

E6040 Renamed “The Bluebell Railway” At Eastleigh Works

7th April 2023



The culmination of four months of effort at Eastleigh Works saw the loco carrying the as-built livery of early BR Blue with half-yellow warning ends and being re-named the “The Bluebell Railway” by Bluebell Railway Preservation Society Vice President, Roy Watts.

Paul Auckland, Project leader said, “This is a key milestone on the journey for having **“The Bluebell Railway” loco operating at its namesake railway. As a long-standing Bluebell volunteer on steam and diesel locos, I’m excited that the Bluebell has been so welcoming of this Heritage Loco and look forward to it operating trouble-free for many years at its new home.**”

Roy Watts, Bluebell Railway Preservation Society Vice President, said “**The Bluebell Railway continues to move with the times, and we’ve now had diesels for many years, starting with diesels operating the tip trains as part of us getting to East Grinstead more than ten years ago. I’m delighted E6040 is coming to the Bluebell Railway as it will be a highly versatile and economical locomotive allowing us to enhance our timetable alongside steam locos, I’m confident it’ll find a number of uses, including giving us the option to keep operating during high fire risk periods**”.

The loco will shortly be moving to the Bluebell Railway to be commissioned and take up its first duties. Further events to launch the loco are all in the pipeline. Keep an eye on the loco’s Facebook group [73133 “The Bluebell Railway” | Facebook](#) and Bluebell Railway website for more information as it becomes available.



If you’d like to get involved in the group doing practical work to support the operation of the locomotive then contact the project leader, Paul at paulchillout@aol.com or you can still donate, including setting up a regular donation, to support via [73133 “The Bluebell Railway” Restoration – a Heritage crowdfunding project in Uckfield by Paul Auckland \(crowdfunder.co.uk\)](#).

Basing the loco and operating it at the Bluebell Railway now allows us to move as a project to further goals of establishing a group to work on the loco to ensure it continues to be reliable and in good condition as well as fundraising for the inevitable work that will be needed going forward.

E6040 / 73133 was designed by Southern Region engineers who set about building a prototype batch of six new “electro-diesel” locomotives at Eastleigh Carriage and Wagon Works during 1961–2. The new locomotives had a respectable 1,600 hp on electric power, and an English Electric 600 hp diesel engine similar to those used in the Southern Region’s diesel-electric multiple Unit (DEMU) fleet. The success of these prototype locomotives resulted in British Railways ordering a production batch of a further 43 locomotives, including E6040 from English Electric at the Vulcan Foundry in Newton-le-Willows. The “electro-diesels” proved extremely versatile, to the point where many are still in service after a life of over 61 years.

The Bluebell Railway www.bluebell-railway.com was one of the first preserved heritage lines in the country, resulting in one of the finest collections of vintage steam locomotives and carriages – many of which were preserved straight out of service from British Railways. The Bluebell Railway commenced train services in August 1960 and now runs steam trains between Sheffield Park and East Grinstead, stopping at Horsted Keynes and Kingscote.

The Bluebell Railway run various events throughout the year including visiting engines, family fun days and Santa Specials. For a full list please visit our event pages. Dining trains are also in operation on selected dates throughout the year, including services for Afternoon Tea and Silver Service dining, Supper Specials and Rail Ale evenings.

Contact Paulchillout@aol.com for more info on the 73133 The Bluebell Railway project or phone 07970 406353