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View from the end of the Platform

PEOPLE POWER

I need to start this issue by apologising for an error in last month's obituary of Peter Binnie. Despite my efforts, the piece was inaccurate, and this caused understandable upset to the family concerned. It has since been revised (see page 60), and I'm grateful to the family for their patience while that was put right. I'm very sorry for the distress caused.

At its heart, this hobby isn't just about trains, track, or scenery – it's about people. The railways we model are bound up with real lives, memories and personal histories, and that's something we should always treat with care.

One of the strengths of any garden railway is how it reflects its builder, whether that's a favourite prototype, a place remembered, or simply the pleasure of making something and sharing it with others. When people ask me what should be in an article about their line, I always hope we can focus on the inspiration that drove them to lay track around their garden in the first place.

That sense of *why* doesn't just drive those laying track and running trains; it also motivates the people who design and



produce the kits and models we use. No one enters the garden railway world to become rich, but because they love what they do and the people they meet along the way.

This issue is another collection of fascinating stories from interesting people. From the Tinto Valley Light Railway, very much an enjoyable work in progress (is a garden line ever finished?), to The Vale of Aylesbury Model Engineering Society putting on a very public show at the Buckingham Railway Centre.

We'll continue to bring you interesting stories every month. Why not drop me a line and share yours?

Phil Parker, Editor

Talking of interesting people, Dave Skertchly has sadly downsized, meaning the Vale of Weedol Tramway is no more. Knowing my love of the Groudle Glen Railway, he asked if I would like to provide a new home for 'Annie', as described in our August 2021 issue. Of course, I said yes. Not just because it is a lovely loco, but as a scratch-built model, there is a lot of Dave in its construction.



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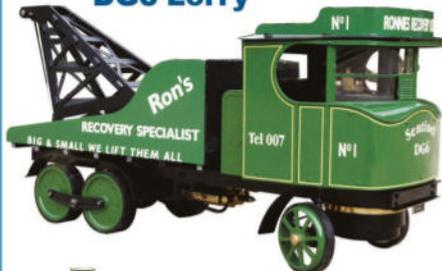
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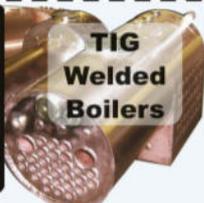
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The Tinto Valley Light Railway

Although a work in progress, **Richard Ashton** has built a line to be proud of.





I suspect my introduction and subsequent interest in model railways is a tale familiar to many a reader. It began in my childhood.

Trains featured in my early years in the form of visits to Bolton Trinity Street station in the late eighties and early nineties, to watch the sprinters and pacers noisily passing in and out, along with occasional visits to the East Lancs Railway that at that time ran between Ramsbottom and Bury, which allowed me to experience, a word I consider appropriate, steam locomotives up close. I fell in love with the complicated (to a boy of seven at least!) system of intricate rods and couplings, and how they moved, the sounds and smells with which I'm sure we are all familiar, and thus was the seed sown that would eventually sprout and grow into a desire to have a steam railway of my own.

Model railways in my childhood took the form of a OO gauge layout my father built in the attic, followed shortly by a small N gauge layout that we built to slide out from under my bed. And that was about it, until a trip to a local model shop in Bolton led to the discovery of SM32.

The track, compared to what I was used to, was huge, but it led to the realisation that building layouts outside was possible,



An overview of the line from Wiston Lodge terminus looking along ivy falls bridge and the viaduct toward Redpoll, a current terminus, but will eventually be a through-station.



Caradoc 'Robin' shunts at Redpoll.

something that very much appealed to my young mind. Sadly, something that would have to wait many years to be taken as a genuine possibility. As such, my focus remained on N gauge and the notion of an outdoor layout went firmly on the back burner.

Fast forward to 2010, the start of an airline pilot career, and the purchase of an Accucraft Caradoc. My partner Linsey also has a love of railways and steam, and it was a gift for her. She named it 'Robin', so suitable nameplates were ordered, but apart from occasional steaming on a rolling road, that was as far as the notion of a garden railway went, until 2018, when we bought our first house in Lanark, Scotland. A house which, critically, had a garden! Time to get planning.

The garden to our house isn't very large and effectively precluded my desire for a line that 'cameos' - a railway that runs through the garden as part of the scenery. Seeing as 16mm is not a scale that easily blends into the background of relatively small spaces, the railway would have to be a prominent feature of it, aesthetics were going to be important.

There is also not much in the way of level ground where a railway would be suitable, so a raised track was deemed necessary. This ultimately meant that I could include a bridge and maybe some sort of viaduct or

embankment. The layout would be a rough L shape, with initially two termini, Redpoll and Wiston Lodge, at 90 degrees to each other and a meandering section of line connecting them, and thanks to my inability to accept that this would be sufficient, there would be a future line running down the side of the house to another terminus in the front garden. The termini would feature a section of platform, a run-around for the locos and some sidings.

The name 'Tinto Valley Light Railway' comes from the name of a local hill, Tinto Hill, which is visible from the house.

So much for the easy part! It should be pointed out that my profession means that I spend a great deal of time away from home. When I am home, I'm jet lagged, tired and not much use to anyone. This, coupled with the fact that we had a toddler to raise, and due to maximising my time spent with my young family, meant that getting the opportunity to go outside and work on the railway was close to impossible.

It should also be pointed out that I began this project without the necessary skills to complete it. Learning as I went would have to be the way to go. Hence, my first attempt at constructing baseboards for the stations was, and I freely admit, woeful. I'd used the wrong kind of wood, constructed the boards in the wrong manner and secured them in the wrong way, as one does with no knowledge or experience, and the imperative to make the most of the brief, snatched opportunity to build at least something! Inevitably, they warped and twisted the hastily laid track and it became clear that starting again would be the only way forward. When I finally had an opportunity to dismantle the first attempt,



'Argyll' shunting at Wiston Lodge.



'Robin' hauls a small freight train across the viaduct.



Redpoll station, with the start of the extension to the front garden.



'Robin' heads onto the bridge with a passenger train.

years had passed and it showed the wood had begun to rot and the track resembled an old abandoned line. This was a low point, but on the bright side, it was a lesson learned: don't try to rush it.

To minimise any warping, I'd need to choose either proper decking timber, rather than rough-sawn, or a suitable composite material that is durable and stable enough to survive outdoors for long periods. I rebuilt the baseboard at the station next to the house, Redpoll, with decking timber sourced from B&Q, properly this time, having done the necessary research, and using more appropriate tools than merely a hand saw and a hammer! I secured the board frame with short posts held with Postcrete in the old flower bed and supported with posts resting on the stone flagging at the front. Suitably treated with slate grey preservative, it provides a stable and sturdy baseboard upon which track could be laid.

The next, for me, technically challenging part was getting the track across the rockery to the adjacent fence where the other terminus, Wiston Lodge, would go. I had considered sinking stone blocks into the soil and running the track over that. This would definitely have been durable and sturdy, but would involve digging up large sections of the rockery, and I didn't fancy doing that if I could help it.

I read an article, in this very publication, about a 'ladder' system made by Filcris, intended for garden railway raised track construction and looked into it. To those unfamiliar, the system uses posts, which are set in the ground with long stringers screwed to either side of the posts, connecting them all up, spacers between the stringers create a ladder frame.

Along the top of the frame are screwed short lengths of board upon which track can be laid. The stringers are flexible so the system can be used to make pretty much any curve desired. To me, this seemed the most elegant and least garden-altering option, so after purchasing two lengths of their G45 sets, I set about carefully sinking the posts and fixing the stringers to create a sweeping curve across the rockery.



Although the line is 'on stilts', careful plant choice helps blend it in with the rest of the garden.



'So, Isambard, what do you think of this 'Countess' engine then? It's one of yours, isn't it?'



Looking up the line toward Wiston Lodge.



'Countess' takes the morning mixed train over the herb garden.

The short boards Filcris made for fixing the track to were a little too short for my taste; I preferred a wider-based trackbed. Help for this came from my neighbour David Sneddon, who has a business manufacturing and selling composite outdoor construction materials and was happy to sell me some end-of-line composite planks for not very much, which I could then cut into board lengths of my choosing (he used to be general manager at the Costain factory in Wishaw making concrete railway sleepers, the 12 inches to the foot scale variety, so it can be said he has a background in track laying!).

For the bridge across the gap between the rockery and the Winston Lodge, I used a composite board supplied by my neighbour, reinforced by bolting aluminium L-beams along its length to make it rigid, and a single mid-span supporting post. The structure is very rigid and strong and was beautified by four aluminium truss sections made by Derek Broom, and painted Forth Rail Bridge red for a bit of flair.

The terminus at Wiston Lodge is constructed in a similar manner to Redpoll, using decking supports and with the same composite planks laid across the structure to form the baseboard. The whole base of the line was covered with roofing felt to provide a good base for eventual ballast, and a decent appearance in the interim, before track was (carefully and properly this time) laid down!

The line, although finally operational, is still very much embryonic. There is plenty to do to tidy up rough edges. I haven't decided how I'm going to beautify the section of line across the rockery yet



'Robin' pulls her train through the herb garden.

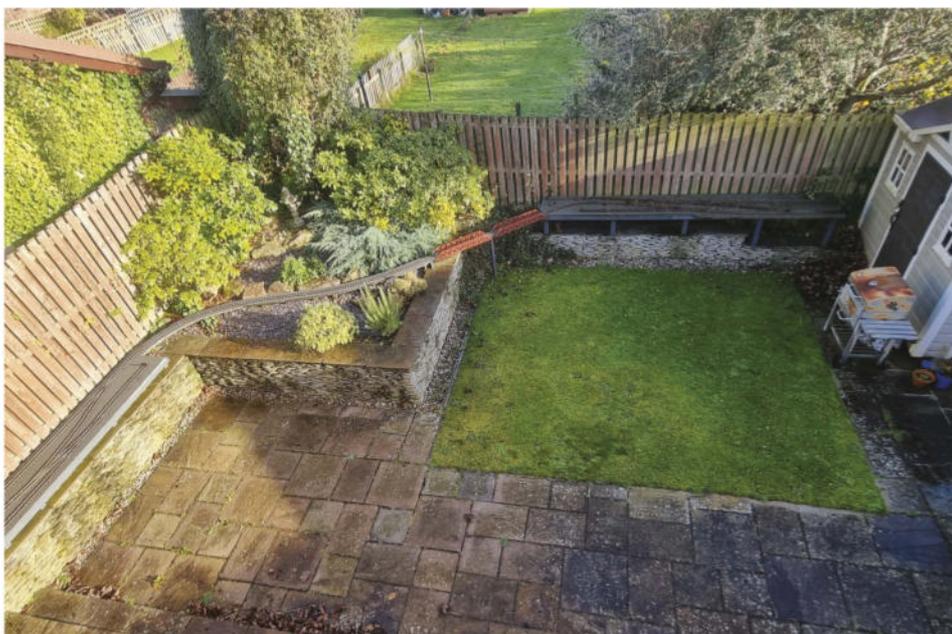
- being such a prominent feature, it'll need to be well thought out! I'm either going to turn it into a realistic-looking embankment or simply cover the sides with decorative edging.

Scenery and ballasting are a must; I foresee my immediate future featuring various building kits and projects!

There are platforms to construct and I have collected various pieces of lineside architecture, such as a water crane and some old Hornby O gauge signals, all of which will find their rightful place in the fullness of time. Garden railways gain their character as they evolve.

There is the extension of the line that will run to the front garden, which I have already started constructing, and which will render Redpoll a halt rather than a terminus. I also have plans to run the line into the shed beyond Wiston Lodge terminus, where there will be a maintenance/steam up area, but I'm getting ahead of myself!

For now, I finally have a functional line of which I am very proud, unfinished but full of potential. It has taken six years of on-and-off construction to get to this stage and I have learned a lot in the process. Let's see how the line evolves and what it will look like in another six years! ■



An overall view of the line showing how it fits into the modest available space.

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Jack Russell

Dave Pinniger looks at two versions of a classic locomotive.



Steve Edwards' Mk 2 Roundhouse Russell on a recent visit to the AVR.



'Victoria' joins the AVR after being lined by Matt Acton.

The Welsh Highland Hunslet 2-6-2T 'Russell' is now very familiar to all garden railway enthusiasts thanks to the Roundhouse version, which has been produced over the last 25 years. However, the first one to visit the Ambledown Valley Railway was way back in 1985 when Harvey Watkins brought his new Archangel loco for a run.

This loco was a revelation to us Berkshire locals; accurately proportioned, gas-fired with full Walshaerts valve gear and lots of detail. It was also in nicely lined out Indian red and the name 'Jack Russell'. Like many of Harvey's engines, the name typified his quirky sense of humour.

The loco looked terrific and performed impeccably and was much photographed by his admirers, including the renowned Peter 'Snapper' Dobson.



'Jack Russell' passing Woody End.



Jack Russell' visiting the AVR in 1985. (Photo: Peter Dobson)



Peter Spindlow's 'Bibury'.

I certainly would have liked to have a Russell, but could not afford the £895 price tag.

Harvey's loco was first of a number of Archangel Russell's to visit the AVR, including Peter Spindlow's 1986 green 'Bibury', Peter Kybert's red 'Russell' and Dave Lemar's brown coal-fired 'Russell', which then went to Colorado, but has now returned to Devon.

When Peter died in 2005, all of his engines were bequeathed to friends and 'Bibury' passed to Roy Bernard, who repainted it black and renamed it 'Victoria'. It was a much trickier engine to run than Roy's other Roundhouse locos, and he always overfilled the boiler and never really got the hang of its erratic gas burner. One day, there was a leak from the gas valve and Roy did not notice the small flame until the paint on the cab roof started to bubble and burn.

I had always liked this loco, so in 2010 I agreed with Roy to swap it for my very reliable Cheddar Samson and Harvey Watkins very kindly



Coal-fired 'Russel' on test on the AVR before being sent to Colorado.



Cookham Light Railway 'Victoria', previously named 'Bibury', visiting the AVR.



Peter Kybert's red 'Russell'.



'Victoria' with a Mk. 1 Roundhouse Russell.

offered to replace the erratic gas burner and gas valve.

I ran the engine for a while, but felt the unrelieved black really needed to be lined out and so the engine then went on a trip to Berry Hill Works, returning from Matt Acton in 2016 looking very nice in BR mixed traffic lining.

'Victoria' had many outings on the AVR and also visited a few other tracks before I sold it to another Welsh Highland enthusiast in 2020 to fund another locomotive.

It is interesting to compare Stewart Browne's locos with the later Roundhouse Mk 1 and reissued Mk 2 versions. Although the Doncaster-built locos run beautifully and do look splendid when properly lined out. I feel that the Archangel loco somehow really captured the character of this attractive and well-proportioned Hunslet. ■

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A pair of open wagons

Wood or plastic? **Ben** and **Amy Bucki** try both for their next rolling stock projects.

One apiece for us this month; open wagons for the growing fleet. While we plan for slate traffic to be the mainstay on the eventual garden line, we thought we'd like some engineering stock as well, as these fleets on the real railway tend to feature more unusual and eccentric items. And, in terms of wagon kits, we've ended up with two contrasting vehicles in terms of materials too, which reflect something of the variety in kits available for the 32mm modeller.

Ben: The first was my welcome pressie when signing up to *Garden Rail* as a subscriber over a decade ago. At the time, I wasn't sure what gauge to model, and ordered the 32mm version of the kit on a whim before choosing to go with 45mm. I'd actually forgotten I still had this wagon kit until I'd started packing for the house move; a decade in store in the attic had caused only slight warping of the wooden components, but with a bit of clamping and careful gluing, it went together OK.

The kit is the 'Industrial Open Wagon' by North Pilton Works, one of a range of vehicles they designed to provide a matching train with similar components. There were

a surprising amount of parts to this kit, in laser-cut plywood, many of which were for the chassis and brake gear.

Plywood gives the model a rather nice texture, even under the eventual coats of paint. After initially painting the body in dark grey, with a black chassis, I ended up choosing a scheme inspired by the engineering stock of the Ffestiniog Railway, which in turn was inspired by the British Rail Civil Engineers 'Dutch' scheme. While dark grey had been chosen as it was what I had to hand, I thought the yellow lifted it a little from looking too plain. The framing was picked out in black, and as with the other stock, a light weathering pass was made with dry-brushed brown, and watered-down Citadel acrylics.

Amy: Our second open wagon was a Binnie Engineering kit for a Glyn Valley Tramway prototype; I had built a couple of their skip and flat/bolster kits in the past, but this was the most complex of their small but well-designed range that I'd come across. The kit went together very well, as had all the previous examples of this manufacturer's work that I've encountered.

The only slight difficulty that I had was with the placement of the components

on the chassis. No major criticism, but I felt like it needed another step in the instructions. I constructed it over a couple of evenings, to give the glue plenty of time to dry, building the body first, then the chassis. I used a mix of superglue and poly cement to build the kit up. A very interesting feature is the slight compensation designed in; it's a reasonably long-wheelbase wagon, and one axle assembly is designed to rock a little to take into account uneven track. It's a lovely, very well thought-out bit of design.

I chose the same shade of grey as Ben, and as with his, the wagon ended up with an Engineers' yellow panel. If anything I think it works better on this wagon, having larger planks to paint on the sides, and it was given a light weathering and a wash with Citadel 'Nuln Oil' to emphasise the gaps between the planks.

Together, both wagons form the nucleus of a planned short train of engineer's stock - the other Binnie wagons I'm working on should look good in a Dutch scheme, and hopefully at an upcoming show we can acquire a small crane wagon and maybe a workmen's carriage to accompany it.

THE BUILD: STEP-BY-STEP



1 The North Pilton Works chassis was built; this proved a little tricky, as the parts had warped a touch over the years the kit had been in unheated storage. Once it was all glued and braced together, it seemed to be square, but I left it overnight and weighted down, just to be sure, and used quick-setting superglue into the bargain.



2 A feature of this kit, and the wider range it came from, are the doors and brakes, all of which make use of thick dowel in order to operate. It needs careful gluing and securing, and cutting down to length after construction of these parts is completed. I toyed with leaving this feature off, as I thought it would make painting a little tricky, but the door is slightly too narrow to be just glued in place, so I went ahead and built the wagon as per the instructions.



3 Not bad for a free gift! The wagon is nice and chunky and the openable doors on each side and the possible brake gear show a lot of thought went into the design and its possibilities for setting in cameo scenes.



4 The North Pilton Works kit, structurally complete but only partially painted. It was at this stage, I decided to add the yellow panels to lift the plainness of the wagon, ending up with the Ffestiniog/BR 'Dutch' engineering stock livery.



5 The wooden open wagon, complete with a little weathering and a dusting of varnish. It could probably use some markings at some point to denote its status as an engineer's vehicle.



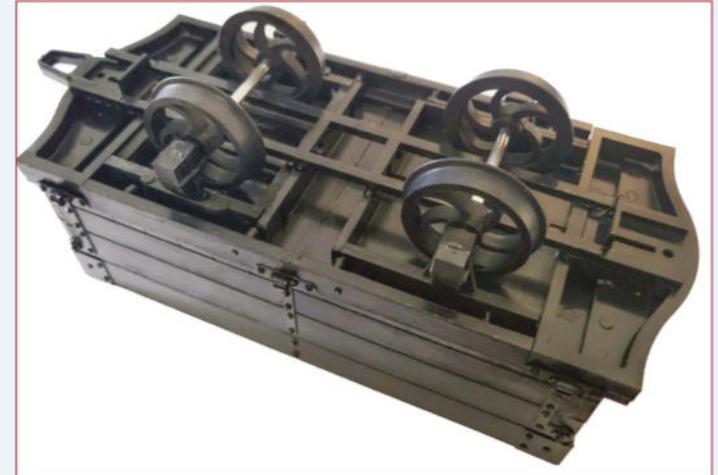
6 | The Binnie kit bodywork under construction; it glued together nicely, using polystyrene cement and a little masking tape to hold the components together while the glue set. A particularly impressive bit of design work and attention to detail is the fact the inner faces of the wagon have neat wood grain and strapping represented.



7 | The wagon construction underway; the bodywork went together quickly, but the chassis was a little more involved.



8 | A really interesting feature of the Binnie wagon; the chassis has one of the axles fitted with this slight ability to rock from side to side, providing effective compensation to handle roughly laid track.



9 | The Binnie wagon, awaiting a few more details fitting. As with all the kits from this manufacturer that I've worked on, the quality of the parts is excellent.



10 | The completed open wagons, stabled with the shunter on an engineering job.

One interesting thing has come from this paired build, inspired by the BR-esque colour scheme; the setting of the eventual line. We're set on the Welsh location for the railway, but hadn't pinned down a time period or exact location. But suddenly the image of a small line like the Corris (short trains, slate quarries), running under British Rail ownership sometime in the 1980s or early '90s, as per the Vale of Rheidol...

Definitely something to investigate further. ■

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Binnie Engineering
www.peterbinnie.com

North Pilton Works
 Sadly, closed in 2024. Kits still appear on the second-hand market.

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War clouds over the Manor Downs Railway

John Conder improvises a military train.

It's 1940, and we have just snatched a kind of victory from the jaws of defeat at Dunkirk, an invasion by ne'er-do-well Europeans is expected within days or weeks at the very most.

The Admiralty is extremely concerned that the mine and quarry at Manor Downs are not adequately protected, as it is feared that enemy agents have blown the cover story and discovered what is really being mined there. It was therefore decided that a sufficient quantity of explosives should be transported to the mine to completely cave in the mine and shaft in the event of an invasion occurring, as the mine is not to fall into enemy hands in a usable condition.

It was also decided to increase the firepower of the gun train defending the mine, and an old 6-inch naval deck gun was to be mounted on a wagon to provide this. It was not known how long the wagon would last with the recoil from the gun, but



The Naval diesel Pandora rounding the curve.



Anti-aircraft wagon.



Water tank and auxillary braking wagon.



The Big Gun.

the boffins expected it to last long enough to allow for the complete destruction of the mine. In addition, it was decided to mount an anti-aircraft gun on another wagon to provide some cover from air attacks.

The modelling starts with the Big Gun, whose chassis is an old brass letter box plate with the gun, shells and housing from the bits box. The end platforms from a Newquida coach, as are the bogies, which have been regauged to 32mm, and the wheels reprofiled to a more acceptable flange size on the lathe.

Moving to the anti-aircraft wagon, we have a chassis from a Swift Sixteen tank wagon, with the tank removed and a representation of a Colt anti-aircraft machine gun mounted in its place, along with ammunition belt boxes added, all again from the bits box.

A support wagon is constructed with the water tank from the above, mounted on an old engine chassis. I believe the Penrhyn Railway did something similar with an old engine chassis and water tank. I don't know if they kept or removed any coupling rods, but I left mine on as an added interest.

The complete train is now so heavy that the Naval diesel Pandora can only just move it by reversing to slacken all the couplings, then full forward and pick up the train one wagon at a time. The much-modified Roundhouse steam loco, Lady Eleanor, however, has no problem pulling the train at all. ■

Garden Rail Resource

Swift Sixteen
www.swiftsixteen.co.uk

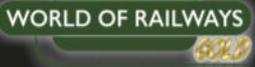
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Times: 10am to 4pm
Web: www.eastsurrey16mmgroup.wordpress.com

Midlands Garden Rail Show

Date: February 28th - March 1st, 2026
Venue: Warwickshire Event Centre, Nr Leamington Spa, CV31 1XN
Times: 10am to 4pm
Web: www.midlandsgardenrailshow.co.uk

Steam Over Spencer

Date: March 4-8th, 2026
Venue: N.C. Transportation Museum, 1 Samuel Spencer Dr. Spencer, NC 28159 United States
Times: 9am to 5pm
Web: www.nctransportationmuseum.org/steam-over-spencer

The London Festival of Railway Modelling

Date: March 21-22nd, 2026
Venue: Alexandra Palace, Alexandra Palace Way, London, N22 7AY
Times: Sat: 9:30 to 5pm Sun: 9:30 to 4:30pm
Web: www.world-of-railways.co.uk/shows

National Garden Railway Show

Date: Saturday, April 25th, 2026
Venue: NAEC Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, CV8 2LH
Times: 9.30am to 5pm
Web: www.nationalgardenrailwayshow.org.uk

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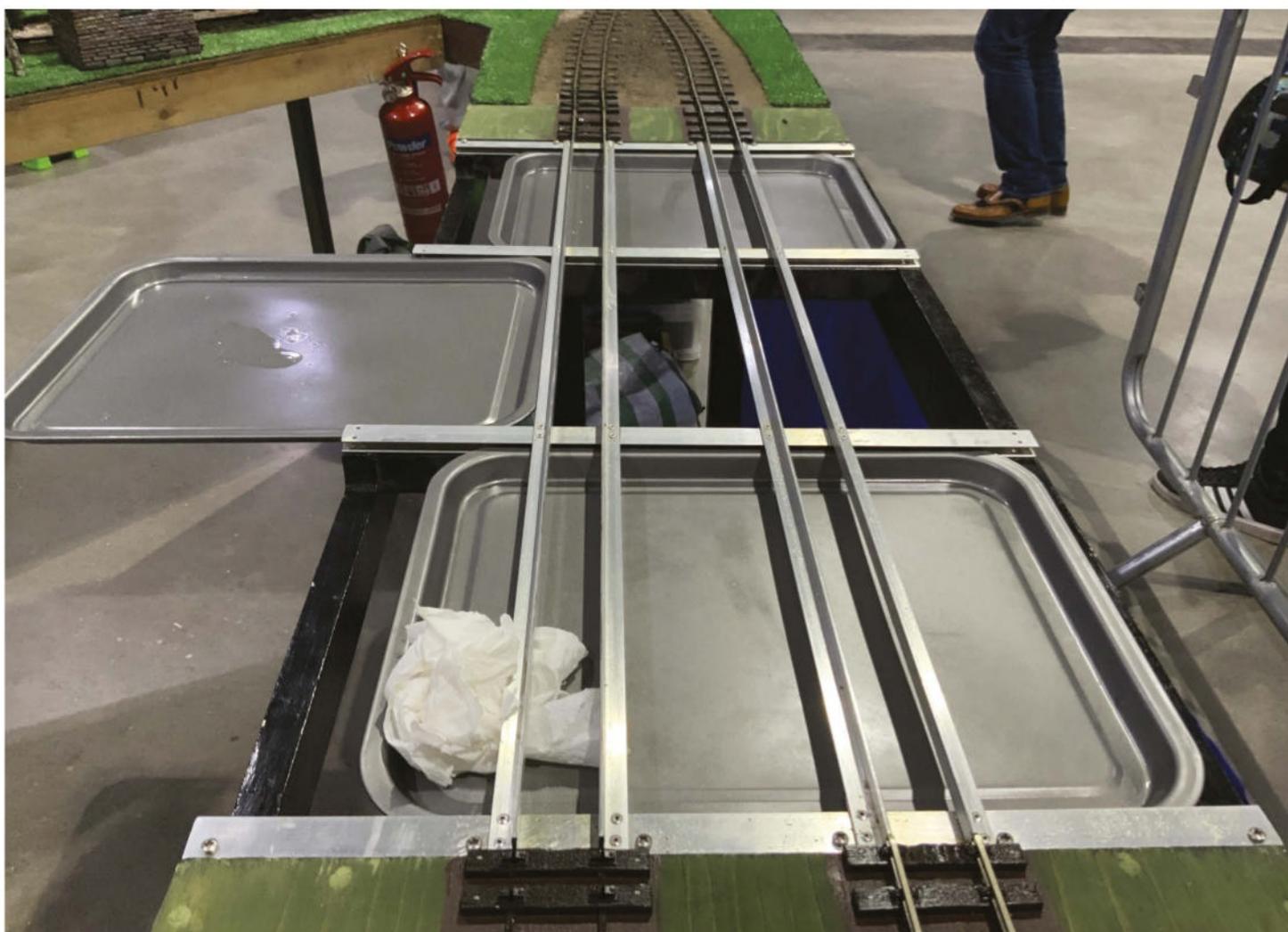
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A Tray Steaming Bay

Alan Macfarlane describes why we need one, and what it should have!

A steaming bay is a place where locomotives can be made ready for a run, and when finished can be allowed to cool down or 'put to bed'. By having a dedicated place for lighting up, you collect the stuff you need there and develop a routine. But what does it need?

At the 2024 16mm National Garden Show, on the modular layout, which I was running on, there was what I call the Rolls-Royce of steaming bays. Often you see something and think it's so obvious, why have I not seen it before? This steaming bay was one of those times. I must say I'm thinking of incorporating the idea into my existing layout. It has also sparked other ideas, too, more later on this.

A steaming bay can have no facilities at all to a set of dedicated drip trays where you can check over, oil and light your locomotive from below.

One of my friends has a siding that is always used as the steaming bay. He is not bothered with weeds or moss growth at this location anymore! On this siding, oil and stuff is always dropped. The pile of ash shows he is using it for his coal-fired loco too. It does look like a steam shed track. Authentic, but it did however take time to achieve.

What do we need at a steaming bay?

The first thing is easy access for you to get around the locomotive. If it's away from a running line, there is less danger to your hands being in the way of passing trains as you concentrate on getting your loco ready. Ballast is a pain to lean on, and looking for that dropped screw, well, it can be 'character building'. Have the bay on plain track and on a smooth surface. Just think if you drop a steam oil drain screw and cannot find it in

the gravel, sorry ballast, the day would not be a good one!

Once the loco is ready, it should be easy to get to the running line. It should certainly not need to be picked up and carried. The area around the steaming bay should be uncluttered. Why? Often, when lighting up, things happen and a swift move by you is needed. With the area being clear, you will be able to move to get something or just out of the way.

At the steaming bay, you will have oil, water, gas, spirit and other flammable bits. A place to sit them down is a good idea. Remember, have them all clearly identified, so mistakes in picking up the wrong things cannot happen. When running on your own, you know where all your safety equipment is, don't you? But when the Clan come and gather, do they know where it all is? Put the safety stuff out and make

it visible for all. In this world of safety information, a full safety plan could be needed at a public opening. For a closed group gathering, it may still be worth just having something.

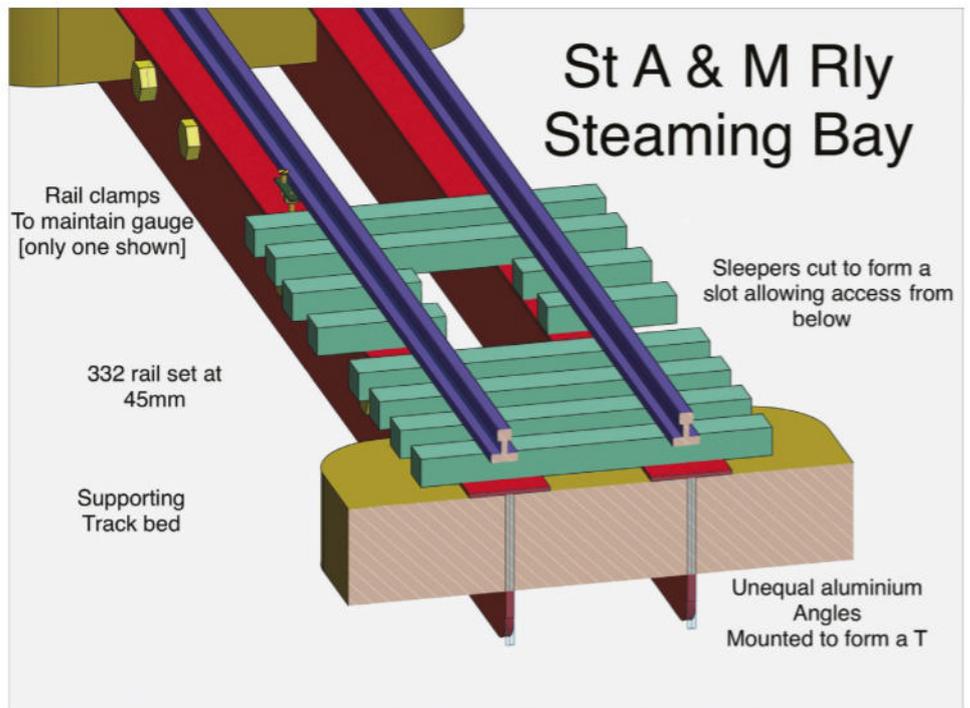
A steaming bay is a two-way thing. You steam up and you cool down. A bit of space is nice for letting the locos cool, blow down the displacement lubricator, drain the boiler and, if using coal, drop the fire.

A place to put your tea is also a must. Light up, then drinking my tea as the pressure rises, is always part of my routine.

Nice to have

Several books and manuals say drain oil into a tray or a tin lid to keep the area clean and tidy. This is sensible, although often getting a tin lid into the right place is difficult, and so we often just drop it on the track, by necessity. Just look at the ground under my steaming bay - it proves it's been well used. The best steaming bay I have seen, so far, had simple steel trays under the track. It caught everything oil, water, fuel and although not seen, it would allow the dropping of a coal fire. You can now see why I said it was the Rolls-Royce.

The nice to have things are: it being at a height where you can look all round and under the locomotive without being a star limbo dancer or on your knees. I find that knee pads become a necessity, the closer to the ground the track is, the older we get the more pain, physically, metaphorically and the grumble factor, a low-level steaming bay is. Your line will determine the height of the steaming bay. But consider height of



the steaming bay before building your line. Mumbling, 'why did no one say that height is heavenly'.

One of the corporate sayings is 'Future Proof'. Well, by having a steaming bay and or line at a height, you have done your best to have it nice now, and nicer in the coming years. Your back and those of your older compatriots will be happier, and they will want to run at yours more often.

When lighting spirit locomotives with the conventional three-burner tubes, you will be lighting from under the firebox. Placing the lighting wand through the side of the locomotive frames or wheels and in the

firebox is, let's say it's a steep learning curve. If it is possible to look at the firebox from below, you can place the wand exactly where needed. You can see when, or if, the three burners are alight. No guesswork and no manipulation of a dental mirror. You are then confident that there is a fire in her belly, one less thing to ponder over while getting ready.

The area around the steaming bay should not support combustion, especially when spirit can be spilled in the area. Spirit can run to different places. The use of tin trays under the steaming bay is a good safety measure. This made me think of all the advantages these steel trays have.



A steaming bay siding showing ash and lots of old oil and no weeds!



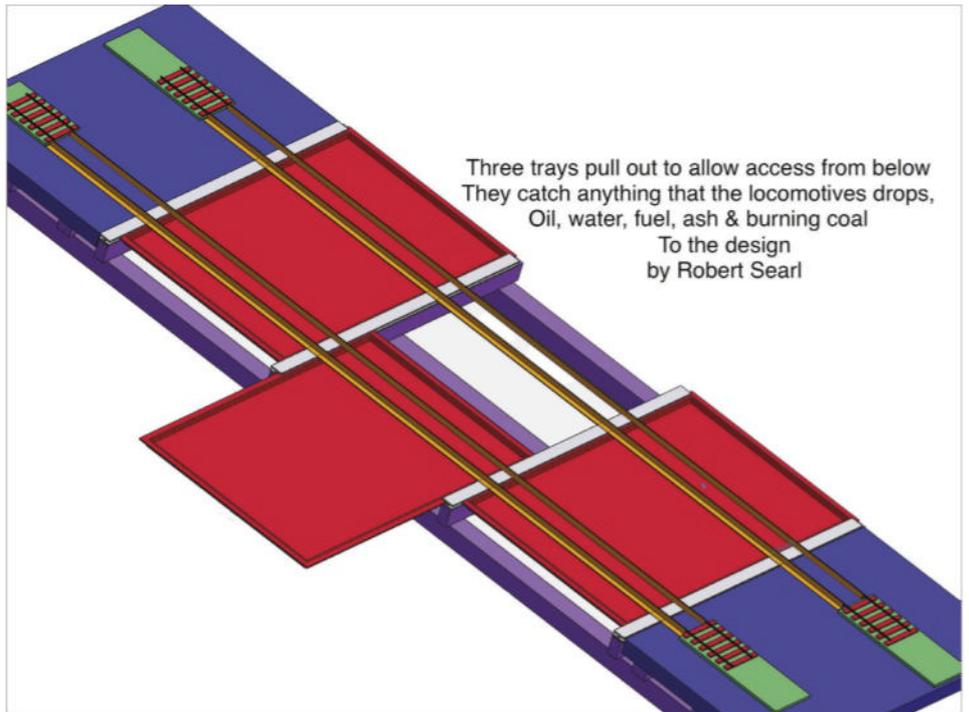
The St A&MRly steaming bay.

If spirit is spilled, it lands in the tray and can be mopped up. If it ignites, it is retained in the tray, just move the loco and then deal with the spirit. When draining a displacement lubricator, drain it into the tray. When blowing down a water gauge or boiler, drop it in the tray. Any oil that drops goes into the tray, not on the floor of a hall. Tin trays, steel baking trays are easy to get, are not flammable, are watertight, although if you are buying new trays, some are folded up with gaps that can let liquids out, others are pressed into the shape so are sealed. The trays are easy to handle and clean. Any cleaning rags or paper can be easily placed in the tray, ready for disposal in the appropriate place.

If you have a coal-burning locomotive, the ash and spent coal is easy to just drop in the tray. If it is still alight, a spray with water from a gardeners house plant watering spray will put it out. You have no fear of damage to the track or the track bed, just the tin tray. As these are cheap and cheerful, replacement, if they do get overheated or rusty, it is not a great issue, but remember, don't use the ones from the kitchen - you may be cooking your food by the lineside if you do. Much better if the cook of the house gets new, non-stick, super dooper ones, and you 'just' accept the hand-me-down old ones, after suggesting to the cook to up grade the kitchen ones, with you having no ulterior motives at all!

What I did

When building the St Andrews and Middleburg Railway (StA&MRly), I knew several of the locomotives I had or coming



would be three-wick burner spirit-fired ones. With this in mind, a steaming bay with access from below was mandatory. Any track bed that can have spirit spilled on it needs to be easily extinguished. My track bed would be susceptible to this so it was just eliminated. It was replaced by two pairs of unequal aluminium angles bolted together make a T. Each pair was set at my track gauge (45mm). This T supported the track sleepers, so no sagging was seen when a heavy locomotive was being made ready. This makes the track clear at both sides and between the rails. Several sleepers were removed from inside the

track and so long open slots were formed. Using rail clamps screwed to the T section kept the gauge correct.

This has lasted over 16 years and shows little deformation or damage, even after a fair bit of spilt oil. The ground below is also spotted with oil, showing it has been used to good effect.

When using my steaming bay, it has one drawback; the wind can come up from below and just causes havoc with the steam-raising time. The answer is, once lit and proved to be alight, pull the loco to the solid bit of the track bed. A simple solution to an aggravating issue.

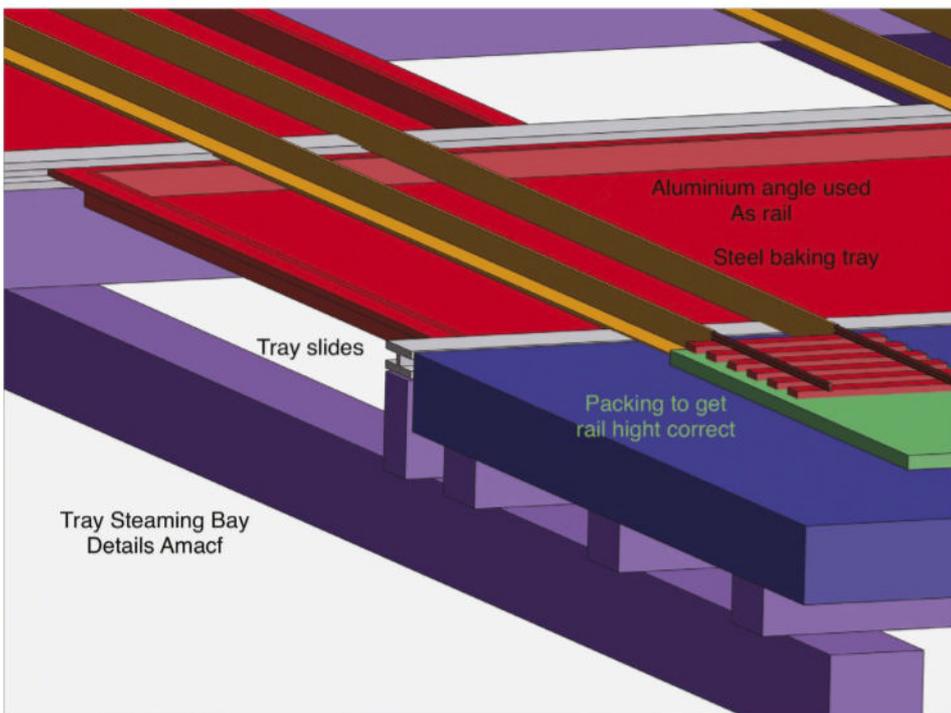
I'm still looking into trays for my steaming bay. I better go and measure so a tray size can be found. Will it be a baking tray or a roasting one? An update will come once the method and action get to the top of the list. You know 'The List' we all have, either on paper or just nestling in with the grey cells.

The one that made me go wow!

At this year's 2024 16mm Garden Railway show, I discovered a steaming bay. Not just a.n.other steaming bay, but the Rolls-Royce of all steaming bays.

An aluminium angle with one edge used as the rail, the other face fixed to the support system. The second angle was the other rail. Two more made a double track, they ran over three tin trays.

Below these track angles, an aluminium extrusion the shape of a elongated H, on its side, was mounted. This gave the steel trays a slot to move in. The three steel trays





Aluminium angle
as the rail

Rail ramp
with
alignment blocks

My steaming tray, fitted at the end of a siding.

slid under the track and collected any and all fluids that fall. Fluids would not drop to the floor. Lighting from below was simple. Slide out the tray after fluids were filled then ignite the burners. Prove the burners are lit and slide the tray back in.

I hunted down the designer/creator, Robert Searle of the Oxford group, and discussed his design. He generously agreed to provide the drawings for this article. With the photos and plans, you should be able to replicate one. One that fits your needs.

The benefits are that the trays can be removed and emptied, it is all aluminium with steel trays, so has minimal things that can burn! As this is part of the module system, it travels to shows and so is a great benefit to all.

To build the system into your layout, there are a couple of points to note. The height of the track and the aluminium angle needs to be adjusted to have the same height as the layout rail head. The second is the fixing of the tray slides, remember the trays need to slide in and out. So, don't put the screws through the runners!

The drawings included with this article are not dimensioned; the steaming bay will be built from the trays you find and use. The size of the tray will determine the overall size of your bay. A small 0-4-0 needs one or two trays, depending on the way they run, a Pacific or even a Garratt will need more.

Loco weight will also determine the thickness of the track aluminium angle, noting what you have or could have as a visitor. A small, light 32mm loco against a large 45mm one in 7/8" scale will determine the section of the angle needed.

There is no reason why this system could not be used on larger live steam scales, too. Upgrading the trays to roasting tins, deeper than baking trays, to collect the larger quantity's of ash and such from 5"+ gauge locos will be necessary. Tipping out a tray is easier than having ash blowing around, or shovelling the dropped fire off the ground!

Another morphed option.

Sitting, mulling over how I can make the trays fit my railway, a few of the little grey cells collided, and this collision said a

dedicate tray on a siding! Why not make a tray that slips on the end of any siding? This will make it very flexible. So I did.

A tray was acquired and the bits box was raided. The aluminium and bits were made to fit 32mm. As I used bolts to keep the track in one place, I had to seal the cross members to the tray. I used a way one of my loco kits used to seal the water pump in the tender water space. Place an O ring between tray and cross member, pass the screw/bolt through the O ring, too. As you tighten the cross member down, the O ring is squeezed to make the seal.

To get a loco to it, a track ramp was made with the rails being tapered down on the milling machine. Then, locating pins and blocks were fitted to allow track alignment with the tray and track. The loco is run up or down with care and assistance.

The tray is not fixed, so raising steam can be carried out off the layout, if running space is as at a premium. With being a modular system, the runners are used to stretching the envelope, and take extra care. Every time you build a layout, it is special and different. It adds to the fun. ■



Rustic facilities

The Editor fancied a quick project. Now his passengers can enjoy a little relief.

Does my garden line need toilet facilities? Yes, but that's not the reason this kit made it to my modelling board.

I'd been feeling a little jaded and, when I saw this kit on Bole Laser Craft's stand for a tenner, decided that it looked like a

bit of fun. Modelling for pleasure. Anyway, at a tenner, it was cheaper than a couple of pints and longer lasting too!

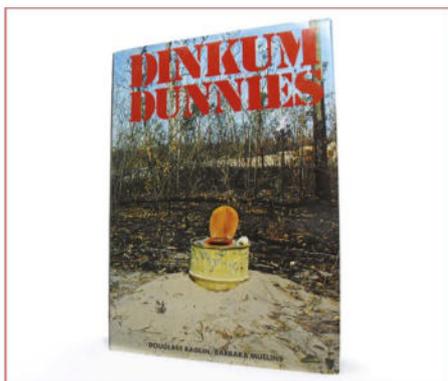
As expected, the model fitted together very easily. And if you know me, you'll know that I can't resist fiddling with a kit as I build it, to make the finished model personal.

This is why we have a corrugated iron roof, made using a press tool I've had knocking around for a long while, and been meaning to try out. According to the makers, it's designed to form pewter, which is nice and soft. But if you clamp it in a vice, very thin (shim) brass will work. Next time, though, I'll invest in the right metal. Pewter is just as waterproof.

Inside, there is a little detail – some front pages of British super soaraway tabloids (some of you will know which one I mean) hung on a nail. These came from

scalemodels scenery.com, where they can be downloaded as 4mm scale litter. It's a little touch, but makes me chuckle.

Did I enjoy the build? Yes. Sometimes a little bit of fun is just the thing to make bigger and more involved projects look more appealing. After all, fun is what this hobby is supposed to be about isn't it? ■



I did a little research in a book from Australia. Would you believe this is the fifth edition?

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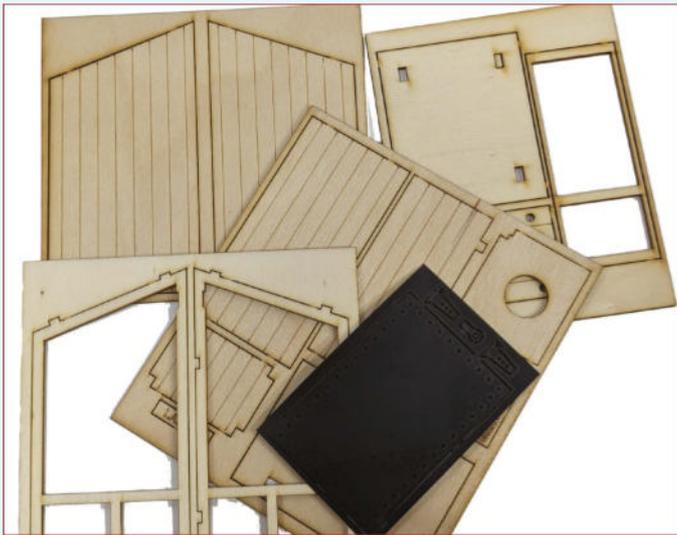
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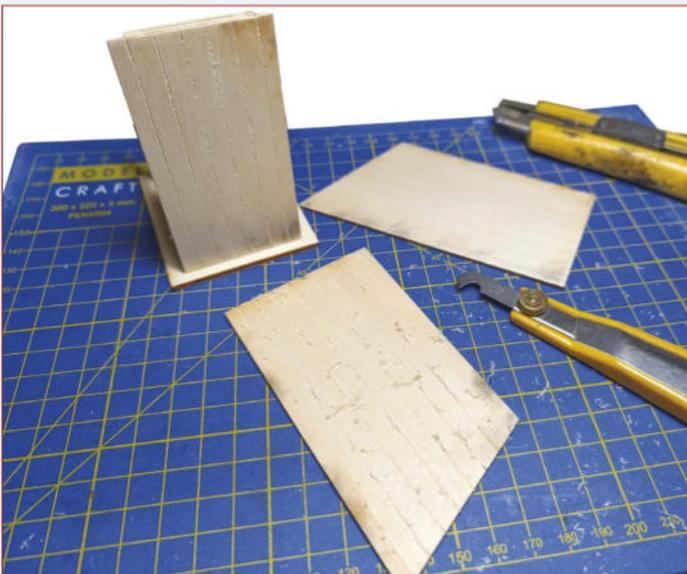
THE BUILD: STEP-BY-STEP



1 The kit is neatly laser-cut from plywood, with some pre-cut ABS plastic detailing parts for the roof and door fittings.



2 Following the instructions, the main frame slots together without fettling, all assembled with woodworking PVA glue.



3 Since I wanted the door to open, I felt that the sides should show plank lines inside and out. These were scribed using an Olfa plastic cutter, followed by sanding with some coarse grit.



4 I treated the wood with EDM Models Weathered Wood Stain, followed by a coat of Coach & Wagon Works Old Oak Wood Stain, so it looks as though the WC sees creosote occasionally.



5 The supplied roof looks like felt, but I fancied wiggly tin. Using a press tool and shim brass, I made some. The tool is designed for pewter, which would have been a lot easier to form.



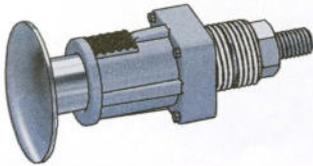
6 I wanted working hinges, so I bent some brass rod into U shapes. Shim brass was cut into strips and bent around these, everything being superglued to the door.



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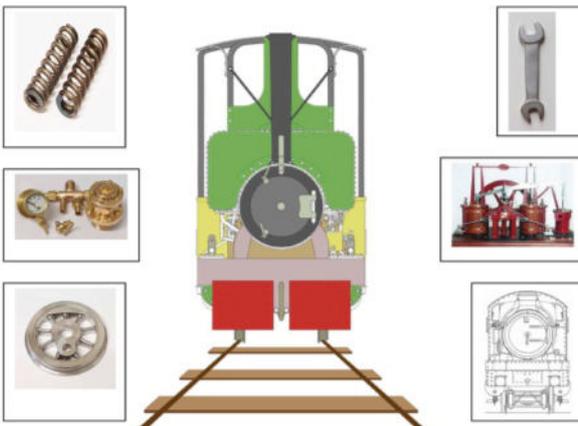
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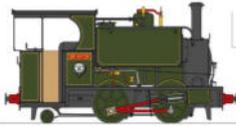
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The Living Layout in Winter

The garden may be dormant, but there is still work to do. **Louise Christie** explains.

This is the month when evergreens in your garden really begin to hold their own, making it an ideal time to focus on the structure of your trackside garden. Some outstanding green features we have found in model villages and railways include neatly clipped topiary shapes, including tunnels and Bonsai or cloud-pruned shrubs, which maintain the illusion of trees but keep everything in proportion.

On the Olive Branch Tramway, we will be experimenting with planting our own topiary tunnel and have selected *Lonicera nitida* (box honeysuckle), a shrubby honeysuckle with dense foliage made up of tiny dark green leaves, with the added bonus of a fabulous display of small white flowers from March to May. An easy shrub to grow and maintain, which tolerates regular pruning, ideal for trackside topiary. Shrubby honeysuckles can thrive in most

free-draining soil conditions, in full sun or partial shade and grows to approximately 40-60in (1-1.5m). Ours was ordered online and has arrived in bare root form, which requires potting up now, ready for positioning and training around a tunnel frame in Spring.

We have sections of dwarf hedging defining our herbaceous borders, made up of *Buxus sempervirens* (common box), however, this summer has been particularly



challenging with the dreaded box tree caterpillar, the larvae of an invasive moth that are widespread across the UK, causing severe damage to our hedging. Cue the painstaking evenings spent combing through the hedging and picking caterpillars off the damaged foliage, followed by a treatment of biological insecticide and finally setting up a box tree moth pheromone trap, we eventually allowed the hedge to recover in time for winter.

Reliable alternatives to box hedging include:

- *Euonymus japonicus* ‘Green Rocket’ (evergreen spindle) - Hardy and compact with small, glossy, dark green leaves. Tolerates full shade to full sun in any moist but well-drained soil. Height up to 40in (1m)

- *Euonymus fortunei* ‘Emerald Gaiety’ (spindle ‘Emerald Gaiety’) – A hardy, bushy, variegated shrub which will climb if planted against a wall – perfect for softening unsightly areas. Prefers a full-sun or partial shade position. Height up to 20-40in (0.5–1 m), spread 40–60in (1–1.5m).

A key feature of our trackside Bonsai border is our evergreen dwarf Hebe, which has a natural compact, rounded shape of tiny green leaves and is often mistaken for topiary, however, this is a low-maintenance shrub, which only requires the occasional trim of untidy ends. A favourite of ours is the Veronica ‘Emerald Gem’ (H) (Hebe Emerald Gem), which only grows to around 13in (30cm), position in full-sun in well-drained soil, sheltered from cold winds. ■



Excellent use of evergreens at Bekonscot Model Village & Railway.



One of our favourites, Hebe Emerald Gem.



Loniceria nitida.



Brighten up your line with a hardy perennial such as candytuft (*Iberis sempervirens*).

Jobs for Winter

Collect fallen leaves – they make an excellent mulch, a great way to improve soil quality and water retention. Or add to your compost heap for a carbon-rich material.

Pruning – dead-head spent flowers and remove diseased foliage, pruning helps rejuvenate plants. Pop any diseased foliage in your green waste bin.

Brighten up your layout – By introducing hardy winter annuals such as violas or pansies, or evergreen candytuft (*Iberis sempervirens*), most garden centres offer a wide variety this time of year.

POSTCARDS

1:19 & 1:22.5

Leaves on the line won't stop this Roundhouse Darjeeling railway B Class on an appropriate train.



POSTCARDS
1:19 & 1:22.5

Postcards from Buckinghamshire Railway Centre

Steve Cook went to the pub. This is what happened...

In the early 70s, four men met in a pub and decided to see if there were any other people around the Aylesbury area who might be interested in forming a club for model engineers. They met again, and nine modellers created The Vale of Aylesbury Model Engineering Society.

Initially, they had no base, but in 1975, an offer from Quainton Railway Society was accepted to build a permanent site for a miniature railway at what is now the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre. During the 1990s, the track was extended with the original circuit and lengthened to go behind the steaming up bays and then extended to a figure of eight track, giving a ride of approx 1km long with gauges 5" and 7¼".

Also during early 1990s, a garden railway was added, with 45mm and 32mm gauge tracks, which proved popular with the members. Moving forward to 2018, the garden railway was completely reworked from the ground up.

Aluminium shelving from a factory was used to make the legs and support the base, which was cut out of 8 x 4 sheets of ply. This made the layout wider, so it incorporated two lines of Gauge One, one electric line, 45mm and of course, two 16mm lines. Three covered steaming bays were also added and that's where we are today.

Starting with the Gauge One track, which is on the outer perimeter; which is 80 metres long. Moving onto the next two loops which are 45mm track; accessed by a viaduct from the steaming bay, which passes over the Gauge One track.



Roundhouse Harlech Castle on a short goods train.



Heading out from the steaming bay, Fairlie 'David Lloyd George'.



'Netty's' driver doesn't look too impressed at being stuck beside the turntable!



We like to take part in special events by changing the signage on the layout, such as Father's Day, and the Rail200 celebrations.

The next track is an electric line where members run G gauge; this is controlled from the 16mm steam bay area. The 16mm has two loops with several sidings and two stations. The steaming bay for the 16mm has a neat turntable that can feed the inside track in either direction. So, in total, the garden railway layout has seven tracks, so something for everyone.

Quirky Touches

Over the last few years, the layout has been populated with buildings of all descriptions, people and a few 'quirky' things, which are loved by the public, especially the children spotting their favourite characters.

When the railway centre holds its themed weekends, such as Thomas or Dino Day, we enhance the layout with the relevant characters to continue the theme.



Roundhouse Stanley Steam Tram on a train of four-wheel coaches.



A single Fairlie, with an FR train, waits in the bay platform.



Thomas day!



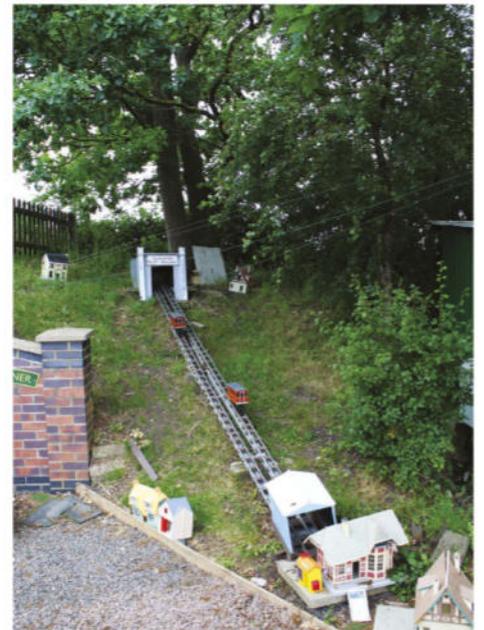
Attending to the locomotives at the front of the layout always attracts interest from the public.



The entire VAMES layout.



For the modern image modeller, an Accucraft Class 66 roars by.



As well as the garden line, we have both funicular railways and cableways, which can be operated by the public with push buttons.



We can't forget the popular 5 and 7 1/4 inch tracks, which offer a long ride around the site. Perfect for entertaining families.

Wednesdays each week are our 'maintenance days', but during school holidays, the whole site is open to the public, when we also run.

A new viewing platform was built after the old one 'failed'. The new one also has the addition of an accessible platform for wheelchair users, etc., which has proved to be well used and gives an excellent view over the layout.

We have a regular number of volunteers who turn up, but we are always looking for new members. If this is something you fancy or want to know more about, then please get in touch. ■

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From the 2023 Manx Heritage Transport Festival, 'Sea Lion' leads 'Brown Bear' on the Grouse Glen Railway.
 Photo: Phil Parker in Narrow Gauge World September 2023.



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As featured in the March edition of Garden Rail

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Building Musketeer

The Editor builds a limited-edition kit with an interesting chassis.

Boot Lane produces a very tempting range, of easy-to-assemble kits. I'll admit to eyeing up the huge variety of locomotives in its show stand, and being tempted to add to my stash of 'one day' projects. Fortunately, for my bank balance, most are only available in 32mm gauge, and my line is 45.

That's most, but not all. In 2024, Boot released a limited-edition kit, which could be built for the wider gauge.

'Musketeer' is an attractive, but odd-looking locomotive. At first sight, it reminds me of a sardine can. Apparently, the design originated with owner Andrew Gadd's father, who built it as a 4mm scale, standard gauge model. This evolved through a couple of 16mm scale versions sold RTR, eventually becoming a kit, due to customer demand.

Only 24 kits were produced, which might make you wonder how valuable this is for most readers, as I'm sure all of those will have been built by now...

What makes this useful is that the loco sits on one of Boot Lane's standard chassis kits. Number 6, to be precise. Now, this *is* helpful to modellers. If you have design for a locomotive in your mind, assuming it will fit on one of these chassis, the hard work is done for you. Screw the parts together to take care of the mechanical side, leaving the modeller to do the pretty stuff.

Mechanical work can be scary, but the good news is that this really is simple to put together. The main tool required is a medium cross-head screwdriver. It's also helpful to have a vice to squeeze the wheel inserts in and the wheels onto the axle.

With a little care, a running chassis can be built up in a couple of hours. It's not a fine engineering job, tolerances are generous enough that I wasn't forced to spend any time chasing tight spots in the mechanism, not something I could say for any of the small-scale chassis I have ever

built! It's not going to haul a massive train, but I'm confident that 'Musketeer' will handle three or four wagons, or my short train of coaches.

Like all models, there is space for the builder to personalise the finished item. I've kept things simple with a strip of plastic around the top edge of the body and a different paint job to the official model, but I might return to it for a little detailing and tinkering in the future.

There is an idea I'll pinch for future builds – the toolbox fits over the on/off and reversing switch, making it easy to access, and yet invisible to viewers. Like the rest of the model, very clever. ■

Garden Rail Resource

Boot Lane Works
www.bootlane.org.uk

Please mention **Garden Rail** when contacting suppliers.

THE BUILD: STEP-BY-STEP



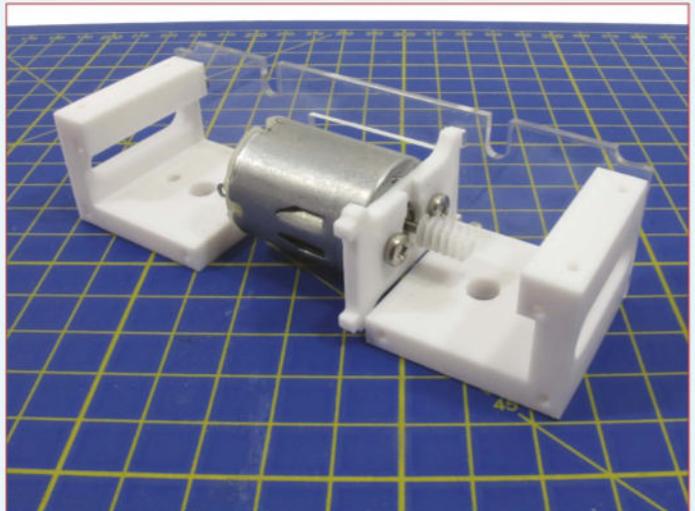
1 | Photographing the chassis parts is a little challenging, as they are made up of pieces 3D-printed in white and clear acrylic side frames. Everything you need is here, including an extra set of frame sides thanks to a packing error. It's always handy to have spares!



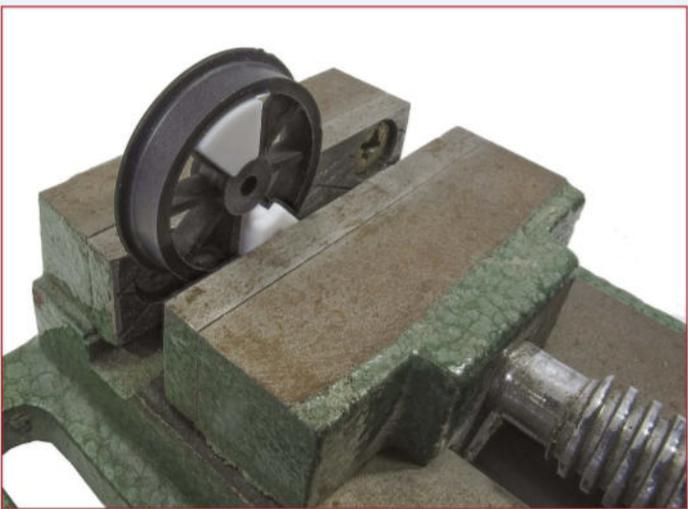
2 | The first task is to fit the motor using the pair of M3 5mm long screws. It's important that the slot in the front of the support faces away from the motor, as it's to allow for the gear on the axle. There's no need to go mad tightening up the screws at this point.



3 | The instructions assume you know how to identify the bolts. Handily, apart from the motor ones, they are all M2 (this refers to the diameter of the screw), but if you need to check the length, measure from the end to the bottom of the head. This one is 8mm.



4 | The end spacers are screwed to the chassis sides, and the motor support located in the appropriate holes. Once happy, the other chassis side is attached. All this is carried out with a medium-sized cross-head screwdriver.



5 | Wheels are standard Binnie ones, and so 3D-printed wedges are squeezed between the spokes to allow for cranks. No glue is required. A counterweight is included to fit opposite the cranks, even though it's not visible. Fitting it is a good idea to equalise stress in the wheel.



6 | The instructions recommend slightly countersinking the backs of the wheels with a tapered reamer. This is to make it easier to fit the axles later. A reamer is recommended, but a couple of twists with a countersink bit will also work.

THE BUILD CONTINUED: STEP-BY-STEP



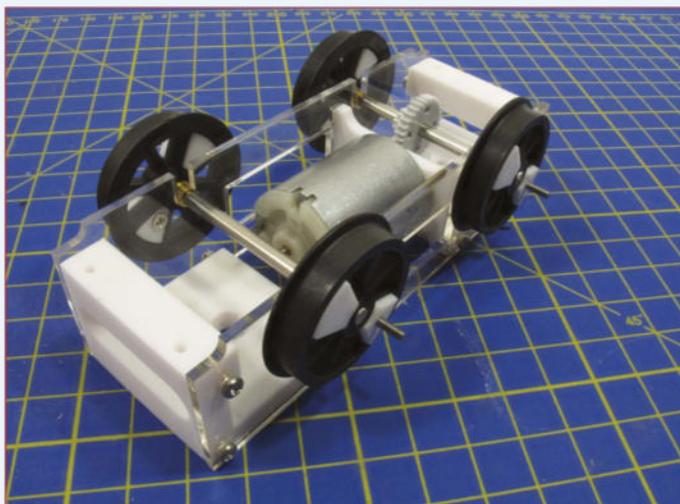
7 Cheese head screws are fitted into the holes in the wedges. These are countersunk to the head flush. It's slightly tight to allow the thread to self-tap into the plastic. Again, no glue required.



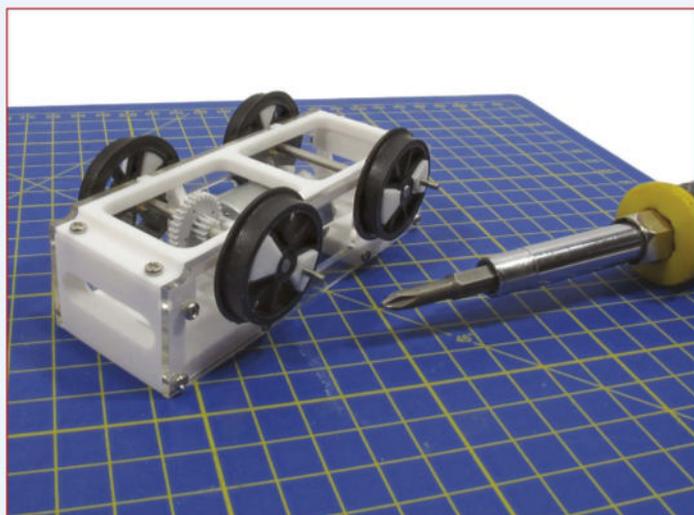
8 I forced the wheels onto the axle by hand a little and then squashed the whole lot in a vice to fit them nice and square. Don't worry too much about the back-to-back, as the axle is the right length, so as long as you stop when the jaws hit metal, you'll be fine.



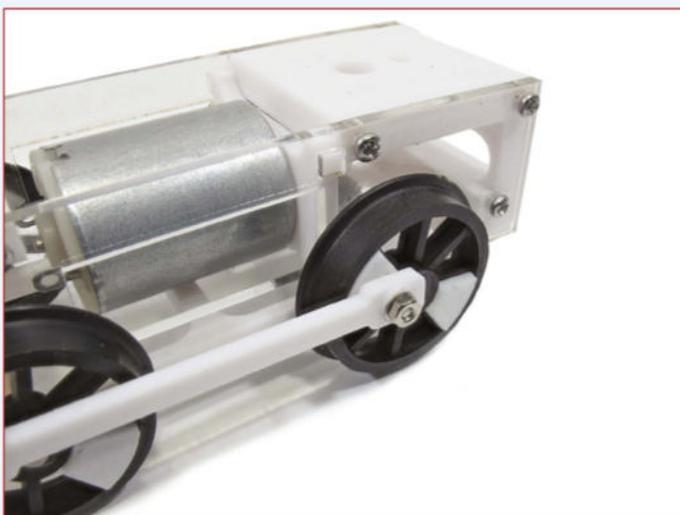
9 The instructions explain how to quarter the wheels, but it all sounds a little complicated. I just look through the spokes and twist one wheel, so it's at 90-degrees to the other. The wedges fitted in the spokes makes this really easy to see.



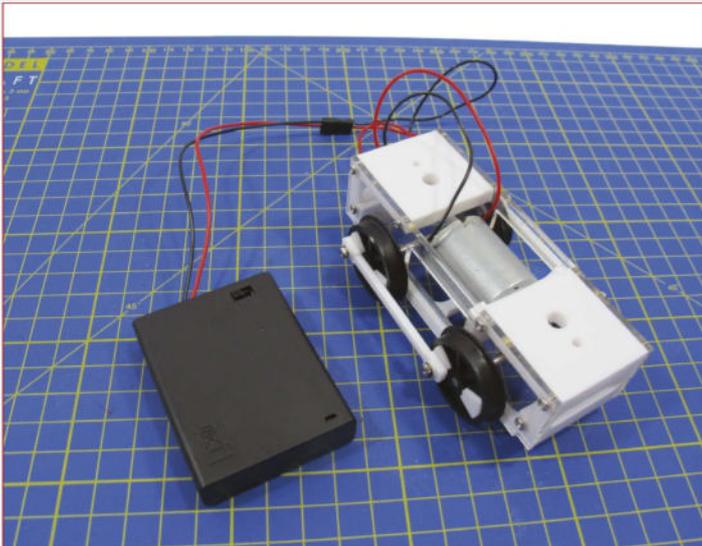
10 You did fit the axle bearings, didn't you? These drop into the U-shapes in the chassis sides, and the wheels should spin freely; if not, work out why. You can't 'run in' the mechanism to improve it.



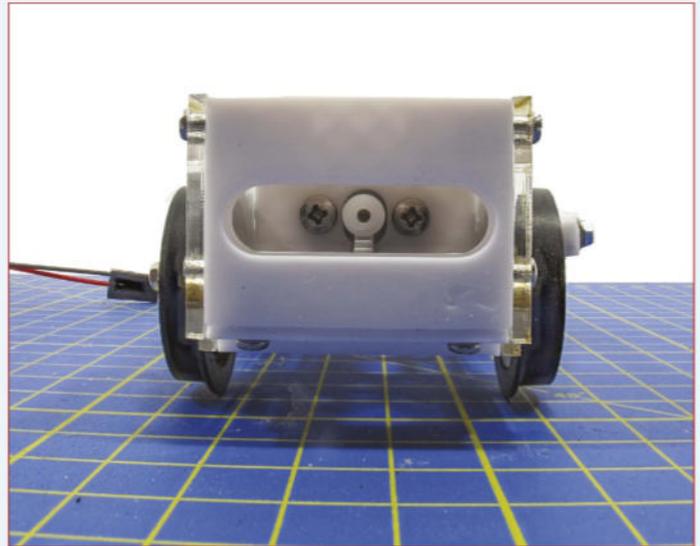
11 A keeper plate is screwed to the bottom of the chassis. Its shape should match the sides and fits with more bolts that self-tap into the spacers at the end. So far, the main tool I've used is this cross-head screwdriver.



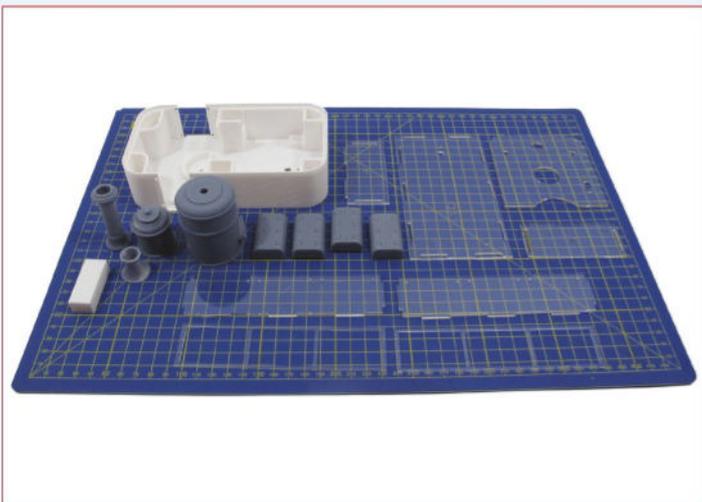
12 Plastic tube bearings are fitted over the bolts in the wheels. The con rods fit over these and are retained by a washer and small nut. I found this a bit fiddly, so work over a tray, or something else that can catch the nuts when you drop them.



13 | A pair of wires are soldered to the tags on the motor, and the chassis is ready for testing under battery power. I'm using four AAA cells, and all seems to work perfectly well. If the chassis is binding, look at where it is sticking. This will almost certainly be a quartering issue.



14 | Access to the motor adjusting screws is better than any chassis I've ever built. There should be a tiny amount of movement when you wiggle the worm back and forth. The gears mustn't be meshed hard together, or you will damage them or the motor.



15 | Moving on to the body, we have a mix of FDM and resin 3D-printed parts, along with more clear acrylic. Pretty standard for a Boot Lane kit.



16 | The skirt parts slot together, and are fixed by running lashings of ABS solvent into the joins. Capillary action will take it where it's required, and the whole lot will be welded together, nice and strong.



17 | Like many 3D-printed parts, the main body tub shows its print lines. To hide these, I've given the body a few thin coats of spray high-build primer. Don't ladle this on and make sure the can is both warm and well shaken. Once fully dry, sand flat with wet wet'n'dry paper.



18 | I'm not very good at lining, but the skirt benefits from a bit of colour. Self-adhesive Trimline tape can be run around the lower panels, and once happy, I give the whole thing a few coats of matt lacquer to seal it all in.

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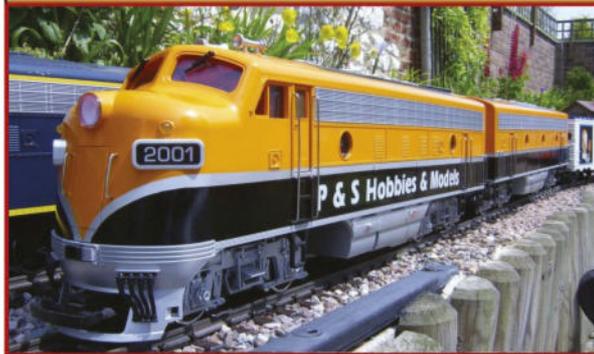
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The Toy Toyota from T'internet

Mark Thatcher takes a light-hearted look at a cheap radio-controlled toy truck from China, and tries to make something of it.

My interest in radio-controlled vehicles pre-dates my foray into railways in the garden by several decades. Stupidly, I first tried my hand at flying RC helicopters, with eye-watering and wallet-emptying results. It was akin to balancing a pea on a spinning plate whilst standing on one leg. Perhaps powered fixed wings would be better? Nope, same outcome. What could get in the way of a relaxing day slope-soaring RC gliders in the Peak District? Dry stone walls!

I tried RC boats too and soon came to the illuminating discovery that gravity works just as well out at sea as it does in the air. So, decided if the model did not have wheels or sat on rails, it was not for me.

1/14th scale RC Tamiya trucks occupied me for a while. To build a top-of-the-range one will cost as much as a moderately-priced

live steam loco, once you have added their multi-function unit, which provides sound and light effects, a couple of trailer jacks and perhaps a radio-controlled fifth wheel plate to attach the trailer to the tractor unit.

More recently, I slid into 1/10th scale RC Land Rovers, and here I found what I was looking for. There is a wealth of help and advice online, and the techniques I try here are learnt from watching a lot of YouTube videos, then asking a lot of stupid questions of the community.

Now, as I have not tried this weathering technique before, and did not know if it would work as I was progressing this article, you will get a snapshot of the progress exactly as I saw it unfold. You will also see any mistakes. That is all part of the fun. For example, I had planned on painting the

flatbed in the same Land Rover Grasmere Green colour as the cab, but the nozzle on the rattle can get blocked, so a dark green was used instead, which I think ironically improved the look of the finished truck.

I should also mention that I was blown away with this roughly 1/19th scale toy truck. Yes, it is a toy. The servos are more like on/off switches, the speed goes from zero to a DeLorean ECTO-1, hitting 88 miles per hour, and the radio-control handset is an utter joke. But it does have its redeeming factors too. There are two motors, one controls a small fan for the dry-steam condensing smoke unit, it also has sound and lights. So, rather than think of this as a working RC model, think of it more as a static display item with sound and smoke, and this could be parked

somewhere and left to chug away on tick over, billowing out noxious gases. Best of all, for the price of £14.99, I expected it to be tat. While in some way it is, I can't believe all that amount of electronics packed into this toy for the price.

Happy days?

Am I pleased?

Yes, I think I am. It's not perfect, but then neither was the original model and, more importantly, I have learned a new technique, which I will get better at, the more I practice it. The whole process actually only took three hours, including dismantling, painting, distressing, reassembly and taking the stage-by-stage photos for this article.

I think in terms of value for money, I really don't know how they do it. I doubt I could assemble a fraction of the electronic components for this truck for under £15.00. Even the cheapest Seuthe smoke generator will set you back £25-£30.00. I obtained my toy Toyota from TEMU - Search for 'remote



You may notice to the right of the rear wheel, there is something that looks like a fuel filler cap. That is actually how you introduce water to fill up the condensing smoke unit.

control city pick-up'. Prices do vary and fluctuate according to exchange rates, and watch out for hidden postage charges as they are not always that prominent on the website. ■

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WEATHERING A WINDSCREEN



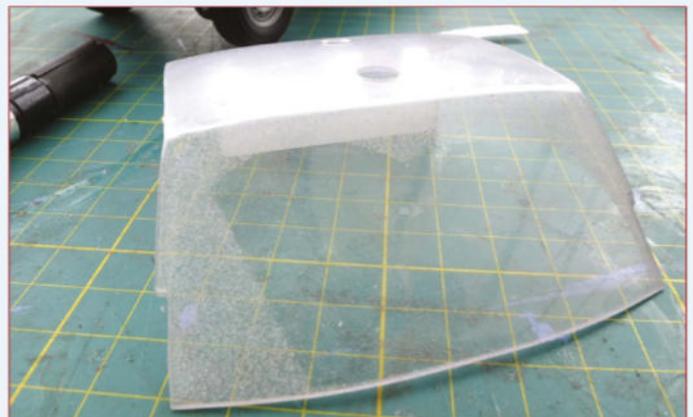
1 There is a quick and easy way to do this. Firstly, cover the entire windscreen in masking tape. It does not need to be fancy stuff, just leave enough overlap so you can trim around it later.



2 Once you have trimmed the tape to the shape of the windscreen, replace it back in the cab. Then you can draw roughly where the wipers would sweep across the glass.



3 Then, out came the windscreen and off came the masking tape for cutting with a sharp knife. Once cut out, you can stick this template back down into position and check the sweep alignment of the wiper blades.



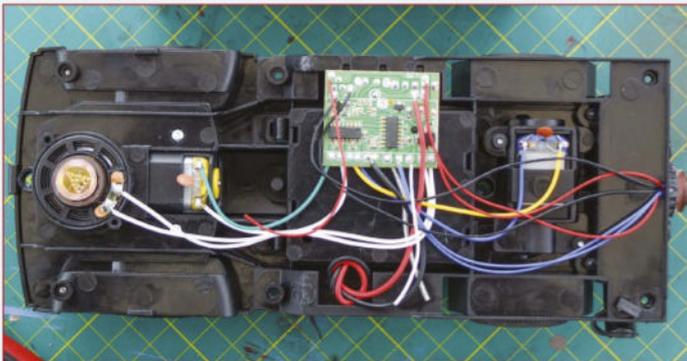
4 I used a mix of light grey and white primers sprayed on very lightly and from some distance to simulate road grime. As you can see, the effect was subtle, but worth it, I think.

THE BUILD: STEP-BY-STEP

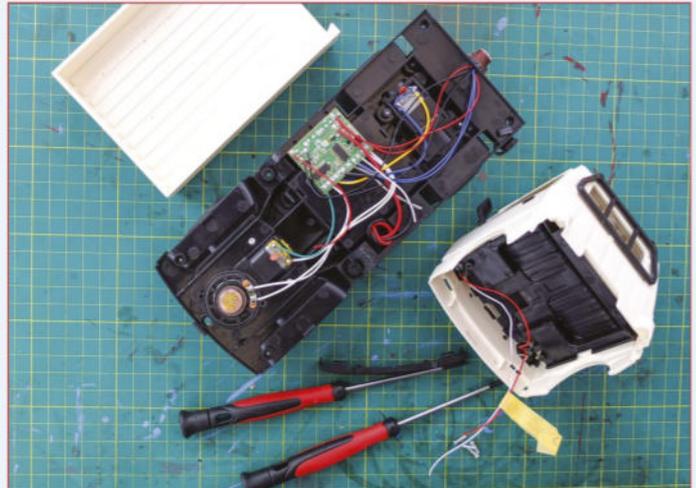


1 | I am clutching at straws, trying to find any positives at this stage. Hey, it comes in a box, and did not arrive crushed in a brown paper bag. What more could you want? The truck is an unashamed rip-off of a Toyota truck and if you can see beyond that horrible gloss, plasticky body, not a bad one at that. That transmitter deserves the same fate that many of my old radio-controlled models suffered, though.

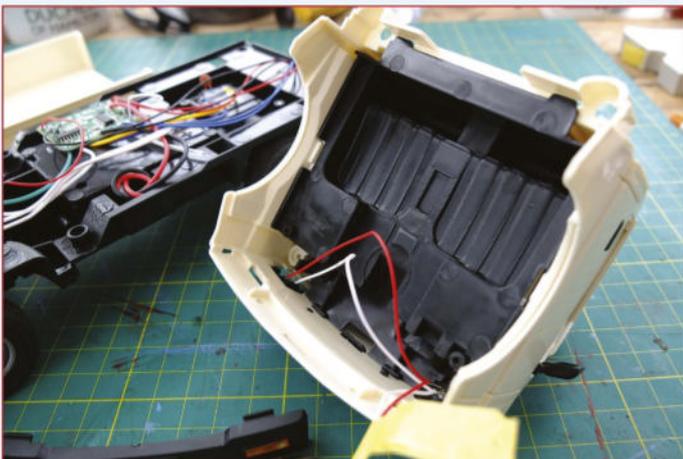
2 | What the heck is this? That smoke outlet is just plain nasty, and who thought it would be a good idea to 'enhance' the smoke effect by adding blue lights? In fairness, when you activate the smoke effect by pushing a dedicated button on the transmitter, as well as a beep confirming this action, the lights at least show you the smoke unit is active. But beware, as that very same button when pressed and held down puts the truck into demo mode, where it dances around all over the place like a drunken R2D2.



3 | Now this is where things get interesting. There is a very detailed and well-made main circuit board, a driving motor, a second motor to power the fan on the dry steam unit and a half-decent small speaker. At tickover, the sound is not bad, but as soon as you hit the gas, it sounds more like an F1 car. The included rechargeable battery slips into its own compartment on the underside of the chassis. The red and black wires going nowhere were actually part of the circuit for the front lights. As these only activate when the truck is moving forward, I snipped these wires so I could spray the cab away from the chassis.



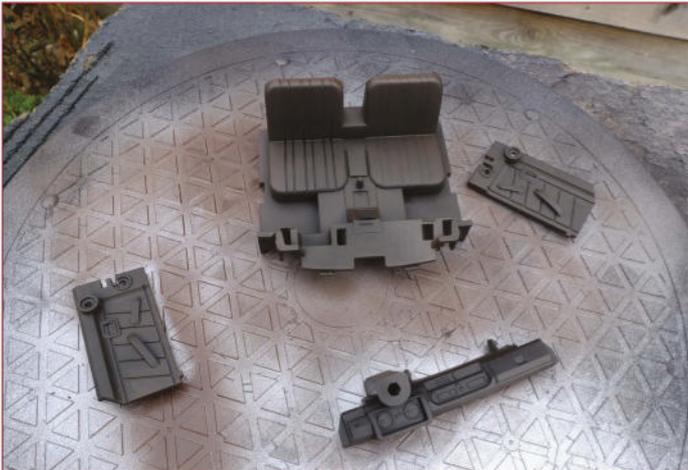
4 | Disassembly was quite easy. There are four screws holding the flatbed to the chassis, and the cab has a slot that slips into a hole in the front bumper, then clips into two other slots close to the rear of the doors. This is also secured to the chassis by two screws.



5 | Having snipped those two wires that connected the cab to the chassis, I realised I did not need to, as, after a bit of persuasion with a small, flat blade, the LEDs will pop out. I guess if you were careful, you could refit these when everything goes back together, but as I won't be seeing them work, that whole part of the wiring loom got ripped out, with the LEDs being consigned to my spares box.



6 | Wait a minute, the doors actually open! I really should have read the box art. This was a real game-changer for me. I only found this out after removing the cab interior. I wanted to paint both doors in different colours to that of the cab, and having them as separate components negated me having to carefully mask up each door prior to painting and weathering. The interior door cards come out too, which in turn, release the mirrors, which again can be painted separately.



7 While the paint was drying on the windscreen, I turned my attention to the cab interior. I did not go into any detail here as most of this would be hidden, but just blew over the parts with some Oak Brown primer from the Army Painter's range of paints. In fact, I used rattle can spray paints exclusively for this project, with any silver highlights being added with a chrome paint pen. So, no airbrushing or hand painting at all.



8 Here, all the main parts have been painted. What a motley assortment. Next, it was time for the wet and dry sandpaper. I started using this wet, and then moved onto dry paper to simulate deeper scuffs and scratches. In the hard-to-get-at areas, I used one of Bole Laser Craft's 180-grit sanding wands. This was well-used, so the edge had been taken off it, meaning it was not as coarse or sharp as a new wand.



9 After a good bit of rubbing down and distressing, this is what I ended up with. The silver accents on the grille have been highlighted with the aforementioned chrome paint pen, as have the hinges and clasps on the flatbed. I had considered taking this even further, as I have some brass spray-painting templates used by WWII aircraft modellers to simulate rust and dirt. But I thought as I was happy(ish) with this result, I best not push my luck.



10 I wanted to create a totally different look on either side of the vehicle and if you compare this shot with the main one at the start of the article, I think I did at least achieve that. Many of these old, beaten-up trucks had many replacement parts and panels fitted over the years, and despite all this cosmetic surgery, still seem to keep going and going.



11 Woodleigh Engineering's pallet loads were the perfect fit for this staged shot. While I would question the loadmaster's decision to place dirty diesel drums next to churns containing fresh milk, it does show off Woodleigh's range of accessories well.



12 I did my best in disguising the smoke outlet, but all I ended up doing was to create something that looks like it belongs on the back of a Batmobile. Still, the hope is, when I position this tail-in to a wall, you won't see it and the snood I added has helped to push the smoke out in a more direct stream.



Let's Go-Go?

Andrew Armstrong builds a PS Models Hudson Tractor.

Anounced for release at the 2025 16mm Association Show, by PS Models, this unusual machine was another on my very long-term wish list. A kit had, I believe, been produced by Saltford in the early 1990's, but I had not managed to acquire one. *(Editor: Well remembered. Kit S55C, costing £3.50, according to the 1995 catalogue)* Now, over 30 years later, came a second chance.

The prototype

Produced by R. Hudson of Leeds, the Go-Go was an attempt to produce a cheap loco for a variety of industrial sites, quarries and the like. It took a Fordson tractor and married it with a 0-4-0 loco chassis. Subsequently, some were re-engineered with different mechanics. Three have been preserved. So far, I have come across two of the survivors, both at Statfold.



Prototype Works No 39924 at Statfold Barn.

My project was to create something paying homage to the type rather than a faithful rendition of any individual machine, so details were taken from photos of both, and what seemed to look right. In the end, I wanted something that could be let loose on the BLR, not a 'shelf Princess'.

The Kit

The kit follows normal PS models practice: laser-cut MDF body and frame parts, wheels and axles, a small motor, battery boxes, and an on/off switch.

Also included are various 3D-printed details, including a front grill, brake handle assembly, and dummy axle guards. Comprehensive instructions are in the box, so everything you need to produce the loco apart from paint and glue.

My build

Before I start, I should be clear, if you follow the instructions, you will produce a very nice rendition of this loco, but as readers of my previous builds will know, I can't leave well alone...

One thing I do try to do with a build is to leave access to the wiring and whirly bits after construction, thanks to rather too many interactions with Mr Murphy's Law, usually wires dropping off, etc. The kit instructions advise gluing together, however, which accounts for why some of my components may look slightly different, but I will touch on that as we go along.

First job is to paint the MDF, which will help to weatherproof the parts. However, MDF is very thirsty stuff, and this small kit drank 2 1/2 full cans of filler primer. As I wanted a grey livery, touching up accounted for the other half can. I find it best to initially paint the individual parts



Prototype Works No 36863 at Statfold Barn.



All the parts, plus research and photos, on my chaotic workbench.



Inner chassis on test, a quick wiring lash-up, to confirm the mechanics worked.

and achieve a good surface before starting assembly and adding additional details.

I usually start these builds with the inner chassis assembly, which involves the fitting of wheels axles, gears and the motor, which are well covered in the instructions. PS produces an optional four-wheel drive pulley and belt kit, which I decided to fit, probably overkill for the BLR, but not something that looks easy to retrofit.

Once that inner chassis is built, it was a chance for a first test, I jury rigged a power supply to make sure all those whirly bits behaved (they did!), before moving on to the outer chassis.

Later, single AAA battery holders fit behind front and rear bufferbeams, I bolted

mine into place to make sure they stayed put. Cable runs are cut into the parts to ease wiring up.

Hudson's seemed to have used more bolts than rivets for construction. A bag of nail art rivets is included with the kit, which look fine, but if you want to replace with typical hexagon heads, then lengths of fine plastic hexagon bar, Plastruct for example, can be sliced with a sharp craft knife, and applied instead. The trick is not to overthink it, thinly slice a number and select the best. I use superglue to hold them in place. Prototype photos will help to sort out where to lay them.

The bufferbeam in reality is an 'T' shaped section, so I added a strip of thin brass top and bottom to represent this. The kit comes

with an attractive 3D-printed coupler, which only needs a light surface preparation and painting. I fitted more bolt heads, then painted it red, not as per prototype, but added a bit of additional colour to the finished loco.

The prototype chassis has the maker's name cast into the frames. I thought about reproducing this using Slater's letters, but then decided to use a resized photo of the detail. The print was glued in place, then well soaked in matt varnish to seal it. A bit of a compromise but it worked for me.

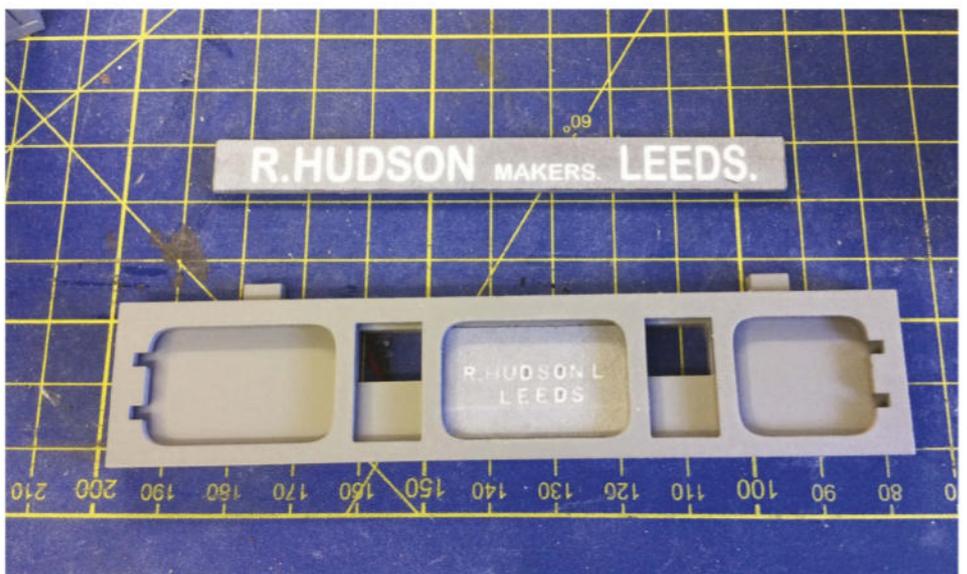
On the kit, there is a channel formed between the top of the bufferbeam and the underside of the footplate. This is not the case on the two prototypes I have seen, and I wished to add the radiator support brackets, infill is simple, just a bit of off-cut machined to shape, rivet detail as per photo, job done! The rear is similar, but without the radiator mounts.

Additional detailing, including some 3D-printed axle boxes are included, and on fitting you will have rugged-looking chassis, very much as per the prototype. Again, I painted everything in some contrasting colours to bring out this detail.

Looking at plans and photos, the front bonnet comes out further than the parts allow, I simply copied the rear bulkhead in a bit of scrap MDF to address this issue. The radiator is supported by a couple of brackets, fabricated from brass angle. Another 3D-printed overlay adds extra detail to the radiator front, and I added a starting handle hole using a small washer, just below it.



Bufferbeams as slightly modified.



Chassis and roof board art work.

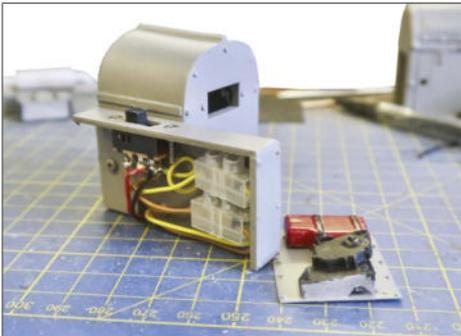


Front bonnet, the detachable bonnet top over its former.

PS provide Plastikard to cover both bonnets, but I tend to use bits of thin brass for the coverings, as I find it takes the shape better. Additional details, including hinges, handles, a radiator filler cap (M2 brass hex screw), were also added. To facilitate access, the bonnet lid is removable, being brass it is fairly easy to make a tight clip fit.

The section of bonnet in the cab has a cut-out in the rear bulkhead for the control switch. This caused me a period of head scratching. Looking through photos, at least one of these machines had a chain drive, although open with the chain visible, there seemed no reason that it couldn't have been covered in. So, a chain guard was fabricated in off-cut ply with a slot for a switch added. The switch is then hidden under a small crate with a hole in its base to take the switch. Job done!

The kit is supplied with a single on/off type switch, which does not allow for reverse. Instead, I used a double-pole, double-throw, centre-off version. These



Rear bonnet, including dummy chain guard, switch and wiring.

are readily available and have a similar form factor, including mounting holes. Soldering up the beasts is not my favourite task, but everything went neatly into the space available, which is the main thing, obviously additional cable runs needed to be cut. Where possible, I try to use miniature screwed terminal blocks, again for ease of maintenance (in deference to Mr. Murphy), so if a switch fails, and they do occasionally, it can be swapped out with a minimum of rude words.

In truth, the entire cab inside is a work of fiction, supported by my stores. The visible gearbox upon which the driver's seat is mounted was from Dean Goods, listed as a Ruston gearbox, the rear engine compartment detail was a part that looked like a Lister engine raided from the SLR scrapyards (thanks Nicki), which was hacked around to fit. Only the brake handle and shaft is originally from the kit. Anti-slip plate from Swift Sixteen forms the cab floor. The driver is Bert from Calvey Models, who seemed to fit nicely. As with all BLR builds, a brew can is visible.

The cab sides, front and rear are much as designed, I added corner bracing with white



Fictitious cab interior.



Underside all wired up, note pulley arrangement for four-wheeled drive.

plastic angle, which is not prototypical, but provides additional strength and makes a clean corner, yet more hex bar bolts decorate the parts. As per prototype, I used some thin brass beading along the top of the open sides. The cab sides have prominent sand boxes visible in the photos, a slice of square plastic tube was filed to the appropriate depth, and something approximating a handle fitted using a loop from a bit of chain.

The cab roof is the same thin brass (1/64" or .4mm) used elsewhere, which bends easily over the roof formers. The kit includes plasticard to do this, but the brass is formed carefully can be sprung into place, so provides a removable roof. Roof boards run down both sides with the graphic R. HUDSON MAKERS. LEEDS.

The display model on the PS stall had this added, so I asked Phil how he did them, "Designed and printed on my computer, do you want a set?" Yes please! Another job sorted. As with the frame graphics, they were glued to the board, soaked in matt varnish, then the boards added to the roof. Material for an exhaust is provided, but I found an exhaust (SLR scrapyards again), which I decided to use.

Homemade nameplates and numbers were fabricated using Slaters letters and numbers. The letters are glued to a thin strip of plastic, and sprayed the body colour, when dry-rubbed back to reveal the lettering. She carries the running number 79 and the name 'TAHN', which is actually two in the Westmorland dialect of an ancient sheep counting system, we already have a 'Yan'.

Lastly, a small etched nickel silver BLR plate (Light Railway Stores) was fixed to the radiator to finish things off.

Conclusions

Throughout this build, I have been pleased with the way the kit has gone together. As is usual with one of my builds, when I start, I only have the vaguest idea of how things will turn out, and there is loads of potential for personalisation with this kit. However, if you follow the instructions, you won't go far wrong, and you will end up with a lovely little machine.

I know locos like this are not everybody's choice, if you have your heart set on a coal-fired NGG16, this little oddity may not immediately catch your eye, but what are you going to use to shift coal and ash around the depot? ■



No 79 'Tahn' on final tests, May 15th, 2025.

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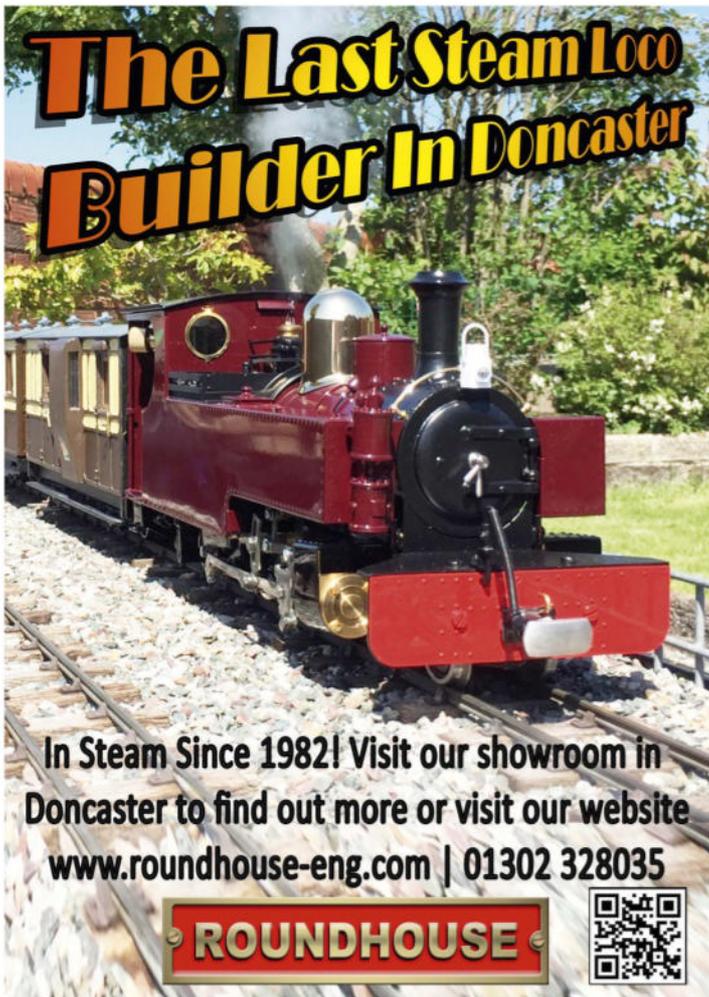
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GARDEN RAILWAY SPECIALISTS

RTR GWR King Class Gauge 1

GRS has announced its plan to make a brand new Gauge One (1:32 scale) live steam model of the iconic GWR King. Manufactured by Bowande, this model will feature all of the mod-cons you've come to expect, including a gas-fired ceramic burner, cylinder drain cocks, four working pistons and sprung axles.

GRS is currently taking deposits of £100 for people to secure a loco in the batch, as they will be built in limited numbers.

Four liveries are being offered; GWR lined green, BR lined green, wartime black and BR express blue. It will be possible to fit them with radio control using your choice of either Fosworks or two-stick control.

Please note that the photos are of the Silvercrest Models Gauge 3 King, which they have kindly let GRS use to promote the model.



Details

Price: £3,999

Website: www.grsuk.com



BOOT LANE WORKS

'Blitzen' fireless locomotive kit 16mm scale

Freelance in design, 'Blitzen' is inspired by the British-built fireless locomotives of the 1910s through to the 1950s. These locomotives were primarily built by Andrew Barclay & Sons; other British manufacturers also contributed to the development of the fireless engine. Boot Lane's draws influence from W. G. Bagnall & Co. Ltd.

Fireless steam locomotives are similar to a conventional steam locomotive, but in place of a boiler/firebox, it has a reservoir or steam accumulator. This reservoir is charged with superheated water under pressure from a stationary boiler. The engine works like a conventional steam engine, using the high-pressure steam above the water in the accumulator. As there is no risk of sparks, the use of a fireless locomotive removes the chance of igniting flammable materials.

Built the firm's tried and tested 'Clara' chassis, 'Blitzen' develops these techniques to recreate this unique class of locomotives. There is ample space within the reservoir to accommodate batteries and RC equipment, while the dome is removable to expose a switch and charging socket if required (charging socket not included).

With 3D-printed parts from filament and resin, and laser-cut acrylic, the kit contains motor, gears, wheels, metal stock, nuts, screws, etc. Everything needed to build the model in the photograph(s), excluding paint and adhesives. Supplied with a 3/6v motor and Peter Binnie wheels.

Building instructions are included with the kit; only glue, paint, basic tools, and batteries are required to complete it.

Details

Dimensions:

Length (over buffers): 204mm

Width (across handrail knobs): 98mm

Width (across footplate): 92mm

Height (from railhead to exhaust): 50mm

Rigid Wheelbase: 56mm

Gauge: Available in both 32mm & 45mm gauge

Price: £150

Website: www.bootlane.org.uk



BOOT LANE WORKS

'Janet' locomotive kit 16mm scale

Inspired by the Furzebrook Railway, 'Secundus', which was ordered from GE Bellis & Co. in 18734. The prototype spent its entire working life on the Furzebrook Railway, which was owned and operated by the Pike Brothers' Dorset Clay business. It was overhauled several times by Stephen Lewin's Poole Foundry, which may account for some of the odd fittings found on the engine, safety valve bonnet, etc.

An 0-6-0 well tank locomotive, with outside frames, the engine had a marine-style boiler, an overall low centre of gravity and was much favoured by the crews at Furzebrook.

The engine is under the custodianship of the Purbeck Mineral and Mining Museum, located at the Swanage Railway Museum in Corfe Castle, Dorset.

Intended as a 45mm gauge model, it is also available in 32mm gauge, and utilises Boot Lane's 'No 9' 0-6-0 chassis kit, supplied in the kit.

With 3D-printed parts from filament & resin, and laser-cut acrylic. The kit contains motor, gears, wheels, metal stock, nuts, screws, etc. Everything needed to build the model in the photograph(s), excluding paint and adhesives. Supplied with a 3/6v motor and Peter Binnie wheels.



Details

Dimensions:

Length (over buffers): 232mm

Width: 112mm

Height: 154mm

Rigid Wheelbase: 96mm

Gauge: Available in both 32mm & 45mm Gauge.

Price: £150

Website: www.bootlane.org.uk



LGB

Class FZe 6/6 Powered Railcar G Scale

In the early 1930s, the Montreux–Oberland Bernois Railway (MOB) was looking for locomotives capable of handling the steep gradients of its line. These were intended for the Golden Mountain Pullman Express, which was to be operated by the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits (CIWL).

To meet this requirement, MOB decided to acquire two electric-powered rail cars with integrated baggage compartments. Each unit developed more than 1,100 horsepower and was built by SIG/BBC.

In 1932–1933, the two railcars entered service and were designated FZe 6/6, receiving road numbers 2001 and 2002. They featured a B–B–B wheel arrangement, measured 17 metres (55ft 3in) over the buffers, and had a maximum speed of 60 km/h (37mph). At the time, they were among the most powerful electric locomotives operating on metre gauge railways.

The economic crisis of the early 1930s greatly reduced demand for luxury travel, so MOB instead employed both rail cars primarily in freight service.

In the late 1980s, number 2001 was completely dismantled, and parts from it were used to return number 2002 to operational condition.

LGB's model represents FZe 6/6 2001 in its original appearance as delivered by SIG/BBC to MOB around 1933. The livery, lettering, pantographs, and roof equipment are all accurate for this period and for the locomotive's current museum condition.

For operation, the model is equipped with an mfx/DCC sound decoder, offering numerous light and sound functions. These include Swiss headlight and marker light configurations, cab and interior lighting, and digitally operated pantographs. Despite its large size:76 cm (30 inches) in length, the model runs reliably on R1 radius curves.



Details

Price: 3,990€

Website: www.lgb.com

THE TRAIN DEPARTMENT

RTR 2-8-0 “Consolidation” locomotive Fn3 Scale

Accuraft Trains, working with The Train Department, is proud to announce two new live steam locomotives in Fn3 scale (1:20.3, 45mm gauge). These models will be available only as ready-to-run (RTR), with production limited to reservations. Delivery is estimated for Jan 2026.

Florence & Cripple Creek No. 3, named Elkton, was a narrow-gauge 2-8-0 ‘Consolidation’ locomotive built by Baldwin and delivered in July 1895. As part of the F&CC's roster of Consolidations, Elkton and her sister engines were tasked with hauling ore, freight and supplies along the rugged and steep grades of the Phantom Canyon route, one of the most challenging yet vital corridors in Colorado's mining boom era.

After the Florence & Cripple Creek Railroad ceased operations in 1915, Elkton was purchased by the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad in 1917. It was renumbered to D&RG 425 and later became D&RGW 315 after the railroad's reorganization in 1924. The locomotive remained in service until its retirement in 1950.

Order books are open, and models can be secured with a \$300 deposit.



Details

Specifications:

Brass & stainless steel constructions

Length: 31.25"

Width: 6.2"

Height: 7.6"

Engine Weight: 12.4lbs

Tender Weight: 6lbs

Butane Fired/Poker burner

Fully working valve gear

Water pump in tender

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Gauge: 1:20.3 Scale, 45mm gauge

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A collection of short wagons, suitable for minor railways.

One Plank Wagon

Typical wooden-bodied short one-plank narrow gauge wagon with a wealth of detail. Iron strapping, rivet detail, thick buffer beams, etc. It can be used as a Piggyback wagon for tubs or a match wagon for a crane. Will take a single Type A container.



Three Plank Wagon

Typical wooden-bodied short three-plank narrow gauge wagon with a wealth of detail. Iron strapping, rivet detail, thick buffer beams, etc. Will take a single Type A container.



Box van

A short version of a box van with plenty of optional ventilators. 103mm wide, 140mm over the couplings, height 145mm.



All kits come with everything required for construction, but paint and glue. Iron bracing, strapping and buffers are separated for easy painting.

Details

Prices: One Plank: £17

Three Plank: £19

Box Van: £30

Gauge: 32mm & 45mm gauge

Website: www.platewaymodels.co.uk



RESURGAM ROLLING STOCK

Ffestiniog Railway 'Carriage 14' kit 16mm scale

The latest addition to the Resurgam Rolling Stock range is Ffestiniog Railway 'Carriage 14', which is also known as the 'Snapper Bar' in its current condition. It was originally built for the Lynton and Barnstaple Railway as a 'non-corridor brake third' in 1897. After the closure of the L&B in 1935, it was sold to a local individual who located it near the former 'Snapper Halt'. It was subsequently purchased by the FR in 1959 and was significantly rebuilt as a 'Corridor Buffet Car', successfully entering traffic in 1963. It was so well received that its critical dimensions were subsequently used as the basis for the new FR 'Centenary' stock.

In the early 1990s, 'Car 14' was heavily rebuilt again to its current form, which is more aesthetically sympathetic to its L&B origins. It has remained in use as part of the regular fleet of passenger-carrying vehicles and still sees occasional use as a 'Bar Car', complete with draught beer, during some special events.

This 16mm scale laser-cut kit has been produced in collaboration with William Curry, combining his excellent scale drawings with Resurgam Rolling Stock's proven design and construction philosophy. It is available in MDF or Plywood, which needs to be specified at the time of ordering.

While this kit may appear complicated in its appearance, every effort has been made to simplify construction and painting as far as possible. For instance, the ducketts are 3D printed, including all of the beading, but separate inserts are provided for all of the cream panels to ensure crisp, clean lines without requiring complicated masking. Great care has also been taken to ensure all of the different beading layers and panels are also modelled in full and correct relief as far as practicable. All of the door handles, grab rails, (solid) vacuum pipes, electrical connectors, and very distinctive ventilators are supplied, along with the SLR Models door bumpers and locks.

Of course, being a buffet/bar car, provision is made to model the interior in full as shown in the accompanying photographs. The full-size prototype does occasionally carry beer pumps for special events. As such, these are supplied along with modern-style kegs as unpainted 3D prints. The same also applies for the kitchen area featuring the towel and soap dispensers, waste bin, hot water tap and naturally the kitchen sink.

The kit is available for 32mm or 45mm Gauge, with the 32mm gauge kits supplied with laser-cut bogies of the correct prototypical profile. For 45mm, a set of '45mm Gauge Optimised Bogies' will be supplied. Kits for both gauges include steel wheelsets running on shouldered axles and appropriate bearings. The finished vehicle should operate down to a 3ft radius on either gauge, but will cut a substantial chord in the process.

Couplings and decals are not supplied with the kit, but the decals, including the 'Snapper Bar' name panels for the 'toplights' are available from Endon Valley Custom Decals.

Details

Dimensions: Length over headstocks: 562mm

Roof height: 135mm

Width over body: 97mm

Extreme width: 113.5mm over ducketts

Gauge: Available in both 32mm & 45mm gauge

Prices: MDF: £225.00, Plywood: £255.00

Website: www.resurgamrollingstock.co.uk





Write in and share your ideas with other enthusiasts

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.

A tribute to Peter Binnie

Peter Binnie, former owner of Peterbinnie.com, lost his fight with prostate cancer in December, passing peacefully in his sleep with his family. He was husband to Sheila and beloved brother/best friend to Robert, brother-in-law to Christine, he was also uncle and great uncle to Rob's children and grandchildren. Peter had continued the business throughout his cancer treatment and fight, without many people knowing.

Peter had served the 16mm Hobby for over 40 years. Starting alongside his father, Colin Binnie and Rob. Between them Colin Binnie and sons was set up this, which later became Binnie Engineering, when Robert left to enjoy family life, then later PeterBinnie.com after Colin's passing.



From left to right: Robert Binnie, Christine Binnie (Rob's wife), Peter Binnie, Shelia Binnie (Pete's wife)



We covered building the ubiquitous Binnie skip wagon kits in our October 2024 edition, just one of the many, many mentions of the families products on these pages.

The Binnie name has been a constant within the hobby and along with the Binnie tippers and wheels and many more items, I would suspect that many Binnie products are in models that are or have graced each and every household with a garden railway, past and present.

Peter retired in the summer, transferring the business back to Robert and his wife Christine, who have many plans to keep the business going for as long as Binnies can!

Peter was very pleased and proud to know that the family would be continuing to serve the hobby.

Editor: I'd like to thank the Binnie family for taking the time to check and approve this tribute.

Lighting up

Having finally got to grips with getting gas into our locos (thanks to recent letters), perhaps it's time someone tackled the equally awkward business of getting them lit.

I seem to be on a losing streak with igniters. I've tried the familiar piezo types – press the button, expect a spark, hope for a flame. When they behave, they're excellent. Unfortunately, mine usually manage a handful of clicks before descending into that familiar routine of loud snapping noises, warm fingers, and a stubbornly cold locomotive.

Thinking the answer might be something more robust, I gave one of the small blowtorch-style lighters a go. Sadly, that didn't prove to be the magic solution either.

I appreciate these things aren't expensive, but it does seem unreasonable to have to carry a small collection of them to the track just in case one feels cooperative on the day. There's nothing more frustrating than a loco fully prepared and ready to go, only to be defeated by a temperamental lighter.



So, over to the readers: are there any makes or suppliers worth seeking out that will survive more than a couple of steaming sessions? I'm quite happy to pay for something dependable; it would certainly beat packing up with an unlit engine.

Colin Baxter

Editor: I'm glad it's not just me! My Boxing Day steaming session was cut short when all the lighters I'd brought along failed to deliver the promised flames.

Snowy days on the Ambledown Valley Railway



Dave Pinnigar sent us a few photos from a chilly run last month on his AVR. A little sprinkle of snow saw him fire up his Harvey Watkins Darjeeling B Class.

Seen at The Rowington Steam Show

Just before Christmas, we took a trip to this popular small show.



Next show:
Saturday,
December
12th, 2026

ABOVE: It's a festive show, so of course, there is a train running through the Christmas tree.

TOP RIGHT: Little Phil does some trainspotting on Eden Halt, built by the Warwickshire 16mm group.

BOTTOM RIGHT: ÖBB Class 298 on Dow Bridge Junction, built by the Three Counties Group.

NEXT MONTH ON SALE MARCH 12TH

**GARDEN
R**

We are off to America to visit the Grand Central Railroad in Arizona.

Also, in our APRIL issue:

- A 1/16th scale tractor locomotive scratch-build by Chuck Doan
- Toyota to shunter. Mark Thatcher carries out a conversion
- Plus much, much more...



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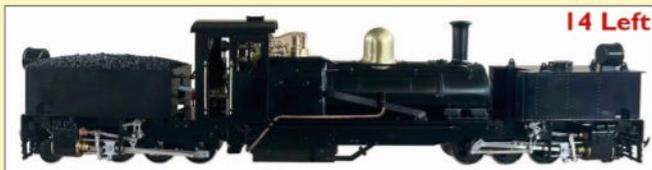


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Please phone to book your place on either or both days. Thai food and refreshments will be provided and extra parking is available for the event. We look forward to seeing you all and hope you enjoy this 2 day event.

Midlands Garden Railway Show

Warwickshire Event Centre

Saturday 28th & Sunday 1st Of March, 10am-4pm

We will be bringing pre-paid orders with us so please let us know in advance if you will be attending any of these shows

The National Garden Railway Show

Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth

Saturday 25th Of April, 9:30am-5pm

Llangollen Garden

Llangollen Pavilion

Saturday 6th Of June, 10am-4pm

Station Studio, 6 Summerleys Road, Princes Risborough, Bucks, HP27 9DT

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