

Sussex Miniature Locomotive Society Ltd

Issue No. 378
April 2009

BEECH HURST NEWS



Cover picture: -

Full Steam Ahead: After about 18 months, undergoing a major rebuild and receiving a new boiler, John West's 'City' class looks resplendent as it climbs the bank towards Court Tunnel during a recent test run. A report and more pictures appear inside...

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Editor's Notes

This edition is again a little later than planned, as I'm trying to keep all the latest news in these editions and therefore publishing dates may vary slightly from news to news as appropriate.

Firstly through these pages I ought to place both hands firmly skyward and say sorry to anyone who was left scratching their head after the last edition, as to why they hadn't received their membership card. I had published that all paid members would receive outstanding cards in their newsletter, then promptly forgot about 90% of them! Hopefully all the cards arrived separately afterwards and if you are still shy of your 2009 card then please let me know and I will issue duplicates as necessary. I am certainly not prepared to accept it as a 'senior moment' more a 'youthful' one, but apologies to all those concerned all the same! I hope the first edition of 2009 was to everybody's satisfaction and thanks to all the regular contributors and extra articles from Stephen Hutton and Ray Parsons. The new or repaired locomotive theme continues with this edition (please see cover photographs for clues) as we welcome back John West's 'City of Truro' and also Paul Tomlinson's new 'Duchess'. John has very kindly penned me an article about the work on his locomotive, as well supplying some very interesting photographs of his new boiler. For those of you who have not seen a boiler under construction these are very interesting and give an insight as to what is underneath all that copper and solder and answer why a boiler is so strong. Along with all the regular features, there is also an up to date Diary of Events for the next few months. The June edition is likely to be towards the end of the month, so I can include our planned trip to Chelmsford and hopefully by then we may well have another new locomotive to include on the cover! I also promise to fit in the Christmas Quiz answers which I had delayed from February and will have to delay again this time in order to keep to an even pagination.

Andrew

Chairman's Notes

Trains are running again and spring keeps trying to break through! We've had a few nice running days and a few cold and wet. This year the trees seem to be very slow coming into leaf, but when the sun does shine there is warmth in it now. Easter finished with a lovely day on the Bank Holiday Monday and we were very busy with 'young' Andrew, who was Station Master, taking a record one day fares total, which helped to make up for Good Friday which was virtually a 'wash out'. Some you win, some you lose!

Geoff has started on a spring paint job inside the clubhouse and has already finished the 'snug' side, which, with the making good around the new windows, has made the area look very smart again. The rest of the main clubhouse will get some paint in due course. With this in mind, please make a big effort to wash those black, greasy or sooty hands and not leave black hand prints everywhere on the new paintwork! It is courtesy to those who try to make and keep the clubhouse looking clean and presentable. Nuff sed!

One other addition inside the clubhouse is a giant flat screen, which Steve Turner kindly present to the club. We are now able to connect this to our laptop and plug in digital cameras etc... for the full 'movie' experience! It is going to be permanently fixed to the wall where the blackboard used to be (for its protection and safe keeping as much as anything) and also so it will be possible to arrange seating around it for a film night etc...

Out on the track it was nice to see John West's 'City of Truro' back after a year's absence for a new boiler and overhaul. It is also sporting a fresh paint job, transfers and lining, and looks very smart indeed and with only a couple of teething problems quickly went back into light 'running-in' passenger service. Also Paul Tomlinson's new acquisition ('Duchess of Hamilton') has arrived, is very impressive and runs well. With a 'fair wind' and 'all being well', a couple of other engines are expected to be finished fairly soon, adding interest on the track.

All in all, a very fair start to the season, the running book is filling comfortably and thanks go to all those who have started setting up and putting away the railway again each running day. I hope everyone enjoys the rest of the season.

Mike

'City of Truro'

It was about 18 months ago when it became apparent that the boiler on my 'City of Truro' locomotive finally decided it had had enough! Four crown stays were leaking quite badly (an umbrella job!) under hydraulic test, so it was thought wise



to call it a day. Consequently the engine and tender were taken back home and the 'Duchess' was packed away and mothballed.

I was determined that after giving so many years of pleasure (nearly 30) the 'old lady' deserved to be rebuilt and given a new lease of life. After I stripped the engine down I found that apart from the boiler, the bearings in some places

were very worn and needed attention. Not surprising really, considering the number of miles it must have travelled. However the boiler was by far the biggest job and was tackled first. I had some of the material already and a small quantity of silver solder so I was off to a flying start. I also had some pieces of ½" tufnol sheet, which is excellent for making the formers, and an odd piece or two of mahogany that was screwed together to make the belpaire and firebox wrapper formers. **(See kit of parts above!)**

All the plates were then flanged and the barrel rolled up from sheet using our rolls in the workshop. Norman kindly advised me on this operation and it turned out a treat.

During this period I was chatting about boilers to Bob Youldon and he suggested I use a procedure for soldering up he had devised, 'The Heretics Approach' he calls it. I was quite taken with the idea as it allows every side stay, cross stay and crown stay to be individually inspected for flaws inside and out during assembly and there is a lot less copper at this stage to keep hot. Very briefly the idea is to assemble the outer wrapper to the inside firebox wrapper using the side foundation rings fixed with bronze screws but less the throat plate, back head and firebox plates, thus making a see through 'tunnel'. All the side stays, crown and cross stays are then screwed in and the whole lot soldered up. Every stay can then be checked for soundness. **(See part assembled boiler below left)**



The throat plate and barrel assembly, and the firebox tube plate and tubes were then soldered up and fixed to the belpaire 'tunnel' with screws. We then soldered these in place and the firebox back plate. After soldering in the front tube plate, backhead, front and rear foundation rings, together with the end and longitudinal stays the heating job was completed. Hopefully job finished!

I should like to emphasise that none of the silver soldering would have been satisfactorily achieved without the assistance of Andrew and Mike. Thank you both very much! I soldered up the previous boiler at home by myself and that is why it eventually failed. Not enough heat in the right places basically and solder never penetrated. It wasn't possible to access properly and that is why I used Bob's method

(see complete boiler left).

The next job was the valve gear set. Originally Kennion's specified gunmetal eccentric straps, but over the years these have worn down to such an extent they were in danger of falling apart! I bought cast iron discs of suitable size and made new ones.



Hopefully they will last longer than a season before requiring adjustment!
Other jobs included: bushing valve guides, glands, connecting rods, new pins for the link motion, along with new 'o' rings for the pistons and a host of other things I have forgotten.

The last job was painting and lining out. I used Precision Paints products and found them to be very satisfactory.

I was very glad to be back on the track by Easter and without too many problems.

Thanks again to those who helped with assistance and advice, not forgetting Val who pacified me with cups of tea when things were going so well and words of encouragement!

John West

New Acquisition

Further to Mike's Chairman's Notes the new flat screen has now been affixed to the wall in place of the blackboard and was suitably tested last Saturday with footage from 'Sir Archibald Sinclair's' special day runs at the Bluebell Railway. Final tidying up now needs to be done and the positioning of the white board across the screen to complete this fixture. I would like to pass on all our thanks through these pages to Steve Turner for acquiring the screen and hopefully it will come in very useful as a film night replacement for the old cine and projector screen, which will be placed into semi-retirement in the next couple of weeks.

Andrew

New Décor

Along with the screen, mentioned above, Geoff has been busy re-decorating that



end of the club room, with a fresh coat of 'magnolia' and white where appropriate. Together with Geoff and John Gange's earlier repairs around the recently double glazed units, the whole 'snug' area is now looking very fresh and we will try and keep it that way by refraining from further decorating the walls with coal dust, oil, black grease and other contaminates! The plan is to redecorate the dining area in the next

few weeks and I will duly report this in the June newsletter. Thanks to Geoff and also John Gange for their time in undertaking this work. (See picture above left)

Andrew

Recent Social Events

Thanks also through these pages to Geoff for organising the second and again very interesting talk by Robert Harris on 'The History of Fairgrounds'. It was just over a month ago that we settled back to enjoy another delve into the social history of the Travelling Fairs and the pleasure they brought with them. Like so many entertainments from the past, the Travelling Fairs are struggling to cope with modern alternatives nowadays and there are certainly not the numbers there once were. If you weren't lucky enough to have heard this talk, then it is well worth it if you ever get the chance, as much for knowledge that Mr Harris has as well as the images he brings that portray the way things once were.

Andrew

Forthcoming Events

With the running season now firmly with us we can look forward to our normal summer social events and visits, plus a couple of extra dates for your diary.

Starting on Sunday 17th May we will be hosting a visit by Chelmsford club to Beech Hurst, who amongst enjoying some fun running and a change of scenery will hopefully also run our afternoon service and provide a range of different locomotives for passengers to ride behind.

The following Saturday is then a slightly earlier than usual mid-summer 'Bring Your Own' BBQ. We will be starting at the normal time of 18:00 and then run on until dark and beyond – weather permitting as ever! All are welcome to this and there will hopefully be a range of trains running during the evening for everyone to ride and enjoy.

The 4th June Club Night will then be taken up by a visit from members of the Lavender Line at Isfield. We are anticipating about 10 to 12 visitors and weather permitting we will run some different motive power that they can drive and enjoy something a little bit smaller than normal.

Two Saturday's following we have been invited to a reciprocal visit to Chelmsford club. June 20th is one of their open days and we plan to take a number of members and locomotives to visit their track for the first time. A list will be placed on the white board in the next week or so and interested persons should add their name to indicate their wish to attend. Transport can then be arranged nearer the time to suit numbers.

With the above but one in mind, the 2nd July Club Night will then be taken up by a reciprocal visit to the Lavender Line at Isfield, when they will hopefully have a steam locomotive available for us to ride on. It is anticipated that there will be no one at Beech Hurst that evening and for those interested in visiting the Lavender Line details will be posted on the white board in the clubhouse in the next few weeks for you to add your name if you're interested in coming with us.

Following on in July, we have invited Maidstone MES to visit Beech Hurst on 18th. They will I'm sure, and weather permitting, bring their usual variety of locomotives for a morning fun run and then run our passenger service during the afternoon period.

We have then been invited back to Maidstone for a special visiting day on August 8th. This is their 80th year and they have, as far as I'm aware, invited a number of other clubs for a grand open day. Details will follow in the June edition and names of those interested in making the journey eastward will be requested on the white board nearer the time.

Towards the end of the month we are hoping to be able to exhibit at the Bristol ME show at Thornbury Leisure Centre, which is approximately 10 miles north of central Bristol. We are still, at this time, waiting to hear if we have been allocated a slot and hopefully I will have firmer details for the June edition. Our intention, if permissible, is to take a display to this exhibition for which we will be asking for extra volunteers nearer the time, as we do have a number of people already interested and transport provisionally arranged if necessary.

Finally to take us to the end of August, there is the normal end of summer 'Bring Your Own' BBQ on Saturday 29th, start time 18:00 as per the June evening.

Andrew

Diary of Events

7th May 2009 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

17th May 2009 – Chelmsford to visit Beech Hurst – Will start at approx. 1000.

23rd May 2009 – Mid-summer BBQ – Will start at approx. 1800.

4th June 2009 – Club Night (see extra details above).

20th June 2009 – SMLS invited to visit Chelmsford (see extra details above).

2nd July 2009 – Club Night (see extra details above).

18th July 2009 – Maidstone MES to visit Beech Hurst – Will start at approx. 1000.

6th August 2009 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

8th August 2009 – SMLS to visit Maidstone MES – Details to follow in June.

21st/22nd/23rd August 2009 – Provisional display at Bristol ME Show – TBC.

29th August 2009 – End of summer BBQ – Will start at approx. 1800.

3rd September 2009 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

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

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A Giant of Steam: Gently pulling away on its first run at Beech Hurst is Paul Tomlinson's latest acquisition, an LMS 'Duchess' class locomotive 'Duchess of Hamilton'. Paul is currently building two other 'Duchesses', one a scratch built scale model and the other a heavily modified 'Model Works' example. This locomotive has proved to be a very proficient passenger hauler over the last few weekends, ably coping with 4 Pullman trucks up the steep 1 in 100 climb out from the station and it seems to be very popular with members of the public too, who admire its fine lines and elegance! Is it better looking than a 'King' though...?