

Sussex Miniature Locomotive Society Ltd

Issue No. 407
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BEECH HURST NEWS



Cover picture: -

New for 2014: Finished a little before Christmas, the latest addition to our freight train is this Banana Van, kindly built for the Club by Jack Pitt. At the time of writing we are awaiting the axle box covers and decals to complete this wagon...

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Editor's Notes

As I write these notes, we have just returned from another excellent show at Model World in Brighton and the exhibition season is over for another year! It has at least been a basically dry weekend and we were lucky to get to and fro without incident. The last edition was released on New Year's Day and if I knew then what I do now then that day was definitely a good indication of the weather for the next 6 weeks or so – wet & windy! Records have been broken and as I am sure most of you will have seen a lot of damage across southern England. Luckily we have got away with the worst of this at Beech Hurst, although being 300 feet above sea level that is one danger we should not face! That said, trees in the locality have been felled and the ground is just saturated but fortunately no significant damage to the buildings or track. The weatherman on Countryfile last night said that a break in the weather looked more certain in the coming weeks, so hopefully this will allow things to dry out somewhat before our season starts, which is just a month away now!

From the last edition I would like to thank Andrew S, Chris, Ray & Steve T for their respective articles.

In this edition there are articles by Dave M, Norman & Ray, plus reports from New Year's Day, Alexandra Palace & Brighton exhibitions, also an update on Winter Work and an updated Diary of Events, so please read on and enjoy...

Andrew

Chairman's Notes

The wettest winter on record has left the track surrounded by swamp land! More than half a dozen large trees have fallen, or been cut down for safety reasons, due to the constant storms and high winds. I'm glad that we finished most of the outside work before Christmas. New Year's Day was a washout but our buffet lunch was well attended by about 40 members, family and friends. Thanks to Howard, Val, John & Steve S for their efforts with the catering – a very enjoyable day...

Since New Year, the big effort has been in the workshop, getting ready for new wiring and electrical equipment. Thanks to Steve S & Steve T for leading this project and doing much of the heavy work, bracing up the joists, and fitting a new ceiling and lights. The electrician is due this week to start the task of re-wiring and fitting replacement hardware.

Outside, Nick has led the battle with the leaves and debris in the cuttings and around the track. This year the leaf clearance has been a heavy, soggy business! As I write, the AGM is looming, and I hope to see you there. We start running in about a month's time, test running (weather permitting) at the end of March, with our first official timetabled weekend at the beginning of April. The running book (signing in book) is ready for you to sign up for duty again for the 2014 season. Let's hope it dries up a bit by then or all drivers will have to be supplied with snorkels!

Mike

Club History

Due to a computer problem, the next pages (14 & 15) will be continued in the April edition of the news.

Steve T

Club Mobile Phone

Before Christmas it was decided at Committee that the Club should have its own mobile phone for use by members to call in should they be unable to attend on a running day. The magic numbers for the phone are: 07707333164. In the event the phone is inadvertently switched off or not answered then it is best to leave a message, which can then be picked up in due course. This will greatly help the TC in case a stand in for a duty needs to be found at short notice.

Committee

Library Book Borrowing

It was also decided at Committee that all books which are borrowed from the library will need to be seen by a Librarian at least every month whilst they are on loan. This will require the book(s) to be brought back to the Club, signed in and then out again. It is hoped this will keep lost or missing books to a minimum.

Committee

Photographs

There is a large collection of spare photographs in a box on the clubhouse table. They have been divided up by each member and are of members driving trains around the park. If you would like any of these then do please help yourself.

Ray

Winter Work

No further track work has been undertaken over the past 2 months and Roy need only make some final alterations / checks prior to our running season starting. This is much dependent on the ground drying out over the next few weeks!

Also outside, Nick has continued to lead a 'team' of debris and leaf clearers who have helped keep the cuttings tidy. With the recent high winds and heavy rain further clearance has been required, however the majority of this job has now been done and we wait for drier weather for the contractors from MSDC to clear the felled trees from the back field.

Inside, no further truck or wagon work has been undertaken due to the closure of the workshop, however like Roy with the track, Andrew S & I will make final checks to the trucks during March and prior to the start of running.

The main job inside from the past few weeks has been the refurbishment of the workshop. As I write, Steve S & Steve T have straightened the ceiling joists and fitted new plasterboard sections, screwed to the joists. Light fittings have also been added and the electrician is due in the next few days to start re-wiring.

In addition, Andrew S, Graham, Mike W, Peter C, Steve S & I have fully painted the ceiling and walls, ready to accept the new electrical fittings and it is a whole lot brighter too! It is my intention to complete a full report on this work, with pictures, ready for the April edition by which time this should be finished.

Finally inside, Ray has continued to tidy and sort out the library cupboards, which have become a little bit cluttered. Please also see the notes earlier in this edition pertaining to book borrowing and spare photographs from the library.

I will finalise all Winter Work in the April edition, due out the Easter weekend, and summarise the many tasks which have been completed over the last 6 months.

Andrew

It's Never too Young to Start...



Along with a 5" 'Britannia', my other current project is a 5" 'Simplex'. With my granddaughters having stayed with us recently, it provided the ideal opportunity to continue their education into the world of 'making things'. My eldest granddaughter Phoebe, aged 7, has always shown an interest in what was happening in 'Dave's' workshop. Last year we cut out a big '6' to form the pendant of a necklace with the help of the drilling machine to form the profile, which we then filed to shape. The job of the day on 'Simplex' was the smoke box, which required the ends to be machined square. So here we are turning up a former to hold the tube (**picture top**) and boring the hole for the chimney (**picture bottom**). At this rate, with the help of my young friend, the 'Brit' should be

finished by the end of the season (which season might you ask?)

Dave Mattingley

New Year's Day

Wet! I could leave it there but that would only be part of the story! With New Year 2013 being one of the best possible days, 2014 was quite possibly one of the worst! It wasn't biting cold but that is about as good as it got! The forecast had been building up to a big storm coming in from about 10:30 and that is what we got. Several members had expressed an interest to run on the track and given the impending rainfall I arrived very early to get at least some running with 'Railmotor' before the heavens opened! An hour, maybe just an hour was about it but having got fully kitted up I was not about to be beaten and I stuck it out as long as I could move my hands! Brian J & Steve S had both taken the sensible decision not to go out and that was probably a wise one! As the morning continued, so Howard was busy inside preparing our lunch and members turned up one by one, until there were nearly 40 of us present – which represents about 60% of our membership! As 12:00 drew near, so lunch was served and the clubhouse was busy with the sound of eating and general conversation. With 40 up, there is just sufficient seating, although with our old 9kw heater now gone that is 2 spaces less! Given an hour or so and not much remained of the salad lunch with cold meats & quiche, and many of the puddings had been dismantled too! I have to say it was very satisfying having come in from the cold and all those present seemed to enjoy their food, which was great. It is hard to say whether this event is better attended than Bonfire Night, however both bring a large number of members together, which is always good to see and provides the perfect opportunity to share news & updates in the model engineering world. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Howard for preparing and serving lunch, to Val & John for purchasing the food and of course to everyone who attended, despite the rotten weather, to make this day what it was. All we can hope is that 2015 is a better day, well outside at least...!

Andrew

Alexandra Palace Exhibition

This exhibition seems such a long time ago but is just a month passed and much has gone on since then.

Preparation for the show was normal except for John Baldwin spending a good deal of time making 2x 6ft raising platforms so models at the back of the stand could be seen over those at the front. Roy P & I also made up 2 special 12ft lengths of track using our new rail and normal sleepers, so the 'King's' & the freight wagons could be displayed as separate trains. With these items on board we set off on the Thursday lunchtime to prepare the stand for the weekend ahead. Our pitch, the same as last year, was filled with 2x 5" GWR 'King' locos, a 5" 'King Arthur', a 5" 'Railmotor' with freight train, a 3 ½" 'Rob Roy', a SR 'West Country' smokebox clock and a selection of Lubricator pieces / Shovels + CAD drawings. Along with the raising platforms, John also printed and collated a new set of A4 pictures for the backing boards showing scenes from around the railway. These, together with 2 flat screens showing a slide show compiled by Andrew S, gave us arguably our best effort yet (**see picture next page top**).



The following 3 days should in theory have been easy enough but the aforementioned wet spell caused the mainline through Haywards Heath to be closed on the Friday morning, which delayed some of us arriving at the show. No such problems on the Saturday or Sunday and overall the weekend went extremely well with the Saturday the busiest I have known it! There were many familiar faces to talk to and many complimentary comments

about our stand and our exhibits too, which are always nice to hear.

The show in general was very good, however a number of notable absences from the Club stands made some of the areas a little sparser than previous years but overall well worth visiting and of course for us bargain hunters the chance to browse the second hand stalls too!

Thanks through these pages to all those who helped out during the 4 days, to set up and breakdown also, particularly John H & Steve S for providing the transport too and to John B for much of the preparation work in terms of raising platforms, pictures and flat screen displays! Hopefully here's to 2015...

Andrew

Brighton Exhibition

Last weekend it was time again for the short trip to the coast for the Brighton Model World exhibition. 2014 was our second year to exhibit at the Brighton Centre and overall the show went very well with a lot of visitors during the 3 days. We had a similar size stand in the Foyer to 2013, this time laid out 3 tables long and we took with us a 3 ½" Pullman coach, a 5" 'Railmotor' with freight train and a Meccano car (**see pictures left and right below**).



Brighton is different to Alexandra Palace and Sandown, in as much as it is not strictly a model engineering show and many of the visitors perhaps don't appreciate this side of the models as much. Being our local show however it is really important to promote the Club for visitors and attracting new members too. We are after all ambassadors for our Club at these events. Peter C's Pullman coach certainly attracted most attention with many positive comments and the highlight of stand! The rest of the show was mixed, however if you like modelling in general then it is a must for a visit in 2015.

Time at Brighton also gave us a chance to catch up with many like minded members in other Clubs and it is hard to walk round the halls without bumping into someone you know and stopping to have a chat. I think more time was spent talking than actually looking around!

A big thank you to everyone who helped out during the 4 days, especially Andrew S & George for their help with setting up, breakdown and assisting me with transport. I hope the show continues into 2015 and being home before 19:00 was a great team effort!

Andrew

A Trip to Sudan for Food Aid – Part 1 of 3 – By Norman Payne

The following 3 piece article (parts 2 & 3 in the April & June editions) is about my experience of going on an important mission to Sudan for Food Aid.

I come from a railway family and when I left school my uncle, who was a steam locomotive driver, got me a 5 year apprenticeship as a Boiler Smith repairing steam locomotives for the Southern Railway at Brick Layers Arms depot in London. By 1956 I had served my apprenticeship and I was given a job as a Boiler Smith on the railways. After a number of years, the time came when steam locomotives were sent for scrap and the railways turned to diesel or electric traction. After a few years away from the industry, I returned as a Welder at Chart Leacon depot at Ashford in Kent. I worked there for a number of years and in my spare time I was a volunteer at the Bluebell Railway. In 1977 I was asked if I would take the job as Works Manager at Sheffield Park, which I accepted. During my time at the Bluebell Railway, many scrap locomotives from Barry in south Wales were purchased as future projects at the railway. During this procurement process I came into contact with the firm of Hugh Phillips in south Wales who had started to make spare parts for steam locomotives, many of which were purchased by the Bluebell. Through meeting Hugh I was asked if I would travel with him to Sudan to look at repairing 6 locomotives to be paid for by Food Aid, which were to be used to take food supplies from there to Ethiopia. I agreed and went to Khartoum with Hugh to take on this task.

On arriving at Khartoum we had meetings with the Sudanese Railway to talk about the project. From there we were sent to the Railway's works at Atbara, which is about 300 miles from Khartoum. I inspected a lot of locomotives, choosing 6 of the best boilers. Our agreement with Food Aid was for these boilers to be sent back to Port Talbot in south Wales to be repaired and Bob Geldof agreed to transport them on the empty ships that were coming back to England to be re-loaded after delivering food for Food Aid.

We first arrived in Khartoum at about 5pm and were taken to our hotel and told not to go out again because there was a curfew from 6pm to 8am in the morning. The next day we were taken to a meeting in Khartoum and given £500 in Sudanese money (which may sound a lot but a bottle of Lemonade would cost about £100 in their currency!) and told our work would be in Atbara. The railway company laid on their Directors saloon for us to travel in and we felt very privileged because it was very posh, unlike the rest of the train which left a lot to be desired with passengers clinging to the sides and the roof! It was very strange travelling on Sudan Railways because when the train stopped at a station people came along selling bananas, melons, pomegranates, oranges, tomatoes, other fruit and vegetables. It is against the law to drink alcohol and if caught you faced a long prison sentence. A doctor came along the train offering us a home made whisky but we politely declined! The toilets on the train were horrible too, no seat and just a hole in floor, not to mention very smelly! One of the trains we used from Atbara was in very poor condition. A pin in the brake rigging on one of the coaches had come off and was lost, with the brake rigging dragging along the ground, which meant that coach had no brakes! This would never have been allowed on British Rail! The train set off in the afternoon and to our surprise it did not go to Atbara but to a town called Shendi instead. Here we were taken to the town centre and shown the slave market, still in use then but thankfully now banished to history! From Shendi, we took a taxi across the desert to Atbara and the next day we were taken to the railway works to be shown the drawings of the locomotives we were to repair.

We found the works very interesting. Sudanese people who worked there did not go by car but by donkey and there were lots of these tied up to the railings outside the works! Outside the managers office there were big church like benches where women sat and waited to take messages around the works, for which they were paid per message. When walking through the works we met an armed guard and asked if ever used his gun, he replied yes and promptly fired it into the air, which as you can appreciate somewhat scared us! Because it gets hot in Sudan, work starts at 4am until noon, and then workers return home to sleep during the heat. The religion in Sudan is 75% Islam, 5% Christian and 20% other religions. At certain times of the day, people are called to prayer by a loud speaker system and they stop work, put their mats down, kneel and pray. At others times they are called to go to the mosque. We were surprised to find locomotives built in Scotland and sent out there many years ago. The Sudanese government had purchased American built diesel locomotives, however they were found to be too heavy for the railway infrastructure and this is why we had been asked to repair 6 of the steam locomotives.

The following day we took the train back to Khartoum and that evening were asked if we would like to attend a wedding for one of the workers in the Food Aid offices. We agreed and were taken to and from by police guards because of the curfew restrictions.

The next morning we left for Khartoum airport and the journey home. No Sudanese money is allowed to leave the country, so this had to be deposited in a bank account and we were searched by armed guards before we could leave.

On the flight home, I was invited to travel in the cockpit of the aircraft for part of the journey and whilst travelling through Egypt the Captain pointed out places of interest such as the Pyramids in the Valley of the Kings – an experience I will not forget. The following week we returned to Khartoum to start our repair work...

Xmas Quiz Answers

No. 1 Pictures – 7 ¼” Gauge – Eastbourne Miniature Steam Railway

No. 2 Pictures – 5” & 7 ¼” Gauge – Uckfield Miniature Railway Society at Bentley

No. 3 Pictures– 10 ¼” Gauge – South Downs Light Railway at Stopham

No. 4 Pictures– 2’ Gauge – Great Bush Railway, Tinkers Park at Hadlow Down

Ray

Forthcoming Events

As previously mentioned in the December edition, our first special day of the year will be on 10th May. Since the last newsletter it has been agreed by Committee that BBC newsreader and long time Bluebell Railway supporter Nicholas Owen will be attending to perform a re-enactment of the opening ceremony. Exact details and timings have yet to be finalised but as well as locomotives from each decade hopefully running and others on display, it has previously been agreed to have a ‘G’ scale layout in the car park and Organ, as per our special double heading day last year. A chance meeting at the Alexandra Palace show may also have spawned the opportunity to display a locomotive present and running on the opening day in 1954, which the owners have said they are happy to do. Final details regarding the day itself will be published in the April edition...

Beyond the 10th May, there are likely to be visits to / from Beech Hurst, plus the normal summer social events with details due to be finalised before the next edition of the newsletter and these will be published accordingly...

Andrew

Diary of Events

6th March 2014 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

3rd April 2014 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

5th & 6th April 2014 – First timetabled weekend of public running for 2014

1st May 2014 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

10th May 2014 – 60th Anniversary of the Track Opening Special – see above

5th June 2014 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

NB. Certain events may be organised at short notice and will not therefore appear in the newsletter. Please check black / notice boards in the clubhouse for details of such events.

Andrew

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Rear Cover picture: -

Afloat: As well as the high winds, the recent rainfall is evident from the picture – almost enough water to sail a model boat! This sentence closed the last newsletter and sure enough a couple of weekends ago we did have enough water (just) and could sail a model boat as pictured above! Thanks to Jack Pitt who just by luck had such a model in his car and luckily enough I had my camera too!