

# BEECH HURST NEWS



**Cover picture: -**

*All Aboard:* The Sussex Clubs Day held this year at Chichester proved to be a very popular and well attended event from many clubs. Pictured is one of John Ely's sons, James, riding in the 7 ¼" petrol locomotive. A full report and pictures appear inside.

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## **Editors Notes**

As another season draws to a close, it gives us a chance to reflect on what has been another good year. It has certainly gone quickly, by the time the next edition is published, it will be damn near Christmas and 2004 will be upon us. As we write these notes Autumn is gradually setting in outside, dark by 1900, leaves falling from the trees and plenty of Autumn breeze. Given the fact it is still dry though we have been exceptionally lucky with the weather this year, with virtually no wet, wet days, although it could be said on too many occasions it has been too good!

Thanks must firstly go to all those who contributed to the August edition, which was quite a bulky edition, with articles from John Ely, Mike P & John De Bank, along with the regular columnists + ourselves doing a few of our own.

This edition is quite slim in comparison, with most of the articles by either Andrew or Mark, with Mike Porter writing a couple of pages about the season as a whole and the Big Boy special back in August. There is also a small piece donated by Ray, which is quite amusing about the US navy. With the winter now upon us, there will be the re-introduction of the Winter Work pages next time to give an update on the work in progress at the club during the work season and also reports on the social events taking place during the winter. Although the Diary of Events is very much reduced this time, it is well worth noting that there maybe social events arranged at short notice that do not appear in the Diary and that it is well worth checking at the club as events will be advertised on the blackboard in the normal way as and when they are organised. This applies particularly to the Nosh Night which is still to be arranged and details will be finalised ASAP.

For those of you who have opted to have this newsletter delivered by e-mail then I hope it arrives on time and to your satisfaction, if not please contact either Andrew or Mark and we will try to sort out any problems. Regarding the website, it is hoped to have this updated ASAP, with new pictures and the opening of the Brewsters restaurant and hopefully the ability to download the news straight from the members page, we will keep you posted on this progress and let you know when it has been updated. But for now, please read on and enjoy...

**Andrew & Mark**

## **Chairman's notes**

The running season closes with the news that we have had the second best year financially in our history. This is despite the public possibly being put off by all the building work going on at the front of the park. Your committee did have reservations about the temporary loss of public parking spaces affecting fares but due to special days and the efforts of members we managed an excellent year.

The new Brewsters restaurant has opened (6<sup>th</sup> Oct) just at the end of our running season. This new facility is an improvement on the old restaurant and hopefully will benefit our railway. Brewster's is geared towards families and has a children's play area within the building. The downside, of course, is that we could be more liable to vandalism as more people will be in the park during the week! The club is now the proud owner of a new locomotive, a Metropolitan Railway

“Growler”. This is a 5-inch gauge Dan Jeavons battery electric loco that was purchased after the original buyer (I believe) passed away. The club took over the purchase and the loco was completed in late September and collected by the club’s “bargees” returning from their “cruise”. The loco is a fine performer and will be a valuable addition to the club’s roster. A few modifications will be carried out to improve the look of the loco (painted lining instead of tape and painting the top of the frames black) and a metal control box in place of the plastic one.

Our roving ambassadors paid a visit to Maidstone taking our new “Growler”, on its first visit, the 125 and Juliet, Scamp and Wharfedale were run at Frimley. Unfortunately Scamp suffered damage to her inside valve gear when she was derailed by an errant stick and retired hurt. Chichester hosted the Sussex Steam Up this year and Mike’s Jumbo stretched her legs along with John’s gauge one live steam loco, “Harry”.

Maintenance of the clubhouse building continues with the front patio windows having their putty renewed as necessary and being painted in our fetching shade of “Buckingham green”

As usual at this time of year the spectre of the winter works rears it’s ugly head. If a list does not appear on the blackboard please ask if you can help when you arrive.

**Don**

### **Social Scene – Visit to Mote Park, Maidstone**

Our annual visit to Mote Park in Maidstone was on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> September. The



reciprocal exchange has become a regular event in the social calendar of both societies in recent years, with a good day out usually had by all. There were about half a dozen of us who made the short hop to Kent this year, taking Vince’s ‘Julianne’ **(Pictured Left, with Dave at the controls)**, Andrew’s IC125 and the newly acquired club ‘Growler’ locomotive + the ‘Pump Trolley’. Running started from about 1030 and with only a few of us present we

seemed to be spending a good time on the track driving each others locomotives, in between the frequent Tea and Cakes which were on offer. The ‘locals’ were quite busy on the construction of their new carriage shed as we enjoyed the track by ourselves. With the foundations set they are planning a set up similar to ours with a lifting bridge to obtain rolling stock from the carriage shed and a point to allow the trucks to reach the main line without the need to lift them over each time. Theirs is planned to be manually operated rather than pneumatic, to discourage vandals and be virtually maintenance free. Despite being cold at times, the weather held out for the whole day, being quite sunny at times and allowing a good 5 hours or so of uninterrupted running to be had. Thanks must go to the Maidstone club for their invitation and hospitality on the day and we hope to be able to meet up again next year.

**Andrew & Mark**

## The Social Scene – The Sussex Clubs Day

September 6<sup>th</sup> dawned bright and early as a group of us set off in search of a day out at the Sussex Clubs Steam Up held this year at Chichester. For the past several years (too many to remember) the Sussex Clubs has been an annual event, organised by a different club each year. The idea was born to hold an annual event where the local clubs could get together once a year at a varying location to have a run and socialise. It has always been a problem that when you live so close to other tracks you very seldom visit them. It was also a chance to meet other local people and share ideas and thoughts. For too long, in the distant past, the SMLS had a reputation (sadly) in some quarters for snobbish and elitist thoughts, a reputation that has only been slowly repaired in the last decade or so with regular visits to other tracks every year that show what a progressive and friendly club we are. **Pictured Below: The IC125 passing under the footbridge, past the new station & over the pneumatic point all at once!!**



The Chichester track has had a lot of work done on it in the last couple of years or so, with the re-laying of the raised track, construction of new buildings, a bridge, pneumatic point etc... The site being about an acre (bit of a guess really) set on the Eastern edge of Chichester, sandwiched between residential homes and allotments.



There is an outer circuit of 10 ¼" and 7 ¼" ground level which is a ring around the whole site, there is also an inner raised circuit of 5" and 3 ½" which is about 350 feet in length?? A newly constructed footbridge allows access for pedestrians into the car parking area, steaming bays and station inside the inner circuit. The pneumatic point is then operational to allow vehicular access to the steaming bays and car parking through the track. A new station building is taking shape serving the inner circuit, whilst another timber building gives small workshop access and an entrance to the 10 ¼" circuit on the outside. The clubhouse is spacious, with a kitchen at the back and beside that is an entrance to a very impressive workshop. Too many

machines to list, casting facilities, stacks of bench space for assembly work to be carried out, what more could you want?? There is also a vintage tractor to carry out the grass cutting duties around the site (not that we would care to try to look after the site with a flymo anyway!!).

**Pictured Above: One of the other visiting engines was a 2-2-2 'Crampton' locomotive, which despite its unusual features ran very well for a good couple of hours.**



There were 14 of us in total, almost a record for a single day visit that made the trip to Chichester, taking several engines and much frivolity with us. Mike P was first on the track with his LNWR 'Jumbo' locomotive, which seemed to enjoy pacing around the inner circuit after the other engines. Being as it is quite a short track it was a near impossibility to get a clear run circuit after circuit, nor is it a particularly quick circuit to drive around, with quite a few sharp and obscured curves. Andrew's IC125 followed a little later, having to be continuously restrained from wanting to speed too fast, it was possible to get it into 2<sup>nd</sup> gear, although there were 'selected' persons who went around in 1<sup>st</sup> the whole time, quite noisy and not that economical (or is it the done thing to drive your car in 1<sup>st</sup> all the time with the engine revving near the red line?!?).

Lunch followed soon afterwards, for those who had opted to, there was a full ploughman's lunch on offer, whilst everybody else tucked into their own home prepared cuisine. **Pictured Below: 'Countess' & 'Harry', two of John's Gauge 1 locomotives pass on the newly constructed oval circuit.**



Following the sunny start the sky was now awash with clouds, some threatening rain, which had been forecast, and true enough, there were several light showers during the course of the afternoon, not that they really got you that wet, just a bit of a nuisance!! Soon after lunch we were joined by John Ely and Family who brought along his Gauge 1 steamers for a run on the newly constructed oval circuit, sandwiched between the inner circuit and the workshop.

With plenty going on there was time to reflect on the surroundings and the brilliant air display, which was taking place at nearby Goodwood. There were several different types of aircraft taking flight during the afternoon including Jets, a Hurricane, several Spitfires and if I remember rightly Dakota's too. They weren't flying directly overhead but they were giving a very impressive display which seemed to stop play for a while as all those present turned their attention to the sky. As everybody was brought back down to earth, the railway seemed to liven up again for a while until it was time to pack up. After the track was sufficiently clear there was a race going on, on the inner circuit between the Pump Trolley (Andrew & Mark) and the IC125 (Vince (Driver), James (Other) & Dave (Other)), which was quite interesting as the Pump Trolley was making quite a go of it and when it was caught up we just lifted it off, allowed the IC125 to pass and throw it back on again for a few more circuits. The signals were also switched on too, maybe to reduce the speed or to keep the two trains apart?? We cleared up about 1700 after a very good day out. Being such a compact site there is always something to do and with plenty of drivers for the engines there was ample time to mingle and ride on other trains. Through the news we would like to thank the Chichester DMES for organising such an excellent day, fabulous hospitality, friendly surroundings and even a free air show thrown in, what more could you want?? Excellent.

**Andrew & Mark**

## Running Season 2003

Firstly, let me say another thanks to all those who helped on our Autumn Special (£2 all afternoon fare day) on September 13<sup>th</sup>. 100 tickets were sold and, along with all our single fares, we estimated about 1000 passengers were carried through the afternoon! Another very busy & successful day!

This year has seen a good selection of locos on the track each running day, and this has undoubtedly seen us through a difficult year.

We started off well in late March and had a good Easter and May Bank Holiday, but June & July were very quiet, with often no one in the park or on the golf course! This I'm sure was due to the mess that posed as the building site for the new restaurant, along with the poor toilet facilities, and often no drinks or ices available to visitors all combined to take their toll on our takings. Then the 'Great August Heat-wave' left us equally lacking in passengers! However, thanks to the continued good, but cooler weather in late August & early September, along with our publicity and special events, we are back 'on track' for quite a reasonable year after all.

Dave & I would like to thank everyone who has worked so hard to make 2003 another good year.

**Mike & Dave**

## Social Scene – Firework Night



With November 5<sup>th</sup> fast approaching, our own Bonfire & Firework night is also almost upon us. Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> November is the date for your diary; there should be a limited catering for the evening, Jacket Potatoes, Beans & Cheese etc... The bonfire (design and contents TBC) and fireworks will kick off from around 6pm. 'We' (that is the pyrotechnic department) already have quite a pile of burnable materials (not all wood, anything that is combustible goes) ready for

the big day, but if anyone has anything that they care to be relieved of before 1<sup>st</sup> November then we can oblige!! It can be dropped off any weekend between now and the day itself and we will store it ready for re-construction. As with previous years a firework donation tin will be placed in the clubroom, currently below the blackboard, for donations towards the evening's main entertainment. Any amount or method of payment is welcome!! We will probably collect the fireworks on the day and go from there. Hopefully we can make this years effort as bigger success as last or even better.

**Pictured Above: Last years 'Garden' design bonfire ready for the off.**

**Andrew & Mark + The Pyrotechnic Department**

## **A New Addition to the Club – Metropolitan ‘Growler’**

For the last couple of years the club has been working very hard to earn extra money to pay for new items at Beech Hurst. With the last couple of years' takings well up on previous years it was decided that we would look to purchase a second club engine. Initial thoughts were to look at an electric engine, as one steamer is quite enough to look after and an electric gives much more operational flexibility in terms of drivers, availability and general maintenance and repair. We were looking at a Class 52 ‘Western’ earlier in the year but a lack of interest with the company that builds them made the committee look at other options. Since we had seen a couple of Metropolitan ‘Growler’ locomotives



recently during visits to other clubs it was suggested that one would be well within our specification and at half the price of a ‘Western’. They are also quite an attractive locomotive (not our words, just from what others have said!!) from an era when steam was still present on many lines. Initially we were informed that there was a 9 month waiting list for the locomotives from the builder, Dan Jeavons, however when Mike Porter made an initial enquiry we were

lucky to be told that due to a bereavement there was a ready finished machine that was available for almost immediate purchase. Having to make a quick decision it was too tempting to turn down and we duly accepted the offer and as there was a group of us coming back from holiday near Kidderminster it seemed an ideal opportunity to collect the locomotive at the same time. One or two modifications will need to be made to the finished machine, but in recent weeks it has proved to be a very steady performer and was taken on it's first outing to the Maidstone track the other week. Since it is a club engine it will be there for everybody to enjoy, after all a good few of us have worked hard to earn the money to pay for it!! A full report on the locomotive will be published when the odd few modifications have been completed.

Pictured Above: The recently acquired ‘Growler’ (right), pictured with the IC125, awaiting departure from the Maidstone track having enjoyed a very successful first outing.

**Andrew & Mark**

## **‘BIG BOY’ DAY**

For much of the early part of the running season, Brian had been sorting out a series of small problems with the ‘Big Boy’.

The “small” problem of replacing an ‘O’ ring seal in the smokebox regulator steam pipe proved an awkward one, involving the dismantling of most of the smokebox contents, but was necessary to complete the 2 year boiler test.

By the time this and a few other seals were completed successfully, mid-season seemed upon us and 'Big Boy' had only run once or twice in light service. I spoke to Brian about arranging a special day to focus more or less exclusively on 'Big Boy' and we agreed on Saturday August 23<sup>rd</sup>, the start of the Bank Holiday weekend.

John Ely kindly agreed to do the publicity in the local paper (and to promote our operations for the rest of the weekend)! This was done along with a timely lament about our problems this year with the reduced parking at the park and all the building mess connected with the new restaurant facilities! Dave supplied a photograph and also produced the usual publicity posters for our station and the town centre.

On the day, the weather proved fine and warm and during morning preparations we discussed the plan for the afternoon passenger running. Eight passenger cars were to be the starter load, with a view to adding 5 cars later in the afternoon for a maximum load attempt! We hoped to break Brian's previous Beech Hurst record of 47 passengers achieved a year or two earlier.

To make sure we still had enough passengers in the park for the 13 car train I advertised, on a black board at the station, that we would offer passengers 2 laps for the price of one on a 4.00 pm special!

Most of the afternoon the 8 car loads were good, but unsurprisingly the 3.50 pm departure had only about 3 passengers as everyone began to queue for the 'big train' at 4.00 pm.



By the time we connected up the extra 5 cars and started loading the 'special' there were about 150 people in line!

Whilst Brian had a good 'stoke-up' and prepared for 2 laps, John Midderigh, our doughty Station Master for the day, started the long walk to collect the fares, for this 13 car train stretched nearly the entire length of our platform! **(Pictured Above & Below: Brian's two mammoth trains**

**make an impressive sight traversing around the park, with 50+ passengers aboard each).** I counted 53 passengers (large and small), by which time Brian was ready and John signalled to the guards that they had the all clear. Norman as 'lead' guard whistled-up, followed 4 cars back by a whistle from Daniel, followed another 4 cars behind him by a whistle from Bill, and finally,







a further 5 cars back, John West and Peter Marten in the brake car gave the final blast!

Brian set off giving 'Big Boy' fair throttle with the intention of getting some momentum with this huge train through the old jungle curve, before the tennis court straight at 1 in 100, and then the reverse curves up through the small tunnel. A little controlled slip on the curve out of the station showed 'Big Boy' was pulling hard and then away they went, without further hesitation, steadily up the gradient! It certainly was an impressive sight in 5" gauge! **(Pictured Above: A 'posse' of loiterers watch on as the first Big Boy train climbs out of the station towards the short tunnel).**

Ian with the class 37 **(Pictured Left)** and Ron Harris' B1 **(Pictured Below)**, with Mark Lane as his guard, were also running and fitted in very well around the loading and unloading of 'Big Boys' train, and at this time they also took passengers on a double lap.

When 'Big Boy' returned, we reloaded again, this time with 54 passengers and guards, Brian himself making the grand total of 55 people! The train was jammed full and I estimated two-thirds were adults! Once again, with guards whistles echoing down the length of the platform, this massive train set off in style. I reckon, with

good dry track and wheels (and Phil had done a good job keeping 'Big Boy' serviced and oil-free through the afternoon) that Brian might well have managed another 2 loaded cars! Perhaps next year we'll top 55!

A last train of a mere 32 passengers enabled all those who had waited for a double lap on the big train to be satisfied, and we finished the day with a few final single laps again.

An amazing final interesting footnote to this most successful day is this:

It was also our BBQ evening and although Brian was not intending to run on into the evening, he and Phil took 'Big Boy' for a few laps to "run the fire out", that Brian had built up for the haulage feats. Some fire. It took them 2 hours 2 minutes to burn it out! No wonder our coat bunkers go down, and Corralls shares go up, whenever 'Big Boy' is at work!

So finally then, special thanks to Brian and also to Ian and Ron who ran the other two trains, and to all the guards and helpers who made this a memorable and fun day.

**Mike**

### **A Little Last Laugh**

Ray gave this to us the other week, it is a real transcript of a conversation held between an American naval ship and Canadian Authorities off the coast of Newfoundland in 1995. We were going to try to scan the original copy in, but due to some 'technical difficulties' at Andrew's end (believe me if you know Andrew's (my brothers!!) computer it has regular 'technical difficulties' in one shape or form so we apologise. So we have re-written it word for word as it was.

**Americans:** Please divert your course 15 degrees to the North to avoid a collision.

**Canadians:** Recommend you divert YOUR course 15 degrees to the South to avoid collision.

**Americans:** This is the Captain of a US Navy ship. I say again divert **YOUR** course...

**Canadians:** No. I say again, you divert **YOUR** course.

**Americans:** This is the Aircraft Carrier USS Lincoln, the second largest ship in the United States Atlantic Fleet. We are accompanied by three destroyers, three cruisers and numerous support vessels, I demand that you change your course 15 degrees North, that's one five degrees North or counter measures will be undertaken to ensure the safety of this ship.

**Canadians:** This is a lighthouse. Your call.

**Ray**

## **Diary of Events**

1<sup>st</sup> November 2003 – Bonfire Night, Beans & Mash etc... **(See News Piece)**

6<sup>th</sup> November 2003 – Club Night – Will start approx 19:00.

4<sup>th</sup> December 2003 – Club Night – Will start approx 19:00.

6<sup>th</sup> **or** 13<sup>th</sup> December 2003 – Christmas Nosh Night, Date and Time TBC, please see blackboard in clubroom nearer the time for date, cost and preferences.

1<sup>st</sup> January 2004 – New Years Day Run & Club Night – From 10:00 till late.

**\*\*Although there are no other confirmed social evenings planned for 2003/2004 yet, it is likely that there maybe some social evenings arranged at short notice. If we are in time they will be duly published in the December or February news' or please check notices in the clubroom which will display short notice socials\*\***

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**