



Preserving the past, looking to the future

Keeping the heritage alive

The Bluebell Railway is a heritage steam railway that runs along the picturesque border between East and West Sussex, from Sheffield Park to East Grinstead station, with intermediate stations at Horsted Keynes and Kingscote.

Attracting thousands of visitors each year, and with its oldest engine dating from 1872, the Bluebell Railway and its volunteers work hard keeping alive traditional railway engineering skills. And it's no surprise on this heritage steam railway, there is plenty of heavy lifting to be done, as engineer Andy Sabin explains: "With heavy objects such as wheel sets and other large components to move, it is basically a heavy engineering site – and then of course there is unloading of goods and 'coaling up' the steam engines."

Specific capabilities

While the trains' coal is still shovelled into furnaces by hand, the Bluebell Railway's heavy lifting needs

are met by forklifts. A steam railway requires specific capabilities from its forklifts, including a coal bucket attachment with additional hydraulics and a good residual capacity to lift the large wheel sets.

Light and heavy duties

When it became necessary to replace their existing forklifts, Andy decided on Doosan, ordering both a D35C-5 and a D45SC-5 diesel forklift – 3.5 and 4.5-tonnes respectively. The smaller forklift is used for lighter duties and general loads in tight working spaces, while moving coal and other heavy loads is entrusted to the larger D45SC-5.

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Great manoeuvrability

Both trucks have made a real difference. “The manoeuvrability of the Doosan trucks is much better than our old ones. These are easy to drive, much more comfortable and very reliable – and they even have a cup holder! They’ve proved so popular that we now have a queue of volunteers wanting to drive the forklifts as well as the trains,” jokes Andy.

Supply by a local firm

“It was also a pleasure purchasing through our local dealer Mexmast. They were attentive and knowledgeable, the price was right and we really liked the idea of a local firm supplying us and looking after the forklifts rather than a faceless national organisation.”

Excellent range of equipment

Since making the change to Doosan, Andy says Bluebell has recommended the manufacturer to others. “Doosan has an excellent range of equipment that is well made, easy to use and efficient – what more can I say?”

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