

BEECH HURST NEWS



Cover picture: -

On The Road Again: After a couple of months work Royal Scot 6159 'The Royal Air Force' steams again for the first time at Beech Hurst one warm sunny afternoon a few weeks ago. Please see my notes overleaf for details of our latest acquisition.

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Editor's Notes

Welcome to the beginning of the end! As the August Bank Holiday swiftly passes us by and we enter September the season will soon draw to a close and one wonders where summer has gone! After all the predictions of a hot and dry summer there were two weeks when it did get hot but apart from that there have been predominantly normal temperatures and for us that is good as it has scarcely been beach weather! Anyway at least the Bank Holiday looks set fair for all three days and that is quite a rarity too, so let's enjoy it whilst it lasts!

With the June edition now some two months past, it is on with the August one, which is mostly my own work. I had hoped to have John B's 'King' for the cover picture this time but it is not quite there yet and I can duly save that for the October edition, when I hope to have an article to accompany the snaps – thanks in advance John! The cover is therefore reserved for another locomotive that is new to the club – an original 3-cylinder 'Fowler' designed Royal Scot with 3500 gallon tender. It is one that Ray & I acquired a few months back and after several weeks working on it to seal things up and make her water tight she duly passed both a hydraulic and steam test and has since run a couple of times in revenue earning service, much to the delight of the previous owner who was thrilled to see her running again and doing what she was built to do. It is now our intention to make good some of the super structure during the winter months and hopefully come next year the locomotive will be a regular performer on the track once again and one which is a bit more of a challenge to drive than many of our current locomotives! Also in this edition there are write-ups and pictures on all the recent social events, a special award for the park, as well as an updated Diary of Events page, which is now current right through to New Year's Day. Towards the end there is also a special note that I have included regarding our upcoming 60th anniversary in 2011, which is worth a thought or two as time is a ticking on this one, so please read on and enjoy...

Andrew

Chairman's Notes

As the end of August draws near, we can start to reflect on the running season. With our last BBQ and last Bank Holiday imminent, only one month remains of the 2009 season, – how time does fly! Up to now, this year has run smoothly and compared to last year we have lost very few days to rain so far and our takings reflect this. We have been tremendously popular with private party groups – so much so, that I think we have to consider whether we continue this side of the operation. It was ok when we had 4 or 5 throughout the year, but this year it has escalated to about 20! Word of mouth and the 'grapevine' are working too well! As most of them have taken place in mid / late mornings it has meant that we've really not had much time to do that many other morning jobs, running repairs, fun runs etc... and it means sometimes asking members to steam for 4 – 5 hours, which is getting too much! In between the private groups we have, however, managed to enjoy some visits and been visited by one or two other clubs (see Andrew's articles for details).

Thanks too to our regular gardeners and hedge trimmers etc... and the club surrounds have always looked very tidy, despite us being so busy!

Steve T and Graham have continued work on the signal rewiring around the track and the clubhouse fascias, guttering etc... have at last been completed and look very smart.

With any monies remaining this season we plan to improve some other areas of the club infrastructure, continuing our theme of reducing maintenance and making life easier for our painting and decorating department.

Let's hope the weather holds, and enjoy September!

Mike

Summer Work

As Mike mentioned in his notes above, the exterior works that we have had undertaken this summer are now complete and the building is looking very respectable. When the June edition went to print there was still some work to finish and following on from that there were still some adjustments and making good to do before we were happy to sign the job off as done. This together with the 'birthday' that the club and dining rooms received back in June and we are very 'ship shape' again. There are still one or two jobs that we would like to get completed before the autumn really sets in and these will of course be reported in the first 'Winter Work' column in the October edition, along with our plans for the winter season and the works that are planned to be undertaken during that time.

Andrew

Recent Social Events...

Lavender Line Visit



With the June edition on the door mat at the end of the month, the visit to the Lavender Line on 2nd July missed the boat by just a few days! Following a visit by their members to Beech Hurst on the club night in June, we were reciprocally invited back to 'their place' for the July club night. A hot, sultry, but dry evening it was and a very enjoyable one too! 16 members made

the short trip east to Isfield and we all took it in turns to have a go on their 0-4-0 'Peckett' steam locomotive in the sidings, ride in their 'Thumper' unit which was going the full length of the line and also to have a look around the sheds and workshop. (See picture above of the 0-4-0 'Peckett' locomotive)



During the evening we were also kindly given a light ploughman's tea that went down very well, thank you! Latterly that evening we also had a look at their recently restored 'Wickham Trolley', complete with vintage Ford 'Prefect' engine, had short rides in the diesel hydraulic locomotive 'Valiant' and finally a full line trip in the ex. Departmental

Laboratory Vehicle No.20, also built by 'Wickham' and driven by a bus engine with semi-automatic gearbox! (**See picture above of the 'Thumper' unit**)

Being a small operation it takes on very much a family feel where everyone knows everyone, which is a refreshing change from many of the larger preserved railways where you know most people in your department, but not so many beyond. I think that I speak for everyone who went to Isfield to say that it was a really pleasant evening and through these pages I would like to pass on our sincere thanks to all those LLPS members who gave their time to show us around and to run trains for us too. It is hoped to arrange a similar visit next year, around the same time, so keep an eye on these pages for any updates.

Maidstone Take One



Following on from our adventures on full size locomotives it was back to all things 5 inch with the visit of Maidstone to Beech Hurst on July 18th. Due to illness and holidays there was a slightly depleted number of visitors this year, however the three 5" gauge locomotives that were able to visit our track, namely an LNER 'P2' (**see picture left**), an NER 'Netta' and a

BR 'B1', all coped admirably with our afternoon passenger service and apart from a chilly breeze, it was a very pleasant sunny day too. We had experienced signalling difficulties that morning and as a result were forced to run Saturday direction, which made a change for us and also our guests, who had for the last few years run Sunday direction to make passenger hauling that much easier.

Thanks go to everyone at our end who helped to set up and run the day, especially Val and John who provided an excellent spread as ever for lunchtime and also to our guests from Maidstone who made the trip to visit our track and also ran our passenger service virtually single handily during the course of the afternoon and we will of course look forward to welcoming them again next year.

Bowls Match



A couple of weeks later came our annual Bowls Match against the club next door. As with previous year's it was held on a Thursday evening, however due to prior commitments it was not the August club night this year, but the week before. A total of 14 members turned out for the evening and with a couple of non-bowlers we set up

with 12 of us either playing against each other, paired with a bowler or paired together and playing against two bowlers! We all played 10 'ends' and the results were evenly spread with a couple of losses and a couple of wins. Ian and I nearly pulled off an unlikely tie on our final 'end', requiring all 8 bowls closest to the jack, we got 6 out of the 8 to restore our score to a respectable 12-10 loss – nearly so nearly! The weather definitely played its part too, with a fine dry evening and just a little late dew on the grass to make the final 'ends' that much more unpredictable and hazardous! After the matches we then retired to their clubhouse to enjoy a drink from the bar, some light snacks and a general chat with our 'friends next door'. Thanks to all those who came along to 'have a go' and most importantly to all the bowlers who gave their evening to give us a game and have some fun at the same time, hopefully we can do something similar again next year. **(Picture above: Andrew discussing tactics with our mentor)**

Maidstone Take Two

After the visit of Maidstone on the 18th, we then took our turn to visit Mote Park in Maidstone on 8th August. This is their 80th year and as such, invitations to their open day were extended well beyond the usual few clubs that tend to visit every year. Speaking to some of their members on the day, there were in fact 15 clubs invited and I was glad to have arrived very early, anticipating a busy track. Having loaded 'Wharfedale' and all the 'kit' at the club I then set off to collect new junior member, Hamish Clark, also fellow junior member Adam Cro on the way to Maidstone and following a good run, and despite a small wrong turn into a shopping precinct in Maidstone we arrived a bit early at 09:30.



display there, but this was much more than I expected and really looked terrific. With time being of the essence, we swiftly unloaded and got 'Wharfedale' in steam to make best use of the track whilst it was clear. We were duly the first ones on and I was lucky to get half a dozen or so uninterrupted laps before other visitors began to arrive and join the track. After a spell I left the locomotive in the capable charge of Adam and Hamish and then mingled with the visitors, many of



who I knew and had met many times before. The remainder of the day passed off very well, engines came and went, and we finally retired at 14:00 when a shortage of driving cars meant a slightly premature end. We cleaned the locomotive down, loaded and then spent a couple of hours talking with members and visitors alike and enjoying what was a superb afternoon, in a nice location and with excellent company. This was only broken at 15:00 when there was a short speech by the Chairman and the ceremonial cutting of the cake to celebrate their 80th birthday. It was nice to see so many people had made the effort to attend, more than I have ever seen on one day before, and it is also a great credit to the Maidstone club for top notch organisation, not only on the track, but also in the kitchen to provide an excellent lunch as well as afternoon tea and cakes. Through these pages I would like to thank Maidstone for their unrivalled hospitality and I look forward to visiting next year, hopefully with one or two of my own! (See pictures: Top 'Wharfedale' and below 'Cake Cutting')

Well that is what I thought anyway! We were indeed the first visitors there, but some of the natives must have been setting up for a while as there was an array of 5" and 3 1/2" gauge locomotives on display on the grass in front of their clubhouse, along with several tables under a gazebo with a whole host of gauge 1 'beauties' and stationary steam engines on too. I guessed that there would be some kind of

display there, but this was much more than I expected and really looked terrific. With time being of the essence, we swiftly unloaded and got 'Wharfedale' in steam to make best use of the track whilst it was clear. We were duly the first ones on and I was lucky to get half a dozen or so uninterrupted laps before other visitors began to arrive and join the track. After a spell I left the locomotive in the capable charge of Adam and Hamish and then mingled with the visitors, many of

Crowborough Club Visit



Finally, last Sunday (23rd) we hosted a small visit by members of the Crowborough club, which was organised by Adam Cro who is a junior member with both us and Crowborough. In total three of their members visited our track, one with a 5" gauge 'Minx', another with a 5" 'B1' and finally one with a 5" 'Schools' (see picture

left). All three visitors enjoyed a morning run with their machines, although the 'Minx' had to come off prematurely after a lubricator failed, whilst the 'Schools' continued on into the afternoon until about 14:30 hauling several goodly loads on three 'Pullman' trucks – a very commendable effort! Although this was a one-off visit it was nice to see some different locomotives at the club and all three visitors enjoyed their run on track which was nice too. Being as Crowborough is also a local club I daresay that we would be able to organise something similar in the future should any of their members wish to re-visit Beech Hurst.

Andrew

Bristol Exhibition



The Bristol Hobbies and Model Engineering show is becoming a well established event in the ME calendar nowadays and this year's show was not to disappoint. In terms of trying to compare it to the larger venues, then you can't, but as a club organised ME show then it is well organised and there is plenty to keep you occupied for a good few hours. Held annually at

Thornbury Leisure Centre, near Bristol, the show is well situated for those who live in the South West and South Wales and as such attracts clubs from that locality who you wouldn't otherwise see at the national exhibitions. Compressed into two halls there was a good range of club stands with some excellent models, as well as most of the recognised traders too. (Pictured above: John's 'King')



Geoff took Nick and Daniel down in his car, whilst Andrew Strongitharm and myself went by train to Bristol Parkway and then by bus! At the show we also met John Baldwin who had his nearly finished 'King' on display. Just short of some last varnishing and the safety valve cover, the locomotive looked a picture and it will be very interesting to see the finished article at the club

very soon. The only downside being that it had been put on the table smokebox facing out and therefore obscuring any view of the cab detail and the tender. For such a small exhibition there was a really fine array of models on display, from LBSC's original 'Ayesha' locomotive, to an immaculate LNER V2 'Green Arrow' and a part-built SR West Country 'Padstow' to name but few. For those of you who have not been to the exhibition before then it is well worth taking a day next year to visit this one. It is not the biggest around, but it is almost entirely devoted to the ME hobby and therefore most stands will be of interest and being a little over two hours from Sussex is not so far to go either – almost as long as to Alexandra Palace!

Andrew

Green Flag



Many of you, I daresay, will have heard of 'Blue Flag' awards for beaches, well there is a similar thing for parks, called a 'Green Flag'. MSDC had won this award for Beech Hurst a few years ago, but try as they might, had failed to regain it for past couple of years. After some winter work and spring planting the park looked decidedly radiant earlier this year and

to the credit of MSDC they finally got their reward when they were informed that this year the park had met the required standards when judged in June. Mike & I work closely with the council on many issues in the park and we said that if they didn't make the grade this year then they never would! (**See picture above left**)

It is true to say that we are very privileged to have our railway in such a wonderful location and somewhere that the council care about so much and put a lot of time and money into keeping that way. Although the 'Green Flag' itself will not bring any massive change to the park, it is a big publicity tool to show that this park, above many others in the locality, is worth visiting and that can only be good for its long term future, as well as the many clubs, including ours, that use it. Hopefully the year 2010/11 will be equally successful and we can keep the flag flying (see outside the front of the park on a dashed tall white pole!).

Andrew

Ray's 50th Anniversary Evening

Following on from the June edition I was given the thank you note and photograph below from Ray and Sheila after they both enjoyed a very nice evening on the Bluebell Railway's Pullman train a couple of weekends ago and are seen pictured before departure in front of their 1st class coach 'Fingall'.

This proved to be a very special and enjoyable night out. Thank you all very much.



Ray & Sheila

Forthcoming Events

Just because the summer is drawing to a close doesn't mean to say that there isn't plenty going on at Beech Hurst and the following are expanded descriptions of Forthcoming Events as listed in the Diary of Events below.

Apart from the regular Club Night's listed we are also welcoming Chelmsford club for another visit on the 20th September during which we expect to have a variety of different locomotives running throughout the day, including our 1400 – 1700 passenger hauling slot. I just hope that we are blessed with better weather than we experienced during their last visit in May, which at best would be described as indifferent!

Moving into October and we will be visiting Malden club on Saturday 10th. This is an annual visit and is usually a very good day out. To assist with catering at their end and transport at ours, a list is being constructed on the blackboard in the clubhouse and all interested persons are asked to add their name to it ASAP so we can let Malden know the approximate numbers intending to visit.

Looking towards November and Bonfire Night is scheduled for 7th, which is closest to the actual day itself on the previous Thursday. As with previous years it is planned to provide baked potatoes, beans and cheese etc... and the theme is planned to be a reasonable representation of the Tower of London!

During December we have been invited, and are planning, to provide a display at the Sandown Park ME exhibition. After being unable to secure a place at the Bristol Show it would be nice to provide a display at this, 'our local', show! Quite a few people have so far indicated a desire to help man the stand during the weekend, which includes Friday 11th December, as well as Saturday and Sunday, 12th / 13th. Details will follow in the October edition and again all interested persons are asked to add their name to our growing list on the blackboard ASAP so we can start to make arrangements for this.

The following Saturday 19th is then planned to be the annual Nosh Night and although a little premature yet we will be asking for names for this during October so Val and John can start to prepare the food in good time. Details for this will follow in the October newsletter too.

Andrew

60th Anniversary

As a side to the above, but kind of related in subject, our 60th anniversary is just two years away now and any major decisions related to this need to be decided at next year's AGM, as 2011 will be too late. So if anybody has any ideas then it is proposed that I will collate all these for discussion at Committee, with the few most popular ones put forward for discussion at the 2010 AGM. Ideas can be anything and could involve individual or multiple days of celebration, including the public, privately for us or indeed both! I for one would like to see a big celebration involving us as a club and something for the public too, as I really feel that come 70 or 75 years the club will be very much different and it would be nice to celebrate those 60 years, as well as many of the members who have got us to where we are today and those of us who also keep the club going and are developing it for future generations to come. Ideas can of course be passed to me via the details on the front of this newsletter or I am at the club during most weekends if you'd prefer to speak in person.

Andrew

Diary of Events

3rd September 2009 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

20th September 2009 – Chelmsford Club to visit Beech Hurst at approx. 1000

1st October 2009 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

10th October 2009 – SMLS to visit Malden DSME, leaving approx. 0900

5th November 2009 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

7th November 2009 – Bonfire Night, including Potatoes, Beans, Cheese etc. 1800

3rd December 2009 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

11th – 13th December 2009 – SMLS display at ME Exhibition, Sandown Park

19th December 2009 – Nosh Night – Details TBC, will start at approx. 1800

1st January 2010 – New Year's Day Run – Details TBC, will start at approx. 1000

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

Sussex Miniature Locomotive Society Ltd



Rear Cover picture: -

Test Run: Further to the cover photograph the aforementioned locomotive is pictured during thorough testing one Sunday afternoon in mid-June to make sure everything is just as it should be! Later that day we let the train loose on the mainline and with about ½ ton in tow she performed well and has since proved to be very powerful in passenger traffic, especially so in the rain too. Mind you I know how heavy the locomotive is having helped carry it down a set of steep stairs!