



W11 and No. 70 'Poplar' at Town Place Bridge, 29 July 2022 Photo: David Cable

The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway Members, Staff and Supporters

August 2022

IN THIS ISSUE

Sometimes when it rains, it pours.

Not the weather, of course, which remains blisteringly hot – much hotter, indeed, than “the long hot summer of ’76”, the benchmark of my youth against which are summers are judged. Rather, in operational terms, where fresh on the news that Flying Scotsman could not make it’s visit, the Railway suffered a failure of visiting loco *Poplar* on the first day of the *Fenchurch* birthday celebration – an event which itself happened just too early for the birthday guest of honour! Such things aren’t new: as recounted in this issue (page 13), *Fenchurch* missed its 100th birthday in steam on account of delays in repairs at the time. The good news this year is that in the last couple of days, *Fenchurch*’s boiler has passed its out-of-frames steam test, allowing final reassembly to start.

It is the prevailing weather, though, that may ultimately be the most worrying. The heat causes direct operational problems – risk of rails buckling, lineside fires in dry vegetation, and crew fatigue – which cannot be fully mitigated while continuing to run a service. We have already seen the service pre-emptively reduced to Sheffield Park – Horsted Keynes on some days because of the risk the area around Vaux End. And there is the question of whether passengers wish to have what is essentially an “indoors” day out on such hot days when the garden, the fridge and a cool beer beckon?

The Bluebell is not alone in such issues – the railway forums are full of announcements of services being curtailed or switched to diesel haulage. But it is an unwelcome extra problem coming so soon after the pandemic, during what should be our peak season, when the Railway really needs to be in financial rebuilding mode.

Adapt to survive: who knows, perhaps in five years our service pattern may be very different? Will we see the day on summer evenings when the regular evening Golden Arrow passes *Fenchurch* hauling the sell-out evening land cruises as the discerning prefer to picnic in Victorian splendour in the cool of the evening?

Tom James, Editor

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From Mee to You

By Geoff Mee, chairman, Bluebell Railway Plc

I don't want to hide the fact from you all that we are in a pretty difficult situation and that we are going to have to take some drastic action over the coming months to protect our Railway.

Against the backdrop of the long-term reduction in visitor numbers that has previously been mentioned in this newsletter, the combined management team have been generating a commercial plan that would reverse this trend and enable us to break even for our basic operating expenditure.

This was going to be driven by our great reputation for putting on some of the best events in the heritage railway calendar. This year was centred on the visit of *Flying Scotsman* and the special events that we had planned around this visit.

As most of you are aware by now, that visit is not going to happen this year due to an unexpected problem with the loco which could not be repaired in time for *Flying Scotsman's* visit.

The good news is that we have secured the loco for next year, its 100th Birthday and most people who had booked are opting to keep their pre-paid tickets for travel next year.

The bad news is that that leaves a huge gap in our income for 2022 and puts additional pressure on the budget for 2023.

The combined Boards of the Preservation Society, the Trust and the Plc met at the end of July for an emergency joint Board meeting to review the implications and decide what we could all do to turn the situation around. All departments committed to an action plan to enable new events to take place quickly that will bolster our income and at the same time build our resilience to other pressures.

The plans that are being developed will not of themselves bridge the gap and we will have to use a significant amount of our reserves that were built up last year to keep us afloat this year and next. The emerging two-year plan will hopefully see us break even again in 2024.

Commercial are developing new initiatives and events that we can use to fill in the hole left by *Scotsman* such as more Footplate Tasters and possibly Guard's experiences and Signal Box experiences. Also planned are additional Ice-Skating rink opportunities, additional catering trains and a potential train running opportunity over the Christmas period – details will follow shortly. Further ideas may see the reinstatement of Autumn Tints and Bluebell Spring Specials. We need to set a timetable that builds around our core Saturday offering that is attractive for a "day out" to our visitors but maximises revenue by filling all the seats while minimising our operating costs – a big ask but one we need to specify quickly.

In order to make this work we need to accelerate some of the restoration and repair work in Carriage & Wagon to get Car 54 out in service, the Observation Car and the 4-wheelers back in service and to clear the long-term restoration projects out of the repair shop. In order to accelerate this programme, we are looking at additional jacking capacity to streamline underframe repairs and expanding specialist volunteer teams to help with maintenance programmes. We will also look at how we can speed up the door lock replacement for the Metropolitan set as it has to come out of service in January to ensure future safe operation. We may need to outsource some of this work to meet the timescales.

We also need to speed up the delivery of additional locos from our own fleet as hiring in additional locos is extremely expensive. There is also a real need to make our existing fleet more reliable with fewer failures in service. To this end a hired-in Reverse Osmosis plant has arrived and if a test on one of our locos proves successful, we will look to purchase a larger plant to safeguard our fleet.

We need a committed programme with realistic dates for *Fenchurch*, *Archie* and *Beachy Head*: all possible for next year's Operational Locos list.

The big-ticket items are with the infrastructure team where the Boards have committed to the comprehensive repair of Vaux End which is a massive 26-panel re-lay that will enable goods trains and 4-wheelers to run over the whole length of the line offering up lots of additional opportunities for commercial to develop.

All of this means concentrating ALL our efforts and workforce – paid and volunteers – on delivering the vital objective of keeping the Bluebell on track for recovery. Our longer-term aspirations will have to be put on hold until we have secured a firm foundation for the Railway's future.

So, you will no doubt ask: if we are losing money, how on earth are we going to pay for all these projects? In some cases, where the outcome is within the charitable objectives of the Trust, we can utilise the Trust monies – much of which is ringfenced for specific uses – such as the Brighton Atlantic or Jewel in the Crown projects – or within the defined terms of the legacies and donations that have been received. We need to invest the company's funds wisely to reduce costs. We are planning to put solar panels on our larger buildings to reduce the eye-watering costs of energy with electricity currently running at £750 per day.

Coal, materials and energy costs are increasing before our eyes and I need everybody to do their bit to 'Turn it Off' when not in use and turn it off overnight and during holiday periods. I don't want to hear stories of electric heaters being left on when the outside temperature is 40 degrees: it's a huge fire risk as well as being totally irresponsible.

We received some very favourable coverage in the heritage press for the brave decision of the Preservation Society to release the Yankee Tank to a preservation group who will restore it rather than let it rot in the Horsted Keynes yard. It was a decision that I wholly endorse and there need to be more decisions like that. We do not have the workshop

space, manpower or funds to repair all the items in storage, so we need to prioritise what we can reasonably restore AND importantly continue to maintain into the future and let other heritage railways preserve and restore those items not on our 'must-do' list in order that they can be saved for posterity.

On the bigger subject of future preservation, some traditionalists insist that we should run only steam trains to the exclusion of everything else. I cannot support this view.

If we look at the impact of climate change and our experience of this summer with lineside fires, we need a small amount of diesel motive power or we run the risk of a prohibition notice from the Fire Service or the Office of Rail and Road. I am asking the Society to evaluate what we need in terms of traction to mitigate this risk.

Times are tough at present, and we all need to work together to implement changes, not just talk about it. I am asking all departments to put together detailed action plans based on the decisions made at the joint Board meeting. We will then monitor the effectiveness of each initiative.

Trust chairman Vernon Blackburn, Preservation Society chairman Paul Churchman and I were impressed with the commitment of all participants at the Board meeting and are committing to hold joint Board meetings twice a year, once in late Spring to review the effectiveness of the previous year and once when we have put the budget to bed for the following year. Also, despite the difficulties at present, we are also committed to the Volunteers' Workshops to be held in January and February: details and dates in the Autumn.

Best regards,

Geoff

Bluebell Railway Beer Festival

In association with the Sussex Branches of CAMRA

23 – 25 September 2022

BEER - MUSIC - FOOD - STEAM TRAINS!

Come to a beer festival with a difference at the Bluebell Railway! Imagine sipping a special Sussex brew in the industrial splendour of a locomotive running shed, listening to great bands, and watching steam trains puff up and down the line. Hop on that train and journey to other stations to tick another great beer or cider off your list.

THE BEER

Once again, the Bluebell Railway's Beer Festival will be proudly supported by the Sussex Branches of CAMRA.

Choose from 90 different cask beers and enjoy a fine selection of cider and perry too! Beer aficionados will be pleased to hear that priority will be given to Sussex breweries, with an aim of offering each local brewery an opportunity of supplying one of their ales, likewise with cider and perry.

Our largest bar will be situated in the locomotive running shed at Sheffield Park Station alongside the main stage, but there will be ten special cask ales at the Horsted Keynes Station and likewise, ten different ones at East Grinstead Station. That's a great start to your visit if you are coming from East Grinstead and a reason to steam through the countryside and visit the unique and rural location of Horsted Keynes Station. Regular shuttles will run between Sheffield Park Station and Horsted Keynes Station all day, as well as operating our full line service.

All beers will be individually priced and sold by pint, half pint and third pint – giving the festival goer plenty of flexibility. A simple beer token system will be in operation, with beer tokens available for sale from outlets across the railway.



CRAFT BEER TAKEOVER IN THE BESSEMER ARMS!

Our pub-restaurant on Platform 1 at Sheffield Park will be open all weekend, serving a full bar of drinks, snacks, hot food and of course – craft beer!

A beer list will be supplied on the day so you can keep track of your favourites and find them!

"But I don't drink beer and I want to come with my friends and enjoy great music, food and steam trains!"

Don't worry – there's nothing stopping you! Other refreshments will be available through our licensed outlets including wine, spirits and non-alcoholic beverages.

Our Main Bars at Sheffield Park Station will be open 12pm – 11pm Friday, 11am -11pm Saturday and 12pm – 5pm Sunday.

FOOD

Our catering outlets will be open and serving a range of hot and cold snacks. In addition, there will be mobile catering vans serving delicious offerings such as Pie and Mash, Pizza and more. The majority of these offerings will be situated at Sheffield Park Station, but snacks and light bites will be available at other stations.

THE TRAINS

A busy timetable of steam trains will be running throughout the days, including Friday and Saturday evening. The bar at Sheffield Park Station will close at 11pm and a service to East Grinstead will transport revellers homeward following that. Two earlier evening trains will ensure that people travelling from the North end of our line get a full evening at Sheffield Park Station and that visitors with London bound journeys via East Grinstead main line station are in time to catch the last train home again.

Timetables for train services over the weekend will be release very soon and will be found here.

THE MUSIC

We are pleased to announce a great line-up of music over the weekend, culminating in a splendid Sunday afternoon session with popular local band – The Blunter Brothers. Enjoy a lazy Sunday afternoon with great music, great beer and make the most of the end of the day discounts and take-aways!

SteamLights Tickets Now Available

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

[SteamLights](#) returns in 2022 with a sparkling new theme and a new lighting-up performance to capture your imagination.

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 brand new sparkling displays, music and narration, this is a steam train experience not to be missed!

Before boarding, witness the new, big switch-on performance as we light up the darkness of Sheffield Park station

Board for the magical journey and be seated in the luxury of your own compartment with your party. Why not make it a whole family affair or bring a group of friends to make the most of the compartment? Then add a special picnic box stuffed with tasty treats and drinks at time of booking and we will put them in your compartment to make the journey extra special!

Journey through the Sussex countryside under cover of darkness, bringing shimmering light and colour as you go. Along the way, enjoy new festive-themed scenes among the trees and clearings and a colourful light show orchestrated in time with music and narration. A multi-sensory feast!



Photo: Dave Bowles

Arrive at Horsted Keynes Station and disembark for 30 minutes to take photographs of your spectacular train covered in lights. The atmospheric country station adorned with lights and festive decoration provides the perfect backdrop.

As you return to Sheffield Park, enjoy a second chance to sparkle through the countryside and view the festive scenes you may have missed the first time.

The whole experience will be approximately 1 hour 30 minutes.

SteamLights will be running on selected dates from 10 November to 8 January.

Jewel in the Crown - July Progress Update

Words and photos by Bob Darvill, Buildings Manager

The painting has continued through some hot weather in July with the relocation of the high scaffold to the north end of the Station House. This enables the high-level cast iron gutters to be removed for renovation. Meanwhile, at the front, decoration is nearing completion with fresh topcoats making a real difference especially to the porch.

Of course, much of the station is still a work in progress. The platform trench excavation has progressed well and is ready to install service ducts that will contain the power and data cables – these having previously interweaved through the canopy structure. Once backfilled, the work can progress trackside with the removal of more zinc roofing and repairs to the canopy structure.

The heavy carpentry work has been focused on the accessible southern end of the canopy. Where necessary, replacement timbers have been fashioned to the correct profiles and reset in place. This has included some large cross-section support

beams, which with the valence detailing also being reinstated is looking good.

We have been preparing and planning for the restoration in the centre portion of the canopy. Many of these timbers are deeply compromised by decay. Whilst some may be preserved, others must be replaced. The surgical process of cutting out and removal will weaken the remaining structure and a robust method of supporting the whole canopy is needed. We have commissioned design work for a sufficiently strong temporary support framework to do this. As soon as we can get access, this will be put in place so the work can continue safely without risk of collapse.

Off site, our specialist zinc roofing contractors are in contact and are gearing up to be with us from mid-September. We look forward to welcoming them to Horsted Keynes and to start the process of re-covering roofs. I look forward to reporting that in a near future update.



Can You Just ... Marry Me?

By Graham Aitken, Senior Station Master, Sheffield Park Photo by Chris Knibbs

Signing on for duty on day three of the Fenchurch Birthday weekend I was met by the Operations Manager, Chris Knibbs, who asked, as usual, can you just ... help out with a wedding proposal? My answer was obviously yes and then the details were explained.

I was introduced to Steve who would be asking the question and advised that he and Chris would be joining the footplate crew on 30541 when it ran round after arrival of the 1015 from East Grinstead. Whilst on the single line before running back into Platform 1 and coupling up to its train, ready to depart at 11:50, Chris tied white ribbons to the front of the loco and fitted a headboard reading "Keavy, Will You Marry Me?"

Whilst this was going on Chrissie Knibbs was in the Birch Grove Suite with Keavy, as part of her first visit to the Railway and was being shown round where Chrissie often works as a member of the catering team. Once all was ok on the loco, I was a

to make the initial PA announcement advising passengers that the 11:50 train was now ready for boarding. Chrissie then brought Keavy down to Platform 1 where I met them outside the Signal Box. The Signaller then cleared the signal to allow the loco to proceed into Platform 1 by which time I had positioned Keavy at the point where the loco would stop prior to coupling up to its train. Steve then stepped off the loco, to the surprise of Keavy who thought that he was at work. Steve asked her to accompany him to the front of the loco, showed her the headboard, got down on one knee and asked her to marry him.

He then raised his thumb which was my signal that she had answered YES and to announce the train again, but this time advising the passengers of what had just taken place and asking them to join the station staff in congratulating the happy couple. A loud cheer erupted.

A brilliant start to my day!



Volunteering Update

By Graham Aitken, Volunteer Co-ordinator

Whilst our Railway is always delighted to welcome all new volunteers, I am particularly pleased to be able to inform readers that at Sheffield Park station we have been able to reactivate the grade of Junior Porter by welcoming four under-18s as new members of our station staff.

This is a very significant development as our Railway should always look to the future and encourage tomorrow's Station Masters, and similar necessary positions within all of our departments, to join us and hopefully enjoy themselves whilst undertaking roles that could possibly lead to a future career in the railway industry.

There is a wealth of experience amongst the current Sheffield Park station staff who, I know,

will be only too willing to pass on examples of their knowledge and skills to our new junior colleagues.

We can also give them advice of how to make (and drink) tea!

I am sure that there are many other departments across the railway that might benefit from an injection of youth and would encourage you to think about what your department could offer to those gF Club members who are approaching the Club's upper age limit of 16, but who might want to continue volunteering at Bluebell.

They might not know where to find you, but it might be worth your effort trying to find them.

Initially please contact me at volunteer.coordinator@bluebell-railway.com and I will put you in touch with the gF Club organisers.

New Footbridge for East Grinstead

Words and photo by Roy Watts, East Grinstead Senior Station Master

On 9 July, the old footbridge at East Grinstead (SR) station was demolished using a rather large crane to remove the old preformed sections.

The following day, the new footbridge was opened to step passengers but the lifts enabling the station to become step free are currently in the process of being commissioned.

There will be an official opening in September and there will be a Bluebell connection which will be reported in October's edition of *The Bluebell Times*.



Sleeping Giants Can't Say Cheese

By Tom Newble

It has been a busy period for the 'Awake the Giant' team, since their previous meeting in May, when the team had a walk around 92240, trackside, whilst meeting at Horsted Keynes.

The Terrier Gala proved to be a busy but exciting weekend for the team, firstly it was lovely to see so much interest in the project and 92240 but it also coincided with the team's next and more recent meeting. As well as launching a Photo Competition. Lastly it was also the day of the social BBQ evening at Sheffield Park.

Andy Taylor who was at the evening with a donation bucket which by 21.00 stopped rattling due to the number of notes in, Andy said the evening was a great success!

SAY CHEESE

The Photo competition launched on the opening of the Terrier Gala and closes on the 4th November, just after the Giants of Steam gala.

Competition Details:

Categories

There are two age categories for the 'Awake the Giant' Photo Competition:

15s and under with Parental Consent

Category: Anything Bluebell (inc. Galas and visiting locomotives)

Over 16s

Categories:

1. Visiting locomotive(s) at the Bluebell Railway
2. Best Bluebell Railway gala photo
3. Best Bluebell photo

Prizes

There are a range of amazing and wonderful prizes up for grabs. Each category will have a winner and one runner-up.

Prizes will be sent out in November 2022.

Entries

Please donate a minimum of £3 per entry by clicking on the Donate button here: <https://www.bluebell-railway.com/donate/> and scroll down to 'Awake the Giant' option.

If you wish to enter the competition or have any questions, then please speak to Tom Newble at awakethegiant@outlook.com

The team are available to meet and discuss the progress of 92240 and the project, 'Awake the Giant' at various Galas and running days throughout the year. If you're about at the railway, please do come and say Hi! If you would like to join the team and help fundraise, manage the stall, help restore the locomotive or show your support, please do get it touch with Andy at andy.taylor@bluebell-railway.com

Education Team End of Term Report

The Bluebell Railway's education team have produced an end of term report summarising a busy time for school groups.

The volunteers have run 23 trips this summer – starting on 5 April and ending on 15 July. The 23 trips were for 20 primary schools, one secondary school and two home educator groups. In total 967 children and 211 adults visited the Railway during the summer term – the largest group was a whole school outing from Skippers Hill in Mayfield for a WWII trip.

Education volunteer Sarah Moss said: "Many schools who visit the Railway do so year after year and, of

course, school trips build an important and enthusiastic young fan base to sustain the future of the Bluebell."

There have been 17 topic-based days and six WWII days delivered by 23 dedicated volunteers. Schools have come from far and wide: from Wallington and Bromley in the north; Eastbourne, Lancing and Brighton in the south; Storrington and Horsham in the west; Mayfield and Maresfield in the east. There are also many other more local schools who have visited from Lindfield, Haywards Heath and Newick to name but a few. And there are lots of school trips already confirmed for the autumn term in September and October with many more expected to take place.

Museum Curator's Jottings

By Tony Drake, museum curator Photos by Tony Drake unless stated

Since becoming curator of the Bluebell Railway museum in 2007, there have been many changes and improvements. The museum on platform 2 at Sheffield Park was housed in the original waiting room which had a small rickety extension at the north end. Fortunately by the time I became curator, a scheme for rebuilding and extending the museum using Heritage Lottery Funding was well under way.

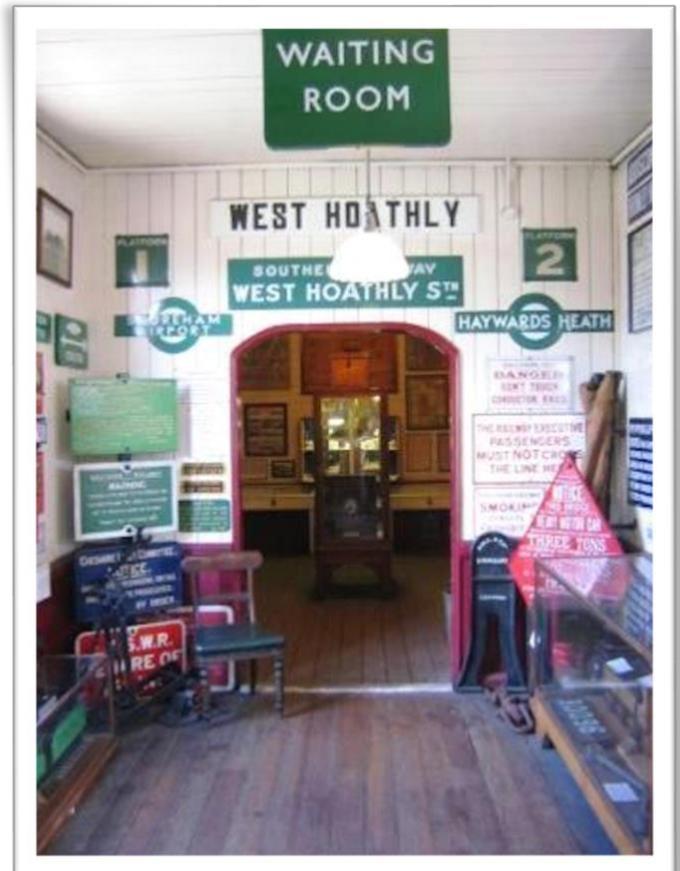
A working party was formed to carefully record and wrap all of the existing artefacts ready for storage in a General Utility Van (GUV). Work then commenced on the partial demolition of the old building and construction and extension of the excellent building we have today.

In the meantime artefacts were being prepared for the new displays. A long-standing favourite, London Jack, was re-furbished by a taxidermist recommended by the Natural History Museum and 'Whippingham', one of the model ships on loan from the National Railway Museum, was taken to the Science Museum workshops for conservation work.

On 23 June 2011 the new museum was officially opened by Lord Faulkner, president of the Heritage Railway Association.

A small group of stewards was formed to be on duty when the museum is open. The number has now grown to more than 30. The stewards interact with visitors, demonstrate the operation of the Withyham signal box and deal with the day-to-day housekeeping.

The signal box, donated by a Bluebell member, has been a great attraction. On its arrival it had to be lifted over the carriage shed and swung round onto the newly built locking room base. In so doing it passed the starter signal, then nearby at the end of Platform 1. As far as we know it is the only signal box that has ever passed a signal at danger! All visitors are welcome but one appeared



Top:
The old museum

Bottom:
London Jack

to have crept in without a platform ticket and was unceremoniously removed.

Over the ensuing years there have been many special events and external exhibitions at museums in Sussex – East Grinstead, Crawley, Brighton and Cuckfield. In addition we have had a Royal visitor – HRH Duke of Gloucester – who took a great interest in our museum.

The museum is part of the Bluebell Railway Trust. Its operation is overseen by the Museum Management Committee. At present the museum is accredited by Arts Council England and is a member of the Sussex Museums Group.

Every 'normal' year since 2011 more than 40,000 visitors have found their way over to our museum. Many are surprised by both the size of the museum and the vast range of items on display. A recent survey of the visitors' book revealed that visitors had come from more than 51 different countries.

On the one hand we provide information, entertainment and interactive fun for all the family. On the other hand, for those more interested, we tell in detail the amazing story of both the Bluebell and the railways of southern England. The Bluebell Museum, together with our archive, is a nationally important centre for research.

I shall be retiring as curator at the end of December 2022. If anyone would like to take on the interesting role of curator, overseeing the day-to-day operation of the museum, please contact me either in the museum or by email: curator@bluebell-railway-museum.co.uk

You can read more about Tony Drake's contribution to the museum and the Railway in the 'Five Minutes With ...' feature in [Issue 7](#) of The Bluebell Times, pp 8-9. All [previous issues](#) can be downloaded from the Railway's website.



Top: All visitors are welcome, but you must have a valid ticket!

Middle: Signal passed at Danger (Photo: Sam Bee)

Bottom: Lord Faulkner opens the new museum (Photo: Bluebell Railway Museum Archive)

New Additions to the Museum Website

By Chris Wilson, Bluebell Railway archive volunteer

The Museum Archive team are pleased to announce that the next instalment of John Scrace's superb stations, signal boxes and infrastructure photographs have been added to the Museum website. There are 285 this month with the locations beginning with the letter 'H'.

The views included here for August are all from John Scrace's hometown of Horsham.

VIEWING AND ORDERING

To view and order go to www.bluebell-railway-museum.co.uk and click on the Archive tab. There are various searching methods, including by locomotive number or class and location. The content key search allows you to see all the images of a particular type, for example, all the images taken of Fenchurch. Use the New key to see all the latest images including those mentioned and shown here and the Nearly New key to see what we added last month.



Left: [081868] Looking towards Horsham signal box during track relaying work, 9 May 1976. John Scrace

Below: [081763] Horsham Signal Box, 8 May 1967. John Scrace



The Stroudley Terriers - Part 2

By Lewis Nodes, Locomotive Department
Photos by Bluebell Railway Museum Archive

In Part 1 of this article we covered the history of the Stroudley Terriers, and Fenchurch in particular, from their roots in the Highlands of Scotland to final withdrawal by British Railways over ninety years later. Now in part 2, former locomotive director Lewis Nodes tells the story of Fenchurch over its near-sixty year stay on the Bluebell Railway.

By 1962 Bluebell had obtained a fleet of locomotives suitable for operating the railway as it was then, and as the closure of the Hayling Island branch approached there would be an opportunity to purchase another Terrier locomotive. Of the two oldest locomotives No 32636 was of most interest, having spent much of its life working not far away in Newhaven, so this was the chosen one.

A fund was setup to raise the money, but the cash didn't exactly roll in, and Bluebell had many other things on its shopping list – including buying the railway. The engine was offered to Bluebell for £750, but finding the cash proved challenging. A number of companies in London's Fenchurch Street were approached for sponsorship, but this was unsuccessful. A donor proposed to provide some funding, but this didn't appear, however thanks to personal intervention by Dr Beeching it was stored at Eastleigh until we had found the money to buy it. How this was achieved is not recorded, but April 1964 it was.

Fenchurch arrived on 13 May 1964. The move included the LBSCR milk van. Initially it was required to have a guard for the movement, but instead an inspector covered that, and *Fenchurch* arrived propelling the van.

Being in working order, it was put to work almost straight away. The first act as new owner was to paint over the British Railways emblems, and the leading digit 3 so it temporarily reverted to No. 2636. When time was available, it was fully repainted into its Newhaven Harbour Co. livery of



Top: Passing through Ardingly en route to the Bluebell Railway, 13 May 1964

*Middle: 30 May 1964, just after arrival on the Railway. Still in BR livery without emblems, and renumbered 2636
Photo: R.C. Riley [105284]*

Bottom: Five months later, on 2 October 1964, now as No. 72 in Newhaven Harbour Company livery. Photo: R.C. Riley [105304]

black with red lining, but with the name on the left tank and the harbour company's name on the right tank. From then until July 1970 it was fairly busy, this being a time of frequent use of the small engines, running 11,520 miles.

With the loco's centenary approaching it was given an overhaul, however one component was delayed causing its return to service to be delayed until 4 November 1972. This time it was painted in the same harbour company livery, but with the name on both sides.

Fenchurch continued its service, generally with two or three carriage trains, sometimes just the observation car, and occasionally with four carriages. In 1975 it went to the event at Shildon for the 150th anniversary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, where it under Locomotive Superintendent Jack Owen's leadership, it stood out from the crowd of larger locomotives by its pristine cleanliness (and the white coal!). (See cover of the July Issue – Ed.)

After returning home, trouble was found with the inner firebox, so it was withdrawn from service for overhaul, having run 4,842 miles over three years.

At that time the workshop was not equipped to undertake the work required, so local engineering firm Luggs of Billingshurst were contracted to replace the firebox with a new one made of steel. The whole overhaul was completed for it to run again on 2 August 1980.

Whilst we continued to run 2 and 3 car trains, more of the trains were longer by now, so there was more use of double-heading. A "big" train could be hauled by two small locos, or a small loco and a medium loco. The small locos also performed shunting, although they were not designed for that. Its last run was on 31 March 1989, when a crack occurred through the hub of one of the front wheels. In this spell of running it covered 7,009 miles.

If *Fenchurch* were to run again it would need a new wheelset, so Clive Emsley setup the *Fenchurch* Fund to enable this, and Brian Wilkie made a pattern for casting the new wheels. After a number of years of relatively small-scale fundraising, the new wheelset was made. There

wasn't spare capacity for the workshop staff to undertake the overhaul, so the volunteer Villa Team undertook this work. For this overhaul there was relatively little done on the boiler, although it was expected that the next time it would require a heavy overhaul. It was noticeable that almost all the motion parts had the engine's original number stamped on them, in copperplate-script numerals, the only exception being the valve spindles (one of which has the number 734, the LSWR number of the Isle of Wight Railway's No. 8, originally No 46 'Newington').

With a view to restoring the locomotive to an earlier guise, a proposal was submitted to return it as far as reasonably possible to its original appearance, which was approved. The principal work was to change to drum-type smokebox on its cast saddle with the traditional D-shape smokebox, and make new splashers with the sandboxes combined (they aren't actually boxes, as it now doesn't have sanding fitted), also to make replica feedwater heating pipes, and an original-style chimney.

When this proposal became known we were contacted by the now-late Dick Riley who offered loan of a chimney cap he had, formerly on No. 59 *Cheam*, so that we could have a replica made of it. Swindon Copper Boilers were contracted to make the pipes and repair the chimney cap, however when they reported that the chimney cap needed only minor repairs, Mr Riley kindly donated it to us so that we have a genuine one.

Now it would have been an option to paint *Fenchurch* in Improved Engine Green at that time, however much of its work would likely be with the LNWR observation car, which is a pretty good lookalike for a Brighton "balloon" motor trailer. So on 31 January 2001 *Fenchurch* returned to service painted in Mr Marsh's umber brown, initially for trial running with stick-on "LB&SCR" lettering, then permanently with the name, and wooden numberplates as some of the class had been given. Having been sold in 1898, this was the first time it had carried this colour, which looked just right with the observation car. There was thought of a repaint into IEG at some point, but that didn't happen, partly because we kept using it.



In Marsh umber as No. 672, near original A1 condition, February 2002

The next ten years proved to be a busy time for Fenchurch, with lots of work with various formations of small trains, culminating in the four Metropolitan carriages which provide a good number of seats, and look just the part.

This decade was a busy time for visiting other railways. First came a trip over the water to the Isle of Wight Railway, where Fenchurch was quite at home with their air-braked carriages. This was followed by a trip further over the water, to a short stay at our sister-railway Stoomcentrum Maldegem in Belgium, and a longer stay at Stoomtram Hoorn-Medemblik in the Netherlands. Lastly, Fenchurch made a visit to the Kent and East Sussex Railway.

So that decade was a busy time, and Fenchurch ran 25,526 miles, bringing its total to 1,158,420.

The overhaul just being completed is the most comprehensive Fenchurch has had for a very long time, so with appropriate use it should give good service for some time to come. We have a good collection of appropriate vintage carriages, but the most appropriate will be our set of 4-wheel LBSCR and LCDR carriages. When this set reaches six vehicles, it will make a train which will be historically interesting, attractive to discerning visitors, relatively cheap to operate, and something few heritage railways can do. Let's hope we can make good use of it.

On This Day, 12 August

By Tony Hillman, assistant museum curator

Three pictures from the Bluebell Photographic Archive taken on 12 August. Thanks to Martin Elms, John Creed, Richard Peirce, Roger Merry-Price and Chris Wilson for finding the pictures and providing the notes.



Shown above is the main entrance to the first Gatwick Airport station, viewed from the west and photographed on 12 August 1956.

The current Gatwick airport and station are situated on the site of what was known from the 1930s, as Gatwick racecourse and station. Most people passing through it will be unaware of the original airport and station, which were less than a mile further south on the Brighton main line.

In the 1930s local landowners sold a parcel of land to enable an airport and station to be built. The intention was to rival the then main London Airport at Croydon, where the buildings were in the Art Deco style. Thus the station was built in a similar style, including the front entrance visible in the picture.

The terminal was in a roundel shape and called 'The Beehive'. It was also finished in the Art Deco style; the final touches were the covered gangways to the aircraft steps. The whole purpose was to impress on prospective passengers that they could get from Victoria Station to the steps of the plane without being subjected to the weather.

To this end a tunnel was built from the station to inside the terminal building.

The station was originally named 'Tinsley Green for Gatwick' and opened on 30 September 1935; the airport opened on 17 May 1936 with a flight to Paris. Shortly afterwards the station was renamed Gatwick Airport. During the war the RAF used the airport, mainly for training. Post-war the passenger services resumed, until in the early 1950s it was decided to build a brand-new airport and station on the site of the racecourse complex. As the sites overlapped, the original airport closed from 1956, though the station remained open.

Her Majesty the Queen opened the new Gatwick Airport, then consisting of just the current South Terminal, along with a new station on 28 May 1958. The original station closed the day before, but it wasn't until the late 1970s that the site was completely demolished, almost without trace.

Photo: John J Smith [40960]



Friday 12 August 1960 and just five days after the Bluebell Railway commenced its services to the public! SR Class W 2-6-4T No. 31920 of Norwood Junction shed (75C) is on a southbound freight near Lillie Bridge, possibly the 1.20 pm train from Old Oak Common yard to Norwood Junction yard. The locomotive was built at Ashford Works in August 1935 and spent most of its life on 'yard to yard' freight services, especially across London, being allocated to Hither Green from new and then Norwood Junction from January 1936 until withdrawal in July 1963. It was subsequently cut up at Eastleigh in February 1964. The class, although highly successful as a freight locomotive, remained banned from passenger train use following the Sevenoaks derailment in 1927 involving another type of 2-6-4T, the River class.

The photograph was taken from the Cromwell Road (A4) overbridge looking north with Earl's Court Junction in the distance and behind the photographer the large London Transport depot and workshops of Lillie Bridge.

The two electrified tracks on the left lead from Earl's Court via West Kensington Junction to Kensington Olympia (formerly Addison Road until 1946). The W tank is on the West London Extension Railway opened in 1863, since electrified and in frequent daily use by both London Overground and Southern services via Clapham Junction. The single electrified track trailing in from the left served the Lillie Bridge complex.

On the right is the LNWR/GWR joint Warwick Road goods yard opened in 1844, enlarged in 1885 and closed in 1967. The tracks leading to the yard are on the site of the two-mile long Kensington Canal which opened in 1828 from Chelsea Creek on the River Thames. It is possible that some of the buildings in the goods yard, originally known as Kensington Canal Basin, dated back to the original wharves. A lock house from the days of the canal, just out of sight of the camera, survived until the late 1990s before being demolished to make way for a Tesco Superstore.

Photo: David Esau [155355]



West Country Class Pacific locomotive No. 34100 *Appledore* rattles across the junction at Lewes on to the Keymer Line with train No. 1M39, the 11.24am Special from Hastings to Leicester on Saturday 12 August 1961. Made up of London Midland rolling stock, *Appledore* took over the train at Eastbourne departing at 12.09pm, working through to Willesden Jct. where it will hand over to a London Midland locomotive. This train was a return Town Holidays Special. Town Holidays have their origins in the Wakes Week Holidays of Lancashire, where local industries closed down for one or two weeks, often in late July or early August. Due to the considerable number of additional trains running on this day, engine workings were extensively revised, so that having completed the first half of its scheduled duty, *Stewarts Lane Duty 505* was covering this Special. The second half of *Duty 505* was in turn covered by *Stewarts Lane Duty 501*.

Appledore, one of 110 West Country and Battle of Britain Class locomotives, was built at Brighton Works in December 1949. It spent its early years working from Ramsgate Shed and later from

Stewarts Lane; while there it was rebuilt at Eastleigh Works in September 1960. After rebuilding it returned to *Stewarts Lane* and on 11 June 1961 became something of a celebrity when it hauled the last steam-worked *Golden Arrow*. Another noteworthy occasion recorded in the *Railway Observer* was on 1 January 1962, "a day of snow and confusion", when it was recorded passing Canterbury East at 9.16am on the Up *Night Ferry*, piloted by N Class 2-6-0 No. 31412. Sadly for the waiting passengers it didn't stop! In anticipation of *Stewarts Lane* closing to steam it was transferred to Brighton in November 1962 and on to Salisbury in August 1963, from where it was formally withdrawn at the end of steam on the Southern in July 1967, after a life of only 17 years and 7 months.

Photo: Joe Kent [02259]

Job Vacancies



Applications are invited for the post of

COMPETENCE STANDARDS MANAGER

The successful applicant will be responsible for the routine management of the Safety Critical Work training and associated competence management systems applicable to Signalmen, Guards, Shunters and Station staff.

The successful applicant will have a good knowledge of modern training and competence assessment systems and be committed to developing a strong culture of compliance to ensure the requirements of the Safety Management System are met. It will be essential to develop effective working relationships with functional Inspectors and other key operating department players who are embraced by the Safety Management System and the Railway Safety Critical Work (RSCW) regulations.

This is a volunteer post that carries no remuneration or specific hours of duty although the successful applicant will require sufficient time and flexibility to be present at the railway to effectively undertake this role.

If you would like to know more about these opportunities informally in the first instance, then please contact lisa.boyle@bluebell-railway.com



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 9 September 2022 from
bluebell-railway.com/bluebell-times*

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Tail Lamp

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

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

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THE BLUEBELL

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Things to do at The Bluebell

SteamWorks! - Sheffield Park

Learn the science and stories behind steam in our interactive exhibition SteamWorks! Set amongst some of our fabulous collection of locomotives in the running shed at Sheffield Park, get hands-on with interactive displays and even have a go on our Stepney locomotive driving experience!

Elephant Van - Horsted Keynes

Once upon a time there was a railway van which moved Elephants belonging to Billy Smart's Circus from town to town. Now, it provides undercover soft play for little ones and is full of wonderful activities. Look out for it at Horsted Keynes Station, you won't miss it – it's bright red!

Playground - Kingscote

The only thing that interrupts the tranquil atmosphere of Kingscote Station are the sounds of laughter from children playing in the picnic area and playground. A kiosk selling snacks, ice cream and drinks is open at weekends, on special events and during the school holidays. Why not break your journey there?

Museum - Sheffield Park

At Sheffield Park station, on Platform 2, you will find our extensive Accredited Museum. Here we tell the story of the railways, and in particular the Bluebell Railway, through a stunning collection of artefacts, display panels and videos. Visitors are invited to pull a signal lever in the Victorian signal box and children can do a quiz and win a badge. Don't miss it!

Outside space - Various Stations

Aside from our own river-side picnic area at Sheffield Park and generous outside space at Horsted Keynes, the railway is surrounded by a network of footpaths and situated on the edge of the High Weald, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Enjoy views of the Ashdown Forest, home of Winnie the Pooh, as the train winds through the Sussex countryside.

View timetables & book tickets online at:

WWW.BLUEBELL-RAILWAY.COM