



Smokebox

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

From the Editor

Another month with little modelling progress. It's been simply too cold in the garage for any length of time at the machines. When it hasn't been cold, I've either been in Wales working on The



Countess at the W&L or working on the National Show. Countess is now separated from her wheels, the chassis now being on a flat wagon. The keeps under the axle boxes were removed, then the chassis was lifted, with block and tackle either end. That's me on the nearest end. The wheels and axleboxes were then rolled to the end of the track in the workshop and a flat wagon rolled underneath the chassis. We used steel section recovered from Tanllan yard to create a level and stable platform so that the chassis can be moved around the yard. The axleboxes were subsequently removed from the wheelsets, a two-person job as they weigh around 35 kg each. The wheels will go away for testing and reprofiling and the axleboxes will be refurbished.

Carol and I visited Stoneleigh on Tuesday 11th February to discuss implementation of metal detecting scanner arches for our show and experience the brightness of the new hall lights. The latter are surprising and welcome improvement. I made a Shed Notice which included a short video which showed what we found. The former is unavoidable for an event of the National Show's size.



The needs & concerns of those with pacemakers and metal implants are addressed and I may by the time you read this have been able to provide details on our show web site. Thanks to BAG members who have volunteered to steward at the show. It's not too late to volunteer, more are always welcome and will lighten the load on those who have already come forward.

See you at the meeting on Sunday 2nd March.

Copy deadline for **April 2025** issue of Smokebox: **Friday 28 March 2025**

Alan, **Smokebox** Editor

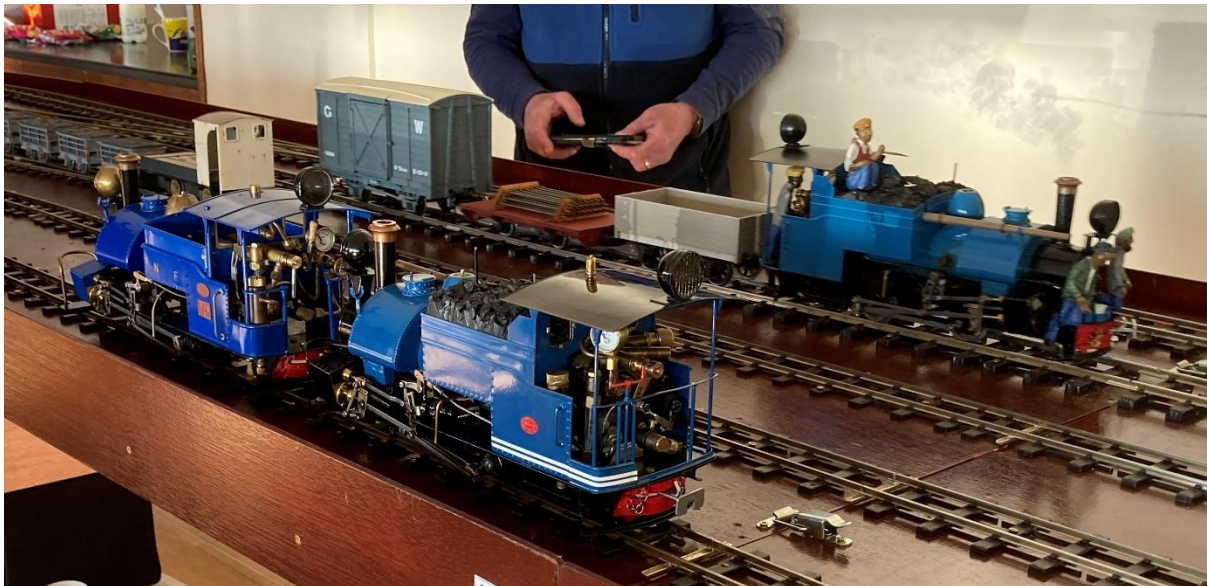
From the Chair

Attendance at the February meeting turned out to be a bit of a challenge. Contradictory “Road Closed” signs fooled several members and one at least gave up and went home! Perseverance, a certain disregard of the direction signs and a bit of luck finally saw a decent turnout of members.

Carol was not able to attend so John and June Kitchenman supplied their latest portable track and this, together with Eaton downs to cater for the 45 mm members gave plenty of running slots.

A regular part of pressure vessel testing is sending my gauges off for recalibration and certification. My two gauges have just returned, so I have a few more years before they need to be sent off again. At one time the G1 association tested members gauges against a certified master gauge so that local area testers could then test with a gauge where inaccuracies were known. If you have a gauge and would like to see how it reads across the scale I would be very happy to plug it into my test rig.

I didn't manage to photograph much in the way of action during the meeting, but I did get this Darjeeling snap! The darker blue loco to the left is sitting in my workshop at the moment, waiting for a pressure test on the boiler and gas tank. Its origin seems to be a bit of a mystery, there are elements of self-build and commercial build. The pressure test could be interesting!



I don't know how many of you have come across the publication - “New Zealand Group Journal” - it is produced by Geoff Hallam and is ostensibly aimed at G1 folk but don't be deceived, the good folk down under run mainline and narrow-gauge without any hangups! Geoff's output is prodigious. The PDF file for the latest magazine will have been attached to the email used to send this issue of **Smokebox**. If you want earlier copies I will try to find them on the chaos which is my home screen. I can forward email addresses to him if you would like to be added to the mailing list or I can add the PDF whenever he publishes.

I hope to see you all at the AGM!

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.

- 2nd March (Annual General Meeting)
- 6th April
- 4th May

- 1st June
- 6th July
- 3rd August
- 7th September
- 5th October
- 2nd November
- 7th December

The **Annual General Meeting** to be held during our meeting on 2nd March at 12.00 midday.

If at the AGM members vote in favour of holding a **Steam in Beds** show, then the proposed date is 22nd November 2025, and the meeting on 7th December would be cancelled.

Garth, Secretary

Annual General Meeting papers

These were supplied as separate attachments to the email used to out the February issue of **Smokebox**. Garth encourages us all to bring our own copies of these to the meeting but limited quantities will be at the meeting if you forget.

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

Garden Meetings

Dave Thompson has issued this early invitation for next year. The **Chells Valley Railway** open day is 14th 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 or by text to 07903390045. Dave's address is:

12 Stanley Road
Chells
Stevenage
SG2 0EF

This is a 32mm line.

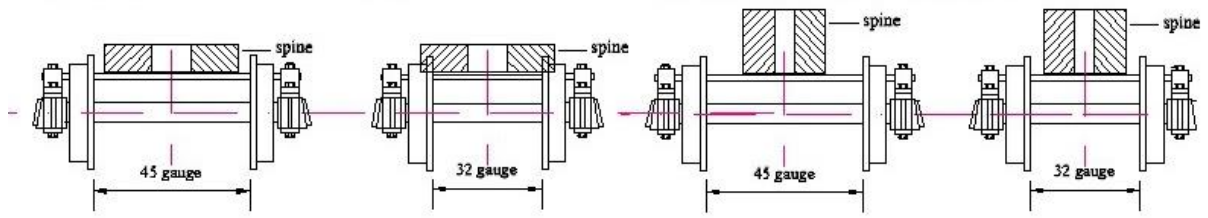
Modelling Matters

LOGGING WAGON

"I used to be decisive but....."

After cutting out and mocking up the spine for the original skeleton wagon design, I decided that limiting the wagon to 45 gauge only was not a good idea, particularly because the Shay is gauge adjustable. Perusal of the first drawing shows that, unless the spine is raised clear of the bogie wheels (and thus add to instability with a top heavy log load) the spine will just not fit between the 32 mm wheel sets. So, a change of plan. Luckily I came across a 21' skeleton wagon on the net and this had a greatly reduced spine width, sufficient to allow some rotation of the 32 mm bogie wheel set. Diagram 1 shows the original design alongside the revised spine.

Original spine, note limited "swivel" on the 45 gauge and interference on 32.



Revised spine, better "swivel" on the 45 gauge and some movement on 32

Armed with this design I re-machined enough wooden parts to make 3 complete spines. Luckily I have access to a milling machine so it was easy to cut the slots required for the cross members. All 6 spine lengths and a sacrificial block were clamped in the mill and a 5 deep slot, 6 wide was duly cut.



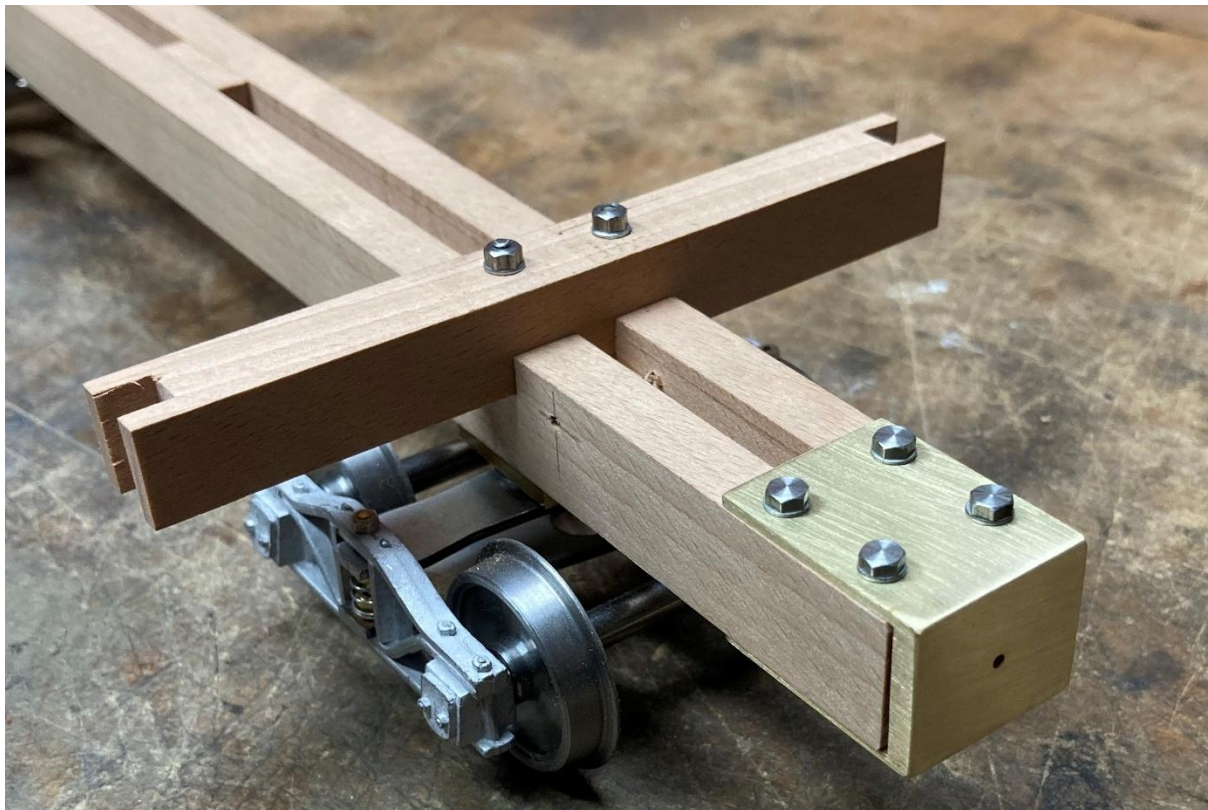
A quick clean up to remove any small remnants of machining and the sides were glued up with spacer blocks to form a rigid structure. Note the use of "miniature" clamps and don't be misled by their apparent toy-like appearance, they are very effective.



There then followed a lengthy spell on the mill where brass plate was cut to size for the tops, bases and ends of the “end caps” which not only strengthen the full size job but also serve as a fixing for the couplings. Here the mill proved its worth once again because after machining I was able to slot the 3 parts to each cap together and friction held them whilst they were silver soldered. The picture right shows the cap after silver soldering and pickling in citric acid but before cleaning up.



The pictures below shows final stage for this month! After cleaning up a trial assembly of spine, swivel plate, bogie, cross member, end caps and fixings took place.



Still to do:

- Complete the sockets at the end of the cross members
- Add strapping to the upper surfaces of the spine and cross members
- Add appropriate finish to all the parts
- Make some dedicated screws to hold the bogies to the swivel plates.

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.