

Romney Hythe and Dymchurch Railway

The first quarter of 2019 has started on a positive note, with our p/way department creating what we believe is a new record for 15 inch track laying, a total of 1.2 miles was successfully completed in 5 weeks. A great achievement and a credit to the team.

Half term footfall through the stations saw a 14% increase on the previous year and with the warm weather at Easter another increase on previous years was achieved. We are extremely pleased with these increases as the rest of this quarter has remained steady. We are hoping that our neighbours across the channel do not find reasons to delay the ferries, causing motorway delays even before Brexit!

The boiler for No 1 Green Goddess is back from its overhaul and certification and is now being tested and tweaked before final assembly. Number 3 has had its smokebox taken back to bare metal ready for its annual boiler inspection. Our diesel No12 had major repairs completed just after Christmas, with some components coming from items prepared for no14's overhaul, which has had to be deferred as a result. Locos 2, 5, 8 and 9 have had their braking systems serviced in the C&W department and apart from that there has only been routine maintenance required on the other engines in the fleet.



The Bug

Some other loco news, Typhoon is on an extended visit to the Severn Valley Railway and is on display in the 'Engine House' in Highley and the Bug is going up country to the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway for the May Bank Holiday and returning with the 'Whillan Beck' for our May Gala. This is the first time this locomotive has graced Romney metal and we are really looking forward to a special event.



Whillan Beck

All that remains is to wish you all a busy and trouble free 2019 and to send very best wishes to all from us here on the South Coast. *Peter Carpenter*

South Downs Light Railway

(Editor's note: Article received for January Newsletter but lost in my files so belated thanks to the p/way gang for all their hard work)

Major Trackwork Completed

Thanks to a massive effort by the regular Heavy Gang, assisted by other members over a February work weekend, great progress has been made with the track renewal programme. It will be recalled that the main objects of the work are to upgrade to heavier section rail with larger sleepers and also, where possible, to ease the many curves around the circuit.



The recent works started at Windmill Curve where a deviation from the old layout was required to achieve a new alignment approaching the crossing. The crossing itself had to be remade and moved slightly towards the East.

Beyond the crossing the line towards the station had to be slewed and its curvature changed. The track from Hardham Halt had to be realigned to meet up with the new crossing and the platform required some attention with an angle grinder.

Signals number 12 (by Windmill Curve) and 3-4 (home signals protecting the station) had to be moved and rewired. The gardeners' HQ had to be re-sited.

It's taken just a few words to record what has been done but you can't just move and adjust track like Peco Streamline. It needs lots of muscle power to bend rail, it needs mechanical power to excavate new trackbeds, it needs cutting and welding skills to make a crossing in situ and it needs lots of effort to bolt rails to sleepers, to join rail lengths together and to create a hardcore base and lay and tamp ballast.

If this is to be a true account, warts and all, unintended fractures of water pipes and signal cables ought also to be mentioned!

The Society is extremely lucky to have amongst its members those who possess the necessary skills to undertake a task like this and also to have most of the tools and equipment needed. A mini digger was hired for one day but otherwise it was good old fashioned manual labour.

Many congratulations to everyone concerned. There's still work to be done so shovellers are always welcome.

Whitfield Light Railway

Well we've kicked on into 2019 and the railway has run on 56-days so far this year. Following maintenance on the locos and stock through January, the railway was then rebuilt over 8-days ready for opening for February Half-Term holidays ... I'm largely running weekends and school holidays but with The Hayloft being on the Warrington / St.Helens / Widnes town boundaries, school holidays never just cover the typical one-week.

February was a good start with great weather, while March was largely poor with gales through the month. In April, working with the farm, I created an Easter Egg Hunt and ran every day through the month, the 2-weeks up to Easter being the best for loadings and weather. As we're separate businesses, when customers bought the Easter trail sheet, they received a discount voucher for the railway to encourage them on to the train. That seemed to go well. May has started slow, with indifferent weather over the bank holiday weekend.



I mentioned, I'm doing less events. I did the Sandbach Transport Festival in April and carried 1,000 passengers over 2-days. 18-19th May sees the railway at the Lancashire Steam Heritage Festival at the Lancashire Mining Museum in Astley Green, and in conjunction with the Lancashire Traction Engine Club. June is carnival season and the railway is at events all month, which is handy as The Hayloft has a series of weekend weddings. July sees a return to The Hayloft and the Maize Maze opening for the summer.

As finances allow the layout will change at The Hayloft, relaxing the curves and moving each end of the line slightly. I picked up 4 x 7.25" coaches from High Leigh Railway which will be rebuilt with new air-braked bogies and steel underframes. The current Pinder 7.25" bogies would require too much cutting to fit 10.25" wheel sets and brake gear. These are available for sale at £400 each (that has been recommended; it can be discussed). A photo is below showing the bogies and I can be contacted through the railways Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/WhitfieldLightRly/> There's also a South African-style wheelchair coach to be restored and regauged. Thoughts are also turning to on-site storage and a larger i/c loco, so any pointers would be gratefully received.





Littlehampton

Miniature

Railway

In 2016 the Littlehampton Heritage Railway Association (LHRA) purchased four 15 inch gauge coaches from the Windmill Farm Railway in Lancashire; these 'Safari Express' coaches were built by Severn Lamb in 1979 for the West Midland Safari and Leisure Park at Bewdley. The Safari Park railway

closed in 2013 and the rolling stock found its way to Windmill Farm. On arrival at Littlehampton the coaches were re-gauged from 15 inches to 12½ inches in time for the start of the Summer season.

From the outset the Chief Mechanical Engineer and the LHRA trustees decided to modify the coaches in order to provide improved access, this would be achieved by cutting out doorways to each compartment and increasing the roof height; it was also deemed very important that one of the coaches should be modified to provide wheelchair access.

Initially progress was slow due to other priorities, such as upgrading the trackwork, but in 2018 the pace of work on the wheelchair accessible coach accelerated. The coach comprises two standard 4 seater compartments, a larger wheelchair compartment with hinged doors and a flip up seat for carers/friends, plus a separate fully equipped guard's compartment. The coach ends, wheelchair compartment and guard's compartment have been fitted with additional panels to aid weather protection.



The wheelchair accessible coach (number 101) entered service in April 2019 shortly followed by standard coach (number 102) which has been modified with improved access and enclosed ends. Both coaches have been painted in a new livery of red and cream. The third coach (number 103) has entered the workshop and the refurbishment work is well underway, if all goes to plan it should be back in service by the end of the season in time for the Santa Specials *Dirk Shepherd*

BGLR Website Members Section

I have uploaded the Boiler Test Code 2018 Volumes 1 to 3 and the respective FAQ's for each volume. I have also added the East Herts Social Media Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy under the section Sample Policies Records and Forms, If anyone else has similar policies I would be pleased to add them for the benefit of all our members.

All Newsletters, Minutes of Meetings etc are all available in the Members section accessed by the key word of our founder Jim Haylock, capitals and space essential.

If you want to modify the content of your page just email me the changes as a Word document with any attached photos and I will make it happen. Any video of your railway which is available on Youtube can be imbedded in your page,

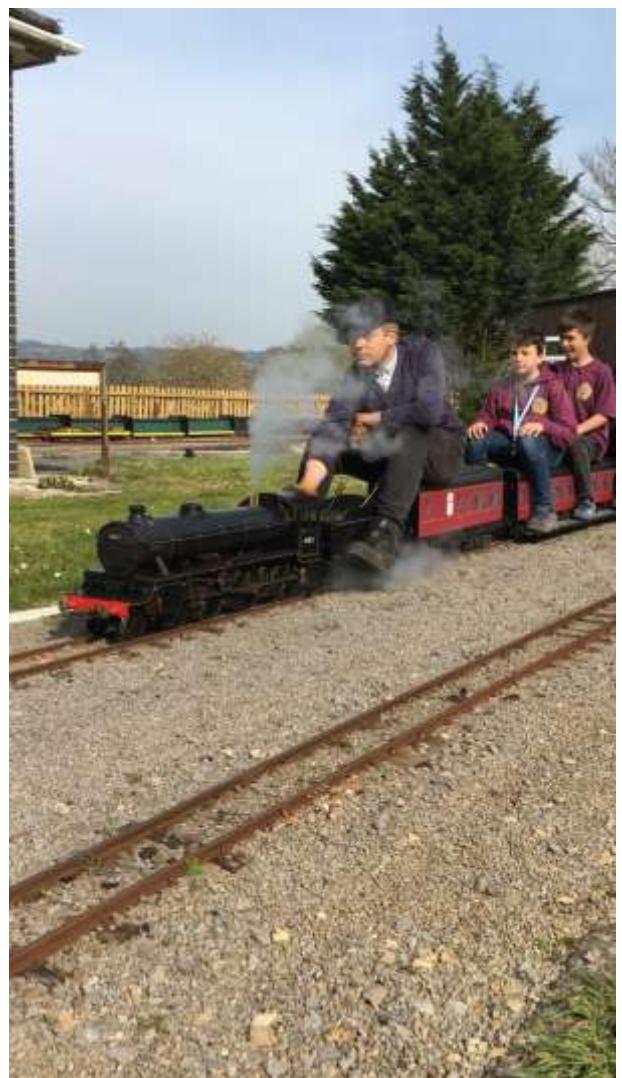
Strawberry Line Miniature Railway



The Strawberry Line Miniature Railway has been seeing lots of changes to its track since coming into ownership under Avon Valley Adventure and Wildlife Park earlier this year. The 5 inch gauge has recently had a double loop completed and with more work happening around the track, there's lots more in store for the railway line too.



On Saturday 22nd and Sunday 23rd June the Railway will be running a special Steam & Diesel Traction Weekend where visiting steam and diesel locomotives from all over the UK will be offering rides to guests of Avon Valley Adventure and Wildlife Park. *Kim Pounsbury*



Editor's Notes

I am on a narrow boat holiday for a couple of weeks in July before the schools break up and then another weeks break on the 14th September, a week or so after the schools go back. In between you will be running your railways, hopefully flat out, every day during this period so I don't expect to produce another Newsletter until late in September or early October.

In producing this Newsletter I found a missing article, which I have included and also a missing photo which has not been used on their webpage or in a Newsletter, so we started with Watford MR and we will finish with them - a picture of their loco Marri with happy passengers in June last year.



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