



Beachy Head hauls a service of vintage stock, 9 March. Photo: David Cable

# The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway Members, Staff and Supporters

March 2025

## IN THIS ISSUE

This issue of *The Bluebell Times* marks five years from the launch of the newsletter. That first issue was a response to the Covid pandemic lockdown: if the railway closed both for visitors and volunteers and staff, how could we maintain a sense of community in such uncertain times? Those early issues owe much to the efforts of the then-Communications Director, Paul Bromley: articles ranged widely from a trawl through the leading dimensions of our locomotives and film recommendations to while away the long evenings to word searches and "spot the difference" competitions.

It has become something of a cliché to divide things into "before Covid" and "post Covid". The Railway is certainly different now than in 2019, and the past five years have seen a series of challenges any one of which could have been seen as severe, but as a group are perhaps unprecedented. But the last five years has also seen tremendous progress on the railway: 'Beachy Head' has emerged to great acclaim; our accessible Pullman Car 54 is a masterpiece of sensitive conversion of a heritage vehicle to broaden our ability to host mobility-impaired passengers; OP4 is now filled with our most vulnerable future restoration projects, along with the adjacent heritage skills centre, and every year the speed restriction at the foot of Freshfield Bank gets shorter as new track is laid back towards Sheffield Park.

We have much to be proud of in the last five years, and this summer there is the "Rail 200" celebration to look forward to. This should not just be a one-off event, but rather an event that provides lasting benefit to the Railway. Perhaps in years to come, we will no longer talk of "pre- and post-Covid" but celebrate how things changed before and after Rail 200.

Tom James, Editor

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# Watts Occurring

By Roy Watts, BRPS Chairman

As a resplendent "Fenchurch" crossed Imber Horne viaduct bathed in bright sunshine, it signalled the start of another operating season and the dawn of the 65th year since the line reopened between Sheffield Park and Horsted Keynes back in August, 1960.

It is also hard to believe that its 12 years almost to the day that passenger services began operating to East Grinstead albeit the weather conditions of that day were the complete opposite to what we were currently experiencing.

To be fair, it wasn't just the trains but all the stations have received forms of attention during the closed period and many a uniform was cleaned and pressed in readiness for operations to recommence.

It was gratifying to see just how well our season has begun and despite some operational challenges, we have seen good numbers of visitors

in particular family groups skating or taking the opportunity for a picture with a television character, I mean to listen to grown-ups totally overwhelmed because they had had their pictures taken with Sonic the Hedgehog!!

Of course, the reopening had been preceded with weeks of hard graft, taking the opportunity of the temporary halt in services to catch up on much needed maintenance.

A Railway is a very demanding beast, and one feels it's a constant "Forth Bridge syndrome" of just finishing one thing when the next item rears its ugly head, never time for a respite.

At this point, I am sure you like me send our thoughts and wishes to the Severn Valley Railway following their devastating embankment collapse north of Strens.



*Electro-diesel E6040 hauled its first regular service train on the railway on 2 March after the booked loco – Fenchurch – had to be withdrawn. The train is seen here leaving Kingscote with the 3.15pm ex-East Grinstead. Photo: Nick Gilliam*



It just goes to prove just how fragile infrastructure can be and of course climate changes have contributed to many recent structural problems.

And they are not alone as we have the section north of Horsted under constant scrutiny due to inherent geological faults hence the lineside monitoring equipment.

Perhaps the positive to be taken is that today, there is the technology and equipment to remedy such problems the Victorians had no access to. We wish the SVR a speedy recovery to full line working.

I trust you will have seen the recent press releases concerning the sponsorship the Bluebell has received from GTR and Eversholt which will enable schools to travel to the Railway as part of the education piece in relation to Rail 200. *[See page 5 – Ed]*

Likewise, the agreement signed with Network Rail will see materials and equipment delivered to the Railway rather than simply disposed of and as I write a consignment of track panels and ballast is imminent.

There is much still to do in preparation for this summer's event but it's ensuring that there will be a beneficial legacy beyond this year's celebrations. The whole theme is about railways past, present and future and we look forward to welcoming industry suppliers and exhibitors to the Bluebell. The programme is reaching the final stages of its construction and is worthy of being the subject of

a full article rather than just a few brief sentences describing some of the elements.

So, the season has begun again once more and we have already seen some interesting combinations of locomotives and carriages such as the class 73 hauling the Metropolitan set or 32424 at the head of the Victorian era coaching stock - which looks just right and exemplifies exactly what the Bluebell and preservation is all about.

Whilst the Railway comes back to life, the Board is busy closing out 2024 as the annual audit gets underway and at the same time, the final touches are being made to the budget process.

We have to be honest and understand the tough trading environment we are facing and the importance that our visitors have a great experience that is seen as value for money and hope we get the secondary spend and the repeat business. Yes, it won't always be perfect and we won't always get it right but that's the way you learn what works and what doesn't and for that I would never criticise anyone for trying. However, we can all play our part by being ambassadors promoting the experiences we can offer. Likewise, this is about all of us, team Bluebell working as a unit keeping an eye on and controlling unnecessary waste. Remember, we all contribute to success and should respect the part everybody has to play in delivering service excellence safely and cost effectively.

Let's face this year confidently and with pride.

Fingers crossed for a successful year!

# Railway 200: Past - Present - Future

By Ruth Rowatt, Marketing and Communication Manager

The Bluebell Railway is planning to hold the largest event in the South-east in celebration of 200 years of great British passenger railways, which started with the first steam service at Stockton and Darlington in 1825.

The event will begin on 2nd June with an education phase, aiming to bring in 18,000 secondary, sixth form, SEN and upper key stage 2 primary students on heavily subsidised visits. The team at the Bluebell Railway have been working hard to raise sponsorship for students to attend and learn about the development of railways, amazing engineering projects and participate in a careers fair with industry giants. We have some exciting and inspiring partners supporting.

Teachers can still register an interest, so if you have any contact with schools and teachers, urge them to investigate this and register. We can take whole year groups on each train! Visit the Railway

200 page to download a brochure and find the link to the form.

From the July 2, we move into the celebration phase. The focus becomes more about what additional exhibits, displays and events we can offer the general visitor. [Check the website](#) for developments and information about what is on offer.

There's more to come! Visit the Railway 200 page to read the full press releases, to find out more about our event and to register an interest in a school visit.

If you wish to volunteer on the delivery of these events, sponsor school visits, contribute in some other way or require more information, then email [railway200event@bluebell-railway.com](mailto:railway200event@bluebell-railway.com) where we can direct you to the right point of contact.

## RAILWAY 200 SUBSIDISED SCHOOL VISITS 2nd JUNE - 2nd JULY TEACHERS REGISTER NOW!

RAIL FUTURE - CAREERS FAIR  
APPRENTICESHIPS - VINTAGE TRAIN RIDE  
STEM EXHIBITS - WORKSHOPS  
NATIONAL EVENT ON YOUR DOORSTEP  
SPONSORED VISITS AVAILABLE



# Eversholt Rail Sponsor School Visits

By Ruth Rowatt, Marketing and Communication Manager

Eversholt Rail are sponsoring a significant number of school visits to the Bluebell Railway's Railway 200 education event this summer, covering rail past, present and future. During the fifteen days reserved for schools, up to 18,000 school children from London and the south east are expected to visit.

The children will learn about the history of railways, the STEM that underpins the rail industry, rail safety, the wide range of careers offered by the rail and logistics sectors and the role rail and mass transit systems will play in a net-zero Britain. They will also see a range of old and

modern railway vehicles and working steam locomotives.

Mary Kenny, Chief Executive Officer at Eversholt Rail, said:

"We are delighted to be supporting the Bluebell Railway in bringing children across the London and South East to the Railway 200 event. This is another fantastic way to engage with the younger generation to showcase the railway and the range of career opportunities and inspire them to pursue careers in the rail industry which is a key objective for our business."

# Generous GTR Support For Travel To East Grinstead

By Ruth Rowatt, Marketing and Communication Manager

Britain's biggest train operator, Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR), are kindly offering 9,000 free tickets to enable schoolchildren to travel by mainline to the Railway 200 event @ Bluebell Railway between 2nd June and 2nd July.

Bluebell Railway's Business Development Manager Jon Beardmore said

"We are very grateful to GTR for this generous support, which will particularly help schools from London, Croydon and Surrey visit our Railway 200 event."

"We've also raised a significant sum in sponsorship, so entry to the Bluebell Railway will also be heavily subsidised."

Angie Doll, Chief Executive Officer at GTR, said:

"Two hundred years ago the modern railway came into existence and utterly transformed our society."

"The inventions, science and technology that created it makes for fascinating learning, which the Bluebell Railway is the perfect partner to deliver in a fun, engaging way."

# Inspiration to Visit the Railway this July

By Ruth Rowatt, Marketing and Communication Manager

During the celebration phase a new and unique touring exhibition train will come to The Bluebell Railway.

From 23 to 29 July, as part of a national celebration of the 200th anniversary of the modern railway called Railway 200, 'Inspiration' will be at Horsterd Keynes station and be a fabulous additional exhibit for our visitors.

Curated in partnership with the National Railway Museum, it will be the only exhibition train on the rail network and will promote the past, present and future of the railway, helping to attract the next generation of pioneering talent.

Sporting an eye-catching livery, Inspiration will comprise four smartly reconfigured Mark 3 coaches, procured by Network Rail. The mobile Railway 200 exhibition is designed to inspire schoolchildren and others to consider a career in rail, shining a spotlight on the wide range of roles available, and to create a more diverse workforce.

Rail's innovation and pioneering pedigree will be explored in a 'Railway Firsts' coach, highlighting landmark moments in the development of the railway. Alongside will be a 'Wonderlab on Wheels', inviting visitors to test their engineering skills with a range of interactive exhibits. This will adjoin a carriage called 'Your Railway Future', showcasing some of the more hidden roles in rail and encouraging people to consider a career in rail to shape the next 200 years. There will also be a 'Partner Zone', offering free, flexible exhibition space.





# Landmark Agreement with Network Rail

By Ruth Rowatt, Marketing and Communication Manager

Network Rail and the Bluebell Railway have signed an agreement which will see further collaboration between the two organisations – the first of its kind with a heritage railway in the south of England.

The landmark agreement will benefit the Bluebell Railway through the donation of redundant railway assets with Network Rail's Sussex Route providing railway materials such as rail and sleepers no longer needed on the mainline railway across Sussex, so that materials that would otherwise be recycled elsewhere can be re-used and can find a new purpose.

Network Rail and the Bluebell Railway will also work together on supporting Railway 200 exhibitions at London Victoria Station and at the Bluebell Railway in Sheffield Park, Sussex. Network Rail will provide historic and now disused assets to help deliver the exhibitions as part of the

Network Rail will also use the Bluebell Railway's facilities as part of its community engagement activity including hosting rail experience days to help promote the role of rail to people considering a career in the industry. In return, the Bluebell Railway will benefit from Network Rail's in-kind expertise and time, with staff being able to use volunteering leave to support the maintenance and running of the Bluebell Railway.



*Lucy McAuliffe, Network Rail's Sussex route director and Neil Glaskin, Chairman of the Bluebell Railway sign the route agreement seated in the Bluebell Railway's award-winning accessible Pullman carriage – Car 54.*

# Q Class 541 Overhaul Update

By Chris Hunford and Steve Pilcher, Maunsell Locomotive Society

The final snagging jobs have been completed on the new tender tank at Rolvenden and arrangements are being made to co-ordinate a lorry movement in order to transport it to Sheffield Park, hopefully around the end of March. We eagerly look forward to seeing it.

The workshop staff are progressing work to fabricate the new front dragbox for the tender chassis. The machining of the journals of the brake beam shaft has been completed.

Meanwhile workshop volunteers Nigel and Trevor have continued painting various parts of the chassis and other members of the MLS working

party have continued cleaning and painting various parts of 541's cladding.

Down at Leaky Finders re-staying of the left-hand side of the firebox is well underway and new monel stays are being machined in house ready for fitting in due course.

Work on the chassis has centred around tidying up some of the smaller items and preparing for the optical alignment work which should, by the time you read this, be well advanced. The purpose of this is to take measurements and align the whole chassis before some work to insert new sections of frames starts around where the horn guides are located – see photo.



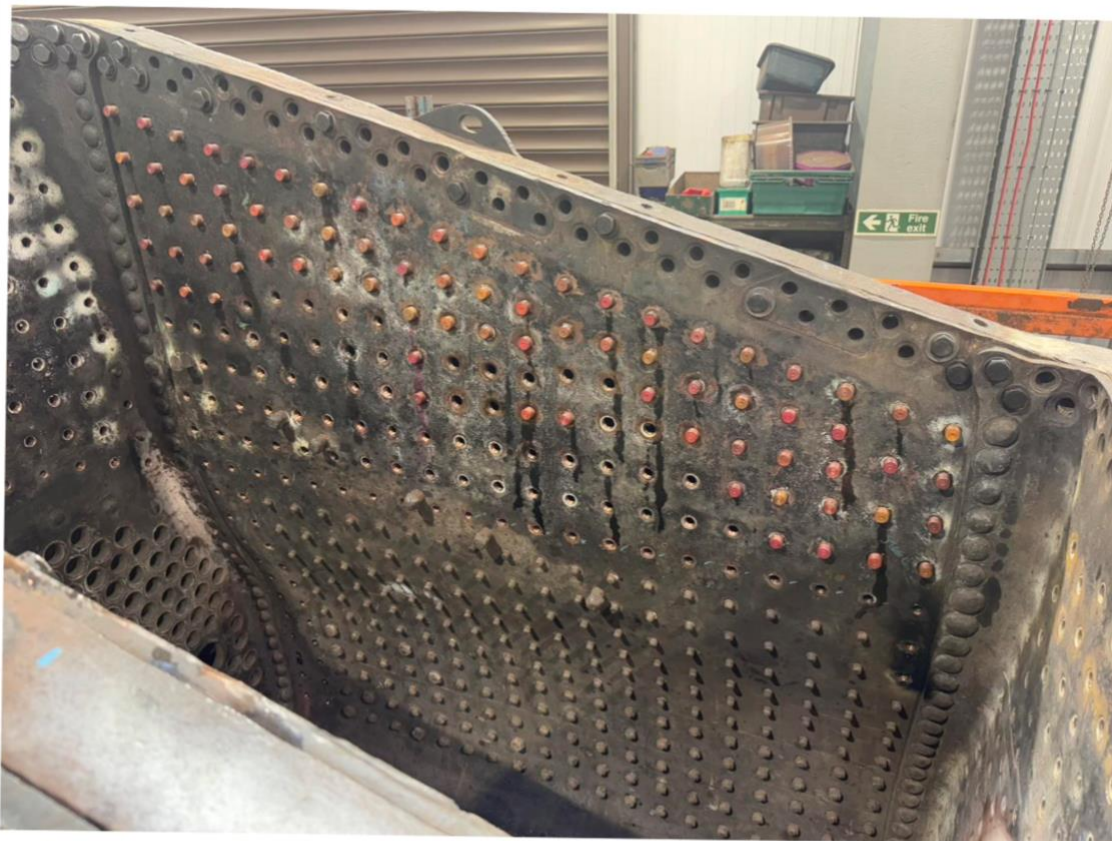
**Left:** New parts for 541's front dragbox and a new section of inner frames for 541's tender chassis, at Sheffield Park.  
Photo: Steve Pilcher

**Below:** Further work on cleaning and painting loco boiler cladding.

Photo Steve Pilcher







**Left:** View of 541's inner firebox, with new copper stays being fitted.

*Photo courtesy Leaky Finders*

**Below:** Optical alignment equipment being set up to take measurements.

*Photo courtesy Leaky Finders*



# Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme Volunteers

Words and photos by Matt Lander and Laurie Anderson, Bluebell Railway Goods Division

During the week from the 15 – 21 February Carriage and Wagon hosted a group of students doing their Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award Residential experience.

The group were directed and assisted by members of the Goods Division working on the heavy body overhaul of the [SR Vacuum fitted box van No 47588](#). This van was very much overdue an overhaul, it's last one being in the early 1990s and a subsequent repaint in the early 2000s. The years hadn't been kind to it and the planking was in very poor condition in places.

Finley, Toby, James, Jacob, Theo and Alfie got stuck in on a variety of tasks including painting, needle gunning and grit-blasting components and they worked with Richard Salmon to machine five body planks each from scratch to give them an idea of the

various differences processes involved in restoration and woodwork.

A few weeks were spent prior to the 15 February preparing for the week by clearing the van of stored seat components, stripping the planking off and needle gunning the framework. All the tools and materials we needed were purchased as well so everything was on hand when we needed it.

On the first day the van was just a bare metal frame. After a layer of primer and undercoat was applied, all the planks were dry fitted and the bolt holes drilled. The frame and most of the planks then received another undercoat and a first coat of gloss.

To round off the week the group fitted the north end and west side with sealant

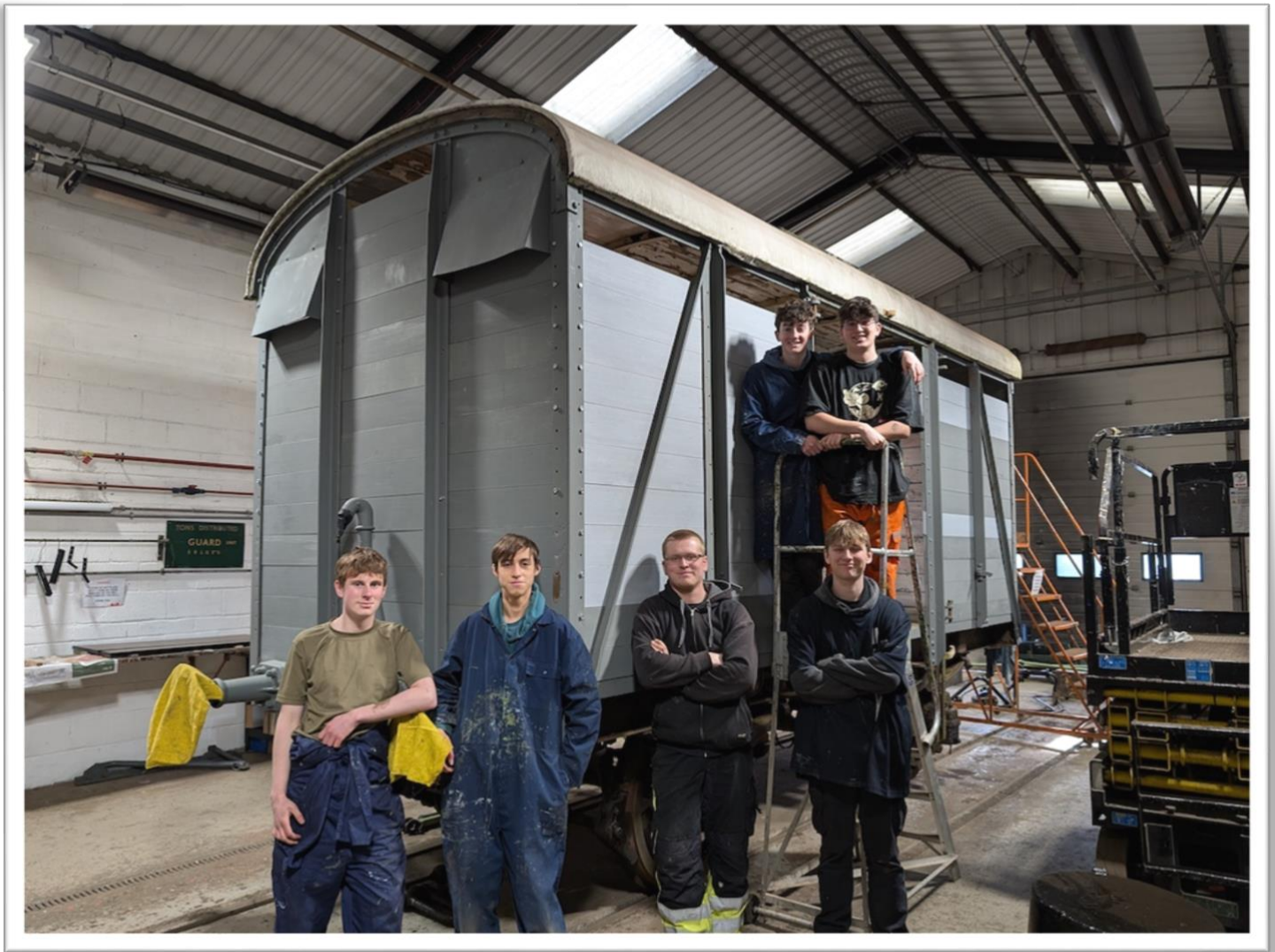


**Left:** Before we started. You can see the very poor cosmetic condition the van was in.



**Right:** Vandal! Those planks didn't put up much of a fight as the timber around the bolts was well and truly gone.





**Above:** *The students pose with their handiwork.*

between metalwork and planking to provide extra waterproofing. They then had a round trip to East Grinstead in a Metropolitan coach.

The students came from various organisations that are part of the Duke of Edinburgh scheme all over the south east. They all really enjoyed their time at the railway and hopefully feel they achieved something even if we couldn't finish the van while they were here but still achieved a significant feat in such a short period of time. A couple of them also expressed an interest in returning for a further part of their DofE Gold and maybe beyond. We

hope this can be repeated in C&W or other departments in the future.

We would like to thank the 13<sup>th</sup> Bromley Boys Brigade including Sam, Kieran and others for setting up the placement and dealing with the admin. Also thanks should go to the Loco department for letting the group use their clean mess facilities during the week and C&W for finding space for us to allow us to work undercover, otherwise we wouldn't have got half the work done.

The remaining work on the van centres around building a new set of doors to replace the life expired ones we removed



and completing the painting. The recent cold weather preventing much of the latter from taking place except on smaller components in the paintshop.

To support us follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Rail.Goods.Division> or see the [Goods Division web pages](#).

**Top:** The early-evening sun sets behind the van. The doors will be dealt with at a later date as the current focus is on getting the sides and ends watertight again.

**Right:** Mid-way through restoration.





# SOUTHERN AT WAR

AT THE  
BLUEBELL RAILWAY

SATURDAY 19TH &  
SUNDAY 20TH JULY 2025



## Advance Tickets Now Available!

For advance tickets and more details on  
our 2025 event in July visit  
[www.bluebell-railway.com/special/southern-at-war/](http://www.bluebell-railway.com/special/southern-at-war/)



# Bluebell Charity Walk

By John Deane, Infrastructure volunteer

Hello to everyone who responded to my plea for support.

Firstly, please accept my sincere thanks for all of your valuable contributions, now amounting to £3612.25, Gift Aid included. The encouragement that I felt from your support, both during my training period and on the crucial day itself, was tremendous.

My friend and staunch walking companion throughout has been Roger Ward, a fellow volunteer in the Kingscote lineside gang. To you, Roger I shall be ever grateful, as without your steadfast help I couldn't have pulled this idea off.

I had intended to thank individually all of you nearly one hundred supporters whose names are known to me, but my admin workload just now precludes me from doing it that way. I hope that I will be forgiven for this collective missive, at least for the present. For those of my supporters who chose to remain anonymous, please accept my sincere thanks here. I have already explained how much all the support boosted my determination. That boost was necessary as eleven and a half miles doesn't sound too great to most of us until you actually set out to walk it.

During this past couple of weeks Roger and I have each walked over 100 miles, (more than 160 Kms). We have now determined to try to maintain our newly found fitness but we are not accepting bets on this just for the moment.

On March 4th, the day of the 11.6 mile Railway Charity Walk, we arrived at East Grinstead Station at 0900 to prepare for the walk. We began walking at 0950. Our travel time, including the passage through the near half mile long tunnel, took us a little under 4 hours at an average rate of just over 3 miles per hour. Steady progress on old legs. With various delays on route our arrival time at Sheffield Park Station was 1505, very close to our ETA.

In conclusion, I must thank those of the Railway staff who gave us every assistance to make this



attempt possible. For safety reasons, Roger and I kept in touch with control by radio throughout our attempt, right up to the finishing line in order to warn of the approaching tea drinkers. Making our final steps at Sheffield Park Station, we were greeted with plenty of welcoming congratulations, banners and balloons. The British Heart Foundation was represented by Helen Smith, their Fundraising Manager for Sussex. Helen presented me with a token medal for my efforts. The celebrations seemed a fitting end to a memorable day and the tea was absolute nectar.

*If you would like to contribute to John's fundraising for the British Heart Foundation, you can still do so here:*

[www.justgiving.com/page/johndeanebluebellwalk](http://www.justgiving.com/page/johndeanebluebellwalk) – Ed.



# Carriage Shop - Branch Line Weekend

By Chris Wilson, Carriage Shop volunteer

For our March donations we will be supporting four of the Bluebell Railway's smaller locomotives which are currently in overhaul. We are pleased to be able donate £125 each to support the work being completed on:

- ➡ [27 P-class 0-6-0T](#)
- ➡ [96 'Normandy' B4-class "Dock Tank" 0-4-0T](#)
- ➡ [323 'Bluebell' P-class 0-6-0T](#)
- ➡ [541 Q-class 0-6-0](#)

The Carriage Shop have commissioned Rapido UK to produce another exclusive OO gauge model wagon. The 7-Plank Wagon is for Ward & Son of Tunbridge Wells and is based on the photograph and description that appear in John Arkell's book, Private Owner Wagons of the South-East.

The wagons are a limited edition of 150 models and will be available from Friday 14<sup>th</sup> March, the first day of the Branch Line Gala, only from the Carriage Shop at Horsted Keynes station. Each wagon is £34.95 and contains an individually numbered certificate.

All profits from the sales of these models will be donated equally to the Bluebell Railway Southern

Coach Group and the Bluebell Railway Goods Division to support each groups important restoration work.

The Carriage Shop has extended opening times throughout the Branch Line Gala during which we will have an additional display outside the shop and a special offer on all books across the weekend.

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 or transport material. If you can help please contact:

[bluebellrailwaycarriageshop@gmail.com](mailto:bluebellrailwaycarriageshop@gmail.com)

For our opening times and news please visit our Facebook page:

[facebook.com/BluebellRailwayCarriageShop](https://facebook.com/BluebellRailwayCarriageShop)





# Photos From The Museum Website

By Chris Wilson, Bluebell Railway archive volunteer

This month we have added a further 492 images to the Bluebell Railway Museum website bringing the total now available to 27,049.

These new additions come from the camera of Joe Kent and showcase more of Joe's work taken across the Southern and wider afield in the period 1959 to 1961. Locations on the Southern include East Grinstead High Level and Low Level, Folkestone Harbour, Ashford, Groombridge, Kemp Town, Poole, Partridge Green and Preston Park Pullman Car Works. There are views at Barking, Radlett, Wood Green, Hadley Wood, Moor Park, and many taken in and around Derby.

If you have a collection of photographs, negatives, slides or digital images you are interested in depositing with the Archive and preserving for the future please get in touch with us by emailing [photos@bluebell-railway-museum.co.uk](mailto:photos@bluebell-railway-museum.co.uk).

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](http://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.

**Top:** A busy scene at East Grinstead High Level station with trains in all four platforms. 4P No. 42102 in view with the 5.25pm to Victoria on 24 July 1959. [200380]

**Middle:** By the end of 1959 all the ex SECR R1 tank engines were replaced as the banking engines on the Folkestone Harbour branch. This view taken on 25th July 1959 shows the transition period where R1 No. 3137 and the ex GWR Pannier Tank 57xx No. 4631 on banking duty. [200392]

**Bottom:** Pullman Camping Coach C.C.162 outside Preston Park Pullman Car in June 1960. [200429]

All photos: Joe Kent



# On This Day - 14 March

By Tony Hillman, Deputy Curator

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



Herne Hill Sorting Sidings were located on either side of the stretch of line between Herne Hill and Loughborough Junction Stations. The line was opened by the London Chatham and Dover Railway [LCDR] as part of their "Metropolitan Extensions" on 6 October 1862 between Herne Hill and Farringdon Street

There seems to be little published about the extensive sidings numbering 35, including at least two coal depots. Entry to and exit from the sidings was controlled by a typical LCDR wooden signal box seen here on Saturday 14 March 1959. It was opened circa 1868 and contained a tappet lever frame of 28 levers. It remained in use until 24 September 1967.

The principal traffic handled was household coal received in trainloads from the Midlands via Brent in North London and then distributed around the London Area and out as far as The Medway Towns and Tonbridge. This was reflected in the motive power used on these trains, mainly C Class 0-6-0s from Stewarts Lane and other South Eastern sheds. In 1959 there was no dedicated shunting engine, but Stewarts Lane C Class 0-6-0s (Duties 74-76) covered the 24 hours in addition to local freights.

With the general decline in freight traffic in the 1960s, goods facilities were withdrawn here on 1 August 1966, in common with many wayside station goods yards, but the sidings were used for storage until the closure of the signal box. Today, nothing of the sidings remains

apart from the freight line that led from the sidings alongside Milkwood Road to the south end of Herne Hill Station, which remains as a turnback siding for Thameslink trains, but now with no connection at the

Herne Hill end. Residential accommodation was built along Shakespeare Road, site of the western sidings and commercial premises on the site of the eastern sidings along Milkwood Road.



Tuesday 14 March 1967 and John Scrace has captured this interesting shot from platform 11 at Waterloo. Standing at platform 10 is West Country Class 4-6-2, 34004 'Yeovil', waiting to depart with the 1.30pm service to Weymouth. Meanwhile, at platform 8, EMU 4-COR 3147 is getting ready to lead the 1.50pm service to Portsmouth Harbour.

34004 was built at Brighton Works and entered service in June 1945. Originally numbered 21C104, it was named on 2 November 1945 at Yeovil Town Station. It was rebuilt at Eastleigh in February 1958. Over the course of its twenty-two year career, the locomotive spent time at several sheds including Exmouth Junction, Bricklayers Arms, Stewarts Lane and Eastleigh.

At the time of the photograph, 34004 was allocated to Bournemouth (70F) having moved there in October 1965. Here we see it on Weymouth Duty 434, which would have had it working the 6.56am from Bournemouth up to Waterloo. The locomotive was withdrawn on 9 July 1967, just a few months after the

photograph was taken, and scrapped at Newport in October 1967.

Unit 3147 had entered service in March 1938, more than seven years before 34004. It was one of a second batch of twenty-six 4-CORs constructed at Eastleigh works for the second phase (via Horsham) of the Southern Railway's Portsmouth Electrification scheme. These had followed on from twenty-nine identical units that had been built for the first (via Woking) phase. All the 4-CORs consisted of two motor brake thirds, a trailer composite and a trailer third.

In the photograph the unit is seen in BR's new all-over blue livery with small yellow ends. These new colours might have suggested a relatively secure future, but by late 1972 all the 4-CORs, having already been reassigned to secondary duties, were gone. 3147, which had received full yellow ends two years earlier, was withdrawn on 1 January 1972 and scrapped at Briton Ferry in June.

*Photo: John Scrace [141142]*





With the Pullman Works near Preston Park on the left SR Class U1 2-6-0 31905 is seen approaching Brighton on Friday 14 March 1952 with the Hastings portion of the 7.40am from Birkenhead.

At that time the through train from Birkenhead Woodside only ran on Fridays and Saturdays. Travelling via Reading and Guildford upon arrival at Redhill at 2.33pm the train split into two sections. The main part departed for Margate at 2.38pm whilst the Hastings portion followed at 2.45pm. Upon arrival at Brighton at 3.25pm the train reversed and left at 3.36pm and, after another reversal at Eastbourne, eventually arrived at Hastings at 4.53pm over nine hours later. That season there was also no catering, the restaurant car facility having been temporarily withdrawn! As readers will see the three coaches are all ex GWR, the rolling stock alternating with SR Maunsell stock.

31905 was allocated to Stewarts Lane (73A). Its first duty that day was to take the 3.45am freight from

Battersea Yard to Hove. Running light to Brighton it would then haul the 10.47am Birkenhead (9.25am ex Hastings) train from there to Redhill. Upon arrival it would couple up to the Ramsgate (74B) allocated Schools class that had brought in the Margate – Birkenhead portion both then going to Redhill shed (75B) for turning and servicing after which both returned respectively to Brighton and Margate.

The first U1, 890, was a rebuild of the sole 3 cylinder K1 (River class) 2-6-4T in June 1928, following the decision to convert the River tanks to 2-6-0s as a consequence of the Sevenoaks derailment. Subsequently renumbered 1890 it was regarded as a success so an additional 20 were constructed (1891- 1910) with 1905 (BR number 31905) entering traffic in August 1931. It spent most of its life on the Eastern and Central Sections and was withdrawn from Norwood Junction shed (75C) in December 1962. It was scrapped at Eastleigh in October 1963.

*Photo: Joe Kent [090026]*



# Late Booking Discounts For March 2025 Trains!



## Luncheon & Dining Trains

### Luncheon Trains:

23rd

### Evening Dining Trains:

22nd & 29th

Table for 1 £95

Table for 2 £190

Table for 2 people on a Table for 4 £240

Table for 3 £285

Table for 3 people on a Table for 4 £310

Table for 4 £380

## BOOK NOW!!



**HEY DUGGEE**  
22nd & 23rd March



## Events Coming Up At The Bluebell Railway

**Hey Duggee**  
22nd & 23rd March

**Iconic Character Cars**  
29th & 30th March

**Brick Making Carriage**  
Featuring Lego Bricks  
5th to 17th April

**Easter Bunnies**  
11th to 13th April

**Mobile Zoo At Kingscote**  
18th to 21st April

**Toy & Rail Collectors Fair**  
23rd April

*'More Than Just  
A Train Ride!'*





Photo: Peter Edwards

# The Bluebell Times

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

*The Bluebell Times is published  
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## Tail Lamp

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