



Heading for a May re-opening



Winter track relaying



Tampers in and out





Spring 2021
Vol. 63 No. 1
Issue 288

Editor: Colin Tyson
 'Westering', 6 Kedale Road,
 Seaford, East Sussex
 BN25 2BY
 colinjtyson@hotmail.com
 Tel: 07943 021585

Editorial team: Roger Cruse,
 Paul Bromley, Roger Price
Design: Anita Waters

COPY DATE for the Summer
 2021 issue is 1 June 2021.

Front cover main: Two days
 before further lockdown,
 SR S15 No 847 passes West
 Hoathly with a Santa Special
 train to East Grinstead
 on Christmas Eve 2020.
 ANDREW STRONGITHARM

Rear cover: The day that
 the NRM's Q1 No C1 entered
 service with a members'
 special train as they sit at
 Horsted prior to departing
 north to New Coombe Bridge
 later in the afternoon of 9
 September 1992.
 PHIL BARNES

Bluebell News is published quarterly
 at the end of March, June, September
 and December. Opinions expressed are
 not necessarily those of the society or
 company.

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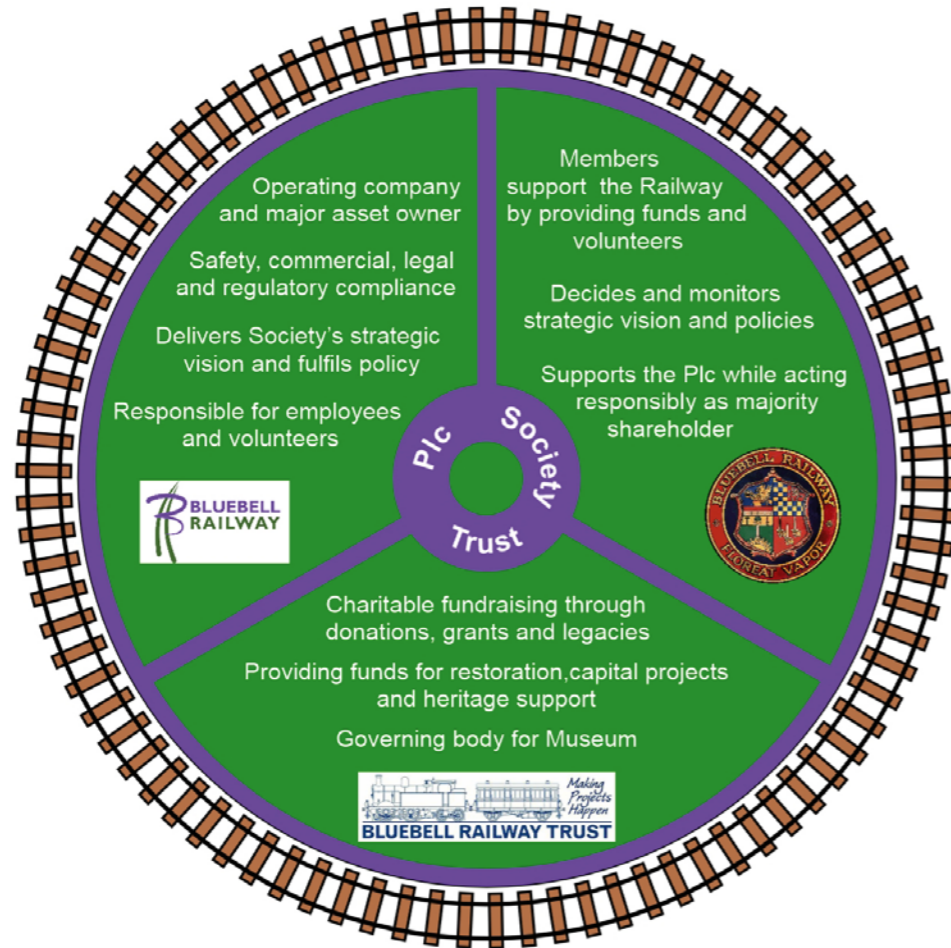
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BLUEBELL RAILWAY

Sheffield Park station, nr Uckfield,
 East Sussex TN22 3QL. Tel: 01825 720800
 Email: info@bluebell-railway.com
 www.bluebell-railway.com www.bluebell-railway.com/brps
Filming Enquiries: Tel: 01825 720835
 www.bluebell-filming.co.uk



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STOP PRESS – SOCIETY AGM UPDATE

No sooner had the last issue of *Bluebell News* landed on the doormat than the country went into lockdown 3.0. The Government's recently announced roadmap as a tentative route out of this lockdown means that gatherings of more than 30 people in an indoor venue will still be illegal until at least 21 June - except for those venues in the proposed pilot scheme which can hold an event with a maximum of 50% of the capacity.

There is still much uncertainty about these dates and we also have the threat of a third wave of infections which could result in further lockdowns if people do not learn to follow the rules. Whilst this means we cannot hold an AGM with absolute certainty, I have booked Burgess Hill Academy for Saturday 2 October for an EGM and AGM. The formal notice will be issued in due course. I sincerely hope that we can actually hold these meetings as we are carrying several Trustee vacancies as well as Chairman and Treasurer vacancies.

GAVIN BENNETT
 General Secretary, BRPS

The first quarter of 2021 has been quiet since the post-Christmas lockdown and I know that you are all champing at the bit to come back and enjoy our wonderful Railway. The good news regarding the number of people now vaccinated against Covid and the pressure eased on our NHS will hopefully see us all back in a few weeks now if the 'roadmap' out of lockdown stays on course.

Current thinking is to aim for a 20th May reopening or certainly by the end of May if the 20th isn't possible.

Important maintenance and renewal, however, has continued around the Railway, as you will see in this issue.

When the Copyhold Junction to Horsted Keynes line was third rail electrified by the Southern Railway, along with it came electric lighting at Horsted at what had previously been just another oil-lit station along our country route. The station staff at that time used to comment that the lights dimmed whenever an electric train came round the curve from Ardingly and entered the station! Horsted was never an electric powerhouse, and so it has proved over the preservation years as more and more demand has been made of it.

However, come June this year, Horsted will finally have its power upgrade that it has awaited for so long. In a deal that costs us very little, UKPN are paying us to upgrade at Sheffield Park and so we also get Horsted done. Well done to those who negotiated the deal on our behalf.

Just as we originally preserved locomotives and rolling stock that no one else wanted, we preserved stations and also signalling of the type that is increasingly hard to find now on the national network. Even the small things that we do, such as printing Edmondson tickets, point to an aspect of railway life that has long disappeared.

I recently noted that the 200-year requirement for the railway to provide brake vans has been formally ended, despite not having been used in revenue service for many years, the rules and instructions for their use have finally been withdrawn from the manual for freight operations. More proof that the little things we still do here in our little corner of England may be archaic, but were proven over the centuries.

Provisional Special Events 2021
 Model Railway Weekend 31 July - 1 August
 Sixty Plus One Gala 6-8 August
 Beer Festival (September TBA)
 Giants of Steam 8-10 October

BR No 73082 Camelot arrives at Horsted Keynes with a Santa Special service on 6 December 2020. The train is carrying its lighting tubes, ready for the evening SteamLights trains. ANDREW STRONGITHARM



Former Bluebell Railway Traffic Manager John Hill (right) died on 14 January 2021 following a long period of ill health. He served our Railway in post from 1983 to 1990 (see page 29). BLUEBELL ARCHIVE



Colin Tyson
 Editor

A TAMPER IN AND A TAMPER OUT

In a continuation of our commercial contract to supply testing and training facilities for Balfour Beatty staff and their tampers, DR73949 has now left the railway and has been replaced by their latest multi-million pound machine DR73950.

Two Class 20 locomotives, Nos 20118 *Saltburn-by-the-Sea* and 20132 *Barrow Hill*



Having just been delivered, new tamper DR73950 rests at East Grinstead on the evening of 22 February 2021. COLIN TYSON

Depot belonging to Harry Needle Railroad Co, were hired to move DR73950 from West Ealing to East Grinstead. They left Worksop on Monday 22 February and ran light engine to West Ealing. From there they ran as 6Q66, with DR73950 in tow, arriving at Network Rail's East Grinstead station at 11.29pm. They were then received on Bluebell Railway and following shunt moves were stabled in the headshunt at our East Grinstead station.

On the evening of Tuesday 23 February they were shunted top and tail around DR73949, with 20132 leading, and then formed 6Q66 from EGR (BBR) to West Ealing, departing Bluebell metals at 11.23pm.

RIGHT: Balfour Beatty tampers DR73950 and DR73949 together at East Grinstead on 23 February, prior to the release of DR73949. ANDREW STRONGITHARM



The two Class 20s in the headshunt at East Grinstead station on the morning of 23 February. DAVE WILSON



Ardingly nameplate secured for museum

The nameplate from the Schools Class locomotive *Ardingly* was listed in a general auction near Cambridge on 24 October 2020. The nameplate came to the auction as part of a house clearance and there were no other railway items. As our museum already has a Lord Nelson nameplate, along with King Arthurs, a Schools would complete the set of Southern nameplates with the class cast into the nameplate. Also, if we could choose, then *Ardingly* would be the nameplate of choice for the museum for obvious reasons.

The auction was phone/internet only due to Covid restrictions. On auction day the phone rang and in less than a minute the nameplate was purchased for the museum. A week later the plate was collected from Cambridge. The plate has a casting fault in the right end and a picture of the nameplate on the locomotive also shows the same fault although we have not yet been able to confirm which side our nameplate is from. The nameplate had been stripped

of its paint, so it was necessary to repaint it.

A large part of the cost of the plate was funded by the generosity of Museum Management Committee members along with friends of the museum. Special thanks go to Chris Wilson from the Carriage Shop at Horsted Keynes who made a significant contribution to the cost.

In the museum the obvious place to display *Ardingly* was below its larger brother, Lord Nelson class, *Sir Walter Raleigh*. Moving the track gauges, already on display below 'Sir Walter' down, *Ardingly* fitted in between.

By way of background, No 917 *Ardingly* was a Schools class locomotive built in May 1933 by the Southern Railway at Eastleigh works. The locomotives were designed by Richard Maunsell and intended for express semi-fast passenger services. They worked on the Southern Railway and British Railways between Weymouth in the west and Dover in the east. In total

40 were built and they held the title of 'the most powerful locomotive in Europe with a 4-4-0 wheel arrangement'. Three have been preserved, including *Stowe*, owned by the Maunsell Society here at the Bluebell Railway. The Schools class was the locomotive of choice for the non-stop 'Bournemouth Limited' which ran between Bournemouth and London in the morning, returning in the evening. The fastest recorded speed was 95 mph between Wool and Moreton. No 30917 was withdrawn from service in November 1962.

The Schools class locomotives were all named after public schools. If the school was in the



Bereft of paint, the nameplate as collected.

RIGHT: Restored and on display in the museum.

Southern area, then shortly after being built, the locomotive visited the school that it had been named after in order that the pupils could see 'their' locomotive. No 917 visited *Ardingly* on 17 October 1933. When the locomotive was withdrawn, one nameplate was donated by BR to the school. The Bluebell Railway now has one nameplate and the nameplate from the other side is at Ardingly College.

TONY HILLMAN



BLUEBELL RAILWAY MUSEUM – IT SKILLS

We are currently expanding the Bluebell Railway Museum website and are seeking a volunteer to assist with this work.

Among the areas we wish to develop further are continuing sales from our photographic and document archive and connectivity with other Bluebell websites.

Have you website development experience with knowledge and skills in the following applications?

HTML, CSS
PHP
MySQL

CSS Responsive frameworks (Bootstrap)
JavaScript
UX
Online sales

The post involves remote working as part of the museum group as well as at Sheffield Park when restrictions are eased. We are a small, experienced and enthusiastic team.

If you are interested please contact Tony Hillman at tony.hillman@lineone.net

HERITAGE SKILLS CENTRE PROGRESS

The interior fit-out of the Heritage Skills Centre, situated to the east of the new OP4 carriage shed at Horsted Keynes, has continued during lockdown in the past quarter.

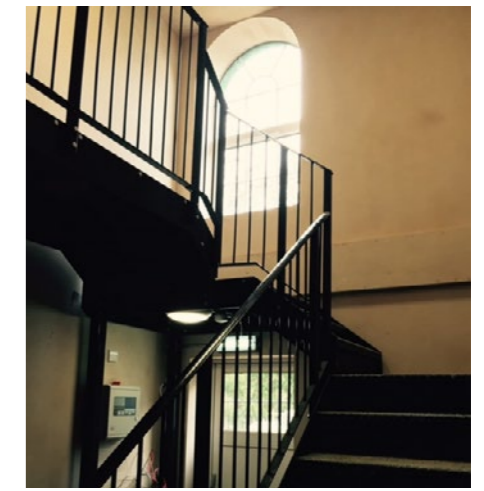
Ground floor progress has been possible on the new C&W trim shop and the adjacent moquette store with completed plasterwork and radiators now installed, as has one of the staircases and the adjacent lift space made ready for installation.

The first floor meeting room and new C&W office are also making progress with lighting units installed at a number of locations and some of the radiators installed.

MELISSA JORDAN
Project Manager

HSC Consumables

In excess of 2,500 metres of cable with 800 cable clips
More than 300m of pipes
More than 850 sheets of board for walls
In excess of 38,000 screws
800+ lengths of timber
185 flooring sheets
More than 3,800 joist nails
More than 1000m of jointing tape



One of the staircases in place.



The new trim shop and moquette store on the ground floor.



The first floor training room, with lighting and radiators installed, looking through to the new C&W office. ALL: STEVE BIGG

Financial Report

I have been asked to provide an update on the spending of the Covid Appeal money. 2020 was a very poor year for many businesses and the Bluebell Railway was very much in the eye of the financial storm caused by the Covid pandemic. We have been forced to close three times and when we have been able to open, we have been required to run at reduced capacity to meet Government restrictions.

To survive, the Bluebell Railway has had to take support from its members and supporters with the Covid Appeal, taken support from Government in the form of furlough payments, its bankers in the form of overdrafts and a CBILS (Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme) loan and two grants aimed at helping heritage and cultural organisations survive the pandemic.

Without all this support, the Railway would have been forced to curtail its operations and probably would have had to remain shut in 2020 and possibly even 2021. This is probably the worst crisis in many years to hit the Bluebell Railway.

In these circumstances you certainly find

out who your friends are. As a director new to the board and to volunteering at the Railway, I can say the Bluebell has many friends; not just its members and supporters but also within the local area with its suppliers, advisors and the wider community. All this support has helped the Railway get this far and to gear up ready to open when restrictions are lifted.

So what with the Covid Appeal money?

At present we have spent around £130k, which helped us prepare for opening in August 2020 including bringing back staff from furlough and getting the line ready to run, paying some bills during lockdown such as security measures and some of the overheads during that period. The balance of £270k is earmarked by the board to support our heritage skills staff, without whom the presentation of locomotives, carriages and other heritage assets would not happen.

The financial crisis caused by the Covid pandemic is not over yet.

Once the Government support and grants have seen the Railway through to opening in 2021, we have to rebuild our finances. For

companies like the Bluebell Railway, this can use plenty of cash before we can become self-funding again. The winter of 2021/22 could be particularly difficult to get through so we need to generate cash from the services we can run in 2021 to get through to the summer of 2022. Knowing that the Covid Appeal money is earmarked for our heritage skills staff will be a key part of getting the Railway through the next year or so.

That's the plan and the use for the balance of the Covid Appeal for now.

I have likened getting through to March 2021 like stepping through a financial minefield where you sort of know where most of the mines probably are. While it may be wise to expect the unexpected, the financial plan is to make sure our volunteers, members, supporters and customers can once again enjoy the sight, smell and sound of steam engines puffing serenely through the Sussex countryside as we have done for the past sixty years (plus one!).

DAVID BURCH
Finance Director

The Argus

Sussex Bluebell Railway line set to reopen services this week

A HISTORIC railway is on track to reopen when coronavirus lockdown rules ease this week.

The Bluebell Railway in East Sussex wants to offer visitors a chance to enjoy the magic of the golden age of steam.

Incredible steam lights will be the highlight of the season to bring colour to the winter darkness.

The railway, which runs from Sheffield Park in East Sussex to East Grinstead in West Sussex, will resume services on Thursday.

Covid-19 restrictions in tier two allow the heritage line to operate in a secure way.

Organisers say there will be extended services in a bid to make up for lost revenue during the closed period.

Bluebell Railway chairman Chris Hurford said: "We look forward to welcoming our passengers back to the railway and can promise them a magical and memorable ride."



BLUEBELL RAILWAY OFFERS "MAGICAL AND MEMORABLE" FESTIVE SEASON AFTER REOPENING POST-LOCKDOWN

Bluebell Railway is promising passengers a "magical and memorable" experience when it starts running steam-hauled train services again after the end of the second lockdown.

The heritage line will resume operations from Thursday 3 December and has extended its festive running season to the end of January to allow for operational services during the closed period.

The railway line between Sheffield Park in East Sussex and East Grinstead in West Sussex, both of which have been granted a tier 2 (high risk) status, allows businesses to continue to operate in a Covid-secure manner.

Bluebell Railway chairman Chris Hurford said: "We look forward to welcoming our passengers back to the railway and can promise them a magical and memorable ride. We have our new illuminated train and breathe displays, called Steamlights as well as our new-gauge festive specials to provide some cheer and welcome delight for families."



Illuminated train and Santa Specials form part of heritage line's winter services
© Tony Pridgen / Getty Images

RAILWAY TRAVELLER



Exciting news from the Bluebell Railway

Sussex's famous Bluebell railway has just announced some exciting events for 2021. First up beer lovers are in for a treat when the railway launches its Beer Festival. The festival kicks off on May 14 and runs for three days. Firm favourites, the Model Railway weekend takes place on 26-27 June, whilst 6-8 August sees a big Diamond Jubilee celebration for the railway line. This was supposed to happen last year but has been postponed due to coronavirus.

Mid Sussex Times

Go online for 'virtual' tours of Bluebell Railway

The Bluebell Railway has launched new virtual tours of the heritage railway.

Start your virtual tour with a view of Sheffield Park Station from the air. Swivel down into SteamWorks to explore some of the railway's impressive collection of steam locomotives.

Hop from one spot to another in the locomotive shed and turn 360 degrees to fully appreciate your surroundings.

With superb views of engines, you can even get on the footplate of Stepney and C Class locomotives. The tour includes snippets of information, film clips and links.



But that is not all. Fly to Horsted Keynes Station and explore the many waiting rooms on platforms accessed by the subway and get an exclusive peek in the signal box.

The current tour includes a Santa hunt for younger members of the family.

You can even skip inside the tour by passing on some virtual reality glasses.

Affordable VR viewers which use your mobile phone to facilitate the tour are available from online stores and the tour works brilliantly with these.

Photo: Bluebell Railway

Photo: Bluebell Railway

Photo: Bluebell Railway

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Photo: Bluebell Railway

December

Much of the publicity in this month was about the reopening after the second lockdown and our festive services including the new SteamLights trains and the traditional Santa Specials.

The Argus reported the Railway 'wants to offer visitors a chance to enjoy the magic of the golden age of steam'. Referring to SteamLights, the report said: 'Incredible steam lights will be the highlight of the season to bring colour to the winter darkness.'

Sussex Chamber of Commerce said the Railway was 'promising passengers a 'magical and memorable' experience when it starts running steam-hauled train services again after the end of the second lockdown.'

Heritage Railway magazine reported on the successful bid by the museum to buy the Ardingly nameplate. The report quoted assistant museum curator Tony Hillman as saying: 'We saw the nameplate on social media and decided to try to buy it. We did not have a Schools' nameplate on display, and with Ardingly just up the road, it seemed an opportunity not to be missed.'

January

Even though the Railway was closed for the whole of the month, there were still plenty of mentions of the Bluebell in the press.

The Mid Sussex Times reported on the virtual tours and remarked that the tours gave 'superb views of the engines' with a chance to get on the footplate of Stepney and the C Class locomotive. It added: 'The tour includes snippets of information, film clips and links.'

Railway Traveller wrote about 'exciting news from the Bluebell Railway' with a preview of some of the planned events for 2021. It mentioned the beer festivals as well as 'firm favourite' the Model Railway weekend.

Republic World entertainment news referred to the Kingsman films and mentioned that many scenes were shot in Sharpthorne Tunnel at the Bluebell Railway.

February

The publication of the Government's roadmap out of lockdown led to reports of what visitors could expect when heritage railways resumed services.

The Daily Telegraph travel section included an article by broadcaster and rail enthusiast Michael Portillo. Under the headline 'I can't wait to toot for joy again', he wrote: 'Dr Beeching may be reviled by rail enthusiasts for closing lines in the 1960s, but he opened up enormous opportunities for railway resurrectionists.'

He added that the Bluebell Railway claims to have been the first preserved standard-gauge railway. 'For those like me, who yearn to live in Agatha Christie's world, it offers the Golden Arrow Pullman dining train,' he added.

The Chichester Observer carried a feature in time for Valentine's Day on '16 wedding venues to fall in love with'. It listed the Bluebell Railway and reported: 'Civil ceremonies can be held at stations at either Sheffield Park or Horsted Keynes.'

Heritage Railway featured the 2021 commemorative model wagon. The article said: 'Carrying the branding 'Harvey's The Sussex Brewers', the wagon is the fifth in the current series of limited edition models.' The magazine also said the wagon is supplied with a coal load as standard but 'looks the part carrying barrels.'

PAUL BROMLEY
Communications Director

Chichester OBSERVER

16 wedding venues to fall in love with

Love is in the air this month with Valentine's Day on February 14. If you are engaged and looking for wedding venues look no further than Sussex.

3. Bluebell Railway, Uckfield

Civil Ceremonies at the Bluebell Railway can be held in outdoor or sheltered locations.

Picture: Derek Martin

Photo: Richard Heath

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Opening hours

Facilities

Accessibility

Notes

Comments

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Published

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Archived

Restored

Deleted permanently

Deleted temporarily

Deleted forever

Deleted always

Deleted never

Deleted sometimes

Deleted rarely

Deleted often

Deleted all the time

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Deleted every week

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Deleted every decade

Deleted every century

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Deleted every universe

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Deleted every field

Deleted every force

Winter work at Horsted House, Vaux End and New Road Bridge

It is old and well-established news that Covid-19 has seriously curtailed the activities of all departments on the Railway. The infrastructure department is no different, and all sections have been working with reduced numbers on just essential work. Only a few of Matt Crawford's main group who can work several days a week and are normally regulars or have particular required abilities for the work that is currently sanctioned, have been invited in.

This maximises the number of useful man-days with the minimum numbers of people, although it is hard on the other team members who are just as enthusiastic. Even members of this working core are effectively laid off on a day-by-day basis depending on the work, the author included.

Horsted House relay

However, even with the very small numbers present, a lot has been achieved. The primary task since Christmas was the relaying of another 16 panels of track north of Horsted Keynes. This is a continuation of the section replaced a year ago and it takes us up past Horsted House Farm Bridge and within striking distance of Vaux End. It also completes the replacement of all the track laid for the initial Bluebell extension, approximately ¾ mile north of Horsted Keynes station. This stretch opened in 1990 and terminated at Horsted House



Horsted House Farm Bridge with finished replacement track, looking south towards Horsted Keynes. JON GOFF

Farm Bridge where there was a brick wall sealing half of the arch, beyond which was a shooting range on the old track bed.

Thirty years is an exceptionally good life for softwood sleepers. A small number had already been replaced on an individual basis indicating the end of life for that stretch of track. Also, the rail installed thirty years ago was second hand then and the heads were well worn down so renewal had become essential.

The relay follows the methods

reported in previous issues of *Bluebell News* using the laser dozer and pegging out the line curvature and then trying to 'eye out' a slightly smoother curve before placing all the sleepers against the new line. In this particular case, there was a slightly sharper curve under the bridge which has been improved by moving the track over by up to three inches at the sharpest point of the curve just north of the bridge.

The removed rail turned out to be completely worn out and has either gone for scrap or a few pieces have been used for fence posts or concrete pile reinforcement. The start of the job was by Horsted House foot crossing where the drainage was sorted last year, although the crossing itself was not properly reinstated and upgraded. Upgrading all our foot crossings is a safety task we need to complete and each upgrade is being attached to the adjacent track renewal as appropriate. Tremaines crossing was completed two years ago after the track replacement was completed there and so it is

the turn of Horsted House foot crossing.

We were fortunate to be given a pair of old South Eastern Railway 'kissing gates' with their posts which were perfect for this crossing. These were cleaned, serviced and painted during last summer by the team when there was no lockdown. They have now been installed either side of the crossing to protect it and a new wire fence installed using some of the old rail as it was already 'on site'. Anti-trespass plates still need to be installed at track level to discourage the public from stepping off the crossing onto the tracks. The old wooden anti-trespass measures were damaged well beyond worthwhile repair by decay and steam loco 'droppings' setting fire to them as has happened to some wooden sleepers all over the Railway. A modern, non-flammable, version is being investigated which will bring the railway in line with modern regulations.

A small number of the removed sleepers were found to be in a half reasonable condition which was not expected at all as some had rotted badly. Only one sleeper in



Horsted House foot crossing with the 'new' ex-South Eastern Railway kissing gates. JON GOFF



The Vaux End platelayers' hut being rebuilt around the old chimney. JON GOFF

the 384 removed was found to be good enough to be reused and that is because it had been used to replace a rotted one within the last year or two. A small number of 'half reasonable grade' examples were good enough to be used for a very different task.

At the top end of the job are the remains of the Vaux End lineside hut, which burnt down in 2009, leaving just the brick chimney stack standing bare. With the half-reasonable sleepers already on site and with a chain saw and the digger also handy, a spot decision was made to rebuild the hut. This was a surprisingly quick job to do as the right member(s) of the team for the job were around as well. Although not a strictly necessary task under Covid conditions, it would have been silly not to take the opportunity. The roof is not yet complete and that awaits another opportunity to finish it.

Consequently, our already very small team was split into two to do the crossing and the

lineside hut. These were worked on simultaneously at opposite ends of the relay, thus inherently helping with the Covid-19 enforced separation.

While contractor John Millam was preparing the ground for the hut, up came an original LBSCR cast iron trespass sign in the digger bucket from about a foot below the surface. It is a total mystery as to how it got there. It is nowhere near a suitable position where it could have been correctly sited and it was underneath the profile of the original ground formation. A mystery not likely to be solved, although there is a theory that it came from Horsted House crossing, which closed in 1927. Perhaps an early souvenir hunter decided it was too heavy to carry and then abandoned it!

New Road Bridge

With the main relay finished, a second smaller track relay was carried out of just four 60-foot panels. This completed the relaid

section right up to New Road Bridge, and leaves only ten panels required to connect up with Horsted Keynes station.

The relay was not carried over the bridge just yet as some embankment maintenance work needs to be carried out first immediately north of New Road Bridge. It is clearly sensible to carry out the work before relaying the track otherwise the new track would have to be lifted again. The next panel would pass right over the bridge, through the Insulated Block Joint and into the ground maintenance area and so it is sensible to leave it until after the ground work was complete.

Recently, concern has been expressed about the condition of New Road Bridge (see last issue) due to there being a visible crack in the north west wing wall. The bridge itself is probably the second strongest on the line after the recently rebuilt Palmers Bridge. Thirty years ago, a concrete saddle was cast into the bridge to strengthen it. Work on the wing wall was deemed unnecessary at the time but does now require some attention. The wing wall will receive an examination and any remedial work required as part of the embankment work, thus ensuring the integrity of the whole area for the next 200 years plus! We do like to future-proof our work.

A concrete retaining wall is being built at the foot of the embankment for the first stage of the work as it can be completed without interfering with the track in anyway. Although there are no public services running at the moment, occasional trains run to shunt vehicles around for maintenance

and often the road railer or the Wickham trolley need to go down the line. Also, the line is kept clear for external training purposes, which brings in some much-needed income to the Railway.

Before the wall itself is built, piles need to be put into the ground to anchor it. A total of 25 piles will form the anchor, 900mm apart. To task an external piling company to do it would cost us thousands but it is something we can do ourselves. First, every other hole was drilled with the auger, held by and driven by the hydraulics of the digger. Next a piece of the recently removed rail from the Horsted House relay was inserted in the centre of the hole and pushed down into the soil at the bottom so that it will stand up without further support during the concreting.

The concrete was mixed in the ballast box on the road railer. Water from the water tower was added and mixing was undertaken by Darren using the digger bucket to push it all around. This works surprisingly well. The concrete was then taken out with the digger bucket and tipped into the holes around the reinforcing rails. A vibrating poker was finally used in the wet concrete to shake it all down and consolidate the mixture.

Once the first batch was done and the concrete set, the remaining alternate holes were drilled and the process repeated until all 25 were finished. The first five in the line nearest to New Road Bridge can be seen in the photograph.

With all the piles finished, the first two sets of shuttering were put in place with the concrete

reinforcement cages placed inside. This couples up with the top of the piles via the rails sections which will eventually form a very strong retaining wall.

Balfour Beatty tampers

In October 2020 the Railway agreed to play host to the new Balfour Beatty Plasser & Theurer tamper DB73949. This visit was for tamper acceptance trials and for driver and crew training. Evenly spaced sleepers are critical for training and tamping practice. Bluebell has laid the new track very accurately with 60-foot (18,288mm) length panels with 28 sleepers each at 653mm centres, which is perfectly suited for this. Despite the lockdown, training has been ongoing since then and the tamper has had a good shakedown as required by Balfour Beatty. Bluebell has been ideal for Balfour and vice-versa as we have had a lot of good quality tamping done for free – an excellent situation for both parties.

The time had come for it to leave Bluebell but just before it



Matt Crawford and Andy Palmer with John Millam driving the auger, drilling the pile holes. JON GOFF

went out at 11.23pm on Tuesday 23 February, like buses, a second one comes along! Brand new sister tamper, No DR73950, arrived late Monday evening being pulled by two BR English Electric Class 20s, 20118 and 20132, in heritage BR Railfreight red stripe livery.

There had been the intention to link the two tampers for a period of time and practice multiple working but the first one was required elsewhere and went out the following evening hauled by

the two class 20s in top and tail formation. The second tamper will remain with us for a while yet to undergo its shakedown and planned operator training courses. JON GOFF

Tuesday Gang Report

Since the lockdown started at the beginning of December, I have not been able to attend so I have asked my colleague Robert Healey to update on the gang's latest work as a small number have been working since late January and into February.

Before the latest lockdown we had made good progress in clearing the lineside near Horsted House Farm ready for the track gang to complete replacement works. Then, at the end of November, we were asked to clear a huge amount of remains following the felling of trees north of the tunnel at West Hoathly. With the Wickham trolley back in action we were able to load and move most of the remains to a point where they could be cut up and disposed of. With the lockdown announcement we then did not meet at all for around five weeks. Robert takes up the story...

A small group returned to work in January. It was a great relief and good therapy to be back out working again after a period of enforced idleness. We concentrated on burning several large piles of vegetation, which had been left just north of Courtlands Wood. Even though the vegetation was quite wet, we managed, after a great deal of effort, to get two fires going, and burned a considerable amount. We returned the following week to burn yet more. We did have one rather truncated day due to delays in getting the tamper to start.

We were to follow it down on the Wickham on the day but eventually we proceeded first. The delay that Tuesday means we will have to return for one more visit to burn the rest of the vegetation and at the time of writing the poor weather had delayed that task. We will then be back to our normal work in March, strimming and tidying up the lineside probably continuing northwards. It is also likely that some of the gang will be visiting the viaduct at East Grinstead soon, lockdown permitting, to clear the growth of ivy on some of the pillars.

KEITH LAWRIE
and ROBERT HEALEY



Reuse of the old rails in the retaining wall at New Road Bridge. JON GOFF



Andy Palmer clears spoil from the auger. JON GOFF



The original Vaux End hut ablaze on 25 June 2009. JON BOWERS



An original LBSCR cast iron trespass sign was excavated by the digger at Vaux End, although it remains a mystery as to why it was at this location. TIM CRUMP

From the Chairmen

Welcome to the first 'From the Chairmen' article for 2021, and with the New Year comes a new joint contributor - Interim Plc Chairman Graham Flight - to join Acting Society Chairman Steve Bigg in providing our reflections, thoughts and hopes as we look forward to better prospects for 2021 than the difficult times which so very many people endured last year.

There is little doubt that for most people the current lockdown is proving more challenging than last year's, with the full onslaught of winter weather probably a significant contributory factor. We hope that you and your families have managed to stay well and safe during this difficult period, and above all that is the most important consideration. The big difference between this lockdown and the previous ones is that we now really do have distinct light at the end of the tunnel (forgive the railway reference!) brought about by the huge strides being made with the national vaccination programme, and the real hope this provides for a return to 'normality' in our lives.

Since the Winter 2020 *Bluebell News* was published, the resignation of Chris Hunford as Plc Chairman and Locomotive Director has been announced. We are sorry to see his departure from these roles, and we would particularly like to take this opportunity to reiterate our sincere thanks to Chris for the leadership he's shown during his time at the helm of the Company, and for the judgement and guidance he provided during the extremely challenging and unprecedented times in 2020. The increasingly evident partnership working between the Plc, Society and Trust boards in the pursuance of objective and shared goals for the Railway was in no small measure encouraged by Chris, and full credit should be given to him for his support in this process. We're sure you will join us in wishing Chris all the very best for the future, and we look forward to continuing to see him around the Railway.

Having uttered farewell (and 'good riddance' perhaps?) to 2020, we look to the future and the improving prospects that 2021 might hold for us all. At the time of writing, we have seen the vaccination figures in the UK exceed 26.8 million, and on 22 February heard the

Prime Minister (PM) announce the government's roadmap for the relaxation of the latest (and hopefully the last) lockdown, and so providing a route towards a destination of much anticipated and longed-for 'normality'. Those of us in the 'Bluebell family' are of course looking forward to seeing trains running again and being able to welcome visitors back to the Railway.

Having reviewed the Government's latest statement on the key dates for the staged relaxation of Covid regulations, the board is actively making plans for the reopening of the Bluebell in line with the detailed information provided by the Government following the PM's recent announcement. In parallel with the Government's approach, we will also be taking a cautious and realistic approach that won't take any risks with the safety of our employees, volunteers or visitors. With this aspect uppermost in our minds, whilst also considering the multi-faceted nature of our business with both outside and inside attractions, we must ensure that all factors are analysed so the Railway can be safely reopened with complete confidence. With these aspects being the predominant consideration, as this edition of *BN* goes to press it is anticipated that a resumption of services could be possible during mid to late May. The exact date will of course also depend on any changes to the Government's phased 'road map' dates, so please keep a look out for further notifications on the Bluebell website, in *Bluebell Times* and social media platforms.

The commercial team have already been rescheduling some of the planned events to reflect the relaxation dates, so there'll be the potential in prospect for a very exciting second half of the year. This will hopefully include the 60th anniversary celebratory event that had to be postponed last year, and now renamed the '60+' event. Full details of all special events will, as with standard services, be advertised as soon as possible, and bookings will be available through the website or by phone via the sales office. In parallel with this commercial rescheduling activity the Finance Director, David Burch, has been working closely with board colleagues in realigning budget forecasts that reflect the emerging



Eleven years ago: While the track was being relaid in the tunnel, trains were top and tailed with No 178 *Pioneer II* and No 672 *Fenchurch*. The old halts were marked out and the trains stopped and started from them. Here the train re-starts from Holywell on 7 March 2010. DAVE BOWLES

outcomes from Government announcements.

As stated in previous issues of *BN* last year, the Plc and Society boards were hugely grateful to members for the considerable support given during 2020 through the generous donations to the Emergency Appeal, as well as the forbearance they have shown during the enforced and extended closure of the Railway. Much appreciation is also held for the support of members during the reduction of benefits at a time of financial pressures and uncertain Covid outcomes. Elsewhere in this issue is an article by David Burch, providing an update to members on the important uses to which the Emergency Appeal donations are being targeted during the continuing Covid restrictions.

In the winter edition of *BN*, it was confirmed that full membership benefits were being reinstated from 1 January this year, which subsequently turned out to be almost exactly the time when the Government announced the second extended lockdown, and the Railway was once again forced to close. Rest assured that the benefits will still be in place once we are able to reopen, and

the promised special trains for members in appreciation of their support will also be incorporated into the operating plan once we are up and running again.

It is usual for the Chairmen to highlight notable achievements and successes since the previous edition of *BN*, but on this occasion the Railway has once again had to close down at short notice since Boxing Day owing to the further lockdown announcement, and it has little prospect of reopening before this edition of *BN* is delivered. However, it is certainly worthy of note that when we were able to operate the Santa and SteamLights trains during December, the Railway received a great many very complimentary messages from our visitors about the quality of our products and high levels of customer service provided. This shows just how well the Bluebell can rise to the occasion even when facing extra challenging conditions, and it is a credit to all those employees and volunteers who worked so hard and well together as a team. Thank you all for your tremendous efforts and support. Following the successes in December, a regrettable outcome

from the Government's necessary lockdown decision post-Christmas was the curtailment of the planned extra SteamLights services during January, most of which replaced the cancelled November trains. This resulted in many disappointed customers and loss of revenue for the Railway at a time when maximum sales were very much needed. It has also necessitated extra administrative work for the sales team, assisted by a group of volunteers, in arranging credit note vouchers or refunds for the affected customers. It is yet another example of excellent teamwork and our sincere appreciation for these efforts as well.

There are, however, many positive and encouraging activities taking place around the Railway in spite of the post-Christmas lockdown. For instance, huge progress has been made on the fit-out in the OP4 Heritage Skills Centre at Horsted Keynes, and the achievements here will bring ever nearer the benefits of the brand-new facilities, including the meeting/training room, trim shop and store, C&W office accommodation, and toilets and showers. In other areas, much

progress has been made by the Infrastructure team including completion of track laying in the carriage storage shed in the OP4 extension, as well as key trackwork upgrades on the running line and remedial work on the embankment near New Road Bridge. In the Locomotive Department, great progress continues to be made towards outshooting No 73082 *Camelot* this summer with a 10-year boiler certificate. Meanwhile, the completion report on the ASH project has been submitted to the NHLF, which has secured release of the final grant payment. In this connection it is worthy of note that the detailed delivery report that accompanied it was praised by the NHLF as being an excellent example of such a document, and it certainly reflects well on the Railway and the project as a whole. Congratulations are due to Roger Kelly and Ruth Rowatt for their excellent work on this.

Yet another example of Bluebell employees and volunteers achieving high quality results with grant money is Pullman *Car 54*, where impressive progress has continued and brings completion of the vehicle tantalisingly more

evident for a launch in 2022. These are just a few examples of recent progress, and they demonstrate that much continues to be achieved despite the lockdown.

In this issue you will notice some job advertisements, including for a new Plc Chair and a Locomotive Director, following Chris Hunford's decision to stand down as referred to earlier. On a personal note, having taken over from Graham Aitken when he stood down last March, and thus becoming Acting Chairman of the Society, I have decided not to offer myself as a candidate for election as Society Chairman at the next AGM. After much consideration, my decision is based on the fact that, should I be successful in the election, I will be in my mid-seventies at the end of the three-year term, and consequently I think that the position would be better undertaken by a younger person. The above roles will be of significant influence in the continuity and further development of the strategic objectives and new initiatives already planned/in process, and will support the sustainability and future growth of the Railway.

The developments referred to in this article, and the associated new ways of working, must not and will not threaten the preservation ethics upon which the Bluebell was founded. Far from it. If we are successful in building a more sustainable and dynamic future business model, there will be an increasing and wider-ranging resource to not just maintain the heritage preservation we currently achieve, but to increase it.

It only remains for us both to offer our sincere thanks to you all, whether employees, volunteers or supporters, for the tremendous loyalty and support you have always given to our Railway, and particularly so during the current challenging times that are affecting the vast majority of organisations internationally. We look forward to seeing you at the Bluebell again fairly soon, and above all wish you and your families good health and a safe year ahead.

STEVE BIGG
Acting Chairman, BRPS

GRAHAM FLIGHT
Interim Chairman, Bluebell Railway Plc



Many of the recent tasks in the locomotive workshop have been centred on a full boiler inspection and overhaul for No 73082 *Camelot*, with the intention of obtaining a new ten-yearly certificate. HENRY MOWFORTH



Camelot's boiler (left) having been lifted from its wheels. HENRY MOWFORTH

- repair foundation ring and re-rivet
- Specialist copper welding around the door plate
- Changing around twenty side stays that had burnt ends, plus any others indicating a need for replacement following ultrasonic inspection
- Remove (and later replace with new) boiler tubes, so as to allow access for a thorough internal inspection of the condition of the boiler
- The boiler flues may need replacing, depending on their condition and the judgement of the boilermasters and the external boiler inspector

The loco will also need a new ashpan. Mechanically, the wheels have been dropped from the frames to allow closer inspection of the frames and wheels. Parts of the motion will have new bushes, along with sundry other repairs as required. It is hoped to have the locomotive back in traffic by the summer.

Wainwright O1 No 65

The O1 has undergone a number of repairs over the winter. On the locomotive, the ashpan has been straightened and the dampers rebuilt. The reverser has been stripped and overhauled, and the engine brake cylinder has been refurbished. On the tender, the brake gear has been re-bushed and new brake blocks have been fitted.

Stroudley A1 Class No 72 *Fenchurch*

Most of the workshop capacity is currently being used on *Camelot*, so progress on *Fenchurch* has slowed. The new foundation ring and throatplate pressing have arrived on site.

Bulleid Pacific No 34059 *Sir Archibald Sinclair*

The remaining stays needed to complete the firebox are now delivered. The valves have been reassembled with new valve rods made – the piston rods were in good condition. The final assemblies are awaiting piston rings and valve rings. New locomotive springs are on site.

BR Standard 2MT No 84030

For nearly a year we have not been able to progress the

cash for materials is still extremely limited. The effect of that has been to slow progress on several projects, with the majority of the workshop capacity going into No 73082 *Camelot*.

BR Standard 5MT No 73082 *Camelot*

Camelot had been suffering intermittent problems with leaking rivets around the foundation ring. With the boiler in its normal position, the foundation ring and bottom of the firebox are between the frames, preventing access to the outside of these rivets. In order to properly repair these, the boiler has to be lifted so that the whole of the firebox can be reached.

The process of stripping down a locomotive sufficient to lift the boiler, and then re-erecting it later, is a considerable expense regardless of the work done inbetween. Therefore, although there is still nominally four years left on the boiler ticket, it is most cost-effective to carry out a full boiler inspection and overhaul, with the intention of obtaining a new ten-yearly certificate. This repair is being carried out by the railway's in-house boilermasters, and comprises the following:

- Remove boiler from frames
- Remove foundation ring rivets,

Thanks go to David Tandy for his work compiling the annual mileage records.

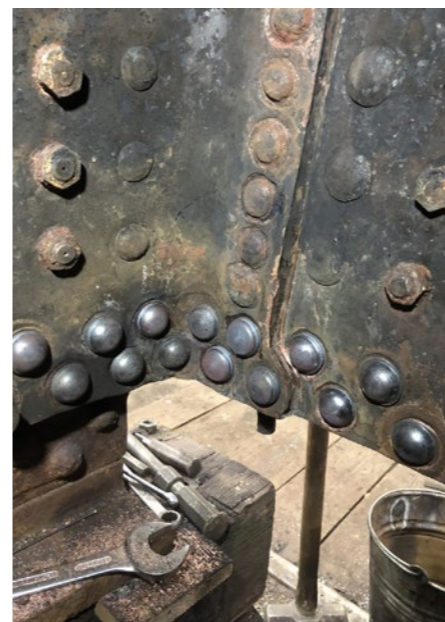
Overhauls and maintenance

For most of this reporting period (December to February) the railway, along with the rest of the country, has been under another lockdown. The workshop paid staff have been able to continue work, supported primarily by the various grants and donations made last year; however volunteer effort towards maintaining and overhauling the fleet has been severely curtailed. In addition,

Locomotive mileages 2020

The annual locomotive mileages for 2020 are given in the table, from which the strange nature of the year is immediately apparent. The overall total of 8,498 miles is only around a quarter of the figure we would have expected to run in a normal year. Within that figure, the mileage and days in use were fairly evenly distributed across the fleet, allowing for No 263 spending much of the year under mechanical repair. No 178 was withdrawn in October after ten and a half years in traffic.

Locomotive	Days in use	Mileage	Notes
847	20	966	
73082 'Camelot'	23	1114	
541	44	1928	
80151	36	2035	
65	22	836	
263	15	524	
178	11	445	Withdrawn in October
Total Steam	171	7848	
D4106	31	650	
Total diesel	31	650	
Total locomotive mileage	202	8498	



Boiler work on No 73082 *Camelot* includes the refurbished fountain ring rivet holes and new rivets fitted. HENRY MOWFORTH

rebuilding of No 84030 due to Covid-19 and the necessary restrictions in closing down the Railway to volunteers.

But all was not lost. Manufacturing drawings are being, or in a number of cases have been, produced for the side tanks, coal bunker and cab. Once we are allowed back to safe working conditions, subject to funds and labour resources being available, we will be in a position to progress quickly.

This work is being carried out by Vic Short (a volunteer in the Carriage & Wagon works), Harry Spencer (Locomotive Workshop Employee) and Nick Wren (Bluebell volunteer) together with a lot of investigative work by Brian Turner and Chris Wren of the 84030 working group.

As well as the drawing work, the webpage for No 84030 has been completely updated and is now available on the Bluebell website.

BR Standard 4MT No 80151, Wainwright H class No 263, Maunsell Q class No 541

The locos have been winterised but are otherwise available for traffic.

Maunsell S15 class No 847

The S15 is awaiting its annual boiler exam. With the current uncertainty in the date for a resumption of operations in 2021, this has been delayed until the operational need is clearer.

Maunsell Schools class No 928 *Stowe*

The overhaul of the boiler is progressing well at Heritage Boiler Steam Services in Liverpool – see Maunsell Loco Society report for more details.

Personnel

After seven years in the post, Chris Hunford has stood down as Locomotive Director. Our thanks go to Chris for his long commitment to the role.

While a permanent replacement is sought, the Locomotive Director's responsibilities will be covered by Bob Pamment, the current

Rolling Stock Director. Bob is a familiar face around the locomotive department, as a driver and volunteer of many years standing. His professional career was in a variety of roles connected with locomotive and rolling stock engineering, and he has also acted for many years as the railway's professional advisor for locomotives and rolling stock.

Tim Gray has been appointed as Locomotive Chief Clerk and Phil Gain becomes Shed Foreman. They take up their roles with immediate effect. Congratulations to both of them. Long-standing volunteer and

Maunsell Locomotive Society member Cecil Woods sadly passed away recently. Cecil specialised in producing many small machined components in his home workshop – from time to time he would depart from the workshop carrying a number of drawings and stocks of suitable raw materials, before reappearing some while later with any number of beautifully made pieces. Our condolences go to his family.

TOM JAMES and BOB PAMMENT, Locomotive & Rolling Stock Director

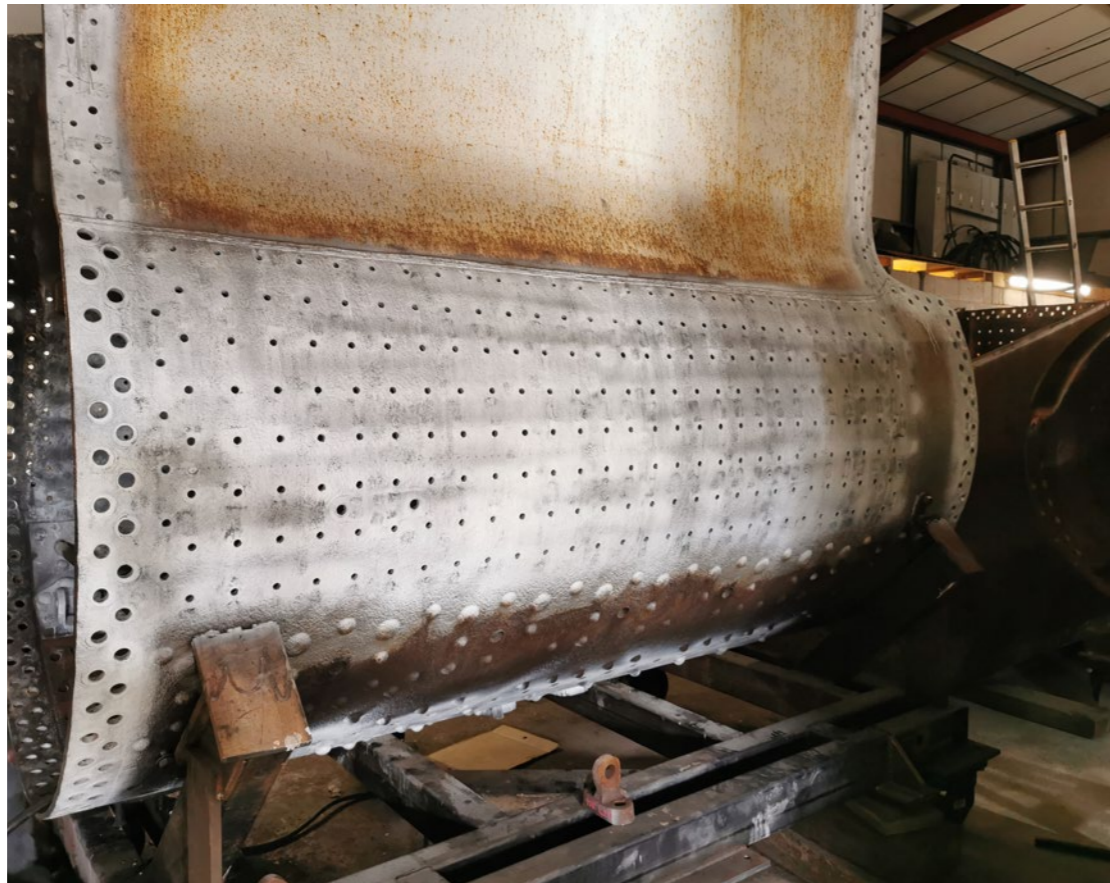


Two views of the trial fitting of the new foundation ring on No 72 *Fenchurch*. HENRY MOWFORTH

No 928 Stowe

Heritage Boiler Steam Services have made a good start on continuing work on *Stowe's* boiler overhaul. Since the Winter 2020 report, HBSS has aligned the new steel backhead and throatplate with the steel outer firebox wrapper and checked for being vertical. All the firebox outer wrapper and internal brackets and sling stays etc have been NDT (non-destructively tested) and apart from a couple of small fractures in stay holes (which can be repaired) it has all passed.

Work has started on drilling and preparing the new steel backhead for attaching the fabricated gussets. It has been agreed that the lower sections of the inner firebox throatplate and doorplate will be replaced as their stay holes have been enlarged several times in previous BR overhauls. This will enable smaller size stays to be used and thus give a longer life to the new inner and outer firebox plating. New material is on order to enable this work to take place and material ordered to make formers, to enable the correct shape to be created.



Stowe's firebox outer wrapper being inspected for cracks under NDT testing. HBSS



Stowe's foundation ring under repair. HBSS

HBSS are also 'improving' the foundation ring by building up with weld and filling oversize rivet holes in the foundation ring. A number of cracks in the foundation ring have also been welded.

Q class No 30541 and S15 class No 847

Both the Q and the S15 were available for traffic until the railway had to close again in late December. No 30541 was used on the SteamLights trains and No 847 starred in a photo charter organised by Jon Bowers on 7 and 8 December. It was requested that it ran without smoke deflectors for this event. Although No 847 always ran with smoke deflectors from when first constructed, this unusual form of appearance certainly attracted coverage – with images appearing in several magazines, etc.

U class No 1638

Still 'in store' at Horsted Keynes.

U class No 1618

No 1618 remains at Sheffield Park. We intend to oversee the overhaul of this locomotive after the work on *Stowe* is completed.

Fundraising for *Stowe*

The work to *Stowe's* boiler is being funded by the Bluebell Railway and the Maunsell Locomotive Society. £41,000 has been committed by the MLS, which has used up the bulk of our reserves. We would like to help fund the purchase of tubes and stays to help complete the boiler overhaul. So, if supporters can spare a 'little extra' for the Maunsell Locomotive Society this would be much appreciated. Contributions towards this cost will be gratefully received. Please make cheques payable to 'Maunsell Locomotive Society' and send to the treasurer at 312 Riverside Mansions, Milk Yard, London E1W 3TA. For donations over £50 we can reclaim Gift Aid if you make the cheque payable to 'Bluebell Railway Trust'. Please enclose a current Gift Aid form (downloaded from Bluebell website) indicating you would like the donation to be towards *Stowe*. Again, please send such cheques to the treasurer, to enable an acknowledgement to be sent. New members are also very welcome.

STEVE PILCHER

Awakening the Giant – 9F No 92240

'The giant' is now at the start of its re-awakening.

Even during the awful Covid year that was 2020 fundraising for the 9F has been moving on apace. This is great news as we are starting to see the benefits of regular donations.

We have the start of what is looking to be a well-supported campaign, both from Bluebell members and outside sources. Although we won't be seeing our 'giant's' heart beating with fire in its belly anytime soon, we expect to crank things up in 2021. Sadly, No 92240 is still stored outside and open to the elements.

Let's get things moving!

Please help get the giant moving again and join in with a small regular donation - this can be as little as £3.75 a week (£15 a month). Details below.

Power in the Downs

A limited edition print, No 78 of 250, entitled 'Power in the Downs' by James B Hayes, depicting No 92240 was kindly donated by Mrs Lockwood of Blackpool. Her father had recently passed away.

Whilst investigating details of the print, she noticed our 'Awake the Giant' fundraising campaign and contacted Funding Governor Trevor Swainson. We would like to thank Mrs Lockwood for her kind donation and she has asked to be kept up to date with progress.

In the December *Bluebell Times* there was an opportunity to own this fabulous signed print via a donation bidding process to the highest donor.

Forty Wagons

A conversation over a pint or six always leads to an interesting evening! One evening pre-Covid, Laurie Anderson (who heads our wagon group) and I got on to the subject of wagons and how it would be great to see No 92240 pull a goods train that would really make it chuff. Towards the end of the conversation Laurie set down a challenge. If we could get No 92240 running again he would endeavour to work up a train of 40 wagons to pull!

So the gauntlet has been thrown down. Watch this space Laurie and the wagon group!

2021

All being well, a working party will be set up by the summer of 2021. This will enable the loco to be cleaned and oiled round every couple of months until it is ready to go into the works. We have also started to look at other fundraising initiatives.

How can you make things happen?

- Please get in contact with me at the below email and sign up to donate as little as £3.75 a week.
 - We would also welcome anyone who could man a stall at Horsted Keynes, advertising and signing people up to regular donations.
 - Someone who could set up and host a Facebook page.
- If you think you can help in any other way drop me a line. Please contact myself Andy Taylor at andytay@hotmail.co.uk for further information.



The 'Power in the Downs' limited edition print.

Shiny domes from Peek Polish sponsor deal

Some good news from the locomotive department in these gloomy times!

Ben Gray passed cleaner, writes: Three years ago I was set the task of polishing the dome of one of our SECR locomotives. Previously, this was a strenuous task which few people took pleasure in doing. On hearing my slight annoyance, my Dad offered me his tin of Peek which had been sitting in his locker for several years. I immediately noticed how much easier it was to polish the dome with Peek, and since then I have been cleaning the domes on all of our operational SECR locos, as well as the other brasswork, on a weekly basis, which helps maintain our high standard of presentation. In comparison with other products, Peek produces a far more impressive finish, and allows the job to be completed in almost a quarter of the time. As well as this, a little quantity of

Peek will go further than a large quantity of an alternative well-known metal polish.

Andy Taylor cleaner, continues: Seeing the good work that Ben had been doing on the brass and copperwork and knowing money is always tight, I looked at how we could use larger amounts of this excellent product for the department.

I searched the net for the makers of Peek. Peek is a British brand product still made in the UK but owned overseas.

I found the webpage and a sales contact address so wrote a letter explaining the Railway and our new found benefits of using Peek within the locomotive department. I left my contact number whilst dropping a small hint about supplying some product free of charge.

Later that day a call flashes up on my phone from California! It was the owner, Robert Peek. After a great discussion about

Bluebell, Robert agreed to supply a large quantity of Peek for free. We are now in discussions of a longer sponsorship deal, using photos like the one on this page taken by Ben and using it on Tri Peek's website, thereby jointly benefitting both parties and looking at building the relationship further.

We are in difficult times and companies want to help the Bluebell. To a company like Tri-Peek this was a small gift but for the locomotive department this has been a massive help, long may it continue!

After further dialogue with Robert Peek and our Commercial Director Paul Lelew, it was agreed that we would stock small toothpaste-size tubes of Peek metal polish in the Bluebell shop and online. Retail Manager Asa Giffits then arranged delivery. This means that our visitors can recreate the shiny metalwork the Bluebell displays week after week in their homes and offices.

In return, Robert Peek has agreed a year's sponsorship of Peek metal polish for the locomotive department!

The polish was subsequently delivered, with one year's supply now to hand.

We thank Robert Peek and Tri-Peek Ltd for their ongoing support in these tough times.



Peek polish and shiny locomotive domes.

From the Archive



Driver Gerry Butler receives the handover paperwork from Andrew Dow, Head of the NRM, which officially released the loco back into traffic. Note the Southern 'Sunshine' lettering on the tender.



C1 reverses past the original loco shed at Sheffield Park in order to access the head shunt and main running line to pick up the carriage stock seen in the back ground.



Q1 Rededication Day: 9 September 1992

The day the National Railway Museum's SR Q1 No C1 entered service following restoration at the Bluebell Railway. The out of service locomotive is currently exhibited in the Great Hall at the museum in York.

Photography: Phil Barnes

ABOVE: The Q1 with its three matching Bulleid coaches are seen in Sheffield Park's platform 2 ready to form the 2.40 member's special service to Horsted Keynes and New Coombe Bridge.

BELOW: The special departs Horsted Keynes bound for New Coombe Bridge prior to returning to Sheffield Park later in the day.



ABOVE: The Q1 with 'rods down' makes a fine sight as the train passes just north of Three Arch Bridge, where a five minute delay was encountered due to congestion at Horsted Keynes!



LEFT: A gleaming C1 vents steam from its cylinders, prior to its handover in Sheffield Park yard after a comprehensive overhaul lasting several years.





January 2021, and the steam heating, wiring for the attendant call buttons and table lamps are well advanced in Car No 54. RICHARD SALMON



The relocated partition between the wheelchairlift entrance area and the enlarged saloon necessarily now has a wider doorway than the original, and the newly made wider sliding door is seen here prior to staining and polishing. RICHARD SALMON



With carpets and glazing now in place, the interior work on Car No 54 has progressed fantastically well. STEPHEN BIGG



RIGHT: Stroudley/Billinton Third No 328 has had its first roof planks fitted and wiring for the lights (which will be electrically illuminated gas lamp fittings) has been run. RICHARD SALMON

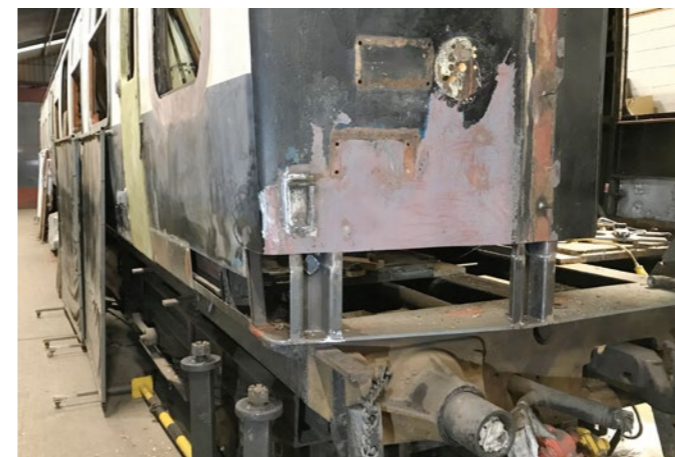


The exterior of Car No 54 is starting to be painted (seen here partly in undercoat) in January. RICHARD SALMON

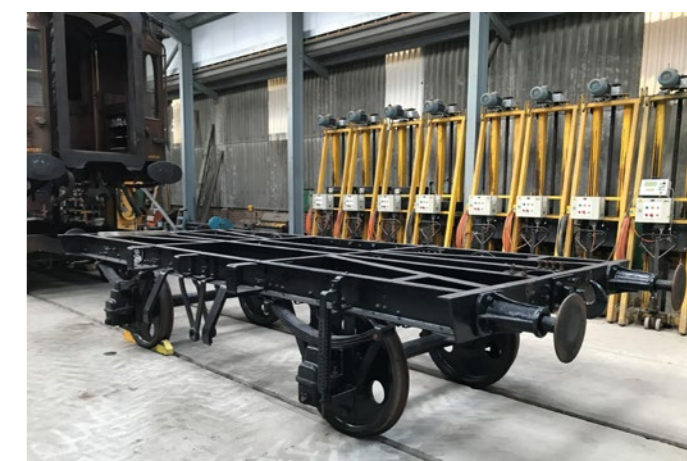
Although volunteer access recently has largely been restricted to December, the works has however remained open, with the full-time staff able to concentrate on maintenance of the running gear on the Pullmans *Fingall* and Car No 64 *Christine*, and the six-monthly exams in preparation for the hoped-for relaunch of services in 2021 of the Wealden Rambler set, the side-corridor Mk.1/Bulleid set, and the Cheshams and SR-liveried non-corridor set. In the case of the Cheshams, one bogie from brake No. 387 was dispatched to Selhurst for tyre turning.

The biggest progress has been on Pullman Car No 54, with the southern saloon marquetry panelling and carpeting now largely complete.

RICHARD SALMON



The main structural repairs to the pillar bottoms at the north (toilet) end of ex-Bicester Mk.1 TSO No 4754 have now been completed; the work at this end has been significantly more involved than was required at the south end. RICHARD SALMON



ABOVE: The wagon team have been making progress on two fronts. Here SR wartime Bulleid wagon No 12058 is seen benefiting from covered space in the OP4 maintenance area. RICHARD SALMON



Two months later, and the southern saloon now has all the French-polished marquetry and veneer panelling installed. STEPHEN BIGG



RIGHT: The majority of work on Stroudley Brake No 949 has concentrated on glazing the brake area and panelling the doors, and one of the brake doors is seen here. RICHARD SALMON



LEFT: Outside the shed, Southern Railway 20-ton dropside engineers' wagon No 62002, which has run an amazing 19 years without requiring major attention after its original restoration, is being stripped down for an intermediate overhaul. MARTIN LAWRENCE

Helping Customer Relations (was this my job spec?)

Engineers get to know the technical strength and weakness of their colleagues whilst regularly volunteering in their groups but it never ceases to amaze me what hidden skills the Bluebell members have hidden behind their interest in railways.

A classic example was demonstrated during the lead-up to the reopening after the first Covid-19 lockdown; S&T volunteers Chris Chambers, Kevin Clark and Paul Baker assisted Ruth Rowatt with the audio-visual shoot for the Covid-safe reopening video. It was on a hot summer's day in June that a large cast of volunteers and their families turned out to star and assist in the shooting. After the fun was over, it was down to Ruth to do the real work of editing the huge amount of footage provided to produce the black and white feature 'Steam returns to Bluebell Railway'. Amongst the cast I am sure I spotted Barry Luck, our Infrastructure Director, playing guitar!

During the SteamLights set-up Ali Bruce drove the Wickham trolley to transport the features and equipment required to illuminate the lineside; seeing reindeer riding on the Wickham trailer was indeed a novel sight. He then bravely endured the weather in January when everything was recovered. Clare and Kevin Clark along with Chris Chambers again shot many stills and videos of the SteamLights

event for use on the website and for future publicity.

The station Public Address (PA) systems is an arm of the Telecoms responsibility and hence became involved with providing some of the extra facilities required for SteamLights. The PA system at Horsted Keynes had to be modified to allow seasonal music to be played over the whole station whilst still allowing announcements to be made. This facility was never envisaged when the system was installed so a fair amount of ingenuity was required to make it all work.

At least at Horsted Keynes the CD player was located in the booking office which was already part of the station's PA system. At Sheffield Park the whole SteamLights event was run from the Birch Grove Suite above the buffet so the PA system and control had to be extended to include this area. The station PA was fed from the mixer which provided a high-quality audio feed. This was a whole new experience for the Bluebell so we had much to develop in a short time.

With many more members having to rely on the internet for their Bluebell fix it was down to Paul Baker and his telecoms section to install the first two webcams at Sheffield Park ready for the reopening. Of course, nothing is that simple and less obvious was after the physical



The ex-BT Telephone Ringing Machines. KEVIN CLARK

work of fixing the cameras and running the cables, a significant amount of IT configuration work was required to get the images available for viewing on the internet. Further discrete webcams at other locations are on the cards, funded from the Covid Recovery grant.

Back to the Day Job Ringing the Changes

Last year when using a Signal Post Telephone at Horsted Keynes I was pleasantly surprised to experience a much-improved ringing tone. In the past it was often difficult to hear the tone if there was any background noise. I followed up my

experience by having a snoop in the telephone exchange and was impressed to witness two gleaming 'new' (refurbished) 2A Ringing Machines. These units normally sit silent, but when a demand is detected one starts to run generating the appropriate tones that we all recognise. The clever bit is that if a fault arises, the machine stops and switches on the standby machine recording the event for the Telecoms team to investigate later. Although there was similar protocol in BT (GPO) exchanges a bespoke interface and changeover system had to be designed and built to work with our Signal Post Telephone system. Kevin Clark designed, built and commissioned the kit, ably supported by his Telecoms colleagues.

Not to be outdone and mainly working from home, Geoff Harris has designed and built an electronic ringer system for Sheffield Park. It will also improve the ringing tones and provide similar auto changeover facilities when a fault is detected. Underlying the change, he is future-proofing the equipment and making the operation and maintenance of the telephone system more resilient. The evolving Signal Post Telephone (SPT) system will be similar

to Kingscote which has been in service since 2015 and has proved very reliable, in fact it will be a baby version of it. Some creative design was required to interface the Sheffield Park signal box with Horsted Keynes SPTs when that signal box is closed out and the signalling is working in 'long section' to Kingscote. This allows a loco crew to use a Horsted Keynes SPT to speak to the Sheffield Park signalman, and also to be called back if necessary. The revised kit will require debugging and testing before bringing the upgrade into service, so Geoff has also designed and constructed a bespoke test console containing essentially 20 switches, 20 indicators, fault indications and headset socket. He is also including a unit which permits local control to be engaged when the signal box is not manned. A test console becomes live in conjunction with the signal box closing circuitry allowing one man to carry out both faulting and maintenance. These special modules are all constructed from superfluous kit that would otherwise have been scrapped. The brain that controls the improved ringers is also based on the existing system used at Kingscote but substantially modified. The extra features required are provided by squeezing additional components onto the similar board.

Track relays and Signalling relays

The signalling team has also had a few bursts of activity, although much more humdrum, still vital. We have been following the Permanent Way track relaying team by drilling rails, installing rail continuity bonding and testing the affected signalling. It has required visits to four separate sites, Palmers Bridge including Freshfield Bank, Three Arch to New Road Bridges, Horsted House Farm Bridge and by the time you read this, New Road Bridge to Horsted throat. All this is of course essential work to be ready for the eventual restart of the service.

The Swanage 'swap'

In the Winter 2018 *Bluebell News* I reported that Chris Bassett and myself had visited the Swanage Railway to study how they had achieved the remarkable feat of

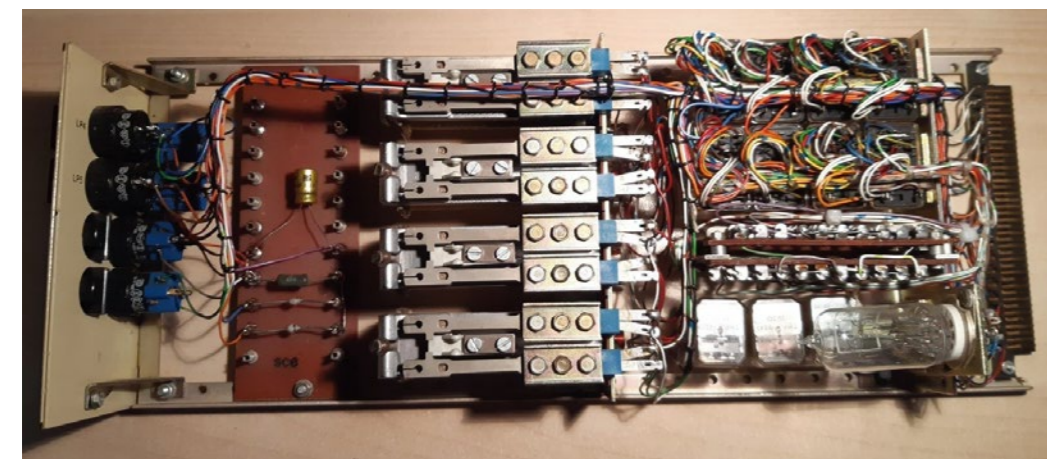
building four 'new build' signal boxes at their railway. At the time we were considering options for our own Sheffield Park signal box replacement as described in the last issue. We approached our fellow Swanage S&T colleagues for a meeting and so on an Autumn day we met some of their S&T team at Norden gates. What followed was a most enjoyable day visiting all their signal boxes and workshop, being treated like VIPs. During the visit they described how they were pressed into provisionally fitting alternative type relays at Swanage to achieve their commissioning date. On closer study we realised that the alternative relay they had used was exactly the same relay we were trying to procure for our East Grinstead enhancements, not only that but we were fairly sure we had enough stock of the preferred relay that Swanage required. As a result of close collaboration, we explored the possibility of a swap. We first checked our stock and agreed we could supply the complete kits they needed including bases and wire connectors. Chris Chambers gave the donated relays a comprehensive test backed up by certification. We were delighted to welcome the Swanage team to Bluebell to collect the replacement kits, unfortunately we could not return the same hospitality we had received on our Swanage visit because of Covid restrictions. Hopefully we can address this shortfall in the future. The Swanage team, after changing the relays, returned the valuable recovered kit for our future use. I wish to record our thanks for what I consider a great example of heritage railway co-operation.

PAUL BAKER and BRIAN HYMAS

RIGHT: Does anyone recognise this 'marker' board? Throughout its active life it was seen daily by many passengers (answer in my next report). Alan Dengate and Jan Kozminski took advantage of the short relaxation of restrictions last year to restore the item and we now await the opportunity to install it at an appropriate location on the Railway. JAN KOZMINSKI



An example of one of the 40 relays, plug bases and wire connectors supplied to the Swanage Railway in exchange for 40 alternative relays required by the Bluebell. BRIAN HYMAS



The brains of the ringer. GEOFF HARRIS

Following the internal publication of the Society-initiated Governance Review Development Report (GRDR), it was a declared intention to provide occasional updates to members on the progression of outcomes from the recommendations in the Report. The Covid-induced lockdowns of last year have inevitably had some effects on progress, but as we start 2021 it is an appropriate time for a further update.

By way of a short recap, the GRDR's prime objective was focussed on improving the governance, structure and supporting processes of the Railway to strengthen its ability to meet the undoubted challenges in the years ahead. The subsequent recommendations supporting these aims totalled just over fifty, and encompassed six sections within the Report, as tabulated below. To provide a high-level current status overview of two of the three managing entities of the Railway, both of which were included in the GRDR, some brief comments would be appropriate. The Governors of

the Bluebell Railway Trust, as an independent charitable entity, have subsequently transferred the Trust into a Trustee Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG), providing liability protection for the Governors in the process. In the case of the second entity, the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society (BRPS), as has been previously explained in *Bluebell News* and other communications to members, we are awaiting the opportunity of being able to hold a post-lockdown EGM/AGM to formally receive members' authority to also transfer the BRPS into a CLG, similarly providing liability protection to the Trustees.

The chart (below) summarises the current status of the GRDR recommendations.

From the current figures

Section Topic

BRPS Incorporation	4	100%
Bluebell Railway Group Structure	1	100%
Bluebell Railway Preservation Society	13	93%
Bluebell Railway Plc	23	35%
Project Promotion / Approval / Finance Mgt	3	100%
Communications	8	75%
	52	64%

shown, it is clear that overall a high percentage of the recommendations have been accepted, and in many cases have already been implemented. With the exception of the Bluebell Railway Plc section, which covers the third managing entity of the Railway, the total average percentage acceptance of recommendations in the other five sections would be nearly 90%. The lower figure for the Plc section therefore requires context explanation to fully appreciate the current situation and future prospects. Of the fifteen recommendations in this section that haven't so far been either incorporated or fully accepted, ten of them are contingent upon associated structural or process changes being achieved, whereupon

there is a strong likelihood they will be incorporated. This leaves a further five that are still subject to discussion/evaluation. If the ten recommendations referred to above are ultimately incorporated, the total acceptance percentage for all six sections will rise to 84%. In the Communications section, there are two recommendations which are also contingent upon associated changes being achieved, and if they are also incorporated, the total percentage will rise further to 88%.

In the context of these GRDR recommendations and the comments above, the Plc board is in the process of evaluating the most appropriate board structure and procedural objectives ideally required to meet the future challenges in the post-Covid world.

Maintenance with Spring in our step

Although the Railway has been closed since the end of December, the infrastructure team has been kept busy. Working within the Covid regulations, and with a much-reduced volunteer workforce, we have been able to keep pace with the essential maintenance tasks, as well as progressing work on capital projects.

Jon Goff's extensive report on pages 7-9 covers recent track relays and the preliminary work to stabilise the embankment north of New Road Bridge, amongst other things. Dave Wilson has provided a few words on the tamper which is being tested on Bluebell metals, and Keith Lawrie and Robert Healey have written about continuing lineside activities. Brian Hymas has written about the many and varied activities of the S&T department, and Mel Jordan has provided an update on progress in the Heritage Skills Centre.

The bridge span at New Road was restructured many years ago and is in good condition, but the north-west wing wall is in need of repair. This was originally planned to be carried out during the current year, but has now been postponed to early 2022, to avoid disruption to services during 2021. The Sheffield Park-Horsted Keynes section will require closure for up to six weeks to enable



The third and fourth roads (H and J) in the OP4 carriage shed are now completed and all four roads are now fully occupied. COLIN TYSON

remedial works to be carried out on the wingwall and adjacent embankment. Plans are in hand to ensure that the Horsted Keynes-East Grinstead section can operate during any closure.

The Friends groups have been visiting their respective stations at least once a week during the enforced closure to check

and fix any urgent problems.

Work is also progressing on the proposed miniature railway in the picnic area at Sheffield Park following its unsuitability at the original planned site at Kingscote. The design is substantially complete, and tender documents are in preparation. A planning application was submitted at the end of January and we await the results. This work is being funded by the Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage.

Work will start very shortly on the installation of electric vehicle charging points at the eastern end of Sheffield Park's upper car park, also funded by the CRFH.

Remedial work on Horsted Keynes station was planned for 2020, but was delayed because of the pandemic. A plan is being developed to enable work to start this year.

The Palmers Bridge relay released sufficient track panels to enable the third and fourth roads (H and J) in the OP4 carriage shed to be completed. All four roads are now fully occupied. The project to provide a new power supply is moving ahead, and with a following wind should be in place in late summer.

Overall, I'm happy to say that the Railway infrastructure is in a better state of readiness for reopening than it was in July last year, when we had been unable to work on the Railway for several months. This inevitably led to the need for a significant amount of catching up during July before the Railway could reopen.

I have no doubt we are all looking forward to seeing the resumption of services whenever the Government permits. Thanks to infrastructure and volunteers for all their hard work over the past few months.


BARRY LUCK
Infrastructure Director



Three electric car charging points and one disabled space charging point have been marked out in the top car park at Sheffield Park. COLIN TYSON



Concrete piling in place on the western embankment at New Road Bridge, Horsted Keynes. COLIN TYSON




Bluebell Railway Plc is recruiting for the key role of CHAIRMAN

This non-executive position as head of the operating company will be responsible for leading and directing one of the premier preserved railways in the UK through the next phase in its development as a major visitor attraction and modern business operation.

Evidence of proven leadership achievement, ideally in a volunteer-led organisation, and background in successful business management at senior level are essential. An interest in steam trains and their heritage and how railways operate would be beneficial.

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

For a full job description and candidate specification, email Personnel & Administration Manager Lisa Boyle lisa.boyle@bluebell-railway.com
Closing date 7 May 2021



Bluebell Railway PLC, Sheffield Park Station, East Sussex, TN22 3QL
01825 720800 Info@bluebell-railway.co.uk
www.bluebell-railway.com

Company Number 1966061 Incorporated in England and Wales



The Bluebell Railway has a vacancy for LOCOMOTIVE DIRECTOR

The successful applicant will be responsible for planning and co-ordinating the strategy for the restoration, overhaul and maintenance of all forms of motive power (steam and diesel) and will have professional and technical responsibility for the company's locomotive fleet.

The locomotive director is expected to attend board meetings and contribute to the company's business decision-making.

For a full job description and candidate specification, email Personnel & Administration Manager Lisa Boyle lisa.boyle@bluebell-railway.com
Closing date 7th May 2021



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The Bachmann 00 gauge GWR 4-4-0 'Dukedog's'



The Bachmann GWR 'Dukedogs'.

Railway miracles don't happen often but are memorable when they do. It's a tale that is echoed across the Atlantic Ocean. When the Pennsylvania Railroad was retiring its first generation diesel fleet an 'enlightened' manager had the vision to hide a large old diesel in a redundant building in the Harrisburg loco depot complex to prevent it being

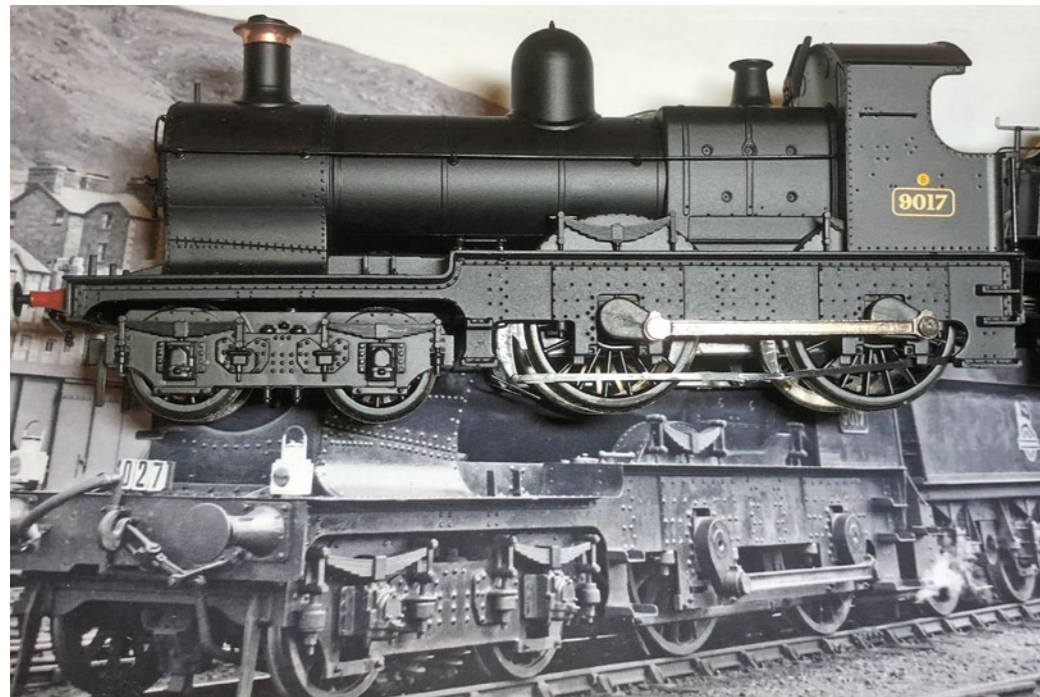
destroyed for scrap metal value. That loco is now beautifully restored in its tuscan red livery as 5901, the sole-surviving example of the EMD E7 class of what was regarded as America's best-selling diesel locomotives. On our side of the pond a similar miracle was performed at Oswestry works.

When the Bluebell Railway was just a baby, a group of

enthusiasts tried to raise the money to buy one of the surviving outside framed GWR 'Dukedog' locomotives. This was the very first attempt at an appeal in railway preservation terms and happened at a time when steam still dominated the railway network. However the great steam cull had begun and those enthusiasts of the time

were aware of the passing of an era. Fortunately some of them worked in influential positions on the railway. On closure of the line both the diminutive Welshpool & Llanfair locos *The Earl* and *The Countess* had been squirrelled away from the scrap men, just like 5901. Those behind the 'Dukedog' appeal struggled to raise the funds but the heroes of Oswestry also tucked away their chosen loco to prevent it being scrapped until the funds were realised.

In steam railway parlance the 'Dukedog' is an unmistakable locomotive of rather fascinating history. They were created by taking the boilers from the time-expired frames of the 'Duke' class locomotives and placing the boiler on the frames of the redundant 'Bulldog' class locomotives. These new 'Dukedogs' proved perfect for working on the former Cambrian Railway lines with its many weight restrictions. Originally these new locomotives were designated as the 32xx 'Earl' class but those Earls were not impressed by having their names bestowed on 'State of the Ark' machines and hence their names were transferred to the 'Castle' class. The number classification was also changed in 1946 to the 90xx



The model is placed over a photo of No 9017 at Barmouth. Just look at that lovely rivet detail.



A peak in the cab of the 'Dukedog'. Even the gauges are calibrated.



Mucky pup: 'Dukedog' No 9022 in weathered finish. Note the absence of a whistle shroud, compared with No 9017.

series to allow for the new 2251 class.

With their distinctively antiquarian character these outside framed 'Dukedogs' attracted quite a following by enthusiasts as they worked their days on the Cambrian and images appeared in the railway press that somehow suggested that it was always sunny on the Cambrian lines. By the late 1950s their working days were numbered as newer standard classes were cascaded into the region having been displaced by diesels elsewhere. The majority of the 'Dukedog' class had been based at Oswestry, though a couple of them were shedded at Machynlleth.

It's been out a few years now but it's one of those models that, like its prototype, stand the test of time. The 'Dukedogs' were never locomotives that were associated with being seen in 'ex works' condition and when Bachmann first announced that one of the models would also be available in weathered condition I just knew I had to have one. As it transpired I just had to have both of the BR liveried versions.

Somehow Charles Collett created a rather elegant looking dinosaur out of the amalgam of 'Bulldog' and the 'Duke' class components. Bachmann have captured the gravitas of the prototype very neatly and the model really has a sort of clumsy cast iron chunkiness about it... nothing spindly here, these were tough plodders but they needed to be, theirs was tough territory, wet rails and fierce gradients needed something that wasn't

sisy. That was their charm and this model had actually been a long time coming but it was certainly worth the wait.

At present two versions are available and both come with the riveted tender. The Great Western green version is No 3206 *Earl of Plymouth* with the GWR shirt button emblem. This model is sound equipped. The BR black version is No 9018 and also features a riveted tender with the early Lion on Wheel crest and whistle shroud. The brass cabside number is painted with the red background as became the style with some BR (W) locomotives. This model is not sound fitted.



Partners in grime: the tender of No 9022 shares a nice patina, an everyday feature of the railway scene not often recreated.

Several of the prototypes were fitted with a top feed and for modellers who want to change

identity of their locos this detailing extra is available from Modelu. CHRIS KAPOLKA



Cambrian recreated: The Bluebell Railway's 'Dukedog' No 9017 enters Carrog station whilst visiting the Llangollen Railway on 3 April 2009. CHRIS KAPOLKA

2019 - A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A 9F CLUB MEMBER



9F Club members preparing *Normandy* for a cosmetic painting.



Painting blue oil drums black!

Sadly, the Covid pandemic is still ongoing and the Railway remains closed to volunteers. This is the time of year when the 9F Club would have held its AGM and got back to duties having washed and repaired the elves costumes and put them away for another year.

Whilst there is hopefully an end in sight it remains unclear when the 9F Club will be able to recommence duties in a safe manner. We await further guidance from the Government and from the Plc board.

With nothing new to report, John Hatherill, one of our younger members, has written a summary of his early experiences in the Club as a reminder of happier days and an encouragement to prospective new members waiting their turn on our waiting list.

John writes...

"First, I'll start with April 2019! In April I decided to do pallet breaking in Sheffield Park yard. It was a lot of fun with the hammer, so everyone then decided they wanted a hammer too!

Then we went to the train with some wood that we had broken up, to use at Horsted Keynes which we put safely in the siding.

(Dad's note: The wood we had reclaimed from the pallets was used to build some staging so that members could safely work

on painting the North London tank).

Then it was chips for lunch, obviously! After lunch, I started de-rusting the crane with some of my 9F friends. But the drama was on the train back to Sheffield Park, because we stopped at a signal. Apparently, someone didn't close their door properly. We were held up for about five minutes whilst the guard got out and closed the door. Then we were off again.

August 2019 next - the 9F Club BBQ. Before we could feast on burgers and hot dogs my friends and I started to clean the P Class and *Normandy* in SteamWorks! It was a competition as to whose engine was cleanest.

After the BBQ lunch then travelled to East Grinstead and back. A lovely ride.

September was a sizzling month in 2019. In the yard there were some old oil drums that needed to be painted from blue to black. So some of us took up the challenge. Then we got on the train to Horsted Keynes. We did some jobs in the yard. Then it was time for lunch. After lunch, some of us got a brake van ride. We went north, just after the loop points on the north side of Horsted Keynes. Then we went back to the south side of Horsted Keynes, through platforms 4 and 5, and finally returned to where

we started.

Back to work now, painting the crane. But we finished 3pm, not the usual 3.30 as we'd run out of paint! Another great day.

In 2019 we had an excursion to a private railway in Kent. When we got there we had to get the carriages and locos out of the sheds, the coach shed was at the bottom of a steep switch-back.

Then some of us went on the test run. Josh was driving but half way round the engine cut out and we couldn't restart it, so one of us ran back to the station to tell one of the adults, who walked out to help us. The rest of the day was drama-free. All 9F members got to drive an engine. We could choose to drive an Ivatt Atlantic, a Lord Nelson or a King Class. Most of us drove before lunch, and the remainder after lunch. Everything was put back in the sheds when we'd finished. What a great day!

It's now November and the last club meeting of the year. There was an unusual, but essential, job on offer which I chose to do. This job was oiling the points and signal pulleys in the yard at Sheffield Park. Some were easy and some hard. But we did the ones we were supposed to do so quickly that we started to pull weeds up from the trackside. Then we did the same on the north side of the station - less

weeds to pull there.

When we had finished we headed to Horsted Keynes. More chips! After lunch we had a look around the station, and of course the carriage shop, for any good deals.

December - elf help. Wow, the year has flown by, so Santa has to visit the Railway again with the help of his 9F Club elves.

We met in the meeting room at Sheffield Park. But we had to wait for a long time there because of a landslide on the track. During this time, we went to Santa's grotto in SteamWorks! After 30 minutes, suddenly, an elf ran in and said we had to leave immediately or we'd miss the train!

Thankfully, we all made it to the train, leaving half an hour behind schedule.

Due to the landslip things had changed and the train had started at HK with passengers and Santa only. (9F Club helpers hadn't boarded yet)

When the train arrived at Sheffield Park, the elves got on with Santa and we helped give out presents on the return trip to Horsted Keynes. We did the trip twice for two sets of passengers.

Finally, we took the empty stock that had come from East Grinstead, from Horsted Keynes back to Sheffield Park, for free, in first class! (Dad's note: you weren't supposed to tell them that). A great but tiring day - as always.

The first meeting of 2020 (which sadly was the last), in March, was when we met at Sheffield Park. There was pit cleaning, wood and coal moving, and loco cleaning in SteamWorks! I chose cleaning No 473 for most of the morning.

When we'd finished, we went to break some pallets. To do this we wear leather gloves to prevent getting splinters in our hands. After that we got on a train to Horsted Keynes but the buffet was closed. Oh no! So our packed lunches came in handy for once. Soon it was time to catch the train back to Sheffield Park and go home."

I hope everyone stays safe and well and I hope we are able to meet again soon.

MARTIN WIDDOWSON
9F Secretary

Correspondence

Sheffield Park signal box plans

I WRITE this after reading the Winter *Bluebell News*, particularly the article on the 'new' signal box at Sheffield Park. I felt unease after reading this. I'm not sure about the nature of the unease, so I will try to quantify it.

The signal boxes that we preserved, at Sheffield Park, Horsted Keynes and Kingscote, existed before Bluebell, noting that Kingscote in its original form was demolished and was in a sense preserved by a replica. In preservation, all three have been restored to their former use and continue in use with conservation applying to their continuing function.

The application of preservation, restoration and conservation means that the original signalling has changed and arguably that changes within the signalling function have aided the preservation of signalling from a wider base than just the Bluebell. In much

the same sense that applies to all Bluebell artifacts, doesn't it?

Our locomotives, rolling stock and infrastructure are in the process of restoration and conservation from far and wide, the fact that they are with us is the 'preservation' part of it.

The new signal box proposed at Sheffield Park is none of this. It preserves nothing of the Bluebell Railway, nor does it replicate a missing Bluebell artifact and will 'preserve' only signalling equipment from the wider railway industry. I struggle with the rationale that suggests that 40 levers, albeit with spares, is required for future signalling.

The Bluebell arrived in 1960 at Sheffield Park and preserved a signal system it inherited. Over the years it evolved into that which you see today. Evolution of signalling

elsewhere means that we have in the current signal box at Sheffield Park a unique artifact, being the sole remaining mid-platform working signal box anywhere in the country (I bet someone knows somewhere else!), which had access from the ticket office for single man working and which originally on preservation was screened by iron railings. The implication of creating a new signalling centre is that the current facility will be swept away to give wider platform space for our visitors. If that happens then the already burgeoning Sheffield Park, no longer that which we preserved but evolved for the needs of the visitors, something which we fought for in preservation, will have been destroyed by us. Truly, in my opinion, Sheffield Park will then have become a steam train theme park.

JOHN DIVINE

Goods Trains at Horsted Keynes

I APPLAUD the positive actions taken by Laurie Anderson and his group of young wagon restorers (*BN Winter 2020*) resulting in our railway being able to operate goods trains during the 'Off the Rails' event last October. I also spotted the item in Jon Goff's infrastructure report regarding track survey work being undertaken in Kingscote goods yard. Together, these items will hopefully allow the long-standing aim of restoring the goods yard at Kingscote to allow regular operations of pick-up goods trains to move closer to being achieved.

The pointwork connecting these future sidings to the running line is already in position as are the associated shunt signals. Pick-up goods trains used to operate all over the UK and I, and the former editor of *Steam Railway*, are not aware of any preserved railway operating them. Many offer demonstration goods trains but not where incoming wagons are shunted into different sidings and outgoing ones picked up and taken away.

Regular (monthly?) operation would fill a gap in what we have to offer visitors, rekindling memories for older ones and the revelation of the variety of what a railway such as ours can offer to the others. Whilst not directly earning revenue, they could be operated at little cost by, for example, being rostered to be worked by the locomotive booked to work an afternoon tea train. The pick-up goods would obviously have to work from somewhere to Kingscote and return there with the different wagons and the up yard at Horsted Keynes would be the obvious location, as goods wagons are currently based there.

With the completion of the OP4 Carriage Shed in the down yard at Horsted Keynes, space should become available in the up yard with many (all?) of the vehicles under tarpaulins moving to the new shed. This would enable the up yard to become a stabling point for goods wagons and vans, with space provided for Signalling Dept (S&T) vehicles, and not a tarpaulin in sight.

With Horsted Keynes station itself being the subject of an imminent appeal to restore it to its former glory, the up yard must not be allowed to remain as a scruffy neighbour. I suggest that the Society compile an inventory of:

- all remaining vehicles in the up yard, now that the OP4 final moves have taken place.
- all known vehicles planned to be moved into the up yard in the future e.g. sleeping cars currently at Sheffield Park.
- All vehicles currently stabled in Platform 1.

along with details given of the condition of each vehicle and of its planned future use.

A commitment to produce a clean-up/clear out plan of the up yard by the end of 2022 would seem a realistic target, allowing visitors at Horsted Keynes to watch goods wagons and vans being shunted in the adjacent yard, assuming of course that Platform 1 is also cleared of vehicles, many in need of urgent attention, allowing it to become operational once again.

GRAHAM AITKEN

Sixty memorable years

They saved our dear Railway, pre-Beeching's cut-backs. Nostalgia superior, no matter the facts. Rail-knights drawn together, from far and from near. Fine lads and fine lasses, with hope and no fear.

They worked for the moment, large snags to surmount. Then looked to the future, their dreams paramount. Most problems they toppled, obstructions passed round. Their trust ever present, their efforts well-found.

Now look to the present, the Bluebell today. Great energy lauded, success on display. Warm dining coaches, with elegant staff. Each filled with keen diners, to eat and to quaff.

Old puffers and buffers; fine drivers and guards. Smart coaches and wagons, plus locos worked hard. A goods yard and shunting, tall signals and tickets; Brass gas lamps, a bookstall, stout fences and wickets.

Three red fire buckets, tall watering crane. Bright diamond crossings, rods taking the strain. High bridges and cuttings, long signalling wires. A tunnel, a viaduct - and all of it ours!

Well-loved wayside stations, a joy to behold. With neat platform awnings of style very old. A cosy warm buffet, a station clock grand. Some helpful old porters, so platforms well manned.

Six decades of effort, such drive has pressed on; As each generation has come and then gone. Tough projects successful, though not without fears. Hard work and achievement shine over the years.

So thus we remember their triumphs now past. The souls who gave freely, so much, to the last. Our thanks should re-echo, not once but oft times. Be broadcast so loudly, like Westminster chimes!

JOHN DEANE

JOHN COPELAND

9 January 1938 - 8 February 2021

John Anthony Frederick Copeland sadly passed away on Monday 8 February having been diagnosed in 2020 with terminal cancer.

As a master craftsman (learnt working alongside with his own father) - John joined the BRPS on 15 February 1998 to combine his passion for trains and carpentry. John spent 17 years volunteering at weekends and many weekdays



John Copeland

on Bluebell restoration projects, most notably helping to restore the four teak Metropolitan Railway 'Chesham' coaches of the late 1890s - the oldest matching set of main line carriages running in the UK.

Proudly stating he 'rode the Chesham set' on the day they retired from public service in the 1960s, he was able to ride them again in 2013 when the London Transport Museum featured the carriages in the London Underground 150 celebrations. His and his fellow volunteer's efforts were rewarded when the carriages won the Heritage Railway Association Carriage & Wagon award in 2006.

In 2008 John was the guest at his own surprise 70th birthday party in a carriage alongside the workshop - it took some cajoling to get him to break from his work to go and investigate the carriage that his family and friends had been decorating and sneaking in and out of all morning!

John and fellow volunteer Roy Wright skilfully constructed the porch around the stained glass windows at Horsted Keynes



John (fourth from left) with key members of the Ashbury set restorers having collected their award from an HRA meeting in Leeds. RICHARD SALMON

station - replicating the original Victorian one which had been long lost. Together they created a masterpiece of an entrance that was blessed by Canon John Twistleton in March 2012.

An only child born to Agnes and John Copeland of Thornton Heath, Surrey, John was an

incredibly modest and proud man.

John attended Ingram boys' school in Norbury, South London and Topplesfield School in Essex as a wartime evacuee. His life-long passions were honed from an early age making scale models of trolley buses and trams from balsa wood and matchsticks, to taking his younger cousin Carol to stand on the rail bridge waiting for steam trains to go under. He joined the Norbury Transport and Model Railway Club where his interests thrived with log books, tickets and memorabilia from the tram and steam train era.

An electrical engineer for 35 years at Muirhead & Co Ltd of Beckenham, Kent - it was here that he met his future wife Josephine and had two daughters: Lorraine and Sharon. Holidays included trips to model railways, trolley bus and tram museums and working steam railways - for his 70th birthday they visited the Silver Stream Railway in New Zealand. Father Christmas even delivered a full Hornby train set with points and station to his girls in the mid-1980s.

He will be remembered as a loving husband, daddy, grandad, cousin, friend, true craftsman and heritage railway enthusiast.

LORRAINE COPELAND



John played an important role in the recreation of the original porch at Horsted Keynes. DEREK HAYWARD

VIC MITCHELL

1934-2021

The well-known Sussex-based proprietor of railway and tramway book publisher Middleton Press of Midhurst, Vic Mitchell passed away peacefully on January 18 2021.

There won't be many Bluebell members who do not have at least one or more Middleton title on their bookshelf. A former dentist by profession, Vic and colleague Keith Smith launched their local *Branch Lines to Midhurst* in 1980, closely followed by *Branch Lines to Horsham* and 'our own' *Branch Lines to East Grinstead* and 40 years later there are more than 500 books in the rail series from subjects across the UK.

An early volunteer at the Talylyn Railway, he was photographed track clearing in the *Daily Express* as volunteering on a railway was so unusual! When he became a founder member of the Ffestiniog Railway, Tom Rolt said to him "there is only room for one preserved railway!"

Vic latterly took on (as a labour of love) producing the National Rail Timetable after Network Rail ceased printing it in 2007.

Said Vic's daughter Deborah, "Due to the present restrictions there will be a small family funeral followed by a Thanksgiving Service to be held later in the year, where we hope as many of you as possible will fill the church to raise the roof in his honour. This, we hope, will be followed by a gathering where we can acknowledge and celebrate Vic's many great achievements during his lifetime. We will notify a date for this."

The business will continue to be run by Deborah and her husband Ray Esher.

COLIN TYSON



Vic Mitchell (1934-2021) at an author's meeting at the since-closed Ian Allan bookshop at Waterloo in March 2016. COLIN TYSON

JOHN HILL

Former Bluebell Railway Traffic Manager John Hill died on 14 January 2021 following a long period of ill health. He served our Railway in post from 1983 to 1990, a period of great change and is fondly remembered by staff and volunteers as someone who very much 'mucked in' with the tasks that needed doing - compiling the weekly STNs, signalling, shunting and dealing with filming enquiries. Members will recall him wielding a chain saw helping to clear the line of felled trees following the 1987 hurricane.

He came to us from the Severn Valley Railway and returned there after his southern sojourn.

A BR steam driver based at Saltley and Tyseley, he was the first person to drive an engine of the SVR in preservation and also drove the first public train on opening day, 23 May 1970. Elected chairman of the SVRA in 1973, during which time the SVR extended services to Bewdley, and Spring 1975 saw him in the role of Director of the holding company. He remained an active volunteer at the SVR until 2017.

Our condolences go to his family.

COLIN TYSON



John Hill in conversation with TV presenter Keith Chegwin at Sheffield Park. MICK BLACKBURN

KEITH MARRIOTT



Keith Marriott (right) in conversation with Simon Baker during tracked bed clearance north of Horsted Keynes. COLIN TYSON

Very sadly Keith passed away on 28 December 2020, three days short of his 74th birthday having bravely fought a year-long battle against Mesothelioma which had resulted from exposure to asbestos at some point.

Keith was born in Godstone but whilst still a baby the family moved to Hurst Green which was to be his and his own family's home for the rest of his days. Having attended local schools, he followed in his father's footsteps by starting an apprenticeship in carpentry and joinery obtaining his City & Guilds. After working with a couple of small firms, he moved to British Caledonian at Gatwick on property maintenance where he spent 25 happy years. In 2010 he moved locally to Moorehouse School where he took on general maintenance responsibilities.

He married Margaret in 1973 and they were blessed with two sons and a daughter. A Bluebell member for more than 30 years he became a life member. He joined the Friends of Kingscote team as a regular volunteer in its early days where he was a real stalwart. I first met Keith around 1997 when he was well advanced with the reconstruction of the Kingscote down platform canopy with Malcolm Applin. He made an immense contribution to the restoration of the station where his carpentry and general building skills proved invaluable.

His legacy to the Railway includes lots of setting up and concrete pouring, fitting out the mess room, porch refurbishment and making the swan necks for East Grinstead's lamp posts. Particularly notable was the intricate work on replacing the down side subway hand rails to authentic versions. He took on responsibility for the Well House fitting it out internally to meet current standards but preserving its outside appearance. Run by Margaret, this refreshment outlet contributes important income to the Railway and I am glad to say Margaret will continue her work there.

Keith was given a good send-off at a ceremony attended by a small group of close family members under Covid restrictions with live relay to friends.

Keith will be sorely missed not only for his contribution to the cause but by the many friends he made at Kingscote and on the wider Railway. Our sympathies go to Margaret, David, Peter, Elaine and the two grandsons.

EDDIE FAIRMAN

Membership matters

Firstly, I must apologise to the members who received a reminder even though they had paid their January 2021 membership fee. Unfortunately, due to lockdown not all the details had been entered onto the database before the reminder letters were produced.

It is now more than a year since we entered lockdown, and for the large part of the year the railway was not able to operate. We have been very grateful for all your support and indeed the generous donations you have given to the railway. Hopefully, it will not be too long before we are back running trains.

I would ask that when you give us any change of address, you also give us your new telephone number. You will see on the renewal letter that we print your last known email address, under which there is provision for you to give us your new one. If the box is blank, and you have one, please print it here. This information is useful if we need to either contact you, or indeed the membership as a whole.

You will have noticed a few changes to the renewal letter. On the reverse, there is a Direct Debit mandate, if you wish to use it to pay your current renewal. At the top of the mandate there is a date by which it must be returned to The Membership Office at Sheffield Park – not to your

assistant membership secretary – as we will not have the time to process it with your bank.

If you are paying by cheque, please send it as normal to your assistant membership secretary along with an SAE, by the date if possible, on the front of the form.

I am looking for someone who could help when needed to look after our membership database, which uses Microsoft Access. Over the years we have been very lucky as it has been updated and its range of uses has been enhanced to what we have now. If you feel you are able, please let me know via the email address below.

As mentioned in the last edition of *Bluebell News* we have two winners of the draw for a year's free membership. Mr and Mrs Smith of Sutton and Mr Haley of Witham – congratulations – your new cards are in the post. If you would like to enter the draw at £1 per ticket, complete the draw section on your membership reminder letter. You can also play if you pay your membership fee by Direct Debit.

Finally, a reminder the Railway's email addresses have changed from .co.uk to .com as below.

DON BREWER
Membership Secretary
membership@bluebell-railway.com

USED AND UNUSED STAMPS FOR BLUEBELL FUNDS

Stamps, albums, picture postcards, phone cards, etc.

Please do not leave at Sheffield Park
BUT SEND DIRECT TO:
Tony Pond, 26 Hesketh House, Cawte Road, Southampton SO15 3SN
Tel: 0792 300 6375

VOLUNTEER 'FIND OUT MORE' DAYS

Unfortunately these are currently suspended due to lockdown and social distancing regulations. Keep an eye on the website for future updates.



The Bluebell Railway Preservation Society is inviting applications from members for election to the key position of

CHAIRMAN BLUEBELL RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Are you a BRPS member of three years or more, who has the ability and motivation to lead Society committee colleagues through a potentially fulfilling period of development for the Bluebell Railway, initiated by recent in-depth reviews of strategic governance, policies and objectives?

As part of the responsibilities, would you be stimulated by the ability to play a key role, in close partnership with Plc board directors and Trust governors, in the future progression and business growth of the organisation? Elected positions on the Society committee are based on three-year renewable terms.

If the above position is of interest, and for further details, please email Gavin Bennett, BRPS General Secretary, at gavin.bennett@bluebell-railway.com by 1 July.



Vacancy for SOCIETY TREASURER

The post of BRPS Society Treasurer is vacant; are you interested in standing for this position?

The Treasurer is a member of the Society's management team and participates in decision making. Ideally applicants should have some background in managing accounts and must be competent in the use of word processing and spreadsheet software. Responsibilities of the Treasurer include tracking the Society's income and expenditure, presenting a monthly report at the Trustees' meeting (currently held online) and preparation of the annual accounts for audit. From time to time the Treasurer may be invited to participate in Trustee working groups to develop Society policies.

If you are interested please contact Nigel Longdon at nigel.longdon@bluebell-railway.com

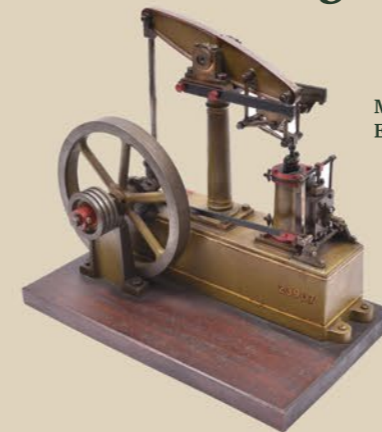
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