

BEECH HURST NEWS



Cover picture: -

Nasty Surprise!! Little did any of us know that we would turn up on Sunday 25th for the 'Large' Engine day and would find a huge Ash tree across the track. We worked for 3 hours to clear the mess and repair the track. Pictured are Mike and Daniel, as we prepare to start the clear up.

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Editors Notes

Well here we are then, almost to end of another summer and the prospect of winter and dare we say Christmas looming soon around the next corner. No sooner have we had a wet start to July, than latterly it was a scorcher and now into August it has stayed very much the same. If we had any seaweed, it would have long since shrivelled up and any fir cone would have been permanently stuck open. Despite the very hot weather we did hit one worthy milestone last Wednesday, when we took 500.00+ for the first time in one afternoon's running!! It doesn't equal record passengers carried, but I believe it is our most profitable day of all time (can you confirm this Chris?). Long may it continue like that, so long as we can cope with demand!!

Thanks must go to the contributors to the last issue, Chris, Peter & Enid Marten and 'Us' many thanks!! I know the printing quality wasn't so good on the last issue, but then Andrew did a lot of printing on his home computer and it is not the best quality by any means!!

On with this issue and we have a few more articles for your pleasure, including recent events, forthcoming dates in the updated diary of events, a jokes page or two and the other regular columnist from our Chairman. Thanks to Peter & Enid Marten, Ray and 'Us' for the articles within. Please take note of the updated diary of events, a BBQ is planned for Saturday 28th August, which will be held after the visit of the Basingstoke club to Beech Hurst on the Saturday, details please see below. Also the Maidstone club are hosting the Southern Federation rally this year on Saturday 18th September, I am not sure if anyone is going from Beech Hurst, but with close ties with the Maidstone club nowadays a few of us might make the trip, either with or without an engine. We hope you enjoy this newsletter, so please read on and enjoy...

Andrew & Mark

BBQ Evening

Another BBQ evening is planned for Saturday 28th August, this is usually our 'end of summer' BBQ and will be the usual format of 'bring your own' the fire will be provided!! The last event on the 3rd July was very successful, if a little damp at times, a temporary tarpaulin was hastily erected on the back of the workshop to protect the BBQ from sporadic showers which threatened to spoil the evening. It was however well attended and with a few trains running, it proved to be another very successful social event. Hopefully the August one will be likewise!!

Andrew & Mark

Bonfire Time!!

We know it is a little bit premature for thinking about November 5th, but the next news is out in early October, so we like to keep it fresh in people's minds!! We are looking as ever for anything that burns (if it doesn't then we make it anyway!!) for a date in early November. We have a shed so far and some other bits and pieces, so if you have anything we may be able to use (on a non-return basis!!) then please feel free to bring it to the club any weekend and it will be appropriately stored ready for use!!

Chairman's Notes

Our club visit to the Great Cockcrow and Pinewood railway took place in early July when 30 odd (and I use the word advisedly) members forayed into deepest Surrey. We were picked up at the appointed time (10.00) by RP90 (an AEC Reliance) single decker in fully restored Greenline livery. On arrival at the GCR we were split into smaller groups to be taken on guided tours of the workshops, signal boxes and engine shed. The railway is run as a complete miniature version of a British main line. I was very impressed with the signalling system as it is based exactly on full size practice with the drivers following the signals rigidly. Drivers have a link system and work to the old BR rule book (with exceptions). After a trip on the Gladesman, which covers all of the routes, we re-boarded the RP90 for the run to the Pinewood railway. This was a completely different kettle of fish but very enjoyable and with great possibilities of extension through the woods. We were made very welcome with tea and cakes and enjoyed multiple rides on a variety of traction. After expressing our thanks we boarded the RP90 for the run home, arriving back around 19.00.

We have again been suffering from vandalism, believed to be attributed to groups of youngsters roaming the park after dark, mainly on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings. The station fence (wooden and chain link) was damaged early in July when at least three palings were broken and the chain link stretched and distorted. The middle of July saw the tunnel gates vandalised in an attempt to gain access. The warning roundels were wrenched from the gates and fortunately were recovered and await re-fixing. This problem is a difficult one to overcome as the Bowls club has also suffered broken windows. I believe the local police made an effort to clear the youths from congregating in Victoria Park but it seems as if they have migrated to our park. The police have been informed and hopefully will make their presence known but in the long run what are our options? Do we get the press involved, letting the parents know what their little darlings are up to (if they care of course), install CCTV (which will be quite expensive and only cover the clubhouse) or do something else?

Our passenger numbers are continuing to show we are carrying more passengers than for quite a few years. Saturdays have shown the biggest rise, I assume because of the Brewster's Factor.

We have had a couple of fallen trees during the recent bouts of high winds. One fell across the point, which sustained slight damage. We were very lucky that the tree was on the low bank behind the point as when it fell it bridged across, with the main weight resting on the lawn.

Enjoy the rest of the summer and thank you to all who turn up and man our railway.

Don

Annual Club Outing

With the success of last years group outing to Fawley Hill it was thought that a similar idea could be arranged for 2004. We decided this year to combine a visit to the Great Cockrow railway at Chertsey, with a visit to the Pinewood track near Wokingham. Many of the members had not ridden round the Great Cockrow before and with a group of ex-Ascot members now involved at Pinewood we thought it would be nice to have a look at what they have got there as a return visit to the one they paid to us earlier this year in June. Travelling as a group we thought it would be nice to hire a vintage bus and through a contact that Don knew we got a Bristol RP90 bus, 1970's vintage or thereabouts, which was quite plush and meant we could all travel together as one big group. Setting out from the club at about 1000 on the Sunday morning we made good time getting to Cockrow, which is just off J11 of the M25. The railway was conceived in the 1960's and has been heavily invested in making it very impressive, with over 3 miles of 7 ¼" tracks and over two dozen engines owned either by the railway as a whole or by private individuals, very similar to Beech Hurst in fact. As part of our visit we were given a guided tour of the two main signal boxes, the engine and carriage sheds and the workshops. A train called the 'Gladesman' was also arranged for 1315, which encompasses all of the routes and takes about 30 minutes or so to complete. Whilst waiting for the train(s) to be arranged we watched the engines prepared and had lunch. The rides as we said take about half an hour with the group split into two parts, with about 16 on each train plus Stephen, who was on our train having his own 'private' coach added to the rear for extra comfort!! The tracks are quite twisty and the gradients are as steep as 1 in 50 at one point. It is fully colour lit signalled throughout, working on 'absolute block' signalling principles. Once our ride was completed we watched the trains being prepared for the passenger rides that run between 1400 and 1700 every Sunday afternoon. With that we headed back to bus for the short hop to Pinewood.

The Pinewood track is set in an ex-army base, with quite a diverse range of activities also in the site, including a model railway club, motorcycle CBT centre etc... The track is approximately 3/8 of a mile in length, which is ground level 5" and 7 ¼" and is laid to a very similar pattern to the one at Frimley Lodge Park, just a bit shorter in length. The railway has seen a big influx of new members recently, with members of the Ascot society moving to Pinewood and with that a lot of new work has been done, including new track laying and the development of a steaming bay area. Tea and Cakes were laid on for us and the afternoon snack was very much appreciated by many as we had the chance to natter to the locals and to enjoy rides around the track behind members' engines. There is planning permission in progress that may yet see the track extended, which would be quite impressive, the location being very nice, lots of pine trees anyway!! We spent a couple of hours at Pinewood, before it was time to head for home. A visit is highly likely to the track next year, with the Pinewood society likely to be an annual visitor to Beech Hurst. It would be nice to have a run on the track as well as to keep social ties with the members there.

With our day not quite over yet, we headed for home, this time cross-country and arrived back at the club in good time at about 1900, at the end of a hugely enjoyable day. Thanks to John Ely for the arrangements and hopefully we can do something similar, as a large group, next year.

Andrew & Mark

Farewell

We would, through the news, like to say a fond farewell to Larry Bradley who has recently left the club to move back north to Derbyshire for retirement. Larry has been at the club for about 8 years and has been one of 'Sunday' gang for those years, helping out all year round, during winter work and also during the summer running with anything that was required. He will be sadly missed as a valued member and all of us would like to wish Larry and his wife Brenda well with their new home and hopefully we can meet up again at some point, even if it is just once a year at the Midland's show at Castle Donnington!! He did send a letter to the club a couple of weeks ago and it is nice to see that Larry has his priorities set right, with boxes around the house, but he could be found laying the foundations for his new workshop outside!! Some things must come first!!

Andrew & Mark

Independence Day Special

With the bowls club organising a July 4th special to coincide with American Independence Day it was arranged that Brian would run 'Big Boy' as a special event to make a more US feel to the proceedings. The bowls club arranged stalls and the idea was attract new members to the club. Unfortunately for those involved the day was quite wet, with a little over 150 rides taken on the railway and fewer people coming to the bowls club. It was a pity that the weather would have the last word, when so much organisation had gone into the day and that it could have been very successful for all concerned.

Andrew & Mark

New Toilet – Summer Work

This is not really the season for building work, however John Gange and Geoff have recently finished re-plumbing and fitting a new toilet into the clubhouse WC, to replace the old one which was a danger to anyone who attempted to use it in the 'seated' position!! The pipe work and valves have been renewed and latterly the lino replaced and walls painted by Mike, a big improvement!!

Andrew & Mark

A Bit of a Problem!!

Never have many of us got to the club of a weekend morning and found that in the preparation of running the railway we would have to cut an entire tree from the tracks and repair the steel work and rails that it has very inconsiderately bugged during the night!! However as our cover picture shows, on Sunday 25th July we had to do such a task, more importantly so as it was our 'Large' engine day which was a well-publicised event that had to go ahead. Something that this does do is to bring the best from people and get



motivation to 100%. So there we were Mike, Dave, Andrew, Daniel, Josh and Peter Chapman all working very hard for a good couple of hours to put things right. **(See Picture Left)** With the absence of any chainsaw device the tree was manually cut using a saw and the brute force of an axe. The branches were first removed, and then we set about cutting the trunk. We knew at this point that a section of the mainline about

8ft in length had to be re-laid and that damage to the siding and the point would have to be fixed before a wheel would turn. With a huge amount of effort (too much at one moment for Mike!) we cleared all bar the biggest part of the trunk, which was awaiting the attention of Vince's chainsaw and set about repairing the damage done. Fortunately the two sidings and the point only suffered superficial damage, but the part of the mainline adjacent has to have the outer rail removed, several sleepers changed and packing placed beneath the new sleepers to counter-act the dip in the steel work caused by the weight of the falling tree. By 1345 we had just about cleared about all of the tree and repaired the damage done, just in time for a 1400 start. A temporary speed restriction was in place over that section of track and as running started the remaining 10ft or so of trunk was cut up and removed ready for disposal. About 2ft or so at the bottom of the trunk was rotten and had finally given up. With a Poplar tree on the backfield coming to a sorry end a few weeks earlier we are investigating a few more trees in the vicinity of the track and clubhouse before something more serious occurs!!

Andrew & Mark

Little and Large Specials

With the above in mind, the 'Large' engine special day on the Sunday was very successful, with two double-headed trains with 'Wharfedale' banking at the rear of the L1's train for extra support. Despite the mornings events and the pleasant weather it proved to be another very popular afternoon with the trains kept busy throughout and when a 'long' train was organised for 1630 it was packed three times over, with as many as 69(?) people on the second of the three double lap runs.

Hauled by 4 engines at the front: L1 + L1 + 'Martlett + 'Royal Scot' and 'Wharfedale' for banking at the rear it was a fine sight around the park and was the busiest train we have yet managed to run. We would imagine that about 75 or maybe 80 could be squeezed on the 17 passenger cars as a limit, that is the maximum we would ever be able to run, but 69 is quite good all the same!!

The Saturday it was the turn of the 'Little' engines to do their stuff and with about half a dozen in action there was plenty of variety to choose from for the riding public. The running engines were Mike's 5" 'Hardwicke', Vince (**See Picture Below Left**) and Phill's 3 1/2" 'Juliet's' + Daniel's 'Gordon', John Ely's



5" 'FLB' (**See Picture Bottom Left**), Mark's 'Bantam Cock', Ron's 'B1,' Peter Marten's '08' and the Pump Trolley, which made a 'cameo' appearance towards the end. The afternoon was actually quite busy throughout it started quite well and despite a continuous flow of trains there were always people waiting to ride. The track, despite having been thoroughly cleaned the Wednesday before was quite tricky, particularly on the 3 1/2", which made for

poor adhesion and trains were slow getting away from the station, it was quite fun in some ways watching the engines going round, some looking quite



ridiculous really with a tiny engine at the head of a train full of people, even more so if you were the person driving one of them, innocently leaning on the cab to gain a little extra traction!! I am sure there cannot be many clubs however that could say that they could haul that quantity of people with mostly 3 1/2" engines in an afternoon!! It was planned to organise a 'long' train for about 1630, similar to the ones we have coupled

together before, but with a few less carriages for the 3 1/2"s. Unfortunately despite Dave's best efforts with the engines there were too few with either suitable or any front coupling that could be 'sandwiched' in between the other trucks or engines and also the height of some of the trucks compared to the engines made buffer lock inevitable, so the idea was abandoned. Despite a few teething troubles during the afternoon it was very successful with a good few engines running the full 3 hours, over 500 rides completed and the weather behaving itself, all in all great fun and hopefully we can do something the same or similar next year.

Andrew & Mark

How Bizarre Is This??

Following up on our recent jokes pages, we thought this was something quite different for the August edition of the news. This short piece was given to us by Enid Marten, and talk about coincidences!!

How bizarre is this...?

Have a history teacher explain this...if they can? Abraham Lincoln was elected to Congress in 1846. John F.Kennedy was elected to Congress in 1946. Abraham Lincoln was elected President in 1860. John F.Kennedy was elected President in 1960. Both were particularly concerned with civil rights. Both wives lost their children while living in the White House. Both Presidents were shot on a Friday. Both Presidents were shot in the head.

And then...

Lincoln`s Secretary was named Kennedy. Kennedy`s Secretary was named Lincoln. Both were assassinated by Southerners. Both were succeeded by Southerners named Johnson. Andrew Johnson, who succeeded Lincoln was born in 1808. Lyndon Johnson who succeeded Kennedy was born in 1908. John Wilkes Booth, who assassinated Lincoln was born in 1839. Lee Harvey Oswald who assassinated Kennedy was born in 1939. Both assassins were known by their three names. Both names are composed of fifteen letters.

What is more...

Lincoln was shot at the theatre named "Ford". Kennedy was shot in a car called `Lincoln` made by "Ford". Lincoln was shot in a theatre and his assassin ran and hid in a warehouse. Kennedy was shot from a warehouse and his assassin ran and hid in a theatre.

Booth and Oswald were assassinated before their trials.

And finally, a week before Lincoln was shot, he was in Monroe, Maryland. A week before Kennedy was shot, he was with Marilyn Monroe. How very strange?!

Enid Marten

More Jokes

The following is a piece donated by Ray, some of it applies to some of our readers and some of it doesn't, well not yet anyway!!

Great Truths About Getting Old:

- Growing old is mandatory, growing up is optional.
- Forget the health food. I need all the preservatives I can get!!
- When you fall down you wonder what else you can do whilst your down there!!
- Your getting old when you get the same sensation from a rocking chair that you once got from a roller coaster.
- Its frustrating when you know all the answers, but nobody asks the questions
- Time may be a great healer, but it's a lousy beautician!!
- Wisdom comes with age, but sometimes age comes alone.

And One More

The Four Stages of Life:

- You believe in Santa Claus.
- You don't believe in Santa Claus.
- You are Santa Claus.
- You look like Santa Claus!!

Ray

Diary of Events

28th August 2004 – Visit to SMLS by Basingstoke, times and numbers **TBC**.

28th August 2004 – End of Summer 'Bring Your Own' BBQ evening, from 1830.

2nd September 2004 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

18th September 2004 – Southern Fed' Rally at Maidstone.

7th October 2004 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

4th November 2004 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

6th November 2004 – Bonfire and Firework Spectacular – Date **TBC**.

****We are hoping to have several visits this year to other clubs, so please keep an eye on these pages or on the notice board at the club, as it is not always possible to publish dates in these pages 2 months before.****

Club nights will continue throughout the season on the first Thursday of each month.

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 for more details of any such events.

Andrew & Mark