



'Beachy Head' leads the 'Bicester' coach at Waterworks on 21 September Photo: Peter Edwards

The Bluebell Times

A Newsletter for Bluebell Railway Members, Staff and Supporters

October 2024

IN THIS ISSUE

While waiting to cross another train at Horsted Keynes last weekend, I was asked how old the locomotive was. Well, there's a question. "About four months old" was the honest answer, and the questioner's jaw dropped. Cue some explanation about the Atlantic project, and the recreation of an original scrapped nearly seventy years ago – yet it is a tribute to the team that built the loco that 32424 is already blending in: with each passing day it feels more and more as if the loco has always been here. It may be Britain's newest steam locomotive, but it is also completely at home in our corner of Sussex – the original having worked over the line on many occasions, of course.

There are two parts of the locomotive that were rescued from the original and are now part of the new: the regulator handle and whistle. Two more significant parts were reunited last Sunday, with the opportunity to pose the loco with one of the original nameplates, and the original smokebox number. The occasion was a visit by the Railway Correspondence and Travel Society, taking place seventy-two years almost to the day after 'Beachy Head' had hauled the Brighton Works Centenary Railtour on 5 October 1952. There are many photos of that tour online, and it was nice to be able to recreate the appearance with the same route code and RCTS headboard.

By time this edition of *The Bluebell Times* is published, [Giants of Steam](#) will be underway. Our Atlantic is a close cousin of the famed Henry Ivatt 'large Atlantic' type of the Great Northern Railway which in many ways set the template for British express passenger locos for the next half century, so it will be fascinating to compare it with perhaps the peak of that line of development, the Gresley A4 in the shape of No. 60007 'Sir Nigel Gresley' – a comparison in steam that has not been possible for many decades. An opportunity not to be missed!

Tom James, Editor

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Watts Occurring

By Roy Watts, BRPS Chairman

These weeks just seem to fly past, and it does not seem that long ago we were talking about and preparing for a lengthy list of upcoming events. Well, here we are now on the cusp of the very popular [Giants of Steam](#) event followed by six weeks of Christmas Seasonal traffic.

September's beer festival was again very successful drawing in the crowds over the 3 days, albeit the Sunday was much quieter. We did of course welcome the UK Pathfinders rail tour during the course of the Saturday. (The first time the Kent and East Sussex Railway has ever run on the Bluebell!! Ok, bit tongue in cheek as I am referring to the recently named and repainted in NSE livery, class 73, number 73128 which led the incoming special).



No 73128 'Kent and East Sussex Railway' leads the UK Railtours excursion across Imberhorne Viaduct. The other locomotives involved were No. 73119 and No. 66792 at the rear.

Photo: Roy Watts

Again the feedback was extremely positive with many a favourable comment expressed not only in writing but to the staff as well. But as always, there are lessons that can be learned to aid and improve for next year.

Again, this is all part of attracting a wider cross section of visitors which we must do in order to bring in the much-needed revenue the railway

needs. An undoubted success in this aspect was the Gruffalo (use google if you don't know what one looks like!) – voted for by the public – that clearly bought out the families.

This was a very busy weekend with the Carriage Restorers convention hosted by the Bluebell and held at Horsted Keynes, the Rolls Royce owners displaying some rather nice vehicles at Sheffield Park and we also welcomed the RCTS for a visit and to travel behind 32424, 'Beachy Head'.

But with the season drawing to a close and the planning for 2025 reaching an advanced stage, the railway needs to take a real in-depth look at itself, examine our real reason for being and what we do.

In uncertain times it's vital to become proactive rather than reactive and put into place strict disciplines to ensure a sustainable operation. It is almost a parody of repetition when you read either in the periodicals or on social media the issues that currently face the heritage railway movement.

We are by no way in a unique situation as it is the same headings that have to be addressed right across the sector, namely ageing infrastructure, declining numbers of volunteers, a more cautious approach adopted by the potential visitor and how they spend their money and the real big one, how to address increased costs. Our recent restoration projects have been turned out to an exceptional high standard which is greatly appreciated by our visitors – but who questions how much did it cost to overhaul that locomotive, coach, wagon and so on?

Look at the work that has gone into restoring Horsted Keynes back to its former glory.

Yes, we need more volunteers, more visitors and of course more revenue but we have to be practical in what we do and simply running extra trains is definitely not the answer.

Neither can it be presumed that people will simply arrive every day and spend their hard-earned money with us. In fact it is the complete opposite

because people seek to get the very best from their cash and in return we have to deliver on that expectation, however tough that may be.

Likewise, we must extend stringent cost controls on what we spend.

I will cover the outputs of the upcoming Board meetings in due course but we cannot go on in the current manner nor is it right expecting the Trust to fund everything we do. We need to develop a

clear vision of what we want to do and set the strategic goals to achieve them.

But as always, let's be positive in what we do as we approach the end of 2024, after all 2025 promises to be quite a special year especially if they are going to rename "Snickers" bars back to "Marathon" once more!

Stay safe!

Somerset & Dorset Flavour

Photo by Dave Bowles

Jon Bowers organised two days of photo charters with No. 34059 and No. 73082 temporarily renumbered as No. 73087 'Linette'. The two locos are shown on an eight-coach train approaching Horsted Keynes. A feature of the photos taken in many locations is the tidy appearance of the lineside, a credit to the hard-working infrastructure teams responsible.



And Now, Breathe ...

By Steve Upton, Southern Electric Traction Group

What does it take to get a sixty-year-old electric unit to run from Strawberry Hill to the Bluebell and then run faultlessly for three days of gala traffic, despite the worst the weather can throw at it? Steve Upton of the Southern Electric Traction Group explains just what ...

It's Thursday. A quiet, sunny Thursday. The gusty wind that's blowing hints at the approaching autumn and as I look out of the office window the trees that line the Fulwell Curve are just starting to lose their vibrant greens. Lynn is in Holland doing clever IT things with her other job (she doesn't just do Trim Shop Minioning, folks) and Buckie is ploughing through post-Bluebell paperwork whilst muttering to himself (as usual). Everything is calm (for a given value of calm), and after the last few weeks I can say with definite authority that calm is something that is underrated in railway preservation. 3417 is sitting demurely in the shed, doors open while she dries out after 3 days of being intermittently rained on, as if to say "What was all the fuss about?" British Airways & Chums are doing their best Red Baron impressions as they thunder over the shed but everything is oddly relaxed ...

So then; let's have a wee chat about the Bluebell Diesel Gala, shall we? Firstly, congratulations to

the teams involved – to Roy Watts, Mike Hawkins and the Bluebell Railway staff and volunteers, thank you. To the team at Locomotive Services, in particular to Driver Oscar Martin, Driver Chris Page, thanks folks; good to have the Wombles On Loan involved! To Christian Lamb and his staff at Strawberry Hill – brilliant work; you're all Honorary Minions! And then there are the [SETG](#) team themselves, at which point I run out of superlatives. To commit to a project that has lasted a decade (so far), to maintain the standards of work of the mainline railway as volunteers, to support the vision that Buckie, Gwil and I hatched in a pub 15 years ago ... you're all bloody brilliant and I happily admit to having a tear in my eye as I write this. Each and every one of you should be proud of what you have achieved. And for everyone else who came along for the ride – either inside or outside the industry – thank you for your trust and support. I hope you've all been watching and thinking "I helped to do that."

Photo: Darren Franklin



It wouldn't be a lie to say that we were all somewhat nervous before 3417 left the shed on the 5 September. The team had done everything required to make sure the unit was safe to transit over Network Rail metals, but we have to remember that not only is the unit approaching 60 years of age but it has only covered 22 miles in the last 10 years; now we were expecting it to cover 450 miles over 3 days, in service. It's a big ask and Buckie was, in his words, wound "a little bit tight." As well he should be: it's his name on all those documents that say 'this unit is safe to go.' Everything had been done to spec or above. All the little details that we had worked on, the careful restoration, the mechanical work, the trim pieces... All that work was about to be put to the test; yes, we were nervous. We needn't have worried.

The trip down to East Grinstead was without incident, although that didn't stop Buckie and Darren pacing up and down like mother hens listening for knocks and bangs! Unusually we were able to share the journey with anyone who happened to be interested thanks to a live on-board camera feed from a First Class compartment in 76262. The idea, one of several spawned by our friend Nick Collier of High Viz Media Group, allowed everyone to enjoy the journey from the comfort of their own homes. As far as we know this is the first time anyone has tried anything like this in the UK. If you missed it, you can find the [whole 3 hour video](#) on our YouTube channel.

By the close of play on Thursday, 3417 was tucked up safely on the Pump House siding at Sheffield Park station and ready for its first day in traffic.

The Friday morning began with apocalyptic rain. And 3417, true to form and in kinship with every other 4VEP ever built did exactly what would be expected of it: it leaked. Minions spent 45 minutes before the first move into Sheffield Park galloping up and down the unit using Blue Roll tissue paper to soak up the water from brimming window frames. Fortunately, all the work we had put in to make sure that the window drains were clear proved to be time well spent. Despite the leaks, the seats stayed dry. The Friday was spent working back and forth, in push-pull mode, with

guest locomotive 33 111 – normally based at the Swanage Railway. Unsurprisingly from our perspective, the loco performed faultlessly. 3417 has worked with this locomotive during our visits to the Swanage and we were delighted to renew the association! Friday also offered us a chance to test a modification only recently designed and fitted; that of a 5kW/Hour battery pack installed to energise the emergency lighting circuit on the unit. This meant that not only could we run through Sharpthorne Tunnel safely, but that we could also use the unit outside of daylight hours. In the past, when a 4VEP (or any other 3rd-rail only unit) was "off the juice", even the most basic amenities such as passenger lighting were available for only 30 minutes at most. In co-operation with [High Viz Media Group](#) and [NXTGENbps](#), the SETG designed and installed a method for energising the emergency lighting circuit for not minutes but hours. This is a first for the unit, and the system proved to be able to provide a full day of on/off lighting as required and (especially in Friday's gloom) it significantly improved the feel of the coaches for passengers and crews. The system, with significant upgrades planned over the winter, is a step change in what the unit is capable of offering to the railways it will visit in the future and we are delighted to be working with NXTGENbps and High Viz Media to showcase what is possible. The press release regarding this enhancement is available [here](#).

Despite Friday's rain, all three running days were an absolute blast from start to finish. Amongst other things passengers were treated to the novelty of orange curtains (thanks to 'Project Tango', completed in secret by Lynn and Gemma in the Trim Shop over the past few months), the non-stop antics of Buckie running up and down the unit with a screwdriver, tightening screws constantly whilst complaining "she's flexing about, love", New Bloke Dave resorting to tactics just short of physical force to get donations out of innocent bystanders and more besides. "Most of it is a bit of a blur", says Buckie. "Walking up and down the unit at 6am doing an inspection and prep is not one of my favourite ways to start a day. But it was worth it. Doing 400 miles up and down the Bluebell over the weekend was a very safe and controlled way to shake the unit down and work

out what tasks we need to carry out over the winter.” The work spent fettling the unit was evident to everyone who visited the railway over the weekend. James Cummins of the Bluebell Railway said “The praise for those who have been responsible for maintaining and operating 3417 was hugely evident from many who specifically made their way to admire and travel behind the 4-VEP. We are hugely grateful for the efforts of those who have worked to keep this piece of Southern Electric motive power alive, but also to those who worked tirelessly behind the scenes across the board to make this all possible.”

The best thing is to leave the comments about the three day to the Minions themselves: they say more with fewer words than I could ever manage!

Darren Franklin, Senior Fitter

“ It was a fantastic weekend. From enjoying the railway from a perspective that most passengers never see – from the back cab – during our transit moves to getting my fix of Crompton thrash, all while catching up with old friends and meeting new people.

John ‘Billy’ Smart, Senior Fitter

“ Speaking to passengers and enjoying their thoughts and genuine joy at being able to travel once again on a 4VEP once again after so many years. I also enjoyed being with members of our team throughout the weekend, team building.

Berwyn Thomas, Minion

“ What a wonderful experience. The memories of the Old Girl from my teenage years and to see the joy it brought to people’s faces, along with them sharing their memories of being on the VEPs when they were in service. It was great to be a part of the SETG team and I felt proud to walk through the carriages while we were rolling.

Jeff Smart, Fitter

“ I spoke to a couple who wanted to have the number of years they had been married (it was their anniversary) displayed on the

headcode blinds of 3417 and have their picture taken with the unit. It made their day! It makes all the hard work everybody did worthwhile when we can help to make memories. Well done!

Nick Collier, Minion & GOAT Herder

“ It was a pleasure to see the group’s work being acknowledged and celebrated by the public. It was hugely gratifying to see 3417 at the Bluebell railway. It validated all the hard work that’s taken place to date.

And for me?

When I spoke to our friend Tim Dunn a few years back, I said that I wanted not just to drive the unit again (I did, although not nearly as well as some other people did. But in my defence, it’s been a while since I last used the Auto Brake). More than that, though, I wanted to walk through the unit while it was in service and watch the public enjoying what the SETG had achieved. I wanted to see the unit being used as it was meant to be and to see it being enjoyed not as a static exhibit but brought back to life – complete with lights (well done, Buckie & Nick). Those three days provided me with that in spades. It was a deeply satisfying feeling, and every bit as pleasurable as I had hoped it would be. But there was an extra layer which I hadn’t considered; it was watching the rest of the SETG team gelling and basking in the collective praise for their work. Every compliment they received was richly deserved.

And as an aside, I think we all agree that Gwil and Maggie would have been proud.

Photo: James Cummins



RCTS Visit ‘Beachy Head’

By David Cross, RCTS Trustee Photos by Jeremy Harrison

The [Railway Correspondence and Travel Society](#) (RCTS), Britain’s oldest railway society, was very pleased to work with the Bluebell Railway and Brian Jackson to put together a small ceremony on the platform at Sheffield Park on Sunday 6 October 2024.

The connection is that the RCTS own one of the original *Beachy Head* nameplates whose normal place of residence is in the museum on the platform at Sheffield Park station. The nameplate is on long term loan from the RCTS to the Bluebell Railway. Brian Jackson is the owner of the smokebox number plate 32424 which his Father Bill Jackson secured from the then British Railways when the original locomotive was withdrawn in 1958. The construction of the wonderful new locomotive was an opportunity for all three parties to come together with the nameplate, the smokebox number plate and a real live locomotive and celebrate these two historical and original artefacts on the new loco.

Although the weather was not kind a group of around 30 people were on hand to see items from 1926, 1951 and 2024 (*) come together before the present *Beachy Head*, with new nameplates, set off on the 13:00 departure to East Grinstead!

The RCTS would like to thank the Bluebell Railway, David Jones, Tony Hillman and Terry Cole for their help and support of this special event, the first time the original name and number plate had been together for 66 years.

(*) – Although the original locomotive was built in 1911, it was not named until June 1926. Repaint into lined black BR livery occurred in September 1951 – Ed.



Above: Brian Jackson (left) and RCTS Treasure and Trustee Reg Wood with the original number and name plates.

Below: *Beachy Head* ready to depart with the 10:30am service from Sheffield Park on 6 October 2024. The headcode matches that carried on the [Brighton Works Centenary Special](#), hauled by the original 'Beachy Head' on 5 October 1952.



Q Class 541 Overhaul Update

By Steve Pilcher, Maunsell Locomotive Society

The Maunsell Locomotive Society would like to thank the Horsted Carriage Shop for their recent generous donation of £500 towards the Q class overhaul appeal.

Work has continued at pace on the boiler and chassis at Leaky Finders in Devon.

The copper welding repairs to the firebox tubeplate and doorplate have been completed with the associated NDT tests too. The new outer wrapper has been fully welded in place and the smoke and flue tubes ordered.

The chassis has seen significant progress over the last two months with replacement of all the rivets on the running plate angles, re-riveting the rear frame stretcher and boiler mounting bracket in place and removal, cleaning and re-attachment of both frame stretchers adjacent to the driving axle.

The new rear dragbox has been riveted in place and is undergoing seal welding as you read this. Once complete the cab can be fitted in place.

The new horn block wedges, slippers and associated nuts/bolts have been machined and all axle boxes are undergoing crack testing.

The 4253 Group continue to press on well with the fabrication of the new replacement tender tank. At the time of writing this report the two rear half sides of the tender tank were being welded into place on the previously fabricated inner frame – see photo. The original sand boxes have been mounted back up on the front of the tender tank – see photo. The steps and lamp irons that had been on the rear of the old tank had been salvaged and were being rivetted back on to the new rear section of the tank's platework.

Back at Sheffield Park, various members of the workshop staff and regular workshop volunteers has set about removing the corroded front dragbox and a short length of the inner frames



where it was wasted. The front section of the outer frames had been needle gunned back to bare metal. Fred Bailey is preparing drawings to enable material to be ordered to enable new rear and front dragboxes to be ordered and then fabricated on site at Sheffield Park.

The MLS working party has focussed on cleaning up the various and many sections of loco and tender brake rigging that are at Sheffield Park and have made good progress on re-painting them – see photo.

The tender wheelsets have returned from tyre turning at the South Devon Railway. In due course they will be given a final clean and then a re-paint.

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 parties.

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.



Previous page: New lower part of left hand outer firebox, welded into place. Photo: Leaky Finders

This page, top: Inside of rear end of the new tender tank. Photo: 4253 Group

Middle: Original sandboxes mounted up on front of the tender tank. Photo: 4253 Group

Bottom: Various brake rigging components after cleaning and painting. Photo: Andy Sparkes

92240 Update

By Tom Newble and Andy Taylor *Photo by Ken Upton*

Since our last updates, team has made huge progress on the overhaul of 92240's tender.

The team have recently suffered a great loss, with the sad passing of our Stall Manager, Tom Parsons. A wreath was worn on the smokebox door of 34059 Sir Archibald Sinclair in memoriam of Tom and the wreath, at the end of the day, was then placed on the smokebox door of 92240, pictured above, which currently resides in the milk dock, adjacent on platform 2.

The 'Awake The Giant' team are always welcome to new team members joining us, for working parties, supporting the stand or by donating. If you are interested in joining the team or would like to find out more, please contact Andy Taylor on andy.taylor@bluebell-railway.co.uk. Any support or donation of monetary or time would be very much appreciated. [More details of 92240 and the overhaul](#) can be found on the Bluebell Railway website.

LOCO PROGRESS

The tender holds seventeen chambers and at the time of this article being written, fifteen and a half have been cleaned, by wire brushing and rust cleaned out of each single chamber before being painted. The team are continuing to use a bitumen paint, which should help preserve the inside of the tender for a number of years and protection from any rusting in the near future. The tender sides have continued to be rubbed down and painted with layers of undercoat. The tender plates have been removed, ready to be cleaned and painted, also removed was the filter lid which has been cleaned and coated in primer. The fall plates have also been removed, although quite a challenge to the team at the working party. The buffer beam has received a large amount of work, the boot plates have been removed, sand blasted before having primer added onto it. It is the hope of the team, whilst continuing to raise funds whilst using 'Sustainable Funding' to have the tender completed by the end of the year. The team are working hard on fundraising and collecting funds



for 92240 and are currently working towards a milestone amount of £500,000 but can we wonder if we can get to £92,240 before the ending of the season?

BUY 92240 A PRESENT!

Launching later this year, will be an opportunity for supporters of 92240's restoration to buy a present for 92240! This will offer the opportunity for supporters to buy gifts that will aid the work of the restoration and overhaul of the 9F and currently, no other society on the railway is doing this! This will be a new and exciting initiative for all to show their support, instead of a monetary donation. Full details are currently being finalised for this and will be out in the Autumn editions of *The Bluebell Times*, Awake the Giant webpage and social media channels.

92240 NEEDS YOU!

Our stand is ever growing and is becoming more and more popular at the railway as well as a lot of interest of 92240 and the stand at external events including model railway shows and society

meetings. The group's aim will be to continue to publicise 92240 as much as possible and at main events, including the children's days, to have stands at multiple locations over the railway. If you

Wealden Lottery

By Malcolm Johnson, Museum Curator

Support the Bluebell Railway: Move from the National Lottery to the [Wealden Community Lottery!](#)

If you play the National Lottery, knowing that a portion of your money supports good causes throughout the country you might consider moving to the Wealden Community Lottery. If you do half of your ticket money would support the Bluebell Railway.

The Bluebell Railway Trust is now a recognized good cause in the Wealden Community Lottery, an exciting weekly lottery that raises funds for good causes in the Wealden District.

Play the Lottery, Support the Bluebell - It's That Simple!

Tickets for the Wealden Community Lottery cost just £1 a week. Each ticket offers a 1 in 50 chance to win a prize, with a top prize of £25,000! That's a better chance of winning than the National Lottery or the Health Lottery and you will be offered the chance to donate your winning money to the Bluebell Railway.

Here's how it works:

- ➔ Each ticket has six numbers, each between 0 and 9.
- ➔ A draw takes place every Saturday night, picking a six-digit winning combination.
- ➔ Prizes are awarded to players whose tickets match the first or last 2 to 6 numbers of the winning combination. Match all six and you win the jackpot!

are interested in assisting with the stand at the railway or taking the stand to a show, please email awakethegiant@outlook.com.

Of every £1 you spend:

- ➔ 50p will go directly to the Bluebell Railway Trust.
- ➔ 10p will go to Wealden District Council for grants to other good causes.
- ➔ 20p will be allocated as prize money.

THE ODDS ARE IN YOUR FAVOUR

You might win once in every 50 tries, but the Bluebell Railway wins every time you play. By participating in the Wealden Community Lottery, you are supporting the heritage and future of the Bluebell Railway.

Your small investment could make a big difference for the Bluebell Railway. Play the Wealden Community Lottery today and support the Bluebell Railway Trust. Together, we can keep the magic of steam alive for generations to come.

GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!

Visit the [Wealden Community Lottery](#) website to buy your tickets and support the Bluebell Railway. Play the lottery and make a difference— it's that simple!

CONDITIONS

Players must be 18 or over and physically located in Great Britain.

Always play responsibly, if you need to talk to someone about your gambling please contact [Gamble Aware](#).

HOPS 2025

By Fraser Hutchinson, HOPS administrator

It is almost that time when we have to reorder the ID cards for 2025. Currently all our ID cards whether they be paper or digital expire on 31 January 2025. We introduced the process of confirming everyone for 2024 at about this time last year and now we have to do it again. Where has that year gone?

Currently Line Managers and Roster Clerks are confirming their teams for next year. You may well have been asked if you are continuing into 2025. They are busy working to a deadline of mid-October to get this done.

Shortly all 1151 working members will receive an email from me asking for your confirmation. You will need to check that your personal and emergency contact details are accurate and finally click on confirm to say everything is correct.

Once I have confirmation from your department and from yourself, I can then reorder the ID cards.

I will send out detailed instructions on what to do, but at the moment this is just a reminder that you will be expecting the renewal email from me by the end of this month.

Finally, both Matt Sloan and I seem to spend a lot of time reordering cards because they have been lost or not survived the washing machine. This has cost the railway several hundred pounds and that money could be used elsewhere. If you would prefer a digital card on your smart phone, this will save the railway money as its one less card to post and one less to be replaced. You can let me know now if you wish for a digital card next year.

Looking forward to a smooth and incident free reordering process.

Bluebell Railway Calendars

By Roger Price, BRPS Archivist

In the archive I have a collection of calendars dating back to 1962 however there are a few gaps which may be because none were produced for that year.

- ➔ 1966 to 1970
- ➔ 1972 to 1976
- ➔ 1979
- ➔ 1980
- ➔ 1986
- ➔ 1987
- ➔ 1990 to 2005

Also more recently ones which were produced 2022, 2023 and 2024

If anyone has copies of any of these which they can send to me I should be most grateful.

Please contact me by email at rogertprice@aol.com or by phone on 07812 070326.

News in Brief

SAVE THE DATE!

Make a note and keep these dates free in 2025! More details will follow in due course, as will further events which will make up our gala/event programme for next year at the railway.

- ➔ Branch Line Gala: 14-15-16 March
- ➔ Model Railway Weekend: 28-29 June
- ➔ Southern at War: 18-19 July
- ➔ 65th Anniversary weekend: 8-9-10 August
- ➔ Beer Festival: 19-20-21 September
- ➔ Giants of Steam: 10-11-12 October

'BICESTER' COACH ENTERS TRAFFIC



Keith Leppard's photo shows Mark 1 Tourist Second Open [No. 4754](#) – formally used on the Bicester Military Railway – gleaming in the sun on its release into traffic last month. The carriage entered traffic on 6 September.

THE VIEW FROM THE FAR NORTH

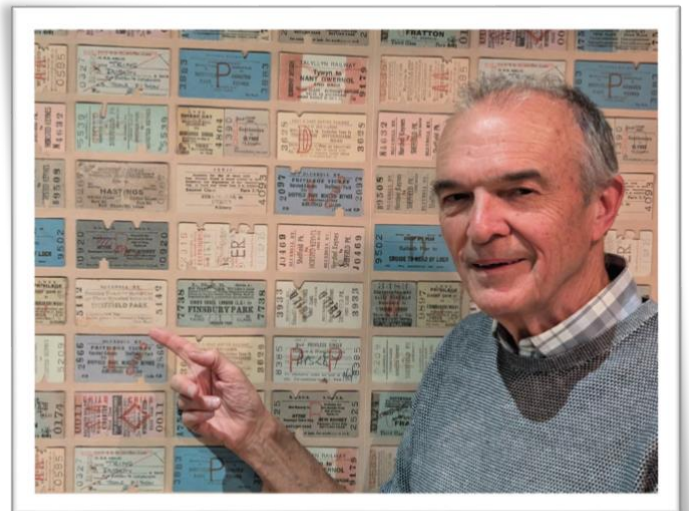
Not just East Grinstead, but Orkney: Senior Station Master Graham Aitken provided the following:

"Returning with my family from a holiday in Orkney last month, we spent a night in Tain and

went for dinner, and a few beers, in the Platform 1864 restaurant where to my surprise found that the wallpaper featured railway tickets. Perhaps not too surprising as the restaurant is in the former station building.

On closer inspection many of the tickets shown were from the Bluebell Railway, featuring Sheffield Park and Horsted Keynes. Photos attached show what appeared to be tickets from the 1960s.

Why this wallpaper was chosen for a restaurant located 44 miles north of Inverness on the Far North Line to Wick and Thurso I have no idea, but perhaps someone reading this might."



Carriage Shop Donates £500 ... with more to follow

By Chris Wilson, Carriage Shop volunteer

To start our October donations the Carriage Shop team are delighted to have been able to donate £500 towards the 'Make Bluebell Bloom Again' appeal to restore the railway's flagship locomotive P class No. 27 'Bluebell'. To find out more about this appeal visit: www.bluebell-railway.com/help-the-bluebell-railway-restore-323-bluebell-back-to-its-former-glory/

We will be making further donations during the Giants of Steam weekend which will be covered on our Facebook page and in next month's issue of *The Bluebell Times*.

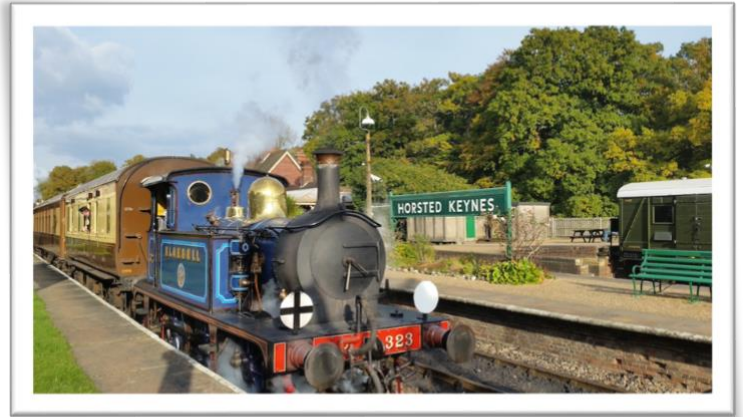
We will be open for extended hours during the Giants of Steam, for all opening times and news please visit our [Facebook page](#).

The Carriage Shop was established in 1989 and is fully operated by volunteers with a sole purpose 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 especially in need of model railway items – if you have any items you can spare we would be very grateful.

If you can help please contact bluebellrailwaycarriageshop@gmail.com



Top: 'Bluebell' at Horsted Keynes on 18 October 2015.

Middle: The Carriage Shop at Horsted Keynes station, next to the dock outside the Carriage & Wagon workshop.

Bottom: Internal view of the Carriage Shop.

More Photos From The Museum Website

By Chris Wilson, Bluebell Railway archive volunteer

This month we have added a further 503 images to the Bluebell Railway Museum website bringing the total now available to 25,401. These new additions all come from the camera of Joe Kent.

149 of the images were taken in early 1952 and feature many views at Preston Park Pullman Car Works, Brighton, Clapham Junction, Fratton Shed, Eastleigh, Clapham Junction, Surbiton and Bricklayers Arms Shed.

The remaining images were taken between 1961-1963. They show some of the last days at the Pullman Works before it was closed in November 1963. Other Southern locations include Upper Warlingham, Oxted, Brighton, Hove, Southampton Central and the Hayling Island branch. Also included are views of Joe's travels further afield at Hatfield, Hitchin, Welwyn Garden City, Derby, Rowsley, Matlock and Birmingham Snow Hill.

Do you have an interest and experience in scanning railway negatives and slides? We are hoping to expand our team of volunteers. 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.



Top: Pullman Car 'Fingall' at Preston Park Pullman Car Works, 8 April 1952. Joe Kent [090114]

Bottom: Ex SECR P class No. 31027 at Eastleigh Shed, on 22 March 1952. Joe Kent [090068]

Back cover: Ex LBSC H2 class No. 32424 'Beachy Head' at Cliftonville Spur, Preston Park, on 5 March 1952. Joe Kent [090018].

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.

On This Day, 11 October

By Tony Hillman, Deputy Curator

Three pictures from the Bluebell Photographic Archive taken on 11 October. Thanks to John Creed, Martin Elms, Richard Peirce, Chris Sutton, Roger Merry-Price and Chris Wilson for finding the pictures and researching the notes.

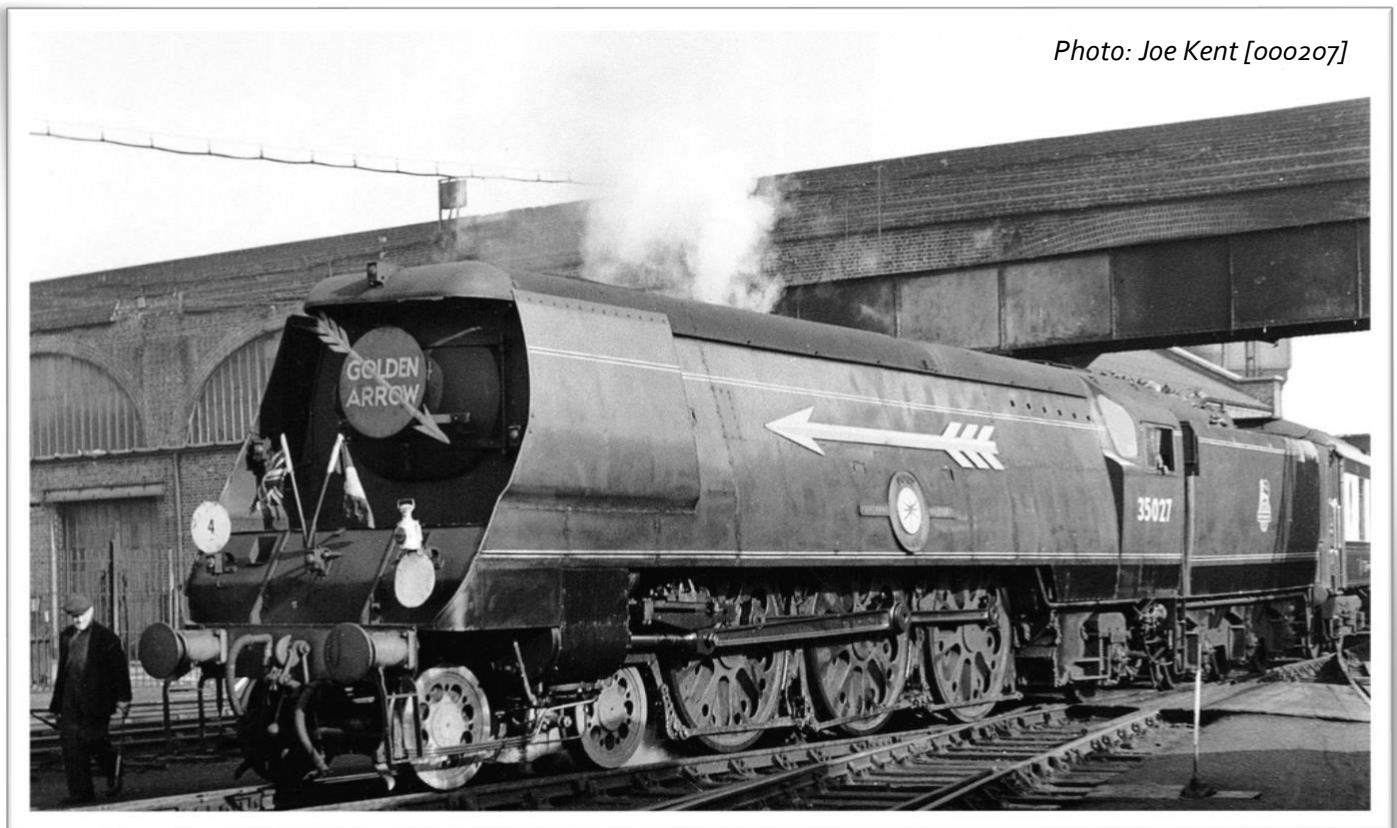


Photo: Joe Kent [000207]

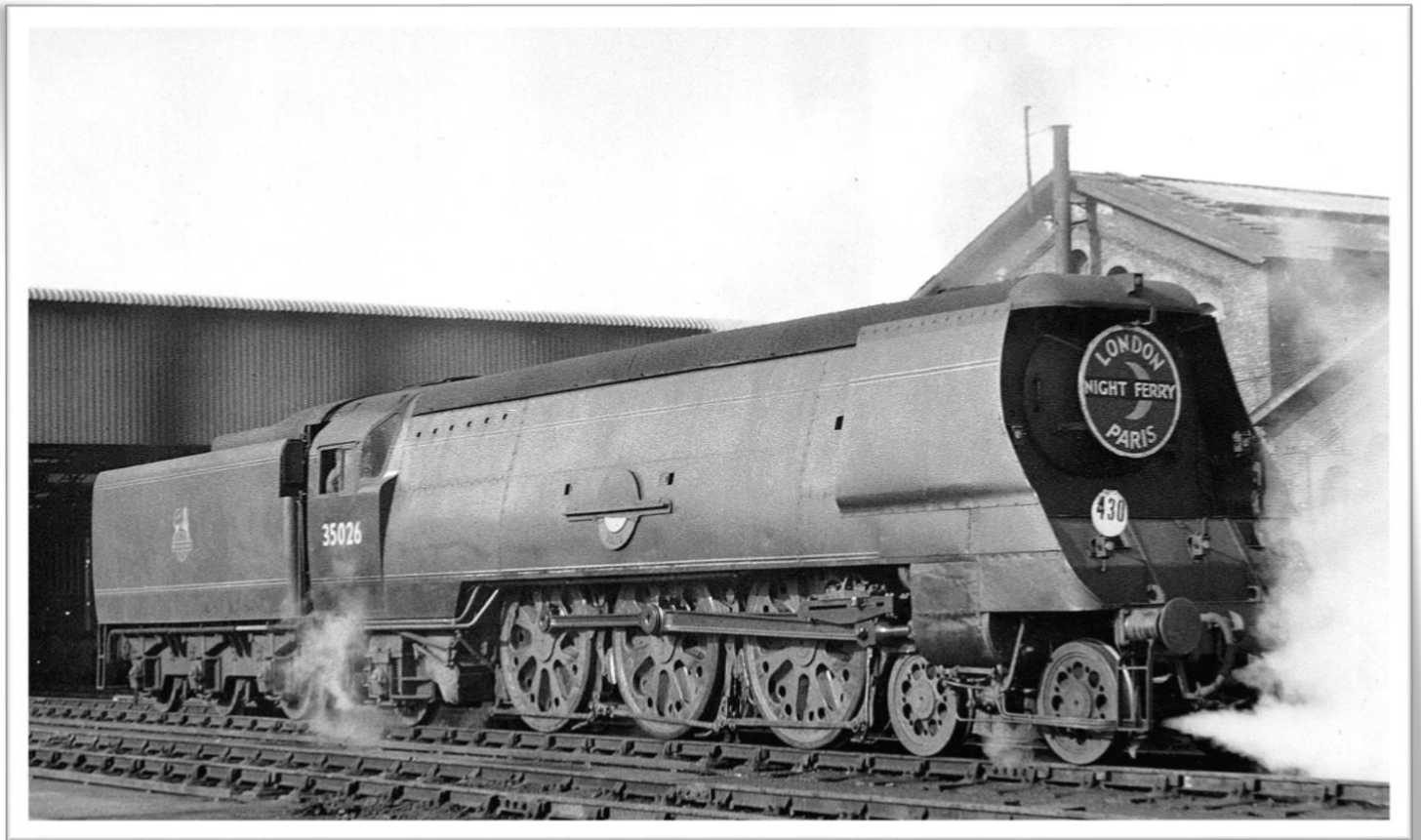
On Wednesday 11 October 1950 the photographer captures Merchant Navy 4-6-2 35027 *Port Line* at Stewarts Lane.

The locomotive is standing under the bridge carrying the South London line over the tracks leading to the Carriage Shed with the water tank of the locomotive shed just visible. The locomotive is on Stewarts Lane Duty 4, the 11.00am Victoria to Dover Marine *Golden Arrow* Pullman train. Rather than running light to Victoria, 35027 is propelling the empty stock to the London terminus, whilst at the north end there should be a N class 2-6-0 on Stewarts Lane Duty 56. The N will later assist 35027 on departure from Victoria by banking the heavy train up the steep climb of Grosvenor Bank.

35027 was built at Eastleigh Works, entering traffic in December 1948. Originally in malachite green it was painted BR blue, as depicted, in February 1950 before being repainted BR Brunswick green in November

1953. Rebuilt between late March and early May 1957 it was withdrawn in September 1966. Rescued from Barry Scrapyard for preservation, it ran from 1988 to 1996 on the Bluebell Railway. It is currently being overhauled in Bury, to mainline standards, for its owners (RSL>) based at Crewe.

In 1929 the Southern Railway bestowed the name *Golden Arrow* on the 11.00 am Victoria to Paris boat train. Before the Second War the motive power was mainly Lord Nelson class locomotives assisted by King Arthurs. Reinstated after the war, on 15 April 1946, it was hauled by either Merchant Navies or Bulleid Light Pacifics and, between 1951 and 1958, by Britannia class 4-6-2s. Steam haulage ceased in June 1961 when the HA (later Class 71) electric locomotives took over. By the mid-1960s the train had no more than four first class Pullmans, the remaining accommodation being second-class ordinary coaches. Because of declining usage, the *Golden Arrow* was withdrawn after the summer service of 1972.



On the same morning, Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 35026 (yet to be named) having arrived at Victoria on the Night Ferry, has propelled the empty stock into Victoria Sidings and then run light engine to Stewarts Lane (73A). Still displaying the Night Ferry headboard, it's ready to work the 10.55am empty stock to Victoria to form the 11.35am to Ramsgate.

35026, although allocated to Stewarts Lane, was working Dover Duty 430 which hauled the Night Ferry in both directions. Leaving Dover Marine at 7.30am and arriving at Victoria at 9.10am, it returned at 9.30pm (10pm in summer). Its routing at the time was via Orpington in both directions, but later in the 1950s the morning up train was rerouted via Chatham, requiring a pilot engine, usually an L1 Class 4-4-0.

The Night Ferry was introduced on the night of 14 October 1936 and ran until 30 October 1980, with a gap during WW2 between September 1939 and

December 1947. It used the Dover – Dunkirk train ferry to cross the English Channel, or rather the first-class sleeping cars and baggage vans did, any second-class passengers had to walk on and off the ship. When loading onto the ship the train had to be split into two equal parts on port and starboard sides to ensure balance. The timings were almost identical in each direction, the ships passing in mid-channel.

35026 was built at Eastleigh Works in December 1948 and initially allocated to Stewarts Lane. It was eventually named *Lampton and Holt Line* at Southampton Docks on 15 January 1951. Rebuilt at Eastleigh Works in January 1957, it went on to be based at all the South Western sheds that had an allocation of the class, in a life of less than 20 years. Withdrawn from Weymouth (70G) on 3 April 1967, it was scrapped by J. Cashmore in South Wales, later the same year.

Photo: Joe Kent [000199]



It is Sunday 11 October 1953, and the photographer has used the high vantage point afforded by Howard Place overlooking the western approach to Brighton. Ex Southern Railway N15 'King Arthur' class 4-6-0 30455 *Sir Lancelot* is shown occupying a siding just to the north of the Brighton to Portsmouth line as it curves away from the station. Also visible in the picture to the right is the outside wall of Brighton shed and, at the top, the Brighton turntable.

The photograph shows the tender devoid of coal and this suggests that the locomotive might be awaiting entry into Brighton Works for attention. This is confirmed by official records, which we hold in our Archive, that the engine entered the works on Tuesday 13 October for a "Light Casual" repair and stayed there until 22 October. The files also show that its time in the works was shared with LMS 'Fairburn' Tank 2-6-4T 42102 and SR 'Schools' class 4-4-0 30901 *Winchester*.

30455 was one of a batch of 24 N15s which had modifications made by Maunsell on the original Urie Design. It was constructed at Eastleigh Works and entered traffic in March 1925, originally numbered E455. The locomotive spent time between Exmouth Junction and Salisbury sheds until June 1952 when, having been renumbered in 1948, it was allocated to Nine Elms (70A).

30455 went to Basingstoke (70D) in late 1957 but was withdrawn week ending 18 April 1959 and scrapped within three weeks at Eastleigh Works. Brighton Works itself closed in 1958. Meanwhile, the line from Brighton to Portsmouth still passes this spot, a Network Rail depot now occupies the area behind where the locomotive is standing.

Photo: Joe Kent [003390]



Joe Kent / Bluebell Railway
Museum [090018]

The Bluebell Times

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Tail Lamp

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

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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