

Lancashire & District Section



February 2002



'Robinson, Crew, Snow' - Found in Culcheth

Cliff Robinson's Open Day - Sunday 30 Dec

It was fun in the snow at our Christmas / New Year get-together at Cliff Robinson's, with a large turn-out of LADS (Lancashire & District Section) bracing the frost. Starting at the earlier time of 11am to ensure we made the most of the

limited daylight, Cliff was still busy fighting a battle in trying to de-ice the track. It went to show how cold it was when we realised the boiling water poured over the rails was freezing whilst waiting for the next kettle!

Chris MacKenzie, your intrepid reporter, was the first to arrive - and the first to leave. Throughout the afternoon he began to feel worse and worse, until he had to go home feeling sick. It turns out he was suffering from food poisoning (don't worry, it was the Saturday night Scampi, not Cliff's delicious soup and pasty 's). His face swelled up and went red, so much so he let in the new year doing a very good impression of a Baboon's bum! (*Ed's wife: Enough of this moaning! What do they say... children have a cold, men have flu.... and women get on with it!*)

But back to railways.

Cliff's line is still in it's revised form, running up and down just one side of the garden, with large 4'6" radius loops at either end.

Our host kept muttering apologies all afternoon, something about the track moving in the frost (but not noticed by any of the visitors). The track had been nailed down

using 1.25" brass pins into those lightweight insulating blocks you can buy nowadays. Apparently, the moss which grows in the blocks under the rails, soaks up water like a sponge, freezes, and then raises the track by pushing the nails out. The job of drilling and screwing down the track with rawplugs has now been added to his list of jobs.

There were many delightful locos and items of rolling stock brought for a run.

Peter & Sheila Harling brought along a brand new Roundhouse Billy he'd just finished assembling from one of the kits we all seem to fancy. To say it looked amazing in its

black finish is a bit of an

understatement. I won't tell you any more about it because I'm hoping Peter writes an article for us on the construction. Another reason for not giving further information is that I was too poorly to remember the details or take a picture (*Ed's wife: Stop moaning and looking for sympathy!*).

Rob Guinness and his wife were a rare, but welcome, visitors. He managed a few runs and impressed us with his home made cardboard coaches (they look great - blending in well with his IP Engineering two compartment coaches).

As soon as Chris left for his death bed (*Ed's wife: Oh! For goodness sake!*) Dave and Margaret Wilding turned up, delayed by Ikea's queues. He with him his latest creation to emerge from the depths of his workshop - a superb steam crane. Too new to be painted, the model has all the correct working bits and can actually load wagons. Again, I'm hoping for an article giving more detail.

I'm sure that you can tell by now that this was a brilliant event, with all thanks to Cliff.



As yet

Many a Slip (Not!)

By Eddie Bellass, our man in the
Occupied Territories of Old Lancashire.

If there's one thing that 16mm and other large scale modellers of the UK narrow gauge scene can be thankful for, it is the simplicity of the trackwork involved, particularly the points and crossings.

While most turnouts are of the plain and simple left-hand and right-hand types there are just a few more complex examples. The Ffestiniog Railway had a 3-way stub point down at Porthmadog Harbour station, beyond the platform end where the station water tank and fuelling stage is situated. This was replaced by two simple turnouts a few years ago, but it was moved up the line into Minffordd goods yard where it now serves the storage sheds.

A stub turnout, by the way, has no point blades. The diverging roads end in square-cut rail ends which are mated up as required to a short but flexible section of the single track which serves them, also with square cut rail ends. This single track is positioned as required to line up with the straight ahead, left and/or right diverging routes.

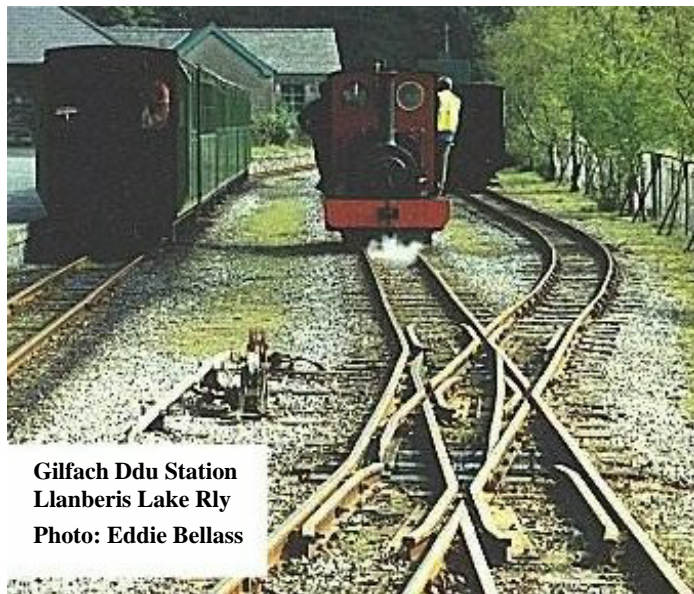
Right next to this Ffestiniog 3-way point is an even more versatile piece of trackery - a 5-way turnout, although this is not a turnout in the true sense of the word. It is more like the 'sector plate' beloved of minimum space model railway layouts in all scales. A longer section of rather 'bendy' single track can be barred over, left and right, to mate up with 5 other converging tracks which meet without overlapping, hence no frogs!

The 12¼" Fairbourne & Barmouth Rly even has a 10-way version!

The rarest type of trackwork on the UK narrow gauge happens to be of a type which is seen almost everywhere in Europe, on both standard and narrow gauge lines. It was also very common on BR standard gauge, with many examples once existing within a few hundred yards of where I'm sitting now, but getting rarer in the UK every year.

I refer to the 'slip point', where one track crossed another on the level by means of a diamond, within which were one or two sets of point blades within (or sometimes just outside) the diamond itself. This track formation allowed trains on one route to either cross the other route or diverge onto it. A single slip, as shown in the accompanying photograph of the Llanberis Lake Railway station yard, allows a divergence within the diamond between two of the four legs of the 'X' shaped track plan in either direction. A double slip, with two extra point blades opposite the first pair, would allow an interconnection between all four legs of the 'X'. This offers the same operational facilities as two pairs of points joined end-on near their blade ends, usually the longest loco wheelbase apart, but takes up less space.

This is the only UK narrow gauge slip I've ever seen. Does anybody know of any more?



Gilfach Ddu Station
Llanberis Lake Rly
Photo: Eddie Bellass

In Brief

Bolton's Still On

Contrary to what has been advertised in the modelling magazines, the Bolton Model Railway Exhibition (Scale Rail North West) has not been cancelled and is going ahead on the 16 & 17 February 2002 at Bolton School, Chorley New Road, Bolton.

Oh! How the organisers must have laughed when they saw that printed mistake...

New Loco also in 32mm

Cheddar Steam are going to launch a new loco, called 'Samson'. Initially it will only be produced in 45mm gauge, but Alan Whittaker from PPS Steam Models is hoping to have the 32mm version by the AGM.

Visit www.cheddar-steam-club.co.uk for more information.

Wanted!

Keith Nicholls, one of our Preston LADS (01772 740879) writes and asks for anyone selling bogies for 45 mm gauge rolling stock eg. Bachmann etc. Also steel wheel sets for 45 mm gauge, insulated or non insulated. It may be that some 32mm gauge modellers have some to dispose of these 45mm bits and bobs following conversions etc., or have been contemplating buying 45mm stock for conversion. Here is an opportunity to get a 'couple of bob' for the leftover bits.

He also mentions that since he replaced his plastic wheelsets with steel ones, he has a number of redundant Bachmann (and a couple LGB) 45mm gauge plastic wheelsets. If anyone can use these, please contact him.

Another Heart By-Pass

We're grateful to Margaret Wilding for the information about Kevin Duffy who underwent a heart by-pass on the 19 December. He has since been in touch to say everything's fine and he's feeling fitter.

Although living in Northern Ireland, Kevin is something of one of the 'Honourary LADS' members, being a frequent visitor at Dave Wilding's Open Days. He even came over for last years Elsecar event.

The Case of the Missing Munro's

Neil and Sheila have been very noticeable by their absence for the last few events.

This isn't through choice, but Neil's back has been giving him quite a bit more 'gyp' than usual. At the moment he's finding it difficult to walk, stand or sit for anything more than 10 minutes.

I'm sure that you all hope he gets better as soon as possible (or at least let us use his railway every now and then....!)

Poorly Sick

Mike Ousby has also been ill (*Ed:- What's happened to us lot? Are we all going soft? There's that many of us ill, this newsletter's turning into something resembling a Church Magazine!*) He was taken to Casualty at the end of January and they kept him in with a viral chest infection. They pumped him full of drugs and then released him a few days later. A few weeks off work modelling should be just the perfect cure.

Can you contribute?

If you have any articles, gossip or items of news whatsoever, send, telephone, Email or even talk to:

Chris MacKenzie, 2 Curzon Drive, Timperley,
Altrincham, Cheshire, WA15 7SY

e:mail narrow.gauge@btinternet.com or Tel 0161 980 7804

Anything considered - especially in the "Things I'd wish I'd known years ago..." section. Please help!

Part 1

in a 3 Part Series

Paint Your Wagon

Alex Milne supplies more expert notes from his workshop

Introduction to the Art

Having written about my Coach Building experiences, I thought (how foolish) that I could have a rest but our Editor can be very persuasive (threatening) and he thought a word about painting may be in order as a follow up.



I approach this with great trepidation as I know there as many 'right' ways to paint as there are painters. All I can do is share my ways and tell you that they have worked for me. There is, however general agreement about one thing - CLEANLINESS.

The work to be painted should be free from grease, fingerprints, dust and anything else which will mar the surface. Cellulose thinners are ideal for cleaning metal but definitely not plastic as they will melt. White spirit is OK on the plastics I have used but don't be tempted to use Washing Up Liquid - it is designed to put a polish on the washing up and some paints don't like the chemicals used.

There are two basic ways to get the paint on to the surface (three if you count spilling or dripping). These are either with a Brush or by Spraying. The latter can either be an Airbrush or an Aerosol, like a car paint.

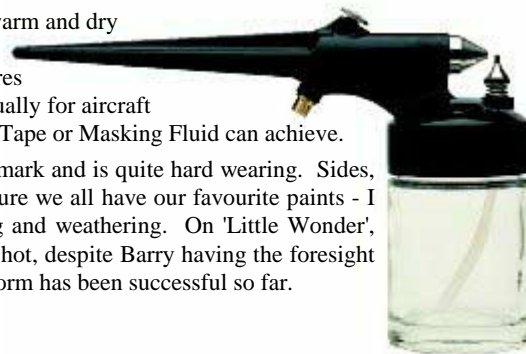
Brushing is fairly straight forward if the paint is well mixed and you use a good quality brush.

On plastic, one coat is probably enough. On wood a thinned coat to seal it then at least two top coats is about right. A build up of thin coats is better than one thick as detail can be obscured.

Spraying, either with an Air Brush or Aerosol canister is best done when the air is warm and dry (high humidity will give a bloom on a gloss aerosol) and the makers instructions should be followed - particularly with regard to spray distance. An Air Brush requires practice, and lots of it to master the techniques. There are several books, written usually for aircraft or military modellers which describe the effects an Air Brush and a roll of Masking Tape or Masking Fluid can achieve.

My models tend to have Car Aerosol paint on the roofs as the matt finish does not mark and is quite hard wearing. Sides, if they are wood are brush painted, or if they are plastic I use the Air Brush. I'm sure we all have our favourite paints - I use Phoenix Precision Paints for specific 'railway' colours and Humbrol for lining and weathering. On 'Little Wonder', which was converted to gas firing by JBM Services, one end of the boiler got very hot, despite Barry having the foresight to fit a baffle, and the paint suffered. A Halfords High Temperature paint in spray form has been successful so far.

Weathering and lining, perhaps, next month.



Things I'd wish I'd known years ago...

An Update

Last month we mentioned about the magical one coat wonder paint for covering bare metal to a satin black finish: Phoenix Precision Paints "Self Etch Primer" in black. Well, many of the LADS have commented that they can't find a stockist, with some retailers saying that it's no longer available.

Our LADS Investigate Reporter was straight on the case. *[It would help if you hummed the "That's Life!" theme whilst reading the rest of this article. I suppose that the Watchdog theme would be better, but no one can remember that one]* Many stockists choose not to sell it. However, it is available direct from Phoenix Paints themselves.

A 50ml tin costs £4.01 and the special thinners (only needed to wash the brush out with afterwards - being self etch primer no other thinners will do) costs £3.04. Both prices include the dreaded VAT.

You can send your order by post (UK only) to the address at the bottom, remembering to add £1.50 for postage and packing.

Alternatively, Phoenix themselves are one of the traders at the Bolton Model Exhibition on 16 & 17 Feb. (see Diary Section for more info). I telephoned them, and they'll make sure that they take enough stock to satisfy the huge demand this mag will undoubtedly create.

Phoenix Precision Paints Co., PO Box 359, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL52 3YN Tel: 01242 575326 E-mail: Sales@phoenix-paints.co.uk

Help Needed

You have probably seen by now details of the special charter trains for 16mm Assoc members on the Ffestioniog Railway - 2.55pm and 6pm Saturday 11 May '02. If not, full details will be in your February issue 16mm Today.

Well, the organiser, Geoff Lumsdon, has asked me to ask the LADS if they will help out on the day. He needs two volunteers per coach on each train (coach numbers 11, 12, 15, 16, 17 & 20). At the time of writing he only has three! Give him a call on **0191 266 5796**. It can only be fun!

This newsletter has been sponsored by:-

Peter M Howarth C.Eng. M.I.C.E.

Civil Engineering in Miniature

PLATE AND TRUSS

GIRDER BRIDGES

LOCOMOTIVE TURNTABLES

Web Site: www.gardenrailwaystructures.co.uk

E-mail: mail@gardenrailwaystructures.co.uk

Telephone **01250 872660**

Please support them like they support us

Dear LADS....

Some genuine letters (for a change) from our infamous postbag

Dear LADS

Reading in the last LADS Newsletter about food at garden meetings (and the plea for contributions), as a non-LADS member, may I put in my bit? Good! Here goes:

To be serious, I do not think that one can "expect" or even advise hosts to provide catering to a particular standard, sparse or sumptuous. Hosts provide refreshments as they feel that they want to and according to their abilities and financial means. To recommend a standard is to tell those who can and have, in the past, provided "catering more suited for a wedding" that their efforts are not wanted and could be most upsetting. To recommend or insist on a high standard to someone without the means or skills would be similarly distressing. What's the problem with just leaving it to each host to do what they feel they want to provide? Any new host who asks can be advised that the decision is theirs, according to their means, skills and inclination.

In East Surrey, we are very fortunate that most of our hosts (or strictly speaking, the domestic authority part of the household) provide an excellent spread. It is well known that one does not have lunch before going to most garden open days! The invite should maybe read, "Bring a loco and an appetite". Not all our hosts provide a sumptuous spread. One just provides tea, coffee and biscuits. Nobody looks down upon him because his catering is not lavish. What is offered is just accepted gratefully. After all, playing trains and spending a pleasant afternoon in a garden with friends is the main reason for going to garden open days. The refreshments are an ancillary part of these events and should not dominate.

Accept gratefully the tea and biscuits or the five 5 course buffet but do not try to dictate. The 16mm world runs very well on very few rules. Why start to change it?

Kind regards,
Robin Willis

Dear LADS,

Your two typing thumbs have got confused again!

The LADS March steam-up is booked! As the last Sunday in March happens to be Easter Sunday, and Easter Monday is always a Bank Holiday, I took a unilateral decision to have our steam-up on the Monday. This avoids cutting the long weekend in half, if anybody wants to go away for a couple of days, and keeps Sunday free for those who like to go to church on Easter Sunday. At the very least, they won't be tempted to hurry the hymns. The fact that Easter Monday happens to be April the First should not be allowed to confuse the fact that this is still the March steam-up. Just in case any of the lads and lasses think this might just possibly be a leg-pull, I suggest you announce the official date as March the 32nd. Or perhaps not...

Thanks for the good wishes on page 1.

Regards,
John Angell

Dear LADS

As head cook and bottle washer of the Spread Eagle Light Railway, I feel that I should comment on the suggestions in previous LADS mags that some people are reluctant to host 'Open Days' on their railways as they don't feel comfortable catering for 20 or so people. I really cannot believe that this is the case. The LADS are surely happy with whatever the host offers in the way of refreshments - be it tea & biscuits or a spread "fit for a king".

As for making a charge - Well! We're beginning to sound and think like we don't live in Lancashire! (Sorry! Only joking!)

As the saying goes, "if it ain't broken don't mend it" The system we have seems ideal and more in-keeping with traditional Lanky hospitality to me.

What do the other caterers think?

U N Settled

Dear LADS,

In answer to your article in LADS "Making a Meal of it", I think it time to cut down on the amount of catering at our meets. I am sticking my neck out, but I know a lot of members say the same thing. I know for a fact that if you cater for twenty, only five will turn up and you are eating sandwiches for the rest of the week! You never know how many are going to come.

I know they charge in other districts - I went to one and it was 50p for tea and biscuits! I don't wish you see a charge, but tea and biscuits and perhaps cake would be ample.

It's no good just suggesting it, as no one would wish to be first. I think the best way would be to ask each member at the meetings and if there is a good cross section in favour, state definitely in the LADS newsletter. Everyone will then know.

Hoping my oar will make the first splash in the tea pot,

Bill Cook

Dear Diary...

16mm Association LADS Events - Bring an engine & have a run

Sun 24 February - Free
Please contact Andy Lether on
01772 713849 if you can host an event.

Mon 1 April - 1pm - Preston
John Angell's Garden (32mm)
Tel. 01772 725308

Sun 28 April - 1pm - Liverpool
Derek & Phil Eaton's Garden (32mm)
Tel. 0151 428 2366.

Sun 12 May - 1pm - Peter Harling
Settle - 01729 822581

Sun 26 May - 1pm - Phil Pacey
Fulwood, Preston - 01772 729203

16mm Railway Exhibitions - Garden railway events

Sat 23 & Sun 24 Feb - Lincoln
Lawns Visitors Centre.
(Small but highly recommended event)

Sat 9 & Sun 10 March - Leeds
Narrow Gauge North, Leeds
Chris's layout is planned to attend
- bring an engine for a run (enough stock)

Sat 6 April - 16mm Assoc AGM
Stoneleigh Agricultural Showground
(The event of the year)

Sat 18 & Sun 19 May 02 - Merstham, Surrey
(Chris's layout is planned to attend
It's a bit far, but a big event)

Model Railway Exhibitions - All scales, not necessarily 16mm

Sat 9 & Sun 10 Feb 02 - Doncaster
Festival of Railway Modelling
Doncaster Racecourse Exhibition Centre

Sat 16 & Sun 17 Feb 02 - Bolton
Bolton School, Chorley New Road (A673)

FOR SALE:
Chris MacKenzie's got some more of his
Timpdon Electronics Speed Controllers in
stock. Contact him for more details.

Dear LADS,

Good to see a new sponsor for the LADS newsletter (*Antropus, January issue*). I have just completed one of their tipper wagon kits and found it a very enjoyable experience.

The instructions are some of the best I have ever seen - obviously a lot of thought and time has gone into producing this kit.

Given the limited demand for 16mm scale, the financial rewards are never going to be that high, so presumably the proprietor is an enthusiast himself.

Just the sort of support 16mm needs to continue being the friendly scale!

John Sharpe

(usual disclaimer :
just a very satisfied customer with no other connection)