



# Smokebox

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

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## From the Editor

First of all, a final word on my eyes. I'm discharged completely, don't need glasses for driving and the difficulty I had driving at night is a thing of the past. I do need occupational glasses for modelling work. These will be bi-focal and have a close and very close correction, which will be helpful when in the workshop, marking out and using machine tools. Ready Readers will do for using the computer and reading magazines and I already have five pairs as I keep forgetting where I left them!

Preparation for the National Show goes on. A major and beneficial change, since the Show Guide was published, is that we will have a catering unit inside the hall, including tables and chairs, so visitors can grab a drink or a snack and eat with friends without having to leave the hall. There will also be a separate 200-seater café, so we should be able to cater for most tastes. By the time you read this power will have been ordered for the small number of exhibits that need it and I'll have hired a van to take show materials from our storage container at Peterborough to the show at Stoneleigh. We're looking at alternative storage closer to Stoneleigh but move to this will be a post-show activity.

In August last year I valued a late member's railway items for probate. Those long in the Association may remember John Olivera, a talented modeller with an interest in African narrow gauge. Probate has been granted, so I am now selling them on behalf of John's daughter Victoria. I would have liked to have offered everything for sale via the Member-to-Member stand at the show, but organising the show has to take priority, so only a few items will be sold via M2M, mainly John's excellent and very varied collection of 32mm gauge coaches and goods stock. I am however offering first refusal on three of his locos and four of his coaches to members of this group via **Smokebox**. See **Sales and Wants** at the end of the newsletter for details. More locos will follow once I have had the opportunity thoroughly to examine them.

Copy deadline for **May 2024** issue of Smokebox: **Friday 26 April 2024**

Alan, **Smokebox** Editor

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## From the Chair

I am pleased to report that Bob Carter, our Bulletin contact, is now recovering at home. I have passed on messages of goodwill from members as I receive them, which is much appreciated by him.

This month has been quite busy, the rain has stopped occasionally allowing essential work in the garden, including preparations for the re-erection of my dual gauge test track. I hope to be running on it in the very near future! In the meantime, the spring bulbs and flowers planted around the track supports have flourished, more light and less footfall one assumes.

I visited Statfold Barn on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March along with Garth and Ken and was overwhelmed by the development on site. I didn't go last year so much was different. The most disconcerting was the new entrance to a tarmac main park which was full by the time we arrived but the overflow park had a good hardcore surface - quite a change to a grassy field. It was very busy but the site is large enough to take a large number of visitors although, as you might expect, the catering was hard pressed at times. As usual there was a good variety of locos in steam so a good day out and a not

unreasonable entry fee. My wife was not very impressed with the lingering smell of coal smoke when I returned home though!



## Bob, Chairman

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### Meeting Dates

Here are all meeting dates until the end of 2024. We have access to the hall from 10.30 and need to have the layouts packed away and be out of the hall by 16.00.

- Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April
- Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> May
- Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> June
- Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July
- Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> August
- Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> September
- Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October
- Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> November
- Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> November – **Steam in Beds**

## Garth, Secretary

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### Committee members

The members of the BAG committee are as follows:

Bob Gamble	Chairman	<a href="mailto:chairman@bag16mm.org.uk">chairman@bag16mm.org.uk</a>
Garth Bridgwood	Secretary/Treasurer	<a href="mailto:secretary@bag16mm.org.uk">secretary@bag16mm.org.uk</a>
Mark Cresswell	Membership	<a href="mailto:membership@bag16mm.org.uk">membership@bag16mm.org.uk</a>
Ted Robinson	Track Manager	<a href="mailto:trackmanager@bag16mm.org.uk">trackmanager@bag16mm.org.uk</a>

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### Forthcoming Events:

#### THE NATIONAL GARDEN RAILWAY SHOW

In case a reminder was needed, the show takes place at the NAEC at Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> April. Doors open at 09:00 and you can access the main hall from 09:30. If you buy your ticket [online](#) in advance you may get into the venue more quickly, but you can buy on the day for the same price using cash or card (we have several contactless card payment devices). We'll issue you with a wristband which you'll need to put on there and then because you won't get out of the payment area without wearing a wristband. I'm afraid that down the years some members have found "imaginative" ways to get into the show without paying, so the use of wristbands will be universal and if you're not wearing one you won't get in. I regret that it's come to this but perhaps it's a sign of the times. We've had just one exhibitor drop out so far but all 17 layouts are still planning to attend. Hopefully many of you are coming and will enjoy what's on offer.

**Alan Regan**, Show Director

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#### GARDEN MEETINGS

*I'll keep these entries in until the meetings have taken place*

**Mark Carpenter** invites members of the Beds group to his open day on **1<sup>st</sup> June from 12:00** along with members from the Herts group. Light refreshments will be provided by Sue who as you know is an excellent cook! Mark requests that you let him know if you are attending so that Sue knows how many to cater for.

There is limited parking outside because the track is situated in a cul-de-sac.

Please contact Mark in advance if you're coming, either by email [65souschef@gmail.com](mailto:65souschef@gmail.com) or by text to 07904855129. Mark's address is:

38 Cavell Walk  
Stevenage  
SG2 0QD

This is a 45mm line.

**Dave Thompson** invites members of the Beds and Herts groups to his open day on **15<sup>th</sup> June from 11:00 to 18:00**. This is the official opening of the Chells Valley Railway line and a special guest will be doing the honour of cutting the ribbon. John Kitchenman has kindly agreed to bring his portable layout so there will be plenty of lines to run on. Dave will provide “barbie” sausages at 13.00 with a few nick-nacks. Tea and coffee will be available.

There are normally no issues with parking.

Please contact Dave in advance if you’re coming, either by email at [david.thompson25@btinternet.com](mailto:david.thompson25@btinternet.com) or by text to 07903390045. Dave’s address is:

11 Stanley Road  
Chells  
Stevenage  
SG2 0EF

This is a 32mm line.

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## Modelling Matters

*Three items this month, thanks to Bob and Garth for sending these in.*

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### ACCUCRAFT SHAY

*Bob Gamble describes a modification to his Accucraft Shay*

Observant readers may remember that I mentioned that I had been sidetracked by the arrival of an



*The completed loco*

Accucraft Shay kit. It is now complete and I am very happy with the detail, particularly the boiler pipework. I am not so sure about the gas supply between tank and jet however, I am not a fan of non-metallic pipework or what appears to be a large snake in the cab! The oil filler cap, easy to get to when the cab was off, is now buried in the depths of the cab, not easy to access. I have made an extension to improve usability.

The picture to the left shows the extent to which the lubricator cap is buried inside the cab. Found it yet? It's in the corner, snug to the back and side. No wonder it needs an extension bar!

To the right is the cap fitted with the extension bar. The “T” handle is silver soldered to the rod, which is threaded 5BA and screwed into a blind hole in the cap and



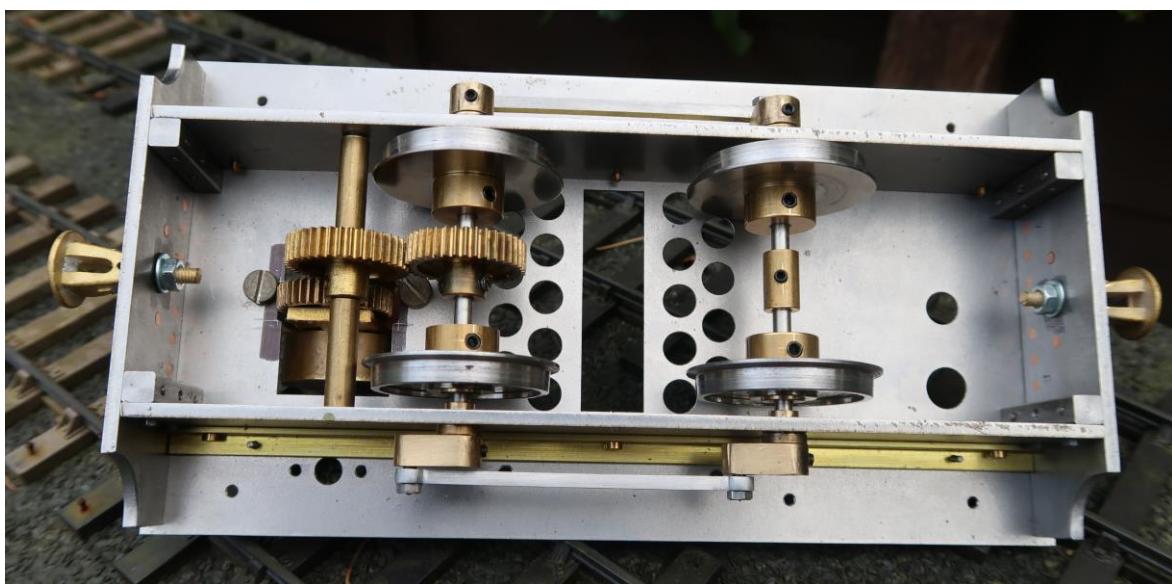
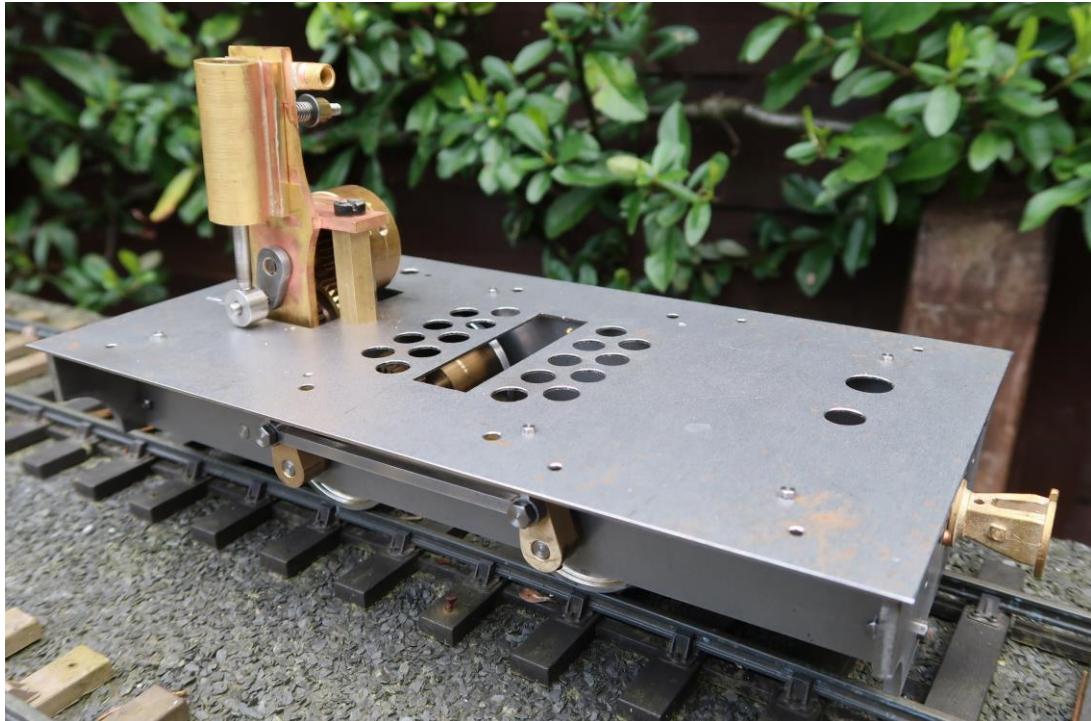
secured with Loctite, making an inaccessible and important part easy to get hold of.

### Bob Gamble

#### ELLIE – THE STEAM TRAM

*Garth continues the tale of his scratch-built steam tram*

Construction of my steam tram “Ellie” has progressed well, however, I have decided to make a new oscillating engine with the cylinder body extended to provide guidance for the piston’s big end which I believe will eliminate the engine sticking at either TDC or BDC. I will also have a look at fitting a reversing mechanism. I doubt if much will get done for the next months as we start to get into the steaming season.



### Garth Bridgwood

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## IMPROVEMENTS TO AN ACUCRAFT L&B BALDWIN

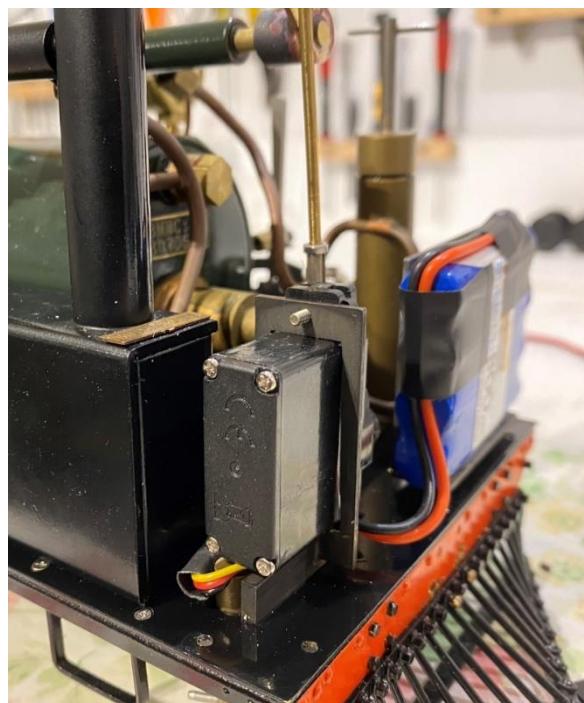
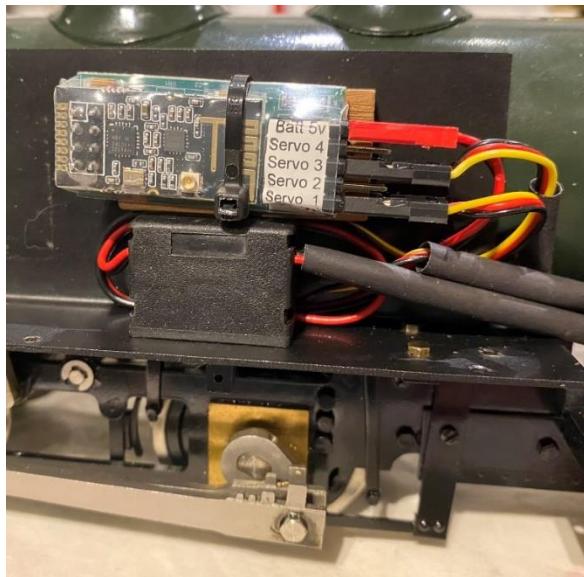
At the time I won the Pearse L&B Manning Wardle described last month, I also won an Accucraft Baldwin. It had been test-run only and had R/C installed, but it lacked a transmitter. When I got it home and apart, I found that it had a Spektrum receiver, which I paired temporarily with my Spektrum transmitter. It had a single servo controlling the bi-directional speed control valve between the cylinders and ran smoothly but speed control was coarse. It was also very tail-heavy. A plan was hatched, to improve speed control and add weight over the front drivers to bring the centre of gravity closer to the mid-point between the drivers.

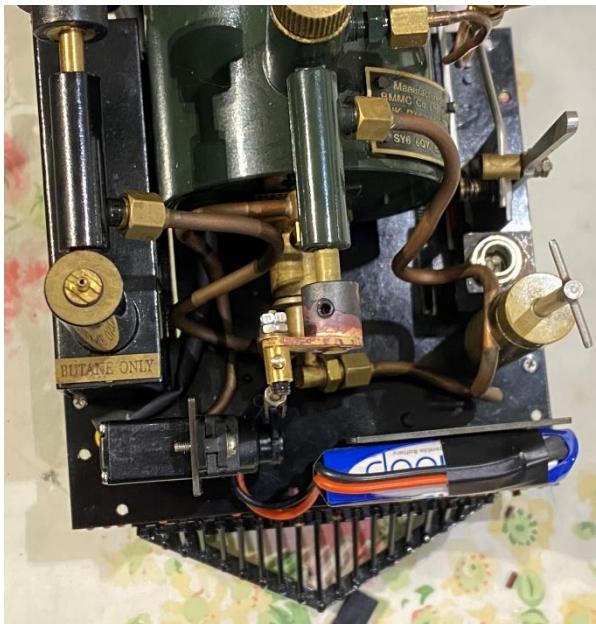
First job was to replace the on/off switch, which I found to be faulty, and install a Fosworks receiver, because I thought it would be more suitable for such a simple loco. The receiver is held with a wire tie onto a wooden block with an air space behind the block and the dummy inside tank to which it's attached. The servo and battery wires were surrounded in heat-shrink tubing to give them some protection from the heat of the boiler.

Applying R/C to the regulator was reasonably straight forward. The thread on the regulator is coarse enough to be radio controlled, meaning that a quarter turn will take you from closed to open enough for a decent speed. The bracket to hold the servo sits on a  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch square lump of brass, shaped to clear the boiler water level drain, use to assure a steam space when starting. To make space for the weights over the leading driver, I needed to move the batteries to the cab, so I made an L-shaped bracket installed at the back of the cab. It's raised off the floor on stand-offs so that the L-shaped channel used to secure the cab to the floor can slide underneath.

Next job was a charging point for the batteries. This was added between the displacement lubricator and the reverser and is no more than an elongated U-shaped bracket held in place with screws from underneath the footplate.

The picture on the next page shows the footplate area before the cab was put back in place. Perhaps you now see why so much care needed





lower of the weights, on each side, were milled to leave a gap above the running plate, so that the L-shaped brackets on the bottom of each tank could slide under the weights. You should just be able to make these out in the next picture. The third lump of brass was cut in half longitudinally then screwed to the block below, making the total height of the weights less than the depth of the tanks. This was necessary because tank top details are secured from underneath and I needed to leave clearance.

I've added about half a kilogram of weight to the loco but its centre of gravity is still biased towards the read driver as opposed to being equidistant between the drivers. To illustrate why, I include a final picture taken side on. Look at how much of the loco is behind the rear driver. It won't really improve when the loco is in use, because there will be as much water in the boiler behind the rear driver as there will be in front. It will be interesting to see how its haulage capacity compares with the Manning Wardle that I described last month, but that's for another day because this project probably won't be completed until after the show.

to be taken positioning the items described above. There really isn't a bit of space left for anything else.

All of the foregoing, whilst useful in achieving better control of the loco, was really to create the space needed to get more weight over the front drivers. The spaces in which the weights now sit were originally occupied by the reversing servo on one side and the battery on the other. I already had a three noggin ends of inch square brass suitable for the weights. The



Alan Regan

## Sales & Wants

A table will as usual be placed at the back of the hall for members to place any items they have for sale.

### THE LATE JOHN OLIVERIA'S LOCOS

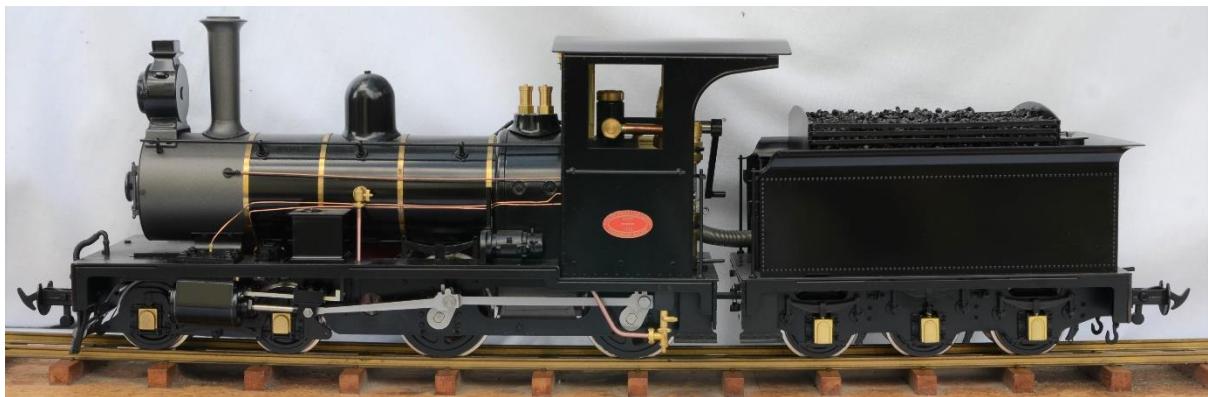
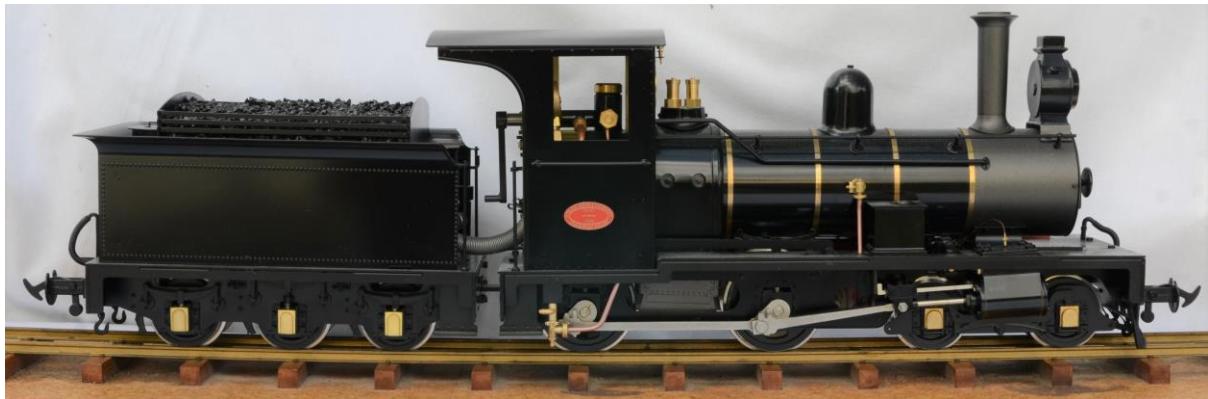
#### Congolese Garratt



The scratch built loco uses Roundhouse cylinder and valve gear plus other parts, like the displacement lubricator and regulator. The boiler has a sight glass and is also scratch built. I have not so far found any paperwork but that may come to light when I collect the loco on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> April. It is 32mm gauge and **not** regaugeable. It has a wet front tank and axle pump on the leading bogie. The gas tank is in the rear bunker, the load being removable. It is manually controlled and would probably need substantial modification to achieve radio control. This loco won Model of the Year at MOTY at the 2010 National Show at the Peterborough Arena and was pictured in issue 132 (May 2010) SMT on page 23. I will test it thoroughly and remediate any issues before selling it. If I can't find boiler and gas tank paperwork, I will test both units and generate certificates compliant with the Associations test policies.

Once I'm confident of this unique loco it will be offered for sale for £2,750.

### Accucraft 4-4-0 Lawley



This loco is new, unused and manually controlled. It was the last loco that John bought but he never steamed it. It comes with the original packaging and paperwork and is offered for sale at **£2.650**.

John made four Resurgam Cape Government railways coaches to run with the loco. Below is a sample, I hope to have all three coaches by the end of next week. They like the loco sat on a display shelf in his living room and were never run. All four are the same colour, but different types of coach, and all are set to 32mm gauge. The coaches are **£70** each.



### "Africanised" Roundhouse Carrie



Whilst the lines of Carrie are clear, the work to make it a colonial loco are equally clear and to my eye well executed. Once I pick the loco up, I'll be able to get build date and details from Roundhouse. This is a manually controlled loco but insofar as Carrie was designed for radio control as an option, fitting it would be straight forward. It's set to 32mm gauge but could readily be converted to 45mm gauge. It's been resprayed in satin green and black. It will benefit from a clean but a cursory examination last August suggested no significant wear or other issues. Like the Garratt, it will be thoroughly tested and any issues remediated prior to sale. This rare loco is offered for £1,750.

If you have **serious** interest in either the locos or coaches please contact me as soon as possible.