

The 2016 National Garden Railway Show



by GARETH JONES

The National Garden Railway show took place on 9th April at Peterborough Arena and attracted more visitors than ever before: nearly 100 traders and 17 layouts of different shapes and sizes. GARETH JONES provides a round up of key highlights.

Photos by Gareth Jones, Rod Nipper, James Finister, Robin Leach and Steve Dean.

It really does seem like only yesterday that I was reporting from my first show as *16mm Today* editor back in issue 154 last year, but already here I am ready to report on a very successful 2016 National Garden Railway Show.

Flying visit

My time at Peterborough began on the Thursday before the show, having flown into Stansted airport from Guernsey and having driven the relatively short distance up to Peterborough Arena.

The next day it was up at 6am to have breakfast and be ready to be at the Peterborough Arena for 7.30am. Driving into the showground it was good to see Dougal, the visiting locomotive from the Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway had already arrived, and was waiting on the back of a lorry ready to be unloaded.

Very early into the day a small army of ready and willing volunteers had arrived and had commenced the work needed to get the hall ready for the arrival of exhibitors and traders. Some time was spent by myself and Alan Regan erecting various signage on the approach to the showground – it's surprising how long a task like this takes.

Smoothly does it

By early afternoon the first of the traders had arrived and had commenced building their various stalls. Layouts were also going up at the same time and all went very smoothly so that we were all able to get off back to the hotel for a well earned drink and evening meal well before 7pm. So all in all a great effort by everybody. Many thanks everyone for your help.



The day dawns

If there's one thing the organisers of the National Garden Railway Show want to happen on the day, it's for people to enjoy themselves. Judging by the many smiles on a good many faces that I saw, I think this objective was achieved. Certainly there was a lot to see at this year's show,



and the trick was to pack it all in. Thanks to Suzanne Bradley's super efforts in putting together this year's show guide, it was possible to get an early heads up on who was at the Show and where they were in the hall. Two information stands were also available to handle queries and we also had a number of floor walkers ▶

Photos on this page:

Heading photo: A panoramic shot of the show hall taken from one of the 'pods' overlooking the hall. It shows just how busy the show gets at peak times, yet there is still plenty of room to circulate.

Above left: Live-steam shunting action on the Hambleden Valley Railway.
Above Right: Admiring glances as a coal fired Darjeeling B Class locomotive and its train pass by on the Indian Hill Railway layout, which also won the best layout award.

in fetching pink hi-viz jackets with the words "Can I help?" on the back.

One visitor from mid Wales, more from across the globe

The Association was very pleased to welcome Dougal and his team of helpers from the Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway. Early on Saturday morning a good many volunteers were seen giving Dougal a last minute polish. Dougal has been out of service for a while as the loco needs some boiler repairs – visits such as this and the trip last August to the Shrewsbury rally helps keep Dougal in the public eye as well as providing vital publicity for the railway.

As well as our honoured guest from mid Wales, we were also pleased to welcome visitors from across the globe - from North America (Canada and the USA), South Africa, Germany and Norway to name a few. Many thanks to you all for making the journey - the show really has a wide reach and has gained international acclaim.

A worthy award winner

The Lamb Trophy is an annual award made to a member who has provided a significant contribution to the Association. This year the Board was thrilled to hand over the trophy to Andrew Charman, who of course you will all know for his long tenure as editor of *SMT*. Well done Andrew – a most worthy recipient of the award.

Creative creations

The annual Model of the Year (MOTY) competition had an extremely strong set of entries this year. This year your editor was invited to be one of the judges – a task that both excited me and scared me to death at the same time! I have to say that the standards of the models I judged were amazingly high, so it was a tricky job to pick winners, but myself and Nigel Town worked well as a team, and I hope we came up with the right decisions in the end! You can see the winning MOTY entries elsewhere in this edition of *SMT*. Highly commended entries will follow in the August issue, Many thanks to Richard Huss for doing such a super job of organising the competition this year.

2017 Show

2017 will mark the 40th Anniversary of the Association. Please do look out for some special attractions at the show. Why not put the date in your diary now – it's Saturday 8th April, 2017. ■



Photos on this page:

Top: W&LLR Dougal was the star attraction at the show. (Photo by Gareth Jones)
Bottom: Association Chairman Alan Regan presents former SMT Editor Andrew Charman with the Lamb Trophy. (Photo by Rod Nipper)

Photos on the opposite page:

- 1 – Our international members didn't just visit the show they also got involved with the stewarding. Left to right are Canadians Peter Foley and Jeff Young enjoying a well-earned rest with Nick Fisher from the USA. (Photo by Steve Dean).
- 2 – Board member Brian Dominic entertains a young visitor to the show with his Flagg Fluorspar layout. (Photo by Rod Nipper)
- 3 – Dave Halfpenny manning the information stand. (Photo by Gareth Jones)
- 4 – Gareth 'Modular' Jones on the modular layout. (Photo by Gareth Jones)
- 5 – Gareth 'Editor' Jones and Nigel Town hard at work judging entries in the Model of the Year Competition. (Photo James Finister)
- 6 – John Campbell was surrounded by admiring crowds all day long as they watched his working excavators and quarry railway. (Photo by Steve Dean)
- 7 – Carol Regan (Trader Co-ordinator) and Colin Slight (Treasurer) count bus fare takings (Photo by Rod Nipper)
- 8 – The smiling faces on the entrance booths. (Photo by Gareth Jones)
- 9 – The Roundhouse gang of (L-R) Christopher Lee (Itchy), Chris Loxey and Harri Harrison. (Photo Steve Dean)
- 10 – Paul Kidger on the left (Chief Steward and Hall Layout) and Laurence Smith (Show Director). (Photo by Gareth Jones)

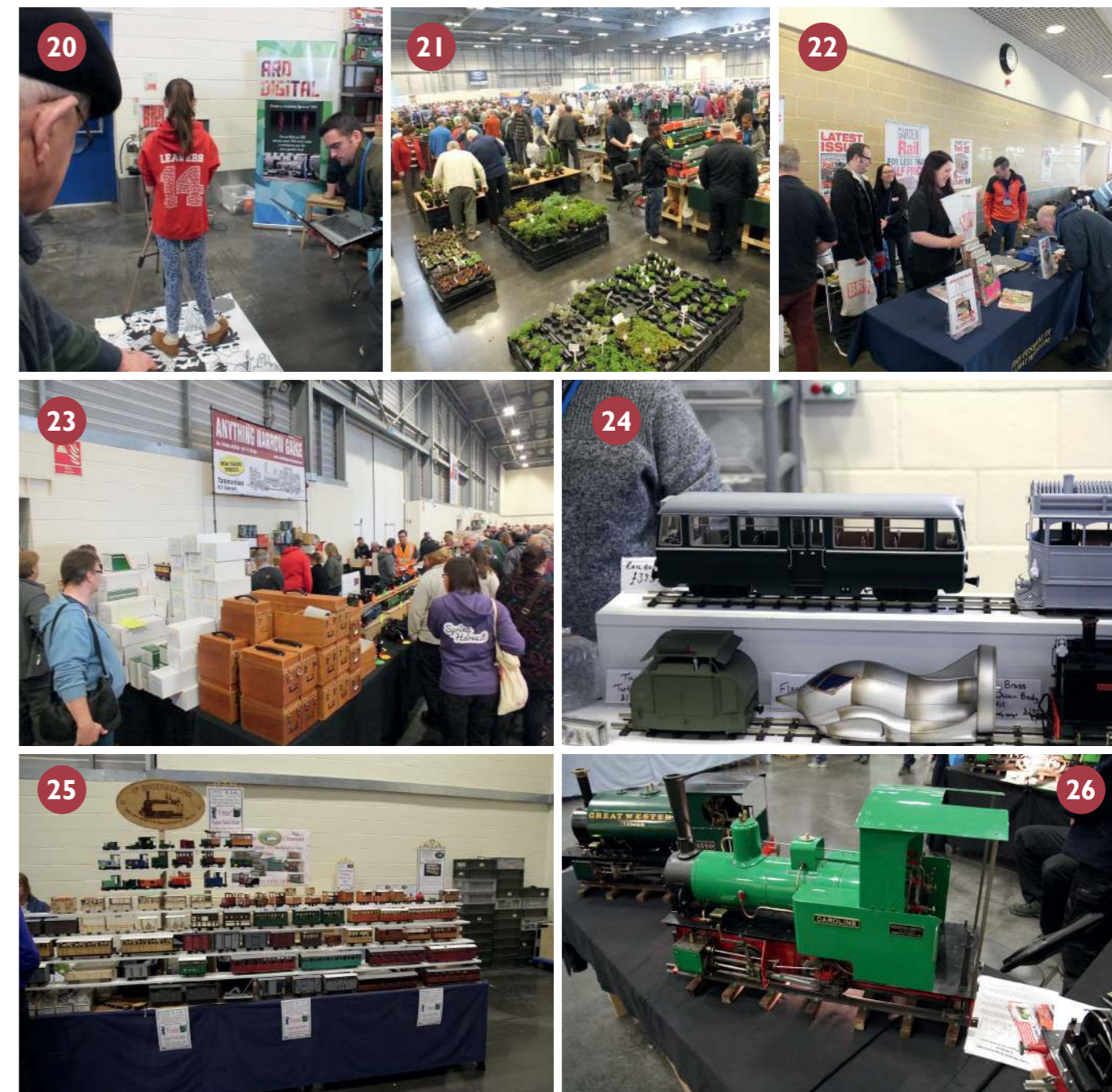
Faces at the show





Scenes from the layouts at the Show

Scenes from the traders at the Show



Photos on the opposite page:

- 11 – Holidaymakers on a day out on the Dingle Branch (Huddersfield Railway Modellers. (Photo by James Finister)
- 12 – Corner piece from the Modular layout - can you spot the miniature railway? (Photo by Gareth Jones)
- 13 – Impressive scale speed live-steam shunting operations in progress on the Hambleden Valley Railway. (Photo by Gareth Jones)
- 14 – Scene from Dixon Green (photo by Gareth Jones).
- 15 – Young visitors and their minders enjoying the joys of garden railways on the Whiteleaf Light Railway. (Photo by Robin Leach)
- 16 – Darjeeling train crew pause for the cameras on the Indian Hill Railway. (Photo by Steve Dean)
- 17 – Goods train on the Glendreich railway from the West of Scotland Group. (Photo by Gareth Jones)
- 18 – Some of the detail in Campbell's quarry. (Photo by Steve Dean)

Photos on this page:

- 20 – 3D scanning in progress. (Photo by Rod Nipper)
- 21 – Garden railway plants for sale from Bodiam Nursery. (Photo by Rod Nipper)
- 22 – Membership renewals and Garden Rail subscriptions at the Warners stand. (Photo by Rod Nipper)
- 23 – Anything Narrow Gauge stand. (Photo by Rod Nipper)
- 24 – Swift Sixteen stand. (Photo by Gareth Jones)
- 25 – IP Engineering stand. (Photo by Gareth Jones)
- 26 – 5" gauge locomotives from Polly Model Engineering Limited. (Photo by Gareth Jones)

There's more from Peterborough in this issue – do take a look at the Model of the Year competition winners on pages 40 and 41.