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JULY 2020
ISSUE 311



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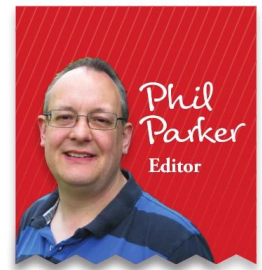
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VIEW FROM THE END OF THE PLATFORM



Incorporating GARDEN RAILWAY
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A CHANGE IS GONNA COME

Humans are surprisingly resilient creatures. Leave us long enough and we'll generally find a way to make the best of any situation, the current one being no different.

While big public events are off-limits and even (at the time of writing) the idea of visiting other garden lines feels like a distant dream, modellers are still finding ways to share and enjoy their hobby.

Plenty of virtual groups and forums already exist, but now we're seeing video-conferencing allowing people to get together. Several groups are already trying this for regular meet-ups. We've also

enjoyed virtual shows and tours of lines.

If you are organising something that is open to the public, please let me know and I'll be happy to use all the **Garden Rail** social media to help promote you. We've started an Instagram account and have been on Facebook for years. If we want to spread the word further, sister magazine British Railway Modelling (BRM) has an even greater reach.

Let's stay safe and tell the world about garden railway modelling!

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CONTENTS

P3 VIEW FROM THE END OF THE PLATFORM

P4 ON THE EDITOR'S WORKBENCH

P6 THE ASTON RAILWAY AND TRAMWAY by Mick Eastough

P14 THE LAST BIG BASH by Dave Skerthly

P18 THE SPIRIT OF SALTFORD

P22 A VINTAGE SIGNAL CABIN KIT by Eric Londesbrough

P24 KITBASHING A COACH by David Rhodes

P26 CONTROLLING ELECTRIC HAMSTERS by John Rogers

P30 SOMETHING TO ASPIRE TO (PART 2) by Mark Thatcher

P36 PRODUCT NEWS

P39 MASTER CUT REVIEW by Daniel Cousins

P40 MAILBOX

P44 ROUNDHOUSE DAVENPORT REVIEW by Steve Blackmore

P46 DIARY DATES/NEXT MONTH

P50 SECURING BALLAST by Julian James

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The Aston Railway and Tramway

There's no need to rush into building a railway.
Mick Eastough started dreaming of his half a century ago.

I started planning my railway fifty years before the first train on the Aston Railway and Tramway (AR&T) ever ran. On that day, sometime during the summer holidays of 1967, I stood next to my father on Ramsey Station looking north along the overgrown track bed at the plume of smoke in the distance. My father was unusually quiet; it was almost like he was at the end of a particularly long pilgrimage. By the time the ancient Beyer Peacock finally arrived and parked itself and three sagging coaches next to the platform, I was hooked for life.

My railway ambitions, however, took a back-seat to 31 years in the Royal Engineers, a family and finally a civilian job. Despite this, the daydreaming, the reading, and researching continued throughout.

Around 1995, I discovered minimum gauge and The Sand Hutton Railway in a

book by Humphrey Household. By 2009, I was reading **Garden Rail** and had built a small loop of track around my Dad's garden so he could run his Accucraft Caradock and some IP Engineering stock.

I had started scratch-building in 16mm until the day I discovered 7/8ths and those beautiful Baldrigís and I scrapped everything and started modelling in 7/8ths full-time.

In 2015, we moved to our current home in Aston-on-Trent. A year of unrelenting DIY followed, during which, negotiations for running rights with Commander Domestic Operations were concluded. The railway would be built once the house and garden works were finished providing it was relatively unobtrusive, was in the bottom half of the garden only, and it didn't block access across the paths. It had to fit in.

SO1 Home Commands provisos noted, I then listed a few of my own:

Flat(ish) continuous running was a must to get the best use of my three live steam locomotives.

Safe stock storage was another must. The last thing I wanted was to be getting boxes of stock out every time I wanted to steam up. At my dad's it took ages and you end up damaging your stock. I also wanted to be able to leave the rakes, if not the locos, coupled and on the track at all times.

A raised track bed. At the moment I'm quite spritely, but there will inevitably come a day when I'm not. Raising the track bed so I could weed it at ease in my dotage was part of the planning.

And finally, sidings. If you build stock you want somewhere for it to stand on the line, do a bit of shunting with and get rakes out

of the way while you run something else. Why spend months building stock to hide it away?

I'd sketched out all sorts of plans for my ideal railway over the years and, once building started, I realised what an utter waste of time it had been. At the end of the day, you have to fit in what you can where you can.

The garden was strewn with big chunks of stone, so I spent months humping and laying stone along two sides of the garden to a height of around eighteen inches to form raised beds to take the track and planting.

This was the easy part. The bottom of the garden has a large ditch, which I planned to traverse with a wooden trestle, Puffing Billy style. But, The Long Haired General vetoed this plan by suggesting that the decking from the sitting area bridged the ditch.

Fortunately, I'd sited a shed in a position where I could use it for storage and it would mask my steam up bay, come station, from the house. After that, I had an area used as a garden store that looked like a grenade range to cross, then an over-large buddleia and a stand of rampant bamboo were in the way. However, as I'd already built twenty yards of stone wall, I decided to push on and cross one obstacle at a time, otherwise I'd never build anything.

CONSTRUCTION

Once the stonework was complete and my back had recovered, I started track laying in the steam up bay, or what is now Shardlow Road Station?

April Fool shunts the quarry. I've plans for a small bothy and a standing derrick for here, along with some more realistic loads. April Fool runs on an IP Engineering Ezee Range power unit and is another product of my bits box.



The new Diesel Tram crossing one of the removable bridges with the first four of my new GP wagons. The bridges drop in and are stored in the storage shed when the railway isn't in use. Prior to running, I have to remember to check that the flaps on the shed are removed and both bridges have been fitted. March Hare shot the big bridge last year and was out of action for a week.

The track throughout is Peco SM32. I tried scratch-building my track, and all I got for it was blind cobblers thumb. Anyone with the patience and diligence to want to lay their own, bespoke, far more realistic track, gets my unrestricted respect, but it's

not for me, or my fingers.

Shardlow Road is built on an expensive piece of marine ply, supported on pre-treated timber soaked in decking oil. Track is nailed to it and then ballasted with Wickes grey paving sand. I've used gravel and gardeners grit before, and spent hours cleaning it out of point blades, or looking for the one bit that kicks the third truck in the rake off every time it crosses it. The sand's great, it looks the part, doesn't cause any running issues and is in better scale than a bag of garden centre boulders.

It's kept in place by beading to the front and to the rear low relief stone walls. These are made from scoring sheets of polystyrene with a hot soldering iron to form the stone work, then painted with Wilko Stone, which you can find with the spray paint. These are glued with PVA onto off cuts of ply and screwed to the back of the board.

The railway then enters a large hole in the shed containing the running line and three storage sidings. Again, the track is nailed to the ply shelf. The large hole on the steam up bay side is to allow three tracks to enter the shed so I can hand shunt rakes in and out during operation. The running line exits the shed on the other side through a smaller hole, then through a wooden protective duct through the grenade range.

The buddleia and bamboo were hacked back (SO1 Domestic was deeply unhappy





No's 3 and 4 on shed at the MPD. The water tank (a bean tin clad in lolly sticks) needs attention when I get around to it. The abutments for the removable trestle bridge can be seen left of centre. A great number of packs of Wilko Bamboo plant markers are in evidence.

with the way I'd decimated the buddleia, but it has now recovered a little). I built a short length of trestle from half-inch square timber to connect to the first of the curves.

Here again, discussions at command level were conducted as the area around the bamboo had been previously designated the dogs' toilet (I did mention everything having to fit in). A compromise was found by which I left sufficient room for a Labrador to manoeuvre between railway and bamboo before it turned right to cross the path.

I'd marked and cut out the minimum curve and was happy that the six-coupled tank loco could negotiate on a piece of scrap chipboard, so I used this as the template for what is now known as slab bank because it's built out of smashed-up paving slabs I had laying around.

The track is laid on top in a mix of seven to one cement. The bamboo side is sheer to give our toileting hound some privacy, whilst the house side is landscaped and planted to disguise it from the house.

Initially, the bridge over the path was a plank and I still haven't got around to building a replacement, although I have completed the abutments.

The line crosses a stone island some three yards in length before the second removable bridge. This area has a small usable space on the inside of the circle, which I thought to use as a timber spur, but by the time I'd added the pointwork, the available space was only four feet in length. Not much use

for a timber siding, but I could (just) fit in a twin road MPD.

So, after some research in the bible according to Mark Smithers *18-inch Narrow Gauge Steam Railways* and studying the photo of Sand Hutton Depot, I was sold on the idea. The track is laid in seven to one cement, the shed is built out of Wickes strip

wood and Wilko bamboo plant markers with a roof made of strips of roofing felt notched to look like slates.

The second removable bridge is a trestle construction that leads to the stone retaining wall section. At quarry curve, I used the template to set the radius of the bend that runs to the front of the quarry. I planted a number of mosses on the curve, three miniature Acers and an old Christmas tree to mask the quarry entrance. The track in this area is laid in the light cement mix and the 'mind your own business' is encouraged to spread as far as it can to get that 1967 IOMR feel.

I plant alpines all over, some prosper some don't, and spend at least half a day each week in summer keeping it in check, but it's well worth it. I've another three Acers at the other station throat, which act as a scenic break before the line crosses the trestle. This area has a long section of double track, the quarry and quarry siding. There's also a short goods spur at Aston Glebe Halt. The halt and loading bay are made using Wickes strip wood and Wilko Bamboo Plant Markers.

Leaving the stone planter area, the line enters the only bit of the line where I got to build some Puffing Billy trestle. Again, I used half-inch square timber and Wickes strip wood. It's supported on two single timber trestles and a double trestle bent (once a sapper, always a sapper). The curve was set out using the profile. The trestles are



April fool trundles through Aston Glebe halt with a short rake of North Pilton Works Industrial vans that I'm really pleased with. The halt platform and planting is bedding in nicely, although the 'mind your own business' is getting a little out of hand. The station throat is masked by Acers and another replanted Christmas tree.

cemented into the base of the ditch and the track spiked to the trestle.

The biggest issue on the whole project was how to cross the back of the garden closing the circuit. The trestle was out of the question because with the decking it would (according to Home Command Aston) be too much wood and the thought of running it across a plank was a stretch too far.

I came up with building a suspended planter out of decking and laying the track in it. The Long Haired General was consulted, discussions were had, and, providing the planting went on the home side of the planter, the solution was acceptable. This area is now known as the 'Hanging Gardens of Aston' and carries the line back to the steam up bay. It's warped over the last 3 years and the track with it, but I simply chipped the light cement off the track and re-laid it.

The first train, which consisted of No 4 hauling nine scratch-built dumb buffered ore wagons and a brake van, ran in June 2017 and brought a tear to my whither eye. I've had three summers of running the AR&T now and have to say, loved every minute of it. The wait, like my fathers anticipation on Ramsey Station in 1967, was well worth it.

I've not gone into the stock, locos, or the AR&T's provenance, but hopefully I will in a future article. If there's anything I would hope anyone reading this piece would take from it, it's the total satisfaction in a lifelong ambition finally realised. It's a lot of fun too. My advice would always be start building your stock now for the day you get the chance to be Holman Stephens in your own garden. For any further information on the line visit the AR&T Facebook page. What Next? Well! Commander Aston Station has granted permission for an extension, a branch into my workshop (which is in the house) from Slab Bank. That would give me an end-to-end run of 220 feet between the workshop and Aston Glebe Mine. There are three sheds to negotiate and a slope of 1 in 40, but the opportunity for more stock and loco's is too good to miss.

Much love and a massive thanks to my long-suffering wife Nicole, (Commander Domestic Operations, Aston Station) without whom this article wouldn't have been possible.

Next Month, we take a look at the AR&T rolling stock. ■



March Hare with a rake of empty slab carriers on quarry turn. The dude riding the shunter's truck will be disciplined later. March Hare was built from the remains of a trod on IP Engineering Rail Car. The wagons are scratch-built, figures by Rob Bennett.



A nice shot of No 6 with passenger stock at Shardlow Road. The coaches and Break Van are built from IP Engineering kits, pimped somewhat. The fencing in the right of the picture is from North Pilton Works, the ballast is Wickes grey paving sand. The walls in the low relief back scene need another coat of Wilko Stone Spray before I coat it with dye brick.



No 6 on heavy goods duty. This photo sums up what I wanted to achieve with the railway. Realism? Probably not, but plausible. The photograph is a screen shot from my camera in the brake van from one of the lines Facebook videos.

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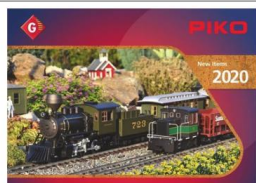
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Wagons



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PK37958 DR Flat Wagon IV



PK37959 DR Club Cola Box Van IV



PK38767 Texaco Bogie Tank Wagon 1971



PK38768 Christmas Flat Wagon with Pick-Up Load



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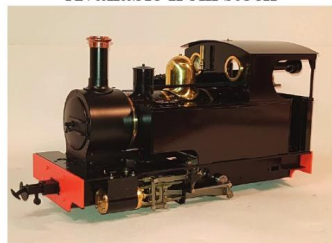
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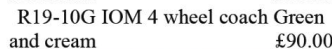
R19-26 Isle of Man Pairs style Half Brake £175.00



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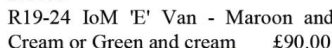
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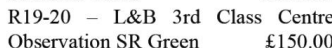
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1:20.3 'KATHLEEN' & 'LADY EDITH' Cavan & Leitrim 4-4-0T
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Is this the final Big-Big Bash?

Dave Skertchly gets an awful shock, and we are left wondering just who is the Plonkah Wallah?

I thought nothing of it in the 1970s. The Tri-ang Big-Big train and its Russian follow-on, the Nova, were a despised laughingstock among the Railway Modelling glitterati of the day. Roll forward half a century and those same plastic monstrosities are sought after collector's items with prices to match.

For one group of enthusiasts in those olden days, the Big-Big shunter chassis was the mainstay of the Bashing Business and the quickest route to getting reliable running on a garden railway.

I had never bashed a Big-Big train and wanted to claim my inheritance and enjoy the experience before it was too late. An awful shock awaited me when I went to buy

my shunter. The prices were extortionate! I mentioned this to a friend, Richard Murphy, who sent me a slightly battered example for which I am eternally grateful.

To our modern heritage eyes, the Big-Big Diesel and its pseudo steam outline option brother have a certain charm, especially when running with a rake of authentic Big-Big Tippers, and I wanted to retain as much of the original as possible. Eventually, those large clumsy couplings had to go, but they, and the plastic body, can be fitted back on with self-tapping screws for nostalgia's sake only.

It is easy to find the reasons why the Big-Big chassis made such a good bash. Despite the rather basic 1960s quality and

small boys toy image, it had integrated reversing switches, battery holders, and spur gears that would be substantially more reliable than any other scratch-built chassis of the time. The gearing is simple, quiet in operation and reliable, with no expensive and difficult to set up worm gear. The snag is that this configuration required the motor to be mounted sideways, protruding through the frames and this resulted in the characteristic side pods that require so much ingenuity from potential bashers to disguise.

The motor is one of those Mabuchi motors that cost about 4/6d, equivalent to nine weeks pocket money, but that is what Grandma's are for! I bought my motors from the model aeroplane shop and I used



There is so much heritage to a Bash. David Clark's diesel was Bashed long ago by his Dad using mostly cardboard. Photo by David Clark

several in KielKraft Easybuilt boats running on 4.5 volts. No wonder they wore out quickly, the motor, it transpires, is rated for only 2.5 volts!

Nevertheless, at the age of 10, I fondly recall that my Grandmother allowed me to test and modify my boats in the bath. After

some hours, I would be extracted from the water, white and wrinkly, smelling of 3 in 1 oil, indeed it seems that the whole family also smelt of it for some weeks too.

To talk about the construction it would be best to start, as they say, at the beginning; I always begin by sourcing the bottom of a

beer can for the smokebox door, that done, I can relax and source the rest from the scrap bin and my ever-growing collection of junk.

On reflection, the use of the beer can for the smokebox door probably accounts for the fact that I build so few diesels. I used 1/8th liteply from the model aeroplane shop and found it a bit grainy. In retrospect, I should have taken more care with sealing the grain.

The first stage was to construct a picture frame around the chassis from 1/8-inch plywood, which neatly engages with the retaining lugs, and then to construct a box on it to clear the batteries. There is no doubt the style was influenced by the delightful Accuraft Dora.

Beware, I made the chassis just slightly too short to clear the bolt heads that retain the large Binnie couplings, so the original chassis has been drilled to clear them, despite my aim of retaining originality.

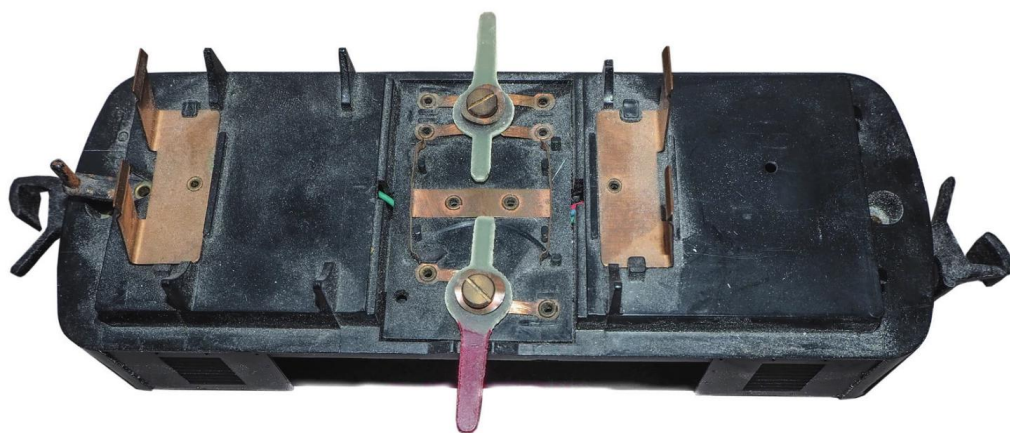
The picture frame was completed with two thicknesses of plywood sculpted to clear the retaining catch on the front. A boiler top was made from three layers of 1/64th plywood, laminated on a plastic drainpipe with PVA between the plies, then left on the

An alternative and popular 1980s Bash was the Faller, Dave's Faller Bash includes cab, tanks and chimney.

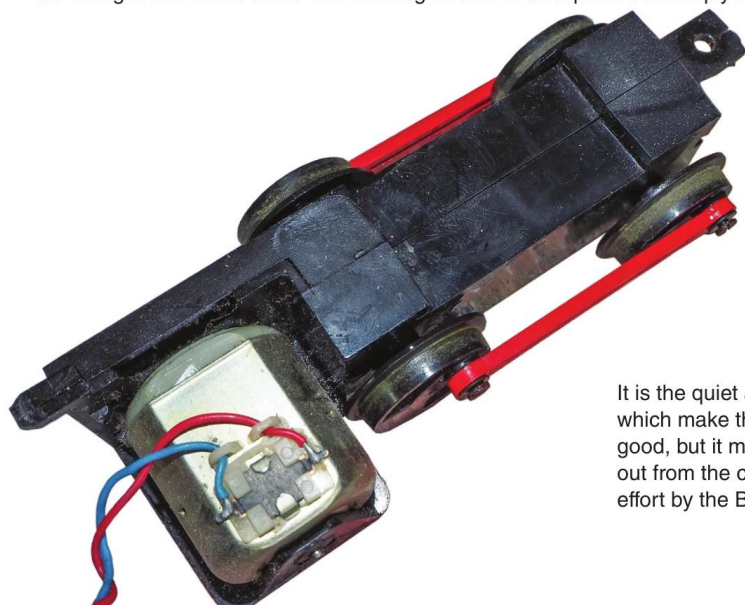




The Big-Big Diesel has a certain charm, especially when running with a rake of authentic Big-Big Tippers.



The starting point is basic, but everything is there, including a battery holder that is quite effective for its vintage. The switch cover was missing so had to be replaced with a plywood part.



It is the quiet and effective geared drive which make the Big-Big chassis so good, but it means that the motor sticks out from the chassis requiring some effort by the Bashers to disguise it.

central heating boiler for a few days to dry.

The smokebox is an off-cut of the boiler lamination, glued on before the boiler top was finally trimmed to size. The boiler bands are cut from my favourite breakfast cereal box.

A dummy back-head was made to cover the batteries and the rear cab supports were cut from a coat hanger, which creates a charming colonial look. I henceforth named the model in Colonial style 'Plonkah Wallah'. A Wallah, by the way, is literally a 'person responsible for something', and is in common use in India to this day.

The chimney was made from scrap plastic tube and plywood filled with body filler. MDF circles were cut initially using a hole saw and stacked to make up the dome.

The completed locomotive was ready to be sealed and, just before the second coat of sanding sealer, I applied self-adhesive 1mm twinkles from Hobbycraft to simulate rivets.

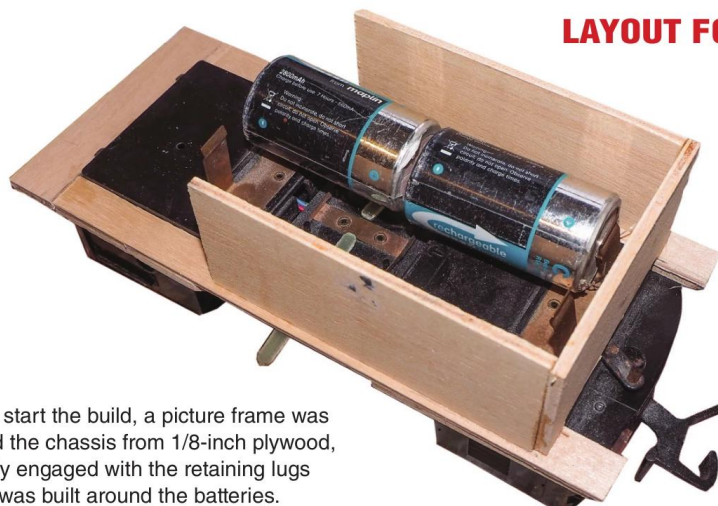
The handrails and beading are made from an off-cut of 30 amp cooker cable, supported with small split pins.

A sort of Humbrol maroon is the main colour, with the rest from various hobby enamels in my box.

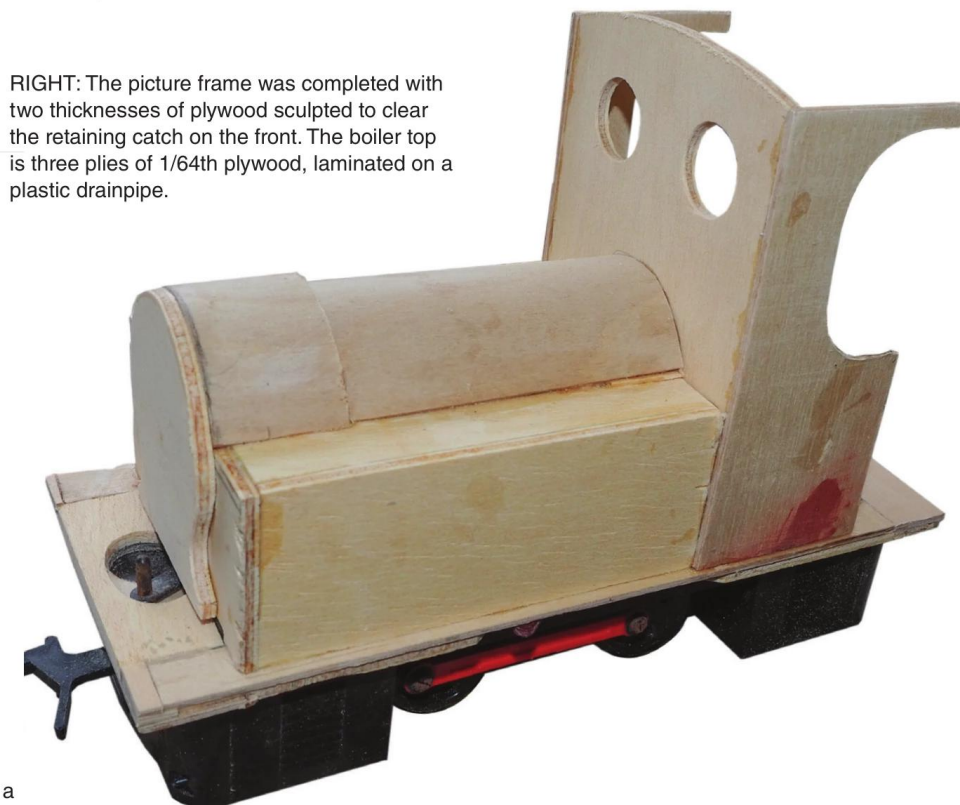
'Plonkah Wallah' runs smoothly but at an alarming speed with a light train, but with a heavier load it slows up realistically on corners and accelerates gently on the straights. With four U11 batteries, it is quite heavy and easily operates my automatic points.

As I sit on my rustic park bench outside the Sheep Shearer's Arms, I can see my little colonial locomotive hauling those smaller industrial trains of slate wagons, at a hair-raising speed it has to be said. I feel privileged to have, at the last minute, claimed my inheritance to bash a Big-Big Train.

The rumour mill, however, is churning in Llatireggub, just who is the 'Plonkah Wallah?' It is well known that the Vale of Weedol Tramway locomotives are named after my family, but they are all accounted for! Whose Dad, more than sixty years ago, gave him the childhood nickname of 'Plonkah Wallah?' I am saying nothing. Another pint of your finest Auld Phagbutt barman, if you please. ■



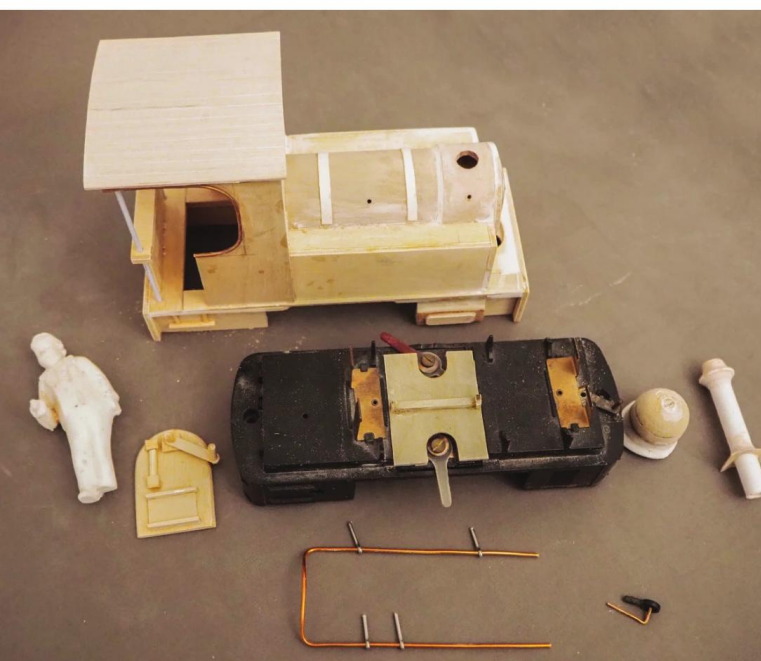
ABOVE: To start the build, a picture frame was built around the chassis from 1/8-inch plywood, which neatly engaged with the retaining lugs then a box was built around the batteries.



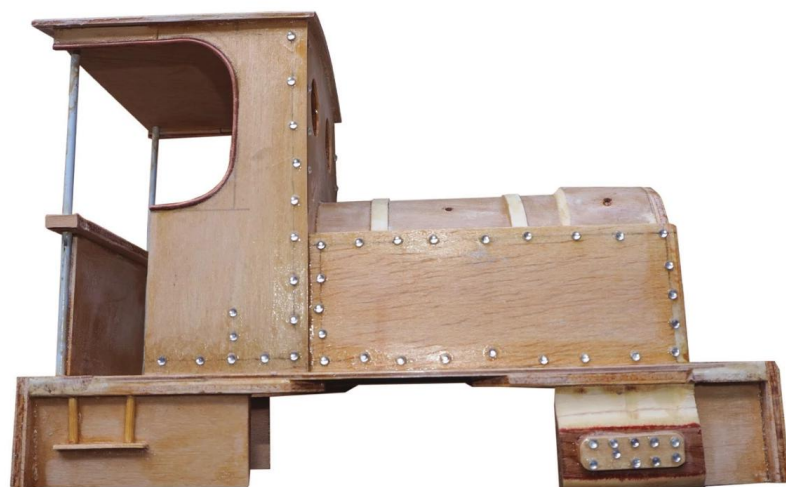
RIGHT: The picture frame was completed with two thicknesses of plywood sculpted to clear the retaining catch on the front. The boiler top is three plies of 1/64th plywood, laminated on a plastic drainpipe.



ABOVE: A dummy back-head was made to cover the batteries, then rear cab supports were cut from a coat hanger to create a charming Colonial look.



The completed locomotive ready for sealing. The handrails and beading are made from an off-cut of 30amp cooker cable, supported with small split pins. The chimney and dome were made from scraps and laminated MDF circles.



Just before the second coat of sanding sealer, self-adhesive 1mm twinkles were applied to simulate rivets.



The Spirit of Saltford

The Editor builds a kit he has wanted to try since 1987.

One of the great joys of growing up is that sometimes you can buy those toys that you couldn't afford as a child. While I never had any interest in Dinky cars or Hornby Dublo trains, young Phil did look at the Saltford Models catalogue with longing.

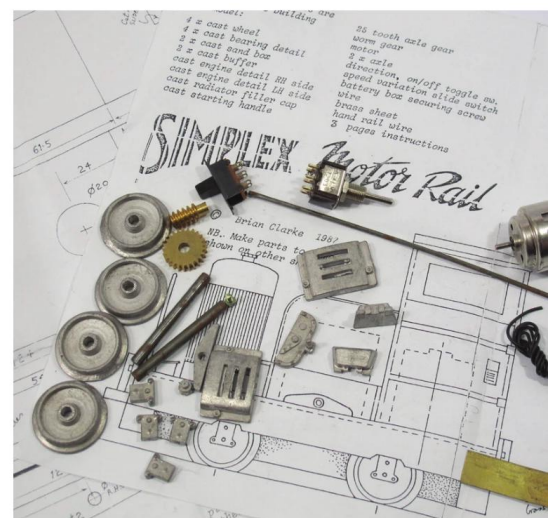
Saltford Models, run by Brian Clarke, produced a series of low-price 16mm scale kits in the late 1980s. Aimed at the beginner with very limited funds, he did his best, within the budget, to provide interesting battery-powered locomotives and rolling stock. In those early days of the scale, it was exactly what was wanted by many who couldn't aspire to an Archangel steam loco, but wanted an outdoor railway.

In truth, a full history of Saltford Models would be too long for this article, so I'll just explain that I've always loved both the hands-on concept of the kits, which were

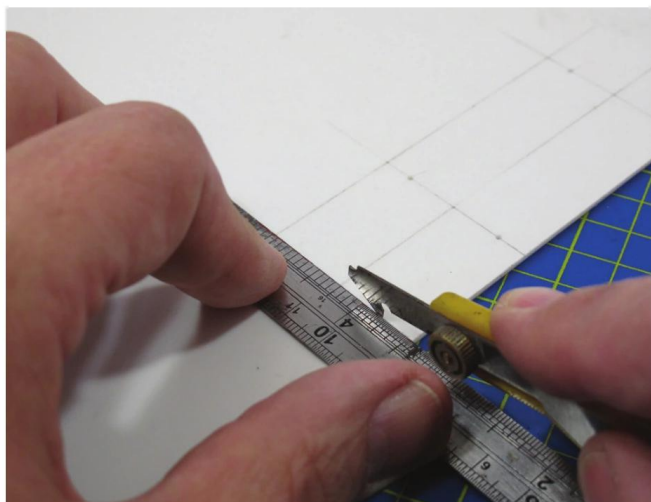
more "scratch aids", requiring, or perhaps permitting, the modeller to build something unique to them. All this, supported by Brian's amazing artwork, recalled the sort of run-down narrow gauge line that appeals to us all.

For a Christmas present many years ago, I once received a 20hp Ruston kit. Building it was great fun and it now sits on top of my computer. The model ran for many miles and, after a little refurbishment, will be good for many more.

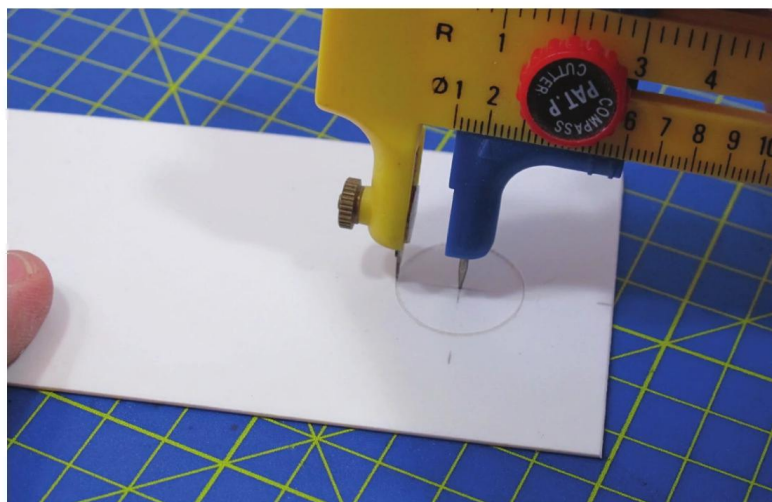
More recently, via an eBay auction, I acquired a Simplex kit and thought it would be interesting to show what's involved assembling it. For those who have grown up on laser-cut models, it's only a case of cutting out the parts. Technology has moved on in the three decades since this model was built, but I enjoyed building it every bit as much as I did all those years ago. ■



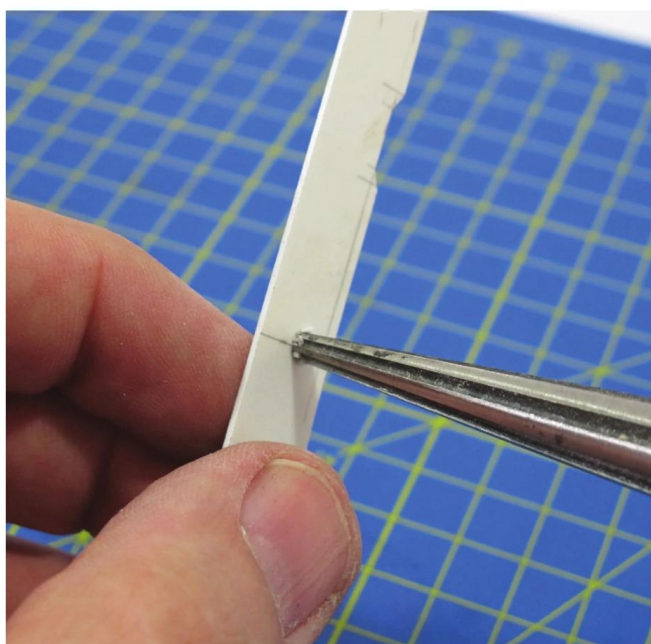
16mm scale Saltford Models kits consist of a set of whitemetal parts, motor, gears, switches and the plans you'll need to cut out all the body and chassis parts from 30 and 60 thou plastic sheet.



I like to use an Olfa cutter on plastic sheet as it makes a neat channel rather than forcing a V into the material. Once you've heavily scored the sheet, it can be bent back on itself and snapped - there's no need to cut all the way through.



Large curved cuts, such as the circle in the footplate the motor passes through, are made using an Olfa compass cutter. As with the rest of the cutting, a knife will work, but this produces a far neater result.



Small holes for the axle bearings are drilled and then opened up using a tapered reamer to the exact size required. A suitable size drill bit might be better, but I want a snug fit over some brass tube and didn't have exactly the right one to hand.

MARKING PLASTIC WITH A COMPUTER.

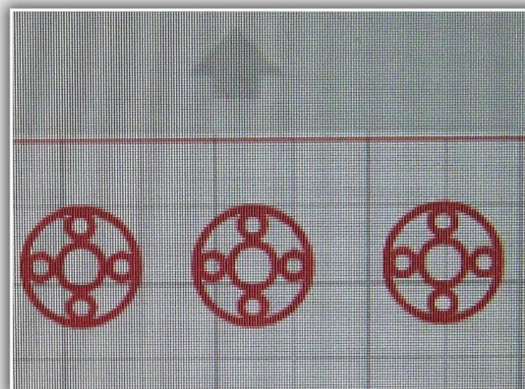
Building the Simplex required me to carefully transfer all the dimensions of each part to the plastic sheet using a ruler and pencil, but there is another way that no-one would have dreamed of when the kit was produced.



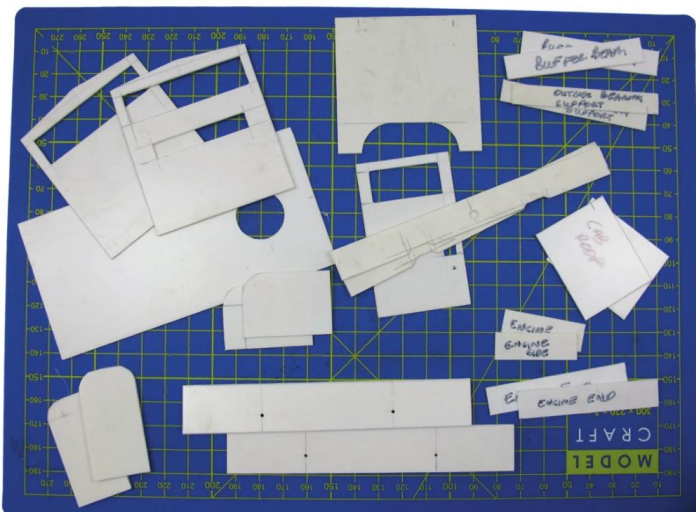
I've been experimenting with a silhouette cutter. The size of a small computer printer, instead of a print head, it has a small knife blade. This is controlled by the drawing program on the computer. The device is popular with crafters, especially those making greetings cards, and costs just under £200.

The software is reasonably simple to use. Red lines will be cut through, other colours are etched on the surface. If you can use the vector lines in a graphics package, you'll be OK. I manage, and my full-blown CAD skills are non-existent!

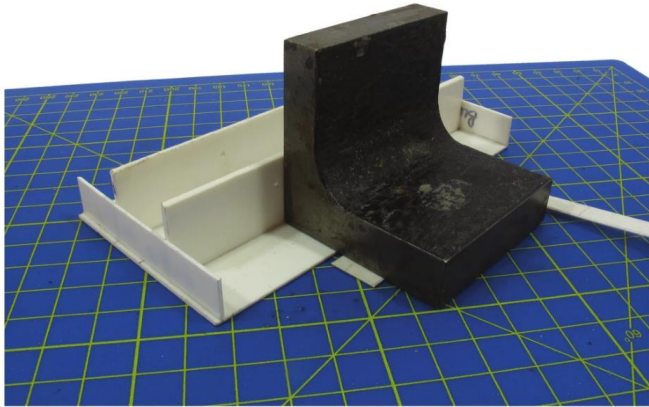
What you see here are some wheel inserts for a 16mm scale model of the Groudle Glen Railway loco 'Polar Bear'. The software allows me to draw circles, which I then position on the page. Grid lines help arrange them, and the sized of all lines, boxes and circles are set in millimetres, so the results should be pretty accurate.



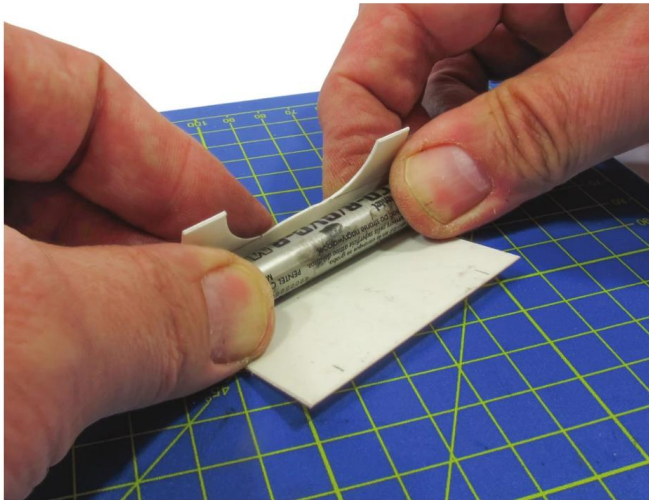
The silhouette cutter won't cut all the way through, even on 0.5mm Plastikard, but it engraves a line that is easy to follow with a sharp knife. A few minutes work and I had a set of wheel inserts that fitted perfectly. This was far easier and quicker than drilling holes in such thin material.



All the parts are cut out and ready for assembly. It's taken at least a couple of hours to get this far. A laser cut or CNC-machined kit would give you this just by opening the bag, but in the late 1980s, that wasn't really an option.



Parts are assembled following the instructions, using plastic cement. I like to use tube cement to grab the pieces, followed by a wash of a liquid plastic solvent to set the joint quickly. This angled support from Squires Tools ensures parts that should be at right angles to each other, are.

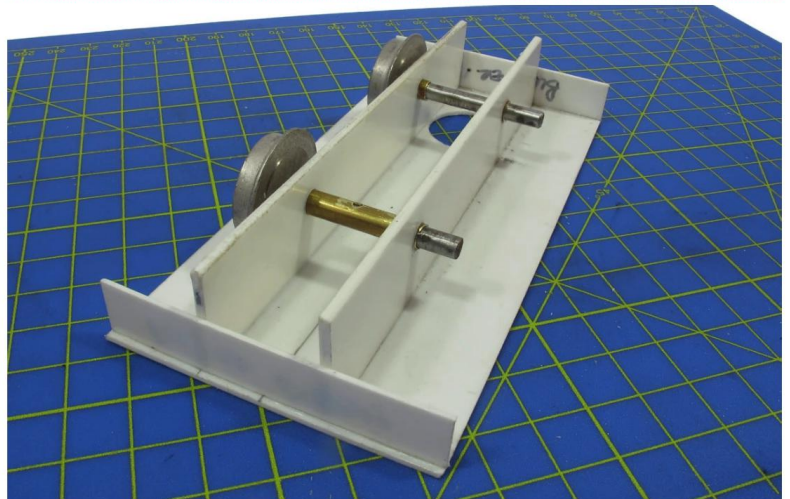


The bonnet needs to be curved and I do this by bending the thin plastic around a handy pen. You need something much smaller than the desired final curve as the material will spring back. Some people advise heating the plastic, but I don't want to burn my pinkies.

TO RIVET OR NOT?

Just how detailed a model you wish to produce is up to the builder. I added a couple of plates and some hinges that appear to be fixed with rivets. In reality, these are nothing more than some cubes of square Microstrip glued in place and then liberally coated with solvent so they melt into rivet head shapes.

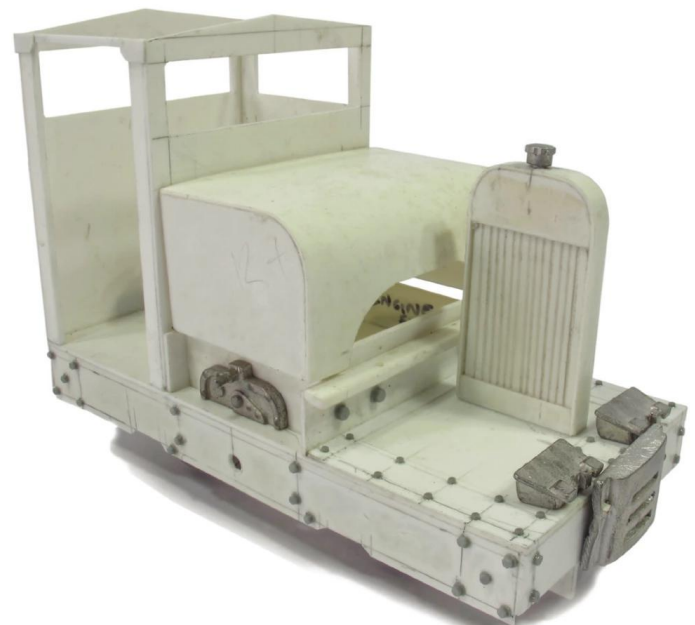
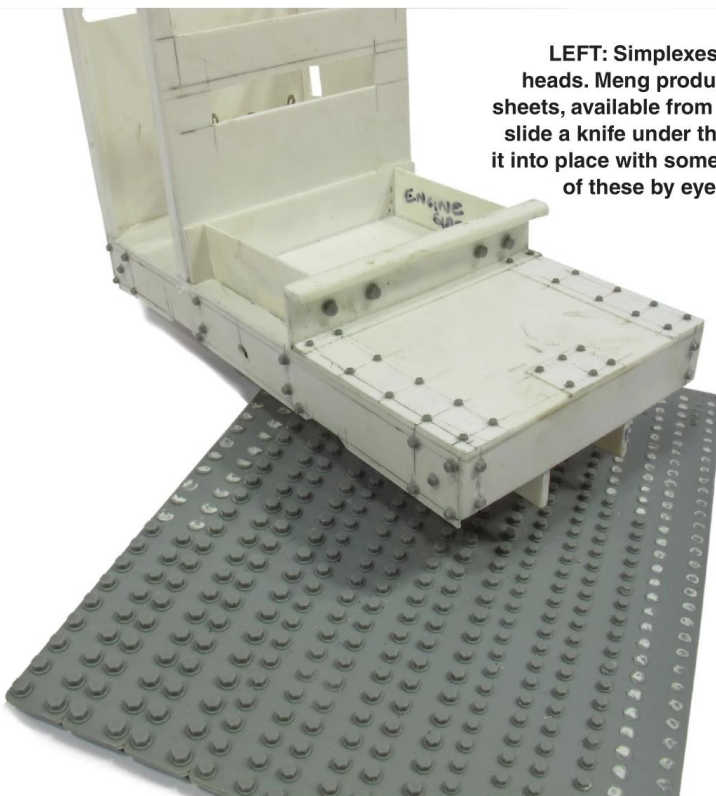
The sharp-eyed will notice I ignored the mass of rivet lines on the cab. Well, with big switches sticking out of the side, it's not that finescale...



One improvement I like to make is using brass tube as axle bearings to avoid wearing through the plastic sheet. The unpowered axle bearing is a length of tube with a hole drilled in the middle for lubrication.

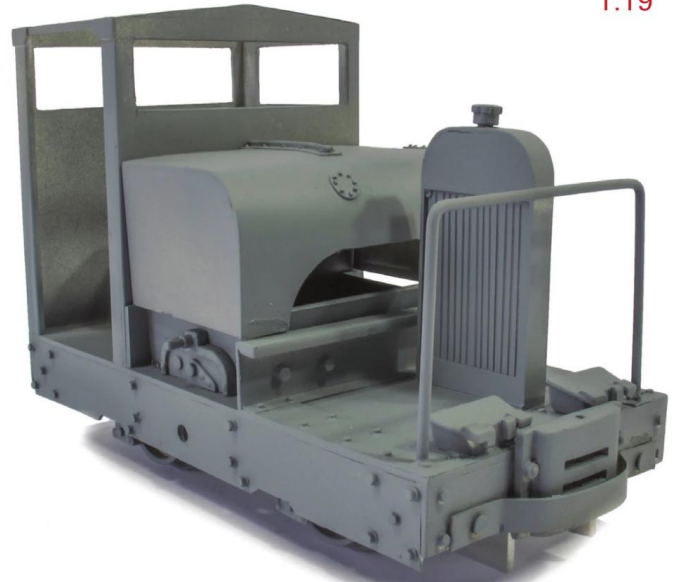
LEFT: Simplexes are covered in rivets and bolt heads. Meng produce some nice moulded plastic sheets, available from general model shops - simply slide a knife under the bolt head required and stick it into place with some glue. I'll admit to doing some of these by eye, but if it looks right, it is right.

BELOW: Time to get the superglue out and attach the whitmetal castings. The radiator is scratch-built from plastic based on the plan, but I added a little more detail from photos. That's the beauty of this kit, you can do as little or as much as you like.





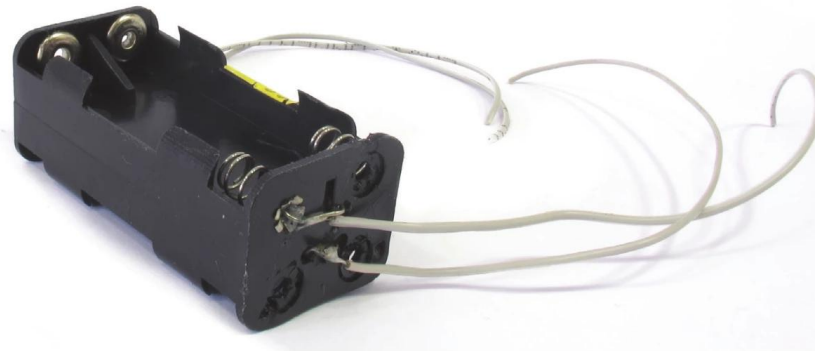
A steel wire is provided to make up the front handrail, just bend it to shape following the drawing and fit into a couple of holes drilled in the footplate. The front bumper is bent up from brass. I drilled it for a couple of big track pins as glue wasn't going to be strong enough to hold it in operation.



A spray of car primer will show up any areas that would benefit from fettling. This is an industrial loco, so I don't want it to look perfect, but it's a good idea to check for edges needing extra sanding or gaps to be filled.



Humbrol 147 for the top of the cab, followed by Precision Paints Signal Red for the body. Black bits are Revell Anthracite grey. A little dry-brushing with lighter shades and some rust tone the red down a bit.



Back in the day, Saltford suggested people make their battery boxes from plastic and bits of brass. It will work, but I always found them unreliable. Nowadays, ready-made boxes are cheap. The problem is, we need two pairs of AAA cells in parallel to each other, not four in series. Unbending the edges of the rivets and re-organising them was fiddly and time-consuming, but it worked. Next time I'll use four single-cell boxes, though!



I really wanted to follow the wiring diagram in the instructions, which has separate stop/direction (left) and speed (right) switches. This involved a lot of head-scratching. Although it's simple enough, for some reason I struggled to get my head around it. Hopefully, the photo will help anyone trying to do the same thing.



Before fitting the switches (you can see the hi/lo speed one in the photo), I sprayed the model with rust and track colour paints and then glazed it with clear plastic that was cut to size.



Building a vintage signal cabin kit

An old kit bought from a second-hand shop must be junk, right? Eric Londesbrough proves otherwise, although it's not a quick job.

When I wrote to Editor Phil about his comments on the old Mallet Models signal box kit in **Garden Rail** Nov 2019, I never expected it to appear in print. This led to my offer to try to assemble this elderly kit, which probably dates from the 1950s. As a rather ancient model maker, I am familiar with this sort of wooden kit containing many pieces. To my surprise, the offer was accepted and the kit arrived in the post.

I first checked the kit very carefully and fresh from the cardboard box, the kit components are all spread out.

I found that it seemed to be complete. The instruction book was quite good for its time, but rather lacking in the high-quality diagrams we all now expect. Indications of the measurements of the pieces were helpful in identification. Younger model makers only used to plastic or click together parts assembled in a few hours might well have shuddered at the parts and instructions.

It soon became obvious that some parts were very warped, perhaps due to the kit becoming damp during many years of storage. Fortunately, having a stock of the fitting upper-side parts together.

correct 5mm ply, the useless roof and floor were soon replaced.

Construction commenced following the instructions and the realisation that several days and many hours of work would be needed to achieve a good result. Evostick glue was used as suggested in the instructions.

Each side of the cabin had to be constructed from three pieces joined edge to edge. In modern kits, these would have been supplied in one piece. Slight warping in these pieces was apparent, but by using a The windows and sills took an awful lot of time to assemble.



number of small clamps and elastic bands, this was often overcome. However, in a number of cases, it became essential to cut a new part. Occasional swearing was not directed at Mallett's, only at the damp storage.

The two sides were assembled to the new floor and the back was glued in place. At this point, for convenience, the floor was painted dark grey. The front panel was then added but the upper section was too warped and a new part was cut. The inside walls were then painted light cream. A bit tricky and could perhaps have been done earlier, but painting instructions only appear at the end of the booklet.

At this stage, I began fitting small window parts, which was to take days not hours. The window mullions, a mullion is a rather old fashioned term for a strong support at the side of a window, were provided cut to size. Surrounding window parts such as window ledges, weather shields, etc., had to be cut from 10mm by 2mm hardwood strip, and as there wasn't sufficient in the kit, my bit box of woods was useful.

Cutting off all the window bars from the lengths of hardwood supplied and fitting them took most of a long day. How fortunate are modern model makers with complete laser cut or plastic windows ready to tick or click into place. The cutting and

fitting of many panel edging pieces and the door frame was quicker and provided an easier end to a tedious day.

The following day involved adding a few more parts, including some careful light sanding, and a coat of buff paint for the walls and dark green for the door. A complete new roof was fabricated as the parts were too warped. It was made with location strips underneath for an exact fit, but not glued in place so as to allow access to add any desirable internal fittings. The only one supplied was a very simple block for a lever frame and brass wire for levers. I did try a few odd fittings that I had to hand, a plastic signalman converted from a fiendish plastic warrior, and a clock made from a button from my wife's box of buttons. The clock looks quite good from a distance, especially having been hand-painted. These may be visible in some of the pictures. A pot belly stove and chimney could be easily added and even LED lighting.

On the final day, the glazing supplied was carefully cut and added inside the windows. Quite tricky to do but tweezers were helpful. As a grand finale, the door knob was fitted. I actually enjoyed the 37 hours of work spread over seven days, and as an 85-year-old, it reminded me of making such kits long ago. ■

Other than a few bits of wire, the kit provides little interior detail, so I scratch-built some bits to fill the space.



The complete cabin, painted buff and with the replacement roof fitted.



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ROUNDHOUSE



Kitbashing an addition to the coaching stock fleet

When he needed to lengthen a passenger train, David Rhodes first thought he'd need to scratch-build, but there was another way.

When I joined the garden railway fraternity in the late 1970s, one of the first 16mm modellers I met was a gentleman who lived in York, Sid Davidson. Sid was a scratch-builder in the true sense of the word. The only deviation from this was his use of Peco O gauge track.

When Sid passed away, I was fortunate to be able to purchase from his estate two bogie coaches. These had run many scale miles and were in excellent condition and are still in use today. They must now be close to 40 years of age, if not older.

Last year at the Elsecar Garden Railway show, I bought a second hand Darjeeling Garratt. With only two passenger coaches available, running the Garratt passenger services on the Selby & Hull (Joint Committee) looked a little odd. Another new coach was the order of the day.

My store contains more than enough plywood from which I could have scratch-built a third coach. However, with so many excellent kits on the market, it was just as easy to build a kit and modify this to match Sid's coaches, to say nothing of the time saved.

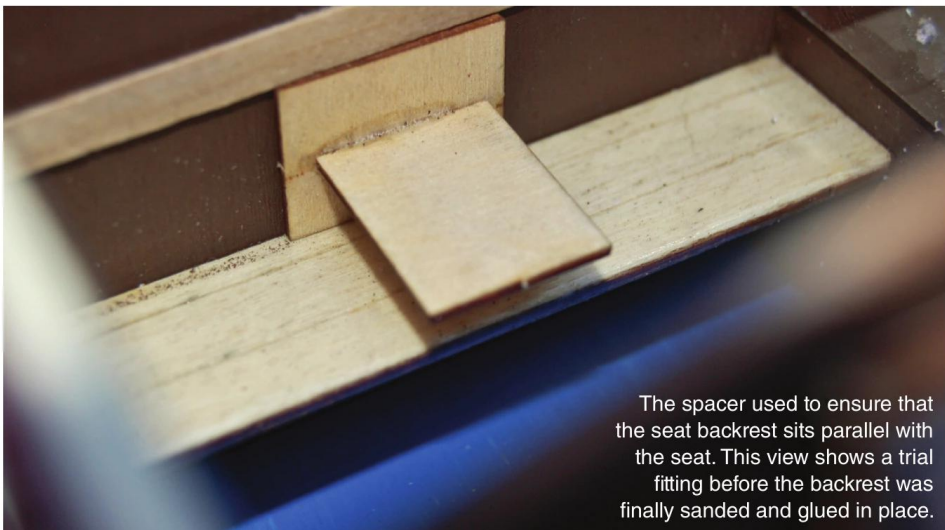
I finally opted for an IP Engineering freelance four-compartment bogie coach that, with some modifications, would not look out of place with the original coaches.

CONSTRUCTION

It is not my intention to go through a step-by-step building of the kit, as excellently-written instructions are included. There are a number of hints and tips ('hacks' in

modern parlance) that other modellers may care to use, which I discovered during the building process.

The position of internal compartment dividing walls are laser cut into the floor as are the positioning of the underside of the seats. Gluing lengths of 2mm square timber across the floor section at the outer edges of the laser marks helps ensure they are fitted at right angle to the floor.



The spacer used to ensure that the seat backrest sits parallel with the seat. This view shows a trial fitting before the backrest was finally sanded and glued in place.

Fitting the seats is made easier if the underside of the seat rests on a bearer. Short 2mm square sections of timber were glued just below the laser mark on the coach sides. This ensures the seats lay parallel with the floor and gives a stronger joint between the side and seat base.

I decided to add seat backrest rails, the issue was how to ensure they remained parallel with the seat. To achieve this, two of the push-out panels from the kit fret were glued together to form a spacer with handle. By placing the spacer midway along the seat and pushing the backrest against its top ensures parallel fitting. Remember to allow sufficient space for the glazing strip at each end of the backrest. This helps retain the glazing in place.

Painting was done in stages. The white sections were spray painted (Wilco Antique white) and then masked off to allow painting of the lower body section, the overlays were painted separately (Rover Damask Red from Halfords). Once the paint had dried, the overlays were offered up, the rear surface smeared in a thin coat of PVA glue. They were held against the body with rubber bands until the glue set. No additional varnishing was added.

MODIFICATIONS

To achieve a bogie ride hight, which matched that of the existing coaches, the pivot assembly laid down in the kit instructions had to be significantly altered.

Additional spacers were added along with one redundant window push-out panel. The new assembly was drilled to take a length of 6BA threaded rod, which was screwed into the spacers. Sufficient length of rod was allowed to protrude through the bogie assembly and to take two 6BA nuts. The pivot assemblies were glued to the under side of the coach floor.

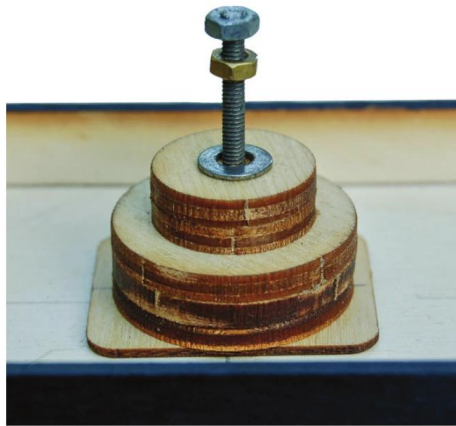
ADDITIONAL DETAILS

Lamp brackets were fitted to the coach ends along with vacuum stands with flexible pipes.

A handrail at one end only, secured by a pair of Roundhouse handrail knobs. Three steps were fitted to the same end of the coach. With staff safety in mind, a grab rail was also installed on the roof above the steps.

On the opposite end to the steps, a builders plate was added along with a lamp bracket. These came from the 'bits box', the builders plate is more in keeping with a wagon plate.

Four roof-mounted lamp holders were installed centrally over each of the four compartments. Again the 'bits box' came up trumps for a near match to those fitted on the original coaches.



This view shows the much-altered pivot assembly. All the wood components came from the kit fret. The 6BA threaded rod was left sufficiently long to enable easy access under the bogie to allow the nuts to be fitted.

Each compartment is fitted with two panoramic scenes of random choice, including Whitby, Bridlington, Scarborough and Hull (well 'tis a Yorkshire railway!). These were printed in black and white, edged with thin strips of ply and glued in place. They add a little something to the finished coach.

The original kit door and grab handles were consigned to the spares tin, the door handles replaced with a brass variety, while the grab handles are of the long brass variety, which I bought for another project some years ago.

The coach fleet number and company initials came from Slaters. I prefer raised numbers and letters as per the original Welsh Highland Railway.

Compartment designations are IP Engineering water slide transfers. It is worth remembering not to allow the transfer to float off their backing strip while they are immersed in water. If that happens, the glue on the rear of the transfer is seriously compromised and leads to the transfers falling off the panels. A thin coat of matt varnish was applied to the transfers once they had dried out. ■



A view of Whitby, downloaded from the internet and printed on top quality photographic paper. The frame was the glued to the print.



A view of the business end of the coach, the end that the railway staff need access to the roof-mounted compartment lamps. The foot steps came from my spares box, as did the lamp bracket. Roundhouse hand rail knobs and a piece of copper mains wire form the handrail. Vacuum stand with flexible pipe complete the fittings.

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The new coach in its train formation. A little shorter, but then all three coaches vary in length.





Controlling electric hamsters with blue teeth

John Rogers describes how he revived a dead Mamod with a replacement electric chassis, that he now connects to his mobile phone.

It is customary in the live steam fraternity to refer to 00 scale trains as ‘electric mice’. While this is amusing and appropriate, even we garden railfarers sometimes need something that we can drop on the track and run in the brief intervals between examining curtain material and being made ready to meet the spouse’s relatives.

This is where the ‘electric hamster’ comes in useful. This follows on from my article in **Garden Rail** 268 “Breeding Electric Hamsters – the Mamod” and shows how to control the beast from a mobile phone.

My previous article described the conversion of a derelict Mamod, No.31 ‘Horace’, to battery power using a geared electric motor mounted in a Meccano chassis. This article describes the addition of radio control, using a Bluetooth control

board.

‘Bluetooth’ is a means of wireless communication used between smartphones and other devices. It is named, for no very obvious reason, after Harald Bluetooth, one time King of Denmark.

From the very start, I must emphasise that this provides limited functionality. The speed is set from the controlling smartphone and then the arrows command Forward or Reverse.



All the electrical gubbins wired in for testing. You can see the simple screw terminal connections for motor and batteries.

This is fine for shunting and continuous running, but probably not for the finer points of acceleration and deceleration. This is a limitation, not of the hardware, but the software provided. Since this is what I wanted from the beast, I'm perfectly happy with it, but this may not suit you. If so, then you need read no further.

For those who are still with me, the board is fairly compact (about 85 x 45 x 10mm) and thus will fit into a small battery loco. It is controlled via the Bluetooth link from a standard Android or iPhone, in my case, a Samsung Galaxy S7, and software to drive it is available for free. It is available from TinySine in China through eBay or via their website. Delivery is reasonably quick and the customer service is excellent.

It is simplicity itself to wire in, with two screw terminals for input and two for output, and works happily on inputs from 3.5 to 12 volts. When connected to a motor with a very low starting resistance, it may need a small resistor in series to avoid the overload circuit tripping. This is not the case with the geared motor that I have used here, but may be with a small motor.

Connecting to the phone to run the loco is also simple. Find the Bluetooth device on your settings, start the app, and click any arrow. The app will then ask you which device you wish to run. It helps if you use the facility to change its name to, say, 'HORACE', or 'HOPS'.

There is plenty of available space under the boiler and above the motor for the receiver board, but since I like running the loco in the dark, I have wrapped the board in masking tape to hide the multitude of pretty flashing lights. I am tempted to add a red LED to give the impression of firebox glow. Few things are as romantic as "I saw a train set the night on fire", to quote Ewan McColl.

The biggest problem when I first converted the beast to battery operation was finding room in the loco for six AA cells; I needed six for the voltage to run at a reasonable speed and AAA cells in the tanks simply didn't provide enough current for the geared motor. As a result, the 6 x AA holder filled most of the cab.

This time round, I found a way to fit it lengthwise by removing the brass boiler backplate and its bolts, so I could get a tiny bit more clearance to squeeze it in between boiler and cab back. Wrapped in black masking tape, and cunningly concealed by a rather smart locomotive crew, I think it isn't too conspicuous; you may feel otherwise on seeing the pictures.

The holder's contacts poke down into the hole that once held the tray of solid fuel. A PP3 lead clips on to the bottom of this and with care, can be attached and detached

without disturbing the battery pack, cab back, or even the crew. As a consequence of this, I haven't bothered to install an on/off switch.

The truly observant will notice that the front and back buffers are different. This is because the Binnie couplings (which I prefer) have a shank that is not quite long enough to engage with the Meccano chassis. I have asked young Peter Binnie to manufacture an item.

You may wonder why I'm taking so much trouble on a Mamod that will never steam again. In terms of appearance, if not of performance, the very earliest Mamod steam locos (SL1 through SL3) were excellent for their day. To my eye, they look better than any of their successors, and stand comparison with any commercial generic locomotive. They convey 'industrial narrow gauge loco' by their classic lines, not by the bling with which they are adorned. ■

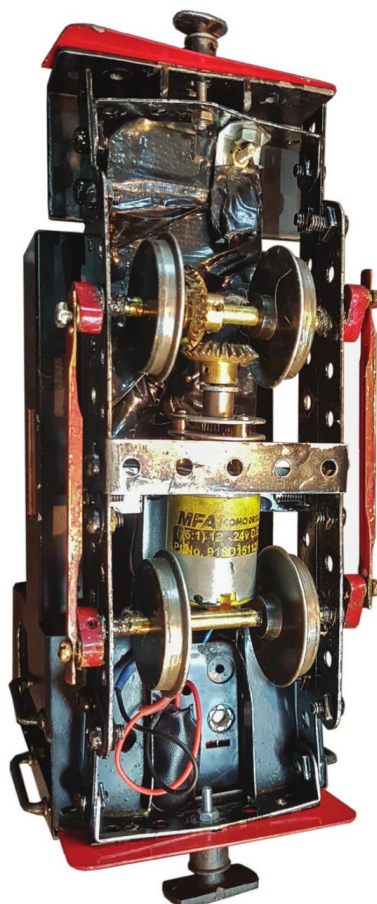
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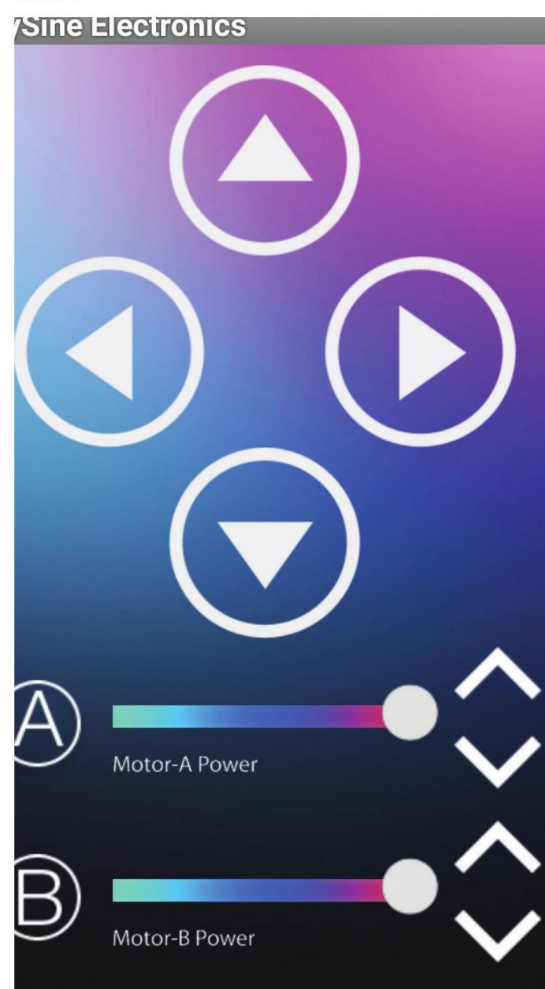


The underside showing the PP3 battery snap clip on the right-hand side.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THIS PROJECT:

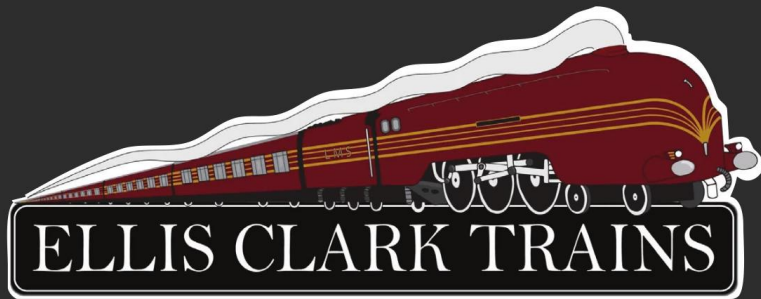
1. Millimetres are important. I just managed to turn the battery holder round and the appearance is much improved.
2. Just because it comes from far away, it doesn't mean it'll be poor quality with no customer service.
3. Trust your feelings; if it looks right, it is right. It doesn't have to be a scale model.

The driver's console on my mobile phone screen.



Rear three-quarter view. Quite nice, I think, but I'm glad to have cleared the cab of batteries.





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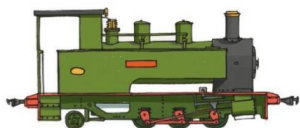
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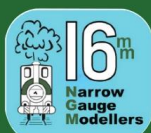
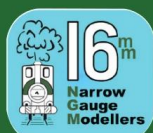
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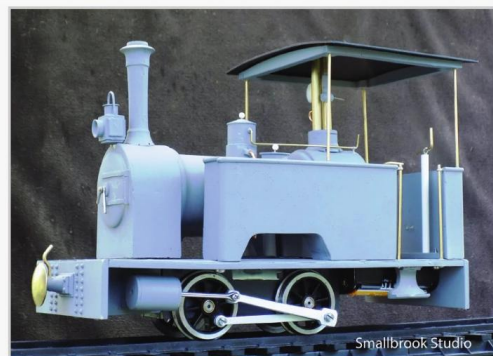
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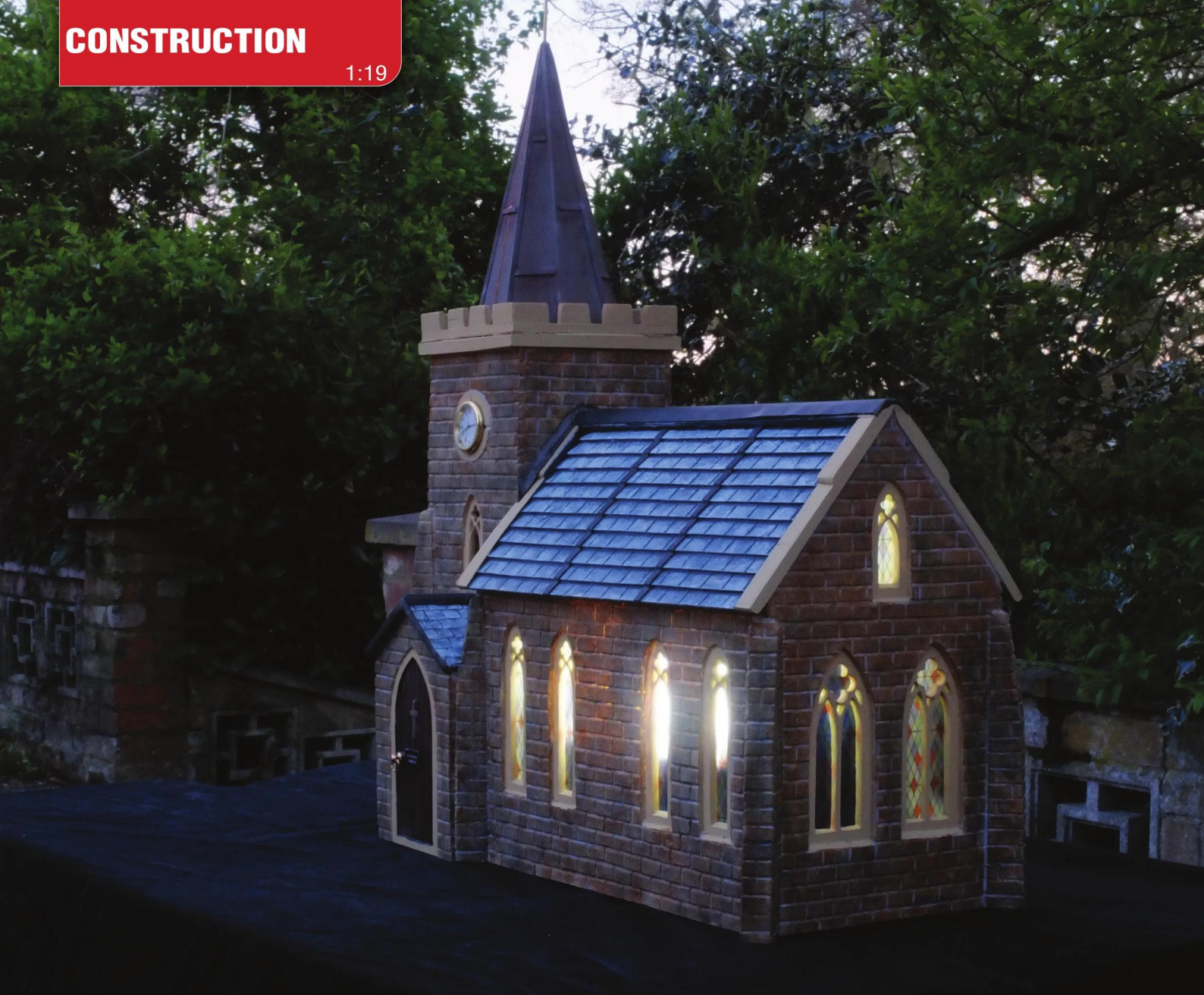
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Something to a-spire to (Part 2)

Mark Thatcher concludes his build of Modeltown's church, with some unusual painting and weathering techniques.

Unquestionably, our rural village is so much quieter than usual. Birdsong seems to be deafening now as there are no other sounds to drown it out. To add to this time warp atmosphere, St. Edmund's church next door has a clock resolutely stuck at 10.05. This isn't due to the pandemic, but because our local vicar retired a couple of months ago and her husband used to be tasked with winding the mechanism.

Anyhow, it is quite symbolic of current times, and I miss the regular hourly chime

and the lack of this just adds to the feeling of isolation. In this time of need, we do not have an incumbent vicar, but a locum who attempts to cover three local parishes. A sign of the times perhaps?

However, I am pleased to be able to conclude this build of Modeltown's church and also show you some different painting and weathering techniques I have not attempted before and frankly was a little apprehensive to try. You may recall from last month's article, the church was built and the spire roughly shaped, but this month it was

time to bring the structure to life by adding some colour and finishing touches.

PRACTICE ROUND THE BACK

Having already primed the walls in grey and painted the windows a light sand colour, the doors were carefully masked up before I started the process of sponge painting. Whilst I am well-versed with this technique, I have never tried to emulate a sandstone finish before. I knew this would be interesting, but I also knew I had to choose my colours carefully.

During a visit to B&Q, I had grabbed a number of different colour swatches to offer up to the building. Here are my top eight tips for sponge-painting using a washing-up sponge suitably saved from the bin!

Tip 1: It is better to bring a selection of colour cards home and offer them up to the building in natural light, if you select the colour in-store they will look different under the interior lights than they will in daylight.

Tip 2: If you have never tried this technique before, practice on the largest flattest part of the building, round the back on the rear elevation, where your first efforts won't necessarily be seen.

Tip 3: Whilst the base coat of brown can be sponged on quite heavily, add the lighter colours sparingly. It is easier to add more, but harder to remove the colour once it is there.

Tip 4: If it does not look right to you, don't be afraid to re-prime the aspect back to grey and start again. Practice makes perfect!

Tip 5: For tricky hard to reach areas, you can cut up a custom sponge to a size that will allow you access to these tricky areas.

Tip 6: When you have completed one side, mask your finished work off so you don't splodge any paint from the next side to paint onto that side.

Tip 7: Once you have used a sponge once, throw it away! Don't be tempted to rinse it out and try to use it again as the surface of the sponge may still be impregnated with old paint and you won't achieve a smooth finish.

Tip 8: Let each colour dry thoroughly before adding the next layer. If you do not do this, you risk the result just looking muddy and messy.

RIDICULOUSLY WRONG

For the base colour I selected Valspar's 'A seat at the Globe' (W20C). This was sponged on across all the brick surfaces, taking great care to keep clear of the mortar lines so that the grey still shows through. This first coat frankly looked ridiculously wrong, but it isn't, so don't be put off at this stage.

At this point I realised the magnitude of the painting sessions to come. You see, to get a consistent finish around the building, I would usually sponge paint the whole building in one session, but this building was simply too big to do that, so I knew I would have to paint the church one



It was nice to sit outside for the first time this year and I spent the time painting the windows with a cup of coffee to sip whilst doing.

The entire building has now been masked up and the sponge-painting process is ready to begin!



elevation at a time, with careful reference to the first section, I painted to keep the consistency of the finish around the building.

Next followed a very light touch of 'Sand Mountain' (R118C). You need to be really light with this second colour. Don't try to be too uniform, as you want to create various shades to simulate the fact that stone does not weather uniformly. I could now begin to see I was on the right lines but also that overall, the building looked too light for my liking.

ALSO KNOWN AS BLACK!

I recalled I had a shade paint set from Citadel Miniatures in stock. I bought this



I swear by FrogTape as, unlike cheaper brands of masking tape, it is easy to remove and leaves the paint on the building too, which is always a bonus.



The roof was not affixed to the main building until it had been sponge-painted.



Don't be put off by the rather bright brown base layer, as this will become far less apparent after the lighter sand colour and black washes are added

last October but had not had an excuse to try it out. These sets are available from The Games Workshop and are actually washes that wargame modellers use to sparingly apply to their figures to replicate grime, dirt, or just darken certain cracks and crevices of the figures.

I started gently just by drizzling "Drakenhof Nightshade" (also known as black to us mere mortals) to the elevations, one side at a time. I was really random with this stage and also let the wash penetrate the mortar line in some places too. Then really quickly, and using a larger round make-up brush, I stippled the wash across the building. I think this really helped to get the overall weather-worn brick effect that I was looking for.

After this wash was added, I could

remove the masking tape covering the windows and doors and add the glazing. There is a repeating pattern to the glazing and vertical and horizontal lines that represent fine leading. You can use these to match each window to its neighbour to produce a consistent glazed finish across all the windows in each elevation. I should mention that prior to that, I just sponge-painted the nave and vestibule roofs with suitable grey paint.

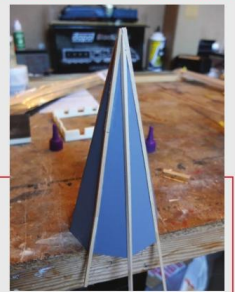
FINISHING THINGS OFF

I acquired a set of four rather nice brass door pulls, which seemed to look suitably ecclesiastical from an eBay dolls house suppliers called Sixpetitfleurs. In addition, a small and rather apt sign hangs on the vestibule door, simply saying 'closed today'.

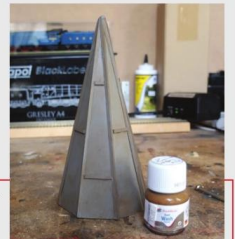
DETAILING THE SPIRE

If you read last month's instalment, you didn't really think I would leave that spire with flat boring sides did you? Oh no!

I used "L" wood sections from Northeastern Scale Models (they now appear to have been re-branded to Northeastern Scale Lumber Co.) in the US, to give some relief to the spire mimicing the metal joints.



Wooden slats were then added horizontally to simulate the joints in the metal sections of the spire.



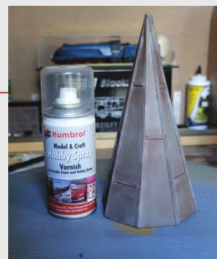
The spire was then given its final coat of matt grey primer and washed with a Humbrol rust wash-paint.



A very light dusting of Humbrol's white weathering powder was then worked in with a stiff brush to simulate water streaking and ingress.



The final rust-coloured weathering powder was applied (from a small sample pack I had, hence no photo of the product).



Once complete, the spire got hit with a light coat of Humbrol matt varnish to blend the colours in nicely and settle things down a little.



The finishing touch was to add a lightning conductor strip made out of sticky-backed conductive copper tape and also stick a thin line of leading tape to the base.

I also added real leading to the apex of the roof of the nave and to the areas where the nave and vestibule roofs made contact with the sides of the tower. After all, it is a church so there must be some real lead somewhere on this model!

So all that remained was to consider some lighting options and with these fine stained glass windows, it would be rude not to. However, that is for another day, but for the final photocall, I just popped a few tea lights into the nave and tower so you could get an idea of the lighting effect at night should you choose to add some lights yourself.

I have to say, without a doubt this is the most involved and detailed kit from Modeltown that I have built to date. Is it also by far the one I have had the most fun building and detailing. It really lends

itself to hopping up, adding extras, and the spire gives the kit a new dimension, the additional height is really pleasing on the eye, too.

It has also pushed me hard and took me out of my modelling comfort zone, but then that is partly what this hobby is about; trying new ideas and techniques. Some work, some don't. We all learn from our mistakes and the secret is not to make the same mistakes twice, or if you do, lie blatantly!

It is also a large kit, measuring up at 45cm in length and 20cm wide. The height to the top of the tower is 36cm and my version stands 57cm tall due to the addition of a spire. It is one of the more costly kits in the Modeltown range, but still great value for money. You won't paint it in one session

unless you are an insomniac and I reckon there were some 35 or so pleasurable hours spent building this model.

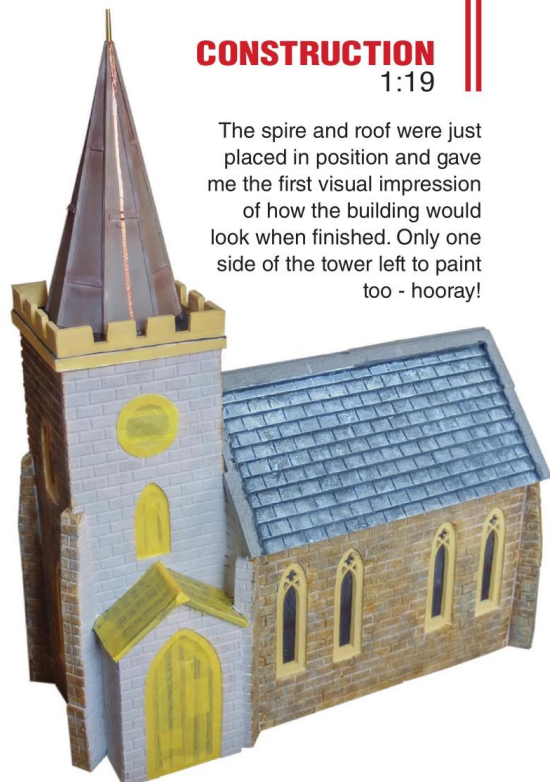
I hope you are all keeping safe. Judging by the suppliers that I have spoken to during our unprecedented lockdown, their mail-order business has increased dramatically and I suspect we all need something to keep our hands from being idle, and perhaps a bit of mental stimulation helps take our minds off other worldly matters too.

So, in those immortal words of Irish comedian, Dave Allen, who, at the end of his set stuck his finger into his trademark whisky glass on stage and uttered, "Goodnight, thank you, and may your God go with you". ■

CONSTRUCTION

1:19

The spire and roof were just placed in position and gave me the first visual impression of how the building would look when finished. Only one side of the tower left to paint too - hooray!



When I initially glued the roof sections together, I got their angle a little off, so had to use Isopon P38 body filler to ensure a rock-solid bond. I also used clamps to persuade the roof to make contact with the walls.



The finished model. Note the leading to the apex of the nave roof, the vertical lead lines on the roof and around the vestibule area, too.

Garden Rail Resource

MODEL TOWN

6 Station Road, Halton Holegate,
Spilsby, PE23 5PB.
www.modeltown.co.uk
Church kit with tower (KIT7A)
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Massachusetts 01844
www.northeasternscalelumber.com

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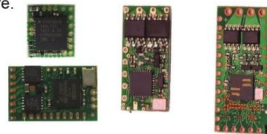
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The range of R/C receivers covers all scales and gauges; from N to SM32, Gauge 1 and beyond with motor currents from 0.5A to 6A. The smallest receiver, suitable for N and 009, measures 9x9.6mm. A selection is shown here.



All Deltang receivers have multiple auxiliary outputs for controlling lights, coupling actuators, sound modules or whatever on-board function your imagination wants to implement.

Batteries

On-board batteries can be NiMH or LiPo for best size/capacity ratio. LiPo cells can be charged in the model and frequently topped up when the loco is resting. Most locos do not need the full 12V - 4V or 8V from 1 or 2 LiPo cells is usually sufficient. For space restricted installations, a single LiPo cell can be used with a small booster to give 9V or 12V.



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Mtroniks or MyLocoSound sound modules can be used to complement your R/C installation. Receiver outputs control motor sound and trigger bell, whistle, horn...

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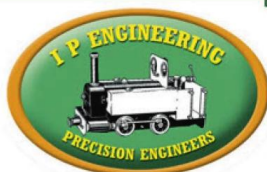
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Micron provides a complete R/C rail installation service using Deltang R/C receivers, MyLocoSound modules and supporting components. We can install in most scales/gauges, from N through Gauge 3.

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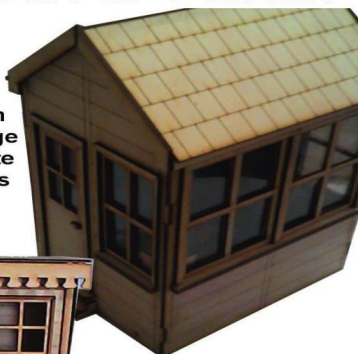
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Please mention **Garden Rail** when contacting suppliers



BOLE LASER CRAFT

16mm scale Bursledon guards van

This model is based on photos of the guard's van used on the Bursledon brickworks railway in Hampshire and appears to be have been built an ex-MOD railway wagon chassis.

The van body is cut from poplar plywood. Both sides of the bodywork are engraved with plank details. Detail parts are 3D-printed in SLS nylon, including corner plates, brake stand, step brackets and door grab rails. The sintered nylon axle guards are screwed onto the sole bars offering free running wheel bearing without the need for brass bushes.

Specification:

24mm diameter steel wheels – 32mm gauge only – are included. Roundhouse colours.

Price £48

Garden Rail will be building this kit next month.

BOLE LASER CRAFT

Yew Tree House, South Street, Bole, Retford, Nottinghamshire, DN22 9EJ
www.bolelascraft.com



BOWATERS MODELS

Sandy River and Rangeley Lakes Railroad Range Expansion

Bowaters latest 16mm scale release covers the last additions to the SR&RL fleet in the form of Combine 14 and Passenger Cars 21/22, along with long Excursion Car 31. These items will fit in perfectly with any of the many Ffestiniog Railway engines, including the Roundhouse Engineering 2-6-2 Tender Engine Number 24.

These coaches are slightly longer lengths, but comparable to the existing 13m WHR coaches in the Bowaters range.

The expansion consists of the following items:

BMS-001 SR&RL Combine 14 (with as-built roof)

BMS-002 SR&RL Combine 14 (with its rebuild 'swayback' roof)

BMS-003 SR&RL Passenger Car 21/22

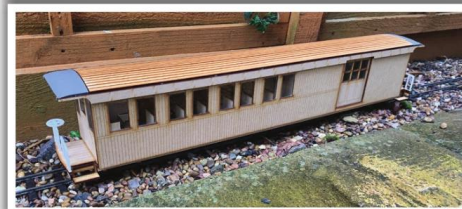
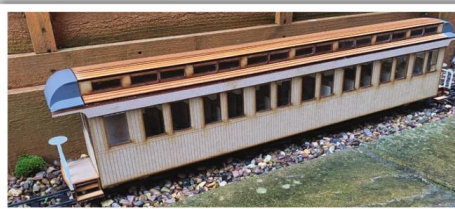
BMS-004 SR&RL Excursion Car 31

These kits are designed for both 32mm and 45mm gauges and are complete with bogies in the gauge of your choice as well as Accucraft couplings. All kits include postage to mainland UK only, with shipping to other countries being at cost. Please note, these are sold as advanced scratch aids and will require some details to complete them, although they are designed to be run as is for those who wish to do so.

Price £90 to £120 per coach in MDF
£105 to £135 in Plywood.

BOWATERS MODELS

www.bowatersmodels.co.uk



TRENARREN MODELS

16mm Scale TR couplings

For anyone modelling Talyllyn or indeed any stock with side buffers, Trenarren Model have modified their coupling pack TM02.

The coupling hooks and backing plate are now cast in brass for increased strength and are supplied with nuts and bolts for fixings and parts to allow the hook to be sprung.

TM02 - Coupling Hooks

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TRENARREN MODELS

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LL360BB

www.trenarrenmodelsonline.co.uk



PDF MODELS

16mm scale 99hp Baguley diesel

Based on Talyllyn Railway, No.11 "Trecwn", is one of three 99hp Baguley diesel locomotives that were purchased from RNAD Trecwn in South Wales in 2008.

The kit includes acrylic laser-cut chassis, bonnet and cab components. In addition, there are 3D-printed bonnet and detail parts, plus frame spacers and gearbox.

Power comes from either a 3V or 6-15V motor driving through a 30:1 or 16:1 worm drive. Delrin drive is used to couple the wheels, which are from Binne Engineering.

Price

£85.50 - With 3v motor, 30 to 1 gears & Talyllyn Buffers

£85.50 - With 3v motor, 30 to 1 gears & Central Buffer/Coupling

£95.50 - With 6-15v motor, 16 to 1 gears & Talyllyn Buffers

£95.50 - With 6-15v motor, 16 to 1 gears & Central Buffer/Coupling

Please note that kits are produced to order and this can take six to eight weeks depending on the workload at the time of ordering.

Batteries and electrics will be required to complete the model.



PDF MODELS

www.pdf-models.com

3D WAYNE

Shipping containers

A new supplier, Wayne Poultney, has been a CAD draughtsman and modeller for many years. The 3D-printing business is a way of combining his drawing skills and railway modelling interests. The first product in the range is a 20-foot long ISO shipping container – as seen on the back of wagons and dumped in yards for storage.

20 foot container 1:24 (USA trains scale)

Dimensions: W95 x H100 x L208mm

Price: £14.50 + (£3.50 postage)

Shorter 1:24 scale container to fit between brackets on flat wagons

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G scale containers (1:22.5)

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3D WAYNE

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BOOK REVIEW

A Down to Earth Railway by Roger Mannion

Building a garden railway is a very different prospect from a smaller scale layout. Roger Mannion knows this as he started modelling in OO and N gauges, but has since seen the light and moved outdoors.

Now part of the Garden Railway Services team, he's had the chance to take both his experience as a modeller and also the person answering other modellers questions in a shop, to write a book on the subject.

Aimed firmly as someone looking at a patch of garden and thinking it really needs a railway, he starts with the basics – scale and gauge, ground or high level – then looks at planning your railway. As he points out, in these scales, planning can save you an awful lot of work, you don't need to shift much concrete in N gauge!

When considering power, there is an informative chapter contributed by Dave Pinniger on steam, but most of the text involves electricity, mainly track power with very extensive coverage of DCC. In this respect, the book is especially current (no pun intended) and will appeal to the growing numbers of small scale modellers who see the appeal of LGB or Bachmann entry-level train sets.

Battery power does get a look in, again with an emphasis on control systems. All this probably relates to the author's background as an electrical engineer.

Scenic features and detailing are covered as well as planting to blend the railway into the garden.

Colour photograph reproduction throughout is good and the book is well illustrated.

To be picky, some of the diagrams have obviously been re-purposed from manufacturer websites, and enlarging them to publication size has left them a little fuzzy. Nothing is illegible and pulling all the content together is useful, so they still make a valuable addition to the information.

As an information resource, mention has to be made of the 11 appendices at the back of the book, which are a valuable resource on their own.

Overall, with its emphasis on track power and DCC, this is very much a 21st-century book that will appeal to modellers moving up scales who are used to the advanced control features offered by digital control but need a helping hand with the basics of work outdoors.

A Down to Earth Railway

ISBN: 978-1-913218-30-0

Format: A4 softback

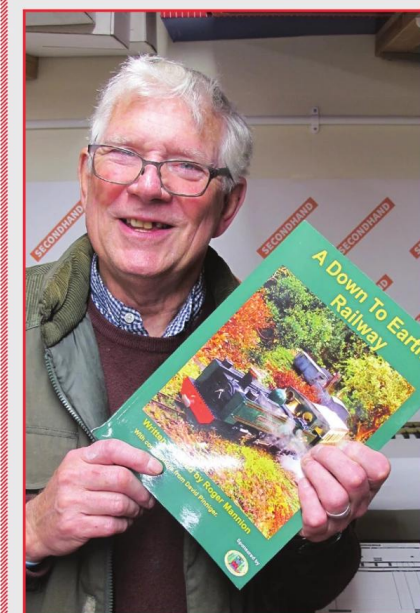
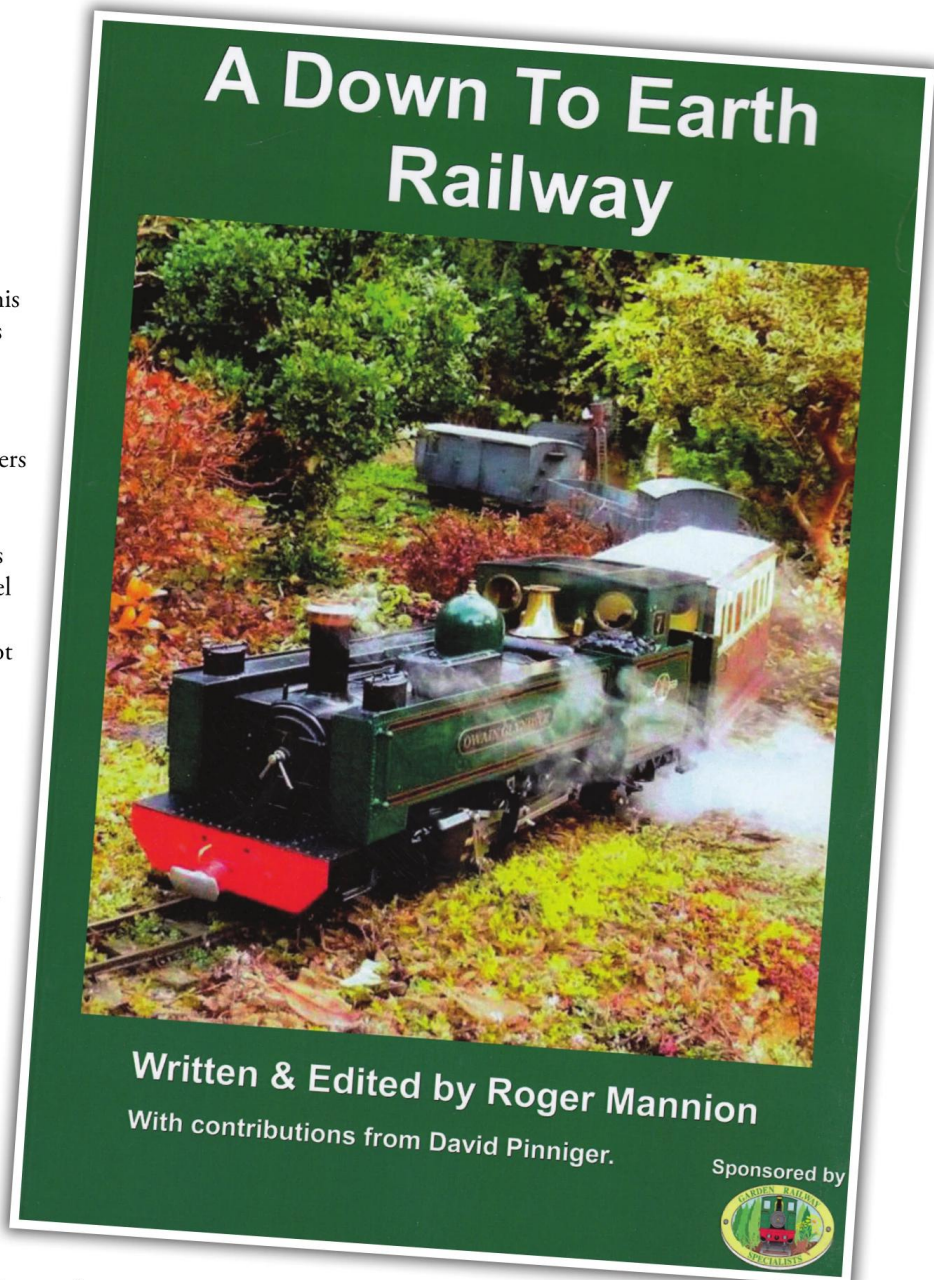
150 pages

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www.grsuk.com



MEET THE AUTHOR

We interviewed author, Roger Mannion about his book recently.

You can read this on our World of Railways news pages:
www.world-of-railways.co.uk/news//beginners-guide-to-building-a-garden-railway-launched

Amati Master Cut

Daniel Cousins takes a look at a useful tool for miniature lumberjacks

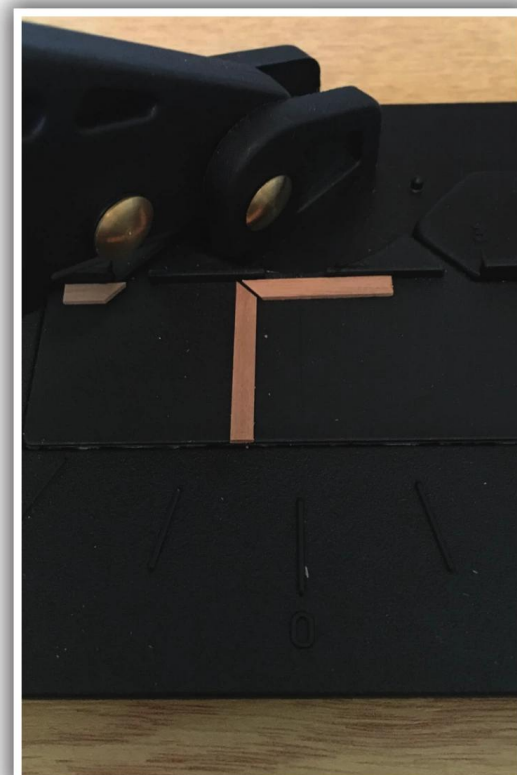


available when more are needed.

Cutting the boiler cladding was made a doddle, each time a clean, square and quick cut was achieved without any mess.

Adjusting the angle of the handle and lining it up to the 45 mark, enables you to cut a clean 45-degree angle. My second task for the Master Cut was to cut four pieces of wood with 45-degree angles for a sign for one of my buildings. The guillotine made a task that would of probably took me some time, and created wastage from wrongly cut angles, a quick and simple affair.

On the box, it says it can cut plastic strips, something I haven't tried personally, but I am sure it would with ease. I am sure I will get plenty of use out of my new cutter in the future, helping me aim to that goal of true perfection. ■



Accurate 45 degree cuts are made easily by moving the handle to the correct mark.

No matter what project or whatever kit I am building, I am always striving to finish it to the best of my capabilities. Sometimes, a new tool comes along that helps enormously in making a tricky task an easy one.

The Amati Master Cut is, for me, a great addition to my toolbox. For those not familiar with the company, Amati makes high-quality wooden model ships and tools to assist in building them, hence this guillotine for cutting strips of wood. Seeing a lot of potential for the garden railway modeller, I purchased one.

It wasn't long before I found a job for my new purchase, cutting quite a few lengths

of 2mm thick Ramin to clad the boiler of the 1:24 scale OcCre Stephenson Rocket currently on my workbench.

Before I could start any cutting, I had to spend a few minutes putting my Master Cut together using the printed instructions on the bottom of the box, which was a simple job to complete. I did find the handle support, which pushes into the base section, a bit of a tight fit, but managed to get it to fit nice and snug. The handle support is then secured from underneath by a screw and washer.

Inside the box are five new blades, one to be fitted into the handle leaving four spares. A pack of 10 spare blades (7386/02) is

Garden Rail Resource

AMATI MASTER CUT

Available from many retailers.
Price £22.99

Please mention **Garden Rail**
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Letters are welcomed on any aspect of large scale railway modelling. Please e-mail the Editor: phil.parker@warnersgroup.co.uk or post to The Editor, **Garden Rail Magazine**, Warners Group Publications, West Street, Bourne, Lincolnshire, PE10 9PH

FILCRIS

My current layout employed a Filcris ladder construction for the main circuit. After a break from garden railways for around 25 years, I started a new line about five years ago, after moving into a property with a decent-sized garden. I wanted a line that blended into the garden, with a height of no more than 18ins above ground level, although that has been increased by excavating in places to give a more comfortable working height.

After discovering the Filcris website and visiting their stand at Peterborough, I opted to use it, mainly to give me the opportunity to build a level circuit relatively quickly, that could be buried to hide the posts and base.

I started in the spring and had trains running by the autumn, with Peco SM32 track mounted directly on a ladder base. I was aware that there were expansion issues with Filcris, but not to the extent that I found with the first winter. I was used to rails expanding, to close up joints in hot weather, and open them when it's cold, but the opposite happens with Filcris, and to a much greater extent. The track badly distorted in places in freezing weather, which I resolved by relaying in the worst cases and removing some of the track fixings to allow more movement. In the hot weather, I initially inserted small rail sections to fill

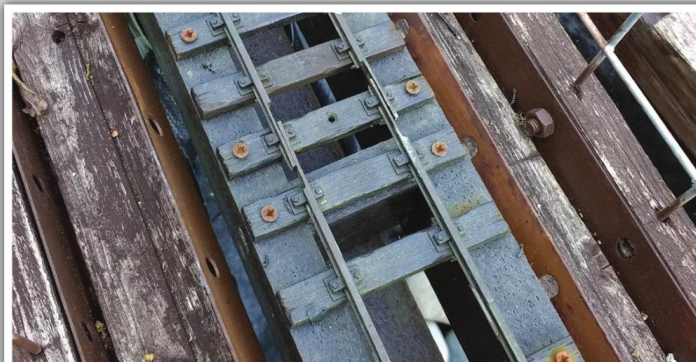
some of the larger gaps, but lately, I've successfully employed some sliding expansion joints.

On the plus side, the use of Filcris allowed me to build something quickly that could be easily levelled, and facilitate plenty of curves, taking advantage of the material flexibility. Digging a pond and lowering the ground level inside the circuit provided the earth to bury the posts and create landscaping features. On the downside, it has given me a track maintenance

problem that was never an issue with more conventional materials.

My two extensions from the main circuit, a high-level line to a steam up area and a ground-level line, have wooden and concrete bases and have been trouble-free. With hindsight, if building again, I would opt for concrete blocks, to save myself the additional maintenance.

Colin Vine



CHRISTMAS COMES EARLY

In the December issue of **Garden Rail** (292), the Editor challenged me to compile a Christmas wish list.

Given that we had booked a trip to Switzerland, to ride the Rhaetian (RhB) the following September and wanting a permanent reminder of the holiday, my top-of-the-range choice was a set of the LGB Alpine Classic coaches, including the Gourmino. These were to ride behind a blue Krokodile, inherited from a dear friend who had passed away.

I knew it wouldn't be easy, as only one of the coaches is in the current LGB catalogue and that is a modern-build version, not the 'classic'.

Well, in April 2020, I finally did it!

Using the combination of Vectis auction house and Chalk Garden Rail in the UK, Grootspoor in the Netherlands and Trainz.com, USA (via a well known online auction site), I now have all five coaches, plus the Gourmino and the baggage car.

All I now need to do is get the railway rebuilt to run the set.

As an aside, during our trip to the RhB, although we saw the historic coaches and even travelled to Davos on a train that included one of them, we were not able to actually ride in any of them. I did manage to get some inside photos of the coach when the conductor wasn't looking!

Thank you for the challenge, as I now have that permanent reminder of a wonderful trip!

Eric Upton
Chairman, G Scale Society



FENDYKE

Reference the letter from Ben Bucki in the June issue of **Garden Rail**, regarding the erstwhile "Fendyke Narrow Gauge". The bad news is that Fendyke stopped trading many years ago, but the better news is that an upgraded version of the loco that Ben is interested in is sold by IP Engineering as the Danny kit.

As an aside, Fendyke was run from a small shop in Whittlesey near Peterborough, and I was fortunate to have visited it on a few occasions. Sadly I can't remember the owner's name, but he was very welcoming and used to make his own kits in the shop to sell as RTR models.

The kits were really scratch-aid kits, though more sophisticated than Brian Clarke's Saltford Models range. The kit contained sheets of plastic card, to which you glued paper templates and then cut out the outline frames and bodywork with a craft knife and steel ruler. The kit also included some really quite reasonable whitemetal detail castings, which you then super-glued onto your work so far. The owner of Fendyke wanted people to realise that scratch-building was easier than they might have thought, and go on to make their own models.

If my memory serves me right, the shop closed sometime in 1996?

Peter Bakke





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An American Cousin Visits The Bole Hill Railway

Steve Blackmore dons his stetson and takes a look at Davenport - the new American 0-4-0 locomotive from Roundhouse Engineering.



Some may have been surprised on the first of January by Roundhouse's choice of a transatlantic prototype, but of course, it makes good commercial sense. There were (are) more railways outside the Welsh principality than in, and odd-bods like myself who model overseas railway deserve a turn in my opinion!

I think it fair to say that Davenport is one of the lesser-known American locomotive builders but, importantly for making the model gauge adjustable, they produced some outside frame examples. As Roundhouse points out, Davenport export all around the world, with many ending up on sugar cane plantations, so I don't think it's too big a stretch of your imagination for

one to find its way onto your little railway.

This model is broadly based on Kiama, which now runs on the Illawarra Light Railway in Australia. Roundhouse was able to obtain some drawings from the museum and, together with other photographs from various other Davenports, this has resulted in an interesting-looking locomotive.

It was late March before I was able to pick up the Davenport, as it had spent the previous few weeks 'over the pond' at a couple of American shows. First job was a detailed examination on the dining room table. Key mechanical features of the model are:

- Outside framed 0-4-0 chassis with Roundhouse internal Walschaerts valve gear.

- Gauge adjustable between 32mm and 45mm.
- Water top-up system and water gauge (this is important, see later).
- Dimensions - Length 310mm over buffers, Width 115mm, Height 165mm, Weight 3.4 Kg.
- Exhaust enhancer.

All the usual good quality Roundhouse controls are fitted. The cab roof is held in place by a couple of magnets, allowing easy access to the water top-up valve, just visible behind the pressure gauge. Batteries are easily accessible just under the roof and the gas knob can be reached through the right rear window. The glazed cab windows are a nice touch. It's a nice compact layout, but

fitting a miniature crew that doesn't impede the water gauge might be a challenge.

Turning to the frames. Yes, they are plate frames rather than prototypical bar frames, but I think Roundhouse has done a good job reducing their height so to leave plenty of daylight showing under the boiler. The inside valve gear is clearly visible, which I found quite mesmerising to watch as the loco trundled around the garden. Standard Roundhouse cylinders are fitted, but with the slide valves moved inside the frames. Dummy steam chest castings are also fixed to the top of the cylinders complete with a dummy valve rod.

The front and rear buffer beams are real wood, so provide cool hand holds. Industrial-style multi-height couplers are fitted. The front tie rods are a nice touch. If the Davenport was to be permanently added to the Bole Hill roster, I think I would add a few bolt heads or reinforcement straps as the beams look a little bare to my eyes compared with the rest of the loco.

Turning to the saddle tank, this is pleasingly riveted and topped with very neat cast dome and sand pots. A brass bell and safety valve contrast well with all the 'black bits'. Oh, and I forgot to mention that the smoke box door is also a very crisp and distinctive casting.

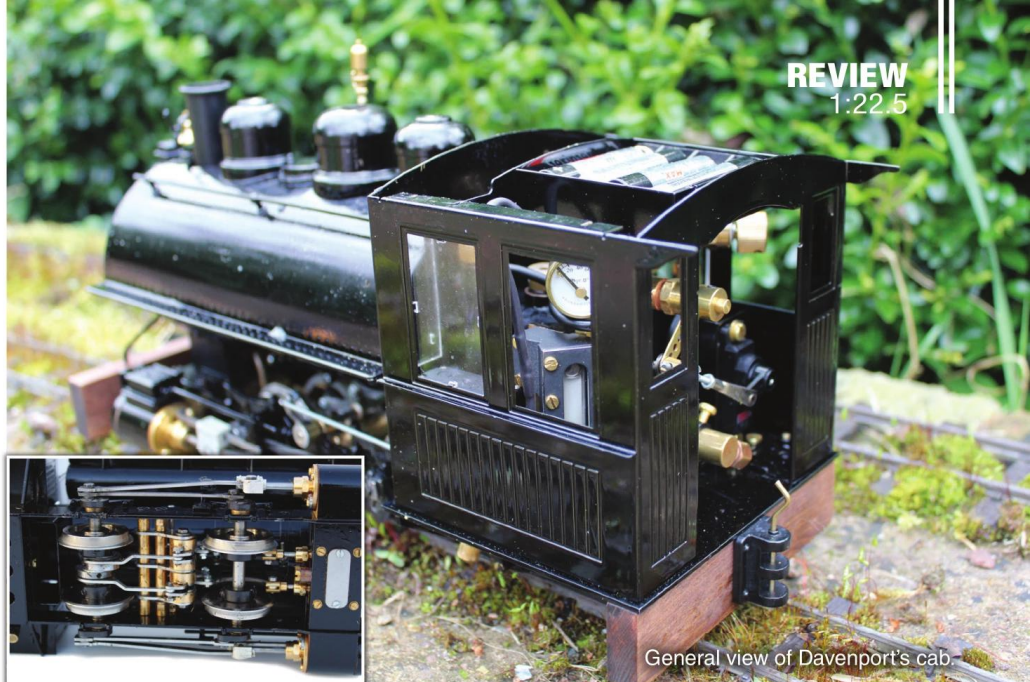
Roundhouse offers this loco in any of their standard colours. The review model is a mixture of gloss and satin black. Frankly, the photos don't do it justice. When viewed in natural daylight, the contrast between the two blacks is very pleasing.

Anyway, enough of the preliminaries let's talk about running it.

For years, Roundhouse has always designed in the safety feature that the gas should run out before the water does. Not so with the Davenport. The boiler is comparatively small as it doesn't extend up into the saddle tank as the Bertie does, but their standard vertical gas tank is fitted. This means that you will need to add water at least once during a run. However, the water sight glass is totally reliable and Roundhouse supply a good water top-up bottle so I found no problem with this.

The first run took six minutes to raise 20 psi, at which point I ran it light engine for a minute to clear all the tubes before I backed it onto a short goods train. I would like to have borrowed more appropriate stock for the photographs but already that virus was making its presence felt and I had to use the BHR's native stock.

The train set off smoothly, trundling around my level upper circuit without fuss. After 10 minutes, I noticed that the water was halfway down the glass, so I topped it back up to the top of the glass and proceeded to get another 15 minutes



General view of Davenport's cab

INSET: Close up of the amazingly-compact inside valve gear.

running before the gas ran out with gauge glass quarter full.

For the second run, I decided to tackle my hilly main line. Again, seven minutes to raise 25psi and then 26 minutes running up and down my hill, refilling with water a couple of times. I continued to run for the rest of the afternoon with my video truck attached and achieved 30 minutes on most runs with faultless running at all times. One train consisted of four bogie coaches and the video wagon (i.e. 20 axles) and the loco had no trouble starting this train even at the steepest part of the line.

What the photos can't show is the lovely sound you get from the exhaust enhancer as the Davenport tackles the 1 in 50 climb.

I did, however, spot an issue with the couplings. The loco itself is quite long at 285mm over the buffer beams, with a short 72mm wheelbase offset to the front. This means there is quite a lot of lateral throw on that back coupling on tight corners. The Bole Hill Railways minimum radius is four foot and with the hook and chain couplings I use, this was not a problem. However, if potential purchasers are thinking of fitting chopper or knuckle couplings and they have tight curves on their line, they may have issues.

The other issue I had was with the shape of the cab roof. Later in the day I decided to run a passenger train and started to get frequent derailments of the leading coach going downhill. Investigations showed that the cab roof actually overhangs the rear coupling by a fair amount (as per prototype) and as the coach tries to overrun the loco's coupling on a curved descending grade, the two roofs clash, pushing the bogie off the rails. If a potential purchaser wants to pull box cars or coaches, I would suggest fitting a larger rear coupling just to give a little more clearance between roofs. In normal times,

I would have discussed these minor niggles when returning the loco after the weekend's visit, however, Uncle Boris intervened and I found the Doncaster factory was shut for the duration! No doubt these issues will be sorted when production resumes this summer (fingers crossed).

To conclude, Roundhouse has produced an interesting-looking model packed with details that I'm sure will appeal to American outline modellers in particular. The loco's running qualities are to the firm's usual exemplary standards. Also worth a second mention is the inside valve gear, which is a marvel of robust miniaturisation and fascinating to watch. ■



The rear cab overhang might cause problems on lines with tight curves.

Garden Rail Resource

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DIARY DATES

Date: 5-6 September (Note: change of date)

Event: Steam in Miniature

Address: Bure Valley Railway, Aylsham Station, Norwich Road, Aylsham, Norfolk NR11 6BW

Organiser (BVR): Bure Valley Railway – 01263 733858, also on Facebook

Organiser (16mm): alan.butcher34008@gmail.com - e-mails only please as I cannot be contacted via the BVR

Web Addr: www.bvrw.co.uk

Times: 10.00-17.00 or until last departure from Aylsham if earlier

Prices: Free access to 16mm layout, normal prices for train rides etc.

Layouts: Aylsham Minor will be available for Association members to run on
Additional info: Bring a locomotive to run whilst the family ride the rails. Two former Fairbourne Railway locomotives – Katie and Siân (from Windmill Farm Railway) will be visiting for the weekend.

Date: 3 October

Event: Llangollen Garden Railway Festival

Venue: Llangollen Royal International Pavilion, LL20 8SW

Times: 10am to 4:30pm

Admission: £7. Accompanied children under 16 free.

Web: www.lgrf.com

Date: 3 - 4 October

Event: Aylsham Model Railway Show (Saturday only event)

Address: Bure Valley Railway, Aylsham Station, Norwich Road, Aylsham, Norfolk NR11 6BW

Organiser (BVR only): Bure Valley Railway – 01263 733858, also on Facebook

Organiser (16mm): alan.butcher34008@gmail.com - e-mails only please as I cannot be contacted via the BVR

Web Addr: www.bvrw.co.uk

Times: 10.00-17.00 or until last departure from Aylsham if earlier

Prices: Free access to 16mm layout, normal prices for train rides etc.

Layouts: Aylsham Minor will be available for Association members to run on
Additional info: Bring a locomotive to run whilst the family ride the rails.

Date: 14 November

Event: National Garden railway Show

Venue: Peterborough Arena, East of England Showground, Peterborough PE2 6XE

Times: 10am to 5pm

Admission: £12.50 on the door (under 18's and carers admitted free), however buying in advance will save you £2.00 per ticket.

Organiser: The Association of 16mm Narrow Gauge Modellers

Web: www.nationalgardenrailwayshow.org.uk

Additional Info: 19 layouts, in scales including 16mm to the foot, 7/8ths, 7mm narrow gauge, G, G1 and G3 running a mixture of live steam and electric powered stock. 100 trade stands including suppliers you simply don't see anywhere else as well as major manufacturers launching new products, information stands and heritage railways. Model of the Year Competition, Member to Member secondhand sales and lots more.

All events are published in good faith.

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Garden Rail welcomes articles submitted via posted disc, e-mail, Dropbox (or other large file sending systems online). Please ensure that your name, e-mail address, telephone number and postal address for payment on publication are included. Send to phil.parker@warnersgroup.co.uk or to the contact address on the Contents page.

Articles should be submitted in MS Word or other word processing format. Please do not use fancy formatting or embed photos in the piece, these should be sent separately at the highest resolution possible and in JPEG format. Printed photos of a historic nature will be accepted. Captions for all photos should be included as part of the submission. You must own copyright to any material submitted and not have submitted it to other publications.

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BOWATERS MODELS	29	JACKSON'S MINIATURES	34	RAILS OF SHEFFIELD	12
BRUNEL MODELS.....	11	JOHN SUTTON MODELS.....	35	ROUNDHOUSE ENGINEERING ..	23
CAMBRIAN MODEL RAIL LTD.....	48	KENT GARDEN RAILWAYS.....	13	SMALLBROOK STUDIO	29
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DREAM STEAM LIMITED	2	LISIACRAFT	48	THE ASSOCIATION OF 16MM	
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GARDEN RAILWAY		MAXITRAK LIMITED	47	THE G SCALE SOCIETY	47
SPECIALISTS	52	MBV SCHUG	47	TONY GREEN STEAM MODELS ..	29
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Securing track ballast

Julian James recounts his experiences of using solvented resin binder.



The ballast on the track throughout my G scale 45mm gauge garden railway has been secured since its construction in 2011 by stabilising primer, a preparation usually for the painting of exterior walls.

The track is laid throughout on a concrete base. This has no reinforcing and no transverse expansion joints. Some ballast became detached in heavy rain, but collecting and weighing the wash off showed that it would be 30 years before it was all lost, so this was not going to be a great problem. I have, however, made further applications of stabilising primer each year along the length of the line, not just in locations any ballast became loose. With the passing of seasons, transverse cracks have occurred in the concrete base at approximately 3m spacing. The ballast in the bed (space between two sleepers) above these has loosened sooner than elsewhere, but a few drops of binder corrects this for another year or so.

Garden Rail 301 September 2019, featured VUBA Easihold gravel binder,

which is a solvent resin binder. I decided to give this a trial. It worked very well, even after rain set in, the trial length had been unaffected.

Used neat there is a risk of it drying to a milky colour, avoided by dilution with water. After experimentation, dilution with an equal amount of water before pouring gave the best results.

Pouring from a cleaned washing up liquid bottle provides sufficient control to the application. It will run off the upper side of plastic sleepers, so there is no need to avoid it falling there. If the underside of switches in points are treated, move the switch blades every hour or so until dry to prevent them from becoming stuck.

As an air-drying product, it is necessary not to oversaturate the ballast, and, of course, rain, before it dries, will wash it away. Drying produces a cross-linking of covalent bonds according to Vuba's product datasheet and installation guide.

Wear a mask during mixing and installation and remember that the product is flammable. Once fully cured it can be

considered innocuous. Keep the spare liquid in a suitable shed above freezing.

With the return of drier weather, I have patched up areas requiring repair and given a maintenance coat of Easihold elsewhere. For new ballast, and depending on stone dimensions, a second application after the first has dried will enhance fixing.

My stone has greatest length between 2mm and 4mm, larger sizes will require more applications. Allow 12 to 16 hours, dependent on ground temperature, before reapplying. Vuba is more expensive than stabilising primer, but with dilution and longer life, it should work out cheaper.

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The model is built to a scale of 16mm:1' (1:19 scale) and follows our standard design brief being internally gas-fired with a centre flue boiler and available in either 32mm ('O' gauge) or 45mm ('1' gauge). The axles run in bronze bearings and all the rods and valve gear (piston reverse) will be manufactured from stainless steel. The cab roof is fixed, access to the regulator and reverser is via the cab doors, water via the boiler filler cap, gas via the toolbox and the lubricator filler is in one of the bunkers. The copper boiler is fitted with a gauge glass. The model is built from stainless steel and brass. Although fitted with TR buffers and couplings the model will accept our Z1/Z2 chopper couplings for those who wish to use them. The model will be available in TR green, Indian Red or black. Estimated UK RRP £1650.00. We would like to thank David Fletcher for the superb drawings and members of the Talyllyn Railway for their help in providing data for the model.



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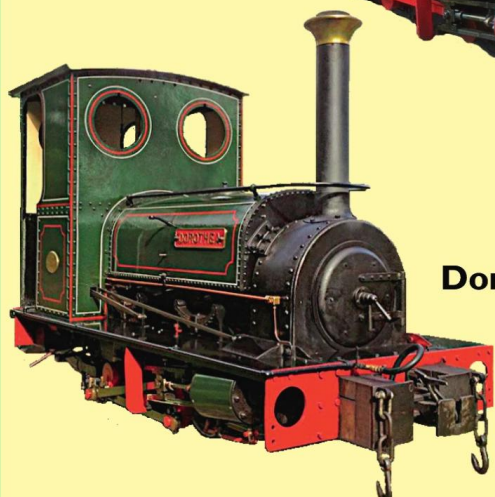
Elidir Style



Dinorwic Style



Penrhyn Style



Dorothea Style

Prod. Code	Example	Cabbed	Livery	Lining Style
AW001	"Nesta"	No	Black	Penrhyn
AW002	"Alice"	No	Red	Dinorwic
AW003	"Dorothea"	Yes	Green	White/Red
AW004	"Britomart"	Yes	Blue	Black/White
AW005	"Elidir"	Yes	Red	Black/Yellow
AW006		Yes	Black	
AW007		Yes	Black	Penrhyn
AW008		No	Black	
AW009		No	Red	

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