

Sussex Miniature Locomotive Society Ltd

Issue No. 423

October 2016

BEECH HURST NEWS



Cover picture: -

Gold Standard: Following on from the frontispiece of the last edition, congratulations to Roy P for winning a Gold Medal for his 'C' class, which is pictured on display at the Brooklands Museum during the Model Engineer Show back in mid-September, a full show report + pictures inside.

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Editor's Notes

As I write these notes, the clocks have just gone back and it seems strange to be getting up for work and it is half-light again! Unfortunately we pay for this at the other end of the day and come 5pm it is now pretty much dark. The only saving grace for the next month or so is that it generally remains relatively mild before the really cold months of January and February after Christmas! Looking back over the season as a whole, and apart from a slight blip mid-way through, we have been very lucky overall and certainly August and September were particularly nice months in 2016. Even October has remained relatively dry with underfoot conditions still pretty firm for the time of year and no sign of those autumn storms from across the pond just yet! Hopefully this spell of dry weather will last to the end of the week (as I write this) and that we get a decent day for Bonfire Night. We have on some previous occasions been wading around in mud trying to prepare the fire, so hopefully this year will be a little different!

From the last edition, I would like to thank Roy P & Steve T for their contributions and pictures, and to Chris, Dave M & Steve T for their contributions to this edition. Along with the usual writings, Chris has prepared a report and updated graphs to include our 2016 passenger statistics, Dave M a report on the visit by Basingstoke back in September and Steve T has prepared the latest committee minutes for publication and an invitation to the workshop training sessions due to start next weekend. Over and above these items, I have also written pieces about the August 'BBQ' evening, our display at the Model Engineer Brooklands Show, continued the series 'Work in Progress' and updated the Diary through to January 2017, so please read on and enjoy...

Andrew

Chairman's Notes

Our 2016 running season ended with some good track days and fares for the year were up a little on recent times. This season we were fortunate not to have too many rainy days and I would like to thank Dan and Nick for their efforts as Operations Managers for the year. Thanks also to all those members who signed up to run trains, take the fares and act as T/C's. Nearly 70 running days is a lot to cover and sometimes it's not easy to fill all the 'slots'. Anyway, we made it and never failed to have trains on the track within a few minutes of 2pm every time, which I vouch is a better record than the full size achieved this year!

We exhibited at the Model Engineer Brooklands Show this year, a new venue. Roy Preston entered his recently finished 'C' class 0-6-0 and came away with a well deserved Gold Medal! Well done Roy!

Thanks to Andrew B and all those who helped with the Brooklands Show.

At the end of the season we also had a pleasant visit from the Basingstoke Club and they ran our passenger service for us with some interesting engines. We thank them for leaving our track clean too!

Winter work has begun and Roy and his gang have been busy on the track. This year the section from the steaming bays to the station signal is being replaced.

At the time of writing, this is basically in place with all the fixings and re-leveling etc... still to be done. Roy has also started on another shorter section over on the tennis court straight, which gets full sun, and the sleepers were suffering! I'm pleased to say quite a few members have been involved on different days which is a great help, and special thanks to Graham Miller who works with Roy every day. It is a lot of work, but is looking good.

Unfortunately, whilst jacking up the steelwork we believe the power cable to the station was disturbed and broken. This cable has proved troublesome before, as it runs from the clubhouse to the steaming bays (underground where the traverser slots in) and on to the station. It also feeds the warning bell transformer near the steaming bays. As we have renewed all the tunnel electrics as well as the engine shed and workshop electrics over the last few years, we should now have this power line put in professionally and certificated also. It's old original cable and potentially dangerous, so we hope to complete this in November before the Santa days. He, ho, busy days!

Steve T, at the committee's request, recently sought advice and a survey of the long tunnel. For a long time there has been clay and silt running in through the holes left in the walls. This is dangerous because it is so slippery and also time consuming and difficult to keep clean. We wanted to be sure we would not cause problems by blocking some of the worst offending holes. We have been assured we won't, so Steve will obtain some silicone bungs to try to improve the situation.

The leaves are falling too now and some of us have already started the endless job of rounding them up and keeping the cuttings and track from getting buried! All help will be gratefully received if you feel like coming along any Saturday and / or Sunday. We will need a team or two of gardeners on the last two weekends of November especially please, as this year we will be assisting Joanna from the cafeteria with her Santa Specials again. We are providing the train rides and the Father Christmas'; the bowling club are loaning out their premises as a greeting and waiting area for the train passengers en route to the 'grotto' (our station building!). We are purchasing a 'party tent' to provide some protection at the station for staff and visitors. As a change from last year we will be running trains in a full circuit, hence the need for a tidy up before the two Santa weekends which are booked for the beginning of December. Mike Wakeling will be putting extra Christmas lights in the tunnel as an added attraction for the travellers to see Father Christmas. Help would be welcome for any of these days and a signing up list is already on the whiteboard. Mike W, Roy P and I have been liaising with Joanna on the plans, but there will be much to do on the days, coordinating and guiding people and operating trains. We will also be offering extra rides (other than those booked and paid for with Joanna) on a donation basis with proceeds to go to charity. This year Joanna will make coupons for paid up travellers which our staff will collect, and all others will be encouraged to put something in the charity boxes if they wish to ride around more. We have discussed 'eventualities', like poor weather but unless it is a howling gale or deep snow, and dangerous to operate, the show will go on despite the weather, primarily because Joanna will book a certain maximum number on any day and it would be very difficult to postpone or change plans. So come prepared please!

I can now give you an update on the 'house building situation', near our railway that I wrote about earlier in the year. We found out late about the proposal to build on the south side of our track, because the announcement was buried deep in the council website. John Baldwin, Roy P and I managed to put a letter together quickly at the time and John wrote and kindly delivered it by hand to the council offices just within the deadline. We wrote only about the concerns we had regarding the railway, and principally about retaining our access to the rear field via the gate that leads into the present council depot. There was a meeting that took place in July that Roy managed to attend, and speak at, on our behalf. The Neighbourhood Plan Examiner's report has since been published. Basically the open space or 'green' near the Mid Sussex Club premises has been reprieved and the number of houses reduced from 24 to 15 which would be built on the depot land only. Thanks to our efforts I believe the entrance to the rear of our premises has received a mention in the report, so we are hopeful it can be 'planned' around. This all has to go to a referendum of some kind for further approval. I suspect that now there will be less pressure on us to open up the back field to the public than before, as the council were offering this area as an alternative to the green space that was put forward to be built on and has been refused. We will see, watch this space!

Steve T, Mike W and Chris are soon to start the Sunday afternoon workshop training sessions that we have spoken about for a while. Details will be in this newsletter. If you would like to learn about using our machines, please let Steve know and come along.

Daniel is preparing some new timetables ready for next year, 2017, how time seems to fly!

I hope to see you on Bonfire Night, Val and John are kindly doing the food once again, Andrew B will be setting off the fireworks, and hopefully we can build a decent fire to keep us warm!

Mike

Recent Committee Minutes

Minutes in Brief for the 11th June 2016

Members Attending: - 8 Present + 1 Apology

16/039 Matters Arising:-

A fault / maintenance sheet has been created & put in each of the Wharfedale & LNER loco lockers (the sheet is to be filled in by the driver or member working on either loco).

16/040 Secretary's Report:-

Insurance for the LNER Club loco is being arranged for £5,000.

A visit to The Lavender Line has been arranged for 16th July 2016.

A visit by Adrian Landi has been agreed for 18th & 25th June 2016.

It was agreed to exhibit at the Model Engineer Brooklands Show.

The Track Cleaning Truck has been loaned to the Chelmsford Society.

16/041 Treasurer's Report:-

The Committee has purchased another Club locomotive – Brian Joyce's 5" gauge 2-8-0 LNER Gresley Tank.

16/042 Safety Report:-

Work has been carried out on the ends of the footbridge by the back station.

16/044 Technical Report:-

Steve T has agreed to take on the maintenance of the passenger trucks with Andy B & Andy S.

New switches for the loco lift are being looked in to.

16/045 Social Report:-

A BBQ with the Petanque group has been arranged after the match with SMLS members.

16/046 News Report:-

It was agreed to reinstate (after some years) a 'Committee Minutes in Brief' section in the newsletter.

16/048 AOB:-

It was agreed to purchase a lockable letterbox as it was found that some of our mail has gone missing.

16/049 Next Committee Meeting:- 23rd July 2016.

Minutes in Brief for the 23rd July 2016

Members Attending: - 8 Present + 1 Apology

16/052 Secretary's Report:-

Adele Evans, Adrian Landi & Chris Gateley were elected as new members of the SMLS.

It was agreed for a group of Bluebell members to visit on 4th August 2016.

It was agreed for a party of some of Adam Cro's friends to visit on 26th August 2016.

Simon Hudson is to be contacted regarding the running of Big Boy at the SMLS track (date to be agreed).

It was agreed for the Chelmsford Society to purchase the SMLS Track Cleaning Truck (price to be agreed).

16/055 Operations Report:-

It was agreed to run the Santa Specials in conjunction with Joanna (café) arrangements to be agreed.

16/056 Technical Report:-

The broken switch on the loco lift has been replaced.

16/057 Social Report:-

A Petanque match with SMLS members has been arranged for 6th August 2016 followed by a BBQ with the Petanque group as guests.

The date for the SMLS Bonfire Night has been set as 5th November 2016.

16/060 AOB:-

The response to the workshop training course has amounted to 2 requests to attend.

It was agreed to advertise the old pressure washer for sale in the next newsletter.

16/061 Next Committee Meeting:- 17th August 2016.

Workshop Training

Further to the piece in the August edition, the workshop training sessions will commence on Sunday 13th November at 14:00. A few members have expressed an interest in these sessions and should you wish to join them, please contact me directly at the e-mail address below to confirm your intention to attend:

stevet50@btopenworld.com

Steve T

Annual Passenger Figures 2016

This must be the 40th report I have done for the newsletter covering the passenger numbers, having taken over from Alan Gettings in 1976. Time flies when you're having fun?

At last some good news on the numbers; we've had a reasonable increase over the last few years. Last year we just scraped 23,000 with the previous two years less than 22,000, now we've achieved 23,754. This now means a better than average year for a change. The long-term average has been about 23,180 for some time and dropping each year, however this year it has increased a little.

The best day was May Bank Holiday Sunday with a score of 616 passengers, there was also one day with 590.

My new(ish) computer now offers a prediction program for my famous graphs. This is interesting; however as it is all new I wouldn't take too much notice of its results. The program does suggest another slightly better year for 2017 with a bumper one in 2018 with an estimate of 36,000 passengers, so the committee planners can use this as a warning of might be coming!

The grand total continues to increase toward the milestone 1 ½ million mark.

At the end of this season we were 39,700 to go to reach this target. Probably not in 2017 but more likely in the late Spring of 2018, (more for the event planners to consider).

So, with 1,460,287 on the clock we still seem to be popular with our passengers, which is what it is all about. Oh, and the telephone numbers? We passed Haywards Heath earlier this year 01444, we also passed Chard at 01460 and now reside at 'Isle Brewers' near Taunton in Somerset (01460 287xxx)

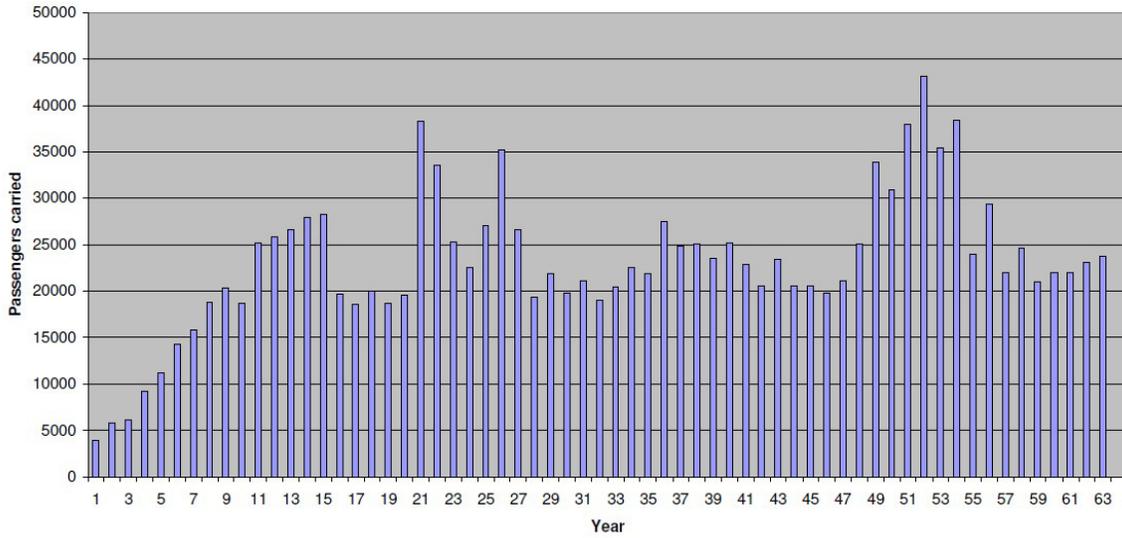
For the newer members, this light-hearted bit has traced the phone number map around the country after a remark from some wit that all this stuff is just telephone numbers!

Good steaming...

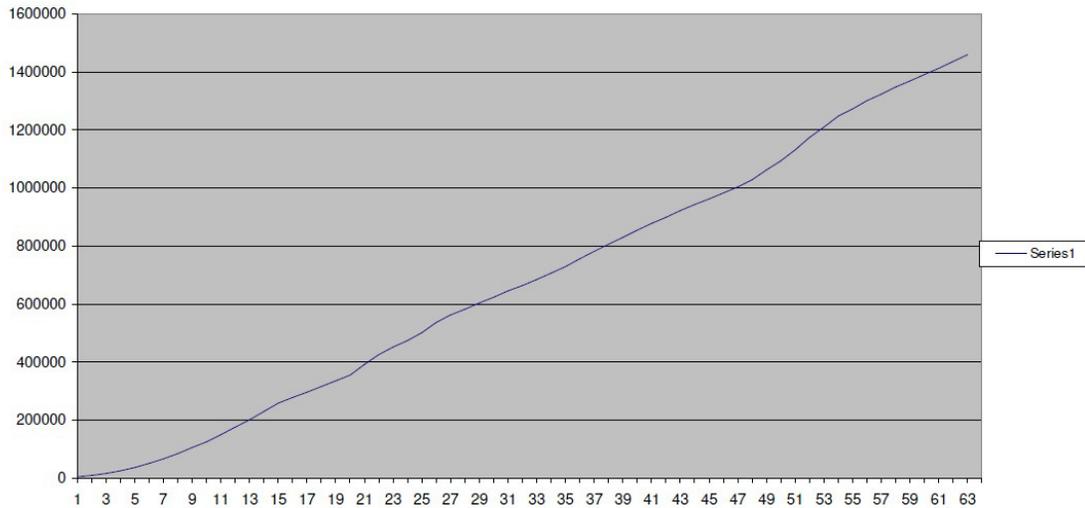
Graph Next Page Top: This depicts annual passenger numbers for each of the 63 years to date.

Graph Next Page Bottom: This depicts cumulative passenger numbers for all of the 63 years to date.

SMLS passenger history



Total passengers



Chris

Recent Social Events – August 'BBQ' Evening

The last edition was published in time for the August Bank Holiday weekend and 'BBQ' evening. This year we have had two dry 'BBQ' evenings, even if the one in June was threatened by showers! August was dry and pleasant enough, and once again well attended too with over 20 members and friends at Beech Hurst that evening. Motive power wise, Laurie ran the Class 31 with a freight train and I ran 'Railmotor' with my vacuum braked truck and assorted passenger trucks too.

Thanks through these pages to all those who helped to prepare and then clear away at the end, particularly Val & John for the food preparation, and of course to all those who attended to make this another very successful 'BBQ' evening. (Pictures of the 'BBQ' motive power below)



Model Engineer Brooklands Show

After a year's break, the Model Engineering Exhibition was back for 2016 and this time it was held at the Brooklands Museum in Weybridge. Having been stalwarts at the Sandown Park show, we were invited to display at this new event and as such we planned to take along a few smaller exhibits to test the water and see how things went.

Brooklands itself is a very interesting aeronautical, bus and motor racing museum all in one, as well as being the location for the 'Stratosphere Chamber', a huge testing rig designed to recreate extremes of temperature and weather. In its day Brooklands also boasted a fully banked motor racing circuit, hill climbing track and aircraft runway, parts of which exist to this day. One of the highlights has to be Concorde 'Delta Golf', which takes pride of place behind the 'Stratosphere Chamber' building and is 1 of only 7 Concorde aircraft in the UK. There are many other diverse aircraft on display including a VC10, a replica Vickers Vimy and a Wellington Bomber to name but a few.

With all these static exhibits in place, the Model Engineering stands were spread around the main clubhouse and in side rooms adjacent to the 'Stratosphere Chamber'. Set up on the Thursday proved to be easy enough with access to our stand being very straightforward too. We took along Roy P's 'Europa', my vacuum braked driving car and flat-bed wagon, also Josh's '3D Printer'. In addition, Roy P also took his 'C' class, which had been entered into the competition section and was therefore displayed in a separate hall adjacent to the 'Stratosphere Chamber'. The following 3 days of the exhibition itself seemed to go well and there was plenty (if perhaps too much) to see for those who came to visit. One of the downsides of this spread layout was that some visitors didn't know if they had seen everything or not. Signage was not brilliant and the traders were somewhat out on a limb across from the clubhouse. All these are definitely areas for improvement should the show happen in 2017. That said, the location is good and if you have never been to Brooklands then there is plenty to see also.

One interesting topic of conversation that came up during the weekend was how other clubs view the future of the hobby and how they are seeking to attract new members. One of the conversations involved the Chairman of the Guildford Club and he was explaining that their vision for success lies in being diverse in terms of the facilities offered. By that he meant encouraging more than just those who come along to run the railway. In particular they have a flourishing 'Gauge 1' contingent and perhaps this is food for thought for us and for other clubs as a way of attracting new members who may migrate to the larger gauges as time goes on. There cannot be any harm to think about such ideas and ultimately if it means an influx of potential new members this surely cannot be a bad thing? Come mid-afternoon on the Saturday and finally the results of the competition were starting to filter through and congratulations to Roy for receiving a Gold Medal for his 'C' class. A question for our more senior members is, when (or if ever) was the last time a SMLS member's railway locomotive won a Gold Medal at a Model Engineer Exhibition? I think I am right in saying Ron Harris has won Gold Medals for his aero engines (Ron, please correct me if I am wrong) but how about a railway locomotive? Answers on a postcard for the December edition please! Anyway, this capped off what was a good show and one which I believe will be repeated in 2017. Thanks go to all those who helped out before, during and after the show, particularly to John B, Mike W, Ray, Roy P & I for arranging transport, for the loan of all the exhibits and to all those who gave their time to man our stand during the weekend. (**Pictures** on the next page)

Andrew



Picture Top: Our stand at the Brooklands Show, except the diggers + 'Black 5' behind!
Picture Middle: A view of the main clubhouse and 'Stratosphere Chamber' to the right
Picture Bottom: Concorde 'Delta Golf' on display at the Brooklands Museum

Winter Work

With the conclusion of our running season, Winter Work is now back for the next 4 issues and will highlight all the significant jobs that have been undertaken or are underway during our closed season.

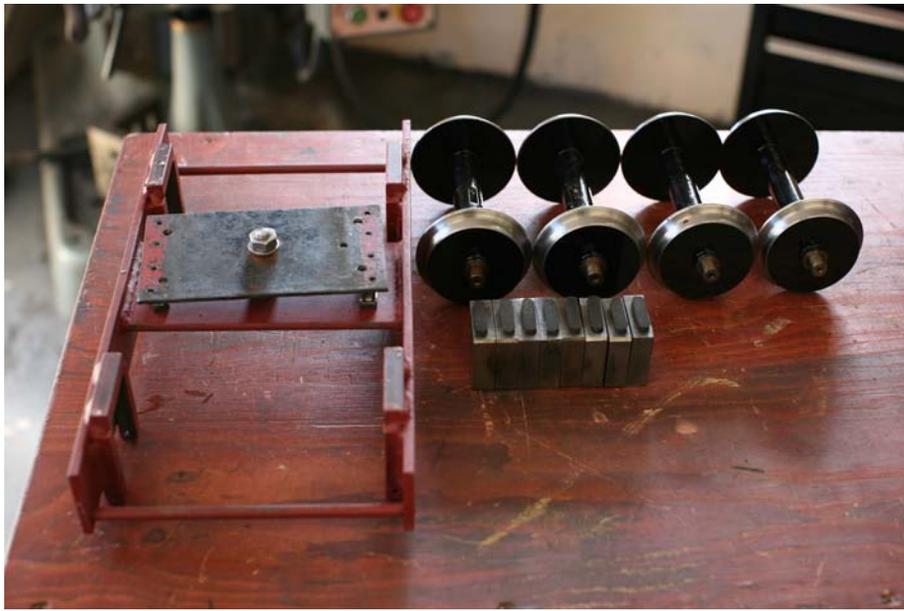
Straight after the last Sunday in September, Roy and his team started on another mammoth renewal of track, this time from the steaming bays, down the hill, through the station and just out the other side by Joanna's café. Helped by many willing (or otherwise) hands, as of last weekend, this section has been lifted, scraped, painted and basically re-laid with final nailing, pinning and levelling to complete. Work then started on another section from just after the 'jungle' right up the tennis court straight. At the time of writing, this section has been lifted, scraped and painting is in progress, prior to renewal of sleepers and rail. With reasonably dry weather over the past 6 weeks, Roy and his team have been lucky not to be wading around in too much mud, which can become a problem.

Truck wise, Andrew S, Graham Mundy & I spent a morning checking our existing fleet for any issues that will need addressing over the course of the winter. Bearings on about a dozen axles will need attention, along with 2 brake pads which have subsequently been replaced. It is interesting to note that the new style of bogie, used regularly on the medium green and short green sets show no significant problems and seem to be wearing much better than some bearings on the old bogies. We are not 100% sure of the reason why but as previously mentioned the bearings on the new bogies are fitted using Loctite retainer rather than a push fit and it may be this reduced stress upon renewal that gives the bearings a longer life. Tolerances on the new bogies are also different with the axle boxes able to float more freely within the horn guides compared to the old bogies, which have spring tension placed on the axle boxes all the time. Aside the normal renewals, Geoff & Steve T have been continuing our previous work on the 12 new bogies which have been progressed over the past 3 years or so. The last remaining job was to bore out the axle boxes, which have been fitted with welded sleeves to take our standard size of bearing. At the time of press this job was part complete and next is to finalise a bearing surface between the bogie frame stretcher and the base of the truck chassis. Steve has purchased some commercially available door runner wheels as a trial to see if they can withstand our loadings. If so they will provide a very good and low cost commercial solution. It is certainly the intention to have spare bogies available for next season and as one such bearing failure proved at the tail end of this season, the ability to swap bogies at a moments notice will come in very handy!

In addition to the above, leaf clearance, path spraying and general gardening has also started and regular volunteers for these tasks will always be welcomed! Leaves are a particular problem at this time of the year and with ever more, and larger trees to contend with, there are ever more leaves too!

Over the course of the next 6 months I will continue to update you via the newsletter on progress of the above jobs, as well as other ones which are undertaken. (**Pictures** on the next page)

Andrew



Picture Top: The first of 12 new bogie frames with axle boxes and wheel sets
Picture Middle: The renewed track looking from the steaming bay towards the station
Picture Bottom: Round 2 of the track renewals under way on the Tennis Court straight

Recent Social Events – Basingstoke Visit

Ten members of the Basingstoke & District Model Engineering Society (B&DMES) visited Beech Hurst on Saturday 24th September. They brought with them a scratch built '9F', a 'Model Works' '9F' 'Evening Star', a 'B1' and a GWR '15XX', all in 5" gauge and all very nicely prepared. After enjoying a 'cuppa' and biscuits on arrival they lit up and were soon on the track. The 'B1' and '15XX' had visited before but for the two '9F' locomotives it was their first time on our track. After a brief familiarisation lap under the tuition of Andrew S they were soon well away and coping comfortably with the track elevations. The weather on the day was perfect, warm with clear skies, and lunch was a picnic outside soaking up the 'atmosphere'. They were invited to do the afternoon stint of public running and all 4 engines performed admirably. Bearing in mind that both '9F's' had been in steam for some 6 hours and the 'B1' and the '15XX' for at least 4 hours they performed equally well at both ends of the day! After a clean down, all engines were safely stowed back in the cars, followed by a fish and chip supper, and then more cakes to finish off what had been a very enjoyable day. Thanks through these pages to everyone who helped to prepare, operate and then clear away, particularly Andrew B, Andrew S, Sam & I. Also to our visitors who brought along some very nice locomotives and who then singlehandedly operated our afternoon passenger service too. (**Pictures** on the next 2 pages)

Dave M

Work in Progress

Since the August edition my previously mentioned flat-bed wagon has run for the first time and this was successful. Addition of brake gear will follow, although I am just pleased to have it running for now and to tick another outstanding project off the long list! Having completed the wagon, I then set to, to make a new nut for the reverser on the 'Black 5'. A tricky but not impossible internal screw-cutting job followed, most of which went well. The thread, a 13/32" x 8tpi square cut left handed one, required a specially ground tool, which had to be finished with a diamond file to the exact profile! Fortunately, I could use the existing reversing screw to help create the correct thread angle and width for the screw-cutting tool for the nut! A couple of test pieces in brass followed and then a proper go in PB102 bronze. The PB102 bronze version I was not particularly impressed with, so another attempt using leaded bronze was started and proved perfect, so with the tool still set a second spare one then followed. The new nut was fitted to the locomotive for the last run of the season and this went well. The original reverser screw, now over 40 years old was just a thou' down on size end-to-end and is a credit to the quality of the original build! With the running season now at an end, it is back to finishing off the last bits on the 'Black 5' in between more wagon production, which is also in progress! (**Pictures** follow on the next but one page).

If members would like to contribute to this column in future editions then I will gladly publish all short articles / pictures and I will continue to lead by example and write about my recent model engineering experiences too...

Andrew



Picture Top: The 'Model Works' '9F' from Basingstoke, which latterly hauled 4-cars
Picture Middle: A superb scratch built '9F' from Basingstoke in the morning sunshine
Picture Bottom: A lovely '15XX' from Basingstoke hauling a good load of passengers



Picture Top: Another fine locomotive from Basingstoke, this time a 'B1'
Picture Middle: Internally screw-cutting the new reverser nut for the 'Black 5'
Picture Bottom: Successful machining of the first nut proved, nut number 2 is next

Forthcoming Events

With this newsletter falling on Bonfire Night, the next event will be our Santa Special runs in early December in conjunction with Joanna from the café. These fall on the first 2 weekends of December and help with a variety of tasks will be greatly appreciated. A list of volunteers is on the whiteboard and if you would like to assist too then please add your name to the list in the next couple of weeks.

Looking into the New Year and we have our New Year's Day Fun Run & Lunch on 1st January. The format is planned to be the same as per previous years and to help with catering a list will be on the whiteboard shortly if you wish to attend and be fed!

Thereafter, we have provisionally booked to attend the London Model Engineering Exhibition at Alexandra Palace over the weekend of 20th – 22nd January 2017. Confirmation of exhibits are required by the third weekend of November, so if you would like to have something on display, alongside 2 locomotives already on the shortlist then do please add your details to the whiteboard during the next fortnight or contact myself or John Baldwin for more details of how to enter!

Andrew

Diary of Events

3rd & 4th December 2016 – Santa Special Runs – Details above

10th & 11th December 2016 – Santa Special Runs – Details above

1st January 2017 – New Year's Day Fun Run & Lunch – Will start at approx. 1000

20th – 22nd January 2017 – SMLS to display at Alexandra Palace – Details above

NB. Certain events may be organised at short notice and will not therefore appear in the newsletter. Please check white / notice boards in the clubhouse for details of such events.

Andrew