



80151 arrives at Sheffield Park during the 60+1 anniversary weekend. Photo: Kenny Felstead

The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway Members, Staff and Supporters

September 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

What does it take to run a railway? Your editor might answer 'locomotives', and I have spent a considerable time over the last eight years or so chronicling the ebb and flow of our fleet for the regular Loco Department updates in *Bluebell News*. Carriages, wagons, track, signals, our wonderful heritage buildings – all of those might have their advocates as well.

But trains do not run themselves. What the pandemic, and our gradual return to normality, has shown is that it is people who animate the Railway. If the Railway is short of motive power, it is at least feasible to hire in a replacement; but if it is short of staff, services have to be cancelled or extensively replanned to cover the shortfall.

So this issue has quite a "people" focus, including the latest information from Graham Aitken, the volunteer co-ordinator, on the refresh of our volunteering processes now under way. The company chairman has been out and about talking to staff, including meeting Chris Cooper, one of a handful of volunteers who started in 1960 and is still here, having put 60+1 years into the railway. Could you be that person in years to come?

Finally, there is a reminder that with relaxation of rules on large gatherings, it is now possible to hold the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society AGM, scheduled for 2 October. There is a reminder in this issue, but perhaps the most welcome point is that the elections – for Society Chairman and six Trustee positions – are strongly contested. Inevitably some candidates will be unsuccessful, but to have as many people standing for election is a sign of vibrancy, and surely shows the desire for renewal by the people who animate the railway.

Tom James, Editor

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From Mee to You

By Geoff Mee, chairman, Bluebell Railway Plc

It has been an incredibly busy month for myself, and the Board and I wanted to give you an insight into some of the things that are happening.

Our Board meeting followed a new format with the first half looking at business as usual with an update from all the Directors on what had happened since the last meeting, what decisions the board needed to make for each department and a projection of what was going to happen in the coming months. The second half of the meeting concentrated on an in-depth look at what we need to achieve in 2022 in order to be able to cover our operations and maintenance costs more fully.

Commercial and marketing director Paul Lelew shared a vision from the Commercial Department as to what may be possible for 2022. Our next task is to ensure that we have sufficient resources to be able to deliver the plan and some high level discussions are being held with all departments to ensure that we have sufficient locos, coaches and

importantly staff to deliver the plan. This will be an iterative process as we must not promise what we cannot deliver.

When all the plans are endorsed by the individual departments we will share next year's plans through *The Bluebell Times* with you all.

In an important new initiative, the Board met with the Managers for the first time in ages to share plans and concerns. This happened immediately before the Board meeting for an hour. Most people thought that it was a good idea to share views and it was decided that this would happen every three months in the future.

I believe that good communication is vital to the success of the business and to this end we are going to arrange some workshop sessions with the workforce and volunteers during the winter shutdown to share the future plans and get help and insight from the broader team to help shape the future of the Bluebell.

At the next Board meeting we will be looking in some depth at what our 'Ten Year' maintenance and investment programme for all of our assets will need to be and what resources we will need to have to deliver the plan.

The key element to delivery will be our workforce and especially our volunteers and the Board will be working closely with Graham Aitken in his role as Volunteer Co-ordinator to attract and train more volunteers across a huge range of skills and jobs across the whole of the Railway.

We have more than 9,600 members of the BRPS but often the burden of volunteering, week in week out falls to a small hardcore of regulars. We need more of you to volunteer to deliver the projects and day-to-day operation.

I will personally be volunteering at the Beer Festival on Sunday and hope to meet more of you then.

I have a real urgent call-out to all members and volunteers for some real tangible support. We are



Geoff Mee (left) with Chris Cooper

not talking money this time but we are suffering from a shortage of volunteers in key parts of the Railway, especially in catering and support for the dining trains. Please help by encouraging more people to volunteer or get involved yourselves.

If you can also encourage more volunteers to join us that would be great!!

I have enjoyed a few visits to the Railway recently, including the Teddy Bear's Picnic (which was really busy, lots of excited kids and Teddy Bears) and I met the team in the museum. Thanks for the introduction to the well-laid-out and informative exhibits.

I also met with Chris Cooper who has been volunteering for a staggering 61 years and is still going strong. He tells me it's all down to the friends that he has on the Railway – and a plentiful supply of tea!

I also had the pleasure of visiting the Loco and C&W departments, thanks to Rowan Millard and Chris Shepherd for showing me around. I learnt a lot about the work and met some of the team. The standard of work is fantastic and a real credit to the staff and volunteers who make it possible.

I was also able to see the Heritage Skills Centre and can't wait for us to officially open it and show it off to the world. It must be the best in the railway

heritage environment. It was amazing to see how part of the complex had been turned into a film set in a matter of days and then returned to normal – another film to add to our impressive record of star-studded visits.

It has been great to start to get out and about and meet people, but it has also highlighted a couple of concerns. Because it's the same staff that are undertaking restoration and routine maintenance, it is clear that people are being pulled in multiple directions and the constant fire-fighting is causing projects to slip, leading to unpredictable timescales for getting vehicles and locos back into traffic or failures of trains in traffic, something that we want to avoid. I will be discussing with the Board if we can come up with some ideas as to how we can work smarter

It is unfortunately true that Covid has not completely gone away and we have had to cancel some dining trains and temporarily close some catering facilities due to the need for some key staff to isolate. Can I please encourage all staff to stay vigilant and safe, using social distancing where necessary.

I hope that staff find these articles helpful, feedback is always welcome and if you have any questions we may be able to pick them up in future articles of 'From Mee to You'.



A busy scene at Kingscote on the Sunday of the 'Teddy Bear' event, 29 August. The opening of the children's play area, along with the self-guided [Kingscote Heritage Trail](#), has transformed usage of the station in recent years, particularly during the summer. Photo: Richard Clark

BRPS AGM - 2 October 2021

By Gavin Bennett, BRPS General Secretary

A reminder that the Society's EGM and AGM will be held on Saturday 2 October at the Burgess Hill Academy, commencing at 7pm (doors open 6pm). This year there is an election for Chairman for which two candidates are standing:

- ➔ Paul Churchman
- ➔ Gordon Parry

and an election for six Trustees for which there are 10 candidates:

- ➔ Laurie Anderson
- ➔ Richard Clark
- ➔ Andrew Ellis
- ➔ Robert Hayward
- ➔ Michael Hopps
- ➔ Lawrence Hutter

- ➔ Roger Kelly
- ➔ Robert Simpson
- ➔ Reuben Smith
- ➔ Howard Strongitharm.

The AGM document contains the statements from all the candidates.

Some of the Long Service Awards due are listed in the AGM document but not all were notified to me by the deadline so there will be more! The EGM/AGM documents are being printed and should be thudding on the doormat next week. If you are coming to the meeting, please don't forget to bring the documents that were circulated a few months ago (the draft Articles of Association, 2019 accounts and the draft Long Term Plan).



Life Membership

By Roy Watts, acting vice chairman, Bluebell Railway Preservation Society, and chief clerk

Since the Railway reopened this year, it has become apparent that there have been some misinterpretations of the benefits associated with Life Membership.

In simple terms, Life Members are entitled to the following in relation to travel:

- Free first-class travel (subject to availability)
- Free first-class travel for Special Events – except those listed below
- Free station admission

Life members will be able to book online unless advised to the contrary for which due notice will be given.

Likewise, entry to stations and their facilities is free for the Life Member. It is important to be quite specific in that the benefit is for the Member ONLY. Any other accompanying person pays the appropriate charge of the day.

This entitlement does not however include any of the following:

- Any private charter train services such as Murder Mysteries
- Santa trains
- SteamLights
- Golden Arrow
- Wealden Rambler
- Fish and chips or equivalent
- Sunday Lunch or dining service
- Gin or other premium service trains
- Mothering Sunday or Father's Day dining trains
- Bluebell Special invitation trains (ie for the first run of a restored loco or coach/rolling stock)
- Bluebell Rail Ale trains

The Society committee noted that there is the possibility that in order to safely control passenger numbers, such as was seen with the visit of Flying Scotsman in 2017, Life Members would be expected to pay the appropriate rate to be determined for the event. However, as before, advance notice of ANY changes to benefits will be duly published after consultation with the commercial department.

Finally, the Society Committee also recognises that the Railway has a changing business model and accepts that if a future event is being run/sponsored by an organisation outside of the Bluebell organisation – for example CAMRA, Balfour Beatty or Network Rail – the event is outside the scope of the Life Member remit.

The Society looks forward to working with the Company as and where necessary to agree on these events and avoid any repetition of the last few months.



Volunteer Review 2021

By Graham Aitken, Volunteer Co-ordinator

As promised, here are the updates of developments over the last month. On a personal level, not very good as I tested positive for Covid which kept me away from the Railway for more than three weeks! But enough about me. Regarding the volunteer review, the good news is that I am gearing up for a Monday 20 September launch of the first three steps.

All managers have now let me have details of all the roles in their departments that can be undertaken by volunteers, and I am creating a comprehensive list of them which will be displayed on the Bluebell Railway website. Outline details of qualifications/skills/competencies – either required or desired – will be shown, as will the level of commitment wanted.

Most of those managers have also supplied me with the names of suitable individuals to become the Volunteer Champion for their overall department or one Champion for each of however many different workstreams they have. These Champions will have strong interpersonal skills and become the volunteers' friendly point of contact at our Railway.

From 20 September potential volunteers will only have to follow a three-step process to become a volunteer with a timescale of days rather than disappearing into the present system and in many cases being lost forever without ever having been contacted by anyone at the Railway.

Step 1 Potential volunteers should go to the Bluebell Railway website and search the list of roles that volunteers can undertake.

Step 2 Email volunteer.coordinator@bluebell-railway.com giving details of the role(s) for which they would like to volunteer, their name and address and, importantly, a phone number to contact them.

Step 3 I will then forward their email to the relevant Volunteer Champion who will phone them to discuss details of the role(s) they are interested in and agree a date and place for them

to either visit us to learn more about those roles or to attend on their first day as a volunteer.

Please don't think that other members of staff – paid or volunteer – will have nothing to do and will just leave everything to the Volunteer Co-ordinator and the Volunteer Champions. Every one of us can talk to visitors about our Railway, asking if they have enjoyed themselves, telling them about what we all do to make Bluebell so special and encourage them to join us as volunteers. Why wouldn't you want to do that? Visitors don't (usually) bite and are generally always pleased to talk to us about our Railway. As a member of the Sheffield Park station staff, I am always talking to visitors, and would encourage you to do the same. Be proud of what you do at our Railway, share your passion with our visitors, many of whom may be just waiting to become future volunteers themselves.

My next actions will be to work through Steps 4 to 12 which I will share with you next month.

In the meantime, if you can possibly help out with our SteamLights trains which begin running on 5 November and continue through November and December and/or on our Santa trains which operate from the 27/28 November and continue generally at weekends in December right up to Christmas Eve, please contact Keith Riggs on keith.riggs@bluebell-railway.com to find out more. He will be delighted to hear from you.

Beer Festival

The first Bluebell Railway Beer Festival takes place this weekend.

The [festival](#) has been organised in association with Sussex branches of CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale) and runs from Friday 10 - Sunday 12 September, mostly at Sheffield Park station.

Choose from 90 different cask beers and enjoy a fine selection of cider and perry too. Beer aficionados will be pleased to hear that priority will be given to Sussex breweries, with an aim of offering each local brewery an opportunity of supplying one of their ales, likewise with cider and perry. There will also be a small selection of ales at the historic George V Buffet at Horsted Keynes station and on the buffet car of the service train.

The event will run from 12 noon to 9.30pm, Friday and Saturday, and 12 noon to 4pm on Sunday. Extra entertainment in the form of live music will feature on Friday and Saturday evenings.

Entrance charge to the festival is £7.50 and includes a beer programme with tasting notes, a free glass plus and a free pint of beer or cider. Entry to the Beer Festival is for over 18s only.

A token system will be in place for further purchase of beers, which can be sampled as full pints, halves or 3rds. There are plenty of food options which will be provided in-house and by temporary food stands.



The beer festival is a stand-alone event but when you buy your tickets for the festival, you will be able to add on other purchases like steam train travel on the Bluebell Railway and even a return [bus ticket](#) for one of our organised bus and coach transfers bringing you direct to the venue on routes from Haywards Heath station, Worthing, Horsham, Crawley, Eastbourne, Hastings, Sevenoaks, Dorking, Reigate and Uckfield.

GET INVOLVED

There are still opportunities to volunteer to help at the festival.

You do not need to be a BRPS member to volunteer at this event. If you are interested, please complete [this form](#) and return to chair@brighton.camra.org.uk

Autumn dining services

The Railway has launched three new dining trains for this autumn.

They are: The Wealden Rambler Chocolate Afternoon Tea, The Grinstead Grazer and The Winter Warmer.

[The Wealden Rambler Chocolate Afternoon Tea](#) is the traditional afternoon tea train with a chocolate twist. It runs on selected dates in November.

Passengers will enjoy a selection of sandwiches, chocolate chip scones and cakes while they take in the splendid views across the entire line from Sheffield Park to East Grinstead.



[The Grinstead Grazer](#) is a new late summer service which starts at Sheffield Park and heads through beautiful Sussex countryside skirting the Ashdown Forest. There are views to East Grinstead with a picnic packed with delicious treats.



And visitors can take comfort on [The Winter Warmer](#) this November. The service includes a hearty meal and dessert, complete with tea or coffee to warm up the chilly Sunday afternoons. This service begins at Sheffield Park and includes return travel to East Grinstead.

Full details of all the services on the [Bluebell Railway website](#).



Carriage Shop

By Chris Wilson

SUPPORTING THE HORSTED KEYNES STATION FUND

The Carriage Shop at Horsted Keynes has now fully reopened after the extended closure period. We are open all weekends that the Railway is operating and have extended opening hours for the forthcoming Collector's Fair and Giants of Steam events.

We currently have a large selection of second-hand books, models, DVDs and bound magazines for sale, all at very reasonable prices!

The Carriage Shop was founded in 1989 and for over 30 years we have supported a variety of projects large and small across the Bluebell Railway. For September we are specifically raising funds for the Horsted Keynes Station Fund, so everything we sell during this month will be in support of our home station.

In addition to the Carriage Shop we also have two bookcases selling second-hand books at Horsted



Keynes station at the end of the W.H. Smiths kiosk. All funds raised from these bookcases for the whole of 2021 will be donated to the Horsted Keynes Station Fund. Just pop your payment through the letter box in the door!

For the latest opening times please visit our [Facebook page](#) or contact bluebellrailwaycarriageshop@gmail.com



Power to the People

Words and photos by Roger Kelly, BRPS Trustee

WELL, THOSE AT HORSTED KEYNES!

For many years it has been known that the electricity supply to Horsted Keynes is underrated. Power comes from a 50kVA transformer mounted on poles at the north end of the field to the east of the railway line. This supplies the whole of Horsted Keynes from the infrastructure depot at the southern end, right up to the bridge at the north end and the railway cottages beyond. When the big extractor fans in the carriage and wagon works are turned on the lights go briefly dim. BR staff used to notice the same thing whenever an electric unit arrived from Haywards Heath on the 'juice rail'! In 2018 as the Operation Undercover 4 (OP4) carriage shed progressed under the direction of Barry Luck it was appreciated that if the associated Heritage Skills Centre was to be completed something needed to be done to upgrade the power supply.

Fortuitously in 2019 Roger Kelly came across a source of funding for the Plc that would pay the £75,000 towards cost of providing an upgrade to the power supply, which the Bluebell Railway Trust agreed to match. To solve the power capacity problem required the installation of a new 250kVA supply. In order to do this, the existing 50kVA pole mounted transformer sited at the north end of the field to the east of the railway line needed to be replaced by a 500kVA ground mounted substation. It was agreed this should be sited immediately to the north of the station building and staff car park. This would reduce the length of low tension cable from the transformer to the incoming switchgear and consequently a possible drop in voltage. For the non-technically minded kVA is almost the same as a kilowatt. Your kettle uses about 3 kilowatts

The supply for most of the Bluebell Railway's use, excluding the buffet, currently comes into a small room located in the station building. It was decided this should be primarily replaced by a new electricity intake room to be part of OP4. A new cable route would be needed from the new substation to run down the station approach road



(Above) The existing 50kVA pole-mounted transformer

(Below) The new switching station



to the intake room. It was agreed that the work of creating the new room and running the cable ducting underground would be undertaken by our infrastructure department.

A formal proposal was put to and agreed by the Bluebell Railway plc Board towards the end of 2019 and Tony Astor appointed as project manager. Of course in 2020 the pandemic came along to delay things, therefore significant progress was only made this year.

The switch over to the new supply will start from Sunday the 3rd October. In addition to providing a more robust electricity supply to the station site it will in the long term mean that the railway can benefit from the use of solar panels Installed on the roof of OP4. Whilst there are no immediate plans to do this a feasibility study into such a project was funded by a recent government Culture Recovery Fund grant.



Installing the ducting.

‘Awake The Giant’ 92240 Update

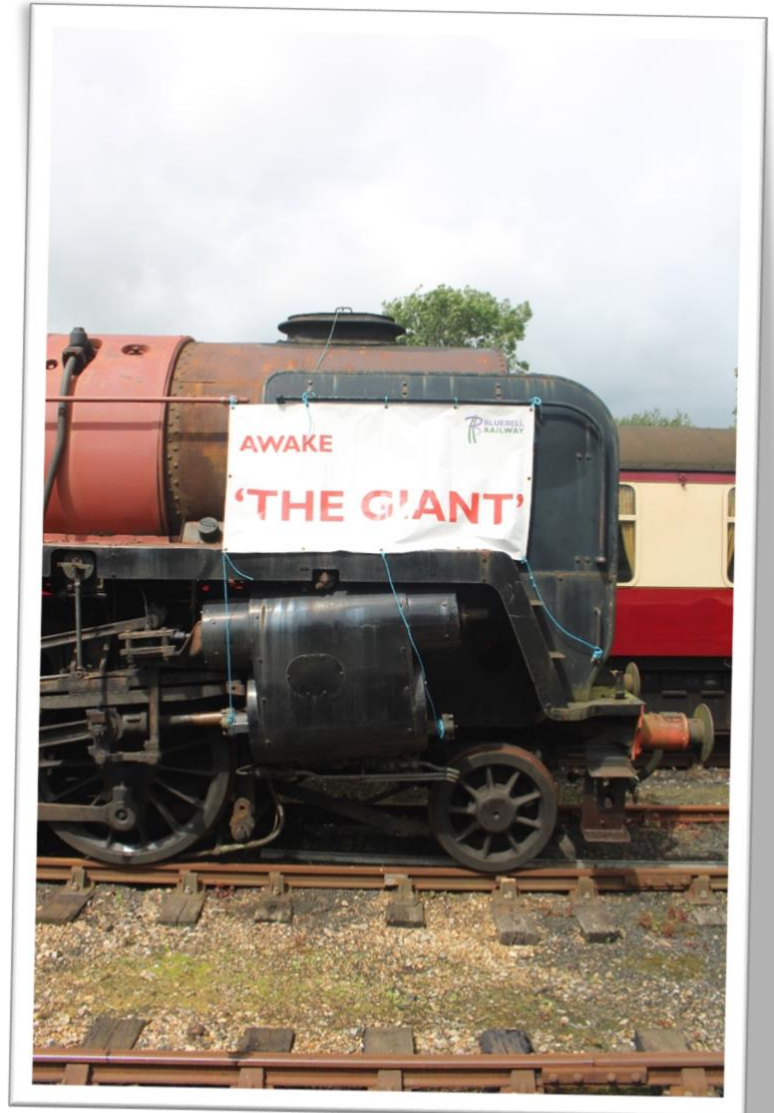
Words and photo by Tom Newble, 9F fundraising group member

The weekend of 6–8 August gave everyone the opportunity to celebrate the Diamond Anniversary of the Bluebell Railway at the ‘60+1’ event. The weekend offered a range of societies and groups based at the Bluebell a chance to promote and fundraise for their projects and appeals. Over the weekend, the ‘Awake The Giant’ team took the opportunity to publicise their appeal to get the beautiful 9F No. 92240 steaming again.

92240 is currently in the sidings at Horsted Keynes, adjacent to Platform One.

The team were around to meet members of the public, fellow members and volunteers. We had two stands over the weekend, manned by members of the ‘Awake The Giant’ team, at both Sheffield Park in SteamWorks’ and at Horsted Keynes, alongside 92240.

We had a lot of interest and the team continue to promote and fundraise for the project. The team are expecting to make regular in-person appearances at the Railway, especially at the ‘Giants of Steam’ gala on the weekend of 8–10 October. The team have some exciting projects. The team are working on some exciting projects behind the scenes: in particular, sponsoring parts of 92240 and a photo competition, for both adults and children. Be sure to keep your eyes peeled for further updates in the near future. The team look forward to meeting you all at the Giants of Steam Gala.



GET INVOLVED

If you are interested in joining or supporting the ‘Awake The Giant’ appeal, please find further information below:

Donating and Supporting: <https://www.bluebell-railway.com/brps/awake-the-giant/#donate>

Information on Volunteering: <https://www.bluebell-railway.com/brps/awake-the-giant/>

Railway Cuttings

By Paul Bromley, communications director

SUN-NY DAYS FOR SANTA SPECIALS

The Bluebell Railway's Santa Specials services have featured in The Sun twice in a week.

The fantastic coverage is on the newspaper's website and is great promotion for our festive services.

A report on 31 August was headlined ["HO-HO-GO: Kids will love this Santa-themed train ride on the Bluebell Railway this Christmas"](#).

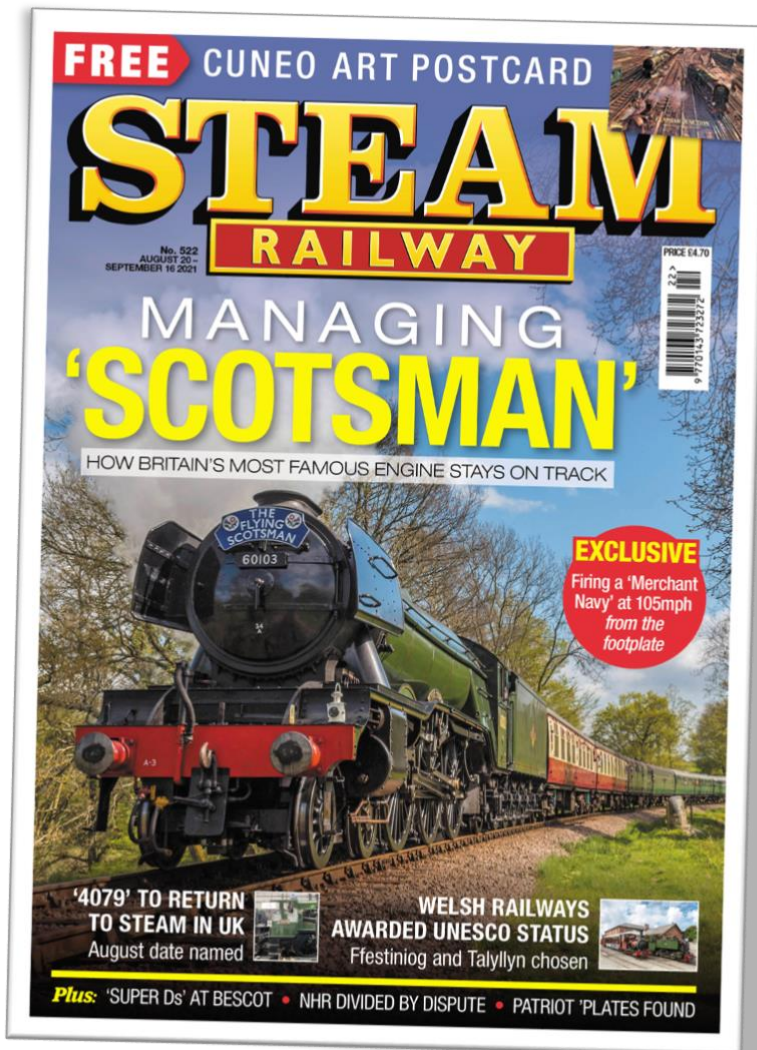
It said: "Let's face it, summer is probably over - so it's time to start looking forward to Christmas. If you're looking for a family-friendly activity, tickets have gone on sale for the Santa Special steam train ride, on the Bluebell Railway."

The article was illustrated with a photo of Class 4MT No. 80151 travelling through the snowy landscape and another of a smiling Santa inside SteamWorks! at Sheffield Park.

Then on 3 September, The Sun ran a feature on ["The best Santa trains to book this Christmas"](#) and included the Bluebell Railway's services.

The report said: "You'll feel in festive spirits before you even board Bluebell Railway's Santa Special steam train, greeted by festive tunes and Christmas punch on the platform."





COVER STAR

A photo of Flying Scotsman during its visit to the Bluebell Railway in 2017 graces the cover of the latest issue of [Steam Railway](#) magazine.

The picture is by regular Bluebell Railway photographer David Cable who said he was “absolutely delighted” to see his image on the front cover of the publication. He said it is “obviously good advertising for the Bluebell Railway”. We couldn’t agree more. Well done, David.

SR issue 522 is available online and in newsagents as a print and digital issue.

CELEBRATIONS - ONE YEAR LATE

A two-page write-up of the 60+1 anniversary weekend appears in the latest issue of Heritage Railway magazine.

The report said: “A busy timetable was operated, with exhibitions and displays at every station, and visitors were given opportunities to see progress made on projects inside the workshops.”

Photos from Mike Hopps, David Cable and Nick Gilliam of various steam and diesel locomotives illustrated the news article.

[HR issue 284](#) is available online and in newsagents as a print and digital issue.



60+1 Anniversary Weekend

Delayed for a year, the Railway's 60+1 anniversary event finally took place over three days 6 – 8 August.

Four locomotives were in traffic conveying passenger trains over the whole line – Nos. 65, 263, 30541 and 80151 – plus the class 09 diesel hauling brake van rides at Horsted Keynes, and "Skippy", the Carriage and Wagon Department Sentinel shunter allowing passengers the opportunity to drive a locomotive under supervision.

The first photo (by Lance Hodgson, right) shows No. 80151 arriving at Sheffield Park with a down service. SE&CR class 01 No. 65 waits to head north with a train formed from vintage pre-grouping no-corridor bogie compartment carriages.



The second photo (by Jon Bowers, left) shows No. 263 heading north from Sheffield Park with the Metropolitan Railway carriages.

There were displays at all stations, including working 5" gauge locomotives running in the yard at Sheffield Park. The photo below (by Tom James) shows an exquisite replica of a SE&CR D class locomotive, a reminder of the planned E class new build project.



On This Day, 10 September

By Tony Hillman, assistant museum curator

Four pictures from the Bluebell Photographic Archive, all taken on 10 September. 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 Roger Silsbury of the Isle of Wight Steam Railway for his help in describing the Cowes gravity shunt manoeuvre.



SECR E Class 4-4-0 No. 31273 in a classic shot taken on Sunday 10 September 1950. This loco was the first of Wainwright's E class, built in 1906 at Ashford Works and originally numbered 273: it passed through the usual renumberings, becoming in turn SR A273, later 1273, and finally BR 31273.

The headboard "H 85" denotes this is a special "Hoppers" train, in this case a return working, the 5.06pm Staplehurst-London Bridge (Low Level). It is on the old SER main line, approaching Crowhurst Junction South, where it will take the spur to the North junction, join the Brighton Main Line at South Croydon, and thus reach a terminal platform at London Bridge. There it will unload its passengers, along with their handcarts and old prams containing their holiday equipment; pots, pans, kettles, bedding etc, and maybe even the occasional baby!

The SER had inherited the seasonal migration of London hop-pickers to the Kentish hop gardens from the pre-railway era: little then changed for over one hundred years. But by

the mid-1950's these trains were in a steep decline, as both the mechanisation of picking and the import of foreign hops had reduced the need for casual labour, and around three hundred years of the hopping tradition came to an end.

None of the SECR E Class was preserved, either from the 15 unrebuilt examples or the 11 rebuilt in 1919-20 to become Class E1. However, the Brighton Atlantic Group has announced that, once they have completed the recreation of LBSCR Class H2 No. (32)424 *Beachy Head*, their next project is to be a scratch-built replica of SECR E Class No. 516. The original loco, along with 31273, was withdrawn in 1951.

Photo: John J Smith



On the same day as the previous photo, we see L Class 4-4-0 No. 31781 on Hop Pickers Friends' Special H90, catching the evening sun on its smart lined-out black British Railways livery as it cautiously descends the Crowhurst Spur.

The train was the 5.50pm Wateringbury to London Bridge (Low Level) via Oxted and East Croydon, arriving at 7.47pm, and composed of a "Long Set" with a Birdcage Brake immediately behind the engine. The loco was allocated to Ramsgate (74B) at the time and was working Special Duty No 39, perhaps an Ashford or Tonbridge duty; its cleanliness suggests a recent visit to Ashford Works.

At this period, the Crowhurst Spur was only used by one timetabled train, the 7.26am Edenbridge to London Bridge on Mondays to Fridays, necessitating Crowhurst Junction South signal box opening for just 35 minutes from 7.10 to 7.45am. The North signal box was opened for slightly longer from 7.10 to 10.0am, again on Mondays to Fridays only, presumably to shorten the five-mile block section from Lingfield to Hurst Green

Junction during the morning peak. The one timetabled train was withdrawn sometime in 1956, after which the spur was only used by special trains and the South signal box only opened "as required", until both were abolished on 25 October 1965.

The Hop Pickers' Specials ran principally in September each year, all except one starting at or passing through Paddock Wood, where a Hop Control was located. The exception originated on the Kent & East Sussex at Northiam. On 10 September 1950 there were a total of 23 Up trains routed as follows: 13 via the Crowhurst Spur, 8 via Orpington and 2 starting at Paddock Wood via Strood. While the Up Sunday trains were called Hop Pickers Friends' Specials, they also catered for families returning from their annual "holiday" as well as friends and relatives visiting for the weekend, who travelled down on one of ten trains the day before or five early on Sunday morning.

Photo: John J Smith



USA o-6-o Tank engine No. 30072, seen shunting at Southampton Docks on the morning of Wednesday 10 September 1958. It is heading a train of empty stock from the Eastern to the Western Docks having just exited Dock Gate No. 1. To the left is the start of Town Quay and to the right in the distance is the mansard roof of the South Western Hotel, adjoining Southampton Terminus station. The engine is working Southampton Docks Shed Duty No. 5.

After World War Two the Southern Railway had an urgent need for more modern motive power for working the extensive docks system. The only engines available were 14 US-designed and built War Department engines stored at Newbury Racecourse station; all except one of these were built by Vulcan Ironworks of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. They proved to be powerful and sturdy engines; the only weakness was a tendency for the axle-boxes to run hot. Apart from shunting, trip workings etc, they were used to heat banana trains and even provide steam to ships in dry dock.

In 1962, with the introduction of diesel shunters, six USAs were transferred to departmental duties at Ashford, Eastleigh, Redbridge and Meldon Quarry. 30072 went to Guildford Shed in March 1963, as it was ideal to shunt in the confined spaces at that site, and by 1964 all the remaining locos had either been withdrawn or transferred from Southampton to other sheds.

On 9 July 1967, 30072 was the last steam engine to leave Guildford Shed, and travelled to Salisbury for withdrawal. Four of the class have survived as follows:

- 30064 – at the Bluebell Railway.
- 30065 and 30070 – on the Kent and East Sussex Railway.
- 30072 – currently at the Ribble Steam Railway and Museum.

Photo: Colin Hogg



Later on the same day as the previous photo, LSWR Class O2 0-4-4T No. W20 *Shanklin* passes Cowes Signal Box and into the station with the 11.30 am from Ryde Pier Head. W20 was the former LSWR No. 211 and was built at Nine Elms in 1892. It, along with W19, were the first two O2s transferred from the mainland to the Isle of Wight in 1923; it survived until the end of steam in 1967.

Cowes station was opened by the Isle of Wight Central Railway on 16 June 1862 and closed with effect from 21 February 1966. The Saxby & Farmer signal box was added in 1892, but was moved to the location seen here and extended in 1918; the signaller is about to collect the Electric Train Tablet for the section from Newport North.

Upon arrival at Cowes station the train will be subject to a form of gravity shunt. The locomotive will run almost to the buffer stops as is usual, and stop while the passengers alight and luggage is unloaded. It will then reverse back to clear the engine release crossover, the guard will apply the handbrake to the train, and the loco will be

uncoupled and run forward to the buffer stops. The locomotive will then reverse over the trailing crossover whilst the guard, using the slope, will release the brakes allowing the now empty train to roll back into the platform against the buffer stops, thus making sufficient space at the other end for the O2 to couple up. Trains of up to three carriages could be dealt with in this way. The practice was not authorised by "the powers that be" at Waterloo, but took place "out of sight and out of mind". There was nothing in the 1930 SR Isle of Wight Appendix to authorise this method of operation, but equally there was nothing to say it was forbidden!

Photo: Colin Hogg

What's On

Friday 10 September – Thursday 7 October

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: Service A / Service B.

DINING TRAINS

Sunday 12 September [The Blue Belle luncheon](#)

Friday 17 September [Fish & Chips Special](#)

Saturday 18 September [Wealden Rambler Afternoon Tea](#)

Saturday 18 September [The Blue Belle evening dining](#)

Sunday 19 September [The Blue Belle luncheon](#)

Thursday 23 September [Fish & Chips Special](#)

Saturday 25 September [Wealden Rambler Afternoon Tea](#)

Sunday 26 September [The Blue Belle luncheon](#)

Wednesday 29 September [Fish & Chips Special](#)

Thursday 30 September [The Blue Belle evening dining](#)

Saturday 2 October [The Grinstead Grazer](#)

Saturday 2 October [The Blue Belle evening dining](#)

Sunday 3 October [The Blue Belle luncheon](#)

SPECIAL EVENTS

Friday 10 – Sunday 12 September [Beer Festival](#)

Sunday 19 September [Toy & Rail Collectors Fair](#)



The Bluebell Times

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Members, Staff and
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*If you have any comments or
feedback about this issue or
suggestions for future articles
or features, contact:*

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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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