



"Beachy Head" during the Built at Brighton event, 25 August 2024. Photo: David Cable

The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway Members, Staff and Supporters

September 2024

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Few entries into traffic of a locomotive have been as eagerly awaited across the preservation world as that of *Beachy Head*. After over two decades in the making, the locomotive was formally handed over to the Operations side of the railway after a short ceremony on 18 August, following which it hauled a special Golden Arrow service for those most connected with the project. Five days later, it hauled its first revenue-earning trains, going on to run an unbroken and faultless ten-day spell in traffic to mark its triumphal inauguration. Those bald facts belie the care and attention to detail with which the loco – and the crews who need to operate it – were bought up to operational readiness. We have seen elsewhere new locomotives promised at an event and then have the date endlessly put back, but none of that here: a tribute both to the quality of the original construction and the methodical process to bring cold steel into a living, breathing locomotive.

For those who missed the launch events, the next opportunities to ride behind the locomotive are on 5/6 October, when it will be in regular traffic, and on 11 – 13 October at [Giants of Steam](#). With the Santa / Steam Lights season fast approaching, these are likely to be the last opportunities to ride behind the loco this year – so what are you waiting for?

Tom James, Editor

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Watts Ocurring

By Roy Watts, BRPS Chairman

If there is one thing that pleases me more than anything, is to see our Railway receive maximum publicity on both social media and the press and I think it's safe to say that has been successfully achieved over the last couple of months.

But it is rude of me not to begin without expressing a huge "thank you" to everybody who has helped in some way to ensure the Bluebell has taken centre stage and become the focus of attention and much discussion.

We have seen a steady stream of rolling stock come on stream coupled with some recent renovations and our reputation for restoration excellence has been well and truly endorsed.

And it's not just the rolling stock but infrastructure, buildings, embankments and lineside that have been cleared or tidied and presented our visitors with a very tidy, clean railway with some pristine rolling stock which is our key trademark.

But when you stop and think what has been output this year, it's been a real feast.

We started with [Car 54](#), then No. 34059, [Sir Archibald Sinclair](#), [Beachy Head](#), [BR Mk1 4754](#), repaint on [16012](#) and finally Electro-diesel [E6040](#) [The Bluebell Railway](#) achieved operational status. Then add in wagons, manicured embankments, freshly painted stations and then last weekend – ok, it's a bit of a cheat but – the return of the [4VEP](#), [3417 Gordon Pettitt](#) which finally went beyond Imberhorne Cutting.

However, nothing stays the same and whilst it's great to see all these new items return in sparkling condition, the rest of the Railway still requires lots of TLC. We have the ongoing projects or planned maintenance but throw in the unexpected and our scant resource – whether its manpower or financial – and it's nothing far short of a miracle that we have had such a good year.

But back to the original comment about us continuing to make the news and it cannot have



Above: The 4-VEP departs from East Grinstead to head back to Strawberry Hill at the end of the Diesel Gala.

Below: The restored interior of Mark 1 Second Open No. 4754, the "Bicester" coach

Both photos: Roy Watts



escaped your notice the headlines made by the entry into service of 32424, Beachy Head. Finally repairing that long lost gap in Preservation, the locomotive continues to attract high praise and quite rightly so and a "wrong has been righted". A great credit to everyone involved.

Last weekend, the Railway ventured into the diesel Gala business after an absence of some 6 years. Unfortunately, the weather could not have been more unforgiving, but it was a good lesson for us and what we need to do to create a successful event.

Likewise, our friends at the [SETG](#) were able to test the labours of their hard work as their hard work restoring the unit to main line condition continues. But there it was gleaming in the dismal conditions, probably one of the most authentic pairings we have had and of course, the unit carrying fare paying passengers for the first time in many years.

Unfortunately, there will not be any trains north of Horsted Keynes after the October half term as it has become necessary to replace the track in Sharpthorne tunnel which will mean no seasonal trains from the north this year, a victim of the continuing need to keep the whole Railway functioning.

It's hard to believe we are entering the final quarter of the year and of course the usual bout of seasonal services but we still have the [Beer Festival](#) and the annual [Giants of Steam](#) events to come, and I'm pleased to report that advance sales for both are already well ahead of this time last year which is very encouraging.

So, with trade for the rest of the year some 15% up over 2023 but whilst that's a good measure, the reverse is the continuing increase in costs, therefore there is still a need for strong and careful financial controls as we enter this final phase.

I do hope that you will take the opportunity to participate in the events and sample the new stock. I am conscious that people work very hard in their respective projects and departments but I do hope you take the time to take a break and enjoy what's on offer after all, that's why we do what we are here for.

Go on: spoil yourself and don't forget, nothing wrong with a critical eye or telling friends and family what we do and how they can help.

As always, thanks for your hard work and support in whatever form you are able to give!

Let's keep the Railway a shining example and you proud of your contribution.



Photo: David Cable

Beachy Head is Launched!

By David Jones, Bluebell Atlantic Group

During the final stages of the reconstruction of the Atlantic thoughts had been given to celebrating the entry into traffic of the new locomotive. Bluebell event planners suggested using the successful 'Flying Scotsman' programme of 2023 as a basis so the 2024 August Bank Holiday and the week leading up to it were pencilled in. This all depended on the successful running-in and commissioning of the locomotive so detailed planning was put on hold for the time being, and supporters were warned in *Atlantic News* that it may not happen until spring 2025.

Due to the relatively smooth running of the commissioning programme, a date of August 18 2024 was possible for the launch Pullman train for the construction team and prominent supporters, with a further series of trains hauled by 'Beachy Head' for the majority of Atlantic Supporters on October 5. Jim Taylor, Events Organiser, produced flyers to be sent out to those eligible to travel on the Pullman Special and most accepted the invitation. There was an effort to contact those who had not responded, but this was not entirely successful so it is hoped that they will attend on October 5.

On the launch day, Sunday August 18, Car 54, the recently completed Pullman car, was placed at the rear of the 'Golden Arrow' train on platform 1 at Sheffield Park ready for the guests. Terry Cole, Chairman of the Brighton Atlantic Project gave a speech thanking all those who had contributed over the past 24 years since the scheme to build the Atlantic started. Included were Keith Sturt, Fred Bailey, Tony Funnell, Dave Westcott, Malcolm Place, Richard Blakesley and Melvyn Frohnsdorff, not forgetting Neville Watts and David Jones for their work behind the scenes on the Newsletter and administration of the records and sponsorships. Thanks were also expressed to the Atlantic House sales team now led by Chris Clacey. Following the speech, David was asked to hand over to Neil Glaskin, Interim Chairman of the Bluebell Railway Plc, a 'Certificate of Completion', designed by Matthew Cousins to signify the



Beachy Head climbs Freshfield Bank on the inaugural supporters' Pullman luncheon service, 18 August.

Photo: Peter Edwards

transfer of 'Beachy Head' from the Atlantic Project Group to the Bluebell Railway.

All those of the construction team and the prominent supporters then boarded the 'Golden Arrow' for the inaugural run up to East Grinstead and back whilst being served drinks and a splendid lunch in the opulent surroundings of the Pullman Cars. Many photographers and reporters were present on the platform at Sheffield Park and also along the lineside recording the occasion for television, the railway press and social media. During the day interviews were held with various group members by the railway press and television news channels, which will have appeared by the time this is published. The following Friday, August 23, marked the start of public services behind the Atlantic and the locomotive ran successfully for the rest of August up to September 1, including a 'Brighton Works' weekend when 'Beachy Head' was joined by 'Fenchurch', 80151 running as 80154 (the last locomotive to be built there) and 'Sir Archibald Sinclair'.

Built at Brighton

By Tom James Photos David Cable

The launch into traffic of No. 32424 warranted holding an impromptu gala over the August Bank Holiday weekend. Four locomotives were in use, each having a notable connection to Brighton Works. No. 72 'Fenchurch', built in 1872, was the first of the celebrated 'Terriers' and is the oldest surviving Brighton locomotive. No. 34059 'Sir Archibald Sinclair' was built there in 1947. BR Standard 4MT tank No. 80151, masquerading as class mate No. 80154, is the youngest surviving Brighton locomotive, dating from 1957, from the final batch of locomotives built at the works. Finally, No. 32424 'Beachy Head' comes of course from our own workshop 15 miles north of Brighton, but to a design with solid Brighton provenance.





Bluebell Railway to Celebrate 200 Years of Rail Travel

By Roger Kelly, BRPS Trustee and Jon Beardmore Photo by Jon Bowers

In 1825 the Stockton to Darlington railway opened as the world's first public railway. Over the next two hundred years, railways evolved to become the fastest, most efficient and safest way to transport people and goods over land.

The rail industry has always celebrated the S&D anniversary. In 1925 a replica of the original train steamed into Stockton station, complete with costumed passengers, in an event that would surely not be sanctioned today.

In 1975 the fondly-remembered Rail 150 took place, including the famous cavalcade which featured our very own *Fenchurch*, then a mere spring chicken at 102 years old.

Fast-forward to 2025 and Railway 200. The North-East will again be the focus of events close to the September anniversary, but this time the Great British Railways team behind Railway 200 have encouraged heritage railways across the UK to create their own events to celebrate Railway 200, coat-tailing on the national event and the associated publicity. *Fenchurch* will be 152 years old and still going strong. For Bluebell, this is too good an opportunity to pass up.

We are fortunate to be ideally placed to host the largest Railway 200 event in the South-East. Our assets include arguably the best private collection of locomotives and rolling stock in Britain, a large operational railway with a national rail connection and the largest preserved station in the UK at Horsted Keynes. We are also located in the largest rail market in the UK and over 20% of the population live within 90 minutes of Bluebell. A key Railway 200 aim is to attract a lot of visitors to the Bluebell Railway who would not otherwise have come.

Bluebell was one of the first heritage railways to show interest in Railway 200 back in late 2023. Since then, our plans have matured. We intend to run an event throughout the peak summer season



that will feature 'Rail Past' at Sheffield Park and 'Rail Present and Future' at Horsted Keynes. Sheffield Park already does a superb job of delivering 'Rail Past' with SteamWorks! and the museum. We hope to augment this with visiting exhibits and special activities, but the real opportunity is at Horsted Keynes, building on the excellent work that has taken place there in the last couple of years, as a result of the "Jewel In The Crown" appeal.

Rail Present and Future is intended to showcase more modern rail equipment, together with a glimpse into the future. The intention is to bring Platform 1 back into passenger use, initially hosting the National Exhibition Train, which will be with us between 23 – 29 July. The Up Yard will be largely relayed, including safe access to -1 and -3 roads, where rail vehicles can be viewed. We have already received a lot of interest from the rail industry (including offers of stewards using volunteering days) and we expect a wide range of interesting exhibits, activities and careers information to be present. We're planning to add a

digital visitor guide to help visitors understand and interpret the event.

To help fund all this, Roger Kelly, Tony Astor and Jon Beardmore put together a National Lottery Heritage Fund application to pay for platform work at Horsted Keynes, exhibition materials and the digital visitor guide. We are delighted to announce that we were awarded £250,000 in August, which, together with Bluebell Railway Trust money already approved, is sufficient to complete the work on platforms 1 and 2.

In parallel, we have confirmed Network Rail, the Rail Industry Association, HS2 and Mortons Media (publishers of *The Railway Magazine*, *Heritage Railway* and other rail titles) as partners, with more to follow.

There will be a big focus on education in June 2025, with what we hope to be commercially sponsored schools visits with a big focus on rail careers. We will also use Railway 200 as an opportunity to recruit new volunteers for Bluebell.

It's important to note that Railway 200 will provide a summer-long background for the railway. It won't stop us running our normal services and events – there will just be more for visitors to see and do, with a unifying theme to tie it all together.

There are two overarching objectives for Railway 200. The first is to put on a special event to bring in

visitors for 2025, ensuring we generate the income we need to fund the railway. This will be greatly assisted by the awareness and national marketing effort generated by the Great British Railways team, who are coordinating the national programme of which we are part. The second is to create a long-term legacy that will help us for years to come. These benefits include infrastructure improvements, an enhanced visitor experience, an influx of new volunteers, new rail industry relationships – which are already delivering tangible benefits – and the opportunity to dramatically increase awareness of the Bluebell Railway, particularly in the London area.

Ruth Rowatt is leading the event design at the Bluebell Railway, while Jon Beardmore, supported by Roger Kelly and Trevor Swainson, is leading on industry engagement and commercial and charity sponsorship. There will be lots of opportunities for others to join in, and to take advantage of Railway 200 to further their own projects. Any groups with well-articulated requests for project assistance from the rail industry should contact Jon Beardmore (jon.beardmore@bluebell-railway.com) who is talking to a lot of organisations who may be able to help.

Could you be the volunteer Project Coordinator to drive this major event? See page 25 for how to apply – Ed.



New Commercial Director

By Neil Glaskin, Director & Interim Chairman Bluebell Railway Plc

I'm very pleased to welcome Michael Bishop to the Bluebell Railway as our new Commercial Director.

Michael is committed to collaborating with the dedicated staff and volunteers at the railway, aiming to contribute to the continued success of the business, ensuring that the heritage railway experience can be enjoyed for many years to come.

Michael will be working with the Chief Operating Officer and other Managers and Directors on the commercial, retail and catering areas of our business. Michael brings 30 years of experience in the passenger transport industry and currently serves as a Director for a local bus company. In his leisure time, Michael enjoys exploring various modes of public transport, with a particular fondness for trains and ferries.

I am sure you will join me in welcoming Michael and wishing him well in his new role.



Rolling Stock Disposals and Loans

Photo by Phil Evans

Phil Evans' photo shows Pullman Car [Carina](#) being loaded onto a lorry on 3 September.

This carriage was originally acquired as a swap for *Doris*, a former Brighton Belle carriage, with the intention that it could provide a back-up kitchen vehicle for our Pullman Train. In August 2023 following a reassessment of the provision of kitchens for our Pullman Train, it was decided that *Carina* no longer featured in our plans for the Pullman Train, and as such has been sold to the [Churnet Valley Railway](#).

A number of other items of rolling stock have recently been listed as potential sales or loans. The status of these is as follows:

- Pullman Car Carina – sold to the Churnet Valley Railway, left 3 September 2024.
- GWR Toad Brake Van [No. 17908](#) – this is deemed as not meeting our core preservation objectives. A sale for ongoing preservation has been agreed, subject to final ratification.
- Dogfish [DB993217](#) – a sale has been agreed and this vehicle should leave the railway in the near future.
- BR General Utility Van [No. 93722](#) – this vehicle was acquired to act as storage space some years ago. It remains available for sale.
- Howard Petrol Locomotive [No. 957](#) – this small shunting locomotive is **not** for sale. However, with opportunities for visitors to see the locomotive at the Bluebell being very limited, expressions of interest are invited to take the locomotive on loan – with the intention that the locomotive can be displayed and possibly operated.



Q Class 541 Overhaul Update

By Steve Pilcher, Maunsell Locomotive Society Photos by Leaky Finders

In recent weeks Leaky Finders have undertaken copper welding work around a number of stay holes on the water side of the copper inner firebox. With this now complete, work has started on welding the new outer wrapper sides of the firebox into place. These have already been cut to size and formed to the correct profile.

The previous report mentioned that the horn blocks had been taken down and overhauled. These have all been machined and the leading and rear horn blocks are now back in place, which entailed the machining of a good number of fitted bolts and a new draw-bar pin – see photo.

The drag box construction nears completion, with the main assembly currently being riveted together. Many rivets have also been fitted on various components in the frames.

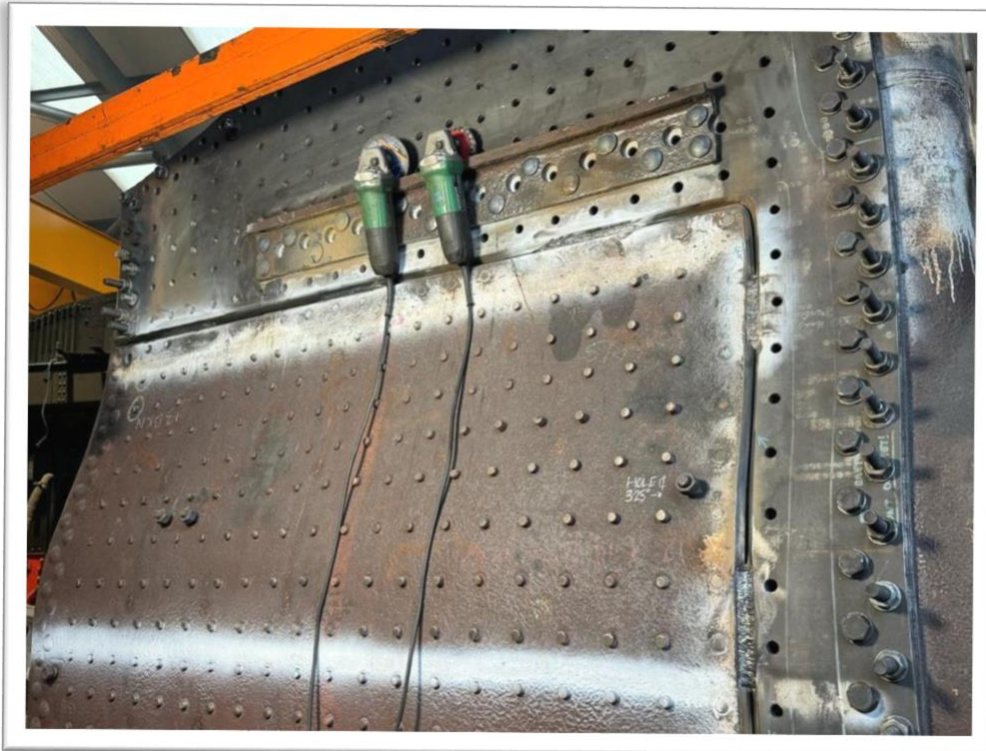
The 4253 Group continue to progress construction of the framework and internal baffles for the rear half of the new tender tank and have also completed fabrication of a new access hatch, that is going into place in the front half of the coal space – to provide two points of entry into the tender tank in future. The Maunsell Locomotive Society is investigating options to 'line' the inside of the new tank to provide a level of corrosion resistance and longevity.

With it being summer holiday time, a number of our Sheffield Park working party have been away, nevertheless Andy Sparkes continued with work on the various brake rigging components and these have now been fully degreased. A start has been made on repainting, albeit they will be re-bushed in due course.

We would also appreciate extra help with the work on 541's tender. Please contact Steve Pilcher on: jstevepilcher@yahoo.co.uk if you are interested in joining our Tuesday working party.



Photos, top to bottom:
Copper welding on the inside of 541's firebox
New machined bolts for horn blocks and a new drawbar pin
Underside of new loco rear dragbox fabrication



Left hand side of steel outer firebox wrapper tack-welded into place

THE Q NEEDS YOU!

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

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

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

At the time of writing we are getting close to the target of providing £40,000 towards this project. As ever, a very warm 'thank you' to all concerned who have generously contributed thus far. Please consider helping us to reach the target of £40,000, and thus play a part in getting this very useful loco back in action at the Bluebell Railway.

Stepney Club to Rise Again - With Your Help

By Ruth Rowatt

Stepney Club is a very special club run by Bluebell Railway volunteers for children 3 – 9 years. The aim of the club is to share stories and news with little train enthusiasts and keep their interest alive until it is time to move onto the 9F Club. A club which allows older children a more hands-on experience at the preserved railway.

THE GLORY DAYS

In the past, members have been entitled to Bluebell Railway Preservation Society rates on train and event tickets, they have enjoyed special discounts on Santa trains and attended summer and Christmas members-only parties at the railway. Throughout the 35 years since its inception, a regular newsletter with stories, puzzles, letters and drawings has dropped through thousands of letter boxes. At the height of its popularity, Stepney Club has had as many as 700 members! Past members have grown up to become volunteers on the railway with locomotive drivers, signalmen and carriage and wagon workshop staff amongst the number. Even a Bluebell Railway Plc Chairman ranked amongst the membership.

THE TOUGH TIMES

In the last few years, the club has experienced difficulties. It probably started with Covid changing some of the ways the club had to operate, with social distancing and restrictions scuppering any plans for Stepney Club gatherings. Then the costs of printing and posting the magazine became unaffordable and for a while Stepney Club had to go digital – not what the club wanted to do at all. The biggest current challenge Stepney Club faces is a lack of adult volunteers to run the club and all the activities we would like to do. What once was a pool of helpful adults, with many hands making light work, has dwindled to a stalwart core. After many years of service, the very excellent club membership secretary is now retiring, and we must say a huge thank you to



Gerry Smith for all his hard work over the years. Luckily, we still have Heidi Mowforth, who started the club, and her wonderful stories about the steam railway, so there is always content for the newsletters.

STEPNEY CLUB WILL RISE AGAIN

Stepney Club has paused taking new members until it finds a new membership secretary – could this be you?

When the club returns in time for Christmas (membership being a super present for little ones), it will be with a brand-new offer for its members. The printed newsletter is also making a comeback – hurrah! The club is busy working on one right now.

Next year, Stepney Club would like to run members-only events once again. We can't do this without adult support. You could be dressing up, playing party games or handing out lemonade.

The printed newsletter requires hours of digital art working. Have you any skills with desktop publishing? It might be just to create puzzles to go

in the newsletter, or to create or find illustrations or images for insertion, whilst someone else formats and compiles the magazine. We aim to send out three magazines a year.

Perhaps you have time to help with stuffing and franking envelopes three times a year or could send out the birthday cards to members on behalf of dear old *Stepney*?

The club needs new adult volunteers to help make it great again. The Stepney Club supports and nurtures the volunteers of the future, and this is so important for places like the Bluebell Railway which could not function without volunteers. Help us make Stepney Club great again.

Please contact ruth.rowatt@bluebell-railway.com if you think you could help.

Experience the Bluebell Railway Beer Festival for Free!

By Ruth Rowatt

The Bluebell Railway Beer Festival is almost upon us, from Friday 20th September to Sunday 22nd September 2024 there will be Sussex brews of all kinds at stations up and down the line and a busy train timetable to enjoy.

Bars are manned by both the Sussex Branches of CAMRA and Bluebell Railway volunteers. As part of that role, volunteers get a beer festival t-shirt and the chance to sample the brews at the end of their shift.

We still have some volunteering opportunities available, particularly on our East Grinstead and Horsted Keynes Bars. These bars close much earlier than the main bar at Sheffield Park. Shifts are just 4 hours long, so when you have finished your shift, you can jump on a train and head to Sheffield Park to enjoy the evening's entertainment and get some free beer.

There are regular buses from Haywards Heath Station to Sheffield Park Station (Bluebell) with stops in between which are free to volunteers and you can use the Bluebell Railway Train service too.

Fancy donating some of your time to help the Bluebell Railway? Contact ruth.rowatt@bluebell-railway.com for more information or to volunteer.

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Nine Elms Reunion

By Jim Rowe, Dave Bryce and Pat O'Neill

On Wednesday 14 August 2024 many current and former railway staff attended the Nine Elms & All Railway Buffers Reunion at the Bluebell Railway. This annual event is very popular.

Plenty of friendships were rekindled, stories re-told and tales of steam trips recounted. Thanks to the excellent staff of the Bessemer Arms, nobody went thirsty or hungry. Other staff were very helpful and friendly.

The only sad note was allowing the Western Region Hall Class locomotive to carry our famous "Nine Elms Enginemen 1838 – 1967" headboard! That class of locomotive never had anything to do with Nine Elms and it was a major talking point of the day. We hope it won't happen again!

We look forward to the 2025 Reunion on Wednesday 13 August.



Top left: Retired railway staff outside the Bessemer Arms

Bottom left: Retired Nine Elms drivers

Top right: Retired drivers

Bottom right: Retired Eurostar drivers

Half a Million Visitors at the Bluebell Railway Museum!

By Malcolm Johnson, Museum Curator

On August 26 at precisely 12:05 PM, the Bluebell Railway Museum at Sheffield Park Station welcomed its 500,000th visitor since opening its doors in June 2011. This milestone moment was celebrated with a special presentation by the Museum Curator, Malcolm Johnson, who was thrilled to recognize Rhiannon and Alex Drillsma, who are from East Grinstead, as the lucky visitors.

To commemorate the occasion, the Drillsma family received a gift voucher for use at the Bluebell Railway Shop, as well as a certificate marking their participation in this historic achievement. Their son Felix and daughter Reya, who accompanied them on their first-ever visit to the Museum, were also treated to Bluebell Railway Museum badges, making the day even more memorable.

The timing of their visit couldn't have been more perfect, and the family was delighted to be part of such a significant event in the museum's history. This moment not only highlights the enduring



popularity of the Bluebell Railway Museum but also celebrates the countless memories it has created for visitors over the years.

Bluebell News – Back Issues

By Roger Price, BRPS Archivist

As from the end of 2024 the museum department will no longer keep a stock of back issues for purchase owing to space limitations in the archives. A good selection of past issues will continue to be available to buy in person from the Carriage Shop at Horsted Keynes and a project is underway to digitise Bluebell News so that it can be accessed online in the future.

Until the end of the year most of the past issues will be available for just the cost of postage or delivery by emailing the archivist at rogerprice@aol.com. As a special offer a complete set of around 250 issues (as far as they are available) can be purchased for £60 including postage or delivery or £40 if collected at the railway.

Meet 'Bluebell,' Our 1934 Morris Minor

By Malcolm Johnson, Museum Curator

The success of the Bluebell Railway owes much to the generous contributions of our supporters. From vintage railway carriages that have been homes for decades to collections of railway books, cash donations, and relics from bygone eras, our support comes in many forms. Yet, it's not every day that we receive an offer involving a road vehicle. That's why we were pleasantly surprised when, on August 26th, we received an email from the son-in-law of one of our Society members with an unusual proposition: the donation of a car.

The car in question is a 1934 Morris Minor—not to be confused with the 1948 model designed by Alec Issigonis—which has affectionately been called "Bluebell" for the past forty years. The owner, a great admirer of our museum at Sheffield Park, believed that the Bluebell Railway was the perfect guardian for this cherished vehicle, entrusting us with its future, whatever that might be.

"Bluebell" is a beautifully preserved car that still drives exceptionally well, though its nonstandard layout, with the throttle and brake pedals in reversed positions, requires a bit of acclimatization. On September 4th, the Bluebell Railway Trust officially became the proud owner of this charming piece of motoring history.

While "Bluebell" won't be housed in our museum – it falls way outside our collecting policy, never mind its size! – we hope it will find its place within the Bluebell Railway's rich tapestry. Imagine the sight of this nostalgic four-wheeled gem parked at Horsted Keynes Station on a sunny weekend or serving as a cherished older car on display at Kingscote Station. Picture it as the Station Master's car, a plausible scenario given that, when new, the car sold for just £125, making it a potential second-hand purchase for a thrifty Station Master of the era. Or perhaps "Bluebell" might find a new life as a film shoot "extra," adding a touch of authenticity to scenes filmed along our historic railway while providing much-appreciated income to support our preservation efforts.



Envision a couple using our wedding facilities at Horsted Keynes, arriving by rail in our period rolling stock, and departing for their honeymoon in "Bluebell," the perfect blend of romance and nostalgia.

If vintage cars captivate you and you can see a future for "Bluebell" within the Bluebell Railway, we'd love to hear from you. Perhaps you could become the custodian of this 1930s charmer, enjoying its vintage allure while making it available for film shoots and occasional displays at the railway. Could there be a "Friends of Moggie" group lurking within our ranks?

For those who are technically minded the four-seater car was very advanced for its time with hydraulic brakes and shock absorbers and a four-speed gearbox with a "silent double top" (synchromesh on 3rd and 4th). A sunroof and tilting windscreen provide the climate control.

If this opportunity sparks your interest, please contact Malcolm Johnson at malcolm.johnson@bluebell-railway.com or call 07593 407802. Let's ensure that "Bluebell" continues to delight and inspire for years to come.

Carriage Shop Donates £500 - 4 times!

Words and photos by Chris Wilson, Carriage Shop volunteer

The Carriage Shop team are delighted to have been able to donate £2,000 towards four Bluebell Railway projects for September.

£500 has been donated to the 1305 Oxted Thumper Gang to support the restoration of Oxted DEMU 1305 'Brighton Royal Pavilion'.

Project leader Ben Wetherall said: 'Thanks to the continuing support from the Carriage shop at Horsted Keynes, we are currently looking into getting replacement flooring for the motor coach and this donation will go towards that.'

If you would like to help the gang then you can volunteer by emailing ben.wetherall@bluebell-railway.com and to donate to the restoration of 1305, either one off or monthly, you can do so by visiting the Bluebell Railway Trust webpage www.bluebell-railway.com/trust-project/oxted-demu-1305/

£500 was contributed to Friends of Horsted Keynes station fund to support the restoration work on the station led by Tim Baker. This was raised through the sale of books in August and we would like to place on record our thanks to the station staff for opening the gazebo which housed the pop-up bookshop.

A further £500 was donated to the Southern Coach Group. For more information and to join the group please visit www.bluebell-railway.co.uk/sr-coach-group/

Lastly, £500 have been provided the Maunsell Locomotive Society to support the work being undertaken on Q Class No. 541.

Maunsell Locomotive Society Chairman Ben Coughlan said 'The MLS are extremely grateful to the Carriage Shop team for offering this generous donation towards the rebuild of 541's tender, helping us get ever closer to seeing the loco steaming again.'

Donations to the Q Class overhaul fund can be made by visiting: www.bluebell-



Above:
Rich Auckland, Ben Wetherall and Andrew Brock from the 1305 Oxted Thumper Gang

Below:
Clive Cutbill, Roger Garman and David Brett from the Horsted Keynes station staff



[railway.com/trust/make-a-donation/](https://www.railway.com/trust/make-a-donation/) and further information on the Maunsell Locomotive Society can be found at www.maunsell.org.uk/

The Carriage Shop was established in 1989 and is fully operated volunteers with a sole mission to raise funds to support projects across the Bluebell Railway.

We currently have a wide selection of Horsted Keynes exclusive souvenirs, model railway items, railway and transport books and Railway Art by Matthew Cousins. We are also supporting the 1305 Thumper Gang, Bluebell Railway Goods Division and the Fenchurch Fund by stocking a small selection of their items in the shop.

The Carriage Shop is always pleased to receive donations of model railway items, books, DVDs, bound magazines, pictures, postcards, photographs, slides, mugs, badges, keyrings or other railway or transport material. We are always in need of model railway items – if you any items you can spare we would be very grateful.

If you can help please contact:

bluebellrailwaycarriageshop@gmail.com

We will be open for extended hours during the Giants of Steam, for all opening times and news please visit our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/BluebellRailwayCarriageShop>



Above:

Keith Leppard, Tony Clements and Tim Preston from the Southern Railway Coach Group

Below:

Ben Coughlan and Chris Hunford from the Maunsell Locomotive Society



More Photos From The Museum Website

By Chris Wilson, Bluebell Railway archive volunteer

This month we have added a further 264 images to the Bluebell Railway Museum website bringing the total now available to 24,898. These new additions come from the cameras of H.C. Casserley, John Scrace and Alan Postlethwaite.

The Henry Casserley images were taken during 1925-26 and feature variety of former LSWR, LBSC and SECR locomotives at locations including West Croydon, Victoria, Clapham Junction, Bricklayers Arms, New Cross and Brighton.

John Scrace's views are of Standard class locomotives at many locations across the South including Nine Elms, Hailsham, Corfe Castle and Groombridge. This selection also includes the last BR train on the Bluebell Line and a few images off the Southern at Ais Gill.

We have also added 29 colour images taken by Alan Postlethwaite between 1963-65 at locations including Forest Row, Hartfield, East Grinstead, Tiverton Junction and Sheffield Park.

Do you have an interest and experience in scanning railway negatives and slides? We will be looking to expand our team of volunteers later this year. If you think you could help and would like to find out more please email: photos@bluebell-railway-museum.co.uk.

If you have a collection of photographs, negatives, slides or digital images you are interested in depositing within Archive please get in touch with us by emailing photos@bluebell-railway-museum.co.uk.



[270324] SR ex-SE&CR R1 No. A154 at Ashford in what looks to be fairly freshly painted Southern Railway livery, 29 August 1925. In common with many former SE&CR locos of the period, it still carries the SE&CR identification plate on the bunker. Photo: H.C. Casserley

VIEWING AND ORDERING

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

To view and order go to www.brm-archive.co.uk. There are various searching methods, including by locomotive number or class and location. The content key search allows you to see all the images of a particular type, for example, all the images taken of Pullmans. Use the New key to see all the latest images including those mentioned and shown here and the Nearly New key to see what we added last month.



[270354]. SR ex LBSC E5x No. B586 at New Cross on 26 June 1926.

Photo: H.C. Casserley

[052026]. BR Class 202 No. 1015 and 2-HAP No. 6093 at Ashford station, Summer 1963.

Photo: Alan Postlethwaite



On This Day, 13 September

By Tony Hillman, Deputy Curator

Three pictures from the Bluebell Photographic Archive taken on 21 June. Thanks to John Creed, Martin Elms, Richard Peirce, Chris Sutton, Roger Merry-Price and Chris Wilson for finding the pictures and researching the notes.



It is Sunday 13 September 1959 and Standard Class 5 4-6-0 73084 (later *Tintagel*) is passing through Sevenoaks at the head of a late afternoon London Victoria to Folkestone Harbour boat train.

73084 was one of 172 Standard Class 5s introduced between 1951 and 1957. Having been built at Derby, it was delivered new to Stewarts Lane (73A) in July 1955. It was also one of the 20 that received names formerly carried by the Urie *King Arthur* class engines from 1959 onwards.

Interestingly, official records show that 73084 was transferred to Nine Elms (70D) in June 1959 after Phase One of the Kent Coast electrification. However, this photograph would seem to support a view expressed in some reports that the locomotive might have remained at its original depot for a few months longer, particularly as it is still carrying a 73A shed plate on the lower part of the smokebox door.

Sevenoaks station was opened, as Sevenoaks Tubs Hill, in 1868 by the South Eastern Railway on its new line linking St Johns with Tonbridge, constructed to shorten the original route between London and Folkestone via Redhill. It became a junction when a connection from Sevenoaks (Bat & Ball), was completed by the London, Chatham and Dover Railway in 1869.

The station had an unusual layout including two island platforms and two side platforms serving four through tracks. Suburban electric services reached Sevenoaks in 1935. However, it wasn't until Phase 2 of the Kent Coast Electrification in 1962 that a fully electric service ran to Tonbridge, Ashford and Folkestone.

Sevenoaks was modernised in the 1970s when a new station building was constructed and the two side platforms were removed. Meanwhile, 73084 was withdrawn at the end of 1965 after a working life of just over 10 years. Sister locomotive, 73082 *Camelot*, is now preserved at the Bluebell Railway as one of five surviving examples of the class.



In the [November 2023](#) issue of *The Bluebell Times*, one of the pictures featured in "On This Day" was a panoramic view of Ilfracombe. Taken on 8 September 1963 from an elevated position behind the engine shed it belied the fact that Ilfracombe Station was 225 feet above sea level.

Five days later on 13 September 1963 we see a similar view, but taken much higher up towards Morteohoe. As well as a good view of the station area, it shows a departing train struggling up the 1 in 36 gradient towards Morteohoe, which began at the platform end. The gradient was such that all but the lightest trains had to be double headed or banked. The train is the 4.50 pm Ilfracombe to Exeter Central formed of Battle of Britain Class No 34080 74 *Squadron* and a 3-coach Bulleid Corridor Set plus two vans. The engine is working Exmouth Junction (72A) Duty 582, which had started its day at Wadebridge!

Prominent in the picture is the white roof of the single road engine shed. Nominally a sub shed of Barnstaple (72E), it didn't have an allocation, but stabled Exmouth Junction engines on cyclic

diagrams. By 1963, with the gradual spread of dieselisation, only one West Country/Battle of Britain engine was stabled overnight.

34080 was built at Brighton Works and released to traffic on 20 August 1948. Initially allocated to Ramsgate (74B) it was used on a number of routes to London, plus inter-regional trains to the Western Region as far as Redhill. On 14 January 1958 it was reallocated to Exmouth Junction where it was used on all types of trains west of Exeter and all but the heaviest trains to Salisbury. Withdrawn from Exmouth Jct. (83D), by now part of the Western Region, in September 1964, it was scrapped by Birds of Morrision, Swansea in December 1964.

Photographer: J Scrace (141516)



Above is a photograph of the approach to Ventnor West station taken on Saturday 13 September 1952, the last day of services on the branch.

It shows the Up Home signal which controlled entry to the station and its yard. Rather unusually both the Isle of Wight Central Railway and the Southern Railway designated the line as 'up' to Ventnor and 'down' to Merstone. The signal is unusual for a passenger line in that the main arms were mounted one above the other. The top arm controlled entry to Platform 1, the middle signal to Platform 2, whilst the lower 'ringed' signal controlled entry to the yard.

Observant readers may notice that the signal to Platform 2 is 'off' as is, in the distance, the Platform 2 Down Starter. This dates to the introduction of push/pull working in 1926 when the locking in the signal box allowed both signals to be cleared at the same time. Visible in the distance is the 10-foot square signal box constructed by the Railway Signal Company.

The branch, from Merstone, on the Newport to Sandown line, was opened in two stages. To St.

Lawrence on 20 July 1897 and on to Ventnor Town (renamed Ventnor West in 1923) on 1 June 1900. There were also intermediate stations at Godshell and Whitwell. The line always struggled financially but after grouping the SR improved services and undertook some modernisation, although economies, such as the removal of the passing loop and signal box at Whitwell, were also made.

During the SR period the branch trains were mainly hauled by A1X Terriers, the O2 class being used only irregularly on the line before WW2. Only in later years when the Terrier tanks were returned to the mainland did the O2s see regular use.

Up to closure, on weekdays, BR operated eight passenger trains in each direction and a daily freight that left Merstone at 10.10am.

After closure, demolition of the line commenced in November 1953 and was completed by May 1954.

Photographer: JJ Smith (043165)



Vacancies

RAILWAY 200 PROJECT COORDINATOR

The Bluebell Railway will be hosting a major event celebrating 'Railway 200' from June to August 2025, which will attract large numbers of visitors to the railway.

The delivery of the event will involve the active engagement of many departments of the railway which will need to be planned and coordinated by a Project Coordinator.

This volunteer role is for one year from now until the end of September 2025. Frequent on-site presence at the railway is not expected to be required as the work can largely be carried out at home and using virtual meetings using MS Teams.

If you have project management experience and would like to part of delivering this exciting event, the biggest ever staged at the Bluebell Railway, please contact lisa.boyle@bluebell-railway.com with a brief summary of your project management experience.



Photo: Nick Gilliam

The Bluebell Times

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

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

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Tom James*

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Tail Lamp

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

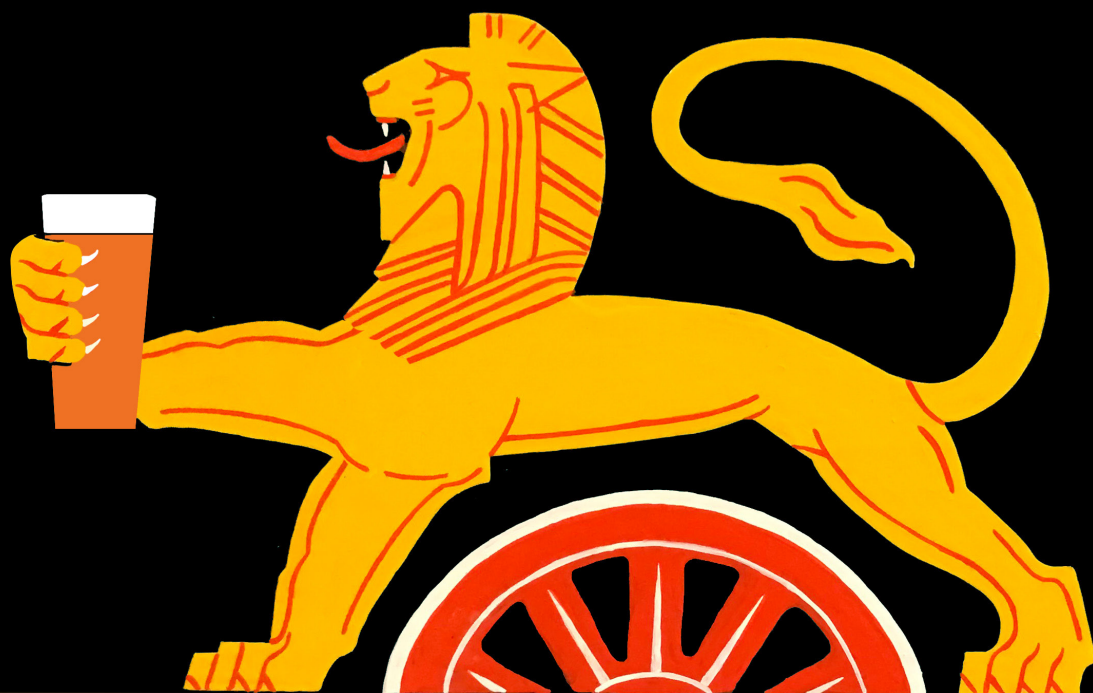
To find out when the next issue is out and for other updates about the Bluebell Railway, check our [website](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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