



Beachy Head with the Maunsell set. Photo: James Cummins

The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway Members, Staff and Supporters

June 2025

IN THIS ISSUE

This has been a month of comings and goings on the Railway, as the gala season gets underway – both on the Bluebell and elsewhere – and events for Railway 200 step up in pace. We have seen the arrival of 'Crompton' No. 33 108 to assist with hauling schools trains for [Railway 200](#); and the Hastings Thumper and BR 7MT 'Britannia' come in on charter workings, while No. 65 and the 4-VEP No. 3417 have flown the Bluebell flag at other railways – GWSR and Swanage respectively. Finally, just as this issue was being finalised, 'Sir Archibald Sinclair' and Bulleid semi-open brake third No. 2526 left by rail to attend a private even in London; they are due to return later this week.

Photos and video of those workings abound on social media, and there is a selection of photos in this issue of *The Bluebell Times*. What is perhaps less apparent is the hard work and dedication of our staff, paid and volunteer, to make such events a reality. One can only imagine the consumption of midnight oil needed to agree, for example, the mainline certification and move of 'Sir Archibald Sinclair' at very short notice after the originally-planned locomotive, 'Camelot', had to be withdrawn. For No. 65 to appear at the GWSR gala, a small platoon of Loco Department staff travelled with it to look after the locomotive while away. Undoubtedly such visits are in themselves rewarding, but it is always worth remembering the effort expended and nights away from home so that we can enjoy our Railway – at home and away.

Tom James, Editor

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Watts Occurring

By Roy Watts, BRPS Chairman

So, do we start with the good news or the bad news?

Well clearly for me – and indeed many others as I found out! – Crystal Palace Football Club finally won a major trophy, winning the Football Association Cup on a sunny bright day under the famous Wembley arch! What an occasion it was. Can I thank people who took the trouble to write to me offering their personal congratulations, that was indeed very special and greatly appreciated.

I am writing this after witnessing our very own 34059, *Sir Archibald Sinclair* and Bulleid Brake 2526 pass en-route to an event in West London for HS2. I have to say it's good to see some movement on and off the main network again with such recent visits from the Hastings Diesel unit, 70000 *Britannia* making a welcome return to Bluebell

metals bringing in the "Chairmans Train" in for a private event at Gravetye Manor (and facing south this time!) and our having the opportunity to send away stock for use at a special exhibition.

I will also mention that our own 4-VEP travelled to the Swanage Railway to participate in their recent diesel gala. It was very pleasing to see so much positive comments about the superb condition of the unit, a testament to the hard work put in by the volunteers of the [SETG](#). It was such a shame that some delinquents tried to damage the unit.

The next time she is out is to attend Derby's Great Gathering before returning to the Bluebell for our own [Diesel Gala](#).

It is only right to acknowledge the considerable ballast donation given to the Railway by HS2 as



No. 70000 'Britannia' arrives at East Grinstead via the Network Rail connection with the 'Wedding Belle Express', 23 May. Photo: Roy Watts.



'Sir Archibald Sinclair' and carriage No. 2656 passing through Sanderstead en route to London during the evening of 11 June. Photo: Roy Watts.

they closed down a construction site – and rather than brand new material go to land fill, finding a home which will make great use of it. Secondly, we have received a delivery of sleepers from Network Rail which will help in the up yard at Horsted Keynes as well as on the planned works just south of Sharpthorne Tunnel. This is why it is important to foster such good relationships with the big players

On a positive note, trade since April has been quite buoyant, with families very prominent at the Character days as well as seeing a welcome return of both school and ordinary coach parties to the Railway – particularly pleasing in this year of Railway history celebrations. This has been an area of concern since the Covid years.

This month sees the start of the [Railway 200](#) celebrations on our Railway and a number of exhibitions begin to take place before things take off in earnest in July, so we hope groups will take advantage of the sponsored tickets that have been made available to us.

By now you will have received the [AGM paperwork and the combined accounts](#). Clearly the not so good news is the state of our current financial situation.

Has this just happened? No, it's been an ongoing issue over many years, but the position is

becoming increasingly untenable and swift action is required.

Has this been caused by anyone or anything? No, in the main this is because we are dealing with equipment which is becoming increasingly costly to repair – ask just how much does it cost to repair a locomotive or carriage? Purchase a length of track? Look how much time, effort and work that our ageing infrastructure requires to maintain the high standards we need to operate our business.

And then there is the plain and simple fact that nothing is cheap anymore, as I am sure your personal budgets show you, and then add day-to-day operational costs which continue to escalate. A lot of these are costs we have no control over.

It's a simple fact we need more revenue – the good news is April and May are showing a healthy improvement and some 45,650 people have travelled with us in the year to date. Going forward we are getting increasing numbers of enquiries which result in group travel. Our premier product, the [Golden Arrow](#) for example has virtually sold out for June and July. Perhaps sensible pricing?

But please don't think we are going to have to start issuing small packs of toilet paper or recycle tea bags countless times! That's a false economy and no way should we let our high standards slide, it's those impressions that encourage great visitor perception.

Likewise running more trains is just not the answer. Many other Railways are reviewing their offer such as reducing days of operation.

We should be grateful to the Bluebell Railway Trust who have been in the fortunate position of being able to support and assist the Railway in many ways. I want to assure you that measures are being taken to address the problem. Like many of you, I have given enough days and hours and to see that wasted would be a tragedy. I have alluded to this issue over recent months but the severity of the problem cannot be ignored and must not be underestimated so it is up to respective boards to take action.

I again assure you that action been started, will be ongoing and you will be kept informed because

one thing the Bluebell family is good at and that is reacting to a crisis and the team pull together.

I have no desire to end on a sour note because so many people work hard for the Railway, people give so much. So many projects underway or reaching fruition. Thus when you see progress on such items as the Q, the H or 323 Bluebell, the awaking giant 9F, the Southern Restaurant car, the SR box van or even the buildings at Horsted Keynes, the work being done to restore Thumper 1305 just a few of the examples of projects worked on and driven by passionate people.

This is the Railway that delivered award winning stock such as a replica Atlantic, restored a Pullman Brake, an original Mark 1 carriage and has just delivered another outstanding Maunsell narrow bodied brake and look just how stunning those 4

carriages look as a rake. Just a pity that the originator, David Wigley, of the 3687-project passed away days before its return to traffic. We offer our condolences to his family.

We have much to be grateful for over the last 65 years and remember, we are not unique and certainly we are not alone in addressing such problems: it's a regular discussion point at the Southern Six

As always, I thank you for what you do because without that service, we can't move forward. Your help and support is invaluable and if you do have an idea or suggestion then please let us have them and do remember to ensure it's worked through and consequences are measured.

Hopefully, I may see many of you at the AGM, it is always a pleasure to meet our members.



Crystal Palace celebrate their Cup victory with an open top bus ride. Photo: Roy Watts

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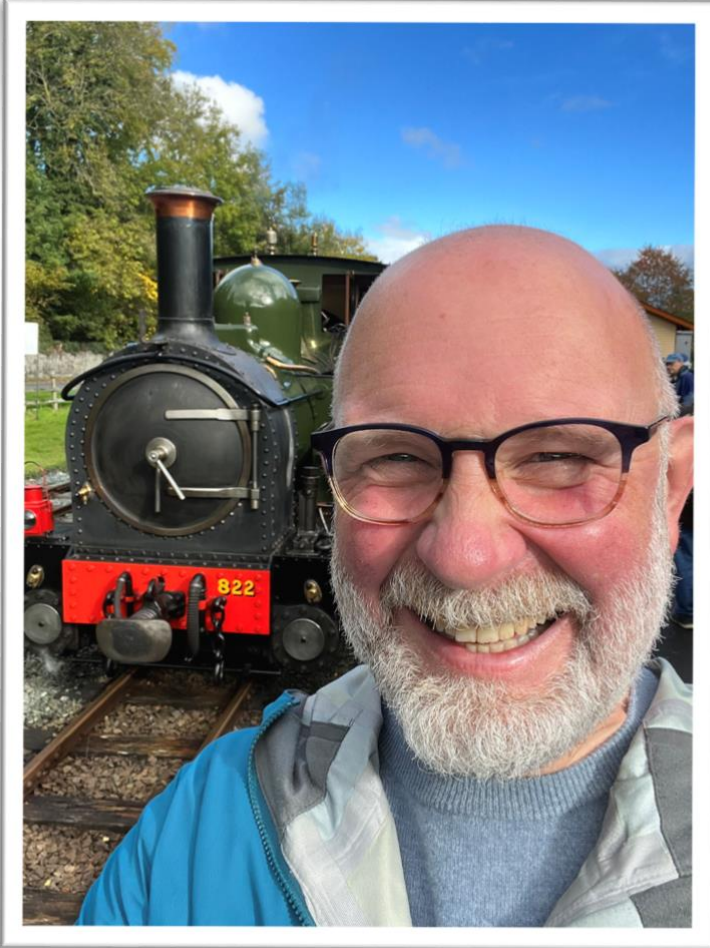
Watts Occurring 2

This has been a month of comings and goings on the Railway, as the

Buses? Crystal Palace? How this month's issue of *The Bluebell Times* **may** have appeared, had Roy been left in sole editorial charge! 😊

New PLC Chair Appointed

By Neil Glaskin, PLC Deputy Chair



I am pleased to announce that at its meeting on the 12 June the Board of the Bluebell Railway PLC appointed Mr Paul Seller as a Director and its new Chairman. Paul's appointment is supported by the Board of the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society.

Paul is a Chartered Engineer and member of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers with over 37 years' experience in the railway industry. Paul started his career with British Rail before moving into the private sector, working on projects in both the UK and Europe. I hope you will join me in welcoming Paul to the Bluebell Railway and wishing him the best of luck in his new role, Paul will introduce himself further in the July edition of *The Bluebell Times*.

With Paul's appointment I will now revert to my role of Operations Director, I have also agreed to take on the role of Deputy Chair of the PLC to support Paul in his new role.

David Middleton, having stood in to cover the Operations role, is standing down from the Board. David will continue in the role of Operations Standards Manager supporting myself and Chris Knibbs. I would like to thank David both on behalf of the Board and personally for his dedication and support during what has been a difficult period for the railway.

All other Board positions remain unchanged.

BRPS Members' Day and AGM

By Keith Leppard, BRPS Trustee

The idea of the day is to encourage members to see what is going on and show them where they can help, either by volunteering or by other contribution.

To give members plenty of time to explore the railway before attending the AGM itself, the service will begin earlier than a normal Saturday (first departures 9.20 am from Sheffield Park, 10.15 am from East Grinstead). As last year, the meeting will take place in a marquee on the top car park at Sheffield Park, commencing at 4 pm. A late train will leave for East Grinstead after the AGM at 5.45 pm, returning to Sheffield Park at 7.40 pm so if you arrive by rail you can get home afterwards; or you could simply use this train to enjoy the railway in the evening light before heading home from Sheffield Park.

EVENT DETAILS

Whilst we do not have a newly restored locomotive to launch into traffic at the event this year, we do have something almost as good – a chance to travel in our newly restored SR Maunsell 'Hastings' Brake 3rd, 3687. It is being put into traffic on 31 May and is running on AGM day, subject to availability, as part of the 'B' set, meaning it should be on the 9.20, 11.45 and 2.15 ex Sheffield Park. We are expecting this set to include all four of our restored Maunsell carriages, the longest rake of such coaches we have so far achieved on the railway.

Throughout the day, we are expecting that most areas within the loco yard (running shed, works, Atlantic House and maintenance shed) will be open to view the progress being made on the various restorations and overhauls that are underway. Some of our loco owning groups will have stands and will be on hand to update you on their respective projects. Whilst at Sheffield Park,

don't forget to pay a visit to the museum where the displays are being continually upgraded and rotated to give new and interesting things to see.

At Horsted Keynes, there will be tours of the Carriage & Wagon works, where you can see the progress being made on a number of carriages in various stages of restoration or overhaul. Members of the SR Coach Group and the Wagon Division will be there to discuss their work and plans for the future. On Platform 1/2 of the station, members of the Infrastructure teams will be showing you the work they have recently completed to this part of our historic 'Jewel in the Crown' station and the 1305 (Thumper) team will be on hand at the north end of the platform to show you the progress they are making to bring this unit back to working order.

At all our stations, staff will be happy to answer questions and, subject to operational requirements, show you how things work in their particular part of the Railway. Do please show your support for the individual project and owning groups that you will meet during your visit.

AGM

We hope that lots of you will join us on Society AGM day this year to enjoy your Bluebell Railway and play your part in its continued progress. Take the opportunity to ask questions and engage with members of the Society's management during the day and at the meeting, and of course spend what you can in the booking office, shop and catering outlets!

Signing in commences at 3pm – please remember to bring your membership card as you'll need it to sign in.

On behalf of the Chairman, Roy Watts, we look forward to seeing you.

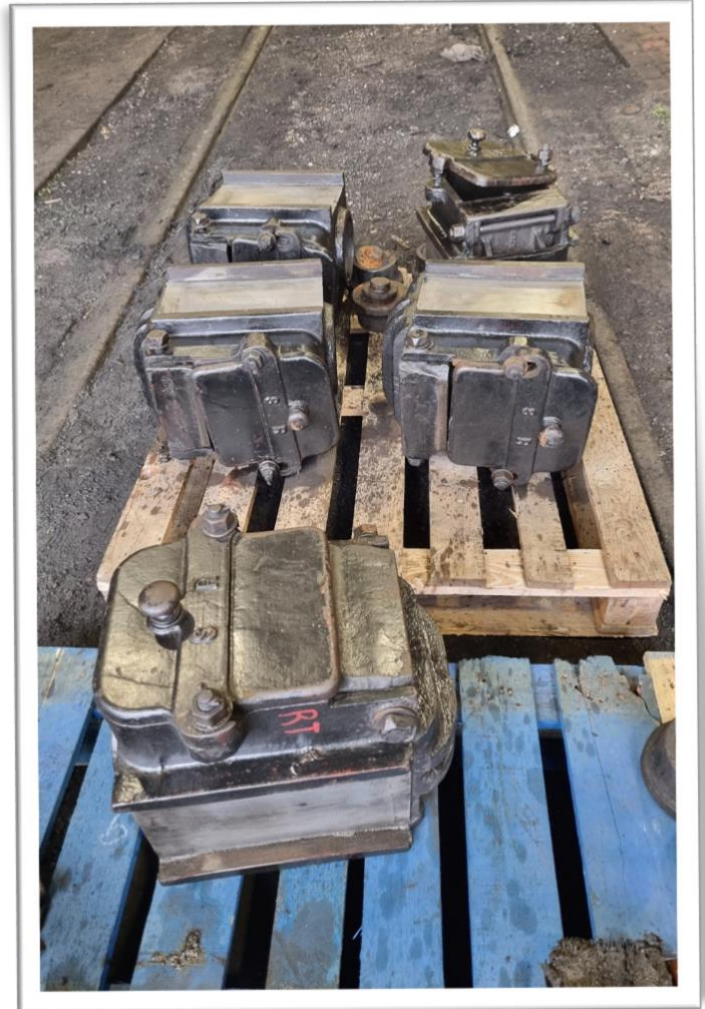
Q Class 541 Overhaul Progress

By Steve Pilcher and Chris Hunford, Maunsell Locomotive Society

Down at Leaky Finders premises in Devon, work is proceeding well on the boiler. 75% of the foundation ring rivet holes have been reamed, countersunk and bolted up, ready to rivet up. On the chassis, painting of the dragbox and rear inner frames is nearly complete. The first of the new frame inserts have had the horn block faces machined, offered up to chassis and marked out. They will shortly start drilling the bolt holes ready to ream up and fit horn blocks to it.

Back at Sheffield Park, plans are being worked up to paint the tender tank. The tender may need to be temporarily re-wheeled to move it out of the workshop for the duration of model railway weekend. To help this happen, the Maunsell Locomotive Society working party has assisted by cleaning up the tender axle boxes and one of the wheelsets prior to re-painting the wheel set.

In addition, the MLS volunteers have continued cleaning and priming various sections of the loco's boiler cladding that are present at Sheffield Park.



Above right: Tender axle boxes after being cleaned.

Right: Tender wheel set ready for being re-painted.

Both photos: Steve Pilcher





Left: New main frame inserts to replace the corroded areas of the frames around the hornguides.

Below: Inside of the frames newly painted after works completed to the right trailing horns.

Both photos: Leaky Finders



Happy Birthday Camelot!

By Julian Heinemann, Camelot Locomotive Society

This photo, from the [Camelot Locomotive Society](#) archive, shows the brand-new No. 73082 ex-works being steamed for the first time at Derby on 27 June 1955. Note the lack of shedplate on the smokebox door. Out of sight but just in front of it is No. 73081. (The photographer took independent shots of each at the same time). Both went to Stewarts Lane depot, and both were withdrawn from service 11 years later in 1966. The photographer is Mr R.J. Buckley.



Home and Away

A round up of some of the less usual Bluebell occurrences of the last month. Photos as credited.



Above: BR Standard 7MT No. 70000 'Britannia' arrived at the Bluebell on Friday 23 May on a private charter working. The locomotive was on display at Sheffield Park for our visitors the following day, before leaving on an outgoing charter on Sunday 25 May. The incoming charter is seen crossing Riddlesdown Viaduct, near Godstone on 23 May.

Photo: John Barrance



Left: The locomotive on shed at Sheffield Park.
Photo: Jack Lamb



Above: While Britannia was visiting the Bluebell, our own Stirling O1 No. 65 was away at the Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Steam Railway for a gala visit. The locomotive is seen on 25 May departing north from Winchcombe with the 9:50 service from Cheltenham Racecourse.

Photo: Nick Gilliam

Below: The previous weekend, the Bluebell played host to the Hastings Diesel Thumper on "The Blue Belle DEMU" charter service. The inbound train is seen here at West Hoathly on 17 May 2025.

Photo: Andrew Crampton





Above: The Swanage Railway held a diesel gala (or should that be "modern traction?") from May 9 – 11. On the gala "preview" day, 8 May, 4-VEP unit No. 3417 'Gordon Pettitt' is seen at Townsend Bridge, propelled by electro-diesel No. 73128

Photo: Gary Packer

Below: As mentioned in "Watts Occurring" (see page 2), Sir Archibald Sinclair and Bulleid semi-open brake third carriage No. 2526 travelled to London during the evening of 11 June for an event at Willesden Euroterminal. The locomotive and carriage are seen here shortly after arrival

Photo: Andy Kelly



Meet a Wartime Evacuee

By Peter Edwards, Education volunteer

The [Education Department](#) has provided guides and activities for school visits for a number of years. Many of these visits are for primary school children who are studying the history of World War 2. In one of these activities the children are able to meet and hear about the experiences of two of our volunteers, Robert Raikes and Malcolm Stroud, who were school children throughout the war.

Robert volunteers as a station porter at Horsted Keynes but as a child he lived in Gloucestershire throughout WW2. He recounts his experience of food rationing and changes in his village because of the war. He also saw the arrival of a number of child evacuees from Birmingham who were billeted in his village and attended the school there. On one occasion a stray German bomb exploded near his home and blew out the front windows.

Malcolm is one of the stewards in our Museum but in 1939 he was a child living in Epsom. He

experienced air raids and has memories of picking up shrapnel from the ground after German air raids. In 1944 when the attacks by V1 flying bombs started, Malcolm was evacuated by train, with all of his school, to a small village in Wales where he lived with foster parents for eight months. His story includes tales of the harvests that he helped with on a local farm and the way locally caught rabbits provided an addition to his meat ration.

In order to make a lasting record of this activity it was proposed that we produce a short film so, during an afternoon in April, Robert and Malcolm sat in front of a camera and told their stories. The camera was operated by Kevin Clark who is a volunteer in S&T. Kevin also sourced some supporting photos and sound effects to produce a finished product.

The film will be a valuable resource for our school visits in years to come. Its production is very timely as we celebrate the 80th Anniversary of VE Day this year.



Carriage Shop Donates £500

By Chris Wilson, Carriage Shop volunteer

The Carriage Shop team are pleased to be able to donate £500 to Southern Railway Coach Group. This amount has been raised from the sales of Matthew Cousin's artwork from the Carriage Shop.

For more information on how you can support the Southern Coach Group please visit

<https://www.bluebell-railway.co.uk/sr-coach-group/>

The Carriage Shop at Horsted Keynes station is open every weekend and for extended hours during the Model Railway weekend on 28 / 29 June.

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

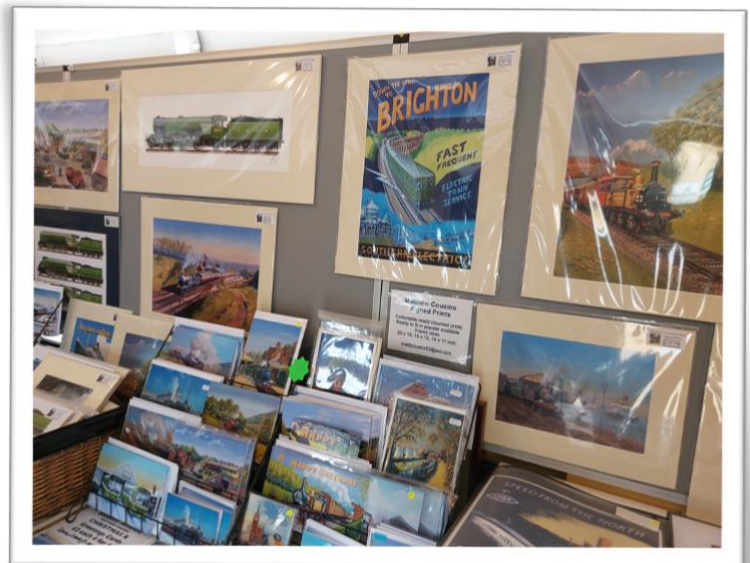
For our opening times and news please visit our Facebook page:

facebook.com/BluebellRailwayCarriageShop



Above: Volunteers from the Southern Railway Coach Group outside the Carriage Shop at Horsted Keynes station.

Below: Some of Matthew Cousin's artwork on display in the Carriage Shop



Railway 200 Exhibition

By Tony Hillman, Deputy Museum Curator

The Bluebell Railway Museum at Sheffield Park is now hosting a new exhibition featuring documents and photographs covering 200 years of railway history in Southern England. This display is part of the national celebrations for the bicentenary of the opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway on 27 September 1825 and has been put together by members of the Archive team.

One or two documents from each decade between 1825 and 2025 have been chosen and are displayed in front of explanatory boards. Examples include a railway company prospectus from the 1840s, a driver's diary from the 1870s, air raid precaution booklets from the 1940s and the last ever printed 'all-line' timetable from the 2010s.

A second group of twenty different documents has also been created for a travelling 'road show' exhibition. This can be accommodated on the top of two or three tables and demonstrated by the archivists. It will feature at various events both on and off the Bluebell Railway. It can be accompanied by a presentation and an explanatory talk of around 40 minutes duration.

As well as celebrating Railway 200, the exhibition also aims to increase awareness of the 'Bluebell Railway Museum - Southern Railways Archive.' The Archive contains more than 500,000 images and documents covering the railways in Southern England from the 1830s to the present day. It is currently based at Beare Green near Dorking, but plans are now afoot to house it in a new building to



be constructed at a location on the Bluebell Railway.

Richard Peirce, Chris Wilson, Paul Frost and Chris Sutton put the exhibition together. Martin Elms,

Tony Hillman and Roger Merry Price supported them and checked the content. Lance Hodgson and Sue Elliot proofread the text. It will be at the museum until October.

140th Anniversary of Woking Homes

By Tony Hillman, Deputy Museum Curator

On 21 May 2025 [Woking Homes](#) celebrated its 140th anniversary.

The Bluebell Museum Archive provided a display of some of the archive material held about Woking Homes. South Western Railway (SWR) were involved with planning and organising the event and provided a plaque. This was one of the last things they did as SWR became South Western Railway Ltd, part of Great British Railways, 4 days later when their franchise expired.

To be correct, the year 2025 is the 140th anniversary of the [London and South Western Railway Servants' Orphanage](#) which initially served as a home for fatherless children of railway workers, starting with a home for girls in Clapham, south London in 1885. Outgrowing the Clapham premises, a new building was constructed in 1909 on the south side of the railway on the London side of Woking station. In 1947 a home for retired railwaymen was opened across the road and it became the Southern Railwaymen's Home for Children in association with the Southern Railway



Home for Old People. In 1982 the name was changed to Woking Homes and by 1989 all the children had left. New buildings now provide homes for retired railwaymen and older people.

Photos From The Museum Website

By Chris Wilson, Bluebell Railway archive volunteer

This month we have added a further 153 images to the Bluebell Railway Museum website bringing the total now available to 27,524.

These new additions all come from the camera of Joe Kent and showcase more of his images taken in 1954. There are photographs taken at Preston Park Pullman Car Works, where Joe worked at the time. Other locations include Patcham, Aldrington Halt, Hove, Derby, Fratton Shed, Kenton and Salisbury.

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.

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.



Top: BR(S) E3 class No. 32465 leaving Brighton station with a train for Horsham, on 27 June 1954.
Photo: Joe Kent [154544]

Middle: BR(S) class 70 No. 20002 with an eastbound goods train at Aldrington Halt, on 5 July 1954.
Photo: Joe Kent [154553]

Bottom: BR(S) D class No. 31737 and E4 No. 32566 with the Lancing carriage works to Brighton station workers train, nicknamed the 'Lancing Belle', on 5 July 1954.
Photo: Joe Kent [154567]

On This Day - 13 June

By Tony Hillman, Deputy Curator

Three pictures from the Bluebell Photographic Archive taken on the 13 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.

Colin Hogg [048583]



It is the penultimate day of steam operation on the North Kent Line; Saturday 13 June 1959, as on the following Monday Stage 1 of the Kent Coast Electrification Scheme would commence. The first new electrification on the Southern Region since before the Second World War.

Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 34068 *Kenley* powers through Bromley South, under one of the new colour light signals, with the 1.30pm Victoria to Folkestone Harbour Boat train via Orpington (Headboard F5). Allocated to Stewarts Lane (73A) It is working Stewarts Lane Duty SPL 6 which on this day started out from Dover hauling the Up Night Ferry, piloted by L1 Class 4-4-0 31753 working Dover Duty 435.

As part of Stage 1 of the Scheme, extensive infrastructure work was undertaken. This included rearrangement of the existing four-track section from Shortlands Junction to Bickley Junction from paired by

direction to paired by usage. As part of the same change the four-track section was extended from Bickley Junction to Swanley. After the change conflicts were largely avoided by North Kent trains using the northern pair of tracks and Orpington or Maidstone East trains using the southern pair of tracks. It was accompanied by semaphore signals being replaced by colour light signals two weeks previously on 31 May. The mechanical signal boxes at Shortlands Junction, Bromley South, Bickley and Bickley Junction were closed and replaced by new panel boxes at both Shortlands and Chislehurst Junctions.

34068 was built at Brighton Works in October 1947 and spent most of its sadly short working life allocated to Stewarts Lane (73A). In April 1961 it was transferred to Salisbury (72B) as by now there was little work for it on either the Central or South Eastern Sections. It was withdrawn for scrap in November 1963.



With the decline of steam and the implementation of the Beeching Report, the 1960s saw a rapid rise in the number of organised Rail Tours. By 1965 not a weekend went by without one of the major railway societies organising a tour to 'celebrate' the closure of yet another railway line and/or the pending elimination of a particular class of steam locomotive.

Thus, Sunday 13 June 1965 the Locomotive Club of Great Britain organised a tour to travel over a number of routes in Sussex and Surrey, two of which were scheduled to close the following day with others closing later in the following decade.

Consisting of ten coaches, the special commenced at Waterloo with a scheduled departure at 9.53am behind modified Battle of Britain class 4-6-2 34050 *Royal Observer Corps*. Running down the main ex LSWR main line as far as Raynes Park it travelled to Three Bridges via Epsom and Horsham. After a seven-minute late arrival the locomotive was replaced by two Maunsell moguls, U class 2-6-0 31803 and N class 2-6-0 31411.

The tour then departed using the East Grinstead line and running via Ashurst Junction to Eridge and Redgate Mill Junction. The train was now on the Cuckoo line, the section as far south as Hailsham would close the following day to all passenger traffic. A sixteen-minute stop was taken at Heathfield, during which the participants, including John Scrace, were able to photograph the two locomotives as depicted here.

After Heathfield the tour went onto Hastings, returning via Eastbourne to Haywards Heath. There the moguls were replaced by 34050 which took the tour to Horsham via Hove and Steyning. Finally, two Q1s, 33027 and 33006 took the train back to Waterloo via the Cranleigh line, also scheduled to close the following day to all traffic.

31803 was converted from a K River class 2-6-4T (built August 1926) in June 1928. It was withdrawn in March 1966. 31411 was built in November 1933 and withdrawn in April 1966.

Photo: John Scrace [140634]



On 13 June 1966, Class K1 2-6-0 62027 is seen leaving North Blyth yard with a train of empty coal wagons bound for Ashington Colliery a few miles to the north. Just visible behind the fourth wagon is a Class Q6 0-6-0.

North Blyth yard together with its locomotive shed was built on a peninsula between the north bank of the River Blyth and the North Sea.

By June 1966 the yard was being used as the delivery point for coal to a pair of very large power stations that had been built further south along the peninsula; Blyth A (seen in the picture) opened in 1958 and Blyth B (off to the right), which became fully operational during 1966. The power stations were amongst the largest in the UK.

Most of the coal came from Ashington and other local collieries in the Northumberland and Durham areas. The power stations used between 50,000 tonnes and 70,000 tonnes of coal a week. To keep the coal flowing required trains to run around the clock. In order to do this North Blyth Shed (52F)

had 38 engines allocated to it in June 1966, the majority from Class K1 (10) and Class J27 (26).

The steam hauled rakes of loose wagons were later replaced by diesel hauled MGR (Merry Go Round) fixed wagon sets, which enabled faster loading at the mines and unloading at the power station. Both power stations were gradually decommissioned between 1999 and 2001, with demolition completed by 2003. This very large site along with the yard is still in the process of being redeveloped.

The North British Locomotive Company in Glasgow built K1 62027 in 1949, one of a class of seventy engines. It was delivered new to Blaydon Shed (52C) in August 1949, then moved in June 1962 to Consett (52K) and finally in June 1965 to Blyth North (52F). It was withdrawn in March 1967 and scrapped in July 1967.

Photo: David Esau [158307]

Volunteer Vacancies

UTILITES MANAGER

The successful applicant will be responsible in monitoring our water and electrical consumption, in reading the appropriate meters and produce brief reports for the Infrastructure Department.

The workload is light with around one or two days a quarter required for meter readings, site visits and preparing reports. In addition, when queries arise the post holder would be required to contact the utility companies to resolve any issues.

Access to utility websites will be granted, and a reasonable degree of computer literacy will be required for this role.

This is largely an admin role, although travel to each of our stations will be necessary, therefore the post holder must have own car.

This is a flexible role with no set hours or days of working required.

It would suit a recently retired person who wishes to remain active and be part of a friendly team undertaking a valuable role.

If you believe you have the right attributes for this post and would like to discuss this opportunity, please email tony.astor@bluebell-railway.com

WEBSITE VOLUNTEER

Help the Bluebell Railway Enhance our Online Presence!

Are you experienced with websites and passionate about supporting the Bluebell Railway? We are looking for a dedicated volunteer to help us improve our website, ensuring an exceptional online experience for our visitors. By joining our team, you'll play a vital role in bringing the Bluebell Railway's extensive programme of events and opportunities to life for our online audience and beyond!

Your Role

We're seeking a volunteer 1–2 days a week (timings and days are flexible to suit) with a keen eye for detail, experience in website management, ideally with knowledge of WordPress, and excellent communication skills to help us:

- ➡ Identify and correct any inaccuracies in our website content
- ➡ Check for broken links and outdated information
- ➡ Provide feedback on ways we can improve the site's usability and visitor experience

Why Volunteer With Us?

Your time and expertise will directly impact the railway, making it easier for visitors to discover our fantastic programme of events, book experiences, and stay informed. By giving your time, you're not only improving our website but supporting our mission to enhance the experience of every visitor who joins us.

If you believe you have the right attributes for this post and would like to discuss this opportunity, please email james.cummins@bluebell-railway.com



Photo: Nick Gilliam

The Bluebell Times

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

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

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Tom James*

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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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