



Bluebell Railway Trio To Steam Again!

6th October 2023

The Bluebell Railway are delighted to announce that three historic locomotives are to return to working order. Following discussions and an agreement by the Bluebell Railway PLC Board and BRPS Society Board, it has been decided that LSWR Adams Radial Tank No. 30583, LSWR Adams B4 No. 96 'Normandy' and SECR Wainwright P Class No. 323 'Bluebell' will all receive overhauls and will steam again at The Bluebell Railway.



The Adams Radial & B4 will both be restored by the dedicated team at Atlantic House at Sheffield Park, the team responsible for their outstanding work making the new build LBSCR Marsh Atlantic 32424 'Beachy Head' a reality.

323 'Bluebell' is planned to go into the workshop at Sheffield Park in early 2024, with a view for the locomotive to be available in the

Summer of 2024, giving us an exciting prospect of seeing our flagship locomotive once again in steam and working Bluebell service trains.

Paul Churchman- Chairman of The Bluebell Railway

"I am really pleased that we have been able to achieve this, with 323 coming back so quickly and to then have Normandy and then the Adams Radial will be so exciting and shows the amazing collection of locomotives that the Bluebell has. It also shows the magnificent skill set of our paid and volunteer workforce."



Vernon Blackburn- Chairman Of The Bluebell Railway Trust.

"It will be marvellous to see these three vintage locomotives, on average already more than 125 years old, in steam again. They are popular with the public and favourites of many of our supporters. They look fantastic with our historic carriages of the same era and are economical to operate"

Adams Radial No. 30583 was outshopped as No. 488 and built at Neilson & Co. in Glasgow in 1885. The locomotive ran with the LSWR until it was sold to the Ministry for Munitions for the war effort in 1917. After WWI, the locomotive ran on the East

Kent Railway from 1919 to 1946- where the locomotive was then brought by the Southern Railway to operate on the Lyme Regis branch in Devon. It would remain there until withdrawal from BR in 1961, from there the locomotive then made its way to The Bluebell Railway and into preservation. The locomotive would become a firm favourite with crews and enthusiasts and would operate until 1990. Since then, the locomotive has remained on static display. 30583 is the sole survivor of its class and is owned by The Bluebell Railway

Adams B4 Tank No 96 'Normandy' was built in 1893 at Nine Elms by the LSWR as a class of 25 locomotives, designed to work in shunting duties, it would be renowned for its role played at Southampton Docks- one that it would provide sterling work until being displaced by American 'USA' dock tanks after WWII. The locomotive was then transferred to Winchester for shunting duties there until withdrawal from BR service in 1963. Sold to the industrial sector after withdrawal, the locomotive was saved by The Bluebell Railway in 1972. 'Normandy' returned to steam at the railway in 1986 and would prove to be an extremely useful and popular locomotive during its time in traffic. The B4 last steamed in 2006 and is currently on display at Steamworks at Sheffield Park. 'Normandy' is one of two of its class to have been preserved and is owned by the B4 Loco Group, which is part of The Bulleid Society.

No. 323 'Bluebell' is one of a class of eight 'P Class' tank engines, designed by Wainwright for the SECR. Built-in 1910 at Ashford Works, the locomotive was initially designed for suburban passenger work, although they were quickly superseded and relegated to shunting duties. Finishing off as 31323, the locomotive was withdrawn from BR in 1960 and was one of the first locomotives to be saved by The Bluebell Railway in that year. The loco was then named 'Bluebell' and became one of four of the class to have survived into preservation. 323 became the flagship locomotive of The Bluebell Railway and played a key role in establishing the line as a major tourist attraction, especially in the earlier years from 1960 onwards. 'Bluebell' last ran on the railway in 2019 and was withdrawn from service, requiring an overhaul. 323 is currently on static display at Steamworks at Sheffield Park and is owned by The Bluebell Railway.

If you wish to find out more information regarding this release and these locomotives, please contact our PR team at PR@bluebell-railway.com