

# Britain's Great Little Railways

Newsletter 71



April 2018

## 2018 AGM and Spring General Meeting

Some 35 members attended the meeting which was held at and hosted by Jim Haylock and his team. The carriage shed was cleared and tables set up to hold both the meeting and the lunch.



The big news prior to the meeting was that Jim had decided to resign as Chairman of BGLR but remain as a Director. Prior to the meeting Jim and the other Directors sounded out candidates to fulfil the two Directors posts which had become vacant following the resignation of Mike Hanson in 2016 and Wally Pearson earlier this year. The AGM voted in the two candidates who were

Rob Hart, from Eastleigh Lakeside Railway, who has taken on the role of ensuring that BGLR has a positive role on Facebook and Twitter. Rob had been very successful in upgrading the profile of Eastleigh LSR on these social networks and it has resulted in a large increase in numbers visiting the railway especially at Gala events. It is hoped that having an active BGLR Facebook and Twitter page will assist all our railways.

Adrian Corke, Evesham Vale Light Railway, who has taken on the responsibility of ensuring that the larger gauges are well represented both inside BGLR and outside with the necessary authorities. It is important



that BGLR looks after all our members and not just those running 7 1/4".

These appointments have been successfully registered at Companies House. BGLR was set up as a Company Limited by Guarantee, some years before I joined, and there was only one registered PSC ( Person with Significant Control. i.e. the person who runs the Company) and that was Jim and thus he automatically became the Chairman. I have now changed the operation at Companies House so that each and every Director is registered as a PSC. This allows the Chair to be rotated and each Director has an individual say in the running of the Company although clearly a majority view of all Directors is required before changes can be made.

## BGLR NEWS

The Autumn General Meeting will be held at the Bure Valley Railway, Aylsham Station, Aylsham, Norfolk, NR11 6BW, on October 10th at 11.00 and it will be hosted by Adrian Barnes. The BVR will be running a passenger service on the day and Andrew has suggested a special train leaving at 14.20 and returning at 16.15, nearer to the meeting I will be asking all attendees whether they wish to catch this train as we can't expect Andrew to run a special and then find no one wants it. The normal service is 10.00, 12.40 and 15.30 with the return journey taking approx 2hrs.

## HRA, LEGISLATION, & SAFETY REPORT

*BGLR is a corporate member of the Heritage Railway Association. Members can read HRA "members only" publications on [www.hra.uk.com/](http://www.hra.uk.com/) by entering the username bglr and the password kcnsy37*

I have nothing to report

## NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

### LITTLEHAMPTON MINIATURE RAILWAY

#### NEW LOCOS

In January 2017 the diesel hydraulic loco 'Gwrl' was returned from loan, to its home at the Fairbourne Railway, leaving ex Windmill Farm diesel electric 'Albert' to handle the summer traffic single handedly. Later in the year however, two more internal combustion locomotives entered service:

A petrol hydraulic wooden bodied tram loco - formerly named 'Tilby' - arrived from the Hastings Miniature Railway, after being regauged from 10 1/4 inches to 12 1/4 inches by its builders RVM Engineering. The loco

was rebuilt with a taller, totally new body by our engineers during the summer months; a few other technical modifications were also made at the same time. The loco was renamed 'Daisy' and entered service on 15 October 2017 following her naming ceremony.

The latest addition to the fleet is 'Philippa' a diesel hydraulic locomotive, owned and built by volunteer



member Tom Sanders. It was completed in November 2017 after a 14 month build from scratch. The loco is equipped with a 4 cylinder Kubota Diesel engine powering two hydraulic motors. The loco's compressor is fitted with external connections, enabling it to supply air to the braking system fitted to the passenger coaches.

## 70th ANNIVERSARY

The railway will celebrate its 70th anniversary (1948 - 2018) on the weekend of 23rd and 24th June 2018.

The railway opened over the Whitsun weekend of 15th – 17th May 1948. An advertisement appeared in the Littlehampton Gazette on Friday 14th May, which simply stated: " THE MINIATURE RAILWAY Which was so popular at East Worthing last year, IS now the delight of Children and Parents, on the Front AT LITTLEHAMPTON".



TJ Thurston was commissioned by the operator, HG Cookson, to provide two steam locomotives for the line. These were of the 4-6-4 wheel arrangement, and were numbered 1005 and 2010; these locos ran until 1984 when the line went over to internal combustion power.

To celebrate this significant anniversary; In addition to the three resident IC locomotives, there will be a visit from one of the

Hotham Park Railway's locos (further details tba). Steam traction will be provided by the Fairbourne Railway's 'Sherpa' making a return visit, having previously visited the line in 2012.

Further attractions will include a display of models from Worthing and District Society of Model Engineers, along with their 5 inch gauge raised portable track; Model Traction Engines; and a 5 inch gauge ground level track.

A Café and Boating Lake are adjacent to Mewsbrook Park station and a further Café and a Mini Golf course are situated next to Norfolk Gardens station. (Cafes, Boating Lake and Golf are not operated by the Railway). The railway will be open from 10.00am each day. *Article and photos by Derek Shephard*

## **South Downs Light Railway**

We, at SDLR, have got off to a great start this year, despite the poor weather! The photo shows Flying Scotsman and Pulborough in steam. A lot of work has been done since Christmas, where we have started our rail replacement program, to change to larger rail. We have also started to extend our platform, so we can now fit two trains into it.



Another project we have on the go is a picket fence (seen in photo) to go around the green, in the centre of the railway. This is to make it safer for the public when they use our grass area for picnics.  
*Article and photo by Tom Cowlin*

## **Students assist Hollycombe to keep on track ahead of Easter opening!**

Hollycombe Steam in the Country near Liphook opened its doors for the 2018 season on Good Friday, 30 March, with the family favourite steam attraction remaining open over the Easter weekend.

Hollycombe's team of committed volunteers were indebted to some winter work carried out by a team of students from Highbury College, Portsmouth, who gained valuable work experience during the recent Student Volunteers Week 2018. The team of public-service students were taught how to lay ballast and over the course of two days completed a 75m track section of Hollycombe's narrow-gauge railway.

Level-3 student Jack Rixon was one of those who spent five days helping out at the site. The 18-year-old said: 'It gave us teamwork and building skills and I also developed my communication skills. If you're interested in old and vintage things like steam engines, it's a nice place to go.' The students were led by public services tutor Dave Allen, who added: 'The work placement was a great opportunity for our students to develop their employability skills. The students were given tasks to achieve, either individually or as part of a team, which allowed them to work on their team building and leadership skills. The placement was also designed to let the students experience the nature of a working environment, being punctual and arranging their own transport. They could also look back and say 'I did that', and they did a really great job.'

The students also helped clear the ground around the base of the steam-powered Tidman Galloping Horses.



Simon Wildgust, Museum Manager, said Hollycombe was grateful for the students help, and added: 'After only two days, and lots of physical exertion, a very neatly laid section was finished off. The students have all been offered the chance to come back as a thank you for all their hard work to experience the narrow-gauge railway from Easter onwards – we're sure our visitors will be impressed with their efforts!'

Despite the recent heavy snowfalls the team at Hollycombe are keeping to their remaining winter maintenance schedule, and were looking forward to the season ahead. 'Easter is always one of the highlights of the year when we raise steam for the first time' said Simon. 'Many of our rides are unique, including the world's oldest white-knuckle ride, the Razzle Dazzle, and oldest mechanically-operated Fairground ride, Mr Field's Steam Circus. For our volunteers, seeing the smiles on

visitors faces after enjoying these Victorian and Edwardian survivors makes all the long hours of conservation worthwhile. Article and photo by Nigel Phillipot.

### **Eastleigh Lakeside Steam Railway**

The long Winter, and with it consistent wet weather, has not deterred the volunteers and paid staff from doing a tremendous amount of work around the railway. At the beginning of March, between snow falls, all work was suspended in the workshop with all attention being given to the replacement of worn out rails and sleepers in the Monks Brook Halt area. On several occasions during this work, it became

quite clear that Eastleigh Lakeside Railway, like many others, relies heavily on the retired community particularly on weekdays. After the rails and sleepers had been replaced, the track was ballasted, levelled and tamped making the ride out of Monks Brook the best it has been for some while.



I have alluded to the snow earlier in this report, but when the track disappeared under a blanket of the white stuff, it provided the perfect opportunity for the snow plough to be brought out of hiding and



attached to diesel hydraulic No: 1994 '*Eastleigh*' . The combination was then used to clear the track and provide an interesting spectacle for those at the railway.

A first for the railway occurred on the weekend of 24<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> March when it hosted a Spring Diesel Gala. This event attracted many visiting locomotives from railways and model engineering societies and proved to be very successful.



Amongst the visitors was a DB (German Railways) V100 battery powered locomotive from Andover Model Engineers, an L.M.S. Jack Shaft Shunter built originally in 1958 as an internal combustion engine but now battery powered from Cockrow Railway, Swanley New Barn Railway brought their diesel hydraulic powered Class 47, East Hertfordshire Railway came along with a battery powered Class 10 shunter and members of the East Kent Railway tested their Lister locomotive on the Lakeside circuit. Our near neighbours, Bankside Miniature Railway, provided a small electric shunter which was used to give members of the public, both young and old, a chance to drive a miniature railway engine. I have no doubt missed many more locomotives and their owners for which I apologise.

Despite the early Easter, and miserable weather, the Easter Egg Hunt was very popular with a large number of visitors coming to the event and enjoying not only the train rides but also the copious amounts of chocolate on site and the very special Easter Cakes in the Lakeside Café.



Work continues apace in the workshop and both 21C1 '*Channel Packet*' and No: 761 '*Taw*' had successful steam tests and were returned to the operational fleet. '*Taw*' was also a special guest at the OO9 Society Exhibition at Barton Peveril College in Eastleigh on 7<sup>th</sup> April and, although only on static display, generated a great deal of interest. The restoration of No: 1003 '*Western Queen*' is gaining momentum with the tender body reunited with its wheels, attention being given to the boiler and firebox and the delivery, to the railway, of new castings.

Throughout the schools' holiday period, the railway operated daily and, where possible, two trains were in operation one of which would be steam hauled and the other using either battery powered locomotive, 'Eurostar' or diesel hydraulic No: 1994 'Eastleigh' but occasionally, both steam hauled.

One very special moment took place in early April when all four operational Bullock built locomotives, the new frames and smokebox of under restoration No: 1003 'Western Queen' plus the frames of Simon Merritt's recreation of Bullock's only Atlantic No: 4012 'Princess Elizabeth' were positioned in the steaming bay and sidings outside the workshop. It will undoubtedly be a superb day when all these engines are in steam and operating at Eastleigh, in the meanwhile, we simply have to look forward to the Surrey Border and Camberley Weekend in June when as many Bullock locomotives as possible will be in steam, and the progress may be seen on the restoration of 'Western Queen'.

*Article by Lionel Kay Photos - in the snow and with the snow plough by Simon Merritt all other photos by Lionel Kay*



## A busy winter at Exbury Gardens

At Exbury Gardens the railway team have been busy working alongside the gardens team in a combined effort to clear out undergrowth from various line-side locations.

The south end of the tunnel in Summer Lane Garden had gradually become overgrown with trees. These have now been felled and, once the area has been cleared, will be newly planted with a variety of dwarf azaleas.



Over the last few years there have also been several attempts to remove Rhododendron ponticum from the area near the viaduct. Rhododendron ponticum is a non-indigenous evergreen shrub that grows quite dense foliage, blocking out sunlight for other plants. Over the winter season almost an acre of Rhododendron ponticum was cleared, opening up an area of mature woodland that has not been visible to passengers on the steam railway until now. Tom Clarke, Exbury's Head

Gardener, is looking to develop these newly cleared areas with lots of new spring and summer planting –as soon as it stops raining of course!

During the clearance of the Rhododendron ponticum, our teams also uncovered some of the original Mitford era iron fencing, from when the Mitford family owned the Exbury estate in the nineteenth century. The Mitford family lived at Exbury for over 150 years, selling the estate to Lord Forster who eventually sold the estate on to Lionel de Rothschild in 1919.

Once the weather improves and the ground is not so waterlogged, the gardens team can complete the landscaping near to the viaduct, creating another area of interest for visitors to look at whilst enjoying Exbury's steam railway. *Article and photo by Holly Whittaker*

## Great Laxey Mine Railway

Again “Tempus Fugit” or “time flies” as the volunteer team suddenly found the new operating season about to commence at an early Easter with many work tasks still to complete including the relaying of the track in the tunnel (the only railway tunnel on the Isle of Man).



It has been a grim winter weather wise but the tactical agreement at our last Board Meeting was to relay approximately 200 metres of track as well as drop the level of the track in our tunnel.

Anyway after the Festive Season was over a group of volunteers agreed to take a late January “holiday” to undertake this task. Otherwise the Great Laxey Mine Railway could not operate for 2018. Seven days of volunteer work did make a significant difference to the track initiative and much was accomplished. However it took until 24 March to complete the upgrade, one week before the Easter opening for the 2018 season. The volunteer team consisted of individuals aged between 18 and 75 and in recognition of our “younger” volunteers, these individuals brought in a variety of skills to support the wisdom of the “older” volunteers.

The task was hard and dirty work but to be involved in Victorian engineering skills was a privilege, working with seasoned professionals who I suspect in the wider

context, around Great Britain, keep most heritage sites working. The great outcome to me is that that two of our volunteers are just into their early 20’s and yet so capable. These individuals both work on the Manx Electric Railway and are very skilled. Meanwhile the “older team” carried on and the outcome was brilliant. Without our “younger” volunteers who did a fantastic job, the average age of the work team was 60 years plus at times!

I was not there at the completion of the railway track project but I cannot believe the weight of track and even sleepers. The team has undertaken a magnificent project which without the volunteers would have cost the railway many thousands of pounds which the company could not afford.

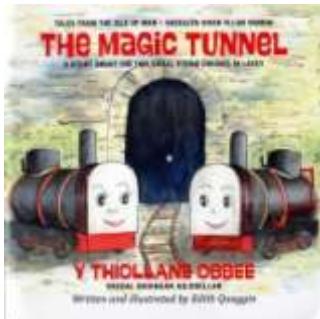
The other positive outcome was the “recovery” (in a getting rebuilt sense!) of our second steam engine “Bee” after 12 months out of operational service. After a successful replacement of the chassis by Alan

Keefe Limited at Ross-on Rye, it took many months to remove the fusible plug but after a heroic effort by our engineering experts within the volunteer team both Ant and Bee were back in action for Easter.

Our battery operated engine "Wasp" took the strain over the season, covering for Bee and new batteries had to be ordered as the original batteries had worn out but all is now well; just the cost and the Railway appreciates the support of the supplier which discounted the batteries.



Likewise the Railway continues to fund raise but it is difficult to compete against "people focussed" charities for funding general operating costs of a railway. Most donations have to be community project specific. However the Railway is grateful for two donations which are enabling the construction of a professional Play Train at the end of the railway track for both the Community and Visitors alike.



One of our volunteers, Edith Quaggin, who is the Station Controller; wrote, illustrated and published a children's book about Ant and Bee and the first run of 500 copies has sold out. Thanks go to Culture Vannin for the financial support. The book is written in both Manx Gaelic and English and has been well received. The reprint will be able to be ordered through our website and Amazon. The book will also be on sale in bookshops in the Isle of Man. So a busy start to the year and the Railway team has proved just how innovative it can be. Article by Tony Wild, Company Secretary. Credit across the team for the excellent photographs. A fuller update can be seen on the website [www.laxeymineralrailway.im](http://www.laxeymineralrailway.im) or on Facebook for which we are grateful for the efforts of Andy Murdoch and Ian Smith.

## Posters and Brochures

First Easter got in the way and then there were the school holidays and then I attracted some lurgy/bug which I am still suffering from so I hope to send them out next week

### Newsletter prepared and circulated by

Tony Davies, Short Acres, Tiptoe Road, Wootton, New Milton, Hants, BH25 5SJ  
Tel No – 01425 616622.  
e-mail – [dublorunner@gmail.com](mailto:dublorunner@gmail.com)

All photographs are the copyright of the Railway featured in the article, unless stated otherwise.

**BRITAIN'S GREAT LITTLE RAILWAYS Ltd** Registered Office:- Moors Valley Railway, Moors Valley Country Park, Horton Road, Ashley Heath, RINGWOOD, Dorset BH24 2ET  
Registered in England & Wales - Company No. 3143331  
BGLR Website – [www.bglr.org](http://www.bglr.org)