



Right Away! Photo: Martin Lawrence

# The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway Members, Staff and Supporters

Issue 8

## IN THIS ISSUE

“Right Away!” Two simple words, spoken on innumerable occasions from one side of the footplate to the other, signal the start of every railway adventure. For the fireman, the next few hours are a delicate balancing act between fire, water and steam in response to the varying demands of terrain and timetable. For the driver there is the responsibility of running smoothly, safely and to time, while behind there may be hundreds of happy visitors, taking in the passing countryside and the sounds and smells of steam, to excitedly relay to family and friends that evening.

For more than three months, our platforms have remained quiet: no clamour of excited families, no urgent whistling by porters to hurry them along, no “right away” across the cab, no sharp whistle as the train starts to inch forward. But inexorably the railway is waking up: timetables considered, volunteer availability sought, rosters drawn up. For the first time in over three months, a locomotive was steamed in late June. Very soon, it is hoped that tickets will be on sale for the planned re-opening from 7 August. Twice before – in 1955 and again in 1958 – the railway has had an enforced closure: on each occasion it came back, different but defiant. With your support, there is every likelihood that steam will flourish once again in the Sussex countryside.

Finally, the summer edition of *Bluebell News* – the Bluebell Times’ grown-up older brother – is now available for free download from the railway’s website – see page 6 for details.

Tom James, Editor

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# Virtual Track Trek Success

By Paul Bromley, communications director

Intrepid walkers and runners braved all kinds of weather to raise nearly £6,000 in the first Virtual Track Trek.

Participants travelled 4.5 miles on a sponsored walk last Saturday to replicate the distance between Sheffield Park and Horsted Keynes stations as a replacement for the traditional trek along the track.

Society Trustee Roger Kelly walked with his fiancée Maureen in the area around their home on the south coast. He said: "Maureen and I did our 4.5 miles non-stop in 1 hour 35 minutes with rain and force 6 winds. Not bad for a couple with a combined age of 150. We raised £1.4k."

The idea for the Virtual Track Trek came from member Deborah Carver who toured various railway stations in the Crawley area to complete her trek. Neal Ball ran his 4.5 miles in Spain in 26° heat and with 87% humidity.

Representatives from the three entities which comprise the Bluebell Railway walked beside the track on a circuit from Horsted Keynes station to Leamland Bridge. Society acting chairman Steve Bigg, Trust chairman Vernon Blackburn and Plc commercial and marketing director Paul Lelew maintained social distancing while walking in rainy weather.

East Grinstead mayor Councillor Danny Favor and his wife Maribel walked around the council's offices to complete their trek.

The combined efforts of all the trekkers raised more than £5,900 including Gift Aid. That money – and other contributions – helped to push the total for the Emergency Appeal to more than £350,000.

The [appeal remains open for donations](#) and people can still donate to the Virtual Track Trekkers or take part in their own sponsored walk. Drone footage of the Virtual Track Trek filmed by Flying Movies Limited is at <https://youtu.be/4f-9BF3cMcc>

Photos, top to bottom:

Steve Bigg, Vernon Blackburn and Paul Lelew outside Horsted Keynes Station  
The same party approaching Horsted Keynes  
East Grinstead mayor Councillor Danny Favor and his wife Maribel  
Maureen Stansfield and Roger Kelly

Photos 1 – 3 Flying Movies Limited. Photo 4 – Roger Kelly





# Dame Vera Lynn Remembered

By Roy Watts, acting vice-chairman, Bluebell Railway Preservation Society

Described by one journalist as "the country's most potent symbol of resilience and hope", the sad news that Dame Vera Lynn had passed away surrounded by her family broke on the morning of 18 June.

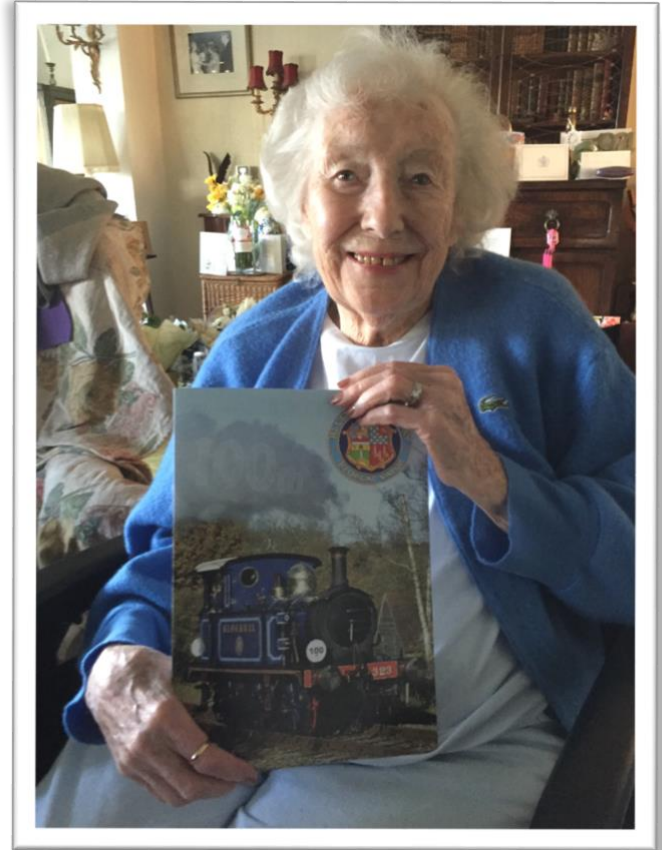
Not only has the country lost its very own "Forces' Sweetheart" but much closer to home, the Bluebell Railway has lost a long-standing friend and supporter.

So just how did that relationship develop? Well, that probably stretches back to war-torn Burma. Dame Vera played an important role uplifting the morale of the Allied forces fighting in the Far East and our very own late founder and President, Bernard Holden, who was playing his part in the conflict as a captain in the Corps of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

Post-war, the formation of the Burma Star Association saw them play key active roles and both being residents of Ditchling, you can appreciate that to know Bernard was to know and share his passion for steam!

Dame Vera made many visits to the Railway usually to participate in Remembrance Day or Poppy Appeal day and was pictured laying a wreath on 73082, "Camelot" in 1995. These events were regularly supported by the forces and the British Legion and, naturally, the Burma Star Association. It was an Association Bernard was proud to be a member of.

In February 2004, Dame Vera accompanied Bernard at the launch of part one of his autobiography, "Let Smoke Make Steam". Transported to Sheffield Park in a Crossley Regis with her brother, Roger, she was greeted by a guard of honour provided by none other than members of the Burma Star Association before accompanying Bernard to the semi-royal saloon where they signed copies of his book.



*Celebrating her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday Photo: Roy Watts*

In August 2009, Dame Vera played a key role in launching our 50th anniversary appeal by launching 50 balloons to get proceedings under way.

In 2017, I had the privilege of having afternoon tea at her home where I presented her with a card from everyone at the Bluebell Railway to mark the occasion of her 100th birthday.

Ironically, just as in their close friendship, they were almost the same age at the time of their passing, both having led incredible lives with many tales to tell and I know the Railway would thank her for all her support she gave without question. I have sent a condolence card from the Bluebell acknowledging Dame Vera's help and contribution and we will be making a contribution to the charity of the family's choice.

## DAME VERA LYNN - VISITS THROUGH THE YEARS

By Roger Price, archivist

It was sad news on BBC Radio Surrey and Sussex on Thursday 18 June that Dame Vera Lynn had passed away at the grand age of 103. My wife immediately sent a text to the radio station to say that I had met her several times at the Bluebell Railway and this was followed by an invitation to speak on the Sarah Gorrell show.

Dame Vera came several times to the railway on Poppy Day. She was a fellow resident of Ditchling to our late president Bernard Holden, who of course died when he was 104! They had met in Burma in the Second World War. Dame Vera provided the foreword to Bernard's book 'Let Smoke Make Steam' published in 2004 and my copy is signed by the great lady herself.

Here are some pictures of Dame Vera Lynn's visits to the Bluebell in 1986 and 1995. These show how willing she was to take part and to engage with as many people as possible during her visits.



*Above right: With (L – R) Ted Oades, Ray Bellingham and Bernard Holden*

*Right: With Avril Gaynor, station master David Middleton and Bernard Holden.*

*Both photos: October 1995, Bluebell Railway Museum Archive*







Top left: Meeting Chelsea Pensioners at Sheffield Park.

Above: With her husband at Sheffield Park

Left: With driver Gerry Butler and 'Fenchurch'

All photos: October 1986, Bluebell Railway Museum Archive

## DAME VERA LYNN – ANOTHER VIEW

By Andrew Partridge, BRPS member and company secretary of Invicta Military-Vehicle Preservation Society (IMPS)

*I am one of the dwindling number whose early memories include the promise of "blue birds over the white cliffs of Dover" as I was carried out to the Anderson shelter in the garden with hundreds of Heinkel bombers flying over against a moonlit sky.*

*During those dark days Vera Lynn embodied the promise of better things to come and her melodies have resonated ever since.*

*I was also fortunate to take part in the Bluebell Railway war weekend in May 2003, when I took part with my RAF Humber Heavy Utility vehicle, running around with a Mr Churchill lookalike and Geoff Sumner as an Air Vice Marshal. The vehicle was parked up on display in the yard beside the engine shed when Vera Lynn turned up as an honoured guest. She made straight for the Humber with me standing beside it in RAF uniform and said, "I always liked the boys in blue".*

*We chatted briefly before she moved on, but it was a precious moment to add to the wartime memories.*

# Bluebell News – Summer Issue

By Paul Bromley, communications director

The Summer issue of Bluebell News is now out.

As with the Spring issue, this edition has been produced in a digital format only.

It is 28 pages long and includes information about the reopening plans, an update on the 60th anniversary celebrations for this year and next year, the success of the Emergency Appeal, a lookback at the beginnings of the railway as a heritage line in 1960 plus updates on filming on the line and engineering projects.

The latest issue – and the previous issue – of Bluebell News can be downloaded from the [Bluebell Railway website](#).



# 60th Anniversary Virtual Celebrations

By Martin Lawrence, volunteer

As part of the countdown to the Bluebell Railway's virtual celebration of its 60th birthday, it is inviting visitors and enthusiasts to submit video clips taken at the railway.

The clips will be shown on the Railway's social media accounts and YouTube channel over the weekend of 7 – 9 August.

Video clips should be submitted as mp4 files and preferably be three minutes in length, although some clips of up to 15 minutes may be considered for the YouTube channel.

The footage should show activities at the Bluebell Railway or Bluebell Railway engines 'on tour' and cover a range of topics – not just engines but people, places and different roles and occasions on the line. The clips should cover the period from 1960 to the present day.

## HOW TO CONTRIBUTE

The clips should be sent to Martin Lawrence who is a volunteer who will edit them for use. His email address is [video@riff-raff.org](mailto:video@riff-raff.org)

The [WeTransfer](#) website, which is a free service, can be used for files up to 2GB. Don't forget to say when it was taken, what it shows and who it was taken by so that the Bluebell Railway can properly credit you.

Please note: The Bluebell Railway can't guarantee inclusion and videos may be edited. The Bluebell Railway and its agents can't take responsibility for any copyright issues arising. Material is submitted free of charge or obligation.

If your film is not selected, please feel free to share your footage via social media on the special day – Friday 7 August which marks 60 years of the Bluebell Railway operating as a preserved railway.



# Stoomtram Up and Running Again

By Rene van den Broeke, General Manager, Museumstoomtram Hoorn – Medemblik

*The following is a combination of two reports from our twin railway in the Netherlands Museumstoomtram Hoorn – Medemblik showing how they have prepared for the resumption of services on their line.*

It's great to hear that the appeal to help the Bluebell Railway was such a success. Our friends have given us about 50,000 Euros extra up until now. There is also a state fund at this moment which covers up to 90% of wages for paid staff due to turnover losses. This helps for the moment, but we transport less than the normal number of passengers since we reopened, which makes running a steam train even more inefficient than in normal circumstances.

We have to work with a procedure guaranteeing 5 feet distance between people which leads to 60% of all seats literally being 'forbidden territory with red tape'. Even more problematic is the fact that our boat service can't be used - this is due to the fact that the main line railway trains between Hoorn and Enkhuizen cannot be used for recreational purposes. What I am most worried about is the coming winter, when we will be left without extra help. So, lobbying takes quite a lot of time at the moment.

The weekend running in 'corona-mode' is instead of the normal daily service which will resume in July. What we do is have one train a day consisting of eight coaches and use seats in an alternating way i.e. a couple of seats are used while the next couple of seats aren't and so on. We can therefore accommodate about 40% of passengers compared with a normal situation.

This brings the total number of passengers to 100 at a time, preferably families, since they live together and don't have to maintain the social distance. Having 100 people in the stations is easy since space isn't a problem with this small number of people. Due to the fact that reservations by internet are necessary, we can prepare the visits and don't have to use face masks.

The problem is that providing 100 seats per trip takes a relatively great effort in duties by staff (a lot of work in cleaning the trains and boarding our



Photo: Rene van den Broeke

guests) while the financial efficiency is low. So further financial input can't be missed. I expect to lose 300,000 Euros this year without any further help. However the Government pays part of the staff costs at the moment and members have helped. Local governmental subsidies still apply. This might all help, though it is too early to draw conclusions.

A big extra problem is that we aren't allowed to work with volunteers who are 70 years or older at this moment. This had a direct effect on 25% of our volunteers and makes it harder to increase services.

I sincerely hope there will be an opportunity later this year to come over and congratulate the Bluebell on the occasion of its 60th birthday and celebrate the fact that we survived this crisis.

I'm definitely looking forward to these better days. I hope you stay well and send the best wishes and best of luck from your Dutch friends to everybody at Sheffield Park.

# Bluebell Railway and Art

By Tony Drake, museum curator

Did anyone see the programme 'Great Paintings of the World with Andrew Marr' on Channel 5 on Saturday 20 June?

During the presentation about Turner's painting of 1838 'The Fighting Temeraire' it was mentioned that the tug pulling the Fighting Temeraire to its berth at Rotherhithe was in bolder colours to emphasise the new age of steam.

Suddenly there was a short sequence of a locomotive (built about a century later!) to depict the power of steam. The loco was none other than the Q class 30541 steaming on the Bluebell Railway.

Turner's painting was probably near the Thames Tunnel at Rotherhithe designed by Marc Brunel, father of Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Marc was a keen artist and in 1823 produced a sketch of his tunnel as part of the plans, that time showing a rowing boat on the Thames above the proposed tunnel.

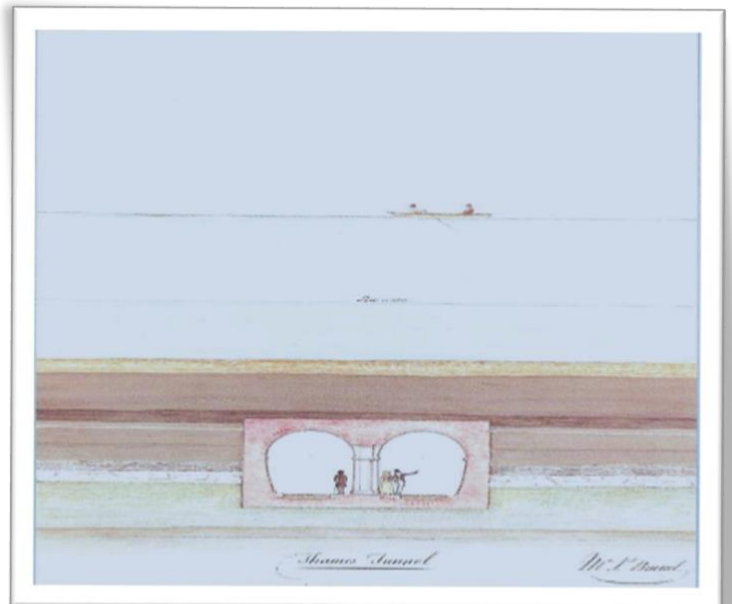
The Thames tunnel became the first underwater railway tunnel in the world. Both of our Terrier locomotives 'Stepney' and 'Fenchurch' worked from New Cross depot through the tunnel. Hence they were named after places north of the river. Fenchurch still has the copper condensing tubes (now not operational) used to condense the steam exhaust whilst travelling through the tunnel.

The programme is still available to watch at <https://www.my5.tv/great-paintings-of-the-world-with-andrew-marr/season-1/episode-3-fb5b7964-3461-4cod-92f6-37738312b665>

The sequence featuring the Q class at Sheffield Park and travelling along the line is at approximately 30 minutes into the programme and lasts for about a minute.



*The Fighting Temeraire, by J.M.W. Turner. Source: National Gallery*



*The Thames Tunnel at Rotherhithe, by Marc Brunel. The original is in the Brunel Museum, Rotherhithe. Source: [artfund.org](http://artfund.org) – the National Charity for Art*



*View from the footplate of the Q class. Source: Channel 5*



# Five Minutes With ... Stephen Bigg

## Name

Stephen Bigg

## Role

Acting Chairman of Bluebell Railway Preservation Society.

Volunteer at Carriage & Wagon Department.

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

I've been a member of the BRPS for over 25 years and a volunteer at C&W since 2003.

## How did you first become involved?

My first visit to the Bluebell was in the early 1960s as a twelve-year-old with my parents, followed by further visits during early teenage years. Then, as is so often the case, girlfriends, career, marriage, family life and other interests provided much distraction. However, I took my son and some of his friends to the Railway on a number of occasions in his younger years, and he seemed to enjoy being up close to and riding behind steam engines ... a good start I thought. Unfortunately this subsequently proved to be a somewhat temporary state of affairs, so it wasn't destined to become a case of 'like father, like son'!

## What was your professional career?

I spent the majority of my career in the food industry, initially in the manufacturing sector in sales and marketing roles. After about seven years, I moved to the food retail sector, where I spent nearly thirty years with the Marks & Spencer Food Division in various management roles within buying, marketing and sales development. This was a stimulating period in food retailing, particularly working for a company that was at the forefront of technological and product innovation.



## What does your Bluebell Railway job involve?

My volunteering role at C&W has from the start involved learning the heritage skills as a carriage trimmer. I was fortunate to be asked to work with two ex-Lancing Works professional carriage trimmers who in retirement were working part time at C&W, and they taught me the skills required. As a complete novice in anything to do with upholstery, this proved to be a steep learning curve from my perspective and required much patience on their part as I attempted to master the necessary skills. After almost three years, by which time they had both retired (again!), I found myself running the C&W trimming shop ... quite a daunting and challenging prospect at the time. After sixteen years I am still learning and increasing my abilities, and this is what makes the job so stimulating and enjoyable.

## How often do you volunteer at the Railway?

Usually two days a week at C&W.

### **Are you involved in any other areas of the Railway?**

Yes. In 2012 I was approached to join the newly formed Governance Review Group and spent the next few years working on the initial and then development phases of the Review. It was a complex and detailed task, but also illuminating and fulfilling, and I finished up chairing the Group for the final two years to the time when the Report was published.

In 2016 I was encouraged to put in a nomination for the position of Vice-Chairman of the Society, which I subsequently did. At that year's AGM I was elected to the position and worked with the newly elected Chairman Graham Aitken. I am now Acting Chairman following Graham's resignation in March. In addition to my upholstering work, this keeps me quite busy as you can imagine.

### **Do you have a nickname?**

When I was at school my nickname was 'Biggles', from the title of the books by Captain W.E. Johns. I'm not aware of any more recent nicknames, although others may know something I don't!

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

That's quite a simple one to answer. Learning a new skill in retirement, and then having the opportunity to train others and seeing them in turn grow in confidence and ability as they become increasingly skilled as upholsterers. That gives me a lot of satisfaction, and at the same time it's good for the Railway as a way of keeping a heritage skill alive. What's not to like!

### **What's your earliest train memory?**

Travelling as a small child with my mother in the mid-1950s from Liverpool Street to Norwich behind a Britannia Pacific when visiting my grandparents in Norfolk.

### **Do you have a model railway at home?**

No, my model railway activities came to an end in my mid-teens, and although I do marvel at some of the magnificent layouts I've seen over the years, I've never been tempted to try and build another one myself. I do still have some of my old

childhood Hornby Dublo models from the early 1960s.

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

One of them is being given the chance to learn a new skill in retirement, as referred to in an earlier answer, and now being part of a team of nine talented and enthusiastic coach trimmers. The other is having had the opportunity to become involved in some of the more strategic aspects of the Railway's activities. An important benefit from both these opportunities, apart from hopefully assisting the Railway as a whole, has been the chance to meet so many great people from different backgrounds, many of whom have over the years become friends rather than simply colleagues. I can't think of a better reason for volunteering.

### **Anything else you want to tell us?**

I've always had an interest in heritage transport, not just on rails and also on road, and many of the people I work with at Bluebell know that another great interest of mine is classic cars. I have been involved in the classic car scene for nearly forty years, and have over that period owned about a dozen different vehicles mainly from the 1950s to the 1970s. I try to locate very low mileage and original condition vehicles, which can be rejuvenated, driven (sparingly!) and then hopefully sold on at a profit. I currently have five classics ranging in age from 1959 to 2002.

### **BLUEBELL BITES**

#### **Jaguar E-Type or Porsche 911**

E-Type Jaguar (early model)

#### **Volkswagen or Volk's Railway**

That's a trickier one; probably Volkswagen (if it was a Golf GTi Mk1!)

#### **Maunsell carriage or Bulleid carriage**

Maunsell carriage

#### **Open carriage or private compartment**

Open carriage

#### **Tea or coffee**

No contest ... tea every time!



# A Closer Look at ... *Sir Archibald Sinclair*



Photo: Derek Hayward

All being well, work will resume on the overhaul of Sir Archibald Sinclair when the Railway reopens.

The Battle of Britain Class locomotive is in the workshop at Sheffield Park undergoing an overhaul. Work stopped when the Railway shut for the lockdown.

The locomotive is named after the person who served as Winston Churchill's second in command in the 6th Royal Scots Fusiliers and later as Secretary of State for Air.

So here's everything you wanted to know about ... 'Sir Archibald Sinclair'.



Sketch of Sir Archibald Sinclair, Secretary of State for Air. This picture was commissioned by the Ministry of Information during the Second World War.

Source: The National Archives

## SIR ARCHIE IN FACTS AND FIGURES

<b>Number</b>	21C159, later 34059
<b>Class</b>	Battle of Britain
<b>Wheel arrangement</b>	4-6-2
<b>Built</b>	1947, for the Southern Railway. Rebuilt 1960 for British Railways
<b>Designer</b>	Oliver Bulleid
<b>Cylinders</b>	Three – 16 3/8" x 24"
<b>Boiler pressure</b>	250psi (pounds per square inch) in current form
<b>Tractive Effort</b>	27,715 lbf in current form
<b>Length</b>	67 ft 4 3/4 ins
<b>Weight</b>	133 tons
<b>Driving wheel diameter</b>	6 ft 2 ins
<b>Coal and water capacity</b>	5 tons of coal, 5,250 gallons of water
<b>Valve gear</b>	Walschaerts

Information taken from '[Locomotives, Carriages & Wagons preserved on the Bluebell Railway, 2020 Edition](#)' produced by Michael Philpott, available from the Bluebell Railway's online shop

# A Day in the Life of ... The Running Foreman

By Tom James, Locomotive Department

*We're taking a closer look at some of the roles at the Bluebell Railway. The railway has about 750 volunteers who give up their time to ensure visitors have a memorable day out. In fact, most of the people customers meet during their visits to the Bluebell Railway are unpaid volunteers. In this article, Tom James explains what it takes to be the Loco Yard Running Foreman.*

It's 11.10am on a fine spring Sunday morning at Sheffield Park. At the far end of Platform 2, BR Standard Class 5MT No. 73082 'Camelot' is fizzing impatiently to depart with the second train of the day. The view from Platform 1 is partly obscured by the Pullman carriages. Looking south, Wainwright H class No. 263 is simmering at the exit to the yard. Far to the north, Stirling O1 No. 65 has just left Kingscote heading back with the first train. With a short pop on the whistle, 73082 starts out on its journey to Horsted Keynes. Three minutes later, as the sound of 'Camelot' attacking Freshfield Bank fades into the distance, there is a whirr of points and a clank as the yard exit signal clears; then with another whistle, 263 drifts down to the water column on Platform 2.

So begins another day on the railway. Except of course, 11:10am is not the beginning – for the loco department, the beginning was nearly five hours earlier. At the centre of it all, responsible for activity within the yard is the Running Foreman, one of those largely unseen jobs around the railway. So what exactly does the job entail?

The Running Foreman's domain is the locomotive yard at Sheffield Park (including the Wealden Rambler dock, and movements in the running shed). He or she is responsible for ensuring that each locomotive leaves the yard on time, prepared, coaled, cleaned and with a full crew; that all activities within the yard are carried out safely; that the yard is kept clean and tidy with ash cleared away and supplies of wood and oil replenished; and that at the end of the day the locomotives are berthed so as to make the



*The author as running foreman. Photo: Nick Talbot*

following day's activities proceed as smoothly as possible. During the day, the Running Foreman also looks after the welfare of all the loco staff, particularly ensuring that crews get proper breaks and are supplied with drinks as required.

For me, the Running Foreman's duty begins around the previous Thursday when the Special Traffic Notice is sent out. This is one of the key operational documents on the railway; amongst a wealth of information, it includes the working timetable – not just the public trains, but the off-shed times, shunt moves and any non-public trains. From this document, I make a note of the key issues for the day: the locomotives needed (referred to as A, B and GL for the two service trains and Golden Arrow Lunchtime train); the booking-on times for crews and off-shed times for locos. Next stop is to check the rostered staff for the day. The day's complement is Driver, Fireman and Third Man for each loco; the same again for a spare ("as required", or AR) crew; same again for the workshop (or "X") crew and four cleaners to work around the yard – twenty people in all including myself. Any gaps in the rostering, or maybe an additional train that was not known about when the roster was drawn up become obvious on checking: if there are any issues, better to find out on Thursday when something can be done, than on Sunday when the clock is ticking more furiously.

Sunday morning, and just before 7.00am I walk up the path to the yard from the car park. Somewhere across the road, a solitary woodpecker taps away, but I am listening for



activity in the yard. The GL crew was due to have booked on at 6.15am: as I enter the yard, there is no smoke, but a rattle of clinker into a barrow indicates that the fireman is well into her job. I detour round to say hello: Ali is throwing out the old fire and I let her get on, while the driver is methodically going around the loco, inspecting and oiling each part. The third man is standing on the tender pushing coal forward. Nothing to worry about there; the other crews are not yet due, so next stop is to sign on inside the lobby. First check for new notices, then consult the “swaps book” for any late roster changes. Finally, note the locos for the day, which are organised by the workshop: No. 65 on the GL (but which takes the first A service on this timetable); No. 73082 on the B service; No. 263 the main A engine. There is a throng of cleaners waiting to sign on; I tell Dan (the most experienced of them) the engines in use and ask that he ensures they split their resources to clean all three, but concentrate first on Nos. 65 and 73082. The AR (spare) crew are also booking-on at 7.00am; I make a mental note that Martin, the AR fireman, is qualified to drive the forklift truck to coal engines, another uncertainty resolved. After that, it is time to get changed into overalls and make a cup of tea and bowl of cereal; it is eaten somewhat on the hoof back in the yard so I can keep an eye on what is going on. Different foremen have different styles of supervision: I am very much from the “management by walking about” school.

Each loco has a scheduled “off shed” time, normally from thirty to sixty minutes before the departure of the train it is due to haul. While the third man wheels away the barrow of ash and clinker from the old fire, I ask Ali what time she is off shed: 9.15 she replies. I know the answer, of course, but by asking, I assure myself that she knows as well. Next, to check with the driver whether he wants to come into the yard during the day. The smaller locos tend to do so, to replenish coal and empty the ashpan. We exchange a few pleasantries, then I leave the crew to get on. Meanwhile there is activity around ‘Camelot’ as that crew starts work. A quick check shows Dan has the cleaners split in pairs on Nos. 65 and 73082; the spare driver and fireman are also lending a hand with cleaning, while the spare turn

cleaner is collecting empty mugs and plates from around the yard to wash up in the lobby.

Just before eight, Colin, the Operating Superintendent for the day, walks through the yard. The Running Foreman has responsibility within the yard, but the OS has overall responsibility for the railway. I’m able to tell him that I have all my loco crews and nothing untoward; I let him know we will want No. 65 back in the yard after the first trip.

Once the workshop opens, I find the Manager to see if he has any requirements. “Can you move 847 into the workshop?” The loco is sitting cold in the running shed; of the locos in steam, ‘Camelot’ is best for the job, so I suggest we do it if possible after the first trip, when the yard will otherwise be largely quiet. I let the crew know we might have a little CYJ (“can you just...”): much rolling of eyes, but better to know early than late.

For a little while, the pace slows, though I keep a periodic check on each loco, to satisfy myself their preparation is on track – experience as a fireman means I have a fair idea, from how far through its preparation each loco is at any given time, whether there is any impending problem. Checking with No. 65, I see they have a boiler pressure of 100 pounds per square inch – it is about 8.30am so all is in hand. I ask the spare crew to look after the loco so the main crew can have a break for breakfast and get changed. Twenty minutes later, pressure has risen to 120psi, and the spare driver asks me for permission to set back to



Blow down!. Photo: Mark Hewitt



*Loco Tetris Photo: Tom James*

take coal. Checking the cleaners are all clear, I give my permission, and cautiously the loco moves back until the tender is on the paved coal dock behind the pits. As pressure continues to rise, Martin – the spare fireman – descends and gets the forklift truck out to start coaling the loco which the driver supervises from the footplate, washing the coal down to lay the dust. Once coaled, it is time for a blow down, part of the daily management of boiler water quality. While the fireman monitors the water level on the footplate, the driver opens a valve and a jet of hot water and steam is ejected from the boiler into the pit. The blowdown causes a shattering roar that requires anyone not involved to move back. Finally, the crew ensure the coal is well trimmed, and I ask them to go and move on to the signal at the exit of the yard.

I call the Sheffield Park signalman and inform him that the first loco is ready to come off shed. A few moments later, the first indicator on the ground frame moves to "RELEASE FREE" and the second changes to "FROM LOCO YARD SHUNT SLOT OFF". Three lever pulls release the frame, change the points and clear the yard exit signal, followed shortly afterwards by a "pop" from No. 65 and it rolls down into the station. I note the time: 9.13am, or two minutes early. Once fully clear of the points, I return the ground frame to its normal position, which in turn allows the signalman to resume full signalling control of the station.

The departure of 73082 at 10:30, and 263 at 11:15 follow a similar pattern. While 73082 blows down,

the cleaners take a well-deserved tea break, then return. Two of them continue cleaning 263, the other two clear the long pit ("three road") of ash and prepare three barrows of lighting-up wood. Once the engines are off shed, there is time to relax, though the day is punctuated at intervals as trains return and locos come in and out of the yard: No. 65 to clear its ashpan; 'Camelot' to carry out the "can you just" shunt of 847; No. 263 in the afternoon for coal. Each such move requires from the Running Foreman a move into the yard controlled from the ground frame, then hand signalling the locomotive into position, arranging coal or organising the shunt move, then finally dispatching the loco back out into the station via the ground frame again. The timetable is such that often no sooner has one sequence of moves finished than the next loco is back in its turn: the job doesn't involve much sitting down!

Finally, late in the afternoon, the locos start to return, and the RF has to get them berthed in such a fashion that the next day's moves can be made easily: you don't want to block the first engine back home behind two others if it needs to be first off shed in the morning. Loco Tetris is easy enough with three locos; rather more involved on a gala day with half a dozen! When everything is back, it's time to write up the day's journal, noting any operating issues, then finally wash and sign off. If at the end of the day you feel you have solved five problems, averted ten others from occurring and no-one has even noticed, you've done a good job!



*Management by walking about: equivalent to walking from East Grinstead to Horsted Keynes without leaving the yard!*



# Station Life - Part 2

By Malcolm and Marion Johnson, museum stewards

*Malcolm and Marion Johnson live on the site of the former Newick & Chailey station which was the next stop on the line south from Sheffield Park.*

*They've written for the Bluebell Times about how they came to live there. In the first part, Malcolm explained his early love of trains and finding the property for sale. He picks up the story from when they moved in.*

Newick and Chailey station was built in 1882 in Chailey Parish near to the Newick Parish boundary in what is now Lower Station Road. It opened on 1 August 1882 and had a substantial building on the east side of the line which housed the ticket office, bar room, waiting room, conveniences and accommodation for the Station Master. It was built on the edge of a cutting with a ground floor and two further floors on the platform side and only two on the road side. The station originally had a footbridge to the down platform which had a ticket office, waiting rooms and conveniences.

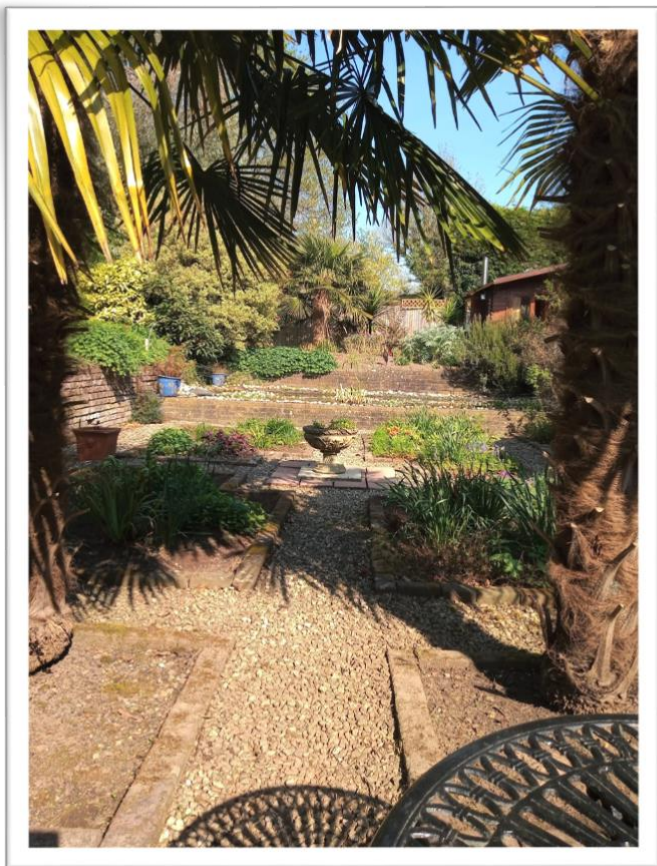
The station had a separate parcel office and, with five sidings, the goods yard was surprisingly large.

On the east side there was originally a very long siding going south.

The station closed on 29 May 1955 but re-opened on 7 August 1956 before again closing on 17 March 1958.

The track was removed in 1960 and the building demolished in 1968. A small length of the track bed and platform sides is still visible in my garden but very little else on the surface remains.

Now, when we moved into the house more than 43 years ago, we did not expect to be moving into a tourist attraction, albeit a very minor one. In our early years in the house, particularly on Easter weekends, there would be a gentle flow of enthusiasts keen to explore the remains of the railway. Always polite and friendly, it was a pleasure to show them the sights. In fact one of the pleasures of life at N&C has been the many wonderful and interesting people we have met. One sunny Sunday afternoon we were visited by Dennis Whiting and his wife. Dennis was the last person to live at the Newick and Chailey station house. He was one of the last "Special" Porters working at the station until closing day 16 March 1958. They moved out in 1964 after living there from 1953. (See Bluebell News Volume 53 No.2). We might have romantic ideas about "living above the shop" at the station but Mrs Whiting told us in no uncertain terms about what a cold and damp building it was. She could never get washing dried, she told us. It did not have electricity when they moved in! She was delighted to move away to a place they had built in Newick. Their rooms in the station looked straight down on Burchetts and they frequently came across Madge Bessemer who lived there. From their description she was without doubt the formidable person we know about today.



*The track bed at Newick and Chailey, looking north towards Sheffield Park*

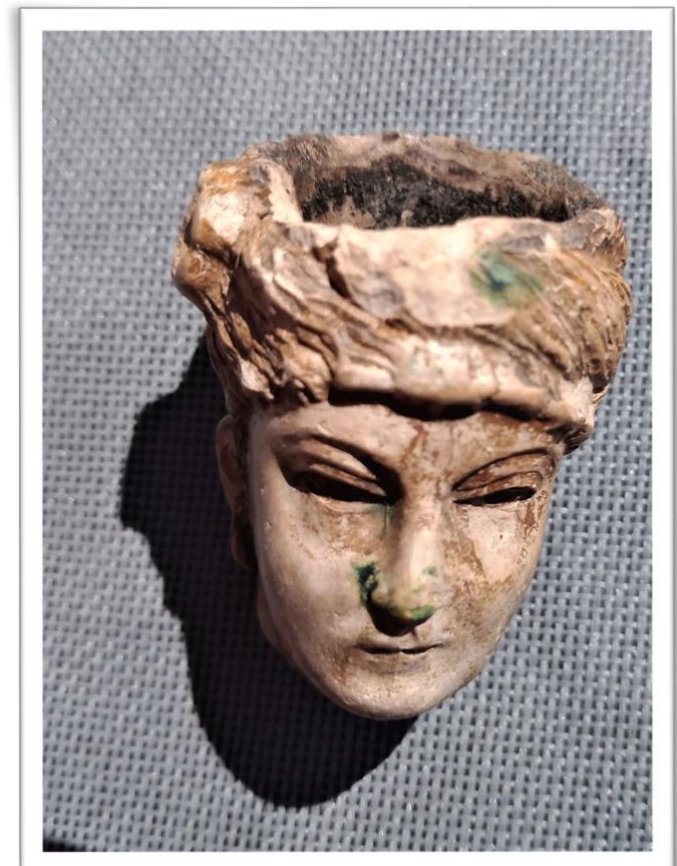
Many people who visit the house recount how they travelled to school in Lewes each day from the station. All say how they enjoyed the experience.

The biggest mass visit to the station came on 24 July 2014 when the Bluebell "Tour of Closed Stations" coach party arrived. The stop was scheduled for 10 minutes but after 45 minutes the group were still with us enjoying the many stories we told about the station and seeing the remains of the station.

Last summer I was in the very back of our garden when I spoke to a man passing along the footpath. He asked if the garden was indeed the site of the station as he had suspected. I showed him around and he told me he was the grandson of the last coal merchants at the station. Coal merchants had operated from the station since 1882. His grandfather was Percy Wood and I believe the family had operated from there for many generations.

### THE ARTEFACTS

In most gardens when one cuts a spade into the ground you will find perhaps a stone or two, a worm or perhaps a child's long-lost toy. At Beechings, it's different - one finds a railway or, to be more exact, parts of a railway. Everywhere one finds the reinforced glass used in the platform canopy as well as the lead used to seal the glass. Bricks, tiles and old structural iron abound. It could be that I watched too many episodes of "Time Team" but at every opportunity I have explored the buried structure of the railway. I have found the remains of the steps that lead from the booking office level of the station at the road entrance to the platform level. I have found the foundations of the foot bridge on platform 2 (up). One day I found a terracotta paved area about two feet down. This was just behind platform two. Bemused I consulted old photographs and soon my eyes fell on the sign on platform 2 that read "Gentlemen". I had found the gents loo abandoned from the early 1930s. An early discovery was that the platform sides had been constructed on a single wall of mortared bricks. Behind these were rows of dry brick filling the space upon which sat the platform. Hardly a construction that would last but there it still is, nearly 140 years later. It was amongst these I



Archaeological finds from the garden: (Top) a milk bottle dated 1955, perhaps used to make the last tea drunk at the station (Bottom) a clay pipe bowl found when excavating platform 2

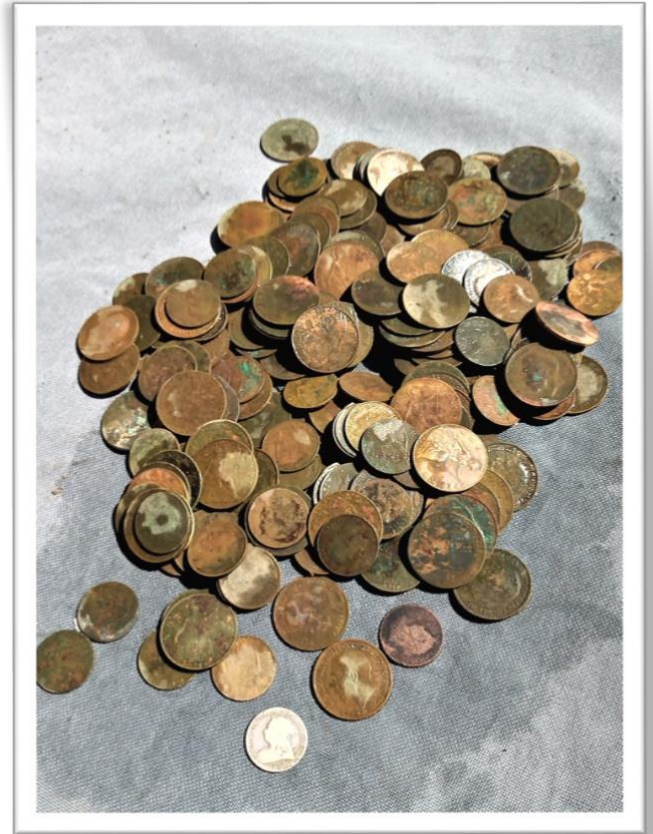


found an ornate clay pipe head discarded by the navy building the platform side.

I also undertook an excavation of the track bed to discover how it was constructed. Its construction was surprising and more complex than I would have thought. If anyone ever wants to know I have recorded the details.

Newick and Chailey was an unusual station compared with the other Lewes to East Grinstead stations. Firstly, the three levels of the station building: platform, road and first floor. But also because it had an entrance on the up and the down platforms. The down side being at platform level. The reason for this was that the big landowners of the district who had financed the station approached the station on foot or by carriage mostly on the wrong side of the station building. To afford an easy access for the well-to-do, a crushed chalk carriageway was constructed from the south towards the rear entrance. The carriageway was always kept clear of trees until the 1958 closure and is still visible today. The railway-owned land extended to very near this carriageway and my explorations of this area led to a very interesting discovery.

Using a metal detector I searched the area outside the station plot but in railway land. Who knows some of the well-heeled travellers on alighting their horse drawn carriage might have dropped some jewellery? What I actually found was a hoard of coins all closely packed together and about six inches below the surface. Pennies, half pennies, farthings, a sliver six pence; they just kept coming. I filled up my pockets until they bulged and then brought a container to hold them. In all over 100 coins. More than £1. Doesn't sound much today but this is approaching what the Station Master earned for a week. Perhaps equivalent in today's salaries to £700. The coins had clearly been in a container, perhaps a leather pouch, which by then had perished. So why bury money? And when? The dates of the coins followed a normal distribution with just one dated 1922. It was very likely the coins were buried in 1922 or 1923. The only plausible reason to bury the coins is because they were stolen. If they were stolen, then they were stolen by a railway worker who intended to return under the cover of darkness to retrieve his



*The hoard of stolen coins*

ill-gotten gains. I determined to track down this thief. Using Holmes-style deduction I concluded the culprit would have to live nearby, be of doubtful character and have a motive. Thanks to LBSC Railway staff records I could determine a lot. I tracked the career of every man (there were no women) who worked at Newick and Chailey during this period. Everyone had an exemplary record bar one. This gentleman had started his career at Sheffield Park Station, progressed to signalman at Pevensey, where he had a signalman's cottage and his wife a job with the railway as a gate keeper. That is a sluice gate keeper. Her pay was enough for the cottage rent of 2/6d.

Things were just great for our man until one day he was transferred to Lewes as a signalman, at one of the signal boxes. His wife lost her job and they lost their home. After a while he resigned, no doubt somewhat bitter. Life took its course and in time he became the publican at The Royal Oak in Newick. In 1918 war broke out and our man saw the wisdom in rejoining the railway. Fewer young men drinking beer and a better chance of not being enlisted must have influenced his thinking. A suspect had appeared. The clincher was that in 1922 the Railway had departed company with him;

he having been “asked to leave their service”. He was clearly suspected of some misdemeanour. To add to the evidence the man had not received a pay rise during his service from 1918. All of his colleagues had done very well as LBSCR attempted to raise their poor pay rates to align with others as Grouping approached. I suspect that risk of capture prevented his return for the buried money and that this was but one of many such unlawful exploits. He died without issue and to my knowledge there are no living close relatives to the man. However I do not ever state his name as, clearly, he can’t defend any accusations. Nearly 90 years had passed but his sins did catch him out.

One artefact that is from the railways that was not buried is the Southern Railway 1924 Act Private Road Sign that is on display in our front garden. I have received many offers to sell it over the years, the best coming in 1980, when £125 was offered. Then that was far too much. A couple of years ago I refurbished it and placed it in a more secure but visible location. There were still traces of the original green and white but it now looks much better.

Now turning to another thing found under the ground. When digging in the garden it is railway things I hope to find. However one very hot August day I found something that the thought of still makes me tingle. I was digging a new shrub bed and scanned the area with a metal detector before digging. I found nothing other than the usual fragments of lead, pieces of iron and a large stainless steel annular object that intrigued me. On stopping for breath and leaning on my spade, as you do, I looked down and saw a bright gold coloured object glistening in the sun. It was very small and coin-like. I didn’t think too much about it and put it to one side for attention at a later time. When I did get time to inspect it I discovered the object was indeed coin like but had no apparent head on either side but on one side there was what looked like a horse and chariot. Researching the British Museum website I believed that what it resembled was a gold quarter stator Iron Age coin. But surely not, I thought. I sent a photograph to the Sussex Portable Finds office at Sussex Archaeological Society in Lewes. The message came back, “We are busy and a response to your email might take some time.” Ten minutes later the phone rang, “Can you bring it in for us to inspect?” The verdict was that it was an Iron Age quarter stator coin probably minted in Chichester in about 50 BC. It is now recorded in the British

Museum. The coin was based on a Mesopotamian design slowly copied and corrupted across millenniums during its migration west through Europe.

### STEAM RETURNS

Nearly twenty-five years ago I decided it was about time that steam returned to the station if only for one day. The Bluebell hadn’t yet produced a Southern Extension project so it was clearly up to me to progress this issue. I approached a friend, colleague and Bluebell member who owned and ran a seven-inch track gauge steam locomotive. Plate laying took place and we were soon set fair. On a bright sunny day the first restored passenger service ran. Unfortunately it was not possible to reach either Sheffield Park or Barcombe stations due to a severe lack of infrastructure but much fun was had by all.

Twelve years ago was the 50-year anniversary of the second closure of the station. To mark this sad day neighbours who lived along the line near to the station were invited to Platform 1 to offer a toast to the railway. A platform ticket had to be purchased to enter the station at the price of 1d. Surprisingly many of the attendees produced the correct currency and were allowed entry by the overzealous ticket inspector who, some thought, resembled me! Those who could not find the correct coin discovered that bribing the ticket inspector worked well so long as it was a bottle containing the correct substance.

I have to report that at the moment the station is closed to enable social distancing. However, before long life will return to normal and those wishing to see what little is left of Newick and Chailey station can return.



Driver Tim Sanderson aboard ‘Christopher’, departing south for Lewes



# Museum Morsel Update

By Tony Hillman, assistant museum curator

We published this photo in the last issue of the Locomotive Club of Great Britain Kentish Venturer Railtour at Victoria station on 25 February 1962.

A suggested caption from Jon Beardmore was:

“ Social distancing: Network Rail admits 'scope for improvement' at Victoria

Jon Samways suggested the following, in the voice of the photographer John J. Smith:

“ I think photographer John Smith would have been saying to all those looking in his direction "Well, chaps, I think you'll find that Sir Brian is behind you ..."

Jon went on:

*"Having worked with John in the Rules Section at Essex House in the late 70s, I can almost hear him saying this! He taught me all I needed to know about writing Signal Box Special Instructions, which I put to good use for many years. His sometimes heated debates with the Divisional Signalling Inspector were legendary.*

*As we all know he made an amazing photographic record, helped by the fact that he used to work in the Engine Diagrams section and admitted to having rostered unusual locos onto workings that he was then able to go and photograph. His well-known shot of Bullied Pacific 34055 'Fighter Pilot' on the Heathfield line on a fertiliser special (as featured in "Steam in the Sussex Landscape" by Klaus Marx and Michael Welch) was one of these. My copy of the book includes a handwritten page of corrections/clarifications which he sent me."*

And Bluebell Railway volunteer Peter Clark contacted us because he was actually on the railtour. Peter is a member of the Alf Brown Group.

He wrote:

*"Not a caption or bubble entry from me but a 'Bluebell' connection to this railtour which started*



*from Victoria on a cold day with, as you can see in the picture, 30782 Sir Brian at the head end.*

*There was quite a scrum at Victoria as can be seen but Health & Safety was not an issue then. I waited until we arrived at Ramsgate to secure my picture when most of the passengers were more intent on visiting 30782's cab. The weather went downhill steadily and by the time we arrived at Ashford for a visit to the works and shed, snow was falling ...*

*On shed was 31065, stored, which had been apparently offered to the embryonic National Collection but was rejected as "not original" and was now to be sold for scrap. The next part of the*

*tour was a trip to New Romney behind 31263 and 31592 and during the photo-stop at Lydd Town a number of people expressed the view that perhaps someone would preserve these types of engine.*

*Little did we know that three of the engines seen that day would indeed be preserved - and at the Bluebell."*

The three engines mentioned are now in Wainwright SECR green liveries and have reverted to their original 'as built' numbers. So 31065 is now No. 65, 31263 is now No. 263 and 31592 is now No. 592. The first two are currently operational and

No. 592 is on static display in SteamWorks! awaiting overhaul.

The Alf Brown Group is a small team of friends some of whom have been in Group since the early 1960s. They started the original Carriage & Wagon restoration programme with SECR Coach 1061 and diversified over the years into a number of projects including overhaul of the footbridge now at Sheffield Park, construction of most of the signals at Horsted Keynes and Kingscote plus other projects. They are now back with Carriages being involved with the overhaul of Pullman Car No. 54.

## Wheels in Motion

By Phil Gain, Locomotive Department

After the top 10 railway songs (The Bluebell Times issue 7), how about top 10 railway films?

Here's my selection:

### 10. The Train

Burt Lancaster's attempt to stop Nazi's great art theft

### 9. Emperor of the North

Lee Marvin as a hobo riding the rails

### 8. The Taking of Pelham One Two Three

Robert Shaw hijacking a New York Subway train

### 7. Von Ryan's Express

Frank Sinatra on a daring escape

### 6. La Bête Humaine

Who hasn't wanted to bop the driver with a shovel

### 5. Runaway Train

Jon Voight escaping from prison

### 4. The General

Buster Keaton classic

### 3. Brief Encounter

'Nuff said





## 2. The Railway Children

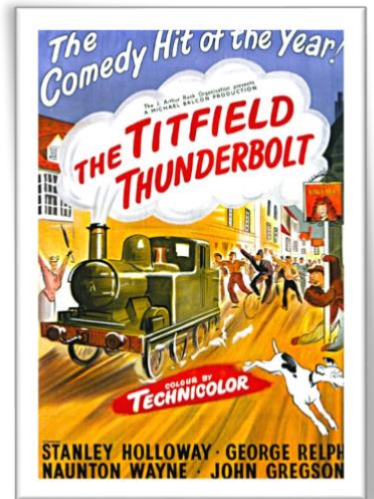
Carlton remake at the Bluebell Railway

### 1. The Titfield Thunderbolt

I defy anyone to knock this off the top spot!!

*(The editor humbly submits that Buster Keaton's "The General" should be No. 1!)*

Got a suggestion for books, films or music with a railway connection of interest to the readers of The Bluebell Times? Please email suggestions to [bluebelltimes@jamesquared.com](mailto:bluebelltimes@jamesquared.com) and we will include them in a future issue.



# Spot the Difference – Solution

By Mike Hopps

These are the 10 differences from the picture in the last issue.



- ➔ Inner home signal arm missing
- ➔ Crest on side of carriage
- ➔ Drain cover in the six-foot way
- ➔ Footstep on carriage
- ➔ Works plate on front driving splasher
- ➔ Letter H missing from 'Fenchurch'
- ➔ Bluebell logo missing from shop sign
- ➔ Missing left hand lamp iron
- ➔ Missing drift lubricator over right-hand buffer
- ➔ Missing brass casting on Westinghouse pump
- ➔ Chimney on station house
- ➔ Gas lamp on corner of station building



# Word Search

We've another word search puzzle for you. This time all the words relate to parts of a steam engine.

You may want to find out more about how steam engines work and there are [plenty of books in our online shop](#) with explanations and details of locomotive power.

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

As ever, no prizes but we will reveal the answers in the next issue along with a new word search. Good luck.

B B K L P D Q N J E E R I J W  
 L G N C O Q W N X Y M E R Y O  
 K R X Z T H J I T D F O E C E  
 E C T K E Y K R H P Y G D J J  
 L Q X Q R V T W N R B V N C R  
 H N Y A A T N O V Q T Q E M N  
 X E N Z M Y T B U R V R T U X  
 Y T B I I S C P Y M C E Y U O  
 N X I P I R Y I R E P G J E B  
 Y X Q P E E X Z S W B U R C E  
 M F X L N T R E D N I L Y C R  
 X V I M V C B C J E L A T C I  
 E O I Q C D B W H I S T L E F  
 B H X H A R I L V F K O Q Y M  
 C G E S B S W M Q K V R H N L

BOILER  
 PISTON  
 FIREBOX  
 CYLINDER  
 TENDER  
 CAB  
 WHISTLE  
 DOME  
 CHIMNEY  
 REGULATOR

## SOLUTION TO WORD SEARCH IN ISSUE 7

T B X Y D D E T A H Q R U B U  
 N N K A B S L A I C E P S M Y  
 N X C M G U B Q E N I U G T M  
 C K W P A C S Q Q A L A R K Y  
 N S W O C N M R Y R B G W Q Q  
 G G D B S A N T A B E W Z R N  
 C X S T E A M S J E E U Q T A  
 Y M D U K Q T X S P B R A B D  
 F N T A D N E K E E W G R L L  
 C J M H A X T Z O X K R O O G  
 I T A I H L O T X N D R A I I  
 N O G Y R P C F X D A K D K S  
 C T Q F J I Q M I D V U P Z X  
 I S T E E M L F E N I L X B P  
 P P K U L H A Y T M H G D N G

- ➡ Branch
- ➡ Line
- ➡ Weekend
- ➡ Road
- ➡ Meets
- ➡ Rail
- ➡ Giants
- ➡ Steam
- ➡ Teddy
- ➡ Bears
- ➡ Picnic
- ➡ Santa
- ➡ Specials

# Kids' Section

Have you ever thought about the sequence of carriages in our trains? It may seem that they can be in any old order, but in fact having the right carriages in the right order in each train is important – ensuring that is the case is the job of a shunter, who arranges for the carriages to be moved between sorting sidings to get the right sequence. We have a shunting puzzle for you to try in this issue, along with the answer to the puzzle in the last issue about fitting all our carriages into shed.

There's more information about activities for children including how to join the Stepney Club (three- to eight-year-olds) and 9F club (ages nine and over) on a [special section of the Bluebell Railway website](#).

## SHUNTING PUZZLE

By Michael Clements, education department

When goods trains ran most days on the East Grinstead to Lewes line, wagons would usually be dropped off (and picked up) at each station. Before leaving East Grinstead the wagons would be arranged so that they could be left at the right stations as quickly as possible as in this picture.

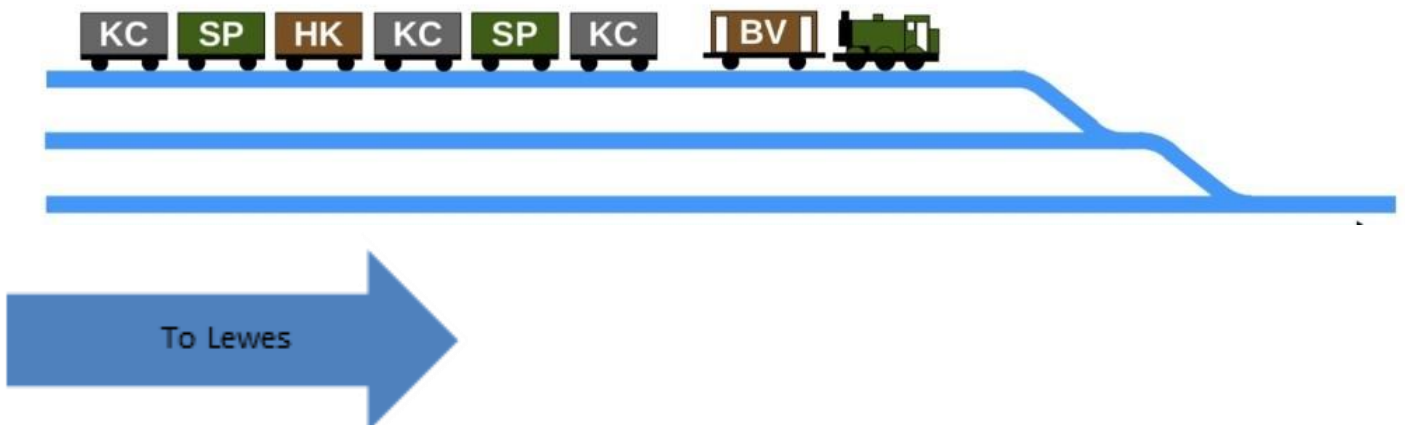


**BV** = brake van **SP** = wagon for Sheffield Park

**HK** = wagon for Horsted Keynes **KC** = wagon for Kingscote

The wagons need to be shunted into the right order. To do this the engine goes backwards and forwards moving wagons from siding to siding.

The goods yard has three sidings and the engine and trucks are like this before shunting:



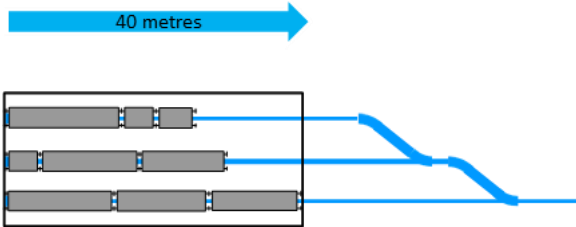
Can you sort the wagons into the right order so that they are ready to leave the goods yard in 12 or fewer engine movements?

Answer in the next issue.

## CARRIAGE SHED SOLUTION

By Michael Clements, education department

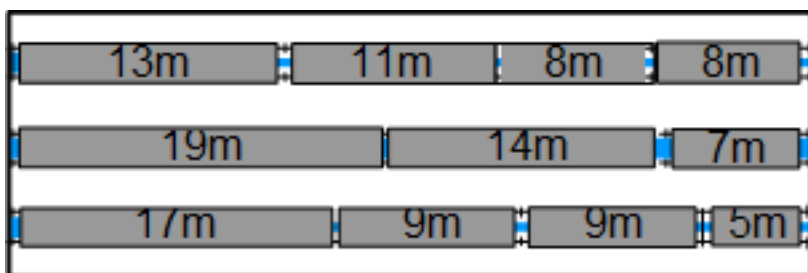
In the last issue we showed you a plan of a carriage shed with three tracks. The shed is 40 metres long.



We asked you to take out the vehicles currently in the shed and see if you could find a way to fit all 11 of the following carriages, vans and wagons into the shed without any of them sticking out the end.

- 1 coal wagon – length 5m
- 1 brake van – length 7m
- 2 cattle wagons – length 8m each
- 2 Victorian carriages – length 9m each
- 1 milk van – length 11m
- 1 Edwardian carriage – length 13m
- 2 parcels vans, one 14m long and one 17m long
- 1 restaurant car – length 19m

Here's one way of fitting them all in.







# 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 [www.bluebell-railway.com](http://www.bluebell-railway.com) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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