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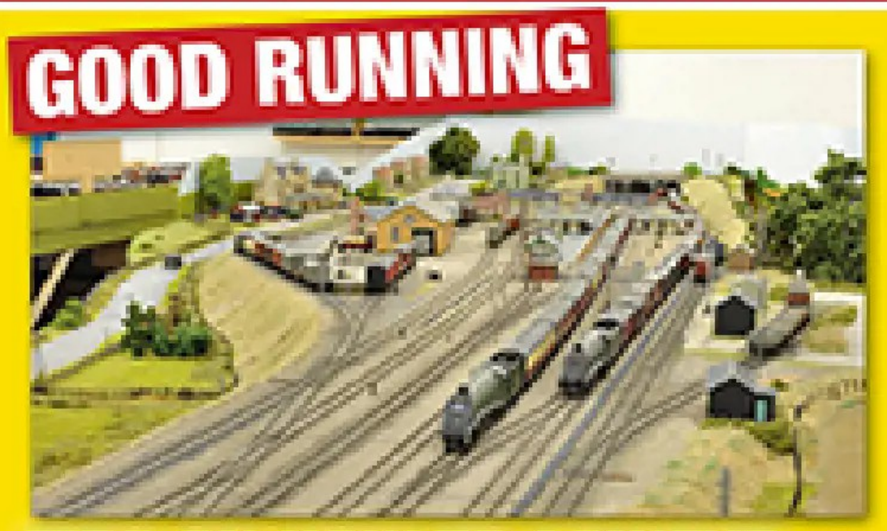

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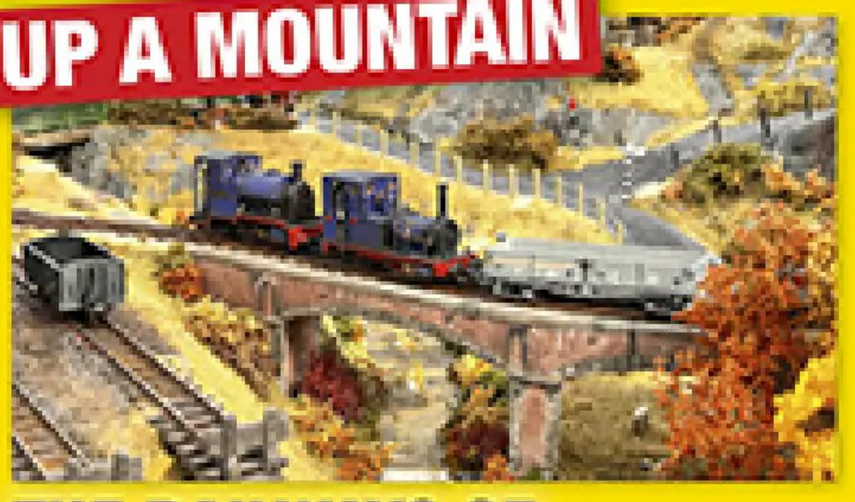

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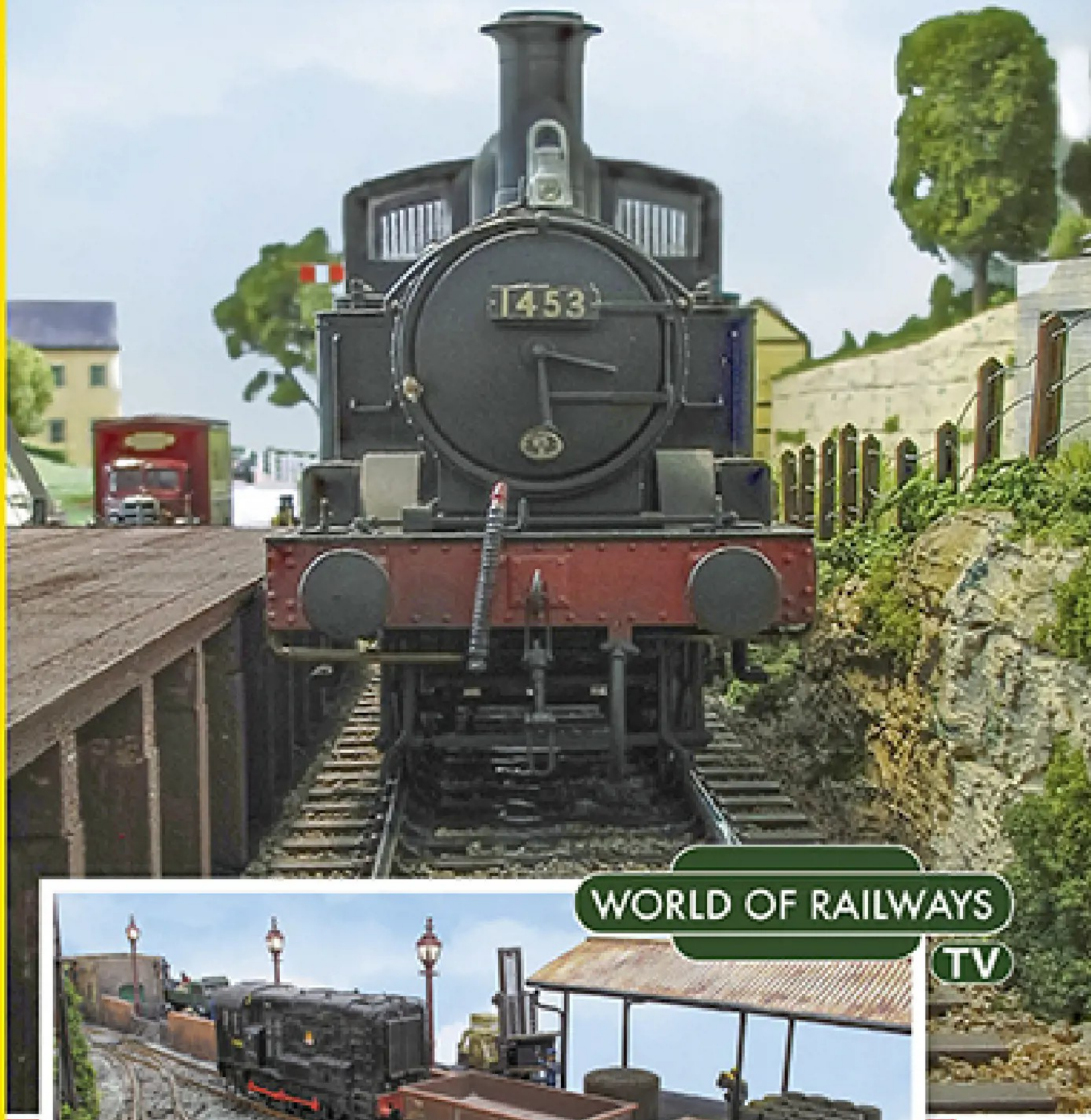

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Watching trains at ‘Amberside

Some railway action on Richard Gleed’s O gauge line featured in the January 2026 issue of BRM magazine.



Modifying card kits with Phil Parker

Phil shows us Metcalfe's latest kit and shares some top tips for construction and modification.



The new Hornby Silver King on test

Hornby's new Dublo Silver Jubilee Collection has arrived! This commemorative example, in the form of the third of the original quartet of A4s, is put to the test on Tony Wright's 'Little Bytham'.



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BRM

GETTING PRACTICAL



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INSPIRING LAYOUTS



p20 Amberside (O)
A decade in the making, this picturesque scene was inspired by memories of awaiting the speedy arrival of the *Cheltenham Spa Express*.



p32 Providence Colliery (OO)
Based around the fascinating rail history in the Forest of Dean area, portraying its drift mines, loading screens and associated facilities.

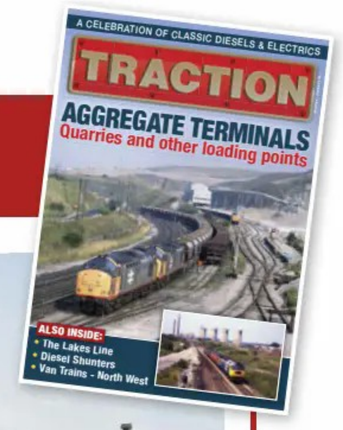


p88 Fford Dinrhyd (OO9)
Inspired by Rev. W Awdry, this picturesque layout in the mountains became the perfect showcase for banking locos in narrow gauge.



p104 Torry's End (OO)
This newcomer to the hobby threw himself in at the deep end, learning new skills and inspiring a new generation of modellers.

TRACTION





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R643	Half Curve 2nd Rad.	**£2.25**
R8072	LH Point	**£11.85**
R8073	RH Point	**£11.85**
R8074	LH Curved Point	**£18.85**
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NR-P994DW	BP Green no. BPO67765	**£14.25**
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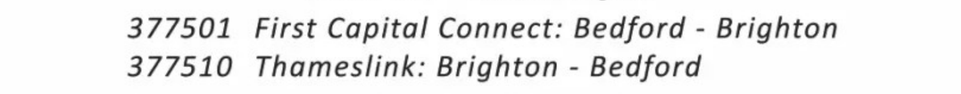
377101 London Victoria - Brighton
377214 South Croydon - Milton Keynes
377210 Thameslink: Brighton - Bedford



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377501 First Capital Connect: Bedford - Brighton
377510 Thameslink: Brighton - Bedford



Class 387 - GWR

387152 London Paddington - Cardiff
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Class 387 - Gatwick Exprress

387204 Gatwick Express: Brighton - London Victoria
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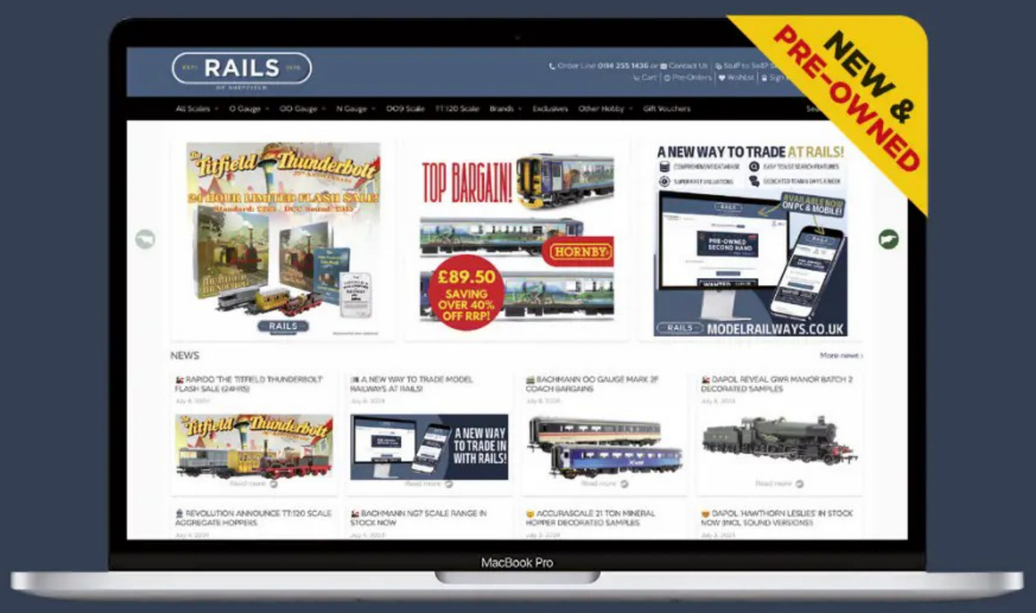

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T. Smart ★★★★★

I sold some used items to Rails recently, handled by Jake in the second-hand department.

All went very smoothly - once I'd packaged the items up, it was collected free of charge and I got a good price that was transferred direct to my bank a day after they received the items.

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S. Barltett ★★★★★

Popped in last week to have a quick look. Wow, blast from the past! Huge collection of vintage toys, like a kid in a sweet shop. Recommend to anyone, shop assistant was very friendly and helpful, I'll definitely be going again.

R. Smalley ★★★★★

Perfect service from Rails as usual. Excellent packaging, quick delivery and outstanding customer service from Joe, who is friendly, helpful and goes out of his way to provide assistance, even when the circumstances are outside his control.

D. Ager ★★★★★

I'm an international buyer, and particularly a fan of British N Gauge, my orders have always been fulfilled and packed above and beyond my expectations. The prices even factoring in the current exchange rate of the AUD to GDP and postage are often cheaper than what I can source here in Australia. A wide selection of manufacturers and models. I'd highly recommend this store.

D. ★★★★★

I've been a satisfied customer of Rails for a long time with my previous online orders. I'm happy to say that my first visit to the store today did not disappoint, as I expected! The service was outstanding, the staff know exactly what they're doing and are more than competent enough to help you get exactly what you're looking for. Would recommend to anyone looking for anything to try them first!



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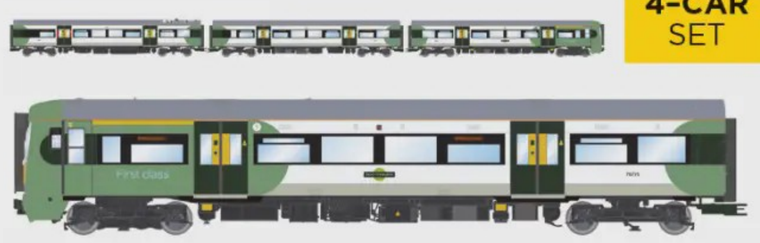

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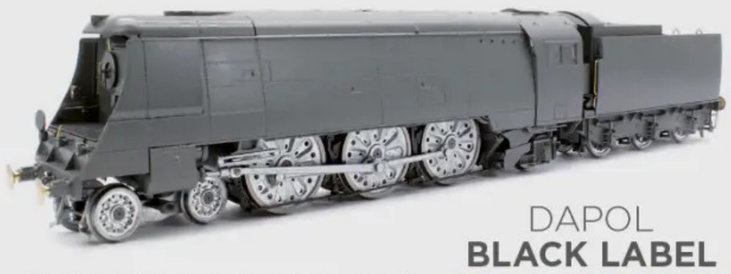

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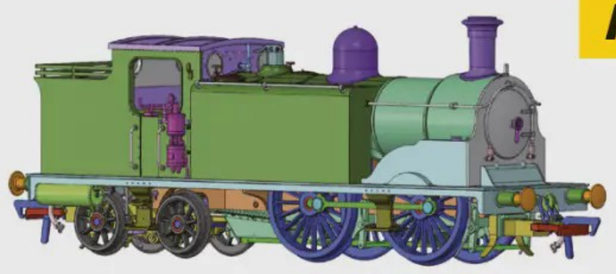

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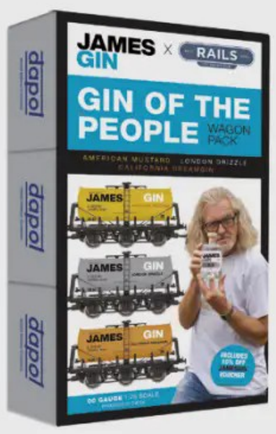



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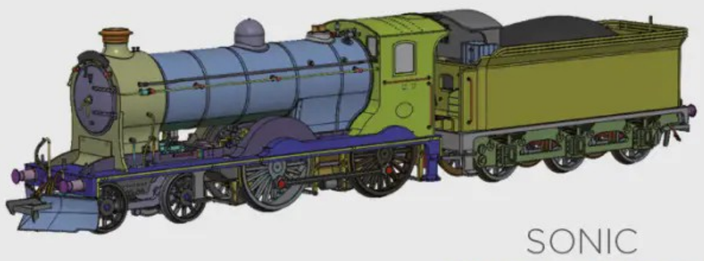

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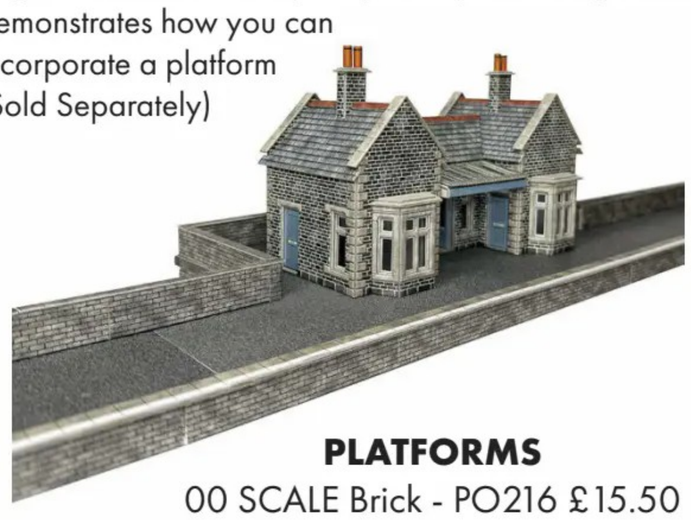

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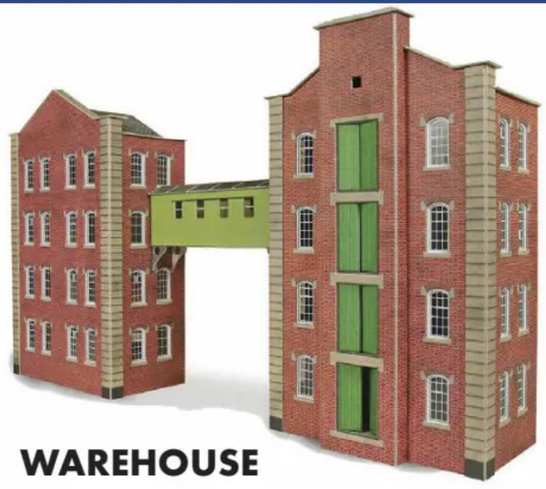

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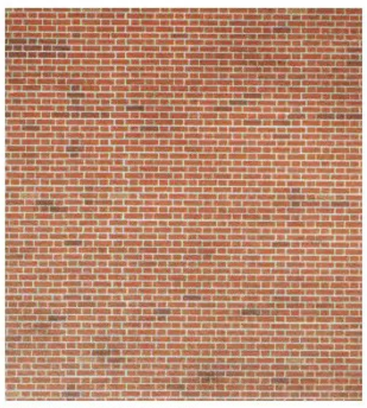

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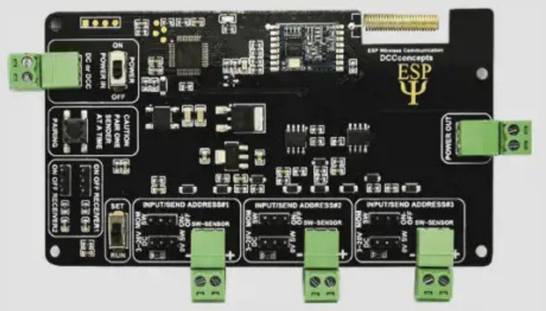

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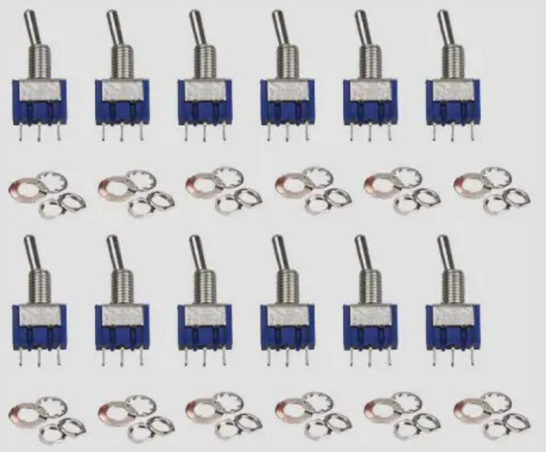

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HEADING WEST

A decade in the making, this picturesque scene, inspired by the builder's memories of awaiting the speedy arrival of the *Cheltenham Spa Express*, became the perfect home for his collection of Western Region locomotives.

Words: Richard Gleed **Photography:** Phil Parker

FACTFILE

LAYOUT NAME: Amberside
SCALE/GAUGE: 7mm:1ft/32.5mm/O
SIZE: 16ft x 11ft x inches
ERA/REGION: 1960S BR Western Region
LAYOUT TYPE: Continuous run

A nice Western Region scene with the lined green pannier tank 6437 by Lionheart Models waiting for the off, with its rake of chocolate and cream coaches, and a utility van in the bay platform. A typical Cotswold tree-covered hill is in the background.

TOP RIGHT: The Heljan *Western Yeoman* D1035 arriving on the loop as a through goods awaits the right of way. The young trainspotters are excited by the new era of diesel traction, embracing new technology.

MIDDLE RIGHT: Time for a tea break and a chat with the porter for the pannier tank crew, having just filled with water and awaiting their next roster. The weathered retaining wall behind is MDF, covered with Kirtley engineering brick paper.

BELOW: A good view of the station structures and their environs, complete with fire buckets, posters, trollies and luggage, etc., everyday detail that brings the scene to life. The Meera Hotel behind is based on the Imperial Hotel (now The Stroud Hotel) in Stroud.





I, like many others I have met over the years, like to dabble around with layout design, perhaps the fun and easiest part? Having done many designs over the years, I had a fairly good idea of what I wanted to achieve; a station on a cross country secondary main line with a bay platform, plus freight facilities of some sort, just to one side of the room, nothing too ambitious! Being in Sheffield one weekend, I acquired a 4ft radius track template, a couple of points and some flexible track from Marcway Models and began to play around on the actual baseboard to see how the real-life bits looked compared to the design on paper. It comes to life once you get 'real' bits on the board and then changes can be made, trying out different angles and elements in real time, so to speak. It's surprising how many changes and tweaks are made, again, it's great fun to do.

I wanted to create a reasonable attempt at a fictitious BR Western Region secondary main line set in the early-1960s, starting in Gloucester or Cheltenham, running through Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire, joining the main line to Paddington, possibly at Didcot? A sort of amalgamation of the Gloucester to Swindon line and the Cotswold line from Worcester to Oxford. The town modelled is Amberside (Amber is my middle granddaughter), based in mid-Gloucestershire, like the real town of Stroud, my hometown.

"The gleaming Castle Class locomotive with chocolate and cream coaches, thundering past our ears, has left a lasting impression. Can you imagine being allowed to do that now!"

Running trains

While the trackplan is double track so I can sit and run two trains simultaneously, it is signalled as a single track main line, for more formal operation and to a basic timetable if I fancy. The two inner semi-circles can then be used for train storage, plus a hidden siding behind the Phoebe's Green retaining wall.

The track is both Peco and Marcway flexitrack, with all points being from Marcway, as it does a good variation of straight and curved items, thus allowing me to shoehorn the track into a difficult space; the three-way point is also a great space saver. The outer track of 4ft radius was laid first using the template, while the inner circuit is just over second radius, using balsa spacers around the inside of the outer one.

'Amberside' has a bay platform for parcels, a small tribute to my dad, who was a postman. This also doubles as a headshunt for the furniture factory and brewery siding on the Up side, plus a double siding for the engineering works on the Down side, thus offering a diversity of movements and freight variety.

I have analogue control using a Morley Vanguard, double-track controller with handheld units, which gives good, solid, slow running. I created a trackplan with sections controlled by centre off switches for cab control, Dapol electric semaphore signals and wire-in-tube point control. Yes, the 'traditional' way, simple and cost-effective. I see so many well-run





ABOVE: A nicely weathered Heljan large prairie tank 6113 in black livery with early emblem rumbles through the station with its mixed goods train. The rolling stock has all been weathered to varying degrees, creating a pleasing overall appearance. Note the terraced houses behind, kit-bashed and enhanced from the 'Purple Bob' range.

MIDDLE LEFT: The AC railcar W79976 just leaving Phoebe's Green Halt on the branch, bound for Amberside. The halt, scratch-built using real wood, is based loosely on the one at Cashes Green.

BOTTOM LEFT: The pub and the barn at Phoebe's Green are drop on items to hide the lifting section hinges and, together with the tree, give a nice entrance to the scenic section. The railcar, W19W, is a brass Tower Models item.

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TOP RIGHT:
The Marcway points are operated by the wire-in-tube method, using steel wire in aluminium tube. The Marcway sprung levers work well with the unsprung point blades, giving a positive locking action. I have disguised many within the scenery!



BELOW RIGHT:
Corgi Vanguard 1:43 scale vehicles bought from various local sources in the station car park. The gravel surface is fine paver sand. Incidentally, the PA Vauxhall Cresta in the lovely lemon and white colour scheme is modelled on the very car that belonged to our window cleaner's father!

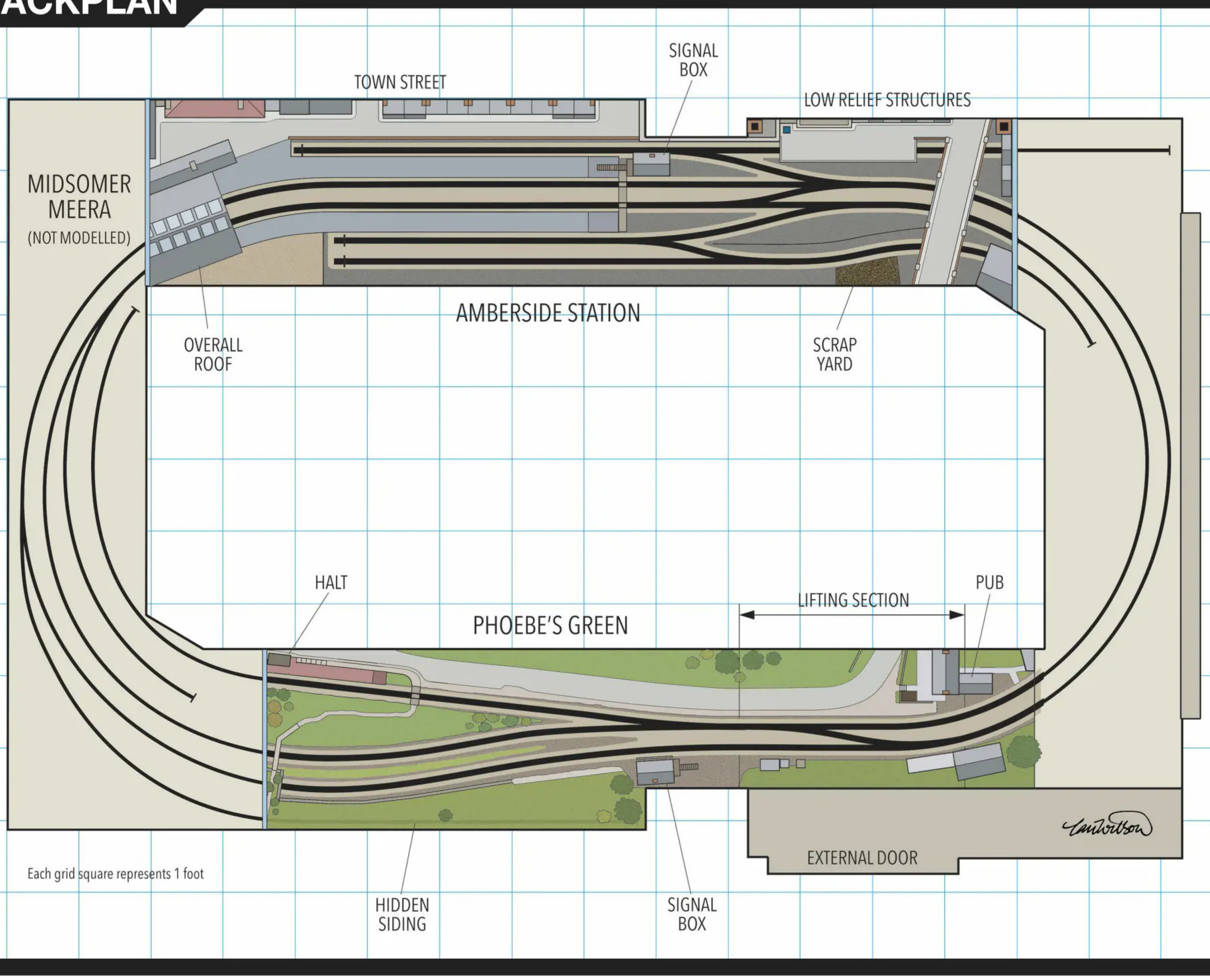


exhibition layouts using analogue control. Also, with the sheer presence of O gauge, I enjoy listening to the actual model noise, thumping over the joints and points. Diesel and steam digital sound can get rather too much on a 'roundy-roundy' layout in a relatively small room. I have various railway sound effects, which I play through a HiFi unit with big speakers. Listening to double-headed pannier tanks on a stone train in the Forest of Dean, while running a double-headed pannier-hauled freight is pretty awesome! I also intend to set up sound modules when I figure out how to do it.

Adding grime

All of the locomotives are ready-to-run from the main manufacturers, mainly Western Region, based in or around Gloucestershire. Tank engines abound, together with Western, Warship and Hymek diesels, railcars and shunters. Many have been re-numbered and weathered to varying degrees, plus added detail. While I like them to look in realistic working order, I have them fairly lightly weathered to enjoy the livery, as not all engines of that era were completely filthy, anyway. Much of the freight stock has been weathered to a good standard, but the coaching stock, Darstaed chocolate and cream, plus Heljan maroon, have yet to be tackled, and also lack decals and passengers. Most of the weathering has been done by three members of GlosGOG, thanks to Kevin, Danny and Neil.

TRACKPLAN







NEAR LEFT: Warship *Kelly* coming into Amberside with the 18.55 service from Paddington with an un-prototypical, but nice to see, rake of chocolate and cream Mk. 1 coaches. Note the large factory in the background, which fits around a building column.

FAR LEFT: I enjoyed building this signal box, squeezing it in between the tracks. The height required a double-flight staircase, cobbled from two laser-cut items. The water column, signal and factory add to the busy cameo.

A long time ago, I stopped worrying too much about the locos behaving themselves and running perfectly every time, they do have a mind of their own, depends on what mood they're in! Also, please forgive me for incorrect train formations, green diesels pulling chocolate and cream coaches, etc., looks good though, doesn't it? Wrong head codes and suchlike.

Sometimes it's just me, either watching the trains go by, shunting, or working to a basic timetable. Express to Paddington, local passenger steam, diesel or railcar, through goods, a Regent fuel rake, trip goods and local pick up goods, sometimes accompanied by my brother Nigel or various mates, drinking tea or beer.

The tight curves are not a problem for RTR large tank engines or diesels. I would love to run a Castle Class engine, but the larger kit-built or the very expensive engines will not negotiate such tight radii. Shame, but a small price to pay I guess? Yes, buffer locking can be an issue when running a very short wheelbase item next to a long one, especially when reversing, and I'm still missing two buffers somewhere in a vacuum cleaner probably! But generally, being aware of it keeps it to a minimum. Long auto coach buffers are the worst.

Setting the scene

The other side of the room was going to be a non-scenic fiddle yard having a couple of storage loops; simple. However, the urge to do more scenery became too great, and our daughter-in-law, Tamsin, wanted me to have trees on the layout.

So, Phoebe's Green was born (eldest granddaughter), complete with a junction for a branch line to the non-scenic Midsomer Meera (youngest granddaughter). This also includes the lifting section, complete with a removable barn and the Rising Sun pub to disguise the large hinges. I built a halt on the branch based on the one at Cashes Green, as previously mentioned.

About the modeller



Name: Richard Gleed
Age: 74
Number of years modelling: 50 years
Favourite era: Steam - diesel transition and 1980s Western Region
Favourite locomotive: Castle

Why my interest in railways? Well, firstly, we lived in Cashes Green, a village west of Stroud on the Swindon to Gloucester line, which had a traditional GWR halt for the Railcar. The platforms had slopes down to the rail level and I have a lasting memory as a young child of a group of us sitting at the bottom of the slope, level with the rails, awaiting the speedy arrival of the *Cheltenham Spa Express* working hard from its stop in Stroud. The gleaming Castle Class locomotive with chocolate and cream coaches, thundering past our ears, has left a lasting impression. Can you imagine being allowed to do that now?

Secondly, my friend Jimmy Martin and I used to go trainspotting on Gloucester stations, Central Western Region mainly, where grimy 9F locomotives would wait in the middle roads with their heavy loads of mineral or oil for the off, very often with safety valves open, making a truly deafening noise to our young ears. The smells and sounds of hard-working steam can never quite be replicated by a preserved railway. We would come home black and grimy from soot and dust, clutching our Ian Allan spotter books. This was in the late-'50s and early-'60s. After that, I lost interest for a while and missed the green diesels, I will never understand why!

So, moving on to the model railways. My younger brother Nigel and I used to have some Tri-ang OO stuff that we would lay out on the living room carpet, then Hornby O gauge clockwork. Later in life, at home with a wife and two children, it was N gauge on a plain, ready-made interior door, great for an instant base. A OO9 spirally thing was next, and finally a OO layout in a spare bedroom, none of which got finished! Then I decided to have a go at O gauge in 2015 and 10 years later, I'm still going with a layout that is probably nearly finished, apart from final touches to the layout and rolling stock.

I have converted our integrated single garage into an insulated workshop come playroom, changing the broken up-and-over door for a part-glazed uPVC front, just leaving the existing double-glazed side door. Plasterboard to the walls, plus insulation as required, T&G chipboard and carpet tiles to the concrete floor, resulting in a well-insulated and energy-efficient, cosy space.

ABOVE: Lionheart pannier 7404 in black livery will be going into the station loop for water, via the three-way point, with a short pick-up goods from Midsomer Meera. I made the road bridge using MDF and Plastikard.



MIDDLE RIGHT: Part of Station Road, with the newsagent, cafe and model shop. The Railway Hotel at the end is based on the real Railway Hotel in Stroud, where I first met my wife in 1970! Display items are cut from various magazine adverts.



BOTTOM RIGHT: A nice cameo of postmen bringing the mail for the utility van in the bay platform. This is reminiscent of Stroud, where my father was a postman in the '50s and '60s, so a nice way to remember him, thanks Dad.

Because I had not planned this section as scenic, it now runs through a tall section of shelving and 'great fun' was had trying to squeeze the double track behind and in front of the shelving uprights and then disguising them as sky, etc. It now gives the impression of a proscenium arch, which I am really pleased with.

The track has 'sleeper grime' acrylic, plus dark rust for the rails. OO gauge Woodland Scenics ballast throughout, using buff for main lines and brown for the sidings. It was laid dry and fixed using the diluted PVA with washing-up liquid method, then sprayed or dry-brushed to add grime. Various scatter materials, sand and foliage, plus static grass using a mixture of colours for different areas, were then added. Platforms and roads in general are fairly plain grey, as I decided to let the buildings do the talking; anyway, you don't notice them after a while.

The trees, shrubs and hedges are from 'The Model Tree Company', to which I added flock materials to bulk-up the foliage and create a more three-dimensional effect. Fence posts from Scale Model Scenery, together with thin or thick wire as needed to create country or heavy-duty fencing. The beautiful moulded stone walling came from Skytrex, to which I applied five different colours to get the shading how I wanted it, plus a whole host of bits and pieces from various suppliers; thanks to you all.

Key structures

Many of my buildings are based on real locations and photographs are used to get the perspective and relative proportions looking right. I don't need them to be an exact facsimile and others are designed using my imagination, a pencil and some paper! Buildings, especially low-relief ones, are very often designed to fit into a space once the track has been laid. I do take heed of real-life building methods and architecture to help make them 'look right' to enhance the end result.

The medium I used for the later structures is 5mm thick 'Foamex', the material used for estate agent 'for sale' signs, which offers a strong, stable and self-supporting structure. It can be glued using a foam-friendly contact adhesive, giving time for realignment as needed. I use a sharp Stanley knife, but it is hard work and needs several runs to cut through. Ornate windows and columns, etc., take time, and using a scalpel can also be helpful. However, the good news is that it is very easy to scribe when forming brick and stonework, sills, lintels and cornerstones, etc. I use a small engineering hole punch and a ground-down old screwdriver. The surface can be scribed and sanded to create the textured finish required. Doors and timber finishes are great fun to create using the same method and can be stressed to look old and worn.

I use acrylic paints for the stone colours, true colours first, followed by weathering, the paint running into the joints easily. Windows are made using fairly thick, clear Perspex for strength, cutting it oversize and gluing the ready-painted, correct-size window frames to the Perspex. This assembly can then be glued to the inside of the window aperture, giving a nice deep reveal. The frames are normally from LCut Creative, these being ready-textured and easy to paint.





TOP LEFT: An unusual visitor on this line, a fairly new Class 45, D132, although getting pretty grubby already thanks to some great weathering. In truth, I couldn't resist buying it! The buffer stops are Peco suitably weathered.

MIDDLE LEFT: Looking from the road by the crossing at Phoebe's Green to a Hymek on the main line. The hidden siding is behind the removable retaining wall, made using MDF and Slaters OO paving.

BELOW: That prairie tank with the goods again, having left Amberside, now passing Phoebe's Green Junction Signal Box. The road on the left leading to the Rising Sun is protected by fencing from the Scale Model Scenery range.

> "A long time ago, I stopped worrying too much about the locos behaving themselves and running perfectly every time, they do have a mind of their own you know, depends on what mood they're in!"



ABOVE: Another, closer view of the mail deliveries, showing the plain grey platforms, letting the eye look at the detail and not be distracted by too much else. I like this scene with the hotel, Woolworths behind and the trees beyond that.



MIDDLE RIGHT: Another tea break, this time with number 1441 Tower Brassworks tank engine. I like the height of this scene, complemented by the track, ballasting and barrow crossing.



BOTTOM RIGHT: Dapol tank 1453 with its autocoach stopping at Phoebe's Green Halt. The rock face is a mixture of Polyfilla and diluted PVA glue.

The Foamex method was used for the Meera and Railway hotels, plus the shops, together with the barn and The Rising Sun pub.

My first building, the large Severnside Furniture factory, was built using 5mm foam board, covered with the Kirtley range of photographic brick papers and using white metal windows for good relief. The brick window arches were made by cutting strips of brick paper and part-cutting every mortar joint, leaving the bottom row intact. When the solid piece is folded up under the arch, the cut bricks fan out to form the arch. The sills are paper concrete. I glued the brick paper to the foam using wallpaper paste and a rolling pin to eliminate bubbles. A layer of backing paper must also be used at the same time, otherwise, it will bow like a banana. I found that out the hard way!! The brewery and engineering works are of similar design. The row of terraced houses climbing Station Road and the company offices are from kit-bashed Purple Bob's kits, a pleasure to work with.

The station building is foam board clad with embossed Plastikard, while the overall roof is thick, clear Perspex covered with black card for the roof detail and having homemade, laminated roof trusses underneath and a card front fascia.

TOP RIGHT: Weathered Gloucester diesel shunter 3994, propelling a single 5-plank truck with barrels towards the brewery. This siding also serves the Severnside furniture factory behind it, the first building I made for the layout.

MIDDLE RIGHT: A great space saver and good fun. The office carpark is built over the loading bay, where a lone van, a Peco kit, is being loaded.

BELOW: Another general view showing the depth achieved (hopefully) from the carpark to the backscene, helping to disguise the relatively narrow baseboard, but still allowing space for the summery sky.





While not strictly a Gloucestershire thing, a friend at the club suggested it as an effective way of disguising the hole in the sky. I am pleased with the result.

Phoebe's Green halt is built of real wood sections and strip plus plastic corrugated sheets for the shelter. The signal boxes are scratch-built using Plastikard shiplap, plus windows from LCut. In general, the building roofs are of sturdy card with tile paper from Kirtley models. Some have individual strips of plastic tiles, but I do like the printed version, toned down with acrylic wash, good old anthracite, a nice dark grey, better than black.

One more thing, words of wisdom from the late, great Allan Downes. If you can't see it, don't model it. Saves a lot of time.

Final thoughts

Due to other interests and family duties (and going to the pub), it has taken me 10 years so far, but it is all my own work. As many of you will know, it can be a frustrating hobby at times, two steps forward and one back and all that. Not to mention the maintenance and bits that drop off inside the tunnel, but I am pleased that I have done it and enjoy playing trains.

Thanks must go to Jon, Harry and Rachel at Antics Online, whose shop and warehouse are just down the road from us. Also, my friends at Gloucester Gauge O Group for their humour and advice in times of need, my brother Nigel and lastly to my wife Sallie for putting up with me over the years. ■

"One more thing, words of wisdom from the late, great Allan Downes. If you can't see it, don't model it. Saves a lot of time."

COMMUNITY

EDITOR'S COMMENT

We often hear people say that this hobby is on its last legs, that, with a lack of newcomers, interest in model railways is dwindling and, in a generation or two, may not even exist.

So, it is nice when we have an issue where three of the four layouts featured are first-time projects. And what amazing work has been achieved. First up is 'Amberside', which was a decade in the making, inspired by the builder's memories of awaiting the speedy arrival of the *Cheltenham Spa Express*. Richard Gleed dabbled in N, OO and even OO9, before finally settling on O gauge and at last finishing a layout.

Next up is 'Fford Dinrhyd', a picturesque 009 layout set in the Eryri National Park (Snowdonia). Its builder, James Walker, approached us to feature the layout, which we always encourage people to do, especially for stay-at-home layouts. A fan of the books of Rev. W Awdry and the Clyre Valley Railway, the model became the perfect showcase for banking locomotives in narrow gauge, and like many of us, started with an impulse purchase and then took on a life of its own.

Torry's End is our final 'newbie' layout and its builder drew on his miniature wargaming experiences during the construction. A teacher by day, the layout now lives in a classroom, inspiring a new generation of modellers.

So, if you are still on the fence about getting involved in this great hobby, you will find plenty of inspiration in these pages of people taking the plunge and reaping many rewards for doing so. Not only that, but they are also helping to prove, once again, that model railways have a very bright future.

Debbie Wood

BUDGET MODELLING

I would like to give feedback, particularly regarding Tony Wright's budget modelling. Can I say it's one of the most refreshing and encouraging series of videos and articles that BRM has published for a long time. It seems that the trend of modelling is for ever-increasing detail at ever-increasing cost, which a section of railway modellers cannot keep pace with due to one reason or another, usually to do with outlay of money. But here is a theme of budget and hands-on modelling that is affordable and realistic in so many ways. Could you please extend this theme within BRM please, as I for one am an avid consumer of reconstruction and renewing older products, and Mr Wright's ideas and explanations of how to make things afresh are excellent.

Bob Wood

BRM Says: Thank you so much for the feedback and we are glad you are enjoying this series. You will be pleased to hear that we have a number of instalments still to come from Tony on budget modelling and other similar articles planned for the future.

WEEKEND PLANS...

Blackburn & East Lancs MRS Show
More than 10 layouts and several traders will be in attendance at this winter show, held at The Oswaldtwistle Mills Business Centre in Accrington. Entry costs £5 and under-16s are free to enter with a paying adult.
DATE: December 6-7th, 2025

The Christmas Model Railway Show
Celebrating its 100th birthday this year, the Manchester Model Railway Society has a number of special exhibits and features planned to celebrate this incredible milestone. Held at The Sugden Sports Centre, Sydney Street, Manchester, over 25 layouts will be in attendance and many traders and well-known manufacturers.
DATE: December 13-14th, 2025

Frome Model Railway Exhibition
The Wessex Association of Model Railway Clubs proudly presents its 2026 Model Railway Exhibition, held at the renowned Cheese and Grain in Frome. This year's exhibition will showcase a wide variety of scales, eras, and modelling styles—from the steam age through to the modern main line. The WAMRC AGM will be held at 17:30 on Saturday.
DATE: January 3rd-4th, 2026

Bognor Regis Model Railway Club Annual Exhibition
Held at Felpham Community College, this annual seaside show offers over 15 layouts and the same again in trade stands, offering plenty of entertainment and buying options for modellers. Tickets cost £7 per adult and free parking is available.
DATE: January 10-11th, 2026

The Southampton Model Railway Exhibition
The Southampton Model Railway Exhibition will be held at Barton Peveril College in Eastleigh and will feature over 20 layouts in various scales, along with numerous traders and societies. A free heritage bus service will connect the venue with Eastleigh and Southampton Airport Parkway stations.
DATE: January 24-25th, 2026

£26,000 DONATION

Revolution Trains has raised £13,000 for Martin House Children's Hospice through the support of its N gauge model railway customers. Thanks to a match-funding arrangement, the charity received a total of £26,000.

The funds were raised through sales of Revolution's special edition locomotives and wagons, including the gold 66301 Drax Power 50, DB red 66190 *Martin House Children's Hospice* locomotives, and limited edition Drax gold IIA-D biomass hoppers.

The cheque was presented during a ceremony at York station, held as part of a larger event organised by Network Rail to celebrate the railway industry's £380,000 fundraising achievement for Martin House through charters, auctions, and other initiatives.

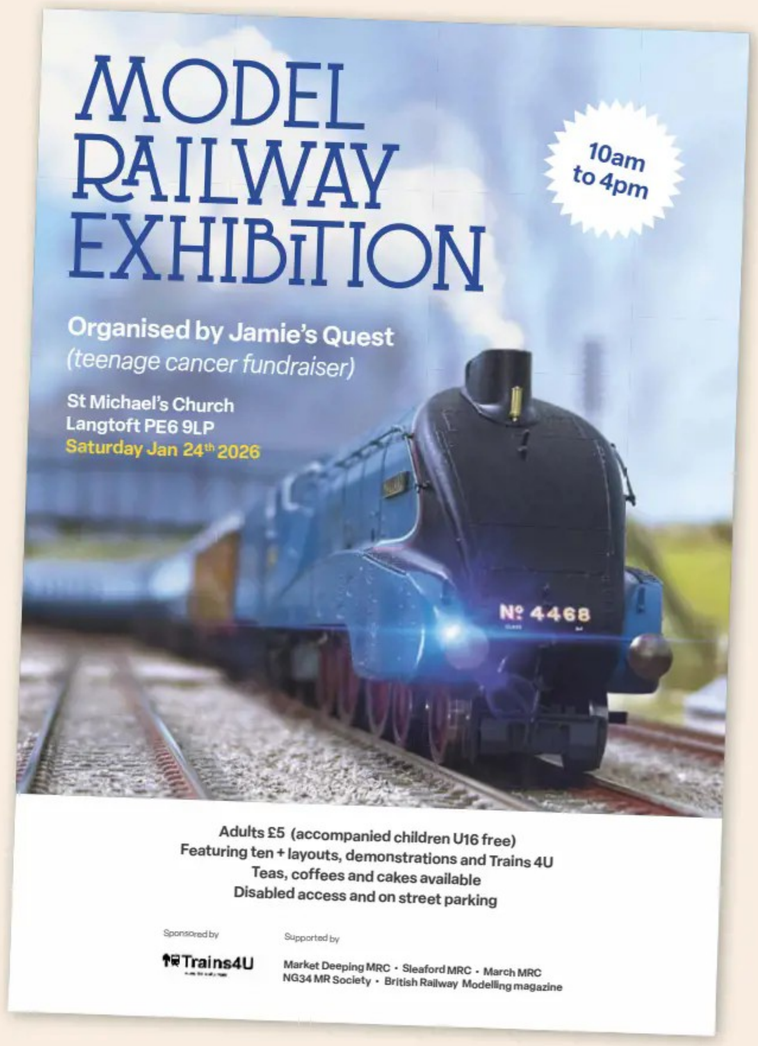
Martin House provides family-led hospice care free of charge for children and young people with life-shortening or incurable conditions.

CANCER CHARITY EXHIBITION CONFIRMED

While we pride ourselves on producing layouts which attend the most prestigious of specialist model railway exhibitions across the country as well as hosting our own large two day event, over the last few years we have also provided layouts for venues such as care homes, school, village and church fetes, libraries, National Trust open days, literary festivals, Christmas fairs, exhibitions of childhood and indeed charity events organised by other clubs. We have gained enormous satisfaction from such appearances and like to think that we are indeed actively giving something back.

Recently, some members heard about Jamie, a young man with a rare and aggressive form of cancer. He requires expensive treatment not currently available in the UK. To help Jamie in the best way we know, a special event will be held, not only to raise money but also to entertain by showcasing our hobby.

On Saturday, January 24th, 2026, from 10am to 4pm, with the kind permission and assistance of the ecclesiastical authorities and the support of BRM and Trains 4U (the latter will have a small sales stand) there will be a charity model railway exhibition at St Michael and All Angels Church, Langtoft PE6 9LP in aid of Jamie's Quest - Teenage Cancer Fundraising who are devoted to funding the potentially lifesaving treatment for this young man. Layouts and demonstrations will be presented by



members of the Market Deeping, Sleaford, March and NG34 clubs. Given that collectively we have a significant number of Junior members, we feel it is particularly appropriate that we assist these endeavours to better the lives of less fortunate young people.

There will be a variety of layouts and demonstrations, and refreshments will be available. Admission is £5 per head, accompanied under-16s free. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible there to support this worthwhile cause.

Alan Hancock (Market Deeping MRC)

A SPECIAL BIRTHDAY

The Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Society, the oldest line society in the UK, is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. Coincidentally, it is now the same age as the L&YR was when it merged with the LNWR in 1922. The Society was formed in 1950 by a group of enthusiasts from Bradford who wanted to record as much as possible about the former L&YR before memories faded and records disappeared.

Since then, the Society has thrived and now has 900 members. It produces a quarterly full-colour magazine, a learned journal about historical matters and occasional books on specialist subjects. In addition, it has extensive collections of photographs, drawings and archive material and holds three events for members each year.

The Society recently celebrated its 75th anniversary by hiring the L&YR Club Carriage, in which members were able to travel on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway. During the year, all its regular publications have carried a special logo commemorating the anniversary.

The Society is devoted to the dissemination of information about the L&YR throughout its 75 years of existence and beyond. Its collections are housed at Manchester Archives, where they can be properly conserved for the benefit of future generations. This is appropriate as the L&YR was itself based in Manchester.

Martin Nield

WAKEFIELD CIVIC SOCIETY PRESENT PECKETT PLAQUE

At its recent open evening, Wakefield Railway Modeller's Society was presented with a blue plaque by the Wakefield Civic Society. It commemorates the locomotive manufacturer, Thomas Peckett, and includes a depiction of one of his locomotives that worked at the nearby colliery of St John's, Normanton.

Accepting it on behalf of the club from the Civic Society's President, Kevin Trickett, were WMRS chairman and president Chris Burnage and John Fairline, along with Chris Mead, who had assisted in some of the background research.

Although known for building his iconic industrial locomotives in Bristol, Thomas Peckett was in fact born in Wakefield. Moreover, he spent some years as a child living in a house situated on the same road as the WRMS clubrooms. Since sadly his home no longer exists, the Civic Society thought it only fitting that the honour of displaying the plaque went to the Wakefield club.

The funding for the plaque came mainly from three members of the Peckett family, with a contribution from Wakefield Railway Modellers' Society.

To learn more about the Wakefield Railway Modeller's Society, please go to their website: **www.wakefieldrms.org**

Chris Mead



Civic Society's President, Kevin Trickett, with WMRS chairman and president Chris Burnage and John Fairline, along with Chris Mead.

A low-level view of the yard framed neatly by the waste bridge. The yard lights are mainly LEDs, with the brightness limited by appropriate resistors, running from a general 12v DC supply. Many visitors have commented how the lights really help to set the atmosphere of the layout.

See 'Providence Colliery' in action at
THE FESTIVAL OF BRITISH RAILWAY MODELLING
7th - 8th February 2026
DONCASTER
Visit www.world-of-railways.co.uk today!

BOOKWORM

After reading about the fascinating rail history in the Forest of Dean area, Theo Thomas attempted to capture the essence of its drift mines, loading screens and associated facilities, unearthing exciting modelling possibilities.

Words: Theo Thomas **Photography:** Tony Wright



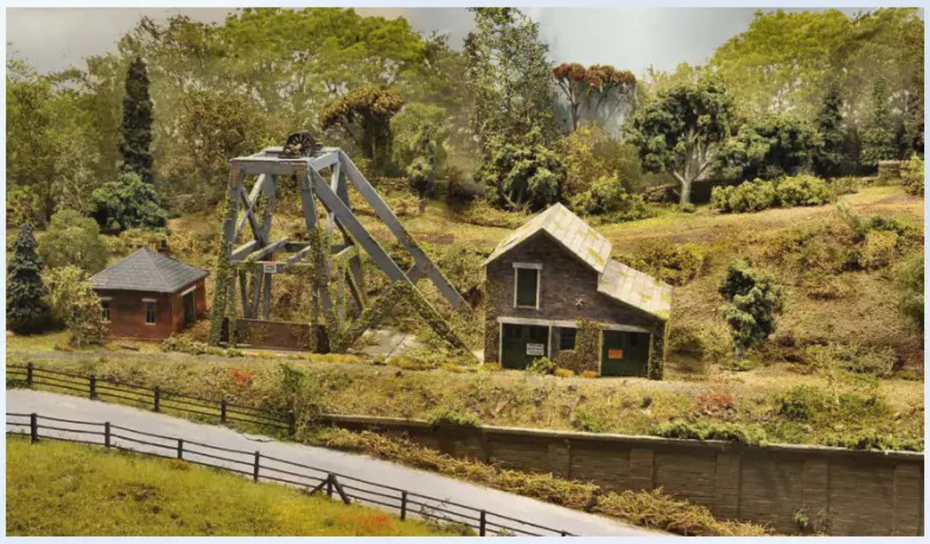
FACTFILE

LAYOUT NAME: Providence Colliery
SCALE/GAUGE: 4mm:1ft/16.5mm/OO
SIZE: 11ft 5in x 3ft 7in
ERA/REGION: British Railways (Western Region)/NCB Western Region late-1950s/early-1960s
LAYOUT TYPE: End-to-end

TOP RIGHT: The upper mine buildings are based on examples seen at the Eastern United Colliery, which was closed by 1962. From left to right are the Fan House, the Compressor House and Boiler House. The narrow gauge loco is 3D printed and its body is running on a Kato tram chassis.



MIDDLE RIGHT: Before the near-horizontal coal-bearing seams (gales) were explored, some mines were dug vertically downwards to search for the black gold. This winding frame was abandoned many years ago and nature is reclaiming the land.



The idea to model a colliery layout came about following the purchase of Neil Backhouse's mighty book *British Railway History In Colour, Volume 2: Forest of Dean Lines and Severn Bridge* (Lightmoor Press). Copies of Pope & Karau's *Forest of Dean Branch*, volumes 1 and 2, were subsequently acquired. Prior to this, I had been vaguely familiar with the Forest of Dean area, but not its glorious and attractive industrial railway history. Commercial coal mining had been carried out in the area since the late-1700s, but by the mid-1960s, all but the freeminers had disappeared.

It was only when I joined my local model railway club in Luton that I decided to develop the theme, build and then exhibit the layout over the last two years. This layout attempts to capture the essence of a Forest of Dean drift mine and all of its associated facilities. I am ably supported in these endeavors by club members Justin, Kevin, Pete, Mike, Andrew, Zoe and fellow Morris dancers Steve, David and Tommy.

> "The exhibition observer will see only one double slip, as the second is secreted inside the screens building."

The tracks on the left here take traffic off-stage (in reality, to the fiddle yard), while the right-hand track is a headshunt, frequented by the yard shunter. The top signal arm is a starter, while the lower one is a shunt signal, allowing locos to use the running line to clear the first points. Both arms are switched from the fiddle yard; the servos are hidden in the hut on the far left.

Another loaded coal train departs. At an exhibition, we run a sequence based around empties in, fulls out. Each sequence takes about 15 minutes, so we are shifting a theoretical 2500 tons of coal in a six-hour period!

Construction highlights

The three baseboards are made from double 'beams' of 6mm ply, separated by softwood blocks, through which all fixing screws pass. To lighten the frame, my characteristic hexagonal clearance holes have been cut out of the ply. The frames have a depth of about 100mm, room for the tortoise point motors I use, and all wiring. The whole layout sits on four homemade leg assemblies; the primary ones can be erected independently, braced, and the main board can then be lowered onto them. The subsequent boards are just 'piggy-backed' on. The support leg for the fiddle yard board is set in from the end, and the board is thus cantilevered out, and is designed to pass over the bonnet of my sports car when erected in the garage! If I'd been more careful with my board building, I would not have built in a track-level hump (now rectified) at the baseboard joints. I blame it on my garage floor being far from level!

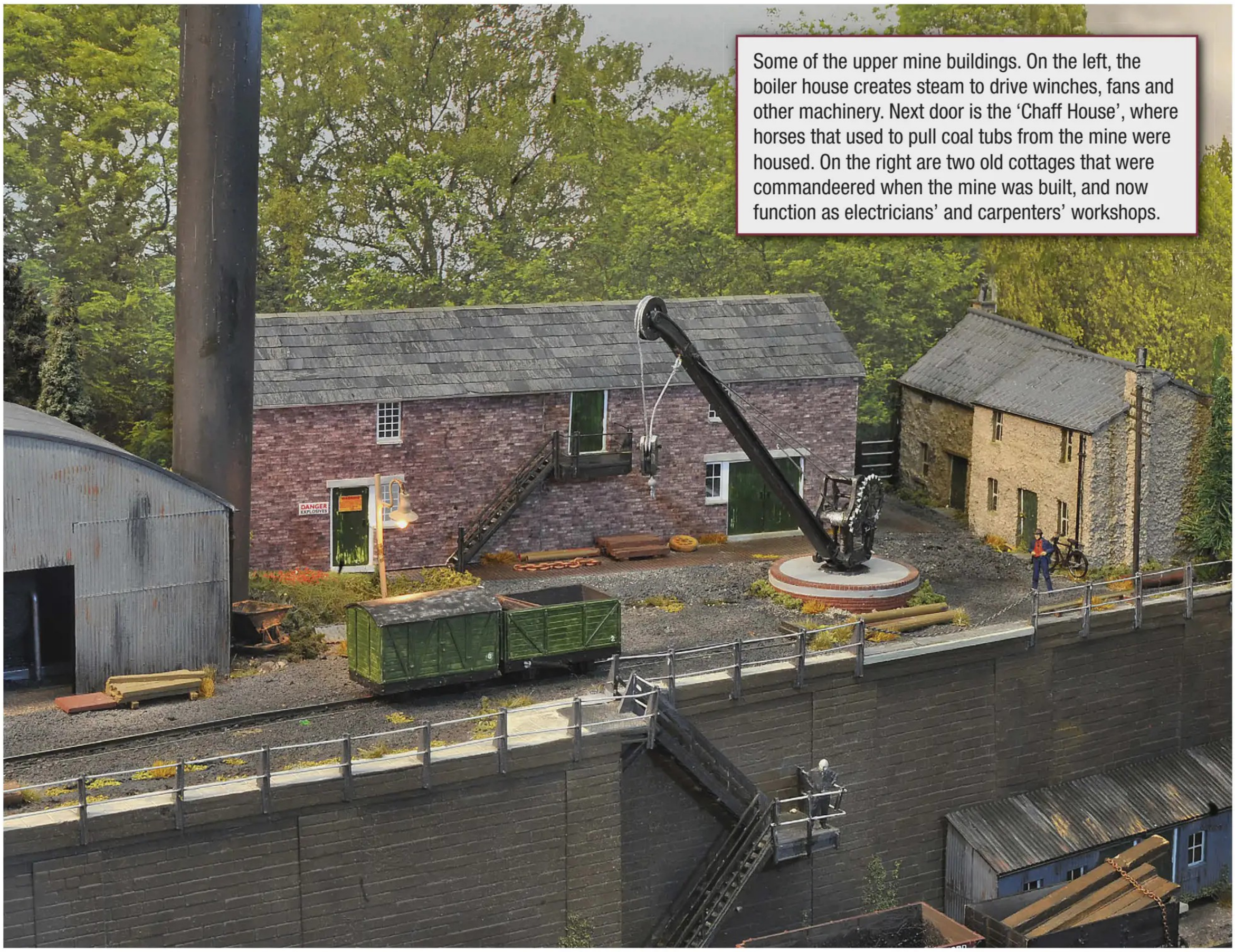
The trackwork is Peco Code 75, with live frog points and the frog polarity being switched by the point motors. DCC control is by two NCE Powercabs, and point motors by NCE Switch8 boards, which I rarely see used, but find excellent.





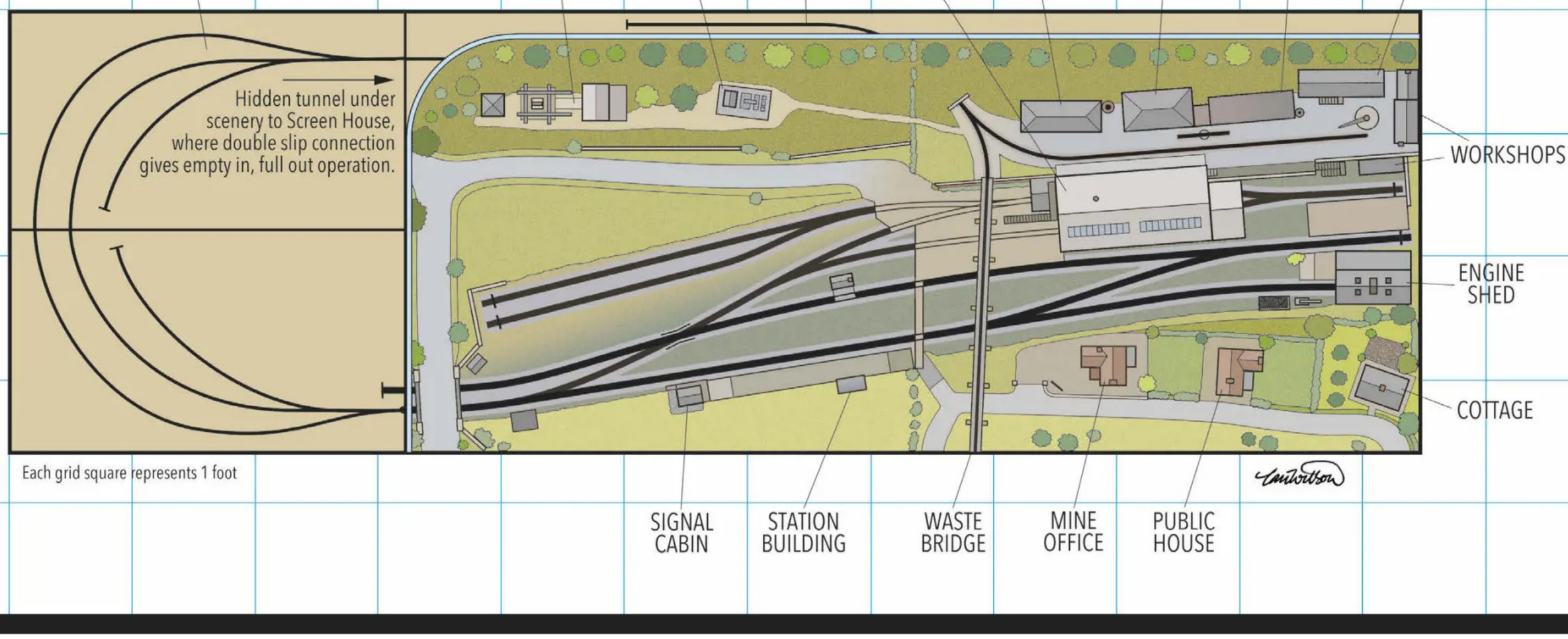
MIDDLE LEFT:
Pannier Tank No. 1627 has brought in a train of empties, run round and is about to detach the brake van. This will be parked at the far end, where there already seems to be one! There are under-rail magnets, which operate the Sprat & Winkle couplings – the grass tuft by the loco is a marker for one.

BOTTOM LEFT:
This view illustrates the difference in height between the upper level, where the full tubs are drawn out of the dipple (mine entrance), and the lower level, where the coal is sent down chutes into standard gauge wagons.



Some of the upper mine buildings. On the left, the boiler house creates steam to drive winches, fans and other machinery. Next door is the 'Chaff House', where horses that used to pull coal tubs from the mine were housed. On the right are two old cottages that were commandeered when the mine was built, and now function as electricians' and carpenters' workshops.

TRACKPLAN



I utilize the macro feature of the Powercabs to change the two double slip motors to set routes. The exhibition observer will see only one double slip, as the second is secreted inside the screens building. This enables us to exchange incoming empty coal wagons for full ones by a hidden tunnel under the scenery, running back to the fiddle yard and return loops. This is the duty of the rear operator; the front operator is in charge of arrivals and departures (and the occasional passenger train).

The rising scenery attempts to recreate a typical Forest valley, with scrubland, scree and trees (loads of trees!), and is built up with shaped layers of expanded foam, plaster bandage, and smoothing filler. Soil texture is created by gluing chinchilla dust down with PVA, before painting earth shades, and finally adding weeds and static grasses, bushes and trees. It's a slow process, but one I think is worthwhile. The buildings are an attempt to copy the style of structures seen in the Forest. A few are modified Petite Properties kits, but the screens building, waste bridge, engine shed, disused winding head and mine service buildings are all scratch-built. The narrow gauge line that brings full tubs out from the drift mine is a figment of my imagination, but adds movement that younger visitors love to see. The 009 loco is a detailed 3D print, bought at an exhibition, on a Kato tram chassis, and the wagons are modified and disguised N gauge items.





TOP LEFT: The Colliery office is a modified and detailed Petite Properties kit. In the yard is the Mine Manager's Armstrong Siddeley saloon car, while Mrs Jones hurries to the station to catch a train to Gloucester.

MIDDLE LEFT: 16xx Class Pannier Tank No. 1627 passes the diminutive signal box, watched by the signalman. No. 1627 was allocated to Gloucester's Horton Road shed in the early-1960s and was a regular visitor to the Forest of Dean area.

BELOW: The very infrequent passenger service arrives at Providence Halt, with its usual few passengers, pulled by 14xx Class 0-4-2 tank No. 1421 in typically filthy condition. This is a DJH model, and is not a great runner, so seldom gets a turn on the layout.

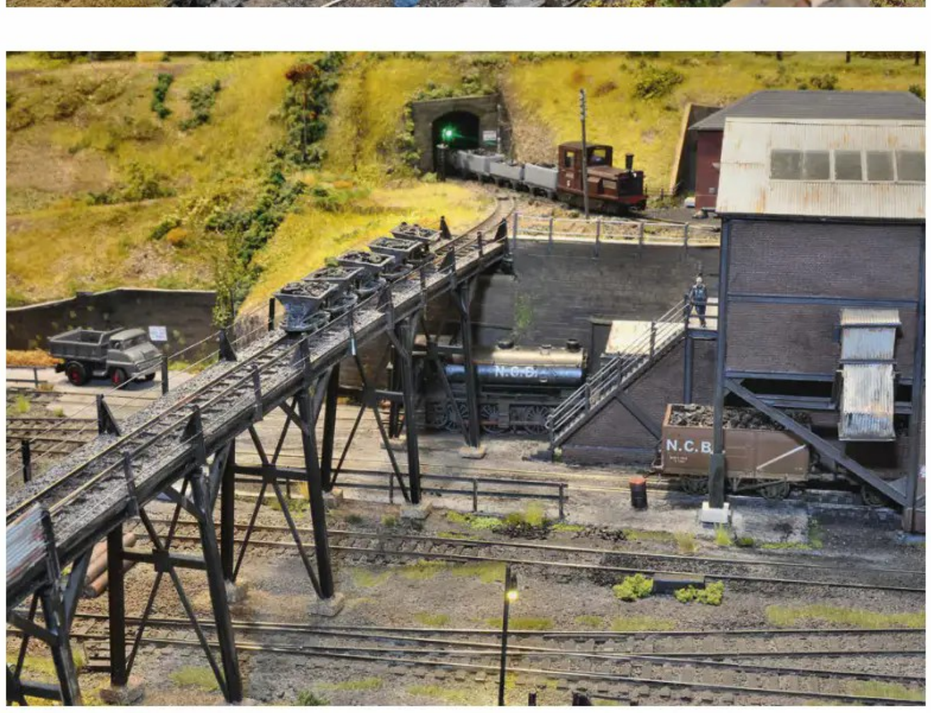
> "As we build layouts, our skill sets improve, our knowledge expands, and our ability to imagine what we want is honed."



57xx Class Pannier Tank No. 9734 brings (yet another) train of empties into the Colliery. All trackwork is Peco finescale, and the electrofrog points are switched by Tortoise stall motors. They also cope with frog switching.

MIDDLE RIGHT:
A close-up of the single road engine shed. This is modelled on the two-road shed at Lydney Junction, which closed in March 1964. The etched shed windows are by York Modelmaking.





BOTTOM RIGHT:
Newly dug coal emerges from the gale (the mine tunnel which follows the coal seam downward into the hillside). The narrow gauge line is a figment of my imagination; in reality, the coal tubs would have been drawn out by horses. The Fordson lorry arrives to collect a load of 'home sales' coal.

Rolling stock

The locomotives used are predominantly Bachmann pannier tanks and prairie tanks for 'main' line use, with an EFE J94 Austerity in NCB livery for shunting. A Hornby Peckett does the behind-the-scenes wagon shunting. Other locomotives from my collection sometimes make an appearance.

Rolling stock is a mixture of Bachmann, Hornby, Dapol, and various kit-built examples I've acquired or built over the years, all fitted with metal wheelsets. I'm primarily using Sprat & Winkle delayed-action couplings and under-rail magnets for hands-free shunting, and while the couplings are tricky to build and fit to every item of stock, they perform well but do need frequent checking and adjustment! The five-wagon rakes use West Hill Wagon Works magnetic couplings. All stock has been weathered to bear witness to a lifetime of misuse in the coal industry!

Operation follows a sequence based on empties in, fulls out, with the train engine barred from the screens area. An empties train will arrive and pass over the weighbridge, uncouple and reposition the brake van in the RH headshunt; the J94 will then propel the wagons under the screens, whereupon they will be drawn out as full ones and placed in the front screens road. The train engine will, having

been coaled and watered, collect the fulls and brake van, and disappear back 'down the valley'. There's often the opportunity to complicate matters by the arrival of a short goods train with supplies, pit props, ballast, etc., which has to be shunted, or a push-pull passenger train that stops at the short platform, awaits non-existent passengers, then departs.

Reflections

I've been building layouts on and off since I was about eight years old, including an attempt to recreate Chipping Norton station in the loft of a previous house. For 20 years, I've been building and operating a permanent OO gauge layout in my garage, which shares the control systems and stock with 'Providence Colliery'. Projects in the pipeline include a 4mm diorama of the Causey Arch in County Durham (built 1727), and a 1970s North East Coast layout using TT-120 HSTs!

As we build layouts, our skill sets improve, our knowledge expands, and our ability to imagine what we want is honed. I've viewed many, many layouts, both at exhibitions, friends' houses, the internet and in magazines and reference books. Each layout offers something to spark our imagination, sow a few seeds, and show us how good we too can be in our layout building. Thank you to all those builders I have encountered for your inspiration! ■





TOP LEFT:
Prairie Tank No. 4560 gets some much-needed coal and water, while 57xx Class Pannier Tank No. 9734 has arrived with a train of empties. The Feathers Public House (right) is popular with workers!

MIDDLE LEFT:
The EFE Models J94 tank is an excellent runner, ideally suited to the slow measured speeds we like to use when operating. Construction of the waste bridge is clear to be seen here - I used various sizes of microstrip I-beam and angles, building each leg on a template. The deck is two layers of MDF, which has assumed a prototypical curved profile!

> "The narrow gauge line that brings full tubs out from the drift mine is a figment of my imagination, but adds movement that younger visitors love to see."



There are a couple of storage sidings at the rear, where unused wagons get left. They are quite difficult to access, needing a clear road through the screens. If the operator is feeling playful, a train of vans will suddenly arrive, which will need to be shunted into these sidings, without affecting coal traffic. Oh, what fun we have!

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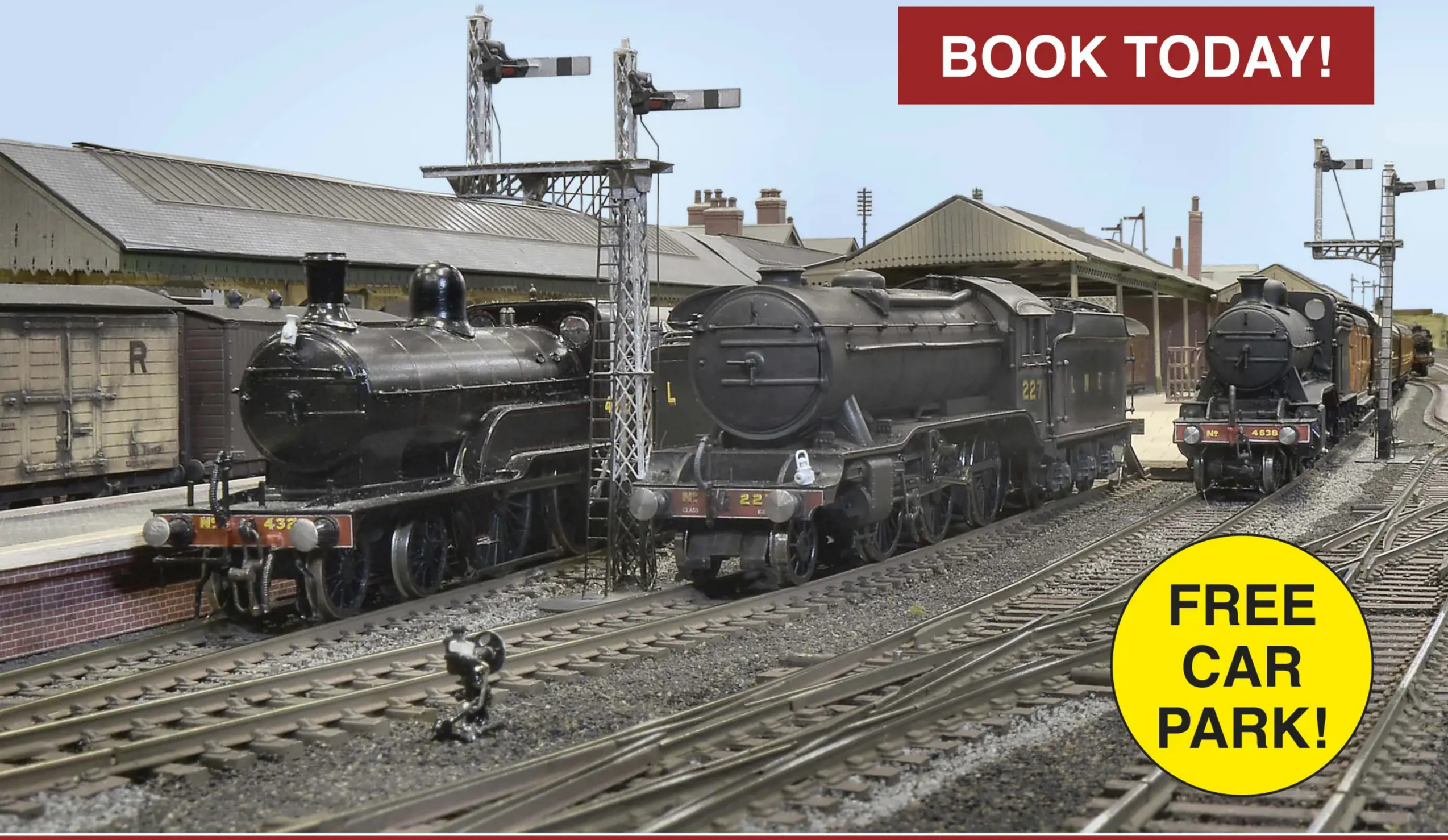

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Getting Practical with...

TOOL of the MONTH

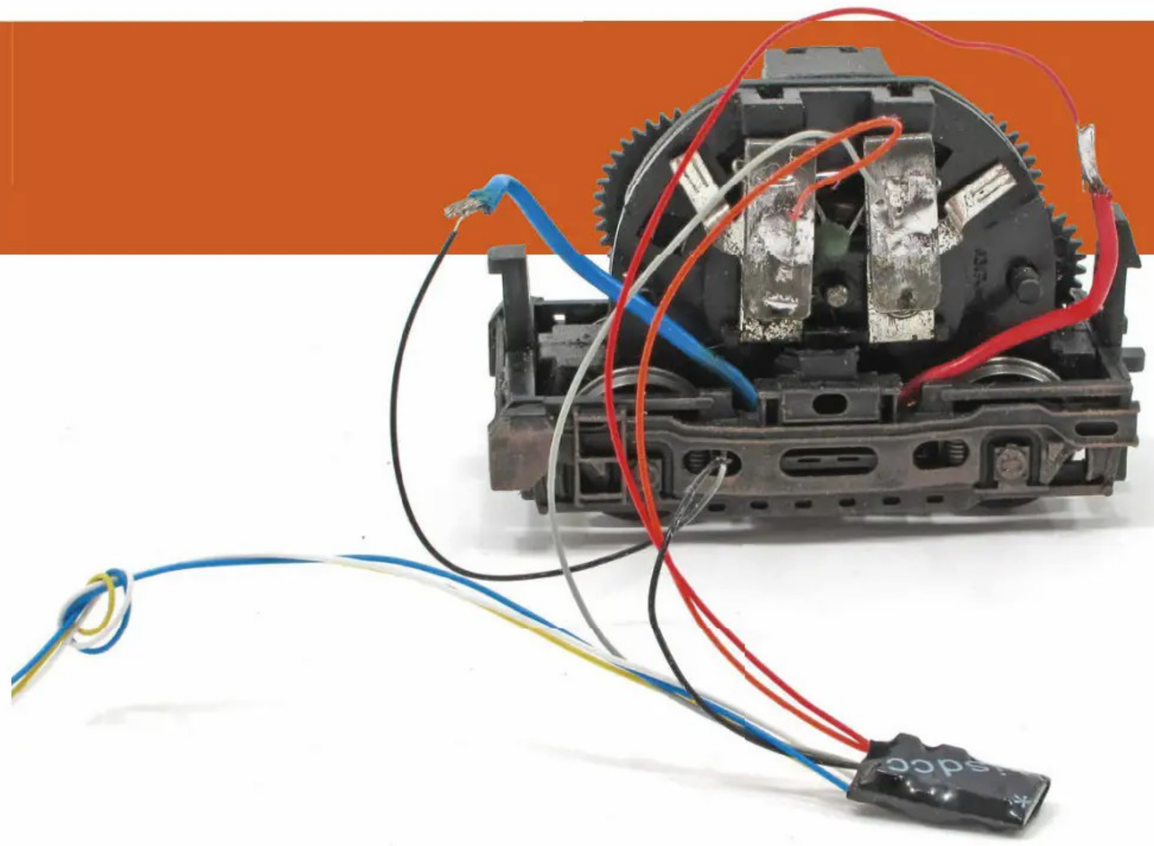


Got a practical question?
Get in touch. Email: BRM@warnersgroup.co.uk

Locomotive cradle

Model locomotives aren't cheap, so when they need attention, it makes sense to pop them in some sort of cradle rather than trying to balance your precious model upside down on the bench. My preference has always been for the Peco PL-70 Servicing Cradle. It's made of foam, with a slot wide enough for a 4mm scale loco, and inserts are provided for TT and N gauge models. Carefully ease the sides apart when putting the model in. We don't want to damage any detail, but once in, I find they hold well enough for wheel cleaning and poking around in the chassis.

Ask Phil



Can I convert a DCC loco to DC?

Yes. For most locos, it's as simple as unplugging the chip and replacing it with an appropriate blanking plate. Older models can have the chip hard-wired in, so you'll need to identify the connections to the pick-ups (red and black in the photo) and the connections to the motor (grey and orange). Cut those wires, then connect one pick-up to one side of the motor, repeat for the other, and you should be good for 12v power.

New on the workbench

TT:120 SR huts – Malcs Models



More products for this rapidly growing scale, this time classic Southern lineside buildings from Malcs Models' Scale Model Innovations range of resin 3D-printed items. We have the concrete hut, tool shed and ballast bins to show you here. Each is supplied on its printing supports, but these break away easily, and then the modeller just has to give them a coat of suitable paint – Precision Paints P958, Weathered Concrete is a colour that should be in any Southern modeller's toolkit.
More details from: **www.malcsmodels.co.uk**


Chris Mead


Michael Russell


Chris Ford


Steven Draper


Tony Wright


Phil Parker

Build a OO gauge Garden Shed

If you've never built a laser-cut wood kit, this little shed from Commodore Studio (**www.commodore-studio.co.uk**) is the perfect starter. Four models for six quid means that even if you mess one up, it's not a problem. Mind you, sheds aren't always perfect, so can you really go wrong?



1 Release the parts from the fret with a sharp knife, and then lightly sand all the edges with an abrasive stick. On some kits, this is needed to remove burn marks from the cutting, but there aren't any to worry about here, so just ensure a smooth edge.



2 While this glue might say it's for cardboard, it works just as well on thin wood, quickly making all the joints. I like to brace them with little bits of card; these are leftovers from a Metcalfe Models kit, no point in letting them go to waste!



3 The castellated corners lock together well, but stick out beyond the ends. Some sheds have this feature, but most don't, so with the roof in place to add strength to the model, I sanded the excess away.



4 A piece of thin card is provided for the roofing felt, and then the model is finished off with some suitable paint. In my mind, sheds are green, so I used up a little Cherry Paints Blackpool green that I had kicking around.



Create a Camping and Bonfire scene



Chris Mead

GIVEN THE improvements and advances in micro-electronics, a number of companies now produce a wide range of accessories incorporating working light features. Most come ready to work out of the box once connected to a suitable power source. One such example is the OO scale camp bonfire from LittleWorldWorkshop (**littleworldworkshop.co.uk**). So, I set about seeing if I could create a scene with this at its centre.

WHAT YOU NEED

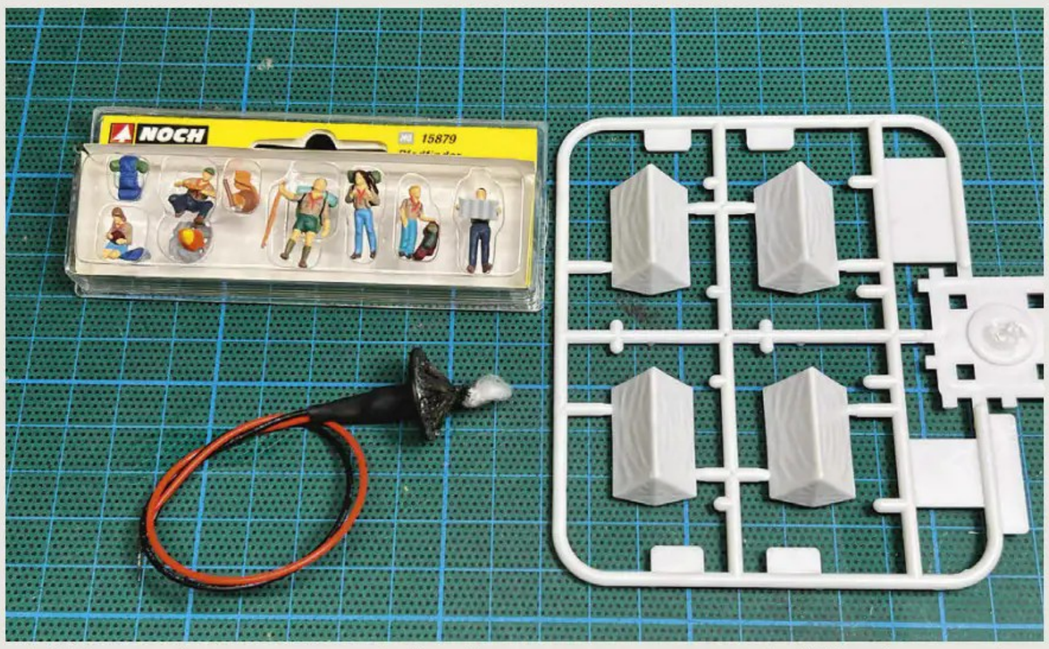
Faller
Tents

Littleworld Workshop
Flickering bonfire

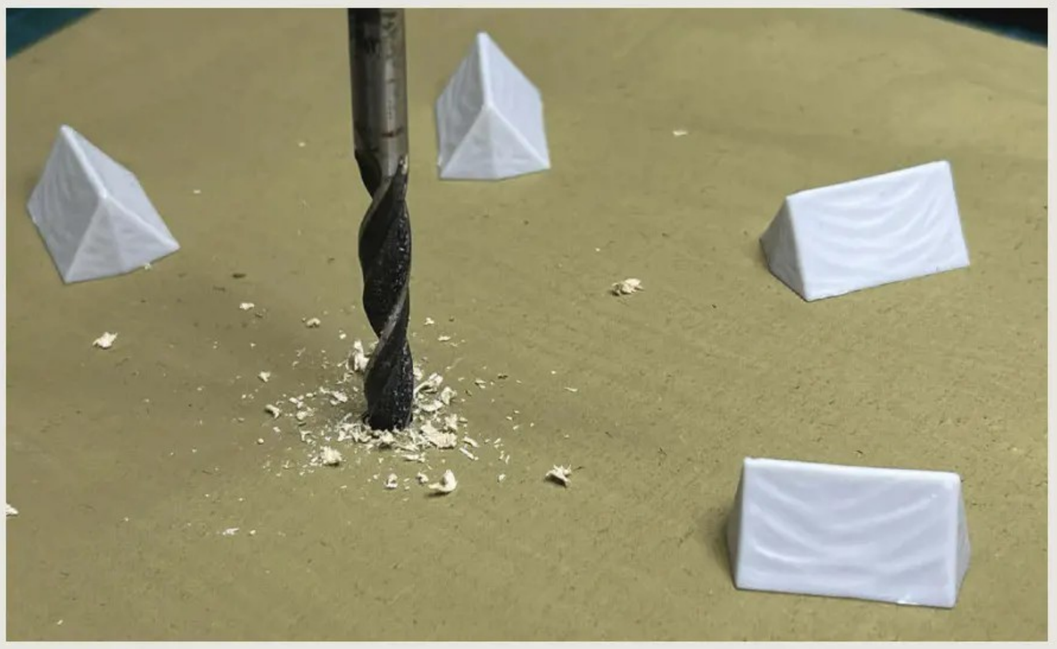
Noch
Campers set

Other
6.5mm and 19mm drills, static grass applicator, modelling knife, steel rule, assorted files and brushes, superglue, static grass adhesive, 50/50 water/PVA glue mix, on/off button switch, red and black electrical wire, quick release connectors, 9v battery and holder, Velcro, cotton thread, sprigs of seafoam, polyester fibre, static grass and foliage material

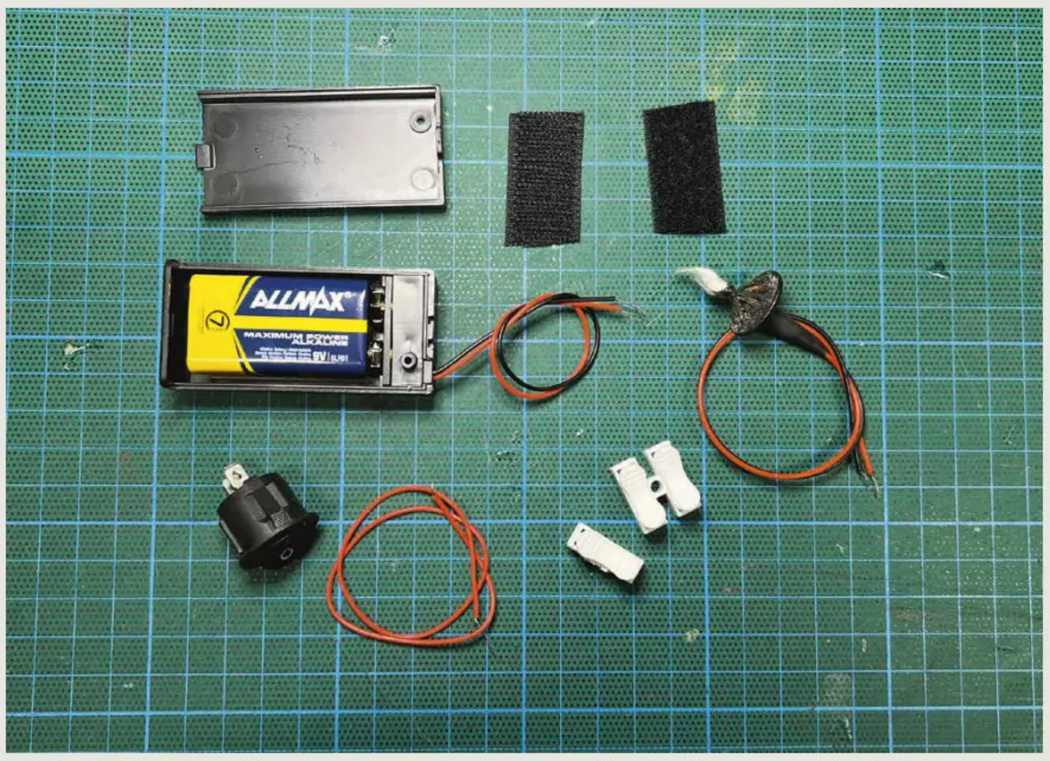
www.xsava.xyz



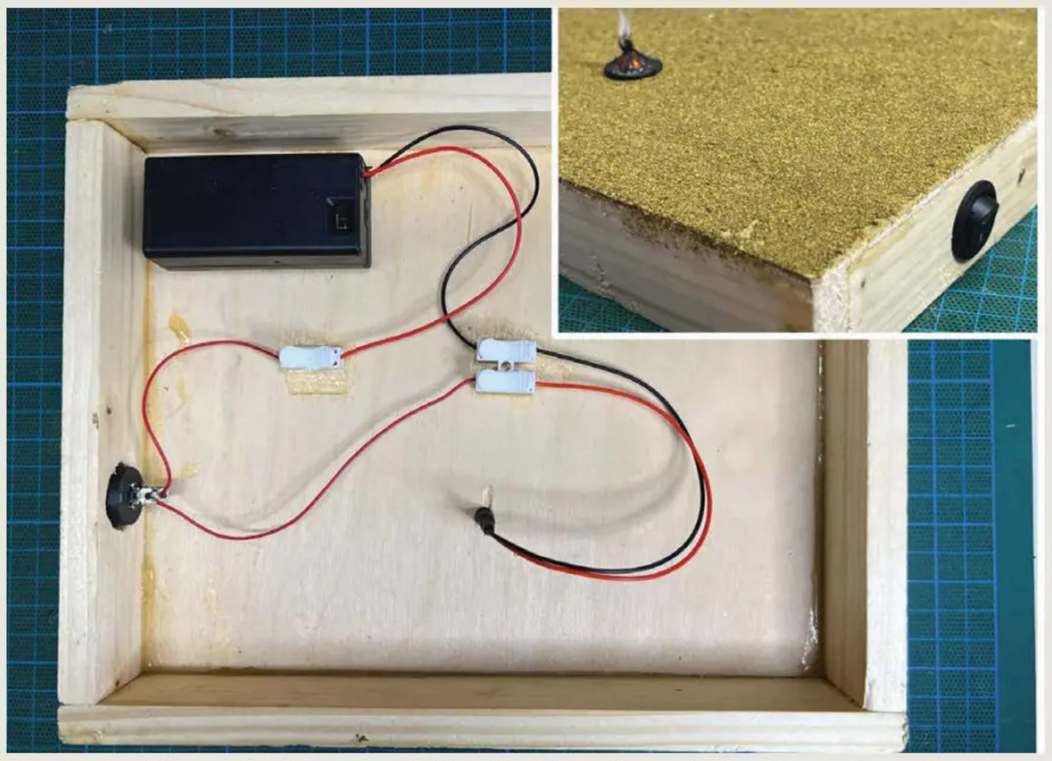
1 The main components for the scene were a set of Noch camping figures, a pack of tents from Faller, and the bonfire itself. It has a flickering effect LED and comes with a resistor built in, which means it just needs connecting to a suitable 6v-9v DC power source.



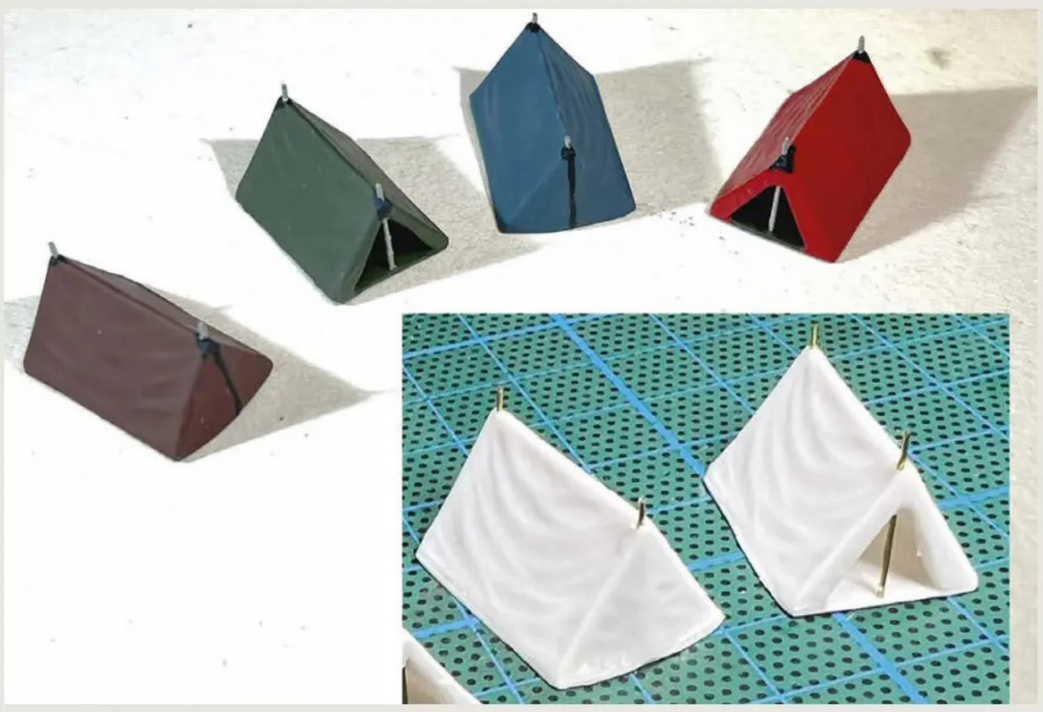
2 The camping scene is set on a 200mm x 250mm base with the fire as the focal point. Using the tents placed in a semi-circle as a guide for the position of the fire, I then drilled a 6.5mm hole in the centre.



3 The circuit components were a 9v battery and holder, 30mm of Velcro attached to the body, an On/Off button switch, three quick-release connector electrical blocks, and two pieces of wire soldered to the switch terminals. The Velcro and quick-release connectors made replacing the battery easier, as well as checking out the fire before it was finally glued in place.



4 A 19mm hole was drilled in the side of the base for the switch, with a small groove filed into it at the 3 o'clock position to match a tab on the switch, which oriented the body. The connectors were glued in place and everything wired up, with the positive wire routed through the switch with its wires cut to length to suit the locations of the connector blocks.



5 Openings were cut into two of the Faller plastic tents, and a 20 thou plastic base added to all. Holes drilled at each end of the ridge took pieces of .4mm brass wire for the tent poles. They were then painted a suitable colour with black to highlight the zips and reinforcement for the poles.



6 Long static grass was applied after masking off the area around the fire. This was covered with dried coffee grounds for the surrounding burnt soil and ash. The tents were glued around the camp fire and the local area rubbed down to give a trampled look. Thread attached to the tent poles for the guy ropes was pulled taut through small holes in the base before being secured with superglue.

Getting Practical



7 The camp is located in a clearing with trees made from seafoam covered in a selection of foliage and scatter materials. The dried plants were first sprayed with khaki drab for a more lifelike bark colour (sleeper grime is another good option). After that, with this method, it took less than 30 seconds to make each tree!



8 The seafoam was dipped in a container of PVA, watered-down to about the consistency of single cream (large yogurt cartons work well). After shaking the trees over an old bucket to get rid of the excess, they were liberally sprinkled with flock powders over a large bowl to recycle the excess, then stuck upright in an expanded polystyrene block and allowed to dry.



9 The trees can be used complete, or parts broken down to create small bushes and hedges. For this, I used them whole and pushed them through holes drilled randomly in the rear left-hand corner of the board. They were then fixed in place with superglue, and the excess beneath the board cut off.



10 To the right, I wanted a single, large, dark bush-like tree. For this, I used a fist-sized piece of polyester fibre, again given a coating of khaki drab and generously covered with the darkest green foliage material I had. However, this time I used static grass spray adhesive rather than the PVA which the polyester, would have soaked up like a sponge.



11 The bonfire was permanently glued in place, wired up and tested. Half a dozen small twigs of about 4-6mm diameter from the garden were snapped roughly to length and placed around the fire area. Lastly, the Noch campers were set around the scene, along with a pile of even smaller twigs to feed the fire.



12 The main purpose of the exercise was to see how easy it is to incorporate working light features into a scene. It does seem a lot simpler these days, especially with products incorporating the resistors needed to protect the LEDs from the full power that even a small battery provides.

ALL SKILL LEVELS

Building a Lineside Hut



Michael Russell

THIS KIT builds two lineside huts that are useful additions to any model railway. They are laser-cut from wood, so they fit together very accurately. The wood gives a realistic finish and the double-walled construction makes them surprisingly strong. This model is in TT gauge, but the methods outlined here could be applied to any gauge model.

This is a delightful kit to build, going together without any issues and producing a realistic result. A little bit of weathering would enhance the model even more.

WHAT YOU NEED

Peco
LK-12110 TT:120 Lineside Hut

Other
Teak ink/wood dye, Indian ink, PVA wood glue, red aerosol primer, PLA filament, cardboard, white paper, small paint brushes, craft knife, steel rule, small clamps, 3D printer (optional)

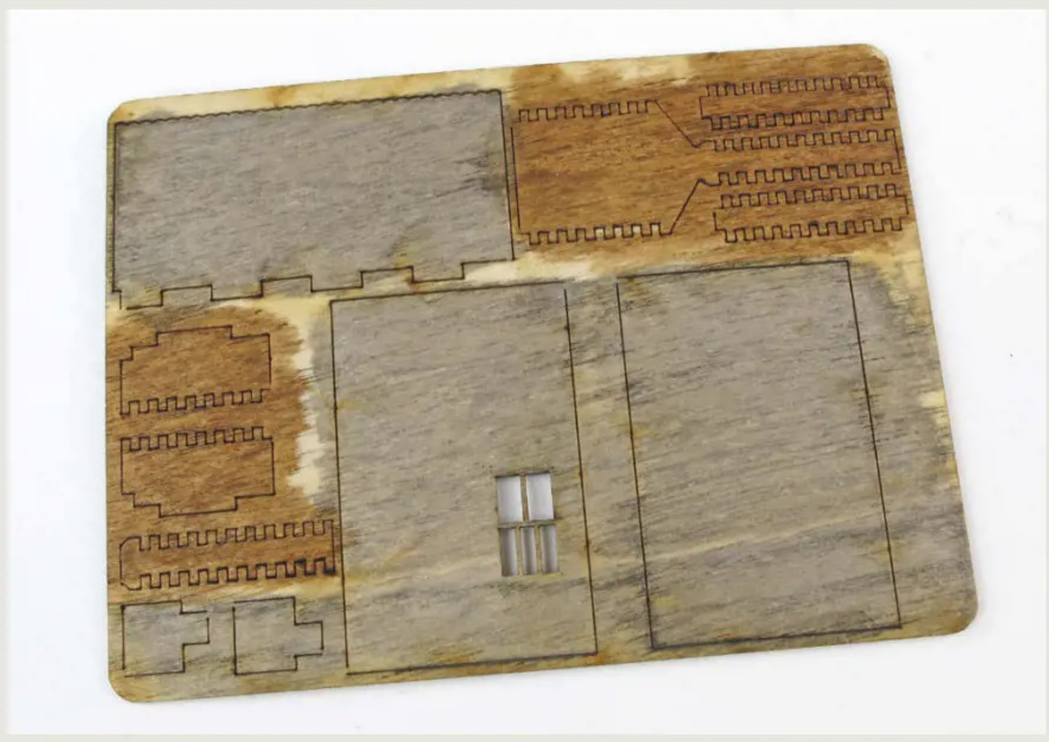
Getting Practical



1 Unpack the kit and take time to familiarise yourself with the parts and to read the instructions. Put the clear plastic sheets for the windows back in the carton so that they don't get scratched.



2 Pre-paint the parts with something that won't clog the natural wood effect, such as ink or wood dye. I used the former, with a very dilute Indian Ink wash for the sides and roof, and teak for the brick sections.



3 Paint both sides of each part at the same time with a small brush. You may have to rework each section several times until the wood draws up the mixture. Leave to dry completely before continuing.



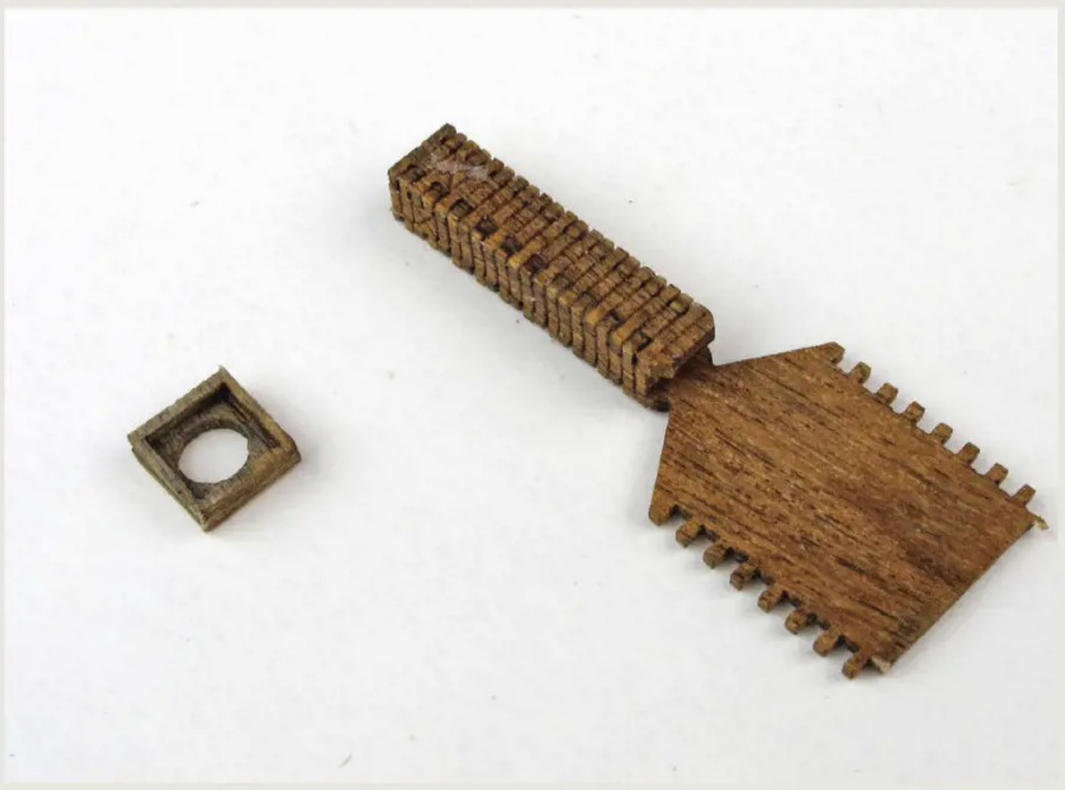
4 Build the internal walls first and note that the tabs ensure that you can't really fit the parts incorrectly, but it is important to have a dry run before adding any glue.



5 To ensure that you achieve maximum strength, be sure to spread an even layer of glue across all the mating surfaces and to clamp until the glue has formed an initial bond, which can be as little as 10 minutes for modern PVA.



6 Before adding the outer walls, measure the two window apertures and cut the glazing material to fit into the inside of the wall spaces. Don't fit them until the end, though, and use PVA.



7 While you are waiting for the outer walls to set, assemble the upper section of the chimney and the trim that fits at the top. The chimney pot can be painted with enamel paint or sprayed with a red primer aerosol.



8 Clamping the roof in place is tricky, so I 3D-printed some wedges in PLA that I designed in Tinkercad. They only took 10 minutes to print out as you can use a fast speed and lower quality settings. The roof angle is 104°.



9 Add a strip of cardboard to the wall where the chimney will go to clear the roof overhang and achieve a stronger joint. Add a strip of paper to the roof apex to hide the roof piece tabs and colour with dilute Indian ink.



10 I built one of the huts as a garden shed, omitting the brick chimney section. I plugged the holes in the back wall with pieces cut from the kit runners to resemble the mounting points for a dismantled shed extension.

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Good Running on 'Little Bytham'

LEAD IMAGE: A scene illustrating the northern throat of Bytham's main fiddle yard. 20 through roads, plus associated kick-back sidings, all expected to run 'perfectly', but only because 'proper' procedures have been followed. Poor running is anathema to model railway enjoyment, regardless of the scale/gauge one works in.



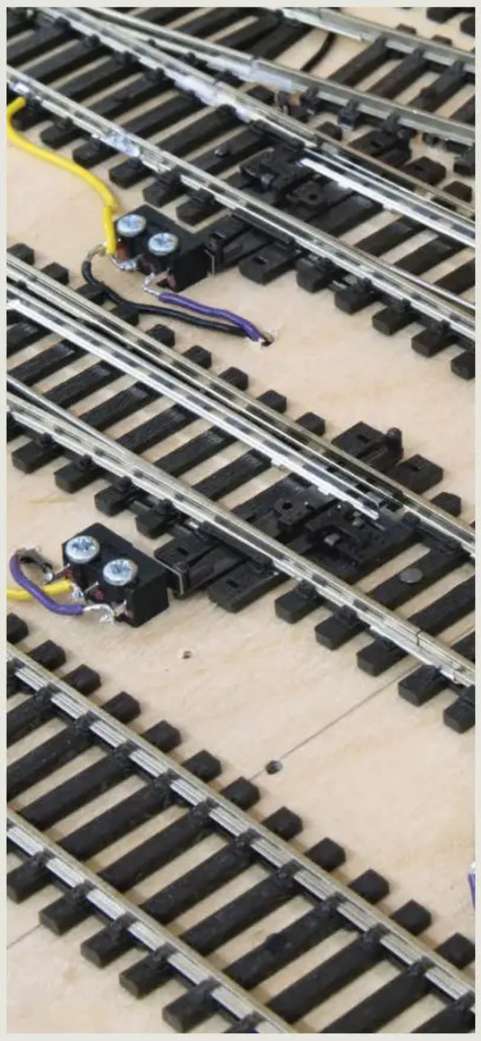
Tony Wright

I'M WRITING this in response to a question/request from a correspondent to BRM, who, having seen many videos I've made of my ECML trainset, wondered how the good running was accomplished. It must first be made crystal clear that good running of any kind – fast/slow/starting/stopping/shunting - on 'Little Bytham' could not have been achieved without the skill and expertise of the team which built it. I'm proud to be part of that team, largely responsible for motive power and passenger rolling stock, along with fiddle yard track-laying and a fair bit of wiring, but my contributions count for nought without the prowess of the rest of the creators.

Much of what I'm presenting has been seen before, but not overall in this context, so I hope readers will forgive a little duplication. Most is fundamentally good practice; good practice which has been practised by many who've 'influenced' me in the past; 'influencers' who've done the hard yards, with years of experience and are (or were until their deaths) expert writers, though none of them was adept at wielding a video camera! I think the best approach by way of explanation might be via a series of photographs with (in part) extended captions.



These are Bytham's main baseboards. We start with first principles, if I may? No matter how well trackwork is made/laid, or how good the wiring, no good running will ever be achieved if the layout baseboards are poor. My experience leads me to recommend a minimum of 9mm birch ply of the best quality for all baseboard frames and tops, preferably of open-top construction (the actual world is rarely flat). Softwood legs are OK, but as frames to support a baseboard, I wouldn't recommend them, and certainly not MDF for load-bearing surfaces. Of course, it helps if the person who builds the baseboards is a retired carpentry lecturer!



Bytham's fiddle yard trackwork is all Peco Streamline, Code 100 (not the older Peco Code 100 'Universal' track system, which, in my experience, was 'universally' bad, but the later sort with tighter tolerances on the crossings). The system is robust and reliable, and all the pointwork is live-frog. A modification I've made to this pointwork is to completely isolate the frog, setting the correct polarity via micro-switches, meaning the respective switch rails are permanently bonded to their stock rails – never rely on a switch rail to pass electrical current from the stock rail just by contact. Another important point is to never rely entirely on fishplates to pass electricity. Each section of rail must have its own feed, either by droppers attached to a bus or by a solid link bypassing the fishplates.



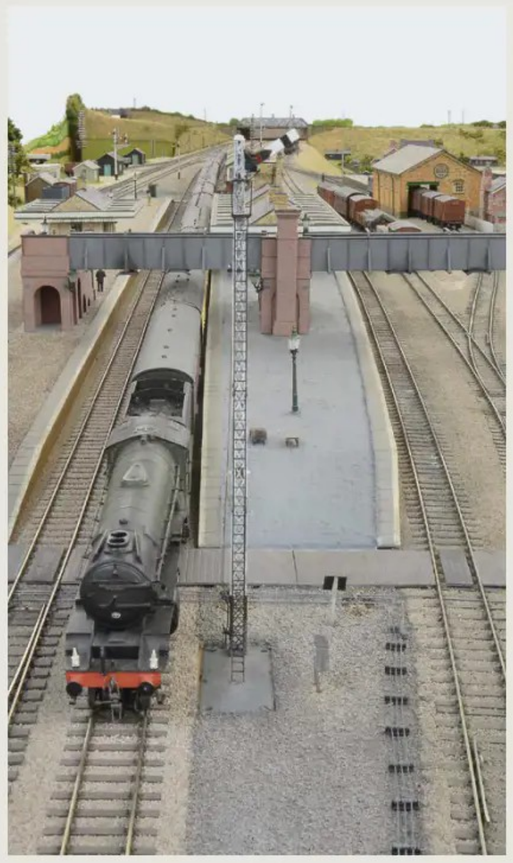
I know it's hard to believe, but I've seen examples of disastrous running on layouts where (because of no pre-planning with regard to laying the track) adjacent locos/stock actually collide with each other in passing. Because we have much tighter curves in scale than the full-sized railway, our clearances between adjacent roads on those curves have to be wider than scale. The trick is to employ the longest vehicles with the greatest overhang on one road and the longest vehicles with the greatest throw-over on the adjacent one (in this case, a Pullman car and the Thompson A1/1). If they don't collide, then everything else will pass unscathed.



Obviously dependent on space, always use the largest radius proprietary points available. And, when laying track, try to achieve transitional curves where straight track meets curved track or where reverse curves are present. Under no circumstances try to cram too much track into a given space, otherwise running is compromised.



Where possible (though impossible on most model railways), try to make the approaches to facing points as near straight as one can, or employ the greatest radius available. Not only that, when roads come off, make sure that those roads separate so as to have no more than four routes coming off a particular point after the 'king' point.



I've spoken about adjacent track clearances, but platform clearances (where present) are vital, too. Because of the inherent 'sloppiness' of OO, the scale dynamics of our locos and rolling stock mean that they can have a tendency to 'waddle' from side to side (this is more prevalent in RTR locos than kit-built ones because they're made to negotiate 'Set-track' radius curves). This means that the distance between a platform edge and a passing train has to be slightly wider than scale. Many are the times where platforms have to have their edges shaved away because passing stock hits them!

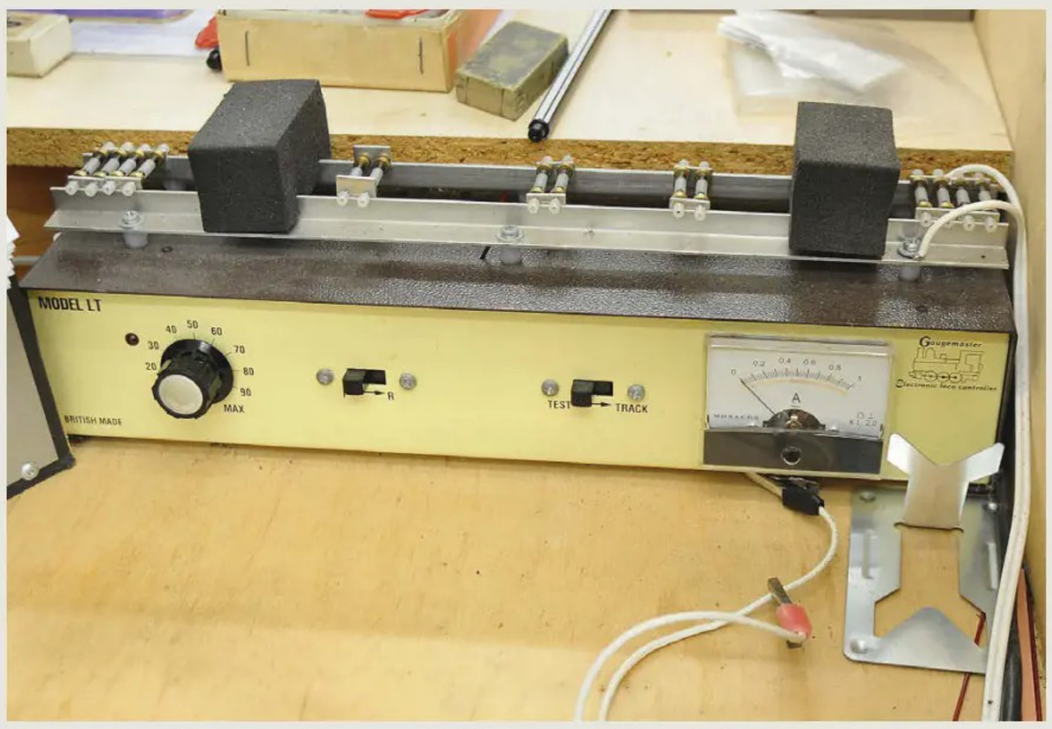
Getting Practical



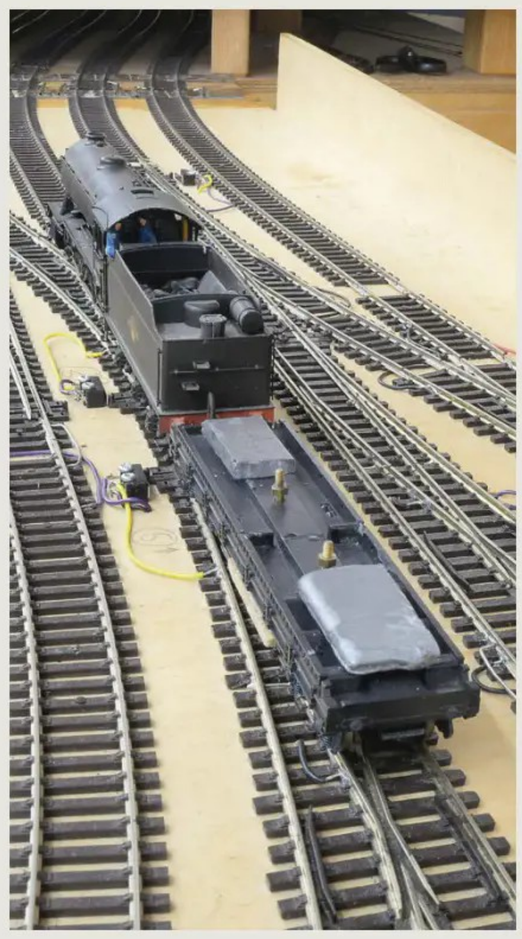
A bespoke control panel, well-made and reliable, is essential if trouble-free operation is to be achieved. Since I'll never use DCC, Bytham's is configured for what is called 'cab control', meaning that any section can be switched to any of the four principal control boxes, ensuring that if one should ever fail, there are others to take over.



One is assured of good running if the scenic-side trackwork has been made/laid by the best in the business – in this case, Norman Solomon. However, it'll only assure good running if the stock is made to the highest standards of performance. Personal stock always seems to be the most jealously guarded, owners frequently altering trackwork when their creations derail and fall over!



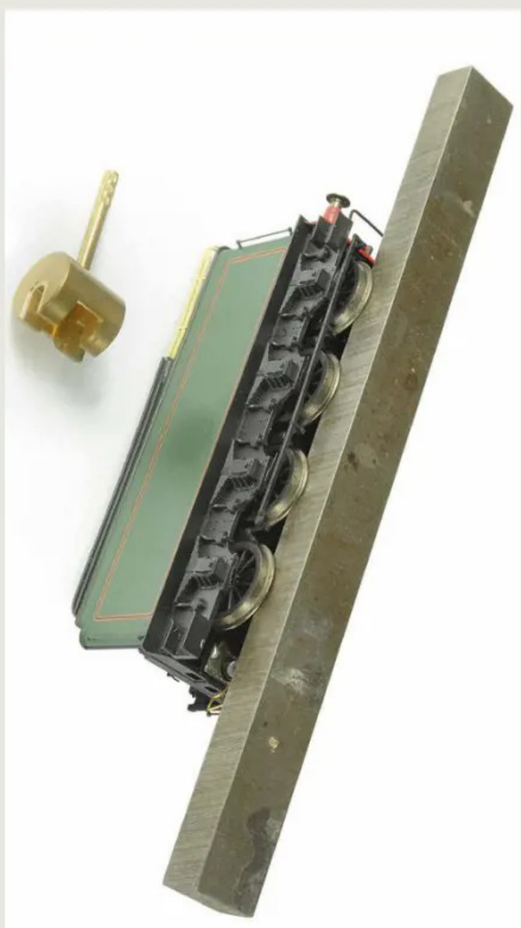
No matter how well a model locomotive might be made, there are occasions when it'll need some attention/cleaning/adjustment/oiling. A test rig (such as this one made by Gaugemaster) should always be present and ready to check such things.



I've found that regular running of a layout tends to keep the track clean. However, I've found it wise to employ this 'track keeping clean' wagon on an equally regular basis (used at least once a month). It won't clean dirty track, but, in the main, it'll prevent it getting dirty. Made by friend, Ray Chessum, it's an old Lima bogie wagon with added weight, with a pad of hardboard (rough side down) rubbing the rails. A track rubber is one supplied by The OO Gauge Association. On occasions, actual hand track cleaning on certain sections is required. In which case, as well as the OO rubber, I use a Garriflex abrasive block (the finest grit), cut into smaller pieces using a razor saw.



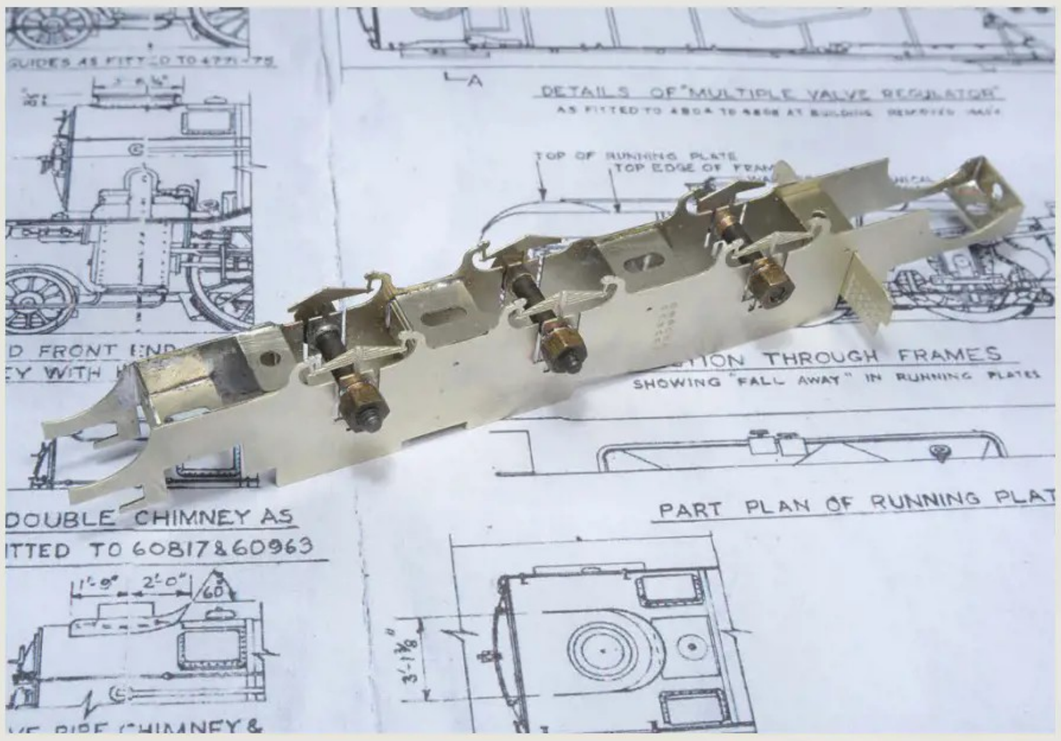
Another way of helping to keep trackwork clean is this delightful little clip-on device made by Noch, available from Gaugemaster. It consists of a felt pad attached to an axle (any 4mm standard gauge), which just rubs along the tops of the rails as the vehicle moves. No cleaning fluid is necessary, as its main job is to remove dust. Four individual brake vans are fitted with these – each one running on the four principal circuits and respective loops/sidings.



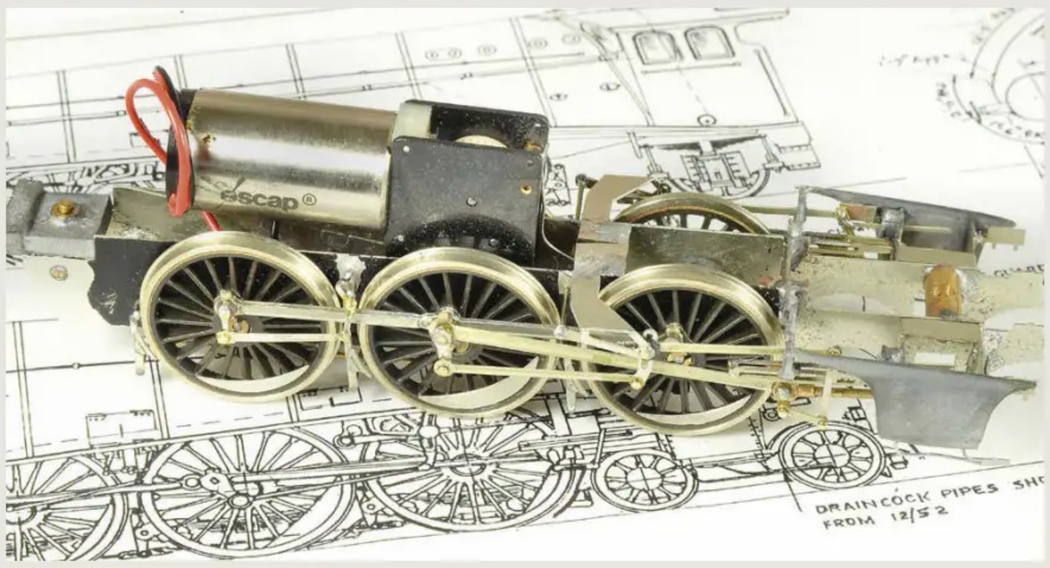
No matter how well any trackwork is kept clean, it will all come to nought if there is insufficient compatibility between that track and the stock over which it runs. Here's where back-to-back gauges are vital. The left-hand example is a single-axle one made by Markits (sadly, it would seem, now unavailable). The large one is milled from mild steel by an engineering friend in Wolverhampton (once a home of all forms of engineering). It's checking the back-to-backs of a Hornby A3 tender I'm repairing. Its great advantage is that it can check many axles at the same time, testing to see that all are parallel. Believe me, I've seen rolling stock where, even though each axle has the correct back-to-back, the frames look like a parallelogram!



As is well known, I prefer to build my own locomotives, but that's only going to work if the chassis are accurately built at source. A way to ensure this is to use a jig (I always make my loco chassis rigid), in this case by Poppyswood, seen here being used to erect a South Eastern Finecast A4 chassis.



For over 50 years, I've built loco chassis using a Jamieson jig, seen here in use assembling a Comet V2 set of frames. No longer available (EAMES closed down decades ago), the jig can still be obtained second-hand on sources such as eBay. Similar jigs can be obtained from Comet, or jig-axles from London Road Models.



No matter how square a chassis might be, it's useless if its motor isn't powerful enough. Here's that SEF A4 chassis, powered by a big Portescap (Bytham's trains can be very heavy!). Long having been accepted as the 'Rolls-Royce' of drives, they're no longer available new, though they seem to be readily obtainable second-hand (at often high prices!). Other drives I'd recommend are High-Level, DJH, Comet and Branchlines.



Even with a good-running chassis and with live-frog points/crossings all round, it can be advantageous to install tender pick-ups on some locomotives. These are simply illustrated here on a K4 I scratch-built 44 years ago. Made from .45mm nickel silver wire, they're simple and effective. Please note another point – all-metal wheels. One will never get 'clean' running if plastic wheels are used.



Where tender-pick-ups are not employed, then all driving wheels should have pick-ups - this example is 'live-to-one-side' on this DJH Austerity. Because the frames are live, then pick-up wipers should be insulated, in this case by small-bore PVC tubing. 'Twitchy' running can often be attributed to intermittent shorts on live chassis. If one is not sure, run your locos in the dark and you'll soon see where the sparks are coming from!



With all the above taken on board and put into practice, one should enjoy trouble-free running; at slow speed, or, as here, at high speed as this DJH Britannia nears 'the ton' on 'Little Bytham'.
If you would like to see more on 'Little Bytham', why not visit ***www.world-of-railways.co.uk*** *for video and practicals featuring Tony Wright and this amazing layout.*



Build a Wills Signal Box



Chris Ford

A WHILE ago, I was warned off this kit - 'Tricky to build'. Oh well, I like a challenge. The first impressions were good; standard Wills kit fare. What surprised me was the issue date. I thought of this as fairly recent, but oh how time flies, the date on the exploded diagram is 1986, just kissing 40 years ago.

Most of the Wills SS range is very much generic, though not in a cartoon way. They are all based closely on prototype practice and have a good deal of realism about them. A couple of the kits have long been favourites of mine, mostly because of their adaptability, and this is no different. It's not a Saxby and Farmer box, but it certainly looks like one, by catching all the innate characteristics without being a slavish copy. The real things were used all over the UK (and abroad) by many railway companies, so will fit just about anywhere. The kit works perfectly well straight out of the packet, though I've made some minor adjustments to lift it slightly. I also went the full bodge for the interior; the more pedantic would add one of the commercial interior detail packs.

Despite the dire warning, the kit goes together very well. The couple of tweaks and the pre-painting is worth trying and, in fact, I hardly looked at the instructions.

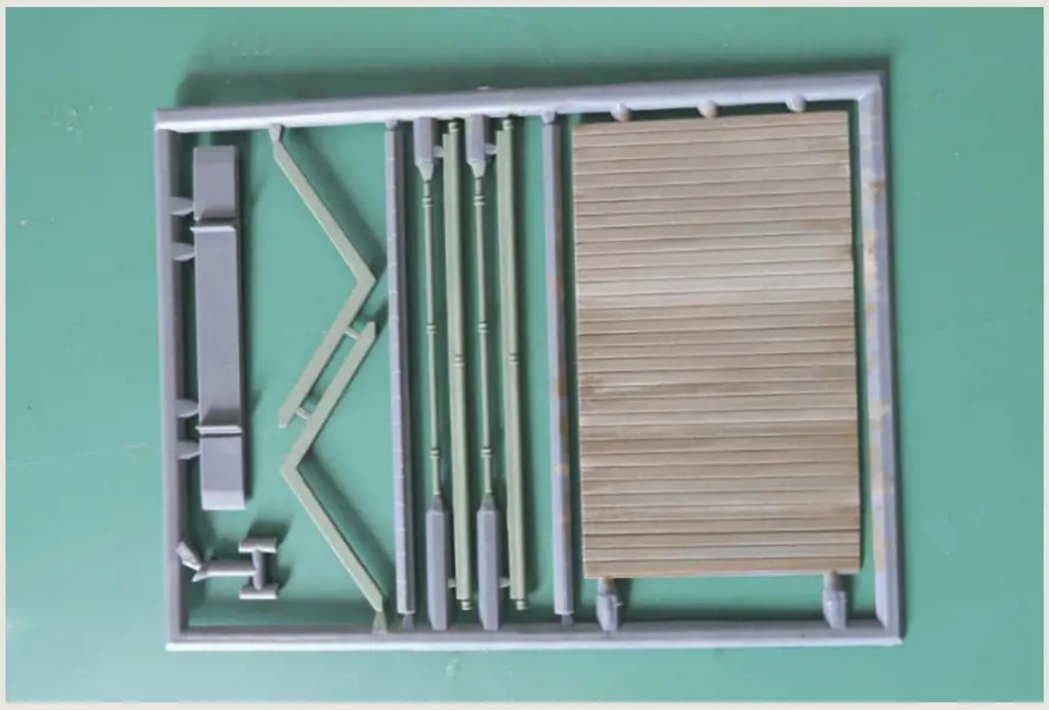
WHAT YOU NEED

Humbrol
29 Earth
64 Pale Grey
78 Faded SR Green

Peco
Track pins

Wills
SS48 signal box kit

Other
1mm diameter plastic rod, scrap plastic, craft knife or scalpel, sanding stick, files, solvent, superglue, Polystyrene cement, Wraithbone (cream) paint from the Games Workshop Citadel range.



1 Much of the initial work could be described as pre-painting. Here, the floor has been coloured with Humbrol 29 Earth with a streaky wash of 64 Pale Grey. The bargeboards, gutters and downpipes have been painted Faded SR Green, Humbrol 78.



2 Many of the Wills kits can be lifted slightly just by adding door knobs. This creates a slight shadow and relief. The 'pop marks' on these doors were simply drilled with a 0.8mm bit and a Peco track pin super-glued in and trimmed flush at the back.



3 One of the options with this kit is to block out the front interlocking room windows with supplied blanking pieces. These needed an amount of fettling to get even a half-reasonable fit.



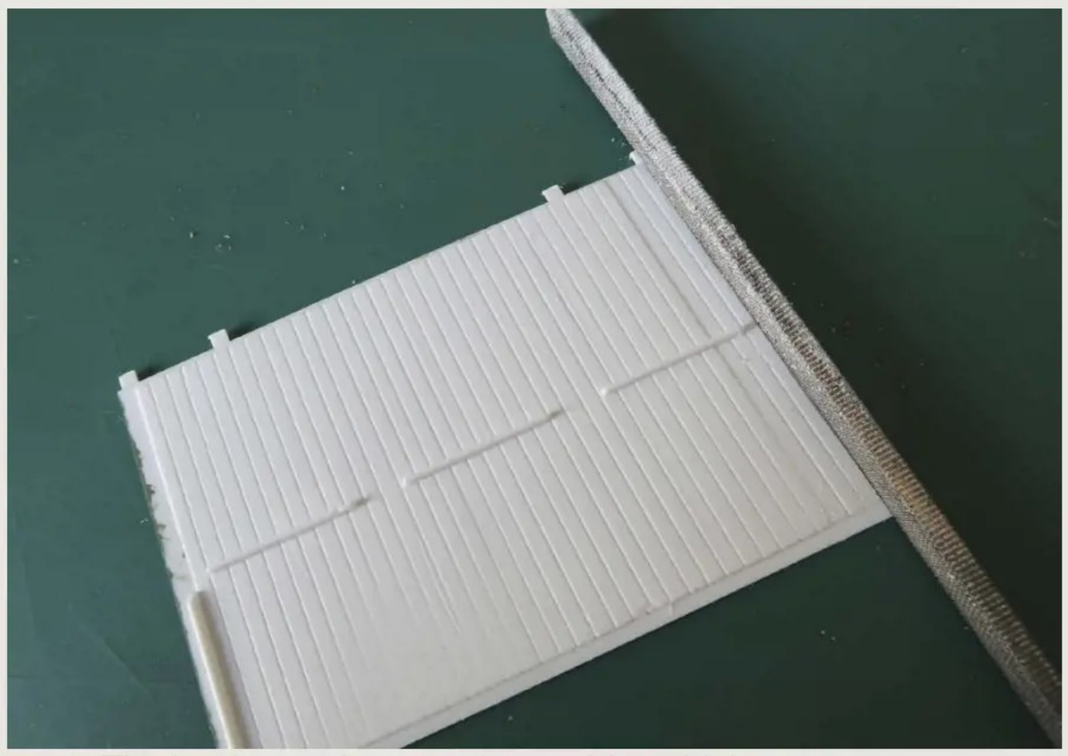
4 The pre-painting continued with all the framing and boarding: the former in Humbrol 78, the latter in Wraithbone (cream) from the Games Workshop Citadel range.



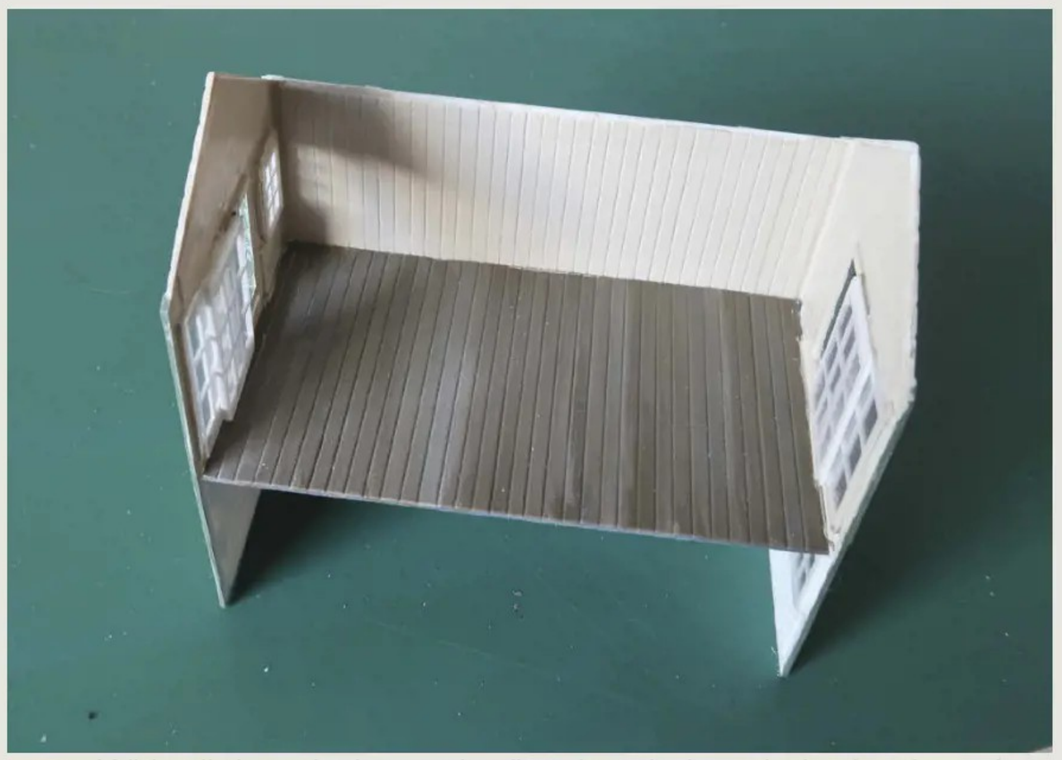
5 The window units are too wide, especially if they are to be fixed in an open position. The side frames were reduced by first taking a slice off with a craft knife, followed by finishing with a sanding stick.



6 All the windows had been given a waft of rattle can white primer while still on the sprue. The sliding window units were fixed on the raised ledges, here showing why the frame reduction is needed and also the dodgy fit to the lower blanking panels.



7 The back panel seemed too wide, which gave a pronounced overhang when sized up against the side section. A millimetre or so was filed off to remedy this, checking with the side as I went.



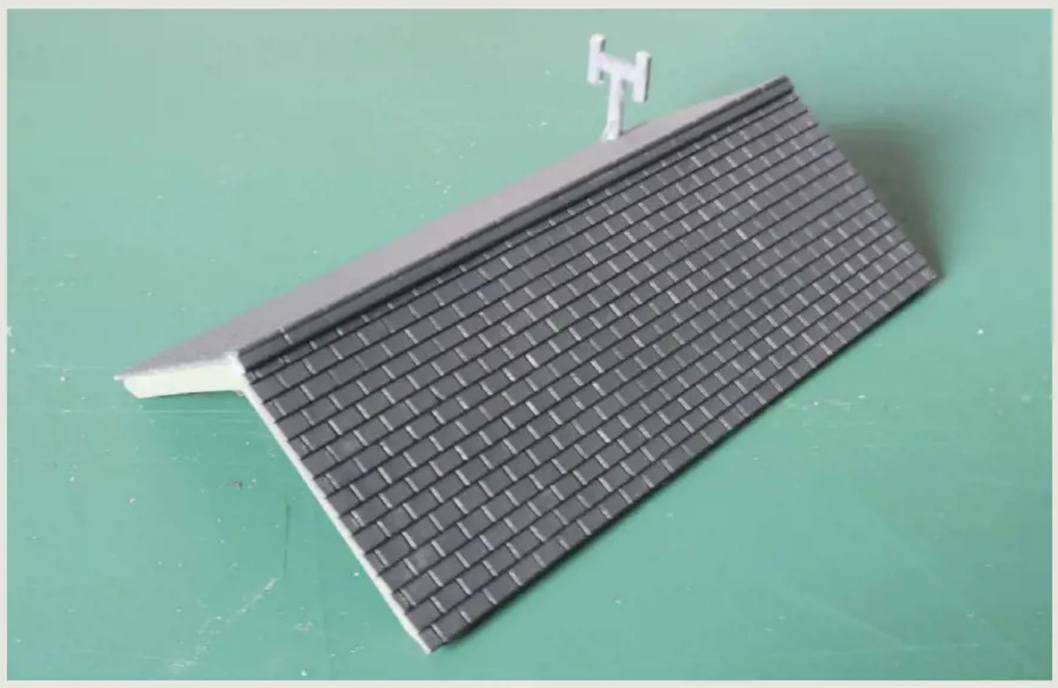
8 With all the window units fitted and glazed, the back and sides were wrapped around the floor piece. Getting the glazing done before assembly makes the build a whole lot less fiddly… and so to the interior bodge…



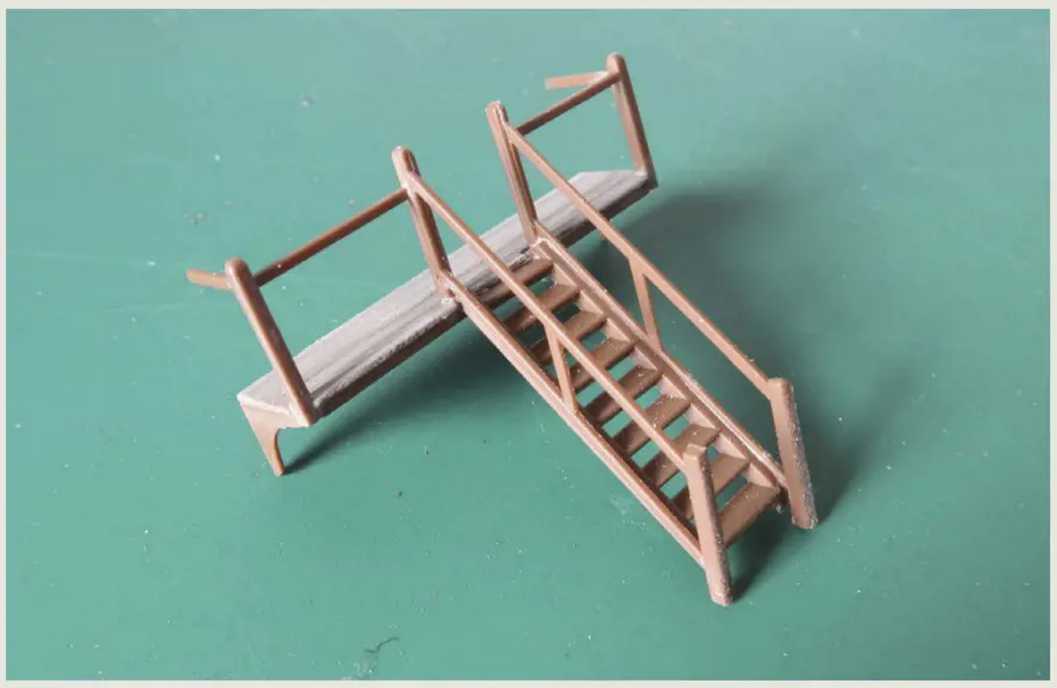
9 Spare fencing has been reduced to the uprights and stuck to a strip of plastic, with some scrap planking for the kick plate. A bridge was made up from bits of scrap sprue to represent the bell and telegraph equipment. This was painted dark brown, while the levers were picked out in yellow, red, blue and metallic.



10 To keep the signalman warm, a stove was knocked-up from scrap plastic, the tube that came over a new paintbrush and a pen top. This concoction was painted black and added to the rear of the cabin.



11 The roof sections were made up quite carefully, using the bargeboards as a guide to the angle. For once, I got all the slates running in the right direction! The stove chimney was welded on when everything was set firm.



12 The step unit was made up as per the instructions. This does need a little trimming to get the banister rails to sit against the cabin with much trial-fitting. The roof was stuck on using an old-fashioned plastic cement and a set of guard rails were run up from 1mm plastic rod and painted to match.



Replacing Traction Tyres on Hornby diesels



Michael Russell

I AM a big fan of the ex-Lima diesels that Hornby now manufactures because of their robustness, simplicity and, of course, cost! The only thing that I am not so keen on is the use of traction tyres. However, this is not an insurmountable obstacle as they can be adapted using Hornby's own spares. To make up for the drop in grip, there is plenty of room inside the body to add extra weight. The plus points are that the locomotive will now be able to collect current through all the wheels and it won't collect more dirt than any other plain-wheeled locomotive.

I am using a Hornby Railroad Class 47 in this instance, but any of the ex-Lima locos that use 14mm wheels should be suitable, for example, the Class 66. Double-check by examining the service sheets available on the Hornby website. Should you damage any components in the process of making these changes, then spares are available, for example, the bogie side frames, which present the biggest challenge in this adaptation. I recommend that you perform this operation before any others, such as upgrading to DCC or weathering.

WHAT YOU NEED

Deluxe Materials
Liquid Gravity

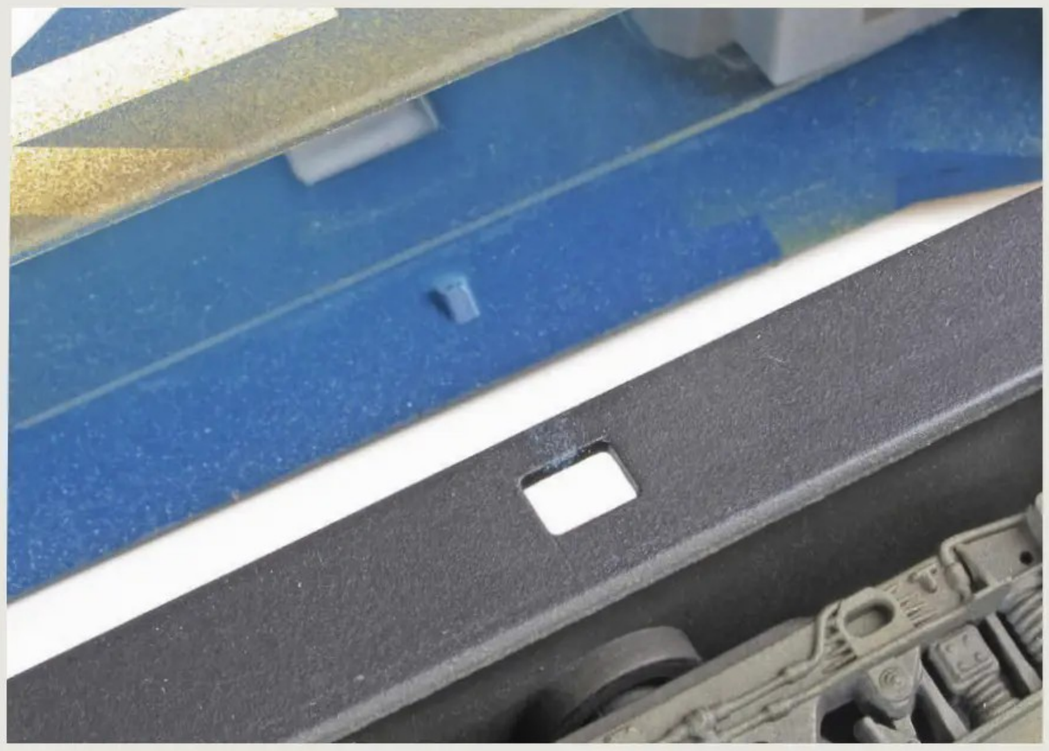
G.W. Models
Type 1 worm/gear puller for 2-3mm shafts

Hornby
R30179 Railroad Plus Class 47
X9666 Dummy wheel set

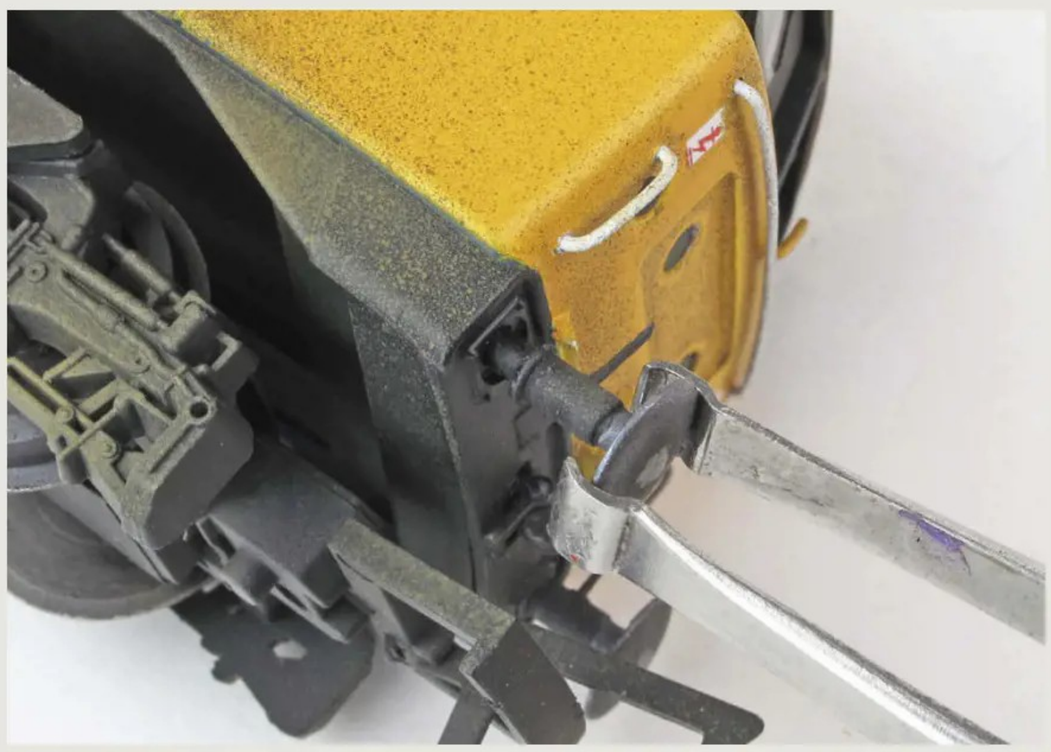
Wizard Models
LOC404 back-to-back gauge for standard OO

Other
Tweezers, small flat-bladed screwdriver, small vice or toolmaker's parallel clamp.

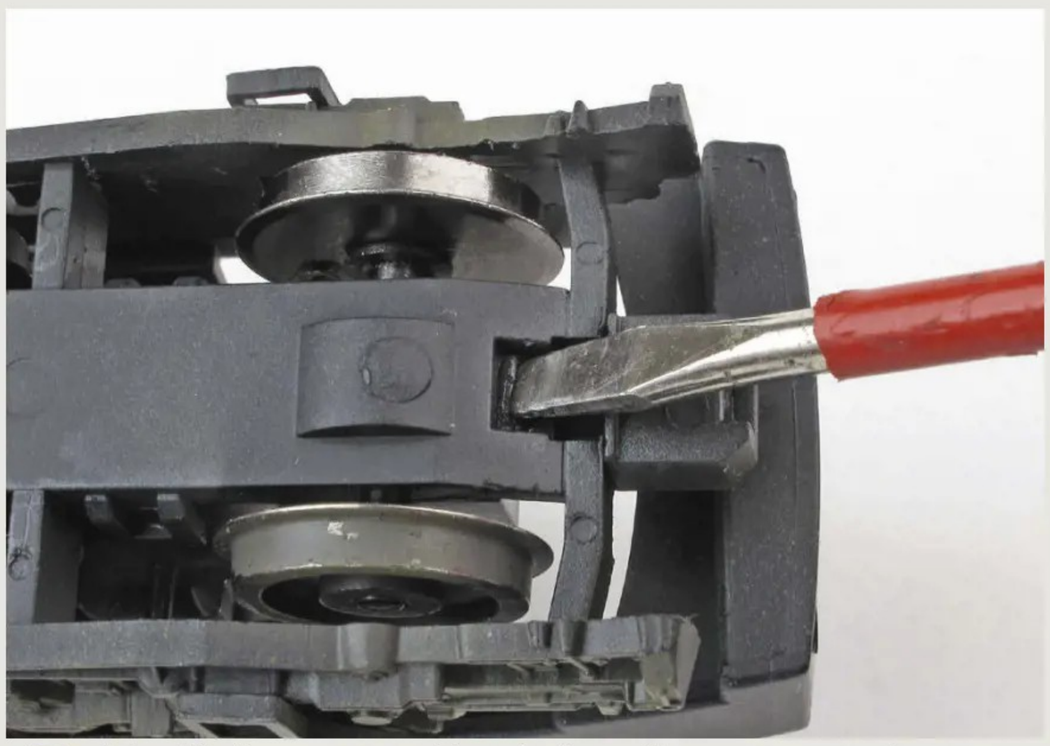
Getting Practical



1 The model is easy to access as the body is held on by four lugs near the bogie pivots. Simply use your thumbnail to lever the body off, working down one side at a time.



2 Some models also require the buffers to be removed, as in this instance with a Class 47. These just pull straight out, but put them somewhere safe so you don't lose them.



3 Identify the powered bogie from the unpowered one; the former is the one fitted with traction tyres. The bogie sides are removed by pushing in the two lugs at either end of the bogie using a flat-bladed screwdriver.



4 At the same time, four lugs along the bogie sides hold the frame to the main bogie housing. I used a pair of tweezers to push these lugs open while pushing on the end lugs. Not easy, but take your time as you won't manage it on the first attempt.



5 Once the frame is removed, the traction tyres are on the outer wheelsets and these can be lifted out. If there is any resistance, then only a small amount of force is necessary to remove them.



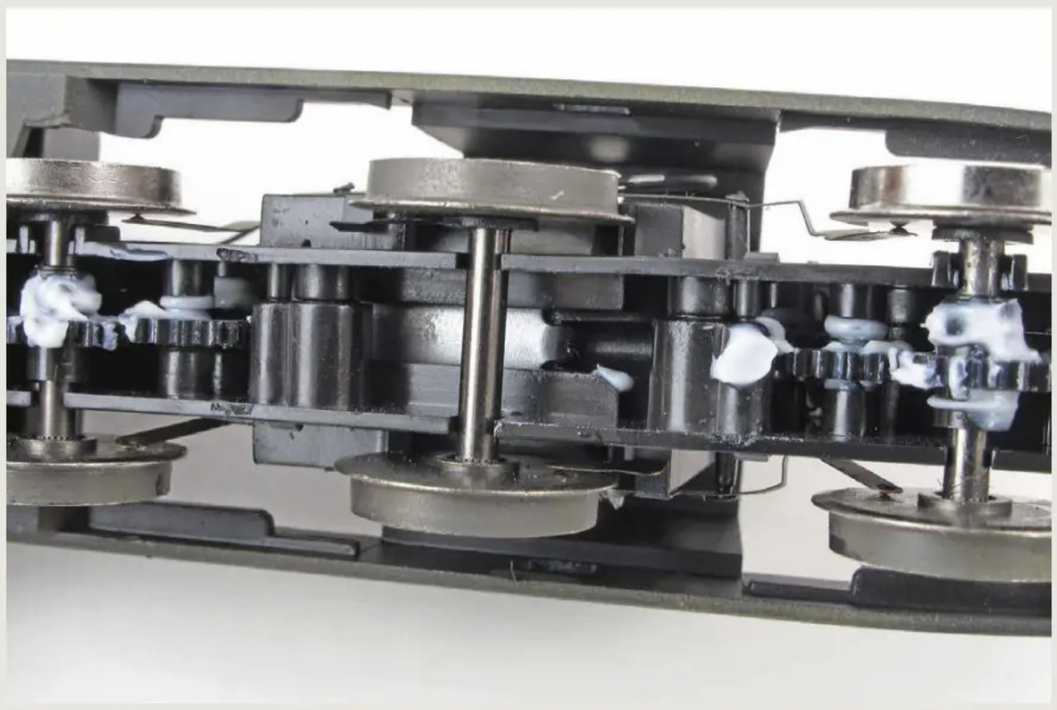
6 Take one of the spare wheelsets and use a worm/gear puller to remove the wheel from the axle. You want to remove the isolated wheel, which has a plastic bush holding it to the axle. Similarly, remove the traction tyre-fitted wheel from the geared axle.



7 Locate the new wheel on the end of the geared axle and press into place. A toolmaker's parallel clamp, a small vice, or even your own finger pressure can be used to push the wheel home.



8 Use a back-to-back gauge to ensure that the wheels are the correct distance apart and adjust as necessary. The white substance is the factory-applied grease, which should be left in place.



9 After treating the two geared wheelsets, place them back into the bogie with light pressure. Be careful to ensure that the current collection wipers are in contact with the back of the wheels for the entire extent of their lateral movement and bend to adjust if necessary.



10 Push the bogie frame back in place and now test the locomotive on the track. Run it over a variety of straights, curves and pointwork to ensure that it doesn't derail. Test the current collection from each wheelset in turn. When happy, replace the bodyshell.



11 I filled the battery box with lead and added a cover made out of plastic sheet and used the existing screw holes for the speaker. I also added more lead on top of this, taking away some of the unseen glazing inside the body.

CONCLUSION

It is possible to replace traction tyres on these models, but there is a price to pay as their haulage ability will be seriously affected. My model is quite capable of hauling six coaches, albeit with a little wheel slip on starting, which is fine for my purposes. However, as only two wheels are powered, it is never going to be able to match the haulage capabilities of all-wheel drive model diesels. It is important to weigh up the pros and cons before you make the changes. For safety reasons, I recommend the use of a lead substitute, such as Deluxe Materials Liquid Gravity.

TOP TIP - The uninsulated wheels in the spares pack can be turned into insulated wheels by drilling out the centres to 4mm using a pillar drill and fitting the plastic spacers from traction-tyred wheels you have replaced. In this way, you can replace the traction tyres on three locomotives for the price of one Dummy Wheel Set spares pack.



Weathering wagons



Steven Draper

WEATHERING CAN feel like a leap of faith. You've just bought a lovely ready-to-run loco, carriage, or wagon - crisp paint, perfect lettering - and now you're supposed to attack it with rust and grime? Madness? Add in the cost and complexity of airbrushes and compressors, and it's no wonder many modellers, including myself for many years, quietly back away.

But there's an easier, cheaper, and far less terrifying way. With a couple of pots of weathering powder, some pigment fixer, a few brushes, cotton buds, and a rattle can of matt varnish, you can give that fresh-from-the-box wagon the look of a hard-working veteran.

In this 10-step project, we take one of our exclusive Accurascale ready-to-run mineral wagons and add many years of service in just a few hours — the dusty greys, the rusty streaks, and the stained underframe all help bring a model railway to life.

The process builds up gradually, is easy to control, and if you make a mistake, you can simply wash most of it off and start again. Just don't spill powders on the carpet – I know!

Once complete, you can finish with a fine mist of matt varnish, and your wagon will look like it's spent decades hauling scrap through rain, soot, and everything else.

So, grab your powders and give it a go. No airbrush, no fear, and no reason your models should ever look too clean again.

WHAT YOU NEED

Ammo Mig
3000 Pigment Fixer
3002 Light Dust
3005 Medium Rust
3006 Light Rust
3009 Gun Metal
3011 Airfield Dust

Spot on Pigments
No.12 Black

Other
Selection of artist paint brushes, cotton buds, matt varnish rattle can, gloves and cloths.



1 Weathering powders generally don't stick to plastic models. A rattle can of Matt Varnish is used to 'base' the model with a misty layer before we begin – shake very well and use in a ventilated space.



2 The process is delightfully dirty, and using pigment fixer, a thin paint-like mix is created using black and painted onto the chassis. A few coats are necessary to build up coverage. Rust tones can be gently stippled on.



3 We're going to build up the effect using layers. Brush on a fairly sludgy mix, then use a cotton bud to remove some, employing a top-to-bottom motion.



4 You can blend further using a soft brush with or without powders. The degree of weathering is entirely subjective and depends on your personal preference and the desired effect.



5 The side door and ends are going to have a heavy rust effect. This time we delicately stipple powders into it – use a mix of black and rust tones until the surface goes matt. The finish is very fragile until dry.



6 The brushes clog up and need cleaning on a cloth – however, after wiping, they are ideal to dry-brush using streaking or stippling motions, and we use this to build up further layering on the sides of the wagon. We can streak dry powders using a soft brush to blend in.

Getting Practical



7 We don't aim to create every small patch of rust, but provided we blend the tones about right, our minds will do the rest. Additional fixer with some pigment like a wash will be sucked into the surface, especially internal edges.



8 Gun metal pigment is very useful as it will polish buffers and make them look like hard steel. Applied using a cotton bud – a dab on the axle boxes give a hint of oil.



9 Brush some lighter rust to the door, locate areas where rust naturally gathers, such as lower parts of the door where water or debris might accumulate.



10 Then some final touches to the sides, wheels and couplings. Stipple over the factory-painted rust areas to give them much more dimension.

Want to try this yourself?

You can pick up the same Accurascale wagons featured in this tutorial — available ready-weathered or unweathered if you'd like to follow along and create your own finish. Shop now at **www.brmm.ag/Wagons25**



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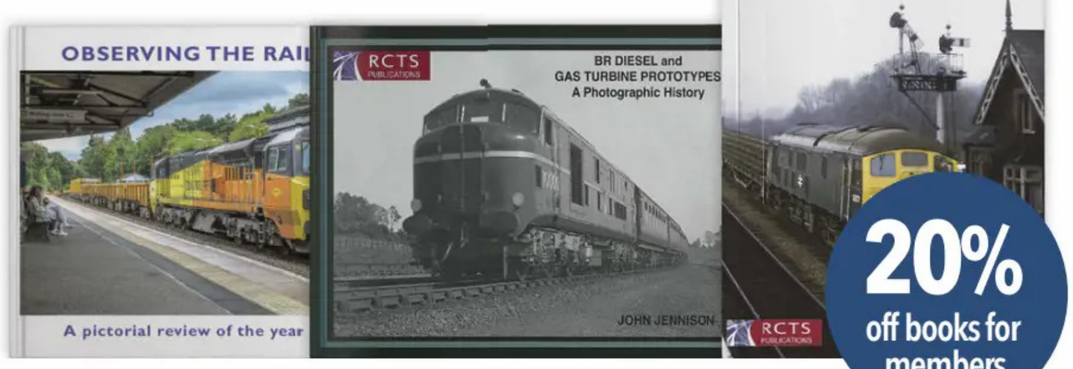

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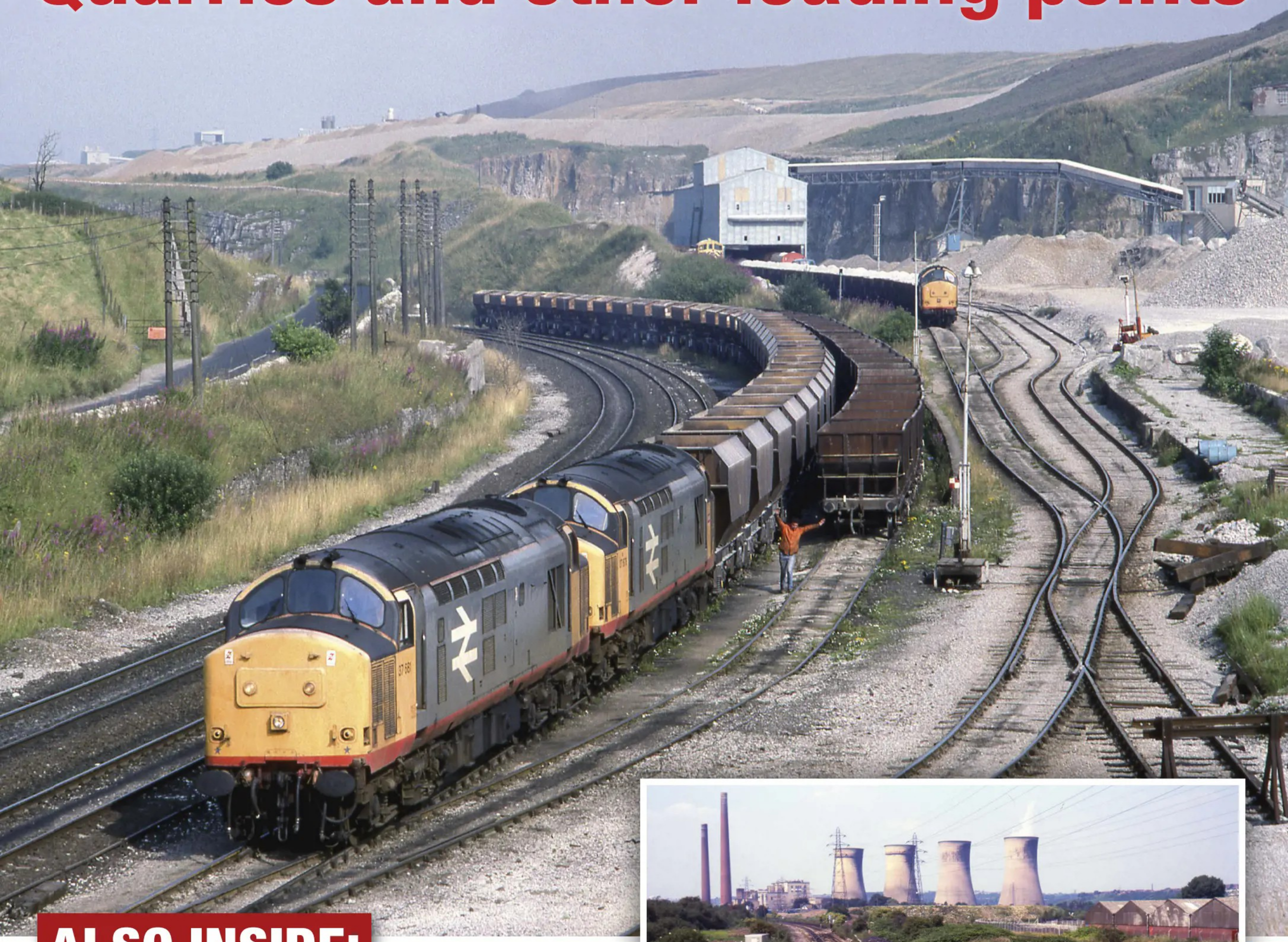
TRACTION

ISSUE 304 | JANUARY 2026

AGGREGATE TERMINALS

Quarries and other loading points



ALSO INSIDE:

- The Lakes Line
- Diesel Shunters
- Van Trains - North West



EMD switcher No. 44 *Western Yeoman II* draws its train of hopper wagons forward on siding number 3 at Merehead on April 3rd, 2007. On the left are sidings 1 and 2, topped by the conveyor belt that feeds the tripper. Foster Yeoman acquired this USA-built locomotive in 1980 for heavy shunting work and its success paved the way for the company's Class 59 order.

AGGREGATES TERMINALS - QUARRIES AND OTHER LOADING POINTS

Paul Shannon examines quarry railheads and other loading terminals for aggregates traffic, comprising various grades of stone, gravel and sand that are used mainly in the construction industry.



Aggregates traffic has undoubtedly been one of rail freight's biggest success stories of the last 50 years. Not only has the demand for construction materials risen substantially, but a large swathe of South East England has largely exhausted its local supplies and therefore needs material to be brought in from other regions. That is precisely where rail freight can compete most effectively with fleets of lorries: moving regular trainloads of 2,000 tonnes or more between two fixed points.

Stone loading terminals come in different shapes and sizes, depending on how much traffic they handle and where they are located in relation to the rail network. As with all types of rail freight, there has been a steady trend towards keeping wagon rakes intact rather than splitting and joining them during the loading process. The loading at most terminals takes place in one of two ways: either the train passes under a loading bunker, pausing for a few minutes as each wagon is loaded from above, or it passes alongside a loading pad, whose length allows several wagons to be loaded at a time by mechanical grab. These days, most trains are powered by a main-line locomotive during loading, but some of the busier locations still have their own shunters. At a small number of sites, the train remains static - and therefore with no need for a locomotive - during loading, because there is either an overhead 'tripper', which moves along to load each wagon in turn, or a loading pad that stretches the whole length of the train.

Mendip stone

Top of the list in terms of rail freight tonnage are Merehead and Whatley quarries in the Mendip Hills. Both locations received major investment in the 1970s to cope with rapidly growing demand. The rail loading facilities at Merehead date back to 1970, when Foster Yeoman expanded its quarrying



EMD switcher No. 120 edges forward out of the loading terminal at Whatley with JHA hopper wagons for Dagenham and West Drayton on April 3rd, 2007. The locomotive began its career in 1974, working at an alumina plant in Africa and moved to Whatley in 2002.

operation at Merehead to supplement its long-established quarry at Dulcote, near Wells. Rail access to Merehead was provided by installing a spur at White's Crossing on the Cranmore branch, with the junction facing Cranmore and a run-round loop installed at White's Crossing. In 1973, a further spur was opened to allow direct running from Witham to Merehead, resulting in the triangular layout that exists today. The loading facility at Merehead comprises three sidings, each capable of taking a trainload of 22 bogie wagons. Sidings 1 and 2 run on each side of an automated 'tripper', which is fed from various storage bins via an intricate conveyor system. Siding 3 has a 'shuttle' loading system that requires a locomotive to move wagons underneath it.

The four parallel loading sidings at Whatley are pictured on April 3rd, 2007, plus the run-round line on the far left. A rake of loaded JHA hoppers awaits departure.





Carrying the short-lived 'large logo' Railfreight livery, 56056 hauls its train under the loader at Tytherington quarry with the 14:10 empties from Stoke Gifford yard on July 27th, 1987. After loading, the train returned to Stoke Gifford and then formed an overnight service to Wolverton.

Whatley quarry is reached by a two-mile branch line from Frome. The upper section of that branch was once a narrow-gauge mineral line for carrying stone from Whatley to a processing plant at Hapsford; it was reconstructed to main-line standards and partially re-routed after ARC took over the quarry in the late-1960s. The loading facility at Whatley consists of two pairs of double-ended sidings with an elevated conveyor-fed 'tripper' running between them, plus a fifth siding used as a run-round loop. Each siding can take up to 30 bogie wagons. If two trains require loading at the same time, one uses the 'tripper' and the other can be loaded from the trackside by mechanical grab.

Both Merehead and Whatley quarries have crushing and screening plants to produce stone of various grades for various end uses. At Merehead, for example, wagons are fed as required from any of 11 storage bins, each containing a different grade. At the top end of the quality scale are 'single size' grades, which contain stone within a given range of diameters, such as 20mm-40mm and 4mm-10mm. Grades such as these are used to feed asphalt and concrete plants. At the bottom end of the scale are the scalpings, basically waste material ranging from 100mm-40mm sizes down to dust, which is sold as an infill material for road building and other construction projects.

Around Bristol

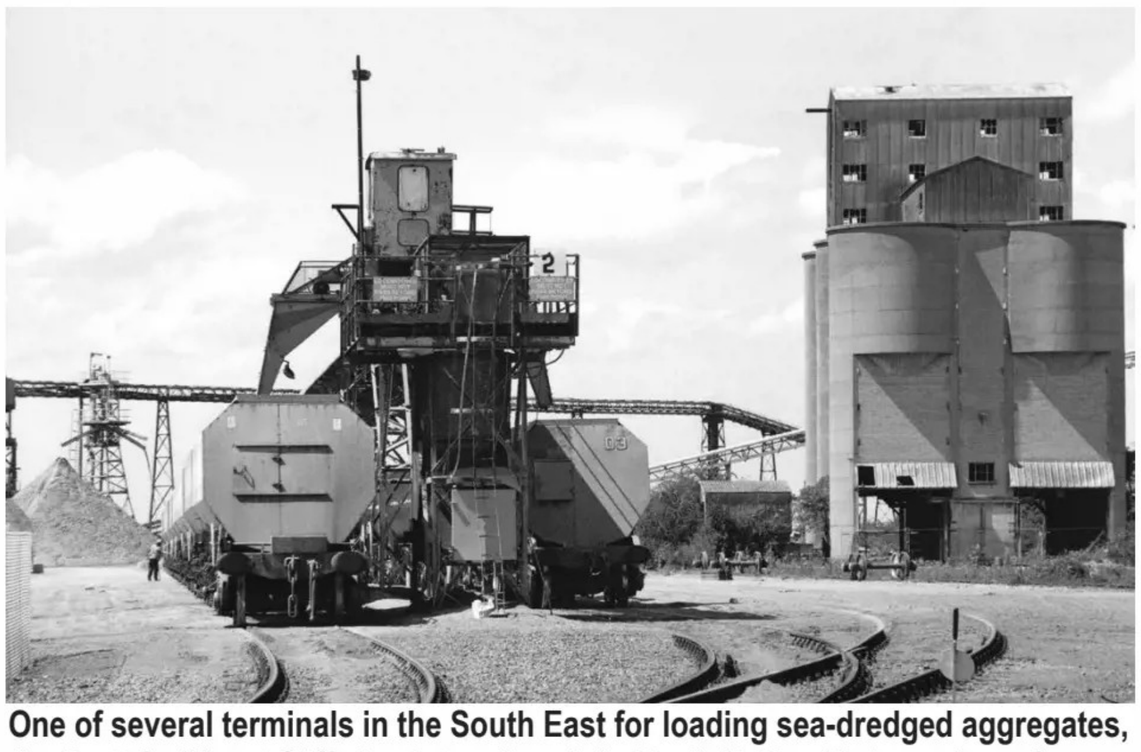
Tytherington quarry in South Gloucestershire, also known as Grovesend, was reconnected to the rail network in 1972, when a six-mile stretch of the former Thornbury branch was relaid. The railhead was simpler than those at Merehead and Whatley, comprising a run-round loop with a loading hopper over one of the tracks. Rail traffic from Tytherington declined in the 1990s, and the railhead was effectively mothballed for several periods. However, the branch became busier again once HS2 construction traffic started in earnest, with regular trains running to the temporary terminal at Quainton Road.

In the Bristol area, stone from the Tarmac quarry at Flax Bourton was loaded at Bristol East Depot from 1999 onwards, but in more recent times, Bristol East Depot has only acted as a staging point. Avonmouth became a railhead for gritstone imported from Ireland in 2006, a flow that still operates today. In Devon, Meldon quarry was a long-standing source of railway ballast, especially for Southern Region destinations, but the quarry was mothballed in 2011. Recently, there has been talk of a revival at Meldon, but no definite plans are yet in place.

South Wales

South Wales has generated a number of aggregates flows in the last few decades. Machen quarry is a long-standing loading point, both for its own dolomitic limestone and for gritstone delivered by road from Craig-yr-Hesg quarry near Pontypridd. Other railheads that came into use in the 1990s and early-2000s, but have since been decommissioned, included Neath Abbey Wharf and Jersey Marine for gritstone from Gilfach quarry, Cwmbargoed for stone from Gelligaer and Hafod quarries, Cwmgwrach for stone from Cwm Nant Lleici, and Tower for stone from Penderyn. Aggregates have also been loaded at Cardiff Docks and Newport Docks. On the Marches line, Tarmac established a railhead at Moreton-on-Lugg in 2004 with the help of a Freight Facilities Grant, and it is still very much in use today.

66712 *Peterborough Power Signalbox* is ready to depart from Mountsorrel with the 10:25 to Eastleigh on April 19th, 2011, conveying 22 IOA wagons loaded with railway ballast.



One of several terminals in the South East for loading sea-dredged aggregates, the Brett facility at Cliffe is pictured on July 22nd, 1998, with two rakes of hoppers positioned for loading.



Running on diesel power, electro-diesel 73121 *Croydon 1883-1983* departs from Lavant with the 12:38 to Drayton on August 18th, 1987.

South East England

In South East England, the demand for aggregates has long outstripped local supplies. Nevertheless, several terminals around the coast and along the Thames estuary act as loading points for sea-dredged aggregates. Angerstein Wharf and Cliffe are two of the busiest terminals, both dating back to the late-1960s. Cliffe is now the origin of regular DC Rail-hauled trains to Chessington. Nearby Grain is a rail loading point for stone shipped from Glensanda on the west coast of Scotland. On the north side of the Thames, Dagenham loads sea-dredged aggregates as well as receiving stone from the Mendips, while Ipswich Griffin Wharf still sees occasional traffic. Land-won sand was transported from Southminster until 1978 and is still loaded intermittently at Marks Tey. Another sand loading point was Fen Drayton, reached by a 12-mile branch from Cambridge, until its closure in 1992.

On the South Coast, a short stretch of the former Midhurst branch remained in use until 1991 to serve a gravel loading point at Lavant, which was equipped with a 'tripper' system so that each of the six daily departures could be loaded in a matter of minutes. Newhaven Harbour was a loading point for sea-dredged aggregates until 1996 and came back into use in 2020.

Leicestershire

A cluster of granite quarries in Leicestershire has provided large volumes of rail freight since the 1970s. The biggest is the former Redland quarry at Mountsorrel, now owned by Tarmac. A new overhead loading facility was provided in 1977 in the sidings adjacent to the Midland Main Line, enabling two trains to be loaded simultaneously. The quarry railheads at Stud Farm and Bardon Hill provide the only regular trains over the Coalville line now that coal extraction has ceased and the mothballing of the western section of the line precludes any through traffic. The Aggregate Industries' quarry at Croft ceased production around 2017, but its rail connection has been retained in case of possible incoming HS2 spoil traffic.

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Peak District

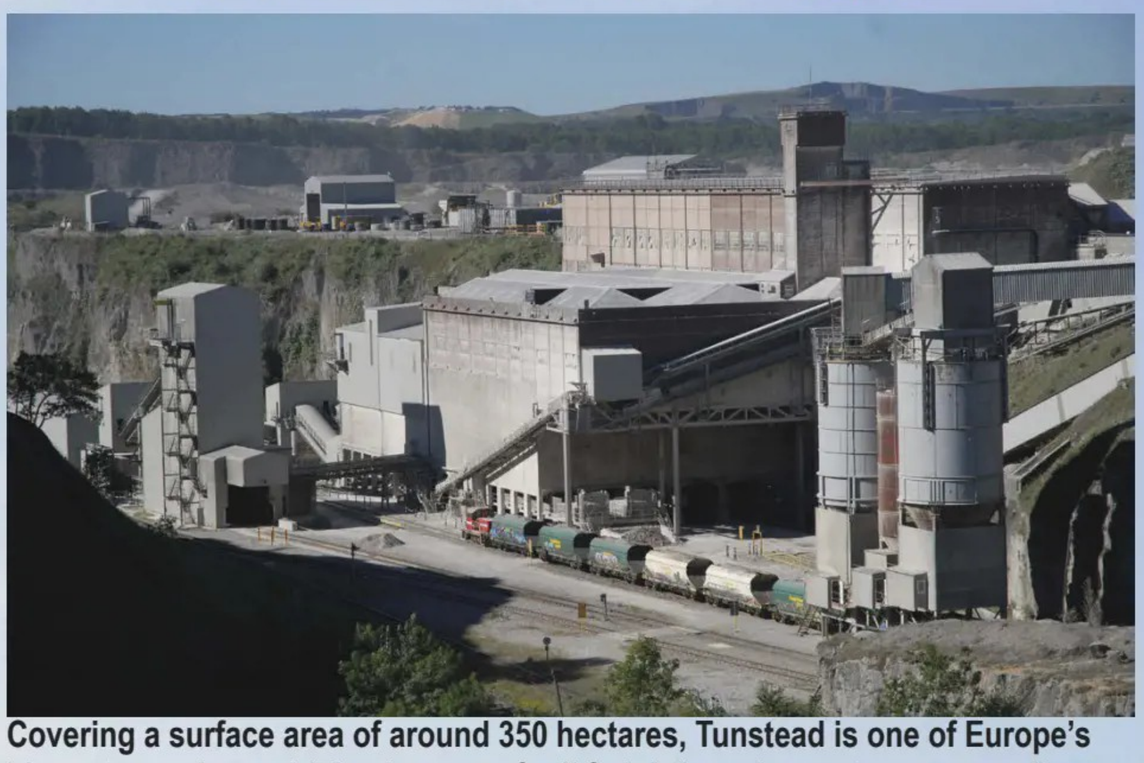
The Derbyshire Peak District is home to several rail-served limestone quarries, which rival those in the Mendips for traffic volume. A bonus for the enthusiast is the mechanical signalling that survives at Buxton and on the freight-only line through Peak Forest. The busiest site in the area is Tunstead, which began operations in the 1920s to supply high-grade limestone to the ICI chemical plants around Northwich. Today, Tunstead is a Tarmac facility, supplying stone and cement for the construction industry, with around half its output leaving the site by rail. Its sidings are extensive and include two main-line connections: one at Great Rocks Junction, which leads into the northern end of the quarry, and the other about half a mile further south, which uses the former down main line. Tarmac uses its own shunters for internal movements.

Dove Holes quarry, located just north of the former Peak Forest station and usually referred to on the railway as Peak Forest, comes a close second to Tunstead in terms of rail freight tonnage. Currently, Dove Holes is operated by Cemex. Wagons can be loaded either by overhead hopper or by lineside mechanical grab and the shunting is carried out by two main-line locomotives on hire to Victa Railfreight - usually DB Class 66s, although other types have appeared, including a pair of Michael Owen's Class 20s in 2023.

To the south of Buxton, the Hindlow branch serves two customers: Tarmac at Hindlow and Breedon at Dowlow. Quarrying at Hindlow ceased in the late-1980s and its rail traffic switched to inbound limestone from Tunstead for the production of lime. However, Hindlow quarry resumed operations from 2020 until 2025 to cater for HS2 traffic, during which time the Tunstead flow was suspended. Limestone traffic from Dowlow began in the late-1990s and now amounts to several trains a day, with the maximum train length increasing from 18 to 26 wagons after the remodelling of Buxton run-round loop in 2019.



37681 and 37678 draw to a halt at Peak Forest with empty Peakstone PGA hoppers for the adjacent Dove Holes quarry on August 17th, 1988. The next siding holds a rake of elderly HTV hoppers and, on the right, 37682 is coupled to a rake of equally vintage MSV tippler wagons awaiting departure.



Covering a surface area of around 350 hectares, Tunstead is one of Europe's biggest quarries and it is also one of rail freight's major customers, sending out half its output by rail. A rake of Freightliner HIA hoppers passes under one of the loading hoppers on June 25th, 2018.

Buxton Lime Industries pilot loco *Dovedale* (number SCW/1/29) draws empty JEA hoppers towards the loading bunker at Tunstead on January 13th, 2001. The main-line locomotive has been detached from the incoming train at Great Rocks Junction.

The new loading facility and run-round loop at Hillhead are pictured on June 15th, 2023, as 66761 prepares to depart with the 15:47 to Hams Hall. During its first year, Hillhead also sent trains to Northampton and Leyland, but then there was a long period with no traffic at all.

A third loading point on the Hindlow branch is Hillhead, where a run-round loop and adjacent area of hard standing were installed in 2023. Unfortunately, the traffic from Hillhead fizzled out after less than a year; no trains ran in 2024 and only a few so far in 2025.

Elsewhere in Derbyshire, Wirksworth quarry produced rail traffic until 1990 and stone trains from Whitwell ceased a few years later. Caldon Low in Staffordshire was the source of limestone traffic until 1989. Shrewsbury Coton Hill became a loading point for stone from Haughmond Hill quarry in 2014, a flow that still runs occasionally today.

North Wales

In North Wales, the main source of rail-borne aggregates has long been Penmaenmawr, where quarrying goes back several millennia. Penmaenmawr was a major source of railway ballast in the British Rail era. The ballast traffic ceased in 2012, but the loading terminal was revived in December 2021 and has seen intermittent traffic since then. The recently opened slate waste terminal at Llandudno Junction has also forwarded a small amount of stone for the construction industry. Railway ballast was loaded at Blodwell, south of Oswestry, until 1988.



After quarrying at Hindlow ceased, the railway gained a new short-distance flow of limestone from Tunstead to feed the lime kilns at Hindlow. 37679 and 37683 have just arrived at Hindlow with the 09:15 from Tunstead on April 9th, 1988.



In later years, the only rail traffic from Wirksworth was seasonal sugar stone to East Anglia. Having been displaced from its Midland Main Line duties by InterCity 125 units, 45146 leaves Wirksworth with sugar stone for South Lynn on October 29th, 1986.

Yorkshire Dales

Several quarries in and around the Yorkshire Dales National Park are busy rail freight locations. The Tarmac quarry at Rylstone, also known as Swinden, became the sole source of traffic on the Grassington branch in 1969. The quarry's rail facilities were upgraded to cater for increased business, and its owner, then Tilcon, acquired a fleet of air-braked wagons for the main flows to Leeds and Hull. Business has held up well since then, helped by restrictions on lorry movements through the National Park, and there are generally two or three trains a day from the site.

Another branch line whose life was prolonged thanks to aggregates traffic was the Wensleydale line to Redmire. The limestone from Redmire was destined for British Steel at Redcar and trains continued running until 1992, when British Steel switched its source to Hardendale. The 22-mile Redmire branch never saw stone trains again, but part of it became the Wensleydale heritage railway and, for a time, the line saw occasional military trains.

On the Settle to Carlisle line, Arcow regained a rail connection in 2016 to load siltstone from Tarmac's Arcow and Dry Rigg quarries. Like Rylstone, the use of rail was necessary because of restrictions on lorry movements. Unusually for a modern terminal, the sidings at Arcow are too short to accommodate a full train and shunting is required so that each portion can be loaded in turn. The terminal has no loop, so loaded trains head north to Blea Moor to run round. Another high-profile revival was the new connection from Horton quarry, which dispatched its first trainload of limestone in June 2025. Again, there is no loop and loaded trains run via Blea Moor. Previously, some of the stone from Horton was loaded onto rail at Ribblehead and it remains to be seen whether Ribblehead siding remains open for occasional traffic from Ingleton quarry.



25042 draws its train of empty ballast hoppers under the loader at Blodwell on August 21st, 1985. It will later form the 15:28 departure to Bescot. After this flow ended in 1988, the track remained in place in the hope of new traffic, but that was not to be.

The smart new JNA box wagons recall the relatively brief life of Railtrack - the owner of the nation's railway infrastructure from 1994 until 2002 - as 37379 and 37799 pause during loading at Penmaenmawr on October 26th, 1998.

66749 shunts hopper wagons at Arcow before forming the 11:13 departure to Pendleton on May 26, 2017. Trains also ran from Arcow to Bredbury and Leeds Hunslet.

Cumbria

The West Coast Main Line hosts three rail-served quarry terminals in the Shap area: Shap Summit, which produces granite for use as railway ballast as well as for capping nuclear waste vaults at Drigg; Hardendale, which used to dispatch limestone for the steel industry but latterly only sent out lime until rail operations ceased altogether in 2024; and Shap Beck, also known as Harrisons Sidings, which produces limestone for the construction industry on Merseyside.

Scotland

In Scotland, the potential for rail-borne aggregates traffic has always been low because there are ample supplies within easy reach of most construction projects. However, the former coal railhead at Ravenstruther became a loading point for railway ballast from Cloburn quarry in late 2021, with trains running initially to Millerhill and later to Carlisle. A proposal was put forward in 2022 to develop a railhead at Kincardine for Tillicoultry Quarries, but nothing has yet come of the idea.



Former BR Class 12 shunter 15231, acquired by the quarry operator Tilcon in 1971, rests between duties at Rylstone on August 8, 1977. At that time Rylstone dispatched trains to Teesside for the steel industry as well as construction aggregates to Hull and Leeds. 15231 was scrapped in February 1984.



The terminal at Redmire is pictured on August 8, 1977, with a single British Steel hopper wagon in position for loading. The inclined arrival sidings hold a rake of empty wagons which will be moved by gravity, one by one, under the loading hopper. Once loaded each wagon will have its brakes released again so that it can run into the lower level departure sidings behind the photographer.

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THE LAKES LINE - WAS THIS THE LOW POINT?

Words & photography by Rockley Battye

Of the many problems besetting him as he pondered on routes north, Joseph Locke, surveying engineer to the Lancaster and Carlisle Railway (L&C), had one overriding obstacle to overcome. That was Shap Fell. Should he go over it, round it, or under it? His route had already gained some altitude as the line crossed into Westmorland, and he was reluctant to lose that advantage, ignoring the town that lay in the valley just a few miles away. Prominent citizens of that town, aware of the importance of a rail connection, felt that action must be taken. The town was Kendal, today known as 'the Gateway to the Lakes', and perhaps the most prominent of those 'prominent citizens' was Cornelius Nicholson, whose portrait hangs in the Council Chamber of Kendal's Town Hall.

The only sensible option was to seek to make a convenient junction with the Lancaster and Carlisle line, and that was achieved at Oxenholme. In 1844, plans were published for a line from Oxenholme through Kendal to Windermere. Joseph Locke, his route for the L&C no longer under threat, could not have been more cooperative, and he found himself appointed supervisor.

The Kendal & Windermere Railway (K&W) would drop down steeply to Kendal, then on a rising gradient serve Burneside and Staveley before dropping down to the hamlet of Birthwaite, from where the intention was to continue along the lake shore to Ambleside. This latter extension met with opposition, especially when the possibility was mooted of a further extension through Grasmere to Keswick (which would have linked up with the Cockermouth and Keswick Railway). William Wordsworth penned those familiar lines:

Is then no nook of English ground secure
From rash assault?

John Ruskin, in his amusing prose, also spoke against it, although the author, Harriet Martineau, was in favour, feeling that outside influences might be of benefit to the insular natives. In the event, the difficulty and cost of any extension proved prohibitive, and the station at Birthwaite remained the terminus. An early view of the station shows only one other building, the station hotel, but development of the area was speedy, and the station was known as Windermere (although it was a couple of miles or so away from the lake).

The DMU is ready to return from Oxenholme down the branch to Windermere. The starting signal, showing a red aspect, is just visible through the station arch. Note the bars on the carriage doors. These were fitted to the DMUs based in this part of the North of England because of the tight clearances in the tunnel near Whitehaven. April 7th, 1983.

The interior of Windermere station, now reduced to a single platform, is showing signs of neglect. The motive power is unusual for the line, it being a West Yorkshire PTE Class 101, Nos. 50275 and 50280, with both cars being powered by Rolls-Royce engines. There should be more than enough power for the stiff climb to Oxenholme. March 19th, 1983.



A Lakeland eyesore: Windermere station, showing the frontage and station roof. April 7th, 1983.



Faded elegance. The main entrance to Windermere station, showing the narrow fluted columns. April 7th, 1983.

The line opened to Kendal in September 1846 and throughout in April 1847. There were still hopes at this time for an extension of the line, but in the meantime it would 'enable the merchant princes of Liverpool, and the cotton lords of Manchester, to exchange in a few hours the smoke of their factories, and the miasma of their towns, for the salubrious airs and silver mists that float round the hills', as Cornelius Nicholson so well expressed it.

In its heyday, the line saw a wide variety of traffic. In addition to the ordinary passenger service on the branch, there were through services to London: the 'Lakes Express' had a portion for Windermere. A through service to Manchester, the 'Club Train', served the needs of wealthy businessmen. The 'Kendal Tommy' supplied a service to Grange-over-Sands using the Arnside to Hincaster line. The author recalls a Leeds to Barrow service on summer Saturdays, which detached a Windermere portion at Arnside, this making its way to Windermere via the Arnside to Hincaster line (and some convoluted reversals).

Freight traffic was all-important, and Kendal had an extensive goods yard catering for a wide variety of products. Kendal was well known for its shoe factory (K shoes), but there was also coal, oil and timber coming in, with textile products being sent out. At Burneside stood Cropper's Paper Mill (sold by Cornelius Nicholson to Liverpudlian James Cropper in 1845), and there was an interchange between the railway and Cropper's own tramway system.

The junction at Oxenholme housed the engine shed for the branch locomotives, but also banking engines to give assistance to trains on the climb to Grayrigg and Shap, until it closed in 1962.

Now the period of post-war austerity was coming to an end, Harold Macmillan could proclaim in 1957 that the British 'have never had it so good'. Petrol and diesel fuels were readily available, and traders made use of this, transferring their goods to lorries with the convenience of door-to-door delivery.



There's plenty of smoke from the exhaust as the branch service struggles up the hill into Oxenholme station. The signboard was a prominent feature at this location and is still in London Midland Region maroon. April 9th, 1983.



The usual power on the branch at this time, a Derby-built Class 108 DMU. The former engine shed at Windermere is visible behind the building on the left, while the goods shed is on the right. April 7th, 1983.



A Class 108 is seen leaving Burneside. The station buildings are no longer in railway use. The crossing is a private crossing for access to nearby Ellergreen and Tolson Hall. April 9th, 1983.

Private cars were on the increase, meaning journeys could be undertaken at the convenience of their owners. At this time, it was possible to park in the main shopping street in Bowness, and for free. The expression 'climate change' was never heard.

This naturally had a detrimental effect for traffic on the railways, as trade and passengers diminished. The Coniston line closed to passengers in 1958, the Lakeside branch in 1965 and the Penrith to Keswick line in 1972. The electrification of the West Coast Main Line was completed in 1974, but Kendal was once again ignored. By the time of this survey, the signal boxes had all closed and the line single-tracked, so it was, effectively, just one long siding.

The photographic survey was carried out in 1983. At this time, the line was in decline. Windermere station was a sorry sight and soon to be sold for use as a supermarket. The engine shed and goods facilities were no longer in use. The branch passenger services were in the hands of Derby-built DMUs, and there were no through trains apart from occasional summer excursion traffic. Was this indeed the low point of the Kendal & Windermere line?

At Staveley, the platform buildings have been demolished. There is a very steep and awkward set of steps down to street level. April 7th, 1983.

The branch train stands at Kendal station. The photograph is taken standing on Longpool Bridge, the first metal bridge in the town, which was built by Cochrane and Co. in Dudley in 1859. April 9th, 1983.



Approaching Staveley crossing. Just ahead of the train are the detectors, which will operate the crossing automatically. April 9th, 1983.



Burneside Lower Crossing is an open crossing. The DMU has just passed the fixed distant signal and has the horn blowing a warning to unwary road users. Burneside station can be seen beyond the crossing. April 9th, 1983.

In 1984, the Lakes Line Action Group was formed (later to become the Lakes Line Rail User Group). There is no doubt they have been a very positive influence, and the Windermere branch is itself marketed as the Lakes Line. The Group pressed for a larger, better-designed station building at Windermere, which opened in 1986, a new stone shelter at Kendal instead of the proposed 'bus shelter' in 1991, while through trains to Manchester Airport began operating in 1994. The line was re-laid throughout with continuous welded rail. The Friends, associated with the Group, look after the stations in their communities and present the traveller with a pleasant environment. Unfortunately, they have not been able to win every battle: electrification, though 'expected within 18 months' in October 1984, was not implemented. There was a short time post-privatisation when the branch services ceased completely. And it is still a long siding.....

However, in 2025, Northern Rail operates no fewer than 17 trains a day each way over the branch, with four of these starting from or terminating at Manchester Airport.

For readers wishing to delve more deeply into the history of the line, I can do no better than recommend Dick Smith's excellent book, The Kendal & Windermere Railway, published by the Cumbrian Railways Association.



The old methods hold sway at Burneside Higher Crossing. Crossing keeper Mr. Dixon returns the signals to the 'on' position after a train has passed. April 7th, 1983.

VAN TRAINS IN THE NORTH WEST

Many parcels and mail trains were made up of a large number of vehicles, but some services operated with much shorter formations, which are ideal to replicate in model form. Here, John Hillmer shares a selection of his images of trains with just two or three vans.

47438 brings the empty vans of the Holyhead to Manchester Red Bank train through Frodsham on October 1st, 1988.



Stockport 47488 *Rail Riders* is at Stockport with what is probably the 14:23 Bolton to Bristol Temple Meads mail vans. The date is April 4th, 1991.





On April 8th, 1990, 47462 is seen near Nantwich, on the Crewe to Shrewsbury line, with a Crewe South to Radyr parcels.



On April 13th, 1990, 86252 *Liverpool Daily Post* arrives at Stockport with 3V20, a Manchester Piccadilly to Bristol Temple Meads van train. The train is composed of just a Mark 1 BG van and a GUV van.



Approaching Manchester, with the cooling towers of Agecroft power station in the background, 47482 heads 1V03, the 14:23 Bolton to Bristol Temple Meads mail vans. The date is July 18th, 1990.

SIZE MATTERS

By J Crosse

For a young enthusiast today, it may be difficult to comprehend how different much of our railway system was in the 1950s and early-'60s, with many small goods yards, numerous private sidings and large railway systems in some dockyards. Freight trains were frequently formed from one or two wagons from numerous locations, all collected from those small yards and sidings and trip worked to the more centralised and larger yards. The small yards were frequently laid for use only by low axle weight locos, and space constraints gave rise to sharp curves on some tracks, particularly in dock areas, meaning that only lightweight engines having a short wheelbase could be used in those locations. These had been the preserve of steam tank engines since the dawn of the railways, but low traffic volumes might mean that a loco only worked for two or three hours at a time, making them ideal targets for replacement by small diesel shunters. Indeed, some industrial sites adopted diesels long before most of the main railway companies.

The decision by British Railways to replace some steam operations by diesel power predated the 1955 Modernisation Plan for shunting locomotives with the first of what became Class 08 appearing in 1953. However, for yet smaller engines, there were already several private builders producing machines for industry, so British Railways could have a quick win by purchasing some of those for evaluation before formulating a comprehensive plan for the future. This resulted in a plethora of types for the 1950s spotter to track down, as by the nature of their duties, such locos tended to hide away from main line locations. Very few of their purchases survived into the TOPS era, in part because the duties that they had been purchased for had disappeared.

*The allocation and disposal information is taken from the new RCTS website **locodata.org.uk**



Get in touch

Don't forget, if you have an idea for an article, why not get in touch by emailing the Editor at steverabone@hotmail.com and you could feature in TRACTION.

LEAD PICTURE: North British received an order for no less than 72 machines, but the engine fitted was one from MAN, manufactured under licence by NBL and being more powerful at 225hp. The hydraulic transmission remained, but of a different model to that fitted previously. Despite the higher horsepower, the locos weighed in at 30 tons, two tons less than the first eight. With the first deliveries being in 1957, only 12 carried the 11XXX series numbers before the introduction of the D style and the class then ran as D2708-D2779, and it was as late as 1961 before the final machine arrived. All were allocated to their native Scotland, but as their workload decreased, a few migrated south to act as works shunters at Crewe. This did nothing to help their longevity, with the whole class being withdrawn by 1968 with some seeing as little as seven years of service. Last of class D2779 is seen at St. Margarets shed in 1962. It was new to Bathgate in February 1961, moving to St. Margarets in October. In September 1964, it moved to Eastfield, where its operational career ended in February 1968. It was cut up by G H Campbell at Airdrie in the following November. F HORNBY/ COLOUR-RAIL.COM





Ruston & Hornsby were a long-established builder of locomotives, and British Railways took in two of its 165hp 0-4-0s in 1956. These were diesel mechanical machines weighing in at just 28 tons. Arriving as 11507/8, they later became D2957/8 and were designated as type DY6 by the Eastern Region. Other than having differing delivery dates, their careers followed very similar paths for most of the time, with both starting out at Immingham before moving to Stratford, one in 12/56 and the other in 1/57, according to BR records. Renumbering took place in March 1958 for D2958 and April for D2957. The pair was separated in August 1966, when D2957 was transferred to Goole, although temporarily stored at Hull Dairycoates. Its time at Goole was short, being condemned in March 1967 and was sold to the Slag Reduction Co. of Ickles, Rotherham, being cut up in the August. D2958 lasted a little longer with BR, being withdrawn in January 1968. It was then sold to C. F. Booth of Rotherham, but instead of being cut up as was normal, it was clearly seen as too useful and worked as a yard shunter until 1981, and even then was not cut up until 1984. 11507 is seen at Stratford in February 1957. E BRIDGER/ COLOUR-RAIL.COM



The ‘big boys’ of the small shunter world were 11 machines built by North British, again with their favoured combination of a MAN engine working through a hydraulic transmission, these being the 11 330hp 0-4-0 D2900s, which came in at a heavy 36 tons to give a tractive effort of 24100lb. However, these figures were substantially different from the nominally slightly more powerful 350hp standard, which had a weight of 49 tons but over three axles rather than two. Delivery commenced in April 1958 and was complete by December, with D2900-7 being new to Devons Road, Bow shed, with the rest soon finding a home at Rugby. Most of the Devons Road machines moved to Stratford when the former closed in 1963. Thereafter, the class spread its wings slightly with examples to be found as works shunters at Wolverton and Crewe, but like almost all of their brethren, they soon became surplus, and with less than 10 years in service, they were withdrawn, with the whole class being condemned in February 1967, no doubt at the whim of the accountants of the day. Not only were they condemned in the same month, but all were sold to Slag Reduction of Ickles and the last were broken up in November 1967, so gone without trace less than 10 years after the first arrived. Finding a photograph of one working seems impossible, and D2902 is seen off duty at Devons Road in 1959. F HORNBY/ COLOUR-RAIL.COM



Hunslet of Leeds was the supplier of 11500-11502, later D2950-D2952. These diminutive machines were 0-4-0 153hp shunters using a Gardner engine and mechanical transmission. The first two arrived in December 1954, with the third in January 1955, and they weighed in at just over 22 tons. All three were new at Ipswich. D2951 received its new number in 1957, while D2950/2 had to wait until 1958. D2950/1 were briefly put into store at the end of 1966 before being transferred to Goole. Seemingly, there was little need for them there either, as both were withdrawn in December 1967. D2952 was worse off as it was condemned in December 1966 while still at Ipswich and it met its end with Slag Reduction Co. at Ickles in August 1967. D2951 went to C F Booth and was broken up in August 1968. However, D2950 was sold for further use, passing to the Llanelli Steel Co. It was out of use by 1976 and lingered until 1980, before being sold for preservation. However, that scheme foundered and it was cut up in 1983. D2950 is seen during its brief time at Goole. K FAIREY/ COLOUR-RAIL.COM



The North British Locomotive Company supplied an initial batch of eight machines starting in 1953, initially numbered 11700-7 and later D2700-7. They had a 200hp Paxman engine and hydraulic transmission. 11700-2 were allocated to the North Eastern Region, being initially based at Hartlepool before all moving to Goole. 11700 was renumbered D2600 for two weeks in 1958 before becoming D2700. The other five class members served at Scottish sheds, mainly in the Edinburgh and Fife areas, these all being delivered in 1955 and their external appearance was different from that of the first three. D2700 was withdrawn as early as 1964, having the honour of being the first engine with a D prefix to go other than accident victims and all were extinct by 1968. 11700 is seen on display at Willesden in 1954, not long after delivery.
R BROUGHTON/ COLOUR-RAIL.COM



A complete one-off was D2999, built in 1958. This machine, a 0-4-0, was built by Beyer Peacock on behalf of Brush Traction and was a demonstrator that was loaned to British Railways in January 1960. It carried two works numbers, BP7861 and Brush 100, and was put to work by BR in Mile End goods yard. Seemingly, it fitted in well and it was purchased in September 1960, being allocated to Stratford. At a weight of 30 tons, for a horsepower of 180, it was quite substantial. It had a Petter-McClaren engine and electric transmission, making it very different from its stablemates. Being 'non standard', it was an early victim of the shunter cull, being condemned in October 1967. Passing to C F Booth of Rotherham, it was used occasionally as a works pilot before being cut up in 1970. This interesting picture is dated as January 1960 by the photographer, so dating from the month of arrival. However, it bears its BR number, which it was reported as not receiving until September! F HORNBY/ COLOUR-RAIL.COM



Andrew Barclay of Kilmarnock was yet another well-known locomotive builder who contributed to the BR small loco pool, initially with 10 locos numbered 11177-11186, later D2400-D2409. The engine fitted was the 204hp version of the Gardner 8L3 diesel and again employed a mechanical transmission. These were of the 0-6-0 wheel arrangement, coming in at 32 tons. With 3' 6" diameter driving wheels, they had a nominal tractive effort of 15,340lb. Later machines, which went on to be classified as Class 06 in TOPS were rated at 20,000lb tractive effort. Delivery was spread from July 1956 to March 1957, and all worked throughout within the Lincoln and Sheffield Districts depots, inhabiting the likes of Boston, Immingham, Colwick and Staveley sheds. D2404/7 at Staveley made it into 1969, but the others were condemned in 1967 and 1968. All were cut up in the various scrapyards of South Yorkshire, with the last to disappear being D2407 in July 1970. Our picture shows 11177, still so numbered in early 1960 at Immingham. COLOUR-RAIL.COM



Hudswell-Clarke also found favour with BR to supply their 0-6-0 design of 204hp shunter, once again employing the Gardner 8L3 engine with mechanical transmission via a three-speed gearbox. Comprising 10 machines, the first of which was recorded into service on December 31st, 1956; no New Year's Day off in those times! Numbered 11116-20 and 11144-8, all had arrived by the end of 1957 and later became D2500-9, and all were for the Midland Region and initially based at Birkenhead, but later life saw them all move to Barrow, most directly but some via either the Liverpool or Derby areas. Faring no better than their other diminutive friends, all were condemned in 1967 and all were cut up at South Yorkshire yards in 1968, except D2506, which migrated to Derby and was still there in 1970, eventually ending its days at Steel Breaking & Dismantling of Chesterfield that year. This undated view of D2500 was possibly taken at Derby, as the loco's regular haunts did not have a roundhouse. The manufacturer's choice of 'chimney' design suggests a steam engine designer did the drawings for these locos. COLOUR-RAIL.COM

Compare and contrast the outline of this engine with that of D2500. The Ian Allan Combined Volume showed all of D2500-19 as one class, the only difference noted being that D2510-9 had a four-speed gearbox instead of a three-speed one, but externally there was no resemblance between the first 10 and the second batch. Delivery started as late as September 1961, and was complete by the year end. Quite why these machines were deemed necessary is now lost in the mists of time. Suffice to say that they fared no better than their cousins and after just six years they were withdrawn. Most were new at Barrow and remained in the area, but D2518 was new to Watford shed before moving to Crewe where it joined D2519, while D2510 spent its life at London (Willesden) area sheds. Their disposal was more varied and one survives (D2511), having eventually found a home at the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway. D2510 is seen two days before its nominal withdrawal date, and so, in theory, is at Rugby shed. K FAIREY/ COLOUR-RAIL.COM



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SNOWDON BY RAIL

Inspired by the books of Rev. W Awdry and the Clyre Valley Railway, this picturesque layout in the mountains became the perfect showcase for banking locomotives in narrow gauge.

Words & Photography: James Walker



No. 1 *Jack Jones* Bachmann Rheneas passes over the viaduct with the guard's van, a Westcliff Workshops 3D print, as the guard enjoys the view of the river and the valley.

FACTFILE

LAYOUT NAME: Fford Dinrhyd
SCALE/GAUGE: 4mm:1ft scale/9mm gauge/009
SIZE: 100cm by 75cm
ERA/REGION: North Wales narrow gauge
LAYOUT TYPE: Continuous run

TOP RIGHT: The quarry loader is built from a kit-bashed Dapol dockside crane kit and has an operating loader door, although you have to be quick to stop the wagons from overloading.

MIDDLE RIGHT: No 5. *James Frazer* shunts the quarry sidings. The model is a Fourdees print on a Bachmann Peter Sam chassis with custom name plates produced by Light Railway Stores.

BELOW: An overview of the layout, which fits in a footprint of just 100cm by 75cm. No. 5 runs toward Porthkel harbour, with a loaded slate train from Hafn Quarry.





It's 1937 in the Snowdon Mountains, the slate quarries are dwindling and one line hangs on with the summer tourist and cattle market traffic propping it up. How much longer the line will survive is only a matter of time...

Welcome to the Mid Snowdon Railway, a line that runs from the North at Hanarah to Porthkel in the west as it snakes around the mountainside. We view the line from the small halt of 'Fford Dinrhyd', a popular spot for ramblers. Its life began as the terminus of the line for a small slate quarry until the line was extended further into the mountains. For the railway enthusiast, the line is a great spot to see the engines working hard and, better still, catch a glimpse of a banking engine helping the heavy trains up the steep gradient to Hafn Junction. If you're lucky, the Porthkel Shunter will be sent up to Dinrhyd to assist the banker on the heavy freights. The sight of three engines snorting through 'Fford Dinrhyd' is something to behold!

Early days

We've all done it, that impulse purchase from the model shop. 'Fford Dinrhyd' had started life as this, my purchase being the Peco track pack along with a loco and some rolling stock. Narrow gauge has always been appealing, and with the rise of ready-to-run, I couldn't resist anymore. Taking inspiration from the Little lines of Wales such as the Talyllyn, Welsh Highland and even lines in England such as the Snailbeach, I took the

> "I can't deny that the Rev. W Awdry has had a considerable influence on this build and the fictional history."



track pack, added a few additional components such as a N gauge track in the fiddle yard and designed a simple circular layout complete with passing loop, sidings and station, all in a footprint of 100cm x 75cm, with a North Wales inspiration as the line passed over a winding river as it ran between the mountains.

The layout had originally started as just an OO9 project, an attempt to build a layout from start to completion. I had tasked myself with vlogging the build on my YouTube channel as a way of pushing myself to complete the project, but I soon found myself 'world building', as I became more immersed in the construction and creating a fictional railway company.

There is something to be said for narrow gauge modelling and that opportunity to create a completely new railway company with its own history, something that is not usually done with its OO counterpart. I soon found myself creating a map, studying Welsh topography and understanding how places got their names. The name 'Fford Dinrhyd' comes from a rough translation of Burford Road, which was, at the time, the name of my OO gauge build (and the nickname of a beloved family pet we rehomed from the Blue Cross). In addition to the map, I worked out a fictional history, the line becoming a route that joined the north coast to the west coast of Wales after the amalgamation of the two original railway companies: The Porthkel Railway and the Avon Bach Valley Railway.



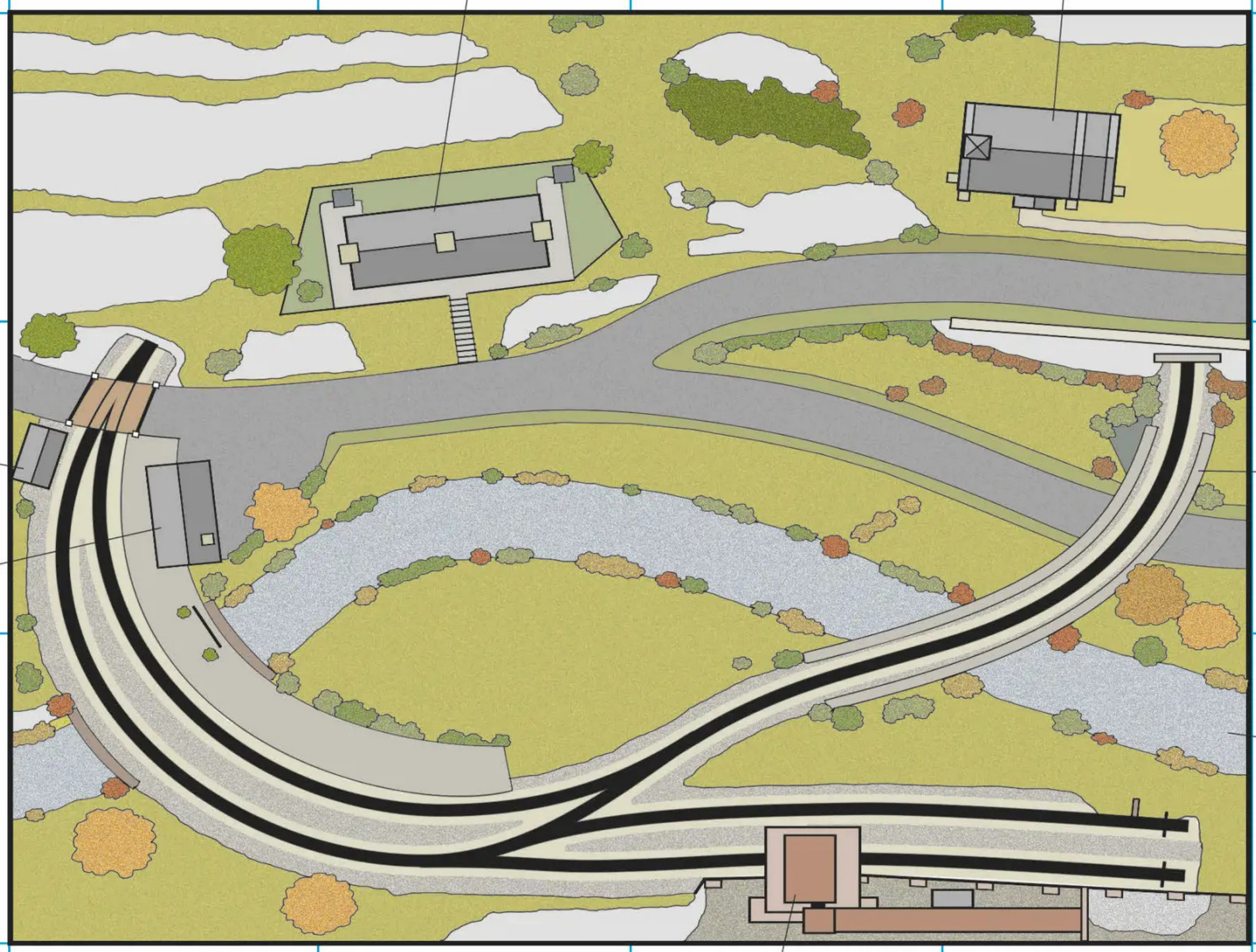


ABOVE: No. 6. *Captain Mainwaring* is a Bachmann Baldwin Works 10-12-D repainted into the Mid Snowdon's attractive blue livery. It passes over the viaduct with a heavy freight train.

MIDDLE LEFT: Viewed from the quarry sidings, No. 5 passes with the express to Hanarah, which is situated on the north coast. The coaches are repainted ex-Lynton and Barnstaple from Peco.

BOTTOM LEFT: The workers' cottages are situated at the bottom of the hill along the main road. They are a Wills kit with added interior detail and lighting.

TRACKPLAN



Each grid square represents 25cm

Ian Watson

About the modeller

Name: James Walker
Age: 40
Number of years modelling: 30+
Name of your first layout: It was a Thomas layout on a board when I was four, but I don't think it was ever given a name
Favourite era/region: 1950s to '60s Somerset and Dorset
Favourite locomotive: 57xx Pannier

I live on the West Northamptonshire border and I have had an interest in railways, both model and real, since I can remember, with a love for *Thomas the Tank Engine* starting it off. I have worked on the railway for 15 years, both for Chiltern Railways and as a Signalman for Network Rail and I have my own YouTube channel, 'western signalman', and I am one of the co-hosts of the Model Rail Replacement Podcast.

I can't deny that the Rev. W Awdry has had a considerable influence on this build and the fictional history. Growing up, it was always the narrow gauge stories I enjoyed the most from the railway series books, in particular, *Duke the Lost Engine*. As I got older and learnt more about the detail Awdry went into to create his fictional world, particularly the Mid-Sodor Railway, I felt inspired to create my own, and the name of the Mid Snowdon railway is a homage to that. Additionally, I have found a lot of inspiration from the Clyre Valley Railway; I loved the idea of banking locomotives in narrow gauge and I decided that 'Fford Dinrhyd' would be a great location to spot such operations as the engines worked their way into the mountains.

Mountains and rivers

I wanted to create that North Wales feel of the line as if it had been squeezed into the mountainside. To achieve this, I used insulation board from the ground up, carving and scoring it to shape before using a coat of Polyfilla to create the rock faces. I always enjoy modelling autumn; the yellows, oranges and reds on the trees really add an extra element to a layout, I feel. This was achieved with the use of seafoam and various scatters. I have since learnt better methods for tree making, and this is certainly something I'd change on the layout.

The river was by far the biggest challenge, as I had used EZ water. This is heated in a pan and poured onto the layout, but unfortunately, the pan (which had no handle) slipped from the pliers I used to move it and the EZ pour went everywhere. It cooled before it reached the end of the riverbed and I was left with a transparent molten lava look. I used an alternative resin for the rest of the river, and blended the pours together with the use of bathroom silicone, which is applied to cling film, manipulated to look like flowing water and allowed to cure before adding to the layout to represent small waterfalls along the river.



TOP LEFT: The viaduct is scratch-built from card and embossed with plastic sheet. The design is based on that of Dolgoch viaduct, just not as high and with a curve. A challenge to get right, but a satisfying result.



MIDDLE LEFT: The church is Dapol kit; the original was too big for the area, so a razor saw was used to reduce the length. The roof was replaced with card strips cut to represent slate tiles. The church has interior lighting by use of an electronic tea light.

> "There is something to be said for narrow gauge modelling and that opportunity to create a completely new railway company with its own history, something that is not usually done with its OO counterpart."

No. 1 passes over the viaduct with the local stopping service. The train is made up of a variety of kit-built and repainted coaches, including Bachman, Peco, Parkside Dundas and Westcliff Works.

TOP RIGHT: No. 6 *Captain Mainwaring*, the locos are named after the characters from *Dad's Army*, who coincidentally have the same name as the owners of the line.

MIDDLE RIGHT: For added interest, I decided that the line would be a good spot to watch banking locomotives. Here, No. 1 and No. 5 are helping shove the freight from Porthkel up the gradient.

BELOW: One of the best views of the line is down by the river and watching the engine still on the viaduct. No. 6 makes its way to Porthkel, with a slate train.





Every building on the layout is either a kit- or scratch-built. Creating buildings is one of my favourite parts of the hobby. The signal box and station building are Ratio kits, the station being situated on a wooden platform that spans the river, painstakingly created with matchsticks with the pillars sculpted from air-dry clay. The cottages on the hill are a Wills kit, with added interior detail, and above one of the tunnel mouths sits the church, a Dapol kit that found itself victim to the razor saw to fit the scene. The sidings at the front of the layout are home to a former slate quarry, which is now used for granite extraction. The loader is a very kit-bashed Dapol dockside crane.

The achievement of completing a scenic layout is always a satisfying one to me, the only other one previously being a small N gauge layout, but there are several elements that I'm really proud of on this layout, the viaduct, in particular, is one of them. I studied photos of Dolgoch viaduct and decided to scratch-build a version and give myself the added of challenge making it curved. Working out the shape of the viaduct and how the arches would be positioned was certainly interesting, but the end result is something I'm particularly pleased with. I also enjoyed those little scenic details, scratch-building my own road signs with the names of the fictional locations of my map on them, or the gardens of the two cottages with two very different owners, one with a prim and proper garden and the other with a pile of rubbish dumped on the dead lawn, and chickens running wild.



Rolling stock

My collection started with the Bachmann *Skarloey*, with the intention of replacing the face with a smokebox door. Somehow, he has survived going under the knife, as other locos have been given a makeover first. Currently, three locomotives have been repainted into the fictional Mid Snowdon Railway Blue, a Bachmann *Rheneas* with a Narrow Planet's conversion kit. This is the Company's number 1 loco, *Jack Jones*, and following that was a Baldwin 10-12-D named *Captain Mainwaring*, and finally a Peter Sam with a Fourdees kit named *James Fraser*. There are a number of on-hire locos from the Ffestiniog until they go through the paint shop, including Double Fairlies and England's large and small. Rolling stock is an eclectic mix of what I like the look of - a mixture of ready-to-run and kits, most are waiting for their own visit to the paint shop.

When I planned the layout, the idea was to just run trains around using the passing loop with a little bit of shunting in the granite loader sidings. However, after the inspiration of the Clyre Valley Railway layout, I like to have the bankers working hard as they help move the heavy trains up the hill. It adds to the operational interest that, once the train has cleared the tunnel, you can run the bankers light engine back, holding them in the passing loop as another train approaches. The sidings also add additional operating interest, and I even built the loader, so it actually loads wagons (not very well, mind - the door doesn't close quickly enough





ABOVE: No. 5 waits for a clear road in the passing loop as No. 1 arrives with the market day train. It's clearly a busy day, the station has three passengers! The platform was constructed with matchsticks, painstakingly glued together.

MIDDLE LEFT: An overview of the rather unkempt garden of the right-hand cottage. The chickens are from Preiser and the shed is scratch-built from card.

BOTTOM LEFT: I wanted two completely different neighbours at the cottages; one owner keeping everything prim and proper and the other a little messier. The opposites go right down to the details of the noisy terrier barking at the cat.

and smaller wagons tend to find themselves submerged in ballast!). A small layout can have its limitations, but, for the time being, it meets my needs.

The trackwork proved to be problematic in places, particularly with the use of curved N gauge set-track points, where locos would stall no matter what I did to try and improve the running. I even removed the plastic frog and converted the point to an electrofrog, but, eventually, I decided to replace with a standard OO9 set and realigned the passing loop.

Reflections

The build was a great experience to learn from. While some things went right first time, others didn't and it's easy to feel disheartened when this happens, but I'd say to any modeller, never give up. There is always a solution to the problem and sometimes you just need to step back and have a rethink. I certainly needed to do that when it came to the river. It's also easy to rush into things when the excitement of moving on to more fun aspects of a layout build is just tempting you to speed through. Always take your time and test your track.

If I were to build this layout again, I'd make sure to peel the silver foil from the insulation board, as it seemed to cause a few short-circuit problems when the track was first laid. I'd also make access to the point motors easier; they currently sit in holes made in the





ABOVE: To lower the costs of the banking engines and reduce occupation of the single line, the company would usually run bankers back with another train picked up from the sidings at Hafn Junction.

MIDDLE LEFT: No. 5 is on an express to Porrhkel calling at the market town of Dinrhyd. The teak effect on the coaches was created with a light brown base coat of Tamiya paint and dry-brush of a Tamiya red brown, then sealed with varnish.

BOTTOM LEFT: No. 5 waits in the passing loop as No. 1 arrives with the local stopping service. The station building is a Ratio kit, suitably weathered for the Welsh weather.

TOP RIGHT: Viewed from the river, No. 6 passes over the viaduct. The weirs on the river were created with acrylic bathroom silicone, applied to cling film and left to cure before being applied to the layout.

MIDDLE RIGHT: A steam roller from Oxford Diecast awaits at the level crossing. The crossing is built from a scratch-built deck and Ratio gates, all suitably weathered.

BELOW: An overview of the station from the sheep field. The bridge is made from DAS air-dry clay, applied to a Plastikard framework and sculpted before setting with N gauge bridge girders and a coffee stirrer beam.





insulation board with only a small opening drilled through the plywood base to feed the wires, and troubleshooting with such limited access made things difficult.

I was quite pleased with my seafoam tress, but I'd certainly look at other methods if I were to make them again. The trunks are too thin for my liking and I'd probably try a wire armature method for something a little more realistic. I'd also check I've planned for every bit of rolling stock, as my Lynton and Barnstaple coaches are a lot wider than other items and cause issues in the fiddle yard.

I am already working on the next station on the map, which is the Welsh Market town of Dinrhyd, its influence is very much taken from the Welshpool and Llanfair Railway. The plan is to build the layout over three modular baseboards, with the centre board being focused on the station and engine shed for the bankers, and the other boards representing the town with the railway squeezed between the houses and the castle, from which Dinrhyd gets its name. If space permits, I intend to add 'Fford Dinrhyd' to this layout, although some drastic rebuilding might be needed to get the two layouts to join together. After that, I'll probably head to the harbour town of Porthkel, but I might need a bigger room to put everything in first! ■

> "There is always a solution to the problem and sometimes you just need to step back and have a rethink. I certainly needed to do that when it came to the river."

PROTOTYPE

The class did visit the Western Region on at least three occasions, twice standing in for Kings with technical problems, but also as part of the 1948 exchange trials. 46236 is seen leaving Paddington in 1948 and the picture clearly shows the sloping top to the smokebox that was evident when the streamlining was removed. **Colour-Rail.com**

DUCHESS OF HAMILTON

By J Crosse



Almost from new, 46231 had lived north of the border at Polmadie, where it is seen in August 1952 in the short-lived BR blue livery. **W H Foster/Colour-Rail.com**

Names associated with nobility have adorned many locomotives over the years, and in 1936, the London Midland & Scottish Railway (LMS) decided to name its most prestigious new engine, 4-6-2 6220, *Coronation* in connection with the coming to the throne of King Edward VIII. Extending the royal theme, a number of other titled ladies had already been commemorated, with the preceding Princess Royal class on the first design of LMS pacific. The theme was extended to name the rest of the first batch (6221-4) of the new 4-6-2s, but for a subsequent order for 10 (6225-34), the theme changed to that of Duchesses, chosen mainly in order of royal precedence, with 6229 being *Duchess of Hamilton*, the wife of the 13th such duke, although the lady in question was the 15th to take the Duchess title. To differentiate the class from the Princess Royals, enthusiasts variously dubbed them Coronations, Princess Coronations or the Duchesses, with the last-mentioned seemingly the most common at the platform end, except for the world of enthusiast slang, which dubbed them Semis.

There were a number of factors that were leading to ever larger designs taking to the rails. In the case of the West Coast Main Line, there were three key requirements; ever-increasing loads, hill-climbing ability for the route north of Carnforth, and the need for speed. The last was in part a perceived need to counter the same motivation as the LNER to have the fastest services to Scotland, a rivalry dating back to the days before the Grouping in 1923. In those days, the Midland Railway, as opposed to the London & North Western, provided effective competition but with very light-weight trains powered by 4-4-0 compounds amongst other types. All of the LMS constituents lacked engines that could handle heavyweight trains at high speed over long distances, combined with the essential hill-climbing ability to tackle Shap and Beattock, or the equally demanding terrain of the Settle & Carlisle route.

The LMS recognised the need for larger locomotives and the incumbent Chief Mechanical Engineer, George Hughes, a Lancashire & Yorkshire Railways man, introduced a 4-6-0 design, but this proved to be a lacklustre machine. 1925 saw the appointment of Sir Henry Fowler, a Midland Railway devotee. He produced the 4-6-0 Royal Scots, that being done in some haste. While these allowed some increase in train weights, they were not consistently high-speed runners and it was not until the arrival of William Stanier in 1932, having a Great Western pedigree, that things began to move forward with a raft of new designs that employed many ideas of GWR origin but incorporating 'improvements' as Stanier deemed necessary. Engines of power classifications of 5 and 6 soon appeared and later improvements were made to the Royal Scots, although that process dragged on and was not complete until British Railways' days.

Overriding the need for large numbers of the Class 5 and Class 6 designs was, in Stanier's view, a Pacific design, and within 18 months of his arrival, the first locomotive entered traffic, numbered 6200 with 6201 following in November 1933. A third locomotive, 6202, was included in Lot 99, which in due course emerged as the Turbomotive, and it was the second half of 1935 before 10 further engines, 6203-12, were delivered following a thorough evaluation of 6200-1. The LMS press office described 6200 as the most powerful steam locomotive in Britain, capable of a speed of nearly 80mph. Various trials established that the type was able to offer a vast improvement over existing timings, with, for instance, 30 minutes being saved on the schedule of the Mid-Day Scot, while on a lightweight train, speeds in excess of 90mph were recorded in several places.

With just 12 Pacifics in traffic, the LMS would require many more to offer a comprehensive high-speed service. Indeed, the LNER was busy constructing A4 4-6-2s for East Coast operations and introducing high-speed trains where speeds of 100mph were being recorded. The challenge for Stanier and the LMS was to produce a locomotive that could both compete with LNER speed and climb the northern hills with a 500-ton load unassisted. Not only that, but image was important and the LNER stole that crown with its 'new streamlined engines'. The LMS had to respond. While it would seem that Stanier was not a fan of streamlining, he insisted it had to be done and there was an initial proposal that 6203-6212 should be built with it, but that came to nothing, and a later scheme to modify the Turbomotive was also stillborn.



The LMS arranged for a Princess Coronation to visit the United States in 1939. While this appears to be 6220 *Coronation* on display, it is in fact 6229 in disguise.
P Lubliner/Colour-Rail.com



Wartime black did not flatter the streamlined Duchesses, as can be seen in this undated view of 6238 *City of Carlisle*.
P Hughes/Colour-Rail.com

The LNER had announced in 1936 that it would be operating to Edinburgh in six hours with a Newcastle stop, while the LMS was set to launch the Coronation Scot in the summer of 1937 with a 6 ½ hour timing to Glasgow. In order to meet the requirements of the traffic department, Stanier decided that the most critical requirement was to mount the largest possible boiler on a 4-6-2 chassis in order to have sufficient steam. Other changes included increasing the driving wheel diameter from 6' 6" to 6' 9" and changing the spacing of the driving wheels in order to facilitate the moving of the inside cylinders forward of the bogie centre line, with all four of them being of a larger diameter than those previously employed. The design was complete by the end of February, and 6220 was first seen outside the workshop at Crewe on May 25th, 1937. The engines were designated as Class 7 by the LMS at that time. The first five Duchesses replaced a similar order for Princess Royal engines. The cost of the latter was estimated at £52,000, while the next 10 were costed at £138,000. A further batch of 20 appeared to have a lower price per engine, with the batch cost being £243,000. Due to the start of World War II, the pace of locomotive building slowed markedly. Initial orders were appearing at the rate of two engines per month, but the production of 6235-6244 took 13 months, with the last appearing in July 1940.

While the works had orders for more in the 1942 construction plan, it was June 1943 before 6245 was completed and up to 6248 were in service by October. Further delays ensued with 6249-52 constructed in April to June 1944 and 6253-6255 in September and October 1946, two years after William Stanier had left the LMS. The next CME was Fairburn, but he died in office to be replaced by George Ivatt in February 1946. With two engines of Lot 414 still to be built, Ivatt made several changes to the design, with 6256 being turned out from Crewe Works in the death throes of the LMS in December 1947, while 6257 was a product of British Railways, entering service in May 1948. If Nationalisation had not intervened, perhaps more Duchesses might have been constructed, but that was not to be. The Duchess name theme was not pursued after 6234, with instead cities within the LMS realm being the subject.

While a major requirement for the design had been the requirement for streamlining, not all class members were so fitted, with 6235-44/49-57 always running without streamlining. In due course, it was removed from all class members. In order to fit the streamlining, the top of the smokebox was lowered at the front, and for a number of years after the removal, some former streamlined engines could be easily identified by the cut down smokebox profile.

46255 *City of Hereford* was one of the less colourful class members, having ever only run in black, blue and green, and here shows off the final version of that livery at Kingmoor in 1962.
Colour-Rail.com



This excellent rear three-quarters view of 46229 shows it in the BR version of the resuscitated LMS Crimson in 1958 at Wigan. **Colour-Rail.com**



Life goes full circle and 46229 reverted to its original identity and form, but unfortunately immobile at the NRM. **Colour-Rail.com**



Appearing as it never did in service, 6229 stands outside the Butlins holiday camp at Minehead. It never carried LMS Crimson and did not run without smoke deflectors after the removal of the streamlining. **Colour-Rail.com**



46229 stands at Euston, having arrived with the Merseyside express in 1962. The class arrived relatively late at its then home shed of Edge Hill, having already been displaced from a number of duties by English Electric Type 4s. **Colour-Rail.com**

Other changes included the fitting of smoke deflectors and double chimneys, with 6235-57 being equipped with the latter from new. There were also differences to the front footplate design, with some having a curved transition, while others were just 'open'.

As well as the publicity value of the streamlining, research showed that the engines that had it used 2% less coal than those that did not. The downside was experienced by those who had to maintain the locos. Filling the sandboxes required the use of a step ladder and, due to spring-loaded covers, accessing certain oiling points was challenging and time consuming, while the metalwork of the streamline plating was corroding from the inside. In November 1945, the decision was taken to remove the casing at a cost of £5,527, and 6235 was the first to be dealt with in the spring of 1946. Two engines came into BR ownership still in streamlined condition, 46226 and 46243, with the latter the last to be dealt with in May 1949. The exposure of the sloping smokebox front, for some reason, triggered the enthusiasts to employ the nickname Semis for those engines. 46246 was the last engine to receive a 'standard' smokebox profile, this being as late as 1960.

The story of the liveries carried by the Duchesses is one of the most complex, given that there were only ever 38 and they were in use for less than 30 years. 6220-4 carried what was specified by Stanier as Caledonian Blue with painted silver stripes 'flaring out' from a central point of the nose of the streamlining. These were carried along the whole engine and tender, continuing on the matching coaching stock. 6225-9/35-44 were similarly treated, but in Crimson Lake and Gold. The non-streamlined 6230-4 also carried crimson lake and were lined out in a conventional manner. 6245-52, being wartime products, were turned out in plain black, while 6253-7 were black but lined out in maroon with 'pale straw' numbers rather than the yellow employed on the other black engines. All of the class received one of the two versions of the black livery, although styles of numbering and lettering varied throughout the LMS period.

In 1948, the whole class was renumbered by the addition of 40,000 to their numbers, except the final class member, which was new as 46257. 6230/6 briefly carried an 'M' prefix to their LMS numbers.

When BR started its trials with experimental liveries in 1948, six Duchesses received what was later termed 'dark blue', having a more purple tinge than that subsequently selected. Around the same time, some black engines received lining out. Most, but not all of the class then received BR blue starting in June 1949. A small number missed out on blue completely, going straight from black to BR green, which was first applied in November 1951 to 46232. With a relaxation of 'corporate rules', the Midland Region later set about repainting certain engines, but none of those allocated to Scotland, in Crimson Lake in two variations, some in what was described as a BR-style while others had an LMS version with the former being orange and black lined with the LMS version being black and yellow, with the two running concurrently for a while. All locos carrying red with the BR-style lining later had it replaced by the LMS version. A late addition for some class members was the cabside yellow stripe signifying that the locos were not allowed to work under the wires south of Crewe.

The class produced many feats of haulage over the years, but the 'opening event' is perhaps the most worthy of mention when 6220 *Coronation* was used for a test run on June 29th, 1937. It made the history books for all the right reasons, but was almost the total opposite. 6220 ran from Euston to Crewe and reached 114mph (1mph faster than the then speed record held by the LNER)

approaching the latter. With the brakes not applied until 1.5 miles from Crewe station, the train ran over a 20mph restricted approach to Platform 3 at 52mph and it would seem that a derailment was narrowly avoided. On the return journey, the LMS snatched from the GWR the record for the highest average speed for a run exceeding 60 miles, averaging 89.1mph compared with the best GWR speed on the Cheltenham Flyer of 87.5mph.

The class was only allocated to a few sheds with their sphere of operation being almost entirely between Euston to Glasgow and Perth. As such, Polmadie, Carlisle Upperby, Crewe North and Camden were their homes, although as diesel traction took hold, some were to be found at Liverpool Edge Hill, Kingmoor and Willesden. Polmadie doggedly hung on to 46222-4/30-2 once they arrived there in 1939, but abused that trust by being the first to condemn Duchesses on December 29th, 1962, those being 46231/2, thus the class was complete for under 15 years. The end for the Duchesses was quite brutal, with around half of the class being in service for the summer timetable of 1964, but a mass withdrawal took place on September 12th, leaving just 46256 on the books, that being retained to work a railtour and it also joined the scrap queue on October 3rd, thus, no class member completed even 30 years of service.

A member of the class was to be part of the National Collection and rather than this being 46220 or 46257, both of which it could be argued should have been candidates, 46235 was the chosen locomotive, possibly because it was being offered a home at Birmingham Museum of Science and Industry. Good fortune favoured 46229/33, as we shall see when they were purchased by the Butlin holiday camp organisation for static display, allowing them both to survive long enough to live a new life in preservation.

So, what of the life of 6229, later 46229 *Duchess of Hamilton*? It was authorised for building on October 27th, 1937, as part of Lot 145 and order 408. It entered traffic on September 7th, 1938, being part of the second batch of streamlined engines and carried crimson paintwork with gold lining.

The locomotive's claim to fame might not be easily identified. The LMS agreed to send a locomotive for display in the United States of America with the obvious choice being 6220, but it was in need of works attention and with 6229 being almost fresh off the production line it underwent an identity swap and was shipped across the Atlantic, departing in January 1939 with the tour planned to take around 12 months. World War II intervened and it did not return until March 1942, to resume life as 6229 at its then home shed of Crewe North. As recorded earlier, the class lost the streamlining and, for 6229, this was officially noted as happening on January 10th, 1948, just three months before it was renumbered as 46229. Right through until March 1961, it alternated between Crewe and Camden sheds, but it then moved to Edge Hill until its condemnation in February 1964. It enjoyed an array of liveries, losing its LMS Crimson for plain black in November 1944. When the streamlining came off in 1948, it was painted lined black, changing to BR blue in February 1950 and green with the first BR crest in April 1952. It never ran in green with the second crest, instead receiving the BR version of crimson livery in September 1958 and the LMS version in October 1959. During its service life, it was credited with having run over 1.5 million miles and, up to the end of 1959, it was the holder of the second highest average yearly mileage at 75,218, just beaten by 46239 at 75,498.

As mentioned previously, following its withdrawal, the loco was one of two purchased by Butlins, with 46229 being chosen because of its alter ego life in the USA, and it spent a number of years taking in the sea air at Minehead, but by the early-1970s, she had fallen out of favour. However, it was not sold by Butlins, but put on a 20-year loan to National Railway Museum (NRM). At the time, the NRM was interested in restoring the engine for main line use, but the cost appeared prohibitive and it was just cosmetically restored. In mid-1978, the Friends of the NRM started fundraising to see it restored to working condition, and its new life on the main line began in 1980 until 1985. The NRM purchased the engine two years later and it took to the main line again from 1989 to 1996. After 10 years as a static exhibit, fundraising allowed it to be re-streamlined, with much of the work being carried out at the Tyseley Steam Museum workshops. It was 2009 before that task was completed and it was done in such a way that the engine could again be restored to running order if required, but there are no active plans to allow it to roam free once more. ■

46229 back where it belonged, on the main line in 1981. However, it was to be mainly on Settle & Carlisle metals that it tackled the northern fells as steam was yet to make a return to the West Coast Main Line. It is seen here at Appleby in 1981. **Colour-Rail.com**



LEARNING CURVE

This newcomer to the hobby threw himself in at the deep end, learning new skills, drawing on his miniature wargaming experiences and inspiring a new generation of modellers.

Words: Alastair Snook **Photography:** Phil Parker

FACTFILE

LAYOUT NAME: Torry's End
SCALE/GAUGE: 1:76/OO
SIZE: 105cm x 30cm
ERA/REGION: Early BR/Western Region
LAYOUT TYPE: Inglenook shunting puzzle (micro)

TOP RIGHT: This hill was formed from expanded polystyrene I retrieved from a skip outside a Homebase. I used a heated scalpel tool my mum gave me years ago to carve it into shape, then coated it with filler before adding ground formations with air-drying clay. The tunnel mouth is a well-known item from the Peco range. I purchased the trees from a second-hand bin at Alcester Trains and Models for a couple of pounds.

MIDDLE RIGHT: My good friend Paul C. gifted me a static grass applicator, which I made good use of in this project with multiple lengths. His kindness, advice and generosity have helped me through some challenging times over the years – thanks, Paul!



'Torry's End' is my first layout, built from the dusty skeleton of a Hornby Thomas Passenger & Goods Train Set, which was a present from my grandfather when I was eight or nine years old. As with many children born in the late-'90s, I adored a certain blue tank engine and dreamed of recreating a piece of Sodor as I wistfully perused the Hornby catalogues. I was desperate to join my local model railway club, which had unfortunately set a minimum age of 16 years for members. By the time I reached this, the membership had dwindled (via natural causes) to zero. When I had my first job at 16, my interest had moved onto other, tangentially related hobbies, such as miniature wargaming. I retained an admiration for model railways, though this was distant, and it seemed unlikely anything would ever come of it.

Just 10 years later, my partner and I had moved into a small flat in Leamington and I was attending the Great British Model Railway Show at Gaydon. I got chatting to Phil Parker, who recommended I try the hobby out by building something small and cheap using bits I already had, pointing me towards a website about inglenook shunting puzzles. He also recommended I join my local society. In a frenzied week-and-a-half, I joined the Leamington and Warwick Model Railway Society, retrieved my old track and locos from my parents' house, designed a baseboard, and had the pieces cut by Torry's Hardware of Warwick. I had been recommended to go here by Phil, and having been treated very well by them, I settled on 'Torry's End' as a name. It sounded, rather comfortingly, similar to Tarry's End, a lane I took on the way to primary school as a little boy.

> "...it was incredibly satisfying to be able to run my first train and test out the inglenook 'card game' concept."

It was an interesting challenge to arrange the various items of foliage to create a realistic effect, but I'm quite happy with the results.



Space-saver

The design is very simple and is essentially the classic inglenook layout, though the main line curves away from the viewer and into a tunnel in the corner of the board – I didn't like the idea of it just finishing at a wall or drop. The baseboard is plywood on pine batons, with only a partial backscene at one end to allow for more viewing angles. This accommodates the hill and tunnel, but also allows the layout to be stored on its end, which means that, when propped up on its end, 'Torry's End' takes up no more desk space than a copy of this magazine would - ideal as we have a lack of space. It is also extremely portable, with everything aside from rolling stock permanently attached with thick brass rod to the baseboard. A spring-loaded carrying handle allows me to carry the thing around like a guitar case, and it fits perfectly across the back seats of our car. I assembled it very noisily, (sans power tools) on an evening when my girlfriend was at a concert. If you are reading this and live in the flat below, I'm very sorry about that.

Throughout the build, I followed the World of Railways beginner video series on the construction of 'Ferness Quay', which recently featured in an excellent small layout supplement for BRM. I improvised slightly here and there, but using it gave my project a logical structure.

I enjoyed laying the track, landscaping the scenery with polystyrene (from a skip outside Homebase), clay and filler, and all aspects of greenery. I did not like ballasting or rail painting, but I slowly got it done over the winter. I enjoyed the process of wiring up point motors, feeders, LED lights and my Gaugemaster Combi controller, and it was incredibly satisfying to be able to run my first train and test out the inglenook 'card game' concept.





ABOVE: The loading bay lights are warm LEDs from eBay, and they give a lovely soft spotlight effect when operating the layout at night. Don't think too hard about what's actually happening in this cameo – it's just meant to look 'busy'.

MIDDLE LEFT: The water tower was from the Hornby *Thomas and Friends* range and came pre-loaded with resin water and had been used in hundreds of games of Warhammer 40,000 before being included here. About time!

BOTTOM LEFT: The gravelly tarmac is actually a spread-on substance made for scale modellng and wargaming. It's meant to represent 'lava rock', but when dusted up, it makes for good, rough tarmac.

Learning new skills

The layout represents a BR Western Region goods yard or sidings. I decided on Early BR as an era, as I find it somewhat alien (I was born the year the railways were privatised). The early history of this entity, particularly the state-driven 'dieselisation', captured my imagination, and I decided I needed to include a Class 08 as my shunter. They looked so grim and brutal in BR black! An appropriate Bachmann 08 was purchased from Tony's Trains of Rugby and most of my eight wagons were purchased from The Wagon Yard at the final Warley NEC show. I also joined up with Bachmann and received the 2023 Collectors Club model of the year, a BR bauxite conflat.

For inspiration, I kept referring back to a photograph of a Western Region goods yard. What struck me was the contrast between the neat vehicle liveries, beat-up old rolling stock, and the pleasant sky and foliage. With reference images printed out, I began experimenting with dry-brushing, washing, powders and a cheap airbrush. It was surprisingly quick and easy once I realised that just as important as the application was knowing where to clean off the muck! Many of my girlfriend's cotton buds were lost to this. I also tried to cut to size and attach a paper backscene, but I utterly destroyed it and wasted a whole afternoon in the process. Having got the airbrush out already, I decided to mix a nice blue and give the boards a very simple background of sky and clouds. It won't win any awards, but it's an intentionally minimal backscene anyway, and I'd had more than enough of it by then!

About the modeller



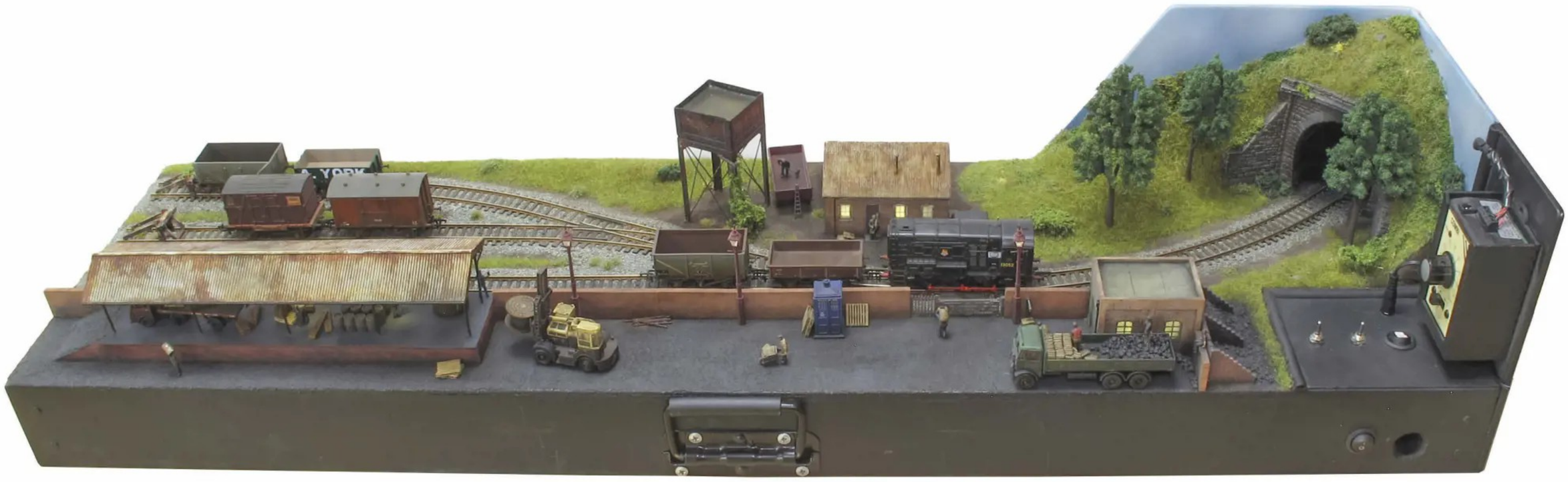
Name: Alastair Snook
Age: 28
Number of years modelling: Two years on model railways, 18 years on model soldiers
Name of your first layout: 'Torry's End'
Favourite era/region: Early BR
Favourite locomotive: Class 08

I'm a primary school teacher, STEM advocate, apprentice model engineer and LWMRS society member based in Leamington. I run a model railway club for years 5 and 6 every week. We recently completed a class project where, supported by the society, my class of 32 children built their own KATO Mini Diorama Circus modules to form a layout, which was then exhibited at multiple shows. This was done within the curriculum as part of their Art and Design lessons.

In terms of scenic items, all buildings are second-hand, pre-painted resin models by Hornby and Bachmann, which I adapted and weathered. An area I'm particularly proud of is the rusting roof canopy of the goods yard platform, an effect achieved using Dirty Down's water-soluble rust paint, combined with Ammo weathering powders, followed by a matt varnish spray. The key to achieving a realistic look here was a base coat, dry-brush and wash before applying the products. This provides a 'micro-texture' for them to cling to, and it all builds up to represent the lumps and bumps of oxide deposits. I also used the rust paint on the buffers and water tower, though watered-down to lighten and smooth the effect to replicate surface rust with a blooming effect.

BELOW: The partial backscene doubles as a stand to keep the layout on its end in storage. It provides strength and protection for the fragile trees and a surface on which to mount the controller without increasing the footprint.

BOTTOM: The layout measures 105cm x 30cm and, as you can see, the shape is intentionally simple and solid.





All figures are Bachmann and Modelscene, but improved with my wargaming acrylics, complementing the overall colour palette. My favourite part of the whole project was arranging these figures to create some little cameos. In the foreground, a coal lorry is being unloaded, but the delivery of coal to the staithes is being interrupted by an oik sitting on a wall. Near the water tower, a worker has climbed inside an open-topped trailer to clean it out. Parcels are being sorted on the platform of the goods yard, and in the dark, I can turn on the downlights in the canopy and move the workers onto the night shift. Most importantly, we have the obligatory Hornby TARDIS by a wall, a gift from my girlfriend.

A technique I 'invented' during the project was a way to avoid detailing the interiors of buildings while lighting them nicely from inside. Simply paint the interior walls and ceiling black, then stick baking paper over the interior of the window. The LED light shines through the window, but the view of the interior is obscured. I'm sure this will have experienced modellers chuckling, but if one fellow newbie learns something useful from my experiments, then that's fine by me!

I spent a long time figuring out how to model dry or dead soil in this scale, which eventually led me to scooping up chinese takeaway boxes full of earth from the roadworks outside Leamington's Aldi. Thankfully, we Brits will ignore almost any behaviour to avoid





TOP LEFT: My lovely mum bought me this 94XX as a birthday present. When I eventually upgrade the layout to DCC, I'll have it chugging around noisily.

MIDDLE LEFT: This lovely coal delivery lorry was found at a second-hand shop. Unfortunately, it is based on a vehicle from a merchant in Martham, Norfolk. Inconvenient, given I'm modelling BR Western Region, so I weathered the living daylights out of it to make the text unreadable.

BELOW: Viewed from this angle, the colour palette of the layout really comes together, tied by the layer of soot and grime I have applied to many of the surfaces.

"I spent a long time figuring out how to model dry or dead soil in this scale, which eventually led me to scooping up Chinese takeaway boxes full of earth from the roadworks outside Leamington's Aldi."



having to interact with each other, so my antics went unchallenged. I baked the earth in the oven, which smelt awful but allowed me to sieve it into fine particles. It was attached in a very similar way to ballast, then washed and dry-brushed to detail and lighten it up.

Operation is DC and very simple – two-point switches built into a small control panel. It is best operated in pairs – one person to drive and the other to couple and un-couple. It's great for getting members of the public to join in at exhibitions.

A typical running session would involve the 'player' shuffling eight cards (one for each wagon) into a random order. They control the loco and points, and they instruct the other person on which wagons to uncouple. The winner (if you want one) is the person who shunts the train into order in the least amount of moves.

The next challenge

I learned a lot during the build process, and I will take this knowledge forward onto my next project. For my next layout (which will likely still be small), I will not be using insulated frogs with DC control, as I have learned that this combination is not conducive to reliable slow-speed shunting. I certainly won't be mixing track codes and (groan) sanding them down to match the heights – bad idea! I was lucky enough to able to show my layout to Pete Waterman at our society open day, and





ABOVE: A pile of rusting metal, a vine growing up to a dripping pipe, or a ladder recently used by a yard worker. Each is a part of the story being told and a chance to imagine.

MIDDLE LEFT: My uncle Jon very kindly bought me this Oxford SD Freightlifter from Chester Models. As with all vehicles, a matt varnish was applied before and after weathering. Top tip – if the vehicle has rubber tyres, take them off before varnishing, or it will make them sticky.

BOTTOM LEFT: Products used on the corrugated roof include Dirty Down rust, Ammo rust powder and Army Painter matt varnish.

TOP RIGHT: I built an off-ramp for the loading bay, as it was annoying me that nobody could get up there. I used Plastikard and brick paper (once again donated by Paul C.) to build the ramp and blended it with the main structure with weathering.

MIDDLE RIGHT: The Class 08 can just fit wholly within the tunnel, but I am sorely tempted to facilitate an extension out of the back panel to be able to bring on new locomotives and wagons.

BELOW: Painting your track makes an enormous difference. When you first start, it's not something you think about, but if you want a realistic look, you should absolutely put the effort in. This is just cheap acrylics!





I got some great advice on the colouration of trees and how to improve the appearance of the sides and control panel while not distracting from the model itself.

The most important thing I learned was the value of being in a society. Every step of the way, I had support, information, mentoring and advice available in person and via my mobile. It was invaluable. If anyone else ever finds themselves wanting to get into the hobby and is short on space, time and funds, I will pass on two pieces of advice: a) make something small and cheap, and b) join a society. All in all, the layout and stock cost about £400 (though not all at once). I overbought some items and now have spares, and I could have saved money in places, but the amount of learning that took place over the year was well worth it.

There are definitely areas of the layout I can improve. I want to replace all of the track and use unifrog turnouts, as well as upgrade to DCC; however, I think I will give it a rest for a few years before revisiting it. Either way, 'Torry's End' will always hold a special place as my first 'proper' model railway, and it is currently enjoying regular operation by a crack team of Year 5 and 6 pupils at the LWMRS-affiliated club I run after school in my classroom.

This layout has come to live in my classroom, where the school club will analyse, play with and definitely not break it! I am a bit of a hobby butterfly, so I probably won't do another OO layout next time. I wonder how small an O or N gauge layout could be? ■

> "A typical running session would involve the 'player' shuffling eight cards (one for each wagon) into a random order."

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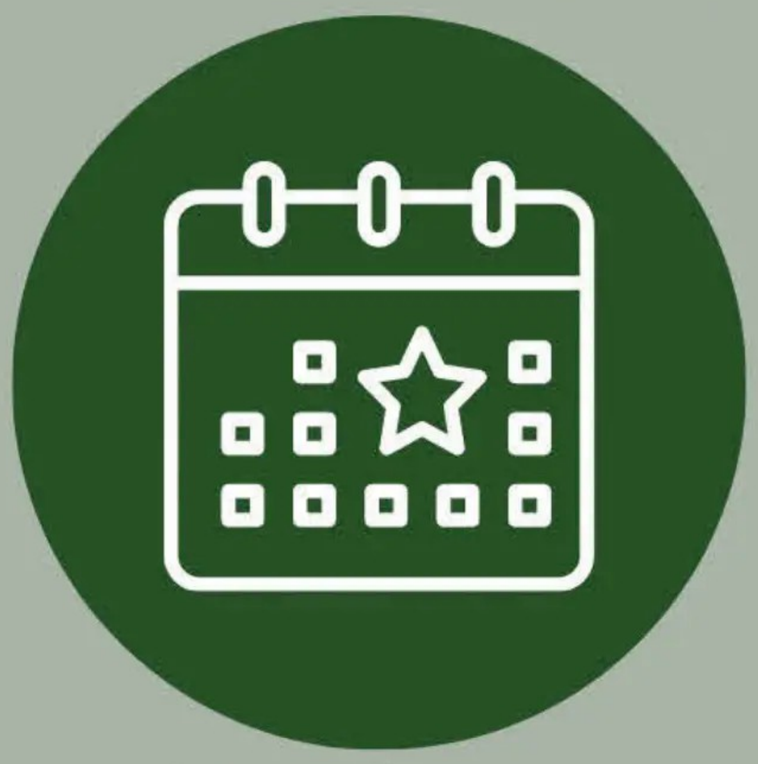

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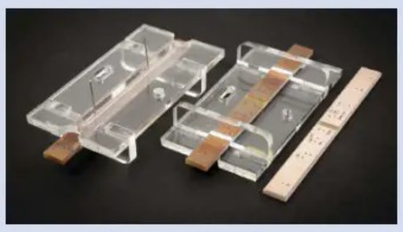
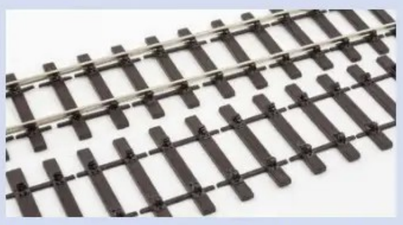


Universal point tie bar used to operate switch blade on points



Range of copper clad strip and pre etch sleepers



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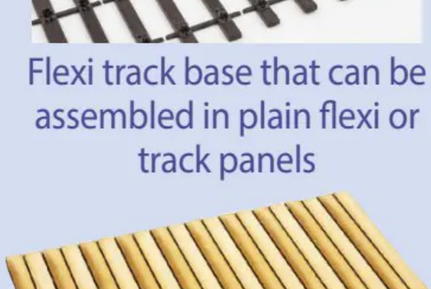

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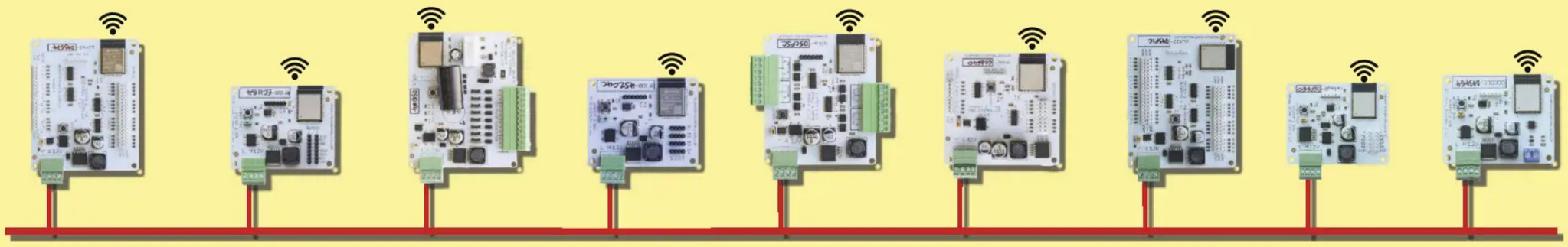

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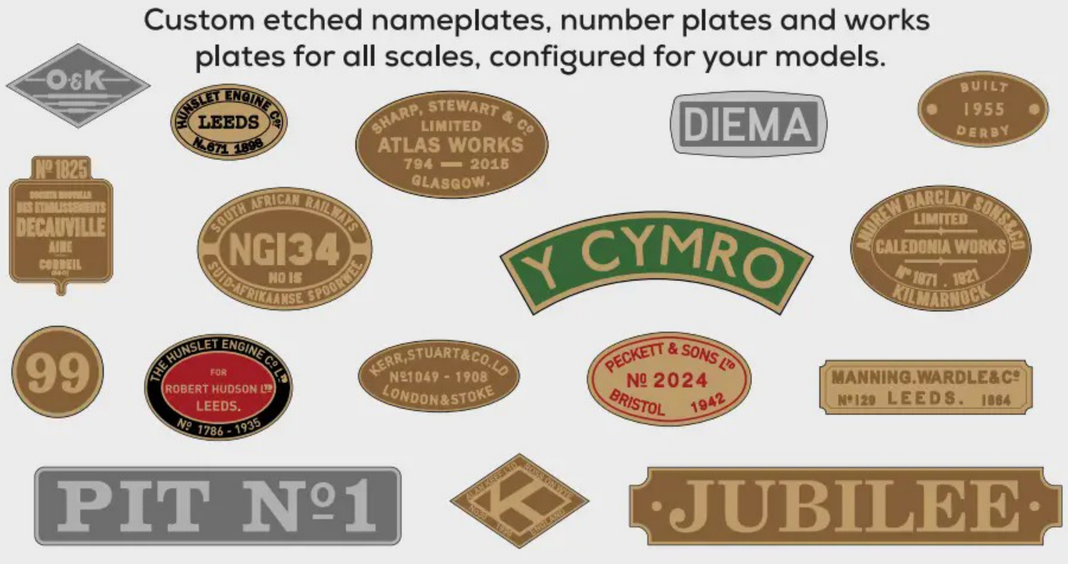

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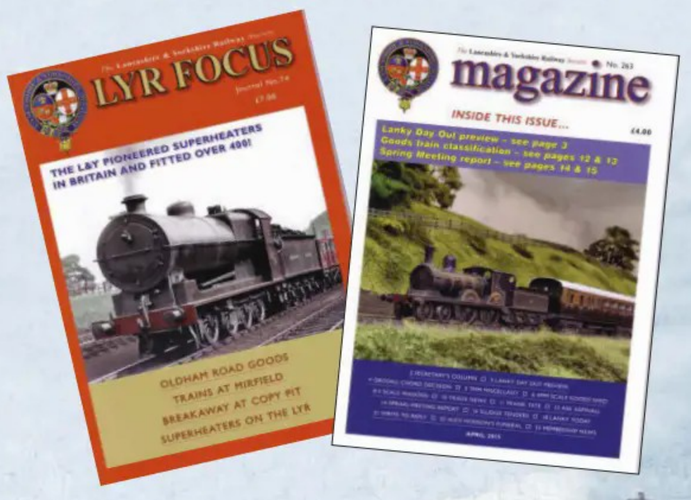

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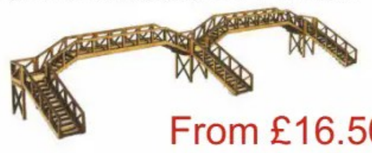

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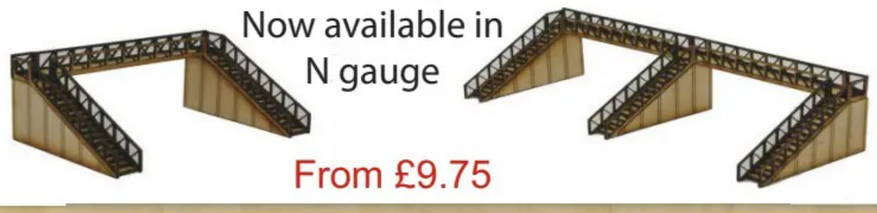

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THE LATEST HEADLINES

Bachmann Winter 2025 announcements



Bachmann has unveiled a wide-ranging collection of new releases for Winter 2025, spanning its model railway ranges across the Branchline, Graham Farish, EFE Rail, and EFE Road brands.

Leading the announcements is the return of the Class 47 to the Branchline range, with a second batch first previewed in October.

The model incorporates several technical upgrades, including the Bach-Up Stay Alive system, body-mounted snowploughs, and refined cab glazing.

Sound Fitted and Sound Fitted Deluxe versions feature the Dual Fitted XL speaker system, with the latter also including Bachmann's Auto-Release Coupling.

Seven versions are planned, among them two BR Green liveries and exclusive commissions.

Also in OO…

The newly-tooled Class 13 *Master & Slave* shunter will appear in two liveries: BR Green with Wasp Stripes (D4502) and BR Blue (No. 13003).



The company's Sales Area Exclusive range returns too, offering four regional Class 150 DMUs — Northern and London Northwestern 150/1s, plus Transport for Wales and Anglia 150/2s.



New rolling stock includes LMS 12-ton vans, Presflo Bulk Powder wagons, BR grain hoppers, Anchor-Mounted tank wagons and BR Carflat wagons, along with a Mk. 1 Brake Second Open "Laboratory 10" in RTC colours for Bachmann Collectors Club members.

N Gauge

Originally announced in September ahead of The International N Gauge Show, Graham Farish adds four new GWR Hall and Modified Hall 4-6-0s, including preserved locomotives *Kinlet Hall* and *Raveningham Hall.*



Built between 1900 and 1908, the C Class was the SE&CR's answer to the growing need for a standardised freight locomotive design. It proved extremely successful with a total of 109 being built, and many survived into the 1960s on main line duties with BR.



It returns with new running numbers in SE&CR simplified lined green and BR Black (Late Crest) with factory-fitted sound versions.

The Class 66 Diesel Locomotive revolutionised the British Rail freight landscape when the first examples arrived in 1998, and more than a quarter of a century later, the type remains at the forefront of freight operations the length and breadth of the country.



The Class has been a staple of the Graham Farish range for many years and makes a return, with three new examples in DB Red, Freightliner Green and GBRf blue, suited for any modern image model railway.

New releases of popular ore and nuclear flask wagons expand the modern image range.



EFE Rail

As already reported, EFE is introducing all-new tooling for the Class 313 and 314 EMUs, reflecting multiple liveries from BR Blue & Grey through to ScotRail Saltire Blue.

The Plasser 12T YOB crane also makes a return in two colour schemes.



Scenecraft

The Scenecraft range grows with several new OO buildings — including a Rural Station, Art Deco platform set, and BR Eastern Region signal box — plus a new Lucsmore Vale Layout Mat and Scenescape backdrop, designed to accompany future Branchline train sets from spring 2026.

In N scale, Scenecraft brings back platforms and ramps, alongside a Depot Crane in black or grey finishes.

EFE Road

Rounding out the announcements, EFE Road expands its diecast range with six new Alexander Y-Type coaches, featuring mirrors for the first time. Liveries include operators from both Scotland and England, with two models produced as limited-edition commissions.





Heljan announces Refurb Class 37 in O

Much like the real thing, Heljan's Refurbished Class 37s will see a major overhaul to add finer detail, new features and a wide range of changes, allowing the many differences across the fleet to be replicated.

To cater for the many small detail variations across the refurbished Class 37 fleet, the all-new tooling will feature a wealth of new parts, including single-piece or split-nose grilles, standard or modified fuel tanks, ribbed or plain boiler roof panel and oval or rectangular buffers.

Standard features include five separately switchable lighting functions in DCC mode, separately switchable tail lights and cab lights, three-piece miniature snowploughs, motorised roof fan and a detailed cab interior.

In due course, the range will be expanded to include centre headcode Class 37/5s and Class 37/7s and a fully retooled Class 37/4 ETS-fitted passenger variant.

Design work on all versions is complete, tooling is currently in progress and the first engineering samples have just arrived for review. All liveries will be produced in strictly limited quantities based on pre-orders and are available to order now for £499.00 each.





Available liveries:

- 3760 Railfreight Large Logo Grey Class 37/5 unnumbered
- 3761 Railfreight Red Stripe Grey 37517 (Thornaby large numbers & Kingfisher logo)
- 3762 Railfreight Metals Sector Grey 37506 British Steel Skinningrove
- 3763 Railfreight Petroleum Sector Grey 37705
- 3764 EWS Red/Gold 37714
- 3765 Loadhaul 37513
- 3766 Railfreight Coal Sector Grey 37704
- 3767 Colas Orange/Yellow 37521 (Tower Models Exclusive)

New Locomotion Models and Railway Icons exclusive NER Snowplough

Locomotion Models reveals a new North Eastern Railway (NER) Snowplough, with variations across both the Exclusives and Railway Icons ranges. NER Snowplough features a brand-new OO gauge tooling produced by Bachmann, with releases spanning multiple eras.

This new collaborative release is an exciting expansion to Locomotion Model's range of exclusive rolling stock, covering several railway eras. The full range is available to pre-order now and is currently due to be available mid-2026.



Available versions:

- NER No.12 in NER Brown/Red - As in service. Locomotion Models Exclusive
- NER No.11 in NER Brown/Red - As in service. Railway Icons Exclusive
- LNER Twin Pack in LNER Blue - As in service. Railway Icons Exclusive
- BR Twin Pack in BR Black - As in service. Railway Icons Exclusive

The new models can be pre-ordered at **www.locomotionmodels.com**, with Railway Icons releases also available at **www.railsofsheffield.com**.



Dapol announces a new batch of BR 20T Brake Vans

O gauge railway modellers and collectors will be delighted with this news, reflecting the success and popularity of previous batches.

Models include a diecast chassis for added weight, a compensation beam to improve running qualities, sprung metal couplings, either instanter link or screw type, where applicable, and diecast wheels with steel tyres.

Priced at £95.00, the artwork is currently being reviewed and delivery is expected around Q4 2026.

Proposed Liveries:

- 7F-200-016 BR 20T Brake Van Dgm. 1/506 B951509 BR Grey
- 7F-200-017 BR 20T Brake Van Dgm. 1/504 B951344 BR Grey CAO
- 7F-200-018 BR 20T Brake Van Dgm. 1/506 B951327 BR Bauxite CAO
- 7F-200-019 BR 20T Brake Van Dgm. 1/506 B951410 BR Bauxite
- 7F-200-020 BR 20T Brake Van Dgm. 1/506 B955069 BR Bauxite
- 7F-200-021 BR 20T Brake Van Dgm. 1/507 B954921 BR Bauxite CAR
- 7F-200-022 BR 20T Brake Van Dgm. 1/506 KDB 954164 S & T Red/Yellow ZTR
- 7F-200-023 BR 20T Brake Van London Transport Dgm. 1/507 B.581
- 7F-200-024 BR 20T Brake Van Dgm. 1/507 B954989 Railfreight Dist. CAR
- 7F-200-025 BR 20T Brake Van Dgm. 1/507 B954686 Railfreight Red/Grey CAR
- 7F-200-026 BR 20T Brake Van BR Grey Un-Numbered
- 7F-200-027 BR 20T Brake Van BR Bauxite Un-Numbered

Atkitz announces new goods shed

The plastic model has been designed to be straightforward to build with pre-coloured parts and will enable modellers to show off their wagons and colourful shunting locos, plus a removable roof to enable a modelled interior. The kit is available now from the Atkitz website with an RRP of £75.00.



Modelau Bryngaer Cyf. reveals its first wagon

A new Barry-based rolling stock producer, with a desire to create high-quality independent-era rolling stock, has released its first wagons. Introducing the OO gauge range is the Cambrian Railways 2-plank wagon with both dropside and fixed-sided versions. As they lasted well into grouping, they are also available in the Great Western livery of the grouping. Often delivering slates, the wagons were seen across the UK, making them an ideal and interesting addition to many layout. Bryngaer has plans to extend the range of wagons and vans over time. The models are on sale and can be purchased from Rails of Sheffield, priced £29.70 each.



Cop This! - Hornby's October announcements

There's something for everyone's tracks in Hornby's latest announcement. Covering both steam and modern eras, DC and DCC sound-fitted control, along with products in both the main and value-focused Railroad ranges.

For many, a highlight will be Class 37 37093 in its fun and collectable Police Livery, as featured in the famous 1984 Intercity *We're getting there* TV commercial.

Fans of overhead electric traction have R30426 Class 87 87012 *The Olympian* in its special Network South East Livery, a scheme it wore from March 2025 after a competition to re-livery two of the class, which also saw it become part of the programme to back London's 2012 Olympic bid.



Released in the new 2025 tooling is R30403 BR Saint Class No.2920 *Saint David.* This loco was previously released as R830 and many railway modellers will be pleased to see it upgraded to include the latest features and detailing.



Originally announced in January 2021, Ruston and Hornsby fans will be delighted to see another livery expected to be in the shops before the end of the year. One of the last locomotives built by the company, *Hilsea,* spent its life with British Gas (Southern), at Hilsea gas works, near Portsmouth, where it carried fleet No. 1139.

The Hornby Railroad announcements focus on popular diesels with DC and DCC Sound options available in most cases.



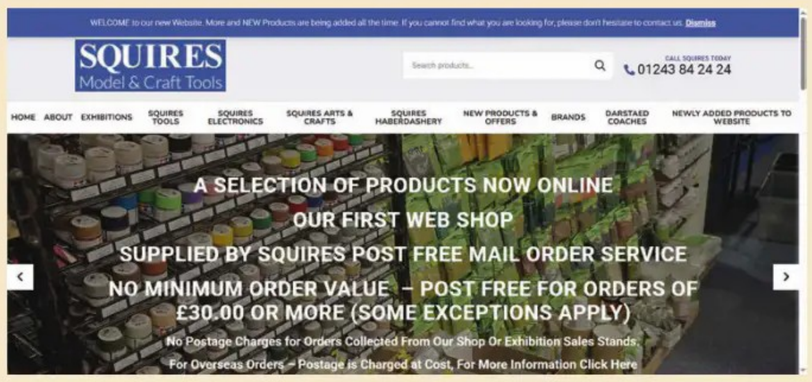


Full list of announcements

- BR Saint Class *Saint David* 2920 – out in February 2026 - £234.99
- BR Late Class J52 0-6-0ST 68846 – out in January 2026 - £174.99
- SR M7 Class 318 – out in February 2026 - £214.99
- LMS Patriot *Holyhead* 5514 – out in Jan 2026 - £239.99
- BR Patriot *Sir Robert Turnbull* 45540 – out in February - £239.99
- Network SouthEast Class 87 *The Olympian* 87012 – out in January 2026 - £239.99
- Northern Rail Class 153 153360 – out in December 2025 – priced at £169.99
- DB Schenker Class 67 67015 – out in January 2026 - £214.99
- British Gas 88DS *Hilsea* – out in December 2025 - £124.99
- RailRoad - BR - Class 37 - '37093' Police Livery (DCC Sound-Fitted) – out in January 2026 - £149.99
- RailRoad - Loram - Class 37 - *An Comunn Gaidhealach* 37418 – out in January 2026 - £94.99 (£149.99 sound-fitted)
- RailRoad - DRS - Class 37 - *Carl Haviland* 37419 – out in January 2026 - £94.99 (£149.99 sound-fitted)
- RailRoad - TFL Construction - Class 31 - '31271' Stratford – out in January 2026 - £89.99 (£144.99 sound-fitted)
- RailRoad - Railfreight Distribution - Class 47 - *The Sapper* 47306 – out in January 2026 - £94.99 (£149.99 sound-fitted)

Squires tools new website

Squires Tools has recently launched a new website designed to enable modellers to easily find and purchase essential items. Items are grouped by popular categories and the website is easy to navigate on a laptop, tablet, or phone. The catalogues have also been digitised and, for those who prefer, orders can still be taken over the phone.



Dapol personalised Christmas wagons

There are four festive wagon designs in either O, OO or N gauge and the customer can have a name with up to 10 characters (including spaces added) added.

Dapol aims to dispatch within five working days and the last order date is 16th December.

Prices:
£11.00 for N gauge
£15.20 for OO gauge
£55.00 for O gauge



Rapido expands GWR wagon range

Rapido Trains UK has announced an impressive expansion to its OO gauge GWR wagon range, introducing a host of new tooling variants and a colourful selection of fresh liveries for 2025.

The new batch of wagons draws on two of the GWR's most enduring designs: the Dia. V6 Iron Mink, built between 1888 and 1901 and renowned for its longevity and versatility, and the Dia. O21 Four-Plank Open Wagon, one of the most numerous open wagon types ever built by the GWR.

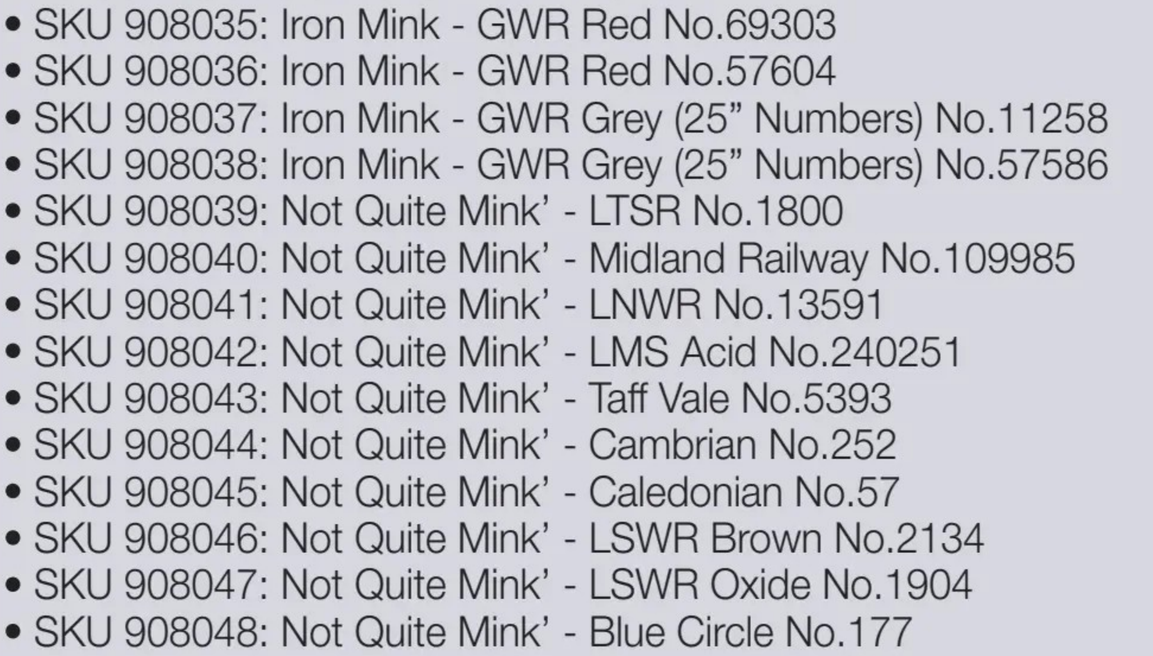
Priced at £32.95 each, the updated ranges will introduce brand-new grease axle box tooling. This enables pre-grouping liveries that were previously not possible to produce accurately. Other detail differences include vents, door types, and brake arrangements. Some four-plank wagons will include an optional sheet bar that the user can fit. A newly tooled GPV door design also debuts on some Iron Mink and Not-Quite Mink models.

OO Gauge GWR Four-Plank Open Wagon - Liveries

- SKU 925009: GWR Four-Plank Open No.44600 (GWR Red)
- SKU 925010: GWR Four-Plank Open No.52198 (GWR Red)
- SKU 925011: GWR Four-Plank Open No.49108 (GWR Red)
- SKU 925012: GWR Four-Plank Open No.632 (GWR Red)
- SKU 925013: GWR Four-Plank Open No.73691 (GWR Red)
- SKU 925014: GWR Four-Plank Open No.62488 (23" Numbers)
- SKU 925015: GWR Four-Plank Open No.54548 (23" Numbers)
- SKU 925016: GWR Four-Plank Open No.45503 (23" Numbers)
- SKU 925017: Barry Railway Four-Plank Open No.10

OO Gauge GWR Iron Mink and Not-Quite Mink - Liveries

- SKU 908034: Iron Mink - GWR Red No.37666
- SKU 908035: Iron Mink - GWR Red No.69303
- SKU 908036: Iron Mink - GWR Red No.57604
- SKU 908037: Iron Mink - GWR Grey (25" Numbers) No.11258
- SKU 908038: Iron Mink - GWR Grey (25" Numbers) No.57586
- SKU 908039: Not Quite Mink' - LTSR No.1800
- SKU 908040: Not Quite Mink' - Midland Railway No.109985
- SKU 908041: Not Quite Mink' - LNWR No.13591
- SKU 908042: Not Quite Mink' - LMS Acid No.240251
- SKU 908043: Not Quite Mink' - Taff Vale No.5393
- SKU 908044: Not Quite Mink' - Cambrian No.252
- SKU 908045: Not Quite Mink' - Caledonian No.57
- SKU 908046: Not Quite Mink' - LSWR Brown No.2134
- SKU 908047: Not Quite Mink' - LSWR Oxide No.1904
- SKU 908048: Not Quite Mink' - Blue Circle No.177
- SKU 908049: Not Quite Mink' - Ferrocrete No.252
- SKU 908050: Not Quite Mink' - BR(S) No.61204
- SKU 908051: Not Quite Mink' - G. Fawkes No.1605
- SKU 908052: Not Quite Mink' - G. Fawkes No.1105
- SKU 908053: 'Not Quite Mink' - D. Fews Explosives No.2264





KMRC reveals exclusive Bachmann Class 47/4

Kernow Model Rail Centre (KMRC) has announced its latest exclusive model, a Bachmann OO Class 47/4 No. 47521 in the ever-popular Network South East livery.

KMRC's exclusive model is being produced for them by Bachmann using the latest upgraded Class 47 tooling. Model railway enthusiasts and collectors can expect a diecast chassis, five-pole twin-shaft motor, and on the Deluxe version, motorised radiator fans and auto-release couplings. Sound-fitted versions feature dual speakers, including a new Tangband passive radiator speaker for deeper bass tones.

The model will capture the unique features of 47521, including the flush and recessed headcode panels, Crewe-built buffer beam brackets, round buffers, NRN cab aerials, and 1,200-gallon fuel tanks. Each model also includes a full set of accessory parts for extra detailing.

Pre-orders are now open through Kernow Model Rail Centre stockists. Prices start at:

- **£214.99** for the DCC Ready version
- **£319.99** for Sound Fitted
- **£354.99** for the Sound Fitted Deluxe edition



Accurascale unveils NIR Mark 2 coaches

Responding to strong demand from railway modellers and enthusiasts of the Northern Ireland Railway, Accurascale delivers on its promise to reproduce these iconic vehicles.

A perfect way to complement the recently announced IRM NIR Hunslet locomotives, these long-awaited coaches will feature the attractive original maroon and blue livery. In addition, the popular blue and grey colour scheme introduced in 1978 will also make a return.

Coaches will be offered individually rather than multipacks.

Standard coaches: £74.95/€89.95 each

DCC-ready driving car: £84.95/€97.95 each

Multi-buy discounts: 10% off for 2–4 coaches, 15% off for five or more.

Delivery is scheduled for Q4 2026 and these are limited-run models, and are available to Pre-order exclusively through the Accurascale website.

WIN a Hornby Avanti West Coast Class 390 Pendolino 'Cop 26'!

Who said we don't look after modern-era modellers? You could win this excellent four-car train pack, **worth £339.99**, reviewed in BRM last month!

For your chance to win, answer the question below to enter the prize draw.

In what year did the Class 390 Pendolino first enter service?

A: 2000 **B:** 2001
C: 2002 **D:** 2003





Head to www.world-of-railways.co.uk/Competitions for your chance to win

The competition will close on January 31st, 2026.

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Accurascale Class 89



Jerry Clifford

On September 29th this year, the unique 89001 *Avocet*, affectionately known as the Badger, had its first trip out on the main line in almost a quarter of a century, with two trips from Crewe Depot to Stafford and back. The locomotive, which has spent more than a decade being restored, is set to operate as part of the Locomotive Services fleet on its Inter City charter operation over the next five years. Around the same time, the much-anticipated Class 89 from Accurascale, in partnership with Rails of Sheffield, arrived in the BRM offices for review.

The Class 89 was designed by Brush and built at Crewe in 1986. It was originally intended as the prototype for a fleet of locomotives to replace the HSTs on the ECML – the cab design being heavily influenced by the HST power cars. In the end, priorities changed and the class was superseded, almost as it was being built, by the Class 90 and 91s. The loco was used as a test bed between 1986 and December '88, when it was given the name *Avocet*, followed by a number of years in revenue service, predominantly on the King's Cross to Leeds route. It was withdrawn and put into storage, pending preservation, in July 1992 before being acquired in a surprise move by GNER and put back into revenue service, before being withdrawn for a second time in 2001. There it languished as part of the AC locomotives' preserved fleet until it made its triumphant return earlier this year.

Accurascale has released the loco in all five livery variations carried by the prototype: Intercity Executive, Intercity Swallow, GNER blue with either white or gold lettering and Intercity Swallow with modern OHLE flashes as currently worn in preservation. First impressions as the model is removed from the very substantial packaging are very good. The level of detail from the fully working pantograph to the simply stunning bogies is really impressive. Nice touches include the polished quartering on the sprung buffers, very fine wire handrails all round, separately-applied windscreen wipers and a full set of front-end pipework in the accessory pack. The finish and lettering is also first class; the numerous differently-coloured, separately-applied details on the bogies are particularly effective, although some careful weathering would further highlight the wealth of detail in this area, which would otherwise be lost in the shadows.

The attention to detail continues under the body. The heavy, diecast chassis block houses a 5-pole skew-wound



The bogies are a stunning example of the toolmaker's craft.



The fully detailed pantograph in the lowered position.



motor with twin flywheels delivering smooth, quiet running throughout the speed range. All five livery variations have been released in both DC and DCC sound versions. The pantograph in both formats can be raised and lowered using its own motor mounted on the underside of the roof. The DC version, including a clip to hold it down to avoid damage, the DCC version being raised and lowered via the function buttons. Access to the interior is via four clips as outlined in the clear instructions provided. The addition of a crew would be well worthwhile thanks to the full suite of working lights provided, including cab interior and panel lights.

Accurascale has set out to produce a premium, museum-quality model and they have succeeded in bucket loads from the packaging to the excellent colour booklet printed in the style of a BR locomotive operating manual. The unique nature of the prototype and the unlikely chance of the model being rerun all contribute to it attracting a premium price, but the quality fully justifies this. Highly recommended.

FACTFILE

Factfile (Review item in bold):
BR Class 89 - 89001 - InterCity Swallow (Original)
BR Class 89 - 89001 - GNER (White Lettering)
BR Class 89 - 89001 - GNER (Gold Lettering)
BR Class 89 - 89001 - InterCity Swallow (Present Day)
BR Class 89 - 89001 - InterCity Executive
Construction: Diecast chassis and plastic components
Weight: 560g
Era: 1986-2004
Price: £229.99-329.99
Minimum curves: Radius 2
Accessories: Windscreen wipes, front-end pipework

WHAT WE LIKE

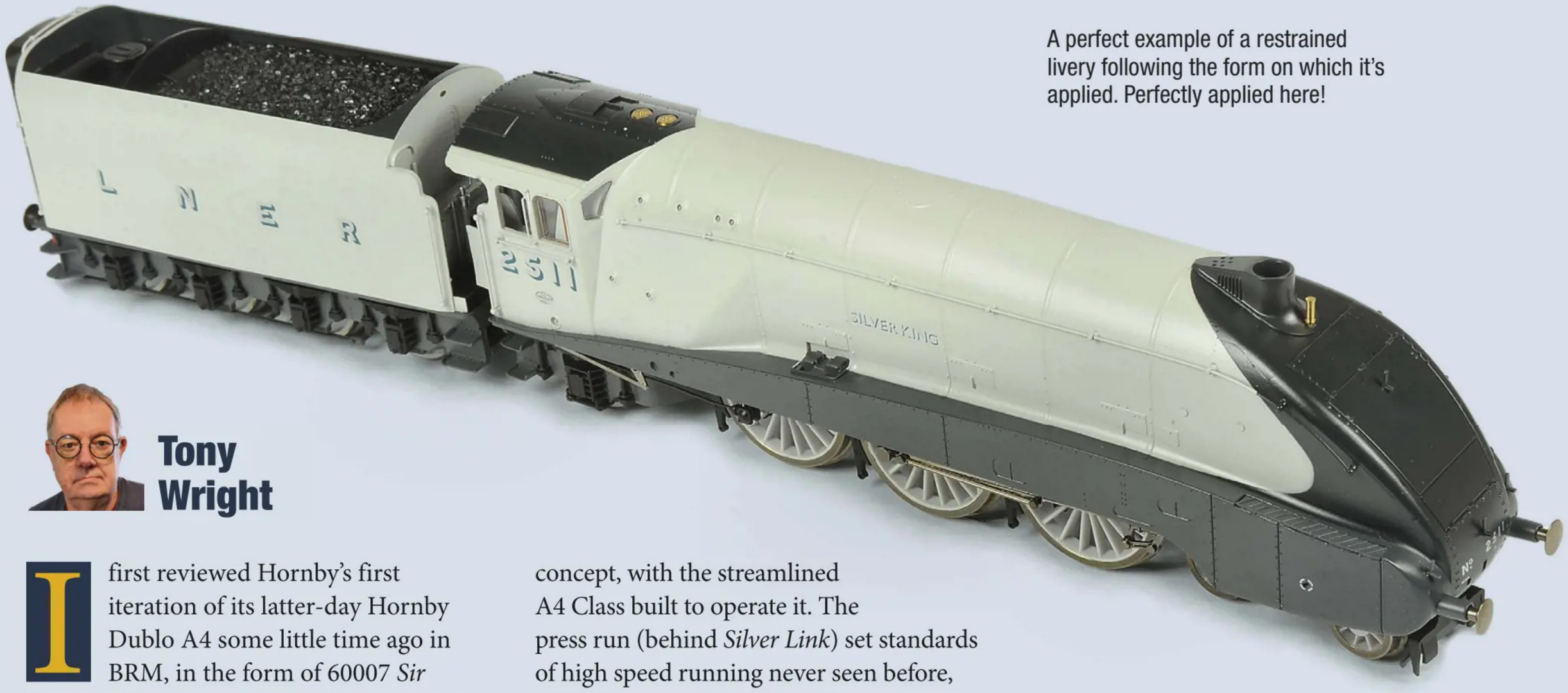
- ✓ Superbly detailed
- ✓ Excellent performance
- ✓ Wealth of additional features

The pantograph, here seen raised, is independently controlled by its own separate motor.

The HST-influenced styling is clear to see in this front view.

00 | 1936-1937 | £££ 320.99

Hornby Dublo *Silver King* Silver Jubilee Collection



A perfect example of a restrained livery following the form on which it's applied. Perfectly applied here!

Tony Wright

I first reviewed Hornby's first iteration of its latter-day Hornby Dublo A4 some little time ago in BRM, in the form of 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley*, my conclusion being that it was (and is) an exceptional model. This commemorative example, in the form of the third of the original quartet of A4s, is, too, an exceptional model.

September 1935 saw the inauguration of Britain's first high-speed train in the form of the streamlined Silver Jubilee. Gresley and his team designed the whole train as a single concept, with the streamlined A4 Class built to operate it. The press run (behind *Silver Link*) set standards of high speed running never seen before, with 43 consecutive miles being run at an average of 100 miles per hour (mostly on the flat), achieving a new record for steam in the process. Four A4s were originally built to haul The Silver Jubilee – 2509 *Silver Link*, 2510 *Quicksilver,* 2511 *Silver King* (the model sent for review) and 2512 *Silver Fox*. Of the four, *Silver King* probably worked the train the least, acting as standby at Newcastle. Of the quartet, she was the only one to lose her original corridor tender, spending most of her life at Gateshead where, unlike her three sisters who were based at Top Shed, she was rarely cleaned. Sadly, none of the original A4s made it to preservation, the greatest loss being the doyen of the Class, *Silver Link*.

More often than not, *Silver King* was used on ordinary LNER expresses, as seen here in model form hauling a typical rake made-up of my kit-builds and modified Hornby Gresleys.





A good view showing the original streamlined corridor tender. Silver King, being Gateshead-based, towed a non-corridor sort for most of her life.



What the A4s were all about - speed!

Strictly speaking, the four silver commemorative A4s (Hornby is also offering the other three) are 'inaccurate', inasmuch as they represent the locos in their condition a year or two after 1935; that is after the recessed front drawhook and shorter buffers were replaced with standard fittings after a shunting fatality, the streamlined fairings around the top of the tender's rear top were removed and numbers were applied to the bottom of the front casing (the 89th anniversary doesn't sound so impressive, though). All that shouldn't take away from how good a model this is. Because it has a heavy diecast body, its tractive effort is very impressive, complemented by exceptionally quiet and silk-like running. Though most of the motion, the Flaman drive and the lubricator linkage can't be seen behind the valances, it's all there. The simple livery is perfectly applied.

There is the usual bag of extra bits to fit should the purchaser so desire, though collectors (many of whom will want this model – and the other three) will not even open it.

FACTFILE

Models (reviews items in bold):
R30458 Hornby Dublo: LNER - Class A4 - 2511 *Silver King*
R30456 Hornby Dublo: LNER - Class A4 - 2509 Silver Link
R30459 Hornby Dublo: LNER - Class A4 - 2512 Silver Fox
R30457 Hornby Dublo: LNER - Class A4 - 2510 Quicksilver
Construction: Diecast
Weight: 450g
Era: 1936-'37
Price: £320.99
Minimum curves: Radius 2
Accessories: Fireman and driver figures, drain cocks, brake rods and flanged rear pony tuck wheelset

WHAT WE LIKE

✓ Feeling of mass
✓ Superlative performance
✓ Quality of finish

Hornby's decision to revive the wonderful old name of Hornby Dublo will prove to be inspired, such is the love with which that great old brand is remembered. I've heard conversations that Hornby plans (or planned) to produce The Silver Jubilee in model form, having given us the peerless Coronation set. The main problem is that, apart from the bogies and some underframe details, there is no commonality between the two streamlined sets – the Jubilee (latterly) consisted of two triplets and a twin, but the Coronation was made up entirely of twins. Still, it would be nice to think it might happen; who knows? It would certainly complement this latest A4, and what a model sight that would be!



What splendid, retro-style packaging.

00 | Modern-day preservation | £££ 139.99

Hornby J15 (GER Y14)



Tony Wright

This is not a brand new model by Hornby, but, as far as I know, it's the first time it's been available in the attractive original full Great Eastern Railway blue regalia. When the model first came out a decade ago, it was available in BR plain black with detail features of that time – thin, lipped chimney and riveted smokebox, for instance. This latest manifestation is said to represent the loco in current preserved condition, with plain smokebox and stovepipe chimney (though the full-sized loco has seen several detail alterations during its time in preservation).

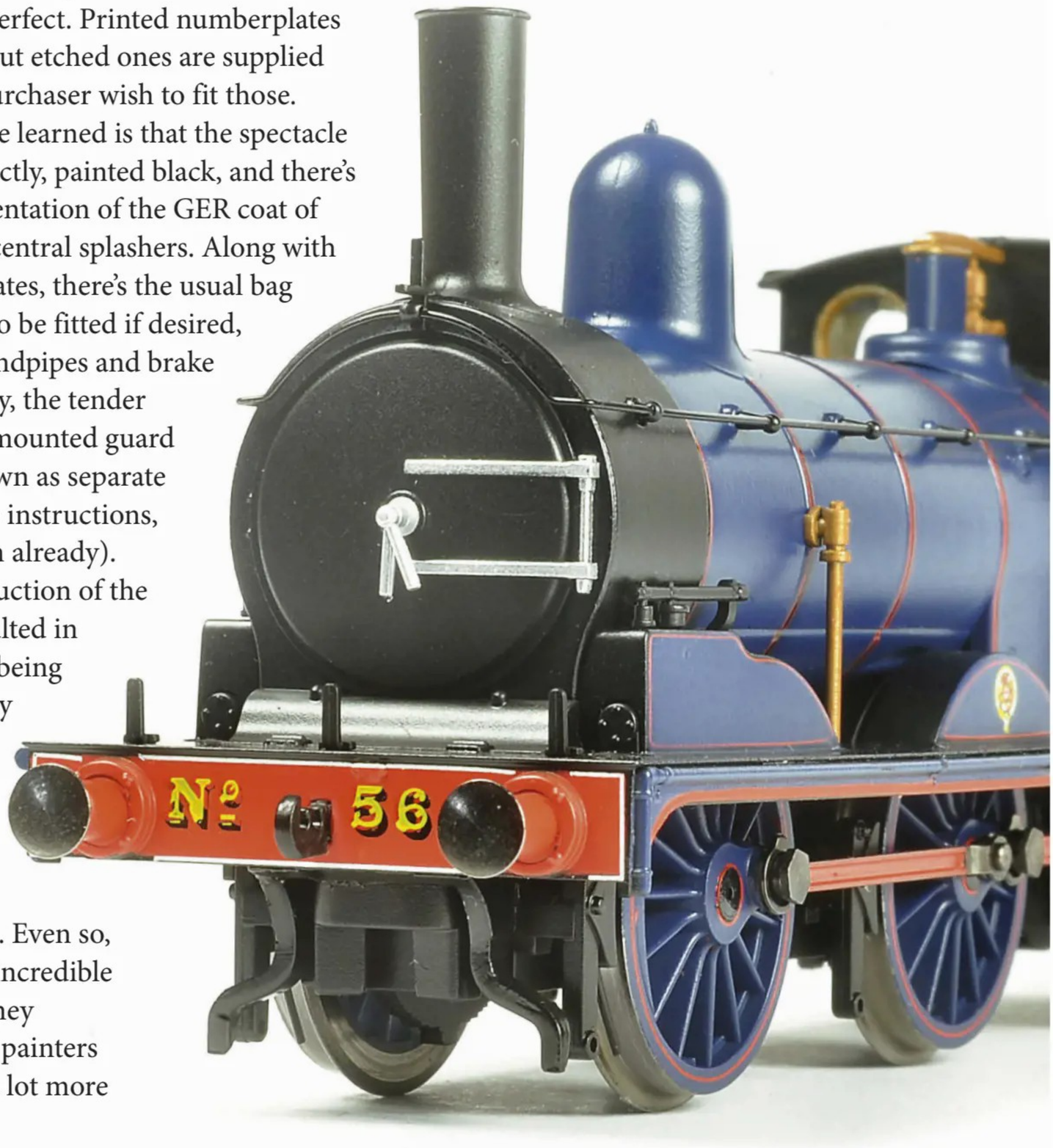
The J15s (GER Y14) formed a class of locos of great longevity, running from 1883 (the loco represented was built in 1912) all the way through the Grouping and into the '60s, as the property of BR (as many as 71 survivors out of the original 288 received BR numbers). They were literally 'go anywhere' locos (the only tender engines in the RA1 category), were extremely reliable and well-loved by the men who ran them.

This lovely new representation is sure to be popular. Careful observation of prototype pictures will be needed if one wishes to renumber it to another example representing pre-WW1 days (after 1914, the locos were painted plain grey, then black), but revel in this depiction of the preserved loco. The problems of the horizontal handrail pillars still remain (they should be perpendicular to the boiler), but in all other respects, the attention to assembly and detail accuracy is spot-on. Running was superlative, through my mixture of hand-made and Peco points and crossings, with no sign of wobbling or waddling, nor any hesitation, thanks to numerous pick-ups, all perfectlyadjusted. Provision for DCC is in the tender.

My main area of praise is the livery application, which is exquisite. There is no sign of bleed anywhere and all the branding is perfect. Printed numberplates are applied, but etched ones are supplied should the purchaser wish to fit those. One thing I've learned is that the spectacle plate is, correctly, painted black, and there's a neat representation of the GER coat of arms on the central splashers. Along with the etched plates, there's the usual bag of extra bits to be fitted if desired, including standpipes and brake rigging (oddly, the tender bufferbeam-mounted guard irons are shown as separate fittings in the instructions, but they're on already).

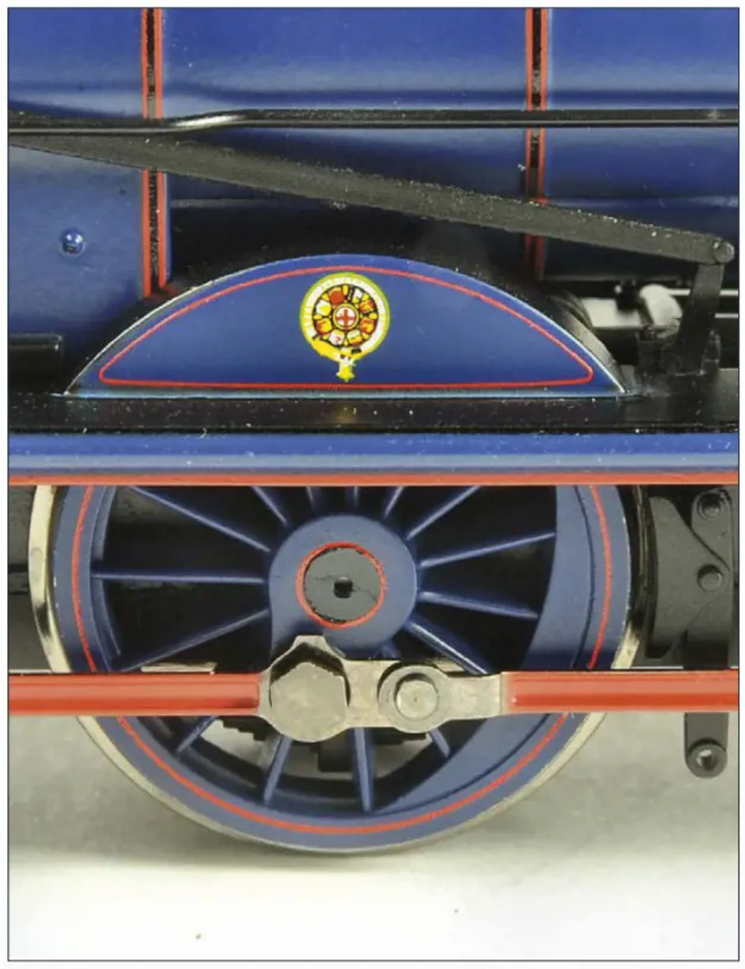
Over-production of the first J15s resulted in later batches being offered at very low prices, but this new example isn't going to 'enjoy' that situation. Even so, it represents incredible value for money (professional painters would want a lot more than what's asked for the whole thing to even match the livery application!). I think it's an outstanding model, deserving of great success, with just one caveat. Take no notice of the loco's history printed on the packaging – it starts life as an LSWR M7 0-4-4T!

Thoroughly-recommended





A fully-detailed cab interior is present.



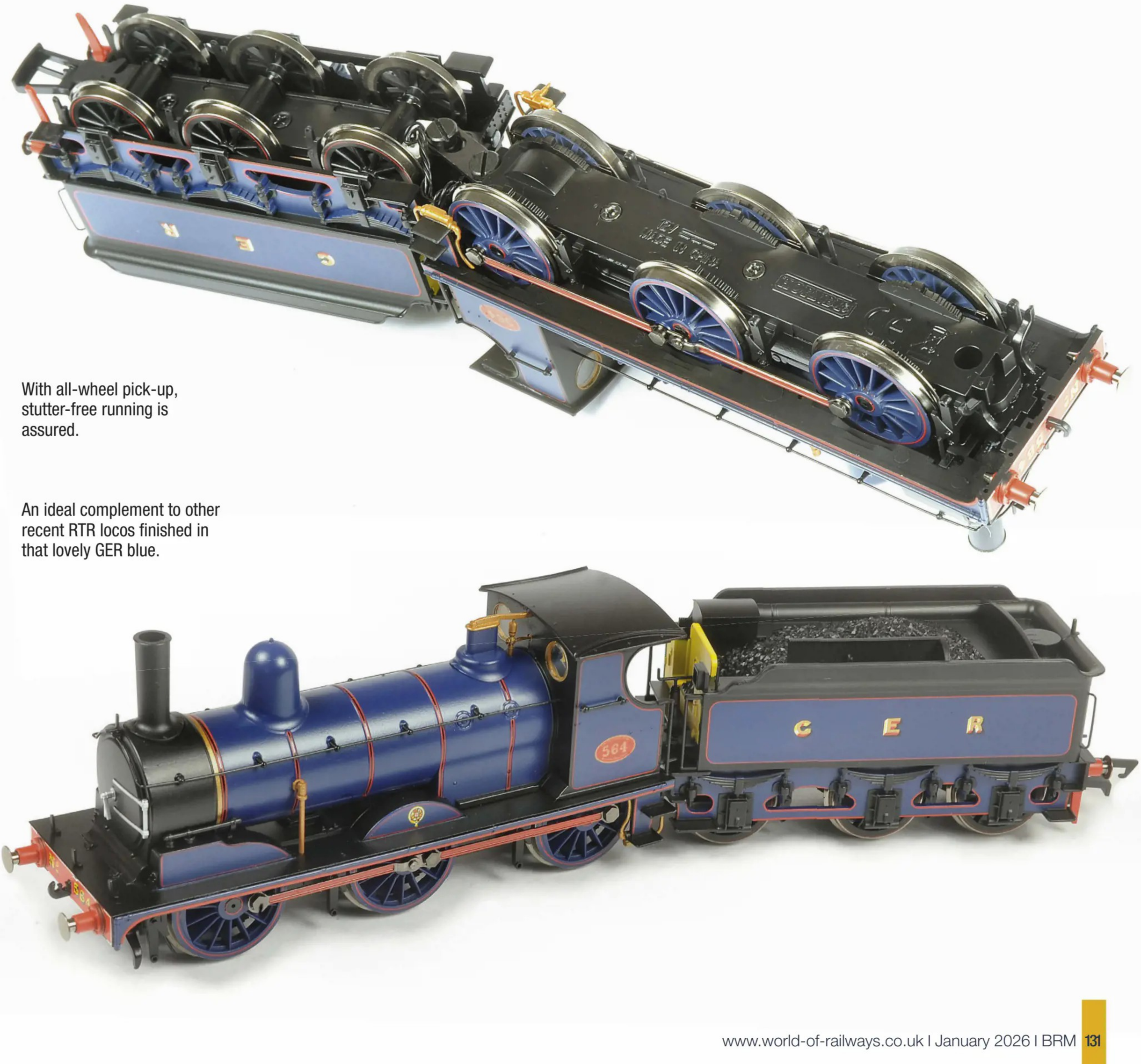
The GER coat of arms is beautifully represented.

FACTFILE

R30407 Great Eastern Railway - Class J15 - 564
Construction: Diecast chassis with plastic body
Weight: 250g
Era: Modern-day preservation
Price: £139.99
Minimum curves: Radius 2
Accessories: Brake rods, etched numberplates, vacuum pipes and coupling hooks and bars

WHAT WE LIKE

✓ Overall accuracy
✓ Beautiful livery-application
✓ Excellent performance



With all-wheel pick-up, stutter-free running is assured.

An ideal complement to other recent RTR locos finished in that lovely GER blue.

Accurascale Beilhack ZZA Snowplough



Jerry Clifford



The Beilhack Snowplough is one of the 'Hatton Originals' models taken over by Accurascale, which are now offered in four different twin packs; two in the original all over yellow livery, including, the 'Stratford Shark' (the subject of this review), and two in the black with yellow ploughs and red buffer shanks as turned out following refurbishment by Network Rail in the early-2000s.

In the early-1980s, BR recognised the need for more snowploughs and came up with the novel idea of using redundant bogies from withdrawn main line locos, fitted with ploughs supplied by German specialists, Beilhack. In total, 10 were built - six at Stratford in 1984/'85 using Class 40 bogies and a further four in 1989/'90 using Class 45 bogies. The ploughs were fitted to the inner ends of the bogies with ballast weights added on top. The original buffing gear and couplings were retained to enable pairs of ploughs to be attached, top and tail, to suitable motive power.

The models themselves are exquisitely detailed. They are of largely diecast construction with numerous separately-applied details in both etched brass and moulded plastic. The very fine handrails, spring and axle box mouldings and plumbing visible through the lightning holes in the frames are worthy of special note. Livery application and lettering are beautifully done, including the shark's teeth motif on ADB965579, although the largely single colour means that the model would really benefit from careful weathering to bring out the fine detail. The wheels run in inside bearings, which, combined with the diecast frames, give a healthy 100g of weight, resulting in a nice, steady ride.

FACTFILE

Model: (review item in bold)
Beilhack Snowplough ZZA ADB965578/579 'Stratford Shark' BR yellow (ex-Class 40)
Beilhack Snowplough ZZA ADB965580/581 BR yellow (ex-Class 40)
Beilhack Snowplough ZZA ADB965580/581 Network Rail (ex-Class 40)
Beilhack Snowplough ZZA ADB966098/099 Network Rail (ex-Class 45)
Construction: Diecast chassis and plastic body
Weight: 100g
Era: 1980s-early-2000s
Price: £69.95
Minimum curves: Radius 2
Accessories: Additional pipework, tension-lock couplings

WHAT WE LIKE

- ✓ Separately applied details
- ✓ Free running
- ✓ Fine lettering and decoration

The detailing pack contains additional pipework that the modeller can fit to the bufferbeam, which sports sprung buffers and a discreet NEM pocket for the supplied tension-lock couplings. Overall, modellers of the contemporary scene will be grateful to Accurascale for reintroducing these distinctive vehicles.



The model features an abundance of clearly printed decoration, including the Stratford shark motif.



Underside view showing inside bearings.

Hornby TT:120 KFA Wagons



Steven Draper

Once out of the box, the model really impressed. The diecast framework is a delicate lattice of steel girders.

Back in the 1980s, Britain needed more wagons, wagons that were tough, reliable, and utterly unpretentious. Enter the KFA bogie wagon.

Built by Finnish firm Rautaruukki and later Procor, 240 of these steel slabs-on-wheels were delivered. They've been quietly earning their keep ever since. You don't notice them — until you do. Then you start seeing them everywhere.

Hornby has decided to shrink the industrial drama to TT:120 scale and nine months after the announcement, three Touax-branded KFAs arrived on my desk. I'll admit, expectations were modest, but once unboxed, wow!

They're surprisingly hefty; the diecast framework is a delicate lattice of steel girders with shiny blue paintwork, pin-sharp printing, and buffers fine enough to impress a jeweller.

There's separately-moulded pipework, a crisp white brake wheel, and data panels that are legible through a magnifying glass. In the hand, they feel robust, like they could survive a minor shunting mishap or enthusiastic handling and still roll away smugly.

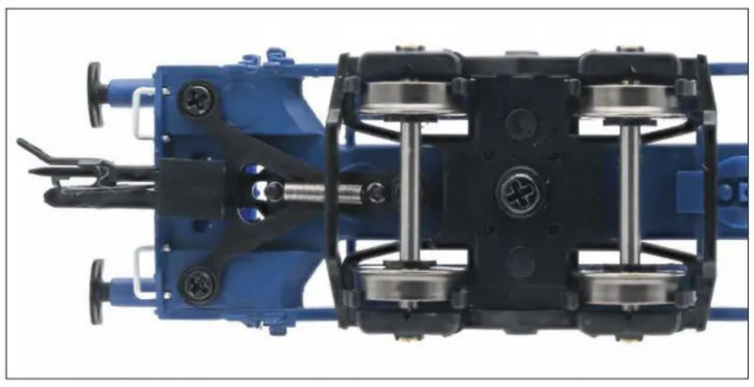
The containers themselves are plastic but substantial. Each has good, clean edges, convincing ribbing and bold liveries. Across the three packs, there is a satisfying mix of 20- and 40-foot containers, plus a tanktainer for good measure.

The different colours and branding beg to be rearranged, and it would be easy to lose half an afternoon chasing that perfect aesthetic balance.

On the rails, the KFAs run on GPS-pattern bogies that pivot freely and look the part. They glided happily through Radius 2 curves and both Hornby and Peco points without a whisper of complaint.



The couplings allow for close running.



The GPS-Pattern bogies enable smooth running.



Will Hornby release the containers separately?

FACTFILE

Model: (review items in bold)
TT6030 Touax KFA 3x20 Containers
TT6031 Touax KFA 3x20 Containers
TT6032 Touax KFA 1x20 1x40 Containers
Construction: Diecast chassis and plastic containers
Weight: 50g
Era: 1980s-present day
Price: £54.99
Minimum curves: Radius 2
Accessories: Dummy screw-link couplings

WHAT WE LIKE

- ✓ Mix of colourful containers
- ✓ Fine diecast chassis
- ✓ Plenty of small but secure detail
- ✓ Smooth Running

The diecast chassis gives just the right amount of weight for stability without dragging the loco down. There's no wobble, just smooth, efficient running. Couplings are standard TT:120 NEM fittings, easily swapped if you prefer alternatives.

In short, they behave impeccably. Hook a rake of these behind a Class 66 and a layout suddenly looks like the real network — modern, purposeful, alive.

These aren't flashy. They won't shout from the display cabinet. But that's exactly the point. Like the real things, they're understated, rugged, quietly brilliant, they're the link between port and depot, diesel and steel, model and memory.

00 | 1950s-late-1970s | £££ 109.96(triple pack)

Irish Railway Models unfitted H vans



Jerry Clifford



FACTFILE

Model: (review items in bold)
CIE Bulleid H Van - Brown (CIE roundel era) -Unfitted- Pack 2
CIE Bulleid H Van - Brown (CIE roundel era) -Unfitted- Pack 1
CIE Bulleid H Van - Grey (CIE roundel era) -Unfitted- Pack 2
CIE Bulleid H Van - Grey (CIE roundel era) -Unfitted- Pack 1
CIE Bulleid H Van - Grey (CIE Flying Snail era) -Unfitted- Pack 2
CIE Bulleid H Van - Grey (CIE Flying Snail era) -Unfitted-Pack 1
Construction: Diecast chassis and plastic body
Weight: 43g (per wagon)
Era: 1950s-late 1970s
Price: £109.96
Minimum curves: Radius 2
Accessories: Alternate couplings

WHAT WE LIKE

✓ Different running numbers
✓ Crisp detailing
✓ Excellent finish

The latest wagons in the Accurascale/Irish Railway Models range to arrive are arguably some of the most useful for modellers, representing, as they do, the unfitted version of the H van. Over 1300 of these vans were introduced during the 1950s as part of Oliver Bulleid's standardisation and renewal programme. They could be seen all over the system, from remote branches to busy main lines on anything from the humble wagonload to bulk, high-volume flows such as bottled Guinness or beet pulp. The rise of the fitted trainload 'liner' trains in the 1970s led to the steady demise of the unfitted H vans, with most being withdrawn by the end of the decade.

Accurascale/IRM are offering the wagons in triple packs in three different liveries; original CIE grey with Flying Snail, grey with the CIE roundels, or the later brown with CIE roundels. As we have now come to expect from this manufacturer, the models are superb with a high level of detail supplemented by numerous separately-applied fittings. The underframe again utilises the excellent Bulleid patented triangular design as seen on the much less numerous fitted vans reviewed in the July 2025 BRM. Livery application, while not complex, is neatly applied with all lettering and numerals being clearly legible. Below the solebar, the spindly nature of the single-shoe brake gear is really well captured. The very free-running three-hole disc wheels run in brass bearings and, as before, there is plenty of room to allow for more accurate 21mm gauge wheelsets for those who feel so inclined. Sprung buffers and slimline tension-lock couplings in NEM pockets are fitted as standard while replacement three links are provided in the detail pack.

Overall, these common or garden vans are a vital addition for modellers of the Irish scene from the 1950s to the '70s. Highly recommended.



The triple pack in CIE brown with the later roundel logo.



Fully detailed underframe and brake gear.

Hornby 4 Wheeled coaches





Steven Draper

In the winter of 2020/21, Hornby followed Hattons' lead and announced a festive surprise: a range of charming four- and six-wheeled coaches, news that fizzed through the hobby like shaken champagne.

These diminutive delights became perfect companions to growing rosters of pre-grouping locomotives — elegant reminders of the days when rail travel meant mahogany interiors, oil lamps, and real tickets.

Purists will note these aren't exact replicas of any specific coach. Instead, they're a greatest-hits medley of late-Victorian design. Cue the forum debates, but the truth is, they do look the part, are selling like hot cakes, and will no doubt appear on many layouts before long.

The review samples came dressed to impress: one in lined LB&SCR mahogany brown, the other in later BR crimson. Together they span nearly 90 years of railway history — much longer, if you count the preservation era. Once released from their protective ice cube packaging, subtle differences appear — roof vents here, underframe tweaks there, plus a detail pack lets you add footboards and brake hoses for that extra "I've-got-a-steady-hand" satisfaction.



Little period variations make for welcome differences.

Coupled together, the close buffer spacing is immediately noticeable and very impressive. Hornby's clever spring-loaded NEM system and consistent wheel back-to-backs keep them running smooth and wobble-free through points, managing set track S curves with ease.

Like their OO cousins, these coaches feature fine panelling effects, although steps, lamp irons, and handrails are understandably moulded in this case. The upside to this is that, despite their dainty looks, they're surprisingly robust and adequately detailed.

The printing, especially the lined LB&SCR version, is sharp, with brass-coloured door handles and silver window frames that catch the eye beautifully. Yes, the coloured plastic bodies can look a bit flat up close, and one chassis had a whisper of warping — but at normal viewing, you'd never notice, and running was not affected.

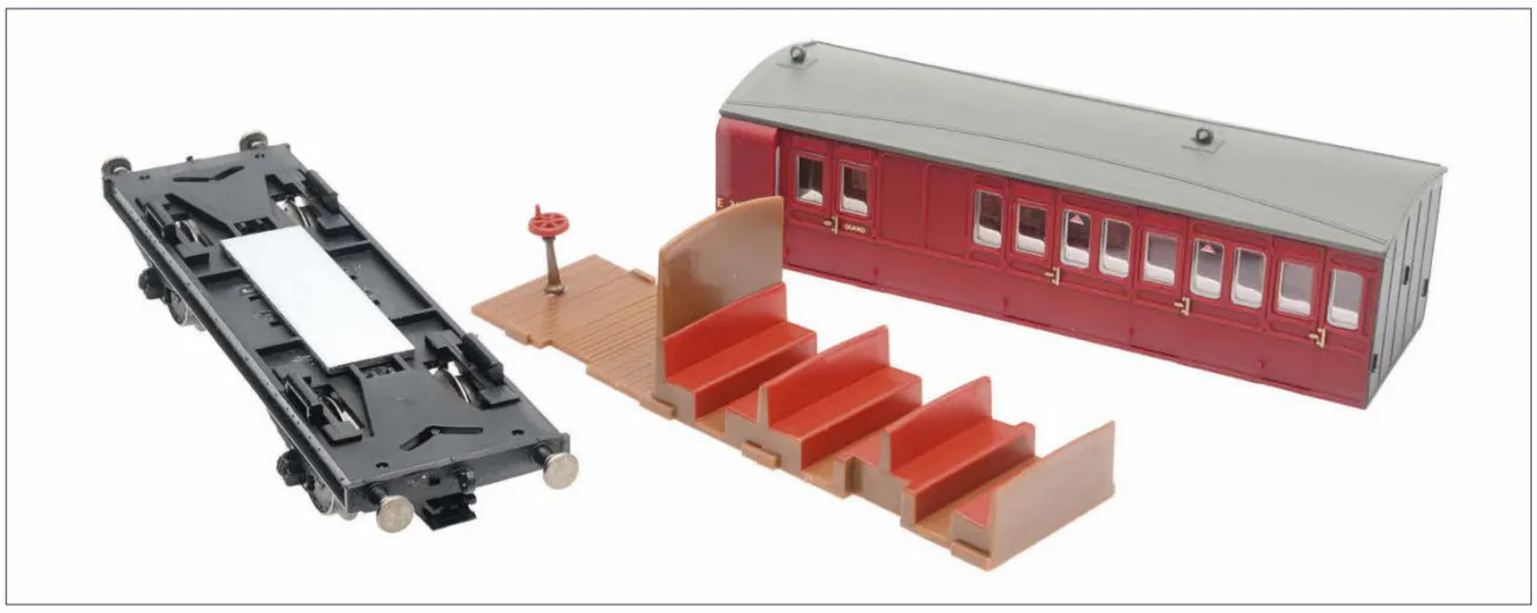
FACTFILE

Model: (review items in bold)
TT4051 / TT4055 / TT4061 1st Class Coach
TT4052 / **TT4056** / TT4062 3rd Class Coach
TT4053 / TT4057 / **TT4063** 3rd Class Brake Coach
TT4054 / TT4058 / TT4064 3rd Class Brake Luggage
In Southern Green / LB&SCR lined mahogany / BR Crimson
Construction: Plastic Chassis and body
Weight: 20g
Era: Pre-grouping-1960s
Price: £34.99
Minimum curves: Radius 1
Accessories: Footboards and Vacuum Brake Pipes

WHAT WE LIKE

- ✓ Overall accuracy
- ✓ Haulage ability
- ✓ Beautiful livery

Hornby's TT120 four-wheelers aren't museum-grade replicas, but honestly, they don't need to be. They're charming, characterful, and perfectly-sized for big adventures in even smaller spaces.



The body easily unclips to allow adding passengers or details.



The close coupling is impressive.

00 | 1930–1948 | £££ 44.95

Bachmann LMS Brake Van



Tony Wright



This is the latest RTR model of this standard 20T LMS brake van. Hornby first produced one under its 'Silver Seal' brand in 1974 (a poor model), and then again at the end of the century when the Airfix tooling for the type was acquired (a far superior model). Finally, from Hornby, the LMS brake van was entirely retooled in 2019, with features such as separate handrails (the main horizontal ones of which bowed!). I have to say I'm puzzled at such duplication, but there's no doubt that the Bachmann example is the best yet.

The LMS built many of this diagram, both unfitted and vacuum-piped (unfitted painted grey and fitted painted bauxite – perpetuated by BR). Some unfitted ones were later vacuum-piped, and later on, many had the pipes removed as the need for vacuum-braked vans diminished post-steam on BR when the respective unions decided that freight guards could ride in the rear cab of a diesel hauling a fully-fitted freight. Many survived into the '80s on BR, often in departmental use, and a few have been preserved. Similar diagrams were built into BR days, with features such as deeper duckets and larger weight boxes.

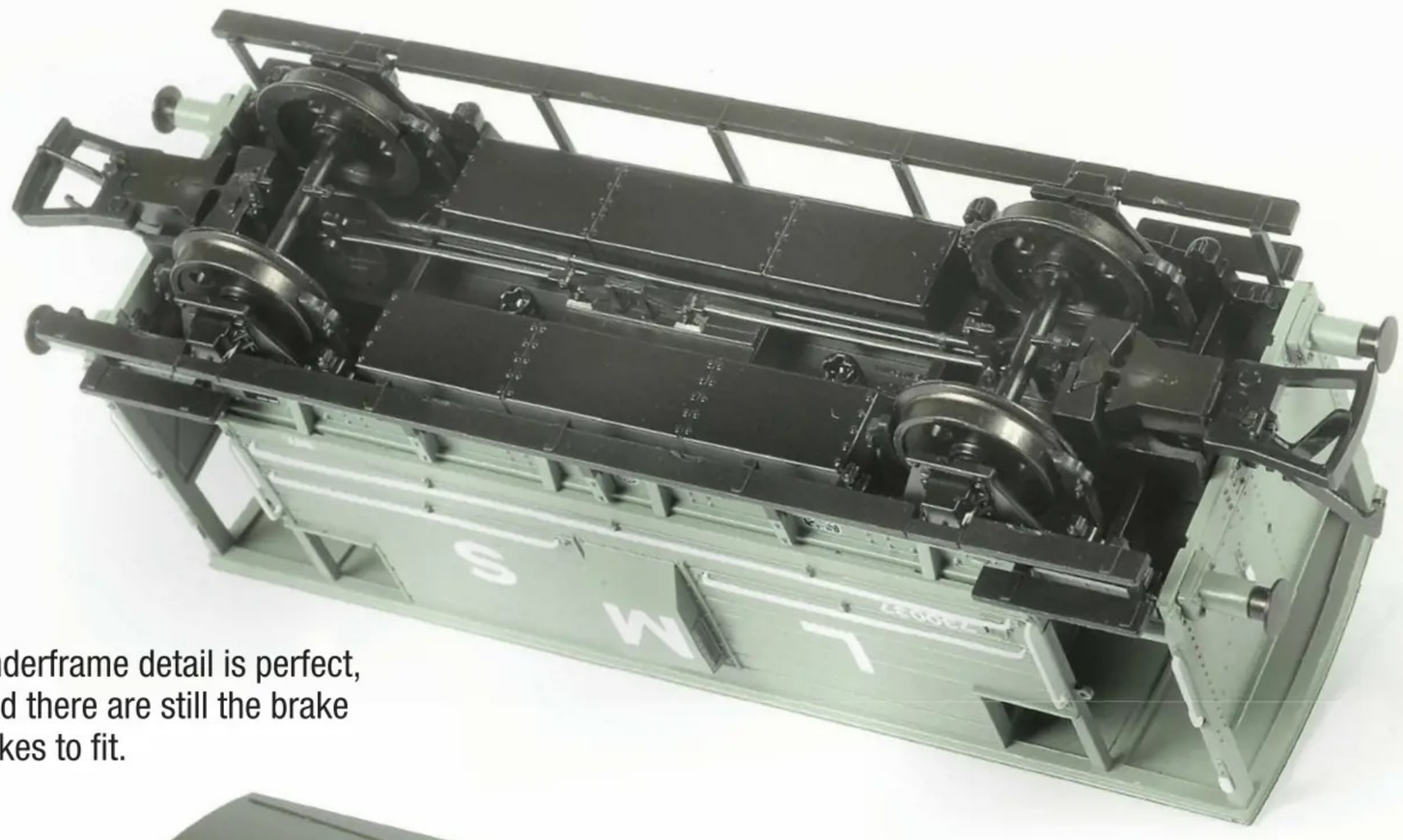
The model received for review is of unfitted No. 730037 (though according to David Larkin's wonderful series on the acquired wagons of BR, that number was applied to a vacuum-piped van). In all dimensions it's perfect (other than being 'narrow gauge', like all OO models), with an abundance of separately-applied details. These include all handrails, including (as fittings to be applied) the safety rails, which can be fixed as horizontal or hanging down. The brake yokes are also included as fittings to be fixed on if required. The roof rainstrips above the verandas are straight, which seems to be the more-typical (Hornby's are curved). There appears to be a full interior, including stove and handbrake wheel; I thought it might be a good idea to show this, but, even after undoing the two screws in the floor pan, the body wouldn't come off (getting inside modern RTR rolling stock is proving just as difficult as with locos!). Standard tension-lock couplings are fitted into NEM pockets, though scale screw shackles are also supplied.



Bodyside printing is excellent, though is this number right?



Accurate prototype source material is essential for assessing a model.



Underframe detail is perfect, and there are still the brake yokes to fit.



Is this the best 4mm model of an LMS brake van ever? I think so.



Some interesting comparisons. Starting bottom left - Bachmann, Hornby, Airfix and etched brass kit.



Weathering (as on the Hornby example) will bring this new model to life.

FACTFILE

Factfile (Review item in bold):
38-975 LMS 20T Brake Van LMS (L M S) Grey
38-976 LMS 20T Brake Van LMS (LMS) Grey
38-977 LMS 20T Brake Van BR Bauxite (Early)
38-978 LMS 20T Brake Van BR Bauxite (Late)
38-979 LMS 20T Brake Van BR Engineers Grey & Yellow
Construction: Plastic with metal wheels
Weight: 50g
Era: 1930-1948
Price: £44.99
Minimum curves: Radius 1
Accessories: Scale couplings and brake yokes

WHAT WE LIKE

- ✓ Overall accuracy
- ✓ Standard of finish
- ✓ Detail fittings
- ✓ Good rolling characteristics

These are beautiful, though for an unfitted brake van, three-link couplings are more appropriate. The standard of finish is superlative, with all branding perfectly-applied. Good rolling characteristics are provided by RP25-profile metal wheels, set at consistent back-to-backs. Weathering would be the only 'improvement' I'd suggest, and I thoroughly recommend this latest Bachmann model.

W.M. COLLECTABLES

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I have acquired a lifetime collection of OO gauge unmade Loco, Coach and Wagon kits, many are no longer in production. There are etched brass, white metal and plastic kits from over 20 manufacturers and covering a wide range of Railway Companies. There is also a large quantity of kit building accessories including wheels and motors.

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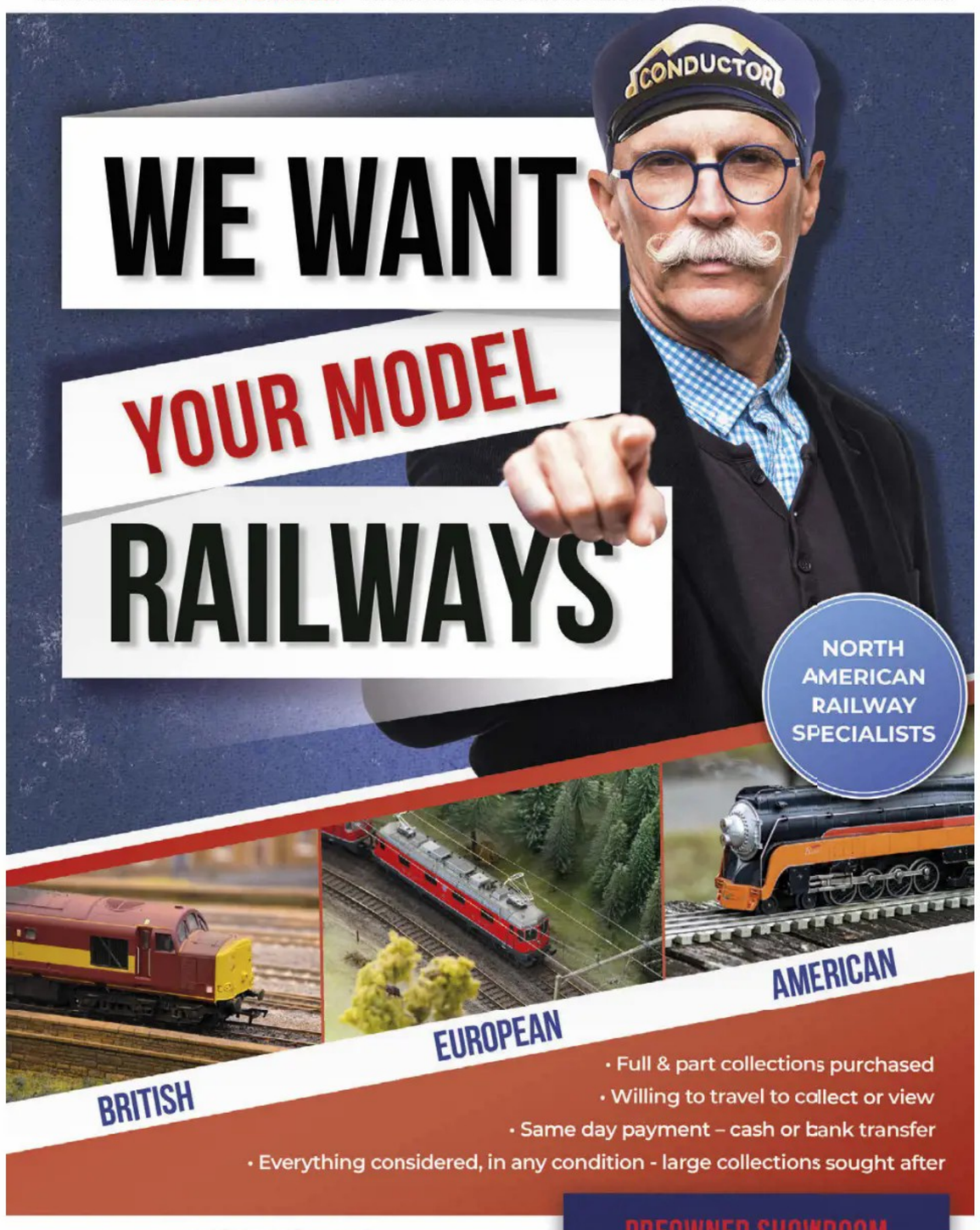

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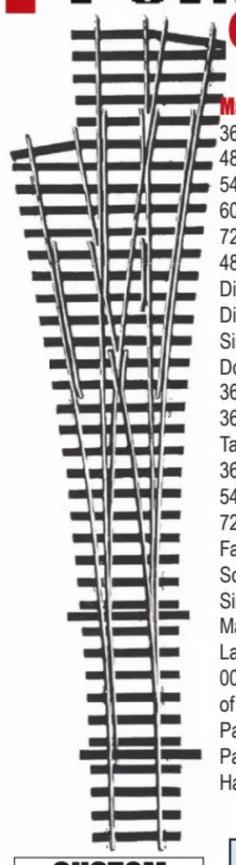

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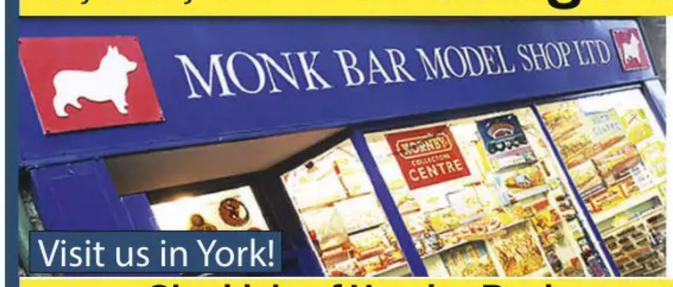

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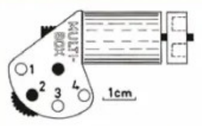

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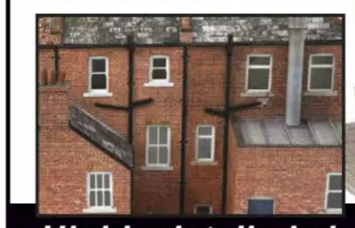

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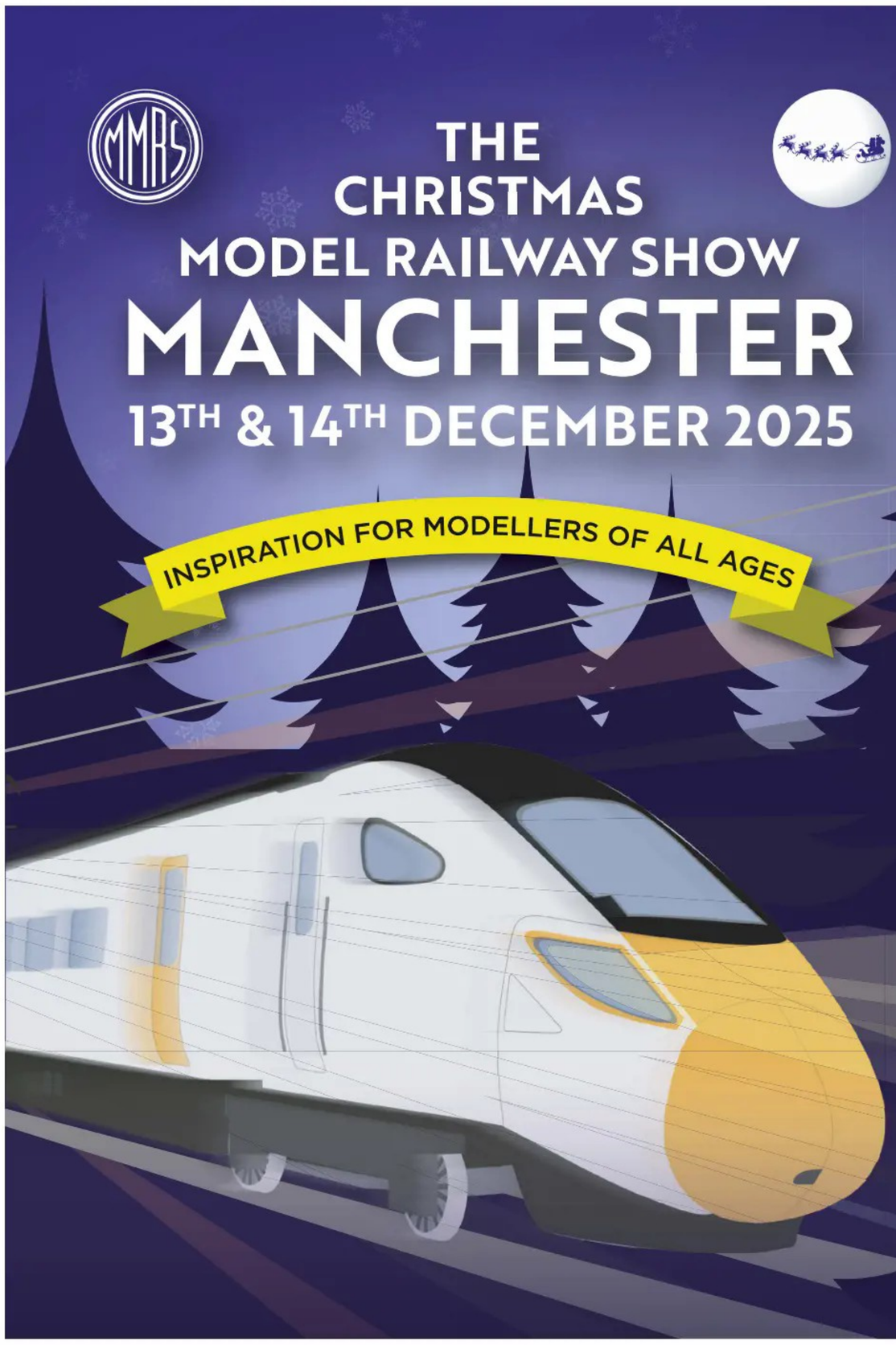

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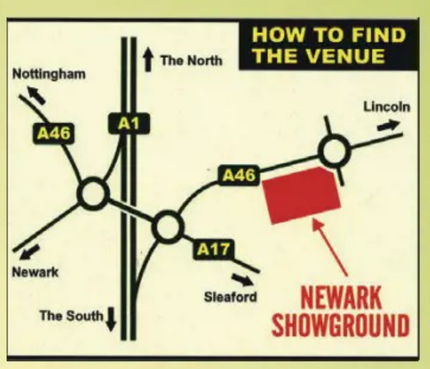

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T 01778 392002

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E help@pocketmags.com

EDITORIAL

I BRAND CONTENT MANAGER
Debbie Wood
E debbie.wood@warnersgroup.co.uk
I FEATURES WRITER
Phil Parker
E phil.parker@warnersgroup.co.uk
I DIGITAL CONTENT CREATOR
Steven Draper
E steven.draper@warnersgroup.co.uk
I TRACTION EDITOR
Stephen Rabone
E: steverabone@hotmail.com
I PROOF READER
Tony Wright

PUBLISHER

Steve Cole
E stevec@warnersgroup.co.uk
I MARKETING MANAGER
Emily Warner
E emily.warner@warnersgroup.co.uk

ADVERTISING

I MULTIMEDIA SALES MANAGER
Sarah Jarman
T 01778 392055
E sarah.jarman@warnersgroup.co.uk
I KEY ACCOUNT MANAGER
Matthew Vines
E matthew.vines@warnersgroup.co.uk
I ADVERTISING ACCOUNT ASSISTANT
Allison Mould
T 01778 395002
E allison.mould@warnersgroup.co.uk

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION

I DESIGNER
Dan Jarman
E danjarmandesign@gmail.com
I ADVERTISING DESIGNER
Amie Carter
E amiec@warnersgroup.co.uk

DISTRIBUTION

TRADE ACCOUNT SALES
E tradeaccountorders@warnersgroup.co.uk
I UK/OVERSEAS NEWSTRADE SALES
Keiron Jefferies T 01778 395043
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West Street, Bourne, Lincolnshire PE10 9PH

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Buffer Stop

This month in pictures



Steven at the controls of the Plymouth O Gauge Group's layout 'Thiswaye' at the Christchurch Model Railway Exhibition.



Have you ever seen such a clean workshop? This is the Harz Railway in Germany.



Early on the Sunday morning, you see the World of Railways stand at Stafford show with Matt getting ready for the crowds to arrive, while Amie has nipped off to get the teas in.



The face of a happy Phil ticking off a bucket list item with a visit to the Schwebebahn, the 124-year-old monorail in Wuppertal.



200 driving wheels on one 16mm scale layout. Wonderful steamy chaos at the Barrow Hill show.



Jacket spud anyone? Cooking lunch in the smokebox of a quarter-scale traction engine at the Midlands Model Engineering Exhibition.

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