

# **BEECH HURST NEWS**



## **Cover picture: -**

*Special Occasion:* 50 years on since the breaking of the tape on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1954 to open the original track, Allan Killick and Mike Porter re-enact the official opening of the track, with a ceremony on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2004. A report on the day and more pictures are included inside.

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## **Editors Notes**

Welcome to the latest edition of the newsletter. Quite a lot has gone on since the last edition, commencement of running has seen much activity at the club, special celebrations, special days and a lot of passengers too. Still at least the weather is behaving itself at the moment, rained off days tally only 1 so far and we have generally good weather throughout, if a little hot of late.

Thanks to the contributors to the last newsletter, Mike, Alan Temple and 'Us', know who they are.

On with this edition, thanks go to Chris for his number crunching article, Peter and Enid Marten for a jokes and quiz page, the Chairman for his notes and to 'Us' for the bulk of the writing this time. There is a short piece each about the 50<sup>th</sup> day and Brian's 'Big Boy' day and the 'planting' of a new railwayana sign by the carriage shed. There is also a write up on the two visits that have occurred recently, one home and one away, also please see the updated diary of events and add your name to the list for the Cockrow and Pinewood visit if you seriously want to go. Other than that, we hope it is an interesting read and please read on and enjoy...

**Andrew & Mark**

## **Last Call**

The club visit this year is planned for 11<sup>th</sup> July, when we will be visiting the tracks at the Great Cockrow (7 ¼") and at Pinewood (Nr. Bracknell 5" & 7 ¼"). A vintage coach has been booked for the trip and we therefore travel as a group. At present there are 20 names on the board, if any other member is interested, then please add their names to the list at the club or contact Andrew or Mark at the newsletter for more information or to add your name to the list (in the next 14 days max.). Cost is 10 pounds each and includes all travel and the visit to Cockrow etc... If it is anything like our trip to Fawley Hill last year, it was a very good day out, all we can hope for is decent weather!!

**Andrew & Mark**

## **Electronic Newsletter**

We hope that all those who regularly receive the news by e-mail are still finding the service acceptable. Please let either of us know if you are experiencing any problems with e-mailed news' or for that matter if you haven't received one by ordinary mail. For the 50+ we send out every other month by post, there are bound to be some which go missing from time to time and we always keep supplies of old news' for this reason, either that or we can print off a new copy from our existing archives.

**Andrew & Mark**

## **Chairman's notes**

The following notes are by definition a précis of events over the past couple of months, so please bear this in mind!

Our celebrations for our 50<sup>th</sup> year of public running, after a slow start, were ably handled by Mike Porter (in my absence). Allan Killick driving "Wharfedale" broke the tape after Mike had said a few words in honour of the day.

Brian's Big Boy had a day to itself hauling a jumbo length train (was it 55 passengers?)

As a special feature of certain running days the Ops Managers have suggested that double-headed trains consisting of 8 cars, running later in the afternoon, would be an added attraction for the public. This has been tried on several occasions and has proved a success.

The strip of grass between the running line and the siding from the back station towards the turntable is being laid with paving slabs. This will show its benefit in the wet weather when members will no longer have to endure trench warfare conditions to put the stock away.

Various railway signs continue to sprout along the trackside in the backfield. I think the pixies must be doing it!!

The presence of "Brewster's" in the park has undoubtedly brought us more passengers, the Saturday figures showing quite a rise. However I hope it is not linked to the following item.

The spectre of the yob culture may have caught up with Beech Hurst. It has been noticed that youngsters have been drinking and generally messing around in the vicinity of our clubhouse. Some have been spotted up on the carriage-shed roof but left when approached. Members are requested to take care when visiting the club "out of hours" as we do not wish to have a confrontation with these youngsters. The park ranger has been informed and she is passing this on to the police.

Our members visited the I.o.W. society at the end of April and made it into a weekend break with two days running on the track.

The I.o.W. and Pinewood societies visited us in early June. Thank you to Val for doing the catering.

Our visit to the Great Cockcrow Railway and Pinewood society has been arranged for July 11<sup>th</sup>. We will be picked up (pick up time to be finalised and will be posted on blackboard) by a RP90 (AEC Reliance) Greenline coach visiting the Cockcrow first. Here we are booked on the 13.15 "Gladesman" train. This train traverses all of the system, unlike the usual trains, which only do half the circuit. We then get back on the bus for the run to the Pinewood railway. After a couple of hours there we return to Beech Hurst arriving back approx 19.00. The all in fare to include coach and train tickets is £10. Names on the board please.

John Ely has reopened his garden railway after it has been extended over the last few months. John intends to have various open days and the dates will be posted on the blackboard.

**Don**

## New Hardware



Following the 'planting' of our new SR 'Trespassing' sign the second of the two Cast Iron signs that have been purchased has now been 'planted' by the carriage shed. Displaying SR 'Beware of Trains' white on red (**See Picture Left**), it does look very smart and helps to set off that part of the railway, whilst remaining as conspicuous as possible. We have made it as hard to remove as possible, but you never

know. We are now just looking for one or two more Cast Concrete gradient posts, like the one on the 'Nursery' straight which make the railway very, well 'railway' like and make a change from Mileposts!!

**Andrew & Mark**

## Big Boy Day



With May now well behind us, it is possible to reflect back on the two special days that we planned. Brian's 'Big Boy' is definitely a celebrity engine, with many people asking about it and on 22<sup>nd</sup> May we planned another 'Big Boy' day with a special long train. Similar to last year's event Brian hauled 8 cars during the main 1400-1630 running slot and then at 1630 took 13 cars for double laps. With a couple of other trains

threaded in between for variety, it once again proved very popular, with people keen to ride behind 'Big Boy' and also keen to experience the long train at the end. It took 3, 13 car trains to clear the queue at the end, but was nevertheless another popular day, with engine performing well throughout, hopefully another similar event can be planned for this year or next. Thanks go to all those who helped out on the day, TC's, Guards, Drivers etc, etc... (**Picture Above**: Dave at the controls of 'Big Boy' posing for a picture with 'Scamp', prior to the 'Big' train).

**Andrew & Mark**

## 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Opening of the Track

Along with the 'Big Boy' day was a special celebration of 50 years since the opening of the original ¼ mile track on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1954.



With Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2004 falling as it did, it was thought that it would be an ideal opportunity to celebrate the original breaking of the tape. We planned to start at 1200 and run till 1700 with as many different engines running during the day as possible. Then at 1630 we planned a 'long' train that would consist of 3 or 4 engines and 17 cars.

The day actually dawned cool and cloudy and with a little rain in the morning things did not look so good. Starting at 1200 proved quiet and things didn't really get going until about 1500, when a few more people turned out and the weather finally decided to try to dry up a bit. The breaking of the tape was conducted by Allan Killick our oldest (serving) member, with a short few words by Mike Porter to precede the official tape ceremony. As it was the picture on the cover is the second breaking of the tape, as the Mid Sussex Times photographer narrowly missed out on the official breaking at 1500 and it was decided to replicate the event for the purpose of publicity. Running continued steadily until 1600, when we started to set up the train for the 'Big' train.

Consisting of 17 passenger cars, plus three additional driving cars for the 4 engines it is as bigger train as we can muster. Headed by Vince's L1, followed by Peter Marten's 'K' and Ray's 'Martlett' and bringing up the rear Phill Creelman driving 'Wharfedale' providing the motive power. With the station filling up, the first train prepared to leave with a total of 66 passengers and



crew aboard. The heavy train got going with some ease and continued to make good progress all the way round, continuing for a second lap for the price of one. The second train (**Pictured**) had a total of 64 passengers and crew, the final train had about 50-something. Despite the slow start and inclement weather, the final three trains made up for that and proved a fine sight for the public and something different for the members too. After the day was over

and the public were long gone, 11 of us went to Brewster's for an evening meal, something different from Fish & Chips and a good way to end an excellent day. Thanks again to everyone involved, TC's, Drivers, Guards, Station crew and helpers. Day's like the 8<sup>th</sup> prove very difficult to arrange and publicise, but are well worth the effort and enjoyable for everyone.

**Andrew & Mark**

### **Visit to Beech Hurst by IoW, Maidstone & Pinewood**

Our first and possible only visitors to Beech Hurst this year were members from IoW, Maidstone and Pinewood societies. The visit planned for 5<sup>th</sup> June is a week earlier than normal, but a good few visitors and engines made the trip. There was no representation from Ascot this year with the dissolution of the society in 2003 and also problems with the proposed new track at Ascot Racecourse, likewise only Geoff Riddles, with his freelance 5" 4-6-4 outline engine,

was able to attend from the Maidstone club as they have recently suffered at the hands of thieves and had a substantial quantity of track stolen, which has led to much time being utilised trying to replace the rail, a problem which we hope never happens at Beech Hurst.

Other than Ivan Hurst, the remaining 4 visitors from Pinewood were making debut appearances at Beech Hurst and brought with them, Ivan's Class 33 and a 5" 'Growler', much like ours but with a better colour scheme and much better whistle. From the IoW came John De Bank's 'Elidir' narrow gauge engine and 'Toby' the tram, a multi gauge battery outline, one for the kids to enjoy!! It has to be said that John's 'Elidir' ran faultlessly for over 2 hours during passenger time, no signs of lubricator problems this year!! There was also a 3 1/2" LBSCR 'Atlantic' engine from the IoW, which also ran faultlessly for several hours, including some light passenger work too!!

Having an almost open type visitor day certainly seems to work well, giving other societies the chance to visit, whilst still being able to socialise while they are here. It also helps us, as we can get quite tight for crew at this time of year and with the high increase in passenger numbers this year, it is necessary to be able to cope with large numbers of rides as well as visiting engines. The day itself went very well, with the weather being fine and warm and everyone having a good time and all the engines behaving themselves. The visiting members then enjoyed afternoon tea and snacks, thanks to Val and John West for the catering and also to all those who helped TC, Ass. TC's etc... We have already enjoyed a very good day at the IoW track, we are going to visit Pinewood for the first time in July and then hopefully there is the Southern Fed' rally at Maidstone in September, which would be well worth a visit too.

**Andrew & Mark**

### **Visit to IoW – 25<sup>th</sup> April**

Our annual visit to the IoW track went very well again this year, with unusually summer like weather. The visit to Broadfields has been an annual day out for many years now, however a developer has expressed an interest in developing the site on which the track now stands, indeed development has gradually been encroaching for the past couple of years and whether the club



stays at the present site for the foreseeable future remains to be seen. With Dave, James and Vince already on the Island, Andrew, John Gange, Geoff and Bob Youldon who came over for a day trip joined them. Motive power for the day was provided by East Grinstead's 'G2X' loco (**See Picture Left**), James' 'Scamp' and Vince's 'Julianne'. This weekend was billed as a special 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the death

of Don Young, with models built to Don's designs particularly welcome, running or in the process of completion.



Normally the rally is held only on the Sunday, but with the Don Young theme in mind it was spread over two days, but from what people were saying on the Sunday, the Saturday was very quiet anyway, with most people attending the traditional Sunday rally. Running started early this year with Andrew and John arriving about 0930, to meet with the others who were living in a caravan for the weekend. Geoff and Bob joined up

with us later on. In fact all three engines were in steam simultaneously and were gracing the track before it got too busy. **(See Picture Above with Dave at the controls of 'Scamp')**

Looking at the steaming bays it seemed that time on the track would be at a premium and times were to be rationed, but as it was, several failures (people specialising in pushing the loco most of the way round rather than it hauling them) and an unfortunate gentleman from Andover who came all that way with no boiler certificates, only to be told no cert's, no run, meant we got away with a good 3 hours each on the track which coincided nicely with lunch being served, time to take a break and observe the comings and goings, of which



there were many. The food is always top notch and enjoyed by all. After lunch attention turned to the boating pool where Geoff's Tug **(See Picture Left, note the 5" 'Crampton' locomotive in the background, also the encroaching housing development)** and Dave's steam boat were in action for while, until Dave's runs out of gas and Geoff having a broken servo, making the boat do a 'merry dance' round the pool. It is nice at

the visits to be able to walk around and socialise with members of other societies without being tied down to driving all day. Andrew and John had to leave by 1530 to catch the 1600 boat back, followed a little later by Geoff and Bob Youldon. The others planned to stop on until Monday and come back then. All in all, it was another excellent visit to the island, great hospitality, catering and genuine friendliness. Hopefully the club will remain at their present location, which although compact, has matured very well over the past 5 years or so and is a really nice location to visit.

**Andrew**

## 50 Years of Passenger Hauling

This May we celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our first passenger running season.

Having crunched the numbers for many years, taking over from Alan Gettings, I am astounded at the amount of work we have put in to running the service all these years. In the news I have written many times about the numbers of passengers we carry, but not so much about the trains, and the track. In this, our 50<sup>th</sup> year we will have carried well in excess of 1,100,000 passengers, in fact the 1.1Mth was carried just before anniversary day, and the 1,111,111th is next!

According to the lap counter fitted to the signal panel in the clubhouse, each year we clock up between 7 and 10 thousand train laps. Assuming that 7,000 of these represent revenue service trains we have amassed about 350,000 train laps, or 147,000 train miles. Now, when you lift a passenger car seat, you can see why the wheels are a bit worn!

Each year there is a natural core of passenger service locos, some of which have given service for up to 25 years. What is their mileage? Maybe up to 600 miles a year, that makes a total of 15,000 miles! I know that in recent years some locos have been fitted with mile counters, so their owners will be able to confirm this. I believe that last year one of our Electric locos reached 1,000 miles in the season.

Now the silly statistics.

If each passenger weighs an average of 1cwt (50Kg) we have moved 55,000 tons of passenger.

If all the train journeys were laid end to end they would stretch more than halfway to the moon or nearly 6 times round the world!

With all the fun running, testing, and track servicing I expect that figure would be nearer to 7 times round the world. Feeling giddy yet?

I wonder how much coal and oil we have used? I don't keep count, but I guess the records will tell us one day. Water, 2 pints per lap? We have boiled about 36,750 gallons.

These statistics bring some meaning to the wear and tear characteristics of the track, and the rolling stock.

What does not appear in all these figures is the wear and tear on the drivers and the guards.

What of the track? The original railway was laid on brick piers with old railway sleepers, and rail with loads of thin packing. In the late 60s and early 70s all that was replaced with steel girder on brick piers. This second track had the rail laid on sleepers much as it is today. At the time of the extension a great deal of thought was given to the track design, the result of which is the track we see today. This has had it's rail replaced probably three times. Regrettably one batch of short lived "soft" rail was drawn by mistake which had to be quickly relegated to the 3 ½" and the second hand market.

What of the future?

Will someone come up with a rail that doesn't wear away, perhaps bearings that won't fail, or perhaps an oil that stays inside the bearing rather than escaping to run all over the engine!



I guess that one of our problems will be the loss of Creosote as a sleeper preservative, we know that most of the modern preservation systems leaves the wood in a very brittle condition. Perhaps we can come up with a moulded sleeper using re-cycled plastic?

I for one would like to see a scale multi cylinder Diesel engine (yes engine, not loco) fitted to a 5" loco.

Any way I can't see into the future so it will be a matter of "wait and see" and hope that there are not too many nasty surprises waiting for us.

At the present rate of popularity, we will be carrying our 2 millionth passenger sooner than you might think!

**Chris Saunders**

**EdNo.**

Thanks for that Chris, with that in mind is incredible how much time and effort is put into keeping the railway the way it is and all the running that goes on. I am sure that the 'fun' running that goes on must be well within reach of the passenger mileage, particularly in the last few years, with a few new engines and members too, maybe this is part of the reason for the worn out trucks as much as anything else? However despite the extra maintenance it is still very good fun and long may it continue...

**Andrew & Mark**

### **BBQ Evening**

As an extra little reminder, is that we are holding another of our 'Bring Your Own' BBQ evenings on 3<sup>rd</sup> July. We provide the heat, you provide the nosh and also there is usually plenty of running to be had during and late on into the evening, as long as the weather is kind?? The fire is lit about 1830, so cooking commences from 1845ish or thereabouts, depending on who is in charge of the lighting!! (No 'Boy Scout' BBQ's here!).

**Andrew & Mark**

Continuing our jokes page, we received this from Enid Marten for the June edition, which is quite good and below is a quick quiz we received from Peter Marten, answers to be found at the end.

**Andrew & Mark**

### **Smart Blonde joke**

A blonde walks into a bank in Edinburgh and asks to see the Manager. She says she's going to Hong Kong on business for two weeks and needs to borrow £5,000

The Manager says the bank will need some kind of security for the loan, so the blonde hands over the keys to a new Ferrari. The car is parked on the street in front of the bank, she has the title and everything checks out.

The bank agrees to accept the car as collateral for the loan. The Manager and the tellers all enjoy a good laugh at the blonde for using a £200,000 Ferrari as collateral against a £5,000 loan. An employee of the bank then proceeds to drive the Ferrari in to the bank's underground garage and parks it there.

Two weeks later, the blonde returns, repays the £5,000 and the interest, which comes to £15.41. The Manager says, "Madam we are very happy to have had your business, and this transaction has worked out very nicely, but we are a little puzzled. While you were away, we checked you out and found that you are a millionairess. What puzzles us is why would you bother to borrow £5,000?"

The blonde replies "Where else in Edinburgh can I park my car for two weeks for only £15.41 and expect it to be there when I return?"

(A smart blonde joke at last!)

**Enid Marten**

### **Quick Quiz**

1. How long did the Hundred Years War last?
2. Which Country makes Panama hats?
3. From which animal do we get catgut?
4. In which month do Russians celebrate the October revolution?
5. What is a Camel's hair brush made of?
6. The Canary Islands in the Pacific are named after what animal?
7. What was King George VI's first name?
8. What colour is a purple finch?
9. Where are Chinese gooseberries from?
10. What is the colour of the black box in a commercial airplane?

**Peter Marten**

## **Diary of Events**

1<sup>st</sup> July 2004 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

3<sup>rd</sup> July 2004 – Mid-Summer 'Bring Your Own' BBQ evening, from 1830.

11<sup>th</sup> July 2004 – Special club visit to Great Cockrow & Pinewood Tracks.  
(See attached news piece), details, times & transport **TBC**.

5<sup>th</sup> August 2004 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

28<sup>th</sup> August 2004 – End of Summer 'Bring Your Own' BBQ evening. **TBC**.

2<sup>nd</sup> September 2004 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

18<sup>th</sup> September 2004 – Southern Fed' Rally at Maidstone. Details **TBC**.

**\*\*We are hoping to have several visits this year to other clubs, so please keep an eye on these pages or on the notice board at the club, as it is not always possible to publish dates in these pages 2 months before.\*\***

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**

## **Answers to Quick Quiz**

1. 116 years.
2. Ecuador.
3. Sheep & Horses.
4. November.
5. Squirrel Fur.
6. Dogs.
7. Albert.
8. Crimson.
9. New Zealand.
10. Orange of Course!

How many did you get right, no cheating!!

**Peter Marten**