

Sussex Miniature Locomotive Society Ltd

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BEECH HURST NEWS



Cover picture: -

Special Article: As part of our 60th year celebrations and to tie in with our recent special weekend, Peter Marten kindly undertook an interview with our local newspaper 'The Mid Sussex Times'. Pictured above is a super article and pictures that appeared the following week.

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Editor's Notes

It is with a sigh that I write these notes on this dark and damp August evening, knowing that this coming weekend (the Bank Holiday one) is about the beginning of the end for our 2011 running season. September will come and go just like that and we will be left to reflect on a busy but very fruitful 57th operating year. From the Treasurer's corner it will have been nothing special, although the continuing debt crisis has much to do with this, as well as the many other activities all vying for people's money.

I hope the last issue was a good read and many thanks to everyone, including Andrew S & Ray for their respective pieces and Andrew S & Linda for the many pictures too. It was hoped that the 60th DVD would be available in time for this issue, however in order to include some last minute footage this will now be delayed until the October or December editions, as time permits.

In this edition, there are the usual articles, reports from our first BBQ evening, our visit to Colchester club and our annual bowls evening, also our 60th special weekend a fortnight ago, as well as an article by Andrew S on his continued progress with Dougal and a fully updated Diary of Events to the beginning of 2012 (lots to look forward to), so please read on and enjoy...

Andrew

Chairman's Notes

August is racing by! It has not been so hot this year, but we have been lucky to avoid any wet days when we have run passenger services and takings have been steady – much in line with last year.

Continuing on our busy theme this year, we have had visits by some members to Colchester and the Bristol Exhibition, an evening of bowls with our friends next door and, by the time you read this, our second BBQ of the season. Also, last weekend (13th / 14th August) we had a great time treating our customers to a special 60th birthday fare of 50p (½ price) for the weekend. Needless to say, it has kept us busy, but I know we all enjoyed the challenge! On the Saturday we ran 8 locos with short trains and on the Sunday we put out 3 long, double-headed ones. Both days were busy and Sunday saw us carrying 1100 passengers during the afternoon. I think this is the most since the days of the old 50p 'regular' fare. I wouldn't want to do that everyday, but now and again it makes it an interesting and fun day. So that was really the last event to celebrate our 60th year! Thanks to all those who took part and worked hard to make both days a great success. Everything went smoothly, no failures, no rain and no mishaps! We have some video of the event and hope to include some snippets on the 60th DVD which is nearing completion & a copy will be sent out to everyone by the end of the year.

With just a month or so to go of this running season, I hope you will help to keep the service going and put your name in the book if you have time to spare for the last few weekends. Lots of us are either working or 'holidaying' at this time of year and staff are harder to come by for the 'Ops' Managers. Thank you in advance.

Mike

Celebrating 60: August Special at Beech Hurst

Each of our major anniversary milestones have been celebrated in one form or another and following our dining train back in June it was felt that the 60th should be no exception. Held back until August, so as not to coincide with our earlier celebrations, and to make sure most of our regulars could be involved, the weekend we chose was the 13th / 14th. I had previously sown some seeds with our local paper, The Mid Sussex Times (known hereafter as The Middy!); regarding the possibility of covering such an event as this was a special year for us. At the same time I also asked the question with Peter Marten regarding the possibility of an interview with The Middy to accompany such an article and with reference to Peter's 60th book. With everything in place we got a slot in the paper the week before to advertise our event and then a super double page spread article the following Thursday as a fitting finale to this (see also cover picture).

The format of the weekend had been finalised a week or so previously and consisted of as many trains as possible running on the Saturday and then 3 double-headed trains on the Sunday. A display of locomotives would also be on show round the back of the clubhouse for passengers to view whilst passing by. Fares would be halved for this weekend to our previous debt crisis busting 50p!

Saturday started damp but the forecast was for it to go only one way and sure enough, come the afternoon it was dry, warm and sunny. We managed 8 trains in total (3 steam and 5 electric) and during the afternoon shifted nearly 800 passengers. It was nice to see so many regulars enjoying their rides as well as many others, and we were lucky that everything went without a hitch!



Sunday was better still with the weather being on its best behaviour again. This time we ran 3 double headed trains (2 by 2 steam and 1 by 2 electric) and we also managed to get all passenger carrying trucks into service! As a bonus we also lit 'Wharfedale' up to head a mini freight train that would surface from the siding as passenger train

paths permitted, trundle round for a lap or two before going back to the siding once more! I am not sure whether Mike W knew what he was in for as the afternoon commenced but it soon became clear that it was not going to be a 'run-of-the-mill' Sunday! He and Roy P stacked and packed for almost 3 hours with most trains running round well loaded and by the end we had moved nearly 1100 passengers! **(Picture above: Peter C & Nick with a typically good load!)**

It has to be said that although a lot of work, the weekend was definitely well worth it and proof enough that we can still organise a good special event.



The weather certainly helped and although I can't thank it directly, I would like to think that the sun was shining especially for us! I can however thank everybody who helped to plan and carry out the weekend, also to our local newspapers, The Middy and The Leader for the advertisements they gave us, and especially to

Dianne Jones at The Middy and Peter Marten who together wrote a really lovely article for the paper, which was a pleasure to read. Here's to our 70th...!

(Picture above: The freight train in operation during the afternoon)

Andrew

Recent Social Events



Following our Pullman train, we then held our first BBQ of the year back at the beginning of July. The evening went off very well and once again we were lucky to have a fine and dry evening if not as warm as previous ones. Light up was at 18:00 and whilst the BBQ was prepared there were trains still running round and others being

prepared. I think it is fair to say that we don't necessarily run as many trains as we once did on these evenings because more often than not it is hard to cook and eat your food whilst looking after the needs of your locomotive too!

Nevertheless, there was activity in the form of 'Growler' 'Michael Faraday' and Dave M's 3 1/2" gauge 'Bantam Cock' locomotive, and these combined with the usual chit-chat still made for a very pleasant evening.

Thanks as ever to Val & John for the food preparation and puddings etc..., also to everyone else who helped during the evening with track duties, washing up and clearing away etc... As Mr Tesco would say 'every little helps'!

(Picture above: The BBQ, having just been lit, is still a bit smoky as Mike Wakeling is finding out! In the background is 1 of 3 'announcing' cones used during the course of the evening!)



(Picture left: Roy P receives some last minute advice before setting off with Dave M's V4 locomotive during the BBQ run)

Three Saturdays later was then our first visit of 2011 from Beech Hurst, to Colchester. A chance meeting at the Alexandra Palace show earlier this year spawned the possibility of a visit and

since then arrangements were made and dates fixed for visits to / fro. Speaking with our friends from Chelmsford who visited back in May we got the impression of a very friendly and welcoming club. And so this proved as we pulled up early on the Saturday morning to be greeted at the gate and then given a guided tour of the site. In terms of size, the site is no more than a couple of hundred feet wide by maybe three or four hundred feet long and is surrounded on three sides by housing and the fourth by open playing fields. Set as it once was to the west of Colchester town, development has gradually encroached over the years and it now lies firmly within town limits! Despite the small foot print of the site it is amazing what has been created. There are 2 tracks, one elevated 3 ½" and 5" and the other ground level 5" and 7 ¼". The raised tracks total about 1300 feet in



two circuits, which run parallel for much of their length before crossing over / under each other at the northern end of the site – a kind of folded over figure of 8 if you like! The ground level is then laid around the perimeter of the site with double track running to a distance of 1100 feet, complete with goods yard and fully operational / interlocked semaphore signalling! Bequeathed some money a number of years ago, the club are in the fortunate position to be financially secure without the need to run for the public, which they don't. The clubhouse is equally pleasant and the site is very well cared for (picture left).

Mike Wakeling, Norman, Andrew S, Laurie & I were the visitors and we took 'Wharfedale' and the Pump Trolley as our motive power. Keen to get steam up we unloaded ASAP and set about getting on the track, the Pump Trolley being first on in a matter of minutes!



'Wharfedale' started out on the ground level circuit (**picture left**) and the Pump Trolley on the raised, and we all took it in turns to have a go whilst mingling with the locals and generally having a nice time! Stephen H then arrived a little while later having come up from Hampshire on the train and was in time to place an order for fish and chips, which was to be our lunchtime meal! As we ate, 'Wharfedale' continued on the ground level, this time with a mixed goods train, and shortly afterwards we moved her to the raised track and ran for an hour or so longer before it was time to head for home.

As we said our thank you and goodbyes there was time enough to reflect on a really nice day out and the extremely friendly and warm welcome we received at Colchester, and I trust they will share those thoughts when they come to us later in September.

Through these pages I would very much like

to thank Colchester for their unrivalled hospitality and for making us feel so welcome at their track. Also, to those of us who went and made the visit possible, which is important as it gives us a glimpse into the world of other societies and the way they do things, ideas which we can look at to make our club better.

Next, on the August club night, we had our annual bowls evening! Once again our team was well supported and 11 of us took on 13 bowlers for 12 'ends' on the green. Because of the way the 'pairings' work there are normally 2 of us against another 2 on the same rink, with 2 'professionals' on each side to help! None of the 3 matches ended closely, with either one team or other proving vastly superior! Earlier rainfall also made conditions a little tricky, although it wasn't quite the case that there was spray coming off the bowls!

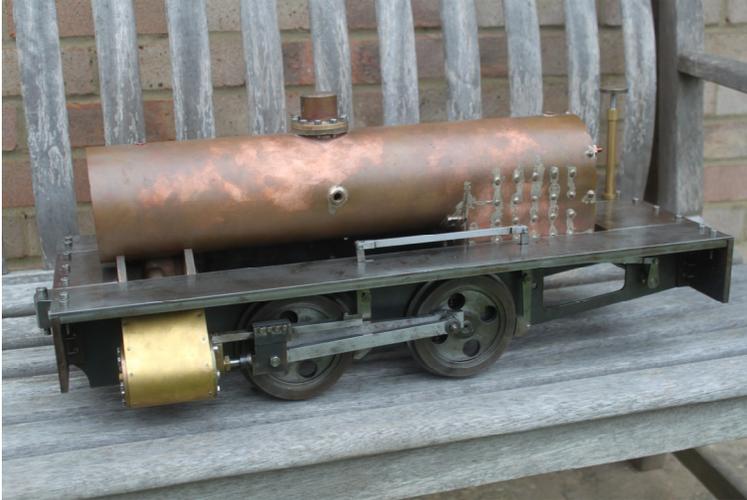
Afterwards we retired to their bar for drinks and snacks, and it was a very pleasant end to the evening chatting with our friends from next door! I would like to thank the bowlers for organising the event and their hospitality afterwards, also to everyone who volunteered to bowl and made the evening possible.

Andrew

Building a 5" W&L Dougal

I am now practically 12 months into building the chassis and out of those 12 months it has taken me just ten to achieve an air running chassis and two to complete the brake gear! After studying the drawings carefully, we noticed that there was something wrong with the actuation of them. They showed screwing the hand brake anti-clockwise to put the brakes on and clockwise of take them off again - the opposite way to how they would normally be.

Thanks to John Gange, we were able to borrow the correct size left hand taps and die, and after many hours of filing and rounding of fork ends, finally the brake linkage is now all together and just about working. Believe me there were many times when I thought the brakes would never be finished!



(Picture above: Dougal seen two weeks ago with brake stanchion, brake rigging and recently machined running plates visible)

During this time however, I have also machined the running boards, footplate and smoke box plate out of 3/8th steel plate, including a fake valance along the entire length of the loco! Similarly to how the side tanks will be, this was to add extra weight to the overall loco and save using any fiddly brass angle for the valances!



In addition to everything listed above, we have also fabricated, from scratch, two draw hooks for the loco, with rounded ends. This was done, not by file (for a change) but out of solid round bar, the same radius that was needed for the ends. With these now added to the loco, the opportunity was taken to test it round the track, not by pushing but

by taking Andrew's air compressor with us on a truck!

This was very successful, so much so that no photographic evidence exists of the testing taking place (in other words, I forgot!). It means that it may have to be repeated once the regulator is finished!

The air tank did however need to be 're-fuelled' at strategic points around the track. Running the old Saturday direction these were the station, flamestore and long tunnel but unfortunately from the tunnel back to the station was just too far and some 'human assistance' was required to get us home!

(Picture above: One of the two draw hooks machined out of a piece of 3 inch stainless bar. The stainless bolts and coupling pins were made at the same time; however the socket cap bolts on the top holding part of the running plate down will be replaced later!)

Now the chassis is just about finished, all that remains to do before we can throw a fire in it is attach the boiler and associated fittings to complete the loco. This began at the start of August by drilling three holes in the smoke box, one for the main steam pipe into the valve chest, one out (i.e. the blast pipe) and one directly



above that (the chimney!). These revealed the holes already drilled and threaded in the port and saddle block below, so a start could be made on making the blast pipe etc... As with all engines this size, there is hardly any room in the smoke box, which is probably why the drawings show a blast pipe a good two thirds up the smoke box and no petticoat pipe. We have therefore decided to shorten the blast pipe to a more normal level, in line with the top row of tubes, and somehow (we haven't got that far yet) fit a petticoat pipe which doesn't interfere too much with the front end of the regulator assembly. This is why we have left the option open to increase the height of the blast pipe if, on the off chance, our modification has a severe impact on the locos steaming.

(Picture above: The smoke box, with blast pipe, blower ring and separate blower nozzle (currently 3/16th but can be changed to suit) in situ)

As already mentioned, the smoke box has to contain part of the regulator assembly as this has to line up with the top of the inlet pipe to the valve chest. We have also slightly altered the design of the regulator to reduce the amount of space required in the smoke box and to make it easier to take apart quickly and all in one piece. We are also making greater use of 'O' rings to seal some of the steam pipes including one to seal the regulator itself, something that neither of us have seen or tried on a loco before. The regulator rod will be encased in a larger copper tube with a flat disk on the end of it. This disk will hopefully just push up against a 1/4 ID 'O' ring which is held inside a counter bore on the end of the main regulator body protecting the 3/16th pipe into the steam chest. Hopefully, in the next week or so, we will know if this is a success!

Andrew S

Forthcoming Events

As previously mentioned, much of our season is now over and done with, and we are very much headed for the winter work season once again. That said, the Diary for the forthcoming 4 months or so is still very full...

During the running season, we still have visits to come from Colchester and Maidstone on the 17th September and 1st October respectively.

Then on 15th October there is a scheduled match with the Pentanque Club. Exact timings are still to be confirmed but a list of those who wish to play will be up on the blackboard in the clubhouse from this weekend.

Bonfire Night has then been arranged for Saturday 29th October. This date has been picked so as not to coincide with 5th November itself when there will be many other displays going on in the area. The format will be similar to previous years with light up at about 18:00, followed by Potatoes, Beans, Cheese and Puddings from about 18:30 and then fireworks from 19:30. A list will be put on the blackboard during September and if you are planning on coming then do please add your name so we can correctly estimate food requirements.

It has also been decided that we will display again at both the Sandown Park and Alexandra Palace exhibitions in December and January respectively. Although somewhat off yet, we do need a commitment of people and models for these shows in order to give them the official green light. Lists will be on the blackboard in the clubhouse after this weekend and again if you are interested in helping out then please add your name and / or model to the lists and we can then assume your attendance. Transport arrangements etc..., will be made nearer the time once we have confirmation from the organisers.

Finally, there is our New Year's Day run on the 1st January 2012. Again, slightly premature at this stage but the date has been agreed so it seemed prudent to add this to the Diary ASAP. It has also been decided that our Nosh Night dinner will be permanently moved to become a New Year's Day lunch instead. After two bad winters and two Nosh Night's all but cancelled due to snowfall it was agreed that the lunchtime buffet on New Year's Day last year was definitely the way forward and because of the timing should make it accessible to most members. It also ties in well with the day's running and provides an extra social side to the day for those not out and about on the track. Final details for this will be provided in the October or December editions once they have been agreed.

Andrew

Diary of Events

1st September 2011 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

17th September 2011 – Colchester club visit to Beech Hurst from 1000

1st October 2011 – Maidstone club visit to Beech Hurst from 1000

6th October 2011 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

15th October 2011 – Pentanque Match at Beech Hurst – details & times TBC

29th October 2011 – Bonfire Night + Potatoes, Beans, Cheese etc... from 1800

3rd November 2011 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

1st December 2011 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900

9th, 10th & 11th December 2011 – SMLS to display at Sandown Park Exhibition

1st January 2012 – New Year's Day run & lunchtime meal – details & times TBC

20th, 21st & 22nd January 2012 – SMLS to display at Alexandra Palace Exhibition

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: -

Special Occasion: With our special weekend on the 13th & 14th August in mind, I'll finish with a picture of many of the Saturday crew (Andrew S is behind the lens!) posing in front of most of our exhibition line up prior to the commencement of running.