

Sussex Miniature Locomotive Society Ltd

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BEECH HURST NEWS



Cover picture: -

Special Celebration: After 64 years, our railway carried the 1.5 millionth passenger on Saturday 25th August 2018 and to commemorate this milestone, Haywards Heath Town Mayor, James Knight presented the lucky family with a special plate. A full report appears inside...

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Editor's Notes

As I write these notes, the weather has finally settled down after one of the longest dry spells for many a year. As of last Monday the Met Office confirmed that summer 2018 was the joint warmest on record and it will surely be a year that is remembered by our generation just as much as '76 is remembered by our parent's generation. Although the sunshine was most welcome, the hottest days were hard work at Beech Hurst and the heat often kept would-be passengers away. That said, we have also experienced some gloriously mild evenings too. The last couple of months have been quite busy with numerous special events and a significant milestone in our history was passed late in August with the carriage of our 1.5 millionth passenger. More on all of these later in this edition. From the June newsletter, I would like to thank John B & Mike P for their respective articles and pictures, and aside a round up of our special events, this edition also contains a couple of articles courtesy of Dave M, an update on summer work and a fully updated Diary to take us through to New Year 2019...

Ed No. Just a quick note to apologise for the lateness of this edition, due in part to waiting for the 1.5 millionth passenger but also a short holiday since!

Andrew

Chairman's Notes

I begin my notes this month on a sad note, as I report that Jo Lavis passed away recently. Jo was a long time honorary member and had been unwell for a while. We last saw her when she came down to visit us with all the family earlier in the year. Our condolences go to Graham P and all her family.

Also, our thoughts go to Linda Chen, who comes to photograph us and our railway several times a year. Linda's husband passed away recently and we all wish her well as she gets back to her photography once again.

Now we are at the end of a very long hot summer with exceptional temperatures, often over 30 degrees, and 2 months without rain. Cooler conditions have returned at last and the track has returned to normal, having been under heat stress for a long time. It was often well kinked, but managed to hold together, thanks to a lot of effort from Roy P. We have been able to run trains on all but one or two rainy days through the summer and the finances are in good shape. Thanks go to our Op's Managers and regular members for keeping the running book full and the railway well staffed. It's hard work at this time of year as we run so many days in August. Thanks too, to everyone who helps with the gardening and tidying up around the place that keeps us looking so smart. The council has even cut the back field at last after it had become almost a jungle, and on this note, I have heard that access to this area has gone on the council's 'back burner' for now, almost certainly because they have been thwarted in their attempts to develop the green area to our south side.

We have had some very successful special days, such as our under 30's day, our regular charity day for the 'Yews' group, several double-headed steam trains and a 'Little Engine Day'. We have also had three BBQ's (including one with our friends at the Petanque club) and all have been extremely well attended.

It is especially nice to see lots of family members at our social meetings these days. Thanks to Val for all the catering for these get togethers and to Lorema also for organising the Petanque and salads.

On the first of our summer Wednesdays we had a visit from a new group, called Focus Model Engineers. They are comprised of folk from several other clubs. They ran our service for us in the afternoon and had a good time. Their chairman, Paul Clarke, also sent John B a lovely complimentary email afterwards and I'm sure Paul won't mind if I share a little of it with you. Paul wrote, 'can I express our thanks for such a splendid day on Wednesday. It is evident from the number of members present that you have a thriving club. We were met by an enthusiastic group of your members who could easily give lessons on customer satisfaction to any of the supermarkets / airlines out there today. The younger members were of great help in getting things ready for us and then continued to be of help for the rest of the day. A bunch of enthusiastic youngsters who can stay on task for that length of time is indeed a rare thing and they should be rewarded with great praise. You have obviously spent a great deal of time in nurturing this element of your club. Please pass on our thanks for letting us use your facilities, which are exceptional, and please thank all those present on the day for their efforts'.

I thank Paul very much for his kind email, and I thank everyone, especially our youngsters for generating such praise and showing us at our best.

A fortnight ago we celebrated our 1.5 millionth passenger and had a visit from our Town Mayor, councillor James Knight. Thanks to Andrew's B and S for organising the visit, and to Lorema for setting out a cream tea for our guests. Nick was also involved in these preparations and managed to get us a visit from ITV Meridian on the previous Thursday. This involved Nick's B1 on the track with Chris S giving an interview on the train. It was aired on the Saturday night. A young family from North Chailey provided our 1.5 millionth paying customer and were presented with a commemorative plate. Thanks to Chris S for crunching customer numbers each year and for doing our Public Relations. With many clubs having problems with new leases and holding on to their sites these days, it can only serve us well to be appreciated for the safe, popular entertainment and regular service that we provide in our 'Green Flag' park. To have our Mayor visit our clubhouse and see so many people in the park enjoying the facilities achieved by a dedicated bunch of volunteers is of tremendous value.

In the workshop, Mike W and Steve S have been working hard putting up a new workbench and Steve T has been progressing the two new passenger trucks, which are now nearing completion.

All in all, a very productive summer and thanks should go to everyone who comes to help us keep everything maintained, tidy and running smoothly.

A last interesting note is that I had to do a double-take when the Focus group arrived for their visit. Who should arrive but my old colleague Bill Gage! Bill and I go back to when we were teenagers in the Chichester and District Model Engineers. Bill gives a very interesting illustrated talk with stories about early railways in Sussex. So, in agreement with the committee, I have invited Bill along to give this talk for the club on the afternoon of Saturday 27th October at 15:00.

I hope you will be able to come along, as we have not had a guest speaker for quite a while now.

I wish everyone some good end of season running.

Mike

Jo Lavis

It is with sadness that I report the passing of honorary member Jo Lavis on Friday 17th August. Jo had been associated with SMLS for many, many years and would normally visit us several times during the season. Through these pages I would like to pass on our condolences to her family and friends at this sad time.

Andrew

'Under 30's Day'

Following a successful 'Under 30's Day' in 2017, a similar day was organised for and took place on Sunday 8th July. 9 of our 13 under 30's were able to take part and given the fine and sunny conditions it was a very pleasant afternoon too.

Pictured below are (back l-r): Andrew Strongitharm, Fraser Hay, Dan Evans, Sam Ridley, Sam Hope & Tom Broome, & (front l-r): Mark Allen & Nick Edwards. The 9th under 30 not pictured was new member Sam Goodwin, who together with all of the above singlehandedly ran our railway on that day...



Andrew

Focus Model Engineers Visit

Wednesday 25th July saw a visit by the recently formed Focus Model Engineers, which is comprised of members from a number of established model engineering societies, including Basingstoke and Southampton to name but two. 6 members brought along 4 locomotives to run prior to and during our passenger service. The 4 locomotives included a 5" 'B1', 5" '9F', 5" 2-6-4T (freelance) and a 5" 'Union Pacific' diesel. Like many days during the summer of 2018 it was hot and sunny, and as a result the passenger numbers were average at best. That said, our guests certainly enjoyed their fun / passenger runs, and all the locomotives performed admirably too. Thanks through these pages to John B for organising the visit and to all those who helped on the day to make this an enjoyable visit for our guests from Focus (**see pictures below: 5" 'B1' (top) & 5" '9F' (bottom)**).



'Little Engine Day' & Locomotive / Workshop Display

Saturday 28th July was our 'Little Engine Day' for 2018 and as an added bonus this year, Mike W arranged for a tidy workshop and for a few items to be displayed. Members of the public were then encouraged to walk through to the back lawn for a chat and to view the locomotives lined up on 'Brian's siding'. On the track, motive power was provided in the form of: two 5" '08's (Dan's & SMLS), Dave M's 5" 'Pansy', Roy P's 5" 'Europa', SMLS 5" 'Growler' and finally a rare outing by Jack P's 3 ½" 'Sweet Pea', 'Nobby'. Aside a few 'pit stops' during the afternoon, the day passed off well and it should be noted how successful the display of locomotives on 'Brian's siding' was. Several 10's of people paid a visit during the afternoon and Mike W was kept busy chatting to them as they viewed each of the 8 locomotives and watched the trains pass by. Furthermore, the vast majority of these visitors were families with children from a few months up to early teenage, exactly the kind of people we should encourage and who may in the future bring new blood to our railway. An idea for 2019 might be to expand this to have more displays and perhaps some smaller gauge layouts to encourage children to stop and watch. After all it is 'Little Engine Day', so why not have some 'N', 'OO', 'O' or 'G' gauges too? 2018 was helped in no small part by another warm and sunny day (there seems to be a theme with our special's this year) and of course by all those who came to help out. Thanks through these pages to all those who helped to prepare, carry out and then pack away again, especially to Mike W for spawning the idea of the locomotive / workshop displays. Hopefully we can arrange a similar and perhaps enlarged event for 2019, and **pictures from 2018 appear below and next page.**



Picture above: Mike W talking with families and 8 locomotives lined up as follows: 5" 'C2X', 5" 'King Arthur', 5" 'Black 5', 5" 'Jinty', 5" 'B1', 5" 'K', 5" 'Black 5' & SMLS 'Wharfedale'



Picture Top: Roy P with 'Europa' emerges from the 'jungle' during 'Little Engine Day'
Picture Middle: Dave M with his 'Pansy' approaching Court Tunnel with a part load
Picture Bottom: Dan with 'Nobby' rounds the corner opposite the pneumatic point

Petanque Match & BBQ

On the first Thursday of August we held our annual 'Petanque' v 'Railwaymen' match. Once again we were blessed with a fine and warm evening, so much so that we were glad when the sun finally dipped below the trees to the west of the park and things started to cool down! 8 'Railwaymen' took part and we were mixed with 'Petanque' players. With 12 teams, all 6 'pistes' on the 'terrain' were used and like a cricket pitch, each 'piste' had different playing characteristics, so judgment on each was the key to success! In our teams we played three games, some of which lasted longer than others with the scores ranging from just one point separating two teams to at least one 9 – 0 thrashing! After about an hour and half, all the games had finished and we made our way to the clubhouse for the BBQ. Lorema & Val had provided a lovely spread of salad and puddings respectively, and those coupled with our own BBQ food made for the perfect end to a very successful evening and one which we can hopefully repeat in 2019...



Picture above: 'Spot the ball', well if you can then you are doing extremely well! Roy P on piste 2 has just thrown his boule, which is pictured mid-flight!

Andrew

Adam & Jessie

Through these pages I would like to congratulate Adam & Jessie Cro on their recent marriage. The ceremony took place on 11th August at Fittleworth and was attended by family and friends. I wish them all the best for their future together...

Picture next page top: Adam & Jessie during their wedding ceremony.



Andrew

1.5 Millionth Passenger

As you will hopefully be aware, we have been counting down to the 1.5 millionth passenger for several months now and as such a decision was made to invite Haywards Heath Town Mayor, James Knight to Beech Hurst on Saturday 25th August to present the lucky passenger with a commemorative plate. During the 2 or so weeks prior to the day itself, Andrew S, Nick & I made the final preparations including the artwork for the plate, a TV appearance and liaising with the Town Council to arrange the Mayor's visit. The plate was of Nick's design and we are indebted to railway artist Richard Green for kindly supplying the 'Britannia' image used. Separately, a last minute opportunity for coverage on ITV's Meridian News meant a hastily arranged shoot involving Nick's B1 and Chris S being interviewed on the Thursday prior to Saturday 25th. The Saturday dawned bright and sunny, if not quite as warm as recently, so luck was definitely on our side. There were moderate preparations to make that morning and with Fraser and Linda Chen primed for photos, and Lorema kindly offering to prepare cream teas for the Mayor we were hopefully ready to go. Before passenger running started, Lorema also randomly selected the driver who would sit behind 'Wharfedale' during the photo shoot. This was done by entering numbered balls into Andrew S' bingo machine and who should come out first but Mike W! All was fair but what a coincidence! Once passenger service was underway Chris S spent most of the first ½ hour or so at the station with a manual counter until we were very close at which point he found the lucky family. The Mayor arrived in very good time and after a quick guided tour, we proceeded to the main station to meet the family.

Until that point everything had gone smoothly and the idea was to take the family to the back of the clubhouse for a photo shoot with the Mayor and SMLS members. However, the Mayor thought that photos at the main station would look good, so a hastily arranged handover took place there, followed by a couple of laps behind 'Wharfedale' to the back station. After our ride, Andrew S, Mike W, Nick & I, together with Mayor, chatted to Mr & Mrs Tennant who hail from North Chailey. Mrs Tennant said they had just started building their first model railway layout ready for when their two children are old enough to appreciate it, so they were the perfect family. Mrs Tennant also joked that she would buy a lottery ticket for that evening, given their luck that afternoon, but I somehow doubt they were winners twice over! Thereafter, Mr & Mrs Tennant had to leave but the Mayor and his wife joined Andrew S, Chris, Nick & I for a cup of tea and cream / jam scones before they departed about 16:00. It had been a whirlwind hour or so and not entirely as planned but we got there and the Mayor was very impressed by our club / facilities and the service we provide to the community. Since the visit of the Mayor, we featured on that Saturday evening's ITV Meridian News and in addition we have secured two press releases, one in the Mid Sussex Times and the other in The Argus, both published on page two with full colour picture, so hopefully some useful publicity for the club and another good news story! Through these pages I would like to thank Andrew S, Chris & Nick for their support with this milestone celebration and here's to our 70th anniversary in 2021. How about 70 locomotives for 70 years as a 'starter for ten'...?

Picture below: Nick driving his 'B1' and Chris being interviewed for ITV Meridian.

Picture next page top: The commemorative plate given to Mr & Mrs Tennant.





End of Summer BBQ

After the excitement of the 1.5 millionth passenger handover was complete and our afternoon running closed for another day we could relax and enjoy our end of summer BBQ. With daytime temperatures a little cooler, the evening was pleasant but nowhere near as warm as the mid-summer BBQ back in June. 2018 has been a lucky year where both BBQ evenings have been about as good as can be expected! With the track direction swapped and locomotives turned, the following ran during the course of the evening: SMLS 'Wharfedale', 'Growler', Class '08' & 'Pump Trolley', together with Nick's 'Jinty'. As members & their families cooked and ate, there was also ample time to enjoy a drive or ride around the track, with the 'Pump Trolley' a firm favourite as ever! The evening was well attended with over 20 members and their families, and after the best part of 5 hours running 'Wharfedale' was the last locomotive off just after 22:00 by which time it was totally dark! Thanks to all those who attended to make this a very enjoyable evening both on and off the track, and extra thanks of course to Val & John for the purchase and preparation of the onions and puddings. Hopefully our 2019 BBQ's will be equally successful and equally dry too!

Pictures appear on the next page...

Andrew



Picture Top: Sam H with the '08', Fraser on the 'Pump Trolley' & Alex with 'Wharfedale'
Picture Middle: Nick rounds the corner into the station with 'Jinty' and a goods train
Picture Bottom: Sam R driving the '08' with his Sister, Mum & Dad aboard

Summer Work

Aside our busy summer schedule, there have been a couple of ongoing projects, namely the two new passenger trucks and a workshop revamp.

Steve T has been making steady progress with the trucks, which are now mechanically very well advanced. In addition, we have received a couple of sets of new brake parts, which are identical to those in use on most of the 'Sunday ends' of our existing fleet. These are very different to the ones on the 'Saturday ends' and the idea is to look at renewing all of the existing brakes to a standard pattern once these new parts have been assembled, tested and proven.

Mike W & Steve S have been working on a workshop revamp, so most of the day-to-day tools and materials are in the main workshop away from the carriage shed workshop which is often used for painting during the closed season.

Picture below: Mike W assembling the new bench on Saturday 25th August.



Workshop Manager

Sorry about the workshop closure on August 25th / 26th but hopefully we are on the way to making life easier for all. There is still some tidying up and labelling of drawers to do over the next few weeks, so please bear with us during this period and I apologise for you having to hunt to find stuff during this time. I would like to thank Steve S for his considerable input, without which this whole job would not have happened. Separately, I am still disappointed with people not reporting broken drills and taps, and the general state people leave the workshop.

The BA set of taps and dies in the block is my benchmark which you can all clearly see is disappearing fast! It is the next poor person who wants to use them that suffers, not me, and it could be you next time! You will break small drills and taps, it is not a disgrace! Please let me know and I will replace them. Happy steaming...

Mike W

For Sale

We are replacing the mechanical saw in the workshop and have recently acquired a band saw. The existing mechanical saw has therefore been put up for sale. If you are interested then please speak with me at the club to make a sensible offer.

In addition, a quick release vice is also for sale, priced at £25. Again, if you are interested then please speak with me at the club and if this item remains unsold then it will be listed via eBay...

Mike W

Work in Progress – 'Royal Scot' & Wagons

Progress on both projects has continued since the last edition, although due to summer commitments and work, and sometimes the heat in my workshop, the 'Royal Scot' has not moved on too much from last time. It is still on the bench and I am currently fabricating three new frame stretchers (a.k.a. large steel blocks). The tanker wagons however are now to the stage where the chassis' are nearly ready for a test run and the tanks / ends are up together, and on their respective chassis'. The tanks themselves will need strapping down and I am currently sourcing some appropriate steel band for this purpose. Thereafter, some additional detailing needs to be added both to the chassis' and the tanks before painting can commence later in the autumn...

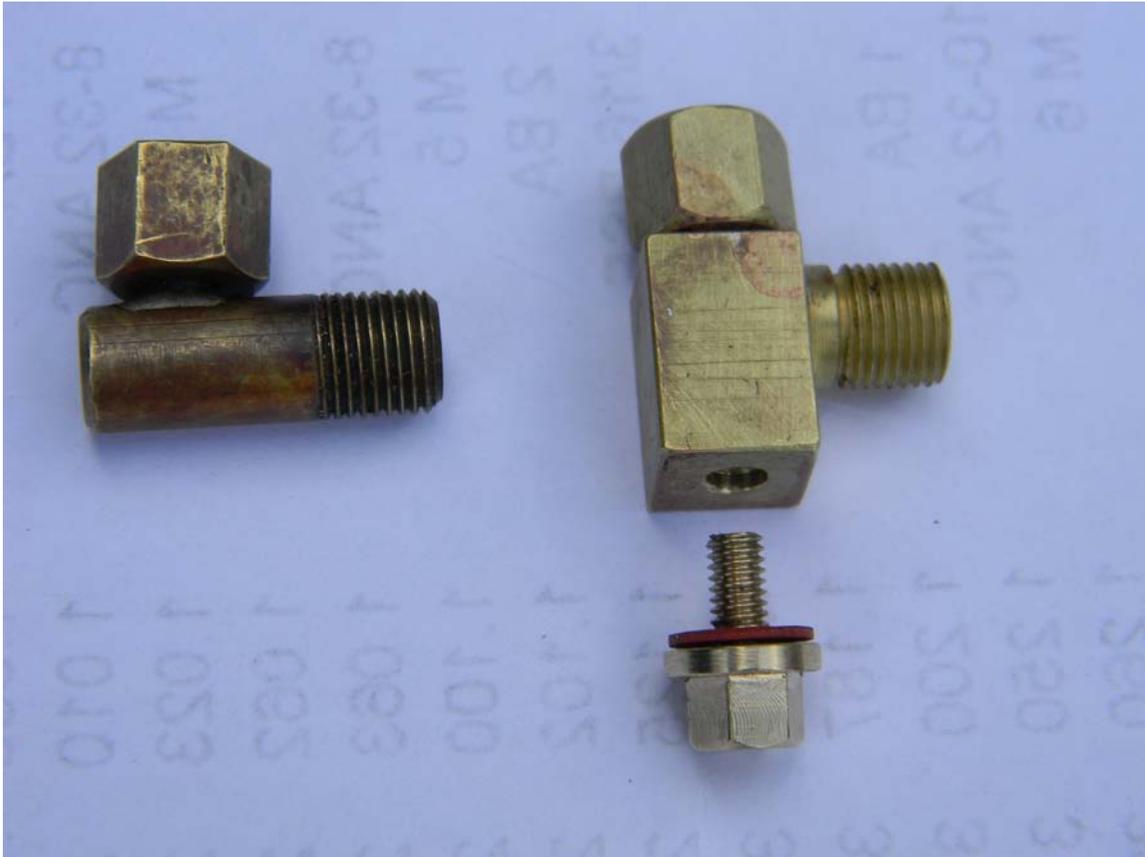
Andrew

Work in Progress – Axle Pump Inlet Clack

I'm sure that many of you, like me, will have experienced the problem of the ball in the inlet clack to a pump sticking on the seat and therefore preventing water being drawn into the pump cylinder. I anticipated this problem when I built the tender for the 'Bantam Cock' and put a screwed plug in the base of the tender directly below the hand pump inlet clack. If the ball sticks on the seat like it does most times I run the engine, I simply un-screw the plug and poke a match through the hole and push the ball off the seat – job done!

Recently I have had the same problem with the axle pump on the 'Pansy'. To free the ball means disconnecting the water inlet pipe to the pump and as with the tender pump, poking a match up into the clack valve body to free the ball. Removing the water inlet pipe is not that difficult to do but it does mean disturbing the pipework which I'm not always happy to do. So I have made a change to the pump inlet connection that incorporates a simple screwed plug directly below the clack ball.

The **picture below** shows the original connection (**view on the left**) and the new version with the plug (**view on the right**). The screw is threaded 4BA, the tapping size for which is 3.0mm, which is a nice clearance on a Bryant and May match! Now if the ball is stuck on the seat the screw can be quickly removed and the ball freed, all without disturbing the pipework. For good measure I have also incorporated this arrangement on the 'Britannia' and the 'Simplex'.



Dave M

Work in Progress – Setting Safety Valves

I have long held the view that setting the relief pressure of safety valves against the reading of the engine pressure gauge is somewhat fraught. I know that the reading on the engine pressure gauge is compared to the reading on the master gauge on the Club pressure test rig every time a steam test is conducted but the difference in the scale of the two gauges is likely to lead to a discrepancy in the reading on the engine gauge. When you compare the reading on a $\frac{3}{4}$ " diameter engine gauge and the larger diameter gauge on the Club pressure test rig I'm sure you can quickly see my point. Especially when the maximum engine working pressure is say 80 psi and the engine gauge is graduated in 15 psi increments, i.e. 60, 75, 90 so setting the red line on the engine gauge at 80 psi is not easy. On the basis of a somewhat dubious comparison between the gauges, the safety valves are then set to the reading of the red lined engine gauge.

If the safety valves could be set to the reading of the master gauge on the pressure test rig this removes the 'middle man' from the equation. On this basis I conducted a simple experiment; I made an adaptor to allow the 'Britannia' safety valves to be coupled to the Club's pressure test rig. The safety valve was initially set to what I believed to be a higher pressure, I then slowly increased the pressure in the rig until the gauge reading reached 80 psi, and I then carefully reduced the spring pressure on the safety valve until it let by. Once it had let by the pressure in the test rig quickly dropped as water was lost from the system. To check that the safety valve relief pressure had been set I slowly increased the pressure in the rig again until 80 psi was reached and at this point a bead of water was just seen on the top of the valve and as before the pressure in the rig dropped away. I must say that it wasn't easy to set the valve at the desired pressure as the test rig lacked a pressure reservoir, each stroke of the pump gave a very coarse pressure increase but nevertheless it did show that in principle the idea wasn't that foolish. I fully appreciate that this test will not prove that the valves can meet the accumulation test requirements demanded by the annual steam test but it did show that the valve lifted at the required boiler pressure. Clearly there maybe / is likely to be a difference in the valve lift pressure when subjected to cold hydraulic pressure versus hot steam pressure, this comparison would need to be explored.

Another thought is that if the boiler had a separate pressure take off point then a 'master gauge' could be temporarily coupled here for the annual steam test and the safety valves set according to the reading on the 'master gauge' leaving the engine gauge for indicating purposes only.

It will be interesting to see how things pan out when the 'Britannia' is eventually subjected to its first steam test with the safety valves pre-set as described above. Time will tell...

PS. Having written the above and I was just about to send it to Andrew when it suddenly occurred to me that the test boiler at the club could be used in this exercise. Steam source with an easily adjustable test pressure (electric heating element with an on / off switch to control it) and a reasonably large diameter pressure gauge (the master gauge). Watch this space...!

Dave M

Forthcoming & Diary of Events

Below is an updated Diary and because we are nearly at the end of our 2018 running season there is just one item remaining but with the inclusion of a Talk by Bill Gage, the Bonfire / Fireworks Night & New Year Run for our closed season.

Looking at these in a little more detail, the Dusk Run on 29th September will require two lots of crew, so volunteers for both shifts will be greatly appreciated!

The Talk by Bill Gage is a recent addition but I am sure will be excellent as per the Talks he has conducted in the past. Some of the railway footage is very interesting too, so definitely one for the diary...

For the Bonfire / Firework Night, names will be required on the whiteboard in the clubhouse, so the catering arrangements can be made. If all interested members can ensure they have declared their position by the third weekend in October, so the necessary food supplies can be obtained!

I will confirm further details of the Christmas & New Year Runs in the next edition, which I plan to complete on or around the 3rd November...

29th September 2018 – Normal Run then 18:30 – Dusk Run – Details above

27th October 2018 – Talk by Bill Gage with historic railway footage – From 15:00

3rd November 2018 – Bonfire & Firework Night – From 18:00 – Details above

15th / 16th December 2018 – Christmas Run – From 13:00 to 15:00 – Details TBC

1st January 2019 – New Year's Day Fun Run & Lunch – From 10:00

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

Sussex Miniature Locomotive Society Ltd



Rear Cover picture: -

1T57: One final historic event that took place just over 50 years ago was the last scheduled mainline steam service on 11th August 1968. Running as *1T57* and known by the name 'The Fifteen Guinea Special' the train ran from Liverpool to Manchester / Carlisle / Settle / Manchester and back to Liverpool. Hauled by 'Black 5's and a 'Britannia' the train was formed of maroon and blue / grey Mk1 coaches, and as a tribute, Andrew S thought it would be nice to create our own train, formed almost entirely of maroon and blue / grey coaches, and hauled for the most part by a 'Black 5' and a 'Britannia'. Ours ran on Sunday 19th August and **picture above**: Andrew S driving the 'Black 5' and John R driving his 'Britannia' approach Court Tunnel.