

Preservation News

An occasional update from the Preservation Standards Committee.

Spring 2018

It is some time since the last news report, so time for a catch up with our activities.

The creation of Preservation Standards was aimed at encouraging the authentic presentation of Bluebell Railway's heritage, based on detailed research to avoid deviation away from what the original railway companies did.

Infrastructure

The core of the Standards Manual has been completed, and its rollout is in progress. The main areas finalised for publication are based around the authentic presentation of our station buildings in their different themed time periods on the Railway and also other areas of infrastructure. All the policy statements are complete; however, some further information is required to complete the task, mainly relating to finding missing original specifications produced by the Southern Railway to confirm detail.

Uniforms

Staff uniforms are the next section to be worked up in detail, and hopefully will be completed early this year. It is amazing just how many staff grades there used to be, and how many we have on the Railway, and each need researching to get everything just right. Small details such as the correct buttons and badges aid authenticity, and it has been surprising the number of commercially produced examples we have found that are incorrect!

There is, however, a big stumbling block to this section in its application, the cost to individual members of staff. Whereas the railway pays for paint for the stations as part of general maintenance, it does not pay for volunteer staff uniforms, and they don't come cheap, especially the Victorian clothes needed for Sheffield Park. The SR and BR uniforms are less of a problem as many generic "heritage" uniforms will pass inspection by the public with a little modification. For the most part the generic uniforms work well, but if we can establish the correct detail then that would be better and something to work towards.

Carriage & Wagon

The next major section requiring attention is to fill in the detail of C&W liveries. The carriages out-shopped are superb and are the envy of many other heritage railways, however the records of original liveries, colour specifications, and upholstery trimming are a bit scattered and will need collating into one comprehensive record. Help with this will be sought from the rolling stock committee and the experts in the C&W department.

Locomotives

Finally, the big one; the loco livery debate! We know that the loco works makes a superb job of out-shopping our loco fleet, however trying to establish the exact specifications for the liveries used is not so easy. To get the liveries used on our locomotives as authentic as we can for each of the locomotives we will be working with our friends in the Locomotive department to try to document the correct liveries for each and every loco on the railway.

We recently received a request from the Atlantic House for help in finding the correct colour of the inside of the cab roof from its final BR livery. Unfortunately, this has drawn a complete blank, so far! Can you help?

Publication

Some time ago there was a discussion by the Trustees on how to publish the Preservation Standards Manual. It is proposed to locate at least one full copy at each station for reference. As well as controlled paper copies, and extracts, for those that need one, it was agreed to make all the files available on a website for everyone to see and copy if they wish. This process is underway and will take some time due to the sheer number of pages and diagrams. Be assured when it is ready to be released, it will be advertised. We will be needing some assistance with electronic indexing, converting, and loading files, if you might be able to help please contact Richard Salmon.

Getting it right first time

On other matters, we have been active in the rollout of the correct colour scheme for Kingscote, assisting the ASH project with finishing detail, specifying the correct gas lighting units for Sheffield Park, and the colour scheme for the footbridge when it is repainted. The Friends of Sheffield Park also have been seeking clarification for some detail with the new canopy.

We have also been consulted, early in the project, over detail finishes of the Pullman Car No. 54 restoration and conversion, which will be a great asset to our fleet when it is complete.

Being on call as well to answer and investigate some of the finer details missing from the original release of sections of the manual, and advising on proposed new developments to help ensure our stations improve their appearance based on what was actually done, has kept us busy. In some situations there has been the need for pragmatism, so not everything is exactly as we would wish; however, we are generally achieving our aims.

And finally ...

In the meantime, please remember we are all members of the Bluebell Railway PRESERVATION Society, so remain heritage focused and if you feel anything is not as you think it should be please let us know.

By Chris Saunders, Preservation Standards Trustee.