
HIGH BALL

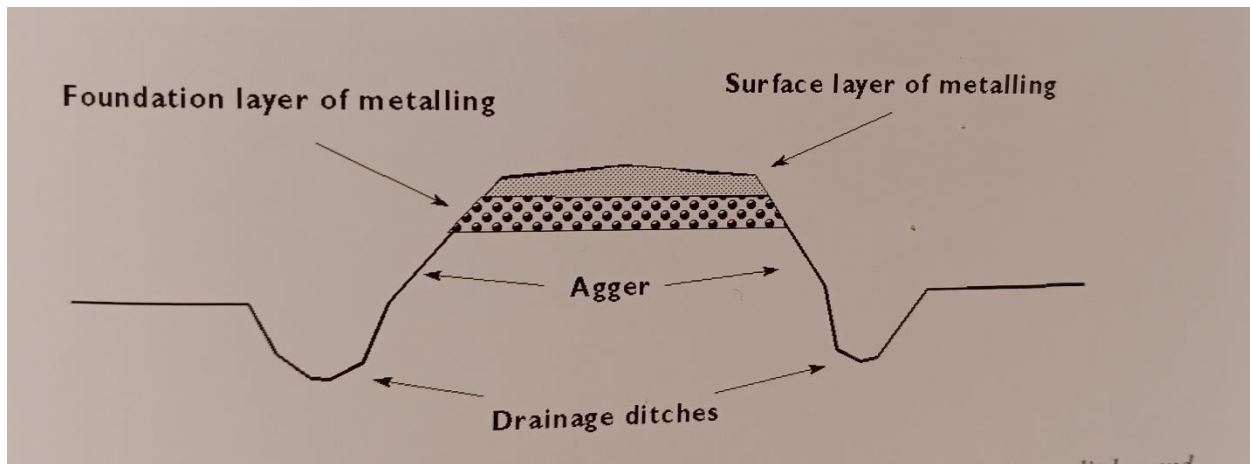
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Origins of Standard Gage

Chances are you have heard stories of railway standard gage (4' 8-1/2") matching the wheel gage Roman war chariots and ruts in Roman built roads in the United Kingdom. The Roman army invaded Britain in the summer of AD 43. Almost immediately the Romans began building a network of roads that rivaled the length of the United Kingdom's modern trunk road system. The Roman roads were built to allow the swift movement of soldiers and supplies. The roads were remarkably straight in order to take the most direct route.

Along with surveying the Romans utilized methods of construction that are still in use today. Camber on the top surface and ditches along the sides promoted drainage. A multilayer construction of varying size aggregates provided a durable surface. The roads were generally built with three to four layers using local materials.



As ditches were excavated the material was often spread along the roadway to provide a raised surface. A foundation layer of varying size stone metalling was cemented in place with sand or lime stone to provide a solid base. Timbers or cut stone were sometimes used in the foundation layer. Next was a surface layer of finer stone and gravel was compacted to provide a road surface. In high traffic areas such as cities the surface layer was covered with cut stone. Most roads however employed a compacted

gravel surface. The surface would be repaired or a new layer compacted as the surface deteriorated. While some researchers point to groves cut into roads in the far east as evidence that chariots set the modern day standard gage, it was coal taxes that influenced the selection of the modern day standard gage. Taxes, a bit of happenstance and engineering evolution.

Coal transported from mine to market in the United Kingdom traveled in chaldron wagons. Historians estimate a chaldron of coal weighed approximately 2,000lbs in the early 1,400's. Coal was taxed by the chaldron and coal producers began gradually increasing the size of a chaldron wagon to minimize tax payments. In 1678 the size of a chaldron was fixed at 51-1/2 long hundred weight (5,880lbs). There were no other standards for chaldron wagons and mines set their own constructions standards. Wagon gages varied 4', 4'-6", 5' and 4'- 8" where standard gage begins.

The Stockton and Darlington is generally credited as the first public railroad to use steam locomotives. Opening in 1825 the Stockton and Darlington was initially laid at 4'- 8" to make use of an abundance of coal wagons available at the collaries near Shildon. George Stevenson chief engineer for the railroad noticed the rail wagons seemed to bind in the curves and widened the gage to 4' 8-1/2". Like the U.S. railway gage varied in the U.K. from 3' (or less) up to 7' on the Great Western. In 1845 the Royal Commission on Railway Gages set "standard gage" at 4' 8-1/2". During testimony before the commission George Stevenson is reported to have testified if he were called to do so he could not provide any explanation for the selection of 4' 8-1/2"

The British standard gage arrived in the U.S. with early locomotives imported from the U.K. Railroad gage in the U.S. varied from 2' to 6' with oddities such as the 3' 9-1/2" Arcata and Mad River. 4' 8-1/2" was selected as standard gage for the transcontinental railroad in 1863. Unification to standard gage occurred in the spring of 1886 when many railroads were regauged almost overnight.

2024 Dues are due.

Annual dues are due. Please send them to Chris Morris 421 N Shelton St. Charlotte MI 48813-1224.

January Business Meeting.

Rod is planning a January business meeting. Date to be determined.

2024 Schedule

Rod is working to clear up some differences in the Turkeyville event schedule received from the Cornwells and what has been published before posting the MMRC schedule for 2024.

MMRC Facebook Page

Facebook Likes and Followers have increased quite a bit in the last 10 months (38% growth rate in Likes, and 52% in Followers). Many people use social media and we want to continue to leverage that. Looking for four volunteers at a minimum who run a train on the MMRC to share more about how their engine works (and some pictures of the internal workings along with the exterior of the engine). Goal is to increase knowledge to the public and retain interest on how trains operate. Would love a steam, electric, gas, hybrid. Contact Tina Pritchard, Membership Secretary if you can help.

For Sale



Retevis RT22 Walkie Talkies Rechargeable Hands Free 2 Way Radios Two-Way Radio(6 Pack) with 6 Way Multi Gang Charger. They use the same frequencies we use at Turkeyville. Only used 3-4 times. Asking \$75. Contact Matt Murawski mattmur86@gmail.com



Steve Morris has a partially completed Little Engines 0-6-0 for sale.

Contact Steve at 517-231-1397



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