



60+1 special at Leamland Photo: David Cable

# The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway Members, Staff and Supporters

August 2021

## IN THIS ISSUE

The three-day, much-delayed 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary gala felt like the Railway getting back to normal. A busy service showcasing our vintage rolling stock, activities at all the stations, opportunities to see progress in our workshops – oh, and of course, summer rain showers! No doubt up and down the railway, acquaintances were remade and conversations certainly turned to setting the world to rights.

One unavoidable fact was the tightness of the motive power situation, with four steam locomotives available for four duties. 'Camelot' is making rapid progress to completion in the workshop, but to alleviate the situation, the railway has taken S160 No. 6046 on hire for the rest of the main season – an external loco hire we have not needed since 2015. The Railway has just appointed both a new Chairman and Locomotive Engineering Director – see page 2 – and it is clear from the Chairman's introduction in this issue that delivering a financially sustainable operating railway is uppermost in minds.

One pleasure of the 60+1 weekend was the daily ritual of lighting up our engines in the running shed at Sheffield Park. For early morning visitors, this is part of the theatre of the Railway, allowing the public to appreciate the work involved in locomotive preparation from close at hand; however, it has the additional benefit of keeping the locomotives in better condition as well. If we could only give the same protection to our out-of-traffic locos, the costs of future overhauls would come down. Undercover storage of our entire locomotive fleet must be high up in our strategic vision if we want to meet the twin aims of being a sustainable operational railway and good custodians of our heritage.

Tom James, Editor

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# Board appointments

By Paul Bromley, communications director

Experienced railway executive Geoff Mee has been appointed as the new chairman of the board of the Bluebell Railway.

Geoff has written a special article for this issue of The Bluebell Times (see page 3) to set out his priorities in the role.

He may be familiar to some people at the Railway but here is a summary of his career to date.

Geoff began his railway career as an engineering student on British Rail's Southern division in 1971. He was the last graduate engineer taken on in the Southern region. His initial training was at Selhurst and he also worked at Eastleigh Works, Derby and around the country.

His managerial career included commissioning the 4VEP and he was Managing Director for Network South East's South East Division. He wrote the timetable for the opening of the Channel Tunnel. He later became the privatisation director for the British Railways Board and, after privatisation, was the Managing Director of Connex Rail.

Geoff has also been an adviser to Transport for London, deputy chief executive of Qatar rail and has been a railway management consultant since 2012.

He first visited the Bluebell Railway in 1971 and is now a life member.

Geoff said: "I feel really privileged to be part of the Bluebell Railway and I am grateful to the directors for appointing me. It was as rigorous an appointment as I have had in 50 years of working for the railways or being associated with the railways."

He added: "I have had 50 years' experience of running businesses and when this opportunity came up to help all of you and the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society and Bluebell Railway Trust, I jumped at it with both hands. I intend to be here for some time and I look forward to working with you all.

"From my perspective, it is a great railway. It has a superb past and a very, very bright future. But we have a lot to do in order to make sure we continue to meet our operational and maintenance costs."

He takes over from Graham Flight who has been the interim chairman since January.

Graham said: "We welcome Geoff to the Railway and wish him well. He offers a wealth of experience and I will help him as he settles into the role and assist in any way I can in the transition period."

The board gave a vote of thanks to Graham Flight for taking on the interim chairmanship. Graham remains Company Secretary and will stay on the board as a director.

And chartered electrical engineer Paul Russell has joined the board of Bluebell Railway Plc as Locomotive Engineering Director. Paul is the subject of the 'Five Minutes With ...' feature in this issue – see page 12.

Paul has worked for more than 30 years on the management of maintenance operations and major construction projects within the cement industry.

He has been volunteering for more than 40 years at the Bluebell Railway working through the grades to Locomotive Driver and has also worked on many locomotive restoration projects such as the North London Tank Adams, E4, Baxter and also the steam crane. He is also the Diesel Traction Engineering Co-ordinator for the Locomotive Department and part owner of the class 09 and class 33 diesel locomotives at the Railway.

Paul said: "The Bluebell has been a major part of my life and through my many years of volunteering I understand the challenges involved in the overhaul, restoration and maintenance of steam locomotives. Coupled with my professional experience in running maintenance operations and projects and working with the Works Manager, I hope to use these skills to further develop the safety, quality and efficiency of the loco works operation."

He takes over as Locomotive Engineering Director from acting locomotive director Bob Pamment who has been in the role since January. Bob remains on the board as rolling stock director. The board thanked Bob for filling the gap and continuing to help on locomotive matters during the transition.

Both appointments were confirmed at the Bluebell Railway board meeting on 29 July.

# From Mee to You

By Geoff Mee, chairman, Bluebell Railway plc

I consider myself to be incredibly privileged to be appointed to be the chairman of the Bluebell Railway which is a real leader in the field of heritage railways as well as a major tourist attraction in the South East.

The Railway embodies 60 years of preservation experience, the largest loco fleet outside the National Railway Museum, an amazing carriage and wagon fleet and some of the best themed station infrastructure in the country. We can look forward to an exciting and prosperous future now that we are fully open for business.

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a really difficult time for the Railway, for its staff and all of our volunteers and I want to thank everybody for everything that you have done to get the Bluebell through this unprecedented period.

We have seen our customers start to return, some really excellent events that are contributing to our reputation as a great day out and so many plans to attract more visitors for the rest of the year – this is a great start to the renaissance of this brilliant railway.

BUT we have a lot more to do to make the future secure and exciting and that is where we all need to pull together for the next stage of our development.

At present we do not have sufficient fully operational steam locomotives, there is a shortage of Pullman cars for our popular and profitable dining trains and our infrastructure has some major repairs that need to be done quickly to ensure a safe and reliable railway.

In addition to these challenges, we are not covering our basic operating and maintenance costs to keep the Railway fully functional. The closures caused by Covid-19 have exacerbated an already difficult financial position across the whole heritage railway sector: a position that we cannot allow to continue into the future.



I am pleased to tell you that the Bluebell Railway Trust, the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society and the Plc board have, by working together, agreed that our first priority must be to get the Bluebell to be able to 'wash its own face' and cover all its operating and maintenance costs. Once we can do that, more funds will be available to continue the astonishing preservation work that the Bluebell is famous for.

It will not be easy!!

So what's the plan?

Led by our commercial team we will be outlining some exciting plans for raising additional revenue and details of what those plans are will be shared in The Bluebell Times in coming months. These plans include expanding our offer to the film and TV industry, acting as a conference and training location for national businesses and using the Heritage Skills Centre for some new and exciting opportunities.

We also have to improve the availability of our C&W fleet by ensuring that we have more



carriages available for service, of the right type, at the right time with the best reliability in service that we can manage, especially in the run-up to our busy period up to Christmas. We cannot allow SteamLights and Santa Specials to be let down by poor reliability (this is especially important as early ticket sales are going very well).

Trains cannot be run without locomotives and, at present, we do not have enough fully functional locomotives for some of our peak services. We are looking at how we can accelerate some of our repairs to get more operational locos. At the same time, we need to ensure that the maintenance of those locos is done to ensure reliability in service and the operations team need to treat these valuable beasts with the love and care that their age requires. By working together, we can have one of the best Christmas periods ever.

One area of railway operations that I feel passionately about is railway safety: safety of our customers, our staff, volunteers and people out and about on our property. You cannot sell tickets on an unsafe railway!! To this end it is essential that our track, signalling, stations and depots are clean, safe and well run and that all of our staff are trained and understand their responsibilities. I have been very impressed by the condition of our track and the good ride and lack of damage to our trains that is possible because of the investment in our Permanent Way that has happened recently

but PW repairs are a bit like the old saying about “painting the Forth Bridge” so there is always more to be done.

I want to turn now to our most valuable asset: our people, be they permanent staff or volunteers. Without them there would be no Bluebell Railway and I want to thank you all for your dedication and perseverance in making the Railway the business success that we are going to make it together. This will be a marathon and not a sprint but, with some good forward planning and your continued hard work, we will all be part of something that we can be proud of that will continue to evolve and grow for the next 60 years.

We will need more volunteers to help make the plans happen and I look forward to working with the team to train and develop more staff across the whole range of the business. We need your help to extend a welcoming hand to new members.

I have one final special ‘thank you’ and that goes to our members, benefactors and shareholders. Without you we would not have survived the last two years and without your continued support we will not be able to do the great things that we have planned for the future. Continue to support us and watch our Railway grow.

*Floreat Vapor!*



*Steam flourishing in the Sussex landscape: 80151 hauls a three coach Bulleid set. Photo: David Cable*

# Volunteering Update

By Graham Aitken, volunteer co-ordinator

As promised in my article published in the July edition of *The Bluebell Times*, I want to update you of the developments over the past month.

All managers were contacted and asked to let me have details of all the roles in their departments that could be undertaken by volunteers. I am now in possession of their responses and whilst I had anticipated most of them, there were a number of new opportunities that have arisen. All of these are now being assessed and will duly appear in a comprehensive list of roles that can be undertaken by volunteers.

Each role will also set out whether any qualifications, skills or competencies are required, or whether full training will be provided.

Each role will also show the level of commitment that will be expected by each volunteer in order that the Railway can plan ahead based on the resources needed and what we can expect to be able to deliver. If the commitment required is too demanding for prospective volunteers, there will be many roles that require a lesser degree of commitment, and I am confident that we will be able to match up roles and volunteers.

How potential volunteers contact the Railway is one of the biggest issues currently and the following is being worked on to ensure that this no longer occurs: potential volunteers will be asked to contact me, using a soon to be released email address, giving their contact details, which I will

## What's Brewing

### BLUEBELL BEER FESTIVAL

By Paul Lelew, commercial and marketing director

The first Bluebell Railway Beer Festival takes place on the weekend of Friday 10 – Sunday 12 September. The event is mainly taking place at Sheffield Park but there will be some special beers at Horsted Keynes and onboard our trains.

forward to the relevant Volunteer Champion (or Ambassador) in each department, or groups or grades within a department. This individual will then contact the potential volunteer and talk about in detail what the role entails, what skills may be required, what the commitment will be and finally to arrange their first day in their new department. The Volunteer Champion will be either the relevant manager, a member of their paid staff or one of their volunteers, and discussions are currently under way with managers to identify how many will be needed in their departments and then to identify who they will be.

Further areas of volunteering to be reviewed include all of the necessary documentation that all volunteers, new and current, must be issued with, confirmation that all new and current volunteers are Society members, how we should reward our volunteers, and finally improving the interface between volunteers and paid staff because it is abundantly clear that without volunteers there would not be a Bluebell Railway.

I remain committed to sorting out volunteering once and for all and encouraging many more new volunteers to join us and enjoy for themselves what most of our current volunteers experience. If you can have a chat, a laugh and a joke with colleagues whilst enjoying helping to run dear old Bluebell, what's not to like!



The event is being held in association with the Sussex branches of CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale).

If you don't want to drive, there are plenty of bus services to support the event plus overnight camping. For anyone on car driving duties, soft drinks and tea will be served and trains will be running all day up and down the line.

There will be more than 90 cask ales plus 30 ciders and perries as well as live music on the Friday and Saturday evening. Entry includes a glass and a free first pint.

We are hoping to make this an annual event.

Full details on the special [Beer Festival events page](#) on the Bluebell Railway website.

### BUFFET BOOST

The King George V Buffet at Horsted Keynes is mentioned in a round-up of highlights of places to drink beer in the South East.

CAMRA published a regional guide 'Real Heritage Pubs of the South East' last year and an article in the Autumn 2021 issue of its members' magazine BEER included some selections from the book.

The story mentioned "the buffet at Horsted Keynes Station on the preserved Bluebell line". It went on: "The station aims to take us back to the 1930s and the simple, small buffet is a perfect example of the type that existed in dozens of stations all over the country."

Thanks to volunteer co-ordinator Graham Aitken for bringing this article to our attention. Cheers, Graham.

*Loco department member Nimalan Satkurunathan enjoying a "proper brew". Photo: John Hutchins*

### TEA'S UP

Words by Andy Taylor, locomotive department

Our steam locomotives run on coal and water with a splash of oil. The diesel locomotives run on ... you guessed it, diesel. But have you ever wondered what the locomotive department volunteers run on?

The answer is, of course, tea. Tea is the best thing to wake you up when starting at 05.30 in the morning. Tea is one of the best things on a cold winter's day on the footplate to warm your cockles (besides the fire). Tea is the drink of choice when socialising in the day. And on special event days the department even has a cleaner rostered to make tea besides other things.

The locomotive department had a very generous donation this summer: 2,500 Yorkshire teabags kindly gifted from the [Bettys and Taylors group](#). This has helped quenched the thirst of the department over the summer period and beyond.

From our locomotive department family to a great British family business: we thank the Bettys and Taylors group for this.





# Heritage Skills Centre

Words and photos by Mel Jordan, Heritage Skills Centre project manager

Horsted Keynes Heritage Skills Centre is now coming to the end of construction, and we are on final finishes with our C&W volunteers using gallons of paint on the internal walls. The building will provide both office and technical space together with training and meeting rooms. Over the next few weeks we hope to complete the interior fit-out to enable occupancy along with external works to provide access and parking.

The Heritage Centre has a floor area of about 500m<sup>2</sup> and is the culmination of a project which began with the successful planning application in 2009 followed by a start on site in 2014. The Skills Centre will provide much needed space and facilities for C&W staff and volunteers.

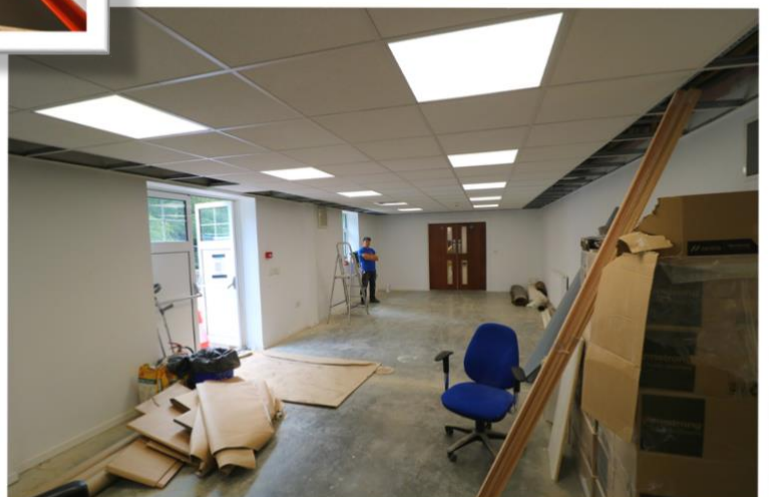
*A few of the gallant team of carriage and wagon painters who have spent many hours painting the HSC interior, saving the Railway many thousands of pounds in the process*



*The moquette store, fully occupied with rolls of material now stored in cool, dry conditions*



*The trim shop*





*The meeting room, awaiting furniture and digital displays*



*The varnish shop*

## East Grinstead Book Shop

By Roy Watts, East Grinstead senior station master

Following the cessation of use as a travel centre and rest area, the Friends of Grinstead (FoG) have converted the former outlet into a sales area for quality second hand books - both transport and general reading - DVDs and other general interest literature.

Over the 60+1 weekend just over £400 was taken that will go towards maintaining the station and we hope to move forward to a permanent building.

Our thanks to Asa Griffiths for supplying the ex-Sheffield Park display shelving





# Vacancies

## VOLUNTEER ESTATES MANAGER - INFRASTRUCTURE DEPARTMENT

We are recruiting a volunteer Estates Manager to improve on the management of the Bluebell Railway's land ownership.

Reporting to the Infrastructure Director, the post holder will be responsible for all aspects of estate management, including:

- ➔ Dealing with boundary issues and encroachments, including up-dating Land Registry documentation if necessary.
- ➔ Managing leases (residential & commercial), licences and any land sales. This could include dealing with negotiations.
- ➔ Preparing and maintaining a database of wayleaves, easements and licences.
- ➔ Advising and assisting with applications for planning consent.
- ➔ Preparing Board reports and papers.

The post carries no remuneration or specific hours of duty. However, the successful applicant will require sufficient time and flexibility to be present at the railway to effectively undertake this role and will have experience in estates management and related activities.

### HOW TO APPLY

If you believe you have the right qualifications for this job and would like to discuss the opportunity, please email your CV and contact details to [lisa.boyle@bluebell-railway.com](mailto:lisa.boyle@bluebell-railway.com) or contact 01825 724884.

Bluebell Railway is an equal opportunity employer.

Bluebell Railway PLC

Sheffield Park Station

East Sussex

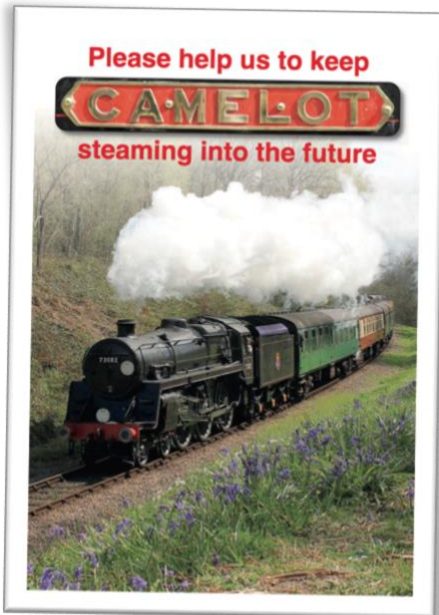
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# Locomotive News

## CAMELOT

By Julian Heinemann, Camelot Locomotive Society

The 73082 Camelot Locomotive Society held its first sales stand since March 2020 at the Bluebell's Model Railway weekend. 'Camelot' was on display outside in the locomotive yard and visitors could go up and view the footplate and meet Society representatives. The newly painted locomotive looked splendid in the sunshine. Reassembly of the locomotive to complete the Intermediate Overhaul is progressing and a return to steam is eagerly anticipated.



The weekend was also the launch of the Society's new fundraising appeal to replenish its funds. In January 2021 the Bluebell commenced an intermediate overhaul of the locomotive, in part to deal with a persistent leak in the foundation ring of the boiler. Mindful of the Bluebell's financial position as a consequence of the 2020/2021 Covid-19 pandemic, the Society has willingly funded the material costs and any contractors costs incurred. Like many other small organisations, we have had severely reduced income since the start of the pandemic in 2020. The £35,000 spent has significantly depleted the Society's financial reserves and we are now launching an appeal so that we can keep 'Camelot' steaming into the future.

As a small locomotive group committed to keeping 'Camelot' in service well into the future,

we are making this rare appeal to all those who have enjoyed seeing and hearing our locomotive in action. Please help us if you can.

Please [download the appeal leaflet](#) for further information. Although we do not have the facility to take donations online, details on how to donate electronically are included in the leaflet.

## BR STANDARD CLASS 2MT NO. 84030

The working group rebuilding the [Standard Class 2 Tank Engine 84030](#) has now returned to the Railway after Covid restrictions. They have recently issued their [first newsletter](#) to the engines supporters, this has now been included in their webpage on the Bluebell website under Locomotives.

## AN AUTUMN VISITOR

We are pleased to confirm [locomotive No. 6046](#) is heading our way!

The locomotive arrived on the Bluebell Railway on 11 August, and will be with us until early November.

No. 6046 was built as works No.70280 by the Baldwin Locomotive Company in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, and the locomotive was exported straight to France in 1945 to help with the war effort. After working on industrial lines in Hungary, it was brought to the UK for restoration and then to the Churnet Valley Railway (1992) PLC in 2006. Several hundred locomotives of the same type worked in the UK during the war years, including six allocated to the Southern Railway.



# Giants of Steam Visiting Locomotives

The two visiting locomotives for the Giants of Steam gala in October have been announced.

They are No. 35028 'Clan Line' and Schools class No. 925 'Cheltenham'.

[Clan Line](#), owned by the Merchant Navy Locomotive Preservation Society, visited the Railway briefly in August 2019 to use the wheeldrop at Sheffield Park for a precautionary inspection and maintenance of the front bogie. It also hauled one service on the line.

A Bluebell Railway spokesperson said: "At the Bluebell we very much look forward to welcoming 'Clan Line' back to our Railway this coming October for the Giants of Steam event. We enjoy an excellent relationship with the 'Clan Line' team, and it is always a pleasure to work with them. We have exciting plans for the duration of their visit.

Southern Railway Schools class '[Cheltenham](#)' will be on loan from the National Railway Museum. The loco last visited us for our gala in 2015.

Our own fleet of locomotives is expected to include No. 73082 'Camelot', BR Standard Tank No. 80151 and SR Maunsell Q class No. 30541.

[Giants of Steam 2021](#) takes place from 8-10 October and more details, including timetables and full details of 'Clan Line's itinerary, will be announced in due course.





# Five Minutes With ... Paul Russell

## Name

Paul Russell

## Role

Locomotive driver and locomotive engineering director

## How long have you been involved with the Bluebell Railway?

I first started volunteering at 16 as a cleaner in the loco department in 1977. I was interested initially in S&T work but I was co-opted into the Loco Department as my friend worked there.

## How did you first become involved?

I had (still have) a friend who was in the year below me at school who I used to go trainspotting with. He suggested I went with him one weekend with Ian Wright who used to give us a lift.

## What was your professional career?

I became a Chartered Engineer in 1990 and after a short spell at Courtaulds and the BBC I have worked in the cement industry for over 30 years in a variety of roles managing electrical maintenance departments, major construction projects up to £65m, as well as more unusual roles managing a 60-mile cross country pipeline and constructing a tunnel underneath an A road to open up new quarry reserves for Rugby Cement plant.

## What do your Bluebell Railway jobs involve?

Apart from my new role which, of course, I am looking forward to, I enjoy my driving turns on the Railway and I also have a role in the development of the diesel side of the Locomotive Department where I am a part owner of the 09 and now class 33 and I set the safety and maintenance standards required for the diesel fleet as well as carrying out maintenance and fault finding on these locos.



## How often do you normally volunteer at the Railway?

At present about one weekend per month. Since I have moved to Torbay (or 'Torbados' as it is optimistically referred to locally) I have to factor in the travel so quite often I now make a long weekend of it.

## Are you involved in any other Railways?

I am a fireman on the Dartmouth Steam Railway running from Paignton to Kingswear

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

I am referred to as Ruskie which I have always assumed was derived from my surname rather than any affiliation with the Soviets.

## What's the best part of your job?

Driving a steam or diesel loco, you are like an actor on stage and centre of attention which makes me feel in a very privileged position

**What's the worst part of your job?**

Getting up at 5am in the dark on a winter's morning to prep an engine and finding the oil like treacle and worse still your cup of tea with an icy crust on top!

**What is your earliest train memory?**

I can only just remember steam on the railways. We used to live at West Worthing and I remember from my pushchair my mum pushing me right up to the level crossing gates as this screaming, hissing machine tore past and it scared the living daylights out of me. My dad had an allotment by the railway and I would always hide in the shed when I heard a steam loco whistle but I would always peep through the gaps in the woodwork.

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

I have a model railway but it's in a box at the moment. I haven't found time or space so far to put it together.

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

There have been so many funny things that I have seen and heard over the years that I can't pick out a favourite. It's the people and the camaraderie that make the place special and I still have fun every time I am there. I suppose the best thing that has happened to me has to be being chosen to drive Flying Scotsman when it visited in 2017.

**How did you occupy yourself when not being able to visit the Railway during the various lockdowns?**

Like the railway I spent my 60th anniversary in lockdown but I think I did the same as many other people fortunate to have a garden and enjoyed this and on various DIY projects such as re-building the kitchen. I even cleaned the windows.

**What is the biggest change you have seen at the Railway since you joined?**

I suppose the biggest change for me is the increase in the size and commercialisation of the business now with the attendant overhead and regulation that governs the function of the organisation

**What is the biggest challenge facing the Railway at the moment?**

Falling passenger revenue set against ever increasing costs of compliance, maintenance and restoration. I think also environmental factors arising from climate change such as availability and price of carbon-based fuel and water will also present a major challenge.

**Anything else you want to tell us such as hobbies, interests or achievements?**

I enjoy walking and the great outdoors, being by the sea, gardening and nature.





# Road Meets Rail

The Railway has been able to host a series of enthusiast events this summer. Highlights amongst these in July were "Road Meets Rail". A selection of photos from these events is posted below. We'll have a gallery of photos from the 60+1 event in the next issue of *The Bluebell Times*.



(Above) There were various displays of traditional skills around the station. Here Fowler roller CRL 110, from 1936, helps demonstrate inter-war road building.

(Right) Foden steam wagon WX 2682, built in 1930, makes a pleasing scene outside Horsted Keynes station entrance

Both photos: Matt Nightingale / [flickr.com/photos/spinner673/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/spinner673/)

(Above) Burrell crane AB8904 gets to grips with loading a set of carriage wheels into a waiting wagon in the Horsted Keynes loading dock; the crew of Maunsell Q class No. 541 look on with interest. The Burrell was built in 1910, making it about 28 years older than the locomotive.

Photo: Robin Procter / [Instagram @robinsteampix](https://www.instagram.com/robinsteampix/).





# Walking the Bluebell Line 1959 - Part 2

Words and photos by Alan Postlethwaite

*On 4 July 1959, the author walked the Bluebell Line from East Grinstead to Sheffield Park. Here we present a selection of his photos south of East Grinstead.*



Just south of East Grinstead, I discovered the severed Up road and the strange sight of a line of condemned goods wagons stretching to infinity. At the tall skew bridge carrying Imberhorne Lane over the railway, I indulged in portraiture to contrast the graceful parabolic outline of the arch with the rich Wealden vegetation, and the dilapidated wooden goods vehicles that had once carried the lifeblood of the nation during the war.

At Kingscote, I discovered an LB&SCR ground signal with a bird's nest in its lantern box, complete with a tiny white egg. Looking through internet guides, the prime suspect is a black redstart. The website states that the black redstart can be seen in the very heart of some of our cities, often singing and nesting right next to passing traffic and bustling humans. I re-closed the flap and moved on





West Hoathly station came as a surprise – a Victorian mansion in the middle of nowhere, built to a high standard of architectural merit in Domestic Revival style. It might have been called Old English style originally but the external beams of the upper storey were later clad in plain and fishtail tiles to keep the rain out. The house is substantial and the porch is delightfully welcoming. Even the toilets have elaborate glazing. It is sad that traffic never approached the ambitious projections of the LB&SCR.

The grandeur of West Hoathly spread to the railway side with substantial platform canopies and a fully enclosed wooden footbridge. Similar structures were originally provided at Newick & Chailey, and at Sheffield Park, while Kingscote and Horsted Keynes had to make do with subways. Barcombe, with only one platform, of course had neither!







I found Horsted Keynes fascinating, a complex rural junction with beautiful buildings. I loved the double-platformed Down line, so too the South signal box, built again to the design of Thomas Myres, with multiple small windows. All the signal boxes on the Lewes and East Grinstead Railway, and at Ardingly, also on the Heathfield or "Cuckoo" line, and between Midhurst and Lavant, used this pattern before the LBSCR standardised on a more utilitarian design.

Keeping well clear of the electrified lines, I dallied in Horsted Keynes for a while before walking the final leg to Sheffield Park. I was given a warm welcome there by a senior member of the embryonic Preservation Society who kindly gave me a cup of tea and a lift to Haywards Heath.

This inaugural walk of twelve miles inspired me to take up long distance athletic walking, culminating in Land's End to John O'Groats via Wales, Ireland and the Hebrides - but not before I had walked a further 550 miles of railway lines to photograph the final glorious years of Southern steam.



“ A distant Kingscote signal stands  
 With tapered post and faded bands,  
 A relic of the Brighton years –  
 Is that a Stroudley tank one hears?  
 The line through Horsted Keynes could boast  
 An Inner Circle to the coast,  
 Where once those green remembered trains  
 Brought motion, steam and whistle strains.  
 Ancient wagons, bullhead track -  
 All condemned, there's no way back;  
 And yet I sense a Bluebell train  
 May one day pass this way again. ”



# On This Day ... 13 August

By Tony Hillman, assistant museum curator

*Three pictures from the Bluebell Photographic Archive, all taken on 13 August by John J Smith. Thanks to Martin Elms, John Creed, Richard Peirce and Roger Merry-Price for finding the pictures and providing the notes. Special thanks this month to Mike King for his help in identification of the coaching stock in the first picture.*



The summer of 1949, according to Met Office records, was an excellent one and Saturday 13 August was no exception. Here we see the 11.26am Victoria to Ramsgate, a semi-fast which stopped at neither Faversham nor Whitstable, and was allowed 2 hours and 14 minutes for the 79-mile journey.

The locomotive is SR Class U1 2-6-0 No. 31901, allocated to Bricklayers Arms shed. It was built at Eastleigh Works and entered traffic in July 1931, being withdrawn from Brighton shed in July 1963 and cut up at Eastleigh a month later. The three-cylinder U1s were best remembered for their work on the South Eastern and Central Sections but prior to World War 2 a number (but not No. 1901) were allocated to Exmouth Junction shed and did sterling work over the 'Withered Arm' lines, especially from Exeter to Plymouth. In May 1961 No. 31901, along with three others, was allocated to Exmouth Junction and worked over the North Cornwall line to Padstow. However, the then Exmouth Junction and

Wadebridge crews disliked them and by October that year they had all been transferred away.

The coaching stock is believed to be Set No. 640, a 10-car 'miscellaneous non-corridor' set based at Herne Hill and retained for excursion traffic and additional summer trains. If so, the leading coach is S3580S (SECR No. 823), a Birdcage Non-corridor Semi-open Lavatory Third Brake dating back to 1909. It was built by the Metropolitan Amalgamated Railway Carriage & Wagon Company for the SECR and ran from new in its boat trains. Sister vehicle S3582S ([SECR No. 950](#)), built in 1907, survives on the Bluebell Railway but awaits restoration.

The train is passing Margate East station; in fact the vast majority of trains went through that station without stopping. By the summer of 1949 only five down passenger trains served the station on a Saturday, so it was not surprising the station closed with effect from 4 May 1953.



Once a common sight on Britain's Railways were freight trains made up of single wagonloads for destinations all over the country. Pictured is N Class 2-6-0 No. 31846 on Sunday 13 August 1950, hauling the 2.25pm Eastbourne to Three Bridges freight, having just passed Hamsey Crossing box north of Lewes. The most striking feature of the train is the number of different designs of wagons and vans, reflecting the companies that had been amalgamated less than three years previously to form British Railways. Less obvious from the picture is the mixture of braking categories in use, with "fitted", "piped" and "unfitted" vehicles all to be catered for.

The N class locos were designed by Richard Maunsell of the South Eastern and Chatham Railway in 1914, with the first being turned out of Ashford Works in 1917. No. 31846 was originally SR A846, part of the second batch, built at Ashford in January 1925 from kits of parts made at Woolwich Arsenal in the previous year. These kits were originally produced by the Ministry of Supply as a move towards standardised locomotives for a proposed nationalised railway industry after WW1,

but this idea had then been superseded by the 1923 Grouping. No. 31846 was withdrawn in September 1964.

At the time of this picture the locomotive was allocated to the Southern Region Western Section depot at Salisbury. It is therefore a mystery as to why it is working an internal Central Section freight. One possibility is that it had worked into the area and been 'borrowed' for this duty.

Lastly, in the background can be seen large areas of water where the River Ouse has broken its banks and extensively flooded; there were far fewer flood defences on rivers in the 1950s.





It is now early evening on 13 August 1950 as Class H2 Atlantic (i.e. 4-4-2) *St Albans Head* passes through the Up London-bound platform at Lewes with the 6.14pm Boat Train from Newhaven Harbour to Victoria. The 6.14pm was almost certainly a relief train as the main train was booked to be worked by one of the three Southern electric locos.

Although No. 32426 was allocated to Brighton, at least two H2s were subshedded at Newhaven for two business trains between Lewes/Uckfield and London via Oxted. Only one of these ran on a Saturday and neither on a Sunday, so these locos were available for duties such as relief Boat trains on which they were not uncommon. Newhaven subshed had a total of eight duties in 1950, of which the two Atlantics were the only engines working passenger trains, the rest employed on freight or shunting. Newhaven subshed closed on 9th September 1963.

Lewes station takes the form of a V with lines to Brighton heading south and those to London west. The attractive station buildings which survive well cared-for to this day are located in the V of the two lines. The once extensive track layout has been heavily rationalised over the years, together with closure of the Uckfield Line. At one time the extensive layout was controlled by five signal boxes, three in the station limits, South and West, plus the large Lewes Main Jct., where the two lines join. The other two were East, on the way to Southerham Junction, where the Seaford Branch leaves the main line to Eastbourne/Hastings, and Lewes Goods on a freight-only avoiding line from Lewes West to Lewes East. The last remaining signal box, by then plain Lewes, closed on 2 December 2019, thereafter control of the signalling was from Three Bridges Rail Operating Centre.



# Major Upgrade to Museum Website

By Tony Hillman, Assistant Museum Curator

The search facility in the [photographs section of the Museum website](#) has been extensively updated. Searching can be for a single locomotive number, a range of locomotive numbers, a locomotive class, a location or just a general search for any photograph description containing a particular string.

While the collection is mainly Southern based, there are many photographs from all parts of the UK and some in Europe. Steam, electric and diesel locomotives are included.

A new feature is "Content Key" which allows selection of a particular topic, say "signal boxes & signals", to display all the photographs with that content. There is also a "Content Key" for "New". This will display the 200 new photographs included in this release. Content Keys can be combined with some other selections.

This is the first release of new photographs for some time, but the new software will allow the inclusion of new photographs far more easily than before, so the plan is to add photographs regularly. This release contains 12,397 photographs. We have many thousands being processed.

Copies of photographs are available as 6x4, 9x6, 12x8, 15x10, 18x12 prints or as downloadable jpg.

Much work has gone in to checking the descriptions but there are bound to still be errors. If you find any, please let us know so they can be corrected. Please email [photos@bluebell-railway-museum.co.uk](mailto:photos@bluebell-railway-museum.co.uk)

The old method of searching and displaying photographs is now withdrawn.

## On This Day - Feedback

Following publication of the photo of the Millwall football special in *The Bluebell Times* No 19 (April 2021), another image of the same train has been located, taken maybe 30 seconds later by John J Smith's contemporary, Sid Nash. This shows the train at Canal Junction, and Sid recorded the number of the second J69 as 68549. The picture is to be found in his 1974 book, "Southern Region Steam Album 1948-1967".



# What's On

Friday 13 August – Thursday 9 September

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 13 August [Fish & Chips Special](#)

Saturday 14 August [The Sussex Gin Train](#), [The Wealden Rambler Afternoon Tea](#), [The Blue Belle evening dining](#)

Sunday 15 August [The Blue Belle luncheon](#)

Wednesday 18 August [The Wealden Rambler Afternoon Tea](#)

Friday 20 August [Fish & Chips Special](#)

Saturday 21 August [The Sussex Gin Train](#), [The Cream Tea Riviera](#), [The Blue Belle evening dining](#)

Sunday 22 August [The Blue Belle luncheon](#)

Wednesday 25 August [The Wealden Rambler Afternoon Tea](#)

Thursday 26 August [The Blue Belle luncheon](#)

Friday 27 August [Fish & Chips Special](#)

Saturday 28 August [The Blue Belle evening dining](#)

Sunday 29 August [The Blue Belle luncheon](#)

Monday 30 August [The Wealden Rambler Afternoon Tea](#)

Wednesday 1 September [The Wealden Rambler Afternoon Tea](#)

Saturday 4 September [The Grinstead Grazer](#), [The Sussex Gin Train](#), [The Blue Belle evening dining](#)

Sunday 5 September [The Blue Belle luncheon](#)

## SPECIAL EVENTS

Saturday 28 – Monday 30 August [Teddy Bears' Picnic](#)



# 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 10 September 2021 from [bluebell-railway.com/bluebell-times](http://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](mailto: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

- ➔ Graham Aitken
- ➔ Paul Bromley
- ➔ David Cable
- ➔ John Creed
- ➔ Martin Elms
- ➔ Julian Heinemann
- ➔ Tony Hillman
- ➔ John Hutchins
- ➔ Tom James
- ➔ Mel Jordan
- ➔ Paul Lelew
- ➔ Geoff Mee
- ➔ Roger Merry-Price
- ➔ Matt Nightingale
- ➔ Richard Peirce
- ➔ Alan Postlethwaite
- ➔ Robin Proctor
- ➔ Paul Russell
- ➔ Andy Taylor
- ➔ Roy Watts



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Based on a 1930s Southern Railway poster from the photo by Charles.E. Brown

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