

BEECH HURST NEWS



Cover picture: -

Downhill All The Way: The first Saturday of September has for the last few seasons been our £2 all afternoon special day and this year was no exception. Pictured above are John West and Ron Harris with a GWR pair that formed one of three double-headed trains operating that day's service.

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Editor's Notes

With another season now finished, the winter months are decidedly close by and Christmas is all but 2 months away! Still that does mean that we are fast approaching Bonfire Night again and our pyrotechnic department can get to grips with another mass arson! Lets just hope we get a nice night for it, see Forthcoming Events later in this edition.

Thanks must as always go to those who contributed to the August edition (albeit a bit of a 'slim line' job), Val, Ray and the regulars etc... for their articles.

The October edition is a bit fatter and with Andrew's printer and computer now feeling a little better, a few more photo's this time too! There are plenty of articles from recent events, plus an updated Diary of Events/Forthcoming Events page for all the latest social gatherings.

On a final note, joint editor Mark has recently moved North to study Mechanical Engineering at University, so most of the articles from now on will be from me (Andrew) and if you are intending to e-mail articles could you do so to the andy.brock... e-mail address on the cover, this will continue until the February edition when the jobs are decided after the AGM at which time we can review the position of Editor(s) for the newsletter.

Andrew

Chairman's Notes

Another running season has come to an end, and, as always, I would like to thank everyone who took part and helped make it a success.

This year the weather provided us with many so-so days – and a few decidedly wet ones, - but thanks to the tenacity of drivers and station masters, (not to mention some determined passengers!), we achieved remarkable passenger figures. No doubt, Chris, as usual, (in his guise as custodian of the sacred passenger totals), will provide us with all the stats and figures for those who like to know!

Despite the indifferent conditions, I hope everyone can look back and say they enjoyed this year's running – after all that's what it is really about! Certainly from the traffic controllers point of view it has been very pleasant to have so much help setting up and putting away, with some new members "mucking in" with the regulars to make everything run easily and smoothly. Our reliability and passenger satisfaction would be the envy of any full size railway!

Next year we will see how the figures are affected by our increase in fares. The notice concerning the increase has been prominently displayed for 2 or 3 months now and generally the comments have been that a pound is still relatively cheap in comparison to other similar rides, but we will have to wait and see. A similar rise in the past saw an initial drop in the number of passengers riding for the first year, picking up again after that. The notice will remain up at the station and clubhouse throughout the winter.

The new station fence has now been completed, replacing the old rotten wooden one with a galvanised steel version. Whilst not cheap, it follows on with our intention to gradually reduce maintenance work around the railway. (Those who helped me paint the old fence will know what I mean!). The new fence was agreed by the council and matches existing fencing in the park, and complies with all health and safety requirements.

It was not an easy job as the concrete posts and platform levels were anything but consistent! Each section being slightly different had to be "made to measure". Following my discussions with the council, they also agreed to contribute to the final cost, and we now have a good strong fence that needs no maintenance and should see most of us out!

Our social events of the last two months, include the late summer BBQ and a visit by Maidstone DMSE, both very successful and many thanks go to Val (and John too!) for providing the usual excellent catering.

We will soon be putting together a winter work schedule and I will be lifting a section of track this month for refurbishment. I hope through the winter you can come up and give the regulars a hand – all the usual jobs from leaf clearance to painting etc. plus a few more! Many hands make light work as they say!

Don't forget we have our Bonfire Night and Nosh Night coming up in the next month or two, and Andrew will provide the details later in the newsletter.

Mike

In The Making



Following the failure of the boiler on Mark's 'Bantam Cock' locomotive a little over two years ago, a new construction started; to build a brand new boiler from scratch, start to finish. Mark, together with help from myself then set about starting to make bits for the new boiler back in September 2005 and as most regulars to Beech Hurst will know, a lot of Saturday nights were put to use making bits for the new construction as well as many hours during the week when time and college work permitted! The new construction was the same as the old boiler, except for the use of thicker copper plate, mostly 10 gauge (1/8") on the new build, in comparison to mostly 16 gauge (1/16") on the old one and also the removal the combustion chamber from the original design – this was felt to be an added complication that gave no real benefit on an engine this small, more so since there are plenty of 3 1/2" V4's around that run very well on the standard tubed boiler.



The culmination of the this work came to a head this summer with a very hectic three months from the beginning of July to the middle of September when the last parts were made, followed by some tedious fitting and then soldering together, with the kind help of John West. The whole project took two years to complete, but at the end of that there stood a brand new boiler with 160psi in it and not a bead anywhere!

It is a real credit to Mark who as a youngster has gone on and built something that many teenagers would have long ago given up on. In all some 400 hours have gone in to the project, which even when you consider over a 2 year period is still 4 hours average per week, that is a real effort, but hopefully now the boiler will be good for many years to come and Mark can add his name to the increasingly diminishing list of individuals who build their own boilers in our hobby, even more so because the project started when Mark was just 16. (See pictures on previous page)

Andrew

Golden Wedding

Through these pages we would like to wish Norman and Hazel Payne many happy returns for their 50th wedding anniversary that they celebrated in late August, by going for a short break to St. Ives, 50 years after their first honeymoon in August 1957. The coach trip included several excursions, with one to the Scilly Isles. Both Norman and Hazel enjoyed their trip very much, even if it was a bit different from 50 years ago!

Andrew & Mark

Social Scene



Given the fact that we are now nearing the end of October, August seems but a distant memory now. But since the August edition we have held our end of summer BBQ on the Bank Holiday Saturday at the end of August which went off very well this year, with a good attendance and lovely fine weather to enjoy. The June one had been a bit of a blow out and it was case of sheltering under a flimsy canvas roof, trying to cook our Fayre in the driving rain and strong winds! August however was very

pleasant with about 20 or so members and family joining in, with all those who attended enjoying the excellent cuisine and also the trains that were running during the evening, including John and Val's dog Piper who got a lap or two on one of our 'house' engines 'Florence Nightingale' (see picture above). The summer BBQ evenings have always been a nice change from our regular Fish and Chip Fayre of a Saturday night and give us the chance to enjoy the summer weather and play trains for ourselves as well. Thanks go to all those who helped out with the evening, including Val and John in particular, who supplied onions and puddings for us all.

The following Saturday was also a special day, for two reasons, one was that a couple of members, Geoff and John Baldwin, made a visit to the track at Bedford MES as part of their open weekend. From what we can gather they had a good time, although apparently the track there seems to undulate slightly more than ours does and Geoff's driving truck had a tendency to de-rail from time to time as a result.

Secondly, back at home we had planned a £2 all day special that afternoon, with three double-headed trains (see cover picture) running throughout the afternoon.

The service went off pretty well for the most part, the only hiccups were Peter Chapman having to take a 'pit stop' part way the afternoon because the lubricators on the '01' had blown back and John West and Ron struggling with the 4 new trucks, although this was put down to two reasons, one being the aforementioned lubricator spillage that made one rail rather greasy and secondly, although we did not discover this till the Sunday, a pair of brake callipers had become detached on the new brakes and as a result were scraping the inside of the wheels on one of the trucks. Norman's 47 deputised for Peter's '01', being used as a banker for Ray who was at the front with 'Martlet', Peter did however resume normal service later in the afternoon. Thanks go as always to those who helped out that day, it wasn't a record breaker, but we did do very well all the same, collecting some 80 odd £2 fares in the process.



At the end of September we then had our annual visit from some of the members from Maidstone DMES. A few of us had visited Mote Park back in May and this was the annual return visit. As usual the Maidstone members brought a variety of locomotives, both large and small, ranging from Sue Parham's 3 ½" 'Jack' and a New York Central Hudson kit locomotive in 3 ½", to a 5" 'U' Class, a 5" 'Speedy' (see picture below left) and Martin Parham's 5" LNER 'P2' (see picture above left). Despite the slightly inclement weather that day the visitors enjoyed their free track in the morning and then duly helped out with our passenger service during the afternoon, albeit it wasn't that busy, but hey it was different to see some other locomotives going round for a change. Ian then went on with the '37' late on to finish the service off, whilst our visitors enjoyed a specially prepared tea, made by Val and John in readiness for the their journey back to Kent. Thanks as usual go to all those who helped out, in any

small way during the day and of course to Val and John for the excellent spread that was prepared for the afternoon tea, so much so that there was even enough left that we could forego a visit to the 'Chippy' that night! Hopefully we will be able to do the same again next year.

Finally on this note, we had a club visit to the Malden track at Thames Ditton last Saturday (13th) that seems to be a regular event at the end of each running season.



Last year the weather was brilliant and there was an awful lot to see there on both the raised and ground level tracks, this year the weather was equally nice, with warm autumn sunshine for the most part, however there was a decided lack of visitors on the Saturday, in fact Beech Hurst by far outnumbered any other visitors, the only other club that I saw that came in any great numbers were Ickenham and I guess there were about 6 or 7 of them. There was no activity on the ground level track till after lunch and being as though there were only about 6 on the raised track, time slots were not necessary this year, with the Pump Trolley and 'Growler' (complete **with** hand controller!) both on for the best part of the day. Along with our two 'machines' there was a 'B1', a '6XP', a 'Mallet' locomotive and an 0-4-0 industrial, vertical boilered steamer, together with a Class 'something' electric, a Class 20 electric and a 'Maxitrak' Class 66 that John Gange was taking some interest in! Pictured are two of four 7 ¼" locomotives

that ran during the late afternoon, both the Class 5 and the 'Schools' were pretty mucky engines, either soot or oil, I am not sure what's worse! Whilst at Malden we also enjoyed a scrumptious lunchtime meal and also afternoon tea and cakes. I am sure I speak for everyone who went, that we all had a very good day and look forward to visiting at the same time next year.

Andrew

Winter Work

With the running season now well over and done with, there enters the work season! By the time you get this newsletter, a short section of track will have been lifted, steel work prepared and levelled in readiness for re-laying of the rails. As well as this there are many more 'regular' jobs that we require help with and a list will be in the clubhouse by the signing in book if you have a few free hours of a weekend to spare. As with previous years we will keep you up to date via these pages of the winter projects and how they are progressing. Not forgetting of course that Easter is on 21st March next year, so we really only have a 5 month 'window' this winter to get stuck in!

Andrew

Jokes

This photo was taken in Swansea from an office just opposite the site where council workmen were making an excellent job of erecting traffic bollards.

This was to prevent cars parking on the large open area in front of the grey building on the right. Can you spot the not-so-deliberate mistake?



Forthcoming Events

The Diary of Events page has now been updated as far as possible, with some notable dates for your diary.

Firstly, on the 3rd November we will be holding our annual Bonfire and Fireworks Night, complete with Baked Potatoes, Beans, Cheese and Puddings. This year's theme has yet to be confirmed, but it may well be a bi-plane! **So if you have anything to burn(!), we need it before or preferably on the 3rd November!**

Secondly, there is the annual Christmas Nosh Night that will be held on 15th December this year. The cost remains the same as last year, being £5 and space will soon be allocated on the blackboard in the clubhouse for those interested in attending.

Finally, the last notable event, albeit in 2008, is the New Years Day run. This will commence from around 10:00 as normal and hopefully there will be a good variety of traction on offer that day.

Just one note for early 2008, is that Andrew + are looking at organising a 'Bits and Pieces' night, sometime before the AGM, probably early in February. It is some years ago that we held a similar event and a lot has been done in that time and it would be nice to see people's handiwork on display for others to see (that is if they want it to be seen!) – more will follow in December.

Andrew & Mark

Diary Of Events

1st November 2007 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

3rd November 2007 – Bonfire Night – Fireworks & Baked Spuds, from 1800.

6th December 2007 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

15th December 2007 – Xmas Nosh Night - £5 per head, details at the clubhouse.

1st January 2008 – New Years Day Run – Will start at approx. 1000.

3rd January 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 & Mark