

Sussex Miniature Locomotive Society Ltd

Issue No. 420
April 2016

BEECH HURST NEWS



Cover picture: -

New 'Locomotive': The latest addition to our 'locomotive' fleet is recently completed MLV 68009, built by Norman. Finished in BR Blue / Grey livery, these 3rd Rail / Battery powered vehicles were used primarily on Kent boat trains to Dover Western Docks and Folkestone Harbour.

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Editor's Notes

As I begin these notes, we are in the grip of another cold snap, even though it is the end of April, and as recently as last week some areas of the country have seen frequent hail and snow showers, and the odd thunderstorm too. Riding my bike through Haywards Heath last Wednesday evening, the town centre was encircled by a quite fascinating electrical storm, which rumbled on for sometime and produced quite a lot of hail in the process! With this in mind and as we end the month I think 'April Showers' sums up the last 30 days quite well! That said, and despite the cold, we have generally been lucky on our running days at Beech Hurst and although not desperately busy we have carried a good few passengers all the same. Let's hope that May and June perk up a bit weather wise and we get a chance for a little bit more playtime on the track too!

The last newsletter, out at the AGM, pretty much concluded our winter season with most jobs complete and reports about displays at both exhibitions too.

In this edition, there is a nice article kindly written by Dave Mattingley about the successful Bits & Pieces evening, which followed the AGM itself. Also, I have written a small conclusion to Winter Work and an update on the development work which is happening around the park. Also note the updated Diary which takes us through until the end of the running season in September, so as ever please read on and enjoy...

Andrew

Chairman's Notes

We are now well on from the AGM, but I would like to welcome Mike Wakeling to the committee and welcome back onto the committee, Geoff West.

I should also like to thank Andrew Brock and Graham Mundy for their hard work during their time 'in harness'!

The weather has been really quite wet this spring and decidedly cold at times, and the park area around the track has been flooded. Nevertheless, the 'hardy' amongst us have managed to operate a service from the weekend before Easter with the aid of woolly hats, wet suits and even balaclavas! Despite all the weather could throw at us, including 'Storm Katie', which brought down two large trees at the end of our driveway, we have managed to carry a fair number of equally hardy passengers! So we are off to a good start.

The effect of the fairground, which had set up in the park over the bank holiday weekends (and more besides) last year, was discussed at the informal section of the AGM. Since then, we have been attempting to find out what days it was permitted to operate. Following a meeting of the Beech Hurst Park 'Steering Group' that Roy P & I attended in March, things have moved on. At that meeting, it was clear that some in the council were unaware just how often the fairground operated and some degree of 'moderation' was suggested, plus the banning of the ice cream van which greatly affected the takings of the newly opened kiosk café in the park. Then, on the Easter opening weekend there was apparently an accident with a young girl falling from the 'tea cup' ride and requiring A&E attention at the local hospital. Since then, and with the rain and wind of 'Storm Katie' requiring a quick exit from the soft ground of the park, the fairground has not been present.

As I understand it, the council are looking into the circumstances of the accident, so we must await the outcome. As I have found out since, from the park ranger, the council do (of course) make money from the fairground and apparently there was no 'fixed contract', it being done on a day-to-day basis.

Anyway, leading on from this, I have discussed the situation with our Operations Managers, and we must ourselves be extra careful at the present time, especially regarding our speed. We often put a reminder in the news about this, and do ask that ALL drivers, at ALL times with passengers, please take it steady. There are no medals for getting back to the station quickly, so give passengers a longer, leisurely ride around. I know a few passengers ask 'now how fast can we go', but if they fell off it would be a different story of 'how dangerous the driver's speed was'. We do not strap the kids on the seats, and they constantly move around. Adults are getting bigger and seem to be riding a lot these days, which makes the trucks more 'top heavy' and liable to tip people when they lean out. Nowadays too, with social media and videos, everything gets recorded by someone and broadcast instantly! So, please, take your time, trundle around gently and stay safe. It would be disastrous for us to be closed down pending some investigation of any unfortunate and unnecessary incident.

We are lucky to have, and to be able to operate, a relatively 'open' system, with no fences around the track etc... This will only last as long as we are accident free, so thank you for your cooperation in advance. Therefore, should the TC of the day request that you slow down, please accept the request gracefully and comply. All TC's have the backing of the committee on this.

This year on the 12th June there will be a 'Picnic in the Park' for the Queen's Birthday celebrations. We will be running extra trains, probably from 12:00 – 17:00 for this event (which is officially booked from 12:00 – 16:00). Please offer your help in the running book for this day if you are free.

The Operations Managers are also looking for a bit more support for TC roles. If you are knowledgeable and fit enough, please help out when you can.

The club locomotive 'Ajax' has now been sold, boxed up and dispatched.

No doubt, Andrew B will include in this news a new list of officers and job appointments for this year. There are just a few changes, so please take a moment to read the list and update yourselves.

Finally, there have been rapid developments regarding the land to the south of our railway. As you may recall, I mentioned that things might be happening around us a few newsletters ago. It seems that there was an application by the council to sell the green area and the old council depot in a section hidden away in their website. We managed to find out about it and the deadline for comments was 21st April. It gave us no time for consultation, but John B, myself and Roy P (who has been making many council contacts with his Learning Centre project) had discussions together and sent a letter regarding future access to our site in the rear field (currently through a 5-bar gate into the council compound).

The proposal was for 24 houses to be allowed on this land, so they would presumably be upmarket dwellings, which we felt we could not seriously object to as a club, especially as we want to keep in the councils 'good books' regarding the future of the back field and track!

So, we have requested discussions with them regarding access, and to consider future possibilities, including public access to this area. We wait to see the outcome. I know many dog walkers who will be privately protesting the loss of 'green land' to the council. We will keep you updated when we know more. I wish everyone an enjoyable running season...

Mike

Election of 'Officers' and 'Other' Positions for 2016

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 2016:

Chairman: Mike Porter

Vice-Chairman: Daniel Evans

Secretary: John Baldwin

Minutes Secretary: Nick Edwards

Treasurer: Graham Miller

Other Committee Members in Addition to the Above Officer's:

Nick Edwards, Steve Steer, Steve Turner, Mike Wakeling & Geoff West

Operations Managers: Nick Edwards & Daniel Evans

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

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 & Geoff West

Custodians of Wharfedale: Nick Edwards & Daniel Evans

Assistant Custodian: Laurie Anderson

Custodian of Club Electric Locomotives: Graham Mundy

Carriage Valeters: Graham Mundy & Tom Broome

Webmaster: Stephen Hutton

Clubhouse Cleaners: Nick Edwards, Daniel Evans & Mike Porter

Track Maintenance: Roy Preston

Carriage & Wagon Painters: Daniel Evans & Geoff West

Carriage & Wagon Maintenance: Andrew Brock & Andrew Strongitharm

Facebook Page Administrators: Adam Cro, Nick Edwards, Daniel Evans & Andrew Strongitharm

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

'Over the Alps'

Through these pages I would like to congratulate John Richardson on his book 'Over the Alps'. It is an account of his time as a fireman and driver down on the Mid Hants (Watercress) Line. It is written as though John is in the room telling the story himself. John has kindly donated a signed copy to the club which is in the club library and I also have a copy if there is a rush to read it. I can heartily recommend it.

I have also just finished reading the draft of another book he has written on his time as an Engineer in the Merchant Navy. This is also an excellent and informative read and I hope that one day soon this will be in print and available for all to read.

John is not only an accomplished loco & steam boat builder but notorious author! Booker Prize next year John?

Dave M

Bits & Pieces Evening

After the AGM a Bits & Pieces evening was held and, I believe, enjoyed by all who stayed on. There were 8 contributors and the following is a brief overview of the exhibits and the stories behind them...

First up was Dave M with his 'Covert' loco. This was a part-built 'Simplex' chassis complete with a work-in-progress boiler. In brief, the chassis and a boiler kit were purchased from Robin West at View Models un-be known to his wife (hence the 'covert' project). Looking at the drawings it quickly became evident that it was not a 'Simplex' as the rear axle was far back and there were cut-outs in the frames. Was it a 'Super Simplex'? A call to Robin West couldn't confirm this either way. With the Guildford show just round the corner the man who sells back issues of the 'ME' was contacted with a promise to bring along the relevant volume describing the 'Super Simplex'. Convinced it was a 'Super Simplex' the boiler kit wasn't going to be much use so Robin agreed to put it on his stand at the show with a view to selling it for me. With the 'ME's in my hand I quickly saw that it wasn't a 'Super Simplex' either! The boiler kit was now going to be fine, was it sold? Frantic calls to Robin proved that it wasn't and it was duly collected the next day. So, the 'covert' project was started as something??? But will be finished as a 'Simplex' with the rear set of wheels spaced back and nice cut-outs in the frames, which I must say adds to their appearance. The smokebox, chimney & saddle are up together with the blast pipe, so the project creeps on!

Next was John W with a lovely twin oscillating cylinder stationary engine. This was a present from his Mum and Dad some 75 years ago. It was a Bowman 'Red Indian' and what a lovely present it would have been. It was mounted on a base plate that originally had a transfer of a Red Indian on it that was sadly lost following a period of restoration. It was spirit fired (meth's) and like so many of the type the water capacity of the boiler was greater than the amount of spirit that was contained in the burner so the fire went out before the water was used up! To add to this, John bought along some magnificent patterns he had made for the cylinders and cannon axle boxes for his 'Duchess', they were fine examples.

At the time John was at that stage in the build of the 'Duchess', no commercial castings were available so there was only one thing for it and that was to make your own patterns and get your own castings. How times have moved on when now so many cast and laser profiled parts are available for almost all of the models we are likely to build. We will see the change when we come to Roy P's exhibits later on.

John was followed by Bob Youldon who had bought along a very nice part built Gauge 1 LMS '4F'. Bob described how he had bid and won the parts on eBay, two sets of parts in fact. What was on display were only the wheels from the original purchase; Bob had re-made everything else to a very high standard. It was a little beauty with fluted rods and very well made plate work. East Sussex County Council had generously 'donated' a filing cabinet to Bob which was re-modelled into the cab! It will be spirit fired with the fuel being held in the tender. We look forward to seeing it in steam Bob and if it goes as good as it looks it will be a fine performer!

Andrew B was next up with a very nice hydraulic test pump assembly. It was completely self contained with the water reservoir acting as the base. It was fitted with a large diameter pressure gauge that was very easy to read and ideal for boiler pressure testing where accuracy of the test pressure is paramount. Andrew commented that the hand pump was maybe a bit on the large size when it came to the pressure test of model scale pressure gauges and fittings where the volume of water needed to increase the pressure was slight but was ideal for boiler pressure testing. There was a comment from the audience that having a large capacity pump was essential when pressure testing some engines in order to keep up with the leaks! Keep it on stand by Andrew, with the season just round the corner it might come in jolly useful!

Roy L was next up with the tender chassis for his 'B1'. All very nice. Roy is putting in a lot of nice detail which included true to scale spring hangers that had all been hand finished, bearing in mind that with a 6 wheeled tender there were 12 of the 'Little Beauties'. It showed Roy's skill at producing such fine detail. Roy had not followed Martin Evans brake handle position but had placed it correctly on the fireman's side of the tender foot plate. Although pretty well hidden from view, the nice set of brake blocks that had been 'hewn' out of solid are really well finished. What he didn't show but some of us will have seen is the start of the tender tank. The sole plate is complete with a near full length sump just like full size and the sides are well under way too, so we expect to see it soon Roy, all done and in the primer!

John B followed with an interesting 'gadget'. This had come via a colleague from the school where John had worked. It was a tall slender frame, if that is one way of describing it, with open sides. It had one end fixed and the other end adjustable. John held it aloft for anyone to tell what it was as he was baffled. Steve Turner stepped up and explained that it was used to support a stack of slip gauges that would have special end slips to suit what was being inspected i.e. an internal bore or an outside dimension. It would have likely been used by the inspection department of a company as it was not the sort of thing that would be on the shop floor for general use due to its somewhat fragile nature.

Roy P had brought along parts for his 5" gauge 'Standard Class 3'.

The parts illustrate how the hobby has moved forward over the years since John W started his 'Duchess'. The engine is being built to the Mike Jack design. For those of you who don't know, Mike Jack is a New Zealander and is producing a finely scaled model in a somewhat unique construction. Roy had brought along the smokebox saddle and the rear pony truck. Mike Jack has used lost wax castings for many of the parts and the surface finish of these is such that they require very little, if any, fettling to produce the finished part. The plate work is all laser profiled requiring minimal finishing and in many cases uses the tab and slot method of construction so it just slots together. Mike had described to Roy how the assemblies should be finally secured by silver soldering the sections together but Roy, afraid of the distortion that may result, has opted to weld the assemblies together. To this end he has purchased a small TIG (Tungsten Inert Gas) welding set and is currently honing his welding skills before starting on the actual job. Mike is supplying each sub-assembly complete with all fixings, the fixings in most cases being the small size metric range. With Roy's rapid building rate as demonstrated by 'Europa' and the 'C' Class I think he may be watching out for the postman to deliver the next set of parts on a daily basis as the current assemblies were almost complete!

Finally, Andrew S showed the brake valve he had made for 'Dougal'.

This was a scaled version of the Gresham and Craven brake valve that was used on full size First Generation DMU's and some diesel locomotives. It incorporated a left hand threaded action of the valve closure with a viton ball acting as the valve itself. No drawings were available so it was copied from measurements taken from an example on the Class 108 coach at the Lavender Line. It certainly looked correct to scale, and to appearance, with particular attention being paid to the vent holes in the top of handle section, all very nicely sized and spaced. Andrew was quizzed as to the progress on 'Dougal' and he said that he was re-making the injector steam valve as he was not too keen on the first one made. The second one was building on the experience gained in making the first. I think that comment applies to all of us, 'should I re-make that part or...' He then went on to say that the world of work was delaying progress on the painting..., no excuse Andrew we need to see it finished!!!

3D CAD. At the end of the presentations Roy showed on his lap top computer, 3D models of the 2 sub-assemblies that he had displayed. He showed how the images could be rotated and how parts could be hidden from view to allow internal details to be seen. This would not have been possible using a conventional 2D drawing package and certainly not seen on paper copies of the plans. No paper copies of the drawing of the 'Class 3' are expected to be supplied by Mike Jack; instead Roy will be issued with CAD files of each part. Is this the start of a paperless workshop I wonder???

The event was attended by 18 members who I'm sure greatly enjoyed the session. Mike P acted as chairman and introduced each of the exhibitors. We look forward to the next one with a new set of 'Bits and Pieces', maybe in the autumn time???



Ed No. A single reasonable picture from the Bits & Pieces evening which depicts John W talking about his Bowman Engine and 'Duchess' Patterns. Most of the exhibitors are pictured, except Andrew S & Roy P out of picture to the left.

Dave M

'Storm Katie'

'Storm Katie' passed through on 27th March bringing high winds and heavy rain with it, and causing disruption across a large slice of England. At Beech Hurst we had a number of trees down, although thankfully none across the buildings or track. Our driveway, however, was blocked with members forced to park in the lane or Harvester car park. The picture below (from Mike P) shows the tree surgeons the following week removing 3 trees from the bottom of our driveway.



Andrew

Winter Work

Following the AGM, most of the ongoing winter jobs have been completed with a few bits and pieces left to do during the warmer spring and summer months. Before running commenced a number of tasks including final preparation of the signals, track and trucks were then undertaken by the various departments and aside a few gremlins, all was well. So, as we are now well into the 2016 season, Winter Work will now go off for its summer recess and return again in October. Through these pages I would like to thank everyone who has contributed during the winter season in whatever way they could from the small routine tasks to taking on larger more in depth projects. We can now enjoy the summer months and running trains, be it for public or pleasure, before the winter tasks begin again in October...

Andrew

Development at Beech Hurst

Further to my write-up in the February edition, work on the new care / dementia home at the North West corner of the park is carrying on apace with buildings now taking shape in a big way! The top picture on the next page shows the current view taken from our station looking North West. With most of the trees along that bank now in partial leaf the development has become slightly obscured but the tower crane still stands tall above the tree line. During the summer months the site will be pretty much masked by the trees once they are in leaf but it will be very evident after the autumn fall. A recent meeting has also highlighted potential drainage issues as a result of the site works and this will be monitored over the coming months to ensure it doesn't have a negative impact on the park. The middle picture on the next page then shows the recently completed development at the end of Bolnore Road, opposite and just beyond our driveway entrance. This consists of 18 mixed 2, 3 & 4 bedroom dwellings and although not directly linked to the park as such are precursors to what might be built at the back of the nursery straight, which brings me nicely to the bottom picture on the next page. This is a view taken from the old golf course looking West towards the Mid Sussex Club (building far right) and beyond to the old communal grass area and council depot. This area is not part of the land left to the Trustees and as such is ripe for development. As previously mentioned a well hidden proposal to sell this patch of land for housing was been submitted by MSDC with a deadline of 21st April for responses. The proposal is for 24 dwellings, presumably of similar construction and size to the development of 18 opposite with access being from Bolnore Road. John B, Mike W & Roy P had a meeting with representatives from MSDC last Wednesday and from that meeting it is clear that there is a strong desire for this to go ahead. There is also talk about making the old golf course and the field behind our clubhouse more widely accessible to the public with funds coming from Schedule 106 money obtained as part of the development. Although at an early stage, any news about this will be reported through these pages as we learn more but the idea of residents gardens backing onto the nursery straight is now a very real one and conceivably some of the proposed dwellings could be built by this time next year! Change is on the way...

Andrew



Picture Top: With leaves flourishing, the buildings to the west are now partially hidden
Picture Middle: The recent development of 18 homes opposite our driveway entrance
Picture Bottom: The area behind the Mid Sussex Club where 24 homes are proposed

Records Update

Following the AGM, John B has now received back 44% of the 'Request for Members Information' sheets and as such I enclose a fresh copy with this newsletter if you have yet to return one to him. Of those received, John has found a lot of new or updated information that he was previously unaware of, so they are invaluable in this respect. Bear in mind too that in most cases, member's information will be as per when they joined unless they have notified either myself for an address change or John in meantime, so this is a very worthwhile exercise to try to keep club records up to date. If you would like to receive an electronic newsletter then I will start this process from the June edition once John has received back a higher percentage of these forms.

Andrew & John B

Forthcoming Events

Since the AGM a fair number of events have been suggested for dates throughout the summer and below is a comprehensive overview of those that have been agreed and when they will take place.

Aside the regular 'Club Nights', we have invited the Lavender Line members to join us on Thursday 2nd June for a light evening supper and the chance to drive on our track. Although a normal Club Night evening the plan will be to start from approximately 18:00 until dusk.

Just over a week later and we have invited Chelmsford Club to visit Beech Hurst on Saturday 11th June. Assuming the weather is forecast to be fine they usually bring a very nice selection of locomotives with them and therefore it should be a very enjoyable day too!

The next day, Sunday 12th June, Haywards Heath Town Council has planned a 'Picnic in the Park' event to celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday. They also plan free keep fit taster sessions as part of this event, which should be interesting to see! The plan for us is to operate from 12:00 (their planned start time) until our normal closing time of 17:00 and as such, if you can help out on this day, particularly when you consider the extended operating times, then all help will be gratefully received! The book is made out and ready to accept your name!

The following Saturday 18th June, SMLS have been invited back to Chelmsford Club for their open day. John B has been in correspondence with the organiser, so if you are interested then do let John know so he can pass on anticipated numbers to the guys up in Essex.

Finally for June and Saturday 25th has 2 events in 1 with a 'Little Engine Day' planned for our 14:00 – 17:00 running and then a 'Bring Your Own' BBQ in the evening, which will start from about 18:00. If you would like to help out or run your loco during the afternoon then please add your name to the running book to ensure we have sufficient motive power. For the BBQ, you just need to bring yourself and something (animal or otherwise) to cook on the griddle! Onions and Puddings will be provided as per previously...

For now anyway, July and most of August are relatively quiet with the second 'Bring Your Own' BBQ on the Bank Holiday Saturday 27th August. Again this will be from about 18:00 and the food format will be identical as per the BBQ in June.

Into September and we have provisionally agreed to display at the new Model Engineer Exhibition at Brooklands, Weybridge over the weekend of the 17th & 18th. Details have yet to be finalised but it looks as though we will have a small stand in the clubhouse on the Brooklands site. Further information regarding this will be published in due course once we know more.

The following weekend (our final one for 2016) may see the visit of our friends from the Basingstoke Club. At the time of press, details have yet to be confirmed, so this remains a provisional date until they have confirmed whether they can commit to attend. Hopefully we can make a date for this as they are a very nice bunch of guys who normally bring along a very nice selection of locomotives too!

Andrew

Diary of Events

5th May 2016 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

2nd June 2016 – Club Night and visit to Beech Hurst by Lavender Line from 1800

11th June 2016 – Chelmsford Club to visit Beech Hurst from 1000

12th June 2016 – Queen's Birthday 'Picnic in the Park' from 1200 - 1700

18th June 2016 – SMLS invited to visit Chelmsford Club from 1000

25th June 2016 – Little Engine Day from 1400 & 'Bring Your Own' BBQ from 1800

7th July 2016 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

4th August 2016 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

27th August 2016 – 'Bring Your Own' BBQ from 1800

1st September 2016 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

15th – 18th September 2016 – SMLS to display at ME Exhibition at Brooklands

24th or 25th September 2016 – Basingstoke Club to visit Beech Hurst – 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



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January 2016

Dear Member,

We are trying to bring the society into the 21st century and to this end we would like to check, and where necessary, update our records. Please would you fill in the following information and either give it back to me at the AGM or return it by post.

Christian Names Surname

Address
.....
.....
.....
.....

Post Code

Telephone Mobile

Email

Date of Birth Occupation

Would you be happy to receive the Beech Hurst News in electronic format (PDF) via email? YES / NO
*Please delete as appropriate

With many thanks and kind regards

John Baldwin
Secretary SMLS