



Smokebox

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

From the Editor

As I advised in the June issue, I can't make the July meeting as we'll be on holiday in the Wye Valley (an opportunity to visit the Forest of Dean railway 😊). It's not an area we've explored before so we're looking forward to our visit. We also plan to visit Derails in Coleford. I'm not planning to buy anything but you never know what second hand items will be there to temp!

I attended Mark Carpenter and his partner Sue's open day in Stevenage at the beginning of June and had an excellent time. Sue's catering was extensive and generous. Mark's line provides an interesting run which was shown to best effect when he (and numerous "helpers") ran his John Shawe coal fired Jack towards the end of the day. Once he got fire, bypass and regulator set, the loco circuted the line, slowing at the climb across a diamond crossing towards the back of the garden but not running away coming down the opposite side. A very satisfying end to a great day and well worth a fairly long journey. Thanks again Mark and Sue 👍. Sadly, I couldn't make Dave's event later in the month – I was ill after a holiday in Germany visiting the Harzerschmalspurbahn system in the Harz. The videos on the Association Facebook page suggest that I missed another well attended event on an interesting line. The hazards of travel!

These events have prompted me to invite you all (and your wives or partners) to come to our next open day on 28th July. Like Mark's and Dave's events, my own is shared with members of the Northants Area Group. Fewer Northants members attend open days nowadays so there should be plenty of opportunity to run for those able to make the trek to the northern reaches of Buckinghamshire. Details in the **Forthcoming Events** section.

I again have a conflict with the August meeting, then the W&LLR Gala which clashes with the September meeting. It looks like it will be the meeting on 6th October before I can visit Eaton Bray again.

Copy deadline for August 2024 issue of Smokebox: Friday 26 July 2024

Alan, **Smokebox** Editor

From the Chair

We had a good meeting in June and two new members joined the group. Oliver Price came with a selection of mining locomotives and wagons most of which he had 3D printed. I have to say that the surface finish he achieved was excellent, completely devoid of the patterning so often present in these prints. The photo on the next page shows a kit built loco (ply I think but may have been MDF) together with two nicely detailed 3D printed wagons.



Another member showed two coaches acquired at the Member-to-Member stand at the Stoneleigh Show, the clerestory coach was a very nice piece of work and looked the part on the track. Sorry, I forgot who purchased them!!



During the week Garth lent me his rake of sugar cane wagons to run behind the Shay - the preserved Australian Shay was, I believe, employed in the sugar cane estates so it seemed like a good idea to try the combination out. Personally, I like the idea of Shays pulling gigantic tree trunks so perhaps I will go down that route eventually, its why I ordered the loco kit in black rather than the preserved green. Garth was very taken with the sugar cane load made of raffia in Peter Elvy's rake but so far has not been able to source a decent product - anyone know of a reliable supplier of raffia?



Work progresses on the bracing to the underside of the Eaton Downs boards, just two to go and then it's a question of fettling the joints to ensure a level track. The next task will be the lifting section to allow easy access to the centre go the track, I hope we will be well into this by the end of the year.



The photo above shows the (exaggerated) hollow on the edge of one board which the brace pulls out.



This shows the braces clamped in place prior to screwing down.

Bob, Chairman

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 7th July
- Sunday 4th August
- Sunday 1st September
- Sunday 6th October
- Sunday 3rd November
- Saturday 23rd November – **Steam in Beds**

Garth, Secretary

Committee members

The members of the BAG committee are as follows:

Bob Gamble	Chairman	chairman@bag16mm.org.uk
Garth Bridgwood	Secretary/Treasurer	secretary@bag16mm.org.uk
Mark Cresswell	Membership	membership@bag16mm.org.uk
Ted Robinson	Track Manager	trackmanager@bag16mm.org.uk

Forthcoming Events:

GARDEN MEETINGS

Alan Regan (yes me, the editor 😊) invites members of the Beds and Northants Area Groups to his open day on **Sunday 28th July from 13:30 to 18:00**. This is a **45mm gauge** line built as a folded figure of eight, with 1 in 50 gradients over generous curves. A full circuit of the line takes around four minutes at a scale 15 mph. If your loco(s) will regauge but you don't have 45mm gauge rolling stock, I'm sure I can provide a suitable train.

We live at the end of a cul-de-sac. Parking is available on the drive or elsewhere in the street.

Please contact me in advance if you're coming, either by email at alan-regan@talktalk.net or by text or WhatsApp to 07808391152. Our address is:

45 Hollow Wood
Olney
MK46 5LZ

Modelling Matters

CHUFFERS

I have fitted Summerlands Chuffers to five locos since the last issue of **Smokebox**: a very early Pearse W&L Beyer, an Accucraft SLR #85, a Pearse Leeds #1, my Larry Cheesman Monarch and finally, a late Merlin SLR #85. Three were simple jobs, cutting the existing exhaust, cleaning up and pushing the Chuffer into place over the exhaust stub. The other two involved some annealing of the exhausts, to form them into a vertical line lower down, so that the Chuffer could be installed in the right place with its top around 5mm below the lip of the chimney. What's been interesting is that one of the locos, the Merlin SLR #85, which previously ran smoothly had, had in fact a very uneven beat, something only noticeable once the chuff was enhanced.

There is little fore and aft movement on late Merlin cylinders (they were designed by Ian Pearse when a Merlin employee so are identical in terms of valve movement to Pearse cylinders) and getting an even chuff in forward and reverse has been a challenge. I'm there in one direction but not yet in the other. I probably need to tweak the movement by half a turn of the valves, but as the

unevenness is only apparent in steam rather than on compressed air, it's now a case of trial and error. Our little dragons provide endless opportunities for time to drift away...

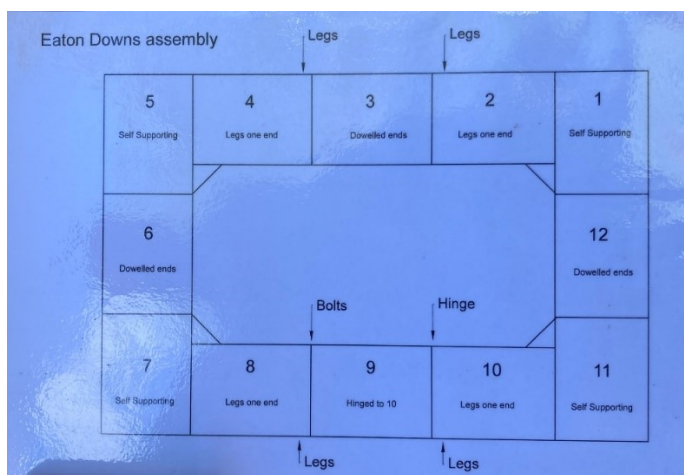
Sales & Wants

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

EATON DOWNS SURPLUS BASEBOARDS

When the club redeveloped Eaton Downs using the curved corner boards that Bob built, four of the oblong boards became redundant. Brian Chidwick, who helped with some of the track laying after the restrictions of the first Covid Lock Down were eased, bought these four boards intending to use them as the basis for an indoor project. Sadly, this never came to fruition. His daughter Sarah has offered them back to the club. The boards in question are numbers 5, 6, 9 and 12 per the drawing below, plus some corner pieces which I think Bob also made, and some legs.

If any of you would like all the boards (sorry, this is an all-or-nothing offer), please contact Sarah via sarahcallis@hotmail.com or by text or WhatsApp to . These will need to be collected from Brian's home in Stotfold, near Hitchin. This picture may help you understand which boards are on offer.



This shows board 5 which some of you will remember from its time in use on Eaton Downs.

