



*Pre-grouping perfection: Fenchurch accelerates away from Tremains Photo: Peter Purdew*

# The Bluebell Times

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

March 2023

## IN THIS ISSUE

There is a bit of a Pullman theme to this issue, ranging from new museum acquisitions to latest progress on Car No. 54, which when finished will allow wheelchair access to our premium Golden Arrow dining service. James Young, a steward on our Pullman services, gives an insight into what that role involves. Inevitably, that comes with a plea: could you help with running that service? The Railway relies on people to run its operations, and at times – notably with the Pullman train – the scale of operations is constrained more by available staff than by available demand. If you feel you could help, please get in touch – contact details are in the article.

Elsewhere, it has been a busy time both on and off the Railway. 'Fenchurch' and three pre-grouping carriages has worked faultlessly between Sheffield Park and Horsted Keynes, with busy trains at half-term justifying the decision to open at that time (many other heritage railways remained closed). The half-line opening was on account of two separate extensive sections of track renewal either side of the tunnel. Meanwhile, our Bulleid carriages were earning vital revenue on a film contract, in the process being hauled on the mainline in what is thought to be the first mainline move of such carriages in 40 years.

And finally, we celebrate an anniversary: March represents ten years since we commenced running to East Grinstead. Roy Watts provides a retrospective, including photos of the variety of motive power seen over the last decade. There was much talk at the time that the Railway needed to consolidate, focusing investment to bring the older parts of the line back to standard, and the extensive track replacement over the last ten years is evidence of that. But we must grow our revenue to survive, and surely East Grinstead must be part of that plan. If the last ten years were about consolidation, is the next decade the one in which we finally exploit our link to Metro-land?

Tom James, Editor

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# Checking in with the Chair

By Paul Churchman, chairman, Bluebell Railway plc and chairman, BRPS

Another month has gone by and we have reconnected the track at Vaux End, we have had the half-term trade with the Ice Rink and we have started the year end audit for 2022. There is so much going on as the leadership team continue to work on saving costs, increasing revenue and looking at what and when we operate.

This is a challenging time for us all and is a lot of hard work. At times it is frustrating and stressful but we are all doing this to make sure Bluebell comes through this and rebuilds and becomes stronger.

We have had to halt projects in varying departments in order to conserve cash and also be realistic about the resource we have to actually do some of these projects. There is also the continued debate about all the assets we own and do we need or have the capacity for them all.

We have to be realistic about all of this, some things will never see the light of day, whereas other assets must always be with Bluebell as they run to the very core of our history and heritage. This is a difficult debate and one that takes time and a lot of patience.

On the trading side of the business, we had a good half-term and we ran 'Fenchurch' and a small train and this was efficient and meant we maximised revenue.

If I listed everything going on, it would run into pages and I won't bore you with that, but there is

so much and the efforts of everyone are truly amazing. We are nearing the Easter holidays and hopefully that will bring lots of visitors and lots of revenue. What we need to make sure is that we aren't spending more than we earn and with a Railway and assets as old as ours, that is the hard part.

There are many railways now making the decisions and facing the huge challenges we are. We recently hosted a meeting of senior managers from the Isle of Wight, Kent & East Sussex, Swanage and Spa Valley Railways and the challenges were the same in all the businesses. There is a massive rise in costs, there is a softening of revenue and we have probably all been doing stuff that loses us a lot of money.

We must balance preservation and heritage with running a sustainable business. This is a very tricky thing to do and will create some debate. At the end of the day we need and must survive.

I would like to finish by thanking Barry Luck who has retired as Infrastructure Director. Barry has done an amazing job in the last three years, taking over after the sudden death of Chris White. He has built a fantastic team of project managers and been a solid and professional leader. Tony Astor has agreed to take over the role. Tony has been one of the project managers in Infrastructure for the last three years and comes with a wealth of engineering knowledge. *[See page 4 – Ed.]*

*Paul*



*With the winter work at Vaux End largely completed, the infrastructure team have moved to West Hoathly, where nine panels (180 yards) of track have been replaced ready for opening the full line.*

*Photo: Jon Goff*



## “The Southern Six”

Leading members from preserved railways based in the South of England gathered at the Bluebell Railway at the end of February to discuss co-operating in the face of shared challenges.

The “Southern Six” are promoting co-operation and solidarity between their different railways to become a strong and united group. At a time of economic change and ever-increasing demands on the heritage industry, the idea of this alliance is to generate solutions and put those ideas into action. As a collective, the alliance hopes to adopt a uniform approach where, as a group, it can produce the best possible results for all parties concerned.

The first meeting was very positive and produced much thought and discussion on how to move forward. Ideas were shared and the intention formed to create strategies to cope with various areas of need for this year and beyond for each railway within the alliance.

The group will meet every two months. This is a positive step forward in using the skills, communication and resources of all the railways involved. It will provide a strong and much-needed platform for discussion and support while meeting the current demands that our industry faces.

The group comprises:

- ➔ Bluebell Railway
- ➔ Kent & East Sussex Railway
- ➔ Mid Hants Railway
- ➔ Spa Valley Railway
- ➔ Isle of Wight Steam Railway
- ➔ Swanage Railway.



*The various railway representatives after the first meeting at Sheffield Park (L to R) Robert Patterson (Swanage Railway), Jonnie Pay (Spa Valley Railway), Steve Backhouse (Isle of Wight Steam Railway), Lisa Boyle (Bluebell Railway), Chris Knibbs (Bluebell Railway) and Robin Coombes (Kent & East Sussex Railway).*

*Note: Amanda Squires (Mid Hants Railway) was unable to attend because of work commitments.*

# New Infrastructure Director Starts Work

Words by Paul Bromley, communications director, Bluebell Railway plc

Tony Astor has taken over as Infrastructure Director after being co-opted onto the board of the Railway.

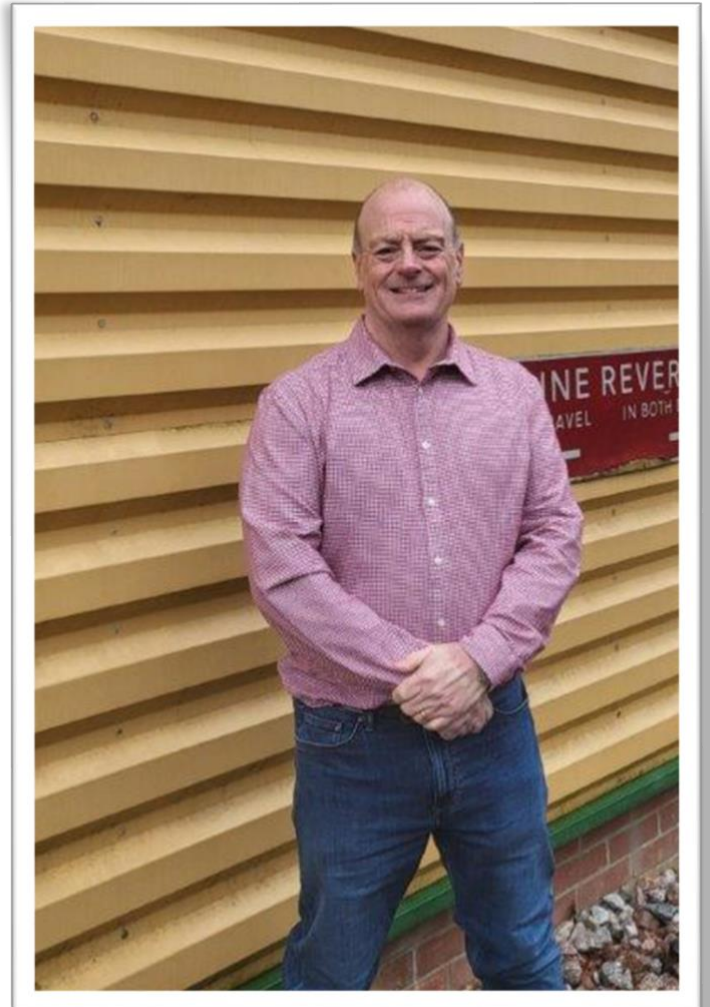
He replaces Barry Luck who has stood down after three years in the role. Barry had indicated when he took on the Infrastructure Director's position in 2020 that he wished to serve for no more than three years.

Tony spent nearly 40 years in the airport business before retiring. He started his Bluebell career as a volunteer, initially in the Carriage & Wagon department before moving to Infrastructure. He has been involved in a series of recent projects including the development of the disabled toilet at Horsted Keynes, the conversion of the C&W lighting to LED and the electrical power upgrade project at Horsted Keynes. Ongoing projects include the loco inspection pit at Horsted Keynes and the new signal box at Sheffield Park.

He said: "I am delighted to have the opportunity to join the board of the Bluebell Railway. Many businesses are facing unprecedented challenges at the moment, and I hope to be able to bring my business experience in project management and infrastructure development to ensure the Railway's projects are delivered in the most cost effective and timely manner.

"Knowing that the volunteers are the backbone of the Railway, I am looking forward to helping them achieve great results as we deliver the future works programme."

Bluebell Railway plc chairman Paul Churchman said: "We welcome Tony Astor to the board and



know he will work tirelessly to build on the great work of Barry Luck in delivering a range of complex infrastructure projects across the Railway. We thank Barry for his service since 2020 and wish him well as he continues with his various volunteer roles at the Bluebell Railway."

Tony took up his post on 1 March.

# HOPS February Update

By Fraser Hutchinson, HOPS project manager

There are currently 801 working members signed up to HOPS. We have found another 58 colleagues. If you have yet to register with HOPS, can you please email me, and I can send out the joining form. For any newcomers, welcome to the Bluebell. If you need any training on how to use HOPS, please contact me.

I am looking at a large pile of staff ID cards ready to distribute next time I am at the Railway, so if you have been expecting one, please don't send your complaints to me just yet. If you have not received one by Easter, then please let me know.

The 2023 season begins for real on 1 April and at last count there are 15 different rosters operating throughout the Loco, Operations, Catering and the Trust Departments, and for the first time ever on the Railway they all look the same. Hopefully you have found the new method of rostering straightforward. What if you realise you have made an error? No problem. On the roster page

you will see the word OPTIONS in blue next to your name. Click on OPTIONS and you will see various options to choose. Select the relevant one for you and click on SAVE. This will then be forwarded to your roster clerk. Please only swap with a colleague once you have agreed to do so!

If your department has yet to move from paper and pen to HOPS for rostering, please get in touch with me and I can help you through the process.

Now that we have been using HOPS since last November (it seems longer!!) you have hopefully formed an opinion about how user friendly it is, or the complete opposite. Rather than keeping it to yourself can you email me at [fraser.hutchinson@bluebell-railway.com](mailto:fraser.hutchinson@bluebell-railway.com) with your feedback whether it be positive or negative and what improvements can be made to the system. All feedback will be used to enhance and improve the system. Thank you in advance for your glowing references!

## Pullman Progress

David Chappell's photo from 1 March shows Pullman Car 54 is now in the paint shop, ready to start work on the roof.

Once outshopped, the carriage will replace Mark 1 First open "Sapphire" in our Golden Arrow dining train. At that point, the Golden Arrow will seat around 100 passengers in Pullman luxury.



The original Golden Arrow is shown in the adjacent photo by Alan Postlethwaite. This shows Bulleid Pacific No. 34092 "City of Wells" passing Herne Hill with the down Golden Arrow service on 4 October 1959. The Bluebell Railway Museum contains an original set of the paired British and French flags always carried on the front of the locomotive hauling the Golden Arrow.





# Bulleids go Mainline

By Tom James Photo by Will Smith

Will Smith's stunning photo below shows the Bluebell's set of Bulleid carriages being hauled on the mainline, in connection with a film contract. Four Bluebell carriages – Mark 1 RMB [1818](#), Bulleid Open Thirds [1464](#) and [1482](#), and Saloon Brake Third [2526](#) – travelled by road to Carnforth in Lancashire. From there they travelled to Hull by rail, hauled by Stanier Black 5 No. 44932 for the filming. The outward journey was on 13 February, with the return to Carnforth on 16 February.

It is believed that those movements were the first by Bulleid carriages on the mainline since 1982. The last use of Bulleid carriages for passenger service on the Southern Region of BR was in

December 1968; carriages transferred to the Scottish Region lasted until early 1970.

Some of the remaining Bulleid carriages were formed into a weed killing train, giving them a stay of execution from breaking up. The last known movement of one such carriage was recorded at Eastbourne station in April 1982; the underframe from the [carriage involved](#) is currently stored at the Bluebell. It thus appears that the move on 13 February was the first such mainline move by Bulleid carriages for forty years.

*(See "Tail Lamp" in this issue for another photo from the same move).*



# 4VEP Progresses at Strawberry Hill

By Roy Watts, BRPS vice-president [Photos](#) Roy Watts or as credited

On Monday 27 February, the Southern Electric Traction Group hosted some very special guests to see the work that is being undertaken on our 4VEP, 3417 "Gordon Pettitt", at the Strawberry Hill depot.

They were Lord Peter Hendy of Richmond Hill, Chair, Network Rail, Claire Mann, Managing Director South West Railway, Robin Hutchinson MBE, Chair of Creative Youth and the Community Brain and of course, the great man himself, our President, Gordon Pettitt.

The guests were shown around the depot site and of course were able to access the unit and see the excellent progress that is being made.

Project leader Chris Buckland gave a brief history since taking on the responsibilities of looking after the unit and the progress to date which included a rewire of carriages, replacement and resetting of the windows to make them waterproof, all the mechanical upgrades such as the braking equipment and of course all the work done to re-trim the seats and side cushions, painstakingly done by Lynne and her late mother, Maggie.

Chris also described the equipment that will be fitted in due course to enable the unit to run on today's modern railway.

There was a large pile of routed stepboards ready to be fixed into place, all prepared by our very own Richard Salmon who unfortunately was unable to be present on the day.

Our host, Steve Upton, ensured guests were well refreshed but sadly no bacon butties today! Amongst topics discussed which were quite far reaching, were the potential for apprentices to come and experience electrical and carriage building and improve their skill sets by employing techniques rarely taught.

To summarise the current situation of the unit, two coaches are "ready to run" – DTCsoL and MBSO – whilst the TSO and second DTCsoL



*Left to right: Robin Hutchinson, Lord Hendy, Chris Buckland (SETG LEAD) and Roy Watts*

*Photo: Claire Mann*

undergo the necessary restoration work such as that described above. [Carriage designations: DTCsoL = Driving Trailer Composite semi-open Lavatory; MBSO = Motor Brake Second Open; TSO = Trailer Second Open – Ed.]

There is a clear work ethos here that if a job is worth doing, do it right first time.

Externally the unit is in excellent condition and the team have set themselves a target of 2024 to have the unit back operational. Watch this space!

Needless to say, guests left hugely impressed with what they had seen and the standard of workmanship. They left in no doubt the success of the work and the high standard will achieve restoration excellence and offered their support wherever it will be needed.



Hopefully, it won't be too long before the unit graces our metals again and at some time in the future, the sound of a "slam door" unit will once again resonate the roof at Waterloo.

The biggest smile though has to go to Gordon himself who, as always, enjoyed his time with "his train" and discussing Railway matters close to his heart with today's management. His sharp mind acknowledged by all!

It was good to see several people working on the unit painstakingly cutting and crafting or meticulously recording each action such that the documentation will prove the thoroughness of the



work. At least we know that there is no need for a livery debate!!

## A Busy and Good Month for 1305

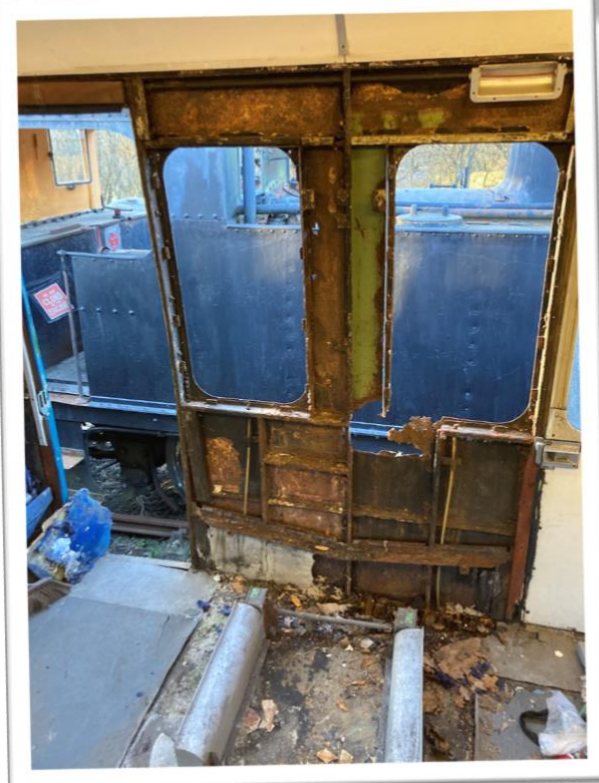
Words and photos by Ben Wetherall, Diesel Traction Engineering Co-ordinator

We had our first induction with 21 attendees being inducted. Laurie Anderson did a sterling job of writing and presenting the induction which had much good feedback. We then did a tour of authorised walking routes, access points and fire escape routes, covered the protection of our working area before work was started and then inspected 1305.

It started first time but soon had to be shut down as it was found the crankcase covers had been displaced and not refitted correctly whilst we had been away. This was causing a considerable oil leak! (Please, if you want to get involved then you can volunteer or come and see us when we are on site: otherwise, eyes and ears only!).

This rectified and the oil level checked, it was restarted and luckily all was well.

We also were lucky enough to have been lent one of the original Brighton Royal Pavilion nameplates by one of the gang. This is being copied and two new ones are being cast courtesy of another of our gang members. Thanks to you both!





The next day we were on site again and began stripping out the bay opposite the hole in the motor coach so we could see what it was supposed to look like and copy it, repairing 1305's worst corroded area.

A week later another working party happened and the rest of the bay started was finished, measurements were taken and a plan was formulated for the metalwork we would need to fix the hole. The lads also began stripping out the corridor end of the motor coach to inspect the crash pillars with a view to replacement and made the happy discovery that it was almost like new, a wonderful surprise as the less optimistic on the Railway had predicted deep sadness in these areas. Fingers crossed this continues in the other three inner end areas.

We will, by the time this newsletter is published, have had another induction day and working day or two and will also have had another visit up to Stoke to hopefully finish the de-icer strip!

### GET INVOLVED

If you would like to volunteer then contact [Ben.wetherall@bluebell-railway.com](mailto:Ben.wetherall@bluebell-railway.com). You can follow the gang's progress on Facebook at [1305 Oxted Thumper Gang](https://www.facebook.com/1305OxtedThumperGang) and on Instagram [@1305s\\_thumpstagram](https://www.instagram.com/@1305s_thumpstagram) or if you would like to donate to the only Bluebell Railway-owned ex-BR diesel traction, then there is an option in the drop down for 1305 in the [Bluebell Railway Trust's web page](#).



*Neil Mewes from the gang took the nameplate up to Leeds on 2 March and delivered it to the foundry for copying.*

*Neil's company, [Avocet Travel Management](#), is sponsoring the new nameplates being made for us.*

## For Sale

The Museum Archive has many duplicate bound *Railway Magazines* from the years 1941 to 1986. Many have the official index bound in. These are for sale at £5 per volume and can be collected from the Archive at Beare Green, near Dorking or Sheffield Park. Please contact [tony.hillman@bluebell-railway.com](mailto:tony.hillman@bluebell-railway.com) for more information.



# A Day in the Life of ... A Golden Arrow Pullman Steward

By James Young, Pullman Steward

*The Golden Arrow dining trains are one of the most popular services with customers. The chance to enjoy a meal as a steam train pulls you through the lovely countryside appeals to people of all ages.*

*But behind the scenes a dedicated team of paid catering staff work wonders to provide a memorable occasion for passengers.*

*So what's involved in being a Golden Arrow steward? In this two-part series, James Young provides a detailed account of a typical shift and answers the most frequently asked question from customers.*

*In Part 1, he looks at the preparations before the passengers arrive and the first leg of the journey.*

A typical shift on the Golden Arrow will be around six hours but does vary depending on the service being operated and whether the train needs to be laid up ready for the next day it operates or not at the end of the shift (it can also depend upon how many staff are on duty as well to share the workload!).

For a Saturday evening the start time is normally 5:30pm and for a Sunday lunch it is 11:00am. We start work one and a half hours before the train is due to depart.

Currently the Golden Arrow has 106 seats in two Pullman Cars, *Christine* and *Fingall* and *Sapphire*, a British Railways First Class Open carriage. Later this year Pullman Car No. 54 will replace *Sapphire* in the train creating an all-Pullman train once again. The on-board team will normally comprise a Train Manager, 10–12 Stewards, two Chefs and two Kitchen Porters but this varies depending on the number of passengers.

## START OF THE SHIFT

The shift always starts with a briefing from the Train Manager who will provide details of the carriages being used, passenger numbers, the menu details, dietary requirements, the timetable and the jobs list/duties for setting up the train, duties while on the train and after passengers have disembarked.

Before passengers can be welcomed on board there are usually a number of jobs to do which can

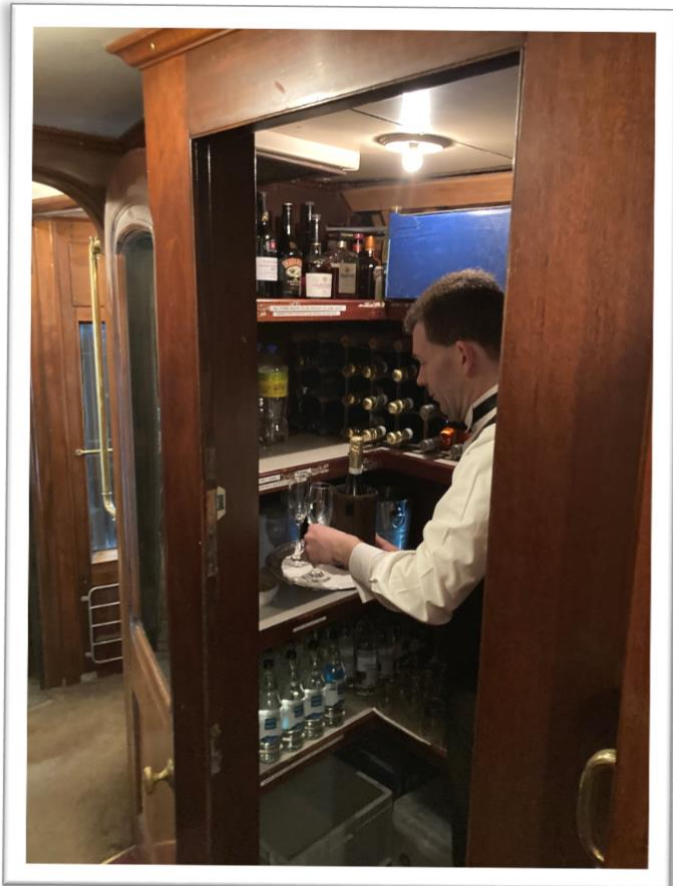


*Kraig, Lou and Rhodes lay up Christine*

*Photo: James Young*

include putting out butters on each table, making up the sugar and chocolate trays for each carriage, making up the protective armwear against the hot salver of food, making up the sauce trays that are served to accompany the main course, making sure soup bowls are counted out and placed in the hot cupboard to warm through, polishing cutlery and glasses and making sure each table has the correct place settings and that all crockery, cutlery and glasses are clean with no stains or finger marks. We also make sure everything is positioned correctly with all of the cutlery in line with each other and straight!





*James making up drinks in Christine's bar*

*Photo: Peter Lloyd-Jones*

Although all of the stewards will be involved in food service during the journey, there are duties that get allocated either while the train is in the platform or prior to commencing food service. Someone will be allocated to do Meet and Greet, usually in the Booking Hall or by the entrance porch, where passengers are checked in and there is the opportunity to direct them to the Bessemer Arms to purchase pre-order drinks and tell them any necessary information such as the boarding time and expected arrival time back at Sheffield Park at the end of the journey. This is also the opportune time to identify any issues or problems with any booking or any dietary requirements that were not known about when the passengers booked their tickets so something can be done about it before the train is five miles up the line! (Unfortunately, it does still happen every so often but the Chefs work their magic to deliver a plate of food for every passenger!)

Normally three stewards will be allocated to each carriage for boarding and initial drinks service with one steward tasked with standing at the door to meet each party and welcome them on board. The other two stewards will be tasked with showing passengers to their allocated seats.

As soon as all passengers are on board in each carriage, drinks service begins by taking orders from each table plus opening and pouring any pre-ordered drinks. Drink orders will be made up by one of the stewards in the bar found in each carriage and then the other two stewards will take the drinks out to each table and open and pour any bottles of champagne, prosecco or wine.

This is where some skill comes in, making sure when removing a cork from a bottle of champagne or prosecco that the cork doesn't fly off across the carriage or hit the ceiling, that there is a loud pop as the cork is released or worse still (and it has happened!) the contents of the bottle sprays all over you or the adjacent passengers.

Another duty for one of the stewards is to be the Wine Waiter. The main role will be to continue to serve drinks throughout all carriages during the journey as this then frees up the rest of the team to concentrate on food service. Also, the Wine Waiter will ensure before the train departs that all bars are stocked up with drinks, ice and slices of lemon are available in each bar, wine wraps are available for putting round bottles and any pre-ordered drinks are made up.

The other duty for a steward is to be the Dessert Team Leader which involves running service on the second trip when desserts followed by tea and coffee are served. While the Train Manager will run service on the first round trip when starter and main courses are served, they spend the second trip sorting out the drinks bills for each table and processing the money. So before departure, the Dessert Team Leader will make sure they have supplies of tea and coffee on board the train, there is milk and cream available in the fridge in the kitchen and that sufficient cheese and biscuit slates have been made up.

With everything completed and ticked off the jobs list, a final check of the train will be done by the

Train Manager allowing the three teams of stewards to go to the doors to start boarding passengers.

### DEPARTURE TIME

With all of the passengers seated, drinks will be served by the three teams working methodically from one end of the coach to the other in order to make sure no one gets left out. At the same time another steward will go through the train serving bread rolls to each passenger. As each team finishes serving drinks in their carriages, they may well be asked to help another team with drinks or will all return to the BGZ (Brake Gangwayed vehicle with the Z denoting it is six-wheeled – this is a six-wheeled brake van that provides pantry and scullery facilities).

The usual pattern for food service is to serve the starters during the first part of the journey after leaving Sheffield Park starting in *Sapphire* first, followed by *Christine* and *Fingall* last.

All of the food is served on salvers from the kitchen in *Fingall* and is all silver served with serving cutlery onto the passengers' plates in front of them. Normally, one of the starters is soup so a steward will take out the required number of hot soup bowls just before. The soup is served with a ladle from a tureen and certainly doing this job always draws comments and admiration (and trepidation) from passengers as you serve it without spilling a drop on the table or the passengers! Serving soup this way can be difficult at normal times let alone on a train which is rocking from side to side as even at 25mph it is surprising how much movement there can be!

Three stewards will take out the first set of starters working from the furthest table in *Sapphire* with each of them having a different starter, then followed by another team who will start serving towards the middle of the carriage. Depending on how popular the soup is, it may well be that one tureen of soup serves everyone in that carriage. With everyone served their starters, a steward will go through serving the croutons to those who have the soup and at the same time they will courtesy check to make sure everyone has a starter and that everything is to their satisfaction. They will then report this back to the Train



*A steady hand is needed by Chrissie while serving the soup*

*Photo: Bluebell Railway*

Manager and Head Chef. The teams will have already moved into *Christine* serving starters working from the far end in the same way as they did in *Sapphire* and will again be repeated in *Fingall*.

Following on behind the steward doing the courtesy checks will be the Wine Waiter checking to see if anyone requires any further drinks plus clearing any finished-with glasses or empty bottles. By doing it this way you are not conflicting with the stewards serving the starters as the carriage aisle is not that wide and if you have a tureen of soup or a tray of starters balanced on your arm, it is better to not have to pass someone with a tray of drinks!

### APPROACHING EAST GRINSTEAD

As the train heads through Kingscote towards East Grinstead this is usually the time that we will be able to think about starting to clear starter plates and cutlery which again is done in order starting in *Sapphire*, then *Christine* and finally *Fingall*.

Stewards work in pairs with one holding the tray and the other clearing the table and will normally clear two bays of tables at a time so for each carriage three teams will clear with one team going back to clear the final bay. The person holding the tray gets the raw end of the deal as by the time you have finished clearing four tables your tray can be piled up with twelve starter





*Mains course is served in Fingall by Sue, Vic, David and Peter*

*Photo: Bluebell Railway*

plates, twelve side plates, four butter dishes, soup bowls and up to thirty-six items of cutlery. Who needs to go to the gym to build up your muscles when you have this opportunity! At this point I need to say that no-one is forced to clear two bays at once, it is up to each person's lifting capability and what they feel comfortable with so it can be that only one bay is cleared.

Once all of the starter crockery and cutlery have been cleared back into the BGZ, where the two Kitchen Porters will wash and dry everything by hand, we go straight into mains service (following the same format as with starters) which you always aim to have got *Sapphire* finished or at least over half completed by the time the train departs from East Grinstead.

First of all, two stewards will take down the mains plate from the plate warmer and then a team of stewards will in turn take the meat and fish in separate salvers, potatoes and mixed vegetables with each one following the other serving each table in turn. Any vegetarian mains or other dietary requirements will be served at the same time along with Yorkshire Puddings if roast beef is on the menu. Normally in each carriage all of the team of stewards will be serving the main course to ensure it is served as quickly as possible and remains as hot as possible. Following behind the food service team there will be two stewards with gravy jugs and sauces. Another steward will bring

up the rear, courtesy checking to make sure everyone has a main course and, again, that everything is to their satisfaction.

Like with the starters all of the mains courses are silver served with serving cutlery with the food in dished or flat salvers. The same exercise is repeated again in *Christine* and finally in *Fingall*, with the aim of having mains course service finished by the time the train rolls through Horsted Keynes. Each salver of food will usually serve 12 – 18 passengers depending on what the salver contains so it may well be that each steward ends up serving three different parts of the main course in each carriage – or you could get lucky and have to serve just the Yorkshire Puddings throughout the train!

While the mains course is being served, the Wine Waiter, if not roped into helping with food service, will be working through the train serving any further drinks, working either in front or behind the other stewards serving mains course.

Once all three carriages have been served their mains course there may well be an opportunity for a bit of a breather and have a drink (non-alcoholic of course!) as until now the service tends to be non-stop. That said, it is also a good time for any finished-with glasses or empty bottles to be collected from tables and for the BGZ and serving area in *Fingall* to be tidied up now that the main part of the food service is over.

The Wine Waiter, after making sure everyone has drinks, will check the stock levels in each bar making a list of the drinks they need to bring on when the train arrives back at Sheffield Park and tidy up the bar areas.

### CLEARING YET AGAIN

Due to the time it takes to serve all three carriages with mains course, it is likely that passengers in *Sapphire* will have finished and so this time stewards will clear each bay of two tables on their own, clearing using the two-plate clearing technique. This is where another element of skill comes in as the first collected plate is rested between your fingers and thumb and then the other plates, as they are collected, are balanced on the palm/wrist area supported by your thumb to

keep them level with the first plate acting as your service area for any leftover food and used cutlery. This is a good place to say that when it comes to opening bottles of wine with a cork, silver serving with serving cutlery, serving soup out of a tureen and clearing mains course on your arm, training is given to new staff and you won't be expected to do all of this on Day 1!

By the time the Golden Arrow arrives back into Sheffield Park station the aim is to have cleared mains course from *Sapphire* and *Christine* with *Fingall* following on quite quickly afterwards.

Before dessert plates are put down, each table is crumbed down to remove any food crumbs. This is

done with a small scraper no bigger than a pen and plate to collect all of the crumbs.

*In Part 2, James details what happens when the Golden Arrow train is back at Sheffield Park and serving desserts on the second leg of the trip.*

#### GET INVOLVED

If, after reading this article, you are inspired to work on the Golden Arrow Pullman as a steward, then please contact either catering manager Megan Laughlin at [Megan.Laughlin@Bluebell-Railway.com](mailto:Megan.Laughlin@Bluebell-Railway.com) or deputy catering manager Sarah Vigar at [Sarah.Vigar@Bluebell-Railway.com](mailto:Sarah.Vigar@Bluebell-Railway.com) for more details.



*The end result: 'Camelot' hauls a lunchtime Golden arrow service towards Horsted Keynes in February 2022.*

*Photo: Dave Bowles*



# A Decade at East Grinstead

Words and photos by Roy Watts, Senior Station Master

Back in 1974, the Society approved and purchased the freehold of the demolished West Hoathly station site and thus began the 39-year journey northwards to East Grinstead.

It was a very simple equation: if the Society failed in its purchase of the West Hoathly site, then there was no Northern extension.

But successful it was and thus began one of the largest projects undertaken by a heritage railway. A project that many said would never succeed and there were certainly many dark days when the then Society Trustees and Company Directors would wholeheartedly agree but nonetheless, there was a determination to succeed and deliver the Society's number one project and many people lived, breathed and endured an uphill task – well certainly varying between 1 in 55 and 75!

No matter what was thrown at the Railway, it succeeded. And because the story of the Northern Extension has been well documented, I have no intention of repeating it here.

However, on a very snowy 23 March 2013, the first trains arrived and departed to the sound of the Bluebell Band ensconced in a rather draughty gazebo and it can be best summarised as the end had become the beginning of a new era in the history of the Bluebell Railway.

There were – and are – many tales to tell such as people asking how we get an engine on the front ... of the stationary buffet car or complaining that they were unable to board the train as there is a fence in the way ... referring to a Southern class 377 unit parked in the adjacent Network Rail siding!

But here we are 10 years on – I'm writing this on the 7 March 2023, which many will remember as the day 10 years ago that the final section of track was secured with a ceremonial white fishplate by our very own Barbara Watkins.

A lot has happened in those 10 years and the station is currently run by an enthusiastic group of ladies and gentlemen who do their best keeping the station in good order. The Buffet car, itself the centre of attention for some heavy TLC, is now run very successfully by volunteers who keep the interior in good order and offer a warm welcome with good service. We are still the link to the outside world and have seen many different types of train using our through connection including outbound Bluebell stock for filming or events such as "Steam on the Met".





The former office building is now a shop selling second handbooks as we raise funds that one day might be realised into a new station building.

It's a long-term aspiration to provide a better station building and just to bring you up to date, we have unfortunately had two applications to the National Heritage Lottery Fund turned down so we will have to rethink the strategy and, in the meantime, especially under our current financial constraints, find a more suitable and cost-effective solution.

Unfortunately, we will never be a Horsted Keynes or Kingscote but we do need to improve what are termed as "temporary buildings".

It won't be long before signals begin to appear enhancing the heritage appearance and offer some operational flexibility.

We are however, the Northern Gateway and being the closest to London should be better exploited and if we are to source growth, we need to explore those untapped markets.

Whilst I thank my team for what they do in all weathers – and believe me, the strong wind funnelled across the viaduct can be quite bitter and the lack of covered accommodation quite unpleasant at times! – it would be remiss of me not to recognise everyone who was involved in any capacity with the Northern Extension since its conception especially the driving force of our late President, Bernard Holden and the man who "made it happen", the late infrastructure Director, Chris White.

Here's to the next 10 years!





# Metro-land 50 Years On

By Tom James, Bluebell Times editor

26 February 2023 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the first screening of "Metro-land", a documentary written and presented by the then Poet Laureate Sir John Betjeman.

In the film, Betjeman takes a train journey along the Metropolitan Railway, starting in the hustle and bustle of London at Baker Street, to the point where the line metaphorically ran out of steam in a grassy field in the shadow of Brill Hill in north Oxfordshire. Along the way, Betjeman stops at a number of key villages and houses, to present a meditation on the rise of suburbia. This is a subject intrinsically linked to the railway: the Metropolitan Railway itself had coined the term "Metro-land" in the early years of the twentieth century, promoting the development of housing along the line which would inevitably drive traffic to the railway.

The first sequence in the film sees Betjeman finishing his pint before commencing his journey from central London. For 'Baker Street' read 'Horsted Keynes': Betjeman's pint is served from the King George V buffet, the outside whistle is one of our engines, and the carriage into which he climbs is one of our Metropolitan Railway 'Chesham' set. BRPS archivist Roger Price noted "the actual filming took place at Freshfield and in Horsted Keynes refreshment room and on the platform in July 1972. The Chesham coaches were taken out of the carriage shed where they were being restored."

*"In the tunnels, the smell of sulphur was awful // When I was a boy, 'Live in Metro-land' was the slogan // It meant, getting out of the tunnels into the country"*

The sequence is accompanied by a close-up of a door lock with the "Live in MetroLand" slogan prominently engraved. A modern visitor to the Railway would search in vain for such a lock, for while the carriages are Metropolitan enough, they pre-date the slogan by nearly two decades. The mystery was cleared up by Edward Mirzoeff, the



director of the film, who wrote to Richard Salmon saying that the lock had been changed, and he couldn't remember where they got the original from, but remembers it had been carefully polished earlier that morning.

He also said: "Our team were only at Horsted Keynes for one early morning's filming, but it was a memorable occasion – our last filming for Metro-land. Designers and graphic artists had worked through the night to fit the 'Live in Metro-land' lock to the carriage door, add posters and photographs, and generally make the Bluebell Line resemble the old Metropolitan as closely as possible. We were very grateful for the warmth and friendliness with which we were received – I can remember that from half a century ago."

## MORE INFORMATION

"Metro-Land" is [available to watch](#) on BBC iPlayer until 28 March. Thanks to Richard Salmon and Roger Price for background information, and Mark Thompson for initially drawing attention to the door lock.

# New Museum Items

Words by Malcolm Johnson, museum curator Photos by Tom James and Malcolm Johnson

The Bluebell Railway Museum on Platform 2 at Sheffield Park has again refreshed its displays with a number of new items.

The signalling displays now has a sighting periscope. These are used to ensure that a signal is clearly visible from the level of the cab or footplate and are used by signalling staff standing at ground or platform level. Visitors to the museum can use the periscope to see a recently installed signal and check that it is visible.

The William Stroudley display has been enhanced to include an illustration of his famous locomotive 'Gladstone'. Both classes of his locomotives, A1 'Terrier' and B1 'Gladstone', that are held at the National Railway Museum can now be seen.

The museum's extensive Pullman displays have been enhanced to demonstrate the close connection between the railways of the south of England and Pullman services.

The first train in the world entirely of Pullman cars was in 1881 with trains running from London to Brighton. In 1882, the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway proudly announced that a first-class car would be added to the train. A poster advertising this is now on display. Linking the start of the London Brighton Pullman service to the end of the service in 1972 is a menu from the very last Brighton Belle Pullman service which ran for 90 years.

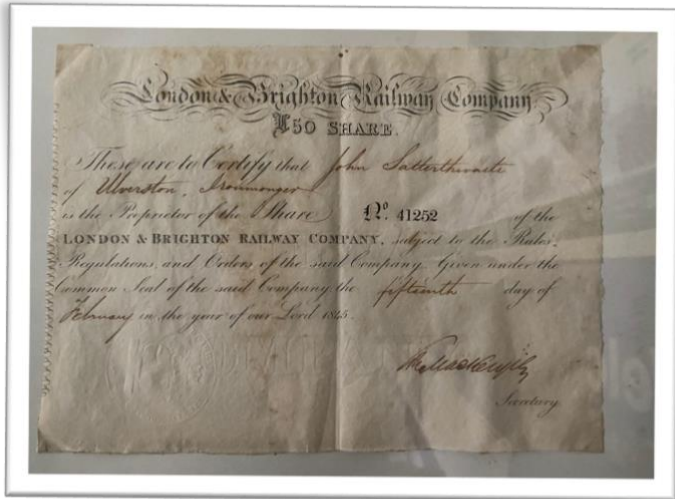
One of the best railway journeys in the country is to travel on Bluebell Railway's Golden Arrow service. This currently runs with two Pullman cars but will soon have more. When you book your next trip on the Golden Arrow allow enough time to visit the museum. You will be able to see the Pullman display, the "Golden Arrow" (that is an arrow that is gold in colour but made of wood) that was always on the front of the loco, the Union flag and French tricolour that were on the smoke box door and carried on every service from 30 April 1930 to 30 September 1972 and a poster promoting the service.

Close to the Pullman display there is now an addition to the wartime items. Beneath the "Evacuation of Children" notice is now the other end of the story. On the outbreak of World War II, children, the elderly and infirm were evacuated from London, mostly by rail. The poster which was printed on 15 September 1938 (one year before the war) gives instruction for the evacuation. On 8 June 1946 King George VI wrote to all the children in the land thanking them for their contribution to the war effort. The letter is now on display.

In the old waiting room on the side of the chimney stack there is now the poster inviting people to the public opening of the Bluebell







Railway on Sunday 7 August 1960 and above it there are three share certificates for the LBSCR dated 1846 and 1847. At £50 a share that was a lot of money in 1846 especially for the butcher whose share certificate is displayed. To be precise: in today's money it was £1,778.23!

Just before the booking office on the right is a Brighton Line poster advertising half day trips to London. Perhaps when you visit the museum you

can determine what a half day is. At 3/6d a ticket it certainly wasn't cheap. Today that would be just under £40! I'll stick with my off-peak rail card. If you ever hear a TV presenter saying that the railways of the 19th century enabled normal people to travel, you can see why that is just not true. You might be surprised to learn that a dog wishing to travel from London to Brighton or any part of, would have to pay 2/6d. Yes, the dog had to pay according to the published charges. That would today be more than £14 or £28 return. That would buy a lot of dog treats. The average weekly wage at the time was about 15/- (75p).

The museum is working on making space for display areas for items of current interest. Before long there will be a display celebrating the 100 years since the creation of Southern Railway and there will be a display for the Branch Line Weekend based on the special locomotives that will be running.

## WE NEED YOUR HELP!

The museum needs your support on another item of change. In the old waiting room area of the museum the story of the Bluebell Line and the Bluebell Railway is explained. The display boards on the platform side are being refreshed and we need your help.

The railway successfully functions due to the dedication of its paid employees and volunteers. We need photographs of volunteers engaged in the multitude of tasks that makes up the life of the railway. There are the plc departments and the sections within the departments, the Friends of .... teams, the project groups such as Atlantic House team, 27 and 9F teams, special events teams, Trust teams in 9F club, Stepney Club, archives and museum and, of course, the Societies such as Bulleid Society and Maunsell Locomotive Society. And many, many more groups including the 09, 33, 1305 Oxted Thumper and Class 73 teams, the teams that run the Preservation Society, those that produce *The Bluebell Times* and *Bluebell News* and those who run HOPS.

The museum is producing a display to celebrate the many roles of volunteers and we need your photographs to use in the display. From cutting grass and digging up daisies, to cleaning carriages and building locomotives, we need to see you in action. These do not need to be from the deep past but can be what happened in December last year or during the last few weeks. Please say who you are, Wednesday Gang, SteamLights etc and do not name everyone. If you think displaying the photograph might upset anyone featured, check with them first. This is a celebration of what so many of you do. We need all those snaps in digital form. Please send a copy to us at [curator@bluebell-railway-museum.co.uk](mailto:curator@bluebell-railway-museum.co.uk)

There are many roles in the museum and archives. Whatever your skills, interests or desires are, why not consider joining the museum and archive team. They entertain and inform the people of the present and protect the things of the past.

# New Additions to the Museum Website

By Chris Wilson, Bluebell Railway archive volunteer

This month we have added a further 641 images to the Bluebell Railway Museum website bringing the total now available to 19,218. This batch contains photographs of stations and signal box locations beginning with the letters 'Q' and 'R' and 500 locomotives all captured by John Scrace.

Every photograph sale directly benefits the Photograph Archive giving us much needed funds to invest in conservation and storage materials.



*Above:*  
A wintry scene at Ravensbourne station on 20 January 1963.

*John Scrace [082849]*



*Left:*  
C class No. 31588 standing in Tunbridge Wells West yard on 16 August 1960

*John Scrace [140541]*

## VIEWING AND ORDERING

To view and order go to [www.bluebell-railway-museum.co.uk](http://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, 10 March

By Tony Hillman, assistant museum curator

*Three pictures from the Bluebell Photographic Archive taken on 10 March 1956. Thanks to Martin Elms, John Creed, Richard Peirce, Chris Sutton, Roger Merry-Price and Chris Wilson for finding the pictures and providing the notes.*



North of Mortimer, on the Reading to Basingstoke line, Lord Nelson class 4-6-0 No. 30864 *Sir Martin Frobisher* is photographed on the 9.20am Bournemouth West to Birkenhead Woodside. The date is Saturday 10 March 1956 and in the mid-1950s the motive power was rostered, not for a Class LN, but for either a Bulleid light pacific or King Arthur 4-6-0. The Bournemouth duty No. 399 involved the locomotive taking the Up portion of *The Royal Wessex* from Bournemouth West as far as Bournemouth Central, before returning to the former to take charge of the Birkenhead train.

Being a Saturday, the rolling stock for the northbound train would be provided by the Western Region, all of which are BR standard coaches except for the GWR buffet car. No. 30864 will be detached at Oxford, to be replaced by a Castle class 4-6-0 and, after turning, will take charge of the southbound Birkenhead to Bournemouth train. On a Saturday, this was formed of Southern Region stock, normally nine coaches including Set No. 427 containing Gresley cafeteria car No. S9213E.

No. 30864, along with its 15 classmates, was built at Eastleigh Works, entering traffic in November 1929 as E864. It first saw use on the Eastern Section for eight years, based at Stewarts Lane. Transferred to Bournemouth in November 1937 it stayed there – save for five months spent at Dorchester in 1954 – until moving to Eastleigh in November 1959. There, its main use was on Southampton boat trains until withdrawal on 27 January 1962. It was scrapped at Eastleigh Works in March of that year.

From April 1950 the Reading West to Basingstoke line was transferred from the WR to the SR, resulting in the subsequent repainting of both Bramley and Mortimer stations in SR green and cream, and the gradual replacement of ageing GWR lower quadrant signals with SR upper quadrant versions.

*Photo: Colin Hogg (48378)*



Again on 10 March 1956, T9 Class 4-4-0 No. 30288 prepares to depart from the outer face of Didcot's island platform with the 3.35pm to Southampton Terminus via the Didcot, Newbury and Southampton line. Most DN&S trains departed from the Bay platform on the downside, but this train had started from Oxford at 2.56pm behind a Western Region engine. Something of a backwater, only four trains a day on weekdays covered the whole line, although a couple more covered part of the route. Motive Power was provided jointly by the Western Region from Didcot and Reading sheds and by the Southern from Eastleigh. To the right of the T9 is WR 0-6-0 Pannier Tank No. 5783 coupled to a shunter truck and possibly a rake of oil tanks.

The T9 Class was designed by Dugald Drummond for express passenger work and 66 (nicknamed "Greyhounds") were built between 1899 and 1901 at both Nine Elms Works and Dübs & Co of Glasgow. 30288 was built at Nine Elms in 1900 and is seen here working Eastleigh Duty 277, the bulk of which was the round trip between

Southampton Terminus and Didcot. It was withdrawn from Eastleigh shed (71A) in January 1961. 5783 was one of 863 Class 57xx 0-6-0 PTs built between 1929 and 1950, making it one of the most numerous class of British steam. Allocated to Didcot (81E) from November 1952 to May 1960 it was transferred to Swansea East Dock (87D), before withdrawal in February 1962.

Although the last day of through passenger trains on the DN&S was 5 March 1960, it was not the end! Oil trains from Fawley to the West Midlands were just starting, routed via Salisbury and Bristol. But unacceptable delays were experienced and in 1961, with this traffic increasing, it was rerouted via the DN&S, hauled by BR 9F 2-10-0s. This lasted until 1964 after which it was diesel hauled via Basingstoke. Through freight traffic over the DN&S then ceased when the section south of Newbury closed completely on 10 October 1964.

*Photo: Colin Hogg (48381)*





The 1950s saw a rapid decline in milk traffic on British Railways, with the annual quantity shipped falling from 200 million gallons in 1948 to about 100 million gallons in 1962. The closure of more rural stations in the 1960s made matters even worse. As road access in the countryside improved, trucks were increasingly employed to take the product direct from the farms, bypassing the traditional but costly rail journey between rural creameries and urban bottling plants.

One such bottling plant, owned by the Co-operative Wholesale Society (CWS), was hidden away next to the old Longhedge Works, behind Stewarts Lane shed. The rail access to the Longhedge plant was an isolated siding with a very tight curve. As a result, only the smallest locomotives were used. In the mid-1950s Stewarts Lane used an ex-SECR P class tank for the 'milk' shunt; three examples of these locos are preserved on the Bluebell.

Once again on 10 March 1956, C Class No. 31581 is pictured at Longhedge Junction with a train of empty six-wheeled milk tanks, an ex-GW coach

(possibly for milk churns) and a brake van. The locomotive was built in 1903 at Ashford, where it was also scrapped in 1960. At the time of the photograph, it was allocated to Stewarts Lane (73A). Here it is on Duty 74, part of which was the 12.45pm Stewarts Lane to Kensington empties, arriving back at 2.12pm.

At Kensington the tanks would have been exchanged with the Western Region, often being returned to creameries as far away as Llandeilo, Melksham and Wallingford amongst others. The tank flasks were made of glass or stainless steel for cleaning after each trip. Originally, the flasks were owned by the dairy company whilst the railway company, which built them, owned the wagon frames: a very unusual arrangement.

*Photo: John J Smith (40239)*

# On This Day – Feedback

Issue 42 of *The Bluebell Times* carried an image of E4 locomotive No. 32504 in which the BR totem on the right-hand side tank was reversed. This prompted a comment from one of our readers in Oklahoma(!) as follows:

“ Firstly, let me say how much I enjoy your "On This Day" series in 'Bluebell Times.' There are always some snippets of interest, even for this exiled Mancunian raised on LMS fare.

In the latest issue (No. 42) you mention the use of 'wrong-way lions' in the BR crest. Russ Rollings of the Friends of the National Railway Museum raised this a year or two back in their Review, and I followed up with a bit of internet research – see attached result.

Despite being unapproved, the practice was quite widespread c.1960. Eastleigh and Ashford seem to be the main perpetrators – perhaps they had the biggest stash of unapproved transfers and adopted a 'waste not, want not' approach – but it also extended to D8000 when new and on [40 106](#) c.1980, the latter carrying the wrong emblem on both sides! At least two survived to reach Barry, on tenders attached to 30825 and 30499, but I don't know where they ended up. And Dapol put one on a 00-Gauge 'Terrier'!

It would be fun if the 'wrong' emblem could be reproduced in preservation. Several of the Class 82XXX tanks carried them, and with 30499 destined for LSWR livery, maybe new-build 82045 would be a possible candidate - do you know anybody in that group?

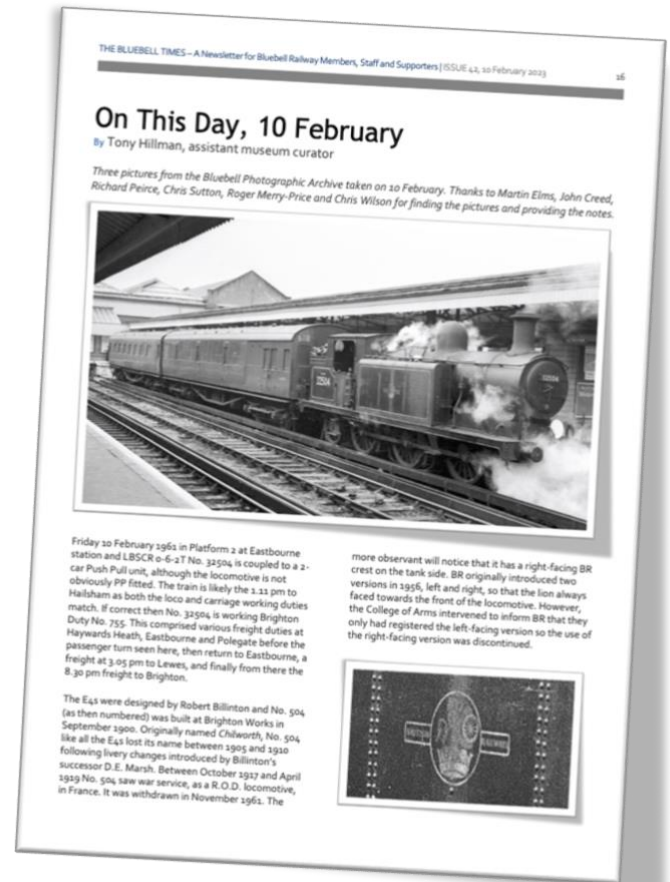
Attached is what I sent to Russ but if you would like more info, I could forward you the links I found.

In the meantime, keep up the good work!

Best regards,

Malcolm Taylor ”

The editor followed up the reference to 30499 with a colleague in the [Urie Locomotive Society](#), who



are restoring the locomotive at the Mid Hants Railway:

“ 499 acquired its 6-wheel tender on 20/12/1963, just before withdrawal, from 30835. Peter Swift's "Book of the S15 and H15s" has a photo of 835 at Reading (20/9/1958) with that tender. (Page 207) It mentions that the tender had forward facing totems. Unfortunately you need the eye of faith (and a good magnifying glass) to see the totem in the picture. ”

The editor, equipped with a faithful eye and a suitable magnifying glass, is confident that the picture does indeed show a "wrong way round" totem. However, by time the tender reached Ropley, all evidence had gone:

“ Apparently there was a 'Time Team' style reveal of old liveries, but of course, the last one was destroyed by sea air and graffiti. ”

So it seems such totems were far from unknown!



# 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](mailto:lisa.boyle@bluebell-railway.com)



Photo: Will Smith

# The Bluebell Times

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

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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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