



Undoubted star of the show at the recent Severn Valley Gala: Fenchurch Photo: David Cable

The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway Members, Staff and Supporters

May 2024

IN THIS ISSUE

We start with David Cable’s photo of Fenchurch at the Severn Valley Railway. Wherever it goes, *Fenchurch* seems to wow the crowds, and the SVR gala was seemingly no exception with reports of packed trains and – if the editor’s unscientific polling of social media is representative – dominating the photo streams of the visitors. The loco is now safely back on shed at Sheffield Park ready for our own [Branch Line Gala](#), which starts the day of publication of this issue. The event has a distinctive Great Western flavour this year, with three visiting GWR locos in addition to *Wightwick Hall* – here on long-term loan – plus 80151 (running as 80100), No. 65 and *Fenchurch* from our own fleet.

This issue marks a busy month: a week after the Branch Line Gala is [Road Meets Rail](#), a festival of working steam. This is fast becoming one of the standout events in our enthusiast calendar, with a variety of road and rail vehicles in use and interesting demonstrations of past trades powered by steam. Then, on 1–2 June, there is the return of the [Southern at War](#) event, back after several year’s hiatus. 2024 is of course the 80th anniversary of Operation Overlord, when the SR played a pivotal role in transporting men and materials to the embarkation ports for D-Day.

Finally, to allow the next issue of *The Bluebell Times* to carry a report from the Society AGM, publication will be one week later than normal. The compilers of the popular “On This Day” feature have been suitably forewarned!

Tom James, Editor

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Watts Occurring

By Roy Watts, BRPS Acting Chairman

And another month passes by at pace!

It doesn't seem 5 minutes ago that you are reviewing recent events and composing the article for *The Bluebell Times* when the reminder for the next one drops into your inbox.

However, it does make you focus on what has gone on.

Needless to say that the official launch of [Pullman Car 54](#) really steals the headlines this time around.

We were delighted to welcome Team GB Paralympian, Fabienne Andre, to cut the ribbon and launch Car 54 back into traffic.

How good was it to see people in wheelchairs use the newly installed lifts and take their place at a table and join the diners? Yet another example of

Bluebell ingenuity and a stunning example of the care and craftsmanship that went into the restoration of this vehicle. Those who can remember the condition of the Car on its arrival will appreciate just what has gone into transforming what was basically a wooden shell into something of sheer beauty is a credit to everyone involved in its restoration.

So if you carved wood, conducted electrical wiring, trimmed seats, installed new glass windows whatever, you are to be congratulated and deserve all the plaudits you receive.

Thanks also go to Roger Kelly for organising the event.

On the operational side, you will be pleased to know that our trade has still remained very



Team GB Paralympian Fabienne André is seen with members of the Pullman staff at the inauguration of Pullman Car No. 54. Photo: Colin Tyson

buoyant, and we have seen some very successful weekends. I hate to say it, but I have seen a few pictures of station staff posing alongside Darth Vader!

Now you might question what Bluey and Bingo, Unicorns, Stormtroopers or Falcons have to do with a Railway? It is actually quite a reasonable question but these low-cost events have been bringing in the family groups.

What is encouraging is that we have also seen a big increase in secondary spend such as souvenirs or models.

Yes, this is all very positive but the real financial element we must manage are the overhead costs. It's this time of year when Council Tax Bills have landed on doormats, income tax changes bite as certainly pensioners will have seen, and have you noticed that fuel costs at the pumps are creeping stealthily up again?

It's a juggling act but this is all about volume growth and increasing visitors.

There is a fine balance between increasing prices, offering value for money and encouraging spend.

Another event that you might have noticed was the 300th edition of *Bluebell News* landing on your doormat recently. Yes, it took a bit of correlation work thinking surely we've been going for 65 years and a 300th edition but then just 4 times a year puts it in perspective.

BLUEBELL TIMES - PUBLICATION DATE

As mentioned above, the BRPS AGM will take place on 15 June, which is the day after the normal Bluebell Times publication date. Accordingly, next month's issue will be published a week late, on 21 June, to allow a report from the AGM. Normal publication schedule (2nd Friday of each month) will resume from the July issue, planned for 12 July – Ed.

Congratulations to Colin Tyson and the team, long may your quality work continue.

On a slightly different note, the Plc are looking for some new blood to fill some currently vacant posts. Interested? See page 20 for more details.

Next month the Society will be holding its AGM at Sheffield Park on the 15 June and there will be an election for Trustees positions.

More about the day's events will be in the post to you very soon as we aim to repeat our very successful meeting from last year as well as opening up some of the usually off-limits spaces.

As always, the Bluebell relies on its volunteer workforce but there is always room for more. Nowhere is that more apparent at the moment than Kingscote and East Grinstead stations where 32 shared staff do their best to keep both stations manned – and believe me it's difficult at times.

So if you know anyone that would like to come along and help at either station, whether its station staff, booking clerks or even gardeners, please do get in touch with our volunteer Coordinator.

As always thank you for your support and look forward to seeing you soon and no, I have no intention of dressing up as a dinosaur ... well, not just yet!

Stay safe.

Paving the Way at Horsted Keynes

By Trevor Swainson, Funding Governor, Bluebell Railway Trust and Tony Astor, Infrastructure Director, Bluebell Railway Plc

INTRODUCTION

As many will be aware, work has been going on to restore Platform 1 at Horsted Keynes so we can use it for operational use. To achieve this, it has been necessary to undertake major repairs on the platform, starting with the rebuild of the supporting wall. Now, it is now necessary to replace the platform edging caused by the deterioration in the coping stones, many of which are loose and unsafe.

Work on the platform walls is well-advanced with the help of funding from the Bluebell Railway Trust. We are now turning attention to the coping stones which is to be funded by a new mini appeal by the Trust.

THE PROBLEM

The coping stones ('the stones') on all 5 platforms date back to the 1880's and are 100mm thick Yorkstone; this is a porous sandstone. Over the years, particularly on platform 1, the stones have deteriorated through a combination of degradation, delamination, cracking, becoming brittle etc. To make matters worse, the effects of rainwater and frost from the grassed area on Platforms 1 & 2 have caused further delamination to the stones.

In short, after 140 years of continuous usage, the stones are at the end of their lives and, to be blunt, they've had it!

THE SOLUTION

Initially, it was thought that the problem could be overcome by only replacing the damaged stones. This idea was soon discounted because we would have finished with a patchwork effect of old and new stones. Whilst saving money in the short-term, sooner or later the remaining old stones will have to be replaced.

The preferred solution is to replace the complete run of stones on Platform 1; this amounts to 150 metres in length, requiring 180 stones.



One advantage of the complete replacement is that many of the old stones are still in serviceable condition and can be re-used now or in the future for repairs on other platforms.

THE OPTIONS

The Infrastructure team had various options for sourcing replacement stones. These have included trying to 'beg, steal and borrow' similar stones from outside of the Railway. Unfortunately, despite contacting Hansons at Ardingly Station, private landowners and even Network Rail, nothing was found that was either suitable or available in the quantities required.

So, in the end, it was decided that we should replace the entire platform length of 150 metres with 180 new stones.

THE COSTS

We require 180 new stones to restore the platform edging. The cost of each of these stones is £115, giving a total cost of £20,700. To this, we must add all the associated costs that include delivery charges, bricks, cement, tarmac and other materials plus plant hire to give a grand total of approximately £26,000.

HOW CAN YOU HELP TO RAISE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT THIS PROJECT?

Once again, we are looking for the generous support of members and friends.

We would like to invite members and friends of the Railway to contribute by 'purchasing' one or more stones at a cost of £115 each. The purchases will in reality be donations on which we will be able to claim back Gift Aid from HMRC, wherever possible.

We need a minimum number of 180 such 'purchases' to complete the job.

As a novel idea, we will number each stone – on paper, at least. We will create an 'Honours Board' that will be displayed on Platform 1 and if you would like your name to be featured there, please let us know by emailing funding@bluebell-railway.com but, If you prefer to remain anonymous, then no action is necessary.

In advance of the appeal launch, we have already received an early donation for 20 of the paving stones so that is a good start.

There is the possibility or even likelihood – we hope! – that we may 'sell' more than 180 such stones thereby exceeding our target. In such case the Infrastructure Team will doubtless provide suitable other ideas to help in the general investment that is being made on Platform 1.



PAVING THE WAY – HOW TO DONATE

If you can support this project - THANK YOU! - you can donate in one of three ways:

Online

Visit the Bluebell Railway Trust website at www.bluebell-railway.com/trust/make-a-donation/

Please select 'Paving the way' from the drop-down menu.

By bank transfer

The Bluebell Railway Trust

Account no. 61059056 Sort code 60-10-26

Please quote reference 'Paving The Way'.

By cheque

Send to:

The Bluebell Railway Trust

Sheffield Park Station, East Sussex, TN22 3QL

Please quote reference 'Paving The Way'.

Gift Aid

If you would like The Bluebell Railway Trust to claim Gift Aid on your donation, please let us know by emailing funding@bluebell-railway.com. If required, you can download a Gift Aid declaration form at www.bluebell-railway.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/BluebellRailwayTrustDonationForm.pdf

Honours Board

If you would like your name included on the honours board, please send a message to funding@bluebell-railway.com

Q Class 541 Overhaul Update

By Steve Pilcher, Maunsell Locomotive Society

Since the last report good progress has been made at Leaky Finders with the loco's overhaul. New boiler plate has arrived for the sections cut out of the sides of the outer wrapper and both sheets have been shaped, weld prepped, trial fitted and are now waiting to be welded in place. Stay holes have been marked out on both sides.

A new throat plate pressing was due to arrive in mid-May.

Remedial work on the inner firebox is being assessed and about to start, particularly around the stay holes.

New platework for the loco's rear drag box has been fabricated and is in the process of being riveted together.

As regards the tender tank, work is proceeding very well at the Kent & East Sussex Railway, where the 4253 loco group are fabricating the new tender tank.

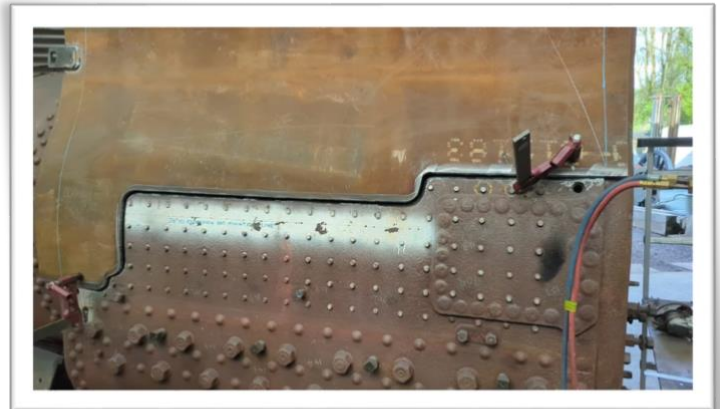
All the new steel plate for the new tender tank is now on site. The 'well' underneath the tank has been fabricated. The coal space is under construction and lockers rivetted together.

Back at Sheffield Park, Melvyn has been busy working towards 'freeing up' the rear drag box on the tender frames as this (like the front drag box) also needs to be replaced.

He firstly needed to remove the rear steps and is now moving forward to cut away various strengthening plates between the inner and outer frames before being able to free up some of the rivets holding it in.

Meanwhile other working group volunteers have progressed cleaning and painting the inner frames, most of which have now had two coats of primer and first coat of grey undercoat. Also a lot of accumulated gunk has been cleaned off the wheelsets.

The tender frames were due to be lifted in May and the wheelsets despatched to the South Devon Railway to enable the tyres to be turned.



Top: New boiler plate awaiting welding into place on 541's firebox outer wrapper.

Bottom: New backhead platework being trial fitted

Both photos: Leaky Finders



Left: Progress with cleaning and painting 541's inner tender frames.
Photo: Steve Pilcher

Below: New well for the tender tank being fabricated by the 4253 group at the K&ESR.

Photo: 4253 group



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, over £35,000 has been put 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.

Camelot – The Early Years

By Tony Wilkinson, Camelot Society

Following on from the article on 50 years of Camelot in the latest issue of Bluebell News, Tony Wilkinson provided this vignette of the early days of locomotive restoration out in the yard at Sheffield Park. It's fair to say that practice has moved on since those days!

In early days of *Camelot's* restoration Keith Sturt was Loco Works Manager and Colin Turner was in charge of non-rostered members of the department: it was thanks to them that we non-skilled people were welcomed and encouraged.

I arrived on holiday and Colin asked for a bit of help with *Camelot*. The stripped frame was standing on jacks approximately diagonally between the back of what is now Atlantic House and the workshop door. The footplate cantilever was near the rail container which held Camelot Society possessions. In between was a muddy hole and the loco frames stood on rough ground. There was room for the forklift to drive all around the end of loco, but the tines were too short to position the steam brake correctly under the cantilever. We were stuck. About that time a Camelot Society fund raising maestro appeared and Colin left the cylinder and departed on the forklift.

I had a bit of an idea and with my mate gathered together a few bits, two or three wooden blocks, a sleeper, and from the workshop four 3/8 inch studs about two feet long, 8 nuts and a ball of blue polypropylene rope.

The wooden blocks were made into a fulcrum and the sleeper a lever. The four studs fastened on top

by a nut were pushed through the bolt holes on top of the cantilever together with lengths of blue rope which were fastened to the cylinder retaining bolt holes. So holding onto the sides of the frames I walked slowly back along the sleeper as my colleague juggled the blue ropes until all was more or less lined up. Then furthermore acrobatics resulted in lifting the cylinder until my colleague was able to fasten the studs through the cylinder retaining bolt holes with a nut. The cylinder now hung precariously from four brass studs. A few more turns on each nut and the cylinder was a few inches nearer the cantilever and it was time for a well-earned cuppa.

We returned to the frames in high spirits each armed with a spanner with a couple of studs to work on. As we progressed with the makeshift jacks, moving the nuts got progressively harder. I was tightening and my colleague was slackening! After correcting the error the cylinder was jacked up to within an inch or so of the cantilever. Each stud and blue rope pair was in turn replaced by (something like) a 3-inch long 3/4 Whitworth bolt. Job done! Not bad when you consider my colleague didn't know how a nut worked. Mind you I couldn't have raised all that money either!

Branch Line Society Rail Tour

By Graham Aitken, Guard and Senior Station Master, Sheffield Park Photo by Lance Allen

Adding to the editor's question 'Why do we do what we do' in the March issue of *The Bluebell Times*, I would like to give another, but different, example of how our Railway continues to be a special place, for members, staff, volunteers, and our visitors.

I signed on duty as Guard for the above train at 8.15am on 6 April, soon to be joined by my colleagues Tim Gray (Driver), Kieran Reeves (Secondman) and Chas Melton (Point Clipper extraordinaire). Our train was the Observation Coach (OBO) and Class 09 Diesel Shunter D4106.

Our task was to succeed in getting our special train into various sidings at all four stations, either as close as possible to the stop blocks, or to vehicles in the siding. The itinerary had been discussed with the Organiser and carefully put together by Chris Knibbs and me, with the agreement of the Infrastructure, Carriage & Wagon, and Loco Department managers.

Starting from Sheffield Park at 9:15am we went to East Grinstead, Kingscote, Horsted Keynes, Sheffield Park, Horsted Keynes, Kingscote and East Grinstead before finishing 15 minutes early back at Sheffield Park at 5:55pm.



The Railway Correspondence & Travel Society's Bluebell charter on Saturday 6 April involved all possible running lines and sidings using the LNWR Observation Car, hence the very unusual sight of a carriage load of passengers in the Sheffield Park running shed!

Our passengers, all 68 of them, were delighted with their day particularly as we visited all the sidings and connections that we had planned to do. Apparently, that hasn't occurred at many other locations they have visited.

The atmosphere inside the OBO was the same all day, interested and interesting visitors who cheered every time we managed to stop 2 inches or less from the buffers in all of the sidings we visited. Their detailed diagram of each location was marked accordingly.

It was almost embarrassing to be thanked by virtually every passenger as they left at the end of the day telling us just how much they had enjoyed their visit, many telling me that we had so much to be proud of at Bluebell, specifically mentioning the friendliness of the staff, the superb condition of our stations, our infrastructure – including our well-kept lineside, our Signalling equipment, our locos and coaches in service on the day – Nos. 73082, 80151 plus 65 on the Wealden Rambler. A special thank you to the Thumper Gang who showed one of our passengers around the unit whilst we went up to Kingscote for the last siding of the trip. During station stops most of the

passengers spent time, and money, in both shops at Sheffield Park, the Bessemer Arms and the HK buffet. When I told the passengers that our afternoon departure from Sheffield Park would be slightly delayed, many got off and a queue quickly built up at the Ice Cream Kiosk. I counted at least 25 ice creams being purchased and enjoyed, including one bought for me by the Driver!

The Organiser told me that the tour had sold out within 36 hours of being announced and that there is a waiting list for a subsequent visit, which they intend to arrange for later this year.

To receive so many positive comments about our railway from such a group of very widely travelled railway enthusiasts is something that we should all be very proud of. Whilst they might have been atypical visitors, it demonstrated very clearly that we are a railway offering much more than a train ride. We need to ensure that our railway continues to be such a special place for all our visitors and need to step back now and again from nit picking almost everything that happens, or is planned to happen, and learn to appreciate and take pride in just what we have achieved at our railway.

As Graham writes, "Our task was to succeed in getting our special train into various sidings at all four stations, either as close as possible to the stop blocks, or to vehicles in the siding." Readers can form their judgement about how successfully that objective was met from the following itinerary:

Depart Sheffield Park at 09:15 and run empty to East Grinstead, with D4106 leading (north end) and hauling the Observation carriage No. 1503.

At [East Grinstead](#), once passengers had boarded, still with D4106 at the north end:

- ➡ Propel out onto the viaduct and draw back in to the loop
- ➡ Propel back into the cripple siding at the end of the loop
- ➡ Draw back into the loop, D4106 to run round via the platform (so now at the south end of the train)
- ➡ Propel the train back into the loco headshunt at the north of station by the booking office, and draw back into the platform, ready to depart for Kingscote

At [Kingscote](#)

- ➡ Arrive in the loop platform
- ➡ Propel back into the down siding as far as possible
- ➡ Draw back into the loop platform, then propel back over the north end run round points, and draw into the main platform ready to depart for Horsted Keynes

At [Horsted Keynes](#)

- ➡ Arrive in platform 4/5
- ➡ Draw into the down yard headshunt
- ➡ Propel into carriage shed road E
- ➡ Draw back via the headshunt into platform 4/5
- ➡ Shunt via the south end of the station through platform 2 and draw into siding 2 in the up yard
- ➡ Propel out as far as possible into the cottage headshunt
- ➡ Draw back into the up yard, then shunt to platform 3 via the loop to main crossover ready to depart for Sheffield Park

At [Sheffield Park](#)

- ➡ Arrive in platform 2
- ➡ Draw into the Pumphouse Siding, then propel back as far as possible into carriage shed A road
- ➡ Shunt back into the Pumphouse and propel as far as possible into the up dock siding
- ➡ Return to platform 2, then draw as far as possible into the loco yard headshunt
- ➡ Propel down onto 3 road going as far as possible (see photo from Lance Allen of the train in the loco shed)
- ➡ Return via the loco headshunt into the Wealden Dock and break for lunch
- ➡ After lunch, from the Wealden Dock shunt via the loco yard headshunt to platform 2
- ➡ Loco to run round, and then propel the train (now with the Obo on the south end) as far as possible into the each of the Newick and Pumphouse sidings
- ➡ Draw back into platform 1 ready to depart for Horsted Keynes

At [Horsted Keynes](#)

- ➡ Arrive in platform 4/5. Shunt sequentially into the New Road siding in the down yard, then via platform 2 as far down the Ardingly siding as possible, then as far into Platform 1 as possible, ready to depart for Kingscote

At [Kingscote](#)

- ➡ Arrive in the loop platform
- ➡ Draw as far into the down siding as possible then propel into the water tank siding as far as possible
- ➡ Return via the down siding to platform 2 ready to depart for East Grinstead

At **East Grinstead**

- ➡ Arrive, scheduled for 5.00pm. Passengers to disembark, loco to run round and return to Sheffield Park

A pretty thorough work out for loco crew, guard, signalmen and point clipper – Ed!

Carriage Shop Donates £500 to the Horsted Keynes Station Fund

By Chris Wilson, Carriage Shop volunteer

The Carriage Shop team are delighted to be able to donate £500 to the Horsted Keynes station fund. This money has been raised through sales from the Kiosk which is a joint venture between the Horsted Keynes station and Carriage Shop volunteers. The Kiosk is open every day that trains are running with all the money raised from there going to support the station fund.

The Carriage Shop reopened at the end of March. The number of customers we have served, and the positive comments received, have been beyond our expectations. Thank you to everyone who has visited us. After funding the materials for our storage van and fitting out the new shop this year we expect to be able to make donations from the main Carriage Shop funds during the second half of this year.

The Carriage Shop is open every weekend throughout May, with extended opening times for the Branch Line Gala and Road Meets Rail. We are located next to the Dock on Platform 5 at Horsted Keynes.

We currently have a G. Newington & Co. of Lewes 5-Plank Wagon which has been produced exclusively for us by Rapido. The limited edition run of 100 comes with a numbered certificate and is at this time only be available by visiting the Carriage Shop at Horsted Keynes. Please beware they are selling fast. All profits from the sale of this model are being donated to the [Bluebell Railway Goods Division](#).

The Carriage Shop is always pleased to receive donations of model railway items, books, DVDs, bound magazines, pictures, postcards, photographs, slides, mugs, badges, keyrings or other railway collectables.

If you can help please contact:
bluebellrailwaycarriageshop@gmail.com

Stay up to date with the latest news and our opening times by visiting our Facebook page: facebook.com/BluebellRailwayCarriageShop.



Above: James Young and Nigel Currah from the Horsted Keynes station team accepting the donation in front of the Kiosk on platform 4.

Left: G. Newington & Co. OO wagon produced exclusively for the Carriage Shop by Rapido.

More Photos From The Museum Website

By Chris Wilson, Bluebell Railway archive volunteer

This month we have added a further 200 images to the Bluebell Railway Museum website bringing the total now available to 23,868.

This month all of the photographs come from the camera of John Scrace and feature more images of Ivatt 2MT 2-6-2T locos and the start of John's 7MT Britannia class photos. This month's selection features many images from Horsham and Christ's Hospital including the last day of the Guildford to Horsham line.



Above: BR Standard class 7 No. 70020 'Mercury' at Nine Elms Shed on 7 March 1964.

Photo: John Scrace [142098]



Left: Ivatt 2MT 2-6-2T No. 41287 at Cranleigh station with the 10.34am from Guildford to Horsham on 1 August 1964.

Photo: John Scrace [141916]

Recently we have had enquiries regarding how to deposit photo, negative and slide collections in the Archive.

Are you current accepting new collections?

Yes, we are constantly adding new collections large and small to the archive.

What do you material accept?

We accept photographs and all types of negatives and slides.

Do you only accept Bluebell Railway or Southern Railway companies?

For original material we accept all regions, areas and countries. As with the collections already on the website our policy is to keep negative and slide collections together and preserve the photographer's work as one collection. For commercial photographs we usually to only retain the Southern area material in our reference library collection.

I would like my collection to be donated in the Bluebell Railway Museum Archive, but I'm not ready to part with it. What should I do?

The most important thing is to let others know your wishes and leave written instruction, especially if you are not around to make sure your wishes are followed. Too many collections have been lost or split up because an instruction wasn't left in a Will. This is the best way ensure a collection you have is to survive and the work live on.



Left: Ivatt 2MT 2-6-2T No. 41287 at Guildford with the 7.34pm to Horsham on the last day of service on this route, 12 June 1965. The loco has various farewell messages on it, written in chalk and there are large crowds on the platforms and trackside.

*Photo: John Scrace
[141936]*

Why should someone choose the Bluebell Railway Museum Archive?

There are many photograph archives available in the country and it is best to make a decision that you are most happy with. The Bluebell Railway Museum Archive is part of the Bluebell Railway Trust. Any money we make from images sold on the website is used to help fund conservation and archive costs. No individuals or companies will benefit financially from holding your material.

How can I discuss things further and find out more?

You can get in touch with us by emailing photos@bluebell-railway-museum.co.uk.

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.brm-archive.co.uk. 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.



Left: Ivatt 2MT 2-6-2T No. 41301 at Baynards station with the 9.22am from Guildford to Horsham on 13 April 1962. John Scrace

Photo: John Scrace [142015]

On This Day, 10 May

By Tony Hillman, Deputy Curator

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



In the 1950s the Ramblers Association often arranged rail excursions for its members from London to the more rural parts of the Home Counties. One such trip is seen at Horsham at around noon on what appears to be a glorious spring day, 10 May 1959.

The 10-coach train consisting of Maunsell Set 233 started from Victoria at 9.34 am hauled by Class Q 0-6-0 30537 allocated to Norwood Junction Shed. It was routed south via West Croydon, Epsom, to Horsham. From there it passed Stammerham Junction and onto the single line branch that went north to Guildford. It was booked to stop to allow ramblers to alight at stations along the line including Slinfold, Rudgwick, and Baynards.

As can be seen in the photograph Class C2X 0-6-0 32541 from Horsham Shed has joined as pilot engine. It's likely that 30537 needed some assistance as shortly

afterwards it failed. In the late afternoon the excursion returned via the same route to Victoria. However, for this journey the train engine was changed to another Class Q 0-6-0 30549 from Norwood Junction.

Class C2X 32541 was transferred later in 1959 to Norwood Junction, joining the other two locomotives involved with this excursion. It was withdrawn from there in January 1961. Both the Q class locomotives lasted a little longer, 30537 being withdrawn from Stewarts Lane in December 1962 and 30549 from Three Bridges in July 1963.

The only surviving [Q class, 30541](#), is based on the Bluebell and is currently being overhauled. Meanwhile, the old line through Slinfold is now part of a long-distance footpath, the Downs Link.

Photo: John Scrace [140813]



Redhill Shed was a three through road brick-built shed, located in the fork between the Brighton and Tonbridge lines. Opening was around 1855, when plans were approved (opening also quoted elsewhere as June 1853), but the coal stage and turntable were located some distance away near the station. In the 1880s these facilities were relocated with a new 45ft turntable adjacent to the shed. In 1924 plans were drawn up to modernise the shed. This provided for a new 65ft turntable on a new site west of the shed, accompanied by an inclined coal stage. These works were completed in 1928, but the plan to replace the shed building was abandoned in 1930. It remained as built until closure apart from a new asbestos roof in 1950. The shed closed on 14 June 1965, but was available for servicing visiting locomotives until January 1966. After closure the shed building was demolished but the three roads remained and were used to stable DMUs and diesel locomotives.

E1 Class 4-4-0 31487 was allocated to Tonbridge and on Saturday 10 May 1958 was working Tonbridge Duty 300 rostered for an L Class 4-4-0. Included in the day's work were the 3.6pm Tonbridge to Redhill and 6.51pm return, between which we see it on the Redhill turntable. Redhill was a strategically important shed being the only reversal point on the cross-country Tonbridge – Redhill – Reading route.

The eleven E1 Class were Maunsell rebuilds of Wainwright E Class locomotives. The first was completed at Ashford in 1919, the rest by Beyer Peacock in 1920. The Southern Region took all into stock in 1948, but subsequent withdrawals occurred between 1949 and 1961. 31487 was transferred to Bricklayers Arms in July 1960 and withdrawn in February 1961.

Photo: John Scrace [140502]



As outlined in OTD in the Bluebell Times for [March 2022](#) the main line between Faversham and Margate was badly damaged by floods on the night of 31 January 1953. Over three months later the track between Birchington and Reculver was still being replaced.

The photograph depicts C class 0-6-0 31271 piloting Q1 class 0-6-0 33022 on what the photographer described as a PW train near Chestfield. After some research in the Archive records, the working is almost certainly the 2.55am engineer's train from Ashford on 10 May 1958. Consisting of 11 loaded 40T bogie rail wagons of track with brake vans at each end it travelled via Canterbury West and Ramsgate to arrive at Birchington at 4.45 am. Between 5.00 am and 3.30 pm the new track panels were offloaded and the old track craned on. At 3.32 pm the train was scheduled to depart Reculver to return to Ashford but by a different, and much more interesting, route!

Travelling via Whitstable, on arrival at Faversham the locomotives ran around the train and then

proceeded down the Dover line as far as Canterbury Junction where they traversed the spur to Canterbury West. The locomotives then again ran round the train before departing south for Ashford with a scheduled arrival at 6.53 pm.

The spur at Canterbury ran from Canterbury 'A' Junction, on the LCDR Faversham-Dover line, to Canterbury 'B' Junction on the SER Ashford-Ramsgate line. Originally put in as double track by the SECR in 1918 it only lasted in use until 1920, track being lifted in 1935. Reinstated during WW2 as a single line it was again dismantled in 1951. However, following the extensive flooding in 1953 it was hastily reinstated as a double line and used until the line between Herne Bay and Birchington could be re-opened.

At the time of the photograph both locomotives were allocated to Ramsgate shed. They were both built at Ashford Works. 31271 in February 1904 and 33022 in June 1942. They were withdrawn in December 1966 and January 1964 respectively.

Photographer: JJ Smith [043097]



Non-Executive Chairman PLC Board (Unpaid)

We are seeking a Non-Executive Chairman to lead and direct the Bluebell Railway PLC Board. This is an unpaid, voluntary position offering a unique opportunity to make a lasting impact on a cherished institution.

Your Role:

As the Non-Executive Chairman, you'll steer the PLC Board of Directors with strategic acumen and unwavering dedication. Reporting to our principal shareholders, the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society (BRPS), you will play a pivotal role in steering our organisation towards continued success and growth. Your primary mission? To safeguard our legacy, foster growth, and ensure operational excellence in harmony with regulatory and stakeholder expectations. Your responsibilities include:

- **Strategic Leadership:** Guide the Board in charting a clear path forward, aligned with our mission and objectives. Lead by example, inspiring our team towards innovation and operational excellence.
- **Governance and Compliance:** Uphold the highest standards of integrity, ethics, and governance. Ensure compliance with regulatory requirements while fostering a culture of safety and inclusion.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Forge meaningful partnerships with shareholders, the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society, and other stakeholders. Be the voice of our heritage preservation efforts, advocating for our mission far and wide.
- **Performance Management:** Monitor and evaluate strategic objectives, ensuring alignment with stakeholder interests. Foster a culture of continuous improvement and talent development.
- **Succession Planning:** Prepare for the future by ensuring effective succession planning and talent management. Ensure continuity in our mission, even in the face of unexpected circumstances.

Who We're Looking For:

We're seeking a dynamic leader with a passion for heritage preservation and a proven track record in business management. If you possess the following, then apply now:

- **Qualifications:** A degree, MBA, or equivalent experience in business management.

- Skills: A keen understanding of governance, finance, and regulatory frameworks. Excellent problem-solving, networking, and public speaking skills.
- Attributes: A quick learner with a commercial mindset and a knack for inspiring others. An interest, if not expertise, in steam-operated railways is a plus.
- Experience: Experience in the heritage or tourism sector is advantageous

HOW TO APPLY

Send your CV and a covering letter detailing your suitability for the role to Chris Barber, Director, People Services at chris.barber@bluebell-railway.com



Commercial Director

Role Overview

The role will provide:

- ➔ The strategic direction, and determine the priorities for, the commercial and marketing of the retail and sales functions.
- ➔ Guidance and advice in the development of specific commercial and marketing initiatives to meet the strategic business objectives.

Key Responsibilities

- ➔ Developing and Implementing Commercial Strategy aligned with the heritage railway's goals and objectives.
- ➔ Revenue Generation: Identifying and capitalising on revenue-generating opportunities.
- ➔ Marketing and Promotion: Overseeing marketing efforts to increase awareness and attract visitors. Lead and plan the strategy for special events.
- ➔ Customer Experience Management: Ensuring a positive and memorable experience for visitors.
- ➔ Financial Management: Monitoring financial performance to maximise profitability and sustainability. Lead the retail, catering, commercial and marketing budget preparation, and approval process.
- ➔ Partnership and Stakeholder Management: Cultivating relationships with external partners, stakeholders, and local communities to enhance the railway's reputation and support its activities.
- ➔ Retail Operations Management: Supervising retail operations to optimise revenue streams and enhance visitor satisfaction.
- ➔ Events Planning and Management: Coordinating the planning and execution of special events to attract diverse audiences and generate additional revenue.
- ➔ Team Leadership and Development: Providing leadership, guidance, and support to commercial staff and volunteers.
- ➔ Compliance and Regulation: Ensuring compliance with relevant regulations, safety standards, and heritage preservation guidelines. Comply with the Safety Management System and Directors' Safety Policy Statement.

- ➔ Reporting and Analysis: Producing regular reports on commercial performance, visitor demographics, and market trends, and using data-driven insights to inform strategic decision-making.

Qualifications and Experience

Essential qualifications

- ➔ Graduate in commercial and or marketing discipline.

Desirable qualifications

- ➔ A Master's Degree or Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration, Business Management, Business Development, Project Management, or a relevant field.

Experience

Significant experience, preferably but not essentially in the heritage or tourism and leisure sector in devising and executing effective sales and marketing campaigns to attract visitors, increase ticket sales, promote special events, and enhance the railway's brand visibility.

Person Specification

- ➔ Business Acumen
- ➔ Customer Focus:
- ➔ Creativity and Innovation
- ➔ Adaptability and Resilience

Join Our Team

If you're a seasoned sales and marketing professional with a passion for heritage railways and a drive for excellence, we invite you to join us as Commercial Director at the Bluebell Railway. Help us continue our legacy of delivering safe, authentic steam train experiences for generations to come.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply or learn more about this role, please contact Chris Barber, People Services Director at chris.barber@bluebell-railway.com

Make Your Mark on History with Bluebell Railway PLC!



Carriage and Wagon Director

Role Overview

As Carriage and Wagon Director, you will play a pivotal role in ensuring the safe and efficient operation of our trains by delivering fit-for-purpose rolling stock. Reporting to the PLC Company Chairman, you will lead and direct the Carriage and Wagon department to maintain high standards of safety, quality, and reliability in our rolling stock fleet.

Key Responsibilities

- Rolling Stock Management: Ensure the delivery of overhauled and maintained rolling stock to the Operations Department, meeting relevant standards and safety requirements.
- Resource Management: Oversee the competence, adequacy, and fitness for purpose of departmental resources, including staff, plant, and equipment.
- Budget Management: Effectively deploy the Carriage and Wagon budget allocation to support departmental objectives and priorities.
- Procedural Development: Develop and implement procedures for maintenance, repairs, and examinations to high standards and tight deadlines.
- Promoting Good Practice: Promote a clean and safe working environment, fostering effective workplace practices and procedures.

Qualifications and Experience

- Degree, MSc, Diploma, HNC, or equivalent in an appropriate engineering discipline.
- Chartered engineer with the Institution of Mechanical Engineers or related body.
- Background in engineering management at a senior level within the UK rail industry.

Person Specification

- Proven leadership and organisational skills.
- Knowledge of quality and environmental systems.
- Budget management and forecasting abilities.
- Practical experience with hand and power tools.

- ➔ Attention to detail and ability to read drawings/schematics.
- ➔ Understanding of welding/fabrication, painting, and vehicle electrics.

Why Join Us?

- ➔ Leadership Opportunity: Take on an executive director role with overall responsibility for the performance of the Carriage and Wagon Department.
- ➔ Heritage Preservation: Contribute to the preservation of Britain's railway heritage through hands-on restoration and maintenance work.
- ➔ Professional Development: Stay updated with technical and legislative developments impacting railway rolling stock.
- ➔ Non-Remunerative Post: While this position is non-remunerative, the rewards of contributing to a cherished heritage institution are immeasurable.

Join Our Team

If you're a seasoned engineering professional with a passion for heritage railways and a drive for excellence, we invite you to join us as Carriage and Wagon Director at the Bluebell Railway. Help us continue our legacy of delivering safe, authentic steam train experiences for generations to come.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply or learn more about this role, please contact Chris Barber, People Services Director at chris.barber@bluebell-railway.com

Make Your Mark on History with Bluebell Railway PLC!



Photo: David Cable

The Bluebell Times

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suggestions for future articles
or features, contact:*

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Tail Lamp

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

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

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