

BEECH HURST NEWS



Cover picture: -

Hotting Up: After several weeks of collecting and a full day of building, this years bonfire effort is fully complete. Based on a 'Sitting Room' theme, it is complete with 2 TV's, plush chairs, carpet etc... A report and more pictures appear inside.

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Editors Notes

First may we wish you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and by the time many of you are reading or have read this, you will be enjoying your excellent cuisine at our Christmas Nosh Night.

We would like to thank all the contributors to the last newsletter: Mike, Dave, Ray and ourselves for another bumper edition.

This edition is action packed as ever with most of the articles written between 'us', with contributions from Ray, Chris and Don. There are the passenger figures for 2003 and an interesting article from Chris on that subject about the past 50 years, also articles about the Bonfire Night, Progressing Winter Work, our new Weather Vein, and the newly completed Restaurant + our carefully selected Christmas Quiz and check out the updated Diary of Events for 2004.

We hope you enjoy this issue as ever, please keep an eye on the website which is in the process of being updated and will soon contain new photo's and the past 3 news' at any one time. Please read on and enjoy...

Andrew & Mark

Chairman's notes

Our bonfire night celebrations went with a bang as usual this year with an excellent display organised by our enthusiastic pyrotechnic department. The bonfire was arranged as a sitting room complete with armchairs and table etc. It also included a working television, on which a sweep was run as to how long it would last! The club would like to thank Sandy for cooking and serving the evening's food, also to all who provided extra in the shape of cakes etc.

The carriage workshop is having a tidy up and face lift, the large grey cupboard forming part of the bonfire scene. Racking for "Lin Bins" is being put up to replace the lost storage space, with the advantage that contents of the bins will be easy to find, unlike rummaging through the shelves in the cupboard. The main workshop is also being slightly re-arranged with the safety equipment cupboard moving to the carriage workshop and the second pillar drill, more or less, taking it's place. The opening of the Brewsters restaurant looks like it will benefit our railway, with the extra running days in October a financial success. John Ely has approached the manager with a view to some of our publicity material being displayed inside. Our Operations Manager reports that next season we may well struggle to cope on busy days, but we will have to wait and see.

The transporter is having a well-needed overhaul with all the bearings being replaced and a repaint. It would be an understatement to say that the bearings were worn, the balls were rattling around like peas on a drum! The gearbox is also being overhauled, as it probably has never been touched since it was installed umpteen years ago. When it's finished the transporter will glide across the car park with graceful ease.

The point also requires attention as the key switch has ceased to function and another method of operation is being investigated. The attention required by both these items reinforces our need to replace or renew infrastructure before it lets us down. Our rolling programme of track renewals being a good example.

Talking of track renewals, work continues in the Court Tunnel area but will not be completed in time for our New Years Day run. Members will have to run shuttle services.

Finally seasons greetings to all our members and families.

Don

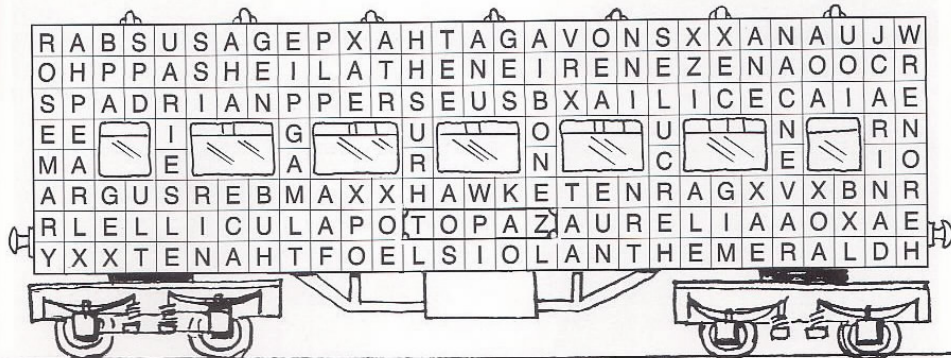
Christmas Quiz – Andrew & Mark

This year we have decided to have two small quizzes instead of one large one. Hopefully these will keep you occupied until the next newsletter comes out in February when the answers will be provided. Merry Christmas – **A & M.**

PULLMAN PREDICAMENT

Hidden in this 'Pullman car' are the names of 37 locomotive-hauled Pullmans plus, to give you a start, the name of the NRM's preserved Parlour Car 'Topaz' already located. The names may read backwards, forwards, up, down, or

diagonally, always in a straight line but never skipping letters. All the letters are used at least once except the Xs, which are not used at all. See how quickly you can find them all.

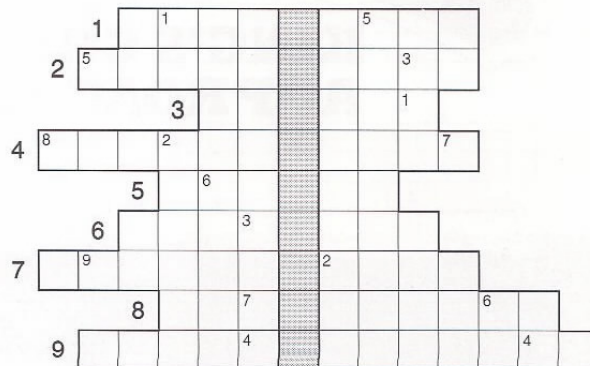


Solve the 'named train' clues below and enter the answers in the boxes. The shaded squares will then spell out the name of a famous train, and the two sets of numbered squares, on the left and right, taken in order, will spell out the down train's two principal destinations.

HEADBOARDS

Clues

- 1 Paddington-Carmarthen express (3,6)
- 2 Express travelling the length of the original Great Western line, introduced to mark the centenary in 1935 (10)
- 3 '— Scotsman', London-Edinburgh express introduced in 1928 (6)
- 4 Name given in 1929 to the Pullman train between London and Paris (6,5)
- 5 'Master' craftsman running between Marylebone and Sheffield (6)



- 6 King's Cross-Edinburgh express instituted in 1956 (8)
- 7 Rivers linked by a Midland line express running via the Settle & Carlisle line (6-5)
- 8 LNER streamliner introduced in 1937 to mark an important event of that year (10)
- 9 Shoreline which formed the destination of the West Country express from Waterloo, named in 1925 (8,5)

Results Summary for the 2003 Running Season

This year, 2003, was our 50th year of public operation. This is in itself no mean feat as many similar clubs have come and gone in this time. Each year, for as long as I can remember (which is not long these days) I have crunched the numbers and written up the results for you all to read. So here is another episode.

What I find amazing is that each season there are worries that “so and so” has taken his engine away, and how are we going to run without him? Well, looking at the activity on the track, the vacuum left by those who depart seems to attract new locos and drivers to fill it! On many occasions there are many more who probably would do a turn, but as the track is full there seems not much point in dirtying the engine just for a couple of laps. This situation we find ourselves in is a great sign of a healthy club.

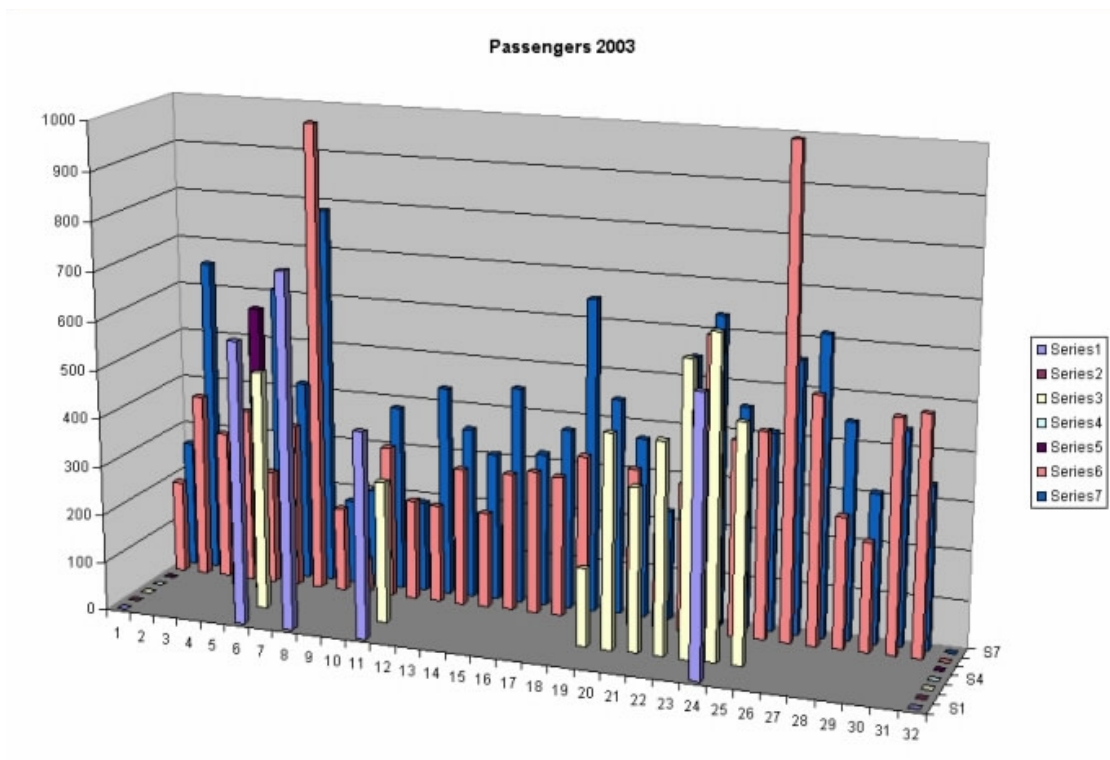
The new (ish) concept of running many short trains with small locos, as an alternative to one long train with a large loco, on ordinary running days seems to attract more passengers than ever. Listening to passengers’ comments made at the station it seems that there is a trend to want to ride on every train that is running. Next year how about changing all the locos and carriages in mid session?

The forthcoming 2004 season could bring about some subtle changes, as the new café complex will be fully open, alas with less parking spaces than there were. The operators seem to have aimed their marketing at the family with young children, the same as us! Let’s hope that we compliment each other’s operation rather than compete for limited “spending money”. Another factor that may affect us in the near future is the opening of the next section of the Haywards Heath Southern by-pass road, whether for better or worse remains to be seen.

So how did we do, after all the disruption due to the building works and the incredible heat in August?

“Not too bad” would be an understatement as we broke the 30,000 barrier only for the 5th time! This year we carried 30,959 passengers, the 5th highest total ever. This now brings our grand total to 1,093,447. The yearly average is also slightly up at 21,869. Last year we investigated just how many passengers we could carry in one afternoon session, the consensus was that about 1000 passengers is a practical upper limit. There were several days this year when we just about made the magic number. However the average number of passengers each session is over 400!

These results do credit to all who have worked so hard to keep the service running all season, especially the hidden gang who seem to keep the maintenance up to date by fixing the problems in the mid week, without disruption to the service. (Either that, or there are Fairies living at the bottom of the park!) Perhaps we should also be very grateful to the loyal passengers who have put up with a number of obstacles, both building work and weather, and lack of toilets and refreshments, yet have still stayed with us to ride our trains.



Pictured Above: A graph illustrating the number of passengers carried during each of the 32 weeks of running last season. *Series = Day of Week*

These figures, apart from being of academic interest, can be used to help formulate future maintenance programmes and to predict stock requirements and loco rostering.

On a personal note, I wonder how much longer the “old” stock can continue to run in service with its reduced wheel diameters and the patched side panels, bearing in mind the hammering it gets from the public during the year?

Chris

EdNo. Thanks to Chris for that interesting article, there is a little more to follow, on the next page with a run down of how the figures have shaped up during the 50 years of running the society has now covered. This relates to total numbers of passengers carried, fares and amount taken per season in relation to money in bank. It is interesting that despite the broad range of leisure activities now available to ‘Joe Public’ that we can still draw people in year after year, this is particularly noticeable this season, bearing in mind the problems we experienced with one thing and another throughout 2003. Regarding the ‘old stock’, between us, that is Andrew and Mark who now share maintenance duties on the carriages there has to be a point in the next couple of years when we as a club have to finalise details of the new stock we want. It will be a big undertaking, but the carriages we are running with now are life expired and if they are to continue beyond the next couple of years, they too will need some serious maintenance!!
Watch this space!!

This table shows the **Year, No. Of Passengers Carried per Year, Cumulative No. Of Passengers Carried, Fare and Money Taken**, respectively.

1954	3880	3880		2.5	
1955	5780	9660		2.5	356.325
1956	6101	15761		2.5	152.525
1957	9202	24963		2.5	230.05
1958	11227	36190		2.5	280.625
1959	14253	50443		2.5	356.325
1960	15794	66237		2.5	394.85
1961	18761	84998		2.5	469.025
1962	20375	105373		2.5	509.325
1963	18729	124102		2.5	486.225
1964	25240	149342		2.5	681
1965	25809	175151		2.5	645.2
1966	26565	201716		2.5	664.125
1967	27950	229666		2.5	698.75
1968	28320	257986		2.5	708
1969	19667	277653		5	983.35
1970	18533	296186		5	926.65
1971	20000	316186		5	1000
1972	18678	334864		5	933.92
1973	19547	354411	407161	5	977.35
1974	38225	392636		5	1911.25
1975	33529	426165		5	1676.46
1976	25291	451456		48	2559.4
1977	22492	473948	509892		
1978	27071	501019			
1979	35250	536269			
1980	26604	562873			
1981	19318	582191		20	3863.6
1982	21903	604094		20	
1983	19824	623918		20	
1984	21099	645017		20	
1985	19024	664041		25	
1986	20410	684451		25	
1987	22583	707034		25	
1988	21848	728882		30	
1989	27478	756360		30	
1990	24823	781183		30	
1991	25032	806215		30	
1992	23463	829678			
1993	25160	854838		40	
1994	22835	877673		40	
1995	20550	898223		40	
1996	23437	921660		40	
1997	20550	942210		40	
1998	20552	962762		50	
1999	19733	982495		50	
2000	21075	1003570	1000000		
2001	25024	1028594			
2002	33894	1062488			
2003	30959	1093447			
2004					
	1093447	Total			
	21868.94	Average			

chris:
estimate based on AG

chris:
millionth based on early estimates by AG

It does make very interesting reading, showing how the railway has grown from the first year in 1954 to the present day. Certainly since the mid-eighties (1985) we have only dropped below 20000 passengers in a season, once, and that was in 1999. In fact since the early sixties the number of passengers has generally averaged out at about 20000 or so per annum, with the extra money taken, coming from the gradually increased fares. Hopefully the next few years will continue on the same trend, as long we don't suffer from a mega heat wave as scientists seem to think we might or are frozen in hard because of 'global warming?' and have to cut the season short or run in the snow!! One thing is for sure though, we think the chance of ever being under water is highly unlikely, but in 50 years we may yet be a famous seaside attraction!!

Chris (Mainly) + Andrew & Mark (Cameo) at the end

The Last Laugh Column – Andrew & Mark

We have been donated another joke from Ray. There is a possibility that we may start to keep this column going for a while if there is enough interest; so, if anyone can give us some jokes then we will see if they can go in. Please be aware that not everyone's will be able to go into this column at once (if we get any at all?) so it may take an issue or two before yours will go in. Please note that this will be based on first come, first serve. So if anyone can give us some jokes, (the editors reserve the right to refuse unsuitable entries!) then please give them to either Mark or Andrew at the club, or, if you are on the web, then send them to info@beechurst-railway.org.uk from the website (www.beechurst-railway.org.uk).

This is the story of Sonia Snell
To whom an accident befell.
It happened, as it could to many,
When Sonia went to spend a penny,
She entered in with modest grace
A properly appointed place
Provided at the Railway Station,
And there she sat in meditation.
Unfortunately unacquainted
The woodwork had been freshly painted.
Which poor Sonia had realised
In her inability to rise.
And tho' she struggled, pulled and yelled
She found that she was firmly held.
She raised her voice in anxious shout
"Please someone, come and get me out".
Her cries for help soon quickly brought
A crowd of every kind and sort.
They stood around and feebly sniggered
And all they said was "I'll be jiggered!"
"Cor Blimey", said the ancient porter
"we ought to soak her off with water".
The Station Master and his Staff
Were most polite, and did not laugh.
They pulled at Sonia's hands and feet
But couldn't get her off the seat.
A carpenter arrived at last
And finding Sonia still stuck fast,
Remarked "I know what I'll do",
And neatly sawed the seat in two.
Sonia rose, only to find
A wooden hole stuck on behind.
An ambulance came down the street
And bore her off - complete with seat -
To take the wooden busted girl
Quickly to the hospital.
They hurried Sonia off inside
After a very painful ride.
And seizing her by heels and head
Laid her face down on the bed.
The Doctors all came on parade
To render her immediate aid.
A Surgeon said "Well upon my word,
Could anything be more absurd?.
Have any of you, I implore
Seen anything like this before?"
"Yes" said a student, unashamed,
"Frequently, but never framed!"

Submitted by Mr Woodman



Winter Work – The Work Goes On!

We thought that this year, like last, it would be nice to continue giving regular updates on the work that is taking place this winter to keep everything 'ship shape'. Just as important as running during the summer, repairs and renewals are essential to keeping the whole club up and running. It is somehow disappointing when you visit other clubs which have very good tracks or locations, but for whatever reason come September the entire membership goes into hibernation and nothing in the way of maintenance is attempted during the winter months and the whole site goes into decline as a result. We are lucky in that respect that there are a good dozen or more regular members who input interminable hours into keeping our clubhouse and site looking top notch all year round, as well as the track which is always kept 100%.



Starting with the track, Mike and Co are in the process of renewing the section from the West end of Court Tunnel to the top of the gradient where it meets the bowling green straight. Not having been looked that for several years and only then was it 'turned' rail, it is getting a thorough re-paint, re-pack and new rails on the 5". Progress at present is that it has been completely painted with the sleepers replaced and packed, with track re-laying likely to start in the next

week or two, this does mean that the New Years Day run is likely to be an up and back run this year. **(See Picture Above: Work on the track continues with the steel work prepared, ready for re-laying of the sleepers and rails).**



Another major undertaking this year is the complete refurbishment of the transporters on the steaming bays. What started out to be a quick overhaul by Dave and Vince has since turned into a complete strip down, with all the bearings being replaced and now the gearbox in pieces ready to be cleaned, re-sealed and re-greased. I am sure once it is done it will be 100x better, but it is always the same when you started something with good intentions and 9 times

out of 10 it takes longer than expected or more things go wrong that you anticipated! **(See Picture Above: Work on the transporters in the main workshop continues, with replacement of the bearings on the vertical runners).**

The trucks this year are being modified in places to attempt to get a better brake in the Saturday direction and the bearings replaced on the trucks that were not attended to in 2002.

What we have done so far (that is Andrew & Mark) is to move one crank arm on the brake pivot rod to get a better leverage at the point of application. Tests have proved to be successful, but if you are using a Saturday brake next season, please give feedback if you are not happy about something as it can be altered quite easily if there are teething troubles. The 3 Saturday ends of the main stock and the black trolley are now complete and tested, with the bearings now being replaced where necessary, which should be completed by end of January/February 2004, in readiness for the new season.

Work has started on the footbridge by the flam store, with Peter Chapman starting work last weekend on rubbing down the old grey paint, with a view to priming and then a new colour of... yes you've guessed it 'Buckingham Green'!! It should look better in green and it will also blend in nicely with the rest of the clubhouse etc...



As Don mentioned in his notes the Carriage Shed workshop has been changed with the removal of two cupboards, (burnt of course!!), and the change around with the bench now on the East side wall.

We are trying to get a better sense of space and organisation in there, (if that is possible??), and hopefully make it easier to keep tidy and less places to hoard junk!

That should be completed in the next week

or two and then work will re-commence on the trucks that are currently buried under assorted screw and nail boxes!! **(See Picture Above: The change around is almost complete, with the racking in place and the tidy up under way, which should make the workshop an easier place to work).**

Those are the major projects that are currently underway, also many thanks to all those 'cameo' appearances that people do, like John Midderigh and his ever increasing battle with leaves and Brian refurbishing the benches that keep the place looking the best all the time.

We will keep you updated through these pages throughout the this year and the early part of next as to the progress that is being made and hopefully be able to display more pictures in the news as we go along.

Andrew & Mark

Bonfire Night 2003



This year's bonfire was another great success, based on a 'Sitting Room' theme (See Front Cover Picture) it was engineered around another shed which we had been donated, lots of wood, (much of it acquired as usual!) two TVs; one was a 12volt, which was connected up to a battery and playing whilst the fire burnt around it, plush chairs, carpet and even its own fireplace, which of course was responsible for its ultimate downfall! Again this year, there was betting to see how long the TV would stay running for (we think it was showing the film Carry On Screaming at the time) and Ray's friend Bob who ironically donated the shed won the £26 sweep prize. This was then topped with a brilliant firework display with plenty of flashing and loud bangs (See Picture Top Left: Ready for action, our collection of fireworks ready to go up in smoke). If you would like to see any of the

pictures of it as you were not there, then please contact Andrew for any more prints of his pictures of the bonfire and the fireworks. Through these pages we must thank everybody involved in the preparation of the wood for the fire, the purchase of the fireworks, everybody who 'mucked in' on the day to prepare the bonfire and moved several tons of wood to build another impressive construction and to Sandy & Co in the Kitchen for the brilliant food spread that topped another very good social evening, lets hope next year is just as impressive!! (That is the only problem, making the next year better than this!?!). (See Picture Above: The fire well on its way after about 10 minutes, the TV lasted 8mins 22secs??).

Andrew & Mark

Newly Completed Brewster's Restaurant



A quick note, if you haven't been at the club recently or live locally for that matter, is the completion of the new Brewster's Restaurant, which was constructed on the old site at the front of the park. Based around a family environment it has certainly smartened up from the front of the park and is quite impressive inside even if the outside architectural looks are not

everyone's 'cup of tea' (**See Picture Above**). It may very well make a substantial impact on our running season in 2004 with very many more people attracted to the park and the facilities it brings with it. It is however a big improvement on what was there before and should hopefully benefit everyone without being a burden or introduce trouble into the park after hours.

Andrew & Mark

Our New Weather Vein



Through these pages we would like to draw everybody's attention to, if you haven't already noticed, our new weather vein that has been put on the finial on the North end of the clubhouse (**See Picture Left: The Weather Vein in full swing on a particularly cold December day with the wind a cool NNE**). It was constructed by Bill Thompson and the outline is based on Wharfedale, the spinning top then runs on a shaft through a plain bearing to the fixed

stanchion underneath supporting the compass points. It works very well and really makes the clubhouse look complete. We would like to thank Bill very much for the effort in constructing the weather vein and to Bill and John Gange who spent a morning a couple of weeks back fixing it to the finial at the front the clubhouse.

Andrew & Mark

Diary of Events

1st January 2004 – New Years Day Run & Club Night – From 1000 till late.

17th January 2004 – Talk by Norman Payne on his Life and Work whilst working BR from the 1960's till retirement. Will start from 1830.

5th February 2004 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

4th March 2004 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

20th March 2004 – Film Show night with Cine films from SMLS and other preserved railways. Will start from 1900.

27th/28th March 2004 – Proposed start of running for 2004 season **TBC**.

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.