

BEECH HURST NEWS



Cover picture: -

At Speed: Over the course of the last 2 years Norman has been busily constructing a 5" gauge 4-CEP motor coach. After all the trials and tribulations the finished model is pictured about 4 weeks ago with 'little' Andrew at the controls after receiving its 'blue grey' colour scheme. A report follows inside:

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Editor's Notes

Welcome to summer! We have near as damn it reached the mid-point of the year and of our 2008 season already, with the summer solstice next Saturday. Despite the bad weather at Easter and into April and the introduction of the £1 fare this year we have been very steady throughout May and the early part of June, with some gloriously warm sunny weather interspersed with a few pretty heavy downpours! In fact despite Southern England having one of its wettest May's since records began, we seem to have avoided too much at the weekends – luck must be on our side right now! Lets hope that the rest of the year continues in a similar fashion!

Thanks go to all those who contributed to the April edition of the newsletter, namely: Enid, Mike, Nick and Ray.

With this edition there has been one change to the format with the addition of a 'rear cover' picture due to 'high demand' & the number of new locomotives that have been entering service during the last few months. I intend to keep this 'bonus feature' going as long as there are enough suitable images to use throughout the year and I'm confident this will continue until early 2009 at least! Apart from the regular features this edition also contains a report on the efficiency trials so far, a visit to Beech Hurst by the Chelmsford club, a write up about Norman's recently completed 4-CEP coach, plus an updated Forthcoming/Diary of Events page, so please read on and enjoy...

Andrew

Chairman's Notes

We are now approaching mid-season and have enough running days behind us to judge the effect of our fare increase this year. On looking back at the records over the last few seasons, it is obvious that this has been one of the wettest and coldest series of weekends we have operated through for many a year. Several days, about a dozen actually, have been really 'called off', and only a few hardy travellers and even hardier members, have salvaged something – we have at least avoided any total 'blowouts' this far! The early Easter weather was inhospitable too this year. So I think, in this respect, it has proved fortuitous that we did increase the fare, because by the time I write this, we have just caught up with the takings of previous years at this, the 'half-way' point.

According to previous statistics, a fare increase such as we have made this year has in the past resulted in passenger numbers dropping to 60% of that before. I suspect overall this year we may find something similar occurring. However, on the few occasions when the park has been dry and the weather warm & sunny, then passenger numbers have been about 80% of previously. Perhaps as the year goes on and petrol & diesel, mortgages and other prices also continue to soar, people will not have so much money to play with on our trains. I know of several families who are having to cut back on luxuries to pay for the necessities! We surely will be affected by this, and probably more so as the year progresses. However, all in all, we are doing fine, and the very heavy wear and tear of the last few years on the track and rolling stock has been reduced!

Back at the clubhouse, life has been busy too. Thanks to Chris and Steve T a niggling 'call-on' signal fault was eventually tracked down and sorted;

a varied gang of good folk have repaired a burst water pipe under the back platform and we can finally now fill in the hole in the lawn! Steve T has been working overtime lately fixing the broken air and water connections 'in the hole' and in his spare time has been piping and wiring our new compressor. The club bought this to supply air to our grit blaster cabinet, as our old compressor was really not 'man' enough (or should that be 'person' enough now!) Anyway, both machines can be operated independently on separate air circuits or linked together if necessary. The operation of the railway relies heavily on a supply of compressed air – so we have 'belt and braces' now!

Thanks, too, to the grass cutters and strimmers. Under Andrew B's guidance, it's good to see our healthy teenage members getting involved in a little gardening! Well done lads, it looks very smart.

This year has seen some new engines arriving at the club and a lot of help has been given by some more knowledgeable members to those who have just started to experience the 'trials and tribulations' of owning a steam engine! There is also a lot of loco building and restoration going on behind the scenes too. These days the club is a hive of activity and enthusiasm that is very heartening. Any club is only as good as the members make it, and ours is certainly now more interesting and lively than for a long time. New locos seen on the track so far this year include: Norman's 4-CEP coach, Paul's GWR 'Manor', Howard's 'Minx', Nick's 'Simplex', John H's 'Polly 5' and now my NBR 'Atlantic'. There are at least a few others close to being completed that may be revealed before the end of the season.

A couple of weeks ago we had a very enjoyable visit from our Chelmsford friends who ran our Sunday service for us. John Dalton sent us a very nice thank you letter that I've put up on the notice board.

The 'Beech-LEC' competition is up and running. Myself, Andrew B and Daniel have all had a 'go', and all survived to reach the finishing line! Now we're looking for a few more of the bigger engines to show us how efficiently they can run or be run, so come and have a go.

For the future we are planning a special day on Saturday 2nd August to commemorate the engine of steam on BR (40 years ago in 1968). We plan to have as many trains on the track, all steam hauled, as we can – with others on the steaming bays or shed road – generally a 'steam extravaganza'. Sunday 3rd will be a mainly electric operation to mark the changeover. Dan has produced some colourful posters to display and we will also arrange some 'press' publicity beforehand too (also see Forthcoming Events page).

Lastly, a small project (started on one of our wet days!) and currently being finished by Steve S, is a display board to be used at the station to advertise the running engines for the day. A bit more colourful and interesting than the blackboard we have been using. Stephen H has been preparing laminated photographs for a 'photo' library at the station.

Apologies if my 'notes' are rather long this time, but I wanted to give a round up of all that has been happening at the club so far this season and acknowledge all the hard work that goes into making a successful and enjoyable club. I have mentioned a few names in relation to the jobs taken on recently, but thanks must go to everyone who comes up and contributes in some way to the upkeep and day to day running of our society, right down to making the tea and washing and sweeping up at the end of each day.

Mike

Efficiency Trials – The Story So Far

At the time of press we have so far finished 4 efficiency trial runs, all of which have been completed by their respective drivers without major incident!

Mike kicked off proceedings on 3rd May with his 'B1' locomotive, selecting a 3-



car train of nearly 900kg's for his 10-lap run. After a tough first lap, he made steady headway and completed the course with a goodly fire still left in the box. Hauling the 3-car train the engine returned an efficiency of 142g's of coal per 100kg's of load, using about 1250g's of coal for the light up and 10 laps.

Andrew then went to the other end of the scale with his diminutive 'Railmotor' locomotive for the next trial on Sunday 11th May and elected a 4-car train with a total load of 460kg's for his 10-lap stint. After nearly slipping to a stand on the first lap, he completed his 10-laps with an additional oil stop somewhere near Haywards Heath and coming home with little but the fire bars showing! The smaller engine used just under 1000g's of coal for the light up and 10-laps, returning an efficiency of 224g's of coal per 100kg's of load.

With no other willing volunteers, Mike then had a second try with his LNWR 'Jumbo' locomotive on 31st May. The smaller machine hauled 2-cars and a total train weight of 380kg's, which was just about enough for the first lap that has proven to be the hardest on the 4 trials so far. The remaining 9 laps were completed in fine style with water taken on the run to avoid anymore than the one further compulsory stop. The locomotive used 713g's of coal and returned an overall efficiency of 184g's of coal per 100kg's of load, putting it in second place so far.

Last weekend we held the fourth trial with Daniel running his 'Polly 3' locomotive. Hauling a load of 3-cars and an approximate train weight of 650kg's, the first lap proved nearly too much with the locomotive returning for its first compulsory stop with just 10psi on the gauge! After a quick 'blow up' the remaining 9 laps were completed with ease and another successful run was complete. 'Polly' used just over 1300g's of coal for its 10-laps and returned an overall efficiency of 201g's of coal per 100kg's of load, putting it in third place overall.

In summary the first four trials have been really good fun. Selecting your load is critical as the first lap has nearly been the driver's downfall on a couple of occasions. It seems that the larger locomotives are more efficient, particularly those with bigger wheels, the 2-6-0's and 4-6-0's etc... but that is not to say they will be the most efficient. A lot is dependent on the driver too, so it should be interesting come the end of the season to see who has had the best run.

It is also interesting to see which locomotives turn out to be more efficient and why. More to follow...

Andrew

Visit by Chelmsford to Beech Hurst

About a month back we hosted a visit by the Chelmsford club. John, Melvin



and Bob have been visiting Beech Hurst for many years and this time we made it into more of a club visit with a good selection of motive power on the track during the day. It was nice that we had a fairly decent day for it too, many times the guy's from Essex have visited us and it has pouring hard with rain, at least this year it was dry and sunny, if a little cool in the wind!



Amongst the machines on display this year was a 5" Britannia, a 5" 9F, two 5" 'Singles', one a GNR and one a rare GER version, a 5" 'Loch' (picture top left), a 5" early NER overhead electric locomotive and a 5" Class 23 'Baby Deltic'.

Those who wanted to

have a run on the track in the morning got their opportunity to have a non-stop (well mostly) spin before the serious stuff started at 1400.

The afternoon service was then provided by the 'Britannia', the '9F' and 'Class 23' double-headed(!), the two 'Singles' double-headed(!) (see picture above), plus Ian and Norman in between to help boost the number of trains. The varied motive power certainly seemed to be popular with a very steady stream of passengers during the afternoon keeping our guests busy for the most part. I would like thank everybody who helped out during the day with all the chores and duties and also socialising with our guests and making them feel very much welcome, also to the guy's from Chelmsford for providing our afternoon service and for making it a very enjoyable and different Sunday with a good selection of different forms of motive power.

Andrew

The Arrival of a 4-CEP

Shortly after the last timetabled slam-door service ran on the Southern region I was invited to go on a Southern Railway staff outing on the last slam door train to be run, before many were sent for scrap. The train was formed of two 4-CEP units, which made an 8-coach train. The trip was from Brighton – Eastbourne – London Bridge – London Victoria – Bognor Regis via Horsham – London Victoria via Hove and finally back to Brighton. Having enjoyed the trip so much, I was sad to see the units going for scrap, particularly as I had worked on them for 6 years at Chart Leacon Depot, during the 1970's.



The 4-CEP (Corridor Electro Pneumatic) units replaced steam traction on the Southern region when major electrification of the Kent coast was introduced. A lot of the previously steam hauled MK1 rolling stock was modified at Eastleigh works to form these new units, which were stored on

the Haywards Heath to Ardingly branch until required.

I had been thinking I would like to build a scale MK1 coach to go behind my Class 47 diesel locomotive, so the trip made me decide it would be better to build a motor coach from the 4-CEP unit which could be run independently of the diesel or double head with it, which would increase the power sufficiently to haul a 5 or 6 car train.

I have always wanted to get involved with double-heading with other diesels during special events at Beech Hurst and having seen the two 'Growlers' double-head on these special days, this gave me the idea of building the unit.

I have had a lot of help from several Beech Hurst members, which I am very grateful for. Because you cannot buy 5" gauge drawings of a 4-CEP unit, I had to buy drawings for the MK1 bogies from Dan Jeavons at Kidderminster. I found out later that the motor bogie are of a plate framed leaf sprung design and differs significantly from the leaf-sprung trailer bogies found on the MK1 coaches of that era. Talking with Bob Youldon during a club night he was able to give me the details of a man who had drawings for a Gauge '1' 4-CEP, which I could scale up to create a 5" version.

I purchased the wheels, axles and axle boxes from Model Engineering Products in Bexhill, but after fitting the wheels to the axles Mike discovered that the back to back dimension was too great and one wheel had to be removed, the axle re-machined and the wheel re-fitted to obtain the correct back to back dimension for 5" gauge (should be between 4.625" – 4.6875").

When I got the drawings for the remainder of the coach chassis and superstructure I was able to make a 5" scale drawing of the coach sides, these turned out to be 67" long, and I took the drawings to a laser cutting firm in Burgess Hill, called Cirrus Laser who cut them from 16swg mild steel plate,

complete with window and door arrangements. The coach undercarriage was made by a firm called Penta Craft on the Ditchling Industrial Estate, near Burgess Hill. My special thanks go to Andrew Brock for a considerable amount of welding he has done for me on the body and undercarriage.

I purchased from Doug Hewson the rubber vestibule connections for the ends of the coach, along with a lot of other fittings that he manufactures for the MK1 coach. The control box and some of the electronics were purchased from Parkside, because I wanted to have the ability to double head with the Class 47, which already had these components installed.

Steve Turner produced a wiring diagram, however, this proved to be very complicated. Steve has spent a lot of hours fitting the electronics in the 4-CEP and has done an excellent job and I thank him for all he has done. Steve Steer then acquired some plastic for the windows and cut them to size too, ready to install.



The horn castings for the bogies were purchased from Polly Engineering and my wife, Hazel, made the 28 orange curtains for each side of the windows, which the 4-CEP's originally had. From the outside these look very good and help to cover up the wiring inside.

Having returned from Tony Funnel, who has done a superb job in

painting the body in BR 'Blue/Grey' colours and adding lettering and symbols, the coach is now in active service at Beech Hurst and apart from a few problems with the wiring and the gear meshing, it has so far proved to be a very good runner and very powerful too – I hope it will continue this way and that people can enjoy driving and riding behind it (see picture above).

Norman

Jokes

A man buys his wife a new car for Christmas. She said "that's no good to me, I want something that will go from 0-160 in 3 seconds, what does the man buy her now?"

Answer: Bathroom scales

An elderly couple are in a church, and the wife says to her husband "I just very, very, very, very quietly broken wind. What do you think I should do?"

Answer: He said "put a new battery in your hearing aid."

Growing Older Is...

- Your back goes out more than you do.
- A fortuneteller offers to read your face.
- You turn out the lights for economic reasons rather than romantic ones.
- You remember this week that last week was your wedding anniversary.
- You are startled the first time you are addressed as "Old Timer".
- You answer automatically when someone addresses you "Old Timer."
- You burn your midnight oil after 9:00 p.m.
- You sink your teeth into a steak and they stay there.
- Your pacemaker makes the garage door go up when you see a pretty girl walk by.
- The best part of your day is over when your alarm goes off.
- The thought of getting out of bed never occurs to you.

Nick

Forthcoming Events

In a fortnights time we will be welcoming Maidstone MES to Beech Hurst for their annual visit. It was not known at the time of going to press how many/which locomotives will be attending, however this is usually down to the weather forecast during the preceeding week. I am sure with a fair wind there will be a good variety of locomotives attending for the morning fun run and also for passenger service during the afternoon.

We will be holding a special weekend on 2nd & 3rd August to celebrate 40 years after the last regular steam services left the mainline. The Saturday will hopefully consist of a large variety of steam locomotives running during the afternoon, with a mostly electric service operating on the Sunday. Anybody wishing to run steam on the Saturday is welcome to put their name in the running book for this day. If more than sufficient locomotives are entered then it may be necessary to swap motive power during the afternoon so everybody can have a go. We should be able to run 6 or 7 trains at any one time and it is all dependent as ever on the weather.

A fortnight later on Saturday 16th August we have been invited to the Maidstone MES track in Mote Park. The next newsletter will be out on the 23rd August, so anybody who might like to attend this visit, either with or without a locomotive, should see Andrew at the club by Sunday 3rd August at the latest so I can let Maidstone know the likely numbers and locomotives, also so we can plan a service of our own on the Saturday.

The following Saturday, 23rd, sees our final BBQ of the year and will comprise the normal format of 'Bring Your Own' for the BBQ, with onions and puddings provided. Again this is weather permitting, but whatever the weather it has rarely stopped us in the past!

The last Saturday of August may well be a final special day of the season before the kids go back to school. Details of this will be arranged nearer the time and will be published in the August edition, however, we may well do something along the lines of a £TBC – all afternoon fare or possibly a double-day with all trains double-headed and dice thrown to see if you get 2 laps for the price of 1! The latter was something we tried a few years ago and was extremely fun to do, especially for the drivers who didn't know what they'd be doing 1 lap to the next!

Beyond August we have a provisional invitation to visit the Malden club on 11th or 12th October, the same as we did last year. Details will be firmed up in the August edition and again if you are interested in going we need to let Malden know by early September so they can prepare for the number of guests.

Also we hope to be able to arrange a talk by the Harris Brothers in October or November about the history of fairgrounds, details to follow either in the August or October editions.

Andrew

Diary of Events

28th June 2008 – Maidstone MES to visit Beech Hurst from approx. 1000

3rd July 2008 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

2nd & 3rd August 2008 – Special running weekend – 40 years after steam

7th August 2008 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

16th August 2008 – SMLS to visit Maidstone MES – details see Andrew

23rd August 2008 – End of summer 'Bring Your Own' BBQ from approx. 1800

30th August 2008 – Special running day TBC – details in August news

4th September 2008 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

2nd October 2008 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

11th or 12th October 2008 – SMLS to visit Malden DSME – details TBC

N.B. Other events are not always shown in the diary of events because they have been arranged at short notice; check black/notice boards at the clubhouse for more details.

Andrew

Sussex Miniature Locomotive Society Ltd



Rear Cover picture: -

On The Road: With quite a lot of new or revamped locomotives making the rails this year, I have decided to introduce a 'back cover' picture in order to satisfy the high demand! Pictured above is the latest GWR locomotive to enter service at Beech Hurst namely Paul Tomlinson's handsome 5" gauge 'Torquay Manor'. After a couple of 'false starts' the locomotive now runs smoothly and should prove to be a reliable and moderately powerful runner at Beech Hurst. I intend keep this bonus feature going during the course of 2008 and maybe into early 2009, all the time that new or revamped locomotives keep hitting the rails at Beech Hurst. Not sure what August will bring yet, so we'll see what appears in the meantime, but there are certainly a good half-a-dozen locomotives in the pipeline, which if not already in service will hopefully be by mid-summer.