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MARCH 2026



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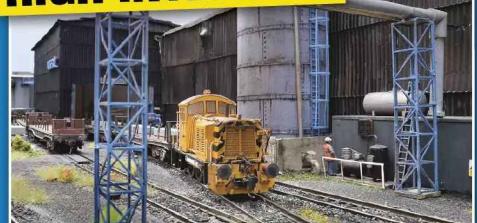
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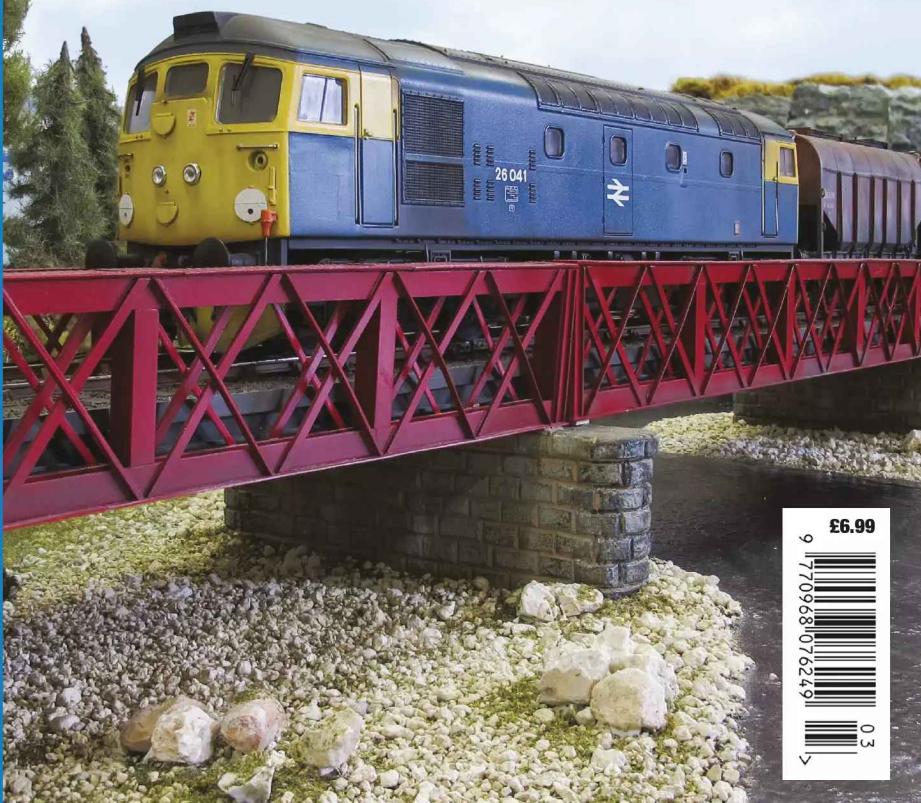
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INSIDE MARCH 26 BRM

GETTING PRACTICAL



p58

- p42** A corrugated hut in 4 steps
- p44** Constructing Goods Sheds in N gauge
- p48** Model a copse using budget trees
- p52** The latest budget modelling with Tony Wright
- p55** How to scratch-build a small warehouse
- p58** Vandalising coaches
- p61** Building wagons in O

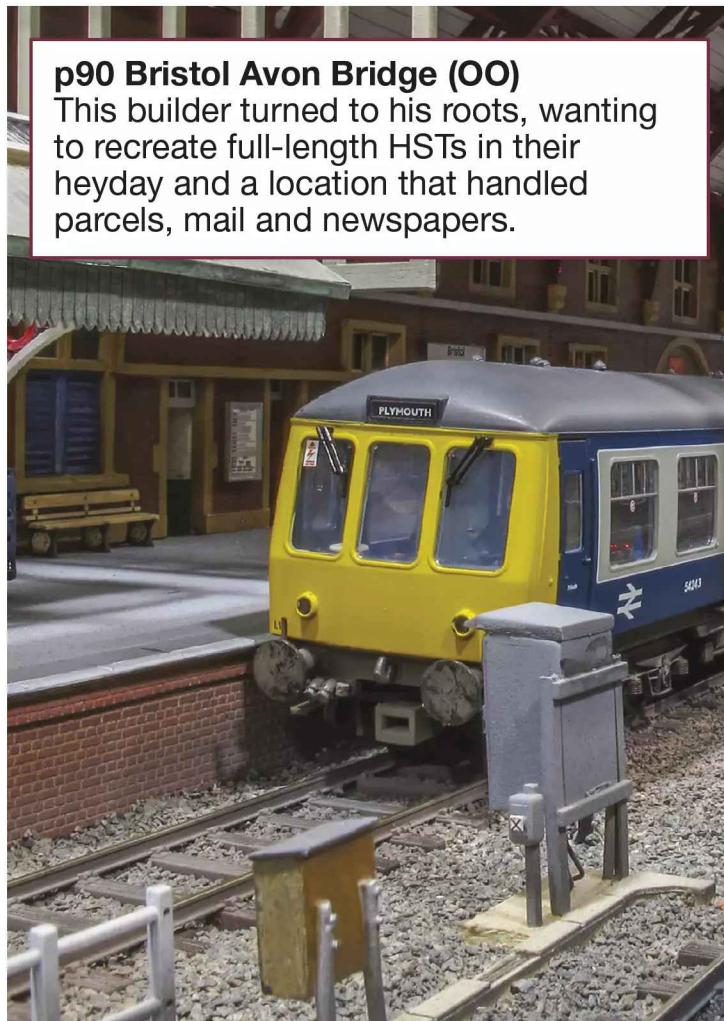


p61

REGULARS

- p30** Opinion, events & more
- p100** LNER motive power: The supporting cast
- p106** Ally Pally show preview
- p114** Hornby '26 announcements
- p116** The latest news headlines

INSPIRING LAYOUTS



p20 Invermire (O)

This latest show-stopping layout takes you on an imagined journey through the Highlands up to the far north, capturing the heart of Scotland.

TRACTION



p68 The North British Type 2s on the West Highland Line in 1968

p76 Exploring photographs of modern traction in its early years

p80 The Tyne & Wear Departmental Fleet

p84 Metrovick Co-Bo Type 2 diesels: A unique failure

LATEST REVIEWS

p126



p120 Graham Farish V2 LNER

p122 Bachmann Class 69

p124 Hornby Branchline Freight Train Set

p126 Heljan Class 153

p128 EFE Rail Class 74

p124



p32 Morf Rail (OO)

Set in the heart of the transitional era, this fiddle yard-to-mill operation features high-intensity movements to keep the crowds entertained.

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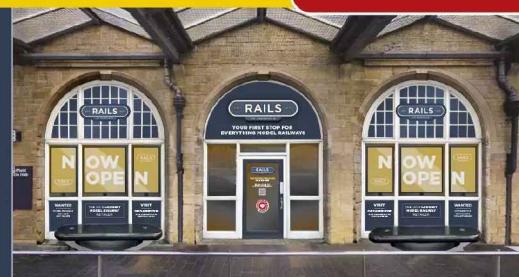


Credit: Harry Rawding



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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.

My first port of call for all buying and selling, new and used. A+

S. Barllett

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.

**WOW!!
SOME OF OUR**

Google
Reviews

**FANTASTIC
REVIEWS**

R. Smalley

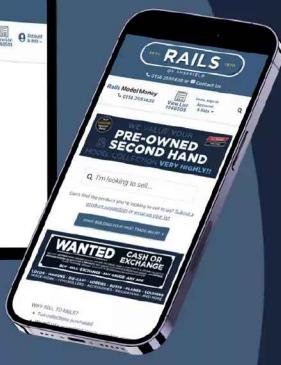
Perfect service from Rails as usual. Excellent packaging, quick delivery and outstanding customer service from Joe, who is friendly, helpful and goes out of his way to provide assistance, even when the circumstances are outside his control.

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 GBP 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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3



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either visit the shop, send us your items, or we can collect larger collections

2



OUR OFFER

our friendly staff will review your list and make an honest valuation offer

4



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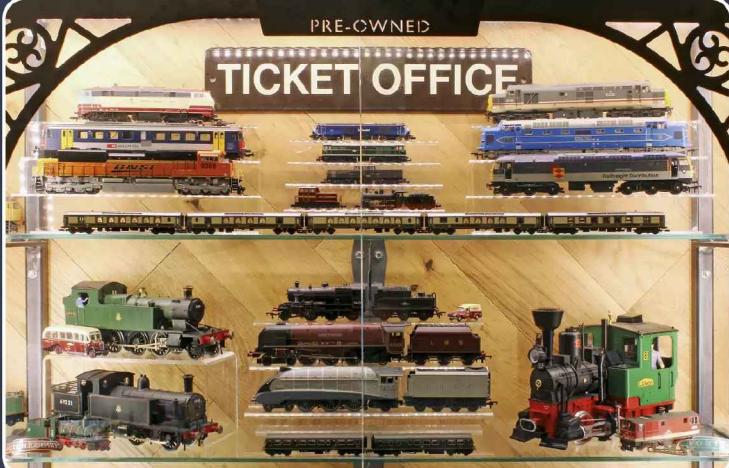
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R. Rae

I have had an excellent experience selling items through Rail's second-hand service. The whole process was simple and straightforward and completed in seven days. A special mention to Ben who was my main contact and was a pleasure to deal with. I went into the process with some doubts but these were quickly dispelled and I would certainly use the service again.



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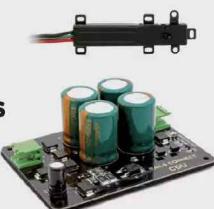
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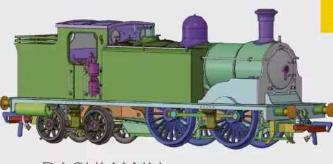
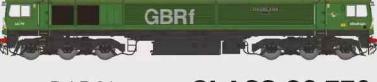
COLLECTION

LATEST AVAILABILITY, ARRIVAL DATES AND CURRENT PRICES

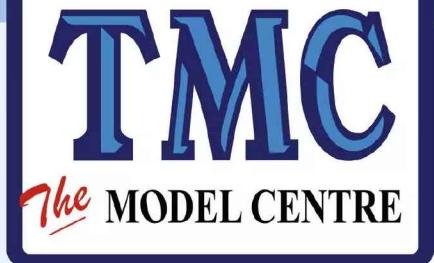
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3



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Quality locomotives*

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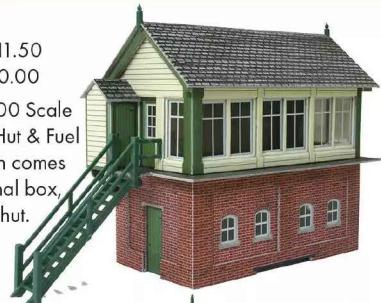


DOUBLE TRACK ENGINE SHED

00 SCALE STONE PO337 £25.00
00 SCALE BRICK PO313 £25.00
N SCALE STONE PN937 £17.00
N SCALE BRICK PN913 £17.00

A beautifully detailed kit with laser cut roof trusses that make the interior detailing more authentic, and can be seen clearly through the roof windows. Large enough to hold 2 full size tender engines.

Comes with a small workshop as a separate building that can attach to the shed in any position.



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A sturdy LNWR Signal Box 00 Scale version comes with Lineside Hut & Fuel Store Shed. N Scale version comes with 1 large & 1 small signal box, platelayers hut & lamp hut.



N Scale version
Signal Box set.



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CASTLE HALL

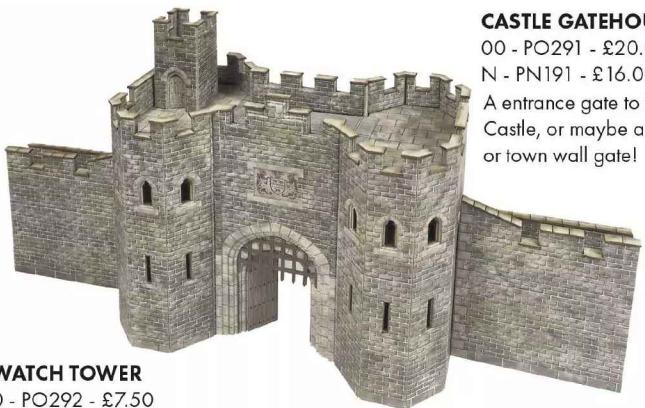
00 - PO294 - £19.50
N - PN194 - £15.00

The beating heart of the Castle.
Could also be a stand alone
Country House.



WATCH TOWER

00 - PO292 - £7.50
N - PN192 - £7.00
00 Scale - 1 Tower
N Scale - 2 Towers



CASTLE GATEHOUSE

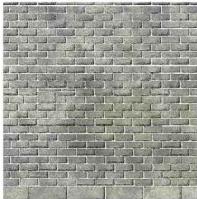
00 - PO291 - £20.00
N - PN191 - £16.00

A entrance gate to the
Castle, or maybe a city
or town wall gate!



CASTLE WALL BRIDGE

00 - PO296 - £11.00
N - PN196 - £8.50



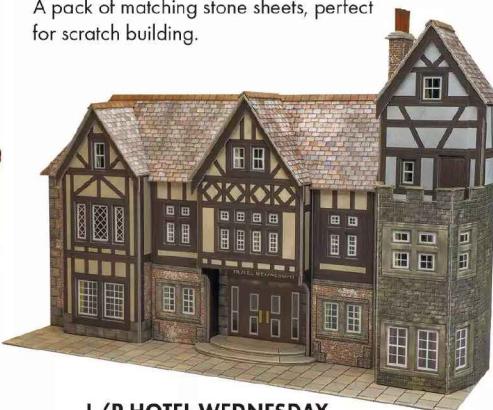
CURTAIN WALLS

00 - PO293 - £12.50
N - PN193 - £9.00
Contains various lengths of
straight walls plus 2 x 45°
corners & 1 x 90° corner



No 1 MARKET STREET

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L/R HOTEL WEDNESDAY

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trains

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00 gauge - 1:76.2 scale



Decorated samples



Class 180 - FGW 'Dynamic Lines'
180102 First Great Western
180109 Hull Trains



Class 180 - Grand Central
180108 William Shakespeare
180112 James Herriot (with green stripe)

5-car set

DC silent **£350.00** (MSRP £449.95)
DCC sound **£445.00** (MSRP £544.95)

Class 180 East Midlands Railway - exclusive to Rails



Class 180 - East Midlands Railway
180109 and 180113

...and Coradia countdown

2-car set

DC silent **£225.00** (MSRP £274.95)
DCC sound **£320.00** (MSRP £369.95)

3-car set

DC silent **£270.00** (MSRP £339.95)
DCC sound **£365.00** (MSRP £434.95)



Class 175 - Transport for Wales
175003 (2-car)
175107 (3-car)

Class 175 - Arriva Trains Wales
175008 (2-car)
175103 (3-car)

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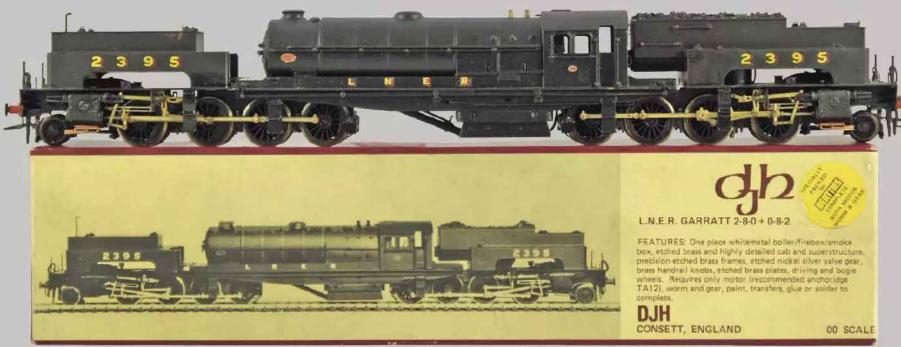


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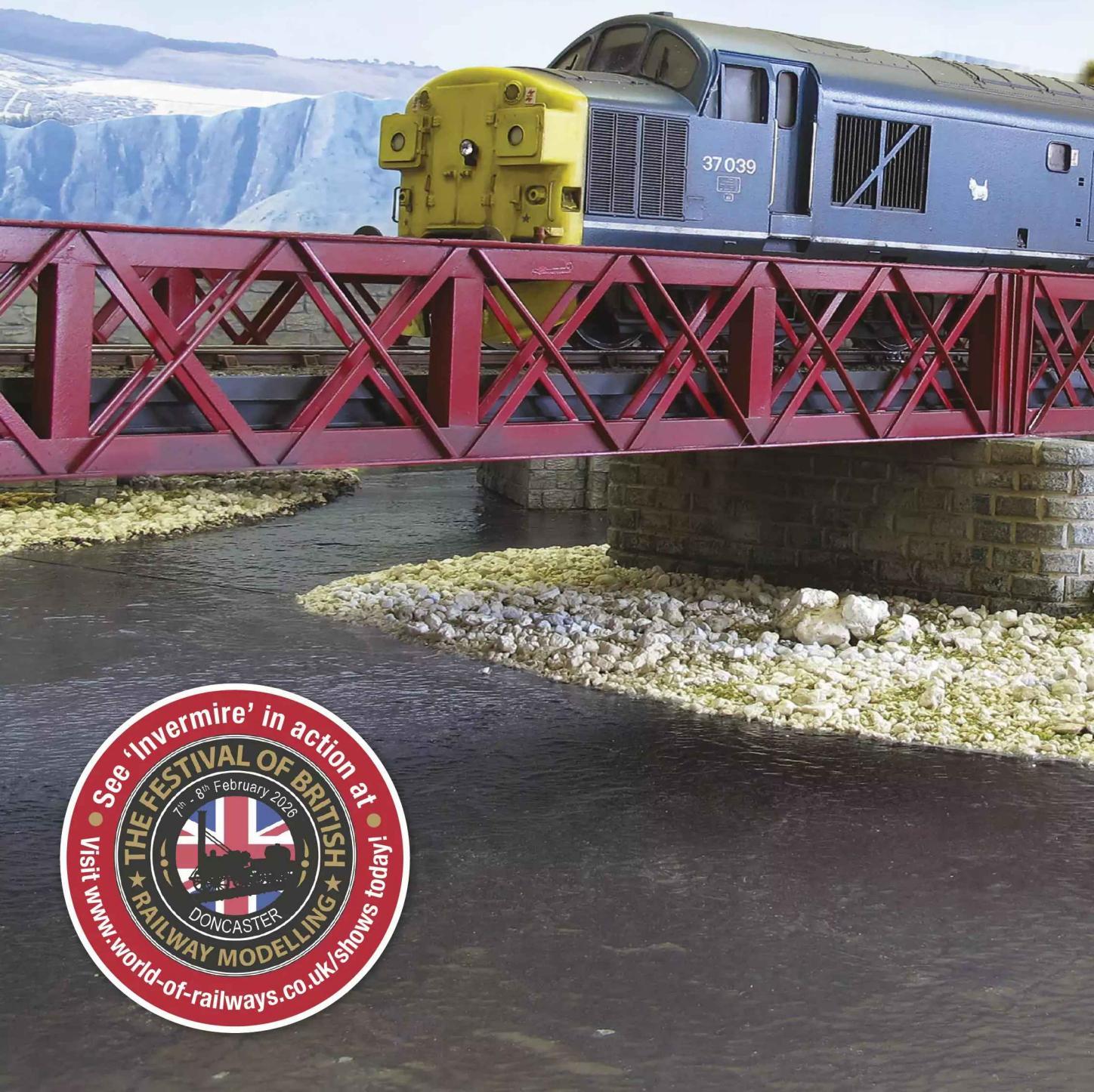
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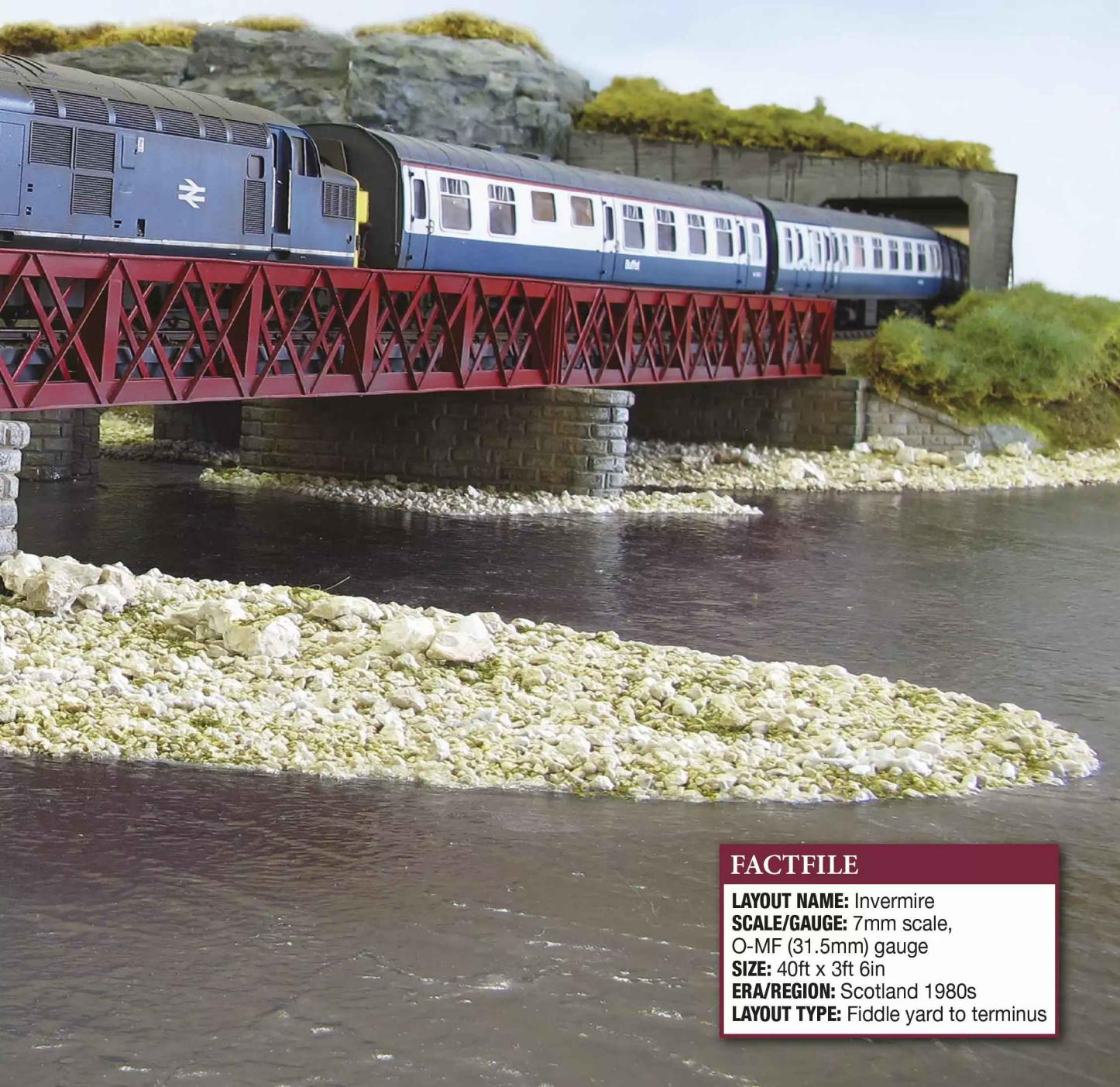
37039 emerges from the avalanche tunnel and crosses the viaduct with the early morning service from Inverness to Invermire. The locos carry the white stripes along their lower sides, a characteristic trademark of Eastfield depot.



SCOTTISH FLAIR

This latest show-stopping layout from The Hessle Model Railway Group takes you on an imagined journey through the Highlands up to the far north of the country, capturing the heart of Scotland.

Words: Mike Knowles Photography: Phil Parker



FACTFILE

AYOUT NAME: Invermire

SCALE/GAUGE: 7mm scale,
O-MF (31.5mm) gauge

SIZE: 40ft x 3ft 6in

ERA/REGION: Scotland 1980s

AYOUT TYPE: Fiddle yard to terminus

TOP RIGHT:

The provender store, based on the one at Thurso, utilises the Bachmann model, though the doors have been altered and a timber loading deck added around it.

MIDDLE RIGHT:

The rail served a fuel depot supplying fuel to the various boats that use the harbour. The concrete paving is mounting card, scribed to represent the construction joints, then painted with Humbrol number 40 grey, dusted with talcum powder while still wet.



H

aving successfully built and exhibited our OO gauge layout, 'Battersby North End', in 2012, we began to look for ideas for a new layout. My son, Robert, had recently built a JLRT kit of a Class 50 loco and we were impressed by its size and presence. So, it was decided to build a 7mm scale layout, something we had no experience of, but joining the Gauge O Guild provided a lot of information, and a visit to one of their "trade" shows, where there was numerous specialist traders, proved very useful. After researching various locations, we were drawn to the railways of Scotland, which in our time period featured Type 2 and Type 3 diesel locos and the use of mixed train formations, including both freight and passenger stock in the same train, offered interesting possibilities.

A couple of years ago, we had to move out of our clubrooms at Hessle Town Hall while the building was refurbished. We were fortunate to be offered a room just around the corner at the Hessle Methodist Church. At 45 feet x 18 feet, this was much better suited to our needs than the four smaller rooms we used at the Town Hall, so we have made the move permanent and we'd like to thank them for accommodating us. As the group has a number of other layouts in progress, we usually just have two or three boards of the layout erected at any one time, but on occasions, we can set it up fully if required.

“ We currently have two separate operating time periods, 1975-1983 with mainly vacuum-braked stock and 1984-1990 with later air-braked stock. ”



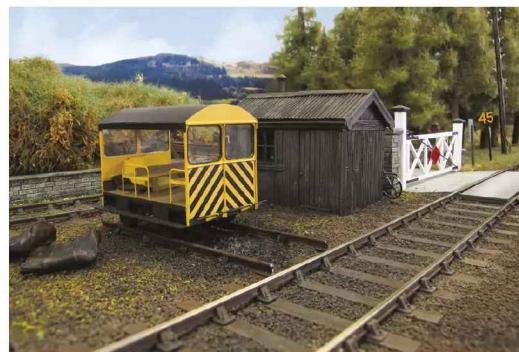


A tour of Scotland

The layout has been designed and built by the Blue Diesels section of the Hessle Model Railway Group, based at Hessle in East Yorkshire (currently Sean Hutchinson, Robert and myself). Although a fictional layout, it is based around a number of prototypical locations on the Scottish rail network.

Trains emerge from the fiddle yard and onto the scenic section through a representation of the avalanche tunnel at Attadale on the side of Loch Carron. They then cross a shortened version of Loch Awe viaduct before passing over a level crossing inspired by the one at Morar. After this, the station approach is reached and a signal box based on the one at Georgemas Junction is passed. Finally, trains reach the station building, which is based on the one at Thurso. So, in 30ft, we travel from south west Scotland to the far north east!

We currently have two separate operating time periods, 1981-1983 with mainly vacuum-braked stock and 1986-1987 with later air-braked stock. At exhibitions, we run one period on one day and the other period on the other day. We are thinking about adding a further, earlier period 1968-1975 with mainly green diesels, but thinking about it is as far as we have got so far!



ABOVE: The signal box, which is scratch-built, is based on Georgemas Junction, where the far north line splits, one way to Thurso, the other to Wick.

MIDDLE LEFT: One of the boats that frequently visited Invermire quayside was the ubiquitous Clyde Puffer. Built by a friend of ours, based around a very basic vacuum-formed plastic shell with much detailing added.

BOTTOM LEFT: A Wickham trolley (non-motorised) built from an N Brass Locos kit, parked near the end of the engineer's siding with a store shed built from a kit from 422 Modelmaking.

LAYOUT | O | INVERMIRE

TOP RIGHT: 26041

stands alongside the abandoned loading bay while shunting wagons on the provender store and quayside sidings. Sulzer the cat looks on, hoping for a treat!

MIDDLE RIGHT:

The entrance to the station building is based on the one at Thurso. At Thurso, the whole of the run-round loop is outside of the building and this has been copied on 'Invermire'. This means we are able to use our preferred manually-operated scale couplings.

BELOW RIGHT:

Another view of the provender store and fuel depot areas. Also shown is one of several cars around the layout, all of which hold personal memories for us.



Key features

The track design was plotted using Templot and printed out on A0 paper. This was stuck down onto cork sheet, which had previously been glued to the baseboards.

Trackwork is hand-built using rail and chairs from C&L, Exactoscale and Permaway and ply sleepers, which were hand-cut from a sheet (not as daunting as it sounds).

Ballast is Woodland Scenics medium grey in the running lines and fine cinders/foundry sand in the sidings, all of which had been weathered using an airbrush. Dropper wires were soldered to each piece of rail and connected to bus bars positioned under the boards made from old lengths of OO flexitrac. Between-board connections are made using Avionics plugs and sockets. These are mounted on the rear of the boards to minimise any crawling around under the layout when setting up. Points are generally operated by servo motors using control boards built from kits from MERG. However, following issues at a previous exhibition, some of them have been replaced with Tortoise motors.

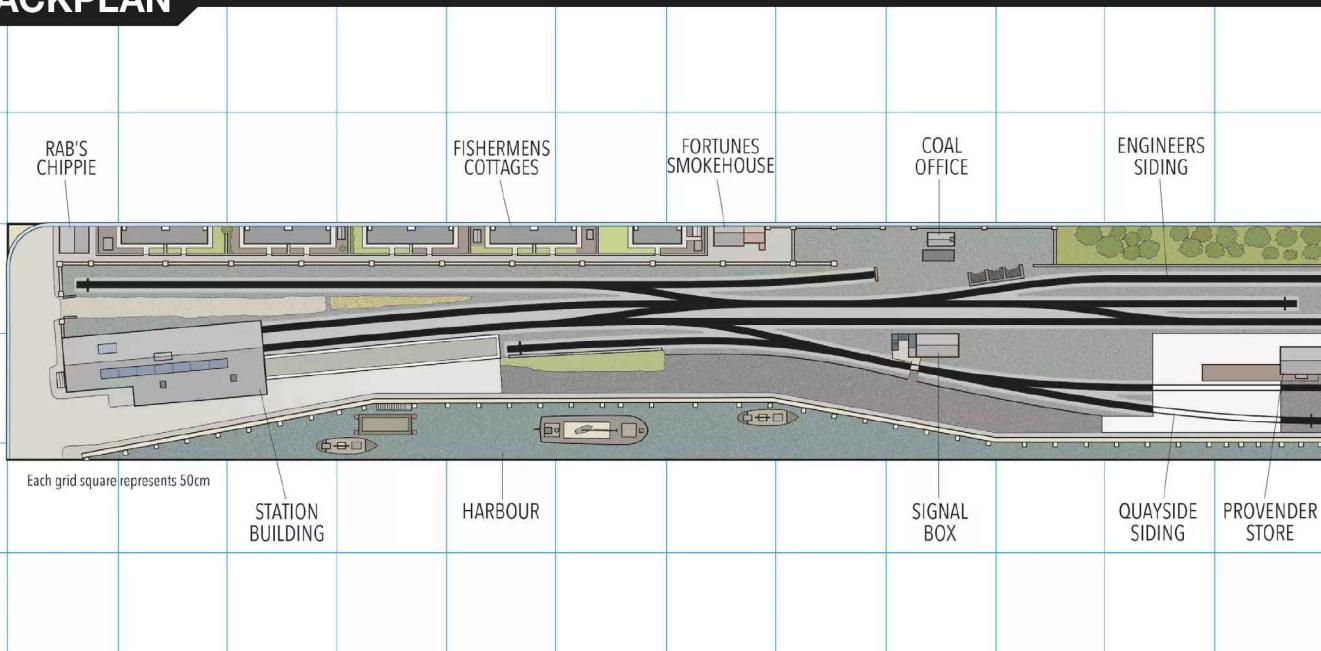
Signals are semi-scratch-built, incorporating etches and castings from Scale Signal Supply and are a mixture of lattice girder, tubular post and angle and plate designs to represent upgrades to the system over the years. All the signals, including the ground signals, work and are again operated by servo motors and MERG control boards.

Non-working point rodding, using components from MSE and scratch-built signal wire posts with EZ Line for the wires, finish it all off nicely.

The buildings are predominantly scratch-built, the exception being the provender store, which is a Bachmann model that was being offered for sale at a show at a price that was too good to miss. The positions of the doors have been amended, though.

The station building, based on Thurso, is scratch-built using a foamboard core. This is clad on the outside with

TRACKPLAN



Slater's stonework and on the inside with plain Plastikard. This was coated with PVA and fine sand sprinkled on to represent the rough render of the prototype. Roof trusses are made from Evergreen strip, covered with Plastikard and then topped off with Slater's roof tiles. Due to its size (about a metre long), the building has been made to be removable from the layout and travels to exhibitions in its own purpose-made box.

The signal box is again scratch-built and is fully fitted out inside, down to the signaller's copy of the Sun newspaper.

At the back of the layout are a row of fishermen's cottages produced as kits to our design by 422 Modelmaking. There is also Rab's chippie, scratch-built but based on the post office building at Robin Hood's Bay, and Fortunes of Invermire smokehouse based on its namesake at Whitby.

New challenges

One of the main scenic features on the layout is the water, something we had very little previous experience of modelling. We didn't want a completely flat surface to it and we wanted to create an impression of depth. The surface of the baseboards to be under water were first painted a mucky browny green, then 12mm wide stripwood was set on edge around the perimeter. 4mm tinted grey Perspex was then cut to shape and laid on top of the stripwood, thereby supporting it clear of the baseboards. Finally, it was given a coat of Mod Podge and, using an airbrush, ripples were formed in the surface. All a bit of an experiment, but we're quite pleased with the end result. The piers and abutments for the viaduct were again specially produced for us by 422 Modelmaking. The bridge decks are 4mm MDF, strengthened underneath with two lengths of aluminium angle and the girders, which are non-load-bearing, were made using Evergreen plastic sections.



ABOVE: From left to right: Mike Knowles, Dave Matthews, Ian Rumford and Rob Knowles.

About the modeller

Name: Mike Knowles

Age: 73

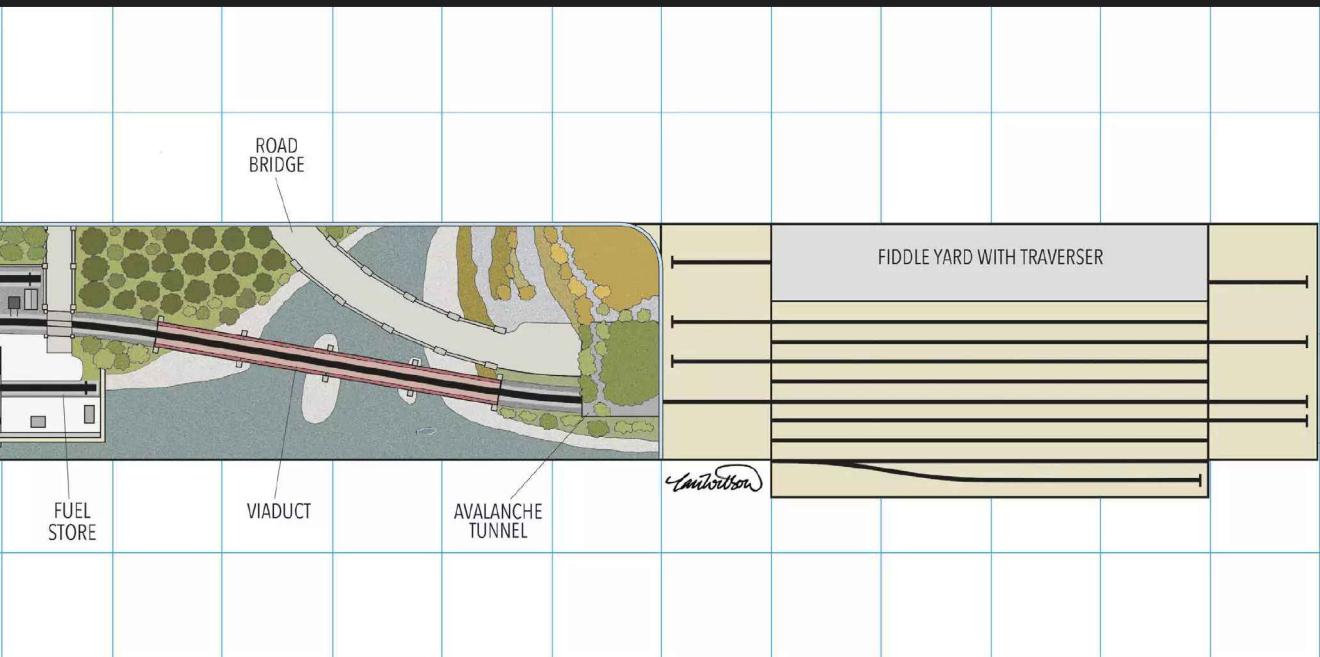
Number of years modelling: 65

Name of your first layout: 'Chubhill'

Favourite era/region: 1970s/80s NE England, Wales and Scotland

Favourite locomotive: Class 37

I've always been a keen modeller, but as a youngster, I had no interest at all in railways, back then, it was all about cars. In my early teens, I got involved in slot car racing, taught myself to solder and started scratch-building chassis in brass and piano wire, which is why I probably prefer working in metal even now. However, university, work and marriage curtailed my modelling activities, and it was eventually through my son's developing interest in railways and model railways in the 1980s that I also got hooked on it. This probably explains why my interest is in blue diesels despite my age.





ABOVE: 37039 on the return journey to Inverness, having collected a single Freightliner wagon from the yard at Invermire. The wagon is built from an adapted kit by PRMRP.

MIDDLE RIGHT: There is a small coal yard serving the local domestic market. The coal is brought in open mineral wagons, often coupled to a passenger train, the relatively low demand making it uneconomic to run a special working. The loading shovel is a JCB 3C Mk. 1 built from a Radley Models kit.

BOTTOM RIGHT: A Class 114 DMU in "Mexican Bean" livery prepares to cross the viaduct heading back to Inverness. It is built from a J&M Hughes kit.



All the stonework for the road bridge behind the viaduct was again specially produced for us by 422 Modelmaking. Andrew Creaser, the proprietor, actually lives local to us and has now joined our group. All the parts he made for us are now included in his range of kits and mouldings.

The avalanche tunnel is scratch-built from foam board and Plastikard and features a representation of the patterned concrete face of the prototype. Hills and embankments were formed from polystyrene insulation, covered with lightweight filler, followed by application of static grass fibres. The visible rock faces near the avalanche tunnel were made using Woodland Scenics rock moulds and lightweight casting plaster.

Varied stock

Quite extensive research was carried out using reference books, magazine articles and, of course, the internet. Various oddities were unveiled, such as specially adapted Freightliner wagons fitted with buffers and screw-couplings at both ends, plus through steam heat and vacuum pipes. This meant they could run singly, marshalled in a passenger train!

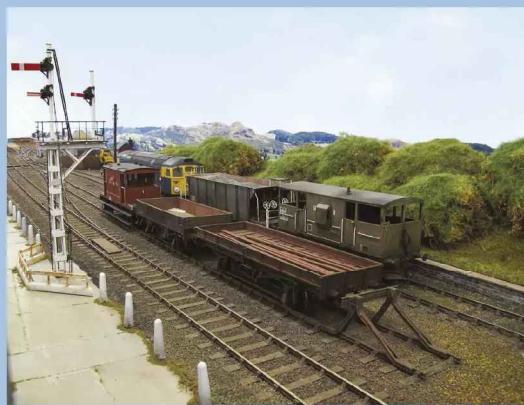
Locomotives are all heavily-modified Heljan models. They have all been converted to single motor drive, which we have found to be perfectly adequate for our relatively short trains. The 37s and 47 feature replacement bodyshells from JLRT and the cabs

of the 25 have also been modified with parts from the same supplier. Further detailing to the locos has also been carried out, again with parts mainly from JLTRT. All the locos are fitted with sound decoders. By using the single motor drive, we have been able to use standard Loksound decoders in the Type 2 locos with EM2 speakers. For the Type 3 locomotives, we used the Loksound L decoders as we felt the higher output from the amplifier would be better suited to drive the large EM3 speakers used in them. They have all been repainted (mainly by Sean) and then superbly weathered by Roger Manton.

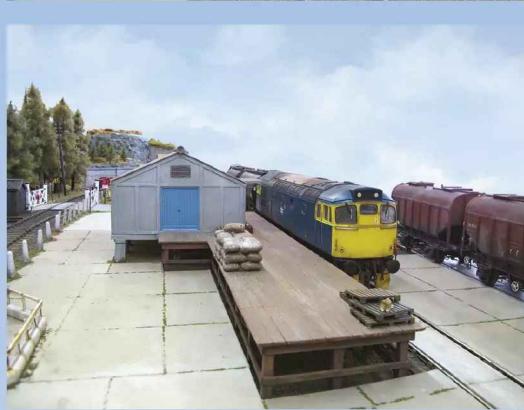
Freight stock is mainly kit-built using products from Slater's, Parkside, PRMRP and First Class Kits, etc. The Mark 1 coaches are Easibuild kits and the Mark 2 variants are (extremely) modified Tri-ang Big Big coaches, detailed with parts from PRMRP, etc. The LMS/BR inspection saloon is an Easibuild kit, while the GWR saloon is scratch-built with a roof and bogies from Dapol. The "Mexican Bean" DMU is based around a kit from J & M Hughes. We would like to thank the kit manufacturers for their help in supplying additional parts so that we could produce the variations to the stock we required.

The layout is operated using a Lenz DCC system and all the locos are fitted with sound decoders. There are three controllers available, two for the train operators and one for the fiddleyard operators.

“ We are thinking about adding a further, earlier period 1968-1975 with mainly green diesels, but thinking about it is as far as we have got so far! ”



TOP LEFT: Engineers' wagons are being shunted into the siding. The Sealion ballast hopper and Shark brake van are again from PRMRP kits. The buffer stops are whitewashed kits from Ragstone Models. Also visible is the home signal, a BR plate and angle design as a replacement for the earlier GNR one.



MIDDLE LEFT: A view of the yard area showing the timber deck around the provender store (built from real timber). The grain hopper wagons on the quayside sidings are from First Class Kits.

BELOW: The yard area as viewed from the quayside. Pictured is some of the later air-braked period stock.

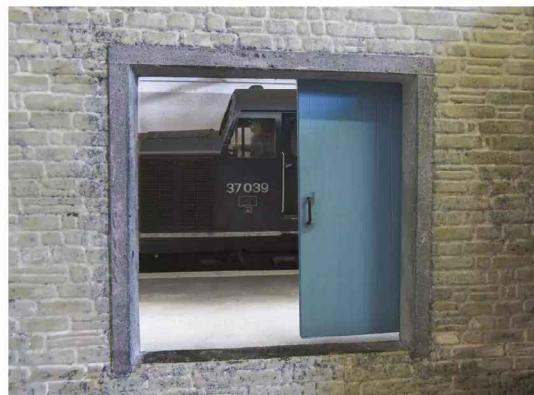




ABOVE: An unidentified Type 2 locomotive pauses beside the signal box while running round its stock. The signaller waits on the stairs, ready to exchange some pleasantries with the driver!

MIDDLE RIGHT:
The cab of 37039 can be seen through the goods entrance in the station building.

BOTTOM RIGHT:
A favourite view of ours looking into the station building through the main passenger entrance.



The system we use is that the train operators bring the trains from the fiddleyard into the station area and do any shunting duties that are required. The fiddleyard operators then take control of the train to return it. The points and signals are all controlled from a panel situated at the station end of the layout, housing a row of 25 switches (pseudo levers) and a representation of the signalling diagram. This is operated by a dedicated signaller during running sessions. While none of the points and none of the signals are interlocked (way beyond us!), we do try and operate as though they were, and doing so greatly enhances the enjoyment.

We operate the layout to a written schedule. Three variations of this are available, one for the fiddle yard operators, one for the train drivers and one for the signaller. Each one describes the specific functions to be carried out by each operator in order to complete a specified manoeuvre. Hopefully, this means that everyone knows what is happening at any one time, though things can go awry. Stopping to talk to visitors at exhibitions is one way of stopping smooth running, but we do like talking about our layout!

Reflections

Building a layout requires a number of skills. Joinery for the baseboards, planning and constructing trackwork and signals, electronics for the operating system, construction of buildings and scenery, etc.

TOP RIGHT: Looking towards the avalanche tunnel portal, showing the road that runs alongside the railway through the tunnel. A pick-up goods train emerges from the tunnel, bound for Invermire.



MIDDLE RIGHT:

The level crossing, inspired by the one at Morar. This gives access to the yard/provender store area. It is manually-operated by the driver of the vehicle crossing the line. Note the telephone to contact the signaller to obtain permission to cross.

BELOW: 47635 hauls a passenger service across the viaduct bound for Inverness. The anglers seem totally oblivious to its passing!



Being part of a club can greatly help with this. We are only a relatively small group (currently 13 members), but among us we have a former signaller and a retired electronics engineer. Plus, we can call on other members who may not have been directly involved with building a particular layout to help with operating it at exhibitions. So, I'd thoroughly recommend joining a club. However, there will always be some new things to master, such as the water and rock faces on 'Invermire', but at the end of the day, you just have to give it a go and hope for the best. There will be failures; for example, we initially braced the decks on the viaduct with timber, but this warped, so it was done again using aluminium angle.

Over the 12-year construction period of the layout, unfortunately, none of us has got any younger. Note - we don't set a target completion date for our layouts, they will be done when they are done and we will just relax and enjoy the process. However, a number of the other members of the operating team and I are now well past retirement age and the effort required to take it to exhibitions is now starting to be a concern. As a result, we have decided to limit the number of exhibitions we take it to a maximum of two per year. While we are happy to sit back for a while and just play trains, no doubt at some point, we will look to build a replacement, but it is likely to be a much smaller affair. ■

“We don't set a target completion date for our layouts; they will be done when they are done and we will just relax and enjoy the process.**”**



COMMUNITY

EDITOR'S COMMENT

You can't beat a good bridge on a model railway.

Not only are they key structures in the railway network, past and present, but they also offer so much in the model world, whether that be disguising a join in the baseboards, offering an opportunity for your locomotives to appear 'on stage', or giving the builder endless cameo and scenic opportunities.

Bridges come in all shapes and sizes, too, from the sweeping, impressive viaducts to the smaller road bridges, offering cars and other vehicles the chance to get involved in the action.

A fantastic example of using bridges to great effect is in this issue, the show-stopping 'Invermire', which includes a viaduct with the wow factor. We are especially fans of the anglers fishing beside it, who are seemingly not interested at all in the variety of trains passing behind them!

Our second layout in this issue actually has 'bridge' in its name, 'Bristol Avon Bridge', which was built by Keith Sully to recreate full-length HSTs in their heyday. There's lots of action going on, with parcels, mail and newspaper traffic being shown. It also has an impressive station scene under the roof girders, full of little touches that bring the scene to life.

'Morf Rail', our third layout, although missing out on a bridge, also ranks highly for its busy movements. It features some impressive pipework and steel gantries, too, perfectly setting the scene for this industrial railway.

And the good news is that you will be able to see 'Morf Rail' and 'Invermire' at The Festival of British Railway Modelling in Doncaster next month! With over 30 layouts, 60 traders and a special tribute to celebrate the 150-year anniversary of Sir Nigel Gresley, it's a weekend not to be missed – find out more at www.world-of-railways.co.uk/information/all-shows

Happy Modelling

Debbie Wood

WEEKEND PLANS...

The Festival of British Railway Modelling 2026

We are back at the Doncaster Racecourse for a weekend of top-quality model railway entertainment! Over 30 layouts will be at the show, plus over 60 traders, and this year we will also be celebrating the 150-year anniversary of Sir Nigel Gresley.

DATE: February 8-9th, 2026



Lincoln and District Model Railway Exhibition

Hosted by the Lincoln and District Model Railway Club, this year's event will be held in a Grade II listed building in the Cathedral Quarter of the City of Lincoln. Visitors can expect over 15 layouts, seven traders and two demos, plus societies. Last year's prices have been held at £5 for adult entry.

DATE: Saturday, February 21st, 2026

Tonbridge Model Railway Exhibition

TMRC is holding its next annual exhibition at its usual venue, Angel Leisure Centre, Angel Lane, Tonbridge. Offering local council parking, buses to the nearby High Street and a railway station within five minutes, visitors can expect over 20 varied layouts, 30 traders, two hands-on layouts, a club stand and railway artists.

DATE: Saturday, February 21st, 2026

2026 Tenterden Model Railway Exhibition

Ashford Model Railway Club is hosting its annual event at Homewood School, Ashford Road, Tenterden. Now under new management, the 2026 show will have two halls of quality layouts and trade stands. Doors will be open at 10am both days, with entry costing £6 per adult.

DATE: February 21-22nd, 2026

Mansfield Model Railway Exhibition

Now in its 17th year, this annual event will be taking place at St Peter's Church Centre in Mansfield with all proceeds of the show going to the church and local scouts group. A selection of layouts and trade stands will be on show, with an adult ticket costing £7.

DATE: March 7-8th, 2026

BRAKING PERFORMANCE

In the February 2026(!) issue, John Cherry has proposed an answer to a question raised in the November 2025 issue, to which the following is my response.

John Cherry, in the September 2025 issue, has conjured up a rather romantic picture of BR staff commemorating the old pre-grouping companies on the cabside of the K Class. Sadly, the reason is rather more prosaic, as the additional B after the 5F power classification is an indication of the braking performance of the loco. Some, if not all, goods locos in BR days were given a rating as to their braking capabilities and noted as either A or B, which in a few cases was then added to the cabside power rating lettering, which seems, from photographic evidence, to have started around 1954 on non-LMS locos. Unfortunately, clear photographs of cabsides are rare, so it is difficult to tell how widespread this additional letter was. On the Southern Region, apart from the K Class and their B rating, Bulleid's Q1 and Light Pacifics achieved an A rating, the latter being labelled 7P 5FA, as can be seen on preserved locos such as *Taw Valley*. It is difficult to determine which rating was better, but both the Bulleid examples had a reputation for being able to pull larger loads than they could stop, at least with unfitted wagons.

Nick Holliday

THE VOTES ARE IN!

Every year, The Quirky Poll asks modellers to vote on the models they would like to see introduced in the future in OO and OO9.

The Quirky Poll has an enviable track record... the Top Item from 2019 - *Stephenson's Rocket* - has been made, as have the Top Two of the 2020 Poll - *Bellerophon* and *Titfield Thunderbolt* - as well as the Top Item of the 2021 Poll - the Streamlined B17.

The 2025 results, which saw higher votes than the last few years, are now in, and below are the top five models voted. Did your favourite make the top five?

1. Furness Railway A5 0-4-0
2. Aveling & Porter Loco
3. GER Nielsen Y5
4. Giraffe Car
5. Trevithick's Loco

The full results are available on RMweb.

RAILWAY FESTIVAL RAISES £100,000



Alstom's record-breaking *The Greatest Gathering* has officially passed the £100,000 fundraising milestone, marking another highlight in what has already become one of the most talked-about railway events of the decade.

Held from August 1–3rd, 2025, at the Derby Litchurch Lane Works, the festival brought together more than 140 historic and modern rail vehicles, an unprecedented line-up that drew over 40,000 visitors to the site and attracted millions more online. The celebration formed part of the UK-wide

Rail 200 programme, commemorating two centuries of the modern railway.

The event's organising committee confirmed this week that proceeds from ticket sales, vendor fees and merchandise have topped £100,000. The money will now be shared among five national charities - Alzheimer's Research UK, the Railway Benefit Fund, Railway Children, Railway Mission and the Transport Benevolent Fund CIO - alongside more than 50 participating heritage organisations.

WIN

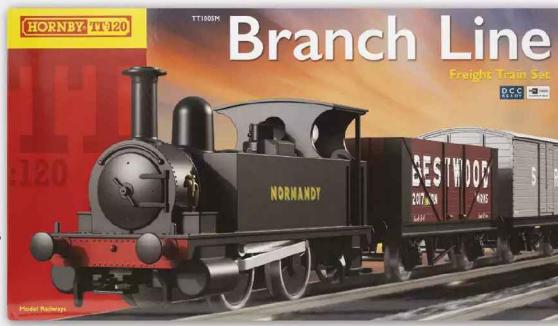
ATT:120 TRAIN SET

The new TT1005M Branchline Freight Train Set from Hornby is up for grabs this month and reviewed in this issue on pages 124–125. An ideal starter set for anyone interested in TT:120, you just need to answer this question for a chance to win.

What is the name of the 0-4-0 tank locomotive inside the train set?

- A: Caen
- B: Giverny
- C: Normandy
- D: Mont Saint-Michel

Head to www.world-of-railways.co.uk/Competitions for your chance to win. The competition will close on February 28th, 2026.



LETTER OF THE MONTH

Thank you, as always, for a varied and interesting issue, including, of course, Traction, to which I became a subscriber many years ago (BRM February 2026).

This time, one feature stood out for me from all the others. This was Steven Draper's review of the Hornby Tri-ang Railways Remembered RS9 "Intercity Express" train set.

Many new products are reviewed in your pages throughout the year, but it was the style, warmth and genuine feeling of nostalgia in Steven's words that have made me re-read this item many times.

I was five years old at Christmas 1966 and, though my parents' means did not ever extend to complete train sets for birthdays or Christmas, I do remember receiving individual model items - wagons, carriages and even the odd loco - and I was always given each new catalogue every year.



Steven makes powerful and very worthwhile points about enjoying toy trains, as he puts it, 'differently, in a simpler, purer way'.

I have entered your competition to win one of these sets and, if not successful in that attempt, will almost certainly buy one with the cash that I receive for Christmas and my birthday in February.

I attend many model railway exhibitions and enjoy seeing the complex and highly skilled efforts of modellers in different scales. That said, I am certain that I, like Steven and his son, will enjoy the simple, nostalgic pleasure of watching a model train go round an oval of track - even as I near my 65th birthday.

I can feel a moistening of my eyes as I write this, and I defy anyone to look again at Steven's last couple of paragraphs without feeling equally emotional, nostalgic and above all, happy.

Thank you, Steven, for a truly moving piece of writing!

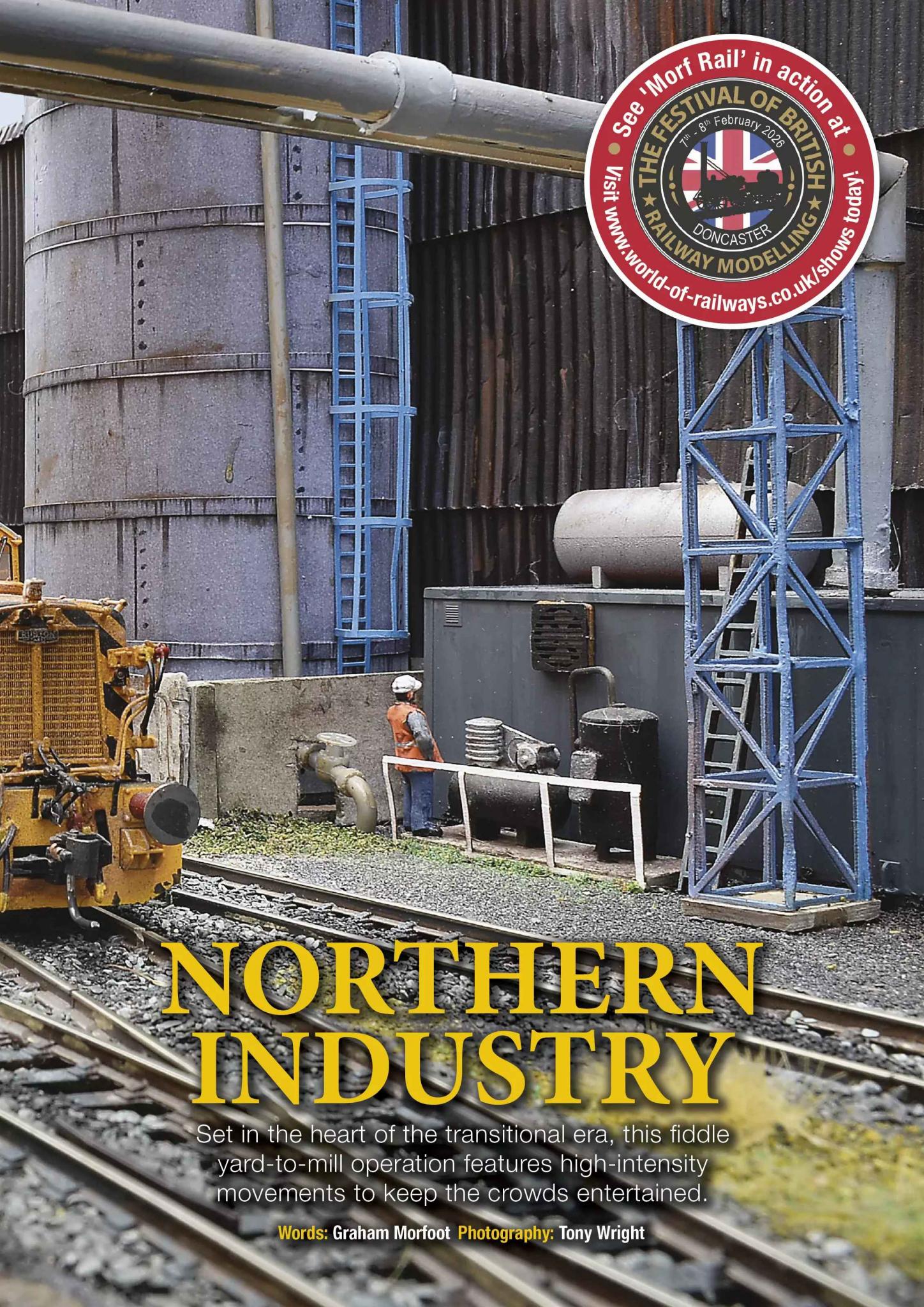
Adrian Willats

The Ruston-built Class 07, a former Peakstone locomotive, is very popular with the works' drivers. Good visibility and powerful, it shunts the bloom loads.



FACTFILE

AYOUT NAME: Morf Rail
SCALE/GAUGE: 4mm:1ft/16.5mm/00
SIZE: 9ft 3in x 4ft
ERA/REGION: 1960s/North West
AYOUT TYPE: End-to-end



NORTHERN INDUSTRY

Set in the heart of the transitional era, this fiddle yard-to-mill operation features high-intensity movements to keep the crowds entertained.

Words: Graham Morfoot **Photography:** Tony Wright

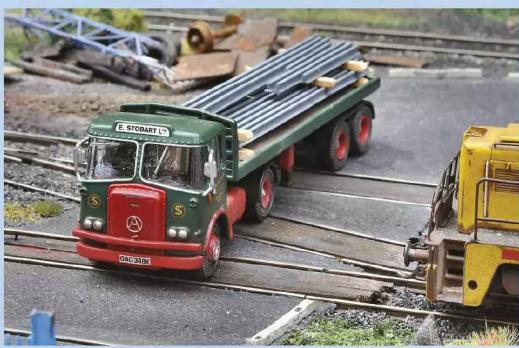
TOP RIGHT:

On a day when steam locomotives are running, a 'Pug' pulls out a bolster wagon loaded with finished rail sections to the transfer sidings.

MIDDLE RIGHT:

A Stobart Atkinson Borderer crosses the tracks at the end of the railbank with a local delivery of short rail sections to British Rail for making points.

BELOW: A Janus creeps out of the Finishing Shed with loaded rail on bogie bolster wagons through the Rail Bank Yard under the gantry crane.



“ The stars were aligning, and the time was right to start work on a new OO layout featuring a rail mill with its own small fleet of locomotives... ”

O

n reflection, it was Ian Wilson's fault, as I'll explain later.

Model Railways have been my primary hobby for more years than I care to remember. I grew up with Tri-ang Hornby in OO and have modelled in American HO, British narrow gauge, and steam-era main line railways, but I have always had a penchant for industrial and light railways. I don't have acres of space at my disposal, but that hasn't stopped me from being a prolific builder of compact, portable exhibition layouts.

This hobby offers a wide range of interests, challenges, and while my planning and execution of layout construction is undertaken alone, I relish the opportunity to share my interests with others. Exhibitions, either as a visitor, participant, or as a guest operator, are a major attraction for me.

I have modelled an Eastern Region country branch line station, a narrow-gauge peat railway, a sugar beet industry, a metal fabrications factory, a working limestone quarry, a concrete products plant, and others. I get inspiration from personal experience, organised and spontaneous visits and from activities linked to my naturally curious personality. When I eventually shuffle off this mortal coil, I'll probably come back as a house cat!





Over time, I have made many visits to the North, to stay with friends, to exhibit, and to visit different events and attractions, often with an industrial or railway theme, including Corus Works.

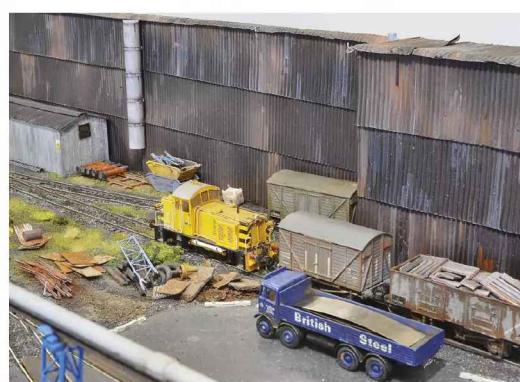
Similarly, I had the opportunity to participate in railtours around the Scunthorpe Ironworks coordinated by the Appleby Frodingham Railway Preservation Society. You can probably already see where this is going.

Coincidentally, the model manufacturers, after exhausting a longlist of contemporary main line locomotives and stock, slowly began to turn their attentions to industrial railways, and so we were gifted with ready-to-run models of Andrew Barclay's, Peckets, Ruston and Hornsby, Austerity Tanks, Yorkshire Engine Co. Janus, etc.

The stars were aligning, and the time was right to start work on a new OO layout featuring a rail mill with its own small fleet of locomotives and wagons and a simple interchange with British Railways.

A new beginning

My preferences dictated that it would be placed in the steam to diesel transition era. It would be a fiddleyard-to-mill operation using proprietary Peco track and stock, and I would invoke Rule One in the event that I wanted to run stock that was not strictly prototypical.



ABOVE: A BR Ruston 48DS slowly enters the yard from the BR sidings with a box van containing spare parts for the rolling mill.

MIDDLE LEFT: The Janus, on loan from British Steel Scunthorpe, moves finished rail on bogie bolster wagons under the overhead gantry crane and past stacked rail that has been tested and cut to the required size.

BOTTOM LEFT: A Ruston Class 07 shunts box vans into the roller mill workshop. British Steel AEC Mammoth has a load of steel sheeting for repairs in the mill.

A dangerous job

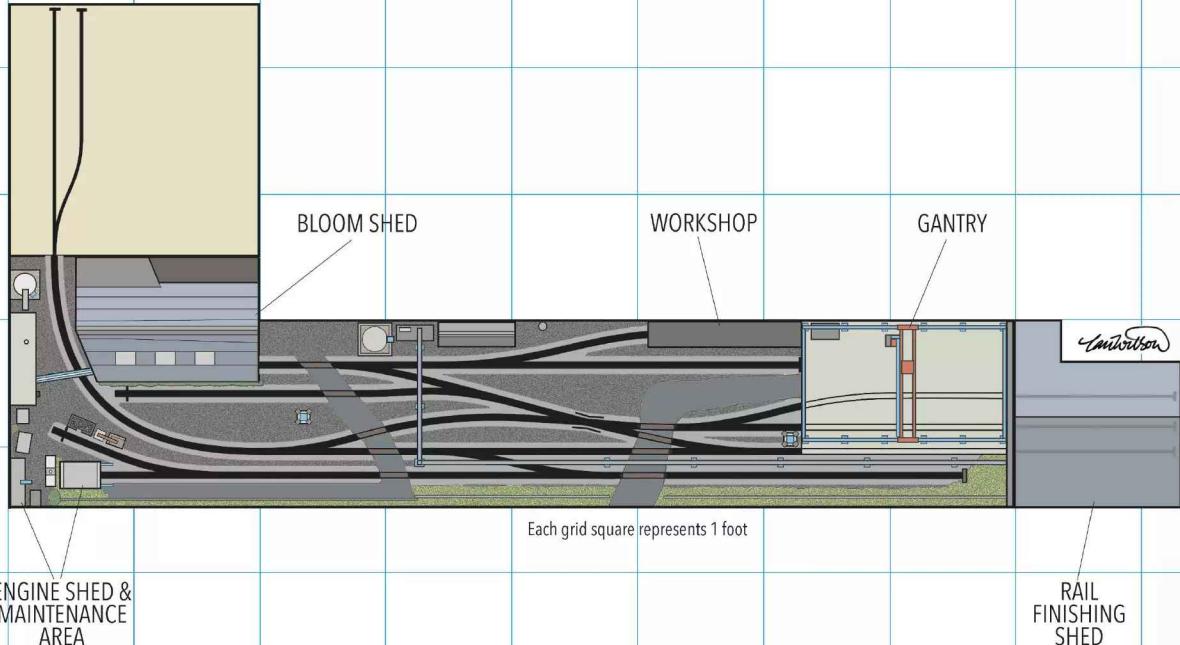
Incidentally, while Workington at one time was a fully integrated iron and steelmaking plant, which produced finished rails from raw materials, and featured several relatively dangerous environments handling molten metal, bulk materials, gases and fluids, the Railbank was without doubt the most dangerous place to work. You might think that rails lifted by overhead cranes equipped with electromagnets were naturally high risk, but it was the need for employees to work close to locomotives, wagons, and moving objects that posed the greater risk. There were fatalities, down to a simple gust of wind turning a loaded lifting beam that claimed lives.

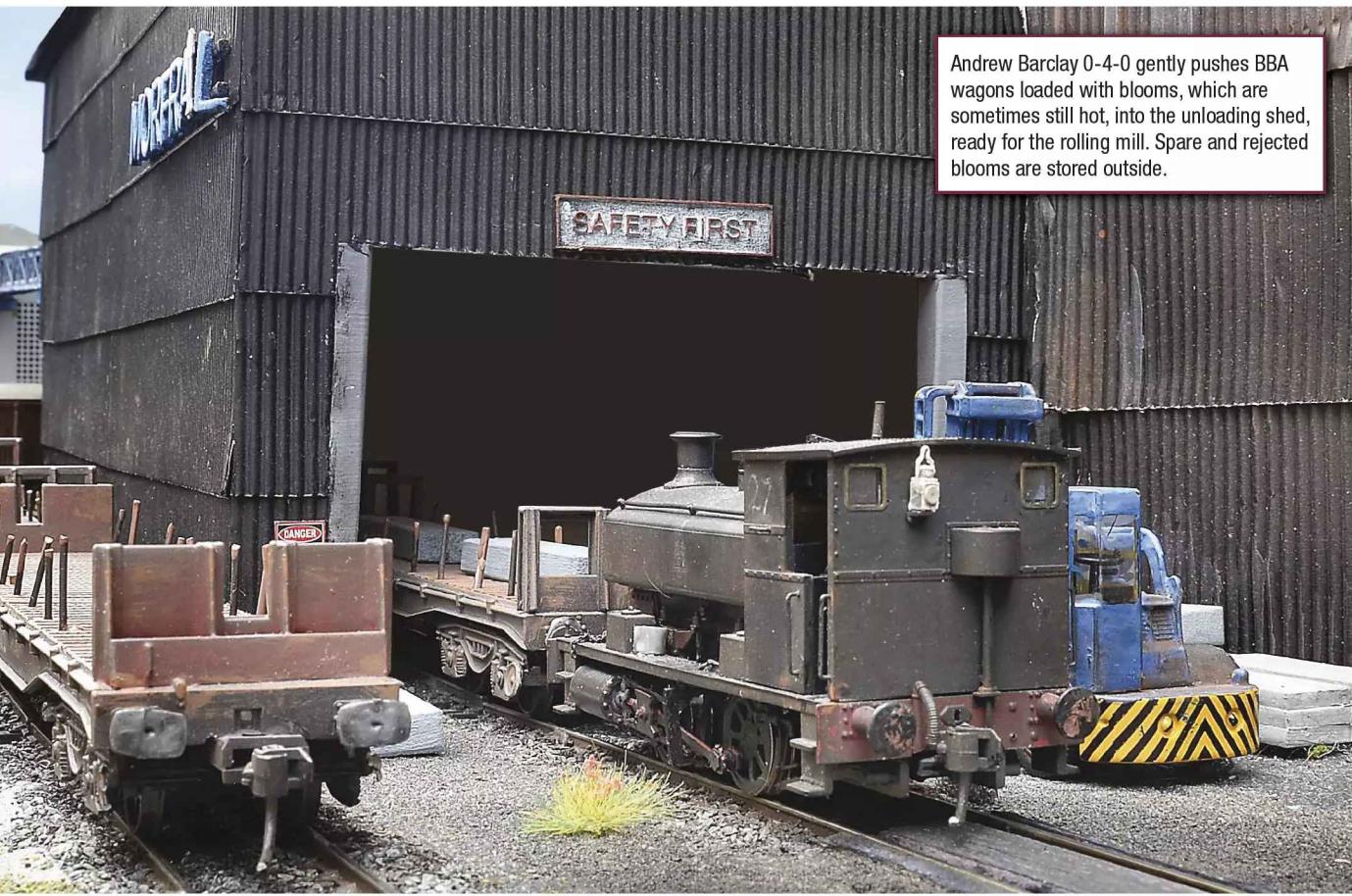
I subscribe to the view that a model railway exhibition is a place to exhibit, meaning there is a responsibility to entertain, inform, and engage the visitors. So, I am happy to make sensible compromises to keep trains running, and at a high intensity. I like to think the public gets value for money. When I visit exhibitions, I lose interest quickly if there is precious little activity and walk away. I am sure I'm not alone.

A steel mill is a necessarily massive industrial process and could scarcely be faithfully modelled in Z scale, never mind in OO. So, it is vital to stay ruthlessly focused on one particular element and portray it with sound logic. A rail mill can be modelled in a small space and visitors can very quickly grasp what is being presented, even if they haven't ever seen one before, and most have not.



TRACKPLAN





Andrew Barclay 0-4-0 gently pushes BBA wagons loaded with blooms, which are sometimes still hot, into the unloading shed, ready for the rolling mill. Spare and rejected blooms are stored outside.

What they see is semi-finished steel being delivered in the form of blooms from an iron and steel works, and finished rails being dispatched. The mill exists largely in the ether, behind the backscene.

I was relatively late to the DCC party, but I am now a total convert, while I recognise that it is not the best solution for every layout or every user. I do like sound-equipped locomotives, but I hear far too many dreadful examples that I have mixed opinions about how authentic they are. I'm often asked if mine are sound-equipped, but my sound is coming from a cheap and cheerful sound bug beneath the layout, playing ambient sounds from a memory stick. DCC offers me two major advantages.

By introducing stay alive support to the decoder, I enjoy very reliable slow-speed running in small, four-wheeled locomotives over deliberately poor trackwork.

My Digitrax brand controllers permit the easy control of two locomotives by a single handset. I can operate two locomotives or, more often, four locomotives with two operators. That helps tick the intensive operation box.

The build

'Morf Rail' is a rail mill. It doesn't feature any iron or steelmaking processes. Cold steel blooms on bogie wagons are hauled to the mill by BR and exchanged for finished rails on the two sidings at the front (right) of the layout. The plant shunters are responsible for transporting the blooms to the stock shed (left side) and delivering rails from the Railbank (right side) to the exchange sidings.



ABOVE: CorusRail 125 © Phil Bagley

Inspirational visit

In September 2002, Corus celebrated 125 years of rail-making at Workington. We were blessed with a beautiful, sunny and warm day for viewing the invited steam locomotives shunting wagons around the works and over the dock bridge to the Port of Workington. The public was granted access to major parts of the plant that would normally be private. The effect wasn't immediate, but it was only a matter of time before I would capitalise on my experience.

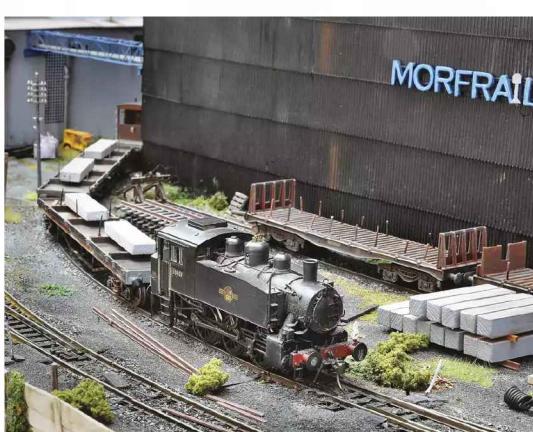


ABOVE: A Ruston Class 07 shunts a BBA wagon with blooms from the yard into the bloom unloading shed.

MIDDLE RIGHT: Ruston Class 07 on hire from Harry Needles Railroad Company moves under the gantry crane towards the finished rail shed to collect loaded bogie bolster wagons.



BOTTOM RIGHT: BR USA tank engine brings bogie bolster wagons loaded with blooms from the BR exchange sidings into the steelworks yard.



For interest, I also run various flat wagons, vans and well wagons with replacement mill rolls, machinery, lubricants, etc, that one might expect to find in a mill.

Construction of the layout is entirely conventional; softwood frames, ply baseboards, and backscenes. I needed to source a quantity of material to model large mill buildings sheathed in corrugated sheeting and found a source of corrugated card, which worked very well, despite being somewhat overscale. They were painted with an aerosol can and brush-weathered. Track and ballast is proprietary, while much of the ground cover was my own concoction of earth and scavenged materials, like autumn leaves. Many private industrial rail lines were ballasted with cinders and ash, and it's easy to collect a lifetime's supply in a plastic container when exploring abandoned sites, then grinding them down in an old kitchen liquidiser or pestle and mortar. I particularly enjoy adding lots of small details like signs, tanks, pallets, scrap, barriers, old rails, dunnage, etc. Most times, I use tried-and-tested modelling techniques and materials, although the explosion in 3D-printed detail parts and figures is having a significant impact on today's hobby. I like to use them sparingly, when I think they offer more than a homemade part.

There are three signature features that often attract comment, and which set 'Morf Rail' apart from many other layouts.

1. The elevated pipeline. Made from plastic tube and supported by laser-cut lattice support columns, made by Phil.

2. The Yard lights. Proprietary lights purchased from Layouts4u. They are non-working, but that's perfect because 'Morf Rail' is illuminated by powerful overhead LED lighting, which aims to portray industry working during daylight.

3. The Railbank. That is, the area beneath the overhead crane gantry. This was based upon photographs of the Railbank at Workington. My good friend Phil Bagley is the closest thing to human bagpipes - he's full of air and he drones on and on, but he's got a laser-cutting machine and he's cheap. Between us, we drafted the lattice columns and gantries using Lightburn software and an Emblaser 2 machine by Darkly Labs, cutting out the parts in repurposed cereal packaging. The overhead crane is a detailed Walthers kit, which was kindly given to me by Ian Wilson and that was the catalyst that really kick-started the construction phase. So, this was all Ian's fault!

In action

It is not important to have a timetable or sequence to operate successfully. However, I think it is important to have a logical, rules-based premise for operating the layout. It helps avoid conflicting movements, unplanned stoppages, and the dreaded hand of Eric Clapton.



TOP LEFT:
Andrew Barclay 0-4-0, BR J94 and Hunslet 0-6-0, which is moving new rollers into the roller mill at present, a busy scene at the yard.



MIDDLE LEFT:
A rare visitor, BR Class 14 awaits clearance to take loaded rail wagons out to the BR exchange sidings.

BELOW:
A heavy-duty forklift is used to unload the blooms from the wagons in the bloom shed. Most of the buildings are made of corrugated iron, which shows various degrees of rust and weathering.

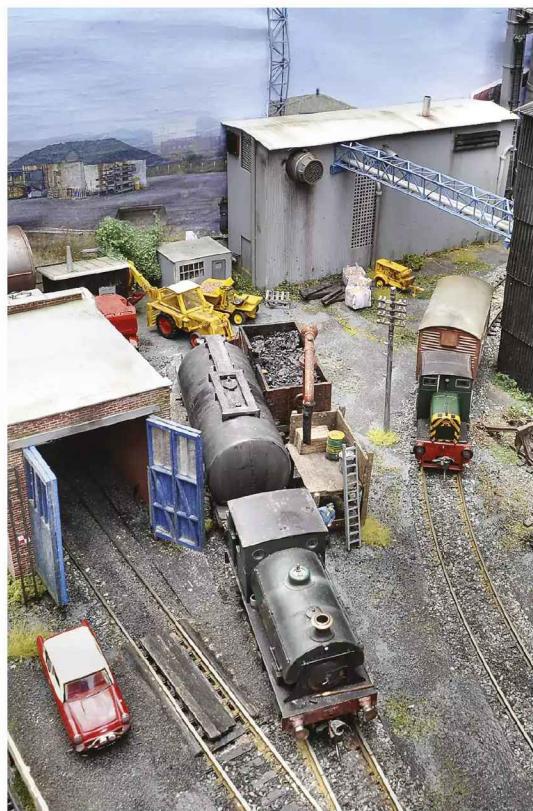
“ I subscribe to the view that a model railway exhibition is a place to exhibit, meaning there is a responsibility to entertain, inform, and engage the visitors. **”**





ABOVE: End of the day and line up of Peckett 0-6-0, Hunslet 0-6-0 (Giesler injector) and USA tank engine.

RIGHT: A Peckett has delivered a tank wagon of diesel to the locomotive service area. BR. Ruston 48 runs by the works' maintenance department.



Nothing is written down, but it is important to walk through the general principles, so we are all singing from the same hymn sheet.

All my locomotives, which are mostly proprietary 'out of the box', and rolling stock are equipped with Kadee couplers and always weathered. A shunting layout is constantly coupling and uncoupling stock, so reliable, semi-automatic couplers are essential and Kadees are hard to beat. They are somewhat conspicuous, but nothing matches their rugged reliability. I always hide or disguise the uncoupling magnets such that the visitor can't easily see where they are positioned. To assist operators, I'll mark their location with a few weeds or a spot of paint on the inside of the rail visible only from the rear.

The BR stock has a small fiddle yard at 90 degrees to the main boards at one end of the layout, and internal works wagon loads can be sorted in the large rail mill building at the other end of the layout. This functions as a second fiddle yard.

Final thoughts

One of the most asked questions I get asked at exhibitions is "How did you manage to jump bail?" followed by "Does the crane operate?" I refuse to answer the first, and "No" is the answer to the second. I'm intrigued why people ask about the crane and I wonder if I have missed something. I could beat myself over

TOP RIGHT:

Ruston Class 165 and Sentinel are working the rail bank yard on a busy day. Gantry crane and pipe supports are laser-cut from breakfast cereal boxes.

MIDDLE RIGHT:

Hunslet 0-6-0 shunts new rollers into the maintenance department. New rollers are delivered wrapped in oiled tarpaulin for protection; rusty, used rollers can be seen behind the wagon.

BELOW: The small locomotive facility has a single road shed, water crane, coaling platform and diesel refuelling point. Peckett 0-6-0 and Hunslet 0-6-0 are on shed as BR.USA tank brings in another load of Blooms into the yard.



the head and maybe investigate how to mechanise it. Alternatively, I might just put a sign on the front of the layout, "No, it doesn't operate. I'm already working on my next creation, so I'm not disposed to rebuild the crane".

I'm proud of the finished gantry, painted and planted on the layout, it was Phil who kindly pointed out that the lattice support columns were handed, and that I'd installed with the rear ones the wrong way round. I made him promise not to tell anyone and nobody has ever mentioned it, so I think I have got away with it. Don't tell anyone!

'Morf Rail' has been exhibited at several exhibitions in 2025 and is booked to appear at several more in 2026, including Doncaster in February.

In May 2025, we visited a couple of paper mills that still operate in South Cumbria, at Beetham and Burneside, which have a long history. Some of the original architecture survives and they make fascinating subjects to study. No clues as to the theme of the next layout then, even if the industry may not be represented, the buildings are just screaming 'model me'.

Ian, next time you offer me an overhead crane, make sure it is an operating one.

Thanks to my friends who help me exhibit the layout, especially Phil, David, Trev, and Martin, Ian for the crane and Phil Bagley for his encouragement and suggestions, all of which were comprehensively ignored, and help in writing this article. ■

“A shunting layout is constantly coupling and uncoupling stock, so reliable, semi-automatic couplers are essential and Kadees are hard to beat.”



Getting Practical with...

TOOL of the MONTH

Fyleads

Most of the tools I mention have been bought from the trade, but this most useful item I made myself. Three metres of wire with silicon insulation, and a crocodile clip at each end. Simple but incredibly useful when you are wiring a layout and need to move power temporarily to a piece of track. Pretty useful when fault-finding, too. One hint – use the silicon wire. While it's a little more expensive than normal stuff, it's very flexible and doesn't kink when you bundle it up.



Ask Phil

When a locomotive is described as an 0-4-0, what does that mean?

This is known as Whyte notation. Each number tells of the number of wheels, moving from front to back. The first is for pony, or bogie wheels, the middle is driving wheels, and the last is for the rear pony wheel. So, your 0-4-0 has no wheels before the drivers, four driving wheels coupled together, and no wheels after them. It's a pretty simple system for most locomotives, *Flying Scotsman* is a 4-6-2, for example, although it gets a bit more complicated for articulated machines. Oh, and bogie diesels use something different, called the UIC system.



New on the workbench

Faller HO scale cuddly toys

Browsing a model shop in Germany, I bought the craziest thing I could see – 30 cuddly toys (Faller 180861). You might well ask why I think you would be interested in them; well, you probably aren't. However, the rack of little kits was full of the sort of detail models we need. It's tempting to ignore them as being slightly underscale – 3.5mm:1ft compared to 4mm:1ft for OO, and some of the colours can be odd. Paint will fix this, and careful placement of the models will hide the scale issue. So, next time you see a selection of foreign kits, take a closer look.





Ben Bucki



Michael Russell



Phil Parker



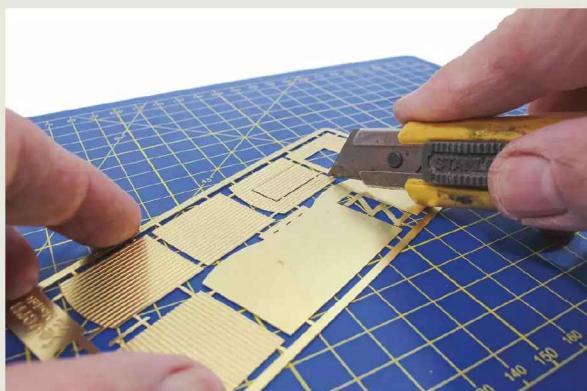
Steven Draper



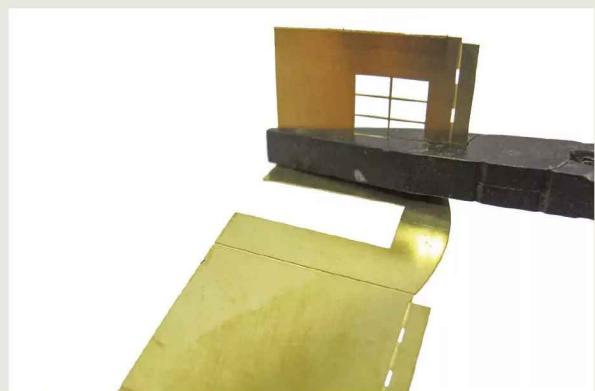
Tony Wright

Build a Corrugated hut in OO

Metal things look best if modelled in real metal. Nothing else will give you the thin edges where sheets join. Working in brass isn't difficult, it's very similar to building a cardboard kit. This little lamp hut from Severn Models (Kit D31) can be assembled with glue, yet exhibits a finesse you won't find in a resin building.



1 Supplied as a fret of parts, the first job is to remove the main inner walls. Carefully, use a heavy craft knife to cut through the tabs. Clean up any leftover tab with a small file to leave a nice, neat edge.



2 The first stage is to make an inner box by bending the sides up. Half-etched lines guide the bend, which is best made holding the part with small pliers. Try to ensure the finished box is nice and square, then fix the tab on the end to the side with superglue.



3 Lining up the side overlays requires a little wiggle time, so I'm using UHU rather than superglue. It's not a bad idea to gently roughen the overlay backs and inner box with a mild abrasive first, but this works really well and is easy to do.



4 Finally, the window sill, door hinges and handles are fitted. Superglue is fine for this, although it pays to apply tiny dots to the hut with a cocktail stick and then place each part with tweezers. Next month, we'll paint the model.

Getting Practical



Goods Sheds in N gauge



Ben Bucki

GOODS SHEDS were once a common sight on the railways of Britain, and the sturdy brick or stone buildings survive all over the country; some derelict, but many repurposed as storage units, garages, builders' merchants, shops, cafes, galleries, and more. For this project, I modelled two variants; one on a heritage railway, converted into a museum, and another less fortunate, in a derelict condition.

It's been interesting working on the two sheds, both of a broadly similar prototype, but with very different materials. The plastic Ratio example is a lovely model, and there are lots of very nice features to this well-designed kit (the internal stonework stood out to me in particular; had I modelled it with the doors open, this would have been a very useful feature). The Ancorton kit is a little more basic, just by the nature of being a laser-cut wooden kit, but the quality of the materials and their cutting was top-notch. The thick paper overlays for the relief detail were a bit of a mixed bag; they worked beautifully for the arches and window frames, which were incredibly delicate. But I found the fold-up paper stairs very fragile and difficult to make, which contributed to my decision to use this kit for the derelict/neglected shed in the scene.

There are pros and cons to both sheds; I suspect it comes down to personal preference for what prototype you're modelling. Whatever the choice, I certainly enjoyed building and personalising both.

WHAT YOU NEED

Ancorton Models

NGS1/95653 Goods Shed

Citadel Paints

Mournfang Brown, Skrag Brown, Doombull Brown, Celestra Grey, White Scar, Abaddon Black, Mephiston Red, Phalanx Yellow, Macragge Blue, Technical Nihilakh Oxide

Humbrol

Polystyrene Cement

Javis

No.2 Mid Green Hedge Foliage & Plastikard .5mm, black.

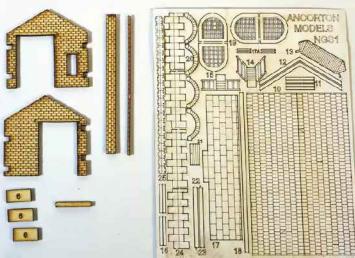
Ratio

N Gauge Trackside Series 220 Goods Shed

Other

Spray Primer (dark grey), 6mm MDF, 3mm plywood, superglue, 'Rocket' PVA, engineer's square, coping saw, razor saw, various files, craft knife, side cutters, steel rule and various brushes.

Ancorton Goods Shed



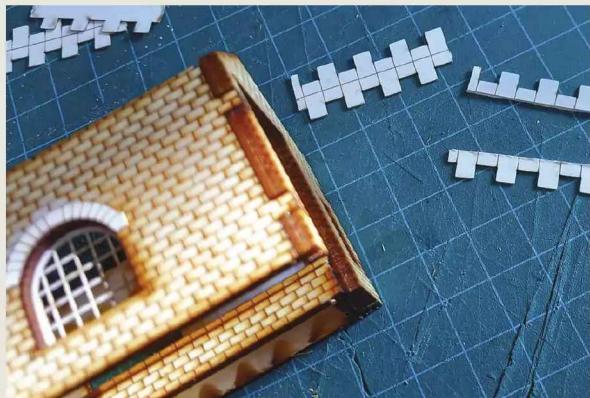
1 In some ways, a simpler kit than the Ratio one, the quality of the laser-cut components is excellent, and the cutting (particularly of the card parts) very finely done indeed.



2 The main shell of the building went together very quickly; the slot and tab construction was accurate, but I did use a cutting mat and an engineer's square, just to make sure.



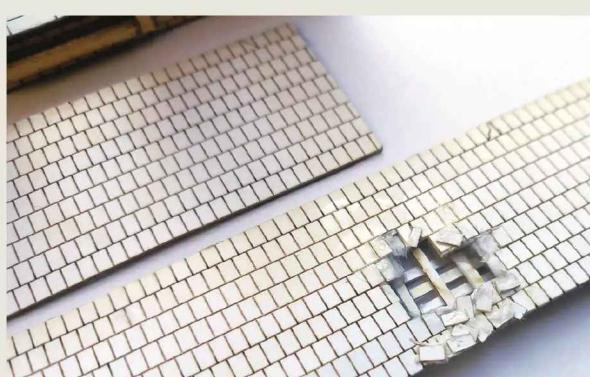
3 The card fret contains some excellent relief details to attach to the model, and the windows are particularly impressive.



4 I struggled a little with folding the stonework for the corners, the layers of card starting to delaminate, so I instead cut them into strips before gluing them on.



5 One area of concern for me with the card was the roof, which seemed too thin and unsupported, and likely to be damaged. I chose to stick it onto some thin, clear plastic (recycled from a piece of packaging) to strengthen it.



6 Having decided to model this goods shed in a derelict slate, I cut a hole in the roof, and after trimming away some of the slates, piled them up to replicate where they'd slid (there's a barn I pass on the way to work with a roof like this), with card from the fret used to represent beams.

Getting Practical



7 I added a beam (cut from the sprue for the Ratio kit) to strengthen the roof, and then used more of said sprue to add some framing around the open doorways; the plan was to model the goods shed as if it had been repurposed and modernised at some point with roller-shutter doors.



8 For these doors, I used some Wills 00 corrugated sheeting; it's probably overscale, but it looks heavy-duty. I liked the idea of the place being turned into warehousing after the railway was lifted; equally, I modelled two of the doors to look like they'd been vandalised.

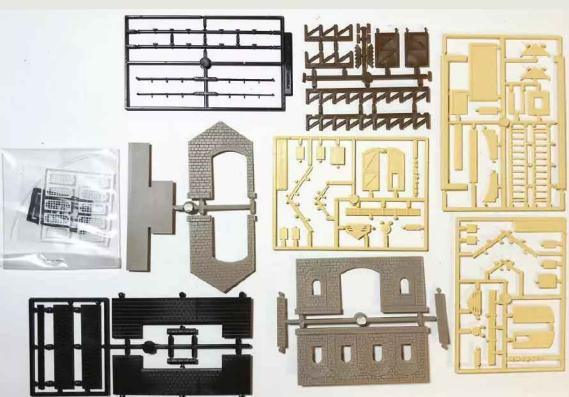


9 After some further bending and distressing of some bits of the structure (the ridge tiles and the card canopy over the loading doors in particular), I sprayed the model with dark grey primer, and dry-brushed with the same light brown as the Ratio shed.

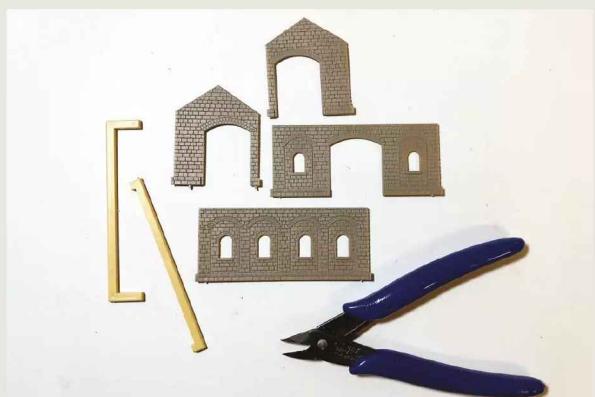


10 I added a splash of colour, a faded blue-green, meant to have been the livery of the company that took over the shed after BR left. More weathering, some greenery to add to the air of dereliction, and graffiti was added (rather basic and tame, but then I'm no Banksy).

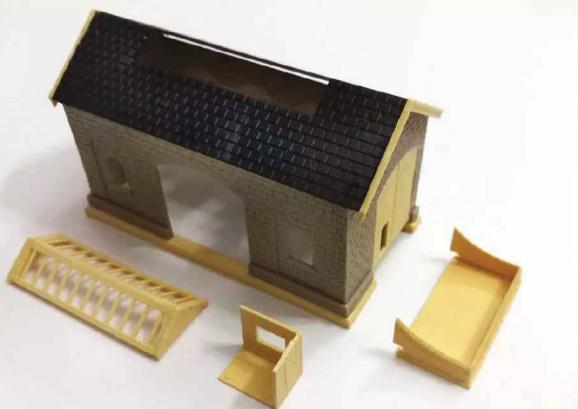
Ratio Goods Shed



1 The component parts; there are some extra bits as this kit doubles as the base for the engine shed and boiler house, but the instructions are nice and clear, so you don't mix them up.



2 I used a pair of side cutters and a craft knife to free the main pieces from the sprue. Mouldings are crisp and of excellent quality; the main structure goes together nicely, I just used an engineer's square to ensure the angles were straight.



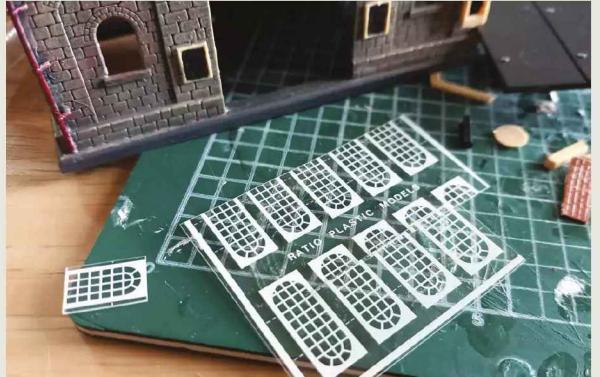
3 The main components of the shed, assembled and ready to be primed and painted. I toyed with leaving the roof off to make glazing easier once the walls were coloured, but realised there was enough room to work.



4 The interior just needed a simple structure visible through the arch and the windows; barring the lattice supports and steps (which came from a damaged Knightwing footbridge kit), the rest was quickly built from Plastikard offcuts, the kit's sprue, and spares from the kit itself (like the cupboards).



5 After priming in dark grey, the stone was dry-brushed with a lighter brown shade, to give an approximation of something like Yorkstone; when it's all done, more weathering would be added to blend it all together, the interior painted a more pristine off-white.



6 The glazing is particularly nice, and there are options for what style of windows to use. I attached mine with Rocket PVA (rather than liquid poly) as I was worried about them fogging up with the fumes from the plastic cement.



7 I probably should have used fine plastic strip for the glazed entrance, but wanted to upcycle as much of the kit as possible and used the sprue and parts of the loading bay doors. It was glued to thin Plastikard for strength, before attaching to transparent plastic.



8 Ready to bed-in to the diorama, the goods shed is effectively finished. I designed and printed off some posters, timetable boards, and signage (in hindsight, the cutting of these is a little wonky, but I'll admit to being out of practice working in such a small scale).

Getting Practical



Model a copse using budget trees



Michael Russell
THE HORNBY trees employed here represent good value, but are basic. The packet is quite small, but when unpacked, there are a fair few trees inside and certainly enough to make several copses or a small wood. In as-bought condition, they are best suited for use in a model of a park, where the trees would have a more cosseted existence. They are made of a bare

plastic base with a twisted plastic wire top covered in scatter, but can be improved a great deal with a little effort.

What do I put on the ground under the trees? This depends on the tree varieties and how closely they grow together. Some, such as yew, have dense foliage and nothing much grows under them. Copses are often used as shelter by grazing animals, so ensure that the lower vegetation is all at the same height, being the limit of what the grazers can reach. The ground wants to be bare in places where the animals are lying on it, too.

THE HORNBY trees employed here represent good value, but are basic. The packet is quite small, but when unpacked, there are a fair few trees inside and certainly enough to make several copses or a small wood. In as-bought condition, they are best suited for use in a model of a park, where the trees would have a more cosseted existence. They are made of a bare

WHAT YOU NEED

Hornby

R7198 Deciduous trees 5-9cm x 20pcs

Scalemodelscenery

TX236-OO 4ft Post & Rail fencing

Other

Ground cover, static grass of your choice, tree leaves, Milliput, shades of grey acrylic paint, primer, green weathering powder, 1mm wire, superglue, scenery glue, glue sticks, side cutters, coarse file, hand drill with 1mm & 2mm drills, tapered reamer, safety goggles, noticeboard pin, flat-bladed screwdriver, hot glue gun, static grass applicator.



1 The trees come in three sizes and two colours of foliage. This is good as it gives us variety, but, being mass-produced, the main problem is still one of uniformity. The foliage colours allow us the opportunity to model two species.



2 The first issue is one of proportions. The boles are too tall and wide for the foliage, so take a stout pair of side cutters and cut the trunk near the roots (wear goggles). The bottom can be used to represent trees that have been chopped down.



3 The simplest way to enhance the trunks is to score them with a coarse file. This will add texture and also remove the plastic sheen. A square file can be used to add fissures and deeper sections if used at a shallow angle.



4 To add branches, first make a small pilot hole with a noticeboard pin. Then use a small drill on the hole and once it bites, turn the drill to a shallow angle and drill through, avoiding the wire metal centre. Thread wire through and superglue in place.



5 Mix up Milliput and add this to the trunk and branches in small pieces until it is covered. Add fissures and texture using a small flat-bladed screwdriver. Leave the bottom of the trunk uncovered so it can be used as a planting peg later.

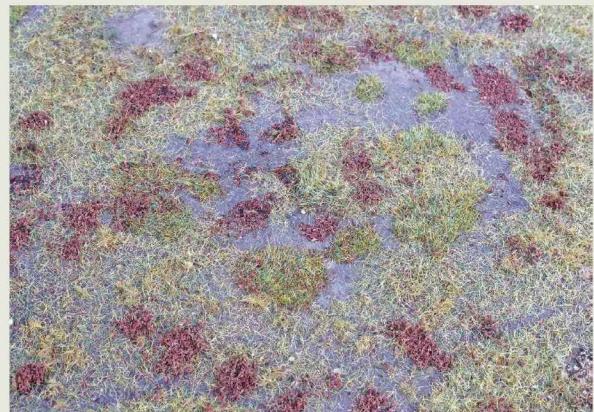


6 Paint the trunk with primer first and, when dry, use acrylic or enamel as a top coat. Trunks aren't often brown and are much more likely to be shades of grey. When dry, use weathering powder to add green, especially on trees grouped closely together.

Getting Practical



7 To enhance the foliage, get a stout pair of side cutters and shorten sections, aiming for randomness to make each tree individual. Try and get a good outline - it doesn't matter if the tree only looks good from one angle, as most layouts or dioramas only have a limited viewpoint.



8 An earth ground cover, followed by an application of static grass, is needed on your baseboard. Keep the particle size of the former as small as possible. There will always be dead leaves on the floor around trees even in summer, but not an even, concentrated blanket, so much less obvious - I used tea leaves.



9 The trees need a good anchorage to prevent them falling over or working loose. Drill a small hole in your landscape and use a tapered reamer to enlarge the hole to match the size of the trunk base and fix in place with a glue gun. Support for a few moments until the glue has set.



10 The fence is made from a ScaleModelScenery kit. Ensure that you use a fence that is suitable for the countryside and not a garden. The material used for the kit does not need painting and a light wash or brush with green diluted acrylic or weathering powders is sufficient.

TOP TIPS

TIP ONE: If you deploy these trees towards the back of a scene, then force the perspective by giving them a light mist of a pale grey paint that is very slightly blue.

TIP TWO: Save the foliage that you snip off. If you uncover some of the plastic used for the branches (that used on mine was bright blue!), then the spare foliage can be used to patch the damage and other sparse spots that need patching up.



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Getting Practical



Budget Modelling Part 6: South Eastern Finecast K3



Tony Wright

I SUPPOSE in some ways this represents the ultimate in budget modelling, because it initially cost me nothing. I'll explain. Though Mo, my wife, and I have reduced the number of shows we attend where I act as a demonstrator/loco-doctor, York is one always in the calendar. Last year at the Knavesmire, a kindly gentlemen asked me, "Would you like to finish this off and then sell it for Cancer Research UK?" as he handed me a bright red box containing a kit for a South Eastern Finecast K3, which had been started. "20 or so years ago, I had the chassis professionally-built, but it's never worked properly and I'm never going to finish it", he concluded. I sensed an air of disappointment and thanked him for his generous donation.

During the show, I examined the contents, and he was right. Though the frames and motion were erected, and a sweet-running Portescap installed, the performance was

dismal – jerky, erratic and stiff (not uncommon among many 'professionally-built' locos I've had through my hands!). I improved it almost immediately by adjusting the phosphor bronze pick-ups and part-dismantling the rods to ease any tight spots, then left it on my display – as a sort of conversation piece, the only bodywork undertaken being to clean up the boiler.

Back home, I examined the box's contents more closely and decided to do as the donor asked.

Readers might recall that just over 24 years ago, I built another South Eastern Finecast K3, writing of my experiences in the June 2001 issue of BRM. It's interesting to note how times change; that article's three pages was text-heavy, with just a few (medium-format transparency) pictures.

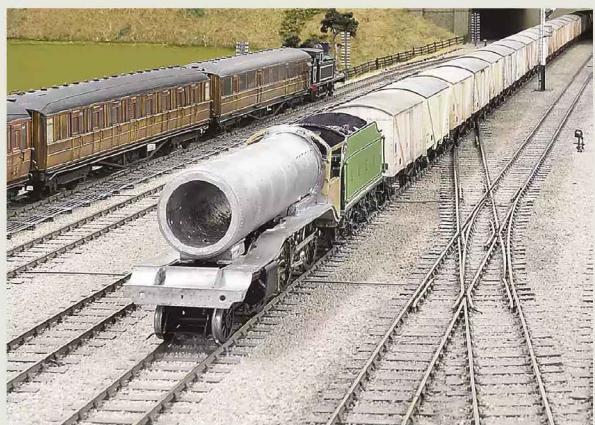
Spurred on by hopes of making some money for a worthy charity and completing the task suggested, once home, I embarked on completing the loco. The following pictures show how I got on.



Prior to starting this project, I had several options, including, one, not bother doing anything to it and merely selling it on. Two, complete it and then sell it. Three, complete it and then buy it myself. It might come as no surprise that I've chosen number three, sending a suitable cheque to Cancer Research UK. Here's that SEF K3, which formed my original BRM article in 2001.



1 This is how the loco presented itself at York. The original builder had fitted the footplate and front buffer beam (the joint between the two being poor), and I just rested the cleaned-up boiler in position. That motion needed some attention.



2 I soon had the chassis up and running (though not quite to my entire satisfaction), cleaned up any original joints and erected the basic cab. I had a spare V2 tender (built from a Nu-Cast kit), so, to speed things up, employed that.



3 With the cab fully-completed and the tender stripped of its previous LNER identity, it started to look rather K3-like indeed.



4 When the full-sized K3s were first built, they carried a huge boiler of 6ft diameter and the superb one-piece casting provided by SEF captures this perfectly.



5 Complete and ready for painting. My choice of locomotive represented an 'unusual' K3 inasmuch as it towed a high frontplate Group Standard 4200 gal tender, and, though its cab was the earlier side-window type, the full-sized loco had been converted to left-hand drive.

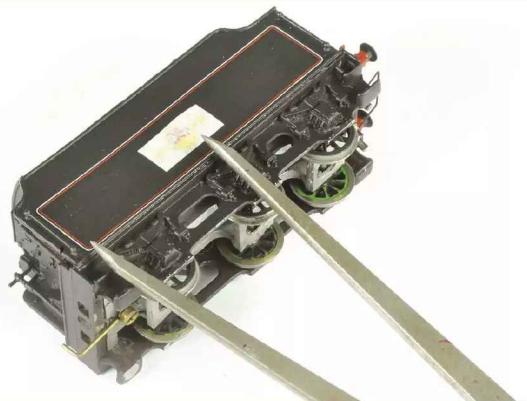


6 At this stage, thorough layout testing was conducted, again on the heavy fully-fitted fish rake. Performance was generally fine, but the original phosphor bronze pick-ups weren't entirely reliable, despite my adjustments.

Getting Practical



7 Attention was then turned to painting – my usual Halfords rattle can car acrylics, sprayed straight from the can; red primer, first followed by matt black. Lining was achieved using Modelmasters' waterslide transfers; sadly, it seems, no longer available.



8 Centring of the BR device on the tender was achieved using spring dividers. The crest and the numerals came from the HMRS 'Pressfix' range. The tender wheels still had evidence of LNER green at this stage.



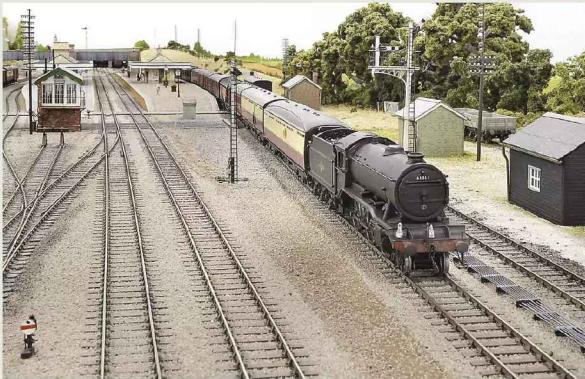
9 Painting complete (I gave up on lining the valances) and ready for weathering. The front numberplate came from Ian Wilson's Pacific range. Why is it that I notice errors immediately after I've finished painting a model? On 61811, in this guise, the safety valves should be slightly further forward. They're staying!



10 I finally gave up on the original phosphor bronze feeble pick-ups and installed my usual .45mm nickel silver wire – far more robust. However, I admit, this whole arrangement is not ideal. The original pads were employed, but they're attached to the brake rigging, not, as they should be, to the frames. Still, it's only visible with the loco upside down.

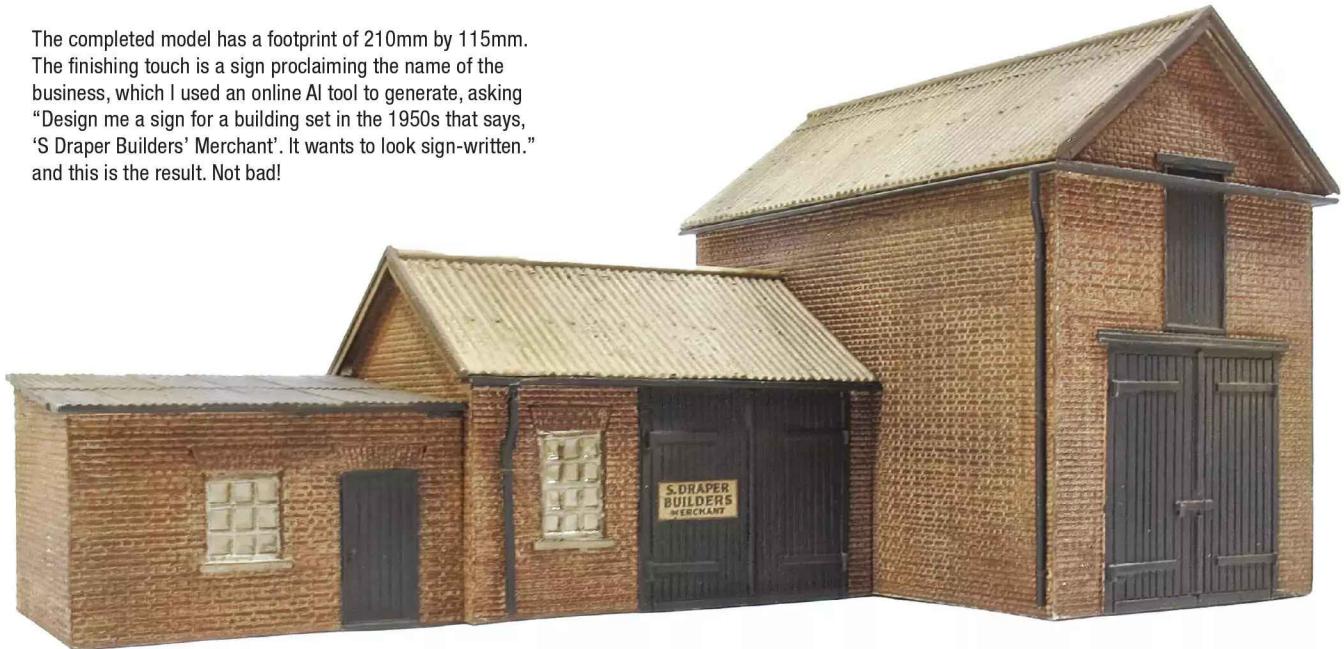


11 Though I'm capable of weathering locos myself, I handed the finished K3 over to my good friend Geoff Haynes to complete the job – his airbrush gives a beautifully-consistent finish. Spoked wheels on GS tenders were unusual, but not unknown. The driver adopts a casual pose.



12 Now in full service on Little Bytham, on typical K3 jobs, March-allocated 61811 has settled down to be a really useful layout loco. I can't recall the chap's name who donated the model, but I give him my most-grateful thanks. It'll be on display at the Doncaster show in February.

The completed model has a footprint of 210mm by 115mm. The finishing touch is a sign proclaiming the name of the business, which I used an online AI tool to generate, asking "Design me a sign for a building set in the 1950s that says, 'S Draper Builders' Merchant'. It wants to look sign-written." and this is the result. Not bad!



Scratch-build a small warehouse



Phil Parker

I COLLECT buildings. Not in real life, but on my computer. Always on the lookout for interesting structures, I grab a photo and file it away for future inspiration. Some of the pictures are old enough that they were taken on a film camera, that's how long I've been at it.

Now, you might look at a building and think, "That would look great on my layout". Trouble is, it's unlikely to be available ready-built, or even as a kit. No problem, it's time to build something from scratch.

Scary? Less than you might think. When approaching a project, remember a couple of important things:

First – It's only model railways. No one dies if the model doesn't come out as you hoped. If it can't be rescued, then all you've wasted is a little time and money, but you would have gained loads of skills

that will make your next attempt better.

Second – If it looks right, it is right. Unless you are building for Pendon (if you are, you don't need my advice), then as long as the model looks like you hoped and fits the space, it will be absolutely fine.

The subject of this build is a small warehouse I spotted by the canal in Leamington Spa. Oddly, it backs onto the water, with no windows or doors facing that way. I don't know its history, or even what it's used for now. This doesn't matter, it's another perfect corner filler and comes with plenty of character. Since the prototype is still there, it's suitable for pretty much any era in the last hundred years, too.

This is a budget modelling project. A sheet of brick embossed plastic, a couple of 1mm-thick plain, some Wills asbestos roofing, a pack of assorted microstrip, and you not only have the materials, but there will also be some spare for the next project.

WHAT YOU NEED

Humbrol

Matt Stone (121)
Brown weathering powder

Slater's

Assorted Microstrip

South Eastern Finecast (via Squires Tools)

FBS402 English Bond Brickwork
FBS411 English Corners, Soldiers (sepal), Lintels and Arches

Wills Kits

SSMP219 Corrugated Asbestos
SS86 Windows, Doors, Gates and Porch

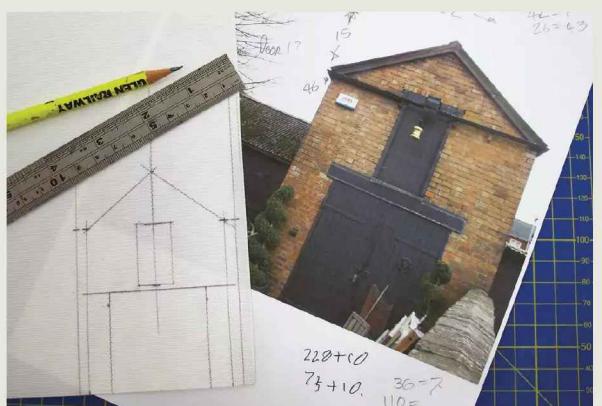
Other

Plastic cement, 1mm sheet plain plastic, DL-Limonene, MEK solvent, knife, Olfa cutter, mild sanding stick, steel rule, engineers' square, brown pencil crayons.

Getting Practical



1 It pays to keep a camera (your phone will do perfectly) handy. This scene is Leamington Spa's south town. I'm standing by the entrance to a small supermarket car park to take it. Sometimes, inspiration can strike when you least expect it.



2 I don't have a drawing, but basic dimensions can be worked out by counting the bricks. Imperial bricks are roughly 9 inches long and 4 1/4 inches high. Add a little for the mortar, and it isn't too hard to mark the frontage out on some plastic sheet.



3 A quick sense check. Doors are normally around 7ft in height, so the figure looks OK. The bottom doors scale at 11ft tall, which isn't out of the question, but I lop a couple of brick courses off to bring it down a little. If you can try this on your layout, that's even better.



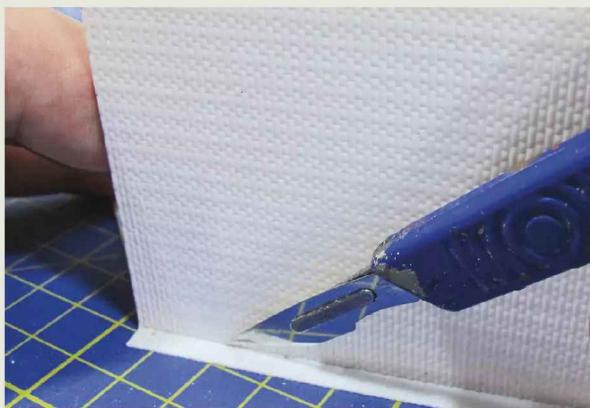
4 Embossed plastic is too thin to use on its own, so I'm making an inner shell out of 1mm-thick sheet. Cutting plastic is easy – score partway through and then snap along the line. An Olfa plastic cutter is slightly better than a knife as it makes a groove in the surface, but both work.



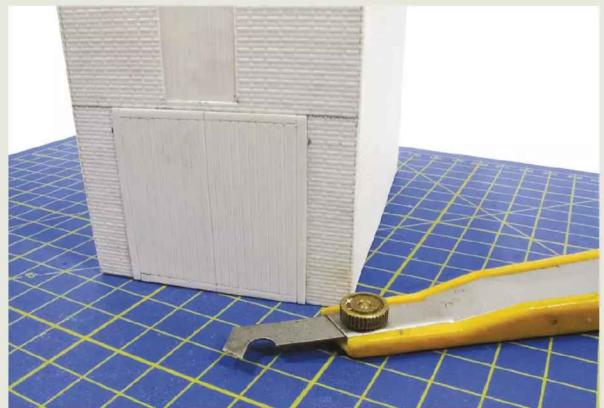
5 To stick the embossed sheet to the plain shell, we need a mild plastic solvent; MEKPak can become trapped between the layers and react over time. DL-Limonene from Wizard Models is a citrus-based solvent product, which is gentler and slower-acting, perfect for this job.



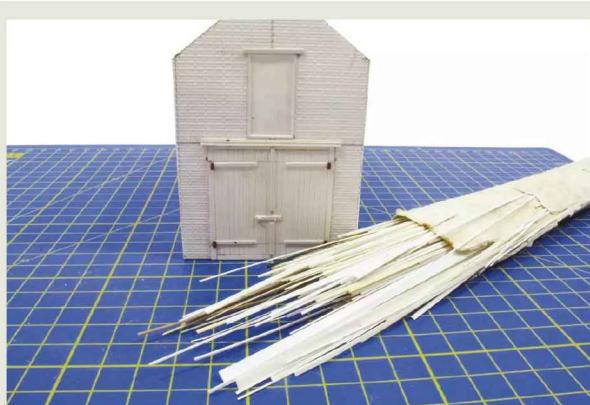
6 The inner box is assembled with plastic cement, tacking the parts together. A wash of solvent (MEK) along the joint will then set it instantly. Using some offcuts to brace the corners makes the building stronger, while also making use of material that might otherwise be chucked away.



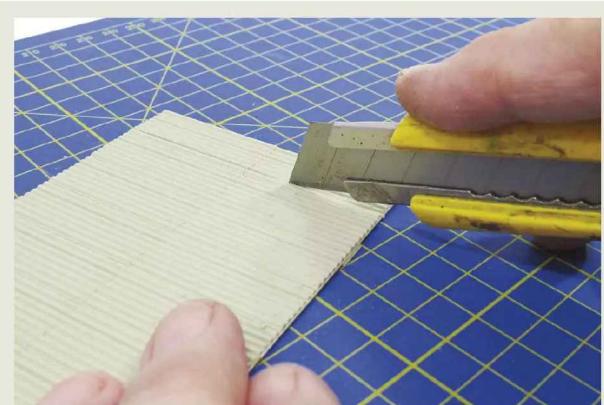
7 The sharp-eyed will have noticed that my brick sheet overlaps the sides of the building. This allows the adjoining wall to be fixed in place, some solvent runs along the joint, when it's dried, the excess is trimmed away for a neat corner joint.



8 The Olfa cutter comes into its own when scribing plank lines on doors. Don't push too hard, and lightly sand the piece afterwards to add wood grain. This is my original tool, over 20 years old, and still on its first blade!



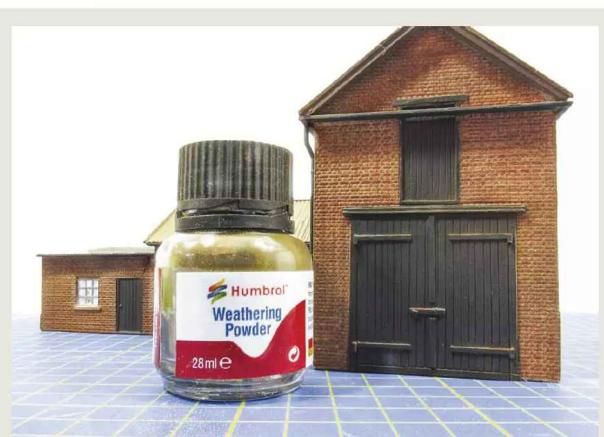
9 Slater's assorted Microstrip is an essential on any scratch-builder's workbench. All the detail on this building has been made from pieces of the different-width material in the pack. I keep my supply topped up so I'm never scratching around for a particular size.



10 For the roofs, I'm using Wills sheets. These are pretty thick, and it takes a good-sized knife to cut through them. Don't try to do it in one go, lots of gentler cuts, and the result will be nice and neat. Always work from the detailed side, too.



11 I'm not painting bricks, I'm colouring them in! After a coat of Plate Stone (121) to represent the mortar has fully dried, just rub different shades of brown on the brick faces. Cover all of them several times with each pencil and you'll replicate the variety of shades in real bricks.



12 All this leaves the building looking nice, but too clean. The finishing touch is a dusting of dark brown weathering powder all over the model. Work it into the nooks and crannies where real dirt will gather. Since this model will be handled, I seal it with matt varnish, job complete.

Getting Practical



The mix of vehicles I'd got for the project was a bit eclectic, so a commercial rolling-stock restoration firm seemed a good setting, as it would explain the mix of Mk. 4 and (upgraded, main line-certified) Mk. 1 coaches. I liked the idea of this works taking in long-term stored vehicles to repair or component-strip.

Vandalising coaches



Ben Bucki

IT'S A shame, but vandalism is a fact of life; the urge to break things seems, depressingly, to be a part of human nature. To railway enthusiasts, it's appalling when mindless destruction of a carriage or building happens, especially on a heritage railway.

Sadly, it's just one of those things - from Teds slashing coach-seats in the 1960s, to smashed-up football excursion stock in the 1980s, to the breaking of the acres of stored coaches after privatisation. Park a railway vehicle in one place for long enough, especially if it looks a bit neglected, and it will attract vandalism, be that metal thieves, bored teenagers, or graffiti artists.

WHAT YOU NEED

Citadel Paints (all acrylic)

Mournfang Brown
Celestra Grey
White Scar
Abaddon Black
Mephiston Red
Phalanx Yellow
Macragge Blue
Skrag Brown
Technical Nihilakh Oxide
Nuln Oil (wash)
Contrast Ork Flesh
Contrast Garaghak's Sewer

Railtec Transfers

Broken Windows 4mm
8260-V205
Graffitied Warning Signs
8848-a5408

Other

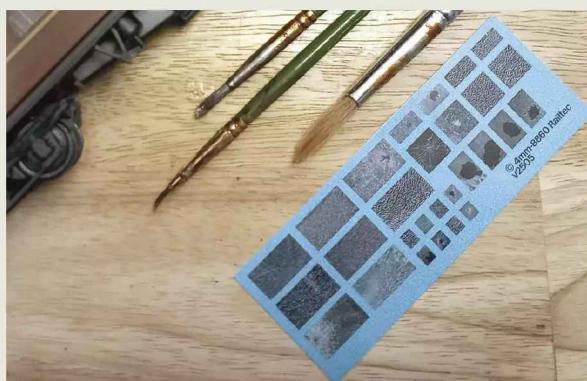
Various paintbrushes,
permanent marker fineliners
(various grades), cotton
buds, kitchen towel and
scissors.



1 A bit of real-world inspiration and visual reference, seen from the café car park at Hellifield Station, North Yorkshire. Here, a rake of ex-parcels stock has been quietly decaying, while attracting the attention of the local youths, for as long as I can remember.



2 The aforementioned eclectic stock; I picked up very cheaply a pair of ex-magazine partwork vehicles (originally available about 20 years ago, I think), to complement a pair of Hornby vehicles, a Mk. 4, and a damaged Mk. 1.



3 The Railtec transfers replicate broken windows and are sized perfectly for Mk. 1 coaches. The effects suggest more modern, toughened glass, so I worked on the assumption that these were/are main line-certified vehicles that had new glazing fitted at some point.



4 There are various designs of cracked, holed, or shattered glazing, so I chose the ones I liked and carefully cut them out, checking for size against the windows on the coaches. I didn't want every pane broken; rather, suggesting that kids had randomly been lobbing things at the vehicles over the years.



5 The ex-GNER coach was a little trickier, the longer windows needing multiple transfers joining together. I ended up accidentally making a bodge of two of them, but thought the left-hand one looked like creasing in the protective film used in the real world (that's my excuse anyway!), so I figured I could hide the joints with a bit of weathering.

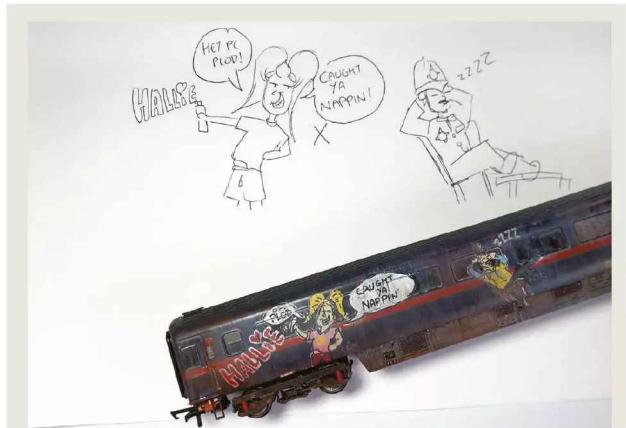


6 Something a little more subtle; Railtec also does sheets of pre-designed graffiti, for things like vandalised signage (such as these overhead-line warnings), so I added these to the ends of the Mk. 1s - again, to suggest main line-certified coaches - and overlaid more over the existing printed versions on the GNER vehicle.

Getting Practical



7 I wanted to paint graffiti on the sides of the coaches (again, replicating the long-term stored stock at Hellifield), so to get in some practice, used some old starter-series wagons and a broken clockwork loco, which I'd picked up extremely cheaply from a second-hand box at Frizinghall Models years ago.



8 To avoid any suggestion of I.P or copyright infringement with what I was painting, I used my own characters, which have featured in some other projects I've done over the years. I was also taking care with the tags and graffiti itself to keep it clean and avoid abuse or swearing (unlike some of the more ...unsavoury... stuff seen at Hellifield); BRM's a family mag and all that...



9 I found, with the darker colour schemes on the coaches, I'd need a base layer for most of the graffiti, especially for the larger writing and characters (which is a real-world technique, too), so used some slightly watered-down white acrylic paint to block-out shapes.



10 Artwork was brush-painted in acrylic and then outlined in places with a fine-tipped permanent marker. It all looks a bit too bold and glaring at this point, but I was planning on weathering everything quite heavily and toning it down.



11 I wanted to give a look of sun-bleaching and fading, with rust, ingrained dirt, and lichen/mould growing. The effect was done with washes of watered-down acrylics, brushed on and wiped downwards with cotton buds and kitchen towels, then some final dry-brushing over the raised details.

CONCLUSION

When it comes to graffiti, though, as an artist, I have to admit to an occasional, sneaking admiration when it's done well or creatively. I don't approve of the mindless vandalising of in-service stock or lovingly-restored preserved vehicles, or just tagging a name randomly so an artist can show how widely travelled they are, but when artistic talent is on show, I can sometimes appreciate it. Working at Carlisle Station in the mid-2000s, I'd witness some truly impressive work done on the otherwise bland, dirty EWS bogie hoppers on the power-station coal trains; a stunning landscape with sunset springs to mind. Vandalsed stock is not something seen that often in miniature, but Railtec markets a range of transfers that make things like replicating broken windows much easier, and I liked the idea of having a go at doing a bit of graffiti in 4mm scale...



Build a Peco 13T Hopper in 0



Steven Draper

IN THIS step-by-step-build, we see if someone with no or limited experience could build a Peco wagon kit, in this example, a recently re-released Parkside by Peco 13T Hopper wagon.

Everything other than tools, paint and glue is in the box, including wheels, turned brass sprung buffers and transfers, plus decent instructions. Mine did not appear to have any wire for the handrails, but I had some spare.

A very basic set of tools was listed that could be put together for about £25 if you were starting out. Some suitable alternatives might already be in a toolbox

or bathroom cupboard. I benefitted from a few others, such as fine drills to clear out holes, but you could use a suitable needle or drawing pin to do this.

Overall, the model goes together well. I did find a few small challenges around the fitting of a few components that required some sanding or trimming to fit, but all could be worked out with patience, tea and careful study of the instructions.

If you are new to kit-building and strive for perfection, you possibly won't start and probably won't finish. However, taking the approach that enjoying the experience of the build and the lessons it brings allowed a relative kit-building novice to create something I'm actually rather pleased with and I'm now itching to have a go at another.

WHAT YOU NEED

Peco

Parkside 13T Hopper wagon

Other

- Plastic cement
- Super glue
- Modelling filler
- Modelling knife
- Selection of files/sanding sticks
- Selection of pliers to bend handrail wire
- Grey and black paint

Getting Practical



1 Carefully cut the first components from the sprue. Dry-fit to ensure all is good, before carefully gluing together – check the solebars are at 90 degrees to the main part of the chassis.



2 Make sure to fit the bufferbeams the correct way up and then take time to fit the parts making up the hopper together, keeping an eye on the angles and ensuring any flash is removed.



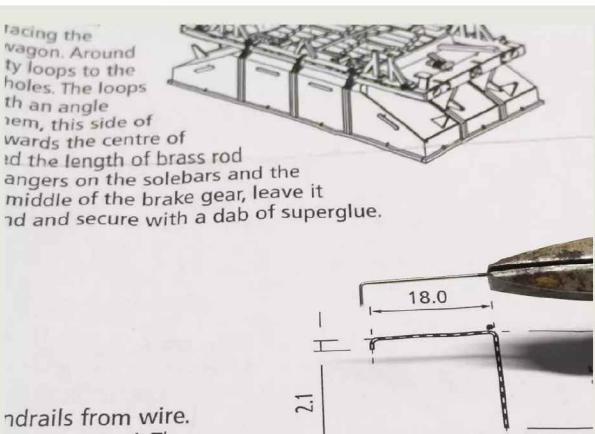
3 There are doors to fit underneath. Be careful to identify which part is sprue and which part is hinge! Some filing was needed before the doors would sit satisfactorily.



4 If you think any filling is required, do this before adding all the small details. This is also a good time to remove any witness seams you notice from the supports.



5 Take care removing the small details from the sprue. The wagon only has brake gear on one side and the brake levers are side-specific. All fitted together well.



handrails from wire. are required. The

6 The handrails are formed by bending right angles in thin brass wire with pliers, using the instructions as a template. Go steady, have patience and a mug of tea is useful.



7 If spray-painting the hopper, do this before adding the remaining details; however, if you are brush-painting, you can paint according to the instructions.



8 Use a tiny drop of superglue to fix the brass bearing into the axle boxes. Slide these over the W irons and check any clearances with the brake gear.



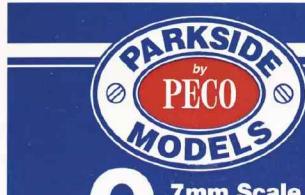
9 The coupling and sprung buffers are built as sub-assemblies. Use the pliers to gently open and squeeze shut the chain links.



10 Once the paint is dry, apply the transfers. Place on the layout and enjoy the satisfaction knowing you've built this; now, are you going to weather?

CONCLUSION

I'm really happy about how this went. It's not perfect, and I think anyone attempting to create a perfect outcome from a kit will make the whole build unenjoyable. I did benefit from some additional tools, too, but treat it as an experience that will nudge the boundaries a bit, and create one or two gentle challenges along a journey that ends with either – I learnt a lot from that, or in this case I've actually just built a model for my railway – and you'll find having a crack at a kit like this a very rewarding way to spend a few evenings.



0 7mm Scale Wagon Kit

Plastic injection moulded kit, with metal wheels and bearing cups, three link couplings and transfers. Requires paints and adhesive to complete.

PS116

BR (LNER Design) 13 ton Steel Hopper Wagon (diagram 1/142, 1/144)

Transfers included for BR



5 050881 787465

In the box, the Peco 13T Hopper wagon.

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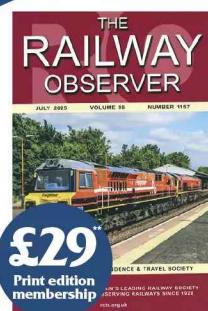
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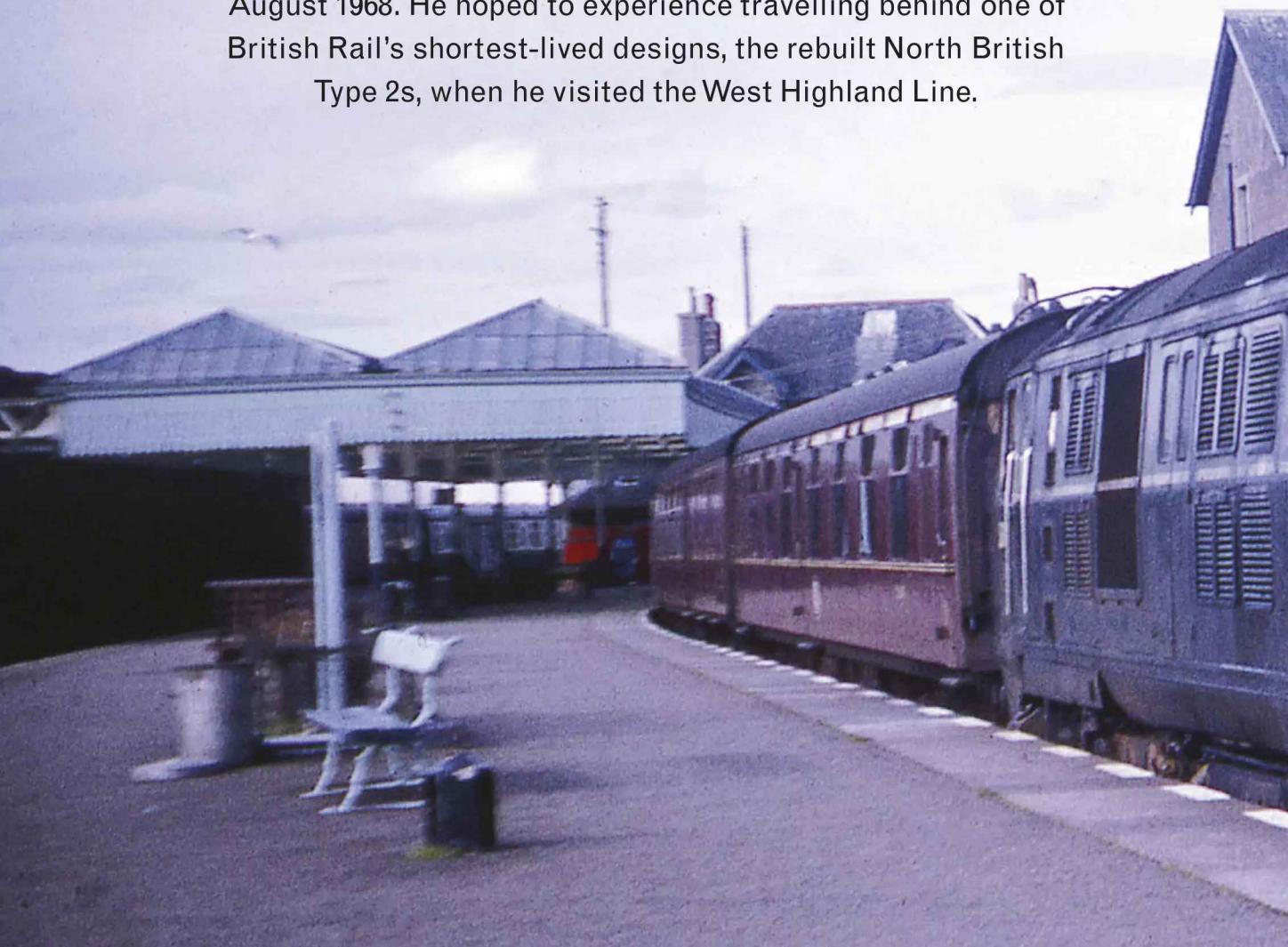


ALSO INSIDE:

- Tyne & Wear
- Photo Bombing
- Metrovick Co-Bo

THE NORTH BRITISH TYPE 2S ON THE WEST HIGHLAND LINE IN 1968

Stephen Rabone spent a week travelling around Scotland in August 1968. He hoped to experience travelling behind one of British Rail's shortest-lived designs, the rebuilt North British Type 2s, when he visited the West Highland Line.



MAIN PICTURE: D6103 is seen at Mallaig in August 1969 with the 18:45 for Fort William. This train and its inward working were the only 'mixed' trains on the British Rail network by this time. If there are any freight wagons on this occasion, they will be out of sight at the rear of the train. RAIL ONLINE

TRACTION COVER: D6108 and D6121 are seen stabled at Fort William shed in 1968. COLOUR RAIL

Mention August 1968 to most British railway enthusiasts and the image that comes into mind will be of the final days of British main line steam in the North West of England. As I was 16 at the time and living in Keighley, I'd witnessed the final few months at locations such as Skipton, Hellifield, Preston and Carnforth. The last steam working I saw through Keighley was a Stanier 8F on an oil tanker train in the last week of June, so it was hardly surprising that I wasn't one of those who deliberately went out to watch the last few weeks of steam workings.

Instead, I had my eyes on travelling by train to places around the country where I hadn't visited before. My parents agreed to let me have my own holiday for two weeks, staying in youth hostels while they went to North Berwick in Scotland with my younger brother.

So off I went, visiting the recently electrified line from London Waterloo to Southampton, followed by going into Western Region territory around Cardiff, Bristol and Swindon. At Cadoxton, near Barry docks, I saw the first North British Type 2 of my trip, withdrawn D6122 in the company of Type 4s D600 and D601. None of these locomotives escaped being scrapped, unlike most of the steam locos dumped at Barry.

Then it was off to Devon, travelling as far as Newton Abbot, before returning to Keighley via a convoluted route that saw me staying in Chepstow hostel and being hauled by D409 between Crewe and Preston. The final leg of that journey from Preston to Keighley via Blackburn and Skipton on the afternoon of Friday, August 2nd, produced the last BR steam workings I saw; two 8F 2-8-0s on coal trains.



Edinburgh, Glasgow Queen Street, Oban, Fort William and Mallaig

Miles from Glasgow		M0	MX	A SO	B X	C	E SO	F	V	G	H	K	L	R
15 EDINBURGH	.....	d	22/30	23/00	03/45	.....	04/35	04/35	07/00	08/20	09/200	15/200	15/200	17/15
GLASGOW QUEEN STREET	.....	d	01 00	01 00	.....	.....	06/00	06/00	08/35	10/05	10/35	16/25	16/25	18/25
DUMBARTON CENTRAL	.....	d	.....	.....	06/26	.....	06/26	06/26	09/01	10/31	11/01	17/03	17/03	19/01
23 HELENSBURGH UPPER	.....	.....	.....	05/20	06/42	.....	06/42	09/09	10/46	11/17	11/30	17/18	17/18	19/28
32 GARELOCHHEAD	.....	.....	.....	05/33	06/56	.....	06/56	09/30	11/00	11/30	17/32	17/32	19/28	19/28
42 ARROCHAR AND TARRET	.....	.....	.....	05/55	07/23	.....	07/23	22/09	05/54	11/24	11/53	17/55	17/55	20/05
50 ARDLUI	.....	.....	.....	06/10	07/38	.....	07/38	23/00	11/40	11/40	18/12	18/12	19/28	20/05
59 ¹ CRIANLARICH †	.....	a	03 05	03 05	06/34	.....	07/59	07/59	10/32	12/00	12/41	18/31	18/31	20/51
101 ¹ CRIANLARICH †	.....	a	03 13	03 13	06/35	.....	08/03	08/03	10/36	12/04	12/45	18/34	18/34	20/54
64 ² TYNDRUM LOWER	.....	d	03 26	03 26	.....	.....	.....	10/47	10/47	10/47	10/47	10/47	10/47	20/53
76 ³ DALMALLY	.....	d	03 50	03 50	.....	.....	.....	11/07	13/18	13/18	13/18	13/18	21/13	21/25
88 ⁴ TATNUILT	.....	d	04 23	04 23	.....	.....	.....	11/27	13/38	13/38	13/38	13/38	21/33	21/45
95 ⁵ CONNEL FERRY §	.....	d	04 42	04 42	.....	.....	.....	11/39	13/50	13/50	13/50	13/50	21/46	21/58
OBAN	.....	a	05 00	05 00	.....	.....	.....	11/54	14/04	14/04	14/04	14/04	22/01	22/13
64 ² TYNDRUM UPPER	.....	.....	.....	06/48	08/16	.....	08/16	12/30	12/30	12/30	18/46	18/46	18/46	18/46
71 ² BRIDGE OF ORCHY	.....	d	.....	07/02	08/22	.....	08/22	12/30	12/30	12/30	19/01	19/01	19/08	19/08
87 ² RANNOCH FOR KINLOCH RANNOCH	.....	d	.....	07/28	09/01	.....	09/01	12/58	12/58	12/58	19/30	19/30	19/36	19/36
94 ² CORROUR	.....	d	.....	07/43	09/18	.....	09/18	13/13	13/13	13/13	19/44	19/44	19/50	19/50
104 ² TULLOCH	.....	d	.....	.....	09/37	.....	09/37	13/42	13/42	13/42	20/04	20/04	20/10	20/10
110 ² ROY BRIDGE	.....	d	.....	08/11	09/48	.....	09/48	13/42	13/42	13/42	20/14	20/14	20/21	20/21
113 ² SPEAN BRIDGE	.....	d	.....	08/16	09/57	.....	09/57	13/49	13/49	13/49	20/21	20/21	20/28	20/28
123 ² FORT WILLIAM †	.....	d	.....	08/40	10/14	.....	10/14	14/06	14/06	14/06	20/39	20/39	20/45	20/45
125 ² BANAVIE	.....	.....	.....	09/40	10/25	.....	10/25	14/35	14/35	14/35	16/40	16/40	20/51	20/51
126 ² CORPACH	.....	.....	.....	09/47	10/32	.....	10/32	14/42	14/42	14/42	16/47	16/47	20/58	20/58
133 ² LOCHEILSE	.....	.....	.....	09/51	10/36	.....	10/36	14/46	14/46	14/46	16/51	16/51	21/02	21/02
140 ² GLENFINNAN LOCH SHIEL	.....	.....	.....	10/16	11/01	.....	11/01	15/11	15/11	15/11	17/03	17/03	21/08	21/14
149 ² LOCHAILORT	.....	.....	.....	10/36	11/21	.....	11/21	15/31	15/31	15/31	17/17	17/17	21/22	21/28
154 ² BEASDALE	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	17/37	17/37	17/37	21/42	21/42	21/48	21/48
157 ² ARISAIG	.....	.....	.....	10/56	11/41	.....	11/41	15/51	15/51	15/51	18/02	18/02	22/08	22/08
162 ² MORAR	.....	.....	.....	11/08	11/53	.....	11/53	16/03	16/03	16/03	18/14	18/14	22/20	22/20
164 ² MALLAIG	.....	a	.....	11/15	12/00	.....	12/00	16/10	16/10	16/10	18/21	18/21	22/27	22/27

Heavy figures denote through carriages
Light figures denote connecting services
For general notes see page 2

A 15 June to 7 September.
and through carriages London King's Cross dep. 19 40 Friday nights
B 27 May to 30 September
C Not on Saturdays 15 June to 7 September.
and through carriages London King's Cross to Fort William dep. 19 40 Sundays to Fridays
E 15 June to 7 September
G 17 June to 14 September
H Until 25 May and from 1 October
Glasgow to Fort William
K 27 May to 30 September.
Glasgow to Fort William
L Until 25 May and from 1 October
R 27 May to 30 September
Y 27 May to 30 September.
Glasgow to Fort William

b Stops only when required to set down passengers from Edinburgh and south thereof
c Stops only when required to set down or take up on notice being given at entraining station 10 minutes before departure time
e On Mondays dep. 07 20
f Sunday nights
g Monday to Friday nights
† See Table 61 for bus service Crianlarich to Ballachulish, Glencoe and Kinlochleven
‡ Station for Glencoe and Kinlochleven. See Table 60
§ Station for Ballachulish, Glencoe and Kinlochleven. See Table 62

Off to Scotland

The next day, I left home again, this time for a week in Scotland with a 'Freedom of Scotland' ticket. I met my parents at Edinburgh Waverley for an hour or so before I headed north to Perth. There I saw a couple of North British Type 2s either on the shed or working passenger trains. The following day, I caught the only daytime train to Inverness, leaving at 09:25. In 2025, there are now seven northbound Sunday trains – who says the "old days" were the best?

The most interesting observation of that day was D6121 at Inverness shed. Quite why it was there, I don't know, and for many years, I wondered if I'd actually written down the wrong number as D5121 was an Inverness-based locomotive. However, photographic evidence of D6121 at Inverness shed in August 1968 has come to light to show I was not mistaken. Details on the RCTS website show that the locomotive was seen at Eastfield on July 28th and was at Inverurie Works on August 28th. Was it on the way to Inverurie when I saw it, or had it simply worked into Inverness on a special freight or passenger train?

The next few days were spent heading north, with journeys to Kyle of Lochalsh and both Wick and Thurso. I then returned to the Glasgow area via Aberdeen before embarking on what proved to be one of the highlights of the fortnight; two days travelling to Mallaig and Oban. I'd already seen 19 Class 21s or 29s at Eastfield depot, Perth and Arbroath, but I was hoping to have the chance to travel behind them on the West Highland Line; I wasn't going to be disappointed.

Reliability woes

The North British Bo-Bo Type 2 diesel electrics must be counted amongst the least successful diesel locomotives to run on Britain's railways. Built between 1958 and 1960, the first batch (D6100-37), with their 1000hp engines, were sent to the London area of the Eastern Region for use on suburban trains. They proved so unreliable that they were first stored and then banished to Scotland in the hope that working in the proximity of North British's Glasgow works would improve their reliability. The second batch (D6138-57), with slightly more powerful engines (1,100hp), were sent to Kittybrewster shed.

Serious reliability problems continued, and between 1963 and 1967, 20 of the class were fitted with 1,350hp Paxman Ventura engines. They would have become Class 29 if they had survived long enough to receive TOPS numbers. The remaining 38 locomotives (Class 21s under TOPS) retained their original NBL/MAN engines until they were stored and withdrawn from service in 1967 and 1968.

All the Class 29s were allocated to Eastfield depot. Although much more reliable than the Class 21s, being a small class, and following BR's decision to reduce the number of classes in use, withdrawal started in 1969 and was complete by 1971. The rebuilt locos (apart from D6123) received 4-character head code panels and most were repainted in a two-tone green livery with a white stripe. A small number of both Class 21s and 29s received Rail Blue livery.

Table 20

Weekdays

Mallaig, Fort William, Oban, Glasgow Queen Street and Edinburgh

Miles from Oban	Miles from Ballachulish	Miles		A	B	C	D		E	G	B	H	
				xx	xx	xx	xx		xx	xx	xx	xx	
			MALLAIG										
24			MORAR	d	07 25	12215		13200	1405		17235		1845
71			ARISAIG	d	07 33	12233		13088	1413		17243		1853
103			BEASDALE	d	07 46	12236		1321	1426		1804		1906
153			LOCHAILORT	d	07 54								
244			GLENFINNAN LOCH SHIEL	d	08 06	12255		1340	1445		1822		1925
31			LOCHEILSE	d	08 27	13215		1400	1513		1843		1945
38			CORPACH	d	08 39			1413	1525		1855		1958
39			BANAVIE	d	08 53	13240		1426	1539		1909		2014
41			FORT WILLIAM ‡	a	08 57	13243		1430	1542		1912		2018
				a	09 04	13251		1437	1550		1920		2026
				d	09 35			1615	1615		1725	1725	
51			SPEAN BRIDGE	d	10 05			1633	1633		1741	1741	
54			ROY BRIDGE	d	10 12			1641	1641		1748	1748	
60			TULLOCH	d	10 26			1655	1655				
70			COROUR	d	10 51			1719	1719		1823	1823	
77			RANNOCH FOR KINLOCH RANNOCH	d	11 03			1731	1731		1835	1835	
93			BRIDGE OF ORCHY	d	11 29			1757	1757		1906	1906	
100			TYNDRUM UPPER	d	11 46			1815	1815		1921	1921	
			OBAN	d	07 55								
64	27		CONNEL FERRY §	d	08 09			1225		1740			1855
13			TAYNULT	d	08 21			1240		1755			1908
244			DALMALLY	d	08 42			1316		1807			1919
32			TYNDRUM LOWER	d	09 07			1342		1828			1938
42	105		CRIANLARICH †	a	09 17	1158	1351	1826	1826	1903	1931	1931	2010
51	114		AROLUI	d	09 21	1203	1355	1832	1832	1907	1923	1923	2011
59	122		ARROCHAR AND TARBET	d	09 55	1237	1428	1849	1849				
69	132		GARELOCHHEAD	d	10 29	1302	1451	1906	1906	1940	1950	1950	
76	139		HELENSBURGH UPPER	d	10 33	1316	1505	1945	1945	2010	2033	2033	2111
85	148		DUMBARTON CENTRAL	a	1045	13435	1518	1958	1958	2024	2047	2047	2123
101	164		GLASGOW QUEEN STREET	a	1115	1418	1546	2028	2028	2110	2156	2156	2137
			15 EDINBURGH	a	1240	1540	1655	21b59	21b59	2241	2255	2255	2208
				a									2340

Heavy figures denote through carriages
Light figures denote connecting services
For general notes see page 2

A xx from Fort William
B 27 May to 30 September
C Until 25 May and from 1 October
xx and through carriages. Fort William to London King's Cross arr. 05 43.
† Mallaig to Glasgow
D 27 May to 30 September
† Mallaig to Glasgow.
xx and through carriages Fort William to London King's Cross arr. 05 43
E 27 May to 8 June and from 9 September to 30 September
G 10 June to 7 September
xx and through carriages to London King's Cross arr. 05 44
X Fort William to Glasgow
II 17 June to 14 September

b On Saturdays arr. 22 08

c Stops only when required to set down or take up on notice being given at entraining station 10 minutes before departure time

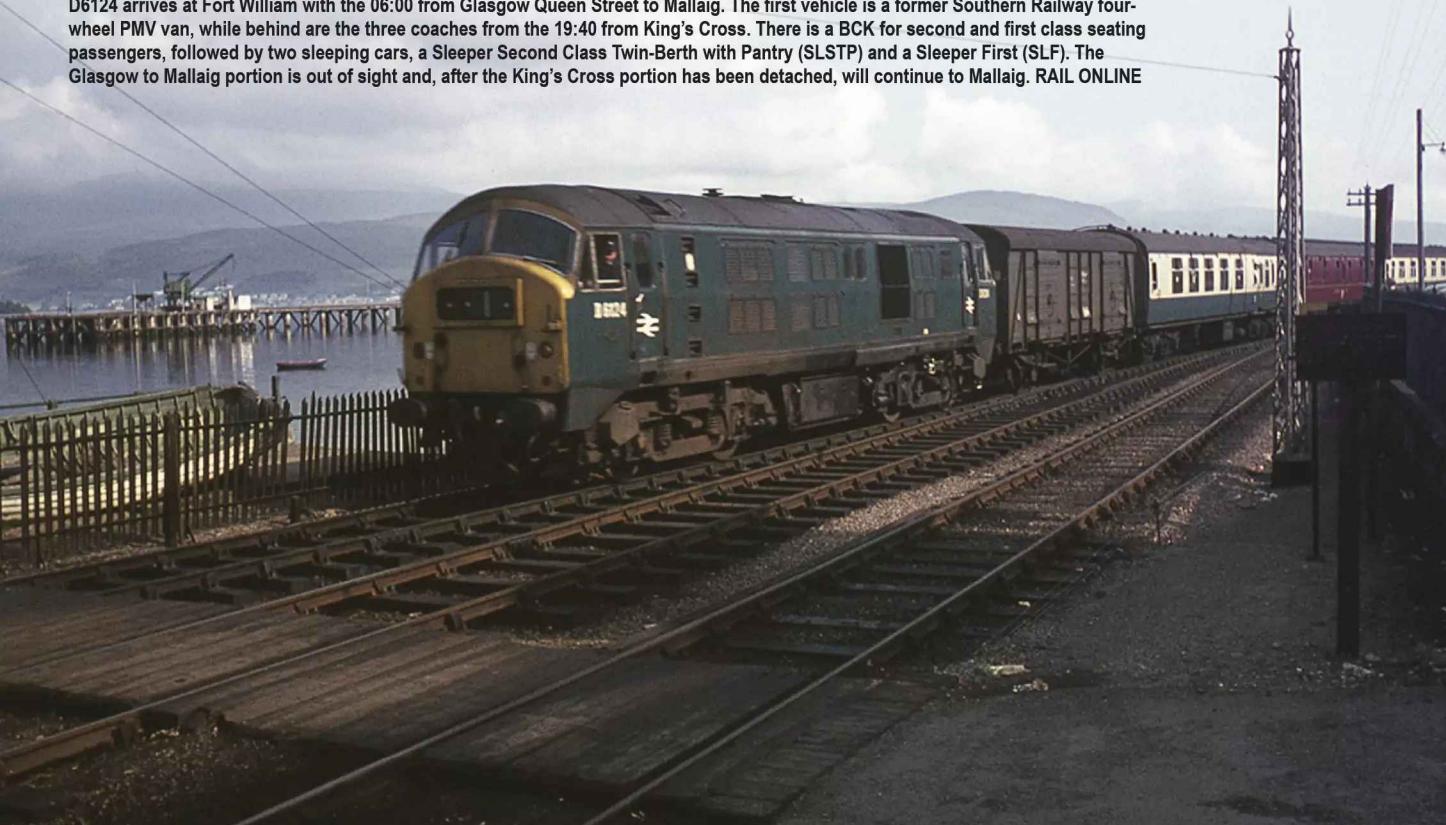
† See table 61 for bus services from Kinlochleven, Glencoe and Ballachulish.

‡ Station for Glencoe and Kinlochleven See Table 60

§ Station for Ballachulish, Glencoe and Kinlochleven see Table 62

ABOVE LEFT & ABOVE: Summer 1968 Scottish Region timetable

D6124 arrives at Fort William with the 06:00 from Glasgow Queen Street to Mallaig. The first vehicle is a former Southern Railway four-wheel PMV van, while behind are the three coaches from the 19:40 from King's Cross. There is a BCK for second and first class seating passengers, followed by two sleeping cars, a Sleeper Second Class Twin-Berth with Pantry (SLSTP) and a Sleeper First (SLF). The Glasgow to Mallaig portion is out of sight and, after the King's Cross portion has been detached, will continue to Mallaig. RAIL ONLINE



D6103 prepares to leave Fort William with an express sometime in 1968 or 1969; judging by the shadows, it is probably the 13:00 from Mallaig to Glasgow and King's Cross. Notice how the length of the train means that the locomotive and the first carriage are beyond the end of the platform and the starter signals. The waters of Loch Linnhe are off to the right, while today this area is now under the main A82 road to the south. The present station is further from the town centre, but more convenient to operate than the old one. COLOUR RAIL



Off to Mallaig

After a night spent in Glasgow youth hostel, the morning of Thursday, August 8th, found me on Queen Street station watching D6111, one of the few surviving un-rebuilt Class 21s, banking a pair of Inverness Class 24s up to Cowlairs. I was waiting to see what would be at the front of the 10:05 to Mallaig and, to my delight, it was D6133. The 10:05 was a summer-only train and ran between May 27th and September 13th. The train was banked out of Queen Street through the tunnel to Cowlairs by D8109.

I noted three more English Electric Type 1s as the train headed west, all on local freight workings: D8090 at Cowlairs, D8073 at Possilpark and D8101 at Bowling. After Craigendoran, the single track of the West Highland Line began, so I sat back to appreciate the scenery. I had never experienced such a dramatic landscape and that journey began my lifelong love of the Scottish hills.

The first train we passed was at Crianlarich, where D6106 was waiting on the 07:25 from Mallaig to Glasgow. Interestingly, the 10:05 from Glasgow is shown in the Scottish Region summer 1968 timetable as stopping at Bridge of Orchy, Rannoch and Corrour only by request and ran non-stop through Tulloch. Thankfully, today's trains don't have this type of inconvenience for passengers and all trains stop at every station except for a few request halts on the Fort William to Mallaig line.

As we ran through Tulloch non-stop, D8082 and D8093 were on the 11:15 southbound empty timber train from the paper mill at Corpach to Crianlarich Lower. Access to the timber loading area at Crianlarich Lower required an awkward double reversal, first at Crianlarich station and then at the junction of the former line from Stirling. My train was scheduled to call at Spean Bridge at 13:49, and there D6116 was waiting with a southbound fitted freight, the 13:05 from Fort William to Cadder Yard east of Glasgow.

My train was due to arrive at Fort William at 14:06 with departure at 14:35. D6114 coupled onto the rear of the train for the journey onto Mallaig. My notes show that after seeing D4098 in the yard at Mallaig Junction, the next locomotive I saw was at Glenfinnan. We were scheduled to arrive at 15:11 and pass the 14:05 Mallaig to Glasgow, which arrived behind D6107. This service had a restaurant car from Mallaig to Glasgow, and at Fort William would have the sleeping cars for King's Cross added. The reversal and shunting of this train at Fort William's cramped terminus took from 15:50 to 16:15.

Freight Working Timetable, October 7th, 1968, to May 4th, 1969

Southbound

01:30 Oban to Cadder (06:33)
01:40 Fort William to Cadder (07:36)
02:30 MX Fort William to Cadder (09:05)
03:34 Fort William to Cadder (10:33)
11:15 SX Corpach Pulp Mill to Crianlarich Junction (14:20)
13:05 SX Fort William to Cadder (2006)
13:50 SX Corpach Pulp Mill to Edinburgh FLT
17:20 6M68 Corpach Pulp Mill to Carlisle

Northbound

00:45 Cadder to Fort William (07:12)
01:50 MX Cadder to Fort William (08:37)
02:32 Cadder to Fort William (09:24)
03:58 Cadder to Oban (09:03)
15:17 SX Crianlarich Jn to Corpach Pulp Mill (18:58)
13:00 SX Cadder to Fort William (20:34)
14:55 SX Cadder to Fort William (22:40)
15:13 SO Cadder to Fort William (22:40) 'SUSPENDED'



D6112 arrives at Mallaig on April 10th, 1968, with the 06:00 from Glasgow Queen Street. This was scheduled to arrive at 12:00 and departed back to Glasgow at 13:00. The third carriage is a restaurant buffet coach. Note the Great Western-style starter signal, complete with signal finials, which apparently was a product of Reading signal works. The Shell/ BP tanker wagons will have brought fuel oil for the fishing boats at Mallaig and were often the tail load of the 'mixed' trains. RAIL ONLINE

BELOW: While the author only saw Class 29s on the Fort William and Mallaig line, they were frequently used on services to Oban. In a superb view at Crianlarich (Upper) station, D6107, in Rail Blue livery, is seen leaving with the 07:55 Oban to Glasgow on April 15th, 1968. The first vehicle is a former LNER Thompson bogie van. It seems likely that the stock for this train would have earlier formed the only overnight passenger train on the West Highland line, the 01:00 from Queen St. to Oban. No doubt the van was used for mail or newspaper traffic. The snow-covered mountain in the background is the Munro Ben Challum, which is 1,025 metres (3,363 ft) above sea level. COLOUR RAIL

Class 29 observations in August 1968

D6100 (B)	<i>Glasgow Queen St</i> 7/8
D6101	<i>Fort William</i> 9/8 09:40 <i>Fort William-Mallaig</i>
D6102	<i>Eastfield</i> 7/8 <i>Mallaig Junction</i> Southbound tankers 9/8
D6103	Not seen
D6106	<i>Crianlarich</i> 07:25 <i>Mallaig- Glasgow Queen St</i> 8/8
D6107 (B)	<i>Glenfinnan</i> 14:05 <i>Mallaig-Glasgow Queen St</i> (to <i>Fort William</i>) 8/8 <i>Arisaig</i> 16:40 <i>Fort William-Mallaig</i> mixed train 8/8 <i>Fort William</i> 07:25 <i>Mallaig- Glasgow Queen St</i> (to <i>Fort William</i>) 9/8
D6108 (B)	<i>Spean Bridge</i> 19:40 <i>King's Cross/Glasgow Queen St-Mallaig</i> (to <i>Fort William</i>) 9/8 <i>Glasgow Queen Street</i> 14:05 <i>Mallaig-Glasgow Queen St/King's Cross</i> 9/8
D6112	<i>Eastfield</i> 7/8
D6113	<i>Arbroath</i> 7/8 <i>Glasgow Queen St</i> 9/8
D6114	10:05 <i>Glasgow Queen St-Mallaig</i> (from <i>Fort William</i>) 8/8 17:35 <i>Mallaig-Fort William</i> 8/8
D6116	<i>Glasgow Queen St</i> 7/8 <i>Spean Bridge</i> Sbd freight 8/8 07:25 <i>Mallaig-Glasgow Queen St</i> (from <i>Fort William</i>) 9/8
D6119 (B)	<i>Eastfield</i> 7/8
D6121	<i>Inverness</i> shed 4/8
D6123	Not seen as in <i>Inverurie Works</i>
D6124 (B)	<i>Perth</i> shed 7/8
D6129 (B)	<i>Eastfield</i> 7/8
D6130	<i>Eastfield</i> 7/8
D6132	<i>Eastfield</i> 7/8 <i>Crianlarich</i> 10:05 <i>Glasgow Queen St-Mallaig</i> 9/8
D6133	<i>Perth</i> shed 3/8, 10:05 <i>Glasgow St-Mallaig</i> (to <i>Fort William</i>) 8/8
D6137 (B)	Not seen

Locations in italics are where the locomotives were seen
(B) received Rail Blue livery





Crianlarich is the location for this view of an empty timber train from the Corpach paper mill to the timber loading point at the closed Crianlarich Lower station on the former line from Stirling. The leading locomotive is D8077. After reversing, the train will head down the Oban line and then reverse onto the spur leading to Crianlarich Lower. The passenger train at the southbound platform is probably the 12:25 Oban to Glasgow Queen Street. The date is September 18th, 1968.

COLOUR RAIL

Arrival at Mallaig was at 16:10 and I had just over an hour to wander around this small port before taking the 17:35 back to Fort William. At Arisaig, D6107 appeared again, this time at the head of Britain's only mixed train, the 16:40 Fort William to Mallaig. The passenger coaches had a handful of freight wagons tagged on at the rear, probably fuel tankers for the fishing fleet at Mallaig or fish vans. The return working at 18:45 from Mallaig also operated as a mixed train.

I spent the night at Fort William youth hostel, which is nearly three miles out of the town in Glen Nevis. I suspect I must have walked there in the evening, but recall catching a bus the following morning.

Class 21 observations in August 1968

D6105	Cowlairs triangle 7/8 (x)	Wdn 8/6/68
D6109	Cowlairs triangle 7/8 (x)	Wdn 4/68
D6110	Cowlairs triangle 7/8 (x)	Wdn 4/68
D6111	<i>Eastfield 7/8</i> Glasgow Queen St banker for 09:40 to Inverness 8/8	Wdn 16/8/68
D6115	Cowlairs triangle 7/8 (x)	Wdn 8/6/68
D6117	<i>Eastfield 7/8</i>	Wdn 16/8/68

Locations in italics are where the locomotives were seen

(x) Photos of these locomotives taken on 25th July 1968 at Cowlairs can be found in 'The North British Type 2 Bo-Bo diesel-electric Classes 21 & 29' by Anthony P. Sayer



In the summer of 1969, D8103 and D4098 are seen in the yard at Fort William. The English Electric Type 1s were used on the timber trains and also to shunt wagons to the aluminium smelter. Intriguingly, D 4098 is carrying a board lettered N57. Does any reader know anything about what this signifies?

COLOUR RAIL

Friday, August 9th

I found D6101 at the station with the stock for the 09:40 Fort William to Mallaig; this ran only between May 27th and September 30th. My own train, the 07:25 Mallaig to Glasgow, arrived at 09:04 behind D6107. The locomotive had clearly been used intensively since I last saw it at Arisaig. Having returned from Mallaig with the 18:45 mixed train, it then had a scheduled wait of just 25 minutes before taking over the 16:35 Glasgow to Mallaig. This must have required some fairly brisk shunting manoeuvres to release it from its arriving train and then couple onto the rear of the train from Glasgow.

In the 31 minutes that the 07:25 Mallaig to Glasgow train was at Fort William, the new train locomotive, D6116, added some extra carriages and a buffet car to the portion from Mallaig. As we passed Mallaig Junction, D6102 was at the head of a train of oil tankers waiting to follow the Glasgow train south. This may have been a special working, as there is no obvious candidate in the working timetable.

On arrival at Spean Bridge, my train passed the 06:00 Glasgow to Mallaig headed by D6108. This train conveyed

two sleeping cars and a brake composite coach that had left London King's Cross the evening before at 19:40. The train seems to have been photographed on several occasions in 1968 and usually had this formation; Class 29, a former Southern Railway four-wheel PMV van, then Mark 1s BCK, SLSTP, SLF, (King's Cross to Fort William) RB, BSK, CK and BSK (Glasgow to Mallaig). The return working, the 14:05 Mallaig to Glasgow, was in the same order but with the King's Cross portion at the rear of the train. The PMV appears not to have worked back south on that service.

On the Friday/Saturday nights from June 14th/15th to September 6th/7th, the train from King's Cross ran as a separate train running about an hour and a half earlier on the West Highland Line and ran direct from Edinburgh to the first stop at Helensburgh Upper. Apart from Crianlarich and Corrour, the Saturday King's Cross train only stopped to set down from south of Edinburgh. Presumably, the King's Cross and Glasgow Saturday portions were longer on Saturday mornings necessitating running the train in two portions.

As I was intending to travel to Oban, I alighted at Crianlarich, where the 10:05 Glasgow to Mallaig behind D6132 was waiting to pass us. After a wait of about 45 minutes, I was rather surprised when the 10:35 Glasgow to Oban train arrived as it was one of the 3-car Swindon-built DMUs of the type I'd travelled on earlier on the Inverness to Aberdeen line and not a locomotive-hauled service. I hadn't realised that in most summers a set would be loaned by Inverness to Corkerhill depot for use on the 10:35 from Glasgow to Oban and the 18:55 return. The service ran on Mondays to Saturdays from June 17th until September 14th. In 1968, the set loaned was 51789, 59685 and 51791, and, of course, the train had a buffet car in the centre trailer. Once again, the stopping pattern of these two trains didn't cater for passengers at every station.

At Dalmally, D5353 passed us on the 11:25 Oban to Glasgow, which had a buffet car in its formation. The only locomotive I noted at Oban was D7583, which was coupled to the coaches for the 17:40 to Glasgow that I would take later on. Although I didn't see any Class 29s on the Oban line they were actually frequent visitors on trains from Glasgow.

With over three hours to pass before my train back to Glasgow, I went to see what was in the goods yard outside the station as, at this time, Oban still had a daily overnight freight train from Cadder yard. The yard would close to general freight traffic in 1969, but continued to handle oil traffic for many more years. I then headed off down to the harbour; although I have lost my ship spotting notes, I remember I saw the 14:45 sailing to Craignure and Lochaline, which was usually the *Columba*. This was built in 1964 and was the dedicated ship from 1964 to

D6114 runs into Bridge of Orchy station with a Glasgow Queen Street to Mallaig train on a typically dull day in 1968.
RAIL ONLINE



D6112 has arrived at Mallaig on April 10th, 1968, with the 06:00 from Glasgow Queen Street. Passengers can be seen awaiting to board the train for the return working at 13:00. Notice how the flower beds have got netting over them to protect them from the gulls! RAIL ONLINE

1972 for Lochaline sailings (it is now sailing as the *Hebridean Princess* cruise ship).

I saw only one train on my return to Glasgow and that was D5353, returning with the 18:35 from Queen Street to Oban, which passed us in the loop at Glen Douglas. I distinctly recall the tall signal box which stood in the centre of the loop, although at the time I didn't know of the military importance of Glen Douglas as a stores centre for ammunition. Arriving back at Queen Street at 21:10, I noted D6108 at the head of the empty stock of the 14:05 Mallaig-Glasgow, which had arrived earlier. My final sighting of a Class 29 that day was D6113 with what I believe was the 21:10 to Dundee.

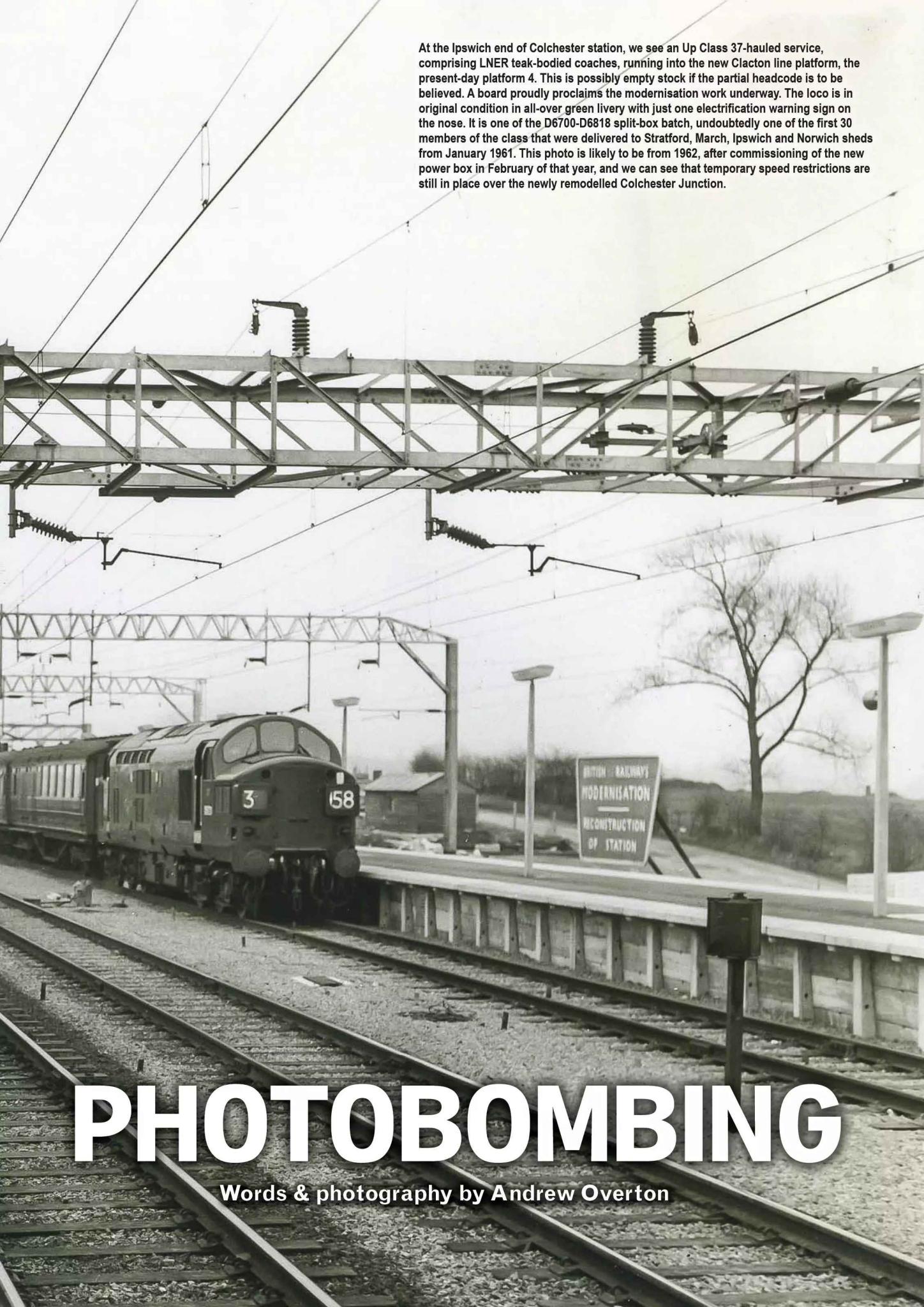
That's not quite the end of my Class 29 story as, during January and February 1971, I undertook six weeks of initial teacher training in schools in Greenock and Port Glasgow. At the weekends, I naturally made the use of the time to see the railways. On one Saturday in January, I visited Eastfield and found no fewer than 16 of the class were at the depot. A few others were also seen on local freight trains and on empty stock workings at Queen Street.

Acknowledgements

- The North British Type 2 Bo-Bo diesel-electric Classes 21 & 29 by Anthony P. Sayer
- Jim Nisbet (Freightmaster Forum member) for timetable details
- Website of the Eastbank MRC: <http://www.eastbank.org.uk>







At the Ipswich end of Colchester station, we see an Up Class 37-hauled service, comprising LNER teak-bodied coaches, running into the new Clacton line platform, the present-day platform 4. This is possibly empty stock if the partial headcode is to be believed. A board proudly proclaims the modernisation work underway. The loco is in original condition in all-over green livery with just one electrification warning sign on the nose. It is one of the D6700-D6818 split-box batch, undoubtedly one of the first 30 members of the class that were delivered to Stratford, March, Ipswich and Norwich sheds from January 1961. This photo is likely to be from 1962, after commissioning of the new power box in February of that year, and we can see that temporary speed restrictions are still in place over the newly remodelled Colchester Junction.

PHOTOBOMBING

Words & photography by Andrew Overton



The Glasgow North Suburban Lines electrification was completed in November 1960 and involved construction of new 6.25/25kV dual-voltage 3-car AM3 EMUs by Pressed Steel Ltd in Paisley, fitted with AEI traction motors. The units consisted of Driving Trailer Second Open (DTSO), Motor Brake Second Open (MBSO), upon which a Stone-Faiveley AMBR pantograph was fitted, and a Battery Driving Trailer Second Open (BDTSO). The signalling was also modernised, although only a small number of new power signal boxes were built with many of the existing mechanical boxes converted to operate colour light signals with points and ground discs remaining mechanically-worked. This photo, looking towards Drumry, shows one of the new units in ex-works condition approaching Singer on the Down main line, probably on a test run, with BDTSO leading. Coaches were painted in the now-famous electric blue livery, with white roofs that would not stay that clean for long. The line diverging to the right gives access to the six terminal 'workers' platforms at the station, the through station platforms still being the best part of half a mile away behind the photographer. The workers' platforms were a private station used by the employees of Singer Works and closed in 1967. The resignalling at Singer took place on May 30th, 1959, (postponed from 9th) but electric passenger services did not commence until November 1960. It is likely this photo was taken during the latter year in preparation for the commencement of passenger running with the new trains.



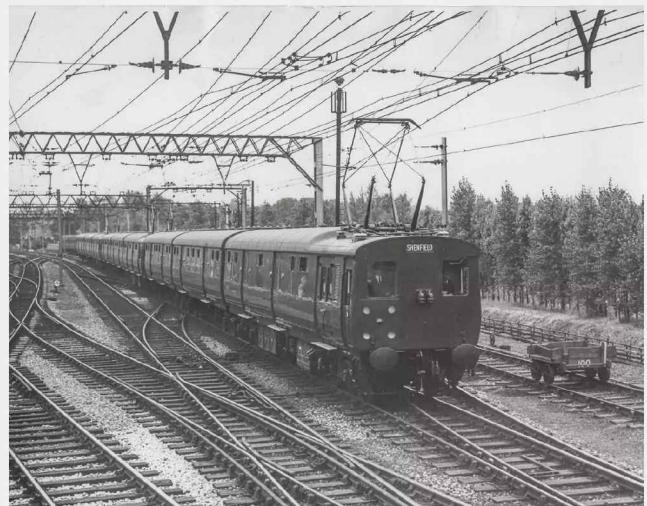
Phase 1 of the Kent Coast electrification included the Sheerness Branch, controlled by new signalling from a new power box at Sittingbourne. The signalling on the branch was the first use of Centralised Traffic Control (CTC) on British Railways, a cheaper form of remote signalling control suitable for use on lightly-trafficked lines. It was destined to be the only application, as technological advances soon made conventional remote control systems as cost-effective on the modest route lengths found in the UK. Part of the project involved the replacement of the existing road and rail bridge over the River Medway with a new bridge, the Kingsferry Bridge, with its vertical lifting span. This view, looking towards the new bridge from the platform at Swale station, shows a pair of 2HAP EMUs approaching, with unit 605x from the second build batch of 1958 leading. Trains over-running signal EV78 will be diverted into the sand-drag to the left. Modellers may wish to note the small hooded side-lights to the right of the signal aspects; called pig's ears, they were to enable drivers to see what aspect the signal was showing when standing close to it, before the invention of signal lenses with a sector (called a hot-strip), which projected some light downwards towards a closely standing train. The new signalling was commissioned on May 24th, 1959, probably shortly before this photograph was taken. The hut to the right is likely to be accommodation for contractors involved in the bridge construction.

in detail, these photos being freely given to the serious railway press of the day to illustrate articles: The Railway Gazette, in particular, carried regular in-depth features on modernisation schemes. Publicity booklets for distribution to the trade were also produced.

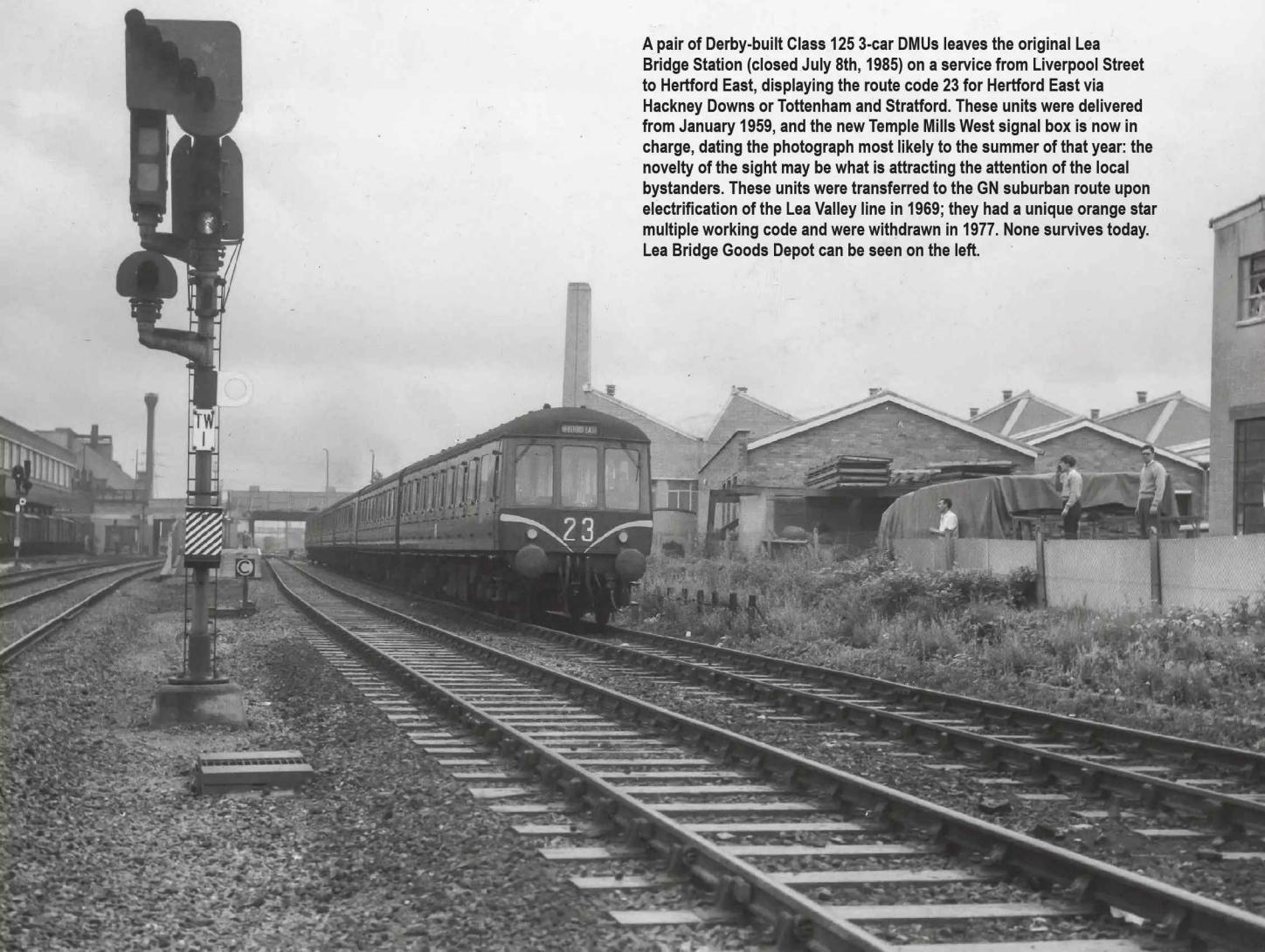
During the transition period between steam and diesel and electric traction, most enthusiast photographers shunned the new order and concentrated on steam locomotives, leaving us today with a dearth of photos of modern traction in its early years. Fortunately, the work of the signalling contractors' photographers often includes shots of modern traction as a backdrop – they certainly didn't want steam trains in the frame, as that was not the modern image they were seeking to reinforce. These photographs show scenes from a number of projects and reveal locomotives and multiple units in largely original condition and liveries.



The Kent Coast electrification was authorised in February 1956, and Phase 1 of the scheme, which included re-signalling of Rainham, was completed during 1959. New third-rail DC EMUs were ordered for the new services and included 2HAP two-car outer suburban units built at Ashford, one of which we see passing the new signal box in original all-over green livery displaying route code 82, a Charing Cross to Ramsgate service via Greenwich. Set 6029 was built in 1957 as part of the first batch of 2HAPs, consisting of a DMBSO and a Driving Trailer Composite (DTCL). Similar to 2EPB and 4EPB stock, their English Electric traction motors were geared instead for express working. The use of level crossing full-barriers was only authorised in 1954, and roll-out for new work was slow; here we see the new power signal box has retained traditional wooden gates, albeit worked by power. The signalling here was commissioned on April 26th, 1959, and the photo will have been taken shortly afterwards, as we can see a redundant lattice semaphore signal post above the front of the second coach of the unit, yet to be taken down.



The Shenfield Electrification was a scheme begun by the LNER in 1935 and completed by the new BR in 1949. A fleet of new 3-car EMUs operating from 1500V DC overhead wires was ordered in 1938 and they were almost identical to those supplied for the Manchester to Hadfield and Glossop route, being initially designated AM6 by BR, later Class 306. The units themselves were built by BRC&W and Metro-Cammell, with English Electric control equipment and Crompton Parkinson traction motors, and had power-operated sliding external doors. Here we see a unit in original condition with Driving Motor Brake Second Open (DMBSO) leading, approaching its destination at Shenfield station on the Down local line, the photographer being located in the signal box. The unit is missing the later addition of two-character route indicator between the cab windows, routing information being given by the arrangement of white lights below the second-man's window. The date is most likely shortly after the introduction of the electric services in 1949.



A pair of Derby-built Class 125 3-car DMUs leaves the original Lea Bridge Station (closed July 8th, 1985) on a service from Liverpool Street to Hertford East, displaying the route code 23 for Hertford East via Hackney Downs or Tottenham and Stratford. These units were delivered from January 1959, and the new Temple Mills West signal box is now in charge, dating the photograph most likely to the summer of that year: the novelty of the sight may be what is attracting the attention of the local bystanders. These units were transferred to the GN suburban route upon electrification of the Lea Valley line in 1969; they had a unique orange star multiple working code and were withdrawn in 1977. None survives today. Lea Bridge Goods Depot can be seen on the left.

THE TYNE & WEAR DEPARTMENTAL FLEET

By David Ratcliffe



In 1971, the Tyneside Passenger Transport Authority published a plan to improve public transport through the development of a Metro system to better link Newcastle and the surrounding area. Following the passing of an Act of Parliament in 1973, construction of the Metro began, with the various sections opening between August 1980 and April 1984.

The Metro was to be 35 miles long, of which 27 miles comprised tracks taken over from British Rail, while almost half of the eight miles of new railway were underground, giving central access in both Newcastle and Gateshead.

For the new passenger services, a fleet of 90 1,500V DC overhead-electric articulated Metrcars were built by Metro-Cammell of Birmingham, while in addition to its passenger stock, the Tyne & Wear Metro also obtained a small fleet of

locomotives and line maintenance vehicles, including five 427bhp 0-6-0DE locomotives ordered from Brush Electrical Machines Ltd. of Loughborough in 1977.

Initially, these locomotives were used to work the wiring and other engineering trains during the construction phase of the system, but would subsequently handle weekend permanent way trains. They were the first industrials to be built by Brush for over 15 years and featured a Rolls Royce DV8N engine driving a traction motor fitted to the centre axle. With the Metro's lengthy tunnel sections, the locomotives had exhaust gas conditioners, while their top speed of 31mph, together with the fitting of BSI/Davies & Metcalfe auto-couplers, meant they could also be used to rescue failed passenger units as well as shunt the Metro's depot at South Gosforth.

The Metro's five bogie ballast hoppers, led by MA28, are pictured at the Hylton Street PW Sidings, North Shields, in June 1991.
MARK SAUNDERS



Among the other works vehicles acquired by the T&W Metro were two Tamplar/Liner machines supplied by Matisa Ltd. and Plasser & Theurer, a Schneider Rail grinder, and two Mercedes-Benz Unimog road/rail machines, one of which was used as traction for the rail grinder. A dozen new air-braked bogie flat wagons, given fleet numbers MA1 to MA12, were also purchased from Procor in 1977; these being fitted with various semi-permanent structures, ranging from cable drum carrying frames to overhead line inspection platforms. All 12 also carried the BRTOPS code PFA, and were TOPS numbered respectively as TWT95450 to 95461 to allow them to work over British Rail tracks if required.

In addition, two brake vans were initially hired from BR, but later purchased by the Metro, in order to provide engineering staff with travelling and messing accommodation, while three ex-BR 'Walrus' bogie ballast hoppers, which had been air-braked by Procor, were purchased in 1978. Two new low-sided bogie open wagons designed to carry spoil and fitted with electronic brakes, MA50 and MA51, were built by Procor for the T&W Metro in 1986, while two further bogie ballast hoppers were built by Procor in 1990, at the same time as they rebuilt the previous trio, fitting new bodies to their existing bogies and brake gear.

There were also changes to the locomotive fleet during this period as the Metro ordered three new 26.25-tonne 4WBE/WE battery electric locomotives from the Hunslet Engine Co. as replacements for its fleet of Brush 0-6-0 diesels electrics in 1988. Allocated fleet numbers BL1 to BL3, and works numbers HE9174 to HE9176, the battery locomotives measured 6300mm over buffers with a wheelbase of 2500mm, having a pantograph fitted on top of the cab to be used to recharge the batteries. Like their predecessors, they were intended to haul engineers' trains and shunt at South Gosforth depot.



Tyne & Wear Metro battery electric locomotive BL3, works number HE9176, was still to have its number applied to the cab side when recorded at South Gosforth in March 1989. DAVID RATCLIFFE



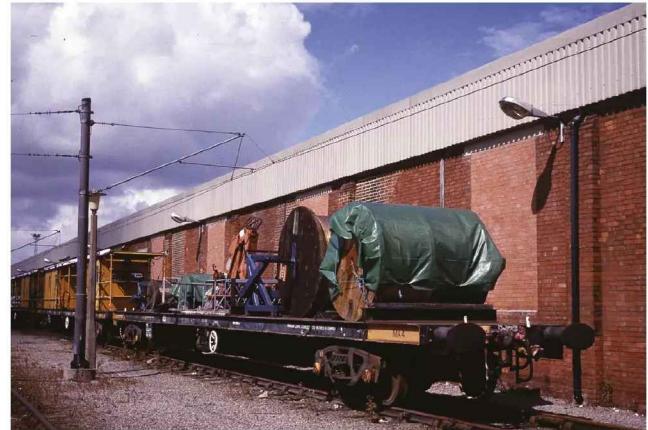
Tyne & Wear Metro 0-6-0 diesel electric locomotives WL3 and WL5, works numbers BT803/77 and BT805/77, await their next duty at South Gosforth depot in August 1987. DAVID RATCLIFFE



MA5 and MA6 were both fitted with dropside bodies for use as general material carriers, while MA8 had no fitments and was used to carry lengths of rail. MA and MA10 were equipped with Geismar rail loaders and, like the ballast hoppers and the dropside flats, could usually be found at Hylton Street, North Shields, with MA10 being recorded there in June 1991. MARK SAUNDERS



The Tyne & Wear's Switch electromagnetic ES/TD No.1976907, constructed by Tamper Inc. of West Columbia, South Carolina, and supplied by Matisa Ltd. is seen at South Gosforth in August 1987. DAVID RATCLIFFE



Tyne & Wear flat MA4 carried a HAIB Crane and cable drums as seen in this view at South Gosforth in August 1987, while MA12 was fitted with a small HAIB crane. DAVID RATCLIFFE



Three of the Metro's PFA flat wagons, MA2, MA7 and MA9, were fitted with frames for overhead line inspection work, with MA7 and MA2 pictured at South Gosforth in August 1987. DAVID RATCLIFFE



Also recorded at South Gosforth in August 1987 were the two PFAs, MA1 and MA11, which had been fitted with frames to carry cable drums. DAVID RATCLIFFE



MA50 and MA51, the Metro's two purpose-built spoil wagons, were semi-permanently coupled with the outer ends being fitted with BSI auto-couplers. Their Westcode electronic brakes enabled them to operate with the Metrocars, but these unique features meant they were not registered for travel over BR tracks. The pair was recorded at South Gosforth in September 1986. DAVID RATCLIFFE

A UNIQUE FAILURE

By J Crosse

The Metrvick Co-Bo Type 2 diesels were born out of the 1955 Modernisation Plan, which decreed that various designs of locomotive in each power classification were to be built for evaluation and comparison prior to a decision being taken on which would be the one that would go into mass production.

There was a plethora of Type 2 designs, of which the Co-Bos were one of two that were intended to allow evaluation of two-stroke engines against the more commonly used four-stroke types. As it turned out, both two-stroke designs proved not to be up to the task, the other being the 'Baby Deltics', D5900-9. The Co-Bo wheel arrangement was adopted to ensure that axle loadings were within the required specification. The uninspiring exterior design of the machines was reminiscent of the Southern Railway pilot locos 10201-3.

Numbered D5700-19, these diesel electrics were fitted with a 1200hp Crossley HST V8 engine and Metropolitan Vickers 137 BZ traction motors. Built by Metropolitan Vickers Electrical Co. Ltd. at Bowesfield Works, Stockton, they had mechanical parts by Metropolitan Vickers and Beyer, Peacock Ltd., Gorton, Manchester. Deliveries were later than expected and over a protracted period from July 1958 through to October 1959. In the grand scheme of things, they stood little chance of being the design chosen to be the standard Type 2 as, in a change of policy, follow-on orders had already been placed for all of the four stroke designs before the first Co-Bo had been delivered. Problems with the engines and the slightly less serious one of cab windows falling out led to the class being stored starting in 1960. A mass re-entry to traffic took place in early 1962 after modifications were made, but as a non-standard class, their fate was soon sealed and none saw out the decade in main line service.

An unidentified passenger working is recorded here with D5716 in charge at Bedford on May 18th, 1959, at which point the loco had officially been in service for two days. At this time, it was allocated to Derby, but along with D5712-5/7-9 it moved to Cricklewood shed in January 1960. This was to be a short-term home as all were sent back to Derby in August. This loco spent more time out of service than some of its compatriots as, in addition to being out of traffic from February 1961 to February 1962, it was stored again in October 1964 before going into Crewe Works for engine repairs, with it not returning to service until March 1966.

F HORNBY/ COLOUR-RAIL.COM





Derby was the home shed for all of the class initially, and here we see D5704 'at home' on May 9th, 1959, in a setting more appropriate to the steam engines that they were supposed to replace. Indeed, it was a noted problem with many diesels in the early days that the world of dust and grime associated with steam power was less than suitable for the provision of good diesel maintenance. The loco had been put into traffic on November 5th, 1958, but was put into store in February 1961 at Trafford Park shed, where it remained until around October before going to the Metrovick works for modification and a return to service in February 1962. D FORSYTH/COLOUR-RAIL.COM



Occasionally, a puzzling picture surfaces and this is one of those. Unfortunately, it is undated but claims to be of D5715 'at Liverpool'. That city was not noted for the presence of the type! Close inspection shows the loco to be relatively clean, as is the shunter behind. To the left of the engine, there is what appears to be a set of steps giving cab access, so this suggests that it might be at a depot open day event. If any reader knows when and where the picture was taken, we would love to know. It was out of traffic, awaiting a new engine at Crewe Works from May 1965 until January 1967. It was in store at Kingmoor just 12 months later and was condemned four months after that in May 1968. G PARRY COLLECTION/COLOUR-RAIL.COM



A rarely photographed location and what also appears to have been a short-term use for the class come together to give us this view of D5704 on express passenger duty at Cheadle Heath, recorded on September 26th, 1960. With a much busier West Coast Main Line nearby, few photographers appear to have ventured out to the Midland line between Ambergate and Manchester. As noted earlier, the loco was stored in February 1961, never to return to work on this line, instead being hidden away by British Railways on quieter duties in Cumbria in the same way that the North British Type 2s were banished to the north of Scotland. It was put into store in June 1965 and apparently never worked again, but it was not condemned until December 1967. D FORSYTH/ COLOUR-RAIL.COM



The entire class was put to work on Midland Division duties, which took them north to Manchester, but also reaching Carlisle and Glasgow when working the famed 'Condor' night freight, which they headed in pairs right through from London. Initially, but rarely captured on film, they covered various passenger duties and D5710 and D5701 were so employed at Wellingborough with the 17:30 St Pancras to Manchester turn on May 14th, 1959. Their careers followed parallel paths until December 1966, when D5710 was put into store. A year later, it was withdrawn and consigned to J McWilliams, Shettleston for scrap. D5701, however, remained in use and moved to Kingmoor in February 1968 and then to Preston Division in June of that year, only to be condemned three months later. It met its end at John Cashmore's Great Bridge yard. K FAIREY/ COLOUR-RAIL.COM



When the class was returned to traffic in 1962, the members were moved en bloc to Barrow-in-Furness for duties in and around Cumbria. There they were employed quite frequently on passenger duty, as seen here with D5717 being found at Lakeside station on the now-preserved Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway. The date was July 6th, 1963. This loco, along with D5708, did make a very brief return to Southern England when the pair was sent to London for evaluation on cross-city freight turns. Clearly, this trial proved unsatisfactory, as the class saw out its days in the north of England. D5717 was nominally moved to Kingmoor, with the introduction of the operating district allocation D12 in February 1968 and after two months, moved again to Preston Division (D10), followed by withdrawal three months later. COLOUR-RAIL.COM



Occasionally, a 'different' photo opportunity would present itself such as this one at Carlisle, where D5707 is giving 'Britannia' 70041 a helping hand with a freight train, which includes some interesting-looking silo wagons, this being on the station avoiding line on August 12th, 1966. At the time the picture was taken, few would have predicted that the Metrovick would only survive the 'Britannia' by some 12 months. Indeed, the Metrovick was out of use before the last BR steam engine was withdrawn, the irony being that this was at Carnforth shed, where both steam and the Metrovicks eked out their final days, with the last steam condemnation being around August 11th, 1968, while the Co-Bo's official withdrawal date was September 7th. D FORSYTH/COLOUR-RAIL.COM



Carlisle was a hotbed of Metrovick activity as the end of BR steam approached, with no doubt the operating authorities being under considerable pressure to have as many diesels as possible in traffic to facilitate the death of steam power. D5701 appears gainfully employed on ballast duties near the city on July 8th, 1966. In what might be classed as a truly unremarkable career, it appeared to follow the herd at each reallocation - Derby to store, then to Barrow in 2/62, Upperby in 10/65, D12 in 2/68, followed by D10 in the June before the end came three months later. However, as one of the other photographs shows, there was a twist in the tail. D FORSYTH/ COLOUR-RAIL.COM



As recorded earlier, some class members paid an extended visit to Crewe Works. D5701 apparently had a far less onerous experience there, as no long period out of service was recorded for it, and yet it received a repaint into Rail Blue, the only class member to be so treated. It is seen so adorned on a freight duty at Grange over Sands in June 1968. It helped not a jot in its survival race, as it too was condemned in September 1968, joining some other class members at Cashmore's Great Bridge yard for breaking up in October 1969. COLOUR-RAIL.COM



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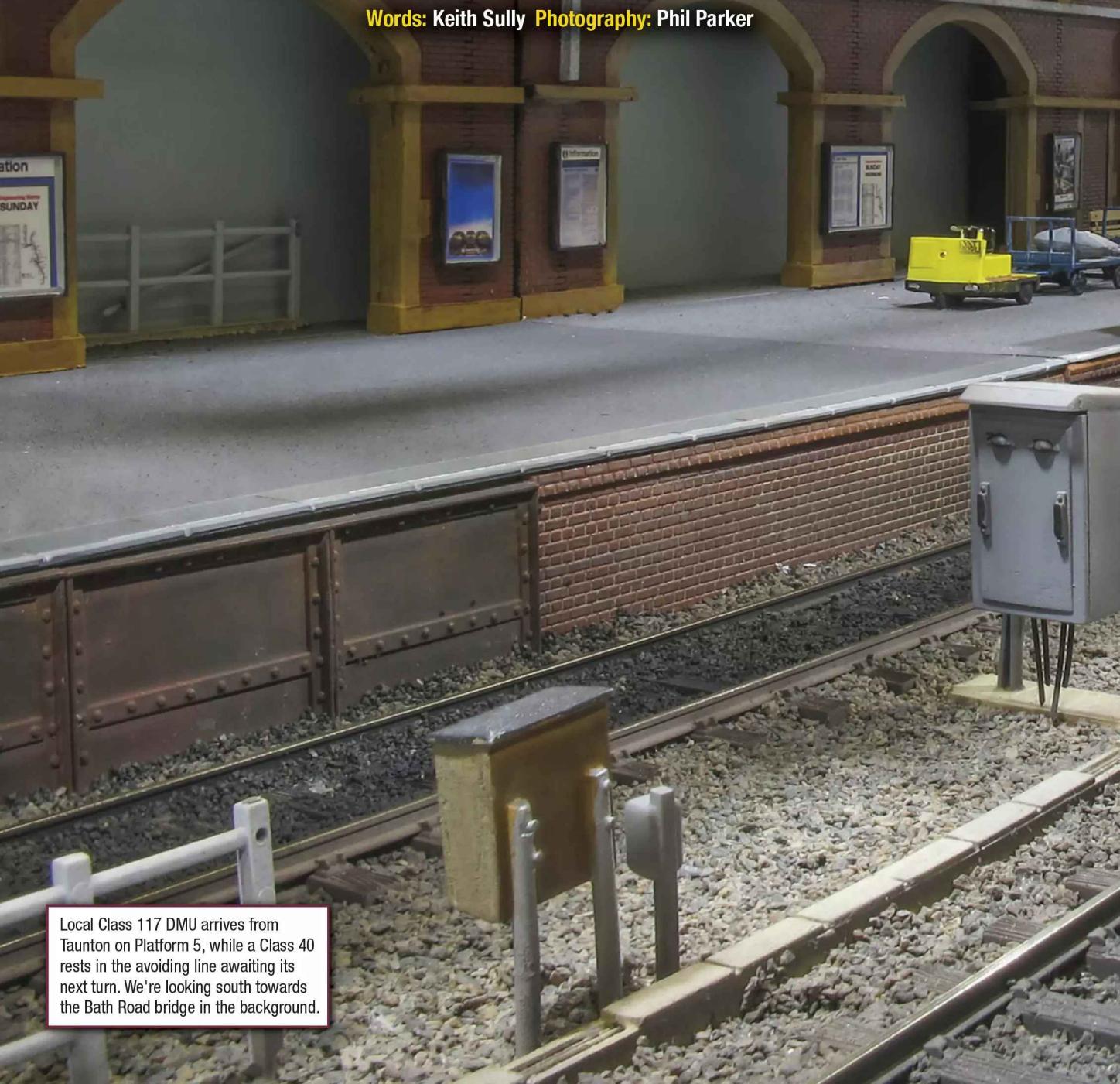
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A NEW CHALLENGE

On the hunt for a second exhibition layout, this builder turned to his roots, wanting to recreate full-length HSTs in their heyday and a location that handled parcels, mail and newspapers.

Words: Keith Sully Photography: Phil Parker



Local Class 117 DMU arrives from Taunton on Platform 5, while a Class 40 rests in the avoiding line awaiting its next turn. We're looking south towards the Bath Road bridge in the background.



FACTFILE

LAYOUT NAME: Bristol Avon Bridge
SCALE/GAUGE: 4mm:1ft/16.5mm/00

SIZE: 20ft x 10ft

ERA/REGION: 1970/'80s/BR Western Region

LAYOUT TYPE: Continuous run

TOP RIGHT: Class 108 draws into Platform 3 from Weston Super Mare. The canopies are built up from a mixture of LCUT laser-cut card components and Plastikard corrugated sheet. The Post Office "tug" is from West Hill Wagon Works.

MIDDLE RIGHT: Class 108 arrives on the stopper from South Wales. Platform 5's buffet is in the background. The station building was created from three laser-cut repeating panels, door left/right, or arch. The buffet entrance is built into a former archway.



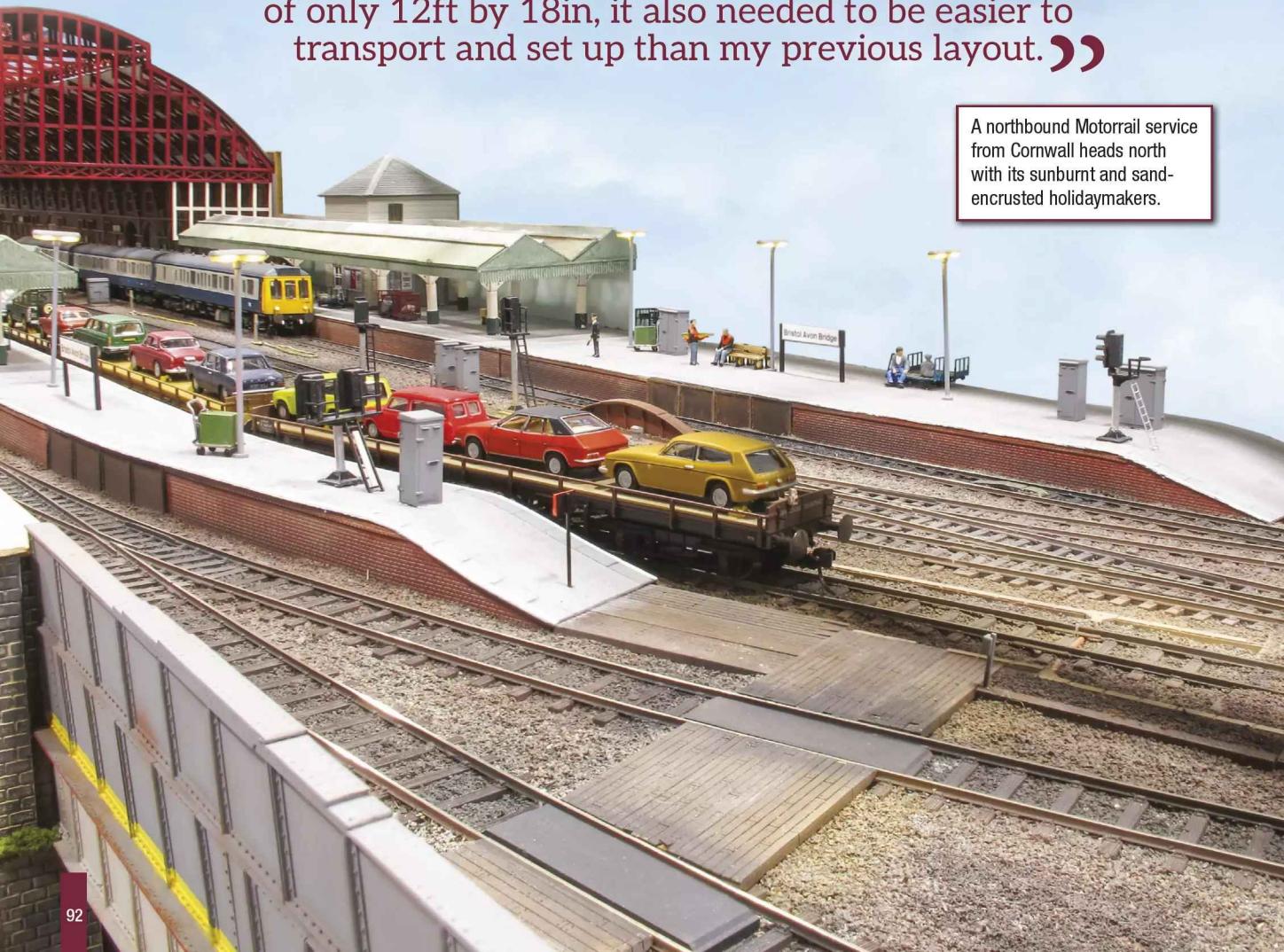
As you look into the station, Bristol Avon Bridge, you will see that its location brings a huge variety of services; locos and units from the South West, Devon and Cornwall, or off to London, South Wales, Midlands and the North. Some terminating, the Cardiff/ Portsmouth running around, local stoppers and long distance all with an excuse to pause here. Freights draw up in the avoiding lines to swap crews and await their path. As the evening unfolds, the tempo of mail and newspaper services increases, portions attached or separated.

With some nostalgia for the area I grew up in, it started me thinking about my second exhibition layout. Looking for an excuse to run trains from the 1970s Western Region hydraulics, through to the '80s HSTs' heyday, then into the early-'90s. I wanted to see full-length HSTs or the Pullman in a setting that would look right, despite only having a modest space to build a layout in. A location that handled parcels, mail and newspapers really appealed.

I love layouts that challenge the viewer to look into them, 'Rumbling Bridge', set in its steep cutting is a good example. So out came the cornflake boxes to mock-up some ideas, which helped ground my ambitions a little bit! Settling on a view that required you to look through the station building, as if you were sitting in the buffet, or walking in from the booking hall.

“ I wanted to build a big layout, but with a scenic space of only 12ft by 18in, it also needed to be easier to transport and set up than my previous layout. ”

A northbound Motorail service from Cornwall heads north with its sunburnt and sand-crusted holidaymakers.





Wish list

'Bristol Avon Bridge' was born from some competing ideas and criteria to be able to run that wide variety of trains. I wanted to build a big layout, but with a scenic space of only 12ft by 18in, it also needed to be easier to transport and set up than my previous layout.

I realised a true replica of Bristol Temple Meads was beyond my skills and space. For example, the curvature of the platforms massively increased the size of the layout, and in OO looked "wrong", despite it being prototypical that only the ends of each coach meet the platform edge. The first compromise is the curve is only hinted at in the track plan, but this solved another issue, which had blown my mind as I tried to design a curved station building - the geometry of roof components!

The inevitable compression of the scene between the Post Office chain conveyor and the Bath Road Bridge to the south of the station allowed licence to move Bristol Bath Road loco depot beyond the road bridge, allowing the moving of the depot's distinctive signal box to nestle under the road bridge.

As I thought about how to recreate the feel of the "new" train shed at Bristol, a eureka moment was realising that the majority of Victorian/Edwardian railway structures and engineering relies on using thousands of essentially the same cast iron components to build up huge structures. Look at Bristol, York, or any of the London Termini, and you will see that replication of the same components throughout.



ABOVE: Motorail loading point on the south-facing bay platform. BRUTE trolleys (West Hill Wagon Works) are left scattered across the station in anticipation of the evening mail.

MIDDLE LEFT: Looking from the booking office entrance, a Warship trundles in with the first of the evening parcels traffic from the Midlands. The roof trusses are created from three laser-cut card pieces to create I beams and the cast iron arches.

BOTTOM LEFT: A Western slows as it passes the Motorail check-in. Close up of the laser-cut archway module, which is laminated back-to-back using PVA glue to create a really robust card structure for the main walls of the station.

NEAR RIGHT:

Taunton train stands at Platform 5, seen as you emerge from the ticket office entrance. The hanging curtain glazing is represented by a laser-cut, produced by a friend with a cutter from 3mm MDF, I left unglazed to improve views into the station.

FAR RIGHT: Platform 5 is bi-directional, often hosting local services arriving from the north and south west. The modular structure of the station building can be seen as you look down the length of the station.



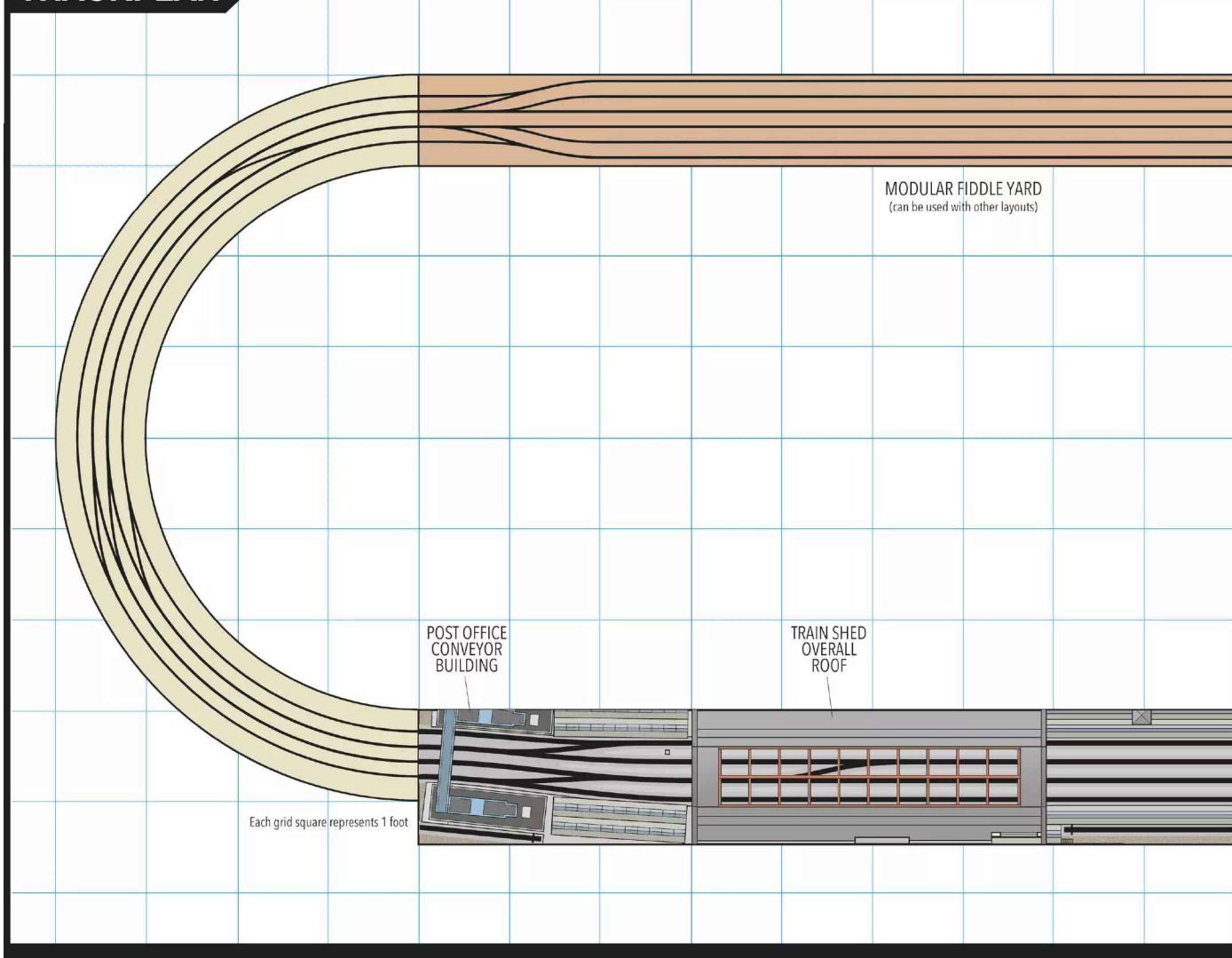
Practically, this meant I built the station from four key pieces: the wall section door left, wall door right, wall archway and roof girder. I chose to get all the buildings' components laser-cut to create the uniformity needed, supplemented with windows and doors, etc., from the excellent LCUT Creative range. A huge thank you to Martin, one of our club members, for his assistance in CAD and laser-cutting a number of items from my less-than-helpful sketches!

Modularisation

The other buildings were scratch-built with reference to photos. The chain conveyor bridge, which connected the platforms to the Post Office sorting office and the signal box, were built from Plastikard. Some other laser-cut kits for the crew mess room, and the LCUT platform canopy components came in handy to finish off the scene.

Modularisation is a theme underneath the skin of the whole layout, from the way the buildings were designed and built to the baseboards and even the way the DCC control system is built up and reused across several layouts.

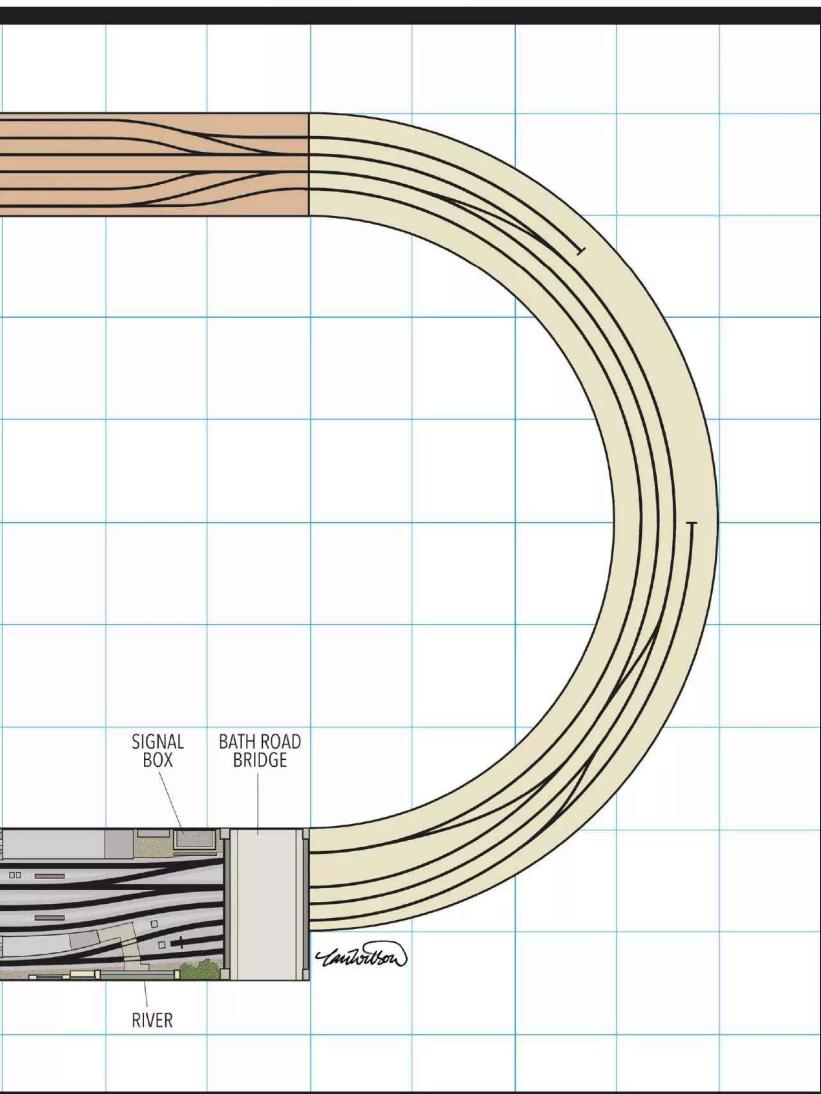
TRACKPLAN





'Bristol Avon Bridge' shares its fiddle yards with my other exhibition layout, 'Bere Banks'. This modular use of fiddle yard boards allows me to swap different scenic sections in, without all the time and expense of building new fiddles each time. Using well designed and engineered baseboards, by Tim Horn, makes construction and setting up the layouts incredibly easy, as everything effortlessly fits together.

A big learning from my first layout is the need to focus on portability. Including fiddle yards, it all fits in a medium-sized van, contained in four crates. Using those packing crates, instead of legs, makes set-up easier and very stable. Each section is only 3ft long, light enough to handle easily and can be moved around the house through doors, etc., without damaging them, the house or me. The shorter sections have made an incredible difference in handling compared to the first layouts' heavier and longer boards. A lightweight modular design means that Sarah, my wife, and I can get the layout out of the van, set up and the first train running in about an hour.



Keith (left) with Alan Barrow part of the regular operating team and electrics trouble shooter!

About the modeller

Name: Keith Sully

Number of years modelling: 30+ years

First layout: 'Bere Banks', based on Bere Alston, Devon.

Favourite era/region: 1970s Western Region and the "Withered Arm" of Devon and Cornwall.

Favourite Loco: HSTs iconic trains!

Living in Devon, I have a particular interest in the old routes covered by the LSWR and the legacy they left behind, as I model in the eras I remember through the '70s into the '90s.

My experience and confidence in modelling has really benefited from being part of a small club and the advice and encouragement that group gives me. Best advice I have received, "is give it a go", build a kit, weather a wagon, you will surprise yourself with what you can achieve.



ABOVE: Baby Warship, Class 22, trundles under the Bath Road bridge with vans from the West Country. Looking weary as it approaches the end of its short life as a non-standard class, I create a world-worn look with fairly light weathering, sometimes as simple as using matt varnish to take the shine off.

MIDDLE RIGHT: The Severn Beach bubble car sits patiently in the bay next to the Post Office chain conveyor, which whisks mail sacks across the lines to the sorting office behind the station.

BOTTOM RIGHT: A Western pulls up on Platform 3 with a northbound service from Penzance.



On show

DCC control is a boon for a layout like 'Bristol Avon Bridge'; it allows lots of operating flexibility. Many locos have sound. Part of the design was to be able to enjoy an HST or the Pullman set pull away from platform 3, the first power car roaring past you, with trailing power car echoing through the train shed as it accelerates for London, while locos on the avoiding lines burble, waiting their turn!

It is great when visitors at shows ask questions or share their experiences of Bristol with us, and it has helped refine how we operate the layout.

All that talking at shows does mean we get a bit distracted from running the trains, but automation is now helping us to put on a better show. I'm currently experimenting with using DCCconcepts Zen shuttles to enable DMUs to ply their trade in and out of the bay or the platform faces. Two operators can now have five trains moving, and they only need to concentrate on two of them. First results from the Bristol Exhibition are encouraging; hopefully, more interest for the spectators while operators concentrate on one task rather than many.

Platform 3 generally runs "up" to London, and platform 5 handles the "down" and Cardiff/Portsmouth trains. The associated signalling is partially-automated, using infrared sensors to change signals to danger as trains pass. Peco micro-switches

on the point motors add a little bit of logic, which also sets them to danger when points are set against a route. Thanks to Train-Tech, who was a huge help in setting up the signalling.

Following the modular approach, each baseboard is self-contained for point and signal control. Each board has a mini control panel for the points and signals on it, which creates a bit of leg work behind the scenes to set up a route, but a compromise that has kept wiring simple and operators slightly fitter!

I learnt that “resistance is useless”, to quote the Vogons. When the layout was first put up in the round, trains were sluggish, and points failed to throw? Very confusing, especially when each board worked perfectly when tested individually or in pairs. What I hadn’t accounted for was the resistance in the long runs of wire, once everything was connected! The solution required replacing the original DCC bus and point control with heavier gauge wire - an expensive and time-consuming error with 600ft+ of wire to be replaced. Investing in a high-quality CDU unit from DCCconcepts has also greatly improved the reliability of the fiddle yard as well.

Rolling stock

When you see us at exhibitions, we will be running one of three time periods, either early-'70s, the '80s, or early-'90s.

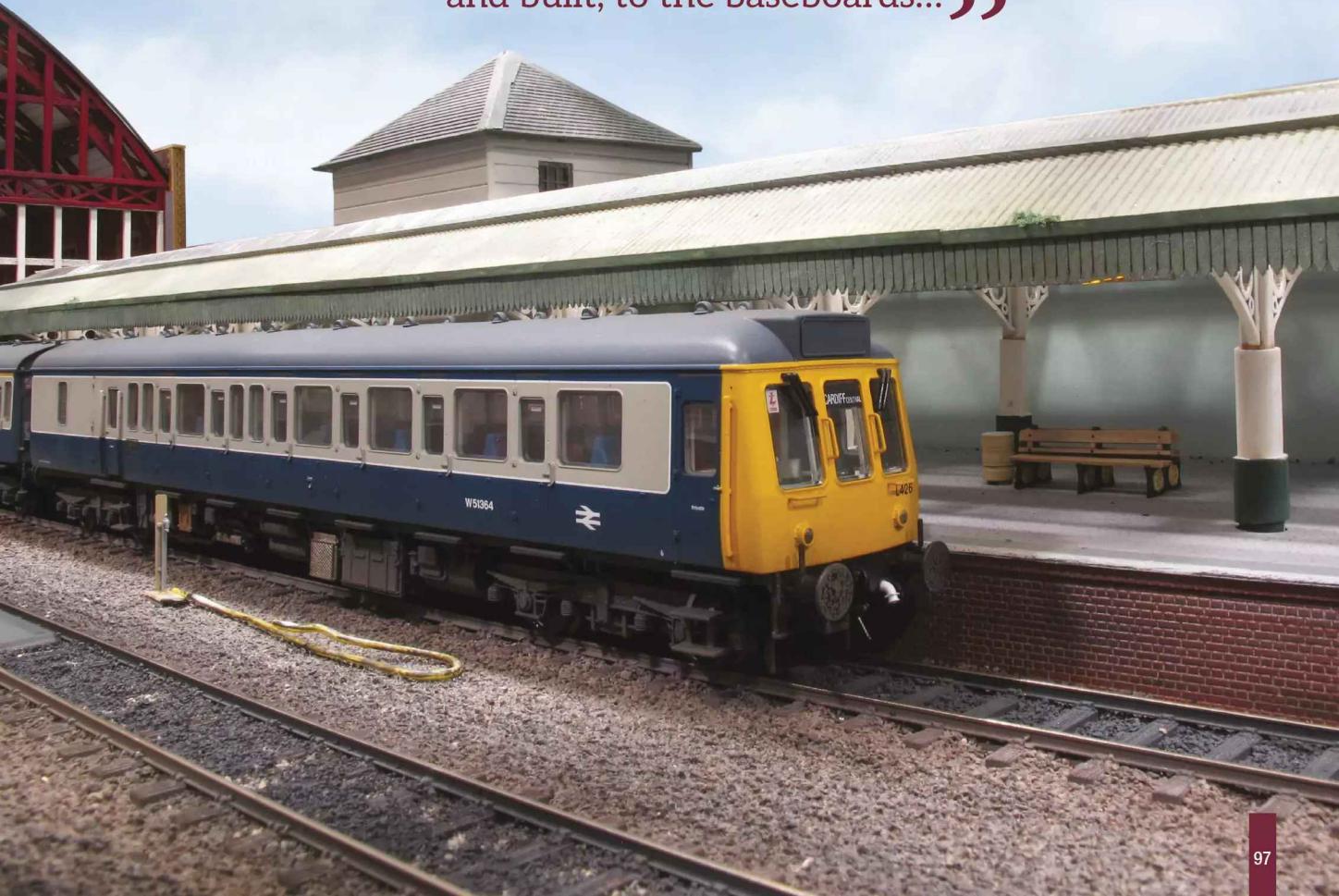


TOP RIGHT: A Peak and Class 40 await their turn to take the evening parcels north. Bristol had a surprising diversity of motive power allocated to Bath Rd Depot in the 1970s.

MIDDLE RIGHT: The Western Region Pullman set pulls in ECS, ready for the evening service back to Paddington. The Bath Road ARP-style signal box in the background is so iconic that I had to move it so I had an excuse to model it.

BELOW: A Class 117 is waiting to return to Taunton on the local stopper. All the canopies and lift buildings were scratch-built from card and Plastikard.

“ Modularisation is a theme underneath the skin of the whole layout, from the way the buildings were designed and built, to the baseboards... ”





A long shot looking through the “new” shed, towards Bath Rd. I chose to simplify the roof structure with the central section removable to clean the track and allow operators to see into the station.

MIDDLE RIGHT:

A Western storms in with a service from Plymouth, looking quite careworn in the twilight of its career. All stock is weathered to look like it is working for a living. The crew room in the background nods to Bath Road Depot.



BOTTOM RIGHT:

Newspapers were important for Bristol, with a WH Smith distribution depot under the station. In the background is a Mk. 1 BG modified for this purpose with sorting tables across sealed doors. GPO alongside BR's own parcels service vans, possibly the last “common carrier” duty for BR.



The variety of trains that have passed through Bristol over the years is enormous, and the proximity of Bristol Bath Road depot meant that many long-distance services changed locos and certainly crew well into the diesel eras.

In that early-'70s era, you will be able to watch Westerns, Warships and Hymeks ply their trade on regional and London services with a mix of Mark 1 and 2 coaches. The short-lived Western Pullman set is seen a couple of times a day from or up to London. A variety of first-generation multiple units bustle around with the local services, Severn Beach, into the West Country or to South Wales. The Portsmouth service, with a Hymek in charge, will run around its coaches in platform 5. In the summer, particularly, Motorail trains can be seen heading north or south. You might even see the car flats marshalled to load or unload in the bay.

Freight periodically arrives in the avoiding lines - clay hoods on their way to the Potteries or Far North, or mixed freights with a variety of locos in charge, including Peaks and Class 37s travelling up from Cornwall.

As the evening unfolds, long-distance postal services arrive, often swapping locomotives. As the night heads towards sunrise, the newspapers start to arrive, often in aging Siphons.

TOP RIGHT: Class 40 sits waiting for its next turn to take it back north, as the local from Weston Super Mare terminates in the bay.

MIDDLE RIGHT: Bath Road Bridge forms the scenic break, made from a bow girder laser-cut kit, with the distinctive steel plates formed from Plastikard and strip. The bolt plates came out of my scrap box from a discontinued Airfix kit.

BELOW: View from the top deck of the bus to Bath, though why you wouldn't take the train is beyond me?

You can see 'Bristol Avon Bridge' in action at Redditch on March 7-8th, Exeter on July 11-12th and Taunton on October 24-25th.



All the stock is lightly weathered. The subtle variations and muted tones, I think, allow the viewer to be transported back in time to watch trains go by.

Where a loco change is required, or a rake is to be split or combined, hands-free shunting uses Kadee couplings, with permanent magnets buried in the ballast. Passenger rakes, which are run in fixed formations, have West Hill Wagon Works Hunt magnetic couplings.

The coach and parcels stock has been refined through weathering, using close couplings combined with York Modelmaking's paper corridor bellows, with curtains/blinds added and interiors painted. It may seem odd to spend so much time on the interiors of coaching stock, "which nobody sees", but I feel there is a great deal of value in the detail that perhaps you only unconsciously observe as you look into a scene. That bit of colour from the cushions or curtains helps them look better, even if your eyes don't focus on the detail.

I'm particularly pleased with being able to run trains that look like they are working for a living, with weathering being consistent with the overall layout's care-worn feel. Feedback from shows suggests creating an impression of Bristol, its train shed, Post Office conveyor buildings and Bath Road's signal box, has been a success, and hopefully proves that even when simplifying a model, it can still be recognisable. ■

“As the evening unfolds, long distance postal services arrive, often swapping locomotives. As the night heads towards sunrise, the newspapers start of arrive, often in aging Siphons. ”



LNER MOTIVE POWER - THE SUPPORTING CAST

By J Crosse

It is the same almost everywhere you look, plenty of information about the star of the show, but with ever-decreasing amounts about the supporting cast, depending on how far down the pecking order they come.

On the London & North Eastern Railway, there was no doubt about the star of their show being the A4 Pacifics and most noticeably *Mallard*, the world speed record holder for steam motive power. Unusually, it did have to vie for attention with what is now possibly the best known steam engine in the world, A3 *Flying Scotsman*, however. With two superstars in the cast, any other classes of loco were always going to struggle to have a high profile, especially as the LNER, but

more so BR Eastern Region, also had the excellent A1s and the lower-profile A2s to complete its express fleet. Having over 200 4-6-2s at its disposal, it is perhaps unsurprising that the publicity machine rarely promoted the virtues of the passenger train support team, which in the case of the LNER were the V2 2-6-2s, which were almost as numerous as the aforementioned Pacifics. The only time that the V2s had their public profile enhanced was when the first of the class, 4771 *Green Arrow*, was used at the head of a prestige new freight service from Kings Cross to Glasgow in the 1930s, yet within the operating department the class was appreciated very much for its ability to stand in for almost any loco on main line duties, from an A4 downwards.

One of the small number of V2s that had a double chimney in BR times was 60902, seen in charge of a typical freight duty at Grove Road near Retford.

P Hughes/Colour-Rail.com



Like their illustrious cousins, the A3s and A4s, the V2s were three-cylinder machines designed by Nigel Gresley, and there were many similarities in the specifications of the three types, with the first V2s entering service around the same time as the A4s. In BR times, an Ian Allan ABC showed the power classification of a V2 as 7P/6F, putting them on a par with the much higher-profile Castles, Royal Scots and West Countries (all of which the V2 was heavier than, including the Kings!), no doubt because each of these was promoted as a front line passenger type rather than a goods engine that could be used for passenger work, as in the case of the V2s.

The origins of the V2 design, however, were rooted in the K3 2-6-0, which was, at the time, the most modern of the LNER freight types. Various proposals had been put forward for the next generation of freight engine, including one having an articulated tender with one pair of wheels being under the loco cab and the other under the front of the tender, perhaps best described as a

2-6-4-4! Despite the primary requirement being for a mixed traffic engine, there was also a proposal to streamline the class to look like a smaller version of the A4. Possibly practicality and potential cost intervened to the extent that these ideas were never pursued. The selected design later came to be the starting point for the A2/1 Pacifics that were built during World War II, with the final four locos on order being cancelled and built to the A2/1 design instead. The basic dimensions were as follows:- three 18 1/2in x 26in cylinders with Walschaerts/Gresley valve gear having 9in piston valves. The boiler had a wide firebox as opposed to the traditional 'narrow' design applied to previous mixed traffic engines, with a working pressure of 220lb/sq in, leading wheels of 3ft 2in diameter, drivers at 6ft 2in and the trailing wheels being 3ft 8in diameter. The tractive effort came in at 33,730 lb and the weight was 93t 2cwt. A 4200-gallon six-wheeled tender could accommodate 7t 10cwt of coal, weighing in at 51t exactly, although both official weights were revised upwards in 1938.



An initial order was placed for just 15 engines, with just the first five (4771-5) being built at Doncaster and entering traffic in 1936. These engines were at first allocated numbers in accordance with the old LNER practice of filling gaps, these being 637/9/40/64/70, and indeed 4771 did actually receive the number 637 but did not run as such. As we shall see, the class leader was allocated no fewer than five different numbers over the years. Further construction overlapped between Doncaster and Darlington, with Doncaster being responsible for 4843-52 plus 3655-64, which meant that Darlington built most of the class with the complete number series being 4771-4899 and 3655-95, with the former being the longest uninterrupted number series on the LNER before the new schemes of 1946, and requiring the renumbering of J54 4800 and Y1s 4801-3 to achieve it. Unlike many other classes, construction continued apace through the war years except for a few months in 1942 and was completed in 1944, this no doubt being partially down to the fact that the design was extremely successful and appropriate to wartime conditions when fast lightweight trains were replaced by slower but much heavier duties, with V2s being attributed with several feats of keeping 20-coach passenger trains on the move. Their 6ft 2in driving wheels also made them equally suited to the relatively flat East Coast lines south of Newcastle, as well as the more heavily graded lines north thereof. Their only challenge was the axle loading, which determined that, with a route availability of 9, they were confined to the same lines as their Pacific cousins.

Like most classes, some changes were made along the way. As-built, the class had a one-piece cylinder block and, while this was lighter than would have been the case with three castings and also reduced the possibility of steam links at the joints, it later proved to be a liability in that if there was a problem with one cylinder then the whole block had to be replaced, and thus in later years, starting at the end of 1955, approaching half of the class received the separate castings during overhaul, but the demise of steam caught up, and the rest were not altered. Indeed, even in the early years of the class, the cylinder block was prone to cracking, leading to design changes.

From 1942, the V2s were painted all-over black, initially with LNER lettering but later just NE on the tender. While after the war it was intended that they revert to green, only one engine was so painted. Apparently, just ex-works and with LNER restored to its black livery, we see 4884 at Hatfield in August 1946. **E D Bruton/Colour-Rail.com**



An exhibition of various items of LNER motive power was held at New Barnet in 1937, with V2 4771 *Green Arrow* being one of the main exhibits, as seen here. **Colour-Rail.com**



More typical of everyday appearance is this view of 4800, one of the Darlington-built machines, seen at Haymarket in September 1938, although it had only been in service for five months at that time. **L Hanson/Colour-Rail.com**



The pony truck had Gresley's patent swing link suspension, despite the fact that this had been abandoned on the Pacifics as early as 1931. After the war, the V2s were involved in several incidents, most of which were attributed to the poor condition of the track due to lack of maintenance, but it was also noted that the swing link bogies did not perform well in such conditions, and thus it was decided to test fit a class member with spring side control instead. Initially, laminated springs were used, but the specification later changed to the helical variety. That being done, it was decreed that the whole class be so modified, but that took over five years to implement. Post-war conditions included having to make do with poorer quality coal, leading to a build-up of char in the smokebox. Over the years, numerous experiments and modifications were tried to allow good steaming in combination with the fitting of self-cleaning apparatus, the latter often causing a deterioration in steam-raising capability. Whilst most changes would not be discernible, eternally one that was, was the trial of Kylchap cowlings in combination with a double chimney and 60858/62/80/1, 60902/3 ran as such, being modified in 1960/1. Previously, 60817 and 60963 had been fitted with Royal Scot-type double chimneys, but these proved to be no more effective than the single chimneys - it was the double Kylchaps that turned those V2s so fitted into the equal of the Pacifics. Two other V2s had visible chimney modifications, 60854 being fitted with a copper-capped chimney in October 1952. This earned the 'wrath of management' and it was removed in December, never to be seen again. The other engine was 60813, which received a 'half-moon'-shaped deflector and had the rim of its chimney removed, giving the appearance of having a mini stovepipe fitting, and that stayed with the loco until the end. It should be noted that several different designs of tender were used with the V2s and were interchangeable.

Reference was made earlier to the numbers carried initially, with the first plan being to continue with 'filling the gaps', which changed to the use of two blocks of numbers. In 1946, the LNER embarked on a new numbering system with the V2s being allocated the range 700-883. These, though, were not in strict numerical order, after 4898, which was to be 827 in the first 1946 scheme, as 828-37 had been 3655-64, 838 was ex-4898 and 839-883 were formerly 3641-54/65-95. The new scheme lasted but three months, however, in that time some 20 engines received the new numbers before it was decided



Following trials with various hues of blue and green, the newly formed British Railways decided that the good old standby, black, would be applied to all but express passenger engines, and that for mixed traffic types they could be lined out. Some very early applications saw this livery being used with the full British Railways lettering on the tender, as carried by 60835 at York in 1949. E Sanderson/Colour-Rail.com



In 1953, *Merchant Navy* 35020 suffered a broken crank axle leading to the temporary withdrawal of the class. A number of engines were loaned to the Southern Region to help out, including eight V2s. 60893 is seen at the head of the *Bournemouth Belle* at Bournemouth Central on May 23rd. R Broughton/Colour-Rail.com



Pictures of the V2s carrying a post-1946 renumbering guise are few and far between, but here we see 891, which was previously 4892 and was renumbered in December 1946. This was the second new number allocated, but the short-lived 791 from the first 1946 scheme was not applied to this engine. Colour-Rail.com



Lined black, but with the lion and wheel emblem, was the official livery until 1956, when rules were relaxed and the V2s were able to have lined green instead. Of course, repainting took some time to be completed and black persisted for a number of years. 60851 is seen still adorned in June 1957 at Dalmeny. **E Blakey/Colour-Rail.com**

that instead the range should be 800-983, which in BR times became 60800-60983. However, as the two 1946 schemes had overlapping number series, the numbers 805/9/71 were each carried by two engines and in the case of the numbers 809 and 871, both engines carried the same number in the same month.

In theory, livery application was simple, being LNER green from new, but that applied only to the engines built before 1941. Thereafter, plain black was applied to both new builds and repainted engines. However, for the green livery, there were differences between the style applied at Doncaster and Darlington, while the black initially had LNER applied on the tender, that later became just NE. The post-war intention was that the engines should revert to LNER apple green, but only 883 was so treated and even that reverted to black. In British Railways times, the specified livery was lined black, which lasted until December 1956, when engines started to appear in BR lined green, and eventually all members were so treated. As already noted, the first of the class was named *Green Arrow*, this originally being applied with a curved nameplate fitted on the running plate, but this was changed to a straight plate on the side of the smokebox. It would seem that there was no intention to name all of the class, but with all of the Pacifics that were in service prior to World War 2 carrying a name, possibly the LNER decided that if a case was made for a particular subject to be marked with a naming, the only course was to apply that



Many enthusiasts were surprised to see a number of V2s on the scrap lines at Swindon Works in 1964, apparently brought there because their tenders were required for conversion to snowploughs. 60964 is at the head of the queue for scrapping. **R Tibbits/Colour-Rail.com**

to a V2. As it was, six apparently-randomly selected engines (4780, 4806/18/31/43/4) were named before 1939 using curved plates, these being four with military connections and two schools, each having a naming ceremony at an appropriate station, or, in one case, in Doncaster Works yard. Apparently, at least 4804 was also in line to be named, but the war intervened. One naming took place in the BR era, that being of 60964 in April 1958. When approached, the headmaster of Newcastle Grammar refused to have his school's name applied to a locomotive!

The V2s could be seen across the LNER network and thus working on the three regions that incorporated parts of the LNER at Nationalisation in 1948. From the very beginning, engines had been allocated across the three areas, with what became the Eastern Region always having the lion's share until dieselisation set in, while the Scottish Region had the least, the 1948 figures being Eastern 83, North Eastern 68 and Scottish 33. In 1954, sheds having 10 or more were Kings Cross (11), New England (23), Doncaster (21), York (30), Gateshead (12), Heaton (17), St Margarets (17), Dundee (12) and Aberdeen (10). In 1961, while the distribution in England had changed little, in Scotland, St Margarets had amassed 28 at the expense of the other sheds, except Perth, which gained a late allocation of three. An unusual fact about the V2s was that there were very few transfers between the three areas.

Modelling standard lined green but also the nameplate-style fitted to the V2s, we see 60835 *The Green Howard* at Haymarket shed. **Colour-Rail.com**





A model V2 in OO Gauge, built from a Nu-Cast/Comet combination by Tony Wright and painted by Ian Rathbone.

At nationalisation, the Great Central route was part of the LNER and a small number of V2s saw use on those services, but in 1958 the line was put under the control of the Midland Region and the V2s moved as well, there being seven at Leicester, three at Woodford and three at Neasden. The Midland contrived to move most back to other former LNER areas, but 60815/63/90 remained at Leicester, only to become early withdrawal victims in April 1962. Indeed, the class could be encountered in many places over the years, from Aberdeen to London on Eastern metals, but they rarely ventured into former Great Eastern territory (the reason being that most of the ex-GE system was only RA8), with only March seeing occasional visits. During the period when the Peaks were being bedded-in on North East to South West trains, arrivals at Birmingham New Street were quite common, and a couple even made it as far west as Bristol. In Scotland, they were regular visitors to Carlisle via the Waverley route, but they also had some duties for a while that took them onto former Glasgow & South Western metals. The Southern Region was also briefly a home for a handful of V2s, this being in 1953 when the Merchant Navies were temporarily withdrawn due to a crank axle failure on 35020. Six were transferred to the Southern and worked from Nine Elms, primarily on Bournemouth line duties, including the Bournemouth Belle. All returned home within two months. Not to be outdone, the Western Region had 60845 for a number of months in 1952/3 when it was based at Swindon for steaming modifications and trials. Ironically, the works became the final resting place for some of the class. This came about as the tenders had been selected for conversion to snowploughs, so both engine and

tender were sent to Swindon, with the former being cut up in C Shop at the works in 1964.

184 V2s were constructed, with the final five entering service in 1944 and the class remained intact at December 31st, 1961, but in 1962, 69 were withdrawn, with another 43 in 1963. At the end of 1965, just 15 remained, and the end came with the condemnation of 60831/6 in December 1966, but early withdrawal 60800 had been put aside to be part of the National Collection, having enjoyed being based at Kings Cross shed throughout. Unlike some engines designated for a life in a museum, the loco was quickly restored to pristine condition in April 1963, but remained in the paint shop at Doncaster Works until October 1964. Thereafter, it led a nomadic existence, moving to store in Hellifield shed. A new life apparently beckoned in 1967 when it was offered a place in the yet to be built Municipal Museum at Leicester, pending which it had moved to the former shed at Wigston. Its museum place failed to materialise, and with Wigston shed scheduled for demolition, it moved once more to the former Pullman Car shops at Preston Park, Brighton. 1971 saw it formally accepted to be part of the new National Railway Museum collection, but a decision was taken that, in the guise of 4771, it should return to main line duties and it was moved to Norwich for preparation and made a trial run on March 28th, 1973, to Ely, ironically a line from which it had been barred during its BR life. Since that time, it has spent much time in action and was repainted as 60800. It is currently out of use, with an obstacle to returning to service being the one-piece cylinder block, which is apparently now in need of replacement. ■



Green Arrow was selected to join the National Collection, and after a number of years in store, it returned to action and is seen in its 4771 guise at Kents Bank in September 1976. Colour-Rail.com



Recreating former glory, 60800 *Green Arrow* blasts past Green End on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway with a rake of Pullman stock on April 24th, 2005. [P Chancellor/Colour-Rail.com](http://P-Chancellor/Colour-Rail.com)

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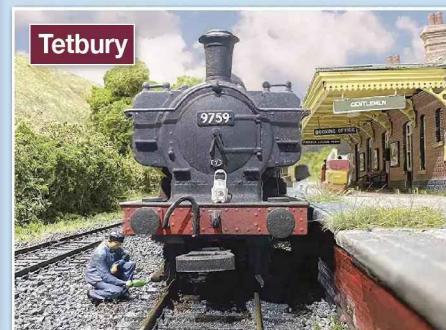
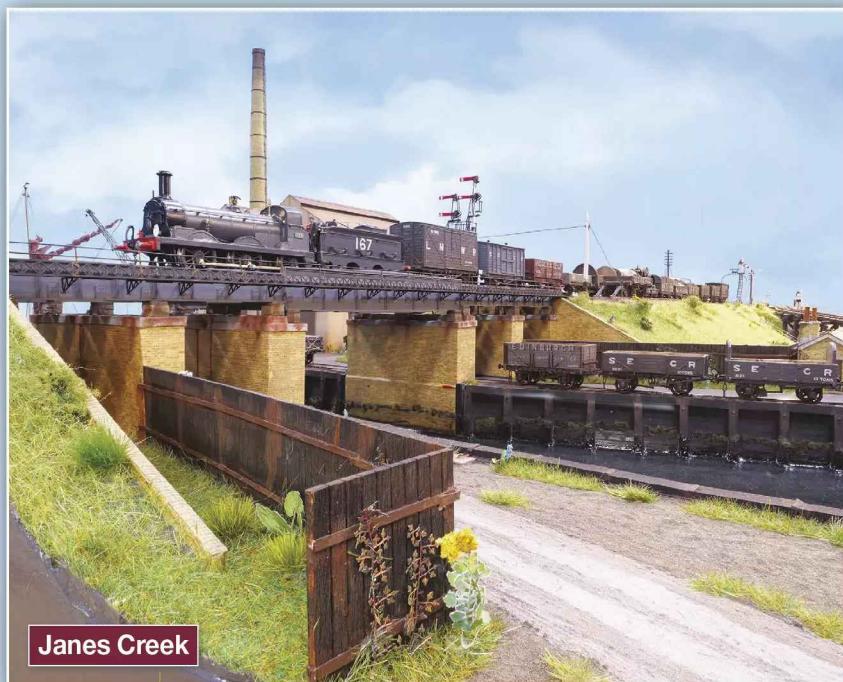
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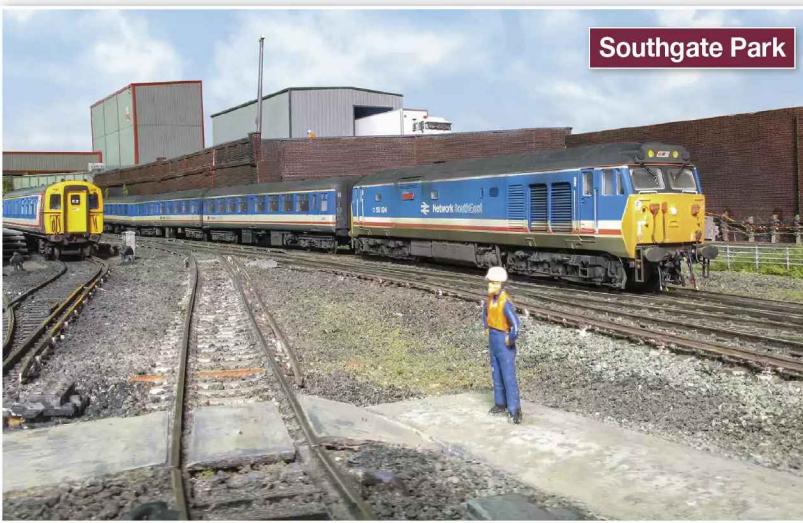
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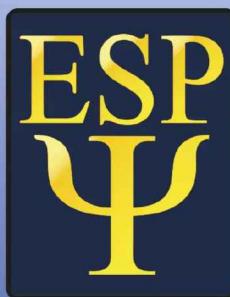
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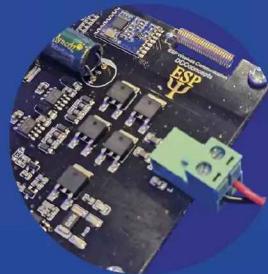


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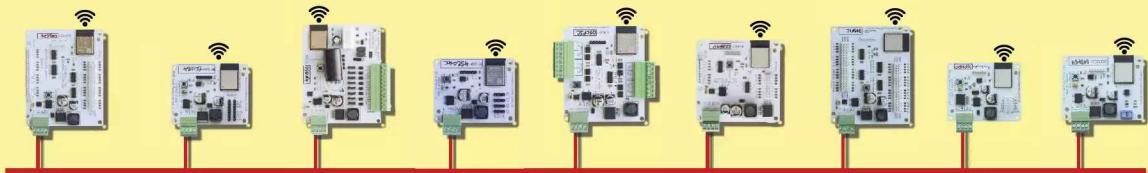
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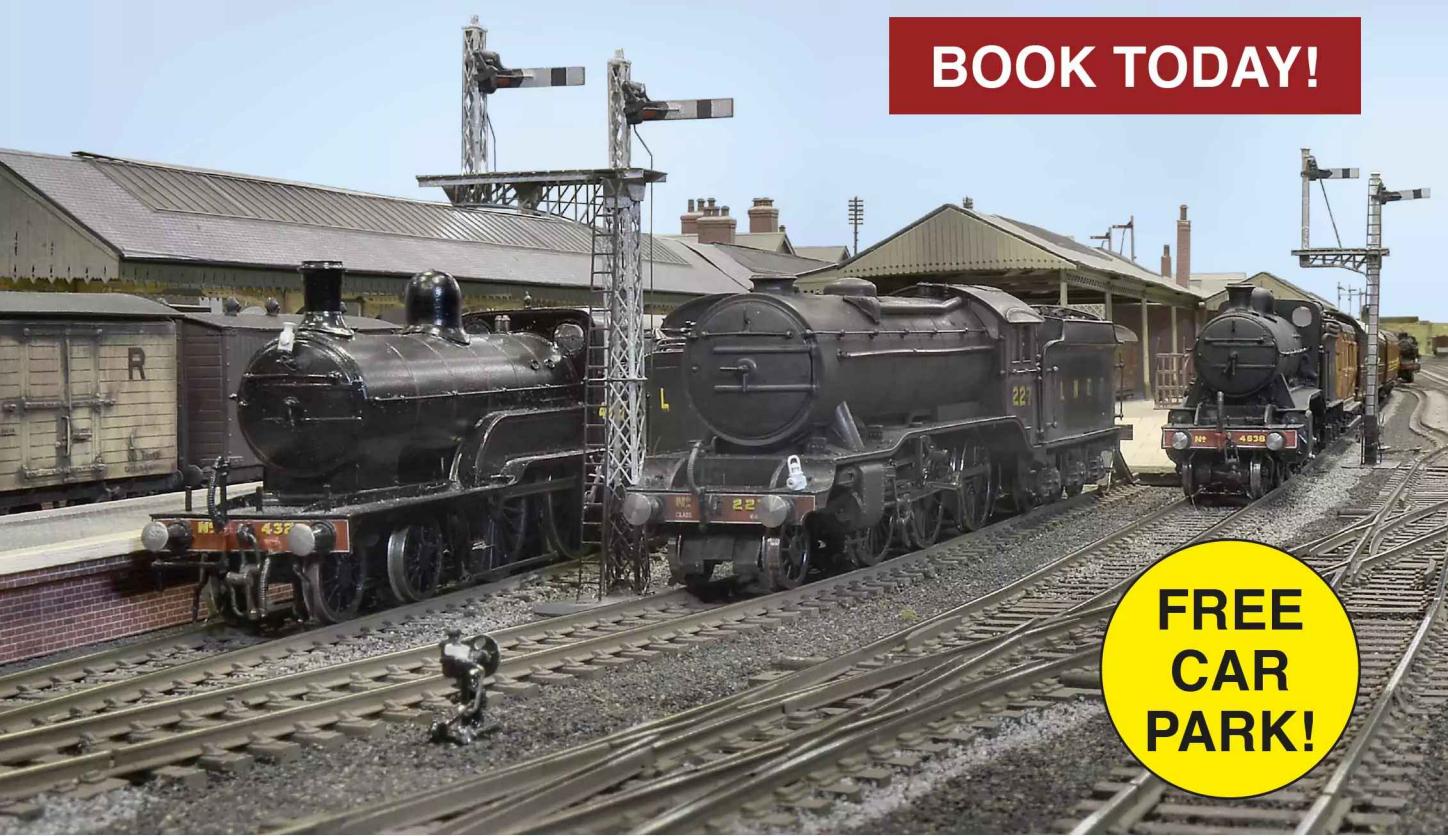
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Hornby 2026 Announcements

It's January, which means Hornby is making its new OO gauge model announcements for the year ahead. Here are some of the highlights...



Steam locomotives

A new tooling of the Rebuilt Merchant Navy Pacific leads the line up, with the preserved mainline performer *Clan Line* 35028 arriving with a diecast body in DC and Steam Generator versions.

30 of the class were rebuilt by British Railways and they were reliable top link locomotives, with 11 surviving into preservation.

New liveries and Steam Generator upgrades feature in a number of new releases.

Other steam locomotives

- BR Rebuilt Merchant Navy 35028 *Clan line* Preserved - £249.99 (£329.99 Steam Generator) – Expected TBC
- BR Class 5MT Early BR 45055 - £249.99 (£329.99 Steam Generator) – Expected June 2026
- LNER Blue A4 Class *Mallard* 4468 with Steam Generator (Die-cast body) - £389.99 – Expected October 2026
- BR Class A4 *Seagull* 60033 with Steam Generator (Die-cast body) - £389.99 – Expected October 2026
- BR Green Early Royal Scot Class *Royal Scot* 46100 - £239.99 – Expected May 2026
- BR Green Late Battle of Britain Class Rebuilt 303 Squadron 34053 - £249.99 Expected July 2026
- BR Black Early Class 9F 92031 - £259.99 – Expected June 2026
- LNER Green Class P2 *Mons Meg* 2004 - £279.99 – Expected October 2026
- BR Green Early Castle Class *Spitfire* 5071 – £229.99 – Expected July 2026
- SECR Lined Green H Class 161 - £159.99 – Expected April 2026
- BR Black Late B12 Class 61516 - £239.99 - Expected June 2026
- LNER Green B12 Class 8572 - £239.99 - Expected June 2026
- BR Black Early K1 Class 62046 - £217.99 – November 2026

Hornby will be making further new OO announcements as well as additions to its TT:120 Range throughout the year.



- LNER Class K12005 - apple green as preserved - £217.99 – Expected November 2026
- BR Green Class 61XX Large Prairie 6126 - £189.99 – Expected July 2026
- BR Green Late Class 5101 Large Prairie 5153 - £189.99 – Expected July 2026
- Stephenson's *Rocket* - £184.99 – Expected May 2026
- The Great Railway Engineers Collection, with figures LIMITED EDITION
- LNER Blue Class A4 *Sir Nigel Gresley* 4498 - £259.99 – Expected August 2026
- LMS Streamlined Coronation 6220 - £284.99 – Expected August 2026



Train packs/sets

Two new sets will bring value at different price points, with a BR Blue mixed traffic set arriving in July priced at £119.99 before a fully loaded Sovereign Pullman Train Set featuring A4 Sir Nigel Gresley 60007, (as preserved) with modified tooling, TXS Triplex Sound, Lighting and Steam effects arrives in September priced at £499.99.



Other sets

- NER Flying Scotsman & BR Green Pendennis Castle in Australia Twin pack - £499.99 - Expected September 2026
- BR Battle of Britain & BR West Country 60th Anniversary Twin Train Pack - £399.99 - Expected August 2026 - Club member exclusive
- East Midlands Railway HST Train pack - EMR 43274 & Intercity 43044 - £394.99 - Expected November 2026
- Virgin Class 43 HST Lady in Red Train Pack - £394.99/449.99 Sound Fitted - Expected October 2026
- Class 802-3 Hull Trains 802301 Amy Johnson 5-Car Train Pack - £549.99 - Expected December 2026

Coronation Carriages return

Hornby is releasing many coaches and wagon in new liveries, and it would be impossible to list them all here.

Of note is news that the very popular Coronation Carriages return in 2026 with a *West Riding Limited* set expected in April 2026, comprising of four articulated train packs priced at £149.99 each plus the One:One Collection Observation car priced at £81.99.

Railroad

A new tooling of the Class 60 leads the 2026 Railroad range, with popular diesel, steam, and rolling stock reappearing in new liveries. Most locos come in standard DC control or with DCC TXS Triplex Sound-Fitted options.

- Class 60 EWS 60038 Avesta Polarit - £104.99/£159.99 - Expected January 2027
- Class 60 TLF Coal Sector 60069 Humphrey Davy - £104.99/£159.99 - Expected January 2027
- Class 60 DB Rail 60039 Dove Holes - £104.99/£159.99 - Expected January 2027



Beatles

Additional rolling stock featuring Beatles Albums is expected to be very popular.

- The Beatles Please Please Me UK Album - £22.99 - Expected December 2026
- The Beatles Hard Days Night US Album - £22.99 - Expected December 2026
- The Beatles Magical Mystery Tour GUV - £34.99 - Expected December 2026

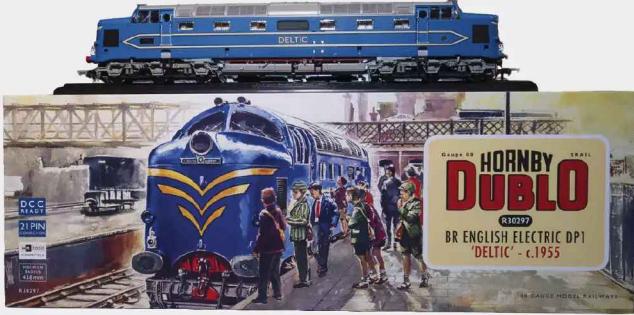
In other news, Hornby's tradition of annual wagons continues with a Merry Christmas 2026 hopper, both priced at £24.99 and No1 Dad at just £19.99, expected in April, all perfect for gifting and collecting.

Diesels and Electric

A National Railway Museum version of Deltic provides additional opportunities for modellers and collectors who missed out previously to purchase the diecast model in its retro-styled Hornby Dublo packaging.

Other highlights

- Class 56 BR Blue 56001 Sound Fitted - £294.99 - Expected June 2026
- Class 56 Transrail Dutch 56047 - Sound Fitted - £294.99 - Expected June 2026
- BR Class 10 Margaret Ethel-Thomas Alfred Naylor 10119 - £199.99 - Expected July 2026
- BR Class 08 Colchester TMD D3760 - £199.99 - Expected July 2026
- Loadhaul 88DS - 97088 - £124.99 - Expected July 2026
- 88DS Glenochil Yeast Factory - £124.99 - Expected July 2026
- LNER Class 91 - 91127 Neville Hill - £244.99 - Expected July 2026



Other highlights include

- Class 08 BR Blue 08256 - £64.99/119.99 - Expected September 2026
- Class 37 Rail Services Pegasus 37422 and Class 37 British Steel Teesside Steelmaster 37501 - £94.99/£149.99 - Expected June 2026
- Class 47 EWS Windsor Castle 47787 and Class 47 RES Atlantic Collage 47749 - £94.99/£149.99 - Expected August 2026
- Class 57 GBRf 57306 - £94.99/£149.99 - Expected January 2026
- Class 66 Freightliner 66601, EWS Class 66 Lafarge Charnwood 66022 and Colas Class 66 Louise 66790 - £94.99/£149.99 - Expected May 2026
- Class 90 BR Intercity Class Royal Scot 90001 and EWS Class 90 Collingwood 90020 - £99.99/£154.99 - Expected 2026
- Class 91 BR Intercity Robert Louis Stevenson 91018 - £99.99/£154.99 - Expected July 2026
- County Class BR Green County of Dorset 1013 - £144.99/No Sound version - Expected August 2026
- Duke - BR Green Early Duke of Gloucester 71000 - £219.99/£274.99 - Expected November 2026
- Jinty - Hart and Weaver Limited - £69.99 - Expected July 2026
- GNR N2 1606 - £139.99 - Expected December 2026

THE LATEST HEADLINES



Dapol reveals B17 decorated samples

Progress on its N Gauge LNER B17 4-6-0 project has been revealed, confirming receipt of decorated sample models.

The initial decorated samples cover a broad range of historically appropriate liveries spanning LNER and British Railways eras. Proposed releases include LNER apple green, North Eastern unlined black, British Railways apple green, and BR late and early crest finishes. A special Easterling set will pair a BR early crest B17 with matching Gresley Carmine and Cream coaches.

The B17 models are scheduled for shipment to the UK in Q3 2026. Pricing is set at a recommended retail level of:

- £151.20 for the DCC-ready version

- £189.00 for the DCC-fitted option
- The Easterling bookset is priced at £259.20 in DCC-ready form, rising to £297.00 for the DCC-fitted option

Models available:

- 2S-020-004 B17 Sunderland 2854 LNER Apple Green
- 2S-020-005 B17 Bradford 1667 NE Unlined Black
- 2S-020-006 B17 Sheffield Wednesday 61661 British Railways Apple Green
- 2S-020-007 B17 Huddersfield Town 61653 BR Late Crest
- 2S-020-008 B17 Easterling Set 61669 BR Early Crest and four Gresley Carmine & Cream Coaches

Return of Caledonian Sleeper Mk. 5 coaches

Accurascale has announced a new production run of its popular Caledonian Sleeper Mk. 5 coaches in OO, this time offered individually with new running numbers.

The most-requested rerun in the company's history, the coaches were originally released as part of Accurascale's first foray into ready-to-run coaching stock. The announcement follows recent confirmation of further Caledonian-themed traction, including a new batch of Class 92 electric locomotives and the all-new Class 73/9 electro-diesel, providing renewed context for the reappearance of the distinctive CAF-built stock.



The returning Mk. 5 coaches are finished in the contemporary Caledonian Sleeper blue and teal livery, accurately replicating the appearance of the vehicles as introduced from 2019 onwards. All models carry newly applied running numbers not previously used in the earlier production run, enabling modellers to supplement existing formations or assemble complete new rakes without duplication.

As with the original release, the Mk. 5 coaches are produced to Accurascale's established specification standard and include separately-fitted etched-metal and fine plastic detail components, fully detailed interiors, wand-controlled interior lighting suitable for DC and DCC operation and painted wheel faces and axles running in brass bearings to reduce rolling resistance.

For the first time, the Mk. 5 coaches will be sold in single-car packs, priced from £59.45 per vehicle. Accurascale is offering multibuy discounts of 10% on purchases of two to four coaches, rising to 15% on orders of five or more.

The models will be available exclusively from Accurascale, with pre-orders now open. Production is scheduled to commence following completion of the company's Mk. 2 coach programme in 2026, with delivery currently planned for Q1 2027.



Accurascale unveils newly-tooled Class 73/9

Accurascale's next addition to its Exclusives range is a newly-tooled model of the rebuilt Wabtec/GB Railfreight Class 73/9 electro-diesel locomotive in 4mm scale.

The model has been developed following extensive research and a licensing agreement with GB Railfreight and is designed to address a long-standing gap in the ready-to-run market for modern locomotives.

The first production run covers locomotives from both the GBRf and Caledonian Sleeper fleets, with tooling specific to each era of condition. Early and current-condition variants are included.

Each locomotive is modelled with features unique to its period, including differences in front-end layout, cab window arrangements, lighting, snowplough types, third-rail equipment and bodyside ventilation.

Accurascale highlights that the tooling for the Class 73/9 is among its most complex to date, incorporating multiple body shells, cab fronts, roof configurations, fuel tank variations, exhaust arrangements and underframe equipment. The tooling aims to replicate the distinctive engineering changes applied during the rebuild programme, such as updated cooling systems, revised electrical equipment and the MTU 8V4000R43L engine installation used on the 11 locomotives being modelled.

Models will be available in both DC/DCC-ready and factory-fitted DCC sound formats. As with the rest of the Exclusives range, releases are direct-to-customer and include a lifetime warranty, free UK delivery and loyalty points on all orders.

The Class 73/9 range is available to pre-order now, exclusively through the Accurascale website.

- DC/DCC-ready: £179.99
- DCC sound-fitted: £279.99

Buy any two locomotives and receive 10% off. Delivery is currently scheduled for Q4 2026.

GB Railfreight releases:

- 73962 – Early condition in GBRf blue, carrying the name *Dick Mabbutt*
- 73963 – Early condition with *Janice* nameplates and full Europorte branding
- 73961 – Current 2024 condition, including Network Rail monitoring bracket
- 73965 – Current condition, named *Des O'Brien* with updated GBRf branding

Caledonian Sleeper releases:

- 73967 – Early Mk. 5 condition with drop-head Dellner coupler and split snowploughs
- 73968 – Early Mk. 5 condition with matching Dellner and snowplough arrangement
- 73966 – Current condition with third-rail equipment removed and revised bodyside grilles
- 73970 – Current condition, named *W. S. Sellar*, with updated roof and bodyside features



Rapido Trains UK announces its Custom Wagon Service

Rapido Trains UK, in conjunction with The Wagon Yard, has revealed that its previously trialled Custom Wagon Service is no longer a show exclusive and will now be available to everyone via a new Custom Wagon Service website.

The new service enables customers to;

- Three text templates
- Three font styles

Models feature the same level of full external, internal and underframe detail as Rapido's ready-to-run range.

Perfect for gifts, events, or never-seen-before liveries, the new Custom Wagon Service is available directly from www.customwagons.co.uk and each wagon is £50.00, with an introductory promotion on purchases of three or more.

- Create a personalised livery that will be applied to a Rapido 5 or 7 plank RCH 1907 PO Wagon
- Choose from five different liveries



New models from Rails of Sheffield announced

LMS Prototype 10000

Expected Q2 2026, the Rails exclusive Bachmann model will feature enhanced livery decoration along with separately-fitted LMS lettering and numbers, new engine room decoration, plus crew figures.

Available to pre-order now in both DCC-Ready £209.95 and DCC Sound-Fitted £339.95.

BR RTC Mk. 1 Coaches

Bachmann's colourful Derby Research Department Test Car and Laboratory Mk. 1s return with *Test Car* 5 and *Laboratory 12* exclusives. Popular with both modellers and collectors, the BSK Mk. 1 models join a range of previously-released RTC red and blue liveried locos, coaches and vans.

Both are expected Q2 2026 with an RRP of £59.95.

Terriers in new liveries

The latest surprise from Rails of Sheffield features a new batch of the very popular LBSCR A1 and A1X Terrier locomotives.

Manufactured by Dapol, the upgraded and enhanced models are now available to pre-order following a period away from the range.



Dapol seeks expression of interest

Following the recent success of its Gresley Buffet, Dapol is seeking interest in order to bring into production a newly tooled LMS 57' Suburban coach in N gauge.

The new range covers four key suburban vehicle types designed for non-corridor operation, with four liveries spanning LMS and early BR service.

Each coach carries a proposed price of £39.95, with expressions of interest now open via Dapol's website and aims to decide on production by the end of February 2026.



Liveries

- Class A1X Terrier 0-6-0T LBSCR Marsh Umber '680'
- Class A1 Terrier 0-6-0T Isle of Wight Central Railway Red '10'
- Class A1 Terrier 0-6-0T LBSCR Improved Engine Green Stepney '55'
- Class A1 Terrier 0-6-0T LBSCR Improved Engine Green Knowle '78'
- Class A1X Terrier 0-6-0T BR Lined Black Late Crest '32662'
- Class A1 Terrier 0-6-0T KESR Blue Rovenden
- Class A1X Terrier 0-6-0T Southern Railway Olive Green 'E653'

All are available in both DCC-Ready and DCC Sound-Fitted options. Pre-orders are now open via the Rails of Sheffield website, and the model is expected to arrive Q3 2026.

- DCC Ready - £139.95
- DCC Sound fitted - £239.99



Rail 200 Class 66

Locomotion Models, in collaboration with Rails of Sheffield, has announced a new addition to the Railway Icons range: two N-gauge GBRf Class 66 locomotives produced by Revolution Trains.

The models portray the locomotives 66710 and 66719 as they appeared while working on Network Rail's 2025 Inspiration exhibition train, carrying a red bodyside, grey roof, and complete GBRf and Railway 200 branding.

£159.99 - DCC-Ready

£254.95 - DCC-Sound-Fitted

Revolution reveals deco samples Class 175 and 180

Revolution Trains has unveiled the first decorated samples of its forthcoming OO gauge Class 175 Coradia and Class 180 Adelante units. The samples have undergone initial inspection, with only minor tweaks required, and the manufacturer has confirmed a pre-order deadline of January 31st, 2026. Delivery is currently scheduled for Q3 2026.

The Class 175 fleet will be available in both Arriva Trains Wales and Transport for Wales colour schemes, reflecting their two-decade career across Wales and the North West before withdrawal in late 2023.

- Arriva Trains Wales: 175008 (2-car) and 175103 (3-car)
- Transport for Wales: 175003 (2-car) and 175107 (3-car)

The Class 180 Adelante is offered in a selection of well-known inter-city liveries. Models include First Great Western and Hull Trains examples in Dynamic Lines branding, along with Grand Central sets - two of which represent named units, *William Shakespeare* (180108) and *James Herriott* (180112), the latter featuring a distinctive green stripe on one driving car.

Rails of Sheffield has commissioned two Class 180 units - 180109 and 180113 - in East Midlands Railway livery. These EMR versions are exclusive to Rails and can be pre-ordered directly from the retailer.

All units will be supplied with factory-fitted speakers, inter-car power couplers, directional headlights and tail lights, interior illumination, and door-lock lighting.



Each train requires a single 21-pin MTC decoder for DCC operation, and we can expect installation to be straightforward.

Pre-orders remain open until 31 January 2026, with delivery anticipated in Q3 2026. Pricing is as follows;

Class 175 (2-car):

- DC/DCC-ready: £225.00 (post-production MSRP £274.95)
- DCC Sound: £320.00 (post-production MSRP £369.95)

Class 175 (3-car):

- DC/DCC-ready: £270.00 (post-production MSRP £339.95)

- DCC Sound: £365.00 (post-production MSRP £434.95)

Class 180 (5-car):

- DC/DCC-ready: £350.00 (post-production MSRP £449.95)

- DCC Sound: £445.00 (post-production MSRP £544.95)



New GBR Class 800

Developed in close collaboration with the Department for Transport, the Hornby model provides a detailed and accurate representation of the new livery, which features a red, white and blue colour scheme and sharp angles to create a colourful and memorable design mirroring the Union Flag.

The Hornby GBR Class 800 model will be available for customers to purchase next year, coinciding with the introduction of the real trains onto the network.

Cavalex Models confirms Class 47 pricing

Cavalex's Class 47 project has been progressing nicely in the tooling stage to a point where the team can release the price of the loco without changing it further into the project, with the DCC Ready RRP price being set at £209.95. The price of the DCC sound-fitted versions will be £309.95.

The Class 47 has been Cavalex's largest challenge yet, with numerous bespoke tooling variations to consider across the range of the Class.

Cavalex has also released some initial livery artwork for the models, which includes some livery renders. This is for illustration purposes only and are not the final versions.



Graham Farish V2 LNER



**Tony
Wright**

My first encounter with a Graham Farish N gauge V2 was during the making of Right Track 4 DVD, 'Improving RTR Models', some 20+ years ago. I didn't think much of it, with its solid wheels, nasty skirt between the boiler's base and the running plate, and gross valve gear. I disguised the non-see-through wheels and the skirt with licks of matt black paint, but still thought it poor. After that, apart from taking the odd shots of Farish V2s on layouts (rarely close-ups), I paid the breed no heed - until now. I've just received the latest GF V2 for review, and this one is simply outstanding; brilliant, in fact!

The prototype was built at Darlington in November 1937, being the first to tow on 4,200 gallon Group Standard tender with

a high frontplate, placed further forward than on the tenders of the first V2s. Green-painted cylinder covers denote a Darlington-built V2, different from Doncaster-built ones, which had black cylinders. As one of a large class of locos that 'won the war', it lasted into 1962 under BR's ownership, by then painted in Brunswick green. At withdrawal, it was attached to a tender with a low frontplate, so take care in altering its identity should you wish (something I don't recommend because of the superlative livery application).

In all honesty, there is no comparison between this latest N Gauge V2 and its predecessor, only contrast. Scrutinising all the prototype information in my library, in just about every way, it is very accurate. The principal dimensions are spot-on, and



A full cab interior is present, but if you want the loco to go round tight curves, then the fallplate must be hinged-up.

With the fallplate up, then tighter curves are not a problem.





Was there ever a more-perfectly finished V2, in any scale?

the amount of detail in this small scale is remarkable. I particularly like the offset positions of the lubricators (something I've never considered - or even knew about - in the score of V2 models I've built in 4mm). Even the cabside cinder guards are present between the windows.

The livery application is, as already mentioned, superlative. All the lining carried by the prototype is present, even down to the black/white/black rendition on the boiler bands. The lining on the wheels is exemplary, and, correctly, the tender wheels are plain black (many LNER green locos have their tender wheels painted green, which is incorrect). Numbers and letters are perfectly-printed.

Though I don't have an N gauge layout to test locos, this one performed perfectly well on my simple test track - quiet, smooth and, no doubt, powerful as its prototype in model form. This high-tractive effort is helped by the rear drivers having traction tyres (for those who dislike this fitment, a spare pair of plain drivers is included). All the wheels are commendably fine for this small scale, as is the valve gear, which is as 'delicate' as is possible, given its potential vulnerability. I'm disappointed in the 'floppy' Cartazzi rear

truck. The frames for this should be rigid, not on a pivot, and with no gap beneath the cab. 4mm RTR abandoned this years ago (Bachmann did this on its OO gauge latest V2). The deflection is noticeable on sharp curves, or is that the reason? Speaking of sharp curves, with the fallplate between the cab and tender down, only wider radii can be negotiated. I had to flip the fallplate up, out of the way, to ensure there was no interference. Similar restrictions with regard to going round tight curves apply to the cylinder drain cocks and cab doors, which are supplied as separate items for the purchaser to fit, should he/she desire. Other separate fitments include 'proper' couplings, front guard irons and, for later depictions, an AWS bang plate.

Provision for a Next 18 decoder is in the tender, and a speaker is already fitted.

What is there left to say? A fantastic achievement in this smaller scale, and superior in appearance to many of its larger brethren. A small amount of weathering (particularly to the motion) would make it even more lifelike, as would a sprinkling of tiny lumps of real coal to hide the black 'porridge' which is in the bunker. Other than that, perfect!

FACTFILE

Models (Review item in bold):
LNER V2 4791 LNER Lined Green (Original)

LNER V2 4843 Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry LNER Lined Green

LNER V2 60845 BR Lined Black (Early Emblem)

LNER V2 60964 Durham Light Infantry BR Lined Green (Late Crest)

LNER V2 60847 St Peter's School BR Lined Green (Late Crest)

Construction: Metal chassis, plastic body

Weight: 110g

Era: 1936-1966

Price: £219.95-329.95

Minimum curves: Radius 2

Accessories: Cylinder drain cocks, cab doors, couplings, front guard irons and an AWS bang plate

WHAT WE LIKE

- ✓ Overall accuracy
- ✓ Fantastic detail
- ✓ Performance
- ✓ Beautiful livery application



The traction tyres on the rear drivers ensure good haulage capacity (as befits a V2), but a spare wheelset is provided for those who dislike such things.

Bachmann Class 69



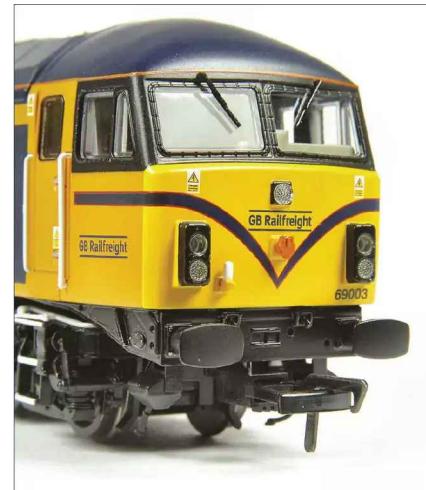
Jerry Clifford



In 2000, GB Railfreight (GBRf) bought its first Class 66s. They were deemed such a success in terms of both cost and reliability that they quickly came to dominate the company's fleet of locomotives. However, by the 2010s, GBRf's desire to continue to expand its business, combined with an inability to obtain more 66s, caused the company to look elsewhere for a solution, which manifested itself in the rebuilding of older Class 56s. Fitting them with new EMD 710 engines, control systems and cab interiors similar to those fitted to the 66s resulted in vastly improved emissions and fuel economy. To this end, 16 Class 56s were purchased in 2018, work to convert them commencing the following year by the American firm Progress Rail

at its Longport works in Stoke-on-Trent. The Class 56 bogies, wheelsets and traction motors were overhauled to an as-new condition and the bodies extensively rebuilt to accommodate the new engines and the very different air intake and exhaust arrangements. The first of the class, 69001, underwent trials on the Severn Valley Railway in the spring of 2021 and entered traffic in July that year.

The Class 69s have entered traffic in a variety of liveries, ranging from all-over black to retro BR green and large logo blue. Bachmann has followed suit with a range of models in both DCC-ready and DCC sound options. The example sent for review, 69003 *The Railway Observer*, is in GBRf blue with DMU-style speed whiskers.



The DMU-style speed whiskers and new light clusters give the old Class 56 cab a new look.



The new air intake and exhaust arrangements, necessary after the fitting of the new EMD 710 engines, on the roof of the Class 69 are superbly captured by Bachmann.





The etched bodyside grills allow a glimpse of the detailed engine room interior.



The first thing that is apparent when removing the loco from the box is its weight, a hefty 657g, which, when combined with Bachmann's standard 5 pole motor, twin flywheel and all-wheel drive, should ensure it has no problem carrying out its intended role as a heavy hauler.

Running, as expected, was smooth, steady and quiet throughout the speed range. Four screws give access to the inside, where a Plux22 DCC socket and sugar cube speaker

can be found as well as a fully detailed cab interior, which requires an aftermarket driver.

Cosmetically, Bachmann has done an excellent job. The paint job is very neatly applied with the colour boundaries being crisp and sharp. The detailing is superb with all the normal separately-applied fittings such as cab handrails neatly done. The etched roof fans and body side grills are exquisitely fine, allowing a glimpse of the detailed engine room interior, which, along

FACTFILE

Factfile (Review item in bold):

Class 69 69001 *Mayflower* GBRf (UK & US Flags)

Class 69 69005 *Eastleigh* BR Green (Late Crest) (GBRf)

Class 69 69002 *Bob Tiller CM&EE* BR Blue (Large Logo) (GBRf)

Class 69 69003 *The Railway Observer* GBRf

Class 69 69013 *Andy's Man Club* GBRf Black

Construction: Metal chassis, plastic body

Weight: 657g

Era: 2021 onwards

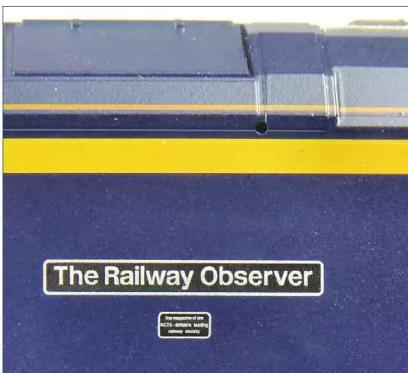
Price: £249.95-389.95

Minimum curves: Radius 2

Accessories: Etched nameplates, couplings, bash plates, pipework

WHAT WE LIKE

- ✓ Excellent performance
- ✓ Quality of finish
- ✓ Overall accuracy



The neatly printed nameplates above can be replaced with beautifully-etched examples supplied in the detailing pack.

with the cab, has separate lights that can be independently controlled on DCC. For DC users, there are three small switches under the fuel tank to allow the head, tail and cab lights to be independently controlled as outlined in the instructions provided. The box also contains a comprehensive set of additional details, including dummy couplings, coupling bash plates, and a variety of pipework, as well as some beautifully etched nameplates to replace the printed ones provided.

Overall, this is another excellent addition to Bachmann's range of modern motive power; highly recommended.



Underside view showing the three switches set into the fuel tank to allow independent control of the lights for DC users.

Hornby Branchline Freight Train Set



Steven Draper



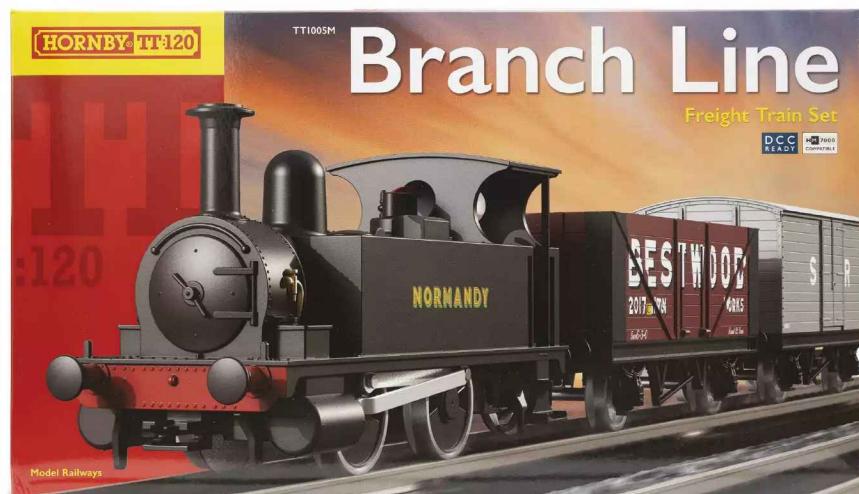
Excellent value, detail and running qualities.

Hornby has long said that the train set is the gateway into the hobby, and there's a lot of truth to that. It's often the first spark: an easy, inviting way into a world of modelling adventures that can explore all sorts of directions.

TT:120 has been conceived with newcomers and returnees in mind, people who may not have the space they once did, but still want something more substantial than N gauge. Showcasing what TT:120 can offer within a £100 set is therefore a crucial task for this new Branchline set. Creating interest, inspiration and the desire to add more will almost certainly accelerate growth in this scale. But a set full of frustration could derail much of the excellent progress made so far.



Everything you need to start playing trains is included in the set.



Is this the most perfect starter set ever?

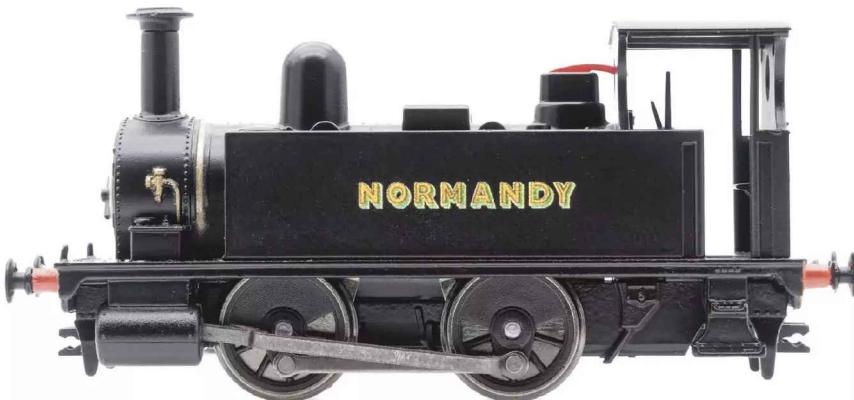
The first hint of Hornby's careful mission is the box. It's well-proportioned and efficient, clearly sized with shipping costs and modern packaging requirements in mind. It's a small detail, but it sets a sensible, well-considered tone before you even see what's inside.

Instead of the usual generic 0-4-0 that has populated OO starter sets for decades, this one has an actual prototype. The London & South Western Railway B4 Class were compact but highly capable 0-4-0 tank locomotives designed by William Adams in the late 19th century. Small, powerful for their size, and

impressively nimble, they became one of the LSWR's most successful shunting engines, lasting almost until the end of the steam era. *Normandy* is preserved today.

Even in plain black, the moulded detail is crisp and the proportions look right. The motion gear is noticeably less bulky in person, which gives the loco a clean, confident presence on the track.

There is a compromise with the wheels: they're solid, with moulded spokes. Some will notice—and some will mind. But a bit of weathering would soften that visually, and



FACTFILE

Model:

TT1005M Branchline Freight Set

Construction: Diecast and plastic.

Weight: 36g (locomotive)

Era: 1923 – 1947 and Preservation (1986-2006)

Price: £99.99

Minimum curves: Radius 1

Accessories: Oval of track, railer, power track, controller and transformer



A useful chassis for other projects?



Easy access, DCC-ready and a flywheel!!

WHAT WE LIKE

- ✓ Value for money
- ✓ Exceptional running
- ✓ Great showcase for TT:120



the design brings a very real benefit: simpler, more reliable pickups. The payoff is obvious. Straight from the box, the running is genuinely impressive, showing exactly what modern small-scale mechanisms with a flywheel can achieve. It's good enough that 3D-print modellers will almost certainly look at it as a highly suitable donor chassis.

The two wagons follow the same theme. Decorated more to model than trainset standards, they look the part. Their chassis is a simplified single moulding, unlike their more premium counterparts, but the overall appearance remains pleasingly refined.

The set includes Hornby's older-style R8250 controller and an oval of track without points. The DCC-ready locomotive handled standard Hornby points fine during my testing, although at very slow speeds, some nudging was sometimes needed.

Overall, this TT:120 starter set feels refreshing at its price point. It's well thought-out and, by appealing to multiple audiences, more capable than many previous entry sets in other scales. It doesn't shout, it doesn't posture - it simply invites you to have fun and imagine what you might build next. And that is exactly what a starter set should do.



Heljan Class 153



Steven Draper



In the early 1990s, British Rail took the two-car Class 155, split it in half, and fitted a second cab. The result was practical, slightly quirky, and unmistakable: a stretched single-coach DMU known by many enthusiasts as *Skateboards*, *Dogboxes*, or *Tin Rockets*; a familiar class designed to solve a problem rather than win affection.

That bold decision gave the Class 153 a long and varied career, becoming a regular on rural and secondary routes, drifting through multiple operators and liveries, and steadily earning its place as one of the more recognisable shapes of the modern railway.

That characteristic length is immediately apparent in Heljan's latest O gauge model. It takes up just enough track to feel important without overwhelming a modest-sized layout. Parked at a platform, it stands confidently as a complete train and could easily generate enjoyment as the sole stock requirement of a small layout. The proportions feel convincing, and the slightly ungainly elegance of the prototype comes through clearly, particularly once the supplied obstacle deflector is screwed in place.

The body has a satin finish, and although the London Midland logo font appears

slightly different from photos I have of the real thing, the complex livery is applied with care. The clarity of the glazing really grabs attention as it plays with the light and gently draws the eye inside. The interior is modelled with a kind of honest workmanlike efficiency and offers the perfect stage for adding a few passenger cameos. One minor point of disappointment is the wiring, which is visibly attached to the floor, though this can be disguised if desired.

Back outside, there is plenty of rivet detail reinforcing the character of the prototype. The bogies and underframe are a satisfying tangle of pipes, cylinders, and boxes, while



The stretched appearance is captured perfectly.



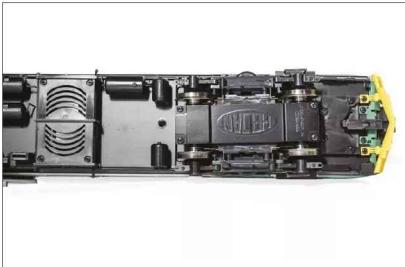
Plenty of exterior and interior cab detail.



A well moulded roof is perfect to gently weather.



Wires are visible but fitting passengers would disguise.



Fitting the obstacle deflector is very straightforward.

crisp panel lines and clean surfaces keep everything looking sharp. Roof detailing supports the overall shape, and optional NRN radio roof pods are included in the accessory bag. While there is no escaping the physical volume of the model, a little restrained weathering would quickly turn painted plastic into something oozing with real hardworking conviction.

The review sample was DC-controlled (it is 21-pin ready and factory-fitted with a speaker). Power comes through a single 5-pole motor

bogie, providing smooth running on a short test track, with baseboard joints and points causing no concern. A longer session on a rolling road showed consistency across the full speed range. Lighting is fitted, although changing its configuration in DC requires body removal and manual adjustment of jumpers in the guard's area. This may be a very good reason to consider the DCC option if lighting control, sound and access to all the model's many features, like door lights, are of importance.

The model forms a complete train in its own right.

FACTFILE

Models (review item in bold):

53201/3 Regional Railways 153301
 53241/3 EMT Stagecoach 153311
 53251/3 Northern 'Swoosh' 153351
 53271/3 Transport for Wales Grey/Red 153906

53291/3 London Midland

City 153356

GM7240701 GWR Green 153380-GAUGEMASTER COLLECTION

Construction: Diecast chassis, plastic body and bogies

Weight: 1920g

Era: 1990 - 2025

Price: £399.00- £519.00

Minimum curves: Radius 2

Accessories: Obstacle Deflector/snowploughs, NRN Roof radio pods, optional magnetic coupling bars

WHAT WE LIKE

- ✓ Accurately captures character
- ✓ Glazing & livery finish
- ✓ Running qualities

A few points aside, nothing really distracts from what matters most with this 'not so miniature' *Tin Rocket*; the elongated proportions and the unusual but familiar presence of a class that is simply straightforward, slightly unconventional, and quietly effective. Heljan's O gauge Class 153 feels remarkably true to the real thing.



EFE Rail Class 74



Jerry Clifford



The look of the 'Big Ed's' is well captured.

As a teenager in the early-1970s, family holidays were always to relatives in north Kent. The highlight, among an almost unrelenting diet of EMUs, were the Southern's unique electric and electro/diesels of Classes 71, 73 and 74, which were quite unlike anything we got to see in my native West Country. I was therefore particularly pleased when the new 74 from EFE popped through the door for review.

24 Class 71s were introduced to the Southern Region in 1958-60. They collected power from the third rail or, for obvious

safety reasons, pantographs in larger yards. They proved to be powerful and reliable performers, but were severely route-restricted due to their need to pick up the juice. In 1967-68, 10 were rebuilt as electro-diesels and classified as Class 74 – spotters knew them as 'big Eds'. Pantographs were removed and the locos fitted with Paxmann engines, which, while they were marginally more powerful than the EE engines fitted to the 73s, were significantly less reliable.

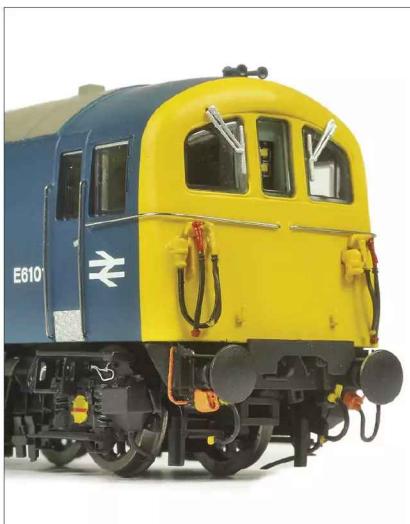
They were also fitted with the Southern's high-level control and brake 'bagpipes', enabling them to be used with 4TCs in

push pull mode. The intention was that they would be used on Southampton and Weymouth boat trains, where there were significant sections of non-electrified track. As it turned out, frequent failures meant they were rare visitors to Weymouth and the class, which spent its entire life based at Eastleigh, spent much of its time in and around London, where members could be seen on both the London Midland and Western Regions working freight, parcels and milk traffic. Continuing unreliability and a gradual contraction of the work they were built for led to their mass withdrawal in 1977.

The Class 74s only ever ran in BR blue, though EFE is offering the locos with a variety of running numbers, both pre- and post-TOPs. First impressions are very good, with the very distinctive body shape and 'face' being particularly well captured – not something that has always been achieved with previous attempts at the Southern electrics. Detailing is well up to the standards we have come to expect these days, with many separately-applied fittings such as handrails and front pipework. The bogies and pick-up shoes are particularly well done. The detailing pack contains more hoses as well as dropped buckeye couplings and a selection of headcodes, which require removal of the body for fitting. This is outlined in the instructions



Bogie frame and pick-up shoe detail is superb along with the correctly fitted spoked wheels.



The distinctive face with the Southern's 'bagpipe' hoses is neatly done.



Close-up of the cabside, highlighting the separately applied handrails and quality of the finish.



Underside view showing the light switches for DC users.

FACTFILE

Factfile (Review item in bold):
Class 74 Electro-Diesel E6101
BR Blue

Class 74 Electro-Diesel E6104
 BR Blue

Class 74 Electro-Diesel 74007
 BR Blue

Class 74 Electro-Diesel 74010
 BR Blue

Construction: Metal chassis,
 plastic body

Weight: 341g

Era: 1967-1977

Price: £214.95

Minimum curves: Radius 2

Accessories: Hoses, buckeye
 couplings, headcodes

WHAT WE LIKE

- ✓ Overall accuracy
- ✓ Haulage capacity
- ✓ Quality of finish

provided and also gives access to the 21-pin DCC socket. No speaker is fitted, but provision is made for one to be clipped in, which will require soldering. The model also features full directional lighting with separate switches underneath for DC users.

Power to all eight wheels is provided by a coreless motor. There are no flywheels and running was a little noisy, but reports suggest this will settle down with running-in. That said, the loco was smooth and controllable at all speeds.

Overall, this is a nice model and EFE has captured the look of these distinctive locos well.



The grey roof panels represent the translucent fibreglass panels fitted to shed some light into the engine rooms following removal of the pantographs when the locos were converted from Class 71.

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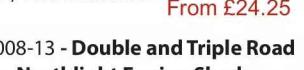
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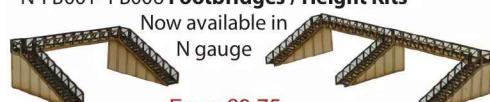


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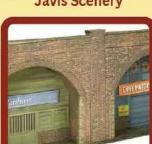
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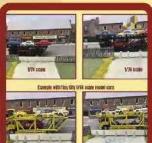
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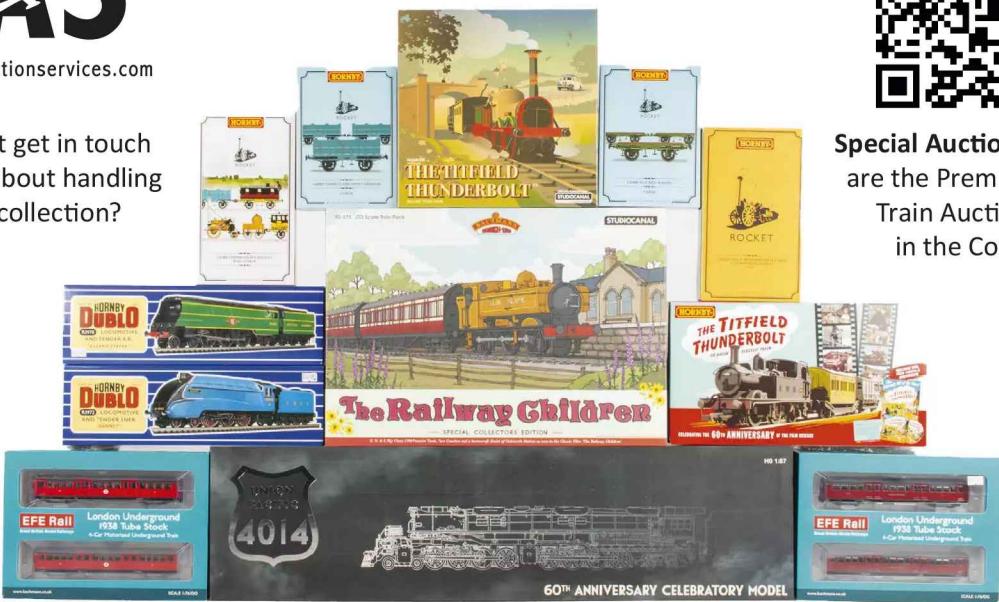
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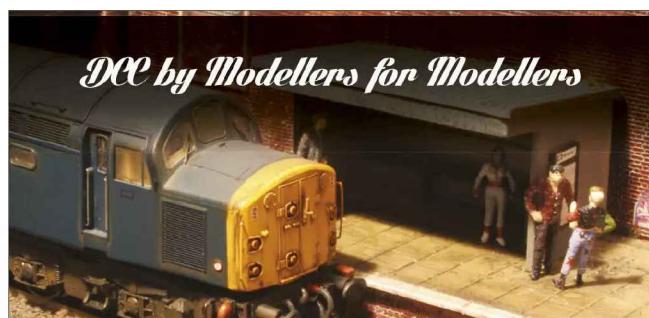
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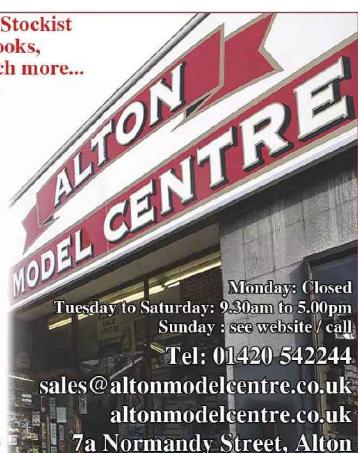
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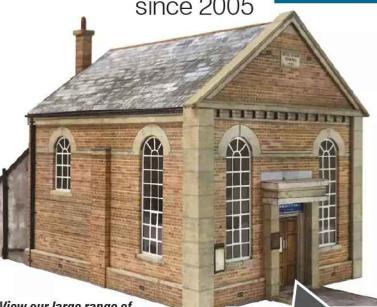
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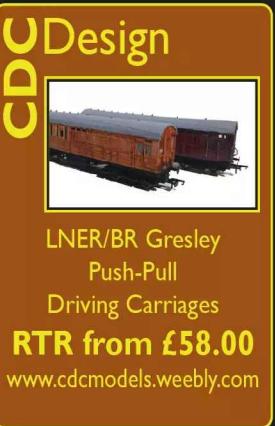
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ADVERTISER INDEX

ABINGDON	131	LITTLEWORTH MODELS	66
ABSOLUTE ASPECTS	138	LONDON FESTIVAL OF	
AC MODELS	141	RAILWAY MODELLING	140
ACCURASCALE	148	LORD AND BUTLER	111
AGR	136	MAD ABOUT TRAINS	141
AIRBRUSH CO	51	MARCWAY	135
AIRFRAMED	144	MEGAPOINT	
ALTON	141	CONTROLLERS	111
ANORAKS ANON	134	METCALFE MODELS	16
AS MODELS	144	MODEL RAIL	
BILL HUDSON	144	SOLUTIONS	141
BRANCHLINES	142	MONK BAR	138
BUGGLESKELLY	138	NARROW PLANET	131
BUXTON	138	NEW MODELLER SHOP	130
C&L FINESCALE	138	NICK TOZER	144
C&M	141	PD MARSH	142
CAMBRIAN	132	PENNINE MODELS	113
COASTAL DCC	134	PETERS SPARES	137
CONNOISSEUR	144	PRESTON DISTRICT	143
CRAFTY HOBBIES	136	RAILS OF SHEFFIELD	8-13
DCC CONCEPTS	110	RAPIDO	147
DEREKS	144	RCTS	66
DIGITRAINS	64	REDCAR MODELS	144
DONCASTER FESTIVAL OF RAILWAY MODELLING	112	REVOLUTION TRAINS	18
DREAM STEAM	135	RHUDDLAN	142
DURHAM TRAINS	144	RON LINES	137
EKM EXHIBITIONS	136	ROXEY MOULDINGS	144
ELAINES TRAINS	143	SCALE MODEL	
ELLIS CLARK	65	SCENERY	137
FOOTPLATE	7	SCALESCENES	141
FOX TRANSFERS	132	SEVERN MODELS	142
FRIZINGHALL	66	SHADY LANE	136
GAUGE O GUILD	143	SHEDRING	132
GC WEATHERING	133	SLATERS	130
GLR	136	SMART MODELS	137
GOING LOCO	137	SPECIAL AUCTION	
GRAVESEND	136	SERVICES	133
GSCALE.CO.UK	136	SPEY MODELS	133
H&A MODELS	144	SPORTS AND MODEL	
H&M	132	SHOP	142
H&M MODELS	138	STREET LEVEL	142
HEREFORD MODEL		TEN COMMANDMENTS	134
CENTRE		THE MODEL TRAIN	
CENTRE	6	CENTRE	136
HOBBY GOBLIN	142	TMC	14, 88
HORNBY HOBBIES	2	TONY OAKES	143
IN THE GREENWOOD	131	TONYS TRAINS	138
ISINGLASS MODELS	137	TOPP TRAINS	142
JACKSONS MODELS	144	TOWER MODELS	3
JIM CORR	143	TOWNSTREET	138
JOHN DUTFIELD	144	TRAIN 4 U	130
KMS	113	TRANSPORTERS	132
KS MODELS	141	TRIDENT MODELS	144
LACY SCOTT KNIGHT	135	UPSTAIRS DOWNSTAIRS	144
LANCS YORKSHIRE		WARWICK WARWICK	19
RAILWAY SOCIETY	135	WM COLLECTABLES	111
LINCOLN MRS	143	YORK MODELMAKING	141
		YOU CHOOOS	134

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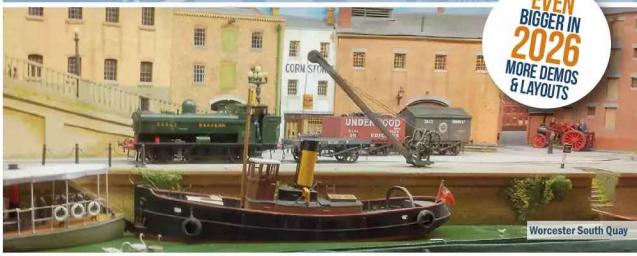
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Buffer Stop

This month in pictures



Smoke and steam at the Severn Valley Railway just after Christmas. *Hagley Hall* is heading to Bridgnorth, while Mogul 13268 creeps through the haze.



Manchester show joins the list of Warners events in 2026. Our Publisher, Steve, was there last year and remembered just before the end of the day, we'd told him to take a picture.



Steven enjoyed his first visit to Hornby's HQ in Margate for the new range presentation.



The members of the Syston Model Railway Society invited Phil to join them for a chippy lunch, eaten off the latest project layout. He would like to apologise for squirtying ketchup everywhere.



It's amazing what you find in a good model shop. On the shelf in Footplate are these Keyser plastic kits from the 1980s, one of which was Phil's first wagon kit!



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