



# Smokebox

The Newsletter of the **Bedfordshire Area Group** of the Association of 16mm Scale Narrow Gauge Modellers

## From the Editor

Thanks to everyone who has provided either supportive comments or material for **Smokebox**. I've held over material submitted by Garth Bridgwood as I was compiling this issue, which nevertheless stretches to 15 pages, when it arrived. Please keep your contributions flowing, they are very welcome and the newsletter would be the poorer without them.

I've used a different smokebox this month. This is a Rhätische Bahn G4/5, a two-cylinder compound loco, where one cylinder is markedly bigger than the other. I worked on this Regner model in 2019 and the picture shows it being tested on my line. Thanks to Ted Robinson for the image.

I wish I was able to contribute something on modelling matters, but sadly there has been little time in September due to visits to the W&LLR in Wales. By the time of our meeting in October, I'll have completed six consecutive weeks on the footplate, generally Tuesday through Thursday, as we've been so woefully short of volunteers this summer. Every dark cloud has a silver lining, so I'm now fully familiar with the "new" Earl with its brick arch, a fitting added whilst being overhauled at the Vale of Rheidol's workshops. The arch takes a little time to heat up, but once it's hot then the boiler continues to make steam even with a thin fire. We're only running as far as Castle Caereinion at present, due to work at Sylfaen to reinstate the passing loop lost some years ago when the points became life-expired, so the fire needs careful management to make sure that we don't arrive at Castle on the outward journey with a raging inferno and full pot of water! However, when you get it right, a lazy return to Llanfair can be anticipated, keeping the fire alive for the short ascent past Tanllan sidings in Llanfair. And if you're fortunate, the driver will ask you to "cross the footplate" and "take her home". Here is the Earl, waiting to depart Llanfair on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> September.



Modelling is in the wings. I've bought a five-year-old and little used ELR coal fired Fowler which looks like it has a good steam plant but is marred by amongst other things a poor finish and compromised R/C installation. The latter is remediated and the next job is to regauge it to 45mm, to which end the ever-helpful Roundhouse Engineering will supply replacement bogies and a pony truck wheelset. The implementation of the pony truck (it's an 0-6-2 tender loco in case you're not familiar with the type) is bizarre, with a pivot point in the bottom of the ash pan, making for the truck describing a short radius curve which means that the wheel flanges rub on the rails rather than follow them. Stainless sheet is on order to redesign this area. When it's done, I hope to be able to run it on Ridgmont as well as here at home, so the 32mm fittings will be retained.

See you at the October meeting 😊.

Alan Regan, **Smokebox** Editor

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## From the Chair

Another successful meeting to the start of the month – that's two in a row! We welcomed back three members who re-joined the group and who bring considerable experience with them. We also have a new member joining the ranks, he has a background of coal fired G 3 (2 ½" gauge) so naturally handles his gas fired Accucraft with aplomb. Chris found some boxes of printed membership cards so everyone left with a shiny new card! My thanks to Steve and Garth for manning the membership table and sorting out the paperwork.

Observant members will recall I attempted a pressure test on an elderly Accucraft at the start of the meeting. The boiler was no problem but the gas tank defeated me. Firstly it was buried under bodywork and the adaptor for the test was very difficult to fit and then seal. As soon as I started pumping the adaptor split, obviously it had failed just as a previous test session was being completed. It seems that even drawn brass is susceptible to failure at 400 psi. At this stage I gave up and the test was completed successfully during the week.

Last year I purchased two of Larry's 3D printed wagons. Exceptional value and gauge adjustable as well. Initially they were a little skittish and looked a bit bland but picking out the ironwork in black and adding a few dabs of rust paint changed their look. A final air brushing with "frame dirt", heavy at the base, lighter towards the top changed the look completely. A spray with matt acrylic varnish took away any hint of gloss. After a trip to Totternhoe quarries a load of broken limestone was added to give authenticity and weight. The paint job took no time at all and that plus the weight of the limestone has transformed the wagons.



Note: Totternhoe had extensive chalk quarries. There was also a limestone quarry, both for lime and for internal carved stonework in some prestigious religious buildings. There was a corresponding standard gauge line and narrow-gauge system, traces of the standard gauge rails can still be found.

Alan wanted to know if the committee had any response from members regarding the G1 show in October 2022. I am pleased to report that sufficient members volunteered to support the show so I was able to tell Alan that we could present Ridgmont in all its glory. We will need a few extra runners during the days of the show but I am confident that will not be a problem. Needless to say it's a long way off and much can change in the intervening months, but we remain positive.

Bob

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## Membership Fees 2021/22

*Our Treasurer Garth Bridgwood has provided the following:*

Dear members, at a Committee Meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2021, it was agreed that, as recognition of loyalty to the club, those who were paid up members in the year 2020/21, will have their membership extended to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022.

For new members and returning members the fee will be £40.00 for the year 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022.

At our next meeting on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2021, Steve Knapman (Membership Secretary) and Garth Bridgwood (Treasurer) will be there to accept cash or cheques. Alternatively, you can pay by bank transfer as follows:

Metro Bank Account name: **Bedfordshire 16MM Modellers**

Account No. **26041686**                      Sort Code: **23-05-80**

Please quote your name as a reference, so we know whom to credit.

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## Meeting Dates for 2021

**Please note that the start time is 10.30 with close at 16.00.**

- Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> October



- Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> November
- Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December

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## COVID-19 Notice

Although face coverings are no longer compulsory, with the increasing prevalence of COVID-19 variants and the fact that no vaccination is 100% effective, the committee asks that members should consider wearing face coverings in the Hall (unless medically excused) particularly when in close contact with other members.

Tea and coffee facilities will be provided at the meeting, but as a result of COVID-19 and also for hygiene reasons, it is recommended that members bring their own mug & spoon to BAG Meetings for the foreseeable future.

Finally, please note that there is **no** restriction on the number of members attending meetings.

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## Foam boxes for models

*Steve Knapman has provided the following on making inexpensive storage boxes. This may not be suitable for very heavy items but surely would be for many rolling stock items.*

### Introduction

There are two reasons, maybe more, to make a box. The first is to store an item so it doesn't get damaged, the second a trial run to test the build of a larger box to store heavier items, to see how it works out, add any improvements in the design such as tool storage etc.

Also in the process, there is a chance to learn and practice new skills, e.g., marking out, planning new projects and identifying where things go wrong or could be improved.

### Tools and Materials:

1	5mm Foam Board.
2	Tape measure/rule.
3	Ball point pen.
4	Very sharp knife such as a Stanley or equivalent.
5	Evostick Wood Adhesive . This just happened to be available at the time.
6	Decent lighting or illumination.

### The Build

The good thing about foam board is it's cheap, easy to measure up, cut accordingly and if things go wrong, it can be used for other projects. It can be purchased in various sizes on the internet or at Hobbycraft who also sell large sheets and three at a discount for £10 ( as of June 2021).

Measure the item to be boxed and add a few mm so that the dimensions of the sides, top, bottom and end pieces are all in multiples of 5mm. This allows for consistency in measuring out for final cutting. Don't mix in inches with mm or centimetres as it potentially adds confusion (5mm = approx ¼").

Cut each piece out with a knife. Stanley or equivalent, with preferably a new blade. Two or three passes should be sufficient. Don't try to cut it straight through on the first pass.

### Labelling every item

It's easy to think you'll remember where everything goes so mark each piece with its position in the final build, and arrows showing up or down positioning. This applies to any project or build.

**Final Assembly:** Apply glue as necessary. Use clamps and squares to ease assembly and correct alignment. If you are not happy with the final build, add in some filler that dries white and smooth down as required. Maybe even some paint.

**Suggestion:** maybe print up the appropriate Wiki article and attach to the box for future reference.

**The Pros:** no need for loads of specialist tools: Cheap to make and easily adaptable to other designs.

**The Cons:** cuts may look a bit tatty so a little filler might improve appearance.

### Other suggestions

A set of compartments for rolling stock of smaller gauges. Keeping sets of small tools etc.

### Wooden Storage/Transport Boxes

If you get round to building your own box then you can sort out the handle to suit the centre of gravity, such that the box doesn't take a slope and extra packing when transporting valuable pieces of kit.





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## How I got involved in garden railway modelling

*I often wonder how we each got into the model railway hobby and in particular, our branch of the hobby. **Brian Chidwick** has provided an overview of his journey into 16mm scale modelling. I'd be very interested to receive more accounts of this nature...*

Firstly, I would like to thank and congratulate Alan Regan for revamping and producing an excellent monthly edition of "Smokebox". Having spent a number of years editing a couple of car club newsletters, I know just how much time it takes and how difficult it is to get suitable material and this is especially true within a small local group. Secondly, as a comparative newbie, both to the group and live steam, I realise that many of the members have been in the BAG (so to speak) for decades and know each other well. It might be useful for new members to have some idea of the interests and skills of other members so herewith is a brief personal introduction if the editor is desperate enough to fill a page or two.

Reading the Ridgmont article in Garden Rail #304 December 2019 reminded me of how I eventually got involved with live steam locos - albeit after a long incubation period.

I was an avid railway modeller in my early years and built several 'OO' gauge layouts in my bedroom before leaving home and exploring other interests. In the late '70s I discovered narrow gauge railways and decided to build a portable 'OO9' layout. Although I acquired a lot of kits I found the state of the art very unreliable at that time and never completed the project. Despite a couple of attempts to resurrect it in recent years, my eyesight and dexterity of fingers are clearly incompatible with this small scale. However, during the early days of that layout, my wife, Lynda and I went to many local model railway exhibitions and saw G-Scale for the first time. This looked more suitable to my clumsy hands and we bought an LGB starter set followed by several extension sets, additional locos and rolling stock with the idea of building a garden railway. This was not to be as we had a couple of children and moved house so the trains only came out occasionally to run indoors for the kids. Despite being inactive on the modelling front we continued to visit local shows and came across 16mm live steam displays, including the fledgling Ridgmont layout by the Bedford Area Group and I resolved to have a live steam loco one day.



Little did I know how long that would take - life just flew by and when I took early retirement in 2007, I discovered just how expensive large-scale models had become. I suggested to Lynda that we dig the almost 'mint and boxed' LGB out of the loft and cash in. As usual, I was outvoted and persuaded that perhaps it was time to actually build a garden railway to stop me spending all my time in the garage tinkering with our classic car (Triumph TR3A).

Whilst the technology for track-powered G-Scale is no different from the smaller scales, building a garden railway is very different from an indoor layout, so I joined the G-Scale Society and various internet forums to learn the best methods of ballasting, tracklaying, wiring etc. By Spring 2008, I was confident enough to lay the first continuous circuit of the Black Squirrel Railway around the smaller of our two lawns. My wife is the gardener in the family so the railway had to blend into the existing garden at ground level. Surprisingly, all went well and two further extensions were soon added and we enjoyed relaxing in the garden with a drink just watching the trains go round, but the live steam bug kept nipping at me so in 2015 I joined the 16MM Association.



Despite reading the excellent "Guide to 16mm Scale Modelling" handbook and the articles in SMT I was still hesitant and possibly even more uncertain as to what to buy. Concerned that I might spend a lot of money on a loco and destroy it from ignorance, I decided I needed help to take the plunge, so in 2017 I came along to a few BAG meetings to seek first-hand advice and guidance. Members couldn't have been more welcoming and willingly showed me the process for running live steam and recommended suitable locos for a beginner. Finally I bought my first live steam loco, a Roundhouse "Katie", which I brought along to a BAG meeting for her first steaming "under instruction". Without the help and support of the group I would probably never have got started so I have been an active member ever since and now have several other Roundhouse live steam and battery locos. All are radio-controlled which is just as well as running on my own garden railway requires constant



attention to the regulator because what appears to the eye to be a reasonably level track, actually has some gradients which seem to affect live steam locos far more than track-powered locos. Personally I enjoy the challenge and find it an excellent way to 'switch off' from everyday problems for an hour or so and just relax. No doubt most members that have a garden railway at home have found running trains or working on the railway has helped them through the solitude of Covid restrictions. However, it's a relief to be able to meet up again once a month at Eaton Bray although I have been fortunate in being allowed to help with the refurbishment of Eaton Downs as and when the Covid rules permitted. I have learned a lot in working alongside the project team - another example of how inclusive the group is.

Whilst monthly meetings at Eaton Bray are excellent social occasions as well as providing an opportunity to run trains throughout the year unaffected by weather, I'm looking forward to visiting a few open days and hope to invite members with 45mm locos to run at the Black Squirrel next summer.





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## Other railways

*Steve Knapman has provided the following on forthcoming exhibitions. Neither is on our doorsteps but might nevertheless be of interest.*

Mickleover Model Railway Group

# Model Railway Exhibition 2021



**Saturday 2nd October**  
*10.00am - 5.00pm*

**Sunday 3rd October**  
*10.00am - 4.00pm*

**Community Centre, Uttoxeter Road,  
Mickleover, Derby, DE3 0DA.**

*Admission - Adults: £5 Children: FREE\**

\* Under 16 years old with an accompanying paying adult

**Layouts - trade stands - demonstrations**  
**Tea room and clubroom also open**

*All layouts belong to the club or to club members*

# COLCHESTER MODEL RAILWAY EXHIBITION 2021



**Sunday 31 October 2021  
10.00am to 4.00pm**

Colchester County  
High School for Girls  
Norman Way  
Colchester CO3 3US

**[www.colchestermrc.org](http://www.colchestermrc.org)**  
see the website for  
latest details as they  
become available



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## WAGS WHARF UPDATE

*Here's **Chris Pretty's** regular update on activity at Pitstone Museum.*

The museum was open for the August Bank Holiday, it drew a record crowd of over 500 visitors which kept us busy running nonstop all day. Unfortunately, the same can't be said about the Beam Engine. It is still playing up in spite of a number of initiatives to improve the running. Following advice from both Pete Newman and Bob Gamble several ideas have been tried. The Lubricator was found to be leaking oil which Bob has now fixed and was refitted in time for the September open day. Even though the Lubricator is now working well we have still not resolved the underlying problem of the erratic running after the Engine has been running for a couple of hours. By my calculations since the Beam Engine was first steamed back in 2004 it has clocked up over 600 hours running which must be some sort of record. It was built from a Stuart's kit of parts; I have been in touch with Stuarts explaining the problem we are having. They have suggested that after that length of time there was probably play in the linkage, however watching the motion in action there does not seem to be excessive play. It has been suggested that the piston ring may be worn causing the erratic running also the boiler has been fitted with a water preheater which may be causing some problems. There is now only one more open day (Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> October) before the museum closes until next Easter. That will give us time to try to get to the bottom of the problem. If anybody has any experience of these engines or can shed any light on the problems we are having do please get in touch.

Last month I suggested that the museum with over 3,000 visitors a year was a possible source of new members for BAGs. I previously mentioned the display stand which was being stored under the stage at E/B. I have now refurbished it, fitted legs, casters plus a security screen. The picture below shows it in use at the museum for the September open day. I still need to fit holders to display the BAGs and Association leaflets.





## The Beds Area Group on Facebook

**Pete Newman** has provided this brief summary of our group on Facebook. I've added a screen shot of the page as it exists at the time of writing, which may not look the same for all users. If you've got more questions about the page, Pete's email address is at the end of the article.

Our main internet presence is our web site ([www.bag16mm.org.uk](http://www.bag16mm.org.uk)), which contains many pictures of our past activities and a diary of our forthcoming events.

However, we also have a Facebook page which has our events diary as the top entry. Further down there is further information about Eaton Bray and Pitstone meetings, an invitation to visit our web site and some links to the web sites of local railways. Each post has an associated picture, I try to make these applicable to the content but I am running out of new pictures.

The page can be found by searching "Bedfordshire 16mm Modellers" in Facebook or on your internet search engine.

The screen shot below shows the current header picture, which is changed from time to time, the wide screen format means it is not easy to find suitable pictures for this.



## Bedfordshire 16mm Modellers

Community

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### About

See all

Our members are all interested in creating and operating models of narrow gauge railways to a scale of 16mm : 1 foot.

The Beds Group meet at:  
Eaton Bray Village Hall  
Church Lane  
Eaton Bray  
LU6 2DJ

The building has its own car park which can take approximately 50 vehi... [See more](#)

424 people like this, including 6 of your friends



441 people follow this

<http://www.bag16mm.org.uk/>

Send message

Community

### Suggest edits

Does this Page have a phone number?

Yes

Unsure

No



### Create Post

Photo/Video

Check In

Tag friends

### PINNED POST



Bedfordshire 16mm Modellers

28 June

Beds Area Group Events Diary for 2021:  
October 3rd - Eaton Bray. Group meeting.  
October 10th - Pitstone. Open day... [See more](#)



Even if you are not a Facebook member it is still possible to scroll the top half of the display to view the posts, the first one being our diary as shown below.

It will be necessary to click on "See more", to be able to see the whole text above each of the pictures.

We usually get about 10 "Likes" every month.

Currently we have 424 "Followers", these people are notified automatically each time the page is updated.

To keep the interest going I would be grateful to receive some up-to-date pictures from our Eaton Bray meetings, Pitstone or any other club activities. Please send to: [p.j.newman@btinternet.com](mailto:p.j.newman@btinternet.com). Pictures may be cropped to fit the format of the page.

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## Sales & Wants

Please note that at future Beds Area Group meetings, a table will be placed at the back of the hall for members to place any items they have for sale.

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### JOHN ROGERS' COLLECTION

John Kitchenman is facilitating the sale of the following items formerly owned by late Association member John Rogers. If you're interested in any of these items, please contact John at [john.kitchenman@btopenworld.com](mailto:john.kitchenman@btopenworld.com).

There is also a large quantity of used Peco Streamline track and points selling at £5 per yard for the track and £30 each for points.

A number of lineside model buildings including a covered station and goods sheds plus industrial style plant buildings based on sugar factory equipment are also available, selling at £5 each per small building and £25 each per large building.

Photos are available of the locos and stock on request to John.

Description	Control	Colour	Condition	Storage box	Price
Roundhouse Sandy River MK2	R/C	Black	Little used	Wood	£2,600
Roundhouse Darjeeling B-class	R/C	Black	Good, used	Wood	£1,700
Roundhouse Fowler	Manual	Black	Good, used	Wood	£1,250
Roundhouse Criccieth Castle battery diesel with sound	R/C	Maroon	Used	None	£750
Steamlines Shay heritage loco	Unknown		Well used	Wood	£900
One 4-Wheel Goods Wagon (Wood, Well Made)	N/A	Grey	Used	N/A	£40
Two Darjeeling Bogie Open Wagons (Metal, Very Well Made)	N/A	Brown	Little used	N/A	£70 each
One Bogie Stock Wagon (Wood, Well Made)	N/A	Brown	Used	N/A	£40
One 4-Wheel Guards/Brake Van (Wood, Well Made)	N/A	Grey	Used	N/A	£40
One 4-Wheel Open Wagon With Crate Load (Wood)	N/A	Grey	Used	N/A	£35
One Bogie Open Wagon (Wood)	N/A	Brown	Used	N/A	£40
One Bogie Flat Bed Wagon With Tractor Load	N/A	Brown	Used	N/A	£45

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### FOSWORKS UC1 UNIVERSAL CHARGER

Suitable for all NiMH battery packs from 2 to 16 cells (2.4v - 19.2v), complete with voltage display showing status of the battery. This is not a fast charger, nor is it automatic, but it does allow you to take the best care of your battery packs. As new £18.00. If interested, please contact Garth Bridgwood on 07706 370364 or at [garth.g1@btinternet.com](mailto:garth.g1@btinternet.com).



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VARIOUS AS SHOWN BELOW

Base boards with legs for a small layout in the garage during the winter months - £35, comprising a total of 6 boards: 2 @ 4.5ft X 2ft and 4 @ 4ft X 9 inches. Assembled size: 4.5ft wide X 12ft long or 6ft wide X 8ft long.

Platform sections, viaduct sections and tunnel entrance - £4 each section. There are 11 platform sections, 2 viaduct sections, a single tunnel entrance and 2 retaining walls for tunnel entrance

These are all concrete sections that are suitable for outdoor use.

If interested please contact **Ray Butler** on 01234 342348 or e-mail [rbutler1047@btinternet.com](mailto:rbutler1047@btinternet.com) and he will bring them to the next meeting.

