

A graphic of a smokebox with a central cylindrical section and two side flaps that taper to points. The central section is a light tan color with a dark outline. The text is centered on this section in a bold, red, serif font.

Smokebox

February 2017

Beds Area Group

Welcome to the February Smokebox

The Bedfordshire Area Group

As many of you know, the Beds Area Group was one of the first 16mm area groups to be formed almost 30 years ago in the village of Ridgmont, hence the name of the group's first layout. Over the years BAGs has developed into a very successful group with currently over 35 members drawn from Bedfordshire and surrounding counties. We have our original layout Ridgmont, which has gone through a series of upgrades to its scenery and buildings, it is probably fair to say it is now the finest example of 16mm exhibition layout around today. Most recently, we have added Eaton Downs to the groups layouts which has given us much needed increase running capacity in 32mm as well as 45mm. Over the years "Steam in Beds", which was originally a bi-annual for group members only plus one trader, has now developed into an important annual event on the 16mm calendar with three live steam layouts and over a dozen traders covering all aspects of our hobby and attracting well over 200 visitors from a wide area.

In spite of all the developments and changes of personnel over the years, we lack at least one thing, a constitution. For reasons that I can only speculate the group have never felt the need to have a formal constitution or for that matter an elected committee. The membership seemingly happy to sit back and relying on two or three members volunteering to fill the positions of Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary. It is worth noting the position of Chairman has been vacant since the last Chairman stepped down some two years ago and in spite of numerous appeals, no one has shown any interest in taking on the role. To all intents and purposes, Tony as Treasurer and myself as Club Secretary (both unelected) have been managing the club between us.

The time has come to put the club and committee on a more formal basis, to that end we will be calling a meeting of all current club members at 12 noon on Sunday 5th of March which is also the date of our March running day. A copy of the Agenda and proposed Constitution will be sent to every paid up member in early February. The object of the meeting will be to appoint a committee consisting of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and to approve the Constitution.

You may be wondering why after all this time we need to have a Constitution at all, the answer is simply we need to move the clubs bank account to another provider. In order to open a new account we need among other things to show we have a Constitution and an elected Committee.

I would encourage all members to attend this important meeting which will have an impact on the future direction of our club.

G1MRA Show June

You will recall that in February 2016 they asked if we would like to take Ridgmont to the G1MRA show at the Fosse to be held at the Fosse in June 2017, no other details were available at that time, not even the date. I confirmed that we would be willing to support the show when we had more details, I was asked for details of Ridgmont, which I provided in the form of our exhibition information pack. I was reminded by one of our members that we had not heard anything further since the initial enquiry at the beginning of 2016. I have emailed the person who issued the invite, the upshot that without making any further contact with us they have gone ahead and invited the Guildford Group to take their layout instead. He did however ask if we would like to take Ridgmont to their show at Shepshed in April 2018. I leave you to draw your own conclusion how we should respond to this invitation. If you think we should or indeed could give a firm commitment to take Ridgmont there please let me know so I can respond accordingly.

Group Meeting Dates – 2017

5th March 2nd April 7th May 4th June 2nd July
August No Meeting 3rd September 1st October 5th November

With Steam in Beds booked for Saturday 25th November 2017.

Wags Wharf at Pitstone Museum

The Museum will reopen at Easter, listed below are the planned open days for 2017:

Easter Monday	17 th April
Bank Holiday Monday	1 st May
Bank Holiday Monday	29 th May
Sunday	11 th June
Sunday	9 th July
Sunday	13 th August
Bank Holiday Monday	28 th August
Sunday	10 th September
Sunday	8 th October

We would be pleased to see any BAGs member at any of the above Open Days in 2017, apart from Wags Wharf there is a multitude of other exhibits you could easily make a whole day of it.

Take a look at their web site at <http://www.pitstonemuseum.co.uk/>

Chris