



PRESS RELEASE

BLUEBELL RAILWAY

MERCEDES-BENZ SMART FORRAIL

25th JUNE 2015

THE BLUEBELL RAILWAY OPERATES ALONG 11 MILES OF RAILWAY LINE THROUGH THE SUSSEX COUNTRYSIDE BETWEEN ITS HEADQUARTERS AT SHEFFIELD PARK IN THE SOUTH AND EAST GRINSTEAD TO THE NORTH, WHERE IT CONNECTS WITH THE NATIONAL RAIL NETWORK.

AS THE FIRST STANDARD GAUGE PRESERVED HERITAGE PASSENGER RAILWAY IN THE WORLD, IT RAN ITS FIRST PUBLIC STEAM HAULED TRAIN ON 7TH. AUGUST 1960.

WITH 155,000 VISITORS LAST YEAR, THE BLUEBELL RAILWAY IS A KEY TOURIST ATTRACTION IN THE SOUTH EAST OF ENGLAND. IT HAS THE FINEST COLLECTION OF STEAM LOCOMOTIVES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM OUTSIDE THE NATIONAL RAILWAY MUSEUM IN YORK – INDEED, IT HAS SOME 32 LOCOMOTIVES AND 86 CARRIAGES ON ITS STOCK LIST.

A TEAM OF AROUND 60 EMPLOYED STAFF AND OVER 600 VOLUNTEERS MAINTAIN NOT ONLY THE DELIVERY OF RAIL SERVICES, BUT ITS ROLLING STOCK FLEET , INFRASTRUCTURE AND BUILDINGS, SOME OF WHICH ARE OVER 140 YEARS OLD.

FROM THE OUTSET, THE DESIRE WAS TO RUN THE RAILWAY BACK INTO EAST GRINSTEAD BUT THE ENGINEERING CHALLENGES OF THE TWO MILE EXTENSION FROM KINGSCOTE WERE ENORMOUS; NONETHELESS WITH THE FIRST TRACK LAYING STARTING IN 2003, TEN YEARS LATER, THE FIRST STEAM HAULED SERVICE RAN INTO EAST GRINSTEAD ON 23RD MARCH 2013.

IT PROVIDES TO ITS VISITORS A UNIQUE WORKING HISTORY AND LIVING MUSEUM OF THE RAILWAY INDUSTRY, FROM CONCEPTION TO THE PRESENT DAY, AND HAS BEEN USED AS FILM LOCATIONS FOR MORE THAN 500 PRODUCTIONS WORLDWIDE TO DATE.

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