

BEECH HURST NEWS



Cover picture: -

A new club visit to the Pembrokeshire club brought some new engines out that seem in need of modifications like this Ajax on the steaming bay in front of the '125' which had failed injectors, axle pump and a temperamental hand pump so it was on and off the track quite a lot during the day!!

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Editors Notes

Well here we are then, mid-June already, 6 months to Christmas and half a season nearly over already. It has been quite a busy season so far, with plenty more events happening this year yet. It hardly seems anytime at all that Mark & I were presenting our first newsletter two months ago and now edition two is here already. Initial thanks go to those who contributed to last times bulky edition, Mike P, Vince and Brian, plus of course ourselves and the other regular columnists.

This edition is a little bit slimmer than the past few editions for several reasons, mainly time on our part which through the summer is less than during the winter, with plenty of things going on and also the fact that printing this newsletter is now having to be paid for more often than not as limited printing facilities are now available. Nevertheless there are several articles to keep you amused in this edition, including reports on several visits that have taken place in the last two months, a report on the appearance of the new pieces of railwayana around the track and forthcoming events which we will mention in greater detail in a minute. In the meantime please read on and enjoy...

Andrew & Mark

For The Future

As we mentioned above the printing facilities for this newsletter have become a little more scarce in recent months and since a lot of members have either e-mail or internet access then what we want to do is to canvass the membership to find out how many people would, from the August edition, just like an electronic edition of the newsletter sent by e-mail only and how many prefer to have a hard copy. What we would like people to do is to e-mail either Mark or myself if you WOULD NOT want a hard copy as of this edition and would rather have either an e-mailed copy or just to download the edition from the website directly. Either that or you can contact us at the club most weekends and we arrange a list of those who no longer want posted news'. Not only will this mean that can we reduce the amount of postage required, but also a e-mailed copy will be colour and if you want to print it in colour to your desired quality then you can do so. There is also an option to download the news from the internet if you want to. Or if you don't want either of those then we could produce half a dozen copies for viewing at the club, which would be available to anyone to look at but not to take home. We will try to see as many people as possible at the club, but if we don't see you there and you haven't e-mailed to say you want an electronic copy, then we will assume that you still want your news posted as normal.

Andrew & Mark

Visit To Fawley Hill, 6th July

For most of the forthcoming events, please refer to the Diary of Events at the back of this edition. If, however, you are one of the 28 people confirmed for the Fawley Hill visit on the 6th July then this piece is for you. John Ely and Ray have confirmed booking of a vintage coach, owned by Ray's son in law to transport us a group on the 6th July to Henley.

It was thought that since it was a club outing it would be nice to travel as a club, something that we haven't done a group for a long time, certainly not the last 10 years at least. We will finally discuss the details at the committee tonight and with then confirm individually with all those who have been confirmed as going, regarding the times, collection point, nominal costs etc...

Andrew & Mark

Chairman's Notes

The running season is well and truly with us and passenger numbers seem broadly in line with previous years. Bearing in mind all the building work and disruption at the front of the park, this augers well for the main part of the year. Our secretary has written to the council expressing concern at the lack of facilities in the park during the demolition and construction phases (park looks closed to passing traffic, lack of effective toilets, no ice cream kiosk and reduction in public parking spaces etc.). The council have replied saying that they will provide more effective signage advertising that the park is open (business as usual), a catering outlet will be operational for the greater part of the summer and that the toilets have now been connected to the mains and are regularly cleaned.

Our "ride all afternoon for £2" day on the Saturday of the May Day weekend was a great success. After a rather slow start things really picked up with the railway running at virtually full capacity right up to the end of running.

The new compressor house with attached battery charging facility has been completed. This will enable members with electric locos to charge their batteries safely at the club without constant attention. Extractor fans have been fitted to remove any explosive gases from the compressor house and members can access the facility without needing to enter the main clubhouse. Estimates are being sought for the recovering, in felt, of the carriage shed roof as it is now over ten years old and showing signs of leakage.

After weeks of work Brian's "Big Boy" is back on the loco roster. This will again prove to be a big attraction to the public.

It is felt by the committee that some of our money should be spent on something that will benefit our members directly, rather than maintenance etc. The society already has a fine steam loco that performs excellent work. However, it is thought that to enable members, who are unwilling or unable (for whatever reason) to drive steam locos, to participate in passenger running your committee is investigating the purchase of a battery powered main line loco. Arrangements are being made for the loan, from the manufacturers, of a Class 52 "Western" for a week in August to enable members to see if it meets our requirements (haulage, construction, detail and battery life etc.). A decision on purchase will be made after these trials.

Once again our members paid their annual visit to the Isle of Wight society's open day in late April. This year one group decided to make a weekend of it and stayed in a caravan in Cowes. Other members and families attended on the day making it one of the largest contingents in recent years. Steamboats and gauge one locos made an appearance along with 5in locos and the pump trolley.

The SMEE visited us in early May with a good variety of locomotives. The weather was fairly kind to our visitors with only the odd shower!

Don

Gradient & Mile Posts

For those of you who have been at the club in the last 2 months or so will probably have noticed the addition of some pieces of railway furniture around the banks of the track. A couple of mile posts were acquired about a year or two ago, found in a dilapidated state in the banks of locally disused railway lines, they were dug up, repaired where necessary and repainted, before being concreted in at the club. Not only do they give the visual effect of a real railway, but give us and the passengers alike something to look at on the way round. Many a time has a passenger enquired upon arrival at the station as to what those numbered posts actually do only to be disappointed by the answer that they don't mean anything at all really, but just there for effect, nor do they appreciate the lengths we go to, to accurately measure the distance from a fixed point so to us they actually mean something, i.e. the 30 ½ mile post in the cutting, is actually, 30 ½' from the datum point by the point, as is the 33 ¾' one on the other side adjacent to the clubhouse. Anything other 'exact' simply wouldn't do, please don't go and measure them though!!



The next one was actually purchased by Andrew from a farm in Shoreham in Kent. In the last news I did mention the 34 ½ mile post, which we were currently in the process of repairing as it had been broken into two pieces. After a lot of welding and in some instances, 'bodging', the post was concreted in about a month ago, sporting the black background and white lettering that were the original SECR mile post colours. It does look very smart and is a change

from the later cast concrete SR mile posts that we also have.

(Picture Above: The SECR Mile Post 34 ½' south of Wick Tunnel).

After the sad passing of Les Warnett a couple of months back, the club acquired three more posts, two mile posts and one a gradient post. They were pretty much like the ones we had had before but both the mile posts had longer posts than had been used to and the gradient post was a beast, it only just fitted in Vince's car and was a three person job to move. The ½ mile post



was actually in pretty neat order and just required a little touching in, here and there, to make it ready for painting. We used an exterior concrete paint which seems to go on quite well, you can get thick coverage and it is pretty quick drying, it will be interesting to see how long a water based paint lasts out in the elements though. The numbers were then painted in, in black gloss, trying to avoid any mixing with the white. With a

fairly shortened post the ½ mile was then concreted in on the siding so as to be visible from the main line without actually being a fixed distance from anything. **(Picture Above:** The ½ Mile Post alongside the headshunt).

The 31 $\frac{3}{4}$ post was in quite a bad way and we had actually missed it when we first went to pick up the gradient post from Les's, as it had been lying on the lawn. The post had to be chipped away until all the blown concrete had been separated from the reinforcing rods. The rods were then treated with red oxide and Mark then re-concreted the post one evening, trying to keep a nice smooth post shape and a chamfer on the corners. The post and top were then re-painted the same way as the $\frac{1}{2}$ mile post and the numbers then blacked accordingly. The post was then set in the ground 31 $\frac{3}{4}$ ' from the Northern end of Wick Tunnel, again with this post the post itself was of full length and trying to dig a hole best part of 4' deep was no mean feat, you get so far and then you have to nearly go head first into the hole to reach the bottom!

(Picture Below: The 31 $\frac{3}{4}$ Mile Post, 31 $\frac{3}{4}$ ' to the North of Wick Tunnel).



The gradient post was more unusual as we hadn't had one before and it was first a case of deciding where best to put it. Being level on one arm limited the options somewhat, but we finally thought in the bank on the nursery straight was very appropriate and pretty realistic too. Again here the post required touching in to replace small areas of rot in the concrete and the rods, where exposed, were again treated with red oxide to protect against rust. Having been painted in same way as the previous two mile posts it was planted into the bank one Saturday afternoon after Mark & I had spent the last 3 hours or so digging a mammoth hole deep enough for the post and to give it sufficient stability. The problem with the gradient post was that it was very top heavy, much more so than the mile posts, and had to put deep enough so the post wouldn't fracture or



the bank slip. After some effort and plenty of concrete, it was duly put into the bank, it does look very smart, as do all the posts around the track, they give the railway a sort of, well, railway look and they have come to a good home where we can all appreciate them. Thanks must go to Peter Saunderson for letting us have them, a place where they can be enjoyed by everyone and looked after for the future.

(Picture Above: The gradient post alongside the nursery straight, level towards the tunnel and 1:165 down towards the clubhouse).

Andrew & Mark

Visits to Isle of Wight & Ascot

We kept up our tradition again this year with visits to IoW and Ascot, at the end of April and May respectively. Apart from John Ely and Family, Geoff and Bob Youldon, the rest of the visiting crew spent a couple of nights on the Island, taking in the scenery, getting wet (of course) and making a proper weekend of it. The day itself was quite nice weather wise, with a typically showery forecast and windy (always the same on that Sunday in April!!). We took Vince's L1, John Ely's 'Planet X' and the 'Pump Trolley' for motive power and together with three boats and some of John's gauge 1, had plenty to keep us occupied. **(See Pictures below: Dave's Steam Boat & 'Planet X')**.



People swapped about with the driving, captaining etc and everybody had a go at something during the day, the 'Pump Trolley' having been hijacked early on and was going round virtually all day with an array of different energetic persons enjoying the delights of the IoW track, as well as getting fit at the same time!!

The track at Broadfields, in Cowes, has been extensively improved over the last few years, with the addition of ground level tracks, gauge 1 tracks, boating pond, a new storage shed and re-decoration of the clubroom. It is certainly a lot different from when I first visited 6 or 7 years ago.



The track at Broadfields, in Cowes, has been extensively improved over the last

During the afternoon we continued to swap about, with everybody having a go at something, be it boats, trains or gauge 1. The Pump Trolley had now migrated to the ground level, where Mark and Andrew were doing it the hard way on the lower level, I can assure you that working the trolley on ground level is very hard work indeed, fun all the same!

One new idea this year was a raffle, held at the end of the afternoon, with a couple of dozen prizes for the lucky ticket holders. Now, we were 16 in total, out of about 50 or 60 present and Beech Hurst members managed to scoop nearly half of the prizes, with Mark's mum especially lucky with 4 prizes (I think) and John's family 3 or 4 prizes too. Also lucky were Linda, James and Geoff, a successful haul indeed and a nice way to finish off a great day. Apart from Vince, Linda, Dave, Claire and James, the rest off us were heading back that evening, having had a very sociable and enjoyable couple of days on the island. Thanks must go to the IoW club for their usual excellent hospitality and hope to see some of them again, here today.

Like the annual visit to the IoW, we also make an annual pilgrimage to Ascot racecourse for a run at the Ascot club track. Located adjacent to the racecourse itself, the track is best part of 3000ft of mixed gauge ground level track. We have made various visits before, with a variety of engines. This year we took Vince's L1, Wharfedale, Mike P's Class 33 and the Pump Trolley. The day started fine, with warm sunshine, but heavy showers were forecast for the afternoon. (As some of us later found out!!)

Unfortunately our tradition of being first on was spoilt by a Class 08 which beat the Pump Trolley to track, meanwhile both the L1 and Wharfedale were polluting the steaming bays, with what can only be described as a fog of smoke, which will eventually spell the end of the tree in the middle of the steaming bays which will succumb to CO2 poisoning!! I was reliably informed that it was a 'special' mix of charcoal and other 'liquid' chemicals!!

During the morning everybody had a drive of something, only Andrew and Mark ventured out on the Pump Trolley, which going round a 3000ft circuit, several times, is hard graft, but great fun and good muscle building for free!! As lunchtime approached so the track filled up with more engines, a good variety of steam and electric present, including a 7 ¼" Standard '5', a 5" King and many more, some more interesting than others!!

After lunch we continued to play for a while longer, until about 1600 when engines were gradually withdrawn as big Cumulo-Nimbus clouds lurked nearby ready to discharge large quantities of water on unwary victims, including us!! With the L1 packed away and the Pump Trolley retired to the sidings, both Andrew and Mark on Wharfedale and Geoff with the 33 ventured out on one journey too many and ended up sheltering under a fir tree at the bottom of the circuit for about half an hour as it poured down outside. Unaware were we that everybody was packing up and ready to head home at the top end and that they had been waiting for us to reappear. With Wharfedale short of coal Andrew and Mark took the decision to feed the engine with whatever fuel was plentiful at the time, which happened to be fir cones, it made the engine stink somewhat, but it was better than no fire at all!! Shortly afterwards the rain had eased sufficiently for us make a quick dash for the top in a haze of smoke and the stench of burning wood.

Apart from that one shower it had been another very enjoyable and sociable day. Whether the track remains at it's present site beyond this year is still not known with the prospect of moving the racetrack across still looming, it could be our last visit to the present track, mind you that was said last year too, so only time will tell. Thanks go to the Ascot crew for their special hospitality once again, with fine food and drink served all day and hope to welcome Ascot to the return visit today.

All those present: Mark Allen, Andrew Brock, John Gange, Jim Green, Stephen Hutton, Dave Keast, Mike Porter, Geoff West and Vince Williams.

Andrew & Mark

Pembrokeshire Visit

This year we have had a new club to visit, to the Pembrokeshire Model Engineers club. Their track is about 2700 feet long (about 500 feet more than ours or so we're told) and is situated in Milford Haven, which is on the coast off the Cleddau estuary. It is of raised construction, built on to concrete blocks and with steel work very similar to that of ours where the siding runs on to the bridge piece to enter the carriage shed. Probably about 1" steel channel, we'd guess, with the sleepers laid onto that and milled out with slots to take the ¼" steel rail laid for 3 ½" and 5".

Only 2 people (Mark Allen and Andrew Brock) braved the wild Welsh weather to find out what state the track was in. We decided that the best type of engine for their track is probably a narrow wheel-based engine as it isn't as good a track as ours. You really appreciate all of the good work that Mike Porter and his track gang put into the condition of our track when you are going around a track that has lots of kinks, wobbles and sudden mounds etc. Even so, it is a good, fun track with lots of potential and quite a good climb (the '125' was revved up high to get over the summit).

We visited on the Saturday and there was only us, half a dozen members of the Cardiff club, who had brought along a couple of engines including an Ajax (**pictured on front page**), which wasn't too healthy as the injectors didn't work, the axle pump didn't work and the hand pump was very temperamental, and a handful of members from the Merthyr Tydfil club. (**See Picture Bottom Left:** Some of the Merthyr members with their diesel outline 'IC' engine).



We took the 'G2X' from East Grinstead (**see Picture Left:** Mark at the controls of the 'G2X', heading away from the station), which was the club that had been invited anyway, Andrew's IC125 and the Pump Trolley. With a clear track we ran the 'G2X' first, trying our best to 'fog' the steaming bays out during lighting up, with one of our special charcoal mixes, and getting a good three hours almost non stop

running in, which was quite impressive, particularly as others seemed to be having difficulties in one shape or another with their machines. After lunch we then cleaned the 'G2X' away and put on the IC125 that was nice as you could



fully appreciate the surroundings without worrying about the engine in front. We also tried some filming from Mark's digital camera to get a full circuit of the track on record to show afterwards.

Once we had had a good run I gave the machine to several of their members to try, many of whom had been enquiring about the 'beast' when it was on the steaming bays, as to it's origin and design (there might one day be a duplicate built??).

Whilst they were enjoying the delights of the track, we tried out the Pump Trolley which turned out to be quite fun, except where the rails were a touch wide on gauge in places and the seated part fell down between the rails!! Also the foot stirrups were dragging on the ground in places, because the track was built to be as close to the ground as reasonably possible, and the foot stirrups were designed to go round our track which is about 1/3 higher. It was fun all the same and overall it had been a very enjoyable day, with a very hospitable welcome and friendly locals.

The society itself is only about two dozen strong and they rely solely on the £50 per year subscription to survive, they do not carry passengers and hence have only limited funds to improve what they have. A new club building is in the process of being built and looks quite smart. It replaces the articulated lorry trailers that have been used as storage and meeting rooms until now. The actual site has a great deal of potential to be a very good railway, but with limited investment opportunity and a small membership it would be hard to see how it could be achieved, we are lucky to have what we have because we as a club work very hard for it and therefore reap the benefits. Thanks go to the Pembrokeshire MES for a very a good day and the refreshments provided, hopefully we can arrange a visit there again in the future.

Andrew & Mark

Website Update

As some of you may be aware, the Beech Hurst website www.beechhurst-railway.org.uk, has been unavailable twice in the last 2 months. On the first occasion web pages were replaced with those containing anti-war slogans and on the second occasion all the web pages on the site were deleted.

The Beech Hurst website runs on one of a series of 5 computers which a commercial company, based in London, offers to the public. They currently host over 4,000 web sites across these 5 computers.

Unfortunately, a hacker discovered a weakness in the security of 2 of the computers, which they run and as a result 1,500 web sites were corrupted. Since we have a copy of the web site it has been easy to refresh the web site, however, there have been problems in getting this done as quickly as we would wish.

We have been assured that the security weaknesses have now been corrected and so are anticipating that this will not happen again. However, to ensure a speedy response if you find any problems with the web site then please e-mail mark.allen@sjmg.net and I will try to get it sorted out that day.

Mark Allen

May Day £2 All Day Special

Following the successful £2 all day fare that was experimented with last year, Mike and Dave decided to include another one in our diary for this season. Not only do such days allow the railway to hopefully run at capacity, but in



turn they also give us the chance to pull big loads for a whole afternoon and provide good publicity at the same time. After a bit of a sluggish start, this year was a great success with virtually all the trains going round full from about 1430 till the end just after 1700. There was almost a continuous queue the whole time, but with the trains in and out quickly, it was always moving and people were happy to have a ride,

knowing that they would have only a few minutes wait for the next lap, during which time they would be kept amused by the continual movement of trains through the station. The weather was very kind too, not being too hot and with no rain either. I believe that we did carry over 1000 passengers over the course of the afternoon, see Chris Saunders for confirmation, which was quite impressive really, I think that it has been calculated that we can carry up to 1200 in an afternoon slot from 1400 till 1700 with all the available rolling stock in action and with no break in traffic. Thanks to all those involved.

Mike and Dave are possibly planning another such day at the end of the season, details will be found nearer the time, either on the website or in the August edition of this newsletter. There is also a special day on 20th July, which will involve little and large engines, and possibly the pump trolley, being banked by the large engines.

Pictured Above: Ray driving 'Martlet' with one of the £2 all day trains heading towards Wick Tunnel, whilst the 'workers' look on in the background.

Winter Work Update



Since the last edition a couple of winter projects have been finished, with one other project almost complete, at the time of going to press. The new brick store, pictured on the cover of the April edition is now fully finished, with all the electrics fitted. The workshop windows fronting the drive have been repaired, including removal of some rotten wood from the frames, refilled and repainted.

They should be good for a few more years now. The new charging shed had been completed externally (**see picture above**), it is just short of an interior shelf and the electrics, it is hoped to be completed in the next few weeks.

This will be the last Work Winter column this year, we will of course keep you up to date with any other significant projects that are on going during the summer and we will then return to this column in the Autumn with commencement of the winter work program.

Andrew & Mark

Diary of Events

21st June 2003 – ‘Bring Your Own’ BBQ evening, lit from 1830 till late.

3rd July 2003 – Club Night – Will start approx 19:00.

5th July 2003 – Chichester DMES visit SMLS, timings and numbers **TBC**.

6th July 2003 – Confirmed visit to Fawley Hill Railway and gardens. 28 places have been booked, see sheet on blackboard in clubroom.

**** (See Attached News Piece) ****

19th July 2003 – Maidstone MES visit SMLS, timings and numbers **TBC**.

20th July 2003 – Little and Large special day, see Mike or Dave if your willing to help out please.

7th August 2003 – Club Night – Will start approx 19:00.

17th August 2003 – Visit to ‘Vale of Aylesbury’ MES at Quanton Road, nr Aylesbury. Exact details of this visit, **TBC**.

23rd August 2003 – Proposed mid-summer ‘Bring Your Own’ BBQ, **TBC**.

4th September 2003 – Club Night – Will start approx 19:00.

6th September 2003 – Sussex Clubs Day at Chichester DSME, details **TBC**.

27th September 2003 – Visit to Maidstone MES, Mote Park, Maidstone, **TBC**.

2nd October 2003 – Club Night – Will start approx. 19:00.

4th/5th October 2003 – Last running weekend, then maintenance begins.

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