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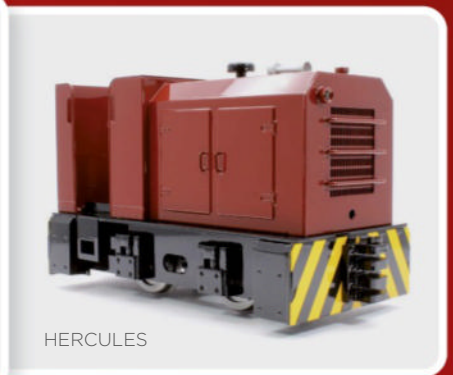
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View from the end of the Platform

GARDEN RAILWAYS FOR THE PEOPLE

As I write these words, we are just over a week away from the National Garden Railway show. By the time you read them, this will all be done and dusted. Don't worry, though, there are plenty more events for large-scale railway fans, take a look at our Diary page on 23 for more details.

One that isn't in there, because it's not really a garden railway show, is the BBC Gardeners' World show at the NEC in June. But that doesn't mean it's devoid of railway interest.

As we cover on Page 40, *Garden Rail* regulars, Andy and Louise Christie, have arranged to build a garden line at this massive public show. It's no little project, as they explain.

What a terrific showcase for our hobby. 90,000 people, most of whom will have no idea how much a railway could enhance their outdoor space, will be exposed to trains in the garden for the first time.



At least the weather in the NEC will be kind. But even a little dampness didn't stop people from enjoying 'The Olive Branch Tramway' during past open days.



Of course, Andy and Louise have form in all this. Their 'Olive Branch Tramway' is a star of the Birmingham Open Gardens event. Many people arrive looking for plants, but find themselves drawn in by the trains, and cake, and make it no further around the trail. They also run the popular Trains in the Garden channel on Instagram.

All hobbies need new entrants if they aren't to wither and die. How can we help? By showing 'normal' people just how much fun we have. Last month, Tom Taylor recounted just how popular his layout, 'HS33', was with locals, and when helping operate 'Kathleen's Light Railway' for people in its home village, I know how fascinated they were.

So, don't hide your light under a bushel. Show off your hobby. Who knows what friends you'll make along the way.

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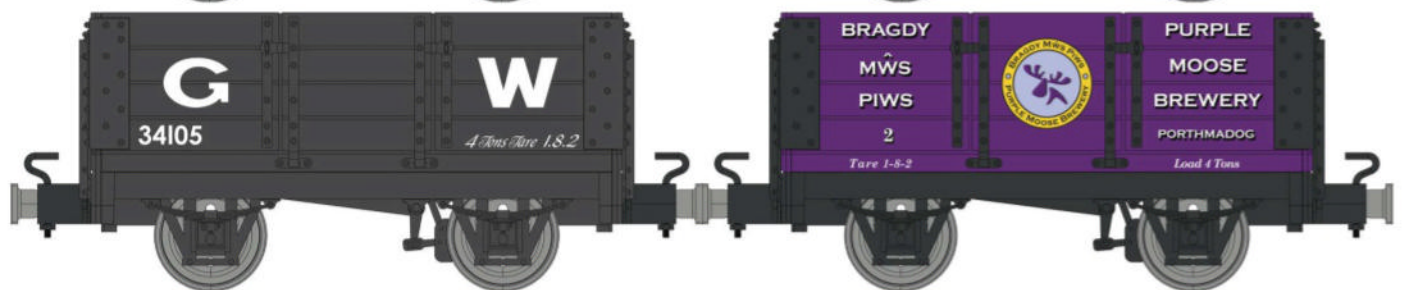
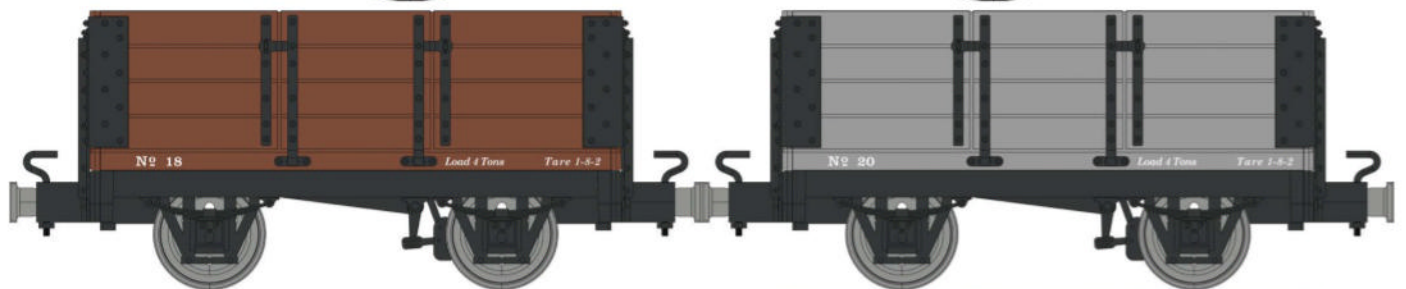
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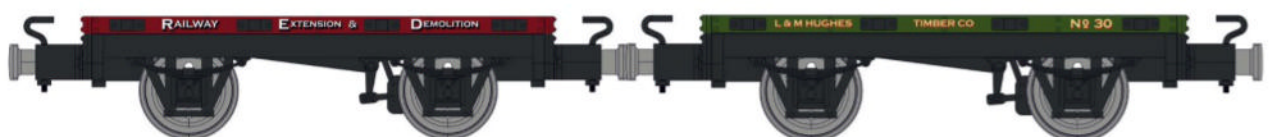
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LAYOUT FOCUS

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From Paving Stones to a Garden Railway

Uwe Richter introduces us to his digitally-controlled line.



The starting point for my garden railway was surprisingly pragmatic. After building our house, a considerable number of paving stones were left over, and the question arose as to what should be done with this surplus material.

In the beginning, there was no clear answer. An initial impulse came from walks with a pram through a nearby residential area. In one of the gardens of a ground-floor apartment, there was a small garden railway that was clearly visible from the footpath.

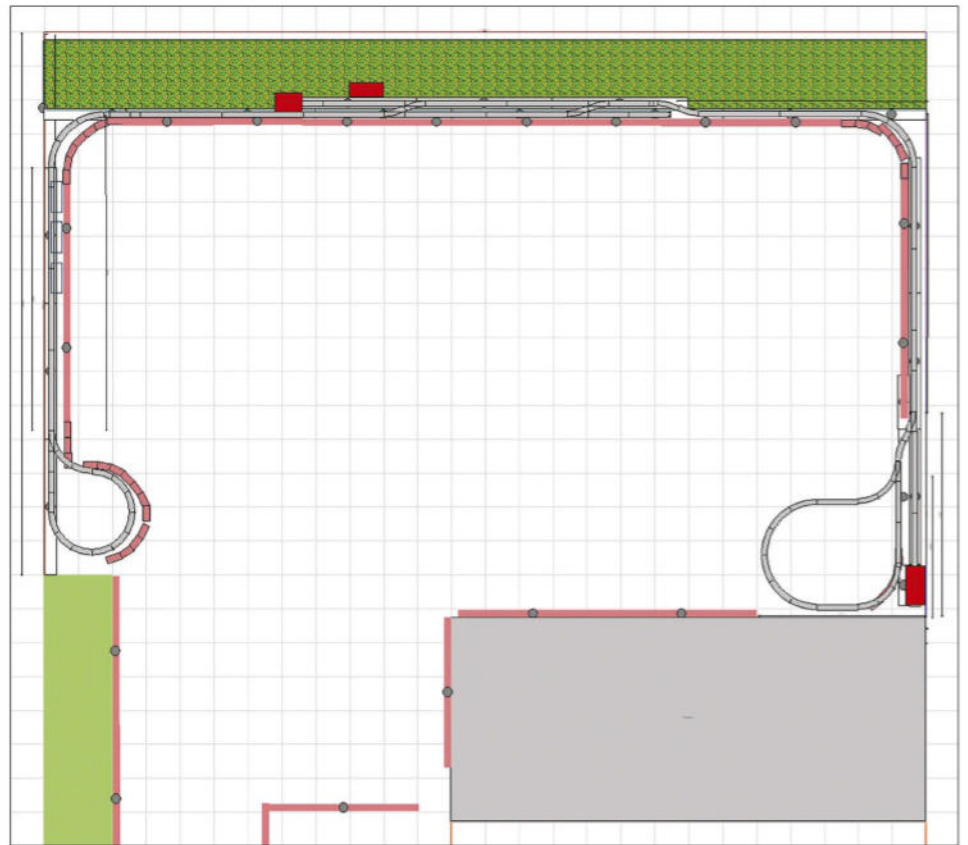
At the same time, the 'model railway virus' had already caught hold of me again, and I returned to the hobby with a digital starter set in H0 scale. Over time, these impressions came together - the leftover paving stones, the observations during our walks, and my renewed enthusiasm for model railways.

Eventually, I said to my wife, "Let's build a garden railway." Her response was as brief as it was decisive: "Okay, then do it." That marked the beginning of the project.

The first step was to record the size of the garden in track-planning software and to develop the layout based on this information. The result was a design with around 40 metres of track and two return loops. The main lines are designed for single-track operation, while the station area provides a separate track for each direction of travel.

Most of the track material was purchased second-hand via well-known online platforms, based on a parts list prepared in advance. In addition, two locomotives were acquired, one of which was already fitted with an older LGB decoder.

From the outset, the layout was intended to be operated digitally. An older ESU ECoS



command station is used, whose output power of four amps is entirely sufficient for operation.

Feedback was initially provided via isolated track sections in combination with an S88N feedback module using current sensing. The S88N module is located near the station area and connected to the command station via a 20-metre outdoor-rated network cable. Both the command station and the laptop running the iTrain control software are housed in the garden shed, where they are reliably protected from wind and weather.

The locomotives are predominantly equipped with decoders from Massoth and ESU, with particular emphasis placed on powerful energy storage capacitors to ensure a stable power supply.

Over time, however, several challenges became apparent. The brass track used initially proved to be very maintenance-intensive. Snail slime formed an almost perfect insulating layer on the rails and significantly impaired operation. Various cleaning agents and track cleaning wagons failed to provide any lasting improvement, and the high level of maintenance required was not satisfactory in the long run.



Return loops are much easier to wire up with digital control than normal DC.



Some evening tramway operation.



An LGB Toy Train loco and coaches running through the station area.

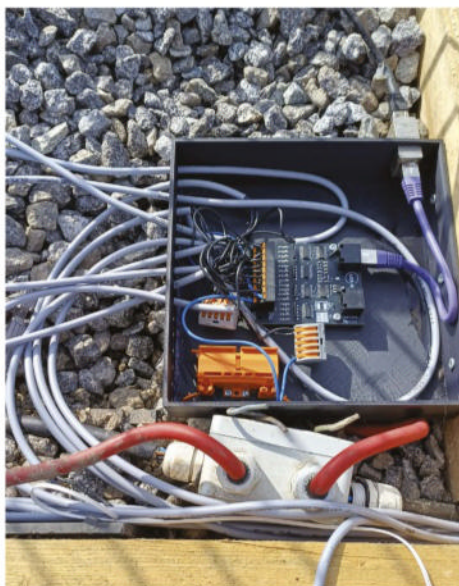
Through online research, I eventually came across the Hamburg-based supplier Spassgleis, which originates from the garden railway hobby sector, and has developed an affordable stainless steel track system for garden railways. They offer both ready-assembled track sections and individual rail profiles with sleeper strips for self-assembly. With the stainless steel track from Spassgleis, the gradual replacement of the former brass track began. This reduced the cleaning effort to a minimum. Today, it is usually sufficient to place a locomotive on the track and start running immediately.

For reliable operation, all locomotives are equipped with buffer capacitors, and numerous additional power feed points have been installed using screwed rail joiners.

However, during the transition to stainless steel track, problems arose with the feedback system. Occupancy detection via isolated track sections no longer worked reliably, and so-called 'ghost detections' became more frequent, with blocks being reported as occupied even though they were actually clear. Whether these effects were directly related to the change of track material could not be conclusively determined, but stable

digital operation was no longer possible in this configuration.

As a solution, I decided to use reed switches. I was aware that these only provide point-based detection, but for garden railway operation, this appeared entirely sufficient - and above all, significantly more reliable than the previous current-sensing method. The encapsulated reed switches were screwed to the sleepers and connected to an S88N module. The associated housing was designed using CAD software and produced with UV-resistant filament on a 3D printer. It features 16 openings for cable entries, with



The electronics control box is 3D-printed in UV-safe material.



To maximise the lawn space, the corner curves are tight, but my Waldenburgerbahn locomotive can still manage them.

the network cable to the command station exiting from the side.

The magnets used to trigger the reed switches were mounted underneath the locomotives, partly screwed and partly glued in place.

In iTrain, it is possible to define precisely the type of feedback involved and how long it should be active or ignored. Even the first test runs were completely trouble-free.

In addition to renewing the feedback system, the track substructure was extensively refurbished in the summer of 2025. After around eight years, many paving stones had settled or tilted sideways, leading to derailments and sections of track that could only be negotiated at very low speed. Since installing fixed edging stones was not an option due to the time involved and the already established planting, the decision was made to use thick wooden beams as supports. These were installed and screwed in place as a frame along the L-shaped boundary stones at the edge of the property. The paving stones were then removed and the substructure completely rebuilt using fresh gravel.

In this way, approximately 35 metres of track were newly laid. The rails were fixed to the paving stones using stainless steel screws, with pre-drilled dowel holes at regular intervals. The existing outdoor wiring could continue to be used. As feedback is now provided entirely via reed switches and isolated track sections are no longer required, the former feedback



Reed switches, seen here, have improved the software's ability to detect trains.



Most of the scenery is a work in progress, but then so is this house, built from a Pola kit.



Trains passing in the station area.

connections now serve as additional power feed points. Power is supplied via crimped ring terminals that are screwed to the rail joiners.

At present, the turnouts are still operated purely by being forced open by the entering and departing locomotives. This operating mode can be configured accordingly in iTrain, allowing the software to understand how the turnout position is influenced by the vehicles.

In the future, it is planned to equip the turnouts leading to the three sidings with servo drives and a suitable servo decoder, in order to further automate operations and make them more varied.

In addition to regular digital DCC operation, the garden railway is also deliberately used as a play layout for my own children, as well as for visiting children. For this purpose, two Playmobil locomotives with radio control are used. These share the same gauge as G scale, which goes back to an earlier cooperation between LGB and Playmobil.

The major advantage of these radio-controlled locomotives is that the children can control their trains entirely independently. This not only provides great enjoyment, but also naturally includes minor accidents and derailments, which are an integral part of play and are enthusiastically accepted by the children. In addition to operation with our own children, we have also welcomed two groups from a neighbouring childcare centre in the past. It was a particular pleasure for me to demonstrate the garden railway in operation to the youngest railway fans and to experience the enthusiasm with which the children followed the trains as they ran through the garden.

As part of the renovation work, a large proportion of the track was also converted to stainless steel rail. Only the curved sections and the turnouts remain in brass or standard LGB material. Further scenic development of the layout is planned for the future, particularly in the areas alongside the track. The use of a 3D printer offers many possibilities here, for example, for individual lineside accessories or custom-built components.

The optimisation of operating processes using the control software also represents an interesting field of activity that continues to provide great enjoyment.

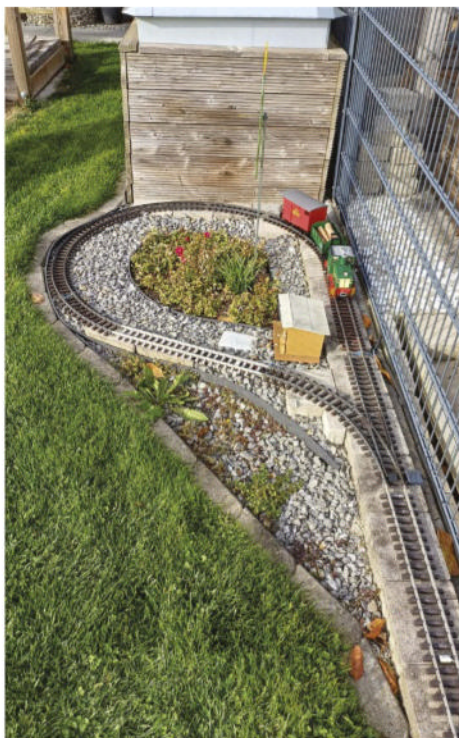
I particularly enjoy operating the railway when everything runs smoothly and I can watch the trains making their rounds from the terrace. The ongoing fine-tuning of the



You can clearly see the paving stones that inspired the railway here, as the Waldenburgerbahn locomotive passes by.



We don't normally operate during winter, although snow isn't common in this part of Germany.



We reach the end of the line, and turn around to go back again.

settings in iTrain, as well as further work on sound, still offer considerable potential for optimisation and form a major part of the appeal. The combination of technology, garden environment and play value gives the layout a very special charm that more than justifies the effort involved.

Regular operation generally takes place from Easter to October. The layout remains fully assembled throughout the year; there is no seasonal dismantling of the track. Only the rolling stock is stored in the garden shed after operation, where it is kept on two shelving units.

Operation is mostly spontaneous, depending on time and weather conditions. Often, it is the children who express the wish to run the garden railway, a request that is hard to refuse. They enthusiastically help with placing the locomotives and rolling stock on the track, a task I am always happy to delegate. After operation, all vehicles are put away together in the garden shed.

Running sessions usually take place within the family, but the garden railway is also regularly brought into use when we have visitors. During winter, operations come to a complete standstill, while the layout itself remains unchanged in the garden.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to my wife, who supports me even in unusual and sometimes slightly crazy ideas. My thanks also go to my children, whose enthusiasm for the garden railway continually makes its operation something special. Last but not least, I would like to thank my brother-in-law for his invaluable assistance with the refurbishment of the track - without his help, such extensive renewal would not have been possible in this form. ■

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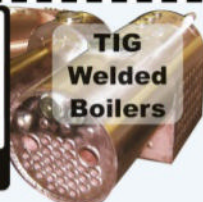
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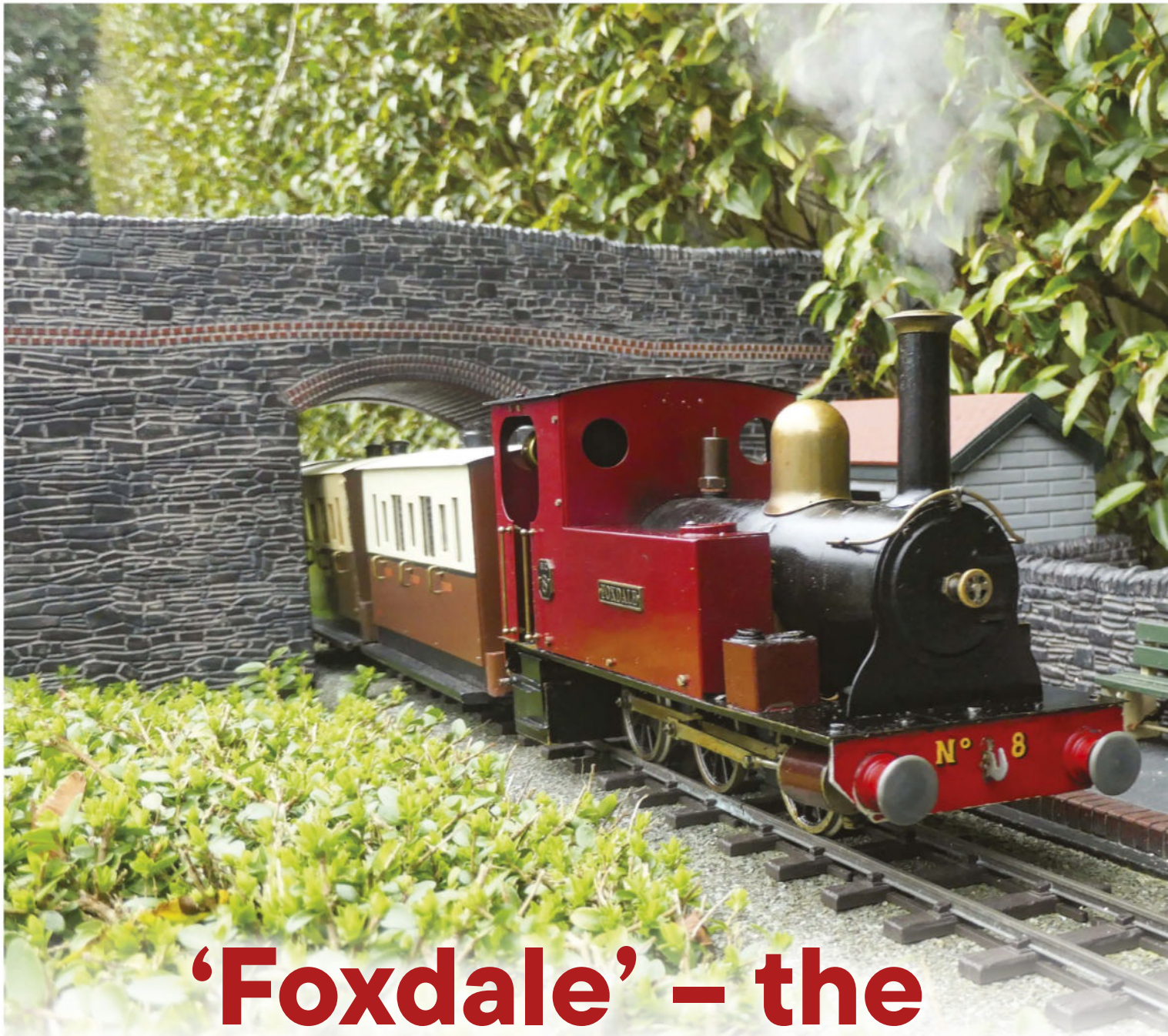
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‘Foxdale’ – the Lindale ‘Caledonia’

David Pinniger tells the tale of his first kit-built engine, still going strong after 46 years.

These days we are fortunate to be able to buy locomotive parts, and even complete kits, for the home builder, but back in the 1970s, there was nothing to help the novice engineer. So, there was a great deal of excitement when a company called Lindale announced a kit for a live steam loco, which required no special skills or equipment.

It picked an interesting prototype in ‘Caledonia’, built by Dubs in 1885 for the 3ft gauge Manx Northern Railway in the Isle of Man. This was a large chunky 0-6-0

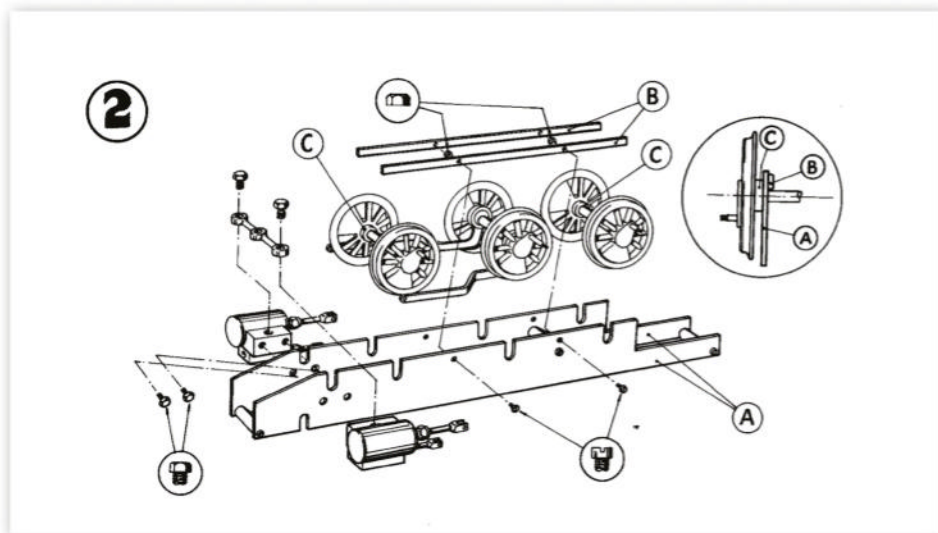
side tank, which fitted in well with the hefty Archangel locos and stock owned by many 16mill modellers.

I could not resist, and bought the kit in 1980. It was attractively boxed and contained a silver soldered pot boiler, and all the components necessary for a screwdriver assembly. Following the very clear exploded diagrams, the engine bolted together very well, and I was delighted that I had succeeded in building my first steam engine.

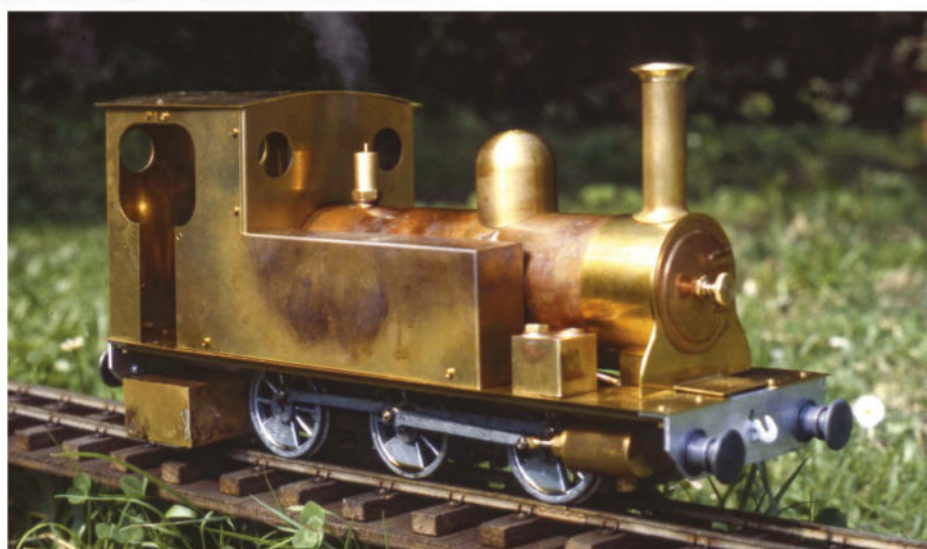
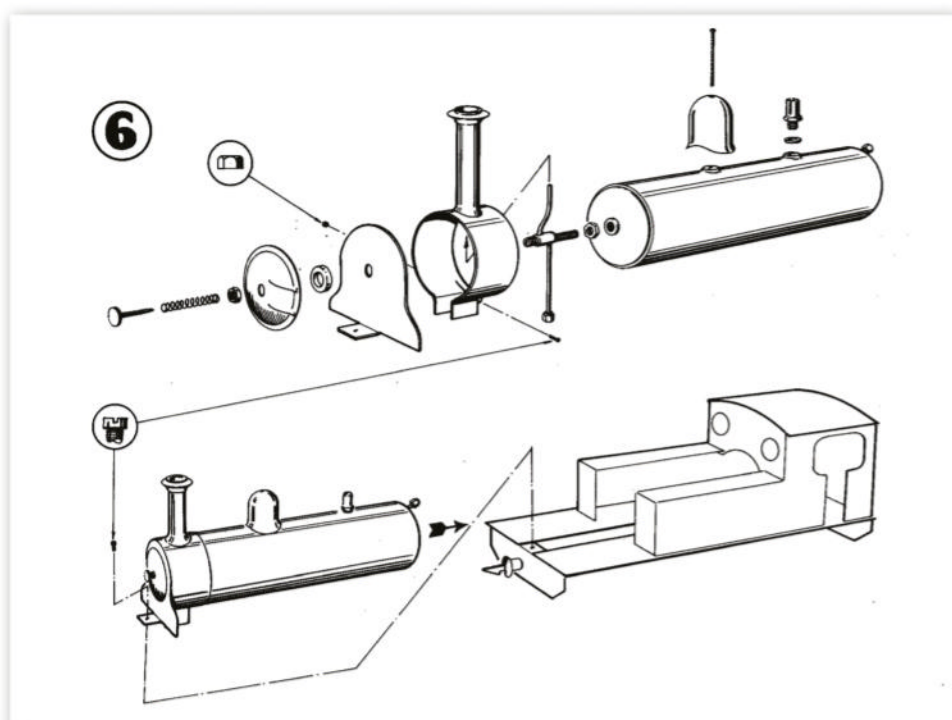
I was even more delighted when I put the shiny new engine on the track, filled it with

meths, oil and water and it ran perfectly around my then very wobbly track in the garden. The slip eccentric valve gear was between the centre driving wheel and the frames, very different from Archangel locos, which had the eccentrics and valve rods between the frames.

Another interesting and very effective innovation with the Caledonia is that the main steam regulator valve is in the cab on the backhead, with an additional exhaust regulator control wheel in the middle of the smokebox door.



Lindale instructions for chassis and valve gear (above), and body (below).



The completed loco for its first test before painting, Archangel nylon buffers replacing the original brass centre chopper.

The engine is driven by opening the main steam valve and then the speed of the loco is controlled by using the exhaust regulator. This feature allowed slow running with a load and certainly helped on my ground level line.

Flushed with success, I stripped the engine down, cleaned the parts and painted the loco in Humbrol Manx Northern Railway maroon. However, pride comes before a fall and on the first trip out on the line, the paint started to blister and smoke. I realised that despite some shielding, the tanks and cab on this pot boiler got so hot you could fry eggs on the cab roof.

I was lucky enough to have a contact at the factory in Slough, where they made Mamod steam toys, and he offered to put the Caledonia body parts through the paint shop. They were returned with a superb maroon paint job, which has now lasted 40 years.



'Foxdale' after the Mamod repaint with a new dome and added handrails and cab steps.

I made a number of modifications to the engine, including an Archangel dome, with a nice flare, handrails on the smokebox and cab sides, cab steps to hide the meths tank, tank fillers on the side tanks, and Archangel coupling hooks and nylon buffers. I also named it 'Foxdale' after the Manx Northern branch where 'Caledonia' ran for many years.

The engine ran well for a while, but then suddenly derailed when the connecting rod became disconnected and dug into the track bed. I discovered that the connecting rods and coupling rods on both sides were bent and totally distorted.

When I removed the rods, it was clear that the heat had degraded the alloy, which had then totally failed. I asked Jack



Close-up of the eccentric valve gear, fabricated rods and replacement wheels.



Maximum haulage test being observed by Jack Wheldon, Peter Dobson and Dave Rowlands.

Wheldon for advice, and he told me how to make new ones from nickel silver. He particularly stressed the importance of measuring very carefully to make sure the wheel spacing was exactly right. This I did with callipers, files and a drill and then, with some trepidation, bolted on the new rods. To my amazement, the engine ran well, maybe even better than before.

However, this euphoria was not destined to last for long. A few weeks later, I was demonstrating how big a train 'Foxdale' would haul when the loco fell sideways off the track and the spilt meths set fire to a nearby shrub. When we had put out the fire, I discovered that the reason for the derailment was that one of the loco driving wheels had disintegrated!

Examination of the other wheels showed that they all showed signs of fatigue. I again asked Jack for advice, and he told me to complain to Lindale as he had heard



'Foxdale' visiting the Border Counties Railway with most of Jack's stock in the train.



45 years later at Bishops Amble and the paint still looks good in the sunshine.

All went well for many years, with only routine maintenance and, in the 1990s, on the advice of Colin Edwards, I fitted a set of new piston O rings when the originals were worn. The engine is now 45 years old and so is not run so frequently but it still performed well on a recent outing to Steve Edwards' Misbourne Valley, evoking the charm of long-forgotten potboilers.

The simple Lindale Caledonia kits should not be confused with the later much more detailed 'Caledonia's' made by John Turner. These were available as gas or spirit-fired and were very well engineered and fitted with John's very effective reversing gear, later copied by Cheddar Models. ■

that this had happened to quite a few other unlucky Caledonia owners.

I rang the company and spoke to a helpful gentleman, who apologised and promised to send me a much better replacement set. I later found out that I had been lucky enough to speak to John Turner. He was a very good model engineer who had designed the Caledonia, and was embarrassed by the failures caused by the original company using shoddy materials to save costs.

The replacement wheels soon arrived with a short apologetic letter from a Mr Crabtree. They were in another league to the original alloy ones and as soon as they were fitted, 'Foxdale' became a regular performer on the AVR, and visited many other lines, including Jack Wheldon's Border Counties. The loco performed prodigious feats of haulage for such a simple engine and goaded Jack into building 'Superbrick'.



John Chambers' green "Caledonia" visiting Dave Mees line. (Photo: John Chambers)



A Class Act

Part
Two

Mark Thatcher gets back on track with his build of a 16mm-scale DHR Class One loco kit from Bole Laser Craft.

I hope you enjoyed my first article on building this loco last month. I certainly have enjoyed construction up to now, despite my own error when assembling the motion gear. I was very pleased that after a gentle soak test, adding a little light oil and running in, this chassis performed as well as the other three locos I already have built from Bole Laser Craft. And of course, the Micron TX10 radio control performed brilliantly as well, as you would expect with any 2.4Ghz-based product.

Now it is time to add some shape, size and weight to this model, and to cover up the electronics, although, I am pleased to see you can access everything you should need to through the opening smokebox door, and in the unlikely event you will need to dig a little deeper, the top plate of the loco

is hinged into place, so can be removed by taking out the two screws in the cab that holds it in place.

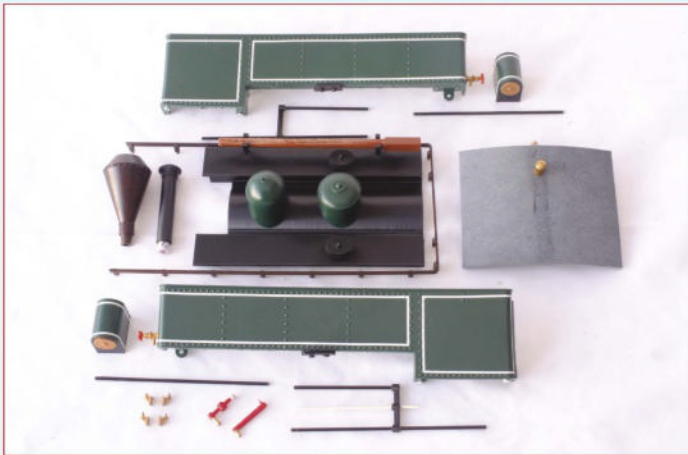
During this final part of assembly, I did check the running gear was working as it should. I knew it would be highly unlikely that anything could get out of sync, but I wanted to check that my clumsiness in assembly had not caused any problems. Besides, it was a good excuse to have a play and see it running!

A class act? Yes, it is, it really is. This is a more advanced kit than the smaller estate loco kits in BLC's range, but as the finished model is bigger than you would expect it to be so. Of course, adding working motion will also add another layer of complexity, but everything went together fine and should do for you too, providing you use screws of the right

length, as explained in the instructions. Don't muddle them up as I did and don't tighten them up too much to bind the motion, as I did on my first attempt.

If you opt for either the basic kit, without electronics, or the kit with the rolling chassis, you could comfortably build and paint the body in a few hours. I probably spent as much time again painting and adding my little details, but found this to be the most fun part of the project. In any case, after a couple of generous evenings, this loco was finished and ready to enter service, on a railway that I currently don't have! I must have spent well into three figures obtaining the accessories I wanted to add detail to this kit, but I think as this model itself turned out so well, it would have been a pity to spoil the loco for ha'peth of coal, if you excuse my vernacular! ■

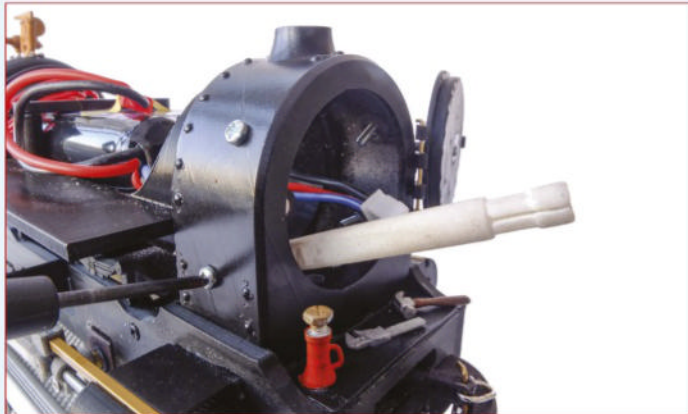
THE BUILD: STEP-BY-STEP



1 I painted the body parts and smaller details prior to assembly. I much prefer this way of doing things as it makes for a far more accurate paint job and means I am not splodging paint in areas that don't need it. If you spray-paint mainly with rattle cans, like I do, you will also find this method to be quick and easy. Everything you see here was painted within the hour, excluding masking and lining the tank sides, and the finish turned out pretty well, too.



2 While I was building the chassis last time, as I was searching for stuff, I stumbled across a load of useful detailed parts, so decided to place them in front of me. This sort of 3D mood board allowed me to see if they all worked with each other, and where they might go. I ended up using the majority of these bits, with only the red fuel can, fire extinguisher and set square being left out. I also ordered a brass safety valve bonnet from Roundhouse Engineering, as the profile looked about right to sit on the curve of the boiler.



3 Having secured the smokebox to the chassis last time, I realised I had missed adding the four captive nuts inside it, which will eventually secure the side tanks to it. Ironically, the fact that the smokebox had already been fitted made for a much more stable platform for me to do this now and reduced the need for my third hand to hold it! I used the captive nut holding tool supplied in the kit, which makes light work of a potentially very fiddly job. The trick here was to insert the bolts from the outside, then to tighten the nuts that are screwed down into recesses inside the smokebox. These recesses held the bolts in place after the nuts were removed.



4 The side tanks were held on by four nuts and bolts for each side. The two rear ones pass upwards and underneath from below the footplate and the front two screw into the smokebox. I found it much easier to locate the bolts through the floor and side tanks onto their respective nuts, then gradually went around tightening things up until I was happy with the fit. You can also spot a few scale tools I had in stock, plus the axle jack and taps to the front of the side tanks. I was going to wait until I had finished the body before I added these, but couldn't help myself!

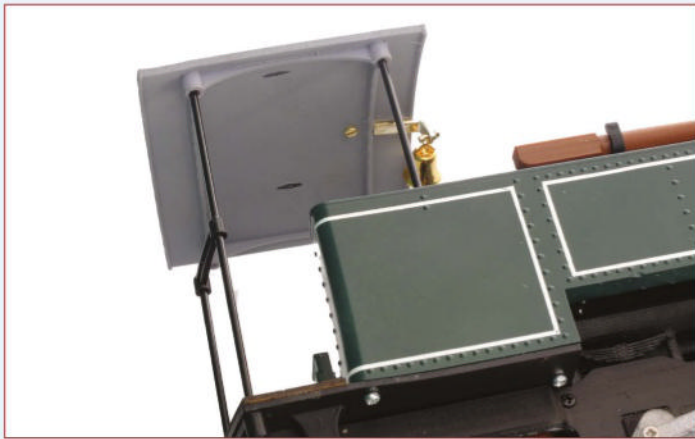


5 The cylinder covers were a simple push-fit into place and they also helped to secure the brass slide bars. You could use a dab of glue to secure your covers in place, but as these were such a snug fit, I decided not to, in case for any reason in the future I would need to get to the pistons to remove these bars.



6 A top cover was provided to hide all the electronics. It had a couple of small locating pips on the front end. These were located into recesses on the inside of the front of the side tanks. The cover hinged inward and downward to fit it, then was secured by two more bolts and captive nuts through the rear of the side tanks. These are located either side of the firebox, and should just about be accessible to release this top cover once the roof supports and roof have been added.

THE BUILD: STEP-BY-STEP CONTINUED



7 You can see where the two bolts are located that secure the rear of the side tanks. Also, I have test-fitted the roof. When fitting the front two roof supports, I noticed they were not perpendicular to the side of the tanks, but as the roof had locating spigots, once this was added, the tanks were pulled in more squarely and lined up. Make sure these front supports go all the way through the top hole of each side tank as they are pushed through these to locate in similar spigots at the bottom, inside of the cab sides. I ran a drill through the upper holes to ensure the supports slid all the way.



8 Before I added the rear roof supports, I thought it was wise to add the back head detail to the firebox. All these parts were included in the kit. I also added my own fuel can and shovel, which I happened to have in stock. Oh, and if you look closely, you can see in the handling of the model, clumsy me had knocked one of the re-railer supports out of line. Thankfully, these were not glued in at this stage, as if I had done so, I may well have broken the locating pip off.



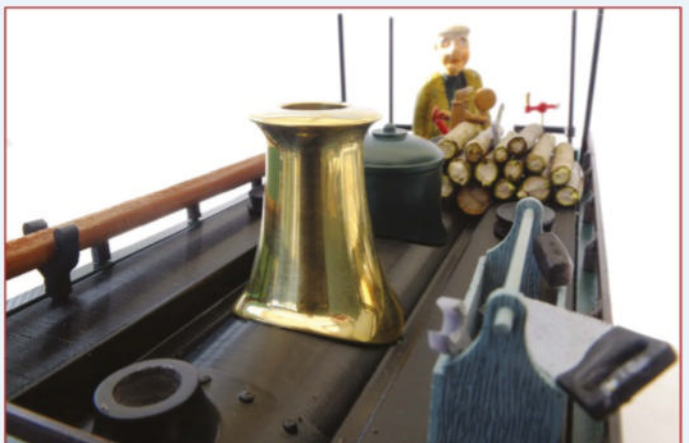
9 Now the body is really coming together! Although I should have been patient, I took this opportunity to add the guard rail around the top of the tanks. Don't be tempted to push it into place too hard, as your hands could slip and you could break some of the locating pips off. I ran a drill through the holes as before to ensure no force was required. Also, this was the first test-fit of the brass safety bonnet from a Lady Anne loco, from Roundhouse Engineering. It was a pretty good fit with the curve of the bonnet being 'nearly' right. The toolbox and other tools were supplied by SLR Models.



10 Before the roof was fitted, I thought it wise to fit the Modeltown driver: DHR Derek, as I would have difficulty doing this later on. Modeltown makes a range of Indian-themed figures, but I had used what I had in stock when building several DHR coaches last year. I am not sure Derek appreciated his feet being glued to the floor! Rather than using Superglue for jobs like this where the glue could leave a residue, I prefer to use Glue'n'Glaze from Deluxe Materials. This has the same properties as PVA wood glue and leaves no visible residue, yet sets to a much stronger bond. It just takes a while to go off.



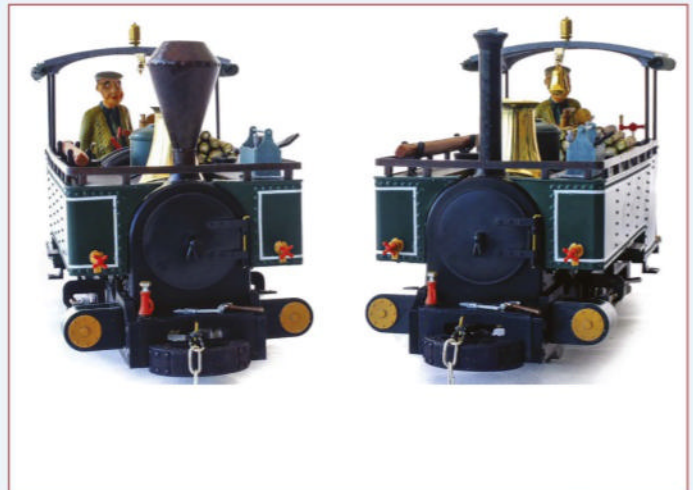
11 As I chose to fit the guard rail, I thought I better invent a reason for it to be there, hence the log pile. In the early days, these locos were wood-fired, before the DHR realised coal was a far more efficient alternative than chopped trees, but in any case, the guard rail was there to stop any wood rolling off the top of the side tanks and decapitating any unsuspecting bystanders. The wood I chopped from my garden is still a bit green, but hopefully will brown off later when it dries out.



12 Here you can better see the profile of the brass safety bonnet from Roundhouse. The curve of the bonnet's base is not perfect and I am sure people more skilled than I and with a lathe could fashion something out of round brass stock, but it was close enough for me. I think the additions of the brightwork on this model offer a great contrast to the painted components and was a worthy upgrade.



13 | The brass roof-mounted whistle also came from Roundhouse. It neatly screwed into place from the underside of the roof. The bell is an over-scale 1/12th electroplated bell from a doll's house shop. I just thought it looked right and would be the kind of thing that colonial locos of this type would have. I made the two cab side blinds out of rolled up seating material that Coach & Wagon Works kindly supplied.



14 | Two alternative chimneys are provided. These are a tolerance-fit into the hole on top of the smokebox, so can be easily swapped. I can't believe how much switching from the balloon chimney with its spark arrester to the more anglicised stove pipe chimney dramatically changed the look of the model. You buy one and get one free with this kit!



15 | The final addition to all this paraphernalia was to add some safety chain left over from one of my Woodleigh Engineering wagon kits, plus a working tail lamp from Garden Railway Specialists. This is powered by two minuscule batteries and the top cap of the lamp acts as a rotating switch. I really enjoyed this whole detailing process, which seems to reflect the chaotic and haphazard nature of the prototypes of many of the locos found around India.



16 | This Class One is a little smaller than the more well-known B Class, but still has an amazing and somewhat prettier presence on the line. It's a pity that they were ultimately phased out, but this kit presents a great opportunity to model the engine that put the DHR on the map.



The early morning sunlight makes my rust effects look a little luminous, but I wanted to portray a working locomotive that has been reasonably well cared for.

Garden Rail Resource

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Date: Saturday, June 6th, 2026
Venue: Llangollen Pavilion, Abbey Road, Llangollen, LL20 8SW
Times: 10am to 4.30pm
Web: www.lgrf.co.uk

Garden Railway Specialists Open Day

Date: June 19th-20th, 2026
Venue: 6 Summerleys Rd, Princes Risborough, HP27 9DT
Times: 10am to 4pm
Web: www.grsuk.com

Live Steam in Lymington

Date: August 8th-9th, 2026
Venue: Lymington Community Centre, New Street, Lymington, SO41 9BQ
Times: 10am to 4.30pm
Web: www.lymingtoncommunity.com

Llanfair Garden Railway Show

Date: Saturday, September 5th, 2026
Venue: Caereinion Leisure Centre, Llanfair Caereinion, Welshpool, SY21 OHW
Times: 10am to 4pm
Web: www.wllr.org.uk

Tony Green Stream Open Day

Date: September 12th-23rd, 2026
Venue: Unit 3, Whisby Road, Lincoln, LN6 3QT
Times: 10am to 3pm
Web: www.tonygreensteammodels.co.uk

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Printed photos of a historic nature will be accepted. Captions for all photos should be included as part of the submission. You must own copyright to any material submitted and not have submitted it to other publications.

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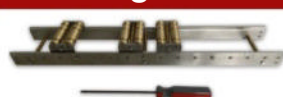
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A Less Silly Idea?

Loco control on the Kitchen Table Railway? **Barry Loraine** investigates.

In the April 2026 issue of *Garden Rail*, our esteemed editor, at least he was esteemed until he delved into the world of ripping apart toys to control his models, asked for ideas to overcome his issues with using a cheap supermarket toy to control one of those lovely PS Models power chassis.

This is not as silly as it sounds, however, there is a better way, so let me give you a bit of background. I have always erred toward the cheap and nasty style of railway modelling, think Colonel Stephens' style of railway management.

My original attempts at getting into the garden was only ever built in parts (small parts) and was called the Bangham & Leaveham Railway. This I hope to maybe resurrect again in the future.

However, in recent years, I lived in a poky little flat in Kent where I had no garden and the only room with any possible hobby space was the kitchen. Thus was born the Kitchen Table Railway, which was built on a 4ft x 2ft discarded piece of 12mm thick MDF.

On this 'baseboard', I built an oval of 10" radius track with two sidings inside the oval and an easily removable piece of backscene built out of very lightweight sheet foam board for the stock to travel through. I always think a railway should go somewhere.

This actually appeared at the NGRS at Peterborough in 2019. The scenery is in one piece, light and easy to move and store on end in a wardrobe. Mantling and dismantling takes all of 30 seconds. This has proved perfect for the little electric mice that give me the most enjoyment in 16mm. I'm afraid as much as I love steamy things, my first love has proven to be cheap and nasty battery-operated contraptions.

In a timely coincidence to the Editors' 'Silly Idea', I have recently re-engined my Wickham rail inspection car.

I should also say at this point that I like the more unusual and perverse contraptions you get on our rail systems, which would explain my gradual decline into narrow gauge. Thus, I've always liked the Wickham

Railcars and the Wackham is my take on these lovely little contraptions.

Based on a Houston Gate Locomotive Works Summer Coach, I knew the moment I saw these kits that it was ideal for conversion into a track inspection car. The body of the coach was shortened, and a hole drilled in the base for a motor. A bit more fettling and there it was. The only issue was that the motor unit I used never ran very well. This is probably due to my own lack of ability rather than any fault in the unit I used.

However, following my move, I started unpacking my models and found the Wackham had become permanently incapacitated and thus required a new motor chassis unit.

"What has this got to do with the Editor's Silly Idea?", I hear you shout. Well, I have a Loco Remote Huddy sitting in a siding fitted with its control unit, which is excellent in all but one respect, cost. It's not at all expensive for what it is, but as I head toward living full time on a pension,

cost is a big consideration. I had the idea that I would like to fit some form of remote control to all my electric mice, particularly as age and a dodgy back make chasing the little rascals less than appealing these days.

All of my battery models use, like the PS Models and most others at the more affordable end of the market, a 1.5v to 6v motor, so this was my starting point.

The obvious place to start looking for cheap and nasty is eBay, and I purchased two different units. One of these does what I want, so I will cover that here. After all, it is simple to install and worked first time for me!

In the small package that arrives is a small circuit board that has what appears to be four wires and a spring coming from it, and a small remote control unit that looks like something to unlock a car. The unit is claimed to work on a DC voltage range of 3v to 12v and a current load of 0.5A.

The wires that come from the circuit board has the markings on the board to help you are as follows:

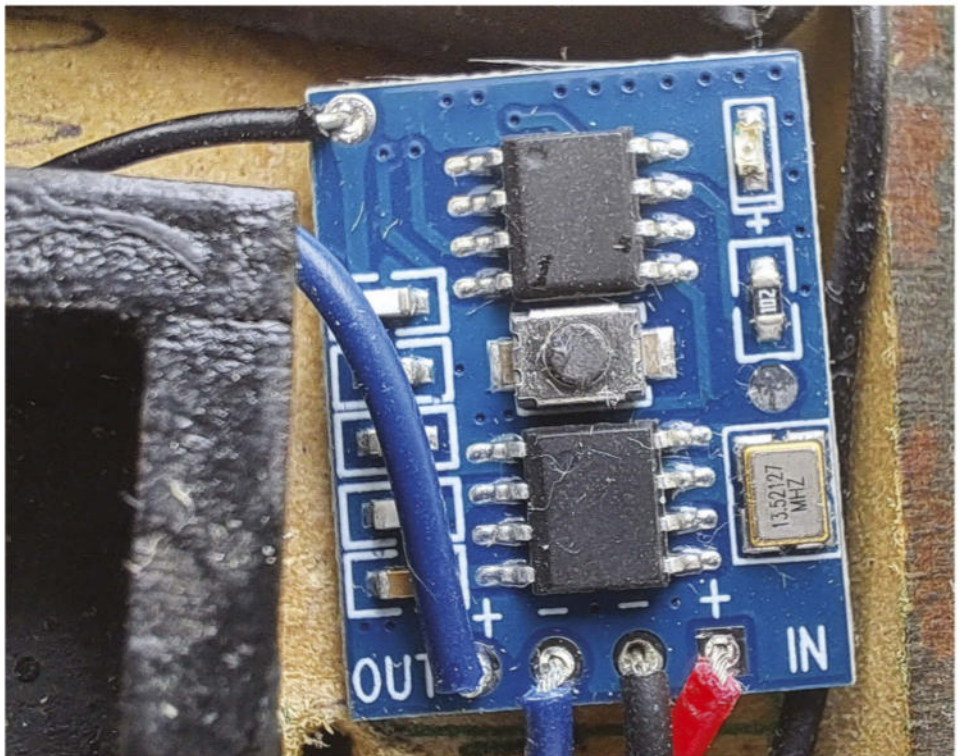
Two blue wires that connect to the motor contacts - either way round, but may need to swap them around if preferred after testing.

Red wire to battery positive

Black wire to battery negative.

I used two 1.5v AAA batteries in series, giving 3 volts to power it because I already had battery holders for these fitted.

The curly spring thing is actually an aerial wire for the remote signal. I uncoiled this and poked it up through the motor hole in the chassis. Being a black wire, it is fairly unobtrusive. They claim the remote has a range of 30 metres.



The circuit board into my railcar. You can see the wires to the battery and motor at the bottom, and the aerial wire tucked out of the way at the top.

The remote control has a latching effect, so one press of the arrow starts the loco off in either direction. You don't have to hold the button down. There is no speed control, its just forward, off, or reverse.

I have fitted an on/off switch in the positive battery wire of mine, because I suspect if you have these control units fitted in multiple models and they were all turned on, they would all start off at once.

So, it's simple to fit and relatively cheap. To find them on eBay, search for 'DC3-12V Wireless Remote Control Forward Reverse Speed Controller PWM Motor Drive'.

At the time of writing, cost per set of circuit board and remote is £6.25 + £7.50 postage from China, although if you buy more than one, the postage remains the same. I purchased mine from a seller called - modul_technik113. However, some of the sellers will let you buy just the controller board for a little less once you have the remote unit.

I don't know how much the Editor's toy cost him, but I doubt it was much, if any less, than the cost of one of these units. (Editor: As I recall, 'lupilu' sells for around £9.99)

In case you want to use a rechargeable battery that fits nicely in or under most models, you could try searching on eBay for '4PCS 1S 3.7V 650mAh Lipo Battery with USB Charger for RC Syma X5 X5C X5SC X5SW'.

I use these in some of my models and they give far better duration than older style batteries and can be easily replaced for longer duration. My inspection car in this article runs for about 45 minutes on dry cells if I'm lucky but for 90 minutes using these rechargeables.

Hopefully, this inspires others to have a play. ■

Garden Rail Resource

Houstoun Gate Locomotive Works
www.hglw.co.uk

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The control handset is simple enough, although it looks like something to unlock the car!

POSTCARDS

1:20.3



40 years of The Little Angel

Andy Taylor has found some postcards that tell the story of his line.



The Little Angel Railway Company launched its newest locomotive today. It was named 'Mannin' by his lordship, the Marquis of Angel, and should be powerful enough to pull the heaviest trains from the valley, and along the coast to Creek. Rumours are circulating here that the nearby Isle of Man Railway, which has already followed Norwegian Railways practice, of course, as well as that of the Little Angel Railway Company in its use of Beyer Peacock locomotives, may indeed build a fine machine like this to work the heavy boat trains to Port Erin.



This postcard, I found in the station shop at Creek, is of the newest loco to join the Little Angel and is a recent example of the skill and artistry of Phil Sixsmith. It is based on Manx Northern Railway number 2 Northern. The Manx Northern decided not to follow Norway, or for that matter, the Little Angel, and had two of these Sharpe Stewart locos built. It is remarkable how much of the Isle of Man loco fleet still exists; however, sadly, both the Sharpies were scrapped a long time ago.

The Little Angel can be found with some difficulty, hiding in the mountains of the Angel Valley, or clinging to the coast as it races towards the beautiful fishing town of Creek. In the hills, they quarried for stone, but it is the main line to Creek that has kept trains busy for more than 150 years. In the last 40 years, what had probably lived in my imagination for decades began to become a reality, at least in our back garden.

The joy of looking out of the window onto our station is just so wonderful. The Isle of Man railway has a very accurate replica of it at Castletown. How lucky am I?

Over 40 years, never mind over 150 years, this area of outstanding beauty has attracted many visitors and, as a result, has sold many postcards. Here are just a few I was able to find for your Editor.



Early morning at Creek, and 'Hutchinson' is preparing to take out the first train of the day. 'Hutchinson' will have been the Creek engine that week. People often mistake this scene as that of the sheds and water tower at Peel. Drivers, firemen and guards will often be found around the mess hut. It is said that some days the Marquis of Angel turns up, hoping for a chance to drive a train.



Just wanted to say how much we all miss Mike Buttell, who sadly passed away a couple of years ago. He offered me lots of encouragement and support in developing the Little Angel, and was largely responsible for inventing our Marquis, inspired by Photoshopping one of David Archer's brilliant headboards so that instead of being The Marquis of Ailsa, the Scottish lord who saved the Isle of Man railway, it became The Marquis of Angel. I learnt far more about the Isle of Man railways from Mike than from the many books I have collected over the years. Mike could bring it all to life. He also had a special way of bringing people together, making them feel important and useful. Mike sold me much of his garden railway stuff when he decided to build indoor railways instead. I got his famous home-made railcars, however, by a more roundabout route. When I asked him if he would mind me naming one after his dad and the other his granddad, both who, of course, drove trains on the Isle of Man Railway, he was so pleased and very moved by my suggestion. The postcard shows the Accucraft railcars in the background. Mike's railcars might be a little battered, but they ooze character and history and still run really well. They are very special.



Number 13 'Kissack' with an afternoon train for Creek storms past Bass shed at the start of its journey to the coast. These small-scale locos are built for a bit of speed, just like their larger siblings, and are great fun to drive.



The Little Angel tries to be pretty. The Foxdale coach F39 nearest the camera was built by Mike Buttell.



This is a postcard from 1989 showing one of the first trains to depart from the first version of Angel station. This picture is taken in about the same place Angel is now, but much closer to the wall necessitating much tighter curves. You might say building a garden railway very much involves a learning curve. The engine is number 1 'Thomas Geoffrey', still around as a static exhibit. The railcar is a very early example of a modeller at work. It is an of course an early work of the Little Angel's engineering consultant, and managing director of the Russet Tor, Phil Sixsmith.



The battery electric locomotive number 15B 'Ard Aalin' stands by Bass Lake signal box. The railway now has seven Manx battery electric steam locos. Five are Accucraft and are 4/11/12/15B and 16B. The other two were constructed by Phil Sixsmith and are number 1 'Sutherland' and MNR number 2 'Northern'. The railway also has six live steam locos, all based on the Accucraft Models.



The railway has quite a large fleet of Manx-inspired coaches and wagons. Some are from Accucraft, others built by Mike or Phil, and there is a very heavy metal coach F47 from GRS. Phil repainted an Accucraft Pairs coach into purple lake, inspired by F68 at Aberystwyth, which can be seen here at the back of a full train of coaches he has built for me. The train is headed by number 1 'Sutherland'. The other coaches are Foxdale number 17 and Cleminson N40, which I'm afraid to say is a bit of a cheat. The observant will also note that we have two Foxdale coaches when in fact the IOM only has the one. Must I keep reminding you that this is the Little Angel and we can do as we so please?



Locomotive number 1 'Sutherland' waits for the signal at Creek.



Number 5 'Mona', one of the live steam locos, has taken water and coal at Creek.





Mighty 'Mannin' heads through the valley with steam to spare.



I have mentioned the small depot at Creek. The main depot is at Bass Lake for Castletown, which acts both as a through station and the valley terminus (it's a small garden). The day the photo for this postcard was taken, the railway must have been busy, perhaps with dining and heritage trains running, as well as the usual service trains. The green loco is 15B 'Nancy', named after my late mother-in-law, who insisted the railway was designed as a dumbbell so she did not have to step over the track. The curves may have eased, but the basic shape remains 40 years later.



Manx Northern number 2 with some of Mike's wagons at Creek. The open is the fish wagon and between the fish and the K wagon, the brown van is the kipper van. Mike wrote a complete history for this van, which might just be the one wagon the Isle of Man Railway may not actually have.



Number 11 'Maitland' deep in the valley heading for the coast.



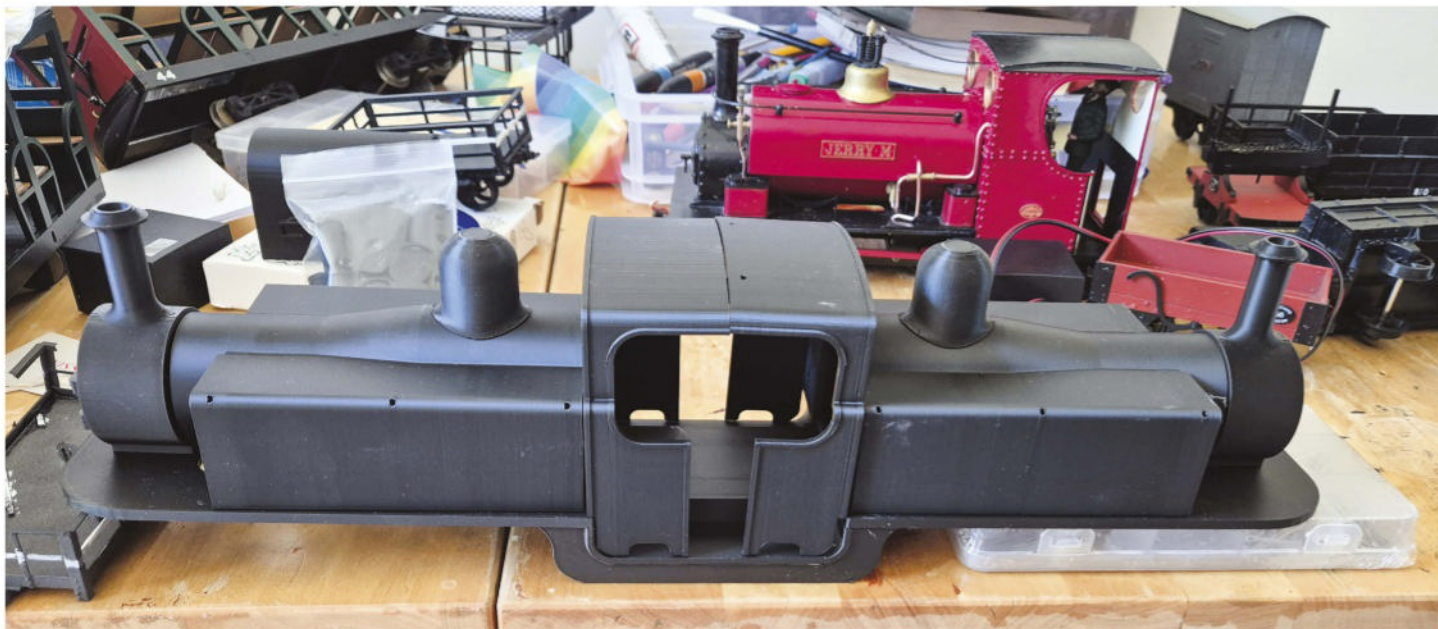
Thank you to everyone who has helped me over the last 40 years, I will try to remember to send you a postcard from Mona's Isle, and here it is. This picture is what the Little Angel should look like. His Lordship was well and truly honoured on July 27th last year. Thanks to David Archer for the beautiful headboard and everyone on the Isle of Man Steam Railway for being so kind and friendly.



Livingston

John Savage finds out that painting can be the trickiest part of a build.

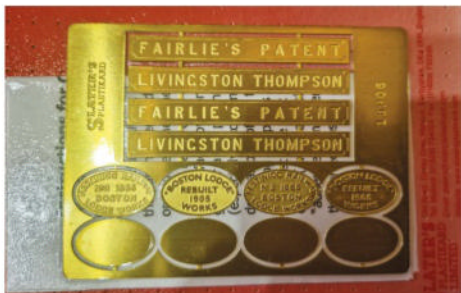




Dry-fitting the freshly unboxed body kit to test how it will go together.



The parts, with their first few coats of filler primer applied.



The Slater's etched name and works plates.



The first top coats start to be applied.



Smokebox handrails, blower pipe and rivet detail being fitted.



The original red - at this point, I started to realise things were a bit bright, but added the borders to see if it would tone down the red a bit. It didn't. Once out in the sun after a night to dry off a bit, I needed my sunglasses on!



To take my mind off the blinding colours, I fitted the cab furniture.

As a lifelong Ffestiniog volunteer, ever since I returned to modelling in 16mm, it has been my desire to have a representative selection of the railway's stock in my collection. However, frankly, the cost of the excellent offerings from Roundhouse really put a damper on the acquisition of steam locos, and so I concentrated my efforts on building up a decent selection of slate waggons to run with my LocoRemote MegaGriff.

Having reached a rake of 50 waggons, while running an almost full-length gravity train was great, I felt I could really do with a prototypical loco to go up front, and right on cue, the relaunch of PDF Models Double Fairlie coincided with a suitable amount of spare cash in the bank, and so, in June 2025, the purchase was made, and I became the owner of a Double Fairlie body kit.

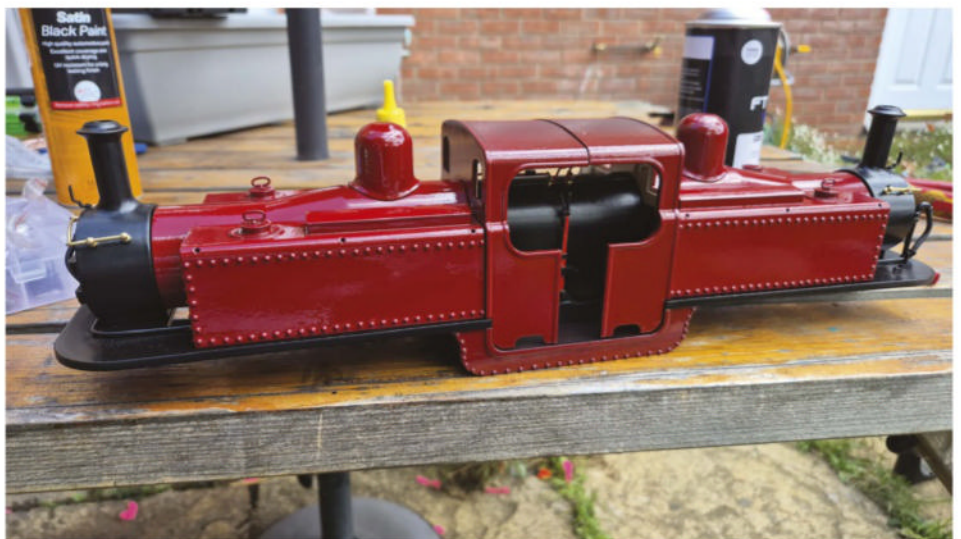
Although the body kit was definitely 'David Lloyd George', I wanted a loco that would have hauled lengthy slate trains back in the day, and the availability of the Slaters 'Livingston Thompson' nameplate set gave me a prototype to attempt to copy. It helped as well that I had the Michael Seymour lining diagram for that locomotive, prepared for its repaint in 1988, available to me.



On display outside the engine shed of the Wygfa and Llanrwst Light Railway, while some slightly less dayglo FR locos pass.



Following a trip to a custom paint mixer, with a photo of the full-size locomotive, finally a colour I was happy with.



After three coats of paint (the summer heatwave really helped the paint to dry quickly), I reassembled the loco to get an impression of the new colour.

My first change to the kit was the handrails, particularly the smokebox ones, and getting the intricate compound curves right took far too many attempts and a whole load of swearing. Handrail knobs came from Warwickshire Loco Works and were absolutely perfect for the job.

Other details were from the Cambrian Models detail parts included in the kit, namely the smokebox door handles, pressure gauges and regulators, although, I needed to do some significant surgery to turn them from the backhead-mounted ones on the sprue into the firebox top ones that the prototypes have.

Reversing lever, clack valves, whistles and lamp brackets came from Trenarren models, vacuum pipes from Brandbright, whilst the pipework detail, handbrake stand and safety valves were scratch-built. Rivet detail is all 2mm half-round nail art pearls, individually superglued in place.

The bogies purchased from PDF models, sadly, although looked amazing, their gears really didn't seem to mesh together well, so the ones fitted now are the Boot Lane Works bogies from the 'Golden Star' kit – cylinder end cap lubricators again are from the Trenarren models range.

I have tried very hard to get the best finish on the paint I can, and out of the box, the parts of the kit were given six or seven coats of high-build filler primer to smooth out the print lines. There were then two coats of grey primer, before topcoat.



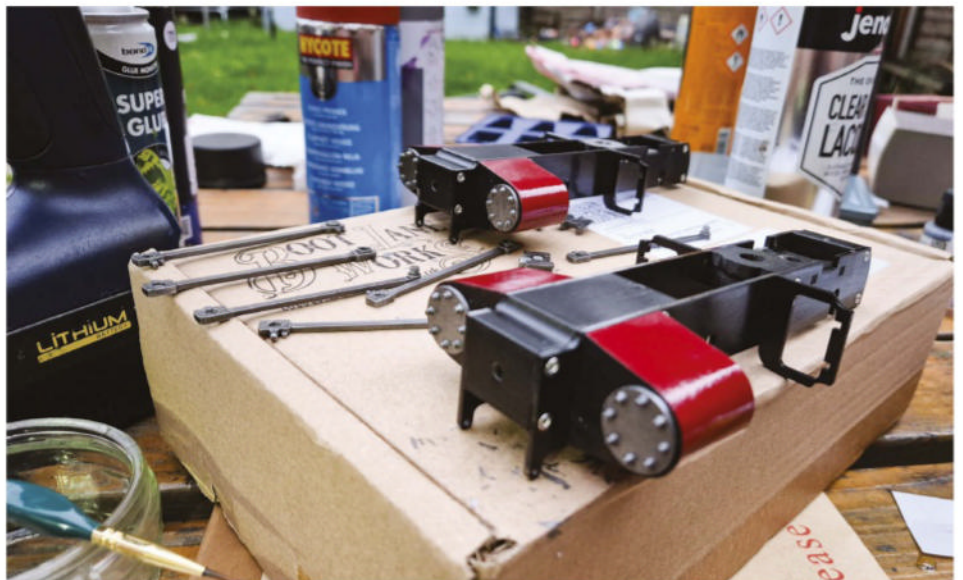
Starting to build the PDF Models bogies.



Bogies fully assembled, the loco sits on the track for the first time.



Applying the Endon Valley Custom Decals lining, based on the official lining diagram from the NRM.



Sadly, I couldn't get the PDF bogies to run quietly; something about how the gears meshed was leading to them eating themselves, so a conversation with Andrew Gadd from Boot Lane Works led to me buying a set of bogies from their Golden Star kit, here being painted and assembled.

Initially, I tried what looked like the closest shade in the current Halfords paint range, and whilst in North Wales in the summer, the half-built loco made a trip to the Wylfa and Llanrwst Light Railway, where, compared to some of the other FR locos that turned up that day, sunglasses were required! It didn't take long for me to decide to repaint it again, so armed with what I was told was the correct paint code for FR Victorian maroon, I duly dismantled the lot and applied what turned out to be a rather awful shade of purple/brown.

I eventually decided to take a decent photo of the loco to a local paint mixing shop, and so what has ended up on the loco, which I am finally happy with, is a custom shade of red/brown that looks, to my mind, just so. Everything has been given an overcoat of satin varnish, that just takes the edge off the extreme gloss the topcoat had.

Lining is from the Endon Valley Custom Decals range. I still need to apply the red pinstripes between the body colour and the black borders, but it doesn't detract too much, so it's on the 'happens when it happens' list!

One advantage of having quite so many coats of paint is that it is now very hard to tell it started off as a 3D-printed kit – I have had several people ask me if the loco is live steam, which makes me quite chuffed with the finish.

So far, the loco has proved itself master of a 50-wagon rake running around the garden layout at the Echills Wood Railway in Kingsbury Water Park, and hopefully, I'll get a chance to take it for a run on other layouts in due course. ■



Out on the Station Master's Garden Railway at the Echills Wood Railway in Kingsbury Water Park, with a 50-wagon train in tow.



Sandpots, nameplates and worksplates added, the loco is definitely coming together

Garden Rail Resource

Boot Lane Works
www.bootlane.org.uk

Brandbright
www.brandbright.co.uk

Cambrian Model Rail
www.cambrianmodelrail.co.uk

Endon Valley Custom Decals
www.endonvalley.com

PDF Models
www.pdf-models.co.uk

Trenarren Models
www.trenarrenmodelsonline.co.uk

Warwickshire Loco Works
www.warwickshirelocoworks.co.uk

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



The Joys of Spring

Springtime is a personal favourite time of year for **Daniel Cousins**, and we heard it encouraged him to create a new scene on his line.

I like springtime very much, especially when garden railways are concerned. Everything starts to begin a new lease of life, and everything seems brighter.

Come March, the weather can start to get drier, lighter, and warmer, which usually means more garden railway action. I do try and use my garden railway all year round, but even I have limits. Being outside on a cold, rainy day in November takes a bit of doing. Just like the Guns N' Roses song *November Rain*, 'nothing lasts forever, even cold November rain', spring is just around the corner.

November is the month I usually go round the railway, digging in some dwarf daffodil (*Narcissus*) bulbs, then forgetting where I set them, so come March, sometimes late February, it's a pleasant

surprise to see them popping up. They only grow to about 25cm tall, so they're quite suitable for garden railways and won't dominate the lineside too much.

It's a good time to give the ballast a freshen up, too. I jump into my car and go to my local nursery for a couple of bags of pea gravel, then work my way around the railway, replenishing any areas that need a little more.

About this time, the locomotives get a good clean. Each one is checked over and their batteries charged. The track gets checked, and soon afterwards, the trains are running.

Late March, the clocks go forward, and the days start to stretch out, and I might be able to get some early evening running in. If I strike it lucky, the pair of Honey

Buzzards could be circling and soaring the blue sky above me.

While Shepherds watch their flocks.

One spring, my father had just finished building himself a model of a living van to accompany his recently completed matchstick model of a traction engine. The model looked to be about the right dimensions for the garden railway, so I asked him to make me one that would look a bit like a shepherd's hut.

The main body panels were cut from 6mm plywood, and the planking was represented by lightly scribing some vertical lines. On each side, an opening for some four-pane windows was cut out, and strip wood made up the windows.

The hut features a hinged front door and a handy little storage box, also with a hinged

door at the rear of the hut. With the windows picked out in white, the main body was painted a nice shade of sage green. A curved roof was cut to length, then glued with some exterior wood PVA to the hut.

No shepherd's hut would be complete without a stove to keep them warm inside, so a chimney pipe was made from wooden dowel and strip wood, before gluing it to the roof to make it look like there is a stove burning away instead.

Our model differs slightly from the more traditional shepherd's hut in regards to the wheels. Instead of the usual chunky cast iron wheels, we have the more modern steel wheels and tyres, probably ex-lorry wheels on ours. These were found by my father in his local model shop. The wheels give the hut a slightly more modern feel, but I don't mind, as my railway is set in modern times, usually as a tourist line.



The shepherd has wandered off, leaving his tea can on the steps, and those pesky sheep are all over the line!



The side view of our Shepherd's Hut shows the curved roof, stove pipe and modern steel wheels, much like those fitted to many gypsy caravans nowadays.



Before the Motley figure, I used a resin young lad with his dog. They are watching as a suitably seasonal train of flowers passes by.

It could just as easily be used as holiday accommodation by swapping the figures.

Talking of figures, we needed a shepherd. While at the National Garden Railway show one year, I stumbled across Motley Miniatures' stand and found them very helpful in finding a suitable-looking shepherd. The figures come unpainted and the heads and bodies are separate, enabling you to create your own unique character.

Like all my figures, I started out with a base colour of matt black, then move onto the eyes and face colours. After the hair and hands are painted, it's just a matter of adding colours to the inside clothing, working outwards, adding colours to the outside clothing.

One day, I will purchase a dog from them for the sheepdog, but let's just say it's off somewhere else, herding up a lost sheep or two.

Motley Miniatures produces sheep, but for this scene, I decided to skip the painting and go for some already-painted versions from Schleich.

The shepherd, sheep, and shepherd's hut get taken down from their display shelf in the Train Shed where they live when the railway is not in use and placed wherever I fancy, whenever I fancy running trains.

Now, let's bring on the sunshine and get out there! ■

Garden Rail Resource

Motley Miniatures
www.motleyminiatures.co.uk

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



A Seed is Sown

Andy and Louise Christie are creating a railway for BBC Gardeners' World Live.



Last June, some 90,000 lucky visitors attended the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham for BBC Gardeners' World Live. From the passer-by to the collective enthusiast of the exotic plants, this truly wonderful show is designed to entertain and delight all levels of interest. My wife Louise managed to get a family ticket for Sunday, so off we went!

With so much to see, I stepped outside the main marquee with my young son William for some fresh air and an ice cream. This allowed Louise to wander freely around the many magnificent indoor displays. When exploring the outdoors, William and

I found a small but heart-warming garden within the Beautiful Borders section. The plot must have measured roughly 6x6 feet, it had a small potting shed, a dry-stone wall and an array of cottage-related plants. William's eye had spotted some Lego characters dotted around this garden, and we both enjoyed searching for more. As we searched, the owner and creator returned and I started to chat to him and asked how he got involved. He simply said, I applied and got selected. I congratulated him on putting together a fine display and left feeling that I wish I could create something like that.



William and I drifted on to find a feature garden nearby that had a Lego wall. Children were busy making and building from a couple of huge boxes of Lego bricks, each then adding their creations to a wall within that garden. I started to think how delightful it was to watch this and it straight away reminded me of the fun children had when visiting our garden open days. Then the penny dropped, what if, I created a garden featuring a train?

A seed was sown. Returning home, I made inquiries with the producers of the event on the best way to apply to create a garden. The Beautiful Borders category is a great starting point for anyone wishing to have a go. I tried to design a functional layout with planting, however, the measurements for these borders were a little restrictive when sizing for large radius curves. At home, our running line is constructed of LGB ready-to-run track. Radius one curves could be used, but for a more realistic approach, I wanted to use large radius curves. Plus, I felt the urge to run live steam! The production team for the show has been very supportive and kind. 'Send us your ideas and let's see how we can fit it to the show'.

Each year, the Beautiful Borders category has a different theme. This year's theme is 'Once Upon a Time' (the story of you). Well, I have a lot of happy memories and stories to tell from my time on the rails, so let's give this garden a railway theme.

Like many fellow railway enthusiasts, my interest with trains and railways began at the end of my Grandparents' garden. They lived in Bromsgrove and at the foot of the world-famous Lickey Incline. Many hours were spent sitting on the fence watching trains go. Little did I know that one day, I would become a professional train driver, driving trains on the other side of that fence.

I became involved as a volunteer with the Severn Valley Railway in the early 1990's, and the railway has been a big part of my life ever since. My first step on the ladder towards becoming an Engine Driver happened in 1995 at the age of 14, when I started at Bewdley station as an Engine Cleaner. And this gave me an idea, to use a step ladder with planting, each rung will represent all the footplate grades I have achieved to become a driver.



The plan!

In 2004, I was very fortunate to be given the opportunity to turn my hobby into a career and to become a main line train driver. To fast forward 21 years, my role today as a main line driving instructor takes me through some wonderful scenery as I carry out my duties. One cannot help but notice the beauty of changing seasons, not to forget the associated colours and flowers. So, how could I put all these ideas into a garden and make it work? My solution is: in two!

Railways, by nature, tend to evolve. My own garden railway experience has done just that. In places, sidings have become loops and track layouts have been redesigned for ease of operation. This garden project has also evolved. Starting life as a Beautiful Borders entry with one raised bed, it's been recategorized as a feature garden with two raised beds. Using large radius curves, each bed has been resized to measure 4.5 meters wide by 7.5 meters long.

The first raised bed will have larger 'real world' planting with railway station, yard and a section of narrow-gauge track, a nod to the 75th Anniversary of the heritage railway preservation movement, which started with Tallylyn Railway in Wales. Without Tom Rolt starting things off in Wales, we would not have the preservation movement we have today.



Assembling the framework, and wishing the garden was bigger.



Would you believe these rocks are fibreglass?



Louise and I met up with the BBC team at the NEC, visited the site and it is huge!

Thus, the rolling stock to be used will be narrow gauge outline. The second raised bed will focus on smaller foliage, dwarf and miniature planting to complement the scale of 16mm and garden railway.

I wanted to give visitors the opportunity to drive the trains for a small fee, with funds raised being directed to charity. To do this, our plot grew a little bit more to add a perimeter. This will provide a walking route for drivers and provide space for a support marquee, a place to brief guests and prepare the locomotives. The overall plot now measures 11 by 15 meters.

Installation for this project is just over a week and with two gardens to build, plus a bit in the middle, my thoughts are to pre-build as much as possible at home. I have started with the same concept for an exhibition layout, using small wooden sections bolted together on site to make a big layout.

By chance, a recent trip to an open garden event at the former BBC Gardeners' World gardens in Kings Heath, Birmingham, resulted in acquiring some fake rocks, which were destined to be thrown out. Made from fibreglass



Concept drawings.

and completely hollow on the inside, these fake rocks are easy to move. Further ideas began to flow on how to make train running entertaining to the viewers. I later scrapped my idea for a duck-under figure of eight, instead designing a separate route with a gradient profile, leaving the main line as flat as possible for ease of running.

To carry the running line between the two raised beds, Simon Davey of Brunel Models has very kindly agreed to build and sponsor a viaduct for the show. This will span the gap of 1.2 meters and will be placed in front of the step ladder. Thank you, Simon! There have been several other offers of help with this project, all of which I will mention in due course. One offer of help, which I simply could not turn down, came straight out of the blue, or should I say green?

In early March, I received a telephone call from the show's Horticultural Director with an incredible offer of help. The charity Green Fingers, who specialise in building gardens for hospices, was looking for a garden project at the show to get involved with. News of a garden railway had caught their attention and they wanted to get on board with the project.

The charity has very kindly offered to source and fund all the plants required for the project. This unbelievable kind gesture was met with much excitement and delight from Louise and me. On the last day of the show (Sunday, June 21st at 4pm), all the plants will be sold off, to help raise some more funds for Green Fingers, I am currently developing two options for anyone wishing to have a go at driving the trains and I will explain more next time as I touch on operations.

Right now, the pressure is on to make this feature garden a showstopper, so I'd better get back to the garden where it's being built. But what name shall I give this garden railway? I'm currently thinking GWR... 'Gardeners' World Railway'!

Gardeners' World Live 18-21 June ■

Garden Rail Resource

Greenfingers Charity
www.greenfingerscharity.org.uk

Brunel Models
www.brunelmodels.co.uk

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Scanning Day at Butterley Garden Railway

Does your club need more members?
Dave Gordon explains how you can 3D print them.

You might look at the title and think that this is a medical article or, if you looked at the pictures first, a 3D printing piece. 3D printing is involved, but it is also a story of our club at Butterley, the people who are members and a nice man called Dean.

We came together to do something that I honestly thought may not be popular with our members and they proved my doubts wrong, being more

committed and enthusiastic than I anticipated they would be. The whole event turned out to be a positive outcome for our club and its members. I like the idea of serendipity, this is a story that starts with a culmination of similar ideas, bubbling around and then converging circumstances, bringing together the ingredients for a wonderful outcome. Sounds like Serendipity to me!

The story starts in 2023. I am generally quite shy, one of five children, and all my siblings are extroverts, which left me with all the introvert genes. I suspect there are quite a few garden railway people who are like me.

On my travels, I had heard that you could get scanned and then that scan could be used to 3D model a figure of yourself. What magical trickery is this, I thought? I also thought it must be eye-wateringly expensive to get this done, but as it turns out, not so.

Another objection in my head was the thought of getting scanned for a 3D print of myself horrified me. If you had said I would also get that scan done at a show, in public, I would have run a mile. However, I did have a yearning to drive my own loco, that prospect seemed exciting enough to overcome my fears.

At the Yorkshire Garden Railway Show, we happened on Dean Punched of Design Scan Print 3D, who was performing this wizardry on a stall for all to see in the middle of the show. On impulse, and with the encouragement and support of good friends (go on, you know you want to), I overcame my shyness and managed to get scanned in the middle of Barrow Hill steam shed, and in front of all the passers-by.

Surprisingly, it was quite painless, involving a few simple steps. i.e. Borrowing a flat cap from Dean's handy costumes department, standing still for a few minutes, while Dean waved something around me. It looked like a car ice scraper, connected to a laptop. "That's it", said Dean, and after a few more minutes, he showed me a picture of me, rotating on the screen in front of us. I was really impressed with the quality of the image and the resemblance. For an introvert it is an uncomfortable sight to see an image of yourself but also, secretly (shh don't tell anyone), quite satisfying at the same time.



Scanned image of Phil Hemmingway,



The 3D-printed and painted version of Phil.



Our resident lumberjack Colin, in a couple of poses, scanned on the day.



The digital display showing some of our figures ready to be printed with the support columns in place for the overhangs. This is what the printer will produce.

My dream of driving my own loco seemed a bit closer. After scanning, Dean has some technical work to do back at base, cleaning up the 3D images and turning them into files, which can successfully be printed on a 3D printer.

After a short wait, I had my model. I was thrilled. The quality of the physical item, although still in plain grey unpainted plastic, was excellent. I tentatively showed my family and they were very impressed. I painted the figure, installed some magnets in the feet and I now rest my elbow on the door of my Roundhouse Lady Anne loco as it travels round the track at Butterley.

Job done, or so I thought. The possibilities of this technology started to give me bigger ideas.

We have a layout (called Llantallog, Mike Riley started it, more of that in a future article) that we take to shows and wouldn't it be nice, I thought, to get all of our regular layout runners scanned and then we could all appear on the layout?

As an existing happy customer, I contacted Dean and asked if we all turned up at a show, could he scan us all. He

surprised me by suggesting he could come to our club and scan not just the layout team but all of the members.

Would our membership go for it, I thought? While we do have some interest in these plastic arts at the club and I thought the members may have the same reservations that I had to get scanned. In hindsight, I need not have worried; they went for it in a big way. It proved to be a great event, enjoyed by all and the end product of ourselves in plastic was much appreciated by all.

We agreed a date and I set about gaining support from the members. There was one request from Dean, the scans would be more interesting if we were not in everyday contemporary clothes. Period costumes would be the order of the day, railway period that is.

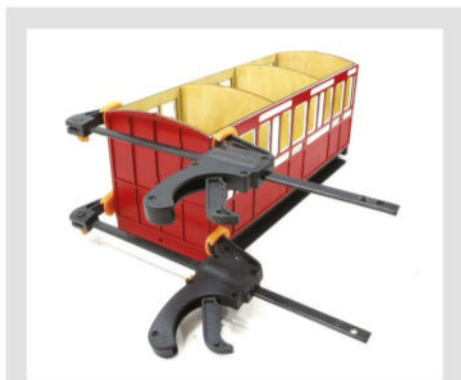
Well, I was not sure how this would go down, but again, I was pleasantly surprised, costumes were not a problem. Signalman, driver, Victorian gent, gardener, engineer, man with axe (don't ask), 1940s people, our members started to reveal the lavish costumes hidden at the back of their

wardrobes. I smiled with some relief; it had started to feel like it was going to be a successful, fun day.

Not all of our members were familiar with the 3D printing or scanning process and we set about publicising the event and letting people know a bit more about what was going to be involved. I was able to reassure members that, based on my personal experiences, it was a painless process, only took a few minutes and you could even sit down on the job if you wanted to. We gradually added people to our list of attendees and as word spread, more people joined in.

It was the big day. Dean arrived and set up his kit. He didn't need any special things from us, a space indoors, just enough room to swing a cat (sorry, ice scraper), power and a supply of tea. All possible at Butterley, apart from the cat.

Refreshments were laid out ready, and members started to arrive in their costumes. It started to feel like a fancy dress party, the atmosphere was fantastic. Our clubroom was a busy place with people chatting, eating and generally having a good time. In some ways, we were like a bunch of people waiting in line for a new injection at the doctors, not knowing what it was going to be like, hoping for the best and nervously comparing notes. I guess with us all doing something different, it created a new energy, and there was much jolly leg pulling and general giddiness as we all took our turns standing or sitting for a few minutes while Dean waved his scanner around us (I am sure there is a more technical term for this). Some people had multiple costumes, or wanted to try different poses and Dean was happy to accommodate this.



We want YOUR projects!

Whatever you are building, Garden Rail readers would like to know about it. Don't be modest, get in touch with the Editor for a chat - details on page 23. Don't forget, we pay for contributions, so you'll have more cash to spend on your hobby!



Some of the Butterley crew waiting at the model station.



100 figures at the Ashover Centenary event.

Some hours later, Dean realised he had treated all the patients, straightened up and took a breather. We gave him a tour of our garden railway at Butterley. We were also able to show off our exhibit that we took to the Ashover Centenary show, featuring over 100 of his figures representing the Birmingham enthusiasts on the last passenger train on that Railway.

Members were able to place orders for their own figures to grace their railways at home. While most of us were interested in 16mm scale figures, some people ordered different scales and ordered 7/8th, G scale or O gauge figures. I am not sure if there is a printer big enough to get a life-size model printed, but if you know there is, please write in and let us know.

As before, some back office technical work was required to refine the images and then, a few weeks later, we were all delighted to receive our physical and digital models. Once you have the digital model, you can print out as many copies as you like

if you have access to a 3D printer. If you have your own printer, you can print out a mirror image to make a slightly different figure. I can narcissistically be both driver and fireman on my Lady Anne and maybe a passenger or two as well. I don't have any current plans to take over the world with clones, but it is a start.

The whole exercise has been a great success and brought an extra dimension to our modelling at Butterley. It brought our members together, doing something fun and a little bit different, we had a wonderful time doing it.

We are now planning to include all our model selves on our layout at Butterley and maybe you can spot a familiar face if you come and visit us? ■

Garden Rail Resource

Design Scan Print 3D
www.designscanprint3d.co.uk

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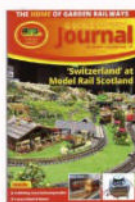
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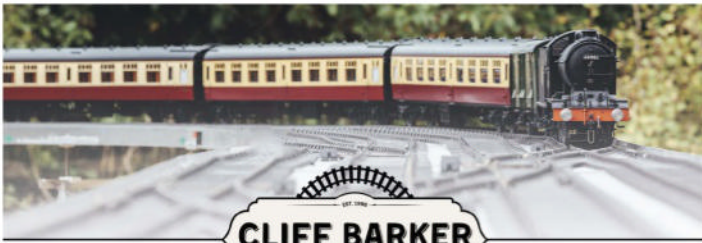
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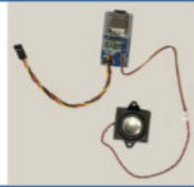
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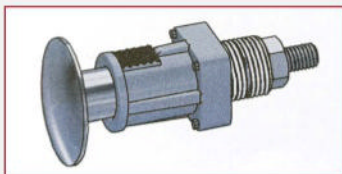


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Slate waste wagon

What do you do during your lunchtime?

Amy and Ben Bucki like to assemble kits for their garden line.

While at the garden railway show at Barrow Hill Roundhouse last summer, we bought the PS Models Estate Shunter loco kit, then spent the following lap of the show looking for a suitable wagon for it to haul. The dinky machine wasn't going to be particularly powerful, and it would look potentially a bit silly with anything more than a couple of light wagons in any case. The vague plan for this impulse-purchase of a loco was for it to just be there as a 'potter around the layout' loco when we were sat outside, rather than anything else, so an odd tipper or flat wagon for it to haul should, we thought, fit the bill.

Browsing back past the stall on a second lap of the show, we spotted the Slate Waste Wagon kit, and thought it looked the part. It would also fit with the 'somewhere in North Wales' theme of our garden line, and is the

sort of item of stock that can just sit at the end of a siding somewhere, providing a bit of visual interest when it's not running.

Wagons such as these are still to be found in a few places in North Wales, their original purposes of being propelled around quarries to have their loads tipped out onto the towering heaps of waste long done. There are a few that have been preserved, in varying conditions (usually rusty). One of the more impressive is preserved as a feature, suspended by cables, over the top of a flooded-out working near the National Slate Museum in Llanberis. We've also come across a few still abandoned, rusting to pieces up in the mountains. The intention with ours was to model one that looked like it was coming to the end of its life in service, kept functional but looking a bit battered.

Duly purchased, the kit was nice and simple, and made to the usual excellent standard of this manufacturer. The 3mm MDF sides make it a little chunky compared to the prototypes, which tended to be sheet metal, but at normal viewing distances, it isn't a problem.

It formed another handy 'lunchtime kit', which is something that can be worked on in little bursts of activity during breaks at work. In the end, we've not done anything to modify this kit, beyond the paint scheme, making it look a little battered, and it nicely looks the part with the Estate Shunter towing it around the line. ■

Garden Rail Resource

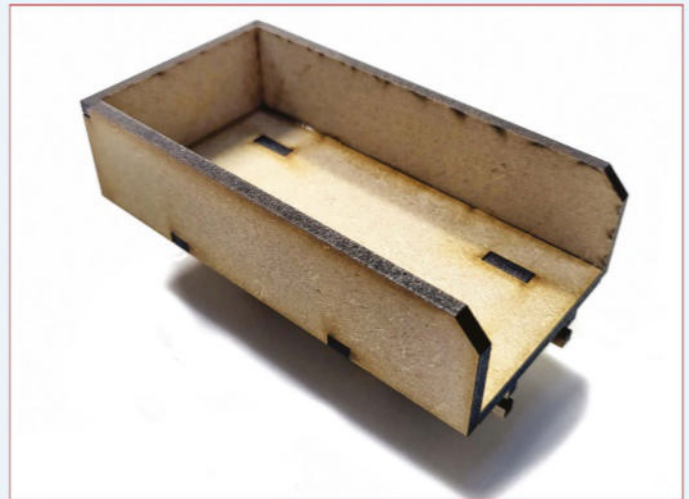
PS Models
www.philsharples.com

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

THE BUILD: STEP-BY-STEP



1 | The main components for what is a simple kit- there are a few more detailing pieces to add afterwards, but it's certainly a nice, quick model to construct.



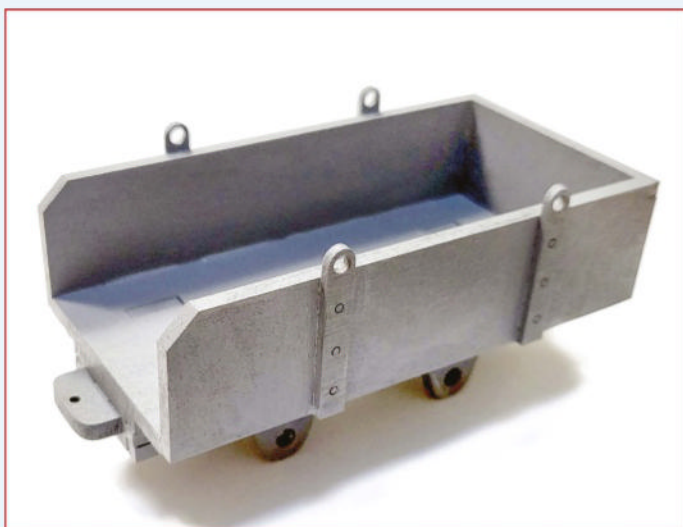
2 | The model was constructed with a combination of PVA and also some reinforcement of the joints with superglue; a bit of belt and braces, perhaps, but done so for both reasons of speed, and because it will be carrying actual rocks, we wanted to make sure it was structurally secure.



3 | The model was constructed without the wheels or bearings fitted, just to make it a bit easier to paint. More superglue was used to make sure the joint for the couplings was nice and strong.



4 | The only relief detail are these straps; we did consider adding some rivets, but the only ones we had to hand were quite large and overpowered the model a bit, so we left them off in the end.



5 | A nice, unassuming livery seemed best for the wagon, so after undercoating, a stippled coat of grey acrylic was added, with a little dry-brushing here and there. After this, the bearings and wheels could finally be fitted.



6 | Weathering involved lots of coats of dry-brushed brown acrylics in various shades added to the wagon. Washes of watered-down blacks, browns, and greys were used, particularly on the bed and chassis, and the wheels were made to look a bit stained with road, dirt and rust.

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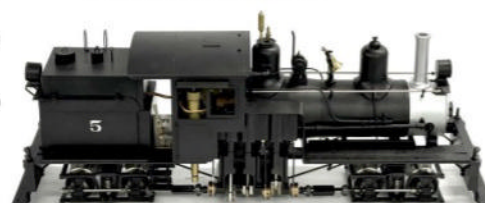
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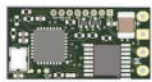
We Understand Model Rail R/C

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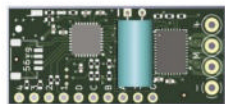
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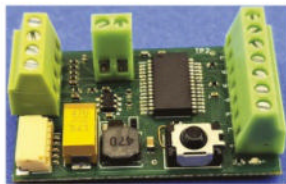


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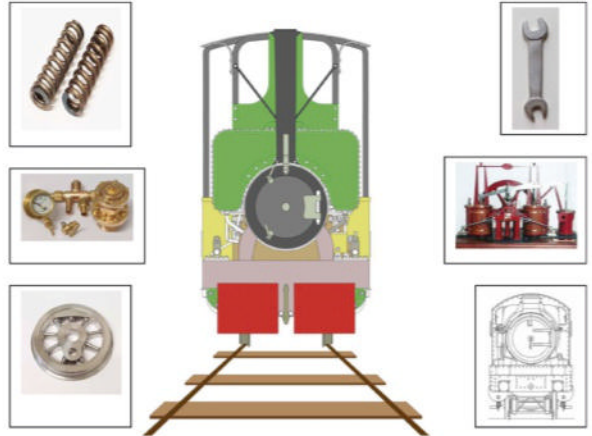


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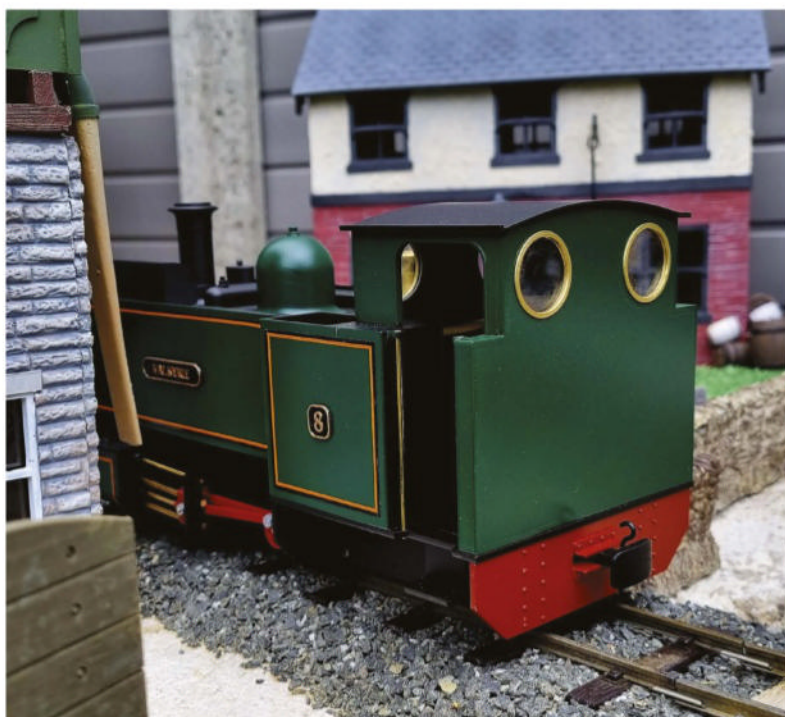


From the Works

Trade information on new products for the garden railway modeller.

If you are a trader with any new product, contact phil.parker@warnersgroup.co.uk.

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



BOOT LANE WORKS

'Valkyre' locomotive kit 16mm scale

Released at Stoneleigh 2026, in loving memory of Peter Binnie, and named after his love of Wagner Opera.

Based on the Vale of Rheidol, Swindon-built locomotives. 'Valkyre' draws inspiration from discussions with Peter and Robert Binnie, and a shared passion for the Vale of Rheidol engines.

The model is available in both 32mm and 45mm gauges, and comes with the option of both 'plate' frames or 'cut-out' frames, depending on the customer's requirements. The 32mm version, with plate frames, will negotiate 30" curves.

The model comes with the standard Boot Lane 3/6v motor, but includes a second gearbox that will accept a MFA 385.

All the usual details are included, along with pre-ripped and detailed bufferbeams and a minimum finish needed for many of the prints.

Details

Price: £215

Website: www.bootlane.org.uk



PS MODELS

Hudswell Clarke Diesel locomotive kit
16mm scale

Inspired by D558, built in 1930 and now preserved at the Apedale Valley Light Railway.

As usual with PS Models products, the kit is complete, bar paint and glue, constructed from a variety of laser-cut and 3D-printed parts, including the exposed engine, along with a small bag of rivet heads, if you would like to add even more detail.

The motor is a high-torque unit with a operating voltage of 1.5v to 6v. Kits come with 24mm wheels, axles, gears and also two AAA battery boxes (fitted underneath the loco) and a slide switch at the rear of the cab, running on 3v with forward control only, although a reverse switch could be fitted. Both 32 and 45mm gauge are accommodated.

Details

Dimensions: Length over couplings: 152mm

Width: 68mm

Price: £45

Website: www.philsharples.com

WOODLEIGH ENGINEERING

W&L Sheep Wagon Kit 16mm scale

The latest of Woodleigh's full-colour 3D-printed kits is the Welshpool's 5-plank sheep wagon. As with the rest of the range, all the builder has to do is superglue the parts together and apply the supplied transfers.

The model can be built to 32 and 45mm gauges, and comes complete with both copper couplings and dumb buffers.

Sheep are not included.

Garden Rail will be reviewing this kit in a future issue.

Details

Price: £35

Website: www.woodleigh-eng.co.uk



PS MODELS

Hudson Box Van kit 16mm scale

Designed on a Hudson-style chassis, this van kit comes with 3D-printed detail. Fitted with 20mm wheels, the model is for 32mm gauge only.

Details

Dimensions: Length: 128mm; Width: 68mm; Height: 130mm

Price: £16

Website: www.philsharples.com



KIPPO MODELS

Abingdon Church 16mm scale

This is the latest 3D-printed building from Kippo, in cleverly smoothed PTEG, so it is suitable to live outside. Easy assembly with all stonework produced in large sections.

Supplied unpainted, the manufacturer recommends Santex masonry paint for finishing.

Details

Dimensions: Height: 75cm; Width: 65cm; Depth: 25cm

Price: £200

Website: www.kippomodelsuk.com

HENDY WORKS

Corris Clerestory Coach No.22

16mm scale

Based on measurements and photographs taken in September 2025, the kit makes into an accurate model of the prototype, with laser-cut plywood, detailed resin prints, and a new innovation for Hendy Works, laser-cut Perspex acrylic windows that make flush glazing straightforward. Beading is 0.6mm fibreboard and 3D-printed PLA roof sections ensure a good fit.

The kit is complete with steel wheels and axles, brass bearings, and a hardware pack that includes brake stands and a works plate, leaving the builder to supply just paint and adhesives.

Full instructions that contain exploded diagrams should help ensure a problem-free build.

Details

Price: £149

Website: hendy-works.sumupstore.com



PETER BINNIE

Lynton & Barnstaple Diamond frame wagon bogie 16mm scale

A pair of Lynton and Barnstaple Diamond frame bogies. 32mm gauge only. Wheels not supplied, but available from the manufacturer.



Details

Price: £12.80

Website: www.peterbinnie.com

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Plate frame Bogie 16mm scale

A pair of freelance plate frame bogies.

Fully compensated 64mm wheelbase. 32mm gauge. Wheels not supplied, but available from the manufacturer.



Details

Price: £12.80

Website: www.peterbinnie.com

H JONES ENGINEERING

Ffestiniog Hearse Van 16mm scale

The FR's hearse van was converted from a Type 2 Quarryman carriage sometime between July 1885 and June 1886. The vehicle is unique in the FR fleet and is evidently a conversion of a quarryman's carriage; however, it also has the oddity of having curved headstocks, which the quarryman carriages did not have.

The kit comprises of laser-cut plywood parts for the main body and the frames are a FDM 3D print. The urns in each corner of the roof are resin 3D prints, reinforced with a metal rod.

Running gear is standard Binnie wheels, with steel axles and a set of custom CNC-machined brass bearings. 32mm gauge only.



BRANDBRIGHT

Chassis for Bachmann 'Thomas' wagons Gauge 3

This kit builds into a 9ft wheelbase chassis that fits directly to the body of an open wagon or van from the 45mm gauge Bachmann 'Thomas' range.

Formed from laser-cut plywood, with laser-cut steel W irons, turned steel wheels, brass bearings and cast whitmetal axleboxes and detailing parts, the chassis is 100mm wide and 220mm long over the headstocks.

Not included are couplings or buffers – the RSA39 and RSA44 parts from the Brandbright range are suitable.

Details

Price: £72

Website: www.brandbright.co.uk

Details

Dimensions: Length: 154mm; Width: 79mm; Height: 105mm

Prices: Plastic wheels: £39.95; Steel wheels: £46.95

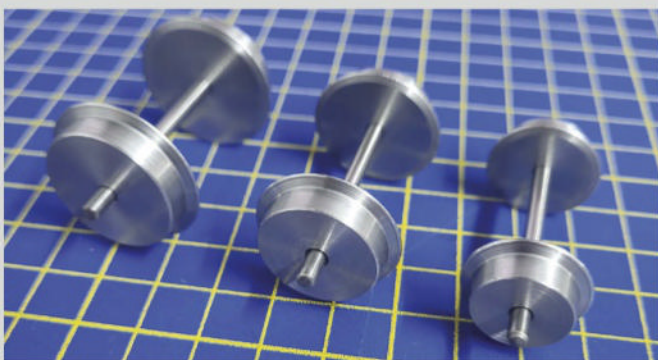
Website: www.hjonesengineering.com

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Details

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Website: www.hjonesengineering.com



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 little lubrication



I loved Mark Thatcher's article 'A Little Lubrication' in last November's issue, and thought one must make one for the bar in our community pub, The Crown, in Arford. It took me a little while to find the kit used in the article, Prior Locoworks Keepings Express Mobile Pub Kit, as it appears they are manufactured in batches. However, with the Editor's help, I secured one.

I promised to send in photos of my version, before I gave it to my local for Christmas. If you are ever near Arford, pop into The Crown for a pint and to see it.

This is a basic kit, but great fun. I would like to thank SLR Models for a few bits and pieces, and the signs used to complete my model.

Ian Harper



Editor: If the drinks being poured on your model are representative of those from The Crown, I'm not so sure...



14xx Winner

I was overjoyed to win the Silvercrest engine, and I am looking forward to running it at a Gauge 3 Society event.

As a retired vicar, living in Suffolk, who models in SM32 normally, I am very tempted to build some Gauge 3 stock to run behind this engine. I have found a drawing for an auto coach, which would look very good!

Nigel Lacey

Size Matters

In the May edition, Mark Thatcher says the Bole Laser Craft DHR loco chassis measures 900mm long - just over 3ft. Quite large for a 16mm loco!

Peter Bleasdale

Editor: Oops! Mark has measured again, and it is actually 230mm. Far more sensible.

Circles within Circles

It is now a year since I ventured into garden railways. The catalysts were, I suppose, threefold: firstly, the fine summer that we enjoyed and the desire to do some modelling – but not indoors; secondly, seeing a garden railway in action in a nearby village open weekend; and finally, a free copy of *Garden Rail*, bundled with other railway magazines, and purchased for holiday reading.

It was the latter that has prompted me to write this letter. As friends and fellow enthusiasts experimented with how to add more interest to a 32mm gauge garden layout for a 16mm Association steaming session, I realised that the two circles that we were playing with were reminiscent of the two circles which appeared in that edition of *Garden Rail*, the demonstration layout at the national exhibition. It is this openness and a flexible approach that prompts me to share our experience with other readers.



The tracks were set on some convenient decking, both were 45mm gauge. The outer one made with metal rails for a power supply through the rails to enable LGB running and the inner one a plastic track set up as a kind of Inglenook shunting puzzle.

The results were pleasing, as between the three of us, we had 32mm and 45mm gauge 16mm to the foot locos and also 45mm gauge LGB locos. I think that it is this variety and interest in anything trains that gives a real strength and depth to the hobby.

I enjoyed the video of the 'Olive Branch Tramway' very much and I am sure that I will return to it many times. What I would say to anyone thinking about garden railways is that, yes, live steam is a

really attractive feature of garden railways, but there are plenty of battery-powered locomotives and, of course, you can always rely upon putting a moderate electrical current through the rails. The former are certainly available in 'ready to run' and kit form and are a really good way of 'getting into' the hobby and having fun - at a fraction of the price of 'live steamers'.

I'm off to see a real coal-fired Gauge 3 Black Five soon. Vive la Difference!

Martin Hopkins

Editor: I'm pleased that you felt inspired by an issue of this magazine; it's what we are all about! And don't worry, Garden Rail will always welcome all types of modelling, from the cheapest to the sort that makes your wallet hurt.

Mike Dockery models

Please do whatever you can to serialise Mike Dockery's marvellous engines!

I'm sure you are aware of his 'shed', but it is unsurpassed in width of imagination!

Over the years, I have had brief conversations with the man, but nothing has slaked my thirst. It would be true to say there is nothing like it.

Andy Hobden

Editor: We have asked Dave Pinnigar to see what he can do. I'm sure you and I aren't the only ones who would enjoy reading more.



Seen at the Midlands Garden Rail Show

A few interesting sights from the Warwick show.



A busy day at the Parkway café.



On the Leamington & Warwick MRS stand, a 3D-printed, fully working Gauge 1 'Elephant'.



Brunel Models stunning Gauge 3 model of Ross-on-Wye station.

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R**

Our latest 'Layout in a Day', along with news from the National Garden Railway Show.

Also, in our **JULY** issue:

- 'Cyclops' – a 16mm scale De Winton
- A clockwork garden railway
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We have LGB representatives present on both days to talk to our customers and answer questions along with an LGB and a general sale across the shop on most of our brands. 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 event.

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