



Visitors 'Clan Line' and 'Cheltenham' on shed at the end of the day Photo: Dave Bowles

The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway Members, Staff and Supporters

November 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

Was Giants of Steam already almost a month ago? The photo above is a reminder of the special atmosphere of that event with a busy Railway and the line running at capacity. Many of the jobs around the Railway are equally arduous regardless of how many passengers there are – a fireman shovels the same coal whether a train is full or empty – so seeing so many smiling passengers over the weekend is a big reward.

Volunteers are the life-blood of the Railway, so it was pleasing to see Chris Cooper – one of our longest-standing volunteers – awarded a lifetime achievement award by the National Transport Trust. The new process for identifying potential volunteers, and matching them to roles, is starting to bear fruit. Volunteer co-ordinator Graham Aitken gives a further update in this issue: could you be our next volunteer? The rewards from volunteering are considerable.

Finally, the Jewel in the Crown appeal, launched last month, has made an excellent start. The latest figures show that donations from our supporters have reached £96,000 to date, more than half-way to our initial target of £170,000. Gift Aid will add to that total. However, there is still more to be raised to ensure our largest station receives the attention it so needs. Remember, any donations made up to the end of January will be match funded, so every £50 donated could be worth £100 to the Railway, or £112.50 if the donor is a UK taxpayer. A donation form is attached at the back of this issue, or you can donate online at <https://www.bluebell-railway.com/donate/>

Tom James, Editor

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From Mee to You

By Geoff Mee, chairman, Bluebell Railway plc

By the time that you read this we will be in the thick of SteamLights delivery and preparations for the arrival of Santa. I know that we all enjoy delivering what is a brilliant experience for our guests but I am also conscious that this stretches our resources and volunteers to the max and I want to thank the entire team in advance for the hard work and long hours that pulling off the spectacle needs.

I am personally looking forward to seeing our five-year-old granddaughter's face when we visit these Christmas events for the first time.

SteamLights and Santa provides the income that we need to see us through the Winter Shutdown and the build-up to Easter. I know that it will be a success due to your hard work and the planning that goes into these events.

On the subject of success, wasn't Giants absolutely stunning! So many people having a great time with so much to see and do across the whole of the Railway but I have to make special mention of Horsted Keynes which really came alive that weekend with so much going on at the station and the tours of the C&W workshops proving really popular, prompting some new members and volunteers.

At Sheffield Park the car parks were full to bursting and all our visitors were having a great time and the revamped shop had one of its best weeks ever.

The owners of *Clan Line* had a great time as well and sent Operations Manager Chris Knibbs a wonderful letter saying how welcoming and helpful everybody at the Bluebell had been and they look forward to planning a return visit.

The Jewel in the Crown Appeal has made a great start and the total funds donated by the public since the appeal launched is over £96,000. More money is still needed though to provide for the necessary renovation. Remember, if you donate before January 31 next year, your donation will be

match funded, so a £50 donation could be worth up to £112.50 to the Railway if you are also a UK taxpayer.

Well done to appeal co-ordinator Trevor Swainson and the team. Please encourage everyone you know to keep up the generosity and we will soon be in a position to start the work on site. We have some great ideas as to how we can make the station and the whole area more attractive to visitors and we are starting to plan for the official opening of The Heritage Skills Centre and OP4 in the spring, so lots to look forward to.

Stations are really important to the visitor attraction and you have heard me talk a lot about the need to be better connected to the London market, which is where we need to raise our profile to attract more visitors. Our gateway for the London market is at East Grinstead and frankly it needs a complete re-think to make it a really vibrant Gateway to the Bluebell Railway from the National Rail Network.

To that end I have asked East Grinstead senior station master Roy Watts to pull together a team to look into the possibility of putting together a bid for National Heritage funding and defining what a New Station (in keeping with our heritage status of course) could be like.

He will be pulling together a crack team to take this forward and we will cover this in a future edition of *The Bluebell Times*.

The Board has also decided that we need to accelerate the delivery of our Pullman Dining Experience. We had a great meeting of the Plc Board, the Trust members and the newly appointed Preservation Trustees with a presentation by business development manager Jon Beardmore, which outlined the vision and delivery options to provide a top quality Pullman Dining experience on the Bluebell. The board are setting aside funding to start the first phase of the transformation, more details in a future edition of *The Bluebell Times*.

We have also discussed the long-running problems of overnight accommodation for volunteers who often come considerable distances for (very) early and late turns of duty. We agree that this needs to be resolved quickly and I have asked BRPS Chairman Paul Churchman to lead a team to look at options to enable this to happen and to resurrect the social side of working on the Bluebell that was a victim of the lockdown.

It has not gone unnoticed that the Volunteer Handbook has been causing some concern. I do have a lot of sympathy with the call for natural justice and the right of appeal.

To this end Paul and I met with the company lawyer and Russell Pearce as a representative of the volunteers to thrash out a solution. The final version is being agreed as we speak but it does allow for a fair hearing of the case and for an independent appeals process.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate carriage cleaner Chris Cooper on his lifetime achievement award for service to the Bluebell presented by the Princess Royal – see page 8.

I have to admit that I hardly recognised Chris without his orange boiler suit; he looked incredibly smart with his Bluebell Tie in full view, very well deserved Chris.

More staff and volunteer news: we have been joined by Phil Jones as our new Safety Compliance Officer and a number of new volunteers including

a Safety Management Systems expert, George Barclay. I am also pleased to welcome Ian Hurst who was the architect for South Central and the Programme Director for English Heritage. Volunteer co-ordinator Graham Aitken continues to work hard with you all to bolster our volunteers across all departments

Next month we will look at the plans and budget for next year, with some really exciting events in the planning stages. We will also be giving details of the workshops that we are planning for late January/February to engage with staff and volunteers to share the programme for next year, the longer term 10-year asset management action plans and this is the opportunity for you to come along and influence the future.

There are proposals for 4 separate dates, one for staff and three for volunteers. I think that we should be able to accommodate 40 people for each date. These will be ticket only events led by Paul and myself and hopefully we will use the new conference suite at the Heritage Skills Centre as the venue.

Christmas will soon be upon us and we are going to be very busy right the way through the season, virtually all tickets for all events and services are sold out which is great for our future prospects. I am sure that it will be great fun but also hard work so I am thanking you all in advance for all your efforts.

Thank you and have a super time making our guests happy in the lead-up to Christmas.



Visiting locomotive 'Cheltenham' on Freshfield Bank with a rake of Bulleid coaches Photo: David Cable

Jewel in the Crown Appeal

By Trevor Swainson, appeal co-ordinator

After the successful launch of the new appeal for help in restoring Horsted Keynes Station to its former glory, donations have been rolling in and the total raised by members, shareholders and friends of the Railway now stands at over £96,000 as at 10 November.

In addition, we will be seeking reimbursement of Gift Aid from HMRC and, at this stage, we estimate an additional £17,000 will be received.

This means we are halfway towards our target of £170,000 from individual donations. For the sake of HK Station, we do require many more donations to enable the restoration to start in earnest after the Winter period.

The offer of matched funding from the Trust extends to 31st January 2022 so every pound of donations is doubled up to a limited of £150,000.

If you have already made a donation, then 'thank you' very much. We will be acknowledging donations shortly but our priority is to get all cheques, etc., banked so we ask you to accept our apologies for any delay in acknowledging your donation.

If you have not yet made a donation, then we are very keen to receive your support to help us meet our target. [Please help us meet our target.](#)

APOLOGIES

In the 'special' edition of *The Bluebell Times* we described the splendid work made to reinstate the stained-glass porch at Horsted Keynes Station.

We stated that the new porch was dedicated to memory of the late Simon Baker but, erroneously, we referred to Simon, the former Station Master at HK as having been killed in a tragic accident when in fact he succumbed to ill health.

We apologise for this error and to any distress this might have caused.

For the record, it was Simon Brown who was tragically killed in an accident. In his memory,

Simon's family has helped set up the Miniature Railway at Sheffield Park that will hopefully soon be installed and in operation.

VIRGINMONEYGIVING AND THE NEW DONATION PORTAL

As you may already know, the VirginMoneyGiving ('VMG') charitable giving scheme is closing with effect from 30th November. Any donations made to VMG after this date will be rejected.

In anticipation of this closure, The Trust has set up its own online donation facility that is operated through The Bluebell website using SagePay and WorldPay. This facility is completely secure as no payment card details are stored by the Trust.

One advantage of the new facility is that the transaction charges are much lower than VMG thereby ensuring the more of your donation is applied to your chosen fund.

We would still like to receive your donations towards your chosen fund. These donations can be made through the Bluebell website using the following link:

<https://www.bluebell-railway.com/donate/>

There you will find a simple form with links to a number of different 'live' projects and, in addition, you can specify any other fund that is not shown on the drop-down menu. The form enables you to opt for Gift Aid thereby increasing the value of your donation.

For more information, please contact: trevor.swainson@bluebell-railway.com

News in Brief

CARRIAGE SHOP DONATES A FURTHER £2,000 TO THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN APPEAL

The [Carriage Shop](#) is delighted to be able to donate a further £2,000 to the Jewel in The Crown Appeal. This brings our total donation to £4,000 in support of this worthwhile cause for the restoration of Horsted Keynes station. This donation includes £700 raised since July from the two bookcases at the end of the Kiosk on platforms 2 and 3. These books are available whenever the station is open – please post your payment through the letterbox.

A huge thank you to all the visitors who came to the Carriage Shop in October and a special thanks to everyone who donated models, books or DVDs or other items to us.

The Carriage Shop will open again with the start of the Santa Specials on Saturday 27th November, please check our Facebook Page for up-to-date opening times.

If you can help with donations of model railway items or Thomas the Tank Engine toys, please get in touch using the email address below.

bluebellrailwaycarriageshop@gmail.com

STEPNEY CLUB MEMBER RAISES FUNDS FOR HORSTED KEYNES APPEAL

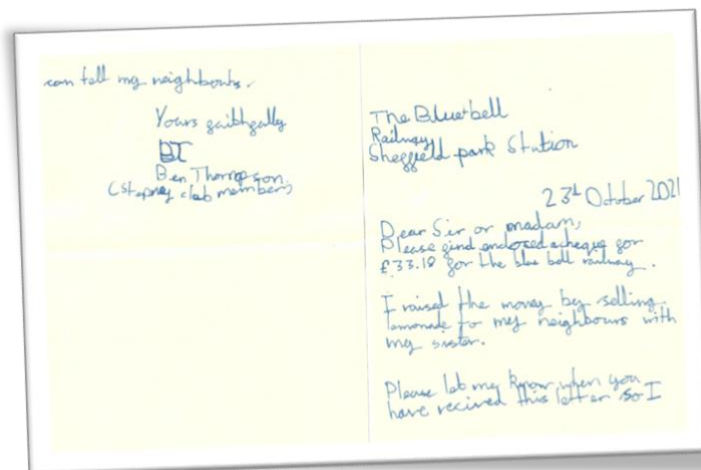
The [Stepney Club](#) is the Railway's special club for younger supporters. But younger doesn't mean less committed or generous. One of our members, Ben Thompson, raised £33.18 for the Railway by selling home-made lemonade! The railway has sent Ben a special cap to thank him for his efforts.

SHEFFIELD PARK DEPARTURE BOARDS

10 out of 10 for all of those individuals who helped to deliver a brilliant – and profitable – Giants of Steam Event.

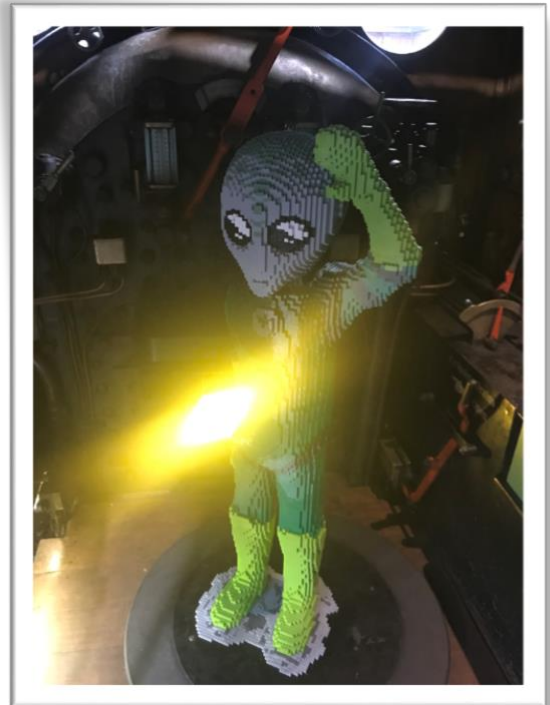
12 out of 12 for Sheffield Park Station Foreman Roger Simmons who during lockdown, amused himself by designing and producing new Train Departure boards for display in the forecourt, in front of our Booking Hall entrance.

On both the Saturday and Sunday of the Giants there were 12 departures, so Roger was able to use both boards and for the first time 12 specially prepared magnetic departure times. Many visitors commented on the clarity of the information.



HERITAGE SKILLS CENTRE SIGNED OFF FOR USE

On 29 October, Building Control visited and confirmed that we will now receive sign-off for the Heritage Skills Centre. We have a few items to address such as signage which we can complete and then send the photos over which will make the process relatively easy. This is a moment that we have spent many years waiting for. Massive amounts of organisation and work has gone into getting us this far. Significantly the trimming team, led by Steve Bigg, has now moved all their material and machines into their new workshop. The coming months will see the vehicles nominated by the BRPS take up their designated positions in the OP4 storage shed. We'll have a full article to mark this achievement in the next issue of *The Bluebell Times*.



*Half term's Lego Brickworks Adventure event bought this alien presence to SteamWorks.
Photo: Tom James*

BLUEBELL TIMES PUBLICATION DATES

This is the penultimate issue of *The Bluebell Times* of 2021. Our next issue is due out on Friday 10 December.

The newsletter will continue to be published on the second Friday of each month.

Publication dates in 2022 are:

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

Contributions from staff, volunteers, members and supporters are welcome. Send words and photos to bluebelltimes@bluebell-railway.com to arrive by the end of the month for publication in the following month's newsletter.

Volunteer Review Update

By Graham Aitken, volunteer co-ordinator

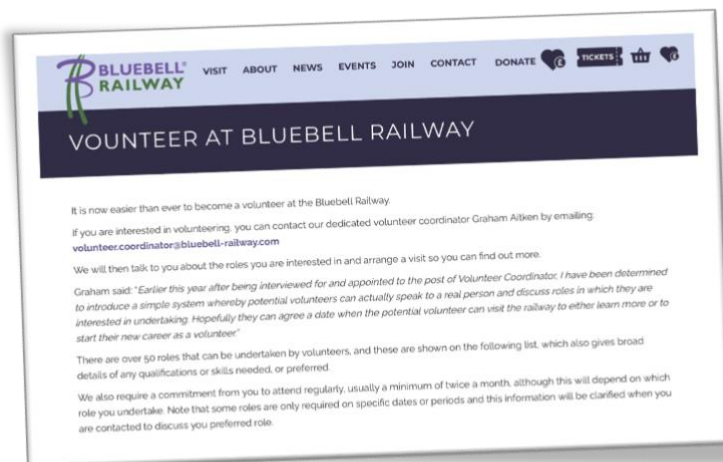
The new process is still producing interest and by the beginning of November 55 potential volunteers had contacted me to offer their services.

This a fabulous start and I have already met with two new volunteers who have become members of the Sheffield Park station staff and also a couple of individuals who turned up at the station one day whilst I was on duty and, after talking to them, they have both offered their services. One in the commercial dept and one in the loco dept.

I do not possess a magic touch, perhaps the gift of the gab, but if I can talk to people about our Railway and suggest that they might want to volunteer here themselves, I am sure that you can all do it when the opportunity arises. Just think how many new volunteers that might result in. Go on, give it a try. All of us, employees and volunteers, has a responsibility to do what we can to keep our trains running, now and in the future.

Turning to my next steps, I had a meeting with volunteer David Chappell recently to talk about restarting the popular Find Out More Days, aimed at potential volunteers who are not sure what they would like to do at the Railway. We are planning to tweak the content of the day and are planning for a relaunch in Spring.

Secondly, whilst we still need many more volunteers across the Railway, a couple of departments are at the point of creating waiting lists, so I will be asking each manager to let me know what the establishment figure is for each of the roles they are responsible for, followed by how many volunteers they currently have in place. This should be straightforward but I am not expecting answers overnight. Have we ever done it before?



And finally, you may be interested to know that I recently met by chance, Nick Brodrick, former editor of the monthly magazine *Steam Railway* and now the editor of the new monthly magazine [Trackside](#), a journal for and about preserved railways. He is very interested in how we are tackling the growing national problem of having sufficient volunteers to allow preserved railways to survive, develop and become greater attractions, for both general visitors, as well as enthusiasts. As such I have been asked to provide an article outlining how Bluebell are tackling this problem for inclusion in a future issue of the magazine. Both he, and colleague Tony Streeter, were very impressed with our simple three-step process of how we now treat potential volunteers, particularly the fact that each one is contacted by the relevant department Volunteer Champion who actually phones them to discuss what their preferred role entails and to agree a date when they visit their chosen location, meet a member of the staff who shows them around and hopefully results in them becoming a working volunteer.

Thank you again to everyone who is helping me to help our Railway.

Chris Cooper Award

Words and photos by Roy Watts, BRPS vice chairman and chief clerk

On the 20 October, the National Transport Trust held its annual awards ceremony at Fawley Hill Railway Museum near Henley on Thames.

The event was hosted by Lady McAlpine, wife of the late Sir William McAlpine.

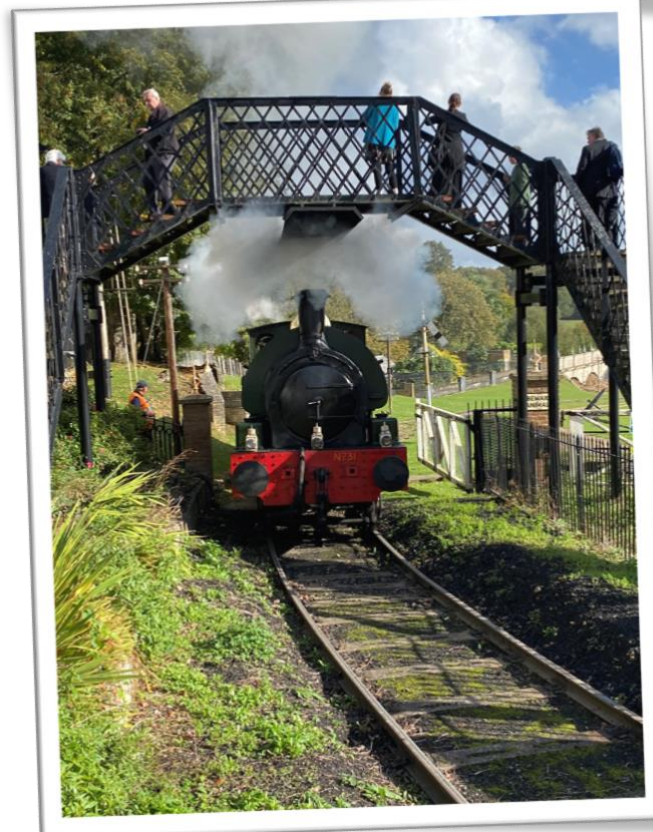
The 2020 event was naturally postponed so this was a combined event with 2021 awards winners. The event was very fortunate in having its new Patron, HRH the Princess Royal presenting the awards for the first time.

Over 200 people were present at the event to receive restoration and commemorative awards covering the huge diverse nature of Heritage Transport.

Guests were treated to all the Museum has to offer including the sight and sound of the resident Peckett locomotive, McAlpine's last steam locomotive number 31, working hard as it climbed the steep ascent into the Museum. However the highlight went to the unmistakable sound of Merlin engines as a Spitfire provided an overhead aerial display.

The Lifetime Achievement Award for 2021 was presented to the Bluebell's very own Chris Cooper for 60 years service to the Railway, particularly in recognition of his work on carriage cleaning and presentation.

Chris was member number 32 when the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society was founded in 1959 and like most people at the time, became an all-round volunteer preparing the Railway for re-opening and undertaking a variety of duties. It is however Chris' passion for cleaning our carriage stock that Chris has become widely respected for and to everyone at the Bluebell, carriage cleaning and Chris Cooper are synonymous and everyone is grateful for everything Chris has done over the years and it's not a bad record to still be cleaning carriages with such a passion after 60 years and judging by the huge number of plaudits paid to Chris on social media, richly deserved.



Photos, top to bottom:

Chris receives his award from the Princess Royal

The former Brighton Station indicator board on display at Fawley Hill

Peckett No. 31 arrives at the museum

The Value of Volunteering

By Paul Bromley, communications director, Bluebell Railway

Why do we do it? Volunteer at the Bluebell Railway, that is.

Everyone has their own reasons for giving up their time and effort.

One of the questions I often ask fellow volunteers in person (and for our regular 'Five Minutes With ...' feature in *The Bluebell Times*) is how they first got involved with the Bluebell Railway. The answers are sometimes surprising, always informative.

For a certain generation, it was because they were at a loose end when they retired from full-time work at the age of 65. Many a time have I heard people say they stopped work on the Friday afternoon and started at the Bluebell on the Monday morning – often with the active encouragement of their partner!

For others, it was because their entire professional career had been on the railways and so being at the Bluebell was a way to continue being part of the railway "family" as well as passing on to others some of their extensive knowledge and skills.

Some people joined because they already knew friends or family who were existing volunteers. And many were recruited by speaking to people at an event or an organised Find Out More Day.

I have come to regard my Bluebell volunteering in recent months as a "journey" – and it has taken me to a destination I didn't expect when I started out as a working member.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. Let's start at the beginning.

I'm not old enough to remember steam on the mainline. How can I be nostalgic for something I didn't experience? I grew up in north London and my parents didn't own a car. All our trips were



The author at the railway with visiting celebrity. (The author is on the right)

taken by public transport. That meant buses to visit grandparents and trains to take us on summer holiday – often to sites on the Sussex coast ranging from Camber Sands to Selsey Bill.

So I have always associated taking a train with going on an adventure. That hasn't changed. The 58-year-old me is just as excited as the eight-year-old me when I'm aboard a train as it pulls out of a station.

I began volunteering at the Bluebell Railway when I had more time on my hands at weekends after my children had grown up and were moving on in life. I was also looking to meet new people (particularly fellow railway aficionados) and provide a more relaxed and quieter contrast to my hectic and pressured day job as a journalist working in 24-hour news.

It was also a form of "payback" for all the wonderful days I and my family had experienced as visitors to the Bluebell – Santa Specials, Days Out with Thomas, Stepney's birthday train, Easter Egg Hunts, Sunday luncheon services, afternoon

tea trains, a Firing and Driving course on the footplate of Stepney ...

A 'Find Out More Day' (on a snowy February Sunday) led to me becoming a museum steward. I was looking for a customer-facing role and the museum seemed to fit the bill as good a place as any to start. The comfortable temperature level inside the museum on a cold day as well as the warmth of the welcome from the museum team sold it for me!

Regular museum shifts followed. I eagerly looked forward to each turn and came home full of stories of the people I'd met. I spent as much time listening to the visitors and hearing about their day/experience/railway connections as talking to them about how semaphore signalling works or the line's filming connections.

I thoroughly enjoyed my Bluebell volunteering – so much so that I then extended my scope to the education team for school visits and as an on-board train guide.

Volunteering at the Bluebell far exceeded all my expectations. I felt that I was achieving a good balance between my paid job and unpaid volunteering.

Then it all changed in the summer of 2019.

My post was made redundant and I was out of work for the first time since leaving education.

I set up as a freelance writer, picked up some occasional paid work from various industry contacts and began moving on to a new phase in my life. It wasn't easy and I won't pretend there weren't occasions when I was a bit down.

But not having to work long, anti-social hours and not having to commute to London from Mid Sussex left me more time to volunteer at the Bluebell. Being around other people (particularly younger people as well as those my age and above), having a reason to get up in the morning, getting out of the house, learning new skills, indulging in a personal interest all improved my mental well-being. It's no exaggeration to say the Bluebell Railway was a lifeline during that time.



Working at Sky News in 2015

I joined the board as a non-executive director when a vacancy arose for a new communications director using my journalistic experience and industry contacts to help the publicity effort.

Then it all changed again in the spring of 2020.

You all know the story: pandemic, shutdown, reopening, shutdown, reopening, shutdown, reopening etc. But it hasn't all been doom and gloom. The birth of *The Bluebell Times*, the success of the Emergency Appeal, raising the profile of the Bluebell Railway were some of the positives to come out of the last 18 months.

But now I can add another personal positive to the list. Because I have obtained regular paid employment again ... and it's all down to my Bluebell volunteering.

I am a Community Rail line officer working for the [Southeast Communities Rail Partnership](#). I work with the Train Operating Companies, local authorities, community groups, transport organisations, station Friends groups and volunteers to connect communities to their railways, improve station environments and encourage train travel. I have a specific line and dedicated stations to look after.

At the job interview, I had to give a 10-minute presentation on encouraging community development around railway stations and was then asked various questions during a 45-minute panel interview. The questions covered my experience of working with community groups,

communicating with volunteers, managing a changing set of priorities, writing reports for board meetings, promotion of rail etc.

Large parts of my presentation and nearly every answer I gave in the interview used an example from the last two years of my Bluebell Railway volunteering. In the entire selection process, I referenced my previous 35 years of corporate life just once – and that's only because I had already used the most relevant Bluebell example in answer to an earlier question!

I am convinced I would not have been offered the job had it not been for my Bluebell volunteering. I would not have been able to provide examples of my commitment to community rail without my work at the Railway. I was even able to provide Bluebell Railway people to act as references to support my application.

The interview panel liked what they heard. They said they were very keen for me to combine my Community Rail work with continued volunteering at the Bluebell Railway. They could see how the two worked hand in hand for mutual benefit. The word they used was "dovetail". It seemed an appropriate choice of words: a dovetail joint in woodwork is one that is strong and secure.

And so it has proved. I have already been able to use my Community Rail knowledge to benefit the Bluebell – putting Network Rail in contact with the station team at East Grinstead, for example, or passing on details of community bus organisations offering to help in transporting visitors to and from the Railway at future events. And I know of a few other projects where I can already see that the interests of Community Rail and Bluebell Railway will overlap.

We all know the world of employment has altered dramatically since the start of the pandemic. Many businesses have pressed the "reset" button with new ways of working – both companies and individuals are adapting to different situations.

The Bluebell Railway has a perfect opportunity to tap into those changing circumstances and recruit a new cross-section of volunteers. We no longer have to wait for people to retire from full-time

work (or be made redundant) to join the volunteering effort.

With many people working from home or commuting to their office just one or two days a week, they are saving time and money – time and money that could be put to good use. In addition, those in that position are often now actively seeking opportunities for greater social contact, a chance to be outdoors rather than stuck in front of a computer and a way to develop a wider circle of relationships to replace the office environment. And in line with the "all work and no play" saying, volunteering gives people a broader outlook.

Employment prospects in many sectors are uncertain at best, gloomy at worst. Volunteering enhances a CV and makes for interesting conversations, particularly volunteering in a sector such as heritage railways. Employers are now looking at people in the round and not just where they've worked or what they've achieved in corporate life.

So that's where my volunteering "journey" has taken me ... so far. I've certainly benefited from being a Bluebell Railway volunteer in more ways than I could have imagined.

For me, railways are no longer just a source of interest but now a source of income.



Promoting Sussex rail lines for the Southeast Communities Rail Partnership

Five Minutes with ... Paul Churchman

Name

Paul Churchman

Role

Chairman, Bluebell Railway Preservation Society

How long have you been involved with the Bluebell Railway?

32 years

How did you first become involved?

My mother, who was a Trustee and Director in the 1990s, started volunteering in 1989 and I got brought along and found a job to do!

What is your professional career?

I have worked in passenger transport all my career, although I qualified as a chef originally. I have worked at Managing Director level for over 15 years.

I have worked for a large US company, Arriva, Rotala and National Express as well as owning my own businesses and currently am a Group Operations Director for a privately owned group based at Heathrow who own a number of businesses that I oversee. I also own a pub in Reigate.

What does your Bluebell Railway job involve?

As Chairman I am there to lead the Society and be the voice for all the members and to ensure that the Trustees and myself deliver the wishes of the membership, but also be the human face and someone that people can go and ask and to hold to account.

How often do you volunteer at the Railway?

Since taking the Chairman's role – weekly, but every day in reality with emails and paperwork.



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

Operations. Shunting is my favourite job on the Railway. I was previously Operations Director and a Trustee from 2007 to 2010 and I used to be a Station Master at Sheffield Park.

What's the best part of your job?

Being part of the team to lead and promote and better our fabulous Railway

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

No

What is the biggest challenge facing the Bluebell Railway?

We have so many challenges that are all equally as big. The key ones are growing the membership, recruiting new volunteers, passing on the skillsets, funding, ensuring we preserve what we have in the right way.

Do you have a favourite locomotive and, if so, why?

92240 – what an amazing and powerful machine.

Train or bus?

Train – I have to deal with buses and lorries in my day job!

Railway Cuttings

By Paul Bromley, communications director, Bluebell Railway

National newspaper and TV exposure for the Bluebell Railway in the last few weeks has built on the publicity success of the launch of the 'Jewel in the Crown' appeal (see page 4).

The presentation to Chris Cooper of a volunteering award by HRH Princess Royal (see page 8) made it to the [online pages of celebrity publication Hello!](#) in an article about the lifestyle of Princess Anne.

The Telegraph included the Bluebell Railway in a [round-up of the UK's finest railway journeys for scenic views](#). The report said: "The 11-mile journey ... weaves through well-wooded Sussex countryside, carpeted with bluebells in spring". It added: "Because it was the first standard-gauge heritage railway, opening in 1960, the Bluebell has a fine collection of vintage carriages, adding to the charm of the journey."

Horsted Keynes station has featured prominently on TV and in print. The fourth episode of the [ITV series 'The Larkins'](#) focused on a plotline in which Pop Larkin (played by Bradley Walsh) leads a campaign to save the local railway station from closure. Sound familiar?

Many of the scenes were filmed at HK with Kingscote also featuring. And Q class locomotive No. 30541 puts in an appearance too with Bluebell Railway driver Bill White. Eagle-eyed Bluebell Railway viewers noticed the change of platform numbers for filming – and the appearance of a windmill at Kingscote (using computer generated imagery!).

Then the day after the episode had aired, a photo of Horsted Keynes station was used by [The Times newspaper in a column about sustainable train travel](#) linked to the Glasgow Climate Change Conference with a plea "to make the 21st century the new golden age of the railways". The photo caption read: "Country train stations have become a rare species since the Beeching cuts."

For younger viewers, an episode of [Channel 5's 'Meet The Experts'](#) series included train-mad youngster Maxi who was filmed at the Bluebell Railway. Channel 5 says the series "celebrates young children's knowledge and achievements in a hobby or interest which they love."

HELLO!

Princess Anne beams as she poses in camouflage for new outing

The Princess Royal donned full military uniform. It's been a busy week for the Princess Royal, who was also in attendance at the National Transport Trust awards, where she presented the lifetime achievement award to Bluebell Railway volunteer Chris Cooper.

Bluebell Railway @bluebellrailway

Many congratulations to Bluebell volunteer Chris Cooper, who received a lifetime achievement award at the annual National Transport Trust awards yesterday.

The award was received for Chris's services to the Railway and was presented to him by HRH The Princess Royal.



2:16 PM · Oct 21, 2021

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Take in the wonderful sights across Britain from the comfort of your carriage.

Bluebell Railway

Southern's trains to East Grinstead provide an easy way for Londoners to reach the Bluebell Railway whose station is a few minutes' walk from the main-line platform. The 11-mile journey to Sheffield Park weaves through well-wooded Sussex countryside, carpeted with bluebells in spring.

Each of the four stations is restored to evoke a different period in the line's 137-year history, and the quiet country junction of Horsted Keynes, with its small refreshment room on the island platform, is one of the most atmospheric of all heritage railway stations. Because it was the first standard-gauge heritage railway, opening in 1960, the Bluebell has a fine collection of vintage carriages, adding to the charm of the journey. Take a stroll to the National Trust gardens at Sheffield Park before returning.

The details: From £22 return (01825 720800; [bluebell-railway.com](#))



The Bluebell also has almost 150 carriages and wagons, most of them pre-1939. | LARRY GALT



There have been extensive write-ups of the Giants of Steam event in the heritage press. A photo by David Cable of Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35028 Clan Line was used on the front cover of [Heritage Railway magazine issue 286](#).

And finally, the i newspaper on Saturday 30 October chose as its anniversary of the day the release of Elton John's album Tumbleweed Connection in 1970. The album cover was photographed at Sheffield Park station. The Bluebell Railway museum team last year recreated the scene for the 50th anniversary of the album's release (see *The Bluebell Times* issue 12 September 2020, pages 22-23) and it continues to be a popular attraction with an Elton John tribute group recently turning up to take photographs outside the museum.

JEWEL IN THE CROWN PUBLICITY

The Jewel in the Crown appeal also gained widespread coverage, including in the [Mid Sussex Times](#), [The Argus](#), [Rail Business Daily](#) and [Heritage Railway](#) and [Steam Railway](#) magazines.



Mid Sussex Times

Bluebell Railway launches £500k appeal to revamp station that appeared in Downton Abbey and Poirot

The Bluebell Railway has launched an appeal for £500,000 to help restore a station that has featured in many popular films and TV programmes.

The heritage line is seeking public support to repair leaking roofs and replace rotting beams at its Grade II-listed Horsted Keynes station.

"The station buildings were built in Victorian times and are now showing signs of wear and tear," said appeal co-ordinator Trevor Swainson.

"We view Horsted Keynes as our 'jewel in the crown' and we hope this appeal puts the sparkle back into the station," he added.



Giants of Steam

Words by Tom James Photos: As credited



The Railway held its 'Giants of Steam' event over three days of intensive running in early October.

Three of the 'stars of the show' arranged on shed late at night as they were prepared for the event: left to right Bulleid Merchant Navy class No. 35028 'Clan Line'; Maunsell

Schools class No. 30925 'Cheltenham' and BR Standard class 5 No. 73082 'Camelot'.

A feature of Giants of Steam is that the locomotives are kept in steam each night (rather than being lit up afresh each day), providing new views for photographers.

Later on, Schools class 'Cheltenham' is seen on a service train.



Photos:
John Barrance (top)
David Cable (bottom)

'Clan Line' was making its second visit to the railway, after a very brief stay back in 2019. It is seen here with a West of England headcode early on Saturday morning.

From the home fleet, 'Camelot' – just returned from overhaul – and Maunsell S15 No. 847 ran service trains, while Wainwright H class No. 263 handled brake van rides at Horsted Keynes, enhanced by being run with a short goods train.

We thank the Merchant Navy Locomotive Preservation Society for allowing 'Clan Line' to visit; and the National Railway Museum / Watercress Line for 'Cheltenham'.



Photos:
David Cable (top)
Robert Batty (bottom)

Looking Back and Moving Forwards

By Tom Newble and Ken Upton, Locomotive Department

As I hope you are all aware, Andy Taylor of the Loco department started '[Awake the Giant](#)' at the end of 2019 (to raise money to restore our very own giant). It did not prove to be the best time to start (due to a certain pandemic!), however Andy didn't give up and now things are gaining momentum.

As well as the many people who are donating on a regular basis and one-off lump sums, we have a growing team of active members, including Martin Payne who is heading up the volunteer engineering team and whose father Norman was involved in the original purchase and restoration.

There has not yet been a big push on fundraising for 92240, but the group has had a small presence at Horsted Keynes at weekends and there was a larger presence for 60+1. We also have a small table in SteamWorks at Sheffield Park.

For the Giants of Steam event, the team were at Horsted Keynes on all three days. 92240 was shunted to Platform 1 and this enabled footplate visits. (Thanks to the Operations Department for the shunt, and the 9F club and Martin Payne for tidying up the footplate).

Over the weekend we had up to five members present – new team member Phil Wilson (a member of the original restoration team) talked to footplate visitors – Jim Brady, Andy Taylor, Ken Upton and Tom Newble collected donations to enter the footplate and made full use of the new 'tap and go' machine kindly donated by David Riviere.

We also had a lot of interest and we estimate that we handed out over 100 [standing order forms](#) to visitors over the weekend, plus photo competition entry forms.

Tom Parsons headed up a small stand in SteamWorks giving out further forms and taking a surprising amount of donations.

Over the 3 days, with help from all members of the team, we raised just under £450 in cash donations. We eagerly await seeing the standing orders come in.

There were many questions from intrigued steam enthusiasts about what work is required, estimated costs and what parts that will need to be sourced. As



previously reported, we have only had an initial assessment but are looking to raise at least £500,000, although it is hoped with regular donations coming in 92240 may be in the workshop before that figure is reached.

Also at the Giants event we launched our photographic competition which runs until the end of November. More details can be found on the Bluebell website and the Awake the Giant social media pages.

As has been stated before, the core aim is to have a pool of regular donors to fund this and future overhauls ('Sustainable Funding' as Andy has called it). However, one off donations are very welcome as not everyone can commit to regular donations.

In 2022 our fundraising will be more prominent. We have a logo (thanks to Driver Liz Groome) and we aim to produce a range of souvenirs to aid fundraising.

To this aim we would welcome hi-res photographs that we can use.

A number of photographers have already generously supplied photographs for us to use but more would be welcome – particularly of 92240 in BR days.

We will also produce a priced list of parts available to sponsor.

Finally, several supporters have expressed an interest in working on 92240. We will investigate the logistics of that. We are likely to start by removing the cladding and insulation in 2022, lead by Martin Payne under the gaze of the workshop team.

E-mail us if you are interested or for any queries. The team can be contacted at awakethegiant@outlook.com

Museum Morsel

By Tony Hillman, assistant museum curator

These three London, Brighton and South Coast Railway signal box name boards have recently been put on display at the museum.



The London Brighton & South Coast Railway Box Board shown above is from the signal box sited at Grange Road station. Although the station was at Crawley Down it was named Grange Road after the estate on which the station was built containing the house 'The Grange'.

When the Railways were Grouped in 1923 the London Brighton & South Coast Railway become part of the Southern Railway. The box boards were repainted from black letters on a white background to Southern Railway green with white letters, as seen above.



In 1865 the LBSCR opened the Horsham and Guildford Direct Railway, which began around 2.5 miles to the west of Horsham, branching off the existing Mid Sussex line to Arundel. For reference this point had to be given a name, and it was called "Stammerham Junction" after the farm a little to the south. A signal box was built by contractors Saxby & Farmer to control the junction, being a wooden cabin on stilts, with the space beneath boarded in. There was no station at the junction, which was really in the "middle of nowhere", only the signal box, and this is its nameboard – though we cannot be certain it dates back as far as 1865.

Later the LBSCR decided to build a station immediately to the south of the junction. This was to serve the new site of Christ's Hospital School, which was moving out of the City of London, and was a large affair with no less than seven platform faces, four on the main line and three on the Guildford Branch. This in turn required two new signal boxes, Christ's Hospital North and South, one at either end of the station. The North box took over control of the junction of the main and Guildford

lines when the station opened on 28 April 1902, and Stammerham Junction box was closed. The name then faded from railway use.

The signal box at Billingshurst, the next station to the south on the Mid Sussex line, was built in the same style as Stammerham Junction; it can now be seen in preservation at Amberley Museum (see previous page).



The London Brighton & South Coast Railway Box Board displayed above is from the signal box sited at the north end of West Hoathly station. The board can be seen in the picture at the top of the brickwork.

As explained above, after the Grouping, the SR repainted box boards green with white lettering, as seen in the photo, right. This example in the museum, below, has been restored to the previous LBSCR colour scheme of black letters on white.



On This Day, 12 November

By Tony Hillman, assistant museum curator

Three pictures from the Bluebell Photographic Archive taken on 12 November. Thanks to Martin Elms, John Creed, Richard Peirce, Roger Merry-Price and Chris Wilson for finding the pictures and providing the notes.



On the afternoon of Wednesday 12 November 1952, ex-LBSCR E5X 0-6-2T 32586 is seen passing Preston Park Pullman Car works, Brighton, on a short Down goods. The engine has a full bunker of coal and the make-up of the train, with a guards van each end, perhaps indicates this is a short trip working, between goods yards in the Brighton area.

The locomotive was built at Brighton works in December 1903, one of 30 engines of the E5 Class. It was numbered 586 and given the name *Maplehurst*, after a village just south of Horsham, and was first allocated to New Cross shed for passenger duties in the London area. In 1911 this engine along with 3 others was extensively altered and provided with, amongst other things, a much larger boiler, being re-designated as Class E5X. The intention was to improve the overall performance and reduce coal consumption, but they were not a success and the conversion of another 16 locomotives was cancelled.

On conversion the engine became one of two E5Xs based at New Cross. It was still there when the Southern Railway was created in 1923, thereafter right up until the end of World War 2, employed mainly on shunting and carriage pilot duties. It then spent a period in storage before being returned to service at Redhill and Horsham as BR No. 32586. It was reallocated to Brighton shed in June 1952, withdrawn in March 1955 and scrapped later that year: the other E5Xs were all withdrawn by January 1956, and none was preserved.

Photo: Joe Kent



LSWR Class M7 0-4-4T No. 30055 sits in Brighton shed yard on 12 November 1956. The locomotive looks ex-works, and indeed it was as it had left Brighton Works just three days earlier, having received a General Overhaul which had commenced on 3 October. However, there is one slight puzzle in that the locomotive is displaying a 70F (Fratton) shed plate. Whilst No. 30055 had been allocated to Fratton in 1955 it had subsequently been transferred, first to Tunbridge Wells West shed (75F) in June 1955 and then to Brighton shed (75A) in April 1956. Perhaps the intention was to send it back to Fratton, but in any event it stayed at Brighton until transferred to Eastleigh shed (71A) in May 1959.

The locomotive was built at Nine Elms in December 1905. Originally it was fitted with the LSWR cable-operated motor control for pull-push work. However, following a number of incidents it quickly became apparent to the SR management that the equipment was either malfunctioning or not being used by the train crew! Accordingly, the former LBSCR air-control gear was adopted as standard for all future pull-push operation and No. E55 (as it was then numbered) was so fitted in August 1930.

No. 30055 was used to pilot the restored LSWR T9 4-4-0 No. 120 on the LCGB *Sussex Coast Limited* railtour over the Cuckoo line on 24 June 1962, whilst allocated to Three Bridges shed. It moved from there first to Guildford and then Tunbridge Wells West before returning to Three Bridges for the final time. Withdrawn in September 1963 it was cut up in February the following year.

Photo: Barry Fletcher



On Wednesday 12 November 1958 a tour of inspection was undertaken on the Central Section of the Southern Region. We have been unable to ascertain what the itinerary was on that day, but as this is one of three photos in the Archive Collection, the other two may give us a clue as they show the loco head-on. The loco is E1 Class 4-4-0 No. 31019, then based at Stewarts Lane, and the disc headcode (positions 1, 2 and 6) is described as "Special Train No.1". The duty number on the top disc (Special 101) is a Stewarts Lane Central Section special duty, so it probably originated in the London Area.

The second of the three photos taken that day, shown here, features the Inspection Saloon with its support coach, being propelled from Preston Park to Hove via the Cliftonville Spur, having previously been hauled from Brighton to Preston Park. Two young trainspotters are enjoying the view over the boundary wall from behind houses in Miller's Road.

The Inspection Saloon, Numbered DS 1, and previously Southern Railway 1S, was built by the LSWR in 1885 as the Directors' Saloon; mounted on "American" bogies, it had an American look about it, rather than British. The lettering to the left of the headlight confirms the vehicle complies with "Restriction 0", the narrowest loading gauge for coaching stock, and the overall width and height are both noticeably less than those of the coach behind. The vehicle was extensively rebuilt in 1950 and reframed on later bogies. Prior to withdrawal in 1961 it found frequent use for driver training in connection with the Kent Coast Electrification.

Photo: Joe Kent

What's On

Friday 12 November – Thursday 9 December

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.

SEASONAL SERVICES

Friday 12 November – Saturday 8 January (Wednesdays to Sundays) [SteamLights](#)

Saturday 27 November – Friday 24 December (weekends until 19 December then daily from 21 December) [Santa Specials](#)

DINING TRAINS

Sunday 14 November [The Winter Warmer](#)

Thursday 2 December [The Christmas Belle](#)

Friday 3 December [The Christmas Belle](#)

Wednesday 8 December [The Christmas Belle](#)

Thursday 9 December [The Christmas Belle](#)

Bluebell Railway Christmas Carol Service

with the

Bluebell Railway Band

Revd. David Murdoch

Bluebell Railway Chaplain

Horsted Keynes Station

Tuesday 7th December 7.30

Station open 6pm Service approx. 50 minutes.

Collection for St Giles Church

and the Station: "The Jewel in the Crown" Repair fund.



The Bluebell Times

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Members, Staff and
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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](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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DONATIONS TO THE BLUEBELL RAILWAY TRUST

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND SEND IT TO:

The Bluebell Railway Trust, Sheffield Park Station, East Sussex TN22 3QL

I enclose a gift of £.....for The Jewel in the Crown Appeal.

Cheques should be payable to *The Bluebell Railway Trust*. If you would like a receipt for your donation, either provide an email address or a stamped addressed envelope.

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate.

Gift Aid is reclaimed by us from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

In order to Gift Aid your donation, you must tick the boxes below as appropriate.

I want to Gift Aid my donation and any donations I make in the future to The Bluebell Railway Trust and / or

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