

About 2½" Gauge

This gauge was popularised in the 1930s by L. (Curly) Lawrence who wrote under the pseudonym "LBSC" in the MODEL ENGINEER magazine, and also had a weekly page in ENGLISH MECHANICS (later MECHANICS), as well as occasional articles in many other publications. He described in detail the building of over 40 locomotive designs, many of which were what we today call "freelance", but incorporated features he reckoned the railway companies should have had!

In the 1920s the scale used was "half-inch" to one foot, but this was changed to 17/32" to 1ft which had the benefit of creating slightly bigger engines.

Curly's famous locomotive was *Ayesha*, a London, Brighton & South Coast Railway atlantic. But the design that is probably the most prolific is *Fayette*, a freelance pacific, with his favourite Baker valve gear.

In 1934 he described in detail how to build the "Sarawak Trophy" engine - for which a silver casket would be presented as a prize for the best engine built to 'Live Steam' specifications. The engine was called *Dyak*, a 2-6-0, and a great many have been built. There is a tremendous variety to the designs published, ranging from *Small Bass* (an 0-4-0T) to *Austere Ada* (the WD 2-8-0). In fact, Curly described 3 more 2-8-0s - *Lady Kitty* (a

GWR 47xx), "WD" (LMS 8F) and the *US Austereity* (the wartime S160). Probably the oddest two were *Caterpillar*, a 4-12-2, and *Ugly Duckling*, a diesel outline 0-6-0.

Locomotives can be large or small, standard or narrow gauge, from a diminutive 0-4-0T to a massive Beyer-Garratt - and can be strong enough to haul its driver and several passengers as well.

Several new 2½" gauge locomotive designs have been published during the last 25 years - such as Don Young's *Elaine/Sir Ironside*, Paul Wiesel/Derek Collin's *Flying Scotsman* and Martin Evans' *Eagle*, *Black Five* and *Nigel Minor*. Recently, the drawings and construction notes for a revised version of LBSC's famous *Ayesha* were serialised in THE MODEL ENGINEER magazine.

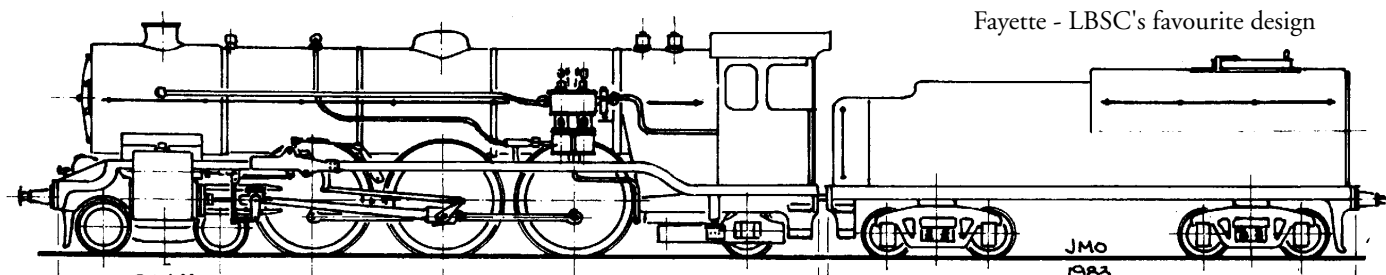
2½" gauge locomotives are generally inexpensive to build using an average 3½" centre lathe and normal workshop tools. Most can be carried easily by one person as an average locomotive weighs under 50 lbs (22 kgs) and can haul a train load of 220 lbs (100 kgs) at 5 mph.

The track needs only a minimum radius of curvature of 18ft if any sort of fast running is to be accomplished. However, it is usual to provide at least a 3rd rail (3½" gauge) or 3rd and 4th rails (5" gauge) to provide better stability for the driver's trolley. Even with the trend today for smaller gardens, a reasonable "test" track is quite feasible.

Not all model engineering society tracks have our gauge installed, but many do, and several more are being built or extended. Some of the tracks that have held rallies for 2½" gauge locos are :-

- Borrowash (Erewash Valley, Derbyshire)
- Brighouse & Halifax
- Bromsgrove
- Cheltenham
- Chesterfield
- Coalville (NWLeics)
- Frimley (Surrey)
- Fylde (Wirral area)
- Hatfield (North London)
- Leatherhead (Surrey)
- Reading
- Romney Marsh (Kent)
- Rugby
- Stafford
- Staines (Middlesex)
- Stockport
- Sutton (Surrey)
- Sutton Coldfield (Little Hay)
- Tingley (West Riding)
- Warrington
- Willaston (South Cheshire)
- Worthing (Sussex)
- Yeovil (Somerset)
- York City

Although 2½" gauge is not favoured as it was in the 1930s, it has been growing again in popularity and has much to offer.



Publications from the Association

STEAM CHEST

Our Journal is produced four times a year and contains technical, contemporary and archive material, as well as all the latest membership and Association news. During the summer months, illustrated reports of our rallies and get-togethers are included. The free members adverts, wants and help required is popular.

SERVICES

This handy reference gives details of the services available to members :- Castings & Transfers, Plans, Drawings & Article-reprints and boolets, back-issues of Steam Chest. Also included are the recommended track, wheel and buffer dimensions.

TRACK LOCATIONS

Details of all the Model Engineering Society's tracks with 2½" gauge rails.

LOCO DESIGNS

Three booklets (with a fourth in preparation) detailing all the locomotive designs ever published.

TOBY

Instructions plus detail drawings for an easy-to-build freelance narrow gauge 0-4-2T locomotive. Designed by member Steve Eaton.

FAYETTE

Information on how to correct the errors in the original description and drawings of this popular locomotive. Essential reading for all who are building one or have acquired one.

DESIGNING YOUR OWN LOCOMOTIVE

LBSC's instructions reprinted from English Mechanics magazine.

SUCCESSFUL RUNNING & MAINTENANCE

LBSC's instructions reprinted from English Mechanics magazine.

HOW TO REPAIR, OVERHAUL AND RECONDITION A MINIATURE LOCOMOTIVE

More useful info from LBSC.

About the Association

Formed in 1975, the **National 2½" Gauge Association** aims to both promote and encourage the building and running of locomotives in this gauge by providing its members with a source of information (archive and contemporary), designs, castings and transfers.

We have details of over **100 published** locomotive designs, including article reprints for most.

The Association has a vast range of castings available and has just acquired the huge range of high quality wheel castings from Alan Headech. More are being produced for various other new and old designs.

Rallies are organised each year in different parts of the country to enable members to have a reasonable chance of getting to one near them to either run their locomotives or watch others. Also, Get-togethers in the South-East and Midlands are held each year.

We also have an extensive Library with over 400 drawing sheets, some of which can be sold where he hold the copyright or have an agreement with the owners.

Membership of the Association

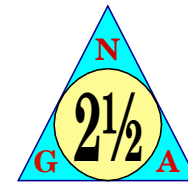
This Association currently has over 400 members, reflecting the great support for the 2½" gauge. Lists and booklets are given to members on joining.

Membership Rates for 2012:

Annual:

Ordinary member	£15
Junior member	£10
EEC member supplement *	£6
RoW member supplement *	£10
Joining Fee :	£3

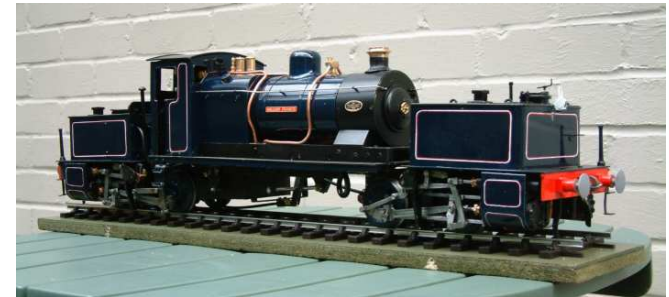
(Note * : mailings to overseas members are sent airmail)



2012

The National 2½" Gauge Association

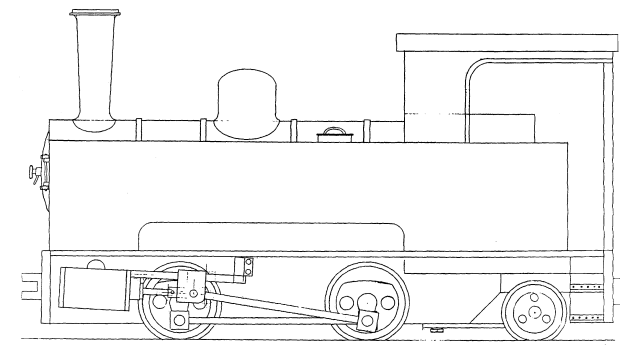
keeping the spirit of the past alive and looking to the future



[the photo shows Dick Allen's standard gauge Garratt "William Francis", built to Peter Wardle's drawings]

**Find out more about the Association
and join it !**

website =<http://www.n25ga.org.uk>



Toby - Steve Eaton's "Narrow Gauge" design