

Sussex Miniature Locomotive Society Ltd

Issue No. 426
April 2017

BEECH HURST NEWS



Cover picture: -

A Blast From The Past: Not a new loco to Beech Hurst as such but former member Dave Lewis' 'B1' has not run on our track since about 1995. A chance meeting I had with Dave at the recent Alexandra Palace exhibition spawned a visit, which took place last Saturday.

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Editor's Notes

As I write these notes, we are between Easter and May Day, and after a spell of pleasant April weather things have just turned cold once again! This arctic blast is only supposed to last a few days and is forecast to give way to a reasonable Bank Holiday weekend. It is, however, a shock to the system after temperatures of 25 degrees earlier in the month! That said, we should be thankful for a generally settled start to the season with good numbers of passengers too.

Last Saturday, we welcomed former member Dave Lewis to Beech Hurst who I met by chance at the Alexandra Palace exhibition in January. Several e-mails later and a visit by Dave, together with his 'B1' locomotive, was arranged. For me, this was a trip down memory lane, because Dave's loco was one of the first I had the chance to drive back in the early 90's just after I joined Beech Hurst. Those early experiences definitely gave me the inspiration to want to build and run models of my own (be it locomotives or rolling stock) and even one lap at the end of the day was something quite special at that young age. It was good to see Dave again and he also had the chance to catch up with Geoff and Ray, who also knew him from earlier times in the club. It goes to show that having a presence at an exhibition does give rise to the opportunity of chance meetings, which in turn can lead to visits such as this one (or Northolt pencilled in for July) or just being able to promote the club in general, which can never be a bad thing. Anyway, on with this slim-line edition and since the February newsletter, out on AGM day, there has been the normal activity at the club with the last winter jobs being tidied up and a start to the 2017 running season. In this edition there is a brief summary and thanks for the Winter Work effort over the past 6 months, a new 'Positions List' for 2017, a couple of 'Work in Progress' articles (thanks too to Dave M for his piece), as well as all the usual writings and an updated Diary to take us through to September, so as ever please read on and enjoy...

Andrew

Chairman's Notes

Our AGM back in March was very well attended, a full house in fact! The main discussion revolved around Roy Preston's presentation of a 'progress to date' on his idea for a 'Learning Centre', adjacent to the clubhouse. The project was given 'the blessing' of those present, by a majority vote in favour, on the understanding that it would be a 'stand alone' project, without funding from, or resourced by SMLS. It was felt that it would add to our support within the council, especially regarding the future of the rear field area. To date, nothing more has been heard of the outcome of several council visits to progress ideas relating to access to this area for the public..., primarily we believe, at the moment, because there have been major changes to officers within the council. Several of our contacts there (and supporters of the club over the last few years) have moved on, and we are now having to touch base with the new personnel. Following the voting for officers at the AGM, and I would like to thank all those who stood, I welcomed Steve Steer, Laurie Anderson and Nick Edwards on to the committee. Special thanks must go to Steve Turner for his work on our club council over the years.

Steve is continuing to keep us maintained and operational with endless repair jobs around the clubhouse and track! Most recently, he has been working with John Baldwin and Mike Wakeling to upgrade our milling machine with a new digital readout and power feed. It is nearly complete now; just one last repair to get around to, with the replacement of a cracked casting, and it should be a very useful and accurate machine for the club.

The 2017 running season is off to a good start, with fine weather and excellent passenger numbers. In fact, the four days at Easter notched up record fares for us. You have to look back to 2005 to find the highest number of passengers carried over the four days, and at that time we were still offering a 50p ride! I would like to say thanks to those members who turned out through Easter to run our railway and give rides to a lot of happy customers.

Jack Pitt's Class '08' shunter has finally arrived at the club and is awaiting batteries before going into service. We thank Jack for his generous donation of this locomotive and hope to have it running soon.

Two trucks are now repainted in maroon livery and are also ready to go back into service. These have become a joint project, Dan and Nick doing the repainting and Geoff and Steve T putting them back together and adding the finishing touches. They will add variety to our rolling stock.

I wish everyone an enjoyable time out on the track in 2017.

Mike

Election of 'Officers' and 'Other' Positions for 2017

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 2017:

Chairman: Mike Porter

Vice-Chairman: Daniel Evans

Secretary: John Baldwin

Minutes Secretary: Mike Wakeling

Treasurer: Graham Miller

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

Laurie Anderson, Nick Edwards, Steve Steer & Geoff West

Operations Managers: Nick Edwards & Daniel Evans

Assistant Operations: Mike Porter

Signals Engineer: Graham Mundy

Assistant Signals: Steve Turner

Workshop Manager: Mike Wakeling

Assistant Workshop: Steve Steer

House Manager: John West

Catering Manager: Val West

Stores Managers: Nick Edwards, Steve Steer & Geoff West

Librarian: Stephen Hutton

Assistant Librarians: Ray Parsons & Geoff West

Newsletter Editor: Andrew Brock

Boiler Consultant: John Richardson

Boiler Coordinator: Steve Turner
Boiler Inspectors: Mike Porter & Geoff West
Custodians of Wharfedale: Nick Edwards & Daniel Evans
Assistant Custodian: Laurie Anderson
Custodian of LNER Tank: Steve Steer & Steve Turner
Custodian of Club Electric Locomotives: Graham Mundy
Carriage Valeters: Tom Broome & Graham Mundy
Webmaster: Stephen Hutton
Clubhouse Cleaners: Tom Broome, Nick Edwards, Daniel Evans & Mike Porter
Track Maintenance: Roy Preston
Carriage & Wagon Maintenance: Andrew Brock & Andrew Strongitharm
Carriage & Wagon Painters: Nick Edwards, Daniel Evans & Geoff West
Carriage & Wagon Bogie Development: Steve Turner
Exhibition Coordinators: John Baldwin, Andrew Brock & Andrew Strongitharm
Facebook Administrators: Nick Edwards, Daniel Evans & Andrew Strongitharm

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

Committee

Winter Work

Since the February edition, the last jobs have been tidied up and as of last weekend the aforementioned newly painted trucks are nearing completion too. Along with our own activities, so the council have also been doing a bit by removing a number of large trees from around the back half of the track. This has thinned out the canopy somewhat and will hopefully encourage ground growth once more! As our new running season has now started, Winter Work will go into its summer recess once again, ready for return in the autumn. Through these pages, thanks must go to all those members who have participated during the winter season with quite a bit of work having been undertaken and completed once again. There are always other odd jobs, which I will report on during the course of the summer before our winter programme starts again in October...

Andrew

Work in Progress – 'Black 5'

Having pretty much completed my wagon, work has once again turned to the 'Black 5', which ran half a dozen times last year but required finishing off. Adam, Andrew S & I were still concerned about sandy deposits in the boiler, so during the first warm day in mid-March, the boiler was lifted from the frames and fully flushed out in Andrew S' back garden using a rudimentary water lance plumbed into a hose reel. Rudimentary it may have been but productive it certainly was and after 4 hours of fairly hard work, over ¾ lb of sediment had been removed from around the foundation ring and boiler barrel (**see picture next page!**). Since then a number of boiler fittings have either been remanufactured or modified for ease of future removal, new superheaters made and at present the final tidying of paint to complete the job. The loco will be fit to return to traffic imminently...



Andrew

Work in Progress – 'A Low Cost Project'

Last year I bought the late Geoff Gillett's 5" gauge 'Pansy' (a GWR 'Pannier' tank – a lovely model). With it came a driving trolley that held the coal, and water for the injector. However I didn't find it easy to drive from because you were sitting too close to the loco and things like the water gauge were difficult to see. An option was to put a wagon behind it that would act as a tender so you would then be sitting further back and make the cab more visible. Seeing Andrew S' 7-plank wagon I decided that was the way to go and set about building one. It was to be a 'low cost' project! At the Guildford Show I bought a dumpy chassis that I think was originally intended to be a driving trolley albeit a bit on the short side. It was a bit crude with disc wheels and no springing on the axle boxes BUT it was at the right price! Also on the stand at the Guildford Show were 2 bogies with spoked wheels but the wheels were of different diameters. Nevertheless, they were not that different and could be machined to the same dimensions – another bargain. Home it all went and out came the tape measure. I reckoned with the chassis shortened by 3" it would start to look about right. I cut the chassis in two, machined up the cut ends and prepped the ends ready for welding. I jigged it all up and took it over to a local fabricator. After welding, to my horror I discovered that it had distorted and instead of being nice and flat, the top of the chassis was now a mild banana shape! Out came the hacksaw and I cut through the lower sections of the weld leaving the top in place. I was now able to straighten it. No more welding, I plated it instead!

The problem was of my own making in many ways, I should have asked that it be tack welded together before applying the full welds. You live and learn don't you.

With the chassis now shortened and flat I re-machined the axle boxes, and put in new bearings and springs. I then turned my attention to the (disc) wheels. I was able to press them off the axles and decided that the axles could be used again. The spoked wheels on the bogies were pressed off and all 4 machined to the same diameter. The re-claimed axles were then modified slightly to accept the spoked wheels and these were set in place using Loctite. The chassis was now complete. Next came the box section. I don't have a box and pan folder so to make the box was not going to be easy but a sheet metal company in Farnham came to my rescue and folded one up for me out of zintec steel. Next was to clad the box with wooden planks. A neighbour has a splendid array of woodworking machines so it wasn't long before a piece of 4mm thick ply had been cut up into strips. Gluing them to the box was going to be a bit tricky so I made up a number of wooden tool makers clamps that could reach down into the base of the box to enable the lower planks to be glued in place. All went well! The box was then fitted with corner angle sections and dummy stiffeners at the ends and the sides. Now came the water tank. Using various pieces of brass and copper sheet that had been laying around in the workshop for a while it soon took shape. I decided to follow Ron's (Harris) advice and fit quick action water valves. The Pansy only has one injector so I only really needed one valve but in the end fitted a pair. Making the tank water tight was a bit of a challenge as anyone who has built a tender will agree. In the end a soapy water solution applied by a small brush while blowing into the tank found the last pin holes!

I kept a running total of the costs which are shown on the next page and it's surprising how much a 'Low Cost' project ends up costing! It was fun though and I'm pretty pleased with it (**see picture below for the finished wagon**).



Chassis £20, Wheels £10, Box £30, 200 off 10 BA Hexagon Head Bolts & Nuts £57 and Paint £10.65 = £127.65! The rest being made from 'stock' and then of course my time at the minimum wage!

Dave Mattingley

'Flying Scotsman' Flies South

It was not only SMLS who enjoyed a bumper Easter with our neighbours at the Bluebell Railway also inundated, this time due to the arrival of LNER locomotive 'Flying Scotsman', which came down for an eight day visit. Publicity surrounding this icon of steam has been well documented and given the numbers who came to see her during the visit, popularity has certainly not diminished. In all, over 8,000 people enjoyed a ride behind the locomotive with an estimated 12,000 more just paying to visit. SMLS members Laurie Anderson, Chris Saunders, Andrew Strongitharm and Howard Strongitharm helped out as 'Gala Makers' and overall it proved a mighty successful event. Below is one of my photographs taken during the visit, although run pasts in sunshine were a complete lottery!



Andrew

Steam on the Brighton Main Line

Not a particularly common sight down our neck of the woods but we have been lucky to see two steam charters through Haywards Heath in recent weeks. Firstly a 'Black 5' on Saturday 18th March and then 'West Country' 'Braunton' (currently running as 'Battle of Britain' 'Lord Dowding') on Saturday 8th April (**see picture next page top on a particularly foggy morning at Haywards Heath station!**).



Forthcoming Events & Diary of Events

With the summer season back with us, so our monthly Club Night's have started once again and these take place on the first Thursday of each month from approximately 19:00. In addition, I have also included a visit by Chelmsford Club which has been booked for Saturday 10th June, our first 'Bring Your Own' BBQ on Saturday 1st July and a provisional date for a first visit by Northolt MES on Wednesday 5th July. As well as those dates listed below, it is hoped to include one or two special running days during the course of the season and a BBQ later in August, all of which will be published through these pages in due course.

4th May 2017 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

1st June 2017 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

10th June 2017 – Visit to SMLS by Chelmsford Club – From 1000

1st July 2017 – Mid-Summer 'Bring Your Own' BBQ – From 1800

5th July 2017 – Visit to SMLS by Northolt MES – From 1000

6th July 2017 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

3rd August 2017 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

7th September 2017 – 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