



No. 65 hauls a mixed train on Freshfield Bank, 2 January 2024 Photo: Paul Simpson

The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway Members, Staff and Supporters

January 2024

IN THIS ISSUE

2024 started – or was it 2023 finished? – with a flourish with the highly-successful mini-gala on New Year’s Day. This really was the Railway at its best, with a busy timetable, a wide variety of locomotives and rolling stock and a substantial goods train running through the day. Family commitments meant the editor couldn’t be present, but the photos and comments from the day show what a success it appears to have been. Paul Simpson’s heading photo is from a photo charter with the vintage carriages and goods rake that took place the following day.

There are no public services now until the February half-term; however, as usual, the following weeks will be far from a hibernation. There will be work taking place across the Railway to prepare for the new season. 2024 promises to be bumper year at the Railway as many long-standing projects come to fruition. Most obviously, we should see ‘Beachy Head’, our new-build LB&SCR Atlantic, enter traffic, along with our flagship loco ‘Bluebell’. From the carriage and wagon department, 2024 should see at least four carriages entering traffic spanning eight decades of design: the Stroudley brake 3rd No. 949; Pullman Car No. 54; Maunsell Corridor Brake 3rd No. 3687; and BR Mark 1 Second Open No. 4754.

So all round things feel more optimistic than twelve months ago. But we cannot be complacent: projects such as those above are only possible through a combination of dedicated people and significant funding. This year as so often the message remains – your support remains vital!

Tom James, Editor

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Checking in with the Chair

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

Well, that's a wrap on 2023 and what a year it has been. We started the year not actually knowing whether we would survive the year, then we made a number of changes and quickly looked at a turnaround plan. The year has flown by, but also feels like it was a long year! We have got to the end of the year and through considerable effort by so many we have made it. We finish the year in a better place than where we started, but the hard work must continue. We must not lose sight of the challenges we still face.

I would like to thank everyone for the amazing efforts we have managed to deliver in 2024 and the fact we all see the huge effort we must again put in for 2024. We have a year ahead with some amazing events to look forward too. We will see [Car 54](#) enter traffic in March, [Archie](#) will get properly painted in February. We will see the [Maunsell Hastings Brake](#) come back to traffic by April. As we go through the year, we will also see '[Bluebell](#)' return to traffic and the commissioning of '[Beachy Head](#)'.

So, a lot to deliver and before we start running trains again our fantastic infrastructure team will have re-laid varying sections of track.

We also have a fantastic year of events to look forward too, as well as changes we will be making to enhance our standard offering to make us an attraction people want to visit.

Many of you will now have read the interview I gave to *Steam Railway* about our assets and how we need to review what we have and look at what we can realistically do. I certainly do not want us to sell the "family silver". What we must do though is

look at the large number of rolling stock items that we are never likely to get round to doing, do not fit our strategies, duplicate what we have or simply unachievable then we need to make some tough decisions. We also need to think about space and also the appearance of our beautiful railway to our visitors – at the moment I don't think Horsted Keynes looks very good to our visitors, with a large number of unrestored vehicles on display. I know this is a subject that brings strong emotions – remember though much of what we have has rotted further away since we took ownership and some stuff has sat there for decades and is not likely to see the light of day for more decades!

We have started 2024 with an amazing Gala event on the 1 January – wow! it beat everyone's expectations. Well done to everyone that delivered this event and a special thanks to Operations Director Neil Glaskin who designed and managed the event.

Although we won't be running trains for the next few weeks, there will be so much to do. We have already started planning Christmas 2024 and will have all this agreed and sorted by the time we get to start running trains again. There is a lot of maintenance work going on and a number of tasks we can't do when we are running trains.

I hope that as many of you can help us deliver our ambitions through 2024 and thank you to those who continue to volunteer and support our great railway and if you are reading this and feel you'd like to help then please get in touch with me paul.churchman@bluebell-railway.com.

Paul

5 Year Anniversary for Bluebell Railway Goods Division

By Matt Lander, Wagon Group volunteer

If you are reading this on publication day, believe it or not (we can't!) it will be the eve of the 5-year anniversary of the Goods Division's first working party, which took place on 13 January 2019. Since then, we have worked on at least nine wagons in some way or another. Looking back now it makes us think what we have achieved and how much we have learnt since that first day. Here is just a brief look at what we have done over the last five years.

We first started in 2019 looking at the chassis of [Bulleid 5 Plank Open wagon No. 12058](#). We first had to remove enough components so it could be lifted off its wheels and grit blasted to get back to clean metal after years of outside storage hadn't been kind to the paint. We spent a lot of time cleaning up. Most of the year was spent de-rusting and painting the smaller components.

The railway shut down due to Covid in 2020 and we had to pause working briefly. However, research continued to find drawings and historical information so we could make components to rebuild the body. We discovered it was part of an order that used English hardwood and wasn't painted due to post WW2 materials shortages. In October of 2020, we spent a few weeks giving [SR Milk Tanker No. 4430](#) some TLC. It was given a long overdue wash and painted some areas of the chassis. In December we started dismantling [SR Engineer's Department 5 plank No. 62002](#) for an intermediate overhaul.

From the end of 2020, we had another pause in our work until March 2021 because of another lockdown. By June 2021 we had enough information that we were confident to start making new parts for No. 12058. We fitted the curb rails, to which the door hinges bolt, and the side stanchions, which support the planks either side of the door.

In July we gave the [Queen Mary Brake Van No. 56290](#) some attention prior to the "60+1"



Top to bottom: Bulleid 5-plank No. 12058; SR Milk tanker No. 4430; a short goods rake mostly comprising recent projects, including SR Engineer's Department 5 plank No. 62002.

anniversary events in August. In a little under a month, we managed to replace two doors and several floor planks and repaint the outside of the brake van. After that we gave [SECR 7 Plank 16194](#) a quick repaint to smarten it up. To end the year, we fitted the floor to the Bulleid Wagon which was the first time it had had timber for decades.

In 2022 we started by fitting a new wagon sheet to [LBSC 5 Plank No. 3346](#) after its previous one was shredded by a winter storm. In spring we purchased oak boards from English Woodland Timber in Midhurst to machine into the body planks for No. 12058. We then could start building the body, even with only one corner assembled so far, we could see it resembled a wagon for the first time!

We closed the year with a big push on No. 62002, All the planks were test-fitted, drilled, painted up and fitted before the end of the year. Work on No. 12058 continued steadily outside. Both sides were assembled and the hinges, modified from ex-LMS ones, were fitted then both doors were built.

By mid-January 2023, we had completed the final topcoat, signwriting and varnish on No. 62002 and it was considered finished. Over February half term week No. 62002 was outshopped and swapped with No. 12058 and [SR 8 Plank No. 37786](#). The latter had a few rotten planks replaced and a repaint – using recycled planks it cost us nothing! No. 12058 was structurally finished and painting and signwriting done.

In March we were shortlisted for the Heritage Railway Association Morgan Award for rolling stock preservation. Although we were a little disappointed to come runner-up, it was great to be recognised in this way. About eight weeks was spent doing some repairs to [BR\(M\) 3 Plank No. M480222](#). Some rotten areas on the doors were repaired and the wagon was given a fresh coat of BR Bauxite.

'Road Meets Rail' in May 2023 featured Fenchurch, which was also shortlisted for an HRA award, and a rake of wagons, all but one of which that we had worked on up till then which allowed us to enjoy our work and showed it off to the public. The weekend featured shunting and loading



Top to bottom: SE&CR 7 plank No. 16194; demonstrating the end result – loading the goods into Bulleid wagon No. 12058 at "Road Meets Rail".

demonstrations including M480222 being loaded with a Fordson tractor before the train went for a trip up the line.

In June we started the heavy overhaul of [LMS 3 Plank No. 474558](#). Initial inspection suggested it only needed a few light repairs, but we ended up replacing sections of the top web on the solebars and the south headstock! We are on the home straight with this wagon and it should be finished soon. To bring things up to date, New Year's Day 2024 saw the O1 take charge of 12 wagons plus brake van.

If the amount of people taking pictures of the train didn't prove how popular goods trains are then I don't know what does, proving all the work we do is worth it!

Q Class 541 Overhaul Update

By Steve Pilcher, Treasurer, Maunsell Locomotive Society

Since the last report in the November issue of *The Bluebell Times*, Leaky Finders have cut out wasted areas of the steel outer firebox wrapper on the sides and backhead that re-quire replacement. In due course new sections of steel plate will be welded back into place.

The chassis has been dismantled and the wheelsets are away at the South Devon Railway for tyre turning; the axles and wheelsets have been ultrasonically tested and have passed. The rear dragbox under the cab was found to be wasted and in need of replacement, so it has been removed from the frames, as can be seen in the attached photo.

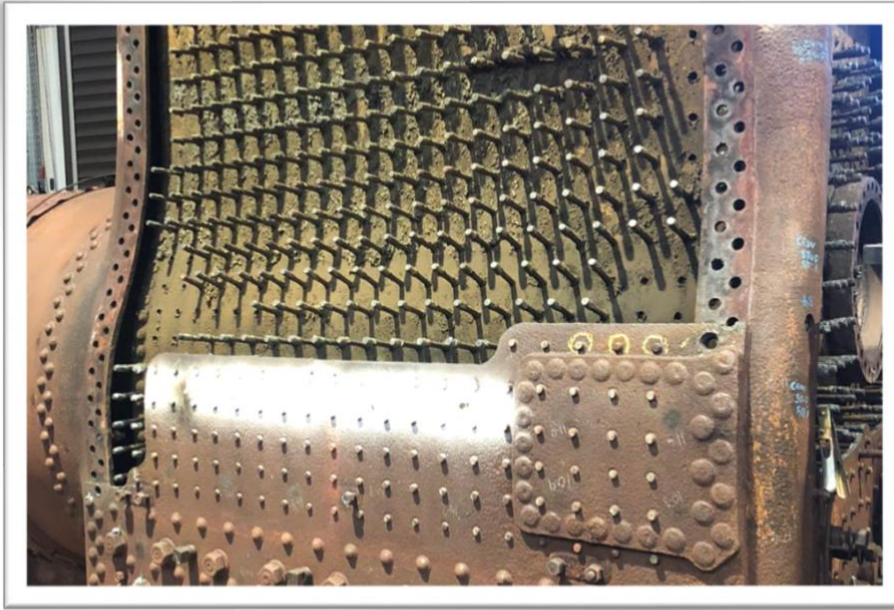
Back at Sheffield Park, boiler fittings are being overhauled by Bluebell workshop staff along with

some preparatory work on the superheater header. As regards the tender, Melvyn Frohnsdorff has been busy freeing up the tender tank to enable it to be lifted to gain access to the frames in order to assess their condition. This has involved dismantling various lengths of pipework suspended underneath and extracting the vacuum and brake cylinders. The tender tank mounted sandboxes and associated pipework also had to be removed. The working party have commenced work on dismantling the brake rigging and cleaning/painting parts taken off the tender. In due course the tender tank will be lifted and the wheelsets sent away for tyre turning. There will be plenty of work for us cleaning between the frames and addressing any work required to dragboxes etc.



Above: One of the tender's brake cylinders, having been extracted from under the tender.

Photo: Melvyn Frohnsdorff



Left: 541's firebox, showing where areas of the steel outer wrapper have been cut away.

Photo: Leaky Finders

Right: The rear of the loco's frames, showing where the dragbox has been removed.

Photo: Leaky Finders



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 over £26,000 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.

Remembering Jock McKay

By Dave Gillam, locomotive inspector *Photo by* Nick Talbot

Many older members of the locomotive department, as well as volunteers around the Railway, will no doubt remember John "Jock" McKay, who sadly passed away in December after a short illness. Jock was a regular member of the locomotive department from the 1970's and many, many of our loco crew will be forever indebted to him for the knowledge and expertise he passed on.

Alongside the Scottish Railway Preservation Society, we [aim to raise £2,000](#) so that we at the Bluebell Railway, and our Scottish friends, can have something to remember and celebrate his life.

We plan to commission the making of a Locomotive headboard "Sussex Scot". Although not a steam service as it only ran from 1988 to the early 2000's from Brighton to Glasgow/Waverley, we thought it was very apt.

Any additional money raised will be split between the restoration funds for the [Bulleid 0-4-0T 'Normandy'](#) and [North British Railway No. 673 'Maude'](#), both of which were favourites of Jock.

The photo on the right shows Jock (seated right) accompanied by locomotive department inspector Russell Pearce, who wrote:

“ *When Archie was first outshopped it was a privilege to host this wonderful man who was by then retired from the footplate, and using a stick to get about. However the stick soon disappeared when asked if he would like a drive of a Bulleid Pacific.*

Sadly we will not get to repeat this picture, John McKay passed away, a great loss to all who knew him and source of knowledge and experience which will be sorely missed.

*Rest in Peace Jock, "Lang may your lumb reek"
"Slange Va!"* ”



HOW TO HELP

You can contribute via JustGiving at <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/JockMcKay>

Giant Strides Into 2024

By Andy Taylor, Awake the Giant project leader

2023

During the year of 2023, the Awake the Giant team have been working hard on the start of the overhaul of 92240. The team's main focus, away from purely fundraising to aid the restoration, has been working on the tender.

Over the year, the water scoop had been removed, the tender's water chambers have been cleaned and wire brushed before being painted and this is the same with the coal space.

The front end has received some work but will receive more, once the tender has been finished the front end has received work on the loosening of running plates and a number of bolts which will ease taken parts off for work and storage during its time in the workshop.

AIMS FOR 2024

The aim for 92240 in 2024 is to have the tender completed by the summer, by the team and then to have this stored after splitting from the engine. The engine will then become the main focus for the team. During 2024, the team will also be looking at sourcing some of the new parts that will be needed and with a fair wind, a full thickness exam on the boiler will be carried out by outside contractors.

92240 NEEDS YOU

The team has had a lot of interest in donating for specific parts of 92240, or bursaries towards the restoration. We have also been contacted by fellow societies and model railway clubs for talks about the work and project on 92240. If your Railway club or society is interested in a talk about 92240 and the overhaul and restoration

92240's team are busy all year round, going hosting a stall at a number of events and galas at the Bluebell Railway. The team's vision in 2024, not only to progress the loco further into its restoration but for the 'Awake the Giant' stand to be at all the special events at the Bluebell Railway. For the team to be able to achieve this, we need you ... we need a team that are able to work

alongside our stand manager to assist in promoting the project and selling the merchandise. If you are able to volunteer anytime to assist in the running of the stand. If you are interested in any of these, then please do get in touch with the team at awakethegiant@outlook.com.

Tom Newble is currently working on a new initiative where supporters can donate and sponsor 92240, the details are being finalised and all being well we will launch in our February article in *The Bluebell Times*.

ARCHIVE

Tom Newble has been working behind the scenes on building an archive of 92240, from its working days, time at Barry's before its journey to the Bluebell and 92240's first restoration. The archive is a 'work in progress' and will continually be added to. If you have any material that could be added to the portfolio, please contact Tom at awakethegiant@outlook.com. The archive will be available to see at the Awake the Giant stand in the new year.

MERCHANDISE

Ken Upton has been working on adding a wider range of merchandise to the stall, including new designed t shirts, badges and stationary to name a few. These are all available on the stall.

Ken has been busy behind the scenes ordering and creating new 'Giant' lines of merchandise that is now available to buy, from the stand and the Bluebell shop. Our most recent additions to the current merchandise range include, rulers and coasters.

GIANT GAZETTE

Mark Wilson has been working hard behind the scenes to get the next issue ready for publication and will be available very soon, be sure to grab your copy. Our new subscription service to the 'Giant Gazette' has proven to be very popular to both, guests and working members of the Bluebell

Railway and has a number of subscribers. If you are interested in subscribing to this, then please email: giantgazette92240@yahoo.co.uk

PHOTO COMPETITION

Thank you to everyone who has entered the Photo Competition, it has proved a popular fundraiser. We are pleased to announce the winners of the competition are shown below.



Under 15s 'Bluebell at its Best' Winner with 01 SECR 65 with the Golden Arrow at Sheffield Park by Henry Jordan.



16s and Over 'Bluebell in Bloom' Runner Up with 73082 'Camelot' at West Hoathly, by Sebastian Povey.



16s and Over 'Bluebell in Bloom' Winner with 73082 'Camelot' in a pre-show warm up by Ryan Jefferies.

All Change at Sheffield Park

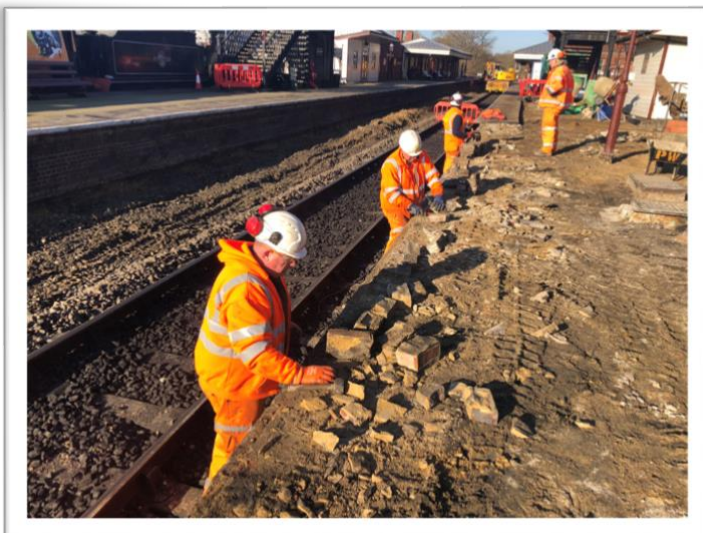
Words and photos by Mike Hopps, BRPS infrastructure trustee

Just two weeks into the New Year and Sheffield Park station is looking like a big building site. The track is already lifted from Platform 2 and the formation is being dug out to remove the clay and pebbles before relaying properly with the now usual Terram and polythene sandwich.

At the same time as drainage is installed, new stools to take point rodding will be positioned ready for the new signal box installation. No. 7 point at the south end, which leads to the Pumphouse siding, is also being replaced.

Over on Platform 1, the whole of the south end is fenced off as a secure site while work is going on to improve the edging of the dock, remedy failed corbelling on the platform face and correctly align the platform edge slabs. While the work proceeds, ducting for future-proofing any electrical upgrades will also be installed.

The steps and supporting brackets on the footbridge, platform one side are also being renewed to complete the job which we started on Platform 2 some years ago. A bit of a challenge when work started yesterday morning (10 January) as the temperature was -4°C and locks were found to be frozen. Thankfully the sun came out later on which improved working conditions!



Around and About

Photos by David Chappell or as credited



Left: Stroudley 3rd No. 949 edges ever closer towards running for the first time in well over a hundred years. It is seen here in the paint shop at Horsted Keynes following varnishing.

Right: This winter's track relaying projects are concentrating on Sheffield Park and the bottom of Freshfield Bank towards the site of Ketches Halt. In preparation, a large ballast mountain has developed at Horsted Keynes.



Left: On one of the last days of the SteamLights season, No. 6989 'Wightwick Hall' is seen on Freshfield Bank on 29 December 2023 with the SteamLights set, still rigged up with the external lighting on both the locomotive and carriages, along with the BY van which housed the generator for the lights.

Photo: Nick Gilliam



Left: A week or so later, on 7 January, this slightly eclectic set ran up the line to remove the static light installations. Class 73 Electro-diesel No. E6040 provided power, along with the 09, BY van and Queen Mary brake van.



News in Brief

BLUEBELL PASSES OUT ITS YOUNGEST EVER STEAM LOCOMOTIVE DRIVER

On 30 December, and on his 21st birthday, Ben Gray became the youngest ever member of Bluebell engine crew to have passed their driver's exam in our line's 64-year history. Ben passed out as a driver, working No. 6989 'Wightwick Hall' and is seen here being given his driving card by Bluebell Railway Inspector Chris Sutters after passing his driver's assessment.

Everyone at The Bluebell Railway wishes to congratulate Ben on this very special achievement!

Photos kindly supplied by Tim Gray and Andrew Blowers.

To read more, visit <https://www.bluebell-railway.com/bluebell-railway-press-releases/>

REGULAR TRUST FUNDING BY STANDING ORDER

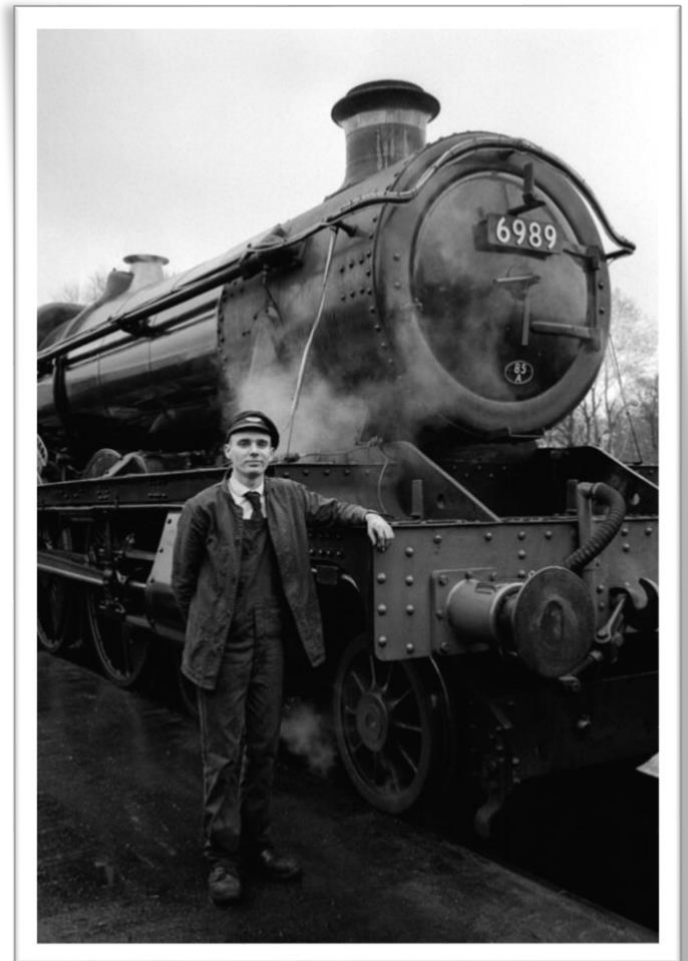
By Trevor Swainson, Funding Governor, Bluebell Railway Trust

A big thank you to all of those who responded to the article in the Autumn issue of 'Bluebell News' where we asked for additional members and friends of the Railway to set up and/or increase their standing orders in support of a wide range of the restricted funds held by the Trust.

We are pleased to report that quite a number of new standing order instructions have been set up for a wide range of funds ranging from P27 through to 'Awake the Giant'. Every penny donated in this way goes towards the restoration of our locomotives and rolling stock.

It is not too late for you to join in making regular donations. This can be done by setting up a standing order with your bank or by making online regular donations through the [Trust web pages](#).

Please help to fund your favourite project.



Feedback on School Visits

By Sarah Amos, Education Team volunteer

Many of you will know that school groups visit the Railway every year. These school trips are organised and delivered by volunteers in the Education Department and the trips tie in with the school curriculum. It's possible that not all of you will know some the details about these trips so we lift the lid on what has been going on in 2023 below...

The [Education Department](#) have run 40 trips during the summer and autumn terms in 2023 – starting on 19 April and ending on 14 December - and have generated an amazing £17,900 for the Railway.

The 40 trips were for

- ➔ 32 primary schools (some schools visited over 2 days because of their group size)
- ➔ 1 secondary school
- ➔ 2 home educator groups
- ➔ 1 scout group that visited over 2 evenings

In total 1,492 children and 286 adults have visited the Railway in 2023 on organised school trips

"We had a the most lovely time visiting The Bluebell Railway! The staff were so knowledgeable, and the children had a wonderful time. It was so well organised and was so nice for our staff to enjoy the day knowing we were in great hands. Thank you so much for all the effort that went into thinking of everything!"

"I just wanted to send a quick note to say how impressed we were with the WW2 evacuation school trip experience at Bluebell. The volunteers are so charismatic and knowledgeable. Thank you for bringing it all to life for both children and teachers!"

"Our feedback is very positive! We loved how the groups were well organised and adults had a great knowledge to tell the children. The adults engaged very well with the children. We had the most fabulous day with you all at the Bluebell railway. Thanks to you all for your care, energy and enthusiasm throughout the whole day".

Many schools who visit the Railway do so year after year and of course, school trips build an important and enthusiastic young fan base to sustain the future of the Bluebell.

Schools have come from far and wide...

- ➔ from London Westminster, Coulsdon, Sutton and Orpington in the north
- ➔ Worthing and Brighton in the south
- ➔ Horsham and Redhill in the west
- ➔ Uckfield in the east

There are also many other more local schools who have visited from Hurstpierpoint, Lindfield, Haywards Heath and Newick to name but a few.

The school trips have either been about World War II or about other topics, usually involving history or transport, which the schools request and tie in with the school curriculum. The education trips have been delivered by an amazing team of 24 regular volunteers.

This is some of the lovely feedback that we have received from schools who have visited the Railway in 2023.

"From arrival to departure, it was all perfectly orchestrated; the staff and volunteers were all so interesting, helpful, knowledgeable and thoughtful. Please thank them all from us".

"I just wanted to send a heartfelt 'thank you' for the trip today. Our children had a fantastic time"

"Thank you for our day as evacuees on the Bluebell Railway. Everyone (adults and children) had a really enjoyable day and the children learnt even more about what it would have been like to be a child during WW2. We felt particularly privileged to hear about the experiences of real-life evacuees and enjoyed all the drama of the billeting procedure and the air raid shelter. You even laid on perfect weather!"

New Additions to the Museum Website

By Chris Wilson, Bluebell Railway archive volunteer

This month we have added a further 320 images to the Bluebell Railway Museum website bringing the total now available to 23,320. This update contains photographs taken by David Esau.

We have added the second half of David Esau's Midland Region photographs. The images in the Archive are predominately Southern but we always prefer to keep a photographers collection together which is why you can find images from across the UK and Overseas on the museum website.

Another batch of John Scrace's Bulleid Pacific locomotive photographs have also been added.



Top: 5MT No. 73093 with a southbound train entering Worcester Shrub Hill station, ca. 1960.

Photo: David Esau [158045].



Left: A view at Wimbledon with Merchant Navy No. 35005 'Canadian Pacific' on the 'Bournemouth Belle' and 4-SUB No. 4605 on a Waterloo to Shepperton service, on 14 May 1964.

Photo: John Scrace [141727]

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 That Day

By Tony Hillman, Deputy Curator

Searching through our photograph collection we only have one photograph taken on the Bluebell Times Friday for January. So we can continue with this feature we will be changing the name to "On That Day". During summer months we might have up to seventy photographs to choose from. This means that many that could be included are left out. So, for January we will be reprising some of the 'Friday' images that did not make the final cut. Thanks to John Creed, Martin Elms, Richard Peirce, Chris Sutton, Roger Merry-Price and Chris Wilson for finding the pictures and providing the notes.



Accelerating through Elmstead Woods station are D1 31739 and Battle of Britain 34083 '605 Squadron' with the 1.10pm Charing Cross to Dover /Ramsgate. It is easy to imagine the noise and smoke as they pass, with both firemen building up their fires for the last part of the steep climb to Knockholt Summit, six miles further on. This photograph was taken on 10 June 1961, the last Saturday of mainline steam passenger working from London to Dover via Tonbridge and Ashford. On Monday 12 June 1961, these services went over to Electric or Diesel operation as Phase 2 of the Kent Coast Electrification scheme.

The usual motive power for this working (South Eastern Division Duty 32) was a diesel locomotive, Sulzer Type 2, in the range D5000 to D5014 but for some reason it had reverted to steam. One possibility is the usage of the Margate Spare set, No 266, to provide

more capacity on that Saturday. This consisted of nine heavy Bulleid coaches retained for specials. It had come up on the 9.55am ex Deal to Charing Cross, an extra train, and the 1.10pm was perhaps a good way to return it, albeit it with steam power because of the weight.

The pilot engine D1 31739 was probably attached in order to save a path to Tonbridge. It was there it came off the train and later that afternoon worked a Tonbridge to Ashford local passenger service.

34083 moved to Exmouth Junction shed in November 1961 and was withdrawn in July 1964. 31739 was withdrawn from Bricklayers Arms just after it had worked on the last day of the Westerham branch, 28 October 1961.

Photo: John Scrace [140600]



On 5 October 1952 the Railway Correspondence and Travel Society (RCTS) organised the '*Brighton Works Centenary Special*' rail tour. The tour was oversubscribed so a fortnight later it organised a repeat event and the photograph shows LBSCR A1X 0-6-0T 32636 leaving Kemp Town on Sunday 19 October with one of the specials that ran on the branch that day. Unlike the first tour, which ran in glorious autumn sunshine, the second trip was marred by heavy rain.

The tour had left Victoria at 10.14 am behind LBSCR Atlantic 4-4-2 32425 '*Trevoise Head*' with eight Pullmans and was scheduled to run to Brighton in an hour although the actual time was 61 minutes and 24 seconds with a top speed of 71 mph. Participants from London could then travel to Kemp Town at either 1.30 pm or 2.40 pm in LBSCR push pull set No. 727 behind 32636 whilst both Brighton Works and Locomotive Shed could be visited. At the latter, on display, were A1X 0-6-0T 32640, E5 0-6-2T 32587, Schools 4-4-0 30915 '*Brighton*' and the last remaining I3 4-4-2T 32091. The tour left Brighton at 4.28 pm with a scheduled

arrival time in London at 5.28 pm which was achieved with a top speed of 75mph.

32636, the oldest surviving locomotive on the Southern Region, was built at Brighton Works as A class No. 72 '*Fenchurch*' in 1872 and was rebuilt to an A1X in 1913. Withdrawn by BR in January 1964 it was acquired by the Bluebell Railway for £750 and is now back in service following a substantial overhaul lasting three years.

The Kemp Town branch ran from a junction off the Brighton to Lewes line and was opened in August 1869. Closure to passengers took effect from 1 January 1933 although the line remained open for freight until 1971. A special passenger service operated on the last day, 26 June 1971, using a Class 206 DEMU No. 1205.

Photo: J.J. Smith [043216]



Mid-morning at Lewes on Saturday 8 July 1950 finds D Class 4-4-0 31488 standing at the Down Brighton Main Platform at the head of the 9.22 am Brighton to Tonbridge, hauling a three coach SE & CR built "Birdcage" set. These sets were quite common on secondary services, mainly to the east of the Brighton Main Line. The headcode disc seems to show 31488 is working Tonbridge Duty 295, from where it was allocated and thus is on the return working of the earlier 6.09am Sevenoaks to Brighton.

Lewes Station occupies a rather cramped site, the junction between the Brighton and Haywards Heath lines lies just beyond the platform ends, followed by the divergence of the Uckfield and Seaford/Eastbourne/Hastings lines. The railway first arrived from Brighton in June 1846, but to a station in a totally different place. The present station building, the third, opened on 17 June 1889. Although the track layout has been significantly reduced in recent years, platforms

being reduced from 7 to 5, the station building remains complete, was Grade 2 listed in 1996 and has been sympathetically restored.

Fifty-one D Class 4-4-0 locomotives were built by the S.E & C.R between February 1901 and March 1907 during the "Wainwright" period 1899 -1913. Of these, 21 were built at Ashford Works and the rest by outside contractors. In 1913 Richard Maunsell rebuilt 21 as the more powerful D1 Class. 31488 was built at Ashford Works in 1902 and allocated new to Dover Town. Twenty-eight of these locomotives passed to the Southern Region in 1948 and the last was withdrawn in 1956. 31488 was rather nomadic from 1950 until withdrawal from Guildford in February 1956, one of the last six survivors. Another of the six, 31737 was selected for preservation and is on display at the National Railway Museum.

Photo: J.J. Smith [040958]



Vacancies

CATERING VOLUNTEERS

Have you ever enjoyed a cream tea on one of our trains? Or a Ploughman's lunch? Or a cup of tea from the on-train buffet? With a busy season of trains ahead, we need more volunteers to help keep those experiences alive, particularly for mid-week traffic. If you like interacting with people, providing a service that our visitors enjoy and making their day just that little bit more special this is the job for you.

MORE INFORMATION

Please contact Lisa Boyle at lisa.boyle@bluebell-railway.com for further information.

Bluebell Times - Submission Guidelines

We welcome submissions – both written and photographic – from around the Railway, or covering Bluebell events, from any source. To make editing as easy as possible, please note the following guidelines for submission.

All submissions should be sent to bluebelltimes@bluebell-railway.com

TEXT

Text is best submitted either by email, or as a word document. (PDF's cause more work to extract the text). Please keep formatting to a minimum – I have styles for text that can be easily applied to plain text as required.

If you are using railway-specific abbreviations (such as a carriage being a "TSO"), please expand them the first time they are used in the text – I won't always know what the abbreviations mean, and if I don't, we can be reasonably sure that many readers won't either.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Please submit in hi-resolution, ideally at least 150px/inch. Preferably remove any watermarks etc – credit will be given in the accompanying text.

If you are submitting photos to accompany text, please keep them separate – don't embed photos in a Word document, but instead send the text and photos as separate attachments.

BYLINES / CREDITS

All submissions are credited by name. If you are writing from a position in the railway, please also include an appropriate job title or role. If you wear "multiple hats" around the railway, please by-line to the most appropriate role in relation to the content of the article.

COPY DATES AND PUBLICATION DATES

Copy deadline is generally a week before publication date.

ISSUE	COPY DEADLINE	PUBLICATION DATE
February 2024	2 February	9 February
March 2024	1 March	8 March
April 2024	5 April	12 April
May 2024	3 May	10 May
June 2024	7 June	14 June
July 2024	5 July	12 July
August 2024	2 August	9 August
September 2024	6 September	13 September
October 2024	4 October	11 October
November 2024	1 November	8 November
December 2024	6 December	13 December



Photo: Peter Edwards

The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway Members, Staff and Supporters

The Bluebell Times is published monthly on the second Friday of each month. The next issue is scheduled to be available on 9 February 2024 from bluebell-railway.com/bluebell-times

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

*The Bluebell Times editor
Tom James*

bluebelltimes@bluebell-railway.com

Tail Lamp

If you've enjoyed this issue of *The Bluebell Times*, feel free to pass it on to other people you think might also want to read it.

To find out when the next issue is out and for other updates about the Bluebell Railway, check our [website](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

Contributors to this issue:

- ➔ Sarah Amos
- ➔ Andrew Blowers
- ➔ David Chappell
- ➔ Paul Churchman
- ➔ John Creed
- ➔ Peter Edwards
- ➔ Martin Elms
- ➔ Melvyn Frohnsdorff
- ➔ Nick Gilliam
- ➔ Tim Gray
- ➔ Dave Gillam
- ➔ Tony Hillman
- ➔ Mike Hopps
- ➔ Tom James
- ➔ Ryan Jefferies
- ➔ Henry Jordan
- ➔ Matt Lander
- ➔ Roger Merry-Price
- ➔ Richard Peirce
- ➔ Steve Pilcher
- ➔ Sebastian Povey
- ➔ Paul Simpson
- ➔ Chris Sutton
- ➔ Trevor Swainson
- ➔ Nick Talbot
- ➔ Andy Taylor
- ➔ Chris Wilson