

Sussex Miniature Locomotive Society Ltd

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BEECH HURST NEWS



Cover picture: -

The Youth of Today: Sunday 30th July was a special day at Beech Hurst with the railway being operated entirely by our under 30 year olds. The afternoon was a success and pictured above are ten out of our eleven under 30 year old members with Josh being the only absentee...

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Editor's Notes

As I write these notes, we have now passed the August Bank Holiday and there are but 4 weekends of our 2017 running season left to go. Since the June edition we have been a little less fortunate weather wise with a number of days either rained off or partially rained off as a result. That said, all of our planned social and special events have gone ahead, and without interruption from the weather! Hopefully the remaining few days in September will be good too and we can at least end the season on a high!

Also since the last edition, it has been good to see a number of 'new' steam locomotives back in traffic. I say 'new', all bar one have been on the rails at Beech Hurst in past years, albeit some more recently than others. The 5 in question are (all 5" gauge) 'Black 5', 'Britannia', 'C2X', 'Dougal' and 'Jinty'. The other point to note is that all bar Graham's 'Britannia' are owned and operated by our younger members and will hopefully be at the club for many years to come.

Over the past few months we have also been joined by a couple of new junior members, Fraser and Sam R (aka Sam no.2!), and since the last edition there has generally been quite a number of younger members present on any running day. This number of regular under-40's is unprecedented during my time at the club and hopefully many will stay interested during the closed season too when help with winter maintenance will be very much appreciated!

As per the last edition, I have kept this one back a few days extra so I could include 'Little Engine Day' and our BBQ too. Thanks to Chris and Mike W for their small snippets in the June edition and this one is mainly from my hand once again with thanks also to Linda C and Mike P for pictorial contributions too. I have included articles on our 'Under 30's Day', Petanque match and BBQ, our 'Double Heading / £3 Fare Day', as well as the aforementioned 'Little Engine Day' and BBQ. There are also updates on some recently completed summer painting, as well as the usual writings and a slightly updated Diary to take us through to November, so as ever please read on and enjoy...

Andrew

Chairman's Notes

What a difference from the weather I reported in the last news! August has brought the rain! In the last 2 months we have lost the best part of 7 days to poor conditions, including the first 3 Wednesdays in a row. Fortunately, the few dry days in between have been good, so we are probably still on track (no pun intended!) for a year of average takings.

Following my request at the beginning of the year for locker holders to have a clean up of their 'premises', probably about half have been cleaned out. One set of rails had been found to have nearly rusted away at the back and Nick welded them up. Please clear out old oily / wet lockers, clean and check the rails, and put in some fresh clean newspaper to soak up the drips. Thank you.

On the social front, the committee has decided that we should make a change to our Bonfire Night activities in the future. There are two main reasons for this.

We have always in the past had a large bonfire in the back field and come up next day to remove the evidence, and apart from a rather luxurious crop of thistles that always sprung up on the bonfire site in the spring (always perplexing to the council as to the origins of this 'fairy ring'), we have had no repercussions or complaints. However, as any member recently visiting the club can see, we now have an extensive 3-story building complex rapidly nearing completion in the adjacent (former) meadow. These properties are selling for up to half a million pounds! So, firstly, we do not want to upset our new neighbours with smuts and smoke from a large bonfire, as they are down wind relative to the prevailing south westerlies. Secondly, we are getting more regular visits to the back field, from council officials and their agents, than ever before. Two separate visits just last Wednesday. With our lease steadily running down, and possible council plans for the back area, we do not want to create any problems for ourselves with them.

So, we have decided that Steve S will light up a warming brazier on our back lawn as a bonfire substitute, we will still have our firework display, without aiming any rockets near our new neighbours and Val will still prepare us a traditional baked potato, beans and cheese supper with desserts. I think it is a compromise worth making and I am sure we will still have a nice time together.

This leads me on to the situation at the back. As I mentioned before, the council officials we have previously dealt with have changed. It appears their focus might have changed with the officers or maybe their priorities have. Roy has been met with procrastination regarding his efforts to progress his project for a learning centre. At a recent park steering group meeting that Roy and I attended, it was hinted that any future for the back field might well be linked in with any learning centre, as a means of making it all worthwhile in terms of 'footfall' numbers and a bridge to the centre area would be the preferred option. However, this appears to have gone to the back burner at the moment. Last Wednesday some contractors working for the council were 'stock taking' and up in the back field taking photos of and checking 'the boundaries'. So it is anybody's guess as to what the council is thinking or up to. Those of you who read the Mid Sussex Times, (copy on the clubhouse table), will have seen that the council have just approved (or it appears 'steam rolled' through) permission for 151 homes on Foxhill Lane, the other side of town, following outline approval for only 99. Needless to say, the locals are up in arms, complaining that the new 'Neighbourhood Town Plans' were now worthless! But what took my eye is a statement in the article that the planning officer argued that the council's 5-year housing plan was 'not up to date' and 45 affordable homes in the development was also 'positive and attractive'. Sounds to me like they are behind with their house building plans! Watch this space!

On a lighter note, we can all wish Norman and Hazel many congratulations on reaching their 60th wedding anniversary. They enjoyed a day out at the Bluebell Railway (where Norman used to work) along with their neighbours, which included a footplate ride for the men! Andrew B filled in the forms just in time for Norman and Hazel to get a message from the Queen on the day! Full marks for a rapid response from the Palace.

We have also had a busy and eventful few weeks at the club.

A milestone was achieved at the end of July when our railway was run entirely by our younger members for the day, not only operating the afternoon trains, but morning gardening and tea service too! I had seen somewhere that another club had done it and I wanted to see if we could achieve the same, having spent so many years nurturing our band of younger guys. It was difficult to find a day that they could all attend but it was worth the effort. They did a good job taking over £500 that day, which fortunately was one of the few dry days we had around that time! Well done to you all (**see also front cover photo**). The good news is they want to do it again next year!

We also had our first club BBQ, a BBQ and match with our friends from the Beech Hurst Petanque group, a visit from The Yews group (which we do free for them for charity each year) and an all steam double heading day with 3 long trains and 6 steam locos. This was the first time for a while we had attempted a double heading day with a ride all afternoon fare (£3). Many previous attempts had been thwarted by bad weather and last time by the arrival of a large swarm of bees in the 'jungle' area of the track! This time everything went smoothly! Thanks to everyone who took part and prepared for these events, and made them so successful.

Lastly, your committee has been discussing a report that has appeared in the Northern Federation committee minutes. It relates to documentation supplied by Walker Midgley, who are insurers for many model engineering clubs. They supplied a list of ongoing / current insurance claims with them. It is obvious that this should be a wake up call for us to tighten up our recording of work done around the club. Some things we already record well but some can be improved. We need everyone who does maintenance or repairs around the club, to just enter it in the relevant section of our maintenance folder, which is kept in the third draw of the filing cabinet. In the unfortunate event of any serious accident or incident involving HSE, they come down hard on clubs without proper or up to date documentation.

John B and Mike W are to start updating our risk assessment files. Also, due to government changes to compensation payments in the event of a very serious injury to a passenger, we are reviewing our public liability maximum.

I have been power washing the paths down to the headshunt which had become slippery in the rainy weather and Roy has been keeping our lawns mowed, so we are looking fairly clean and tidy all round.

As I write these notes, we have one more 'special' day this coming weekend when we have our 'Little Engine Day', some of our rarely seen locos taking part in the passenger hauling.

There is still one more bank holiday, and a Wednesday to go, and we finish running for this year on Sunday 24th September, allowing track refurbishment to get started in good time before the weather deteriorates. Enjoy the rest of the season.

Mike

High Visibility Jackets

A special notice to all members involved with passenger running. To avoid confusion on the rare occasion when a TC is wearing a high visibility jacket at the same time as someone is working on the track and also wearing a high visibility jacket, the committee have decided to obtain two new YELLOW high visibility waistcoats with the words 'TRAFFIC CONTROLLER' on the back. Our existing ORANGE high visibility jacket can be used by anyone working on or near the track during running time. We now have the new yellow high visibility waistcoats, so please use the relevant jackets, and thank you for your cooperation.

Committee

Special Running Day – 'Under 30's Day'

From the front cover picture, an 'Under 30's Day' was held on Sunday 30th July when our railway was run entirely by the next generation. Ten out of our eleven under 30's were free to attend and all contributed to a very successful afternoon, which was blessed with good weather too! Below is the roster for the day:

TC – Andrew S

Station Master – Alex

Drivers – Dan, Nick, Adam, Tom, Laurie & Sam H (Sam no.1)

Guards – Fraser & Sam R (Sam no.2)

Including Marc & I for a moment, who fit into the under 40's category, I would be interested to know the percentage of overall cover the 'younger' members provide during a running season but it must be at least 30% of all turns, if not a little higher, and where steam drivers and TC are concerned, a lot higher!

Andrew

Recent Social Event – Petanque & BBQ at Beech Hurst

As per 2016, our August club night was booked for a Petanque match with our friends from across the way and was followed by a BBQ back at our place. Thanks to the efforts of Lorema & Mike Wakeling, this has now become an annual event and this year we had 8 railwaymen paired with 16 Petanque 'pro's'! A dry, if a little bit breezy and chilly, evening greeted the players as we made our way across to the terrains. Once into our teams, we each played 2 games and at the end the scores were tallied up to find a winning team. As ever there was some friendly rivalry and whether you ended up a winner or loser it was good fun nonetheless (**picture next page top: 3 Petanque games in full swing**).

The BBQ was equally good and very busy at the start as two dozen or so hungry people vied for position over the hot coals! As people sat and ate, it gave us a chance to have a chat and to socialise with our guests who we normally greet with just a smile and a wave as we pass by on a train! Through these pages, a big thank you to Lorema, Mike W & Val for preparing most of the food, and to Lorema in particular for liaison with the Petanque club to get this evening off the ground in the first instance. Always a fun social event and hopefully one we can replicate in 2018...



Special Running Day – 'Double Heading / £3 Fare'

After a quiet fortnight, we then held a special running day on Saturday 19th August – a double heading £3 all afternoon special. The plan was to run with 6 steam locomotives, hauling 3 double headed trains and with the option for passengers to buy a normal £1 fare or a £3 all afternoon ticket. The past couple of attempts at this event have been stalled, either by rain or by bees! No such problems this time, although we narrowly missed a passing shower around lunchtime but thereafter it was fine and sunny! The 3 trains were Adrian's 'Manor' + John B's 'King', Mike P's 'Atlantic' + Nick's 'B1' and finally Adam, Andrew B & Andrew S' 'Black 5' + Howard's 'King Arthur'. The latter was a late replacement for Mike W's 'Black 5', which has been temporarily withdrawn from traffic. The running session started quietly but soon built up and after about ½ hour most trains were at least half full if not more. Thereafter, it was a very steady flow of passengers until 17:00 by which stage we had sold close to 100 £3 tickets and nearly 250 normal rides too – a busy day! In addition, the weather was fair and we had no failures, surely a success! As we packed away, there was time to give the youngsters a drive and finally a couple of laps with bowlers who had come up from Rottingdean to play. Those bowler trains were hauled by the 'Black 5' and with 7 trucks, up to 19 adults and 2 dogs, it certainly made the locomotive work hard but was great fun and a perfect way to round off a very enjoyable day! Thanks to all those who helped out to prepare, operate and then to pack away again. Especially to the drivers above, Andrew S & Dan for TC duties, Linda, John M & John G for manning the station and to the guards: Alex, Chris, Fraser, Graham M, Norman & Sam (no.2)... **(Pictures follow on the next two pages).**



Picture Top: Nick with the 'B1', Mike P with the 'Atlantic' & Mike W with the 'King Arthur'
Picture Middle: John B with the 'King', Andrew B with the '5' & Adrian with the 'Manor'
Picture Bottom: Nick & Mike P pass the steaming bays with another fairly full train



Picture Top: Adrian & John B depart the station with another good load
Picture Middle: Andrew S & Mike W climb towards the short tunnel with plenty aboard
Picture Bottom: The first of the two bowler trains arrives back and that was heavy too

Special Running Day – 'Little Engine Day' & End of Summer BBQ

Following the success of the 'Double Heading / £3 Fare Day' on Saturday 19th, we then held a 'Little Engine Day' and our 'End of Summer BBQ' on Saturday 26th August. Lots of smaller locomotives (many not seen at Beech Hurst that often) worked the trains, with some double headed and others hauled by a single locomotive. At the start of running, the trains were as follows: Marc with a 3 ½" 'Stanier 2-6-4T' + Roy P with a 5" 'Europa', Andrew B with a 5" 'Railmotor' + Andrew S with a 5" 'Dougal', John H with a 5" 'Polly V', Sam H with a 5" 'Growler' and John M with our 5" '08'. Shortly into the session, John H had to retire the 'Polly V' with a split blower connection in the smokebox and was shortly followed by Marc's 'Stanier', which had a lubricator failure. Roy P then carried on alone and all ran well until about 15:00 when Andrew S' 'Dougal' had to retire too with a slip eccentric problem. I then carried on alone with 'Railmotor', albeit with a reduced load and by this stage the club '73' had been drafted in to help cope with the queue! A short while later the casualty list increased with the '08' retiring with drained batteries but about the same time, Dave M joined the party with a 5" 'Pansy' and the rest of the afternoon carried on without major incident! It was certainly an interesting session and plenty to keep the TC busy! The queue at the station was reasonably long at times but I think the waiting passengers quite understood as they saw many of these small locomotives doing their best to keep the service running and with the number of trains operating there was always something to see! As the afternoon wore on so the number of passengers slowly died away and the last few laps were quite sedate. By this stage, Roy P with 'Europa', my 'Railmotor' and the club 'Growler' were the only survivors from 14:00, along with Dave M's 'Pansy' and the club '73', which had joined us during the afternoon. Dave was particularly pleased with the performance of 'Pansy' and having suffered a motoring malfunction on his way to Beech Hurst; it was nice to end the day on a bit more of a high!

After normal running ceased, so the BBQ was prepared and lit, and the evening social commenced. 'Europa' and 'Railmotor' stayed on for a couple of laps after 17:00, before being retired to the steaming bays. The club '73' and 'Wharfedale' then carried on during the evening, whilst people cooked and ate their BBQ nosh. Like the daytime, the evening was very pleasant with the sunshine hanging on pretty much until dusk and it was really rather warm too. A few less members were able to attend due to one reason or another but nonetheless there were still nearly 20 of us who contributed to another very good evening and with a couple of trains running too. As the sun began to set, so we packed away after another (long) day but a very enjoyable one too. Thanks through these pages to everyone who helped out during the 'Little Engine Day', particularly to Ian & Mike P for TC duties and to all the drivers, most of whom brought their locomotives with them and therefore still had the task of taking them back home and unloading after a tiring day on the track. Also to Val & John for the majority of the BBQ food preparation and to everyone else who stayed on after running to enjoy a fine evening. Here's to 2018... **(Pictures follow on the next two pages).**

Andrew



Picture Top: Roy P & Marc pass the steaming bays shortly before Marc had to retire
Picture Middle: Andrew B & Andrew S at the same point before Andrew S had to retire
Picture Bottom: Sam H (Sam no.1) with the 'Growler' which ran faultlessly all afternoon



Picture Top: John M with the new club '08', which ran well until about 15:30
Picture Middle: John H's 'Polly V' (far) after retirement with Dave M's 'Pansy' (near)
Picture Bottom: Fraser with the club '73' and a 'mixed traffic' during the BBQ evening

Summer Work – Painting the Headshunt

Last Friday, before the Bank Holiday weekend, a group painting session was organised to rub down and black the headshunt from the far end buffer stop to the bridge by the carriage shed doors. 6 members: Fraser, Graham Miller, Graham Mundy, Mike P, Mike W & Roy P were all involved and this section does look very smart again. Of course, the main track work will be started again in a little over 4 weeks time and as every year I am sure Roy P will be only too glad of volunteers for this task! (Picture below: The initial scraping and rub down).



Andrew

Norman & Hazel

Through these pages I would like to congratulate Norman & Hazel Payne on reaching their Diamond Wedding Anniversary on 3rd August. This is a fantastic achievement and they celebrated their special day with a trip on the Bluebell Railway. In addition, I managed to arrange for a card to be sent from Buckingham Palace, who will send out congratulatory messages to persons who reach 60 years of marriage, 70 years of marriage / 100 years of age and then every year of both thereafter. Bear these landmarks in mind if someone you know is close!
(Pictures below: Norman & Hazel at Sheffield Park and the framed card)



Andrew

Work in Progress

Since the last edition, the 'Black 5' has returned to traffic and successfully hauled passenger trains on a number of days. It has also been to the track at Mote Park in Maidstone and as recently as last weekend to a 'GL5' meet at Gilling in North Yorkshire. The overhaul can be considered nearly complete (just letters & numbers to add) and then routine maintenance. It has been quite a long haul, not helped by a few obstacles along the way but she does perform very well. Mechanically, the valves and reverser nuts were the most challenging parts but I really enjoyed producing these and trying new techniques along the way, some of which were more successful than others. Painting was probably the hardest part overall and above the chassis line she is pretty much all brushed. I did not enjoy this task, particularly since modern paint does not seem to brush out very well. A number of experiments using mixing additives to help with flow and wet edge time were trialled and in the end Owatrol proved to be the best all-round additive as long as you did not leave a mix for more than a couple or 3 days before making a fresh batch. This technique by no means eliminates the requirement to finish with various grades of abrasive papers but the smoother the initial application the more time and effort saved later. I know many models are sprayed but since almost all full size locomotives are brushed and brushing can be done pretty much anywhere I would always advocate this option for authenticity and practicality too. With the 'Black 5' now pretty much done, I have recently been working on adding further vacuum pipework and a vacuum limiter to 'Railmotor', which is an ongoing but nearly completed task, and I will then try a new technique, 'Metal Blacking' on the chassis of my 7-plank wagon...

Andrew

Forthcoming Events & Diary of Events

With the month of September just a day or two away, so the diary is now fairly slim to the end of the year. A final summer time Club Night will take place next Thursday and thereafter we have a Food & Fireworks Night on November 4th. Since the last edition was published it has been decided that we will not now hold the previously agreed Bonfire side of this event in 2017 due to the on going building work next door. Therefore it will be a Food & Fireworks Night instead with timings largely the same as previously advertised. A list for those wishing to attend will be on the whiteboard at the end of the season and if you would like food then do please add your name to this list so we can cater accordingly.

Thereafter, I will publish any further events in the October edition, due out on or around the Food & Fireworks Night...

7th September 2017 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

4th November 2017 – Food & Fireworks Night – Will start at approx. 1800

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