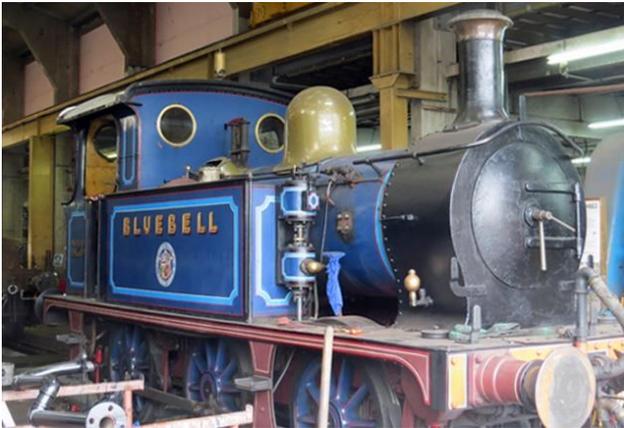


VISIT TO THE BLUEBELL RAILWAY. – 2015

The Summer outing of Digital Camera 1 was to the Bluebell Railway. Even though railways are considered by many as 'Boys' interest all of us enjoyed the experience.



The Bluebell Railway runs from Sheffield Park to East Grinstead and is organised by a few professional engineers but mainly by a band of very enthusiastic volunteers who spend days in the dark engine sheds mending and cleaning the elderly machines. Some of them also have the pleasure of playing at being a train driver and fireman. And don't they enjoy it. The hard work they were doing with almost passionate care was inspiring. One volunteer tells me he spends

three days a week in the sheds since he had retired. Another was asked if he minded getting dirty and he said he enjoyed it as his wife never allowed him to. All this enthusiasm shows in the overall quality of the railway and the museum. The museum, for example, is very professional in layout and information and contained many artefacts that date back to the early days of steam. A visit to www.bluebell-railway.co.uk is well worth it, particularly the 'History' page.

However we went there to take photographs and this we did. All this machinery both stationary and moving gave the members so many subjects to photograph. The platforms, signal boxes, luggage and other railway paraphernalia produced an atmosphere of the 1950/60 and all the group felt it. It also gave us an opportunity to travel in 1950's carriages pulled by a steam train. At times I felt I was commuting again.

As a personal aside, as a young 'train spotter' being up close to the engines whose numbers I so carefully under-lined in my copy of *The ABC of Southern Trains* by Ian Allen (who sadly died a few weeks ago) was pure nostalgia.