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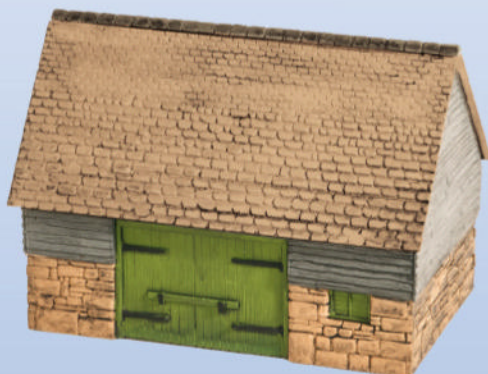


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CONTINENTAL MODELLER

June 2026
Volume 48
Number 6

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RAILWAY MODELLER

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



Cover
Rhätische Bahn Ge4/4 III 642 Breil/Brigels
at Madiro station with panoramic stock
on the scenic N layout by Diger Rossel.
Photo: editor.

French Railways Society marks 50 years

A note from John Rowcroft appeared in the January 1976 edition of *RAILWAY MODELLER* (three years before the first CM!) under the heading 'Calling Francophiles' suggesting that the growing number of enthusiasts modelling French railways might form an association. There were already several French layouts on the exhibition circuit and interest in the railways of France had been stimulated by imports of the Jouef range of locomotives and rolling stock (including full length coaches!) and by developments on SNCF itself, including the first order for production TGVs.

In June that year 'Newsletter No.1' was sent to twenty or so founder members and marked the start of what soon became the SNCF Society, the first of the continental societies to be established.

In 2017 the name was changed to the French Railways Society, reflecting the broader interests of members and the country's changing rail scene.

This month the Society celebrates its golden anniversary. With around four hundred members, it still reflects the interests of modellers and those with a general enthusiasm for the railways of France. As well as meetings, a widely admired quarterly *Journal*, and monthly online news pages, it has an impressive photographic archive of French railways with over 60,000 images.

In its early years, meetings could be held in members' houses but in July 1982 the Society went *en fête* to a theatre in Newmarket with an event both for members and the public. This set a pattern that has continued to the present day.

The Society's annual *Summer Rendezvous* will take place at the Peace Memorial Hall, Woodfield Lane, Ashted, Surrey, KT21 2BE, from 10.00am to 4.00pm on Sunday 7th June. Along with layouts, displays, talks, and trade stands, several other Continental societies have been invited to join the celebrations.

Below left

The French Railways Society had a stand at the Alexandra Palace exhibition in March, showing Society products, Society and other French publications, and a small HO layout. It was staffed by (among others) (from left) Alan Marlow (Sales Officer and Exhibition Manager), David Thomas (*Journal* Editor), Brendan Gash (Treasurer), and Tim Hills.

Below right

Brendan Gash built the 5' by 13" HO layout for display on the Society stand in 50 days (for 50 years). The loco is a Hornby-Rivarossi USATC S100 0-6-0T. (The SNCF examples were classified 030TU but this is supposed to be an independent *secondaire*.) Photo: David Thomas.



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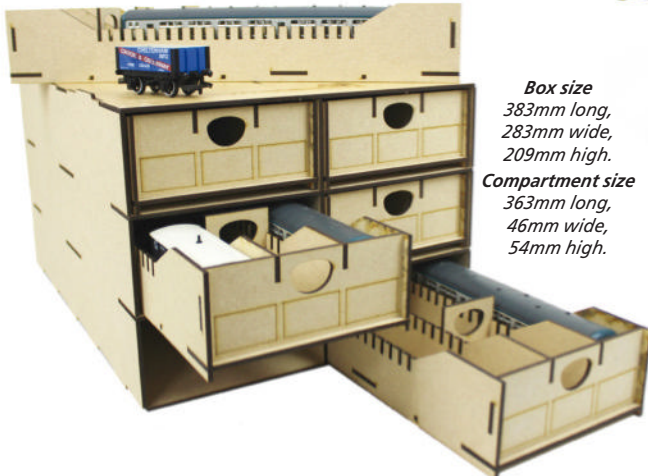
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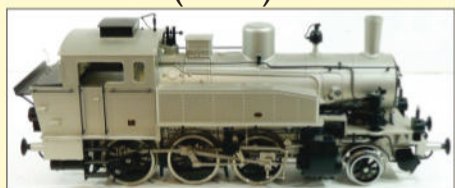
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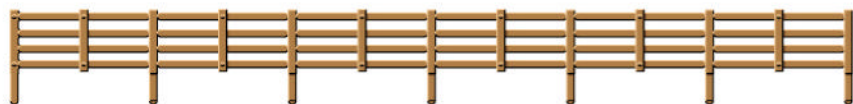
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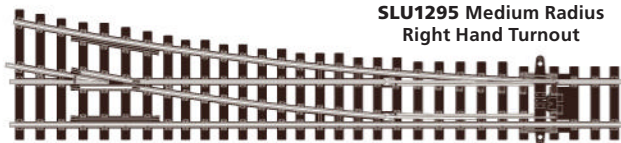
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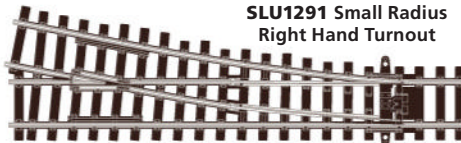


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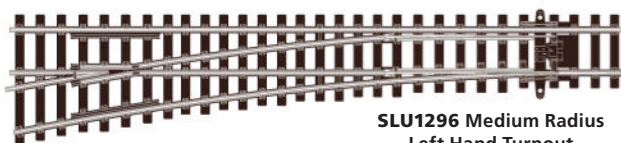
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Right Hand Turnout



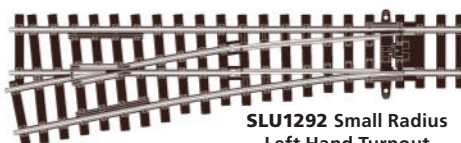
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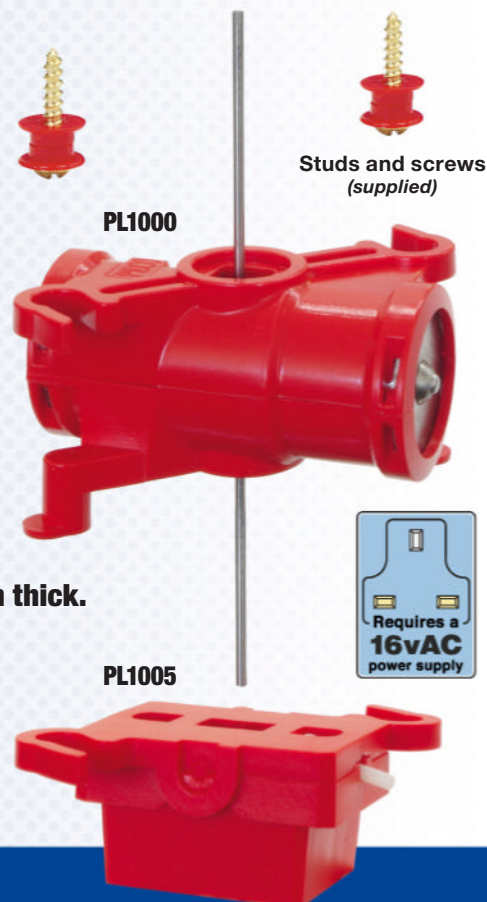
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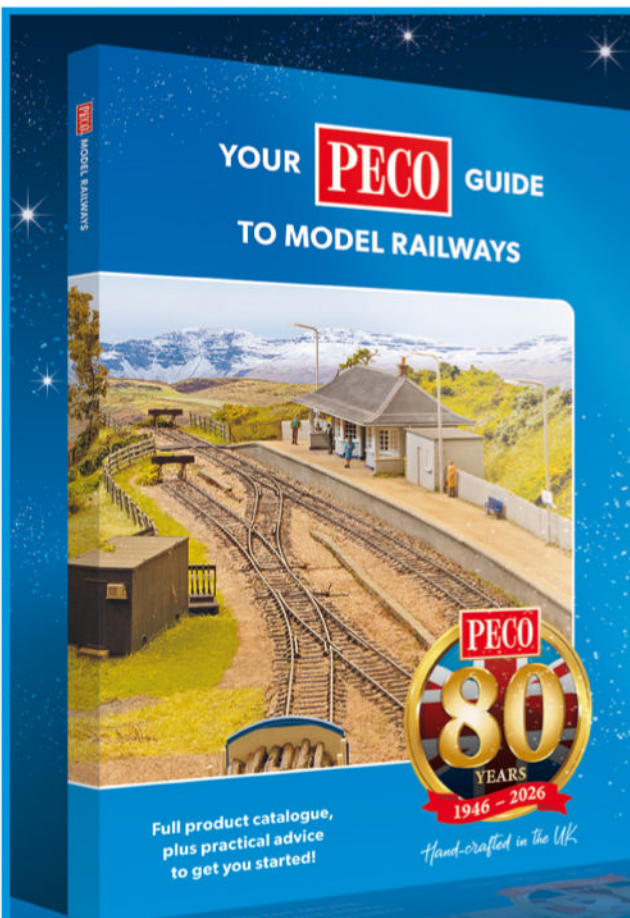
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Icons - Option

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Prolific layout builder **Diger Rossel** was attracted by the potential of the Kato Rhätische Bahn models.

Madiro

An imaginary but plausible location on the RhB

Right
Two trains made up of panoramic coaches pass in the station.

Below
A pair of Ge4/4^{II} electrics head a timber train over the larger viaduct.

Photographs by the editor.





JUNE 2026

For years, Switzerland has been a country where my wife and I like to go on holiday, especially to the canton of Graubünden. Not only for the beauty of the landscape and nature, but also for the metre gauge Rhätische Bahn. I think I do not need to explain what it means to see those trains running through the mountains, with the many tunnels and bridges. How they climb and descend without a rack, disappear into a tunnel, and then emerge many metres higher or lower remains a fascinating sight, especially sections of the Albula and the Bernina lines. It is wonderful to take a trip on the RhB or to spot the trains on the route during a hiking tour.

Building a layout on this theme had been on my wish list for years. For a long time, RhB models were only available in HOm, and mainly from Bemo. But a few years ago the Japanese company Kato also started to market RhB stock in 1:150 for use on N gauge track; this is compatible with their home market where the trains are 3'6" gauge.

In addition to Kato, MDS also started to offer locos and stock, and Pirata produce special editions based on the Kato models.

Since I had always modelled in 1:87, working in this smaller scale was a new challenge for me.

A windfall

During the construction of my previous layout, I was asked by my father if I was still interested in model railway stuff as a friend had just died and his family had material to dispose of. Often you get a box that has been in the attic for years with old track and some old locos and stock, sometimes already so rusty that you cannot do much with it. It had to be collected quickly because the house of the deceased had to be emptied. On the spot I was guided to a room and there my breath stopped for a moment – on a shelf was new track from Roco and Fleischmann, a brand new Roco Z21 DCC control system, and a decoder for the points. It turned out that just before his death, the person had purchased everything to build his own layout after his retirement. The family generously allowed me to take everything as long as it would be used properly. I promised them that it would be, and this model is dedicated to him.



Above
The whole of the scenic side of the layout.

Below
Ge4/4^{II} 622 Arosa in Hakone Tozan livery brings a *Glacier Express* set over the smaller viaduct towards the station.

First of all, I started collecting rolling stock from Kato, a few locos and wagons. I converted each loco to run digitally. Fortunately, this is very easy as Noch supply the necessities that can be replaced in the loco with a few actions.

The locos by MDS are available in various versions including digital with sound, which is what I went for. I also had a Kato loco converted in Germany by a specialist company so that it now also runs digitally with the right sound. Soon I had built up quite a collection, but I was still missing freight wagons. During the corona pandemic, no wagons were built by MDS and with great difficulty I was

able to get hold of a few from a dealer in Denmark. Production is now back and these wagons are available again.

Kato has a nice little coupling for the stock that adheres particularly well once they are secured. It is a nice close coupling that also looks very similar to the original. Because they are difficult to connect, I eventually opted for 3D-printed N gauge couplings from Paul Peeters. These are even closer coupled, are easy to replace for the existing Kato couplings, and click together easily due to the magnetic effect. The power of the magnet is also perfect, so that the vehicles remain well coupled.



Construction

The layout was made of 9mm plywood with reinforcement in the corners. It consists of two module boxes each 1.2m x 45cm with a height of 45cm. These are placed together to create a total length of 2.4m. At the back there are two small boxes each 1.2m x 15cm that serve as a storage yard.

The background, as with my other layouts, is curved at the back corners. This way, no straight lines are created and it gives a look of perfect depth. With this layout I did not choose an end plate at both ends of the layout, but it runs with the shape of the mountain on that side. This way you can also look into the layout from the sides.

The tops of the module boxes are demountable to allow access to the track during construction and later if there are any problems.

The module boxes are placed on legs that I copied from Fremo. The first module has two legs and a crossbar, and the other module has only one leg and is secured to the first. By mounting a crossbar, the whole thing is stable and stands without any problems. The storage yard boxes are then hung on the back and attached to the modules.

When the whole thing is in place, a skirt made of curtain fabric is fixed round the legs, attached to the module boxes, just above the ground.

Between the legs is a shelf for the Z21 and router, built into a case, for control of the layout and with power connection for the various elements such as lighting, sound, etc.

For the lighting over the layout, I used natural white LED tubes, with warm white LED strips at the front. On the front panel, two small LED display spotlights properly illuminate the corners.

The layout is easy to transport in the car with the rear seat folded down.

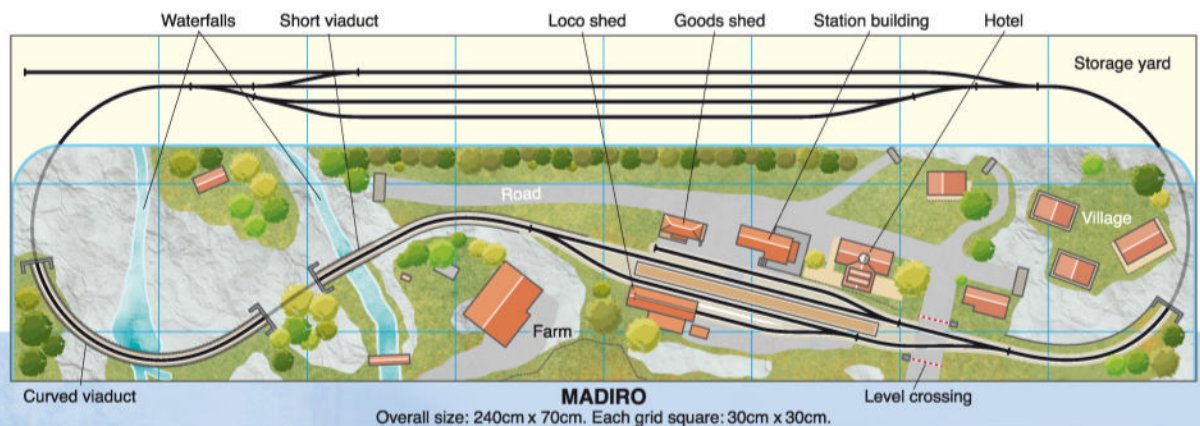


Track plan

The route is single track, just as in reality, with a passing loop at the station. At the station there is a siding to a small loco shed with a workshop, and a siding serving a small goods shed.

At the rear, the line splits into four stabling tracks and there is a short siding for spare rolling stock. There are six different train compositions, some of which run one after another. Four trains run in one direction and two in the other.

From the storage sidings, the train enters the scene on the left from a tunnel that ends directly on a curved viaduct. After this bridge, the train runs through a short tunnel and then runs over a short viaduct and a curve towards the station. After the station it continues over a level crossing and up a short climb to a tunnel that takes it back to the storage sidings. Here the train stops on its empty track and another train can leave. In this way, a varied presentation of various train compositions is provided for the viewer.



Below
Two of the popular
open observation wagons
attached to the rear
of a regional service.



All points at the front are controlled via a small tablet with the Z21 app. The points are linked to signals from Mafen that clearly indicate the position of the point by the red or green light. At the rear, two points are operated in the same way and the other trailing points are opened by the train itself. All the track is from Roco/Fleischmann. The points are worked from below by Conrad point motors.

Near the village is a small level crossing. The two barriers are slowly opened and closed by two servo motors under the board. A magnet under one coach of a train operates a reed contact so the servos are activated and the barriers close. After the train runs over another reed contact, the barriers open again. At the crossing there are two small indicators that also come from Mafen. The moment the reed contact is

activated, a sound module is also turned on and makes the well-known level crossing noise. This authentic sound was recorded at Bergün station and programmed into the sound module via the computer and a USB connection.

Landscape

Before I could start building the landscape, I glued a photo backscene onto the background hardboard sheets. I found the image on the internet when looking for panoramic photos of Graubünden.

For the base of the landscape, I used hard foam sheets that are easy to cut to size, glued together with wood glue until the right height is reached. Over this material I have worked out the shape of the mountains with Mifoshape.

Right
The station building.

Below
Ge4/4^{III} 642 Breil/Brigels
coasts into the station with
a Bernina Express set.



Mifoshape is a fine modelling powder that is mixed with water to form a paste. It is a beautiful and light alternative to plaster and has a longer processing time, allowing for detailed work to create realistic landscapes and rocks.

After the material has dried, the landscape can be provided with a basic colour. For this I use matt latex paint that is made with different colour pigments for the landscape or rocks.

After the base colour, the deep colour of the rocks is applied with a washing technique and further accents with powder paint. In places where the greenery will be added, the surface may or may not be made brown or green. Only when the colour accents have been applied does the whole thing get the natural look it needs.





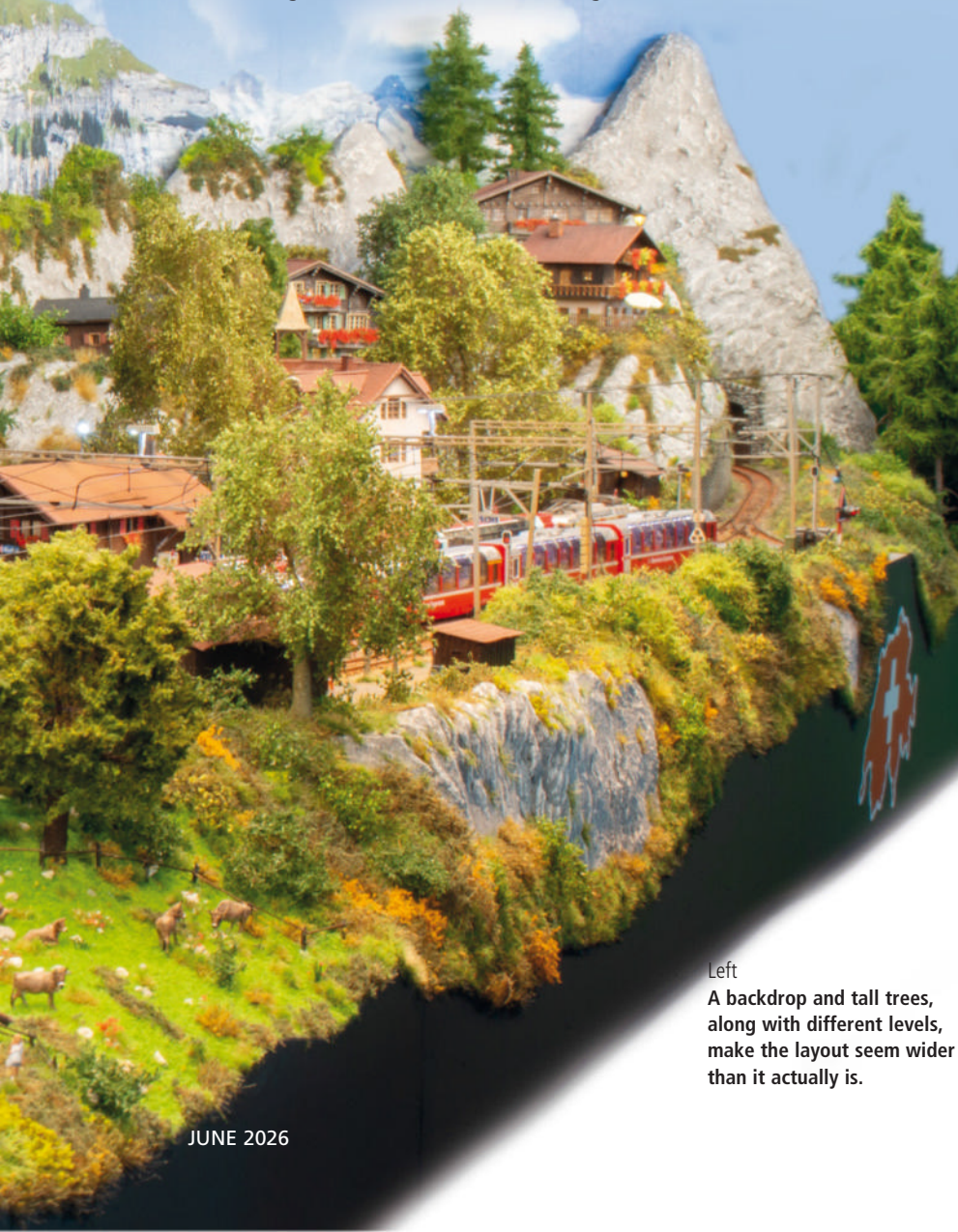
Above
The tunnel mouths were scratchbuilt from RhB drawings.



Above
The waterfalls and viaducts
are key features of the scenery.



Above
Ge4/4^{III} 642 Breil/Brigels and train in the station waiting for a cross.



Left
A backdrop and tall trees, along with different levels, make the layout seem wider than it actually is.

Tunnel portals were used in the mountains. Since I found all available tunnel portals too high, I made them myself from thin hard foam. On the basis of a size chart from the RhB, they were made exactly the right height.

The landscape also includes two waterfalls that merge under the two viaducts into a small river at the front of the layout. The waterfalls were made with cotton wool as a base over which a layer of Noch *Modellwasser* was applied for the watery and shimmering effect. The waterfall now has the white appearance you can see in reality when the water plunges down over the rocks.

The river was filled with MBZ water, a gel-like clear substance that you melt in the oven at 110°C and then pour into the watercourse. There it hardens and resembles water. This gel is then given a sealer as a finish combined with Noch model water to get a flow effect.

Working road vehicles

Through the landscape in the background there is a road that is equipped with a magnetic tape over which run two vehicles from the Faller Car-System. The standard bus from Faller has been modified and equipped with a body of a Swiss bus by Minis. The lorry is lettered for a Swiss transport company. The road runs up a slope behind the station and disappears into a tunnel. Inside the mountain there is a turning loop and after a short time the vehicle emerges from the tunnel and then runs back behind the station to a turning loop hidden under the village. Due to the magnetic tape used, the magnetic guide on the vehicle can float above the road without causing friction. The vehicles are charged with a plug and a transformer and then run for an average of about five hours.

The magnetic tape is concealed in the road by placing cardboard of the same thickness either side, sealing it with a smooth finish and Faller road paint. The weathering of the road was done with various colours of powder paint from Artitec.



Left
The loco shed houses a veteran Ge6/6 'Crocodile' which is now maintained by a group of volunteers.

Right
The ABe8/12 Allegra in white ABB livery represents the latest generation of rolling stock.

Scenery

After the basis of the layout was finished, the greenery could be started. I chose to set the scene in late summer, so that in addition to the greenery there are also some brownish spots to discover. For this I used different materials including grass mats, grass clumps, and shrubs from Martin Welberg and Lars op't Hof. I also use material from MiniNatur and Silhouette. By the right combination of colours and heights you get a realistic natural effect.

The trees come from various suppliers such as MBR, Elriwa, MiniNatur, Temu, and Unique. They are placed in such a way that they give a realistic impression of the natural appearance due to the various colours.

Structures and details

Of course, you also need appropriate buildings for a layout set on the RhB. Searching on line, I came across Modellbahn Werkstatt Wuppertal which produces a station representing Rueun in 1:160, along with a weighbridge. They also have several Swiss houses and chalets. In addition to these houses and the station, other buildings from Faller, MBZ, and Noch were used. Only wood and card laser-cut models have been used on the layout.

All structures are equipped with lighting in the form of small LEDs. The lamps along the road come from Faller and some small lamps in the village are by Temu.

There are also two figures that are equipped with a photo camera with a mini-LED. These flash at random by means of a small circuit board under the layout. There is also a Selecta product vending machine on the platform where the traveller can buy a snack or drink. This vending machine is also equipped with a small LED. The model is from Swissmodelrail from Switzerland, who also supply various other articles in the correct scale that are used on the layout, such as waste bins, ticket machine, benches, containers, RhB information column, RhB station clocks, and signs for not crossing the rails in different languages. A wide range to provide your station with all the necessary elements in the right way. Artitec products have also been used, such as the cabinets in the workshop.

The necessary figures come from Preiser, Noch, Kato, and Temu. The latter were used in all the coaches of the *Glacier Express* and the *Bernina Express*. Finally, there are also various animals to be seen, such as cows, chickens, ducks, dogs, and birds that mainly come from Geke van Petegem, Faller, and Preiser.

In addition to the self-driving cars, there are also several other cars from Minis and Busch. Some are equipped working front and rear lights.

There are also cyclists here and there on the layout to complete the picture, some of which are also equipped with small LEDs front and rear lights.

The terrace of the hotel is a good place to stay and the many tables are full of tourists and train enthusiasts. At the station there are day trippers, train fans, and walkers who use the station as a base for walking to, for example, the viewpoint at one of the viaducts. Hikers can therefore be found everywhere on the layout. The farm has also been designed as realistically as possible and is concealed in the landscape. There are beehives, a small rabbit hutch, a chicken coop, and agricultural vehicles.

By the loco shed at the front of the layout is an old Ge6/6 'Crocodile'. Until recently, there were no RhB Crocodiles available in 1:160 and I reverted to a static model from Atlas. This loco is maintained by a volunteer team which has nice accommodation with a workshop. Late in 2025, Kato finally released the long-awaited 'Crocodile', initially not with DCC sound. I bought one and had it fitted with a decoder to haul a tourist train. The loco is only 92mm long and runs very nicely.

The name

I had to come up with a name. After much thought, I decided to give the station a fictional name, but which sounded as if it could be in Graubünden. The name Madiro is composed of the first two letters of my wife MArianne's name, the first two letters of my own name DIger and our surname ROssel. It has a beautiful Swiss-Italian sound and many visitors have already asked me where the station is located.

Right
The level crossing is equipped with working lights and barriers.



Finally

The layout was finished at the end of 2024 and made its debut in March 2025 at the OntraXS! show in the railway museum in Utrecht. It was honoured with the OntraXS! Kids Award, chosen as favourite by younger visitors.

At exhibitions, we enjoy the visitors reactions as they discover the many details. There is even a snowman to be found in one of the forests!

If you would like to see the layout, keep an eye on our Facebook page and become a friend of *Madiro* to see at which exhibitions we will be with the layout. Invitations are already planned for Switzerland, Germany, France, and various exhibitions in The Netherlands.



Mike Carter created his original portable American HO layout to accommodate a collection of highly detailed structure kits.

Mill Falls

New England in the 1950s

Mill Falls is a fictitious mill town somewhere in New England. The layout's name is a play on words as it features several mills in the autumn (or Fall) besides an extensive area of waterfalls.

The layout was built way back in 2003. It was inspired by my love of making craftsman kits. In 2001 my wife bought me a limited edition kit from South River Model Works (SRMW). This depicted the Whitinsville Spinning Ring Company which was built on the Mumford River in the Blackstone Valley in 1826. The owner of South River Model Works is Bob Van Gelder. His day job was as an architect. The story goes that on his summer holidays he enjoyed touring New England on his Harley seeking inspiration for a new kit. He used to produce one kit a year in very limited numbers. The kits come with a comprehensive instruction book running to 96 pages. This book was essentially an intensive course in structure and diorama building.

When finished the kit made a complete diorama 2' by 1'. I decided to extend the waterfalls feature to include another SRMW kit, Thorndike Mills (a.k.a. Mill Falls Carpets). This also featured a waterfall so it seemed natural to combine the two. The main mill was based on the one in Thorndike and the wooden extension was based on another located in Spencer, both in south-central Massachusetts.

Another SRMW kit features on the layout – Currier & Sons Cabinet Makers.

The doyen of American limited edition structure kit manufacturers, George Sellios of Fine Scale Miniatures fame, is represented by the beautiful Stuffys Brewing Co. This features the brewery, a hotel, a newsagent, and a shoe-shine operation. These kits were a lesson in scratchbuilding as they essentially consist of a plan and lots of scale sized wood, plus details as castings. The water tower on the roof consists of over two hundred pieces of wood cut by hand!

Baseboards

Having made the kits, the question was what to do with them? The answer was to build a portable layout. Unfortunately, I am not that skilled at carpentry and while I was happy building my home layout – the *Sierra Nevada* (see CM June 2006) – this was something else entirely. I enlisted the help of friends Graham Gatehouse and Graeme Schrouder to build the baseboards and help with the electrics. The resulting baseboards have frames of 10cm by 2.5cm with attached legs.



Above

A pair of 'doodlebug' rail motors at the depot.

The station is a kit by Crow River Products of Crawford Notch depot in New Hampshire.

This side of Mill Falls Carpets are three Foscale kits – Gordo's Fried Chicken, Valley Coal Company, and the garage.

The scenic part of the layout consists of three boards 90cm wide by 55cm deep. The middle and right hand boards were designed to 'coffin up' (bolt together face to face using end boards) for transport as at the time we only had access to two small cars, a Corolla and a Polo. (My Toyota MR2 did not qualify as suitable layout transport!) Care was taken when placing the structures that the buildings did not clash with each other when brought together for transport.

The baseboards are very heavy but after more than forty exhibitions (and counting) they have stood the test of time.

The layout also has fiddle yards either side of the scenic section, both 120cm wide. The layout can be exhibited with both fiddle yards as a run through or with just one as a switching layout.

A large lighting pelmet completes the setup.





Above

The whole layout.

Below

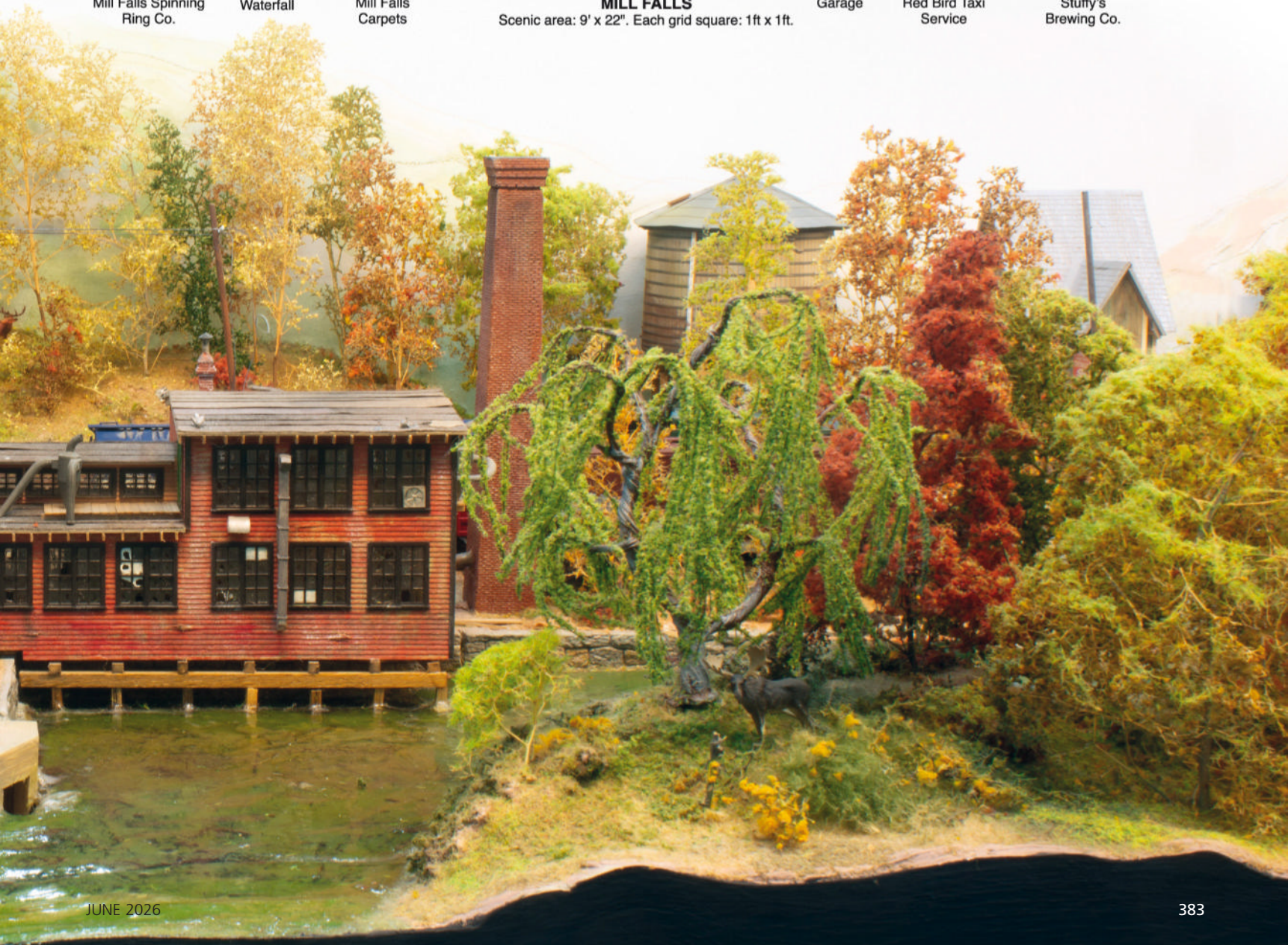
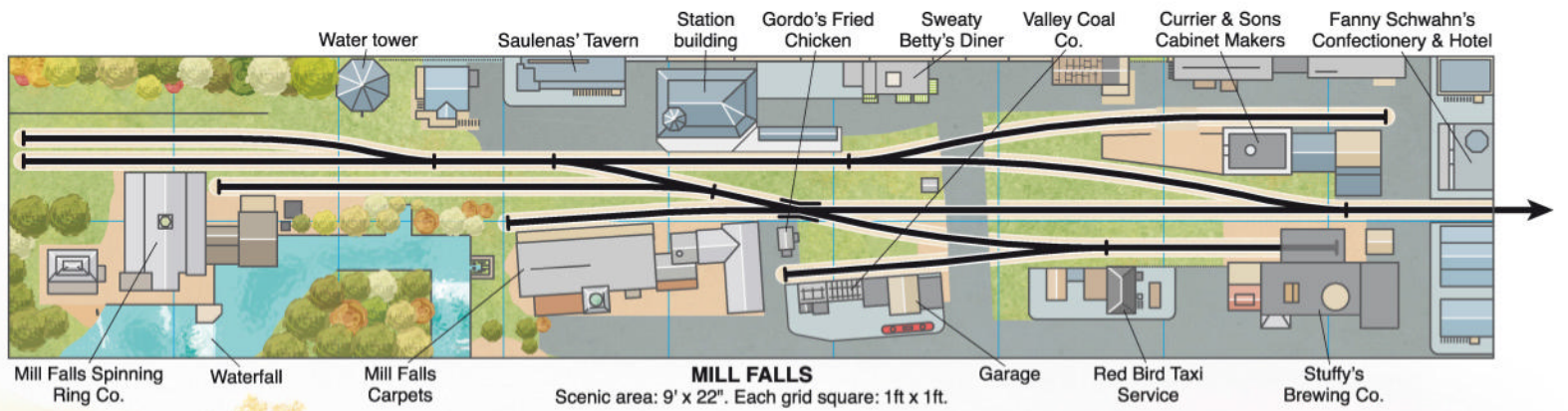
**The start of it all –
South River Model Works
(SRMW) kit for Whitinsville
Spinning Ring Company.**

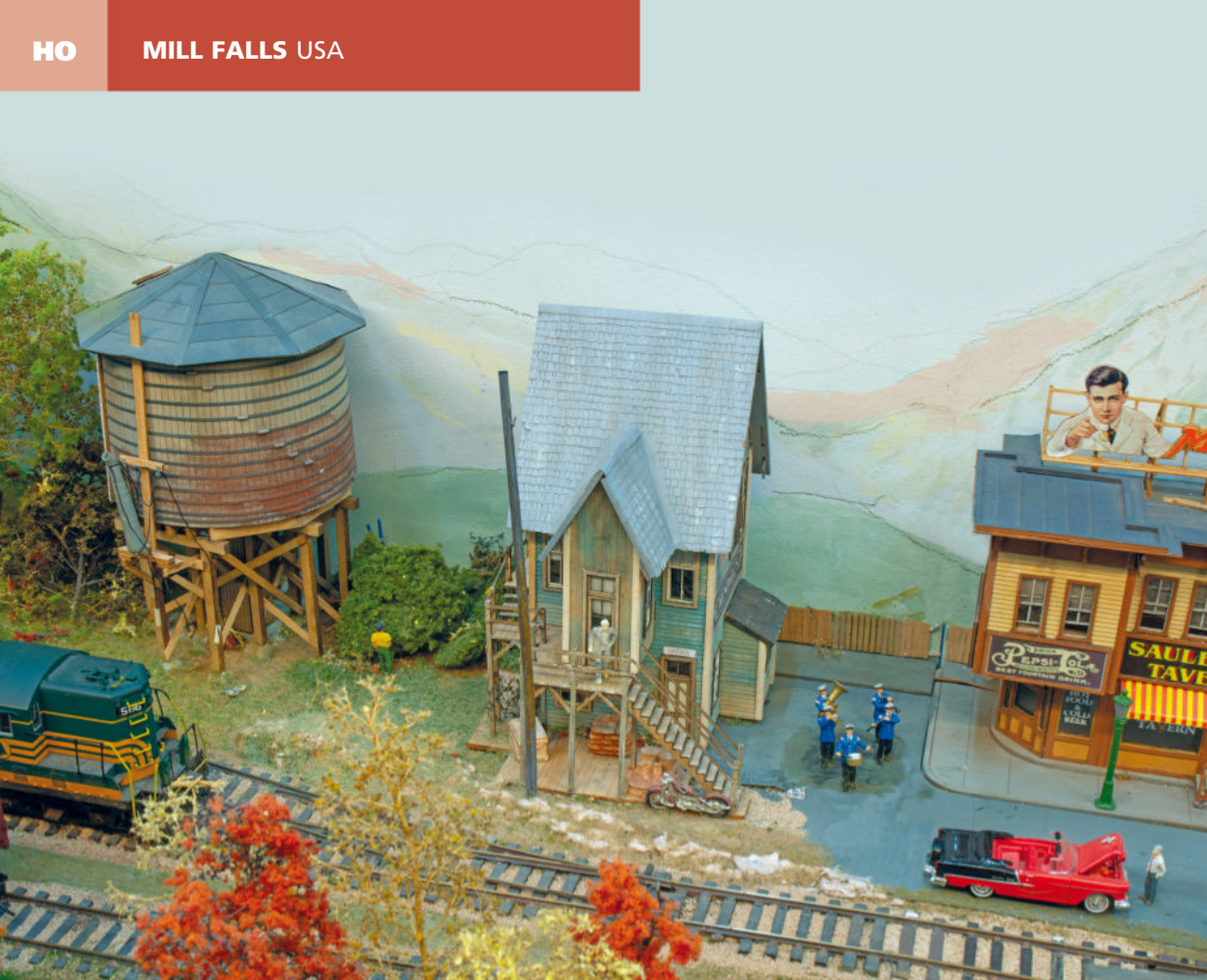
Track

The track layout was determined by placing the completed structures first and then adding spurs to the industries to form a satisfying shunting puzzle. Hidden magnets buried under the track together with Kadee couplers allow for hands-free switching.

All track is Peco code 100. There are five small radius points, one wye, and a double slip. The points are all fitted with Peco PL10 motors together with the Peco PL15 accessory switch. They have operated reliably for the last twenty-two years.







Above left
The water tower, Kendall's (a.k.a. Wicked Wanda's), and the Saulenas Tavern, both the latter by Bar Mills.

Above
Another SRMW kit, Thorndike Mills (a.k.a. Mill Falls Carpets). The main mill was based on one in Thorndike and the wooden extension on another in Spencer, both in south-central Massachusetts.

Left
The second waterfall.

Right
A Budd RDC provides the passenger service. To the right of the depot is another Bar Mills kit, Sweaty Betty's Diner. In the foreground, three Foscale kits – Gordo's Fried Chicken, Valley Coal Company, and the garage.





Left
Gordo's Fried Chicken
and adjacent amenity.

Right
Sweaty Betty's Diner.
Low relief flats front
the hand painted backscene.
The switch tower overlooks
the grade crossing.

Control

Graeme built a very nice control box with a track diagram for the reliable control of the points using DC. The rest of the layout is operated by DCC using a Digitrax DB150.

Animations

Features include a honky-tonk piano in the bar at Stuffy's Brewing Co, flashing crossing signals, a flashing taxi sign, and a road traffic accident.

Colour light signals by Atlas control the train movements.

Structures

Apart from the limited edition kits already mentioned, the layout is a something of a showcase for several of the best kit manufacturers in the USA. The station is a model of Crawford Notch depot in New Hampshire on the Conway Scenic Railway. The kit was by Crow River Products and included a cast hydrocal roof and base, resin walls, and architectural detail parts cast in metal. We discovered the kit in a local model shop in North Conway after visiting the Crawford Notch depot.

Below
The grade crossing allows
a view of passing trains
between the main buildings.

Right
Maine Central 0-6-0 #386
rolls through the yard
by the Red Bird Taxi Office.







Either side of the depot are three Bar Mills kits – Kendall's (a.k.a. Wicked Wanda's), the Saulenas Tavern, and Sweaty Betty's Diner.

To the right of Mill Falls Carpets are four out of production Foscale kits – Gordo's Fried Chicken, Valley Coal Company, the garage, and Red Bird Taxi Office.

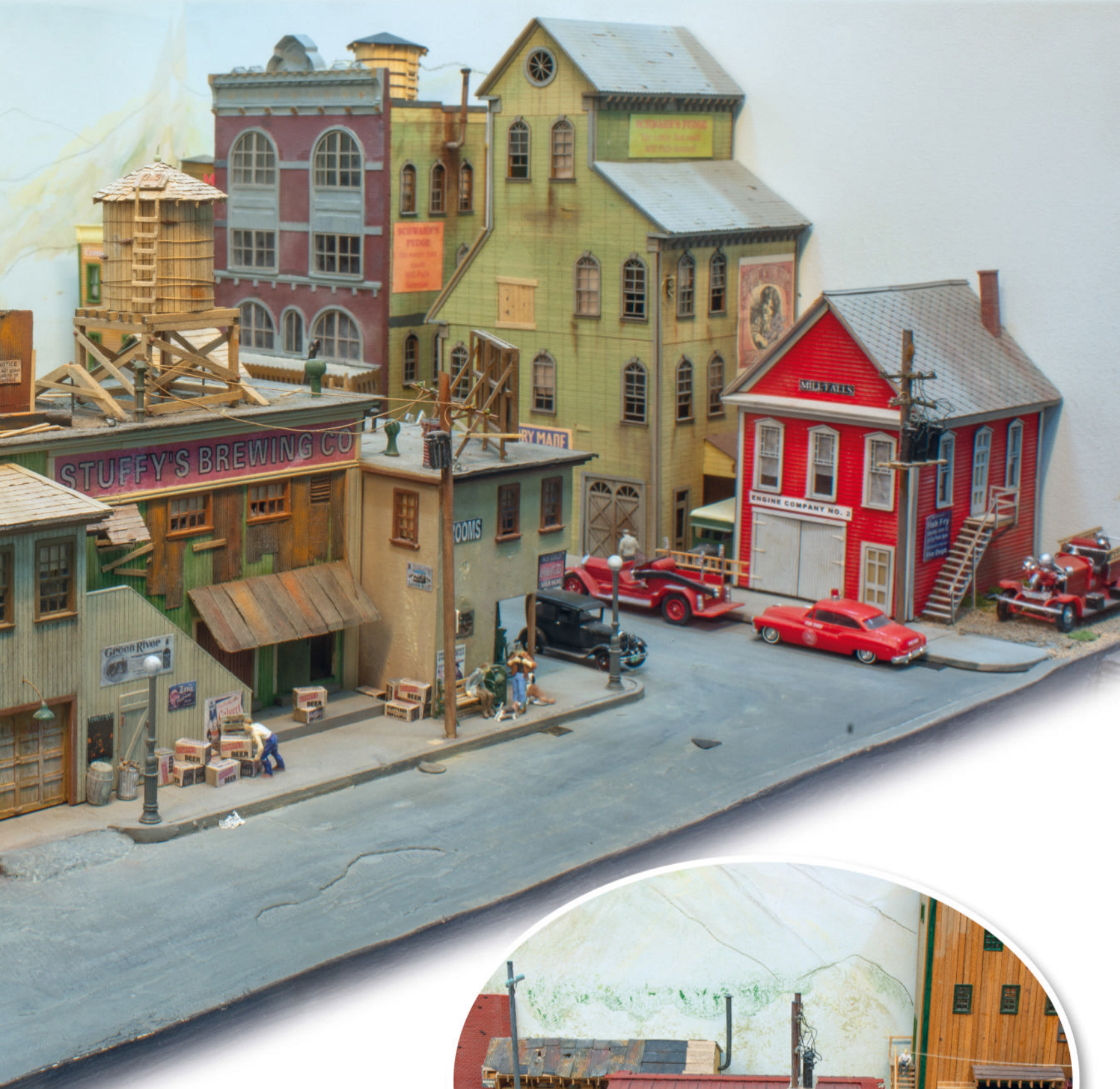
To the right of Stuffy's Brewery is a limited edition kit from

Master Creations – Fanny Schwahn's Confectionery and Hotel. Suffice to say this took a lot of patience before it was completed.

The old fire engines and a Model T Ford are out of production kits from Jordan.

The backscene is my attempt at hand painting. It is not too intrusive and once again has stood the test of time.

Above
Alco 2-6-0 #1358 arrives,
passing between
Currier & Sons Cabinet
Makers (another SRMW kit)
and Stuffy's Brewing Co.
(by Fine Scale Miniatures).



Stock

We operate the layout using a mixed fleet of steam and diesel locomotives with a New England heritage – Boston & Maine, Maine Central, and New Haven.

Passenger traffic is now mostly handled by 'doodlebug' rail motors and Budd RDCs.

All are equipped with sound decoders.

Above

Currier & Sons Cabinet Makers receive raw materials and ship finished product in box cars, which simplifies switching as the same vehicles serve both purposes.



Left
The local police are dealing with a road traffic accident.

Right
Next to the fire station,
by American Model Builders,
the hotel (brown building)
and green building
(Fanny Schwahn's)
are one limited edition kit
by Master Creations
and frame the exit track
to the fiddle yard.

Below
A street level view
of Stuffys Brewery
which features not only
the brewery but also
a hotel, a newsagent,
and a shoe-shine operation.
The grade crossing
is protected by
flashing lights.

Photographs by the editor.



Conclusion

The layout was a joy to build and has been fun to operate. It also helped to maintain my interest in American model railroading when the large *Sierra Nevada* layout had to be dismantled due to a house move. That is gradually being reinstated in the new house, but it is a slow process, not least because in the meanwhile I built another American exhibition layout (*Red Hook Bay*, CM November 2014 and American special) and became interested in Norwegian HO (*Norge*, CM May and June 2020), Swiss N (*Allegra*, CM February 2025), and Japanese N (watch this space!), not to mention British

OO and OO9! This may to some extent explain why it has taken so long to get round to an article on *Mill Falls*!

Exhibition managers might like to know that the layout can be conveyed in one car and operated by just two people, usually myself and my wife. However, we now have six different layouts on the circuit, so we try to limit overall outings to around twelve a year.

The next appearance for *Mills Falls* is due to be at the Mendip show in Shepton Mallet on Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th June.



Philip Roberts introduces his home layout, a Rhine side scene set in Epoch IV.

Photographs by the author.

Borch-am-Rhein

Rails through the vines





Above
At Borch-am-Rhein station
a local hauled by a BR140
is held to allow a BR110
to overtake with an express.

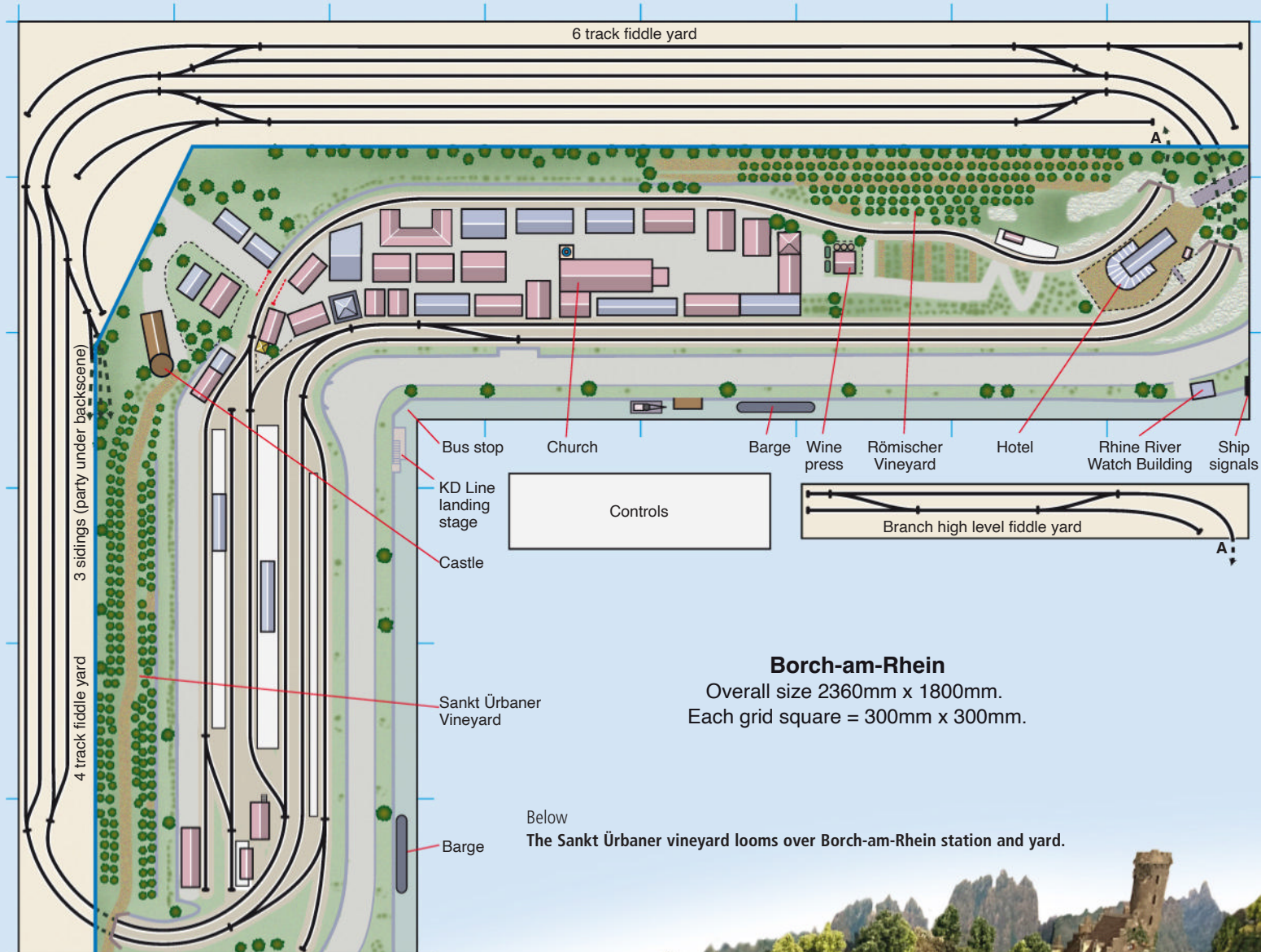


Left
A BR112 emerges from
the tunnel and passes the
Rhine River Commission
watch tower and associated
Wahrschau (light signals)
for shipping.

The principal motivations for building this layout were that I like railways, and that I am also quite partial to a glass of wine! Probably more significantly, I was fortunate enough to live and work in West Germany for several years during the 1980s whilst serving in the Royal Air Force. This gave me a perfect opportunity to travel widely throughout Germany and other parts of Europe – and to sample the odd glass of wine or two along the way! My layout is based firmly on a Rhine-side scene from the late 1980s (Epoch IV) and it does incorporate a lot of vines – you have to be a wine devotee to spend as long as I have making vines in N!

The location is fictional but it loosely based on some favourite haunts in the Rhine Valley at Boppard and Bacharach – hence the name that was supposed to be an amalgam of the two. The branch leaving the mainline at Boppard (for Buchholz and Emmelshausen) gave the idea for the model, albeit the gradient on the model is probably a little steeper than the 1 in 16.4 on the real thing.

My memories of being in the Rhine gorge between Koblenz and Bingen (on the 'left' bank) or Rüdesheim on the opposite shore, and to a certain extent also the Mosel Valley, were of seeing a huge mixture of long-distance (often named) expresses, inter-regional, local stopping services, and freight traffic that just kept coming and, in the case of the Rhine, on both sides of the river at once. Add the river traffic and this was a marvellous place for any transport enthusiast to sit and watch the world go by!



Borch-am-Rhein

Overall size 2360mm x 1800mm.
Each grid square = 300mm x 300mm.

Below

The Sankt Ürbaner vineyard looms over Borch-am-Rhein station and yard.





Having visited again recently it is still fascinating even if there are far fewer long-distance express trains as most of these are now ICE services that use the *Neubaustrecke* to reduce journey times.

Planning and construction

Although I have been an N gauge modeller for over forty years, and had amassed quite a lot of rolling stock and scenery over the period since my time living in Germany, it was a move of house in 2014 and subsequent retirement that provided the opportunity and, more importantly, the space to build something new that would meet my desire to run reasonable length trains in a Rhine-side setting.

Planning began in earnest with the creation of 'mood boards' to identify what sort of scenes I wanted to create; this was not to be a precise replica of any particular location but I did want to capture the feel and mood of Germany in the 1980s, and I like to think that I have achieved that in my model.

As ever, ambition and space inevitably result in compromises at the design stage, and although I was going to build this layout in a large spare bedroom, I also had in mind that it may have to fit into a 6' x 8' garden shed if we had to move house in the future. As a consequence, I decided that I would use maximum radius curves to achieve the double track layout that I desired and to do this I would

use Peco Setrack at each end where the tracks would disappear into conveniently sited tunnel mouths. This also limited the coach lengths that could be accommodated – hence my fleet of Minitrix coaches which at 136-140mm long negotiate the curves satisfactorily whereas longer, and more accurate, stock at 165mm would not work. Considerable use was made of rolls of lining paper to draw out precisely what would go where, and this proved to be time well spent.

Above
A BR151 rumbles though with a long train of hoppers as a BR260 begins to climb the branch with a freight.

Below
A measurement railcar stabled near the signal box.



Right

The level crossing at the start of the branch line has been fitted with working barriers and warning lights.

The other compromise was in regard to the branch line, where my aim was to make the gradient not too steep but steep enough to gain enough height to create a branch fiddle yard at high level above the main six track fiddle yard and have enough room to deal with derailed stock or sticking points within the running distance that was available. As a consequence, the branch is limited to shuttle services by VT98 Uerdingen railbuses and short freights hauled by BR212 diesels (sometimes in pairs). It still provides considerable operational interest.

The two baseboards (180cm x 80cm and 160cm x 80cm) are constructed in the traditional manner using 2"x 1" frames topped with ½" ply. The base board height is set at 84cm which makes for a good viewing height when seated and ease of access when installing wiring.

All running surfaces were covered with cork sheet spray painted with track grime before track laying commenced.



Below

Looking down the long side of the layout with the branch line climbing on the left and the main line on the right.



Scenery

The scenery was mostly built using sheets of polystyrene cut with a hot-wire cutter and glued in place with copious quantities of PVA glue. This was covered with even more copious quantities of Polyfilla that was all painted green with a household emulsion.

Cork bark was used to create the rock faces at the right-hand end of the layout and everything was given an enhancement of paint, flock powders, and purchased stick-on grass clumps and small bushes. I have used many a tube of UHU-glue in my time!

The backscenes were made from my own photographs of the Rhine that I took to my local Office World store (which existed at the time!) and got them to enlarge and print for me.

The vines are at the heart of the layout and have taken a considerable amount of time to build – all 250 of them, with at least two strands each! I quickly came to the conclusion that buying ready-made vines would be prohibitively expensive and would not be practical, so I needed to identify a cheaper home-made alternative. I experimented with numerous different construction methods before alighting on the one used. Pre-painted and cut-off cocktail sticks (retaining the pointy bit at one end) are pushed into the polystyrene hillsides as required and pre-painted sewing pins are located to provide the intermediate supports for the wires that carry the vines. Each length of vine is a piece of thin green garden wire (available on rolls at all garden centres) rolled flat and straight, roughened using a file to get better glue adhesion, and then painted with dilute PVA before being rolled in trays of various scatter material. These are allowed to dry and then cut to length as required and attached to the cocktail end sticks using UHU glue. Intervening support pins can then be pushed into place to support loaded vines (and keep them aligned), or used to show where empty vines are waiting to be re-planted. As occurs in the real world, various tracks cut through the vines that tend to occupy every square metre of ground, and appropriate figures are at work.



Below

A contrast in passenger services –
a 103-hauled express on the main
and a BR798 railbus on the branch.
Note the empty posts
among the vines.



I have labelled my two vineyards with letters set onto stone walls – Römischer (as there is evidence of wine growing in the region as far back as Roman times) and Sankt Urbaner (as St. Urbanus is the patron saint of wine, winegrowers, and coopers!). A wine press sits on the outskirts of the village ready to process the grapes.

Trees are the other key aspect of the layout – over two hundred of them. The pine trees at the top of the hills are used to provide some perspective and to create a scenic break against the plain blue sky backscene. Deciduous trees

are used lower down the hillsides, in the house gardens, and on the riverside promenade. The pine trees I salvaged from previous layouts but the deciduous ones are from the Gaugemaster range – my local model shop in West Sussex.

The buildings come from a wide variety of the usual sources (Noch, Kibri, Vollmer, etc.) but have been positioned to create the feel of some of the Rhineland villages with packed squares and very narrow streets. A suitable Rhineland castle commands the high ground above the Bahnhof. The unusual river watchtower is used by the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) which monitors shipping traffic and provides information to river craft using the (scratchbuilt) *Wahrschau* warning boards that give an indication of approaching vessels on some of the tight river bends. The building was originally a kit for a level crossing keeper's house.

The river surface was spread with Polyfilla and smoothed to create the effect of small waves, painted olive green, and then covered with several coats of gloss varnish. Cork bark, small stones, and twigs decorate the bank.

The three larger boats are all assembled from the excellent Artitec range of kits.

There are over 250 figures on the layout, many from the Noch and Preiser ranges.

I am gradually adding passengers and interior detail to all my coaching stock.

Track and electrics

Track is almost all Peco code 80 flexible or Setrack (for the end curves, as described earlier) painted and ballasted using tried and tested methods in the scenic areas – a time-consuming and tedious process but definitely worth it for the finished effect. The track is detailed with dummy signalling magnets and detector panels from DM Models.

Above

A BR151 with hoppers passes a BR112 hauling an express.

Above right

Essential work is under way on the river wall as a BR151 rolls by with a train of vans.

Left

The KD-Line landing stage is conveniently located for both the bus stop and the railway station.



Right

The modern Rheingold complete with the famous dome observation coach races through behind a 103 as a 798 diesel railcar climbs the branch line through the vineyard above. The tank transporters slowing up road traffic should not bother the camper vans in the layby as their occupants enjoy a picnic by the river.



The electrics are 'old fashioned' DC provided by three Gaugemaster controllers supplied by three independent transformers utilising twenty-one isolated track sections that are operated by miniature toggle switches on the control panel.

There are some thirty-five motorised points with below-surface motors in the scenic areas and above-board mounted motors in the fiddle yards, all routed through a Gaugemaster Capacitor Discharge Unit and controlled by a bank of Hornby passing-contact switches, with many operating in pairs for route selection.

There are eighteen Viessmann colour light signals (many built from kits to keep the cost down), again controlled from a bank of Hornby switches with Vorsignals slaved to the associated Haupt or Block Signal. The German Railway Society publishes a number of excellent publications including two volumes entitled *The German Signalling Guide - Colour Light Signalling* and *Auxiliary Railway Signalling in West and East Germany* – these were really helpful in trying to make the signalling and trackside signage as realistic as possible. These can be purchased on-line and you do not have to be a member of the GRS.

The non-working catenary uses Arnold masts and towers that have been detailed with suspension wires and hangers and appropriate signage. Flexible black thread has replaced the original rubber thread from Arnold which perishes over time. The hangers were made from thin wire bent into shape on a former using track pins mounted in a small wooden block with the pin heads then removed. Arnold catenary signage has been applied as appropriate.

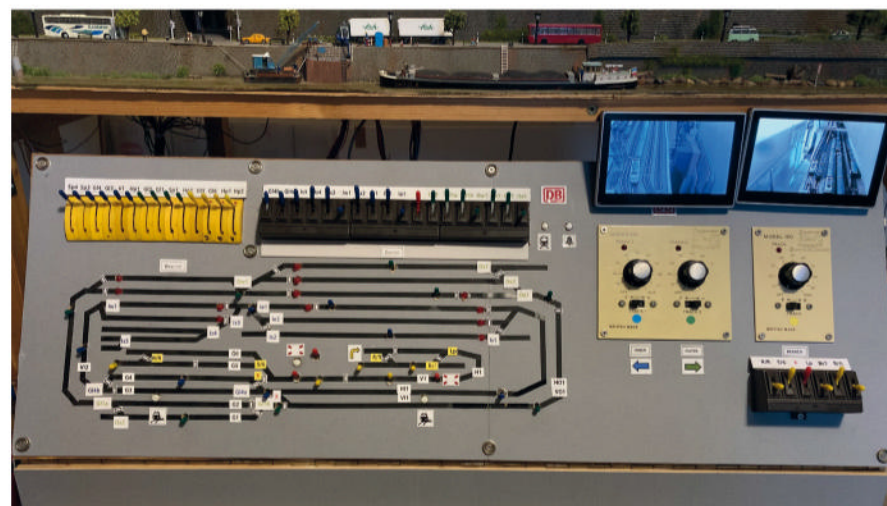
The control panel was designed with the option to have track occupancy lights fed from infra-red detectors in the fiddle yard, however, the purchase of two 1.5v car reversing cameras with 4" screens helpfully removed the requirement for twelve more sets of wiring! The two cameras are positioned at right angles to each other and provide good visibility of both rear fiddle yards so that layout can be operated from the front.

The control panel is mounted on a storage box with castors such that it could be rotated through 180° and operated from the rear of the layout if necessary. The cable connections at the rear have been left sufficiently long to facilitate this if it were ever required – it has been not so far!



Above
**The watch tower
and gate to the old town.**

Below
The control panel.



Sound is provided by three separate sound modules – one from ATV that provides two-tone horn sounds in mini speakers fitted under the baseboard (one under the station area and one adjacent to the main Blocksignal controlling entry on the southbound track) and a third speaker for the level crossing bells on the branch. Two further Noch sound module produce the bells for the church in the main square and a station module produces a set of appropriate sounds for the Bahnhof area (station announcements, two-tone horns, doors closing, whistles, etc.). The level crossing at the start of the branch has working lights, bells, and moving barriers all of which are controlled independently – mainly because my grandson challenged me to make them work! This was achieved, much to his delight and mine, by using two miniature servo motors with a control board from Heathcote Electronics with thin jewellery chain connected to the original, non-working, Faller level crossing barriers.

Operation

There are five passing loops in each direction in the rear main line storage yards, all long enough to hold the fixed train sets that operate on the layout – generally a loco and five coaches or ten to thirteen wagons.



Above
A ride on the branch line offers scenic views. A BR798 rail bus climbs the branch line through the Römischer vineyard as a tractor and trailer deliver grapes to the wine press.

In addition there are extra sidings on both the up and down main lines, while the branch yard has two tracks and a headshunt.

The layout is operated with sixteen different consists that cover the spectrum of IC, Inter-Regio, local stopping services and freight services. In addition a small number of covered, open, and flat wagons provide for the agricultural and viniculture products that are carried on the branch together with passenger services provided by two DB VT98 railbuses.

A steam special, using a Fleischmann BR83 and a rake of vintage Arnold 'Rheingold' coaches, provides added interest as it brings excursions to Borch-am-Rhein to service charter trips on the Köln-Düsseldorfer Line cruise ship *Loreley*. A subway connects the Bahnhof to the bus station and the KD-Line landing stage.

Two maintenance sets, one powered by a vintage Roco BR144.5 electric pulling a rake of gravel hoppers and flat trucks, and two electric railcars are deployed as and when required to add variety.

Trains operate in a sequence that effectively requires block control through each of the signals as trains shuffle to the next section as it becomes clear. The branch runs a regular shuttle, interspersed by short freights. Passenger services on

the branch halt at the hotel station, which also makes a good starting point for walks among the vines.

As a nod to the Cold War period, I have one train of Bundeswehr vehicles pulled by a BR218 diesel in ocean blue/beige and a convoy of road vehicles made up of British long wheelbase Land Rovers (from the Oxford Diecast range) escorted by two Royal Military Police short wheelbase Land Rovers, and a couple of Bundeswehr tracked vehicles on DAF low-loaders escorted by the Polizei, as they are a bit wide for the narrow roads! It all brought back many memories from my days in the armed services!

Rolling stock

The stock is the usual combination of Roco, Fleischmann, Arnold, and Minitrix, with some more recent wagon types produced by DM Models in Germany. Some of the older stock was acquired secondhand at exhibitions in Germany in the 1980s, and much was purchased secondhand on-line in order to make up the particular rakes of coaches and wagons that I wanted. As a consequence, quite a bit of the stock is now getting on for forty years old – and some of the locomotives still run as well now as they did when new! If only the same could be said of me ...



Coaches have passengers and interiors appropriate to the type of carriage. This is an ongoing process as it is quite time consuming, and to date I am about half-way through my fleet. I have also experimented with various forms of corridor connections that have included the concertina-folded black paper, cut carefully to size, and various forms of black foam or sponge. The challenge is in getting something flexible enough to negotiate fairly tight curves and stiff enough to hold its shape but not so stiff that the edges catch and force the coach out of alignment on sharp curves. I now only lightly glue one end to the carriage pairs and this helps the ease of movement. It would be great if one of the manufacturers would find a workable solution, as without corridor connections coaching stock formations do not look very realistic in my view.

Almost all of my stock is lightly weathered and, if I am really honest, I was initially very reluctant to try this. However, the transformation is, I think, considerable and the task is nowhere near as daunting as I had feared. I used a combination of track grime or brown Humbrol paints usually dry brushed on with patches of various shades of ochre, rust, or brown. This was coupled with the liberal use of weathering powders (in my case I used soft pastels that I bought in a high street newsagents (what used to be WHSmith), filed over a tray with an emery board/nail file to create a small pot of fine powder that I then applied using a soft brush. Matt varnish was then applied including to the roofs of all my stock and the finished effect I found very pleasing.

Future

The layout has taken nearly seven years from inception to reach its current state. I retired part way through this period and this enabled me to devote more time to the construction. Part of this period was interrupted by the COVID pandemic and the construction provided a very useful diversion during lockdown. I spent a lot of time before work actually started in planning – time which proved to be well spent.

I think I have succeeded in capturing the mood of the Rhine Valley in the 1980s and this is very satisfying from a personal perspective.

There is no doubt that the construction and operation has given me much pleasure and I hope I have inspired my grandson to have an interest in railways as a consequence of my enthusiasm for the hobby.

As ever, the layout is never fully finished and I am still adding detail even as we are contemplating moving house and down-sizing, so the layout has probably reached the end of its life.

Left

The hilltop hotel is noted for the views over the valley.



CONTINENTAL MODELLER

Below

Two BR261 0-6-0 diesels double head a freight up the branch passing the halt which serves the nearby hotel as a BR218 brings a military train along the main line. At least the train does not require a police escort ...



Robert Barnard presents an impression of a French metre gauge *secondaire* modelled in 1:100. It has been invited to the FFMF Fédérail salon in Les Herbiers, Vendée, France, in June.

Photographs and plan by the author.

Saint-Trojan-les-Bains

A small coastal terminus in Charente-Maritime

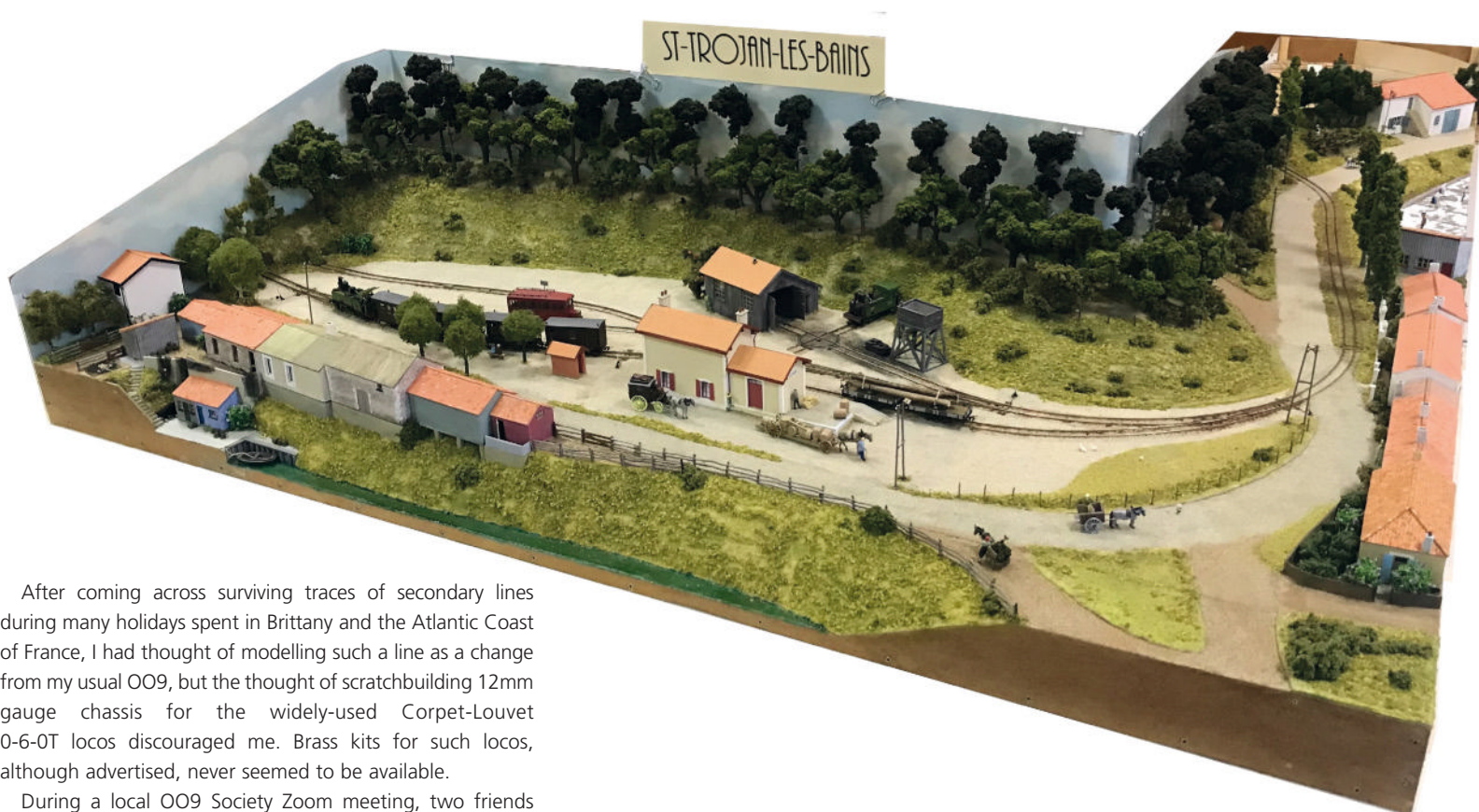
Choice of scale

Models of 3' and metre gauge lines have remained largely the domain of scratchbuilders, due to limited commercial support for 12mm gauge (needed to model these lines in 1:76 or 1:87 scale respectively) and hence few ready-to-run chassis. There are some 3D-printed body shells based on 3' and metre gauge prototypes, shrunk (with

varying degrees of success) to suit OO9 modellers. Paul Titmuss has made an effort to make 12mm gauge modelling easier, commissioning 3D-printed bodies for Clogher Valley and Côtes-du-Nord tram locomotives, and diesels, to run on Halling 12mm gauge chassis. Recently, REE have marketed ready-to-run 1:87 scale models of French prototypes, previously mostly the preserve of specialist kits.

Below
EC 030T No.22 has arrived
at Saint-Trojan station.





After coming across surviving traces of secondary lines during many holidays spent in Brittany and the Atlantic Coast of France, I had thought of modelling such a line as a change from my usual OO9, but the thought of scratchbuilding 12mm gauge chassis for the widely-used Corpet-Louvet 0-6-0T locos discouraged me. Brass kits for such locos, although advertised, never seemed to be available.

During a local OO9 Society Zoom meeting, two friends discussed their experiences modelling Isle of Man and Irish 3' gauge prototypes in TTn3 (i.e. 3mm to the foot, 1:101, on 9mm gauge track). I began wondering about French metre gauge on 9mm gauge track. For a Corpet-Louvet, I knew that an outside-cylinder 0-6-0 with connecting rods driving the rear wheels was produced in N by both Fleischmann and Roco, as I had used these mechanisms for OO9.

The correct scale for metre gauge on 9mm track would be 1:111 – not a standard modelling scale. The closest common scales were 1:101 (British TT3, 3mm/ft) or 1:120 (Continental TT). I discovered a range of French metre gauge 3D-printed designs produced by Simon Dawson (www.rue-d-etropal.com) in various scales including 1:100 – which of course makes it very easy to make models from dimensioned metric drawings. In this scale, metre gauge track should be 10mm gauge, but I decided I could use 9mm and tolerate the error.

At the time, 3D-prints of Simon's designs were available from Recreation21 on Shapeways. Following the demise of that, I see the (proven) design files can now be inexpensively downloaded via www.cults3d.com for home printing.

Above

A general view of the layout. LED strip lighting will be added for exhibitions.

I would sum up the scale as having stock similar in size to OO9/HOe industrial vehicles running on a layout with smaller buildings and figures! But, to my eyes, it looks 'right'.

Choosing a prototype

I originally thought of recreating an impression of a French line, rather than aiming for absolute detail. This was because I knew less about these lines than I have picked up about British lines I have modelled. However, I am always drawn to model an actual prototype.

Rather than one of the better-known French secondary networks like the Réseau Breton, Vivarais, or Corrèze, I fancied different scenic challenges, and chose the Économiques des Charentes (EC) line on the island of Oléron, a place I had often visited during holidays in Charente-Maritime. This offered the possibility of a model showing a line passing typical Charentais cottages, salt marshes, oyster beds, and salt pans. My choice was probably influenced by the impracticality of visiting France during the two years of Covid lockdowns and restrictions when I was thinking about this project.

Further research revealed several sources of information and photographs, including:

- the prototype and modelling discussion groups passion-metrique.net and gemme.org/forum
- FACS www.facs-patrimoine-ferroviaire.fr
- The Industrial Railway Society irsociety.co.uk for information about Corpet-Louvet locomotives;
- YouTube videos of other rural lines like the Corrèze in the 1950s;
- extremely helpful e-mail correspondence with experts on the EC lines, including Patrick Deludin in France and Malcolm Ravensdale in the UK;
- books on the EC lines in Oléron and Ré (see references);
- vintage postcards from the 1900s onwards, good scans of which can be found on line. I found out many details from these cards, although they cannot always be trusted – publishers often retouched details they did not like;

Below

Saint-Trojan station at a busy moment in the early 1900s.





Above
The loco runs round its train.
A horse bus waits
outside the station.

- the Institut National de l'Information Géographique et Forestière site *Remonter le Temps* (<https://remonterletemps.ign.fr>) allows comparison between modern maps and old maps or aerial photographs. Much of the route of the EC lines can be traced on 1950s aerial photographs, although many pre-WW2 maps have been lost;

- the website <http://archeoferroviaire.free.fr> shows a map of all lines in a *département* and the trace of each line overlaid on a modern open-source map, which helps with discovering remains on the ground.

Some understanding of written French is helpful in using these sources, but on-line translation software can assist, both in understanding text and in posing questions for experts on forums.

Below
The loco is turned. It is
a tight fit on the turntable.



Having found photographs of the Oléron line from these sources, I created a database of nearly two hundred images of the line and its immediate surroundings, during its life and since closure. I have referenced these images by their location along the route, so that I can find images of a particular place easily when required.

I adopted a step-by-step approach to creating a model, including:

- selecting a couple of possible Oléron locations;
- placing an initial order for some of the Recreation21 3D-prints – a Corpet-Louvet body, TAM (Tramway des Alpes Maritimes) coaches, and a van – to assess their quality and suitability;
- acquiring an appropriate chassis for the first loco;
- finishing these initial models without major enhancements to assess their suitability;
- planning a second tranche of models, including more drastic modifications to the loco, scratchbuilding a *fourgon* (luggage/guards van), and detailing the other rolling stock;
- building a 'photo plank' to represent a section of line, to test the scenic approaches.

These steps went well, so I decided to carry on and build a layout.

History

The large islands of Ré and Oléron lie off the west coast of France in the Charente region (now part of Nouvelle Aquitaine). Both can now be reached via long road bridges.

Oléron, the more southerly, was very remote until Jacques Bouineau started regular sailing boat services between the island (the ports of Le-Château d'Oléron or Boyardville) and the mainland (Le Chapus or La Rochelle) in 1841.

In 1889, a branch of the standard gauge État railway system finally reached Le Chapus, by which time local mayor



Above
The crew prepare to depart but some passengers remain on a bench before boarding.

had introduced more frequent steamboat services to the island. The rail and boat connections stimulated commercial production of salt, oysters, and mussels, as well as wine, brandy, and onions. Better connections also brought affluent holidaymakers, and the fishing village of Saint-Trojan in particular developed as a health resort offering sea bathing and sea-water therapies. Transport of farm produce from the interior of the island remained poor, but once *économique* railway lines had been authorised in the Charente mainland and on the neighbouring island of Ré, a proposal for a railway the length of Oléron was accepted.

The 41km system with twenty-eight stations or halts was completed in 1904, after the concession to build and operate it for 60 years had been awarded to the Compagnie des Chemins de Fer Économiques des Charentes (shortened to EC), a part of the Groupe Jeancard which already ran similar lines on the mainland and the Île de Ré, as well as lines in other areas, such as Morbihan in southern Brittany.

The Oléron line ran from Saint-Trojan at the south of the island via Le-Château d'Oléron (where a triangle allowed trains to either run on to the quayside and reverse, or to pass by stopping at halts at the fortified town's two principal gates), and then north via the large town of Saint-Pierre (where the line's workshops were located) and Sauzelle to Saint-Denis. A branch ran from Sauzelle to the port of Boyardville. There were few significant structures, gradients, or earthworks, and the track was ballasted with sand from the island's dunes.

Five EC Corpet-Louvet 14.5T locos were used on the island at any time. Stock for four passenger trains, each with one first/second class and two second class coaches and a post/luggage van was provided, along with thirty-eight wagons (van, open, and flat). Initially four services per day ran

between Saint-Trojan and Saint-Denis, with another three services between Saint-Pierre and Boyardville. The Great War saw services reduced, and they were not fully restored after 1918 due to the advent of motor bus services and reliable road freight transport.

The line was closed in stages from 1932 onwards. Much of the track was lifted by the end of the Second World War, although part of the Saint-Trojan line was in use until 1949 carrying materials for a new car ferry landing stage.

With minimal earthworks, and after development on the island, little of the line is still visible – Saint-Pierre station currently houses a surfing academy, Boyardville station is a private house, and the waiting shelters at the halts of Porte de Dolus and La Chevalerie still exist, the latter having been restored some years ago. Parts of the trackbed are now cycle paths. Saint-Trojan station site lies beneath a modern commercial development, which used to house a *crêperie* where we often enjoyed lunches during our family holidays in the area.

The layout

Stations and halts on French wayside tramways were usually quite standardised, and may not make visually interesting models, as they often lay alongside more-or-less straight roads. Space constraints suggested a terminus-to-fiddle-yard layout. The Oléron line had four termini: Le Château with its triangle would be too large, while Saint-Denis and Boyardville were very simple, although quay extensions at both would have offered scenic possibilities. Saint-Trojan, however, seemed just right. This proved to be a fortuitous choice, as there are more old postcards showing this station and its surroundings than any other, because it was an early tourist destination.



The line approached the town along the roadside, before crossing the road and curving sharply to enter the station, whose tracks were curved to fit in the area between forested sand dunes and the town's harbour, roads, and buildings.

As well as a combined station building and goods shed, Saint-Trojan had a weighbridge, a small loco shed with overnight crew accommodation, a water tank, and a turntable – EC engines generally ran chimney-first, except returning from Boyardville, which had no turntable.

The station is built on a 1200mm x 450mm piece of 50mm thick cavity wall insulation foam board, framed with 3mm MDF supported by 10mm x 12mm stripwood. The board was fixed into the frame using a hot glue gun. The station baseboard weighed only 1.7kg before track and scenery were added.

The layout uses Peco OO9 code 80 'Irregular Sleepers' track, the excessive rail depth being hidden by deep ballasting. Peco OO9 12" radius and Y Electrofrog points are used where trains are hauled or propelled, with two 9" radius Setrack points where only light engines run. The station king points are Peco N gauge Setrack curved points, which have a very long plastic crossing where short wheelbase locos could stall. The flangeways and wing rails were covered with 0.075mm thick nickel-silver sheet, shaped, glued in place, and soldered to the adjoining rails. Locomotives run smoothly through these points without any noticeable bump over the metal shim, so the other Setrack points were similarly modified.

As the actual line was ballasted with sand, fine beach sand was used on the model, held in place by diluted PVA glue. The ground beside the tracks is built up above sleeper level, the ballast covering the sleeper ends. A special scraper was moved along the rails to clear any sand from the flangeways

before the glue hardened. No check rails are provided where roads cross the line. This is correct for the period prior to 1912, when check rails were fitted, after several accidents due to the raised rails (especially falls by cyclists).

Points on the EC lines were held in the set position by levers with a weight that swings round as the points are trailed through, or as the lever is moved. The model has a working version of these levers. The wire lever operates an electrical slide switch beneath the baseboard to change the polarity of the crossing as well as moving the switch blades.

The Oléron line had no signals.

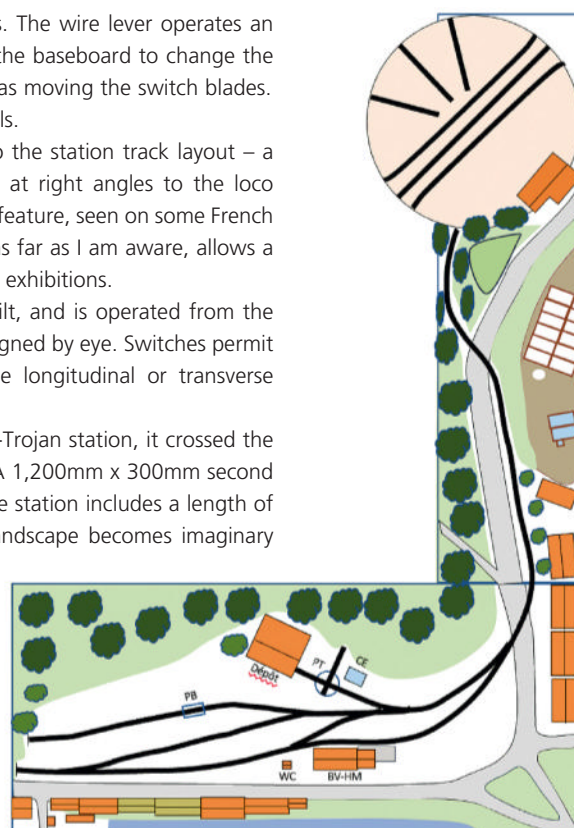
I made one small addition to the station track layout – a short track from the turntable at right angles to the loco shed, to hold a spare loco. This feature, seen on some French lines, although not on the EC as far as I am aware, allows a spare engine to be displayed at exhibitions.

The turntable was scratchbuilt, and is operated from the rear of the layout. Tracks are aligned by eye. Switches permit power to be fed to either the longitudinal or transverse tracks over the turntable.

As the original line left Saint-Trojan station, it crossed the road and ran by the roadside. A 1,200mm x 300mm second baseboard at right angles to the station includes a length of roadside running before the landscape becomes imaginary

Above
Another steam-hauled train ready to depart with an accumulator railcar having just arrived.

Right
Plan of the layout.
1,200 x 1,740mm.





– representing some typical features of the island. The line passes a tidal inlet in the salt marshes, with a small oyster fishery and salt pans. It then re-crosses the road and disappears (prototypically) into the forest.

The layout ends with a 450mm diameter turntable fiddle yard capable of holding three trains (loco + one wagon + three carriages + *fourgon*, or equivalent), and three railcars. The fiddle yard is partly concealed by trees and a traditional Oléron farmhouse with a small vineyard. The farmhouse has the typical outside staircase, a covered work area (the *chaïs*) with a window through which baskets of grapes would be emptied during the harvest, and a fish-drying pole – a method using sun and wind to dry fish for consumption during the winter.

Lack of space unfortunately prevented a typical Oléron windmill being included.

Scenery

Buildings are made from 1.5mm plywood and stripwood. Most were scaled from photographs.

The station building/goods shed is based on drawings of the similar (surviving) EC building at Ars-en-Ré prepared by Patrick Deludin for a local exhibition and a book on the Ré line (ref.4). These drawings were also issued as a pre-coloured card kit by the museum in Ars-en-Ré, and I was able to re-scale and adapt a PDF file Patrick kindly sent me to represent the Saint-Trojan building. The doors and windows on the model are simply printed on card from the re-scaled drawing and glued into the plywood carcass.

Recreation21 produced two varieties of 3D-printed French pantile roofs – one for factory-made interlocking tiles, and the other for hand-made pantiles. The station, toilets, and loco shed use the ‘factory-made’ tiling, painted to give a uniform

colour. As the 3D-printed sheets are rather small in this scale, I devised a way of pressing the hand-made tiling from a 3D-print into a thin layer of air-drying clay (which is available in terracotta colour) glued to a thin plywood base. In this way I was able to create roofs to suit all the cottages and sheds. These roofs have individual tiles picked out in different colours, to suggest the ‘hand-made’ tiles.

Photos show Saint-Trojan station yard to have been quite a large bare expanse of sand with tracks buried in it. I have resisted the urge to fill these spaces with ‘clutter’.

The unsurfaced roads are represented by sandpaper with a light covering of Woodland Scenics gravel.

Trees were made using Woodland Scenics materials, taking care to represent suitable types of tree.

The forest lies at the back of the layout and the trees are protected from accidental damage by a ‘backscene’ of clear acrylic sheet. Peco ‘sky’ paper was fixed behind the acrylic for photographic purposes.

At the front of the layout, various workshops and fishing huts were built on the bank sloping down to the water in the inner harbour. Conventionally, a layout would omit buildings between the viewer and the railway, but my first attempts at photographing the layout showed that a foreground was needed, so a 70mm wide baseboard extension was added. This represents the bank with the huts. Surprisingly, I even found an old postcard showing the rear of the fishing huts, but the small jetty and the steps leading down to it are imaginary.

Bringing the layout to life

People and animals in 1:100 presented some challenges, so some 1:87 figures were used in the foreground – a kind of ‘forced perspective’. The layout needed three distinct types of

Above
EC 030T No.26 arriving
at Saint-Trojan station.

figures: locals (farmers, fishermen and women in traditional dress, with donkey carts or pack animals), railway staff, and well-dressed visitors to the island.

In the foreground (i.e. nearer to the viewer than the trains), the local fishing and farming folk and animals are Noch, Preiser, and Woodland Scenics 1:87 figures, with colours toned down. Appropriate headgear must still be added – many women wore *quiche-nottes* (elaborate headdresses, traditional to the area). 1:87 geese and chickens roam near the cottages.

Engine crews are Langley Models TT3 and ModelU 3D-printed 1:100 figures. Passengers and people waiting on the station are ModelU 1:100 Edwardian figures, painted to represent the prosperous visitors to the health resort of Saint-Trojan.

Examples of several types of cart seen in old photos were constructed using whitmetal wheels from Langley Models or laser-cut plywood wheels from Scale Model Scenery. The horse bus that took visitors from the station to their hotels was built in the same way, as was the long horse-drawn carrier for wine casks (seen in postcards of the Île de Ré). Donkeys from Noch (1:87) and ModelU (1:100) complete the scene. A Roskopf 1:87 open-topped motor bus (*char-à-banc*) can be seen, ready to take parties of visitors through the forest to the beach, when (in the period after the First World War) railcars are running.

Because of their fragility, groups of figures and animals are assembled on small pieces of transparent plastic so that their position can be changed from time to time.

Some typical plants, such as sunflowers, lupins, and buddleias, mostly from the TASMA and Model-Scene ranges, enhance the sense of place.

The rows of vines were challenging. Assembling parts from a Busch 1:87 vineyard scene according to the instructions did not satisfy me. After repainting the leaf mouldings in more subtle late summer shades, I superglued individual branches on to the previously shaped and painted vine mouldings. Painting the grape bunches purple suggests a ripe crop.

Motive power

I have built three Corpet-Louvet locos, all running on Roco HOe Feldbahn 0-6-0T chassis (each of which is slightly different!):

- EC 22 and EC 26 (both locos that worked on the Oléron line) have bodies made from nickel-silver sheet, with the correct *hirondelle* (swallow-tail) cab. For simplicity, each body includes the 3D-print boiler and smokebox from a Recreation21 3D-printed Corpet-Louvet.
- EC 53 is a larger Corpet with a later style of cab, which was used by the EC on the mainland. This is a Recreation21 Corpet body simply with the cab rear sheet removed and extra details added.

EC engines were apparently painted a bright green. As the details are unclear from photos, the livery is applied slightly differently on each of the locos. They carry coal briquettes on their tank tops, and a stack of these to replenish them is located near the turntable at the station. The briquettes were made from tiny blocks of black styrene, shaped, and glued together before being burnished with a glass-fibre tool, which leaves them with a suitable finish.

I also have a Fleischmann N DB BR80 chassis which may be used for a model of EC 1 or 2 – older, smaller Corpets used initially on the Île de Ré but replaced after they were found lacking in power.

EC rolling stock

Some trains were 'mixed', with freight wagons attached to a passenger service – usually behind the loco. The number of carriages varied from two to seven or eight in peak periods.

There are two passenger trains, each with three coaches and a post/luggage van (*fourgon*). The coaches are Recreation21 TAM first class coaches, which are reasonably accurate in most dimensions apart from the width. I widened them and added interior detail, brake gear, and more accurate balcony railings made from brass wire. The *fourgons* have bodies made from Evergreen planked styrene sheet fitted on Recreation21 3D-printed flat wagons.

EC carriage livery was varnished teak, and one set is finished in this way. However, the varnished wood did not survive well in the island climate, so carriages on Ré and Oléron were later repainted in Van Dyke brown. The second set of carriages carries this livery.

Wagons are also Recreation21 TAM designs, widened and detailed like the coaches. The low-sided (*wagon-plat*) and open (*tombéreau*) wagons are reasonably accurate. The TAM van (*couvert*) was not quite correct, and once the layout was largely completed, new bodies were scratch built for them.

Freight stock is painted light grey with black ironwork. Various loads have been made for open wagons: stacks of wine casks, sacks containing salt from the salt pans or the white onions for which Saint-Trojan is known, etc.

All loco-hauled stock is fitted with Graham Farish N gauge metal-tired spoked wheels and Greenwich OO9 couplers.

Some EC services on the mainland used railcars (owned by the local bus operator RDAS) but never in Oléron. However, an RDAS De Dion JM was taken to the neighbouring island of Ré by the German occupying forces during the Second World War and even operated there commercially for a short time after the war. My model JM is fabricated from styrene sheet, and uses a Kato 11-109 chassis.

As the De Dion *autorails* were too long for the turntables provided for the EC Corpets, they had a built-in turning mechanism. Making such an arrangement work is not

Right

EC 030T No.22 passes the oyster beds and salt pans on its way towards Le Château-d'Oléron. The stock is in the original varnished teak livery.

Below

EC Corpet-Louvet loco No.22 under construction. The boiler is cut from a 3D-print Corpet, and the chassis is from a Roco HOe Feldbahn model.





feasible in a small scale model, so I added a mechanism in the track in the siding to allow the De Dion to be turned. A platform between the rails is raised, lifting the railcar from the rails, the platform is then turned through 180°, and finally lowered again.

Interestingly, the EC bought sixteen accumulator railcars in the late 1920s, subsidised by the French government who wished to improve rural passenger transport by segregating it from freight traffic on secondary lines. A further six went to the Jeancard Group's Morbihan network. They ran

successfully until 1944 in Charente and until 1948 in Morbihan, averaging 35,000km per year and 134km between re-charges. They could reach 42km/h and haul one or two four-wheel coaches for extra capacity. They were never used on Ré or Oléron – possibly the islands had no public electricity supply at this date. My model is built from styrene sheet, and runs on a TomyTec tram chassis fitted under the trailing bogie end of the railcar – the wheelbase suited better and the motor is hidden within the luggage compartment.

Below
De Dion type JM autorail
using its turning mechanism,

Below right
EC accumulator railcar.





Left
An EC accumulator railcar departs Saint-Trojan for Le Château-d'Oléron. Whether the island had a public electricity supply at this time to charge the railcar overnight is a matter for speculation ...

Non EC stock

I wanted to run one of the iconic Billard A80 *autorails* that maintained passenger services on many rural lines in France from the 1930s. The body is another Recreation21 print, which runs on a Tomytec N gauge tram chassis adapted for use as a motor bogie. Being double ended, the Billard does not need to be turned for the return journey.

The length of the loco release track and the turntable limit the size of locos that can be used on the layout, but other small engines and rolling stock may 'visit' to add variety.

The producer of Paul Titmuss's 3D-print of a Côtes-du-Nord Blanc-Misséron tram engine body (Ivan Industries) kindly adapted the design to 1:100 for me. The resulting very well detailed print was fitted to a Kato 11-109 chassis and – after adding details such as glazing, pipework, lamps, etc. – provides a useful extra loco.

I have recently built another non-EC loco, a Fives-Lille 0-6-0T used on the Porto – Pova – Famalicão line in northern Portugal. This has a nickel-silver body fitted to a Grafar N gauge British class 08 diesel chassis with outside cylinders added.

Operation

Operation of the layout is very simple, involving minimal coupling/uncoupling and handling of stock. A train runs from the fiddle yard to the station, the engine uncouples and runs round, is turned on the small turntable, pauses to take on coal/briquettes and water, wagons are shunted as necessary, and the train departs again for the fiddle yard, where the whole train can be turned ready for the next journey. Two trains run alternately; the locos, wagons, and their loads are changed for variety.

Below
Visiting from Portugal, Fives-Lille 030T PPF No.7 *Rio d'Este*, sets off from Saint-Trojan station.



Above

A Billard A80 autorail
on the roadside section
approaching the station.



To add interest, a second train can arrive before the first train departs, railcar services can be run between loco-hauled trains, and a spare engine can be kept at Saint-Trojan to shunt freight stock at the station between arrivals.

Conclusion

So far the layout has only appeared at some small one-day OO9 Society get-togethers. However, it has been invited to the FFMF Fédérail exhibition in Les Herbiers, Vendée, France, on Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th June, which will be an adventure ...

There is a standard gauge steam railway in Les Herbiers which can be visited alongside the model railway show.

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Below

The De Dion autorail
crosses the road.
Both the railcar
and the wine-cask carrier
are based on similar vehicles
used on the neighbouring
island of Ré.



Phil Baggley describes his latest exhibition layout.

It will be at the Perth show on Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th June.

Nazareth Portland Cement

A cement plant in the early 1960s – mid-1970s



My early career was in the iron and steel industry, and for as long as I have been modelling that was the focus of my attention. To cut a long story short, I modelled Bethlehem Steel in north-east Pennsylvania and another Pittsburgh-based layout in HO, and there were other layouts in HO and OO, all taking much longer to finish than I had anticipated or hoped.

I have been retired for several years now, and after settling in to my new lifestyle, I yearned to tackle a fresh modelling challenge and build a portable exhibition layout.

I am not a prolific modeller and I have several competing interests, so without a heightened level of self discipline a new layout has the potential to stall for extended periods. Furthermore, my long term plan involves several new adventures in HO and OO and there are only so many hours in a day.

One of my competing interests was a desire to become competent in laser cutting at home and teach myself *Light-burn*, the leading software.

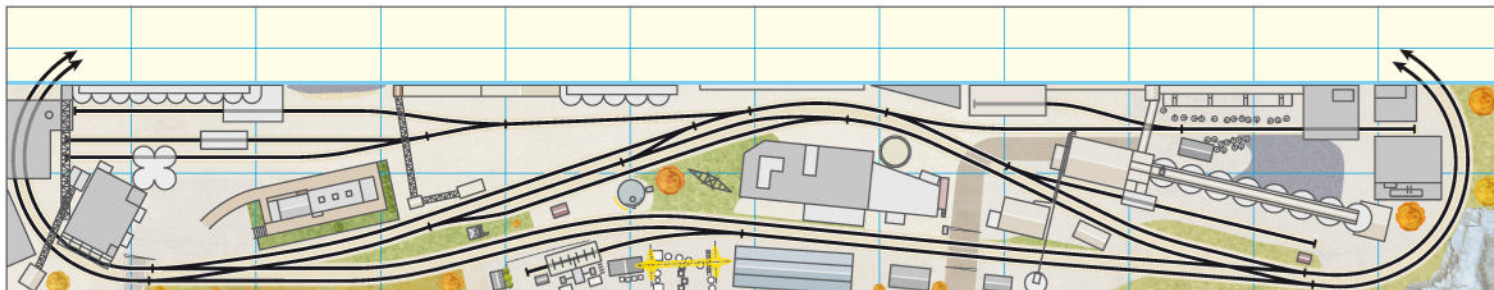
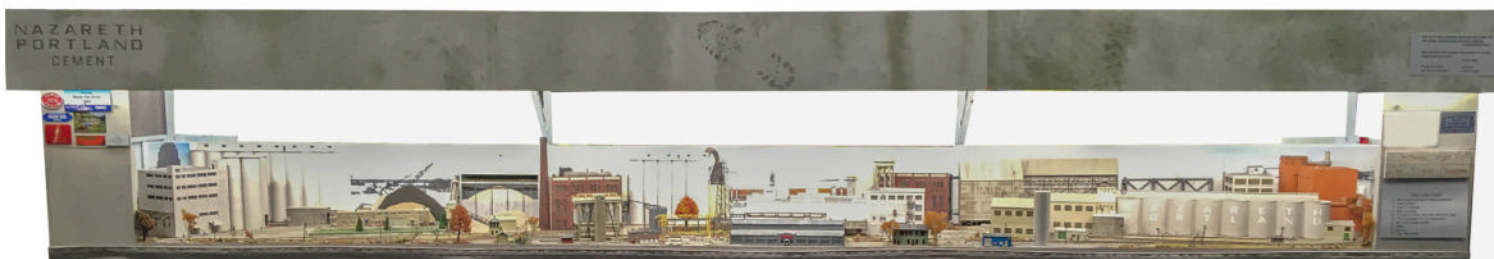
I discussed with my plans with my partner and explained that I was going to build a new layout from scratch in twelve months, and set myself a deadline – it had to be ready for the next local exhibition. I am aware that a lot of people have difficulty finding the time, but for me to achieve my goal, I had to set a deadline. I knew that would impact other aspects of life, and sometimes it was problematic. It undoubtedly did have an impact on other hobbies and activities, but I had the support of my family (and we still speak to each other, occasionally).

In the event, I did make the deadline but not quite how I had hoped, as you will see.



Above
Lehigh Valley RR GM F7A #564 Eastbound unit on a cement train
meets Lehigh & New England RR Alco FA&B set hauling coal.

Photographs by the editor, unless otherwise noted.



NAZARETH PORTLAND CEMENT
Overall size: 12' x 2' 4". Each grid square: 1ft x 1ft.

Choices

So what to model? I spent very little time deciding what scale because I already had a suitable collection of N track, locomotives, freight cars, buildings, etc. that had never been put to use. I also had a library of books, magazines, and photographs to guide my decision.

I wanted a portable continuous run with an industrial theme and after briefly considering the iron and steel industry and coal mining, cement manufacture bagged the top spot.

Nazareth Cement did exist but I borrowed the title for my layout. It was inspired by several of the cement mills that existed at one time or another in the region. For example: Alpha Cement, Hercules Cement, Nazareth Cement, Dragon Cement, and Penn-Dixie Cement. There are several excellent books and magazines available and plenty of images on Flickr and Facebook. The Anthracite Railroads Historical Society is a great source of information, and most of the

American railroad modelling magazines have featured really useful articles.

I had enough information to draft a prototypical track plan but I was keen to ensure it would be interesting to operate and to entertain. I took logical decisions based upon the process and flows of raw materials and finished product. For example, coal would be delivered in open hoppers to the boiler house for raising steam. It would be interchanged from main line freight trains, picked up by the in-plant switcher, and exchanged for empties. Limestone would be sourced from local quarries, slag from the local iron and steel industry, paper bags, and so on. I originally planned the manufacturing process to be depicted in a linear fashion, but that did not quite work out either. I imagined several features with a specific purpose in mind but they were later abandoned. It is fair to say that the layout evolved and changes were made in the light of experience, and a looming deadline.

Right

The covered raw materials store was based on Hercules Cement in Stockertown.

The low relief structure, conveyors, and transfer house were all cut from card. The chimney, brick factory, and foreground silos were raided from my stash of used kits.

The original plastic windows were replaced by card with a finer profile.

Below

To the left is the distinctive Lehigh Cement building (which still stands), scratchbuilt from card. The company office is to the right with raw material stocks on the ground beyond.





Construction

I elected to try extruded polystyrene foam for the baseboards. 60mm Knauf orange insulation foam in 1,220mm x 600mm sheets from Wickes was handy. I was impressed by an N scale model of Masham at an exhibition some years ago, and when we were packing up, the owner carried it out in one hand. It was a 'light bulb' moment for me as I have always strived to build lightweight and flexible, not heavy and rigid. The foam was encased in 4mm ply sides for protection. I regret not making the side frames a lot deeper so I could have used slow action point motors and integrate the legs.

Foam has several benefits, but the mounting of point motors, under-track uncoupling magnets, and baseboard connections are problematic. My solutions were novel but time consuming and not as reliable as I would like. I am not sure if the foam is still available, and I still rate thin ply construction very highly.

I originally employed 18mm blockboard for the baseboard ends and installed captive nuts and locating dowels to aid assembly. I found it difficult to guarantee snug, close fitting joints every time I assembled the layout.

I sculpted the mating surfaces so that only a 30mm deep band at the top actually mated the adjacent board. Below that band, the surface was cut back 2mm or so on both boards. This allowed the ends greater flexibility and tolerance to assembly variations.

The track is Peco. I had a few pieces of code 55 and a bigger stash of code 80 and I am more than happy with that. American N gauge diesels usually have all-wheel pick-up so they are rarely troubled by Insulfrog points. I would have preferred Atlas code 55 which has a more authentic North American appearance, with finer rail profile and closer tie (sleeper) spacing, but it is comparatively expensive and Peco is very reliable and a solid performer.

I experienced some reliability issues with certain four-axle locos and the plastic (dead) sections of the two diamond

crossings. I considered that removing and rebuilding them with live frogs was too much work but, having a spare unit on which to experiment, I cut away the soft plastic crossing vees and melted in to place a vee-shaped section of rail. I was nervous about doing it, but the process went well on the spare and then equally well on the in-situ crossings. It made a big difference – the vees are now live and I would do it again. I am using DCC so there is no issue with polarity change.

I laid the track down directly on the foam, and ballasted it with my own mix. I sieve OO/HO and N ballast at the same time, removing tiny dust particles and saving them for weathering and scenic work. Dilute glue penetrates the ballast more readily without dust in the mix. I have used blast furnace slag for ballast for many years but my garden is

Below

I did not want a long straight double track running along the front edge of the layout, so I made space for Keystone Precast Concrete, a concrete products plant that sprang up close to the cement mill. The products are simple scrap tube parts painted with matt emulsion. The high tension tower is a 1:76 etched brass kit but does not look out of proportion.





blessed with limestone chippings and rocks. I experimented and settled on crushed limestone this time. The crushing process is crude, noisy, and embarrassing, so I make sure the neighbours do not see or hear me – on my knees, breaking up chunks of limestone in the garden with a lump hammer, and sweeping it up with a dustpan!

I would have preferred larger radius curves and I settled on a baseboard width of 680mm as a workable compromise.

Electrickery

I had always planned to incorporate a lighting pelmet so I built the outer baseboard ends with pockets so that the uprights and the headboard could be simply dropped into place. As a general principle I try to eliminate the use of tools to join sections together. With some thought, most sections can be designed to slot together with an occasional clamp or over-centre catch.

I use the NCE DCC system which is widely regarded as one of the best although in my opinion it has not kept pace with competitor. Starting anew, I would probably select a system that uses wi-fi and smart 'phones/tablets.

The main lines and the industry tracks are on separate power feeds via NCE circuit breakers. I added the optional LED to the main control panel so it is obvious when the breaker trips, which it often does when I'm distracted. If there is an event within one district, it will shut down and protect it, while the other will remain unaffected.

I used scrap 2.5mm twin and earth for the DCC bus wires. Every expense spared. All my soldered wiring joints are coated with hot glue as a precaution against accidental contact with one another.

Points are operated by SEEP solenoid motors secured to ply bases, throwing the points via a cobbled together wire rocker in a tube. The 60mm foam base poses additional challenges and I would use slow action motors next time. Furthermore, I had a very bad experience mixing capacitor discharge powered solenoid point motors with DCC on layouts in the past. I will go to some length to keep those circuits well apart, especially at baseboard connections.

Structures

Long before I embarked on construction I had bought a laser cutter. With a 10-Watt laser it is powerful enough to cut and emboss card and similar substrates but not ply or wood so readily. I had no experience of CAD drawing so *Nazareth* would be the ideal opportunity to gain practical experience in designing the cutting files in *Lightburn* and operating the machine, an Emblazer 2. My ambition was to make as many of the structures as possible in card with the laser. The exception being the many silos, tanks, vessels, and pipes which are round in section and better based upon plastic tubes from a variety of sources.

Progress was slow at first but after making many errors my work improved. Card is a plentiful material and it is OK to make lots of mistakes – it does not break the bank. I learned a lot about the optimum choice of card too. It takes time to complete a particular project. More by accident than design, I started with the structures at either end of the layout, working toward the middle. I spent a lot of time configuring those structures at the ends to mask where trains enter and exit the layout. A 'mousehole' cut in the backscene is incongruous and it is not difficult to avoid with a little extra thought.

The laser cutter cost me less than the small fleet of modern models that I see on many other layouts. With the exception of control systems, locos, and rolling stock, I like to make as much as I can rather than buy it off the shelf. The laser cutter gives me so many more options, and I get satisfaction from learning the software and optimising the machine. I am lucky to have the space available in an outbuilding to run it. Manufacturers do not dwell on the smell or the fumes which render them incompatible with use in most homes.

I have also acquired 3D-printer but I dared not even open it while I was building the current layout. That is a rabbit hole that I dare not contemplate going down if I want to get the layout finished. But I am really looking forward to getting started.

I used the laser to make low relief structures on the backscene. The signature feature of many cement mills is the huge rotary kiln(s). I did not have sufficient real estate to

Above

Keystone Precast Concrete dominates the foreground. It was based on a prominent building, part of Keystone Cement, which I found on Google Maps. It is made entirely of card, cut using the laser. The large building behind is an enlarged and modified Walthers kit. I blended the plastic kit with cardboard extensions with sponge applied emulsion paint. Pipework and a covered loading dock help disguise the kit's origin. The signature rotary kiln is largely obstructed by these buildings.

Right

The green building was based upon what I think was a railroad office at Bangor on the Bangor and Portland Railway, later Delaware Lackawanna and Western RR. Readers might recognise it as by coincidence it was modelled in HO by Ian Wilson on his Bangor and Portland branch (CM December 2025). Here it serves as an office for the Lehigh & New England RR.

model one in full. I cut out several overlaying card shapes and then glued and painted them. They were all based on photographs and are not to scale but they do the job. (I was trying to obscure the winter-themed commercial backscene which I realised too late in the build was the wrong choice.)

Several weeks before the exhibition deadline, I realised I was never going to finish in time and that I had to raid the parts box to fill the middle section of the layout with commercial kit-bashed structures rescued from a previous layout. Some you might recognise but I tried to embellish them with laser-cut parts to make them more representative of cement mill structures. The office complex is a reversed German railway station. I covered it in PVA glue and sprinkled crushed and sieved flint chippings over it to save time and try to disguise its origin. Flag poles flying the star-strangled banner seem a popular feature of many American premises, so I printed out a paper flag and glued it to a flagpole. A row of evergreen trees attempts to block the view of the stone yard from the hard working employees in the office.

So the original planned linear process arrangement was halted. Brick-built structures took the place of the planned concrete structures. More by accident than design I was now portraying the evolution of a manufacturing process over time. Some industrial processes start out in a linear fashion but as equipment becomes obsolete, it is replaced. Often there is not the space to install the replacement in the original place, so it has to be relocated. Do it often enough and the overall process flow appears disorganised and odd. So, for example, my brick-built power station in the middle of the layout has been repurposed and is now part of the cement manufacturing process. The new power station is sited to the far right. The original stub ended track for delivering bituminous coal to the boilers has been taken out of service

and the gas-fired power station has no requirement for coal. Nobody has ever questioned the layout of my mill, but I like to think I would have an answer if they did.

Some older commercial N scale structure kits are let down by overly thick window frames. The laser cutter is a brilliant tool for producing windows with much closer to scale proportions. N scale is pushing the capability of card to retain its shape but I can reliably get down to about 0.6mm wide sections. Those finer detailed windows are a significant improvement.

I had always assembled card parts with PVA glue, that is until my good friend Graham Morfoot sold me some Deluxe Materials Card Glue and Superphatic glue to try. It was a revelation and I am a convert to these adhesives. They allow me to take some outrageous short cuts when assembling parts which I would not be able to do quite so well with PVA.

One of the signature features of the Hercules Cement plant in the Lehigh region are the huge storage silos with 'Hercules Cement' lettering proudly displayed on each silo. That was the inspiration for my 'Nazareth Portland'. I found a free font called Quantico which was very close to the Hercules style and easy to adapt. I used the laser cutter on adhesive label stock which I then used as a paint mask.

Naturally, there is a lot of concrete used in the construction of cement mills. The basis for my rendition of concrete is matt emulsion paint, always two or three coats applied with a sponge. Stippling with a stiff brush is possible but a sponge is better. Taupe is the shade I used, but there are several which are perfect. It is easy to apply, very forgiving, and leaves a superb opaque textured concrete surface whatever substrate you are applying it to. Weathering and countershading is very easily accomplished to depict shadows and stains by adding tiny amounts of dark colours.



Scenery

I used static grass sparingly but I am a novice with electrostatic application. Trees and bushes are made from heather stalks plucked from the garden. It is natural for the stalks to all have a similar curved shape and aligned in the same direction but if you take three or four stalks and bind them together it makes a reasonable tree structure on which to hang teased out poly fibre. I initially used commercial foliage but I now prefer beech hedge leaves (gathered in autumn) and dry spun in a coffee grinder to chop them up. I take out any undesirable contraries with a coarse sieve. I only gained an E grade when I sat my O level tree making exam, and it shows. I fudge it by modelling autumnal foliage.

The rock cutting at the edge of the layout was built as a pyramid of square shaped extruded foam blocks glued and pinned with cocktail sticks. Then I made a quantity of thin shell plaster castings in Woodland Scenics moulds. It helps if the plaster is really old, as it goes off very quickly. When dry, I mixed and matched them over the foam blocks and filled gaps with broken castings, coloured the rocks with acrylic paint, and added foliage.

I did test run several locos and freight cars past the rock castings to confirm clearances, and then, with just days until the layout's debut, I decided to run larger six-axle diesels.

The raw materials stockpiles were made from spare lumps of extruded styrene insulation foam left over from baseboard construction. I shaped them with hot wire and hand tools, then covered them with thick PVA glue and sprinkled crushed limestone over the top. The result was ultra light, and quick and easy to achieve. I used real coal, coke, and ironworks slag on other stockpiles – all collected from local sources.

The road and yard surfaces around the mill were made by sieving real cement over a wet patch of dilute PVA. Once dry,

the texture is far too rough but a little work with sandpaper and tools produces a suitable manicured surface.

My favourite technique for tarmac road surfaces is plaster of Paris with black acrylic paint added. It dries to a satisfying grey colour and is easy to add fractures, potholes, fresh repairs, expansion joints, and road markings.

Traffic patterns

There is sufficient information in books, magazines, and on line to become familiar with the materials needed in the manufacture of cement, and plenty of images to learn what types of motive power and freight cars are employed.

Limestone was a key material but the mill was often sited alongside the quarry and the stone delivered by aerial bucket tramway or conveyors. Iron and steel industry slag, shale, and coal (for raising steam and for firing kilns) were delivered to the mills by rail.

The Lehigh cement region was at the forefront of developments in rail transport of finished cement. Broadly, it began with paper bagged cement transported in boxcars, then pressurised canisters in adapted gondolas, and ultimately to covered hopper cars. I have portrayed all three within my chosen era of early 1960s to mid 1970s. You will easily identify the different types of car on the industry tracks and within the freight trains running on the main line.

Passenger traffic was virtually non-existent but *Nazareth* has only a four track storage yard. It is not practical to be changing the stock during an exhibition running session. A single Budd RDC (Kato) is an easy to introduce option to add a little more variety to the layout. If I ever build a similar layout, I would aim for a minimum six track yard – that would offer a sequence just about long enough to keep the public interest without duplication.

Below

Lehigh and New England RR Alco FA with some rather too clean and shiny 40' boxcars westbound.

The earliest shipments of cement were in bags loaded in boxcars represented by those in front of the silos. There are several images of the Hercules Cement silos in Stockertown and they are such a distinctive feature that I wanted to represent them on the layout. The silos are plastic waste water pipe, with a covered conveyor building running along the tops made from card and Scalescenes printed paper corrugated sheet texture. The new power station was from a Walther's kit; we nicknamed it Club Tropicana. The low relief structures on the backscene were based on prototype images.



Right
 Alco RS3s to the fore –
 Lehigh & New England #651
 is switching hoppers as
 Central of New Jersey #1546
 passes with a short freight.
 Photo: author.



Stock

I consider myself very lucky to have accrued a lot of my locos and freight cars over many years of collecting. There was a time when it was cost-effective to buy new from shops in the USA and UK, but availability has declined while prices have generally soared in recent times. Currently, my main source of stock is a small number of UK sellers at exhibitions and on eBay.

I believe it is more challenging to model American N today than it was a few years ago, though there are still some specialist UK outlets.

I recommend Atlas, MicroTrains (soon to combine), Athearn, (newer) LifeLike, Roundhouse, Red Caboose, and Kato, with Peco for track and related components. You may find a considerable amount of older, simpler locos and freight cars, often equipped with European-style couplers and shiny coarse wheels. They are a low cost way of getting started with American N but you generally get what you pay for.

Reliable running starts with very careful track laying and every single separate piece of rail has its own dropper wire soldered to the underlying DCC bus wires. I never rely on fishplates for power between rails.

American N locos are (broadly speaking) better equipped to tolerate dead frog points, so Peco Insulfrog points are generally fine.

A lot of credit is due to good loco mechanisms, but clean wheels and clean track is essential. I am now paying much closer attention to current paths inside loco where there are sliding contacts. I use graphite from a pencil lead or a tiny amount of conductive grease to promote conductivity.

Recently I have been using Deluxe 'Trackmagic' solution. It does what it claims to do.

The longest train I have run was 155 freight cars behind an Atlas Fairbanks-Morse 'Trainmaster'. It occupied about three-quarters of one main line circuit.

Exhibitions

The layout is run very rarely at home – usually just for a few hours before every show to clean track and test everything.

For transport I have my own van. It happens to serve as my car, so to speak.

Two ply end boards are bolted to the three baseboards and the whole thing is wheeled around on a dolly. They are light enough to be lifted as one unit. The trestle legs are separate, and the lighting pelmet, drapes, and struts go in the same kit bag.

A lot of people take photos or videos without asking, which I do not mind. But I do object strongly when Youtubers upload a video of my (or anyone's) layout) without crediting the name of the layout, the scale, and the builder. I think that is really bad and disregards the effort that the modellers have put in to presenting a layout at an exhibition.

Lessons

The army says that "A battle plan never survives first contact with the enemy" and that is my experience of exhibitions.

When *Nazareth* is exhibited, my aim and my responsibility is to entertain and engage with the paying public. For me, that means a continuous parade of trains, with minimal unforced errors, derailments, stoppages, etc. I do not have a timetable or a sequence, just train movements that keep interest and make sense. It was a mistake to try to showcase the industrial tracks with a single loco, and it was a mistake to try to interchange cars between the main line trains and the cement mill. Knuckle couplers in HO are more reliable and forgiving than in N and I exposed too many reliability issues and created long delays. Coal deliveries in open wagons to the power station were one of the first to go. It was a kick-back track right up against the backscene, in a confined space with poor visibility and access. A derailment inside the power house was a nightmare to resolve.

Coupling and uncoupling generally was so unpredictable that it was quickly abandoned in favour of three mill switchers permanently coupled to a short set of cars. I could achieve most of my objectives without the risk of unwanted events and subsequent delays.

Interchange between the main lines and the mill was also abandoned because it really needed three operators to make it work and often I am running with two (and sometimes just one). Furthermore, because of my overall track plan, one job could tie up three trains at the same time. It could also inhibit movement of the mill switcher(s).

So even if interchange went smoothly and to plan, it was far too disruptive. Most visitors lost interest.

I had seen a picture of those air operated cement canisters, dozens of them lined up alongside yard tracks. I only had canisters that came with selected Atlas brand gondolas. I did not have anywhere near enough so I scratchbuilt about 30 of the little darlings, painted and weathered them all, and planted them all around the back track. After the first few exhibitions, I was kindly advised by a former cement mill employee in the States that those canisters never left their gondolas. They were never dispersed on the ground around the tracks. My source photo happened to be taken of a consignment of redundant canisters in a nearby yard that were being hauled away for scrap ... uprooting them is still on the 'to do' list; I have not plucked up the courage.

It is tiring standing on your feet for two full days when you are unused to it. It is possible to view some of the layout whilst seated but I introduced a couple of highly adjustable IKEA shaving mirrors at the ends of the layout and these have proven their worth. Without them, it is awkward to monitor trains on tracks that run hard up against the bottom of a tall backscene. It would have been better to control the industry tracks from the front of the layout. I will be giving much more thought to seated operation in future.

It was while exhibiting *Nazareth* that I discovered another great aid. The Paisley exhibition used to be in a former town centre department store. Exhibitors accessed the public floor by the trade entrance. There were several different trolleys, dollies, and barrows available, and I happened to find a spare dolly to shift the layout. I do not know why I had not thought of it before, but the dolly was brilliant and made handling so

Left
Long trains running – in the interests of keeping the public entertained, the various industrial spurs do not get as much use as they were designed for.



Above
The cement mills developed pressurised air canisters to deliver cement to rail-served customers in the north-east. They were fixed in gondolas which were modified to provide access to the manual control apparatus.

Below
In due course, the canisters made way for pneumatic covered hoppers of greater capacity. The Lehigh cement region played a major part in these industry developments.

much easier. As soon as I got home I ordered four soft-tired wheels, cut out a suitable piece of thick ply, and made my own. A very cheap and worthwhile investment. Should have made one sooner.

Having a long track record in modelling HO, and not being so active for the previous few years, I underestimated the challenges posed by N. I kept repeating the same mistake in not reducing features like doors and windows to scale dimensions. I was modelling in N still with my HO head on. In some ways, it might have been easier if I had started in N. It did not help that it was several months into the build before I realised American and British N are to different scales. Oops. I still look at N scale figures and think that they are too small.

My eyesight is typical of someone of my age. My usual method is to address decoder equipped loco with their road numbers, usually on the cab side, but these are too small to read so I have printed out cheat sheets for myself and my operators. I take a snap of each loco, position the image on a sheet of A4, and overlay the address in large numbers. Then I print out and laminate a set of eight and mount them on the backscene.

Conclusion

I would not say the layout was finished but it is highly unlikely I will implement any significant changes – I have too many competing interests. I might automate the colour light signals some day.

On a personal note

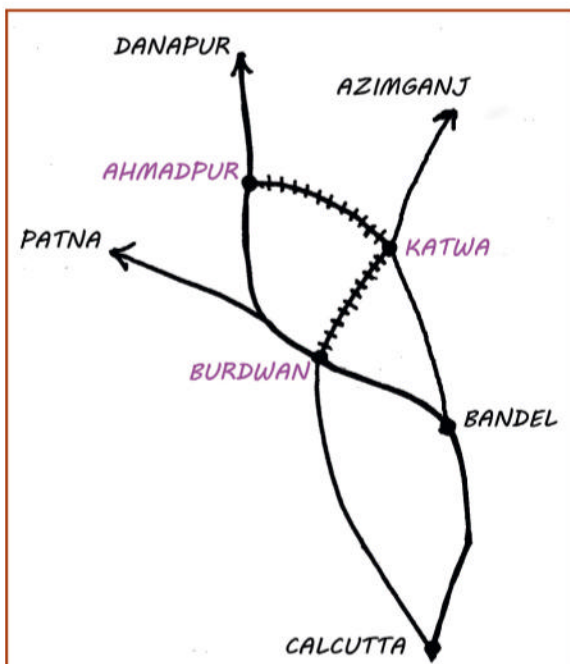
I am writing this in March 2026. In April 2025 I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. I had been having blood tests every twelve months for some years but in early 2025 I was advised to have further tests to determine my status. I had no symptoms and was quite confident I did not have cancer. But cancer was found at an advanced stage. In a candid moment, the consultant said that without treatment I might have about three years but if I chose treatment then my survival chances were high. I have had surgery and I am now cancer free. One in eight men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer at some point. You would be surprised by how many of your friends and others known to you have had the same experience, but men do not tend to talk about it. So if you are in your fifties or older, go to your GP and demand a PSA test – it might just save your life. It saved mine.





Stewart Blencowe explains what prompted him to model an Indian scene.
Photographs by the author.

Ahmadpur A narrow gauge adventure



The state of West Bengal is the fourth most populated state in India and was established following partition in 1947. Geographically long and thin, it connects the extremes of the squalor and noise of Calcutta with Darjeeling, with its serene and peaceful views of the Himalayas. Once away from the confusion of the city, West Bengal is basically a rural state from paddy fields on the banks of the Ganges to the tea plantations of the higher reaches.

The state was well served with north-south broad gauge lines in addition to the three main lines to the west.

To service the rural areas to the north of the Calcutta to Patna main line, a railway of 2'6" gauge was built in 1915 from Burdwan across 33 miles to Katwa on one of the north-south lines, and by further extension in 1917 a further 32 miles across to the Sahibganj Loop line, and to a northern terminus at Ahmadpur.

The lines were built by separate companies but were operated by McLeod & Company, an Indian subsidiary of a London firm of managing agents, McLeod Russell & Co.Ltd. They also worked the Kalighat-Falta Railway and the Bankura-Damodar River Railway (both also 2'6" gauge).

Above
Bagnall 0-6-4T AK6
 (works no.2021 of 1916)
 arrives at Ahmadpur
 with the 07.05 from Katwa
 on 20th January 1992.
 These locomotives had
 12" x 18" cylinders
 and 34" diameter drivers.
 Ten were supplied
 between 1914 and 1927
 for use on various lines.



The original 0-6-4T locomotives were supplied by Bagnalls of Stafford between 1914 and 1927. In addition, two Bagnall 2-6-2Ts bound for the Egyptian Delta Railways were diverted to the lines in 1916 with a further two being added in 1930 and one more as late as 1953 as traffic developed.

The two lines were truly 'light' railways, laid directly on the earth with no ballast, single line with passing loops. Track maintenance had always been minimal which resulted in a 30km/h speed limit. After some reluctance they were eventually taken into Indian state railway ownership in 1966 and transferred to the Eastern Railway zone.

The northern terminus at Ahmadpur is a small town of around 10,000 souls with local rice mills providing much of the employment, the town having lost its sugar mill some years ago. The broad gauge passed through here in 1860 and established a station while it was to be fifty-seven years later before the narrow gauge arrived. While there never was a physical connection between the two gauges, an interchange goods shed was built for transshipping freight.

When I visited in 1992 the narrow gauge was the main attraction as it was one of the few such lines remaining in India. There was a general air of decrepitude certainly visible in the station building which was very poor by comparison to its broad gauge relative. This was further evidenced by the loco watering facility. The water crane appeared to be have been out of use for some time but, never fear, for wonders can be performed with a hose from the rear of the station and a couple of buckets passed up and down in order to replenish the locomotive!

Even so both lines maintained five trains each way daily, amazingly two of them travelling in the very early hours.

The services could be operated by two locomotives on each section taking nearly three hours to complete the journey one way.

By this time the locomotive fleet had been halved and the railway had, not surprisingly, identified low passenger numbers and an unwillingness to buy tickets as the reasons behind the questions of the lines' existence. By late 1994 steam began to be replaced by some very dubious second-hand railcars. These consisted of four carriages hauled by a single ended railcar which necessitated the installation of a triangle at Ahmadpur in order to turn the railcar.

Above
AK6 in Ahmadpur station
having arrived from Katwa.

Below
AK6 at Ahmadpur station.
Note the clay stove
in the background.





These services, cutting the journey time down to 2.5 hours, struggled on until closure of the lines in 2007 and their eventual conversion to electrified broad gauge, the new lines opening by 2018, connecting to the main Calcutta to Danapur line. The area of the original narrow gauge station and goods shed was completely swept away and there remains no evidence of what I saw in 1992.





Above left and above **AK6 running round at Ahmadpur.**
The interchange goods shed can be seen in the background, with broad gauge tank wagons beyond. The area in the foreground was subsequently filled in to accommodate the triangle for turning railcars.

Left **The narrow gauge station buildings.**

Right **Watering AK6 at Ahmadpur station by means of a hose and buckets.**



Left and below **AK6 and train ready to depart for Katwa.**



Above
AK6 at the intermediate station of Labpur
on the way to Katwa.

Right
AK6 at Nerolegram halt.



Below
Katwa shed, with Bagnall 0-6-4Ts BK1 (2006 of 1914),
AK6 (2021 of 1916) just arrived from Ahmadpur,
and beyond BK4 (2009 of 1914)
preparing to take the next train to Ahmadpur.
Although nominally allocated to Ahmadpur – Katwa (AK)
and Burdwan – Katwa (BK), the locos worked either line.



Top right
BK4 leaves Katwa
with the 15.52 to Ahmadpur.

Right
'Delta' class 2-6-2T BK14
(Bagnall 2030 of 1916)
at Burdwan station.
This loco was one of those
transferred from the
Kalighat – Falta line.
The type was built for the
Egyptian Delta Light Railways
but diverted due to the war.
They had 12" x 16" cylinders
and 36½" diameter drivers.



Left

2-6-2T BK13 (Bagnall 3053 of 1953) came new direct to the Burdwan – Katwa. It had been entered in the 'Black Beauty' contest at Burdwan broad gauge shed.







Above left
A southbound passenger train enters Ahmadpur broad gauge station hauled by WDM2 18140.

Above
WP Pacific 7350 with a northbound train at Ahmadpur.

Left
AK6 and narrow gauge train arrived at Ahmadpur.

Left
BK4 at the narrow gauge platform at Ahmadpur on my 7mm scale layout. Note in the background the broad gauge train hauled by a WP Pacific.

Left
A narrow gauge train behind BK13 is ready to leave as WP 7527 pulls away from the broad gauge station. The layout will be featured in more detail next month.



Gilbert Gribi presents a simple but effective modelling hint.

Photographs by the author.

Stacks of planks

Essential for a sawmill or timber yard



Both my original Carpathian and later French Oe layouts feature sawmills, so I needed a lot of stacks of planks. A long time ago, I used to make them with a milling machine – a complicated, time-consuming process that often yielded poor results.

Since then, I have been making them with balsa wood, a simpler and less expensive method.

I cut strips from a sheet of 1mm balsa the length and width of the required planks. For O scale, the strips are about 18mm wide. I take care to cut along the grain.

I hold these planks together with two clamps. Ten or eleven planks are perfect for a nice stack in O. Using a knife, I shape

each side alternately by reversing the position of the clamps. I then run rough sandpaper and a wire brush over each side.

With the clamps still in place, I simulate the bark by painting each side of the stack with 'natural sienna' oil paint, taking care to avoid getting any on the first board. I remove excess paint with a cloth lightly dampened with turpentine.

The stack is created by inserting wooden strips (for example, 1mm x 0.5mm) to represent the spacers between the boards.

Once completely dry, you can weather it with a mixture of black and grey, well diluted with turpentine.

And there you have it, it could not be simpler. Fifteen minutes, or thereabouts, and the stack is finished.

Above

The substantial sawmill was a major feature on my Carpathian layout which depicted the transport of logs from the forest.



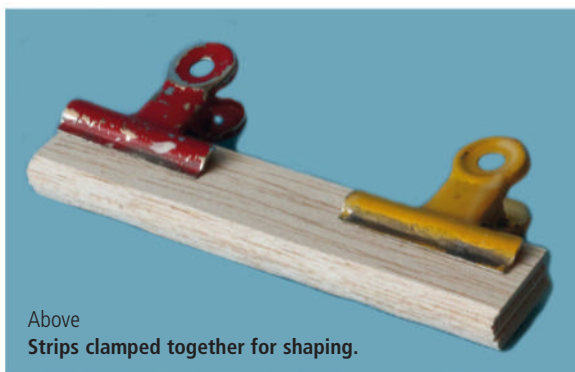
Above
The necessary tools.



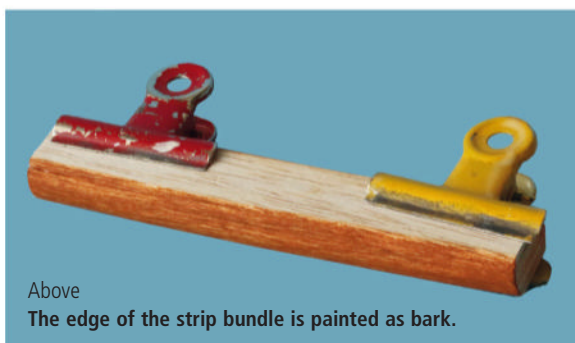
Below The raw material.



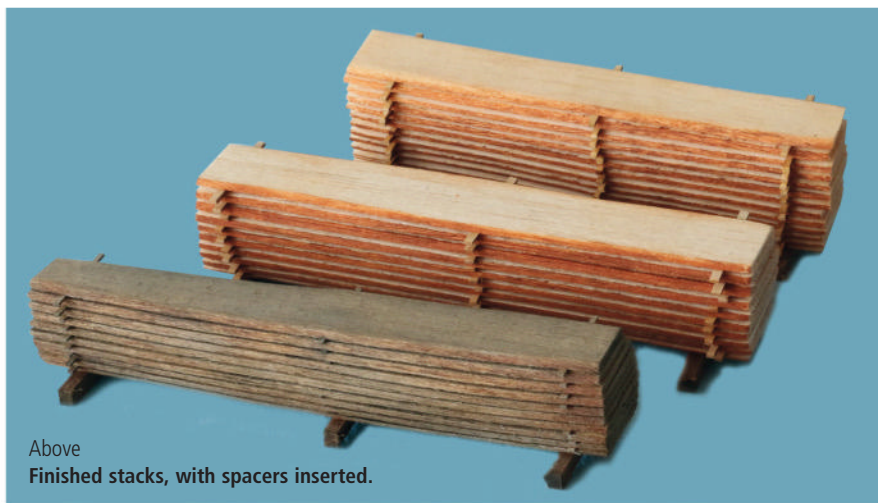
Above
Strips cut to a suitable width.



Above
Strips clamped together for shaping.



Above
The edge of the strip bundle is painted as bark.



Above
Finished stacks, with spacers inserted.



Above
Stacks of planks being made in model form.



Left
Planks as a lorry load.



Right
A stack as a lineside detail.



Below
Stacks in the timber yard, and loaded for transport.

Reviews

Evaluated by our own specialist staff



HO

early Deutsche Reichsbahn BR02 new from Brawa



The Deutsche Reichsbahn developed the BR02 Pacific in parallel with the 01 from 1925 in order to make a direct comparison between two-cylinder simple and four-cylinder compound designs. Evaluation was carried out in everyday operation at Erfurt, Hamm P, and Hof depots to test which would be more suitable. Due to defects in the steam passages, the 02 could not fully exploit the advantages of compounding compared to the simple 01. In addition, the higher maintenance costs ensured the decision to give preference to the 01 for series production. The ten 02 locomotives were converted to 01 at the Reichsbahn works in Meiningen between 1937 and 1942 and renumbered as 01 011 (ex 02 001) and 01 233-241 (ex 02 002-010). All ten passed to the DB after the war, and 001 234-4 based at Hof was the last to be decommissioned, in 1972.

The first version of this model appears in late 2022. It is now available in early DRG Epoch II form as 02 003, based at Erfurt P shed, in 'Prussian' dark green with Indian red frames.



The model is very accurate in all dimensions, according to published data, and displays a great deal of fine detail. The markings are all very sharply printed.

The boiler, cab, running plate, and tender body are injection moulded plastic, with a few features formed in place (e.g. lubrication lines) but the majority of the details added as separate parts – the model is enhanced with steps, handrails, pipework, conduits, sandpipes, cylinder and valve chest 'plumbing', handwheels, valves, safety valves, steam manifold, generator, and air pump. The cab boasts a detailed backhead, and even a separate reversing wheel. The chimney is a separate metal casting. Piston tail rod covers are provided for the modeller to fit if curves allow.

The motion is made of blackened metal parts, with a plastic crosshead; this loco has the welded motion brackets.

The chassis is cast metal, with open bar frames as well detailed as the body. The wheels have fine flanges, allowing a scale wheelbase.

The loco and tender are permanently close-coupled, with electrical connections built into the drawbar.

The tender is no less detailed than the loco, with many added parts, and axleboxes true to the originals.

The model is powered by a double-ended can-type motor with two flywheels in the tender driving the two outer axles through worms and reduction gears. The bogie frames are rigid but all axles are allowed a certain amount of side play, so the minimum radius is 360mm though 420mm is recommended.

All loco wheels and the outer tender axles collect current, to ensure a secure supply.

The model runs smoothly and quietly, and is controllable across the speed range, from an almost imperceptible crawl to a realistic maximum. The model weighs c.612g and there are traction tyres on the four driven tender wheels, so pulling power should be more than enough for most layouts.

The lanterns on the buffer beam are illuminated via light guides from warm-white LEDs. The directional headlights are separately switchable in digital mode, as is the cab light, firebox flicker, and running gear lights.

The loco has a Plux-22 socket for a digital decoder in the firebox.

The model can be obtained with digital sound factory-fitted, using a Döhler & Haass decoder; the loudspeaker is mounted in the smokebox, so the exhaust seems to emanate from the

right area. The exhaust seems well synchronised, and the whistle is excellent! The decoder is multi-protocol, and in all there are no fewer than twenty-six functions. A smoke generator is included; a Seuthe type 20 can be retro-fitted to the analogue model.

Standard couplers are supplied to fit in NEM pockets on close-coupling mounts at each end; the front fitting is optional.

Finely moulded brake pipes, steam heat hoses, and dummy scale couplings are provided for the modeller to fit if working couplers are not required.

Full illustrated instructions for loco and decoder are provided in German and English.

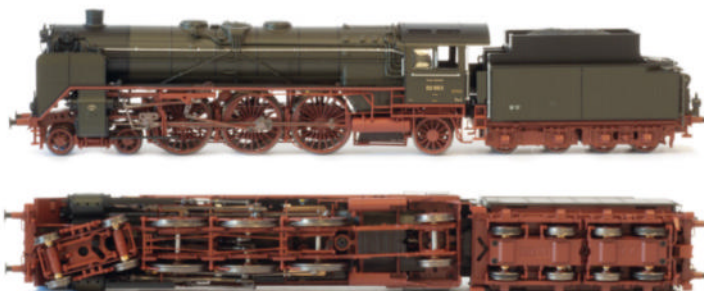


Manufactured by

Brawa,
Uferstraße 26-28
D-73630 Remshalden, Germany.
www.brawa.de

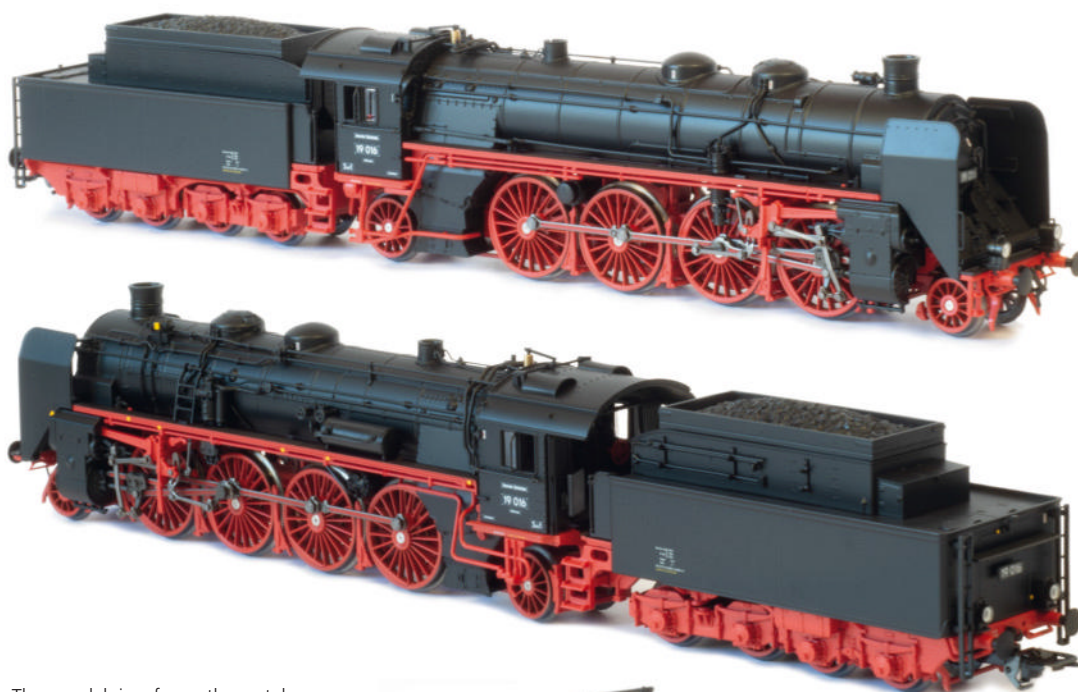
SAMPLE SUPPLIED BY
Mount Tabor Models,
Scarthin, Cromford,
Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3QF.
www.mount-tabor-models.co.uk

PRICE
ref.70098 Digital Extra 495.00.



Shortly before the First World War, the Saxon Machine Factory in Chemnitz developed one of the most powerful steam locomotives of its time, classified XXHV. With four driving axles, an output of 1,800hp, and a service weight of 162 tons, it was a truly mighty express train engine that really showed its strengths in the Saxon mountains. Twenty-three were put into service between 1918 and 1923, the last batches ordered by the newly formed Reichsbahn. Some of these powerhouses, designated as Class 19.0, initially even ran in Swabia. These elegant and powerful locomotives were soon affectionately nicknamed *Sachsenstolz* (the pride of Saxony), having proven themselves exceptionally well in their homeland. After 1945, the DR could not do without them, undertaking extensive refurbishments and even partial reconstruction. Regular service ended in 1958.

Announced at the end of last year, Trix now offer a finely detailed and technically sophisticated model of the BR19⁰ with smoke deflectors and a Saxon 2'2 T31 coal tender as DR 19 016 (instruction leaflets give 017), in early 1950s operating condition (Epoch IIIa).



The model is of mostly metal construction with much intricate detail and many separately applied parts.

Piston rod tail covers, brake hoses, and dummy scale couplers are provided for the modeller to fit if required.

The model is equipped with a dual DCC/mfx digital decoder with numerous operation and sound functions. (Access depends on the control system in use.) These include: headlights; cab lighting; flickering firebox; running gear lights; direct control (no inertia/momentum); low speed range for shunting; smoke generator; operating sounds; whistle; guard's whistle; shunting whistle; generator; injectors; letting off steam; safety valve; coal shovelling; ash grate; squealing brakes; water pump; air pump; sanding; couplers engaging/uncoupling; replenishing coal; replenishing water; replenishing sand; rail joints; and an announcement.

The model has a high-efficiency motor with flywheel mounted in the boiler. Four axles are driven, and the two rear drivers carry traction tyres.

The headlights are directionally controlled. Maintenance-free warm white LEDs are used for the lighting. Cab lighting and the flickering of the fire can be controlled. A smoke unit is installed.

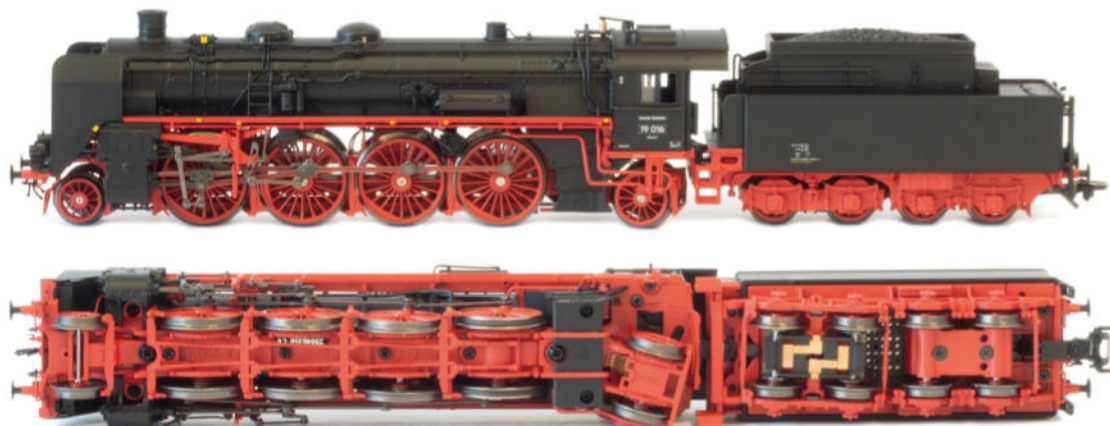


The model is intended for a minimum radius of 437.5mm; with care operation on 360mm is possible.

Total length over buffers is 260mm.

NEM coupler pockets are provided at both ends, with a coupling fitted on the tender and one provided for the front. The buffer height complies with the NEM standard.

An AC three-rail version is offered in the Märklin HO range (ref.38190).



Manufactured by

Trix,
Stuttgarter Straße 55-57,
D-73033 Göppingen, Germany.
www.trix.de

SAMPLE SUPPLIED BY
Mount Tabor Models,
Scarthin, Cromford,
Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3QF.
www.mount-tabor-models.co.uk

PRICE ref.25019 £590.00.



Deutsche Reichsbahn 18 314, later nicknamed 'Schorsch', has an unusual, indeed extraordinary, history. Built in 1919 for the Baden state railways as a class IVh high-performance Pacific, it was taken over by the DRG as 18 314. After the end of the Second World War, the loco was exchanged for an S3/6 and sent to the Soviet zone, where it became the VES-M Halle test centre urgently needed a fast four-cylinder compound loco for test runs. To increase its speed even further, in 1960 it was fitted with a

rebuilt boiler, partial streamlined fairing, a new cab and tender, and gained a green livery. The finishing modification was the conversion to oil firing in 1967. It was taken out of service at the end of 1971 and sold to West Germany in 1984. Since 1986, it has been one of the highlights of the Auto & Technik Museum in Sinsheim.

The new model represents 18 314 with oil-firing and a 2'2'T34 oil tender, with small Witte smoke deflectors and Indusi train control on one side, as it was operating circa 1968 (Epoch III).

The model is of mostly metal construction with much intricate detail and many separately applied parts.

Piston rod tail covers, brake hoses, and dummy scale couplers are provided for the modeller to fit if required. There are also 'brass' safety valves and full lower cab side skirts (without the cutout to allow the trailing truck to swing).



The model is equipped with a dual DCC/mfx digital decoder with numerous operation and sound functions. (Access depends on the control system in use.) These include: headlights; cab lighting; flickering firebox; running gear lights; direct control (no inertia/momentum); smoke generator; operating sounds; whistle; guard's whistle; shunting whistle; generator; injectors; letting off steam; safety valve; oil firing; squealing brakes; water pump; air pump; sanding; couplers engaging; uncoupling; replenishing oil; replenishing water; replenishing sand; and rail joints.

The model has a high-efficiency motor with flywheel mounted in the boiler. Three axles are driven, and the two rear drivers carry traction tyres.

The headlights are directionally controlled. Maintenance-free warm white LEDs are used for the lighting. Cab lighting and the flickering of the fire can be controlled. A smoke unit is installed.

The distance between loco and tender can be closed up for display.

The minimum radius recommended is 360mm.

NEM coupler pockets are provided at both ends, with a standard coupling fitted on the tender and one provided for the front.

An AC three-rail version is offered in the Märklin HO range (ref.39029).



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www.trix.de

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Mount Tabor Models,
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Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3QF.
www.mount-tabor-models.co.uk

PRICE ref.25029 £585.00.



At the end of the Second World War, French railways were short of motive power and to obtain the large number needed quickly locos were ordered from the main American and Canadian builders.

The design was based on a modification of the USRA Light Mikado, suitably adapted to meet the SNCF loading gauge. Modifications included the overall height, the fitting of European couplers and buffers, left-hand drive, smoke deflectors (to a unique and instantly recognisable style), and (on the second batch) a Kylchap exhaust.

The first order for 700 was placed in February 1945 with production split between the big three American builders: Baldwin, American Locomotive Company, and Lima. The second batch of 640 was ordered from the same plus the Canadian manufacturers Montreal Locomotive Works and Canadian Locomotive Company. Most of this batch were built as oil burners, using heavy fuel oil (known in French as *mazout*), unlike the first batch which had all been designed as coal fired.

The massive introduction of oil-fired locomotives was due to the fact that in the immediate post-war period quality coal was in high demand. Oil thus allowed savings, even if in many depots it required a revolution in working conditions. The extra range permitted by oil – 700km instead of 400km – also explains the more intensive use of these locos. The enginemen nicknamed them *mazoutières* or *charbonnières* (coal scuttles) according to fuel employed; oil-burners were also called *goudronneuses* (tar spraying machines) by their crews.

The first engine, built by Lima, left the workshops on 30th July 1945 but 466 was the first to be unloaded in France on 17th November 1945, at the port of Marseille. The last, 1340, left the workshops of Canadian Locomotive Company



in July 1947 and was unloaded at the port of Cherbourg on 5th September.

Seventeen engines (1220-1235 and 1241) were lost at sea when the ship transporting them sank in a violent storm in April 1947. So of the 1,340 engines initially ordered, only 1,323 entered service.

1101–1340 were the only SNCF steam locos with Belpack wheels.

Easy to drive, they offered relatively modern comfort for both drivers and firemen. The cabs were fully enclosed, with driving and firing controls within reach while seated, with automatic coal feeding thanks to the mechanical stoker, while oil firing was even easier. They were *banalisées* (standardised), that is, not assigned to a particular crew.

On 19th October 1975 the last in service, 141 R 1187 of Vénissieux depot, worked a special return trip between Lyon and Veynes.

Several have been preserved, among them the subject of the new Trix model. oil fired 141 R 1244, as currently operational with the Mikado 1244 Association based in Brugg, Switzerland.

The finish is excellent, with all markings very nicely rendered.

Both locomotive and tender are largely made of metal, and the model is very detailed.

Separately applied parts include the whistle, safety valves, generator, speedometer, pipework, pumps, handwheels, handrails, grab handles, lift rings, brake rigging, and lamps. Many 'brass' parts are highlighted.

Brake hoses, steam heating pipes, dummy screw couplings, and piston tail rod covers are included as accessories for the modeller to fit.

The directionally controlled lighting is achieved with maintenance-free warm white LEDs, and the model is equipped with a smoke generator as standard.

It also comes fitted with a digital sound decoder; the device and the loudspeaker are in the tender.

There is a high-performance motor, with flywheel, in the boiler, driving via a reduction gearbox onto the fourth axle.

All four driving axles are powered through the rods.

Two traction tyres are fitted, to the rearmost wheelset.

The minimum recommended radius is 360mm; 500mm is required if the piston tail rod covers are fitted.

There is a two-position link between loco and tender, and a NEM pocket on a close-coupling mount on the rear of the tender; it comes fitted with a Märklin close coupler.

The decoder has up to 27 switchable functions, depending on the controller used. These include directional headlights, double lights for shunting, and cab interior lights.

The smoke generator can be switched from the decoder.

As well as the running sounds, several features can be activated from function buttons: locomotive whistle, shunting whistle, safety valve, letting off steam, air pump, water pump, injectors, adding fuel, sanding, brake squeal, rail joints, coupling noise, and a guard's whistle.

There is also the option of direct control (which overrides the set momentum) and a (reduced) shunting speed.

A three-rail AC version of this model can be found in the Märklin HO range (ref.38141).



Manufactured by

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SAMPLE SUPPLIED BY
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Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3QF.
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PRICE ref.25141 £579.00

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French text

The leading French model railway magazine *Loco-Revue* continues its quarterly additional offering with the eleventh issue (dated March – April – May 2026) which is not a modelling guide on a particular topic but a portrait of one layout – or rather two layouts in one – by Philippe Muzeau, who explains some of his techniques in some detail.

The layout occupies a 4.5m x 3.4m attic room – not vast but large enough for a solo project. Set in Burgundy from the 1960s (a popular area and a popular period with French modellers), it is on two levels and is in effect two separate linked layouts. The lower is the main line, electrified at 1,500v DC, while the upper is a typical *secondaire*, which also features a metre gauge section. The upper level is close to the angled roof in places, while on the main section the scenery drops to floor in places, allowing for an impressive viaduct.

In fact there are three levels, with main line storage sidings below. The levels are linked by impressively engineered helix ramps; the main line ramp height spacing has been carefully arranged to allow use of old rail as the overhead contact simply attached to the underside of the board above.

The work is presented in three main sections:
– from idea to realisation, exploring some of the real locations and services which inspired the project;
– the scenery and structures, with particular attention on the track and catenary along with selected structures;

– and the trains themselves, including graphics showing particular compositions for different periods.

The layout features replicas of local landmarks and structures, giving an authentic atmosphere.

The tour of the metre gauge section involves an unusual Saurer *autorail*, though a couple of different Billards and other trains are also glimpsed.

We learn how sections of the layout have evolved in the light of experience, operation, and the arrival of new products.

The layout looks fairly complete but the account ends with notes on what is still to be done – layouts are never finished!

The work is very well illustrated. All model and most prototype photos are by the author, to a good standard, and all well reproduced on good quality paper.

The photos are not only informatively captioned but there are also key numbers in the text; the material is well laid out to correspond as far as possible. The correlation is not perfect but in only a few places is the relevant image over the page.

There is an excellent plan of the layout, as well as scale drawings of several of the structures.

As usual for *Loco-Revue*, the presentation is clear and straightforward, with restrained use of different fonts for the chapter titles and subheadings, and some use of pull-quotes (lines extracted from the text and enlarged for effect).

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



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

A reasonable knowledge of French will help to get the most from this publication but there is much in the illustrations alone to inspire and inform modellers.

Narrow Gauge Enigma The Story of Peter Rampton and His Collection X

by Stephen D. Phillips

Published by The Vale of Rheidol Railway
Park Avenue, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 1PG.
www.rheidolrailway.co.uk

280mm x 220mm 420pp

Hardback £80.00 + £8.99 p&p

ISBN 978-0-95445-467-8

There are no doubt many modellers who find they have been guilty of acquiring far more locomotives and rolling stock, or kits and accessories, than they can possibly operate on their layouts, or have time to assemble and display – but imagine if that scenario applied to full-size items rescued from a range of countries around the world.

That is exactly what happened in the case of the late Peter Rampton, who almost by accident became a collector of historic narrow gauge locos. Finding himself living in an era when fine examples of engineering were being withdrawn on rail networks across the globe due to modernisation, while also being in the enviable position of being able to afford to do so, he set out to save as many as possible from scrapping or – a fate almost as bad in his eyes – being put on a plinth.

At an early stage he had a vague notion of setting up a museum, or acquiring a trackbed on which to run his purchases, but so high were the standards of restoration he considered essential that relatively few items reached the completion stage. Despite his involvement in the creation of the Brecon Mountain Railway and acquisition of the Vale of Rheidol Railway, his growing collection remained tightly packed into barns at a farm in Surrey – and became the legendary and much whispered about but seldom viewed Collection X.

The author of this book was in the relatively rare position of being able to win the confidence of the reclusive Mr Rampton and was allowed access to measure, photograph, and record his collection while it was still in Surrey – no easy matter as some locos

were actually supporting the roofs intended to shelter them. Now the collection's full extent has been at last been made public, this book allows us to appreciate the many items which have yet to be restored or displayed. Fittingly the introduction begins with a quote from Peter, with regard to his locomotives, that "I've done my bit saving them – it's up to others now to do something with them."

The story begins with Peter's childhood years in Surbiton, where his introduction to trains comprised Southern Railway services passing through the London suburb's art deco station and running a live steam Bassett-Lowke O gauge Mogul on a layout in the loft of the family home. Boarding school at Malvern College broadened Peter's horizons to the BR Western Region scene on the Worcester to Hereford line, which ran past the school.

The family's wealth came from the then prolific Freemans mail order catalogue business of which Peter's father was a joint Managing Director.

It was also in the late 1960s that Peter met the young trainee teacher Nigel Bowman – today the owner of the Launceston Steam Railway in Cornwall and who has appropriately written one of the forewords to this book. At that time Nigel had almost completed the restoration of the former Penrhyn Quarry, of North Wales, 1883-built Hunslet 0-4-0ST *Lillian*, and Peter offered him use of one of his barn buildings for finishing the project. It was not long before Peter himself also began wanting to acquire narrow gauge steam locos to restore.

However, by that time the UK supply of 2' gauge engines was drying up so Peter began using his contacts to find obsolete equipment abroad. He first turned his attention to a 600mm gauge former colliery line in Northern Spain, the Hulleras de Sabero y Anexas, and bought its entire loco fleet of Couillet of Belgium 0-6-0Ts, a Borsig 0-6-2T, and German Henschel 0-4-0Ts and an 0-4-2T, as well as the company director's four-wheel balcony saloon. Another early acquisition, this time from the Compagnie Industrielle des Sables des Nemours sand quarry in France, was a Dick Kerr former First World War 0-4-0 petrol-electric tractor

which in time became invaluable for shunting other stock arriving at the farm.

All of these items are detailed in the book with background information, photographs, and line drawings, as are all items from the collection.

A visit to South Africa in 1969 opened up a new source of acquisitions, these initially comprising an unusual 1931 Avonside Heisler loco, Renishaw No.4, and a 1936 Bagnall articulated 0-4+4-0T, Renishaw No.5. Both duly arrived in Surrey after complex shipping arrangements from Durban.

During the mid-1970s Peter looked seriously into acquiring a disused trackbed on which to run the equipment he had acquired, with those eventually rejected including the long closed 1'11½" gauge Lynton & Barnstaple Railway and the more recently disused standard gauge Moretonhampstead branch in Devon, the Bridport and Lyme Regis branches in Dorset, and the course of the former Elan Valley reservoirs construction railway in mid Wales. In the end he collaborated with the late Tony Hills on acquiring the former South Wales standard gauge trackbed which was relaid in 1'11½" gauge as the Brecon Mountain Railway – today a line with an American flavour thanks to its Baldwin motive power. Its earlier days, however, saw trains being hauled by the 1908 vintage Arnold Jung 0-6-2WT *Graf Schwerin Löwitz*, built for the 600mm Mecklenburg-Pommersche Schmalspurbahn in eastern Germany and acquired by Tony Hills from the Deutsche Reichsbahn in 1972. Although Peter Rampton later ended his involvement with the BMR, this loco features in the book because it has now been acquired by the Vale of Rheidol Railway as part of its museum collection displayed alongside Collection X items.

The mid-1970s was also noteworthy for a visit to the Isle of Man Railway to view the many Victorian 3' gauge coaches that had been abandoned in the sheds at St. John's following closure of the Peel and Ramsey lines. He was able to purchase four bogie coaches and two ex-Manx Northern Railway Cleminson six-wheelers – very luckily as it turned out as many of the vehicles left behind were destroyed in a subsequent shed fire or by the scrapmen. In Surrey, the rescued coaches were

RAIL Magazine Special 23 In het spoor van Evan Daes

Uitgeverij Uquilair B.V.,
Biestkampweg 39,
5249 JZ Rosmalen, The Netherlands.
www.railmagazine.nl
298mm x 230mm 116pp
Softback €11.95
ISSN 0926-3489 Dutch text

Evan Daes is well known in The Netherlands and beyond, through appearances with layouts at various exhibitions, as a talented modeller. For some years now he has made his hobby his profession, custom building dioramas and layouts. This new special edition from *RAIL Magazine* presents three of his recent commissions and a number of modelling tutorials, some based on scenes in the featured layouts, explaining his techniques and the products used.

The layouts are *Rosebecq* (twenty pages), an imaginary village in the Dinant area of Belgium, with steam giving way to diesel and electric motive power. A short section of metre gauge Vicinal is included. The layout is in a long and relatively narrow loft space with the unusual but eminently practical feature of the storage sidings being behind sliding glass panels.

Klein Zermatt (ten pages) is a Swiss alpine scene, L-shaped 5m x 4.5m with tall mountain scenery and both standard and metre gauge tracks on several levels, all topped with a snow scene.

Vennheim (twenty pages) is an imaginary location on the former Vennbahn, on the Belgian – German border. The layout is an unequal U-shape, with one side extended at an angle, and also appears to be situated in a roof space

All three layouts are HO, and all employ a considerable amount of hidden track.

In each case plans of both the scenic and hidden sections are provided, but dimensions are not always given.

The tutorial section features: a diorama depicting a mountain stream; adding three-rail centre contacts to Peco code 100 track, using custom-etched parts; building a large stone arch bridge; overhead catenary; adapting commercial kits with new colouring and extra details; ballasting, with examples of different brands of track; and a tunnel mouth with retaining walls. The articles are between three and eight pages. In each case the work is illustrated with clear step-by-step photos, and the tools and materials used are listed, often specific proprietary products.

The collection is rounded off with 'a diorama whipped up out of thin air' which describes the construction of a scene centred on a small railway bridge (a laser-cut kit) over a stream, which was built as a demonstration piece for a competition.

The photographs, most by the author/modeller, are in colour throughout and of high quality, all reproduced very well on high quality paper. Many of the layout views are presented full page width, and several as double page spreads – both the modelling and the images merit such expansive treatment, in the usual clear *RAIL Magazine* style.

The special includes eight pages of advertising – for *RAIL Magazine*, other Uquilair publications, and various scenic products used in the features.

While a reasonable knowledge of Dutch will be required to get the most from this publication, the modelling speaks for itself.



placed on temporary 2' gauge ex-WD bogies acquired in France and ran during a few farm open days.

By a strange twist of fate, in the last few years a number of those coaches have been returned to the Isle of Man for restoration to use on the remaining Port Erin line, though the one coach which Peter did fully restore and convert to 1'11½" gauge using his own patent bogies is on display at Aberystwyth.

Also added to the eclectic mix of items arriving at the farm were a Ransomes & Rapier mobile steam crane and a larger standard gauge crane from the Longmoor Military Railway – both of which saw use lifting heavy wooden coaches or rusting locomotives off low loaders.

A return to northern Spain saw the elegant Hudswell, Clarke & Co 0-4-2STs *San Justo* and *Santa Ana* being acquired from the 600mm gauge San Salvadore Iron Co. in Santander, before next South Africa yielded up such treasures as a Bagnall 0-4-2T from the Rustenburg Platinum Mines (a sister to *Isaac*, now at Statfold Barn, and *Gelert*, now at the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway) and, more impressive still, ex-South African Railways Hanomag-built NGG13 Garratt No.82. The book also features drawings and photos of the more recently acquired NGG13 No.60 *Drakensberg*, which is today operational on the VoR after arriving in Wales via the Schinznacher Baumschulbahn garden centre line in Switzerland, where it was too large to operate round its tight curves.

In 1983 Peter Rampton finally realised his aim of setting up a self-supporting trust to look after his growing railway collection while also benefiting from tax concessions yielding funds for restoration projects. He named it the Phyllis Rampton Narrow Gauge Railway Trust after his late mother and invested money from his late parents' estate as part of the trust's assets. This subsequently facilitated the 1988 purchase by Peter and Tony Hills of the Vale of Rheidol Railway from British Rail. In the decades since there has been much investment in restoring stations and views lost to tree growth, as well as in conversion of the former GWR loco shed at Aberystwyth as a museum to display items from the collection.

The 1990s saw nineteen more locos joining the Surrey collection, with India now added as a source. Attempts to acquire a Darjeeling Himalayan B Class were ultimately unsuccessful (the book also profiles a number of other locos which could not be purchased) but Peter was able to buy two Gwalior Light Railway Bagnall Pacific tender locos which have just recently been displayed in their unrestored state at the VoRR.

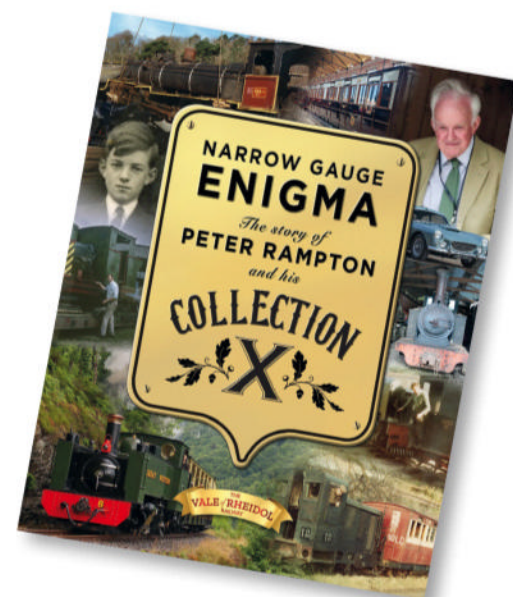
Other purchases included, from South Africa, Henschel-built SAR NG15 2-8-2 No.121 and two Falcon ex-Beira Railway 4-4-0 'Lawleys', while from closer to home came the 2'6" gauge Bagnall 0-6-2T *Conqueror* built for Bowaters Paper Mill and later used at Whipsnade Zoo. It has recently been donated to the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway.

What fate awaits other 2'6" items in the collection has yet to be revealed. They include, from India, a Bengal Nagpur Railway CC class 4-6-2 built by North British, a Parklakimedi Light Railway 0-6-4T No.PL695 and Indian Railways 'Delta' class 2-6-2T No.AK16.

Peter also acquired various small industrial locos, including a Kerr, Stuart Wren 0-4-0ST and a Ruston, Proctor & Co.Ltd. 4w paraffin mechanical shunter. Ex-Penrhyn Quarry items in the collection include the De Winton of Caernarfon vertical boiler 0-4-0 *Kathleen* and the Quarry Hunslet *Margaret* – and in recent years the ex-Cilgwyn and Penrhyn quarries Manning Wardle 0-6-0ST *Jubilee 1897*, once a long-term resident at the Tallylyn Railway's Narrow Gauge Museum in Tywyn but released for the sadly short-lived PQR revival scheme at Coed y Parc, Bethesda, has also joined the VoRR museum collection.

Other smaller locos from further afield include Fowler 0-6-0Ts, 0-4-2Ts, and 0-4-0Ts used on sugar cane lines in locations as far apart as Fiji and Mozambique.

As the book highlights, Peter's legacy of the Phyllis Rampton Trust has seen further items being added to its collection, most notably in 2001 when an auction which followed the passing of French collector Jean-Bernard Mervaux saw the acquisition of a Decauville 0-4-0T used in a ceramics factory in France, and a J.A.Maffei of Munich ex-German Feldbahn 0-8-0T *Brigadelok* loco and accompanying water tender.



A similar auction which followed the passing of Adrian Shooter, of Chiltern Railways and Beeches Light Railway fame, saw his Model T Ford rail inspection car, based on one from the Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes Railroad in Maine, also join the museum exhibits.

All in all, this book tells the story of an extraordinary man and his remarkable collection, helping to reveal its full extent after years of speculation and obscurity. Although there are some text errors which have escaped the proof-readers, and modellers wanting to use the detailed drawings may question the wisdom of printing some of the larger ones across page spreads with gutters, it is an impressive, absorbing, and useful piece of research with many photographs, both colour and black & white, and high production values, that go a long way towards justifying the hefty price tag. SA



66 years of Roco



To mark the 66th anniversary of the brand, Roco presented its new anniversary locomotive 1216 006-7 on 8th April at Salzburg Central Station. Numerous invited guests and media representatives attended the event.

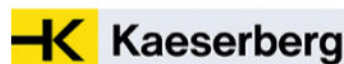
A particular highlight was the official christening of the locomotive by Governor Karoline Edtstadler, who symbolically sent the loco on its way. In her

address, she praised the significance of Roco as a company with strong regional roots, steeped in tradition yet also innovative.

The specially decorated Taurus features a depiction of the legend of Europa and the bull.

The HO model will be ref.7500103 DC and ref.7510103 DCC sound.

www.roco.cc



Kaeserberg

train of the month June

St.Moritz – Scuol-Tarasp passenger

ABe4/4, 440kW, 39t, 65km/h

Load: 18 axles, 104t, 287 seats

The ABe4/4 railcars were acquired for light express trains in 1939-40 to add extra services into the existing timetable. This was so successful that the sets soon had to be lengthened. As the power of the railcars was no longer sufficient, they were transferred to the Engadine region where, from the mid-1940s, they operated on the flatter routes, St.Moritz – Scuol-Tarasp and Samedan – Pontresina.

At Kaeserberg, ABe4/4 501 pulls a train consisting of a standard type I second, a standard type II composite, and a four-wheel baggage van from 1913. For the summer season, the train is re-inforced with a SIG centre-entrance coach built in 1956 and a heavy SIG coach from 1930.

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



50 years of Bemo



Conversations with the Rhätische Bahn set the project of a commemorative container designed by Bemo in motion.

After initial design ideas, test photos of the milestone RhB loco models by Bemo were taken on their display layout and several proposals were submitted to the graphic designer. Through numerous rounds of refinement, the legendary 'Crocodile' and the Ge4/4^{II} and ^{III} were selected as the most significant models from the early decades. The yellow Bernina nostalgia railcar, the 'Ancestor Train', and the Capricorn were chosen as distinctive railcars.

On 25th March 2026, the anniversary container had vinyls applied at the main workshop in Landquart. Wagon Sb 65616 will run on the RhB for a year to commemorate the anniversary. Models will be available in HOm and HO.

As part of the anniversary celebrations, Bemo are holding a photo competition. The winning image must be a landscape-format photo of the anniversary wagon taken in Graubünden. Only one photo per entrant is permitted.

Submissions must be received by 1st August 2026, via

mail@bemo-modellbahn.de

in print-ready resolution with a maximum file size of 20 MB.

By submitting a photo, you grant Bemo the rights to publish it. The winning photos will be featured on the back of BEMO Post 68.

First prize is a model locomotive (not Metal Collection models or multi-car train sets). Second and third places will each receive an item of rolling stock of their choice. There is no cash alternative. Good luck taking the perfect photo!



Etched letters from Matho

Belgian scenic specialists Matho offer another useful accessory:
ref.80010 – etched upper case letters, 6mm high, suitable for all scales.

www.mathomodels.com



Latest HO trams by Halling



The legendary Vienna type G available again!

A true piece of Viennese tram history returns: the Halling model of the Vienna type G is back in stock!

The type G trams are among the most important vehicles on the Vienna tram system. A total of 520 were delivered, 400 to the BBG (Vienna Public Transport Company) and 120 to the NWT (Vienna Public Transport Company). This made the type G one of the most numerous trams.

The first vehicles were procured as early as 1900 and shaped the Viennese cityscape for decades. They were used in passenger service until 1967, and many continued to be used after that, remaining in service as maintenance vehicles until 1991. Numerous modifications over the years attest to their long and versatile use.

The model represents No.961, the version with six windows and an open platform, in original condition from 1906 onwards.

Particular attention was paid to the delicate decorative lining, which has been rendered even more finely than before.

The model has a plastic contact arm.

It is available as a standard rolling model with metal axles or as a powered model with M-drive and a Mabuchi motor.



The final act of a remarkable series

Throughout its history, the Graz tramway has been adapted to meet the changing demands of fluctuating passenger numbers and technical innovations. In roughly 100 years, over 550 vehicles have been acquired and, in some cases, extensively modified.

The conversion of vehicles in the company's own workshops has a long tradition, as does the acquisition of used vehicles from other cities, since the system suffered for a long time from a severe shortage of both funds and vehicles.

In 2007 the fleet was expanded with trams from Vienna (series 290, formerly E1) which had been built at the Lohner carriage and wagon factory.

The new Halling models are based on the Vienna E1, with careful attention to the many small differences that make these cars true Graz originals.

They are available as rolling display models or motorised models with directional lighting and a NEM651 interface.

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

American Z Line latest releases



The General Electric C44-9W is offered in CN (IC) form, with two numbers available, #2704 and #2718.

The models are DCC ready and feature the AZL 7mm diameter motor, dual flywheels, prototype specific details, separately applied grab irons, directionally controlled LED lighting, ditch lights, blackened metal wheels, optional front truck with mounted coupler, and AutoLatch™ couplers.



Two numbers are available on the GM-EMD F7A as MKT (KATY) #72C and #75C.



Two Southern Pacific numbers are available for the GM-EMD SD50, #5504 and #5513.

The models have prototype specific details with separately applied grab irons, and include directionally controlled LED lighting, blackened metal wheels, traction tyres, AutoLatch™ couplers, pre-installed front pilots/ploughs, and optional truck with coupler.

The GM-EMD GP30u in BN – BNSF transition patch livery is the first upgraded GP30 version AZL has offered, with two numbers, #2822 and #2830.

The 2026 run is DCC ready and features prototype specific details, AZL 7mm diameter motor, dual flywheels, pre-installed pilot, upgraded PCB, directionally controlled LED lighting, optional front truck with mounted coupler, blackened metal wheels, and AutoLatch™ couplers.



The bay window caboose appears in CSX livery with Operation Lifesaver lettering, as #903966 and #903913.



www.americanzline.com

Bridport club visits Peco

On Wednesday 25th March members of the Bridport & District Model Railway Club visited the Peco factory at Beer.

Proceedings began with coffee in the Orion Pullman car which has been a favourite attraction for many years.

After an initial introduction, the members were split into two groups to enjoy a very interesting and thorough tour of the factory.

The visitors were shown in great detail how many different products are made

by the loyal workforce of local tradespeople, often working on very sophisticated equipment. These items are sold all over the world.

After the very informative tour, the club members returned to Orion for a light lunch and a talk by Mr Michael Pritchard, Chairman, and son of the founder, who gave a short history of the company.

After lunch club members were able to visit the model shop.



The club meets on Tuesday evenings between 7pm and 9pm in Askerswell Village Hall and anyone is welcome to join.

The club's next exhibition is on Saturday 1st August at the Sir John Colfox School, Bridport, open from 10am until 4pm.

Exhibition Diary

Dates, events, and information

Please send details for possible inclusion to:

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

E-mail: clubs@railwaymodeller.co.uk

Saturday 23 May

SAFFRON WALDEN, Essex

Organiser: Saffron Walden MRC.

Venue: Abbey Lane URC Hall, Abbey Lane, Saffron Walden, CB10 1AG.

Open: 1000-1600

Admission: free but organisers welcome a donation to the chosen charity (St.Johns Ambulance Brigade).

Amenities: parking at Swan Meadow Car Park, satnav CB10 1DA, c.400m from the venue and signposted; card only pay & display.

Features: up to 7 layouts including *Varicourt* (First World War French village scene, O09) and *Dayton Valley Railroad* (US N). Club secondhand stall with American and British N, and one trader.

Website: www.lawlogg.uk

Saturday 23 & Sunday 24 May GLASGOW

SCOTTISH FESTIVAL

OF RAILWAY MODELLING

Organiser: Renfrewshire MRC.

Venue: Braehead Arena, Kings Inch Road, Glasgow, G51 4BN.

Open: both days 1000-1700

Admission: adults £12.00, accompanied children free.

Amenities: from M8 eastbound J25, M8 westbound J25a. Multiple car parks around the shopping centre, with free parking. Railway stations a short bus ride away.

Features: over 40 layouts including *Auswiss* (Austrian/Swiss HO). Demonstrations, trade.

E-mail: info@renfrewshiremrc.co.uk

Website: www.thescottishfestivalof railwaymodelling.co.uk

Saturday 23 & Sunday 24 May ANDOVER, Hampshire

Organiser: Salisbury & South Wilts RS.

Venue: Thruxton Centre, Thruxton Circuit, Andover, Hampshire SP11 8PN.

Open: Saturday 1000-1630

Sunday 0930-1600

Admission: adults £10.00, children 5-16 £2.00, accompanied U5s free, family (2+2) £22.00.

Amenities: free parking; full disabled access; catering.

Features: 20+ layouts including *Kaninchenbau* (automated alpine HOe, CM February 2022).

Contact: Exhibition Publicity Manager David Graney, 07768 448369.

Website: www.sandswrs.co.uk

Saturday 30 & Sunday 31 May HULL, East Riding of Yorkshire

Organiser: Hull MRS CIO.

Venue: The Event Space, Princes Quay, Hull city centre, HU1 2PQ.

Open: Saturday 1000-1700

Sunday 1000-1600

Admission: adult £8.00, one child free with each adult, additional children £1.00.

Amenities: entry to large on-site car park is via Waterhouse Lane (satnav HU1 2PS/what3words: atomic.figure.salon). 10 minute walk from bus and rail at Hull Paragon Interchange.

Features: 14 layouts including *Megsdorf* (German HO, CM August 2025). Trade.

E-mail: hullmrs@gmail.com

Website: www.hullmrs.org

Saturday 23 & Sunday 24 May BEER, Devon

BEER HEIGHTS LIGHT RAILWAY GALA

Organiser: Peco Model Railways.

Venue: Pecorama, Underleys, Beer, Seaton, Devon, EX12 3NA.

Open: both days 1000-1700

Admission: £27.50, under 3s free, dogs £2.00. Card payments only – book via website.

Amenities: free parking. Note site is steep in places. Extensive gardens, mini golf, former 'Golden Arrow' Pullman car Orion, exhibition of layouts in a variety of scales and gauges showing how model railways can be set up in a range of home and garden settings, and well-stocked model shop. The ticket also allows a 10% discount on purchases from the model shop. Refreshments available.

With Pecorama temporarily closed for the 2026 season, this is one of three planned gala events where the mile long 7¼" gauge BHLR, one of the finest lines of that gauge in the UK, can be enjoyed.

Contact: 01297 21542.

Website: www.pecorama.co.uk

Friday 29 & Saturday 30 May BANGOR, County Down, Northern Ireland

Organiser: City Church (formerly First Bangor) MRC.

Venue: City Church, Main Street, Bangor, Co.Down, BT20 5AF.

Open: Friday 1900-2130

Saturday 1000-1630

Admission: adults £7.00, children £3.00, family £15.00. In aid of church charities.

Amenities: town centre venue in Main Street near its junction with Central Avenue. Limited parking in the church grounds, but on-street parking is also available, as well as a short walk away in the Asda store car park off Main Street. Bus stops are close by and the church is a short walk along Abbey Street and Main Street from Bangor railway station. Venue has disabled toilets and lifts.

Features: over 30 layouts ranging from O gauge to T gauge, plus other model displays, including cars, tractors, and planes, plus crafts.

E-mail: secretary@firstbangormrc.co.uk

Thursday 4 June

BEER, Devon

Peco factory tours

Organiser: Peco Model Railways.

Venue: Peco, Underleys, Beer, near Seaton, Devon, EX12 3NA.

Cost: Silver Experience 0915-1200 £40.00 per person.

Gold Experience 0915-1500

£65.00 per person;

£120.00 for two booking together.

Amenities: free parking. Visitors must be over the age of 10 and, as this is a

working factory, they must wear closed shoes. Note also that this tour involves walking around the site, with flights of stairs and standing for long periods.

Features: after meeting a tour leader in the 'Golden Arrow' Pullman car *Orion* for refreshments and a safety briefing, join a two-hour behind-the-scenes experience. From raw materials to finished products, see where model railway track, wagons, and accessories have been rolling off the production line for the last 80 years. You will watch track components being assembled, learn about the different machines used, and see the finished products being packaged, ready for shipping around the world.

For the Gold Experience, refreshments will be provided throughout the day, including a light lunch served in *Orion*, followed by a 30-minute Q&A session with a member of the Peco management team. There will then be an opportunity to get 'hands-on' making a souvenir limited edition 009 wagon to take home. Finally, there will be the opportunity to visit the Peco model railway exhibition and shop, and take advantage of a 10% discount.

Website: www.peco-uk.com

E-mail: tina.bishop@peco.co

Saturday 6 June LUDLOW, Shropshire

Organiser: Craven Arms & District MRC.

Venue: Ludlow Racecourse, Bromfield, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 2BT.

Open: 1000-1600

Admission: adults £7.00, accompanied under 16s free.

Amenities: on the A49 Shrewsbury - Hereford road. Ample free parking on site, including disabled spaces. Ludlow station 2.6 miles and Craven Arms station 6 miles. Wheelchair-friendly venue with café.

Features: layouts include *Le Vieux Hameau* (French HOe, CM July 2025) and *San Clemente* (US HO, CM September 2024). Demonstrations, societies, trade.

Contact: Chris Jamieson, 07510 109347.

E-mail: cadmrcehibitions@gmail.com

Saturday 6 June MILTON KEYNES

Organiser: Milton Keynes MRS.

Venue: Walton High Brooklands Campus, Fen Street, Brooklands, Milton Keynes, MK10 7HE.

Open: 1000-1630

Admission: adults £8.00, children (5-16) £2.00, under 5s free.

Amenities: new, larger venue. Free parking or use Milton Keynes Park & Ride near M1 J14, then take Arriva bus No.3 or UNO bus C1. 30 minutes walk. Town railway station is also served by Arriva bus No.3. Refreshments.

Features: around 29 layouts including *Santa Barbara* (US N, CM October 2011), *Furka Oberalp* (Swiss HOm), and *Klien Schmalitz* (German HO, CM January 2025). Trade.

E-mail: secretary@mkMrs.org.uk

Website: www.mkMrs.org.uk

Saturday 6 & Sunday 7 June WEST SHEPTON, Somerset

MENDIP RAIL

Organiser: Shepton & District MRS.

Venue: Shepton Scout Hall & SDMRs Club Room, Old Wells Road, West Shepton, Shepton Mallet, BA4 5XN.

Open: Saturday 1100-1700

Sunday 1000-1600

Admission: adults £7.00, accompanied children free.

Amenities: on-site parking.

Features: a variety of layouts including *Mills Falls* (US HO, in this issue).

Website:

www.sheptonmrs.wordpress.com

Sunday 7 June ASHTED, Surrey

Summer Rendezvous

Organiser: French Railways Society.

Venue: Ashted Peace Memorial Hall, Woodfield Lane, Ashted, Surrey, KT21 2BE.

Open: 1000-1600

Admission: adults £8.00, children £2.00.

Amenities: free parking. Refreshments.

Features: layouts and illustrated talks. Plus specialist societies, bring & buy stall, and trade.

E-mail: markjury007@aol.com

Website:

www.frenchrailwaysociety.co.uk

Saturday 13 June BILLERICAY, Essex

Organiser: Billericay MRC.

Venue: Hannakins Farm Community Centre, Rosebay Avenue, Billericay, CM12 0XP.

Open: 1000-1600

Admission: adults £6.00, children £3.00, family tickets £14.00.

Amenities: free parking. Billericay station is close by and local buses also stop nearby. Light refreshments.

Features: 15 layouts in a range of scales, including *Himalayan Adventure* (O09), *Broken Creek* (US HO, CM ???), and *Bayou Scie* (On30). Trade.

E-mail: secretary@billericaymrc.org

Website: www.billericaymrc.org

Saturday 13 June BURTON-ON-TRENT, Staffordshire

Organiser:

7mm Narrow Gauge Association.

Venue: Burton Town Hall, King Edward Place, Burton-upon-Trent, DE14 2EB.

Open: 1030-1630

Admission: non-member adult £14.00, family £19.00; member adult £8.00, family £11.00.

Accompanied under 16s free.

Amenities: wheelchair access.

Refreshments and bar.

Features: layouts include *Johannesdorf* (German Oe, CM November 2007), *Megantic* (US On2, CM October 2023), and *Black Diamonds Modular* (US On30). Demonstrations, societies, specialist trade.

E-mail: exhibition@7mmnga.org.uk

Website: www.7mmnga.org.uk

Saturday 13 June

HEWORTH, York, North Yorkshire

Organisers: N Gauge Society Yorkshire Area Group and WorldWide Group.

Venue: Heworth Community Centre, 38, Applecroft Road, Heworth, York, YO31 0HQ.

Open: 1030-1600

Admission: £5.00 per modeller or family group. Under 16s must be accompanied by an adult.

Amenities: limited parking on site so visitors are requested to respect the centre's neighbours when parking in the local area. Local bus No.11 runs from York railway station to Ashley Park Bridge, just outside the Community Centre. Level access throughout. Refreshments available.

Features: modular layouts from both N gauge groups featuring a great variety of styles and scenes from around the world. Extensive T-Trak and Freemo modular circuits featuring British, European, Japanese, and North American scenes. Layouts include *Mühlenfelder* (German N, coming soon in CM) and *Trifoulou* (French Nm, CM October 2025). Club sales, trade (including Mount Tabor Models).

Contact: John Brady, 07818 077663.

E-mail:

www.membershipsec@outlook.com

Websites: <https://yagngs.wixsite.com/yorkshire-area-group>

www.ngaugesociety.org/area-groups/worldwide-group

Saturday 13 June

HUCCLECOTE, Gloucester

Organiser: Gloucester MRC and Hucclecote Methodist Church.

Venue: Hucclecote Methodist Church, Carisbrooke Road, Gloucester, GL3 3QP.

Open: 1000-1700

Admission: adults £6.00, children free.

Amenities: car park, plus free on-street parking nearby. Stagecoach No.10 bus from Lower Tuffley to Cheltenham via Gloucester. Disabled access. Refreshments.

Features: 14 layouts in a variety of scales and gauges, including *Ahmadpur* (Indian 7mm, previewed in this issue). Demonstrations, displays, trade.

E-mail: info@hucclecotemc.org.uk

Website: www.hmcms.org.uk

www.gloucestermodelrailway.org

Saturday 13 & Sunday 14 June

MERE, Wiltshire

Organiser:

Mere & District Railway Modellers.

Venue: Mere Lecture Halls, Salisbury Street, Mere, BA12 6HA.

Open: 1000-1600

Admission: adults £7.00, accompanied under 16s free.

Amenities: free parking in adjacent public car parks. Light refreshments.

Features: at least 12 layouts, including *Somewhere in France* (WWI OO9). Demonstrations, trade.

E-mail: paddy.newton@sky.com

Website:

www.meremodellers.co.uk

Tuesday 16 June

BEER, Devon

Silver Experience Peco factory tour
Gold Experience Peco factory tour
Details as for Thursday 4 June

Saturday 20 June

BANSTEAD, Surrey

Organiser:

North Downs Model Railway Circle.

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

Open: 1000-1700

Admission: adults £6.00, senior/disabled £5.00, under 16s £3.00, families (2+2) £12.00.

Proceeds to 3rd Banstead Scout Group.

Amenities: free parking; refreshments.

Features: 21 layouts, including *Sankt Martin* (German DB HO) and *Potomac Street* (US B&O HO). Trade.

Contact: Stuart Robinson, 07758 458827.

E-mail: stuart.robinson27@ntlworld.com

Website: www.ndmrc.info

Saturday 20 June

EASTBOURNE, East Sussex

Organiser: Pevensey Bay MRC.

Venue: Victoria Baptist Church Hall, Eldon Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 1UE.

Open: 1000-1600

Admission: adults £7.00, children (over 5) £1.00, family (2+2) £14.00.

Amenities: Stagecoach bus No.1A runs nearby on Eldon Road. Large car park; wheelchair accessible; refreshments.

Features: layouts include *Brunswick* (German N, CM August 2023), *Hockenbaum* (German Nm), *Sonne, See, und Schmalspur* (German HOe, CM September 2004), and *Caravanserai* (Egyptian OO9, coming in CM).

E-mail: PevenseyBayMRC@gmail.com

Website: www.pbmrc.club

Saturday 20 & Sunday 21 June

BUXTON, Derbyshire

Organiser: Railex Buxton.

Venue: Buxton Pavilion Gardens, St. John's Road, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 6BE.

Open: Saturday 0930-1700

Sunday 0930-1630

Admission: variable entry periods – tickets priced from £7.50. See website for details. Entry valid for the day of purchase only, not transferable. Children must remain under supervision at all times. Unaccompanied 13-18 year-olds can enter at the discretion of the door staff but no large groups. Full colour A4 guide £2.50.

Amenities: on-site pay & display parking accessed from Burlington Road (£5.40 all day) or at nearby railway station and Palace Hotel. Disabled parking free at venue. A few exhibits on a stage accessed only by steps. Cafés, restaurant.

Features: 50% larger venue than previously. Over 30 layouts including *Sakura Cherry Blossom* (Japanese N), *Fort Whiting* (colonial OO9, CM March 2021), *Kaninchenbau* (alpine HOe, CM February 2022), *Megantic* (US On2, CM October 2023), *Karolina Falls* (US On30, CM September 2014), and *Purgatory Peak* (US On30, CM November 2011). Demonstrations, societies, trade.

E-mail: mbhenshaw1967@gmail.com

Website: www.railexbuxton.co.uk

Meetings

Thursday 4 June – 1930

Lutterworth Railway Society

The Swiss Railway Scene

by Sholto Thomas.

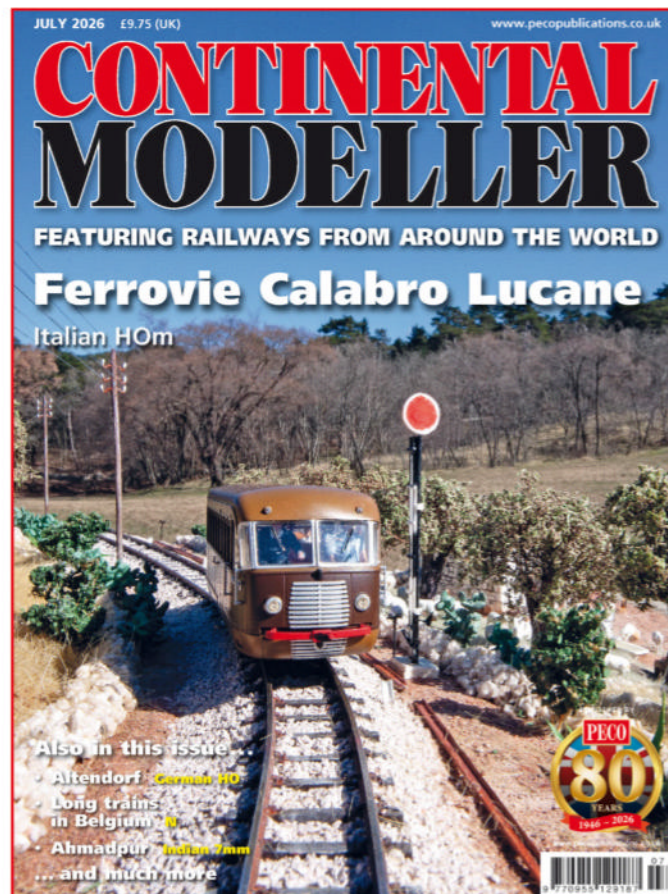
Venue: The Pavilion, Recreation Ground, Coventry Road, Lutterworth, Leicestershire, LE17 4RB.

Admission: members £2.00, guests £5.00.

Contact: Phil Lindsey on 07554 192217
philliplindsey@gmail.com

Coming next month

out 18th June



• Ferrovie Calabro Lucane

Davide Raseni presents an impression in HOm of the neglected 950mm gauge system in southern Italy which was an early user of diesel railcars.

• Altendorf

Ronald Barrink has created a compact HO depiction of a German *Bahnbetriebswerk* (steam loco depot) which illustrates all the necessary servicing activities.

• Long trains through Belgium

Dries Reubens designed a layout in N to show long trains of authentic Belgian stock running through the landscape. It can show different periods – here the current scene.

• Ahmadpur

As previewed in this issue, Stewart Blencowe describes the 7mm scale layout he was inspired to build after visiting this broad/narrow gauge interchange.

• TRAXX GTS Rail E.483 001

Roberto Macchi shows how he enhanced an HO electric from A.C.M.E. by fitting two decoders for more functions.

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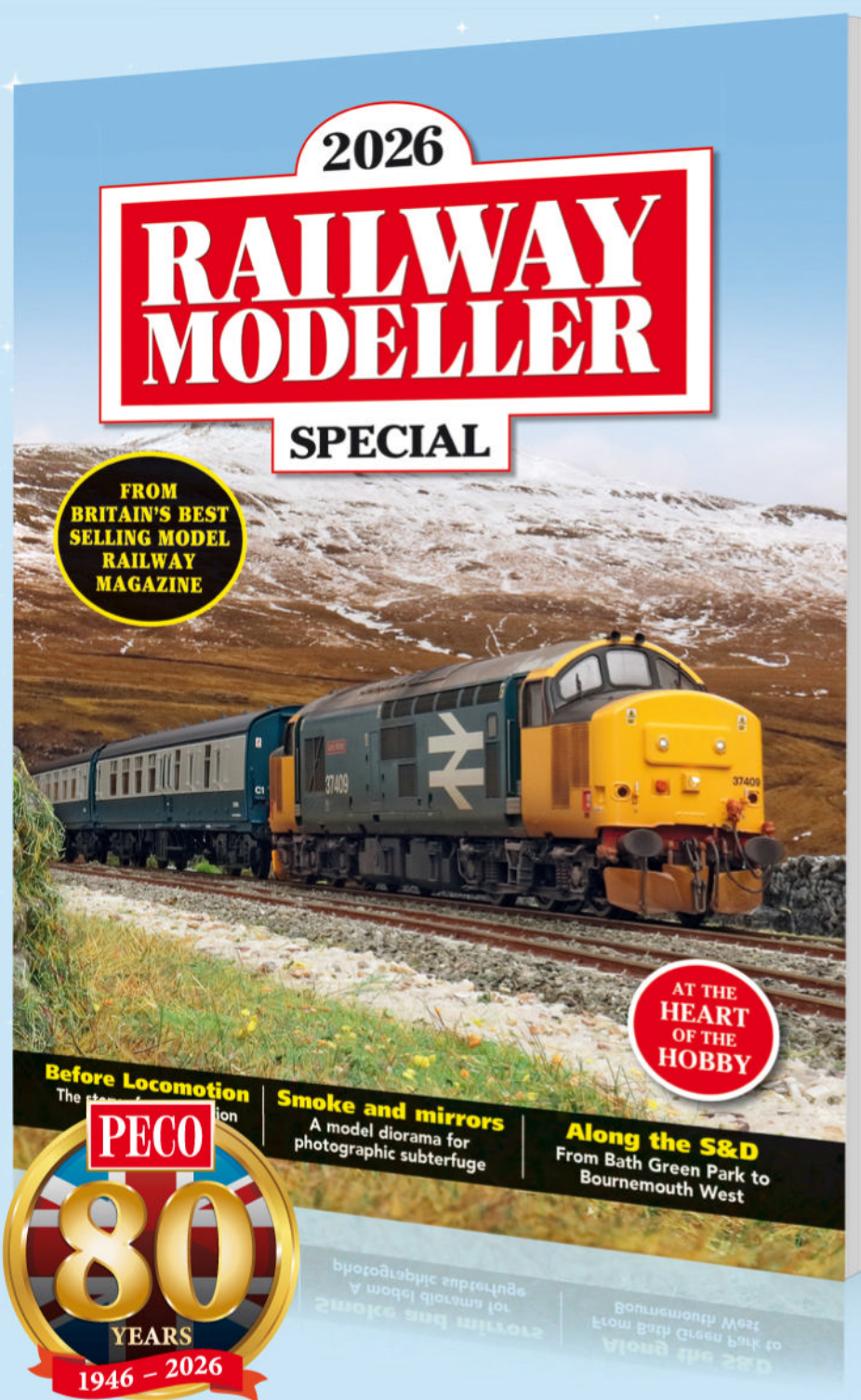
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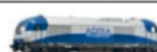
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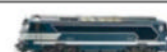
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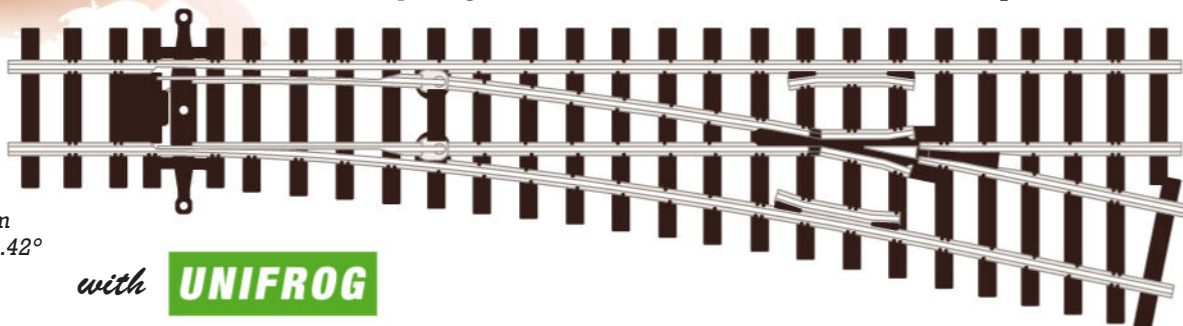
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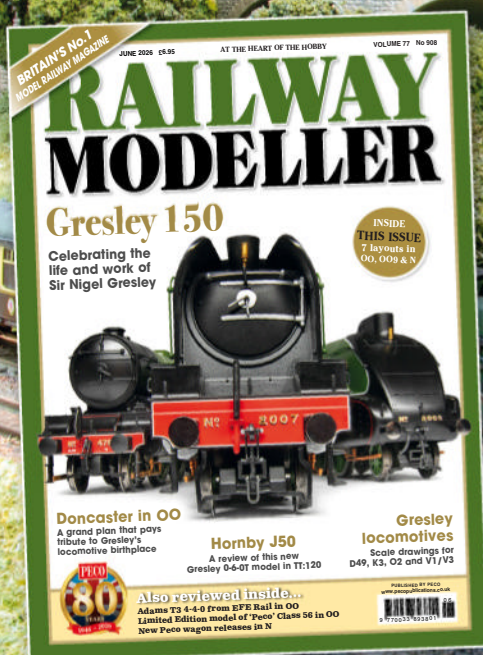
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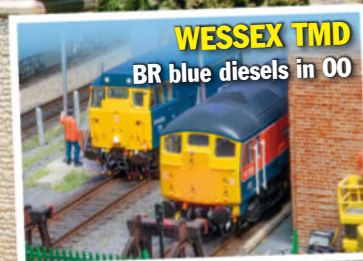
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