



*The Pioneer Photo: David Cable*

# The Bluebell Times

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

July 2021

## IN THIS ISSUE

It is a cliché that a business' most important asset is its staff. As a cliché it is nonetheless rooted in truth, and is every bit as true for an organisation such as the Bluebell that is reliant on volunteers for its continued existence. Having large numbers of volunteers comes with its own challenges: the Railway is a small or medium enterprise financially, but has a staff more typical of an organisation perhaps twenty or more times larger.

Yet for such a key asset, how much do we really know about what makes our volunteers – and potential new volunteers – tick? Are we at risk of not moving on from the 1960s? To tackle those questions, Graham Aitken has been appointed to a new role of Volunteering Co-ordinator. On page 4 of this issue, Graham explains his new role and the challenges of ensuring that the volunteer ethos and contribution to the Railway continues for decades to come.

This issue also carries a report on the arrival of 'Crompton' diesel D6570. Acting locomotive director Bob Pamment explains the rationale for the arrival of the locomotive, which is owned by the same group of locomotive department volunteers that also owns the class 09 shunter. It's a striking thought that the loco – which entered service almost exactly sixty years ago – is older now than No. 323 'Bluebell' was when the Bluebell Railway started running. As always, let us know your thoughts by writing to the editor at [bluebelltimes@bluebell-railway.com](mailto:bluebelltimes@bluebell-railway.com)

Tom James, Editor

<i>60+1 Event Update</i> .....	2
<i>Volunteering Update</i> .....	4
<i>Along the Commercial Road</i> ....	6
<i>News in Brief</i> .....	6
<i>Vacancies – Bluebell Railway Trust</i> .....	7
<i>Diesel Developments</i> .....	8
<i>D6570 'Ashford'</i> .....	9
<i>Around and About the Workshops</i> .....	10
<i>Walking the Bluebell Line 1959 – Part 1</i> .....	12
<i>On This Day, 9 July</i> .....	15
<i>What's On</i> .....	19
<i>Tail Lamp</i> .....	20

# 60+1 Event Update

By Robert Hayward, chairman of the Diamond Anniversary steering group & Trustee of the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society

It was back in 2017 that we started planning the several 60th 'diamond' anniversaries associated with the Bluebell Railway. As we approach the celebration of the running of the first train 60+1 years ago in 1960 on 6- 8 August, it's good to look back to see what we have done to mark these special milestones.

The first anniversary to commemorate was the closure of the Lewes to East Grinstead line by British Railways in 1958. We did that in the Spring of 2018 by adopting the 'Sulky Service' timetable of four roundtrips per day as operated by British Railways in the lead-up to closure. However, what seemed 'sulky' in 1958 proved to be popular in 2018 as it was a more intensive service than Bluebell would normally have put on during the Spring season.

The re-enactment of the last train on 16 March 2018 allowed us to commemorate that occasion in style. We even had the train departing from Sheffield Park towards Lewes and then arriving back from the Lewes direction for the first time since 1958. Of course, it was a cheat, because the train was taken as far south as it could and then was brought back into the station! Importantly, there were several people on that re-enacted last train who had been on the last train 60 years earlier.

For that occasion, the Railway received a lot of positive publicity in the local and national media, including BBC South East TV news and local radio who spent the afternoon with us. Also, during that day, local schoolchildren had taken the opportunity to experience 1950s' train travel; many hadn't travelled in a train before. The result of that was the Railway received a huge number of lovely pictures and written work produced by the children who were clearly inspired by their visit. There were many reproduced mementos being sold in the shop; mugs, fridge magnets, badges and clothing.



In 2019, there was another important diamond anniversary to celebrate because it was the 60th anniversary of the formation of the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society.

To mark this important milestone, there was a celebratory dinner held at Meridian Hall in East Grinstead on Friday 15 March (this was the same date that 60 years earlier the Society had been formed). That was a lovely occasion, and we were honoured to have Sir Peter Hendy, chairman of Network Rail, as guest speaker who praised the work of the Society and Railway. The venue was kindly sponsored by East Grinstead Town Council and the then Mayor of East Grinstead, Cllr Rex Whittaker, was also an honoured guest. We enjoyed a 'Pullman style' menu using Bluebell's own catering team. Some of the diners were so impressed with the level of service they had enjoyed that enquiries about whether Bluebell's catering team could be booked for other functions!

On 7 August 2020 was the 60th anniversary of the Bluebell Railway operating steam-hauled timetabled passenger trains. We had planned to celebrate with a large three-day event and operate the most intensive train service possible, along with a lot of other activities at all stations. That wasn't possible because the Covid pandemic restrictions imposed a closure of the Railway for an unknown period.

Swift thinking was needed, and our plans had to evolve. The Railway was closed and in the absence of being able to run trains or any finance, we ran a virtual event online instead. We have much to be proud about our 60 years of operation and we

wanted to share that with our members, our supporters and anyone who we could interest in our story. We did this with a 60-day online countdown via social media linked with a huge amount of archive video plus specially produced material and made available to those that were confined to their homes during lockdown. This took a lot of effort by many people to achieve to make it a success. I particularly liked the [stop motion 'Steaming through 60'](#) and the [model railway videos](#), as well as the reopening video '[Steam returns to Bluebell Railway](#)'. If you missed them, then they can still be found on YouTube and remain an important legacy of what Bluebell has achieved and how it continues to inspire.

When Government restrictions were eased, we grasped the opportunity to steam through 60 on 7 August because that coincidentally was the day the Railway was able to reopen. It wasn't exactly how we had planned to celebrate but we had two good reasons to do so that day. Running trains on our 60th anniversary, which is what we all really wanted to do albeit with a grander event, and reopening to the public following lockdown.

We were overwhelmed by the support of the media – both national and local TV as well as radio. Also, our many well-known celebrity friends and other heritage railways sent us video birthday messages of congratulations for which we were very grateful. It was a very memorable day.

Looking forward a couple of weeks, on 6, 7 and 8 August 2021 we hold our belated [diamond anniversary three-day long weekend of festivities](#) to celebrate 60+1 years of the Bluebell Railway. The concept we're still working on is to showcase to family and enthusiast visitors all the massive achievements of the Bluebell Railway since 1960 and the work that goes on behind the scenes, particularly the craft skills and the way in which our staff and volunteers make the Railway what it is – more than just a ride on a train through the beautiful Sussex countryside.

It'll be a packed weekend of displays, activities, music, festivities and, of course, all our available steam engines operating an intensive service along the line and activities at Sheffield Park,

Kingscote, East Grinstead and at Horsted Keynes stations.

At Horsted Keynes, our largest station and where we have most room to hold our larger events, there will be a festival atmosphere and a place to enjoy good food and live bands playing classics from across the last six decades in the events field. On Saturday we have steam services late into the evening and entertainment from local bands. Kids Kingdom will provide fun and games suitable for all ages. For the big kids, brake van rides and diesel driving taster experiences are planned, for example.

Also, access will be available to areas across the Railway normally restricted, including our carriage and wagon sheds, locomotive works and running sheds with guided tours and presentations. Visit the S&T department display at Horsted Keynes and see the work that they do.

Undoubtedly the highlight of the weekend festivities will be on Sunday afternoon for the locomotive cavalcade of all our working engines at Horsted Keynes as has been the custom for our decadian anniversaries. A truly spectacular event.

Do please put the dates in your diaries and tell your friends about the event; we look forward to seeing you in August, whether as a visitor or helping out as a volunteer to make the three-day event a success.

Further [information and a selection of ticket types](#) are available on the Bluebell website.

The planning for these events raised the possibility of other ways to celebrate 60 years of the Railway based on ideas submitted that we were not able to take forward because of practicality and/or financial reality. There were many suggestions to hire in locomotives from other lines, but the celebrations were always about the achievements of the Bluebell Railway, and we wanted to showcase our achievements. However, in 2018 we did try to hire in a BR Class 4 tank locomotive and run it as 80154, the locomotive that was used on the last train from East Grinstead, but none were available. We did display the original number plate in the museum whilst it was on loan to us so the historic connection was there.



Another idea was a “If the line had remained open” event using the various types of traction that would probably have been used. This could have included haulage by Class 73, Class 33, 4VEP, a Hastings unit, a Class 205/207 ‘Thumper’ unit and a Class 170 diesel unit as still used on the Uckfield line! We also had suggestions about running steam-hauled trains to East Croydon or a London terminus using our own rolling stock, or from one of the mainline operators. However, Network Rail’s major works on the line north of East Grinstead and the imposition of weight restrictions on their viaducts prevented that. Cost was also another factor!

## Volunteering Update

By Graham Aitken, volunteer co-ordinator

Since the creation of the Bluebell Railway in 1958, over 62 years ago, when a group of individuals successfully campaigned to preserve the recently closed railway line between Lewes and East Grinstead, two things have remained constant. Namely the support of members and the actions of volunteers. Without the latter, there simply would not be a Bluebell Railway. I have every reason to believe that will still be the case long into the future.

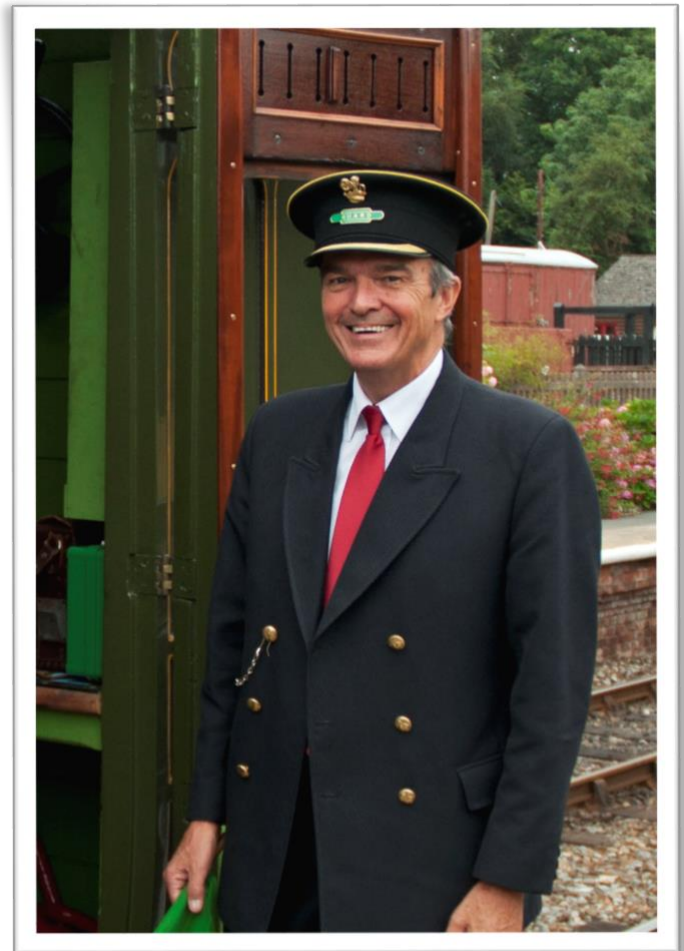
Looking back to our beginnings, I am sure you will agree that the world of 1958 was quite different from that of 2021, whether better or worse is for you to decide. Clearly how we encouraged and treated volunteers over that period has changed – or has it?

While some of the roles undertaken by volunteers have not changed much, if at all, many others most definitely have. How volunteers are recruited, welcomed, trained, retained, thanked and valued differs greatly across the Railway and with the Plc, Society and Trust beginning to actively work together, this silo approach is no longer desirable or acceptable.

The time is therefore right for a fundamental review – possibly for the first time ever – of all aspects of volunteering, including these key elements:

Maybe these will be possible sometime in the future, or when we celebrate our 70th anniversaries in 2028 to 2030!

Putting on an event is only possible because of the work done by a large team and my thanks go to all for the help and contributions of time to all those involved. This year we have had to face many challenges and uncertainties and, in particular, those Covid-related restrictions imposed by Government that have made the job more difficult.



*Graham Aitken Photo: Martin Lawrence*

- ➔ Awareness - what roles are volunteers needed for?
- ➔ Resource planning - how many volunteers are needed to undertake each of the roles identified, currently and in the future, taking

account of developments and supporting the objectives of the Railway's business plan.

- Succession planning - the age profile of our existing volunteers must also be included allowing predictions to be made of where vacancies may occur in future.
- Engagement - how are volunteers recruited for each role? We must have a simple procedure to advertise vacancies and an equally simple but robust procedure of how 'would-be' volunteers make contact.
- Placement - how are volunteers matched up to the roles?
- Induction - personal welcome by a member of the relevant departmental team and completion of mandatory documentation.
- Training requirements - what is required for each role?
- Training opportunities - what is available to allow volunteers to progress in their chosen roles, or to change to another role?
- Retention - what will be done to encourage volunteers to remain as volunteers?
- Recognition - how will volunteers be made to feel valued?

This review will also include the roles, responsibilities and behaviours of Plc managers and staff in their interface with volunteers.

Lisa Boyle, HR manager, and Steve Bigg, acting Society chairman got together and prepared a paper seeking Society and Plc Board approval to undertake such a review. This approval was given. To ensure that the project gets to grips with all of the issues involving volunteers, a new post of Volunteer Co-ordinator was created and advertised. Following an interview, I was appointed and am already working on a total review rather than just applying yet more sticking plasters. I am determined to ensure that all aspects of volunteering in future follow the mantra of 'Ready, Aim, Fire' and not the version too often seen currently across our Railway of 'Ready, Fire, Aim'.

My first priority will be to engage with every department manager to ascertain which roles can be undertaken by volunteers, whether any qualifications are necessary, whether training will be given, and finally how many volunteers are required for each role.

The workload will be too much for just one person and my second priority will be to seek and identify suitable candidates to become Volunteer Ambassadors in every department, to work with me and the volunteers in their department. Ambassadors could be the manager, a member of their staff or a volunteer, as long as they can demonstrate that in addition to being a people person that they also possess strong inter-personal skills.

Once these first two priorities have been satisfactorily dealt with attention will then turn to identifying who our existing volunteers are, which department(s) they volunteer in and whether there are any vacancies in the roles they undertake.

Only when the above three priorities have been fully completed will the next stages be revealed, to avoid me and my Ambassadors being pressured into seeking new volunteers when we may not even know what roles they are needed for, as frequently happens today.

I propose to produce regular updates for issue in *The Bluebell Times* and an article for the Autumn issue of *Bluebell News* that gives details of what the review is aiming to achieve. Communications are so important, particularly when they involve all members of staff, paid and volunteers, and as soon as progress is being made on the first three priorities, I will provide details of how I can be contacted.

My own history as a Bluebell Railway volunteer began in 2007 when I became a Trainee Porter at Sheffield Park station. Fourteen years later I am Senior Station Master at Sheffield Park and also a Passenger Guard. Both of these roles have brought me into contact with many other volunteers across all departments and locations and I plan to meet many more of you in the future, finding out what made you become a volunteer, the good bits, the not so good bits, and any ideas you may have for improvements.

# Along the Commercial Road

By Paul Lelew, commercial and marketing director

Since we re-opened on 20 May, we have as a commercial department exceeded our sales budget figures by +6%, which under the restrictions is a great result achieved under some difficult operating conditions.

The commercial team has been supported of course by all other departments across the Railway as it is a team effort and we all have to work together.

Restrictions are still in place until 19 July. However there are positive indications that many of the current guidelines could be relaxed. If and once this occurs, we will be able to open our services to pre-Covid levels and capitalise on selling more ticket combinations.

We released tickets for SteamLights on 30 June and are looking forward to fantastic sales in a short period of time which happened last year.

And finally, we have launched a new product 'Sussex Gin Trains' which have just been released for sale and we are hopeful these will be a very useful addition in producing some new revenue.

The remodelled retail shop is trading extremely well and is exceeding 2019 weekly sales and is proving a very positive customer experience with many compliments on the new look and range of stock available.

Chris Knibbs and his filming team have been busy this year and we have already exceeded last year's sales with six months still to go!

## News in Brief

### PUBLIC WIFI

A new public WiFi system has been introduced at Sheffield Park station to allow visitors to post live and instant reviews of their experiences on social media.

The "Bluebell Guest" free internet access covers most of Sheffield Park including the platforms, shop, Bessemer Arms, SteamWorks!, Bulleid shop and museum. Users have to agree to a set of [terms of conditions](#) and follow safety advice when connected.

The introduction of the WiFi system allows for future expansion of facilities if required.

There will be separate networks for members of Bluebell staff and for internal use.

### 4VEP SPONSORSHIP

The [Southern Electric Traction Group](#) has announced that it has reached an agreement with Armstrong Powerhouse to sponsor the continuing restoration of the Bluebell Railway's unique 4VEP Electric Multiple Unit No. 423 417.

It follows a similar show of support from Tom Cairns, founder of RealTime Trains.

3417 has been under long-term restoration at Strawberry Hill depot since 2015. The support of Armstrong Powerhouse will go towards overhauling the brake system of the unit and, alongside the support from RealTime Trains, will mean that unit is almost fit to be hauled on the national network.

Steve Upton, SETG spokesman, said: "These are exciting times for 3417 and the SETG. We have been working hard behind the scenes to bring this sponsorship to fruition for several months, and we are delighted to finally bring Armstrong Powerhouse aboard as supporters of our restoration project. We hope this marks the start of a lasting collaboration."

Roy Watts, governor of the Bluebell Railway Trust, commented: "This is the second major donation towards the restoration of 3417 in as many months. The dedication of the SETG in bringing this important piece of railway heritage back into public use is exciting to be part of, and the Bluebell

Railway is delighted by the work achieved and the generosity of Armstrong Powerhouse.”

### ROAD MEETS RAIL TIMETABLES PUBLISHED

The timetables for the Road Meets Rail event next weekend (17 and 18 July) have been published.

They can be downloaded from the Railway’s website on the [Road Meets Rail](#) special events page.

### SANTA SPECIALS TICKETS

It may still be Summer but thoughts are already turning to the festive season.

Tickets for the Santa Specials services go on sale from Thursday 29 July.

## Vacancies – Bluebell Railway Trust

The Bluebell Railway Trust is looking for additional volunteers to help with its expanding workload.

The Bluebell Railway Trust is a registered charity that raises and manages funds for the Bluebell Railway to help in its future growth and development.

We are looking for two additional volunteers – no pay, no limit on hours – to help to maintain this growth. These positions would be suitable for individuals who have the time to spend 1 or 2 days each week working with us at Sheffield Park, elsewhere on the Railway and from home.

#### FUNDING MANAGER

We are seeking someone to assist the Funding Governor and to work with other Trust Governors to help in our continuing growth. This includes raising funds, particularly by exploiting new sources of funding, to finance the ongoing restoration of the Railway’s heritage assets and investment in the future of the Railway.

The successful applicant will have broad commercial/business experience and will be able to work successfully with other Trust volunteers and managers across the whole railway.

We do not require a formal CV, but we would like to hear a little bit about you and your experience. You should be proficient in the use of Microsoft Office applications. The key attributes are use of initiative, versatility and the ability to get on with people.

Please apply by email to: [trevor.swainson@bluebell-railway.com](mailto:trevor.swainson@bluebell-railway.com) or for further information, please call Trevor Swainson on 07968 284164.

#### MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTANT

We are seeking someone to assist the Chairman of the Trust to manage its financial functions and provide Governors and other stakeholders with up-to-date financial information.

This is more than an accounting job as it entails understanding projects being funded by the Trust, liaising closely with their managers across the Railway and monitoring project expenditure.

The successful applicant will either be a qualified accountant or someone with extensive experience of computerised accounting systems and Microsoft Office applications.

We do not require a formal CV, but we would like to hear a little bit about you and your experience, particularly in computerised accounting systems. The key attributes are versatility and the ability to get on with people.

Please apply by email to [vernon.blackburn1@bluebell-railway.com](mailto:vernon.blackburn1@bluebell-railway.com) or for further information, please call Vernon Blackburn on 07775 740381.



# Diesel Developments

By Bob Pamment, acting locomotive director [Photos by Mike Hawkins](#)

For some time now we have been conscious of our vulnerability in the event that hot, dry weather instigates a steam ban on our Railway. This has become even more of a concern now that the pandemic has brought home the severe financial implications of having no income from our travelling visitors for even a couple of weeks. We have been luckier than some who, in recent years, have experienced such bans but clearly a mitigation is required as it can only be a matter of time before we find ourselves having to face this proposition, whilst at the same time keeping the business afloat. There are very few available mitigations here, but Diesel traction is the most sensible. We have on occasions, rescued the service using our class 09 Diesel shunter D4106, but this has the downside of not being powerful enough to keep to the timetable. A main line Diesel Locomotive is really the only option. So, the Board discussed this proposition with the BRPS to establish whether such a mitigation has a valid place in the grand story that the Bluebell Railway is setting out to tell.

Meanwhile a group came up with the proposition of bringing a class 73 Electro-Diesel to the Bluebell. This was floated with the BRPS who decided that such a locomotive did indeed fill a

gap in the story that we are telling. However, the Plc Board gave this due consideration and decided that as its Diesel engine was only 600hp it would not be suitable to pull six coaches on our steep Railway and keep time, so this proposal was not followed up.

So having established that a main line Diesel locomotive fulfils both a company need and a BRPS aspiration, when the possibility arose of the B350 Ltd negotiating a deal to purchase a relatively rare Crompton Type 3, it was felt by all parties that this was an opportunity that should be grasped with both hands before it went away. The B350 group worked their magic and D6570 was secured for use on the Bluebell Railway.

I am aware that this project will not be universally well received, and I wish to re-assure those with concerns that this project is not intended in any way to detract from the predominance of the Bluebell as a Steam Railway but instead will add value to an area of the story that we should tell and at the same time provide a level of insurance to our visitor income which is vital for our long-term security. Below is a release from the owning group, I hope that you will find this news as a positive addition to the Bluebell portfolio.



*D6570 loaded at Rolvenden (left) and ready to be unloaded at Sheffield Park (right)*



# D6570 ‘Ashford’

The group of long-standing locomotive department volunteers which owns Bluebell's class 09 shunter D4106 has acquired ex-British Railways class 33 D6570 "Ashford" from the D6570 Ashford Group for use on the Bluebell Railway. This locomotive commonly known as a Crompton is one of a class of 98 locomotives built between 1960 and 1962 for the Southern Region of British Railways. With a Sulzer 8-cylinder 8LDA28A engine rated at 1550hp these were the most powerful 4 axle diesel locomotives built for the British Railways modernisation programme. For over 30 years they were a common sight across the region on freight and passenger workings and were frequent visitors to East Grinstead on trains from London Bridge. D6570 entered service in October 1961 and was initially allocated to Hither Green depot. In 1980 it was named "Ashford" and in 1985 re-allocated to Stewarts Lane where it was based until withdrawal in February 1997. It was subsequently sold from BR and transported to the Kent and East Sussex Railway where it has remained to date in the careful custodianship of the "D6570 Ashford Group".

The locomotive is in good mechanical condition and has been stored undercover out of use for several years at the Kent and East Sussex Railway. On arrival at the Bluebell Railway, it will not enter service immediately, however the new owners will implement a re-commissioning programme to ensure the locomotive is reliable before being available for service and at the same time undertake a number of bodywork and roofing repairs to make the loco weathertight.

It is envisaged that the Crompton will provide a wide range of benefits to the railway's operation including in the following areas:

During periods of high lineside fire risk where steam locomotive operation may be curtailed or prohibited by the authorities, the Crompton would allow a passenger service to continue to operate and so minimise revenue loss and risk to the business.

Support to steam passenger operations by giving greater flexibility in its use as a "thunderbird"

locomotive able to rescue failed trains quickly and enable a passenger service to continue, it being more than capable of maintaining passenger timings which has always been a limitation for the 09, D4106.

Shunting, infrastructure and engineering works with it being able to haul heavier loads at higher speeds and so improve efficiency in the undertaking of these works.

The proposal made by the owning group to bring the locomotive to the railway has been approved by the PLC Board and also the trustees of the BRPS. Crompton's were an important part of the Southern scene in the early sixties. So operating the loco fits in with the recently revised Long Term Plan of the BRPS. Mike Hawkins from the owning group said, "D6570 Ashford coming to the Bluebell Railway is the culmination of a process that has taken time, but we wanted to make sure we got the right loco. We're really pleased to have secured this locomotive from our friends at the KESR, given its good overall condition and local connections".

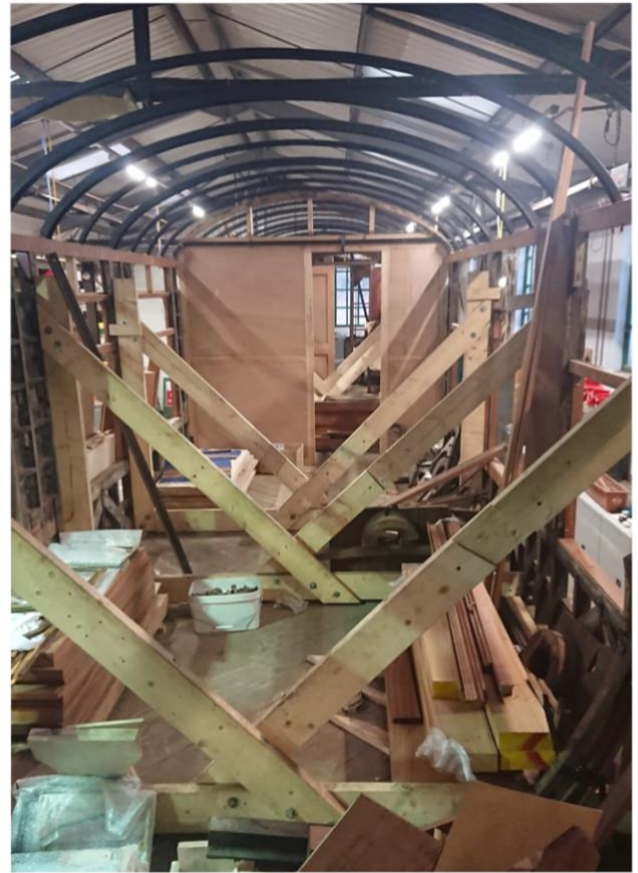
Bob Pamment, Bluebell PLC director said, "Locomotive Ashford gives us more flexibility and security, we're pleased to continue working with the B350 owning group made up of long-standing locomotive department volunteers. They have proved what they can do in providing 09, D4106 to the railway for more than 7 years now."

Anyone interested in contributing to repairs, and particularly with experience of diesel locomotive maintenance (e.g., ex fitter) and restoration (e.g., steel work repairs) is asked to contact [paulchillout@aol.com](mailto:paulchillout@aol.com), one of the owning group with their details, suggested contribution and experience.

# Around and About the Workshops

## PULLMAN CAR NO. 54 - THEN AND NOW

Two photos of Pullman Car No. 54, taken in February 2019 and June 2021. The first photo (right) taken in 2019 shows all the wood bracing that was fitted to the interior to facilitate the lifting without distortion of the wooden body off the steel underframe. This enabled the restoration of the top surface of the underframe and the fitting of a new rubber insulating membrane between the body and underframe, plus access to the bottom rail of the body. In the bottom left corner of the second picture (below), taken recently, you can see the wooden frame that will eventually become an upholstered seat like the others. All seat frames have been made new and the seats and tables constructed with detail design



alterations to provide seating that matches the window spacing unlike the slight displacement associated with the vehicle in its previous life. The extent of the work undertaken in this restoration is comprehensive and enormous.

## BR(S) SHOCK WAGON

We are delighted to hear the great news that the Bluebell Railway Trust has acquired an additional wagon for the Historic Wagon Fleet.

Some months ago, the Science Museum Group issued an asset disposal list in which [14036, a BR\(S\) Shock Open Wagon](#) of Southern Railway Design, was listed.

Once agreed by the Rolling Stock Sub Committee, Bluebell Railway Preservation Society, Bluebell Railway Trust and the Bluebell Railway Plc, an application was submitted to the Science Museum Group from the Trust requesting the Transfer of Ownership. In mid June we heard the news we had been the successful applicant.



While the Transfer of Ownership of this Wagon is free, we are still required to cover the transportation costs to move it from the North Yorkshire Moors Railway to the Bluebell Railway. Very generously the Bluebell Railway Trust has kindly agreed to pay for the transport costs so a big thank you towards them.

The [Historic Wagon Strategy](#) has called for a Shock Wagon of Southern Railway Design to be acquired for a long time and we are very lucky to have been able to get the sole surviving example.

### QUEEN MARY BRAKE VAN 56290

All hands to the pumps in early July as a requirement to get Southern Railway Queen Mary brake van No. 56290 back into a fit state for brake van rides at the 60+1 Anniversary Event.

This brake van is used quite heavily being the only fitted brake van operational on the Railway and the wear has started to show with rotten floor boards, collapsing doors and peeling paint work so the Railway has requested for us to do the work to get it back up to reasonable standard.

Richard Salmon has made a kit of door parts to be assembled to replace the two bad doors on the south end of the Brake Van.

We spent most of the weekend shovelling out the old rotten planks and drying out the underframe beneath the floor. The new floor planks have arrived but are yet to be cut to size.

Hopefully, with all other projects halted, the brake van will be complete in time for the event.

### VAN C No. 404

Van C No. 404 has received a first layer of varnish – a 2.5 litre tin being enough for half the vehicle. A sign writer is needed before the guard's door can be treated.



*Photos:*

*Pullman Car No. 54 – Kuristo de Mans*

*Brake Van 56290 – Laurie Anderson*

*Van C No. 404 – David Mercer*



# Walking the Bluebell Line 1959 - Part 1

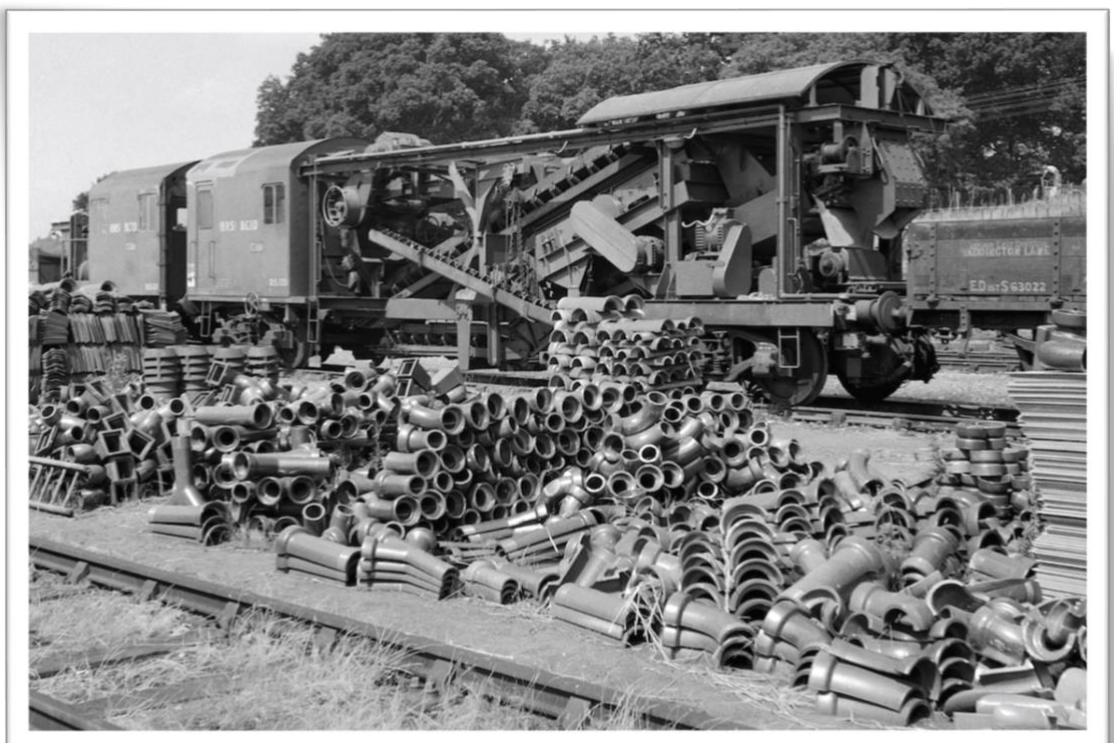
Words and photos by Alan Postlethwaite

*On the 4 July 1959, the author walked the Bluebell Line from East Grinstead to Sheffield Park. Here we present a selection of his photos in and around around East Grinstead. The journey to Sheffield Park will be covered next month, with the line closed and in its last year before preservation.*



This was my first foray into LB&SCR rural territory, having spent all my spare weekends in the Spring in a race against time to photograph the LC&DR Kent Coast lines before Electrification Day. I departed East Dulwich at 7.18 am, then East Croydon at 8.27, arriving at East Grinstead at 9.20. As a novice, I was puzzled why we had been hauled by an LMS tank - Fairburn class 4P No. 42090.

I found this remarkable ballast washing machine in the lower goods yard at East Grinstead. It would appear that the yard was also used to store earthenware building components such as drainpipes and chimney pots.





Armed with a BR(S) Lineside Photographic Permit, I walked the tight west curve from the High Level station to St Margaret's Junction where I witnessed the turning of class C2X No. 32521. This loco had brought the pickup goods from Norwood Junction to Dormans. It ran through the High Level station, then reversed down the incline to the Low Level goods yard, and returned chimney leading up the line to Dormans.

Like the Midland Railway, the LB&SCR built much of its infrastructure to last a thousand years. This massive retaining wall and London Road bridge are on the line to St Margaret's just north of the tight west curve.







An M&D Lowbridge AEC Regent V on Service 91 to Tonbridge, a Morris Minor Traveller, a soft-top tourer, a couple of Fords and an assortment of lesser saloons are set off by the fine 'Domestic Revival' architecture of East Grinstead's station building with its elaborately tile-hung walls. What

a privilege for the station master to have lived in such a fine mansion! Architect Thomas Harrison Myres designed all the station buildings for the Lewes & East Grinstead Railway, and this was by far the largest. It was pure vandalism to have demolished it.



# On This Day, 9 July

By Tony Hillman, assistant Museum curator

*Five pictures from the Bluebell Photographic Archive, four taken on 9 July and one shortly after. Thanks to Martin Elms, John Creed, Richard Peirce and Roger Merry-Price for finding the pictures and providing the notes.*



A mystery photograph! What we do know is that it is Thursday 9 July 1953 and SR Q1 class 0-6-0 No. 33004, of Guildford shed, is at Barnes Junction heading its train towards Richmond. The discs on the front suggest it is a Special Working bound for Aldershot Government Sidings and yet there is no mention of this train in the Special Traffic Arrangements Notice for that week.

The LMS coaches in the formation suggest the train originated from somewhere on the LMR, or it could have possibly come from Tilbury via Barking, Gospel Oak, the North London line and the West London line. Is it a troop train bringing back National Servicemen conscripts from places as far afield as Germany, Singapore, Aden, Egypt, Hong Kong or even war-torn Korea, or a battalion moving from one part of the UK to another? If the train has come off the West London line, where did the Q1 take over? Possibly Clapham Junction, Kensington (Olympia), Willesden or even possibly Canonbury. This photograph raises more questions than it answers!

The Bulleid Q1 "Austerity" locomotive had various less-than-complimentary nicknames, including "Biscuit Tin", "Frankenstein" and "Ugly Duckling" – and it is not hard to see why. But it was a successful design all the same, despite its appearance, with the boiler apparently perched loosely atop the six driving wheels, without the benefit of running plate or splashers. The last example survived until 1966, long beyond its intended wartime lifespan.

Photo: Colin Hogg



Standing at the end of Victoria platform 8, Battle of Britain class No. 34087 *145 Squadron* awaits departure with the 9.00am boat train for Folkestone Harbour, on Saturday 9 July 1960. The fireman checks the headcode discs, one each end of the buffer beam, denoting Victoria to Folkestone or Dover via Orpington and Tonbridge, while the duty number '1' is pasted to one of the discs. The headboard on the smokebox door, showing 'F3', indicates this is a Folkestone boat train, rather than D for Dover, and is the third of the day's services. This extra identification was provided on peak season weekends and bank holidays, as an aid to staff when many extra trains were running.

This loco was one of the 1948-9 batch of twenty Battle of Britain locos, built at Brighton Works under BR management, and the first to have the wider 9' cab, and larger 5500 gallon tender. The earlier locos, built by the SR in 1945-7, had a narrower 8'6" cab, and only 4500 gallons water capacity. 34087 was among the last working examples of the class, being withdrawn only in July 1967 with the end of steam on the Southern Region.

In Summer 1960, Victoria station had just undergone its latest modernisation, as part of the Kent Coast electrification, and platforms 7 and 8 had been lengthened to accommodate 14 coaches. Judging by the pile of rubble and the planks seen bottom right, the job was not quite complete by July. Further up the platform, the tail lamp from the incoming empty stock move forms another trip hazard for unwary passengers.

Photo: Alan Postlethwaite



It is 9 July 1963 and ex-GWR 0-6-0 Pannier Tank No. 7780 is travelling southwards as a "light engine" from Weymouth Yard to Weymouth Quay, along the Weymouth Tramway on Commercial Road. It was an early example of the 57xx class, introduced in 1929, and which eventually numbered 863. 7780 was one of only a few from the first batch of 100 still in BR service in 1963, but several went on to a second career with London Transport. Usually only one person walked in front of the train, so possibly the second seen here was a shunter - both with their furred red flags in hand. In later years two was more usual as increasing numbers of cars parked too close to the line needed to be "bumped" out of the way. This is a more unusual picture of the Tramway, most of which feature a boat train from Paddington or Waterloo, hauled by a 1366 Class 0-6-0 PT introduced in 1934. Later Ivatt 2-6-2 Tanks were used.

All workings over the Tramway were by Weymouth Shed, for many years GWR/WR territory until transferred to the SR in February 1958. It was one of the last remaining sheds in the country, finally closing on 9 July 1967. The Weymouth Tramway opened in 1865, saw its last timetabled train in 1987, last special train in May 1999 and after many years of disuse was finally closed and dismantled in 2020/2021.

Looking carefully at the picture, compared with today, most of the right-hand side of the road still exists, whereas the tennis courts and bowling green on the left have given way to the inevitable car park. The bus, Southern National Bristol Lodekka No. 1813 (UOD 496), has just come off route 61B and turned right out of Gloucester Street, heading north towards the bus garage. The garage is in the distance to the right where the road bends to the left.

Photo: Alan Postlethwaite



Sunday 9 July 1967 went down in railway history as the last day of steam on the Southern, and a small but well-documented number of workings took place on the Waterloo to Bournemouth line. Less well known is the fact that three extra trains were arranged to send a consignment of Channel Island tomatoes from Weymouth to the Midlands. Allocated as the motive power as far as Westbury were:

- ➔ 34095 - 10.20am ex Weymouth
- ➔ 34052 - 2.20pm ex Weymouth
- ➔ 73092 - 3.00pm ex Weymouth

On arrival all three engines then returned light to Weymouth and a place on the scrap line.

This picture of BR Standard 5 No. 73092 was taken just south of Yeovil Pen Mill on the former GWR line. The tracks to the right are the former LSWR Yeovil Junction to Town line. On the smoke box can be seen a number of chalk inscriptions including 'Queen Mary', 'The Cunarder' and at the bottom 'Last Fling'. Surprisingly, on Monday 3 July the engine had been borrowed from Guildford shed to work the 8.33pm Southampton Eastern Docks to Waterloo Boat train, run in connection with the arrival of RMS *Queen Mary*. Presumably as no appropriate headboard was available one of the staff improvised.

Photo: Roger Merry-Price



This photo was taken a few days after the previous shot, showing the Weymouth collection point for withdrawn steam, commonly known as the "Scrap Line". Prominent are both 73092 and 34052. Both were cut up at Cashmores of Newport in early 1968.

Photo: Tony Hillman

# What's On

Friday 9 July – Thursday 12 August

Information is correct at time of going to press but subject to change. Full details at <https://www.bluebell-railway.com/timetables-and-calendar/>

Please check the website for any updates.

## REGULAR SERVICES

Timetabled train services including [The Sussex Cricketer](#) on weekdays and [The Pioneer](#) at weekends

## DINING TRAINS

Friday 16 July [Fish & Chips Special](#)

Saturday 17 July [The Blue Belle evening dining](#)

Sunday 18 July [The Blue Belle luncheon](#)

Wednesday 21 July [The Blue Belle luncheon](#)

Friday 23 July [The Wealden Rambler Afternoon Tea](#)

Saturday 24 July [The Rocket](#), [The Sussex Gin Train](#), [The Cream Tea Riviera](#), [The Blue Belle evening dining](#)

Sunday 25 July [The Blue Belle luncheon](#)

Wednesday 28 July [The Wealden Rambler Afternoon Tea](#)

Friday 30 July [Fish & Chips Special](#)

Wednesday 4 August [The Wealden Rambler Afternoon Tea](#)

Friday 6 August [Fish & Chips Special](#)

Wednesday 11 August [The Wealden Rambler Afternoon Tea](#)

Thursday 12 August [Fish & Chips Special](#)

## SPECIAL EVENTS

Saturday 17 – Sunday 18 July [Road Meets Rail](#)

Saturday 31 July – Sunday 1 August [Model Railway Weekend](#)

Friday 6 – Sunday 8 August [60+1 weekend](#)



# The Bluebell Times

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Members, Staff and  
Supporters*

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## Tail Lamp

If you've enjoyed this issue of The Bluebell Times, feel free to pass it on to other people you think might also want to read it.

To find out when the next issue is out and for other updates about the Bluebell Railway, check our [website](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).

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