



A Victorian study: Fenchurch waits for Stepney on a late-night working. Photo: David Cable

The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway Members, Staff and Supporters

April 2024

IN THIS ISSUE

Why do we do what we do? One answer is in David Cable's captivating heading cover photo of our two Terriers, *Stepney* and *Fenchurch*, recreating a Victorian scene on a Jon Bowers photo charter last month. It's a lost scene we can present so well with an unrivalled collection of historic locomotives and carriages spanning ten decades.

At a deeper level though, the "why" is I think about being part of a collective vision of something of lasting value. "More than just a train ride" is a phrase that can be interpreted in many ways, but for this volunteer at least, it means staying close to our heritage roots. We are about more than just providing a glorified fairground ride in the most cost-effective way possible (vital though financial sustainability is). Rather, we have to inspire a range of feelings in our members, staff and supporters: wonder, awe, curiosity, learning ... The work of teams such as the SR Coach Group and Bluebell Goods Division – reported in this issue – is vital to that end to ensure that we never move to a place of simply running a basic service with a minimum level of homogenous stock on the grounds of expediency.

Whatever else happens around the railway, that is the golden thread that binds us – not only to our immediate peers in the here and now, but to the generations of members and supporters who came before and will – hopefully – come after. The Bluebell has been, and remains, a special place: focusing on what makes it special – "more than a train ride" – will ensure it remains cherished for years to come.

Tom James, Editor

<i>Watts Occurring</i>	2
<i>Paul Churchman</i>	3
<i>Society AGM – 15th June 2024</i>	4
<i>Long Service Awards 2024</i>	4
<i>HRA Privilege Cards</i>	5
<i>Q Class 541 Overhaul Update</i> ..	6
<i>Progress on SR Coach Group Projects</i>	8
<i>Car No. 54 Enters Traffic</i>	9
<i>Goods Division – Before and After</i>	11
<i>Fordson E83W Van</i>	12
<i>Thought of Becoming a Passenger Guard?</i>	13
<i>Maunsell Moves</i>	14
<i>Horsted Keynes Carriage Shop Reopens!</i>	15
<i>More Photos From The Museum Website</i>	17
<i>On This Day, 12 April</i>	18
<i>Volunteer Vacancies</i>	21
<i>Tail Lamp</i>	22

Watts Occurring

By Roy Watts, BRPS Acting Chairman

And so another operating season gets underway and we begin our 64th year!

First though, can I acknowledge the kind messages of support that I have received since "resuming" as your Chairman. [See page 3 – Ed]. I didn't expect it but I'm more than happy to work with you all to ensure firstly that our Railway has the capability to continue to grow and deliver a first-class experience for our visitors; and secondly, we concentrate on what "WE" want to see operating on our Railway. The one thing we must do is to keep up those levels of communication and for us to take responsibility for our actions and this is where I guess I have to say that it doesn't mean we go on some spending spree or start undertaking unfunded and possibly unnecessary projects. We have our plans currently in place so let's stick to them and reappraise in due course.

I'll be covering a number of these as a separate communication but for now, let's concentrate on building on success: after all, we have so many positives going in our favour that they far outnumber any negatives.

However, let's not lose sight of the "what, why, when and how" of what we do.

- What is it we want to achieve? A first-class Railway delivering excellent service, safely and punctually.
- Why do we want to do it? Because we believe in the grand principles of being a key player in building success for the Bluebell Railway whatever our role.
- When? Well, its always by tomorrow unfortunately but we understand it's not

always possible BUT taking ownership and pride in what we do, no matter how long it takes

- And how we do it is in my book by consultation and consolidated teamwork AND continuing to grow the number of people who visit the Railway whether as a passenger or by the many avenues of diversification we offer such as the Training School opportunities that have received excellent publicity in recent journals.

Anyway, you will be pleased to learn that we had a very strong February half-term and that trend has continued over the last few weekends and into the Easter period.

Fingers crossed this will continue as there are many [events](#) planned that hopefully will appeal to the broader spectrum of our customers and enthusiasts alike, several still in the planning stages and yet to be announced. Just look at the line up for this year's [Branch Line Gala](#) and our recently announced guest visitor for [Giants](#), A4 60007 Sir Nigel Gresley (is that three down, three to go?)

There is no golden bullet that will solve any financial difficulties, but we ended 2023 in a stronger position than the previous year and that's where we need to continue that growth from that base level.

I look forward to working and serving you going forward and as always, thank you in advance for your support at this critical time.

Wish you all well and please keep in touch.

Paul Churchman

By Roy Watts, BRPS Vice President and Acting Society Chairman

I am writing to inform you that I have received Paul Churchman's resignation as Chairman of the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society and Bluebell Railway PLC, and also as a Governor of The Bluebell Railway Trust.

The following interim measures, agreed and approved by the Society Trustees and the Company Directors have been put in place:

- Acting Society Chairman – Roy Watts
- Management of the PLC will be overseen by Lisa Boyle, Neil Glaskin and Roy Watts
- Carriage and Wagon will be overseen by Trustees Keith Leppard and James Young

These measures are temporary until replacements are in position.

In the meantime, whilst I am sure that this will come as a surprise, it is very important to remember that the Bluebell Railway will continue as normal especially as we are right on the cusp of a new operating season.

We have seen some really positive events this year and it's important we continue to maintain that level of progress in ensuring the Railway has a strong future.

Obviously you will be kept informed of any changes as they happen and new incumbents are put in place.

As always, I am assured by the continued level of support and commitment of the volunteers and members of the paid staff who want nothing more than to deliver a first-class railway experience to our visitors whilst showing off the high quality of our restorations.



Stepney and Fenchurch, now both sporting Improved Engine Green, recently co-starred in a Jon Bowers photo charter. Fenchurch is seen here late one evening awaiting Stepney on an up passenger working.

Photo: Nick Gilliam

Society AGM - 15th June 2024

By Gavin Bennett, BRPS Secretary

I have received the following nominations for this year's AGM:

Chairman

➔ Roy Watts (currently Acting Chairman)

Trustees (three to be elected)

➔ Laurie Anderson

➔ Michael Hopps

➔ Gordon Parry

➔ James Reeves

➔ Robert Simpson

Society Trust Governor

➔ Colin Tyson

Roy Watts is declared duly elected but please note he will only serve until the AGM in 2026 (which is when his current term as Vice Chairman would have ended).

Colin Tyson is also declared duly elected as the nominated Society Trust Governor.

The AGM documents, including the Ballot form, will be sent out towards the end of May.

Long Service Awards 2024

By Gavin Bennett, BRPS Secretary

At each Annual General Meeting of the Society, it recognises long service as a volunteer to the railway by awarding certificates to those who have achieved 10+, 25, 40, 50 and 60 years service and we also have badges for those who have achieved 25, 40 or 50 years' service.

The Society does not keep records of when people started volunteering and so we rely on the person concerned and/or their manager to tell us.

Following the changes introduced in 2018, the names AND principal duties of those due to receive Long Service Awards will be published in the AGM document. Those submitting their names may submit a short statement (150 to 200 words maximum), setting out what work they have done for the railway and in which department(s). The Awards will be given out much earlier in the meeting, shortly after we have dealt with the essential formal business of the AGM.

WHAT TO DO

If you are due a Long Service Award at the 2024 AGM, having completed, or will complete this year, 10+, 25, 40, 50 or 60 years' service (and we include 2020 as an eligible year!), then you need to send me your name (as you would like it shown on the certificate, e.g. Fred or Frederick), the award category and a short statement (around 150 to 200 words) setting out what you have done on the railway, no later than 5pm on 22 April either by post c/o Sheffield Park Station or by email to gavin.bennett@bluebell-railway.com. There is no set format for the statement but please do include separately your email and/or phone contact details in case I need to get in touch. Overlong statements will be edited.

Please do not rely on the fact that you may have mentioned it to me a while ago since I cannot guarantee that I will have remembered!

HRA Privilege Cards

By Gavin Bennett, HRA Coordinator

The HRA's Privilege Card scheme for 2024 is open and all Staff and volunteers are eligible to purchase these. The cards cost £42 and cover two people, giving discounted or free travel at most Heritage Railways and some Museums in the UK. Special event days are usually excluded. Application is made online at [HRA Privilege 2024 | Heritage Railway Association](#) or, if necessary, by cheque to me at the railway. The HRA despatches cards fortnightly and sent to me in the first instance for verification that you are a member of staff or volunteer. Cards will then be left in SP Booking Office for collection and you will be notified by email when they are ready for collection.



Modified Hall No. 6989 "Wightwick Hall" at Nobles approaching Three Arch Bridge with the 3.40pm train from Sheffield Park on Easter Saturday, 30 March 2024.

Photo: Peter Edwards

Q Class 541 Overhaul Update

By Steve Pilcher, Maunsell Locomotive Society

During March there was good progress on the overhaul of 541's tender.

Thanks to all the work by Melvyn Frohnsdorff to free up the tender tank, it was possible for it to be lifted from the chassis and sent on a lorry to Rolvenden for the 4253 Group to commence work on fabricating a new one. Undercover shelter has been constructed, which will enable the group to progress the project, regardless of the weather.

Back at the Park, Melvyn has continued to remove corroded sections of angle iron that require replacement and also free up the front drag box. Both the front and rear boxes will need to be replaced, and this will result in a robust chassis fit for many years' further work. Meanwhile other

members of the working party have set about removing a great deal of accumulated gunge and rust from what were previously concealed and quite inaccessible areas between the frames, and a start made on repainting.

Hopefully the frames will be able to go into the workshop in April to enable the wheelsets to be removed on the wheeldrop and then sent away for tyre turning.

As can be seen on [Leaky Finders' Facebook page](#), they were working flat out in March to successfully conclude the overhaul of "Clan Line". Now this has been completed, work can restart on replacing the corroded areas of 541's outer firebox wrapper. More on this next time.





Above: Progress with cleaning and painting 541's inner tender frames. Photo: Steve Pilcher

Previous page: 541's tender tank being loaded on a lorry to travel to Rolvenden on 27th February 2024. Photo: Melvyn Frohnsdorff

THE Q NEEDS YOU!

The [Maunsell Locomotive Society](#) has agreed to try and raise £40,000 towards the cost of overhauling the tender and providing a new tender tank. The Q is an ideal size and economical loco for Bluebell operations. It fits in well with the 'Southern' image, and it did actually operate in the vicinity.

Online payments to the appeal can be made by clicking the [DONATE](#) button on the Bluebell website and following the online payment instructions. Select Q Class 541 Overhaul in the drop-down box.

For those who prefer to use cheques, please send a cheque, made payable to the 'Bluebell Railway Trust' (and a [Gift Aid Form](#) – if appropriate) to the Bluebell Railway Trust, Sheffield Park Station, Uckfield TN22 3QL. Please add a note to say it is for the 541 Overhaul Appeal.

At the time of writing, over £35,000 has been put in place towards the target of providing £40,000 towards this project. As ever, a very warm 'thank you' to all concerned who have generously contributed thus far. Please consider assisting reaching the target of £40,000 – and thus play a part in getting this very useful loco, back in action at Bluebell.

Progress on SR Coach Group Projects

Words and photos by Keith Leppard, SR Coach Group

MAUNSELL RESTAURANT CAR 7864

Since the tarpaulins came off the coach on 24 February, we have removed the majority of the window frames and life-expired steel panelling on both sides and the south end. This has exposed the wooden framework, the vertical pillars and intermediate cross rails of which are in generally good condition and will be mostly reused. However, both the bottom sides and cantrails, being made originally of mahogany rather than the teak used for the rest of the frame, have largely rotted away. The replacement teak bottom side (west) is well on the way to being fabricated, with four of the five sections cut and lap-jointed together and mortices for the pillars cut into the first two of these. Two of the sections of cantrail for this side are also in production. We plan to fully dismantle the body over the coming months, renew the floor and then rebuild it on the new bottom sides.

SECR/SR 100-SEATER 971

All 10 of the east side doors have been removed and stripped down, with repairs already completed to several of them. These will be temporarily rehung before the west side doors are taken down for the same treatment. The current plan is that the coach will then be a project that is progressed to a conclusion jointly by several parts of the C&W team.

BULLEID OPEN THIRD 1482

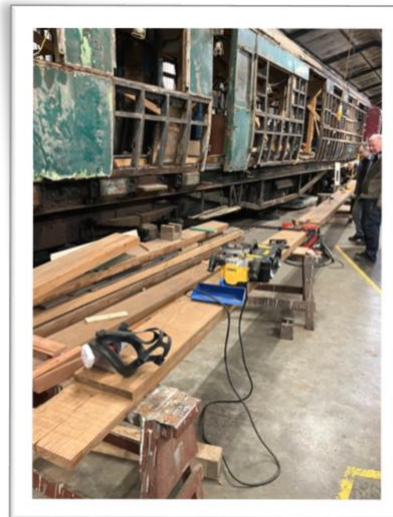
This coach entered the works just before Easter for the long-delayed completion of its intermediate body overhaul, which was begun some years ago in between periods in traffic. One aspect, a complete retrim, was completed by the Trim Shop team at the end of 2023. The main task now remaining is to remove and re-seal the last four of the main and top lights (windows), which are on the northern section of the west side of the coach so we have made a start on removing these. The luggage racks and several other interior components have to be removed before the windows can come out.

GET INVOLVED

Our main workdays are Wednesdays and Saturdays, and both Bulleid and Maunsell teams would welcome more help to get these and other projects done all the sooner. You can find out more about the SRCG on our [web pages](#) and follow our updates on [Facebook](#).



Above: the west side of 7864 after the tarpaulins were removed, 24 February 2024



Left: Sections 2–4 of the new west bottom side for 7864 taking shape alongside the now largely stripped west side of the coach, 3 April 2024.



Above: 1482 with one of its main lights removed for new seals to be fitted, 3 April 2024

Car No. 54 Enters Traffic

Photos by Martin Lawrence

Wheelchair-accessible Pullman Car No. 54 entered traffic this month in our [Golden Arrow Dining Train](#). These photos show the sumptuous interior of the carriage as the finishing touches were applied to its restoration.



Left: The wheelchair-accessible part of the southern saloon. The three chairs are loose and can be removed if required, giving the choice for a passenger to remain in a wheelchair, or swap to a chair as desired.

Below: A composite photo of the former van area of the carriage, now adapted with electric wheelchair lifts on each side. The entrance into the saloon is behind the photographer.





Above: The partition between the north and south saloons, looking south.

Right: The beautiful attention to detail extends even to the toilet, with its distinctive porthole window



Goods Division - Before and After

Photos by Matt Lander, Goods Division volunteer

The [Bluebell Railway Goods Division](#) provides the “before and after” comparison below. The 1937-built LMS 3-plank wagon [No. 474558](#), the Bluebell’s very first ordinary goods vehicle which arrived in May 1965, came into the works last year for what was expected to be a quick intermediate overhaul. However, once the floor was removed, it was discovered that there was significant corrosion on the underframe, which in addition to other repairs has involved the complete replacement of one headstock and the welding on of a new top flange on one sole-bar. The top-planks all round have been replaced, and all the metalwork stripped back and treated to reduce future corrosion. The “after” photo shows it today, and the “before” on 8 May 2023.

The team is currently working on an intermediate overhaul of [SE&CR 2-plank ballast wagon No. 567](#).



Fordson E83W Van

Words and photo by Laurie Anderson, BRPS Trustee and Bluebell Goods Division volunteer

One of the lesser-known assets on the railway is Fordson E83W Van. The wagon gang have become custodians of it and have been restoring it as a background project.

It has gone into Stewart Annis' workshop for repairs to the engine that was thought to be seized and a few bits of bodywork that needed sorting.

The engine has been taken out, inspected and the initial report is that the engine is in a very good state. The previous firm who had done the work on it had done a brilliant job rebuilding it. There is a bearing that is a little tight but will be sorted.

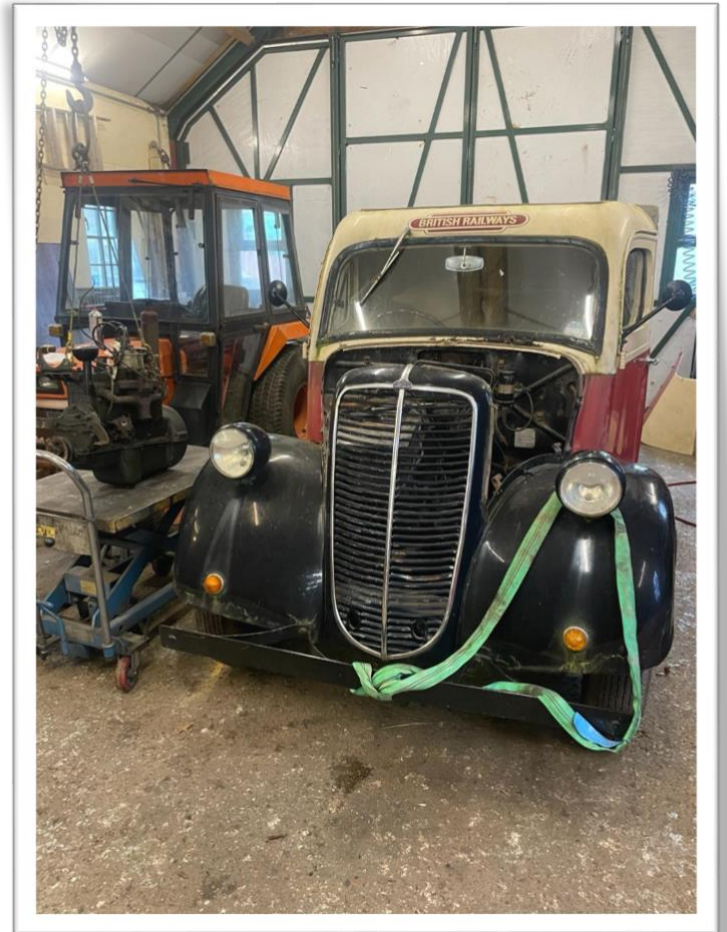
What was causing the engine to lock up when trying to crank it over was the fact that one of the cylinders had been hydraulically locked with oil, water and diesel. After draining out, the engine rotated freely again.

Excellent news, not major work to get the van going again. The tight bearing will be dealt with, new piston rings will be fitted, and all the seals will be changed.

There is some minor bodywork repairs needed from being left outside in the Horsted Paddock Woods, but Stewart can sort this. There is a need to repair both of the wooden door pillars on the back of the van, but replacements can be made in the C&W workshop.

Eventually, once all the repair work is complete, Matthew Lander can give it a paint and make it look new again.

Hopefully, the van will be runnable by mid-summertime all going well. We hope to start using it regularly at events.



Thought of Becoming a Passenger Guard?

By Gordon Dudman and Chris Haynes, Tutors

Beyond the sight of one of our historic steam locomotives, one the most archetypal vision that our visitors see is that of a traditional railway guard standing watch over proceedings with his green flag and whistle to indicate the departure of their service is imminent. The role of a guard is complex; the safety of all passengers using our services rests in their hands. None more so than once our trains leave a station, their safety rests in the hands of the guard and the locomotive crew.

For someone without a railway background, there are a bewildering set of skills that need to be mastered; hand signals to control movements and their associated hand lamp indications. Knowledge of all the signals on the railway, what they control and in what direction your train is going to take. A plethora of rules written in the language of the 1940s and 1950s, setting out what action needs to be taken in the event of any mishap must become second nature to you. Is my train safe to bring into service? What if something untoward happens whilst en route? Even to experienced railway employees, there is much to revisit and remind oneself – can you recall what is to be found in the emergency tool kit carried in each brake van? What happens when your train is to be hauled by a former Southern Railway locomotive today, but yesterday was being hauled by a former Great Western Engine? All these issues, and much more, are covered in a series of 6 training days. Some will be classroom based, but a lot of time will be spent out working rolling stock in either the yard at Horsted Keynes or Sheffield Park. Towards the end of this period, you will then start to work our service trains under the watchful eye of an experienced guard.

Since October last year a hardy bunch of volunteers have been beavering away mastering



the answers to these and many more questions in their quest to become Passenger Guards on the Bluebell Railway. Pictured are Chris Bayly, Pat Beale, Simon Hodges, Julian McGovern, Ian Scrivins, Michael Turley and Andy Ward who along with Andrew Strongitharm (who had to be elsewhere when the picture was taken) are the latest group of guards trainees.

On Sunday 17 March they completed the formal classroom part of their training programme. Over the coming weeks they will be working with a team of Mentor Guards to put all that hard work into practice, as they progress to becoming fully competent Bluebell Railway Passenger Guards.

If you too would like to join the next cohort of volunteers wishing to become Passenger Guards, please contact Peter Underwood, our Guards Roster Clerk, either in person when he's on duty as Station Master at Sheffield Park or by e-mail at puguardsrosters@hotmail.com

Maunsell Moves

Photos Phil Evans

Two photographs of Maunsell U-class locomotives 31618 and 1638 being shunted in preparation for undercover storage in the 'Woodpax' shed at Sheffield Park, where they have joined S15-class 847. They have gone into the spaces vacated by 'Dukedog' 9017 (now at Aberystwyth – see previous issue of *The Bluebell Times*) and Standard Class 4 75027 (now in 'SteamWorks'). 31618 was photographed on 28 March in transit from the dock road, and 1638 is seen on 4 April being made ready at Horsted Keynes for its journey down the line.



Horsted Keynes Carriage Shop Reopens!

By Chris Wilson, Carriage Shop volunteer

After many hours of work from volunteers the new Carriage Shop at Horsted Keynes opened on Saturday 23 March, nearly 35 years to the day that Barry Jones opened the first Carriage Shop in the Southern Railway Maunsell Nondescript Brake No. 4444 carriage that was used before we moved to the Mark 1 that would be our home for almost three decades.

The Carriage Shop is now located next to the Dock at Horsted Keynes station in the [SR Gangwayed Bogie Luggage Van No. 2462](#). The GBL was built in 1931 using extended former LSWR underframes. GBL No. 2462 would see service during the second world war - used as a stretcher van in a casualty

evacuation train. It passed to British Railways, then into departmental service. In 1981 it arrived at the Bluebell, originally intended for use as an exhibition van, it was refitted and used as a kitchen car in the Cutler dining train. After being replaced it lay out of use from the late 1980s, until 1998 when Matthew Cousins adopted the van. Thanks to the work of Matthew and the other volunteers we still have the GBL today in its excellent condition.

It was only fitting that Barry Jones and Matthew Cousin officially opened the new Carriage Shop featuring Matthew's Rail Art and the work of other artists.



We are delighted to be open again and resuming of our fundraising activities.

None this would have been possible without a lot of help and support. Thank you to the Southern Railway Coach Group and the Carriage & Wagon volunteers who restore BY No. 419 – our storage van. Thank you to everyone who helped empty 419 and pack up and empty the old Carriage Shop. Thank you to everyone who helped set up the new shop or had helped in anyway.

The Carriage Shop is open at weekends and sells Railway Art by Matthew Cousins, books, model railway items, postcards, and Horsted Keynes exclusive souvenirs. The funds raised are used to support projects on the Bluebell Railway.

We have had many donation since reopening but we are still in need of donations of any model railway items. Do you have a spare wagon?

We are always pleased to receive donations of books, DVDs, bound magazines, pictures, postcards, photographs, slides, mugs, badges, keyrings or other railway collectables.

If you can help please contact:

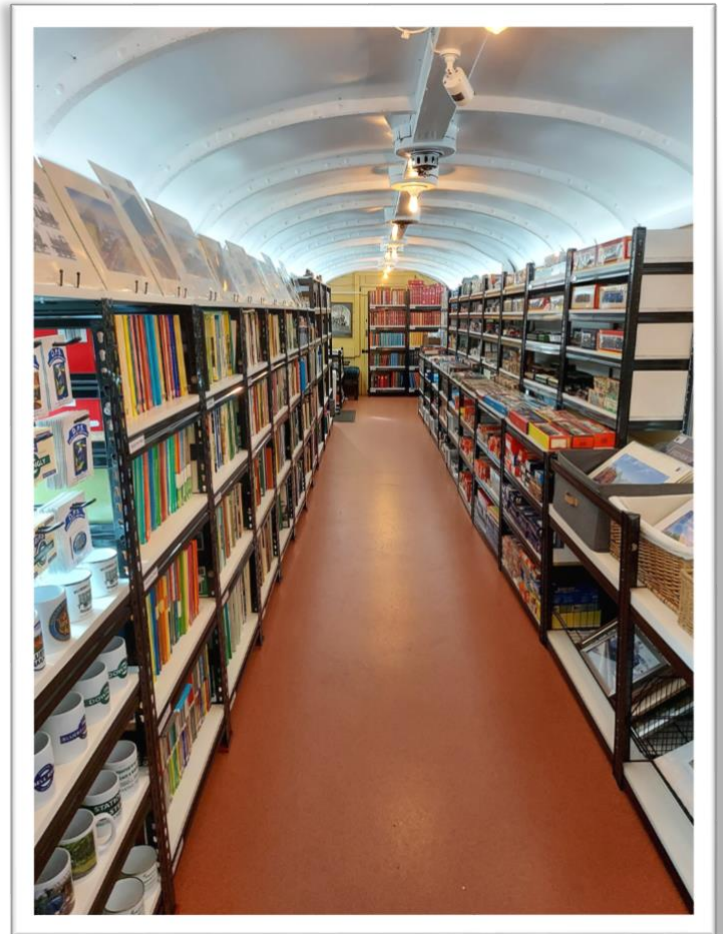
bluebellrailwaycarriageshop@gmail.com

Stay up to date with the latest news and our opening times by visiting our Facebook page: [facebook.com/BluebellRailwayCarriageShop](https://www.facebook.com/BluebellRailwayCarriageShop)

Previous page: Matthew Cousins (left) and Barry 'Jones (right) ready to officially reopen the Carriage Shop on Saturday 23 March 2024.

This page, top: Inside the new Carriage Shop.

Bottom: Matthew Cousins Rail Art display.



More Photos From The Museum Website

By Chris Wilson, Bluebell Railway archive volunteer

This month we have added a further 100 images to the Bluebell Railway Museum website bringing the total now available to 23,668.

This month all of the photographs come from the camera of John Scrace and feature the last of John's SR Merchant Navy class locomotives photographs and the start of Ivatt 2MT 2-6-2T locos.

There have also been updates to the database of the photographs already on the website to address some of the inconsistencies and we have added separate content keys for Electric Locomotives, Diesel Locomotives, Electrical Multiple Units and Diesel Multiple Units to make for easier searching and browsing. Also added is the day of week to the date and Bank Holidays, Easter, Christmas, etc. to the Other Information field.

Top: Merchant Navy class No. 35024 'East Asiatic Line' on the 10.30 am Waterloo to Bournemouth West service passing B4 No. 30102 at Winchester City, on 20 September 1962.

Photo: John Scrace [141822]

Right: Ivatt 2MT 2-6-2T No. 41260 on 6.26 pm to Brighton and 4-CEP No. 7134 with the 5.02 pm Victoria to Littlehampton at Horsham station, on 22 April 1964.

Photo: John Scrace [141890]



VIEWING AND ORDERING

Every photograph sale directly helps the Photograph Archive giving us much needed funds to invest in conservation and storage materials. The information needed to pay for orders online by BACS is now included on every order form.

To view and order go to www.brm-archive.co.uk. 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 Pullmans. 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.

On This Day, 12 April

By Tony Hillman, Deputy Curator

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



At the junction station of Crowhurst, H Class 0-4-4T 31162 is in charge of the Bexhill West Branch two coach push/pull train on Friday 12 April 1958. Having provided a cross-platform connection with a Hastings to London train, it is shunting from the Up Bay to the Down Bay to provide a similar connection with a London to Hastings train. 31162 is working St Leonards Duty 410, which with Duty 409, covered all the branch passenger trains. Soon after this date the steam hauled trains were replaced by a 2-car DEMU on 9 June 1958 until the branch closed on 14 June 1965, freight having ceased earlier on 9 September 1963.

To the left of the train is the substantial Crowhurst signal box, originally No2 later "B", it was a typical South Eastern Railway building. It contained an 87-lever frame, although by the time the box closed on 18 April 1971 only 7 were working. This box and the associated junction for the Bexhill branch, opened in

May 1902, along with the former No1 or "A" box, located at the London end of the station and abolished as an economy measure in 1951.

H Wainwright, Chief Mechanical Engineer of the SECR, designed the H Class and 66 were authorised, with 64 built between 1904 and 1909. Components for the final two were produced, but not assembled until 1915. The class was used on local and branch line trains across the Central and South Eastern Divisions until the Kent Coast Electrification in 1959 and 1962 rendered many redundant, the bulk of withdrawals occurring between these years. 31162 was withdrawn from Tunbridge Wells West in January 1961 and the final 3 in January 1964. 31263 is now preserved at the Bluebell Railway.

Photo: Colin Hogg [049015]



On the sunny spring afternoon of the 12 April 1958, the Brighton Belle Pullman train from London Victoria is seen approaching Brighton, its destination.

In 1933 the Southern Railway electrified the route between London and Brighton. The Brighton Belle started running shortly thereafter to replace the steam hauled Southern Belle. Three special 5-car electric units were built for the service by Metropolitan Cammell. The exteriors were painted in the brown and umber of the Pullman Company. The interiors were furnished in the Art Deco style popular at the time. Designated 5 BEL, in 1937 they were re-numbered as 3051-53.

The service usually operated with two sets and one as a spare. It initially did three round trips a day with two on Sunday. It quickly became very popular having both First- and Third-class sections. As the journey was only around an hour it served snacks, drinks and a limited range of cooked meals, though in the mornings a cooked breakfast was one of them. Staff employed by the Pullman Company provided the catering and table

service until 1962, when BR effectively acquired the company.

The service was suspended at the beginning of the war in 1939 but was fully restored in October 1947. It soon became popular again, with extra workings including a 10pm service from Victoria.

In 1968/69 the units were repainted in BR blue and grey at the same time losing some of their Art Deco interiors. By the early 1970s the units were showing their age and it was decided to withdraw them. Despite opposition from some of its famous clientele including Sir Laurence Olivier, the last Brighton Belle ran on the 30 April 1972. A copy of the special menu is in the Bluebell Archive.

Fourteen of the coaches survive in preservation or charter service. The [Brighton Belle Society](#) is in the process of restoring a 5 BEL for use on Southern electrified lines.

Photo: Joe Kent [094568]



Wednesday 12 April 1961 was the date of the first human space flight carried out by Yuri Gagarin from the Soviet Union. On the same day in Kent, at a more leisurely pace, BR Standard 4 2-6-4T 80151 is photographed approaching Tonbridge on the 12.04 pm from Redhill.

The locomotive was allocated to Brighton shed, working Duty No. 736. Having left the shed at 7.30 am it worked to Tonbridge on the 7.55 am passenger train and from there to Redhill at 9.32 am Its afternoon duties included taking the 1.10 pm passenger train from Tonbridge to Brighton, then shunting Brighton yard before taking a trip to London and back on van trains, before retiring to Brighton shed at 1.35 am the following morning.

The train is formed of a Maunsell 4-car Restriction 1 set along with two vans. The passenger stock had formed the 9.45 am from Reading South with the vans added at Redhill. On arrival at Tonbridge the vans will be detached and the Maunsell set, along with 80151, will form the 1.10 pm to Brighton.

The photograph was taken to the west of Tonbridge on what was originally the South Eastern Railway's main line via Redhill to Folkestone and Dover, it having reached Tonbridge in May 1842. By May 1868 a new 'cut off' route between London and Tonbridge via Sevenoaks had opened. Steam hauled local passenger trains lasted until January 1965 when the 'Tadpole' DEMUs took over. The line was subsequently electrified in 1993.

80151 was built at Brighton Works at an official cost of £21,944. Entering service in January 1957 it stayed on the Southern Region throughout its short life of ten years and three months having been allocated to Brighton, Redhill, Salisbury and Eastleigh sheds. Withdrawn in May 1967, it was subsequently rescued from Woodham Brothers scrapyards at Barry, restored and is [currently in service](#) on the Bluebell Railway.

Photo: Colin Hogg [048687]



Volunteer Vacancies

SPECIAL EVENTS VOLUNTEERS

We have a number of events this year coming up where we could use some assistance in set up and delivery. In particular, we are looking for some people to help set up for Southern At War Event – 1 / 2 June 2024.

Location: Horsted Keynes Event Field

Setting up for this event will be from 27 May 2024.

This will broadly include setting out sandbags and props ahead of the weekend, masking tape, posters and bunting to dress the station. Ground spike placement and cordons ahead of arriving exhibits and overseeing the arrival of exhibits setting up.

Opportunities to help during the event will include ticket checking, getting involved in Air Raid drills and similar activities, assisting customers where necessary and general monitoring of the event field to ensure everyone has a fun and safe experience.

Of course, we will also need some helpers to tidy up after the event too!

If you would like to get involved and help, please let Charlotte Parkinson know at your earliest opportunity, this would be most helpful to be able to put together a schedule of tasks and dates that suit the majority of those volunteering.

Look forward to hearing from you.

MORE INFORMATION

Please contact Charlotte Parkinson at charlotte.parkinson@bluebell-railway.com if you would like to help at this or other events.

CATERING VOLUNTEERS

Have you ever enjoyed a cream tea on one of our trains? Or a Ploughman's lunch? Or a cup of tea from the on-train buffet? With a busy season of trains ahead, we need more volunteers to help keep those experiences alive, particularly for mid-week traffic. If you like interacting with people, providing a service that our visitors enjoy and making their day just that little bit more special this is the job for you. In particular we are looking for on-train assistance on the RMB, at the static catering facilities at Kingscote and East Grinstead.

MORE INFORMATION

Please contact Lisa Boyle at lisa.boyle@bluebell-railway.com for further information.



Photo: David Cable

The Bluebell Times

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Bluebell Railway
Members, Staff and
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suggestions for future articles
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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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