

BEECH HURST NEWS



Cover picture: -

Away Day – A picture taken a couple of years ago on one of our trips to the Maidstone track depicts Stephen Hutton, driving Norman's Class 47 locomotive. We have been invited to their track again this year on 26th May, for details on this and much more, please read on...

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Editor's Notes

As we write these notes a little later than the Chairman's notes we can report that thanks to some absolutely belting weather over the Easter period, we have started the season in fine form, carrying nearly 3,500 passengers in the first 4 official days so far, with that figure just over 5,000 if you include the previous unadvertised weekend and last Wednesday as extras. This weekend coming, the 14th and 15th, also looks like it will be a belter, with temperatures nearly twice the seasonal average, so we may well be flooded with passengers. Talking of flooding however, the wonky weather that seems to be around just lately dropped an absolute deluge on Beech Hurst about a month back, so much so that there was flooding everywhere around the park, puddles at least 6 inches deep were measured and the water running along the side of the clubhouse by the pneumatic point was like a river. We are sure to say that everybody who was there that afternoon had never seen rain like that in the park, ever! We were lucky that it did not encroach on the clubhouse, but there was a lot of sweeping afterwards as the water had brought a lot mud with it that had coated the paths and steaming bays in a slippery mess. Lets hope that we don't get too many days like that during the summer!

Thanks as ever must go to the contributors to the last edition, those people being: Bob Youldon and Ray, also to the regular columnists and Us.

This is quite a slim edition this time, with articles on the forthcoming events, completed winter work, club t-shirts, jokes and two recently updated websites, so please read on and enjoy...

Andrew & Mark

Websites

The SMLS website has recently been updated by Stephen to coincide with the start of new the season and now features a counter on the homepage that tells you how many times the page has been 'hit', in other words how many times it has been viewed in a given period.

Also the website that was put in the newsletter last year run by Linda Chen who takes transport related photographs has also been updated and Linda who was at Beech Hurst over the Easter weekend has uploaded 20-odd images on to the site since then. A couple are featured below and a reminder of the web address if you are interested: www.lindasrailpix.fotopic.net

Andrew & Mark



T-shirts



As discussed at the AGM we are to proceed with obtaining artwork and named clothing for members of the club. The Beech Hurst badge as featured on the homepage of the website and **pictured above** for those of you not wired up to the 'www' will be the main template of the clothing with optional names for those who would like them. The artwork is being prepared now and I intend to order a garment, named of course, and in due time show it at the club before other people order their own. The prices of the garments are pretty much the same as you would expect to pay on the high street with a small extra for the stitch work and name and are all recognised brands, such as 'Fruit of the Loom' for example. More to follow in the June edition...

Andrew

Chairman's Notes

After all the winter work, it's good to be back in the running season again! As I write, the Easter weather looks favourable and with a bit of luck we'll be off to a good start! Over the winter Geoff and Daniel have fitted 'Conway' and 'Polly' with 'mini-cowl' smut and oil deflectors. Both engines had a tendency to leave their drivers with more than a few freckles, and were as such only suited to pilot duties in passenger service.

John Midderigh already has a similar chimney cowl that is unobtrusive and yet very effective at stopping the sparks flying. Having had a burned eye last year that was painful for about three days, I am going to try the same on the B1 this year. When I've tried it, I'll report back! For the purists amongst us, don't worry, I'm not going to fit something such as we saw on a locomotive running during the Malden club open days last year. Those that saw it will know what I mean, and for those who didn't, it consisted of a large diameter flexible pipe like an upturned 'U-bend' put over the chimney and gave the impression of an elephants trunk at the front of the engine. I still chuckle at some of the comments I overheard, such as "does it eat buns?" and "I think it's the last of it's kind!"

Following the AGM forum, the committee has decided to go ahead and have the print work prepared for the 't-shirts' and 'sweatshirts' with the 'Beech Hurst' logo. We'll get an item made up and Andrew has offered to (excuse the pun) 'model' it for us around the clubhouse. Having seen other clubs so attired in their club colours on visiting days, maybe it would be helpful and pleasant for us to do the same.

We also discussed the future direction of fares at the forum. Although one of our best in terms of passenger numbers, last year left us with only half the previous years profit after all expenses (and now tax, again) had been deducted.

Also, on the some busy days we have been operating at the limit of our capacity, and have also held our fares at 50p for this, a tenth year. There were no supporters for a fare of say 70p or 80p and a suggestion for a few intermediate years of increasing the adult fare only to £1 (leaving youngsters at 50p) found only limited support. Almost unanimously, the opinion was that we should “bite the bullet” and go for a £1 for all price. It was commented on, that, as rides go, this is still cheaper than most. Ray also pointed out that we have always been a ‘one fare’ railway and in the past when fares were raised substantially the passenger numbers dropped for a while, but they soon picked up again after a year so. Also our regular station masters indicated that they were not getting any younger, and hands and brains did not work as quickly as they used to! The overwhelming feeling was to ‘keep it simple’! The majority felt we should go ahead and introduce a fare change next year. With this in mind, it was agreed that later this season we will put up a poster at the station informing our customers that fares will rise next year and station masters will help pass on the message.

Next year, at the start of the 2008 season, a new poster declaring the £1 fare will go up with the reminder/explanation that this would be the first change for 10 years and that all proceeds continue to help with the upkeep of the railway and that all the staff are voluntary. Lets hope we can then retain the new fare for another 10 years!

To finish off my notes for this newsletter, I should like to make what I would like to be the last comments on the difficult issues that have overshadowed the club for the past couple of years and were raised again at the AGM. It is obvious that feelings are still strong, but it was also obvious that the majority of the club wished to move on now. The club has come through and it’s now time to stop looking backing.

By coincidence, the introduction of the ‘vulnerable persons’ policy has given us a structure to deal with similar problems in the future, although it goes without saying, I hope it never happens again!

Communication remains important within the club and we must all try hard on this score. Likewise, respect towards fellow club members must be the only acceptable conduct. Friendships strained by events can be restored – where there is a will, - lets make it so in 2008. It was evident through the second half of last year that a renewed, friendly and supportive atmosphere has redeveloped within the club and that everyone was pulling in the same direction again. I hope that this year that feeling and approach can go from strength to strength, and differences over one situation can be overcome by agreement and enjoyment of the many other aspects of club life. After all, the club should be for the enjoyment of our hobby, and a friendly meeting place for all it’s members, so lets now get on with it!

I wish you all a very happy and successful season out on the track. We all too send our best wishes to Brian and Bill, who have both ‘been in the wars’ again! Get better soon chaps and we hope to see you ‘up the club’ again before too long.

Mike

Winter Work

As a final close to the last dregs of winter, we would like to say thank you through these pages to everyone who has helped out over the last 6 months with routine and not so routine jobs at the club.

The additional shunting siding is now complete and in use, with just a few minor tweaks required to make it 100%. This will provide a very useful storage and shunting line in the summer when truck sets are moved. Also with the feet on the ends of the steel work turned to sit under the steel, it is just possible to turn to 'Pullman' length cars on the turntable, as long as they do not have rubber flaps protruding out from one end.

The workshop is now very tidy, and thanks to two skips, so is much of the clubhouse and outside area. There will be the necessity for the ad-hoc 'dump' runs during the summer to ditch ash and excess waste metal etc... but for the most part we are now very tidy all round.

Thanks to the gardening by John Midderigh the remainder of the trackside areas are also very tidy too, with weeds, brambles and excess and dead branches also removed. During the summer once everything is in full bloom, we will have a good look at some of the trees in the cuttings leading up to the long tunnel and mark any of those that are seen to be dead. They will then be lopped prior to Bonfire Night as they are the root cause of much of the small dead sticks that drop around the vicinity of the track.

Also to Brian, John West and Daniel who have repainted all the concrete mileposts and one gradient post adjacent to the track. They are all looking very smart now, however, had you seen the state of the 33-¾ post at the rear of the clubhouse the other week it was very comical! Brian and John had gone out and painted the concrete post and face with the normal water based concrete paint, no problem you'd say, but having done so the aforementioned storm flood that lashed down made the paint run everywhere, it was very unfortunate, but quite amusing at the time. Needless to say Brian duly repainted it the following weekend and it now looks as good as new!

During the summer, we will continue to keep you updated with any major projects that take place or that are planned around the club. It is pretty likely that the entire wooden station fence will be replaced later this year, probably with a galvanised metal one, very similar to the one that presides outside the bowls clubhouse, this would almost certainly be done by an outside company, as long as the council are in agreement. This would also gain around 6 inches more width along the path in the station area, as well as being pretty much maintenance free, which can hardly be said of the current wooden one.

Here's to a new season and a clubhouse and surroundings to once again be proud of!

Andrew & Mark

Jokes

This piece was recently given to us by Ron Harris and although it is not strictly in the joke category, the simple obscenity of the figures talked about is quite funny in itself!

Acceleration; Put into Perspective

- One Top Fuel dragster 500 cubic inch Hemi engine makes more horsepower than the first 4 rows at the Daytona 500.
- Under full throttle, a dragster engine consumes 11.2 gallons of nitromethane per second; a fully loaded 747 consumes jet fuel at the same rate with 25% less energy being produced.
- A stock Dodge Hemi V8 engine cannot produce enough power to power the dragster supercharger.
- With 3000 c.f.m. of air being rammed in by the supercharger on overdrive, the fuel mixture is compressed into a near solid form before ignition. The cylinders run on near hydraulic lock at full throttle.
- At the stoichiometric 1.7:1 air/fuel mixture for nitromethane the flame front temperature measures 7050 degrees F.
- Nitromethane burns yellow. The spectacular white flame seen above the stacks at night is raw burning hydrogen, dissociated from water vapour by the searing exhaust gases.
- Dual magnetos supply 44A to each spark plug. This is similar to the output of an arc welder in each cylinder.
- Spark plug electrodes are totally consumed during a pass. After ½ way, the engine is dieseling from compression plus the glow of exhaust valves at 1400 degrees F. The engine can only be shut down by cutting the fuel flow.
- If spark momentarily fails early in the run, unburned nitro builds up in the affected cylinders and then explodes with sufficient force to blow cylinder heads off the block in pieces or split the block in half.
- In order to exceed 300 mph in 4.5 seconds, dragsters must accelerate at an average of 4G's. In order to reach 200 mph well before half-track, the launch acceleration approaches 8G's
- Dragsters reach over 300 mph before you have completed reading this sentence.
- The 'redline' is actually quite high, 9500 rpm.
- The Bottom Line: Assuming all the equipment is paid off, the crew work for free, and for once, NOTHING BLOWS UP, each run costs \$1000 per second.
- For the quarter mile run, the quickest recorded time is 4.441 seconds and the highest speed 333 mph.
- Given a 200 mph running start in a Twin-turbo Corvette Z06, a dragster from a standing start would catch you within 3 seconds and beat you over a course length of just 1320 feet – **Now that's acceleration!**

Ron

Basic Workshop Training

I have noticed an unfortunate trend in recent years in our workshop.

There seems to be a lack of basic workshop skills in many of our newer (and a few of our not so new) members.

What I am proposing is a series of training sessions in BASIC workshop theory and practice. I was very fortunate to have received such training both at school and as an apprentice. The form of my training was a short illustrated talk, followed by practical instruction; this in turn was followed by either intensive practice, or, a practical exercise.

The result of this type of training is an inbuilt sense of 'good practice' resulting in a clean and usable workshop that everyone can take pride in.

Over the years individuals in the club have gone to great expense to provide a well-equipped workshop for the maintenance of infrastructure and to provide facilities that an individual cannot be expected to have at home. I recall some years ago, construction of locos in the workshop was discouraged as it was expected that members would at least be able to obtain a bench, vice, drill and hand tools for home use.

To offer a suitable training environment the workshop would need to be treated as ones own, being cleaned after EVERY session by EVERY person using it. The usual excuse is 'I didn't make that mess, so why should I clear it up?' Well if you want to rummage through someone else's rubbish to find that small part that just rolled to the back of the bench, OK, but it would not be lost in the first place if the bench was clean! I have witnessed cleaning sessions, where a part-built loco was thrown in the bin, as it had been left in a heap of rubbish. Excessive? No I don't think so, what one does with someone else's workshop, should be to respect it! Not leave it like a tip!

I still have all my notes from my training days, which, could be scanned and reproduced for handouts. A suitable projector could be purchased by the club that would also double as a DVD player. I would propose that the club buys some material for a course and possibly a short rule for each student.

Perhaps members and the committee could give some consideration to the proposal, as the alternative is a continuing loss of skills with an eventual failure to be able to do even the simplest maintenance task

Chris

EdNo.

This idea will be discussed in the coming weeks at the club and if thought to be useful a session will be advertised at the club and a list for those interested in attending it made available on the blackboard in the clubroom.

Andrew & Mark

Election Of Officers

Annually, after the AGM, the news always reports on the 'comings' and 'goings' of those on the committee and in positions within the club. The following is the revised list of who holds what position in the club:

| <u>Position</u> | <u>Occupant</u> | <u>Proposed</u> | <u>Seconded</u> |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| Chairman | M.J. Porter | <u>JW</u> | <u>JB</u> |
| Vice-Chairman | G.A. West | <u>ST</u> | <u>PT</u> |
| Secretary | J. Baldwin | <u>GAW</u> | <u>ST</u> |
| Treasurer | A.P. Brock | <u>JWG</u> | <u>GAW</u> |
| Minutes Secretary | A.P. Brock | <u>JWG</u> | <u>GAW</u> |
| Operations Mgr's | M.J. Porter, G.A. West & A.P. Brock | <u>ST</u> | <u>JB</u> |
| Signals Engineer | S. Turner | <u>MJP</u> | <u>GAW</u> |
| Consultant S' Eng' | A.J. Killick | <u>MJP</u> | <u>PT</u> |
| Workshop Mgr's | S. Turner & N.S.E. Payne | <u>MJP</u> | <u>JW</u> |
| House Manager | J. West | <u>GAW</u> | <u>NSEP</u> |
| Materials Manager | A.P. Brock & | <u>ST</u> | <u>JB</u> |
| Ass' Materials Mgr | P.C. Marten | | |
| Social Secretary | V. West | <u>MJP</u> | <u>GAW</u> |
| News Editors | A.P. Brock & M.C. Allen | <u>GAW</u> | <u>NSEP</u> |
| Librarian | R. Parsons | <u>GAW</u> | <u>MJP</u> |
| Ass' Librarians | A.P. Brock, G.A. West & D. Evans | <u>GAW</u> | <u>ST</u> |
| Boiler Inspector | G.A. West | <u>PT</u> | <u>JB</u> |
| Ass' Boiler Insp's | J. West, S. Turner & F. Bailey | <u>MJP</u> | <u>JWG</u> |
| Cust'dns W'dale | A.P. Brock | <u>GAW</u> | <u>ST</u> |
| Ass' Cust' W'dale | D. Evans | | |
| Carriage Valeter | I. Thompson | <u>PT</u> | <u>MJP</u> |
| Web Master | S. Hutton | <u>MJP</u> | <u>GAW</u> |
| Custodians of '08' & 'Growler' | D. Evans & A. Strongitharm | <u>MJP</u> | <u>JWG</u> |

Thanks go to both Fred Bailey (retiring Boiler Co-ordinator) and Stephen Hutton (retiring Librarian) for the time they have put into their respective positions.

Andrew & Mark

Forthcoming Events

With one eye on the Diary of Events below, there are a couple of events in the next few months worth noting. Firstly, the visit to Didcot has yet to be confirmed at the time of press and will be advertised at the club ASAP, if not in the June edition if this is in time. On 13th May we invite the Chelmsford club to Beech Hurst as mentioned in the previous newsletter, followed by an invitation to the Maidstone MES track at Mote Park two weeks later on the 26th May. A list will be started at the club in the next week or so, anybody who is interested in this visit should make themselves known so we can let Maidstone how many are likely to be attending. It is a few years since we have been to Maidstone, the track is 2200 feet long if we remember rightly and is set in pleasant surroundings in Mote Park (see also cover picture). There are also a couple of BBQ evenings pencilled in at the normal times during the summer and are 95% sure to take place as listed. More news on a club visit to Didcot will be relayed as and when it has been arranged.

Andrew & Mark

Diary Of Events

3rd May 2007 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

13th May 2007 – Chelmsford club to visit SMLS – Will start at approx. 1000.

26th May 2007 – Invitation to visit Maidstone MES – See attached events piece.

7th June 2007 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

23rd June 2007 – Provisional mid-summer 'Bring Your Own' BBQ – TBC.

5th July 2007 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

2nd August 2007 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

25th August 2007 – Provisional end-summer 'Bring Your Own' BBQ – TBC.

6th September 2007 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

13th/14th October 2007 – Malden DMES Open weekend invitation – details TBC.

Summer 2007 – Visit to Didcot Railway Centre, provisional and details TBC.

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 at the clubhouse for more details.

Andrew & Mark