

BEECH HURST NEWS



Cover picture: -

Something A Little Different?
This years bonfire effort went up very well, thanks to some hard graft during the day to produce a bi-plane! We could then sit back and watch all that work go up in smoke, before the excellent fireworks that were enjoyed by all at the end. More inside...

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Editor's Notes

It hardly seems like 2007 is nearly over and that we are 'a stones throw' from another New Year. I know we always say it, but this year has flown by and with an early start next year, we have barely 3 months before we start running again. Having said that, we have had another very good year, financially, work wise and an increase in the membership. 14 new members have been accepted this year, 3 of which have become 'regular's' and helped out not only during the summer months, but also into the winter too. Lets hope that 2008 is just as successful.

Anyway on with the here and now, I would like to thank Chris, Stephen Hutton and Bob Youldon for contributing pieces to this newsletter and along with a good few interesting articles and our regular features, there is also an updated Diary of Events page that goes right through until May next year!

So without further ado, I would like to wish everybody a very Happy Christmas and New Year, so read on and enjoy...

Andrew

Chairman's Notes

With the shorter days and winter weather now well and truly upon us, it's good to see we have many of our 'winter jobs' completed already – and those not finished are well on the way to being so! The regular winter workers, and some of our newer members too this year, have earned a well deserved 'pat on the back', and a big 'thank you' from me for all your efforts. Andrew and I listed out a full page of tasks and it's nice to see so many names written in to do them. Special thanks must go to Geoff for doing such a great job on upgrading our kitchen this autumn, and putting in so much time and care on the project. It looks great, and is all ready for our 'Nosh Night' Xmas celebrations this weekend.

Last month, we took time out from our toils to enjoy an excellent 'Bonfire Night' at the beginning of November. The bonfire 'gang' created an excellent 'bi-plane' bonfire for us to set fire to! (One of our better ones I think.) Andrew and Steve S also set off one of the best firework displays I think we've had too – complete with an excellent firework finale! All the more enjoyable because we were warmed and filled with Val's delicious baked potatoes and other goodies, a very good evening and a lot of fun.

Just looking past Christmas for a moment, a reminder that Easter comes early next year (in mid-March) so we have really only January and February to finish off any work and then we will be checking out signals and track for the 2008 season! (I've seen Daniel making out next years 'running book' already!) So, with our usual 'fun run' scheduled for January 1st and, AGM for March 1st, once again time will whisk us into next season before we know it!

Anyway, for now, let's enjoy Christmas and New Year holidays and I would like to wish everyone a 'Happy Christmas' and a healthy, happy 'New Year'.

Mike

Winter Work

Following on from Mike's notes, I would like to expand on a few of the jobs that we have completed or are currently under way.



Following a period of noticeable blockage we thought it was time to investigate the drain that leads from the sink in the engine shed. Nobody seemed to be sure where it went to and why it was taking so long to drain away. After some experiments with flourosene, nothing obvious seemed to appear and we were left scratching our heads as to the route it took. We decided to call in a drain company to

attempt to flush the blockage out, which resulted in a large swath of the car park disappearing under a black slime and still no clear indication of the direction of the drain. **(Pictured Above:** Still no answer – and we've got to raise the man hole cover too!)

We knew that it went out under the track and after some further probing, realised it headed directly for the man hole cover by the bowls clubhouse, however, there was no entrance into the sewer drain from there. After further scratching, we discovered that when the bowls clubhouse extension was built a new manhole was sunk to take their toilet waste away that had severed our drain! After some digging we broke through the end of our drainpipe and attempted to rod it through, but still nothing, just more black slime! It was finally decided to dig a trench, expose our drainpipe and do whatever was necessary to connect it into the manhole by the bowls clubhouse, it was then that we discovered why we couldn't rod through the pipes! When the irrigation tank had been built next door a 'mole' had been used to lay water pipes supplying the irrigation system and that had bored right through the clay pipe that was our drain! Consequently we have now taken out all the old clay pipe



and laid plastic drainage pipe from the track to the man hole with a bend to bring it into the man hole and safely away. What should have been a fairly quick job, turned out to be about a months work! Still, it is done now and Ray has been busy mapping out the known waterways around the clubhouse and he will now draw up map showing these for the future generations!

(Pictured Left: The new drain)

Following the first section of track that was renewed close to the steaming bays, another section from the south end of the long tunnel to signal 5 has now been 'turned' with Geoff and Ian spending many afternoons recently turning and then re-laying the rail section by section, at the last count it was nearly completed, with just pinning to finish.

John Midderigh has been busy gardening around the back of the clubhouse and keeping the ever-increasing leaf fall accumulations to a minimum. With most of the trees now stripped bare this problem should start to recede after Christmas.

John West has also been busy, this time making the club a set of boiler plugs and adaptors for use when carrying out boiler tests. We had relied on what ever was available, but now have a nice new set to be looked after and kept together.

Post Bonfire Night we also ordered another skip, the 3rd in nearly a year, to remove more metal waste that had been accumulating and a lot of ash from the fire itself. Although it didn't seem possible, we managed to fill it and a bit more, but the place is much more tidy for it, we must now keep it that way!

Other projects that are underway include: making good the station platform, where the new fence was built, that Howard is currently filling in. Peter Chapman has just started on our new aluminium section for the bridge to the carriage shed to try to lighten the load when moving and lifting this section and finally, Andrew and John Gange have been in discussion with a surveyor about modifying our existing footbridge – more to follow.

Andrew

Bonfire Night

Away from the normal winter work, we took time out on November 3rd to build our usual flammable creation in readiness for later incineration. Having come up with several ideas in recent years, some better executed than others, this time we thought we'd go for a bi-plane! With wooden fence panels to act as wings and fuselage and plenty of wood to beef up the inside it was decided!

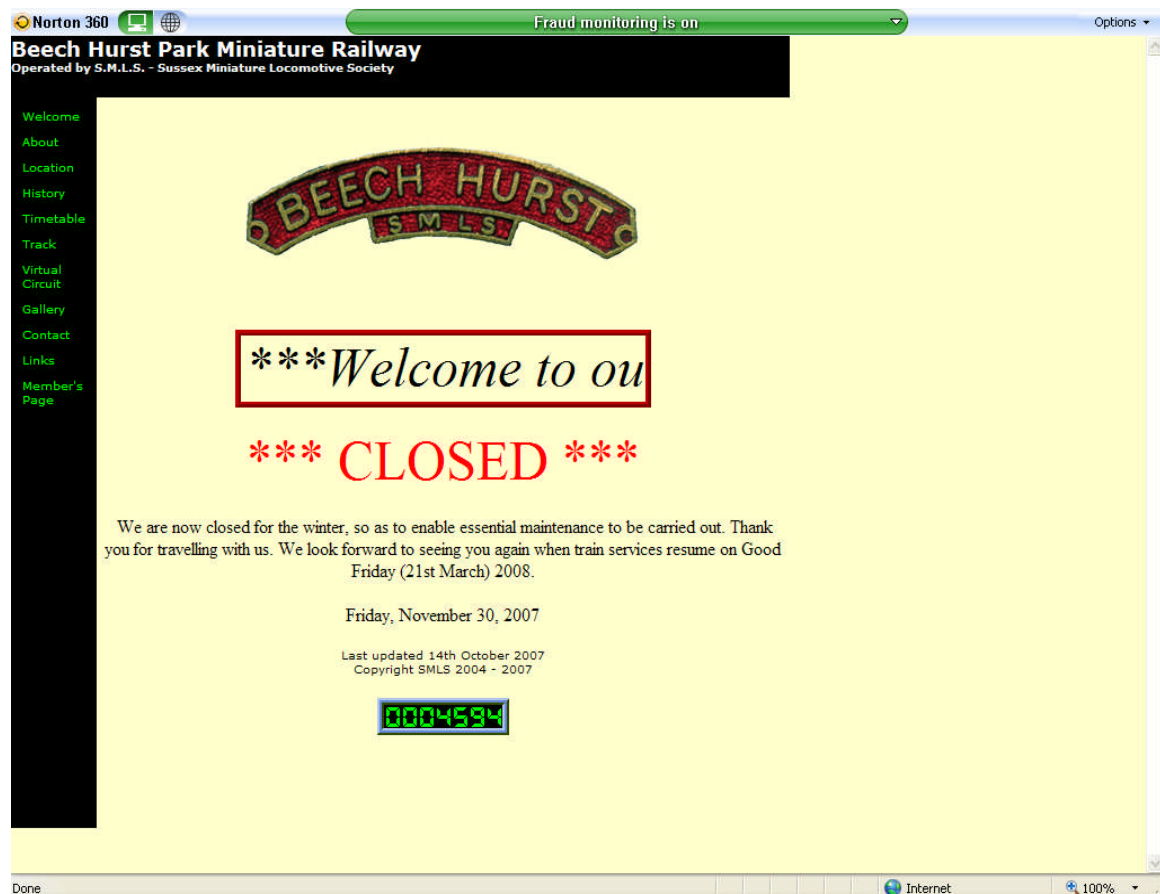
It took best part of the day to build our creation and with a little extra help at the end we completed it shortly before dark (see cover pictures), complete with pilot! We then took '5' before it was time to light up. As with previous years a 'sweep' was prepared and bets placed on how long it would take for the 'guys' hat to catch fire! In the end it took 22 minutes, with Andrew's Mum winning the 'sweep', last year it was his Brother! Whilst the fire burnt down a little we were treated to delicious baked spuds, beans and cheese, followed by pies for pudding, before it was time for the finale of the evening, the firework display. As with previous years and despite a massive fire about a year ago, Andrew managed to acquire the fireworks at the usual place in Ringmer. The display lasted for about 30 minutes and capped off a very fun evening.

I would like to thank everybody who contributed to the fire, helped build it and all those who then turned out to watch it happen! Also to Val and John who worked very hard to prepare the food for the evening, which after a day of shifting wood was so very much appreciated! Here's to next year, ideas please...!

Andrew

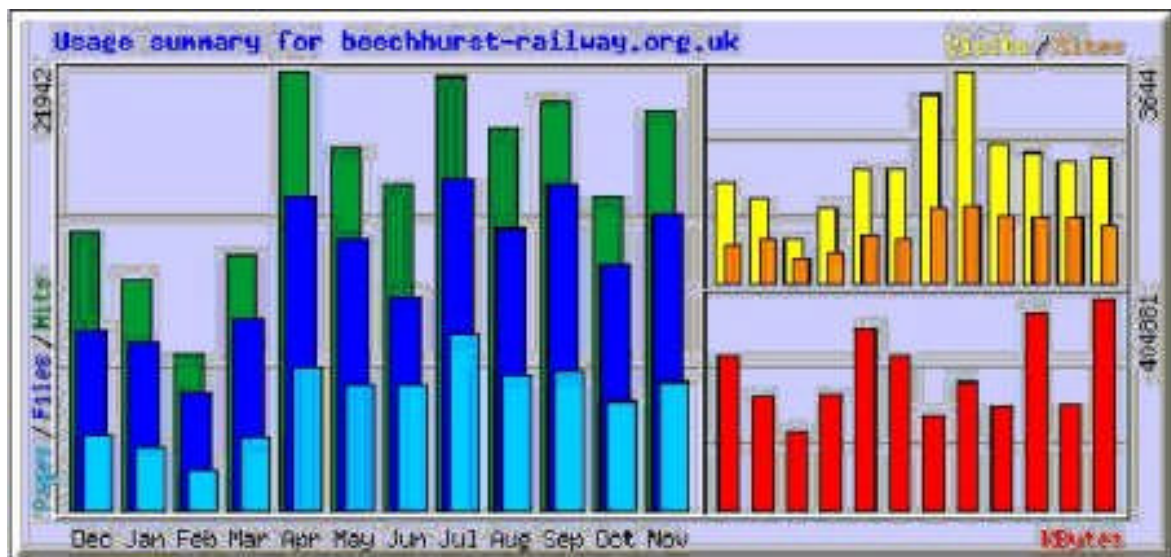
Website Statistics for December 2006 – November 2007

EdNo. Thank you to Stephen Hutton for producing the following graph, table and screen shot of our website home page illustrating how many 'visits' ('hits') we have had this year. The graph and table illustrated on the page below show, on a daily and monthly basis, how many 'hits' we have had on the website. As far as I can tell you and I am no expert on all things Internet, the number of 'visits' is the important number as this tells us how many individual instances the website has been visited. The 'hits' relate to the number of times a page within the website has been viewed, confused yet? Well say Person X visits the website that is one 'visit', but then they also view the Timetable page, that makes two 'hits', one to the homepage and one to the timetable page. They then check out the history too, that makes 3 'hits' in total and so on...! In short we have received 25,000 'visits' to the site over the past 12 months that equates to roughly 2,000 per month or 65 a day on average. Compared to 11,000 'visits' in the 11 months between January and December 2006, that is roughly a 100% increase on the same period last year, which is pretty impressive and just proves that the web is such an important advertising tool now, and dirt cheap with it!



Information acquired between 22:00 and 22:30 on Friday 30/11/07. The counter on the home page registers each 'visit' to our site and stands at 4594.

Summary by Month										
Month	Daily Avg				Monthly Totals					
	Hits	Files	Pages	Visits	Sites	KBytes	Visits	Pages	Files	Hits
Nov 2007	665	493	214	72	973	404881	2175	6424	14812	19978
Oct 2007	507	396	177	68	1132	204779	2117	5507	12289	15741
Sep 2007	683	542	233	75	1122	378354	2257	7016	16263	20508
Aug 2007	615	453	218	76	1158	202290	2382	6782	14068	19086
Jul 2007	699	536	284	117	1315	246920	3644	8804	16636	21697
Jun 2007	541	356	210	108	1271	178931	3264	6320	10680	16252
May 2007	584	439	203	63	773	294410	1961	6318	13617	18124
Apr 2007	731	523	239	64	819	348120	1944	7193	15718	21942
Mar 2007	414	308	116	41	552	221753	1301	3618	9562	12842
Feb 2007	279	211	71	26	439	151288	752	2009	5934	7814
Jan 2007	371	269	102	47	754	215597	1482	3168	8361	11518
Dec 2006	452	290	120	55	657	295561	1726	3731	8995	14024
Totals						3142884	25005	66890	146933	199526



Andrew & Stephen

Analysis of our 54th operating year

This article should have appeared in the October news, however owing to a "senior moment", or was it the fumes from our blocked drain? It is a little late.

What a surprise, another good year for the operating team.

No washouts this year, thank goodness, but no bumper days either. The busiest day saw us carry about 1000 passengers, we have done better in previous years, but the higher levels of passenger flow can be a bit stressful.

This was going to be a pretty good year as it was the last one with the 50p fare, and lots of publicity notifying the passengers of the impending rise. Next year will see a doubling to £1.00. The last time we doubled the fare was back in 1969 when it went from 6d to 1/- in old money, or 2.5p to 5p in new money.

The result was a drop off in passenger numbers by about 40%, however there was a net increase in revenue at that time.

The numbers recovered over several seasons. (If you keep your back numbers of the news, see last year's article)

I expect we will have a quieter year this coming season, with more time to talk with the public in the station, although the passenger numbers tend to go down, recruitment seems to go up.

So what of this year, the total is 38,416 passengers, a runner up to 2005 when we carried a record 43,159.

The grand total just fell short of 1.25 million at 1,248,389.

The all time average again rose to 23,103 per year, another statistic for the track maintenance guys to look at.

Last year I predicted that we would carry our 1.25 millionth passenger early in the 2008 season. It seems I was right, as we need to carry only 1,911 passengers to reach that milestone. It seems to me to have been only a couple of years ago that we celebrated the 500,000th.

More numbers, the track lap recorder registered 8,852 for this year, not all service trains though.

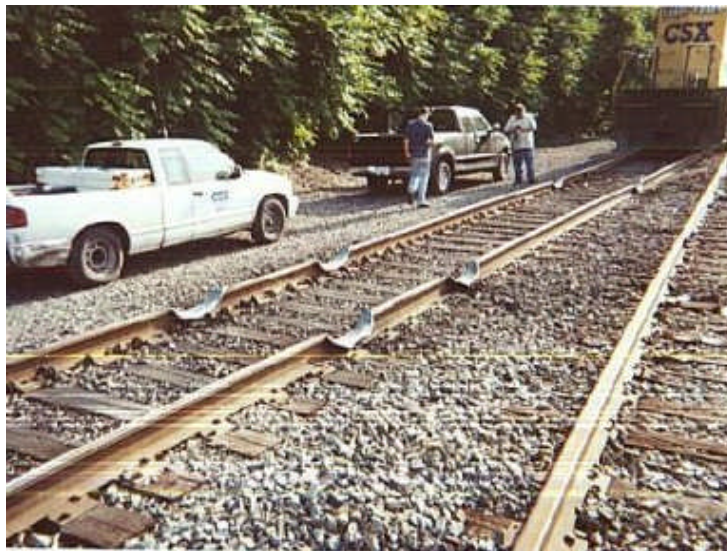
No graphs this year, I'm getting bored producing them each time, but next year!!!!

Good Steaming,

Chris

Jokes – Wheel slip!

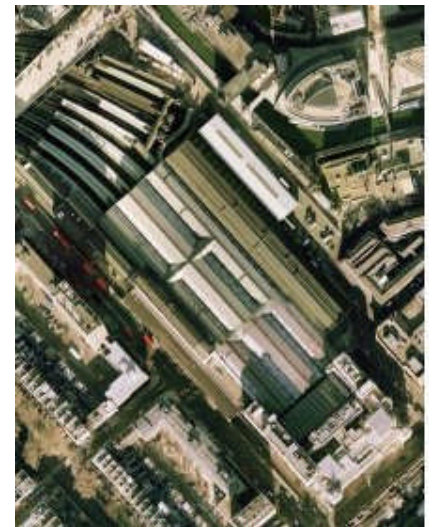
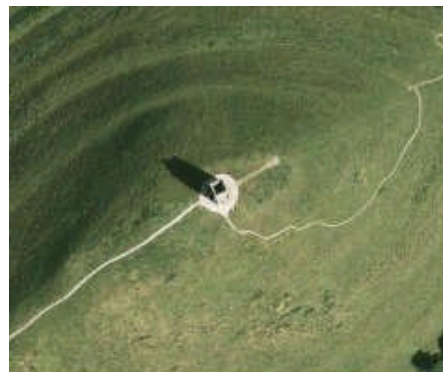
EdNo. Not sure there is a lot else to say here, only that I've never seen anything like this before!



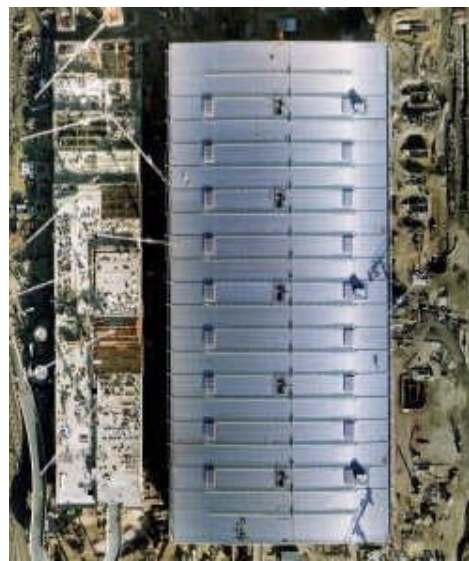
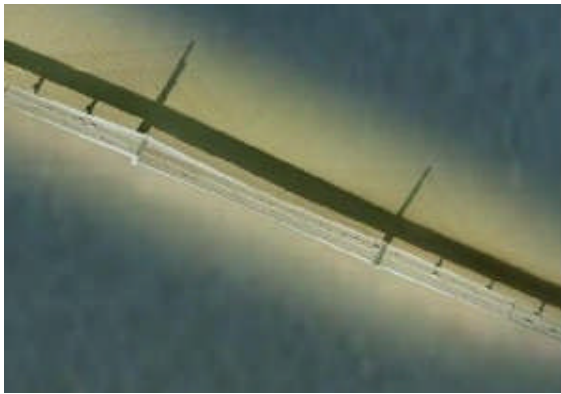
Bob Youldon

Xmas Quiz

I wasn't quite sure how to fill these pages this year and having used engineering, railway and local history quizzes in previous years I was looking for something a bit different and hopefully have found it! It is still, in a way, engineering based, but it also relies on your geographical knowledge too. Below you will find 10 aerial images of well-known landmarks across the UK, some older than others, but all have been feats of engineering at some time in the past or nearer to the present day. Start from the top left and work your way from left to right along each row, until you have completed all 10! Answers will appear in the February edition.



Congratulations! You have now reached the half way stage, how are you getting on so far?



You have now finished!

Andrew

Forthcoming Events

A good few of you will be tucking into your Nosh Night cuisine by the time you have read these pages and therefore I would like to thank Val and John in advance for their efforts in preparing and cooking on Nosh Night – February is a while away & I would like to express our thanks before then for the superb fayre.

Nearly upon us is the New Years day run, which will be the usual mish-mash of locomotives, weather permitting and hopefully this year – snow! The track will be free from about 10:00.

I am hoping to be able to organise a 'Bits 'n' Pieces' night for February 2nd. It is some years since we have done a similar night and I think it would be nice to see what other members are working on. I have about 7 or 8 pieces already on offer and if you would like to display an item then please see me at the club either Saturday or Sunday most weekends to discuss your item(s)!

The AGM date has been set for the first Saturday in March, which next year is the 1st and unless anything untoward happens that will be the firm date.

Running proper then commences 3 weeks later on Good Friday, which is 21st March next year; we will then run as normal through to the end of September.

Also, in April next year we have been invited to display a stand at the Royal Bath and West showground at Shepton Mallet as part of a larger Model Engineering exhibition. We have initially agreed to support this event and once further details are known we will pass these on through the newsletter pages. Models from the club will be displayed and members will also be required to man the stand.

Andrew

Diary Of Events

1st January 2008 – New Year's Day Run – Will start at approx. 1000.

3rd January 2008 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

2nd February 2008 – Bits 'N' Pieces – Will start at approx. 1900 – see above.

7th February 2008 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

1st March 2008 – SMLS AGM – Will start at approx. 1900.

6th March 2008 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

21st March 2008 – Good Friday – Official start to 2008 running season.

3rd April 2008 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

12th/13th April 2008 – TBC date for ME Show at Shepton Mallet – see above.

1st May 2008 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

N.B. Other events are not always shown in the diary of events because they have been arranged at short notice; check black/notice board at the clubhouse for more details.

Andrew