

Sussex Miniature Locomotive Society Ltd

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BEECH HURST NEWS



Cover picture: -

On Display: Our stand for the London Model Engineering Exhibition 2017 at Alexandra Palace. Our placement was the same as per previous years, however with one or two less stands overall there was plenty of aisle space between each. A show report appears inside this edition...

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Editor's Notes

As I write these notes, it is the first day of Meteorological Spring and today was the first morning I have been able to cycle to the station without lights! Not that the recent weather has been spring like, more autumnal in many respects with 2 named Atlantic storms in as many weeks but overall we have had a pretty average and relatively calm winter. Yes there have been wet and windy spells but also some dry and fine weather in between and as we draw into March so the temperatures are slowly on the rise too! The period between Christmas and our AGM is normally fairly quiet, broken only by the odd exhibition or two and the continuation or completion of some ongoing winter projects. Hereon in thoughts begin to turn to our new operating season and the odd preparation jobs too. Looking back, and apart from the significant track renewals, the winter season has been relatively quiet with no major projects undertaken but many small ones nonetheless. Gone are the days of the large infrastructure works, where our peaceful surroundings were broken by the sound of digging or a petrol cement mixer turning somewhere nearby! Mind you there is plenty of this coming from the building site next door! Perhaps it will be our turn again in the near future?? Anyway, on with this edition and aside the usual writings, there are reports on New Year's Day, Alexandra Palace, Winter Work, Recent Committee Minutes and a small Diary update to take us to April, so please read on and enjoy...

Andrew

Chairman's Notes

The New Year's Day get together went well again, not quite so many people this year for various reasons, and as usual it rained! This is fast becoming traditional 1st January weather! We also exhibited at Alexandra Palace mid month, and some training sessions on Sundays have been appreciated by those attendees.

With the 2017 AGM on its way again, it's time to think about the running season for this year. The new running book is all made out ready for you to sign up once again. This year, due to a later Easter, running begins a little later too, so let's hope we get a warmer start than a few recent years. The new season's timetable has also been prepared and printed.

With running in mind, would loco owners with lockers please check the state of your locker rails / loco wheels before you roll your engine out to the steam bays. Discussing with Roy P, it might be helpful if TC's could place an old towel at each end of the shed road to clean wheels both going on and coming off the track. It takes only moments to do but can save oil from getting on half a mile of track! Perhaps you might clean out your locker too..., a Spring Clean!! Many are extremely dirty inside. The rails can be lifted out for cleaning and some new newspaper inserted to absorb oil. Many thanks for your cooperation, 'nuff sed'!

Before Christmas, Graham Mundy and I looked at the club electric locos with a view to just cleaning them up ready for the next season. On inspection it was obvious the small cogs on the drive spindle of the motors had worn away to a sharp feather edge. We had seen wear similar to this some years before on another high mileage electric locomotive, namely Ian's 37.

We decided to bite the bullet with our 'Growler' 'Florence Nightingale', and change them before any damage was done to the nylon toothed wheels, which still seemed ok. We miss Peter Chapman for these types of job. So, with Geoff's help too, we set to work trying to work out how Peter had fixed everything when he put ball races on the axles. It is necessary to get the old Loctite quite hot to free the axles from the wheels and the cogs from the motor spindles, trying to work quickly and keeping the heat away from the motors. There were also grub screws and sleeves to be discovered and dealt with! Once removed we could see that the cogs were bored out (to fit the motor spindles) to such a degree that it was amazing they were strong enough! This must have been done long ago by Dan Jeavons, from whom we obtained the engine. As no 12-toothed cogs were available Geoff tracked down a company and we had 20 made especially for us at about £10 each, which considering their delicate nature, seem well made and of excellent quality. Everything has to be to exact dimensions, as there is no tooth 'meshing' adjustment in this design! Anyway, 'Florrie' is done and ready for testing. Next winter we will do the same with the '73', our other club electric, if the cogs prove to be as robust as the originals, despite their flimsy appearance.

Considering 'Florrie' must have covered, I would estimate, in excess of 2,000 actual miles since we got her about 12 years ago or so, I suppose we cannot complain. Those delicate little cogs pulling probably about 20,000 passengers, and going around about 30 million times in the process! I can only ask the many drivers who take a turn on this loco in passenger service, to please be gentle on the throttle, ESPECIALLY when pulling away under load. If you could see the tiny cog that was doing all the work you would understand what I mean! It's a lot of work to replace them, so please employ a light touch, and with a bit of luck they will last another 12 years!

The Haywards Heath Referendum on town planning and housing was approved by a considerable margin. This means that we can probably expect some plans to appear for housing on the old council depot to the south side of our railway in due course. The green area directly to the south of us including the Mid Sussex club will no longer be included in the building land. It seems too that there is further discussion within the council regarding opening the rear field to the public. This will not be a quick project because of the difficulty of access and safety requirements. I will keep you informed when any definite ideas materialize.

We have also been subject to some vandalism again after a period of tranquillity, namely broken windows. This is disturbing and expensive, the police are aware. However, this is nothing compared to Canterbury club who have had their track destroyed. John B. has been in contact with them and we have offered assistance. We wait to hear from them in due course. All very tragic and the reasons behind such actions are incomprehensible to most of us!

Finally, just a big thank you to everyone who has come along during the winter months to help with the gardening, track work, workshop activities, exhibition, Santa Specials and New Year get together. Much has been done to prepare for 2017, so I wish everyone a safe and successful new season. Hope to see you at the AGM. Best wishes

Mike

Recent Committee Minutes

Minutes in Brief for the 22nd October 2016

Members Attending: - 7 Present + 2 Apologies

16/075 Secretary's Report:-

It was agreed to exhibit at the Alexandra Palace Show in January.

Colin Hancox was elected as a new member of the SMLS.

16/076 Treasurer's Report:-

The money has been received from Chelmsford for the Track Cleaning Vehicle.

16/077 Safety Report:-

It was agreed for Glen Wakefield (electrician) to start on the rewiring from the clubhouse to the steaming bays and the station ASAP.

16/078 Operations Report:-

It was agreed to start the passenger running season on the weekend before Easter and to finish the last weekend in September.

It was agreed to purchase a party tent for club use.

It was agreed to run the full circuit of the track for the Santa Specials.

16/079 Technical Report:-

It was agreed to get the land drains surveyed with a view to clearing them out.

It was agreed to purchase some silicone plugs for the long (Wick) tunnel.

2 new truck bogies to be assembled with test rollers instead of the rubbing plates.

It was agreed to sell the old track sections.

It was agreed to repaint the 2 medium green trucks into BR Maroon + transfers.

16/080 Social Report:-

The Bonfire & Firework Night date has been set for the 5th November 2016.

Val West has asked to cater for the New Years Day lunch. This was agreed.

16/083 Any Other Business:-

Roy Preston was congratulated for winning a Gold Medal at the Brooklands Exhibition for his SE&CR 'C' Class locomotive.

16/084 Next Committee Meeting:- 19th November 2016.

Minutes in Brief for the 19th November 2016

Members Attending: - 7 Present + 2 Apologies

It was reported that Peter Chapman had passed away recently.

16/091 Technical Report:-

It was agreed to order 1,500 new sleepers at a cost of £900.

The new mains power supply has been completed from the clubhouse to the steaming bays and the station.

The power to the loco lift has been rewired with its own trip in the main panel.

A 240v 13A socket has been installed in the loft for a frost protection pipe heater.

It was agreed to order 20 new motor spur gears for the 'Growler' and '73' locos.

16/095 Any Other Business:-

Congratulations were given to Mike & Lorema Wakeling on reaching their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

It was agreed to purchase some Christmas rope lights to hang in the long (Wick) tunnel for the Santa Special run.

16/096 Next Committee Meeting:- 7th January 2017.

Workshop Training

The workshop training has stopped due to a lack of numbers. However, Steve Turner & Mike Wakeling are still willing to give 1 to 1 training to any members wishing to be shown how to use any of the equipment in the workshop or wish to be helped with parts they would like to make.

If you are interested, please contact Steve Turner (stevet50@btopenworld.com) or Mike Wakeling (mike.wakeling@btinternet.com) for more information.

Recent Social Events – New Year's Day & Alexandra Palace Exhibition

I don't know if we're just unlucky but once again the weather did its best to foil our New Year's Day run! The forecast during the preceding week kept changing with rain later, then rain earlier and then showery all day! In the end, the latter won the day but despite this inclement weather the park still echoed to the sound of steam once again! Not that there were many takers on such a grey day but Marc, with his recently acquired 3 ½" gauge 'Fairburn' tank and my 'Railmotor' had good runs even if we all got a little bit wet at times! We both started early and despite a few problems lighting up with some rank old charcoal, were both on the track well before 10:00 and both locomotives were on good form too! It had been my intention to run with a mixed goods train too but due to the dampness already in the air, I thought it best to avoid saturating the wooden wagons too much and opted for the normal passenger trucks instead. As we continued to run round, lap after lap, so more members arrived in readiness for the midday lunch, which was being prepared inside. For those brave enough to stand outside we also employed our very own external heating source, namely a dustbin brazier, complete with 3 foot tall chimney and by heck did that baby roar! New Year's Day and Bonfire Night, are our two best attended social events of the year and it is good to see nearly half our total membership turn out for each one. Whether the enticement of free nosh or perhaps just the social aspect, it is always nice to see many familiar faces and to have time to catch up during a period of the year when attendance at the club is probably at its lowest. As lunchtime approached, Marc retired his machine to the steaming bays after a good couple of hours on the track leaving 'Railmotor' to continue for another couple of hours before I retired her too. That just left the Pump Trolley to make a cameo appearance after lunch for those wishing to lose a few excess pounds piled on over the festive period! By this stage most members had finished their main courses and were relaxing back with a cup of tea close to hand. As the afternoon wore on, so people dispersed one by one until there were but a handful of us remaining. By now, the showery rain had become more persistent and the dry warm clubhouse was very appealing! Through these pages I must thank all those who helped before, during and after the day, particularly to Val & John for the food preparation, as well as to all those who helped out or had a drive on the track.

Yes it could have been better outside but equally it could have been much worse too, so hopefully 2018 will be a little bit drier...! **(Pictures next page)**

Three weeks later and the grey, cloudy and inclement weather had turned into dry, cold and sunny as we loaded up for the show at Alexandra Palace. This year we hired a van for the duration of the show and it proved to be most useful in terms of space and accessibility too. Our stand position remaining much the same for 2017 and as such we took the following items for display: 5" 'King' chassis, '3D' Printer, 5" 'Dougal' chassis, 5" 'Black 5', 5" 'MLV', 5" '9F' and 5 off 5" wagons. Add to those, all the stand paraphernalia and we had a goodly load as Mike W & I set off from the club that Thursday morning. We had a quick trip up the M23 to John B's in Caterham for another pick up and then next stop was Alexandra Palace. The journey by road is easy enough but not that nice once you hit the latter end of the A40 and then Hanger Lane! As we traversed the North Circular, it is hard to imagine that people live adjacent to this road. 6 lanes of traffic, 3 lanes often moving slowly, it must be a gutsy existence with many of the buildings and infrastructure blackened by years of vehicle pollution! Anyway, we only had to endure the A406 for about ½ hour or so and apart from a minor cock-up at Henlys Corner we arrived just before 14:00 and ready to unload. Luckily we managed to secure an unloading place in the main hall and therefore only had a short distance to wheel the models to our stand. The stand size was the same as for 2016 and because the organisers keep this consistent each and every year, it does make planning that bit easier. Andrew S had joined us from work to help unload and before 16:00 we were heading down South Terrace to the railway station and then home! The next 3 days, like 2016, proved to be pretty busy with lots of people to talk to and plenty of interest in the stand. All the models were well received, however particular interest was being taken in 'Dougal' and the 'King', I assume because they were just chassis' and therefore you could see inside. This is something to bear in mind for the future, in that part-built models seem to be just as interesting to visitors as their completed counter-parts but weigh less than half as much! Aside our stand, there was plenty to see also and a few second hand bargains to be had too. As with previous years the International Snooker was taking place in the West Hall next to ours but this year I did not see any famous faces coming in for a peek at the models on show. Come Sunday afternoon and it was left to Adam, Andrew S, Mike W & I to clear up and then load up ready for the journey home. This was completed safely, although by the time we had diverted into Caterham, unloaded at Beech Hurst, Andrew S' and finally Mike W's, it was pushing past 22:00 and there was still the small matter of fuelling the van and returning it to the hirers. No matter though, as it had been another really good weekend. Thanks through these pages to everyone who helped out before, during and after the show, and who loaned models for display too. In name order only: Adam, Andrew S, John B, Josh, Norman, Mike W & I. With the Brighton exhibition and I believe the Model Engineer Exhibition both cancelled in 2017, it looks like Alexandra Palace will be our one and only display event for this year... **(Picture next page)**

Andrew



Picture Top: Steve S at the controls of Marc's very nice 3 ½" 'Fairburn' tank locomotive
Picture Middle: 'Railmotor' during a quick pit stop and yes the umbrella was required
Picture Bottom: Mike W's 'Black 5', all but finished and on show at Alexandra Palace

Winter Work

Since the December edition, there have been no major projects on the go but a number of smaller ones, either completed or ongoing as detailed below.

On the track, our New Year's Day run went very well and all the re-laid sections performed perfectly. Roy P still has some final adjustments to make nearer the start of the season by which time the steelwork should have settled down nicely and hopefully the ground will have dried out a bit too!

On the trucks, there are 3 projects running concurrently. The normal day-to-day maintenance has continued with Andrew S & I, along with help from Graham Mundy, working our way through the renewals list we made back last October. As I write we are down to 2 single axles to complete all the bearing replacements and 2 other bogies which we intend to monitor during the course of the coming season and may need attention during this time.

As an aside to the normal maintenance, Dan & Nick are working at re-painting the 2 'new' trucks, which were painted SR green livery, into BR maroon livery. At the time of publication, both trucks are in the workshop having been rubbed back and are between undercoat and topcoat (**see picture below**). Once complete, this set will add another variation to our stock list and for me we ought to then seriously think about painting another set (to my mind the 3 short greens) in either BR corporate blue livery or the later BR blue / grey livery to go with our modern image electric locos and later period steam locos. For interest, the last steam hauled service under BR in 1968 was '1T57' the 'Fifteen Guinea Special', hauled by 'Black 5's and a 'Britannia', and the stock for that train was made up entirely of blue / grey or maroon coaches!



Also on the trucks, Steve T has been making up a trial pair of bogies for use this coming season. These comprise the frames, axle boxes and wheel sets that Andrew S, Steve S & I have worked on during previous winters with the addition of a new 'roller' system between the bogie stretcher and the truck frame in place of the hardened and ground blocks. The intention is to fit these trial bogies to S2 (blood & custard) truck, which already has the mounting holes on the main frame and is the sister truck to S1, which Roy P's PTFE rubbing block trial is ongoing. Also inside, and the overhaul of 'Growler' locomotive 'Florence Nightingale' has been completed. This aforementioned project has been undertaken by Geoff, Graham Mundy & Mike P, and involved dismantling the loco for a deep clean and replacement of the motor pinion gear wheels. Because of the design, renewal of these components requires pretty much a full bogie strip down so the motor and gear wheels can be released. Re-assembly took place in the New Year and the loco is now ready for its 14th full season since purchase towards the end of 2003! Outside, and gardening activities have continued with final clearances of leaves and other tree debris deposited by the recent storms (**see picture below for an unfortunate victim of the recent Storm Doris alongside our driveway**). In addition and as recently as last weekend, Mike W & Steve S have been flushing out the drains between the pneumatic point and the steaming bays to aid water flow to the soak away. Another rank but somewhat essential task! Also outside, although I suppose you could say inside too, and following a couple of recent broken windows, time has been spent tidying up and replacing the necessary front panes on the clubhouse. Thanks to Geoff and Mike W for their liaison with the window company and for their time spent at the club during fitting. In the April news I will conclude all the winter work from the past 6 months...

Andrew



Subscriptions

Last call for 2017 sub's, which are the same as 2016 at a £5'er for under-18's and over-60's, and £10 the rest in between. Cash or cheque (pay 'SMLS Ltd') at the club is fine or by BACS to the following account is fine too: Account No: 20688428 and Sort Code: 20-49-76 with your name as reference. Or by post to: Mr G Miller (SMLS), 128 Western Road, Sompting, BN15 9TY.

Graham Miller

Work in Progress

Since Christmas my 7-plank wagon is now complete and waits testing. Originally bought as a 'project', it is now pretty much there and I'm pleased with the results! Recently, I have renewed all of the brake gear, most of which I have been able to re-work from existing components with some new pieces too and these have been trial fitted prior to blacking / painting (**see picture below after completion**). The springing still requires attention and there will be tweaks required once I have run the wagon. The body I am leaving pretty much as is for now, although a little straightening of some of the side panels will be done prior to final sign off! Next it is back to all things steam and the 'Black 5' is back on the bench...!



Andrew

Forthcoming Events & Diary of Events

At present the only Diary entry of sorts is the start of running, which unofficially commences on Saturday / Sunday, 1st / 2nd April and then officially commences the following weekend 8th / 9th April. Hopefully by the April edition, further summer social events and visits will have been agreed and will be duly published...

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