



# Smokebox

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

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## From the Editor

Not much from me this time. I'm Show Director for this year's National Garden Railway Show due to Mick Blowfield recuperating from surgery and things are starting to get busy. I've spent most of the day revising the information pack that we send to layout operators and traders and this has needed quite a few changes for 2022. We have a board meeting tomorrow, my last as chairman, and it will be emailed out after the directors have had an opportunity for comment.

I'm writing this on the evening of Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May. I expect to be walking out of the halls at the Arena exactly four weeks today, most layouts and traders having set themselves up in readiness for the following day. We have 83 stewarding positions to fill for the show and have filled just 35 as I write. If any of you is willing to give up a couple of hours of your time on either the Friday, the Saturday or both, please get in touch with Stuart Timms, our Chief Steward, at [stuart.timms.16mm@gmail.com](mailto:stuart.timms.16mm@gmail.com). You gain free entry to the show, food/drink vouchers, a preview of the stands and exhibits and the satisfaction of helping to run the largest garden railway show in the UK and probably Europe. The whole basis of the Association is of volunteers sharing the load. We really need your help so hopefully one or two of you can support the Association and the show.



Above is a picture of Zillertal, the Austrian loco hired to the W&LLR in August 2019 and first used at that year's gala. This was taken on Friday evening 20<sup>th</sup> May, returning light to Llanfair on the first

evening of the railway's "Beyer Bash" gala, celebrating 120 years of Beyer Peacock locos. The loco was struggling to steam due primarily to many of the boiler's flue tubes being blocked, a byproduct of use of the "horrible ovoids" that we have to use in the absence of available Welsh Steam Coal. They generate copious quantities of ash, which had blocked many tubes. We'd taken the last train of the day from Llanfair to Welshpool, but it was decided to have the Earl bring it home and for us to return light, something I've never done before. We were waiting in the new loop at Sylfaen, whilst the staff and tickets for the next three sections were brought to us by road. It was a beautiful evening as you see. This month's Narrow Gauge World contains an article on the new fuel if you're curious to learn more. That Friday was the first of seven days on the railway. I was on the loco again on the Sunday and this time she steamed much better. This time we returned home from Welshpool with a short goods train, another first for me. You never know what volunteering on a heritage steam railway will throw up!

Finally, you'll see that the copy deadline for the July issue of **Smokebox** is a few days earlier than usual. I won't have much time to assemble it the weekend of 25<sup>th</sup> June. I'll leave you to guess why.

**Copy deadline for July Smokebox: Monday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2022**

Alan, **Smokebox** Editor

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## From the Chair

Well, it's that time of year again – anticipation of the premier National Garden Railway Show at Peterborough which is just weeks away! As is my custom I have ordered a ticket via the Association's web site, it makes life so much easier just getting in and there are extra incentives this year. Whether I will be able to avail myself on the earlier entrance is doubtful because a cup of tea and a bacon butty will be top priority on arrival! I have to congratulate the Association's webmaster for a very professional ordering process which is one of the best I have encountered.

Although I had been a member of 16mm some years before joining Gauge 1, my really active participation in the modelling scene began with Gauge 1. As many members will be aware the early days of live steam used meths as a choice of fuel. 16mm gradually moved to gas firing and now the vast majority of locos are gas or, still a minority, coal. Needless to say Gauge 1 stayed with meths. So now to get to the point of my article, Meths as a fuel is well suited to model locomotives. In particular the ability to use a Stephenson smoke box to create a variable draft through the fire and thus increase or decrease steam production depending on the load on the locomotive. This is why, along with coal, it favoured by so many Gauge 1 members. There is a major downside however and that is the very flammable nature of the fuel and the fact that when spilt fuel burns it is very difficult to see the flame and that flame persists for some time. The first thing most people notice when meths is burning is the sleepers changing shape and bubbling up and paint blistering. The other thing is often extreme pain when it burns on the body. It is this last point which concerns me. Meths has been around for such a long time it is easy to forget the dangers. Recently several members of Gauge 1 were badly burnt by a meths fire. I personally know members who have had nasty burns and one took a very long time to heal properly. My point is, if you run a meths fired locomotive (and I know there are a number of 16mm locomotive so fired) make sure you have adequate means to hand to extinguish a fire. Many folk favour a fire blanket, I like a plant spray to cool down and flood the fire with water. Don't, as the Gauge 1 members did recently, mistake modern uncoloured meths for water! I have seen this happen with industrial meths and the outcome is not good.

Bob, Chairman

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## Picture Gallery

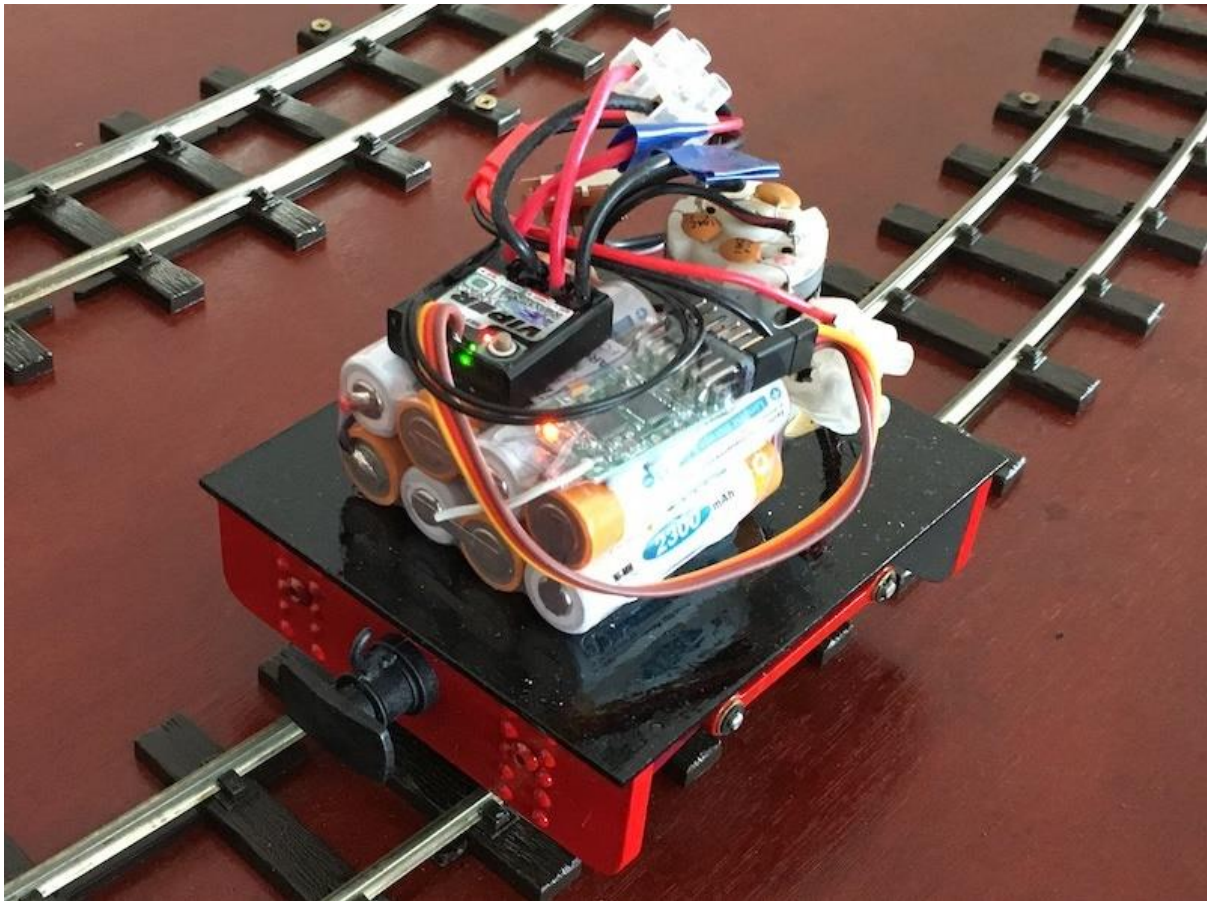
Here are a number of pictures provided by Bob



1 John Kitchenman's Accucraft SLR #85 (W&L #14). The livery is known on the W&L as "Linda blue" and either came from a paint exchange with the Ffestiniog Railway, or as a result on someone joining the W&L with a couple of tins in his boot!



2 Ted and Bob at work on the boards for Eaton Downs



3 This is a trial chassis made by Carol East. Very heavy and study, looks like it will pull anything. Good low speed as well.



4 A Regner steam tram, available as a kit or RTR. See this link: <https://www.regner-dampftechnik.com/product-page/kastenlok-nr-102-easy-line-fertigmodell>

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## Meeting Dates

Here are all meeting dates until the end of the year. **Please note that the start time is 10.30 with close at 16.00.**

- Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June
- Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July
- Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> August
- Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> September
- Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> October
- Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> November
- Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> November **Steam in Beds Show**
- Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> December (to be confirmed)

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## Steam in Beds Update

*Chris Pretty has provided the following update*

Unfortunately, Ray has had been unwell which has put his plans back by a couple of weeks. However, he is up and about again and plans to get the last of the Traders packs out this week. This does mean that we won't have the final list of Traders until next month. All being well we will publish a full list in the July Smokebox which is in line with the schedule set out in the Project Plan. A start was made at our April meeting to recruit Stewards to cover the various activities needed to make the preparation and running of the show go smoothly. However, there are still many areas that need to be covered. As Ray was able to be at the May meeting only one or two more names have been added. We will be doing the rounds at our June meeting so please be ready to help. We expect every member to do their bit by covering one or more of the vacant slots. There is something to suit everybody from selling tickets at the door, selling raffle tickets, Member to Member sales or dare I suggest a stint in the car park, there really is something to suit everyone.

I understand Garth has started working on the Advertising for SIB, once we have the final listing of confirmed Traders, he will be able finalise the format of the Show Guide, Flyers and Copy for the various Adverts to promote the show .

We also need to make sure we have a full running roster for Ridgmont the last thing we need is nothing running. I suggest you get your name down early to avoid missing out on a run. As usual Ray will be working his magic on Ridgmont by adding all the extra scenery. Ridgmont has now been in regular use by the group for over 30 years, it is starting to look its age. Ray has plans to give it a bit of TLC by replacing some of the track ballast and spruce up some of the basic scenery. I know any help you can offer would be appreciated. I understand Ray has been working on a new feature that will have it's first outing at SIB.

Chris Pretty

SIB Project Manager

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## Other railways

**Chris Pretty** has submitted the following on Wags Wharf:

After the record breaking attendance for the first open day on Easter Monday we would expect the second open day on the 2nd May to be a much quieter affair, how wrong we were another record breaking day. It must be the post pandemic effect lets "let's get out there now we can??"

By the time you read this we will have had our third Open Day on the 29th of May. We do struggle keeping things going with just the 3 of use. With no spare operator to ring the changes it is hard to

give people a break, it also means we can't engage with the visitors. Many of them have question about WW and its background we can't spare the time explain the railway or get a plug in for the BAGs meetings. We have all been to Exhibitions where the operators are all too busy to talk to visitors, so many missed opportunities.

As always, any BAGs members who fancy a day out at the Museum are always welcome. Apart from the many exhibits it would be an ideal opportunity to promote 16mm and the Beds Group and the Eaton Bray meetings.

A quick look at their web site will give you some idea of vast range of historic items in the Museum's collection.

[The Heritage Park - Pitstone Green Museum \(pitstonemuseum.co.uk\)](http://pitstonemuseum.co.uk)

The remaining Open Days for 2022 are as follows:

- Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June
- Sunday 10 July
- Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> August
- Monday 29<sup>th</sup> August
- Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> September
- Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> October

If any BAG member would be interested in helping to operate Wags Wharf during any of the above open dates, do please let me know.

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## Sales & Wants

**Please note that a table will be placed at the back of the hall for members to place any items they have for sale.**

There have been no items supplied for listing this month.