

JORDAN MANSFIELD / GETTY IMAGES

## Steam railway chuffed to reach start of the line

**East Grinstead** They have taken decades to get through, but steam trains on the Bluebell Railway are once more connecting to the national rail network.

The railway — then the Lewes and East Grinstead Railway Preservation Society — started running steam trains in 1960 on a five-mile stretch of track from Sheffield Park to Horsted Keynes in East Sussex that had been shut by British Railways in 1958.

The campaign to reopen six more miles of track to East Grinstead, West Sussex, began in 1974. It has cost £11 million and entailed building a bridge and clearing an old cutting that had been used for landfill of 300,000



cubic metres of rubbish. As a band played *Congratulations*, the first service from East Grinstead to Sheffield Park for 55 years steamed out yesterday, the first day of the line's

two-week East Grinstead Opening Festival. The services include a restored 1931 U-class locomotive, left, which has been in Bluebell service since 2006, hauling rolling stock from

Southern Railways. Roger Kelly, the fund-raising director, said: "I have a feeling of elation — and emotion, partly because lots of people who should have been here aren't here. We

are so grateful to all the people who helped with the fund-raising. Without all the donations that they made, today simply wouldn't have been made possible."