

# Sussex Miniature Locomotive Society Ltd

Issue No. 374  
August 2008

## BEECH HURST NEWS



### Cover picture: -

*A Rare Beast:* Over the past twelve months Mike has been rebuilding an unusual North British Railway 'Atlantic' class locomotive named 'Waverley', which after quite a few trials and tribulations is now back on the rails and running very smoothly indeed.

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## **Editor's Notes**

With precious little of the summer left, I think a lot of us are scratching our heads and wondering if it had ever arrived in the first place! This has been one of the worst I have known for a few years, with many days not exactly washed out, but certainly curtailed by some very unseasonably inclement weather – good for ducks though!

It is a little while since the June edition and I have held this one back to the end of the month this time so as to include all the latest news from the last 2 months.

Thanks to Mike, Nick and Norman for contributions to the June edition and together with my usual writings made for quite a hearty edition, complete with rear cover feature that I have continued into this edition. In order to fit the latest into this newsletter I have written all the articles, barring the Chairman's notes, myself, with time definitely of the essence! Along with the most recent social events, there are articles on the Efficiency Trials and Forthcoming Events, as well as a fully updated Diary of Events that now runs until the New Year, so please read on and enjoy...

**Andrew**

## **Chairman's Notes**

This year more running days have been affected by the weather than any season I can remember! Nevertheless, we have managed to keep a service operating through even the worst of it. On the better days we continued with some efficiency competition runs and so far Peter Marten's 'K' class is ahead of the rest of us, proving very economical with the black nuggets! There are a few more 'having a go' at being 'sparing with the shovel' so it will be interesting to see the results.

To everyone who has helped with the 'gardening', I say a big 'thank you'. The lawns and cuttings all look very tidy and the foliage around the track has been kept in check, despite it all growing so rapidly this year.

A new addition to the station furniture is a display board in which we can slot pictures of the engines running each day. Thanks to Stephen H for starting us off with a set of pictures and to Steve S for finishing off the board, and to all who put in some effort during its manufacture. It adds interest for passengers waiting.

Meanwhile our other Steve 'T' has been progressing the long task of re-wiring the signalling conduits around the track.

August is always a busy month, with the Wednesday running and Bank Holiday Monday. We have also fitted in a good few private groups too.

Some members made a visit to Maidstone track a fortnight ago and earlier in August we enjoyed a very good evening playing bowls with the club next door. Our thanks to both the Maidstone and Bowling clubs for welcoming us as always.

With the Bank Holiday now firmly behind us, I wish everyone some pleasant end of season running through till the end of September!

**Mike**

## Maidstone Take-Two

It may be a long while in the past, but since the June edition we have welcomed Maidstone MES to Beech Hurst and have as recently as a fortnight ago visited their track at Mote Park in a reciprocal visit.

The visit by Maidstone to Beech Hurst has so often in the past been plagued by bad weather and this year was the exception! Despite a seriously cooler and wetter summer, June 28<sup>th</sup> proved to be a very nice day with variable amounts of cloud interspersed with some warm summer sunshine. As ever they brought with them a really good selection of motive power, from the diminutive 3 ½" gauge 'Jack' to two 5" gauge LMS greats, namely a 'Royal Scot' and a 'Duchess'. Also on track was a 5" 'V3', a 5" freelance 0-6-0 called 'Lady Windser' (definitely spelt 'er' before anybody asks!) and a 5" 'Speedy'. The first locomotives were on the track from about 11:00 and running right through the last were off just after 17:00, having coped admirably with our afternoon passenger hauling. There was then just the small matter of enjoying a late afternoon tea before the drive back East.

Through these pages I would like to thank all those who contributed throughout the day, all those who helped with TC duties, to Val and John for the purchase of the food and also to Howard and Roz for preparing a fine afternoon tea for our guests. It is always a pleasure to entertain and to be able to leave the afternoon service in capable hands, whilst we can take a 'back seat' for a change!



Following on from their visit to Beech Hurst, we then enjoyed a very nice day out to Maidstone a fortnight ago to run on their track at Mote Park. We took 3 locomotives, namely 'Wharfedale', 'Minx' and the '4-CEP' coach + the 'Pump Trolley' and 5 members too! Unlike their visits to Sussex, we have usually been lucky with ours to Maidstone and this

was no exception as despite a poor forecast the weather turned out to be bright, warm and partly sunny throughout the day, with no hint of the promised deluges! Arriving early we set about getting on the track as soon as possible to get a free run before other guests arrived. 'Wharfedale' was on first, followed shortly afterwards by the '4-CEP' and shortly after that by 'Minx'. As it turned out the other invited club, Canvey Island, only brought one locomotive, a 'GNR Single' that has been a frequent visitor to Beech Hurst with the Chelmsford club as well as two very energetic 'Collie' dogs! The day seem to pass by very quickly with everybody swapping locomotives and having the chance to drive,

as well as mingling and chatting with our hosts and enjoying a sumptuous lunch and, later, afternoon cakes. All 3 locomotives performed faultlessly as did the drivers (most of the time!) with the 'Minx' being withdrawn at about 15:00, followed by 'Wharfedale' and the '4-CEP' at about 16:00. We had long ago lost the 'Pump Trolley', which provided the Maidstone members with good arm exercise that day!



As I am sure all those who attended will agree, we had a superb day helped in two ways; firstly by some ropey weather forecasting and also by the hospitality of our hosts who were very friendly as ever and who also provided a feast for us to enjoy. I, for one, will look forward to our visit next year when Maidstone MES will be 80 years old!

**Pictured Previous Page:** 'Big' Andrew on 'Wharfedale'.

**Pictured Above:** 'Little' Andrew with the '4-CEP'.

**Andrew**

## **BBQ Evening**



The most recent social event occurred last Saturday with our annual 'End of Summer' BBQ. Attended by as many as 20 members and guests, the evening went off extremely well with several trains in operation to be enjoyed by all. There was of the course the small matter of the BBQ too, which cooked the usual fayre as well as some slightly more exotic meats, such as Kangaroo and

Ostrich! We also enjoyed some luxury puddings and were suitably 'fattered' up by the end the evening!





Through these pages I would like to thank all those who attended the BBQ to make it the evening that it was, to those who helped prepare and pack away and also to Val and John who prepared Drinks, Onions and Puddings for us all. Finally, apologies to anybody who came out smelling a bit a smoky after our antics in the tunnel with a firebox full of house coal!

**Andrew**

**Pictured Previous Page:** Nick in charge of 'Simplex'

**Pictured Above:** New member Graham Mundy at the controls of a 'mixed traffic'!

**Our Newest Member!**



Over the years we have seen quite a lot of different wildlife at Beech Hurst, primarily rabbits and the usual songbirds, plus the occasional visit from a badger, deer or fox. Just recently, however, we have seen, on an almost daily basis, what we are pretty sure is a Sparrow Hawk around the park. I don't know about anybody else but I have found these birds quite elusive, having only ever seen one

close at hand at Beech Hurst before. This particular bird has been a regular visitor in the past month or so and seems to have certain favourite perches whilst it hunts for prey, one of which is the end of our station fence (**pictured above**), which gives it a 'birds eye view' of the golf course and any small rodent in the grass! Whilst I guess they are not as rare as some birds of prey it is certainly something different to be seen in the park of an evening time.

**Andrew**

## **Bluebell Visit**

As well as the aforementioned social events we also hosted a small visit by some of the Bluebell Railway Firemen and Drivers last Tuesday night. Occasionally some of our members are treated to footplate trips on the Bluebell and as a thank you for this and to keep good relations with them we also invite their Firemen and Drivers to come and have a go at something smaller from time to time. Around a dozen or so of their members, plus a handful who were visiting from the Bo'ness Railway in Scotland attended the evening during which we ran 2 steam locomotives and Norman's 4-CEP coach. It is always interesting to see how some of the full-size crew can adapt to our locomotives and to be honest none of those who came on Tuesday had any real problems and the evening went off extremely well. We eventually cleared away about 23:00 having had a very enjoyable evening with plenty going on and lots of interesting people to talk to at the same time. I would imagine that the takings in the 'Harvester' were also unusually high that evening too!

Hopefully next year we can arrange something similar in June when the days are that much longer. There is already something similar in the pipeline that we are looking to arrange with some of the lads from the Lavender line too.

**Andrew**

## **Track Speed Reminder**

We have noticed a few drivers are again sometimes going a bit too fast in passenger service! Please can we remind you to keep to a very steady pace with the public on board, and as always to round the clubhouse curve at walking pace – for safety reasons!

The TC's decisions of the day are final. All authorised TC's will have the backing the Operations Managers and Committee. Please do not put a TC in the difficult position of having to ask you to slow down!

Thanking you for your cooperation.

**Andrew, Geoff & Mike**

## **The Efficiency Trials – The Story Continues...**

With a lull in proceedings after the last report, the efficiency trials have taken off again in the last month or so, with 6 more members having a bash.

First up on 20<sup>th</sup> July was 'little' Andrew driving Howard's 'Minx' locomotive. A medium sized 0-6-0 was in with a shout and took a load of 2 coaches totalling 518kg, also with the benefit of a dry and clean track. After a slightly false start at the station on the first lap, the next ten laps were driven very well, with just a couple of additional stops for 'blow ups' along the way. Returning an efficiency of 253g of coal used per 100kg of load put the 'Minx' in the 'wooden spoon' position, but would it last?

Thus followed one of the favourites. Peter Marten's 'K' is one of our heavy weight machines and is also in pristine running condition. So on 23<sup>rd</sup> July the 'K' took a fully loaded 4 car train of 1012kg for the next trial.

Again benefiting from excellent weather and rail conditions, both locomotive and driver performed with out fault during an excellent 10 laps that returned an overall efficiency of 121g per 100kg of load – the new benchmark! In hindsight we could well have added a further ¼ ton to the overall load, which would have improved the figures still further.

Next up on 26<sup>th</sup> July Nick tried his hand at the trial, driving his ‘Simplex’ locomotive. Again another medium sized 0-6-0, so how would this compare with the ‘Minx’ for efficiency? Taking a load of 540kg and 2 coaches, the driver and locomotive put in a near faultless run, with no additional stops and at quite a ‘rate of knots’ too. Returning an overall efficiency of 236g per 100kg of load it was not that much more efficient than the ‘Minx’, however the two locomotives are quite different and may well show different efficiency characteristics. Also, I think both could have taken bigger loads that seem to be the key to getting maximum benefit from the coal used.

The next trial on 27<sup>th</sup> July was with a GNR ‘Single’ owned by Adam Cro. Taking an initial load of 1 car and nearly 250kg of overall load the locomotive failed to negotiate the climb from the station on the first lap and Mr Edwards was forced to abandon ship, reducing the final overall weight to 194kg. Several non-stop laps followed with just one more stop for a ‘blow up’ required, but in the end 10 laps were duly completed. Despite being a larger wheeled locomotive, the ‘Single’ returned figures of 528g of coal used per 100kg of load – the ‘Minx’ was no longer last! Although traction was limited, the main reason for the low efficiency was simply the small load taken given that the locomotive weighs in at 90lbs, when even my ‘Railmotor’ had coped with 450kg of load for a locomotive that is barely 60lbs in weight, it does have small wheels and 4 of them though!

The latest two trials used the club locomotive ‘Wharfedale’. Both took near as damn it the same load with the train weighing in at 1050kg – using all 4 cars. Stephen Hutton was first to try his hand on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> August and put in a completely faultless run to return admirable figures of 141g per 100kg of load and snatch the 2<sup>nd</sup> place from Mike’s B1 by a mere 1g! The load was just sufficient for the locomotive that made good headway on the first few laps, with a run that got better and better as time went on. Then, on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> August Mark Allen took ‘Wharfedale’ for it’s second outing in this year’s trials. This was the first run where the weather was just acceptable with intermittent drizzle making the track quite tricky. We had had to postpone Ray’s attempt on the previous Sunday morning due to heavy drizzle that would have made for an unfair comparison. After a dicey first lap, Mark negotiated the next 9 in fine style and returned with little left in the way of fire to gain an overall efficiency of 133g per 100kg of load and snatch 2<sup>nd</sup> place back! Given a dry track I think this efficiency would have been a little better still, but not quite good enough to dislodge the ‘K’ which still looks the favourite with just a month of the season now remaining!

A winner should be declared in the October edition and is there anybody else left to affect the final result...?

**Andrew**

## **Forthcoming Events**

I have now compiled a full Diary up until the New Year, with the details listed below. We have confirmed that our visit to Malden DSME will be on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> October and any interested persons should add their name to the growing list on the blackboard as soon as possible in order to secure a place!

Also confirmed are Bonfire and Nosh nights that are to be held on November 1<sup>st</sup> and December 13<sup>th</sup> respectively. I will publish further details in the October edition; however, any entries to Bonfire Night are welcomed with open arms at anytime between now and the day!

Also coming soon, on 29<sup>th</sup> November, is a talk by one of the Harris brothers about the 'History of Fairgrounds'. I will try and firm up details for this in the October edition, failing this details will be available on the blackboard in the clubhouse nearer the day, once we know more. I am reliably informed that this is a very interesting talk and it would be good to have a good attendance for this. More details on all of the above and further additions will follow in October.

**Andrew**

## **Diary of Events**

4<sup>th</sup> September 2008 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

2<sup>nd</sup> October 2008 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

11<sup>th</sup> October 2008 – SMLS to visit Malden DSME – names on blackboard ASAP.

1<sup>st</sup> November 2008 – Bonfire Night – details to be firmed in October edition.

6<sup>th</sup> November 2008 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

29<sup>th</sup> November 2008 – Talk by the Harris Bros. on 'The History of Fairgrounds'.

4<sup>th</sup> December 2008 – Club Night – Will start at approx. 1900.

13<sup>th</sup> December 2008 – Nosh Night – details to be firmed in October edition.

1<sup>st</sup> January 2009 – New Years Day Run & Club Night – Will start from 1000.

**N.B.** Other events are not always shown in the diary of events because they have been arranged at short notice; check black/notice boards at the clubhouse for more details.

**Andrew**



## Sussex Miniature Locomotive Society Ltd



### **Rear Cover picture: -**

*On The Road:* Continuing with the theme of new locomotives at Beech Hurst in 2008, another new arrival is Howard and Andrew Strongitharm's 'Minx'. Acquired in the early part of this year the first few months weren't without their problems, however as the season has progressed the 'gremlins' have one by one been 'weeded' out and the locomotive now performs regularly without too many problems. Pictured above, the 'Minx' had a faultless outing to the Maidstone track at Mote Park a couple of weeks ago and seen with Howard at the controls, whilst Andrew seems to have found something interesting in the drain under the water tower!