

Chairman's Thoughts

During the school half term Diane and I took ourselves off to Antwerp in Belgium to visit my Aunt and family. I have driven a few times to Belgium but Diane thought it would be nice to go by train, so we booked the Eurostar from Ebbsfleet in Kent, a new purpose built station for the Eurostar.

We drove down early Saturday morning straight into the prepaid car park by the station, less than five minutes from the parking. Having booked on-line we had to get our tickets from a machine on the station concourse. Having no tickets we had to enter a code in a ticket machine and out came four tickets, then onto customs and passport control to be checked in.

A few minutes before departure you were asked to go to the platform and stand by your carriage number. The train arrived and we were shown to our seats. The train only stops for two minutes and we were off. Ten minutes later we entered the tunnel and were served a very nice meal, complete with wine and then onto Brussels in 1 hour 48 minutes in total.

The tickets I had booked allowed us to travel to any station in Belgium, so on arrival at Brussels we changed to a local train to Antwerp with a short walk across the square to our hotel.

We spent the next few days visiting relatives and seeing some of the sights of Antwerp. We were taken to The MAS, a new eye-catching museum. Its design was inspired by a sixteenth-century store house or 'Hanzehuis'. The galleries are stacked up like 'boxes' creating a spiral tower with large expanses of glass. As you go up on the escalators from the ground floor to +9, you have a constantly changing view of Antwerp: city, port and river in a single glance, and on the top, 10th floor you have panoramic views of Antwerp. We also visited the Red Star Line museum where two million people from all over Europe left for America in the 1920s, including Irving Berlin, Golda Meir and Einstein.

Travelling around Antwerp is not a problem as they have a good system of trams and buses. In the centre the trams go underground, very much like our Underground in London. The Station building is very impressive with platforms one on top of the other with a pedestrian concourse in the middle. Time went quickly and we soon had to return by Eurostar. All in all a most interesting train journey and few days.

If you missed out giving your name at the last Society Meeting as a helper for the Santa Run on the 14th December and still want to help on the day, please contact me with your details.

Our Annual Dinner Menu should be included with the December *Newsletter*.

David Martin



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Insurance & Membership Lists

A copy of the Society's Insurance 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 wanting to run their locomotives at locations requiring evidence of Public Liability cover there are copies of the Certificate at the back of the same folder as the copy of the policy. This need to be signed by a Committee Member on an individual basis before becoming valid.

The new Application and Renewal Forms means we can keep our Membership List up-to-date. 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

Committee Matters

The December 2014 Committee Meeting will be held in Training Room 1, The Littledown Centre at 7.30pm on Wednesday 3rd December 2014. The Minutes of the November Committee Meeting will be available for perusal at the November 2014 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 2014 will be anticlockwise. December 2014 will be 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 16th November and 7th & 21st December 2014.

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

Boiler Testing

If you require a Boiler Test, please remember that you need to book it with one of the Boiler Testers. Also you should have all the paperwork with you - that's all the past Test Certificates and the *Written Scheme of Examination!* You have kept them, haven't you?

B&DSME Diary Dates.

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| 19 th November 2014 | Monthly Meeting; 7.30 pm. Muscliff Community Centre.
<i>Bill Wilson. A review of over 100 years of 0-gauge live-steam toy and model locomotives.</i> |
| 4 th December 2014 | Tech-Chat (Informal Discussion Meeting); 7.00 for 7.30 pm.
<i>Phil Drake. Please let Phil know if you are attending.</i> |
| 14 th December 2014 | Santa Special; Littledown Miniature Railway.
<i>Volunteers will be needed for this event.</i> |
| 17 th December 2014 | Monthly Meeting; 7.30 pm. Muscliff Community Centre.
<i>Christmas Party. Please bring seasonal food and cakes.</i> |
| 8 th January 2015 | Tech-Chat (Informal Discussion Meeting); 7.00 for 7.30 pm.
<i>Venue to be decided. Please note change of date to the second Thursday to avoid New Year's Day!</i> |
| 21 st January 2015 | Monthly Meeting; 7.30 pm. Muscliff Community Centre.
<i>Subject to be advised.</i> |
| 28 th January 2015 | Annual Dinner; 7.00 for 7.30 pm. Crooked Beam Restaurant, Christchurch.
<i>Menu should be with the December Newsletter. Dick Ganderton.</i> |

Luscombe Valley Happenings

www.luscombevalleysteam.com

Humbug Day

December 20th

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 Helvetica using Adobe InDesign CS5 v7.0 on an Apple Mac mini 2.3GHz Intel Core i5 running Mac OS X v10.10 Yosemite.

Editor's Ramblings

This edition is very short, just three pages. I really need a lot of you to write something to fill the pages, rather than leave it up to the few.

We have really made a lot of progress on *Littledown Castle* recently. The problem that we have had from day one has been the very bad flat spot that prevented the engine from picking up smoothly. In fact it was so bad that if the throttle was opened too quickly the engine stalled! This prevented the governor from working properly. Nigel Way, who has experience with racing similar engines on go karts, offered to help and so a whole day was spent trying to find out what the problem was. We eliminated various possibilities such as the revised air intake and the new silencer system, stripped the carburettor down and cleaned every orifice we could find, but the flat spot refused to go away. We decided to try a larger main jet to see if that cured the problem, so I combed the internet to find either a larger jet or a replacement that could be opened up.

The carburettor is rather unusual as it doesn't have an idle air screw and the main jet just screws into the side of the jet tube rather than being in line with the emulsion tube. As the jet looked just like a M5 brass cheesehead screw with a small hole down the middle I decided to try to make one. The original jet is stamped 63 - the *Owner's Manual* states that it should be 54. I found that a 0.60mm drill passed easily through the jet but a 0.65mm one wouldn't go. So 63 obviously means 0.63mm diameter. I decide to drill my brass screw with a 0.75mm drill, which actually measured 0.74mm. A rummage in my box of odd screws turned up a OBA brass cheesehead screw. This was quickly converted into an M5 screw, the head turned down to match the original jet and stamped 74.

Would this new home made jet work? Well, the engine started easily and required less choke for a shorter time. With bated breath the throttle was opened and, lo and behold the flat spot had gone! Tests on the track showed that the engine had been transformed and the governor worked correctly!

Littledown Castle is now available to take its share of pasenger hauling and 'driver training' has started. The temporary MDF body has been tarted up with handrails and John Hancock has made a headlamp that looks great fitted into the speed whiskers on the front grill.

Dick Ganderton

Garden Railway For Sale

Dear Secretary,

Some years ago I built a 5" gauge railway around my garden. I now wish to dispose of it. It consists of:

About 150 metres of aluminium 21mm high track of which about 45 metres are straight. Rail is in 3m lengths

Sleepers mostly wood, 30 per 3 metre length of track

10 points: 2 x 10' Y; 2 x 15' LH; 2 x 15' RH; 2 x 10' LH; 2 x 10' RH

2 x 'Ride on Railways' *Hercules* electric locos (bearing version)

3 x 'Ride on Railways' coal trucks, with running board and one seat each, 2 with brakes

1 x 'Ride on Railways' open bogie truck, with running boards and two seats

Associated ballast and brick edging.

Naturally, I would love you to buy all or some of it but, failing that, I would be grateful of suggestions as to how I might usefully dispose of it.

Anything you can do would be welcome. My telephone number is 01483 283571. Post code is KT24 6EW. That is about five miles east of Guildford. E-mail: mjcoventry@dsl.pipex.com

Thanks again.

Jeremy Coventry

Car Parking

The Committee would like to remind Members that they should only park their cars or motorcycles in the designated parking areas. There is no parking in the area around or near the Engine Shed, on the driveway or turning circle. Exceptions may be made for a very limited number of 'Blue Badge' holders and the 'Blue Badge' should be displayed. As parking spaces are limited please use the main Littledown Centre Car Park if you are not bringing a locomotive to run.

If the heavy rain that we are now experiencing continues, then parking on the grass just inside the entrance will become impossible and it will be necessary to impose the same sort of restrictions as last year.