

Sussex Miniature Locomotive Society Ltd

Issue No. 451
June 2021

BEECH HURST NEWS



Cover picture: -

Out of the Ordinary: Certainly for the first time in my 27 year membership, the AGM was not held at Beech Hurst but at the Perrymount Road Methodist Church instead. Pictured above shows most of those present with Mike W starting proceedings...

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Editor's Notes

It is mid-summer day as I start what would have been our 70th anniversary edition and our in-person AGM is due to be held this Saturday but not at Beech Hurst. Covid-19 limitations mean the clubhouse is just too small for such a meeting. Fast forward a week and I report that for the first occasion in my time at SMLS, our AGM was held 'away from home' at the Perrymount Road Methodist Church. The large space allowed 20 members to come together and despite all that has passed us by during the last year it was heartening to see such an attendance.

Whitsun 2021 was due to be a weekend celebration for our 70th anniversary but sadly this was not to be. However, I have included a 'pictorial interlude' later in this edition from past anniversaries and perhaps we could follow the example from the Bluebell Railway and hold a '70+1' anniversary in 2022, even perhaps to coincide with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee – all food for thought...?

With the forecast end of Covid-19 restrictions, I have held back the issue of this newsletter so I could report the most up to date information. Mike W's 'Notes' below detail our current position and there is light at the end of the tunnel even if that aspect indicates 'caution' rather than 'proceed'!

Also in this edition, there is an updated 'Positions' list following the AGM, a couple of items are offered for sale and details of these follow in later pages, along with a pictorial round up of the tidy clubhouse and garden, as well as an updated Diary, so please read on and enjoy...

Andrew B

Chairman's Notes

Dear all,

Hope you are all well & enjoying the great weather we are having at the moment, back to summer 2020 that made the lockdown much more bearable for all.

Reflecting on the time since the last newsletter, more members are now meeting up the club on a regular basis.

I would like to thank all those that came to the AGM and it was great to see so many members.

For those who were not at the AGM I thought I would give a brief outline of what was talked about during the open discussion session.

We are no doubt, like many other clubs and societies, faced with some challenges and the committee has already started to review these with some urgency. Fortunately, we are in a financially sound state so we can concentrate on maintaining our service to the public to give us our income and to the comfort of our members. We know there are several of you that feel we should start to open public rides again and the committee has now agreed to try and run a limited service depending on availability of members to run the day. We will operate under a Covid-19 guidelines risk assessment to protect our members and minimise cross-contamination amongst the members and the public. This is purely a **voluntary service** and there is no pressure on any member to join in, it is entirely up to you. The 6 outings per locomotive locker rule will not be enforced again this year.

By the time you read this you should have received a call or have been approached by a member of the committee to enquire if you would like to join us in attempting to run for the public on 1st August as an experiment. It has been agreed that we do not collect a fare but have a donation bucket, thus avoiding the need for close contact with the public and handling money. We will run with the driving truck free of passengers and possible changes to the loading and unloading procedures but all will be confirmed shortly.

One thing Covid-19 has brought forward is the need for us to seriously consider Contactless payment. Considerable discussion by the committee has already taken place into reviewing what this will mean to our members. This has included talking to clubs already using Contactless payment that are operating from an office selling tickets or tokens for rides. This process involves a card reader and we are reviewing the wireless operating systems that are out there (average cost per payment is 1.7p) and due to our poor signal, we are reviewing other pre-booking systems as well. This has led us to believe that we may have to consider installing a landline to the clubhouse for a wired solution.

At the 2020 AGM John Green raised the issue of the standard of our current toilet saying we need to improve it so that we can engage more with our public and members. We haven't forgotten the toilet, it is still on the list, but I am afraid the roof took priority. We have, however, re-hinged the toilet door to open outwards which does give easier access and more room inside. When we upgrade the toilet, it will have a knock-on effect on our current layout for storage so the committee felt this would be an ideal time to review our current social area. We are looking for your thoughts and ideas on how you would like it to be. Currently many of our chairs do not meet fire regulations and should be replaced. We have to ask ourselves are we using what's in our cupboards. Roy Preston has already submitted a proposal for the committee to review which supports the objectives of the club and includes reviewing the current social layout and having a display area within the clubhouse for members work and to demonstrate how things work so that we can bring potential members in to see and advertise what we do. Let's have your thoughts and ideas to put in the pot for discussion.

Finally with regard to new members, Andrew Strongitharm in his report has pointed out that we have had 8 enquiries to join us during the Covid-19 restrictions which hopefully we can turn into new members. To achieve this, we have decided to hold a New Members Day on the 21st August followed by a BBQ. We always need to increase our membership and we are looking for ideas on how we can sell our Society as a desirable one to join. If you know of anyone who may be interested tell them about the 21st and invite them along to meet us in the afternoon. This is an opportunity for you to present your thoughts and ideas to the committee on how you would like to see the club move forward.

Having sat down in the clubhouse and caught up on the pile of Engineering in Miniature on the clubhouse table it was great to see the articles in the magazine by Sam Ridley who has been beavering away rebuilding his Winson locomotive during the lockdown, even having his photo as the cover page for the magazine.

Well done Sam. My thanks also go to Andrew Brock for his encouragement, support and advice given to Sam and allowing him access to his workshop to achieve this. We look forward to its inaugural run.

My thanks again to all those who have turned up at various times of the week to do maintenance and gardening, and thanks to Mike Porter & John Richardson we have now carried out several boiler and steam tests.

We have had a couple of incidents during this time. The first with vandals throwing tiles from the bowls club roof at our new roof and we required 20 tiles to be replaced. This has been reported to the police and we have a crime number but without CCTV it is very difficult for the police to follow it up. They have recommended that we fit CCTV as a deterrent and it was agreed at the meeting last Monday to look into installing a system. This is a legitimate reason to request a grant from the Police Property fund to cover part of the cost.

The council mowers also hit one of our track pillars which Roy and his team had to reset. Fortunately, the steel work was not damaged. We have told the council about both incidents and have asked if they can ensure their mowing team take care when cutting close to the track supports.

The crack in the tunnel portal has been fixed and the coping stones re-pointed.

We still have work to do and a team under Roy P's supervision have taken on cleaning and repainting steel work this week and the grass is growing at a rapid rate and needs constant cutting.

Some time back the committee had decided to ask Val West if she would like to become a Vice-President and it gives me great pleasure to announce that Val very happily accepted. We have been seeking to arrange a memorial event for John and to announce it then but sadly Covid-19 has delayed us from achieving this before we need to re-issue this year's roles.

John Baldwin has stepped down from being Vice-Chairman and he proposed that the role should be taken over by Adam Cro who has gratefully accepted and was duly elected. Many thanks for John's support over the last 18 months.

The government guidelines have been considerably relaxed but I am sorry I will still be wearing my mask in shops and on public transport until this current rise in cases stops. I will also continue to wear my mask in the clubhouse as a precaution when there are several people in there and would kindly ask that if we have been in contact with Covid to stay away from the club for the advised time. Looking forward to a slow return to normal during August and hopefully a fully open 2022 season...

A late posting: 'Cup of tea time with improvised shade (see picture next page)!!'

Many thanks to those who joined in the painting in the heat last Wednesday and to Steve Steer for applying a protective coat to the clubhouse floor...

Mike W



Summer Work – By Andrew B

Since the last newsletter there has been routine outdoor maintenance at the club, along with tidying up of the clubroom and workshop areas. Included has been the usual gardening of our areas, whilst inside, the clubroom has been cleared, deep cleaned and the floor sealed ready for use (**see pictures next page**). Also inside, the workshop has been de-cluttered and the Myford lathe removed following its sale. It is hoped to be able to move the Boxford lathe in shortly.



Election of 'Officers' and 'Other' Positions for 2021

At the first Committee meeting following the AGM, members are elected to fill the 'Officer's' & other 'Working' positions within the Club, this list is for 2021:

President: Ray Parsons

Vice-Presidents: Geoff West & Val West

Chairman: Mike Wakeling

Vice-Chairman: Adam Cro

Secretary: Andrew Strongitharm

Minutes Secretary: Andrew Brock

Treasurer: Graham Miller

Other Committee Members in Addition to the Above Officer's:

John Baldwin, Tom Broome, Harry Shopland & Steve Steer

Operations Managers: Tom Broome & Andrew Strongitharm

Assistance Operations Manager: Sam Hope

Signals Engineer: Graham Mundy

Assistant Signals: Harry Shopland

Workshop Manager: Mike Wakeling

Assistant Workshop: Steve Steer

House Manager: Mike Wakeling

Catering Manager: Lorema Wakeling

Stores Managers: Nick Edwards & Steve Steer

Librarian: Stephen Hutton

Assistant Librarians: Ray Parsons

Newsletter Editor: Andrew Brock

Boiler Consultant: John Richardson

Boiler Coordinator: Steve Turner

Boiler Inspectors: Mike Porter, John Richardson, Steve Turner & Geoff West

Custodians of Wharfedale: Nick Edwards & Daniel Evans

Assistant Custodian: Sam Ridley

Custodian of LNER Tank: Steve Steer

Custodian of Club Electric Locomotives: Sam Hope

Club Electric Locomotives (Technical): Graham Mundy

Carriage Valeters: Sam Hope, Graham Mundy & Sam Ridley

Webmaster: Andrew Strongitharm

Clubhouse Cleaner: Tom Broome

Track Manager / Maintenance: Roy Preston

Truck Manager / Maintenance: Andrew Brock

Gardening Coordinator: Vacant

Exhibition Coordinators: John Baldwin, Andrew B, Andrew S & Mike Wakeling

Facebook Administrators: Tom Broome, Adam Cro, Nick Edwards & Andrew S

Disciplinary Sub-Committee: John Baldwin, Chris Saunders & Mike Wakeling

Data Production Coordinator: John Baldwin

Person of Significant Control (for Companies House Register): Andrew S

Any changes to the above will be communicated through the newsletter.

Committee

Anniversary Celebrations – By Andrew B

In lieu of pictures of our 70th anniversary, a few from our 21st, 40th, 50th & 60th...



Picture above: The 21st anniversary cake...



Picture above: The cutting of the 21st anniversary cake...



Picture above: The 40th anniversary cake...



Picture above: The steaming bay during the 40th cavalcade preparations...



Picture above: Brian Taylor 'B1' & Dick Simmins 'Dyak' in the 40th cavalcade...



Picture above: John Seymour reading a copy of 'Model Engineer' at the 40th...



Picture above: The group photo during the 50th anniversary celebrations...



Picture above: The editor on TC duties preparing for the 50th cavalcade...



Picture above: Engines simmer on the steaming bay after the 50th cavalcade...



Picture above: One of the 'mega' trains during the 50th afternoon running...



Picture above: A group photo during the 60th anniversary celebration day...



Picture above: Members & guests at Sheffield Park for the 60th dining train...

For Sale – By Committee

Through this newsletter, I have been asked to advertise the following surplus items for sale. Interested bidders should contact the Secretary via e-mail at the following address: andrewstrongitharm10@gmail.com with their offers by no later than Friday 6th August. A guide price for each is shown below.

The first item is a 4-wheel driving car with integral skid brake and foot stirrups for raised tracks (**see picture below**). Built by Allan Killick, the item is in good condition and provides a lightweight driving car for both electric or steam locomotives. The driving position is comfortable but you do need to take care not to tip the vehicle when leaning forward to drive steam! There is currently no seat, so prospective buyers will need to source or construct one. **Guide £50 - £75...**



Next is a 'Polly' built bogie driving car, complete with seat, working brakes and a small toolbox at the front end (**see pictures next page**). This is one of the standard driving cars built by 'Polly' and again is in good used condition but the chassis would benefit from a clean. Designed for use on both ground and raised level tracks, this item is stable and well made, and would suit both electric or steam locomotives. **Guide £200 - £250...**



Work in Progress – 'Project SR'

With my wagon train 99% complete, I have turned to 1 last item of rolling stock. Several years ago I bought a 'Pillbox' guard's van, which I intended to use as is. After 2 minor 'incidents', which left the body a little out of shape, and the step boards needing repair, I decided to undertake a slightly more in depth overhaul! This involved rebuilding much of the chassis, including the 'W' irons, axles and wheels, the fabrication of new dummy clasp brakes, new 'heavy weight' frame stretchers and 2 new sets of step boards. The body also required 'realignment' and a repaint. I have to be content that, like many things in life, she is not perfect but is otherwise a 'good representation'! There are a few more hours left and then it is back to working on locomotive projects otherwise I shall have nothing to pull all these wagons...! **Picture below:** SR 'Pillbox' guard's van nearly ready...



Andrew B

Forthcoming & Diary of Events – By Andrew B

With the easing of Covid-19 restrictions the committee will keep members aware of developments during the coming weeks. Running days may be operated on an 'as possible' basis depending on the availability of members on any given day. A 'New Member's Day' has been added for Saturday 21st August for all those who have enquired about membership during the Covid-19 closure. A number of committee members plan to meet and greet prospective members and to give them a tour of our facilities. In the evening a 'Bring Your Own' BBQ has also been pencilled in for members and as per normal this will start from 18:00. Further Diary dates will hopefully be published in the next newsletters...

21st August 2021 – New Member's Day & BBQ at Beech Hurst – 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.