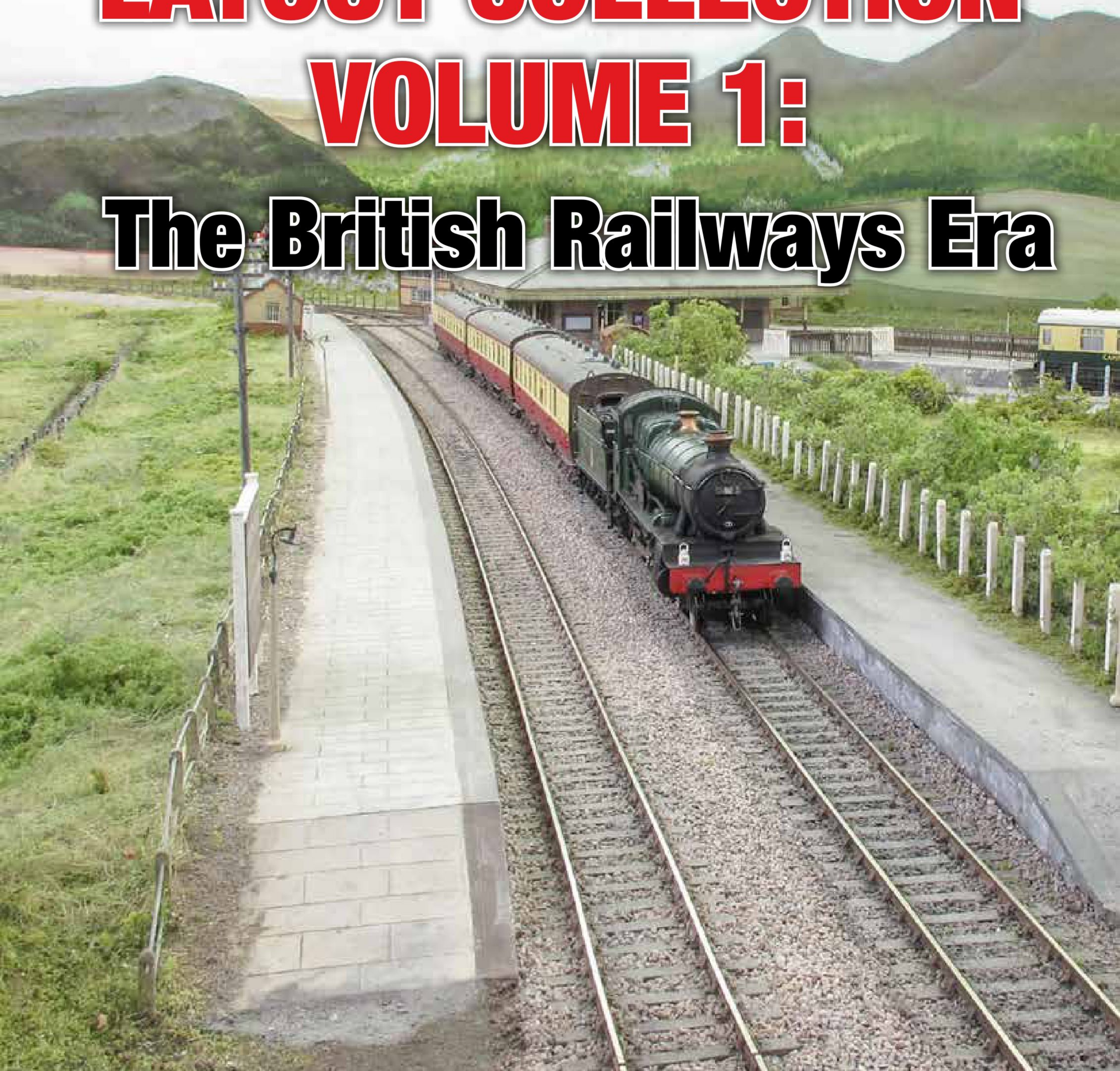




LAYOUT COLLECTION

VOLUME 1:

The British Railways Era



BRITISH RAILWAY MODELLING

BRM

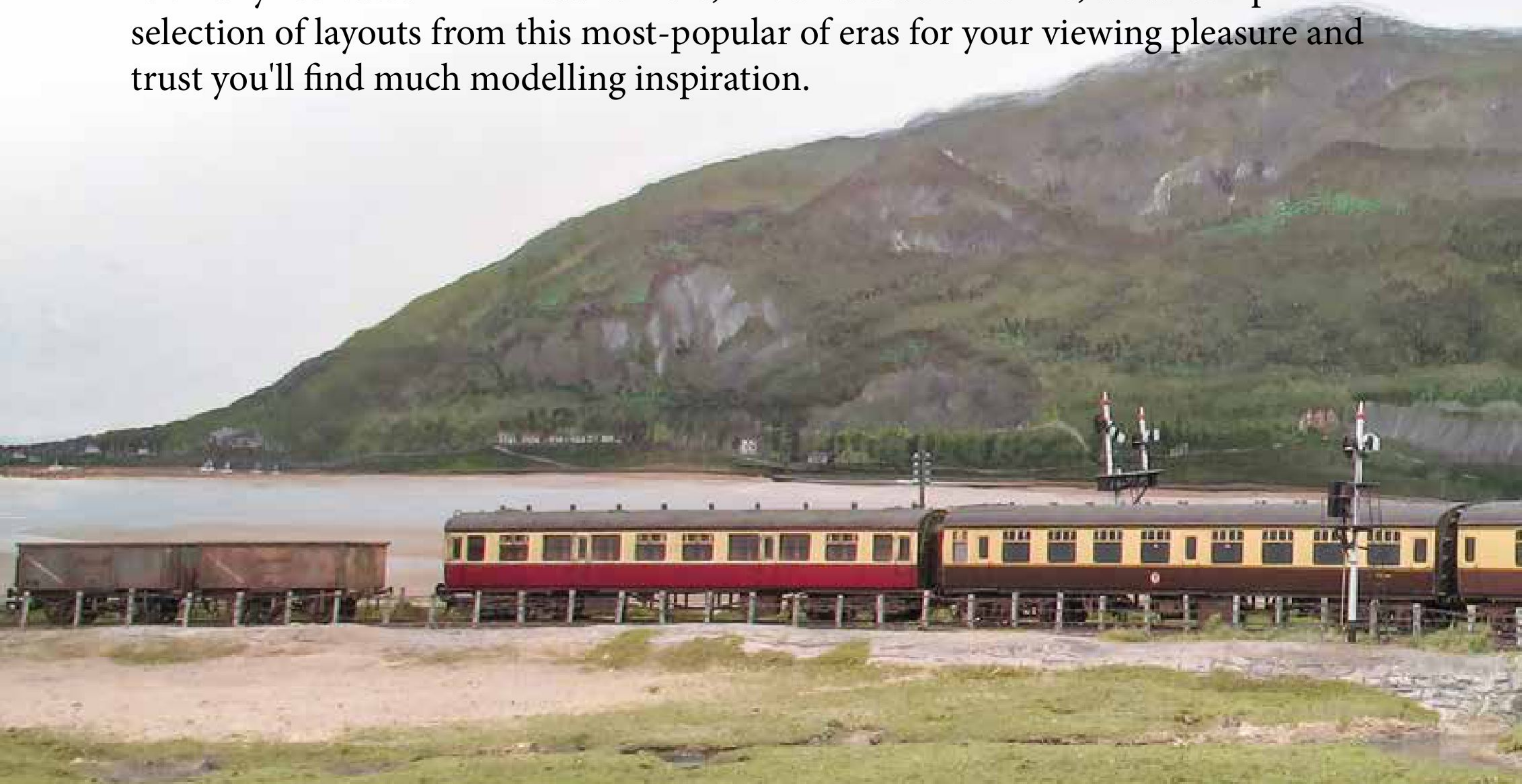
LAYOUT COLLECTION

VOL 1:

The BR era

Contents

From nationalisation of the 'Big Four' in 1948 until its privatisation from 1994, the British Railways (later, British Rail) era oversaw many changes on Britain's railways, including the rebuilding of the railways after WWII, the introduction of diesel and electric power and the rationalisation of the network. The era certainly has provided railway enthusiasts with many fond memories, which have been faithfully recreated in miniature. Here, in our latest bookazine, we've compiled a selection of layouts from this most-popular of eras for your viewing pleasure and trust you'll find much modelling inspiration.



P4 Barmouth Junction (OO)

P52 Barton Road (N)

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BARMOUTH JUNCTION

Geoff Taylor's windswept coastal scene is part of a much more substantial layout. Big enough, in fact, that its timetable takes over six hours to complete...

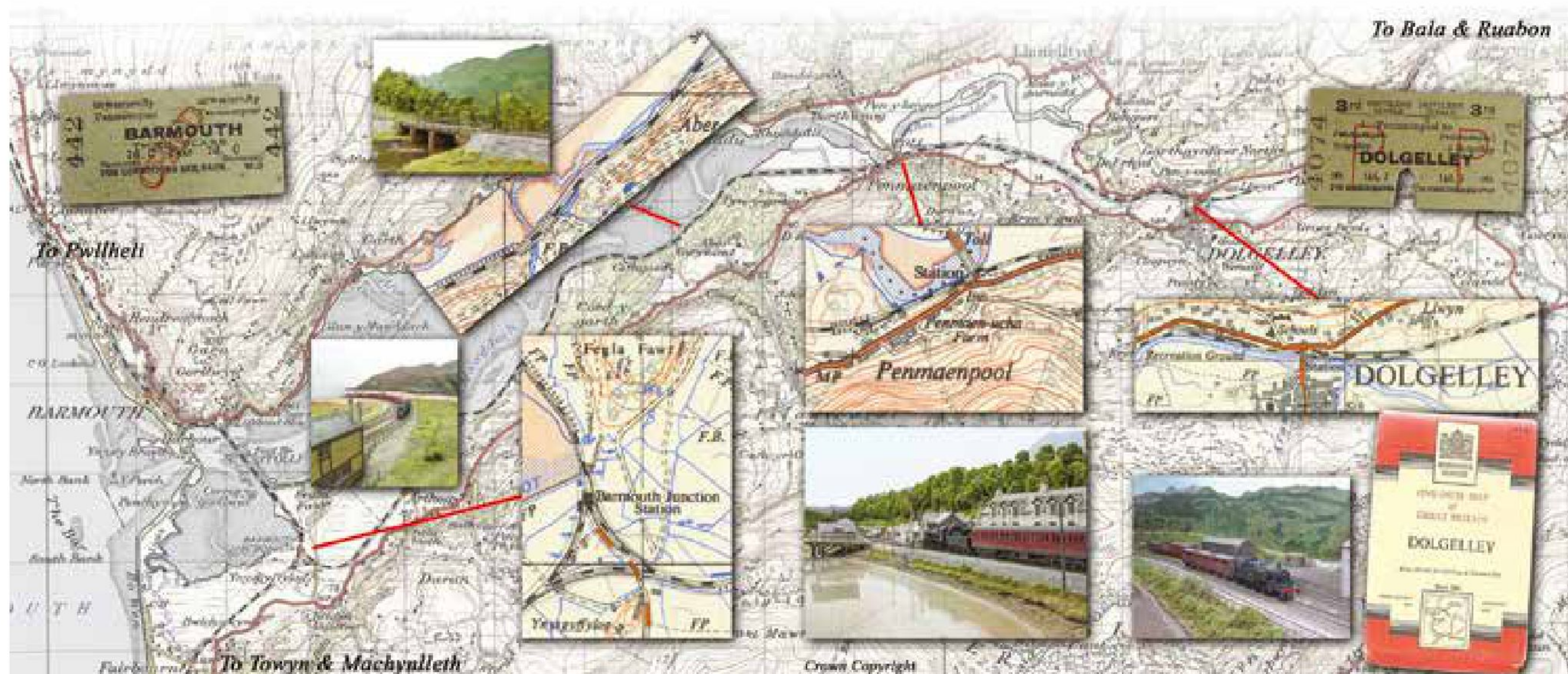
Factfile

Layout name: Barmouth Junction
Scale/gauge: 4mm:1ft / 16.5 (00 gauge)
Size: 19ft x 7ft
Era/region: BR Western Region 1948 - 1965
Location: West coast of Wales
Layout type: Junction to fiddle yards
Power/control: DCC, Lenz controllers
Words: Geoff Taylor
Photography: Andy York

most of the space would be for Barmouth Junction, but I realised I could include Penmaenpool station and Dolgelley goods yard too



'Lydham Manor' draws into Barmouth Junction station with the slopes of Cader Idris on the handpainted backscene. Geoff's handbuilt station is a fine record of the long-gone building. This platform is the only one which still survives from the original four.



Barmouth Junction is part of a layout that includes Penmaenpool (as featured in **BRM** July and August 2016) and Dolgelley goods yard. I first became interested in this station when I borrowed the C. C. Green book *The Coast Lines of the Cambrian Railway*, but due to space restrictions at the time, I decided to model Penhelig, which is actually another station in Aberdovey. The larger station is a little way out of town to the north. Plans were drawn up for Penhelig and a start was made on the buildings, but then we moved to mid-Wales to start up my model building business.

The layout was shelved while I concentrated on the business, the house and the garden. A few years later, a space was acquired for a shed, so the plans and books came out again and it was then that I decided to model Barmouth Junction. This was ideal for me as my 'day job' was now constructing model buildings and this station didn't have many buildings on it. I also like to see a fair amount of scenery instead of just trackwork on layouts, so it was just what I wanted. I may never have finished an urban scene anyway, because the models take such a lot of time to construct. I liked the idea that trains came up both the branch and the main coast lines to the junction and then went into a single track across the bridge. This could be interesting to operate.

Plans were drawn to a scale of one inch to one foot, to see what could be achieved. The junction station would need a fair amount of space to model properly and, of course, there would be three storage yards



The perspective on the backscene, painted by Sara Heller, looking towards Llwyngwril is exactly that of a seagull's-eye view from Barmouth Junction as the Collett Goods' train snakes over the pointwork onto the single line section towards Aberdovey.

The handbuilt signals are a delight as is the concrete post and wire fencing which separates the railways land from the salt marshes of the Mawddach estuary. They are still there today.



too. I did think about modelling the lovely Barmouth Bridge but I thought it would take up too much space and wouldn't be too interesting as a model. I also needed some workspace built into the room, which was another factor in the design.

Most of the space would be for Barmouth Junction, but I realised that I could also get Penmaenpool station and Dolgelley goods yard in as well, by using gradients on different levels. I wanted to capture the windswept location of the area and model the platforms as near as possible to the real station. Both the main and branch lines used to splay out from the station but, by curving them inwards, it could actually work as a model. Also, I wanted the trains to go on a journey to get to the next station instead of just going through the backscene into the next section. Quite an ambitious plan, which I hoped would work!

From the scale plans, I drew it full size on lining paper, so I could see exactly how it looked. I was now ready to start the baseboards and framing. For the majority of the baseboard tops, I've used 12mm MDF and 9mm for the gradient boards. Wood framing is mostly 50 x 25mm with the legs being 50 x 50mm. Gradients have been built to a minimum of 1-in-48, but even that means that certain locomotives can't pull any more than three coaches, which is not really a problem as some trains only had three or four coaches anyway. I wanted the junction to be at a height of four feet, so everything else is less, coming down to the lowest part of the layout at three feet.

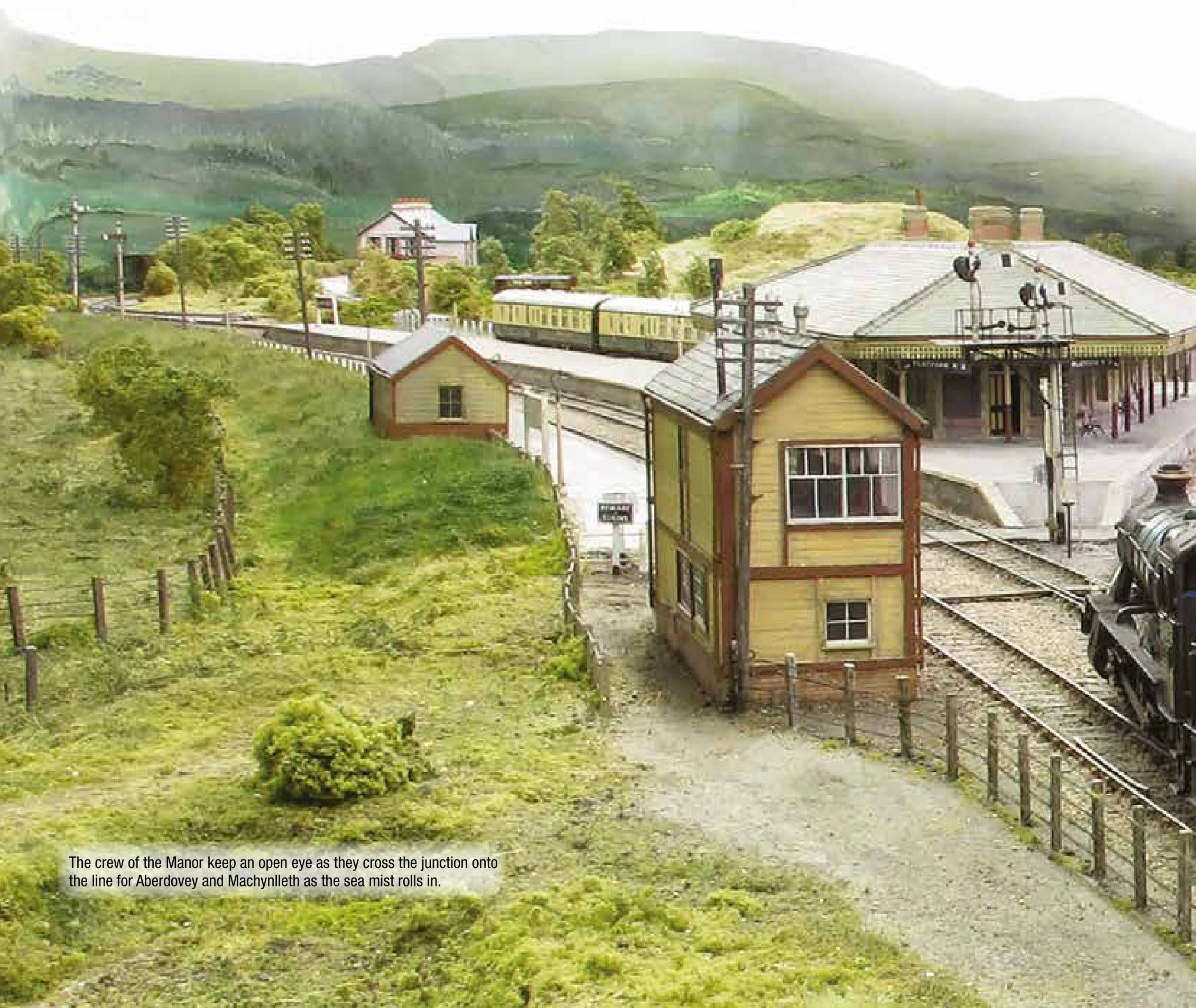
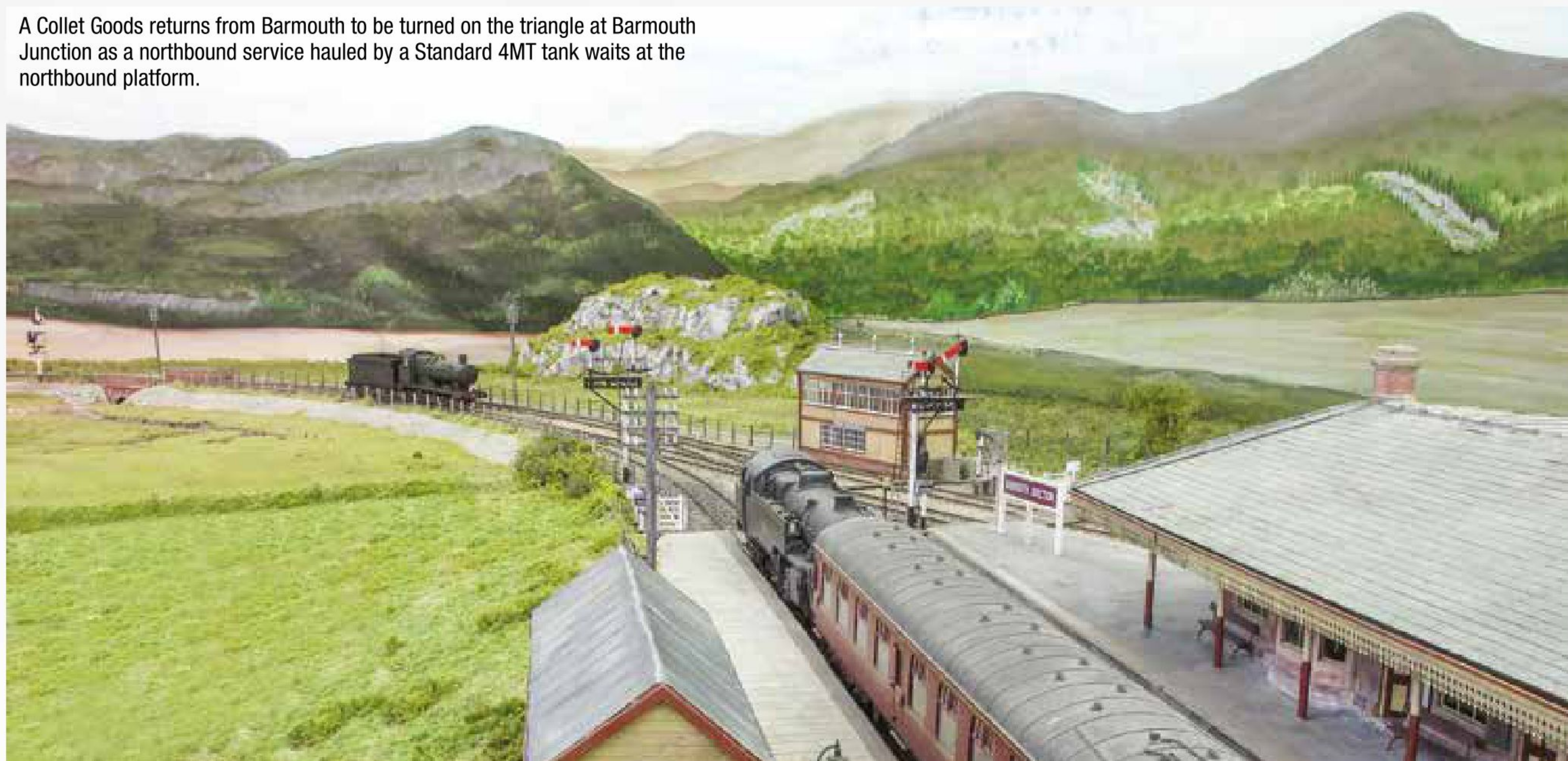
It was always going to be a DCC layout, so the wiring reflected that, as the boards were being made with bus wires going under or by the side of the tracks. Each piece of track is soldered to these with dropper wires. The Lenz system is used with the rotary controllers, which I find better than the thumbwheel. All locomotives have decoders and these are mostly TCS. Some also have sound decoders fitted, which somehow makes quite a difference to how you drive them.

Trackwork is 4mm 00 scale. The main reason for this is that I don't make locomotives and I didn't want to convert all the rolling stock wheels to either P4 or EM. I was determined that the track should look as good as I could get it, though. I've used SMP flexible track, which has had all the webbing cut off and then repositioned on the plan. This makes the Woodlands



LAYOUT FOCUS

A Collet Goods returns from Barmouth to be turned on the triangle at Barmouth Junction as a northbound service hauled by a Standard 4MT tank waits at the northbound platform.



The crew of the Manor keep an open eye as they cross the junction onto the line for Aberdovey and Machynlleth as the sea mist rolls in.

Scenics ballast a bit easier to put on. All the scenic sections of pointwork were hand-built by my friend John Bailey. The three storage yards and the hidden sections have Peco track and pointwork. Tortoise point motors have been used throughout and wired back to panels, with diagrams of the track and LEDs for direction. I've drawn up the panel displays on the computer and then had them printed onto metal and made wood surrounds for them. I had a lot of help with the panel and Tortoise wiring, as I get a bit phased with any more than two wires!

The three storage yards have been named as 'Barmouth', 'Machynlleth' and 'Ruabon', which gives an indication of where the trains are going to or coming from. Each is different to operate, with Ruabon being the easiest, as it is just in at one end and out at the other. 'Machynlleth' has a traverser at the end and a run round track, but it's 'Barmouth' that is the busiest. Trains come in and are detached at the end of each road using magnets for the Kadee couplings and a Pannier tank fetches the coaching stock back past the first point into the scenic section. Meanwhile, the

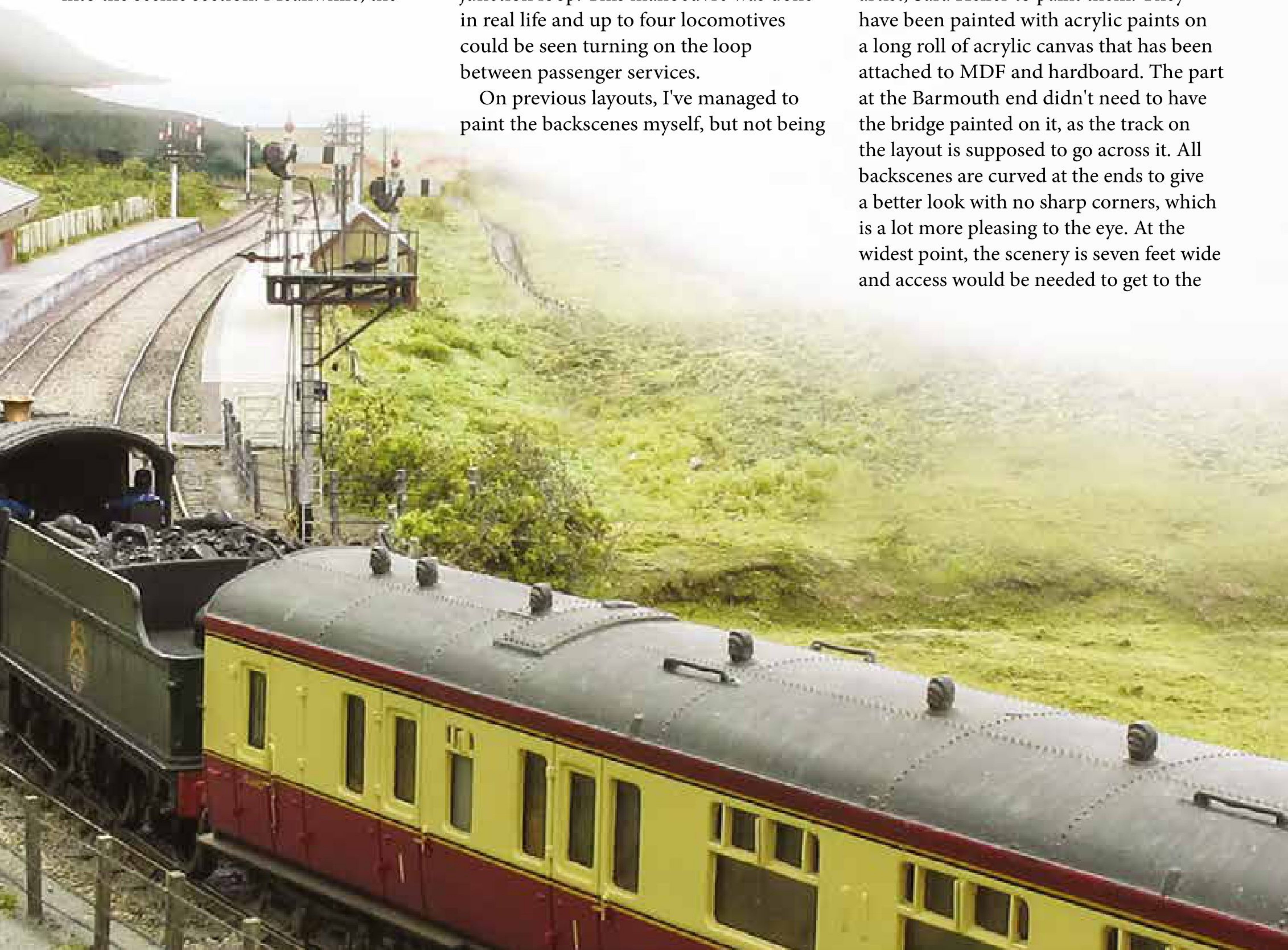
The signalman waits with the token for the Dolgelley branch for the driver of No. 7800, *Torquay Manor*.

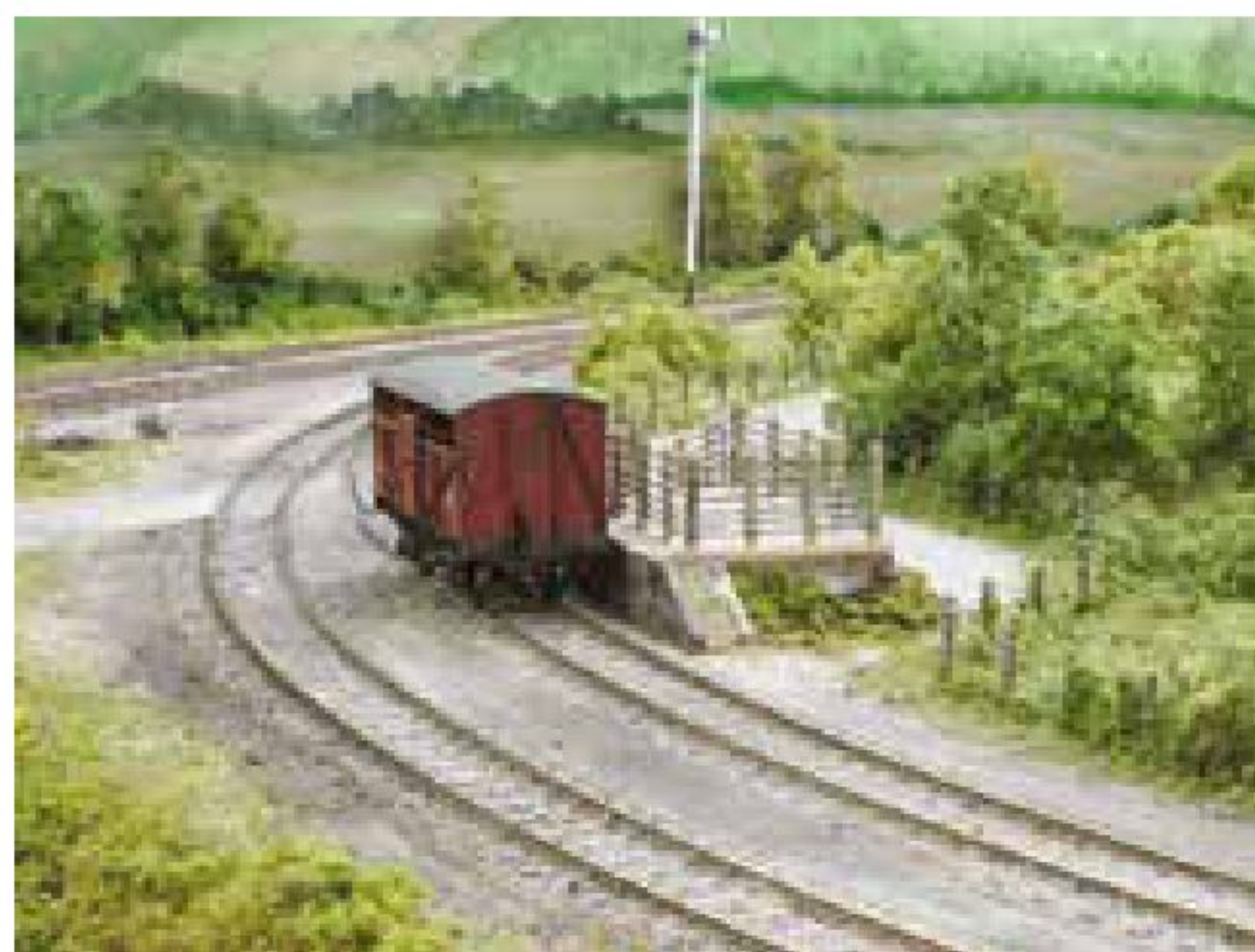


locomotive either backs to turn on the shed turntable or waits to turn on the junction loop. This manoeuvre was done in real life and up to four locomotives could be seen turning on the loop between passenger services.

On previous layouts, I've managed to paint the backscenes myself, but not being

an artist, I have kept them really simple. For this project I commissioned a local artist, Sara Heller to paint them. They have been painted with acrylic paints on a long roll of acrylic canvas that has been attached to MDF and hardboard. The part at the Barmouth end didn't need to have the bridge painted on it, as the track on the layout is supposed to go across it. All backscenes are curved at the ends to give a better look with no sharp corners, which is a lot more pleasing to the eye. At the widest point, the scenery is seven feet wide and access would be needed to get to the





furthest parts for maintenance. Two lifting sections have been made complete with scenery over the top and are pushed up from below and then secured with a wood bearer to keep them in place when working on the layout.

The rock faces of the small hill have been built up with polystyrene shapes glued together and a very thick layer of building plaster covering it. It was left to dry for two weeks to make sure it had all set properly. I used various tools to create the rock formations, such as a screwdriver, chisel and dental probes, until the desired effect was reached. A black wash was painted on to see how the rocks would look before painting in various shades of greys, greens and whites to resemble the real thing. A magnificent view can be had from the top of this hill today.

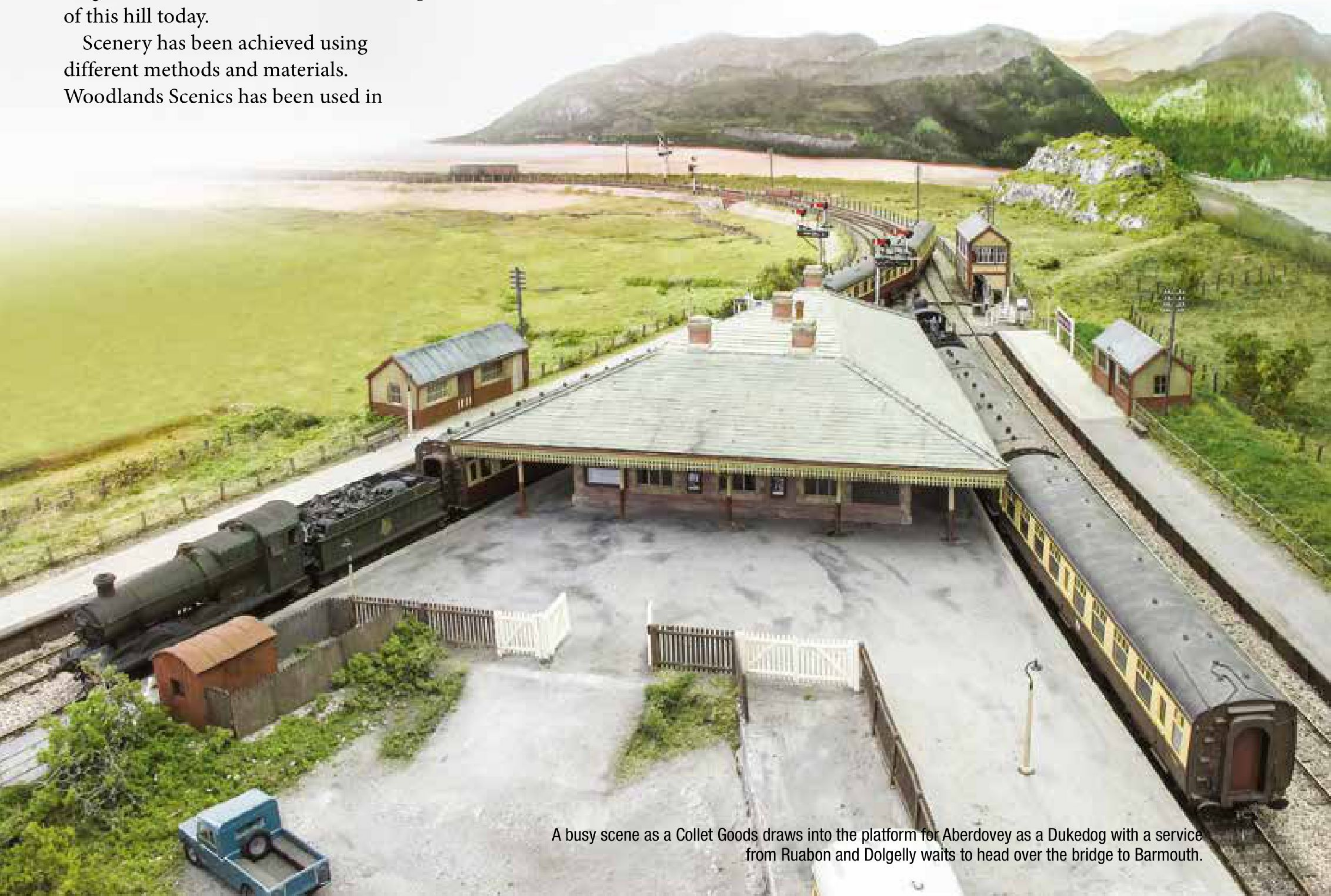
Scenery has been achieved using different methods and materials. Woodlands Scenics has been used in

the main, as I like the range of textures and colours. Other materials used were teddy bear fur, hanging basket liners, sea moss for trees and bushes and a variety of other scenic scatter flocks and earth powder from Tremendous Models. The embankment behind the signal box was the bed of the old tramway around 1900, which only lasted a few years.

The area leading up to the bridge (not modelled) is mostly marshland with channels that are filled with water at high tide. A channel flows under a small bridge, which acts as an escape to any excess water. To achieve these channels I broke up pieces of insulation board, glued them down and put a watery mix of plaster over everything. When dry, a basic earth colour was applied.

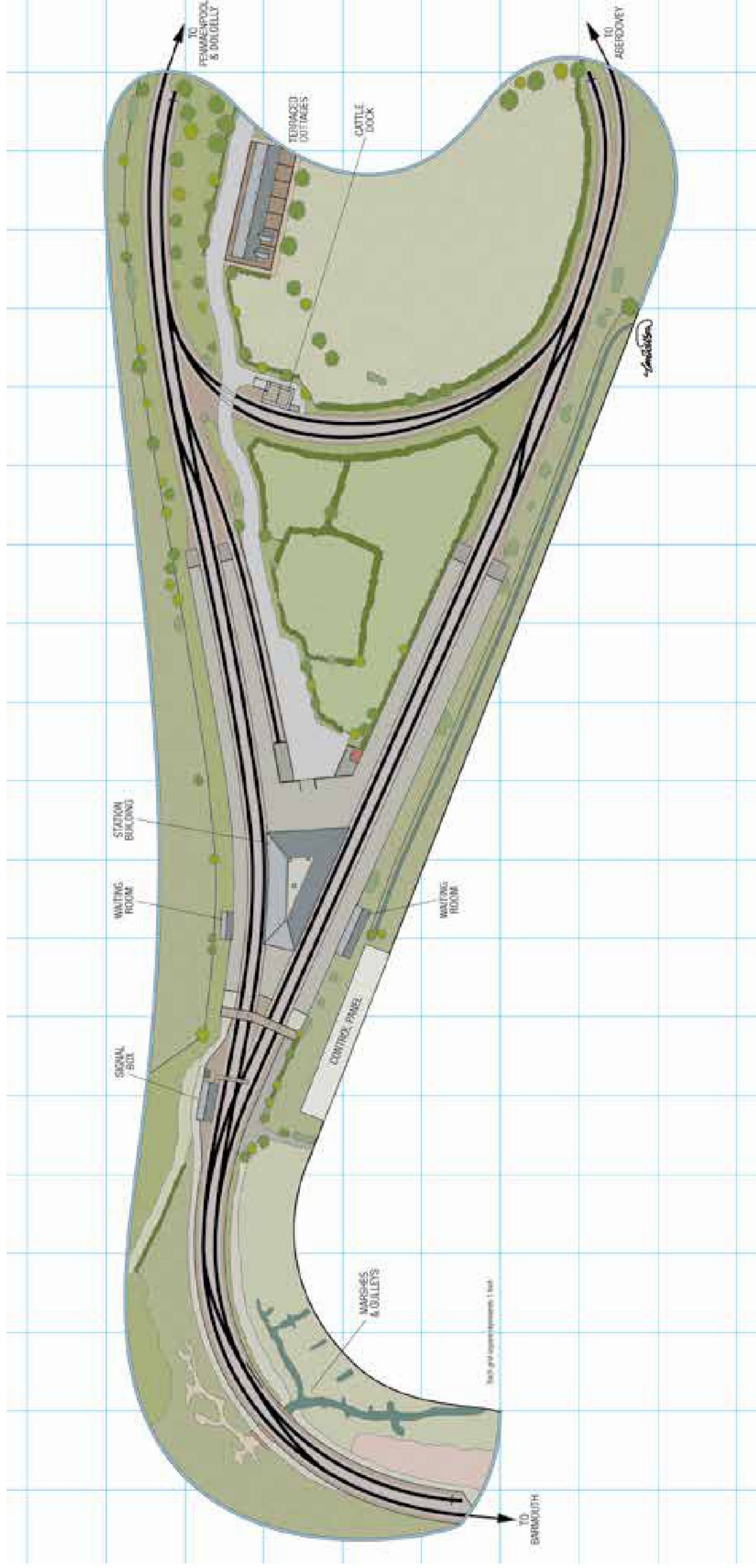
PVA glue was applied in some of the channels and very fine sand was sprinkled, followed with a few layers of varnish. Quite a lot of fencing was needed and these were made from plastic posts with strong black cotton thread; gluing now and again to keep them in place.

The buildings are made from Plastikard with plastic brick sheet overlays. The windows, doors and valancing are all etched brass from my own artwork. Barmouth Junction platforms are all a bit different from one another, and their faces are stone, wood and concrete. They were made from good quality card on card formers and some were scored where necessary. The sign boards have all been drawn on the computer, mounted on



A busy scene as a Collet Goods draws into the platform for Aberdovey as a Dukedog with a service from Ruabon and Dolgelly waits to head over the bridge to Barmouth.

BARMOUTH JUNCTION



I liked the idea that trains came up both the branch and the main coast lines to the junction and then went into a single track across the bridge. This could be interesting to operate

card and attached to posts or the station building. Signals have been made by Tony Geary and are operated using servos being pulled from lever frames at the different locations.

The stock on the layout is all ready-to-run from Bachmann, with a few Hornby items. The only exceptions to these are a Dukedog and a Stanier 2-6-2T, both of which are kit-built by friends. As the model is all the BR period from 1948-1965, the coaches are a mixture of maroon, carmine and cream, and chocolate and cream. They are all weathered to some degree and have Kadee couplings on each end of the rakes. Both ex-GWR and Standard class locomotives can be seen during this period, which gives a lot of variety to the trains. Goods wagons and vans are mostly Bachmann and are all in the process of having Spratt & Winkle couplings fitted for shunting purposes.

The layout is operated to a sequence with screens at the main areas, and was designed by John Elliott. Either a friend or I uses a laptop to change the screen pages, which tells the operators the next move. There are 124 pages to the sequence, taking over six hours to get through, so you can never tell what the next move might be, which makes for more interesting operating.

I am more than pleased with the layout. It's better than I could have imagined when it was in the planning stage and is certainly more complex than I first thought. The operating sessions are really enjoyable with friends, which makes this hobby very worthwhile. At present, we have to shout to the next station to see if a train can travel, but that is about to change with the addition of block instrument panels that are in the process of being made. So, all in all, my ambitious plans worked and very well it seems.

Although most of the layout is finished, there are just a few small details to be added such as porters, a station master and one or two passengers which will be done by Alan Buttler of Modelu 3D who is a regular visitor to the layout. He has already made the signaller with single line hoop, the benches on the platform and the rather marvellous station platform lamps. My friend John Bailey, who passed away in 2015, was very much part of my layout, helping me in various aspects of it on a regular basis. The lovely pointwork that he made is still admired and it would have been nice if he could have seen the layout in its more or less finished state. ■

The 'Dukedogs' will be forever associated with the Cambrian routes. So many of the engine types used on the Cambrian are well catered for by Bachmann whose chief designer, Merl Evans, was an Aberystwyth man and a fan of the Cambrian.





I wanted the trains to go on a journey to get to the next station instead of just going through the backscene into the next section. Quite an ambitious plan, which I hoped would work!

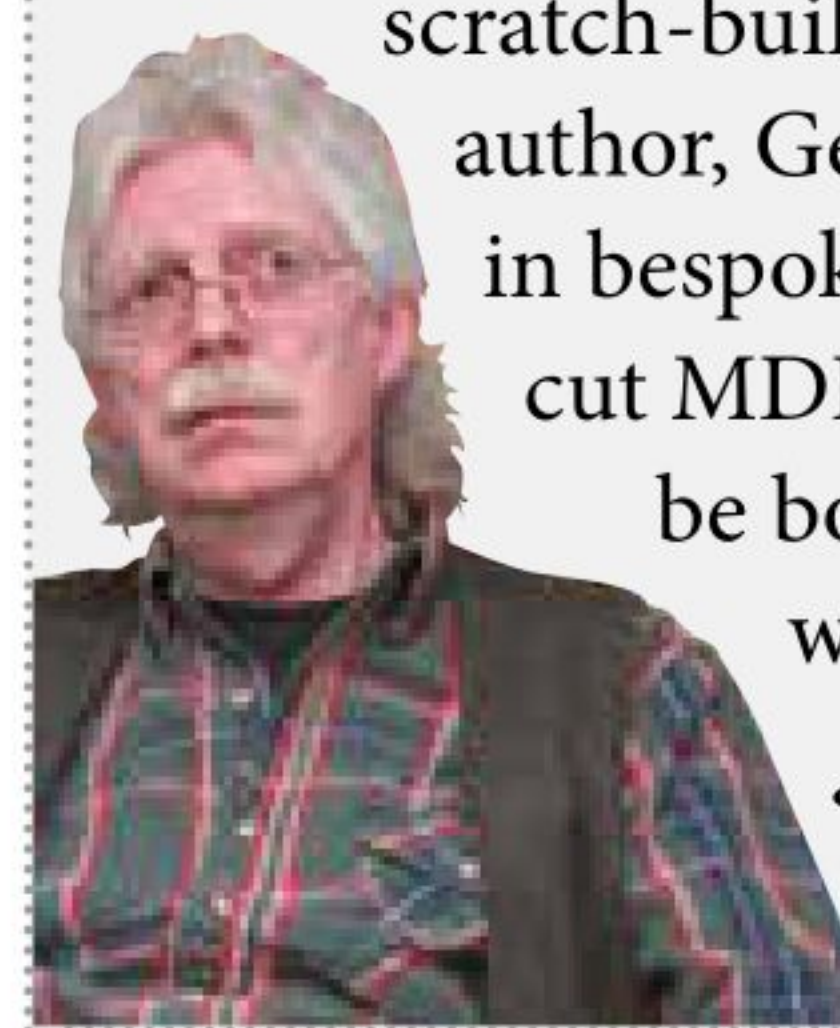
Meet the modeller

Geoff originally trained as a printer, and his work entailed much travel nationwide. By the mid-1990s, though, he had decided on a change of direction.

Already a member of the Manchester Model Railway Society (MMRS), he expressed an interest in making the buildings for the group's 'Dewsbury Midland' layout. His initial efforts were met with approval, and the layout went on to be a popular fixture on the exhibition circuit. Geoff's work thus came to wider attention, and other building assignments followed. One of these was the noted 'The Gresley Beat', for which Geoff constructed a substantial portion of the London cityscape.

His initial goal achieved, Geoff was soon able to turn his hobby into a business. His move to mid-Wales has enabled more space to engage in further commissions and to incorporate Barmouth Junction into a much larger and more complex layout. A skilled

scratch-builder and published author, Geoff now specialises in bespoke work and laser-cut MDF models that can be bought from his website. See www.gtbuildingsmodels.co.uk for more.



PROGRESS AT

'The extension' described by the 82G team of **Peter Silvester, John Edwards, Nigel Smith, Keith Blake** and junior member **Owen Smith**.

Photos by Andy York. Constructional photos by the 82G team.



82G

28xx 2-8-0 No. 2857 and rebuilt Merchant Navy Class Pacific
No. 35013 *Blue Funnel (Lines)* await their duty on shed.





Bulleid Pacific pairing ; Merchant Navy No.35024 East Asiatic Company in experimental BR Express Passenger blue livery with white and black lining returns to shed having worked the 'ACE', while West Country Class No. 34021 Dartmoor, with transitional SR 'Sunshine' style number, prepares to work the 'Daven Belle'.

Many of you may remember that the 82G loco shed layout appeared over two issues of *British Railway Modelling* during the latter part of 2010 and was presented with the Cyril Freezer Award for 'Best Layout of the Year' at the BRM organised Festival of British Railway Modelling at Doncaster, in February 2011. For those of you who read the articles on the layout, you may also remember that the story ended with the four core members of our little group discussing the possibility of an extension to the layout. The initial thoughts were that we could add a double track main line in front of the existing shed building, with the main line continuing on a curve behind the loco shed layout to form a continuous run - a 'roundy-roundy' with fiddle yards. The existing loco shed layout would be retained as the centrepiece with a connection from the existing

shed yard exit road under the tunnel onto the 'main line', thus accessing the proposed fiddle yards behind the layout. Great idea! However, it slowly dawned on us that it would be a massive task, which would prove impractical to build in a reasonable time frame, would be near impossible to transport to shows and erect and dismantle (the four of us aren't getting any younger and neither are our 'associate' members who help us at exhibitions). It was

also obvious that a massive coaching stock building programme would be required. So, it was back to the drawing board!

After many meetings of the group and much scratching of heads, the layout extension was decided on, and the answer was pretty obvious really! We would extend the shed and complete the shed yard. The original layout was designed so that the 'off-stage' area started half way down the main running shed building, with the exit

“ I am pleased to say that in all cases everything is going to plan but not necessarily in the order that people might expect... ”



(and entrance) track disappearing into a tunnel behind the lifting shed and factory building. In the new extension the layout has been extended by 60%, enabling us to complete the running shed buildings and provide more sidings and stabling points.

Several of the existing baseboards have had a narrow extension piece permanently fitted to the front, which has enabled us to provide new trackwork passing in front of the newly extended running shed, thus providing a 'front' link between the existing layout and the new extension. The former track 'exit' through the tunnel behind the lifting shed and factory building has been retained, entering onto the extension *via* the other end of the tunnel and opening out to a twin-track which now exits beneath a double track overbridge. The extended end of the layout is now 'framed' by a large viaduct running front to back across the

82G Extension Construction



Track laying (looking towards the existing shed), with the new tunnel mouth in place and showing the extended single track link at the rear. **INSET:** Track laying commences.



The viaduct is still under construction. The new double track over bridge is also clearly seen. **INSET:** The structure to the new running shed roof.



A close up view of the viaduct, showing two arches to be occupied by the G.W.R. Signal Dept (Bristol Division). **INSET:** An aerial view of the first extension baseboard.

Layout Focus

full width of the baseboards. A look at the track plan will make things far clearer than this inadequate description could ever do!

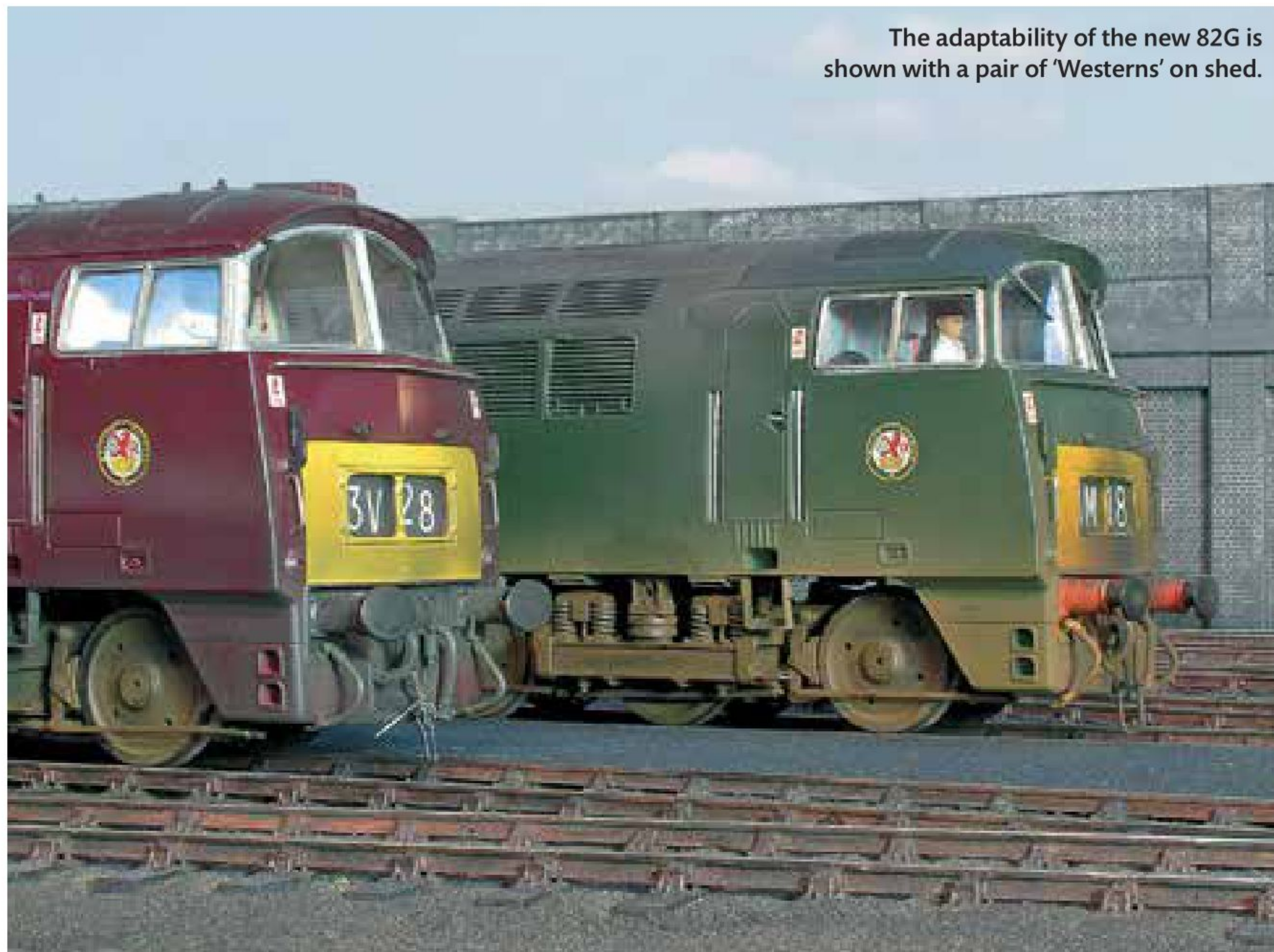
As our loco stud ever increases (we are predominantly loco builders after all), so the extended layout, with two ways in and out, as well as a 'through' running shed and far more storage space in terms of sidings and stabling points, gives us far more 'display' space and operational flexibility. But that in itself caused a problem, which was only resolved by increasing the length of the 'off-stage' cassette fiddle yard area. The total viewable area of the extended layout is now 8.5 metres (28'), with the overall length, including fiddle yard, stretching to nearly 12 metres (38' 6")!

The dawn of DCC

That brings us to the final headache - how to control such a layout. How many operators would it need to make it function properly and keep the public entertained? How would we adapt the wiring and control panel to accommodate the increase in 'loco drivers'?

Well the answers were obvious really and something we had been toying with for a couple of years, but never got round to doing anything about it. Go DCC! We gave it a try at the last couple of exhibitions (York and Woking) we attended with the 'old' layout, by running with 'traditional' DC control for the majority of the day, but swapping over to a lashed-up DCC system (with only one controller!) for an hour or so at the start and end of each day.

We are grateful to our chum, Mike Williams,



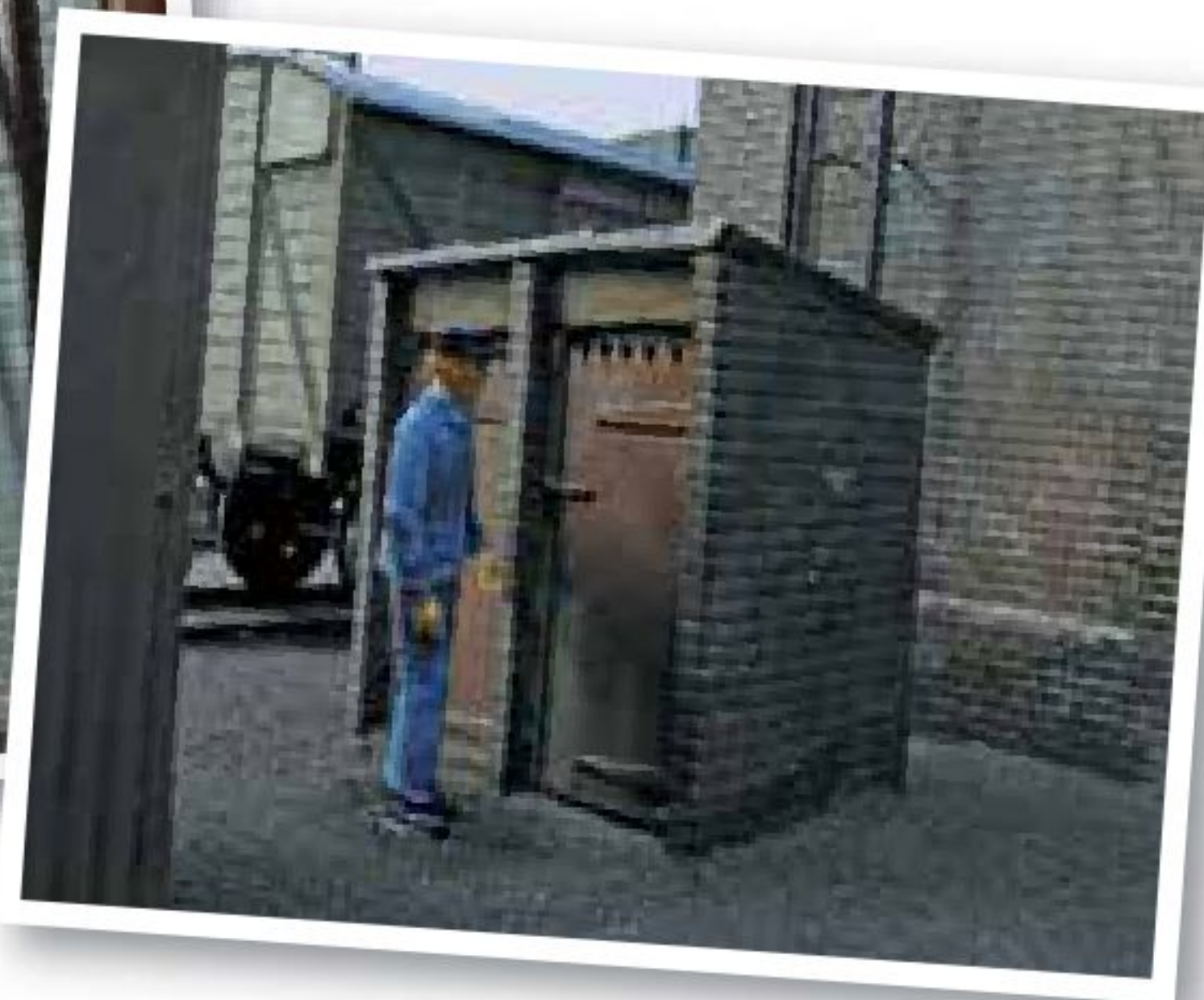
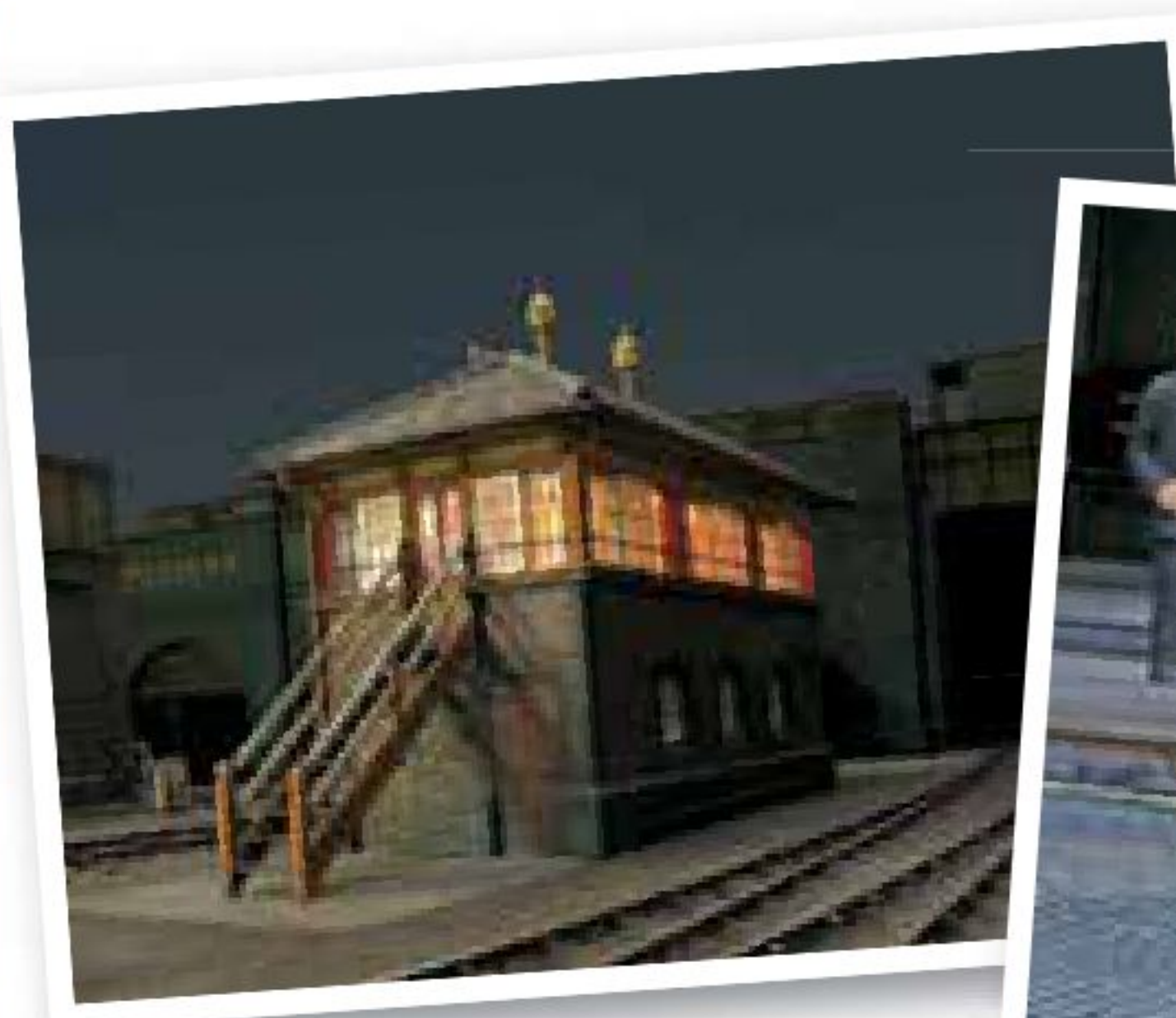
The adaptability of the new 82G is shown with a pair of 'Westerns' on shed.

for the extended loan of his Lenz system for these trial runs. The difference was dramatic! The sounds of steam and diesel seemed to draw the visitors to the layout and added a dimension that, with the benefit of hindsight, was sadly lacking. So that's exactly what we've done. The wiring is now much simplified

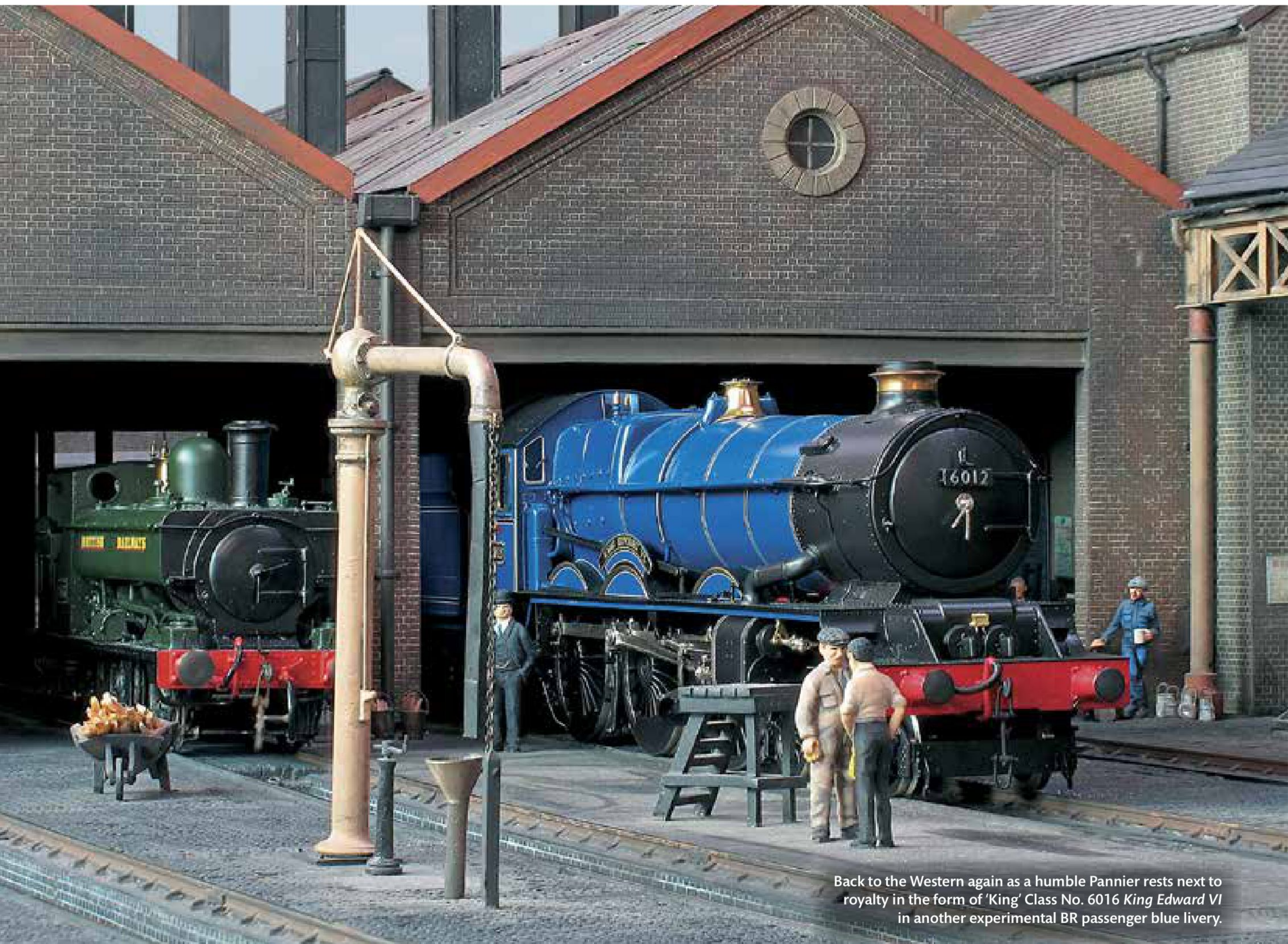
(courtesy of Nigel) and the operational flexibility, limitless, so that you, the visiting public, now have the sound as well as the sight of a working locomotive depot in steam (and diesel) days. There will be typically four loco drivers operating at any one time (with Digital Command Control you drive the loco, not the

KEY DETAILS Bringing life to 82G

They say that it's the small things that make all the difference and despite its size there are a number of cameos and other details which help bring the layout to life. Here are just a few of them...



Unusual stablemates as ex-Plymouth, Devonport & South Western Junction Railway, Hawthorn Leslie-built 0-6-2T No.757 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe*, built to work the Callington branch stands next to 'Brighton Atlantic' Class H2 No.2424 *Beachy Head* - a new build of the prototype is underway on the Bluebell Railway.



Back to the Western again as a humble Pannier rests next to royalty in the form of 'King' Class No. 6016 *King Edward VI* in another experimental BR passenger blue livery.

Layout Focus

Edward VI again - this time with more regal company, if a little scruffy, in the shape of 'Lord Nelson' Class 4-6-0 No. 30855 Robert Blake in early British Railways condition.



track!), all orchestrated by a 'shed master', who will direct which loco goes where and does what and will control the setting of the pointwork and loco pathways. This, we believe, will prevent errors and disasters, where one loco could otherwise easily cross the path of another if not properly controlled. Our thanks go out to Kevin Wilson, whose hospitality on a number of occasions, allowed us to get an understanding of DCC, to decide on the right system for us and to hone our driving skills on his wonderful Bucks Hill layout. We are also

grateful to Fiona at DCC Supplies of Holt Heath in Worcestershire, who has sourced the equipment for us (Digitrax) as well as dealing with the steady and sometimes frantic stream of requests from the four of us for DCC decoders (ESU Loksound). Finally, to Bryan Robertson (the sound guru) whose steam and diesel sounds are a true delight and have changed the aura around the 82G shed yard totally. Bryan is a great guy with a wry sense of humour, who occasionally puts an 'additional' sound on a chip, which is actuated by one of the higher

function buttons. So, please don't be surprised if you hear a GW 56xx tank going by, followed closely by a flock of seagulls, or even the driver of a 'West Country' playing a tune on the whistle! Great stuff!

Where to see 82G

By the time you read this progress update on 82G, the newly extended layout will have had its first public outing (in nearly finished form) at the Warley National Model Railway Exhibition, at the NEC near Birmingham and will appear



in 2013 at the *London Festival of Model Railways* at Alexandra Palace, in London, over the weekend of March 23/24, as well as at STEAM Museum, Swindon, and Guildex at Telford in September 2013. So to those of you attending those exhibitions and visiting 82G shed, you will find the area to explore is much bigger and we hope better. But, please don't forget your Ian Allan abc spotter's book and, despite the vastness of the shed and its environs, please keep an eye open for the ever vigilant shed Foreman!

82G Extension Construction



The viaduct now fixed in place. Also shows the "bothy" and water tank, placed to gauge their final positions. **INSET:** The running shed extension with its unpainted roof in place.



Track laid across the viaduct and ballasting complete. **INSET:** Running shed extension with its unpainted roof in place, but now with its smoke stacks fitted.



The newly extended running shed and its environs, with the office roof covering now in place. **INSET:** A panoramic view of the full layout extension.

Layout Focus



Progress at 82G

An overall view of the new extension to 82G with plenty of power on shed.



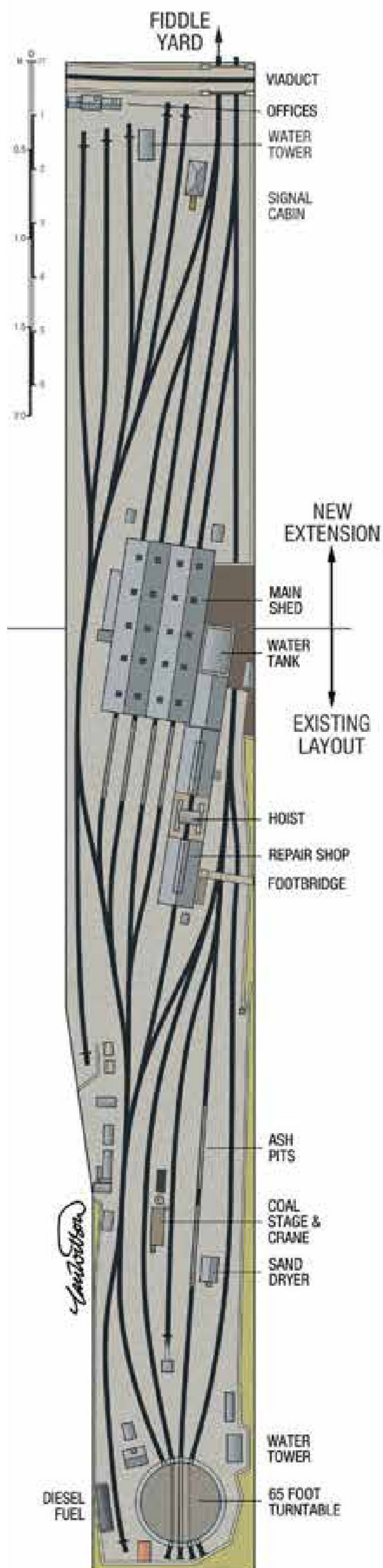
Layout Focus

SR-built N15 'King Arthur' Class No. 30804 Sir Cador of Cornwall waits under the hoist - note the lamps left by the support column.



TRACK PLAN

**.82.
G**



82G Extension Construction



The signal box takes shape (from a modified 'Lasercraft Devon' kit). **INSET:** You can now see the signal box in place on the layout.



The new end of the extended layout. The new over bridge gives a twin track exit from the extended layout to the fiddle yard. **INSET:** A view from above the viaduct.

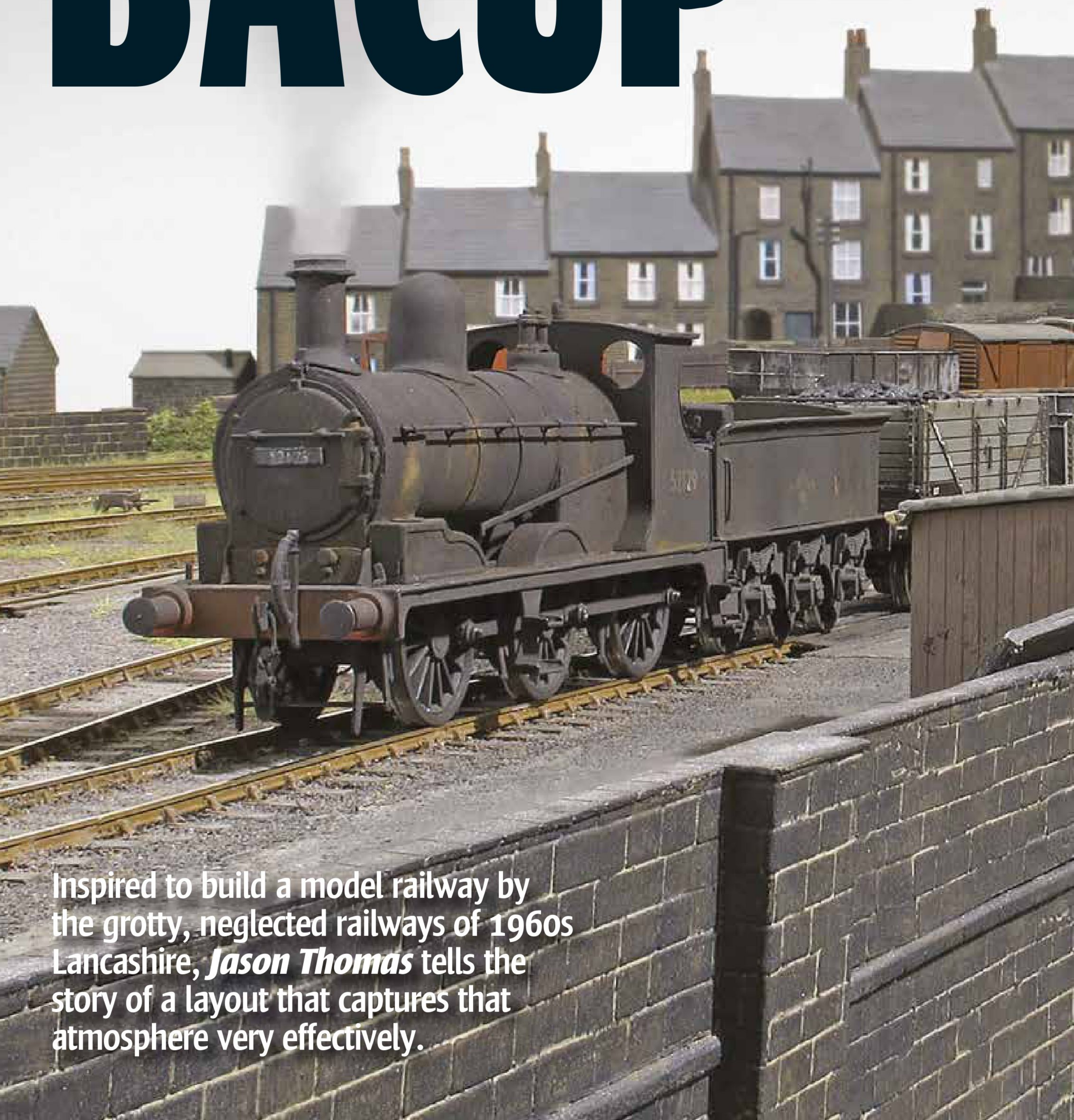


Early diesel fuelling points and pump control boxes. These are based on those found at Swindon and Laira. **INSET:** Diesel fuelling points under construction.

LAYOUT FOCUS

RMweb Issue Poll Winner

BACUP



Inspired to build a model railway by the grotty, neglected railways of 1960s Lancashire, **Jason Thomas** tells the story of a layout that captures that atmosphere very effectively.

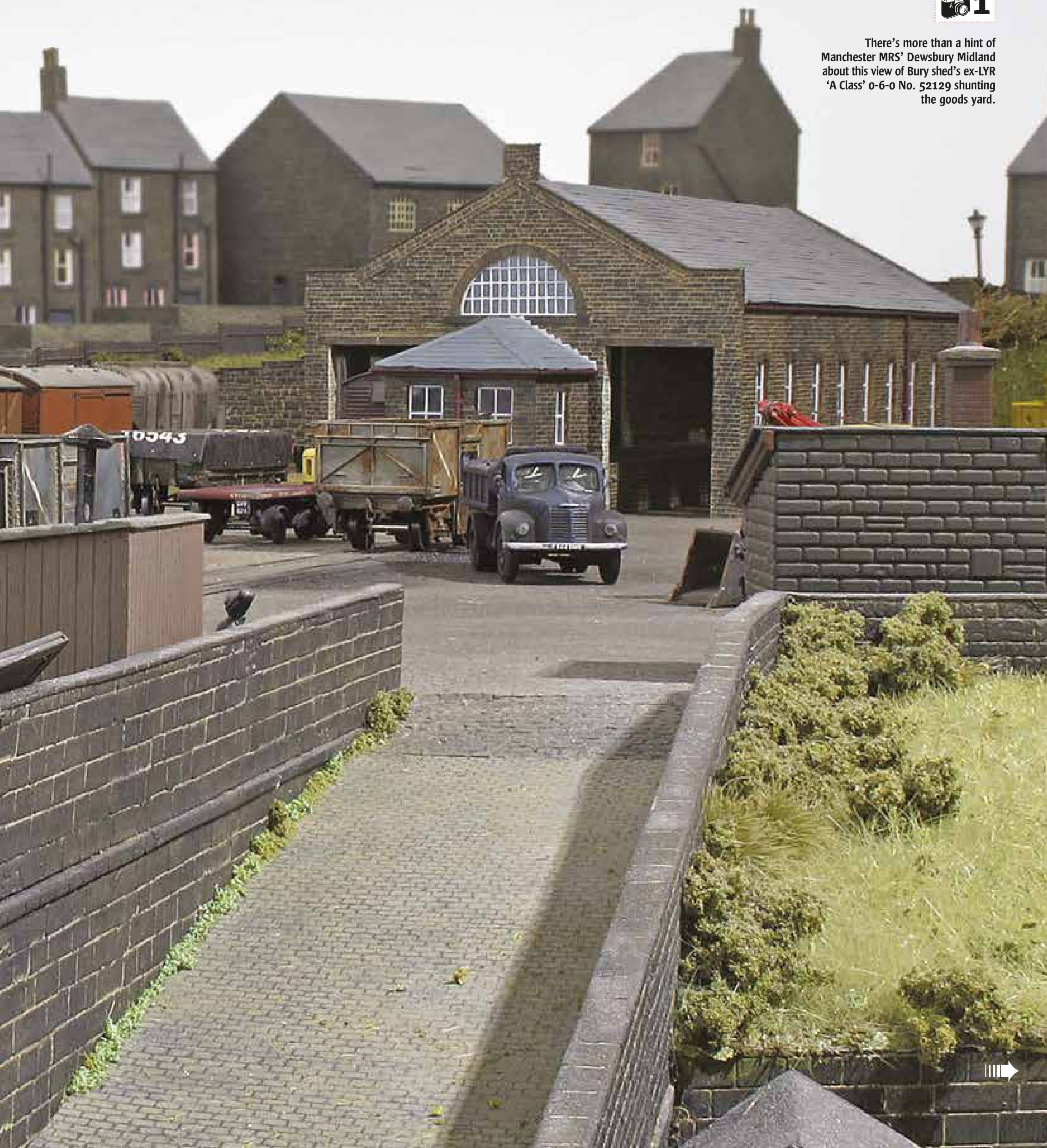
00
GAUGE

FACT FILE

- **LAYOUT NAME** Bacup
- **SCALE/GAUGE** 4mm:1ft scale, 16.5mm gauge 00
- **SIZE** 13' 6" x 3' (scenic), 11' x 2' (fiddleyard)
- **TYPE OF LAYOUT** End-to-end
- **POWER/CONTROL** 12V DC two-rail

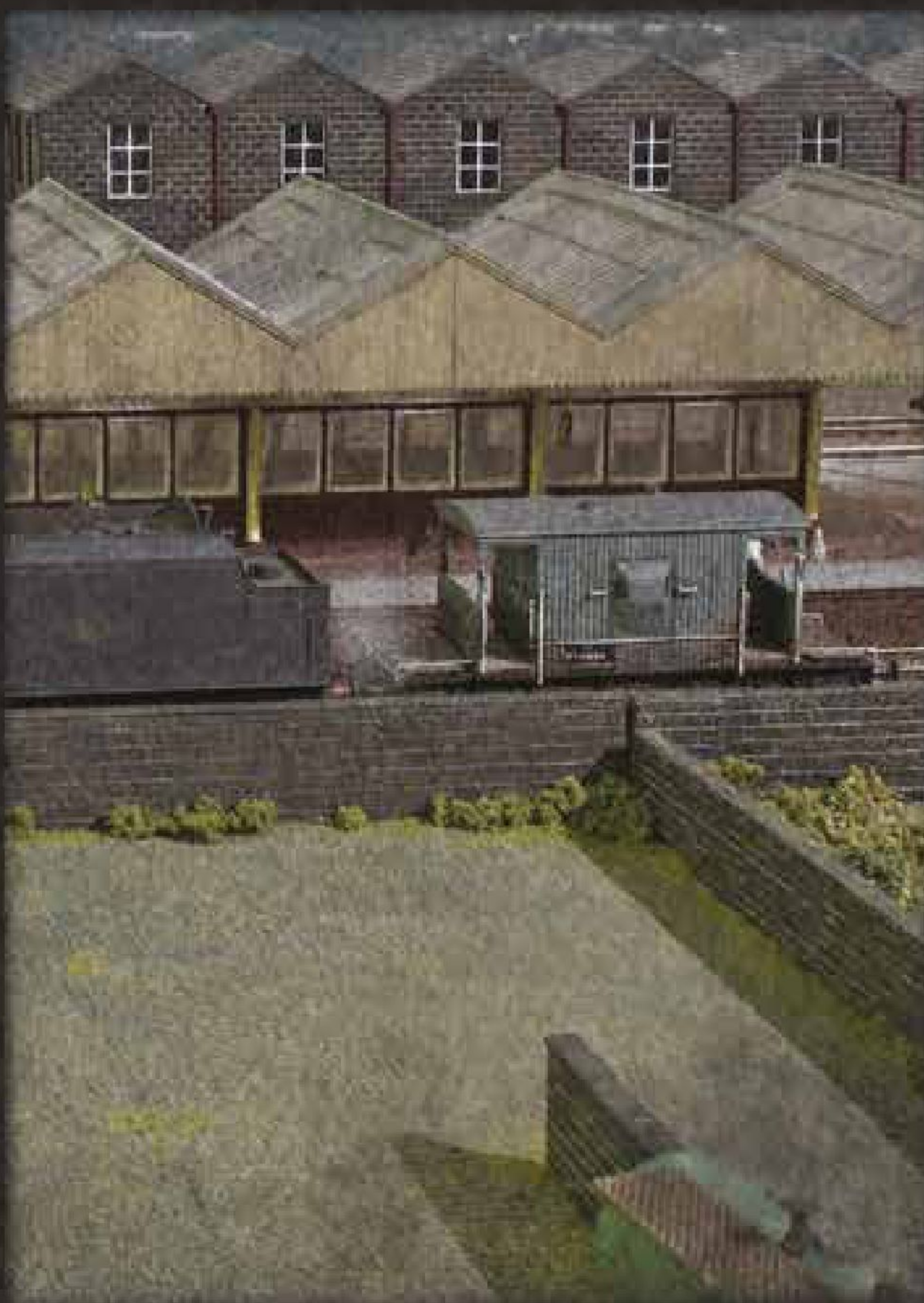
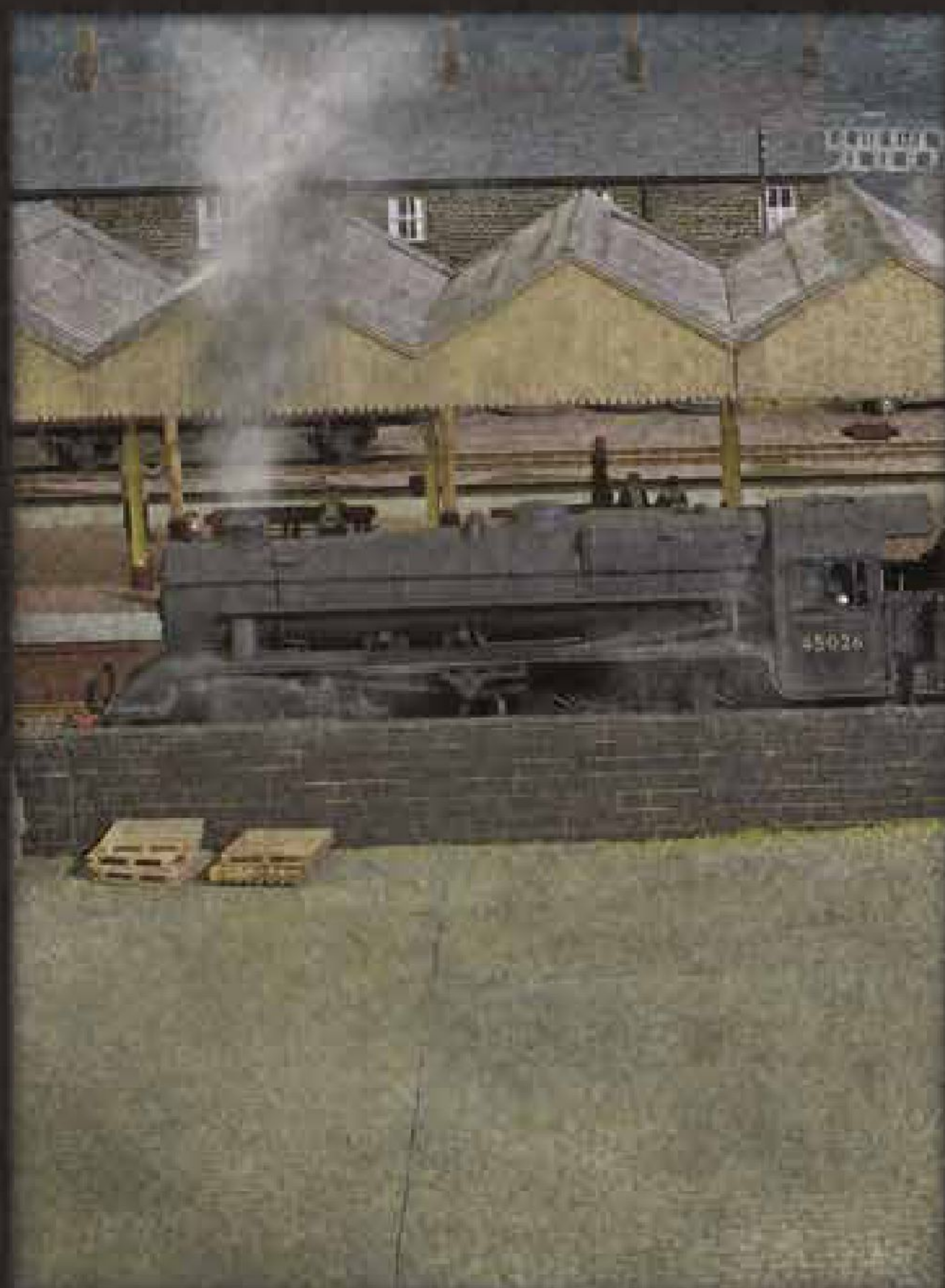


There's more than a hint of Manchester MRS' Dewsbury Midland about this view of Bury shed's ex-LYR 'A Class' 0-6-0 No. 52129 shunting the goods yard.





It wasn't just the railways of Lancashire that were in decline in the 1960s - the region's cotton and textile industries were shrinking, leaving scores of mills redundant and derelict. Viewed from the upper floors of one of Jason's mills, 'Black Five' 4-6-0 No. 45026 simmers in the station before collecting a goods train.



KEY DETAILS TRACK



I had always been a Peco user, happy with its looks, robustness and the way it functioned. But, at an exhibition a few years ago curiosity got the better of me and I purchased a few yards of SMP flexitrack, took it home and compared it to what was on Rubbishtown. Big mistake, as no sooner had I done so than a voice in my head started telling me to rip it up and replace it. Even at that stage,

I was thinking of using Peco turnouts in conjunction with SMP track but when it came to this layout, there was no choice but to learn how to build my own turnouts. To do this, I chose the easier route of bullhead rail and PCB sleepers, the first efforts being acceptable (as in, they worked but looked, well, wrong) and later ones looking better. Once you practice, it's actually pretty easy to turn out (pun

intended) turnouts to the dimensions you require.

The track was painted first with an aerosol can of Railmatch Sleeper Grime, followed by the rail sides and chairs being given a coat of Precision Track Colour. It is laid on C&L foam underlay and the ballast, all from C&L, is a mixture of 2mm Light Grey for the main lines and Ash Ballast for sidings and the cess.

There was no glamour in the station, no pretence of a past glory at this railhead. It was always a small terminus with no famous trains, no exotic locomotives and that's exactly why it appealed to me.

Bacup is a layout that owes a certain debt to **RMweb**. That might seem a strange statement but if it weren't for the inspiration gained from seeing other layouts there, from the plethora of information available, the encouragement and advice of its members, then I would not have moved on from the standard of my previous layout, which I now like to refer to as 'Rubbishtown'.

Now 'Rubbishtown' was perfectly acceptable but when the baseboards warped due to a misinformed decision to use Sundeala, I had little choice but to tear it up and start again. There were a number of elements of the layout that I felt needed improvement and I was itching to move forward and try new areas of modelling.

WHY BACUP?

So why a grotty mill town in East Lancashire which lost its rail connection in December 1966?

When I was 15, I bought a book called *British Railways Past & Present, No. 3: The North West*. On page 77 is a photograph of a run-down Bacup station, and a Cravens DMU departing as 'Black Five' No. 44728 idles in the headshunt with a brake van. There was no glamour in the station or surrounding



The impressive starter signals controlling departures from the double-sided platform.

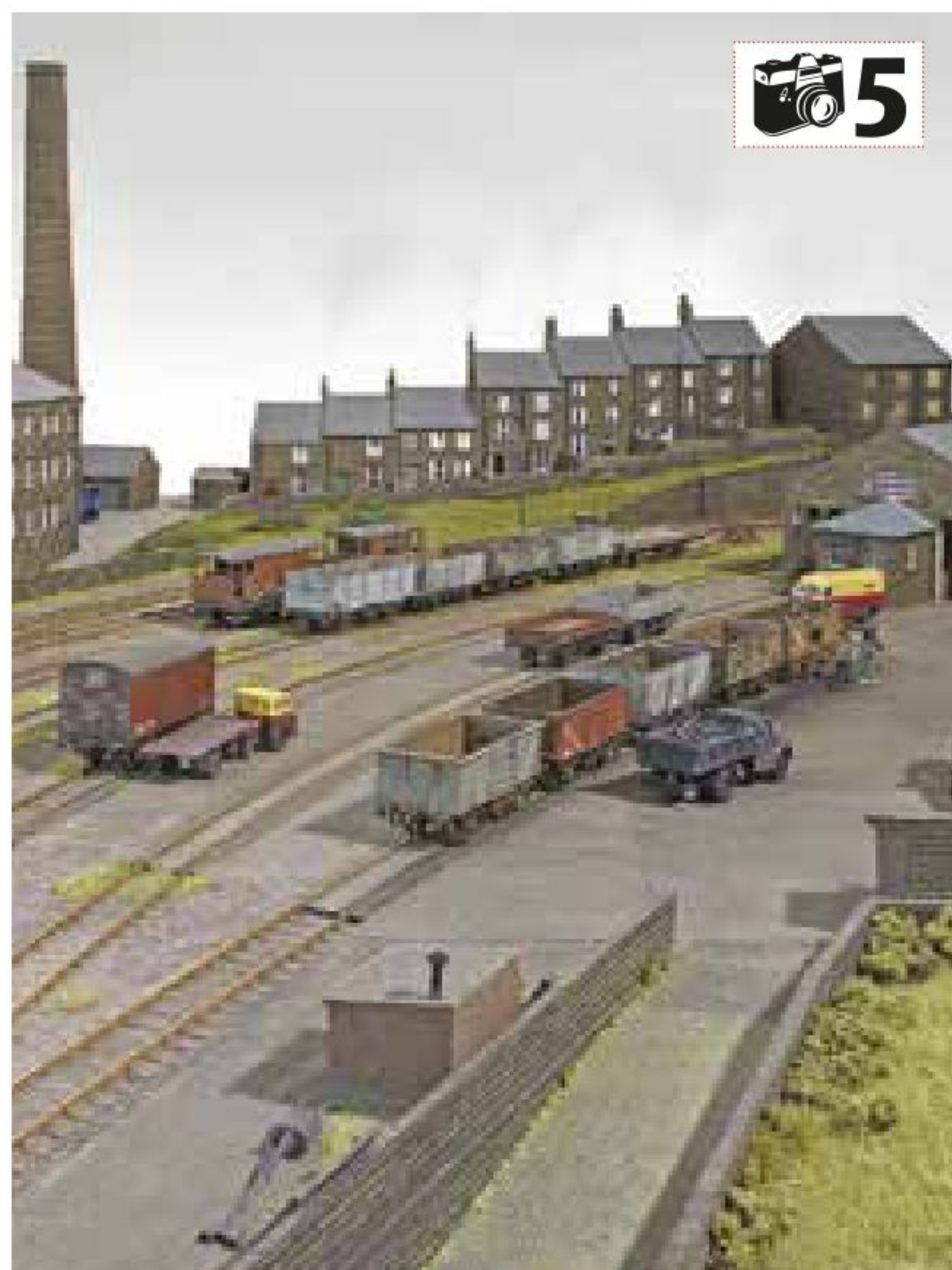
area, no pretence of a past glory at this railhead. It was always a small terminus with no famous named passenger services, no exotic locomotives or anything else that is supposed to appeal to railway enthusiasts or modellers. And in a strange way, that's exactly why it appealed to me.

Bacup was at the head of two branches; one from Bury via Rawtenstall (part of which is now the East Lancashire Railway) and one from Rochdale via Facit. The station was a terminus comprising a double-sided platform, a goods yard which used the platform run-round as a headshunt, a couple of carriage sidings, and a junction just off the end of the platforms. A mile down the Rochdale branch was a locomotive shed which closed in 1954. The station itself had a canopy of 12 pitches that covered about half of the full platform length.

I should point out at this stage that the layout is based on Bacup but is not true to prototype, as I did not have the room to do it justice. The trackplan is hopefully recognisable to those who knew the location but beyond the railway boundary nothing is in its correct place. However, all the elements are from Bacup and the surrounding area. Think of it as 'Abstract Bacup', a catchy name I am sure you'll agree.



5



ABOVE: Jason calls the layout an 'abstract' interpretation of Bacup, using buildings and structures from the area but managed to fit it in the space available. INSET: This greenhouse is one of the few buildings on the layout that didn't have to be designed and built from scratch!



GETTING STARTED

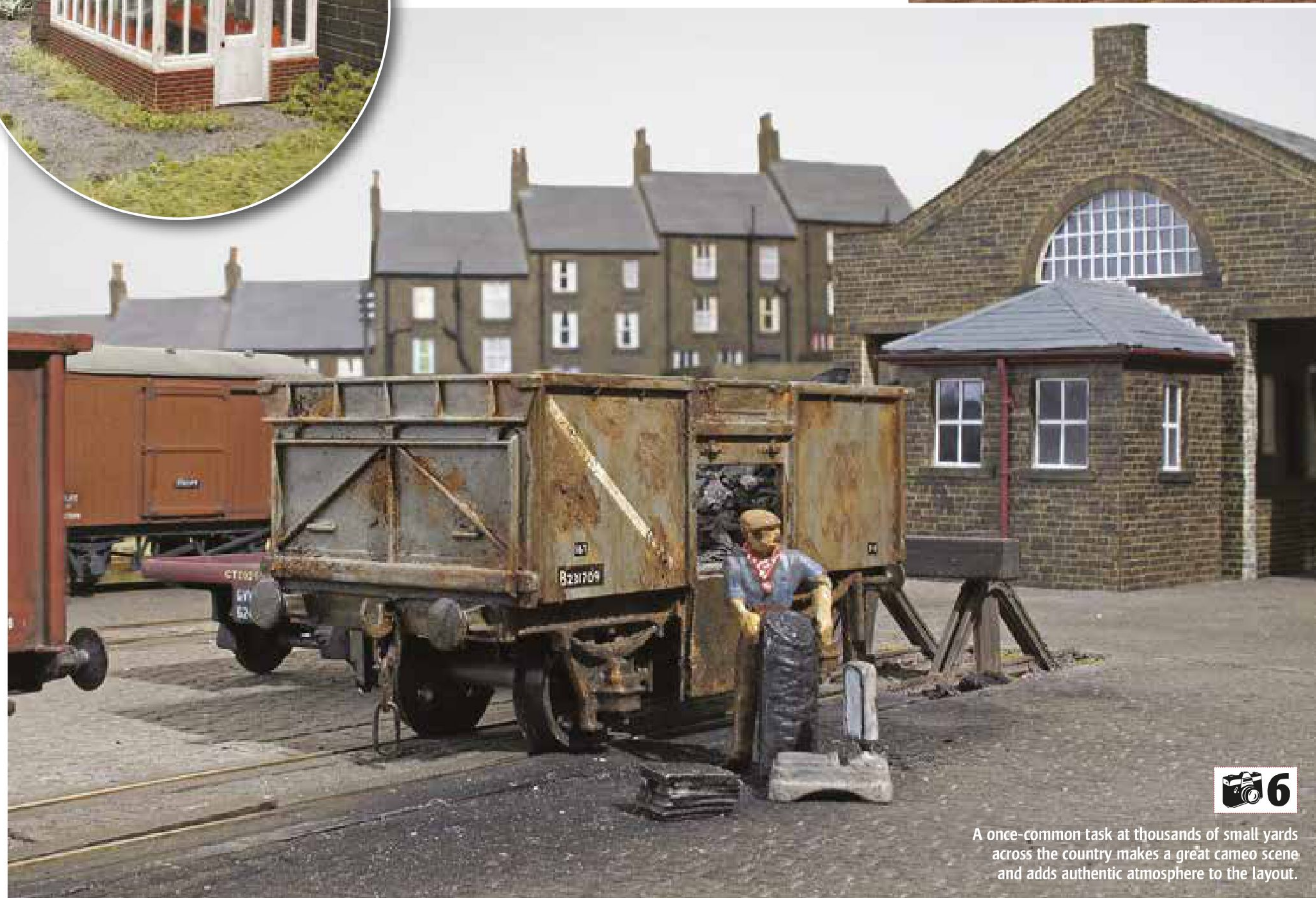
To me, the planning of a layout is as enjoyable as the actual construction. Researching the location you wish to model, drawing trackplans, imagining how it might look, even constructing mock-ups of various structures can be a real pleasure.

It was during this stage that I realised that I was going to have to take a huge step up and build my own turnouts. When the plan was drawn using Anyrail software and Peco templates, there was just no flow to the station throat area. This was compounded by limits of available space and the baseboard joins. It would have meant having to use Peco turnouts of different sizes and radii and would have ended up looking scruffy, causing derailments and leading to no end of frustration. As such, I downloaded a copy of Templot (track planning software), swore at it a lot, deleted plenty of early attempts and then finally twigged out how to use it and quickly saved then printed off the plans before I forgot how to use it again.

The next step was key to progressing the whole layout. As the station buildings and canopy play a large part of defining the layout as Bacup, I built this first with the reasoning that if I couldn't make a decent representation of it, then there was no point in continuing. After three months of cutting, gluing and painting a large amount of plastic card and more lengths of Microstrip than I care to remember, I was satisfied that I could pull the layout off and made a start with the track.

PROGRESSION

I wanted to avoid creating a flat landscape as Bacup is up in the Pennines where even the pool tables have hills and valleys. So, the decision was taken



6

A once-common task at thousands of small yards across the country makes a great cameo scene and adds authentic atmosphere to the layout.



Although Bacup's regular passenger services were dieselised from the mid-1950s, an ex-LYR 'Radial' 2-4-2T occasionally makes a comeback standing in for a failed DMU.

To me, the planning of a layout is as enjoyable as the actual construction. Researching the location, drawing trackplans, imagining how it might look and making mock-ups is a real pleasure.

early to raise the trackbed above the baseboard frames and fill in the scenery above and below it. As such, other than the trackbed, there aren't many level areas on the layout with even the road past the station entrance being on a gentle slope. As far as scenery goes, there is not a great deal of greenery, the majority of space being filled with mucky stone-built terraced houses and mills, stone setts and filthy retaining walls.

The vast majority of the buildings on the layout are scratch-built; the exceptions being a greenhouse and a handful of lineside huts. Having decided to model a town in the Pennines, there was no option but to scratch-build the sandstone houses, mills and other buildings; lots of them too.


All the non-railway buildings are based on real examples in or around Bacup. Google Earth is a

highly useful tool in providing inspiration, details and dimensions. The railway buildings are taken from a number of other locations, chosen as their dimensions fitted better with the reduced scale of the layout when compared to the real location. The signalbox is a model of one at Hebden Bridge, the goods shed is based on one down the Facit line in Whitworth; Bacup had a rather large goods warehouse and there just wasn't the room for it on the layout.

The buildings are mainly constructed using a shell of mounting board, clad with embossed plastic from a number of sources and painted/weathered using enamels. Slates are made from 150gsm paper. The majority have windows and doors made from plastic card and Microstrip, with a few exceptions, for example the signalbox, using

etched windows. I was far too worried about making a mess of them and gluing on and cutting the Microstrip for such intricate windows would have driven me potty!

Chimney pots on the houses have been a point of contention, as anyone who has followed my thread on **RMweb** will know. Initially, I used tapered pots and was happy with how they looked but it was pointed out to me by a number of members that castellated pots were used in the Bacup area. It has been a running joke for some time but finally, I managed to source a vast amount of the correct pots from Freestone Models and attach them.

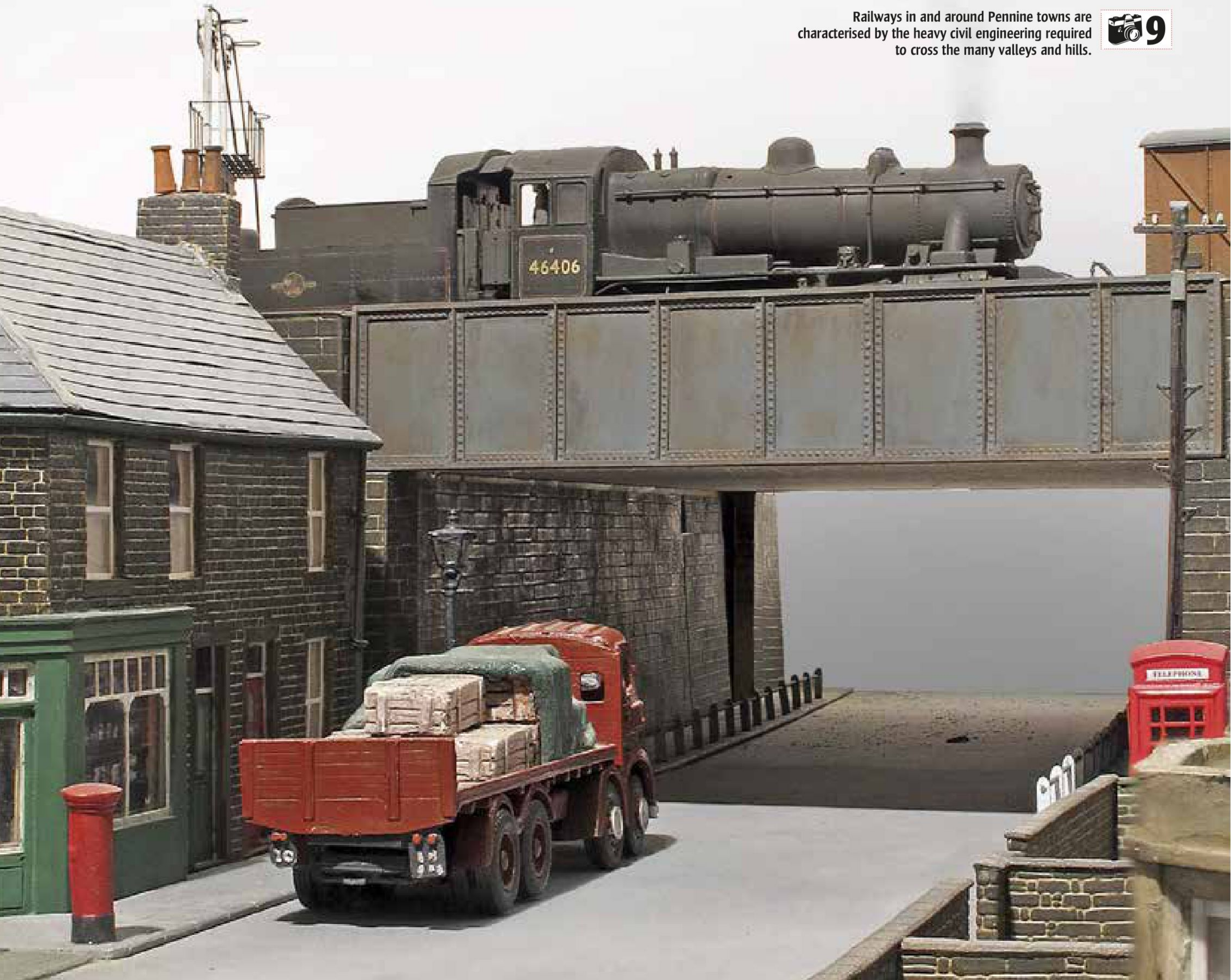
Other areas of discussion (which have inevitably led to changes) have related to the colour of gutters and drainpipes, stench pipes, diagonals on gates and most recently, the colour scheme of mangles! 



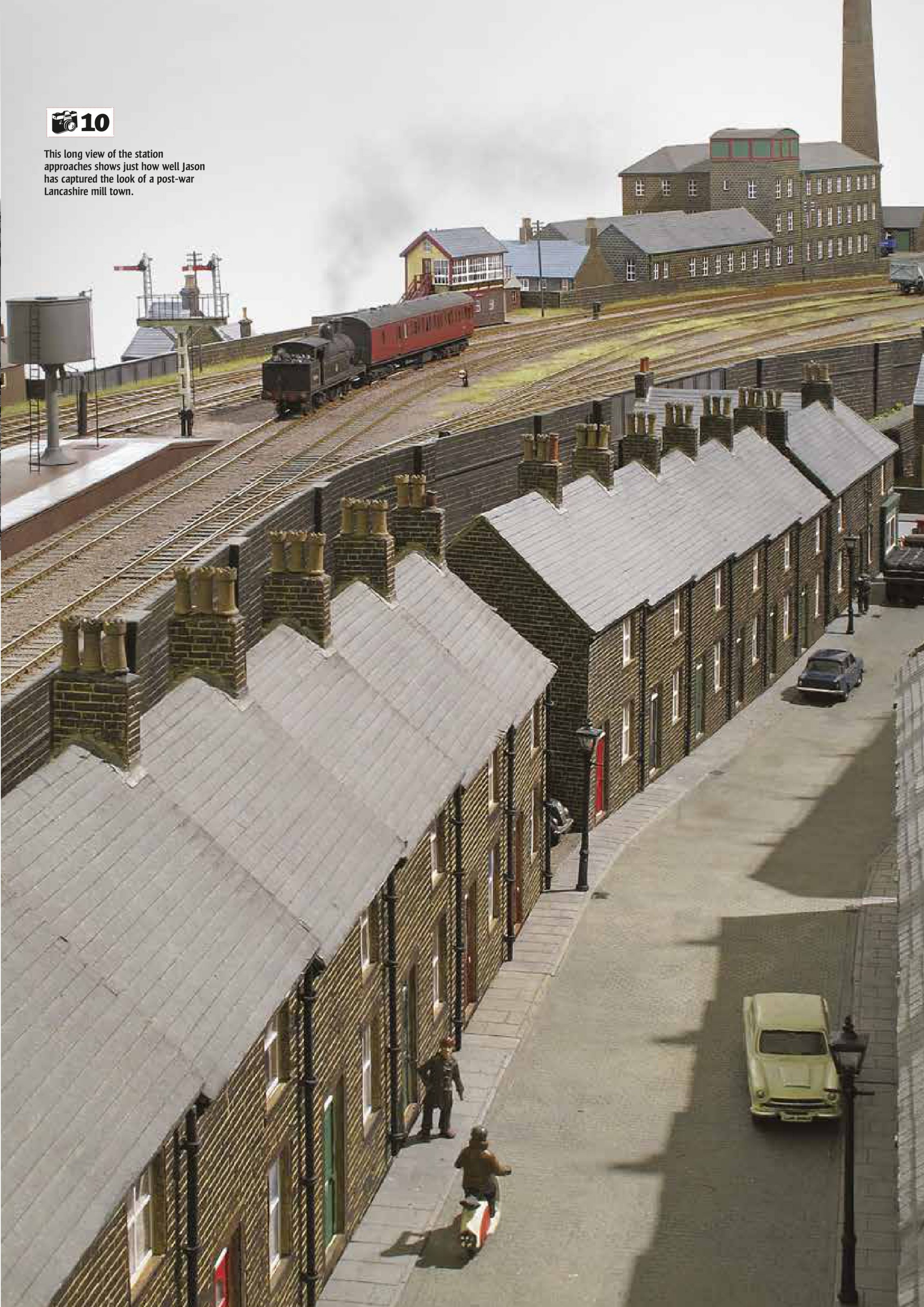
A filthy WD 2-8-0 typifies the grime and neglect of the final years of BR steam in the north-west of England. Note the use of static grass to create weed strewn tracks in the goods yard.



Railways in and around Pennine towns are characterised by the heavy civil engineering required to cross the many valleys and hills.



This long view of the station approaches shows just how well Jason has captured the look of a post-war Lancashire mill town.





East Lancashire was one of the first areas to benefit from the introduction of diesel railcars in the late-1950s, although their popularity with passengers wasn't enough to save some lines, such as those to Bacup.

KEY DETAILS WEATHERING BUILDINGS

Weathering of the buildings is achieved by first painting the embossed plastic with stone coloured enamel paint and then once dry, dabbing on first brown and then matt black enamel paint with an old rag wrapped tightly around the index finger. Doing so leaves the paint on the raised section but not in the mortar courses. I have tried this method with brick too; it was not as successful.



WHAT MAKES BACUP A GREAT LAYOUT?

Although Bacup is Jason's first 'serious' layout he's very effectively captured the atmosphere of a Lancashire mill town in the 1960s, towards the end of steam in the area. The modelling of mundane terraces and functional mill buildings is to an exceptionally high standard. The locomotive and stock weathering is superb and the layout runs very smoothly. The only drawback is that it isn't an exhibition layout as it deserves a much wider audience.

Andy York
RMweb Editor

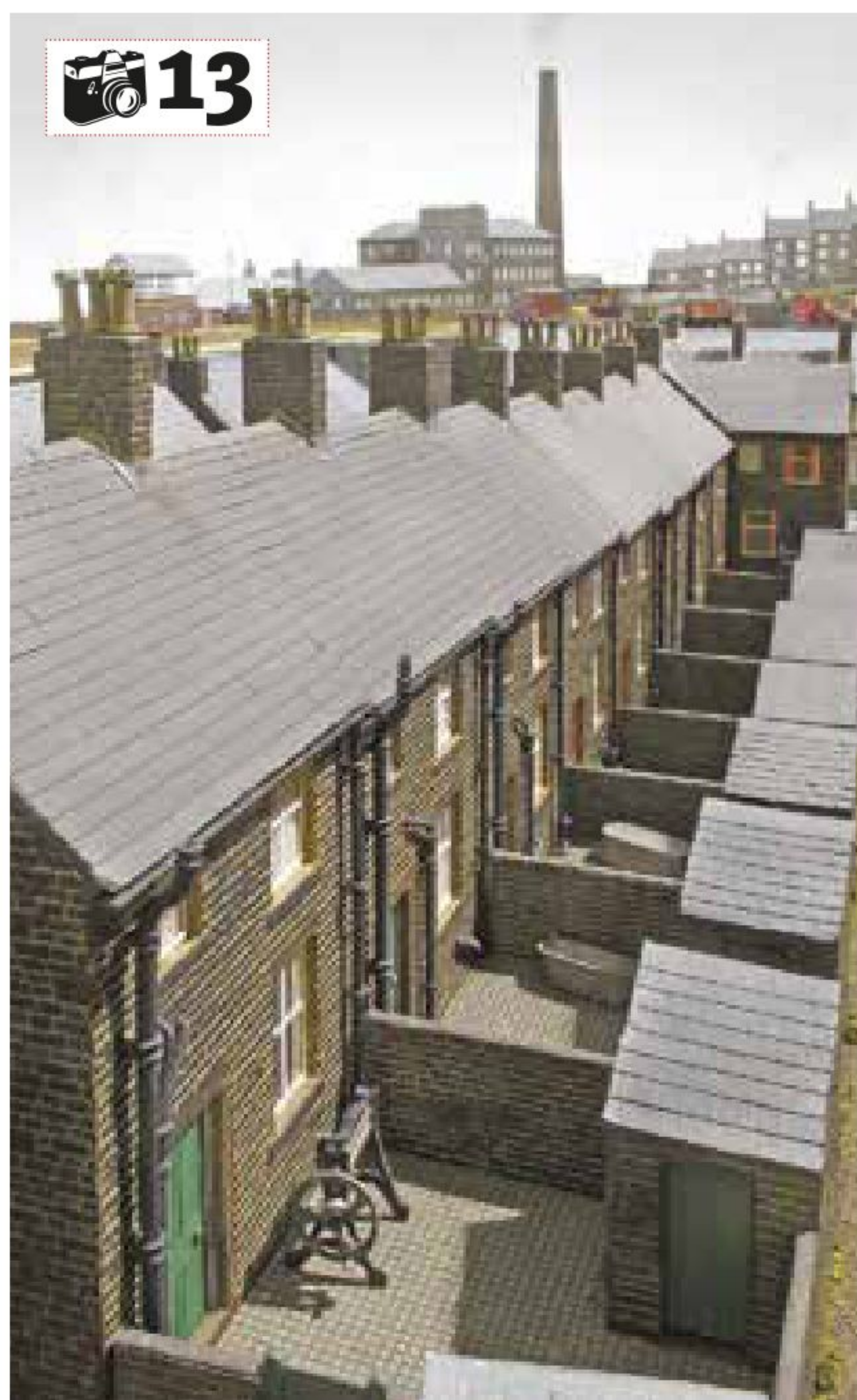


TAKING STOCK

Bacup's passenger services went over to diesel railcars from the mid-1950s and from then on, the only locomotive-hauled passenger services were occasional railtours and Wakes Weeks excursions to exotic locations such as Morecambe, Blackpool and Southport. With that in mind, I duly purchased a couple of DMUs but then temptation got the better of me and I purchased an ex-L&YR Aspinall Radial 2-4-2T. Of course, a 'Lanky' layout should have a 'Lanky' locomotive. In fact, it should have a few, so it was followed by an A Class 0-6-0, a Class 23 0-6-0ST and in the pipeline, a London Road Models Belpaire-boilered Aspinall Radial 2-4-2T.

As I already had a few locomotives more common to the line in its twilight years (for example Stanier Black Five 4-6-0s), the layout now flits between a couple of periods in time; namely the late-1950s and early-1960s, with best efforts not to use locomotives that wouldn't have been seen together. After all, the 'Lanky' machines were something of a rarity by the early-1960s.

The majority have been renumbered to examples that are known to have run in the area, if not up the branch itself. A few have been chopped about a bit (the amateur's way of saying modified), all have real coal added and I am in the process of weathering them. Coaching stock comprises mainly RTR items, with goods stock being a mixture of RTR and kit-built, the latter gradually out-numbering the former.



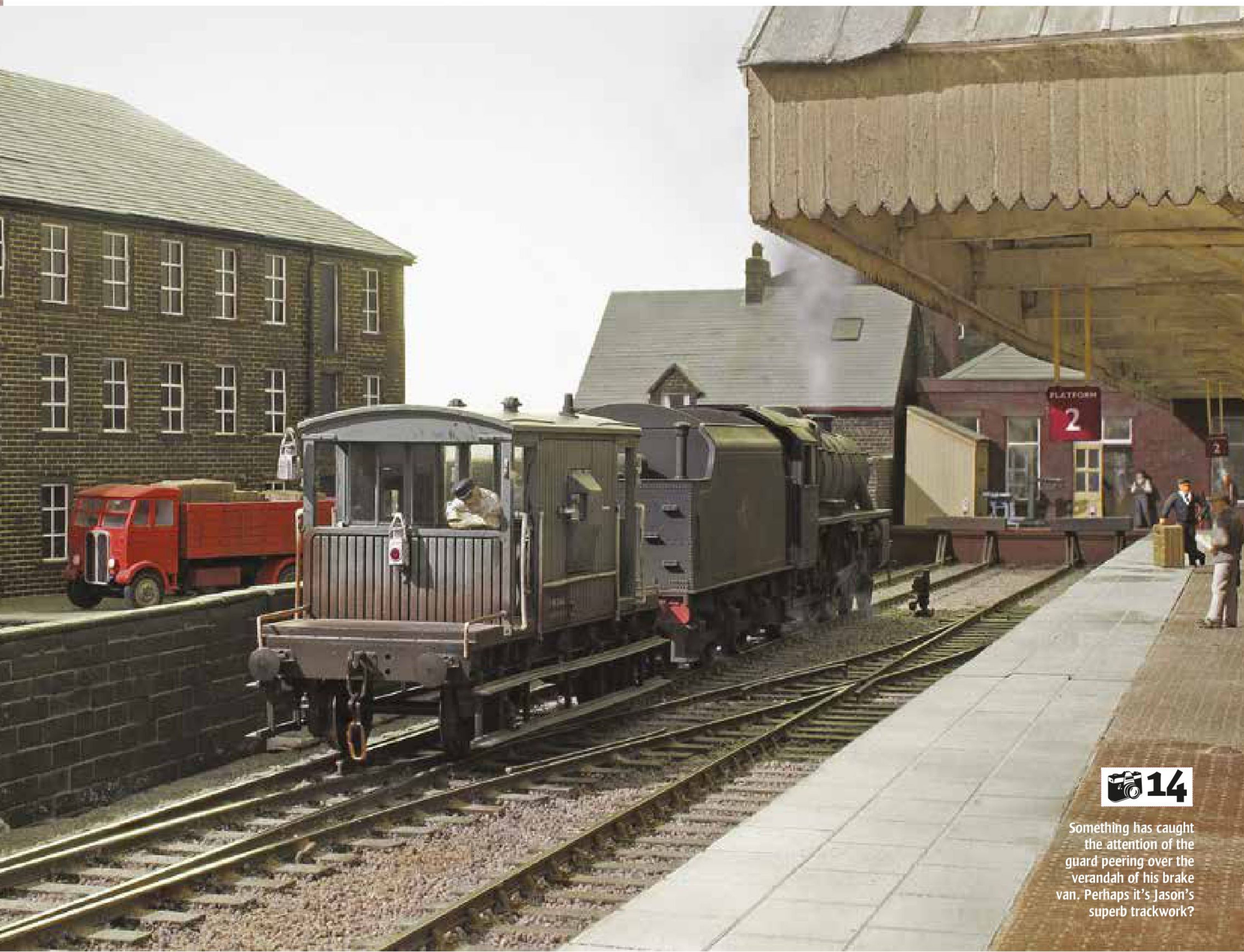
Dozens of terraced houses, complete with stone sett backyards and outside toilets had to be built to complete the scene.

LESSONS LEARNED

Building the layout has been a rollercoaster ride. One of the aims was to teach myself various new modelling skills and constructing a layout based on a prototype location has driven me forward in doing so. Since starting the layout three years ago, I have improved my scratch-building and weathering methods, taught myself how to build turnouts, constructed my first etched brass locomotive kits, built signals from MSE components, plucked up the courage to take a scalpel to RTR locomotives costing a fair chunk of cash and glued my fingers together countless times (the last wasn't really an aim, more of a side-effect).

Without the advice and guidance of countless people on **RMweb**, I fear I wouldn't have achieved much more than 'Rubbishtown II' so may I thank each and every one of you, from those who I have chatted to on the forum and in person, through to those who posted up how they tackled tasks in their threads. Even those who wouldn't shut up about chimney pots!

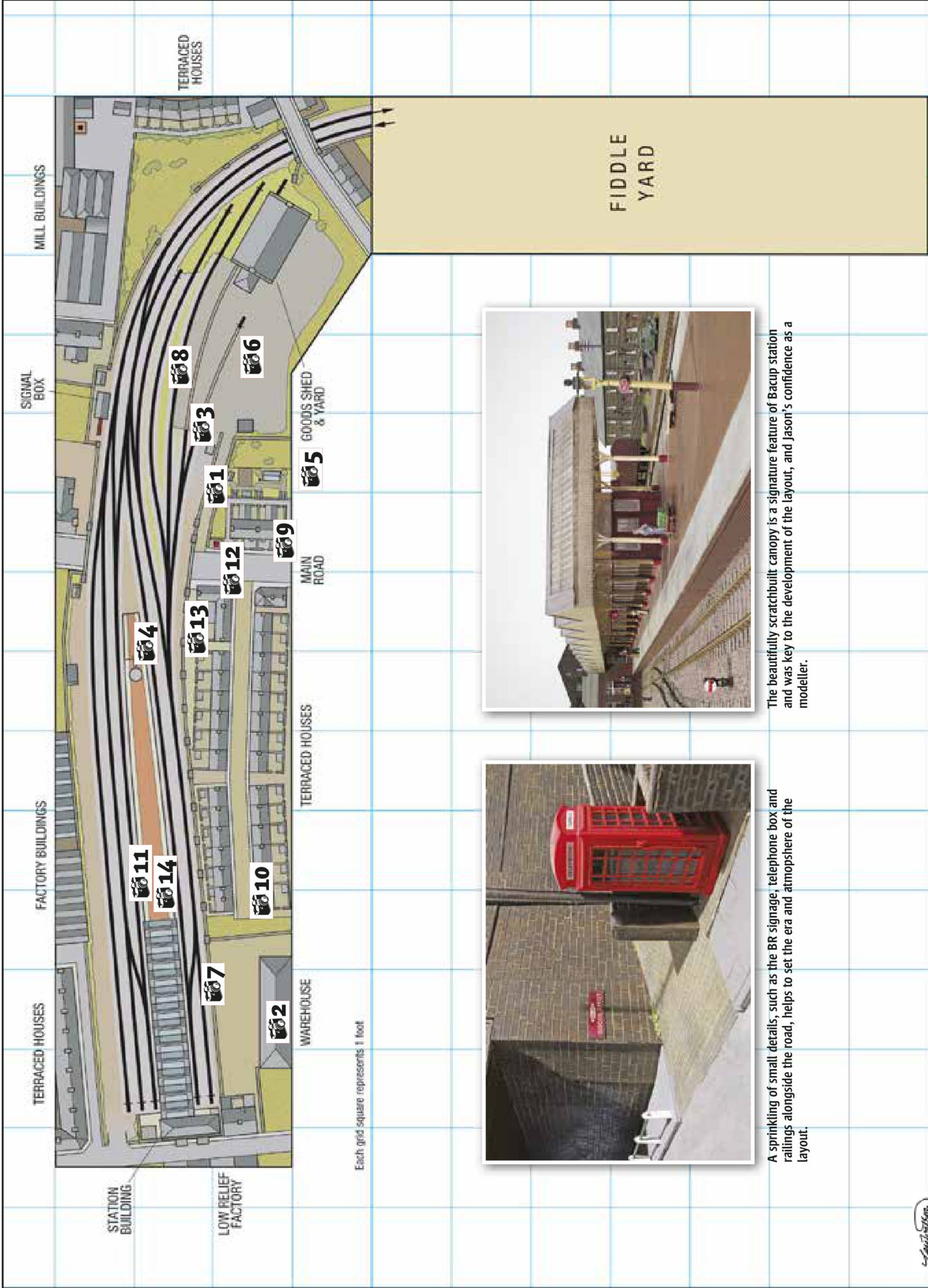
And to finish the article in the traditional way, what does the future hold? Sitting back and playing trains, mainly.



14

Something has caught the attention of the guard peering over the verandah of his brake van. Perhaps it's Jason's superb trackwork?

LAYOUT OF THE MONTH BACUP



A sprinkling of small details, such as the BR signage, telephone box and railings alongside the road, helps to set the era and atmosphere of the layout.



The beautifully scratchbuilt canopy is a signature feature of Bacup station and was key to the development of the layout, and Jason's confidence as a modeller.

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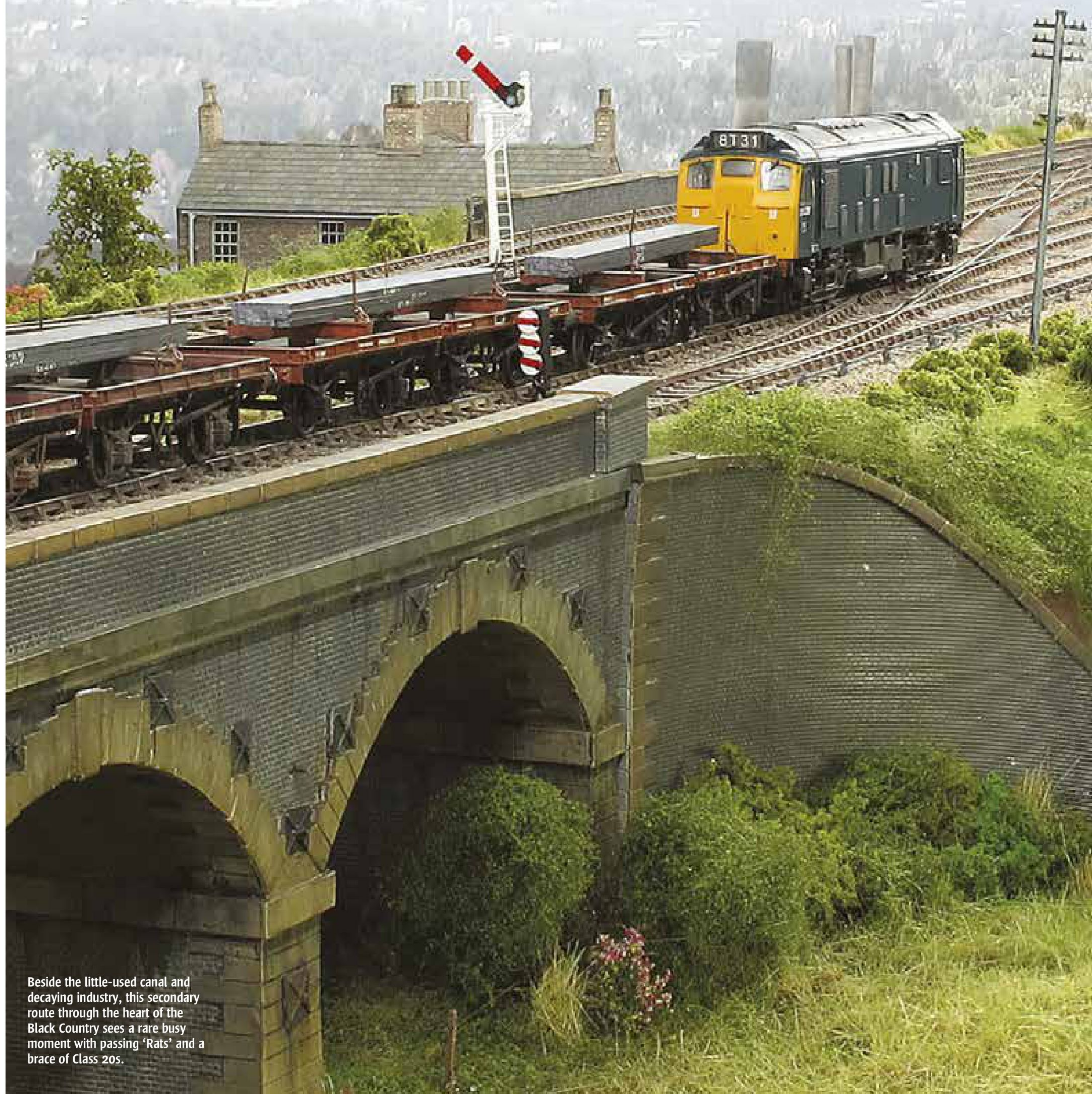
Phone Opening Times:

- Mon-Fri 10.30am—12pm & 2pm-4.30pm

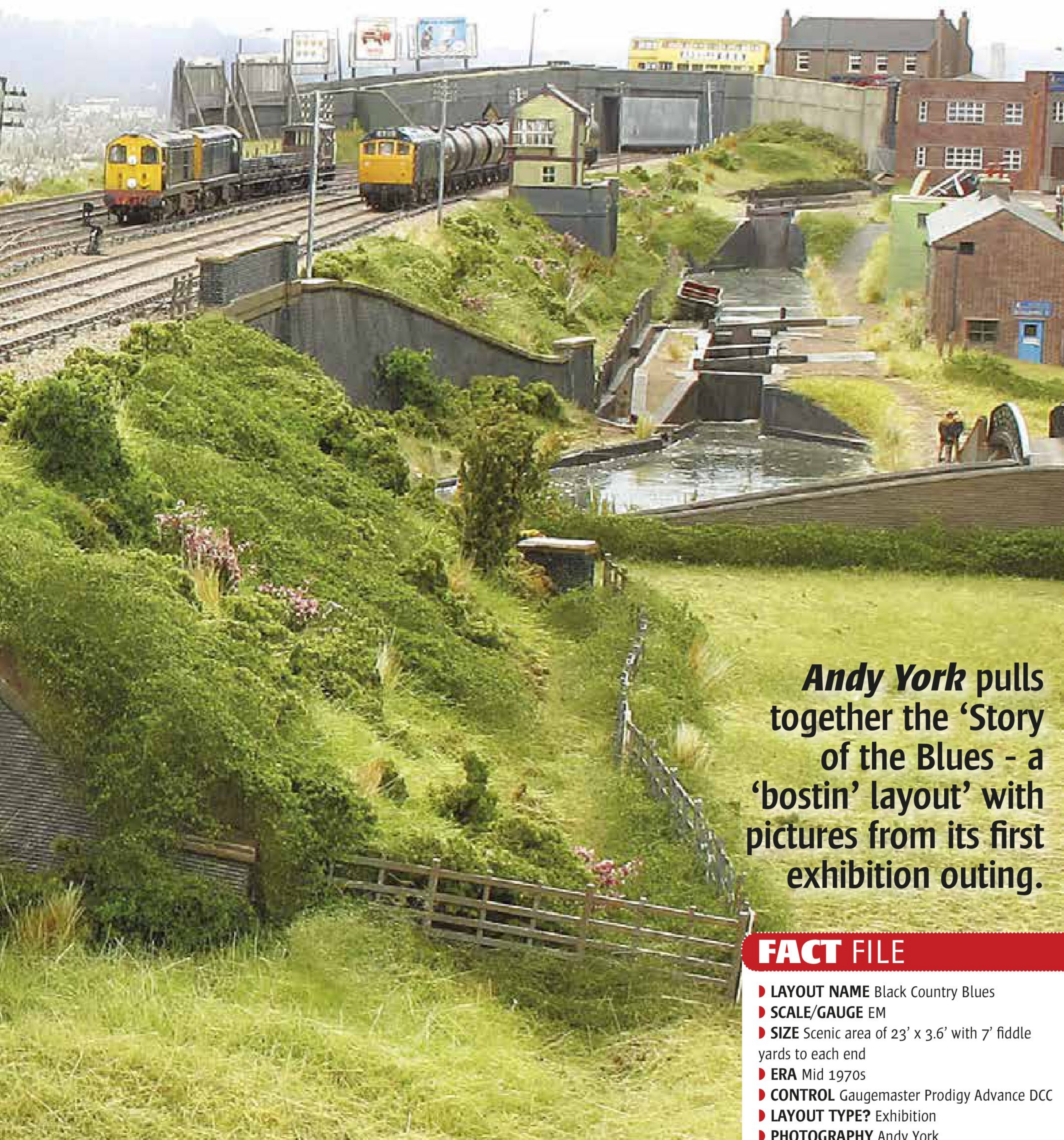


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BLACK COUNTRY BLUES



Beside the little-used canal and decaying industry, this secondary route through the heart of the Black Country sees a rare busy moment with passing 'Rats' and a brace of Class 20s.

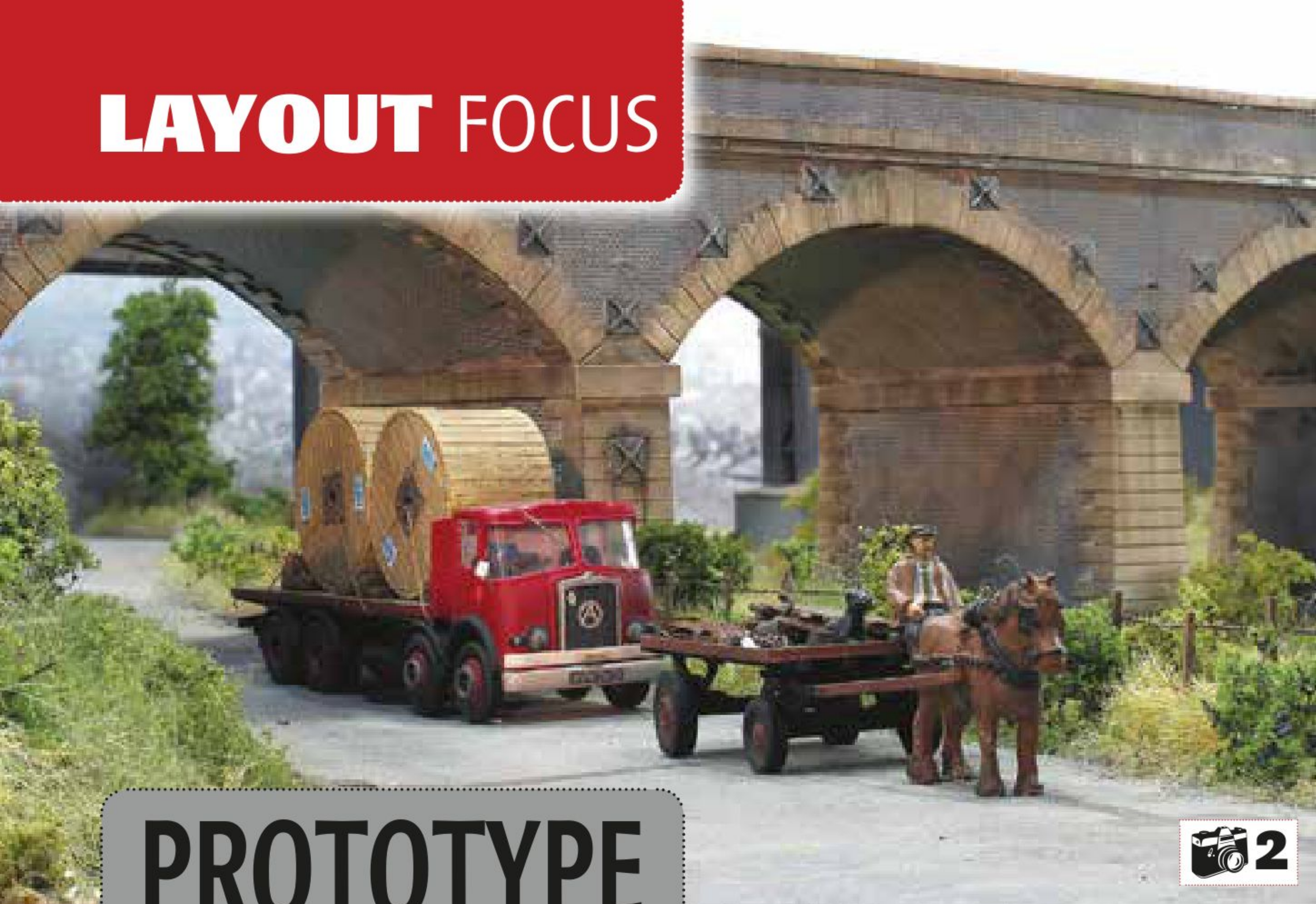
LAYOUT FOCUS **EDITOR'S CHOICE**

Andy York pulls together the 'Story of the Blues - a 'bostin' layout' with pictures from its first exhibition outing.

FACT FILE

- **LAYOUT NAME** Black Country Blues
- **SCALE/GAUGE** EM
- **SIZE** Scenic area of 23' x 3.6' with 7' fiddle yards to each end
- **ERA** Mid 1970s
- **CONTROL** Gaugemaster Prodigy Advance DCC
- **LAYOUT TYPE?** Exhibition
- **PHOTOGRAPHY** Andy York





3



LEFT: Road vehicles readily identify a layout's era, so care was taken to ensure they fitted the mid-'70s

ABOVE: A partially sunken 'joey' boat sits in the polluted canal next to the weed-infested embankment.

PROTOTYPE INSPIRATION



In the BR blue era, a Class 47 heads over the skewed canal bridge north of Wolverhampton High Level. Simon Dewey

All of the structures on BCB are hand-built, taking inspiration from structures around the Black Country, which give a specific regional flavour.

From a personal perspective, the whole of the BCB project has been a huge success, not just measured by the destination or end result shown here, but because of the journey the team took. It seemed a simple enough precept - a challenge to construct an exhibition layout against a defined budget but, as with all best plans, it grew beyond that, not just in size but by involving a wider team. This 'crowd-sourcing' of material has produced a result greater than the sum of its parts and without wishing to belittle the hard work and dedication of the core team, it's been fantastic to see a project that a wider community has got involved with and feel part of.

The project

The construction of the project was serialised in **BRM** through 2012 and 2013 and recorded in real time on RMweb with its own dedicated area (www.rmweb.co.uk/BCB). This brought contributions from fellow members with

memories of the area and its culture, prototype information (especially specific traffic workings), and practical contributions from lineside huts to road vehicles and larger buildings. The project developed its own life and impetus, taking a little longer than the original 12 months timeframe but is all the better for it.

The winning entry was a proposal to produce a slice of the Black Country with a secondary route through typical 1970s scenery. For those who may not be familiar with the Black Country, it's not a defined political entity but a region of largely industrial urban areas that sit above a particular coal seam, giving rise to the proliferation of heavy industry with the coming of the canals and railways. It stretches roughly from Wolverhampton in the north west to West Bromwich in the south east; Walsall in the north east to Stourbridge in the south west. The team undertook to reproduce several key structures from the early railways, adhering to principles laid down in the Railway Clauses Acts to make a

The BCB Team

GEOFF COOK

Produced track plan in Templot, followed by construction of turnouts and plain track from individual components. Completed electrics in time for Doncaster then built the working signals - 13 ground signals and three for the main line!

JOHN WARDLE

Drew concept sketches and overall design, research, field surveys, scale drawings, track ballasting, modelled tunnel portal and skew-bridge over the canal, LNWR fencing and added Wills point rodding!

PAUL GALLON

Modelled the road vehicles in addition to working on some of the details. 'It made me push the boundaries of my modelling skills, learn new ones and find different ways of doing things by working with other modellers.'

DAMIAN ROSS

'For me it was about getting a bunch of mates back together who had drifted apart for various reasons' - built the baseboards, legs, fiddle yards, front fascias, lighting units, and contributed the 'Clayliner' wagons to form the working from St.Blazey to Stoke.

NIGEL BRAZIER

Research and site visits to ensure detail of canal, locks, etc. specific to Black Country canals. Also researched locos and stock used by the steel works in the period modelled.

ANDY BANKS

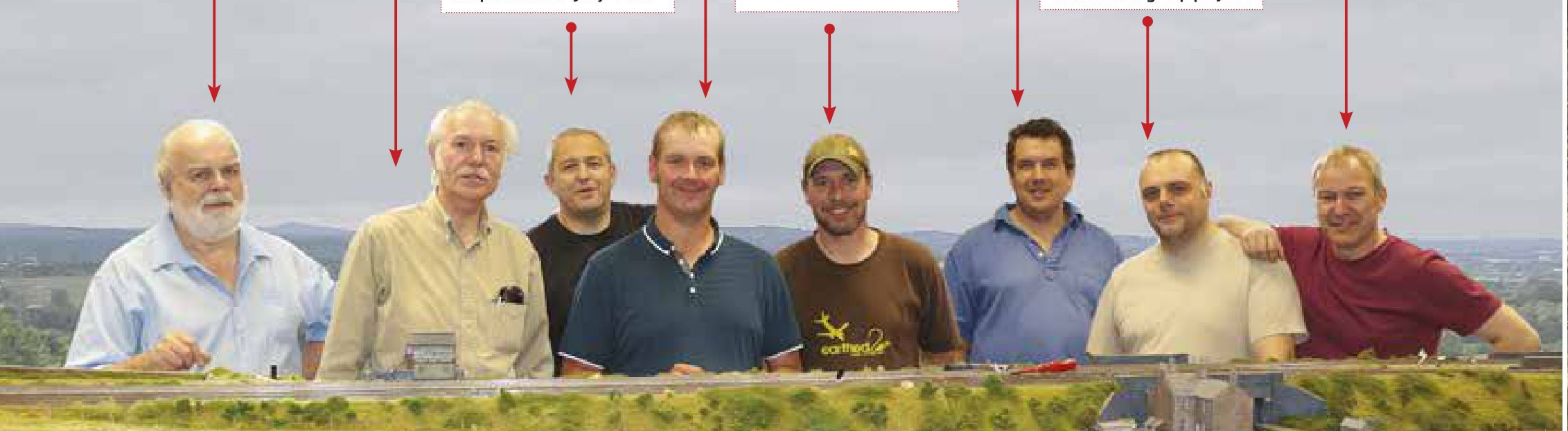
Very much the even headed problem solver! Built the viaduct and industrial skew bridge, and the pub (based on the 'baggies' Eight Locks at Ryder's Green). Also made the part sunken 'Joey' boat.

JASON THOMAS

Constructed the Cart Shed building in time for BCB's debut show, roped into the finishing work and became part of the operating team 'making some great friends along the way'.

MARK FORREST

Provided most of the rolling stock, but also built the signal box from an etched-brass kit - 'I approached the project from a different perspective as I had not worked on a group project'.





The weedy greenery on BCB combines static grass and polyfibre coated with blended turf. The clumps of Rosebay Willowherb are made from Woodland Scenics long grass fibres, coated with Blended Turf and topped with pink Flower Soft foam granules.





As the exchange sidings were added after the main lines, the signal box to control the sidings had limited space and required a retaining wall to be built on the slope down to the canal. A pair of Class 20s prepare to leave the sidings with a trip working to Bescot with a short load from British Steel's Trafalgar Works.



See Black Country Blues at

**THE FESTIVAL OF
BRITISH RAILWAY
MODELLING
DONCASTER**



6

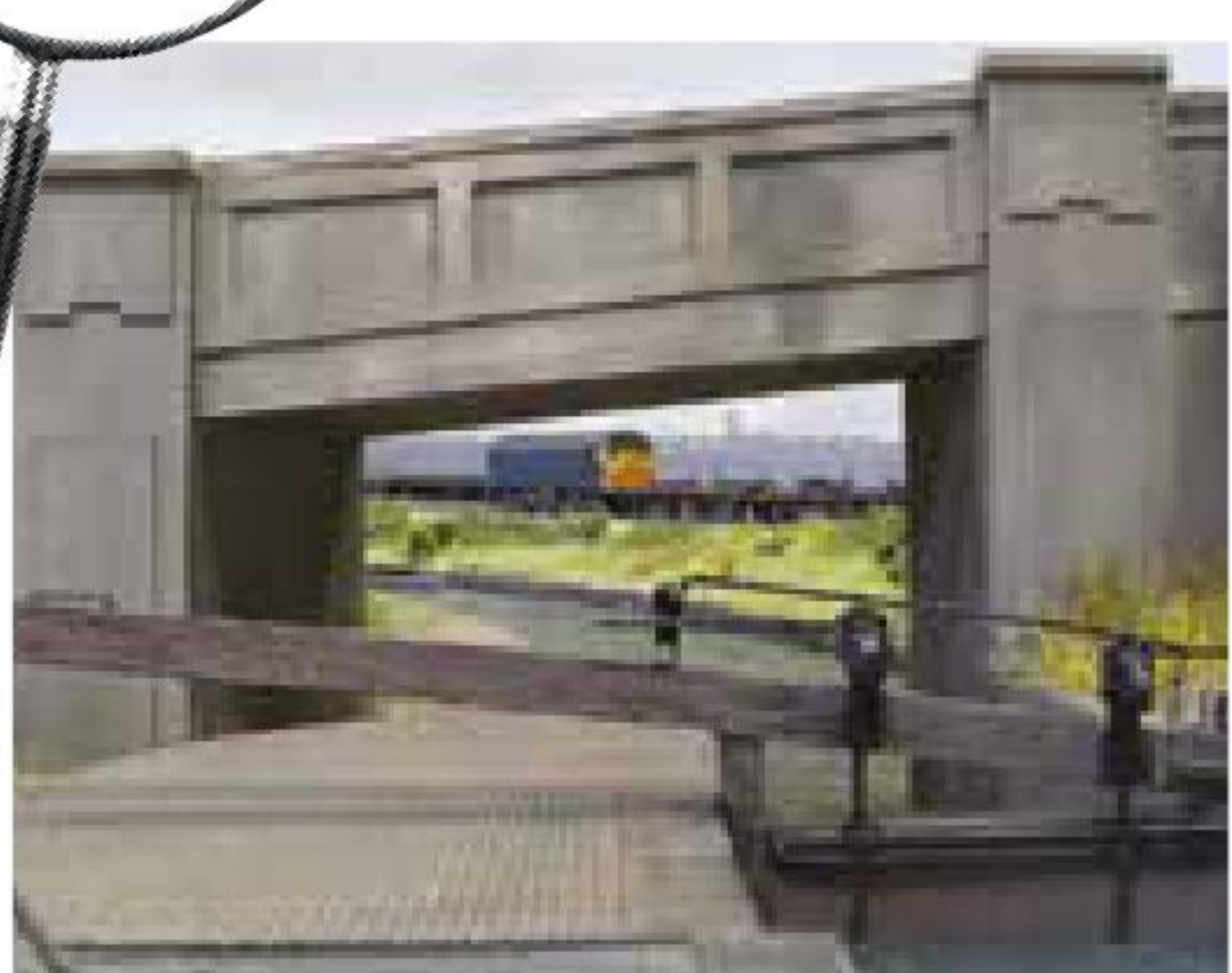
The Class 31 has worked its way up the gradient from James Bridge Junction, through the tunnel and is now crossing the blue brick viaduct through post-industrial wastelands.



A Class 47 heads a block oil train from Albion Oil Terminal towards the viaduct, which was based on structures on the Grand Junction Railway at Aston and Penkridge.



KEY DETAILS



BRIDGES

Although the large viaduct may be the structural star of the layout, there are many more bridges, all of which are modelled on local prototypes. The art-deco concrete road bridge over the canal in this view would be very difficult for an exhibition viewer to see.

model which didn't just look right but included embankments with the correct sloping, accurate gradients and demarcation of the railway's property in conjunction with the civil engineering. 'If it's right it will look right' definitely applied to their well-researched efforts.

The model was given a rough location however, to determine what workings could be seen along the line and has therefore been interpreted as a deviation of the Darlaston loop that joins with the Princes End route, thus linking the Grand Junction line with that of the Stour Valley route between Wolverhampton and Birmingham. The team could then determine the traffic flows; from local trip workings through to incoming oil trains and even regular but unusual workings which brought locos considered 'foreigners' to the region. If anyone was lucky enough to be diverted along such routes on Sundays in the 1970s you would know that nothing travels quickly, with short distances between junctions, difficult gradients and aged trackwork making it unlikely you'd get much above 30mph, therefore nothing moves with any haste on the model.

BCB ARTICLE ARCHIVE

There have been a number of Black Country Blues articles featured in **BRM** over the past 16 months. Here's a list of what you may have missed:

October 2012 - The plan for BCB (5-pages)
November 2012 - Baseboards and elevated trackbeds (4-pages)

December 2012 - Creating the Permanent Way (6-pages)

January 2013 - Landscaping Part 1

February 2013 - Landscaping Part 2

March 2013 - Bringing it together for the first time

April 2013 - The first exhibition!

May 2013 - A visual update from Alexandra Palace

June 2013 - The canals of the Black Country

July 2013 - Building the canal and lock keeper's cottage

September 2013 - An RMweb member on building a couple of key structures

You can download any of these back issues from just £2.99 an issue.

Go to: www.pocketmags.com/BRM

WHERE CAN I SEE BLACK COUNTRY BLUES?

The layout is booked to appear at the following shows in 2014

♦ **STAFFORD RAILWAY CIRCLE, STAFFORD**

February 1/2

♦ **FESTIVAL OF BRITISH RAILWAY MODELLING, DONCASTER**

February 8/9

♦ **DEMU SHOWCASE, BURTON UPON TRENT**

May 31/June 1

♦ **EXPO EM NORTH, MANCHESTER**

September 13/14

♦ **WARLEY NATIONAL, NEC**

November 21/22

KEY DETAILS BUILDINGS



In addition to the major industries of the Black Country, many back roads were populated with quite anonymous small works with tatty buildings eking out an existence in an air of dereliction.

2013 2010 2005 THE BCB TIMELINE 2002 2009

Although this is a linear representation of the work undertaken many tasks were progressing concurrently.

→ May 2012

Project outlined and submitted

→ June 2012

Winner of challenge announced, prototype research underway

→ July 2012

Extension of plans after operational considerations

→ August 2012

Baseboard construction

→ September 2012

Rolling stock work

→ October 2012

Trackbed fixed and boards landscaped

→ November 2012

Structures and buildings underway

→ December 2012

Tracklaying and electrical work

→ January 2013

First scenic treatments

→ February 2013

First outing to Doncaster

→ March 2013

Second outing to Alexandra Palace

→ April 2013

Track adjustments

→ May 2013

Mark continues to produce rolling stock

→ June 2013

Completion and detailing of structures

→ July 2013

Detailing of locos

→ August 2013

Signals under construction

→ September 2013

Completion of scenic works

→ October 2013

First exhibition in complete format at Peterborough

The goal

It was very important to achieve something which looked like typical scenes from around the Black Country. This was not necessarily achieved by reproducing specific structures, but through placing items in proximity and including small details. Those who travelled the railways of the area at that time will be familiar with polluted canals bereft of any leisure activity, mile after mile of industry from steelworks, indiscernible light industry dependent on the output of the region, relics of previous industrial activity and acres of seemingly abandoned greenery, so it was this environment the team sought to capture rather than an identifiable station location. The layout breaks away from more traditional conventions of passenger services and some form of station and includes a secondary freight-only route with exchange sidings for an off-scene steelworks celebrating the mundane rather than any glamour whatsoever.

Although we mentioned earlier what should be specifically included, it's the anonymity of the whole which strangely defines what the model is. It could be somewhere - there are features the viewer can identify with - but no-one should be able to pin down exactly where they'd go to see it.

My modelling time became devoted to the project too, I couldn't stand by and just watch others put time and effort into a layout that was very close to my modelling interests so I pitched in with some mundane canal cottages, the photographic backscene and helped out with the final scenic work. **BRM**

The BRM perspective

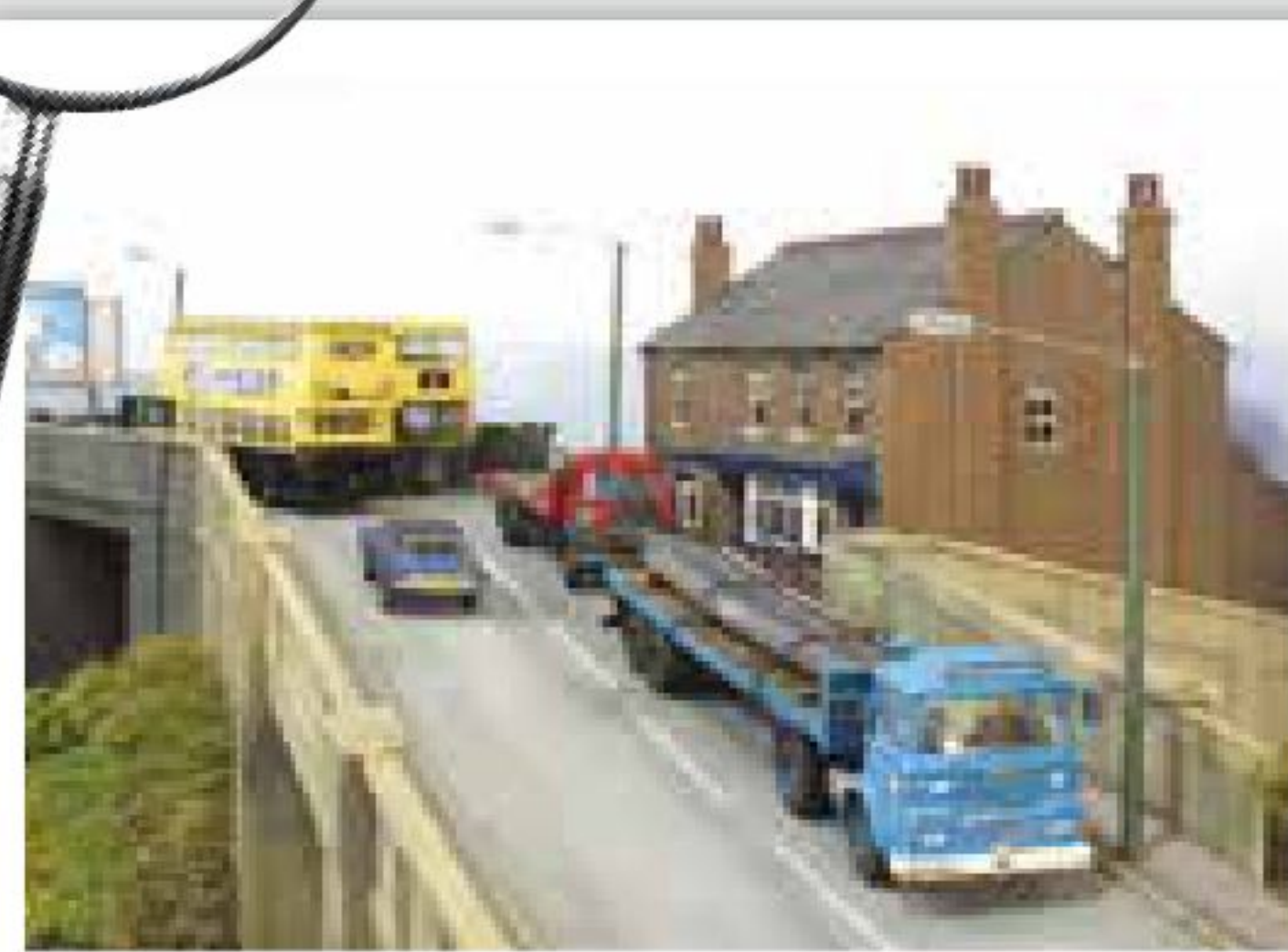
by Steve Cole, Associate Publisher

The idea behind the first-ever RMweb Project Layout was to find a team that would excel in all areas of modelling to produce a layout of outstanding quality. The ideal scenario was to have someone great at baseboards, trackwork, scenery, buildings, etc., resulting in a layout that could be claimed the best 'Project Layout' ever produced.

In May 2012 I don't think any of us could have imagined just how many people would have contributed to BCB. The initial 'team' was appointed for their combined modelling skills, originality of the concept, and understanding of how to successfully demonstrate the model at exhibitions. I'm not sure even they imagined just how BCB would capture the imagination of so many RMweb members.

The original topic on RMweb had over 46,000 views with 671 replies (at the time of writing) with many more sub topics created about certain areas of the layout. People from around the world offered know-how ranging from modelling techniques to prototype information. Buildings were transported on planes direct to shows, and operators travelled hundreds of miles to exhibitions. Baseboards have been 'living' many miles apart as different team members 'did their thing' to ensure deadlines were met. The project has been mind-boggling, and only when you see the finished layout can you appreciate just what this vast group of modellers have achieved. BCB is, quite simply, the most ambitious publishers' project layout ever attempted and, in my opinion, the best project layout ever completed! Well done to every one involved.

KEY DETAILS



ROAD TRANSPORT

Road vehicles readily identify a layout's era to many viewers, so care was taken to ensure that the transport shown on BCB fitted the mid-1970s, with a predominant mix of Leyland and Ford vehicles; the lamp posts are even modelled on ex-trolleybus wiring poles.



CANAL

The canals used to be the transport lifeblood of the area before the arrival of the railways and form the memories of many visitors to the area, with their proximity to rail routes. The water surface is formed of alternating layers of PVA and gloss varnish over a suitably polluted paint colouring and the cast-iron roving bridge is hand-cut from card.

THE WIDER RMweb INVOLVEMENT



The team undertaking the project has not only grown to include Paul and Jason but has brought in many 'country members'. Chris Tooth (2manyspams) invested a large amount of time in the early stages to form the landscape and get the scenics in place for the first outing to Doncaster whilst other RMweb members wanted to make a contribution to a project which seemed to continually increase in scope. Flavio de la Rosa (Il Dottore) from Switzerland produced some magnificent buildings along with Stu Hilton (stubby47) from Cornwall. Eric (TheSignalEngineer) brought a personally meaningful shunter's hut where his father had worked, whilst Arthur Ormerod made a superb Yorkshire Engine DE2 for the steelworks and suitable road transport.

Geoff Cook's gentle curves and pointwork are shown to good effect on this shot of one half of BCB. Signalling work, from MSE components, is still taking place.

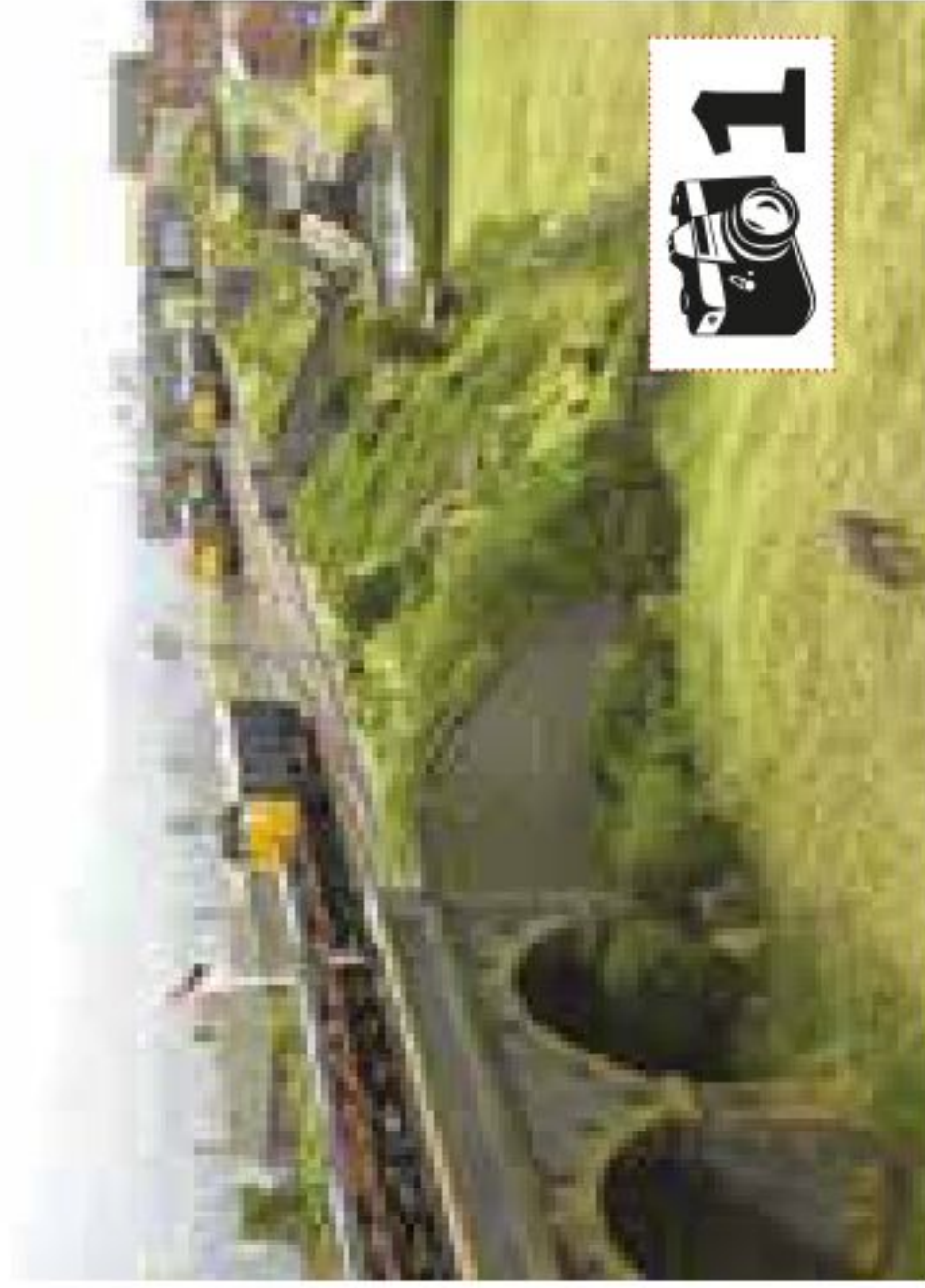








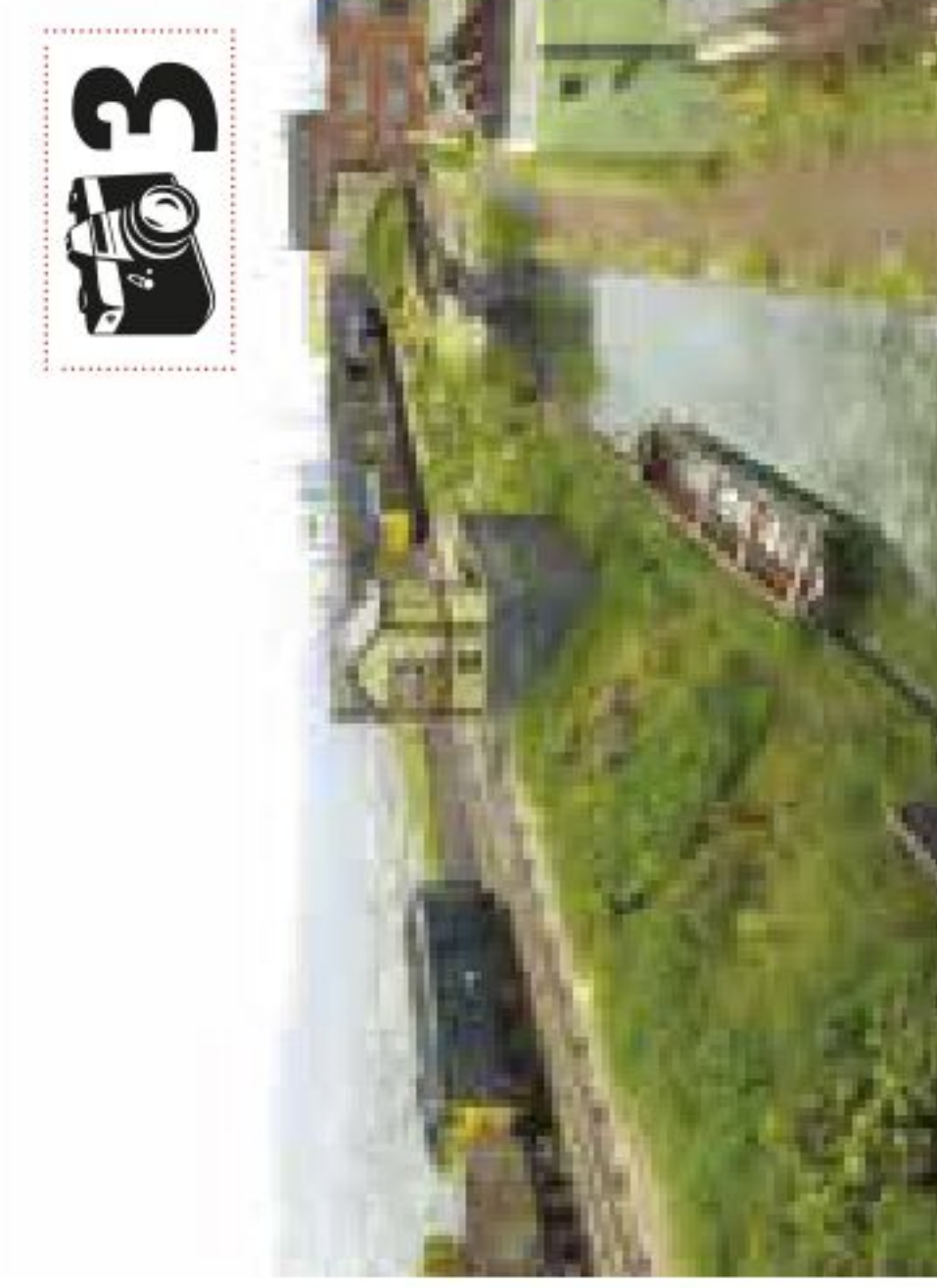
EDITOR'S CHOICE BLACK COUNTRY BLUES TRACKPLAN



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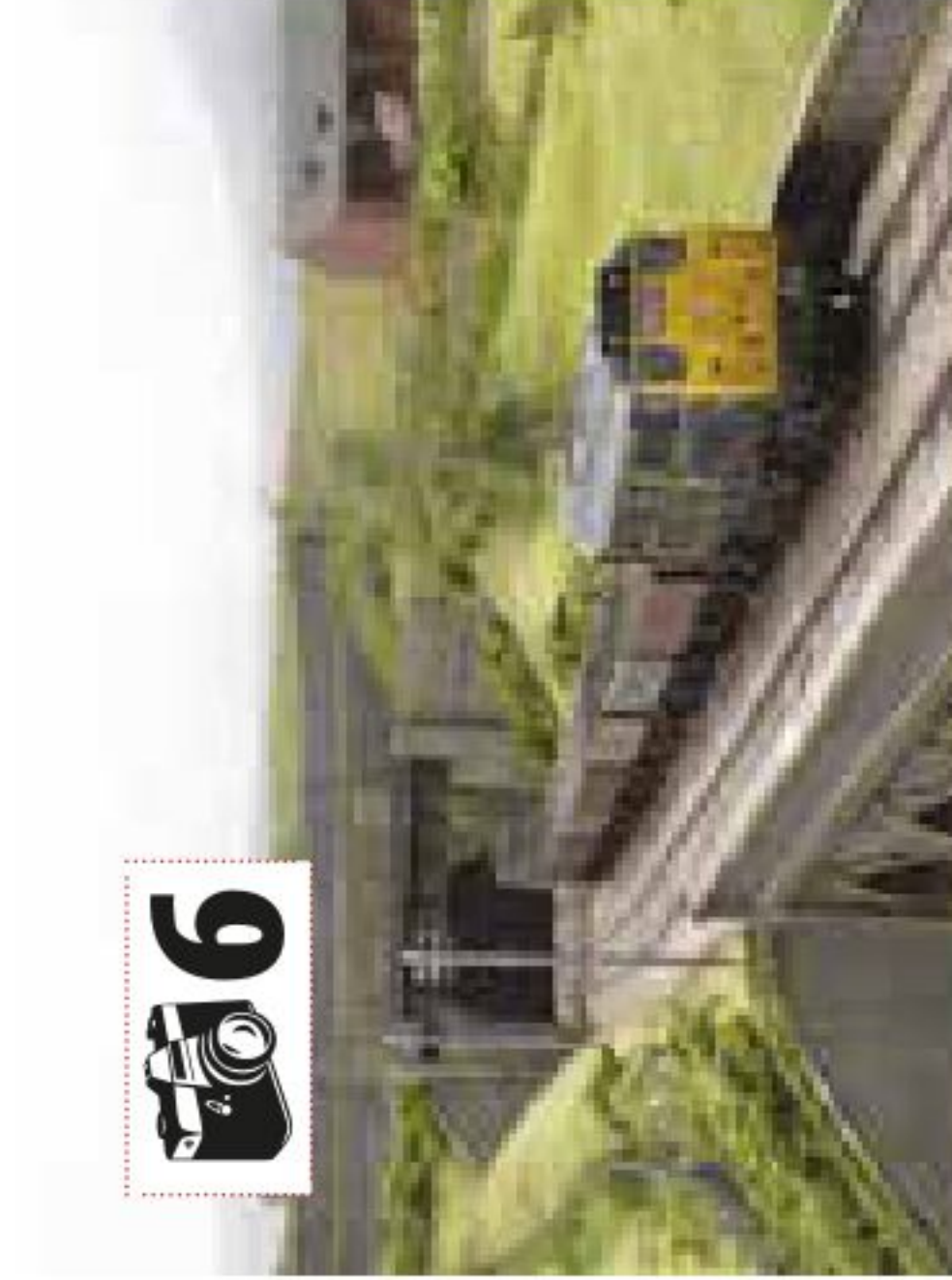
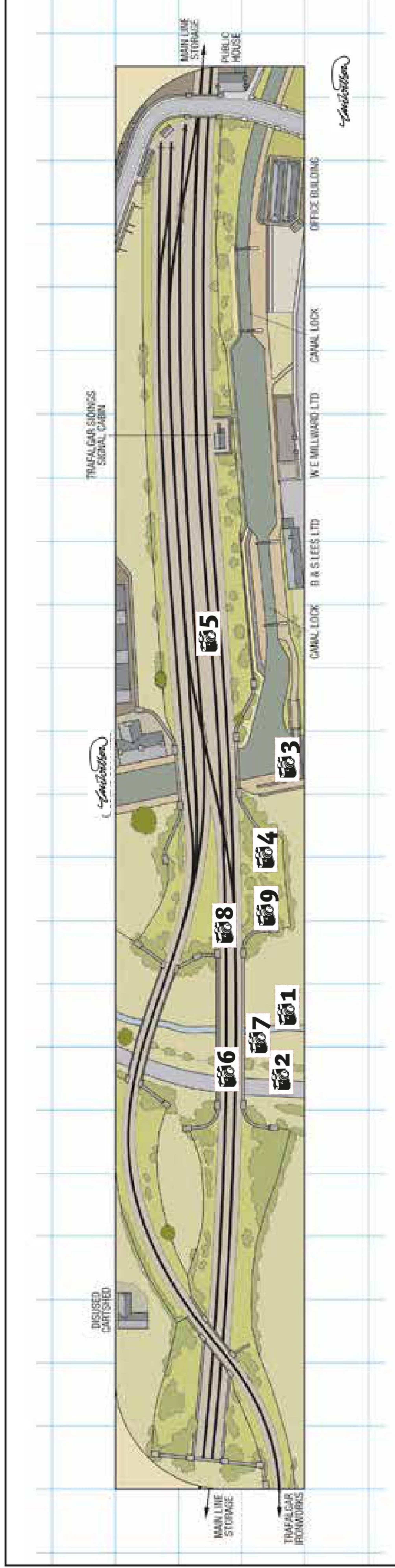
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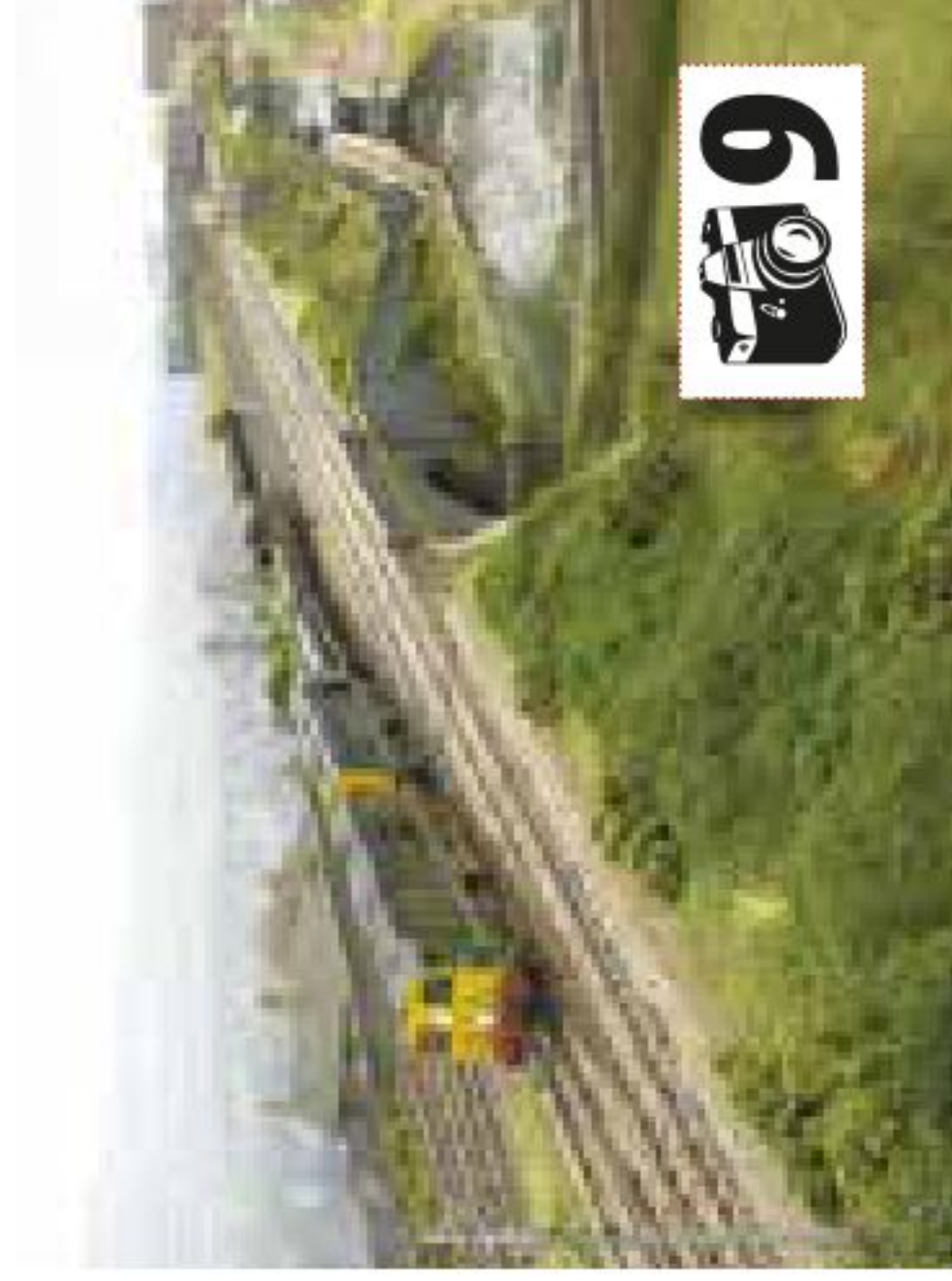
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BARTON ROAD

The dream of a mainline layout and release of new N gauge diesels led Benn Pollard to create this landscape in which Western Region diesel hydraulics roam free.



Factfile

Layout name: Barton Road
Scale/gauge: N gauge
Size: 15' x 8'
Era/region: 1960s/70s BR (WR)
Location: Fictional
Layout type: End-to-end with triangular junction
Power/control: DCC
Words: Benn Pollard
Photography: Andy York



A scruffy 'Western' diesel-hydraulic D1029 *Western Legionnaire* rounds the curve with a train of equally grubby-looking six-wheel milk tankers. 'Westerns' were a common sight on 'milk-runs' after dieselisation in the 1960s, given their passenger locomotive status.

The primary ethos behind 'Barton Road' was to create something that really utilised the benefits of modelling in N gauge – full-length trains with a reasonable depth of scene within a manageable space. I wanted to break away from the usual designs and create something that made it that little bit different. I decided on an amalgamation of those principles, with the curved mainline giving the opportunity to operate through-running trains, a goods yards handling facilities and a dock branch to enable plenty of shunting, and to give passing trains a reason to stop and drop off or pick up wagons.

THE PLAN

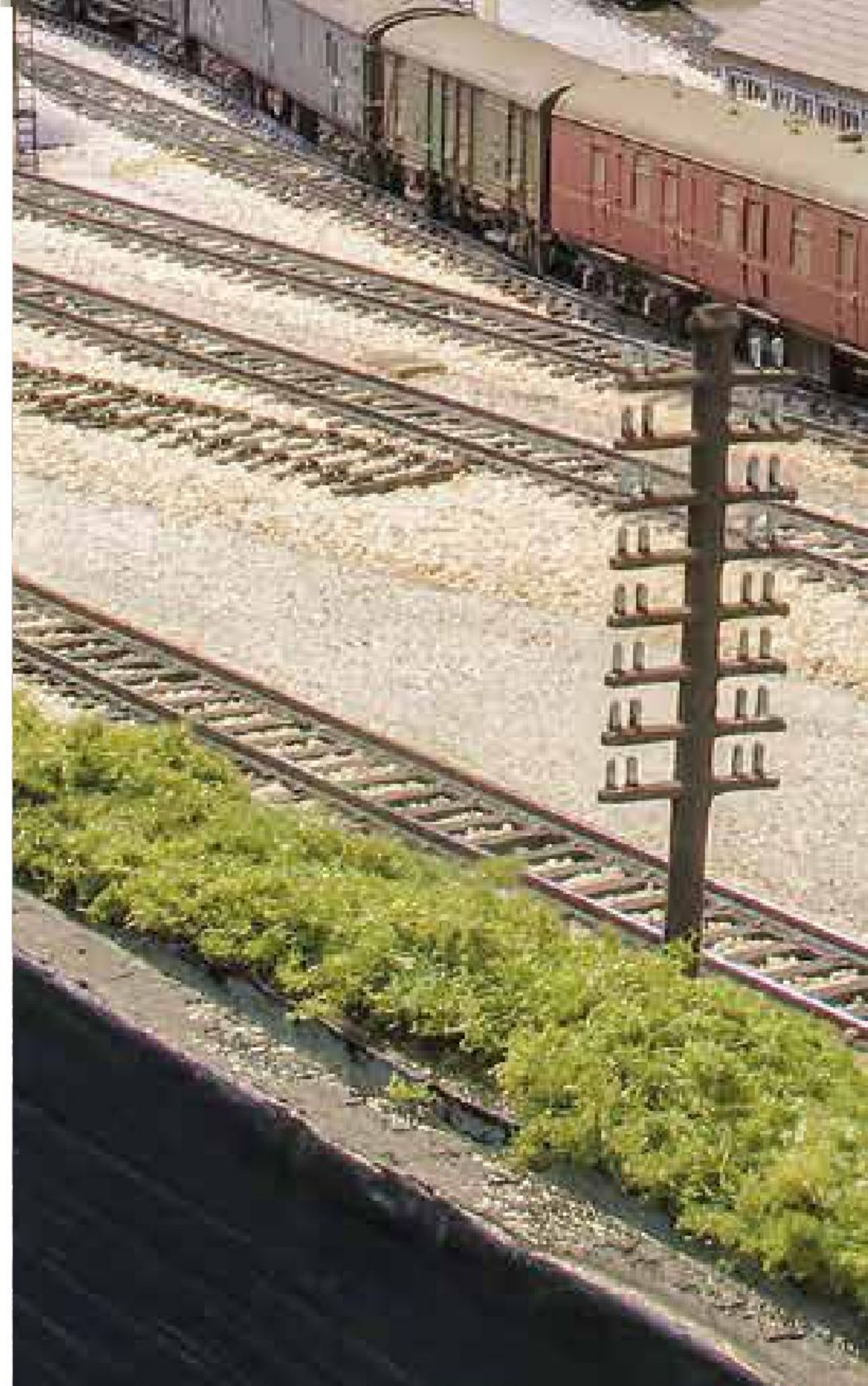
I started the project in February 2012, and the first exhibition was booked for May 2013. That deadline was met, albeit in a fully operational but partially scenic state. The layout was extended with a station, a parcels depot and a local goods yard, which brought the total length to 19'. It was built on lightweight baseboards consisting of 3"x1" timber frames with two central braces, and 9mm plywood tops that bolt together in pairs for safe transit.

The decision to model the late-60s/early-70s pre-Total Operations Processing System (TOPS) era on the British Rail Western Region was influenced by personal railway interests and those of fellow modeller Rob Pickford, plus several new models of BR(WR) traction. These included the Dapol Class 22 and 52 'Western', plus the Graham Farish Warship hydraulics, with the more recent Class 25 and 31 diesel-electrics.

Soon to become 46049 under TOPS at the end of December, 1973, 186 is captured hauling a newspaper train. The Graham Farish locomotive is pictured with a lengthy formation consisting of a Mk 1 BG, an ex-SR PMV, a GUV, SR 50' Bogie 'B' luggage van, two BR blue ex-'blue spot' vans and a CCT. The selection of RTR stock now available in N gauge makes such variety within capable reach of any modeller.



Filling an awkward triangular space is made simple with a scrapyard says Benn Pollard. The area where rolling stock and locomotives are dismantled is fed by a siding. Note the loose wagon wheels in the foreground.





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A forlorn-looking 'Hymek' in the scrapyards, now minus its wheels has yet to see the full extent of the cutter's torch. Meanwhile, experiencing happier times and waiting for the crossing gates to open, 'Warship' 810 *Cockade* idles with a local pick-up freight.

SLIGHT DEVIATION

There was also a bit of a curve-ball in the Graham Farish Midland Blue Pullman set which, although not correct for the BR(WR) in its out-of-the-box condition, could be made so with relatively little work. The 'Midland' was gently removed from the side of the power cars, retaining the word 'Pullman' in its correctly offset position for these ex-MR 6-car units. Jumper cables and sockets for the front ends were pinched from the inner ends of strategic places on the intermediate vehicles, glued to the front ends, then the carefully masked front end was sprayed yellow. A light coat of weathering and it was done!

The BR pre-TOPS period is often overlooked for its variety and modelling potential, I think mainly due to the end of steam on British Rail in 1968 being considered as the end of 'proper trains'. During the period in which 'Barton Road' is set there was still a full complement of mainline diesel-hydraulic classes in service. With the increasing number of diesel-electric classes encroaching on to what was previously hydraulic-dominated territory, you only had to observe the external condition of many of these hard working Western Region locomotives to see that the run-down had begun. This is what 'Barton Road' depicts.

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INSPIRED BY REALITY

'Barton Road' is set in the eastern suburbs of Bristol, not far from Temple Meads station. I chose this location for its variety of traffic and traction, with InterCity passenger services heading West, local services, milk, postal and newspaper trains. The adjacent Lawrence Hill station was particularly interesting, as it had a sizeable goods yard and a freight branch that curved off towards Avonside Wharf. The mainline also passes through the area in a cutting, which made it more suitable for scenic breaks, and there was the added interest of the nearby closed Midland Railway's Bristol to Birmingham route. This gave me the justification to create a fictitious truncated chord that, in theory, would have linked the GWR mainline to the now-closed MR route.

The remains of the chord to the Midland route have been depicted as lifted beyond the head shunt for the run-round loops that now occupy the old track bed. This allowed me to create an unusual scenic break of an imposing girder bridge, with an overgrown and disused track bed.

I have also added a single line curving off-scene under the road bridge at the top of the triangle. This line heads down towards the docks, and provides a head shunt to reverse wagons for the

goods warehouse and cement terminal. There is deliberately no connection to the mainline here, since track rationalisation has simplified the junction layout and created the opportunity to carry out some complex shunt moves, with west-bound trains that now require reversing in the loop by the station in to access the sidings.

CONSTANT EVOLUTION

'Barton Road' has evolved in several ways since its first exhibition. The layout was initially designed to be extended along the viewing side, towards Bristol. I wanted to operate the layout on the exhibition circuit before designing an extension, so I could work out what improvements were needed. I decided that a suburban station and parcels yard would benefit the layout, along with a coal merchant for good measure. I also added the pointwork, a loop to permit the reversal of trains and the appropriate signalling.

The extension took approximately a year to build, and presented a number of conundrums – not least a few interesting spaces to fill. The goods and parcels depot needed road access, and I opted for a traditional cobbled road descending on a ramp. The parcels depot platform, roof and warehouse are scratch-built using South

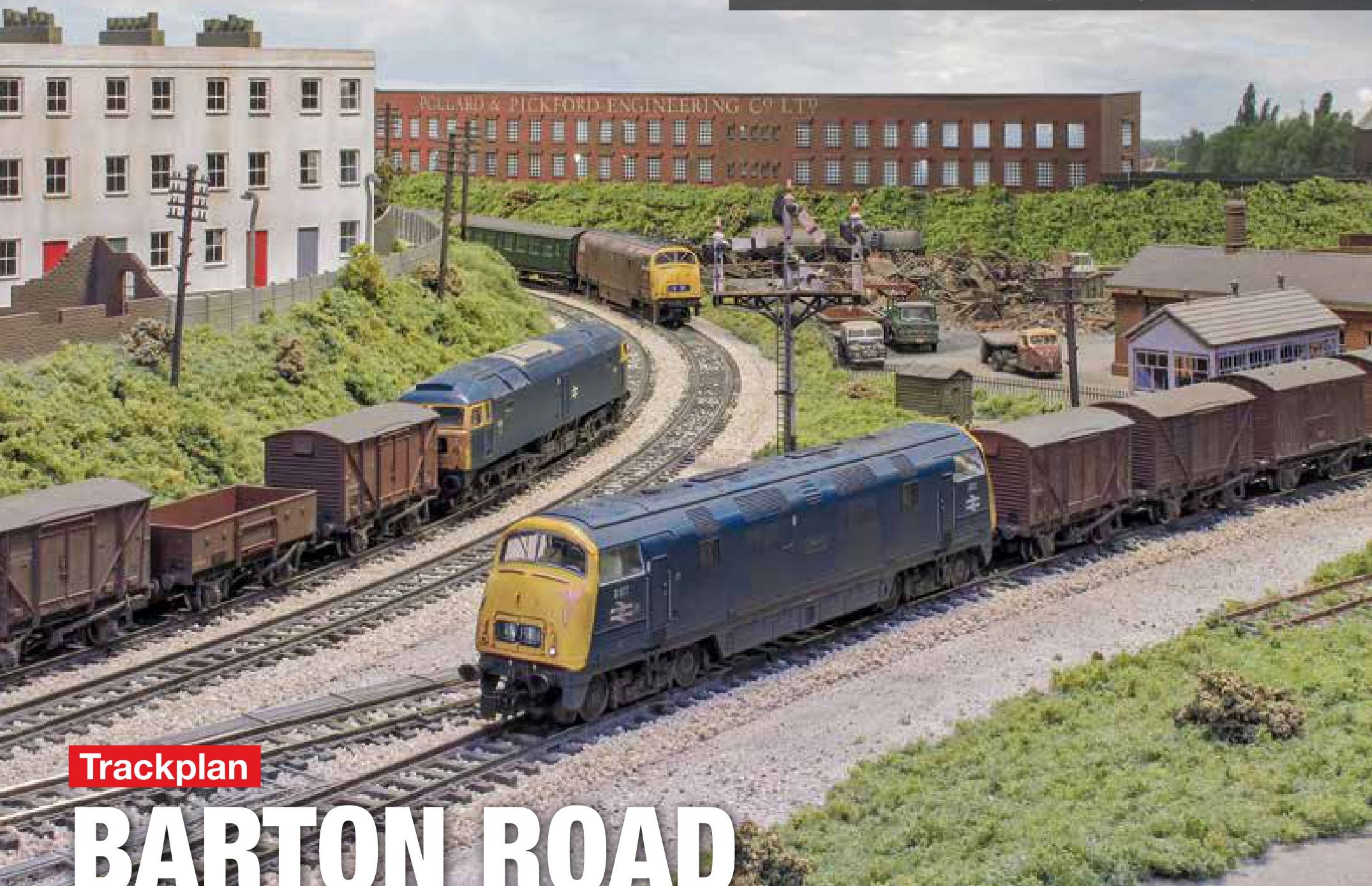


A dramatic sky sets the scene for the meeting of Brush Type 2, 5826, now minus its 'D' pre-fix and full yellow ends on a Travelling Post Office train and ex-Midland Blue Pullman, now with full yellow ends. Modelling the pre-TOPS era offers more livery variety than the corporate blue era which was to follow.



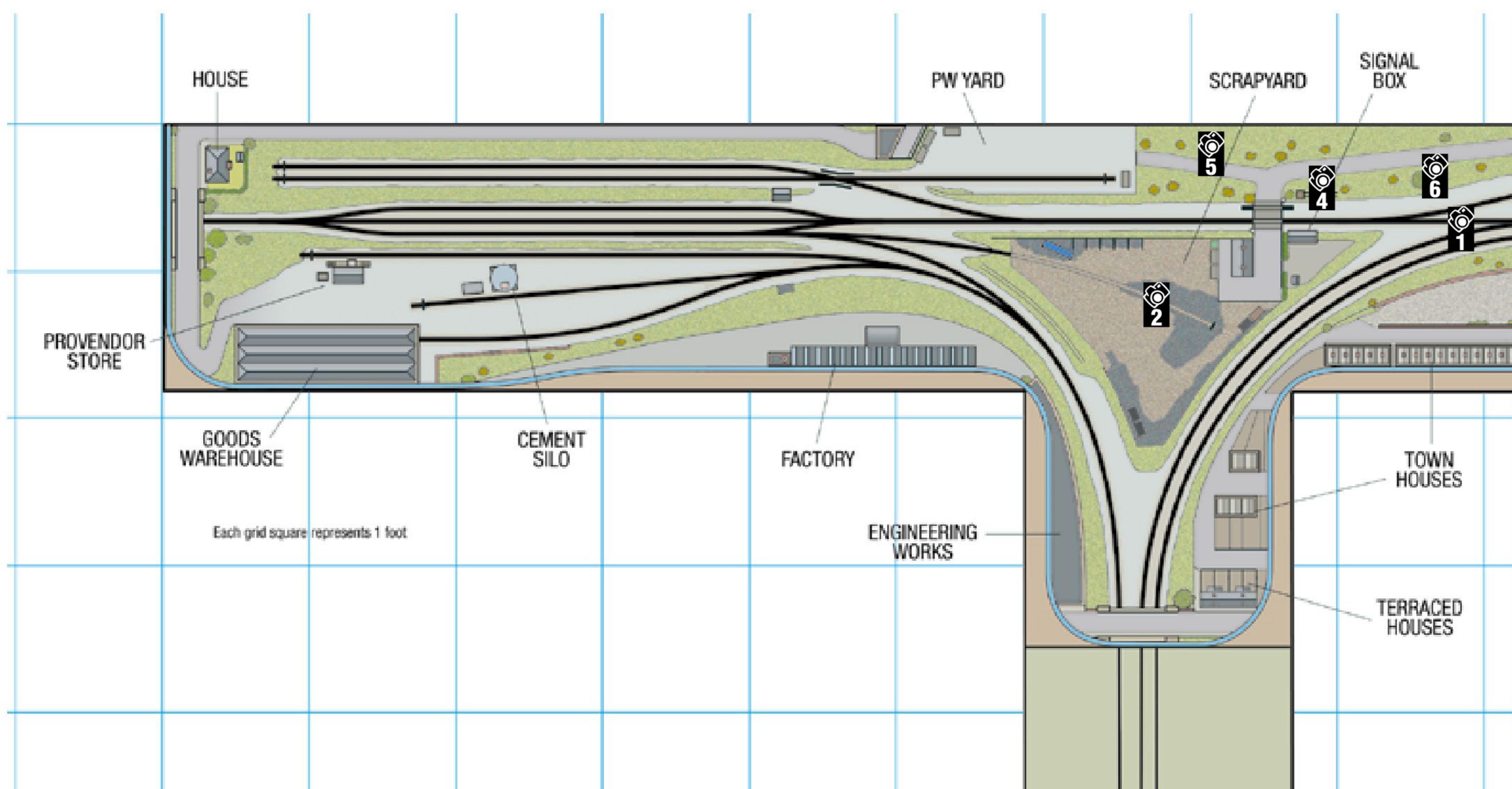
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The changing of the guard. 'Warships' make a regular appearance on 'Barton Road' hauling both passenger and freight, in BR Maroon and Corporate Blue, but their time is limited. An unidentified Brush Type 4 is caught encroaching on 'new turf'.



Trackplan

BARTON ROAD



Eastern Finecast brick sheet, plain plastic sheet for the concrete sections and Slaters OO gauge corrugated sheet for the parcels depot roof. All are based on a common 1920s/30s GWR design, surviving examples of which can still be found at Slough and Bordesley in Birmingham.

AWKWARD SPACES

It was difficult to fill the strip between the ramp and the backscene. I modified one of the industrial buildings, which was rearranged to suit the location. The space in front of the row of shops took a bit of thinking about. It was too large to fill with clutter, and a building of any substance would dominate the landscape too much.

After experimenting with a range of ideas, I opted for something slightly out of my modelling comfort zone – buses! I scoured Flickr and a few books for inspiration, and a simple set up seemed best option. I used a Scenecraft Shunters Mess Room as a booking on point, which I repainted in the Bristol Omnibus Co. house colours.

Hands-free shunting is a key feature of the layout. This is carried out using Dapol Easi-Shunt magnetic couplers, with permanent magnets placed in between the sleepers. Wagons have mostly been grouped into two, three and four vehicle rakes, with one axle in the group fixed to stop the wagons moving or rolling away when being coupled or uncoupled.

GOING DIGITAL

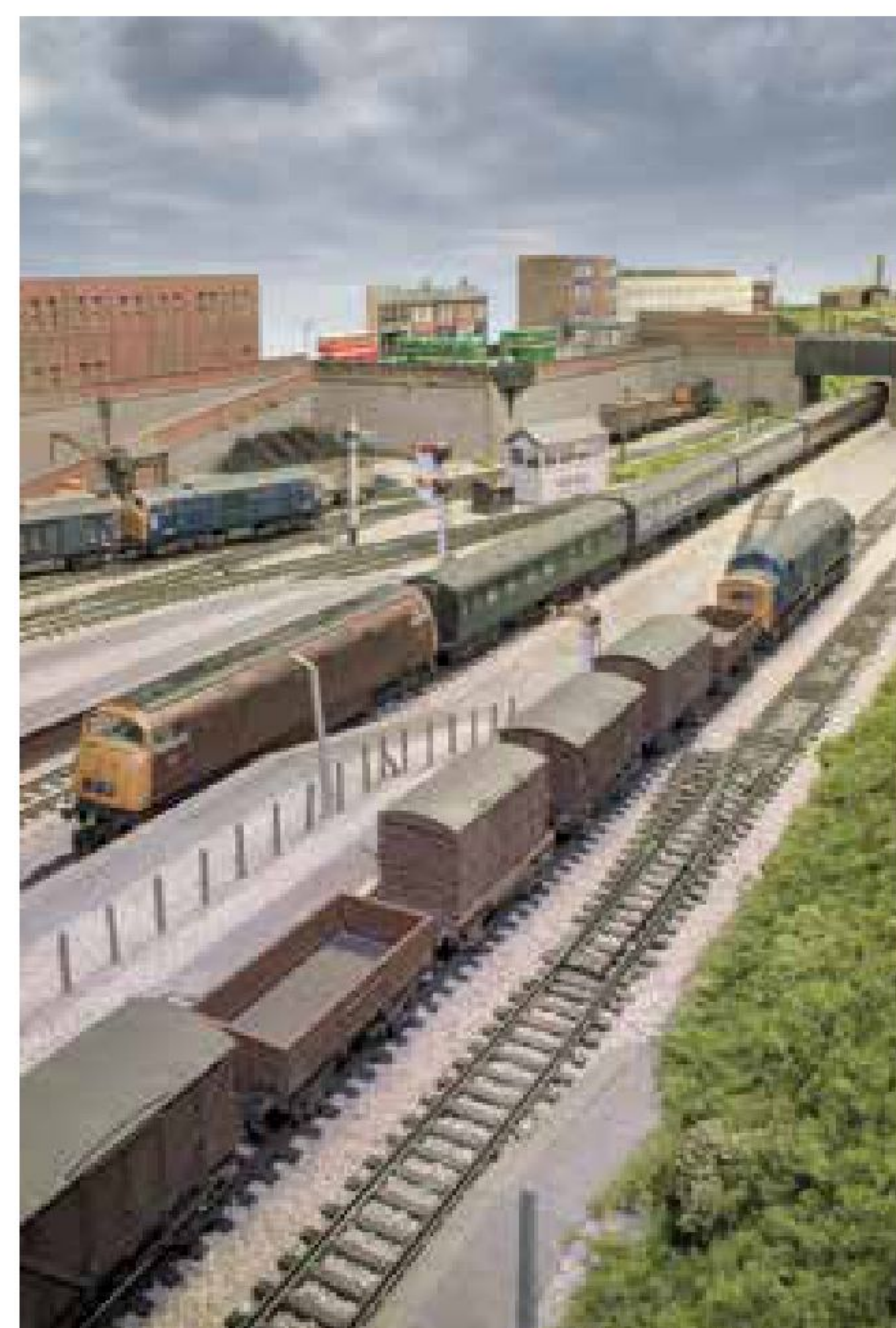
My first exhibition layout, 'Bishop's Bridge', was run with a standard analogue setup. However, I stepped outside my comfort zone with 'Barton Road' and changed to DCC. There are many advantages, but the main reason was to reduce the complexity of the wiring under the layout and

increase its operational flexibility.

One of the more challenging projects I've attempted was fitting sound to a Graham Farish Class 08 shunter. I decided not to install the speaker inside the locomotive, so I opted to put both the chip and the speaker into a BR 20T brake van, which would be permanently coupled to the locomotive. I purchased a Zimo 648 chip from Digitrains with Paul Chetter Class 08 sound files. I carefully disassembled the brake van and the chip was placed along the roof and held with double-sided adhesive foam tape. The wires from the chip were run under the van to the locomotive, either side of the coupling, which was retained to add strength and protect the thin wires when hauling heavier trains.

'Barton Road' now features a growing number of sound locomotives. The use of sugar cube speakers gives the sound surprising projection and clarity, and an additional layer of realism.

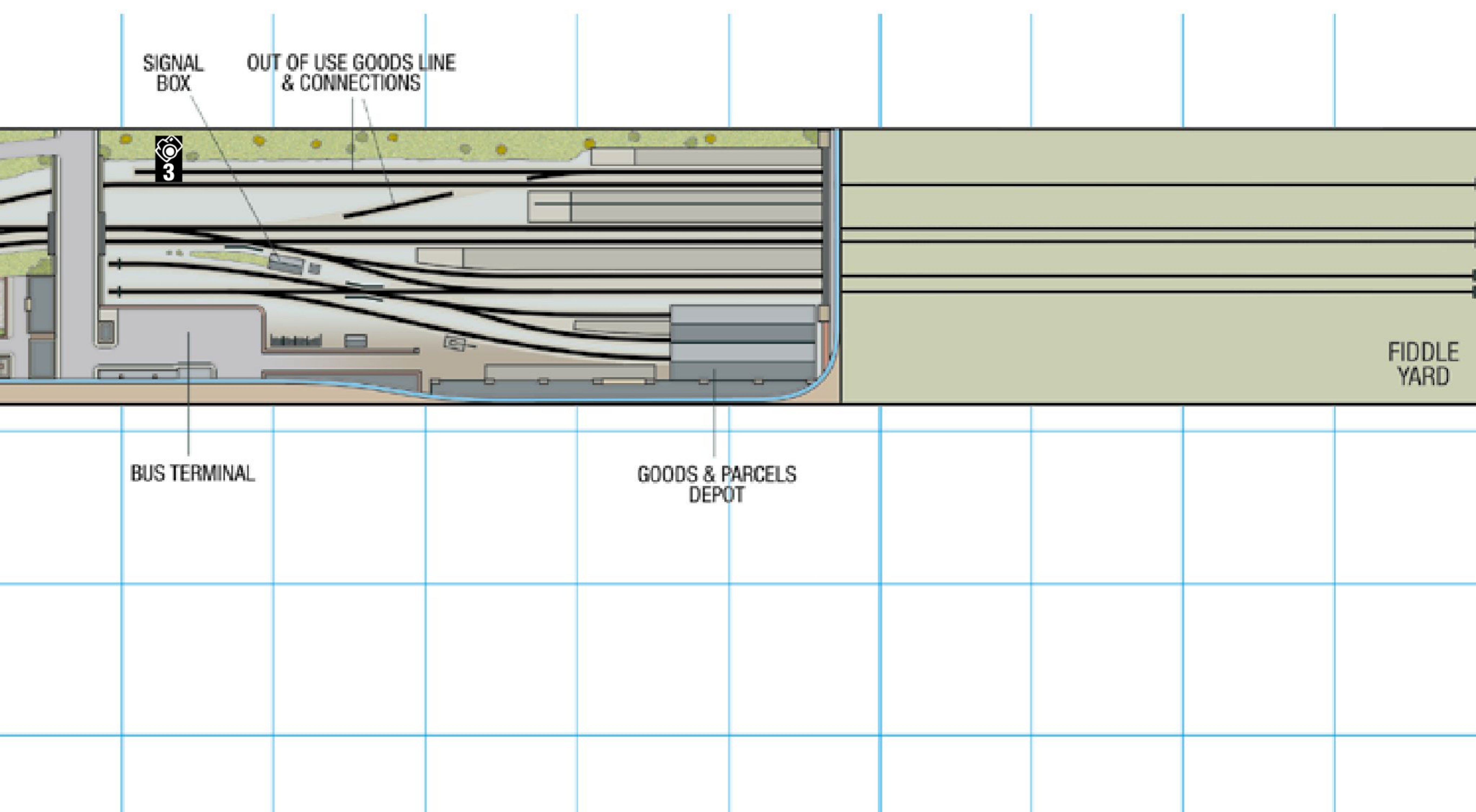
'Barton Road' isn't finished as such. I've drawn the line at further extensions, but there's plenty of detail to be added, such as line-side clutter. I've yet to add people to the pavements and platforms to complete this urban scene.



What we think...

'Barton Road' really shows the quality of current N gauge diesels so well, with additional weathering and the use of DCC sound. In a small amount of space Benn has captured the feel of run-down Bristol at the beginning of the 1970s, a favourite era of mine with diesel-hydraulics and plenty of freight traffic. Keep a close ear to the layout at exhibitions as there are some amazingly good sounds to hear.

Andy York, RMWeb Editor



OPERATIONAL SIGNALS

The semaphore signalling and level crossing gates make the layout more entertaining to operate, as all trains must be correctly signalled by the operator. The former were made from damaged NQP Dapol signals, which were cut up and rearranged. The level crossing gates were made by joining two pairs of Ratio gates. Both are operated by GF Controls servo units. ■

SCRAPYARD

A triangle is always a difficult space to fill, although it is not a shape that occurs very often. Due to its nature of containing items of all shapes and sizes, a scrapyard is an ideal way to occupy it. In the case of 'Barton Road', the scrapyard is situated on what was once the produce sidings. With that traffic transferred to road, the scrap dealer moved in and claimed the site along with the old brick offices. The scrap itself is made up from all sorts of rubbish I had lying around - old kit sprues, plastic sheet offcuts, wagon bodies, wheels, bridge girder parts, guitar strings, wire, steel scourers, straws and an aluminium buffet platter which I cut up into squares and dotted about the place.



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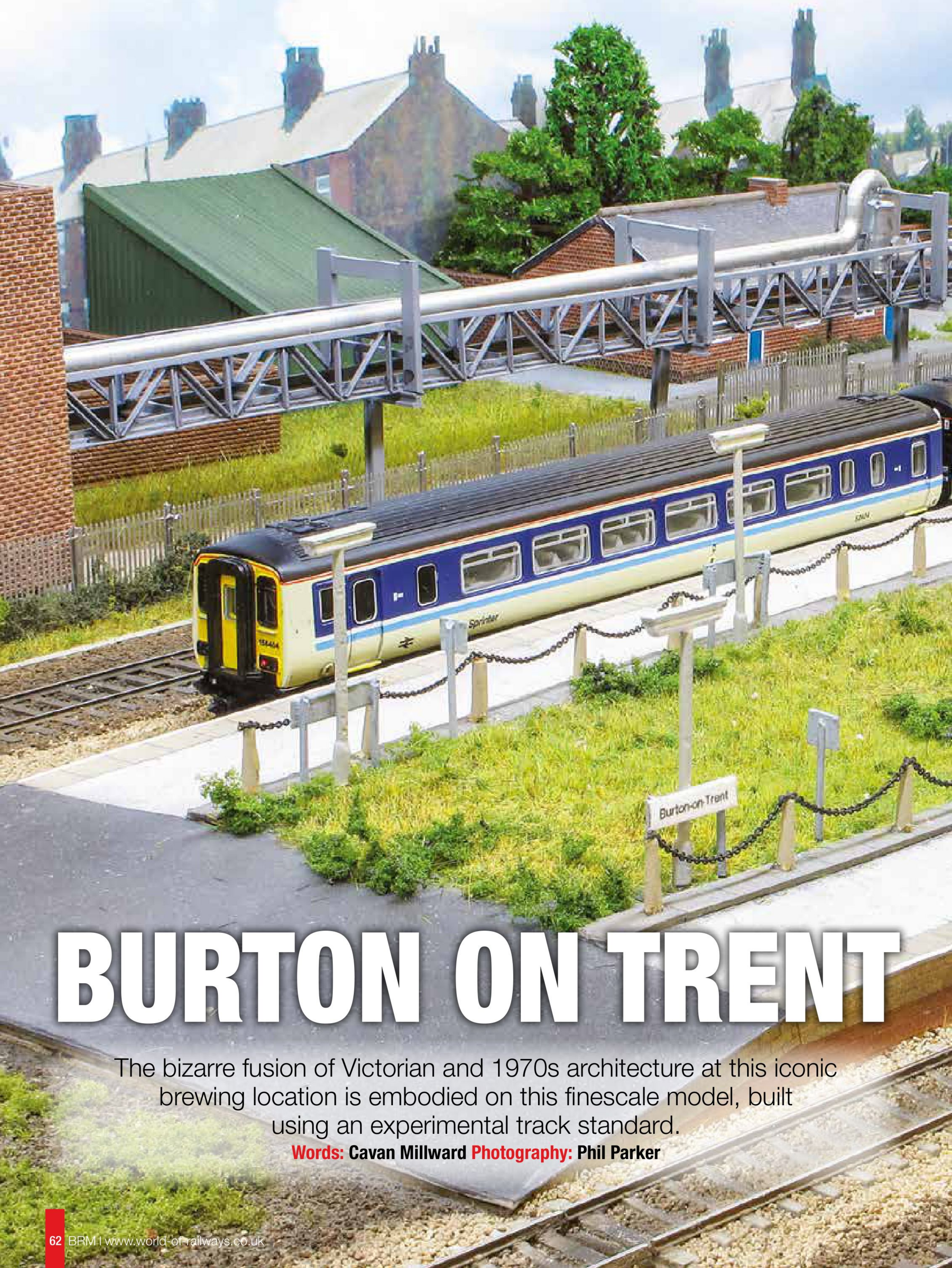
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BURTON ON TRENT

The bizarre fusion of Victorian and 1970s architecture at this iconic brewing location is embodied on this finescale model, built using an experimental track standard.

Words: Cavan Millward **Photography:** Phil Parker



Factfile

Layout name: Burton on Trent
 Scale/gauge: 2mm Scale/N2
 Size: 6ft x 2ft 6in (10ft x 8ft overall)
 Era/region: 1990s Sectorisation
 Location: Burton On Trent, Staffordshire
 Layout type: Continuous run

The local Class 156 service to Lincoln pulls in as 56054 takes its full load of HAA hoppers toward Drakelow Power Station, south of the station. Today this scene would have had a very overgrown central section to the station because of neglect from the National Forest.

I got back into the railway scene in 2009 at the ripe old age of 33, following a large break pursuing other modelling ventures that included military, sci-fi and war gaming miniature modelling. This gave me a firm scratch-building, painting and weathering background. Having completed several layouts during my teenage years, I was incredibly impressed to see how the quality of 4mm:1ft scale rolling stock and scenics in railway modelling had progressed during my time away. This encouraged me to purchase one of the first Bachmann Class 47s at the time and a new era of modelling was born. I promptly set about super-detailing and weathering the locomotive and soon felt that a layout was needed after seeing the likes of Chris Nevard's small highly-detailed layouts and the impressive large ones like 'Blackmill'.

As a previous modeller of N gauge in my teenage years, I was always drawn to the possibility of mainline trains in a realistic setting. I always struggled to achieve this in 4mm:1ft scale because of the space required. I worked up plans for a smaller, more manageable layout to build. It was a visit to the 2015 DEMU show at Burton on Trent that sowed the seeds of actually building the station in N.

Wise choice

You might say it's an odd choice as it isn't particularly picturesque, nor run down and grimy - two extremes that usually attract the modelling fraternity, but it does have its merits. From a purely technical aspect it suits modelling. It has natural scenic breaks at each end, with a reasonably short run between them and interesting architectural features such as the brewery behind, and old iron arches under the car park that once supported the old Victorian station building in the days of steam.

Burton on Trent once had a spaghetti of tracks and sidings going in, out and around the breweries of the town. Alas, all are gone and it's almost as interesting to see how the 1970s shack of a station building now guards the entrance to the platforms and the old sidings have been reclaimed by local industry and businesses. Something that isn't readily apparent unless you know the area is the sheer volume and variety of train services and rolling stock that hammered the rails here. The sectorisation period of the late-1980s and early-1990s saw a huge variety of freight and passenger stock ferrying back and forth and this can still be seen today to some degree. The iconic

A repainted Graham Farish Class 60 (ex-Mainline blue) sporting Railfreight Petroleum livery and custom etched Joseph Banks nameplates. The Class 56 is a Dapol EWS locomotive, repainted into Railfreight Coal sector as 56054.



My philosophy, being somewhat OCD, some might say, is to make the rolling stock as detailed, finely-finished and weathered as possible.



Kingsbury oil tanks are still a staple, as they were back then, but no more are the MGR hopper trains that used to endlessly toil their way to and from Drakelow power station, just south of the station on the Coalville branch.

Careful design

Once the location was set, the design started with a screen capture from Google Maps. We don't realise how lucky we are these days to have access to such wonderful aids to modelling. However, despite the wonders of the internet, I soon found that period photographs or videos of Burton on Trent in the sub-sector years surprisingly hard to find. Photographic sites such as Flickr are invaluable here as well as forums like **RMweb**, where there is always someone who knows something about what you're trying to model. I thought it was sound judgment to use Burton as a testbed for my proposed N2 track standard. I promptly set the boards out digitally using CAD software, which I translated into Templot, laying the Google screen grab over as a background. The trackplan was drawn over it, tweaked,

then printed ready for when I'd built the baseboards.

Permanent Way

The Templot plan was glued to the baseboards with waterproof PVA glue. The track was glued over the plan using contact adhesive to first lay the copper-clad sleepers. To these, the rails were soldered for the freight loops, with 2mm Scale Society concrete sleeper bases and Code 40 flat-bottom rail for the main running lines. The track ballasting got my attention first. On my previous layout 'Outon Road', I created interest by mixing the ballast colours to produce a look to the track that was less uniform and helped define areas of main vs. secondary lines. I liked the way that worked, so felt that Burton, with its main through lines and heavily speed restricted passing loops, would also benefit from some form of variation. I first gave the track a primer coat with Halford's Grey Primer and cleaned the rail surfaces. I then used three colours from the Humbrol range of enamel paints to apply to the wooden sleepers, concrete sleepers and rail sides. The colours had

been carefully selected by sampling from several photographs of real British mainline track. The red, blue and green values were averaged out and ran through a paint comparison program. I'm pretty happy with the results obtained.

I used Woodland Scenics fine ballast in brown and buff colours. During the research stage I read that this was too coarse for N gauge track, but when I compared it with photographs of the track at Burton on Trent, it appeared similar in size once installed and tamped, although probably slightly courser than true scale.

The track was given a light dusting over with an airbrush, picking out areas of locomotive deposit concentration, with the darkest areas around point work to imitate the grease and oil that stops mechanisms from seizing up.

Scenics

This is a real location, so there was no space for ready-to-plant buildings. All of the structures had to be measured or deduced from photographs, drawn out and then built to replicate the actual buildings of the area.

47550 takes a break in the PW yard while picking up a rake of 'grampus' wagons. The trees are a mixture of Woodland Scenics and handmade trees from sea moss and flock.





WHAT IS N2?

The simple answer is - it's N, the next generation, the sequel! It's based on 2mm finescale components that probably best describe what N2 is about. Of course, I say the above with a wry smile, but it really is a step up when it comes to the way N gauge track can look.

The concept isn't new – it's the building of finescale Code 40 track, but allowing standard 'off the shelf' N gauge wheelsets to run through it. It's been done before and no one called it anything but N. The difference here is that I've created a standard for it, which didn't involve eyeballing it with a wagon or two. The concept works by narrowing the gauge as the track passes through the crossing 'V's of the turnouts to 8.85mm and widens back to 2mm finescale's 9.42mm gauge elsewhere. If you make the transition long enough, no one will notice. The 8.85mm gauge allows for finer flangeways and thus smoother running of rolling stock, with little or no body rock as it passes over the V.

If building your own track in 2mm scale seems a daunting task, I'd say give it a go away from the layout - you may surprise yourself. You could pin down ready-to-lay track and be done with it, but N2 looks better and runs better too. The reason I chose this over 2FS is that I can still run 'out-of-the-box' rolling stock, as long as it's not from the dark ages of pizza cutter wheels, with no issues and no re-wheeling costs.

All of Burton's buildings are made from thick card, however various finishes are applied ranging from brick paper printed at home, through to embossed plastic sheet and even Redutex textured sheet, of which the main brewery is covered. All of the buildings are weathered in their surroundings and sit well in the scene. The main iconic backdrop to Burton on Trent is the huge pipeline to the rear of the station. This was something that I dreaded and looked forward to in equal measure. The first section I scratch-built from Plastruct sections, however my sanity protested and the remainder I 3D printed at home using my Anycubic Photon printer. The pipe is an aluminium tube scored in a spiral along its length using a scalpel blade. I used 3D printing again with the old Victorian station stairs and the car lift in the Moor Street garage.

A novel feature that I have been keen to add to a model railway for many years is the notion that the layout has been sliced out of a much bigger landscape. This I have tried to emphasise by showing the two buildings at the front of the layout as cut-throughs. I've seen this done before, but each time it has seemed a little contrived and I was determined not to do that. Instead, I purposely allowed the buildings to sit naturally in their positions on the layout and cut them where they fell. It made the line through them much more natural. Modelling Burton in this period has been difficult. Finding pictures from the time has been a huge task too, and many times I was fortunate enough to speak to someone from the area that could give me guidance from their memories of yesteryear. What I have



The south approach sees 60027 heading north on steel coils. This view shows many of the details that make this feel like Burton. The road bridge, brewery, Norman's Instrument shop and the characteristic flow of track around the island platform add to the scene.

The 1970s station building at Burton on Trent. A familiar sight for those taking the train in the town. It has changed little over the years. Station Taxis was still based in the shop to the side of the station until very recently. The window vinyls are copies of the real thing.



A majorly reworked Class 31 heads north with a parcel train for Derby. The second vehicle in this rake is a courier vehicle, converted from a Farish Mk. 1 BSK.



ended up with is a little bit of a flavour that spans Burton on Trent from around 1988 to 1993.

Thrifty savings

My philosophy, being somewhat OCD, some might say, is to make the rolling stock as detailed, finely-finished and weathered as possible. It's a difficult task to do in a timely fashion, which is why a lot of my wagons and coaches are still working their way through the process.

My locomotives on the other hand tend to get treated straight away. As a matter of course, I always cut moulded handrails and add separate wire versions, renumber and weather every locomotive and often carry out a respray, too. This is mainly due to my thrifty nature of picking up second-hand locomotives, regardless of livery and making them into what I want, rather than waiting for one to appear. Lots of money is saved, although it's getting harder to find bargains in the current climate. I then either choose a prototype number to match the details that the model has, or set about modifying the details to suit. The internet plays a massive part in this and no model is started without several photographs of the real thing printed and stuck to my workbench.

Harmonising colours

Each model is finished with weathering, which is a very detailed and precise task. There are many layers to a good weathering job, none of which is beyond the average modeller, but there are layers that, once worked through, give the model a greater depth and presence.

For 'Burton' I have tried to build up as much stock variation as possible, but as, unbeknownst to me at the time, I started the project, Burton on Trent has a massive stock base to go at. I have tried so far to build up the staple rakes, but there are still a few missing. I'll try to add these. The layout

is pretty much finished on the scenic side, so I can concentrate on building, painting and weathering stock - something I enjoy immensely. Hopefully I'll build up enough to run Burton as prototypically as possible. As the trackwork supports out of the box N gauge models, I need do nothing more to the wheels than make sure the back-to-backs are in 'spec' and the wheel faces painted!

Operation

The layout has been wired for DCC from day one. It allows for flexibility and simplicity of operation.

It was powered by an MRC Prodigy, but

Much like the Norman office block, the garage on Moor Street bisects the baseboard edge. In order to follow the precedent set by Normans, this is also cut through revealing inside. The car jack is 3D printed and the tyres are made from tiny rubber grommets.



has been converted to SPROG 3 control and JMRI with smart phone controllers for ease of use and the convenience of multiple operators. The front yard is accessed by servo-operated turnouts that are Arduino controlled and have a local board mimicking a ground frame in its operation. The fiddle yard - currently being overhauled - will be controlled by the excellent Megapoints controller hardware through the DCC bus, providing route-setting of the servos via JMRI on smartphone handsets.

Burton On Trent is only run at exhibitions. It's a great feeling to get it out at a show and perform for the public. I find great satisfaction in the interaction with spectators and delight at the prospect of people enjoying watching something that I've built. It's a great opportunity to meet new people from the many walks of life that railway modelling encapsulates, but also catch up with old faces or even faces that you've never met but spoken to online many times before. Exhibitions are the real face of the hobby and if you've never participated in running a layout at one, I would heartily recommend it if you get the chance.

I was always drawn to the possibility of mainline trains in a realistic setting.

Closing thoughts

The layout is now well into its second year on the exhibition circuit following a few turns as a work in-progress piece last year. With the layout starting to come into its own, I think back over the build and whether it was worth modelling a real location. Was it worth the effort and research? What did I gain by doing it?

The answer isn't straight-forward. Some might feel that it ties you creatively as you're copying something that already exists and not allowing yourself to inject anything of your own. Opposition may say that it gives a better feeling to the layout because it's based on a real railway and hence 'must' be correct. I agree with both statements. I don't think they're exclusive ideas and there's no reason why a model of a real place can't have room for creativity. I've engaged my creativity on

this build, but the fact that it's a real place has grounded the layout in the prototype. It's given me a reason to research the place and feel part of it, feel a connection that almost certainly would not have been there should this have been a fantasy location. It gives the people who come to watch us play trains a sense of place and for those that know Burton, a sense of familiarity and home.

I think modelling a real place is more special than I even gave thought to before this journey began. It makes me want to take that journey again in the future, while in the present I can drive my trains and enjoy my efforts with added meaning - a knowledge of where those trains are going once they leave the layout. Not a fiddle yard but Bristol, or York, or Kingbury or Drakelow Power Station. It turns a 6ft x 2ft 6in rectangle into a slice of something much bigger. ■



A Buxton Class 37 rolls by at the 15mph line speed as it's overtaken by a 50mph freightliner train on the 'fast'. A lone YEA 'Perch' awaits collection in the overgrown PW yard.

BURTON BREWERY

The iconic backdrop to the station, and the smell of beer in the air was a major character of the town.

CLOSED ROAD BRIDGE ON MOOR STREET

This road used to be the main road across the railway until 1992. The bridge is exceptionally low at 8ft 9in and was hit by traffic on many occasions. The bridge was fitted with a warning light and painted in yellow and black patterning to help prevent accidents. The road is modelled after the opening of Shobnall Road Bridge to the left.

STAINLESS STEEL PALISADE FENCING

The stainless-steel palisade fencing is a custom etch I designed that runs across the back of the garage and the full length of the layout. I'm happy with how this turned out. The stainless steel is tougher and more resistant to knocks than brass too.

CUT THROUGH GARAGE ON MOOR STREET

Now part of Inchcape Toyota, the garage is based on the building that exists today as I've yet to find any period photographs of the building. The inside is entirely my own vision as I had no way to know what it was like in there!

BREWERY PIPELINE

Many people think that this is a beer pipe pumping product across the railway to the site just north of the station. It's a water pipe supplying water to the building from the other side.

REPLICA OF BURTON RAILWAY STATION

The old Victorian splendour was demolished in the 1970s to allow for the new structures to take its place. I doubt such a decision would be made today.

STATION ARCHES

Another ark back to the Victorian age, these arches used to provide track access to the brewery in the steam days, the tracks are now chopped short and made into PW sidings.



PW WORKER TAKING A 'BREAK'

My lovely wife enjoys placing my figures and this cheeky PW ganger has been caught short while his buddies discuss the workday ahead.

N2 TRACK

The finescale appearance of the N2 track makes a huge difference to the look of the layout and the running characteristics.

NORMANS MUSIC

This shop was a major supplier of pianos and brass band instruments throughout the midlands. The building was purpose-built for the company and was only outgrown in the 2000s when the shop moved to a new industrial estate the other side of town

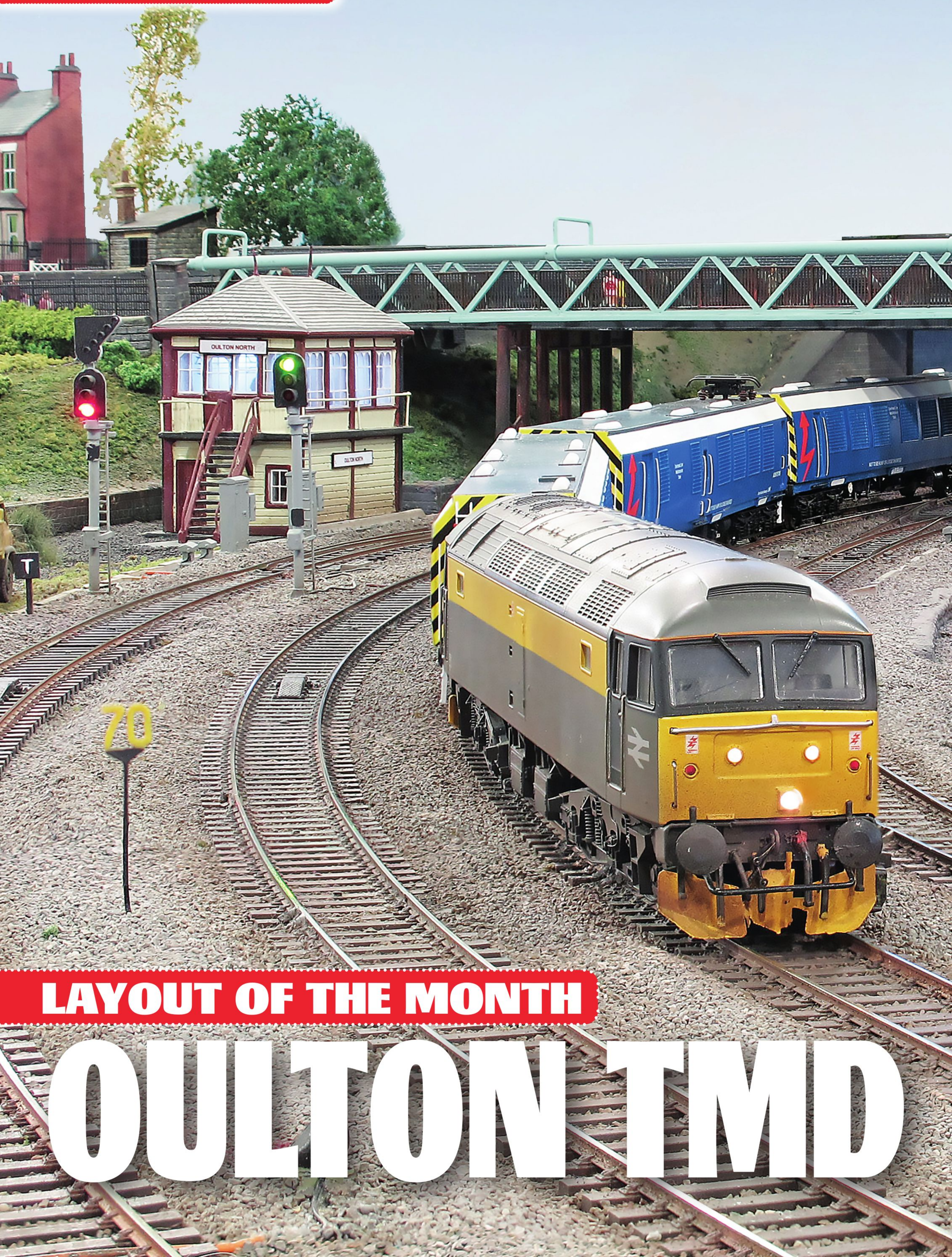
Meet the modeller...



Cavan Millward –
Modeller and Owner.

I've been modelling for over 30 years, some of which has been railway-related and some of which has ventured into other realms. I started out as a child modelling basic shapes with my Hornby HST on a board in the living room. With a passion for wanting to know how everything went together and came apart, I soon started building models and contraptions that led to my first model railway. This love of modelling continued with several layouts before I began dabbling in sci-fi modelling and war-gaming. The techniques I learned here paid dividends when I eventually re-found my love for model railways in 2010. I swiftly built the layout 'Outon Road', a 4mm:1ft scale fictitious location that echoed branch operation somewhere off the WCML. The skills that I'd learnt outside of the railway modelling world married well with the techniques employed in the building of the layout and stock, which started a relationship with the hobby that I would find myself drawn back to over and over again in the coming years. It has been difficult sometimes to find the time needed to dedicate to a build, but it's ended up being a very enjoyable experience.

LAYOUT FOCUS



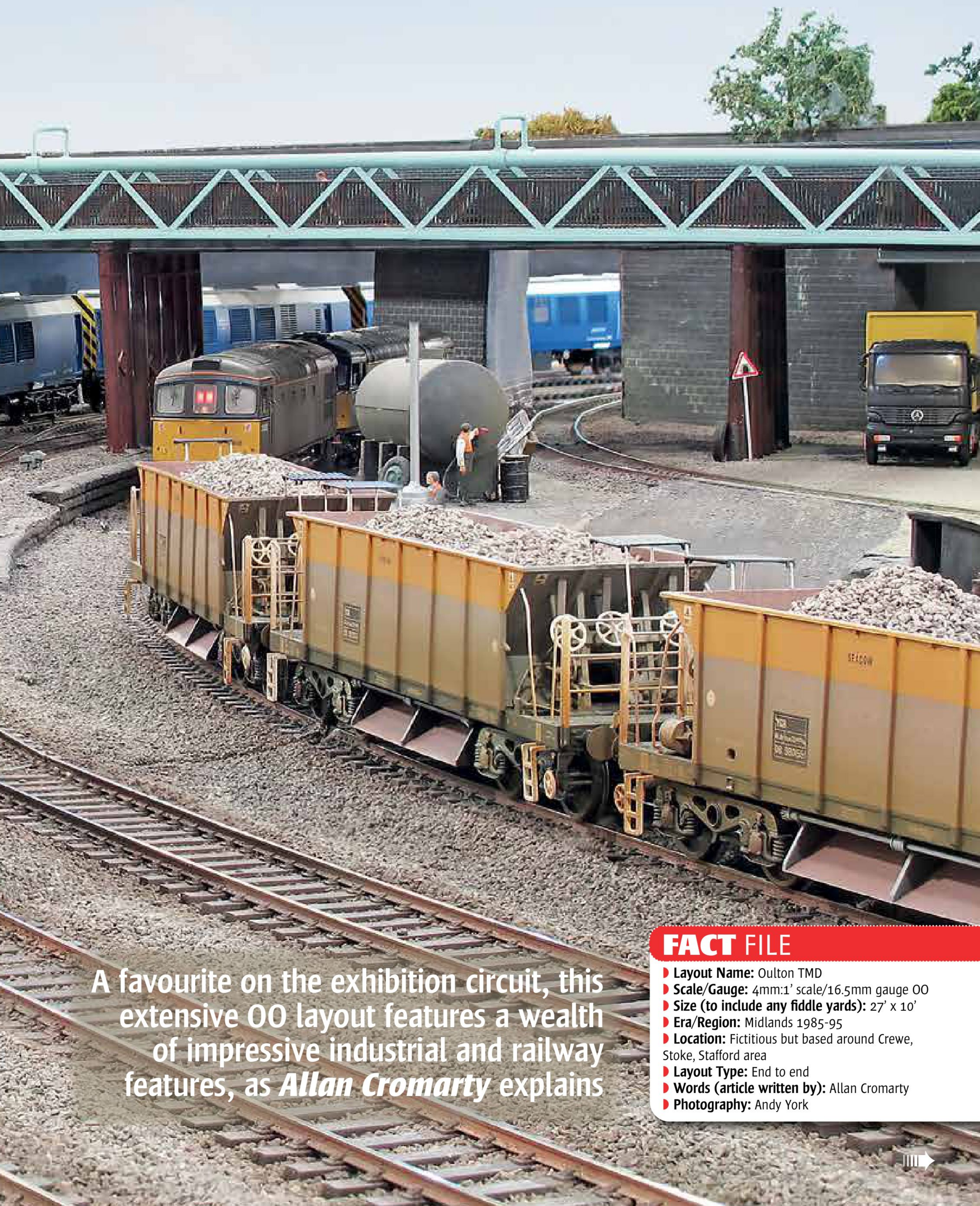
LAYOUT OF THE MONTH

OULTON TMD

00
GAUGE



Engineering trains to the fore as a 'Dutch' Class 47 passes the ballast depot with an overhead line electrification train - a rarely modelled feature of the 1980s and 1990s railway. In the background is the scratchbuilt footbridge spanning the yard.



A favourite on the exhibition circuit, this extensive OO layout features a wealth of impressive industrial and railway features, as *Allan Cromarty* explains

FACT FILE

- **Layout Name:** Oulton TMD
- **Scale/Gauge:** 4mm:1' scale/16.5mm gauge OO
- **Size (to include any fiddle yards):** 27' x 10'
- **Era/Region:** Midlands 1985-95
- **Location:** Fictitious but based around Crewe, Stoke, Stafford area
- **Layout Type:** End to end
- **Words (article written by):** Allan Cromarty
- **Photography:** Andy York





2

Giving the layout its name is the Traction Maintenance Depot, complete with its large scratchbuilt shed building and extensive facilities for servicing and stabling locomotives. On shed here are two depot 'pets' - Tinsley's 47145 Merddin Emrys and Stratford's 47581 Great Eastern in NSE livery.

Many layout builders are satisfied with one major feature; perhaps a locomotive depot, a station, an industrial private siding or factory complex. 'Oulton TMD' has all of these and as a result is a real crowd-puller at exhibitions. **BRM** spoke to owner and builder Allan Cromarty to find out what inspired him and how he did it.

BRM: How did you become interested in railway modelling?

Allan Cromarty: I was 14 when I built my first model railway. I bought a couple of locomotives, some coaches and wagons, along with bits and pieces of track. They were all Hornby and came from Massey's of Trent Vale - a hardware store that also sold model railways.

After about two years I sold it all, but restarted ten years later when time, money and a spare room meant I could build another layout. I continued to collect model railways over the years, eventually building a 30' x 10' layout at home. For the past 15 years I have helped on a trade stand at exhibitions, and have been exhibiting 'Oulton TMD' since 2005.

BRM: What are your prototype influences?

AC: I originally modelled BR steam, then one summer in the late-1980s the job I was involved

with meant I was situated alongside the railway line at Cliffe Vale near Stoke-on-Trent. I was there for several months and had plenty of time to view the various passenger and freight trains passing by. I began to take an interest in the current railway scene and decided to change to modern image, modelling in what I consider to be the most colourful time period in BR's history - the change from corporate blue to sectorisation.

BRM: Why did you choose to model in this scale?

AC: Availability of items and cost were the biggest factor in deciding to model in OO gauge. There was still quite a limited range of N gauge items at that time - they were also more expensive. By the late-1980s, Lima was producing a large selection of modern image locomotives and the quality was better than Hornby. As I had a large garage that I could dedicate as hobby room, space was not an issue either, so OO was a natural choice for me.

BRM: When did you start work on your layout?

AC: After many years of having a large layout at home I decided it was time to try and build a layout to exhibit. Work commenced on 'Oulton TMD' in early-2005. My first invitation was to Alsager Model Railway Show in November of that year; a small exhibition held in the local village

hall and a good show for my first outing.

The layout was quite basic and to be honest, not very well detailed, but while I was there I was lucky enough to be invited to my next show, the Soar Valley MRE in September of the following year. Spurred on by the invitation, I continued working on upgrading the scenery, fitting lights and detailing the locomotives and stock.

BRM: Have any exhibition layouts or model railways featured in magazines inspired specific features on your layout?

AC: 'Dyserth Road' had one of the biggest influences on how my layout was to develop. I saw and heard it at an exhibition and was immediately impressed with the sound-fitted Class 37s. I decided that was the way I wanted to go. My original layout had been wired for DC with some 20-odd isolating sections. The changeover to DCC from analogue meant a rewire and a panel rebuild, plus the additional cost of the DCC equipment, but the change was well worth it.

BRM: What advice would you have for those starting out in the hobby, or making the transition to a permanent layout?

AC: There is nothing more frustrating than a locomotive that continually stutters and stalls on points or crossings. The best advice I can give is to

I don't think anyone actually taught me how to build a model railway. I gained experience through trying - and failing - but learning from my mistakes.

One of the layout's major features is the oil terminal, served by regular trains of TTA and TEA tank wagons. Railfreight 60009 *Carnedd Dafydd* stands under the scratchbuilt unloading gantry, which is based on one at Westerleigh, near Bristol.





Dominating one end of the layout is a large rail-served cement works with scratchbuilt silos, loading hoppers and associated buildings. The plant even has its own internal shunter in the form of an ex-BR Class 17 in Ribble Cement colours.



use quality track and controllers. Most people start with a Hornby trainset. The track and controllers are fine to start with, but I would recommend upgrading to either Peco Streamline Code 100 or Peco Setrack if space is tight. I would suggest the use of Peco Code 75 track if you are more confident with the wiring of Electrofrog points. 'Oulton TMD' uses both; Code 100 in the depot and fiddleyard and Code 75 on the front section. The points are also a mixture of Insulfrog and Electrofrog. Both types have been extremely reliable and work well with DCC. In the ten years the layout has been operating I haven't had to change one point!

A quality controller helps too. Before I changed to DCC I used a hand-held feedback controller and a twin track controller, both from Gaugemaster. Both were reliable and controlled the locomotives well, even at slow speed.

As for DCC there are many choices, but I use the Lenz system. It's not the cheapest on the market

and it's not being developed as much as other systems, but I've found it to be very reliable and some components from other manufactures are compatible with it. For example, I use NCE EB1 circuit breakers to create power districts on the layout, so if there is a fault in one section, power to the whole layout doesn't go down!

BRM: What challenges or problems did you face when building the layout?

AC: Wiring was one of the biggest challenges. Every time I extended the layout I needed to build a new control panel. I don't operate the points with DCC but use the conventional way of a CDU and toggle switches. 'Oulton' has five panels, the largest of which is 1m long, operates 23 points and 28 colour light signals!

The other problem is operators - or lack of them! At the first show I originally operated the

layout on my own, but as the layout grew in size I soon realised I needed help. While at the Soar Valley show in 2006, one of the SVMRC members offered to help out and still does. I now have a team of eight people, whose assistance is very much appreciated (Thanks lads!). Six of those are members of various model railway clubs. We usually try to have a team of six to operate the layout at exhibitions, unfortunately they sometimes have commitments to their own clubs and are not always available.

BRM: What lessons have you learned from building 'Oulton TMD'?

AC: I don't think anyone has actually taught me how to build a model railway. I started out buying ready-made buildings or kits and I never thought I could build a layout that could be exhibited. I gained experience through trying - and failing - but learning from my mistakes. So my advice would be



to have a go, do your best and if it doesn't work out the first time, try again until you are happy with the end result.

BRM: What, if anything, would you do differently based on your experiences?

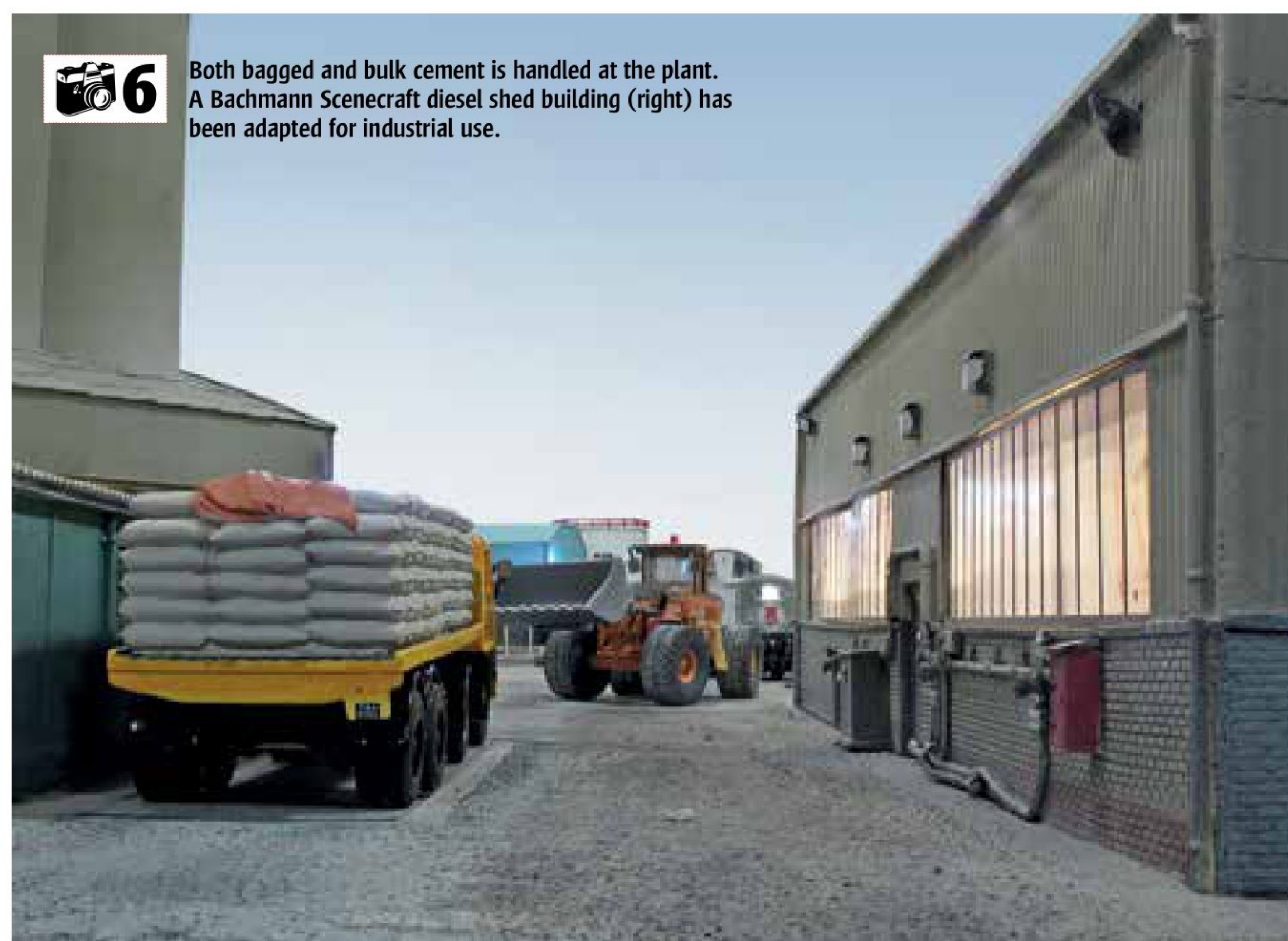
AC: The wiring. DCC needs only two wires - I don't think so!

Yes there are two wires from the controller, but because of the complicated track design and the fact I used Electrofrog points I have had to install quite a few track feeds. There is also a vast array of wiring needed to feed all the colour light signals and all the points as I still prefer to use a CDU and switches to control them.

I must admit that all that wiring is not as neat as I would have liked. I dread the day when a problem occurs as fault-finding will be a complete nightmare! I have thought about rewiring it but



The TMD running shed interior is illuminated and the fully detailed interior is visible to exhibition visitors. Much use is made of lighting all over the layout.



Both bagged and bulk cement is handled at the plant. A Bachmann Scenecraft diesel shed building (right) has been adapted for industrial use.

even that would be a daunting task. In future any new layout or extension would be much neater and wired logically to aid fault finding.

BRM: What are your favourite areas of the layout and how were they tackled?

AC: Originally I built everything myself, but as new sections were constructed there was pressure to complete them in time for the next show, so Derek Barnett of Footplate Model Railways helped out. The layout has developed and so, I believe, have my modelling skills. A few years ago I decided to build a large extension to the layout that would consist of an oil terminal and the cement works.

I remember there being an oil terminal at Etruria, near Stoke, in the 1980s. I couldn't find any photographs of it, but found one of the Westerleigh terminal near Bristol which looked similar to the Etruria facility.

The challenge was to create a model just by using details from the photograph, so with help from Derek we scratchbuilt the girder and angle iron framework from plastic and used brass wire for the handrail that ran over the tanks. Wills chequerplate was used to create a walkway and details and pipework from the Knightwing range were used for added features. I also needed an oil storage tank and this was built from a piece of 4" soil pipe (unused I might add!) with extra details. A road tanker filling point was scratchbuilt, again scaled purely from on a image seen on the internet.

BRM: Have you experienced any problems with rolling stock that needed modification before it would run reliably?

AC: Generally most modern locomotives and items of rolling stock are very good, so other than





Overview of the cement works, showing the high level line which forms the scenic break at the rear of the layout.



weathering I have had to do very few modifications. The exceptions were older Bachmann Class 08s and 37s, which needed additional pick-ups to help them run better.

Working lights were also fitted to the older Bachmann Class 08s, 20s and 37s. With regard to the rolling stock, some of the old Lima PCA cement tanks and Hornby ferrywagons needed better wheels and couplings altered to the NEM type.

I have had problems with Heljan Cargowaggon couplings and they are in the process of being modified. Another problem is that the couplings are not always the same height. To solve this I've bought various couplings, some cranked, some straight, and fitted the ones that work best using trial and error. Occasionally I need to refit the whole unit and use Parkside Dundas NEM mounting blocks (PA34) to reposition the coupling as required.

BRM: What are your plans for the layout?

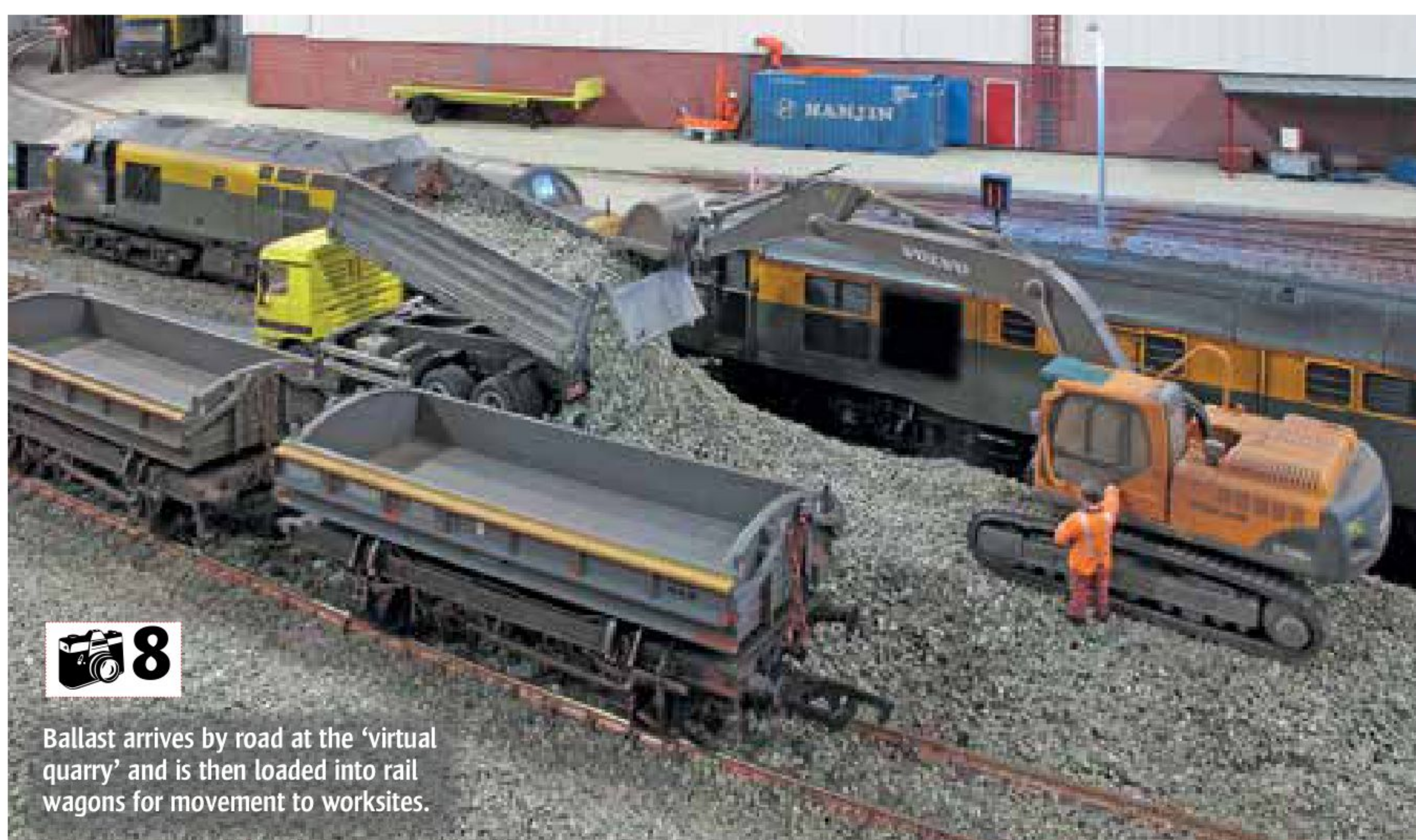
AC: In November 2015, 'Oulton TMD' will reach its tenth anniversary on the exhibition circuit, but there are still plenty of small jobs that need doing. I want to fit lights to the oil terminal and to some of the vehicles. I am always adding new locomotives and they need detailing and weathering as do any wagons and coaches I buy.

When finances allow, a new sound decoder or two will also be fitted, which will keep Simon, one of our operators happy, as he refuses to run any locomotive that is not sound fitted!

With regards to the layout, I am still undecided whether to extend it again or build a new layout altogether. There is still a lot of interest in 'Oulton TMD', with provisional show appearances booked through to 2017!

BRM: How do you fit your railway modelling around your work and home life?

AC: I am self-employed and have an understanding partner so this gives me a high degree of flexibility



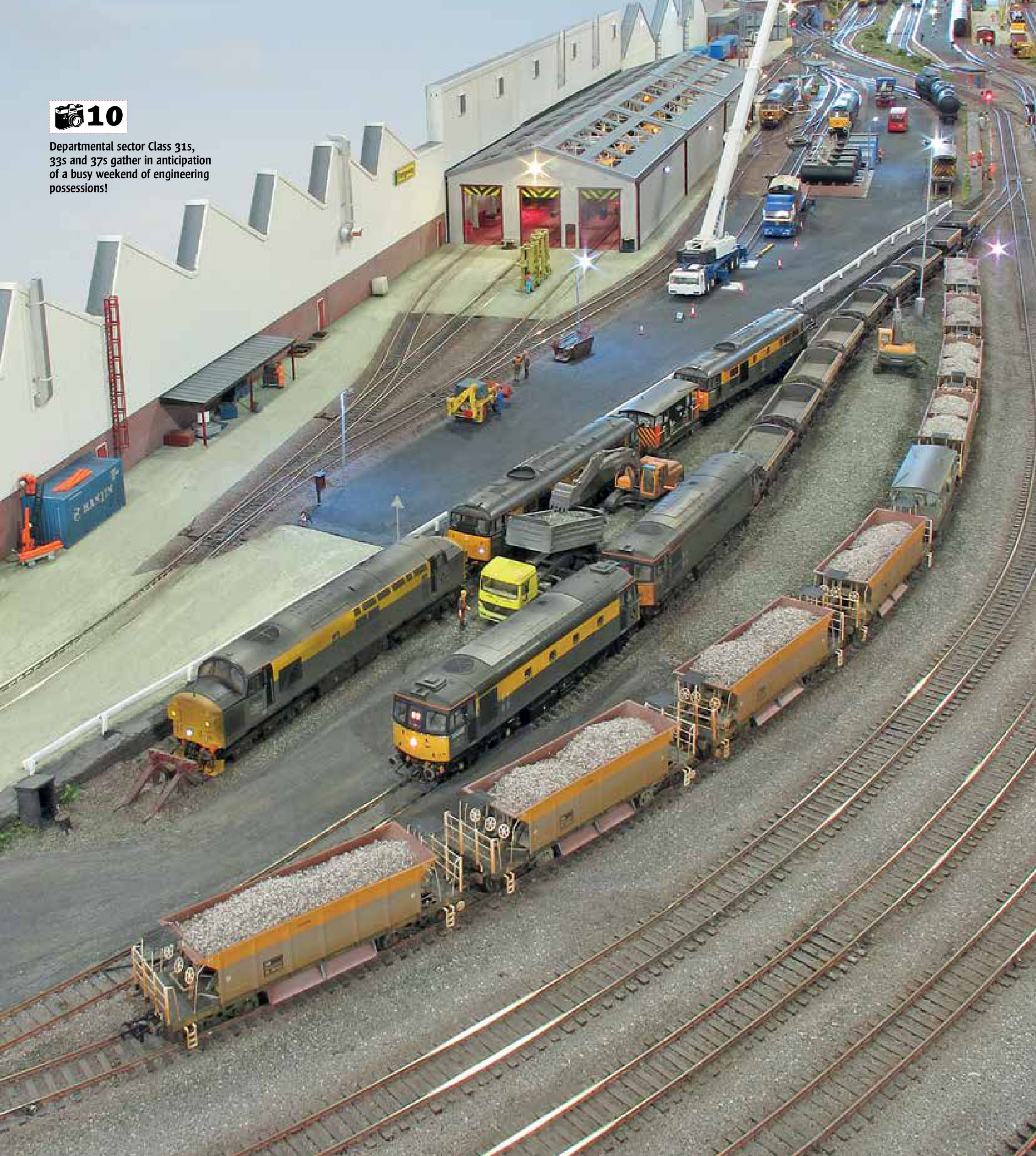
Ballast arrives by road at the 'virtual quarry' and is then loaded into rail wagons for movement to worksites.



Careful detailing and the tall structures help to create an authentic heavy industrial look in the cement works.

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Departmental sector Class 31s, 33s and 37s gather in anticipation of a busy weekend of engineering possessions!



in the amount of time I can devote to working on the layout and prepping it before a show. I try to make sure I have at least one evening per week set aside as a modelling night.

I also plan big, but start small - that's what works for me. If you can design a large layout that can be built in several small sections, you are able to finish and operate one part before moving on to the next. 'Oulton TMD' was only 12' long and 2' wide when it was first exhibited, it is now 28' by 10'!

If you are really struggling to find time to build your own layout I would highly recommend joining your local model railway club.

BRM: When you encounter a problem in your modelling where do you look for solutions?

AC: When Derek was helping me we would generally discuss, or more likely argue about any problems that arose. He has a lot of experience in the model railway world and is always on hand to offer advice, usually along the lines of; "What you want to do is..."

Next would be fellow modellers. I am lucky to be indirectly involved with several local model railway clubs, namely Stafford, Alsager and the Soar Valley club. Not only do some of their members help

operate the layout, but their advice is invaluable. Ashley, of SVMRC advised and worked for two days fitting and wiring up over 100 LEDs during construction of the control panel.

The internet and internet forums are also very useful in finding specific information, and I keep magazines that have articles relating to projects that I may find interesting.

BRM: How do you prefer to buy models?

AC: I use a variety of sources; obviously, Derek at Footplate helps provide the majority of models,





Above Lighting helps to show off some of the more interesting features of the layout, and the skilled modelling required to produce such well-observed modern industrial structures.

Right At the station end of the layout, there's yet another freight terminal, complete with travelling gantry crane for transhipment of loads between road and rail transport. Class 47s are much in evidence, including a Res locomotive which has arrived with a short Travelling Post Office (TPO) train. Also evident is the extensive low-relief backscene of industrial units.

track and accessories I need, but I am also lucky that I attend about 15 model railway shows over the year. That allows me to source most of the other items that I require. I also have two local model shops which are a bonus and of course the internet and eBay fill in any gaps.

I don't tend to go to swapmeets anymore except occasionally the one at Stafford - they work well for picking up locomotives and rolling stock but I prefer model railway exhibitions for their better selection of building materials and accessories that help lift a layout. Footplate of Kidderminster, Express Models for the locomotive and yard lights, South West Digital, DC Kits and Legomanbiffo provide the sound decoders.

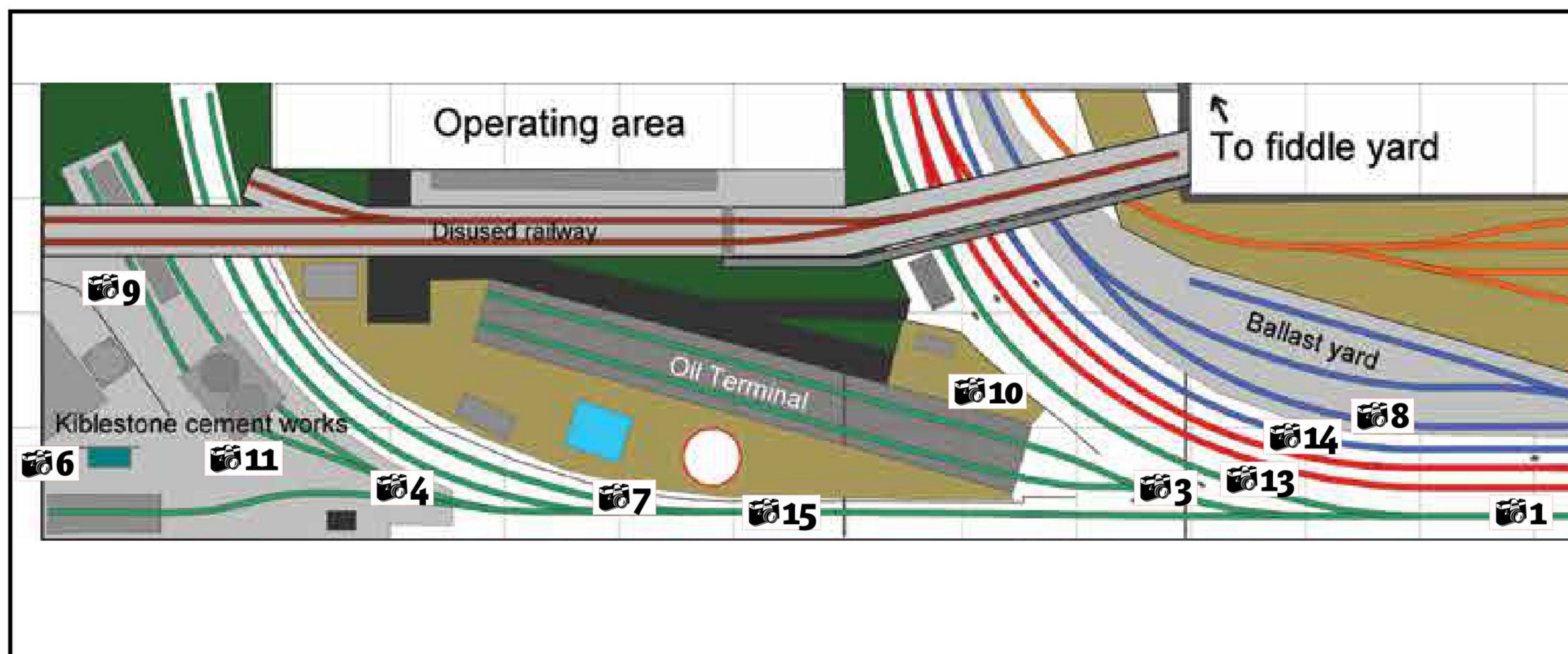
BRM: What developments would you like to see in the hobby?

AC: When I exhibited 'Oulton TMD' at Eurospoor in Utrecht, one question I was asked was; "Why don't British layouts have catenary?"

I have to agree that there are not many layouts out there with it installed. I would certainly like to see one of the major manufacturers produce it. Dapol produced one item, but it would be nice to have a full set. I would like to see Bachmann or Hornby upgrade their Class 08s and 20s so they have working lights fitted. More items of rolling stock from the late-1980s and early-1990s would be good for me; one example being Tiphook Rail KPAs and it would be nice to see a Railfreight Construction sector Class 37! **BRM**



LAYOUT OF THE MONTH OULTON TMD



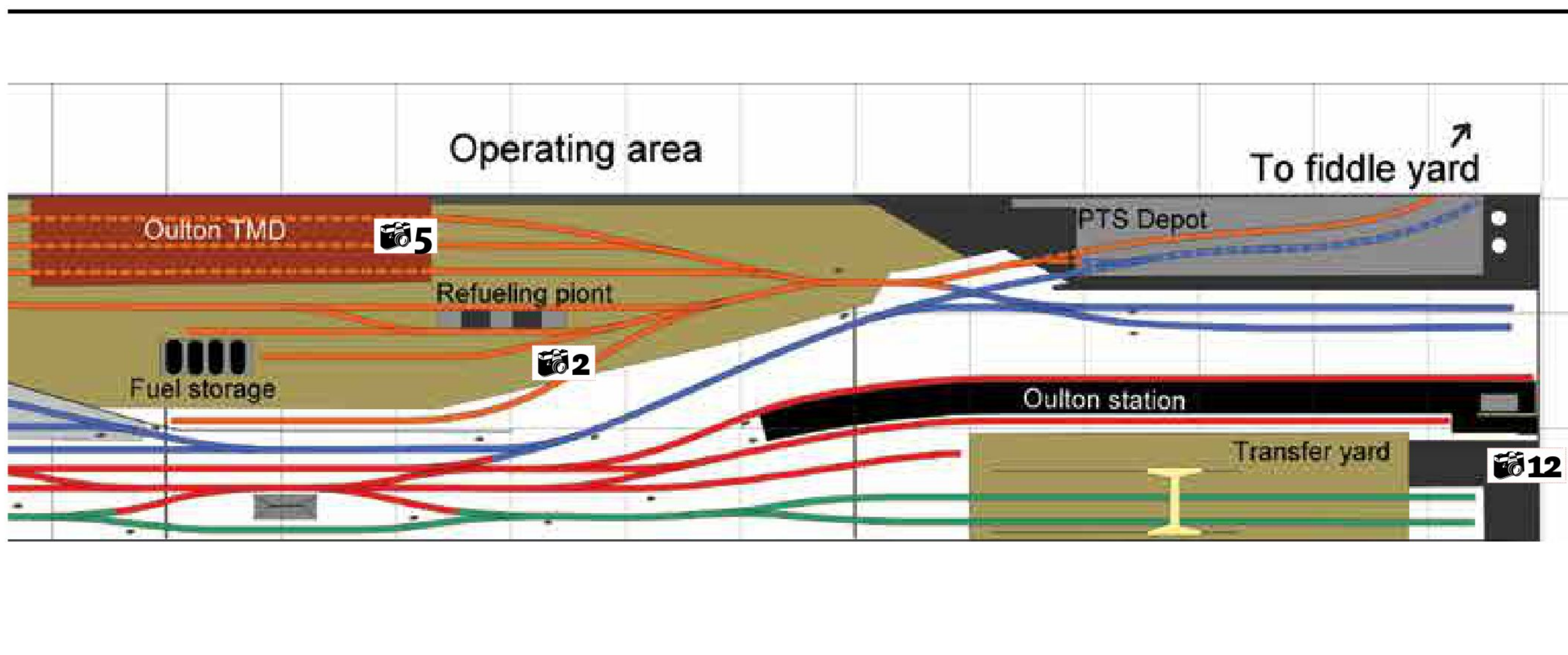


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**SEE IT IN
ACTION...**

Find out more about 'Oulton TMD' on Facebook and at cromarty100.supanet.com. You can see the layout in action at the REC exhibition at Woking Leisure Centre

on September 12/13 and at the Wigan Finescale Exhibition on October 3/4.





A steam era metal speed restriction sign is a traditional feature in a scene that otherwise shows how the railway was modernising in the 1990s; PW gangs in high-visibility clothing, portable floodlights to illuminate their worksite and pallisade fencing have become universal over the last two decades, as new working practices and safety rules have been introduced.



With the Class 66 revolution yet to take place, classic BR diesels dominate the fleet. Large logo 37025 *Inverness TMD* heads away with a steel train as the OHLE train eases under the high level line.



The oil depot brings together scratchbuilt structures, such as the storage tank, and components from the likes of Knightwing, Plastruct and Wills.

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37 413 heads down to Par Docks to pick up some china clay wagons. In the yard can be seen various locos and wagons – all there for servicing or repairs. In the foreground the Par lines curve round forming the connection to the main line from St Blazey and the line to Newquay.

FACT FILE

- ▷ **LAYOUT NAME** Diesels in the Duchy
- ▷ **SCALE/GAUGE** EM
- ▷ **SIZE** Scenic area 3m x 1m.
Overall length approximately 7m
- ▷ **ERA** 1988 - 1992
- ▷ **CONTROL** DCC
- ▷ **LAYOUT TYPE** Exhibition
- ▷ **PHOTOGRAPHY** Andy York

LAYOUT FOCUS **EDITOR'S CHOICE**

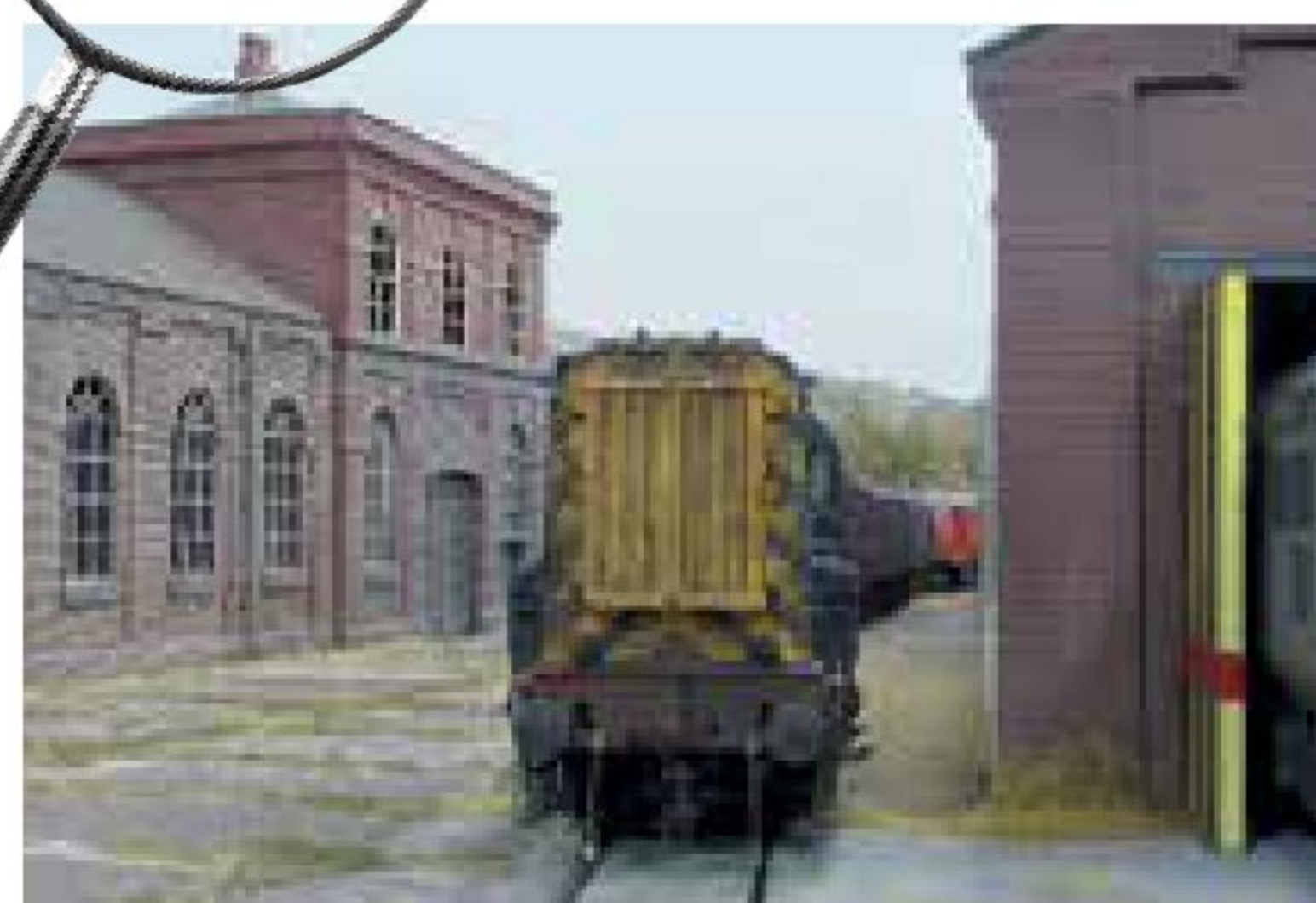
DIESELS IN THE DUCHY

Damian Ross took St. Blazey and Cornish China Clay trains as his inspiration for this depot-based exhibition layout. ➡

37 413, a Scottish refugee, now based at St Blazey, carries the Railfreight Distribution sector livery and St Blazey depot plaques but still retains her Scottish name. Flush fronted 37 521 is seen behind.



KEY DETAIL



LOCOMOTIVES

Although there was less variety of locomotive classes at St Blazey in 1988 than 20 years before, there's certainly variety in the liveries as the railway progressed through Sectorisation and this is reflected in the detailed and weathered locos from mainstream manufacturers that ply their trade on the model. The detail variation between models occasionally causes identification issues for some of DitD's operating team at shows. Where the model becomes more distinctive is in the rolling stock which may be seen including kit and scratch-built items to ensure that the rolling stock is typical of that seen at St Blazey in that period.



pilgrimages to the south west provide some great memories of the railway

was brought up (some would say dragged) during the corporate blue era which, at the time, was extremely drab and uninspiring. I can hear the cries of protest already, and of course as the song goes 'time has re-written every line...'. Most of us, of course, would die for such an eclectic drab liveried collection of locos now but not so back then – especially in that livery.

I originate from Lincolnshire, more specifically the town of Louth. Beeching, Marples and the road lobby had seen off a lot of the railways our way. The last passenger train to Louth ran the day after I was born, with freight hanging on for a few years to the malt kiln and the coal yard. So it was down to annual holidays and day trips to preserved railways that provided the major exposure to railways – relatively little compared with others who had the benefit of living near open main line.

Those annual pilgrimages to the south west provide, to this day, some great memories of the railways, which, in my view, was a vastly more interesting time than that of today. In particular, the days and evenings on Par station with my father – to whom I owe this lifelong love of railways. So the south west it should be, in fact not unprecedented as the previous layout Treneglos, built to celebrate 40 years of the last 'Atlantic Coast Express' (with John Wardle and Chris Tooth, both part of the Black Country Blues team), was based on the North Cornwall Railway during its final years in the steam era – yes steam!

I have a great interest in the Victorian buildings built for the railways, in particular the care, effort and pride that went into these in a time when

labour was considerably cheaper. A few years ago with a group of friends we built 'New Haden Colliery'. This demonstrated and exposed to me the delights of architecture from the Victorian period and its application in the industrial and railway scenes.

Getting back to the coming out of the blue era. As a teenager things started to change – on the railways that is. Finally after years of rail blue, with only the odd depot special livery to stir the emotions, Large Logo livery emerged – this was exciting. Railfreight grey also appeared at this time. This seemed very interesting and each loco/class that gained the liveries was eagerly awaited. How well the large logo suited the 50s and 56s and the Railfreight grey, now with red stripe, on the 58s.

This was all nothing compared with the mind boggling array of liveries that then followed from BR's decision to split up into 'business units' in preparation for the run up to privatisation. This led to a multitude of liveries for the freight, parcels and passenger business as well as all of the legacy liveries from time gone by.

In an effort to pull this lot together, here we have someone who likes all things south west, has a great interest in Victorian building architecture, and hankers after a time when there was still a good selection of traction in a vast array of liveries.

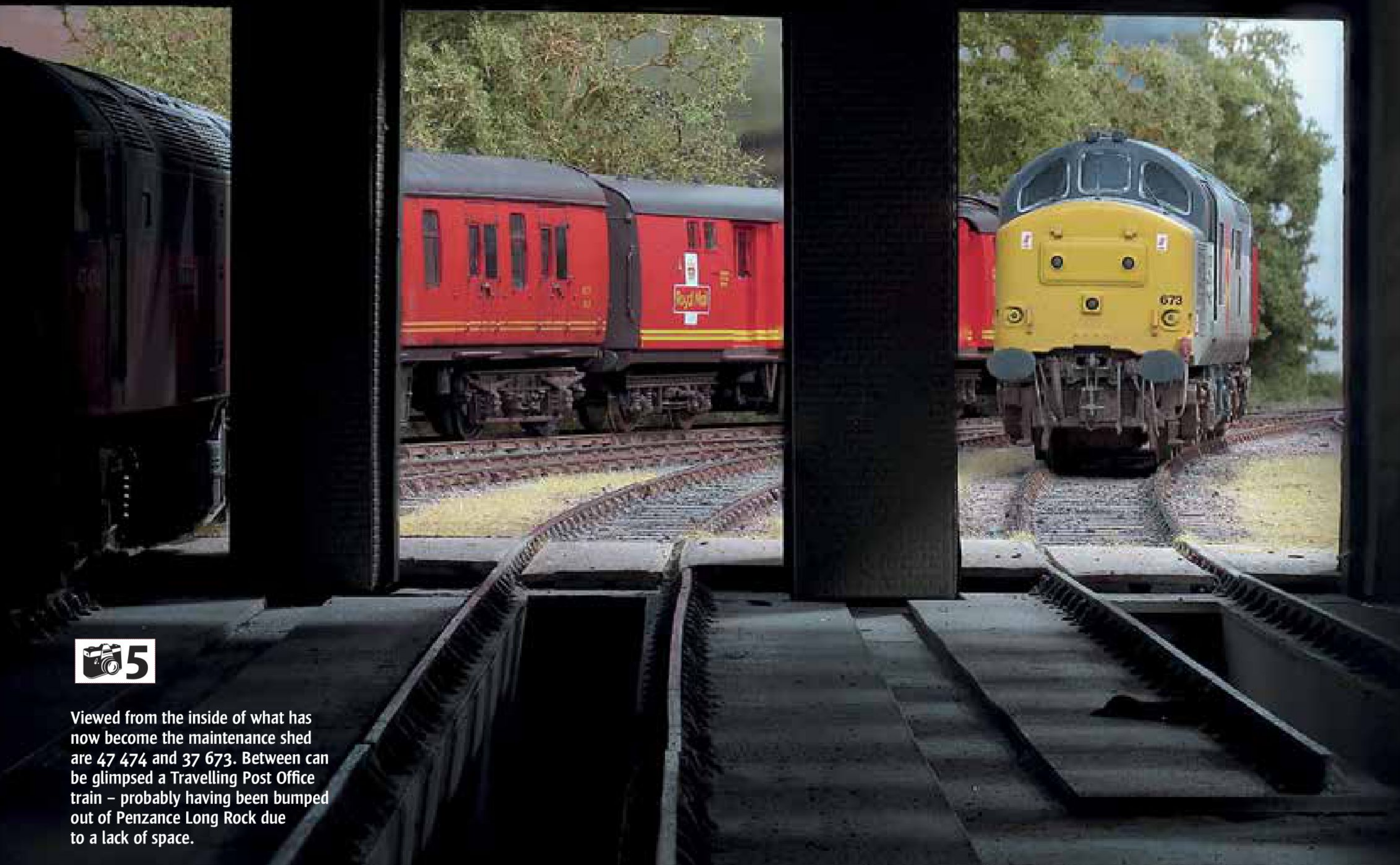
Other considerations are that I'd observed that most (not all) modern image depots generally use modern buildings, sometimes not in landscapes. So how about a mad juxtaposition of old part-adapted to the coming of the new.

The old steam shed and works at St Blazey, modelled in 1988-1992 - it had to be!









Viewed from the inside of what has now become the maintenance shed are 47 474 and 37 673. Between can be glimpsed a Travelling Post Office train – probably having been bumped out of Penzance Long Rock due to a lack of space.

KEY DETAIL THE BURNT-OUT CARAVAN



To one side of St Blazey depot on the land constrained by the chord, the line to Par docks and the main line is populated with static caravans due to the proximity to the coast. A small representation of the edge of the site has been included, including a caravan which has met an unfortunate end after some unwelcome guests stayed.

SITE HISTORY

The site was originally built to serve the Cornwall Mineral Railway from 1874, which ran from Fowey to Newquay via Par. The railway itself replaced earlier canals and tramways, evidence of which can still be seen today and which have been modelled to the front of the layout.

The site and adjoining station were originally known as Par until a link was built to the main line (Cornwall Railway) when it was renamed St Blazey to avoid

confusion with Par Station on the main line. Par Station still exists today on the main line to Penzance. However, St Blazey station, which is still extant adjacent to the yards, closed many years ago. The depot was operated by the Great Western Railway until Nationalisation in 1948. Depot codes were SBZ under the GWR, 83E and 84B under BR and BZ from the 1970s onwards under the current system.

RfD T&RS Depot

In 1987 British Rail split itself up into 'business units as a precursor to privatisation'. This led to the creation of three passenger business' namely Intercity, Network South East (NSE), Provincial (later to become Regional Railways), and the Parcels sector which later became Rail Express Systems (RES). Railfreight was to become a business in its own right being divided into TrainLoad and Distribution. TrainLoad did what it said on the tin - commodities that formed full trains. There were four divisions to the TrainLoad Business: Coal, Metals, Petroleum and Construction. Each had their own 'Sector' markings. If you look very closely at those sector markings you can determine an 'F' for freight!

Railfreight Distribution basically mopped up all the rest of the traffic that didn't conform to the train load split, this at the time also included the Freightliner operation. So there we have a fifth subsector – 'Double Diamonds'. The sixth marking was for Railfreight General – a further mop up of unallocated locomotives – although there were very few of these.

St Blazey was managed by Railfreight Distribution during the period modelled and was responsible for maintenance of the local Class 37 fleet, Class 08s, DMUs that worked the local Cornish branches and the China clay wagons that were used for all of the local trip workings. The clay hoods had recently been withdrawn with the new CDAs (nominally based on the HAA coal wagon) now being used.

KEY DETAILS BUILDINGS

6

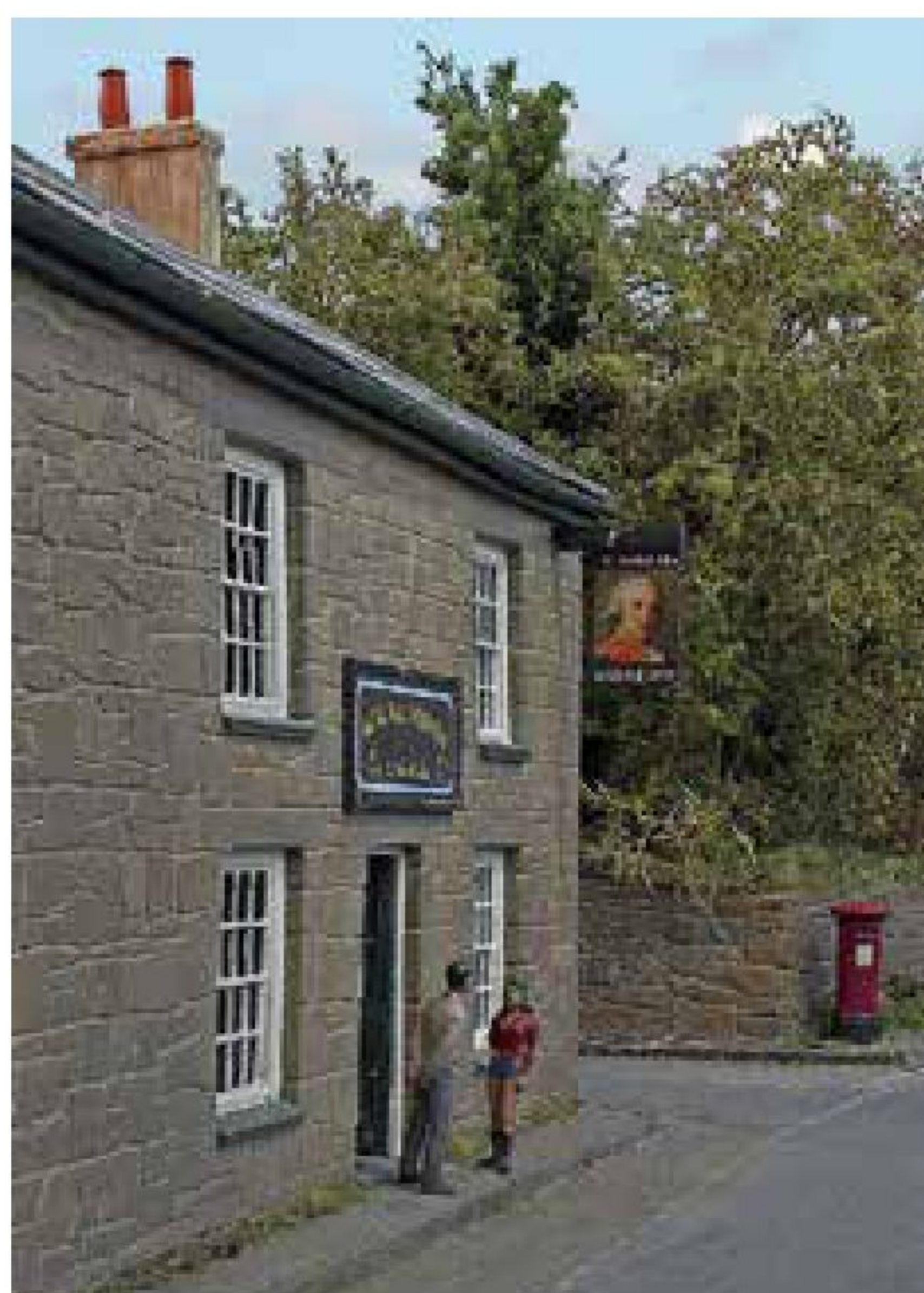


ABOVE: Showing a comparison between Railfreight 'red stripe' and the 'triple grey' Sector liveries, 37 669 and 37 672 await their respective duties following a local exam and refuelling.



LEFT AND BELOW LEFT: The layout includes several buildings which exist at St Blazey to define the model in the eyes of the viewer, even if the model is not an exact portrayal of St Blazey. Detailed observations and photographs from site visits and reference sources have helped give the layout a definite identity.

BELOW: Par Bridge crossing keeper's house – the subject of a Channel 4 restoration programme.



7

LAYOUT FOCUS

Interpretation

Now let's be clear, this is not an exact replica of St Blazey depot, more an interpretation of the best bits - the bits we like. The bits we felt would create a nice attractive scene and give a good representation of the site. We are all constrained by compromises and often space. From left to right we have included the following signature buildings:

- ▶ Par Bridge Crossing Keeper's house. The real thing has featured on a Channel 4 restoration programme. John (Old Gringo in RMweb parlance) built this, the real thing still stands, the crossing still in use as the access to Par Docks.
- ▶ The Par Inn. A beautiful piece of modelling by Chris (alias 2manyspams - RMweb again). Based on the actual pub, if you look closely there's a weather vane on the roof. In our world it's named the 'Admiral Rodney' after one of my cats.
- ▶ The Roundhouse. A nine road roundhouse with 70' roads, each road having 58' inspection pits, all of which have been modelled. The real thing is still there, Grade Two listed and in use as small industrial units. The adjacent turntable is still part of the operating railway and occasionally used for specials. Both built by myself (Indomitable026 in RMweb world). Of note is that the roundhouse was closed in 1987, as such we do not use it - although it is all fully operational!

▶ Ex-Wagon Works now loco/wagon maintenance shed. This is the large building that (sometimes) sits right in the middle of the layout. I say sometimes as it got left at home once for the Uckfield show! It now has inspection pits on each road and is firmly stuck to the boards. If I forget this particular building again then I've also forgotten the board! It feels like everyone's had their finger in this particular pie - a combination of skills, as Andy (Wagonbasher on RMweb), Chris and I added some tasteful stripey doors and the pits.

▶ To the rear of the Maintenance shed is what we call the engineering building. Another building by Chris and subtly tweaked from its real life counterpart. I say subtle but it's actually a mirror image, slightly shortened and has been moved from the other end of the site... it should be located to the left of the roundhouse. A case of a very attractive prototype, superbly modelled that just had to be found space for.

For the future, Chris is currently building a replica of St Blazey Signal box, which will sit at the back right of the layout. This is due to feature some superb laser cut windows and frames from our friends at Shawplan.

All of the buildings modelled are still in existence which helps tremendously when trying research and model prototypes.



PRESENTATION IS EVERYTHING...



Something that John has drummed into me over the years is that presentation is everything. I tend to agree but I wouldn't let him know that. I'm very keen that we present a scene in a box. The layout is viewed at a height of 4' 0" and viewed through a dark coloured 'letterbox'. The layout is lit by daylight energy saving bulbs and there are 12 of them at an equivalent of 150 watts each. The backscene is 2' tall so nothing unsightly can be viewed behind the layout. And yes I mean operators! All of this is to conspire to draw you into our little world without distraction. We also have a spotlight display to the left of the layout which gives further details of the location.

SEE THE GROUP'S OTHER LAYOUTS



TRENEGLOS

Treneglos, which lives with Chris Tooth, portrays the 'withered arm' of the former LSWR in late BR(S) days and was built to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the last Atlantic Coast Express. The layout includes a passing station on the line to Wadebridge and Padstow.



NEW HADEN COLLIERY

New Haden Colliery, now owned by Geoff Cook, features a working colliery alongside the now-disused branch to Cheadle in Staffordshire in the 1950s. NHC is one of the few layouts to feature the barren desolation that surrounded many collieries and their traffic.



BLACK COUNTRY BLUES

The development of Black Country Blues has been well documented in **BRM** but a recent running weekend provided Damian with a chance to run some of Diesels in the Duchy's locos and stock towards the end of a working into the Midlands in this photo.



Track workers step clear of the trains on Par curve. The water course is the old canal, which pre-dates the railway. To left of that is the old tramway. Both were used to provide a means of moving china clay before the railway came.



The RMweb 'journey'

Chris originally started our thread on RMweb and I have to say what a journey! We have made a great many friends, friends that are now helping out both operation and building some of our projects. I find it a very positive world, a brilliant way to exchange information and learn. People coming to say hello and complimenting the layout at shows really does make it all very worthwhile. The hobby for me over the last few years has developed considerably, despite my lack of time to execute it.

I like to think we do the best job we can with what we have, accepting that there is always a lot to learn and that from this whatever we do next time will be better still. It is important to me that we are always moving forward. That said, we do not take ourselves too seriously. Really it's about relationships and having a damn good laugh. You only have to read the RMweb thread to realise that most time and effort is spent discussing pies, pasties, beer and cream teas... as part of a calorie controlled diet of course!

The future?

Diesels in the Duchy is still a relative youngster as far as the exhibition circuit is concerned. So we'll put ourselves about, so to speak, and try and

get to different parts of the country without over exposing ourselves.

Our group has 'one or two' layouts that need attention/ building and exhibiting: New Haden Colliery (the first real layout we built as a group) is currently stored and needs a little titivation before return to the circuit. Treneglos, which is a steam era model of the North Cornwall Railway, has done around 30 shows and is about to return to celebrate 50 years of the 'ACE'.

The last couple of years have been spent building Black Country Blues, the RMweb Project Layout, again with what is now an enlarging group of friends. John's 1910 Wild West project, Once Upon a Time in the West, has suffered a little from this change in priority, however construction will recommence shortly. There are also a few other private layouts to contend with!

And finally...

... look out for a project called 'Highland Sulzers - Lochgorm Works in the Eighties'. This will be my next personal project in Scale 7. It will be a classic representation of Inverness depot set in the Halycon days of classic Type 2 traction.
BRM

KEY DETAIL

STREAMS

Many of the watercourses in the area have a milky blue colouring due to the proximity of china clay extraction activity. The varnished stream between high banks certainly captures the appearance of the River Par.



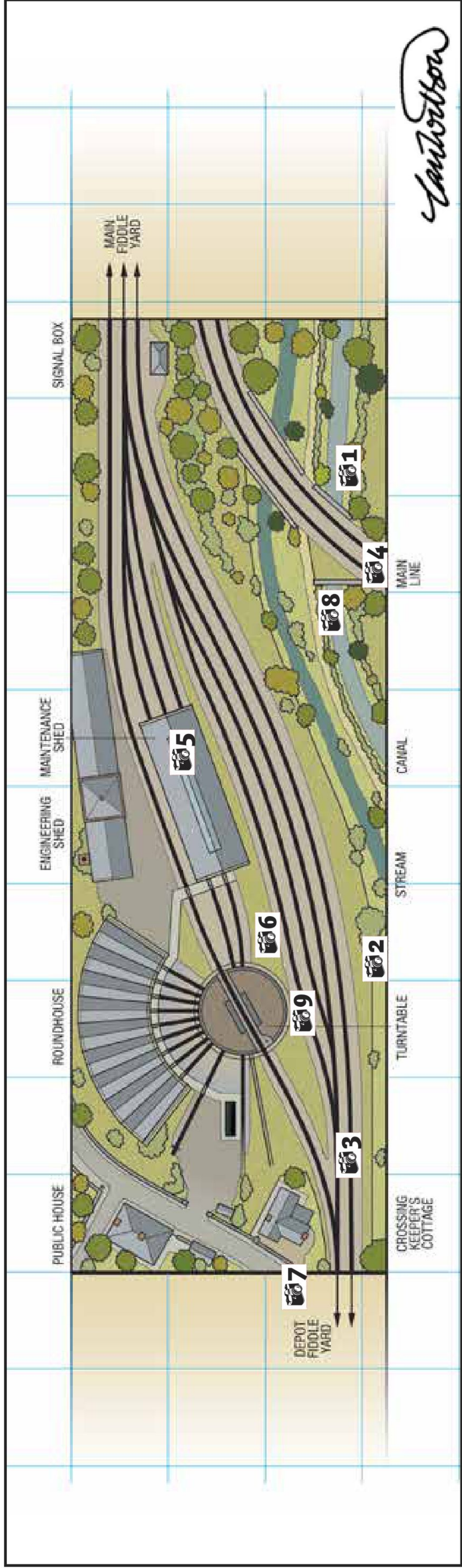
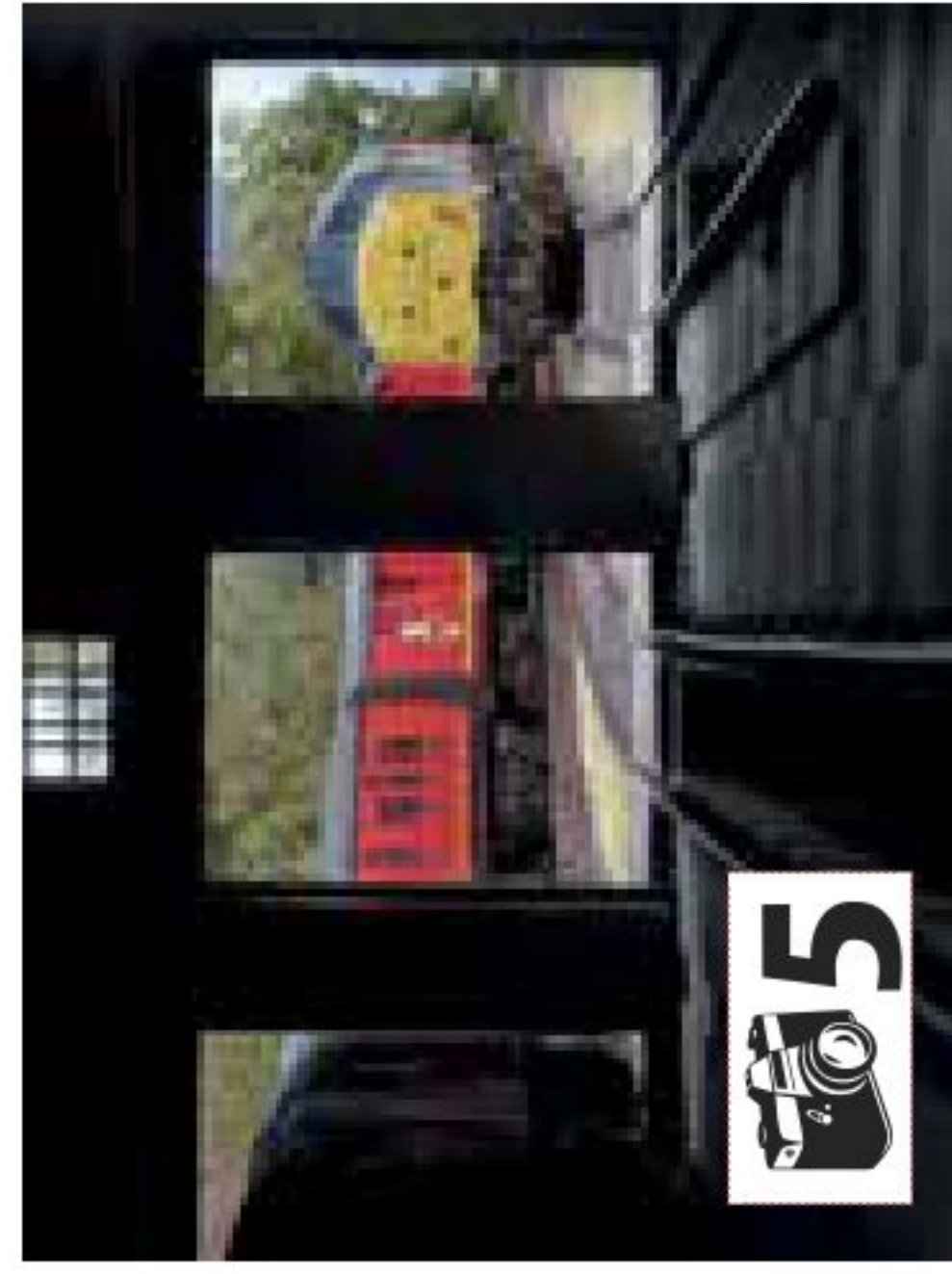




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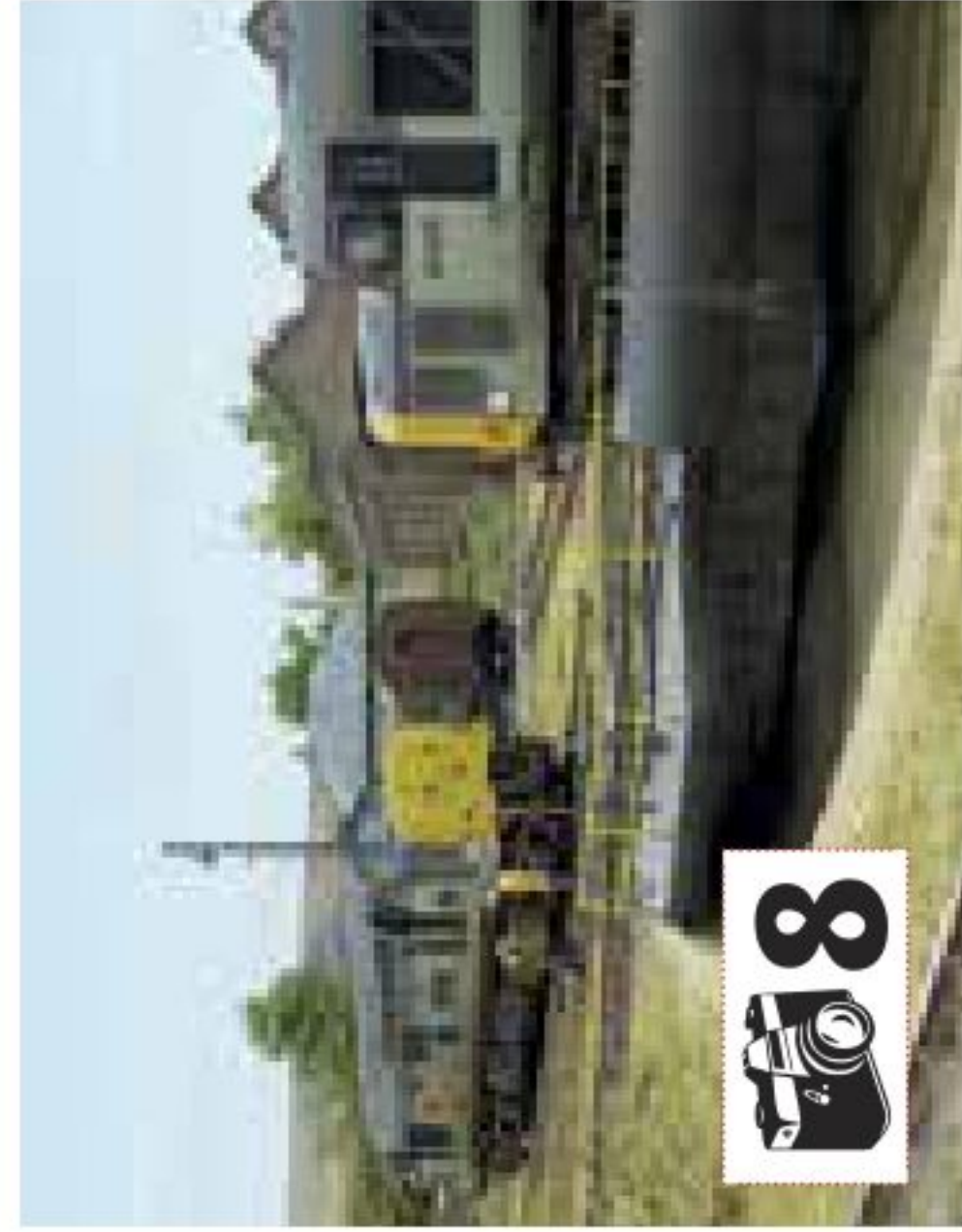
EDITOR'S CHOICE DIESELS IN THE DUCHY TRACKPLAN



OWNER FACTFILE



- NAME Damian Ross
- RMweb NAME Indomitable026
- AGE 43
- OCCUPATION Project Manager - Network Rail, LNE
- LOCATION Near Newark
- YEARS MODELLING Most of life
- OTHER INTERESTS Engineering, architecture, beer & pies
- CLUB Informal group of friends by the name of Staffordshire Finescale Group





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