



A 2 1/2" Atlantic for a model railway in an outdoor setting

By Ralph Brewer (from July 1994)

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The well known designer of model locomotives, 'LBSC', produced a semi-American Pacific design for a 2 1/2 inch gauge loco-motive called 'Fayette', many of which were made. Over the years I had occasionally contemplated building a garden railway although I knew very little about the technicalities of model steam locomotives.

On impulse, I bought a partly finished engine at a shop in Fareham. Later I discovered that it was an Atlantic version of LBSC's "Fayette". The boiler and motion were well made but the pipework was poor. The engine was in bare metal without boiler lagging or painting. By chance I learned of the National 2 1/2 inch Gauge Association whose members included the late George Beesley of Dibden Perleu, about 20 minutes drive away. George was a retired toolmaker and a man of great skill and knowledge of metal working. Under his guidance I learned the principles of model steam locomotives and their operation.

In the course of designing a tender I decided to move the whole concept of the model to that of a LNER (formerly GNR) Atlantic locomotive, but with the obvious difference of having Baker's valve gear. Some standard parts such as wheels and bearings were bought from Messrs Kennions and I was fortunate in having the main part of the tender made by the well-known silver smiths, Barker Ell is of Birmingham, for whom my son worked.

On attending meetings of the National 2 1/2 inch Gauge Association I saw that the two basic interests of the members were the building of locomotives and riding behind them on a trolley on ele-





vated tracks. My interest was in the erection of a steam powered model railway in an outdoor setting. It would clearly be advantageous for the locomotive to be controlled by radio.

I bought a quantity of brass track, all of which had been set out on the ground. This

accompanied with my idea of creating a miniature version of the real thing. The layout in my garden consisted partly of track on viaducts and bridges and partly on fine shingle on the ground. Although workable, I now judge the latter part to have been a mistake. All track should be on firm wooden or other rigid surfaces. The rails must present a smooth and even plane to the rolling stock free of lateral and vertical irregularities. Layouts with points and branch lines are particularly suited to a radio controlled model.

The rolling stock consists mainly of model wagons used on Welsh industrial lines for carrying slate. They are unsprung and are sensitive to track irregularities, hence the comments on track quality. They are a convenient base for fit-on variants.