

16mm Track Construction – Phase One

The motivation for a 16mm outdoor track stemmed from the fact that the indoor track built in 2011 was not a practical solution as a 'turn-up and run' facility, which took a considerable amount of time to set up, assuming a suitable location was available along with the need to be able to access the school.

The committee recognised this short coming and after suitable lobbying, allocated a sizable sum of money to construct an outdoor track. There then followed a protracted period of meetings of small groups generating lots of diagrams and notes on methods of construction but a reluctance to set the building process in motion. In late 2014 the committee let it be known that if the funds set aside for the new facility was not taken up in early 2015, they would be reallocated. This galvanised the 16mm members into action and following a meeting held in November, an action plan was drawn up and despite another lull in activity a small group decided action was needed and set about finally building the track.

The desire by some members to have the track go through the small garden area was resisted on the grounds of the level of maintenance that would follow. The decision was to go for an oval-ish track set inside the small loop of the ground level track and weave as necessary around the trees and bushes that were there. The plan was for a track of around 39m in length with the 32mm track on the outside and 45mm on the inside. The construction technique used was 110mm soil pipes filled and set into a concrete base. A timber framework was fabricated on the posts, with the roofing battens laid on top to form the trackbed. An ambitious 5 weekend build schedule was proposed but many doubted it could be done especially as most members were usually only on site for 3 hours on a Saturday morning. A few optimists believed it was just an issue of organisation.

Construction began on 21st February 2015 with the first Saturday being a flurry of activity and set the tone for the rest of the build, with no protracted discussions about the route, position of posts or how deep holes should be. The strong turnout also allowed for self-forming groups to establish route surveyors, hole diggers and bush-clearers amongst the skill sets.



Surveying the site

A small group of members communicated during the week to resolve any potential problems with the work being scheduled for the upcoming Saturday. Great efficiency was achieved as the little teams became expert at various tasks. Holes were dug in the pre-marked locations; post insertion technique optimised, leading to rapid progress being made with production line efficiency. Members could see progress and through good communication knew what tasks they had to undertake when arriving on site.



Team work as the structure is built



Nearly there with the battens

The same team working ethic continued as we moved into the woodworking phase. The sounds of busy chopsaws rung out across the site, and very quickly the trackbed started to take shape. By the close of the 4th Saturday the trackbed was completed and the first sections of track were beginning to be laid. The club was amazed and immensely proud of the speed at which the structure had gone up with some doubters finally accepting that the schedule was achievable.

The final stage was completed on the 5th Saturday as the two tracks were finally completed.



The completed oval

On Saturday 28th March 2015 the track was formally declared open.



The official opening saw a grand turnout of locos



The Track is finally up and running