



FINDING FINDHORN

The stone piers and lattice girders may look oddly familiar... and if so, there's a reason.

Findhorn Viaduct opened in 1897. Its 1,330ft-length carries the Highland Main Line 140ft above a

river that rises in the Monadhliath mountains, and tips into the Moray Firth. It stands near Tomatin, between Aviemore and Inverness.

Three years after Findhorn first carried trains, a more famous

structure was completed to the south near Edinburgh... and the two shared an engineer.

John Fowler, the man behind London's 1863-built Metropolitan Railway, worked on Findhorn

together with the Highland Railway's Murdoch Paterson.

Do the nine spans of this viaduct perhaps look like the approaches to the main structure of the Forth Bridge to you...?



Today, the Highland viaduct remains of key importance and Network Rail completed a £4.5m refurbishment of its Category B-Listed structure in 2017. The view may change in future though – with

plans for widespread electrification that could reach Inverness by 2035.

However... in May 2014, Findhorn looks much as it ever did, as the crews of Ian Riley's 'Black Fives' Nos. 44871 and 45407 enjoy a brief

stretch of near level rail, before slogging up 1-in-60 to Slochd summit (1,315ft above sea level).

It's a moment in time, captured during the Railway Touring Company's 'Great Britain' tour.

• If you ever go looking for the viaduct, don't be caught out: there's another one over the same river near Forres. The 'real' one is just off the A9.

Picture: Bob Green



By the people,

Only about the past...? Our heritage lines have North Yorkshire Moors Railway Trust vice-chai

Just how many people does it take to keep a motive power department running? Some of the Grosmont engineering team of the North Yorkshire Moors with two of their most recent workshop projects: '9F' No. 92134 and Lambton Colliery 0-6-2T No. 29.
Charlotte Graham/NYMR



for the people

very modern benefits – if only we'd realise it.
man **Andrew Scott** talks to **Tony Streeter**.



KITBASHING A 'J21' IN 1:1 SCALE



A Locomotive Maintenance Services' proprietor David Wright inside the firebox. LMS is overseeing the overhaul. Tony Streeter

B The boiler, which despite fears, was largely salvageable. Tony Streeter

C The copper firebox being removed... forever. David Wright

D The expired firebox backplate... and the new. David Wright

E Wasted frames... entirely new ones will be cut. David Wright

F NER standardisation... the refurbished frame stretchers, not from a 'J21', but a 'J25'. Tony Streeter

G It may look tired, but the cylinder block was repairable. David Wright

H A new tender is being created from new drawings because the original didn't match the Worsdell blueprints. The basic frame is already erected. Tony Streeter

I Other than the wheels, this box of bits represents most of what was restorable of the tender. Tony Streeter

J ...And it's easy to see why even the smallest parts, like this pitted tender spring hanger, required renewal. Tony Streeter

K No further use: the old chimney is being replaced. Tony Streeter

L The driving wheels are monitored for cracks. They are repairable, but new tyres are on order. David Wright



“...money is always the big, big, determining factor.”

Even if the 'J21' made it to the next overhaul before cracks were found, Toby argues that rather than “being out of commission for a year”, that could stretch to “five or seven years while we raise the money for new frames.”

“So, let's do it now, but what we envisage in ten years' time or 12 years' time is 'oily rag down the bottom end, re-tube, back out again'; partly reflecting the thoroughness of the restoration, partly reflecting the low impact of use it's going to have in the next ten years.”

Not everything on the engine was worn out: the cylinder block was “a good news story” – because contrary to fears that it would be life-expired, this is BR-era, stamped 1952 only a decade before the engine's withdrawal. Cab and running plates are thought to be original, the motion “is probably from all over the North Eastern”. Frame stretchers are from No. 825 and the replacement chimney (donated by the North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Group) is “from another 'J21', I don't know which one.”

Yet if much of the locomotive itself is new, that's even more true of the tender. The wheelsets are being re-used, but the tank and frames are being replaced.

That said, Toby says that whatever original 'furniture' could be reused was saved from the old frames, so the new versions “are, at a punt, 15% original metal.”

Although the tank will be largely welded with dummy rivets, the area where it faces the footplate is to be riveted: “So whilst it's brand new there is that nod and appreciation of heritage.”

'C' on the outside, 'J21' inside

Replacement material aside, when it next steams the 'J21' will actually be turned out as an NER Class 'C' in that company's green and with its original number, 876. The engine will be a key part of a North Eastern ensemble being assembled at Kirkby Stephen – from buildings to rolling stock.

Yet the 'J21' will remain in its physical latter-day physical condition; while it is clearly still a classic North Eastern Railway machine, by the time it was withdrawn after a more than 70-year life in 1962 it had evolved in some striking ways from the original. Most significant perhaps was its conversion from a compound machine to a 'simple' – a change that took place relatively early in life. Much later though was its loss of a superheater, something that didn't happen until early BR days. That is a quite visible alteration: the unsuperheated version has a shorter smokebox.

So, leaving aside originality, what does this say about the project's authenticity? Or, looking at it another way, if the North Eastern look is key and so much work is already being done, why not go the whole way and 'back convert' No. 876 into as-built condition?

“I think one of the reasons, again from the engineering point of view, is that we didn't have to”, Toby responds. At that point, he argues, “we really would be in the realms of new build”.

Some Worsdell engines were built as simples, “so you wouldn't necessarily have to re-compound it – but you would have a superheated locomotive with a different smokebox, whereas there's nothing wrong with the smokebox and the boiler.”

The latter has some wastage that needs to be made good, he adds – “but when I first got involved, I was told the boiler was knackered”.

“So we haven't done [it] because we haven't needed to. And the money wouldn't be there... money is actually a key part of this. It's vulgar, but it's important.”

So – why green? Toby admits to a “personal passion” for the pre-Grouping companies and also remembers the 'J21' in green from Beamish – though the livery this time round will be the earlier (more ornate) version as carried by Tennant 2-4-0 No. 1641 at Darlington. More bluntly though, the LCLT chairman argues that ‘no green equals no steam’ – because previous HLF bids to restore the engine as No. 65033 were unsuccessful.

However, Toby also adds that if “the HLF are funding the project to kickstart it, it's also the public that fund its continued sustainability... If there's no visitor offer, then it's going to be very slim pickings.”



Preservation past and future. A 1995 view of Beamish's Rowley station with No. 876 wearing a variant of the NER livery it will carry after 2022. Trevor Davis/Transport Treasury



Return... with the 'Saint'

The Severn Valley Railway has created a new event for the post-Covid world. *Paul Appleton* explains – and enjoys the first proper trains with a '29XX' in nearly 70 years.



There's barely a cloud in the sky and more than a whiff of steam in the air: "Perfect weather for a gala weekend" I remarked, before the rebuff came: "But perhaps not a gala in the true Severn Valley tradition".

I'm sat with Severn Valley Railway General Manager, Helen Smith, and Head of Marketing and Communications, Lesley Carr, sipping tea on the concourse at Kidderminster Town on the second day of the railway's four-day 'Steam Up' in April. Visiting Didcot 'Saint' *Lady of Legend* has just arrived

with the first train of the day from Bridgnorth and is drawing an excited crowd at the buffer stops.

"We could have run with just our own fleet", Lesley explains, "we have enough locos. But we wanted to do something special for the enthusiasts".

Helen concurs: "It would have been easy to do that, but we promised that we would go that bit extra and I think it was the right thing to do".

It's certainly a striking way to come back from Covid – but did booking the 'Saint' represent a risk, given the fluid nature of restrictions?

"The people at Didcot have been great, they understood that if the lockdown had continued we would have had to cancel the visit and they were fine about that."

Lesley chips in: "They are as happy about it being here as we are. It hadn't pulled a full length train before or covered any kind of distance, so they are enjoying seeing what it is capable of doing."

Trying a 'Saint'

The visit of No. 2999 is the new-build 4-6-0's initial trip away from its Oxfordshire base since it steamed for the first time in 2019.

It was due to be a guest at last year's SVR Spring Gala, but that was cancelled owing to the first Covid-19 lockdown, so its choice as the principal attraction scratched an itch for those of a Great Western persuasion.

In recreating a Churchward classic, the Great Western Society has successfully filled a gap not only in GWR history, but one which helps tell the story of the two-cylinder 4-6-0 in Britain.

With a steady flow of customers – all of whom have pre-booked – passing excitedly through the forecourt, it seems this is a great way to get the season rolling, post-lockdown services only having restarted a few days earlier on Monday 12 April.

"We've had a few shakedown days", Lesley explains, "everything seems to be working well and it is great to see the volunteers back, doing what they enjoy".

The weeks leading up the 'Steam Up' have taken a great deal of preparation; the last public trains to run on the 'Valley' having been the 'Santa' and 'Steam in Lights' services. These operated successfully through December until the third lockdown kicked in, leading to the curtailment of the post-Christmas festive trains. ➡➡





“ Visitors like to have their day organised for them, they don't need to... worry they might miss the last train ”

HELEN SMITH



▲ The closest thing to a crowd allowed at a railway this spring, but the sight of people enjoying their hobby again is a blessing. ‘Flying Pig’ No. 43106 and ‘Heavy Freight’ No. 2857 cross paths at Arley on 18 April. *Ashley Smith*

◀ A moment to reflect. The flag at half-mast atop the 17th Century tower of St Anne’s church and the time on the clock show that HRH Prince Philip’s funeral is underway on 17 April. GWR 2-8-0 No. 2857 steams away from Bewdley with a train for Bridgnorth, straight after the national minute’s silence. A week before this picture was taken, the SVR was still in lockdown. *Bob Green*

Previous spread

‘Saintly’ perfection? The feel is almost pre-war, other than for some of the detail. *Lady of Legend*, the first ‘29XX’ to run anywhere outside Didcot Railway Centre since 1953, spins its 6ft 8.5in driving wheels at Severn Lodge on 16 April.

Churchward’s standard two-cylinder express 4-6-0 was a high point of British locomotive design, but the last of the originals ran in 1953. The new No. 2999 steamed for the first time in 2019 after a multi-decade gestation that included reusing large parts from 1929-built donor 4-6-0 No. 4942 *Maindy Hall*; Collett’s first ‘Hall’ was created in 1924 when No. 2925 *Saint Martin* was rebuilt with 6ft driving wheels.

Trailing the straight-frame ‘Saint’ is a varied selection of GWR coaches – although immediately behind the tender is Hawksworth Corridor Third No. 829, which was actually completed in 1948. *Phil Waterfield*



COMING BACK FROM COVID

What has it been like for the railway, coping with lockdown?

"It was tough", Helen accepts, "there's no hiding from it, but thanks to the generosity of our supporters, careful management and making cost savings where possible, including the furloughing of some paid staff, we have come out of it in a relatively strong position.

"We lost around £4.8m in revenue over the past year, while we have managed to raise £2.8m to keep the railway going during this difficult time. Capital expenditure has been limited to essential projects and unfortunately, it will probably take up to ten years to get us back to where we would have been in 2021."

That has consequences – not least for the likes of the turntable scheme, which had been announced as part of the Bridgnorth Development Plan.

"As time rolls on, the most pressing needs of the railway change," Helen explained, "three or four years ago, the turntable project was a desirable thing, and it still is.

"But since then, the locomotive workshop and shed roof has started leaking and it's a very poorly lit space, so a bigger priority has become the need to replace the roof, provide solar panels to power a more energy efficient lighting system and to install an overhead crane..."

The railway has launched an appeal to help pay for this - see News.

Lesley continues the point: "We are very fortunate that the Falling Sands Viaduct repairs were already well under way before the pandemic struck. If that project had stalled then we might not have been able to run trains for much longer. There are many more projects like this that we need to plan for if the railway is going to survive.

"For example, we have the slips at both Sterns and Alveley Woods where the ground has become unstable and requires specialist attention to find permanent solutions to keep the trains running."

Helen agrees: "Some of these projects aren't 'sexy' but are essential to the long-term success of the railway. We need to raise funds to allow them to take place and we are just launching a fresh appeal to fund the improvements at Bridgnorth, but we are building a five- to ten-year fundraising plan in which we will pair up some of the 'sexier' projects, usually including locomotives, with those less appealing, but very necessary, infrastructure projects."

The SVR Charitable Trust is leading the drive to raise funds, something Lesley has first-hand experience of as she was closely involved with the Trust when she joined the railway five years ago: "Education and learning are the buzz words in terms of fundraising. If you can link a project to a useful and worthwhile educational function, then the chances of succeeding with grant funding becomes much greater. We need to organise our projects and fund-raising plans in such a way that we know what we are going to be aiming for, both financially and aspirational, years ahead of when we need them."

“...it is great to see the volunteers back, doing what they enjoy”



LESLEY CARR

"Much behind the scenes work has taken place," Helen explained, "we are so lucky to have such a great and dedicated team here".

Having not pulled a timetabled revenue-earning train before, a certain amount of preparatory work had to be carried out on No. 2999 too. Only a couple of days before the 'Steam Up', the bogie was out from under the engine having attention to its springs, but after some fine-tuning, the 'Saint' ran a number of trial trips before being passed to take its starring role.

As well as the visitor, the weekend included no fewer than eight resident engines (see box).

Semantics aside, April's 'Steam Up' was different in a very particular way to the familiar gala: rather than making cross-platform dashes to ensure haulage by different engines, passengers stayed in their seats.

To ensure social distancing, each set of coaches made three round trips over the 16-mile line – with a locomotive change at each end. All you had to do to experience the variety was stay on your backside.

It worked, proving that an enthusiast event can be held, even under difficult circumstances.

Some 2,588 visitors took up the offer, leading Helen Smith afterwards to describe the 'Steam Up' as "a resounding success!"

Given this, will we see a return to the usual enthusiast spectacles we have become used to from the SVR?

"Of course we will", Helen responds, "we would be lynched if we didn't!

"We have a dedicated team who plan these events and right now they are planning a gala with guest locomotives for the autumn, and we will also have a finale event to close the season, all things being well."

In fact, a string of events has been devised for 2021, including May's 'Spring Diesel Bash' and the popular 'Step Back to the 1940s' event over two weekends: 26-27 June and 3-4 July.

However, events with an indoor element won't go ahead just yet – for example the 'Peep behind the scenes' and model railway dates.

Fewer trains... more efficiency

While the last year has meant changes in the way railways have offered days out to the public, the feedback in the 'new era' has, it seems, been good.



Since all journeys are pre-booked, says Helen, "it is easier for us to get real time feedback and passengers tell us that they have been pleasantly surprised at how well we have looked after them. They feel safe and have appreciated the efforts of staff and volunteers on their big day out with us."

Is this going to be the future of travel on heritage lines?

"It will be here", Helen confirms, "it will continue to be part of what we offer even after restrictions have been lifted.

"Visitors like to have their day organised for them, they don't need to tune into a timetable, or worry they might miss the last train back. But we recognise that there are others who don't want a pre-planned excursion, they want to do their own thing, so we will run open access trains too, once we are allowed to.

"At the moment, we are running fewer trains and, although revenues are well down, we make



Are all GWR engines the same? With garter crest on the low tender and straight frames on the locomotive, *Lady of Legend* exudes early 20th Century panache as driver Duncan Ballard whistles for Bewdley tunnel on 23 April. Bob Green

more money per train, thanks to pre-booking, so that is far more efficient than running trains that are part-empty.

“Under normal circumstances, from one day to the next, you don’t know how many passengers will turn up. Pre-booking has changed that and we can be more flexible – running more or fewer trains according to demand.

“I think it will be 2022 before we can return to anything like normal. Until then, visitors will want their own compartments and expect us to wear face coverings, socially distance and do all the things we are being asked to do to get through this difficult time. It will take a while for people to get back to the old way of doing things.”

Lesley is keen to point out that these ‘new ways’ protect volunteers too: “We truly value our volunteers and paid staff, so all of these measures are also designed to give them the confidence to return to the railway and carry out their usual duties, even if that means things have to be done

a little differently for now. Over the last year or so, we have been producing short films showing the role of the volunteer behind the scenes and some of the work that has gone into preparing locomotives and carriages for the new season.”

These clips are available on the SVR’s YouTube channel, which now has over 5,000 subscribers and has become an increasingly important medium of communication.

The line’s newly installed Live Cam feeds can be accessed here too (see *Running Lines*).

Lesley continues: “It helps keep our volunteers and supporters connected with the railway and hopefully will attract those who haven’t experienced a visit to the railway to give us a try.”

Some may even have come to ‘Steam Up’. And as *Lady of Legend* eases off the ‘stops’ at Kidderminster Town to take its place on the following train, all seems well with the world.

Gala or otherwise, there are certainly plenty of happy faces around. ■

SEVERN’S EIGHT IS JUST GREAT

If opportunities to enjoy preserved lines have been limited by the pandemic, you wouldn’t have realised it at the SVR’s ‘Steam Up’. In fact; as a confident sign that ‘we’re back’, you could hardly expect more: the 15-18 April event included not only the ‘Saint’ but seven home-based engines in operation and eight (with ‘reserve’ 0-6-0PT No. 1501) in steam.

Resident runners were Port Talbot Railway 0-6-0ST No. 813, Collett ‘57XX’ 0-6-0PT No. 7714, Churchward ‘28XX’ 2-8-0 No. 2857, ‘Modified Hall’ 4-6-0 No. 6960 *Raveningham Hall*, rebuilt ‘Light Pacific’ No. 34027 *Taw Valley*, Ivatt ‘Flying Pig’ 2-6-0 No. 43106 and Riddles ‘4MT’ 4-6-0 No. 75069. The latter engine was itself held in reserve until called into action on the event’s final day, after *Lady of Legend* failed with a bent connecting rod pin (see News).

Horsted Drains

All is not well at one of Britain's finest stations. Bluebell Railway Trust Governor **Colin Tyson** explains why £1.8m is needed for repairs.

Beloved by film and television producers for 60 years, Horsted Keynes station in West Sussex has a filmography almost certainly unmatched by any other heritage station. Oozing with atmosphere, it has played the perfect location for the likes of Poirot, Sherlock Holmes and *Downton Abbey*.

But peel away the 'set dressing' and the age of the 139-year-old station is starting to be obvious.

So much so that the decision was made to restore it as the focus of the Bluebell Railway's 60-year Diamond Jubilee Appeal in spring 2020.

Then the coronavirus pandemic landed and the fundraiser had to be pulled last-minute in favour of a Covid Emergency Appeal. By necessity, the priorities had changed.

That appeal, boosted from our own membership, raised £400,000. Coupled with a

National Lottery Heritage Fund grant and two more from the Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage, nearly £1.7m of additional funding has been received for such elements as salaries and improvements to carry the business forward.

As things start to return to something like normality, the plan is to relaunch the station fundraiser in September/October as a '60+1' appeal timed in tandem with the popular



An enchanting inter-war scene recreated using the impressive five-platform stage of Horsted Keynes and matching Southern dressed actors Maunsell 'U' 2-6-0 No. 1638 and LBSCR 'E4' 0-6-2T No. B473 in summer 2012. But take a closer look and the problems here are obvious (inset). Jon Bowers/Colin Tyson

'Giants of Steam' enthusiast gala. At the same time it is planned to undertake preliminary emergency work, funded by a restricted £200,000 legacy specifically for the station.

'Brighton' cutbacks

Horsted Keynes was built in 1882 to the designs of Thomas Harrison Myers, staff architect to the London Brighton and South Coast Railway. Similar designs were adopted for stations north of Lewes to East Grinstead (including Ardingly) as well as at intermediate stopping points from Polegate to Eridge (on the 'Cuckoo Line'), the Chichester to Midhurst branch and at Hassocks on the London to Brighton Main Line.

Horsted Keynes was one of the largest stations in Sussex, boasting five platform faces, and forming the junction of the line south of East Grinstead to Lewes and the route via Ardingly to Copyhold Junction on the Brighton Main Line.

With two island platforms plus a single version

“...put simply, repairs are needed ‘from the chimney stacks to the tracks’.”

that houses the main building (ticket office and public rooms combined with station master's accommodation), platforms are numbered 1-5 from the west.

Rationalisation of such lavish facilities, which even included a refreshment room, started in LBSCR days. In 1913, a plan to simplify the signalling led to the removal of the westernmost canopy and buildings on Platforms 1 and 2, to improve the sight line for the signalman at the south end of the station.

The rendered plaster finishes seen on the station's front entrance in early photographs, and lined out to resemble timber framing, was re-clad to traditional 'Sussex tile-hung' style by 



around 1912. Little maintenance appears to have been undertaken by SR or BR, although ‘patch and mend’ has taken place in the six decades of Bluebell ownership.

There have been two notable exceptions in replacing what had gone before, both of them through volunteer initiatives; firstly the missing canopy and buildings on Platforms 1 and 2 were reconstructed in 1992-2004, utilising matching cast iron columns and spandrels saved from Hassocks and Lavant. Even with this nothing was straightforward – bat droppings are present in the loft space, bringing an unwanted diversion regarding disturbing a protected species.

Then, in memory of a preservation-era station master who had died, the front entrance porch that had been weatherboarded in Southern days was returned to its former magnificence with recreated stained glass windows.

Repair from ‘stacks to tracks’

Infrastructure repairs had been a low priority for the railway for several decades whilst attention was diverted to extending northwards from Horsted Keynes to East Grinstead. Since the six-mile extension was completed, more covered accommodation has been built for rolling stock and the original five-mile length of ageing permanent way between Sheffield Park and Horsted Keynes has now been virtually replaced.

The station, including the signalbox and adjacent former pump house and water tower, are Grade II Listed. All planned changes must therefore be agreed with the local council’s Conservation Officer.

Whilst there are no insurmountable defects with the main brick building and offices on Platform 5, the canopies expose the problems in the guttering and the failure of much of the original life-expired zinc roof sheeting. Water has penetrated failed box gutters along the length of the canopy and the interfaces with the brickwork.

It’s the same with the canopies on the island structure on Platforms 3 and 4 and, to an extent, guttering on the matching replica structure on Platforms 1 and 2.

Topography also plays a part – the land east of the station rises sharply and several small streams run off from higher fields. Upgrades will also be required to the drainage of the area and the station approach road.

Brickwork supporting the platforms has spalled or is just missing in places; put simply, repairs are needed ‘from the chimney stacks to the tracks’.

The Bluebell excels at making each station area a heritage zone based on a particular period in history, starting at Sheffield Park in LBSCR condition and travelling northwards through the SR and BR eras to East Grinstead. This includes the use of bullhead rail and timber sleepers in stations as laid down in the railway’s *Preservation Standards Manual*, overseen by a society trustee.

Each station has a ‘Friends’ group; witness the superb conservation work by the teams at Sheffield Park and at Kingscote. Horsted’s ‘Friends’ have done their best at ladder height and below, painting the interiors of public rooms or sanding and varnishing floorboards – but moisture is present in plasterwork caused from areas that only contractors can reach. ➡

SOUTHERN GLORY... BUT WORK TO BE DONE





A Daylight! Failed zinc sheeting outside the gents' on Platform 5.

B Missing teeth: water damage on canopy valancing.

C Early signs of rust on a canopy column, 15 years after restoration.

D Peeling paint on stone coving.

E The signalbox and adjacent former pump house and water tower are also Grade II Listed. Only the signalbox comes under current restoration plans.

F Period details abound on Platform 5, including the square canopy posts made by Lewes iron founder J. Every.

G Compromise: electric conduit in the subway is now housed in modern material, but yet to be painted.

H A perfect recreation: the 'new' Platform 1 and 2 building.

I LB&SCR-1882 immortalised in stone.

J Spalled and missing brickwork on platform faces.

K The impressive SR bracket signals are also in need of some TLC.

L Subliminal advertising!

M Original Victorian stained glass.

N Fire extinguishers, 1930s style.

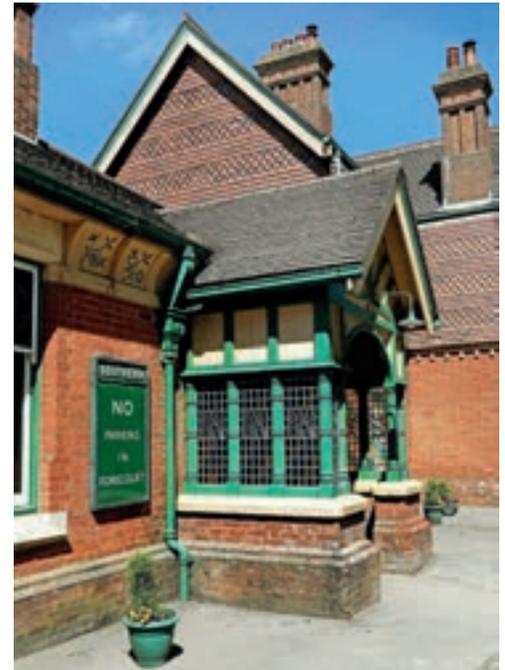
O Enamel signs of the times.

P Train not (yet) departing: North London Railway 0-6-0T No. 58850 and stock, stored at Platform 1.

Pictures: Colin Tyson and Trackside



The station when new in 1882, complete with painted decorative upper panels and leaded stained-glass porch – replaced with tongue and groove wood in 1914. The decorative plaster work to the first floor of the station house was replaced even in LBSCR days with a continuation of hanging tiles in the Sussex style. It would not be cost-effective to return to this appearance... Bluebell Archive



...but happily this striking feature was practical to restore, replicated using the surviving porch at Mayfield. Note the original floral patterned stone coving, picked out in green.

Avoiding showers

For both financial and operational reasons, it makes sense to concentrate on each area individually. The plan is to start with the building and canopies on Platform 5, which houses the station house, booking hall and office, ladies' waiting room and the gents' facilities. Completion of this will hopefully attract additional funding to finish the other areas.

Structural attention will also be needed to the signalbox, which has suffered from slight 'roof spread'. As the pump house and water tower serve no commercial or operational use, these are excluded from current plans. They could possibly attract outside funding in future, particularly if there were plans to make them functional again.

Despite plenty of water in the 'wrong' places, limited availability of the 'wet stuff' and its reduced pressure has been a long-standing feature of operations here, as the surviving SR notice to enginemens to 'only take water here when absolutely necessary' bears witness.

Electricity has also been problematic; BR staff used to experience a dimming of the platform lighting whenever an electric unit from Haywards Heath arrived on the 'juice rail'. With all the additions to the surrounding area in preservation

– Horsted Keynes is the base for our Carriage & Wagon works, Signal and Telegraph, and Infrastructure/Permanent Way Departments – the draw has become ever more apparent. A much-needed power upgrade for the whole site is scheduled for June.

Immediate attention will focus on joinery, canopy glazing, zinc roof sheeting, guttering and drainage; my advice to any other line with elderly stations is to regularly check rainwater downpipes, guttering and roofing before any problems become really expensive.

Horsted Keynes has always been a nice place to wait between trains, under the shade of the canopies in a hot summer – but trying to avoid showers caused by gushing water from failed guttering on a wet day is far from pleasant!

The station can be very busy on a two- or three-train operating day, with services crossing here plus the added attractions of a childrens' play area in the converted 'Elephant Van' in the cattle dock and the viewing area in the adjacent Carriage Works. Making these special and much loved buildings sparkle once again would be the perfect outcome.

A restoration gang made up of members who have 'aged out' from our junior '9F Club' have made a great start on the wagon fleet. Coupled

with the Kingscote Goods Yard Project, which had slipped in priority owing to Covid-19, let's hope that Platform 1 can be cleared of rotting stock and that wagons can once again be stored here and run to Kingscote to create the 'pick-up goods' trains of old. Then we truly will have an ambience to be proud of.

In addition, all platforms are now equipped for bi-directional running, under a wonderful array of working semaphores. These even include provision to one day work westwards towards Ardingly; then we will have a 'true' country junction station.

What will it cost?

Factoring in the work required – to the station house and offices, Platform 5 and canopy, Platforms 1 to 4 buildings and canopy, subway, approach road and signalbox – gives a figure of £1,673,000. Of that, £440,000 is for 'Phase One' (the first two items listed). These are 2020 estimates.

Our 'heritage' (as some may say!) toilet facilities are part of the station's uniqueness, but add in a modern block away from the heritage area and you can add £215,000... so let's say £1.8m in total.

So please keep an eye-out for the appeal this autumn and, if you are able, make a donation towards this worthwhile cause.

Together, we can make Horsted Keynes the jewel in the Bluebell crown once again! ■

● Turn to page 76 for a trackplan of Horsted Keynes.

“ The Bluebell excels at making each station area a heritage zone based on a particular period ”



COLIN TYSON...

...is a governor of the Bluebell Railway Trust and the longest serving editor of the members' house journal *Bluebell News* (since 1995).

His devotion to railways of the south of England is without question: he owns more than 100 enamel signs, including 58 Southern Railway and Region station name 'targets' and totems, collected since the age of nine (when you could still get totems for between £5 and £10!).

As well as being a lifelong railway enthusiast, he was also editor of *Old Glory* magazine for 20 years.

THE LIFE OF A COUNTRY STATION

1882: The five-platform station opens on the new Lewes & East Grinstead Railway.

1883: The station becomes a junction with the opening of the line to Haywards Heath via Ardingly.

1905: Three former special train sidings are filled with more than 30 LBSCR locomotives awaiting withdrawal or disposal, including now preserved Isle of Wight 'E1' No. 110 *Burgundy*.

1914: Traffic levels don't fulfil expectations and the signalbox at the north end of the station is demolished leaving the south 'box to control the rationalised track layout and modest number of trains. The westernmost canopy is also removed aiding the sight lines for signalmen.

1935: Electrified third rail and EMUs arrive.

1940: Wartime measures sees siding space used by flat wagons carrying a variety of stored equipment: ship propellers, ammunition and parts of Brighton built tanks.

1958: Three years after BR's closure of the L&EGR is thwarted, the line is finally shut, but trains from Haywards Heath – including a number of enthusiast specials – continue to serve Horsted Keynes.

1961: The nascent Bluebell Railway is granted access to the eastern platforms, reviving the station's junction status.

1963: The Ardingly branch is closed, but Horsted Keynes remains in preservation use, thus becoming the only intermediate station on the L&EGR to never close.

1990: Horsted Keynes becomes a through station again for the first time in 32 years as the first section of the Bluebell's northern extension opens.



2004: The long-demolished canopy is rebuilt by volunteers, helped with original parts from Hassocks and Lavant.

2012: A reproduction of the original stained-glass porch is recreated in memory of the late station master Simon Baker (see above).

2014: A major resignalling project is commissioned with bi-directional working possible for all platforms and provision for any future reopening to Ardingly.

2021: A third and major extension to the Bluebell's carriage shed and workshops on the former goods yard nears completion.



Starlight atmosphere! Southern Region
'SMT' No. 73082 *Camelot* squeezes
between Platforms 4 and 5. Jonathan Hughes

TRACKSIDE track plans

HORSTED KEYNES

