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CONTINENTAL MODELLER

February 2026

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Number 2

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RAILWAY MODELLER

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



Cover

Sachsen IVK 99 530, still with original boiler and riveted tanks, and **reko 99 1585-1**, rebuilt with a new boiler and welded tanks, ready to leave the narrow gauge sidings at Lottenbirge with a heavy freight.

Photo: editor.

European show in Birmingham

We commend the European Railways Association for their initiative in organising a dedicated exhibition at Longbridge in Birmingham on Saturday 28th February, and wish them every success.

The show may not require a hall at the National Exhibition Centre but does offer no fewer than twenty layouts, in a broad range of scales, gauges, and subjects.

At the time of going to press these were:

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Spatenbrau Brücke</i> | German N | CM August 2017 | Andy Howitt |
| <i>Mühlenfelder</i> | German N | | Pauline McKenna |
| <i>Sellraintal</i> | Austrian N | | Dan Wylam |
| <i>La Gare de Saint Claude</i> | French N | CM October 2022 | Nick Lewis |
| <i>Verneuil-les-Vignes</i> | French N | | Jonathan Cassidy |
| <i>St.Frazal d'Ardèche</i> | French Nm | CM August 2023 | Piers Milne |
| <i>Allegra</i> | Swiss RhB Nn | in this issue | Mike Carter |
| <i>Streifhohe</i> | German/Swiss N+Nn | | Chris Sheldrake |
| <i>Gare Sainte-Marie</i> | French HOe | | Paul Walton |
| <i>Vogelsbach</i> | Austrian HOe | | Eric Bird |
| <i>Kaninchenbau</i> | alpine HOe | CM February 2022 | Iain Morrison |
| <i>Ulvaryd Strand</i> | Swedish HOe | CM November 2019 | Charles Insley |
| <i>Santa Maria</i> | Swiss RhB H0m | CM September 2025 | Dan Spalding |
| <i>Aix-en-Pains</i> | French H0m | | John Davies |
| <i>Lottenbirge</i> | German HO+HOe | in this issue | Mark Dale |
| <i>Dreileben</i> | German HO | | Nick Palette |
| <i>Altenburger</i> | German HO | | Alan Wardman & Maciej Kurkowiak |
| <i>La Camrienne</i> | French HO | | Graham Hand |
| <i>St.Pankraz</i> | Austrian HO | CM February 2021 | Mike Upton |
| <i>Fürenalpbahn</i> | Austrian Oe | CM May 2019 | Friso Dijstelbergen |

Note that *St.Frazal d'Ardèche* was built by Sy Newitt and *Fürenalpbahn* by Anthony Bilton; these layouts are being shown by their current owners.

Several of the layouts have been featured in the magazine, and the list of exhibitors includes some familiar contributors with new projects.

We encourage you to attend if you can.

Full details in *Exhibition Diary* on page 148. The layouts are previewed on page 146.

Award for Port de Crozon at Manchester show

Following on last month's comments about foreign layouts being recognised at general exhibitions, we were delighted to hear that Gordon and Maggie Gravett were awarded the trophy for best visiting layout for *Port de Crozon*, the Railway of the Month in our December 2025 edition, selected by Manchester MRS members at the exhibition to mark the society's 100th anniversary.

Gordon and Maggie are pictured with Philip Sweet (Exhibition Manager, left) and Doug James (society Chairman, right).



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A simple idea, impressively executed – Mike Carter has a new theme in a new (for him) scale and gauge, making good use of Kato N Rhätische Bahn stock.

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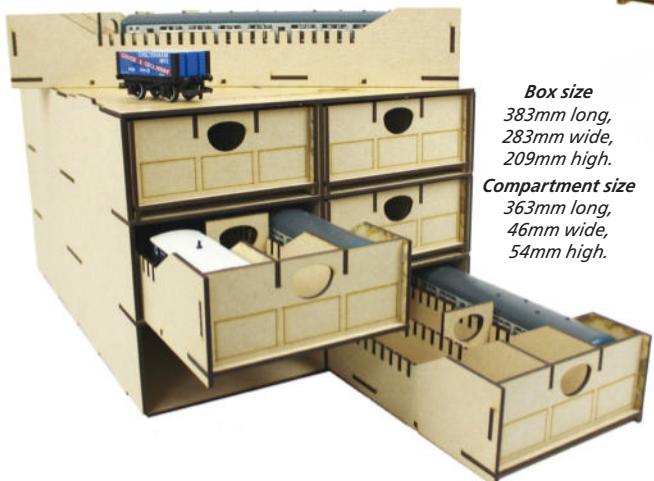
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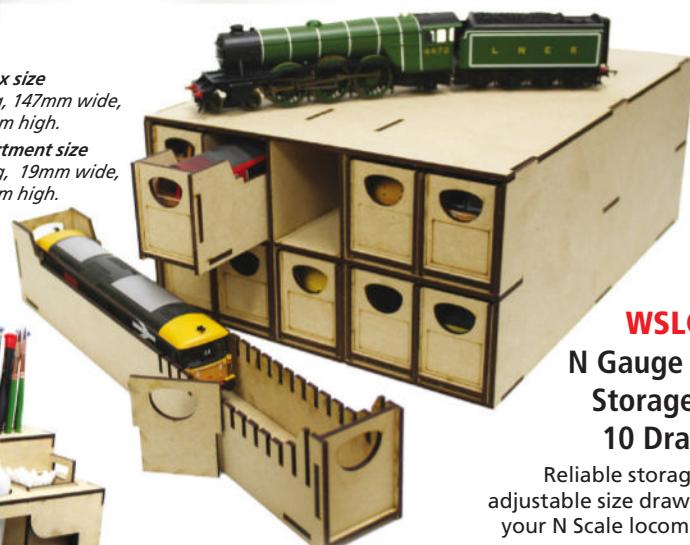
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Hitachi Class 800/3 GWR

10-1672 9-Car Set

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OP R282 1,580mm 11-211/11-213 DCC



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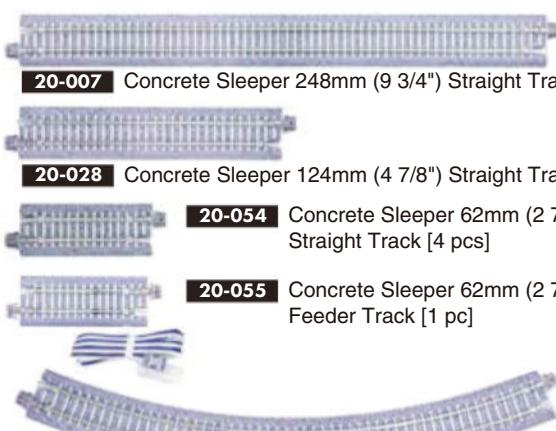
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Icons - Specification

| | | |
|----------------------|----------------|---------|
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Icons - Option

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
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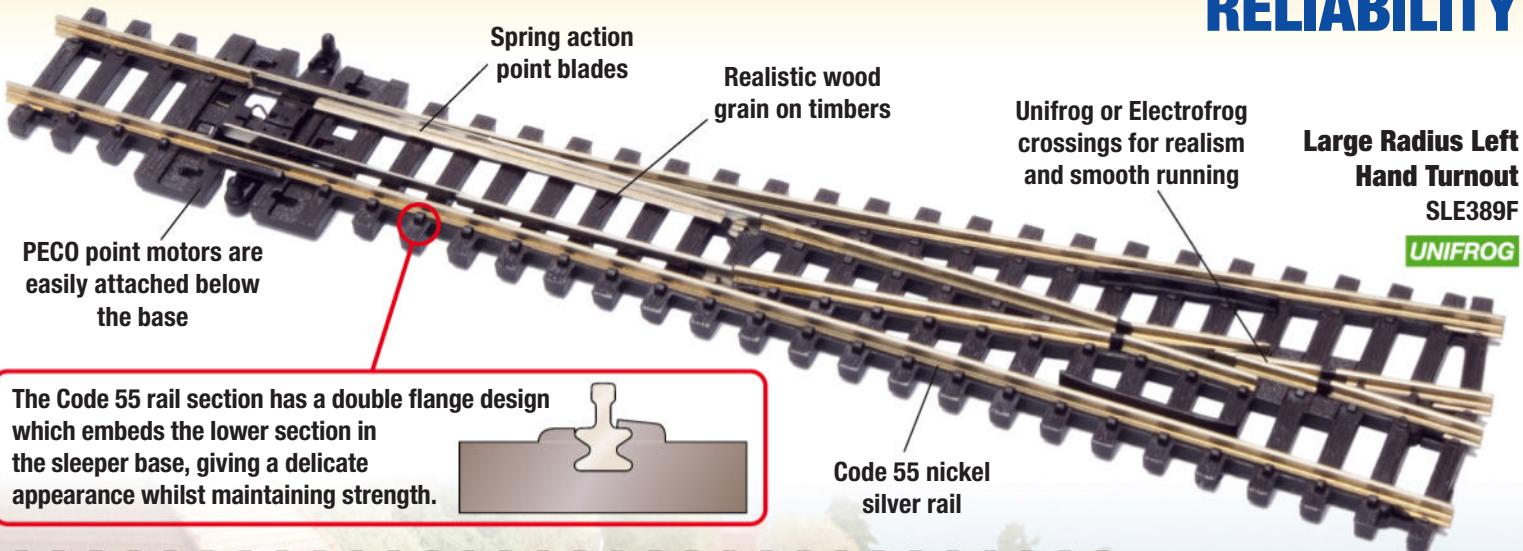
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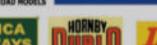
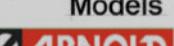
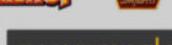
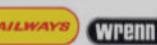
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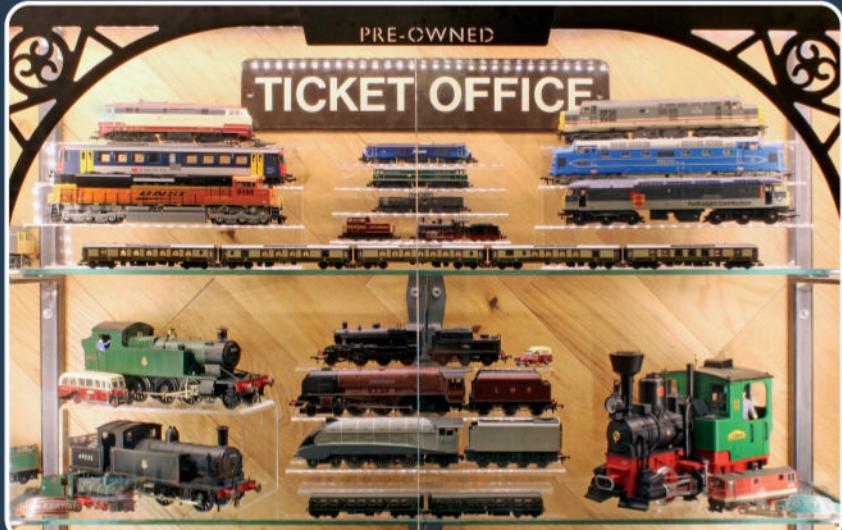
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Lottenbirge



Standard meets narrow gauge in the Erzgebirge

Mark Dale presents his German dual gauge exhibition layout with an unusual operating feature.

Below

Einheits 2-10-2T 99 734 arrives with a passenger train on the narrow gauge to make a connection with the standard gauge double-deck stock as IVKs 99 530 and 99 1585-1 wait to depart with a heavy freight made up of standard gauge wagons on Rollwagen transporters.

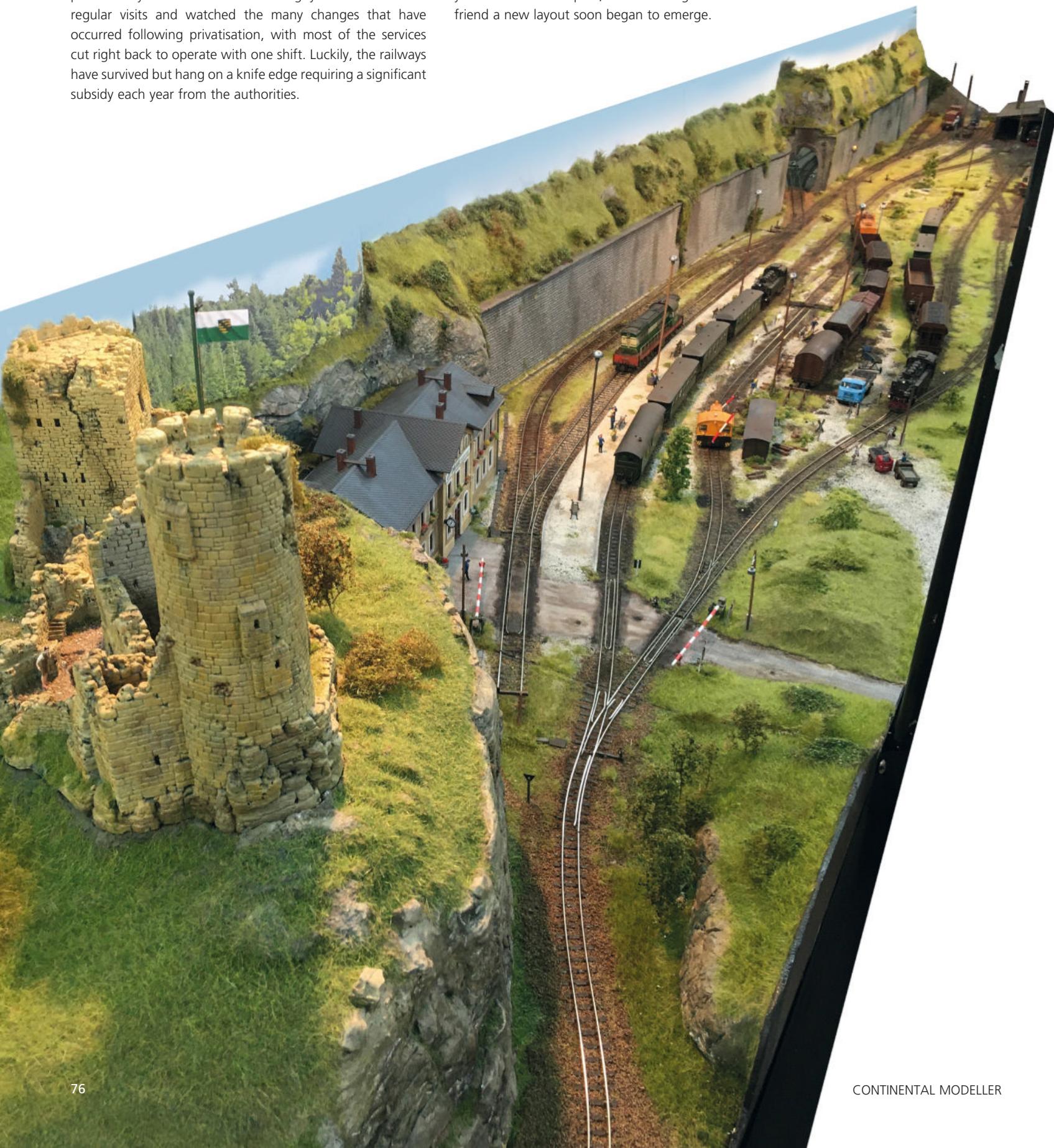
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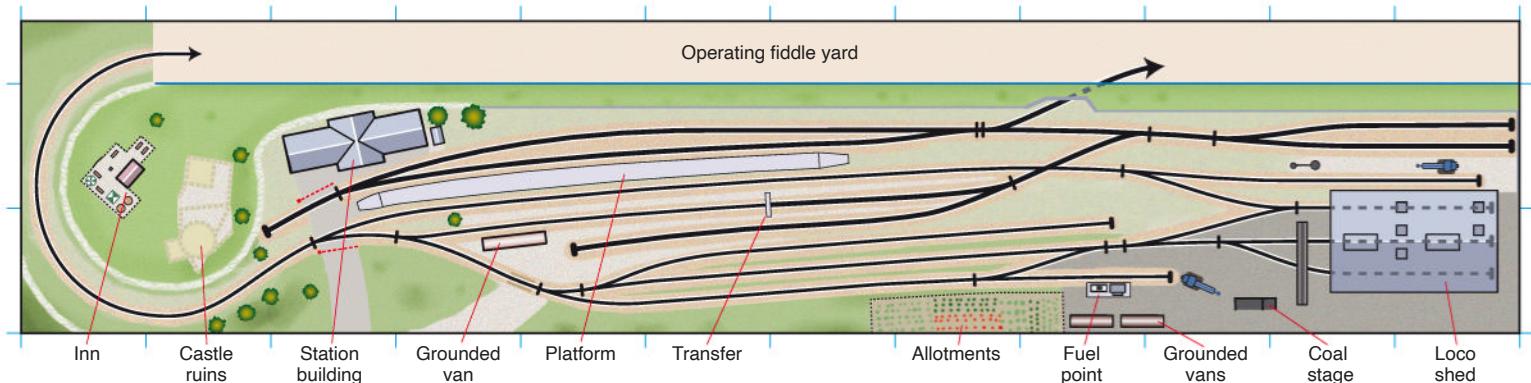
My interest in Saxon narrow gauge railways began in 1997 following a visit to the lines around Dresden. At the time they were still state owned, operated by DB, and running a public service which on most lines commenced in the early hours for the commuters. Unfortunately, transport of freight had ceased a few years prior to my visit. Over the following years I have made regular visits and watched the many changes that have occurred following privatisation, with most of the services cut right back to operate with one shift. Luckily, the railways have survived but hang on a knife edge requiring a significant subsidy each year from the authorities.

My first HOe layout depicted Bertsdorf, the junction on the Zittau line (see CM January 2018), and has been exhibited a few times bringing a little bit of Saxon narrow gauge over to the UK. This new layout really grew from an idea I had to make Bertsdorf fit in the garage a little more easily, by adding a new baseboard on the end to access a new fiddle yard. That was the plan, but following a discussion with a friend a new layout soon began to emerge.

Below
An overall view of the scene which has the transfer pit as its central feature.



Lottenbirge Size of scenic section 12' x 2' 6". Each grid square = 1' x 1'.



The layout depicts a fictitious town in the Erzgebirge region of Saxony, based very loosely on the stations of Wilischthal and Wolkenstein, both of which had transshipment facilities. The time is towards the decades leading up to the turn of the century. The railway unfortunately is in a run-down state through lack of investment and is on the verge of closure.

The standard gauge line emerges from a tunnel into the station with a run-round loop. From the other direction the narrow gauge line comes around a rock formation with a castle perched on top. Passenger trains arrive in the platform for a cross platform connection to the standard gauge. Freight trains arrive into the station ready for shunting onto the transshipment siding.

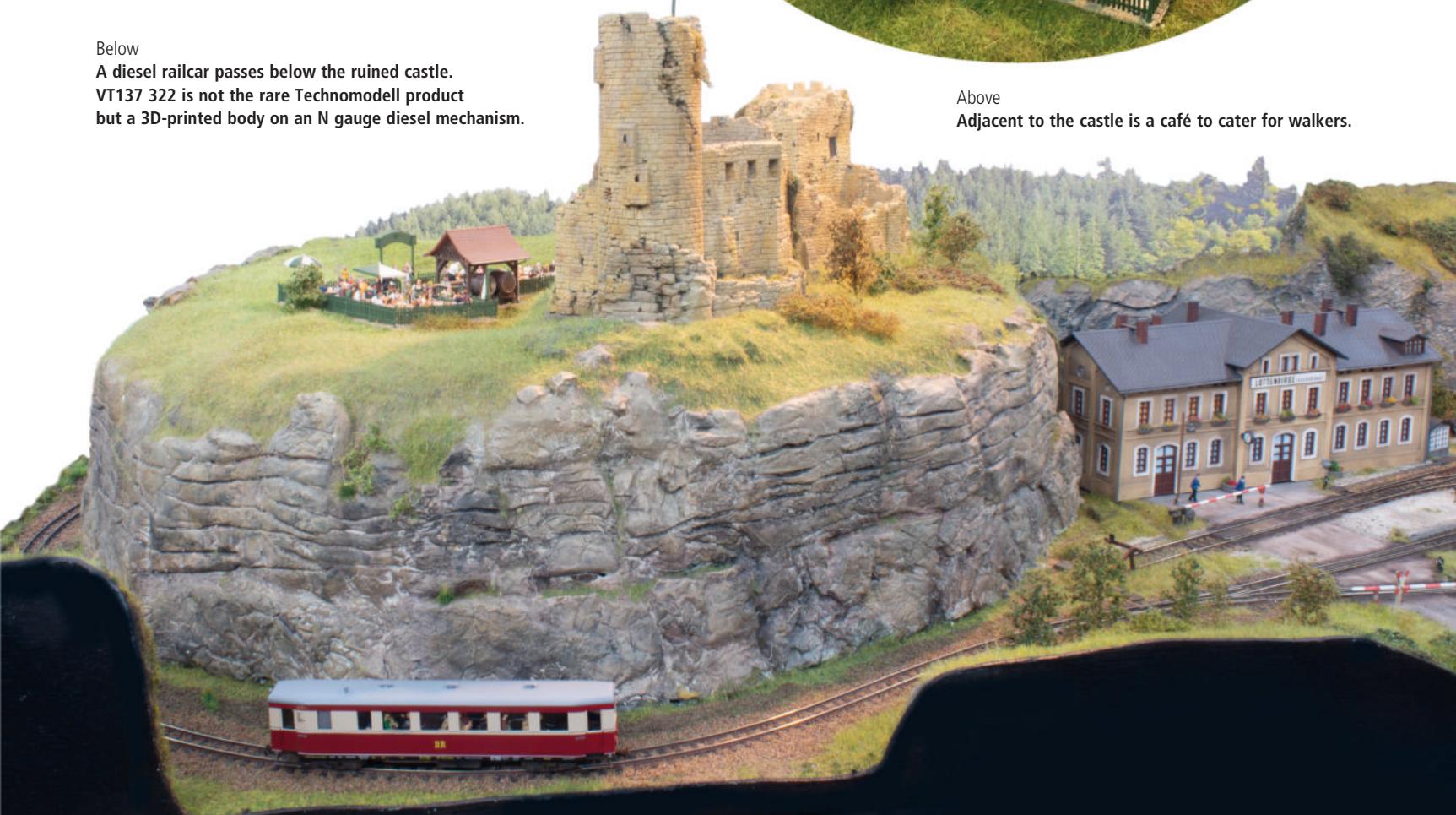
Below

A diesel railcar passes below the ruined castle.
VT137 322 is not the rare Technomodell product
but a 3D-printed body on an N gauge diesel mechanism.



Above

Adjacent to the castle is a café to cater for walkers.



The use of transporter wagons to move standard gauge wagons over the narrow gauge network was a common practice in parts of Europe. The Saxon narrow gauge network was extremely large, with most lines carrying freight on transporters. The loading of the wagons takes place in the yard on a special siding where low narrow gauge vehicles equipped with standard gauge rails are pushed up against a raised section of standard gauge. The standard gauge wagons are then pushed onto the narrow gauge transporters and secured using metal chocks and chains. Due to the overhang of the standard wagons a metal pole is used to couple the narrow gauge wagons together.

There are some excellent films on YouTube of this being carried out, for example *IVK Planbetrieb Oschatz-Mügeln* on the The Traintv channel –

www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrsQGtw-2Fw

Transporter operation is something that is rarely observed in model form. We did not know if it was possible to load a wagon and keep it in place whilst the train travelled around a layout, let alone being exhibited in front of the public. I already had a couple of Roco transporters and some HO track. A test piece was soon set up and, yes, it was possible. However, using the scale scotches was not an option but experimenting with a piece of foam squeezed over the axle enabled the wheels to turn but provided enough friction to stop the wagon rolling off. The design of the track plan now commenced with the transporter loading ramp being a main feature.

Below

Romanian-built L45H diesel 199 018 in DR livery (as now running on the Zittau lines) makes ready to depart with a passenger train.





Above
A regauged Köf shunter holds Rollwagen against the transfer dock as a BR106 0-8-0D propels standard gauge wagons slowly onto them. The four-wheel open acts as a reach wagon. Note that bogie wagons require two Rollwagen.

Below
The Köf assembles a train of loaded Rollwagen. One of the baggage vans on the adjacent siding will be added to the rear to accommodate the crew.



Loco servicing facilities are provided at the opposite end of the yard – a three road loco shed and new diesel fuelling point on the narrow gauge, along with a shared coaling area for standard and narrow gauge locos. A standard gauge loco is allocated here for shunting.

A mixture of steam and diesel locos operate the services, which also include some Czech cross border traffic.

When constructing the layout I decided to venture into Digital Command Control (DCC), and this has been a whole new learning curve. I have used the NCE Power Cab controller, and the first locos I purchased came fitted with Zimo decoders. I then started to fit decoders to the Bemo locos used on *Bertsdorf*. Among them were Loksound 5 decoders by ESU. These are now my preferred decoders, and I have a Lokprogrammer to download sounds and tweak the locomotives.





Left
 DR passenger stock
 with visiting diesels –
 on the standard gauge
 Czech 'Goggles' 763 210-4,
 on the narrow PKP Lxd2 289,
 a Polish example of the L45H.

Right
 VIK 0-10-0T 99 1714-7
 has arrived at the platform
 as the shunter draws out
 the first loaded wagon.
 The long coupling poles
 have to be added or removed
 by hand – as in real life.

Below left
 Regauged Köf 199 003-4
 and 0-8-0D 106 076-3
 working the transfer pit.
 The Köf was inspired by
 a metre gauge example.

Below
Einheits 2-10-2T 99 734 and
Kriegslok 2-10-0 52 8105
 exchange passengers
 as 0-8-0D 106 076-3 shunts
 wagons to be transferred.

Below right
 A IVK arrives with a freight.
 Four-wheel wagons can be
 carried on one *Rollwagen*.





Left
As the Czech 763 diesel runs round its train, a powerful Bulgarian class 77 has taken over on the narrow gauge.

The motive power is a mixture of steam and diesel from Roco, Piko, Brawa, and Bemo, and the rolling stock from Roco, Brawa, Bemo, and Technomodell.

I have a few narrow gauge diesels from beyond Saxony which I have repainted in liveries representing what might have happened as a replacement for steam. I recently discovered that Deutsche Reichsbahn had a provisional contract to acquire Bulgarian class 77 diesels and rolling stock from the Rhodope railway for use on the Freital line, but this failed to materialise with reunification in 1989. I also found that files to 3D-print these models were available ...

Track is Tillig for the standard gauge and Peco main line HOe for the narrow gauge. I decided to operate the points manually using the wire-in-tube method connected to a slide switch. This is hidden in channels milled out of the baseboard during construction before the track was laid over it.

Underneath the baseboard I have run two sets of bus rails, one for the narrow gauge and the other for the standard; the idea being to help in the event of tracking down any faults that may appear by isolating either system. I have also connected to each of these NCE EB1 circuit breakers.

Below
The loco facilities and shed. On the standard gauge 2-8-2T 86 270 takes water. The narrow gauge shed hosts 2-10-2Ts 99 760 and 99 734, VIK 0-10-0T 99 1714-7, and IVK 0-4-4-0T 99 1585-1. At the fuel point are two Austrian Rh2095 diesels, numbered theoretically as DR 199 601-8 and 199 602-6. The DR could not have funded these machines, but also did not acquire any of the potentially available Romanian L45H type until after re-unification and privatisation. The DR's failure to develop a light axle load 'main line' diesel for the narrow gauge – and reluctance or inability to purchase one – probably saved the IVKs, many of which were rebuilt and hence survived to be preserved.



Right
The shed at Freital Hainsberg. August 2009.

When it came to the buildings, I scratchbuilt the loco shed from plasticard. I based it on the shed at Freital Hainsberg, one of the narrow gauge lines on the outskirts of Dresden. The station building along with some other scenic features are from the Auhagen range. The castle and long stone retaining wall are from Noch.

Operation consists of a freight train arriving on the standard gauge with a mixture of wagons to be stabled in the siding or loaded onto the narrow gauge. The shunting loco takes over proceedings and a transporter train is formed up. Whilst this activity takes place a local passenger service on the standard gauge can arrive and depart, along with a connecting service on the narrow gauge. This usually involves a loco exchange for a fresh one off the shed.

Shunting the transporter wagons needs a steady hand! We have modified the Roco bar couplings, cutting the loops off the ends and replacing this with a piece of 0.7mm wire shaped to a curved hook which drops into the hole on the wagon. To assist locating the hole, a small counter bore has been made on each wagon. Once loaded, they are shunted into the siding to pick up the crew van ready for departure.

A visit to Dresden in 2025 really highlighted how close these lines are to disappearing. Whilst we were there the SDG, which operates three of the lines, reduced the service on the two Dresden lines due to the subsidy being cut by 10%. This has resulted in cancellation of the last pair of trains of the day, which will now only run during high season, Bank Holidays, and weekends. If the subsidy is reduced further, more cuts will have to be made. If you want to see them in action and have a holiday to a lovely part of Germany, I would recommend visiting sooner rather than later.

Websites for more information:

Steam Route Saxony (Dampfbahnroute Sachsen)
www.steam-route-saxony.com
 Saxon Steam Railway Company
www.sdg-bahn.de
 Zittau Narrow Gauge Railway
www.zittauer-schmalspurbahn.de
 Pressnitztalbahn museum railway
www.pressnitztalbahn.de

The layout will be one of those at the European Railways Association exhibition on Saturday 28th February.

See *Exhibition Diary* for more details.



Above
As 199 018 arrives on shed, shed staff seem very keen to help a young lady with a troublesome Trabant.

Right
B-B diesel 110 091-6 stabled awaiting its next duty.

Below
A BR58 2-10-0 being coaled on the standard gauge.



Mike Carter has a new theme in a new (for him) scale and gauge.



Above

Rhätische Bahn Ge4/4 II 620 in RhB Club livery with a rake of *Glacier Express* coaches. Passengers get a great view of the waterfall as they cross the bowstring girder bridge.

Allegra

A simple idea, impressively executed



This new exhibition layout is once again the result of a ride on a train. My American HO layouts – *Sierra Nevada* (CM June and August 2006), *Red Hook Bay* (CM November 2014 and American special), and *Mill Falls* all came into being after a ride on the Durango & Silverton in Colorado. *Norge* (CM May and June 2020) similarly after a ride on the Flåmsbana in Norway.

During the summer of 2025 my wife and I visited Lake Como in Italy, but the real purpose of the holiday was the desire to ride on the famed Rhätische Bahn *Bernina Express*. We travelled from Tirano in Italy to St. Moritz in Switzerland. It was a wonderful ride through beautiful scenery. I was intrigued by the way the train snaked around model railway-like bends to gain height.

My wife commented that I could not build a layout to depict it as it would cost a fortune in trees! However, after a reasonable lapse of time, her tacit approval to build another layout was obtained and I purchased a Kato N Allegra unit and a rake of *Bernina Express* coaches.

I had already been impressed with the quality of Kato N. In 2024 we had travelled to Tokyo and on the last day of our stay I had stumbled on a model shop. It was a treasure trove and a Shinkansen 'Nozomi' set stole into my suitcase!

All five exhibition of my existing exhibition layouts are fiddle yard to station/depot. With the array of different subjects (American, Norwegian, and British), we get plenty of invitations to exhibitions. As I write we been invited to four exhibitions in the next six weeks with four different layouts. Much as I like exhibiting, age waits for no man and a weekend constantly shunting/switching can be very tiring.

So this time I decided to keep things simple! A continuous run and analogue control. Whilst this is layout six, layout seven is to be Japanese. The Japanese model scene is mostly DC only and most Kato products would need to be hard-wired to become DCC. Whilst all my previous layouts have been operated with Digitrax DCC products, *Allegra* is purely DC using an entry-level Gaugemaster 100M. You could say it was a test bed for the future Japanese layout!



Above
An ABe8/12 Allegra hauling a short set of *Bernina Express* panoramic coaches – a light load for a unit rated at 2,400kW on DC and 2,600kW on AC.



Above

Ge4/4^{III} 643 with a rake of EWI coaches weaving along the ledge just above the lake.

There is something particularly attractive about the 'little red train' (as the RhB publicises itself)

running through a winter landscape – though "little" is a relative term: the Ge4/4^{III} is 16m long and rated at 3,100kW (4,160hp) with a top speed of 100km/h while the *Stammnetz* (main network) standard coaches are 18.42m long – impressive for metre gauge.

Allegra was built in just six weeks whilst I took a break from volunteering on the West Somerset Railway. I decided to keep things very simple. The layout could be replicated easily by anyone using off-the-shelf products.

At exhibitions I had been impressed by Paul Holwill's beautiful N layout *Moors View*. (See RAILWAY MODELLER December 2024). This is a striking snow scene depicting the moors area between Exeter and Plymouth. Whilst we travelled on the *Bernina Express* in the height of summer, I wanted to try a snow scene for myself.

The layout uses a White Rose Modelworks baseboard kit made of 9mm MDF. It measures 150cm by 60cm (about 5' by 2'). The board is a little heavy, but I could have opted for the far lighter Far Eastern Ply. Lesson learned.

All track is Peco Setrack code 80 with first and second radius curves. The points are manually operated behind the backscene.

The backscene was formed with a spare sheet of Foamex to which I fixed an ID Backscenes mountain scene. I used a hot glue gun to attach the curved Foamex to the side walls. With the Foamex being 6' wide to the 5' of the board, it forms a nice gentle curve which ensures there are no corners in the sky!

The side walls were placed some 6cm from the leading edge to allow for a water scene. I painted the water surface on the baseboard with an acrylic Cerulean Blue paint. Once this had dried, using a 2" brush I stippled several coats of Mod Podge Gloss-Lustre onto the surface. This goes on white but overnight the surface dries clear and leaves a convincing water surface. My other layouts *Red Hook Bay* and *Norge* have realistic harbours made using this method.

Then I glued a sheet of 2.5cm Celotex to the baseboard carving out a shoreline fronting the lake. A separate inlet was created for a small stream.

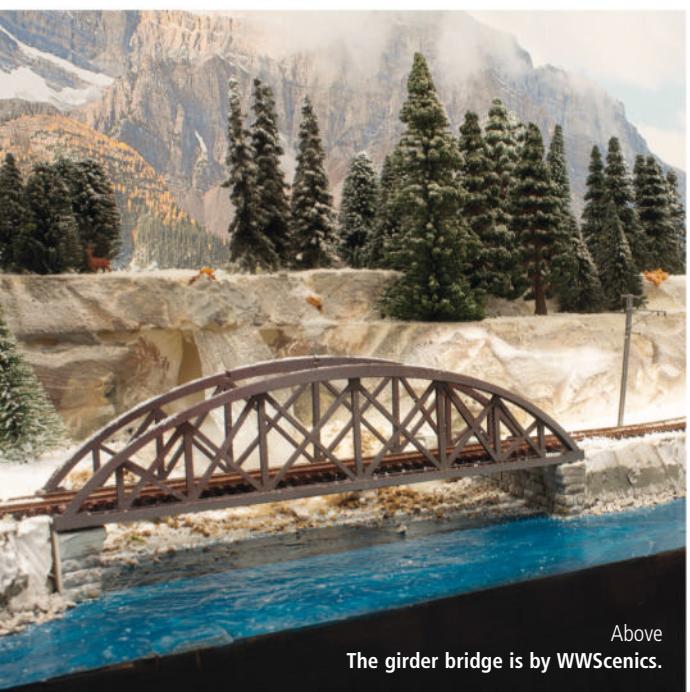
Right
The Allegra is making steady progress beside the lake. The scene was inspired to an extent by Lago Bianco on the Bernina line.

Below
Typical local wildlife can be glimpsed among the trees, apparently oblivious to the passing trains.

Below right
Children playing in the snow near a mountain chalet.







Above
The girder bridge is by WWScenics.

I laid the track directly onto the foam and ballasted it with fine Chinchilla Dusting Powder. I then added some 5cm Celotex to form the hills merging into the backscene. I used a craft knife to create some interesting rockwork.

All the foam apart from the trackbed was then painted with some ready-mixed Artex. After this had dried, I dry brushed the hills with chalks using a foam makeup sponge to accent the rock faces. The shoreline received some talus. The track disappears into the backscene via two Woodland Scenics tunnel portals. A small bridge from WWScenics carries the track over the stream.

Snow was added to the scene using a combination of snow products from Deluxe Materials and Woodland Scenics.

The catenary masts are by Kato.

Trees were going to be a problem until I realised that there must be hundreds of trees stored away from my previous home layout which had been dismantled due to a house move. A rummage in several drawers produced the more than seventy trees required for the layout. These were planted into the snowy foam without needing glue. I then applied a realistic snow effect on the branches using Modelmates spray.





The scene was completed by adding two scratchbuilt wooden ski chalets together with children playing snowballs (Woodland Scenics). Confession – the chalets were built in N for the HO *Norge* layout for a forced perspective effect, but I ran out of real estate!

A lighting pelmet completes the presentation equipped with a flexi LED light kit by Power Master. The pelmet itself is the product of never throwing anything away that could be useful one day! It was cut down from a plastic packing case and fixed to the layout sides using hot glue. The layout name is made up from cheap wooden letters available from Hobbycraft.

Rolling stock

The stock is all Kato. There are three separate trains depicting the *Bernina Express*, the *Glacier Express*, and a service train.

The roster includes:

- ABe8/12 Allegra hauling a set of *Bernina Express* coaches
- Ge4/4^{II} 620 in *RhB Club* livery with a rake of EWI coaches
- Ge4/4^{III} 643 with a rake of *Glacier Express* coaches.

Conclusion

This little layout was fun to build and it is easy to transport in one car. At exhibitions it takes only minutes to set up and take down.

It already has three future invitations, including the European Railways Association event in Longbridge on Saturday 28th February. See *Exhibition Diary* for details.

Below

An Allegra hauling a set of *Bernina Express* coaches, one of the three regular performers on the layout which occupy the three manually switched storage loops behind the backscene.

Photographs by the editor.



Antonio Federici shows how he adapted a Peco N gauge turntable for HO.

Photographs by the author and Benedetto Sabatini.

With thanks to *Tutto Treno Modellismo* magazine.

A shorter turntable

Suitable for many layouts



The availability of the FS Gr.640 and Gr.625 classes from Os.kar in HO sparked a strong desire to be able to represent passenger operations accurately with a steam loco. Since the layout I am building depicts a medium-sized terminus, it was necessary to equip it with a turntable as these locos, which, unlike types with bogie tenders such as the Gr.740, very rarely ran in reverse. In reality, a location similar to the layout would presumably have been equipped with a standard turntable with a bridge length of either 9.5m or 15m. The former case, encountered for example in Biella, requires turning the loco and tender separately, a very interesting manoeuvre but difficult to reproduce in model form.

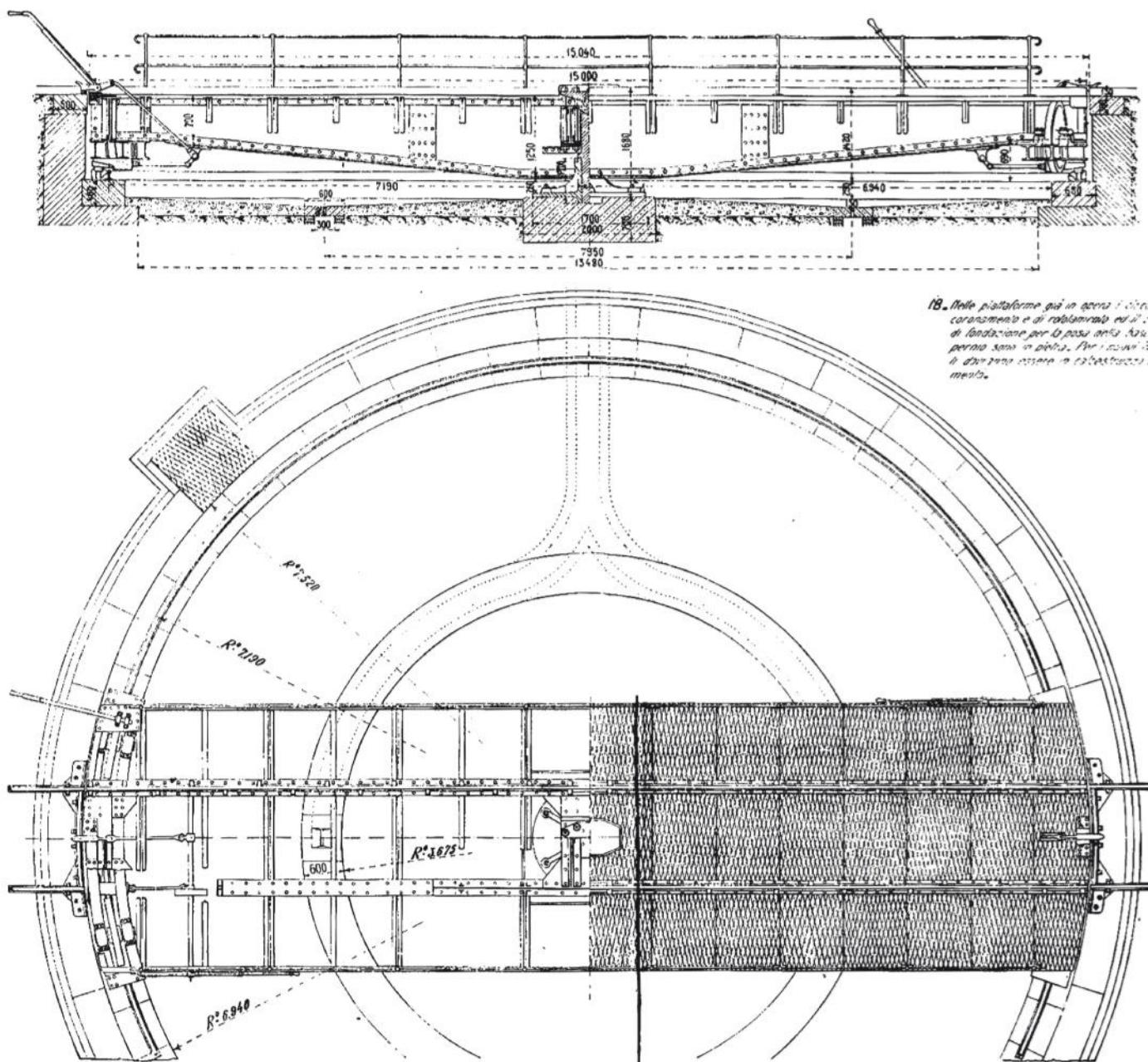
The second case, typical of many stations frequented in the steam era by the 625 and 640, such as Milan Porta Genova, Bra, Cuneo, Rovigo, Foligno, Fabriano, and Cosenza, is faced with a chronic lack of commercially available products at reasonable prices. There is an 18m motorised turntable available from Fleischmann, and numerous others of similar

diameters are in the specialist Hapo company's catalogue, but the price for these exceeds €150. Furthermore, these are based on German examples; for those seeking a truly Italian turntable, the only alternative to scratchbuilding is to use the MFAL photo-etched brass kits, which are certainly beyond my reach. So I sought a solution for building a turntable by converting a readily available and affordable commercial product. This is a freelance solution, not precisely faithful to the design of Italian turntables, but decidedly economical and technically easy.

Peco offers several turntable kits for different scales and gauges. While the HO turntable is decidedly generous in size, the N model (ref.NB-055) has a diameter of just over 150mm, with a plastic pit of a depth adequate even for HO. It is also very reasonably priced and can be motorised, as I discovered from photos and articles in English modelling magazines and forums. I manage to purchase one online and immediately began studying how it could be 'Italianised'.

Left
The finished turntable,
based on a Peco N product
adapted to HO,
installed on the layout.
Photo: Benedetto Sabatini.

Below
**FS drawing of a standard
15m diameter turntable.**



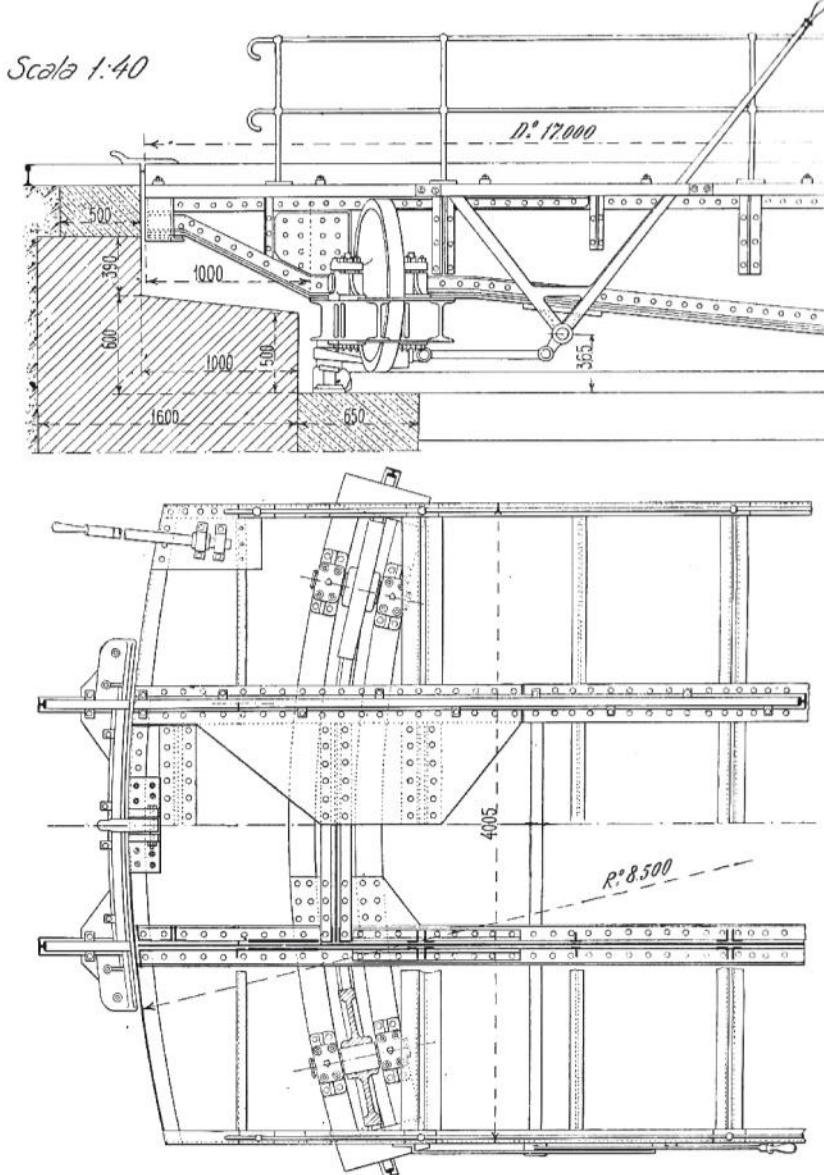


Above and above right

Modifications to the pit: the new shape is achieved by wrapping strips of plasticard around the original moulding. The new running gear is 1.5mm higher than the original to compensate for the modification to the bridge.

The pit walls were lined with a strip of Redutex brickwork.

PIATTAFORMA GIREVOLE DI DIAM. M. 15:00
TRASFORMATA A M. 17.00 DI DIAMETRO



The Peco kit is as simple as it is precise: the pit is made as a single piece, with the running gear and the external wall accurately moulded; it has a depth of approximately 12mm, realistic in N but still acceptable in HO.

Around the base of the pivot, appropriate mounts for electrical contacts allow for the power supply to the bridge track and automatic polarity reversal.

The supplied bridge is made of three parts: the sides, which include the reproduction of the (fixed) wheels, and the upper deck, which has the mounts for N gauge track and the anchor points for the power contacts. The main beams, which in reality are arranged in line with the rails, are assembled at a distance well above 9mm and closer to 16.5mm, which suited my purpose.

The sides have an almost constant height and are therefore quite different from the tapered style of FS turntables. However, after the modifications are completed, they are barely visible, and so, in my opinion, definitely acceptable.

The length of the bridge is about 150mm: too small to turn a Gr.625, which requires at least 170mm. (I am talking about the overall wheelbase, not the length over buffers.) In fact, some FS 15m turntables were extended to 17m by creating two cantilever structures, with small modifications to the turntable, which took on a 'step' shape. See the FS drawing (*left*). Why not make a similar modification to the Peco turntable to increase its length?

Since the adoption of a new bridge to adapt the turntable to HO track would have had the effect of raising the rail level, requiring a modification of the original running circle, I decided to transform the original external wall into the base of the 'step' of the turntable, widening it with strips of plasticard glued to the edge of the pit. This way, the bridge can be extended to about 170mm, enough to turn an Os.kar model. The widening was achieved by wrapping four strips of 1mm plasticard around the original moulding: the first two, applied flush with the pit, serve to widen it by an additional 4mm; the two outer ones are taller and protrude about 2mm from the original circle to create the outer edge of the step and the inner edge of the new pit. A suitably shaped 3mm x 1.5mm Evergreen strip completes the new circle, making a total width of 5mm.

To further increase realism, it is possible to modify the pit by creating access steps to the bottom, normally protected by corrugated sheet metal; I preferred to omit this modification for fear of creating an area of excessive weakness in



the pit, also in view of the greater load resulting from the larger models.

The pit and the crown of the wall were painted grey to simulate concrete, and the inner walls of the pit were lined with a strip of Redutex bricks. A couple of drains could also be installed in the bottom of the pit to collect rainwater; however, I advise against gluing loose material (earth and dust) to the bottom of the pit to avoid any possible interference with the bridge.

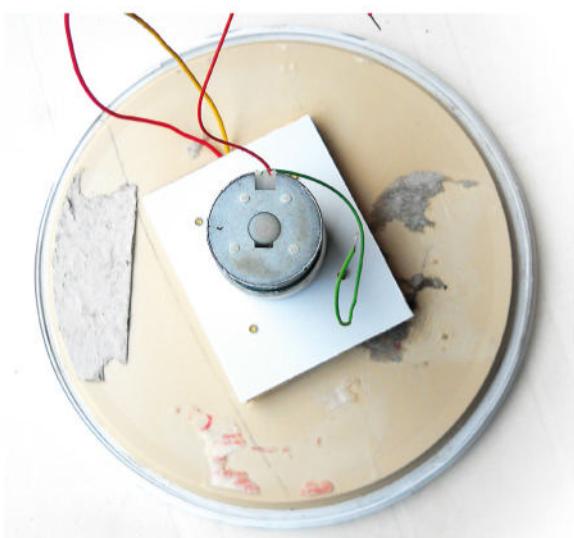
Movement

Next it was time to focus on the bridge's movement. The Peco turntable does not have any motorisation as it comes, but the instructions clearly highlight methods for transmitting movement to the bridge. According to personal preference, it can be adapted for manual or motorised control.

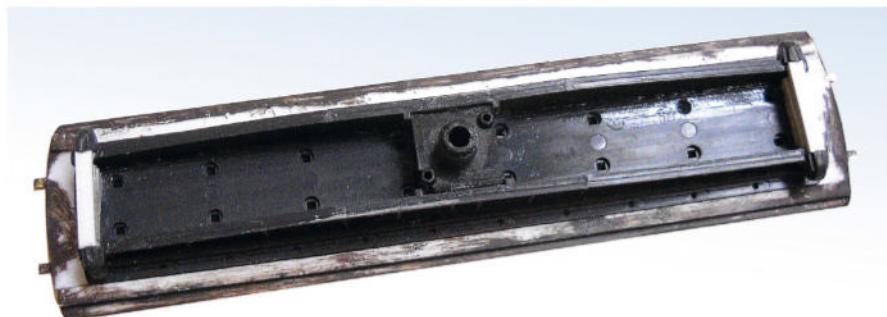
In the first case, simply follow the instructions for the N turntable, which suggest a worm gear transmission – readily available Meccano components are recommended. The bridge's pivot pin is hollow, compatible with a 4mm diameter shaft.

I had to hand a 12V motor with high gear reduction and an output shaft of precisely 4mm, purchased at an exhibition years ago, so I opted for motorised movement.

Using a 10mm scrap of Forex, I prepared a block to anchor the motor to the pit, equipped with a generously sized hole for the pivot pin. I secured the motor to a 1.5mm rectangular



The two pieces of rail underneath align with the original sprung contacts and provide power to the track.



lar plastic plate with three screws, and secured the plate to the Forex block, ensuring the motor shaft engaged with the Peco turntable housing. The motor shaft, in this case, has a flat surface for anchoring a grub screw; since there was not enough space to fit a collar on the hollow Peco pivot beneath the pit, I forced the fit with a piece of cable tie to prevent slipping.

Below left

The motor has a high degree of reduction gearing, and its output shaft connects to the hollow pivot. The assembly is supported by a Forex frame and anchored with small brass screws.

Top
The modified girders and the new wider deck.

Above and below
Girders and deck assembled.

Construction photos: author.



Above
The original bridge is topped with a new plasticard component that carries the 16.5mm gauge rails.



Top

The widened bridge in the modified pit, with the new deck ready to attach.

Above

The new deck in place, and the whole unit ready to install.



Since the turntable has only one access track and is located in the foreground, where it is easily visible to the operator, I did not consider it necessary to use an automatic alignment system.

In praise of slowness

After an initial mechanical test, which was successful, I temporarily installed the turntable; in the absence of an alignment system, I preferred to reduce the speed of rotation speed. Given the high torque of the motor, and the significant gear reduction, I opted to build a 5V stabilised voltage power supply circuit consisting of a diode bridge, a pair of capacitors, and the μ A7805 stabiliser integrated circuit (at a total cost of just a few Euros). Given the simplicity of the circuit, I used a perforated strip board for this. Power is provided through a double pole centre off switch, which allows the turntable to rotate in either direction, as well as stopping it. The speed is now approximately 2 rpm, comparable to real turntables. The slow speed allows the bridge to be easily aligned with the approach track; the bi-directional rotation facilitates small adjustments in case of failure on the first attempt.

In operation

I could finally proceed with installing the turntable on the layout, finishing the scenery around the pit, and assembling the missing parts.

The generous dimensions of the cylinders of some locos in use suggested placing the handrails (made from a Faller plastic product) on two 2mm x 2mm Evergreen strips glued to the outside of the bridge.

In addition to the indicator discs, I represented the bridge locking levers (made of plasticard) and the manual operating levers, but omitted further details such as the pneumatic motor and related control systems.

Although this model does not match the FS drawings, the compactness of the turntable and the low cost were more than valid reasons for accepting the approximation, especially considering the cost of proprietary products, which are also very different from FS turntables.



Above

The finished turntable in place on the layout.
It is very compact, the whole thing
requiring little more space than the length of the bridge.

Right

The alignment between the bridge and the access track
is visual, thanks to the slow rotation speed of the turntable.
The widening of the track compensates
for the greater thickness of the bridge,
as well as allowing for a greater usable length.
To this end, the bridge rails protrude over the edge of the pit.
Note the addition of the signal disk and the locking lever.

Below, left to right

Turning a Gr.640 (by Os.kar) with a six-wheel tender.
It only just fits – the length of the bridge is only just longer
than the total wheelbase of the loco.

Photos (6): Benedetto Sabatini.



Rudy Altenhoven created an attractive scene depicting a well-known location as an entry for the 2025 *Modelspoor* micro-layout competition.

Halte Royale d'Ardenne

On the line between Dinant and Bertrix



Above

A type 97 2-8-2T and its short train coasts toward the halt where some affluent passengers – with a considerable amount of luggage – are waiting to board and more are arriving by landau, just in time.



As the *Modelspoor* exhibition in Leuven/Louvain (Belgium) approached, with its customary competition for micro layouts (see panel), the idea came to me to realise a project I had been devoting myself to for several years.

During a walk with my wife along the Lesse River in the Ardennes we discovered this imposing building with its castle-like appearance. It was a private station on Line 166 (Dinant – Bertrix) built for King Leopold II and opened in 1898.

Once they arrived at this destination, wealthy clients and royalty from all over Europe were transported by horse-drawn carriage directly to the Château d'Ardennes luxury hotel via a forest path.

I wanted to depict this unusual circular building with its square tower and spiral ramp in its full splendour, in the late 1930s. I also wanted to pay tribute to the workers who built this architectural gem, which is unique in Europe.

As well as affluent passengers waiting on the platform, I wanted to show peasant life during the hay harvest, at the time when cutting, drying, and gathering the hay were still done by hand. This contrasts with the bourgeois life lived in luxury.

The River Lesse flows through the valley below the halt, with a metal bridge across it – a feature worth modelling.

The station is situated just before the tunnel that leads to Houyet. At the time, the line was a single track, with a mechanical signal controlling passage through the tunnel. This signal was scratchbuilt using period photographs. I chose to operate it using a servo motor actuating two small switches to change the signal lights.

The track is Fleischmann.

The track is powered by a DCC control unit with a Fleischmann Multimaus (identical to Roco). It was operated entirely manually during the exhibition. As it was my first exhibition, I wanted to maintain control of the loco and enjoy driving it.

For the train, I opted for a type 97 2-8-2T steam locomotive (former Prussian T14) by Piko and passenger carriages by Roco. Everything was lightly weathered.

The tower, as well as the retaining walls and the bridge pillars, were made with Faller 'Decoflex' dipped in hot water to obtain the curved shape.

The competition

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 will be taken into consideration by a jury of experts. There will also be a separate public vote.



To enliven the sky, there is an aeroplane equipped with a miniature motor to turn the propeller. (The Château d'Ardennes had its own private airfield.)

Approximately two thousand tufts of different grasses were needed to form the base of the scenery.

The trees in the forest are home-made, with a base of sea foam coloured brown and sprinkled with various colours of foliage.

To populate the scene, I chose appropriate figures from Artitec and Preiser.

Below
You have to look beyond the bridge over the river to discover both wild and domesticated animals.



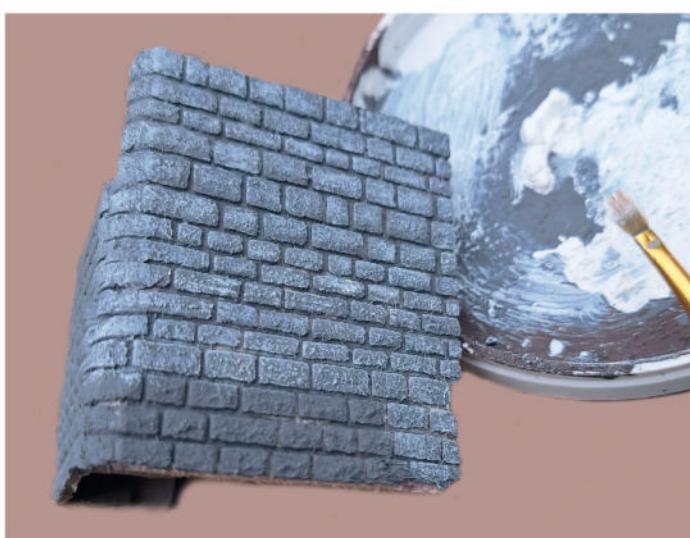
Left
The whole scene,
with the train just about
to cross the bridge.
Operation is simple –
just the one train circulates,
pausing at the halt.
The board size did not allow
for a loop at the rear
so trains could alternate,
but this satisfied the rule
requiring some rail action.

Right
97 035 simmers quietly
as the well-to-do passengers
disembark and board
at the platform.

Below
The scenery takes shape.

Below right
Dry brushing the stonework
of a bridge abutment
to bring out the texture.

Photos (2) by the author.





Above
The valley of the River Lesse is alongside the halt.

Below
One the gentry contemplates a swim in the river as farm workers toil in the fields.





I put a sheet of clear plastic over part of the front to protect the details from inquisitive fingers. This was made quite easy to remove as access for photography by the magazine's staff was one of the competition conditions.

LED strip lighting was built into the cabinet, which made a big difference to the presentation.

As a bonus, birdsong and the sound of the aeroplane can be heard through miniature speakers hidden in the scenery.



It took me two and a half months to bring the project to fruition and thus introduce this precious witness of the past to the public. It was a real pleasure for me to have been able to build this layout, despite some difficulties encountered.

At the *Modelspoor* exhibition in September 2025 the layout was up against some tough competition, so I was very pleased when it was placed third by the expert jury and achieved first place in the public vote.



Above
The train awaits the signal to proceed. Both loco and coaches were originally German and were taken into Belgian stock after the First World War as reparations. The footpath along the river bank was popular with walkers and cyclists then as now – that is how I discovered this location and decided to model it.

Layout photographs by the editor.

Andrew Eastabrook reports how route setting on The Pas and Northlands was updated, with considerable technical assistance from **Rob Wesley**.
Photographs by Mike Schoen.

Route setting

Improved remote control of points on a garden railway

My garden layout is based on Canadian railways with diesel locos and long trains. It has evolved over many years. It runs around the garden, along walls, between plants, running over bridges across ponds, and includes various loops and parallel sections of track. It enters the house through my workshop and then climbs via a helix to run around my office. The Rocky Mountain section of the inside line featured in CM December 2022 whilst the original garden section was shown in CM August 2012 and a new trestle bridge in October 2024.

For many years the turnouts on the garden section have been operated by Peco PL10s. These have been outside in all weathers with only limited protection, and apart from a little surface rust they have been completely reliable and robust.

The control of each PL10 was through the DCC system and two auxiliary control boards located in the train shed. Three wires from each point output on the boards to the PL10s were laid in ducts around the garden, the furthest being some 15m away. The capacitors on the auxiliary boards had enough power to operate a single PL10 but not two at once for the crossover.

The disadvantage was that each point had to be examined after any operation to make sure that the blades had moved and located correctly. Most of the points were reasonably reliable but not all – and this of course included the most inaccessible one.

The next development was to add Peco PL13 slide switches to the top of each PL10. These have also been exemplary in service for the most part, but outdoor conditions could make them 'sticky'. The system adopted for many years was to wire the slide switches to two different coloured LEDs signalling the route set which could be seen from the operator's seat across the garden. This gave a visual indication of the point setting but was still not completely reliable as the mechanics had a lot of in-built resistance. All the points needed regular maintenance, and the crossover never really worked properly.

I then met Rob Wesley (System Designer and Software Engineer) at the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway and a new operating system was born. This has now been tested for a number of months and is proving itself reliable, accurate, and (so far) foolproof.

Over to Rob for the technical description.

Technical solutions investigated

The trains are controlled by a Digitrax DCC system which requires four supplementary power supply feeds to deliver sufficient power over such a large distance.

After visiting the layout, a small group of volunteers from Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway were discussing the practical constraints of controlling the garden points remotely and so avoiding having to reach through garden plants or scramble over ponds to verify the movement of each point. The overriding issue was that all external equipment had to be fully weatherproof – just like the real railway.

Over the years I have built a number of electronic systems to monitor and control systems in domestic environments. These have been based on various platforms, ranging from Linux PCs, a variety of Raspberry Pi's and Pico's, down to various very small micro-controller based systems. The idea was to see if we could build a wi-fi or radio signal system so that the points were controlled completely separately from the DCC control of the trains. Having worked in industry with plant control and telemetry systems in the past, I thought it best to see if we could incorporate some of the concepts used on those systems.

The system needed to be fault-tolerant. One downside of tiny PC systems such as the Raspberry Pi is that there is an operating system which has to be loaded before any software can be run. Any loss of power can potentially corrupt that operating system, and at the very least, if it survives the outage, that system has to be re-booted before it can run the software. At the end of each use the system needs to go through a clean shutdown to retain its integrity.

Micro-controllers work differently and do not have this problem. They are by nature, outage tolerant, and run continuous 'loops' of code. As soon as power is applied after an outage they instantly restart running the code from the top of the loop. There is no operating system as such, and this makes them far more suitable to control the points in this case. The downside is that micro-controllers have to have their code built on a PC using a programming language such as C++ or Python which is usually written on an integrated development environment (IDE) such as the Arduino Integrated Development Environment (2.x IDE) or PlatformIO. Once checked and verified, the code is then compiled and transmitted to the microprocessor. This is a one-off process



that only needs to be repeated after any software changes. It initially sounds very complicated but once you have got your head around the process, it is very straightforward; any errors are highlighted by the IDE.

There are many types of micro-controllers on the market these days for enthusiasts to build electronic projects. Two common types are the ESP family of controllers from Chinese manufacturer Expressif Systems or the fairly recently introduced pico boards from Raspberry Pi, made in Britain.

In this case the boards need to have sufficient input or output ports for the number of peripheral connections required.

During the prototype stage a number of potential solutions were investigated, using different micro-controllers, different communications protocols, and different ways of controlling the points, ranging from solenoid actuators to servo motors.

Technology used

The micro-processors eventually settled on were two different types of ESP controllers, one ESP32 30 pin module to manage the transmitter unit and three ESP8266 D1 Mini units to act as distributed receivers. The ESP units were chosen because they have a feature called ESP-NOW which allows direct chip to chip communication to take place without requiring any messages to pass through a domestic wi-fi router. All such communications are direct between the modules and are targeted to the unique hard coded chip address, known as the unit's MAC address.

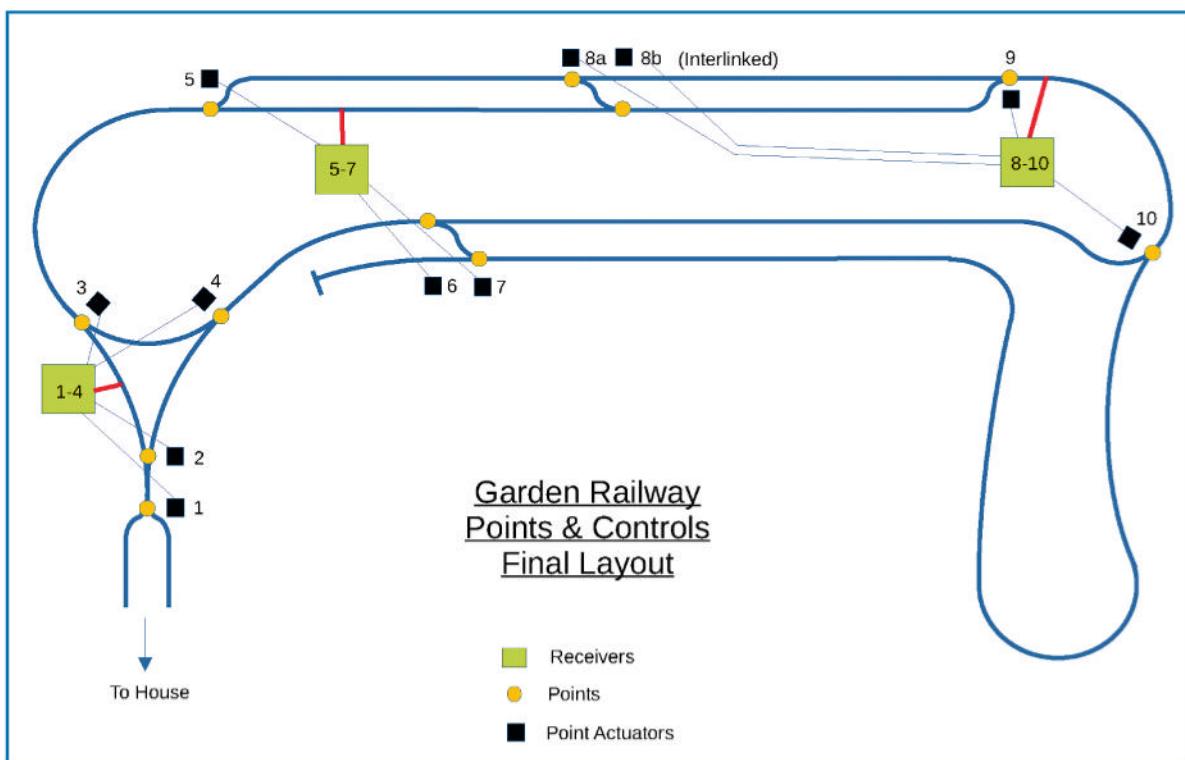
ESP-NOW has a tested range of up to 200 metres and it also has inbuilt transmission verification. If a message is sent from a transmitting module to a receiver and that receiver receives the message it will reply instantly to confirm that it has received that message. This significant feature is used by our system to verify that each remote receiver is on-line and working.

After using solenoid actuators attached to ESP12F relay boards it was found that these were bulky, had a tendency to bounce the point blades unless damped with an attached sliding switch, and we had a problem fitting them inside weatherproof containers with all the solenoid control wires.

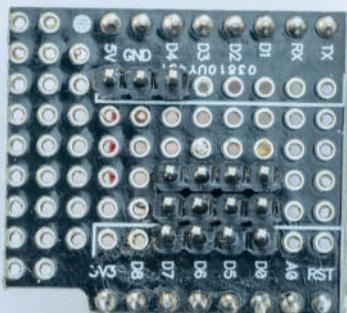
Small metal-gear servos were subsequently found to be very precise, worked smoothly and gave a reliable and rigid point blade action. It took a long time to get the perfect servo arm throw to give a precise movement of 3mm from side to side as required by the points. Each point is operated by a 1mm diameter copper wire point rod with a loop sitting over the nib on the point arm and then taken back to the servo arm with a long 90° arm to allow a small degree of flexibility for when the point blade touches the destination rail. This avoids the need for a full omega loop.

Early receiver prototypes took their power from the nearest section of track, but we had problems with regulating the power supply and lost a couple of power regulation and receiver chips from power surges. The three receiver hubs now all receive power from a separate dedicated 12V DC smoothed and regulated supply.

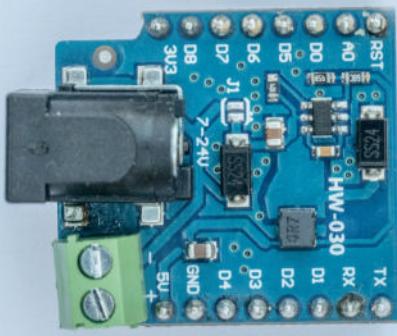
Above
The railway is well integrated into the garden.
The distances involved mean it was impossible to see how the points were set from the control position, even though they were remotely operated.



Right
 The receiver control box in the foreground and the servo hut behind. This is for point No.9 but is typical of the installation. Cladding the 3D-printed huts and the waterproof boxes is a task for the summer; there is a lot of landscaping to complete as well.



Left
 The three components of a receiver module.

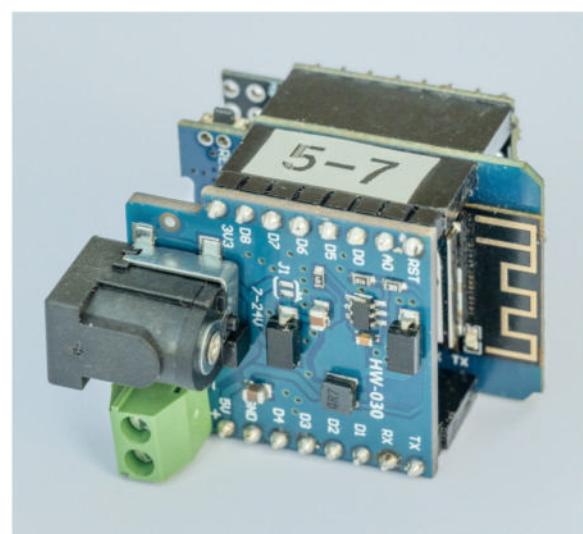


Right
 A complete receiver stack, in this case for points 5, 6, and 7.

Each receiver module stack comprises three tiny circuit boards. At the base there is a power regulator board which takes the regulated 12V supply and provides 5V for the connected servo motors and 3.3v for the ESP micro-processor. Above this sits the main processor board, the heart of each unit, and finally on top is the interface board which provides connections for up to four servos and one set of daisy-chained LEDs. All three plug together making a very compact unit that fits neatly within a 63 x 58 x 35mm waterproof box.

The LEDs used in the transmitter are the latest WS2816 daisy-chainable units, these can produce any colour required and all eleven in the transmitter unit only require one digital signal to control them. This saves a mass of spaghetti wiring needed with traditional LEDs, and gives infinitely more colour choices.

It is worth noting that ESP boards are 3.3v systems. However, all those used here have a 5v USB input which can





be used to run the processor board. In this case it only provides power during setup and point calibration. Operationally power is provided via the specific power regulator board, which takes DC supply voltages from 7 to 24 volts and drops it down to 3.3v on the processor board.

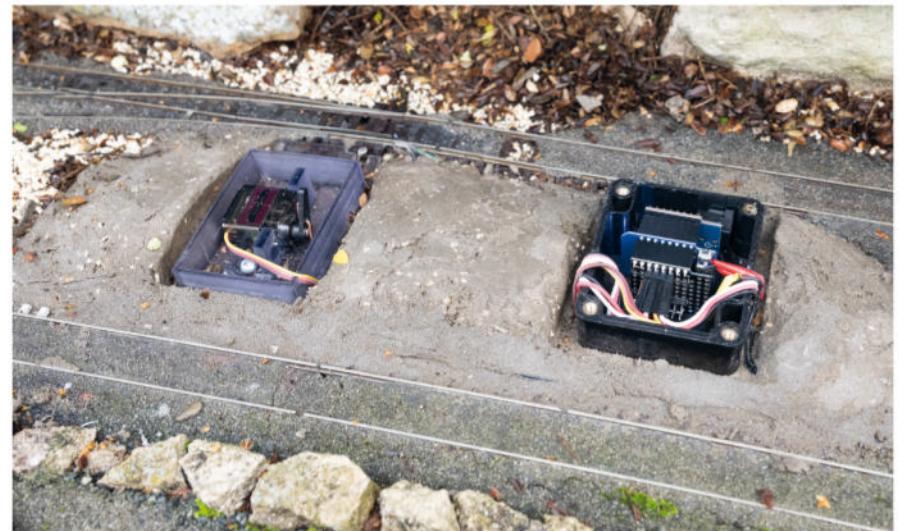
It is important that only one source of power is used at any time. Whichever source is being used, care has to be taken to keep peripheral currents to a minimum. Stalled servos can draw a significant current from the receiver units. To avoid excessive currents, the software we have written ensures that only one servo attached to a receiver is operated at a time. Multiple requests from any receiver are issued three seconds apart to allow the servo and points time to move.

The final design has three signal receivers located strategically around the garden and eleven point controllers. Each point controller contains an MG90S servo housed inside a custom 3D-printed hut. Many prototypes were produced before an optimised design was reached that matched the points. The servos sit on a sliding mount inside each hut to allow for perfect adjustment.

The three regional receivers are housed in small waterproof boxes. Each receiver box controls up to four point controllers. Points 8a and 8b act as a pair as this is a crossover. The software manages them as a pair but with a three second gap between point movements.

There were cast concrete bases under the original solenoid actuators. These all had to be broken out and new bases cast to suit the new controller huts. New bases were also cast for the three receiver units, and small conduits buried to take the triple servo control wires from each receiver to its adjacent point controlling hut. All the huts and boxes will be sceniced and landscaped.

The smoothed and regulated 12V DC supply is routed from the house to all three receiver units by cables buried in conduits in the garden.



Above
The servo and receiver uncovered.

Right
A receiver with the control wires to each of the servo motors.





Equipment developed

The system has three main elements:

1. The Master Control Unit

The initial controller used an ESP32 30 pin Development Processor sitting on a breakout board. It took its power from an integral USB3 socket and was powered by a small 'phone charger battery. The processor has now been changed to an Olimex ESP-DevKit-Lipo Processor (rev.D) along with a matching 3.7v 1200mAh Lithium Polymer battery. The Olimex is a 34 pin board, which required a development base board change. The benefit of the new processor is that it has on-board power management circuitry to charge and manage the battery status, and report its state.

The transmitter has a mimic diagram on the front with status LEDs at each point location. The LEDs are WS2816 units in traditional 5mm diameter cases with four legs. They are daisy-chained so one output port on the micro-processor controls the string of all eleven diodes.

The processor continually scans all ten control buttons and issues commands when a button is pressed. The unit sends a formatted instruction to the MAC Address of the required point receiver and awaits a response. If it gets an acknowledgement from the receiver, it changes the state of the relevant variable in memory and changes the colour of the appropriate mimic LED. The colours chosen are Green for clear, Blue for diverting, and Red when no response has been returned from the receiver.

Due to the incredible speed of the micro-processor loops, significant focus had to be paid to debouncing and the damping of button presses in order to avoid multiple commands being issued for one short press of a button. This has been achieved with the assistance of third party open source button library code (JC Button).

Along with formatted point instructions the transmitter also sends formatted signal instructions ready for when LED signals are installed on the track in future.

It is important to understand that the LEDs on the mimic diagram show the state of the points as requested, and acknowledged by the receiver. There is no actual monitoring of the point blade to confirm it has moved to the position requested.

Left

The Control Box in check mode before the 12V supply to the receivers is switched on. The coloured tapes show the blue or green LED colour for the routing. The two LEDs at the top show green for fully charged and solid or blinking red when the battery needs charging. The box measures 170mm L x 130mm W x 60mm D. The points can be operated from anywhere within 25m as tested so far – this is more than adequate for my garden.

Exhaustive testing has shown that the servo and copper wire activating arm are very reliable and can be trusted. It is necessary, however, before each operating session to ensure that there is no debris around the point blades which could lead the servo to stall or over-stress the blades.

2. Regional Receivers

Each receiver is powered from one dedicated 12v DC smoothed and regulated power circuit which services all three receivers. Each of the units can receive the wireless data transmissions from the master control unit but only one will react to messages for points within its scope.

The first thing the receiver does is acknowledges each request by replying to the master control unit. It then breaks down the message to determine which point servo it needs to contact and what action to take. This currently involves issuing a command to one of its four connected servos. For the future additional facilities have been included to change signal LEDs in conjunction with the related point.

Receiver responses to the transmitter are monitored and used to update the state of the mimic diagram. A failure to respond sets a red flag for that individual point.

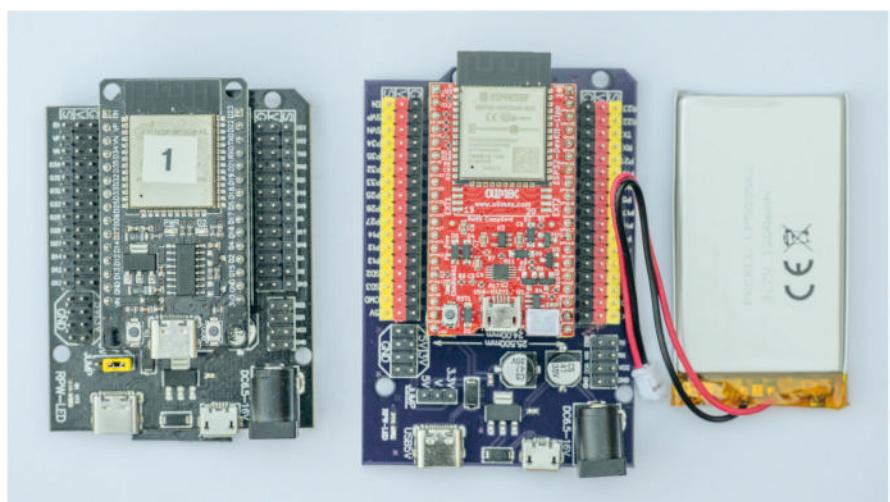
With MAC Addresses being used in the communications protocol we have minimised the risk of receiving malicious signals which attempt to issue contradictory instructions.

3. Point Controllers

Each of the eleven point controllers consists of a MG90S servo sitting in a hut and connected to the point via the 1mm diameter bent copper point rod. The point controller will move the servo arm precisely to the specified 'Clear' or 'Diverting' position.

Below

On the left, the original Master Control Unit.
On the right, the new device, with the LiPo battery.



The 'Clear' and 'Diverting' positions are different for each set of points depending on which side of the track the servo hut has been located. The unique settings for each of the eleven points are held in the master configuration table of the Control Unit software.

Points 8a and 8b are a crossover pair. The software makes them work together so a press of button 8 activates them both with a three second time delay in between to minimise servo power demand on the receiver.

Implementation and testing

Extensive prototype testing was done on the desktop using a set of points in various configurations and with various devices driving the points. The final solution was chosen due to its reliability and fault tolerance.

The software has continually evolved over the last twelve months, with both the master control unit and receivers having had a very significant number of modifications and adjustments for new features or to eradicate software and hardware issues.

A self-contained servo calibration unit has been created to allow each servo to be calibrated individually so each point controller module can be set up accurately without powering up the full system.

The controller has been thoroughly tested and has given full control and reliable operation during a full summer.

Recent modifications

The original transmitter unit was developed with the intention of having removable batteries, and was previously running with a power bank attached via USB.

New products are continually becoming available in the micro-controller world, and so recently the existing code was transferred over to the 38 pin Olimex ESP32-DevKit-LiPo Processor. This had exactly the same ESP32 capability but with additional facilities to connect and manage the charging of a 1,200mAh Lithium Polymer (LiPo) battery.

After discussions with the technical team at Olimex and some very minor solder bridges to pads on the board, the system can continually report the state of the battery. Software modifications were made and so users can monitor the battery state and charging status via a pair of LEDs above the track diagram. The transmitter unit can be recharged via



Above

The inside of the Control Box with the new Control Unit and LiPo battery.

Below

Controlling the points from some distance away across the garden is now much more convenient.

the USB port when the power drops towards its safe minimum operating level. The micro-controller circuits ensure that the battery stays within its safe operating limits. Initial tests suggest that the unit can run for a number of hours without a power boost from a standard USB charger.

The system is continually being refined and new capabilities added.

Further reading

If you want to find out more about ESP32 and ESP8266 microprocessors or ESP-NOW communications, there are two excellent websites that will explain all about this technology and give examples:

<http://randomnerdtutorials.com/>
<http://dronebotworkshop.com/>

Conclusion

My thanks go to Rob for transforming the outside running experience for the summer operators, and for a fascinating trip into the most technical aspects of our hobby.

The Pas and Northlands now has eleven points controlled by the latest technical wizardry.

There are two remaining Peco PL10s without slide switches just outside the train shed, one working Caboose Industries control stand, and nine Caboose Industries ground throws, two non-operating and seven working, plus eight points operated 'digitally' (with a finger!) and three by wire-in-tube.

Malcolm Pickering explains how he was tempted away from modelling British subjects.

Mallecombe

The result of a holiday in France

My railway and railway modelling interests had always been British, with all the railways in the rest of the world being of passing interest! So I had never entertained building a non-British layout. However, following a trip to France in 1995, the idea gradually took hold. My wife decided that year on a holiday in the Jura area, way over in the east of France but not quite into Switzerland. During our travels in the area we came upon Morez, where the railway line from Andelot to St.Claude has to reverse because of the geography. The station at Morez looks like a terminus, but the double track approach is in fact two single lines. Trains usually arrive on one line and subsequently depart via the other.

Morez is well known to enthusiasts interested in continental railways but I only came across it by accident. There are several spectacular viaducts on the route and a tunnel which forms most of a circle to enable the line to climb through the mountains. One viaduct is very impressive in that the line descends on a curve and the structure towers above the housing of Morez.

The idea of a layout began to form, so later when Roco brought out their X2800 *autorail*, which is a fine model of the units we saw at Morez, I just had to have one.

Right
The road sign is genuine, although the model of the station is based on Morez. Freight traffic on the line has ceased in real life but survives in model form – 567556 arrives with a train of sliding side bogie vans.

Photographs by the editor, unless otherwise noted.

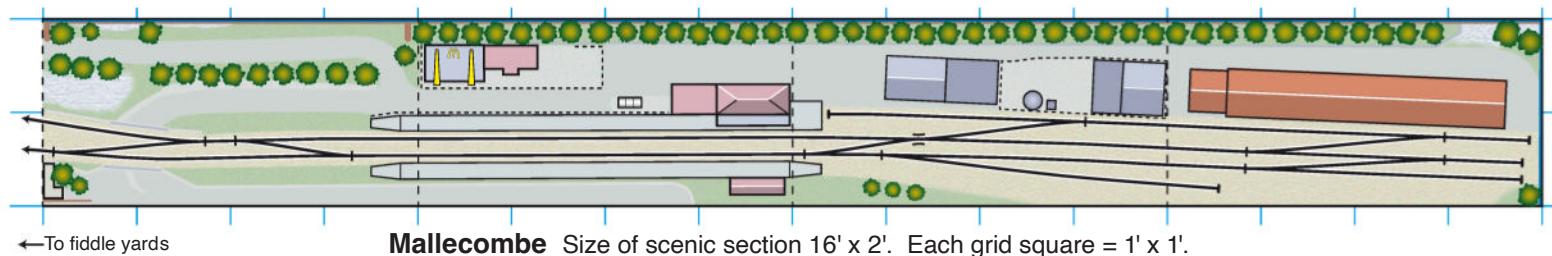
Below left
X2724 and X2803 *autorails* pass at Morez in 1995.
Note the viaduct high on the hillside in the background.

Below right
The scene recreated in HO with X2722 and X2857.
Photos (2): author.



MALLECOMBE

2.5



Mallecombe Size of scenic section 16' x 2'. Each grid square = 1' x 1'.

During subsequent visits to France a few further visits were made and by the last time new X73500 units had replaced the X2800s. Thus I had to have one of them too.

The real Morez station is reasonably compact, but the goods shed and sidings cover a much larger area and extend south to where there was a turntable, according to my map.



Above
Crossovers allow trains
from either direction
to access either platform
and vice versa as services
must reverse here.

Right
The whole layout.



My Morez-inspired model just has a passenger station and a goods shed and is still 20' long. Observation suggested that in the real world there is no longer any freight traffic of any significance and the goods shed and sidings are retained for railway purposes – permanent way and engineering trains and probably snowploughs in winter. On my layout I have imagined that some freight is retained and various vans appear at the goods shed.

Boards

At the time of construction I decided to follow the method used by Clyde MRC who use substantial base frames with a view to re-using them for subsequent layouts. I went for a nominal 4' by 2' whereas the club's standard was 1.5m by 0.75m – which are too heavy and large for a one-man layout! The smaller size suits Sundeala sheets which I prefer for laying track on as track pins can be pushed in easily. In practice, these boards are also too heavy for one person, so I will not be using that method again.



Above
Twin unit autorail X72654
coasts over the crossover
approaching the platform.

Below
The station building
was adapted from
the Faller 'St.Julien' kit.

Track

The track is Peco code 75 which is fine for HO. However, I have reduced the spacing between tracks as a particular concern of mine is the over-wide spacing seen on many layouts. There are no curved sections where it would be necessary for wider track centres, but even so I think mine are still a bit too wide.

Ballast is Woodland Scenics of various hues.

Control

When I was setting out to build the layout, I thought I would give DCC a go, so the layout is controlled by Lenz equipment. Notwithstanding all the sound capability and other technical wizardry of digital control, for me the best bit is being able to run a train or loco up to another anywhere on the layout without the need for isolating sections and switches. This is particularly useful when using railcars and multiple units.





DCC is only used to run trains and there is a separate panel for changing the points, which use Conrad point motors.

Scenery

There is little scope for mountains and tunnels on the layout but I have tried to make a feature of a road bridge under the line just before the track runs into the fiddle yard.

Most of the stone walls and the bridge have been cast in a resin plaster which seems to give a proper stone effect when painted. More wall runs along the rear of the layout with trees above.

A few Heki trees are amongst the larger number supplied from who knows where by Amazon.



Buildings

I thought that building a continental layout would make the provision of buildings easier, given the huge range of kits available. Not necessarily. Some painting is still required to tone down the plastic which also tends to be translucent. Kits are supplied with black lining card to restrict any light showing through if internal lighting is fitted.

The station building is a Faller 'St.Julien' plus its extension. I have added a canopy on the platform side and signage beneath.

The goods shed is only the size it is because of a mix-up when ordering from France. My original order for two Faller kits was declined, or so I thought, so I re-ordered. The four

Above left
The twin bracket signal which controls departures from Morez.
 Photo: author.

Above
The model was scratchbuilt using etched parts.

Below
The McDonalds was made from a Viessmann kit.





kits that eventually arrived made up into quite an impressive structure and is far more effective than the original two would have been. Even so the real shed at Morez is much, much larger.

Other buildings are the 'industrial area' structures which were made by a club colleague, David Lambie, where an American US HO kit (Pikestuff, I think) was used as the basis. All these buildings are similar these days so the country of origin is less important.

New on the layout for 2025 was a Viessmann McDonald's which was quite interesting to build. It certainly gets noticed by an audience.



Above

A veteran X3800 'Picasso' autorail calls at Mallecombe, perhaps on a special charter over the scenic line.

Left

A concrete buffer stop observed at Morez.

Right

The substantial buffer stop replicated in model form.

Photos (2): author.

Signal

There is but one signal at the station displaying one signal head for departure from each platform. I have loosely copied this using UK style etches and parts from the scrapbox to make a (non-working) version. I have assumed that any approach signals are off-stage.

Buffer stop

One item at the real Morez that took my fancy was a substantial concrete buffer stop. I made something similar from plasticard which I then used to make a mould in order to cast the finished article in plaster.





Rolling stock

Rolling stock is a carefully selected mix of whatever I fancy, but is hopefully appropriate for the type of layout. So there is a pair of X2800 railcars by Roco, a pair of Jouef X73500 units, and a totally out of period 'Picasso' autorail. I also have an X4300 two-car EAD by Jouef which probably would not have been used in the real Morez, plus a sound fitted X2700 by REE, which was. Piko diesel locos also appear hauling various bogie vans to the goods shed or a RIO suburban push-pull set or even Corail main line coaches with a 67xxx.

Operation

In reality Morez has but a limited service and is indeed threatened with closure. On the layout at exhibitions the service is more or less continuous. Originally designed for leisurely one-person operation with some shunting of vans in between passenger arrivals and departures, at exhibitions the layout usually has two operators trying to do both at the same time. This is necessary to keep paying customers happy at a show but certainly does not reflect the way the single line railway would operate in reality!

Above
X2800 and X2700 autorails
 pass at Mallecombe, each
 reversing before continuing
 on the other line.

Below left
An X73500 single unit,
nicknamed baleine bleue
(blue whale), meets the
X2700 set at Mallecombe.





Above
The large goods shed was made from four Faller kits.
BB66117 assembles a train of sliding side bogie vans.

The name

I did not want to call my layout 'Morez' as it is much too small, so I called it 'Mallecombe' as I have seen my own name spelled like that!. There is a Mallecombe elsewhere in France, so that clinched it. Vanity wins every time!

Mallecombe was exhibited at Model Rail Scotland in Glasgow in February 2025, on behalf of Clyde MRC, of which I have been a member for more years than I dare think about. Although it is mainly a personal effort, it is available when the club requires.

Below left and below
The new industrial buildings between the station
and the old goods shed were made from American kits.





Graham Lightfoot visited the preserved section of a once extensive 750mm gauge network in northern Germany. *Photographs by the author.*

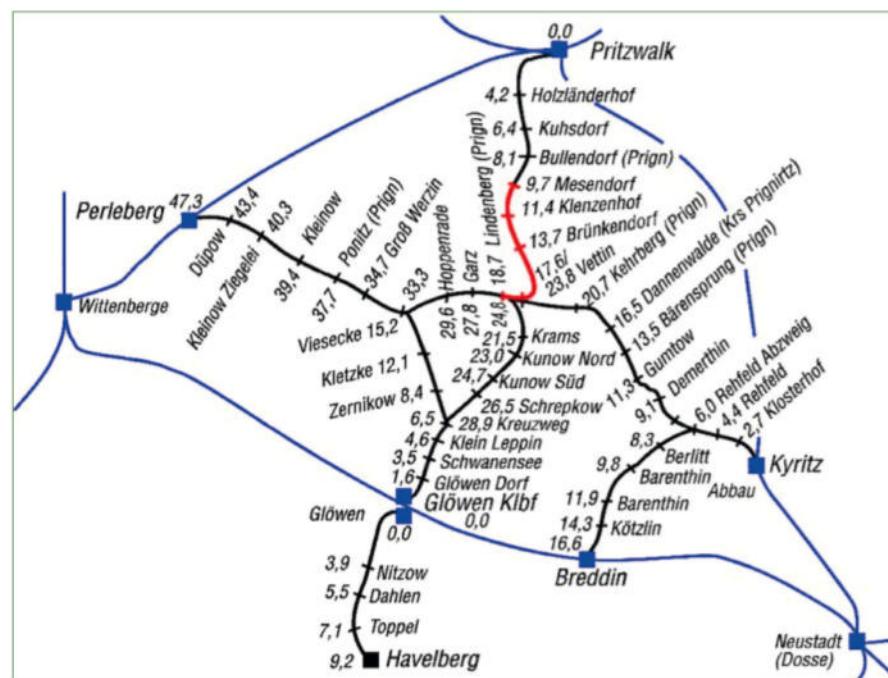
Above
Saxon IVK 99 608
backs on to its train
in Mesendorf ready for
the 1200 departure.

The Pollo

Part of the former Prignitzer Kreisbahnen

On my first visit to the small town of Pritzwalk, northwest of Berlin in the state of Brandenburg, in 2015, the hotel where I stayed had flyers for a nearby 750mm gauge line called the *Pollo*, which ran between the villages of Mesendorf and Lindenberg. I had seen some photos of this preserved line and of the Prignitzer Kreisbahn in Deutsche Reichsbahn days. So on my last day in the area (a weekday), I made the short drive to Mesendorf where the line has its depot. Although it was not a running day, one of volunteers was present and kindly showed me around their loco shed and yard. So in May 2024 I planned a trip to north-east Germany so it would coincide with one of the running days.

The Pollo line is the remaining section of the once 101km Prignitzer Kreisbahn, which had connections to the standard gauge at five locations, the main ones being Perleberg and Pritzwalk, both having facilities to transfer standard gauge wagons on to transporters (*Rollwagen*). Perleberg was the main depot, which in DR days had a workshop under the direction of Raw Wittenberge.





Above
99 608 ready to depart with the 1600 to Lindenberg.

The first part of the Westprignitzer Kreisbahn was opened in 1897, from Perleberg to Kyritz and Breddin, both having standard gauge connections. Over the next fifteen years other sections opened to Pritzwalk and Havelberg via a junction at Lindenberg. The terminus at Havelberg, on the Havel river, had a siding to the harbour to transfer goods to and from barges.

The DR started to close sections from 1967, with the final stretch from Glöwen, on the Berlin to Wittenberge standard gauge line, to Havelberg, closing to traffic on 25th September 1971.

How the Pollo got its nickname

The railway was nicknamed Pollo right at its opening. On its first journey, a forester's dog, named Pollo, is said to have barked loudly at the passing train and run after it. The forester simply called his dog back, but people assumed that the cry of "Pollo" referred to the train, and that is how the railway got its name.

Over its life a large number of different steam locomotives were used on the system, starting with typical 0-6-0Ts, some of which in the early days named after towns and villages served. Some of these machines lasted well into the DR era.

Other locos were moved there by the DR as their home lines were closed. These included several Saxon IVKs, four Orenstein & Koppel 0-8-0Ts from the Kreis Jerichow I, and even a re-gauged Austrian U class 0-6-2T via the CSD. The largest and newest loco used was 0-8-0 99 1401, built by O&K in 1947, the prototype of a large batch constructed with enclosed cabs and six-wheel tenders as post-war reparations for the Soviet Union.

Three Wismar four-wheeled railcars built in 1939 were used for most passenger services towards the end, as passenger numbers dropped and the mixed trains were removed from the timetable.

Another railcar was moved to the line in 1962 for just thirteen months, the unique VT137 600 'Lindwurm', an unusual articulated 2'(1A)(A1)2', one of three built in 1940 for the Lettische Staatsbahnen (Latvia) which had been tried with little success on a number of lines in Saxony, on Rügen, and the Kreis Jerichow I.

This wide variety of stock would make the PK in DR days a good candidate for modelling.

Preservation

In the early 1990s a group of enthusiasts started to preserve the 8.9km section from Mesendorf to Lindenberg. They found a number of coaches and wagons being used as sheds and farm buildings which they moved to Lindenberg and Mesendorf for restoration. By 1993 they had acquired all the trackbed and track laying began. As work progressed they acquired more rolling stock, and in September 1995 their first loco arrived, a V10C 0-6-0 diesel from an industrial line in the Havel area, which they numbered V10 101 and painted in DR black livery.

Below
Mesendorf station and shed. The brick structure had replaced a wooden one since my visit in 2015.





Top
99 608 arrives in Mesendorf with the 1100 from Lindenberg.

Below
Assorted bogie coaches used for the passenger train.

Above
V10 101 on shed in Mesendorf.

Below
The baggage van and open wagon used on the passenger train.





DR works in Neustrelitz. It was moved to Lindenberg in 1994 and displayed at the Prignitzer Kleinbahnmuseum before being taken to Mesendorf in 2008 for restoration.

The preserved line has seen a number of visiting locos, including four Saxon IVKs, from different lines, and smaller locos from the Rügensche BäderBahn. The much travelled former Heeresfeldbahn 0-10-0T+T AQUARIUS C. spent a few months on the line in 2010 and 2011. The LKM 0-8-0 99 1401 had two spells on the Pollo in 2004 and 2018.

When I visited the line on 9th May 2024, Ascension Day, the line's two diesels were both in action shunting and assembling trains in Mesendorf, with V10 101 also taking a mixed train to Lindenberg at 1500 as a test run for a photo charter the following day, passing 99 608 and the passenger service in Brünkendorf. The LKM type Ns3 0-4-0D, Köf 6401, was working as station pilot assembling the train. It was not carrying its number as it had only just been repainted.

Top
99 608 departs Mesendorf with the 1600 to Lindenberg.

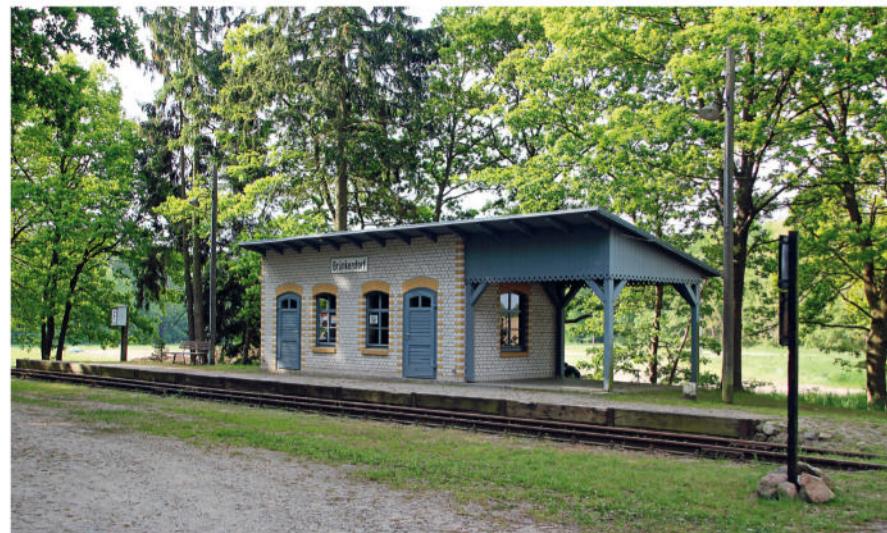
Below
A modified bogie flat used as a barrier vehicle between *Rollwagen* and other stock.



Above
The LKM type Ns3 0-4-0D in Mesendorf after shunting stock. Note the DDR Wartburg police car.

Below
A *Milchkühlwagen* in the siding at Mesendorf.





Above

99 608 running alongside the B107 between Mesendorf and Klenzenhof with the 1400 to Lindenberg.

Left

The new brick-built Brünkendorf station building, May 2015. This replaced an older simple wooden halt shelter.

Below left

Passing through Vettin on the way back to Mesendorf with the 1300 from Lindenberg.

The timetable offered four return workings from Mesendorf to Lindenberg, departing at two hour intervals, starting at 10.00, each trip lasting 36 minutes, with a two-minute stop at Brünkendorf in each direction. Visiting Saxon IVK 99 608 was working the trains, suitably decorated with flowers, hauling three bogie coaches plus a baggage van and an open wagon used for cycles, so it could be classed as a mixed train!

From Mesendorf the line climbs through a cutting, then levels out as it runs alongside the B107 as far as Klenzenhof halt, which has a passing loop. It then turns away from the road through open country and woodland towards Brünkendorf, which is now the main passing point. In DR days Brünkendorf was just a halt with an open-fronted shelter. In 2003 a new brick building was put up and a siding added to the loop. The building has been furnished with a number of items from the DR period.

From Brünkendorf the line continues through woodland to Vettin halt where there was formerly a junction with the line to Kyritz. Vettin has a galvanised steel shelter, and, like Brünkendorf, it is some distance from the village it serves; each has a road connection and a level crossing.

A group from a motor museum followed each train in their preserved East German Wartburg police car and stopped the traffic on the level crossings.



Above
99 608 approaching Lindenbergs with the 1000 from Mesendorf.

Right
The 500mm gauge Feldbahn. LKM type Ns1 arrives back at the Prignitzer Kleinbahnmuseum after running round the park. Note the three different classes of passenger wagon.

Below right
A pair of Rollböcke, a Rollwagen, and a van on display in the park next to the Prignitzer Kleinbahnmuseum.

The final section to Lindenbergs is through open countryside, with the entrance to the station being controlled by a semaphore signal. The platform is past a loop, with steps leading down to the main road and the Prignitzer Kleinbahnmuseum in the nearby park. After the passengers have detrained, the train pushes back into the loop, the loco runs round, and moves the train back into the platform ready for the return working.

As you come down the steps from the platform a group of model railway enthusiasts have a G gauge layout in the garden of a house at the road junction, close to the museum.

The museum has a collection of items from the various lines in the area, a small shop, and a café.

The loco being used on the 500mm gauge Feldbahn was a LKM type Ns1, pulling three wagons marked first, second, and third class, depending on the degree of seat comfort!

From the museum bookshop I purchased *Kleinbahnenreise durch die Prignitz* (Verlag Kenning), 478 pages, covering the history of the line and preservation, with hundreds of photos, and track plans of every station and halt. For anyone thinking of modelling a narrow gauge line in this part of Germany, it offers much inspiration and information.

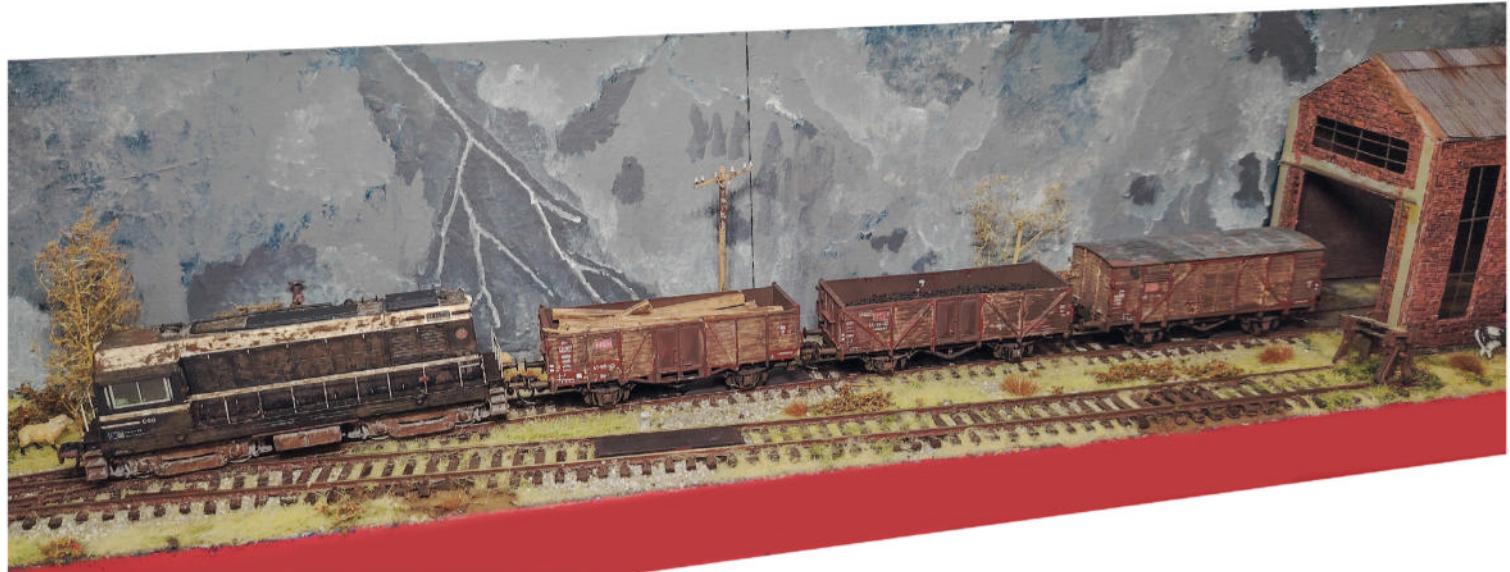
Unfortunately neither Mesendorf or Lindenbergs can be reached easily by public transport, but the line is well worth a visit. Check the website for operating days: www.pollo.de



Myles Munsey was determined to model something completely different – a small fragment of the little-known Albanian rail system set firmly in the communist era. *Photographs by the author.*

Prrenjas goods

Shunting the daily pick-up freight



Why model Albania?

I like breaking with convention. And I like a challenge. Memories of when I rode the antediluvian Albanian rail system in 2007 were still fresh, so I used those recollections to create something truly unusual. The lack of any commercially available ready-to-run stock for Albania was potentially problematic. The solution was to incorporate and adapt generic rolling stock in much the same way as the prototype railway did. In the end this very much worked in my favour.

Part of the modelling appeal was the representation and rarity value of the run-down aspects of the rail system. The other rewarding element was my attempt to recreate Albanian life under communism. To do this I needed to include some bucolic cameos and in particular one of the omnipresent defence bunkers.

This is a tiny layout (even by my standards) but I hope authentic and interesting. Tiny in this instance is a revamped IKEA picture shelf measuring a mere 29" x 4¾". The original idea was to have a three-track arrangement but that foundered because everything became too constricted. The shelf suggested a two-track 'tuning fork', which although squeezed into a very small space really does provide meaningful and realistic operation.

There were four main considerations:

- portable
- interesting operation despite the space limitations
- DCC operation with sound
- reliable coupling and uncoupling

Location

It was very important to find a suitable location which I could model correctly.

Ideally this needed to revolve around freight as I do find that sound-equipped locomotives (one of which I had just acquired) maximise their potential in such an environment.

The question was – where?

What really helped was the Quail Map company track map of Albania (ref.9789999515528) and Google Streetview. Using both these resources and after extensive research (and some luck), I eventually discovered a large run-down roadside goods shed at a town called Prrenjas. This had all the required features, albeit I have juggled them around to make them fit the limited space.

Prrenjas was a stop on the line from Durrës to Pogradec. Although the line closed in 2012, the goods shed still stands. Streetview enabled me to see the shed from a variety of angles thus helping to model it accurately.

Above
The afternoon freight hauled by a Czech T.435 diesel leaves Prrenjas loaded with timber, coal, and assorted items in the van.



The track layout was evident on the map and could also be detected from the road running alongside. The permanent way was grass strewn and not of the optimum quality. That attracted me hugely, as did glimpses of sheep and cows walking dangerously close to the permanent way and rust and grime everywhere. That aspect resulted in a layout which apart from the vegetation is pretty colourless.

Making the scene look Albanian

The line to Prrenjas opened in July 1973, whilst the Czech class T.435 locomotives had disappeared by 1971. With a very restricted choice of suitable locos, this discrepancy was overlooked.

Whilst neither the loco nor the wagons are hopelessly inaccurate, they do not look especially Albanian either. Therefore, to make the scene resemble Albania as far as possible, I looked around for other non-railway features which it would have been present in the 1970s when communism was at its height.

To start with there are the ubiquitous defence bunkers. The Albanian landscape was once dotted with an estimated 750,000 (!) of them. These strange looking bunkers (akin to a British pillbox) were constructed on the orders of Party Leader Enver Hoxha who ruled Albania from 1944 to 1985. They were meant to repel an invasion which in the end never came.

With a defence bunker an essential part of the scene, I set about making one. It was made from an old ice cream scoop. The excess plastic was cut off then a thin covering of modelling clay was then applied to give a concrete look. To make the rifle slits I drilled a small hole in the side which was gradually enlarged using a needle file.

I have also represented here one of the smaller, less common, two person bunkers to defend the railway line. (not in its true position but close). Around 173,000 of these smaller ones were installed! They were referred to as QZ's or *Quender Zjarri* = firing position.

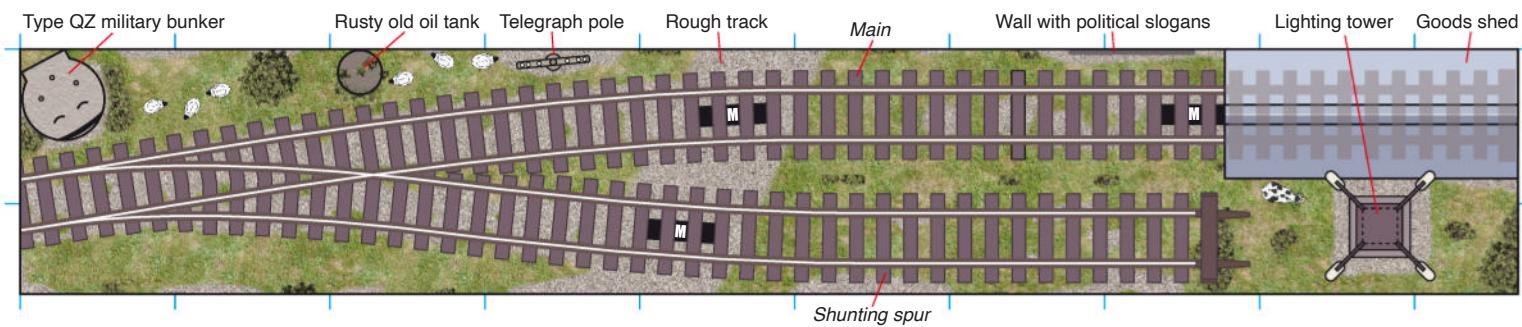
The image of Hoxha appears on the wall by the goods shed with the inscription 'PPSH' (*Partie Punës e Shqipërisë*, Labour Party of Albania) painted alongside.

Track and operation

The track in Albania is pretty basic. Lines in the People's Socialist Republic of Albania were constructed between 1947 and 1986 using 'volunteer' labour. Sadly, it shows. Often barely supported and with minimal ballast, grass frequently grows over the rails.

I used Peco code 100 wooden sleeper track, mainly because it would be more resistant to the odd bump or two in transit. There is a single Peco code 100 right hand short radius point worked by wire-in-tube to create a 'tuning fork' track plan.

Above
The shepherd keeps a watchful eye on the sheep that have found grazing on a spot of land between the military bunker and the rusty old oil tank as 435.057 emerges from the siding.





Above
In communist Albania the image of Enver Hoxha was never far away. It appears here on a wall with an apposite political slogan.

All the track was treated with Railmatch sleeper grime with the rail edges painted with Revell 83 rust. Inside the goods shed the track is inlaid with Wills stone sets.

The loco and its sounds are controlled by a Gaugemaster Prodigy Advance 2 DCC unit and through this I am able to achieve some ultra slow realistic shunting.

Operation revolves around shunting wagons into the goods shed following the arrival of the Pogradec to Durrës pick-up freight. This has paused at Prrenjas to drop off wagons. In real life this happened between about 11.45 and 14.15 when the morning passenger train to Pogradec was in the section north of Prrenjas.

A set of eight four-wheel wagons by Roco gave me plenty of stock with which to operate this layout. Many train formations are possible. All wagons are short wheelbase, Era III, and are fitted with clip-in Kadee couplers. There are three strategically located permanent magnets. Two are positioned on the longer of the two sidings. This is the main (goods shed) track which can hold three wagons. This is where most of the activity takes place, whilst the shorter right-hand track is primarily an aid to shunting. This has a single magnet on its two-wagon length.

Below
The short siding can accommodate two wagons. Seen stabled here are a hinged lid wagon and a van formerly used for fish.



Motive power

The only loco is 435.057 by Piko. A few of these T.435 (former CSD) diesels operated in Albania between 1969 and 1971. These diminutive machines with their short wheelbase are a big advantage on a small layout. The loco is DCC sound-fitted and is perfect for a shunting diorama, even more so with squealing brakes and in-cab announcements – even if they are in German, not Albanian! The communist red star is a nice touch.

Despite my initial reticence, the loco was heavily weathered lest it look incompatible next to the filthy wagons. I started with Railmatch 412 weathered black to eliminate the shine, then added Railmatch 2402 frame dirt, Railmatch 2403 roof dirt, Revell 83 rust, and Ammo streaky grime effects.

Wagons

The wagons are DR derivatives with Era III markings. I took advantage of a Roco boxed set of eight wagons (three vans, three opens, a stake wagon, and a hinged lid wagon) at a very favourable price. Albania relied heavily on hand-me-downs and former German and Czech equipment was widespread. The set was ideal.

During a lull in the proceedings, I set about weathering the wagons. Everything is heavily grimed and rusty. One even has a large hole in it following a shunting accident. The original DR markings are all but obscured.

Being effectively isolated from the rest of Europe, Albania never subscribed to the UIC numbering system and so wagon markings if any were rudimentary. I have overlaid the original markings with a crude HSH (*Hekurudha Shqiptare*) panel using my own printed labels. These have blotted out the 'DR' and are still just noticeable under all that dirt.

If the wagon is wooden bodied, the planking is painted with Vallego Iraqui sand followed by burnt umber. To follow comes frame dirt, roof dirt, and rust. Steelwork is painted frame dirt from the outset. I do find this shade most effective in eliminating that out-of-the-box shine and replacing it with a dull worn look.

Wagon loads are varied and comprise steel sections and timber along with coal, potato sacks, and rusty oil drums. Sacks and oil drums are by Model Railway Bits of Tadley.



Structures and scenery

One thing I noticed through studying the Quail map was the proliferation in the 1970s/1980s of goods sheds throughout Albania. Most of them are now gutted and abandoned but in their day were substantial barn-like buildings.

One such was at Prrenjas, but the model had to be considerably shortened. The brickwork, window bars (fashioned from 0.5mm Plastruct), the doors, and the outer ends have been faithfully modelled.

The shed was scratchbuilt from artist's mount card overlaid with small rectangles of paper to simulate brickwork – an unbelievably tedious task. With the brickwork in place the bricks were painted a brown/orange colour and this in turn was treated with Nuln oil. This marvellous product has the effect of dirtying the whole surface but also runs into the divisions in the bricks making the cracks and fissures really stand out.

The roof was overlaid with corrugated and rusty Scale Model Scenery sheet (ref.TX280).

The goods shed is the only actual building. It is removable for ease of track cleaning.

Whilst the three-track idea ultimately stumbled, one benefit was that the already built goods shed could be re-used. It turned out that under this new arrangement that the big unglazed windows would now face the viewer and the operator. This helps enormously with wagon positioning.

Alongside the goods shed is an older style lighting tower (Scale Model Scenery ref.LX450-00) – again not in its true position, though there were several dotted around the Albanian rail network. It really does enhance the scene, as does the heavily oxidised oil tank (Knightwing).

The grubby aspect of the layout is balanced with some greenery though it is turning brown with the onset of autumn. Woodland Scenics straw and light green grass was used for all open areas, including up to and between the rails, with some Ammo MIG fine bushes (ref.8375) and Army Painter tufts dotted around.

The countryside hereabouts is semi-agricultural, so there are a few animals. There is a solitary cow (Noch) and a shepherd, sheepdog, and sheep scene by Model Railway Bits of Tadley.

For the backdrop I ignored the nearby hills which are there in real life and created my own dramatic stormy sky. I wanted something dark and oppressive with a sense of foreboding to echo the turbulent mood of the times. I started with Vallejo grey in neutral and light shades with a

little Kantor blue by Citadel. This was then given a grubby grey-brown wash and enhanced with some threatening clouds. The right effect was achieved by adding some forked lightning.

Conclusion

There is a real sense of achievement in producing something so unusual. Small it may be but that hardly matters when the appearance and effectiveness of the model have exceeded my expectations. For this DCC has played a big part. I am a relative newcomer to this style of operation, and though the layout is minuscule, DCC has truly enhanced operation.

It took a long time to get going on this project but once my initial inertia was overcome there was a definite enthusiasm to get it finished. At no point, though, did I rush, and each stage was approached with care and attention to detail.

I hope the results bear this out and that readers enjoy this glimpse of Albania – surely one of the most obscure railway systems in Europe.

Prrenjas Goods is due to be at the Kenavon exhibition in Reading on Saturday 21st February.

See *Exhibition Diary* for more details.

Above
435.057 is in the siding
with the hinged lid wagon.
Livestock roams free
grazing where it can.

Below
The lighting mast towers
over the goods shed.



Jacques Poré shows how he enhanced a small scenic feature to make it more French.

Photographs by the author.

Bicycle rack

Adapting an Artitec model

The Dutch firm Artitec offers a neat little bicycle rack ready to be installed on your layout (ref.387.272). This model is very finely crafted from photo-etched metal. It comes assembled, painted, and decorated.

However, the advertising signage as delivered and ready installed is not well suited to a French environment. This is also the case on another similar reference from the brand. We therefore cut a piece of signage from a sheet of decals for railway scenery (or other items) that might be more suited to a local theme: here, an advertisement promoting a pizzeria.

The bicycle rack can be installed as is, simply placed in the appropriate location, and, if necessary, glued in place.

I added a small roof, cut from thin corrugated metal sheet. Plastic cannot be used here since the sheet has to be bent. I had corrugated metal sheet from Fides in stock, but that is not readily available today. However, similar products can be found from Interfer or Diorama, among others.



Above and above right

The bicycle rack in the railway depot, right next to the entrance to the rolling stock area. The bicycles are from Artitec and L'Obsidienne, the moped is from L'Obsidienne.

Below left

Artitec ref.387.272 'bicycle rack' as it comes, very finely crafted, painted, and decorated.

Below

The bicycle rack with a new French advertisement replacing the Dutch sign supplied.





Two support legs were made from 1mm diameter brass wire and shaped. The roof then followed the rounded shape of the legs at the top.

To perfect the decoration, a thin coat of grey primer was applied with a brush, followed by weathering with several shades of Decapod weathering colours.

The bicycles are Artitec or L'Obsidienne products, made from a photo-etched metal sheet.



Left

I wanted to add a roof to protect the bikes from the elements. A piece of corrugated iron and two brass wire supports did the trick. The support legs were first shaped, then the roof curved and glued in place with a few dabs of superglue then consolidated with Araldite.

Below

The bicycle rack would look just as good in a village square, near a school, or at a factory as it does in the railway setting.



Reviews

Evaluated by our own specialist staff



N

Rhätische Bahn Ge6/6^I 'Crocodile' and train new from Kato



Following the electrification of the Albula line in 1919, the metre gauge Rhätische Bahn needed to acquire more electric locomotives. The new type was built by the Swiss Locomotive and Machine Works (SLM), Brown, Boveri & Cie (BBC), and Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon (MFO) in 1921, classified Ge6/6 and numbered 401 to 406.

The introduction of electric operation on the line from Landquart to Davos Platz similarly necessitated new locos more powerful than the Ge2/4 and Ge4/6 already in service. Further deliveries of the Ge6/6 were made as follows: 407 to 410 in 1922, 411 and 412 in 1925, and 413 to 415 in 1929. Due to the articulated body and long nose



sections, in common with the standard gauge machines, they were nicknamed 'Crocodiles'.

With these new locos, the RhB was able to replace steam locos on its core network. The Ge6/6s hauled heavy freights and principal passenger trains, including the *Glacier Express*.

The machines were 13.3m long and weighed 66 tonnes. The power output was 940kW (1,260hp) and enabled them to reach a top speed of 55km/h.

It was not until 1974, after more than fifty years in service, that the first example of the class was withdrawn, due to an accident. However, as early as 1958 the new Ge6/6^{II} locos began to displace the Crocodiles to less demanding services. The Ge4/4^{II}, delivered from 1973, considerably accelerated this process, so that in 1984 six Crocodiles were withdrawn. By June 2001 only 412, 414, and 415 remained in operation. 412 has since been scrapped, leaving two preserved in working order. They continue to be used not only for special trains but also, in the summer, matched with historic coaches and open panoramic cars incorporated into the regular timetable.

Having tantalised enthusiasts with a pre-production sample at Intermodellbau in Dortmund in April 2025, Kato have recently released their brand new model of this iconic machine as part of their Rhätische Bahn range of 1:150 scale models on 9mm gauge track.

The model features a high level of moulded detail on the body, with different window and louvre arrangements on each side. There are lots of separately applied parts, such as the yellow door handrails and the distinctive large pantographs (which are not wired for current collection from the catenary) along with the roof 'furniture'. The silver rims of the headlights are nicely reproduced. The outer handrails and the jumper cables are separate parts for the modeller to fit.

The headlights are directionally controlled warm white LEDs. All three front lights illuminate, but not the small light between the front windows.





The bonnets are mounted on the bogies and move independently of the central section, as per prototype. The bogies have a fine representation of the rod drive.

The running characteristics are excellent – as you would expect from Kato, powered by a five-pole coreless motor with flywheel. Maximum current draw is 012A.

Current collection is from all wheels.

Traction tyres are fitted to the middle pair of wheels on each bogie.

As you might expect from Kato, running is smooth and quiet.

A digital sound version is also offered but the model has no socket to facilitate fitting a decoder, never mind a speaker and stay-alive, though there is housing for a speaker.

The model comes fitted with short couplers to match the *Glacier Express* stock but interchangeable standard (Arnold) couplers are also supplied. To fit these the snowploughs must be detached.

The loco is just 92mm long and weighs 52gr.

The individual model depicts 414, which is still in active service as a preserved locomotive, modelled as around 2023. The 100th anniversary commemorative plaque attached to one of the cab doors is present.

Kato are also offering a passenger train set consisting of Ge6/6 415 with a baggage van (D4220), one first class EWI coach (A1235), and two second class EWI coaches (B2355 and B2362), all delivered in a typical Japanese 'book' slip case. The loco is in brown, the coaches green, as in the early 1980s.

The baggage van reproduces the early appearance before a pantograph was installed and some windows were blocked off.

The EWI standard coaches are from the large group of longer main network stock placed in service from 1962 as they were before renovation. The first class has toilets at both ends on the left, the seconds have toilets on the right.

These models were previously offered in the later red livery.

All are equipped as standard with short couplers which imitate Scharfenbergs; these look neat and work well, providing a positive connection.

Replacement Arnold couplings are included if required.

The couplings are sprung mounted in pockets on the bogies.

The wheels are on plastic tube axles with outer stubs in pick-ups ready to supply optional LED interior light kits (refs. K11-211 and K11-212, sold separately).

Despite the bearings, the models roll freely.

Each EW1 coach is 120mm long, the van 90mm. The whole train is 555mm.

The minimum recommended radius is given as 150mm, and the maximum gradient 5%.

Manufactured by

Kato (Sekisui Kinzoku Co.Ltd.),
Tokyo, Japan.
www.katomodels.com

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

PRICE
loco ref.K3103-1 £230.00.
set ref.K10-1987 £365.00.



The Czech E669.1 Co-Co electrics have proven their worth in heavy freight service for over half a century. They were developed from the two E660.0 prototypes with the aim of eliminating the need for double-heading freight trains. Delivered by Škoda to the Czechoslovak State Railways (CSD) in the early 1960s, the 150 built were used on the 3kV DC network in the north and east of the country.



With the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1993, the entire class, now designated 181, became part of the Czech Railways (CD) roster. Five are still in operation under the auspices of CD Cargo as bankers.

Continuing their mission to serve 'minor' markets, Piko have recently released a brand new model of this class.

The specific prototype is E669.112 of Česká Třebová depot, with Epoch III markings. The finish is first class, with clearly printed markings.

This version has round buffers and the original snowploughs.

The roof is highly detailed with insulators, cabling, and switch gear, plus fine metal pantographs which are sprung but not wired for current collection from the overhead.

The glazing is flush-fitting and offers a view of the detailed interiors of the cabs and equipment room.

The moulded plastic body shell is augmented with many separately applied detail parts, including windscreens, wipers, aerial, and cab door handrails.

There is the customary pack of accessories to enhance the buffer beams – dummy scale couplings, brake hoses, steam heat pipes, and electrical connections.

The level of detail on the bogie side frames is particularly impressive.

The triple white headlights with two red tail lights are directionally controlled in analog operation. Under digital control they can be switched, along with the lighting in the driver's cab, the equipment room, and the chassis. Digital control offers additional lighting functions, such as high beams.

The model is equipped with a NEM 658 PluX22 interface, and there is a compatible PSD XP Sound Decoder (ref. 56645) with numerous vehicle-specific sounds.

The model can also be obtained with the decoder factory-fitted.

The mechanism is conventional – a heavy cast metal frame carries a can-type motor with twin flywheels driving via cardan shafts and universal joints to reduction gearing in each bogie frame.

All wheels are driven and collect current, and there are traction tyres on two wheels (one on each inner axle, diagonally opposed) which with a substantial weight of 501gr should ensure ample pulling power. Our sample ran smoothly and quietly across a sensible speed range straight from the box, though running in is recommended. The minimum radius is given as 358mm.

The model has NEM coupler pockets on close-coupling mechanisms each end, and comes with standard couplers fitted.

Length over buffers is 216mm.

Manufactured by

Piko Spielwaren GmbH,
Lutherstraße 30,
D-96515 Sonneberg, Germany.
www.piko.de

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

PRICE
ref.21020 DC £220.00.
ref.21022 DCC sound £335.00.





The Deutsche Reichsbahn Halberstadt middle entrance coaches, built by the Raw Halberstadt works in the 1970s and 1980s, were distinctive second class coaches (classified Bmhe) noted for the unique roof and doors approximately one and two thirds along the sides (as opposed to end vestibules). They were used in both semi-fast regional and international trains. Some were later converted into type y composites with modernised interiors (classified AByu).

It was only after a conversion of the railway repair works in 1978 that it became possible to produce longer coaches according to UIC guidelines. This enabled the construction of 26.4 long vehicles.

Two prototypes were built in 1972/73, then the first series of Bmhe built in Halberstadt were open saloons with centre entrances, similar to the n-type coaches of the Deutsche Bundesbahn.

They were designed for international use and so equipped with four-voltage electric heating.

The carriages had 88 seats in eleven bays, five between the two double folding doors and three at each end, and at one end a toilet. One end bay was designated for smokers and so had seats upholstered in brown imitation leather; seats in the non-smoking section had red covers. The interior walls were lined with wood grain finish panels. For use in express trains, holders for seat reservations were initially installed above the windows.

They ran on modified Görlitz V bogies with 920mm diameter wheels, which allowed a maximum speed of 140km/h. However, the maximum speed of many coaches was later limited to 120km/h for maintenance reasons.

A total of 1,279 Bmhe coaches were built between 1978 and 1983.

The first coaches were painted in the standard DR dark green with a grey roof. In the second half of 1981, the DR introduced a new colour scheme for long-distance services – chrome oxide green (TGL 2235, similar to RAL 6002 leaf green) with an ivory window band and a brown roof (TGL 0247). Some Bmhe were painted in this new scheme, but only applied those primarily used in long-distance trains. Those used for express and local trains, were painted in a single colour, chrome oxide green.

Twelve of these coaches received the DR orange and ivory livery StädteExpress trains and served as supplementary coaches. However, they were repainted green and beige as early as 1983 and used in regular long-distance service.

With the introduction of the Halberstadt express stock with side corridors in the 1980s, the centre entrance coaches were gradually withdrawn from express services, although individual examples continued to operate in premium services until 1992.

Following the accession of the new states to the Federal Republic of Germany, the DR focused on meeting the demands for increased passenger comfort.





From 1992 onwards, most of the Bmh stock was converted into Byu and AByu, with a new interior with new ceiling panels, which varied considerably depending on the series. In some cases, new individual seats were installed, while in others the existing benches were re-upholstered. The windows were also replaced, with half of them now being fixed. The classification was changed to By(uuu)(z)438/439. Bicycle spaces were created in a large open area at the end of some carriages (type Byd(z)439). The composites became ABy(uuu)(z)407/408. All were painted in the regional livery of mint turquoise/pastel turquoise/light grey, which had been used by DB since 1987. This was followed by traffic red in 1996.

To enable these coaches to be used in cost-effective push-pull operation, a number were converted into driving trailers at Raw Wittenberg. They got the angular front which resembled DB BR628 railcars. The open compartment behind the cab was designed as a luggage compartment for bicycles and push-chairs, etc., and fitted with folding seats along the side walls. The area at the other end was equipped with wheelchair spaces and a wheelchair-accessible toilet. The designation for these driving coaches was Bybdzf482.



Shortly after the fall of the wall, the DR loaned many Halberstadt-type coaches with Görlitz V bogies to the DB, which was experiencing a severe shortage of coaches due to the decommissioning of asbestos-contaminated stock. They were primarily used in express and regional express trains.

After the founding of DBAG, the fleet in the west was significantly expanded. In particular, the vehicles with first class sections were subsequently fitted with GP200 bogies with disc brakes to improve ride comfort.

Since 2000, a considerable number of the modernised coaches have been taken out of service or sold to Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary.

However, in October 2006, these coaches were still operating in trains consisting solely of the same type, based in Cottbus, Erfurt, Halle, and Leipzig. A few could be found in sets made up of n-type coaches in the former West Germany.

While they are newer than the n-type stock, they are significantly heavier, and they were modernised some time ago. Furthermore, many still have noisy block brakes, whereas the remaining n-type stock predominantly has quieter disc brakes. For this reason, they were taken out of service earlier. They also became redundant due to the acquisition of new multiple units and double-deck stock, as well as the cancellation of services.

The scheduled use of Halberstadt centre entrance coaches by DBAG, with the exception of driving trailers, ended on 12th December 2015.



Piko have recently introduced new scale length models of these characteristic DR coaches.

The main colours are dense, even, and well defined, with very clearly printed markings, down to the smallest inscriptions.

The plastic body has some features (panels, grilles, vents, and so on) moulded in place, augmented by separately applied parts such as handrails, steps, corridor connections, fall plates, jumper cables, and windscreens wipers (where appropriate). The driving cab buffer beam comes fitted with full dummy scale coupling and brake hoses.

The glazing has neat metallic frames, and there is a full interior.

Interior lighting is optional using refs. 56312 or 56314 according to type.

The bogie sideframes are well detailed in deep relief.

The underframe also carries many added components, and the brake shoes are in line with the treads of the blackened metal disc wheels, which are on pin-point metal axles, insulated one side by a plastic centre bush.

NEM coupler pockets are installed on close-coupling mounts on the frame, and come with standard couplings fitted.

The type Bmhe second is offered in standard green with grey roof and the later green with brown roof, two numbers each.

Also listed is the later first/second composite conversion (not illustrated) and the driving trailer second with the angular Wittenberg style cab.

This is also offered in several liveries, including DBAG traffic red and for independent operator TRI in Mitteldeutsche Regiobahn (MRB) blue & silver, as illustrated.

This model has working directionally controlled white head and red tail lights, and is equipped with a socket for a DCC accessory decoder. In all other respects it matches the standard vehicles.

All these models are 303mm long over buffers and suitable for a minimum radius of 358mm.

Once again Piko have lavished considerable care and attention on relatively humble 'everyday' vehicles.

No doubt over time they will produce many different versions.





Manufactured by

Piko Spielwaren GmbH,
Lutherstraße 30,
D-96515 Sonneberg, Germany.
www.piko.de

PRICES
coaches refs.28000/1/2/3 each £68.00.

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

driving trailer ref.28022 £120.00.





The Prussian T9³ 2-6-0T were among the most numerous steam locos in Germany. With a top speed of 65km/h they were used in both passenger and freight service. From 1901 the Königsberg Union foundry delivered more than two thousand to the Prussian State Railways and 132 to Alsace-Lorraine. In 1925, the majority of them were still extant and passed to the Deutsche Reichsbahn, classified BR91³, with several from Belgium included. During the Second World War some made their way to Poland and Austria, among other places. After 1945, the class was gradually withdrawn from service. The last West German examples were retired in 1964 while in the east some lasted until 1971.

After the war, six remained in Austria. However, only two, 91 1207 and 91 1347, were transferred to the ÖBB class 691, retaining their Reichsbahn numbers. They were modified in some technical details, the most noticeable being fitting the pony truck with disc wheels. Both operated primarily in the St. Pölten area before being retired from service in 1957. Their continued use highlights the durability of this classic design.

Piko have taken the opportunity to produce an authentic variant of their new model of the original German loco released earlier in 2025 which proved popular and was sold out before it could be reviewed.

As well as the disc wheels it has the typical ÖBB cab with a raised vent on the roof and a coal bunker extension.

The Epoch III markings are clearly printed.

The model is accurate according to published dimensions and photos. It has a metal boiler and separate tanks, while the cab and bunker with footplate are injection moulded plastic. This shell is enhanced with numerous separately applied plastic detail parts, including chimney, smokebox front, pipework and fittings, handrails, steps, whistle, and authentic pattern lamps.

The usual details (dummy screw couplings and brake hoses) are provided to fit to the buffer beam if working couplers are not required.

The cab interior is detailed.

The chassis boasts fine metal motion, full brake gear (moulded as part of the keeper plate), and fine profile die-cast zinc wheel centres.

The model is powered by an enclosed motor with flywheel in the boiler via a worm drive to the rear axle.

There is current collection from all wheels, including the pony truck, which

is lightly sprung to ensure good track-holding and contact.

The model ran smoothly and quietly straight from the box from walking pace to a reasonable maximum; running in for 25 minutes in each direction is recommended.

The minimum radius recommended is 358mm.

Two traction tyres on the rear driving wheels and a weight of 228gr should make for appropriate haulage capacity.

The twin headlights are directionally controlled. The model is equipped with a NEM 658 PluX16 socket for a decoder.

There is separate switching of cab and running gear lighting and firebox flicker under digital control.

The Piko Trainsound® decoder ref.56643 is recommended; the model is also available with this factory fitted. To install this device, the weight must be removed.

The model is supplied on a piece of plastic ballasted track within the usual warp-around clear plastic shaped 'cocoon'.

It has standard couplers in NEM pockets on close-coupling mounts on the frame at each end.

The loco measures 123mm long over buffers.

Piko are to be commended for producing a variant which represents so few machines and with such a short career (in this form).



Manufactured by

Piko Spielwaren GmbH,
Lutherstraße 30,
D-96515 Sonneberg, Germany.
www.piko.de

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

PRICE
ref.50740 DC £260.00
ref.50741 DCC sound £375.00.



Two hundred and forty of these short wheelbase goods train baggage vans were built for the Deutsche Reichsbahn by Waggonbau Bautzen in two batches in 1957 (139) and 1959 (100), following a prototype in 1956. At the end of 1968, 237 were still in existence, 96 of which had roller bearings. A special feature was that they had built-in end-of-train lights, with movable red and white covers.

Since the vehicles did not meet expectations from the outset (running characteristics, and limited speed) they were later replaced by other new developments, and only the two series were produced despite some reports of a third batch.

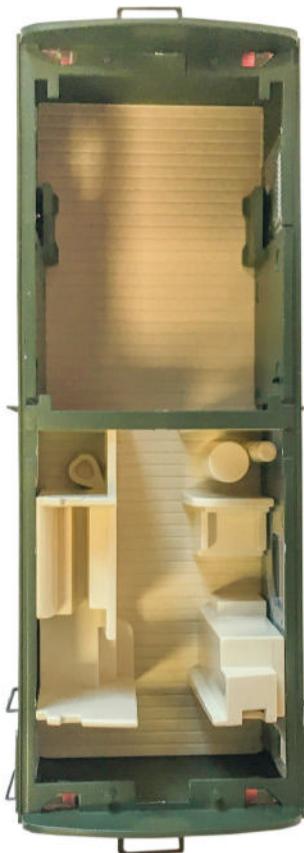
The designation Pwgs 88 is not entirely accurate. Baggage vans for goods trains (Pwg) were usually categorised according to the first year of construction of the type. Later, all were grouped

together under the classification number 88, regardless of the year of construction. The DR apparently assumed that as these new steel vans would replace all older types, they could be referred to as Pwgs 88 without further differentiation. The 's' stands for 'schnell' (fast) and indicates that the vehicle may be used in trains travelling at speeds over 90km/h. This was not the case for the Pwgs 88.

Although the Pwgs 88 were originally designed as baggage and escort vans for goods trains, they were later transferred to passenger service and renumbered accordingly as D 65 (class number 743) or, after the introduction of the computer numbering system, Daa (class key 93-26). (D indicates a passenger train baggage van, 65 refers to the year 1965.) If they continued to be used for freight, they retained the class abbreviation Pwg in conjunction with the identification number 940.

Some survive in preservation.

Roco have recently released a brand new scale model the vans. It is very accurate, according to published dimensions, and highly detailed. The finish is excellent, with Epoch III markings clearly printed. This example is numbered 88-48-25. It has silvered window frames and door handles, separate handrails, a separate chimney, and interior detail.



The end of train lamps have translucent red lenses, and working lights only in the digital version.

The raised cupola lookout has three windows.

The sliding doors to the goods are can be mounted in three positions – closed, half-open, and open; they do not move but alternative parts are provided. To fit them, the roof must be unclipped.

There are steps under the load area doors.

The underframe is detailed with brake gear, rodding and pipework, a generator with drive belt, and brake shoes in line with the wheel treads.

The model weighs 44gr and rolls freely on blackened metal disc wheels on plastic tube axles.

It is equipped with NEM coupler pockets on close-coupling mounts and comes with standard couplers fitted.

As delivered it has attenuated scale coupling hooks and brake hoses fitted to the buffer beams; full versions are supplied as alternatives.

The minimum recommended radius is 358mm.

The model is 103mm long.

Interestingly, a sticker attached to the base of the customary clear plastic box reveals that the model was made in



China – a new source for Roco, although a few items were sourced there as an experiment some years ago, and in addition to their own factory in Vietnam.



Manufactured by

Roco,
A-5101 Bergheim, Austria.
www.roco.cc

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

PRICE
ref.6200175 £57.00.

Modellbahn-Kurier

Special 53

Faszination Spur 1 – Ausgabe 33

Eisenbahn Kurier Verlag

Munzinger Straße 5a, D-79111 Freiburg, Germany.

www.eisenbahn-kurier.de

297mm x 210mm 82pp

Softback €19.90

German text ref.1966

ISBN 978-3-8446-1966-9

This edition of the continuing series devoted to model railways in Gauge 1, dated for the third quarter of 2025, begins with the 'Gestatten – Schursch II' (seven pages) by Thomas Montaperti which is a detailed look at the new model by KM1 of the green Deutsche Reichsbahn Pacific 18 314, including a scale drawing and two black & white photos of the prototype running with the DR post-1970 number 02 0314-1.

The next eight pages present 'BESTO Kraftfutter' by Michael Stolp in which he describes and illustrates his working diorama of sidings serving an animal feed supply depot.

A couple of pages provide a list of model railway events taking place across Germany for the period August to November 2025.

'Neuheiten zum Herbst' (five pages) looks at the latest products available for Gauge 1 this autumn, including the Märklin SNCF 241A, luxury coaching stock, and a variety of wagons by BMB Beesmodellbahn, plus superdetailing parts for the Märklin Deutsche Bundesbahn BR218 diesel-hydraulic.

The next four pages takes a close look at the new range of wagons from Steiner Modellwerke.

Three pages are allocated to an account by Manfred Kohnz of building a 3-D printed kit of a fork lift truck by Tuffa.

In 'Rangierspiele' (six pages) Thomas Montaperti describes and illustrates how an enjoyable shunting yard scene can be created, with a track plan and details of the movements that can be recreated.

In 'Damals und heute – Altbewährt: Märklin 218' (four pages) Ralph Zinngrebe examines the Märklin DB BR218 diesel-hydraulic, sadly no longer in production. Four further pages show how one of these models was extensively upgraded by fitting of etched detailed parts by Krüger-Modellbau and Montaperti-Modelltechnik.

In 'Stromführende Schrauben' Patrick Roepstorff describes and illustrates a simple way of electrically connecting layout baseboards (two pages).

Ralph Zinngrebe needs only a page to show how he created new signs for the sides for an Opel Blitz lorry.

In 'Mobile Control Pro' (three pages) Heiko Herholz reviews the new digital controller from ESU, with images of the display screen.

'Kreative Botanik in 1:32' (eight pages) by Ralph Zinngrebe describes and illustrates how plants and weeds can be recreated in model form using scenic products from Heki, Busch, Model Scene, and Noch. No fewer than 56 colour photographs are featured.

The penultimate five page section is 'Der Haifisch hat Zähne' (the shark has teeth) – Thomas Montaperti reviews a pre-production sample of the new highly detailed KM1 model of a Siemens 'Vectron' BR193 electric in the distinctive Rail Force 1 shark livery.

In the final feature, '3-D-Anlagenplanung' (five pages), Ralph Zinngrebe shows how you can design a Gauge 1 layout using a computer programme by Rail Modeller pro in conjunction with N scale models!



This is full of information, advice, and inspiration for Gauge 1 modellers; however, a good knowledge of German will be required to get the best from it.

There are numerous advertisements from model manufacturers – Märklin, Steiner Modellwerke, BMB Beesmodellbahn, HEGOB Modellbahn GmbH, Wunder, and KM1, plus a few for model shops in Germany and for other products from Eisenbahn Kurier Verlag, namely books, magazines, calendars, and DVDs.



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

The tour takes us (more or less) from north to south and includes the following lines:

Rügen – 6 pages, 11 photos

Molli – 10 pages, 16 photos

Harz – 7 pages, 12 photos

Döllnitz – 9 pages, 14 photos

Lößnitz – 14 pages, 21 photos

Weißenstein – 12 pages, 19 photos

Fichtelberg – 11 pages, 16 photos

Preßnitztal – 8 pages, 12 photos

Zittau – 15 pages, 23 photos

Dresden park railway – 4 pages, 6 photos

Berlin park railway – 3 pages, 4 photos

Most of the lines were visited more than once.

East German Narrow Gauge

Compiled by Bryan Tozer

German Railway Society

GRS Sales,

4, Woodmerry Avenue, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 7PA.

www.grs-uk.org

295mm x 215mm 118pp

Softback £13.00 incl.p&p. No ISBN

The latest in the series of photo booklets on aspects of German railways from the German Railway Society takes us on a tour of the narrow gauge lines in what was East Germany with images from the slide collection of the late David Odd.

The photos are the results of trips in May 1977, April 1978, July/August 1983 (at least part on a Locomotive Club of Great Britain tour), July 1985, March 1993, May 1994, May 1995, April 1996, May 1997, May 2000, and May 2002.

Three photos are dated outside but close to some of these groups so are presumed to be incorrect, though whether in the original notation on the slide mount faithfully repeated or in composing the caption is unknown. One image is dated June 2015, which seems completely out of place.

A significant proportion of the photos date from before privatisation or preservation and so are of particular interest.

Die Baureihe 41

Geschichte, Technik, Umbauten, Einsätze 1: Berlin bis Hamburg

by Peter Melcher

Eisenbahn Kurier Verlag

Munzinger Straße 5a, D-79111 Freiburg, Germany

www.eisenbahn-kurier.de

297mm x 210mm 336pp

Hardback €54.00

German text ref.6044

ISBN 978-3-8446-6044-9

The Deutsche Reichsbahn *Einheits* (standard) design BR41 2-8-2 was, through its power and speed, the definitive all-purpose mixed traffic locomotive. Whether at the head of heavy freights or on passenger services, whether in flat or hilly country, it must rate as one of the most successful German steam loco designs.

This book replaces a slimmer volume from EK in 1977. So much material and so many photos have been gathered that it requires two volumes. Page and picture numbering runs through.

Two prototypes were built in 1936 for evaluation; once deemed successful series production resulted in 366 examples built by most of the major manufacturers by 1941 when curtailed by war conditions. Interestingly, the class was never subjected to any wartime simplifications.

After the Second World War, in the west the DB equipped them with new boilers and converted some to oil firing while in the east the DR (with rather more of them) instituted a reconstruction programme, also to deal with the problems of the St47 steel used for the original boilers.

Swiss Electric Railcars and Multiple Units since 1900

Written and compiled by Martin Fisher

Swiss Railways Society, Sales,

15, Kingsdale Croft, Stretton,

Burton-on-Trent, DE13 0EG.

www.swissralsoc.org.uk

297mm x 210mm 320pp

Hardback £39.00 + p&p

ISBN 978-1-7390883-2-3

The first electric railcars appeared in Switzerland in the 1890s. They became more widespread from Edwardian times on narrow gauge and from the 1920s on standard gauge, but multiple units were slow to be adopted and only really became common in the present century. This book explains how this evolution came about and discusses the differences between the two types of vehicle – not always obvious, or indeed consistently expressed. The many varieties are identified and there are over fifty tables of technical data, clearly set out with a lightly tinted background.

The book follows the format established in the Society's works on steam and electric locos by going first through the standard gauge systems (adhesion then rack-and-pinion), SBB first then the independent sector, and then likewise with the narrow gauge, following the development in chronological order and helpfully cross-referencing similar designs in service with different operators. It reveals that there were in

The introduction includes a map of East Germany with the locations of the lines helpfully marked.

There is a text introduction to each section, with a map of the route in most cases – welcome, but some are rather low resolution.

Along each line the images are not arranged in either geographical or chronological order. They are presented mostly two to a page, with some full page verticals and some smaller amongst the text sections.

The collection is rounded off with a section of miscellaneous extras and loco technical information, mostly as one page for each type, with a representative photo above principal dimensions, etc. (17 pages, 18 photos).

Some lasted on DB until the end of steam in the mid-1970s, and on the DR until the mid-1980s, though in both cases withdrawals had been taking place for a decade or so.

This first volume covers the design considerations, alternative proposals, and the decision to build in 1934. There is a very detailed technical description, and accounts of the modifications and rebuilds.

Then service by administrative area is covered, in alphabetical order, with allocations recorded over time and duties documented, as far as records – inevitably incomplete – will permit. Part 1 takes us from Berlin to Hamburg, shed by shed, through the administrative areas of Breslau, Cottbus, Dresden, Essen, Frankfurt (M), Greifswald, and Halle (S).

The second volume continues the coverage (from Hannover to Wuppertal) and also includes the customary sections on use beyond Germany, notable accidents, use as heating locos, withdrawals and scrapping, and notes about preserved examples, plus a comprehensive list of sources. The contents page includes these headings, taking us beyond 700 pages in all.

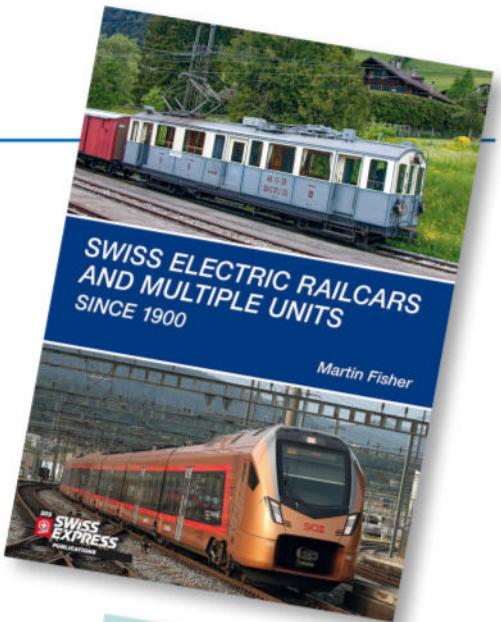
The first volume alone is illustrated with around 434 photographs, the majority naturally in black & white but with some colour, some as early as 1954. All are very well reproduced on good quality paper, and informatively captioned and credited. They show the locos during construction and overhauls, with parts and sub-assemblies evident, at sheds, in stations, and hauling trains. There are also detailed scale drawings.

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 working timetables and other documents are included.



A very thorough class portrait in the manner for which EK is noted. Ideal for modellers wanting to understand different versions and changes over time.



fact many detail differences among what appear to be substantially similar machines.

A newly drawn map of the country (on the end-papers) shows where most of the railways (some long closed) which used these vehicles are situated.

The work is illustrated with a superb collection of around 970 photos, the majority in colour, some from as early as the 1950s. The latest are dated July 2025.

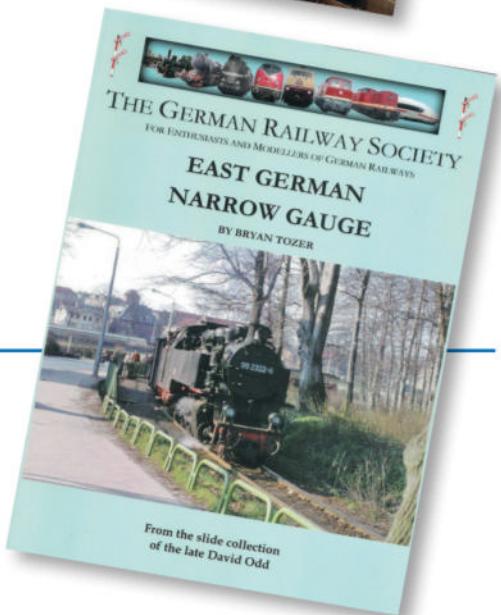
They have been supplied by a number of photographers (several SRS members), archives, and online sources, all duly acknowledged, and all very fully captioned.

In contrast with the loco books, there are no scale drawings, but views of interiors have been included.

The work is completed with four appendices: publications listing current Swiss railcars and multiple units (which this book does not), the classification system, the manufacturers, and a bibliography. There is also an index, which should enable companies and types to be found easily.

Like its predecessors, this book deserves a place on the shelf of all serious students of Swiss railways. It is a remarkable compilation by any measure, packed with interesting information, representing a massive amount of research, and produced to a very high standard. It must be considered very good value. It would be a credit to any professional publisher, and reflects very well upon the Swiss Railways Society.

It only remains for the SRS to complete the coverage of Swiss motive power with something on diesels, although it would not be such a large work.



At the price, this can be considered reasonable value, with much to interest dedicated fans of East German narrow gauge, but the presentation could have been better.



Eisenbahn Video-Kurier 166

Schwerpunkt: Railpool-Lokomotiven

The main topic of this programme is the Railpool fleet of electric locomotives. However, the presentation begins with an item not mentioned on the cover – archive scenes of Deutsche Reichsbahn VT18.16 diesel units, including around Berlin. Further archive colour film shows the interiors of these trains and on display at the Leipzig Messe.

More recent film shows the last operational member of the class on its way from Berlin to Prague, with scenes shot from the cab and arriving into Prague. This is followed by film of VT18.16 07 in poor external condition languishing in a siding and later being hauled by Deutsche Bundesbahn E40 128 on the way to Nürnberg. Later we see this unit now fully restored on display to the public at the DB Museum in Nürnberg. Members of the SVT Görlitz group are interviewed and explain the history of these vehicles. Later scenes show the unit at work on enthusiast specials.

We then come to the main topic, Railpool's electrics from Bombardier and Siemens at work on a variety of different freight services, including along the Rhine Valley and at Innsbruck in Austria where double-headed Bombardier TRAXX type locos are seen heading a train of bogie opens. Some scenes were shot in the snow in the Czech Republic. Ex DR 155 099-5 is seen on a train of bogie tanks and ex DB 151 062-7 in Railpool's silver livery at the head of a mixed freight.

Next a complete contrast with a look at three one hundred-year-old steam locos. Firstly, green S3/6 No.3673 is seen from the lineside on an enthusiast special which includes a red DSG Speisewagen (dining car). This is followed by close-ups of *Luci*, an 0-4-0T departing bunker first on a period mixed goods with further film from the lineside on the way to Nördlingen, Bavaria. At Nördlingen we then see DB Pacific 01 066 on a train to Donauwörth. The loco is seen departing the station on a with a four-coach special passenger service, with further scenes filmed from the lineside. This is quickly followed by film shot from the lineside of another four-coach train worked

EK-Videothek DVD c.58mins + 45min Bonus ref.8566 €19.80

by DB 4-6-0 38 2267. This loco dates from 1918 and is currently kept at the museum at Bochum-Dahlhausen.

In the next feature archive black & white film shows BR03¹⁰ Pacifics at work on the DB with footage from the lineside and on the footplate. 03 1045 is one of the locos featured and at Bw.Hagen-Eckesey 03 1051 is seen taking on coal and water. Archive colour film then shows 03¹⁰s from the lineside on passenger services. Examples seen include 03 1013 and 03 100, which is seen backing onto a passenger train at Köln Hbf. At Lippstadt 03 1021 is seen departing the station on a passenger train, with further scenes filmed from the lineside.

The next section is a look at DR double-deck articulated coaches, with archive black & white film of these vehicles in service. Later colour film is shown, including views of the interiors. At Nauen station a set of these coaches is seen departing being propelled by a BR118 diesel-hydraulic locomotive.

In the *Erinnerungen* section colour film is shown of the so-called 'Weiße Lady' (White Lady) prototype electric 143 001, filmed from the lineside and from inside the cab. At Berlin-Schönefeld the loco is seen with AEG lettering on the bodysides departing on a passenger service formed of DR stock. Further scenes show the loco departing on a heavier passenger working and then in private hands as Erfurter Bahnservice 212 001 on a train of tank wagons.

In *Bahn News* aerial film shows the ICE test train at the end of 2025 carrying out tests along one of the *Neubaustrecken* (new high speed lines).

In the final *Rückblick* section archive black & white film show the BR06 4-8-4 steam loco under construction and then in service departing from a major station with a passenger train.

A certain amount of background music is used on this production, mainly in the *Rückblick* section, but it is not too intrusive.

Trailers for other Eisenbahn Kurier DVDs last for about five minutes.

The Bonus section is 'Mit Volldampf durch Deutschland', showing a range of still operational standard gauge steam loco at work throughout Germany filmed from lineside on organised specials and *Plandampf* events.

The Eisenbahn Kurier railway video library is published by EK-Verlag, Munziger Straße 5a, D-79111 Freiburg, Germany. www.eisenbahn-kurier.de



Die Baureihe 420

Der S-Bahn-Klassiker der Deutschen Bundesbahn

A new S-Bahn network was opened in München in 1972 in time for the summer Olympic Games; for this Deutsche Bundesbahn developed a new three-car electric unit. The new trains were an instant success. The network was the first on the DB to use AC power and led to similar developments in Frankfurt am Main, Köln, Stuttgart, and the Rhein/Ruhr area. Between 1969 and 1997 a total of 480 units were introduced and these reliable trains

formed the backbone of S-Bahn services for decades. This programme covers the history of the BR420, right up to their last days in service with film showing them in operation with DB and later Deutsche Bahn AG.

The presentation begins with scenes of 420 001 in orange & pebble grey livery followed by 420 967 in DBAG traffic red (*Verkehrsrot*) livery arriving and departing München-Karlsfeld on a service to Altomünster. Out on the lineside, another traffic red unit passes, followed by further examples in this colour scheme. At Kleinberghofen 420 967 is then seen arriving and departing, with another working in the opposite direction. Further members of the class are seen from the lineside, and at Altomünster 420 967 is seen arriving at the station. Here we take a look inside the passenger accommodation. A successor to the 420, 423 725 is observed on a service to Dachau. Further scenes of this working were filmed from the lineside.

Archive stills then illustrate the forerunners of the 420s, the class 427. Archive colour film shows them in revenue service with sporting DB crimson red (RAL 3004) livery. The prototype 420, ET 20001, is shown in archive black & white photos and then archive colour photos show production 420s in service in München, Stuttgart, and the Rhein/Ruhr area.

420 551 is seen in orange & pebble grey livery on a service to Nannhofen and at Flughafen München a similarly liveried unit is seen arriving and departing the station. Further examples in this colour scheme are shown, then 420 026 in blue & pebble grey livery is seen on route 55 to Ebersberg (Oberbayern). This is followed by film of 420 182 in sky blue livery on an S1 service to München Flughafen. Further scenes

EK-Videothek: Baureihen DVD c.58mins ref.8672 €22.80

show sky blue 420s on services to and from München Flughafen, then nearer to the Hauptbahnhof in München and in Pasing 420s are seen in the orange & pebble grey, including one passing double-headed BR218 diesels on a train of double-deck coaches. 420 030 is later seen in traffic red on an S8 working to Olching. At Rosenheimer Platz in München 420 030 is seen again arriving and departing the station, while at the Hackerbrücke traffic red 420 566 is seen arriving and departing with a service to München-Ostbahnhof.

We then see orange & pebble grey 420s on S-Bahn services around Frankfurt am Main, including at Kriftel. Further examples in the later traffic red colour scheme are seen from the lineside and at Frankfurt (Main) Hbf., including 420 801. At Frankfurt-Griesheim depot 420s are seen undergoing maintenance, including tyre turning. 420 226 is seen emerging from the depot and 420 810 is seen passing through the washing plant. Further scenes were filmed inside the cab.

The next section presents both orange & pebble grey and traffic red examples from the lineside in the Stuttgart area, with views inside the passenger accommodation on these trains.

Moving on to the Rhein/Ruhr area, a traffic red 420 is seen at Wuppertal-Steinbeck arriving and departing with a service to Essen. Further Rhein/Ruhr area 420s are shown from the lineside and at Velbert-Langenberg station. Archive colour film then shows them in the orange & pebble grey operating around Köln, including crossing the Hohenzollernbrücke.

Back in München, orange & pebble grey 420 001 is seen again on a farewell to the class run at München-Ostbahnhof, with further scenes filmed from inside the cab. With the rear cab (420 501) leading we see this train later heading back to into the station. This set is now preserved and is seen later at the DB Museum in Nürnberg. 420 002 in blue & grey is also seen.

Traffic red 420s still in revenue service are seen on the München S-Bahn network. The programme ends with scenes at Arnbach where a unit is seen arriving and departing on a service to München-Ostbahnhof, with further scenes of this working filmed from the lineside.

The German (only) commentary is both clear and informative, as usual. There is some background music used, mainly towards the end, but it is not intrusive.

Around five minutes of trailers for other EK DVDs follow the programme.

The Eisenbahn Kurier railway video library is published by EK-Verlag, Munziger Straße 5a, D-79111 Freiburg, Germany. www.eisenbahn-kurier.de



Verkehrsknoten Cottbus

Cottbus is the second largest city in the state of Brandenburg. It has had a rail connection to Berlin since 1866. In the course of time five additional lines were constructed. Today its main station (Hauptbahnhof) is a modern route centre. Since 1903 the city has also had an extensive tram network. This programme looks at this interesting railway centre from the early 1990s through to the present day, including the new trams operating in this city and the associated fleet of buses.

It begins with scenes filmed from the lineside close to the Hauptbahnhof where we see a variety of passenger and freight services. We then take a closer look at the Hbf. and a map shows the rail routes radiating from Cottbus. The city boasts four tram and five bus routes and the buses and trams are shown in action.

ODEG diesel railcar 642 915 is seen arriving and later departing with a regional service to Zittau. Electric 182 017 is then seen running light from the depot (Bahnbetriebswerk) with some scenes filmed in the cab. Electric 112 117 is also seen moving off the depot. Archive colour film then shows a Bordeaux red Deutsche Reichsbahn BR 155 electric moving off the turntable and an ASF battery shunter is seen hauling a DR 'Ludmilla' diesel-electric. A general view of all types of motive power on shed is shown around the turntable, including steam locomotives. This includes the operational *Heizlok* (heating loco) 44 1412-4. DR 2-8-4T 65 1057 is also seen taking on water and departing the Hbf. on a passenger service formed of DR beige and orange liveried coaching stock. 2-10-0 52 8090 is shown with the tender being refilled with coal and undergoing an inspection before moving off light engine. 52 8079 (with tub tender) is also observed taking water and Pacific 03 204 is seen on the depot turntable. This is followed by scenes of 2-8-2 35 1019 at Cottbus Hbf. where the loco is seen departing with a train of DR green coaches. Further film shows this working from the lineside. At the Bahnbetriebswerk electric 250 083 is seen on the turntable and moves off alongside a 'Ludmilla' diesel-electric. A BR118 diesel-hydraulic is also seen moving off shed.

We then see the new depot at Cottbus with stabled double-deck coaching stock and electric multiple units on display. A Kfö III (BR333) diesel shunter is also seen.

In the early 1990s we see electric 212 005 in orient red livery working an Inter-Regio passenger train. Modern diesel multiple units belonging to the Lausitz Bahn are seen and rebuilt Pacific 01 0509 is seen on a special service departing Cottbus Hbf. double-heading with a Deutsche Bundesbahn BR23 2-6-3. Green Pacific 18 201 (with two tenders) is then seen, followed by film of Cottbus buses and trams, including the latest Skoda-built examples. There are also some scenes of preserved vintage trams.

We then make an excursion to the metre gauge Spreewaldbahn where we see 0-6-0T 99 5703, along with preserved DR coaching stock and the *Parkeisenbahn* (park railway).

EK-Videothek: einst und jetzt DVD c.58mins ref.8685 €22.80

We then get footage from the lineside of modern Siemens Vectron and Bombardier TRAXX electrics at the head of freight services, followed by some local passenger trains. In Merzdorf e.m.u. 443 101 is seen arriving and departing, followed by a look inside the new ICE depot at Cottbus where ICE trains are undergoing maintenance. Archive colour film then shows Cottbus Works overhauling 'Ludmilla' diesel-electrics, among them 234 630 along with some ex-DB V60 diesel-hydraulic shunters. Outside the works the uniquely liveried DB Fahrzeuginstandhaltung Cottbus diesel-hydraulic 218 497 in half-and-half black with red frame and bogies and white with grey frame and bogies is seen.

The presentation ends with views of a traffic red 'Ludmilla' running light, filmed from the lineside, new Skoda-built trams on test, and an ODEG BR642 diesel railcar on a local passenger service departing from Cottbus Hbf.

The commentary (only in German) is clear and informative.

There is some background music used but it is not intrusive.

Around five minutes of trailers for other Eisenbahn Kurier DVDs follow this programme.

The Eisenbahn Kurier railway video library is published by EK-Verlag, Munziger Straße 5a, D-79111 Freiburg, Germany. www.eisenbahn-kurier.de

Below

The main signal box at Cottbus Hauptbahnhof, in May 2013. Photo: Graham Lightfoot.



Die Baureihe 5040

The BR50⁴⁰ 2-10-0 was one of new-build steam locomotive classes of the Deutsche Reichsbahn. Between 1956 and 1960, 88 examples were built by the Karl Marx works in Babelsberg. Withdrawals began from 1975 and this process was completed in 1980. All but 50 4073, which served as a *Heizlok* (heating locomotive) in Lötz and Demmin, were scrapped. In 1991 it was acquired by the Bayerisches Eisenbahn Museum (BEM) in Nördlingen. Thirty years later and 50 4073 can again be enjoyed in full working order. This programme shows this loco's restoration in Meiningen, its first trips out on the main line, and later at the head of special freight and passenger services.

The presentation begins with scenes of 50 4073 filmed from the lineside heading a heavy freight train loaded with logs.

This is followed by film of the loco being hauled out of the shed at the BEM by ex-Deutsche Bundesbahn Kfö III diesel shunter 332 092-6 of the Bayern Bahn. The 50⁴⁰ is seen moving onto the turntable and then it moves off light engine.

At Wittenberg the loco is seen with the post-1970 EDV number 50 4073-8. The driver is seen climbing aboard and the loco moves off. There are further scenes on the footplate, from the air, and from the lineside at the head of a train of bogie open wagons.

EK-Videothek: Stolz der DR DVD c.58mins ref.8673 €18.90

Archive colour film shows the locos in of DR days, including 50 4088. At the West German/East German border station at Büchen, 50 4035-7 is seen backing onto a freight and the loco takes water. Later it is seen departing with a heavy train of four-wheeled tank wagons. Further archive colour film shows examples of the class filmed from the lineside, including another scene at Büchen.

50 4073 is then seen in more modern times undergoing overhaul at Meiningen. Andreas Braun from the BEM is interviewed and tells the viewer about the loco's history. Bearing the pre-1970 number 50 4073 it is then seen undergoing final checks at the BEM before moving off shed. The loco is turned on the turntable and moves off with the assistance of ex-DR diesel shunter 311 632-4. 50 4073 is then seen running light engine. Further scenes show the from the lineside on a train of logs with a Bayern Bahn ex-DB V90 diesel at the rear.

It is then seen again running as 50 4073-8, with footage on the footplate, from the lineside, and from the air on a train of GATX bogie tank wagons.

The final section shows it from the lineside hauling a five coach train of green DB coaches.

Very little background music is used in this programme, mainly towards the end, and it is not intrusive.

Around five minutes of trailers for other Eisenbahn Kurier DVDs follow the programme.

The Eisenbahn Kurier railway video library is published by EK-Verlag, Munziger Straße 5a, D-79111 Freiburg, Germany. www.eisenbahn-kurier.de

New by Norsk Modelljernbane



Production of the Norwegian NSB El3 / Swedish SJ OF twin unit electrics used on the ore line in the far north of Norway and Sweden is now finished, and NMJ were expecting the HO models to arrive just before Christmas or at the latest early in the New Year.

The models have extensive lighting functions – you can control the top lights, lower lights, lights at each end, cab lights, and in the equipment room in both units. For the SJ OF, you can also switch between red and white lights at the back, or have everything turned off.

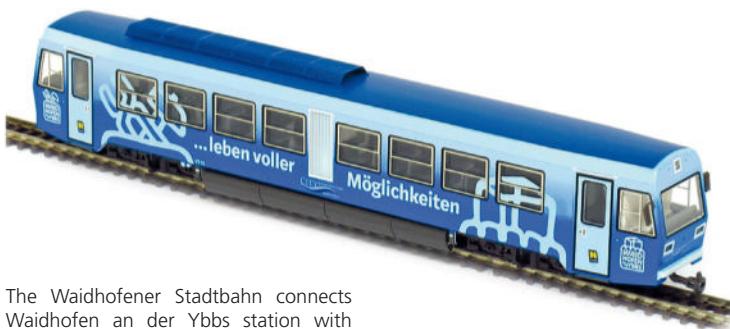


Swedish OF is in the same teak as the wooden coaches.

These locos can be used with the NMJ 1908 type Mas hopper wagons (made by Roco) as well as both Roco and Trix later type Mas hopper wagons.

www.nmj.no

Waidhofen railcar in HOe



The Waidhofener Stadtbahn connects Waidhofen an der Ybbs station with the city centre, 3.3km away. It operates daily and, together with the buses, is an essential part of local public transport.

In the 2010s, the former ÖBB 5090 railcars then operated by NÖVOG received a new blue livery. While VT9 and VT10 got a very striking colourful design, from 2016 VT12 had a much calmer and more dignified finish.

The current re-issue of NÖVOG VT12 in 'Citybahn Waidhofen' blue is also a technical development of the former products. For the first time, the models are driven by two small but powerful

coreless motors in the bogies. The sound of the old drive has been lost while the pulling power has been retained.

A new circuit board equipped with a 6-pin NEM651 socket facilitates conversion to DCC. Halling highly recommend the new ZIMO MX617N decoder, and this can be ordered 'ex works'.

Halling Modelle
Leopoldigasse 15-17,
A-1230 Wien, Austria.
www.halling.at

CM Cup competition reminder

There is still time – just! – to send your choices for the 2025 Continental Modeller Cup. With well over a thousand pages published in the course of the year, we hope that the quantity and the quality of the material presented

through the year will make the choice difficult again! While modelling is not in essence a competitive sport, we find it interesting to know which features were particularly appreciated.

cm-editor@btconnect.com



train of the month February

Davos shuttle train

In 1988, the Rhätische Bahn planned to operate shuttle trains with the Ge4/4I locomotives and rebuilt all ten by 1992. They got new cabs and remote multiple-unit controls for operating shuttle trains and double-heading. The 48t machines were rated at 1,180kW and had a top speed of 80km/h.

The shuttle trains were formed from centre entrance coaches delivered in 1956 by SIG (Schweizerische Industrie Gesellschaft, Neuhausen am Rheinfall) initially with driving trailer BDt 1731.

The centre entrance coaches were modernised with outer swing doors that were flush with the sides.

The load was 87t and the four coach train offered 219 seats.

The locomotive seen on this train on the Kaeserberg layout, Ge4/4I 604 Calanda, was withdrawn in March 2011.

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



Fourdees release O&K in OO9



Fourdees have announced their first model inspired by the products of the prolific German manufacturer Orenstein and Koppel. This company built thousands of locomotives for domestic and international use. Otto is based on their standard 50hp 0-4-0WT design.

The kit depicts a machine as built, with both injectors beside the manifold within the cab. These are on a separately fitted boiler backhead, for ease of painting. The distinctive right-hand side regulator valve and steam feed pipes are key characteristics of these machines, along with the narrow running frame forward of the tanks, and oval cab spectacles.

A choice of four chimneys is included with the kit, with traditional, stovepipe, spark-arrestor and O&K profiles.

As with all Fourdees kits, there are clear resin windows. Standard couplings in NEM pockets are included.

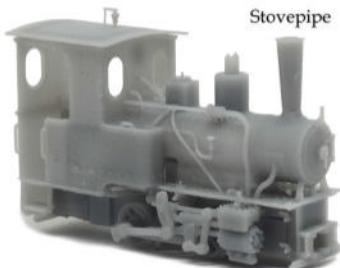
The painted sample shown above is on the included static chassis.

The kit is designed to fit either an unmodified Bachmann 'Percy' chassis (above right), or (after removal of the valve chests) the same chassis with a valve gear upgrade (right).

Traditional



Stovepipe



Spark Arrestor



O&K



American Z Line latest releases



New from AZL are two unique Union Pacific GE C44-9Ws, #9571 and #9599. Each features the UP to SP transition patches, and #9571 also has a replaced air-conditioning unit.

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 Northern Pacific road numbers are available for the GM-EMD FP7 in Loewy livery, #6600 and #6601.

They are DCC ready and feature prototype specific details.



To complement the B&O Chessie version released previously, the GM-EMD SD50 gains two C&O numbers, #8563 and #8568.

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.



The last of the EMD SD70M-2 run is now available as Canadian National #8943 and #8947.

The SD70M-2s are DCC ready and feature the AZL 7mm diameter motor, dual flywheels, prototype specific details, directionally controlled LED lighting, optional front truck with mounted coupler, blackened metal wheels, and AutoLatch™ couplers.

The GM-EMD F7A is now offered for the Gulf Mobile & Ohio with two numbers, #811A and #812A.

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 bay window caboose is available as Burlington Northern #11999 and #11476.

The new AutoFlood III hoppers appear as Burlington Northern, one pack of two and two packs of four, all with different numbers.



www.americanzline.com

European Railway Association exhibition – layouts preview

Saturday 28 February – Longbridge, Birmingham

Spatenbrau Brücke Germany N

Andy Howitt

CM August 2017

A simple but neat small shunting layout, with a fuel depot in an industrial complex and some new stabling sidings being constructed alongside, and bridges crossing a deep river valley.

Mühlenfelder Germany N

Pauline McKenna

Inspired by a location near Bremen (Bremen-Mahndorf), and designed for watching trains go by.

Sellraintal Austria N

Dan Wylam

An entirely fictional creation set in the Austrian Alps in the Tyrol. It depicts the terminus of what was a much longer line developed for the movement of minerals and silver from a quarry and silver mine but now is the starting point for services up the valley to the winter sport resorts.

La Gare de Saint Claude France N

Nick Lewis

CM October 2022

Saint-Claude is in the Haut-Jura in eastern France, an area of high pastures in a spectacular limestone mountain range. The small town lies deep in the valley of the river Bienne, surrounded by peaks soaring to 900-1000m. The station building sits on an excavated terrace at the foot of a high rock wall. The former goods depot now houses a vehicle repair shop and other small businesses. Evidence of the goods yard, turntable and other fixtures can be found alongside the unused lines in the direction of Oyonnax. The line in the other direction passes under a bridge taking local traffic in the direction of Morez.

Verneuil les Vignes France N

Jonathan Cassidy

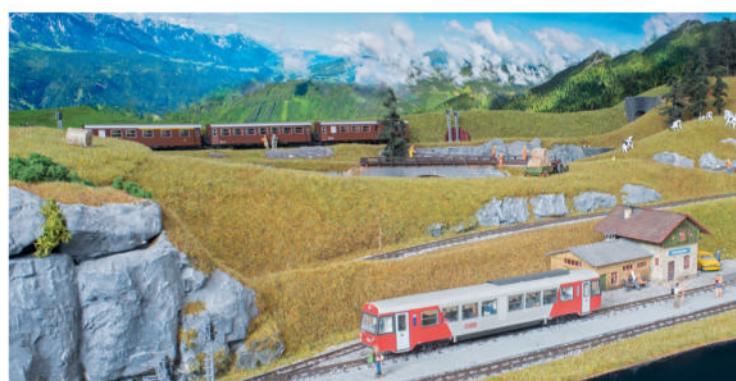
Set in the south of France in the late 1970s/1980s, a secondary line with freight and local passenger services. Electric locos work most of the services with a few appearances of autorails and diesels.

St.Frazal d'Ardèche France Nm

Piers Milne (built by Sy Newitt)

CM August 2023

A French secondary railway in the 1960s-1970s. A fictitious location based on the Chemin de Fer du Vivarais in the Ardèche département in south-east France. Most of the railway closed in 1968 but parts have been preserved.



Allegra Switzerland Nn

Mike Carter

in this issue

The layout is a nod to the Rhätische Bahn, a major private railway, home to the Glacier Express and the Bernina Express. The layout was conceived after a ride on the Bernina Express. It is a fictitious winter scene featuring the typical sharp curving track of the Bernina line.

Streifhoher German/Swiss N+Nn

Chris Sheldrake

A small, fictitious village in the Alps, between the German, Austrian and Swiss borders. In this miniature world, Streif is an important stop on a single track international metre gauge line, with passing places where skiers change to the local metre gauge rack line that takes them up to Streifhöher where the ski lifts are located.



Gare Sainte-Marie France HOe

Paul Walton

Sainte-Marie was built in a month. It started with nothing more than an empty baseboard, a box of Kato Unitrack, and an idea. Set in the south east of France close to La Roche and part of the same secondary rail network. It is set in the 1960s but with minor alterations it can be in the 1980s.

Vogelsbach Austria HOe

Eric Bird

Loosely based on the 760mm gauge Zillertalbahn terminus at Jenbach in the Tyrol area of Austria. It uses modern day Zillertalbahn and heritage rolling stock with occasional visiting stock.

Kaninchchenbau alpine HOe

Iain Morrison

CM February 2022

Set in the alpine foothills where narrow gauge trains are still very common. It was designed using the 'rabbit warren' principle and is fully automated, with five trains operating continuously all controlled automatically by a computer running iTrain software. The design ensures that trains will not always appear from the expected exit and viewers try to guess where the train will come from.



Ulvaryd Strand Sweden HOe

Charlie Insley

CM November 2019

Set in southern Sweden, on the shores of Lake Vättern in Västergötland, this is the lakeside terminus of the Ulvaryd-Mjölltorp Railway, a 60cm gauge line which connected the small lakeside town of Ulvaryd with the standard gauge line from Skövde to Karlsborg.

Santa Maria Switzerland HOm

Dan Spalding

CM September 2025

The model is of an imagined Rhätische Bahn station. As well as the passenger service, the station sees some timber traffic loaded in the station yard and a small rail served distribution point. There is a through freight service to Mustair and Mals.

Aix-en-Pains France HOm

John Davies

Metre gauge Tortillards were meandering local or minor railways – to isolated French rural communities struggling for survival, they were a lifeline connecting them to the outside world before the motor age. France once had over a thousand miles of these little railways, but now they are only found as preservation lines.

Lottenbirge Germany HO/HOe

Mark Dale

in this issue

Lottenbirge is somewhere in the Erzgebirge in Saxony. It is at the end of a standard gauge branch line that forms the interchange with the extensive 750mm narrow gauge network in the region. Wagons are loaded onto transporter wagons to continue their journey to the local industries. The time period is towards the end of the 20th century around the time of German re-unification. The railway has been neglected, and steam locomotives are still in daily use alongside their diesel replacements on both the standard and narrow gauge.

Dreileben Germany HO

Nick Palette

A fictitious location in Sachsen-Anhalt in the former East Germany, set in the late 1980s shortly before the demise of the DDR and the re-unification. It portrays the end of a rural branch line and uses short freight and passenger trains typical of the era and region. The layout is dominated by two large structures – a factory in the background which is not rail served and a grain silo which is.

Altenburger Germany HO

Alan Wardman & Maciej Kurkowiaki

A small country station and goods sidings with a loco stabling point, set in the Thuringen/Sachsen area of the former DDR between 1990 and 2000, with the amalgamation of the DR and DB systems which allows a mixture stock.

La Camrienne France HO

Graham Hand

La Camrienne represents a ligne secondaire d'intérêt général. Most such lines in France were metre gauge, but some were standard gauge, although most had closed before or during the Second World War. Some survived, struggling on until final closure in the late 1950s or 1960s. La Camrienne is one such (entirely fictitious) line, almost at the end of its life. In addition to a basic passenger service, much of the traffic is agricultural and general merchandise, together with the post-war wine-bottling plant.

St.Pankraz in Steiermark Austria HO

Mike Upton

CM February 2021

St.Pankraz is the terminus of a branch. The layout is set in a broad time period from the mid-1980s to the present day. Trains are operated by the Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB) or the private Steiermarkische Landesbahnen (StLB). Traffic consists mainly of trains serving the local timber industry, with additional freight consisting of tankers supplying heating oil, and vans to the goods shed. The branch is popular with rail tour operators, bringing an interesting variety of steam locos to the line.

Fürenalpbahn Austria Oe

Friso Dijstelbergen

CM May 2019

This layout was built by Anthony Bilton. It represents a small terminus station somewhere in the Alps. The traffic is mostly tourists accessing the mountains, plus some light freight: building materials inbound, logs and milk outbound.



Exhibition Diary

Dates, events, and information

Saturday 17 & Sunday 18 January

CANTERBURY, Kent

Organiser: City of Canterbury MRS.
Venue: St.Anselm's School, Old Dover Road, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 3EN.
Open: Saturday 1000-1700
 Sunday 1000-1600

Admission: adults £8.00, children (5-15) £1.00. All U12s must be accompanied by an adult. Cash or card payment.

Amenities: visitor parking at New Dover Road Park & Ride next door or on street nearby; only limited disabled parking on site. Stagecoach buses 12, 15, 16, 17 and 89 pass the school. Disabled access to both halls. Refreshments.

Features: around 14 layouts. Demonstrations, trade.

Contact: Exhibition Manager Jeremy Kennett, 07443 658102 evenings only.

E-mail: ccmrs.shows@gmail.com

Website: www.ccmrs.co.uk

Saturday 17 & Sunday 18 January

LEICESTER

Organiser: Syston MRS.
Venue: Birstall Social Club, 16-18, Wanlip Lane, Birstall, Leicester, LE4 4JS.
Open: Saturday 1000-1630
 Sunday 1000-1600

Admission: adults £5.00, accompanied U16s free, unaccompanied U16 £4.00.

Amenities: plenty of car parking close to and at the venue. Arriva bus 127 linking Leicester city centre with Loughborough stops 10 minutes walk from venue. Main hall is wheelchair friendly but access to clubroom is up stairs. Refreshments.

Features: 12 layouts including *Burgedorf* (Austrian HOe, CM September 2007) and *Spion Kop* (N). Trade.

Contact: 07878 661025.

Website: www.systonmrs.org.uk

Saturday 24 & Sunday 25 January

ERITH, South East London

Organiser: Erith MRS.
Venue: Harris Garrard Academy, Yarnton Way, Thamesmead, near Erith, Kent, DA18 4DW.
Open: Saturday 1000-1700
 Sunday 1000-1600

Admission: advance tickets (book via www.ticketsource.co.uk/erith-model-railway-society) – adults £9.00, juniors (12-17) £4.50. On the day – adults £10.00, juniors £5.00. Accompanied under 12s free.

Amenities: nearest rail station is Abbey Wood (served by Southeastern, Thameslink, and Elizabeth Line services), a 10-20 minute walk to the venue or catch either 180 or B11 bus from Bus Stop C. Transport for London buses 180, 401, and B11 stop outside the venue; TfL buses 177, 229, 244, 301, 469, and 472 stop on nearby A2041; TfL Super Loop service SL3 stops at Abbey Wood station.

Large free car park – take note of the signs and the car parking marshals. The venue is within the ULEZ boundary, so check that your vehicle is compliant.

Fully accessible. Extensive range of refreshments.

Features: 32 layouts including an Anglo-German modular N layout, *Rocky Mountain Rails* and *Mini Rocky Mountain Rails* (US N), *Whizz Bang Corner* (WWI OO9), *Vine Street Riverside* (US HO), *Water Run* (US HO), and *Beijiao* (Chinese HO). Demonstrations, societies, trade.

Contact: Exhibition Manager Paul Plummer, 07736 560956.
E-mail: erithmrs@gmail.com

Saturday 24 & Sunday 25 January

KENDAL, Cumbria

Organiser: Kendal MRC.
Venue: Kendal Leisure Centre, LA9 7HX.
Open: Saturday 1000-1700
 Sunday 1000-1600

Admission: adults £6.50, children (6-15) £2.50.

Amenities: small charge for parking. Fully accessible. Light refreshments.

Features: layouts include *Brusio Viaduct* (HOM Rhätische Bahn Bernina Line, Swiss-Italian border). Demonstrations, societies, trade.

Contact: Ian Conway, 01539 733844.
Website: www.kendalmrc.org

Saturday 24 & Sunday 25 January

EASTLEIGH, Hampshire

Organiser: Southampton MRS.
Venue: Barton Peveril Sixth Form College, Chestnut Avenue, Eastleigh, SO50 5ZA. (Use SO50 5BX for front entrance.)

Open: Saturday 1000-1700

 Sunday 1000-1630

Admission: adults £10.00, accompanied under 16s free.

Amenities: c.1.5 miles from M3 J13 or M27 J5, AA signed from shortly after the junctions. Limited free parking on site; for other parking options see SMRS website. Eastleigh and Southampton Parkway rail stations are both about 1.25 miles away. A free heritage bus service provided by the Southampton & District Transport Heritage Trust will operate between these stations and the college on both days from 0930, running approximately every half hour – see website for timetable. Also Bluestar local buses 2 and 5 stop near college. Full catering.

Features: layouts include *Kaninchenbau* (automated alpine HOe, CM February 2022), *Tropical Wonders* (N), and *Colorado Springs* (G scale Playmobil). Demonstrations, societies, trade.

Contact: use contact form on website.
Website: www.southamptonmodelrailwaysociety.co.uk

Saturday 7 & Sunday 8 February

ALTON, Hampshire

FEDEX
Organiser: Alton MRG.
Venue: Eggars School, London Road, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 4EQ.
Open: Saturday 1030-1700

 Sunday 1030-1600

Admission: adults £8.00, accompanied U16s free. Cash or card payment.

Amenities: free parking, with enlarged area for disabled drivers near the

Please send details for possible inclusion to:

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

E-mail: clubs@railwaymodeller.co.uk

Saturday 21 February

PRINCES RISBOROUGH, Buckinghamshire

RISEX

Organiser: Risborough & District MRC.

Venue: Wades Centre, Wades Park, Stratton Road, Princes Risborough, HP27 9AX.

Open: 1000-1630

Admission: adults £7.00, children (5-17) £1.00.

Amenities: disabled access; light refreshments.

Features: layouts include *Achalraj* (Darjeeling OO9, CM March 2019). Demonstrations, club secondhand stand, societies, trade.

E-mail: risexmanager@rdmrc.org.uk

Website: www.rdmrc.org.uk

Saturday 21 February

READING, Berkshire

Organiser: Kenavon Railway Society supporting the Cholsey & Wallingford Railway.

Venue: The Warehouse, 1a, Cumberland Road, Reading, RG1 3LB.

Open: 1000-1600

Admission: adults £5.00, seniors £4.00, children £2.50, families £11.00.

Amenities: limited parking in the church car park off Norwood Road; 3 hours free parking at Palmer Park Stadium (10 minutes walk away); pay and display at the Hope and Bear. Reading Buses 4, X4, 12, 13, 14, 127 and 128, Carousel 850 (Henley/Marlow/High Wycombe) and Rail Air RA1 all stop nearby. Wheelchair accessible. Refreshments.

Features: around 18 layouts including *Los Tanimals* (N), *Falschezahne* (HOe); *Klein Schmalitz* (German HO, CM January 2025); and *Prrenjas* (Albanian HO, in this issue) plus layouts from North Downs Model Railway Circle. Trade.

Contact:

Richard Standing, 0776 0285383.

E-mail: standing_richard@yahoo.co.uk

Website: [https://standingrichard.wixsite.com/kenavon/exhibition-copy](http://standingrichard.wixsite.com/kenavon/exhibition-copy)

Saturday 21 February

TONBRIDGE, Kent

Organiser: Tonbridge MRC.

Venue: Angel Centre, Angel Lane, Tonbridge, TN9 1SF.

Open: 1000-1700

Admission: adults £8.00, accompanied U16s free.

Amenities: next to Sainsbury's, just off the High Street, five minutes from Tonbridge main line station. Council car parking at Angel Centre. Buses through adjacent High Street. Disabled access (except for the stage of one hall). Refreshments.

Features: 22 layouts in various scales and gauges, including *Brunswik* (German N, CM August 2023) and *Neuhauen* (HO). Societies, trade.

Contact: 01959 523840.

Website: www.tonbridgemrc.com



Sunday 22 February HEANOR, Derbyshire

Organiser: Ilkeston (Woodside) MRC.
Venue: Heanor Miners' Welfare, Ilkeston Road, Heanor, Derbyshire, DE75 7DT.

Open: 1000-1600

Admission: adults £5.00, accompanied U16s free.

Amenities: event will be signposted; venue is off the A6007 Ilkeston – Heanor road. Free car parking; disabled access; café and bar.

Features: layouts include *Branston Sub* (US N) and *Hampshire Hills Tramway* (HO). Trade, club stall.

Contact: Event Organiser Pete Abbott, 07930 909571.

Website:
www.ilkestonwoodsidemrc.co.uk

Saturday 28 February LONGBRIDGE, Birmingham

Organiser: European Railways Association.
Venue: Austin Social Club, Tessall Lane, Longbridge, Birmingham, B31 2SF.

Open: 1030-1630

Admission: adults £9.00, accompanied children free, families £15.00. No unaccompanied children.

Amenities: easy access from M42 and M5; large free car park accessible from both Longbridge Lane and Tessall Lane; disabled access; catering.

Features: 20 layouts including *Spatenbrau Brücke* (German N, CM August 2017), *Mühlenfelder* (German N), *Sellraintal* (Austrian N), *La Gare de Saint Claude* (French N, CM October 2022), *Verneuil-les-Vignes* (French N), *St.Frazal d'Ardèche* (French Nm, CM August 2023), *Allegra* (Swiss RhB Nn, in this issue), *Streifhöhe* (German/Swiss N+Nn), *Gare Sainte-Marie* (French HOe), *Vögelsbach* (Austrian HOe), *Kaninchenbau* (alpine HOe, CM February 2022), *Ulvaryd Strand* (Swedish HOe, CM November 2019), *Santa Maria* (Swiss RhB HOm, CM September 2025, above), *Aix-en-Pânes* (French HOm), *Lottenbirge* (German HO+HOe, in this issue), *Dreileben* (German HO), *Altenburger* (German HO), *La Camrienne* (French HO), *St.Pankraz* (Austrian HO, CM February 2021) and *Fürenalpbahn* (Austrian Oe, CM May 2019). Two demonstrators. Specialist societies – German, French, Swiss, Italian, Benelux, and Scandinavian. Trade – Mount Tabor Models, Elaine's Trains, CM3 Models, Paul Hannant, Ingauge/DCC Supplies, Bill & Phil, Gerald Savine Prints, M.E.R.G., and the ERA book stall.

Contact:
Colin Capell, Exhibition Manager
0121 475 4256, 07748 410164
E-mail: colinca@cec21.plus.com

Saturday 28 February – Sunday 1 March

LEAMINGTON SPA, Warwickshire

MIDLANDS GARDEN RAILWAY SHOW

Organiser: Meridienne Exhibitions Ltd.

Venue: Warwickshire Event Centre, A425, Southam Road, Leamington Spa, CV31 1FE. (At the junction of the A425/B4455. Southam Road visitor entrance – sat nav CV31 1FE).

Open: both days 1000-1600.

Last admission one hour before closing.

Admission: adults £13.00, seniors £12.00, children (5-14) £5.00. Advance tickets via the website, on the day at the ticket office.

Amenities: free car park, designated parking area for Blue Badge holders. Disabled facilities. Restaurant & coffee shop.

Features: one of the leading events dedicated to garden railways. Over 15 layouts in G, 16mm, Gauge 1, O, and more, plus nearly 40 specialist traders and societies. Check website for updates.

Website:
www.midlandsgardenrailshow.co.uk

Meetings

Saturday 7 February – 1900 BORHT – Teams talk

The Mysore Railway Museum in 2025 by Ronjoy Ghosh.

Anyone interested can ask for a link.

Contact: borht.org@gmail.com

Monday 9 February – 1930 Lincoln Railway Society

*On The Lines of Duty
(Part 2 – UK and Europe)* by Alan Stennett.

Venue: St.Hugh's Church, Harewood Crescent, North Hykeham, Lincoln, LN6 8JG.
Admission: £4.00.
Non-members welcome.

Contact:
Publicity Member, 01522 698085
E-mail: grahamlightfoot1948@gmail.com

Thursday 19 February – 1930 Lutterworth Railway Society

Exploring Mongolian Railways by Steve Morris.

Venue: The Pavilion, Recreation Ground, Coventry Road, Lutterworth, LE17 4RB.
Admission: members £2.00, non-members £5.00.

Contact: Alan Bilton, 01455 207996 or 07771 756013.

Website:
www.lutterworthrailwaysociety.co.uk

Coming next month

out 19th February

CONTINENTAL MODELLER
FEATURING RAILWAYS FROM AROUND THE WORLD
Sehr-am-Üzant European HOe

Also in this issue...
• **Tirano** Swiss N
• **Le Goudron-Calandre** French HO
• **Arranstein** German N
... and much more!

Published by **PECO**
www.pecopublications.co.uk

00709551229167

• Sehr-am-Üzant

Within a limited space Alan Jockmans created a beautifully presented scenic masterpiece in HOe depicting an idyllic but completely imaginary village.

• Tirano

Metre gauge through the street – Paul Jobber describes his new layout, which replicates a Rhätische Bahn scene in N with material by Kato and other specialists.

• Le Goudron-Calandre

David Thomas presents his French HO layout, which simulates a typical standard gauge *secondaire* somewhere not too far from the River Loire.

• Arranstein

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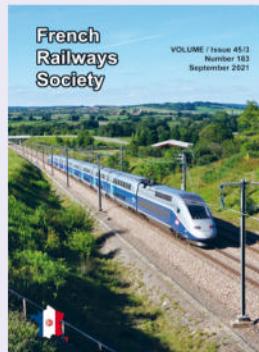
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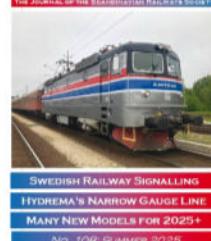


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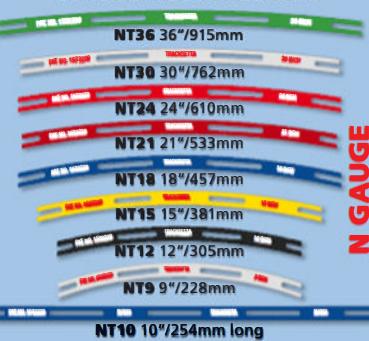
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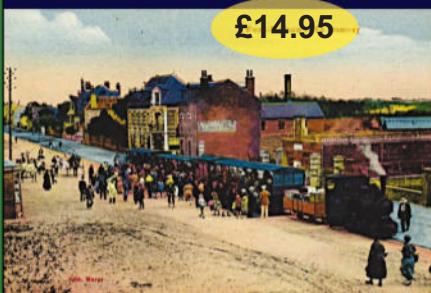
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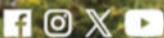
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