



The drama of SteamLights at Three Arch Bridge. Photo: Dave Bowles

The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway Members, Staff and Supporters

December 2022

IN THIS ISSUE

After November, in which it seemed never to stop raining, the weather has turned cold for the winter. A common comment to loco crew from footplate visitors goes along the lines of “you wouldn’t get cold up here” – they’d be surprised at how cold it can get at certain times! Worth it though when you look back and see a cloud of white steam seeming to hang above the train along the long straight of Freshfield Bank, and when SteamLights is in operation, lit into varied colours from the lineside illuminations. Such services elicit a degree of sniffiness from certain quarters, but the editor is firmly of the view that the railways that are best placed to weather the current economic problems will be those with most diversity of income streams.

There’s a packed issue of *the Bluebell Times* this month, and that is without including news of *Fenchurch*, which is being thoroughly run in before handing over to the Operations department. It is planned to use the locomotive for footplate taster courses in 2023. The current courses are already sold out, but more dates will be added soon – keep an eye on the [website](#) or the Railway’s social media channels for new dates. Also planned for 2023 is the return of [Branch Line Gala](#), with one exciting visitor already announced. Those of us who grew up in the 70s and 80s building Airfix models will see a familiar outline! Operationally, Branch Line Gala is traditionally one of our most interesting events, and allows us to show the railway doing what it does best: small engines working hard pulling vintage trains.

It just remains then – on behalf of the Society trustees, Plc directors and Trust governors – to wish all our members, staff, volunteers and supporters a really Happy Christmas after a difficult and demanding year. Here’s to a successful 2023!

Tom James, Editor

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From Mee to You

By Geoff Mee, chairman, Bluebell Railway plc

Christmas is coming and we are in the full swing of Santa Specials (all sold out), Golden Arrow Christmas Lunches (all sold out), SteamLights (nearly all sold with a few spaces available after Christmas so get in quick if you want to see a great show). This year's SteamLights has updated lineside displays, a Wishing Tree and a new spectacular opening by our Master of Ceremonies, which has gone down very well with our visitors. We have had some lovely letters coming in from our invited guests complimenting the Railway on a great experience.

Christmas is a huge commitment for all our staff and volunteers and I want to thank everybody for their hard work and dedication that makes this happen. A special mention to our catering staff who are under an immense amount of pressure to get the whole range of services up and running, we have still a number of vacancies and any offers of help would be greatly appreciated by catering manager Megan Laughlin, assistant catering manager Sarah Vigar and the team. Also, a special thank you to Christmas Event co-ordinator Julia Pique who has once again organised both the Christmas events with the events staff and volunteers.

I am pleased to say that the boards have approved the adoption of the 2 Car Oxted Diesel Multiple Unit 'Thumper' 1305 and the Class 73 Electro Diesel locomotive 'Bluebell Railway' so there is a lot of organising to do by locomotive engineering director Paul Russell and diesel traction engineering co-ordinator Ben Wetherall to get the Diesel gang mobilised and prepare the space to do the work.

A small minority of people are critical of the introduction of diesel traction which I find frustrating. The Bluebell will always be a predominantly steam railway but some people are stuck in a Time Warp that ends in the 1960s and does not acknowledge that the history of the Southern Railway continues to this day. We are the custodians of that journey through the archive

and the display that we can put on as a living museum. Just as important, diesel also gives us the resilience in hot weather without the risk of setting fire to the countryside and the risk of a prohibition order. They will also give us the ability to run earlier morning services from East Grinstead, something that we want to implement at weekends during 2023. We need to grow our visitor numbers to provide the funds to keep our Railway viable. In very crude terms an additional 50,000 visitors (only 1,000 a week!) would mean an additional £1 million income for only marginal additional costs – that additional income can be reinvested in further developing our offer to visitors.

Other loco news includes the arrival of the 9F at Sheffield Park in anticipation of some investigative work to determine the extent of the work required to overhaul the Giant. Fundraising continues to support its overhaul so if you want to make a special Christmas donation to get this magnificent machine back in service, now is the time to do it.

Fenchurch has one last loaded test to pass before it can be cleared as fit to run and be ready for next season. Plans are being finalised for our [Branch Line Weekend \(21-23 April\)](#) which is shaping up to be an exciting show.

The commercial team are already marketing the start of next year's programme. Keep an eye on the website, social media channels and the weekly newsletters for early updates and early bookings. We hope to be able to announce some exciting new events early in the new year.

I was very pleased to be able to attend the Loco AGM on 26 November and to meet the footplate team in person. It was great to see so many of the crews in one place. Locomotive superintendent Stuart Marks introduced an improved process for progression from cleaner, fireman though to driver which I believe is a good initiative and will ease the pressure on crews at busy periods.

The combined boards also gave the go-ahead to use some restricted funding from the legacy of former Carriage & Wagon workshop volunteer Roger Williams to undertake the restoration of a Bullied coach to enhance the Bullied set. Rolling stock director Paul Churchman and the C&W team with the Rolling Stock Committee will decide the most suitable vehicle and how and where the work will be done.

On another related subject we are planning to move *Sharphorn* from Horsted Keynes to SteamWorks! to sit alongside the North London Tank and *Stepney* as an exhibit to show the history of the Bluebell. *Sharphorn* was the contractor's engine that helped build the original line, the North London Tank the loco that helped take up the railway. Alongside *Stepney* as our first preserved locomotive, they should make a great combined exhibit.

An important decision was made in the last couple of weeks when we appointed a new Operations Director. After advertising and then interviewing, we have decided to appoint Neil Glaskin on a permanent basis having served in an interim capacity for a short time – welcome to the board (again), Neil. This does mean that Neil has stepped down from his current position as Vice Chairman of the Preservation Society. He has been replaced by Roy Watts on a temporary basis until a permanent replacement is elected at the next AGM.

In preparation for 2023 infrastructure director Barry Luck and infrastructure manager Matt Crawford are gearing up with the infrastructure team to undertake a major relay of the track at Vaux End which will start in January. When completed, this will enable full use of our entire 11 miles for all vehicle types giving us many more opportunities for a wide variety of events. It's a big job involving a lot of our volunteers and contractors but it will be planned with meticulous detail and I am sure that the team will deliver on time and budget – good luck guys.

A lot of work is going on to finalise the budget for 2023 which will be discussed at the plc board in December and with all three boards (plc, Society and Trust) at a joint meeting in January alongside

the commercial plan for 2023 and a draft outline of the proposed business plan which is being prepared as a 'Straw Man' draft by Trust governor Trevor Swainson, Trust chairman Vernon Blackburn and myself.

The intention is to share the outline proposals for comments and additional input at the Volunteer Workshops to be held between late January and March facilitated by co-ordinator Gordon Dudman and his team as they did last year. Details of the dates and arrangements are included in this edition.

We are still on the lookout for more volunteers especially in Engineering and very specifically in coach painting where volunteers can learn a new skill as we need to develop a much bigger team of skilled painters to keep our locos and coaches in pristine condition. If you want to join, then please contact the volunteer coordinator at volunteer.coordinator@bluebell-railway.com

We also have paid and volunteer opportunities in catering and retail which we really want to fill.

In early December BRPS President Gordon Pettit visited the archive at Beare Green for an update of how the archive work is progressing on the further transfers from the plan arch at Waterloo.

The new HOPS system is now live and I would encourage staff and volunteers to sign up for it so that you have up-to-date rostering, communications and online training at the touch of a button online.

I need to reinforce the message about safe working methods and ensuring that tools and equipment are fit for purpose. This not only relates to access equipment and ladders but also to portable tools. Remember – don't take on a task if you have not been properly trained for it. Many accidents happen when people try to do a good turn for others, but don't fully understand the safe way of doing the job. Please stay safe, support the Railway and the teams as much as you can through this really busy period and – most importantly – have a really great Christmas with family and friends. See you in the New Year!

Geoff

Board Update

By Paul Bromley, communications director, Bluebell Railway plc

There have been a couple of updates to the composition of the plc's board of directors.

Neil Glaskin, who has been interim Operations Director, is to take on the role on a permanent basis. He has relinquished his role as Vice Chairman of the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society in order to take up the plc board director role.

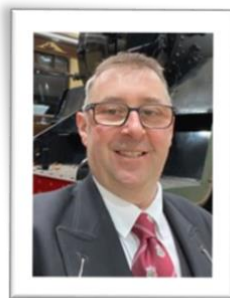
The Society has announced that former BRPS chairman Roy Watts will take over as Vice Chairman until the Society's AGM.

The board's appointed Safety & Assurance Director George Barclay has decided not to take up the post for personal reasons.

The board has therefore asked former Safety & Assurance Director Martin Cresswell to resume the

role on an interim basis pending the recruitment of a permanent post-holder. Martin will be the Safety & Assurance Director while the recruitment process takes place – see job ad on page 20.

Geoff Mee, chairman, Bluebell Railway plc, said: "Providing a safe railway for all our staff, volunteers and customers remains the board's top priority."



Operations Director
Neil Glaskin



Safety Director
Martin Cresswell

A Christmas Message from The Chaplain

By Fr. David Murdoch, Bluebell Railway Chaplain

A very special experience for me recently was coming with local Ukrainian families and their hosts to a Steam Lights train. It was wonderful to see the joy and excitement on the children's faces as they saw the amazing displays along the lineside. I was in a compartment with two Ukrainian mums who had a little English and so was able to hear something of their lives there. It was very poignant and moving for me to reflect on the contrast between giving the children some 'normal' fun whilst such terrible and distressing events continue to unfold back in their home country. It is to the great credit of the railway that they enable these and other needy families closer to home to enjoy this experience.

'Light at the end of the tunnel' is, of course, a railway metaphor. Life can feel dark and uncertain at the moment, having had two monarchs and three prime ministers this year. As well as facing increasing pressures from high inflation and mortgage rates, along with the ever more frequent extreme weather events caused by global warming. Our railway too

faces financial challenges and needs more volunteers. Each of us also has dark events like sickness and bereavement to face in our personal lives.

In the sweetness of Nativity plays and the like, it is easy to forget that the baby whose birth we celebrate had nowhere to be born except a stable, and that he, Mary and Joseph were soon refugees, fleeing into Egypt from Herod's terror. In St John's Gospel, it is said concerning Christ's coming into the world: *'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.'* (John 1, verse 5)

Notice that it does not say there will be no darkness, but that the darkness will not overcome the light. Please be in touch with me if I can ever give any help or support, and I look forward to seeing many of you at the Carol Service at Horsted Keynes Station tonight (9 December) at 7-30pm.

I hope and pray that the light and life of Christ may be with you all this Christmas and into the new year.

SteamLights Trips for Ukrainian Families

The Railway has given away selected compartments on the SteamLights service to special guests.

The offer was made through partnership working with West Sussex County Council representatives, Ukrainian refugee hosts from local villages and a charity called Reaching Families which empowers families of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

Chief Operating Officer Lisa Boyle said: "To be able to see the pleasure and excitement of those children and adults and to give them such a wonderful start to the festive period has been an absolute honour."

The railway gave away 77 compartments seating either 6 or 8 people, tables for 4 people and various spaces in the wheelchair accessible carriage on three specific services in November.

Adult and child residents of local West Sussex residential homes and approximately 70 Ukrainian refugees currently residing in the villages of Horsted Keynes, Highbrook, Newick and Chailey were among the invited guests.

Kay Yeowart, one of the hosts, commented: "SteamLights is a beautiful, magical experience lighting up the night sky, lifting spirits and brightening hearts. We are extremely grateful to the Bluebell Railway for inviting many local Ukrainian families who are sheltering from the extreme horrors of war to enjoy this amazing event. The evening was very special for them and they loved every minute."



Preservation Society Vacancies

By Gavin Bennett, BRPS Secretary

The Bluebell Railway Preservation Society has recently made some changes to the roles of its officers. Following his appointment as a Director of the Bluebell Railway plc Neil Glaskin has resigned as Vice-Chairman as required by article 23 of the BRPS articles of association. Vice-President Roy Watts has agreed to take on the role of Acting Vice-Chairman until the 2023 AGM.

James Young has agreed to take on the vacant position of Rolling Stock Trustee and Chairman of the Rolling Stock Sub-Committee. The society now has two vacancies for Trustees to chair two new sub-committees.

TRUSTEE VACANCIES

The Bluebell Railway Preservation Society is seeking two Trustees to join the board of the BRPS, it is proposed that the successful candidates would be co-opted to the society board on appointment and would then stand for election at the 2023 AGM.

As well as sitting on the main society board the two successful candidates would be appointed to chair one of the following committees:

Society Communications and Publicity Committee

The committee will work to implement improvements in communication to all members, working and non-working, looking at how communication can improve as well as new ways of communicating including using electronic means to reduce postage costs. Working with the Membership Trustee look at developing a new data base system to maintain membership records and use this to aid communication. The committee will also look at how it can promote membership of the BRPS and promote society activities and events. Working with the PLC Communications Director the committee will support the work of the editor of *Bluebell News* as well as provide news and information to *The Bluebell Times* and external publications. The

committee will support the work of the society webmaster in maintaining up to date information on the BRPS section of the website and use social media to further promote and provide information on the society.

Volunteers Committee

The committee will look at volunteering and membership, key areas will be supporting the work of the Bluebell Railways Volunteer Coordinator in encouraging new volunteers to work on the railway. The committee will also work with the gF Club to support their work and look at the best way for gF club members to transfer to mainstream volunteering.

The committee will work with the PLC and other groups on the railway to improve facilities for volunteers.

This committee will also lead on organising events for members and volunteers such as Members Days and social events.

Both of the above are new committees and as such the appointed Trustees will need to set up their committee and put together terms of reference to be agreed by the BRPS Board.

To arrange an informal conversation to discuss the positions please contact the Society Chairman paul.churchman@bluebell-railway.com

Applications for the position must be submitted to Gavin Bennett, the Society Company Secretary, gavin.benett@bluebell-railway.com Applicants must be current members of the BRPS with at least three continuous years of membership prior to nomination for office. Applications should be received by the 31 January 2023.

RETURNING OFFICER

The person undertaking the role will be required to assist the Society board of Trustee Directors in the processes of administering and overseeing the voting procedures for EGMs / AGMs, including Proxy Voting facilities for Society members.

The ideal candidate should possess good administrative and compliance skills, and also have a sound level of I.T. competence. He / she will work closely with the Society Company Secretary and the Membership Trustee, and will be supported by Election Observers at EGMs / AGMs.

It is not a requirement to provide a fully detailed CV, but we would like to know a brief profile about

you, and your experience and capabilities for the role.

If you are interested in assisting the Society Board in this important role, and would like to receive more information about it, please email Gavin Bennett, the Society Company Secretary, at gavin.bennett@bluebell-railway.com by 31 January 2023.

HOPS Update

By Fraser Hutchinson, HOPS champion

It is just over a month since I sent out the introductory email to all staff at Kingscote and East Grinstead introducing a new system called HOPS. I explained that we would be the pioneers for HOPS and awaited staff to give me dates for the Santa roster. The rostering system we, plus other departments, were using was the time and tested Retsor, and all data and competency records were kept on BROOSS. We populated the HOPS staff list, and 31 brave souls were given HOPS accounts.

Fast forward one month and that list is 648 and growing. All four stations, the guards and signalmen are on board within the Ops Department and are on track (excuse the pun) to go live for the start of the new season. I wish to thank Neil Glaskin, John Bayfield, Mary Cutbill, Adrian Lee and Peter Underwood for being so supportive in introducing HOPS within their departments.

Kingscote and East Grinstead have gone live and so far, there have been very few issues. This bodes well for going live throughout the Railway ready for the new season in February 2023.

The Loco Department which is the largest of our departments is moving from BROOSS to HOPS ready for the new season. For this a big thank you to Tim Gray who has been very supportive. In the background we thoroughly appreciate the work Russell Pearce and Trevor Bance are undertaking to collate all the competency records.

We have contacted all departments and received full support and staff are joining us all the time. If we have missed anyone out, please come forward!

BROOSS has now been withdrawn and HOPS will fully replace this and will deliver, recording rosters, competencies, timetables, improving communication throughout the Railway, and a storage for all our documents and rule books etc. To enable this transition a huge thanks must go to Matt Sloan who seems to have given up his social life to get this achieved. I was very encouraged to be told by a senior member of our Railway, that more has been achieved in one month of HOPS than five years of BROOSS.

I am currently running introductory online sessions to all staff and the first six have been well received despite my incompetence of mastering Microsoft Teams! There are four more planned between now and Christmas and there will be more come the New Year.

We are now asking staff for up-to-date photos so that we can replace the BROOSS ID cards. I have seen our very first card (Chas!) and soon we will have the choice of a credit card sized ID card and one on a mobile, like the Senior Railcard on the big railway.

There are other things going on in the background, but I have given you a taste of what has happened so far. The Beatles song "Eight Days a Week" seems to sum up the fact that things are moving swiftly and there are not enough days to get it all done.

New Telephone System

By Nigel Page, IT director, Bluebell Railway plc

We are introducing a new telephone system at the Railway which will improve the experience for our customers and our staff.

Many Bluebell Railway customers like to talk to us to book tickets or to buy something from the shop. The current telephone system provides a basic customer experience and is at the end of its five-year lease. It is prone to reliability issues and most importantly doesn't provide the required capability when incoming calls are high, or staff are not available to answer the phone.

Following a structured procurement process, the Bluebell Railway board has approved the purchase of a market leading software and internet-based telephony solution from 3CX, hosted by Gradwell Communications to replace our Panasonic-based telephone system. The internal Strowger-based phone system will remain unchanged.

For our customers, the new telephone system provides several features that will significantly improve the customer experience. These include: position in queue, call back and a digital receptionist allowing callers to choose what they want to do (e.g. purchase a ticket, buy something from the shop). Our

external telephone numbers will not be changing. The main number will remain 01825 720800.

For Bluebell staff and volunteers, the new telephone system will provide a number of new features including remote working, call-forwarding to mobiles, enhanced voicemail, visibility of busy/not busy and call recording.

Detailed planning is in progress with a target implementation date at Sheffield Park, East Grinstead and Kingscote of February 2023. Horsted Keynes will follow in late March 2023 when the external connectivity to the station has been upgraded.

Subsequent communications will provide more detailed information on various aspects of the project, including cut-over timings, new handsets, new extension numbers and most importantly what training will be available for Bluebell staff and volunteers.

If you have any concerns, questions or things you want the project team to be aware of, please contact us on Telephony2023@Bluebell-Railway.com



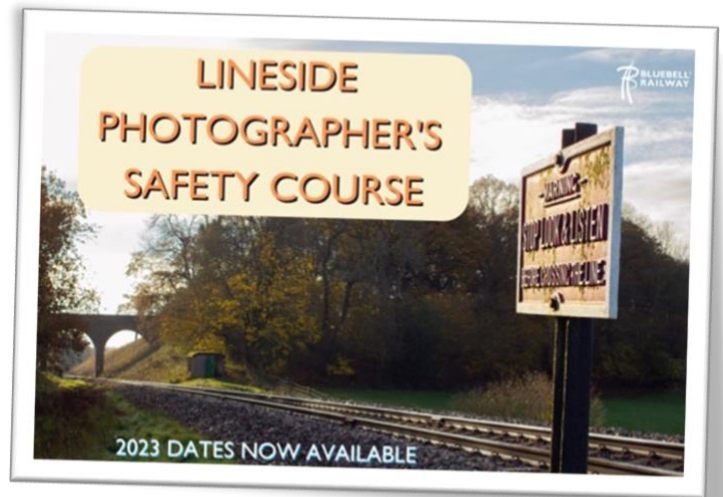
After more than a month stored at Sheffield Park, No. 76017 left the railway on 29 November. The loco is seen here at East Grinstead. Photos: Roy Watts.

Lineside Photography Courses

The first Lineside Photography safety courses of next year are now on sale.

The courses provide training and instruction in how to take photographs from places of safety in non-public areas of the Railway.

Applicants must be BRPS members and be able to quote a valid membership number at the time of booking. Successful participants will be issued a Lineside Photographer's Permit which is valid for one year.



The dates are:

- 7, 9, 21 and 23 March
- 4 and 6 April.

More details and how to book on the [website](#).

Photos:

*James Cummins (left)
Tom James (below)*



Night Ferry Wagons-Lits Leaves the Bluebell

By David Jones Photos courtesy David Jones

Thursday 24 November 2022 marked the end of an era at Sheffield Park when [Sleeping Car No. 3801](#) was loaded onto a Reids rig for a new life in Belgium.

This story began just over 38 years ago when the Wagons-Lits carriage arrived at Sheffield Park on Friday 14 December 1984, following a journey from the CIWL works at Ostend. It had been stored there since the Night Ferry service between London and Paris ended on 31 October 1980. It was purchased by a group of Bluebell Railway locomotive working members to provide sleeping accommodation at Sheffield Park especially over weekends. The scheme was instigated by Martin Allen who realised that one of these vehicles would be ideal for this purpose being not only a Southern sleeping car but would add to the Bluebell's collection and preserve an important part of the railway history of the area. It was appreciated that Car 3792 had already been preserved at the NRM, York as a static exhibit, but No. 3801 would continue its use for overnight accommodation and be located in the south.

Following problems with communicating with the Paris office of CIWL, your author offered to help as he was making frequent visits to Paris at the time as Export Sales Manager for Bexhill-based Furness Controls Ltd., and was able to call in to their office to discuss a possible purchase. This eventually resulted in a visit to the Ostend Works on June 5 1984 where an inspection was made of Nos. 3801 and 3803, both of which were available. Although No. 3803 had an extra historical value being the carriage that our late Queen had travelled in when visiting Paris in 1948, No 3801 was in much better condition, so this was the one chosen. After extended negotiations with CIWL and transport specialists Beckenham Heavy Haulage

a plan was formulated that would see No. 3801 travelling by rail from Ostend to Zeebrugge via Brussels, and then on the train ferry to Harwich. One or two members of the group would travel in the vehicle for security reasons to Harwich where the Wynns low loader would collect the vehicle and take it to Sheffield Park. This journey was beset with problems as described by Geoff Course in the Spring 1985 issue of Bluebell News, but eventually it arrived, unloaded and moved onto a piece of track constructed by the Night Ferry team themselves.

Restoration started immediately with cleaning and repainting into the original dark blue of the CIWL from its later SNCF light blue livery that it arrived in. With help from the Works at Ostend in providing details of the correct colour paint and lettering templates, this was completed by 1986 when a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the start of the train ferry service on October 14 1936 took place over the weekend of October 11 and 12. Many visitors came to see the Wagons-Lits in the platform at Sheffield Park where a display of Night Ferry memorabilia was set up. Since then individual owners of the nine compartments have changed and unfortunately due to it being outside in the Newick siding at Sheffield Park it has deteriorated somewhat, although some painting has been carried out occasionally. In the past year or two there has been outside interest in purchasing the vehicle and this has now happened with the resultant move described above. Although it is sad to see this carriage go, especially with regard to the large amount of expenditure for purchase, transport and repairs, hopefully its new owner will give it a revived lease of life.



Where's the Wickham?

Words and photos by Mike Hopps, BRPS infrastructure trustee

After some six months of intensive works by a small team from the S & T and Infrastructure Department, the Wickham trolley and trailer are now back in service and were rapidly tested in readiness for assisting with the SteamLights set-up

For years the machine was maintained on an ad hoc basis by Charles and Bob Bird, aided by Dave Devlin. After the sad loss of Charles and Dave, it was left to Bob to continue, but without proper support and facilities, Bob was finding it increasingly difficult to keep up with anything other than occasional brake block replacement. This issue was exacerbated by the fact that the driver and trailer unit had slightly different size brake shoes and with only one size of shoe available, there needed to be some modification to the castings in order for the trailer blocks to fit the driver unit. This has resulted in excessive wear and ultimately almost complete failure of the driver braking system. Earlier in the year the unit was withdrawn from service as it was no longer considered safe to use and a plan was put into place to overhaul what is probably the most useful and readily available vehicle on the Railway for all sorts of trackside maintenance.

Without a pit being available, the tractor unit was placed on an 'A' frame so that it could be inspected. It then became clear that there was a lot more wrong than just a simple brake problem and so worn parts were removed for inspection and possible repair. The brake hangers, brake adjusters, cross shaft bearing bushes, brake compensators and clevis pins were all so worn that they needed to be replaced. Not surprisingly, no spare parts are available for Wickham trolleys as there were so many different adaptations to the standard model and the firm closed down anyway in 1990. Bushing was considered for the hangers and brake compensators, but there was so little material to work with that it was decided to remake them along with the bushes. Computer Aided Design drawings were produced from measurements taken from the originals and with the dxf drawings we



supplied, new hangers and compensators were laser jet cut by Cirrus in Burgess Hill. Similarly, the cross shaft bushes – originally made from Tufnell – were laser jet cut in brass. The brake adjuster pivot holes were worn oval, but there was enough material for these to be drilled and reamed oversize, with similar holes drilled and reamed in the new hangers which had been plastic coated before machining off-site. New clevis pins were fitted to the assembly, with some being sourced from the US as none of the correct length were available here. A new air brake cylinder was also sourced to complete the assembly – fortunately available from a motor factors as a standard item and not particular to Wickham.

The foundry in Spalding which has been supplying brake block castings were sent a drawing and asked to make a new pattern for the 24-inch diameter tractor wheels - the trailer wheels are only 21 inches in diameter, which is why they had to be adapted.

The foundry have now supplied two sets of new blocks of the correct size for both units.

So with the brake assembly now being back to almost new condition, attention was turned to other matters which needed servicing and refurbishment. The air brake system has been checked and cleaned, some pipes replaced and any leaks rectified along with the air tank valves being serviced as well as a new coat of paint to the tank. While up on the 'A' frame it, has been possible to check things that haven't been looked at for a very long time. The underframe has been jet washed, repairs made to any rot in the floor and new running boards will be fitted at a later date. There have been oil changes for the engine, gearbox and differential as well as various filters. The coolant has also been changed after flushing the system. The bench seats were removed, cleaned and painted and the trim shop in C & W were kind enough to re-trim the driver and second man seats. Externally, all the rust patches in the bodywork were cut out and plated over with galvanised sheet – it being too thin and awkward to weld without a complete refurbishment. New windscreen wipers have been sourced and fitted and the outside including the roof have been painted. Painting has also been done internally and new side tarpaulins are being made by a specialist firm in Essex to replace the torn originals.

The trailer too has been up on the 'A' frame and adjustments have been made to the braking system as it was found that one of the cylinders was not working at all. New brake blocks have been fitted and bearing bushes laser jet cut in brass to replace the original Tufnell parts which had started to deteriorate badly. New brake hangers will be considered at a later date and measurements have already been taken so that drawings can be prepared. The trailer has been extensively cleaned, jet washed and painted above the sole bars in the traditional yellow with black hazard stripes at the back. New air brake pipes and electrical connectors will also be fitted.

There has never been a proper maintenance schedule or official documentation available for the Wickham; so now that all these repairs have

been made and the systems and operating requirements are better known, it is planned to keep proper records. External verification will also be sought to prove fitness to run and regular testing and servicing will be set up; rather than just waiting until something goes wrong, which has been the case for as long as anyone can remember!

WICKHAM TEAM

- ➔ Ali Bruce - Project Manager
- ➔ Bob Bird
- ➔ Doug Steptoe
- ➔ Richard Burt
- ➔ Andy Swain
- ➔ Alan Dengate
- ➔ Mike Hopps



Awake the Giant

By Andy Taylor and Tom Newble, Awake the Giant project [Photos](#) by Nigel Thomson

No. 92240 has been sleep walking and has now found a new place at Sheffield Park!

On Thursday 17 November, within part of the weekly shunt, No. 92240 was moved back down to the Sheffield Park. The locomotive was oiled round some weeks ago by Martin Payne and again by the workshop team the day before the shunt.

On the day of the shunt, the locomotive was kept at a low speed on the way down the line with regular stops checking that nothing was warming up and you guessed it to put more oil round. With this the locomotive glided down without so much as a squeak, almost with a smile on its face.

Thanks to everyone who has made this move happen from locomotive engineering director Paul Russell, operations director Neil Glaskin and operations manager Chris Knibbs to the operations team, the workshop team and the shunters. No. 92240 is the next 'large' engine on the list for overhaul, after 34059, *Sir Archibald Sinclair*. In the new year, the engine and tender will be split so that the tender can be moved to kick off the restoration. It was hoped to remove the cladding but this will now wait until we can move the locomotive into the works as some of the running plate will need to be removed. The engine is due to enter the works once *Sir Archibald Sinclair* is out. We plan to run an induction to anyone who wishes assist with the restoration early in 2023. Please see contact details below for anyone who wishes to assist.

Over the year, 'Awake the Giant' team have made massive progress with their fundraising efforts for the overhaul and restoration of the locomotive.

The team have increased their presence over the railway, being present in every gala possible and throughout the weekends.

In November *Steam Railway* magazine ran a 7-page article around 92240. The article covered everything about the locomotive's history and plans for its forthcoming overhaul. We thank



Steam Railway for the coverage which has already raised the profile of what we are doing and increased the income stream.

DOUBLE MONEY BUT MORE IS ALWAYS NEEDED

Income is steadily increasing and we have roughly double the income from last year. This has been helped through the launch of a leaflet explaining about the locomotive. On the back of the leaflet you will find a donation form either for regular or one-off donation. We are still a long way off the final amount needed, so any further support is very welcome.

This year, the merchandise has been very popular with many orders being taken and many items selling out really fast as well. The team has now increased their merchandise range even more, with more products being added in the new year.

Once the restoration starts we will also be documenting the overhaul and in the future, a

small publication about 92240 from the team will hopefully be printed and available to read.

Results of the photo competition held over the summer will be in a future issue of The Bluebell Times – Ed.

WE NEED YOU, YOU AND YOU:

To help awake the giant we need further support, regular monthly donations are the best way to help, please [go to our webpage](#).

If you are interested in getting involved or helping out with working on the locomotive or running the stand, selling merchandise then please email Andy Taylor (Project Leader) at andy.taylor@bluebell-railway.com

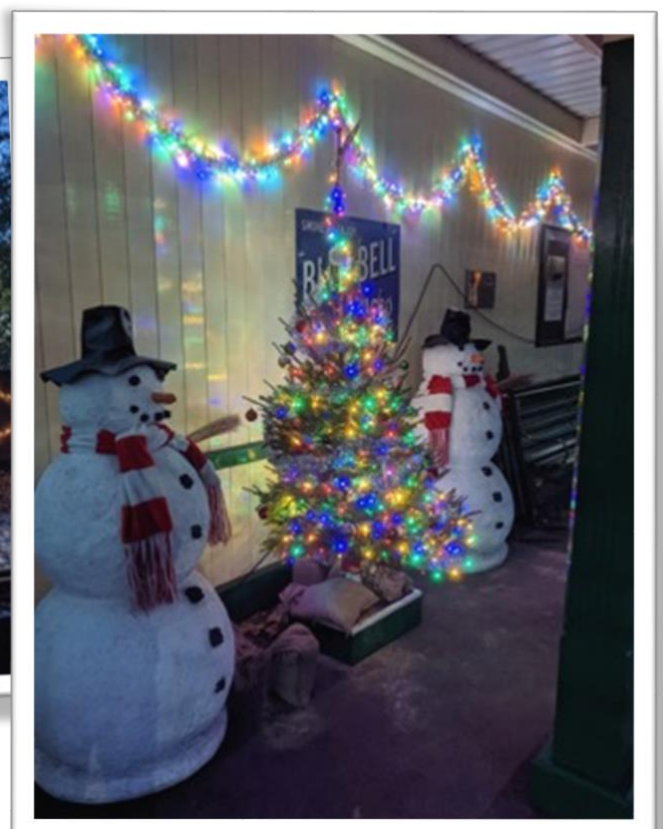
We would like to thank everyone who continues to donate and has purchased merchandise to help fundraise for No. 92240 and would like to wish all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Let's Awake this Giant once more!

Festive Cheer at East Grinstead

Photos by Harry Holmes, East Grinstead station foreman

Not to be left out of the Christmas decorations stakes, East Grinstead has been putting on a display of festive cheer, as seen in these photos by Harry Holmes, a volunteer station foreman at East Grinstead.



Volunteer Spotlight

Photos by Ruth Rowatt, marketing and communications manager

The Bluebell Railway offers varied volunteering opportunities that suit a range of different people. Find out more about one of our newest members of the Sheffield Park Station Staff and the difference volunteering has made to his life.

A LITTLE BIT ABOUT ME:

Name: Kai Grinstead

Age: 15

Volunteer position: Trainee Porter at the Bluebell Railway.

I'm a train enthusiast. I enjoy model railway, but I'm also a Star Wars and Doctor Who fan and I spend time at the gym with my Dad. I also enjoy gardening.

I present with an autism spectrum disorder and have dyslexia. I attend a special school: Oakgrove College in Worthing and I go to Brinsbury College on a Friday.

How did you hear about volunteering opportunities at the Bluebell?

I was coming for a visit and my anxiety went through the roof and I felt sick. My Dad said we shouldn't go as I might feel worse, but I forced myself to go. My train journey on the steam train calmed me right down and I felt at home because there were people here like me. I picked up a volunteering leaflet that day.

I see working here as pushing myself. When I started volunteering, Mum came as a chaperone and now she has joined as station staff too. She really enjoys it and is great at selling events and membership. She likes talking to the public. I've made jokes that she is going to replace me.

Why did you choose Porter?

To get me started I chose Porter, so I had a basic understanding of how the railway works, dealing with customers and working with a team.

Sometimes you have to put your needs aside to get things done. I feel like a different person when



I put the uniform on. With the uniform on I am technically Bluebell and I'm responsible for making the public happy. With this uniform on, I have to be the best of the best.

What do you enjoy about volunteering?

They are friendly and inclusive here. I interact really well with the other staff.

The first day is really important and it went well. They treated me really well on my first day; warm, friendly and welcoming, and it made me want to come straight back. I didn't want to go home.

I've made new friends and we all work together. We are all here because we love trains. We work as a team.

How does volunteering make you feel?

It makes me feel great because it breaks up my cycle. The average teenage boy is probably doing sports or on a computer. How many are working at a heritage railway? No one is stopping you from volunteering. Volunteering helps my confidence and social skills. I've tried new things with my new friends.

What do people at school think about you volunteering?

I wrote a piece for the school newsletter, showed them my uniform, showed them all the tech like clippers for tickets and carriage key. I also showed them my pocket watch.

People at school can see there are things you can actually do, they can succeed too. I just tell people don't give up; you can do what you want to do. Having special needs doesn't mean that you can't succeed, you are more likely to, because you have to work harder to achieve things already.

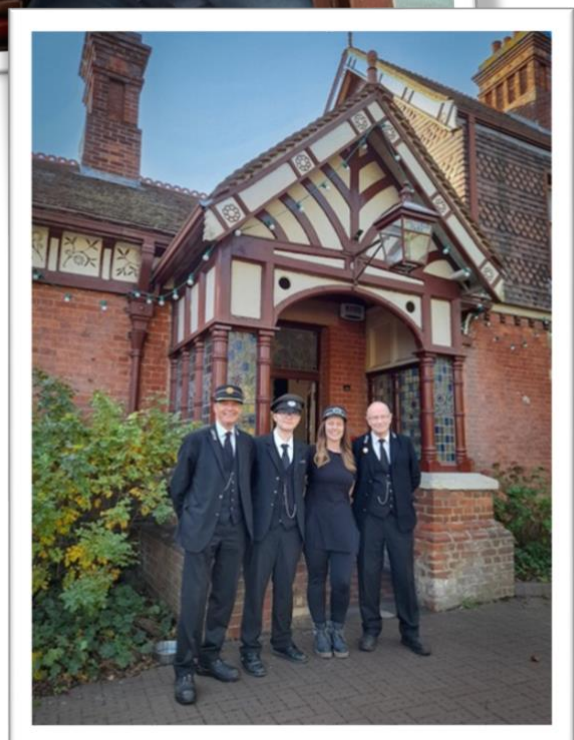
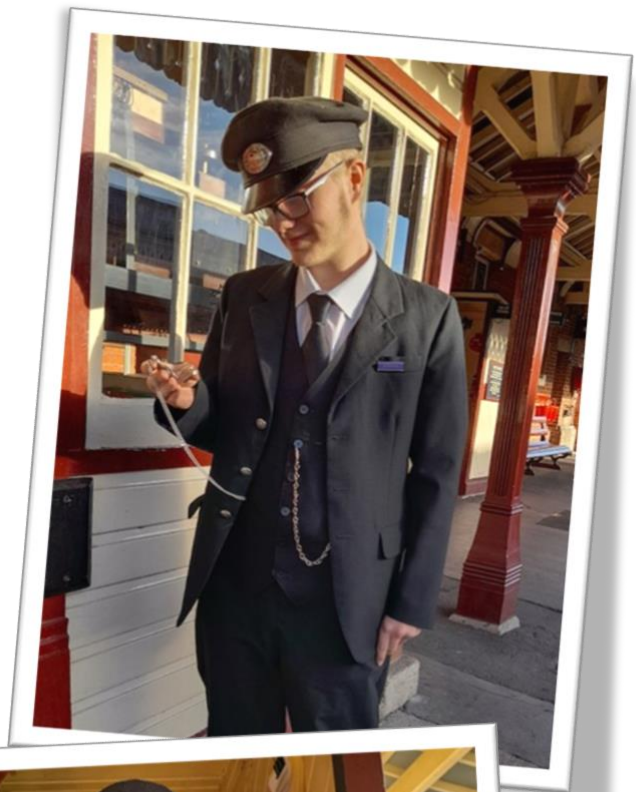
Suddenly, I had lots of new friends at school who had read my newsletter piece, they didn't believe I was working at Bluebell until then.

I share what I do via social media. I'm very proud of what I'm doing. A teacher that taught me long ago is sending me postcards because Mum keeps her informed of what I'm doing. She likes to support what I'm doing because I was in mainstream school and unsupported, but she could see my potential and wanted me to succeed in trains the way that I always wanted to. She is very proud.

What would you say to encourage someone with a disability to volunteer at the Bluebell Railway?

Come and have a look and see what they can do. There are so many different areas, so you can find something that suits you.

In this role, I get to take in the beauty of the trains coming in and out. Someone that has autism like me is forced to deal with seeing lots of people and it challenges me in a good way.



New Additions to the Museum Website

By Chris Wilson, Bluebell Railway archive volunteer

The December update for the Bluebell Railway Museum website includes the latest batch of John Scrace's stations, signal boxes and infrastructure photographs. This month there are 147 images in the 'N' set, most are locations that begin with the letter 'N' but there are also some photographs of railway notices.

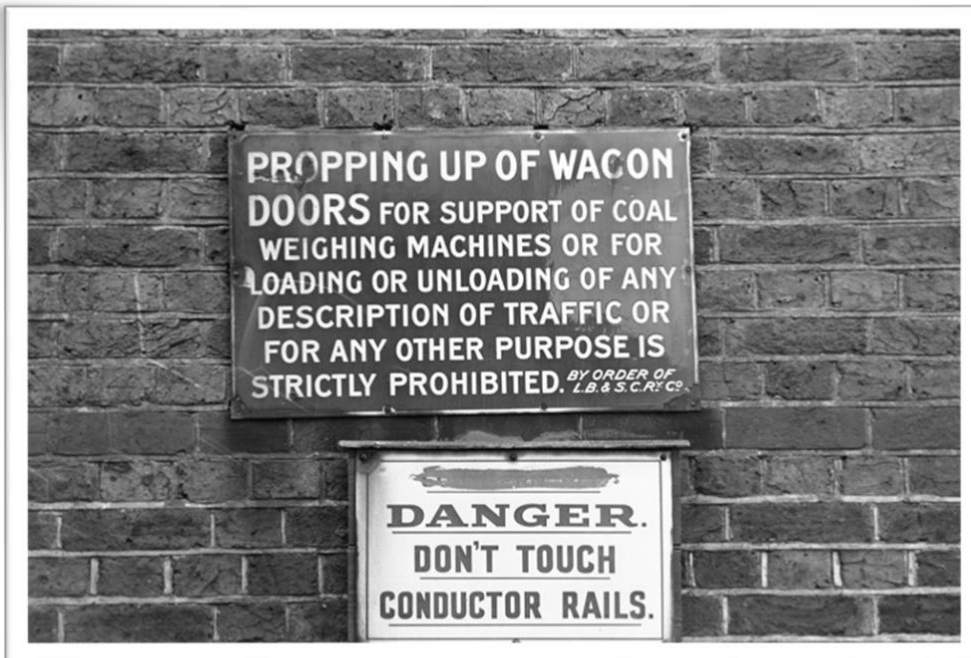


*Above:
View at New Milton Station on
11 June 1966.*

John Scrace [082461]

*Left:
LBSC Wagon Door Notice and
SR Conductor Rail Notice seen
at Horsham on 14 April 1963.*

John Scrace [082360]



VIEWING AND ORDERING

To view 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. The content key search allows you to see all the images of a particular type, for example, all the images taken of Fenchurch. Use the New key to see all the latest images including those mentioned and shown here and the Nearly New key to see what we added last month.

On This Day, 9 December

By Tony Hillman, assistant museum curator

Three pictures from the Bluebell Photographic Archive taken on 9 December. Thanks to Martin Elms, John Creed, Richard Peirce, Chris Sutton, Roger Merry-Price and Chris Wilson for finding the pictures and providing the notes.



Saturday 9 December 1950 and the photographer, John J. Smith, is located just south of Hurst Green Junction. The train is the 1.25 pm (SO) Victoria to Tunbridge Wells West via East Grinstead, hauled by former LBSCR 4-4-2T No. 32081 freshly painted into BR secondary passenger black livery.

The locomotive was based at Eastbourne shed (75G) and is working Duty No. 796. On that day the I3 will have worked up from Eastbourne station on the 6.37 am to Tunbridge Wells West via the Cuckoo line. After a spell in the shed yard it then worked the 10.06 am to Victoria. Upon arrival at 11.47 am it went to the loco yard for servicing before returning on the train depicted. Arriving at Tunbridge Wells West at 3.17 pm, it will subsequently work the 5.55 pm to Eastbourne, followed by the 9.00 pm van train from there to Haywards Heath and finally back home to Eastbourne on the 12.05 am (Sunday) vans, before returning to the

shed approximately nineteen hours from departure at 6.17 am the previous morning.

No. 32081 was built at Brighton in December 1910 to the design of Douglas Earle Marsh. After the Second World War all the I3s were showing their age, so much so that Tunbridge Wells West shed no longer considered the class capable of handling the important London services. Many, such as No. 32081, were transferred to Eastbourne and remained there until withdrawal which, in the case of No. 32081 was August 1951 with an estimated lifetime mileage of 1,005,891.

The rolling stock is of interest being formed of a former LSWR-designed Ironclad 4 car set No. 472 with a 'loose' Maunsell Corridor Third attached to the rear. Set No. 472 consisted of 3rd Brakes Nos. 4046 and 4047 with First No. 7664 and Third No. 2348, all built by the SR in 1926 and all withdrawn in 1959 or 1960.

Photo: John J. Smith [41246]



The picture, taken on 9 December 1962, shows an Austin A30 and a Mercedes "Ponton" saloon passing the main entrance and station house at Mitcham. Access to the platforms was through the booking office arch and down steps to the right. The station was on the line from Mitcham Junction to Wimbledon and opened in October 1855. Some of the route was built on the old track-bed of the Surrey Iron Railway, a horse-drawn line of 4-foot gauge which ran from Wandsworth to Croydon via Mitcham, opened in 1803 and closed in 1838.

The new line had a very convoluted history in its early years. It settled down to be operated by the LBSCR which mainly used push-pull sets on the passenger services. Freight services were developed around the Mitcham area which included a general goods yard, a brewery, coal yard for a power station, gravel pit and an engineer's yard.

In the early years the number of passengers using Mitcham was low, despite the growth of housing

in the area. Once the City & South London Railway, later the Northern Line, opened nearby at Morden in 1926, the numbers dropped. The SR electrified the line in 1930 with a minimum of two trains per hour each way, but with little improvement in the number of passengers. Freight traffic, however, increased with the opening of the new coal-burning Croydon 'B' power station in 1950. The line through Mitcham was reduced from double to single track when freight traffic declined rapidly in the 1960s and the local yards closed; the coal yard for the power station was the last in 1973.

The building in the picture escaped demolition when it was replaced by new steps and a platform booking office in the 1980s. Because it was thought to be a survivor from the Surrey Iron Railway era, it was listed and has been re-developed as flats named Station Court.

Photo: Alan Postlethwaite [50769]



Also seen on Sunday 9 December 1962, two 2-EPB 2-car electric multiple units pass at Mitcham Station on the West Croydon – Wimbledon Line. Although not in accordance with the rules, it was common practice not to change the headcode at each end of short journeys, although the tail lamp was in place on the relevant unit. The only such line in the London Area of the Southern Region, it was mainly single with passing places at Waddon Marsh, Mitcham Junction and Mitcham, but double line between Merton Park and Wimbledon. The line no longer exists as such as it was closed and the track-bed used for Croydon Tramlink.

Units 5722 and 5731 were part of Class 416/2, 2-car EMUs of 1951 Mk 1 design numbered 5702-5779. They were built in 1954-1958, principally to allow the formation of 10-car trains on the Eastern Section. Later, following the de-electrification of the South Tyneside Line in January 1963, 15 similar units were transferred to the Southern Region. After modifications to the driver's cab and removal of First Class accommodation they entered service

as 5781-5795, and became the regular rolling stock on the line.

The West Croydon – Wimbledon Line was closed on 2 June 1997 to be converted to part of the Croydon Tramlink network, the last train running on 31 May. Most of the previous formation was used although at the eastern end it was joined to the Tramlink network with a flyover over the heavy rail Sutton Line from near Reeves Corner to Wandle Park, where it joined the original formation. A deviation was built around Mitcham Junction station where it passed over the Sutton Line and at Wimbledon it terminated in Platform 10, which was divided in two with buffer stops leaving a short bay platform at the Haydons Road end.

Photo: Alan Postlethwaite [50767]

Feedback

Thanks to our regular readers for feedback on *The Bluebell Times*. Below are a couple of follow-ons from recent editions of "On This Day". If you have any feedback on any article in *The Bluebell Times*, please send them to bluebelltimes@bluebell-railway.com. We can't respond to every email, but they are all read and where appropriate forwarded to the relevant parties



From the September Issue, Nick Stanbury writes:

“ The picture in the September issue of the 5pm King’s Cross to Victoria vans in 1956 reminded me of an anecdote from D. C. R. (Bob) MacMurdie, recounted on one of his occasional working visits to Bluebell some years ago. As a young Eastern Region fireman in the 1950s, Bob often worked the cross-London van trains and his engine invariably needed to take water at Victoria. Notwithstanding Nationalisation, he was obliged to sign a printed chit (headed 'L.B.&S.C.R.') stating 'Received: one tank of water' – presumably so the Southern Region could bill the Eastern for the supply! ”

Amazing to think that more than thirty years after the LB&SCR had ceased to exist, a supply of their forms was still in use. Did the accountancy run to the difference in capacity of “one tank of water” between a J50 and a B1, I wonder?

Meanwhile, from the November issue, Graham Floyd notes:

“ a small error in the above mentioned publication in that on page 15 there is a photograph taken at Kensington (Olympia). The text goes on to explain the history of the station but states that 'the station reopened as part of the West London Extension Railway'. Actually the station was on the West London Railway, the West London Extension Railway commenced some 1/2 a mile east of the station beyond Earls Court Junction (actually between Earls Court Junction and Lillie Bridge Sidings Signal Box). ”



The Railway Clearing House map from shortly before World War 1 shows the boundary – see [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Railway_Clearing_House) for a large scale version of this map.

Now is the time... Fundraising for FREE!

By Trevor Swainson, Funding Governor, Bluebell Railway Trust

Did you know that you can STILL raise funds for The Bluebell Railway Trust simply by shopping online? It costs you nothing and you still get the best prices from your chosen retailer/service provider.

Over the years, The Trust has received more than £30,000 at no cost to you and – it has to be said – at little effort from the Bluebell fundraising team.

Now is the time to join the schemes before you buy all of your Christmas presents or do your Black Friday shopping to benefit the Railway. Every penny raised goes towards the preservation and restoration of our unique collection of heritage assets.

Currently, we operate two similar schemes you can use to help the Railway. To join, all you need to do is to go to the Bluebell website, click the DONATE link in the top menu and then scroll down the page. Otherwise go to <https://www.bluebell-railway.com/donate/>

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT EASYFUNDRAISING



There are over 7,000 shops and sites on board ready to make a donation – including eBay, Argos, John Lewis, ASOS, Booking.com and M&S – and it won't cost you a penny. Among the best of these retailers are insurance companies who each pay a generous donation when you renew your household, motor or other insurance policies.

On the DONATE page scroll down to easyfundraising and the FIND OUT MORE link will take you to the easyfundraising webpage where you can join up.

Each time before you start shopping, find your chosen retailer as normal and when you complete your purchase, that the retailer will make a donation to Bluebell Railway at no extra cost or effort to you whatsoever!

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT AMAZON SMILE



AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support your favourite charitable organisation every time you shop at Amazon. It does not cost you a penny and you enjoy the same prices that are available on the regular Amazon account.

On the DONATE page scroll down to Amazon Smile and the FIND OUT MORE link will take you to the Amazon Smile webpage.

Alternatively – AmazonSmile is available at smile.amazon.co.uk on your web browser and can be activated in the Amazon Shopping app for iOS and Android phones. By selecting The Bluebell Railway Trust, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to the Trust every time you shop.

Job Vacancies

Applications are invited for the post of:

SAFETY AND ASSURANCE DIRECTOR

As a plc Board member, the Safety and Assurance Director has professional responsibility for ensuring implementation of the requirements of the safety management system across the railway and for the strategic direction of the department.

A key function of the role is to Chair the Bluebell operating and safety review group and also to act as lead contact with regulatory authorities.

The Safety Director delegates day-to-day management of the department to the Safety Manager.

This is a volunteer post that carries no remuneration or specific hours of duty. However, the successful applicant will require sufficient time and flexibility to effectively undertake this role and have the appropriate technical competences to meet the professional requirements of the post.



HOW TO APPLY

If you believe you have the right qualifications and experience for this role, please send your CV to lisa.boyle@bluebell-railway.com

Publication Dates

We hope you enjoy reading this monthly newsletter.

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

Copy and publication dates for 2023 are:

ISSUE	COPY DEADLINE	PUBLICATION DATE
41	Friday 6 January	Friday 13 January
42	Friday 3 February	Friday 10 February
43	Friday 3 March	Friday 10 March
44	Friday 7 April	Friday 14 April
45	Friday 5 May	Friday 12 May
46	Friday 2 June	Friday 9 June
47	Friday 7 July	Friday 14 July
48	Friday 4 August	Friday 11 August
49	Friday 1 September	Friday 8 September
50	Friday 6 October	Friday 13 October
51	Friday 3 November	Friday 10 November
52	Friday 1 December	Friday 8 December



The Bluebell Times

*A Newsletter for
Bluebell Railway
Members, Staff and
Supporters*

*The Bluebell Times is published
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on 13 January 2023 from
bluebell-railway.com/bluebell-times*

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

*The Bluebell Times editor
Tom James*

bluebelltimes@bluebell-railway.com

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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