



Southern perfection! 847 and short vintage train approaches Vaux End Photo: David Cable

The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway Members, Staff and Supporters

Issue 10

IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome back! Four months after the railway's season was brought to an abrupt halt, there are signs all around of the railway emerging from its enforced break to do what it was built to do: run a service. Stations are being cleaned, lineside vegetation cleared, rolling stock inspected, locomotives overhauled. This weekend, a series of "ghost trains" will run: not an early harbinger of Halloween, but an essential part of proving we are ready to roll again. Everything leads towards 7 August, our sixtieth birthday. The first train, a members' special, was fully booked within 10 minutes of tickets becoming available. Now it is crucial that the opening day is followed up through the rest of the year with every train running to its maximum capacity – so that we can look forward to a sixty-first birthday to remember!

This issue of The Bluebell Times is Issue 10. We published Issue 1 with the aim of trying something to keep our members, staff and supporters entertained and informed during what were desperately uncertain times. As such it was something of a leap into the unknown – indeed, even while putting Issue 1 together, we had no clear idea if or when Issue 2 would be produced. So it seems the right time to record our thanks to you, the readers and contributors, for supporting the publication over the last four months. It has been a particular pleasure to be able to carry features from parts of the railway that do not always share the limelight, and to uncover some of the more human stories from around the railway.

Issue 11 is due to be published on 14 August: it will be a re-opening special – and we will have an announcement about the future of the Bluebell Times. Until then – welcome back to an operational Bluebell Railway!

Tom James, Editor

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A Warm Welcome Back

By Chris Hunford, chairman Bluebell Railway plc

Dear friends, colleagues and members,

It's just over a month since I last wrote to you and I hope you continue to keep safe and well.

Closure of the railway in mid-March now seems a long time ago when the global, national and local outlook was very challenging. However, as a nation we have come together to face these challenges and it's pleasing to see further easing of the lockdown restrictions and life almost returning to some normality.

In that context we're now only one week away from our reopening date of Friday 7 August; a celebration of our formal reopening and our 60th Anniversary. Since mid-July staff have been returning to work and preparing the Railway for reopening with tasks such as locomotive boiler exams, carriage exams, inspection of our infrastructure, cleaning and tidying our stations and linesides and marketing our railway with what we have to offer. We have also been implementing the measures required to comply with the Government guidance so some parts of the Railway might not look the same as they did. Overall though, it's very pleasing to see activity across the whole Railway and to feel that buzz returning – so a warm welcome back to everyone!

None of this would have been possible though without you supporting the railway during the closure and in particular supporting our Emergency Appeal. So I'd like to say a huge thank you to all of you for your kindness and generosity which has meant our Emergency Appeal is now close to the £400,000 mark.

As a business we're not immune or alone to these unprecedented times and decisions have had to be made to secure the long-term sustainability of the Railway. Part of this decision-making process was to reduce our overall cost base which has, unfortunately, meant making some redundancies across the whole Railway. We hope this is only a short-term measure but the success of the



Emergency Appeal has allowed us to retain those vital heritage skilled staff so we can continue to outshop the locos, carriages and other rolling stock the Railway is world renowned for and present what is a world class heritage railway.

As mentioned above, our opening on 7 August will be a double celebration: being both the 60th anniversary of Bluebell operating trains but also the day that passenger trains restart operations! Our first train on the day will be our Members' Special which will depart at 9am following a short ceremony – and if you have booked your ticket, I look forward to seeing you. In fact tickets for our Members' Train sold out in less than 10 minutes!

Public trains will then operate on 7, 8 and 9 August and every weekend throughout the rest of 2020 alongside our catering trains. Please see our website for bookings! We're also planning a transport-themed special event at the end of October to celebrate our unique locomotives, rolling stock and line. More details on this will follow in due course.

So, with just one week to go, I look forward to seeing you on 7 August and throughout 2020 – and thank you again for your support during these unprecedented times.

Still Steaming Through 60 - Diamond Anniversary Update

By Robert Hayward, chairman Diamond Anniversary steering group

Hopefully, you've all been following the 60-day #SteamingThrough60 countdown across our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram profiles that started on 8 June. The posts include fun facts, archive videos and photographs from yesteryear as we count down the 60 days as we approach our Diamond Anniversary in a week's time on Friday 7 August.

Until the Covid-19 global pandemic closed down the Railway in March we were, after more than two years of planning, due to have a very big three-day party. When the birthday celebrations were then postponed indefinitely, the steering group formulated a plan to hold a 'virtual' celebration instead so as to ensure that we still celebrated the Diamond Anniversary regardless of the closure, to make the date special for members, supporters and the wider community.

More recently, the decision was made to restart passenger trains on 7 August and that gave us another way to celebrate. The result is that the focus of the celebration can be around the running of the first train on 7 August at gam which is reserved for members and now sold out. The train departs at gam and we plan to commemorate the occasion with a short ceremony with a few words spoken by Chris Hunford, chairman of Bluebell Railway plc including an announcement about when the postponed celebration is to be held in 2021. Sadly, Chris won't be speaking to a crowded platform of members and the public because social distance guidelines simply won't allow this; only those who have pre-booked tickets and staff on duty will be the witnesses. However, he will be filmed and we hope that it will be possible to have a live link to this occasion on [our website](#).

I can also announce that we will have two webcams set up so that all the trains over that weekend can be viewed and "Steaming Through 60" can be witnessed with live coverage for those that cannot attend. The locomotives will carry

special headboards and if you want to buy one then they will be sold at the end of the celebrations in 2021.

The 'virtual' celebration is still going ahead and it will be a potpourri of film and images relevant to Bluebell over the years, some e-birthday cards from well-known supporters and a model railway item featuring a 4mm model of the Bluebell Railway! Again this will be via a link on our website and on our social media channels.

So, we have the prospect of having both a 'virtual' celebration and a very constrained public demonstration of sixty successful years of running steam-hauled passenger trains. It's not all that we wanted to do, but in the circumstances, it is the best we can achieve with all the constraints.

The work for the Diamond Anniversary event planned for this year has not been wasted; it included some of the best aspects of past events plus some new ideas to appeal to both enthusiasts and families. Whilst most of what we had planned to do will still go ahead, we have the opportunity to develop those plans with some new opportunities possible in 2021 that were not previously available. However, that's all subject to Bluebell being able to operate as we would like it to next year.

Happy Birthday Bluebell!



Back to Work

By Paul Bromley, communications director

There's been a lot of activity taking place around the Railway to prepare for reopening.

Paid staff and volunteers have resumed their duties along the line and in various departments.

Here are some photos from around and about as the railway gears up for re-opening on 7 August – sixty years to the day after the first preservation era trains ran on the line.



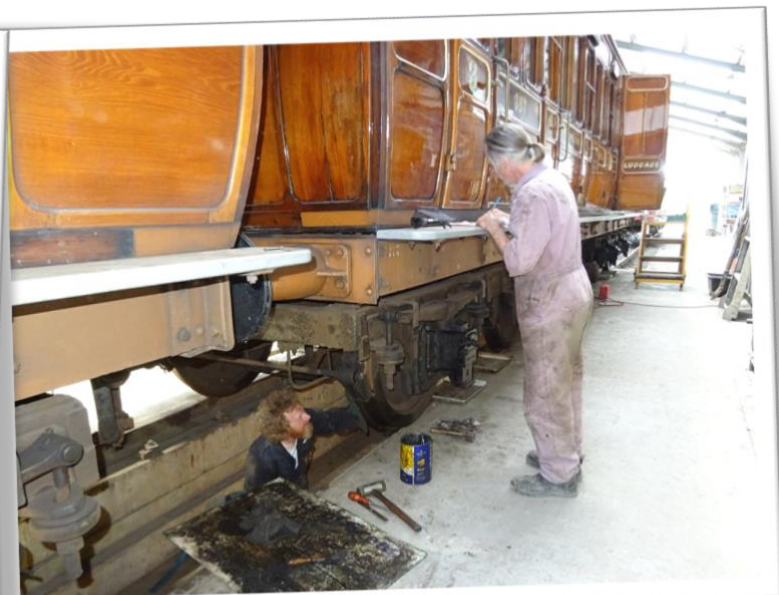
*(Left) Out on the line, the Tuesday Lineside Clearance Gang were working near Sharpthorne Tunnel collecting logs – these will be sold, providing useful revenue to the railway.
Photo: Phil Laycock*

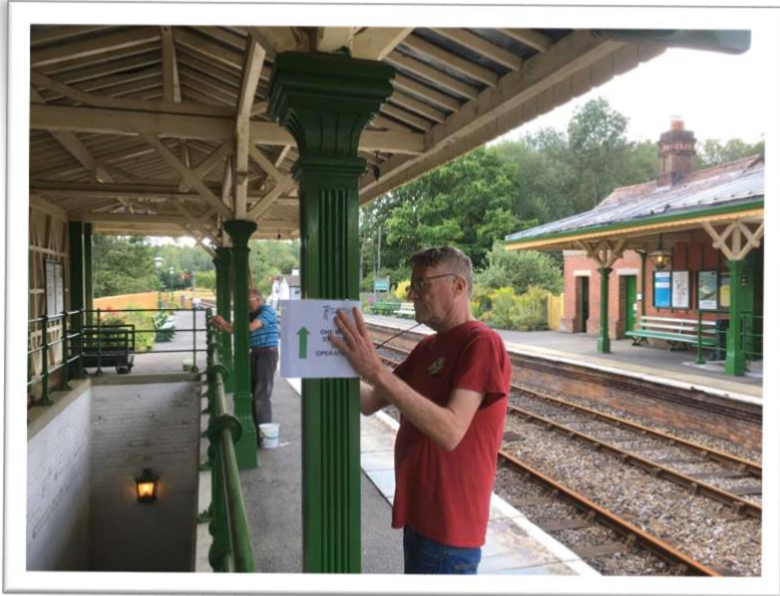
*(Below) The Sunday Permanent way gang have also been back in action. One group, north of West Hoathly, were greasing fish plates and the second (pictured) were fettling the track alignment at Vaux End. Permanent Way work is one of the easier jobs to do whilst maintaining social distancing, outdoors.
Photo: Dave Bowles*



(Below) In the Loco Works, our boiler smith is working on No. 34059 Sir Archibald Sinclair's boiler, while others worked on No. 263, including machining the crank axle – this is work that was put on hold when the lockdown started.

(Below right) The team at the Carriage & Wagon Works at Horsted Keynes have been busy checking and preparing the Metropolitan set of carriages which will be used on the first train next Friday.





(Above) The Friends of Sheffield Park have been back on their regular Wednesday duties carrying out repairs and maintenance to ensure the station looks good when customers come back.

(Left, top to bottom) The team at Kingscote have been busily getting the station ready to greet visitors when we reopen. (Photo: Mark Baker)

At Sheffield Park, museum stewards carried out a much-delayed spring clean of the museum on Platform 2 in readiness for welcoming visitors once again.

The annual clean and polish was due to have been held in late-March but could not take place because of the Railway's closure. Instead, it took place in July in a socially distanced way so that the exhibits are sparkling and gleaming for reopening.

The museum will be open on running days with a one-way system in place for visitors. (Photo: Tony Drake)

Meanwhile, John Corbridge was out with pruners to trim back the hedges to make Sheffield Park look neat for customers.



Five Minutes With ... Father David Murdoch

Name

Father David Murdoch

Role

Chaplain

How long have you been involved with the Bluebell Railway?

11 months

How did you first become involved?

September 2019, when I came to be Priest-in-Charge of Horsted Keynes, the two jobs going together.

What does your Bluebell Railway job involve?

Leading Christmas Carol and Summer Songs of Praise Services. I would like to expand the job. I have been trying to attend special weekends. I would like to offer support and a listening ear to staff and volunteers, whenever needed and wanted.

How often do you volunteer or help at the Railway?

As above, mainly the two services and special weekends, so about once every month or two.

What's the best part of your job?

Leading the Service on the platform and preaching from an engine: riding on the trains and meeting people.

Which is your favourite station on the line – and why?

Horsted Keynes. It is in my parish and so beautifully and characterfully restored and maintained.



Reverend David Murdoch and his wife, Christine. Hiding out of shot – Barney the dog.

What is your earliest train memory?

Watching 'The Midland Pullman' and other trains pass by when I lived as a young child in Harpenden. Moving to Lancashire just in time to see the last steam trains on British Rail.

What's the best thing that's happened to you at the Bluebell Railway?

Quite unexpectedly becoming its Chaplain.

What is the first thing you are going to do at the Railway after reopening?

Come for a ride and meet others who will be rejoicing, as I will.

Anything else you want to tell us?

I have liked railways since childhood and was a member of the Railway Society at my Grammar School in Lytham, and of the Blackpool branch of the Lakeside and Haverthwaite. My other hobbies are classical music, reading and walking in the countryside with our dog, now including footpaths that go near the railway.

BLUEBELL BITES

Fish & chips or afternoon tea

Fish and Chips, which I look forward to enjoying on the train for my birthday in September.

Eastertime or Christmastime

Very hard question for a Priest! Christmas is about God sharing our humanity in Jesus. Easter matters

because it was God, in Christ, who died and rose again to show God's love. And they both include special events on the railway!

Riding on the footplate or relaxing in a carriage

I enjoyed a driving and firing experience on the Severn Valley Railway for a special birthday, but more often relaxing in a carriage.

Chaplain's Message

By Father David Murdoch, Railway Chaplain

'They who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength...' Isaiah 40, v31

All kinds of feelings can go with waiting. Waiting anxiously for an exam, medical test or job interview result; waiting painfully while suffering from a serious illness or being with a loved one who is; bored waiting for the end of an unstimulating lesson or job; joyful waiting in anticipation for a birth, marriage or other celebration.

Then there are the numerous different feelings associated with waiting for a train. You can fill those in yourselves!

The last few months of lockdown have been a testing time of waiting for many. Not least, all of us who are associated with our wonderful Railway. Those who run it have responded creatively and imaginatively to the financial challenges involved, and that has met with a generous response.

All of us, I am sure – workers, volunteers and passengers – have greatly missed the trains and eagerly look forward to the reopening in August, celebrating the Railway's 60th birthday. Sincere thanks are due to all who are working so hard to make this possible.

Apart from missing rides and meeting people as Chaplain, I have greatly missed even the sound of the engines puffing and whistling, which we can hear from the Rectory Garden.

What people keep calling the 'new normal' will still be a time of waiting and adjusting for us all, albeit with the encouragement of things beginning to get going again. It will be great to start getting out and meeting each other again.

Sharphorne Tunnel or Imberhorne Viaduct
Imberhorne Viaduct, because I like seeing the views from the line.

Tea or coffee

Definitely coffee, preferably filter: I dislike tea and never drink it!

We will be reminded how many people have to work together to operate a preserved steam railway: each mattering and all needing each other. A picture, for those who have faith, of what our churches can and should be like – and for all of us, of what our communities can and should be like.

So all aboard! Let the whistles blow and the trains start up!



St Giles, Horsted Keynes

A Closer Look at ... *Captain Baxter*



Photo: Derek Hayward

As we get ready for our 60th anniversary, we're taking a look back at one of the engines which featured at the 50th Anniversary Gala in August 2010.

"Baxter" or "Captain Baxter" (as it had been named until 1947) arrived at the Bluebell in 1960 after spending its working life at the Dorking Greystone Lime Works at Betchworth station. It was only in 1982 that it returned to traffic after a comprehensive overhaul.

It's currently on static display inside SteamWorks! and is a firm favourite with visitors, particularly youngsters.

So here's everything you wanted to know about ... Captain Baxter.

DID YOU KNOW?

'Captain Baxter' carries a plaque on the tanks stating that it was built by Fletcher-Jennings using a patent design. This patent concerned the arrangement of the rear axle and valve gear that allowed construction of a very short, yet powerful locomotive, useful in cramped industrial locations.

There are five locomotives preserved in this country built by Fletcher-Jennings. Along with 'Captain Baxter', they are 'Dolgoch' and 'Talyllyn' built for the Talyllyn Railway; and 'Townsend Hook' and 'William Findlay' that were also built for Betchworth Quarry. All five were assembled in 2016 at Tywyn for the Talyllyn Railway's 150th anniversary celebrations.

CAPTAIN BAXTER IN FACTS AND FIGURES

Number	3
Class	B (industrial)
Wheel arrangement	0-4-0T
Built	1877 by Fletcher Jennings & Co, for Dorking Greystones Lime Works
Cylinders	Two, outside 12 ins diameter x 20 ins stroke
Boiler pressure	150 psi (pounds per square inch)
Tractive Effort	8,740lbf
Length	18 ft 6 ins
Weight	22 tons
Driving wheel diameter	3 ft 6 ins
Coal and water capacity	Approx 5 cwt coal, 300 gallons water
Valve gear	Fletcher patent

Information taken from '[Locomotives, Carriages & Wagons preserved on the Bluebell Railway, 2020 Edition](#)' produced by Michael Philpott, available from the Bluebell Railway's online shop

A Day in the Life of ... a Train Guard

Words and photos by Jack Lamb, passenger guard

We're taking a closer look at some of the roles at the Bluebell Railway. The railway has about 750 volunteers who give up their time to ensure visitors have a memorable day out. In fact, most of the people customers meet during their visits to the Bluebell Railway are unpaid volunteers. In this article, Jack Lamb explains what it takes to be a Train Guard.

A LITTLE BIT ABOUT ME

My name's Jack and I'm a Guard at the Bluebell Railway. I first started volunteering at the Bluebell when I was just nine years old, in the gF Club. This is a young volunteers club that encourages young people to get involved in the running of the railway. At 16 I joined as an adult volunteer in the locomotive department. After a short break to take my A-levels, I returned to the Railway as a trainee Guard, passing out at 19 years old.

When I'm not at the Bluebell Railway, I am a Train Dispatcher for Southern Railway, using many of the skills and experiences from the heritage railway to further my career on the national railway.

BOOKING ON

You may think that the Guard just blows a whistle, waves a green flag and rides around on the trains all day. But there is much more to being a Guard than that.

It all starts early in the morning at Sheffield Park Station. I first check the notice board for any new information such as operating instructions, speed restrictions and anything else I need to know. Then I fill out my details and my start time in the signing-on book (also known as "Booking On"). By booking on, I am confirming that not only am I present but also that I am fit and well, not fatigued or under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

PREPARING THE TRAIN

On my way to the train, I stop by the signal box to collect "the Guard's Box" and if my train has a wheelchair lift, the key for it. In the Guard's Box is a tube of detonators, a telephone, a list of telephone numbers and a lineside gate key. These items are used if the train needs to be rescued or evacuated from a station.



Once at the train, the first thing I do is check the hand brake is on. Before any train can enter service, it needs to be checked inside and out, to make sure it is safe for our passengers. Starting in the guard's van, I must check I have the vital emergency equipment. Without it, the train cannot be used. There should be: a tail lamp, a fire extinguisher, a first aid kit, an emergency screw coupling, a detraining ladder and two wheel scotches. I also need to check that the emergency tool cupboard is sealed, so I know nothing is missing.

Next, I put on my hi-vis vest, a pair of gloves and grab a notebook for the exterior check of the train. Starting from the guard's van, I walk around the train checking that the carriages are coupled together properly, with the brake pipes, steam heat pipes and electrical connections secured. I am also checking to make sure there is no damage to the carriages and that they are safe to be moved.



Pre-dawn start

When I reach the end of the train, I make sure that the end doors are secure and that the train is safe for a locomotive to couple onto.

Back at the guard's van, the next job is to fill out the Guard's Journal. I note down all the carriage numbers that form the train and their weight. The Journal is my record of the day, so if anything out of course happens, we can look back to see what happened.

Finally, I need to check the inside of the train. I make sure that all the seats, tables, windows and the toilets have been cleaned and that they are safe to be used. I also check that the lights are working in every carriage, which is important to keep everyone safe as we pass through Sharpthorne Tunnel or if we're running after dark.

ALL ABOARD!

Now that the train is ready, it's time to welcome our passengers on-board. This is a really enjoyable part of the day as I have the chance to meet lots of visitors and help them with anything they may need. Every train has a luggage compartment, which our passengers can use to store pushchairs, bicycles or wheelchairs during their journey. I note down where the passenger is going so that their items are unloaded at the correct station.

Before we leave, I need to check that the brakes are working on the whole train. To do this, I go to the rear of the train and apply the brakes. If they

apply and release correctly at the rear of the train, I know that the rest of the train's brakes are also working. I then need to place a red tail lamp on the rear of the train. This tells our signalmen that all the carriages are still attached and none of them have become detached, blocking the railway.

OUR JOURNEY BEGINS

The last passengers have joined the train, all the doors are closed and it is time to depart. I check that the signal is green and wait for the Station Master to give our train permission to leave. They blow their whistle and raise their hand to me, which I acknowledge by raising my hand. If it is safe for the train to move, I blow my whistle, wave a green flag to the driver and the train departs. Once the train is clear of the platform, I enter the departure time into my Journal. All departure and arrival times are logged on the Journal, together with any other relevant information.

On our journey I'll be checking signals, updating our progress in the journal and speaking to our passengers, answering any questions they may have about the railway. As a Guard, I need to know our route like the back of my hand. I know every bend, bridge and building, so if an emergency were to happen, I can state my train's precise location. Features of our route like our tunnel are also important to know as I need to remember to turn on the lights.

At each end of the line, our locomotive "runs round". It is uncoupled from the front of the train and is coupled to the rear to take us back in the opposite direction. When this happens, the tail



Inspecting the train

lamp must be moved from one end of the train to what is now the rear of the train. A brake test must also be completed before departure, to make sure they are working correctly. This is often the best opportunity for the guard to refill their tea can and get some food.

END OF THE DAY

Arriving back at Sheffield Park Station, our day draws to a close. As our passengers head home, the Porters help me close all the windows and lock the doors, checking for anything that may have been left behind. Next it's time to put the carriages away in one of our sidings or the carriage shed. To manoeuvre the train safely, the driver and I communicate with each other by a handheld radio, a necessary modern safeguard. Once the carriages are in the right place, I screw down the handbrake and take all my equipment back to where I got it from. I then finish my day right where it started and sign out. This is to prove that I have not worked more than the 12-hour maximum and that I have left the Railway. Time to head home and reflect on another successful day at the Bluebell Railway.

VOLUNTEERING

The Bluebell Railway simply would not exist if it wasn't for volunteers like me. I would recommend volunteering at the railway to anyone. No matter what your skillset or experience, there is a role for you. Whether it's in a passenger-facing role like mine, getting your hands dirty in one of our workshops or looking after one of our stations. Could you be part of the team that takes Bluebell Railway into its next 60 years of steaming through Sussex?



*(Top to bottom)
View along the train through the guard's periscope*

Hat and flags

Tail lamp and hand-signalling lamp

A Photo's Worth ...

By Mike Hopps, Infrastructure volunteer



The Northern Extension Project team celebrate at the summit of the line. Photographer Mike Hopps is on the right, the photo having been taken with a delayed shutter release. The late Chris White, architect of the construction of the East Grinstead extension, is standing centre on the locomotive.

I first set foot on the Bluebell Railway sometime in 1965 after a day out with cousins from London, one of whom had just passed his driving test and was keen to venture further than Kew Bridge. At that time the only camera I had was a Box Brownie, but I don't think I had it with me on that occasion and so no photos of what can be seen now as a memorable occasion. A 1967 visit did produce some photos, albeit in black and white, but it was a start.

So in 1971 when I was looking for my first teaching job, the hand of fate led me to East Grinstead and Imberhorne School where I was appointed to teach Metalwork in the Lower School at Windmill Lane. While still a teenager in 1965 I had worked as

a volunteer at weekends on the Welshpool and Llanfair – travelling down from Liverpool in an old converted ambulance driven by my dentist who was also an enthusiast. I seem to remember that we filled up with red diesel before the trip back on a Sunday evening! Some years later the possibility of working near another heritage railway was certainly a plus as well as the job but, apart from membership and taking photos over the years, family life – and a house resembling the film 'The Money Pit' – meant I was always busy. It was to be many years later that I was able to volunteer on a regular basis.

Finally and when approaching retirement, I decided that I should make up for lost time and

offer myself as a working volunteer in the Infrastructure department. This was 2009 and we were about to start digging out the tip – the 'Imberhorne' tip; just down the road from where my teaching career started. In fact it became a regular joke when we were working that any piece of old iron that turned up when digging was closely inspected to see whether it was one of the many forgework jobs created by one of my students all those years before. Matt Crawford also searched in vain for any old exercise books with my comments in red ink. We didn't find any, but we did uncover two Western Region totems. One from Oswestry – very badly damaged, probably by the digger, but another 'Machynlleth', still in reasonable shape which now hangs in the museum. We shall never know how many others might have been transported in the waste to Bedford. The significance of this features in the photo which will be explained later.

The enormous amount of work that was done by the Infrastructure team in digging out the tip and finally laying track after five years is well documented elsewhere and needs no further explanation. Literally thousands of photos were taken showing various stages as we progressed deeper and deeper into the mire and I doubt whether any other heritage railway has succeeded in completing such an enormous project given what appeared to be an almost insurmountable undertaking. It was fitting that such an achievement was finally recorded in a manner not dissimilar to the classic photo taken at Promontory Summit, Utah in 1869. When the rails were joined in the white fishplate ceremony we didn't have opposing locos to strike a similar pose, so it was decided that during the first steam working from Kingscote to East Grinstead we would attempt to capture the mood of the occasion and record the event for posterity. This was an Infrastructure volunteer only special arranged by the late Chris White and laid on as a reward for all those who had worked on the project and we would record the event for posterity somewhere.

Now photographers will tell you that sometimes things go according to plan on photo shoots, often for various reasons they don't. Sometimes the best photos are snatched shots – pure luck, and we can all remember those. However, on this occasion we had to get it right and a bit of pre-planning was the order of the day. We had the loco – 9F 92212, we had the volunteers who had all been briefed to wear hi-vis and bring their hard hats. We had chosen to frame

the photo with the arch of Hill Place Bridge which provided a reasonably level area beyond the summit where the group could spread out. Hopefully nothing could go wrong. So the great day arrived and we set off from Kingscote. The first run was to be non-stop to East Grinstead, probably to see if in fact it was possible up the 1 in 55 with steam traction. Chris was worried that if we stopped just after the cutting we might not get started again! We needn't have worried, the 9F romped up the bank with barely any effort. So on the second run we stopped just in front of the bridge as planned.

Long before the actual occasion while I was doing the planning for this, I had thought long and hard about how the photo might be viewed in years to come without the obvious signs of a location. One bridge is very like another and so I came up with the idea of the replica totem which was made full size and I thought it could be placed in front of the volunteers in time honoured fashion. After coming to a stop we all clambered out of the train and I ran on ahead to set up the tripod and camera, passing the sign to someone assuming it would be positioned in front. Now as well as all the planning, this is where luck came into play as the totem had been passed up to the loco crew who were standing on the buffer beam and had hung the totem on the top lamp iron. Obvious now, but I hadn't thought of it as I assumed that everyone would be on the ground. I took several photos to get everyone relaxed and in the mood and then the final one when they were asked to raise their hats which is what you see.

So that is the story, but it is surprising the number of times I have been asked for the location of Imberhorne Station by people who can't find it on any map and wonder if it was buried in the cutting like some long lost village in a reservoir!



*The Machynlleth station totem recovered from the rubbish-filled cutting at Imberhorne, now displayed in the museum at Sheffield Park.
Photo: Tony Drake.*

Tales from the Shed: Goods Working - 2

By Russell Pearce, Driver

In the first part of this series on goods working, Russell looked at the history of the unfitted train and considered some of the basics which are taken into account when working such a train – two key points being the overall gross weight of the train and the brakeforce the engine is capable of starting. Now in part two, he considers how the skills of the driver, fireman and guard, working together as a team, are needed to keep the goods moving safely.

On the whole engines booked to work the unfitted goods train in the 19th Century had power generally just sufficient to start a train, but not necessarily capable of starting a whole train in one go. Vehicles in the unfitted train were not maintained with the buffers in close contact. This contrasted with passenger trains where carriages are coupled as tightly as possible. So why is this important when working a heavy train?

Whilst it is true that an engine working a train close to its notional limit of starting effort may struggle to start it all in one go, the three link couplings used between the vehicles of such trains were very slack, so in truth the engine is worked in such a way as to

start the train one vehicle at a time. The point being that in starting we are also interested in the friction that has to be overcome before the axle will start to rotate on its bearing. Bill Brophy, the former Bluebell Railway Shedmaster, explained to me that when we discuss engines moving trains of “x” tons, we really mean they are overcoming the rolling resistance of a train of that weight. The ground takes the weight, but the heavier the train the higher the rolling resistance. Old wagons were provided with plain bearings lubricated with grease. Once these bearings were warmed up and the grease became less viscous, the friction was reduced; but starting a cold wagon was a tougher proposition than a warm one.



Photo: Derek Hayward

So how to start a train of significant weight. I said earlier that the wise driver will be very easy in opening the regulator and start the train one vehicle at a time. This is where the long three link coupling is of critical importance. The engine starts and tightens the coupling which tugs the wagon, so getting it on the move. Thus, the first wagon is moving before the rest of the train, the next coupling becomes taut and that helps to start the next wagon and so on all the way down the train. The driver keeps a close feel on the regulator and is alert to note the weight of the train coming onto the draw hook, steadily giving more steam until he has hold of the whole train when it can be applied more assertively. Then off he goes.

So far so good; and this all sounds easy but there are things to bear in mind which arise from the use of the long three link coupling. The first is that the coupling is longer than the distance between coupling hook centres, so while an assembled train of a number of wagons might stand end to end over say 100 yards, when the couplings are all tight the overall length might be several yards longer. Remember that we are using this slack to lift the train wagon by wagon. If the driver lacks care, the guard in the brake van at the back will be watching the train in front of him start very quickly and stretch out, and when the process reaches his van, the last vehicle to move, it is yanked from rest to the speed of the whole train in less than a second. The careless driver with a long train could easily have his engine doing 15 miles an hour or more before the van is moving.

This can result in a very rough start for the guard, who could easily be thrown off his feet, and cause

injury; he can fall and hit his head on the handbrake stand or the stove; be thrown over the back of the veranda, or he could be left chewing the wooden railings. This all sounds quite alarming and with good reason. One of the causes of bad feeling between footplate staff and guards was this very practice, which is well described in the memoirs of the former Saltley man, Terry Essery.

The second issue is that careless starting of trains in this way is highly likely to cause a coupling to break, which causes inevitable problems of its own, that we will not go into here because they lead to a whole piece on the subject of what we do with failed trains.

So, the wise driver starts carefully, and feels for the whole weight coming on to the engine before getting stuck in. But what of the guard – who we will not, on this occasion, have catapulted off his van? Having given the tip to the driver, he will stand ready to exchange a further hand signal with the fireman to indicate that all is right and the whole train safely on the move. The fireman acknowledges this and tells the driver. And because on a long run the gradients will vary, the business of stretching the train will crop up every time there is a change, so the fireman must keep an eye out to make sure that the train remains in one piece and repeat the exchanging of hand signals. Which brings us to another job for the guard.

During his preparation he will have made sure that like all trains there is a red tail lamp on the rear as a warning to anything following that there is a train ahead. However, when the train is unfitted, the guard must also add two other lights. The tail lamp goes on a lamp iron placed above the draw hook in the middle of the buffer beam, but on this train he has two other lights to place on irons at the top corners of the van just below the roof, which protrude outside the width of the van. These lights have a burner inside as usual, but they carry two lenses apiece, a red lens facing backwards and a plain one facing forwards. The fireman and driver looking back can see these white lights which are thus an indication both in daylight and darkness that the train is complete. Any driver following such a train sees three red lights in a “V” and knows that unfitted goods is being followed. This is not so remote a possibility as it might sound because there were permissive signalling arrangements which allowed slow moving goods trains travelling in the same direction to occupy the same section. This



Three link couplings. Photo: Martin Lawrence

configuration of lights is also advice to the signalmen passed en route of the type of train they had in their section.

So, we have our train on the move and all is hunky-dory until we have to slow it down, control it on a falling gradient or stop it. Rather like starting, this is a gradual business. Proper use of the brakes is key, sudden braking will close up the train too quickly and cause similar problems for the guard as on starting, and actually not be that effective. There is a likelihood that sudden braking will cause the train to pile into the engine, and cause injury to the crew, and it may well cause the engine to skate and get out of control. As the Rev. Awdry has it in the story 'Percy takes the Plunge': "On, On, On laughed the trucks..." and as he says "every wise engine knows you cannot trust trucks"!

Thus, it is here that in-depth "route knowledge", and knowledge of the engine and how to use the available brake force, is vital. This is where we find out how hard it was for a crew to work an unfitted train. Typically, when slowing a train down the driver should shut off steam and have the fireman start to screw down the hand brake on the tender. This was a common practice because it is easy to apply a handbrake and the crew have better control than with a vacuum brake. Furthermore, the hand brake can be left applied in a way that is hard to achieve using vacuum, and some steam brakes. (We ignore modern BR standards which have an excellent steam brake).

With the tender brake correctly applied the engine will sit back into the train, and once again the driver is feeling for the engine to gather up the whole train before adding to the brake force until it is either stopped or has slowed to the desired speed. On a falling gradient we are looking to have the train maintaining line speed, while under clear signals. This means that, ideally, we have the tender brake doing the work of holding the train back while the engine vacuum or steam brake is held in reserve for additional stopping. This is why 847 makes a first-rate heavy goods engine, for the large eight-wheeled tender has brake force aplenty.

Meanwhile the guard has work to do. I mentioned last time that the van was extra to the train, its brakeforce not being taken into account, and I said that it was the job of the guard to see that the van did not do the driver's work for him. So descending a

gradient, the guard would apply his brake sufficiently to ensure that the van was not catching the train up and adding to the weight the driver was trying to stop, but neither should it tighten the coupling and slow the train, unless called for by the driver. Descending a gradient, the guard is being as vigilant as the driver in watching the train and listening for the driver calling for assistance by sounding the whistle.

Our line is effectively a staircase climbing from Sheffield Park to East Grinstead, so the changes of gradient tend to vary from rising or falling to the level or nearly level. So, generally speaking, the business of managing the stretching and closing up of the train is somewhat easier than would be typical on a longer run. Bill Brophy once spoke of standing on the platform at Dorking (Town) station which is at the bottom of a dip, watching unfitted goods trains running through. Having got the train closed up so as to control the speed downhill, approaching the change to a rising gradient the driver would have to stretch the train out again, applying steam to draw the couplings out. The guard would also take part by watching very carefully to see when the job was done and then release his brake at the crucial time so as to prevent excessive snatch on the van. Bill described seeing Moguls going hell for leather coming from the west to get away from their trains and have them fully stretched and well on the move so as to maintain momentum for the climb up Deepdene bank.

One other wrinkle not to be overlooked is the additional work to be done when a loose coupled train is stopped on a rising gradient and the guard has work to do to prevent snatching and to hold the train at a stand. As the train slows on the uphill it will run onto the engine but when the engine stops, the train will naturally stretch out, which can again cause snatching and possible broken couplings so the guard must judge the right time to apply his brake to minimise snatching and the weight of the train dragging the engine back. However, he must allow the train to rest with the buffers closed up, because now we are on a rising gradient the driver will need again to restart the train wagon by wagon. Having the train resting on the van allows this to happen, but of course, now the guard must be very vigilant in watching the train restart so he has his brake off at exactly the right moment to ensure a smooth easy pull away.

In the third and final part of this series, in the next issue of The Bluebell Times, we will look at operation of goods trains on the Bluebell.

On this Day

By Tony Hillman, assistant museum curator

Two pictures from the Bluebell Photographic Archive taken on 31 July. Thanks to John Sharp, Martin Elms, John Creed and Roger Merry-Price for finding the pictures and providing the notes.



4-SUB unit 4698 stands in the Up Victoria platform at Epsom on 31 July 1960, awaiting departure towards Sutton. This is a standard all-steel unit from the first lot of the final batch, built between May 1950 and December 1951 using the underframes of pre-war units of SECR origin. It is one of a small number of this batch fitted with roller blind head code boxes, rather than the more common metal frame type. Even so, a blank red screen was not provided on the blinds, hence we still have the anachronism of an electric train with a paraffin tail lamp. The distinctive overhead Epsom signal box was opened in 1929 by the Southern Railway, replacing the former pair of LSWR boxes dating from the late 1890s, one at either end of the station. It gave excellent visibility in both directions, and remained in service until 1990, when it was abolished under the Waterloo Area Resignalling Scheme (WARS).

Photo: Alan Postlewaite

20002 was built at Ashford in 1940/1 and originally numbered CC2. The third rail electric locomotive was designed by Oliver Bulleid with the electrical equipment, including a pantograph for working in goods yards, designed by Alfred Raworth. It was later numbered 20002 by British Railways. The photograph taken on 31 July 1955 shows the black liveried electric locomotive near Southerham Junction, east of Lewes, with a 15 vehicle Newhaven Harbour-Victoria boat train. The main Boat Train in each direction was hauled by one of these electric locos, the only regular passenger trains hauled by them, but the second Boat Train was generally steam-hauled.

Photo: Joe Kent.



Museum Morsel - The Irish Connection

Words and pictures by Tony Hillman, assistant museum curator

In the last issue, Tony Hillman explained how he went to the Eastbourne home of collector John J Smith after he died. Among the items he found was the nameplate 'Enniskillen'. Here, Tony explains how the nameplate was taken back to Ireland.

A few days after finding the 'Enniskillen' locomotive nameplate among the collection of items at John Smith's house, my wife Sue and I left on our first holiday in Ireland. Our second stopover was in Londonderry where we visited the Railway Museum. While being shown round, I asked if anyone would be interested in the 'Enniskillen' nameplate. The immediate answer was: "Selwyn who runs the Enniskillen Railway Museum".

I got Selwyn's contact details and got in contact with him when we got home. Obviously, he was keen to obtain the nameplate, so I put him in touch with the Treasury Solicitor to negotiate.

It was some months before the Museum managed to buy the nameplate – but they did, and it was shipped to Ireland for restoration. The date of 7 December 2010 was set as the official unveiling at the Museum and Sue and I were invited.

December 2010 was to become the coldest December on record and we set off for Heathrow not knowing if our flight was going as the previous day's flight had been cancelled. Fortunately, our flight did go, leaving over two hours late. Arrival was into Belfast International Airport, some way from the city so a bus journey followed to our hotel, the Europa. It is known as "the most bombed hotel in the world" having suffered 36 attacks during the Troubles. We dropped our bags and set off, again by bus, to Enniskillen. Selwyn met us at the bus stop and took us to the Museum.

The first visit to the Museum is a surprise as it is housed in Headhunters Barbers Shop which is run by Selwyn's two brothers. Probably the only place in the world where you can get your hair cut in a Railway Museum. Guests started to arrive, but many decided not to attend due to the weather. The contingent from the nearby County Museum did not want to risk coming. The unveiling took place, the photos were taken, and Selwyn took us back to the Europa.



Sue and Tony Hillman at the unveiling of the name plate.

The following morning, we did the tourist trips around Belfast and in the evening attended the Irish Railway Record Society meeting where Charles Friel MBE gave a talk on one set of John Smith pictures. Charles chose one of John's holidays and using his encyclopaedic knowledge of Irish railway history put together John's itinerary even down to where he stayed and the trains he must have caught. A fascinating evening.

Home the next day, but the Irish story does not end there.

To come: another visit in 2018 for a special exhibition



A barber's shop – with attached railway museum!

From the Archives

We've a picture from the archive for this issue's quiz, plus answers to the quiz pictures in issue 9.

The Bluebell Railway is known as "the line to the stars" because of its long association with films and TV series.

We even have a [specialist filming website](#) which has been updated with the latest productions to have used the Railway.

This photo has a very special place in the archives. It was the Bluebell Railway's first film contract.

Can you:

- ➔ Name the actress who is plugging her ears as the safety valves lift on the engine
- ➔ Name the engine
- ➔ Name the film
- ➔ And, of course, name the year?

Answers in the next issue.



FIND OUT MORE

This photo, along with many others taken during the making of films at the Bluebell Railway, is taken from from '[The Line to the Stars – Half a century of location filming at the famous Bluebell Railway](#)' by Heidi Mowforth.

Many other archive photos from the railway's sixty year preservation history are collected in '[Bluebell Railway Sixty Years of Progress](#)' by Colin Tyson.

Both books are available from the Bluebell Railway's online shop.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ IN ISSUE 9

By Roger Price, archivist

In the last issue, we showed the four founder members of the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society (with Chris Cooper, behind). They were, left to right:

- Klaus Marx. He was the original Society archivist and editor of Bluebell News for 35 years. He was also chairman of the now defunct London Area Group. He died earlier this year.
- Bernard Holden the Line Superintendent, Plc Director and our late President who died in 2012 aged 104.
- Captain Peter Manisty who worked with John Leroy – the first company chairman – at his travel company in Tunbridge Wells. He was Publicity Officer for the Railway until 1962 and went on to become chairman of the Association of Railway Preservation Society (ARPS) for a number of years. He died in 1992.
- Charles Hudson was a trustee of the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society for many years and also head of the Signal and Telegraph department. He is now a BRPS vice president.



The other photo was taken on 22 March 1992 with army cadets taking part in a sponsored tug of war.

Word Search

We've another word search puzzle for you. And, appropriately, the theme is the Bluebell Railway's 60th anniversary.

There's now a week to go until the Railway celebrates 60 years of operating. It was the first standard gauge preserved passenger railway in the UK operating a timetabled steam-hauled service on a former British Railways branch line.

So as the Bluebell Railway marks the moment of "Steaming Through 60", enjoy this puzzle to mark the occasion.

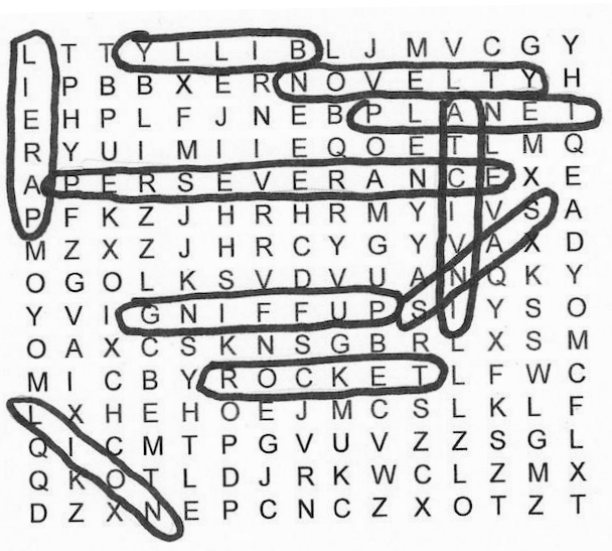
The answers are hidden horizontally, vertically or diagonally and in a forwards or backwards direction.

As ever, no prizes but we will reveal the answers in the next issue. Good luck.

G X V X R A I L W A Y M V H E
 U T C L D D X D F O K L A U T
 Q J E O L W E H Q Y Y P A Y H
 D F X T K E O V T A P B A A R
 C X T J G P B X R Y J D C N O
 P J F P N Y I E O E H F Z F U
 F A K O I S S E U T S I H Z G
 C F S V M E U N R L H E S D H
 B I R S A Z X I F R B Y R Y U
 M R D L E Q B L W O C A H P H
 N S L B T N X Q D F D G B H W
 N T V X S J G G L N F A S U I
 G E X I A M J E A X E U S D C
 R I F W L T R T R U H G H H Q
 F C U G F R S P W I T E D R D

HAPPY
 BIRTHDAY
 BLUEBELL
 RAILWAY
 STEAMING
 THROUGH
 SIXTY
 FIRST
 STANDARD
 GAUGE
 PRESERVED
 PASSENGER
 LINE

SOLUTION TO WORD SEARCH IN ISSUE 9



- ➡ Rocket
- ➡ Invicta
- ➡ Novelty
- ➡ Puffing
- ➡ Perseverance
- ➡ Billy
- ➡ Lion
- ➡ Sans
- ➡ Planet
- ➡ Pareil



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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 www.bluebell-railway.com or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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