

# Sussex Miniature Locomotive Society Ltd

Issue No. 391  
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## BEECH HURST NEWS



### Cover picture: -

*Special Occasion:* With our 60<sup>th</sup> year nearly half way past, it was with great excitement that we started the celebrations properly with our Pullman dining train on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June. Pictured above is our locomotive running round at Kingscote, a report and photos appears inside.

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## **Editor's Notes**

I'll start, before rambling on about the season so far or the weather etc..., by wishing the club a very happy 60<sup>th</sup> birthday that fell on the 4<sup>th</sup> May. The April edition was just premature of this date and since we have now officially passed the day and celebrated in style at the Bluebell Railway, I can safely wish belated birthday wishes and hopefully many, many more like it!

Having held this edition back to coincide with our first BBQ evening, we have just about reached the half way point of our 2011 season and isn't it going fast! Our dry start has, since the middle of May, been replaced with what should have been 'April' showers, culminating last Tuesday with the most terrific thunderstorms that swept across Sussex during the afternoon. These were some of the best for years and although short lived were spectacular to say the least – assuming you like that sort of thing! Placing my Treasurer's hat on for a few moments and it is fair to say that we have not had the best of recent weeks with 3 days registering as complete 'blowouts' during different weekends, having had almost continuous dry weather for the first 10 weekends or so. Fortunately our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary train was one of those balmy fine evenings you often associate with summer and for that we must be very thankful.

I had kept the April edition fairly basic and to the point and as such I can only thank Andrew S for his 'Dougal' article and pictures for that newsletter.

This edition has much more to report and thanks to Andrew S and Ray for their respective pictures and contributions. Along with the normal writings and a further updated Diary, there are articles on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary train, all the recent social events, a letter from Wynne Stone and Andrew S' article on his continued progress with the construction of Dougal, so I hope you will all read on and enjoy...!

**Andrew**

## **Chairman's Notes**

As I write this, in early June, the first rains have arrived! Nearly 3 months with virtually no rainfall, I heard a pronouncement that it had been the driest period for over 100 years in the south-east!

Anyway, last Sunday was rained off, the first of the season – nevertheless we've had an excellent 2 months of dry running with steady passenger numbers. Rainfall has a nasty habit of 'averaging' out over the year, so we must wait to see how the rest of the summer treats us.

Fortunately, the good weather held up for us to enjoy our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary trip on the Bluebell Golden Arrow train. In fact it was one of the warmest days we have had, a bit breezy but 'wall to wall' sunshine, right up until dusk. I am pleased to say the evening was a great success, with all going to plan, apart from a short delay due to signalling problems at Sheffield Park (which held us for 20 minutes). This led to a 'lively' 2<sup>nd</sup> trip to Horsted Keynes, the 'Dukedog' emitting hot cinders, which rained down around us! Anyway, the evening was good fun, with good company, and the Bluebell meal service on board was excellent. I have already received some very nice thank you notes, which are much appreciated.

Thanks go of course to everyone who was involved in the planning and preparation for the event, with special thanks to Andrew B and Andrew S who coordinated everything with the Bluebell and prepared the train and headboard etc... for the evening, also a big thank you to John & Val for donating the ingredients for our lovely anniversary cake, which was baked and iced for us by their daughter Carol. Thanks also to Linda Chen and her husband, Andrew S, John Baldwin and John Woodroffe for recording the event for us photographically. We have started to put together a 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary DVD with clips and 'stills' throughout the club's history and once we have added our Bluebell 60<sup>th</sup> photos we will give out a copy to all members as part of this years anniversary souvenirs for members. Thanks go to Steve T and Graham M for a lot of hard and time consuming background work editing and selecting the content. I hope too by now you have enjoyed reading some – if not all – of the club's detailed history in the booklets printed for this 60<sup>th</sup> year.

A full report of our anniversary evening follows later in this news, as also will reports about the visits to / from the Lavender line. As I write, they have already visited us on the Thursday evening before our 60<sup>th</sup> train trip. In fact the driver on the 'Dukedog' was amongst our Lavender line visitors and was driving Howard's B1 the night before! Change of scale and change of company, eh? Anyway, he kindly let Dave M & Roy P, Mike W & Paul T, and Paul Le Masurier enjoy a cab ride on the 'Dukedog' during the run rounds at Kingscote, Sheffield Park and Horsted Keynes respectively. I would also like to thank John & Val again for their hard work in preparing a good spread for our Lavender line friends. Although I will be away working when we make a return visit, I would like to thank them in advance, along with Mike Laker who has kindly organised these exchanges. A full report on the two evenings appears in a few pages time!

We also had a pleasant day in May, entertaining our friends from Chelmsford club and as usual we thank them for operating our passenger service for the day! As I am often working when they visit, it was really nice for me to see and chat with them all again.

'Phew'! Time to catch our breath I think. It's been a hectic four months, but very enjoyable with the beautiful weather. I hope you will enjoy the rest of our 60<sup>th</sup> year, out on the track!

**Mike**

## **Wynne Stone**

Letter from Wynne Stone:

It is with regret that in future I will not be sending any Birthday, Easter or Christmas cards. I do hope that you will understand, but this is due to my failing eyesight.

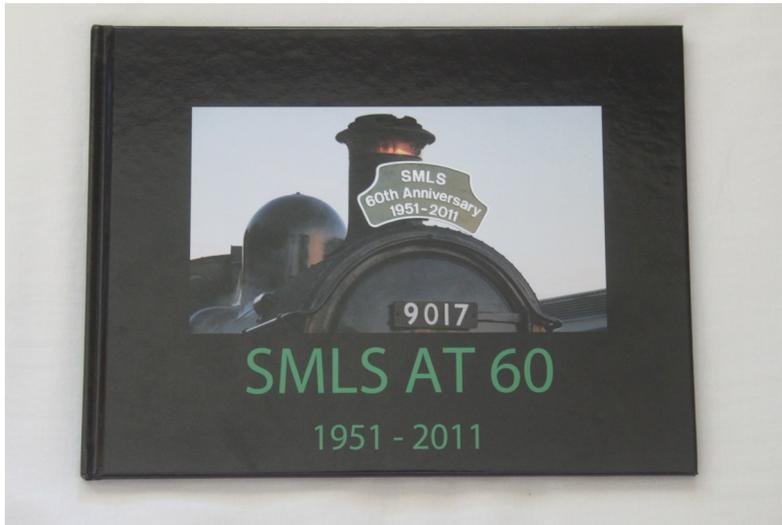
With my fondest wishes

Wynne Stone.

A sad note for those who remember Allan and Wynne Stone. Allan was a member of SMLS and Bluebell Railway (where he was a driver of long standing). They regularly stayed in Sussex for Allan to drive at the Bluebell and also at Beech Hurst, where he ran either his 5" 'Britannia' or 5" 'Minx' locomotives. Allan died some years ago.

**Ray**

## **60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**



Briefly, before the main report on the evening of our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary train, I would like to note that the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary DVD will hopefully be distributed with the August newsletter as it is not quite ready to go with this edition. Also, Linda Chen has produced a pictorial hard back book (picture left) from the night and Andrew S a

compilation CD with his and Linda's pictures on. The book is extremely well done and is available at a cost of £32 if anybody would like one, a sample copy of which is on the table in the clubroom for people to 'thumb' through if they wish. If you are interested in a copy of the book then please add your name to the list on the blackboard in the clubroom and once complete we will ask Linda to order as many copies as are required. To avoid embarrassment afterwards it will be necessary to pay up front for these please and I will be happy to collect funds and then pass them to Linda. If you would like a copy of the CD then please see Andrew S at the club and he will be happy to give one of these to you.

In addition to the above, John Woodroffe has also given us some very nice prints of a few pictures taken during the evening and we are hopeful to have some video footage taken by John Baldwin if he is able to recover this after the camera suffered a seizure! With a bit of luck this won't be terminal and we will also have some moving footage to add to the many stills photo's taken to remember the night by.

I would, through these pages, like to thank on behalf of everybody who came with us that night, Linda, Andrew S, John B & John W for taking the time to take these images and footage, and also for preparing books, prints and CD's etc..., which I know is a lot of work.

**Andrew**

## Celebrating 60: SMLS Pullman Train at the Bluebell Railway



After the best part of 18 months of planning and taking bookings, the SMLS 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Pullman Train at the Bluebell Railway took place at the start of last month.

Last minute problems with the menu were resolved in the week leading up to the event and the night took place under clear blue skies, something that would not have been achieved had it taken place on either of the following two Fridays (see Lavender line visit report!)



A total of 84 members and their guests booked places on this special train and only one person was unable to make it. Everybody arrived in time to take part in a group photo (**picture top**) on the platform at Sheffield Park prior to a 'cone' announcement telling passengers the train (**picture middle**) was ready for boarding.



A leisurely ride through the Sussex countryside to Kingscote Station followed, by which time the starters had been served (**picture bottom**).

The locomotive, GWR Dukedog 'Earl of Berkley', complete with commemorative headboard, then ran round the train ready for the journey south. A short pause at Horsted Keynes (**picture middle**) on the return journey allowed the main course to be served as well as time to off load the cake (**picture top**) which had been prepared for the club by John and Val's daughter and which would be cut when the train arrived back at Horsted Keynes later in the evening.



The only slight problem of the evening occurred on arrival back at Sheffield Park when the signalman informed us of a problem with the advance starter signal. One of the railway's S&T engineers was called out from Haywards Heath to allow the train to get underway again although by this point we were running 20 minutes late.



The dessert course was therefore eaten whilst stationary at Sheffield Park and a very spirited run back to Horsted Keynes was in order to allow time for the cake to be cut. The Chairman made a short speech on the platform and posed for photographs of him cutting the cake. The cake, along with a glass of champagne for every guest was distributed on the journey back and the Secretary and Chairman made a toast to the Society in each coach respectively (**picture bottom**). All in all we had an enjoyable time and this is something that I for one would love to repeat in 40 years time....



**Andrew S**

## Recent Social Events

With the exception of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary train, as reported above, there have been 3 other notable events since the last newsletter, these being a visit to Beech Hurst by Chelmsford club, as well as visits to / from the Lavender line. Chelmsford haven't had a great deal of luck weather wise during their visits to us over the past few years and after all the dry and sunny weather in April and early May, the Sunday dawned dry enough but with the threat of showers later on.



We usually start around 10:00, which gives those who want a fun run time to have a go during the morning in readiness for the 'main event' after lunch. This visit has become bigger over the years and 2011 didn't disappoint either with a really good mix of locomotives, some of which I have not seen before either! All our guests decided to take advantage of the free track prior to 14:00 and it was mighty busy as up to 6 trains were on at any one time! Lunchtime then came and went and soon enough it was nearing 14:00 and time to prepare for the afternoon's public running. The extra variety of locomotives gave the travelling public a lot of choice

and the chance to ride behind many new locomotives too. There was due to be an additional 8<sup>th</sup> locomotive on too but Bob Frost's 5" 'Trojan' locomotive was suffering with water feed and priming problems on the steaming bays and was unfortunately a 'non-runner' as a result. Fortunately the weather 'played ball' right throughout the afternoon session and it was fine and dry as one by one our guests came off having had a really good run and a few heavy loads too.

(Picture top: a 5" 'Manor') and (picture bottom: a 5" 'B1') joined by (all 5" gauge): 'Britannia', 'B1', 'GNR Single', 'Simplex', 'Sweet Pea' and a '9F'.

Through these pages I would like to thank everybody who helped out on the day (especially Andrew S & Adam for helping me with the TC role) with all the tasks big and small, and most importantly to our guests from Chelmsford who came and ran our service during the afternoon, for which we are all very grateful. I hope to be able to welcome Chelmsford to us again later in the year and hopefully with as good, if not better, weather!

Following on from the visit by Chelmsford, we then welcomed the Lavender line to Beech Hurst on our club night on 2<sup>nd</sup> June. This is the third year that we have hosted this event and this is the third year where the weather has been just perfect! Starting about 18:00, we used our two club 'Growler' locomotives, as well as Howard's 'B1' to provide the motive power for the evening. Each in turn, our guests had the chance to drive one or other of the trains in between chatting with us or riding as passengers. Val & John had also prepared a cold buffet supper and strangely enough the track went very quiet for about ½ hour or so as everybody migrated inside to enjoy the delicious food! The evening itself is quite informal and it does give us all a chance to chat with our friends from Isfield, whilst the trains are going round. Once again I would like to thank everybody who helped out during the evening, especially to Val & John for preparing the evening supper, also to Andrew S & Laurie for helping me with the TC duties during the event. Hopefully this will be something we can do again next year and hopefully the weather will be equally kind!

As a complete contrast to the fine and settled weather of 2<sup>nd</sup> June, our return visit to Isfield two Friday's ago was one of the wettest days of the year so far!



Albeit not particularly cold, the rain was pretty much relentless but did not however dampen our spirits or those of our hosts! About 12 of us made the trip to Isfield and we were greeted with a sumptuous salad buffet as we arrived, which was excellent to say the least. We all enjoyed our food and then it was our turn to

take the controls of their resident steam locomotive 'Austin I' or have a ride in the 'Wickham' rail bus. As the evening drew on the rain did ease to a certain extent and most of us were then treated to a full line ride behind 'Austin I' in the attached guard's van. This was something completely different and gave the driver and fireman a bit more of a challenge having been shuttling to and fro for the last hour or so with one or other of us at the controls.

**(Picture above:** A view of the line from Isfield, looking north towards Uckfield)



This rounded off a very nice evening and as we said our goodbyes it was hard to let the weather have the last laugh as it was an excellent evening with great food and many thanks to everybody at the Lavender line, particularly Nick & Steve on the loco, and John & ladies in the buffet, who braved the inclement weather to give us such a nice visit and hopefully we can repeat this again next year. (Pictures above: John Middeligh & 'Austin I' with our headboard)

**Andrew**

### **Summer Work**



With the summer season continuing on, there have been other ongoing jobs taking place whilst the trains are running. As well as the regular gardening jobs, Geoff & Nick have installed new taps on our sink in the engine shed and Andrew S & I are in the final stages of completing the new truck (picture left).

Pretty much all the painting has been completed on the side sheets and chassis, and we are nearly there with the running boards too.

**Andrew**

### **Building a 5" W&L Dougal**

After announcing that 'Dougal' had turned over on air for the first time in the last newsletter, a lot of time has since been spent getting it turning over smoothly and with even beats in both forward and reverse. I know there are not many things one can change with slip eccentric valve gear; however you'll be surprised just how long it can take to get things just right. The use of 'O' ring cord to seal the steam chest has come into its own as this has had to be taken on and off countless times in order to check the positioning of the valves. In the end we discovered that it would be impossible to achieve perfection in both directions, so after about 4 weeks of fiddling and making minute adjustments to the stop collars we have settled for forwards being virtually correct and reverse being ever so slightly different.



During the process of setting the timing, soapy water was used to check for any leaks around the supposedly steam tight joints, as any wasted steam (or air) could have serious consequences for the overall steaming of a loco this size. After noticing air escaping between the left hand cylinder and frame, flange sealant was used to try and seal the main steam pipes between the two. This nevertheless had no effect and before too long it was discovered that the air wasn't leaking through the main steam pipes but leaking through the cylinder casting itself!



With no obvious blow holes in either the main bore or any of the steam ways, Dave Mattingley suggested using 'Devcon' (an industrial epoxy resin) to seal the cylinder all over - who has ever heard of a porous cylinder! This was duly completed and was very successful.

(**Picture previous page top:** The chassis showing the 'good' cylinder, running boards temporarily fitted, boiler and the start of the brake gear)

Following on from this, the next stage is the brake gear (**picture previous page bottom:** the four completed brake blocks) which as I type is currently under construction, along with the (3/8") running boards and the loco now weighs 62lb!

**Andrew S**

### **Forthcoming Events**

Following on from the first BBQ evening which falls on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup>, we have a visit to Colchester club planned for Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> July. A list of names is currently on the blackboard at the club and anybody interested in going should put their name down by Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> July at the latest so we can advise Colchester of our expected numbers / locomotives etc... Thereafter we have been invited to play a bowls match on the August club night as per previous years. Again, a list is on the blackboard and interested persons should put their name down ASAP so we can advise the bowls club accordingly. There are usually bites and nibbles on offer, as well as a fully stocked bar for use after the match! Our second BBQ then falls on the August Bank Holiday Saturday and that just about rounds up the main summer events. Colchester and Maidstone clubs then visit during September and October respectively, and finally there is an invitation to a Pentanque match on 15<sup>th</sup> October – more details will follow in August.

**Andrew**

### **Diary of Events**

7<sup>th</sup> July 2011 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

23<sup>rd</sup> July 2011 – SMLS visit to Colchester club – see blackboard at Beech Hurst

4<sup>th</sup> August 2011 – Club Night & Bowls Evening – see blackboard at Beech Hurst

27<sup>th</sup> August 2011 – SMLS end of summer 'Bring Your Own' BBQ from 1800

1<sup>st</sup> September 2011 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

17<sup>th</sup> September 2011 – Colchester club visit to Beech Hurst from 1000

1<sup>st</sup> October 2011 – Maidstone club visit to Beech Hurst from 1000

6<sup>th</sup> October 2011 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

15<sup>th</sup> October 2011 – Pentanque Match at Beech Hurst – details & times TBC

**NB.** Certain events may be organised at short notice and will not therefore appear in the newsletter. Please check black / notice boards in the Clubhouse for details of such events.

**Andrew**

## Sussex Miniature Locomotive Society Ltd



### **Rear Cover picture: -**

*End of a Perfect Day:* With a slight delay whilst waiting for a signal to be fixed, there was time enough at Sheffield Park to enjoy the picturesque sunset before our second trip to Horsted Keynes. A colourful end to a perfect evening...