

Sussex Miniature Locomotive Society Ltd

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BEECH HURST NEWS



Cover picture: -

On Display: The majority of our stand at the recent Alexandra Palace show in London can be seen above. Because of a late change to the stand behind ours, we had to display on all 4 sides with our backing boards occupying just the far right hand end...

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Editor's Notes

As I write these notes, it is late February and it is pretty cold too! Even though we are nearly 2 months past the shortest day, the weather does not show any sign of warming up just yet! Overall, the past 5 months have been pretty average weather wise and as such we have been able to complete a lot of routine maintenance as well as a number of extra jobs too. The track, trucks and signals are basically ready for 2018 and in addition we are generally looking very tidy too. There will now be the usual commissioning jobs before we start running in just over 4 weeks and time to say thank you to everyone who has undertaken work during the closed season. Weather permitting it can sometimes be difficult to find jobs for everyone on a given day but nonetheless there have been good attendances and a willingness, where possible, to do whatever is needed. Our AGM will soon be upon us and with that, the start of our 2018 season proper.

From the December edition, I would like to thank Fraser for his pictorial contributions and in this edition, the first of 2018, there are reports on the recent Alexandra Palace show, an update on our Winter Work, as well as all the usual writings and a substantially updated Diary of Events through to September.

Editor Note: In addition, and from our AGM of last week, I have included a short summary on the progress of the Learning Centre, so members of SMLS are kept abreast of this project. These summaries will be issued with future newsletters when there is an update, so for now, please read on and enjoy...

Andrew

Chairman's Notes

These are my last notes of winter and the AGM is once again upon us. Thanks are due to the committee for all the hard work put into running the club for another year. Much time has been spent trying to do the best for the club and keep everything up to date and organised. This year we have tried to tighten up on our maintenance records, risk assessments and safety matters. There have been quite a few clubs with accident claims and Health & Safety investigations recently, and we need to try to be ahead of problems and prepared for unfortunate situations. I am pleased to say we had another safe year.

As part of this safety approach, we have included 3 of our regular running day checks into a 'fill in sheet' kept in a folder near the running book. The TC will be responsible for checking the 3 items have been filled in the folder before running, but are NOT necessarily required to do the work themselves.

The running book now has 3 entries for names to be added on running days, to check these items and they are:

- 1 – To check walk the track (PWI – Permanent Way Inspection)
- 2 – To check the red and green aspects of the signals when putting them out
- 3 – To visually check the trucks and braking mechanism, and try the brakes (PTI – Passenger Truck Inspection)

Please volunteer sometimes to come and help out with these basic tasks, do not leave it all to the TC. But the TC must ensure the daily sheet in the folder is filled in to his / her satisfaction before running.

This may seem a bit of a 'pain', but it is essential now to have the things we have been doing anyway, officially recorded. Some clubs who have had visits from the Health & Safety Executive have been criticised, and even fined, for not having up to date records. This is for the benefit of the club. I thank you in advance for your help and cooperation with this very important small addition to our club procedure.

Mike Wakeling, as our workshop manager, is also compiling some safety guidelines for workshop use. These will be issued in due course. Please read and please comply with the safety guidelines.

As of the time of writing, the council have not yet agreed on any propositions or ideas for access to the rear field. I will try to get the latest info before the AGM.

The running book for 2018 is all filled in and ready for you to sign up, official running begins on Good Friday as usual. Thanks to the usual gang, the leaves are cleared and winter work is nearly finished. Just a little drainage work to conclude, the new compressor to be connected up, final checks and track levelling to be completed. I have had a big clean up in the club kitchen and it would be much appreciated if you can leave it clean after you use it. Can I please ask that after your 'cuppa', you wash your cup and put it away, please do not leave it dirty on the draining board for the people who lock up to wash and put away! Once again, I thank you in advance for your kind cooperation!

Thanks to everyone who has worked hard through the winter to get the club ready and I look forward to seeing you at the AGM, and wish you a good running season in 2018.

Mike

General Data Protection Regulation 2018

The Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) has governed the use of personal data for the last twenty years. However, the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is now in force and the deadline for compliance is 25th May 2018. Additionally, a Data Protection Bill is making its way through Parliament with the intention of filling in certain gaps that have been left to the discretion of Member States, and of imposing the requirements of the GDPR into British Law once the United Kingdom has left the EU.

We are looking to see how this new legislation will affect SMLS.

Initial investigation seems to suggest that we may have to email or write to every member and get their written agreement that you are happy for the 'Beech Hurst News' to be sent to you.

There are also implications as to how we secure and protect data that we hold about you, especially financial information, i.e. when and how much you paid for your yearly subscription to the SMLS.

As I say we are looking into this, so please bear with us and we will keep you informed.

John B

Alexandra Palace Show

Thursday 18th January dawned bright and breezy, and fortunately the strong winds experienced the previous night had subsided by the time we were due to set off for London. Our broad collection of models for 2018 was entirely made up of small 5" gauge and many more 3 ½" gauge examples too. Andrew S & I had dropped off most of the exhibits on the Wednesday night, ready for Mike W & I to load on the Thursday morning. I had hired a small transit van again this year and was lucky to be given a decent '67 plate' example with less than '2000' on the clock! This proved to be sufficient in size, whilst keeping all the exhibits closely packed in for our trip around the M25 and the A406 (North Circular) with a small diversion to John B in Caterham along the way. After a fairly faultless journey, we arrived at Alexandra Palace at 12:30, signed in and were unloading in the Great Hall no more than ½ hour later. With the van now safely parked in the North Service Yard for the weekend, Andrew S, John B, Mike W & I set to and started work on the stand. Normally we have our raised section to the rear of the stand, with all other models to the front and sides thereof. However, it became apparent that the North Association, who usually back on to the full length of our stand, had requested only 1 table this year, so we ended up having to place our raised section in the middle of the tables with models at the front and rear, as well as at either end too. As it turned out this worked well but meant our display boards could only be placed at the far right hand end, where NAME was present. With set up complete, we headed home by train ready for the next 3 days ahead of us.

Picture Below: The left hand end and rear of our stand at Alexandra Palace.



Friday was an early start as Norman & I met with Adam at London Bridge station. The journey to Alexandra Palace was a little busy being rush hour but we arrived safe and well before 09:30. Inside the Great Hall we met up with John B & Roy P, and after a quick session to erect the backing boards we went downstairs to the exhibitor café for a cooked breakfast prior to opening time at 10:00. For £6.50 the breakfast is not bad and plenty enough to keep you going throughout the day! Friday was a bit slow to start due to an accident on the North Circular but once it got going there were a lot of visitors! There was interest in all the models and I think it would be fair to say the Class 08 and good wagons took the accolade for the most photographs! Between us, Adam, John B, Norman, Roy P & I were also kept busy with many questions about the models and about our railway too. A thoroughly good day and an excellent start to the weekend!

On Saturday, John B, Norman & I held the fort and with breakfast consumed once again, we were ready for 10:00. Thereafter, I for one did not get a break from the stand until about 15:00 because it was that busy with a pretty much continuous stream of visitors. Once again there were many photographs taken, along with questions about all the models and our railway too, so the time passed really quickly. Post-15:00 it did start to thin out a bit and as per Friday it gave each of us the chance to take a wander round and see bits of the show, as well as catching up with friends from other clubs / societies at the same time.

The final day on Sunday was another cold one and by mid-morning we had lying snow too! Adam, Andrew S, Fraser, Mike W & I were the crew for the Sunday and after breakfast, and a fairly slow start, it once again picked up and was a good day without being too busy. With 5 on the stand we all had the chance to wander round during the day and to take a final look at the other club displays and trade offerings. With the Model Active Zone closing at 15:30, that was our 1 hour notice to the final closing time of 16:30 and with that another very successful show. Breakdown took about an hour and a half, and by just after 18:00 we were on the road back to Sussex. The journey home was just as quick as the journey up and we were unloading at the club not long after 20:00 with a fuel stop too.

Overall, the weekend went very smoothly and despite the logistics, and the long days, it was very enjoyable too! Such a display cannot happen without the goodwill of many members who loaned locomotives and below is the role call for 2018: Bob Youldon (3 ½" '4F'), Adam & Jim Cro (3 ½" 'Britannia', 3 ½" 'Rocket' & 1" 'Minnie'), Andrew Brock (3 ½" Pullman, 5" Guards Van & 5" Open Wagon), Andrew Strongitharm (5" 'Dougal'), John Baldwin (5" '15xx' chassis), Norman Payne (3 ½" 'Schools'), Adrian Landi (3 ½" 'Saint') and SMLS (5" '08', 5" Open Wagon & 5" Covered Wagon). Thank you to all those above for the loan of their models and to Adam, Andrew S, John B & I for organising collection, delivery and storage of each of the models too. Without this effort we could not put on a display and without such displays there is ultimately no show. Over the weekend there were in excess of 10,000 visitors, so it is definitely worth the effort and we managed to distribute circa' 250 SMLS timetables in the process. The Great Hall has been booked for next year, so hopefully here's to 2019...!

Andrew

Winter Work

Since the December edition, Winter Work has been progressing steadily with a number of jobs now complete or nearly there...

Outside, Mike W & Steve S have been digging a short drainage channel from the point to the manhole opposite the compressor house on the inside of the track. This area has been prone to flooding and as such new plastic sections have been sunk into the clay to help water flow away and down the manhole.

Inside, Geoff has finished painting the 3 short trucks in their new blue / grey livery and with the bogies replaced these are now back in the carriage shed and ready for our 2018 season. Having painted trucks in the past I know this is a lot of work and a very time consuming operation too, so many thanks to Geoff for his efforts over the past few weeks, they look very smart indeed. Once the running season has started I will take a photograph of the set with one of our modern imagine locomotives in time for the April edition.

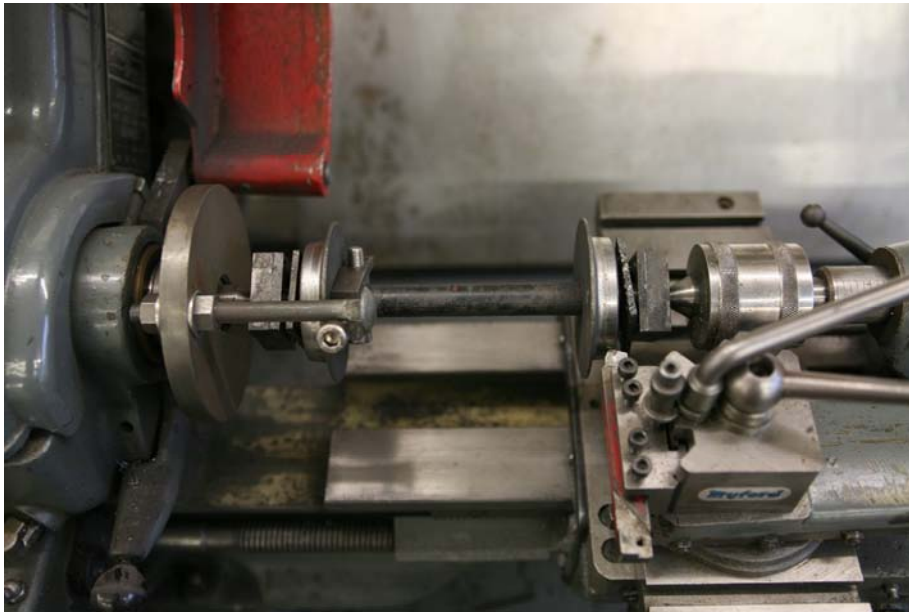
Also inside, and again with regards to trucks, Andrew S & I have finished working our way through the repairs and renewals for 2017 / 8 and all trucks are now ready for the new running season. There has been a reasonable amount of bearing replacement this winter, some of which was deferred from 2016 / 7 and monitored during last season. In addition, a number of wheels have been skimmed to bring back the correct tread profile and several others have been cleaned up where they have become pitted with aluminium dust. These jobs alone can be quite time consuming because each requires a wheel set to be removed and the outer bearing covers released so the axle can be held between centres in the Myford lathe, not to mention cleaning all the grime and dust they pick up during the season too!

In both workshops, Mike W has started a post-winter tidy up and at the same time has started to replace some worn out tools and tool drawers too. Overall, the workshop has remained pretty tidy during the past few months and members are encouraged to keep it that way, including taking time to replace tools they have used to their rightful location and to report breakages, so sets can be maintained. One final task, which has been undertaken on a couple of recent Saturdays, has been the checking of 20,000 or so track nails. Their length under the head is only nominal and as such each is checked to make sure it will not protrude through a sleeper and potentially create a short-circuit to the steel work underneath. A fault with the signalling last season was found to be as a result of a long nail, so these checks should make such a fault much less likely. Roy P has made 4 accurate hardwood test blocks, each of which can hold 32 nails, so 4 people can check 20,000 of these little devils in about 3 hours!

With there but a month to go until the start of our 2018 running season, I will duly wrap up the Winter Work report in the April edition and summarise the main jobs which have been completed during the past 6 months.

Pictures Next Page: Photographs from recent work in progress.

Andrew



Picture Top: Nail checking in full swing and a perfect job for a wet Saturday afternoon
Picture Middle: An axle from C1 truck is centred on the Myford and ready to skim
Picture Bottom: The new drain, which has been installed above the pneumatic point

1,500,000 Passenger

From the AGM, many of you will now know that later in 2018 we are likely to carry our 1,500,000 passenger. Andrew S, Nick & I have volunteered to organise a special day for this occasion and if you have any ideas for this then we would be glad to hear from you. We will keep you updated during the season and once a likely date is known (potentially mid-July to August) we will publicise this to members and through press releases to the general public too.

Andrew

Development around Beech Hurst

A few weekends ago I was lucky enough to have some early morning sunshine to take the image below, depicting the completed retirement / nursing home flats to the west of Beech Hurst which are built on the site of the former Parkfield School cricket pitch! They are obvious from the main road at the front of Beech Hurst and are clearly visible during the winter from our side of the park too. Luckily during the summer there is sufficient leaf cover on the trees to shroud a lot of the development from view. Just above the cutting, which leads to our short tunnel, you may be able to pick out a green gate from the development into the park and which now gets frequently used by residents. The wooden fence along the periphery of the development has been added during past few weeks also. Final fitting out of some of the properties continues as I type.

We now await plans for the opening up of the rear field and the proposed development of the former MSDC depot behind our long tunnel.

Picture Below: The new retirement / nursing home flats to the west of the park.



Work in Progress

Since Christmas I have been busy working on the aforementioned 'Royal Scot', as well as a number of 5" gauge wagons too. The chassis of the 'Royal Scot' is now being painted ready for it to be re-wheeled and then the motion work added piece by piece. As with any re-build project there is going to have to be a certain amount of compromise, otherwise it will simply get too involved and therefore take too long. Assuming the end result is pleasing to the eye and is a reliable and strong locomotive that will do me just fine. The wagons are a bit of a side step away from locomotive building but form a nice little project to keep the enthusiasm going elsewhere. Also, by modelling wagons currently at Horsted Keynes on the nearby Bluebell Railway I can easily take measurements and notes as required. The latest wagon projects also involve a bit more woodwork and since this is another skill that I would like to develop, the box van in particular is the perfect vehicle to cut my teeth on! I shall continue this piece in April and hopefully with a pictorial update too, as well as an article from Dave M about his recent trials and tribulations with injector manufacture...

Andrew

Chelmsford Santa Special

Following the December edition, Chelmsford and SMLS member John Dalton kindly sent through the following picture of their Santa Special at Chelmsford, complete with several inches of snow! Thankfully their efforts were not wasted and about 50% of the original bookings were able to attend. We should therefore consider ourselves lucky down here in Sussex that the snow was just far enough north and east not to cause us any problems. That said, it would have made Beech Hurst look very pretty...!

Picture Below: A double headed train on a snow clearing run!



Forthcoming Events

As can be seen from the list below, we now have a pretty full Diary to take us through the majority of 2018. Thanks to Mike W for proposing many of the dates and it is good to see that even at this stage of the year there is a lot planned.

Starting at Easter and there is a proposed, but not finalised, 'Easter Bunny' style event that Mike W is in the process of piecing together, so please keep an eye on the notice boards in the clubhouse, as well as on our Facebook and website pages for final details of this and how you can help out.

In addition, I have added our Thursday 'Club Nights' to the Diary, which continue on the first Thursday of each month during our running season. The August 'Club Night' is paired with a Petanque match and BBQ with our friends from across the way, so put this date in your diary for an evening to socialise and have fun!

I shall keep the Diary updated during the course of the year and also report back on each of the special events listed below too. Here's to a fun 2018...!

Diary of Events

Easter Weekend – Potential 'Easter Bunny' event, please see above for details

5th April 2018 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 19:00

3rd May 2018 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 19:00

26th May 2018 – £3 Ride All Afternoon Special – Details TBC

7th June 2018 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 19:00

9th June 2018 – Provisional visit to SMLS by Chelmsford Club – Details TBC

16th June 2018 – Invitation for SMLS to visit Chelmsford – Details TBC

23rd June 2018 – Under 30's Day & Mid-Summer 'Bring Your Own' BBQ

5th July 2018 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 19:00

28th July 2018 – Little Engine Day & Workshop Display / Tours – Details TBC

TBC July / August 2018 – 1,500,000 Passenger – Details TBC

2nd August 2018 – Club Night + Petanque Match – Will start at approx. 17:30

11th August 2018 – Double Heading Day – Details TBC

25th August 2018 – End of Summer BBQ Evening – Will start at approx. 18:00

6th September 2018 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 19:00

29th September 2018 – Normal Run then 19:00 – 21:00 Dusk Run – Details TBC

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