

Sussex Miniature Locomotive Society Ltd

Issue No. 432
April 2018

BEECH HURST NEWS



Cover picture: -

New Livery: Further to my pictures in previous editions, the recently refurbished and repainted 'blue / grey' trucks are now complete and before entering passenger service, an opportunity was taken to photograph them with one of our 'blue / grey' 'locomotives', which is Stephen's 4-CEP.

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Editor's Notes

As I write these notes, it is the last day of April and having experienced a mini heat-wave just a week ago, the weekend just gone was cold and cloudy. What a difference a few days make! Our first month of operation has been much the same with a generally poor Easter weekend but a couple of really nice weekends since. On the bright side, the forthcoming May Day weekend is forecast to be sunny and much warmer, so hopefully these will be 3 good days for us. If nothing else, it is nice to see trains operating once again after 6 months of winter work.

Unfortunately, the Easter Bunny special, due to be held over the Easter weekend, could not be arranged in time and therefore this has been postponed until 2019. This was not for the want of trying but Mike W came up against a number of obstacles in the weeks leading up to Easter, which could not be overcome. That said, there is still plenty in the Diary for the upcoming summer months for us to look forward to.

From the February edition, I would like to thank John's B & D for their pieces and in this edition to Dave M & Mike W for their contributions. In addition, there is a new Officers / Directors / Positions List for 2018, articles about ongoing projects at the club, and at home, as well as updates to our Diary and the countdown to our 1.5 millionth passenger, so please read on and enjoy...

Andrew

Chairman's Notes

Our 2018 running season got off to a slow start with cold wet weather over Easter, several days being more or less rained off. March was particularly cold this year with very low temperatures and two bouts of snow around the clubhouse. I came up to the clubhouse several days in a row to ensure we were not frozen up, blocking off roof vents with towels to stop the howling easterly sub zero wind freezing our tank, pipes and toilet. I think we just about survived, the clubroom thermometer was down to 2 degrees most mornings that week!

Our AGM was held at the end of one of these snowy spells and it was fortunate that a thaw set in on that Saturday morning, so that we had a good attendance considering the conditions. Probably the four most important matters from the meeting were the elections for officers, a discussion around the Learning Centre, the passenger fares and an update on the back field situation.

At the election, five members stood, John Baldwin, Andrew Brock, Daniel Evans Stephen Hutton & Graham Miller. Daniel, Graham & John were re-elected, and thanks go to all for standing.

Under 'Matters Arising', Chris Saunders asked about the Learning Centre, and it was decided after further discussion, by a nearly unanimous vote in favour, to have another meeting later in the year on this project, once some more concrete information was available. This will really need to be in the form of an EGM and will require the usual 21 days notice to convene. At the moment, Roy has posted an application for planning permission. We have been checking items raised at the AGM, and we are assured our clubhouse does belong to the council, despite the fact that we built it, and that this is confirmed in our existing lease with MSDC.

Also, our insurance is in joint names with the council, although we pay the premiums. However, this insurance also covers many other items, such as all of our passenger trucks for one thing, so the premium we pay is not entirely buildings insurance. We have decided (what with our existing lease expiring in 2024, possibly earlier depending on what transpires with the Learning Centre, back field and also what might be to our advantage) that we will not complicate matters by seeking to negotiate our existing insurance arrangements at this time. The passenger fare was discussed and agreed to be put on hold for another year. It will be added to next year's AGM agenda as will a discussion on subscription charges as raised by Bob Youldon.

There was no new news to report on the council's ideas for our back field. The latest rumour is that the housing that MSDC had hoped to develop on the green to the south of us has been opposed by Haywards Heath Town Council so at the moment, no houses, no Section 106 money, no progress on the rear area. Let sleeping dogs lie. In fact, I bumped into a council engineer in the park just a few weeks back and he said he had a couple of quotes for a pedestrian / disabled ramp and bridge into the field, one for £80,000 and another for £120,000. Ouch! He said it had 'all gone quiet' and he had other things to do!

Most winter jobs have been finished off at the club now. The signal head storage board has had a repaint thanks to George. I came up one of the only fine days before running season and levelled and concreted in the remaining drainage channels above the point. This has already had a good test with the heavy Good Friday rainfall, the run-off from the cutting gushing through, and taking away the water that previously used to cascade into the point area itself. Geoff & Steve T are starting the construction of a new 2-car passenger truck set, using mainly parts we have had in stock for a long time. The committee has discussed wheel sets and Roy has done some calculations on diameter and track surface loading. We believe many of our existing wheel sets are getting too small in diameter now due to wear / tear and re-profiling from time to time. The new trucks will use some of our new wheel sets of 2.75" diameter over tread. We will probably need to prepare more wheel sets of this diameter to replace all existing truck wheels, some of which are now down to 2.3". With this extra set of new trucks, hopefully put together during the summer and painted in the coming winter, we will be able to take trucks out of service for re-wheeling or repairs if necessary. Lastly, John B has been working on a club project to produce a speed monitoring system for the clubhouse corner, when running in the usual direction. This is considered an area that requires consistent low speed for safety reasons, i.e. poor visibility, down hill, two removable sections of track and often people crossing the line. Thanks especially to Graham Mundy for track and signalling expertise input, to Roy for additional track modifications, and the gang doing the digging for cable laying. Thanks go to everyone for all the winter work.

On a personal note, as some of you have seen, I have been working on a petrol shunter, taken on as a bit of a project when my facial problems prevented me closing my eye to steam smuts! Like all quickie projects it took longer than expected, but I finally have it working reliably and hauling passengers!

It duly performed a few turns over the cold Easter and at the end of the day I can just turn off the ignition and put it away! I shall return to steam when the weather gets warmer! This Chairman's Notes is a long enough, so I hope to write a few paragraphs about my efforts with petrol traction and a photo or two for next time. Well done to Andrew S for his articles in the EiM magazine. Fame and recognition at last Andy! These describe the trials and tribulations of constructing a first locomotive which is a long and difficult learning curve, but, hopefully, these articles will encourage others to have a go!

Lastly, John B has updated our visitor forms. These are kept in a wall pouch below the committee officer clips in the clubhouse and are there for anyone to use when requesting a visit. To keep people informed, please fill in one of these forms and put it on John's secretarial clip if you:

- a) Wish to bring more than two friends or visitors to the club
- b) If a visitor / friend / non member wants to bring an engine to run at the club. (Two friends or less, or no visiting loco, does not require a form). The formal requests are then discussed / agreed at the next committee and a section of the form, signed by John, is clipped in the running book so everyone knows about it, and we are prepared.

I wish everyone a good season for 2018.

Mike

Note from the Workshop Manager

I apologise to all for the current movement of cupboards around the workshop but the aim is to be able to develop the back workshop into a welding and paint shop with permanent fume extraction.

Hopefully all will be back straight in the next few weeks.

Broken Tools in the Workshop

I am repeatedly replacing the small centre drills at the moment. What is very disappointing is the guilty person or persons do not have the courage to tell me so that I can ensure the next user has one to use. They just throw them away or hide the broken end in the wood holder. If we use tools frequently we all break them but we do not like to admit it. If you are always breaking centre drills seek advice, there is usually a reason. There are probably 3 main reasons for breaking centre drills:

1. The tailstock is off centre. This can be checked several different ways.
2. When facing off the end of the bar prior to centre drilling, the height of the tool is set too high or too low and it leaves a pip on the end of the bar which could force the centre drill off centre.
3. Too much pressure and clogging the drill. Drill a little and back off to clear.

I will not eat you if you break a tool, please let me know so I can replace it!

Mike W

Election of 'Officers' and 'Other' Positions for 2018

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 2018:

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: Tom Broome

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, John Richardson, Steve Turner & 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 New Truck Development: Steve Turner & Geoff West

Carriage & Wagon Painters: Nick Edwards, Daniel Evans & Geoff West

Exhibition Coordinators: John Baldwin, Andrew B, Andrew S & Mike Wakeling

Facebook Administrators: Nick Edwards, Daniel Evans & Andrew Strongitharm

Disciplinary Sub-Committee: John Baldwin, Chris Saunders & Mike Wakeling

Data Production Coordinator: TBA

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

Committee

Piper Dog

It is with great sadness to report that Val & John's eldest Sheltie dog, Piper, passed away peacefully on 2nd May 2018 after a short illness. Part of the club for nearly 15 years, he will be sorely missed by those who knew and loved him. Piper was the perfect companion who liked nothing more than a train ride. **Picture below:** One such train ride during our 60th Anniversary celebrations...



Colin Hewitt

Through these pages I pass on the sad news that long-standing distant member Colin Hewitt passed away peacefully on 9th April 2018. Colin lived in Crowborough and was also a long-standing member at their club. As well as being an accomplished engineer with several completed projects to his name, he was also a very kind and friendly man.

My earliest memories of Colin were in the mid-1990's when he would bring his LNER 'J39' locomotive to Beech Hurst for a passenger run. Saturday's were Colin's day of choice and this well built and stocky locomotive would easily haul two long trucks up the hill from the station all afternoon. As a young member I also learnt very quickly that Colin would likely give me a go at some point during the afternoon and therefore I would try to make sure I was in the right place at the right time! The 'J39' and Dave Lewis' 'B1' are some of my earliest driving memories at Beech Hurst and therefore some of my fondest too.

Andrew

Winter Work

As reported in the last edition, a few winter tasks remained prior to the opening of the 2018 running season. With the track, trucks and signals all pretty much ready to go there were the usual preparatory jobs left to do. Some of these included final signal testing, truck seat cleaning and placement back on the relevant vehicles, station tidying and repopulation of the steaming bay equipment trolley to name but a few... In addition, George kindly repainted our signal board, which was looking tired at the end of last season.

It is fair to say that we had another busy winter and from the enormity of track work to making tea on those cold winter days, there was something for everyone. Thank you through these pages for all the man (and women) hours put in over the winter and hopefully these endeavours will be equally fruitful later this year.

Andrew

Summer Work

With the running season on going there is much less time for extra maintenance with routine jobs keeping us busy enough during the season. That said, there are a couple of notable projects underway as described below.

Firstly, Geoff & Steve T are undertaking the construction of two new 5' passenger trucks. Utilising many components that have been in stock for longer than I have been a member, as well as some more recently modified, the two trucks are starting to come together. As of last weekend, the basic frames, bogies and rubbing plates have been assembled for testing before final assembly of the chassis' can begin. Completion of these trucks will allow for greater flexibility of our existing fleet and possibly retiring a number of nearly life expired trucks.

Also in the workshop, Mike W & Steve T have been re-arranging things so the materials and tools are all in the main workshop, leaving the rear workshop for painting, soldering and welding. At the timing of writing, the exact location of some workshop assets has yet to be decided but hopefully the full reorganisation will be complete during the next month and duly reported in the June edition.

In addition to the above projects, a number of hours have also been spent adjusting the mainline transporter, which had become slightly out of line on the eastern (lower) end. This is now much better and provides a smooth ride across the steel ends.

Andrew

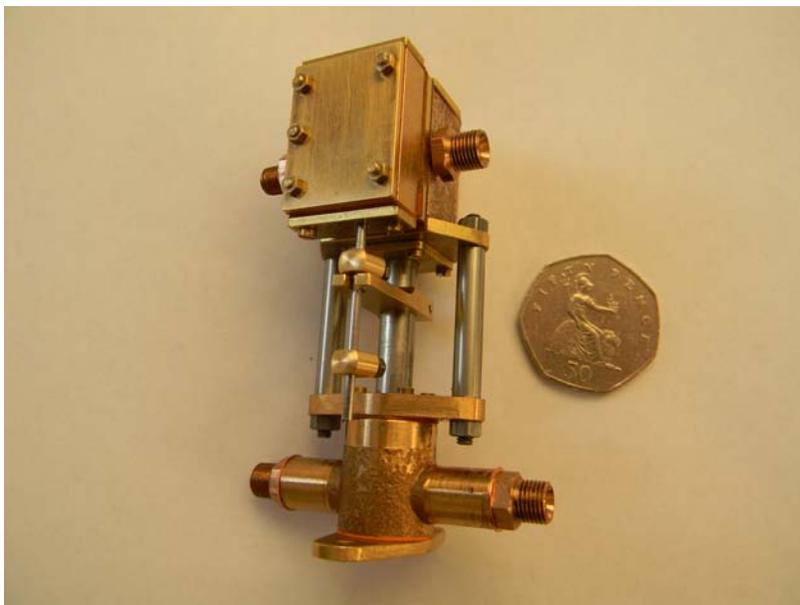
1.5 Millionth Passenger

So, with our first month in the bag, the running total to our 1,500,000 passenger is now within 13,000. It is still hard to say how long this will take to achieve but we would estimate this to be half again come the next newsletter in June with a target date of mid / late August highly probable. Exact details of plans for a special day are still being looked at but any ideas to Andrew S, Nick or I can be taken forward for further consideration.

Andrew

Work in Progress – A Weir Pump

In parallel to making the 'fiddly' bits for injectors, I decided to finish making a little Weir Pump to the Southworth design that I had started a year or so back. **Picture below top:** Shows all the parts ready for assembly and no I didn't make the 50p piece! **Picture below bottom:** Shows the pump fully assembled. All-in-all it was a nice little project. It will require a displacement lubricator and John West has kindly given me a rather nice one that was given to him by his Father. This will be plumbed in, in due course. The pump is intended to be fitted to the running boards on the 'Covert' project, a 5" Simplex, which is coming along nicely.



Dave Mattingley

Work in Progress – 'Royal Scot' & Wagons

Thank you to Dave for his piece & pictures above and since the AGM, I have been working as many hours as I can on both the 'Royal Scot' and numerous wagons too. Having dismembered the locomotive I was not happy with the buffer beams and their arrangement, so I have now made two new beams for the front and rear, along with steel blocks to secure them to the frames! Those of you at the club during the past couple of weekends may have noticed the power saw working overtime to cut through a piece of 4" square steel for the blocks and these have now been milled to size, ready for fitting. The remaining piece of the 4" steel will be milled to fit underneath the current middle stretchers in place of the redundant axle pump and will provide additional weight midway along the locomotive! Whether I can pick it up at the end of all this remains to be seen!

On the wagon front, the two oil tankers are still progressing well and I have recently finished machining 28 axle boxes for these and other wagons. At circa' 2 hours per axle box, the numbers do not look good! I have also made 20 working leaf springs and at over 1 hour per spring (4 leaves per spring); those numbers do not look particularly healthy either! Next it is tank rolling and with the cast tank ends in stock these are starting to come together nicely. Hopefully these wagons will be ready for a mid-season test run – real work permitting!

Picture below: The penultimate axle box being machined on the Myford lathe.

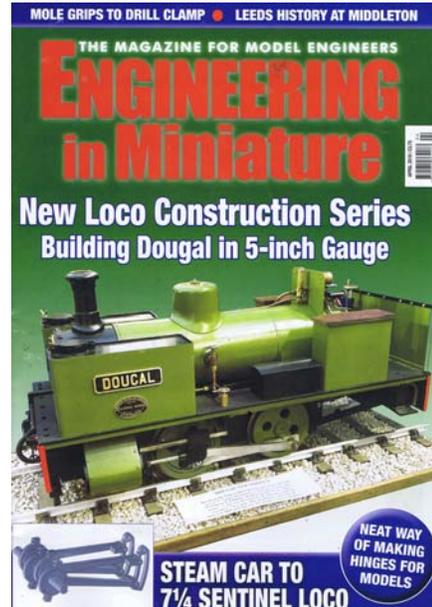


Andrew

In Print

Through these pages I would like to congratulate Andrew S for being asked to write a construction series about his Welshpool & Llanfair locomotive 'Dougal'. Engineering in Miniature magazine have commissioned the series, which could last well over a year and will chart the build of a first locomotive by a younger member of the hobby. (Picture right: 'Dougal' on the April EiM Cover)

On the back of this, I think it is worth noting the success that other SMLS members have had during the past couple of years with Adam Cro (The Manufacturer), Norman Payne (Steam World) and Roy Preston (also EiM) all writing articles for print in national engineering / railway magazines. In addition, Roy's Gold Medal award for his 'C' Class at the Model Engineer show. The club should be proud that members are recognised for their engineering excellence and experience, and I hope it will inspire others in our club and other clubs alike to tread a similar path.



Andrew

Forthcoming & Diary of Events

Below is the Diary from late May through the summer. Help on the special days is always welcome, so please add your name to the running book where possible. The 'Under 30's Day' on 23rd June is subject to change, with a new date ASAP...

26th May 2018 – £3 Ride All Afternoon Special – Will start at 14:00

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

9th June 2018 – Chelmsford Club to visit SMLS – Will start at approx. 10:00

16th June 2018 – Invitation for SMLS to visit Chelmsford

23rd June 2018 – ~~Under 30's Day~~ & 'Bring Your Own' BBQ – From 18:00

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

28th July 2018 – Little Engine Day & Workshop Display / Tours – From 14:00

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 – Will start at 14:00

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.