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French 1:50



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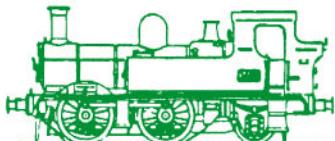
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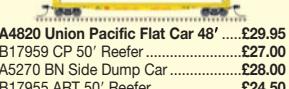
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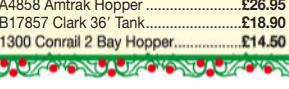
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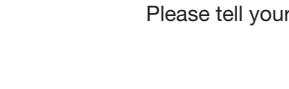
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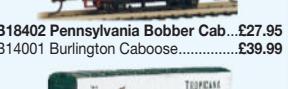
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CONTINENTAL MODELLER

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RAILWAY MODELLER

For all modelling British railway practice.
Published on the second Thursday
of the preceding month.



Cover

Réseau Breton 1937 Billard autorail X153 is ready to depart from Port de Crozon. The distinctive watchtower from Le Fret is visible in the background.

Photo: Gordon Gravett.

Manchester MRS celebrates centenary

The show presented by Manchester Model Railway Society on Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th December this year has been described by the Exhibition Coordinator as the most complex the society has ever staged. It promises to be a great celebration and a fitting finale to the society's centenary year.

Founded in 1925, the Manchester MRS is the third oldest model railway club in the world. Although its establishment came after that of both The Model Railway Club (1910) and Wimbledon Model Railway Club (1924), the MMRS does claim to be the organisation with the longest continuous active history, owing to the fact that, unlike the other two, it remained open to members throughout the Second World War.

There will be a strong historical theme to the two-day event, with a timeline of displays and exhibits around the venue celebrating not just the society's own long history but also that of the wider hobby and railways in general, in keeping with Rail 200.

The layouts booked cover a wide variety of scales, gauges, eras, and prototypes, British and overseas outline. These include:

Port de Crozon, the new French metre gauge 1:50 layout by Gordon and Maggie Gravett, making its debut at the show, and featured in this issue.

New Sharon, Maine two footers in On2 by Bob Harper (CM December 2024, below).

Laramie Engine Terminal, US O by Peter Kirmond (CM November 2017).

In addition to the layouts, there will be modelling demonstrations, displays, society stands, and specialist traders. Peco will have a stand where publications including RAILWAY MODELLER and CONTINENTAL MODELLER can be purchased, along with information about the extensive Peco product range and displays showing forthcoming new items.

The event will also provide plenty of activities for children, including a chance to win a train set. Younger visitors will also be able to try their hand at driving model trams on the biggest exhibit in the show, almost 13m long!

The show takes place in two large sports halls with step-free access throughout. The Sugden Centre is near both Oxford Road and Piccadilly railway stations, and on numerous bus routes. Note there is no public parking at the venue, but there are two multi-storey car parks within a short distance – the one at the Manchester Aquatics Centre is recommended.

For further information, refer to the listing in *Exhibition Diary* or see the MMRS website (www.mmrs.co.uk).



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966 PORT DE CROZON – RAILWAY OF THE MONTH

On the metre gauge Réseau Breton – Gordon Gravett introduces his new French layout, modelled in 1:50, which portrays an imaginary seaside terminus. It will be making its debut at the Manchester show.

974 HEIDE – PLAN OF THE MONTH

Yannick De Vynck has modelled in HO a wayside station on Line 12, between Antwerp in Belgium and Roosendaal in The Netherlands.

984 RETURN TO NAZARETH

On the Bangor & Portland branch of the Erie Lackawanna – Ian Wilson has developed his American HO home layout, introduced in the October 2024 issue.

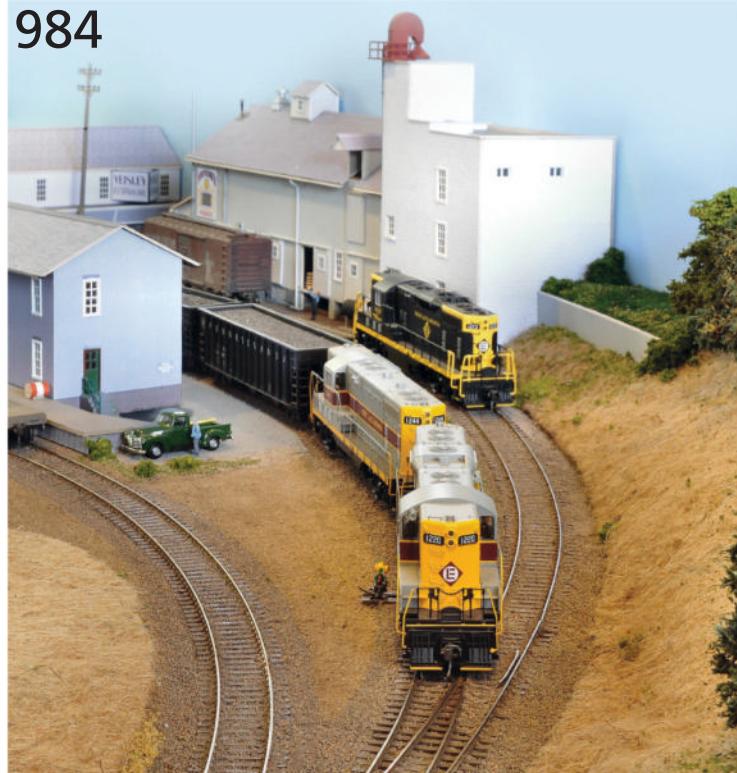
992 ROSENFJORD

The end of a Norwegian branch line modelled in HO – Alasdair Reid rekindled an old interest in Norway and created a permanent layout in his garage.

1000 PORTAGE

An Alaskan snow scene – Stuart Robinson describes a compact HO switching layout built by members of the North Downs Model Railway Circle.

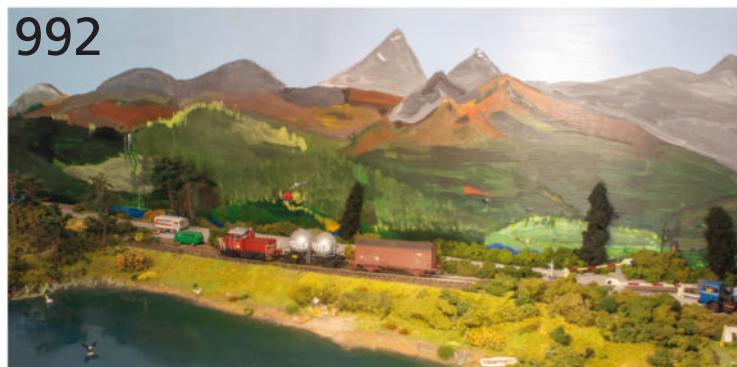
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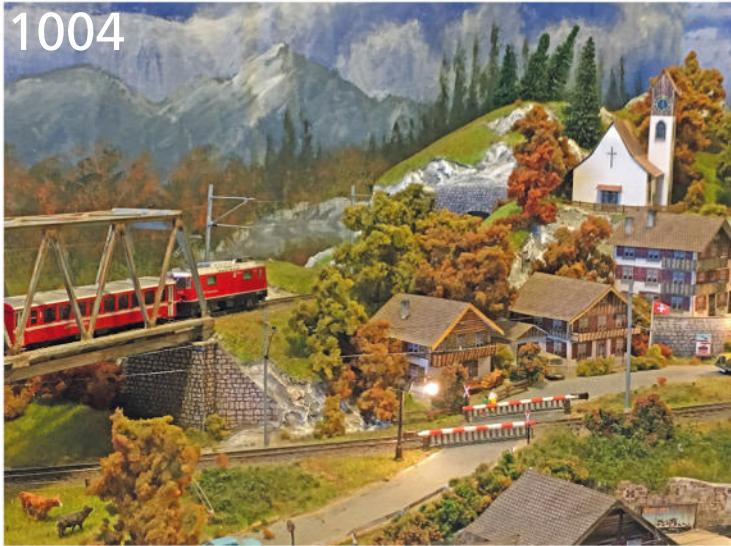


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1004**1004 CHRÜZALP**

Maurizio Tolini found an attractive Swiss N gauge layout which turned out to be mostly made with cardboard.

1012 A.I. AS AN AID TO MODELLING

Tim Mulhall tells how ChatGPT unexpectedly assisted with a particular modelling task on his Swiss HO layout and proved to be much more useful than anticipated.

1016 TAIL LIGHTS ON MODALOHR WAGONS

Jacques Poré shows how he enhanced intermodal vehicles from LS Models by adding working end-of-train lights.

1020 A PLASTERED BUILDING

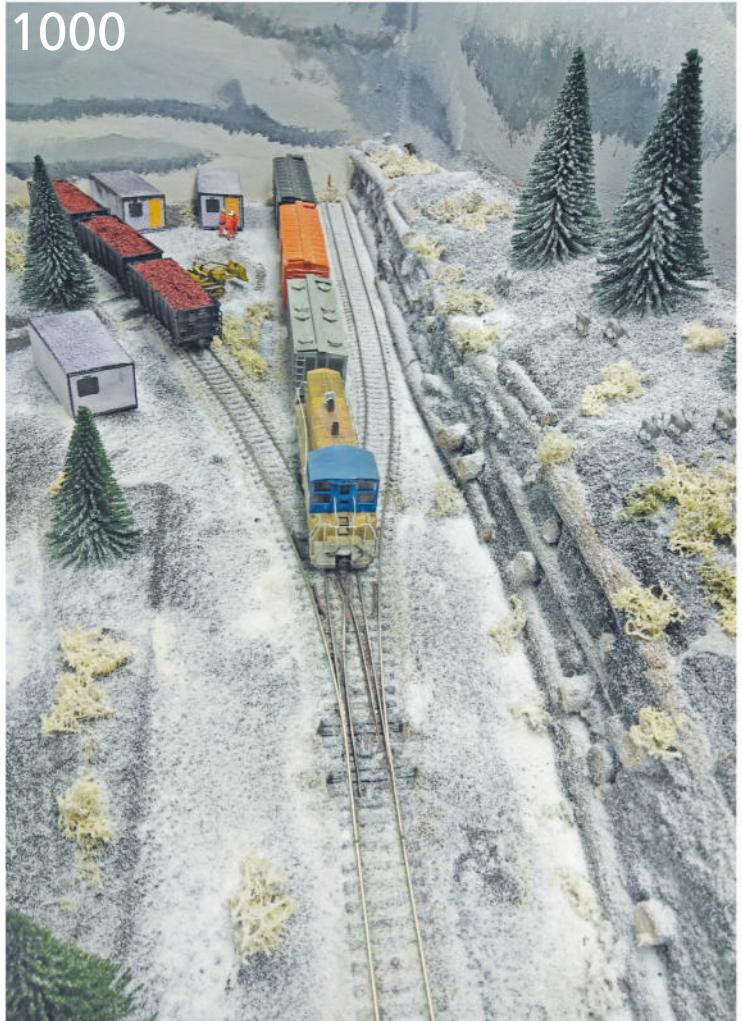
Michel Altorf-van der Kuil explains how he created a cottage with rendered walls for a French HO layout.

1024 RUE DES ÉTOILES

A micro layout in HO with much detail and animation – Michael Kohler and Philipp Gerber combined their skills to model a typical village street somewhere in France.

1028 TETSUDO + SANKEI

Made to be easily portable – Peter McConnell created a cosmopolitan Z gauge layout with a Japanese flavour.

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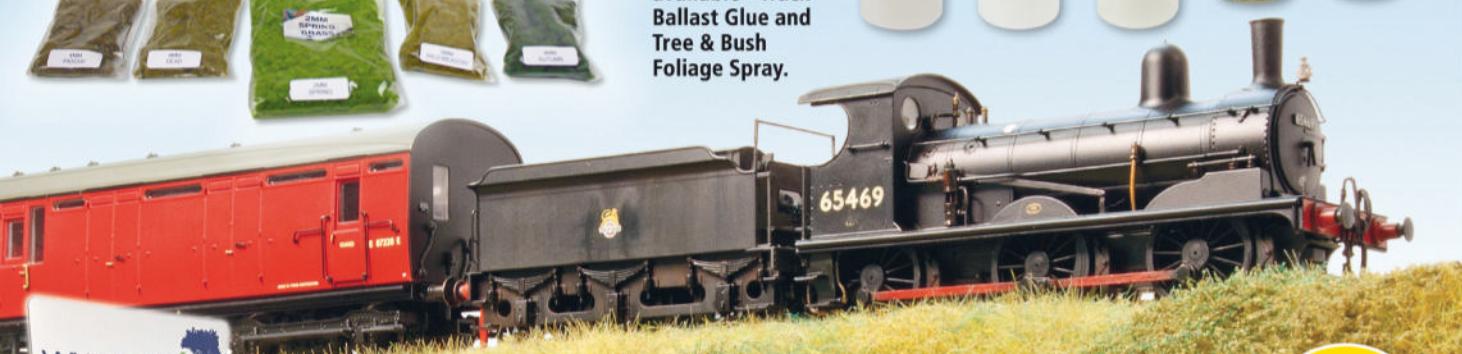
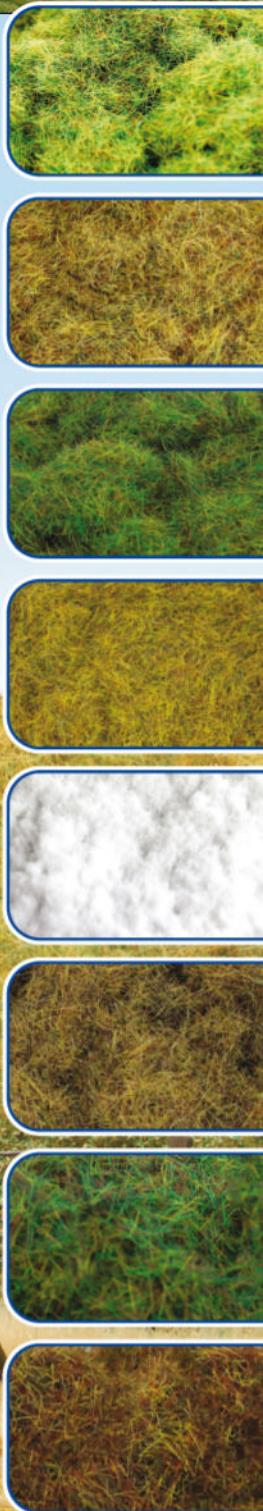
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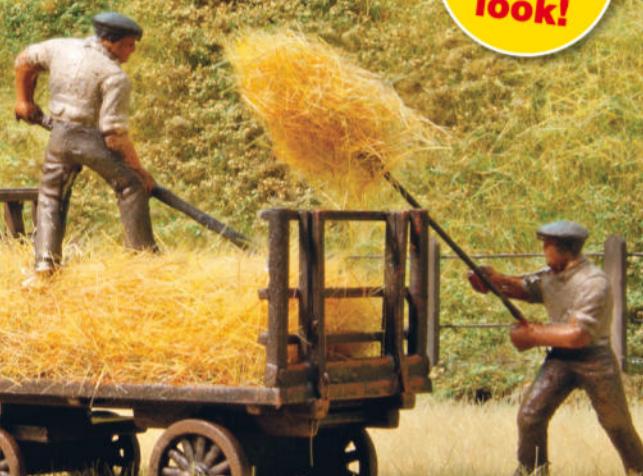


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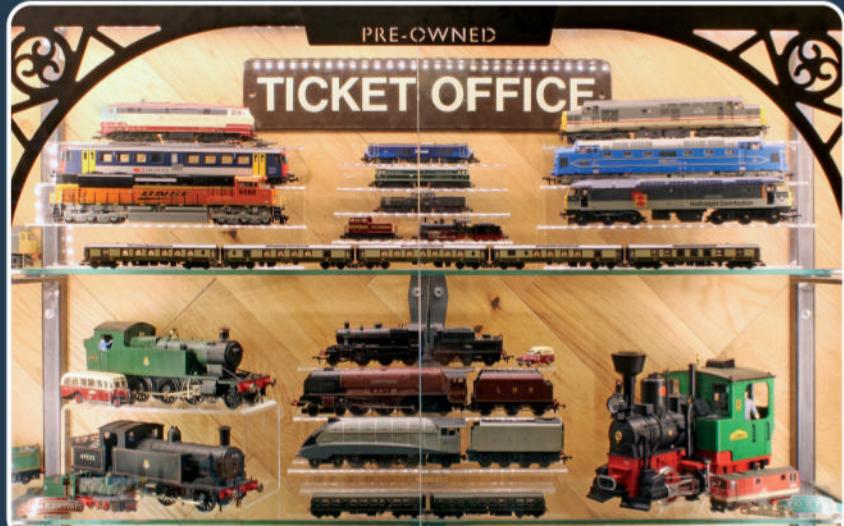
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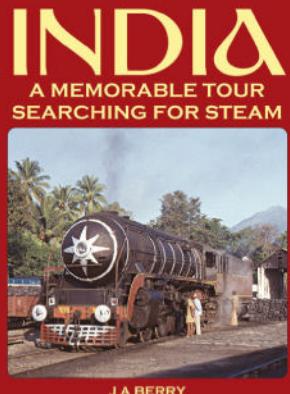
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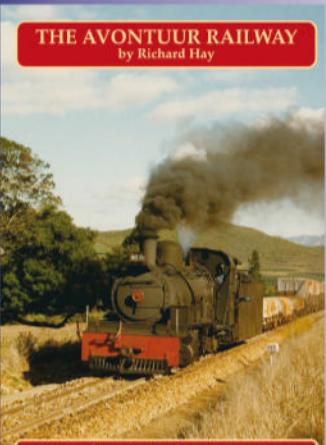
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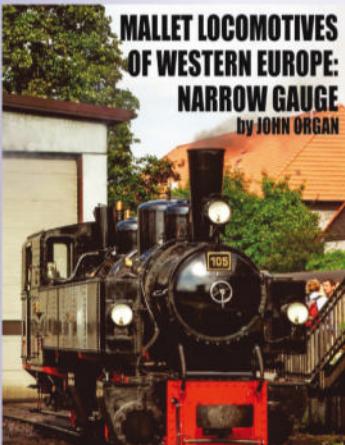
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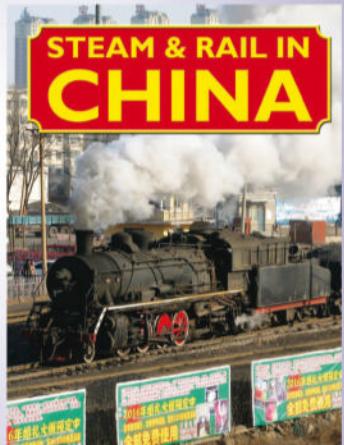
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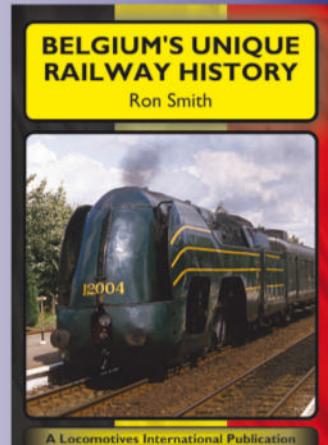
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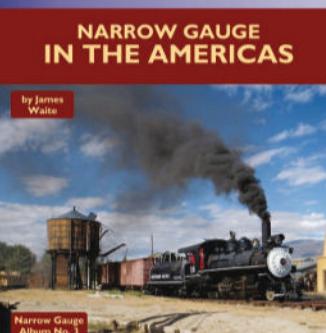
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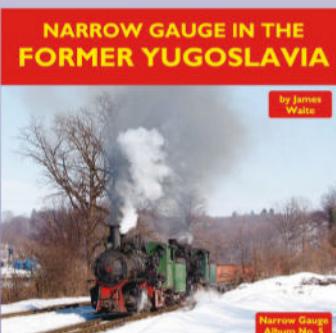
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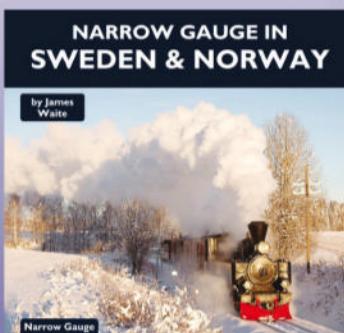
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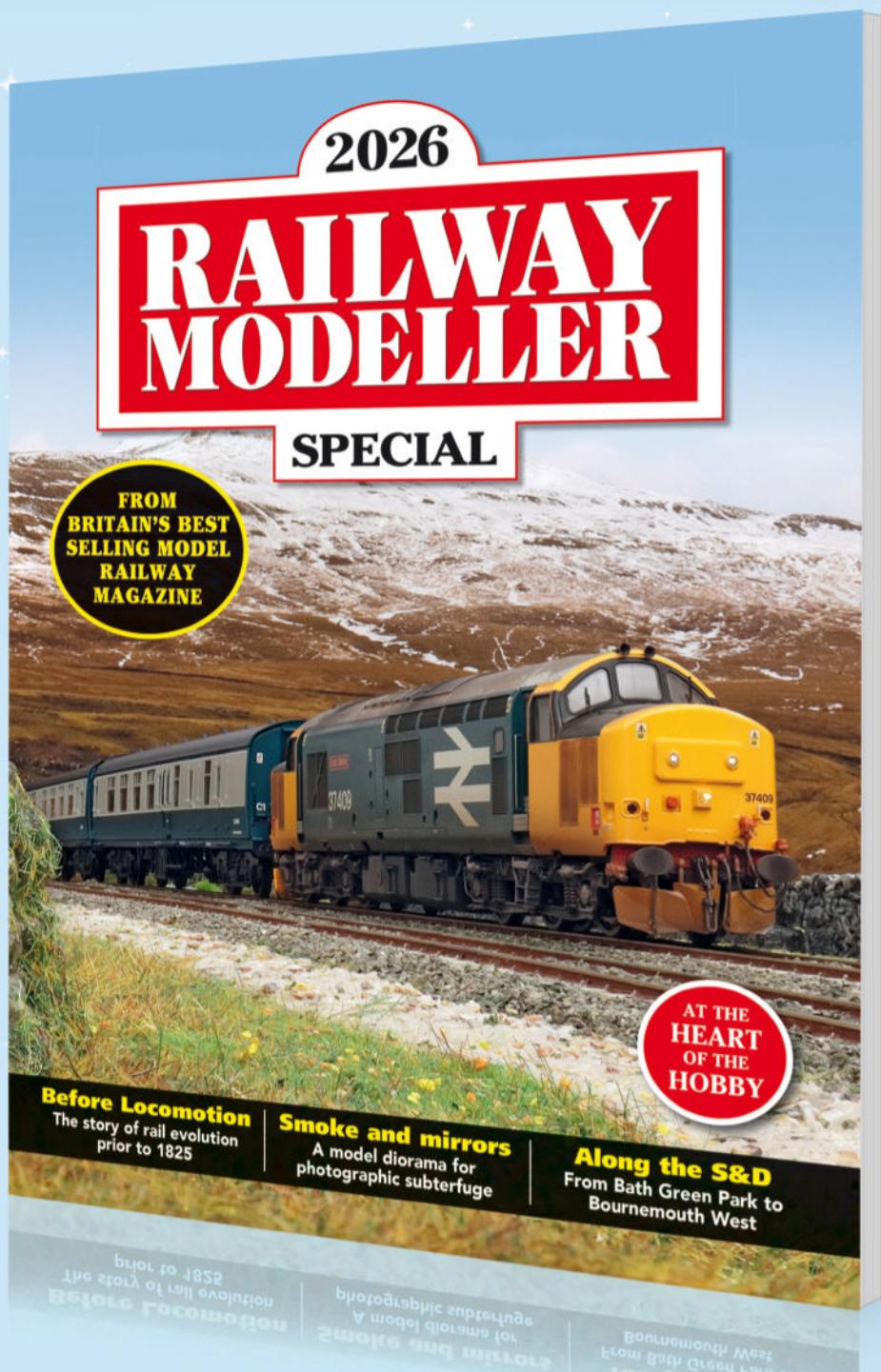
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Photographs and plan by the author.

Port de Crozon

On the metre gauge Réseau Breton



It was in 1925, a hundred years ago, that the metre gauge Réseau Breton reached the Atlantic coast of Brittany, across the Crozon peninsula. The origins of this network of lines, though, dated back to the latter part of the previous century to link up inland rural areas and it was considered important enough for its construction to be granted state funding – *Intérêt Général*.

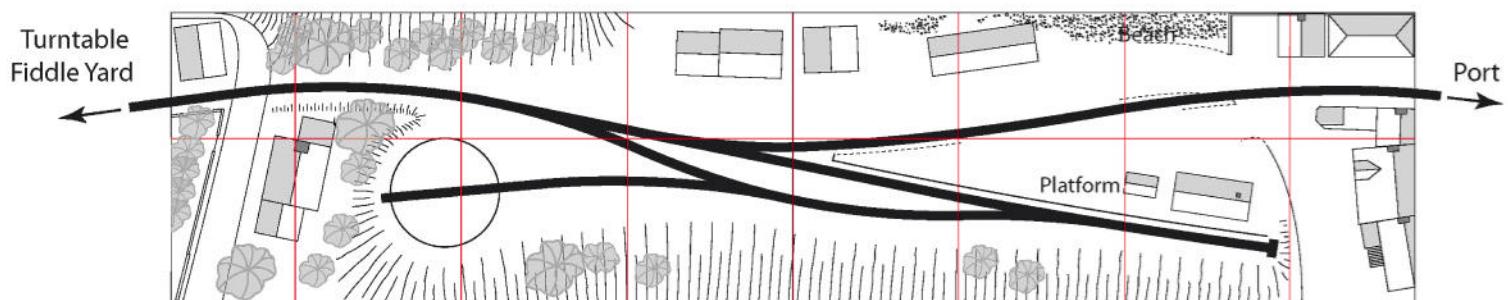
Between 1891 and 1907 five lines were opened, all radiating out from the central market town of Carhaix to link up with existing standard gauge routes to the north, east, south, and west. Carhaix was (literally) the railway centre of the network and apart from being the departure, and arrival, point for all lines, it also housed the workshops and principal locomotive depot.

The last of these five routes (to the west) connected with the standard gauge at Chateaulin and was opened in 1907, but by 1909 authorisation had also been granted to extend the line onto the Crozon peninsula. The First World War, however, delayed construction, and it was not until 1923 that the railway reached Crozon Morgat and, eventually, in 1925, the coastal town of Camaret-sur-Mer, along with a short branch to le Fret.

Back in 1991 Maggie and I had this crazy idea that it would be quite interesting to base a new narrow gauge layout 'loosely' on the Réseau Breton. Until then all my interests and modelling had been of British subjects and we knew little about this network of lines and, whereas books – at the time I think there were just two – were very useful, this was clearly

Above
A typical short mixed train consisting of a brake second and a van arrives at Port de Crozon behind 2-4-0T E.206. The small station building is of the robust stone and brick design used for many of the waiting shelters on the Crozon line, but altered here to accommodate office facilities in lieu of one of the large station buildings.

Port de Crozon
7ft 6in x 1ft 9in



Left

Fives-Lille 4-6-0T E.332 eases back onto the turntable.
The loco was made primarily from nickel-silver but has a brass tube boiler, while the boiler fittings were turned from plastic. The mesh spark arrestor is a piece of black stocking stretched over a turned clear acrylic dome.

Below

A mixed train ready to depart behind E.332.
The flat bottom (vignole) track was made using Peco IL5 rail soldered directly to copper-clad 4mm scale point timbering with the bolt fixings and dummy fishplates added from the Grandt Line range.

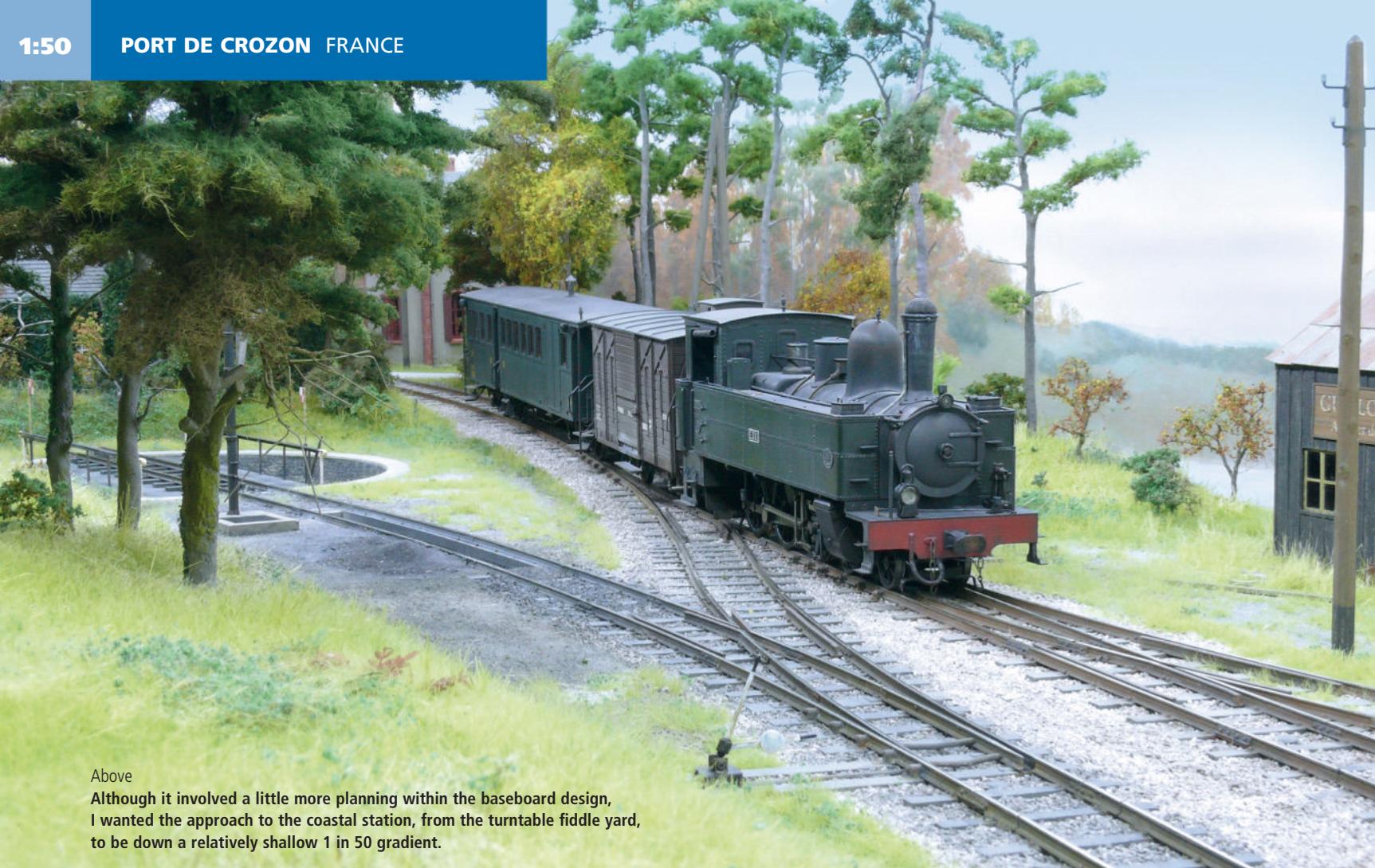
a good excuse for a short break in Brittany to investigate what might be left to see. By this time the metre gauge railway had been closed for nearly twenty-five years – it finished in 1967, but realising that the French do not rush into re-developing sites or obliterating track beds as fast as might happen over here, we were hoping to find some inspiration, both from the infrastructure and the countryside in general.

In fact, that trip turned out to be extremely fruitful and we discovered far more about the Réseau Breton than we could ever have imagined. The culmination of that, and numerous other long weekends or holidays in the area, resulted in the building of our *Pempoul* layout (see CM April 2008 and a retrospective in April 2017). We thoroughly enjoyed taking *Pempoul* out to shows, but the logistics of exhibiting a large (by our standards) layout eventually proved to be too much for just the two of us, and I am pleased to say that it has now found a new home at the Ashford International Model Railway Education Centre in Kent.

Although, by then, I was involved in British O gauge again with *Arun Quay*, this did not impede on the joy of holidaying in Brittany. And these trips were far from idle; many photos were taken on these holidays as research for modelling!

We kept being drawn back to the Crozon peninsula and, in particular, the ports of Camaret-sur-Mer and le Fret. The once thriving shellfish trade is now very diminished and, at Camaret-sur-Mer, many of the trawlers that used to bring in these catches now lay derelict in the port. It was not so long ago that these included traditional sailing *langoustiers*, but I suspect that by now, these have all but rotted away. Le Fret is equally fascinating but a sad reminder of what it once was with a number of dilapidated small fishing boats hauled up onto the beach. And although now re-purposed, many of the old sheds and huts associated with fishing can still be seen. This small town also intrigues me because of, what I assume to be, a prominent watchtower on the edge of its small harbour.





Above

Although it involved a little more planning within the baseboard design, I wanted the approach to the coastal station, from the turntable fiddle yard, to be down a relatively shallow 1 in 50 gradient.

So, in considering a relatively small new layout, the outcome of this situation was leaning heavily towards, in model railway parlance, a 'branch line terminus', and sited somewhere on the coast of the Crozon peninsula.

Scale and gauge

Prior to seriously researching the Réseau Breton, my initial thoughts were to build a layout loosely based on the railway in O-16.5 (7mm scale on 16.5mm gauge track) –



a combination I was very familiar with. But with such a plethora of information available from the early visits, the opportunity to make something a little more accurate was clearly not to be missed, especially regarding the ratio of the scale to the gauge!

In a perverse sort of way, the fact that nothing was available commercially was one of the draws towards modelling this railway. I enjoy building models, and also the research and planning that precedes the making, so starting from scratch had, and still has, many attractions. Also this did not tie us to any of the conventional model railway scales and for *Pempoul* we eventually settled for a scale of 1:50; which made calculating the measurements for the models from the prototypes metric dimensions so much easier. Also, at the time, I was working as a model maker for the shipping industry and 1:50 was quite usual for those models, so it was not that alien to me.

At this scale the metre track gauge should, of course, have been 20mm, but re-working track and wheel standards seemed to be a step too far! So, instead, I chose to use the well-proven EM (18.2mm gauge) and accepted the compromise of it being 1.8mm too narrow. As it turned out, this was a wise choice as, not only did it make construction easier with wheels, axles, and track gauges readily available, the slightly narrower gauge also allowed more liberties to be taken with the track radii than might have otherwise been possible. Having established these standards for *Pempoul*, I saw no reason to change for *Port de Crozon*.



Planning the layout

The railway onto the Crozon peninsula differed from the previous Réseau Breton routes in being laid with flat bottom (*vignole*) rail instead of chaired bullhead (*double champignon*) rail – although in later years much of the earlier network was also relaid with *vignole* rail. For this I used Peco IL5 code 100 flat bottom rail, which, as far as I can ascertain, is a very close match for my 1:50 scale. 4mm scale copper clad point sleeper strip that is 4mm wide also scales nicely from the 200mm width of the actual sleepers. (The excellent two-volume history of the railway from Éditions L-R Presse has some very useful drawings of *vignole* track panels in Tome 1).

Many of the station buildings also differed in style and a more Breton appearance with steep high roofs and tall tapering chimneys replaced the typical Chemins de Fer de l'Ouest style used hitherto on the previous routes. I would very much have liked to have included one of these buildings,

Above
E.206 stands over the ash pit and is about to take water. The water cranes on this part of the Réseau Breton were of a fairly simple design but, with its tapered spout, concrete base, and drain cover, the model made for an interesting build.

Below left
The large Fives-Lille 4-6-0T being turned in readiness for a return working.

Below
Having been turned, E.332 heads a mixed goods train up the gradient away from the port. The goods wagons all share a number of common parts and were built as a batch many years ago. The boat is a cast resin item by Quaycraft, available from Cornwall Model Boats.





Above

The Société Alsacienne 2-4-0Ts were the first locos to be built for the Réseau Breton system in 1891, though all were out of use by 1955.

The point levers with their rotating balance weights are of a distinctive design, so to give them strength, I drew the basic parts and had them photo-etched in brass.

but it really did present a serious problem. This was not from the modelling point of view – I had drawings and photos, and examples were available both to measure and for close inspection. The difficulty, for what was to become a small layout, was from the visual aspect; they were very large, and in my opinion, too large for such a small layout!

So, having accepted that I was going to have to scale back any thoughts of basing it on an actual station site, I looked for a number of characteristic features that would, hopefully, give my vision some credibility. One aspect that is difficult to replicate, especially in a small space, is the openness of a typical Réseau Breton station site. Unlike many situations in Britain, space was usually not such an issue in France, and I had to exert a great amount of restraint to not overcrowd it. The track layout would also have to be very minimal. One feature that could not be ignored, though, was a turntable; locos rarely worked cab first on the system, although this

must have happened on the short branch to le Fret, where there was not one. I also quite enjoyed the challenge, as I had not built a turntable before.

Many of the stations had quite substantial waiting shelters and, although dwarfed by the main station buildings, they were still of a characteristic design, as were the annexes – the toilet buildings. The aforementioned turntable would also be to a regular design, which fortunately appears in a number of photos, and more recently in the L-R Presse books. And to go with the turntable, some basic replenishment facilities in the form of a water crane could be added – again to a standard design that was fairly well photographed.

Baseboards and infrastructure

Despite my father having been a carpenter, I have never had any aptitude for woodworking and building the infrastructure for any layout has only ever been a necessity rather than any pleasurable part of the build. So, when considering the Arun Quay layout, and knowing that anything I built subsequently would have to be no larger, I decided to make a separate support structure with an integral lighting pelmet that could find future use if ever the need arose. The boards that combined to make the actual layout were totally separate items, so in considering this new project, I only really had to think about a new pair of baseboards. Oh – and a new fiddle yard.

I had experimented with extruded polystyrene in the construction of the Pempoul baseboards and, whereas this had made the structures lighter in weight, the boards could have been stronger. This was rectified on Arun Quay with a design that incorporated a form of 'box girder' in the framing that was made from strips of extruded polystyrene clad on all sides with $1/16"$ (1.6mm) ply. One of these also formed a central 'spine'. This has worked well over a number of exhibition outings, being relatively light in weight and also quite rigid, so I was quite happy to repeat the procedure for this new venture. I also worked to exactly the same dimensions – 1'9" wide by 3'9" long, which proved to be a manageable size to move around the house.



Above

From the buffer stop to the entrance to the fiddle yard, this shows the full extent and simplicity of Port de Crozon. To the right, the siding continues to the port (off scene).



Above
Post-war most timetabled passenger services were provided by autorails.
 Here, 1937 Billard X153 is ready to depart.
 In the background, the distinctive watchtower from Le Fret, with the line to the port to its left.

Below
The dilapidated cottage now has a home on a layout.

Buildings

When *Pempoul* was built, most of the buildings were made well in advance of the actual layout – in fact, before it had even been fully designed. Whereas most had been photographed and researched with a location in mind, one particular cottage, in a very derelict state, was too good to let pass and Maggie built this in the expectation that it would eventually find a home. Unfortunately, a location on *Pempoul* could not be found without it appearing too contrived, and it has spent the last twenty years or so in its own display case at home. So, right from the outset, this cottage would definitely have a place on this layout!



Apart from the station toilet building (the annexe), I cannot claim that any are exact replicas of real structures, but most are based on actual buildings on the Crozon peninsula, although in many cases the dimensions and locations have been adjusted to fit in with the composition. The watchtower from *Le Fret* is typical of this situation.

When it comes to construction, I think we all find materials that we enjoy working with and methods that work for us, so why change?

Traditional building materials in Brittany are granite and slate, so brickwork, especially on older buildings, is in the minority. For our models the shells of the buildings are made from foam-cored board and then covered in a thin layer of DAS modelling clay, which gives a lightweight yet rigid structure. Once dry, the DAS is scribed to represent the stonework (or brickwork).

I use Tamiya acrylic paints, thinned to make a wash, and apply a number of coats to the surface until the desired colours and effects are achieved. Again, this is a method that works for us, and give the results that we are looking for.

Locomotives and rolling stock

When *Pempoul* was built, there was already a surplus of stock, so some of this gave me a head start in producing sufficient for *Port de Crozon*.

Built specifically with this layout in mind is one of the early Société Alsacienne 2-4-0Ts that date back to 1891 and the opening of the first Réseau Breton route, and all were out of use by 1955. The model was made from nickel-silver and is powered by a Mashima motor driving through a High Level gearbox.



Left
X152 is a 1947 Billard A150D *autorail* and is seen here departing Port de Crozon – the red and white disc denoting the rear of a train. This is one of those tricky things on a layout where it is difficult to be right, so I have discs on both ends. The 'S' sign is for *siflet* (whistle) – but we do not have sound either!

Right
Fives-Lille 4-6-0T E.332 coasts into the station with a mixed train.

Below
X152 about to disappear behind a stand of conifers as it climbs the gradient towards the fiddle yard. These trees, and a couple of pines near the station, were purposely placed in the foreground to allow the viewer to see, or rather glimpse, the scene from different viewpoints.





This is joined by a Compagnie Fives-Lille 4-6-0T, built at least thirty years ago for *Pempoul*. In this scale, of course, these had to be built from scratch, but rely heavily on available chassis components (wheels, axles, motors, and gearboxes etc.) for building 4mm scale EM locos.

My preferred material for loco construction is nickel-silver and whereas for the earlier engines this was cut out by hand, I now prefer to draw out the components and have them photo-etched – in effect, producing a kit of parts. I find I can now draw far more accurately on the computer than I can cut metal by hand!

Most of the steam workings on the network would have been freight, although for variety the inclusion of a passenger coach to make a mixed train is hard to resist.

Passenger services are provided by a pair of Billard 150 *autorails* – one modelled on the angular 1947 design, the other on the more rounded 1937 styling. These are made from ABS plastic and Perspex. A Perspex 'box' provides the strength and the glazing and this is clad in 0.25mm ABS sheet material.

Rolling stock also relies on 4mm scale wheelsets, but that was about as far as commercial products could help. Where components were going to be needed in multiple, I made masters and had them cast commercially or drew them and had them photo-etched. But otherwise, sheet styrene was the material of choice, with Evergreen strip material, plain sheets, and 'V' grooved planking, used extensively. Construction articles on the *autorails* appeared in CM December 2008 and the rolling stock in February 2009.

Backscene

Port de Crozon is set on the coast, and this meant that somewhere in the design water ought to be evident! With precious little space being available on the actual baseboards,

my solution to this was to include a coastal inlet and the open sea – the Atlantic Ocean, no less – on the backscene. This also enabled me to have higher ground at the front of the layout, dropping steadily down towards a beach at the rear.

I first tried a full height flexible backscene on *Pempoul*, and from the viewing side, we thought it worked well, hiding all the associated detritus that accompanies an exhibition layout well out of sight. It did mean that we had to operate from the front, but keeping that to one end of the layout did not obscure any public view and it also enabled us to explain about the railway and the modelling far more easily than talking over the width of the baseboards.

The material used is the same as used for vinyl roller blinds, and is similar to that used for pull-up banners, so is widely available. I painted the scenes with artist's acrylic paints, but photographic backscenes printed onto similar material are also widely available, either from stock photos or custom made using images of particular areas.

Conclusion

Discovering and then modelling the Réseau Breton has been an extremely interesting and rewarding diversion from my 'native' enthusiasm for the Brighton line, and one that I could never have foreseen. Fortunately, my wife Maggie could also see the appeal, and the combination of her language skills and love of the country, plus my enthusiasm for the railway, has led to a joint effort and a fascinating modelling diversion.

This year, one hundred years after the opening of the Réseau Breton line to the Atlantic coast of Brittany, we are delighted to be able to display *Port de Crozon* at the Manchester Model Railway Society's Centenary exhibition on Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th December.

See *Exhibition Diary* (p.17a) for further details.



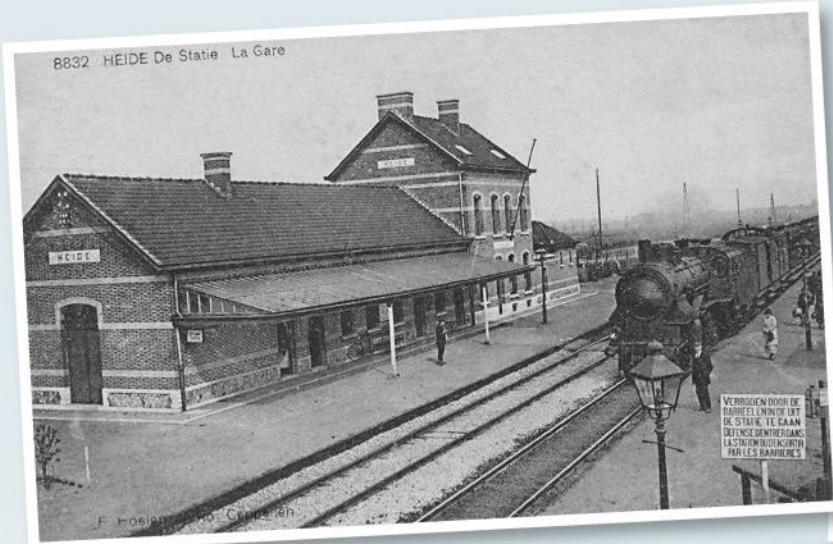
Yannick De Vynck introduces his Belgian HO exhibition layout.

Photographs by the author, unless otherwise noted.

Heide station

On Line 12, between Antwerp and Roosendaal in The Netherlands





Above and above right
Old postcards provided the inspiration – and a certain amount of information – for the layout.



Heide is on the international line which connects Antwerp with Roosendaal in The Netherlands. It is located in a sub-municipality of Kalmthout. Before the station and the village of Heide were built, the area looked very different.

Until 1880, the area around the current station consisted of an unspoilt landscape of heathland and dunes. This changed dramatically when sand was extracted from the Kalmthoutse Heide from 1888 onwards. This sand was used for large projects such as the construction of Antwerp Central Station and the raising of the ring railway around Antwerp. To transport the large quantities of sand efficiently, a branch line was built towards the Kalmthoutse Heide. This development attracted workers, as well as traders and industry, and thus the village of Heide-Kalmthout was born.

In 1897, the Belgian State Railways set up a halt, where a few old coaches served as a station. With the growing popularity of Heide as a destination for tourists from Antwerp, several hotels were built around the halt. To serve the increasing number of passengers, the State Railways built the current station building in 1911, which still adorns the village today. However, since 1st December 2021, the station ticket office has been closed and passengers can now only buy their tickets online or via a machine. The former ticket office and waiting room are currently being integrated into the existing 'Heide Statie' restaurant, which means that the building is well maintained.

Heide station in model form

The idea of modelling Heide came about in 2011, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the station building. During this festive year, together with the municipality, the SNCB/NMBS, and some friends. I organised an exhibition of layouts in the station. The aim was to use models to recreate as many authentic train compositions as possible that ran on Line 12 at the time. As a personal challenge, I decided to model the Heide station building in HO, despite my lack of experience in that area.

Left

A series 16 4-4-2T pauses at Heide with a local train formed of six-wheel compartment stock.





Above
Former Prussian G8 0-8-0 now SNCB/NMBS 81 173 on a short goods.

Above right
Brossel diesel railcar 551 52 gets the clear signal after a halt at Heide.

Left
Pacific 1 030 races through Heide with CIWL stock.



Fortunately, I received valuable tips from the model railway club Post B from Roosendaal on how to make buildings from scratch. With their advice, and after six months of intensive work, my scale model of the station building was completed.

A station naturally also includes track. It was a long search to find out exactly how the tracks used to be. After research in the SNCB/NMBS archive, fellow villager Stan Wagemans came up with a track plan from 1927. (Surprisingly, the SNCB/NMBS itself could not find this plan in its own archive!) The track layout from that time was more extensive than expected and offered more possibilities for the layout. Until the electrification of Line 12 in 1957, the track plan remained unchanged. With this valuable information, we were able to get started.

The layout was constructed as five modules, each with a sturdy 12mm thick plywood frame. Three of these modules are 120cm long and 70cm wide. In addition, there is a shorter module of 60cm long and 70cm wide. In order to fit the layout in my hobby room, we also built a long module of 180cm x 70cm, which connects at an angle. This creates a gentle curve in the track and gives the layout a more natural look.

To give the construction extra stability, cross braces were added every 40cm. Within each frame, 2cm thick insulation panels of expanded polystyrene were placed. This material, which is made in one piece and does not contain insulation beads, is stronger and causes less waste during processing.

For extra strength, the track was laid on strips of plywood. The trackbed was simulated with a 4mm thick layer of cork, onto which the track were laid.

The track is from the Peco code 100 Streamline range. This makes it possible to run my older locomotives without any problems.

The original Peco double track spacing of 52mm was changed to 46mm, which brings the main tracks closer together and makes the whole thing look more realistic. A disadvantage of this change is that the points had to be modified.

In order to imitate the standard rail length (27m), notches were made in the rail head every 30cm with a saw.

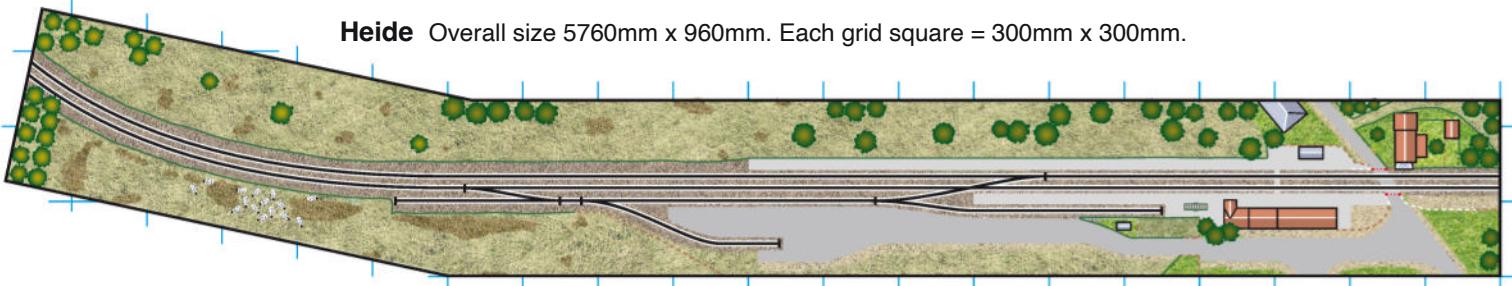
The rails were connected with joiners from Weinert, and a double sleeper was placed at each rail joint, as is customary on real tracks in Belgium.

The sleepers and rails were painted brown, because in reality, used rails have a brown tint and not the often used reddish-brown colour.

For the ballast bed, crushed sand was used, carefully sieved into different grades. The very finest, which looks almost like dust, was used for the platforms and walkways next to the tracks. Coarser pebbles served as track ballast and were fixed with diluted wood glue.

On less used tracks, such as those in the goods yard, the NMBS used fewer sleepers. Due to the low shunting speed and limited traffic, these sleepers were placed further apart. We have also applied this principle to the model. The sleepers of the Peco track were cut loose one by one and replaced with a gap of approximately 12mm. As a result, these sleepers are not perfectly parallel, which creates a visual contrast with the more regularly constructed main tracks.

Heide Overall size 5760mm x 960mm. Each grid square = 300mm x 300mm.





The sleepers in the goods yard were embedded in very finely sieved ash, originating from Essen station. To remove bacteria, fungi, and other vermin, the ash was heated on a glowing barbecue for half an hour after sieving. It was then fixed with diluted wood glue.

The goods yard was equipped with a scratchbuilt unloading platform, built with brick sheets from Slaters. The bluestone coping stones were imitated with mechanically processed Evergreen sections. The cobblestones on the surface were scribed in plaster. They were given a dark grey base colour that was made lighter using the dry brushing technique. All the cobblestone strips on the layout were made in this way – it gave us a few evenings of scribing fun!

Like every Belgian goods yard, Heide had a weighbridge and loading gauge. Both were constructed from kits from the PB-Messingmodelbouw range.



Top
The SNCB/NMBS series 25 were modified German BR44 three-cylinder 2-10-0s, without smoke deflectors.

Above
American-built 0-6-0T 58 031 positions a van at the loading dock.

Left
Former Prussian T9³ 2-6-0T now SNCB/NMBS 93 006 by the loading gauge and weighbridge.

Right
Coal shovelled by hand out of open wagons is weighed and bagged in the goods yard for local horse-drawn delivery.



Buildings

The buildings have all been made based on existing examples. I had a plan for the station building that was easy to scale, but there was no plan available for the hotel. Just before it was demolished, I was able to take photos. By counting the number of bricks and stone layers, I was able to make a drawing and rebuild it to scale.

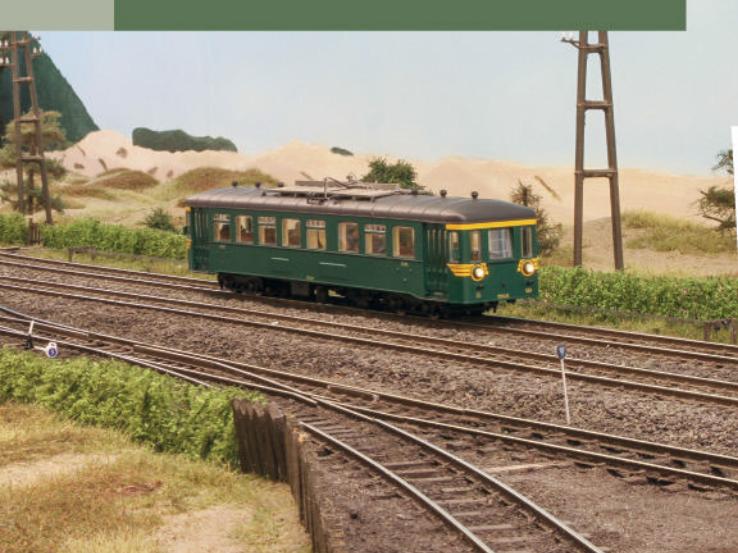
I also had no plans for the crossing keeper's house. The building had been demolished in the 1960s. Completely by chance, I came across the same type of house during a train ride in Duffel. A large number of photos were taken of this building and a drawing was made.



Above
0-6-OT 58 031 on a goods.
Timber pit props were
a common load.

Left
The level crossing
and keeper's house.





The buildings are all built using the same method. Slater's plasticard stone sheets were used to imitate the façade stone work. These sheets are only 0.5mm thick, so to provide sufficient strength they were glued onto 1mm thick white plastic sheet. The decorative arches above the windows were made from a narrow strip of Slater's sheet. This strip was cut halfway into the joint each time. This way, the strip can be bent and inserted above the window.

The windows were inserted after painting the plastic walls.

Due to the large number of windows and doors in the station building and in the keeper's house, a silicone mould was made from a master model. This made it easy to make many copies in resin. The cornices of the station building were also cast in resin. Laser cutting technology was used for the hotel.

The roofs were made with roof sheets and ridge tiles from Auhagen. The gutters were built with 1.5mm Evergreen angle section. The drainpipes were formed from 1mm plastic rod from Evergreen. The brackets and other details come from the Paul Bellon range. The roof tiles come from the Auhagen range.

Of course, the crossing installation also includes the rolling barriers. These were soldered up from etched frets from a kit by PB-Messingmodelbouw, modified to imitate the one at Heide.



Above left

Approaching the station is a larger class 553 diesel railcar.

Below

The following goods train is held at the signal.

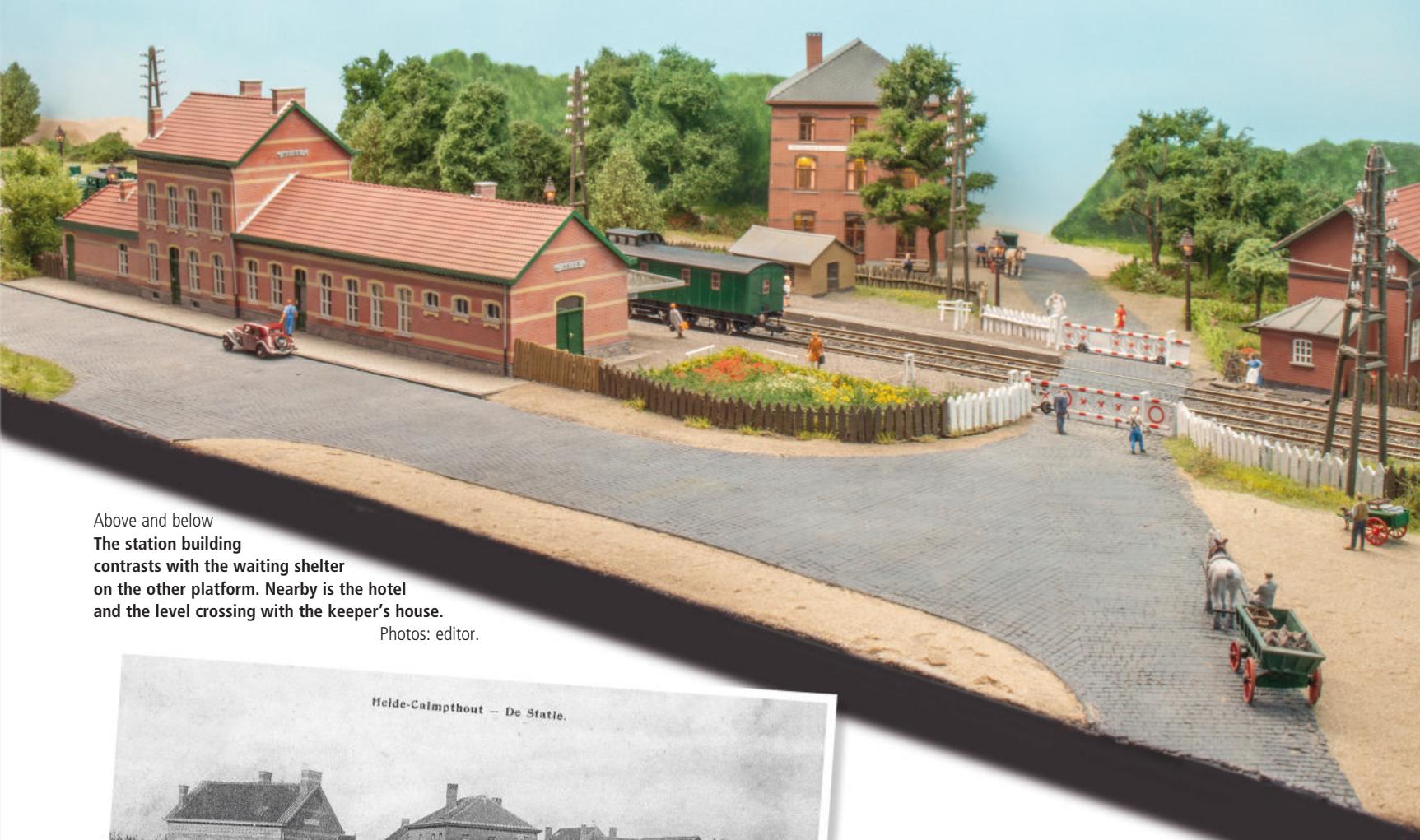
Landscape

The base of the landscape is a hard foam sheet covered with plaster. The dunes were formed by several layers of architect's card covered with plaster. After applying a yellow colour, the whole was sprinkled with sand from the Kalmthoutse Heide and glued. The sand from the Heide was first dried in the oven and sieved with a very fine kitchen sieve.

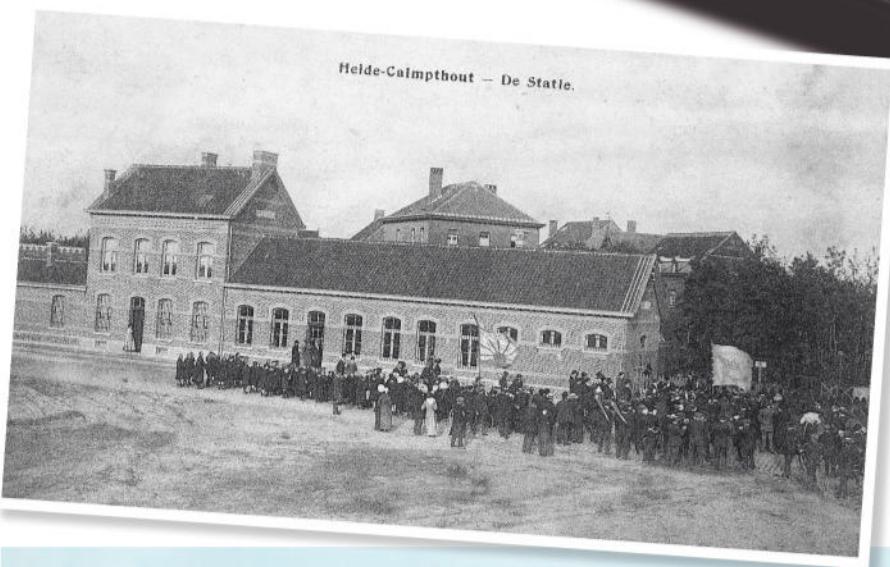
Fine peat from Woodland Scenics was used as the base of the grass and the heathlands. Several layers of static grass from Modelscene were applied to this. To imitate the heath plants required a long search. In the end I coloured the sand myself.

The Scots pines were made by twisting together iron wire and then sprinkling with static grass. These were the first trees that I made in this way. After some experimenting, I got the hang of the technique and built other trees and shrubs on the model railway in the same way.





Above and below
The station building
contrasts with the waiting shelter
on the other platform. Nearby is the hotel
and the level crossing with the keeper's house.
 Photos: editor.



Another search was needed to find a product to imitate beech hedges. These hedges used to be on both sides of the line to keep animals and trespassers off the tracks. Most of the hedges on the market are too thick or do not look natural. In the end I came across tree foliage from MiniNatur, and their beech foliage for N was convincing. It was cut into suitable strips.



Above
SNCF/NMBS 0-8-0T 53 055
rolls through the station
with a goods train.

At stations, the tracks were protected with a wooden fence. In Heide, these were made from old sleepers that were half dug into the ground. The top was sawn into a point so that they would rot less quickly. The fence was made in model from Evergreen strip onto which pieces of balsa wood were glued. A point was also cut on the top of each piece of wood.

The telegraph poles were made from wooden skewers. During modernisation work on Line 12, remains of old telegraph poles were dug up and removed. These poles had a diameter of 30cm. The skewers are 3mm diameter, perfect for replicating these poles. A point was ground at the top and holes were drilled for the insulators. The crossbars were made from the same skewers, glued between the poles. The

metal wire that reinforced the cross connections was imitated with a piece of lacquered wire from an old Märklin transformer. The metal mounting crossbar was imitated with a piece of Evergreen profile. The insulators are my own design, 3D-printed.

The semaphore signals on the layout are brass kits from PB-Messingmodelbouw. These were my first introduction to soldering etches. Although they are not the easiest kits to build, they produce beautifully detailed signals.

For the mechanical operation components, I went to the Bocq museum railway in Spontin to measure the construction accurately. Based on these measurements, I drew artwork for etching, which was done for me by Paul Bellon. Fitting it all was a precision job, but it adds a realistic and often overlooked detail to the layout.

Control

The layout is controlled digitally with an EcOS 2. The points and signals are operated by servos, controlled by two ESU Switchpilot servo modules. Each module was also given a Switchpilot extension to polarise the points and move them flawlessly.

The traffic can be controlled automatically with the free Dutch 'Koploper' program, which uses current detection and the S88 feedback bus. My friend Dirk took on a large part of the automation of the layout and I learned a lot from this.

Conclusion

I have participated in several exhibitions in Belgium and The Netherlands. At these events I could always count on the help of a number of friends, who helped me move, set up, and operate the layout. These were tiring but incredibly enjoyable excursions that would not have been possible without them. Thank you!





Right

Note the hotel has full interior detail.

Photo: editor.



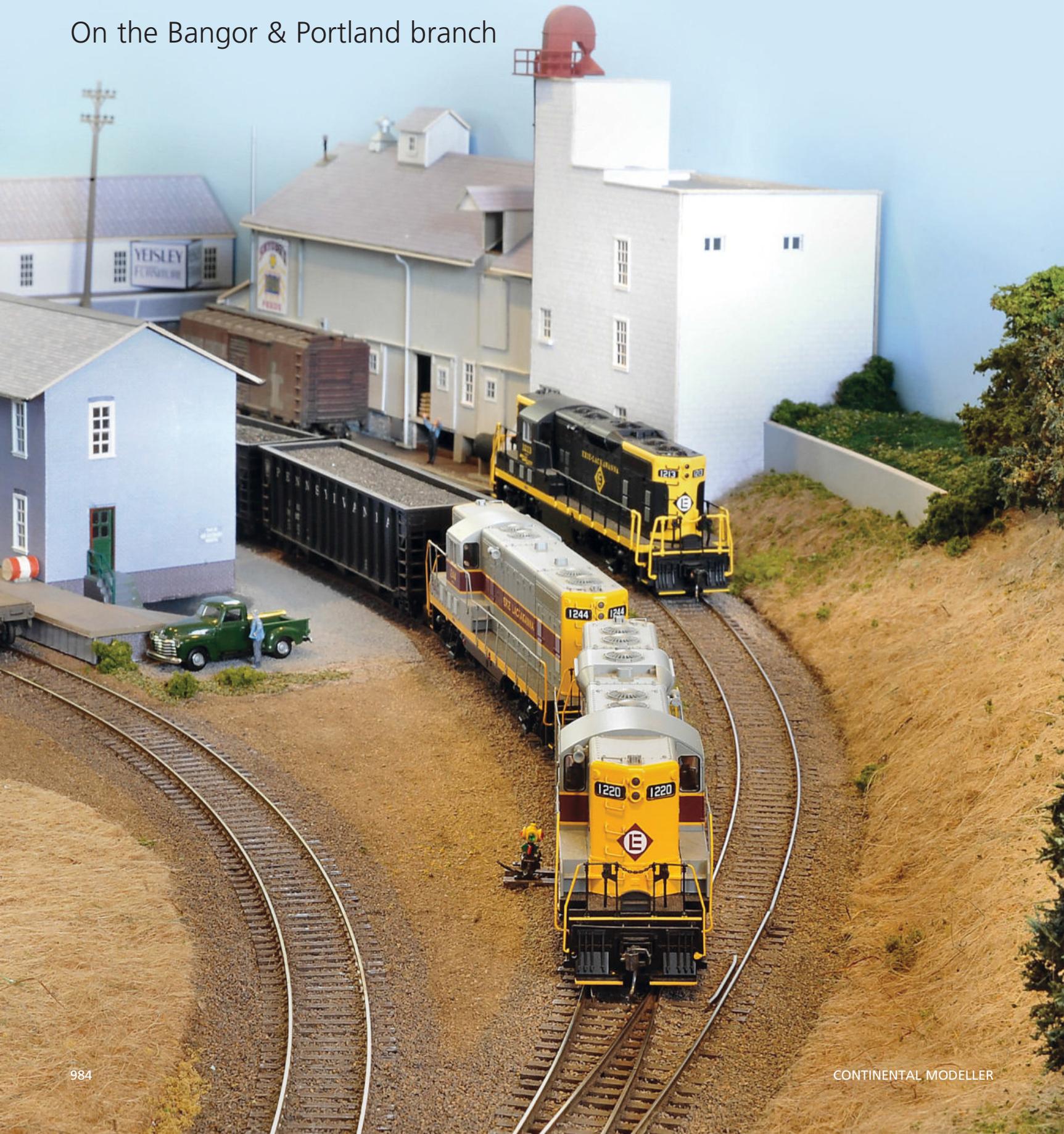
Above
Four-wheel inspection railcar 38025 is another distinctive Belgian vehicle.

Ian Wilson has developed his extensive American HO home layout, introduced in the October 2024 issue.

Model photographs by Tony Wright. Track plan by the author.

Return to Nazareth

On the Bangor & Portland branch



The full story of my model of the Erie Lackawanna's Bangor & Portland Branch appeared in the October 2024 issue of *CONTINENTAL MODELLER*, but at the time that issue went to press one corner of the layout still had temporary cardboard mock-ups representing the structures. That corner was Nazareth and the structures have now been replaced with scratchbuilt models.

Nazareth is a community in Pennsylvania's Northampton County – and yes, it was named for Nazareth in Israel. It was established in 1742 by a Moravian group which went on to form another community nearby and named it Bethlehem. This later became the location of a major locomotive servicing facility on the Central Railroad of New Jersey (CNJ) and the site of a large steel works also served by the Lehigh Valley and Reading railroads.



Above

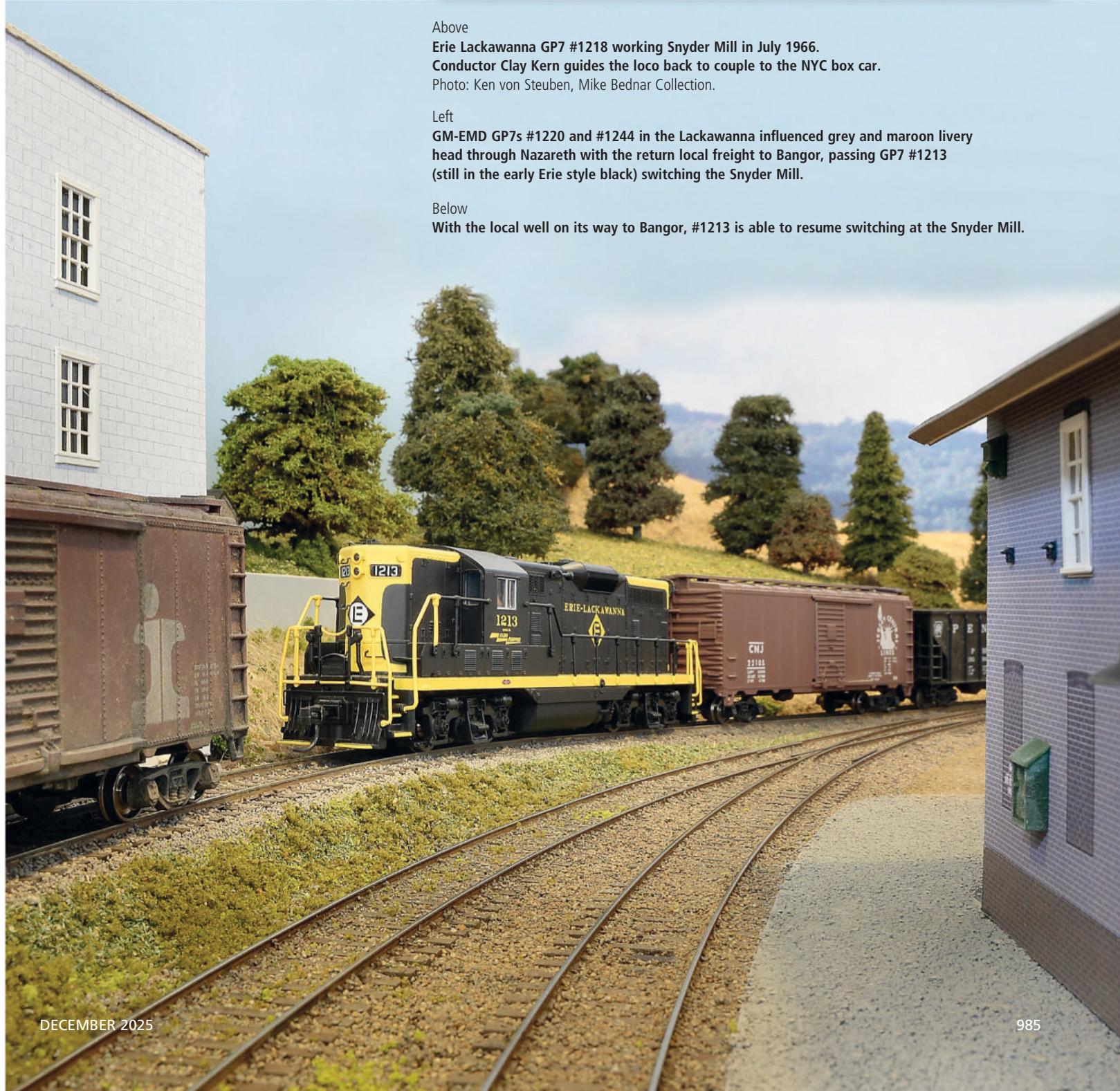
Erie Lackawanna GP7 #1218 working Snyder Mill in July 1966.
Conductor Clay Kern guides the loco back to couple to the NYC box car.
Photo: Ken von Steuben, Mike Bednar Collection.

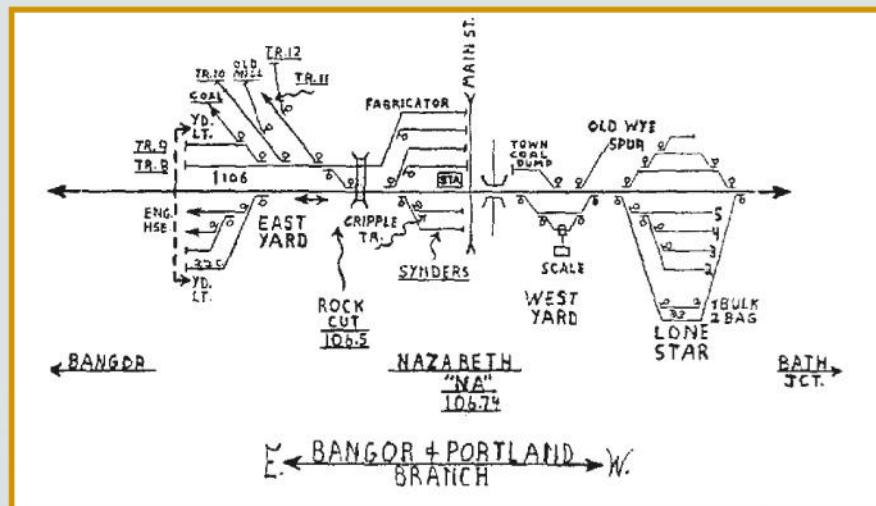
Left

GM-EMD GP7s #1220 and #1244 in the Lackawanna influenced grey and maroon livery head through Nazareth with the return local freight to Bangor, passing GP7 #1213 (still in the early Erie style black) switching the Snyder Mill.

Below

With the local well on its way to Bangor, #1213 is able to resume switching at the Snyder Mill.





LACKAWANNA FREIGHT STATION

On my EL Bangor & Portland layout Nazareth lies in a corner between Belfast Junction (Lehigh Valley interchange) and a cement plant – Kent Cement. Condensing a 20 mile branch line into a 24' x 14' area was quite a challenge and required selective compression (and much omission!) throughout. Nazareth was no exception and much of the more interesting trackwork and structures there had to be discounted for lack of space.

Above
Erie Lackawanna plan showing extent of tracks at Nazareth.
Note the mis-spelling 'Synders' and the second spur there
labelled 'Cripple Track'. Courtesy Bob Stafford.



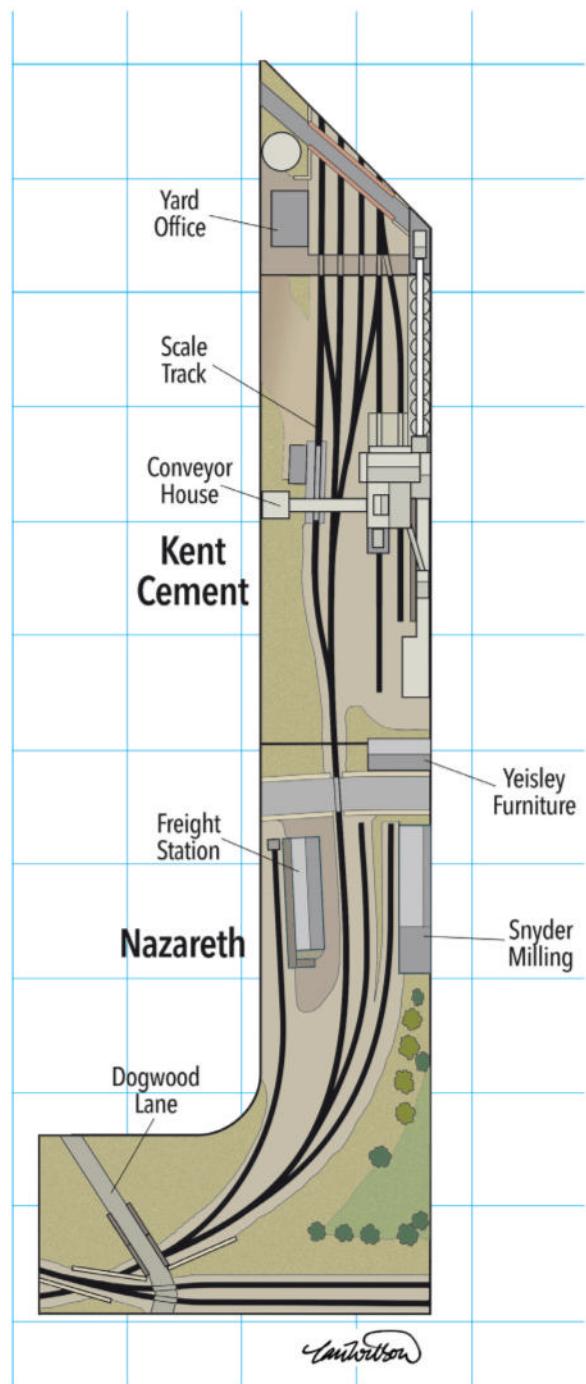
Left
Artwork for Nazareth
station nameboard.

Right
The station and Snyder Mill
in April 1960, before
the height of the mill
building was increased.
Photo: Ken von Steuben,
Mike Bednar Collection.

Below
For a time the EL tried
replacing two 1,500hp GP7s
with one 2,500hp GP35,
but it was not successful.
Here GP35 #2558 heads
covered cylindrical hoppers
through Nazareth.



The area I have modelled is the Main Street crossing where the Lackawanna freight house, Snyder Milling, and Yeisley furniture store were situated. The agent at the Nazareth freight house billed most of the paperwork for cement shipments on the branch, and freight handled would probably have been steel, oil and chemicals for a nearby engineering works. Snyder Milling would have received mainly bagged soybean meal arriving in box cars.





Armed with photographs of the area to be modelled in two excellent Morning Sun colour books – *Trackside around the Pennsylvania Cement District* and *Lackawanna Railroad Facilities in Colour, Volume 2*, I made a start on the Nazareth structures. Three of the prototype photographs from the books are featured here along with model views taken for direct comparison. The prototype pictures were taken by Ken von Steuben and are in the collection of Mike Bednar, whose railroad experience started in the 1960s on the Lehigh Valley, running through Conrail and Reading & Northern into the 1980s, and with help from Jaime Serenisits, the editor of *Trains & Railroads of the Past* magazine, I was fortunate to be given Mike's permission to use them.

Below
Prior to ballasting, the three structures at Nazareth were represented by cardboard mock-ups. This revealed the need for minor adjustments – the Snyders Mill track was slewed by a few millimetres and the goods platform on the freight station was made narrower to give more clearance between the structure and the main running line.



Left

The use of three Peco code #83 curved turnouts enabled Nazareth to fit into a relatively tight corner.

Right

Nazareth station,
Snyder Mill,
and Yeisley Furniture
in 1958, looking south,
with a cement plant
in the distance.

Photo: Ken von Steuben,
Mike Bednar Collection.



Below

The same view in model form,
with GP7 #1220
on the grade crossing.



Left

Artwork for
Yeisley Furniture nameboard,
to be folded at the centre
to the correct angle.





I took the dimensions of Snyder Milling from the instruction sheet for a kit of the structure previously (but no longer) available from Stella Scale Models in the USA, and I was able to scale the dimensions of the freight house and Yeisley Furniture from these measurements. Construction of the structures used a mix of card and Slater's Plastikard. The windows and doors in all three structures are from the comprehensive Tichy Train Group range. The elevator on mill building came from a Walthers grain conveyor kit kindly supplied by Graham Morfoot, who is a regular operator on the layout.

Photos showed that between 1960 and 1962 the height of part of Snyder Mill was increased and it is in this later state that the is modelled.

Using my graphic skills I produced the signage for all three buildings.

I obtained the grade crossing lights with lifting barriers for the Main Street crossing from a company called We Honest in China. These will be made fully operational when time permits!

All the time the layout remained operational, which is one of my priorities no matter what improvement work is taking place.

The Bangor & Portland branch was abandoned between Belfast Junction and Bath in 1979, but although the tracks are long gone the freight house at Nazareth still stands today and is in community use. The Snyder Milling building has been converted into living accommodation, but the Yeisley Furniture store is no longer there.

Above
Early power in EL days on the Bangor & Portland branch were Fairbanks Morse H-16-44s but they were sold off to Mexico by the mid 1960s. Here #1932 is switching the Snyder Mill with the Kent cement works in the distance.

Right
Artwork for the Snyder Mill nameboard.



Right
From 1968 the EL was part of the Dereco Group, which also included the Delaware & Hudson. This day the Snyder Mill job has drawn D&H RS3s #4085 and #4099 in company with EL caboose #C182.



Alasdair Reid rekindled an old interest in Norway for a permanent home layout.

Rosenfjord

The end of a Norwegian branch line



This is my second layout of this name. Construction of the first started in July 1977 following a holiday around Sognefjord and Voss. Progress was swift, then in January 1978 construction came to a halt when I got engaged to an Italian girl I had met at work. All money and energy went into our house, though a small branch terminus was built. (A house must have a model railway!)

It was inevitable that following our honeymoon in Italy my next layout would feature the FS (St.Nazario, see CM March/April 1981). (I wonder – is this the longest interval between magazine appearances?)

The years passed and my modelling was varied, to say the least. In 2010 I felt the urge to build a bucolic Scottish branch and my take on Dornoch to The Mound grew round three walls of the garage. It was a lovely layout but only required one tank loco, two coaches, and a few wagons. It soon became boring and all sorts of Scottish diesels began to appear, somewhat spoiling the atmosphere.



Above
A Di3 NoHAB has brought the passenger train into Rosenfjord station and the Skd shunter prepares to assemble an outgoing goods.



Above

**The start and end of the layout,
Rosendalen station and passing loop,
which serves as my fiddle yard.**

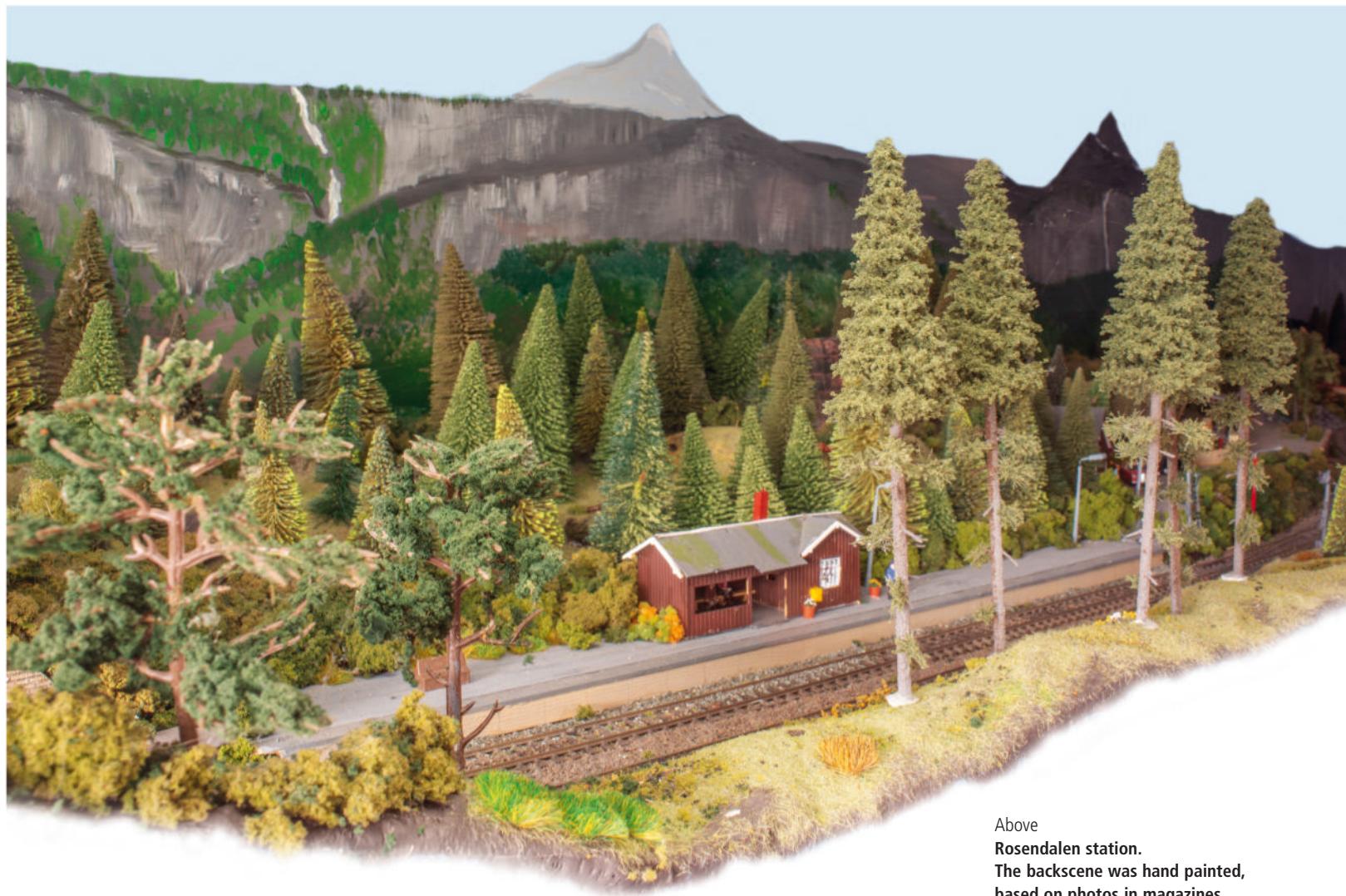
Left

A Di3 NoHAB arrives with the passenger train from Rosenfjord.

The big change came when I stumbled on the Norwegian cab ride videos on YouTube by RailCowGirl. Based in Voss, she is a driver for VY (formerly NSB) on the Bergen to Oslo line and the spectacular Flåm branch. I devoured these features. Then during the first Covid lockdown I was looking at the Contikits website and noticed an NSB coach and several wagons. I bought them for old time's sake, but when I put them on the layout I soon decided it would not take much work to convert it from Scotland to Norway. The die was cast and over the next few months the backscenes were repainted while regular parcels arrived from Contikits, Gaugemaster, and Golden Valley Hobbies.

A trip along the line

For the last forty years or so my layouts have been fiddle yard to terminus, except that I do not adhere to the convention of a hidden fiddle yard. I do not believe that is necessary on a home layout, so all of mine have had full scenery. Most have been in the form of a junction station, but on this layout that was not possible so I have modelled the passing loop in Rosendalen.



Above
Rosendalen station.
 The backscene was hand painted,
 based on photos in magazines.

Below and below right
There is not much
 at Rosendalen, just a house
 and the timber yard.

The layout begins with the obligatory road bridge over the end of the station platform. Like many Norwegian stations, there is a platform only on one side of the loop. The station building is a lovely Auhagen kit but is due to be replaced with a scratchbuilt structure based on one on the Flåm line.



Behind the station a heavily forested slope sweeps up to the painted cliffs, copied from those on the amazing Raumabanen. A small path leads up from the end of the platform to the road. The only house is a venerable Playcraft kit of a farmhouse and barn, sourced by my good friend Julian Andrews. The barn was used separately, over at the harbour.

Just along the road is a small woodyard owned by a K.S.Dufay – the RailCowGirl who inspired the layout.





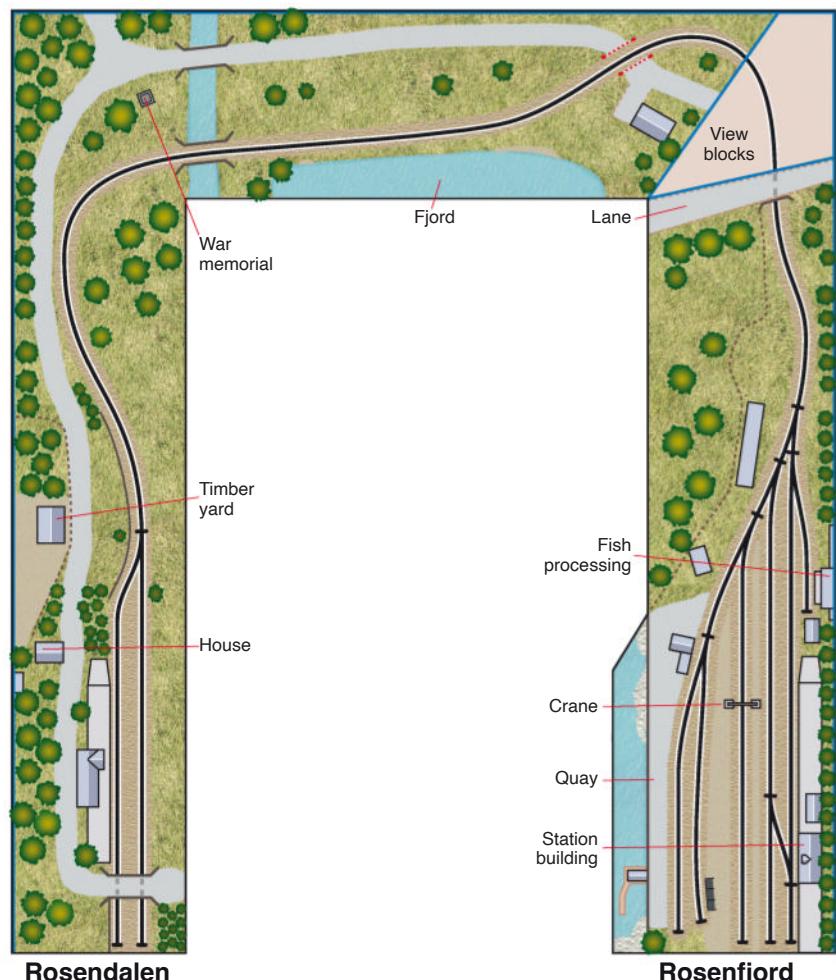
Above
A load of timber
rolls over the river bridge
behind the Skd shunter.

Below
The level crossing,

As the road runs up to join the main road, the line heads downhill in a sinuous curve to reach the board across the end of the garage.

The road has also dropped down and crosses a fast flowing river next to the railway bridge. Rail and road now run alongside each other beside a small lake. A family has parked up, crossed the line, and are enjoying a picnic by the water. Meanwhile out on the lake a sea eagle has caught a fish for its lunch.

The road swings right, the railway left and there is a level crossing. The railway disappears through a large V-shaped view block (necessary to accommodate the fuse box and electric meter!). The line then re-appears and enters Rosenfjord.





Above
A busy day for the shunter
as it passes by the lake
with a return load.
Note sea eagle fishing.



Below
The distinctive fish building
near the entrance
to Rosenfjord station yard
was a whisky distillery on
the previous Scottish layout
and is due to be replaced.

Here the track layout is unchanged from its Scottish origins, using Peco code 75 fine scale track with electrofrog points. The plan is simple. A short siding goes off to the left to what was the small engine shed at Dornoch. This later became a distillery in the generic Scottish setting, and is now a fish processing factory.

The main line runs on towards the platform, and the station building is a fabulous Faller kit. The scene is backed by lots of trees.

The run-round loop can hold three bogie coaches or up to seven four-wheel freight wagons. Two sidings serve as the freight yard.

During my 1977 trip I travelled over the Hardangerbanen, a wonderful line from Voss to Granvin. Here 'flat' timber was brought in and transferred to a local factory which made pallets. In turn they went out in open wagons. This traffic is replicated on the layout. Granvin was the subject of an article in the January/February 1982 edition.

The other siding serves the quayside. Ships outgrew this quay and are off stage! A Hurtigruten shipping line office beside the station hints at this. A small (Kibri) ferry still serves an off-shore island, carrying general cargo on its flat rear deck. The other boats are small yachts and cabin cruisers (Kibri), while Noch and Busch motor boats complete the scene around the yacht club.

From the viewing side a steep wooded hill slopes down to the line. One rule of thumb if modelling Norway - if you think you have enough trees, you do not! At least double it!

Operation

At the end of the layout I have an Ikea cabinet on which I have stacked three clear plastic units which hold all my wagons; I leave the coaches at Rosendalen station platform. In the loop I will make up a freight – always two stake wagons loaded with timber and an open wagon. Sometimes this will carry an inbound load. There may also be a DB van (carrying marine engines), a cement silo, and NSB vans for general merchandise. The NoHAB diesel will take this train to Rosenfjord and run round, ready to take the outbound train back up the line. I will then spend a happy half-hour with the wee Skd shunter pushing and pulling wagons around the yard before getting the next day's outbound train ready. Simple fun.

Stock

Motive power is sparse. There is a classic NoHAB diesel, NSB Di3 629, a 70th birthday present from my wonderful wife. It is a big step up from the Tri-Ang Transcontinental General Motors diesel I had decades ago!

The other loco is a type Skd four-wheel diesel shunter, NSB 224 214. It was found for me on eBay by Julian Andrews.

Both models are by NMJ and are excellent runners.

Coaching stock is just two NSB bogie coaches, also by NMJ; they were a matching gift from our daughter.

I have twenty-four goods wagons. Also for that significant birthday our son and daughter-in-law bought me a rake of five loaded timber wagons from NMJ, and in the same order I got two vans. (Beware the customs duty!) The rest were acquired secondhand, either from Contikits or picked up at exhibitions, though it must be said finding Norwegian stock is not common!



Conclusion

This is likely to be my last layout, and I love it. I would like another diesel loco, and a railcar would be good, but otherwise it is complete.

I must close with some thanks:

- to Julian Andrews, for encouragement and nigh on forty years of friendship;
- to Contikits, Gaugemaster, and Golden Valley Hobbies (usual disclaimer!);
- to various Norwegian modelling Facebook pages which I follow for inspiration;
- to my family for those wonderful birthday presents;
- and above all to my wife, for supporting my hobby since 1978.

Above

Overall view of Rosenfjord. The NSB bus was bought secondhand at a show – back in 1977 I had a new one!

Right

Rosenfjord station, yard, and quayside. The small fjord ferry approaches the quay. On the right is the yacht club.

Photographs by the editor.



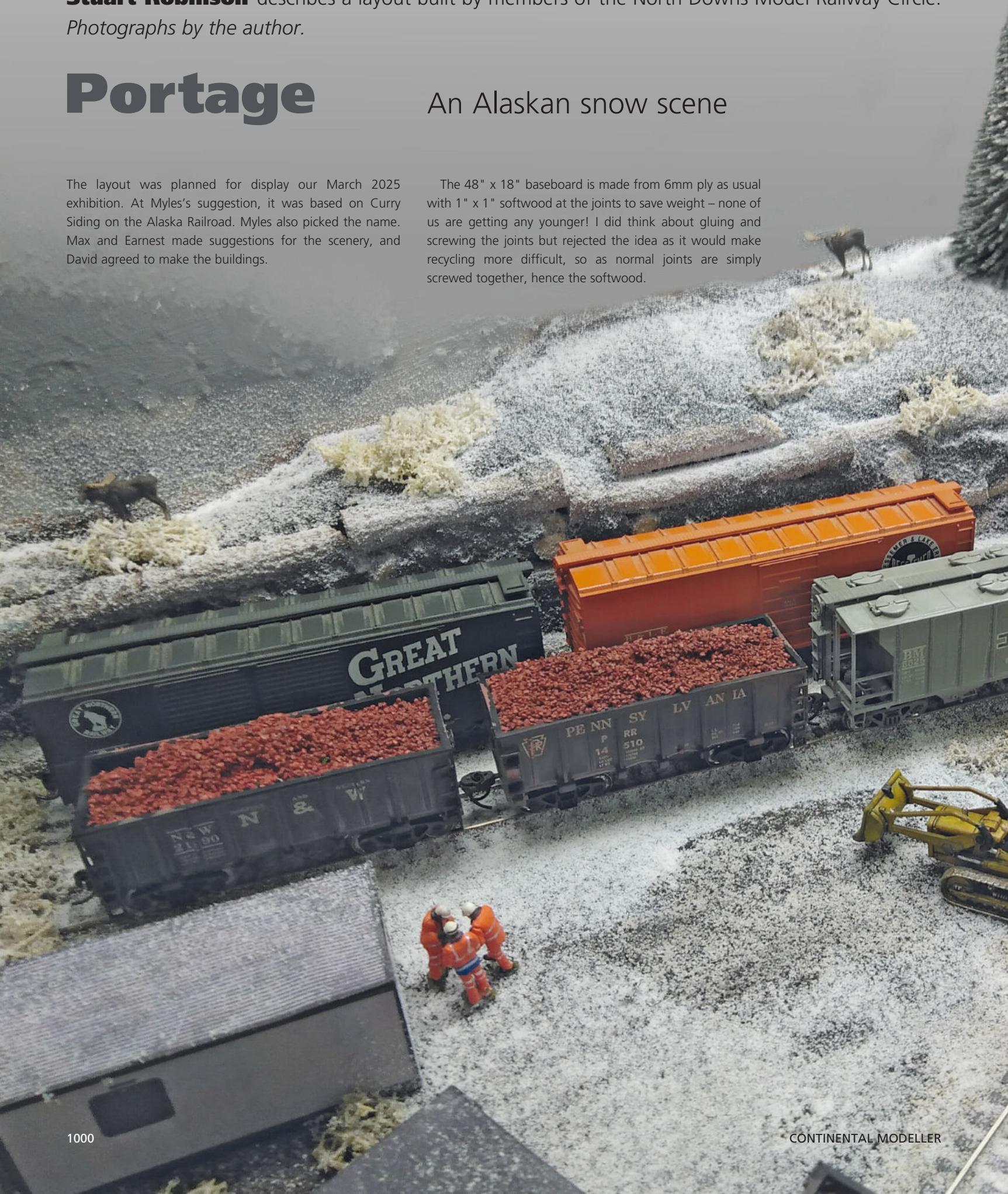
Stuart Robinson describes a layout built by members of the North Downs Model Railway Circle.
Photographs by the author.

Portage

An Alaskan snow scene

The layout was planned for display our March 2025 exhibition. At Myles's suggestion, it was based on Curry Siding on the Alaska Railroad. Myles also picked the name. Max and Earnest made suggestions for the scenery, and David agreed to make the buildings.

The 48" x 18" baseboard is made from 6mm ply as usual with 1" x 1" softwood at the joints to save weight – none of us are getting any younger! I did think about gluing and screwing the joints but rejected the idea as it would make recycling more difficult, so as normal joints are simply screwed together, hence the softwood.





Curry Siding is just that – a single siding, so to make Portage more interesting to operate and watch, a three-way point was added. The three-way was used as it maximised train length. In retrospect, I am not sure it was such a bright idea – two separate points may have been better.

There were problems with the first point and my clumsy attempt at repairs wrote it off – rather painful given the cost. The replacement also had problems and some gentler adjusting still did not resolve them.

My next idea was to lift the point so it could be operated using sprung steel rods (piano wire). The attraction was the rods could be soundly pinned in place stopping the point blades from springing away from the rails, which was causing problems for some of the longer stock. With great trepidation I started. I cut the rail joiners at the single end, poured boiling water on to unglue the ballast, then lifted the point with a putty knife. Next I removed the remnants of the joiners. So far so good. I then marked where to drill the holes for the rod, and drilled the holes. I replaced the joiners, ensuring they slid down the rails so they did not stick out. I then tried to replace the point. There was a problem. While I could get the three-way to line up with the back and middle sidings, I could not do so with the front siding. I had to lift the point again, remove the offending joiners and ensure their replacements were slid well back so they did not stick out. I then relaid the point – all the joiners fitted. Great! Next I used a GP7 for test runs over the point to make sure it worked – thankfully it did. Then I fitted the point rods. The GP7 came out again and the point was checked with the point thrown with the rods – again success. This was followed by making good. The joiners were painted 'rust', the point was re-ballasted, and given a coat of snow. Yet again the GP7 came out for a test run – the point worked.

As normal, wires were soldered to a tag strip hidden by one of David's buildings. The layout is linked to the controller and transformer by computer cables and plugs. Two wires connect to the track.

Track is ballasted with a homemade ballast mix glued down with scenic glue.

The backscene is my first attempt to paint a winter storm scene and is based on a photo I found on the internet of a storm in Alaska. There were three attempts the left-hand side, next the centre, and finally the right. This part was felt to be the most successful by Myles, Earnest, Max, and Jeff. In the future I think I will try painting the backscenes light grey then add the clouds.

The back of the layout is a bluff held in place by cribbing. I used expanded polystyrene to form the bluff. I then cut the 'logs' to form the cribbing from branches of tree in my garden. They were glued in place and gaps between filled with expanded polystyrene. The polystyrene but not the wood was carefully covered in dirt from my garden glued in place with scenic glue – one part wood glue, three parts water, and a dash of washing-up liquid.

Left

All switching work is accomplished by Transrail #147, an Athearn GM-EMD SW1500. Transrail is an imaginary railroad, created by Steve Adcock for his *Ansell Ferry* layout, which was featured in CM in March and May 2003.

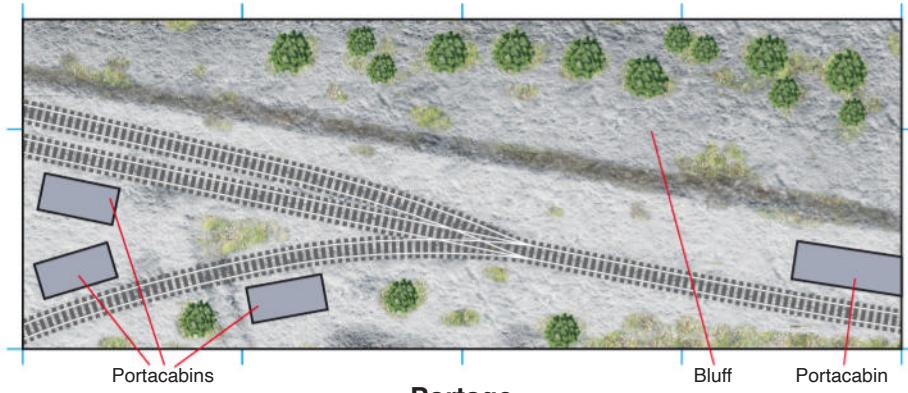


In front of the cribbing the ply was covered in dirt that was scenic glued in place. In one place at the front I added a small piece of expanded polystyrene to make things look more interesting and to give somewhere to plant trees. I then added details – pools with rivulets linking them to pipes 'under' the track; in fact the pipes are styrene tubes painted brick red at the edge of the ballast. Sadly they and the water are largely concealed by the snow.

Myles added bushes and fir trees by gluing them in holes.

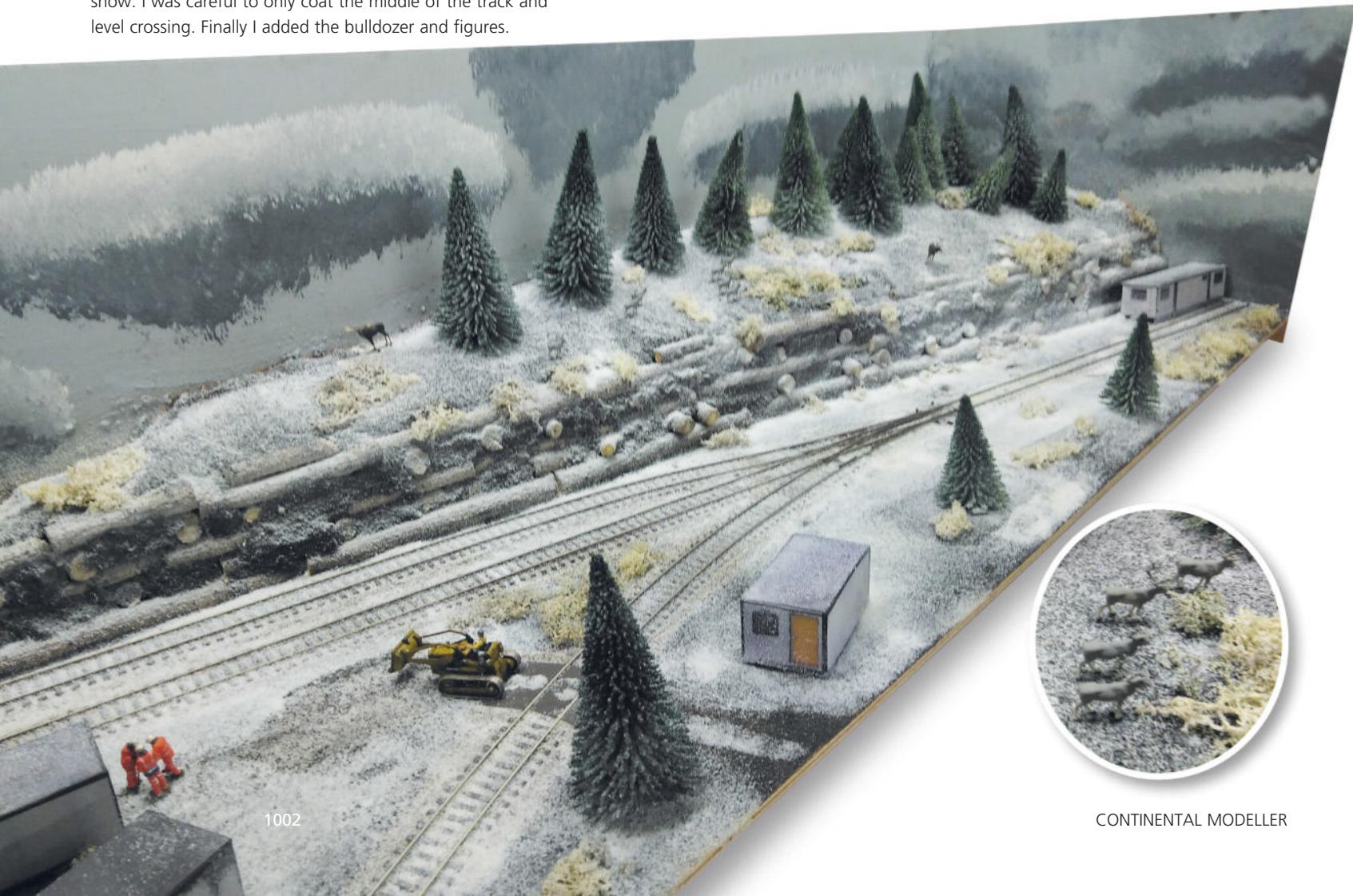
David built four portacabins, one specially designed to cover the tag strip.

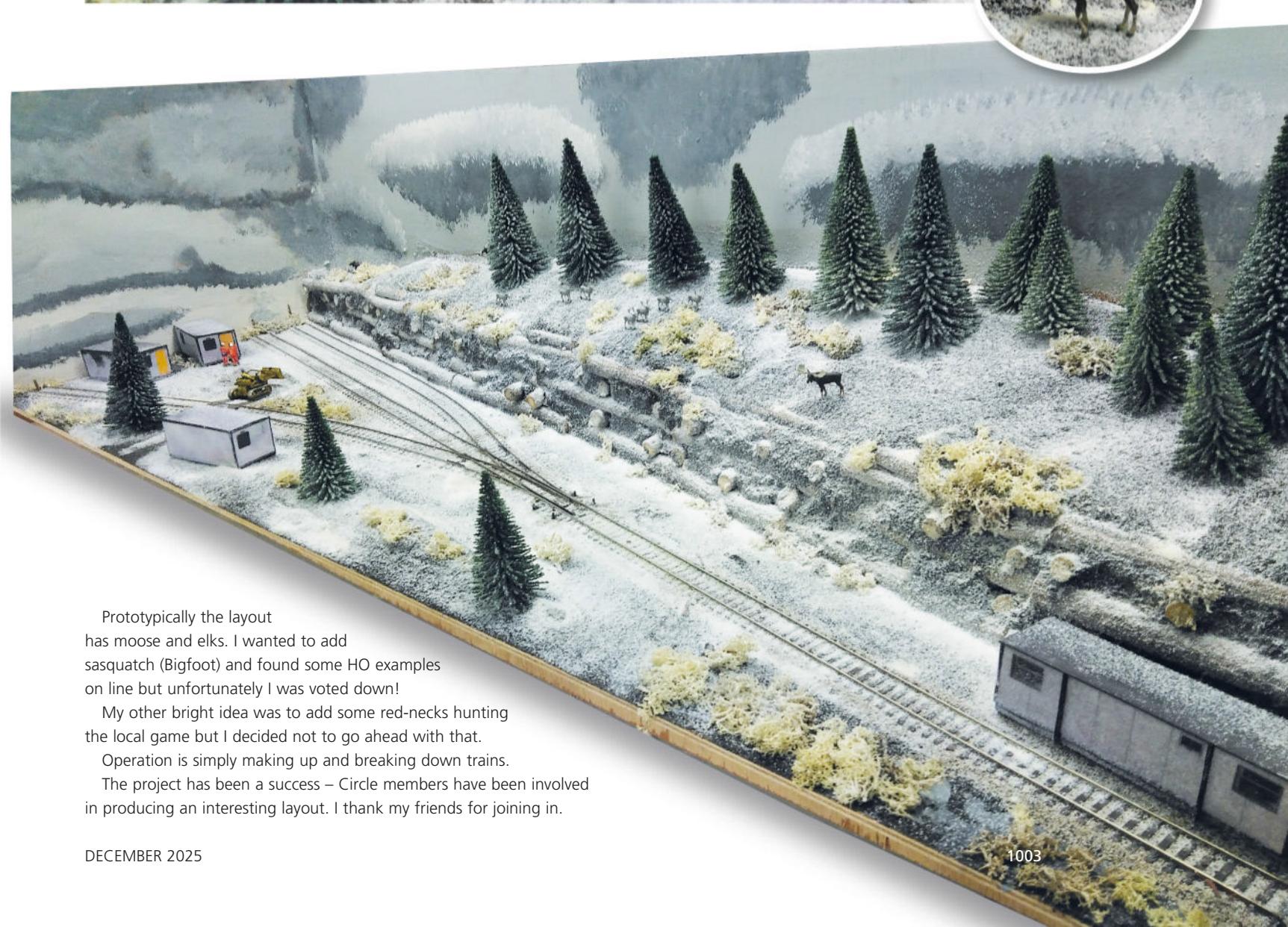
Next I added the snow. I coated the area I intended to cover with scenic glue, put the model snow on my hand, then blew it onto the glued to give the effect of windblown snow. I was careful to only coat the middle of the track and level crossing. Finally I added the bulldozer and figures.



Portage

Overall layout size 4' x 1' 6". Each grid square = 1' x 1'.





Prototypically the layout has moose and elks. I wanted to add sasquatch (Bigfoot) and found some HO examples on line but unfortunately I was voted down!

My other bright idea was to add some red-necks hunting the local game but I decided not to go ahead with that.

Operation is simply making up and breaking down trains.

The project has been a success – Circle members have been involved in producing an interesting layout. I thank my friends for joining in.

Maurizio Tolini tells the story of a layout he saw, bought, altered, and sold.

Photographs by the author.

Chrüzalp

Mostly made with cardboard

As modellers, sometimes we get anchored to techniques that become more and more rigid and persist even when they no longer have a reason to exist. Sometimes we hide behind preconceptions related to our own experience and resist designing or creating something innovative.

The layout featured here represents something I found beautiful and achievable, according to the famous modelling motto: "low cost – high yield".

After almost fifty years of experience in modelling using plastics, I came across something unique, inconceivable until then. At first glance *Chrüzalp*, as its builder had named it, was simply beautiful and eye-catching. It was for sale and I had no hesitation in making an offer, which was accepted. Once it arrived in my workshop, I had a surprise – it was largely made of cardboard!

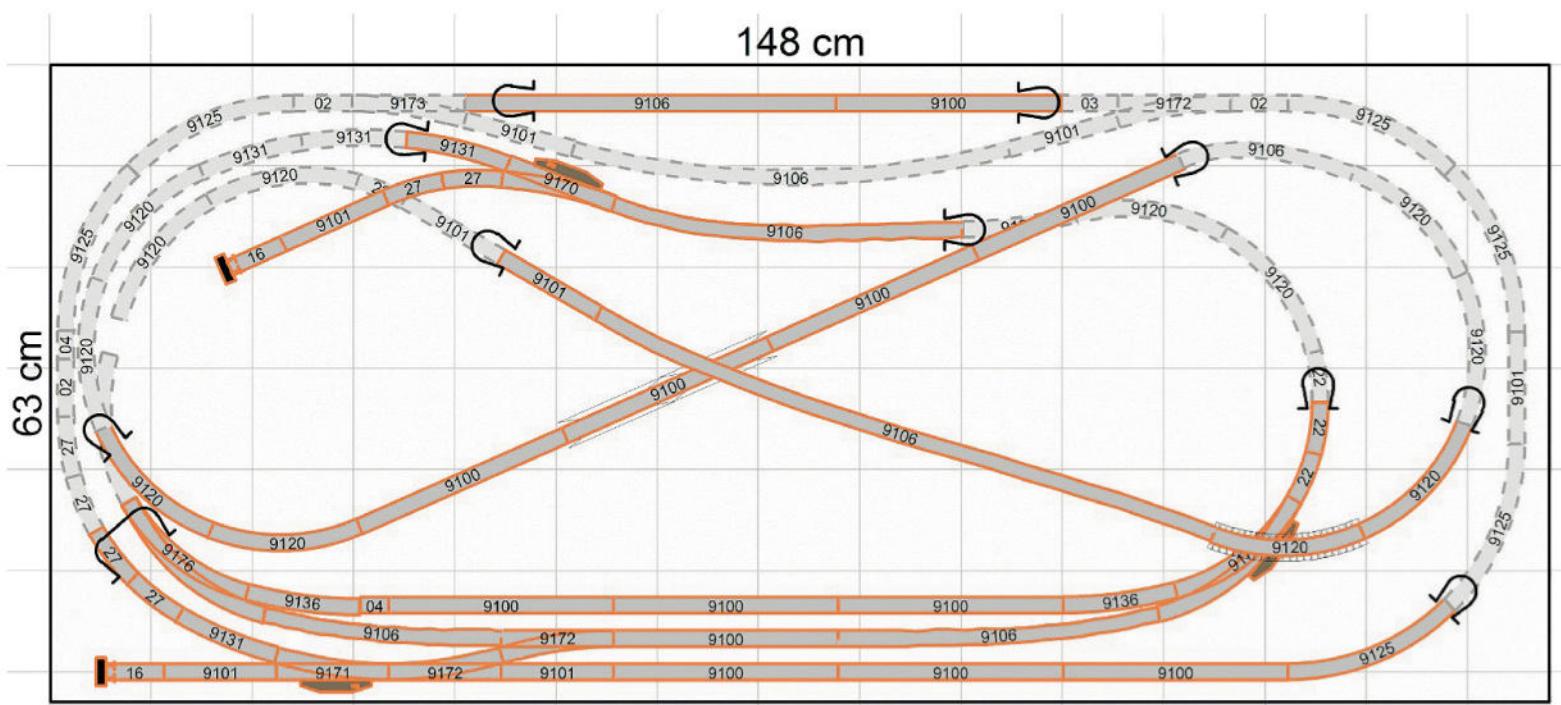




Above
I decided to run Kato
Rhätische Bahn stock
on the mountain circuit
and standard gauge
on the plains section.



Left and right
The layout as I first saw it.



My baseboard construction philosophy has always been linked to wood, mainly in the form of plywood sheet, with the frame cut away as necessary to save weight and allow

access, with plywood for the trackbed. I knew cardboard could be used for buildings, but a card baseboard was really something new.

Below
The left side of the layout
as it came. The crossover
at the end of the platform
is the only link between
the upper and lower circuits.





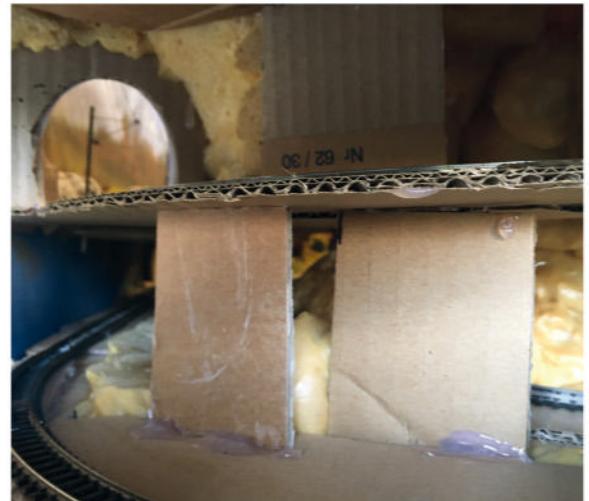
Above
I was surprised to discover that the entire baseboard was made of cardboard.

Above right
Card had also been used extensively for the structure of the scenery.

Analyzing the construction in more detail, I saw that recycled corrugated cardboard had been used in large part, together with polyurethane foam and hot glue where there was a need for quick setting, making everything compact and extremely light as well as rigid.

Chrüzalp measures 148cm x 63cm and is framed on three sides by a hand-painted backdrop, also made of recycled cardboard, which gives a remarkable depth.

The original track was Minitrix with tight R1 curves (194.6mm radius) with the bad practice of kinks to reduce



the width even more. Other curves were R2 (228.2mm) and R3 (329mm). To make the original layout more functional, I adapted it with Fleischmann Piccolo track without ballast, including two curved points, as shown on the diagram (with Fleischmann reference numbers).

The two circuits, mountain and plain, are electrically separate; this allowed the circulation of two trains simultaneously in opposite directions with the use of two analogue power supplies. I opted to add digital operation on the low line and retained analogue on the high one.

Below
The right side of the layout as it came.





Above
Simple switches control the analogue 'metre' gauge while the standard gauge has been converted to DCC.

Above right
The signals have been made to work with LEDs but are not integrated with the control system.

Left
The upper circuit loops around the castle at the summit of the climb.



Right
There is a hidden loop on the low level under this section of the upper circuit as it climbs over the base level line.

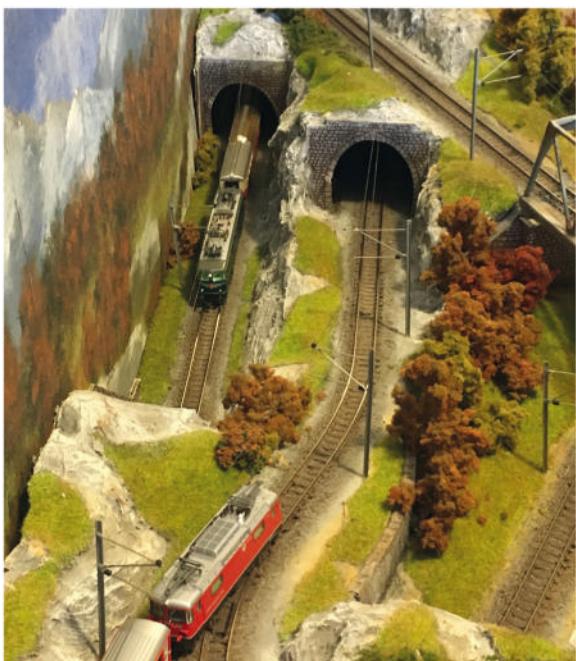


The masts and portals of the overhead were scratchbuilt with pieces of brass section and pins firmly glued and/or soldered according to the template. The catenary is arranged so that the pantographs do not actually make contact, for ease of use and reliability. The contact wire is black sewing cotton, stretched and glued.

The Swiss type signals were also scratchbuilt, simply with red and green LEDs; they have no influence on the trains.

The landscape was created using polyurethane foam, carved with care and abundantly covered with plaster, painted with water colours. The ground cover used classic commercially available fibres, along with shrubs and trees.

Below
The overhead masts were scratchbuilt from brass. Locos run with pantographs raised but held just under the contact wire – hardly apparent to viewers.





Above
Kato Rhätische Bahn Ge4/4II
and EWII standard coaches
on the girder bridge.

Left
The card castle
on the left hand side.

Above right
The card church
on the right hand side.



Right
The goods shed,
with a standard gauge
sliding side four-wheel van.



The buildings are made of colour printed cardboard and look truly impressive, blending harmoniously with the surrounding landscape, in my opinion more to scale than many of the plastic kits on the market.

When I first saw *Chrüzalp*, I thought it would go very well with the Kato models of the Rhätische Bahn stock, both for aesthetic effect and because those models will negotiate curves impossible for so many other N gauge items.

The modified layout was shown at a couple of trade fairs, and has now been sold on. Ironically, it is back where it came from, in Switzerland. With the proceeds, I built a new layout, using Tomix track and simple, cheap infrastructure. It is never too late to learn something new!

A word about my experience with Tomix track. Encouraged by the attractive geometry, together with the fact that the point motors are conveniently concealed in the ballast, I procured enough track for the construction of the layout. However, the magnificent curved points, the double slips, and the tramway points proved unsuitable for European rolling stock. Even the Kato RhB stock had problems, with the snowploughs catching on the point check rails, sometimes derailing. The problem is due to the limited height of the rail (only 0.5mm). This affects even high quality models.

Searching the internet looking for inspiration for new small layouts, I came across some images of a model that looked like *Chrüzalp*. Having refined my research, I went back to the original builder: Manfred Feiss, a Swiss model maker whose masterpieces can be seen on www.9-mm.ch

An admirer of N, and a skilled designer, he has created different types of cardboard buildings, a myriad of structures, from stations to castles, some of which can be downloaded and printed in colour. See www.mf-modellbau.ch

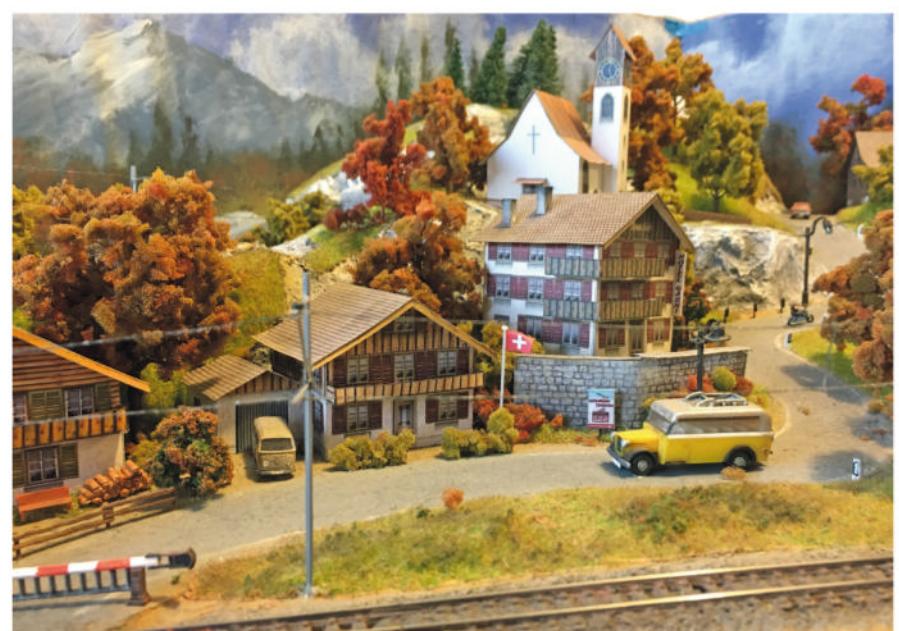


Right
The modified layout.



While browsing, you come across various modelling projects, explained in great detail, with helpful suggestions. It is a site I have saved as a favourite.

Below
Card houses beside the line.



Tim Mulhall tells how ChatGPT unexpectedly assisted with a particular modelling task.

Photographs by the author.

AI in modelling

More useful than anticipated for a very specific project

I enjoy making use of high tech and cutting-edge products, both at work and in my hobbies. I have owned a 3D printer for a few years now and used it occasionally for printing items where someone has kindly created the software design file and shared it online. However, my abilities for designing myself ended with O level Technical Drawing! Creating Computer Aided Design (CAD) electronic drawing files is beyond me.

Recently I was working on a section of my Swiss layout, specifically trying to create a small Rhätische Bahn junction station. I had laid the two lines arriving from different locations, but had not felt the need to set the tracks perfectly parallel to each other. The island platform was going to have a taper!

Reviewing copies of the Swiss Railways Society magazine, I realised that the low height platforms were not going to be possible to recreate by simply glueing some scatter or gravel in place. I would need a proper platform with facings and surface.

Turning to my computer and its web browser, I pondered where I could find the official dimensions for a standard low height platform and whether I would be lucky enough to find a drawing scaled to HO which would support my cardboard creation. Instead of simply searching using Google I visited the ChatGPT website (<https://chatgpt.com/>)

ChatGPT is an Artificial Intelligence program – AI for short. Instead of simply trying to match words in your search question with web pages, it can understand your question and then produce an answer from the web and its own library of knowledge. It is not foolproof, though, and the response does depend on you knowing the best way of asking the question.

I have learned to layer my questions – start with a simple and broad question, then add detail and complexity to develop a more detailed and accurate answer. I have learned that posing the entire problem in one go has a habit of getting ChatGPT confused and lowering its likelihood of providing a good answer.

1

Can you find an article and ideally scale drawings of RhB model railways low height platforms - for recreation on an HO 1:87 model railway

So, my first question was simply to look for potential information. [Screenshot 1](#)

It took around 12 seconds to find and summarise the official Swiss standards, providing a link to the official source – useful to allow me to double check the details. [Screenshot 2](#)

ChatGPT remembers previous conversations, so knowing that I had an interest in a real HO layout it made its first intuitive leap. Instead of simply providing a link to a photo or

2

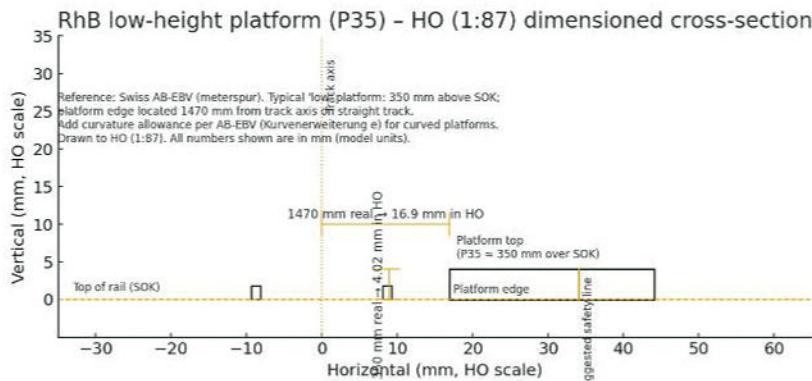
The key prototype dims (RhB / Swiss standards)

- **Platform height (low / "P35"):** typically 350 mm above rail top (SOK). On Swiss Schmalspur networks this is the reference height; 300–400 mm occurs, but 350 mm is the norm. [bav.admin.ch](#)
- **Platform edge offset (straight track, meter-gauge):** the typical "normal" edge is 1 470 mm from the track centerline, with additional curvature allowance (Kurvenerweiterung e) in curves (value per AB-EBV tables). [bav.admin.ch](#)
- **Real RhB example:** Klosters-Platz rebuild documented 370 mm over SOK and uses the same edge/curvature logic—useful to see how RhB applies the standard. [gr.ch](#)

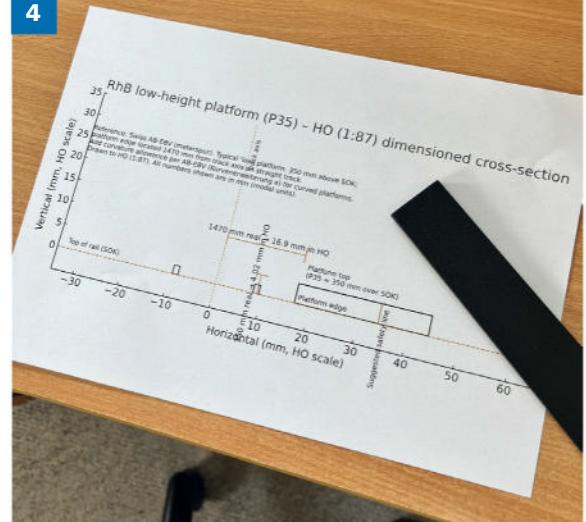
If you want the safety/marking details (tactile safety line etc.), those are laid out in the official BAV "Taktile-visuelle Markierung von Bahnperrons" guide, which pairs with the AB-EBV rules. [bav.admin.ch](#)



Thought for 3m 1s



3



4

If you'd like, I can also generate:

- a **plan-view template (PDF)** you can print and lay over your baseboard to set the edge and safety line, or
- a **laser-cutting/3D-print pattern** for repeatable platform modules.

Geometry choices

Prototype baseline (AB-EBV, meterspur):

- Platform height: 350 mm real \rightarrow 4.0 mm in HO.
- Edge offset from track axis: 1470 mm real \rightarrow 16.9 mm in HO.
- Platform top width: typically 3–4 m real \rightarrow 34–46 mm in HO.
(We can parametrize this; I'll default to 40 mm.)
- Module length for printing: e.g. 60 mm / 120 mm so they fit common print beds.

Two printable parts:

1. Platform face (edge wall) – vertical fascia with slight chamfer at top.
2. Platform module (top + face) – rectangular block, printable flat, used directly if you don't want separate faces.

Thought for 1m 6s

Sweet — I've generated a small RhB low-platform kit in HO (1:87) as ready-to-slice STL files. They use the 4.0 mm platform height with a subtle 0.5 mm 45° bevel along the platform edge.

Download the STLs

- Platform block – 60 x 40 x 4 mm (with top-edge chamfer)
[Download](#)
- Platform block – 120 x 40 x 4 mm (with top-edge chamfer)
[Download](#)
- Platform face (fascia) – 60 mm long, 1 mm thick, 4 mm tall (with bevel)
[Download](#)
- Platform face (fascia) – 120 mm long, 4 mm thick, 4 mm tall (with bevel)
[Download](#)

5

drawing, it offered to draw a clean engineering drawing of the platforms itself!

Three minutes later I had a design based upon official plans. [Screenshot 3 and photo 4](#)

It also gave me a summary of how the model railway community created similar platforms and gave me a few 'quick tips' on building and making it look more realistic!

I had assumed this would be the end of my discussion with ChatGPT, but then it surprised me with its next response – completely unprompted. [Screenshot 5](#)

It offered to create a full CAD drawing which I could produce on a 3D printer. I could not believe it would have this skill – so I accepted the offer.

[Screenshot 6](#) shows the technical details it would follow for the drawing and [screenshot 7](#) the briefing it gave on the files it was creating – the CAD file format is known as an .STL file.

Checking these on my computer and test printing one platform proved the design was ideal. So good was the result, that I realised within ten minutes of my first question I had something which matched a commercial product!

I subsequently uploaded the files to an online platform to allow other people to benefit from the designs.

I still needed to produce a customised variant to fit the space available as the track was already fixed in place. Providing ChatGPT with the start and finish width of the tapering platforms resulted in a new set of .STL files for my unique layout situation.

The files were sent to the 3D printer in two batches, and two hours later I had platforms ready to place on the layout – a perfect fit. [Photo 8](#)

7



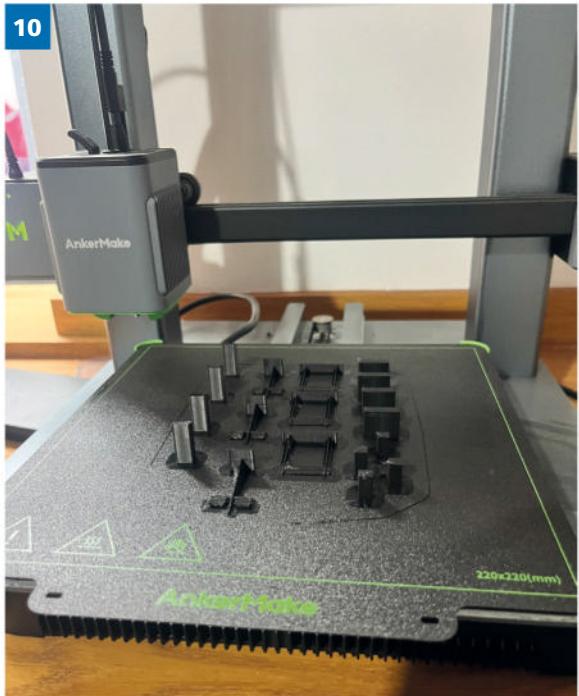
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Thought for 2m 28s

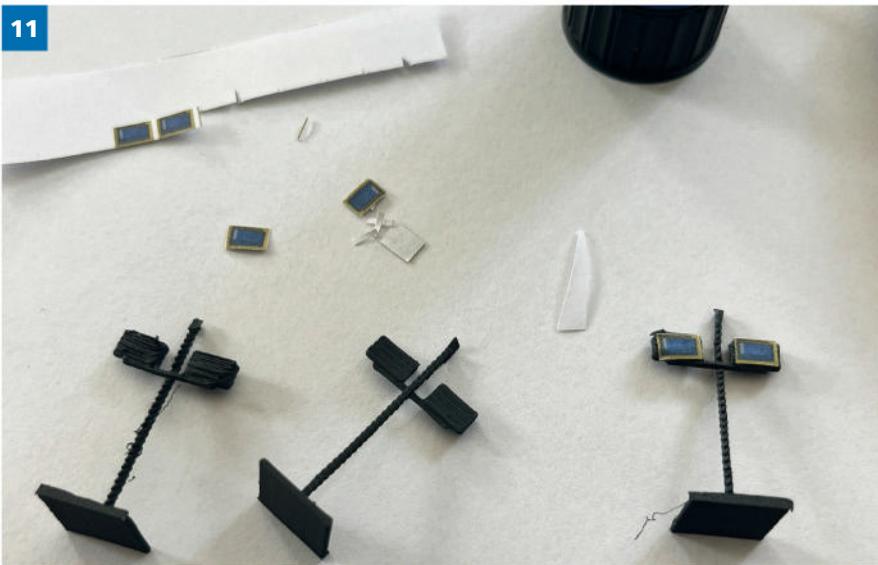
Thought for 11s

Amazing—can't wait to see the platforms dressed! I pulled together solid references for typical RhB/SBB platform furniture, then built printable HO (1:87) STLs for benches, ticket machines, bins/recycling stations, and info signage. The shapes are **stylistically faithful but print-friendly** (chunkier where needed for FDM; resin will capture more detail).

9



11



Whilst these were being printed, I got carried away and had ChatGPT design an end ramp and track level crossing, station furniture, electronic platform indicators, and ticket machines. These were printed after the main platform. [Screenshot 9](#) and [photo 10](#)

All items were primed and painted, and the ticket machine and electronic display screens were printed from photographs I had taken during my travels. [Photo 11](#)

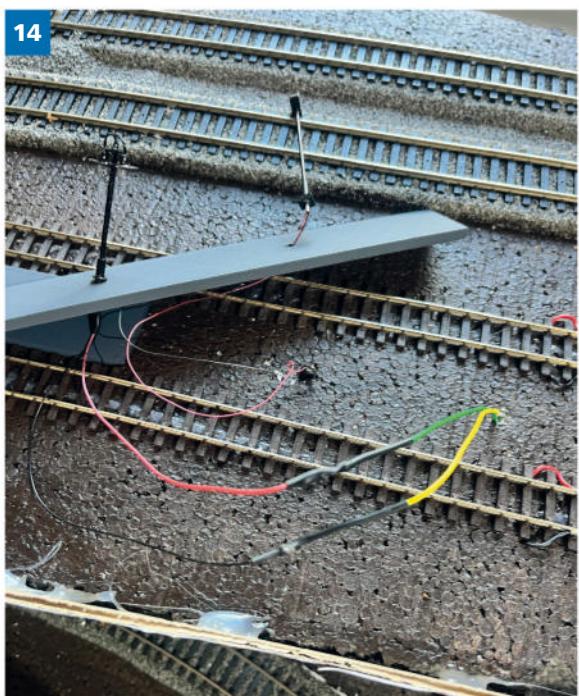
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12



14



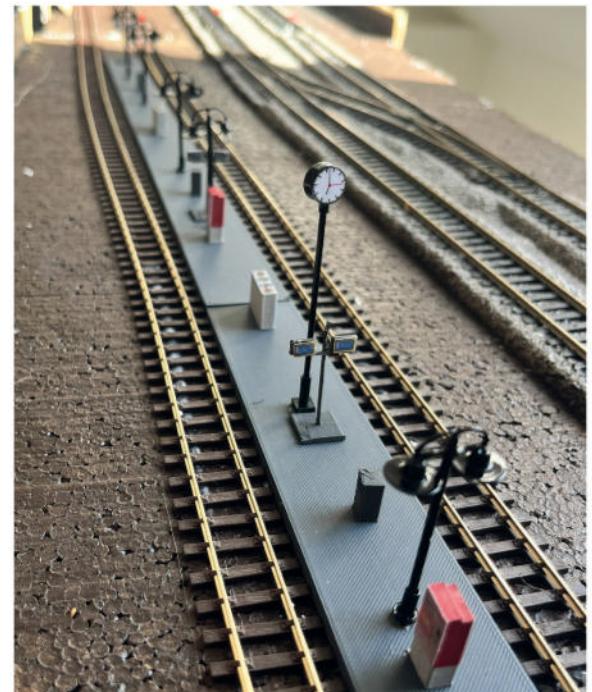


I then added some pre-built platform lights and a Swiss illuminated clock. Wiring these to a control unit resulted in a beautifully illuminated station. [Photos 12, 13, and 14](#)

The final platform installation and working station lights set off the planned RhB station. [Photos this page](#)

Now on to the next project – a power supply installation for the SBB catenary! [Photo 15](#)

The operating layout will be exhibited for the first time at the Swiss Railways Society annual meeting on Saturday 11th April 2026 at the Kidderminster Railway Museum, Station Approach, Comberton Hill, Kidderminster, DY10 1QX. The event runs from 10.00 to 16.30.

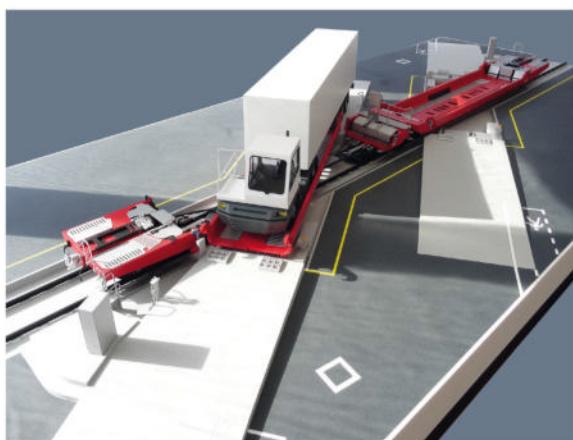


Modalohr wagons



Jacques Poré shows how he enhanced intermodal vehicles from LS Models by adding working end-of-train lights.
Photographs by the author.

The Modalohr lorry carrying wagons, named after the Lohr company based in Alsace which designed the principle and the system (infrastructure for loading and unloading, and, of course, the articulated wagons) are in service on several long distance routes across France, which means fewer heavy lorries on the roads. This therefore makes a significant contribution to protecting the environment (less pollution, less road wear, less noise, etc.), as well as saving energy.



Above

At the Innotrans international transport trade fair in Berlin in September 2014, a Modalohr double wagon was on display, demonstrating the principles and operation of the system.

Below left and below

On the Modalohr stand at Innotrans in 2018, large models demonstrated how it works. The engineers present were generous with explanations, visibly proud of their product.



1



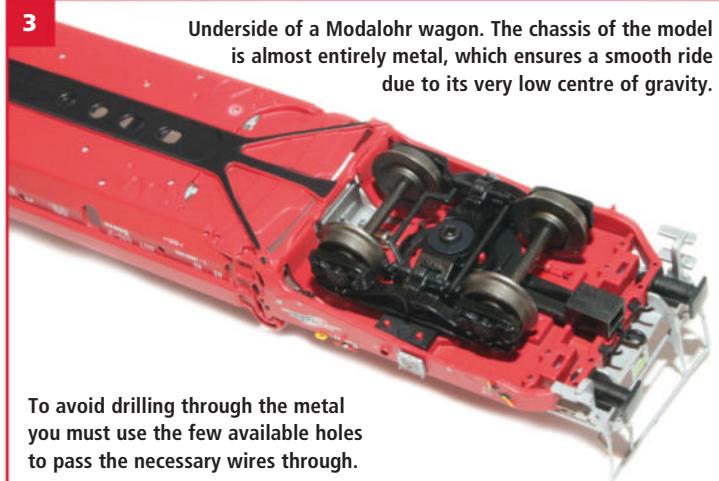
The Modalohr lorry carriers are articulated double wagons, mounted on three bogies. LS Models offer both mid-train and end-of-train double wagons. Logically, it was one of these that I equipped with end-of-train lights.

2



The buffer end of the wagon, where the end-of-train lamps will be installed.

3



To avoid drilling through the metal you must use the few available holes to pass the necessary wires through.

In HO, LS Models has offered highly realistic models of the Modalohr wagons for some years, with various products, both end-of-train and mid-train wagons. The Corail coach, adapted for accommodating lorry drivers, was also part of the LS Models range.

In this article I will show how to further improve these intermodal wagons by installing red end-of-train lights. This simple modelling project takes into account the fact that the model has a metal chassis, so avoids drilling. The project is practical as there is more than sufficient space to house the electronics inside a road trailer.

For the end-of-train lights, and the additional parts needed to make them work, I chose a kit from Lapierre Modélisme. The lanterns themselves are from REE, and come pre-wired with a good length (c.300mm) of enamelled wire.

5



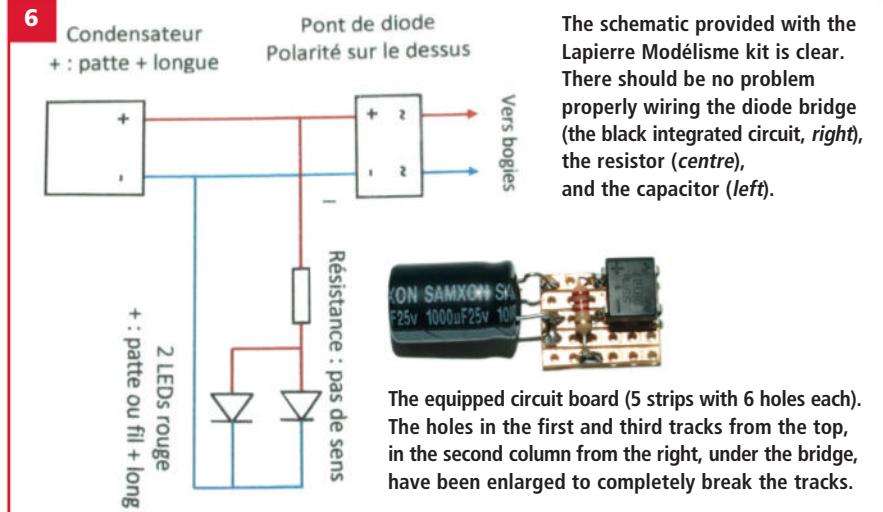
Most of the necessary hardware is included in the Lapierre Modélisme *End Lights Lighting Kit with REE Lamps*; the latter are ready wired, which is very practical, given the small size of the surface-mounted C-MOS LEDs. I have already prepared some parts by soldering them onto a small rectangle of perforated strip board.

4



The centre bogie and its mounting are different from those at the ends.

6



7

The lorry used as the load is a Herpa model, adapted with genuine French number plates (by SAI). I chose a closed semi-trailer to conceal the electronics for the tail lights; you could use an open with a tarpaulin. The Modalohr wagons are loaded with the trailer on one half and the tractor, if travelling with it, on the other.



8



Separating the chassis from the body is easy: it is a simple snap-fit. I drilled two 6mm diameter holes in the trailer axle: one near the rear (here on the left), the other near the trailer/tractor coupling (the oblong hole to the right).

9



One bogie removed to install the modified pick-up. Below is the universal pick-up as supplied in the kit before adaptation to fit the LS Models bogie.

10



10

The end and centre bogies have both been equipped with pick-ups. Meanwhile, fine wires are made ready with soldered mini-connectors, from a terminal strip.

11

The wire, soldered to the pickup, passes through a hole in the centre of the chassis, under the grey part, emerging under the trailer, to hide the wire once the wagon is on the track.



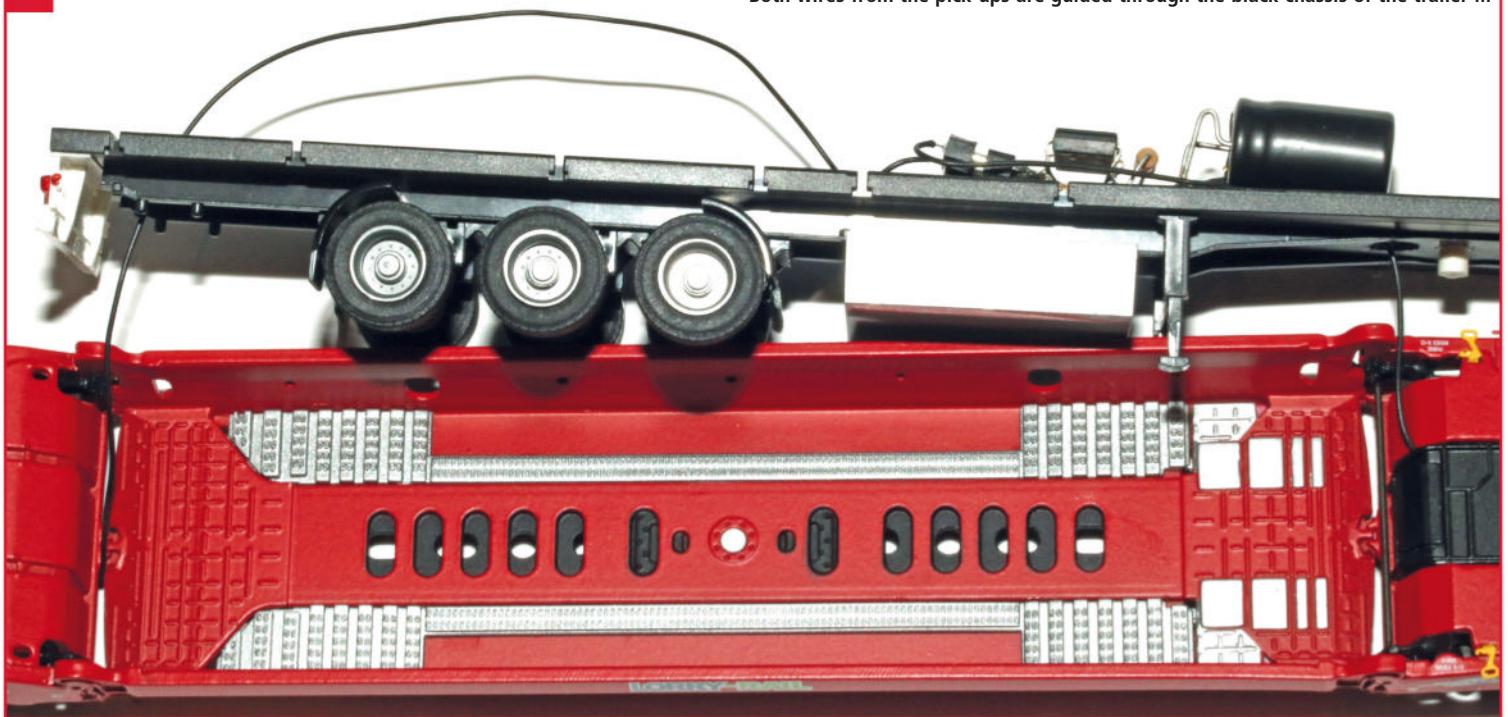
12

For the centre bogie, the wire passes above the bogie before running to the top of the chassis in the centre (on the right).



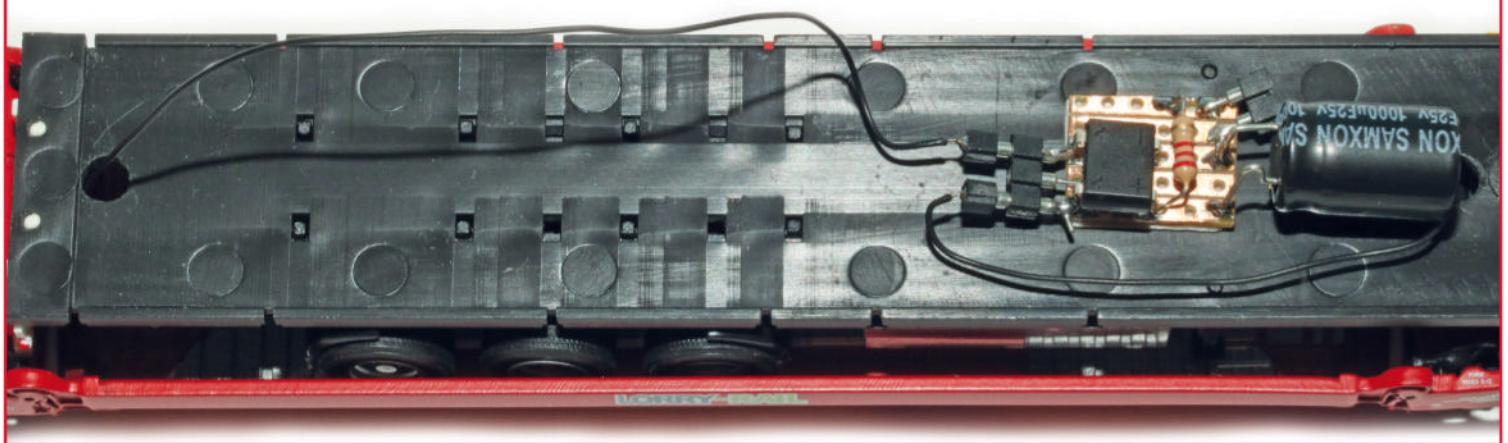
13

Both wires from the pick-ups are guided through the black chassis of the trailer ...



14

... and connected to the diode bridge circuit by two mini-connectors. The lamps have been fixed in place with a small drop of superglue and the fine enamelled wires from the LEDs have been guided under the wagon chassis and then to the inside of the trailer and connected to the circuit.



15



The end of a wagon with lamps in place and wiring installed.

16



Tail lights installed and working.

Michel Altorf-van der Kuil shows how he created a cottage with rendered walls.

Photographs by the author, unless otherwise noted.

Plastered building

More detailed scenic techniques



This house is the third in a small row on Wim Wijnhoud's layout *La Ligne du Gerize*. In the previous article (October 2025) I described the construction of the stone houses; this deals with the construction of the plastered building.

Basically, this building was built in the same way as the stone buildings. The walls are made of styrene and the upper storey floor is placed between them. The advantage of this floor is that it gives the building strength and keeps the windows easily accessible. We do not want to delve deep into the house once we start installing the windows.

Once the frame of the house was made, I painted it with primer. Then, one by one, I smeared the walls with slightly diluted white wood glue. Model plaster was then sprinkled onto the still wet glue with a sieve. This can be a thick layer that was then pressed down well.

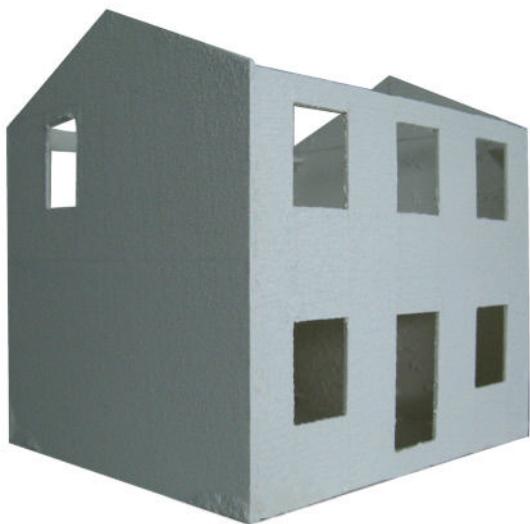
I let this layer dry overnight and then wiped away the excess plaster with a hard brush. I collected this plaster to use again. I cleaned the window openings to remove small blobs of plaster, small drops of wood glue that have absorbed the plaster.

These irregularities may also occur on the walls, and I removed those too, using a knife or a piece of fine sandpaper.

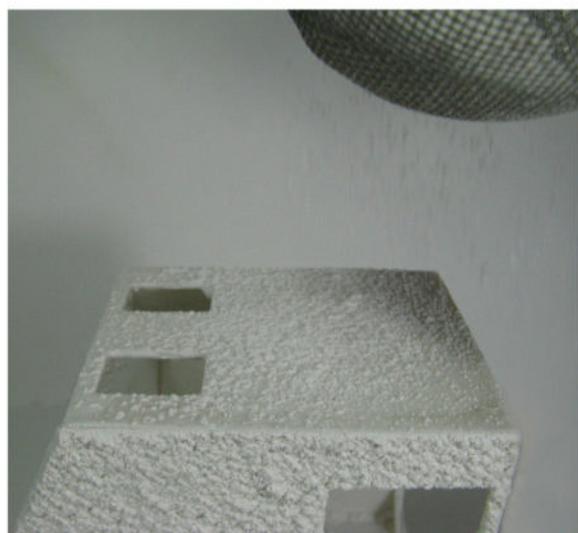
I repeat this plastering at least six times. As a result, we obtain a fairly hard smooth layer that also adheres at the corners. There are no seams to be seen.

To give the house a more French look, I added cement edging to the window openings. Around the windows I drew a frame of about 2mm and scored this line with a sharp point or needle. In the process, a few bits of plaster came loose, but that is not a problem – in real life there are bald spots like that too. I removed the raised edges with the back of a knife.

Above
The finished model in place on the layout.
 Photo: Wim Wijnhoud.



Left
The shell of the building painted with primer.

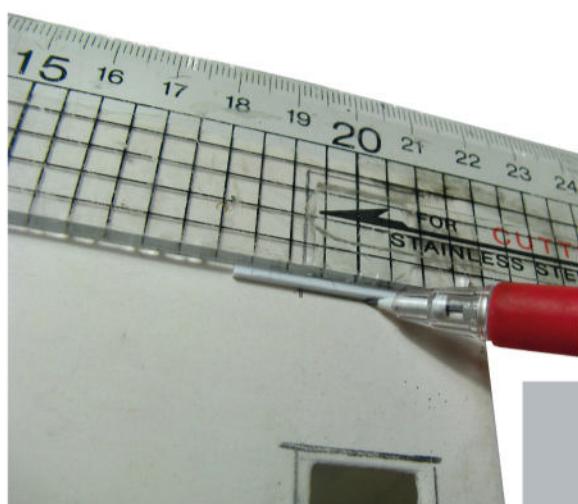


Above
Then the walls were smeared with slightly diluted white wood glue.

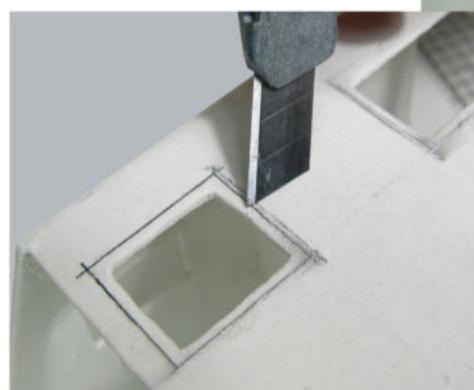
Left
Model plaster was then sprinkled onto the still wet glue from a sieve.



Right
This can be a thick layer that was then pressed down well.



Left
I added cement edging to the window openings. First a frame of about 2mm around the windows using a strip of plasticard as a guide.



Right
I then scored this line with a sharp point.



Left
I then removed the raised edges with the back of a knife.



Above
As a base, the house was first painted grey.



Above
Then the yellow colour was applied – but the first coat was too much, the colour was too bright.



Above
I toned it down a bit by choosing a more brown-beige hue, diluted, and painted over it a few times.

Painting was a challenge for a while. The house had to be painted in roughly the same style as the adjacent natural stone houses. As a base, the house was first painted grey. Then the yellow colour was applied – but the first coat was too much, the colour was too bright. I toned it down a bit by choosing a more brown-beige hue, diluted, and painted over it a few times. This makes the paint a little less evenly distributed, making the building a little more dingy. By touching up a few more areas with undiluted paint, this effect is amplified.

The side and back walls do not have the yellow-brown-beige colour but are grey cement. This was obtained by first painting the walls sky grey and then touching up with white grey with a small sponge. For this, I cut up a kitchen sponge. I first dipped this piece of sponge into the paint, then pressed out some of the paint on an old newspaper, then padded the wall with the sponge. This will give the effect of a cement wall.

To slightly weather this wall, I went over it with a thinned brownish paint. I removed this almost immediately with a wad of paper kitchen towels. I pressed the wad lightly on the wall so that the applied paint was partly removed. The wall becomes more realistic that way.

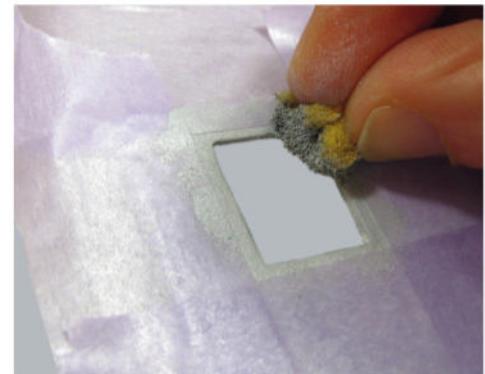
For the window surrounds, I used the same technique with the sponge while they were masked with tape. Once finished, the window openings looked beautiful.

The advertisements on the wall will be the subject of another article. The technique I used here does not work for me any more, so I have to look for an alternative method.

Then I installed the shutters (as described in the November 2023 issue, *right*), the windows, the roof, the gutters and downpipes, and the electrical cable. This runs at the side of the house where a kind of insulator was made from a piece of copper wire and a piece of DAS clay. Sometimes you should not make things more difficult than necessary.



Above
The concrete rear wall and masked window surrounds were painted by dabbing with a sponge.



Above and below right
The old advertisements, printed on thin paper, were built up in layers and distressed at each stage.



I carefully filled the roof transition between the small stone building and the plastered building with clay. Searching the internet, I found frequent examples of such transitions. With a thin roll of DAS clay and some moisture, it is easy to recreate this. Make sure the roll is very thin. You quickly have too much and therefore too thick a transition. This was then coloured, by tamping light grey paint with a sponge. Then the whole thing was lightly weathered. There is also some moss on this, simulated by mixing some olive green with light green. Do not mix it completely, but keep it so that a colour transition is still possible.

To complete it, I hung curtains made from some folding paper. This is how the buildings look inhabited. Those light blue curtains next to the advertising stand out especially.

All buildings were given a light wash. They are not built perfectly, but even that makes them beautiful.

I hope this description inspires you to build this kind of house yourself.



Above
Almost finished – still needing gutters, downpipes, and electrical conduits.

Below
The rear of the building is fully detailed
even though it cannot be seen once in place on the layout.



Above and below
Finished and ready to place on the layout.





Michael Kohler and **Philipp Gerber** combined their skills to model a typical village street somewhere in France.

Photographs by the editor and from the author's website <https://photos.app.goo.gl/qMceXd9cEcV2gHrw6>

Rue des Étoiles

A micro layout with much detail and animation

It is a typical day in the small French village of Saint-Aubin, some time in the 1960s. The afternoon lies languid over the cobbled streets. It is late summer, and the sun shines a warm gold on the façades of the old houses. Rue des Étoiles winds its narrow, twisting path through the heart of the town, past the small park where the old men play *boules* every day in their shirt sleeves. Their voices echo softly among the plane trees as the silver balls roll quietly over the gravel.

The square in front of Monsieur B.Junk's pharmacy is, as always, a hub of activity. The pharmacy's façade, slightly weathered, spoke of many decades during which villagers sought advice and medicines there. Through the shutters with their green slats, a warm glow fell, and inside M.Junk is just explaining an ointment to a customer.

Directly beside the pharmacy is Brocante Maya, a small antiques shop with a dusty display. In the window stand intricately painted plates, old books with worn leather



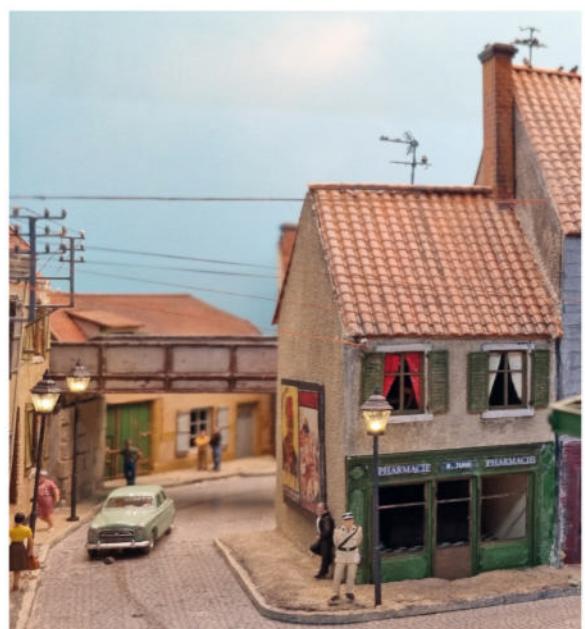
RUE DES ÉTOILES

covers, and a long case clock that had not run for years. Maya, the shop owner, is adjusting a porcelain figure while a curious customer browses the many treasures. It is a place full of stories – every drawer, every chest held memories of times gone by.

Next door is the post office, where a small queue had formed in the morning. The postmaster, a friendly man with narrow spectacles, stamps letters with care, while postman P.Hamm stands outside by his bicycle, adjusting his heavy bag. Soon he would set off again to deliver the latest news – perhaps a love letter, a long-awaited postcard, or an official reminder.



To the right of the square rises the church, its bell tower a landmark of the town. For years, the bells had rung the same familiar chimes. The warm stone glowed in the afternoon sun as the priest stepped out of the heavy wooden door, a quiet prayer on his lips.



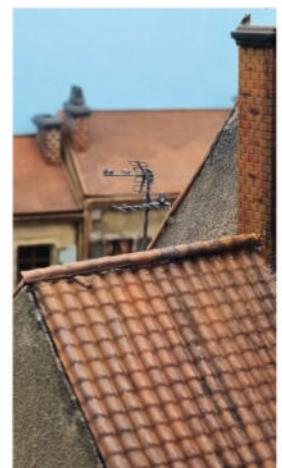


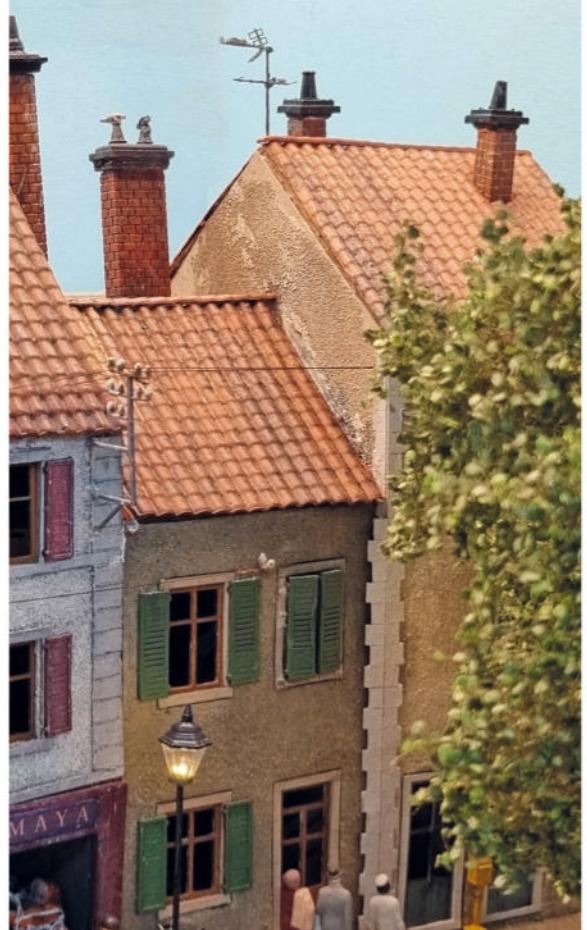
The shutters of the surrounding houses were open to let in the afternoon warmth, and occasionally one could hear the soft hum of a radio with the news or French *chansons*.

Behind the church, a little further up Rue des Étoiles, a dusty side street leads to the Bar des Amis. It is a simple place, nothing fancy, but everyone in the village knew it. A few old wooden tables, a bar, and the patrons, mostly workers, sat there with a glass of *pastis* or red wine, laughing and loudly discussing the day.

Two cyclists pass by – one a young man wearing a beret, with a small basket of baguettes fixed to his handlebars. The other is an older gentleman in a dark jacket, cycling at a leisurely pace, paying little attention to anyone.

On the other side of the street stands Constable P. Carques, his arms folded behind his back. With a stern gaze he watched the scene, though those who knew him well understood that he had a soft heart. If the children played too loudly or someone rode a bike on the pavement, he usually contented himself with a warning glance.





The layout

Rue des Etoiles is a highly detailed micro layout in 1:87 scale, where the focus is on village life rather than trains.

The buildings are made from resin and cardboard kits by Artitec and MKB, carefully adapted, painted, and weathered. Fine RTS sand was used to refine the textures of the façades, while delicate details such as telegraph poles, chimneys, and even 3D-printed pigeons bring the scene to life.

A particular highlight is the moving bicycles and cars, which travel through the streets using the Magnorail system, including a police officer and a postman alternating on their rounds through the town.

The lighting inside the buildings creates a pleasant atmosphere, switching on and off in different rooms.

Although deliberately in the background, the railway is operational. Instead of conventional curves to storage loops, traversers with three dual gauge (HO/HOM) tracks each side of the scenic section allow the use of digitally-controlled autorails from R37, Mistral, and REE running on a shuttle, saving space.



A little further on, behind the bar, the street passes under the old steel bridge carrying the railway that connected the neighbourhood to the wider world. Diesel railcars still run across it on the old local line. Each time one rattled past, the ground vibrated and the shutters of the houses clattered. The smell of diesel hung heavily in the air, mixed with the scent of lavender and dust carried in from the fields.

That afternoon, in the golden light of late summer, time seemed to stand still in Saint-Aubin. The world was changing, everyone knew that, yet here in this small town, one felt little of it. The men played *boules*, the church clock struck the hours leisurely, and the trains rumbled in their steady rhythm. The people lived in the moment, caught in the endless cycle of the seasons. It was a world that basked in its simplicity and constancy, a world that stubbornly turned its back on the outside, at least for that one summer afternoon. Life here was calm, yet never dull. Every corner of this little square had its own story, and for the people who lived here, it was more than a place – it was home.



Peter McConnell has created a cosmopolitan layout with a Japanese flavour.

Photographs by Andrew Burchett.

Tetsudo + Sankei

Made to be easily portable

A period of lockdown with no exhibitions, coupled with approaching dotage, prompted me to lay up my *Sankei Valley* layout and build something smaller. It is on a single board just 1.5m long and 0.6m wide (5' x 2').

It has a little bit from here, a little bit from there, little bits of scenery from everywhere, mostly gleaned from layouts in CM. After much pondering a continuous circuit with a branch was favoured. The continuous run would be good for the locomotives.

It started with the baseboard. Weight was a major consideration (age tells!) for portability and loading into the car for transport to shows. Space in the car was critical, hence the size.

6mm plywood for the baseboard was cut to size by a local builders' merchant. Before assembly all cross-members were drilled with 30mm holes to facilitate wiring and to go a little way to reducing weight. All joints were screwed and glued, as was the foamboard top.

Märklin Z track was laid on Tracklay self-adhesive underlay, an oval of double track main line without station and a single track branch line leading to a small terminus station with a couple of sidings.

A small town of Sankei card kit buildings evolved. Already in stock were a couple of Artitec boats so a canal basin was added.

Rolling stock is all Rokuhan. Powered units are DE10 Co-Bo diesel locos and a selection of KIHA diesel railcars. Freight stock is a train of oil tanks and a train of vans. Two coaches are available for occasional push-pull use.



Top
A bird's eye view of the town station.

Above
A view down the high street.
Note the bicycle sheds on the station forecourt.

Left
A twin unit KIHA diesel railcar in the station while the main line has become Shinkansen.

Right
Boats in the dock – the pleasure boat waits for customers while the patrol boat waits for the fishing boat to dock.



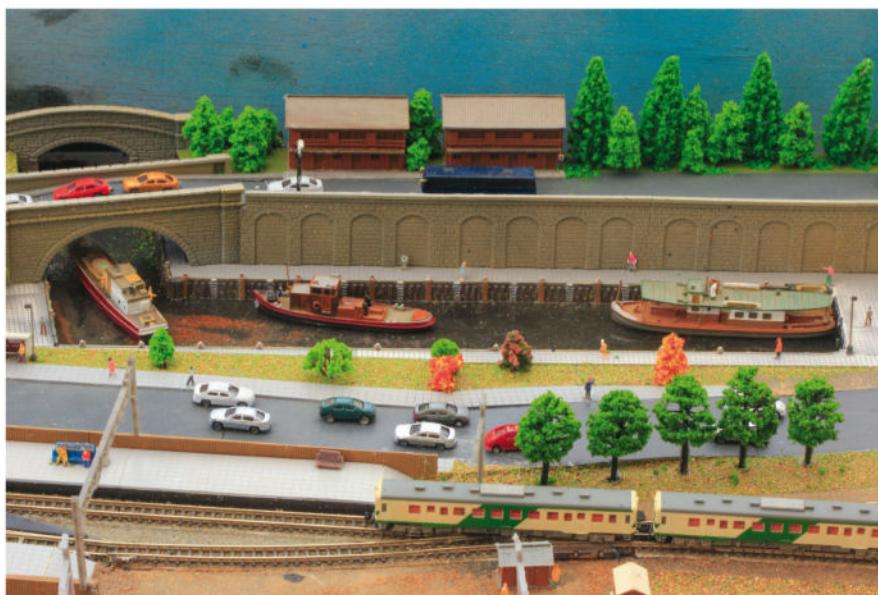
There is no rigid timetable: trains, both freight and passenger, run as required for and by the younger visitors who like to see lots of movement: two trains on the main lines and one on the branch. For something different, from time to time the main line becomes Shinkansen with an E6 seven-car unit providing the action.

Control is through a pair of Rokuhan battery controllers, with eight AAA batteries in each.

The road vehicles are mostly Chinese, bought on line. Except for one by Noch, buses are 3D-printed from various sources. The lorries are Kibri and Noch, two of which have

Top
A single unit Kiha diesel railcar makes its way along the branch, with a twin unit in the background

Above
The town from the railway.
Right
An overall view with a train of tankers on the left.



been 'japanesed' by replacing their original German bodies with Rokuhan shipping containers.

The figures are Preiser, many of them from their unpainted bulk pack. Painting was a challenge!

The rolling stock, controllers, and card kits were obtained from Japanese companies hobbysearch or plazajapan.

In short – it is simple, it works, it is easily transportable, and it has been well received.

The layout is due to be at the Oxfordshire Bus Museum (Long Hanborough, OX29 6LA) for the Christmas events on Sundays 14th and 21st December.



Reviews

Evaluated by our own specialist staff



HO

ÖBB Rh2050 diesel new from Jägerndorfer



The Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB) Rh2050 was a diesel electric with propulsion technology from America. The locomotives were ordered following demonstrations by General Motors, and the class is technically related to the NoHAB type AA16.

In the summer of 1955, GM and its German agent Henschel presented a European prototype locomotive of the 'road switcher' hood style with a single cab, a type G12 numbered 7707, which performed demonstration runs in Austria on the Semmering and the Südbahn. Good results prompted the ÖBB to order an initial batch of ten in 1958 and, following positive experience, to purchase a further eight in 1962.

But in contrast to the American style demonstrator, the body had cabs at each end with the engine compartment between. The body is carried on a welded bridge box girder which is connected to the side walls and parts of the roof to form a load-bearing structure. The sides are pierced with ventilation grilles. The frame rests via Flexicoil springs on two fully welded outside frame bogies, which were manufactured locally by SGP.

The locos, classified 2050.01 to 18, were manufactured by Henschel & Sohn in Kassel, Germany, under license from General Motors, with some parts manufactured and supplied by Austrian industry: bogies and steam heat boilers by SGP, compressed air equipment by Jenbacher Werke, and traction motors (for the second batch) by Elin.

Power came from a type 567 two-stroke V12 diesel engine rated at 1,520hp imported from the GM Electro-Motive Division in La Grange, Illinois. A generator was coupled to the engine, producing direct current for the four traction motors which drove the wheelsets via gears. The diesel engine's power could be adjusted in eight steps. Top speed was 100km/h.

All locos were equipped with an automatic braking system, an indirect air brake, and a safety brake system.

2050.011, 012, and 015–018 were capable of tandem operation using a multiple-unit control system, operated by a single driver. In the late 1980s, 015–018 were stationed at Knittelfeld for banking on the Obdach summit. In the 1990s, they were replaced by tandem-capable 2143s and returned to Vienna.



The class proved very successful but could not completely replace steam locos on the non-electrified parts of the ÖBB network due to the small number built.

Initially they were used for both passenger and freight on non-electrified lines from Vienna and Graz. The main area of operation during the first decades of service was the Franz Josef Bahn to Gmünd.

Originally, all locos had a steam boiler for train heating, but this was later removed from all of them during major repairs.

After the boiler was removed, the locos were used exclusively for freight. With the installation of electric train heating, 2050.02 was used mostly for passenger trains.

After an interim upgrade, 2050.02 was the only one to receive electric train heating (evident from an addition on the roof) to make it available for express and special trains.

In 1993, 2050.01 was the first to be retired following an accident. By the turn of the millennium, half of the class had been decommissioned and some scrapped. The locos were finally to be found on the so-called 'oil commuter', i.e. tank car trains from Stadlau to Ölhausen, and on the local routes of the Weinviertel region and the lines to Marchegg. There were still eight in the ÖBB fleet until 1st May 2004, assigned to Vienna East depot. However, all were decommissioned and written off during the course of 2004.

Some survivors are with private operators in freight service, while preserved examples are still occasionally used for special trips.

Austrian specialists Jägerndorfer have recently released a new Chinese-made model of this class, accurate according to published dimensions. Our sample represents the class leader, 2050.01, in its final form in the Valousek blood-orange livery with Epoch IV markings.



Other versions are in the original green colour scheme, all with finely applied era specific livery details. The finish is very good with all markings very neatly executed. Additionally optional etched metal number and maker's plates are supplied.

The body is of metal construction, with added detail parts including horns, windscreens, wipers, nose and cab door handrails, nose and buffer beam grab handles, shunters' steps, and buffers. The model comes with one end fully fitted, the other ready for a model coupling in NEM pockets; parts are provided to equip both ends either way.



The glazing fits flush, with neat frames to the windows and vent grille panels. There are etched metal radiator grilles in the roof and side, with simulated equipment room and cab interior where visible through the windows.

The plastic bogie side frames are moulded in deep relief, with added shock absorbers and cab steps.

The frame is cast metal, with major components formed in place.

The mechanism is conventional – a central can type motor with twin flywheels drives via cardan shafts to reduction gearing in each bogie. All wheels are driven and collect current. There are two traction tyres, on one inner wheel of each bogie, diagonally opposite. With a weight of 539g, pulling power should be impressive. The model runs smoothly and quietly over a realistic speed range.

The minimum recommended radius is 358mm.

The directionally controlled head and tail lights are achieved with LEDs, and there is cab interior and instrument panel lighting (which can be isolated with a switch underneath). The lights are separately switchable in digital mode.

The model is equipped with a Plux22 socket for a digital decoder, and is also available in DCC sound (with dual 15mm x 11mm speakers) and AC versions.

Length over buffers – 204mm.

The eight page A5 illustrated instruction booklet is in German and English.



Manufactured for

Jägerndorfer GmbH
Bundesstraße 20,
A-2563 Pottenstein, Austria.
www.jaegerndorfer.at

DISTRIBUTED IN THE UK BY
Gaugemaster Controls,
Gaugemaster House, Ford Road,
Arundel, West Sussex, BN18 0BN.
www.gaugemasterretail.com

PRICE ref.20530 £245.00.

Loco-Revue

Les Dossiers Thématiques 09

Petitville-sur-mer

Terminus Océan

Edited by Alexis Avril

Éditions Loco Revue,
BP 30 104, F-56401 Auray Cedex, France.

www.locorevue.com
297mm x 210mm 116pp
Softback €16.80
ISSN T.B.A. ref.L11659 French text

The leading French model railway magazine *Loco-Revue* continues its quarterly additional offering with another themed collection with the emphasis on practical modelling.

This ninth issue (dated September – October – November 2025) is devoted to one HO layout, Petitville-sur-mer (Smalltown by the sea), a seaside terminus created by the prolific and accomplished modeller Olivier Taniou, now a regular contributor to *Loco-Revue*.

His work also appears in CM from time to time since we first encountered him and his wife showing a portable layout at an exhibition in France some years ago. In contrast, Petitville is being developed in a dedicated space at their home as a long term project, designed to provide material for publication in addition to the pleasure of a hobby. It is fictional, set somewhere between Normandy and Brittany, which has been named 'Bretandie'.

A ten page introduction sets the scene by examining some of the real coastal stations in those regions which inspired the layout.



Left
The station building
at Petitville-sur-mer
with just a Picasso X3800 autorail
at the platform.
The town buildings beyond
are still under construction.
 Photo: Olivier Taniou.

1981) with a revised collection of some 400 illustrations reproduced to current standards. In particular much more information and photos have become available from what was East Germany.

In customary fashion, the background is examined and there is a full technical description of each of the three main variants and many other sub-types. Modifications over time are noted, and many depot allocations are recorded. Private railways and industrial lines are included, with a substantial section on use beyond Germany. Gaps in the historical record may mean the story can never be complete, but this book manages to include a remarkable amount of information.

The majority of the photos are naturally in black & white but there is some colour in the final section dealing with preserved examples. All are very well reproduced on good quality paper, and informatively captioned and credited.

Some data is presented in bordered tables, distinguished with a drop shadow and using banded background tints to make it easier to trace a line across. Facsimiles of historic documents are included.

The collection is rounded off with a comprehensive list of sources.

The material is then presented in three main sections:

– the major work: baseboards for an extensive layout, which will eventually be on two levels, with full details of the helix that connects them; laying the track with care; and the basics of the electrical supply. The layout is a good size – L shaped 4.7m by 2.8m, on two levels - but not too large to be achievable.

– life in Petitville: the station building and the platforms; other railway installations, the goods shed and the crane; the road approach to the station; and the construction of a fish packing factory.

– the actors enter the scene (rolling stock and operation): detailing a Jouef CC72000 diesel to represent a specific machine at a particular period; similar work on a Jouef 140C; shunting the holiday season passenger trains, quite a challenge compared to regular workings; and serving the goods shed, demonstrating that wagons serve a purpose and must be delivered to and collected from the relevant sidings.

The chapters are substantial and range in length from two to twelve pages, with many sub-sections.

They effectively are self-contained articles in the usual magazine article style with titles and credits - the latter hardly necessary in a work all about one layout by one author.

This is clearly not the complete story of the layout, but it is all new material, as far as we can tell, though there are many references to some topics already featured as articles in the regular magazine (conveniently listed on page 17).

The layout is described as realistic and fun to operate, both the result of care in planning and construction.



In conclusion, the author notes that there is still much to do – and indeed that some of the older work will need to be updated – and this will be reported in future articles in the regular magazine.

As usual, the coverage goes into considerable detail, well supported with construction photos. Tools and materials required are listed for each project. Commercial products are identified.

While the modelling is HO, most of the techniques would be valid in other scales and gauges.

The work is very well illustrated. Except for few historic images in the introductory section, the photos are all in colour and well reproduced on good quality silk paper.

As usual for *Loco-Revue*, the presentation is clear and straightforward, with restrained use of different fonts for the chapter titles and subheadings. The occasional 'tip' is highlighted separately, while lists of tools and materials are on tinted panels.

Extra material is available online, in the form of videos and files to download.

A fair command of French will be required to get the most from the text but the illustrations make it useful for any modeller of the French scene. And some of the material may well appear as articles in CM in time ...

The book includes just two pages of advertisements for other LR Presse publications and products.

Die Baureihe 89⁷⁰

Die preußische T3

by Hans-Jürgen Wenzel

Eisenbahn Kurier Verlag
Munzinger Straße 5a, D-79111 Freiburg, Germany.
www.eisenbahn-kurier.de
297mm x 210mm 240pp
Hardback €54.00
ISBN 978-3-8446-6067-8
German text ref.6067

The Prussian T3 0-6-0T (later BR89⁷⁰) embodies the 'good old days' of railways like almost no other locomotive. The first were built as early as 1882, and over 1,300 were delivered to the Royal Prussian State Railways, as well as to other state, private, and industrial railways in Germany and abroad. The robust and durable T3s proved their worth over many decades in passenger and freight service on branch lines, as shunters, and on works railways, and remained in service with the DB and DR until 1968. Their immense popularity ensured that numerous examples were preserved, some of which are still in operation today.

Eisenbahn Kurier have recently re-issued this long-out-of-print standard work (which first appeared in



Focus op Modelspoorwegen 2

by Gerard Tombroek

*Lycat till Forlag,
Margaretha Turnorlaan 8,
NL-3903 WK Veenendaal, The Netherlands.
www.lycatat.nl
210mm x 265mm 168pp
Hardback €39.90.
ISBN 978 94 92040 81 7 Dutch text*

This is the second album of layout photos by noted Dutch photographer and modeller Gerard Tombroek. (The first was reviewed in our December 2024 edition.)

It may be a second volume but by no means features second choices – it is simply indicative of the huge number of high quality layouts that he has photographed in his career, which happily still continues.

His name should be well known to regular CM readers both as a photographer and a modeller (*Halte Tombroekstraat*, CM August, September, and October 2016). Since 2007 he has been chief photographer and a regular contributor for the Belgian *Modelspoormagazine* (MSM) and its French counterpart *Train Miniature Magazine* (TMM).

With around three hundred photos and supporting information, this landscape format photo album shows how various talented modellers have achieved realistic layouts. It presents twenty-one layouts in various scales, gauges, sizes, and settings. They are:

Centraal Station – Dutch HO – Pim de Moed
La Roche Porphyr – Belgian HO – Rudi Nelissen (CM July 2017 and July 2019)
St.Juliet – British S – Maurice Hopper
Werlte – German Gauge 1 – Siep Hellinga (CM February 2025*)
La Petite Ceinture de Paris – French HO – Paul de Groot (CM July and August 2023*)
Cubana – Cuban Oe – Samuel de Zutter and Valentijn van der Haegen (CM January 2025*)
't was in Amsterdam – Dutch HO trams – Thom Raven and the Hollandse Tram Maatjes (CM December 2017*)

Le Bassin – Belgian HO – Floris Dilz
Hamburg Hauptbahnhof Ost – German HO – Thorsten Pfeiffer (CM April 2024)
Le Port de Noirmout – French O – Gaëlle and Olivier Taniou (coming in CM!)
Wysoka Gorzowska – Polish HO – Tomasz Florczak (CM December 2024)
Yeoton Wharf – British 3mm – Nick Salzman
Balegem-dorp – Belgian N – Vereniging N160
Pempoul – French 1:50 – Gordon and Maggie Gravett (CM April 2008 and April 2017)
Kniephaven – German Z – Dirk Kuhlmann (CM German special 2017)
Filisur – Swiss HOm – Paul van Westrenen, Bart Verkruyssen, and Henk van Scherpenzeel (CM April 2021*)
Stasjoni Hell – Norwegian HO – Hans Peters (CM October 2024)
Tripton-by-the-Sea – British S7 – Ton Trip
Kräwinklerbrücke – German HO – Jörg Schmidt and Reviermodul e.V.
First Snow on the High Line – US HOm3 – Pit Kargas (CM December 2014)
Sauwerd – Dutch HO – Robbert Jan de Vries (CM Dutch special 2020*)

These layouts have a common factor – modelling of a very high standard. All have been seen at exhibitions in Europe and some even in the UK, and all have been published in *Modelspoor/Train Miniature* and many also in CM, in several cases using Dhr Tombroek's photos (noted *), as well as in *MIBA*, *Modelleisenbahner*, and *Le Train*.

These features look quite different to the magazine articles, and in many cases use previously unpublished 'spare' photos. The author also admits that his image processing skills have improved over time so even the same photos should look better.

The photo sessions range from 2009 to 2024, most at exhibitions (though the venues are not identified); in some cases there was more than one 'visit', when the same layout was encountered again after publication in the magazine. This presented a good opportunity to take additional photos from a different angle or of



a scene missed previously or added later – after all, a layout is rarely 'finished'. These topics have been included in this book.

As with the first volume, the presentation is mostly one large picture per page, sometimes one large and one smaller; all images are in colour and excellently reproduced on high quality glossy paper.

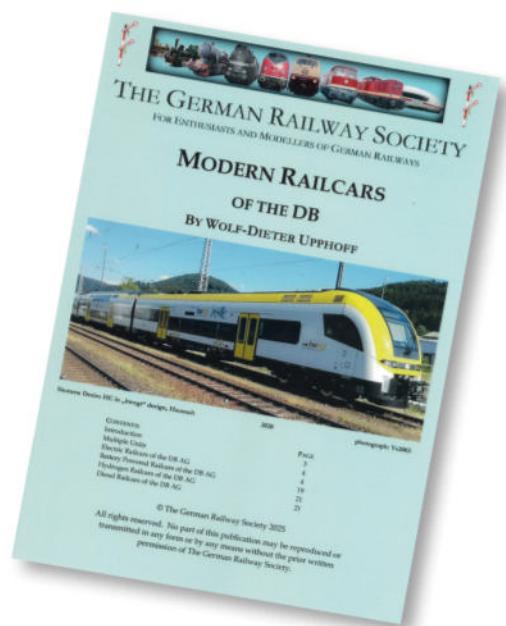
There is an introduction to each layout, with many of the builders sharing techniques, plus detailed captions.

Each feature also includes a coloured track plan, produced in consistent style by Dhr Tombroek and a summary panel giving setting, theme, scale, gauge, period, type of layout, date photographed, and camera used.

At the end of the collection a glossary explains various railway and modelling terms.

Highly recommended to all with an interest in high quality photos of high quality modelling.

We know this represents just a fraction of his collection. He could no doubt could produce a third volume and more, and we hope he will! Meanwhile, we expect to continue featuring his pictures in CM.



We do not advocate design gimmicks for their own sake but some techniques could have been used to enhance clarity: tables could have had lightly tinted coloured backgrounds, headings and sub-headings might have been in colour.

The inside front cover of the book gives general information about the Society and its activities, with contact through the website.

A commendable attempt to summarise a complicated situation, presented without frills, at an attractive price, and in English, which modellers of German railways should find very useful.

Modern Railcars of the DB

by Wolf-Dieter Upphoff

*German Railway Society
GRS Sales,
4. Woodmerry Avenue, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 7PA.
www.grs-uk.org
295mm x 210mm 32pp
Softback £7.00 + £3.00 p&p.
No ISBN*

The latest in the range of useful guides to aspects of German railways from the German Railway Society considers modern railcars of the DB – which here means DB AG, as the book deals with the current scene.

In the modern era, there is a bewildering variety of railcars and multiple units, in contrast to the previous Deutsche Bundesbahn standardisation policy.

The introduction explains the advantages of railcars and multiple units compared to loco-hauled trains and suggests why they have proliferated for current passenger services, from the high speed ICE to small single cars. They are flexible in a different way – it is not simple to change the consist to meet demand but independent units can be combined or separated to serve various routes.

(The BR401 ICE 1 is technically two power cars and intermediate coaches, and BR402 ICE 2 half trains with one power car and a driving trailer, but they are included here as the sets are effectively indivisible.)

The vehicles are presented, logically enough, in order of class number, though with some modern types this results in a derivative (classified for technical reasons) preceding the original. There might have been a case for chronological order, so technical developments and responses to demand were charted. The types are grouped in sections – electric (p.4ff), battery (p.19ff), hydrogen (p.21), and diesel (p.21ff). Electric is clearly the largest category, and includes Berlin and Hamburg S-Bahn stock.

There is no contents list and no index, which does not make reference to a particular type easy.

For each class there is a brief description and a photograph. Technical data is conveniently collated into tables which enable easy comparison. Information includes manufacturer, build dates, quantity, wheel arrangement, length, weight, maximum speed, power output, tractive effort, number of traction motors, and seating capacity.

The classes are not simply presented one type per page in the time-honoured tradition of "spotter's books", so the illustrations get out of step with the relevant text.

The information appears to be up to date, and the most recent photos are dated 2022; the earliest are from 2002 (bar the SVT877 of 1938 mentioned in the introduction).

Most of the photos have been sourced from the internet, duly acknowledged.

This could give the impression that the digital files have been easy to find, and simple to put into page, and this surely underestimates the amount of work that has gone into collating the information.

It is slightly surprising that the members of the Society were not able to provide a higher proportion of relevant illustrations.

The work concludes with a half-page bibliography listing relevant publications.

As with other books in this series, every German word is in italics, even proper nouns and place names: this looks odd – italics might be expected for titles of cited works or technical terms used in the text, whether or not accompanied by a translation. The term 'Jacobs bogie' is widely used but not explained as a form of articulation, with a bogie shared between two vehicles.

The style of presentation is straightforward and generally clear. All the photos (bar the *Fliegende Hamburger*) are in colour and well reproduced. Most of the illustrations are inevitably 'letter-box' – long and narrow – given the nature of the vehicles.

Gaugemaster model shop rebranded as 'Model Giant'

Following an extensive refurbishment, Gaugemaster has rebranded its model shop – formerly known as The Engine Shed – as Model Giant and has added the motto 'For Big Imaginations', because it is reckoned to be one of Europe's biggest model shops.

Although the store now has a modern new look, the aim has been to retain the ethos of providing expert advice, a friendly atmosphere, and an extensive product range backed by the Gaugemaster team.



The shop has also altered its opening hours and can now be visited from 10:00-17:00 Monday to Friday, 09:00-18:00 on Saturdays, and 10:00-16:00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Model Giant is at Gaugemaster House, Ford Road, Arundel, BN18 0BN.

The site is adjacent to Ford railway station, served by trains from London Victoria, Brighton, and Portsmouth.

For further details call 01903 884488 or visit the website:

www.gaugemasterretail.com

Kaeserberg

train of the month December

KBB shuttle train from 1946

The Kaeserberg Railway (KBB) policy for acquiring rolling stock has always been the same: to look at other railway companies for the best-suited equipment and adapt it if necessary.

This shuttle train (ABDeh2/4 railcar and trailer) had previously been running on the Furka-Oberalp, but it took five years between the initial contacts and the train's entry into service on the KBB.

Kaeserberg
Impasse des Ecureuils 9,
CH-1763 Granges-Paccot,
Switzerland.
www.kaeserberg.ch



Märklin/Trix surprise in HO



The 'surprise' new model from Märklin and Trix for this year is the Deutsche Reichsbahn BR190 2-8-2, known as *Sachsenstolz* ('Pride of Saxony', formerly Saxon class XXHV), with a Saxon type 2'2T31 coal tender, in Era IIIa (early 1950s) condition. Twenty-three were built between 1918 and 1923, the last batch ordered by the German State Railways (DRG). With an output of 1,800hp these massive (162 tons) but elegant machines soon proved themselves. After 1945 in East Germany the DR could not do without the 'Nineteens', and many were extensively overhauled and even rebuilt. Regular use of these locos ended in 1958.

The model is all new, true to the original, and features many finely crafted details. The loco and tender are largely made of metal. Pivoting cab doors and a replica of the curtains between the cab and tender provide additional detail. Piston rod protection tubes and brake hoses are included as optional accessories. Loco and tender are close coupled, and the tender rear has a close coupling mechanism with a NEM pocket.

The buffer height complies with the NEM standard.

A high-efficiency motor with flywheel in the boiler ensures smooth and powerful running. All four driving axles are powered, with two traction tyres.

The loco is equipped with a mfx+ digital decoder with 'Game World' and extensive sound functions. A built-in buffer capacitor optimises running characteristics.

The dual headlights change depending on the direction of travel and are active in conventional operation, but can be controlled separately in digital mode. The cab lighting and the flickering firebox can also be controlled digitally. The lighting is provided by maintenance-free warm white and red LEDs.

A smoke unit is installed as standard, producing speed-dependent dynamic smoke emission.

The model is intended for a minimum radius of 437.5mm; with care operation on 360mm is possible.

Total length over buffers is 260mm.

Naturally there will be a set of suitable stock to go with the loco.

Price (RRP): €679.00.

Märklin ref.38190, Trix ref.25019

www.maerklin.de

www.trix.de

AIMREC Collection now open

In conjunction with the fourth anniversary of the opening of Ashford International Model Railway Education Centre (AIMREC) studio and workshop, the project's Trustees are pleased to announce that the new building housing the AIMREC Collection of model railways will open on Saturday 15th November.

It features some of the finest layouts from the exhibition circuit over the last twenty-five years. The 4,000 sq.ft. of exhibition space over two floors has been converted from a former barn on the same site as the studio in Betherston, near Ashford in Kent.

This achievement is the culmination of fifteen years of work by the project's supporting team.

The layouts from the AIMREC collection to date and on loan on display will include *Pempoul*, *Gordon* and *Maggie Gravett's evocation of the Réseau Breton* metre gauge in 1:50 (CM April 2008 and April 2017) and *Somewhere in France*, a First World War OO9 layout by Peter Capon (CM June 2019).

Admission is £10.00 for adults and £5.00 for children. Family tickets are £25.00 (2+4). An annual season ticket for adults is available at £75.00.

There is enough external space to allow for a phased expansion of the popular Spitfire Line 5" gauge miniature railway; rides are included in the ticket.

Entry to the existing studio and workshop, which houses the tea room, model shop, secondhand bookshop, and other layouts and displays, remains free, as is parking.

Initially, the AIMREC Collection will open on Saturdays until 20th December and then again from 9th January, from 10:30am to 4.00pm. It is planned to add Fridays in early 2026, with additional opening in school holidays.

From the M20 junction 9 follow the signs for Tenterden on the A28. AIMREC is located a short distance from the A28 in the village of Betherston, TN26 3DB.

What 3 Words:

FOLLOW.UNIONS.MENSWEAR

Further information on the website

www.aimrec.co.uk

Neuburg wins award at Farnham



Congratulations to Jim Finlayson and his team with the twin Swiss HO_m layouts *Neuburg 1913* and *2013* on winning the Keith Purbrook trophy for the most appealing layout as chosen by the visiting public at the Farnham show in October.

It is unusual for 'foreign' layouts to feature in popular awards at general exhibitions. The fact that members of the public were encouraged to help operate may well have been a factor!

Pictured: Pete Ashmore, Julia Boswell, Margery Finlayson, Jim Finlayson, Phil Ashlee, and Derek Boswell.



Blunami decoders now for N



The BLU-1100 is the first Blunami decoder compact enough to fit N scale models while still delivering the powerful features and high quality sound for which SoundTraxx is known.

The BLU-1100 gives N scalers full access to the Blunami experience – wireless control, realistic sound, and intuitive app-based programming – all in a decoder that fits the space constraints of smaller models.

The BLU-1100 can be operated via a traditional DCC system or controlled wirelessly using the Blunami App, available for iOS and Android devices.

Blunami features:

- the option to use the free Blunami App for setup and/or operation
- reactive Dynamic Digital Exhaust
- functioning brakes
- over 60 individual sound effects in high-quality 16-Bit sound with a seven-band equaliser
- Flex-Map functionality using over 28 functions
- Hyperdrive2 motor control for smooth, slow-speed operation
- 28 function support, with directional and E-Stop functions

While Blunami is a fully featured DCC sound decoder, no command station is necessary, and no functionality is lost when used with the app. Blunami operates using either an NMRA-compliant

DCC command station or a digital device such as a tablet or 'phone with the Blunami App. The wireless operation works reliably up to 100' and allows the user to connect to and run multiple decoders easily.

The Blunami sound library contains up to twelve diesel prime movers per part number, over forty air horns, and a variety of selectable sound effects, including bells, compressors, couplers, dynamic brakes, and more.

The BLU-1100 for steam models contains ten unique exhaust chuffs, ninety whistles, and a menu of additional sound effects such as bells, compressors, air pumps, dynamos, couplers, and more.

BLU-1100 Specifications:
31mm x 10.5mm x 5mm
1A motor stall current
4 function outputs
1 Watt, 8 Ohm audio amplifier
16 sound channels
There are different devices for steam, GM-EMD diesels (two), GE, ALCO, Baldwin and others, and electrics.

All versions are listed at US\$175.95 MSRP.

The decoders are compatible with NMRA DCC Standards and Recommended Practices.

<https://soundtraxx.com/products/blunami/blu-1100>

Belgian PCC trams by Ferivan



When tram traffic in Brussels came under increasing pressure in the 1940s and 1950s due to the rise in the number of cars and buses, the MIVB (STIB) sought a modern and efficient alternative to the outdated four-wheel trams. The solution was found in a revolutionary tram concept developed in the United States: the PCC (Presidents' Conference Committee) cars.

In 1951, La Brugeoise et Nivelles (BN) delivered the first Brussels PCC, with electrical equipment from ACEC. It was given the number 7001 and heralded a completely new era. Between 1951 and 1953, fifty were delivered, followed by another thirty between 1955 and 1956.

In 1958, an 81st PCC was produced, namely 3060, destined for Hamburg. After test runs, it was deemed unsatisfactory and shipped to Copenhagen. There too it failed to impress, and the tram was brought back to Brussels and assigned the number 7000. In September 1995, it returned to Hamburg in its original condition but equipped with a pantograph.

The 7000 series was equipped with four 40kW ACEC motors, together producing 160kW. The top speed was 70km/h, although in practice they rarely exceeded 50km/h in busy city traffic.

They were characterised by the typical whining motor and resistance noise that many Brussels residents still remember vividly. The PCCs were not only faster and quieter than their predecessors, but also more reliable and easier to drive.

The 7000–7080 series was the work-horse of Brussels tram services for many years. They appeared on almost all main lines and became a familiar sight in the city centre and suburbs.

Due to the conversion of the pre-metro to a real metro from the 1970s, many tram lines in Brussels were discontinued. Nevertheless, a considerable number of vehicles remained in service until the end of the 1990s – proof of their robustness and solid construction.

A few examples have been preserved in museums, including the Brussels Tram Museum (MTUB). There, 7001, the very first one, still runs on special occasions.

Ferivan is releasing a ready-to-run model of the PCC in both HO and HO_m. Unpainted and painted kits are also available. All versions come with numbers as decals and relevant line signs as stickers.

The finished model costs €365.00 (non-motorised) or €395.00 (motorised). www.ferivan.be

Faller new items leaflet

Faller have recently published a second new items leaflet for the year, running to 36 A4 pages and available in English as well as German and French. It includes HO and N structures and accessories, and the well-known Car System.

www.faller.de



New from American Z Line



The second batch of the General Electric C44-9Ws are now available, in two Chicago & North Western road numbers, #8608 and #8617.

The GE C44-9Ws feature AZL's 7mm motor, dual flywheels, prototype specific details, separately applied grab irons, directional controlled LED lighting, ditch lights, optional front truck with mounted coupler, blackened metal wheels, AutoLatch couplers and they come DCC ready.



Two new road numbers are available for the GM-EMD SD60 as Norfolk Southern #6552 and #6560

The AZL SD60s feature prototype specific details and include directionally controlled LED lighting, blackened metal wheels, traction tyres, AutoLatch™ couplers pre-installed front pilots/ploughs, and optional truck with coupler.



Two new GM-EMD F7 A units are available for the Spokane Portland and Seattle (SP&S), #804 and #805.

They come DCC ready and feature prototype specific details, metal stirrups, the AZL 7mm motor, dual flywheels, directionally controlled LED lighting, optional front truck with mounted coupler, blackened metal wheels, and AutoLatch™ couplers.



The GM-EMD FP7 has been produced with two more Southern road numbers, #6130 and #6135.

They have the same technical characteristics as the F7 models.



www.americanzline.com

Latest figures from Preiser



Among recent new releases from figure specialists Preiser in HO is a set of footplate crew for a Rhätische Bahn steam locomotive, a driver and a fireman with shovel (ref.28276). Carefully hand-painted in realistic colours, these plastic figures are in the Exclusive Edition series.

New for 1:22.5 (G) is a cartwright, holding a mallet and chisel (ref.45520). Although described as a single figure, the carefully hand-painted plastic model is supplied with accessories – two substantial rustic trestles, a plane, a large clamp, and a sack barrow, the object of his work, with separate wheel. The box picture suggests that some parts of the accessories should be painted.

In the 1:72 military range there is a plastic kit for modern US Army seated personnel, drivers and passengers (ref.72544) Two pairs of identical sprues provide fourteen unpainted figures with separate weapons and accessories.

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Micro layout competition at the Modelspoor show in Belgium



At the Modelspoor exhibition in Leuven/Louvain in Belgium in September, the now traditional competition for micro layouts was staged.

The competition rules state that the visible area of the micro layout, regardless of scale, may not exceed 7,500cm² though smaller is permitted. The shape is not restricted, and there may be different levels. The size does not include any fiddle yard, return loop, or hidden sidings necessary for rail activity (which is required), provided these are invisible to the audience and the entire layout fits within an area 2.5m wide by 1.5m deep. The track must be at least 1.1m above the floor and the bottom of the valance a maximum of 1.9m.

Various elements of the concept, design, construction, detail, activity, and presentation are taken into consideration by a jury of experts. There was also a separate public vote.

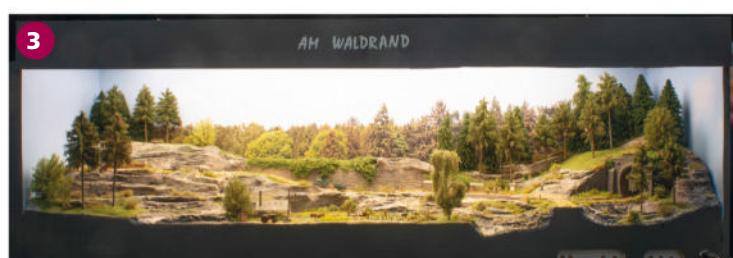
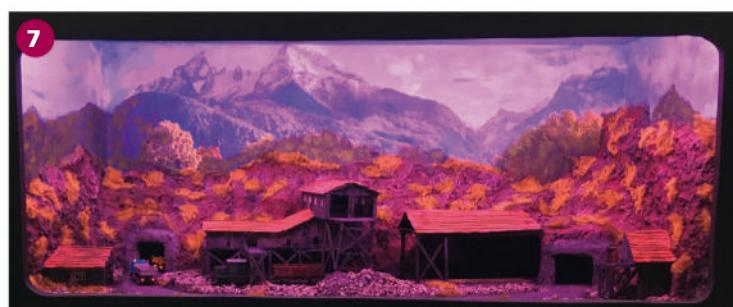
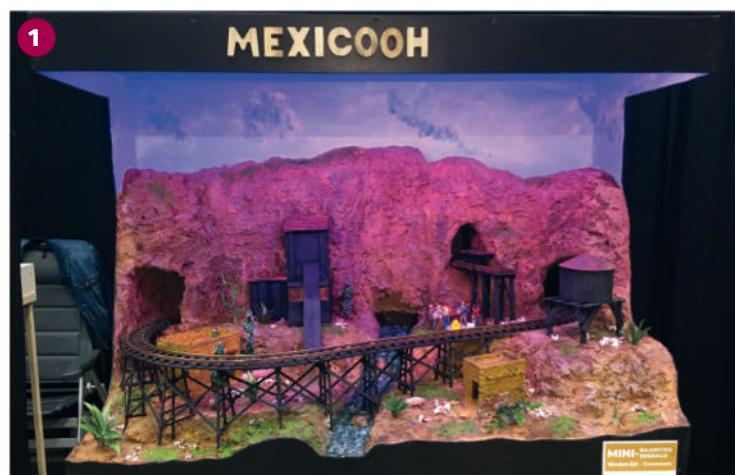
This year there were eight entries, in a range of scales and gauges, some quite conventional, others more innovative, but all of a high standard.

We did not envy the jury their task – and might not have come to the same conclusion!

Articles on some of these layouts should appear in CM in the coming months.

The micro layouts are listed here by their official entry numbers.

1. *Mexicooh* – IIf (1:22.5)
Henk van Beest a.k.a. 'Poco Loco'
2. *Infra... struc... tuur...* – Belgian HO
Robbe van Dingelen
Jury first place
3. *Am Waldrand* – German HOe
Walter Cornelis
4. *Pur Hill anno 1878* – US On30 & 18
Jeffrey Onrust and René De Vlieger
Jury second place
5. *Halte Royale d'Ardennes* – Belgian HO
Rudy Altenhoven
Jury third place, public first place
6. *Tokay Express* – Hungarian HO
Jean René Lejeune
7. *De onderste steen boven*
"Leave no stone unturned" – HO
(mine with moving lorries)
René Molendijk
8. *Bw 1930* – German HO
Stefan Cornelis



Exhibition Diary

Dates, events, and information

Saturday 22 November

BANSTEAD, Surrey

Organiser:

North Downs Model Railway Circle.

Venue: 3rd Banstead Scout Group, Scout Ridge, Banstead, Surrey, SM7 1RB.

Open: 1000-1700

Admission: adults £6.00, U16s £3.00, seniors/disabled visitors £5.00, families (2+2) £12.00. All profits to 3rd Banstead Scout Group.

Amenities: free parking. Refreshments, **Features:** layouts include *Oregon* (N), *Lafayette Spring* (HO), *Five Mile Siding* (HO), *Willis Bluffs* (HO), *Neumarkt* HO and *Angle Crossing* (Sn42). Trade.

Contact:

Stuart Robinson 07758 458827.

E-mail: stuart.robinson27@ntlworld.com

Website: www.ndmrc.info/Home/Tadworth.htm

Saturday 22 November

EATON BRAY, Bedfordshire

Steam in Beds.

Organiser:

Bedfordshire 16mm Narrow Gauge Modellers.

Venue: Eaton Bray Village Hall, Church Lane, Eaton Bray, near Dunstable, LU6 2DJ.

Open: 1000-1600

Admission: adults £6.00, accompanied U16s free.

Amenities: free parking. Wheelchair friendly venue except stage.

Features: three live steam layouts. Specialist traders.

E-mail: c.pretty0301@btinternet.com

Website: www.bag16mm.org.uk

Saturday 22 & Sunday 23 November

BIRMINGHAM

NATIONAL FESTIVAL OF RAILWAY MODELLING

Organiser: Warners Exhibitions, sponsored by Metcalfe Models, World of Railways, and Rapido.

Venue: National Exhibition Centre (NEC), Birmingham, B40 1NT.

Open: Saturday 1000-1700

Sunday 1000-1630

(Early entry from 0930 each day for pre-booked ticket holders, plus parking discount – £10.00 instead of £18.95 on the day).

Admission: one-day tickets – adults £22.00, accompanied U16s free; Weekend Pass – £40.00. Bookable through Eventbrite – see below. All tickets are digital and can be accessed via an Eventbrite confirmation or app – show ticket on a 'phone or bring a printed copy to enter. If a full-time companion is required, a companion's ticket is offered but supporting documents must be e-mailed to worinfo@warners-group.co.uk prior to the show. No dogs apart from official guide/assistance dogs.

Amenities: the venue is well signposted from M6, M42, and M40. Parking is managed by the NEC. The venue is adjacent to Birmingham International railway station (served by frequent trains from Birmingham New Street, Coventry, London Euston, etc.), as well as Birmingham Airport, connected to the NEC and station by free driverless Air-Rail

Link shuttle trains. Full disabled access but only Class 2 mobility scooters/electric wheelchairs with a maximum speed of 4mph are permitted. Catering.

Features: more than 60 layouts, including *Ishinaka* (Japanese N, CM July 2022), *Donnersbachkogel* (Austrian HO/HOe), *Kreuzweg* (Swiss HOm, CM January 2023), *Nazareth Portland Cement* (US HO), and *Beijiao* (Chinese HO, CM November 2023).

RAILWAY MODELLER has made arrangements for up to 50 finalists in the Peco RAIL200 Model Layout Competition (including the winning entries selected by a panel led by head judge Pete Waterman) to be displayed. 'Modular' category finalists will be linked together, with a special train running from one end to the other as a finale to the Peco contest.

Societies, trade, and World of Railways stage where industry experts will share insights.

Contact: 01778 391000.

Website: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-national-festival-of-railway-modelling-2025-tickets-1437473384589?

www.thene.co.uk/whats-on/the-national-festival-of-railway-modelling/

Saturday 29 November

RAINHILL, Merseyside

Organiser:

Rainhill MRC.

Venue: Rainhill High School, Warrington Road, Rainhill, Merseyside, L35 6NY.

Open: 1000-1700

Admission: adults £5.00, children £6.00 (includes a visit to, and gift from, Santa).

Amenities: full disabled access. Refreshments.

Features: family show with layouts in various scales. Trade and club shop. Tickets also valid for Merseyside & Southwest Lancashire 009 Group NG Show (see below).

Contact: Brian Davis, 01925 226266.

E-mail: brianandertondavis@gmail.com

Website: www.rainhillmrc.org.uk

Saturday 29 November

RAINHILL, Merseyside

Organiser: Merseyside & South West Lancashire Narrow Gauge (009) Group.

Venue: Rainhill Village Hall, Dane Court, Rainhill, Merseyside, L35 4LU.

Open: 1000-1700

Admission: adults £5.00 (cash only at the door). Ticket also covers entry to the Rainhill MRC show – see details above.

Amenities: free parking. Rainhill railway station is approximately 15 minutes walk away. Refreshments.

Features: narrow gauge layouts in 009 and other scales. Demonstrations, trade.

Website: www.009society.com/news/exhibitions-events/

Saturday 29 November

EXETER, Devon

Organiser:

Exe MRS.

Venue: Fresha, 23, Bittern Road, Sowton Trading Estate, Exeter, EX2 7LW.

Open: 1000-1600

Admission: adults £3.00, children free.

Please send details for possible inclusion to:

Peco Publications, Beer, near Seaton, Devon, EX12 3NA.

E-mail: clubs@railwaymodeller.co.uk

Amenities: car parking available and local bus route passes nearby. Disabled friendly venue. Refreshments available – venue is a café.

Features: at least five layouts created by club members, demonstrating different gauges and modelling skills, plus opportunities to chat with members. Trader with secondhand stock.

E-mail: train@exemrs.co.uk

Website: www.exemrs.co.uk

Saturday 29 & Sunday 30 November

GENK, Belgium

Euromodelbouw

Organiser: Dipro Events

Venue: Limburghal, Jaarbeurslaan, B-3600 Genk, Belgium.

Open: 1000-1800 both days

Admission: adult €17.00, under 17 €10.00. Adult weekend €25.00.

Amenities: parking; disabled access; catering.

Features: railways and other modelling – vehicles, construction equipment, military, maritime, aircraft – in three halls, 10,000m². Exhibitors from all over Europe. Trade.

Contact: info@dipro.be

Website: www.euromodelbouw.be

Saturday 29 & Sunday 30 November

GANGELT, Germany

Organiser:

Gesamtschule, Kitzraedstraße, D-52538 Gangelt, Germany.

Open: Saturday 1000-1800

Sunday 1000-1700

Admission: adults €8.00, family €12.00, under 14s free.

Amenities: parking.

Features: railways and other modelling. Demonstrations. Market.

E-mail: mef.gangelt@outlook.de

Website: www.mef-gangelt.de

Sunday 30 November

HENFIELD, West Sussex

Biennial Exhibition and Open Day

Organiser: West Sussex G Scale Group.

Venue: Henfield Hall, Coopers Way, Henfield, West Sussex, BN5 9EQ.

Open: 1100-1600

Admission: free but donations appreciated.

Amenities: free parking; full disabled access; refreshments.

Features: layouts of varying sizes; sales of G scale items. Members will be present to answer questions.

Contact: Mike Wakeling or Nicky Budgen via e-mail address below or call 07801 597677.

E-mail: westsussex@gscalsociety.com

Website: www.gscalsociety.com/area-groups-near-me/west-sussex/

Saturday 6 & Sunday 7 December

OSWALDTWISTLE, Lancashire

Organiser:

Blackburn & East Lancashire MRS.

Venue: Oswaldtwistle Mills Business Centre, end of Pickup Street, Oswaldtwistle, BB5 0EY.

Open: Saturday 1000-1700

Sunday 1000-1600

Admission: adults £6.00, accompanied U16s free, family (2+2) £10.00.

Amenities: free parking; disabled access; light refreshments.

Features: layouts include *Chop-it-up Lumber Company* (1:24, CM July and November 2024). Demonstrations, trade. Opportunity to view the clubroom upstairs.

E-mail: belmrs2019@gmail.com

Website: www.belmrs.com

Saturday 6 & Sunday 7 December

NORTH SHIELDS, Tyne and Wear

Christmas Open Weekend

Organiser: Blyth and Tyne MRS.

Venue: First Floor Offices, Redpath House (above Asda), 40, Saville Street, North Shields, NE30 1NT.

Open: 1000-1600 both days

Admission: adults £3.00, U16s free.

Amenities: on-street parking, multi-storey car park opposite. 125 yards from Metro station. Disabled access. Refreshments.

Features: 20-plus layouts, including *Diesendas* (German N), a German HO/HO mixed gauge layout, a Czech HO layout, *Lenzberg* (Swiss/German), *Northern Plains* (US N), and an American HO 'Inglenook' switching layout. Trade. An opportunity to meet fellow enthusiasts, exchange tips, and be inspired by the creativity on display.

Contact: use contact page on website.

Website: www.btmrs.co.uk

Saturday 13 December

CLUN, Shropshire

Christmas Model Railway Show

Organiser: Chantilly Grey Events.

Venue: Clun Memorial Hall, Guilden Down, Clun, SY7 8NY.

Open: 1000-1600

Admission: adults £6.00, U16s £2.00, U5s free.

Amenities: ample free parking on level ground; disabled access; refreshments.

Features: nine layouts, including *Oasis Camp* (US HO/HOn3). Trade.

Contact: Tim Croton, 07753 856308.

E-mail: chantillygrey@gmail.com

Saturday 13 December

ROWINGTON GREEN, Warwickshire

Garden Railway Show

Organiser: John Sutton Models.

Venue: Rowington Village Hall, Rowington Green, Warwickshire, CV35 7BU.

Open: 1000-1600

Admission: adults £5.00, accompanied U16s free.

Amenities: free parking. Catering provided with profits from this and the event going to British Heart Foundation.

Features: two SM32 & one G scale 45mm gauge layouts. Plus nine trade stands from garden railway suppliers.

Email: johnsutton3@sky.com

Website: www.johnsuttonmodels.co.uk



Saturday 13 & Sunday 14 December

MANCHESTER

CHRISTMAS MODEL RAILWAY SHOW

MMRS centenary exhibition

Organiser: Manchester MRS.

Venue: The Sugden Centre, Sidney Street, Manchester, Greater Manchester. M1 7HB.

Open: Saturday 1030-1730

Sunday 1030-1630

Open at 0945 for advance ticket holders; walk-up tickets on sale from 1030.

Admission: advance ticket prices (purchase via the MMRS website before 2145 on Friday 12 December, or from retailers The Locoshed in Whitefield and Sawyer Models in Leigh): adults Saturday £14.00, Sunday £11.00. .

On-the-day prices: adults Saturday £16.00, Sunday £13.00.

On both days accompanied U15s and carers accompanying a disabled person with a ticket admitted free. Maximum of three children free with each paying adult.

No dogs except assistance dogs with a disabled adult.

Amenities: venue is in city centre, easily reached from arterial routes and almost underneath the Mancunian Way flyover, part of the Inner Ring Road, but there is no public parking at the venue itself – multi-storey car parks nearby. Blue Badge parking spaces available to book by e-mailing exhibition@mmrs.co.uk

Visitors should consider using one of the 79 Park-and-Ride schemes operated by Transport for Greater Manchester – see <https://tfgm.com/public-transport/park-and-ride> – or travel by rail to the nearby Manchester Oxford Road and Piccadilly stations. Venue is served by 29 bus

routes, 21 with stops within 100m of the entrance. Nearest Manchester Metrolink tram stops are at St.Peter's Square and Piccadilly. Venue has step-free access. There are two areas for parents with small children to sit down, with toys and drawing materials available: *Toytown Terminus* (part of catering area) and *Junior Junction* (in entrance lobby). Quiz for children – one lucky child will win a complete model railway with locomotive, rolling stock, track, and controller.

Hot and cold snacks and drinks available in Hall 2.

Note while photography and filming are allowed (if layout owner agrees), live streaming of the event is prohibited.

Features: 26 layouts including *Port du Crozon* (French 1:50, featured in this issue), *New Sharon* (US On2, CM December 2024, below), and *Laramie Engine Terminal* (US O, CM November 2017, above). Demonstrations, societies, manufacturers, and trade.

E-mail: exhibition@mmrs.co.uk

Website: www.mmrs.co.uk/exhibition/

Meetings

Thursday 18 December – 1930 Marlow & District Railway Society

India – Part 2 by Peter Robins.

Venue: Bourne End Community Centre, Wakeman Road, Bourne End, SL8 5SX or on Zoom.

Admission: non-members £3.00, members free.

Contact: Martin Stoolman, 07954 849390.

Website: www.mdrs.org.uk



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Fusine – Laghi

Italian HO

Also in this issue...

- Noirmout French O
- Wiesenber German HO
- Nickel Mines US HO
- and much more

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• Fusine – Laghi

A frontier station in the eastern Alps – Luca Klobas presents a diorama in HO reproducing a now disappeared cross border railway between Italy and Yugoslavia.

• Noirmout-en-Retz

Olivier Taniou describes his new French layout, a diversion into O to capture the atmosphere of a small port between Loire Atlantique and Vendée.

• Wiesenber

Jörg Krause presents his German HO exhibition layout which aims to show the wide open landscape of Brandenburg and Mecklenburg.

• Consolidated Nickel Mines

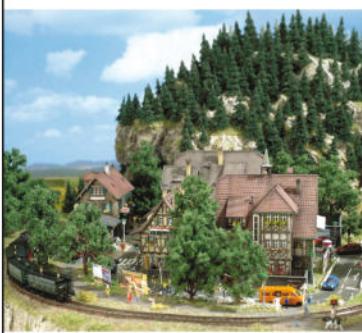
Mario Alberto Scarati and Bice Luigia Carabelli describe their unusual HO exhibition layout set in the south-west of the United States.

• Château Léman

A freelance setting between Switzerland and France – Yann Monbaron introduces the HO layout of Alain Manzoni.

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Roco 74475	as above, different running number	£68.00	£48.50



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Roco 52635	DB VT798/VS998 2-Car Diesel Railcar & Trailer, Era IV, Red Livery, DCC SOUND	£350.00	£233.60
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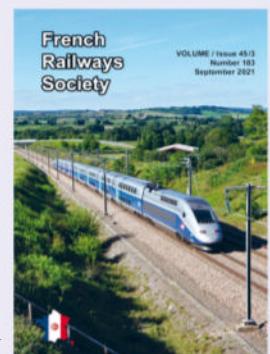
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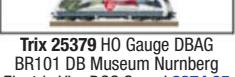
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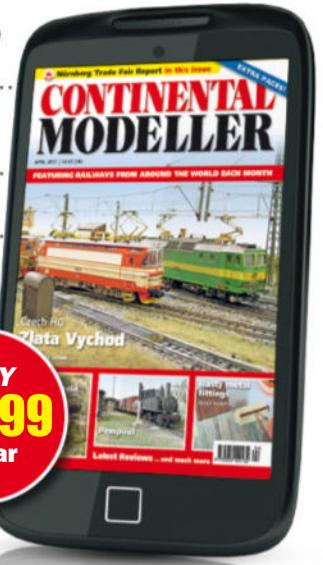
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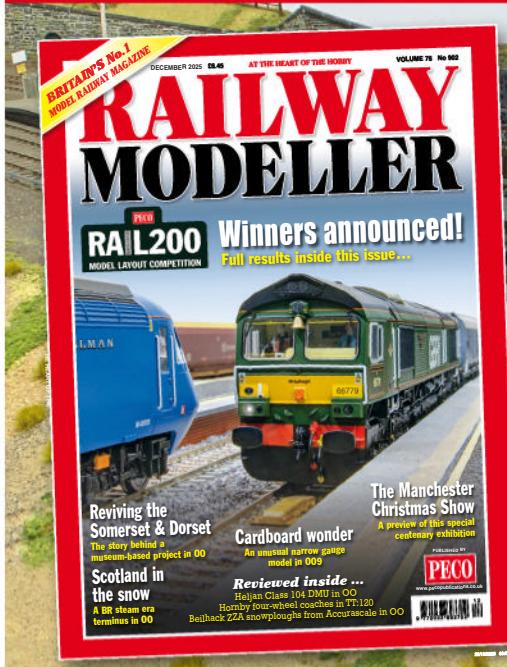
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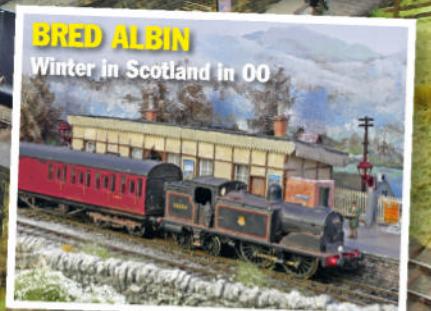
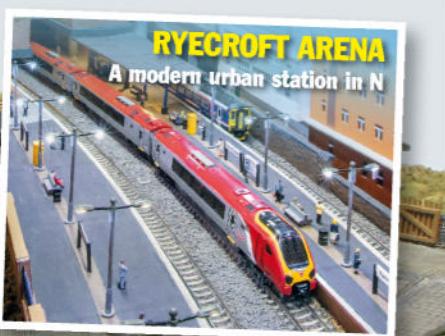
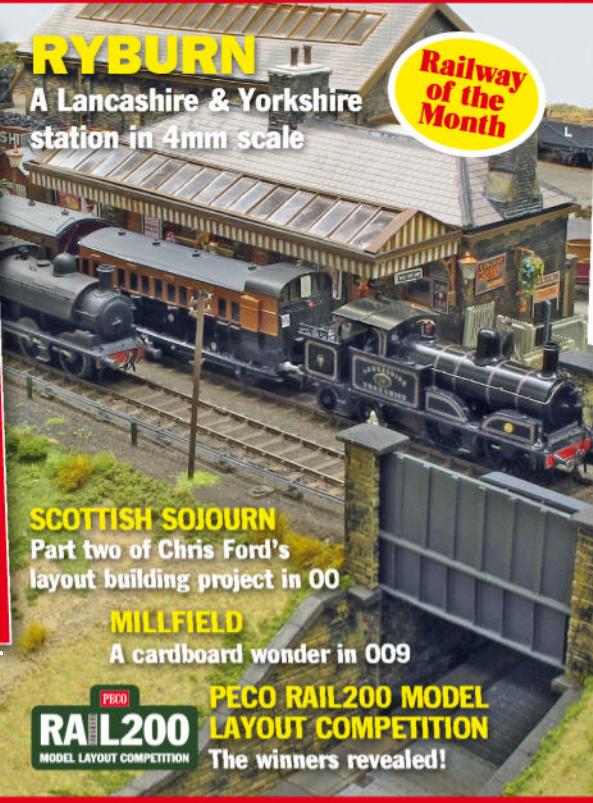
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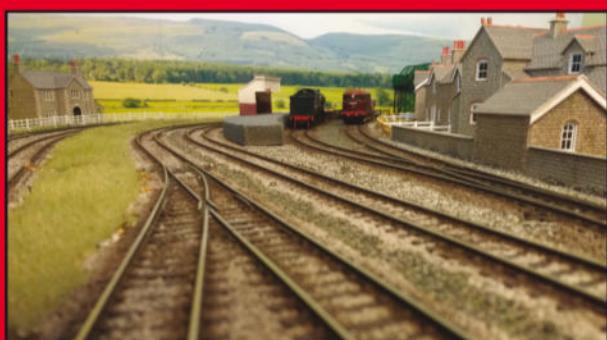
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