



The imposing presence of Flying Scotsman Photo: Andrew Strongitharm

The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway Members, Staff and Supporters

March 2022

IN THIS ISSUE

Was it only five years ago that, to a skirl of pipes from the platform, Flying Scotsman drew out of Sheffield Park with its inaugural gala breakfast service? As preservationists, a historical appreciation is core to what we do, but such is the breakneck pace at which events in the “real” world have taken place that an event only five years ago already feels like distant history.

In August this year, Flying Scotsman will be flying south once again. With a host of uncertainties about the future still around – not least a somewhat precarious coal supply situation – the visit of the world’s second most famous locomotive gives a focus to look forward to in the summer. (The most famous locomotive? *Stepney* will be looking on from the shed, silent for the time being, but with a lifetime to look back on half as long again as Flying Scotsman, sagely aware that after even the most dreadful crises, life soon enough reverts to a more even keel). Initial details of the visit are contained on page 2 of this issue.

Elsewhere in this issue there is much to report, not least the very rapid recovery from damage caused by Storm Eunice. The main casualty was a signal north of Kingscote, but with one day of service during half-term cancelled on precautionary advice from the Met Office, and a second day in which trains could initially only run as far as Kingscote, services were back to normal by the end of the day. Two days of storms feels like a metaphor for the last two years: battered, but with everyone pulling together, we are back in business.

See you on the trains!

Tom James, Editor

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Flying Scotsman to ‘Fly South’ This August

World-famous locomotive No. 60103 Flying Scotsman, will return to Sussex this summer.

It will be the Flying Scotsman’s second visit to the Bluebell. The locomotive visited the steam railway for a 7-day run in April 2017 – marking the first time the engine had visited Sussex in more than 50 years.

Geoff Mee, chairman of Bluebell Railway Plc, said: “We are thrilled to confirm The Flying Scotsman is on track to visit us once again.

“The last event was a huge success, with many people travelling from far and wide to glimpse the famous loco on Bluebell rails. We have some exciting plans for this year’s visit – including the chance to travel behind Flying Scotsman on regular services and special dining trains, so keep an eye out for more information soon!”

Flying Scotsman was the first locomotive of the newly-formed London and North Eastern Railway (LNER). The locomotive (previously numbered 1472) was renumbered 4472 in 1924 and given the name ‘Flying Scotsman’ after the daily 10.00 London to Edinburgh rail service.

It was numbered No. 60103 after British Railways was formed and rail travel was nationalised in 1948.

The Flying Scotsman is now owned by the National Railway Museum and operated and maintained by Riley & Son (E) Ltd.

The locomotive is due to undergo an overhaul in April 2022, prior to the locomotive’s centenary celebrations in 2023. The visit to the Bluebell Railway will be one of the first chances to see the famous engine following the overhaul. As part of the overhaul, Riley & Son (E) Ltd will restore the locomotive to the same standard as the last overhaul in 2016, with work focusing on the boiler and the required retube and recertification. There will not be any changes to the locomotive’s livery, numbering or chimney configuration.

Sarah Price, Head of Locomotion said: “Flying Scotsman is a symbol of the grace, speed and style

of the steam age and the world’s most famous locomotive is a fantastic ambassador for the National Railway Museum. Ahead of the centenary in 2023, we’re keen for as many as possible to see the newly-overhauled Flying Scotsman, whether at speed on the main line or up close at heritage lines and I’m sure the visit to the Bluebell Railway will be a great success.”

The Flying Scotsman will be running non-stop return services between Sheffield Park and East Grinstead for five days from 25 – 29 August. All seats must be pre-booked in advance.

Visitors will also be able to see the locomotive on static display from 17 – 24 August and 30 August – 5 September. Tickets for footplate viewings will be available to book online.

Tickets will be on sale from Sunday 1 May. Please visit the [Bluebell Railway’s website](https://www.bluebellrailway.com) for further information.



Flying Scotsman drawing out of Sheffield Park with a Dining Service. Photo: Andrew Strongitharm

From Mee to You

By Geoff Mee, chairman, Bluebell Railway Plc

Well, this has been a real month of Highs and Lows! And Highs growing out of the Lows.

Highs, because we have had the best start to the year ever in terms of revenue!! The ice rink attracted a lot of people including a whole lot of younger people, catering and the shop did very well. Half term over the two weeks was amazingly busy and my personal experience of the Golden Arrow Pullman dining was exceptional from an ambience, service and food point of view, all-in-all a great start to the year.

Lows, because we had to close the Railway for a day because of trees falling across the line and one of them taking out a signal at Kingscote as well as 80151 running into a fallen tree and suffering some damage, but without being derailed.

The Highs from the Lows, 80151 was repaired and back in service within hours, the trees were cleared by the Ops and Infrastructure teams before the end of Saturday and the heroes in the S&T department performed a near miracle to reinstate the damaged signal and allow train to run.

About infrastructure, manager Matt Crawford and the team completed the track relaying, replaced the points outside the engine shed and completed the training facilities at Horsted Keynes all in time for the new season – nice job folks

The conflict in Ukraine is causing escalating energy costs and coal supply is a real headache for all heritage steam railways. We are fortunate to have secured a supply of coal ovoids which will keep us steaming for the time being. They fire very differently and the loco crews are learning how best to manage the new challenge. We need to manage our resources to match the fuel supplies that we can get and may need to supplement our steam locos with a limited use of diesel motive power to stay fully operational.

OP4 is now Operational and the Heritage Skills Centre and the conference facilities are in regular use and, thanks to business development manager

Jon Beardmore's efforts, is a fully accredited training venue and is hosting regular training sessions for railway maintenance companies. The trimming team has now attracted more than 10 new volunteers who are all progressing well through their training and helping to progress the C&W effort in the repair shop. We would still like to see more volunteers in the C&W workshop to help progress repairs on our wonderful fleet of coaches.

Our volunteer wagon team goes from strength to strength producing some brilliant repairs to our goods vehicles so enabling some really top quality pick-up goods demonstration capability.

On Saturday (12 March) we will be having our first loco owners group meeting in a number of years to discuss how we can help each other to accelerate the repair and maintenance of our combined loco fleet to improve availability and resilience against a challenging year of exciting events which are rapidly approaching. Highlights include Road meets Rail and the Model Railway event which has some new venues planned with bigger and better exhibits. We also are looking forward to a visit by Flying Scotsman – see page 2 for details.

Last weekend we held the third and last of this year's Volunteers Workshops. More than 100 volunteers attended the workshops and the ideas generated were terrific and will be reported on in the next issue of *The Bluebell Times* by workshop organiser Gordon Dudman and the team of supporters who made this all possible. This will help inform our emerging business plan and there are ideas that I know will make a big difference to the visitor experience. I can't wait to share the emerging themes and I want to thank all the volunteers, managers, directors and trustees who participated in the events – a great experience for us all. These three events were so well received, attended, and played such an important part in preparing for the future that BRPS chairman Paul Churchman and I have committed to repeat them next year.

We were pleased to welcome Steve Oates, the CEO of the Heritage Railway Association, to our last board meeting (see page 8). His message was the challenges facing the heritage rail community as is reported separately in this edition. On the subject of the HRA the 'Jewel in the Crown' appeal was shortlisted for an award for most innovative funding programme and we wish appeal co-ordinator Trevor Swainson and the team every success in the final.

Work on Horsted Keynes refurbishment will start within weeks and I look forward to seeing this progress through this year with some exciting new

initiatives to be announced later in the year. At the same time we can expect to see the start of work on the Miniature Railway at Sheffield Park – see page 9 for a report on this project.

All in all a pretty dramatic start to the year and although there are still a lot of uncertainties there are a lot of exciting things to look forward to in the months ahead.

Best wishes to you and your families,

Geoff

The Jewel in the Crown Appeal

By Trevor Swainson, Appeal Co-ordinator

28 February marked the formal end to the JITC Appeal although a few late donations will continue to be received. Remarkably, the Appeal has raised £591,500 in five months comprising:

- ➔ Personal donations from members, shareholders and friends of the Railway: £168,400
- ➔ Matched funding from The Bluebell Railway Trust: £168,400
- ➔ Gift Aid on personal donations to be recovered from HMRC: £34,700
- ➔ Legacy from the estate of the late Roger Williams: £200,000
- ➔ Grant from the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society: £20,000

All of these funds will be applied to the much-needed repairs and renovation of our 'Jewel in The Crown', at Horsted Keynes.

It would be fair to say that the amount raised has exceeded our expectations with the Appeal coming so soon after the equally successful 'CV Emergency' Appeal in 2020. Simply saying 'thank you' hardly seems enough but, once again, more than 1,000 members, shareholders and friends have responded to the call.

However, it has to be said: a very big and formal THANK YOU to everyone who has supported the Railway once again.

It is difficult to thank everyone who has been involved in the Appeal for fear of missing someone out but particular mention must be made of Keith Riggs who masterminded the administration of all of the donations. Grateful thanks also must go to Steve Bigg, Roger Kelly, Paul Bromley, Colin Tyson, Tim Baker, James Young and to anyone else whose name I might have inadvertently omitted.

Work has already started on the planning of the project. Already there has been a detailed survey of all the cabling etc. that festoons to Station building. I think everyone agrees that all of this was a bit of a mess but it will now be tidied up and put into ductwork. Some redundant cabling was discovered so we might make a bob or two on the sale of the scrap copper!

Now the real work begins! Infrastructure director Barry Luck, project manager Mel Jordan and buildings manager Bob Darvill will be masterminding the work and we look forward to seeing the results of their labours unfolding over the next year or so.

Commercial Update

By commercial department, Bluebell Railway

We've been through a lot. Now, let's all pull together.

The season has started and we're looking forward to things slowly returning to what vaguely resembles 'normal' (whatever that was).

The efforts by everyone to re-awaken what was to some degree a business in hibernation have been outstanding, and it's great to see everyone working together to achieve the best for the Railway we all know and love.

However, the knock-on effects of the pandemic still present many challenges and we have to do our best to overcome them in the most practical way.

You only need to visit the supermarket, a local pub or restaurant to see the effect that the past two years have had on supply chains and staffing levels in all aspects of business. Menus have shrunk across the board as suppliers don't know what is available from day to day, and the venues themselves physically cannot afford to waste stock due to last minute cancellations, which are still very much an issue at the current time.

Compounding this problem is the huge exodus from the hospitality industry with many staff being either furloughed or choosing to pursue new avenues in the light of the pandemic as well as Eastern European citizens returning home. Many of these staff have chosen not to return to hospitality, and as such left a massive gap in the workforce, both in terms of current staff and potential employees. This is especially apparent with waiting and catering staff, where specific skills are required.

As you can imagine these issues affect Bluebell in the same way as they do the aforementioned pubs and restaurants. Limited stock availability is causing issues with essential supplies for all our catering outlets, as well as our dining services, such as the Golden Arrow.

This is one of the reasons why we are currently running a limited menu. As the situation improves, we will of course return to offering an a la carte menu on Golden Arrow, and a wider offering throughout the other catering outlets. The dining services are also affected by the continuing staffing shortage, with many of our previous staff having moved on to different sectors of the employment market because of the pandemic. On a more positive note, the Golden Arrow has returned to service after two years, with our first sets of diners having had a very enjoyable experience, no doubt due in part to the excellent service provided by our staff, both old and new.

This has left a surfeit of trained waiting staff, which has especially impacted the Golden Arrow services, with the 'silver service' staff requiring a longer training process, another reason why the menus are currently limited, as it is easier for the staff to learn focusing on a reduced menu, and then move on to the a la Carte as they gain experience and confidence.

There are opportunities where existing employees and volunteers can help out in this situation. We are currently recruiting for the following roles:

- Kitchen Assistant – Sheffield Park
- On-Train Supervisor
- Catering Supervisor
- Casual catering staff

If you know anyone who may be suitable for, or interested in any of the roles, please mention it to them. More details are available at:

www.bluebellrailway.com/job-vacancies

Alternatively, if as a volunteer you feel that you may be suitable or interested in assisting in any of the above roles, then please email volunteer co-ordinator Graham Aitken at volunteer.coordinator@bluebell-railway.com

Fantastic February

Words and photo by Ruth Rowatt, Marketing and Communications Manager

What a brilliant start to the new operating year! February half term saw the introduction of an ice rink in the locomotive shed at Sheffield Park running sessions alongside our Kids for a Quid event on the steam trains. Visitors could choose to get tickets to skate, to travel or do both. It was a resounding success. The railway was full of families, some of which were regular visitors and many new faces too.

The ice rink was managed by a professional company and the location allowed for a unique and special experience. Surrounded by locomotives and with a view onto the pits where engines are lit up, you couldn't get much closer to the heritage – and no, it didn't turn the ice black!

Families were able to explore SteamWorks! in the locomotive shed and learn about steam, even if they were not traveling on the trains that day. We noticed that a more diverse group of people visited to use the ice rink and experience the railway – so we were really pleased to see more young adults, for example, engaging in their heritage.

There was lots of wonderful and positive feedback from our visitors, one lady said that everyone in her family had thoroughly enjoyed their whole day, and the ice skating had been "the icing on the cake!"

It was a resounding success both financially and when considering the visitor experience, so we plan to run this again in the future.

POSITIVE E.P.O.S

During half term, we launched our new electronic point of sale system which meant new tills in the shop and catering outlets. There were no disasters, and our visitors used the new tills, so we were pleased with the transition. Our online and booking office tickets will be hosted by the new system from 1st May, so we are busily working on this behind the scenes. Look out for ticket releases for future services including the Golden Arrow and events this month. If you haven't signed up to our newsletter – why not? It is the fastest way to know when those tickets go up for sale. Otherwise, keep an eye on social media for the announcements.



Volunteer Review

By Graham Aitken, volunteer co-ordinator Photo by Richard Clark

What could be better than one of the following?

Sitting on a moving train in a buffet car and enjoying the passing scenery whilst partaking of a refreshing tea/coffee/soft drink/alcoholic drink, and perhaps a small snack

... or ...

Enjoying a drink, snack, or ice cream in the picnic garden at Kingscote station, whilst your, or someone else's, children are having fun in the playground

... or ...

Keeping calm in the buffet car at East Grinstead station with a welcoming drink and perhaps a snack, whilst awaiting the excitement of a steam train ride to discover the rest of the fabulous Bluebell Railway

How about ...

Being the person who provides the refreshments in all three of these options?

If you like interacting with people, providing a service that our visitors enjoy and making their day just that little bit more special this is the job for you.

Ideally, we aim to provide a small team of two people for the on-train buffet car and at both the Kingscote and East Grinstead buffets, so therefore ideal for spouses, partners, family members, friends or leave it to us to create the teams.

Perhaps you might already be a volunteer, if so, why not encourage your spouse, partner, family member or a friend to make up your own team of two, in addition to your normal volunteering activity.

With the 2022 running season about to get underway we are looking for 20 individuals, or 10 teams of two, to join our existing volunteers in making our visitors experience just that little bit more special.

Please contact the Volunteer Coordinator NOW at volunteer.coordinator@bluebell-railway.com if you think that this would be just the job for you. A member of the Volunteer Catering Team will then contact you to answer any questions you might have and arrange a date for you to join us, or why not stop and have a chat with me on Sunday 20th March when I will be on duty as Station Master at Sheffield Park.

It's good to talk.



HRA chief executive visit

Words and photo by Paul Bromley, communications director, Bluebell Railway Plc

A new Interrail card scheme and plans for an authoritative kitemark were outlined by Heritage Railway Association chief executive Steve Oates on a visit to the Bluebell Railway.

He spoke to more than 20 Plc directors, Society trustees and Trust governors in the Birch Grove Suite at Sheffield Park.

Steve outlined his professional career and heritage railway background: a chartered surveyor who then set up several commercial radio stations before working in economic development for a local authority. He joined the Isle of Wight steam railway at the age of 13 and was its chairman.

He said his aim as HRA chairman was to revitalise the trade body for heritage railways.

"Heritage railways generate local, national and international value to the UK visitor economy," he said. "We are massive."

He set out the various challenges facing the industry including coal and the environment as well as recruiting a more diverse workforce of staff and volunteers.

Steve said the HRA's Interrail card was a great asset: it provided 40% of the HRA's income and was a benefit to working volunteers. He said a new

card scheme was being developed to replace the existing system.

And there will be a revised website with a members' area coming soon as part of the plans for the HRA to be "the voice speaking up for the sector".

Steve said: "We want HRA membership to be an authoritative kitemark giving peace of mind to customers – something to put on your website to say you are doing things right, you are doing things well."

All heritage railways were trying to balance three aspects: preserving the heritage brand, becoming commercially profitable and safety/standards.

He ended his presentation by commenting: "As far as I am concerned, we are an important part of the visitor economy. People are making a choice about where to spend their hard-earned income."

Steve answered various questions from attendees including the trials of different types of coal. He was thanked for his presentation by Bluebell Railway Plc chairman Geoff Mee.



Steve Oates, HRA chief executive (left) is thanked by Bluebell Railway Plc chairman Geoff Mee (right)

Miniature Railway

Words and photos by Peter Dickson, project manager

As reported in *The Bluebell Times* issue 29 (January 2022 p15), planning permission has been granted for the construction of a miniature railway by the picnic site at Sheffield Park station. Peter Dickson, who is the engineering manager for the Train2Train scheme, is managing the project and sets out his vision for the scheme.

I have been appointed the project manager for the miniature railway and Sheffield Park. I hope to spearhead a new drive to engage with young people and families to help sustain the Bluebell volunteer force and further grow the educational and community reach for the Railway.

There are many reasons for this project:

- The construction of the miniature railway will become a focal point for new and existing young Bluebell Railway volunteers
- There will be close engagement with the 9F Club
- It will encourage family engagement with new and existing volunteers
- The miniature railway will be self-funding on an operational basis
- Construction progress will be serialised in Bluebell Railway publications and the wider media.
- We will establish a project office and “go-to centre” for updates and new recruitment as well as for potential educational visits
- [Chris Vine’s “Peter’s Railway”](#) outdoor activity centre will be based around the miniature railway site

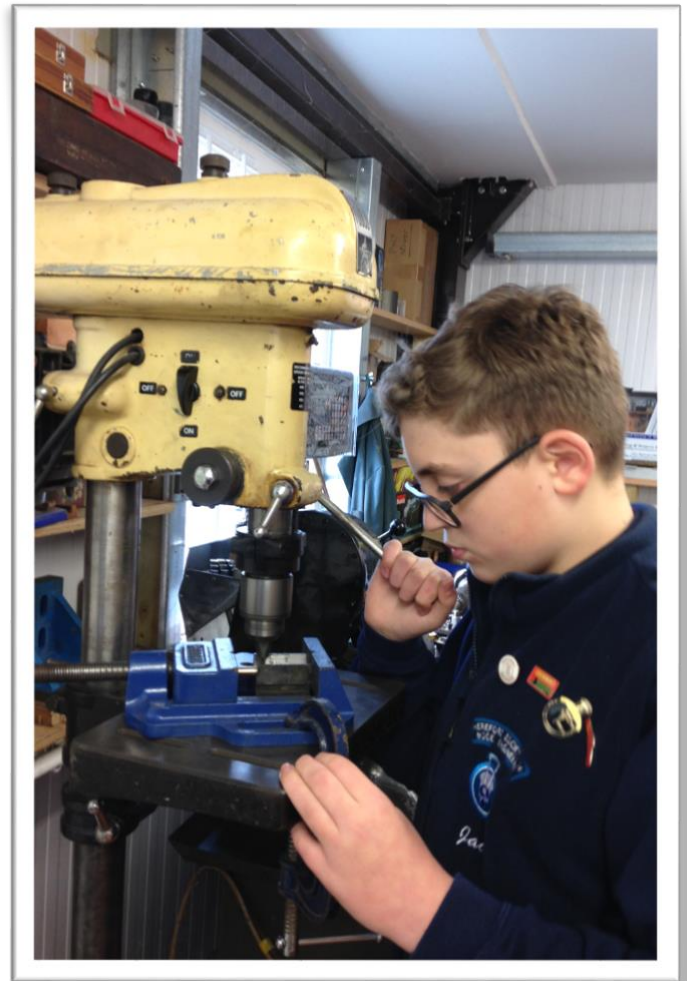


- ➔ There will be close integration with Bluebell's operational teams such as engineering, S&T and P Way
- ➔ It is envisaged that the final form of the miniature railway will be operated in accordance with full size practice
- ➔ We will reach out to local model engineers, some of whom may already be Bluebell volunteers
- ➔ The miniature railway will have its own small engineering workshop supporting servicing and training and allowing technical mentoring for under-16s
- ➔ The miniature railway will feature alongside the big railway on special events such as Giants of Steam and galas
- ➔ The miniature railway will facilitate cost effective local school visits and reach out to local youth groups
- ➔ We will work collaboratively with the gF Club and we would look to re-establish the model railway and set up a train simulator suite in order to reach out with a wider net to engage with young people and bring them into the Bluebell Railway
- ➔ We will develop practical projects that young people can take on as individuals such as wagon building, signal construction and locomotive maintenance

I hope the above gives a flavour of what I would like to achieve from this project. The question of engagement with young people is a developing process. I am well aware that the Bluebell has some excellent young people and, in the short time I have been working at the Railway, I have witnessed a very positive culture towards supporting young people.

I firmly believe the miniature railway will increase the volume of young people visiting the railways as well as opening up the engagement options to keep them at the Railway.

My own personal project [Train 2 Train](#) seeks to reach out to practical young people and open their



eyes to the hobby and career possibilities within the rail industry. We have supported the building of a miniature railway at the Nene Valley Railway. Phase 1 of this line is fully operational and runs alongside the sheds at Wansford. Much of the line has been constructed by young people. It offers a focal point for local model engineers to run their engines and visit the NVR.

In summary I do not see the miniature railway at Sheffield Park doing anything other than extending the reach to both young and old, broadening the family day out and forging closer educational links.

I am very keen to fully develop the classroom portable building into a "go-to" location for the miniature railway. I am really keen to put my energy behind the gF Club as I see this as a project they can support and potentially own.

There is a great deal of preparatory work we can do ahead of any infrastructure work within the picnic site. There is also scope to use a portable railway to raise the awareness of the project and create some immediate interaction.

News in Brief

HERITAGE SKILLS CENTRE GAINS ACCREDITATION



The Horsted Keynes training facility has successfully passed its NSAR (National Skills Academy for Rail) inspection. It means the Bluebell Railway is now an accredited rail training venue.

The Railway intends to hold a series of open days in March for invited attendees from regional rail companies to look at what is on offer.

There is a special section of the Bluebell Railway's website devoted to being a [Rail Training Venue](#).

THEATRE PROPS

Suitcases, departure boards, lamps and flags were among the items loaned to Theatre Royal Brighton for their special shows to promote the 'Adventures on Trains' book series.

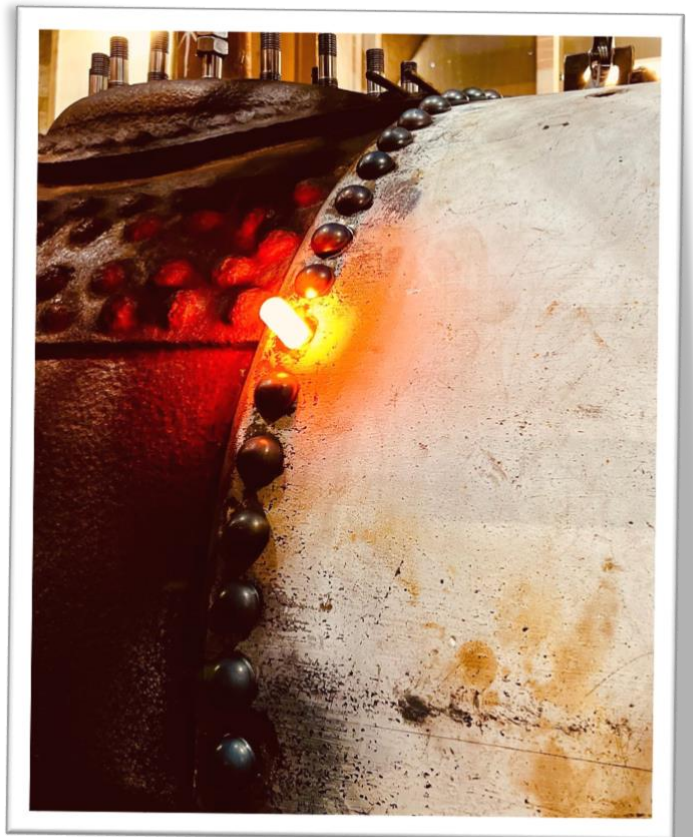
Authors M.G. Leonard (who lives in Brighton) and Sam Sedgman wanted to make the stage look like a railway station and asked for the Railway's help. Sheffield Park senior station master Graham Aitken organised the collection and return of the items.

M.G. Leonard told her audiences that she was a frequent visitor with her family to the Bluebell Railway and the idea for the 'Adventures on Trains' series came during a journey on the line.

TERRIER 150

Progress continues on ensuring Terrier No. 672 Fenchurch is ready for its 150th birthday celebrations. The locomotive is currently being overhauled and is expected to feature in the Bluebell Railway's [Terrier gala](#) from 29 to 31 July.

There is also a special [Terrier 150 website](#) with the calendar of events for all the activities at heritage railways this year.



*Another rivet in the rebuilding of Fenchurch's boiler.
Photo: Andy Kelly*

REWORKING THE SOUTH OF SHEFFIELD PARK

Following completion of winter track relaying in Lindfield Wood, the infrastructure team has recently moved to the south end of Sheffield Park with a vengeance. [The south-end point of the run-round loop has been replaced](#) – that point sees heavy use as nearly every station movement passes over it. Following that work, the two western roads in the locomotive yard have been dug out. The rails are in reasonable condition but the wooden sleepers are life-expired and

replacement is complicated by the concrete crossing in the middle of the pointwork. The road railer made that concrete less complicated in short order, but getting at the smaller pieces surrounding the check rails and chairs proved a bit more difficult and called for the jack hammer. The chairs apart from the two broken ones will be replaced with new screws and set on new timbers



Photo: Mike Hopps

which have been ordered and stored at the salt yard ready for the work.

SIGNAL BOXES AND STATIONS

In addition to David Esau's photographs (see page 13), we have added the second batch of John Scrace's station and signal box photographs to the Museum website. This time location beginning with the letter 'B' and 'C', 838 in total.



Baynards Station, 13 April 1962 Photo: John Scrace

MORE THAN JUST LEAVES ON THE LINE

During the night of 18/19 February Storm Eunice brought down a substantial tree just north of Kingscote Station, which did a thorough job of destroying the down home signal. Fortunately the adjacent equipment cases survived unscathed. Our S&T volunteers, assisted by Jon Bowers' Sunday permanent way gang, have done wonders, and succeeded in erecting and commissioning a temporary 3-aspect colour light signal to take its place on Sunday 20 February.



Photos: Mike Ellis



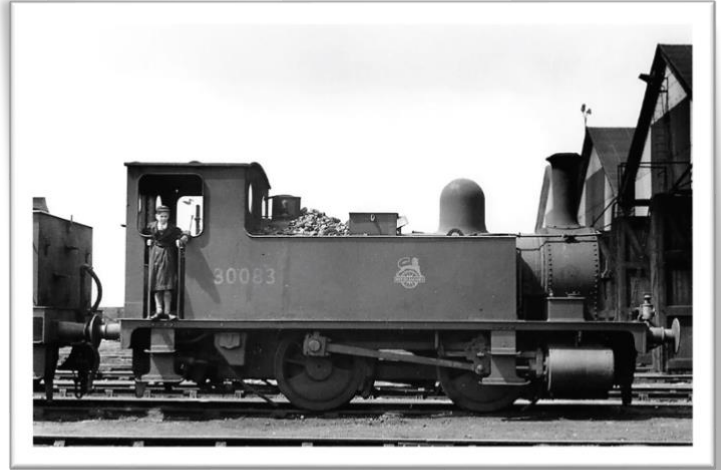
A New Photographer for the Museum

By Chris Wilson, Bluebell Railway Museum Archive volunteer *Photos by David Esau*

We are delighted to announce that we have added more than 700 images taken by David Esau to the Museum website. Some may be familiar with the name of David's older brother, Mike Esau. Mike, being 8 years older than David, took his little brother with him on many of his railway trips, whether it was David pedalling his tricycle down to the pedestrian bridge over the Waterloo main line at New Malden where they lived – he can just recall seeing a blue-liveried Merchant Navy – or further afield to more magical places such as Ashford or Eastleigh. From the earliest years he can remember, railways were part of his life. His older brother's influence propelled David into railway photography. At the age of 9, he took his first railway photograph at Ashford works on 6 January 1955 – the last Drummond S11, 30400, awaiting scrap – using his mum's old Ensign camera.

Most of his photographs were taken in the South of England, but he travelled to other parts of the country as well. Many trips were with Mike's life-long friend, the late Gerry Siviour, who had the luxury of a car, or on the back of Mike's Lambretta scooter, and latterly on his own Lambretta. Perhaps the most epic trip was two weeks in 1961 up to the Scottish Highlands. New Malden to Mallaig, all on Mike's Lambretta TV 175 with two very modest sized panniers.

David said: "In the late 1950s and the first half of the 1960s I spent most of my spare time at weekends and during school holidays taking photographs of steam trains. My brother had printing equipment, and so a few of my photos – all black and white – were printed, and some even got published. However, the vast majority of my collection has lain dormant in a filing cabinet. Recently, it started weighing more heavily on me what I should do with my collection – I'm not getting any younger! I had already thought of donating it to a preserved railway such as the Bluebell, but I also thought that given modern technology it would be wonderful to see my collection properly by scanning the negatives –



Top to bottom:

David Esau on B4 30083 in c.1957, courtesy of Mike Esau

Taken on 10 April 1964, M7 30053 is being attended to outside Swanage shed.

Taken in 1959, O2 W16 'Ventnor' stands in Sandown station.

quite a daunting task when the total collection is just over 3,400 negatives.”

David got in touch with the Archive, initially to enquire about what scanning equipment we used, but after discussions David generously agreed to deposit his collection with the Archive and we would provide him with the scans. Aided by the circumstances we all found ourselves in last year, more time was available for scanning than usual and the whole of the collection was digitised in just under a year.

David continues: “During the course of 2021, Chris Wilson has been beavering away scanning the collection. I can’t tell you what a joy it has been to see my photos brought to life after all these years, most of them for the very first time. Fortunately, I kept a diary of trips between May 1960 and 1965, so I have the date and location for many of the photos. I catalogued most of the Southern Region photos – which is more than half of the collection – and about half of the Western Region ones, but I am now in the process of cataloguing the rest of the collection. It’s quite a detection exercise looking at railway lines on Ordnance Survey maps – many now sadly ‘disused’ – to try and pin-point the location! There will still be many opportunities for those with much greater knowledge than me to pin them down. It is good to know that the future of my collection has been secured, and I hope others can now enjoy the fruits of my years as a young railway photographer, and what wonderful years they were.”

We are very grateful to David for entrusting his collection to the Archive.



*Top to bottom:
W16 passing Wroxall station with a freight train for
Ventor on 30 October 1962.*

*An unidentified 4MT and unrebuilt Bulleid Pacific emerge
from Winsor Hill tunnel heading towards Shepton Mallet
with a south bound Inter-regional train on 12 August
1961.*

WANT TO SEE MORE?

The first part of David’s Southern area photos is now on the Museum website. To view, access and order go to www.bluebell-railway-museum.co.uk and click on the Archive tab. There are various searching methods, including by locomotive number or class and location. Content key search allows you to see all the images of a particular type, for example, all the images on the Isle of Wight. Use the New key to see all the latest images.

The Stirling O / O1 Class - Part 2

By Keith Sturt, former Bluebell locomotive workshop manager

In part 1 last month we looked at the fascinating history of the class and No. 65 up to its withdrawal in 1961. Now in part 2 we trace the path the loco took from a dusty corner of Ashford Works to its eventual re-emergence on the Bluebell Railway in all its Edwardian glory.

Keith Sturt was one of the small group which rescued H Class No. 263 for preservation, initially based at Ashford Steam Centre, and who knew Esmond Lewis-Evans well. Keith was later appointed loco works manager at Sheffield Park and is now one of the team constructing the replica Brighton Atlantic No. 32424 'Beachy Head'.

Following withdrawal, while thoughts turned to possible preservation, No. 65 was stored at Ashford: initially in Ashford steam shed, and then at the Locomotive Works. After more than a year in limbo, the order came for the locomotive to be scrapped. At the very last minute, a saviour came in the form of Mr Esmond Lewis-Evans, newly returned from Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia) where he had been running a car

dealership for some years. Mr Lewis-Evans agreed to purchase the locomotive – only just in time, since one of the connecting rods had already been cut, pending being towed to Richborough for scrapping. The rod was welded back together again, and other rods replaced to enable the loco to be steamed on light duties.

In 1966 the locomotive was moved from the workshop back to the old steam MPD, by that



No. 31065 in Ashford Works, 28 November 1964

Photo: Keith Sturt



*Top to bottom:
Now in Ashford Shed – 17 July 1966 Photo: Keith Sturt*

Outside Ashford Shed – 1 June 1968 Photo: Keith Sturt

In steam alongside 'Clan Line' at the South Eastern Steam Centre, 9 September 1973 Photo © Eric Kemp, courtesy of Derek Hayward

time in use as a diesel depot. When the depot closed completely in 1968, Esmond negotiated with BR to rent the site, opening what became known as the South Eastern Steam Centre. For some years, this was home to an eclectic mix of locomotives and rolling stock, some owned by Esmond and some by other groups. All three of the larger SE&CR locomotives now owned by the Bluebell Railway Trust – H class No. 263, C class No. 592 and the O1 – were based at the centre and steamed on open days. The Steam Centre stayed open from 1969 through to 1976, but gradually went into decline such that by 1976 the O1 was the only locomotive left on site.

Around 1980, BR threatened to seize the O1 and put it up for auction to attempt to recover alleged rent arrears. Before they were able to do so, the locomotive was removed from the site, broken into its major components and dispersed to a variety of secret sites around southern England, becoming known at the time as the "lost engine".

This is how matters remained until September 1996 – exactly 100 years after the locomotive had been constructed – when Esmond paid an unexpected visit to the Bluebell Locomotive works. He was encouraged to make contact with Bluebell by Martin Lock MBE – a Plc director for a time – who had worked with Esmond at the Ashford Steam Centre.

It became apparent, during this visit, that Esmond wanted Bluebell to restore No. 65 to working order. To take this further, Bill Brophy, Peter Cox and Keith Sturt had a meeting with Esmond in what remained of the partially demolished Steam Centre, and also visited Sellindge in Kent to see No. 65's boiler.

The cost of collecting all the parts of No. 65 from around the country would be considerable, so Peter Cox provided Esmond with a loan of £12,000 to pay for the transport to Sheffield Park. Eventually parts of No. 65 arrived in 'drips and drabs' but it soon became evident that the loco was far from complete, and in poor condition. No. 65 had been stored outside for over 15 years and therefore an extensive refurbishment was necessary.



A rare photo – all three of the large SE&CR locos in steam together at the South Eastern Steam Centre Photo: Keith Sturt

The boiler was reasonably sound apart from the usual re-tubing, but most steam fittings and pipework were missing including the brake ejector (a somewhat vital part). The polished outer brass dome cover was also missing. The frames and wheels had been sitting in mud, somewhere on a farm in Cambridgeshire; the driving wheel tyres were so badly rusted they were unfit for service and had to be re-profiled at Swindon.

Non-destructive testing showed the welded connecting rod to be unfit for service, and this had to be replaced with a new machined forging. The tender tank was not fit for further service and was replaced in Sheffield Park works. A considerable number of items to complete the loco came from Bluebell or H Class Trust stock. The locomotive entered service in August 1999 where it was the star attraction at an event held to commemorate the centenary of the formation of the South Eastern & Chatham Railway.

Shortly afterwards, Esmond's brother Adrian visited the railway, and announced that he now owned the locomotive having acquired it from Esmond in settlement of a debt. However, Adrian was happy for

Esmond to appear to remain the locomotive's owner, as were Adrian's two sons to whom he subsequently transferred the ownership. The locomotive ran in Bluebell service between 1999 and 2009, and then for a second period starting in 2017. Esmond Lewis-Evans died the same year, aged 90.

In November 2021 the family decided that they no longer wanted to own No. 65 and offered it to the Bluebell before putting it up for auction. Following negotiations, it was agreed that the Bluebell Railway Trust would purchase it for a significant six-figure sum. The transaction was completed just before Christmas. The historic engine has now been secured for the Railway for the long-term and joins C Class No. 592 and H Class No. 263, both previously at the Ashford Steam Centre with the O1, in the Trust's ownership.

In its 125-year life, No. 65 has had an eventful existence, coming close to disappearing for good at least twice. While Esmond Lewis-Evans had his financial difficulties, it must be remembered that without him, No. 65 – along with several other items of considerable heritage interest – would not be with us today.

Funding for No. 65

By Trevor Swainson, funding governor,
Bluebell Railway Trust

The Bluebell Railway Trust has had to pay for the engine from its existing resources which were intended for use on other projects on the Railway.

We therefore need to rebuild our reserves by raising funds to help finance the purchase of the O1. Launching a new general appeal so soon after the very successful 'Jewel in The Crown' Appeal would not have been appropriate. Instead, we decided that we would invite specific donations from those with a general interest in locomotives and those with a keen interest in the O1 and our other SECR locomotives.

If you would like to help, there are several ways you can do so:

- By making a donation via the website at www.bluebell-railway.com/donate; or
- By cheque payable to The Bluebell Railway Trust, quoting the reference 'SECRo65'; or
- By bank transfer directly to the bank account of The Bluebell Railway Trust, again quoting the reference 'SECRo65' – account no. 61059056, sort code 60-10-26.

In the latter two cases, if you have made a declaration for Gift Aid purposes, you need to take no further action. If you do not have a current declaration made within the last 4 years, please contact funding@bluebell-railway.com so that we can send a Gift Aid form for you to complete.

Subject to satisfying safety regulations, anyone making a donation of £500 or more will be invited for a one-way cab ride on the O1 between Sheffield Park and East Grinstead. We are considering other incentives which will be announced in due course.

Due to a typographical mistake, the wrong account number was given in the last issue of The Bluebell Times – the correct number is as listed above. Ed.



Top to bottom:

The boiler and cab of No. 65, by now divorced from the frames, wheel and tender, at Hope Farm, Sellinge – 28 May 1989. Photo: Nigel Menzies

The frames of No. 65 under overhaul at Sheffield Park, late 1990s

The reconstructed tender tank at Sheffield Park, late 1990s Both photos: Melvyn Frohnsdorff

On This Day, 11 March

By Tony Hillman, assistant museum curator

Three pictures from the Bluebell Photographic Archive taken on 11 March. Thanks to Martin Elms, John Creed, Richard Peirce, Roger Merry-Price and Chris Wilson for finding the pictures and providing the notes.



On the night of 31 January 1953, a violent storm together with a tidal surge struck much of the East Coast of England. This flooded large low-lying areas, particularly that between Herne Bay and Birchington, closing the North Kent Coast line. As a result, a special timetable was brought into use. This included a shuttle service between Herne Bay and Faversham, to connect with the London trains: a connection was laid in at Faversham to permit these shuttles to terminate in the Down Slow platform when required, rather than have to cross the main line to the Up side of the station. The North Kent Coast line finally re-opened on 21 May 1953.

On Wednesday 11 March 1953, H class No. 31519 was photographed with push-pull set 659 arriving

at Faversham on the 1.40pm all stations shuttle from Herne Bay. The driver can be seen in the driving coach whilst the fireman will have remained on the locomotive. The elegant LCDR Down Starting bracket signal dates from 1899, though by now modified with SR upper quadrant corrugated steel arms, and Westinghouse pattern shunting discs.

Set 659 was created in April 1938 from two of the three vehicles from Set 535, after an accident at Swanley Junction in June 1937. Former coach No. 5418 was converted to a driving brake composite and re-numbered 6409; it was re-joined by the undamaged Wainwright (ex SECR) brake third No. 3324. A similar vehicle, No. 3341, which had been the leading end at Swanley, was destroyed. The

new set was unique in that the brake third retained its 'birdcage' lookout, visible in the picture, and was the last such vehicle in service on the Southern Region. It

was withdrawn from the Three Bridges to Oxted services in November 1961. *Photo: Barry Fletcher*



The inter-regional train between Birkenhead and the Kent and Sussex Coasts was longstanding and ran in three portions, dividing at Redhill and Ashford. Formed of nine coaches between Birkenhead and Redhill, the provision of rolling stock alternated between Southern and Western Regions. Pictured here is the Hastings portion on Friday 11 March 1955 departing Redhill for Brighton at 2.45pm, consisting of a Maunsell buffet car (locked out of use and presumably en route to Lancing Works) and a Pullman Car (also locked out of use, en route to Preston Park Works). These are then followed by three Western Region coaches forming the train proper, all hauled by D Class 4-4-0 No. 31734. The remaining six coaches from Redhill divided at Ashford – four for Margate via Canterbury West and two for Ramsgate via Dover. In later years the train was truncated to operate between Wolverhampton and the Kent

Coast only, before complete withdrawal at the end of the Winter 1962/1963 timetable.

The D Class 4-4-0s numbered 51, were designed by Harry Wainwright and built between 1901 and 1907. Under Richard Maunsell, who succeeded Wainwright as Chief Mechanical Engineer of the SE&CR in 1913, 21 were rebuilt as Class D1 between 1921 and 1927, with a Belpaire firebox and long travel piston valves. No. 31734 was allocated to Tonbridge Shed (74D) after 1948 until its withdrawal in October 1955. On 11 March 1955 it was operating Duty 294, a lengthy tour starting at 4.40am and ending at 11.15pm. During the course of the day, it visited Sevenoaks, Brighton, Redhill, Brighton, Lancing and Brighton. Included was the afternoon Lancing Works staff train, known as the "Lancing Belle", on which it piloted an E4 Class 0-6-2T.

Photo: John J. Smith



Saturday 11 March 1961 and early days of the Bluebell Railway at Sheffield Park station. A volunteer applies paint to the canvas on the roof of ex-London Transport vehicle No. 518. The carriage, then a Full Third and originally numbered 394, was built by the Ashbury Railway Carriage & Iron Co. Ltd (of Manchester) for the Metropolitan Railway in 1900, one of 54 similar coaches built between 1898 and 1900 as steam-hauled stock. Between 1906 and 1924 all the series were converted to electric working, No. 394 being converted to a driver trailer in 1921 and renumbered 6702. However, it was converted back for steam haulage by London Transport in 1940, for use on the Chesham branch as part of a 3-car push-pull set. It was then renumbered 518.

The Chesham branch trains remained steam-hauled until September 1960 when No. 518, along with three other ex-Metropolitan Railway vehicles from the Chesham branch, were purchased by the Bluebell Railway for £60 (+ £5 delivery) each. All four were extensively used throughout the early sixties but, by the end of the decade all were suffering various forms of decay and taken out of

service; the driving cab of No. 518, in particular, being infested with dry rot.

In 1992 the BASH Project (Bluebell Ashbury Supporters and Helpers) was launched to raise the funds to restore all four coaches to working order, and in their original, as built, condition. One of the major tasks was to rebuild the driver's cab, featured in the picture, to an ordinary passenger compartment with outward opening doors to match those in the rest of the coach.

After 38 years out of use No. 394 returned to public service in February 1999 and, along with the other two Ashburys and one Craven-built ex-Chesham branch coach, all four are still running today. A testament to all those members of the Carriage & Wagon Department at Horsted Keynes who undertook their restoration.

Photo: R. C. Riley

What's On

Friday 11 March – Thursday 7 April

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.

DINING TRAINS

Friday 11 March – [Sausage & Mash Special](#)

Saturday 12 March – [The Wealden Rambler Afternoon Tea](#)

Sunday 13 March – [Golden Arrow Luncheon](#)

Friday 18 March – [Sussex Cottage Stew Special](#)

Saturday 19 March – [The Wealden Rambler Afternoon Tea](#)

Saturday 19 March – [Golden Arrow Evening Dining](#)

Sunday 20 March – [Golden Arrow Luncheon](#)

Friday 25 March – [Curry Evening](#)

Saturday 26 March – [Golden Arrow Evening Dining](#)

Sunday 27 March – [Golden Arrow Luncheon](#)

Friday 1 April – [Pie & Mash Special](#)

Saturday 2 April – [The Wealden Rambler Afternoon Tea](#)

Saturday 2 April – [Golden Arrow Evening Dining](#)

REGULAR SERVICES

Weekends in March – timetable [Service A](#)

Saturday 2 and Sunday 3 April – timetable [Service B](#)

Monday 4 April to Thursday 7 April – daily services timetable [Service A](#)



The Bluebell Times

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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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THE BLUEBELL

RAILWAY

*Steaming through Sussex
it's more than just a train ride*



15 - 18 April Easter Bank Holiday Weekend

Families will enjoy eggcellent spring trails at Bluebell Railway this Easter bank holiday weekend, Book an All Day Rover ticket and hop on and off the train all day.

The Golden Arrow - 2022

Our wonderful Pullman dining set returns from maintenance for sumptuous steam hauled luncheons and delicious evening dining.



28 - 30 May Road Meets Rail

Traditional Steam Fair featuring working traction engine displays, miniature engines and a steam driven children's merry-go-round.



23 - 25 September

Bluebell Railway Beer Festival

In association with CAMRA, join us for great music and a huge range of beers and cider.

2 & 3 July Model Railway Weekend

Where miniature meets full size! Ride our trains to see layouts, traders and models at all the stations along the line.

14 - 16 October

Giants of Steam Autumn Gala

Thundering giants join our home fleet locos for our annual gala. Special guest engines will be announced, so keep an eye on our website.



29 - 31 July Terrier Gala

Join the small but mighty Terriers such as Stepney (our longest resident loco) and Fenchurch, Terrier No.72 (back out after an 11 year refurbishment) and special guests in celebrating the Terrier Class' (and our own Fenchurch's) 150 birthday.



November - January Festive Events

Santa Specials, Festive Dining Trains and the magical Steamlights experience provide something for the whole family.

WWW.BLUEBELL-RAILWAY.COM

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