

## Chairman's Thoughts

As the weather has turned very wet, please take care when parking on the grass area. Please try not to churn up the grass. If you are coming on a Sunday and not bringing a loco to run, could you please park in the Littledown Centre car park as there is no restriction on time on Sundays, unlike the three hour limit during weekdays. Also, please be aware that if you park in the lay-by it is restricted to **one hour** and is regularly checked by the same person who checks the three hour parking in the Littledown Centre Car Park. It is 365 days a year, so be warned.

Our last Society Meeting was well attended and the talk on the stars over Stonehenge was very interesting. The speaker referred to a website called *Stellarium* that can be down loaded for FREE on your Mac, Linux or Windows computer. If you have got a tablet you can go out when the weather allows and look at the stars. (Available as *Stellarium Mobile for iPad at £1.49, or Stellarium Mobile Sky Map for Android at £1.69. Ed.*)

If you missed out giving your name at the last Meeting as a helper for the Santa Run 15th December and still want to help on the day, please contact David Finn or myself with your details. There is also a list on the notice board in the Engine Shed.

Our annual Christmas Party will be on Wednesday 18th December, three days after our Santa Run, so please come along and please bring something to contribute. We will also have our usual raffle and prizes would be appreciated, also a quiz as last year.

Our Annual Dinner Menu is attached to this Newsletter.

**David Martin**

## Editor's Ramblings

The Annual Dinner 2014 is definitely on! The Crooked Beam Restaurant is still open for business and I now have the Menu for our Annual Dinner on 22nd January 2014. The price is still £18.50 per head, but places are limited to 40, so it's first-come-first-served. If you want to book a place don't leave it until January! The Menu and Booking Form is in with this Newsletter.

The alternator on *Littledown Castle* suffered a diode pack failure. I took the alternator over to AJW Electrics, 220 Leigh Road, Wimborne, on the offchance that they would be able to diagnose what was wrong with it. We went into his workshop at the rear of his bungalow and explained what we were trying to do with the alternator. He clamped it into his test rig, started it up the large 5HP electric motor and applied volts to the brushes. Watching the meters and listening to the alternator trying to alternate he diagnosed failure of one phase of the diode pack. He quickly removed the diode pack, tested it and confirmed that his diagnosis was correct. A rummage through a cupboard produced a new replacement diode pack, which he decided to fit there and then. A retest of the alternator was carried out and he pronounced it very healthy.

So, if you have a problem with the alternator or starter motor in your car, he is definitely the man to go to! *Littledown Castle* is now performing better than ever and we are now arranging the controls before finalising the body design.

**Dick Ganderton**

## Merlin's Mutterings

Nice to say that all eight trolleys have now had the modified brake pull rods fitted and this completes the refurbishment and modification to the eight standard trolleys, also the two smaller ones.

The new trolley, which is being made, has now had two new end plates made and fitted. The side panels have now been ordered, cut and bent to conform to the shape of the standard ones. This trolley is also being adapted to become a dynamometer trolley, at the moment it is, of course, experimental, but looks favourable.

That's all this time.

**Merlin**



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## Committee Matters

The December Committee Meeting will be held at the Littledown Centre at 7.30pm on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2013. The Minutes of the November Committee Meeting will be available for perusal at the November Meeting.  
**George Wheatley, Secretary**

## Direction of Running

The way in which we alternate the direction of running at the Littledown Miniature Railway has been changed. The direction of running will now be clockwise for even months and anticlockwise for odd months. So November will be anticlockwise and December clockwise.

The 16mm Narrow Gauge Garden Railway will still be running on the First and Third Sundays of each month, weather permitting. The next dates are 17<sup>th</sup> November and 1<sup>st</sup> December. The railway will not be running on 15<sup>th</sup> December as that is the day of our Santa Special.

## Engine Shed Mobile Phone

A Mobile Phone has been installed in the Engine Shed at Littledown for the convenience of Members. It can be used for outgoing calls on Society business and in an emergency. Members who are at the track can also be contacted if required. The number, **07879355399**, is on the 'Contacts' page of the Society's Website **www.littledownrailway.co.uk**

## Insurance & Membership Lists

The Policy for the Society has been renewed. A copy of the policy has been placed in the desk in the Engine Shed. The original documents are held by the Secretary and can be viewed by arrangement.

For Members who wish to run their locomotives at locations which require evidence of Public Liability cover there are a number of copies of the Certificate at the back of the same folder as the copy of the policy. This will need to be signed by a Committee Member on an individual basis before it becomes valid.

The success of the redesigned Application and Renewal Forms has made it possible to keep our Membership Lists up-to-date and as all the Forms were signed, details can be distributed to other members. An abbreviated list, which omits addresses, can be obtained on application to the Secretary. A copy is kept in the desk in the Engine Shed

**George Wheatley, Secretary**

## B&DSME Diary Dates.

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|--------------------------------|---|
| 20 <sup>th</sup> November 2013 | Monthly Meeting; 7.30 pm. Muscliff Community Centre.<br><i>Rebuilding the Welsh Highland Railway. Charles Clarke.</i>           |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> December 2013  | Tech-Chat (Informal Discussion Meeting); 7.00 for 7.30 pm.<br><i>Gordon Miles. Please let Gordon know if you are attending.</i> |
| 15 <sup>th</sup> December 2013 | Santa Special. Littledown Miniature Railway.<br><i>Volunteers required. <b>This is a Sunday event.</b></i>                      |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2013 | Monthly Meeting; 7.30 pm. Muscliff Community Centre.<br><i>Christmas Party. Please bring seasonal food and cakes.</i>           |
| 15 <sup>th</sup> January 2014  | Monthly Meeting; 7.30 pm. Muscliff Community Centre.<br><i>Subject to be arranged.</i>  |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2014  | Annual Dinner; 7.00 for 7.30 pm. Crooked Beam Restaurant, Christchurch.<br><i>Menu is with this Newsletter. Dick Ganderton.</i> |

## Luscombe Valley Happenings

**www.luscombevalleysteam.com**

Humbug Day

December 21<sup>st</sup>

## Newsletter By E-mail

If you want to receive your copy of the Society's monthly Newsletter as a .pdf file, in full colour, you **must** let Dick know, by e-mail, sent from the computer you want to receive it on.

Typeset by Dick Ganderton in Gill Sans using Adobe InDesign CS5 v7.0 on an Apple Mac mini 2.3GHz Intel Core i5 running Mac OS X v10.9 Maverick.

## 16mm Update

Yet another piece of legislation has arrived on our 16mm doorstep, namely the *LPG Pressure Vessels Regulations* and the Southern Federation's (SF) interpretation of it.

This is for LPG tanks under 250cc, as used in all of our 16mm locos. As the 16mm NGM are affiliated members of SF this will apply to us. To date I have no such communication from the 16mm NGM on this matter.

Requirements: According to SF this requires the Gas Tank Serial No and a Safeguard Test, whatever that entails, to be recorded on the annual Boiler Test Certificate.

Now what does this really mean?

1. More work for the Boiler Tester, but no additional work for the loco owner, unless it is a home built tank.  
2. Manufacturers of gas tanks are obliged to supply an Identification and Test Certificate for each tank supplied, and would have to specify the gas mixture and temperature.

3. What about older gas tanks? The document from SF is very vague and does not cover this point, as with many other queries. It looks to me as if the thing has been rushed out without much thought or consultation.

4. It should be possible for the Society's Boiler Testers to retrospectively test the tanks, but it's not going to be as straightforward as most people think.

5. There is no mention in the literature as to the test pressures and these will vary with gas mixture and operating temperatures

6. We have been told that existing Boiler Test Certificates will be modified to include the gas tank tests (more expense).

I would draw members attention to *B&DSME News*, Volume 28, Issue 2, February 2009, *16mm Update*, for more information on the effects of pressure with respect to mixed propane/butane gasses. As more information becomes available I will try to keep you updated.

In the mean time I hope to see you at the Littledown track on the First and Third Sunday each month.

**Gordon Miles & Dave White**

## Dismantling Miniature Pressure Gauges

With the new Boiler Testing *Green Book*, the requirement for the Pressure Gauge on the boiler to have the 'Red Line' marked on the dial has been emphasised. This is easier than most people imagine and in this article I will show how to take the gauge apart to get to the dial.

There are two common variants of the miniature pressure gauge used on our models. One type has the glass carrier held in place with two small screws either side. This type is simple to take apart - just don't loose the screws!

The second type has the glass carrier pressed onto the main body. This is the type described in my pictures (1). All you need is a medium flat blade screwdriver and a vice. No screws are undone, the screwdriver is just used to **gently** start to lever the glass carrier forwards by inserting the blade in the slot underneath the gauge and twisting (2). The carrier should then end up slightly cocked (3)

Now gently grip the square part of the gauge body in a small vice, glass down. Using the screwdriver blade **gently** push the top of the glass carrier down to square it up (4) and then continue pushing down at 3 o'clock, then 9 o'clock, holding one hand under the glass, teasing the carrier off the body. Place the carrier, glass down, on a soft cloth. Carefully remove the gauge from the vice and paint a thin Red Line at the correct position on the dial (5).

To reassemble, hold the gauge upside down over the glass carrier (6). Carefully engage the body into the carrier and gently push down with your thumb squarely on the middle of the back of the body until it is fully home (7). **Dick**



Photographs Dick Ganderton



## Look After Your Boiler

So there I was having a chat with Bob while he was doing a descaling job on his *Dart* loco and it occurred to us both that not everyone in the club might know about this essential end-of-season maintenance for a locomotive boiler. It is a very important aspect of caring for your expensive item of hardware, which might otherwise fail a hydraulic test prematurely.

During use your boiler will build up scale within it, due primarily to the deposition of calcium carbonate from the dissolved calcium ions in hard water, just as in kettle scale, unless you regularly use distilled water. This may be practical for 16mm locos, but not for larger ones. Over a period this deposit will build up on all the interior surfaces below water level and as it does so render the boiler less and less efficient as a steam producer, since it acts as an insulator between the boiler walls and the water within it. In extreme cases the scale may accumulate to such an extent that it will reduce or block the normal circulation of the water within parts of the boiler. It is only because the water can circulate, especially around the walls of the firebox, that prevents them from becoming severely overheated, risking failure of a joint.

We all know not to allow the water level in a boiler to fall below the level of the firebox crown for precisely this reason yet effectively the same thing can happen lowdown around the foundation ring if we allow the unchecked build up of scale. Scale can also block the passages leading to the water level sight glass - 'nuff said', to quote a well known past contributor to *Model Engineer*!

So how do you avoid this problem? Twofold - firstly by 'blowing down' regularly after steaming; this will remove a proportion of the suspended particles of scale, depending upon how much water you remove from the boiler, but will not deal with the encrusted layers that steadily form on the internal surfaces with each steaming. However, this can be dissolved by using an acidic descalant, obtainable readily from hardware stores for treating kettles.

Bob does it this way. With the normal water level in the boiler add the descalant in the proportion shown on the bottle and refasten the safety valve. The mixture will fizz actively as carbon dioxide is formed and this must be allowed to escape, preferably by opening the injector steam valve. This ensures that none of the acid can accidentally overflow via the safety valve and damage the loco paintwork.

Light a small fire in the grate, just to warm the mixture and wait until all the fizzing stops. You will know when this happens by watching the water level glass until all bubbling stops. Now empty the boiler and vitally, flush out three times with clean hot water, whilst pushing the loco to and fro to agitate the water and remove any remaining deposits.

If you do not do this, apart from leaving acidic residue in the boiler, it will prime badly when steamed. As they say, 'Ask me how I know'!

Now you should steam the loco for a run to make sure that any acidic residue that might have found its way past the regulator will not then sit in the cylinders to cause corrosion.

It is suggested that you descale the boiler annually and then all should be well. All this can be done in the time it takes to have a natter and enjoy a cup or two of tea or coffee!

**John Hoyle and Bob Devereux**



Photographs John Hoyle



## October Meeting

There was a good turnout of members for the Society's October Meeting at the Muscliff Community Centre. They enjoyed a very interesting illustrated talk by Bob Mizon on matters astronomical and astrological, with his own take on the mysteries of Stonehenge. He introduced members to a fascinating app for those into computers and tablets called Stellarium, which gives the position of stars and planets for any time and date.

John Roberts, a Member, who is building a Polly, was in attendance with samples of clothing with B&DSME badges and names if required. These are normally available to view and try on in the Engine Shed. If anyone has Christmas presents in mind, the next meeting on 20th November may be your last chance.

**George**



## Santa Run 2013

I had a phone call last week from the big guy in the Red Suit, reminding me that it is the time of year when the call to arms is required for the Santa Run. This year it will be run on Sunday 15th December. There is a list displayed in the Engine Shed, to enable the huge numbers of volunteers to enlist by putting their names in the required spaces.

**Dave Finn**

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### For Sale

**T**wo 3½" Gauge steam locos, built by the late Ron Bateson. Ron was a Member of the Society for many years and spent his working life as Chief Engineer on several Cunard ships, including QE2. Both locomotives were run regularly at Kings Park and are well made.

3½" Gauge LBSC *Bantam Cock* 2-6-2.      £2,000.

3½" Gauge Don Young *Derby* 0-6-0. £1,500.

Viewing by prior appointment only.

Contact Dick for further information. Tel: 01202 822701 e-mail: [dick.ganderton@me.com](mailto:dick.ganderton@me.com)

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