



Stepney and Fenchurch Photo: Peter Edwards

The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway Members, Staff and Supporters

February 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

After almost a year of the current pandemic, during which time we have had long periods with no trains running, it can sometimes be hard to see the bright side. Typically in February we would be about to restart regular running during the half-term holiday; there would have been some large section of track relayed to celebrate, and thoughts would be turning towards the shape of the Branch Line Gala – always an event to create a buzz around the Railway before the peak summer season.

For many of our readers, faced with another daily commute from bedroom to kitchen table (“sorry I’m late CJ – unexpected congestion in the hall area”) while juggling the demands of home schooling, such thoughts must seem a world away. But Peter Edwards’ photo above is a reminder that railways are durable entities: two locomotives approaching, of great age but still with us, are a reminder of that durability: Stepney and Fenchurch were already old the last time there was a global pandemic. Next year will see Fenchurch reach the grand old age of 150: what better way to celebrate the railway’s emergence into a new operational age than with the overhaul of our most venerable locomotive?

Finally, *The Bluebell Times* has a new email address – bluebelltimes@bluebell-railway.com. The editor would be delighted to receive contributions for future articles, whether photographs or prose, at the above address. Until then – stay safe, look forward to the resumption of services, and remember the durability we have shown so far.

Tom James, Editor

<i>Board Update</i>	2
<i>Visit the Railway Virtually!</i>	3
<i>Happy 100th Birthday to Life Member Irene!</i>	4
<i>News in Brief</i>	5
<i>Cover Star</i>	5
<i>Inter Rail Passes</i>	6
<i>Job Vacancy</i>	6
<i>A Closer Look at ... No. 263</i>	7
<i>A Matter of Deflection</i>	9
<i>A Picture’s Worth</i>	11
<i>Photo Contact Sheets</i>	12
<i>Five Minutes With ... Reuben Smith</i>	14
<i>Museum Morsel</i>	16
<i>On This Day, 12 February</i>	17
<i>Word Search</i>	19
<i>Sixty Memorable Years</i>	20
<i>Tail Lamp</i>	21

Board Update

By Graham Flight, interim Bluebell chairman

I must open my comments by hoping that you are all safe and well and continue to be so until we can all receive the vaccine and begin to replan our lives.

My first month in office as Interim Board Chairman has been something of a dramatic learning curve not least because it is some seven years since I last chaired a Plc board meeting and I now have what is to me at least a new Board of Directors with whom I have not worked before.

I am very pleased to say that at my first full board meeting as Chairman on 28 January all the Directors were extremely helpful, supportive and knowledgeable and my three “advisors to the chair” of Steve Bigg, Roy Watts and Vernon Blackburn proved that it was a good idea to have them alongside me in their support roles.

As you are all aware, the Railway is now closed until further notice under the current Government guidelines for Covid-19 but that does not mean the level of activity on the Board is any less, just redirected.

One immediate effect of the closure has been the cancellation of the post-Christmas SteamLights trains resulting in the refund of a significant amount of fare revenue just at a time when we needed it most to start the year well.

Looking towards the time when we are able to reopen, work continues in all essential departments to ensure that we are ready to operate trains safely for our staff, volunteers and passengers and to maximise our operating revenues for the remainder of 2021. There will be a lot of ground to recover, assisted by the Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage managed through the Bluebell Railway charitable Trust.

In complying with Government guidelines, it is important to note that volunteers may not attend the Railway as they may have done in the past unless they are specifically invited to do so by their manager or Director. We must keep strict controls



on the numbers of people on our premises to help protect everyone.

One exciting project that has not been delayed is the shop refit at Sheffield Park which will be carried out in February giving us a whole new shopping experience to look forward to and to spend our “lockdown savings”. Other Capital Projects are being kept under review for revised funding and start dates.

Having spent over forty years as a Director of first the Extension company and then the Plc and eighteen years as Plc Chairman until 2013 when we opened into East Grinstead, as well as a founding Trustee of the charitable Trust, I feel a mix of apprehension mixed with being pleased to have been asked to act as Interim Chairman but no-one has defined “interim” for me yet!

I hope that I can make a valid contribution to Bluebell in my new role and that we can all make plans to be back “on the rails” as soon as it is safe to do so.

My Best Wishes to you all for 2021.

Visit the Railway Virtually!

By Ruth Rowatt, Marketing and Communications Manager

INTRODUCING OUR NEWEST TOUR

You may have seen our new 360 degree virtual tour of SteamWorks! at Sheffield Park Station and a Christmas-themed one of Horsted Keynes Station. These tours are the product of a Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage project and are just the beginning. We are continuing to improve and add to the tours and have worked with members of the Bluebell Railway Museum to create our [latest tour](#) which we are pleased to announce is now live on the website.

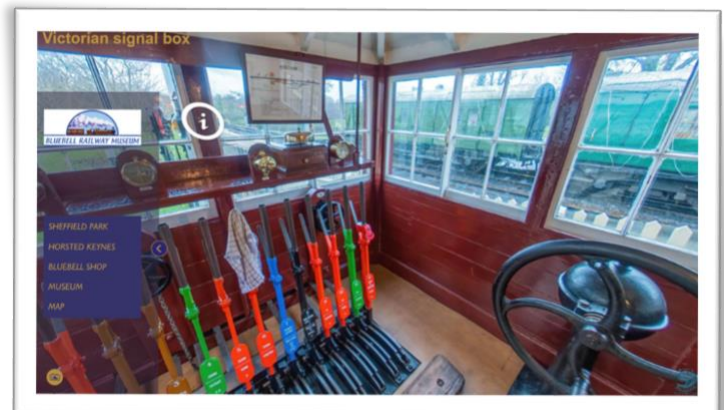
The tour allows you to move from one spot to another around the entire museum and even into the Withyham Signal Box. All tours include information symbols which reveal a label when you click on them and extra goodies like pop out photographs and facts. Don't worry if you struggle reading the labels, they are spoken too.

The tours are best viewed on a computer screen to fully appreciate the fantastic detail included in the shots. By using your mouse or holding your finger and swiping on the screen of a phone or tablet you can swivel around on the spot and look in every direction.

One of the brilliant things about these tours is that they enable all people to access their heritage. It is particularly appropriate right now with the railway closed. Many people are stuck at home missing their visits or looking for ways of making their lives culturally richer. The tours will be a great way for potential visitors to research their visit and also a super tool for outreach activities like talks to groups.

More tours coming soon, including Kingscote Station, booking office and signal box!

[Take a stroll round the museum tour](#)



**HERE
FOR
CULTURE**

Happy 100th Birthday to Life Member Irene!

On Tuesday 19 January, a wonderful surprise was organised for one member. Living in a care home and unable to visit the Railway for a long time, Irene Baker was celebrating her 100th birthday. A great supporter of the Railway over the years, Irene had been missing her “beautiful Bluebell”, so she experienced the closest thing that we could provide – a virtual tour!

Bluebell Railway Preservation Society Chairman Steve Bigg joined Marketing and Communications Manager Ruth Rowatt, Irene and her good friend Alison Dawson on a Zoom call. Ruth then shared her screen with Irene and took her on a tour around Sheffield Park and into the running shed. She was thrilled, referring to herself as Bluebell barmy!

Good friend Alison talked about Irene’s reaction to the surprise.

“She was in tears of joy afterwards and was so happy. It has made her day.”

This is just one example of how this new resource can be used to bring joy to people’s lives.

BRPS Chairman Steve Bigg said: “It was a great pleasure and privilege to be able to share the Zoom call with Bluebell life member Irene Baker to celebrate her 100th birthday. Hearing her reminisce about her many happy memories of visits to the Railway was very special, and it was clearly evident that the Bluebell has been the source of much pleasure to her. It was also good to see her former neighbour and friend Alison Dawson and husband participating in the call.

“It was lovely to see Irene enjoying the memories that the tour brought back to her, and she was clearly very impressed with the more recent developments such as SteamWorks! Seeing Irene’s enjoyment brought home to me just what a good initiative the virtual tours are, as there will be so many viewers who for many varying reasons may not be able to access the Railway and this facility will provide much interest and pleasure.

“I would like to reiterate my thanks to Irene for her many years as a supporter of the Bluebell, and wish her health and happiness for years to come.”

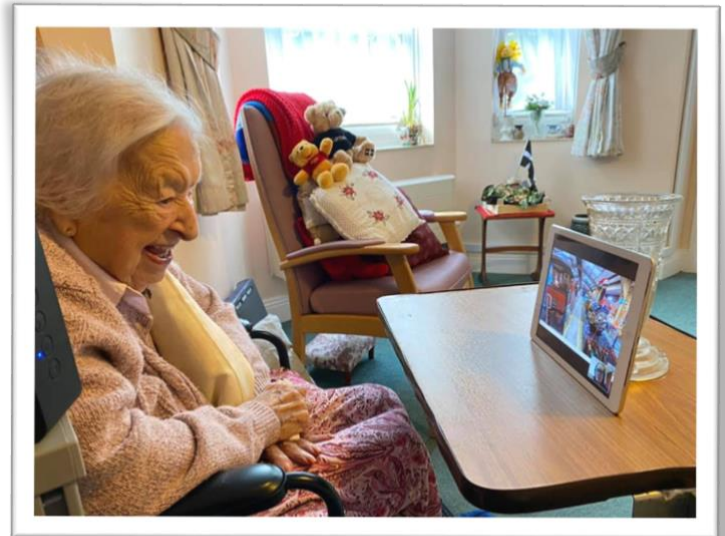
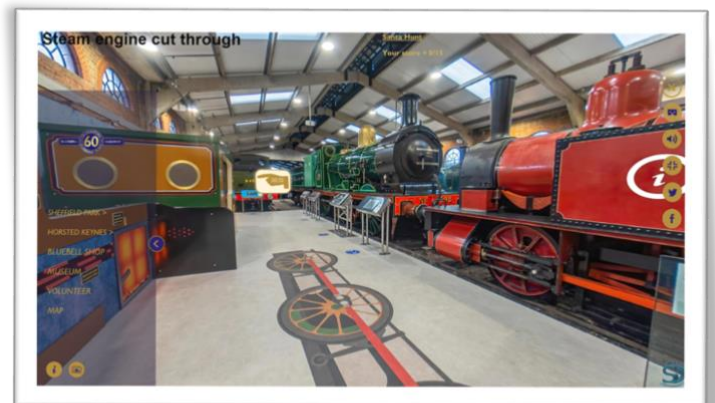


Photo: Alison Dawson



News in Brief

EVENTS UPDATE

A number of changes have been made to the provisional list of events published in the last issue of The Bluebell Times because of the continued uncertainty over opening dates.

The BrickWorks! Adventure event has been moved from April to October. Giants of Steam and the planned beer festivals have been moved to the end of September as these are likely to be high volume visitor events.

Please check the [Railway's website](#) for updated information and confirmation of events. All dates are still subject to change.

MORE WEBCAMS

Approval has been given for eight new webcams along the line in addition to the two which were installed at Sheffield Park station for the 60th anniversary/reopening weekend last August.

The exact positions of the new webcams are still the subject of consultation and will include considerations about heritage aspects. The webcams will allow people to view train

movements and will be operational on running days only.

The money for the new webcams has come from the Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage grant which provided money for specific projects to help the Railway recover from closure.

GRANT APPLICATION

The Railway has applied to the Culture Recovery Fund for a further grant in the second round of applications. If successful, the money will cover the period from April to June.

SHOP REFIT

Contractors will be rebuilding the Sheffield Park shop during February. They will be enhancing the lighting, allowing natural light in from the windows and building a train-themed exciting new inviting shop which will appeal to customers. The shop will be laid out logically and in a commercial fashion to maximise sales.

APPOINTMENTS

Tim Gray has been appointed as locomotive chief clerk and Phil Gain becomes shed foreman. They take up their roles with immediate effect.

Cover Star

By Lance Allen, Bluebell Railway Trust officer and Bluebell Railway data protection officer

I'm involved in a few different charities and one hat I wear is assistant editor of the magazine for PCaSO, a prostate cancer charity. For the new edition I've got one of my Bluebell photos on the front cover.

The magazine is on PCaSO's website and published in hard copy around Sussex, Hampshire and Dorset. It will help to remind folk that we are here.

The photo is S15 No. 847 heading north away from Horsted Keynes under Leamland bridge and was taken on 26 April 2014.



Inter Rail Passes

The Heritage Railway Association runs a scheme whereby Directors, Officers, Managers and regular Working Members can buy a pass which entitles the holder and a guest to free or reduced travel on most heritage railways or entry to certain museums valid until 28/2/2022.

This year it will cost £35 (a special discounted price of £25 applies for those who paid for a pass in 2020) and it should be ordered from me in writing showing your full name with your cheque payable to me R.T.PRICE.

Please note turnaround of orders from HRA can take up to four weeks from your original application.

HOW TO APPLY

Please send a gins by 6ins self addressed and stamped envelope for return of the pass to:

Roger Price

6 Rural Way

Redhill

Surrey

RH1 4BT

Job Vacancy

The Bluebell Railway has the following temporary part-time vacancy (for maternity cover).

COMMERCIAL ASSISTANT

This is a joint position between promoting the railway, organising our special events and supporting the Customer Services and Sales Department.

You will be responsible for helping deliver events on time and on budget, ensuring they are compliant with all the necessary health and safety and legal requirements, as well as taking customer bookings, inputting ticket information onto the system and responding to customer service queries when necessary.

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

The role will require flexible mid-week and weekend working 20 hrs per week.



MORE DETAILS

Please contact Lisa Boyle on 01825 724884 or email: lisa.boyle@bluebell-railway.com for further information.

Closing date: 19 February 2021

A Closer Look at ... No. 263

By Tom James, Locomotive Department

In the reckoning of great Locomotive Superintendents, few seem to consider that Harry Smith Wainwright deserves much merit in any discussions. A common criticism is that he wasn't much of a designer, relying instead on his chief draughtsman – though such a comment could equally be applied to many others, including such undisputed giants as Maunsell and Stanier. Indeed, engineering design is but one of the many responsibilities of a Locomotive Superintendent, and occasions when the chief spent too long directing the detail of design did not always end happily, as the Southern Railway later found. Another criticism often levelled is that his designs were just derivatives of others: the apparent similarity between a Stroudley Terrier and a Wainwright P being held up in support of that view. That two 0-6-0T engines of moderate design weight and tractive effort will almost inevitably end up with similar dimensions is not necessarily a consequence of plagiarism, but perhaps simply a consequence that there are only so many ways you can sensibly adjust dimensions to come out with a locomotive designed for similar duties, while the commonly held view seems to ignore the significant detail differences between the designs – many of which are to the advantage of the Wainwright design.

So perhaps it is time to reassess Wainwright as a locomotive engineer, and to that end we are fortunate in the breadth of his designs that can be studied to this day, several in operation: preservation gives us his principal express passenger, mainline goods, passenger tank and branch / shunting locomotives. In the Stirling O1, we also have a sample of a locomotive rebuilt under Wainwright, a key part of the work of Locomotive Workshops in an era of rapid change being extending the useful working life of designs that had become outdated but not necessarily worn out.



No. 263 at its relaunch into service, 8 July 2012. Photo: Gary Packer

No. 263 was constructed at Ashford, being released to traffic on 16 May 1905. (Interestingly, the Locomotive Register says 1904, and has been corrected at some later date). As built, 263 was one of a handful of locomotives fitted with the straight-sided bunker, all of those so fitted being from the 1905 construction. She finally received a flared bunker at a general overhaul as late as 1959, possibly on account of the original bunker having been damaged in an accident on shed.

In the capital stock list, 263 took the place of a Ramsbottom "Ironclad" 2-4-0, originally constructed in 1876 and condemned on 13 August 1904.

When introduced, 263 was allocated to Slades Green Shed, working mainly on North Kent services, including in the summer down as far as Ramsgate and Dover via Faversham. At the grouping, she was the first of the H class to receive the A prefix number, in December 1923. After the suburban electrification in 1926, she was re-allocated to Bricklayers Arms, followed by a move to Dover by the early 1930s. In 1941, she was transferred again to Nine Elms (ex-LSWR) to replace Western Section engines on loan to the LMS. Around this time the locomotive was involved in a derailment leaving Cannon Street station when it, along with sister engine 1503, was struck by Schools Class No. 903, resulting in the two H class locos ending up derailed and on their side. Damage was evidently not too severe to prevent a return to service.

In BR days, she was shedded at Tonbridge working trains in the area, including the Westerham Branch, before a final move to Three Bridges. Surprisingly late in life (February 1960) she was fitted with Motor Train apparatus, for which purpose a Westinghouse pump was fitted. The end came in 1964 along with her two surviving class mates 31518 and 31551, 31263 being the very last in traffic when she worked on 4 January 1964. At withdrawal, her mileage was 1,849,668 – impressive indeed for a humble tank engine.

After a period in store, she was worked in a goods train through to Robertsbridge where some restoration work was carried out. Thereafter, she moved to the South Eastern Steam Centre at Ashford, where she was periodically steamed. Finally, in 1975, her owners – the H Class Trust – took her to the Bluebell Railway, where she has been ever since. Ownership was transferred to the Bluebell Railway Trust in 2008. On the Bluebell, she has run in traffic between 1976 and 1982 inclusive; between 1991 and 1997; and since 2012. During that period she has added around 60,000 miles to her overall total.

As preserved, 263 carries boiler number 638. This was constructed new in January 1914 and attached to locomotive 395 (a member of the Stirling class O1). Following spells in 391 (class O1), 248 (class O1), back to 1391, 1385 (class O1), 1259 (Wainwright H), 31521 (class H) and 31259 again, it was fitted to 31263 in 1959, at the same overhaul as the locomotive was fitted with a flared bunker. Along with sundry other repairs and renewals, a complete new firebox was fitted in 1933. (It is a curious feature of the boiler record that the clerk

at its first post-nationalisation repair dutifully lists the locomotive number as 31521, after which each repair lists the locomotive number as the old SR numbers, even as late as July 1961 when the boiler is recorded as being repaired while in locomotive 1263).

NO. 263 IN FACTS AND FIGURES

Number	263, later A263, 1263, 31263
Class	H
Wheel arrangement	0-4-4T
Built	1905 at Ashford Works by South Eastern & Chatham Railway
Cylinders	Two, 18 ins diameter x 26 ins stroke
Boiler pressure	160 psi (pounds per square inch)
Tractive Effort	17,360 lbf
Length	32 ft 10 ¾ ins
Weight in working order	54 tons 8 cwt
Driving wheel diameter	5 ft 6 ins
Coal and water capacity	2 tons 5 cwt coal, 1200 gallons water
Valve gear	Stephenson

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. Additional information from the [Locomotives page](#) of the Bluebell Railway website.



No. 263 at Robertsbridge, 23 April 1966, soon after withdrawal from British Railways. By this time the push-pull gear had been removed, though the bracket for supporting the Westinghouse pump is still visible on the smokebox.
Photo: Peter James

A Matter of Deflection

By Tom James, Locomotive Department

The photos of No. 847 running without smoke deflectors (BT15) promoted a reader to ask what they were for, how they worked and whether it made a difference to run without them. The editor takes up the challenge of providing an answer ...

When a locomotive is running quickly, the blunt face of the smokebox tends to throw the air out sideways. This has the effect of causing a local area of low pressure on either side of the smokebox immediately behind the front of the loco, about level with the chimney.

On Victorian locomotives, that was never much of a concern, since they had relatively tall chimneys that carried the exhaust smoke and steam well clear. However, as locomotives got bigger, to fit within the loading gauge the chimneys got progressively shorter. In addition, improvements in valve gear tended to give a softer exhaust that emerged at lower speed. The combination of those two things led to problems in which the exhaust tended to get drawn down into the low pressure area either side of the smokebox, which obscured the view from the footplate.

The fascinating letter reproduced here shows that this was already becoming a problem by the early years of the twentieth century:

"I can assure you that this nuisance is general amongst enginemen all over the country, and more especially among men who are employed on high-pitched boiler engines where the steam leaves the boiler top such as short distance above the boiler top.

Engines working the trains in both the Shrewsbury and Grantham disasters [in 1907 and 1906 respectively – Ed.] were both high boiler engines, and in each case would be working with a short cut-off under conditions most likely for the steam to be dropping down and obscuring the driver's bearing with the consequence that the driver is misled – as in the above cases – with disastrous consequences."

Thus from the early years of the twentieth century, the railway companies started experiments to try to avoid that problem, and eventually all except the GWR came up with some variant of smoke deflectors. Maunsell on the SR was among the first to do so. All of Maunsell's

A Letter to Dugald Drummond

The son of the writer of this letter, Mr A. J. Hawkins, of Feltham, is 75 years of age. The letter is undated, but we publish it in full as an example of how the older generation of Locomotivemen approached their job.—Ed.

"D. Drummond, Esq.,

"I beg to extend to you my gratitude for the acknowledgement of my correspondence to you, which stated that an idea had occurred to me, whereby the exhaust steam which drops down into the enginemen's vision line, when running could be prevented.

"I admit that my idea is a crude one, but I feel sure that if you bring your mechanical skill and science to bear upon it, success is certain.

"I beg respectfully to bring before your notice, in the following remarks, the true facts of the situation, and I do so strictly in confidence as an engineman in your employ, hoping that you will accept it in the spirit in which it is written.

"I can assure you that this nuisance is general among enginemen all over the country, and more especially among men who are employed on high pitched boiler engines, where the steam leaves the chimney top such a short distance above the boiler.

"Engines working the trains in the Grantham and Shrewsbury disasters were both high boiler engines, and in each case would be running with a short cut-off under conditions most likely for the steam to be dropping down and obscuring the driver's bearing, with the consequence that the driver is misled—as in the above cases—with disastrous results.

"I know that my remarks are opening up a very important question—hence my desire to hand you this paper personally. This will make sure that it does not fall into any other hands but yours. I have such confidence that the idea will prove a success, that I certainly think it should be protected before any experiments are made. This is my reason for bringing it before your notice. I have not mentioned my idea to anyone before I hand this paper to you—which will give you the best explanation I can in writing.

"By careful observation, I find that when running—and more especially when running at a high speed with a short cut-off—that immediately behind the top of the chimney, a vortex in the atmosphere takes place, and the exhaust steam passes back over the back part of the chimney-top into this vortex, which draws the steam down into the trail of the chimney as the

atmosphere fills in after it. Sometimes it will shelter close down to the boiler, when the dome comes along and divides it, and which throws it directly to the cab windows, where it strikes the front of the weather board and obscures the driver's and fireman's line of vision. Drivers have sometimes to put their heads half-way down the hand rail to obtain a glimpse of the signals underneath the steam. At other times it is imperative to shut off steam altogether to get a glimpse. Even the exhaust steam from the vacuum ejector will destroy the line of vision, at times, and the blower must be used to try to clear the chimney-top of steam.

"It has occurred to me, that to dispense with this nuisance, a column of air generated by the velocity of the engine, can be conducted in an enclosed passage directed on a suitable plane from the front of the chimney, to proceed in an upward direction and to come directly under the exhaust, as it leaves the back half of the chimney. I consider that if this can be done, the whole of the loose vapour that causes the exhaust nuisance, would be lifted above the disturbed currents in the atmosphere caused by the passage of the chimney, to clear the line of vision of the men on the footplate.

"I am satisfied, that if this vapour can be lifted only two inches, it will be sufficient to throw it out of all the attractions which draw it downwards; and should the current of air generated by the velocity of the engine when running, be not sufficient to remove the nuisance, I see nothing to prevent a fan from being fitted to one of the bogie axles, to create a blast of air for the purpose. However, I feel certain, that a current can be gained by the speed of the engine sufficient for its removal.

"I see nothing to prevent all chimneys at present being fitted at very little expense, and all new chimneys, I should imagine, could have the necessary arrangements cast in one. My idea is that an opening be designed in the front of the chimney, with an air passage going back on each side to the back, and leading up under the exhaust steam as it leaves the chimney.

"Thanking you for granting me the privilege of expressing to you my ideas on this subject.

"I beg to remain, Yours obediently,

" J. A. HAWKINS,

" Engineman, Ermouth Junction. Exeter."

A letter in 'The Locomotive Express', November 1949

Credit: A Westlake / [SWC](#)

larger locomotives were originally built without deflectors but had them fitted at various points through the 1930s. They work by smoothing the airflow along the boiler and directing it to provide an updraft behind the chimney lifting the smoke and steam. How much of that was science and how much trial and error



No. 847 without smoke deflectors. Photo: Jon Bowers



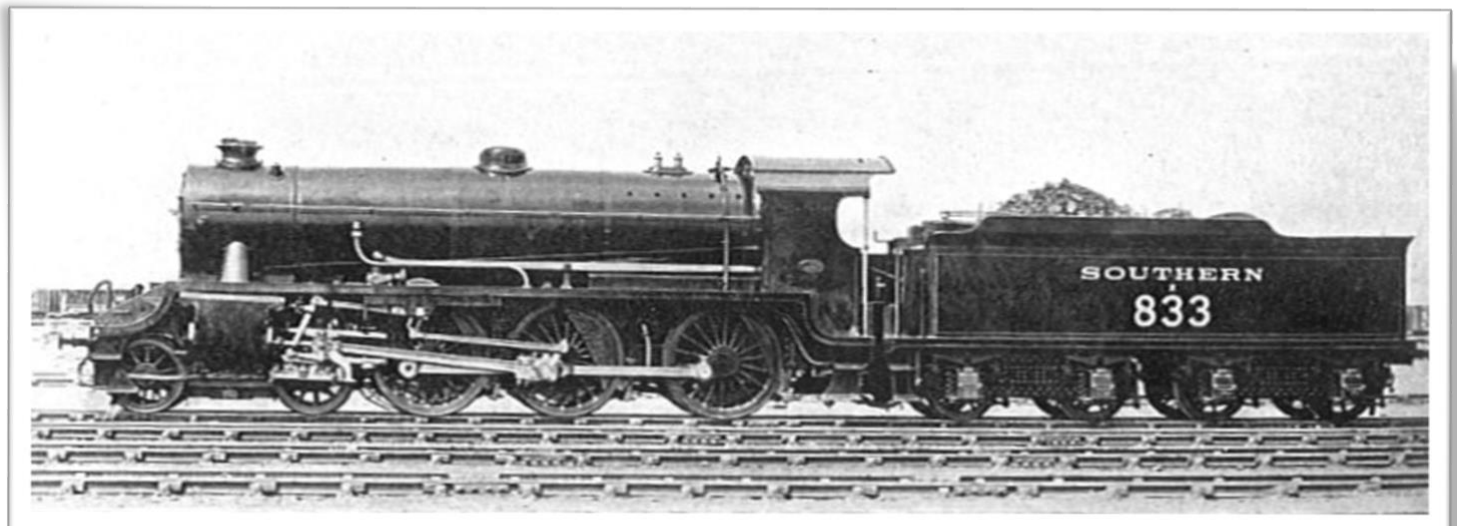
The classic Maunsell front end look. No. 847 on a connecting service for an incoming charter, 2 October 2014. Photo: Derek Hayward

is an interesting point – certainly Gresley, when designing the front of the experimental “Hush-hush” locomotive and later P2 and A4 classes, used wind tunnel models, but I don’t think that was common practice, other designers relying more on trial and error and operational experience.

On the Bluebell, we don’t run at very high speeds, so the low pressure area formed is minimal – it would be more pronounced at higher speeds. Additionally,

because we run at low speed we also tend to run with a longer cut-off, which gives a sharper blast and throws the exhaust higher. The result of those two is that we don’t tend to get significant issues with the smoke drifting down and obscuring the view.

Maunsell S15 No. 833 as originally built, without smoke deflectors. Source: Wikipedia



A Picture's Worth

By John Petley

It's often said that "a picture is worth a thousand words" and in this feature one of the Bluebell Railway's authorised photographers chooses one of their pictures and explains how they achieved the shot. This time, it's John Petley and his photo of a Standard Tank Class 4 and a family link to Ashford depot.



My picture features a loco which has not steamed at the Bluebell for some 30 years – Standard Tank No. 80064. It was taken in the cutting between Freshfield and Holywell on 19 June 1988.

I am particularly fond of this picture for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is not a particularly common location for photos as the sun only rises high enough in the summer months for the track to be free of shadows and on such occasions, the temperature is often too high for the loco to be

emitting any exhaust, even though it will be working at this point.

More importantly, this picture epitomises the last days of Sussex branch line steam. Not only did Standard 4MT Tanks work many of the final trains on the Bluebell line but also the combination of a standard tank and Bulleid stock was a very familiar sight in the last days of services over what would have been my local line for much of the past 40

years had it still been open – the late lamented Cuckoo Line from Polegate to Eridge.

The use of black and white helps to create the impression that the picture could have been taken in the late 1950s – indeed, there are hardly any giveaways to indicate that it is a preservation-era image.

I discovered another reason for having a soft spot for 80064 quite recently. Although never a Central Division engine, it was allocated to Ashford in 1960-61, so my late grandfather, who was a driver at that depot, would probably have driven it. It is to Grandad that I owe my love of steam trains. When I was a small child, he once took me up onto the footplate. I was only two or three years old at the time and although I have no idea which engine he was driving, this happened during the period

when 80064 was an Ashford engine, so who knows?

With sister loco 80151 back in service, once the Railway reopens, I will look forward to taking more pictures that have this same "end of Sussex branch line steam" atmosphere.

Editor's note: members of the public should stick to public footpaths, public areas and our stations when photographing trains. Lineside access is granted only to people with a valid permit who have completed one of our training courses including safety regulations. Details of the accreditation course are at https://www.bluebell-railway.com/whats_on/lineside-photography-permit/

Photo Contact Sheets

By Paul Furlong

Bluebell Railway Member Paul Furlong discovered these photographs at a car boot sale some years ago. He believes they probably date from the 1960s – can any of our readers provide any more details? Send suggestions to the editor at bluebelltimes@bluebell-railway.com





Five Minutes With ... Reuben Smith

Name

Reuben Smith

Role

My main role at the Railway is Fireman and Safety Representative for the Firemen

How long have you been involved with the Bluebell Railway?

18 years

How did you first become involved?

I was on a visit to the Railway with my mum when we saw a group of children the same age as myself working in the yard. After we had gone for a ride, my mum asked one of the adults supervising them what they were doing. She was told they were the gF Club and that they met once a month to work in the yard with the engines, in the signal boxes and on the trains in the buffet car. I was signed up straight away and was down the next month getting covered in oil and paraffin cleaning Blackmoor Vale!

What is your professional career?

Train driver on the mainline

What does your Bluebell Railway job involve?

There's plenty of things I have to do but the main jobs is to control the boiler in such a way that it remains safe and that the driver has enough steam to operate the engine and that it stays quiet (not wasting the steam through the safety valves) when he doesn't need as much. I also as fireman need to assist the driver in keeping a good lookout when not engaged in firing the engine. That in itself is a skill because on some corners the driver won't be able to see round the boiler so I will have to stop firing and keep a lookout for them which means I need to know the route and be able tell which way the engine is turning without necessarily looking out the window first.

How often do you volunteer at the Railway?

I normally aim for 3 – 4 days a month



Ready to go off shed. Photo: Nick Talbot

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

I'm a trainee signaller and also a gF Club leader

Do you have a nickname? If so, what is it and how did it come about?

I know of a couple but they definitely couldn't be printed here!

What's the best part of your job?

Watching the seasons change, the friendships I've made and training cleaners up to become our future firemen

What's the worst part of your job?

Coming down the line tender first on an open-backed engine in the cold, rain and snow

What is your earliest train memory?

Sitting on the bonnet of my dad's car watching the Slammers and 319s passing through Redhill station. Also watching the class 47s on the cross country trains running round their Mk2s to carry onto Brighton.

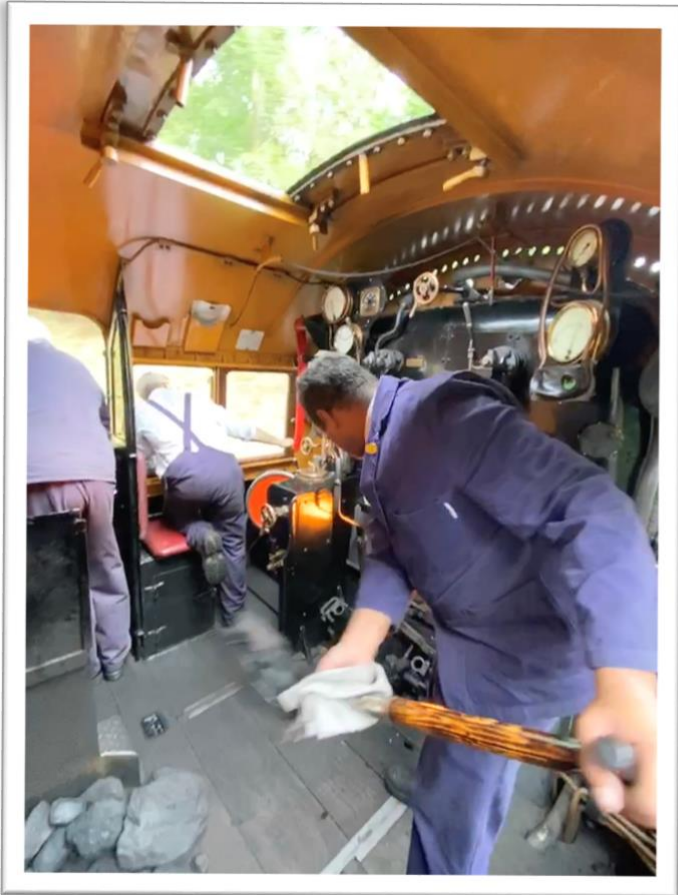


Photo: Lewis Kenworthy

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

I'm currently building a large OO gauge model railway based on a preserved LB&SCR branch line in my loft with the assistance of another loco dept member and I also have several O gauge models I run on a garden railway with several other Bluebell members

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

There's far so many things I can choose from, including many I couldn't write down, but if I had to choose one great moment it would be when a passenger proposed to his girlfriend on the footplate and she said yes!

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

Suddenly having lots of free time on my hands so I had no excuse not to do the redecorating at home that I'd been putting off

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

I came down as part of a small cleaning gang to get 65 and 80151 looking their absolute best for the opening weekend

Anything else you want to tell us?

I think I've taken up enough of your time already

BLUEBELL BITES

Early morning prep or late evening trip down the line?

Evening trips are magical

Sitting on the loco lobby balcony or in Bessemer Arms?

You can't beat the lobby balcony on a summer's evening

Driver's seat on an EMU or the fireman's seat on Camelot?

Fireman's seat of 30541 because it's far superior

Token exchange: standing on the platform or leaning out of the cab?

Either

Thomas the Tank Engine or Gordon the Big Engine

Thomas

Tea or coffee?

Yorkshire's finest tea with a dash of milk



On No. 592 at King's Cross for a film contract Photo: Nick Hair

Museum Morsel

Words and photos by Tony Hillman, assistant museum curator

NEW TURNTABLE INSTALLED

A turntable has been installed at Sheffield Park ... but it's not big enough to turn a Bulleid Pacific even in OO gauge.

For some time the shipping cabinet in the Museum has displayed three Southern Railway shipping bookmarks. On one side these bookmarks show the Newhaven daytime sailings and on the other the night-time sailings.

We can now display both sides of these bookmarks because a turntable has been installed. Rotating slowly, it allows time for visitors to view both sides.

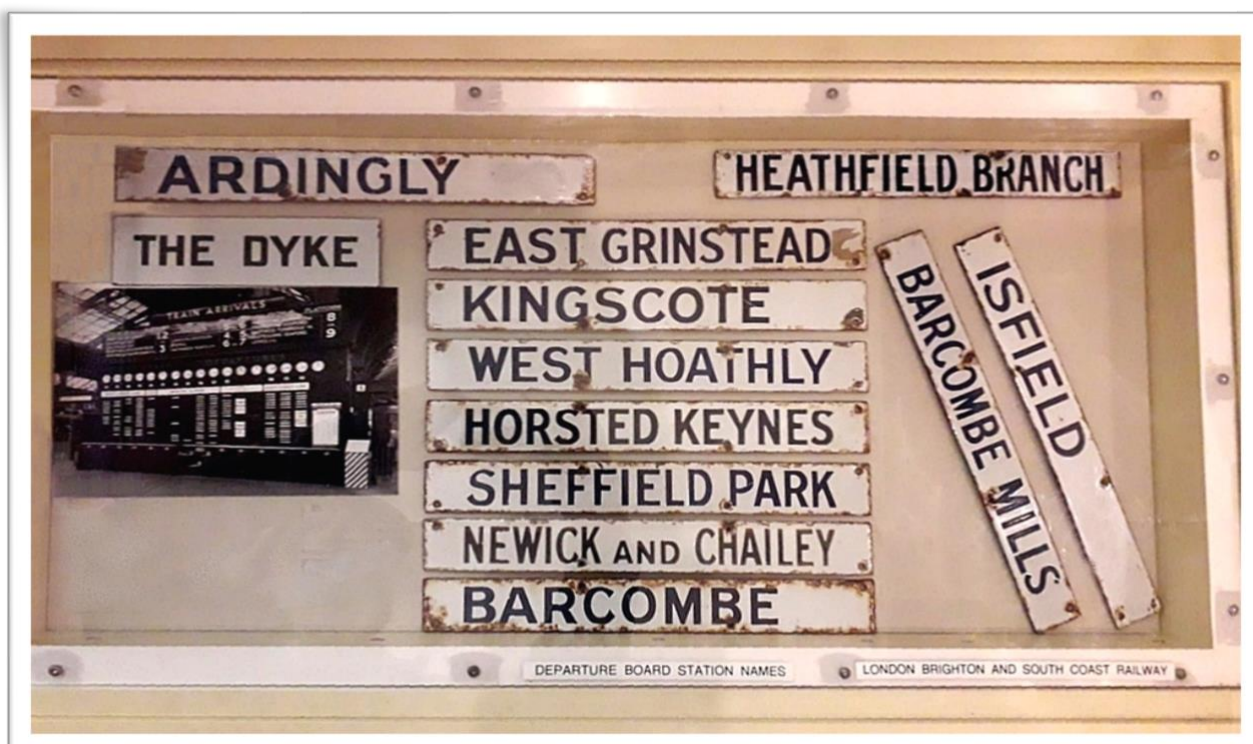
BRIGHTON INDICATOR BOARD ENAMEL PLATES

In two recent auctions Bluebell line enamel plates from the Brighton indicator board have been on sale. The plates for Sheffield Park and Horsted Keynes are already on display in the Museum as our photograph shows.

Several people got in touch to advise us about these plates being on sale. Even though we already have the plates, we thank them for letting us know.

If you ever see anything offered in auctions or on eBay that may be appropriate for the Museum, please do get in touch. It is much better to be told of something we already know about than not be told about something we have missed.

Please email curator@bluebell-railway-museum.co.uk



On This Day, 12 February

By Tony Hillman, assistant museum curator

Two pictures from the Bluebell Photographic Archive taken on 12 February. Thanks to John Sharp, Martin Elms, John Creed and Roger Merry-Price for finding the pictures and providing the notes.



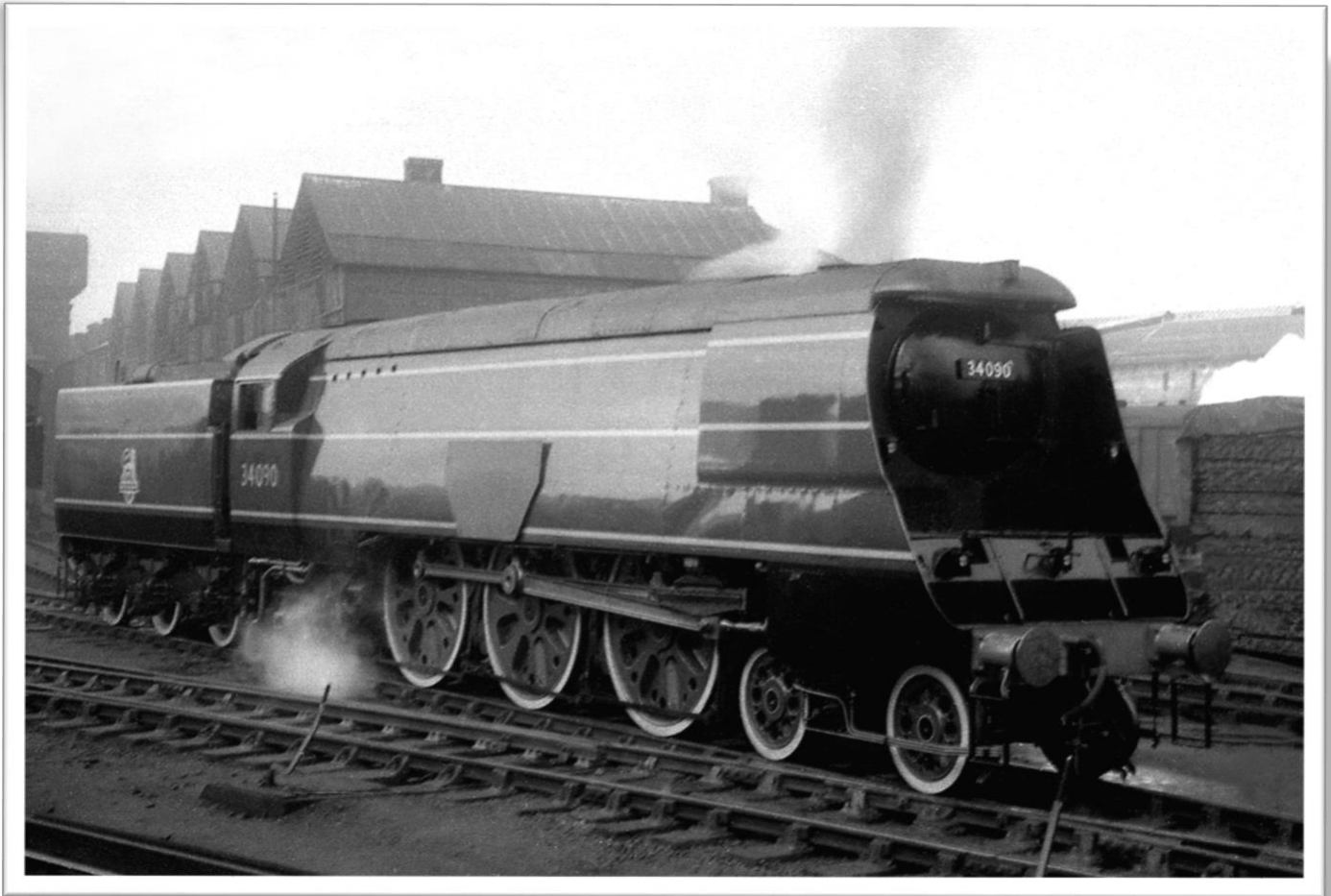
An almost timeless view of the viaduct over the River Medina at Newport, Isle of Wight. Newport station is to the right, and the 11.31 Cowes to Ryde Esplanade service is just pulling away towards Wootton, and what is now the Isle of Wight Steam Railway. The locomotive is Adams O2 class W28 *Ashley*, built in July 1890. The train will not complete its usual journey to Ryde Pier Head, as the line beyond Esplanade was closed for rebuilding of the pier. It was scheduled to arrive at Esplanade at 12.11 and return to Cowes at 12.21. But time is in fact rapidly running out for this scene, as the date is 12 February 1966: in nine days' time the passenger service here will be withdrawn, and in April the line will be closed completely.

Close observation of the bridge deck reveals it is only of single line width, though the brick piers have an empty space beyond for a second track. This formerly carried the line to Merstone, and thence Sandown or Ventnor West, which finally closed in 1956. Later, the previous bridge was renewed with the span seen here, but only the northern side carrying the Ryde line was retained. Though not a "swing bridge" in the proper sense of the term, the central span could be unbolted and slid aside to allow river vessels with tall rigging to pass.

On the right we see another example of the nationalised transport industry: a barge labelled, rather curiously, "British Road Services". This somewhat less successful arm of the British Transport Commission passed through the guises of the National Freight Corporation (1969) and National Freight Company (1980) before re-privatisation as the National Freight Consortium in 1982. Loyal to its initials, it later became "NFC plc", but is now defunct.

Photo: Roger Merry-Price

We would like to thank Roger Silsbury of the Isle of Wight Steam Railway for his help with information for this caption.



Is it a West Country? Is it a Battle of Britain? Bulleid Light Pacific 34090 stands in the Works Yard at Brighton on 12 February 1949, having just been turned out of the shops. A total of 110 of this class were built, all but five at Brighton, between May 1945 and January 1951, of which 66 were given names of places in the West Country, while 43 were named after senior figures or RAF units involved in the Battle of Britain.

The odd one out was 34090, seen here with the nameplates covered by a wooden board prior to its official naming three days later at Waterloo. The naming ceremony was carried out by Sir Eustace Missenden, by then chairman of the Railways Executive of the British Transport Commission. The full name of the locomotive was revealed as "Sir Eustace Missenden, Southern Railway", with the smaller scroll beneath confirming it was a member of the Battle of Britain class. It also had the RAF light blue background paint on the nameplates as opposed to the red used on the West Country engines.

The full name was a tribute both to Sir Eustace, who had been the last General Manager of the Southern Railway from a few days after the start of the war in 1939, and to the 67,000 men, women and boys of the SR who had served as "loyal and energetic officers, with the unfailing endeavours of courageous staff". It was they who had kept the system in operation through the Blitz, Dunkirk and other emergencies, and in the massive and secret preparations for Operation Overlord, the air- and sea-borne Allied invasion of mainland Europe which began on D-Day. The crest depicted on the locomotive was that of the Southern Railway, rather than the Missenden family coat-of-arms.

Another unusual feature of 34090 was the use of malachite green on the cast centres of the loco and tender wheels, and yellow on the wheel rims, as opposed to the usual black applied to its classmates. Also, as British Railways was only just over a year old by then, the "Lion and Wheel" emblems on the tender sides were hand-painted by Brighton Works craftsmen. This loco travelled close to three-quarters of a million miles during its 18-year lifetime, being modified in August 1960 to reduce both coal consumption and maintenance costs, and remaining in service to the very end of Southern steam in July 1967.

Photo: Joe Kent

Word Search

Bluebell Railway Preservation Society trustee Rob Hayward has alerted us to the fact there are a couple of noticeable 60th anniversaries to be celebrated in 2021 that are Bluebell related.

In particular:

- ➔ On 10 June 1961, the Hawkhurst line closed. The locomotives used on the last train were 31592 and 31065.
- ➔ On 28 October 1961, the Westerham line closed. 31263 was a regular locomotive used on the line (but not on the last day) along with 31323, 31592 and 31065.

So our puzzle this month is all about stations on the two branch lines.

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

C	J	W	C	Y	T	M	H	F	T	X	E	B	L	O	CRANBROOK GOUDHURST HAWKHURST TENTERDEN WESTERHAM BRASTED CHEVENING HALT DUNTON GREEN
I	D	W	Z	R	L	E	C	R	J	B	R	X	W	U	
E	N	F	X	D	A	K	H	D	X	D	N	Y	P	O	
C	G	G	G	U	H	N	U	B	L	E	C	V	T	H	
B	P	D	Z	M	X	N	B	K	J	H	N	W	O	D	
K	Y	X	A	E	T	R	F	R	E	D	X	W	O	C	
T	T	H	J	O	G	V	D	V	O	Q	R	E	X	T	
S	E	G	N	T	P	O	E	Y	V	O	N	S	H	S	
R	N	P	A	K	W	N	E	F	D	S	K	T	F	R	
U	T	G	P	U	I	H	M	C	W	B	J	E	X	U	
H	E	P	R	N	C	R	S	X	J	U	P	R	O	H	
K	R	Y	G	E	Q	N	W	G	I	Y	F	H	W	D	
W	D	A	K	M	E	J	C	D	Q	Q	P	A	O	U	
A	E	M	N	L	S	N	N	D	B	F	K	M	P	O	
H	N	G	L	I	N	I	D	E	T	S	A	R	B	G	

SOLUTION TO WORD SEARCH IN ISSUE 16

H	C	E	I	M	Y	K	R	U	I	X	A	Y	N	M	➔ Brick ➔ Works ➔ Adventure ➔ Beer ➔ Festivals ➔ Open ➔ Air ➔ Live ➔ Music ➔ Diesel ➔ Gala
R	Y	U	K	W	D	W	G	B	N	J	C	I	H	H	
I	K	W	N	F	O	I	F	O	Y	O	M	D	Y	O	
A	B	A	J	R	X	B	E	T	J	O	U	Z	F	E	
Y	L	D	K	X	R	R	P	S	C	N	S	Q	X	G	
V	F	S	L	A	V	I	T	S	E	F	I	K	Y	O	
J	M	P	Y	X	C	C	X	P	Z	L	C	V	R	Y	
L	E	Z	T	H	K	K	O	G	L	X	E	C	E	A	
Z	X	M	R	R	T	N	P	I	V	J	G	V	E	K	
S	C	S	E	C	Z	U	T	K	L	N	F	A	B	L	
N	W	B	B	D	M	O	W	Q	G	B	X	D	J	I	
H	I	V	I	K	D	G	N	B	Z	K	O	E	L	Y	
E	R	U	T	N	E	V	D	A	C	V	K	W	R	E	
S	O	Z	B	O	G	K	W	J	G	A	L	A	Z	C	
W	R	B	H	G	V	S	B	W	N	X	G	W	L	Z	

Sixty Memorable Years

By John Deane, Bluebell Railway volunteer

Bluebell Times Reader John Deane sent us this poem to mark the Railway's sixty years of preservation

They saved our dear Railway, pre-Beeching's cut-backs.

Nostalgia superior, no matter the facts.

Rail-knights drawn together, from far and from near.

Fine lads and fine lasses, with hope and no fear.

They worked for the moment, large snags to surmount.

Then looked to the future, their dreams paramount.

Most problems they toppled, obstructions passed round

Their trust ever present, their efforts well found.

Now look to the present, the Bluebell today.

Great energy lauded, success on display.

Warm dining coaches, with elegant staff.

Each filled with keen diners, to eat and to quaff.

Old puffers and buffers; fine drivers and guards.

Smart coaches and wagons, plus locos worked hard.

A goods yard and shunting, tall signals and tickets;

Brass gas lamps, a bookstall, stout fences and wickets.

Three red fire buckets, tall watering crane.

Bright diamond crossings, rods taking the strain.

High bridges and cuttings, long signalling wires.

A tunnel, a viaduct – and all of it ours!

Well-loved wayside stations, a joy to behold.

With neat platform awnings of style very old.

A cosy warm buffet, a station clock grand.

Some helpful old porters, so platforms well manned.

Six decades of effort, such drive has pressed on;

As each generation has come and then gone.

Tough projects successful, though not without fears.

Hard work and achievement, shine over the years.

So thus we remember their triumphs now past.

The souls who gave freely, so much, to the last.

Our thanks should re-echo, not once but oft times.

Be broadcast so loudly, like Westminster chimes!

John Deane November 2020



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 12 March 2021 from bluebell-railway.com/bluebell-times

If you have any comments or feedback about this issue or suggestions for future articles or features, contact The Bluebell Times editor

*Tom James
bluebelltimes@bluebell-railway.com*

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](http://www.bluebell-railway.com) or follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/bluebellrailway), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/bluebellrailway) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/bluebellrailway).

Contributors to this issue

- ➔ Lance Allen
- ➔ Steve Bigg
- ➔ Jon Bowers
- ➔ Paul Bromley
- ➔ John Creed
- ➔ Alison Dawson
- ➔ John Deane
- ➔ Peter Edwards
- ➔ Martin Elms
- ➔ Graham Flight
- ➔ Paul Furlong
- ➔ Nick Hair
- ➔ Derek Hayward
- ➔ Tony Hillman
- ➔ Peter James
- ➔ Tom James
- ➔ Joe Kent
- ➔ Lewis Kenworth
- ➔ Roger Merry-Price
- ➔ Gary Packer
- ➔ John Petley
- ➔ Michael Philpott
- ➔ Roger Price
- ➔ Ruth Rowatt
- ➔ John Sharp
- ➔ Reuben Smith
- ➔ A Westlake