



## Taking the First Steps in Gauge '3'

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We all know the truism: as you get older, the eyesight isn't what it used to be, so you look for the obvious answers. Clearly the most important of these is to look for a larger scale in which to make and run models. But you hesitate.... life seems to pass at a faster rate than you remember, you really will start one day when all those essential jobs have been started (and some even finished!).

So when Alan Marsden took the initiative of inviting G3G members in his locality to make a joint visit to John Tomlinson's open day near Manchester on 26th April, I didn't hesitate to thank him for his kindness and accept. And it has been the catalyst to my making time to actually start modelling again ("Yes, dear, I will finish the decorating soon.") I had been passing the time wondering how my experiences of making OO Gauge (1955 - 1970) and O Gauge (1975 - 2005: intermittent) models would translate to the larger scale and the challenges of building a garden line. Perhaps this visit would provide some answers.

Sunday 26th April turned out to be one of the most enjoyable days that I have had for some time.

### **The following events met my expectations:**

- Gauge '3' trains running on a large track are an even more satisfying sight than small layouts or exhibition stands
- G3S members are sociable, hospitable, helpful and friendly
- A well-kept garden with an integrated railway is a magnificent sight, and Beryl & John Tomlinson's is superb

### **Things I didn't expect:**

- The sound of a live steam locomotive pulling away with a rake of coaches is hypnotic, yet Alan Marsden's Jubilee 4-6-0, Roger Mills' GER S56 0-4-4T and John Tomlinson's G&SWR 51 Class 2-6-0 all had their own characteristics.
- G3 live steam locomotives don't like any but the mildest gradients - around 1 in 100 maximum, I'm told. My own garden rises 4 feet in 250, so I now know not to follow the ground from one end to the other.
- Radio control of a battery-powered electric locomotive is much more enjoyable than track-powered control. In this case, it was Alan Marsden's J94 0-6-0T (GRS kit), which handles superbly at low speeds.
- Removable but quickly-erected trestles to support the line as it curves round near the house are the answer to keeping the garden open for others to enjoy when you're not running (or to mow the lawn!)
- The Brandbright Del-Air/Easy-Air pneumatic control of points (described by John in the March newsletter) is unobtrusive and reliable over long distances.
- G3 members are prolific tea-drinkers.



I now have no excuses for not starting to build rolling stock and to make a start on track construction. I have the GRS Terrier and O2 kits, plus a rake of LSWR coaches and a few wagons to begin with. One item of experience I gained from shunting and reversing in 'O' Gauge was that rolling stock runs with fewest derailments when each item in a train is approximately the same weight. Do members have any advice on average wagon and coach weights, please?

My first visit to an open day was an experience that I recommend to all new members.



**Alan Marsdens J94 Austerity 0-6-0 with Roger Mills GE coach set at John Tomlinson's Timperley layout.**  
**Below, the train passes over the "quickly removable" trestles mentioned in Ted Sadler's report.**

