



"Sir Archibald Sinclair" on the 3.40pm ex Sheffield Park, 15 June 2024 Photo: Peter Edwards

The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway
Members, Staff and Supporters

June 2024

IN THIS ISSUE

Thursday 6 June was truly a red-letter day at the Railway. Having been steamed the previous day to allow the final inspections to be made by the Railway's boiler inspector, No. 32424 'Beachy Head' moved under its own power for the first time. An extensive process of testing and running-in will now need to take place, but you now have the opportunity to book tickets to travel on the [locomotive's launch event](#), to be held between 23 August and 1 September.

Issue two of *Bluebell News*, back in December 1959, carried the words "As each week goes by, more interesting pre-grouping classes become extinct – the loss of the last Brighton Atlantic was an irreparable catastrophe..." The original locomotive had been scrapped before the BRPS was formed, and of course, in those early years, the priority had to be saving the line and proving it could be operated as an attraction. But who amongst those early pioneers could have imagined that 66 years after the original was ignominiously scrapped, once more a Brighton Atlantic would grace the lines crossing our own corner of the Sussex Weald?

The Railway has achieved much over the last 65 years, and can look forward to many notable achievements to come. But to recreate a formally extinct locomotive type as a living breathing entity must surely rank highly amongst those achievements. The opportunity to say "I was there" when the loco enters public service will come just once in a lifetime ...

Tom James, Editor

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Watts Occurring

By Roy Watts, BRPS Chairman

And here we are halfway through the calendar year and the summer solstice is upon us, not that I plan to be anywhere near Stonehenge but respect to those who do choose to go! Just a shame a certain element of society decided to deface the stones in order to achieve what?

Nonetheless, it's a fact that 2024 is hurrying past at pace and talks now turn towards events for 2025 and the giving the final touches to events planned for the latter part of this year.

And yes, final touches for the Festive Season are being put into place!

Putting on an event is not just a case of "it's June 1st and it's XYZ event" but it's the culmination of months in the planning involving stakeholders, commercial, operational departments and also the involvement of external agents, risk assessments and so on.

Obviously there are many measures of success and likewise the impact of external factors beyond our sphere of control that go to the contrary.

Our recent Branch Line and Southern at War events were both resounding successes and all those involved in the execution of the event plans should be congratulated but above all, thanks to those who made it happen – or in the latter case our thanks to "the Few" as a certain Winston Churchill once said.

Clearly the success of the Southern at War weekend was measured by the visitor numbers, the feedback received and the clamour for it to be repeated next year which indeed it will be: the planning has already begun.

Next year will of course mark 80 years since VE and VJ days.



Photo: David Cable

These events are put on to attract families and enthusiasts alike and are not always designed to be labour intensive, but we do have some upcoming events that require additional resources – so if you do want to help your railway rather than rely on “the Few” please do get in touch with our volunteering team and know you are helping play your part.

Branch Line weekend, being very much of GWR flavour, was aimed and successfully delivered for the enthusiast. *[See page 13 – Ed.]*

Our thanks go to the owners of the respective visiting locomotives for allowing them to operate on our railway and in a very different environment and setting.

Our other events aimed at the family market have also continued to bring in an increasing number of visitors.

So whether it's circus skills, farmyard animals dinosaurs or magicians making your mother-in-law disappear, you will be pleased to know that they have all contributed to the increased numbers of people coming to us. Yes, a train ride with a little more without charging excessive fares or expensive staging can only be a positive to help build our revenue streams.

Obviously, the main highlight of the month has to be the appearance and movement in steam of 32424, the Brighton Atlantic. What an occasion! Social media going into meltdown!

Huge congratulations to Fred Bailey, Keith Sturt and to all those who have been involved in the project. Another massive achievement for the Bluebell Railway and the Atlantic group deserve every plaudit they receive and yes, I'm sure like the other 9641 Bluebell members we cannot wait for the big launch event, which has also been several months in the planning, coming to fruition this August.

June 15 saw a busy day at the Railway with Members Day, the rededication of No. 34059, 'Sir Archibald Sinclair' and the Society AGM .. oh I must not forget the Dinosaurs which clearly caused amusement amongst the members as to which meeting they were attending.

Starting with the day itself, well you couldn't have believed just how wet it was to begin with and I'm sure that no matter how committed you are, the weather would dictate your decision-making process!

I was very grateful to Tim Dunn for giving his time to assist in re-dedicating 34059 back into squadron service. Again, a stunning piece of restoration by the locomotive team and that paint work an absolute credit to painters. It seems a shame that we have these fantastic pristine locomotives but their very environment will change their condition through usage but that's the game we play.

Finally, my thanks to everyone who attended on the day. Remember, it's your day, not mine. Of course, you realise you are now officially stuck with me for the next two years! My personal thanks go to Keith Leppard and Clive Emsley for organising the day and to Gavin Bennett for the AGM work.

It's good to have the meeting at Sheffield Park at the ancestral home of the Railway at a reasonable time but as always, there are lessons to be learned and improvements to make.

You have a lot to be proud about at this moment but thank you for your support and your patience and commitment to delivering a first-class heritage experience

I look forward to seeing you at some point this season.

BRPS AGM - Saturday 15 June 2024

By Gavin Bennett, BRPS General Secretary

This year, the AGM was held in the same marquee but at Sheffield Park where the strong gusts of wind did their best to try and move it back to Horsted! 227 members signed in at the meeting and an additional 157 proxy votes for the resolutions were received.

Apologies for absence were recorded, including Roger Kelly who was recovering from a recent operation on his foot. The meeting stood in memory of the 83 members recorded in the AGM booklet who had died since the last AGM, as well as for Paul Baker, Richard Lowe (omitted from the list), David Rider and Barbara Watkins who had all died recently May they all Rest in Peace.

The minutes of the last AGM were corrected to show Bill Brophy was in attendance and then adopted as a record of the last meeting. Adoption of the Society accounts was despatched equally swiftly [NB the consolidated profit & loss account for both the Society & the Plc will be circulated soon.]

In the unexpected absence of Steve Trigg, the Plc's Finance Director, the Chairman made a valiant effort to talk briefly about the accounts. A number of questions were raised and answers will be sought from the Plc. In broad terms there were questions raised about the continuing losses, release of capital from the reserves, the 40% staff costs, reduction of business rates, and the large increase in the shop's gross profit.

Colin Tyson, the Society's nominated Trust Governor, outlined the work of the Trust and the extent of the Trust's support for the railway, particularly for track renewals and for the overhaul of locomotives and coaches. The first stage of the Jewel in the Crown project had seen extensive refurbishment of the main building and Platform 5 at Horsted Keynes and work was now in progress on Platform 1.

In his Chairman's report, Roy Watts said that at the start of this year, he had not expected to be Chairman of the Society again and, together with



*The sight that lit up social media: 'Beachy Head' in steam at Sheffield Park.
Photo: David Jones*

Neil Glaskin and Lisa Boyle, acting as Chairman of the Plc. 2023 had been a difficult year again but there were encouraging signs that fare revenue was rising, helped by the number of family themed events we were putting on to attract visitors. Dinosaurs and cartoon characters might not be to everyone's taste but they were popular and successful. We had to control costs and bringing in visiting engines was an expensive option and we had to be sure we could recover the costs. We were held in high esteem by many other railways and much of that was down to the volunteers and members. He was delighted that the Atlantic had steamed and praised the Atlantic Team and its supporters for all they had done to get us to the stage and he looked forward to its formal launch later this year. He praised those who had restored Pullman Car 54, commenting there were few other railways which could offer the range of accessible coaches we did. Thanks were recorded to the Infrastructure Department and Lineside and Fencing Gangs who worked tirelessly out of sight to look after our track and lineside. The 1305 DMU team and the Wagon Gang had brought new blood into the railway and this was to be welcomed. He said the dual role of Society and Company Chairman was too much for one person and he was pleased to announce that Neil Glaskin would become interim Plc Chairman until a new Chairman was appointed. The post had been advertised and interviews were being planned.

TRUSTEE ELECTION RESULTS

➡ Michael Hopps	258 voted	Elected
➡ Laurie Anderson	225 votes	Elected
➡ James Reeves	203 votes	Elected
➡ Gordon Parry	155 votes	
➡ Robert Simpson	154 votes	

The Chairman congratulated the successful candidates and offered commiserations to those who had not been elected. He thanked retiring Trustee Richard Clark who had taken on the Preservation Standards mantle from Chris Saunders and had work hard to try and maintain the standards set out in the Preservation Standards Manual.



*An interested bystander tries to gain access to the AGM!
(Readers can supply their own jokes ...)*

Photo: Trevor Swainson

He also thanked Keith Leppard and Clive Emsley who had done much to make the Members Day a success. It was unfortunate that the Atlantic could not be on show as planned but he assured members that the paint was still tacky.

LONG SERVICE AWARDS

Long service awards were presented to the following volunteers:

- ➡ 50 Years Service: Clive Emsley (Operations), Lewis Nodes (Locomotive) and Russell Pearce (Locomotive)
- ➡ 40 Years Service: Richard Salmon (C&W), and Sean Smeeth (Locomotive)
- ➡ 25 Years Service: Harry Brampton (Locomotive), John Sisley (Infrastructure – Friends of Kingscote) and Michael Wilson (Infrastructure)
- ➡ 10 Years Service: Robert Raikes (Operations / Education), David Rhydderch (C&W), Trevor Swainson (Bluebell Railway Trust), Rich Tanton (Loco works) and Chris Wren (Locomotive - Class 2 Project)

We'll carry a pen-portrait of the long service award winners in the next issue of The Bluebell Times – Ed.

Making ‘Bluebell’ Bloom Again

By Trevor Swainson, Bluebell Railway Trust Governor; Tim Gray, Locomotive Director and Simon Blaker, Locomotive Workshop Supervisor

The Bluebell Railway Trust is launching an appeal to raise funds for the restoration and return to service of one of its favourite and most popular locomotives ('loco').

At the Members' Annual General Meeting on 15 June the Bluebell Railway Trust announced the launch of an appeal to raised funds for restoration of 'Bluebell'.

The Appeal will be featured in the forthcoming edition of 'Bluebell News' and, in addition, we are planning for external promotion through press releases and through social media. As a 'starter' for the new Appeal, we announce the following.

A BRIEF HISTORY

'Bluebell' or more correctly P class 0-6-0T No. 323 was built as Ashford Works and entered service in 1910. Only eight of the P class locos were built and, as such, made less of a name for themselves than other more celebrated designs. After unremarkable working lives, surprisingly, four of the class survived into preservation where they have blossomed and are now much more favourably regarded as highly capable little locos.

Upon withdrawal after 50 years of service for British Railways and its predecessors, 'Bluebell' was rescued by the newly formed Bluebell Railway, and it became the second loco saved by the Bluebell Railway, arriving in June 1960.

In its working life for much of the time, it had 'mucky' black livery but, after overhaul in 1966, it was repainted in a house style of lined blue livery with brass number plates and the company crest displayed. It was named 'Bluebell' and, in its new appearance, it soon gained its iconic status.

After a major overhaul in 2011, 'Bluebell' ran for a further 8 years before being withdrawn from service in 2019. Since then, it has remained in storage pending another major overhaul.

RETURNING FROM ITS SLUMBERS

'Bluebell' has languished out of the limelight for many years until 2023 when a bold decision was made to return it to service. It was thought – optimistically, perhaps – that this restoration could be completed in only 4 months at a cost of only £10,000. Hope springs eternal!

The plan was to take the boiler from fellow classmate no. 178 as this was thought to be in much better condition than 'Bluebell's' own boiler. The first stage was to carry out a full inspection of 178's boiler and it was then realised – to our horror! – that the boiler had failed and, indeed, was condemned.

As tales of woe go, this was another 'black day'.

What to do now? Abandonment of the project seemed to be the only realistic alternative but that would have been so disappointing as 'Bluebell' is the iconic symbol of the Railway and to return it to its slumbers is almost unthinkable.

However, 'fortune favours the brave' and a revised restoration plan was drawn up. Inevitably, this would require much more time and money to get 'Bluebell' running once more again.

THE NEW PLAN

We knew that a heavy repair of No. 178's boiler is required and, accordingly, it was decided to place this work with an outside contractor as our own Loco Shop is fully committed on other work. A suitable contractor has been found with both the time and capacity to carry out the repair. Timescales are tight because the contractor only has a limited slot that would be available.

In addition to the boiler repair, there were many parts and components needed for the rebuild. Some of these can be recovered from 'Bluebell', some were held in store and some would be manufactured as new.

How much will all of this cost and how long will this take?

Quite obviously, the original estimate of £10,000 has long gone. Now, we are looking at a cost of around £150,000 that includes a contingency for the 'unknown' that we might still find when fully dismantling 'Bluebell'.

Similarly, the original timescale has gone and now we are looking at completion by late summer 2025 hopefully in time for one of our planned 'big days'.

Where will the money come from?

We hope that we can raise a large part of the funds by donations, gifts from legacies and maybe we might find some grant support.

HOW CAN I HELP?

The Bluebell Railway Trust is launching an appeal to fund this project and we invite members, shareholders and the many friends of the Railway to help us return this much-loved loco back into our operating fleet.

PLEASE HELP US TO MAKE 'BLUEBELL' BLOOM AGAIN!

If you can support this project – THANK YOU!

You can donate in one of three ways:

- ➡ Via the Bluebell Railway Trust website at www.bluebell-railway.com/trust/make-a-donation/
- ➡ Or, by bank transfer to:

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

Please quote the reference 'Bluebell Bloom'

- ➡ Or, by cheque payable to The Bluebell Railway Trust

Please complete the form on the last page of this issue of The Bluebell Times and send to:

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

If you would like The Bluebell Railway Trust to claim Gift Aid on your donation, please complete a Gift Aid declaration form, available at www.bluebell-railway.com/gift-aid-form/

Beachy Head Steams!

After more than 20 years in the making, our recreation of Marsh H2 Atlantic No. 32424 'Beachy Head' moved under its own power for the first time on 6 June 2024.

Beachy Head Admission Tickets Now Available – 23 August to 1 September 2024!

Advance tickets for the August launch into service of our new build Atlantic 32424 'Beachy Head' are now available to purchase. The locomotive will be running on public trains across the August Bank Holiday weekend. Look out for further announcements with more to come in conjunction with 'Beachy Head' entering service on our railway!

Visit www.bluebell-railway.com/beachy-head-2024/ to book your tickets and join us in welcoming Britain's newest steam locomotive into service!

TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE TO BOOK!



BEACHY HEAD

32424

23RD AUGUST TO 1ST
SEPTEMBER 2024



Q Class 541 Overhaul Update

By Steve Pilcher, Maunsell Locomotive Society

Leaky Finders have continued to make excellent progress with work on 541's boiler and chassis. In recent weeks they have taken down the loco's horn guides, as it was found that some of the rivets holding them in place required replacement. In the case of the middle driving axle's horn guides, repairs to the loco's frames are going to be required.

The new rear dragbox is fabricated and bolted together and will be riveted up in the coming weeks.

Frame stretchers are ready to be riveted in along with replacing other loose rivets on the chassis, such as those that hold the running plate in place.

The new plate work for the firebox outer wrapper has had stayholes drilled, in advance, prior to being welded in place. Also there has been some work around the firehole door to replace rivets etc.

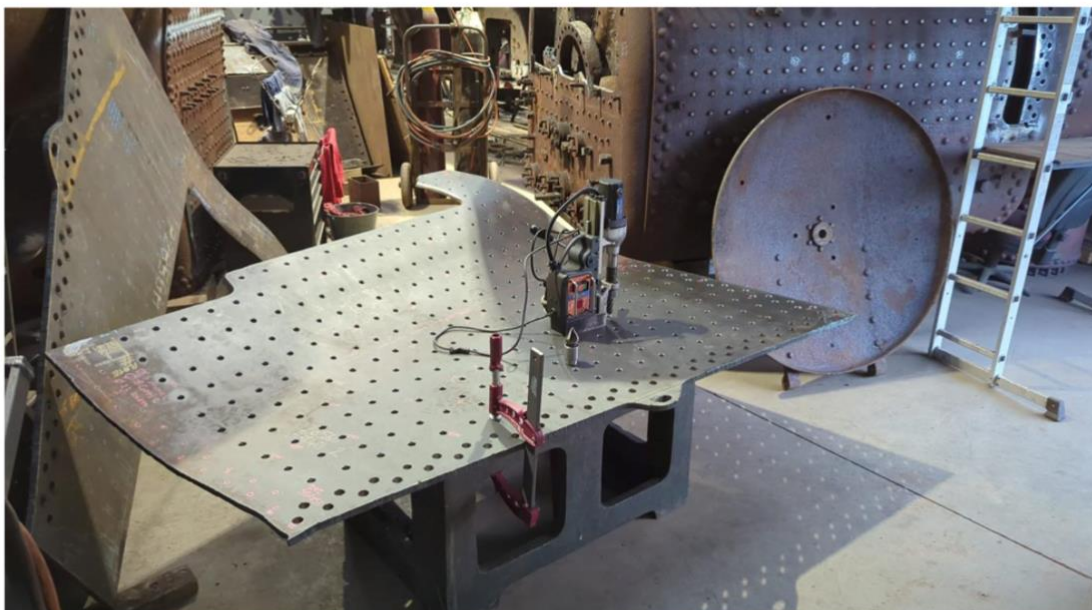
As regards the tender tank, the 4253 gang at the K&ESR is working, on average, three days a week on the tank and maintaining excellent progress. At the time of writing the front half of the tender was all up in position, and framework for the rest of the

tank was being assembled. It is not currently possible to buy one length of steel sheet to fabricate the sides, so it has to be made in two halves.

Back at Sheffield Park, Melvyn Frohnsdorff has continued work to free up the rear drag box on the tender frames. This has involved removing the two rear buffers in order to access rivets holding the drag box in place.

The tender frames were lifted on 7 May and wheelsets removed. We are grateful to a group of 9F Club volunteers for helping out one day and virtually all the cleaned-up areas of the frames are now in a first coat of gloss black. Barry Smith, assisted by Stephen Booth, managed to remove the brake beam so it can be assessed. Meanwhile the author and others have given the tender wheelsets a thorough clean and they are now ready to be sent away to the South Devon Railway for tyre turning.

All the tender brake gear has been cleaned up to enable it to be re-bushed, and a good 'first clean' of the loco brake gear components has also taken place.



Left: New boiler plate with holes drilled for stays to go into place on 541's firebox outer wrapper.

Photo: Leaky Finders

Andy Sparkes has taken the lead in cleaning the tender's rear footsteps, with some of them now in first coat of topcoat.

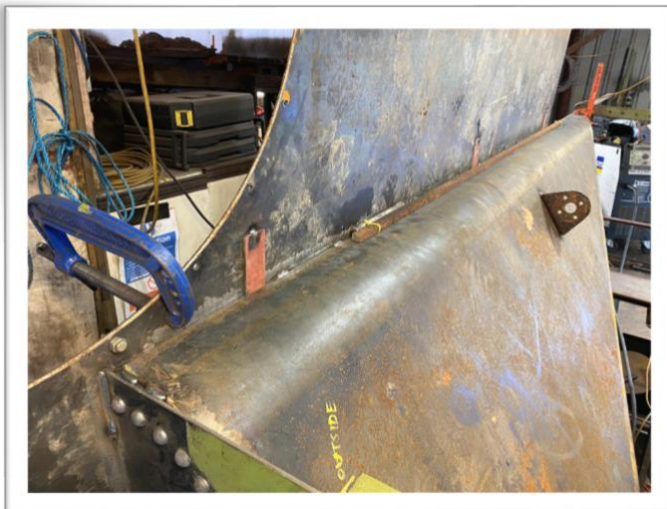
The Society would appreciate extra help with the work on No. 541's tender. Please contact Steve Pilcher on jstevepilcher@yahoo.co.uk if you are interested in joining our Tuesday working parties.



Above: The front half of No. 541's new tender tank coming together nicely.
Photo: 4253 Group.

Below left: Coal plate being offered up to the tender side and tender front.
Photo: Chris Hunford

Below right: Progress on cleaning and painting No. 541's tender footsteps.
Photo: Andy Sparkes



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 we were getting close to 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 helping us to reach the target of £40,000, and thus play a part in getting this very useful loco back in action at the Bluebell Railway.

Tender Progress on 92240

By Tom Newble, Awake the Giant project

It has been a busy few months for 92240 and the 'Awake The Giant' team. 92240 has been busy being shunted around the park before finding a residing spot, in the milk dock, by the footbridge at Sheffield Park.

The team has continued to work and focus on the tender. The tender has continued to be rubbed down, wire brushed and painted.

During April, 92240 was shunted into the milk dock at Sheffield Park and the locomotive is currently residing there. The tender has been split and now resides inside the running shed. This has enabled the team to continue to work on the tender, protecting it from the elements. The aim for the team is to have the tender completed between June and July, before moving onto working on the locomotive proper.

The tank and the water chambers have been wire-brushed and cleaned out of all the rust and are now in the process of being painted with a specialist chemical compound. (See [The Bluebell Times, November 2023](#)). A number of members have been trained in the application. The chemical compound is a specialist coating normally used by the petrol chemical industry to expand the life of large bulk tanks. The outlay for this is roughly 3 times of that of bitumen paint but should mean minimal work is required in the tank for the next 50 years.

Work on the outside has also progressed and we now have applied a couple of coats of black undercoat onto the fireman's side of the tender. This starts to build up the layers in readiness to being flattened down and topcoats being applied.

Phil Wilson has been working hard on a new seal of the tender water gauge reader and working on the bolts and brackets of the water sprinkler and spray pipe which has since been treated as well as being grit blasted.



92240 PHOTO COMPETITION

The annual photo competition, to raise funds for 92240 has returned for 2024 and is now open. There are three categories, and all are welcome to enter. Prizes include 92240 goodie bags and Bluebell vouchers. A suggested donation of £3 per entry (per photo) is suggested. Full details can be found on the ['Awake The Giant' web page](#) on the Bluebell Railway's website, or by picking up a leaflet from the stand.

The photo competition ends on 2 January 2025, with winners being announced in the February 2025 edition of *The Bluebell Times*.

The 2024 categories are:

- ➡ Under 15s (with Parental consent) 'Beautiful Bluebell' – any photo of the Bluebell Railway.
- ➡ 16s and Over 'Bluebell at its Best' – any photo of the Bluebell's home fleet.
- ➡ For All Ages 'Visiting Bluebell' – any photo of visiting locomotives to the Bluebell Railway.

GAZETTE

Mark Wilson has been working hard on the 'Giant Gazette' which, is now one year old and is the quarterly news about 92240. The Gazette not only contains engineering reports, 92240 updates,

puzzles and articles from members of the 'Awake The Giant' team, but also shows a selection of archived materials, from 92240 in steam days and early preservation. Copies of the Gazette are available from the stand and a subscription is also available as well, which can be made by emailing giantgazette92240@yahoo.co.uk

ARCHIVE

Tom Newble has been continuing to research the history of 92240 and source a number of materials, predominantly photos but some video clips to. These will be on display, from the summer. Archive photos are also available to be seen in the 'Giant Gazette', details above. If you have any materials containing 92240 and are happy for them to be shared and published, please get in touch with Tom at awakethegiant@outlook.com

MERCHANDISE

Ken Upton has been working hard on creating a wide range of merchandise and exclusive 92240

products. The current product range has included; t-shirts, hoodies, stationary, mugs, coasters, badges and new for 2024 we have latte mugs and travel flasks, purses, wallets and lanyards. Merchandise is all available from the stand, on most weekends and galas. A small selection of our merchandise will be available inside the carriage shop, later this year.

92240 NEEDS YOU!

Our stand is ever growing and is becoming more and more popular at the railway as well as a lot of interest of 92240 and the stand at external events including model railway shows and society meetings. The group's aim will be to continue to publicise 92240 as much as possible and at main events, including the children's days, to have stands at multiple locations over the railway. If you are interested in assisting with the stand at the railway or taking the stand to a show, please email awakethegiant@outlook.com.



Western Invasion

By Tom James, Locomotive Department. Photos by Nick Gilliam



Above: No. 7714 passes Birchstone Bridge with the 12:45 from East Grinstead on 11 May 2024

Branch Line Gala this year took on a distinctly Western theme, with a trio of visiting GWR designs joining long-term visitor No. 6989 'Wightwick Hall'. The visitors were No. 7812 'Erlestoke Manor' (courtesy of the Severn Valley Railway and the [Erlestoke Manor Fund](#)); Pannier Tank No. 7714 (also visiting from the Severn Valley Railway / [SVR Pannier Tank Fund](#)); and Pannier Tank No. 1369, courtesy of the [South Devon Railway Association](#). 'Erlestoke Manor' stayed to operate trains the following weekend at the "Road Meets Rail" event.

Our BR Standard 4MT was renumbered as Western Region-based No. 80100 for the weekend, complete with Shrewsbury shed plates. Home fleet locos No. 65 and No. 72 'Fenchurch' completed the Branch Line Gala line up. With seven locos in steam and a complex timetable, the event was filled with movement.

Our thanks go to all the owning groups for allowing their locomotives to visit.

There was a lot of positive comment online, but this posting on the National Preservation forum by user "oldschooltrains2" was particularly notable for drawing out the all-round operational performance of the gala:

“ Cannot praise this event enough. I assumed with such a complex timetable, so many loco switches and services terminating at/starting from Horsted, there would be late running and had kind of priced that into my day and plans, but the timekeeping was absolutely impeccable from start to finish when I was there on Sunday.

That was obviously due to very slick work by the crews and signalling teams, plus a well written timetable that made something that looked on paper like it was ambitious to the point of borderline lunacy actually completely practical to operate. I felt the teams at the stations played a big role in the timekeeping and slickness of the day too.

The announcements were always so clear, prompt and information, so everyone knew exactly where they had to head for each train and what their options were. They were also quick to reassure people when not to hurry, especially during the token exchanges at Kingscote. So professional and smoothly executed.

As well as it all running so smoothly, it was also superbly entertaining. I hadn't been to the Bluebell since 2017 and I'd forgotten that the southbound journey includes a few very decent noise opportunities too - it's not just coasting from Imberhorne cutting downwards like I thought it was.

But the northbound journey... so much fun. I was able to get a front coach window out of Horsted with each of the four GWR locos plus the end of day combined set trains with 80151 then the Hall/Manor double-header and the experience on the climb through the tunnel was brilliant every single time. The Manor and 7714 were the most entertaining to me when solo, but the Hall and Manor double-heading on 8 coaches as the day's finale... honestly not sure I've enjoyed a steam run on a preserved line that much before. The noise was remarkable.

And that Bluebell habit of ending a gala by lashing up a 'mega-train' of two sets combined is just wonderful. 50049 on I think 12 coaches + 2 dead 20s at the 2017 diesel gala is my all-time favourite cl.50 trip on a preserved line. I love that the Bluebell are embracing diesels so much now too, I'll certainly be making more visits each year once that DEMU's in regular service.

But yes, the branch line gala was absolutely worth every penny and the four-hours-each-way trip to get there. Hopefully I will be back for the diesel gala and giants, and not intending to miss another branch line weekend either. Superb. Thank you so much to everyone who made it happen.

”



Above: No. 7812 approaches Horsted Keynes with the 10:25 from Sheffield Park on 10 May 2024

Below: No. 1369 passes Birchstone Bridge with the 1.15pm from Kingscote on 11 May 2024



The Extension Shuttle

By Tony Wilkinson

The current restoration of No 323 "Bluebell" serves as an opportunity to recall this tale of its use over thirty years ago on the extension shuttles. Loco volunteer Tony Wilkinson is our guide ...

Younger Bluebell members can barely imagine a nail biting wait of Venus de Milo proportions for the extension green light or the euphoria of that symbolic track laying orchestrated by members like Neil Cameron and Paul Russell manning the steam crane. Perhaps the diligence of the railway management who quickly spotted the opportunity to raise a bit of wonga by running a 1000-yard extra ride up the new bit up past Leamland Bridge is easier to comprehend.

A day on the footplate of the shuttle loco was an experience not available nowadays. For me as Third Man press ganged into help it was effectively a bucket list item before bucket lists were even invented. The real advantage was that instead of the usual midweek trips on the C class or Q class it was a chance to be on the footplate of one of the smaller locos. My first trip was on *Stepney* with Russell Pearce as driver and Peter (Grandad) Cox as fireman. The day started by propelling the milk tanker to Horsted Keynes. The tanker was the shuttle's water supply; the hard water at Horsted was only to be use in extreme emergencies. On this part of the day the footplate duties were as normal. The tanker was dropped, and the pump positioned at the north end of Platform o (*now Platform 1 – Ed*) by which time an enthusiastic Graham Ward arrived with Bob John and in no time a carriage was moved from an up siding across to the down yard. That was a bonus for C&W. Now was time to prepare for the Shuttle where now a carriage was propelled up the line and new extension. The driver was in charge and positioned at the front of the carriage with the fireman in charge of the loco and Third Man Charlie left holding the shovel. What a pleasure to fire a Terrier!

After several trips it was time for Graham Ward to reappear and we crossed to the down yard for another C&W carriage shuffle. All that was left to do was put the Terrier as Pilot to the last service

train of the day and doublehead back to base at Sheffield Park.

My next shuttle had *Bluebell* rostered, again with Grandad as fireman and Dave Radcliffe driver. I'd never been on the footplate of a P class before so on the first trip of the shuttle I stood and surveyed the fire which looked very much as the Terrier's had been! Dave obviously fancied a spirited start and opened the regulator accordingly. Well, we had the spirited start for about 100 yards before the brakes came on. Not only had I run out of steam, but we were sitting across the points preventing the loco on the service train running around the stock. The daily timetable was as a result delayed by 20 minutes as I frantically shovelled coal into Bluebell's firebox. It was little consolation to find out that someone else (no names, no pack-drill) had followed my example. I heard also that other unwitting firemen coasting down from HK to SP had similarly been caught out on that short section of up gradient at Mounteswood Curve ...



Above: "Bluebell" on an extension shuttle

Photo: Mike Esau

Carriage Shop Donates £1,575

Words and photos by Chris Wilson, Carriage Shop volunteer

The Carriage Shop team are delighted to have been able to make two donations in this month.

Firstly we have helped with 'Paving the Way' (see *The Bluebell Times* for [May 2024](#)) by funding the purchase of five new stones for platform 1 at Horsted Keynes. As you may know each stone will be numbered (on paper, at least) and an 'Honours Board' will be displayed on Platform 1. We have rather sentimentally requested that 'our' stones are shown to be within the vicinity of where the old Carriage Shop once stood.

Our second donation was for £1,000 to the [Bluebell Railway Goods Division](#). These funds were raised through the sales of our Newington & Co. of Lewes 5-Plank Wagon which has been produced exclusively for us by [Rapido Trains](#). The limited edition run of 100 fully sold out in just over a month – thank you to everyone who visited the Carriage Shop to purchase one of these wagons. We are now looking at options for producing another wagon with Rapido and further updates will follow in due course.

The Carriage Shop is open every weekend, with extended opening times for the Model Railway weekend. We are located next to the Dock on Platform 5 at Horsted Keynes. We currently have a wide selection of Horsted Keynes exclusive souvenirs, model railway items, railway and transport books and Railway Art by Matthew Cousins. We are also supporting the 1305 Thumper Gang, Bluebell Railway Goods Division and the Fenchurch Fund by stocking a small selection of their items in the shop.

The Carriage Shop is always pleased to receive donations of model railway items, books, DVDs, bound magazines, pictures, postcards, photographs, slides, mugs, badges, keyrings or other railway collectables. We especially require model railway items – if you any items you can spare we would be very grateful.

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



Above: Matthew Lander for the Bluebell Railway Goods Division accepting £1,000 donation outside the Carriage Shop.

Below: Inside view the Carriage Shop.



More Photos From The Museum Website

By Chris Wilson, Bluebell Railway archive volunteer



BR Standard 4MT 4-6-0 No. 75069 near Woldingham with the 12.30 p.m. Victoria – Lingfield race special.

Photo: John Scrace [142249]

This month we have added a further 300 images to the Bluebell Railway Museum website bringing the total now available to 24,168.

This month all of the photographs come from the camera of John Scrace and mainly feature views of Standard locos, including the Britannia, 2MT, 3M, 4MT & 5MT classes.

In the last month we have added two collections to the Archive. Firstly, a wonderful collection of 126 glass plate negatives of SECR locomotives. The collection was put together by Brian Pearce and generously donated to us by Robin Gibbons. We would like to thank Tom James for his help in putting Robin in touch with us. Secondly a large collection of 35mm slides featuring Bluebell Railway views from the 1970s onwards. Both collections will in time be scanned and added to the website.

If you have a collection of photographs, negatives, slides to digital images you are interested in depositing within Archive please get in touch with us by emailing photos@bluebell-railway-museum.co.uk.

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.



BR Standard 4MT 2-6-4T No. 80011 heads the 12.28 p.m. East Grinstead to Lewes service at Sheffield Park on 16 March 1958, the day before BR closed the line. Note the signal post in place but has no semaphore arm.

Photo: John Scrace [142399]

Gremlins!

By Tom James, Bluebell Times Editor

Keen-eyed readers may have spotted a number of errors in the previous issue of *The Bluebell Times* - it seems we had an infestation of gremlins here in the BT editorial office!

Firstly, the photo caption of the Observation Car on page 10, in connection with the Branch Line Society charter, incorrectly referred to the RCTS (Railway Correspondence and Travel Society) – for which my apologies to the members of both organisations! Fortunately, this error was spotted and corrected quickly with a revised issue, so many readers will have seen the correct caption.

There were also two errors in the “On This Day” captions. Loco 31487, shown on the turntable at Redhill Shed, was incorrectly referred to as an E1 rather than a D1. The two types are visually very similar, differing primarily in a slightly longer coupled wheelbase on the E1 to accommodate a larger firebox, but even so, as a paid-up member of the [South Eastern & Chatham Railway Society](#), the editor should have done better! Secondly, the caption of the P/W train carrying materials away from damaged track in the 1953 floods, refers at one point to it running on 10 May 1958. It should of course have been 10 May 1953.

My thanks go to the several readers who wrote in noting those errors, and apologies for any confusion caused. Despite appearances, editorial policy is to strive for accuracy – we don't add deliberate errors just to see if readers are following closely! So if you do spot an error, please continue to write to the editor at bluebelltimes@bluebell-railway.com, if only to prove that at times, even Jove nods ...

On This Day, 21 June

By Tony Hillman, Deputy Curator

Three pictures from the Bluebell Photographic Archive taken on 21 June. Thanks to John Creed, Martin Elms, Richard Peirce, Chris Sutton, Roger Merry-Price and Chris Wilson for finding the pictures and researching the notes.



During the 1950s and 1960s excursions often ran from Eastern Region and London Transport Central Line stations to the South Coast via the East London line. Motive power over the East London Line from Liverpool Street was usually Eastern Region (ER), J67/69 0-6-0Ts, later replaced by D84xx diesels.

On Sunday 21 June 1959 two such excursions ran, one from Elsenham (ER) to Brighton and the other, pictured here, the 10.35am from Loughton (LT) to Eastbourne. Hauled by D8409 from Loughton to Liverpool Street (reverse), on to New Cross Gate by D8408 and finally by U1 Class 2-6-0 31892 from New Cross Gate to Eastbourne. It is seen here climbing the bank through Honor Oak Park. Behind the engine is a pristine rake of seven Gresley coaches, the maximum that could be accommodated in the middle platform road at Loughton. No information is available about

which shed 31892 was working from. Displaced the previous weekend, 14 June 1959, from Faversham by Stage One of the Kent Coast Electrification, it was in the process of being transferred to the Western Section at Feltham.

Designed by Maunsell as a development of the U class with three cylinders, the prototype A890 (later 31890) was rebuilt from the unique Class K1 locomotive at Ashford Works, entering service in June 1928. Judged a success, it was followed by 20 more built at Eastleigh in 1931. All 21 were taken into BR (SR) stock in 1948 and survived until 1962, except 31901, which was the last to be withdrawn in June 1963. None was preserved. 31892 was withdrawn from Three Bridges Shed (75E) in November 1962.

Photo: JJ Smith [045478]



Callington was a sub shed of Plymouth Friary (72D) and on Wednesday 21 June 1950 two local residents stand in the shed yard. On the right is LSWR O2 0-4-4T 30216. Built at Nine Elms Works in June 1892 it was withdrawn from Plymouth in November 1957 and scrapped at Brighton Works the following month. Attached to the O2 is a LSWR loose trailer brake composite, either 6557 or 6558. Fitted with ornate collapsible metal trellis entry gates, they were the last surviving former railmotors and were withdrawn in April 1956.

On the left is PD&SWJR 0-6-2T 30757 *Earl of Mount Edgecumbe*. It was one of two identical locomotives, the other being 30758 *Lord St Levan*, both built by Hawthorn Leslie in December 1907 for the Plymouth, Devonport & South Western Junction Railway. Used on the Callington branch, mainly on freight in latter years, they were replaced by O2s and LMR Ivatt 2MT tank engines. Both locomotives then spent a spell at Plymouth Friary before being transferred to Eastleigh shed (71A) in 1956. 30757 was used there as shed and works pilot before being withdrawn in December 1957.

The Callington branch, opened in 1908, was built and operated by the PD&SWJR. It acquired the East Cornwall Mineral Railway, which operated a narrow gauge mineral line from Calstock Quay to Kelly Bray and converted it to a standard gauge line running between Bere Alston and Callington, although the latter station was actually located in Kelly Bray.

The Callington branch remained steam worked, by Ivatt 2MTs, until September 1964. In November 1966 the western section between Gunnislake and Callington was closed, the portion that remains open is now served by trains running from Plymouth to Gunnislake, which reverse at Bere Alston.

Readers are recommended to watch [Rover Makes Good](#) (available on BFI Player) for some shots of O2s, Ivatt 2MTs and 'gate stock' at Luckett on the branch in this 1952 children's film.

Photo: JJ Smith [040914]



On Friday 21 June 1957 diesel prototype Deltic and English Electric Type 1, D8000 are seen next to Longhedge Junction Signal Box. The pair are on their way to Battersea Wharf to take part in the "Modern Railway Transport" exhibition, organised by the British Transport Commission, which opened on 28 June. Coming just two years after the 1955 Modernisation Plan, the event also included thirteen prototype passenger carriages.

Deltic, also known internally as DP1 (Diesel Prototype one), was built by English Electric as a demonstrator and introduced to traffic in October 1955. At the time of the photograph the 3,300 horsepower (hp) locomotive was allocated to Camden Shed (1B) and was being tested on the London Midland Region. Withdrawn in 1961, Deltic spent over 30 years at London's Science Museum before being moved to the National Railway Museum (NRM). Today it can be seen at the NRM's Shildon location.

D8000 was brand new at the time of the photograph having just been allocated to Devons Road Shed, Bow (1D) on 18 June. Also constructed

by English Electric, the 1,000hp locomotive was the first design ordered under the Modernisation Plan to be delivered. D8000 was the forerunner of a fleet of 228 machines that eventually became Class 20. It was acquired by the NRM in 1981 and can still be seen at York.

Longhedge Junction Signal Box was opened by the LBSCR on 9 March 1890, replacing an earlier pair of East and West boxes. It was a Saxby & Farmer Type 5 box, 30 feet in length, contained a 59-lever frame, and stood between three parallel sets of double lines, working various connections between them. Having running lines on each side of the box meant windows were provided on both sides of the operating floor, as seen here. After rationalisation of the layout, control of this complex was transferred to Victoria Area Signalling Centre and the box closed on 23 July 1978.

Photographer: JJ Smith [044427]

Vacancies

NON-EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN PLC BOARD (UNPAID)

We are seeking a Non-Executive Chairman to lead and direct the Bluebell Railway PLC Board. This is an unpaid, voluntary position offering a unique opportunity to make a lasting impact on a cherished institution.

Your Role:

As the Non-Executive Chairman, you'll steer the PLC Board of Directors with strategic acumen and unwavering dedication. Reporting to our principal shareholders, the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society (BRPS), you will play a pivotal role in steering our organisation towards continued success and growth. Your primary mission? To safeguard our legacy, foster growth, and ensure operational excellence in harmony with regulatory and stakeholder expectations. Your responsibilities include:

- ➔ Strategic Leadership: Guide the Board in charting a clear path forward, aligned with our mission and objectives. Lead by example, inspiring our team towards innovation and operational excellence.
- ➔ Governance and Compliance: Uphold the highest standards of integrity, ethics, and governance. Ensure compliance with regulatory requirements while fostering a culture of safety and inclusion.
- ➔ Stakeholder Engagement: Forge meaningful partnerships with shareholders, the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society, and other stakeholders. Be the voice of our heritage preservation efforts, advocating for our mission far and wide.
- ➔ Performance Management: Monitor and evaluate strategic objectives, ensuring alignment with stakeholder interests. Foster a culture of continuous improvement and talent development.
- ➔ Succession Planning: Prepare for the future by ensuring effective succession planning and talent management. Ensure continuity in our mission, even in the face of unexpected circumstances.

Who We're Looking For:

We're seeking a dynamic leader with a passion for heritage preservation and a proven track record in business management. If you possess the following, then apply now:

- ➔ Qualifications: A degree, MBA, or equivalent experience in business management.
- ➔ Skills: A keen understanding of governance, finance, and regulatory frameworks. Excellent problem-solving, networking, and public speaking skills.
- ➔ Attributes: A quick learner with a commercial mindset and a knack for inspiring others. An interest, if not expertise, in steam-operated railways is a plus.
- ➔ Experience: Experience in the heritage or tourism sector is advantageous

HOW TO APPLY

Send your CV and a covering letter detailing your suitability for the role to Chris Barber, Director, People Services at chris.barber@bluebell-railway.com

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For further information and to apply, contact Sarah Vigar at sarah.vigar@bluebell-railway.com

For other catering vacancies, please see <https://www.bluebell-railway.com/job-vacancies/> – Ed.

VOLUNTEER CARRIAGE CLEANERS

Our carriages are our showcase to visitors and make a lasting impression on their perception of our Railway – so it is vital that they are always clean and well presented. We have a dedicated team who clean the carriages both inside and out to ensure they are always looking their best.

If you would like to join this team and carry out a role that makes a direct impact on our visitors perception of the Railway, then please contact tom.lawson@bluebell-railway.com for more information.



Photo: David Cable

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 12 July 2024 from
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](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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- | | |
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	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Donations to The Bluebell Railway Trust</h2>
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Please print out and complete this form, and then send it to:

The Bluebell Railway Trust, Sheffield Park Station, Near Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 3QL.

Alternatively you can donate directly online via www.bluebell-railway.com/donate and save the postage costs.

I enclose a gift towards the **Making Bluebell Bloom Again Appeal** for the restoration of Class P Locomotive no. 323 'Bluebell'.

Cheques should be made payable to The Bluebell Railway Trust.

£

☐ If you require an acknowledgement, please tick the box and either provide an email address or a Stamped Addressed Envelope. My email address is:

The Bluebell Railway Trust is always pleased to receive donations and legacies to help us to continue to support projects that might not be afforded by the Railway from its operating resources.

☐ If you would like more information on leaving a legacy to the Trust, please tick this box.

DATA PROTECTION

We are committed to protecting your personal information and will not share your details with any organisation outside the Bluebell Railway Group that comprises Bluebell Railway Trust, Bluebell Railway Preservation Society, Bluebell Railway Plc and subsidiary/or supporting groups.

☐ So that we may contact you using the details you have provided, about Bluebell Railway activities that we believe may be of interest to you, please tick this Consent Box. Details of our privacy policy, including your opt-out and access rights, can be found at www.bluebell-railway.com.

GIFT AID DECLARATION

In order to add the benefits of Gift Aid to your donation ~~you must~~ please tick the boxes as appropriate:

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