

**BRITAIN’S GREAT LITTLE RAILWAYS**

**Minutes of 2019 Spring General Meeting held at the Fancott Miniature Railway, Luton Road, Toddington, Bedfordshire, LU5 6HT on Wednesday March 20th at 11.00 am.**

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**Railways represented**

Barnards Railway, Bentley Miniature Railway, Bure Valley Railway, East Herts Miniature Railway, Evesham Vale Light Railway, Exbury Gardens Steam Railway, Fancott Miniature Railway, Fairbourne Steam Railway, Ferry Meadows Railway, Hotham Park Railway, Littlehampton Railway, Moors Valley Railway, Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway, Rudyard Lake Railway, South Downs Light Railway, Swanley New Barn Railway, Watford Miniature Railway.

**Welcome by the Chairman, Iain Dinnes**

The Chairman expressed his thanks to Ron Stanbridge and his team for hosting the meeting and welcomed all those railways that were able to attend. He also welcomed our new members, Watford Miniature Railway (Charles O'Mahoney) and HMR Alexandra Park. Charles attended the meeting but Dan Radcliffe was unable to attend at the last minute. Although the new owners of Brookside decided not join us, total membership has increased to 45 railways.

**Apologies for Absence**

Beer Heights Light Railway, Bekonscot Light Railway, Bickington Steam Railway, Cinderbarrow Miniature Railway, Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway, Eastleigh Lakeside Railway, Exmoor Steam Railway, Foxfield Miniature Railway, Great Cockcrow Miniature Railway, Great Laxey Mines Railway, Hambleton Miniature Railway, Hastings Miniature Railway, HMR Alexandra Park, Hollycombe Steam Museum, Kirklees Light Railway, Mortocombe Railway Society, North Bay Railway Company, Rhiw Valley Light Railway, Rhyl Miniature Railway, Sherwood Forest Railway, Shibden Miniature Railway, South Devon Miniature Railway, Strawberry Line Miniature Railway, Summerfields Miniature Railway, Thompson Park Railway, Weston Park Railway, Whitfield Light Railway and the Woking Miniature Railway

**Minutes of the 2018 Autumn General Meeting**

The acceptance of minutes of the Autumn General Meeting was proposed by Roger Brown and seconded by Jim Haylock and the resolution was carried unanimously

**Matters Arising**

**HSG 216**

The Draft document produced 230 comments which have been reviewed and discussed by the committee. The Draft is now at Version 7 and is ready to be published but is awaiting a decision by the HSE as to whether they will endorse it.

The new version of HSG 216 is all guidelines and recommendations and is in no way prescriptive. Risk assessments of the ongoing operation are both a key to a safe operation and essential if an incident should occur. It is advised that they are reviewed every couple of years and updated as necessary.

**Treasurer's Report**

Nothing really to add to the accounts which are included in the Minutes of the AGM. There are 2 subscriptions outstanding, HMR Alexandra Park which should now be paid and Bickington who are still difficult to contact

**Legislative and HRA Update - Iain Dinnes**

The HRA will be holding meetings very soon on the employment (and volunteers) of young persons on a railway and also on the derogation of HRA members if there was to be a ban on the use of bituminous coals. The members will be updated as necessary on these subjects when the minutes of these meetings are available.

**Safeguarding Policy.**

Some railways already have policies for safe guarding and guidance notes for vulnerable people. Examples from East Herts MG and Barnards Railway will be sent to me and I will post them on the members section of the website so that they are available to all members.

**Request for Copy for the April Newsletter**

The late Easter and the fact that the school holidays start on 8th April means that members will be too busy to write an article for an April Newsletter so it will be held over to May with a deadline date of 10th May and publication on the 13th May. I, of course, will accept articles at any time up to the deadline.

**Review of Website**

I have added the HRA Magazine to the members section which I hope will become a "one stop shop" for all BGLR and HRA matters. Password to members section is Jim Haylock (Capitals and space are essential)

**Review of Safety Incidents for the last six months**

An incident occurred at the East Herts Miniature Railway when small pieces of hot coal/ash came out of the chimney and struck a passenger and another piece went down the jumper of a one year old boy causing minor burns. An investigation by the railway is underway.

A general discussion on the matter of ensued

* Moors Valley uses a barrier vehicle, the Guards Van, immediately behind the engine and a spark arrestor
* Many railways fit 1/8 inch stainless steel mesh as a spark arrestor.
* Bure Valley has spark arrestors and a similar stainless steel mesh on the ashpan to prevent lineside fires.
* Swanley New Barn will provide a suitable spark arrestor to East Herts so that they can trial it.

**2019 Brochure and Poster**

The 2019 Brochures and posters were distributed to members after the meeting. In total some 24 boxes of a 1000 brochures were distributed at the meeting. The remainder will be posted out to members.

**Venue for 2019 Autumn General Meeting**

The Chairman will contact Cleethorpes Coast and Kirklees to understand if either are interested in hosting this meeting.

At the meeting Watford Miniature Railway volunteered to host the 2020 AGM and Spring GM and Barnards Railway the 2020 Autumn General Meeting

**AOB**

**Coal**

Currently Bure Valley are using coal from Ffos-y-Fran but have been told that this will no longer be available from mid year 2020. They are about to trial a tonne of Russian coal from M C Carbon Ltd to understand the steaming capability and smoke production of this coal.

Post meeting Notes

Further research after the meeting indicates that M C Carbon are the UK agents for Mechel who are a Russian mining company. It is likely that the coal to be tried will have come from the Elga Coal Complex which is reported as having 2.2 billion tonnes of high quality coking coal. M C Carbon do not seem to have a website but the Coal Industry of Wales does show Tim Cranmer as a Director with an email address of timcranmer@mccarbonltd.co.uk or contact Bure Valley for more information.

Adrian Corke received an email from Hargreaves on Ffos-y-Fran availability

*Hargreaves Services & mine owners Merthyr (South Wales) are pleased to forward the latest 2019 product details and digital photos of the Ffos-y-fran Superior Quality Welsh Steam Coal mine in South Wales.  This is the largest coal mining project in UK, that supplies specialist steam raising sized coal to the Preserved Steam Railway, Traction Engine & other steam raising appliance markets.*

*Total Ffos sized coal production for steam raising is again anticipated to be up to circa 50,000 tons this year and freely available to you throughout the 2019 steam season & beyond.*

BUT what does "beyond" mean in real terms?

**Ferry Meadows Miniature Railway**

David Coging would like to retire and is intending to put his railway up for sale later in the year. If you know anyone who is interested please contact David on Tel: 01933 398889 E-mail: david@ferrymeadowsrailway.co.uk

**Hatfield House Miniature Railway**

It was reported that this miniature railway has been closed down with some of the rolling stock going to Hastings MR and some to Watford MR

**Boiler Test Code 2018**

One of the members asked a question on this new Boiler Test Code. The answer was given outside of the meeting. The Test Code is in 3 volumes and is relevant to miniature railways and therefore I have added a new section on the Members Only access on the website with all three volumes and the relevant Q & A's. I hope that this will be useful to members.

**Brochure Holder**

One of the members present stated that his brochures were often ruined when it rained. Peter Jackson said that you could buy a weatherproof box from Amazon that would do the trick for around £7. He then suggested that some of the additional funds that we have in the bank could be used to allow BGLR to supply one weatherproof box to every railway to keep their brochures dry. By a show of hands the members present approved this proposal. The secretary will follow up this proposal.