Tenterden came to nothing. Goudhurst was thus roughly halfway along the branch, and the only passing place on the single line for passenger trains.

The Hawkhurst Branch was always something of a backwater and the passenger timetable changed little over the years. The limited regular Sunday Service was withdrawn at the end of 1916,

although Sunday trains ran for Hop Pickers and friends each September. In the years after World War 2 the Push/Pull trains were worked by 0-4-4T locos of R and R1 classes, and later H Class, from Tonbridge Shed. The 7.32am up train arriving back at 4.50pm was augmented by an additional coach to accommodate around 120 school children. This passenger traffic was the mainstay of the branch, plus Hop Pickers Specials and Specials for the girls of Benenden School, which used larger 4-4-0 locos. Freight traffic before World War 1 was sufficient to justify three trains a day, but by the 1950s this had declined to one, hauled by a C Class 0-6-0, also from Tonbridge Shed.

Photo: John J Smith



The Bluebell Times

*A Newsletter for
Bluebell Railway
Members, Staff and
Supporters*

*The Bluebell Times is published
monthly on the second Friday of
each month. The next issue is
scheduled to be available on 11
February 2022 from [bluebell-
railway.com/bluebell-times](http://bluebell-railway.com/bluebell-times)*

*If you have any comments or
feedback about this issue or
suggestions for future articles
or features, contact:*

*The Bluebell Times editor
Tom James*

bluebelltimes@bluebell-railway.com

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](http://bluebell-railway.com) or follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/bluebellrailway), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/bluebellrailway) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/bluebellrailway).

Contributors to this issue

- ➔ Graham Aitken
- ➔ Gavin Bennett
- ➔ Steve Bigg
- ➔ Vernon Blackburn
- ➔ Paul Bromley
- ➔ David Cable
- ➔ John Creed
- ➔ Gordon Dudman
- ➔ Martin Elms
- ➔ John Fry
- ➔ Derek Hayward
- ➔ Chris Hewison
- ➔ Tony Hillman
- ➔ John Hutchins
- ➔ Tom James
- ➔ Tom Lawson
- ➔ Paul Lelew
- ➔ Barry Luck
- ➔ Geoff Mee
- ➔ Roger Merry-Price
- ➔ Bob Pamment
- ➔ Richard Peirce
- ➔ Tim Preston
- ➔ Roger Price
- ➔ Ruth Rowatt
- ➔ Trevor Swainson
- ➔ Stef van Vuuren
- ➔ Chris Wilson

**28th - 30th May
Road Meets Rail**

Traditional Steam Fair featuring working traction engine displays, miniature engines and a steam driven children's merry-go-



**23rd - 25th September
Bluebell Railway Beer Festival**

In association with CAMRA, join us for great music and a huge range of beers and cider.

**2nd & 3rd July
Model Railway Weekend**

Where miniature meets full size! Ride our trains to see layouts, traders and models at all the stations along the line.



**29th - 31st July
Terrier Gala**

Come and celebrate Terrier No. 672 Fenchurch's 150 birthday. Currently in overhaul and expected to feature in the gala.

**14th - 16th October
Giants of Steam
Autumn Gala**

Thundering giants join our home fleet locos for our annual gala. Special guest engines will be announced, so keep an eye on our website.



**BLUEBELL[®]
RAILWAY
EVENTS 2022**



**November - January
Festive Events**

Santa Specials, Festive Dining Trains and the magical Steamlights experience provide something for the whole family.

**Selected dates throughout 2022
The Golden Arrow**

Our wonderful Pullman dining set returns from maintenance for sumptuous steam hauled luncheons and delicious evening dining.

Kids for a Quid!

Look out for half term bargain tickets for children on our standard timetabled train services - starting with this February Half Term! Check our website for more information.

Event dates are provisional. Look out for updates, details and further events via social media and on our website. Go to our website and subscribe to our email newsletter to be first to hear about ticket releases

www.bluebell-railway.com

