

KENT NEWSLETTER

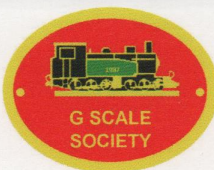


Newsletter 15

December 2020



Seasons greetings
From the G Scale Society



The Society for Garden Railways

Best wishes for a wonderful Christmas
and a very happy New Year.

Article Andrew Lloyd

LOCKDOWN COTTAGE ON THE WILLOW LIGHT RAILWAY.

I purchased the Model Town kit number 5 'White Rendered Cottage' some years ago at GRail, but for various reasons never got around to opening the box and getting on with it. About 3 years ago a friend of mine asked me to 'dog sit' to allow her to visit her family in west London for the day and I thought this was a chance to do something constructive while watching the dogs. This got me started with cleaning the sections and gluing of the four wall panels and it was put away in the shed to continue another day.....and forgotten!

When lockdown arrived in March and I was informed by the Government that I was an 'at risk' person and to isolate for 3 months. The thought of plenty of jigsaws was not that appealing, although a couple were done in the first few weeks, so the shed was searched for this kit and a space found indoors to get on with it without having to clear up after each session - the shed is too full and untidy to work in, if you are wondering. The rest went together quite well although I did not like the roof joints of the dormers, or the L shaped piece of plastic supplied for the ridge tiles. I thought of using some lead I had but this proved too thick and heavy and with shops still closed and not wanting to go out, an alternative needed to be found. One morning when taking my Statin tablet, I noticed that the double layer aluminium foil they come in could be cut to form 20mm strips and that these could be joined to form the ridge tiles. By cutting these strips down to 6mm would also make the flashings for the dormer roofs.



Lockdown Cottage on the Willow Light Railway

Painting was done as it all progressed, and Perspex windows added with curtains painted on the inside. I also found a set of tiny led lights running off 2 AA batteries so included lighting which meant putting in some interior wall to the first floor to stop it all looking over lit. The outside looked a bit raw, so climbing plants were formed from green pot scouring pads pulled apart (various makes are available at most supermarkets and pound shops!). It will be interesting to see how they stand up to outside and may fade in years to come - but then easy to replace. The two pots by the front door came from my 'bits box', again purchased some years ago with no project in sight but might be useful.

The idea for the future is to make this into the 'Willow Inn' as it is next to the level crossing and on the main (only) road with a pub sign and outside tables, so that it can continue to serve it's delicious food, but if it is anything like the actual build, then this may be a few years away. It would be unusual as most pubs are being converted into

houses and not the other way round! I leave all my resin models out all year and the Model Town signal box I have does not seem to have suffered over some 15 years and has had one re-paint, by necessity after I dropped it, but it was due a repaint anyway. In between work on this I have repainted the level crossing gates and reset the gate pillars, which were leaning. The gates needed refurbishment as they are also resin and I forgot to wash them before the first painting, which slowly came off - we can all learn the hard way!

Article John Woollett

I made my leaf cleaner from the business end of a toilet brush stuck on to an old meccano motor. It is pivoted and counterbalanced so that the brush can rise up which helps it to get over junctions etc. Powered by a 9-volt battery it can sweep dry leaves clear of the track and has been found useful in the leaf fall season.

Hope all members are keeping well. Have been running my trains, but the hot weather and downpours have been a problem. **Ed** – You can see that John wrote this during warmer days.



Leaf removing vehicle ready to start work

Article Chris Worby

I hope you are all well.

With restrictions still upon us I guess there haven't been opportunities for the Kent group to meet up etc, but with the news of a vaccine in the offing, hopefully by late spring we might return to some normality.

Anyway, not surprisingly I've used much the past months building things. Crib Lane has grown a bit with a turntable, but mostly I've been engine building. (This is the exhibition layout Chris brings along to our Winter meetings)

There are two that might be of interest to the Kent members, as the real engines that inspired the models by Kent based examples. Both are Romney Hythe locos. One a 4-8-2 Samson and the other a 4-6-2 Green Goddess.



At the front the 4-6-2 Green Goddess and standing behind 4-8-2 Samson

Arguably they aren't to recognised G scale dimensions being loosely 36mm to the foot, but proportion wise they are consistent with my other standard gauge locos that approximate to 1/24 As ever they are not absolutely to scale as they are built around available G scale chassis/motor blocks Samson uses a much modified/extended Bachmann 4-6-0 chassis, whilst the Pacific uses an Aristocraft motor block and Bachmann parts for its running gear Both tenders were built around the Bachmann industrial 2-6-0s chassis.

Incidentally the prototypes were built in Colchester, so as an Essex G scale member I can claim they have a connection there!

Do keep well and hopefully our hobby can return to some sort of normality soon.

Best wishes Chris Worby

This year has not been great for the garden railway. Usually, I would have an open day and this would require various tasks being done to ensure all was well for the important day. Lockdown over the summer as we know stopped all events. Late last year I also started on a project to make our front garden easier to manage so that more time could be devoted to other activities. The front garden is tiered and each level had its fair share of established plants and shrubs, which quite frankly were out of control. When we ventured out there with the lawn mower it was to cut the shrinking area of grass as the foliage sought to link the tiers into what seemed like thick forest. The project turned into a mammoth task and I realised why previous owners of the property had not tried to do what I had started; in fact it might have been why they decided to move. Needless to say that, this year the Garden Railway did not get much attention and services have only run once, which I realise is shameful.

For those who have attended any of my open days you will know that I have packed into a small space quite a complex maze of lines. Such is the available space that this has required the use of some R1 curves, which I do find limiting and unrealistic. Within the winding tracks there are some reversing loops that allow trains to change direction. This I find stops the situation where the trains always go around in the same direction and with some skilful point changing it is possible to start a train off in one direction and a minute or so later have it back at where it started from but facing in the opposite direction. I run DCC and one advantage of this is that you can reverse the supply to the track whilst the train is moving without it stopping meaning the whole journey could be done without any stops. I decided that I could not do this using the ready-made devices that automatically change the track polarity, as I wanted to be able to also use the layout using DC sometimes. It was a case of working out where the train was and throwing a switch at the right time.

Running the layout in DC mode requires a slightly different method that involves stopping the train in a section of track, throwing the switch to reverse the polarity on the track and then making sure you controlled the train by turning the dc controller in the opposite direction. I added some lights that indicated the two ends of the sections of track with the reversible polarity. These lights, visible from the normal control position, work in unison with the polarity-changing switch. Flashing lights mean that you are approaching a point where the polarity of the tracks is reversed. Permanently on means the train is about to cross into a section where the polarity is changeable but from that direction the polarity is OK for the train to proceed. All works fine as long as you keep concentrating on the where the train is.

I should say that not every train operation required this polarity changing exercise and it is possible to set a train off and for it to trundle around without constant intervention.

The front garden has eventually been completed almost a year on from when we started. It turned out to be a much more extensive task than first envisaged with mission creep occurring from the outset. Call me a wimp but as winter rapidly approaches and getting onto the layout when it is cold and damp is not very appealing. I must confess that there has been some neglect of the layout – some encroachment by plants and deterioration of the edging around the track. I am sure that I cannot be the only person who has found that the log rolls have a very short life!!

My thoughts have now turned to a restoration program for the coming year. I have been thinking about maybe a change to the whole layout. Planning consent for anything larger will not be forthcoming. A change could only be to something simpler as I cannot think of how I could fit in anything with the same operational diversity as I have already got. A new track layout would be quite involved since the existing layout has, under the track, what some would say are over engineered foundations of, weed membrane with aggregate on top then finished with small granite chippings holding the track in place – I got this idea from the real thing! The wiring infrastructure is also significant and it would seem a shame to dispense with all of this. Therefore, I have concluded that it will be refurbishment program rather than redesign.

The pond, which the line goes both around and over I think, will need to go. The decking that graces the centre of the layout is life expired and requires either replacement or being changed to a stone or cement-based material. The front garden project has taught me a few skills that I can put to good use.

In future newsletters I'll bring details of the restoration process and progress but in the meantime here are some pictures



The pond that needs to go. There are no fish.



Mother nature reclaiming the track



Log roll that is now life expired



The trestle that awaits a train to shake its timbers



The decking that has seen better days

Kleinbach the final chapter

Roger Allen

Many of you will remember my portable layout "Kleinbach". It was last exhibited about 3 years ago and since that final outing has rested at the back of our garage pending dismantling. One result of the first confinement was that we were unable to see our son and his family for around 6 months as they live near Harrogate and we are in Orpington. However a window of opportunity opened towards the end of August and a visit to North Yorkshire planned.

For some time I had been wanting to give my grandson, Otto, his first electric train set and what better that some LGB. In 2019 I had managed to buy a second-hand LGB Otto in good condition from Kent Garden Rail and this plus a diesel loco, a passenger set, some goods wagons and a station building would I felt provide a good start. About two weeks before our visit I decided to strip track from "Kleinbach" and I am glad I did rather than leave it to a couple of days beforehand. What I imagined would be a quick job proved otherwise as I had secured and ballasted the track in too effective a fashion. It took me a few days to remove the track, clean it and solder any bits that required re-joining to form their original LGB set-track lengths. Fortunately LGB sleepers and code 332 rail are very forgiving and easy to work on. I removed, cleaned and reassembled enough track to provide the basic R1 oval plus the 20901 buffer stop set and the 20902 station set. No outlay other than some packs of replacement of metal fishplates.

On arrival in Harrogate we set everything up on the lounge carpet with a track going in and out of the kitchen, I have an accommodating daughter-in-law! I am pleased to say son and grandson were very taken and as with most little – ones, Otto was very quick in learning how to control the train, even if it was rather speedier than I advised.

Since our visit my son has found a more permanent home in their loft area.



"Otto" the green engine

On the right starting to set-up the track in its loft home >>>>>



In September, I was able to do some further cleaning of the baseboards, which had supplied the track as above. These have now found a new home with a friend who will be using them to build a French outline HO layout.

These efforts give me some more space in the garage and I hope before too long to commence on my next, and rather overdue, 1:22.5 project, which will be an indoor French metre gauge layout. When realised at last it will give me the opportunity to use my two Corpet-Louvets in an appropriate setting.

A new Californian member

When a new member joins the G Scale Society, he or she will have usually specified, which local area group(s) they wish to be linked with. Membership secretary Fraser Neilson will advise the appropriate group and it is then for them to welcome the new member to the area.

In early October we were advised of a new overseas member, Mick Spilsbury, who lives in California and put Kent as his main area group for the Society. In welcoming Mick, Andrew Lloyd learned that Mick grew up in Bexley but has been in California for more than 40 years. He is on the board of the Bay Area Garden Railroading Society (BAGRS) and is also involved in an initiative to start a national (US) garden rail on-line newsletter following the demise of the Garden Railways printed magazine. If you are able to please take a look at the BAGRS (<https://bags.org>) and GRnews (www.grnews.org) websites.

We hope that before too long when we get going again with our regular activities, Mick will be able on a visit to the UK to come to one of our Kent garden meets.

Kent Area Winter Meet

You will recall that we undertook a survey about holding a winter or later event. This survey was before the further covid restrictions that were introduced in November. Around 20% of members replied and of those half would have wished to attend a January event if held and half would not attend. We said that non-replies would be taken as meaning “No” and thus the committee view this overall result as meaning that will not be holding our usual Winter Meet at Teynham on the last Sunday of January, even if it were possible.

Regarding the other two questions on the survey 75% of respondents would support a Spring event and a similar number would attend if such a Spring event were held at an alternative venue to Teynham.

As this is written, we learn that Kent will be placed in Tier 3, at least until 16th December. Your committee would however like to organise an event as soon is possible from the Spring onwards and we will keep the position under review.

Kent Group Annual General Meeting

It is clear that we will not be able to hold our AGM in the normal fashion by the end of January. As a substitute we will hold the meeting amongst available committee members in either “real” or “virtual” form as circumstances permit in late January. We will issue an agenda and supporting statements in the form of the Annual report and Financial Statement to members as usual and invite members to raise any matter to be considered by the committee.

Attendance at our AGMs of late has been low but nevertheless we trust members will understand the need for these arrangements in January 2021.

Membership Subscription Renewals

A reminder that for all members who joined the Society before May 2019 that your membership subscription is due with effect from 1st January 2021. Renewal details are in the Winter 2020 Journal.

Members joining from May 2019 will have a renewal date on the anniversary of their joining the Society as shown on the address label of your Journal

WINTER PHOTOS

