



# 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 month. As you can perhaps appreciate, time has been at a premium as the date of the National Show on 12<sup>th</sup> April approaches. There are still many loose ends to tie up but the heavy lifting is done, which is just as well, as various curved balls get thrown at the Show Director in the run-up to the show! Thanks to those BAG members who have contributed to stewarding the show. Your support is greatly appreciated.

I have been at the W&L again, for more work on Countess but also for familiarisation on 699 Sir Drefaldwyn. Here she is at the water tower in Welshpool after I'd fired from Llanfair:



I drove the return and quickly appreciated what a powerful loco it is. Also, being superheated, there's a slight lag between the regulator being opened and steam hitting the cylinders. You have to be patient and resist the temptation to add a bit more regulator. The return trip was uneventful and hopefully I'll be invited to sign for the loco in due course.

See you at the meeting on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> April.

Copy deadline for **May 2025** issue of Smokebox: **Friday 25 April 2025**

Alan, **Smokebox** Editor

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## From the Chair

It was great to see so many members at the AGM last month, we particularly appreciated the effort some had made to attend despite considerable difficulties. We had several helpful suggestions in AOB which the committee are pursuing, particularly the idea of drawing up a list of members who have permanent tracks and are willing to let those without, test locos at a time convenient to both.

I have mentioned Statfold Barn narrow gauge collection in previous editions of **Smokebox** and this month will be no exception! Ken, Garth and I visited at the start of March this year, luckily the weather was very kind to us. For those not familiar with Statfold Barn it is a complex of various track gauges set over quite a distance. Numerous coach and wagon shelters together with a large hall with central turntable for display/storage of locomotives give some idea of the setup. All the locos are either fully restored or awaiting restoration. Purists may shudder at the artificial surroundings but seeing upwards of ten locos in steam and taking turns to run trains is probably worth overcoming ones principles. I took a number of photos and have selected a few because some quirk or other caught my eye.



Yes, it's the Roundhouse loco in twelve inches to the foot!! Until I saw the real thing I was not a great fan of the model but with the various bits and pieces of equipment added it really came alive.



Lurking in the engine shed a run of the mill diesel, a tiny little thing - but what a transfer



I've included **Trangkil No 4** because I do like Hackworth valve gear and it's a nice engine. Roundhouse no longer supply Hackworth cylinders etc. but how about a basic series with Hackworth substituted for slip eccentric - a rather fine loco could emerge.



A new build by, I believe, Statfold engineering. The engineering capability is considerable at Statfold. Just look at the smooth plate work, not a rust eaten sheet to be seen!



A real narrow gauge miniature with amazing joinery for the woodwork. The roof construction to the ends by the clearstory was noticeable under the canvass covering - I always wondered how that was achieved! A possible coach for towing behind my tram engine? One can but dream....

**Bob, Chairman**

## Meeting Dates

Here are all meeting dates until the end of 2025. 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.

- 6<sup>th</sup> April
- 4<sup>th</sup> May
- 1<sup>st</sup> June
- 6<sup>th</sup> July
- 3<sup>rd</sup> August
- 7<sup>th</sup> September
- 5<sup>th</sup> October
- 2<sup>nd</sup> November
- 7<sup>th</sup> December

**Garth, Secretary**

## 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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## Garden Meetings

Dave Thompson has issued this early invitation for next year. The **Chells Valley Railway** open day is 14<sup>th</sup> June 2025. Dave will provide hot dogs (sausages in rolls), tea, coffee and soft drinks.

There are normally no issues with parking.

Please contact Dave in advance if you're attending, 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

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### LOGGING WAGON

Not so much progress this month, a week or two of good weather meant gardening duties and no workshop time.

The socket blanks were cut from sheet brass using a fine toothed hacksaw, then stacked in the mill vice and cut to a uniform width.

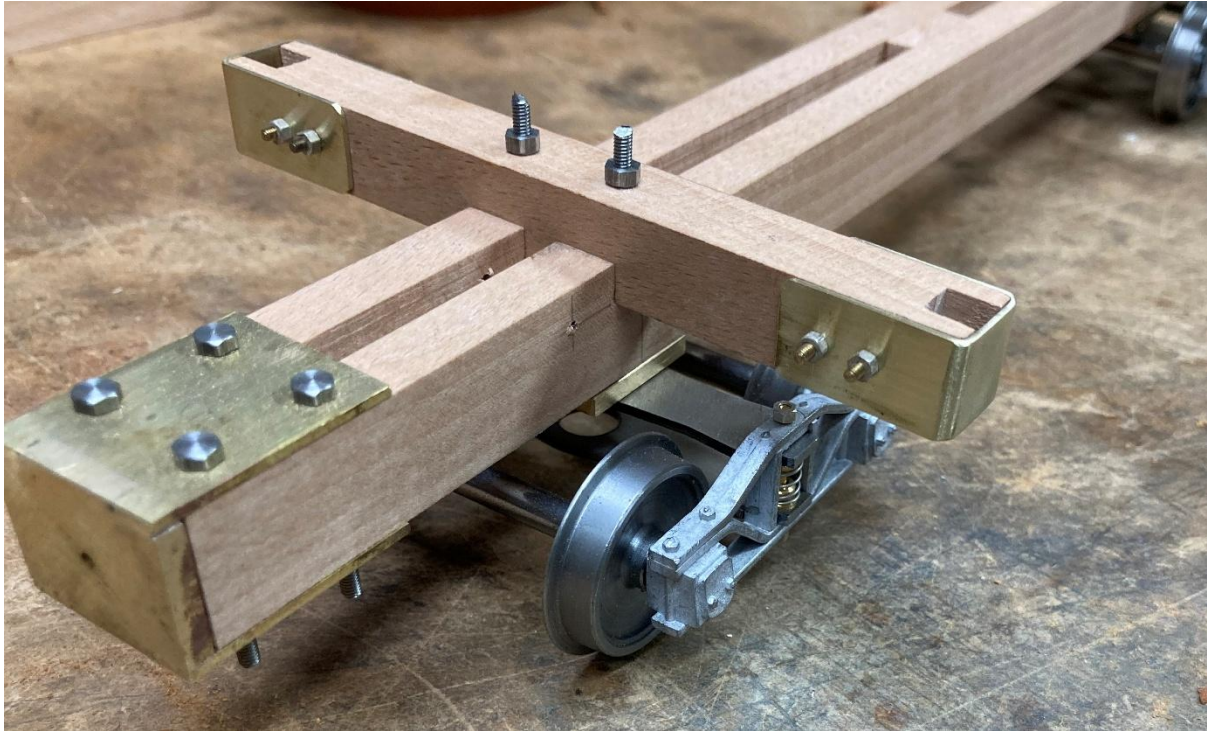
After marking out the bend lines the strips were bent using a MetalSmith bending bar. Some came out the correct width - 12 mm - most didn't! Persuasion via a hammer and a "dolly" of 12 mm square aluminium corrected the size. I would have preferred sharp right angled bends but sheet bent to right angles will always give a radius unless a deep groove is cut to the inside of the bend - as in a typical etch.

The "U" shaped sockets were then marked out for length and bolt holes.



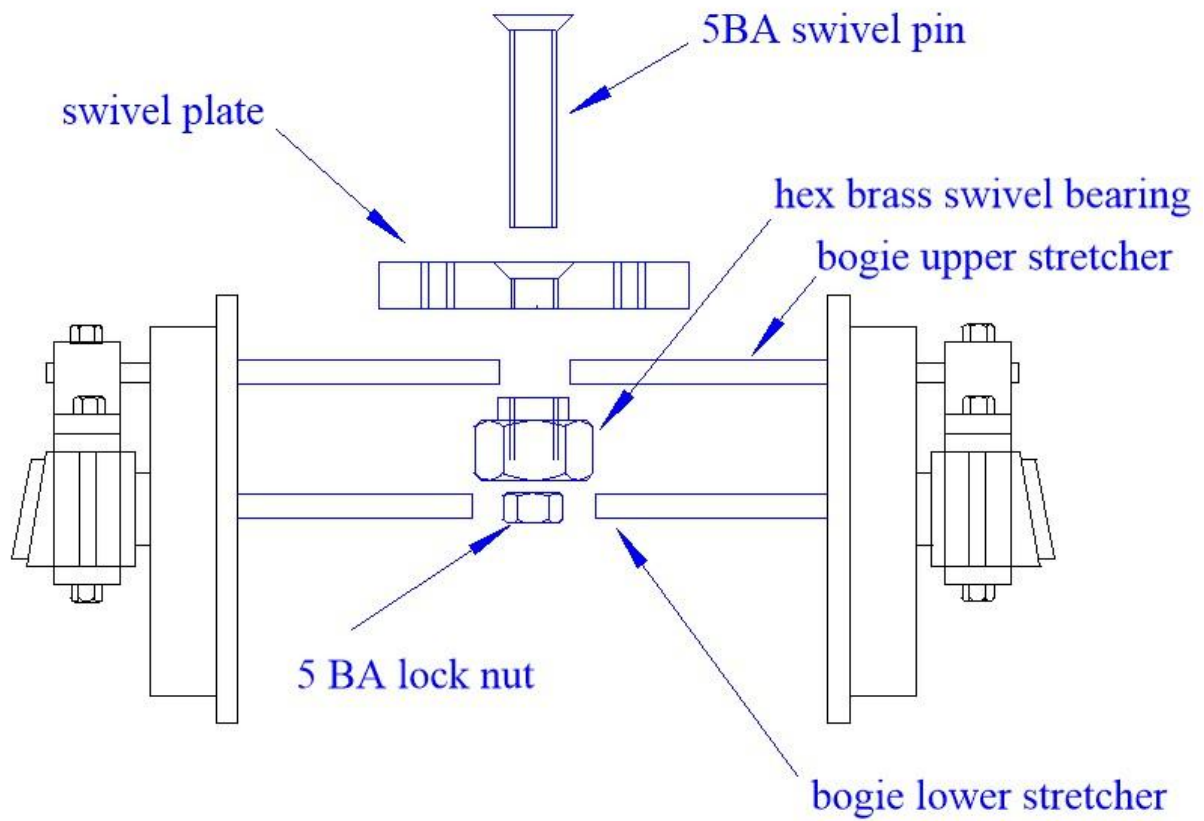
*"U" shaped sockets*

After cutting to length, drilling and given an initial cleaning up I tried some out to see how they looked, after drilling for the retaining studs and nuts (10 BA).



*End socket bolted in position*

Never one to make a job easy, I next turned my thoughts to retaining the bogie to the skeleton frame. I knew from discussion with members that a simple screw through the upper bogie stretcher could be difficult to fit and prone to unscrewing. I had already decided to span the two longitudinal sections which form the skeleton with a brass plate to ensure OTT strength and rigidity. A 5BA screw through the plate, countersunk and glued in position to stop movement served as the swivel pin. (Two 8 BA holes were also drilled to accept studs passing through the spine and cross members culminating in a 8BA washer and nut, this should ensure a secure fixing). The upper stretcher was drilled 4.8 dia and 7 A/F brass was turned down to fit the drilled hole, just shy in length of the thickness of the cross member, drilled then tapped 5 BA. A 5 BA nut serves to lock the brass hex in position. We now have a situation where steel rubs against brass which is generally accepted as a good solution. Note - I made sure that the 5 BA swivel pin was level with the lower stretcher to ensure ease of assembling the hex brass and nut.



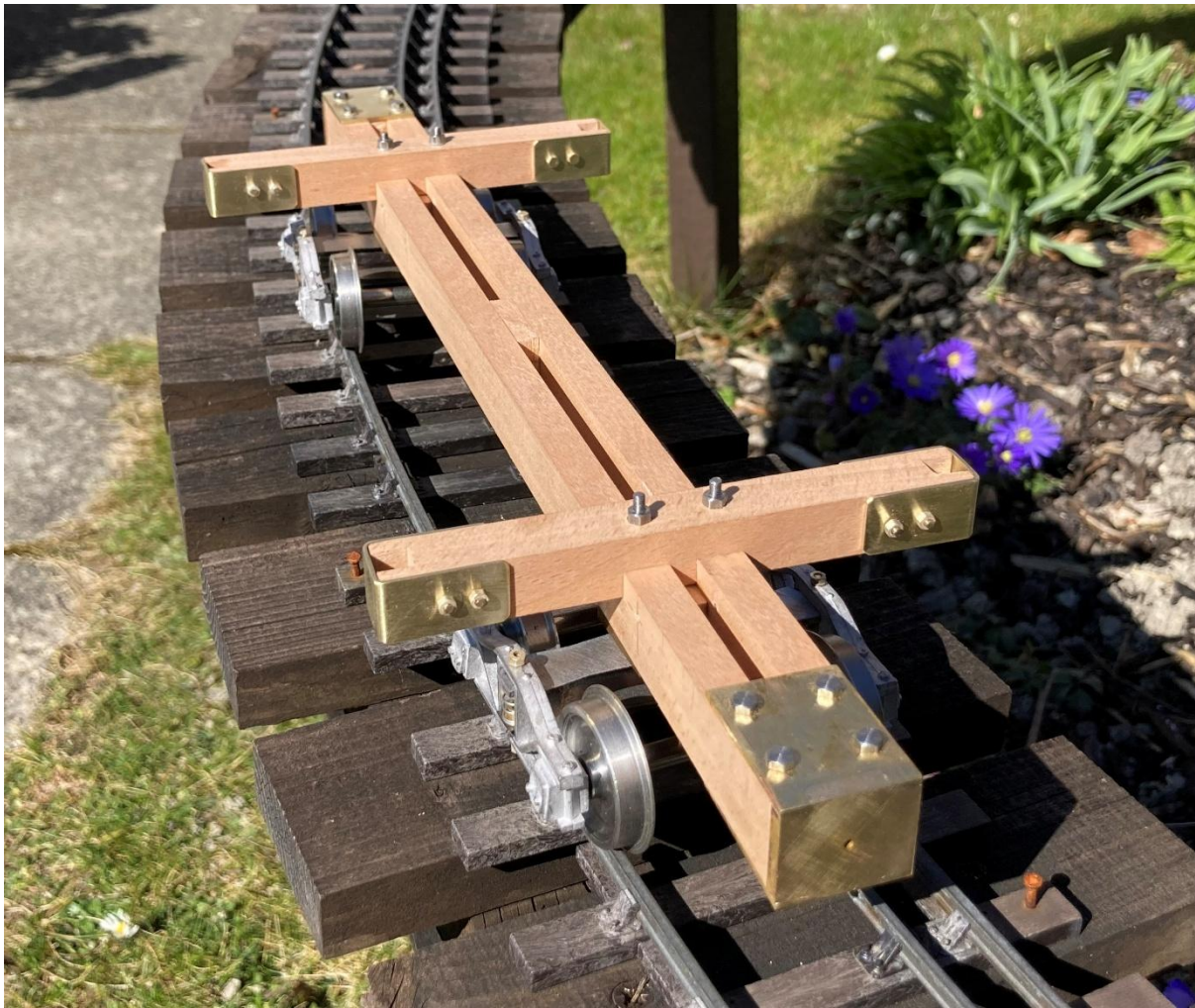
I took a photo of the underside of the bogie showing the lock nut, hex brass swivel bearing, swivel plate and 5 BA swivel pin. Not terribly clear but the best I could do.



*Swivel plate underside*

Flushed with enthusiasm I assembled the parts made so far for one wagon and tried them on the track. Still some cleaning up and stud reduction to do, but couplings would see the wagon useable.





*Assembly on track*

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## 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.