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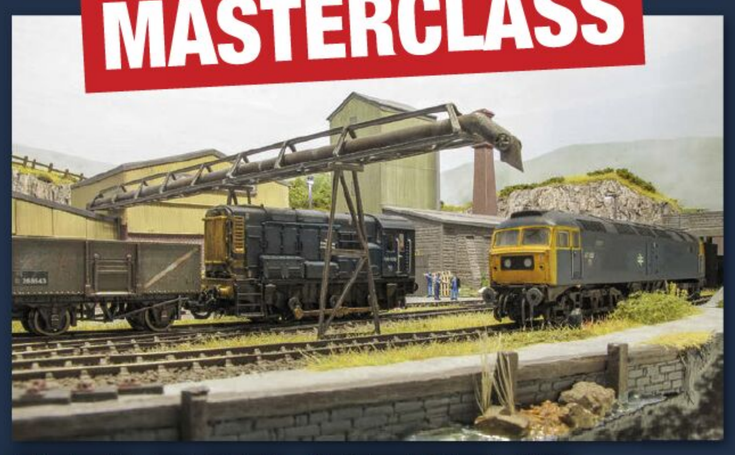
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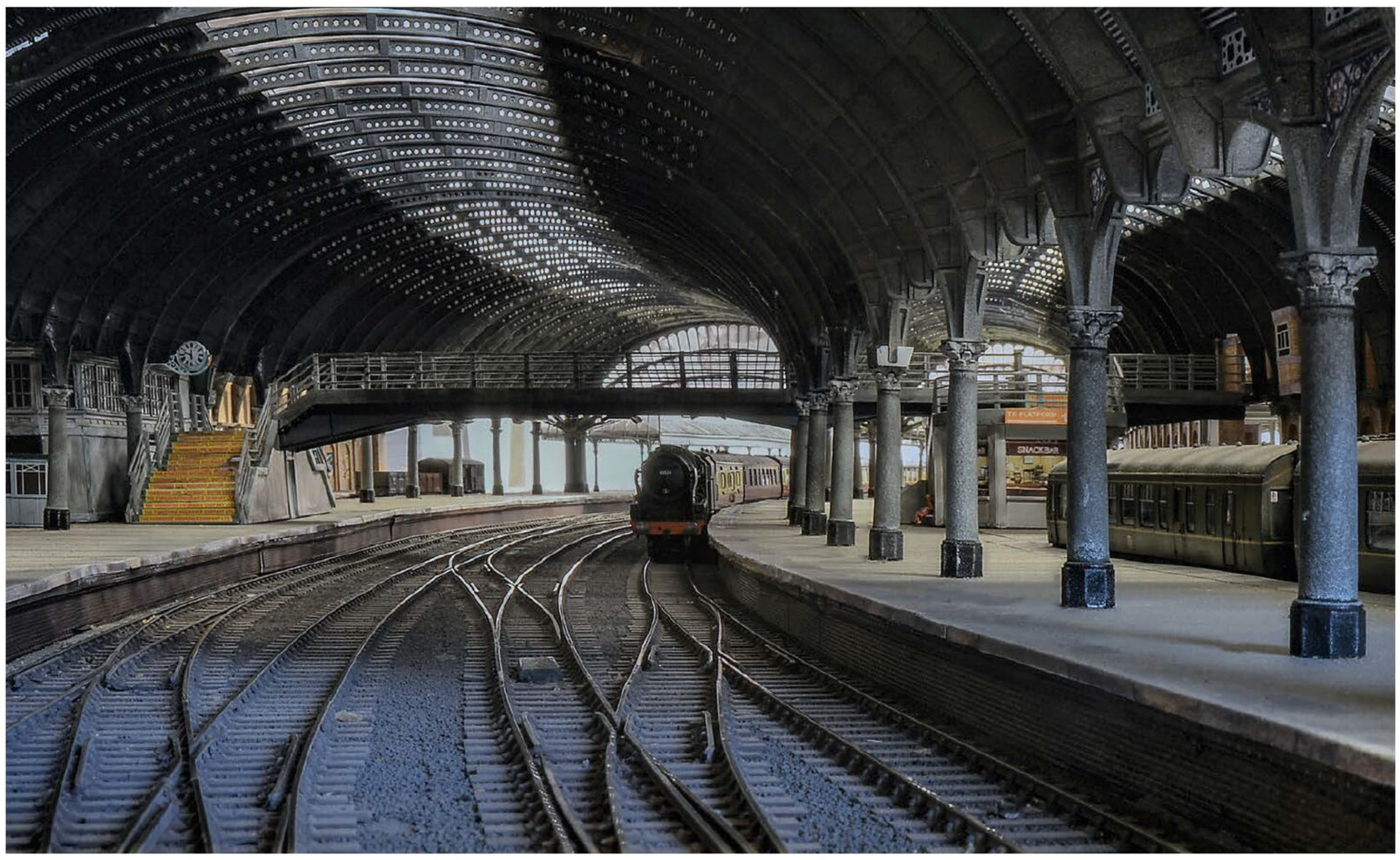


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WELCOME

Proud to be part of the hobby for 30 years!



Welcome to this special taster issue of BRM, a chance for us to show you what this great magazine is all about.

Did you know that we celebrated our 30th anniversary in 2023? 30 whole years of being a cornerstone of this hobby, it's quite a milestone and we enjoyed celebrating by taking a look back over some of the great layouts that have appeared on our pages over the years.

But, like most things in life, it is important to keep pressing forwards and evolving, and BRM has been on quite a revamp over the past six months, with our core aim to keep bringing you the best layouts, the latest new product reviews first, and a helpful dose of modelling advice, 13 times a year. You see, we are more than a magazine, we are here to help you get to the heart of the hobby.

Whether you're an avid reader, occasionally dip-in, or someone who hasn't picked up an issue in quite some time, we hope you enjoy this little slice of the new-look BRM. We are, after all, here for you, in this fantastic hobby of ours, and long may it continue.

If you want more of BRM (and why wouldn't you?), we have great subscription offers available and some fantastic layouts and practical features planned for 2024, make sure you don't miss it!



Our fantastic January issue includes the following great content:

- 4 amazing layouts
- Practical advice and project inspiration
- Historical articles covering the railways we love
- The latest new products reviewed by experts
- All the top news headlines from the model railway world

The Jan issue also includes an exclusive video with almost 2 hours of layouts in action PLUS a FREE issue of Traction magazine!

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See page 38 for more details

LAYOUT | OO | YORK

A Liverpool Exchange to Newcastle express comprising ex-LMS stock pauses at Platform 9 as locomotives are changed. The curvature and sweep of Thomas Prosser's 1877 station and roof, modelled to scale, is readily apparent in this view. Unmistakably York. Platform details remain on the 'to do' list.

CALLING AT YORK

A magnificence in architectural prowess, this work-in-progress by a retired Royal Engineer puts his lifetime accumulation of skills to excellent use.

Words: Giles Baxter **Photography:** Tony Wright

FACTFILE

NAME: York
SCALE/GAUGE: 4mm/OO Finescale
SIZE: 31ft x 26ft
ERA/REGION: BR late 1950s/Early 1960s
LAYOUT TYPE: Continuous loop with run to storage sidings

York has held a fascination for many years, I have no idea why, and for 30 years it was just a pipe dream. That all changed when we found a house with an outbuilding previously converted into a garage, providing a space of 31ft x 26ft.

The few models of York that I have seen in the model press tend to focus on the southern end, with its conventional station throat, but I always felt the northern end, with the divergence of lines to Darlington and to Scarborough over the Ouse Bridge and the Waterworks Crossing, presented a more interesting challenge. It did, however, require a squarish room – which I now had.

Having worked out the bare-bones of the scheme and critically, the radii of the roof spans and the four through lines, I started to build the trackwork for the northern end in late 2019, not really expecting to cut wood for years to come. And then came lockdown, and work proceeded at pace.

'York' is not finished by a long chalk. What you see here is a snapshot of progress to date, and I will send in updates over the years to come.

Making compromises

The layout is set in 1958, for all the usual reasons – the wide range of locomotives and stock that can be run, and the availability both of excellent RTR models, and my own kit-built and occasionally scratch-built stock made over the past 40 years. This rule is applied lightly, to widen the range of 'permissible' stock.

All model railways involve compromise for obvious reasons – skills, space, or time. This was ever the case for 'York'. A true-to-scale model would require a room about 60ft square, so where to take liberties, and where to hold true? By reducing the plan area of the station to

Given the road, the B16/1 traverses the Scarborough Bridge, modelled true to scale as it was in 1958. The bridge has since been rebuilt, and the narrow walkway replaced with a modern, airy, cantilevered structure providing direct access onto the platforms. We had to work hard to deduce the 1958 design from photographs and maps. Peter built the model, and then we were sent a set of engineering drawings! We did get it right. In this diorama, Earlsfield terrace is modelled exactly as it is today, complete with glazed sides to the dormer windows, another York peculiarity.







LEFT: The York Station Hotel in its full glory. A recent visitor took one look, pointed to a top floor window and proclaimed 'But that is room I stayed in last week'. An article on its construction was published in the April 2021 edition of BRM.

about 60% true, the curvature of the station platforms could be modelled to scale, emulating the magnificent sweep of Prosser's iconic 1877 trainshed. Reducing the curvature of the divergent lines at the northern end created the space to include the Scarborough Bridge across the River Ouse, a reasonable representation of the North Loco Yard and North Shed (now the National Railway Museum). It was also necessary to shorten the roof to 6ft (from 10ft at scale), shorten the platforms at the southern end, and omit the small 44ft span to the eastern side of the train shed.

The result is a model station that is recognisably York in terms of its character, architecture and potential operating practice.

A puzzle

My previous layout was built in modules to accommodate the regular house moves that went with military life. While the carpentry involved is more complex, I found installing the trackwork and underboard gubbins to be relatively straightforward because of the ease of access. It would have been impossible for me to have modelled York's track layout working from underneath. At its widest, the station measures some 7ft across; too far to reach a stranded train, clean track, or effect a minor repair. So, the



RIGHT: A classic shot of the mechanical coaling plant installed in 1932, and demolished with some difficulty in 1970. A3 60054 *Prince of Wales* prepares to reverse to load up. This section of the layout is very much 'work in progress.



baseboards are modular, the station hotel, portico and booking office are mounted on a trolley, which slides out, as is the North Shed. The trainshed roof is in removable sections, as is the North Shed roof. 'York' is, in reality, a giant jigsaw puzzle.

The next major challenge was to design a scheme for the main running lines that would allow a number of trains to be run simultaneously on circuits of at least two scale miles. This led to a folded figure of eight configuration, with main lines to the south folding back on themselves and ducking into a tunnel under the Loco Shed before running round the opposite side of the room. The resultant incline alongside the North Loco Yard, and the second bridge over Leeman Road by the yard turntable, are thus solely modelling constructs necessary to make the layout work.

ABOVE: Another superb diorama from Peter showcases the Co-Operative and Garfield Terrace on Leeman Road where it nips back under the main line at the northern end of the Loco Yard.

BELOW: The Up Tees-Tyne Pullman, with Peppercorn A1 60123 *HA Ivatt* in charge, proceeding through the station on the Up main.

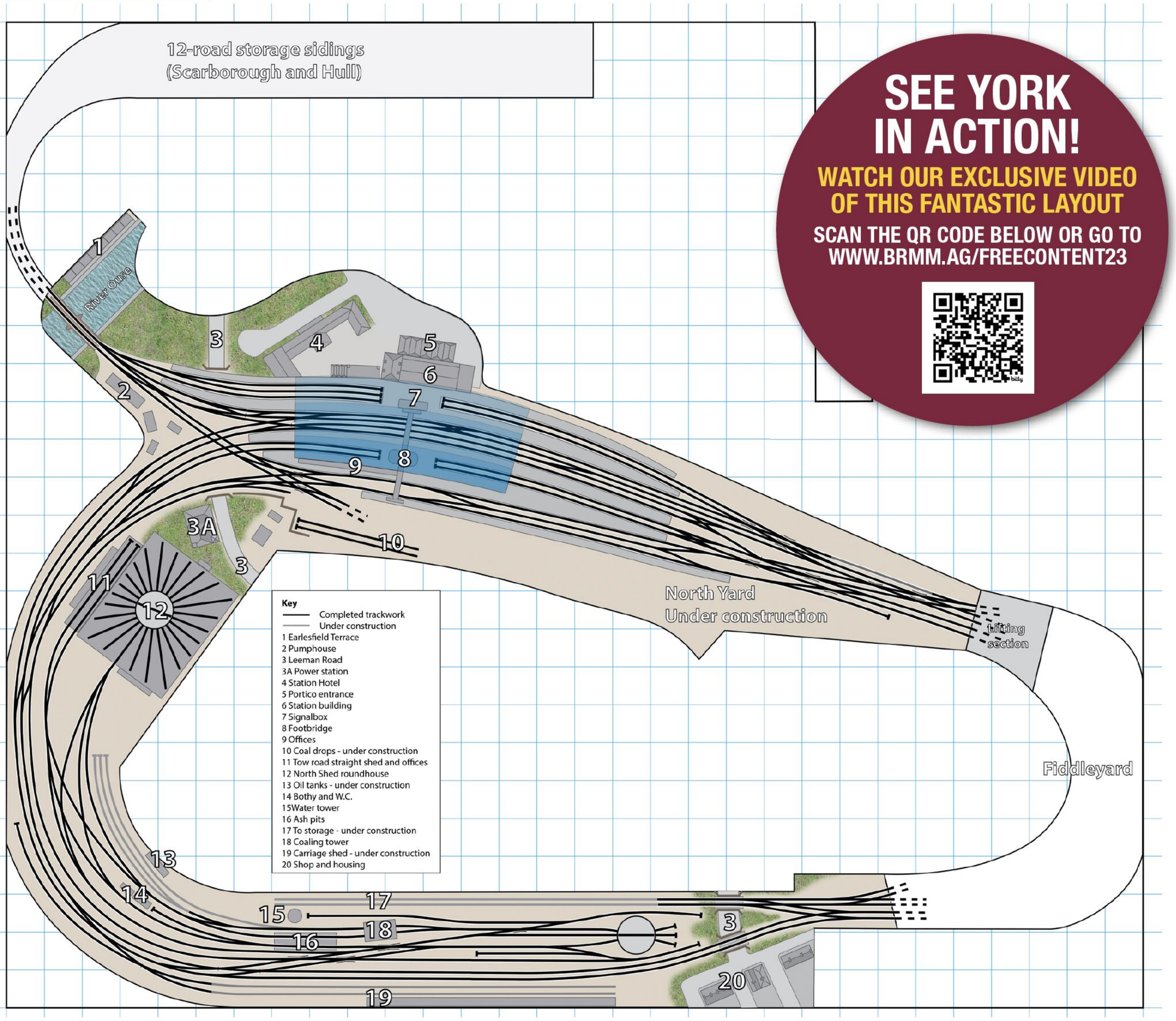
The final challenge, which I ducked, was to find a way to include a reasonable representation of York's extensive goods yards, Holgate Junction, and the locomotive facilities around the South Shed, without overfilling the space. In the event, I settled for a representation of the coal yard and drops, Branches Yard, and a simplified reconnection with the main southbound main lines where Holgate Junction might have been.

Trackwork

The trackwork was to be a key feature, and is as accurate a representation as practical of the layout in 1958, including the Waterworks Crossings. With the exception of one scissors crossing, a few crossovers, and the 44ft spans and associated platforms and lines, the trackplan within the immediate station area is an absolute copy of the original,



TRACKPLAN



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complete with curved single and double slips with switched diamonds. Elsewhere, while the trackplan is of necessity varied, the interconnectivity between all lines has been replicated – essential for changing locomotives and such a feature of operations at York during the steam and early diesel era.

Trackwork in the scenic sections is hand built, using a combination of components from C&L, Exactoscale, and DCC Concepts. Trackwork in the fiddle yards is Peco. Point motors are a combination of DCC Concepts and servos.

Track is built to 16.5mm gauge finescale standards, narrowed to 16.2mm gauge through the curved turnouts and slips typically with 1:9 common crossing angles. In retrospect, I am not sure this has added anything either to appearance or running quality and, if anything, made it harder to achieve running perfection, as the 16.5mm gauge crossings with their slightly wider flangeways are generally more tolerant of imperfections in rolling stock standards, an inevitable fact of life for a large layout maintained by one person.



The Trainshed Roof

As late as October 2020, I had no idea how we would model the trainshed roof so that it would look the part, yet be robust and removable in sections.

I obtained some drawings from Network Rail, which were drawings to support a planning application for alterations to a listed structure, specifically the replacement of the original wooden screens at the northern end with the new arrangement as they are today. When I had worked out how the structure of the real roof functioned in 1958, and why some of the present features are in fact redundant, I decided that the best way to model the roof was to replicate the Victorian engineering of the real one.

We were joined by William Guild, a recently-qualified architect and a whizz with CAD, who, from drawings and photographs, produced the 3D files for the ornate columns that support the roof and platform canopies, the curved longitudinal beams, and the artwork for the transverse beams and end screens with their intricate tracery for laser-cutting in 0.8mm ply. 3D prints came from one of the many suppliers now offering this service, and the laser-cut parts from Julie at York Architectural Modelmaking (how would we manage without her? – no connection, just a satisfied customer). We now had a box of many parts – a kit. I also arranged for the platform sections with holes for the column bases to be laser-cut from 2mm ply, to ensure that we had platforms, column bases and trackwork, laid using setting out curves to the correct radii, perfectly aligned round the curve. Then to Peter, who assembled the kit, added the cladding from aluminium sheet, and applied his wonderful eye for colour.



The roof is 6ft long and just under 3ft wide. The 3D columns and curved longitudinal beams are 3D-printed. The 64 transverse girders, each made up of three laminations, are laser-cut from 0.8mm ply, as are the end screen laminations, girders, and connecting trusses. Just like the real thing. The cladding is made from short aluminium sections faced with hippo tape. Ventilators and walkways are scratch-built in styrene. We decided only to model a short section of the flat ventilators at the southern end, installed after the Luftwaffe raid in 1942, and the sawtooth section at the northern end. We left the rest off to allow light in, and to be able to see inside.

Creating the scene

Come August 2020, work on the baseboards and trackwork was progressing, but I had no idea how to approach the architectural modelling, and the trainshed roof in particular. I had built a number of buildings to a good standard for an earlier layout using techniques published by Geoff Taylor, but I was burying my head in the sand about the realities of doing it myself. I then spotted an article on a new layout in 7mm:1ft scale, 'Welshpool and Llanfair', in which the author, recognising time was not on his side, commissioned Peter Smith of Kirtley models. I came instantly to the same conclusion and a few weeks later Peter started on the first of many architectural gems, the York Station Hotel.

It is the architectural modelling in general, and the roof in particular that catches the eye. Peter has published an article on the hotel (BRM April 2021) and described the construction of the buildings and scenery in his thread on RMweb (York Station in the 1950s).

Most are as accurate and to scale as research and space allowed, for example, the footbridge, the W. H. Smith's with platform signal box above (now a Costa Coffee), the diorama of the Scarborough Bridge as it was in 1958, and the Co-Operative building flanked by terraces. Others are representative, most notably the North Shed, which, if to scale, would be four times the size!

Peter's rate of progress has been remarkable. He has spurred me on and introduced me, instinctively a loner when it comes to model-making, to the modelling community via BRM. I am a convert to Peter's technique of using photographic brick papers, particularly when used on vertical surfaces and roofs, to produce wonderfully representative models quickly, and at great value for money.

Rolling stock

My attention has recently turned to the stock needed for York to fulfil its potential as a working railway. Frankly, two years ago my knowledge of the trains that would have run through and around York was rudimentary. I had a reasonable collection of potentially suitable





RIGHT: A view over the roof and southern platforms to the Scarborough Bridge beyond. The Art Deco signal box was built in 1938, but not commissioned until after the war when the eight mechanical 'boxes around York were replaced in the 1951 re-signalling project. The footbridge extension is also apparent. Today, this extends over platform 16 and 17, not modelled, to provide direct access to the NRM. On the extreme left of this picture, we see the connections from Platforms 14, 15 and the embryonic North York Yard leading over the Waterworks Crossing to the Scarborough Line. DCC makes the wiring of such complex trackwork very straightforward.

stock built up over the years, together with stock that 'just won't do' – at least amongst those who care about or notice these things, and whose ranks I find myself joining. This damascene conversion came about after seeing those wonderful videos of Tony Wright's 'Little Bytham', and when showing 'York' to visitors, most of whom loved the architecture but have no interest in railways, finding myself able to give the 'architectural' tour and talk about what operations might have looked like and why things were the way they were, but not run the trains that would bring these narratives to life.

My existing stock is a mix of RTR, usually weathered and in some way detailed or upgraded and kit-built. I have one scratch-built effort, a B16/1 just to prove to myself that I could. I have about 30 locomotives of various types, mostly 'singletons' with DCC sound and stay-alives. For passenger traffic, I have a good selection of corridor BR Mk. 1s, Thompsons, ex-LMS, and a variety of suburban non-corridor stock for Scarborough excursions, Hull turns, and the Doncaster 'locals'. Add to this a good selection of vans and goods wagons suitable for the period and location. I now have a better understanding of the scene in 1958, and a feel for the gaps, most notably Gresley corridor carriages.

Control and operation

'York' is DCC-controlled. A previous layout using a concept of modular, independently-powered baseboards drove me to DCC, without any appreciation of the operational potential of DCC, or the benefits of sound. But I was hooked on sound after a visit to a friend who had just started down that route.

Then came 'York' and it was clear to me that DCC was also the only way to power up the modular baseboards and complex track formations sensibly and to enable the type of operational movements that



BELOW: Scratch-built B16/1 61441 prepares to depart from Platform 7 and cross the River Ouse with a York to Hull service made up of parcels vans and three non-corridor passenger coaches. Platforms 4 and 5 are not modelled as the short 44' span of the train shed roof has been omitted. The B16 was ubiquitous, with the whole class comprising three variants shedded at York at one time.



LEFT: We had fun producing this one. The roof was removed, camera placed, and set on a 10-second timer for the roof to be replaced. The roof girders were profiled from drawings from the planning application to convert the shed to the National Railway Museum, obtained from York City Council.

I envisaged. Switching is achieved solely via the SPDT switches that are integral to the DCC Concepts point motors, or Frog Juicers. For example, the eight diamond crossings that make the Waterworks Crossings require one pair of frog juicers only, and the polarity of all 16 frogs is always correctly set whichever route through the crossing complex is taken.

I have yet to turn my attention to layout operation. On my own, I can operate the trains as the mood takes. But, on a recent visit to a layout where I was handed the controls, my host selected the routes, and invited me to 'just drive'. It opened my eyes to the fun that can be had when others are involved, whether a single visitor with no experience of DCC, through to a team operating some form of sequence, yet to be conceived or tested. Many, if not most, passenger workings at York in steam days required a change of locomotive, with those

About the modeller

Name: Giles Baxter
Age: 61
Number of years modelling: 54
Name of first layout: Hornby Dublo three-rail. No name!
Favourite era/region: BR 1950s
Favourite locomotive: D20 from an Arthur Kimber kit

Long before I was born, my father built a Hornby Dublo 3 rail layout for my two much older brothers. He was very artistic and had a wonderful eye for scenery and colour, but making it work was not his thing. So, my brothers developed other interests and back into the boxes it all went. On my seventh birthday, he thought he would try it out on me and I was presented with the layout, erected on a 6'x4' board. I was hooked.

Fast forward to 2010. My career in the Royal Engineers was coming to a close, and time to find a house with a room of the size and shape in which a model of York might work.



LEFT: The view inside the shed with the main roof section removed. The turntable is by ADM. The floor, pits and infills are from laminated MDF and laser-cut ply. In 1958, the real shed had two roundhouses and a diesel servicing depot, but could only accommodate six Pacific locomotives. The model has one roundhouse only and a much-reduced servicing depot, but all stalls are capable of taking the longest Pacifics.



LEFT: The portico, foreshortened to five arches from the nine in real life. Weathering was applied enthusiastically here, being the first building of the station itself to be constructed. Contrary to our expectations, colour photos of the time show that the brickwork inside and out was in good, clean condition, so Peter abandoned weathering the brickwork for the rest of the model. The trainshed roof, however, was a different matter, grimy to its core.

taken off heading for the locomotive yard for turning, servicing and preparing for a return working or dumping their fires and heading into the roundhouses, while their replacements stood nearby ready to take over the working. 'York' can accommodate all of that, but it will need a team to execute in any meaningful way. One day...

Final thoughts

There is a long list of candidates for the layout, in rough order of tackling next:

- Finish the North Loco Yard
- Representation of the York North Goods Yard
- Complete the main line circuits and realign the fiddle yards
- An operating sequence for visitors
- Addressing the stock deficiencies
- Signals (but not ground signals)
- Detailing – platform signs, porters trolleys, seats, and people to name a few...

I'd like to finish by thanking Peter Smith and William Guild for their amazing work and architectural skills, to the societies and suppliers, large and small, who are the lifeblood of our hobby, to Tony Wright for his encouragement and wonderful photographs, to the BRM community for their interest, contributions and increasing friendship and finally, to the ever-patient Mrs B. ■

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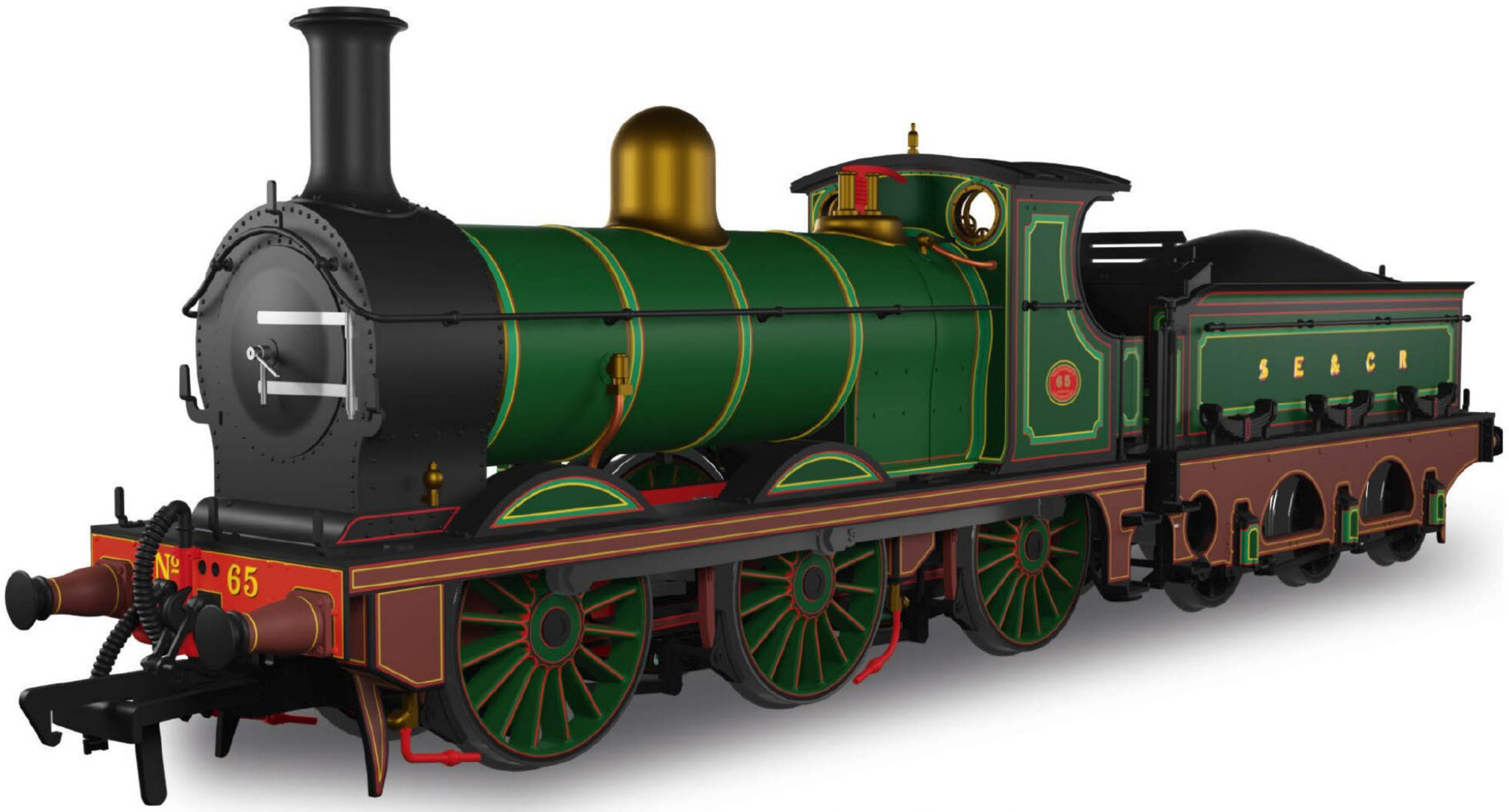
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BELOW: At the northern end of Platform 9, 'Patriot' 45534 is about to be detached from the Liverpool – Newcastle express and replaced with an A3, V2, or B16/3. The lines from Scarborough join the Up and Down main lines via a series of three slips each with switched diamonds - a York speciality it seems. Stock for a York to Hull working waits in platform 7 for its locomotive, typically a B1, B16, or D49 to come off shed. A DMU lurks in Platform 12.



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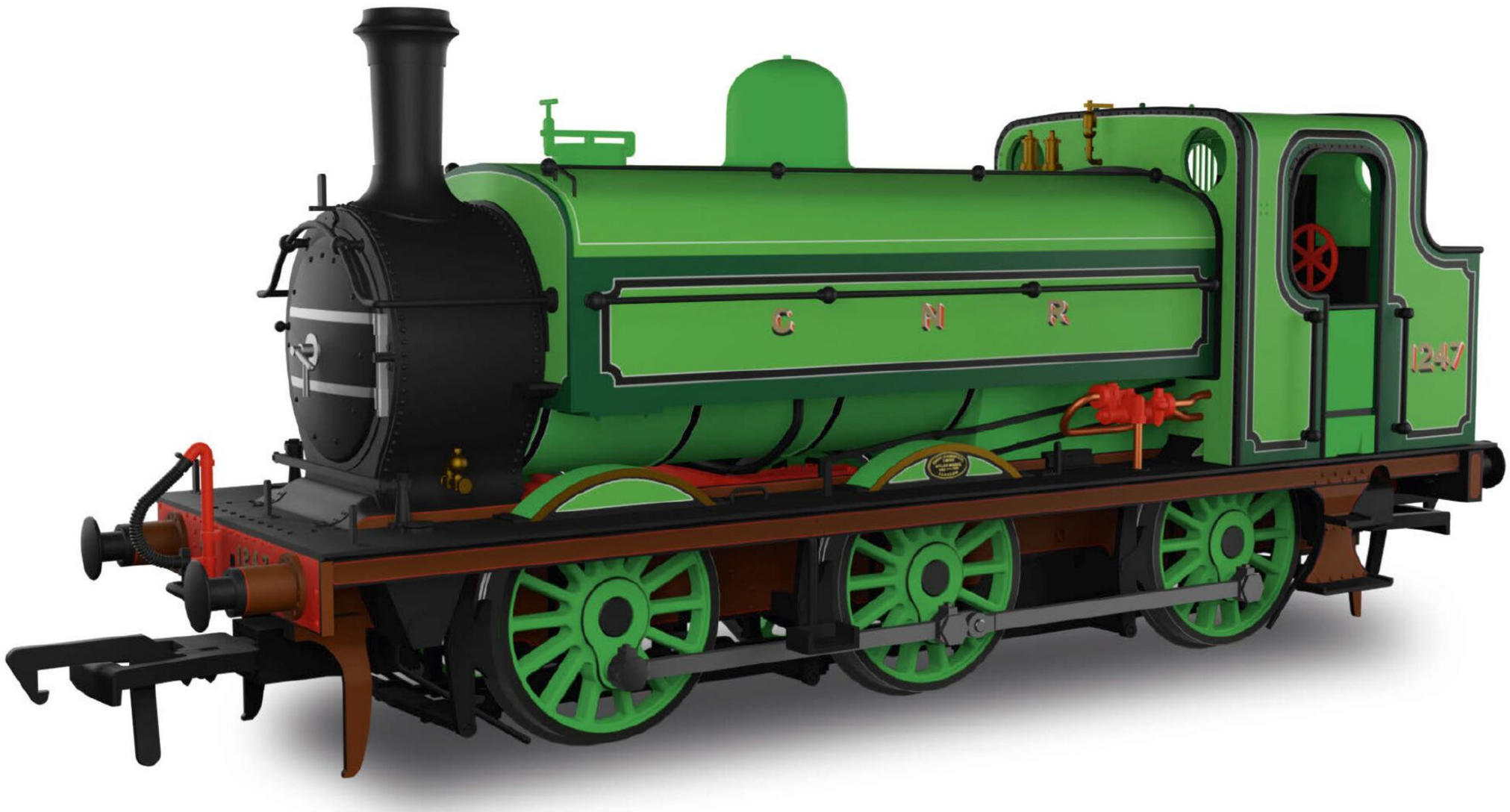


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Michael Russell

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Make sure that your coach is fitted with the battery compartment on the underside, otherwise, you will not be able to fit the lights. Despite what it says on the Maglight box, only Hornby's very latest coaches are suitable, unless you plan on modifications.

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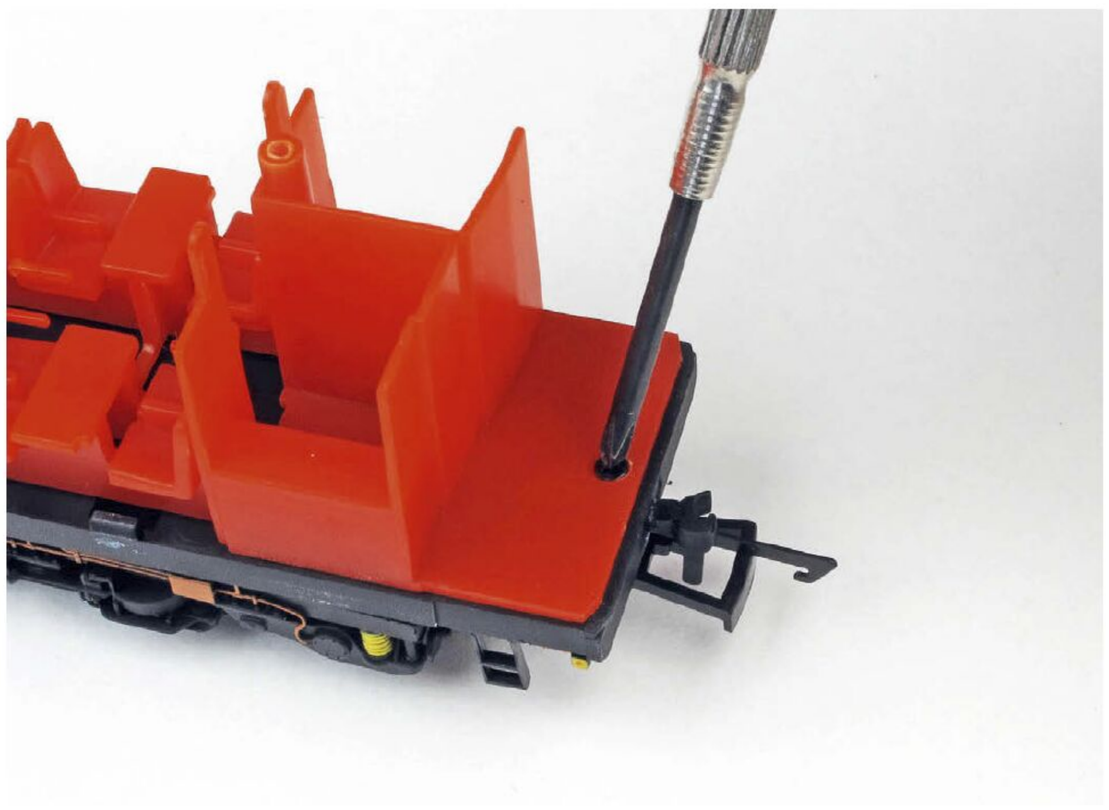
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1 Using a small cross-point screwdriver, remove the LED strip board by undoing the two screws at either end. Keep the screws safe in a container and don't get them mixed up as they do differ between components.



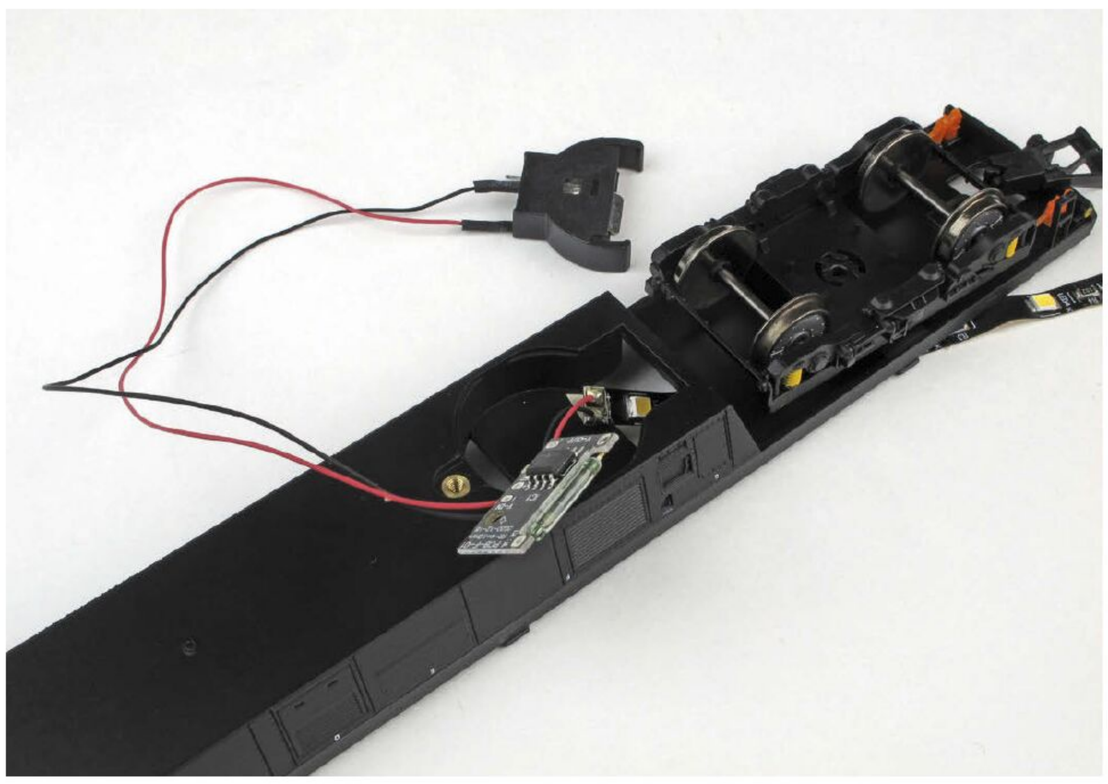
2 Remove the two screws from the seat and floor unit, there is one at either end. Note that these screws differ from the others. Lift the seats away from the chassis and store somewhere safe.



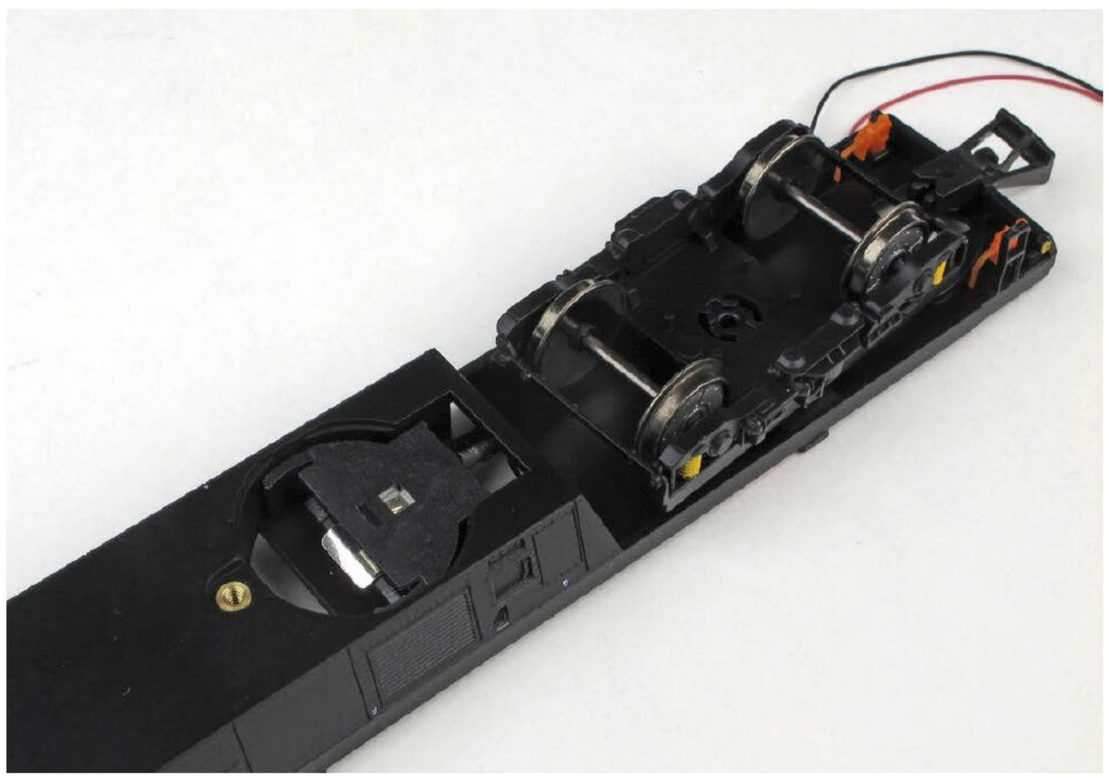
3 The next job on the list is to undo the screw from the battery compartment cover on the underside of the coach, using a small cross-point screwdriver is the best tool for the job.



4 If the cover is a tight fit, turn the coach over and push from the rear with a blunt instrument so as not to damage it. Remove and store the cover and screw safely.

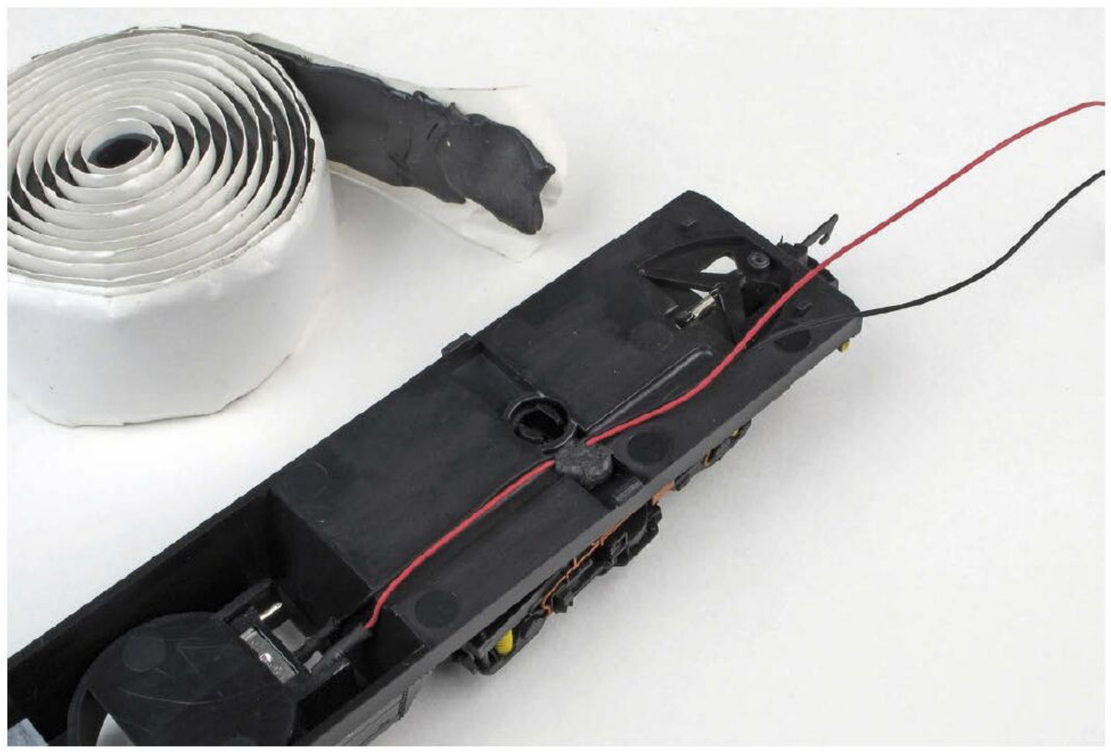


5 Thread the lights in from below through the battery compartment. Be careful when threading the reed switch through. It fits through the opening, but be careful not to damage the wired connections.

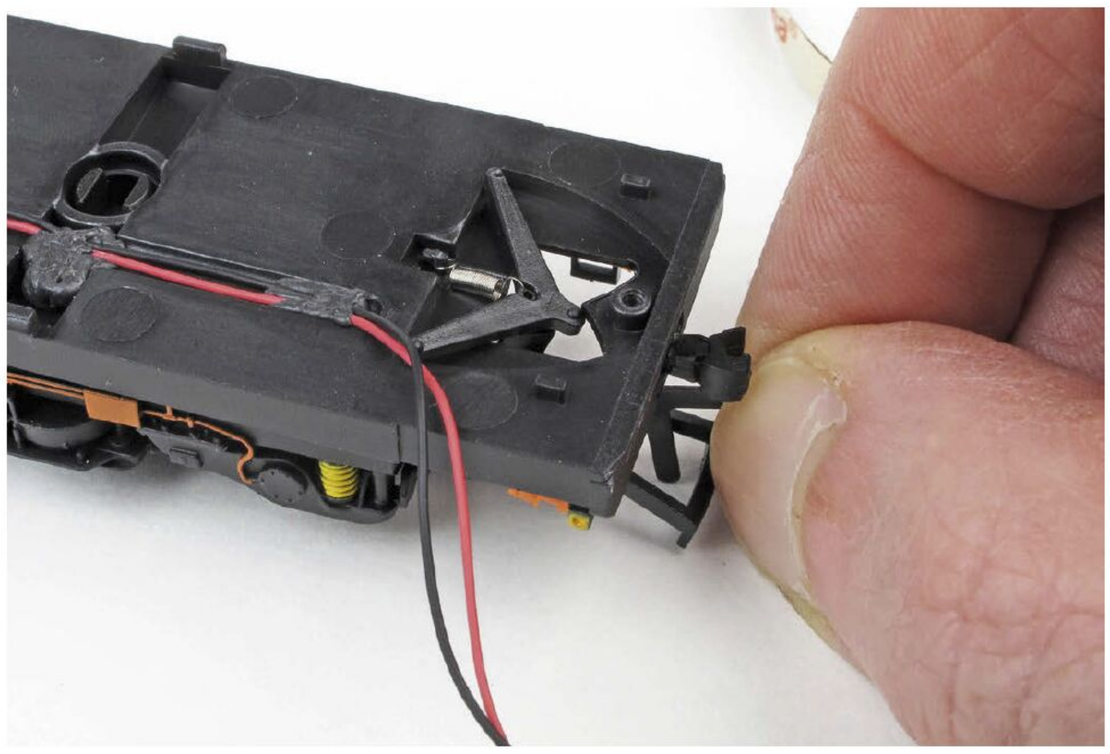


6 Push the battery holder into place. It is better to have the + polarity symbol showing outwards. I corrected mine after taking the photograph!

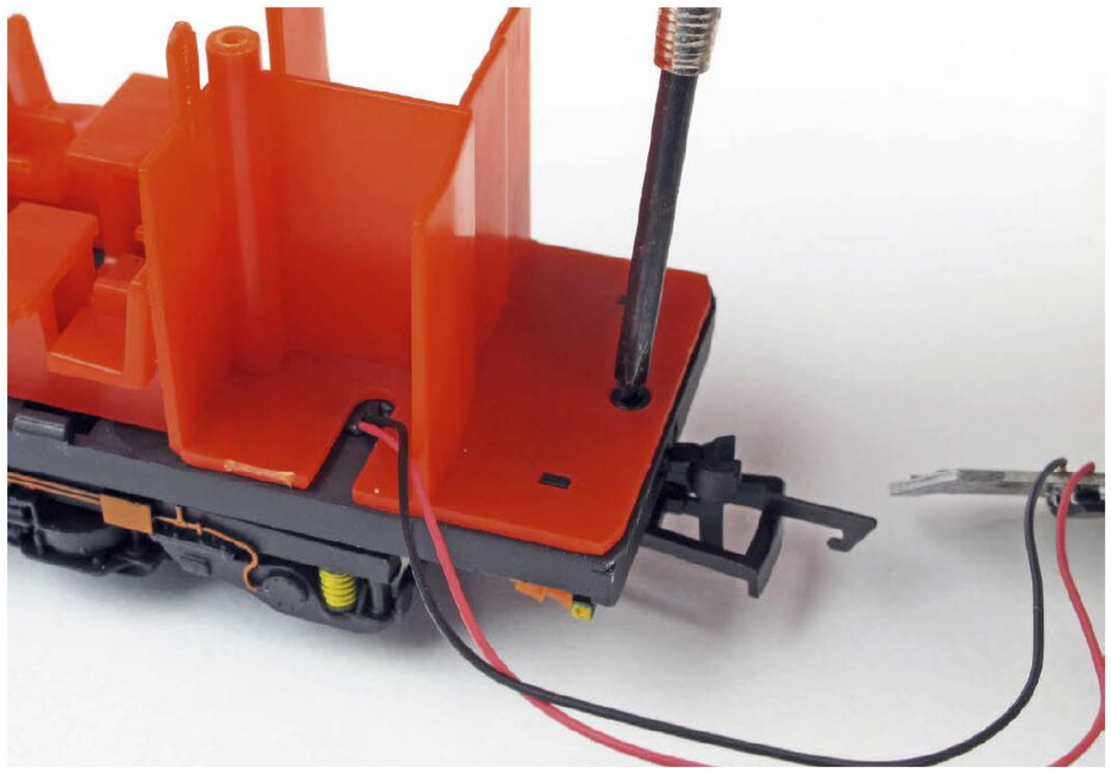
Getting Practical



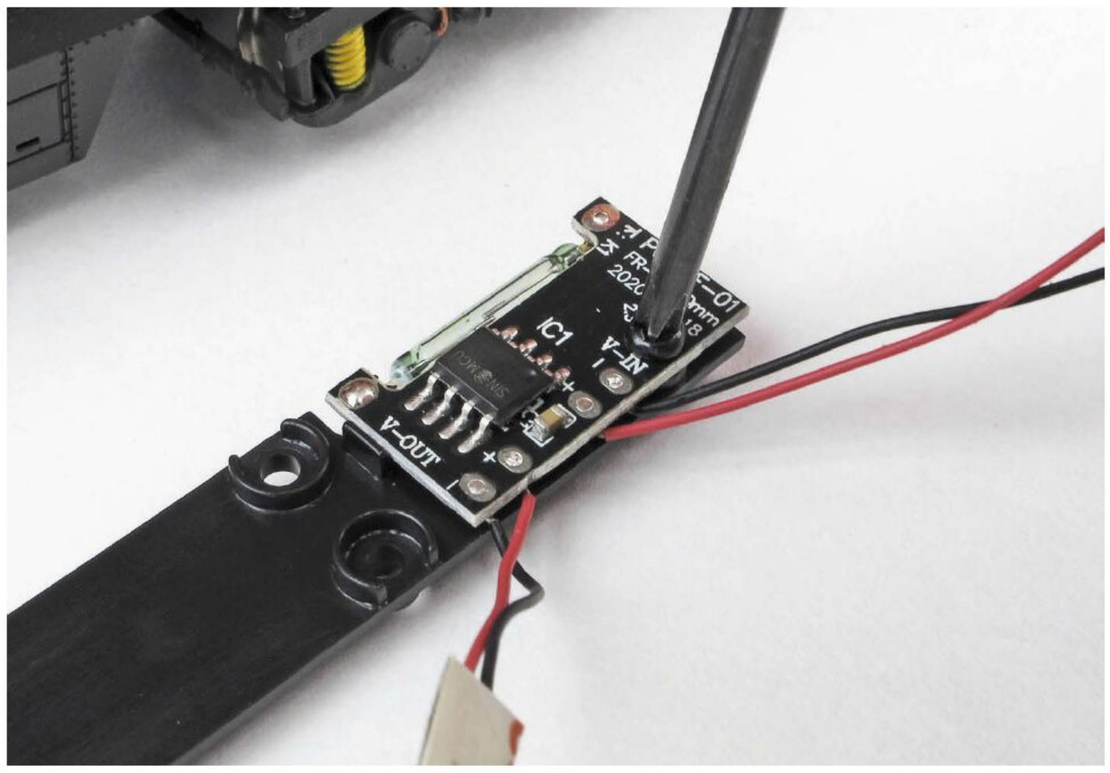
7 Run the wires along the chassis floor and hold in place with small pieces of Blak Tak, ensuring that these stay flush with the chassis.



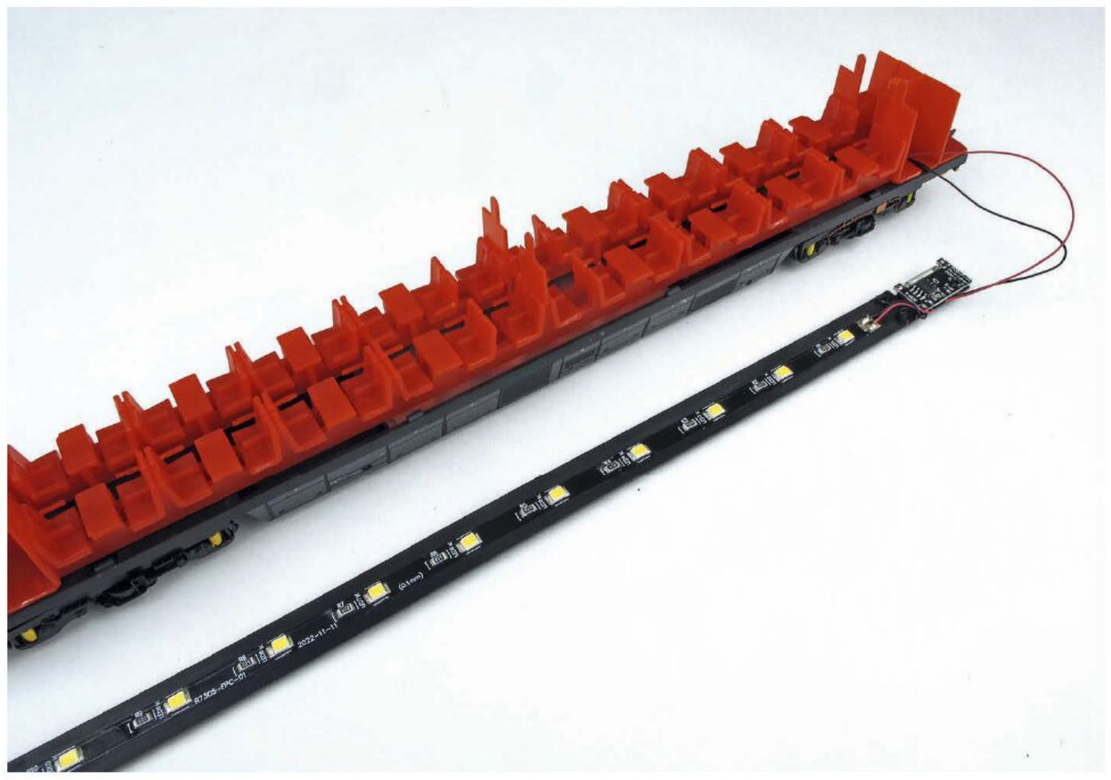
8 Before refitting the floor and seat unit, ensure that the couplings are properly seated in the chassis. All three end points should be above the floor.



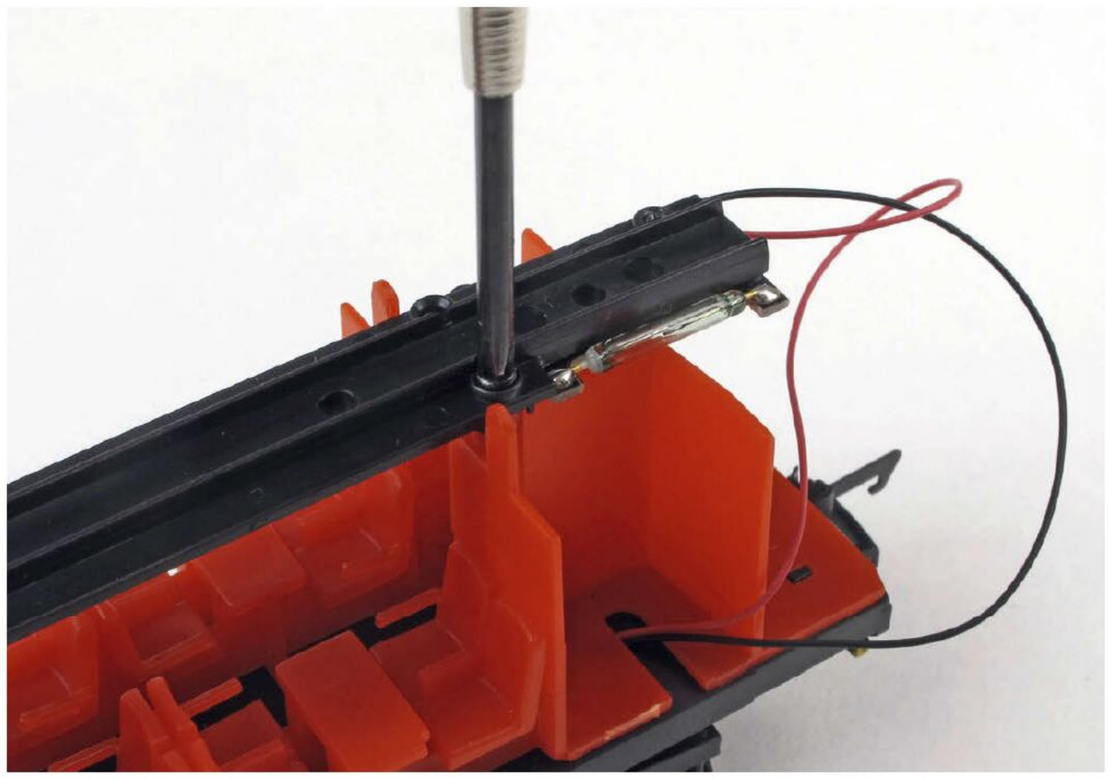
9 Lay the floor and seat unit carefully back in place, ensuring that the cut-out for the wires is at the correct end, and then refit the two screws using a screwdriver.



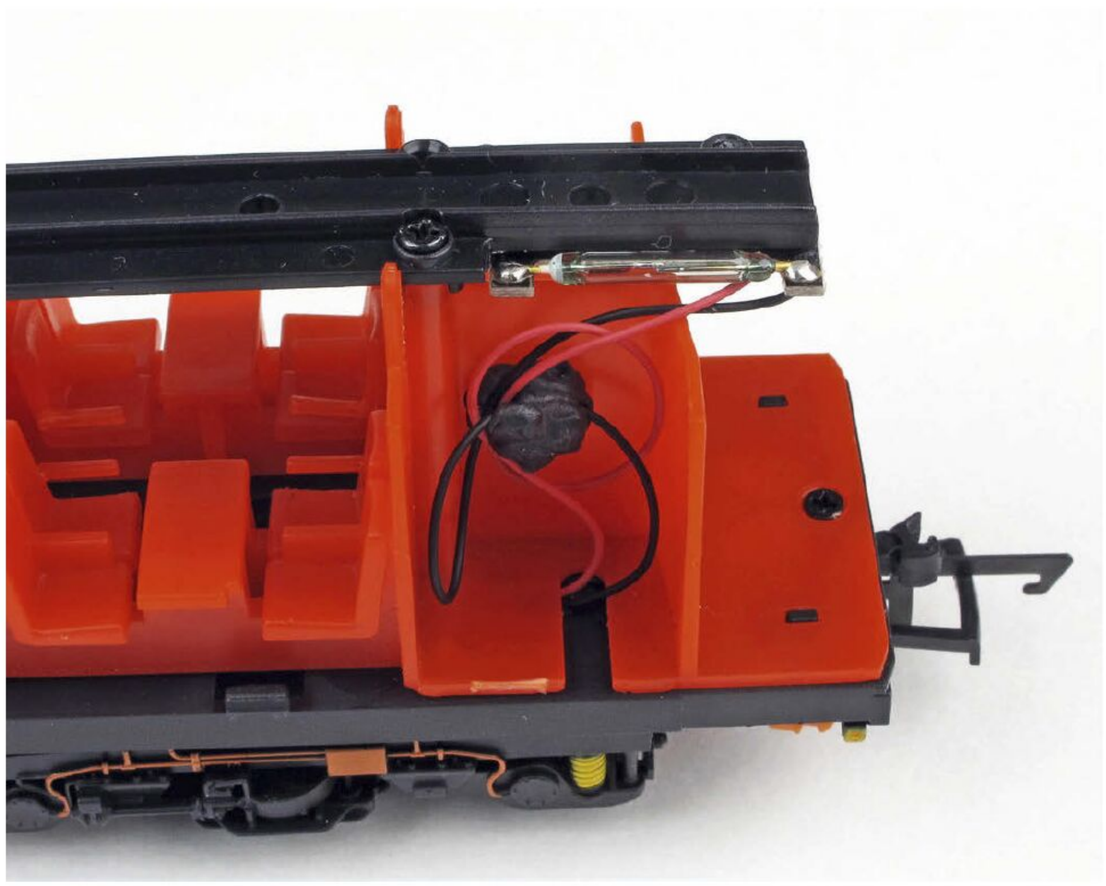
10 You will find that there is a spare screw in the LED strip board. Undo this and use it to fit the reed switch board into place. Ensure that the reed switch fits into the cut-out as shown.



11 Peel the backing from the LED light strip and use this to fix the lights in place down the centre of the LED strip board. Be careful because the adhesive is strong and it is difficult to relocate once it is in place.



12 Refit the LED strip light board on top of the seat units using the two screws you saved during disassembly. Ensure that the lights are facing downwards.



13 Push the wires into the compartment and hold in place with Blak Tak. Note the reed switch located in the cut-out and at the far end of the coach. Push the cell battery into place in the holder. You must get the polarity correct, or the lights won't work.



14 Put the battery compartment cover back in place and refit the screw. The lights can now be turned on or off by passing the supplied magnet longitudinally over the end of the coach where the reed switch is fitted.

CONCLUSION

This is a lovely product. It is easy to fit, works well and looks great once fitted. You will want to do your entire coach fleet once you've tried it. Take your time when fitting the first one. Once you've completed one coach, you'll be able to complete the rest much quicker.

TOP TIP

Fit magnets on the entrance and exits to your storage yards so that the lights are turned on and off automatically with the movement of the stock.

PROTECT YOUR MODELS!

Cleanliness may be next to Godliness, but it leads to better model making, too! When completing a modelling project that involves glazing that is prominent, such as on rolling stock, every little bit of foreign matter will be on view. Exterior contaminates are relatively easy to cure, but anything trapped on the inside involves intrusive work, with the potential for damaging your model during rectification. Of course, it is best not to get any dirt on the interior to start with. So, before you start a project like this, give your workbench a vacuum or brush down, then use a damp sponge on your work surfaces. Of course, this is good practice anyway, especially when switching from scenic or weathering tasks. Ensure that you wash your hands and don't eat or drink while modelling, either.



The Sticky Label Method

There are approximately 500 windows and pieces of glazing on my N gauge layout, 'Chandwell', and they are all different in style, shape, and size. With this many windows to make, and with this much variation in style, I need to use a cheap, quick, but overall effective method to make window frames for my buildings.

I read about the 'Sticky Label Method' three years ago and I've never looked back. It may not be as finescale as etched brass or laser-cut components, and it may not be as 3D-like as a 3D print, but using only a sticky label and a bit of food packaging, it certainly is accessible and affordable.

This step-by-step guide shows the technique for a few simple windows, then talks a little about how you can modify the technique to give more colour, more depth, or more interesting non-rectangular frames.

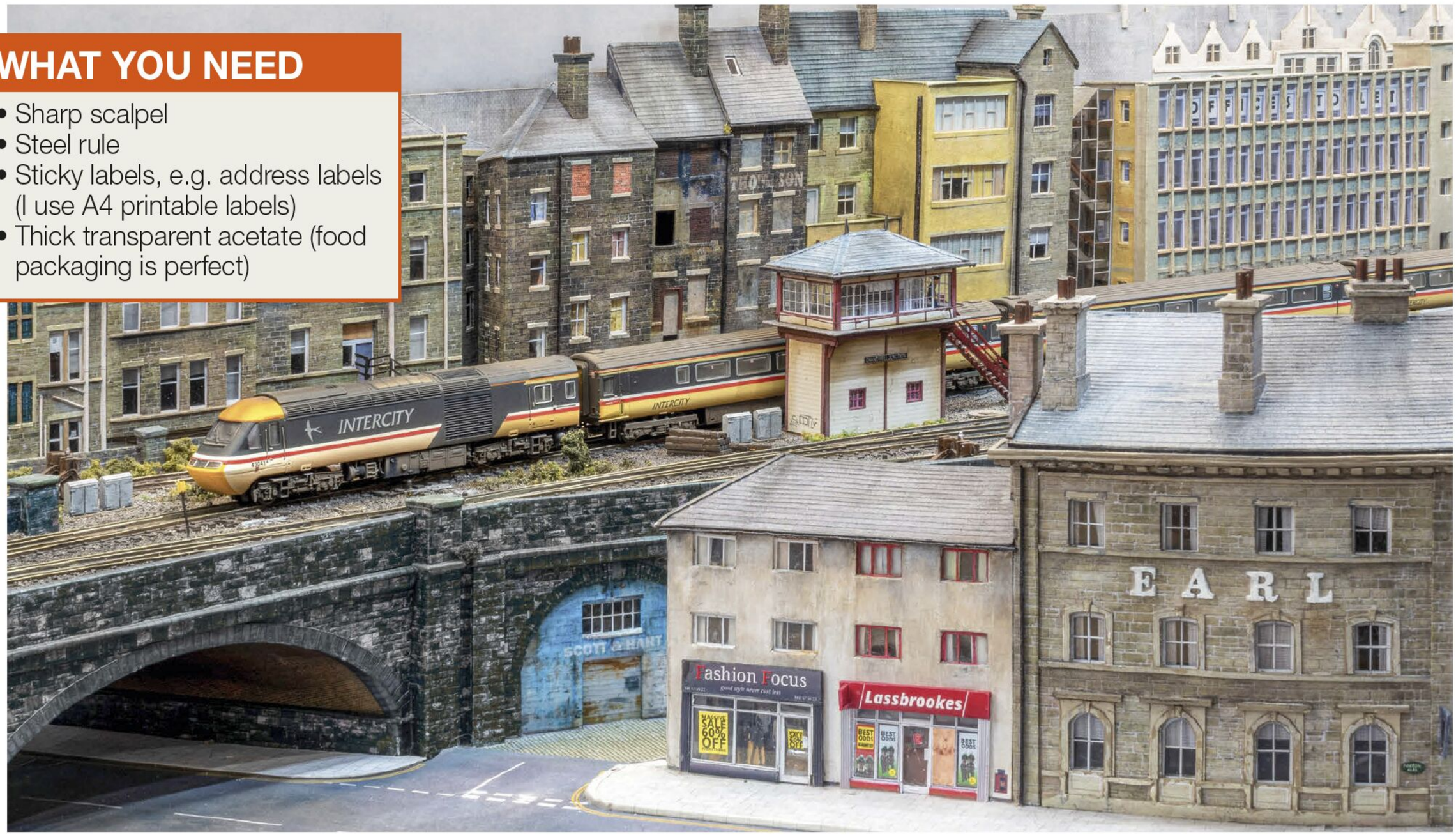
The method can take a bit of practice to get right – it's easy to cut all the way through the acetate or to make the frames too thin. But with a little practice, almost any frame that you can imagine can be made using these simple materials and to a very much acceptable (to my eyes at least) standard.



Michael Scott

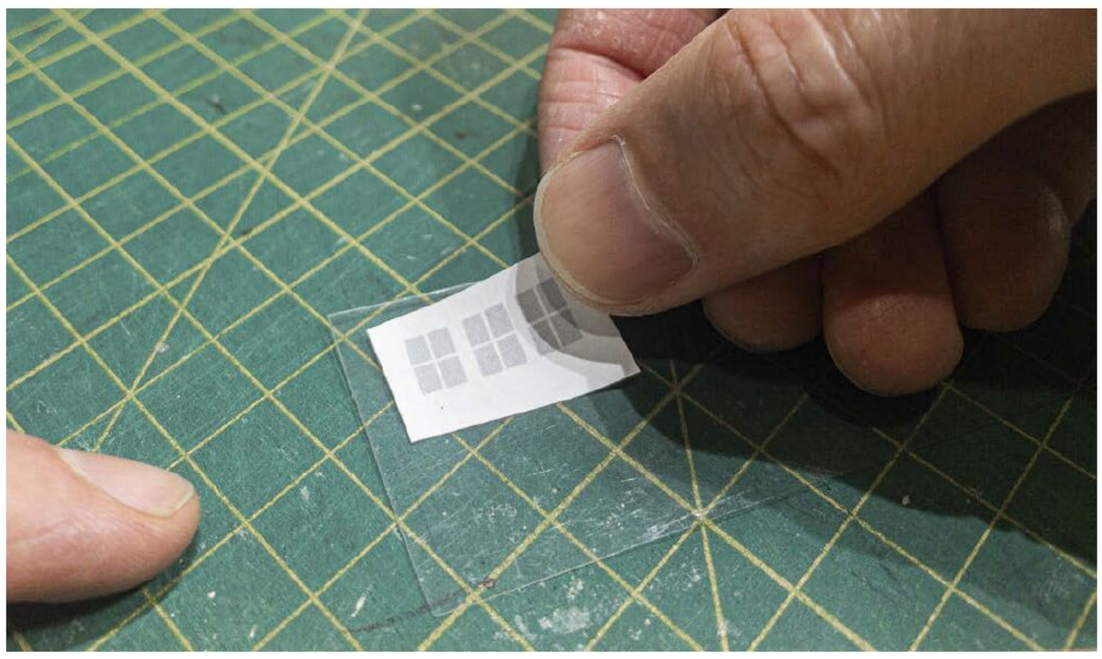
WHAT YOU NEED

- Sharp scalpel
- Steel rule
- Sticky labels, e.g. address labels (I use A4 printable labels)
- Thick transparent acetate (food packaging is perfect)

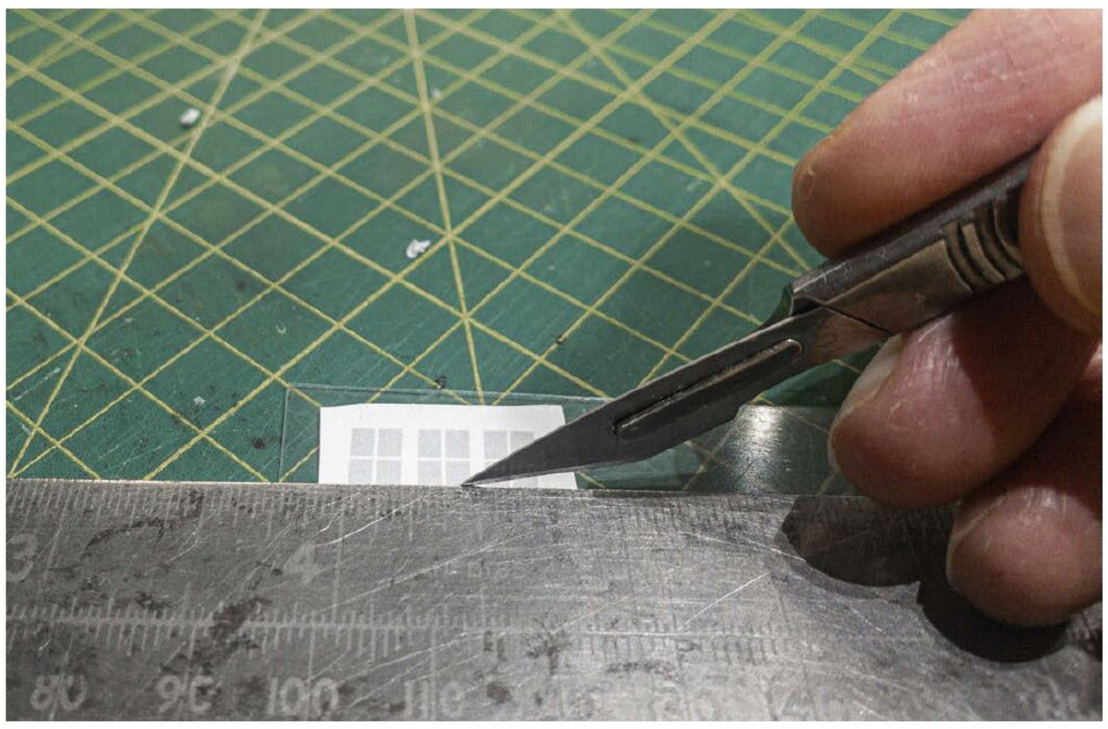




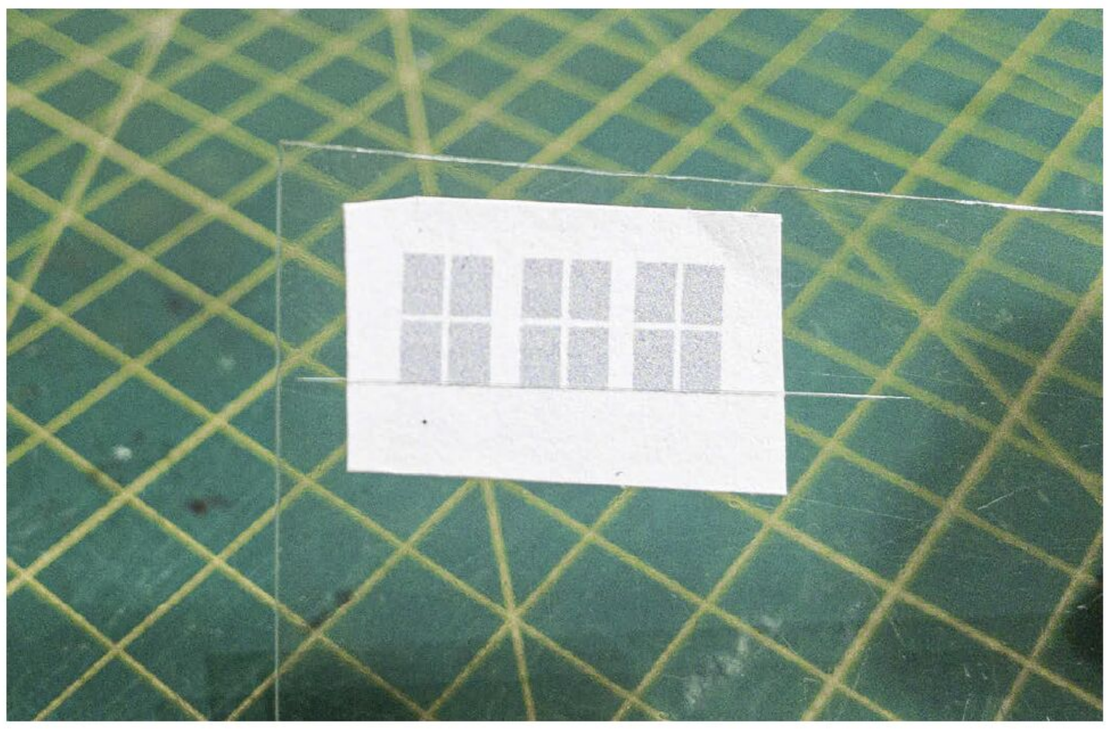
1 I'm using the tray from some prosciutto. For my basic N-scale windows, I draw the outer frame 0.7mm smaller on each side than the window aperture in the building. I then draw the cross-bars of the frame somewhere between 0.25mm and 0.6mm wide, depending on the style.



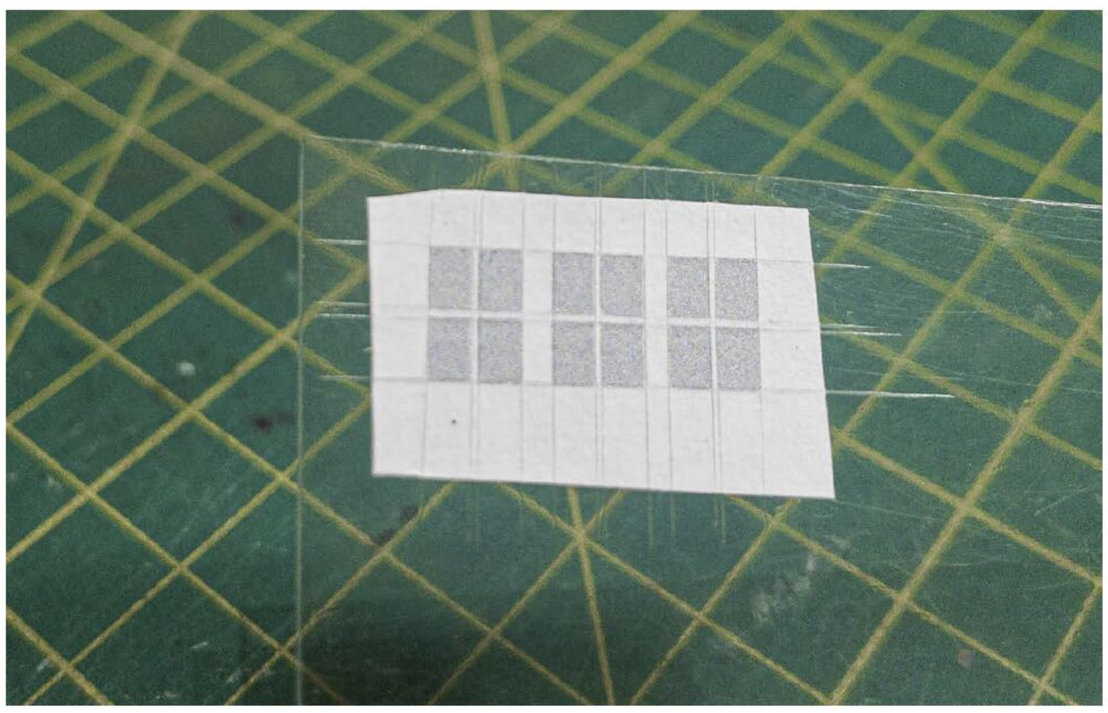
2 Roughly cut out a few windows, peel them from the backing, and stick to a piece of acetate. Smooth the label down so that it is well stuck. Work in small batches because the longer the label is stuck to the acetate, the harder it is to peel the glazed parts away cleanly.



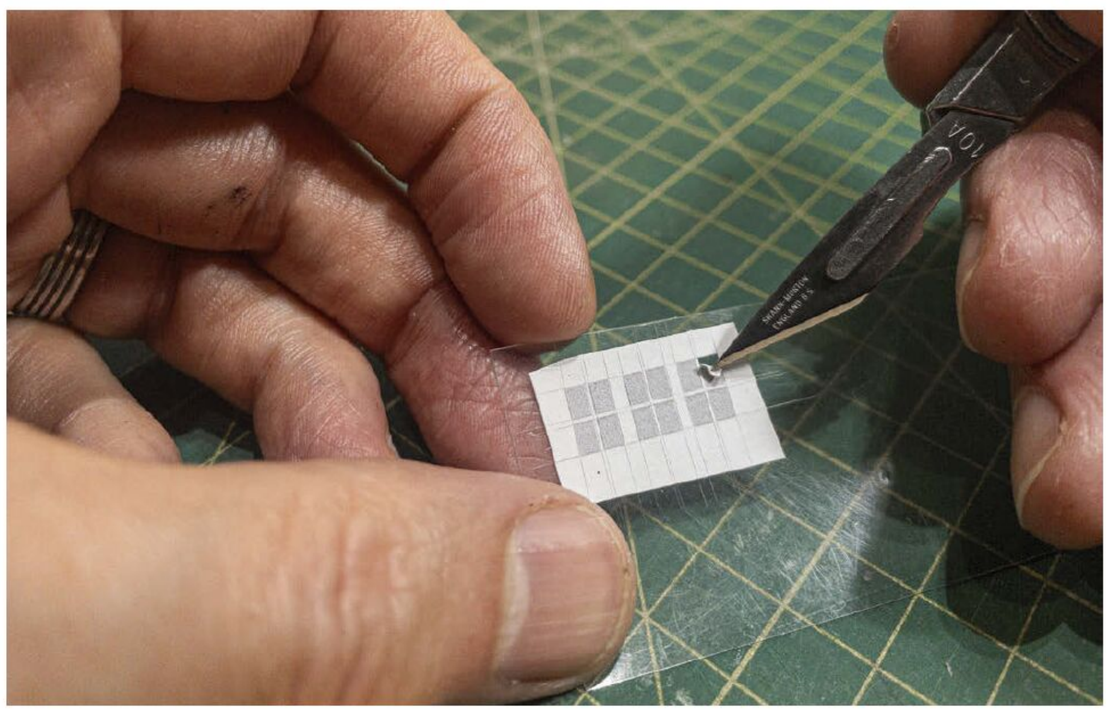
3 Put the steel rule along the first horizontal part of the frame. You are cutting the line where you will peel the glazing from later, so keep the rule over the window frame and cut the edge of the glazing. You need to cut all the way from one side of the label to the other – don't worry about the corners – just go in one long line.



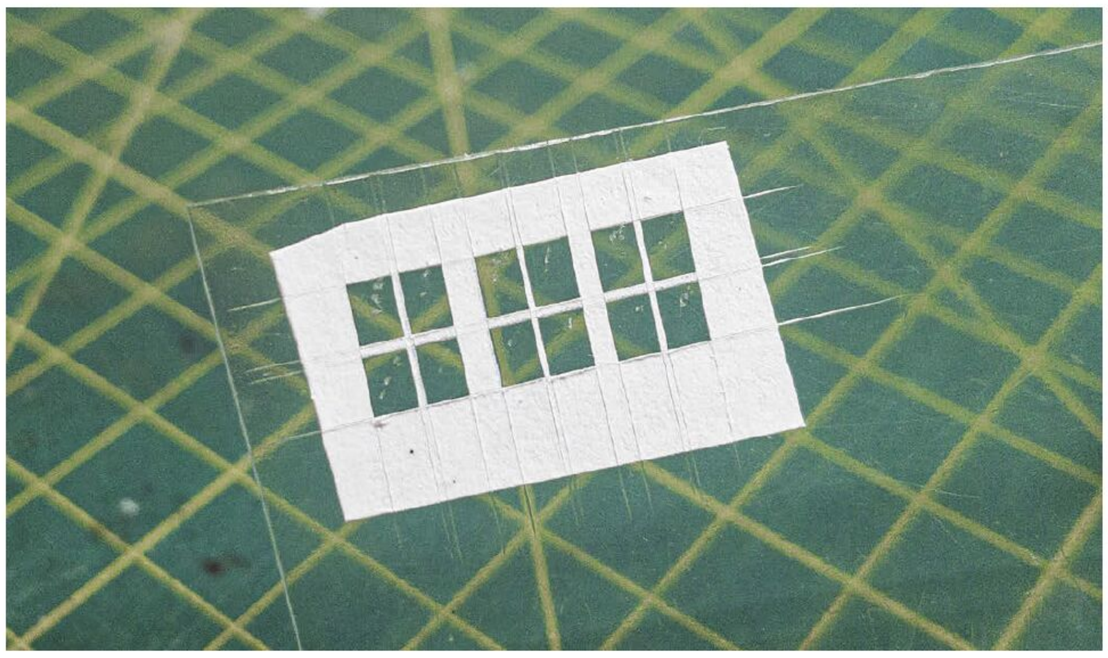
4 Keep only the lightest of pressure on the scalpel. You need to cut through the paper, but not the acetate. It usually takes two or three strokes to get through the paper. With practice, you will learn to feel and hear when the knife is through the paper and just grazing the acetate.



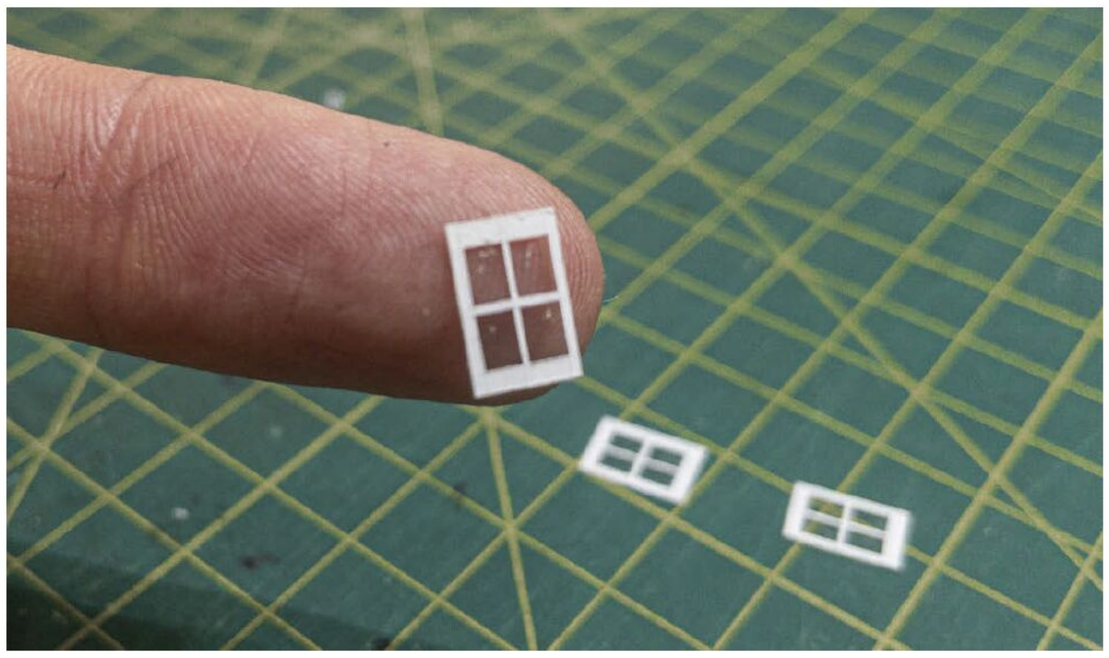
5 Repeat the same thing for all of the rest of the horizontal cuts. Remember that you're cutting along the edges of the glazing rather than cutting out the glazing or the frames. Cut along the top and bottom of each piece of glazing, rotate by 90 degrees and repeat for all the vertical lines. You will be left with a crisscross of incredibly thin intersecting lines all across the window.



6 This is the fun part. Use the tip of your scalpel to nick the corner of one of the glazed pieces. Then, ever-so-gently peel away the printed label. If all of your cuts have gone through the paper, it will come away cleanly. You will be left with super-fine frames ready to be trimmed and added to your model.



7 When printing the window, try to make the piece you cut away a dark enough colour so you can see it, but light enough so that if you under-cut by a tiny amount, you are not left with dark lines on your frames.



8 A quick trim and the window is ready. You will be surprised at how quickly you can make these, and just how fine the frames are. It seems unbelievable at first that you can hand-cut window frame bars only a quarter of a millimetre wide, but it really is possible.

TAKING IT A STEP FURTHER...

The basic method is just the start. Here are some ways you can take it further. The most important thing is to take your time, practice, practice, practice, use your imagination, and, most importantly – have fun!



PAINTING

Colour the frames to match the branding of a shop. Print fine lines down the frames to represent engraving or multi-layered metal frames. Don't be afraid to model a little plywood to cover up mistakes!

The best paints to use to colour the frames are simple watercolours. These are ideal as they flow easily, and are absorbed slightly into the sticky label. This means that the top and bottom surfaces of the frames easily get colour, as well as the front surface. There are no resulting white bits.

Should paint get onto the glazing, it just dabs off with a little damp toilet paper, so it's a really simple approach.



MULTI-PART FRAMES

Make your frames in two parts. You can cut right through the acetate to leave a large hole in the top layer.

When you mount this on top of a lower layer, the hole is lost into the overall frame and it gives a lovely 3D effect.

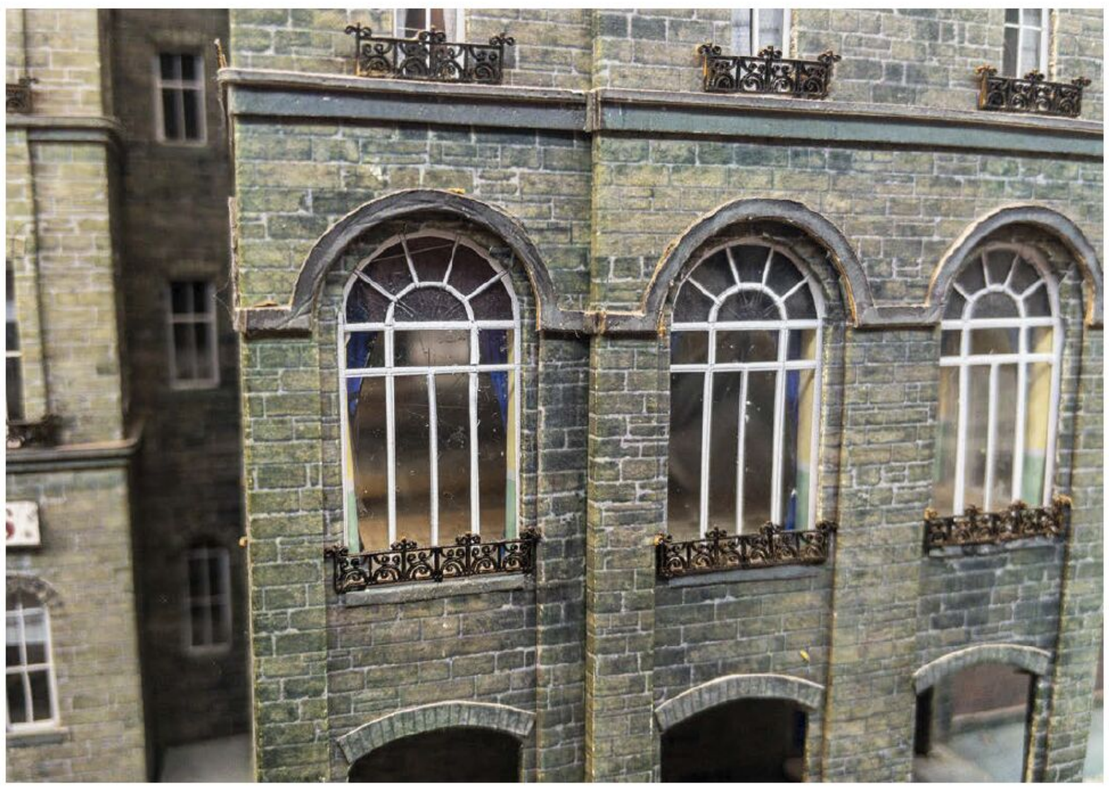
You can combine this technique with using two, three, or even four layers of sticky label on top of each other to give even more definition to the frames. This is good in scales larger than N. For this particular building, I coloured the frames black and used tissue paper behind the glazing to represent the partially-obscured windows of a cheesy nightclub.



OFFICE BLOCK

Use large sheets of acetate to represent the glazing found in old 1960s office buildings or external stair-wells. Use multiple layers to represent interior secondary double-glazing. You could also cut some parts of the frames thicker than others to represent the opening parts of metal-framed windows.

To model some windows in an open position, use the 'hole' technique described earlier to model a window partially open.



CURVED FRAMES

It is easy to adapt the method to cope with curved frames. Just carefully free-hand cut around the edge of the glazing to join up with the rule-made straight cuts. I find it easiest to try to do this in one cut rather than multiple light strokes. It's easy to cut too far and go right through the acetate, but with care, the curved glazed part will just peel right off and leave you with a lovely curved frame. Make the frames two or even three layers of sticky label thick before you cut them to give a deeper feel to the glazing.

ALL SKILL LEVELS

Enhancing a Ramshackle Workshop



Phil Parker

Forget your palaces and stately homes, I'm much more interested in scruffy industrial buildings. Fortunately, as a modeller, they are much more useful prototypes for any layout I'm likely to build. Because of this, the moment a new kit for what I like to think of as a 'working building' is launched, I'm very keen to take a look at it.

One of the things I find most pleasing about an industrial building is that most have been modified during their life. Extensions are added, as and when required, and the builders won't be too fussy about matching the materials, or enhancing the beauty of the main structure.

This is perfectly shown by the new Metcalfe Ramshackle Workshop kit. Starting out as a good, solid, stone building – something familiar to the Yorkshire-based designers – at some point, the owners have added a brick boiler house extension. The contrast between the materials appeals to me, although conservationists might beg to differ!

Much as I love building Metcalfe card kits, you don't need me to repeat the excellent instructions included in the packet. That's handy, because I'm not good at following them – I like to go 'off-piste' and do my own thing. It's my model, after all.

There's really nothing wrong with the kit as supplied, but the corners of the buildings bother me, and, as the roof of any model is the nearest thing to your eye, printed tiles don't look as good as separately-applied alternatives. Since I'm tinkering, the stonework is very nicely coloured, but flat. Easy enough to improve, if a little time-consuming.

WHAT YOU NEED

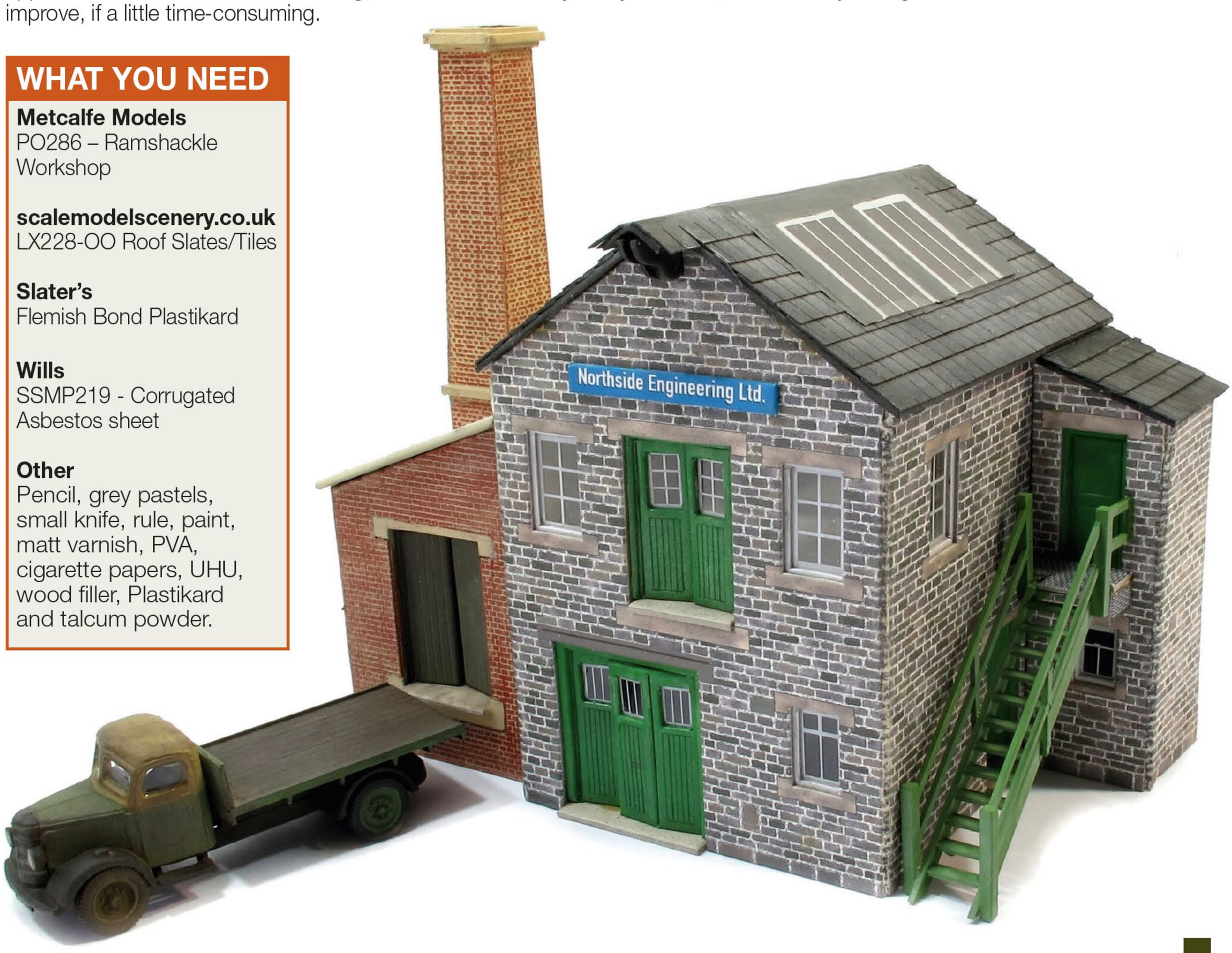
Metcalfe Models
PO286 – Ramshackle Workshop

scalemodelscenery.co.uk
LX228-OO Roof Slates/Tiles

Slater's
Flemish Bond Plastikard

Wills
SSMP219 - Corrugated Asbestos sheet

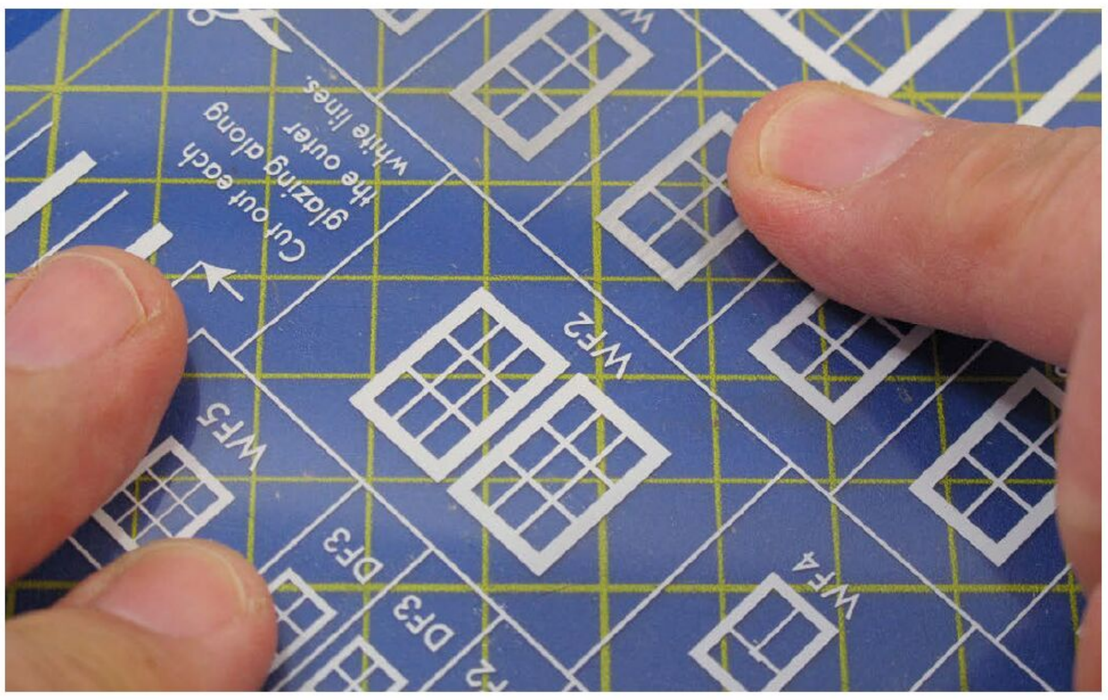
Other
Pencil, grey pastels, small knife, rule, paint, matt varnish, PVA, cigarette papers, UHU, wood filler, Plastikard and talcum powder.



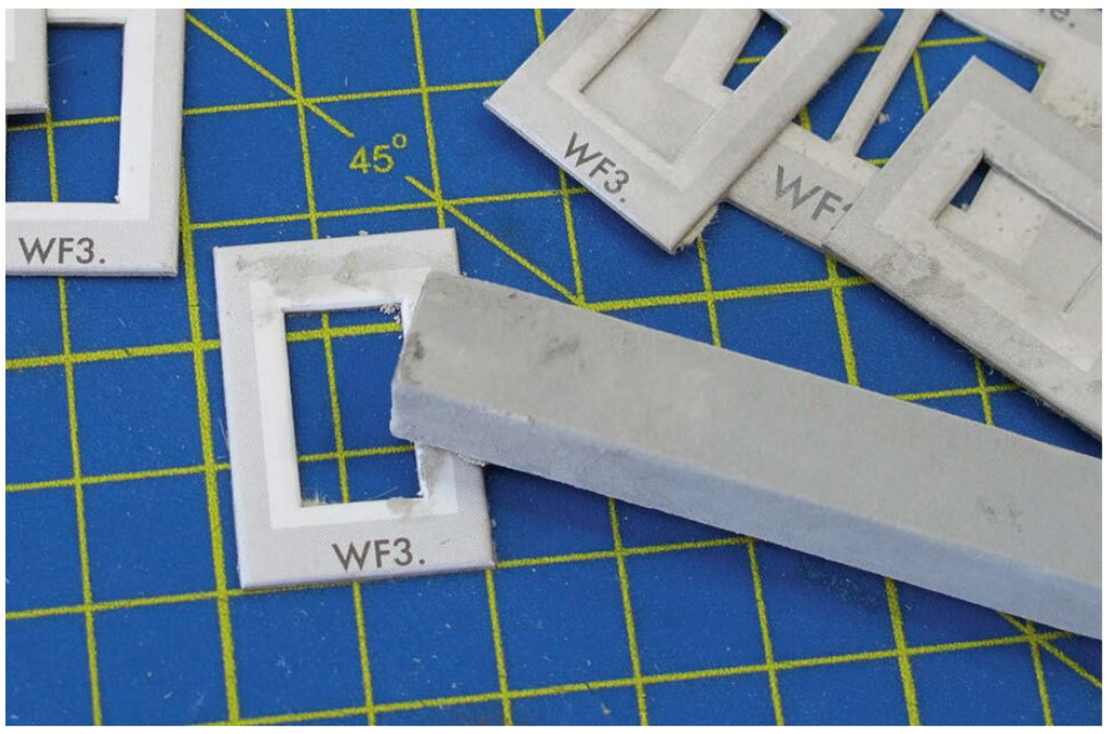
Getting Practical



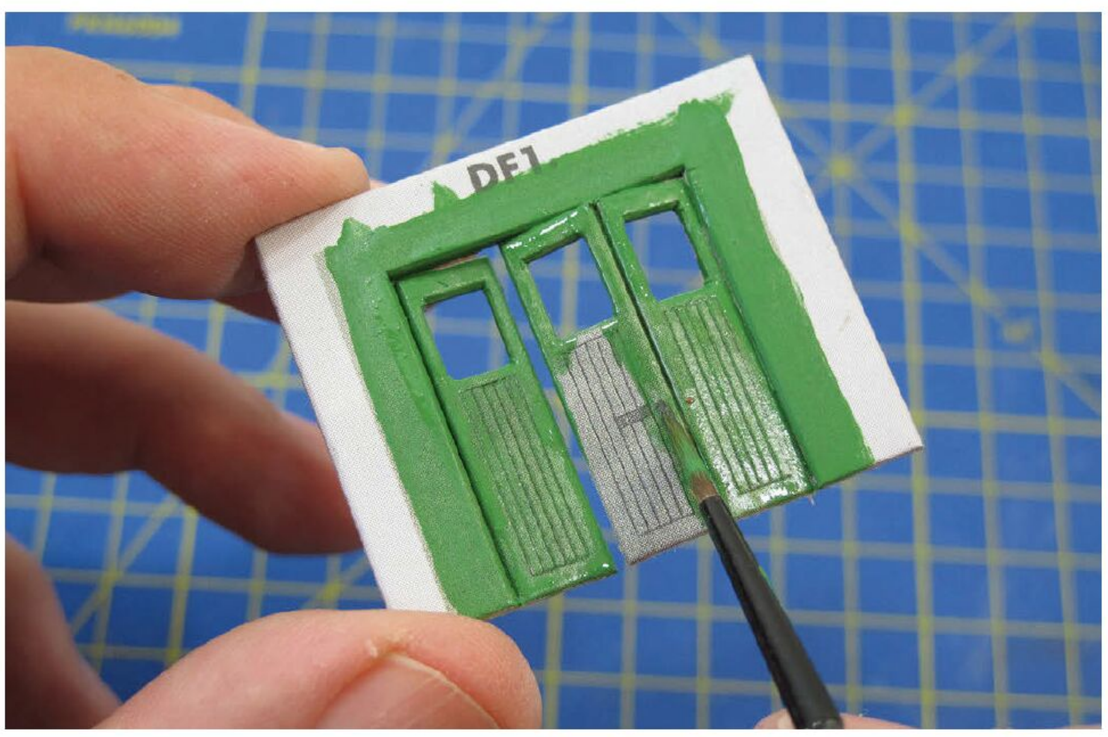
1 The kit follows the normal Metcalfe format of pre-printed and die-cut card sheets and printed clear windows. Additionally, a set of injection moulded plastic steps are included in this kit if needed.



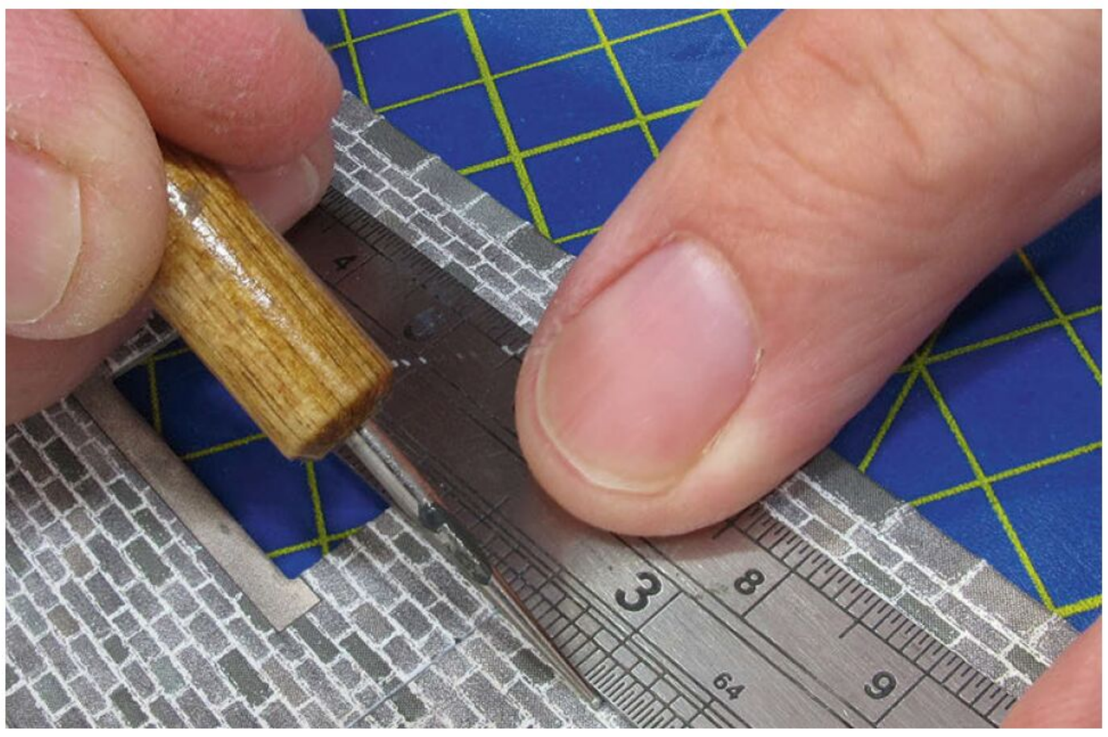
2 All those window frames are very, very white. Toning this down is simple enough, though; rub a pencil lightly over the glazing bars, then smudge with your finger. It would be possible to change the colour this way too, by using a pencil crayon.



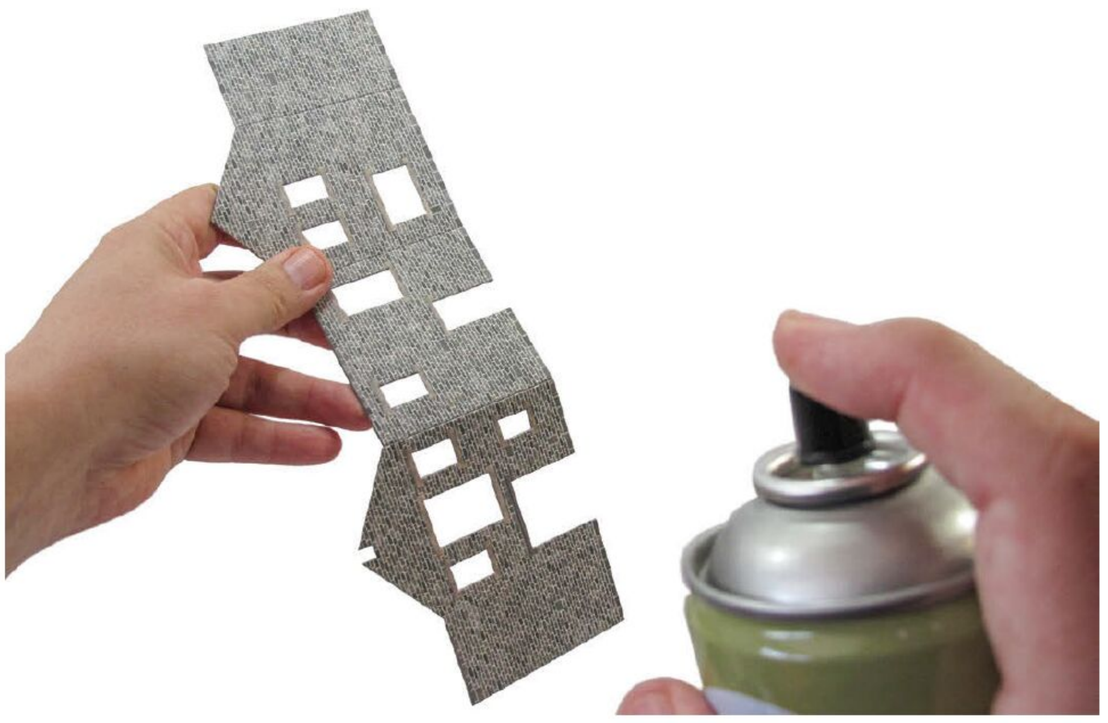
3 Pencils will also work on the card window frames, but a pastel is better as the colour can be rubbed to smudge it and give an even tint. Packs of grey pastels are available cheaply from high-street art shops - perfect for weathering, too.



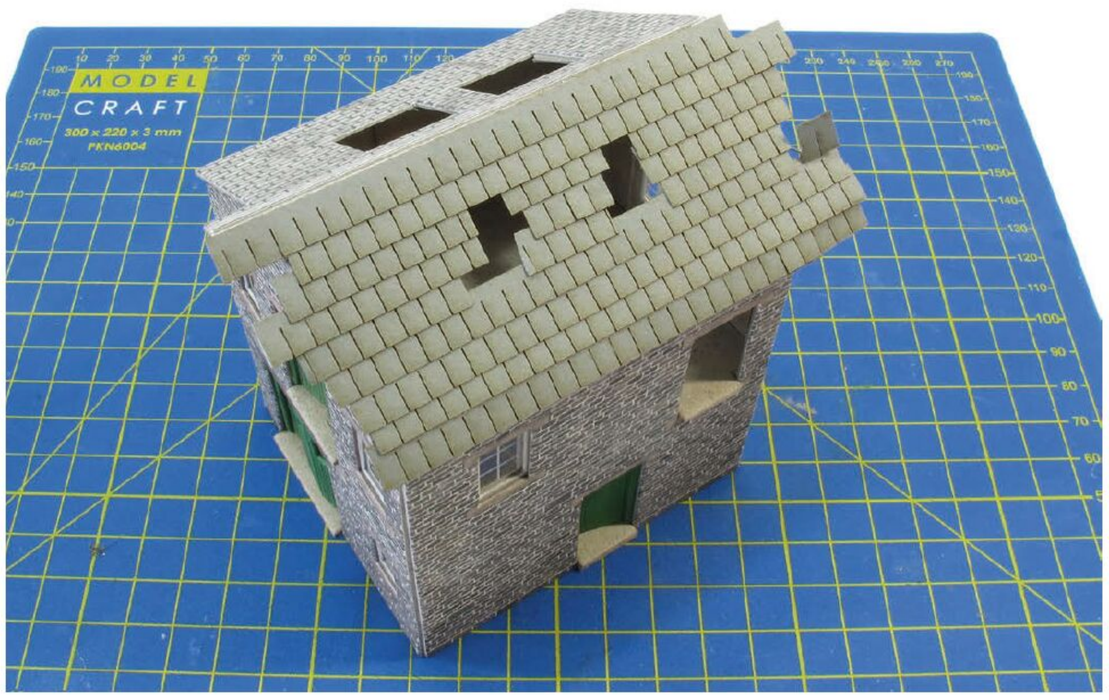
4 When opening the doors, you can see the edges of the card. I scribe the plank lines with the back of a knife (this gives a very fine line) and then paint the card, covering the edges and inside of the window frames.



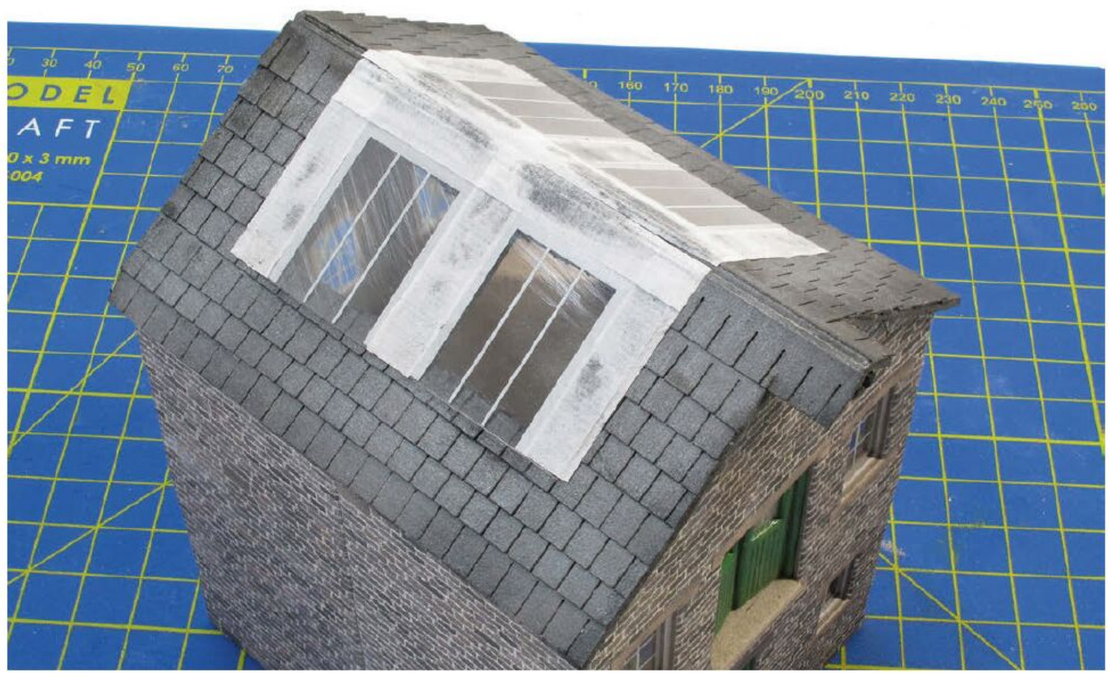
5 To my eye, stone looks a lot better if it has some texture, and being a high-quality paper, the Metcalfe printed walls scribe really cleanly. I do all the horizontals with a rule, and the verticals freehand. All this is three hours' work, but worth it.



6 A light spray of matt varnish, with the can held further away than the instructions on the side recommend, adds a little more texture as the paint will be very slightly dry by the time it hits the surface.



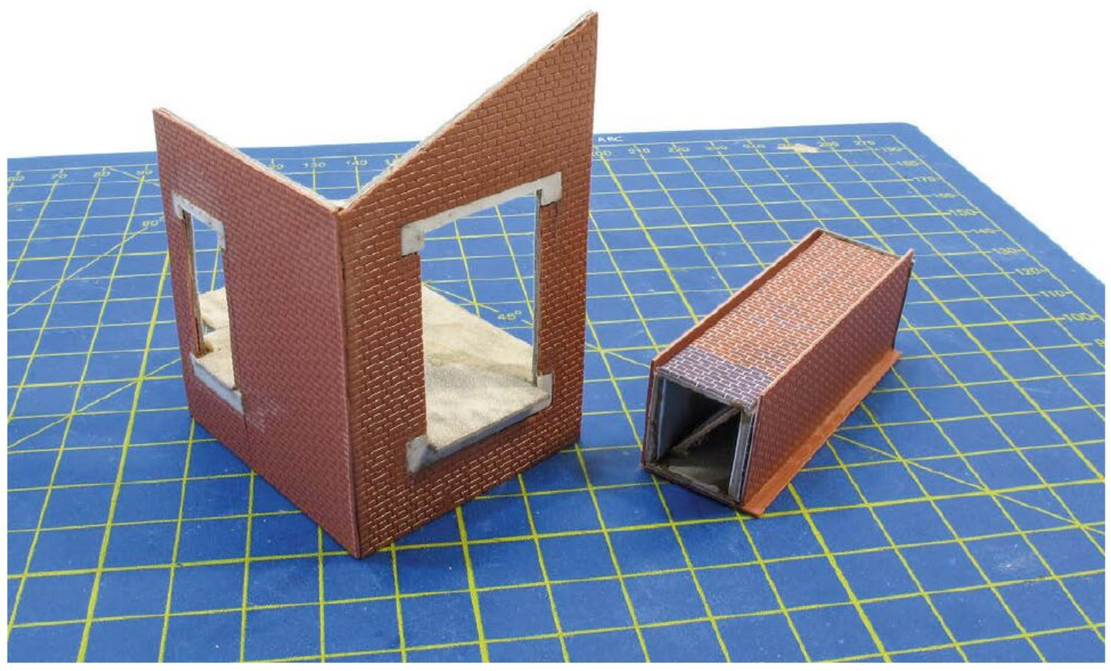
7 Roofs are the most visible area on a model, so adding some laser-cut tiles makes a big difference. Handily, the lines on the kit roof are perfect to line up the replacement strips of tiles, which are fixed in place with a smear of PVA glue.



8 The supplied leadwork looks a bit chunky to me, so I make my own with 6mm wide strips of cigarette paper stuck in place with UHU, and then I paint them a different grey to the roof - simple yet very effective added detail.



9 On the corners of the stone building, a little neutral colour wood filler hides the gap, and then a pencil is used to roughly join up the courses. No need to be precise with this, or worry about colour matching; with the gap gone, the eye seems to ignore any imperfections.



10 Covering the corners on the brick boiler house is tricky, so I'm cladding the whole thing in Flemish Bond Plastikard fixed in place with solvent-free UHU, and bonded at the corners with liquid solvent.



11 A piece of Wills asbestos roof looks much better than the flat card original, although I have cheated and left the skylight off. Dusting the cream paint with talcum powder while it's tacky gives the material an appropriate texture.



12 Finally, the steps are assembled with plastic glue and fixed to the side of the building. These are a really nice moulding – any chance they could be sold separately, Metcalfe?

Modelling fish vans



Jesse Sim

Modelling the LNER is much easier these days with all the new ‘bells and whistles’ that the RTR manufacturers are producing. However, it still requires an amount of kit-building to create a realistic portrayal.

I have gone down the route of exploiting what RTR stock is available and kit-building the rest. However, when purchasing the same piece of stock multiple times for a scale length train, it can leave it looking somewhat boring and uniformed. With that being said, there are things you can do to make each wagon look unique with minimal work and expense and the result is having many duplicate wagons looking completely different.

One such instance of too many duplicate wagons was my fish train, consisting of around 12 Bachmann LNER 10T fish vans. This could be remedied by changing all the numbers, but for a quicker alternative, I decided to change only one letter here and there, using my weathering method to hide the differences.

Once these vehicles are placed in a train with various other kit-built LNER wagons travelling at a scale speed, the small changes become unnoticeable. These methods can be used on any vehicle or in any era of your choosing.

I hope these tips help you to improve the magnificent models the manufacturers produce for us railway modellers. Some of the wagons illustrated require a little more time than others, but the results are worth it.





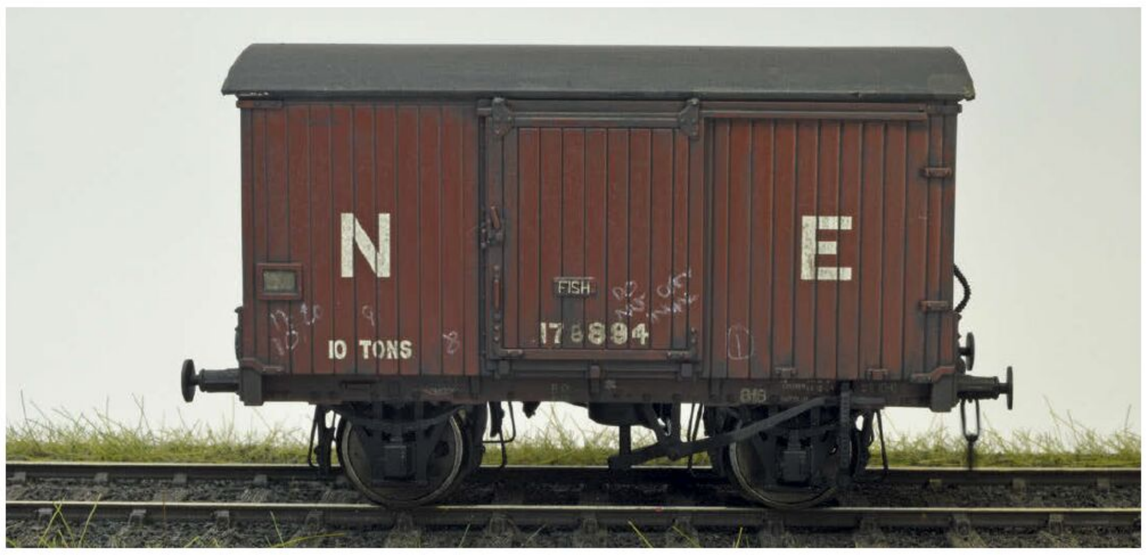
Wagon 1

The first wagon is a simple method. It’s been weathered to a medium standard with a single number change. Due to Bachmann’s numbers being over-scale, the HMRS number is smaller. The trick is to weather the wagon and hide the smaller number. This is a quick alteration that works – it’s hard to spot the incorrect size number in a train at scale speed.



Wagon 2

In some cases, a wagon could spring a leak on its roof and potentially damage the contents, so a tarpaulin was draped over the roof and tied down. This would have enabled the wagon to reach its destination with the merchandise unspoiled before being sent for repairs. The LNER tarpaulin is from the Smiths range, turned inside out. It's scrunched up before being placed on the model to give a worn and beaten look. I glue the tarp to the roof only and use the rope to pull tension down the sides, just like you would in real life. The rope is sewing thread that I stole from my sister's sewing box... don't tell her!



Wagon 3

Mimicking the first wagon, this also has a single number change with a lighter weathering effect. One small yet effective method that brings a wagon to life is chalk markings made by shunters, station staff or dock workers. This can be replicated by using a white pencil sharpened to a very fine point. Paraphernalia would include marshalling yard line numbers, random markings and small instructions, notices or descriptions. Random scribble works well for showing many words. The trick is to keep the pencil sharpened after every use to keep words and letters clear.



Wagon 4

Carrying on with another somewhat clean wagon, this one doesn't have a number change and carries the original factory lettering. However, it's been weathered to show someone has attempted to clean the wagon while it was being loaded or unloaded, resulting in muck and dirt on the right-hand side where the door would have been if it were open. Often, spur of the moment ideas work best. This wagon could have been a disaster as I wanted to replicate scratch markings from the door sliding across the outside. Using a scalpel, I gently scribed scratch marks horizontally to demonstrate this; thankfully, my crude idea worked.



Wagon 5

This wagon has also received the single number change and been weathered, but this time I have gone for the heavy approach showing a really grimy in-use look. Once the wagon was heavily weathered, I went along with a cotton bud and thinners and wiped away the enamel paint mix on the numbers, letters and 'NE' branding. This gives off the idea that an employee of the LNER has attempted to clean the wagon with a rag as best he or she could to help identify the wagon better.



Wagon 6

My favourite fish wagon – compared to the other five, this required more work, but it was worth it. The Bachmann fish wagons are in the pre-1937 lettering scheme, but I wanted to create one in the post-1937 small lettering with the older style showing through the repainted sides. This was achieved by removing the large numbers on the door and the tonnage on the bottom left side with a scalpel, then cleaning the areas with a fiberglass pencil. With the wagon cleaned, I repainted it using Phoenix Precision LNER red oxide paint. Only apply one coat so the larger 'NE' is still visible. I re-lettered the wagon using HMRS transfers with Peter Tatlow's *LNER Wagons Volume 4A* as a guide.

LAYOUT | N | MELDON WEST

A Dapol Class 33 arrives at the quarry with a short stone train. The two 'Seacows' are N Gauge Society kits, while the guard van is a modified Peco model.

MELDON WEST

Compact yet full of operating potential, this first exhibition layout for its builder has yielded great enjoyment.

Words: Tom Blount **Photography:** Phil Parker

FACTFILE

NAME: Meldon West
SCALE/GAUGE: 2mm:1ft scale/ 9mm gauge/ N
SIZE: 5ft x 1ft
ERA/REGION: 1981-1996/ British Rail - Western Region
LAYOUT TYPE: End to end



Being born in the '80s, my early memories are of my grandparents taking me to London. The favourite part of my day was the journey on British Rail and I'd often come home with a roll of 35mm film full of trains and track details.

Before embarking on my first exhibition layout, a big inspiration for me was seeing models created by Chris Nevard. I really liked his use of small spaces, showing that you didn't need to have a huge space to create something detailed and interesting. I was also inspired by 'Arun Quay' in O gauge by Gordon Gravett. The detail is astounding and I thought it would be a good challenge to aim for that amount of detail in N gauge. There were also a few techniques I liked and wanted to try, so I decided a small layout would allow me to test those without worrying that I'd ruin a large model or waste a lot of money if it all went wrong.

I had a 3ft by 1ft board set aside for the project and after a track order was made, 'Meldon West' was born.

I currently live in a flat, so space is at a premium. The layout board fitted into the spare room nicely, with the 18in fiddle yard detachable and stored under the layout.

I'd previously seen 2mm Finescale, but didn't feel confident with replacing wheels and gears on rolling stock, and along with the added cost, I decided not to attempt it. I then stumbled across British Finescale track and thought I must try it to see if it works.

Construction begins

I'd originally wanted to model a china clay scene, due to having a Class 37 with a handful of china clay hoppers, but my excitement to build a layout got away from me and I went straight into building and track laying.



Rolling Stock

Rolling stock is mostly ready-to-run models from Graham Farish and Dapol, with a few wagons from Peco. Whilst the super-flu lockdowns gripped the world I was able to convert all of my locomotives to DCC, this included some chassis modifications to older models and lowering of bodies for more prototypical gaps between bodies and bogies. The modifications also allowed the fitting of stay-alive circuits, which have made a huge difference to slow-speed running. I've recently finished building my first rolling stock kits, four N gauge Society Seacows, and tackled a locomotive re-spray, a Class 37 into British Rail large logo grey livery. The majority of the locomotives are modelled with buffer detail at one end and a coupling at the other, and most of the wagons have been weathered and detailed. The stock is fitted with Dapol's easi-shunt couplings, which are activated by hidden magnets in the yard crossings.





After mocking up some rough buildings, I thought that any clay dries would overcrowd the layout and not make best use of the available space, therefore, leading me to model a small aggregates facility instead.

The modelled area of the layout measures just 2ft 5in long by 1ft wide, so when designing the layout, I was keen not to overcrowd it and give the illusion of depth and space. For the track design, I settled on the inglenook shunting puzzle, whereby there are three sidings and an added run-around loop at the front of the layout for extra operational interest.

The main entry track leads to the hopper siding, the rear siding acts as a holding spur for either stock or locomotives, the front siding and run-around features a small wharf and platform for local passenger traffic. The sidings hold either seven small wagons or three larger wagons. The track is Finescale Code 40 rail built to N gauge standards using Finetrax kits.

Overcoming challenges

The journey of building the layout has been a challenge, but if I had to select two things where I've conquered my biggest fears, they would be building track and installing DCC into locomotives.

I was daunted at the idea of building track, especially points in N gauge. I used kits from the Finetrax range and these were relatively simple to construct. It was a

FAR LEFT: A Farish 47 draws wagons forward for loading under the hopper.

TOP LEFT: The fine trackwork looks great close up with extremely neat work on the road crossing.

MIDDLE LEFT: An amazing amount of trackside detail is now available in 2mm scale.

BELOW: The backscene creates depth to frame this, obviously rural, industry.



relief to see the switch blades working as they should and a locomotive running freely across my first constructed point kit. When it came to converting my locomotives to DCC, I watched YouTube videos and absorbed as much as I could from various internet resources, but ultimately, I learned by taking locomotives to bits and failing. I have revisited my first few conversions recently and begun again, having learnt much more while converting my ever-growing collection. More recently, I've been fitting stay-alive circuits to assist with the slow-speed running and additional LED lighting, such as cab lighting.

Control of the track is via a Gaugemaster Prodigy 2 and two handheld controllers. There are controller sockets built into the layout frame, both at the front and rear so it's easy to swap between the two. Points are operated by DCC Concepts' Cobolt slow-action motors. The point motors and signals are operated by analogue control panels, which are mounted in the fiddle yard.

Setting the scene

One of the largest features of the layout is the rock face, which is made from 5mm foamboard formers covered in a 50:50 PVA/water-soaked kitchen roll. After this had dried, I used plaster mixed with water and PVA to create the rock surface. While wet, I used an offcut of plastic sheet to carve the rock faces. This was later painted with various grey and brown washes to finish.

The roads were created using DAS modelling clay with some plaster used to fill cracks that appeared after the clay dried. The yard crossings hide uncoupling magnets. These were covered in a thin layer of plaster and sanded to match the height of the rail before being painted. Static grass uses various shades and short lengths from Javis and Peco, while shrubs and bushes are made from Polyfibre covered in flocks.

Buildings on the layout are scratch-built with the exception of the chimney and water tower, which are Ratio kits. The loading hopper, based on the real hopper at Meldon Quarry, along with the elevated discharge pipe, are made from spare Code 40 rail, brass and plastic sheet parts. Other buildings were built using plastic sheet formers, before either brick,



Being restricted for space does not mean you can't create a different but interesting scene.







stone, or corrugated plastic sheet was added. These were primed and painted with various shades, before being weathered and added to the layout. The bridge hiding the fiddle yard entry and exit is also scratch-built from plastic sheet in a similar way.

The small station platform at the front of the layout utilises Peco platform edging, plastic sheet for the base of the platform and then model filler for the top surface. This was sanded to create the final surface prior to painting and weathering.

At the beginning of 2021, with it being nearly two years since I began the layout, I decided that something else was needed to add operational interest. I know signals aren't necessarily something found in quarries and smaller facilities, but I liked the idea of scratch-building some. There are four signals on the layout, of which all are working ground signals. One is mounted on a post near the hopper and, although not correct, it's loosely based on the one next to the hopper at Meldon. I have plans to replace this with a more prototypical version.

The highlights

One part of the layout that I'm pleased with is the loading hopper and the connecting stone conveyor. These are scratch-built from spare Code 40 rail, brass and plastic sheet and the conveyor features ballast as if heading for loading. I'm also very pleased with the yard's road surface, this took me a while to get right, and I can't remember how many times I painted it before I settled on the colour that you see now.

Two further features that I think have made a big difference are the curved backscene and LED lighting. The backscene is created using hardboard shaped to hide the corners, while three 30cm cabinet lights illuminate the layout. These are covered with a mixture of lighting gels to create a smooth mixed lighting effect.

If I was to pass on tips to other modellers, it would be to have patience and perseverance. I often get tempted to rush something to complete it, only to look at it afterwards and wish I'd taken my time. This is the first project where I've taken my time, and if it wasn't right the first time, I've started again.

FAR LEFT: The use of overhead elements breaks the scene into parts, adding further interest.

NEAR LEFT: There's a sneak peek beneath the bridge to the world beyond, but this is hidden in normal viewing.

RIGHT: Everything within the scene uses subtle complementary tones and weathering for added realism.



LAYOUT | N | MELDON WEST

Evidencing earlier quarrying activity, the works are backed by stonework with excellent shadow and highlight tones.

> "'Meldon West' was my first venture into an exhibition layout, I've built a few small projects over the years but I've never managed to get one to this stage before and it was great to see it well received."

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This can be frustrating at times, but I'm always learning and so on the second or third attempt (or more), I'm much happier with my efforts.

Don't be afraid to start something again if at first you didn't succeed.

Operation

At home, I operate the layout from the front as it sits against the wall in the spare room. For its debut outing at The International N Gauge Show (TINGS), I installed a board to hide the fiddleyard, which includes a little information and a few photographs of the layout under construction and operated the layout from the rear. Although small, it is a hugely entertaining layout to operate. You can lose a lot of time trying to unravel the puzzle of shunting wagons into the correct order before being collected by the departing locomotive. For the time being, I'm concentrating on detailing and weathering my current rolling stock, but there are early plans for the next layout.

Final thoughts

If I were to repeat this project, I would try to incorporate a few more working details and interior details. I've always been impressed by layouts where there are detailed interiors of warehouses or dwellings and, in hindsight, I wish I'd done the same with my warehouses. I've also always been impressed by moving vehicles and would have liked to explore the Faller car system with a moving lorry or two – maybe on the next layout!

'Meldon West' was my first venture into an exhibition layout. I've built a few small projects over the years, but I've never managed to get one to this stage before and it was great to see it well received at TINGS.

This layout was originally a test-bed for techniques and ideas of which I am very happy with the results. I have early plans for my next layout, which will feature more of a main line scene portraying part of the East Coast Main Line. I'm keen to limit the size of my next layout as I want to concentrate again on the detail and I like the challenge of trying to make something small feel big.

I'm also a keen member of the Berkshire Area Group of the N Gauge Society, and I've recently joined the N Gauge Society and DEMU modellers group.

I'd like to thank my wife Katherine for her endless support while I ramble on about my railway and spend hours tucked away modelling. ■

ABOVE: A bird's-eye view of the layout showing the inglenook track design and added run-around loop at the front of the layout.

RIGHT: A view down the yard and a Farish Class 08 idles awaiting its next duty. In the foreground is one of the road crossings that hides the uncoupling magnets for the Dapol Easi-Shunt couplings.

BELOW: The Farish Class 08 in BR blue is the workhorse of the layout. It has been DCC converted with an added stay-alive circuit for super-smooth slow speed shunting.



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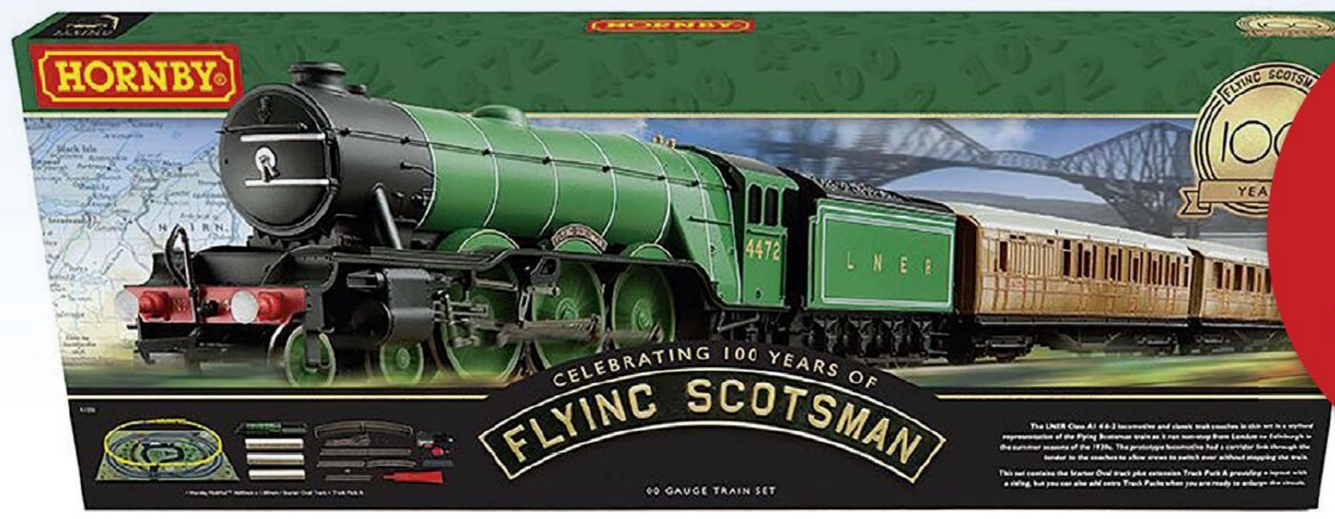


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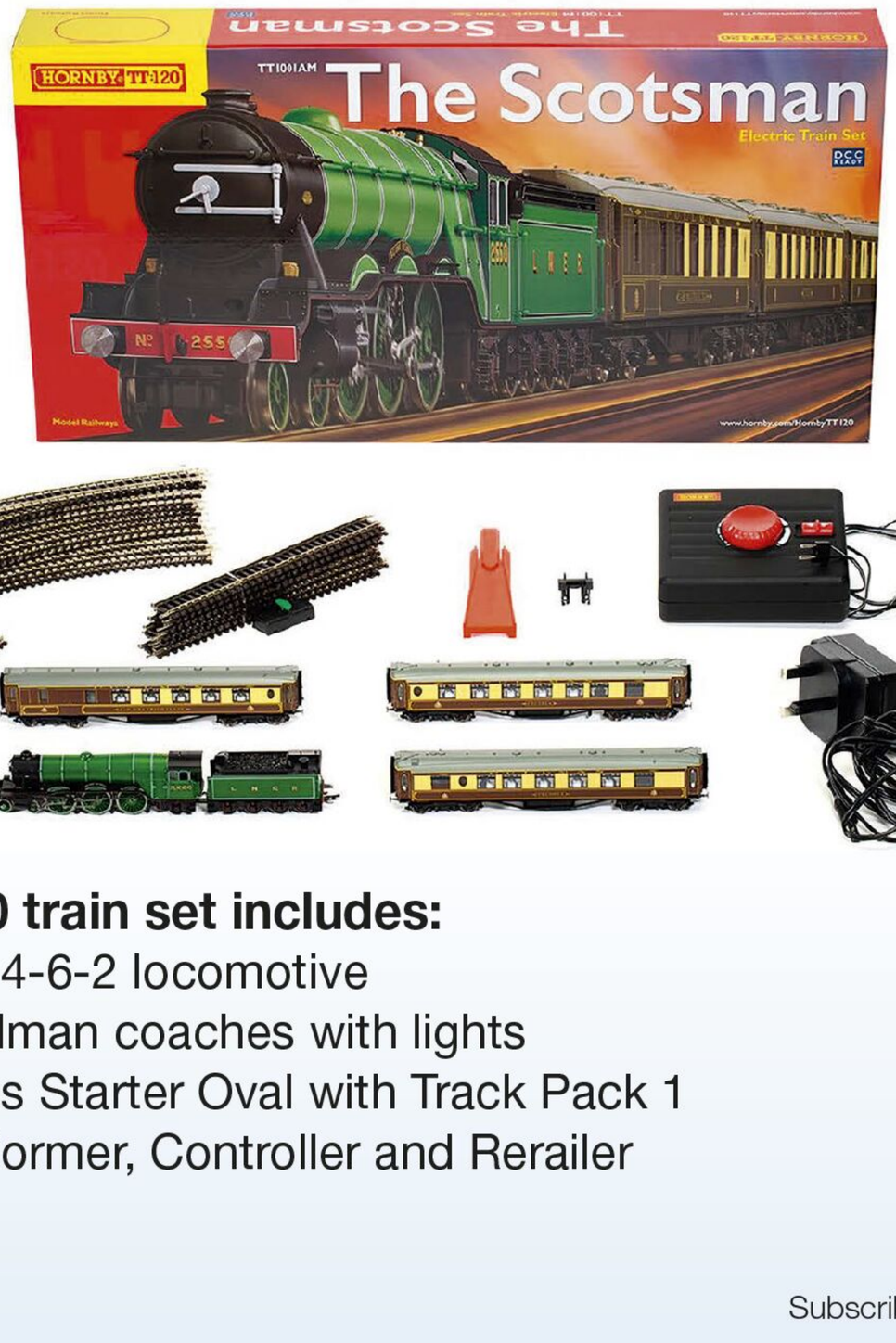
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A refurbished Class 101 DMU approaches the station, under the footbridge, as 37071 heads across the bridge to refuel. The footbridge giving access to the station is typical of the area. 'Alexandra Sidings' signal box is tucked into the junction below the hillside, but with a clear view down the line.

ALEXANDRA SIDINGS

This curved twin level layout, where lines cross bridges and disappear to hidden sidings, makes for entertaining viewing, and engaging operation.

Words: David Hampson **Photography:** Phil Parker

FACTFILE

NAME: Alexandra Sidings
SCALE/GAUGE: 1:43.5 scale / 32mm gauge / O
SIZE: 24ft x 5ft
ERA/REGION: 1970s BR Manchester area
LAYOUT TYPE: End to end



Some buildings, including the station canopy, are laser-cut from MDF. Many of these have been adapted and weathered to create the rundown look of an area at the end of its railway life.

'Alexandra Sidings' is a split-level O gauge layout. Unlike many split-level layouts, the usual format has been reversed with a low-level station at the front, and an upper-level parcels depot to the rear. The layout is a replacement for a previous layout, 'Oldham King Street Parcels', and is a similar size, though the design allows greater use of visible scenic sections with hidden sidings, rather than a separate fiddle yard.

Why 'Alexandra Sidings'? Though the station is named Oldham King Street, continuing the theme from previous layouts, the emphasis on this layout is not the station, but the parcels shed. The area in Oldham on which the layout is loosely based is called 'Alexandra Park'. The parcels depot is therefore called Alexandra Sidings Parcels Concentration Depot, and is based on Clegg Street PCD, for which the main traffic was parcels from the many catalogue warehouses located in former cotton mills in the Oldham area.

Long-distance modelling

The layout was planned and built during the Covid pandemic, by Keith Harrison and myself. This presented its own particular challenges. The lack of exhibitions meant that the usual source of 'bits and pieces' needed wasn't there any longer. Online ordering had to become the 'norm', particularly during lockdown, when online deliveries seemed to be the only way of getting anything. However, this wasn't always convenient or appropriate. How do you order things that you have just run out of, such as more thinners, one more O gauge insulating rail joiner, or a single piece of heat shrink tubing, for example? Will a new station canopy fit the layout, given the space available?



Splitting Levels

The urban nature of the layout means that there is little in the way of 'traditional' scenery. However, as Oldham is a town built on a hill, the opportunity was taken to vary the levels on the layout. Much of this has been achieved through the use of stone retaining walls, and tunnels, which are typical in the area.

The main retaining wall, which separates the station from the parcels yard, houses much of the wiring and DCC equipment. Often, wiring was hidden behind sections of this retaining wall, which enabled the joints between the separate baseboards to be disguised. Sections of this wall are removeable to keep access. The grassed hillside behind the signal box is made of polystyrene, and disguises the 'hidden sidings' at the rear of the layout. This hillside uses synthetic horse hair and foliage from Treemendus.

“The opportunity to see and use 'Heaton Lodge Junction' to give some of the stock a 'good run out' was a real test of their durability.”

24023 returns from the fuelling point. This locomotive is sound-equipped and has working windscreen wipers.

Online shopping may be a benefit, but also needs extra planning or cost. It is certainly not an 'instant solution' for those items that are difficult to get. Maintaining enthusiasm for modelling under these circumstances can be difficult and frustrating, too.

Given that we lived over 30 miles apart, a 'division of labour' plan was needed. Based on the individual areas of interest and expertise, it made sense that Keith took on building the baseboards, laying track, buildings and developing the scenics. I took on the operation of the points, signals, detailing and electronics. This meant moving the individual boards between homes, often a number of times.

Prior to the construction, Keith made a one-quarter scale model of 'Alexandra Sidings', complete with cardboard buildings, to test out the design and look for any unexpected flaws. This was used as a basis for constructing the full-scale model.

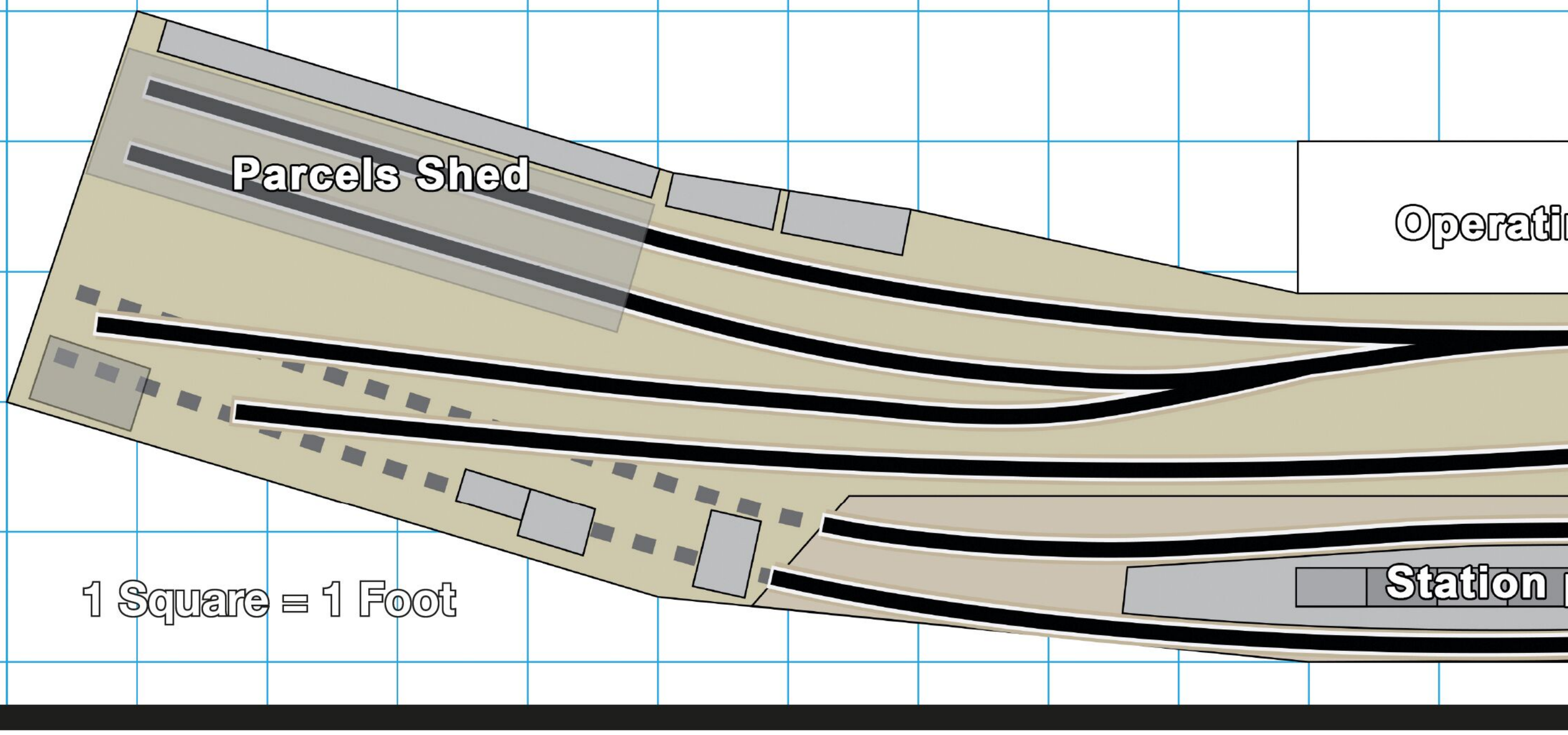
Digital operation

'Alexandra Sidings' is DCC-controlled, using mainly the Lenz digital control system, with ESU accessories. The layout is built on five 4ft baseboards. These have flat bases, so they are able to be stacked in pairs for transporting. Much of the scenic and detailing on the layout is removable, including all the buildings. To retain a flat base for each of the baseboards, surface-mounting of components was essential. This led to the decision to use servos, mounted above the boards for point operation.

Suitable locations were found to ensure that the points and signals could be operated using direct wire connections from the servo to the point/signal, without the wires needing to cross baseboard joints. The servos and signals are controlled by ESU SwitchPilot decoders, which can control up to six servos each.



TRACKPLAN





A Class 504 EMU is about to depart for Manchester.

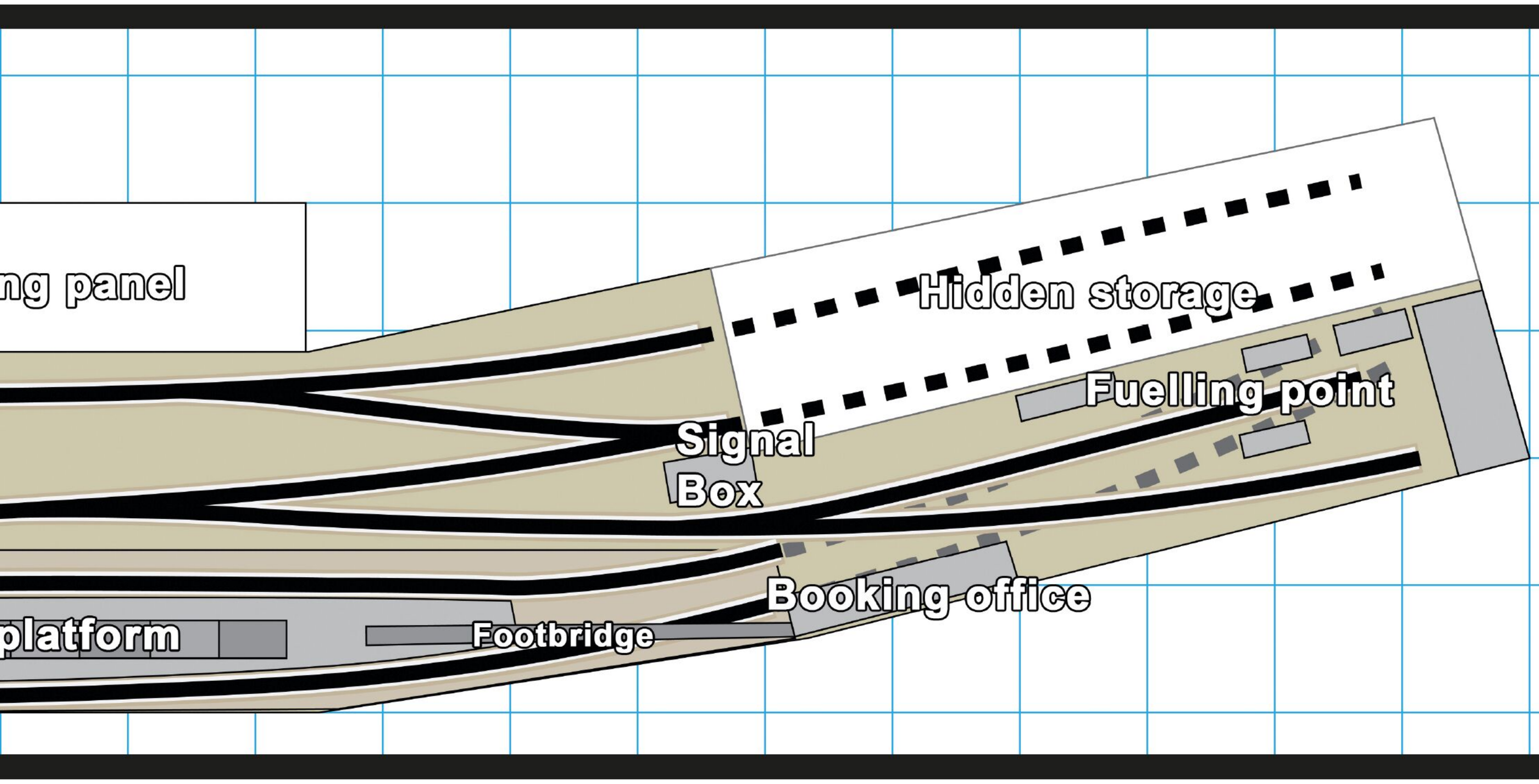
To simplify operation, a small laptop using Train Controller software is used to select pre-programmed routes. The lower level is semi-automated, with track sensors detecting the position of DMUs. These sensors control the operation of the wall-mounted semaphore signals and the single (hidden) return point in the tunnel section.

The stock is a mixture of scratch-built, kit-built and ready-to-run. Most of the stock has been modified to operate using DCC by the addition of ESU sound chips and smoke units, where possible. One item of stock, which often draws comment is the Class 504 Bury EMU. This started life as a kit of parts, with the sides specially cut by Shawn at Easybuild. The distinctive front ends were modified from DMU cabs using photographs to take measurements. The underframe equipment and Gresley motor bogies were scratch-built by me. The unit has 'arcing' from the pickup shoes, but needed side-contact third rail to be fitted to the layout to make the operation realistic. This meant adding a new job to the list.

Being keen to utilise as many of the features of DCC as possible, including sound, I used the servo outputs built into the ESU XL chips to control some unusual 'one-off' features. These include fitting working windscreen wipers on Class 24, 24023, and adding 'pop-up' drivers (that operate in the direction of travel) in a Class 128 parcels DMU.

Creating the scene

Most of the buildings on the layout have been scratch-built by Keith, using either Plastikard, or clear 4mm Perspex for buildings with many windows. This gives a good solid structure as a base. Buildings are then covered with brick or stone paper and weathered to suit their location. This allows the inclusion of windows in





LEFT: A Class 24 awaits its next turn at Alexandra Sidings with parcels ready to be loaded. It won't be long before the shed is closed and demolished.

RIGHT: A Class 101 DMU arriving at the station.

BELOW: A Class 45 delivers a tanker full of fuel to replenish the stocks at 'Alexandra Sidings'. Locomotive fuel is unloaded into the tank at the rear.

BOTTOM: 08376 shunts vans in the parcels shed. The BR Universal Trolley Equipment (BRUTE) trolleys are being employed to load and unload parcels.

the structure, without the need for separate glazing, but retaining the strength of the building.

Some buildings, including the station canopy, are laser-cut from MDF. Many of these have been adapted and weathered to create the rundown look of an area at the end of its railway life. Low-relief buildings are used at the rear of the layout to create a backscene that varies in height. These buildings fit into drawers housed in the baseboards for transport. This means that the height of all buildings on the layout is restricted to a maximum height of 75mm. The backscene was fitted with separate, removable details such as hedges, stone walls and a sleeper-built fence. This is made from nearly 2000 wooden sleepers, each embossed with punched holes for rail chairs.

Some of the taller buildings, including the signal box and station building, are constructed to be stackable, to keep the height below 75mm. Precise measurements had to be taken to ensure that all the buildings fitted, both on the layout, and in the storage drawers. This led to some funny moments when it became apparent that the chimney pots on the station building were too tall to fit in the drawers, and needed to be cut down. Keith is very good with a hacksaw!

Though site visits were limited during the pandemic, many books and articles about the railways in this area exist, some showing interesting and distinctive architecture, which we have tried to catch the spirit of. Where possible, the buildings are based on real structures in the North Manchester area. The station building is modelled on Guide Bridge station and is adapted to fit the 'snug' location perfectly. The choice of a building for the station was one of those 'light-bulb' moments. Keith was looking to find a small station building that might be suitable, and, having





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rejected a number of possibilities, ended up driving past Guide Bridge. There it was – perfect, and so distinctive of the area!

The signal box is modelled on the small box at Bury North, and the open-sided parcels shed based on an interim parcels shed at Oldham Clegg Street. The extended footbridge from the station to the platform is adapted from a kit made by York Modelmaking, who helpfully supplied the pieces needed to model the bridge in the correct length, and also designed the 'hoops' on the bridge from pictures of 'Gas Street bridge' in Oldham – a distinctive local landmark that is still in place, but now very much worse for wear.

Layout collaboration

While constructing 'Alexandra Sidings', Keith and I had the opportunity to spend time at Simon George's impressive 'Heaton Lodge Junction' layout. This layout is truly inspirational, and by chance, can operate much of the same stock as used on 'Alexandra Sidings' (except for the Class 504 EMU)!





ABOVE: 'Alexandra Sidings' has its own vehicle maintenance depot to keep the BR road vehicles in service, including the Scammell Scarab tractor units. A Bedford HA van is having work done on its front brakes.

LEFT: This EMU is scratch-built using parts from Easy Build Coaches.

BELOW: The re-fuelling point is located next to a demolished building, which still has the remnants of plaster on the walls. An old grounded CCT body is used as a store for materials needed for servicing locomotives.

For me, the opportunity to see and use 'Heaton Lodge Junction' to give some of the stock a 'good run out' was a real test of their durability. For Keith, it was a chance to compare and discuss scenic techniques with Simon, which was most valuable. Eagle-eyed readers may even have spotted some of the stock running on 'Heaton Lodge Junction'.

Following a two-year period of construction in which combinations of baseboards were transported between houses (lockdowns allowing), the first time the full layout was put together was four weeks before its first show (MIOG) in March 2022. Minor changes were made before the three-day exhibition with 'Heaton Lodge Junction' at Shepton Mallet. Thankfully, there were no serious issues discovered during this baptism of fire.

Having just completed this layout, there are no current plans to build a new one, but in the long term, maybe a replacement for our other layout, 'Apethorn Junction'? ■

About the modellers

Name: Keith Harrison
How many years modelling: Since the 1960s
Name of first layout: 'Europ'
Favourite era/region: Italian Railways/1950s BR (WR)

Name: David Hampson
How many years modelling: 25 years
Name of first layout: 'Oldham King Street'
Favourite era/region: 1970s, BR (M)
Favourite locomotive: Class 40

We both became interested in railways as a result of our fathers' working on British Railways/ BR, principally in signalling. This led to family trips, holidays by rail, and a following of 1960s and 1970s railway operations.



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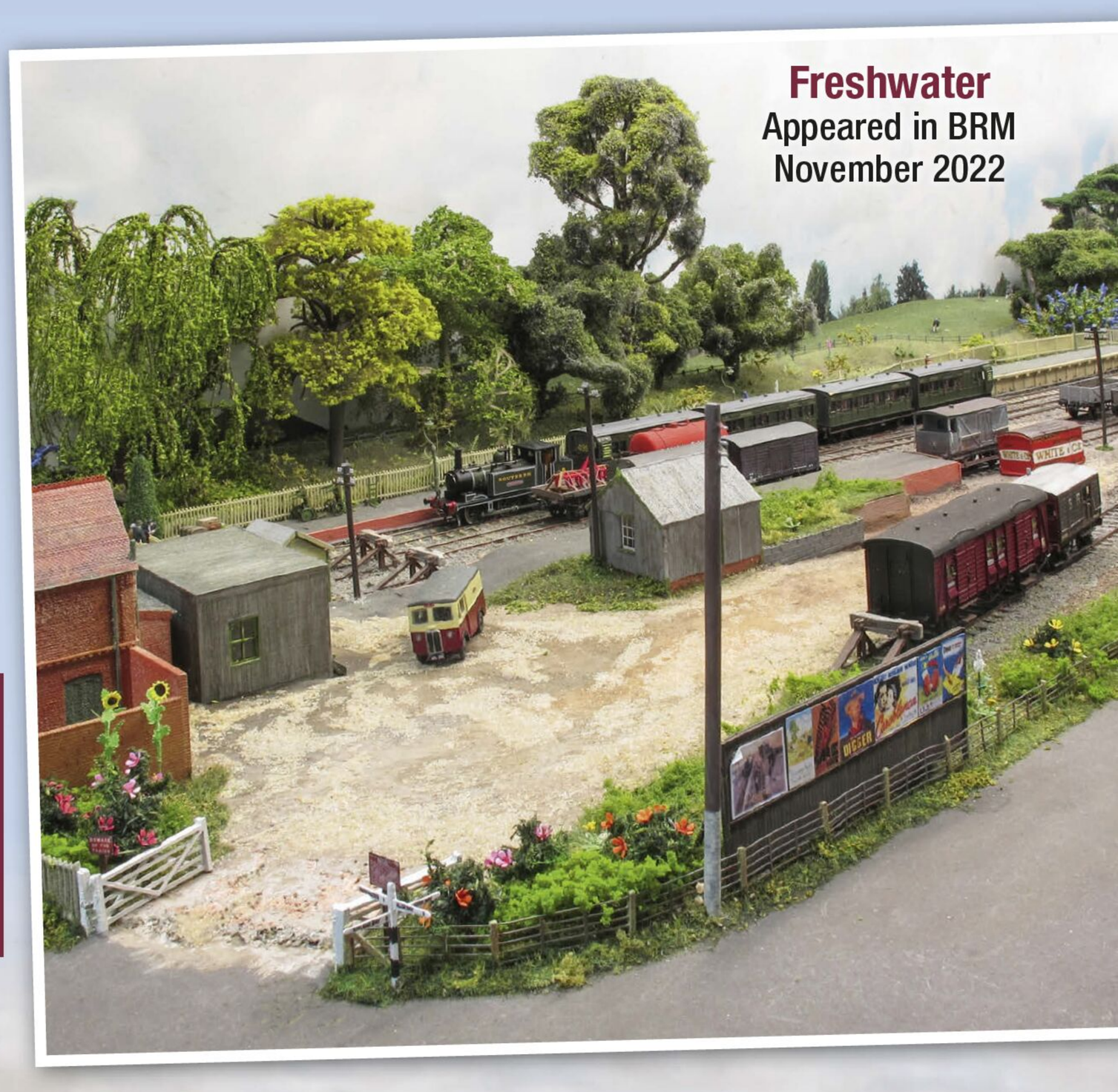
The retaining wall separates the two levels of the layout, and includes refuge areas for staff working on the line. Signals are wall-mounted and operated by servos. The buildings are all removable.

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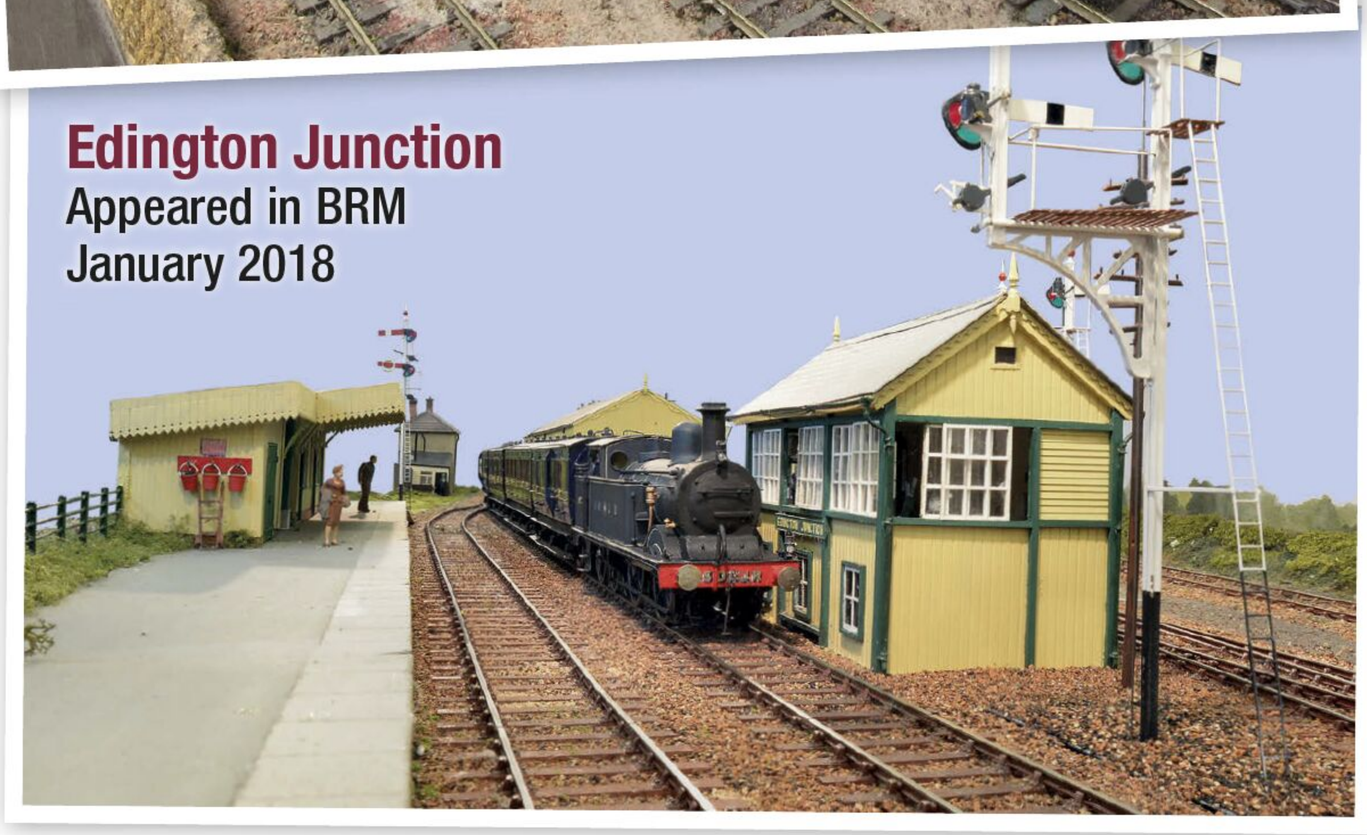
Copenhagen Fields
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Hornby's Big Four Collection



Tony Wright



Hornby LNER Class A1 *Hermit* No. 4478

Released as one of a quartet of models representing 'The Big Four' (the other three being a GWR 'Castle', Southern Railway 'King Arthur' and LMS Fowler 2-6-4T; a limited edition of 500 pieces of each one), this is Hornby's latest manifestation of this elegant class.

The prototype was built in 1923 (the first year of 'The Big Four'), and the model is representative of this up to 1930; by then, long-travel valves had been fitted (an extended cover above the cylinders being the outward appearance) and the boiler fittings and cab roof had been cut-down from the GNR loading gauge to the LNER composite one. Some earlier models of this class suffered from a somewhat 'bendy' footplate, but this is not the case here. In fact (along with the firm's current A3 models), the footplate is now made of cast metal, which means no bending but also gives the added advantage of extra adhesive weight.

Performance was, as expected, silky smooth and powerful, and the livery application is superb. There's even a firebox glow. Provision for DCC is in the tender. I thoroughly recommend this model.



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Hornby GWR Castle Class *Caldicote Castle* No.4074

The GWR representative of the 'Big Four' Limited Edition range from Hornby is this representation of the second-built of Collett's highly successful Castle Class 4-6-0. In fact, it's interesting to compare it with the Gresley A1 I'm reviewing at the same time, because, in the 1925 locomotive exchanges between the LNER and the GWR, the Castle proved its superiority over the LNER A1, on both its own Paddington to Plymouth road and the LNER's main line from Kings Cross as far as Doncaster (I have to say that both models were equally powerful and smooth running – so, an honourable draw?).

The model represents the Castle as built, towing the smaller type of tender attached to this class. As intimated, performance is exemplary and the standard of livery application is exquisite, though it's my understanding that the spasher tops should be black, not green. Strangely (given that it's been present on other Hornby Castles), the prominent lubricator 'blister' is missing from the RH side of the smokebox.

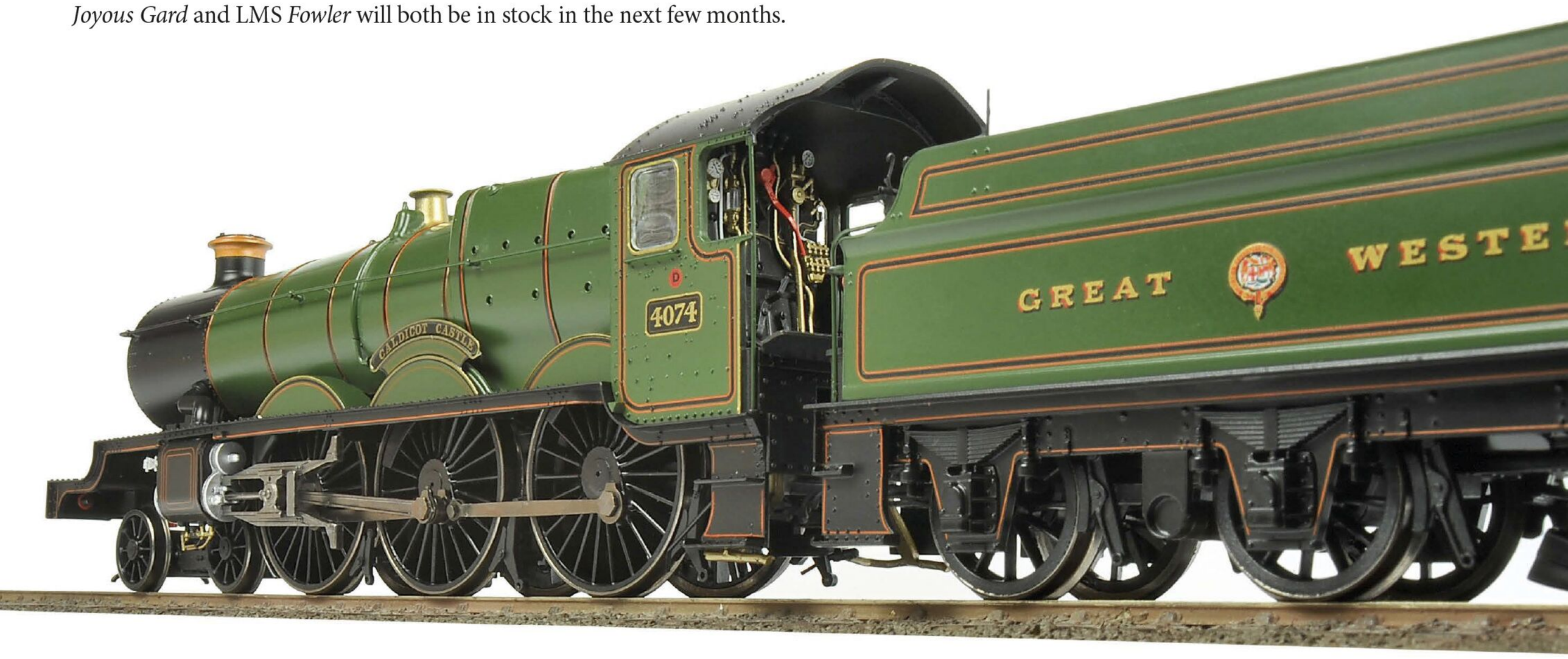
As with all new loco models these days, it would seem, there are bits to be added by the purchaser. Another thoroughly-recommended locomotive.

As with the other three locomotives in this limited edition range, I'm sure it'll be popular, and not just with collectors. A numbered certificate is also supplied with each one.

Both of these models are available to order now from Hornby's website, to make sure you can get the whole collection, Hornby recommends pre-ordering the final two models, too. The SR *Joyous Gard* and LMS *Fowler* will both be in stock in the next few months.

FACTFILE

Models:
Hornby LNER Class A1 *Hermit* No. 4478
Hornby GWR Castle Class *Caldicote Castle* No.4074
Price: £218.99
Era: 3
Construction: Plastic body and diecast footplates
Weight: 340g (Castle), 400g (A1)
Minimum curves: Radius 2



00 gauge | 1953 - ever-enduring | £££ £399.95

Rapido 'The Titfield Thunderbolt' – Deluxe train pack

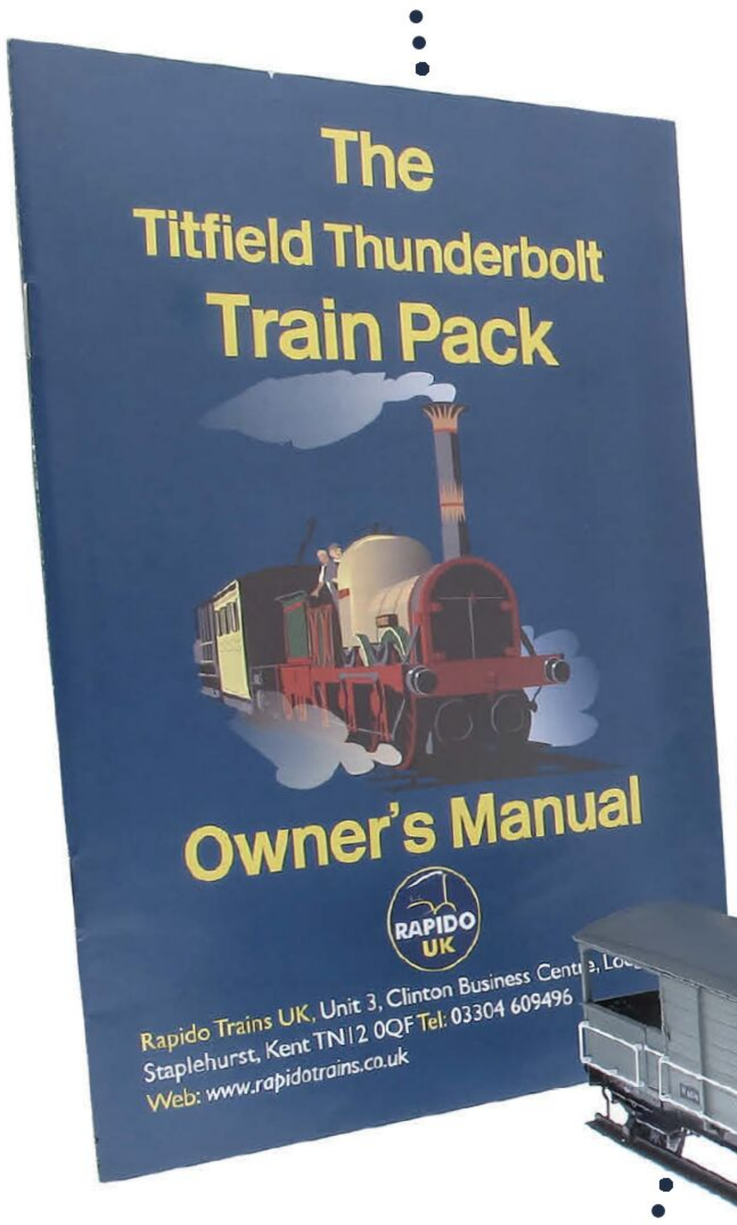


Andy York

Informative manual covering the history of the prototype in addition to all you need to know about owning and maintaining the model.

Full colour book commemorating the 70th anniversary of the release of the film, including much background information.

Certificate acknowledging Studio Canal's support for the model, seemingly signed by Valentine before he hit the gin bottle.







GW Dia.AA20 'Toad' brake, W68740, as used in the movie.

Loriot 'Y' well wagon mounted with Dan's house.

Film character figures 3D-printed in full colour of the Squire, the Bishop of Welchester and the Vicar, Sam Weech, as driver.

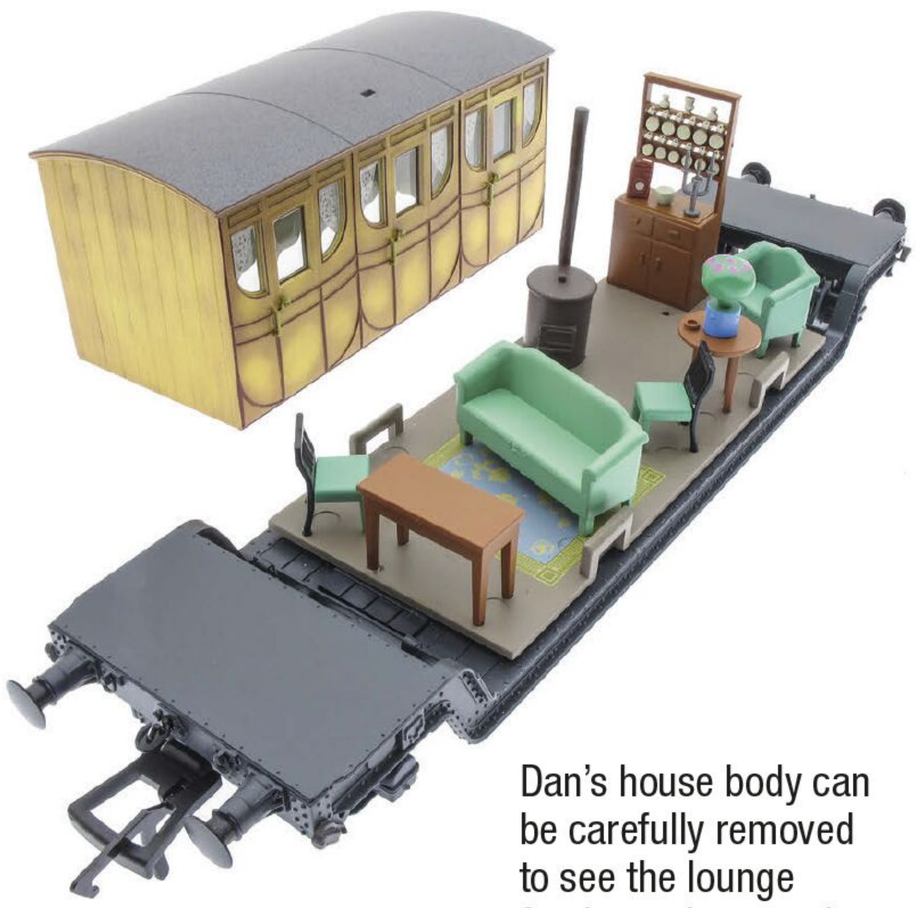
We have previously reviewed Rapido's Liverpool and Manchester *Lion*, Loriot 'Y' well wagon and GW Dia. AA20 'Toad' brake within BRM, all excellent models individually, but now comes their true reason for existence and very much a case of the sum of the parts being greater than the whole in the superb, delightful and evocative Titfield Thunderbolt set, produced, with a licence and excellent support from the film's owners, Studio Canal.

Our review model is the Deluxe train pack, which includes a captivating commemorative booklet delving into the film and its fascinating production and full-colour 3D-printed models of three of the principal characters involved with the operation of Thunderbolt.

The delights of the Deluxe set include DCC sound with quotable dialogue excerpts from key moments in the story; these can be found in our video clip on *World of Railways* and are worth the additional entertainment, including a tongue-in-cheek F20, which will give a wry smile to those who know the backstory of the inception and announcement of the Titfield models.

Thunderbolt was repainted in more vivid tones for the filming in 1953 to make use of 'Technicolor' as one of Britain's early full-length colour cinema releases, and it is in this guise with red frames, patterned chimney and *Thunderbolt* nameplates we see the model, exclusively available from Rapido. Dan's house, mounted on an unmarked Loriot 'Y', features full internal detail as used in the film sets with weathered appearance as found in the field and can be opened up. The train, to meet the Light Railway Act of 1896, of course, needed a brake, hence the 'Toad' van.

The set is a luxury, a collectors' piece, rich in ephemera, which touches happy and nostalgic memories for those of us who remember the film from childhood, and have probably watched it many times since.

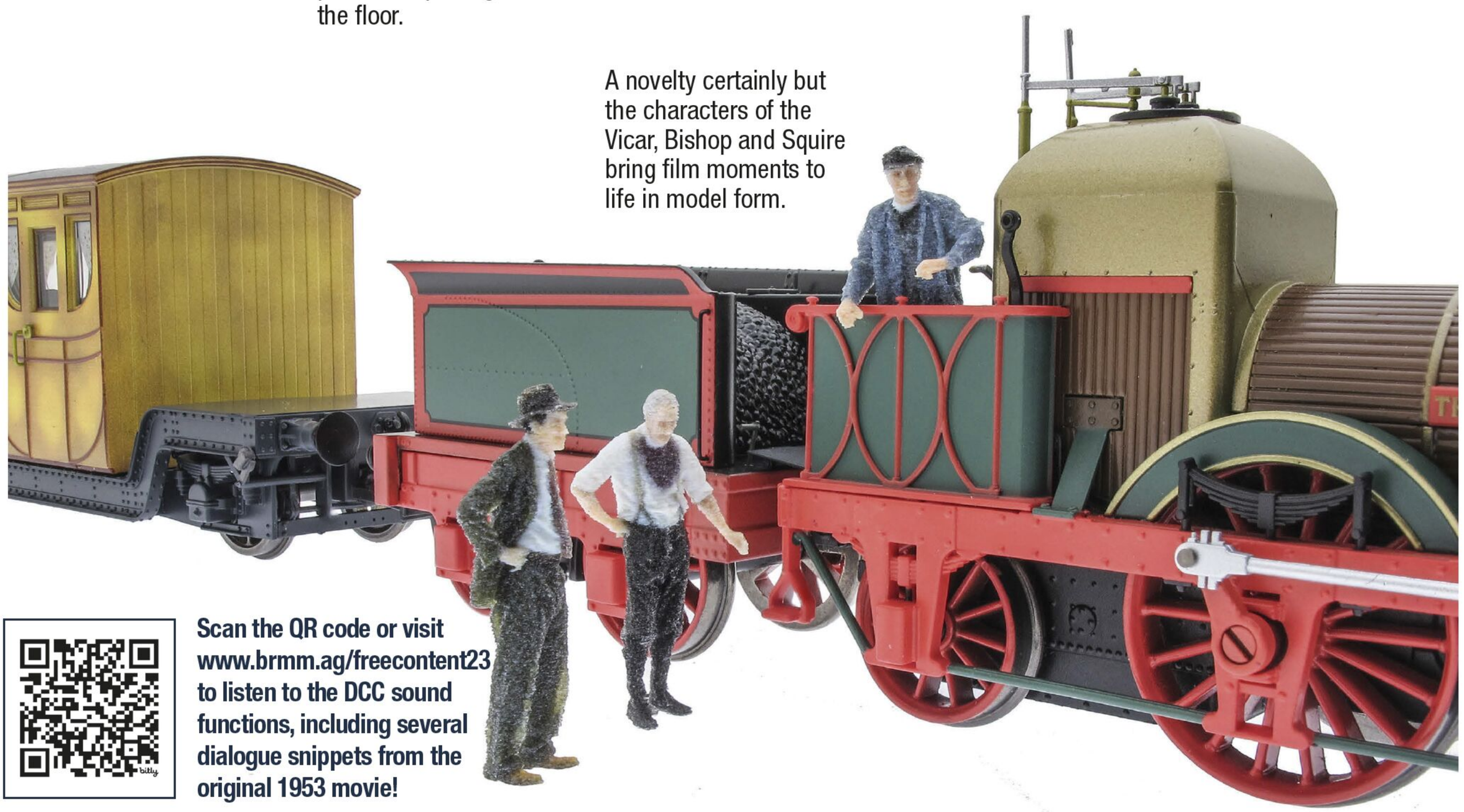


Dan's house body can be carefully removed to see the lounge furniture, down to the printed carpet rug on the floor.

If you liked the film, you'll love the book, rich in colour and trivia.



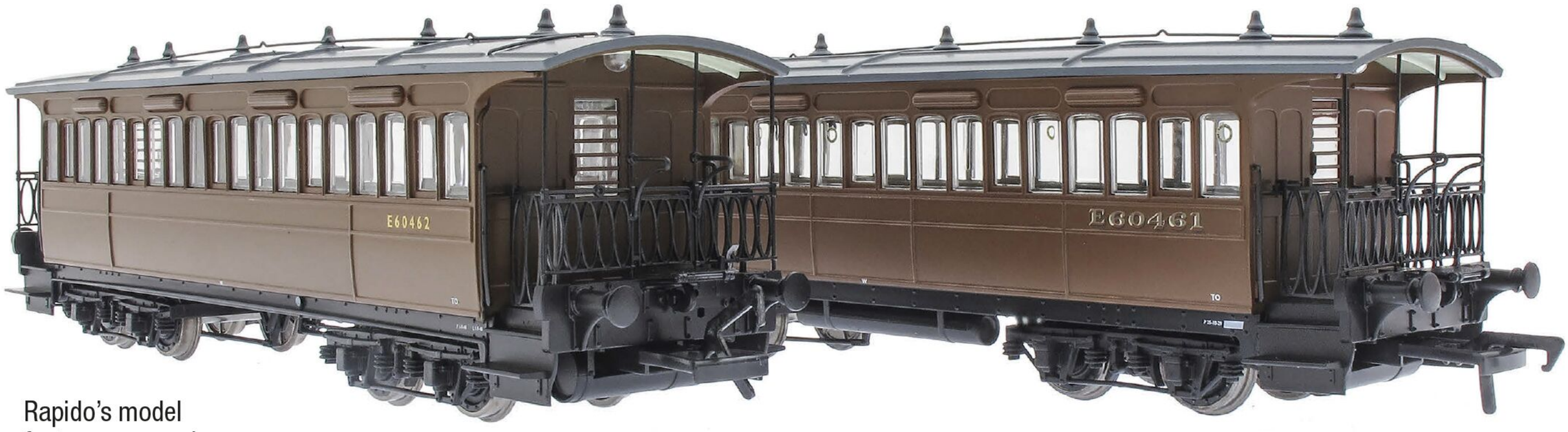
A novelty certainly but the characters of the Vicar, Bishop and Squire bring film moments to life in model form.



Scan the QR code or visit www.brmm.ag/freecontent23 to listen to the DCC sound functions, including several dialogue snippets from the original 1953 movie!

00 gauge | 2 | £££ £74.95

Rapido Wisbech & Upwell tramcars and Titfield Buffet Car



Rapido's model features as much detail as possible



Faithful to the vivid film repaint for Technicolor, the tramcar completes the rolling stock set of Rapido's 'Titfield' range.



Andy York

It's a rarity to see such niche coaching stock available ready-to-run, but once again, this is a by-product of Rapido's development of their Titfield Thunderbolt range.

Everything about the Wisbech & Upwell Tramway was unusual and its coaches were certainly no exception, with two bogie coaches built by The Great Eastern Railway in 1884 for use on the line, number 7 as a composite and number 8 as a second-class vehicle, which still meant some form of brake vehicle was required for a complete train. Both vehicles were similar in appearance; just over 37ft long and had a maximum height of 10ft 2in – much lower than conventional railway standards. No. 7 could hold 10 First Class passengers and 22 Second, while No. 8 had a total capacity of 34 Second (later Third) Class passengers on the longitudinal seating; additional standing capacity was catered for with roof hanging straps as shown in the interior of this superb model.

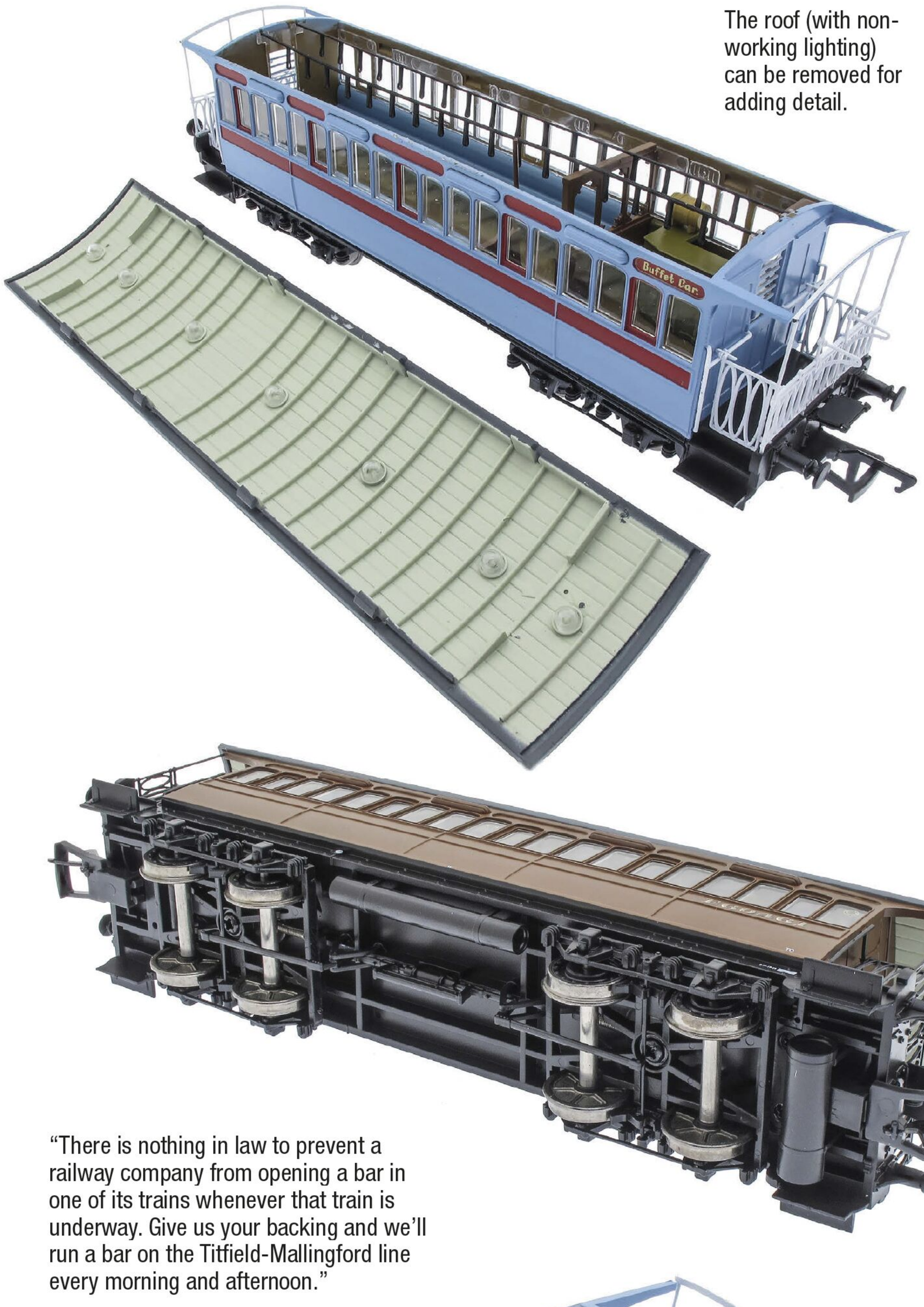
Body panelling and roof details differed between the vehicles (all catered for in the tooling suite) but they remained almost unchanged physically during their working life with the exception of modified footsteps. After passenger services on Cambridgeshire's Wisbech and Upwell line ceased on December 31, 1927, both vehicles were transferred to the Kelvedon and Tollesbury Light Railway in Essex, where they worked until that line closed in 1951.

Stardom then beckoned for No. 8. It was repainted and starred in the Ealing comedy *The Titfield Thunderbolt* – complete with bar, largely, for Mr. Valentine, which can be seen inside the model with bar-mounted barrel but it seems to be missing some gin bottles! It was earmarked for preservation by the British Transport Commission and was even restored into GER livery. Sadly, due to a misunderstanding, it was scrapped on March 9, 1957. No.7 was sold and its body became an onion store before being rescued for preservation. Acquired by the M&GN Society in 2002, it has been fully restored - complete with a Titfield-style bar.

The finish and decoration of the models is superb, and the verandah railings and detail are exquisite and are produced in liveries and numbers covering their LNER life in brown, through British Railways numbering, the Titfield repaint and the preserved Great Eastern crimson livery, as worn by the preserved No.7 on the North Norfolk Railway.

Even if you're not modelling the Wisbech and Upwell line or recreating the Titfield Thunderbolt story, the models are of sufficient and justifiable appeal to excuse their appearance on fictitious light railway scenes, which seem to be of increasing interest at the moment.

On balance I would say these are one of the best-quality 4mm ready-to-run coaches I have reviewed; a really top-quality product.



The roof (with non-working lighting) can be removed for adding detail.

FACTFILE

Models:
919001 – LNER Brown No.60461
919002 – LNER Brown No.60462
919003 - BR(E) Brown No.E60461
919004 – BR(E) Brown No.E60462
919005 – GER Crimson No.7 (as preserved)
919006 – BR Maroon No. E60461
919007 – BR Maroon No. E60462
922003 - Titfield Thunderbolt Buffet Car
Era: 1884 - preservation
Construction: Plastic body and weighted chassis
Weight: 65g
Minimum curves: Radius 1 (371mm)
Accessories: n/a

WHAT WE LIKE

- ✓ Verandah detail
- ✓ Underframe detail
- ✓ Interior detail

"There is nothing in law to prevent a railway company from opening a bar in one of its trains whenever that train is underway. Give us your backing and we'll run a bar on the Titfield-Mallingford line every morning and afternoon."





Harking back to the style of horse-drawn tramcars, the end verandah of the coaches gives a distinctive style.

00 gauge | 8 - present | £££ £169.99-£259.99

Accurascale Class 37/6



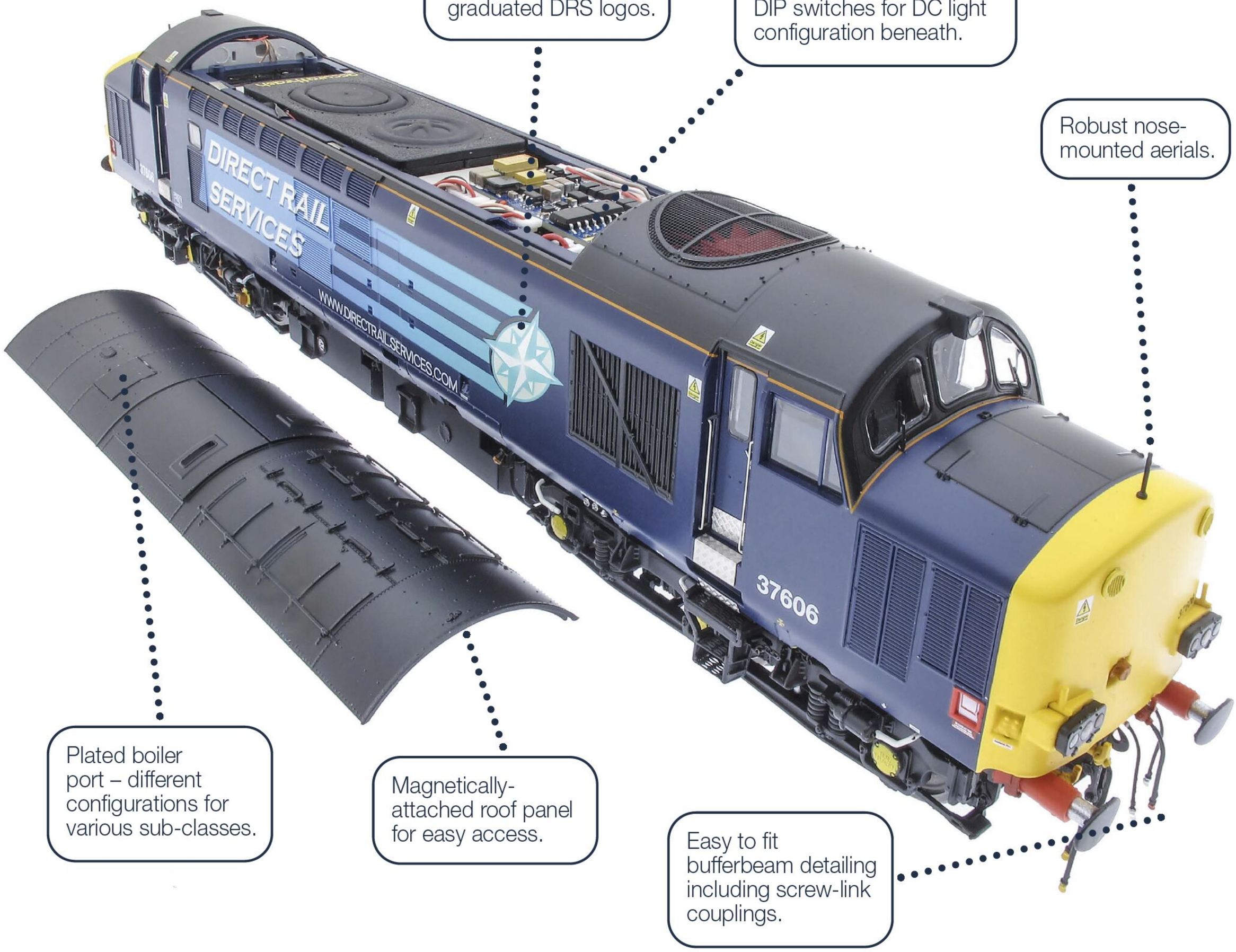
Andy York

Initially conceived as locomotives for the Eurostar 'Nightstar' sleeper services, the Class 37/6 locomotives utilised former Class 50 bogies for faster running and are modelled by Accurascale in DRS and Europhoenix liveries with a distinctive style of flush-finished nose with WIPAC light clusters. Two models have been produced in the early DRS livery, two in Compass livery, including our review sample of 37606 and 37609 in the later turquoise-flare DRS livery. Finally, there is 37608 in rail Operation Group's striking Europhoenix livery as *Andromeda*.

These models complete the first run of Class 37 models announced, but the second run of models, including early examples and Class 37/7, is now in production, with delivery anticipated by the middle of next year. Most of these are currently sold on pre-orders but some stockists do have availability.

Our review model of 37606 performed as well as all the previous models delivered this year, managing a load of 20 Mk.1 coaches capably, with plenty of sound to enjoy matching the wonderful running qualities.





Excellent portrayal of blue to green graduated DRS logos.

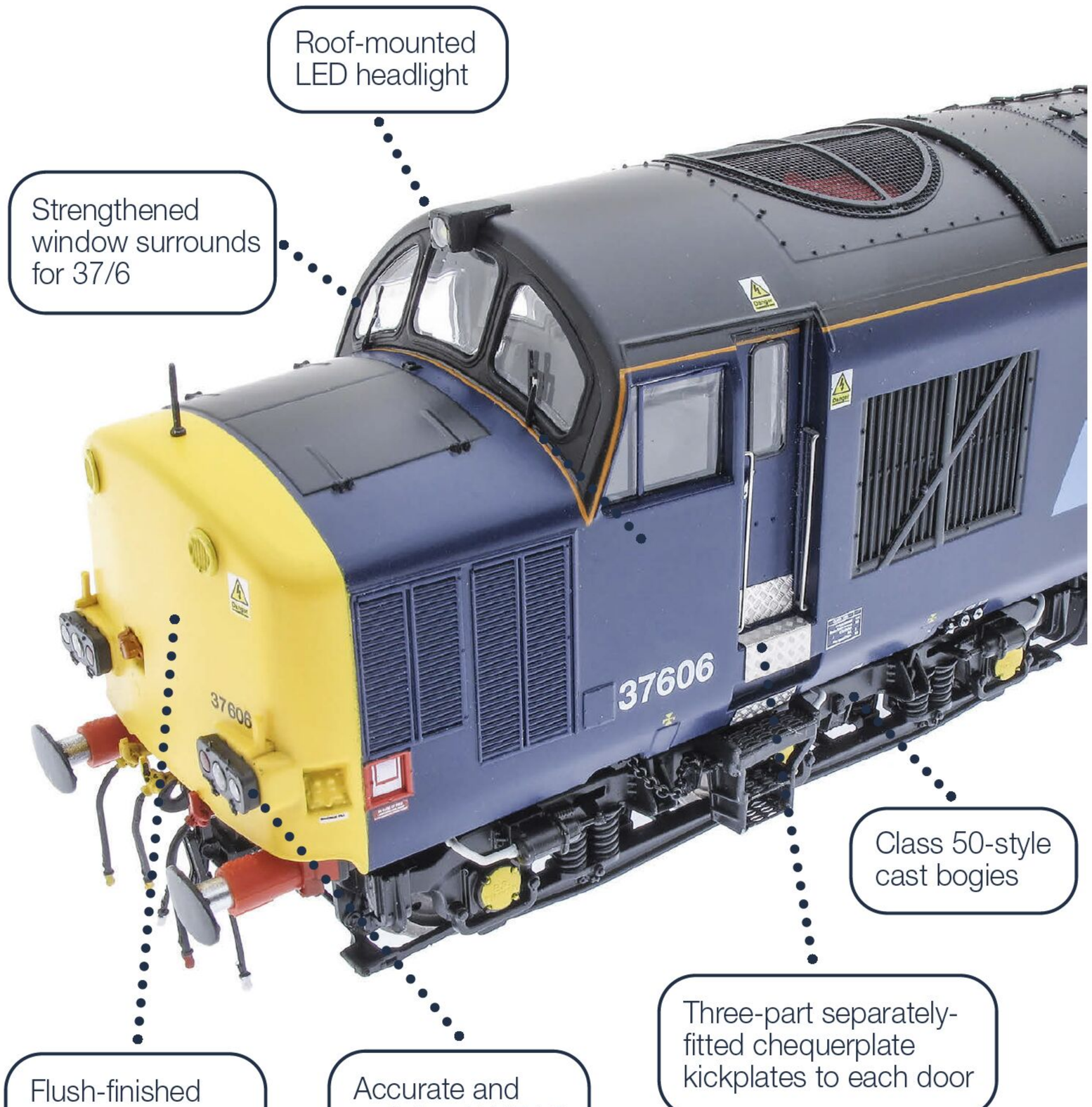
Easy-access circuit board for 21-pin decoder and DIP switches for DC light configuration beneath.

Robust nose-mounted aerials.

Plated boiler port – different configurations for various sub-classes.

Magnetically-attached roof panel for easy access.

Easy to fit bufferbeam detailing including screw-link couplings.



FACTFILE

Models: ACC231937608 37608 Andromeda Europhoenix / Rail Operations Group grey/ red/silver, ACC231637609 37609 DRS Compass, ACC231537606 37606 DRS Compass, ACC231437602 37602 DRS Compass, ACC231337607 37607 DRS early, ACC231237605DCC37605 DRS early
Era: 1994 – current
Price: DCC ready £169.99, DCC Sound £259.99
Construction: Diecast chassis, plastic body with etched detailing parts
Weight: 690g
Minimum curves: Radius 2 (438mm)
DCC socket: 21-pin MTX
Accessory pack: Bufferbeam detailing, cosmetic screw-link couplings, snowploughs

“The LED roof-mounted headlights and WIPAC cluster lights are nicely toned and not overly bright.”



The Class 50-style cast bogies have many separately fitted parts, including etched bogie steps. There is a substantial amount of piping above the bogies to the central tanks.

WHAT WE LIKE

- ✓ Livery application and sharpness of print
- ✓ Metal chequerplate to door kickplates
- ✓ Design of bogie securing chains
- ✓ Roof panel and handle detail
- ✓ Sprung buffers with detail to rear of buffer heads
- ✓ Plug and socket connections for tidily-routed internal wiring
- ✓ Lighting colour and brightness levels
- ✓ A deep bass to engine sounds
- ✓ Value for money

00 gauge | 2-5 | £££ £64.80

Dapol GWR 'Mainline City' toplight coaches



Andy York



The GWR crimson lake livery and lining is charming, to the extent that I wonder if the firm might ever look at Midland coaches?

From 1920, the Great Western Railway created six sets of coaches, semi-permanently formed into rakes of six vehicles comprising of two composite, two third class and two brake third to operate services between Reading and Windsor to the City of London via the Metropolitan lines to Aldgate and Liverpool Street.

'Toplights' as a whole are a wide-ranging reference to many coach types of the period, so it is understandable that Dapol has first tackled a coherent, manageable and targeted type to produce, with an indication that gangwayed types might appear in the future. The Mainline City coaches are also very logical as an ideal accompaniment to the firm's 61xx Prairie model. It's a long time since we have seen 4mm scale coaches from Dapol and, I have to say, these just ooze quality, so if we have more of the same to look forward to, we are in for a treat.

From the box, the weight is impressive at 160g per coach. With a diecast chassis, they are beautifully free-running; my mind wanders to how well a slip coach could be achieved, but I digress. Our review samples sport the GW lined crimson lake livery with the garter crest (Set 1), suitable for their introduction before the lined chocolate and cream livery with garter crest appeared in 1922 (Set 2). From 1927, this livery received the twin-cities crest (Set 3) and, from 1934, chocolate cream wore the GWR 'shirtbutton' livery (Set 4) with the twin-cities crest returning to the 1942-onwards wartime austerity GWR brown livery (Set 5), which lasted until nationalisation when BR crimson (Set 6) became the standard for suburban coaching stock. After the War, the sets of six started to be separated and appeared in diverse locations in the latter years of the GW.

The crimson lake finish to the samples is superb and the lining and lettering fine and precise. Under close magnification, the garter crest appears fuzzy but is perfectly acceptable at normal viewing distances. The 'toplight' reference to these coaches refers to the upper window panel either side of a compartment door. Dapol has created a frosted effect with textured moulding to the glazing. There's a lot of separately-fitted and fine, yet robust, detail fitted, including the roof vents with separately-fitted and painted metal commode handles and door handles; exquisite.

The roof can be unclipped and carefully lifted, leaving the conduits at the brake end in place to fit a 6-pin decoder for DCC control of the LED lighting (and admire the etched luggage racks and interior finish); the brake end features a red taillamp, which operates at the opposite end from the train engine; excellent! The current is collected from the axle pinpoints inside the excellently-defined diecast 9' bogies with fully brake linkage represented.

On balance, I would say these are one of the best-quality 4mm ready-to-run coaches I have reviewed; a really top quality product.



Detailed diecast bogies include current collection for the interior lighting.



The brake end has separately-fitted communications conduits in addition to a fixed working taillamp.



While the lining and lettering is superb, the only flaw is in the quality of the garter crest's definition.

FACTFILE

Models:
GWR lined crimson lake Set 1 – 2 x 3 coaches to form set of 6
GWR lined chocolate/cream Set 2
GWR twin city crest lined chocolate/cream Set 3
GWR shirtbutton lined chocolate/cream Set 4
GWR all brown Set 5
BR crimson Set 6
Era: 1920-57
Construction: Plastic body with diecast chassis
Weight: 160g
Minimum curves: Radius 2 (1028mm)
Accessories: Rigid coupling bars, tension-locks for brakes and bufferbeam detailing

WHAT WE LIKE

- ✓ Livery colours and decoration
- ✓ Lighting functions
- ✓ Good weight and running
- ✓ Full set running numbers



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