

50 ISSUE



'Fenchurch' flying the Bluebell flag on the Mid Hants Railway, 6 October 2023. Photo: Nick Gilliam

The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway Members, Staff and Supporters

October 2023

IN THIS ISSUE

“Big” locomotives have been a feature of the Bluebell scene for nearly the Railway’s entire existence, with 75027 arriving in 1969 and *Blackmore Vale* first running in 1976. Nonetheless, for many enthusiasts, if you were to ask them to sum up the Railway, they would mention small tank engines hauling vintage carriages. So the confirmation of plans to overhaul Nos. 488, 96 and 323 – along with existing workshop overhaul of No. 263 and volunteer-led rebuild of Wainwright P class No. 27 and BR Standard 84030 – has been very positively received. This month’s header photograph shows the currently operational “Fenchurch”, which by all accounts was the star attraction at the recent Mid Hants Railway gala, showing the enduring appeal of such locomotives. (Interestingly, the carriage behind Fenchurch is also Bluebell-owned, [Bulleid open 3rd No. 1456](#), which is on long-term loan to the MHR).

Growing up, the editor’s local station featured a mural of No. 488 above the entrance, and from such small beginnings a lifetime fascination with the locomotive – and railways in general – was seeded. So while we enjoy the big engines this weekend at [Giants of Steam](#), we can look forward to a small tank engine future!

After an initial flurry of fortnightly issues during the first Covid lockdown, *The Bluebell Times* went monthly and dropped the prominent issue number from the cover. Nonetheless, the observant may notice that this is issue 50, a nice milestone to have reached. The newsletter wouldn’t have been anything without the many contributors of both words and photos, so to everyone who has contributed over the last three and a half years, many thanks, and please keep the photos and articles coming!

Tom James, Editor

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Checking in with the Chair

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

Well half a century of *The Bluebell Times* – doesn't time fly!

So it been a busy month, a very successful beer festival and the announcement that Normandy and the Adams will go into the Atlantic House to be done when *Beachy Head* comes out early next year. This is really really good and demonstrates our commitment to heritage, despite the need for us to be forever more commercial in our appeal – the balance is of the utmost importance.

Around the rest of the Railway, we see Archie nearing completion and we have a new Locomotive Engineering Director, welcome Tim Gray – known to many of you as he is the Chief Clerk on the Loco Ops Dept as well as a Driver and Inspector.

We are also gearing up for Christmas, operationally, as well as putting the finishing touches for the commercial plan for 2024 together. The Board also have an afternoon of financial and commercial planning on the 9 November. We have done so well this year in our turnaround, but it is only the beginning, and we need to do more and keep up what we are doing – we can and will do this and the determination of everyone is so good to see.

So as I write this we are gearing up for Giants of Steam and I hope another bumper weekend – it certainly feels it will and let's hope the weather does hold off.

Paul



"Sir Archibald Sinclair" approaches Horsted Keynes on a loaded test run, 11 October.
Photo: Roy Watts

Bluebell Railway Trio to Steam Again!

The Bluebell Railway is delighted to announce that three historic locomotives are to return to working order. Following discussions and an agreement by the Bluebell Railway plc Board and BRPS Board, it has been decided that LSWR Adams Radial Tank No. 30583, LSWR Adams B4 No. 96 'Normandy' and SECR Wainwright P Class No. 323 'Bluebell' will all receive overhauls and will steam again at the Bluebell Railway.

The Adams Radial and B4 will both be restored by the dedicated team at Atlantic House at Sheffield Park, the team responsible for their outstanding work making the new build LBSCR Marsh Atlantic 32424 'Beachy Head' a reality.

323 'Bluebell' is planned to go into the workshop at Sheffield Park in early 2024, with a view for the locomotive to be available in the Summer of 2024, giving us an exciting prospect of seeing our flagship locomotive once again in steam and working Bluebell service trains.

Paul Churchman –Bluebell Railway chairman said:

“ I am really pleased that we have been able to achieve this, with 323 coming back so quickly and to then have 'Normandy' and then the Adams Radial will be so exciting and shows the amazing collection of locomotives that the Bluebell has. It also shows the magnificent skill set of our paid and volunteer workforce. ”

Vernon Blackburn – chairman of the Bluebell Railway Trust said:

“ It will be marvellous to see these three vintage locomotives, on average already more than 125 years old, in steam again. They are popular with the public and favourites of many of our supporters. They look fantastic with our historic carriages of the same era and are economical to operate. ”



Hopefully a scene that can be repeated in a few years: 488 at Horsted Keynes on a Jon Bowers charter, 18 March 2019 – with hidden steam supply off stage! Photo: Jon Bowers

[Adams Radial No. 30583](#) was outshopped as No. 488 and built at Neilson & Co. in Glasgow in 1885. The locomotive ran with the LSWR until it was sold to the Ministry for Munitions for the war effort in 1917. After WWI, the locomotive ran on the East Kent Railway from 1919 to 1946 – where the locomotive was then brought by the Southern Railway to operate on the Lyme Regis branch in Devon. It would remain there until withdrawal from BR in 1961. From there the locomotive then made its way to the Bluebell Railway and into preservation. The locomotive would become a firm favourite with crews and enthusiasts and would operate until 1990. Since then, the locomotive has remained on static display. 30583 is the sole survivor of its class and is owned by the Bluebell Railway



[Adams B4 Tank No 96 'Normandy'](#) was built in 1893 at Nine Elms by the LSWR as a class of 25 locomotives, designed to work in shunting duties, it would be renowned for its role played at Southampton Docks – one that it would provide sterling work until being displaced by American 'USA' dock tanks after WWII. The locomotive was then transferred to Winchester for shunting duties there until withdrawal from BR service in 1963. Sold to the industrial sector after withdrawal, the locomotive was saved for preservation in 1972. 'Normandy' returned to steam at the Railway in 1986 and would prove to be an extremely useful and popular locomotive during its time in traffic.

Photos:

No. 488 (above) – Russell Pearce

No. 96 (top right) – Roger Gregory

No. 323 (bottom right) – Reuben Smith

The B4 last steamed in 2006 and is currently on display at SteamWorks! at Sheffield Park. 'Normandy' is one of two of its class to have been preserved and is owned by the B4 Loco Group, which is part of The Bulleid Society.



[No. 323 'Bluebell'](#) is one of a class of eight P Class tank engines, designed by Wainwright for the SECR. Built-in 1910 at Ashford Works, the locomotive was initially designed for suburban passenger work, although they were quickly superseded and relegated to shunting duties. Finishing off as 31323, the locomotive was withdrawn from BR in 1960 and was one of the first locomotives to be saved by the Bluebell Railway in that year. The loco was then named 'Bluebell' and became one of four of the class to have survived into preservation. No. 323 became the flagship locomotive of the Bluebell Railway and played a key role in establishing the line as a major tourist attraction, especially in the earlier years from 1960 onwards. 'Bluebell' last ran on the railway in 2019 and was withdrawn from service, requiring an overhaul. 323 is currently on static display at SteamWorks! at Sheffield Park and is owned by the Bluebell Railway.



Q Class 541 Overhaul Update

By Steve Pilcher, Treasurer, Maunsell Locomotive Society Photos by Leaky Finders

Since the last report in the September edition of *The Bluebell Times*, the boiler had its NDT (non-destructive testing) examination at the end of September, and nothing unexpected/untoward was found, which is a relief. A discussion with the Railway's boiler inspector is due to take place in mid-October to review the findings and agree the scope of works to overhaul the boiler and work required on the chassis.

Prior to this, all the flues and smoke tubes had been removed and some needle gunning of the boiler barrel undertaken to allow for the NDT examination.

As regard the chassis, the frames were lifted on 4 October to allow the wheelsets to be removed. They will be sent to the South Devon Railway soon, for assessment and decision taken as to whether to try and undertake one more turn of the tyres – or to replace the tyres.

Some parts of the motion will return to Sheffield Park for attention, along with the boiler cladding, to free up space in Leaky Finders works.

As regards the tender, one reputable large scale metal fabricator has visited to view the existing tender tank and another contractor is working up costings in order to provide a quote for fabricating a new tender tank.

The tender is currently positioned behind 31618, near the Bulleid Society shop, whilst we await space to enable the existing tank to be freed from the chassis.



THE Q NEEDS YOU!

The [Maunsell Locomotive Society](#) has agreed to try and raise £40,000 towards the cost of overhauling the tender and providing a new tender tank. The Q is an ideal size and economical loco for Bluebell operations. It fits in well with the 'Southern' image, and it did actually operate in the vicinity.

Online payments to the appeal can be made by clicking the [DONATE](#) button on the Bluebell website and following the online payment instructions. Select Q Class 541 Overhaul in the drop-down box.

For those who prefer to use cheques, please send a cheque, made payable to the 'Bluebell Railway Trust' (and a [Gift Aid Form](#) – if appropriate) to the Bluebell Railway Trust, Sheffield Park Station, Uckfield TN22 3QL. Please add a note to say it is for the 541 Overhaul Appeal.

At the time of writing, there is approximately £25,000 in place towards the target of providing £40,000 towards this project. As ever, a very warm 'thank you' to all concerned who have generously contributed thus far. Please consider assisting reaching the target of £40,000 – and thus play a part in getting this very useful loco, back in action at Bluebell.

Jewel in the Crown Update October 2023

Words and photos by Bob Darvill, Jewel in the Crown project manager

Saturday morning, 30 September and on time according to plan, the last of the building site paraphernalia is gone. The final coats of paint have dried to a bright glossy finish, the lights are on and the booking hall doors are open onto the platform. Today's passengers departing Horsted Keynes can promenade easily the length of platform 5 over a restored, even and unbroken surface. If they choose, they might make use of the reopened facilities. With the temporary bridge removed, they again experience the subway to access the trains. The trains and locomotives will always be the main attraction but some passengers look back over their shoulders to admire the station buildings through which they have all passed. Now looking resplendent in its period colours, platform 5 is ready again to form the backdrop for their day out on the Railway. It is particularly rewarding to hear some admiring comments and to watch visitors photograph the buildings wanting to include the image with other memories of their visit.

As always, there are a few remaining works to snag and finish off, but now is a moment worth celebrating. It represents the conclusion of the

planned work that started in April. Everyone involved, be they contractors, subcontractors, consultants, permanent staff or volunteers, all have reason to be collectively proud at this moment of achievement. Thanks are also due to Horsted Keynes' regular station personnel and the residents who have been supportive whilst enduring the inevitable disruption this summer.

So what next? Right now, there is some internal painting progressing in several of the more visible public access spaces including some upgrade works in the gents toilet on platform 3/4. Next year Phase 2 will restore and bring back to service platform 1. It will include the reconstruction of the platform itself with some further repairs to the canopy including the valance and gutters. Even as the team is winding down on platform 5, advance preparations are being made. Much of the site protection and compound infrastructure has already been moved across the tracks in readiness. The next big change will be the erection of site protection hoardings and some temporary works designed to create safe but usable spaces to accommodate all the usual Christmas festivities. But Christmas is of course another story!



Thumper 1305

Words and photos by Ben Wetherall, 1305 Oxted Gang Project Leader

Much the same this month on 1305, the underframe continues on the Driving Trailer Second (DTS) with more and more of it transforming into black, some of it actually gloss black too.

I can't thank the underframe gang enough for their work, it is seemingly relentless and not a clean job by any stretch of the imagination!

A few members of the gang have been shown how to use the grit blaster in the Carriage & Wagon workshop which has helped no end with various underframe fittings being cleaned up.

Soon we hope to have all the AWS (automatic warning system) bracketry, receiver and junction box back up under the DTS.

Whilst removing various parts from the DTS underframe, we stumbled across the reason for the lack of output from the DTS speedometer – a hole in the conduit fitting which had let rainwater in and over time had corroded the inside of the housing and its contents. Another job for the list!

In the Driving Motor Break Second (DMBS) the brush boxes have been removed from the generators ready for cleaning up and inspection of them, as well as a good clean inside the generators before a coat of special insulating paint.

Outside in the up yard we have had assistance from Tony Astor and Tim Gray, who have sorted out a temporary 3 phase supply for us. This will allow us to use our plasma cutter (if the wagon gang and others haven't worn it out already!) and, using some nifty adaptors from Tim, step down the supply to single phase too – handy for when



the PMV (parcels and miscellaneous van) eventually arrives with us in the up yard so we can have a warm base with lighting during the winter months.



Above: Corroded speedometer

Right: the generator undergoing cleaning and inspection

Below: The brush boxes



HOW TO HELP

As always if you would like to join the gang and help us get 1305 back to passenger carrying order then contact Ben.wetherall@bluebell-railway.com, follow the gang's progress on Facebook at [1305 Oxted Thumper Gang](#) or on Instagram [@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 menu for 1305 in the [Bluebell Railway Trust's web page](#). Please make sure you add Gift Aid too to maximise your donation.

Many thanks and we hope to see you soon!



Progress on D6570

Words and photos by Mike Hawkins, B350 Ltd

The Crompton moved back into the maintenance shed at the beginning of September and work has resumed on No. 1 end cab.

The front section of cab was completely missing, the crash pillars had rotted out at the point where they joined the floor and plate work either side of the marker lights was paper thin.

With this plate-work removed it has allowed better access for the base of the desk to be needle-gunned and coat of primer to be applied.

New cab supports, front floor section and crash pillars have been fabricated. Now that the cab is fully supported from the front it will allow the remaining plate work below the driver's and second man's window to be placed right back to the cab doors. Work will then focus on the internal cab floor and cable tray especially on the driver's side.

We have managed to reinstate the battery box link conduits, which meant dropping the air tanks but gave us the opportunity to refit some of the tank pipework.

A new copex duct [a form of flexible duct – Ed] from the battery box to the battery isolating switch has been installed and the battery cable pulled through in preparation for connecting at a later date.

A fibre glass strengthening strip has been applied to the inside of No. 1 cab roof where the wiper motors are fixed as this is one of the big weak points in the loco's design.

In the coming month we are hoping to reinstate the other battery box and remaining air tank pipe work, alongside cleaning and prepping parts to go back into No 1 cab.



Simon Hodges Appointed Safety Director

By Paul Churchman, Bluebell Railway plc chairman

I am pleased to announce that the Board has appointed Simon Hodges to the role of Safety Director, he replaces Martin Creswell who has retired.

Simon has a wealth of experience at corporate level responsible for corporate governance, safety and assurance.

Simon will be overseeing the overall safety strategy, but to strengthen our operational safety we will be appointing an external contractor to advise us on that front to ensure that we are fully compliant and that our SMS is up to date and robust.

I would like to thank Martin Creswell for all his efforts, especially stepping back into the role after initially retiring.

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to Simon and look forward to working with him.

IN HIS OWN WORDS

“ I am a Member of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators that has over 40 years of experience at board level.

I have some ten years' experience as the Company Secretary with responsibility for health and safety and insurance of two FTSE 200 leisure companies during which I was also an adviser on corporate governance issues to the ICSA and the London Stock Exchange.

I spent over eleven years in the Middle East where I completed a 2-year assignment as head of the health funding project for the Government of Dubai as well as holding positions as the Company Secretary of The Jumeirah Group, Senior Executive Officer of Dubai Holding Insurance Services LLC and Head of Compliance for ADNOC and Company Secretary of Excel in London. In each case, I was responsible for the Health & Safety and insurance functions.



From October 2011 I ran my own small consultancy business based in the UK but I am now largely retired.

I am a current volunteer as a member of the platform staff at Sheffield Park and am starting guard training in September.

I am very much looking forward to working with the Board, you and the wider team at the Bluebell Railway to create a world-class facility with a sustainable business model. ”

HOPS Update

By Fraser Hutchinson, HOPS Manager

It has been a few months since the last update. A lot has been going on behind the scenes – I will not bore you with the details – but we are working towards replacing the paper signing-on sheets with an online version. This will give the Operations Manager, for the first time ever, a clear view on who is working at the Railway at any given time. This ticks lots of health and safety boxes and will meet approval from the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), our safety regulator. More news next month.

We have now broken the thousand mark and currently we have 1,035 working members at the Railway, all with up-to-date HOPS ID cards. All cards expire in January 2024 as they are only valid for one year. We must reorder all cards ready for the new season. This will be an annual event and as this will be our first time, I need to explain the process that we all need to follow. Everyone will need an up-to-date ID card to work at the Railway, to receive discounts in our catering outlets and to receive free travel on partner heritage railways.

HOPS splits all areas of the Railway into separate departments with a named Head of Department (HoD) which is usually the line manager or roster clerk. HoDs will be asked to provide an accurate list of all staff within their department and to remove any that no longer volunteer.

You will in the first instance receive an email from me to an individual link to confirm your details/that you want to continue to volunteer. For a limited time, you will be able to check your personal details and if they are incorrect or out of date you are able to edit and make any changes in your HOPS profile. You **must** press the **confirm** button on each page for this to be accepted. A short video will show you what to do. This video will be uploaded to HOPS and a link sent to everyone before we commence this.

You will need to respond by the given deadline. HOPS will automatically renew the ID cards, if it receives the department confirmation from the

relevant Head of Department, and that you have confirmed your details/wish to continue, and I have checked everything has been done correctly. Central HOPS have set us a deadline and we must meet this, so I do ask everyone to respond asap.

You will also have the choice of whether you require a physical or a digital card. The current default is physical. You will have to email me to change to a digital card. The cost of producing digital ID cards is five times cheaper than the physical card. Digital cards tend not to get lost and during this year we have spent £400 replacing physical ID cards that have been lost.

If we all meet the deadlines, the new cards will be posted towards the end of January, so it is crucially important that we have the correct addresses for everyone.

As this is the first run-through there are bound to be some mistakes but with your support, I am sure this will be kept to a minimum. Next year should be straightforward!!

If you have any queries re the above, please contact me at fraser.hutchinson@bluebell-railway.com and not Matt Sloan as he is doing all sorts of technical stuff ready for the online booking system and settling into his new role of Competency Standards Manager.

HOPS stands for "Heritage Operating and Processing System". It is an online system used by both the Bluebell and many other heritage railways to manage rostering, competencies and distribution of notices and documents relating to our Safety Management System – Ed.

News in Brief

CAR NO. 54 PROGRESS

Painting on Pullman Car No. 54 is reaching the final stages. David Chappell's photograph from 4 October shows the part completed intricate lining and sign writing at the brake end. See also "Tail Lamp" in this issue for another photo.



INCOMING EDs

Photo: Andrew Crampton

On 23 September 2023, UK Railtours ran an excursion train from the Midlands to the Bluebell Railway, with arrival coinciding with our Beer Festival. The return working is shown here emerging from Sharpthorne Tunnel. Locos were Electro-Diesels 73212 and 73109, along with 66718.



'CHATABIX' VISITS THE BLUEBELL RAILWAY

Comedian Joe Wilkinson has presented an episode of his comedy podcast 'Chatabix' from the Bluebell Railway.

Joe and fellow comedian David Earl visit various unique locations across the country for the series. The Bluebell Railway became the location of choice and set the scene for an episode that they both immensely enjoyed.

Most notably they enjoyed the Museum on Platform 2 at Sheffield Park. Joe recreated the famous Elton John 'Tumbleweed Connection' album cover outside the museum.

The podcast can be found on iTunes and Spotify and the Railway is featured in Episode 295 called 'Where's Joe Now – Choo, Choo!' ([Spotify](#) / [iTunes](#))

See *The Bluebell Times* [issue 12](#) pp22-23 for the full story of the Elton John album cover and the photo opportunity outside the museum – Ed.

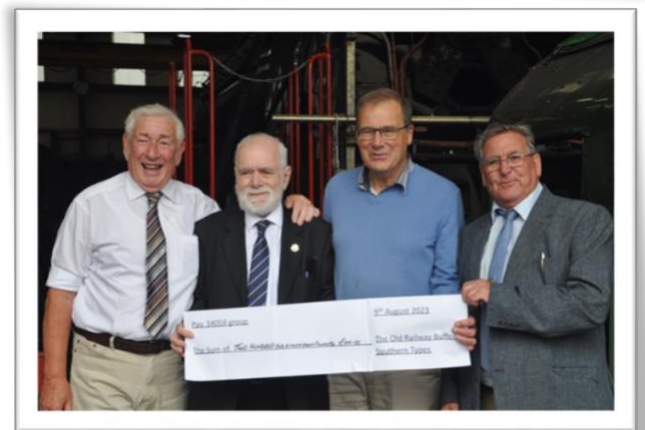


The Nine Elms & All Railway Buffers Reunion

By Pat O'Neill Photos by Jim Rowe and Kay O'Neill

We took over the organising of this annual event from Jim Lester and the late Tim Crowley two years ago. A decision was made to broaden the scope by including all former and present railway workers. This year we estimate over 200 came to the event on 9 August, not just from places between Dorset and Kent but also Scotland and France. Lots of friendships were rekindled on the trains, platforms and of course, in the Bessemer Arms!

We have been selling badges and receiving donations for a charity fund, profits shared between the [Bluebell Railway Trust](#) and [Woking Homes](#), an old established railway care home. Our pictures show 73082 proudly carrying the Nine Elms Enginemen Headboard and us, left to right – Dave Bryce, Pat O'Neill, Vernon Blackburn (Bluebell Railway Trust Chairman) and Jim Rowe presenting a cheque for £288.55 to the Bluebell Railway Trust. We plan to be doing the same next year!



Bulleid Shop – Giants of Steam Weekend

By David Foale, Bulleid Society

The Bulleid Shop on Platform 2 at Sheffield Park has an extensive range of transport books especially about Southern Steam. For Giants of Steam weekend there will be a special offer – **buy any three books and get the lowest priced one free.**

We also have a variety of bound volumes of magazines available at low prices, with the same offer for purchase of any three volumes.

Titles include:

- ➔ *Railway Magazine* various years from 1945 to 1985
- ➔ *Model Railway News* from 1960s
- ➔ Many past years of *Bluebell News*
- ➔ A few *Trains Illustrated* and *Modern Railways*.

Come along and see if you can complete your collections.

Horsted Keynes Carriage Shop £2,000 Pledged - Our Last Weekend

By Chris Wilson, Horsted Keynes Carriage Shop

As this issue of *The Bluebell Times* is published the, Carriage Shop will be open for its last weekend trading out of the Mark 1 coach which has been our home since 1994. An end of an era in many ways for the format of the Carriage Shop founded by Barry Jones in 1989. The Carriage Shop has raised and donated hundreds of thousands of pounds and our volunteers have served many thousands of customers.

However a new chapter is ahead and after *Giants of Steam* the work starts on packing up and emptying the contents of the Carriage Shop, then over the Winter setting up the new shop alongside Matthew Cousins in [GBL Van No. 2462](#).

We are very grateful to have been allocated [Van C \(BY\) No. 419](#) to use as storage and we would like to thank the Commercial and Electrical teams for vacating 419 and a special thank you to everyone who helped empty the Van and move everything on Wednesday 6 September.

No. 419 requires work and the Carriage Shop team are delighted to have been able to donate £2,000 to cover the cost of materials for the parts that needs to be replaced and painted.

We would thank Peter Chaston, Mike Steptoe and Matthew Cousins for the work that have already completed on 419 and to Richard Salmon and Tom Simcock for preparing the replacement planks. And thank you in advance to those who have offered or are willing to help.

Year to date the Carriage Shop has now raised and donated £12,000 to Bluebell Railway projects.

The Carriage Shop is open throughout the [Giants of Steam](#) weekend and will be running some limited special offers at stock clearance prices during the weekend. The fewer books there are to pack and move the better!

For up to date information visit our Facebook page: facebook.com/BluebellRailwayCarriageShop

The Carriage Shop is currently on platform 1 at Horsted Keynes station and sells second-hand books, models, DVDs, photographs, bound magazines, jigsaw puzzles and other railway & transport collectibles.

We welcome donations any of the items listed above which can be brought in on any day the station is open. To contact us regarding a donation of items please email bluebellrailwaycarriageshop@gmail.com



Two views of No. 419. Van C (BY) No. 419 showing (left) the good work that has already been completed on the platform side and (right) the side in need of the more attention.

New Additions to the Museum Website

By Chris Wilson, Bluebell Railway archive volunteer

This month we have added a further 739 images to the Bluebell Railway Museum website bringing the total now available to 22,268. This update contains photographs taken by the late John Scrace and David Esau.

David Esau very generously deposited his negatives with the Archive, as covered in the [March 2022](#) issue of *The Bluebell Times*, with his Southern images being made available first. We have now added the Scottish Region and the first of David's Western Region photographs.

The images from John Scrace include photographs of Battle of Britain class No. 34070 'Manston' one of this year's guest locomotives for Giants of Steam and the Bluebell Railway's own Battle of Britain No. 34059 'Sir Archibald Sinclair'.

Top: Spotters watch on as Hall class No. 4917 'Cranmore Hall' passing through Reading General station, in August 1961.

Photo: David Esau [156861]

Bottom: Battle of Britain class No. 34070 Manston at Morteohoe & Woolacombe station with the 10.30 am to Waterloo 'Atlantic Coast Express', on 9 September 1963.

Photo: John Scrace [141486]



VIEWING AND ORDERING

Every photograph sale directly helps the Photograph Archive giving us much needed funds to invest in conservation and storage materials. The information needed to pay for orders online by BACS is now included on every order form.

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 Pullmans. 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, 13 October

By Tony Hillman, Deputy Curator

Three pictures from the Bluebell Photographic Archive taken on 13 October. Thanks to Martin Elms, Richard Peirce, Chris Sutton, Roger Merry-Price and Chris Wilson for finding the pictures and providing the notes.



In the early afternoon of Saturday 13 October 1951, Ivatt 2-6-2T 41291 sets off from Withyham hauling the 2.19pm Tunbridge Wells West to Three Bridges train made up of a 2-car ex LBSCR Push/Pull Set. To the left of the train is an LBSCR wooden signal and to the right in the background an LBSCR signal box dating from 1877, now preserved at the Bluebell Railway Museum at Sheffield Park. The signal box was not a block post as there wasn't a passing place at Withyham, but it was provided with signals to protect the crossing and siding. It closed with the line on 2 January 1967.

The Ivatt 2-6-2T was a class numbering 130 locomotives, based on the LMS Stanier 2-6-2T design. Introduced between 1946 and 1952, most

were built at Crewe, but the last ten at Derby. A total of 100 were allocated new to LMR sheds, although some later migrated to other regions, but 30 (41290 to 41319) were allocated new to the Southern Region. 41291 was built at Crewe in September 1951 and allocated to Stewarts Lane (73A), but immediately loaned to Eastbourne (75G) where it is reported to have been present on 8 October 1951. It was regularly used on Eastbourne Duty 795, departing Eastbourne Shed at 5.25 am, working to Tunbridge Wells West, East Grinstead and Three Bridges, including the train in the picture. It arrived back at Eastbourne Shed at 10.30 pm, a long and productive day of 15.5 hours.

Photo: John J. Smith [042661]



Friday 13 October 1961 and 'Big Ben' shows the 12.54pm Waterloo to Basingstoke is on time as it approaches Vauxhall station. The train was rostered for a Schools class 4-4-0, being Nine Elms Duty No. 11, but the locomotive, King Arthur (N15) class 30788 *Sir Urre of the Mount*, appeared to have been borrowed by Nine Elms, the N15 being allocated to Eastleigh shed (71A).

The locomotive was built by the North British Locomotive Co. in Glasgow, one of thirty built by the contractor for the Southern Railway. Entering traffic in September 1925 as No. E788, it was originally to have been named *Sir Beumains*. It spent its entire life working on the Western Section except for approximately four months from December 1948 when it was allocated to Stewarts Lane shed. Renumbered 30788 by BR in October 1948 it was withdrawn from Eastleigh shed in February 1962, with an estimated mileage of 1,423,378 and cut up at Ashford Works shortly afterwards. Both nameplates were saved and the compiler of these notes has one of the plates, together with the front numberplate, on his living room wall!

The 12.54 was normally diagrammed for two Bulleid 3-car sets and a PMV, the latter to be removed at Woking. On this occasion the formation has been strengthened by an additional Maunsell coach. The train was shown in the public timetable as only running to Basingstoke but on arrival it will sit there for 32 minutes and then form the 2.48 pm all stations to Salisbury.

One more item relating to King Arthur. The modern building to the left of the locomotive is called Tintagel House. Built the previous year, in 1960, it was the former Metropolitan Police Headquarters, housed the first police computer in 1971 and was the home of the team who finally brought the Krays to justice.

Photo: John Scrace [140243]



This picture, taken on a sunny Tuesday October 13, 1992, shows Eynsford in Kent. The station opened in July 1862 and was situated on the branch line between Sevenoaks Junction (now Swanley) and Sevenoaks (now Bat & Ball). The line had been built by the nominally independent Sevenoaks Railway, but was worked from the outset by the London Chatham and Dover Railway (LCDR).

The station building is on the down side and more lavishly built than many other LCDR intermediate stations. To the right is the stationmaster's house, which still has two chimney stacks, the third stack serves the booking hall. To the left are what were the staff areas and a fourth stack.

Of note are the size of the chimney pots and the stonework halfway down. Also the mirroring of the doors and windows in the booking hall, the latter having double sashes and all having glass arches. At an early stage the building was rendered.

On the up platform a simple wooden passenger shelter was provided in the style used by the LCDR. A small goods yard and shed were to the left of the station, which usually handled one train a day.

In November 1932 the signal box was moved from beside the up line into the right hand side of the booking hall and a bay window, which still exists, was built on to the platform to give views of the line. This unusual arrangement was phased out in February 1971, signalling becoming automatic between the boxes at Swanley and Otford Junction.

The station is now one of six entrusted to the Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership. As a result, in the last 2 years, the up platform shelter has been rebuilt in the LCDR style and a waiting room refurbished. Both are now in the colours of the Southern Railway.

Photo: John Scrace [081392]



Car No. 54 Photo: David Chappell

The Bluebell Times

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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.

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