



Four twenty-first century locomotives lined up at Horsted Keynes. Photo: Jon Bowers

# The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway Members, Staff and Supporters

November 2025

## IN THIS ISSUE

It has become something of a cliché in Bluebell circles, when seeing one of our vintage locomotives hauling a rake of Edwardian and Victorian carriages, to casually note “a combined age of over 800 years” or similar. Slightly less common then, to have a lineup of locomotives across the throat at Horsted Keynes in which the combined age is just 25! But that is what *Giants of Steam* delivered, with four twenty-first century locomotives proving a great draw to the public. Having been rostered on the Friday, I spent Saturday as an ordinary visitor, including taking my own photos of the lineup – I don’t think I have ever seen such crowds as were concentrated at Horsted Keynes mid-afternoon.

And yet that was perhaps not even the most notable photo in this issue. 150-year-old steam locomotive outside St Paul’s Cathedral in London? We have that as well, a sign that the Bluebell continues to be able to deliver the unexpected and groundbreaking even in this, our 65<sup>th</sup> year.

None of which would be possible without volunteers, nor without considerable fundraising. Fundraising is a particular challenge: over the years we have demonstrated our strength in that arena, but only by hard, and often unseen, work. Not everyone aspires to the schoolboy glamour of the engine driver, or to wear the finery of a Victorian station master. But if you would like to make a contribution that will have a lasting impact on the Railway, then please read Roger Kelly’s article on page 6 of this issue, and see how the Railway is funding for a future.

Tom James, Editor

<i>Watts Occurring</i> .....	2
<i>Plc Update</i> .....	3
<i>Lady Mayor’s Parade</i> .....	4
<i>BRPS Trustee Vacancy</i> .....	5
<i>Funding The Bluebell Railway</i> ..	6
<i>Feedback – Gordon Pettitt</i> .....	9
<i>Maunsell Locomotive Society</i>	10
<i>Cheers 92240!</i> .....	12
<i>Seeing Red</i> .....	12
<i>Giants of Steam</i> .....	13
<i>HOPS Update</i> .....	15
<i>Vacancy – Event Coordinator</i>	16
<i>Carriage Shop Donates £500</i> ..	17
<i>Photos From The Museum Website</i> .....	18
<i>On This Day – 14 November</i> ..	19
<i>Tail Lamp</i> .....	22

# Watts Occurring

By Roy Watts, BRPS Chairman

And as Camelot effortlessly crossed Hill Place Viaduct into the setting autumn sun, another operating season drew to a close prior to the commencement of the traditional festive services which are so important to our business.

Our fantastic infrastructure team will now take the opportunity to commence essential works along the line.

At this stage of the year's programme, it's the section of line immediately south of the tunnel which requires attention, stabilising the earthworks and replacing the rails and sleepers which are nearing the end of their working life.

Through the expertise of our infrastructure teams and the attention to detail they bring to the job, this will help improve the ride quality for passengers and importantly, help crews maintain line speed, particularly on that part of the climb northwards.

We have seen over the years just how well they deliver these programmed works, on time and (often) below budget, the quality of the end product giving the lie to that old Bluebell saying that if a job's worth doing, it's worth doing twice!

Clearly the importance of maintaining the line is of vital importance – that other old saying rears its ugly head "no track – no trains!"

Yes, the trains look great but it's what it is running on is far more important. Might not be glamorous or "sexy" but it is THE vital element of the operation.

Unfortunately, it is just another consequence of the Victorian engineering that today affects so many embankments and earthworks not just in this part of the country but elsewhere. Whilst sufficient at the time, natural forces such as climate change have had a clear and often damaging impact on the railway.

Nonetheless, it is only right to acknowledge the work of the team that turns out in all weathers to

ensure the railway is repaired and maintained to a high standard. We have already seen that between Horsted Keynes and Sheffield Park, the latter being the focus of the new year maintenance period when the area around Ketches Farm and the loco yard will be tackled.

In the next issue of *The Bluebell Times*, I will take a brief look back over the year but for now I would just like to look back over a successful autumn season.

If you remember, the financial position of the railway was best described as not being in the best shape.

Like other heritage railways, we have been hurt by rising cost and I have no need to describe the responsible factors as that message is regularly delivered!

Not only does this affect trade but also available monies to enable secondary spend.

Fortunately, we have seen a slight increase in membership which is a positive. Is it because we are a quality offer? Seen as a safe repository or something that people want to join and be part of the success story? There is always room for more volunteers.

Looking back over recent special events, I am pleased to tell you that we have had a very successful couple of months which will go a long way to reduce – but unfortunately not completely clear – the projected loss for this year.

The 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Weekend, Beer Festival, Giants of Steam and the Halloween Specials/Ghost Train have been very successful and made significant contributions to the bottom line. The 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations with its motive power line up particularly because it was a pure "home-produced" event.

A further example was last month's Giants event which, despite fewer visitors than 2024 (when 'Sir

*Nigel Gresley*’ was the headline act), this year was a phenomenal success.

The attraction of the four newest steam locomotives in the country attracted people from far and wide.

Being on duty at East Grinstead, people introduced themselves from Somerset, Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and even Cardiff and Aberdeen who had travelled specifically for the event. (*And Canada! – see page 13 – Ed.*) In certain cases, staying for an additional day because of the quality of what they had seen and had real value for money.

Yes, it's not possible to run a Giants event every week let alone the attractiveness which would wear off, but it's always special when you do things for the first time, such as trains leaving from Horsted Keynes platform 1.

But for the Bluebell, putting on a high-quality event translated into:

- ➡ 4289 visitors
- ➡ Fare revenue of £122,082.45
- ➡ Catering revenue of £48,584.47
- ➡ Retail revenue of £23,688.09

Set that against costs of £77,000 and you can see the contribution this event made.

So again, Bluebell can show how to put on an exceptional performance.

Mind you, when I saw ‘*Tornado*’ leave through the gates at 04.00 the following week, it bought home some of the unseen work we do at all hours of the day and night to ensure such success.

I must take the opportunity to thank everyone who worked so hard during all the recent events. Your contribution is so greatly appreciated. Can I also welcome the new members who joined as a consequence.

We now enter the final phase of the year with the commencement of our Festive services and without doubt, the invitations to help during this critical period will follow.

It's good to know that as I write, ALL of our catering services have sold out, [Santa](#) has only a few seats available and [Steamlights](#) is well on the way to success.

Everyone works hard to ensure the best possible experience and service for our visitors and we owe it to them to deliver and hopefully exceed their expectations.

Let's end the year on a high note!

As always, as Society Chairman, I thank you for your help, support and contributions. We are all volunteers drawn together by one aim and whether working volunteer or armchair member, it's all about being part of the team, making it a success ... just as we see at Selhurst Park on match days!

Look after yourselves.

## Plc Update

By Neil Glaskin, Bluebell Railway Plc Interim Chairman

Following the AGM of the Bluebell Railway PLC on the 23 October, Nigel Page and Chris Barber retired as Directors, both gentlemen had served for a number of years but were finding it difficult to balance the role with their careers and family life. The Board records its thanks to Nigel and Chris for their work during their time as Directors. Also following the meeting Simon Hodges has taken over the role of Company Secretary from Graham Flight. Graham has undertaken that role for over 30 years and we are all grateful for his service as our Company Secretary. We are glad that Graham will be continuing as a Director of the Plc.

The Plc is still without a Chairman following the resignation of Paul Seller. Anyone who might be interested in the role is invited to contact [neil.glaskin@bluebell-railway.com](mailto:neil.glaskin@bluebell-railway.com) for an informal discussion should they wish before applying.



# Lady Mayor's Parade

Words and photos by Roy Watts, BRPS Vice President

In February of this year, the Bluebell Railway was approached by one of its life members, John May, who has strong connections within the City, about the possibility of Bluebell taking part in this year's Lady Mayors Show, particularly pertinent in this 200th Anniversary year of Railways.

Having been introduced to the incoming Lady Mayor herself, Dame Susan Langley DBE, she was very interested in the whole concept and more so when the idea of perhaps bringing a locomotive to participate was suggested as a possibility, especially as the suggested at the time to bring Locomotive was 55, 'Stepney', its name associated with an area of London.

Months of preparation took place because it's not just a simple case of taking an engine around the streets of London but so many considerations were involved such as the routing, negotiating tight bends, height and weight. The latter being one of the main concerns because of the huge amount of underground services that exist around the city, not just cables and pipes but rooms and tunnels. In particular, Transport for London took a keen interest in the area around the Bank of England and the Guildhall.

After all, the very idea that a steam locomotive might end up sharing the booking hall of Bank

underground, especially after it's just been rebuilt might cause a bit of an upset!

After some sterling work by the haulier, Andrew Goodman of Railway Support Services, routes were agreed and it was a bit of a close-run thing! By now, the choice of loco had switched to 72, 'Fenchurch' as she was the easiest to extract having undergone maintenance work.

However, all unnecessary weight removed off the trailer, the loco drained of water and the load spread across a number of axles, "Fenchurch" took pride of place in the procession. With 2 Vice Presidents, Roy Watts and Graham Flight on the footplate, the loco received an amazing reception along the entire route. Certainly, some different route perspectives from the cab!

We received a private message to say that the lady Mayor was very pleased with the loco choice because she herself is very closely associated with the Fenchurch area itself and was formerly an Alderman for the Aldgate Ward.

Never been done before so another Bluebell first!

Thanks to everyone who helped and made this happen.



# BRPS Trustee Vacancy

By Gavin Bennett, BRS General Secretary

Howard Strongitharm has resigned as Preservation Standards Trustee and so we have a vacancy on the Society Board. We thank Howard for his time as a Trustee, initially as BRPS representative on the tripartite Museum Management Committee and latterly as Preservation Standards Trustee.

As it is more than six months to the AGM, the Trustees would like to co-opt a replacement to the Board. The BRPS is the majority shareholder in the Plc and ultimately, the owner of the railway. Trustees have a collective duty to set the overall policy of the railway, subject to the Plc's statutory obligations, and to monitor the conduct of the Plc's business.

A co-opted Trustee has full voting rights at BRPS Board meetings. As per the BRPS Articles, they would be expected to either stand for election at the next AGM (13 June 2026) or indicate they will be standing down. Given the extent of the changes which are likely to emerge from the current restructuring proposals for the railway as a whole, we need a full team of Trustees.

Ideally, we would like someone who could take on the Preservation Standards portfolio. The manual is currently in paper form – although PDFs are available on the website – but it would be good to start to transform it into a searchable web-based document. You would lead the Preservation Standards Committee setup by Howard where the initial work on transforming the manual into a web-based solution has been started. Trustee meetings are normally held monthly at the railway on the third Thursday of the month from 6:30pm for a couple of hours.

If you are interested in applying to be co-opted as a Trustee, please speak to any of the current Trustees who will tell you what is involved or contact [gavin.bennett@bluebell-railway.com](mailto:gavin.bennett@bluebell-railway.com). Applicants must be paid-up members of the Society and show at least three years continuous membership of the Society. If there is more than one applicant, then an interview will be held. The deadline for applications is 6 December 2025.



**Left:** No. 34059 'Sir Archibald Sinclair' visited the Mid Hants Railway in early October for their Autumn Gala. The loco is seen here leading No. 35005 'Canadian Pacific' on the 4.10pm departure from Alresford, 4 October 2025.

Photo: Nick Gilliam

# Funding The Bluebell Railway

By Roger Kelly, Funding Strategy Manager

In July, I was asked to—and have taken on—the role of Funding Strategy Manager for the Bluebell Railway. Long-standing members may well be thinking, “Oh, is he back again?”—and you’d be right! I previously served as the Bluebell Railway Plc Director responsible for Funding from 2008 to 2018.

This, however, is a short-term appointment, measured in months rather than years, while we work towards making a more permanent appointment. The position follows the recent retirement of Trevor Swainson as the Trust’s Funding Governor.

I’d like to take this opportunity to personally thank and acknowledge Trevor for his seven years of service, especially for his leadership during the COVID Emergency Appeal—a vital initiative that helped keep the Railway operational during a most difficult time. He managed the Jewel in the Crown Appeal, which with Legacies, funded the restoration of the Horsted Keynes Station House and Platform 5.

So why the title ‘Funding Strategy Manager’? The title is intentional. Funding is used to refer to income that does not come from the revenue raised through trading. At least initially, my focus is not on individual donations, but rather on securing financial and in-kind support from organisations—such as the National Lottery, charitable foundations, local and national government, and businesses.

These kinds of partnerships have already funded major projects this century, including:

- ➡ The Northern Extension to East Grinstead
- ➡ The Carriage Shed
- ➡ Locomotive Maintenance Shed
- ➡ Museum
- ➡ SteamWorks
- ➡ Wheelchair-accessible carriages

- ➡ Restoration work at Horsted Keynes Station and costs of the Rail 200 event

Plus several smaller but equally important projects.

Of course, we must also recognise the vital role that member and public contributions played. For example, the Horsted Keynes Carriage Shed and Heritage Skills Block were entirely funded through donations and legacies to the Bluebell Railway Trust.

## LOOKING AHEAD:

As Funding Strategy Manager, I report to Bluebell Railway Plc Finance Director, Chris Welch. The Company is now taking a more active role in funding. While Trevor and I once focused on Funding for THE Future, the reality today is that we must now focus on Funding for A Future.

External funding for short-term operational costs is hard to come by. Our priority is now on targeted projects that either:

- ➡ Generate income, or
- ➡ Reduce costs—such as a planned installation of solar panels.

We’ve already begun reaching out to potential funders. In addition to traditional sources, under Chris Welch’s direction, we are exploring social investment from businesses. Companies bidding for government contracts must demonstrate Social Value, and supporting heritage organisations like ours is one way they can do so. These opportunities take time to develop—but we are on the case.

We will of course continue to get support from the Bluebell Railway Trust. Under the dedicated chairmanship of Vernon Blackburn, it has over many years made a significant contribution to the Bluebell Railway that exists today.





**Above:** The wheelchair-accessible section of Pullman Car No. 54, one of the projects made possible by fundraising.

Photo: Martin Lawrence

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

While we seek institutional support, individual donations remain crucial and are deeply appreciated. Contributions can be made:

- ➔ By post to Sheffield Park
- ➔ Online at [bluebell-railway.com](https://bluebell-railway.com) via the Donate button

Among the various funds listed, the most useful is the one marked "Unrestricted – For High Priority Projects". This allows the Trust Governors to allocate funds, within charity law, to the most urgent preservation needs.

Legacies too are very welcome. They can help a benefactor reduce Inheritance Tax on their if made to the Bluebell Railway Trust (Charity No 292497). In addition to the projects listed earlier the money

from Bequests has, over the past ten years, funded the replacement of several miles of our permanent way.

Equally important is the incredible support of our volunteers. Your time and effort are essential to keeping the Railway running—and for that, we are immensely grateful.

## JOIN THE FUNDING TEAM

If you're looking for a different kind of volunteer experience, Vernon and I have opportunities that might interest you.

There are more funding sources than I can realistically pursue alone. If you have experience with:

- ➔ Grant application writing
- ➔ Business bid development or tendering

➡ Project research and administration,

I would love to hear from you. Please stop me for a chat if you see me around or contact me at:

[roger.kelly@bluebell-railway.com](mailto:roger.kelly@bluebell-railway.com)

The Funding Strategy will identify what to apply for, where from, and when—but support with drafting applications, data gathering, and managing applications would be very welcome.

In addition, the Trust handles a significant administrative workload, even outside major

appeals processing donations, claiming Gift Aid and managing legacies, are all essential tasks. If you have skills in administration or database management, please contact Vernon at:

[vernon.blackburn@bluebell-railway.com](mailto:vernon.blackburn@bluebell-railway.com)

Whether you support the Bluebell Railway through donations, your time, professional skills—or simply by visiting us—thank you. Every contribution helps secure the future of our much loved Railway. Here's to a bright future for the Bluebell.



**Above:** The Sheffield Park locomotive maintenance shed.

*Photo: Jon Elphick*



# Feedback - Gordon Pettitt

*In the September issue of The Bluebell Times, we covered the celebration of Gordon Pettitt's life held at Sheffield Park. Gordon's widow Ursula has kindly written this letter of thanks to the volunteers who made Gordon's celebration at the Bluebell so special.*

“ To Roy Watts and all the volunteers at the Gordon Pettitt's celebration of life on the 8 September 2025.

Having, the opportunity to celebrate Gordon's life with his friends and family at the Bluebell Railway has been a highlight for me.

I want to send my heart-felt thanks to all the volunteers who gave up their own time to make the day possible and for the opportunity to hear all the memories of the good, and sometimes challenging times, that friends and colleagues spent with Gordon.

I know the day was made more challenging by the terrible shock of Gordon's train having a graffiti attack the night before the celebration. The time, energy and commitment from all those involved in removing the graffiti so that the celebration could go ahead as planned was really overwhelming. All I can say is thank-you this is something I will never forget.

Ursula ”



# Maunsell Locomotive Society

By Steve Pilcher and Chris Hunford, Maunsell Locomotive Society

## Q CLASS NO 541

Work on the Q class has slowed slightly over the last couple of months. In the July issue of *The Bluebell Times*, we reported cracks had been discovered in four of the horn blocks and would need specialist cast iron welding to repair them. Well, I'm pleased to say these have just returned from our specialist supplier and work can recommence on the chassis.

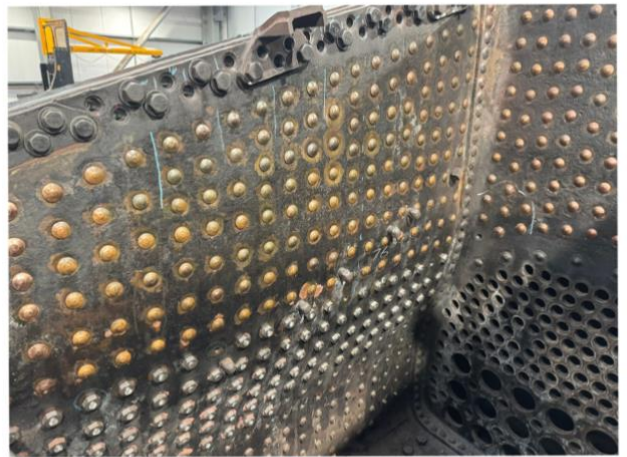
As I write, the repaired horn blocks are being machined ready to fit and work has commenced on the second main frame insert. Work on manufacturing the new axlebox crowns and machining the last axlebox have also been completed, alongside other smaller jobs like refitting the brake shaft and the grate carrier brackets.

Work on the boiler has progressed steadily, largely focusing on annealing, setting, fitting and heading over the copper stays. Work to caulk and nut the monel stays has also been largely completed. Some of the smaller and more fiddly jobs like repairing and fitting the mudhole doors, marking out and fitting the blowdown valve and reaming foundation ring holes have started. These are all essential but more time-consuming tasks.

A small difference between Maunsell locomotives and the majority of others is the fact the boiler flue tubes have a copper bottle shaped end braised on to the steel tube, which then fits into the tubeplate. Once complete each braised end must be tested to ensure no cracks or impurities have formed in the process. This braising process and the NDT (non-destructive testing) work has also been completed meaning the tubes can be fitted when needed.

Back at Sheffield Park, work on repairing and machining the various fittings continues as well as work to the tender tank and chassis. In particular, some of the workshop volunteers have been busy painting the tender chassis pipework and getting the buffers back up into place. The MLS working party have concluded cleaning the interior of the

tender tank and applying the first coat of a very durable paint system.



**Top:** A view of the inner firebox, showing the new copper stays and new monel stays with their stay nuts fitted.

**Bottom:** A view of the outer firebox, showing the new patch screws, copper stays and monel stays.

*Both photos: Leaky Finders*





*Buffers back up on 541's tender chassis. Photo: Steve Pilcher*

### V CLASS NO. 928 STOWE

A significant milestone was reached with Stowe last month, when an order was placed for a new left hand side cylinder pattern and casting. You may recall a flaw was discovered in the existing cylinder which could not be repaired and the decision was taken a new cylinder would be required. So, after many months designing and producing the necessary drawings, discussing the pattern making and casting options with companies and, of course, ensuring there are sufficient funds, we're pleased to say an order has been placed. Our thanks must go to Fred Bailey in Atlantic house for his drawing work and liaison with companies and Simon Blaker in the Loco Works for his advice.

Once the new casting has been received, it will then need to 'sit' for a while before the machining process can start, after which we can look to fit this to the chassis.

With regards to the boiler, we're starting to gather the necessary drawings to make a start on marking out the stay positions across the new platework. The boiler is the most significant part of the locomotive overhaul as the chassis, tender, fittings etc are approximately 90% complete already.

Finally – on the subject of fundraising – although the MLS has managed to accumulate sufficient funds to enable the order to be placed for the left hand cylinder pattern and casting, approximately £15,000 still needs to be raised to pay for machining the casting.

Can you help please?

All contributions welcome, preferably via the Stowe chassis appeal in the Bluebell Railway Trust – or contact the MLS Treasurer, Steve Pilcher, [jstevepilcher@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jstevepilcher@yahoo.co.uk) for further details.



# Cheers 92240!

By Tom Newble, Awake the Giant volunteer

September saw the Bluebell Railway's Beer Festival. This year, the team was in attendance over all three days and manning stalls at both, Sheffield Park in SteamWorks! as well as Horsted Keynes, in the King George V Buffet. This event, prior to the Giants of Steam gala, proved to be one of the best for fundraising for 92240. The [Awake the Giant](#) team are pleased to announce that we raised £2004.65. The team would like to thank Miles Jenner and the team at Harvey's Brewery for their support and sponsorship of an amazing 144 pints of [Harvey's Old Ale](#). We would also like to

thank everyone who visited to support the team, the stand and brought a pint or two, merchandise and donations. Lastly, we couldn't have run the two stands without the support of a large team of 12 volunteers – we thank you for giving up your time to help and support.

A full engineering report will be available, in the next issue of *Bluebell News*.

Let's Awake this Giant once more!

## Seeing Red



*After undergoing maintenance at Sheffield Park for the first part of the year, and a summer of filming a TV adaptation of the Harry Potter novels, No. 6989 'Wightwick Hall' returned to traffic on the Railway this Autumn. The loco, now painted in Hogwarts red livery, is seen near Waterworks on a service train on 25 October; and has been a star attraction for many visitors. Photo: Rob Howard*

# Giants of Steam

*Giants of Steam took the theme of a "new builds" gala, bringing together Peppercorn A1 No. 60163 'Tornado' (completed in 2008); Churchward Saint No. 2999 'Lady of Legend' (2019); Collett Grange No. 6880 'Betton Grange' (2024) and our own Marsh H2 No. 32424 'Beachy Head' (2024) for a festival of 21<sup>st</sup> century steam.*

*The photos give a flavour of the event, which drew visitors from far and wide – including the words below from Stephen Gardiner, visiting from Canada!*

I wanted to pass on my appreciation to the volunteers and staff of the Bluebell Railway for last weekend's excellent Giants of Steam Gala. I attended from Toronto Canada, arriving in England last Friday morning and coming straight to the railway. I thoroughly enjoyed all three days of riding and photographing steam at the railway, and every interaction I had with everyone working there was fantastic. Kudos to everyone for making it such an excellent event and a great weekend. I hope they all realize how special the heritage railway sector in the UK is, and how their efforts make it so.

We don't have rail preservation or steam operations to any comparable extent in Canada, and are unlikely ever to. Being able to occasionally visit the UK and be a part of events like this is something I very much look forward to when the opportunity presents itself. As I've been sorting through pictures and materials this weekend after returning home, it's hard to believe that it has already been a week since the event! Time flies when you are having fun (or back at the office for 3 days after a very short 5-day jaunt across the Atlantic and back!).

Please share my message of appreciation in whatever way is best. I look forward to visiting again in the future and hopefully in fewer years than between my first visit in 2004 and my second last week!



*'Tornado' sets back onto its train in preparation for the line up at Horsted Keynes on the second day of the gala.*

*Photo: David Cable*





*'Betton Grange' emerges from a cloud of steam with the 9.15am departure on Saturday 18 October, marking the first passenger service from Platform 1 at Horsted Keynes ..*

*Photo: David Cable*

*'Lady of Legend' climbing Freshfield Bank with the 12:45 departure from Sheffield Park on 17 October.*

*Photo: Peter Edwards*



*'Beachy Head' and 'Tornado' approach Three Arch Bridge with the 4.20pm departure from Sheffield Park, 18 October. The two locomotives can be seen to represent the beginning and the culmination of the Ivatt 'big boiler' concept of large locomotive design.*

*Photo: Nick Gilliam*



# HOPS Update

By Fraser Hutchinson, HOPS Admin and Jeremy Elwell, HOPS ID Card Admin

It is that time of the year when the hard working and underappreciated HOPS team must reorder 1300 ID cards for 2026

We now need each and every member of the railway to confirm that they are going to continue next year.

To do this, can you please do the following:

## Either

Click on the link on the noticeboard on the HOPS home page

## Or

Go to: <https://www.hops.org.uk/user/confirm>

If you need to make any amendments, please do so and then press CONFIRM at the bottom of all four pages. The medical page may be blank – that is normal.

To meet the deadline imposed by HOPS, we need confirmation from everybody by 23 November.

If we don't hear from you, we will assume that you are no longer working for the railway. With 1300 colleagues, we do not have the time or resources to chase people up.

There are two further items for you to consider:

## DIGITAL ID CARDS

In 2025, we had to replace over 75 ID cards — either lost, damaged, or accidentally washed. It's time to make the switch to a Digital ID Card — modern, secure, and always with you on your phone.

- ➡ No more replacements
- ➡ No more waiting for new cards
- ➡ No risk of damage or loss
- ➡ Instant access, anytime, anywhere

Join the growing number of colleagues who have already switched to digital and discovered just how easy it is.

If you would like to switch, email [ID@bluebell-railway.com](mailto:ID@bluebell-railway.com) and we'll set it up for you.

Once you've switched to digital, you'll wonder how you ever managed without it!

## SIGNING IN & OUT

All staff must sign in and out using HOPS - not on paper. You can do this in one of two ways:

- ➡ At a HOPS terminal on site, or
- ➡ On your own device by visiting <https://time.hops.org.uk>

It even works without internet! If you choose to use your own phone, follow these steps:

- ➡ Open <https://time.hops.org.uk>
- ➡ When setting up for the first time, select Individual Mode.

Once set up, you can sign on and off directly from your phone.

Thank you for your cooperation.



# Vacancy - Event Coordinator

The Bluebell Railway has the following part-time vacancy in the Commercial Department:

## Event Coordinator

Have you a creative outlook with exceptional organisational skills?

Can you promote the railway and our special events designing publicity material?

You will be responsible for delivering events on time and on budget, ensuring they are compliant with all the necessary health and safety and legal requirements, as well as coordinating with suppliers and all event logistics.

Applicants should be highly motivated, enthusiastic and a strong team player.

Experience of working with volunteers preferred.

The role will require flexible mid-week and weekend working 24hrs per week.

Please contact Lisa Boyle [lisa.boyle@bluebell-railway.com](mailto:lisa.boyle@bluebell-railway.com) for further information.

**Closing date 30 November 2025**

# Carriage Shop Donates £500

By Chris Wilson, Carriage Shop Volunteer

This month the Carriage Shop team are delighted to donate £500 to the Friends of Horsted Keynes station to support the important work carried out by this group.

The Carriage Shop will be reopen on Saturday 29th November for the start for the Santa Special trains. For up to date opening dates and times please visit:

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

The Carriage Shop was established in 1989 and is fully operated volunteers with a sole purpose to raise funds to support projects across the Bluebell Railway.

We currently have a 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.

We are in need of donations of Model Railway items, if you can help please get in touch: [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)



*Members of the Horsted Keynes Station team*



# Photos From The Museum Website

By Chris Wilson, Bluebell Railway archive volunteer

This month we have added a further 365 images to the Bluebell Railway Museum website bringing the total now available to 29,035.

We another set of 100 images showing Diesel Multiple Units taken by John Scrace at locations in the Southern and Western Regions.

Additionally there are a 265 photographs taken by Joe Kent taken in 1953 and 1954.

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.

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**Top:** Internal view Brighton Signal Box on 8 May 1954.  
Photo: Joe Kent [154362]

**Middle:** Three R1 class locomotives approaching Folkestone Junction with the Folkestone Harbour to Victoria service on 28 May 1954. BR(S) 31069 & 31337 are the two leading.  
Photo: Joe Kent [154452]

**Bottom:** BR(S) Class 70 No. 20003 passing Preston Park Pullman Car Works with a northbound Pullman train on 20 May 1954.  
Photo: Joe Kent [154409]



# On This Day - 14 November

By Tony Hillman, Deputy Curator

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



Photo: R.C. Riley [105521]

There cannot have been many 'main line' locomotives that had six owners but ex LSWR Class 415 4-4-2T 488 is one.

Designed by William Adams the Radial tanks first entered traffic in 1883. 488, built by Neilson & Co. of Glasgow, entered service in March 1885 and was initially allocated to Windsor. With the advent in 1914 of suburban electrification, Robert Urie, authorised the withdrawal of the thirty locomotives in poorest condition of which 488 was one.

However, following the outbreak of the Great War, the order was rescinded and all those remaining were repaired and returned to traffic except for 488!

Now in the duplicate list and renumbered 0488 it was, in 1917, sold to the Ministry of Munitions for £2,105 and saw service at the Royal Navy's General Salvage Depot at Ridham and then the General Stores Depot at Belvedere. It was advertised for sale in August 1920.

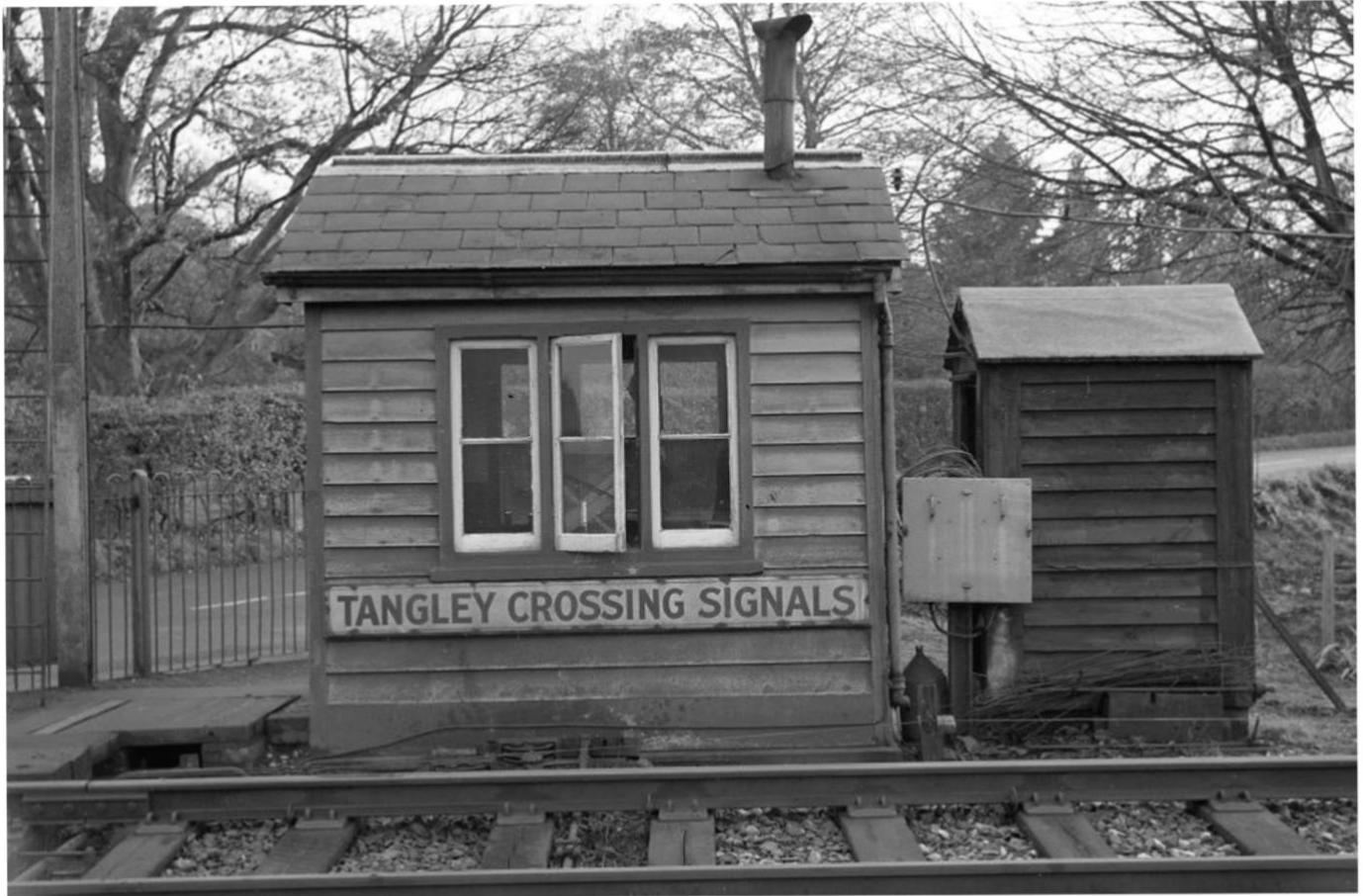
Its third owner was the East Kent Railway. There it was numbered 5 but only saw occasional use and by 1943 was

offered for sale as scrap. By November 1945 it remained unsold and the Directors sought advice from the Southern Railway as to its value. In fact, the SR decided to purchase the locomotive at a cost of £120.

Its fourth owner promptly overhauled it, renumbered it 3488 and set it to work, with the other two still extant 415 class engines on the Lyme Regis branch. Nationalisation in 1948 saw British Railways become its fifth owner; the locomotive being renumbered 30583. It remained working on the Lyme Regis branch but by 1960 the Southern Region completed the easing of the more difficult curves on the line so the three Radials could be replaced with Ivatt 2MTs, 30583 being subsequently withdrawn in July 1961.

Acquired by the Bluebell Railway, its sixth owner, its subsequent history is well known. The photograph shows 30583 running on 14 November 1982 at Sheffield Park whilst in BR livery. It is currently awaiting restoration and readers may contribute towards its overhaul on [www.bluebell-railway.com/trust-project/adams-radial-no-488-overhaul/](http://www.bluebell-railway.com/trust-project/adams-radial-no-488-overhaul/)





Tangley Crossing is located between Chilworth and Shalford on the Redhill – Guildford line, nowadays referred to as the North Downs Line. Opened by the South Eastern Railway in three stages in 1849, it formed part of a strategic route avoiding the London area and was much used by through freight traffic as well as regular local passenger trains and a once-a-day Birkenhead – Margate service.

Tangley Crossing Box, pictured on 14 November 1967, was one of six crossings in a little under six miles between Gomshall and Shalford, but was by far the busiest as the railway was crossed there by the A248. The crossing was controlled by a small South Eastern wooden hut containing a 6 lever frame and was unusual in retaining its South Eastern blue on white enamel nameplate, one of only a handful surviving into the 1960s, other significant examples being North Kent West Junction and Dartford Junction. No definitive opening date has come to light, but it is likely to have been in the 1880s. It was not a block post, it existed solely to protect the level crossing. The

box was abolished on 11 July 1974 and the crossing converted to Automatic Half Barriers (AHBs).

With the gradual decline in freight traffic in the 1960s and 1970s, together with almost all other traffic, save the regular local passenger service, the line saw some piecemeal resignalling. In June 1983 the section from Reigate to Gomshall was resignalled and controlled by a panel in Reigate Box with CCTV control of the crossing at Betchworth. The Gomshall – Guildford section however continued with piecemeal changes until as recently as 23 September 2025 when the section was resignalled and upgraded, then coming under the control of Guildford Panel. As part of the scheme, Tangley Crossing was converted from AHBs to a CCTV crossing controlled by Guildford panel.

*Photo: John Scrace [o834o6]*





On Saturday 14 November 1959 Bournemouth and Boscombe Athletic travelled to Walthamstow Avenue FC to play in an FA Cup tie. British Railways laid on a football special to enable local supporters to get to the match. The train made a return trip from Poole to Blackhorse Road, travelling via the North London line. The locomotive selected to haul it was West Country Class 4-6-2, 34046 *Branton*.

The Southern Region locomotive can be seen clearly in this photograph of Tilbury Shed (33B) taken by JJ Smith during the course of the afternoon. It is thought that Tilbury was chosen as a servicing point due to the proximity of a triangular pattern of lines where, in lieu of a suitable turntable, the locomotive could change direction. The coaches from the special spent the afternoon at nearby Tilbury Riverside.

34046, introduced as 21C146 in November 1946, had been rebuilt in early 1959 and was allocated to Bournemouth (71B) in March. Withdrawn in October 1965, the locomotive languished at Barry for many years before finally being preserved and

mainline certified. By coincidence, it hauled a train of Crystal Palace supporters from Clapham Junction to an away match at Southampton in May 2016.

In November 1959 Tilbury's allocation of locomotives included LMS Fowler 3F Class 0-6-0Ts, LMS Fairburn 4P Class 2-6-4Ts and BR Riddles Standard 4MT Tank Class 2-6-4Ts, and examples of all of these can be seen in the photograph. Also allocated but not in the photo were a number of WD 2-8-0s and J 39 0-6-0s. The depot closed in June 1962 after electrification of the lines out of London Fenchurch Street had rendered it redundant.

Meanwhile, the journey back on the football special in 1959 must have been a happy one: the visitors, who had been trailing by two goals at half time, scored in the last few minutes and won the tie 3-2.

*Photo: JJ Smith [045808]*



Photo: David Cable

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Members, Staff and  
Supporters*

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## Tail Lamp

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