



SteamLights at Three Arch Bridge Photo: Dave Bowles

The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway Members, Staff and Supporters

December 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

2020 ... it has been a rollercoaster of a year, but as the nights draw in, the Railway is seeing the year out in a blaze of light and colour. Our Christmas time services of daytime Santa Specials and the new night time SteamLights trains have proved very popular; it is wonderful again to see our stations occupied – at an appropriate distance – with happy families once more. That includes East Grinstead, with two departures on each day of Santa Special operation.

The Railway thus ends the year on a positive note, and that feeling is bolstered by the recent certification for public use of a Covid-19 vaccine leading to the hope of a return to a more normal existence. Against that, the vaccine will not be deployed overnight, and the economic shock to the country will take some time to right itself, so from the Railway's viewpoint, much needs to be done in 2021 to rebuild. That said, the publication of a provisional calendar of events for next year, including events aimed at both families and enthusiasts, is a sign of optimism for the future. Biggest of all, of course, will be our "Sixty plus 1" event in August 2021.

With those thoughts then, it remains only to thank you – the readers and contributors – for supporting The Bluebell Times for the last nine months. Photographic and written contributions are always welcome – see back page for contact details. Have a merry Christmas, a happy (and bright!) New Year, and look out for the January 2021 issue of The Bluebell Times on 8 January!

Tom James, Editor

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Chairmen's Message

By Christopher Hunford, Bluebell Railway Plc and Roy Watts, BRPS

REFLECTIONS ON 2020 AND HOPES FOR 2021

You would think that reflecting on this year would be a relatively easy task. At first glance, we ran trains for only a month before closing in March and then reopening with great but somewhat subdued ceremony in glorious weather in August, only to close again in November prior to opening with an amended set of festive services in December.

That's what can be seen but as in all businesses, a huge amount of work and time has gone on behind the scenes, the proverbial "swan" syndrome: preparing trains, new ways of working, reassessing locomotives, rolling stock and operating staff and making some very difficult decisions in order to ensure the Railway can not only emerge fit and ready but on a sound financial footing.

New ventures such as SteamLights will help sustain and help grow our offer because, whatever happens, sustainable operation has to come with some diversification if we are to survive.

There has also been a real step change over recent months with the three entities (Bluebell Railway Preservation Society, Plc and Bluebell Railway Trust) working so much closer together than before.

We will all be glad to bid 2020 farewell for many reasons whether personal or simply because it just needs to be forgotten.

Bluebell Railway is preparing itself for what it does best: operating heritage rolling stock supported by the best personnel. You will have seen the great success the Railway has achieved in obtaining grant aid to help sustain us during these difficult times and to aid recovery. Add to that the magnificent response to our Emergency Appeal. Much of the monies donated to the appeal came from our members, families and friends – witness such acts as that of six-year-old Alex Venton who donated all his pocket money. We would like to offer everyone our most sincere thanks for their support.

In return, we are pleased to confirm that all membership benefits will be reinstated with effect from 1 January 2021 and, as promised, other additional offers such as special trains are being planned and will be duly communicated. The BRPS is currently seeking advice on what we can and cannot do to conclude our

annual general meeting business. We are still heavily restricted on the numbers who can meet, let alone finding a suitable location to accommodate people.

We look forward to 2021 bringing optimism and a return to some form of life we like to refer to as normal although the definition of "normal" has yet to be decided. However, it is very clear that 2021 will still be a difficult year both financially and physically as we try to adapt and embrace new ways of working and living and by far, it will be outside influences that will impact the way we work and live.

It's abundantly clear we will have to work to a much stricter budget and financial plan. Key has to be the protection of our staff and volunteers and whilst it was very hard to tell people to stay away, it was done so with very good reason.

We again offer our most sincere thanks to everyone involved in and supporting the Bluebell Railway in 2020.

We wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and all good health, happiness and, above all, a safe New Year.

This is an abridged and edited version of a longer article which will appear in the Winter edition of Bluebell News which will be posted to BRPS members in the next few weeks.

‘Light at the end of the tunnel?’

By Fr David Murdoch, Bluebell Railway Chaplain

As Christmas approaches this year, it feels as though we have been enduring many months of darkness as, with countries throughout the world, we have been responding to coronavirus. It has been, and is, a dark time for many: those seriously suffering from the disease, the bereaved, the hard pressed medical and other emergency workers; those whose livelihoods are threatened or already lost; those whose mental health is affected and carers with less support; the elderly, isolated and vulnerable and those in care homes. Even for those of us who are relatively fortunate and less directly affected, there has been the need to adjust to all the various rules and guidelines.

Railway-wise it has certainly been a year of ups and downs: the long first lockdown with all its deleterious financial effects, mitigated by the generous response to the appeal. The postponement of most of our Diamond Jubilee celebrations until next year, yet the joy of opening again on the actual 60th anniversary. The amazing and excellent work which went into making it safe to operate again: I had personal experience of this when I enjoyed Fish and Chips on the train on my birthday. It was even made possible for our daughter to join me and my wife, although she had turned up at the last minute for a lovely surprise. Now (as I write) the disappointment of a second lockdown. Again, I have a personal share in this, as I had been very much looking forward to blessing and riding on the first SteamLights train as well, of course, as to the splendid carol service. I do hope that by the time you read this some sort of train operation may have been restored, albeit perhaps reduced. I am sure we all long to see the ‘light at the end of the tunnel’.

I recognise and respect that people of all faiths and of no religious faith read this newsletter. What I humbly offer from the perspective of a Christian chaplain is our belief that in the coming of Jesus Christ into the world ‘The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it’ John’s Gospel. Ch1, v5. In the tiny, helpless babe of Bethlehem, and the man he grew up to become,



Christians believe God shared fully in our humanity with all our joys and sorrows, strengths and weaknesses. Shared even in our suffering and death, rising again to give us hope.

‘He was little, weak and helpless, tears and smiles like us he knew;

And he feeleth for our sadness, and he shareth in our gladness.’

(Cecil Frances Alexander, 1818-1859, ‘Once in Royal David’s city’)

I know such things are not always easy to believe, especially when in dark times ourselves! Perhaps even harder is that although it is not automatic, good can come out of evil, strength through weakness, life through death, the resurrection through the cross. I hope a railway example may illustrate this:

As a youngster I read L T C Rolt’s ‘Red for Danger’ – a history of railway accidents and safety. Of course, we might all wish that none of these accidents had happened, that all those passengers and railway workers had not been injured and killed or had to face the terrible consequences of the human errors we all make. Yet it was because of them and through them that so much was learned, making railway travel one of, if not the, safest means of transport.

I hope and pray that we may all find light at the end of the tunnels we journey through in our lives. A very happy and blessed Christmas.

Reasons to be cheerful

Let's face it: this hasn't been a great year. But we wanted to end 2020 in a positive mood so we asked people across the Railway for their contributions for the most positive aspect of 2020. Here are their thoughts:

Roy Watts, senior station master at East Grinstead and BRPS acting vice-chairman

The most positive thing was the continuing enthusiasm and passion of the staff and volunteers who have worked so hard in difficult circumstances in order to return and maintain the Railway to operational status. Some have diversified to helping other departments whenever needed.

Graham Aitken, senior station master, Sheffield Park

The magnificent response by volunteers to cover the significant number of turns of duty needed for the Railway to deliver both Santa and SteamLights events. Using Sheffield Park station as an example this was the daunting task facing our roster clerks:

- ➔ Santa – five members of station staff, two stewards and two carriage cleaners required on each of the nine Santa days (total 81);
- ➔ SteamLights – five members of station staff, four stewards and two carriage cleaners required on each of the 43 SteamLights days (total 473).

Grand total: 554

Add to that figure the number of station staff and stewards needed at Horsted Keynes and East Grinstead stations, signalmen at Sheffield Park, Horsted Keynes and Kingscote signal boxes, drivers, firemen, guards and the figure is well over 1,000 – and that's just in the Operations Department!

Robert Hayward, trustee, Bluebell Railway Preservation Society

I was so very pleased that the Bluebell Railway was able to celebrate the 60th anniversary of operating

the first train on 7 August along with the reopening of the Railway after the lockdown. I'm proud that so many people made the effort to help make that day memorable to both the members and visitors. That day wasn't just about operating trains because a large proportion of the members were prohibited from coming to the Railway so there was a huge amount of archive film and the live action broadcast with the new cameras at Sheffield Park.

Trevor Swainson, funding governor, Bluebell Railway Trust

The best moment of the year was when we hit the initial target of £300,000 on the Emergency Appeal – if only to silence the doubters! The response from outside of the Railway was unbelievably good. Somebody loves us!

Also, the survival of the Railway thanks to all the grants and fundraising.

Nick Comfort, leading porter/booking clerk, East Grinstead and Kingscote

The way our customers rallied round during that brief period between lockdowns. They've always been special (at least, 99% of them), but the people who came to travel on our trains during September and October were exceptional: friendly, encouraging and fully understanding of the challenges we faced in giving them a steam train to ride on. Even the ones who travelled up to Kingscote in the dark because of a tricky electrical connection in the Met set saw the bright side.

Barry Luck, infrastructure director

The most positive thing for me in 2020 has been the Plc board, the BRPS and the Trust all working together to make sure the Railway survived and was able to restart operations on our 60th Anniversary.

Bob Pamment, rolling stock director

For me one of the big positives from 2020 was the running of goods trains, with shunting demonstrations, on two weekends. There has been progress on a project plan for developing Kingscote as a working Goods Yard; a fleet of wagons with two brake vans and 11 wagons repaired, maintained and available for use; six regular volunteers who have done the maintenance work and are actively restoring further vehicles and who between them raised £7,000 in a month for wagon restoration; the great job in raising the marketing game leading to the two mini-gala weekends ('Off the Rails').

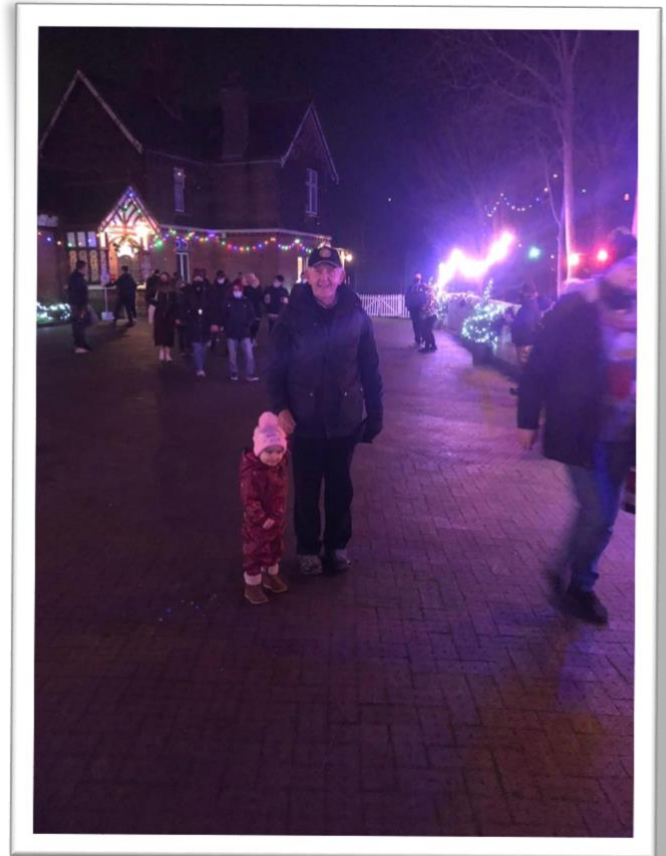
The crowning glory for all this being the two mini-gala weekends themselves which, albeit only ran between Sheffield Park and Horsted Keynes, made good progress towards the aim of creating an extravaganza that would appeal to all angles: nostalgia, education, historical, families and enthusiasts.

David Burch, finance director

The year has been a wake-up call to many businesses, not just the Bluebell, to look at what they do, how they do it and where they are going.

Vernon Blackburn, Bluebell Railway Trust chairman

Everyone working together as One Railway to ensure we get through the pandemic.



Roger Kelly, BRPS trustee

Following my marriage to Maureen this year I became a step great-grandfather. This is me at SteamLights with my step great granddaughter.

The January issue of The Bluebell Times, out on Friday 8 January, will contain people's "Wishes for 2021".

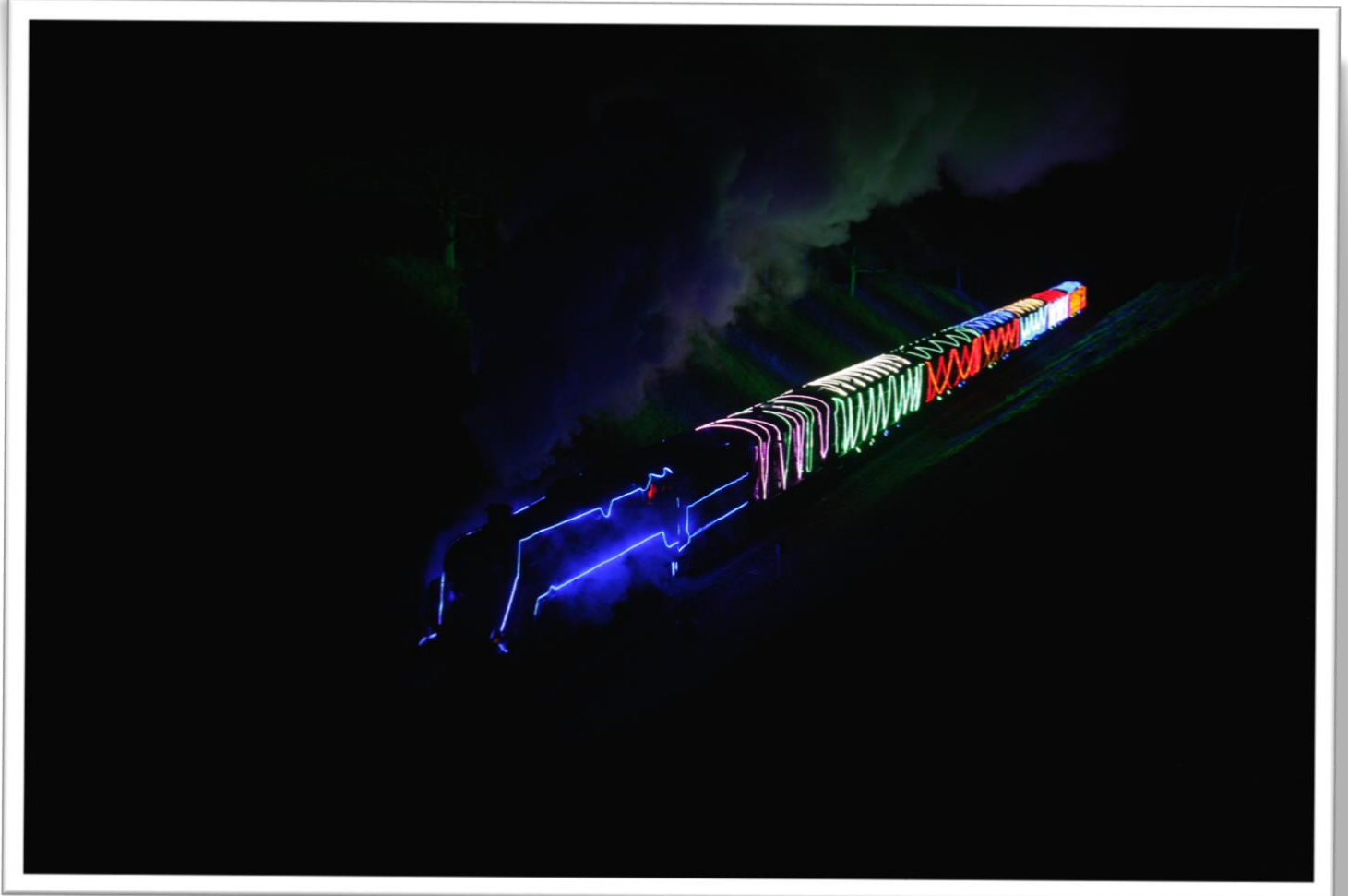
'TIS THE SEASON

The countdown to Christmas has begun – and every day on social media there is an Advent Calendar item with a photo and details of an event at the Bluebell Railway from the past.

The postings are a chance to wallow in nostalgia and include some snowy scenes from years gone by and previous Santa Specials. The #AdventCalendar items can be seen on the Railway's [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts.

SteamLights Lights the Way

By Paul Lelew, commercial and marketing director [Photos](#) As credited



'Camelot' on a SteamLights test train, 2 December 2020. Photo: Andrew Strongitharm

The SteamLights test train ran on Friday 13 November very successfully from Sheffield Park to Horsted Keynes twice. The first run was a full dress rehearsal and went without a hitch with the exception of one string of LED lights which failed on the locomotive 'Camelot'. This was rectified very quickly by our contracted supplier of the equipment at Horsted Keynes and the locomotive returned to Sheffield Park fully lit.

The second run was filmed for use in our future marketing activity to promote SteamLights in future years.



The first test run, 13 November Photo: Casey Photography / Clare Clark

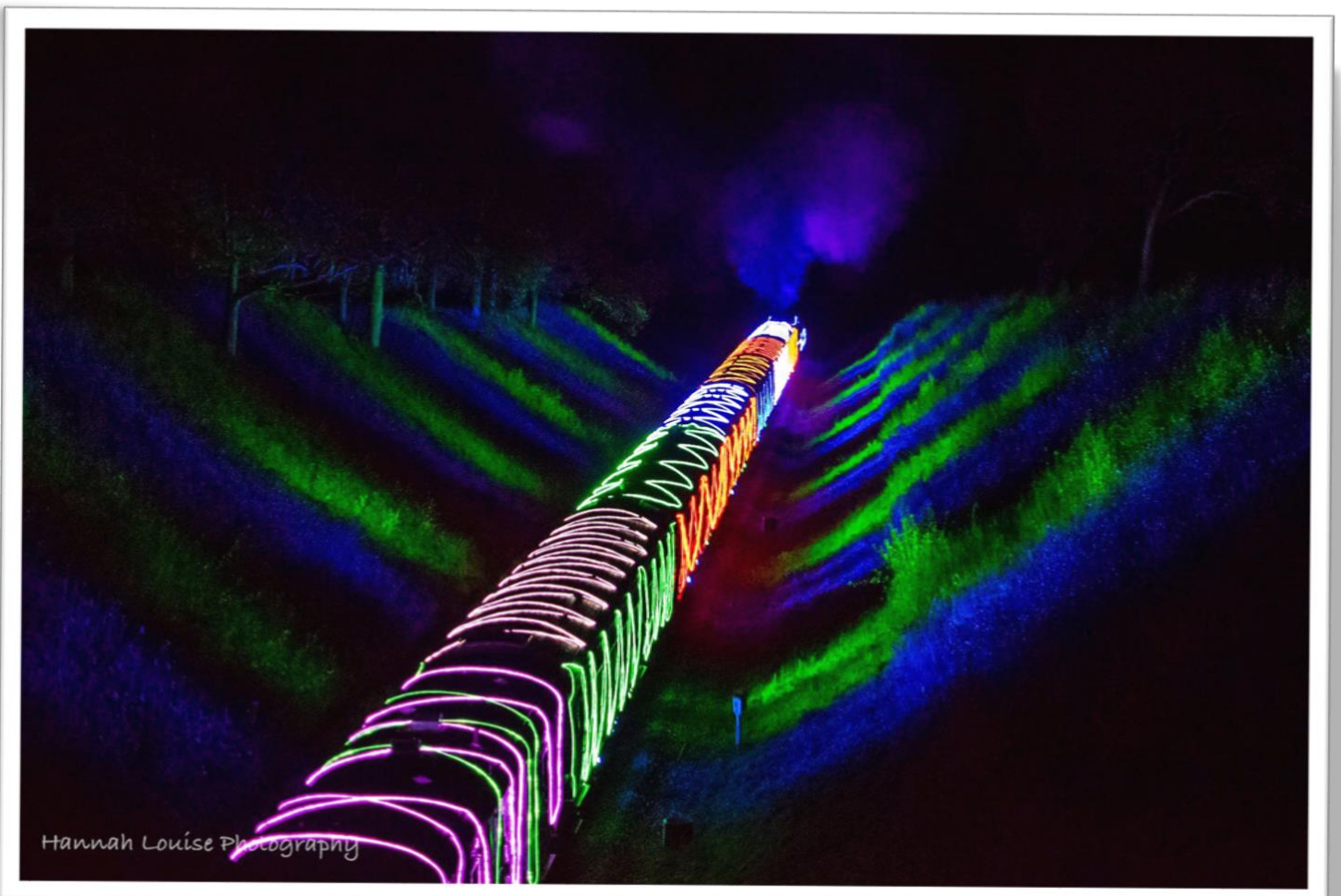
Thanks to driver Jim Grant and fireman Ben Dingley who said that it was a challenge to run the train at the right speed to show off the lineside displays – but they did a terrific job.

I have to thank two key staff members for their outstanding work on SteamLights. Namely co-ordinator Julia Pique who has put an enormous amount of planning into this new product and has spent countless hours organising every detail. Secondly hats off to carriage and wagon works manager Rowan Millard and his team of employees and volunteers. The promotor of this event, Andrew Pooley, said it was the best rigged train he had ever seen at any of the railways running similar events.

SteamLights had to be moved from November and is essentially being run in December and then January 2021 and we hope that it will be one of our premier products going forward.

Photos: Casey Photography / Clare Clark (right)

Hannah Louise Photography (below)



BY404 Filming Generator Van Update

Words and photo by Mike Hopps, infrastructure department volunteer



Work stopped on the film generator van when we locked down in March just as we were hopeful of better weather after a prolonged period of rain when we couldn't get much done. What followed was a really dry spell when the final exterior painting could have gone ahead but it was possible to work off-site and a lot of time was spent finishing off the necessary repairs on the droplights and periscope mirror frames in the guard's cabin.

The droplights were also painted and varnished in more ideal conditions away from the van. Once we could get back to work after the lockdown restrictions were eased, exterior painting continued along with repairs to the periscope housings and mechanisms. SteamLights has added to the excitement with 404 being used as a generator van – which has been the intention all along for filming; but it also needed checking for fitness to run.

Being moved to E road in the Carriage and Wagon Works gave another opportunity for exterior

painting in the dry as well as getting a full mechanical service by the maintenance crew. Brake linkages were all taken down, greased and adjusted; vac system checked and new bags fitted; axle boxes serviced and electrics tested. Finally, with time pressing for imminent service, it was necessary to patch another hole in the south cabin floor so that the generators could be loaded safely.

Cable ports have also been made and fitted in the end walls as well as a custom designed fan unit which can be fitted to any of the droplight openings depending on whichever generator is working. The original intention was to vent the generator exhaust through the existing stove chimney, however the size of the generators for SteamLights has precluded this and so exhaust ports have been fitted in the cabin roof at each end in place of a torpedo vent.

So [BY404](#) is now entering service at last and will be available for filming at the earliest opportunity in the New Year – Covid observances permitting.

Clearing a Path to 2021

By Andy Taylor, locomotive department cleaner *Photo by Ben Gray*

You may recall that in the last issue of The Bluebell Times, passed cleaner Ben Gray and I gave an insight into the world of shiny domes. Please keep reading for a further update but in the meantime there's more great news for the Bluebell locomotive department cleaners.

Our cleaners have many jobs to undertake when rostered. For cleaning duties, the sign-on time is normally 07.00 but it could be as early as 05.30 if working on an engine.

The day starts with frantic activity trying to get each engine clean before moving off-shed. This means cleaning the very top of the engine down to the wheels, cleaning the brass-work and assisting the fireman if and when needed. By around 09.00 breakfast is long overdue and a chance for a cuppa and a bacon butty or two!

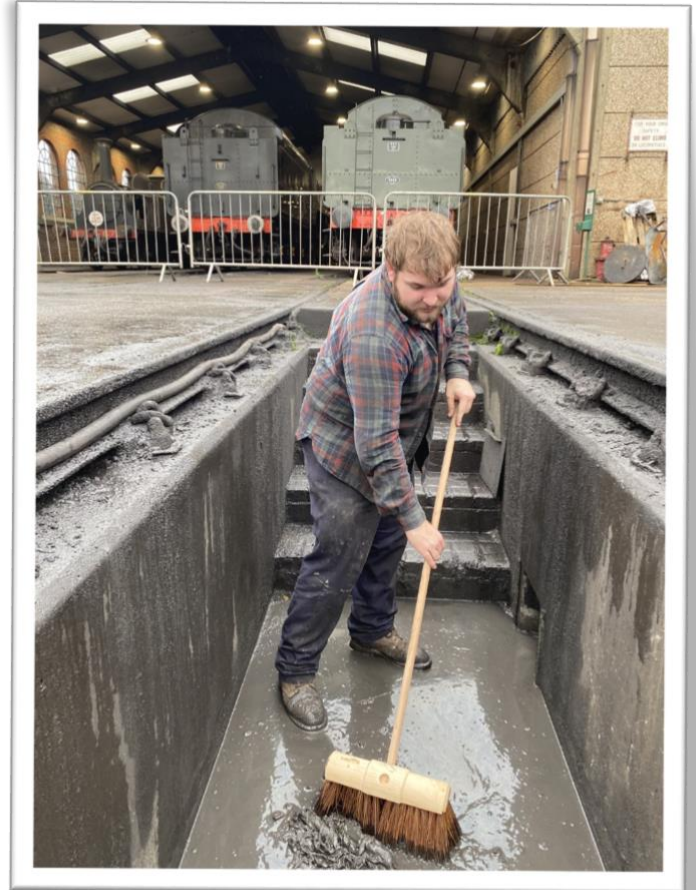
Once back from the feeding frenzy, the engines start to move off-shed and a look into the pits as to how much ash and gunge is down there. The Bluebell is very lucky to have two pits: one about the size of the 9F 92240 (Awake the Giant) and the other the length of three Blackmore Vales (The Bullied Society) or many, many P tanks (Project 27).

The unlucky thing from a cleaner's perspective is that if there has been no time to empty the pits in the week and it is a gala weekend, it can be like a condensed gym session using shovels, wheelbarrows and normally very old worn-out brooms.

That is ... until now!

[Hillbrush](#), a British company which has a Royal Warrant and which was started in 1922 and is based in Mere, Wiltshire, has very kindly offered to sponsor all the yard brooms, some cleaning brushes and enough loco footplate brushes for every engine and those under overhaul. The sponsorship is ongoing into 2021 and beyond.

Hillbrush's kind help will make the cleaners' job much, much easier and help keep the loco yard a



Loco department cleaner Ross Broadbridge cleaning the long preparation pit.

safe and clean place to work. Likewise on the footplate, it will help the fireman ensure the cab floor is spick and span using the best brushes on the market.

We hope to see members of Hillbrush management in late spring at the Bluebell to thank them for the support and also look into further opportunities where both organisations can help each other further.

Special thanks must go to David Hagelthorn, head of marketing for Hillbrush, and the wider team for helping make this happen.

“PEEK” PERFORMANCE CONTINUES TO MAKE THINGS SHINE

Now for the exciting update about metal polish.

A lot can happen in a month ... Autumn has turned to Winter, we have now come out of our second lockdown and good things can happen on Friday the 13th!

We pick up from last month where Ben Gray had told us how he had come to use a different brand of metal polish. This was after finding (as the rest of the locomotive cleaners do) that cleaning the domes on our South Eastern and Chatham engines was hard going. Since Ben had been using Peek, he found the job full of satisfaction and you would often find him cleaning the brass work on the engines every weekend to a very high standard.

Seeing this, I negotiated a quantity of Peek metal polish for use in the locomotive department free of charge and was in the middle of working on something even better.

After further dialogue with Robert Peek, owner of [Tri-Peek Ltd](#), and also negotiations with commercial and marketing director Paul Lelew, it was agreed that we would stock small toothpaste-size tubes of Peek metal polish in the Bluebell Railway shop and on the website. Retail manager Asa Griffiths then arranged delivery. This means that our visitors can recreate the shiny metalwork



the Bluebell displays week after week in their homes and offices.

The [shop is stocking 50ml tubes](#) which are on sale at £4 each.

The fantastic news is that in return Robert Peek has agreed a year's sponsorship of Peek metal polish for the locomotive department.

On Friday 13 November I received a very excited email from Stuart Marks, Bluebell Railway Locomotive Superintendent. The Peek metal polish was delivered in a very large lorry with one year's supply delivered in one go.

We thank Robert Peek and Tri-Peek Ltd for their ongoing support in these tough times.

Shop Reorganisation

The shop at Sheffield Park has been reorganised ready to welcome festive visitors.

The stock has been rearranged and the displays tidied up to increase sales and attract more visitors.

Then next year there will be a full refurbishment of the retail area using money from the Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage grant.

Here are some “before” (right) and “after” (below) pictures to show you the transformation under new retail manager Asa Griffiths and commercial and marketing director Paul Lelew.



Pop into the shop next time you're at the Park to see for yourself – and don't forget there are lots of Christmas present ideas as well as the range of books, DVDs, games, puzzles, clothing, model railway items and more.

While getting all of the presents in, you can help the Railway by registering with either EasyFundRaising or AmazonSmile. They each pay a small percentage of the value of your purchases to the Bluebell Railway every time you shop.

EASYFUNDRAISING

You can shop at over 4,000 retailers to generate funds for the Railway at no cost to you; same choices, same prices that you would see by going directly to the retailers' websites.

To set up EasyFundRaising, simply go directly to www.easyfundraising.org.uk and specify the Bluebell Railway as your nominated charity.

AMAZONSMILE

Shop online at Amazon to get the same great prices while earning 0.5% of the value of your shopping for the Railway, again at no cost to you.

To set up AmazonSmile, simply go directly to smile.amazon.co.uk on your web browser or activate AmazonSmile on your Amazon Shopping app on your iOS or Android phone (found under 'Settings' on your app).



EPOS Project Manager

Izzy Roberts has been appointed as project manager to oversee the introduction of an Electronic Point of Sale (EPOS) system across the Railway.

She previously worked on similar projects for the Sussex Archaeological Society.

The integrated system will allow the commercial and retail departments to record and monitor ticket, shop and catering sales more effectively. It will increase the speed and effectiveness of the information available to staff to manage the business more effectively.

The EPOS system will also allow the Railway to rectify problems quickly and exploit commercial success. The money for introducing the system comes from the Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage grant.



9F ‘Awake the Giant’ Update

By Andy Taylor, locomotive department

We reported on the history of freight locomotive 9F 92240 in issue 5 of The Bluebell Times. A fundraising campaign was started last year to “awake the sleeping giant”. In this article, Andy Taylor provides an update on the efforts so far to raise money to get the locomotive back into traffic, a chance to bid for a limited edition print of the engine and other ways of helping the campaign.

Wow – what a year 2020 has been (for all the wrong reasons!) ... apart from 9F locomotive No. 92240 that is. The “giant” is now at the start of the awakening.

Fundraising has been moving on a pace, even in a Covid year. This is great news as we are starting to see the benefits of the regular donations.

We have the start of what is looking to be a well-supported campaign, both from internal members and external individuals. But we won't be seeing our “giant's heart beating and fire in its belly” anytime soon unless we can crank things up in 2021. Sadly, 92240 is still out in the open with the elements beating down on it.

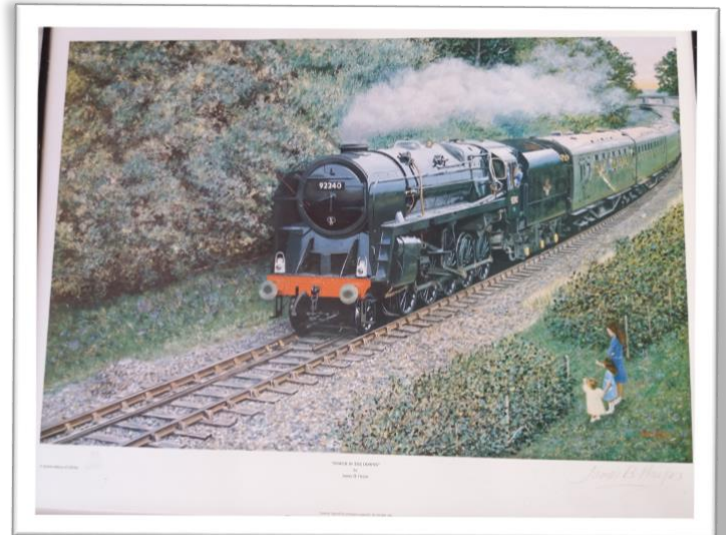
Please help get this giant moving again and join in with a small regular donation – this can be as little as £3.75 a week. Details below.

We have received a print of “Power in the Downs” by James B Hayes. This is a limited edition print number 78 out of 250 and depicts BR 9F No.92240. It is 24" by 20" (61cm by 51cm).

It was kindly donated by a Mrs Lockwood from Blackpool. Her father had recently sadly passed away.

While investigating further about the print, she noticed our ‘Awake the Giant’ fundraising campaign and got into contact with Bluebell Railway Trust funding governor Trevor Swainson. In turn, Trevor passed on my contact details and this led to a telephone conversation with Mrs Lockwood and her sending down the print. We would like to thank Mrs Lockwood for her kind donation and she has asked to be kept up to date with the progress.

Would you like this magnificent print hanging up in your house? We are going to give the print to



Power in the Downs

the highest donor. There is no reserve donation amount on this and if you wish to put a donation amount forward please email me with:

- ➔ The amount you wish to put forward as your donation for the print
- ➔ Your full name and telephone number

Please send to andytay@hotmail.co.uk Closing date 31 January 2021

A conversation over a pint or three always leads to an interesting evening! One evening before Covid, Laurie Anderson (who is heading up the wagon group) and I got onto the subject of wagons. We thought it would be great to see 92240 pull a goods train that will make it chuff a little. Towards the end of the conversation and evening, Laurie set down a challenge. If we could get 92240 running again, he would endeavour to work up a train of 40 wagons to pull. So the gauntlet has been thrown down. Watch this space, Laurie and the wagon group!

All being well, a working party will be set up by the summer of 2021. This will enable the loco to be cleaned and oiled round every couple of months until it is ready to go into the works. We have also started to look at other fundraising activities: please keep an eye out for updates.

There are other ways to help:

- ➔ Please get in contact with me at the email address below and sign up to donate as little as £3.75 a week

HRA Awards

The Bluebell Railway's marketing and communications efforts during the Covid lockdown have been recognised by the wider heritage railway industry.

The special [reopening marketing video](#) has been shortlisted by the Heritage Railway Association in its annual awards.

Actor Martin Clunes, best known for TV series Doc Martin, narrated the video organised by the Railway's marketing team to show the measures which had been put in place to ensure the stations and trains were Covid-safe to allow for reopening in August.

The actor had previously visited the Bluebell Railway for filming in 2014 and provided the commentary for the video called 'Steam Returns to Bluebell Railway'.

Volunteers filmed and took part in the video to show the social distancing, exclusive compartments, enhanced cleaning, one-way system and hygienic food preparation.

The video is on the shortlist for the award for the most innovative fundraising project or scheme during the Covid crisis.

And 'The Bluebell Times' has been shortlisted in the communications category of the awards.

Bluebell Railway chairman Chris Hunford said: "We are delighted to be shortlisted for these two prestigious awards. It recognises the significant

- ➔ We would also welcome anyone who could staff a stall at Horsted Keynes to advertise the campaign and sign people up to regular donations
- ➔ Someone who could set up and look after a Facebook page

If you think you can help in any other way, drop me a line.

Please contact me Andy Taylor at andytay@hotmail.co.uk for further information.



work and dedication by the staff of the Bluebell Railway during what has been a difficult year."

The HRA says the awards ceremony is due to be held next March or April.

[Full list of nominations](#)

Five Minutes with ... David Jones

Name

David G. Jones.

Role

Assisting in the Locomotive Department. Also Secretary/Treasurer for the Brighton Atlantic Project.

How long have you been involved with the Bluebell Railway?

42 years.

How did you first become involved?

Was previously a volunteer at the Kent & East Sussex Railway since 1965 but then moved over with other members of the Southern Mogul Preservation Society when 'U' Class No. 1618 transferred to Sheffield Park in 1977.

What was your professional career?

After completing a five-year engineering apprenticeship at the British Syphon Company, Eastbourne, in 1962, I became a design draughtsman there but then moved round the corner to Edwards Instruments for about ten years designing and drawing up vacuum measuring devices. Whilst there, I transferred into sales dealing with electron microscopy preparation systems, then joined my third employer Furness Controls Ltd of Bexhill in 1977 eventually becoming Export Sales Manager. This involved a lot of overseas visits to Europe and the USA dealing with low pressure measuring instruments and leak detectors, which also included participating in trade exhibitions and giving lectures. I retired in 2004 so was able to devote a bit more time to the Bluebell.

What does your Bluebell Railway job involve?

Cleaning and painting locomotive parts and helping with assemblies. Also from home, dealing with Atlantic enquiries, overseeing the



David Jones as an Edwardian for an event with the Semi-Royal Saloon Photo: Andrew Strongitharm

sponsorship scheme and giving talks around the Sussex area.

How often do you volunteer at the Railway?

Once a week on average.

Are you involved in any other departments or areas of the Railway?

I used to help in C&W when I owned the LNWR semi-Royal saloon and may again when work starts on my recently acquired Pullman Car No. 36. (age permitting!)

Do you have a nickname?

I don't think so.



Helping on the Atlantic, 23 November 2014 Photo: Fred Bailey

What's the best part of your job?

Seeing the result of our restorations in service, usually after many years of work.

What's the worst part of your job?

Raining when I want to do some painting outside.

What is your earliest train memory?

Travelling up the Cuckoo Line behind steam from Hampden Park to Heathfield on the annual St. Luke's Church Sunday School outing when I was about 10.

Do you have a model railway at home or in the garden?

Not now but I used to have a Triang TT3 layout many years ago.

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

Nothing stands out.

What was the most frustrating aspect of not being able to visit the Railway during lockdown?

Not being able to make progress on the overhaul of 'Stowe'.

What was the first thing you did at the Railway when it reopened?

Travelled on the 'Breakfast Belle' train with my brother.

Anything else you want to tell us?

I quite enjoy giving talks about the Bluebell Railway and other subjects, as outlined in the previous Bluebell Times (October issue). I was also pleased to be able to facilitate the purchase of the 'Night Ferry' Wagons-Lits sleeping car in 1984 and later the 'Brighton Belle' Pullman Car 'Doris' in 2009, which hopefully will soon be running on the main line within the 5BEL unit. I have also been a guide at Polegate Windmill for over 50 years and did help with the restoration and maintenance there until recently.

BLUEBELL BITES

Atlantic or Pacific (type, not ocean)

Atlantic, as I have been involved with the reconstruction of 4-4-2 Class 'Beachy Head' No. 32424 from the start with the purchase of the ex-LBSCR B4 Class tender chassis, originally from 'Pretoria' in 1991. This was bought from the 34070 'Manston' group, then an independent organisation based at Richborough Power Station in Kent prior to joining the Southern Locomotives stable at Swanage. As an aside, I cruised on the Sapphire Princess across the Atlantic Ocean last year to visit the Canadian Maritime Provinces followed by New York and Boston before returning to Southampton.

Pullman Car No. 36 or Pullman Car No. 54

Actually it would be both, as the restoration of Car 54 is part financed by the sale of ex-Brighton Belle Car 'Doris' that I was instrumental in saving for active preservation in 2009, and Car 36 is the Pullman I purchased recently and hope that it can be overhauled after Car 54 enters traffic on the 'Golden Arrow'. I may give Car 36 the name 'Hermione' that it carried for the 31 years during its



previous service on the Colne Valley Railway, as named cars are more attractive to potential dining customers. I will possibly ask Emma Watson to launch it into traffic!

Brighton Belle or Breakfast Belle

Brighton Belle, as I travelled twice on the original train including on the last day in April 1972 and look forward to travelling again when the restored train enters service on the main line, hopefully in 2021. I did travel on the Bluebell's Breakfast Belle on 8 August but there were no kippers!

Downton Abbey or The Railway Children

Downton Abbey as I watched almost all the episodes on TV plus the follow-up cinema film. Both the C Class and U Class No. 1638 appeared in the TV series, and I feature these in my 'Filming at the Bluebell' PowerPoint presentations, as I do the Carlton TV version of The Railway Children. I was able to visit Highclere Castle near Newbury a couple of years ago where most of the Downton Abbey filming took place and was impressed with the new retail facilities they have introduced as a result of a large increase in visitor numbers, mainly from the USA where it is hugely successful.

Tea or coffee

Tea, as I rarely drink coffee which would have to be decaff anyway on doctor's orders.



Photos, top to bottom:

*In 'Doris', 2009
Photo: Brian Kaye*

*Painting the Maunsell Locomotive Society PMV, 6 April
2011
Photo: Steve Pilcher*

*With Atlantic Group Chairman Terry Cole (left) and
Richard Proudman of Bachmann, accepting a donation on
behalf of the Atlantic Group
Photo: Bachmann Europe plc*

A Photo's Worth

Words by Jon Bowers, Photo-charter organiser Photos by Jon Bowers and Dave Bowles

If a photo is worth a thousand words, how much more is that the case in this year when opportunities to photograph trains have been so sparse? In years past, a regular part of the operational year was the staging of enthusiast photographic charters, but the prevailing conditions precluded such events in 2020. Until this week ...



Photo: Jon Bowers

It's fairly safe to say 2020 will live long in the memory, but generally not for the right reasons. The past two days (7–8 December) however have gone some way to putting right the missed opportunities from earlier this year, with the tentative return of photo-charters at the Bluebell. Suffice to say running "Covid-secure" events brings a lot of additional challenges and I had been questioning whether it was worth the effort, but when you get light like we had this afternoon, 8 December, it makes it all worthwhile.

I owe so many people a vote of thanks for making the 2 days such a success:

- ➔ the loco crews, guards and signalmen for being as superb and accommodating as ever
- ➔ the newly formed wagon group for giving us a goods train to play with for the first time in a few years



Photo: Dave Bowles

- the Maunsell Locomotive Society and workshop staff for kindly agreeing to remove the S15's smoke deflectors for a short while
- the rest of the Loco Dept for resisting the urge to clean the loco!
- the various clearance gangs for giving us pristine linesides
- all the behind-the-scenes staff for the planning work and allowing the events to run at all

Most of all though, huge thanks to all the participants for coughing up a small fortune each to allow the charters to run and obliging with all the additional Covid requirements. I hope you enjoyed yourselves and apologies to those booked on just the Monday that we weren't able to provide better weather!

Stay safe all and see you again next year...

Jon Bowers at work, orchestrating an earlier photo charter Photo: Peter Zabek



Museum Morsel

Words and photo by Tony Hillman, assistant museum curator

We are always on the lookout for new items to put on display in the museum. The museum is already quite full of items and finding a place for something new is sometimes a problem.

Not so with the new “Ardingly” Schools nameplate. The obvious place was below its big brother, Lord Nelson, Sir Walter Raleigh. We thought we could move the track gauges already on display below Sir Walter down and fit “Ardingly” in between.

The first thing to do was move the display case away from the wall to get access. Not an easy job, the display cases are heavy and take a lot of effort to move. Removing the track gauges was a straightforward event though they had to be untied from their holders.

Obviously, “Ardingly” needs to be centralised at a sensible level. Like other nameplates, “Ardingly” does not have a hole in the middle, so calculations take place to work out where the four holes need to be drilled. “Measure twice, drill once” is a good adage. This is when you find that the reason the calculations are a quarter of an inch out is because the floor is not actually level!

We checked many times before placing the first M12 Rawlbolt hole in the right place. Fixed temporarily in place on the one bolt, the gathered audience are asked: “Is it level?”

Following confirmation, the other three holes are drilled. Now the moment of truth, does it fit? Yes, it does. Job done.

Just the track gauges to refit, Hoover up the dust and replace the cabinet against the wall.

For more about the ‘Ardingly’ nameplate, see page 17 of the November 2020 issue of The Bluebell Times – Ed.



On This Day, 11 December

By Tony Hillman, assistant museum curator

Two pictures from the Bluebell Photographic Archive taken on 11 December. Thanks to John Sharp, Martin Elms, John Creed and Roger Merry-Price for finding the pictures and providing the notes.



11 December 1966 and with less than seven months to go before steam on the Southern Region ends, West Country class 4-6-2 No. 34015 Exmouth hauls the 10.51 am Basingstoke to Salisbury stopping service under Battledown Flyover at Worting Junction. The flyover was opened in 1897 by the London & South Western Railway to eliminate the former flat crossing, where there was a conflict between Up Southampton and Down West of England main line trains. It carried the single Up Southampton line over the West of England lines, on a skew girder bridge.

A new panel signal box had opened only three weeks earlier at Basingstoke, and also seen here is the neat new concrete cable troughing provided for the scheme, in the nearside cess. This carried the signalling and telecoms cables, replacing the overhead wires of the telegraph pole route still visible on the far right, but soon to be recovered.

Photo: Roger Merry-Price



The 1.59 pm Pulborough to Midhurst branch train leaves the Mid Sussex line at Hadham Junction on 11 December 1954. The motive power, LSWR M7 0-4-4T No. 30052, is sandwiched between a single Pull-Push Third Brake No. S3847S, in lined crimson lake livery, and Third Brake No. S2650S. The former is an ex-LBSCR Marsh Arc-Roof coach dating back to 1921, whilst the trailing vehicle is ex-LSWR and dates back to 1909. No. S2650S was berthed at Midhurst to strengthen the single Pull-Push coaches when additional seating was required, but normally making just one return trip per day.

The signal box in the right background is Hardham Junction. Classified by the "Signal Box Study Group" as an LBSCR Type 1, it opened in 1863 and had a long life, closing on 21 March 1967, following the final closure of the Midhurst Branch on 23 May 1966. Colloquially the design was known as a "box on stilts", but those that survived into more recent times were boarded-in from base to operating floor.

A neighbouring "box on stilts" which lasted even longer was at Billingshurst. This was thought to have opened by 1872 but did not finally close until 14 March 2014 as part of the Arun Valley Resignalling Scheme, by which time it was the only survivor of its type. After closure, it was moved for preservation and can now be seen at the nearby Amberley Museum.

Photo: John J Smith

Word Search

All the words this time are about [Christmas products on sale in the online shop](#).

The shop has Christmas baubles, a 2021 hip flask, Coca-Cola Christmas London bus, a Bluebell Railway star snow scene and many other festive gift ideas.

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.

A D I T N I Q O M O G W R V V	CHRISTMAS
O E F Z G B P L X W N X O C L	BAUBLE
G Q I B U G M F R T V Q H N Y	CALENDAR
E G Z P N S Y L D M B R Y I S	HIP
J C F R C C O A U Z I Z M P P	FLASK
K N U B O E M S T S Y Q R E L	SNOW
Y K U B U N T K T Y P A Y R U	SCENE
B N I U I E S M Z D Q M Z C M	LONDON
B L P R U Q A D F A H G O Y Q	BUS
U A X P Y S M V C O N W Q P Y	PERCY
S W U V N Q O R X C O W K X Y	THOMAS
H B D B F D H P F V E H I N O	
P H K M L S T N Z F J G T P Z	
J R A D N E L A C L E N V B I	
E L O N D O N U N Z N Y H R V	

SOLUTION TO WORD SEARCH IN ISSUE 14

N L A N C I N G W S D E I M S	ASHFORD	
S K R O W R H M J B Z P F G E	BRIGHTON	➡ Elms
K J V Y N X D V I K P B R U N	EASTLEIGH	➡ Preston
G L O N G H E D G E F R F O J	LANCING	➡ Park
P Y O B A R K B V N Y S T E N	LONGHEDGE	➡ Railway
A Z H G I E L T S A E H M E I	NINE	➡ Works
R U K J L X P Q Z Y O K U L C	ELMS	
K V K C P R D F I I Y V W M M	PRESTON	
N W S T E P L K R L V D W S D	PARK	
K P Z S K P H B G G W Z C O M	RAILWAY	
F X T S V A E Q D R O F H S A	WORKS	
S O G N R A I L W A Y Q F U P		
N N I N E R C R B O U O V W B		
L W J H G B I D U Q Y F L Q V		
V X S G I C D F H S J P D H T		

Christmas Spot the Difference

By Chris Wilson, Bluebell Railway Museum Photographic Archive

Here's a festive photo from the Bluebell Railway Museum Photographic Archive to keep you busy during the Christmas period. It's a colour photo taken by Joe Kent at Brighton station in December 1975.

Can you spot seven differences between the two pictures? Answers in the next issue.





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.

The Bluebell Times is scheduled to be published on the second Friday of each month. Planned publication dates in 2021 are:

- ➔ 8 January
- ➔ 12 February
- ➔ 12 March
- ➔ 9 April
- ➔ 14 May
- ➔ 11 June
- ➔ 9 July
- ➔ 13 August
- ➔ 10 September
- ➔ 8 October
- ➔ 12 November
- ➔ 10 December

All issues will be available for downloading from the [Bluebell Railway website](https://www.bluebell-railway.com). 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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The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway Members, Staff and Supporters

The Bluebell Times is published monthly on the second Friday of each month. The next issue is scheduled to be available on 8 January 2021 from [bluebell-railway.com/bluebell-times](https://www.bluebell-railway.com/bluebell-times)

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