

Paving the Way at Horsted Keynes

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

INTRODUCTION

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

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

THE PROBLEM

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

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

THE SOLUTION

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

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



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

THE OPTIONS

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

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

THE COSTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



PAVING THE WAY – HOW TO DONATE

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

Online

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

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

By bank transfer

The Bluebell Railway Trust

Account no. 61059056 Sort code 60-10-26

Please quote reference 'Paving The Way'.

By cheque

Send to:

The Bluebell Railway Trust

Sheffield Park Station, East Sussex, TN22 3QL

Please quote reference 'Paving The Way'.

Gift Aid

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

Honours Board

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