

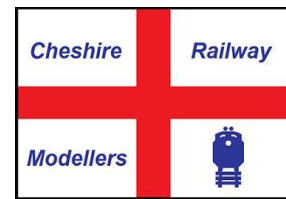


# Piepesenam Mine

(Hemlock Estate Railways)

## A Gn15 model railway

By Richard Brumpton



### The beginning

I have been an avid armchair modeller for a number of years. I first started to build a layout in 1985, but that attempt was sidelined when I became interested in computers and the early internet. Time passed and life took its course, I moved to Scotland, met Pam, got married, had twin daughters and eventually, we moved back down to Yorkshire.

For reasons unknown, the model railway bug returned, but this time I decided to actually model something. With planning permission granted by Pam, I embarked on an N gauge layout, joined a club and went to a number of model shows. Whilst the N gauge layout took shape, I found the size of the layout (10 foot long) hampered progress as I had to erect it each time I wanted to work on it.

While browsing the internet at Christmas 2006, I stumbled on a number of sites promoting Gn15. This led me to [www.gn15.info](http://www.gn15.info), the Gn15 forum and as they say the rest is history!

### A slow start

Having decided that Gn15 was the scale for me, I came up with a number of track plans and ideas for a small layout. Then family life, summer holidays and decorating put a stop to that! In December 2007 after a year of false starts, I decided that I would build a Gn15 layout – I draw a new plan, worked out a list of required stock and set a monthly budget.

The biggest problem I have had when starting other projects has been having enough stock. So, I decided that the first think I needed to do was place an order for a number of Sidelines excellent kits. This would ensure that I have both plenty of stock that needed a layout to run on, and I would have enough “non-layout” jobs to do (painting etc) for times when the baseboard had to be hidden away so the spare room could become a bedroom again.

### The idea

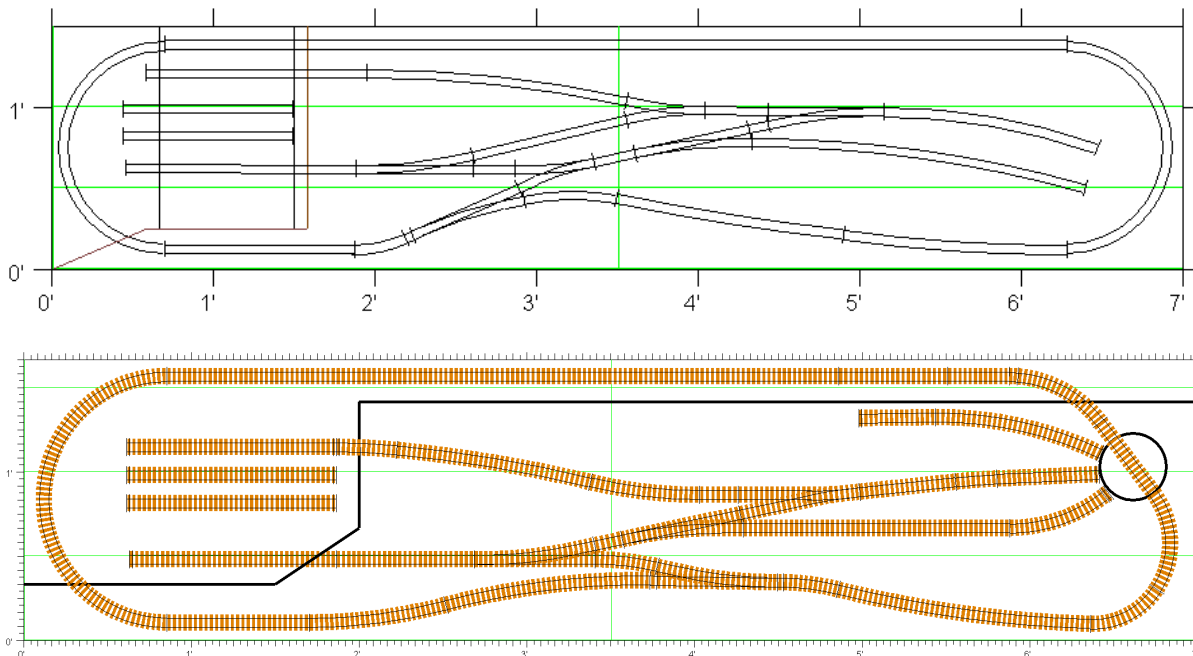
The theme of the layout will be an old mine on the Hemlock Estate (somewhere in England) that has been taken over by a company developing a secret diet food - using that well known mineral "Piepesenam" that has been found in the old mine workings. However, to ensure that the competition doesn't find out about the mine, the estate continues to operate a small holding/farm shop, growing and selling all manner of organic vegetables.

The next few pages have a log of the monthly progress of the layout, which is due to make its public debut at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cheshire Railway Modellers exhibition on January 2009 – That gives me 12 months to have it ready!

## January 2008

The track plan has been drawn and redrawn. The current working plan is designed to fit on a 7 foot by 20 inch baseboard, that I have had professionally made.

I have two basic ideas for the track plan.



The overall layout has a continuous run, so that I can just sit and watch the trains go by, but within the loop will be an old mine working, with shunting and general activities. The area to the left is the fiddle yard.

I am not sure which plan to go with at the moment. I like the look of the second one, but not sure how this will fit with the turntable (size is just a guess) and it could be difficult to operate the turntable as it will be 6 foot away from the fiddle yard and controllers!

I have printed out both to full size copy and as soon as my Sidelines stock arrives, I will test it to ensure it fits. My biggest problem with changing to Gn15 is getting to grips with the size! I ordered some O-16.5 points and when they arrived, I couldn't get over how much bigger they are to N scale ones!

## February 2008

February has been month of sorting my boxes of N gauge stuff. All the stock/track has been sold but I have kept hold of my controllers, scenic bits and my odds-and-ends box.

A visit to the Lincoln Garden Railway show on the 23<sup>rd</sup> has produced a box full of Sidelines stock – I ordered it earlier in the month and arranged with Steve Bennett to pick it up at the show. The evening has now been spent building most of the wagons and half building the first loco, a Gnat. Followed by an hour of trying to remove super-glue from my fingers and our new kitchen table!

## March 2008

March has seen the fleet increase in size. The locomotive fleet now includes a Gnat, a Wasp and a Flea. The current thoughts on locomotive movements of the estate will comprise of:

Flea: Movement of raw Piepesenam and mine rubble to the processing centre

Gnat: Movement of processed Piepesenam to transshipment shed and general heavy haulage on around the estate.

Wasp: Movement of produce to the farm shop and transport of light goods around the estate.

The fleet includes a wide variety of wagons to transport goods around the estate, mine tubs and a selection of wagons for specific purposes (water, fuel, tools etc).

All of the stock will be fitted with DG Couplings to enable shunting and wagon movement to take place without the need of the “big hand from the sky”. The couplings have all been made, most have been blackened, and just need the wire loops fitting – this is the most fiddly part and progress is slow.

*\*\*TIP \*\* Before you build your wagon kits, decide how you are going to couple them – It was no fun drilling/filing slots in kits to fit the couplers – much easier before they are glued!*

Most of the stock has been primed and is either painted or in the progress of being painted. The Flea is primed and ready for spraying – I am not sure what colour to use, but blue is currently the favourite!

### 20<sup>th</sup> March

Another day, another set of stock painted. I've added some hooks (made with paperclips) to my two bulkhead wagons, and fitted chains across the sides – to help keep the load on.

The Gnat has been primed ready for painting – I've got a can of British racing green, so am going to give that a try – not sure how it will turn out but hopefully not too bad. Tomorrows pictures will tell the story!

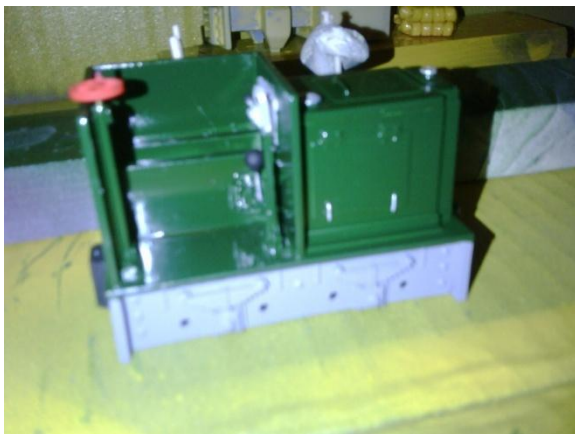
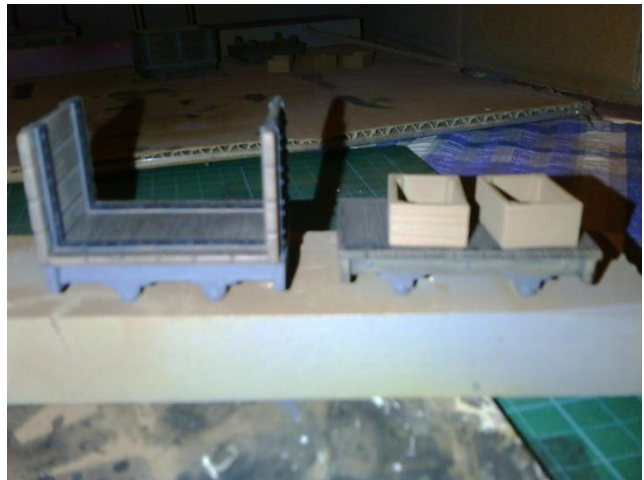
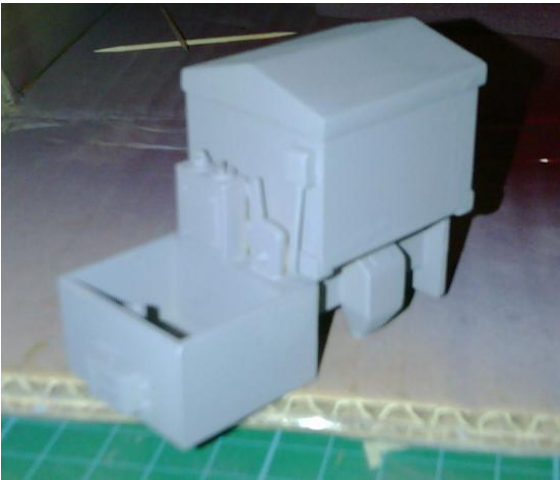
The Wasp is also completed – thanks to a couple of photos from Steve Bennett, I've managed to sort out the gear level that just didn't look right. This will be primed tomorrow for painting on Sunday.

The passenger wagon is now complete. It's painted in a burgundy colour with black under-carriage. It just needs its couplers installing, but the metal black has managed to turn white – I will try again tomorrow.

Finally, my first SLM figure (Jon) is primed in black and has a base wash of thin white applied, ready to paint tomorrow. I am following the instructions from Brian Fayle (<http://www.brifayle.ca/2c.ba.paintlarge.html>) and hope that mine turn out as well as his!

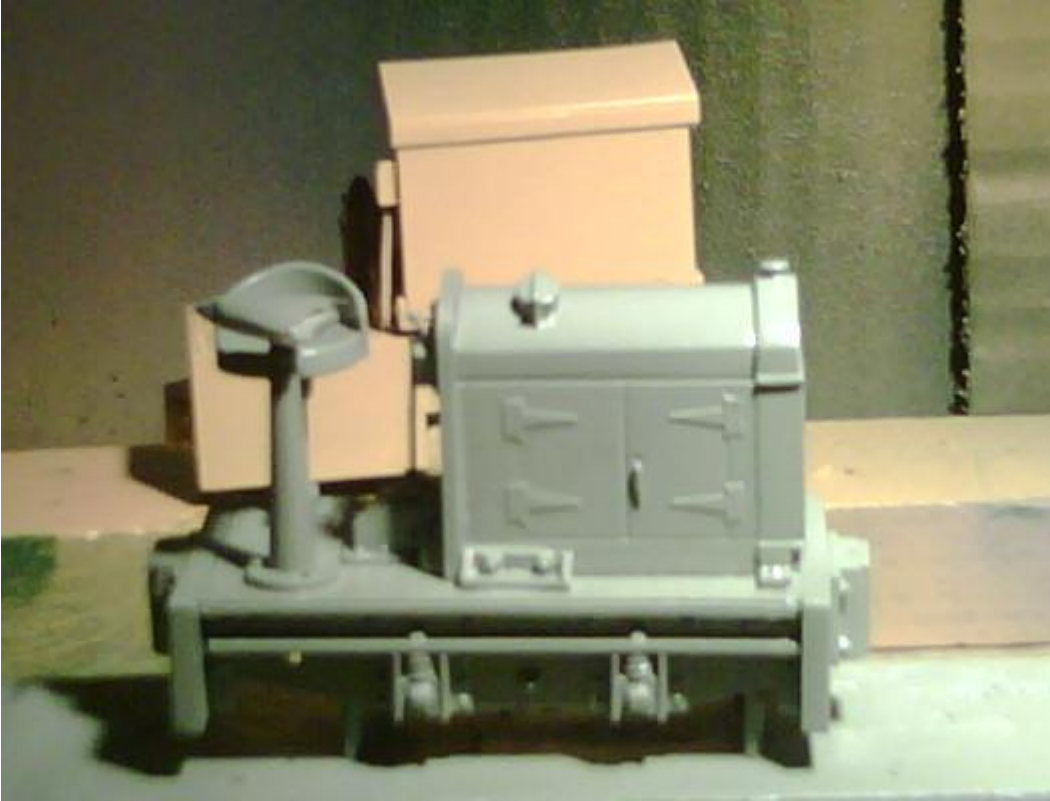
22<sup>nd</sup> March

A few progress shots are below:



27<sup>th</sup> March

Quite a quiet few days, due to easter, work etc etc. However, progress has been made on the Flea and Wasp. They have both been to the paint shop for their first coats and are now waiting for detailing and weathering.



In addition, the 5 mine tubs have been well and truly rusted and weathered – Scenic Rust is a superb product, does what it says on the packet and probably doesn't need to be applied as thickly as I did.



29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> March

I have spent the entire weekend trying to get the wire loops for the DG Couplers constructed. This is using Steve Bennett's method of bending the wire using one single length instead of a brass loop and steel dropper.

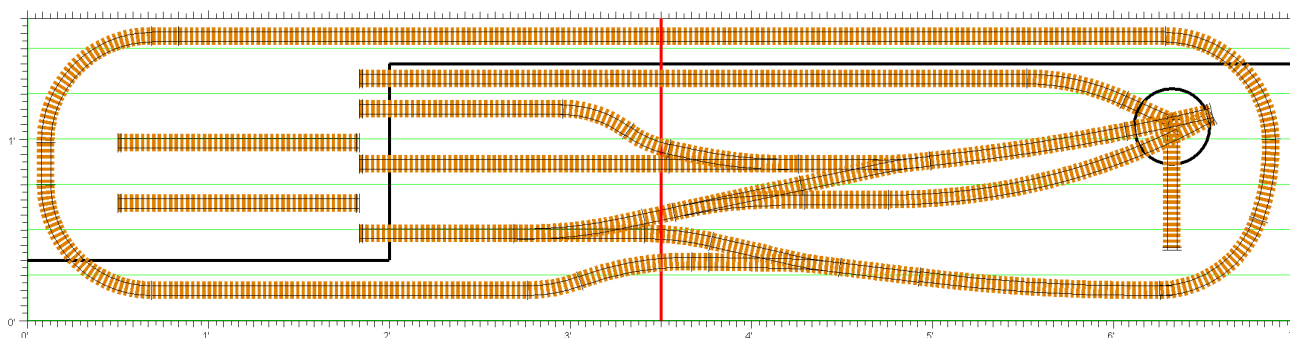
I am really having problems using this method and also the official DG method. You need to have about six pairs of hands and then another couple of pairs just incase. I haven't actually managed to make one that looks and works properly. The main problem is that they keep springing out of shape, or out of the coupling. It's so frustrating, that I have now decided to have a rest from couplings and the stock for a few days and make a few template buildings for the layout.

17<sup>th</sup> May

A well overdue update! Where did April go? Unfortunately for the layout, it was taken up with real work...It was just a hectic month with numerous meetings and a couple of trips away.

Progress has moved forward with tonight seeing the first running of stock on the layout.

The baseboards where picked up from Colin (Blackcat) last week and the track plan was completed:

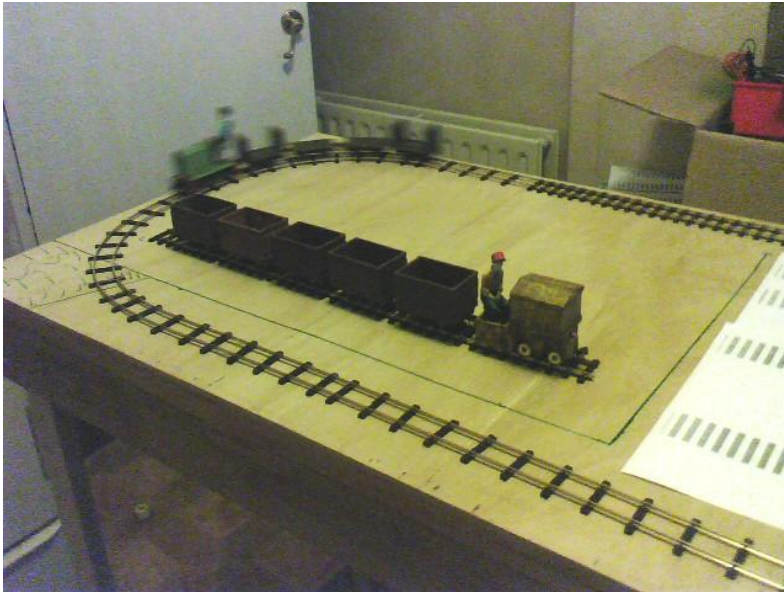


The outer loop is complete:

This is the right hand side:



This is the left hand side. The mine train is sitting in what will become the fiddle yard. This will be operated using cassettes, that are built using copper clad board and rail. They will slide back and forth and also have handles to lift them out completely.



This is probably going to be all the updates for May, as once again I have a lot of real work and little modelling time, except at weekends.

**June 2008**

Coming soon!