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OCTOBER 2026
ISSUE 386

Rail

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View from the end of the Platform

TEMPORARY ARRANGEMENTS

Neither of our two layouts in this issue exists. At least, they don't exist any more. We lead with the amazing display from the BBC Gardeners' World show this year, by designer and builder Andy Christie. It's fair to say that while the layout might have only been temporary, the materials weren't exactly the sort you fill the back of a van with and put together in a couple of hours. At this level, show gardens take time and effort, but when 60,000 people are turning up for a visit, you can't skimp.

No less astounding, is Forest of Glee by Graham Arnold. A garden, complete with flowers, in November? In Scotland? That's what we call a challenge – but the results are beautiful.

Both schemes offer ideas for those attempting something more permanent, which is why I'm sure you will be interested. There are so many different ways to build a garden line, from throwing a load of track on the lawn, to putting tons of hard landscaping into place.

How you do it doesn't matter, just have a go. And then send me some photos. I'm already looking at 2027's issues (did someone mention Christmas?), and will need some layout articles plus 'Postcards from...' features. If you can wield a camera (a good mobile phone will do) and type a few words, then I'm keen to



hear from you. Don't be modest, there will always be someone who will find inspiration in your efforts. Don't forget, we pay for contributions too...

***Merlin update:** Last time I mentioned that I'd managed to set fire to the wiring in my Merlin Mayflower. Well, out of curiosity, I switched it on, and it worked! I have no idea how, the wires to the servo are black and crispy, but I've decided, if it ain't broke, I'm not going to try fixing it!*

Phil Parker, Editor



With the drought in full force, our club decided to have a steaming session, with no steam locos. It's just as fun running battery electrics, and you don't end up with oily fingers. The loco you see in the photo is 'Greenly', a kit by the Gauge 1 Association. We have one, and start building it next month.

Publisher: Steve Cole

E: stevec@warnersgroup.co.uk

Editor: Phil Parker

E: phil.parker@warnersgroup.co.uk

T: 07879 664 383

Advertising: Sarah Jarman

E: sarah.jarman@warnersgroup.co.uk T: 01778 392055

Advertising Designer: Amie Carter

E: amiec@warnersgroup.co.uk

Designer: Dan Jarman

E: danjarmandesign@gmail.com

Production Executive: Allison Mould

E: allison.mould@warnersgroup.co.uk T: 01778 395002

Contributors: Graham Arnold, Ben and Amy Bucki, Andrew Christie, Sean Cullen, Henry Pearsall, Rex Mounfield, Mark Thatcher

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Building the BBC Gardeners' World Railway

Andrew Christie takes us behind the scenes at probably the most visited garden line this year.

For as long as I can remember, I have always enjoyed making and building things. From bars to retaining walls, from wooden seating to garden sheds, I receive a great sense of joy being creative. It's not every day you get accepted to build a garden for an internationally recognised flower show, and it's not every day you get the chance to combine not one, not two, not three, but four interests! My ever-growing love for gardening has come from sourcing suitable plants to go on the lineside that complement the scale of the trains passing by. Here was a wonderful opportunity to get creative, involve some charming plants and of course, play trains.

Supported by my loving wife Louise and a few close friends, we created something very special. In just eight days, we turned an area of car park into a completely functional garden railway with two raised beds, reflecting two styles of planting. However, it didn't all go to plan.

At the time, I possibly felt too exhausted to reflect on the daily progress as there was simply so much going on. I knew it was going to be good but I had to remain focused on getting it right. Some days felt slow with no progress and other days gave huge leaps to the next stage. One eye was always being kept on the job in hand with the other looking ahead to solve the next puzzle, I felt like a true navy.

From build-up, you are straight into press day, where your garden is judged and graded. Then, four days of being open to the public after which is another few days of take-down. It's a complete time warp. I have never known three weeks pass by so quickly, possibly because it's been secretly great fun!



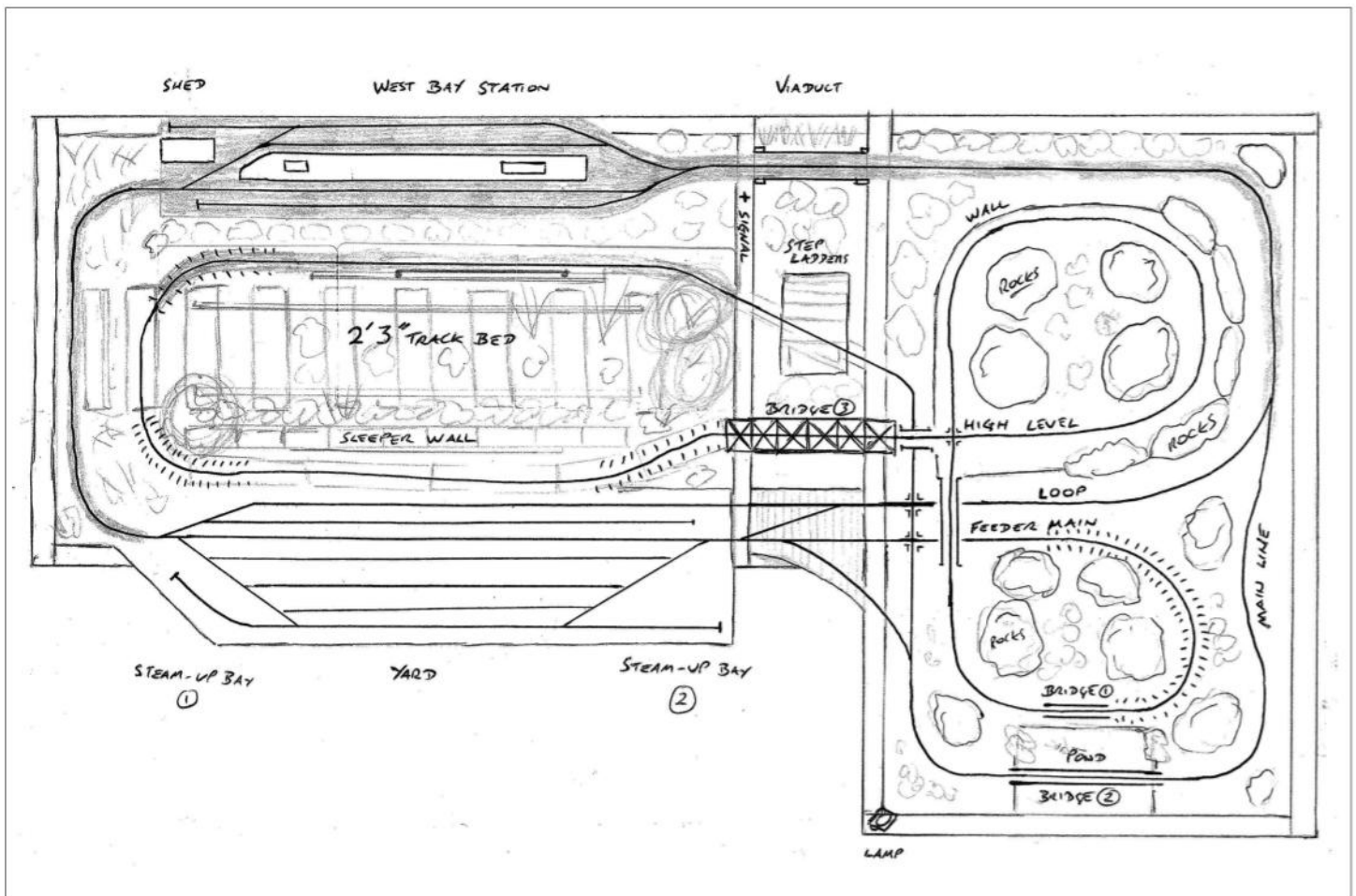
A break in the last days of construction. From Left to right: Neil Sewell (Greenfingers), Dave Beaman (Severn Valley Railway), Louise Christie, Andrew Christie, Simon Clough (Biggest Little Railway), Editor Phil, Gary Webb (Former Head Gardener, National Trust)



An overall view of the layout, at a relatively quiet time during the show.

There are many elements to the production BBC Gardeners' World live and what you see on television or in person at the show is only the icing on an incredible, multi layered cake. I have always appreciated, and have taken an interest in the behind the scenes, seeing it for real was secretly a joy but also a wake up call. There are professionals with their big budgets, garden designers, landscape designers, contractors, mini diggers and power tools. Here's me with a friend called Dave, a hire van full of wood, half a sandwich and a battery drill. This was going to be tough.

My thoughts were to be as organised as possible with the track bed being made in bolt together sections in the same way as exhibition layouts do. Infill and planting would then be inserted into the beds. Before my first day on site, I had already collected most of features



Our Brunel Models viaduct (Photo: Richard Bratby)

for the layout such as wooden fencing to represent where my interests in trains began at the end of my grandmother's garden. Matthew from Garden Railway Specialists had kindly sponsored 40 full size railway sleepers. These were to create a centrepiece in the lineside raised bed. A sleeper wall was built to hold an enamel sign on one side, the other side overlooked a section of 2'3" track. This represented the 75th anniversary of the heritage movement which as we all know, started at the Tallylyn Railway.

Several fake rocks were collected from a charity garden in Kings Heath, Birmingham. These were of foam construction, with a fibreglass coating, painted to resemble the real thing. Heads turned in disbelief as these huge rocks were being carried by one person. They truly did look the part.

Finer items collected included girder bridges from Chris at Blackcat Bridges, and a wonderful viaduct built by Simon of Brunel Models. Based on the Chelfham Viaduct design, it was critical that the two raised beds were built to allow this to slot in. As I arrived on site, to my horror, an empty car park awaited me and my good friend Dave Beaman. This may have been a blessing though. To shift a raised bed would have been hard work. I had hoped by this time, these would be ready and waiting for our arrival,

and this pushed us back by a good day.

The exhibition's ground construction crew, Paul and Jordan, soon arrived, but the drawings for the raised beds that I had submitted with dimensions were missing. Both have spent many years on builds but hadn't dealt with a garden railway. After explaining the some pre-made internal dimensions of 4.5 and 7.5 meters, I presented them with the viaduct. All became instantly clear and they were genuinely excited to be building raised beds for a garden railway.

Our plot was closest to the visitor's car entrance, which was far away from the main collective of show gardens. Although being distant from everyone else, this turned out to be a bit of a blessing as we weren't being trampled on or caught up in some of the other dramas unfolding on site. Another showcase garden was flooded out when a mini digger went through a water main! Our free space all allowed us to lay out my pre-formed sections on the empty car park and easily add them to the raised bed. That said, what I did not take into account was the run-off of the car park surface for drainage. This called for a bit of re-thinking.

I had designed the track bed to have a buried timber frame so plants could be easily planted in the pots in readiness for the big Sunday sell-off. Also, one running line would be level throughout to allow manual locomotives to operate. With a bit of head scratching, some choice words and a lot of packing, we resolved this issue to make the line level. This gave another blessing as the bridge crossing the



The flatter end of the layout, laid with wildflower turf.



Fake rocks, a lot easier to handle than the real thing!



As I prepare the next train, 'Louise' storms up the gradient towards the rock garden. This bit challenged the drivers!

water feature was now better shown.

When designing the running line, I wanted something more than a plain circle as seeing the same train go round to on lookers would become boring. I included a spur from the main line, which led to another loop around the garden in reverse. This line passed through a set of wooden step ladders. Each rung represented a grade I had achieved over many years to become an Engine Driver. The line continued around the garden and faced its first challenge. After all, I wanted a layout to drive!

The extended line ran around the section of 2'3" track and entered a hill climb. Drivers were required to get enough speed up by this point otherwise, they simply would not make it for the up and over. By late Saturday afternoon, this section of line needed cleaning due to oil and grease deposits causing low adhesion. A quick



Richard's Darjeeling B Class crosses our water feature.

scrub with a fine emery cloth and trains were once again flying up the bank. This section of line was also home to our golden spike moment and was later presented to Editor Phil, as a thank you for his assistance.

Reaching the high level, an LGB girder bridge marked the summit. It soon became a challenge for drivers to shut off steam in good time to firstly not go over speed around the high level and secondly, not to collide with any other trains! Shortly after leaving the bridge, a 90-degree cross over was in place to direct the high level towards

the falling gradient back down to meet the main line.

A clever arrangement of point work allowed access to a fiddle and preparation yard. This provided several through sidings, one dead-end siding and a couple of steaming bays. The yard layout worked perfectly providing safe space for storage and preparation. Richard from Footplate had kindly sponsored a large quantity of G scale track, however to finish the build, it was necessary to lift several points and a few more curves from the Olive Branch



Louise and I with the Gold award certificate.



We encouraged guest drivers, Sue Kent from Gardeners World didn't expect to be operating a steam engine when she arrived on the stand.



The gradient needed regular cleaning as oily track isn't conducive to adhesion.

Tramway at home. To complete the running line, West Bay station was transported to site after our garden open day. This event landed on the Sunday in the middle of the build, but Louise and I had already signed up to opening our garden gate for charity.

Operation was key for this garden railway as it was a must to keep trains running for the ever changing crowds. When a steam loco was coming to the end of its session, a quick nod to the yard and a battery loco and train would be turned out on to the main line as the steam rolled in. This system worked perfectly for the entire running of the show.

One regret I have is that I did not measure the finished length of the running line. However, I estimate this would have in the region of 80 meters or 262ft for a single loop around the garden. Add to this

passing loops, sidings and track within the fiddle yards, its becomes quite a sizeable train set!

During the early stages of planning, producers of the show asked if we would be willing to team up with Greenfingers, a charity which creates gardens for children's hospices and hospital around the UK. Louise and I felt very humbled to be asked to support such a wonderful charity. Joining forces meant that our plant list would be sourced and funded by the charity. They would also provide volunteers! This was indeed a great help given the size of our plot.

Our plant order was set to arrive with the main bulk delivery for the supplier's trade stand at the show. It wasn't until early afternoon on Monday that four wrapped trollies arrived with us. This gave us just a day and a half to plant! A large amount of wildflower turf had already been installed around the narrow-gauge track by this time and was looking fantastic, although there was still a lot to do.

During the unpacking, it became clear that half of the order was missing. Items such as long grasses and other varieties of alpines were not included. Neil, our enthusiastic main man from Greenfingers, went quickly in search of our supplier and returned with the quote, 'it's all blank faces over there, this is what we've got'.

What happened next was pure wisdom and creativity. My wife Louise set to work and did an amazing job. Quick thinking divided the alpine and small plant raised bed in half.



Even influencers couldn't escape our efforts to spread the word about little steam engines!



NGW magazine editor Andrew Charman brought his family along, and daughter Megan brought some cakes.



Several firms generously sponsored the garden.

By planting all the alpines and ferns together, this left the water feature with pond plants to be surrounded by roses which we had been sent in abundance. This showed instantly how garden railways can fit in and around normal size plants. Our water feature looked fantastic and gave a very homely feel.

Judgement Day: Before the show opens to the public, each garden assessed and graded. Starting a bronze, the awards rise to silver, silver merit, gold and the top award is platinum. Surrounded by several sponsors and volunteers, a collective of judges arrived late afternoon on Wednesday 17th June. After a brief meet and greet, the judges were shown our creation. To be very honest, I felt that some of my explanation behind my design was a little lost on the judges as their focus was rightly on the horticultural side although a few were

taken by the engineering involved with our garden.

As the judges departed, I saw smiles on the faces of our guests and sponsors. I felt that we had done them proud. At 6pm that same evening, Louise, Dave and I attended the floral marquee to receive our grade. Comforted by a small glass of fizz, we chatted with other fellow gardeners and production the ground team. The marquee was full of atmosphere and then our grades arrived. One by one, each garden was awarded. It was then our turn.... 'Trains In the Garden' – GOLD!

Tears of joy rolled when we returned to share news to our team of volunteers and sponsors. Handshakes and hugs flowed in plenty. To enter as a beautiful border, then to be bumped up to a showcase garden, to be a first-time entrant at a internationally recognised event, this was all a truly amazing achievement. Perhaps at the time, I didn't realise the size of our achievement. I was simply grateful to be enjoying a hobby with great friends and family. I will be forever grateful to all involved along the way and I am deeply grateful to my wife Louise for creating a rich and fabulous display of colour through the power of plants.

Hopefully our efforts will be enough to raise awareness of the Greenfingers charity and, to inspire the next generation of enthusiasts to give it a go...? I certainly spoke to several



The flat crossing worked well, as long as the drivers paid attention.

visitors during the show that now wanted to explore taking trains outside. I also spoke with some who had no plans to visit the show but after seeing it on television, they wanted to see the display in the flesh. To me, this made all our hard work and time worthwhile.

Would I do it again? Yes. To enjoy working with a such a group of like mind and talented volunteers was a truly rewarding experience, one I shall forever remember. Thank you, team! ■

Enjoy a trip around the line: www.youtube.com/watch?v=JSZN3qHqC0s&t=16s

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Phil's railmotor, and my loco, 'Louise' in West Bay station. (Photo: Hannah Benson)

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Time to get into the tub

Mark Thatcher builds a pair of coal tubs from Bole Laser Craft.

When building the Nantmoor wooden halt station kit from Bole Laser Craft in last months' issue, I could not help but think a couple of coal tubs would bring something to the scene as they would be just the kind of rolling stock you might find loitering around towards the end of the buffer stop of a little-used station. OK, there was some modeller's licence going on there as the station is meant to be a through station, but it still sort of works.

I can never seem to acquire enough tubs. I take the view that on any estate railway, tubs would carry more than just coal, they would probably have been employed to carry all sorts of mixed goods. Indeed, they would have been pressed into service to do this on any small railway with limited funds and with an even more limited budget. These are very flexible little kits, and I also hope, in time, to add a few more to make up a longer mixed-goods rake. ■

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Bole Laser Craft
www.bolelascraft.com

16mm Coal tub kit
 Kit with 20mm nylon wheels: £30.00
 Kit with 20mm steel wheels: £36.00

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THE BUILD: STEP-BY-STEP



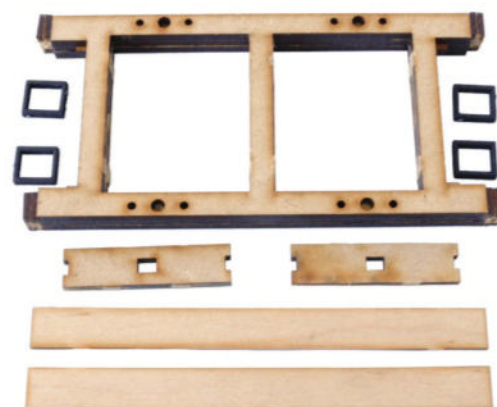
1 For a small wagon, there is a lot of detail going on in this kit. However, I took this photo prior to commencing the build, and when I did so, I noticed that BLC had included a second fret for the sides and ends of the tub, which was surplus to requirements. If you look at the photo you can see the two bottom frets are identical and you only need one. I suspect your kit will probably only include one fret, which would be correct.



3 To add a little more clarity to the last photo, the four square wooden buffer end pieces which were not shown there are on fret A in this photo. If you are using these, then I would advise you using a Stanley knife or similar to make a solid clean cut before you remove them from the fret to stop these parts delaminating. You also have a choice of two hooks, or if you want to fashion your own arrangement then buffer beams without any holes for the hooks are also included, shown on the lower left here.



5 The final step is to glue the two solebars into place on the chassis. If you have constructed your chassis sandwich correctly, and view it from the top as in this photo, no holes should be visible on the top section of the chassis. From underneath all the holes should be visible to allow you to locate and screw the axle boxes into place.



2 The basic chassis is a three-layer sandwich with four hollow square nylon buffer strapping pieces to be added to the dumb buffers. Depending on the coupling arrangement you choose to model, you can either add the square wooden buffer ends firstly, and then the strapping, or cut the lug off the end of the buffers to reduce any chance of buffer lock on tight radius curves. If you do so, so won't need the strapping detail.



4 The three layer chassis sandwich is now made up. There is an order that these layers go together, so please refer to the instructions. The chassis layer without any holes in it goes at the bottom, followed by the part with eight smaller holes in it (these are the holes for the axle box screws), followed by the top section which has four more larger holes for the spigot on the axle boxes to locate into.



6 Nylon strapping detail is included. These locate into pre-drilled holes in the sides and ends of the tub. The instructions mention running a 3mm drill to clear the holes out if necessary, but I found it quicker just to use a tapered reamer to open up these holes on the outside surface of the sides and ends. Then it was a simple job just to push the strapping into place. No glue was needed as they were a good push-fit!

THE BUILD: STEP-BY-STEP



7 I found it easier to build up the body by adding the ends firstly, then slotting one side into place, followed by the tub floor. This ensured the body stayed square and true. The sides have tabs which locate into matching recesses on the ends.



8 Then when the previous sub-assembly was dry, I added the second side of the tub body. It was a little overkill to clamp the body whilst the glue set, as the fit of the sides and ends was very good, but I always like to compress any joints to ensure the glue is firmly in contact with what it is gluing together.



9 As I said in my preamble, I think these tubs are flexible enough to accommodate more than just a loose coal load. I used coal sacks from Woodleigh Engineering to demonstrate this. Five sacks were the magic number here to fill up the tub. I went for a dark oak wood stain from Coach and Wagon works for this tub also.



10 I populated my second tub with some small conical milk churns which I had 3D-printed. Again, I lucked out in the pack-n-stack department as eleven of my churns dropped in perfectly. I also got my black Sharpie pen out to highlight any joins in the wooden planking prior to adding the body strapping. C&WW light teak stain was used to stain this second tub to make it look a little different.



11 I left adding the axle boxes and wheelsets until last as I did not want the tub to roll around whilst adding the loads. BLC provide a handy jig in this kit to set the gauge of the wheels, so it is pretty simple to do. Then each axle box locates on a central spigot to the underside of the chassis, and these axle boxes are held in place with two screws each.



12 You can clearly see the difference between the C&WW Old Oak and Light Teak stains used on these two tubs. Both were varnished over later with Army Painter matt varnish.



Building the LGB wagon kit

Some used to say that *Garden Rail* was full of plastic LGB models. That was never really true, but now we have a wooden kit from the firm, and the **Editor** has a look.

“**W**here did that come from?”, was my first reaction on spotting that LGB, well known for high-quality RTR, had included a laser-cut kit in their new announcements. This is a really left-field move from the firm, so of course, I wanted to build the model.

Opening the box, it's an interesting project. Not one that will occupy a lot of modelling time either as it turns out. A pleasant evening complete with tea and cake break, will see you with an addition to your G scale wagon fleet.

The most important point is that the chassis is pure LGB. Clip the bits together, and the result is no different from any other wagon from the company. That's both a smart move for the manufacturer as they

don't need to tool up for special parts, and for the modeller, who is pretty much guaranteed a running model.

Laser-cutting the body is also good for manufacturers. We see this a lot in the small-scale modelling world, where all sorts of companies are using the technology for short-run projects. No need to keep piles of components on the shelf, just cut the kits on demand. I'd guess that as this is a toe-in-the-water for LGB, that sort of thinking will have played a part.

The end result though, is a pretty perfect wagon for the new kit builder. You can assemble the parts without glue, so it's more of a simple 3D jigsaw than anything else. Long-term 16mm fans will remember Brian Dominic, who used to

hand people a simple glue-free tub kit to build from his demo stand. After a few minutes, the visitor was holding a wagon they had built, and thinking maybe they could have a crack at this kit building lark.

I think this wagon is a winner. The result is nice and sturdy, assembly isn't hard, and you still get the happy feeling watching it run around your line of, “I built that.” ■

Garden Rail Resource

LGB
www.lgb.com

41035 High-Side Gondola: 49.99 € (RRP)

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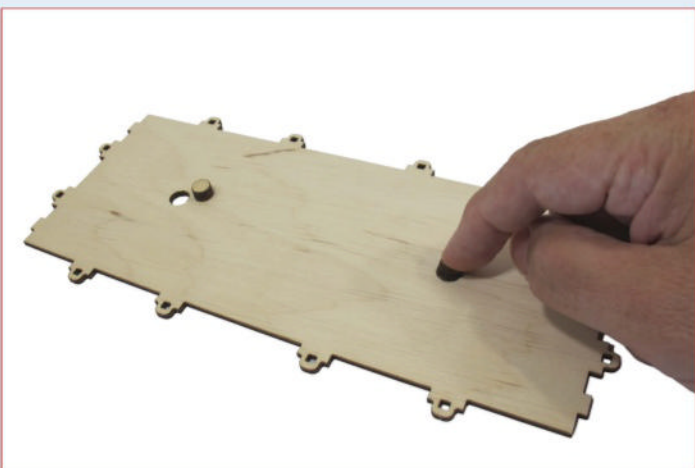
THE BUILD: STEP-BY-STEP



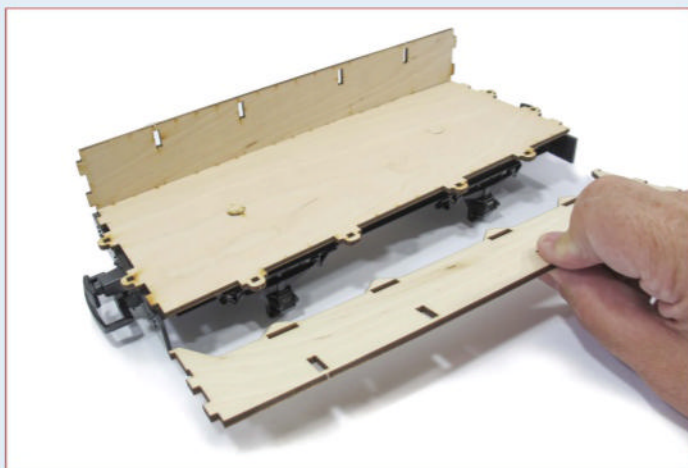
1 | Open the box, and you find all the parts for a standard, long-wheelbase LGB chassis, and laser cut wooden sheets to build the body. You'll notice a couple of circular bits. Don't lose them, they are important, even if it's not obvious at this stage.



2 | Brain on. The swivelling units that hold the wheels have to be threaded through the chassis, and it's not hard to put them in upside down. Trust me on this. Once these are in, decorative centre buffers push into the beam.



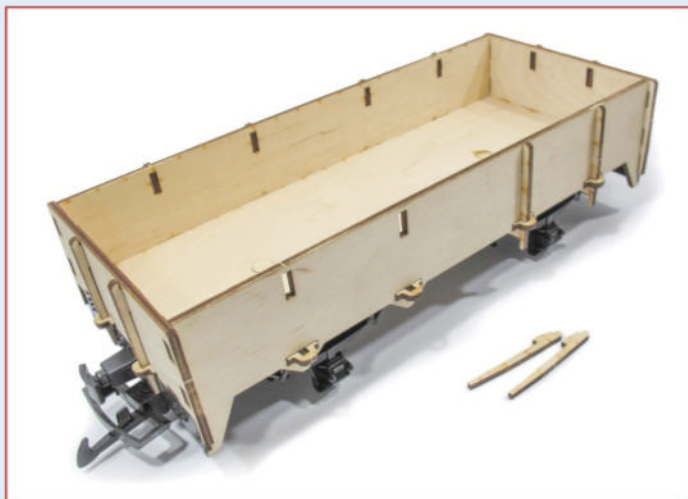
3 | Those round parts push into the floor and are the pivots for the swivelling units. They need to be flush with the upper surface of the floor, and are a reasonably tight fit. A touch of glue won't hurt, but isn't essential.



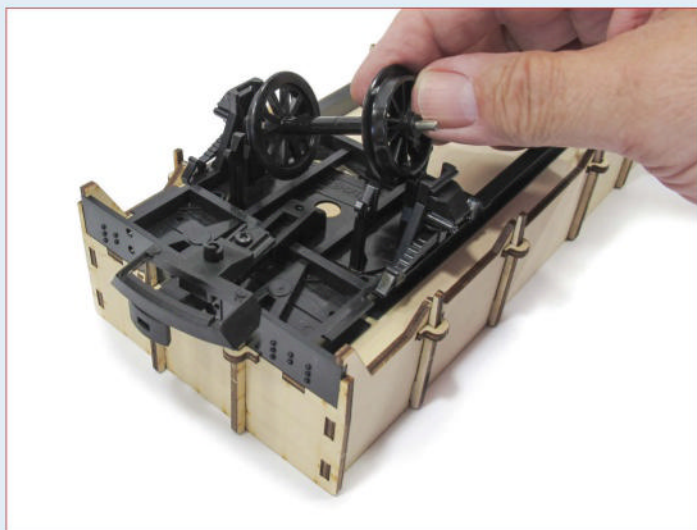
4 | Both sides slide over the projections on the floor. You can actually build the entire model without any glue, clever design means it just locks together.



5 | The ends fit in the same way as the sides. A little bit more of a fiddle is needed to line everything up, but no sanding or trimming.



6 | Now for the clever bit. These uprights lock the sides and ends in place, fixing the whole wagon together. A couple of spares are provided, although I didn't break any, it is very possible.



7 Finally, the wheels are slipped into the W-iron units. Couplings are fitted already, but if you want a hook on both ends, a spare is in the box.



8 Half an hour's work, and we have a perfectly good G scale wagon. Essentially, it's a bit of standard LGB rolling stock, just with a wooden body.



9 Those plan sides bugged me, so I took the body apart, and scribed some plank lines along them. If you were keen, adding a centre door wouldn't be out of the question with a little scratchbuilding.



10 In the instructions, it is mentioned that running this wagon in the rain is a bad idea. Not a problem, a quick coat of sanding sealer will protect the wood, and allow it to be sanded really smooth.



11 Being too lazy to mask the underframe, I hand painted the wagon with a couple of acrylic coats using paint from the Railmatch range.



12 The finishing touch is a set of home-printed Garden Rail transfers. Since it's unlikely that LGB will produce a wagon for us, this is the next best thing.

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Venue: Portland College, Nottingham Rd, Harlow Wood, Mansfield, NG18 4TJ

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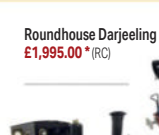
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‘Sir Haydn’

The Editor enlists the help of a Talyllyn expert to assess this 16mm scale model of TR Number 3.

The locomotive we now know as ‘Sir Haydn’ was built by Hughes’s Locomotive & Tramway Engine Works in 1878 for the Corris Railway. Originally an 0-4-0, by 1900, it had gained a trailing pony truck to improve riding. The history then becomes complicated, as around 1921, the line combined the parts from three locomotives, to produce a single working one. No one is sure which parts were used, but it’s safe to say that the current loco is not what originally came out of the factory!

The GWR purchased the Corris line in 1929, locos 1 and 2 being scrapped before this. Had the local MP, Sir Henry Haydn Jones, not leased Aberllefenni Quarry, the chances are the line would have been lost,

along with the remaining motive power.

Fortunately, the line lasted long enough to be taken over by British Railways, from whom the fledgling preserved Talyllyn Railway purchased the two remaining Corris locos for £25 each. No.3 was named ‘Sir Haydn’ after the man who had done so much to see it survive.

‘Sir Haydn’ was the better of the two, and became the first new locomotive to work on the Talyllyn for over 85 years. The original cab, which only had an opening on the right-hand side, was replaced in the 1960s with a cab that was shorter and had openings on both sides, further modifications followed over the subsequent years. It is in late Corris/early Talyllyn form that the model appears.

The model: First impressions

‘Sir Haydn’ has been produced for Maxitrak by Accucraft, as an exclusive, and they have been heavily involved in its development. We are looking at the final pre-production model, which Maxitrak consider good enough to authorise production.

To help me take a proper look at the model, I enlisted my friend, Keith. A long-time volunteer at the Talyllyn, he knows all the locos inside out, partly through being a man with the spanners during the overhauls, and also a regular on the footplate. He’s also got a ‘Sir Haydn’ on order, so would a test with this model make him regret it?

Extracting the model from the box, you are taken by just how detailed it is. The safety valves on top caught my eye, and

'Sir Haydn' Specifications

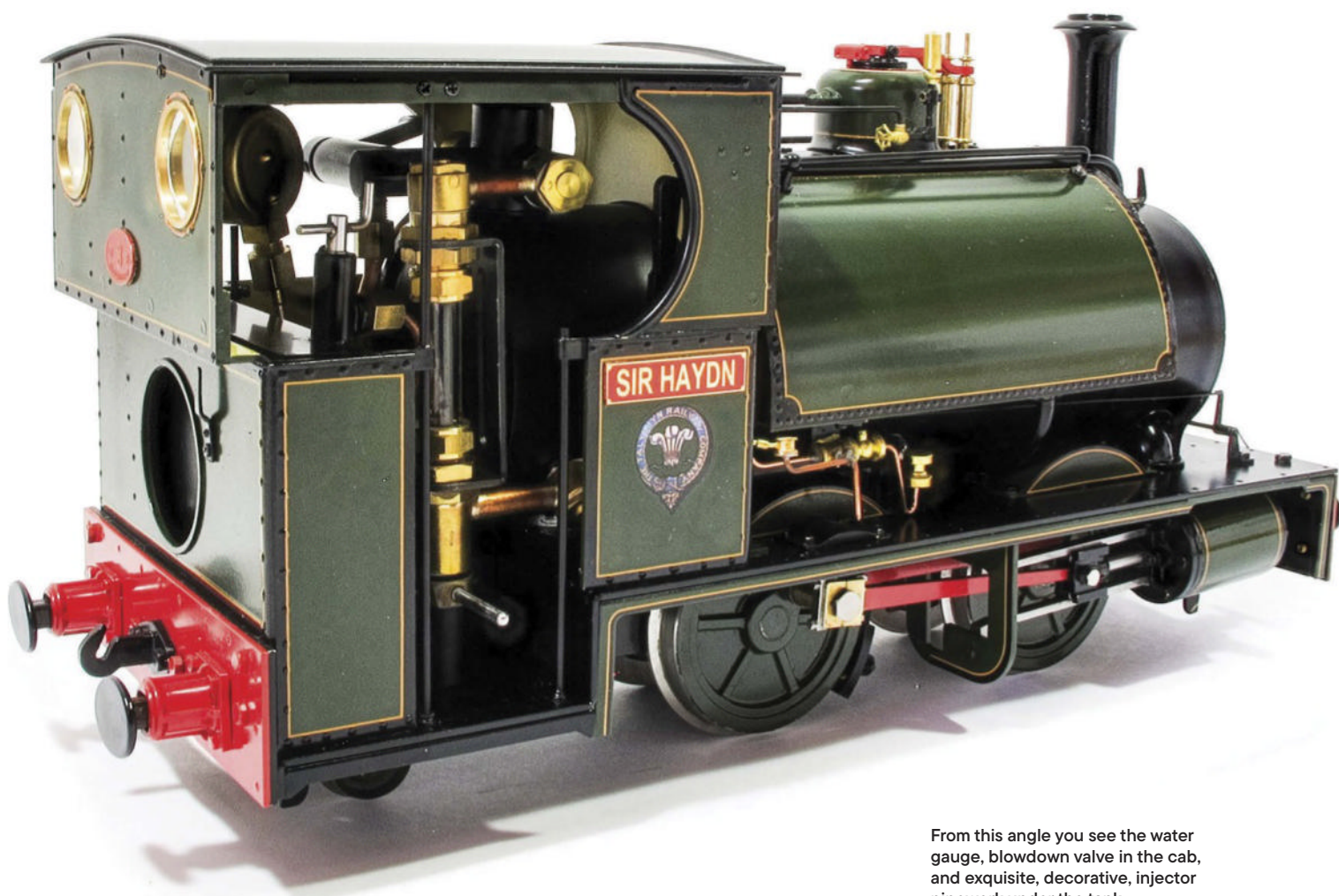
Scale: 16mm to 1 foot (1:19)
Gauge: 32mm or 45mm
Length: 250.5mm (over buffers)
Width: 32mm gauge – 84.5mm Width 45mm gauge – 96.5mm
Height: to the top of the chimney – 124mm
Boiler: Centre Flue
Working Pressure: 60psi
Weight: 2200g
Minimum Radius: 2 feet 6 inches
Reversing Gear: Piston type, reverse by lever in the cab
Valve Gear: Simulated Stephenson's link
Fuel: Butane Gas
Boiler Fittings: Safety valve, pressure gauge, water gauge with blow-down valve
Cab Controls: Steam regulator, gas regulator, reverse lever, lubricator
Price: £1950



Looking inside the cab you can see the reversing lever in the top left, the moving around clockwise, we have a water gauge, gas control on top of the tank, pressure gauge, regulator and finally lubricator.

the lubricator (which came from the WHR 'Russell' in real life apparently) and sanding gear on the footplate. This is a scale model that you could happily sit on a shelf and gaze at, without ever feeling the need to fire it up. Everything seems properly attached too, I waggled lots of details, and none seemed loose.

Painting an lining is crisp and well executed. The colours match contemporary photos.



From this angle you see the water gauge, blowdown valve in the cab, and exquisite, decorative, injector pipework under the tank.



Lighting up is the traditional Accucraft way, smokebox door open, and introduce some fire. We tried gas torch and electronic lighters and both worked straight away.

The model on test is 32mm gauge, although 45mm will be available according to the website. It will be interesting to see how this looks, as the inside frames will presumably be moved out, pushing the cylinders, which are close to scale and corrected slanted, beyond the edge of the footplate. Such are the challenges facing firms making scale models!

Looking in the cab, there is plenty in there, but access is still good. The regulator is operated from the side of the model, the lack of cab door here making this easy. I found at the top of the swing, the arm tucks inside the cab slide very slightly, but not enough to be a problem. Next to it is the pressure gauge, no longer poking through a spectacle plate and giving the model a 'one eyed' look that some enthusiasts didn't like.

The gas tank fits across the back of the cab, blocking the big hole in the body that on the real loco would allow brushes in to clean out the tubes. Apparently, although we didn't test it, the tank is easy to remove so the burner can be released to clear blockages.

On the cab door side, we can see the water gauge and blowdown valve. In front of this, tucked in the corner, is the reversing lever.

Fitting a crew would seem to be a bit of a challenge. It's not a big cab, and there is a lot going on. Access is via the traditional Accucraft swinging roof. Unlike other models, you can't unclip and remove it though.

On the track

All that is lovely, but this is a working steam engine. We filled the generous sized gas tank with pure propane, then attended to the lubricating oil, in the non-door side. A deadleg lubricator is fitted, so be ready to syringe the oil and water out at the end of the run, you can't just drop it out of the bottom. The cap is fitted with a long T-shaped handle, just like the Peckett, and fat fingers might struggle a little with it. Water goes in last. We filled the boiler and then pulled 250ml out again. The instructions will provide full details, but this is a pre-production model, so there weren't any, it was all down to the skill of the operators.

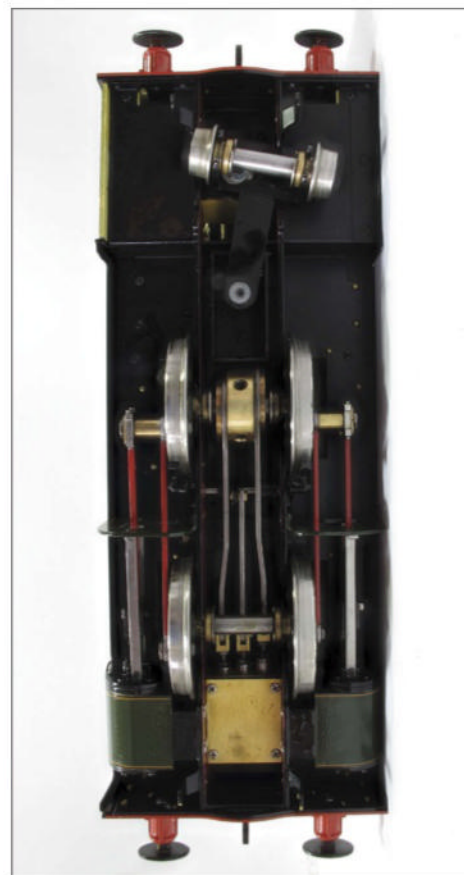
Placed on the track, the smokebox door is opened, gas turned on, and fire introduced into the front. With both gas torch and electronic lighter, the model lit straight up, with no fuss at all.

Operating on a warm (26 degrees C) day, we had steam raised in just over five minutes. After a little priming, the loco trundled off nicely around the track, at a sensible speed too.

Following a couple of circuits, a suitable train was hooked up we and set it off. No drama. The loco pulled well, even on a couple of tight curves. At this point, Keith started fiddling, trying to get the speed down to a scale 15mph, but this couldn't quite be achieved. I don't know how much test running this model has been through, so as everything beds in, slower speeds may be possible, although it seems OK to me.

Our first run was over fifteen minutes, and after stopping for tea, we gassed and oiled up for a second go. This time the model was even smoother, with a satisfying soft chuff and just noticeable smoke from the chimney – it being too warm for proper effects.

A little fiddling with the gas and regulator saw the train circling extremely nicely, and a little slower. This time the run was around 20 minutes, although I did top the water up to be on the safe side. Maxitrak expected the model back in as good condition as they handed it to me!



Underneath, we can see the simulated Stephenson's link motion. This is a 32mm gauge model, but it is possible to order it 45mm, but not change gauge yourself.



Off we go with a suitable Tallylyn train, that the model handled with ease, even on reasonably tight curves.



While waiting to set off on the second run, I take a look at the pressure gauge, which is easy to see from the side.

Conclusions

Firstly, Keith was pleased with it, there's no sign of him cancelling his pre-order! I certainly enjoyed running the model, it's simple enough that a beginner could happily operate it without needing supervision. They might be surprised how hot the regulator and reversing lever get, it's a steam engine after all, but those with a bit more experience, and a set of heat-proof gloves, won't worry.

We ought to consider value for money, and while not the cheapest model locomotive out there, the level of detail and superb running mean that if you are looking to justify a purchase to the family, I don't think it will be that hard. This model looks, and feels, quality. It's certainly a locomotive you will want to display, being far too good to hide in a box, but then you'll also want to see it out on the track. ■

Garden Rail Resource

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Talyllyn 24

Henry Pearsall takes on the challenge of Coach & Wagon Works' latest kit.

Opening the box, first impressions are extremely good, but they are not joking when they say it is complex! The instructions and diagrams are very detailed with all parts well organised and numbered, which I anticipated would be a great help.

My first step, rounding the edges on all the external beading is an extremely time consuming and tedious task, but will make a big difference to the end result. I used a mixture of needle files and fingernail emery boards. Care must be taken as the parts are very susceptible to breaking whilst working on them.

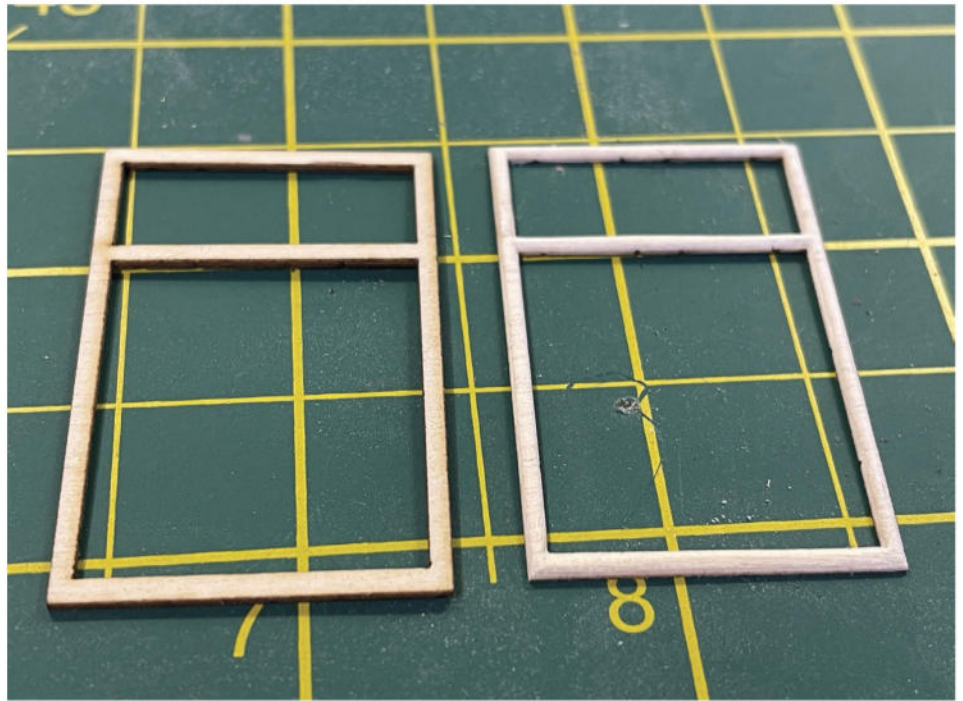
The beading was then painted brown and kept safe ready for fitting. I only did one side's worth of beading to start with in order to break up the tediousness somewhat!

Although the instructions don't say to do this, I decided to smooth the sides as

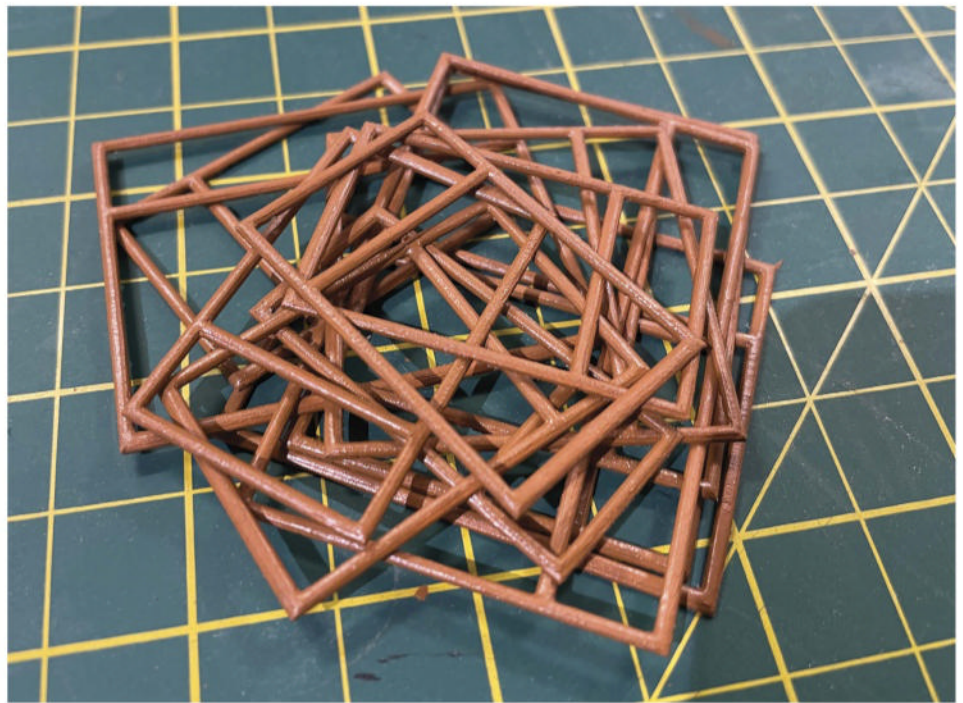


the real carriages have no wood grain showing through the paintwork. To do this I applied fairly liberal coats of grey car primer and then sanded them back until the wood can just be seen through the grey, this has the effect of filling in the wood grain ready for the top coat.

I decided to paint the brown first then do the red on top as this makes for an easier masking job. This was done using an airbrush, multiple coats and a light sand with 800 grit in between coats just to smooth any bumps, this makes for a nice smooth finish.



Rounding the edges on all the mouldings is a tedious job, but if you look at the one on the right, you can see it's worth it.



A pile of sanded and painted mouldings.

Tamiya modellers masking tape in three sizes (6mm, 10mm and 18mm) was used to mask up for the red panels, as the half round beading will go over the joins you don't have to be too accurate with the masking, as long as you stay within the laser etched lines. This is a real bonus.

The rest of the side beading was then shaped and painted, the side with the doors (TR coaches only have doors on the north side) is more complex than the other, as the locks form part of the fret, making them

very easy to break. They can be glued back together, but they will be even more fragile, so care must be taken.

The beading was painted brown and the locks brass. The beading was then glued in place on the sides. I did this a few pieces at a time using watered down wood glue in a fine applicator, weighed them down, then did the next few and so on until done. The door footsteps were also painted brass and fitted to the north side. The whole lot is then given a coat of varnish to seal it in and give an even finish.

were dipped in varnish and left to dry before fitting to the inner sides, these are a very tight fit so did not require any glue.

The inner sides were then varnished, again rubbing down between coats to get a nice finish. I then fitted them to the outer sides, using Glue'N'Glaze. Once dry, the painted/stained and varnished panels were fitted under the windows, and the special embroidered panels set in the first class section doors.

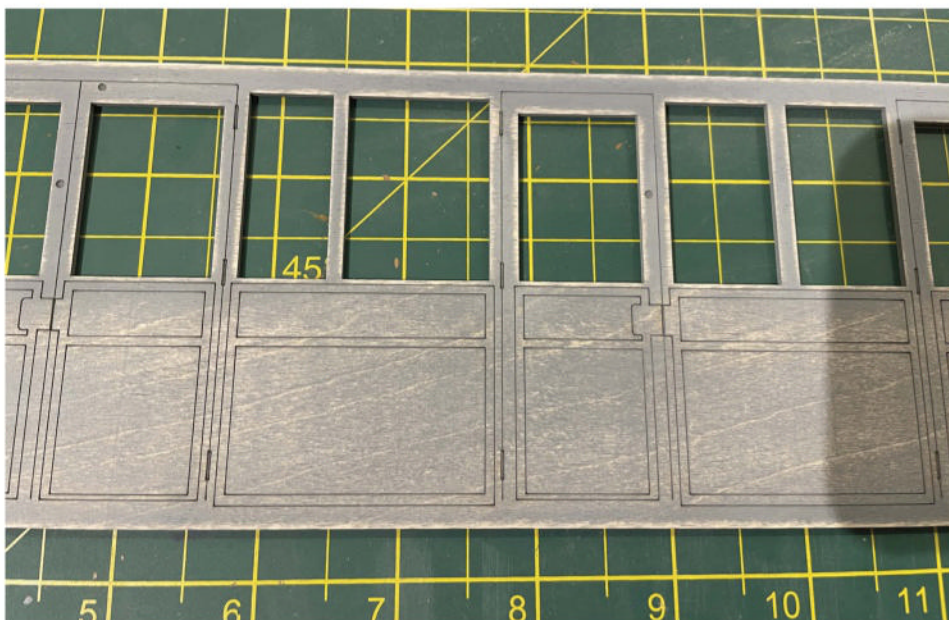
Window frames were painted and varnished, then attached, with the small brass coloured piece fitted in some of the windows to represent the handle. Droplight straps were then made using the provided leather, and added to the doors. I then made up the 'Stuart Shelves' and stained and varnished them before fitting.

The folding seats were tackled next, following the diagrams provided to build them, these are a nice piece once finished.

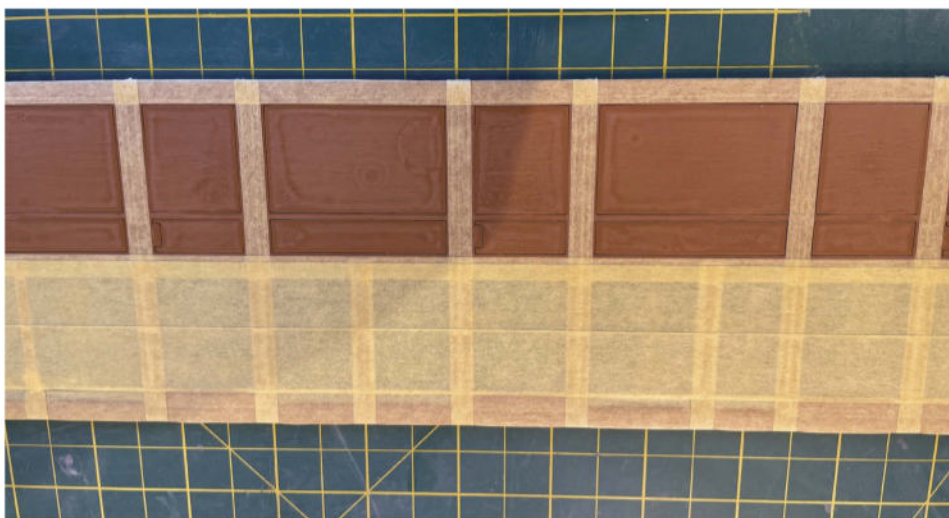
Moving on to the ends, a similar process was followed with the glazing sheet being fitted, then the stained and varnished inner panel glued on top. The window frames again were then painted/stained and varnished before being fitted.

Seats were then made up and the cushions upholstered as described in the instructions, these were then fitted to the ends, the seats with wood glue and the cushions with hot glue.

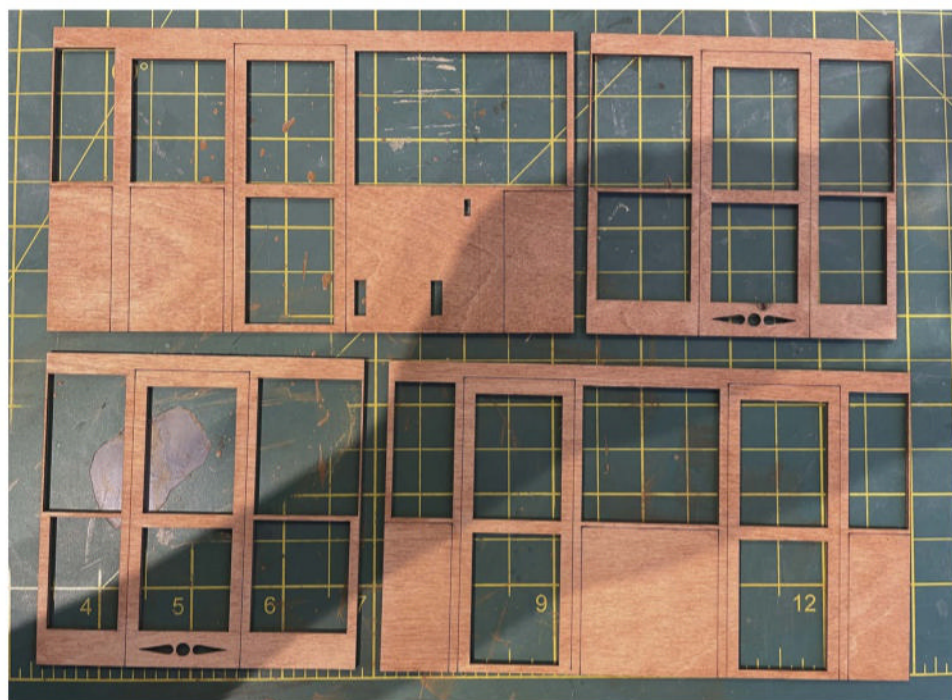
The first/third class dividers were then tackled, the first class side was stained with watered down Light Yew to give the lighter shade that the prototype has in these compartments, the third class side



The sides were sprayed with primer and then sanded so the grain didn't show through.



Masking up the sides is fiddly, but essential.



Moving inside the coach, all the woodwork has to be stained.

was stained with normal Light Yew. Both were then varnished.

Once done the special first class decorative fret piece was stained and the mirror glued in. To my horror, I found that wood glue must not be used on the mirror piece as it removes the shiny surface which ruins the mirror. Once this was done the luggage rack was painted and made up as per the instructions then fitted to the fret, the fret was then fitted to the divider.

Third class seats were made up and fitted in the same way as the ends to the other side of the divider. Then the last few steps repeated for the second divider.

The first class divider was made up with the transfer applied to the glazing piece first. You have to work quickly and line it up with one of the plywood divider pieces to ensure it is in the correct place once the pieces are glued together. The wooden pieces of the divider were then stained and varnished in the usual way before gluing to the glazing piece.

I painted the floors in the third class sections Wagon Grey as described in the instructions, and fitted the first class carpets. Care must be taken to ensure they are in the right place so that there are no gaps when the coach is assembled. The dividers were then dry fitted and fettled to fit properly.

With all the parts of the body prepared for assembly, several dry runs were made with a fair amount of fettling needed, I had inadvertently glued the glazing in slightly the wrong place so this needed to be trimmed a bit to make it fit correctly. Other parts needed small amounts of trimming to make fit as well, the dividers did not quite fit in the slots in the sides so a sliver was taken off each side of these and some of the aligning spigots needed to be trimmed as well to fit the misaligned glazing piece.

The sides were glued on, followed by the ends, and some more fettling was required. Everything was clamped to the bench as well as the rest of the carriage to try and keep the carriage straight with no twist, as this would be very difficult to fix.

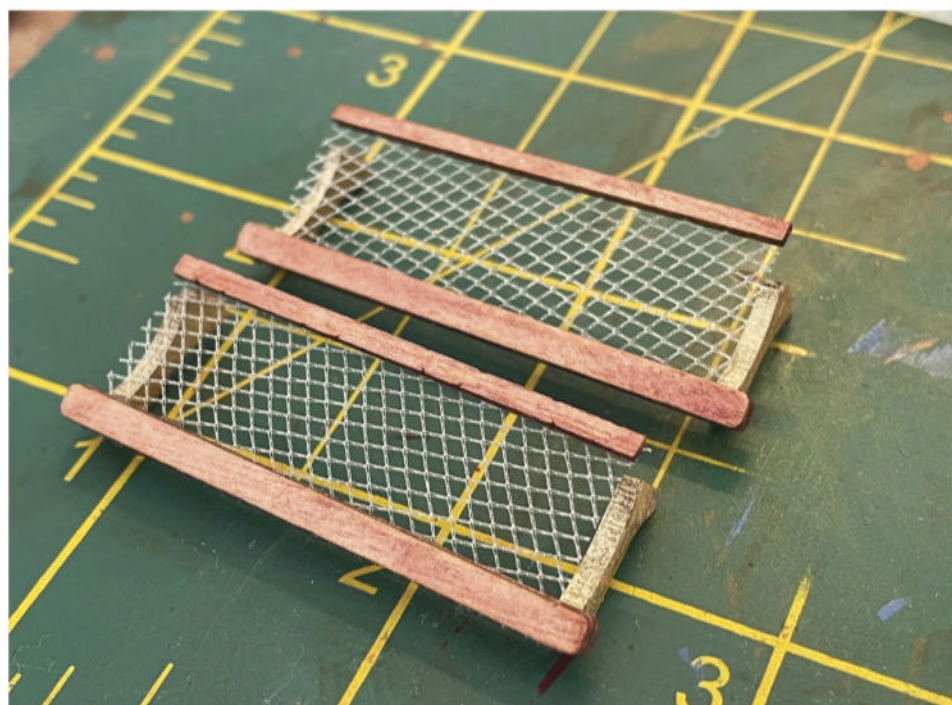
The first class seating was tackled next, the armrests were rounded, and then the seats assembled according to the diagram. The seats were then stained and varnished. Next the cushions were upholstered, CWW provides a useful video on their website on how to do this. It is fairly tedious with so many cushions to do but they do look good. The fabric needs a good sharp pair of scissors to cut. This was repeated for both the low back and high back chairs. They were then fitted into the coach as described in the instructions with hot glue.



The folding seats, really do fold!



Internal partitions being prepared.



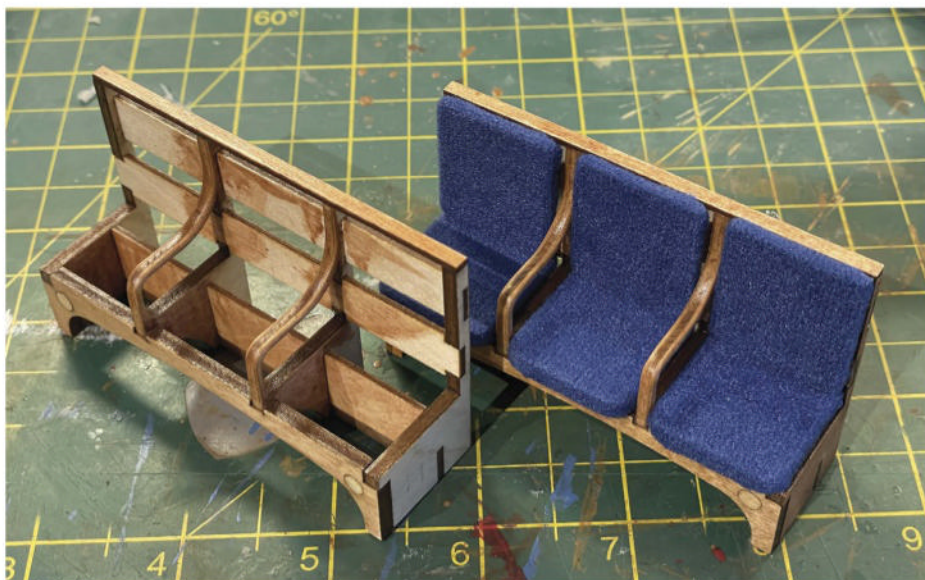
Overhead netting for your luggage.

The base frame was then glued up, with the buffer stocks and couplings fitted too, then painted and glued to the bottom of the body.

Moving on the roof, the kit comes with a useful jig to aid assembly, I found this very useful, and it helped avoid some of the usual difficulty in persuading the roof to stay the right shape!

The roof internals were added next with the included lighting. The wiring for this needs to be cut and soldered fairly precisely for it to fit correctly and I did find that some of the slots for the wires in the roof beams needed to be made a little larger to fit the wires better. I glued the middle panels in and in hindsight I probably should have screwed them instead as the instructions say, but it's unlikely the solder joints will fail.

Once the roof internals were done I then painted and stained the relevant parts before attaching the stained inner roof beams.



First class seating.

The roof was then test fitted to the coach and planed to fit flush with the sides and ends for the gutter strip which fits and locates the roof to the carriage.

The bogies were then assembled and the faceplates made up and fitted. They were then painted black and the pivots fitted to the carriage, there is no marking or dimension for this so I fitted them as best I could from photos of the real carriage.

With the build now almost complete all that was left was the transfers and extraneous details including door handles etc. The transfers were fitted using Humbrol DecalFix, the edges were trimmed but the middle carrier film left in, this maybe was not the best thing to do but I found it difficult to get the transfer to come off the film cleanly without folding up this way.

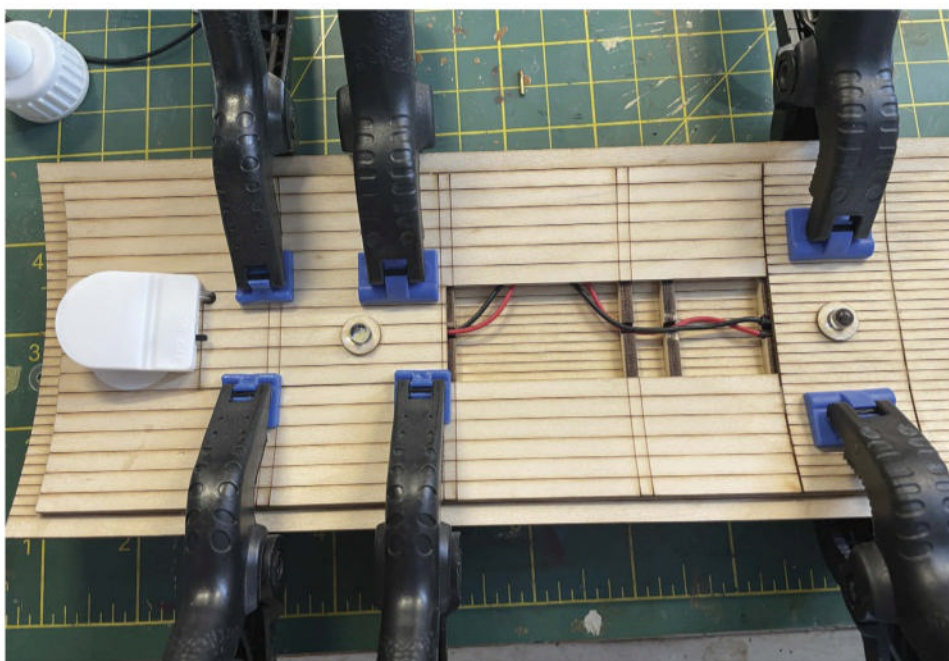
The door handles were cleaned up with a file and fitted.

The TCS connections were painted up and fitted next. The cable part of the print is very fragile, and actually the wrong way round too, so I cut this part out and used some thin electrical wire instead, glued into a drilled hole in each of the parts.

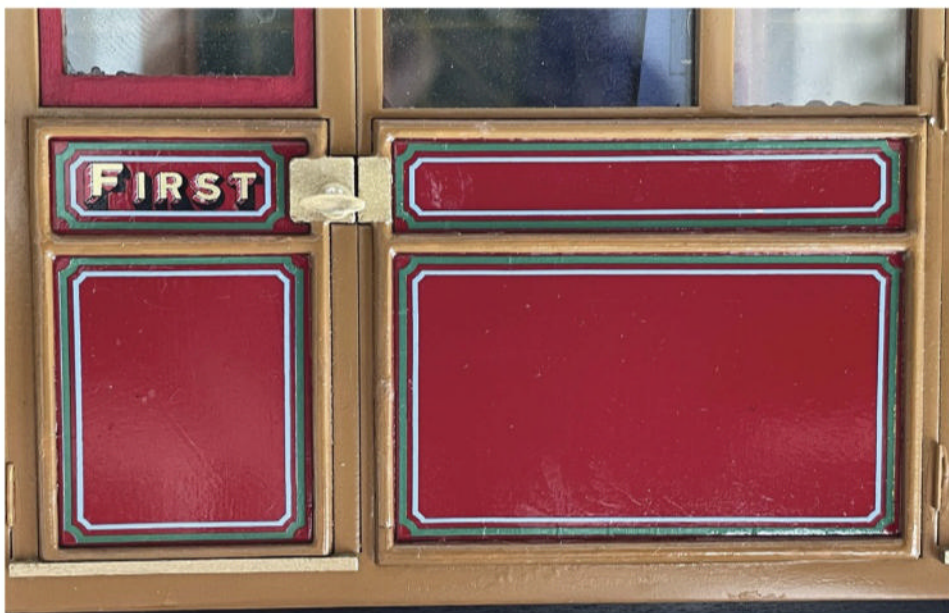
I then went over the whole coach and touched up any areas with paint as needed. The bogies were fitted, the plastic washers were lubricated with some light oil before assembly, next the retention nuts were done up tight and then backed off a little to give just enough movement in the pivot so the bogies can navigate any undulations in the track, but not so much as to cause the carriage to rock or tilt excessively. The couplings and buffers were also lubricated.



The first class compartment is very plush!



Fitting the wiring in the roof.



Door locks fitted.



The TCS connections were fragile, and needed work.

Done! I am very pleased with the result, an excellent looking and running model with a very nice interior, something that is often lacking in models. Some parts were perhaps a bit tedious and could possibly be improved but as this is C&WW's first foray into the kit market I am sure they will improve on the kit where they can. All in all though, an excellent and comprehensive kit that does not leave anything out and builds up to a really fantastic model that you can be very proud of. ■

Garden Rail Resource

Coach & wagon Works
www.coachandwagonworks.uk

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



It's always nice to have proper steel buffers.



The bogies.



TR train made up of Coach 14, 'Alf' and the four-wheel coach I built in the February 2025 issue.

Here are the donor 16mm figures, kindly provided by The Gauge Gallery. They painted the figure on the left for me. I think it looks really good. The fireman even has a five o'clock shadow and a nice tash! The other two are unprimed, exactly as you will receive yours. I am not sure where the seated driver's hand is going, but the fireman doesn't seem to mind!



Figure painting by numbers for dummies

Mark Thatcher finds a way to conquer his fear of painting figures.

Figuropobia - It does not make sense! Give me a 16mm or G scale building to make, paint and weather, and I am totally up for it. But give me a similarly-scaled figure and I'll run a mile. I have never mastered the dark art of figure painting, and because I don't enjoy it that much, have never really bothered to try either.

But, over the last year or so I think I am getting a little better. OK, I am miles off being a skilled artist. I hope this five-step guide to painting the quick and easy way helps. I am far from an expert, but this system works for me and may work for you. ■

Garden Rail Resource

The Gauge Gallery
www.thegaugegallery.co.uk

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



Vallejo offers a good starter set of paints that you will need. They are quite reasonably-priced and if you use one colour more than any other, you can order single bottles to replenish your supplies later on. They are available from Amazon. The doors in this shot are from a Gauge 3/G Scale engine shed I built from Kippo Models earlier this year.



Here is one of my previous attempts at painting a 1/12th scale loco crew from ModelU for one of my 5" gauge live steam locos from Silver Crest Models. I painted these about a year ago, and due to the larger scale, they were more forgiving in my clumsy hands. They are probably a D- (must do better) but I hope I have refined my technique a little since then. You can be the judge of that.



Step three: My personal preference is to paint the figure from the bottom up. That way when the first stage of paint has dried, I can protect it with a matt varnish to make it safe to handle. The shoes are painted with 71.037 Mud Brown, then whilst still wet I added 71.040 Burnt Umber to the top of them. Note how the shadow painting has left a black shadow between the shoes and the bottom of the trousers. I used 71.005 Grey, mixed with black and white to create various shades on the overalls.



Step one: I find a good primer coat is essential as the paint will adhere better. Also, a grey primer helps to lift the detail out of the model, so you can see where the creases and folds are in the clothing, for example.



Step four: I could have used 71.004 Blue for the jackets, but for some reason could not find it so used a blue from another set of airbrush-ready paints I bought from TEMU. These are stupidly cheap with a set of 48 colours coming in at only £29.76. That's only 62p per bottle! I also grabbed a massive bunch of small brushes for the detail work, from TEMU whilst I was at it. The light green used on the seated driver was 71.007 Olive Green, with the braces being picked out in 71.037 Mud Brown; the same as I used on the shoes.



Step two: I learnt this shade-painting technique from the wargaming fraternity. The thinking behind it is, consider where the sun would be in the sky and how light would fall on the model. So, it will be darker at the bottom. Just upend the figure and give it a quick blast of black primer. This will darken certain areas, like under the armpits, groin and chin. Then repeat this process by spraying white primer from above to highlight the top light effects from the sun.



Step five: This is the step that always lets me down. Ironically, painting the pupils of the eyes is a challenge due to my own worsening eyesight! Here I mixed 71.003 Red with 71.001 White to create a base skin tone colour, then when that was dry, mixed 71.027 Light Brown with more white to cover the majority of the previous layer, leaving parts of the face and crevices between the fingers in the base colour. The end result won't win any awards, but I think my process mostly worked for me.



Building a mobile estate bench

Sean Cullen looks at Plateway Models' manrider kit.

After building a pair of wagons for a works train, I thought we needed some form of transport for the workforce, and so purchased the Bench kit from Plateway Models.

The estate range of kits is built on a standard chassis, with differing bodies, which means that if the body is not glued

down, you get a dual purpose wagon, the basic flat wagon and the alternative body. As I already had the lift off wagon I now have the choice of a pair of flat wagons or a two-plank wagon and a manrider. I think the kits are very reasonably priced and well thought out, so here is how I built the Bench.

Garden Rail Resource

Plateway Models
www.platewaymodels.co.uk

7/8ths Estate – Bench kit: £25

Cambrian Model Rail
www.cambrianmodelrail.co.uk

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

THE BUILD: STEP-BY-STEP



1 The obligatory component photo. The basic wagon parts are on the left and the bench top parts on the right. It is helpful before doing anything else, to draw a line on the underside of the floor down the middle of the length of the wagon and then two parallel lines 24mm either side of the centre line. This makes life easier when fitting the solebars later on.



2 Positions for Cambrian Model Rail rivets are engraved on the kit parts. My method to fit them is to use a cocktail stick to place a small amount of superglue on the desired location, then pick up a rivet with the tip of a No11 scalpel blade, and carefully place in position. To make it easier to see which side is up with the rivets I spray one side of the sprue with whatever paint I have to hand.

THE BUILD: STEP-BY-STEP



3 | The axleboxes and W-irons are made up from five components, including sets of ball races, which should ensure a free running wagon. Let the paint dry before carefully assembling these parts, you really don't want glue in any of the moving parts!



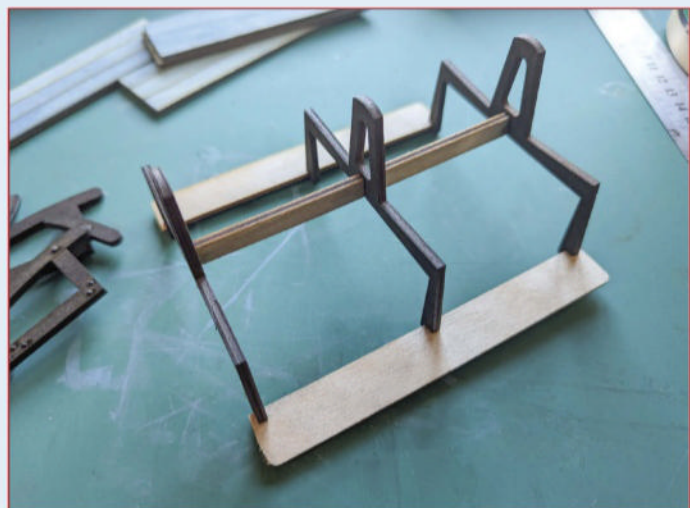
4 | I like to paint the components before sticking it all together. Black is standard spray can. The seat backs and seat are acrylic, each plank painted separately with differing dilutions of paint to make sure there is variation. The bare wood is treated with a very dilute Indian Ink solution which gives a realistic greyish sheen, use multiple coats until the desired colour is achieved.



5 | Buffer beams fitted using metal blocks to ensure they are square. These are followed by place the axleboxes. My precision measuring device is a 10mm thick piece of wood, butted up against the buffer beams, it saves all that tricky use of a ruler and pencil



6 | W-irons are fixed to the solebars, doing my best to ensure that they are lined up so the wheels spin nice and freely. Finally, the centre buffer couplings are attached to the ends, and we have a completed flat wagon, which acts as the chassis for the manrider.



7 | The footboards are a snug fit in the seat frames, which is useful as everything can be lined up correctly dry, and then glued easily. Pre-painting the parts really pays off here as we end up with a nice neat finish.



8 | The seat unit finished, and ready to place on the wagon. Now I need to employ some more workers to make use of the bench!



The MidSummer Garden Railway

Rex Mounfield returns to *Garden Rail* magazine after almost 20 years, having decided to once again enjoy 16mm to the foot.

In the spring of 2020, we had the COVID lockdown. During the winter I had managed to finish my long term project of a portable, OO gauge exhibition railway and with nowhere to show it, I was now officially bored. As I paced up and down my wife said, "Why don't you find something to do."

"But what", I said?

"Well you haven't done anything with a garden railway for years, and as the summer is coming up why not think about that", she sensibly replied.

Early days

This brought about a need for some negotiation with Janet again, as she happens

to be the head gardener. Although she said I could have as much garden as I wanted, I was also keen to try to be fair, as my 7 1/4" gauge line took over our previous garden.

We agreed that I would just make up a balloon loop, adding a return loop the next year. The track would only go down one side of the garden, along the edge of the lawn, other than for the turning loops, and it would be supported on short posts.

That sounded nice, an ongoing project for this summer and next. So, as you can imagine it wasn't long before I was measuring up the garden and then testing out possible layouts on my AnyRail railway design program. This covers gauges including, SM32, so that I was able to see

just how much room would be taken up by the various designs I put forward to Janet.

Firstly there were pegs and string to mark out where the balloon loop nearest to the bungalow was going to be, then the flower borders needed deepening, the grass was cut into by about six inches to allow room for the rail support boards.

I had decided that, as this was only a whim, I could not justify too much expense so I chose to use Weather and Boil Proof (WBP) plywood. Yes, I know. All of you who have done this before will now shake your heads and utter, "Tsk, tsk, tsk". The worst bit is that if anyone had asked me, I would have been shaking my head too, as I really should have known better.

Using the Peco set track curves gave me a great template to easily mark out the plywood, and then it was cut out with a rip saw for straights, and a jigsaw for curves. As I cut each piece I put it on the soil and ran a screwdriver round it so I knew where to bang the posts in. I then cut points on 2" x 2" planed wood, painted on preservative and banged them in, checking they were level as I went. I put sealant on the edges of the plywood, then preservative all over, and fixed the plywood down onto the pegs with screws.

The balloon loop progressed well so I added the point in, thus joining together the two ends and then continued the straight line alongside the flower border. As this went on I realised that the line was progressing very well and my mind started whirring.

I started to cut the curves away to make a cutting into the lawn for the far end, and it occurred to me that if I were to cut out slightly more lawn along the garden side straight, I could add a parallel straight line, and have a complete dog bone layout. Then there would be no need for the points, so I could use these to make up a passing loop.

The completion of the deeper cutting at the far end of the garden was harder work. I to dig down some 8 or 9 inches into the hard, dry, summer turf, and as we were now in the midst of the summer heat this was becoming much more difficult. Still I felt it would be worth it as this part of the line would become a real cutting.

Once I had completed this work I quickly laid the boards and then the track, as by now I was eager to join up the rails and run something, a job that went on at a great pace. Soon I managed to complete the circuit, and testing with our diesel, 'Stumpy' we were able to see something move.

A few days later, watching our Silver Lady chuffing round Janet said, "So what do you think you'll do now?" and I said, "I don't know, yet. But I dare say I'll think of something!"

The line expands

After a snowy Norfolk winter, time not wasted as my wonderful wife, had kindly bought me some locomotive and rolling stock kits for Christmas, I wondered what could be done to the Midsummer Railway line to make it 'better'!

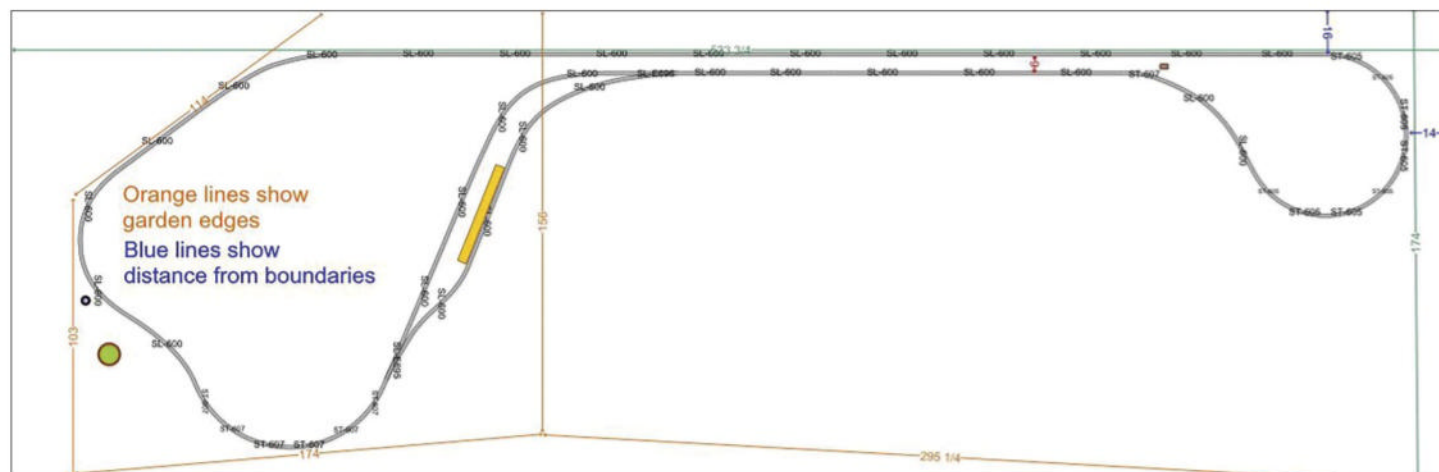
Once more I settled down with AnyRail, and started to wonder what sort of

extension could be made to the line, at the same time making an inspection of the toll the weather had made to the work of my first year of railway building.

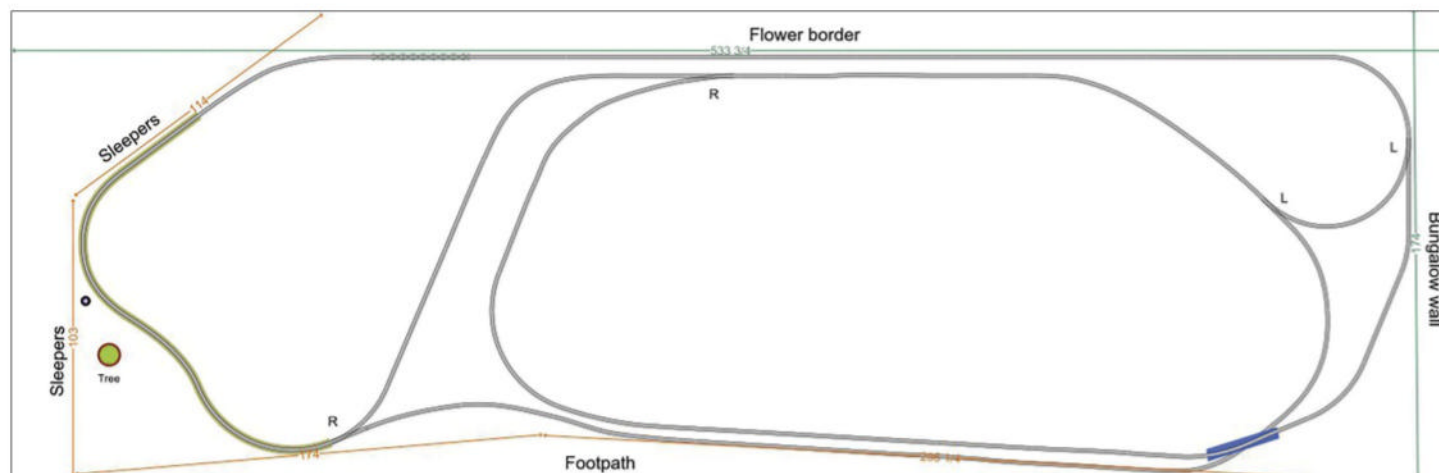
Apparently, my plywood base was 'Weather and Boil Proof', and I am here to tell you, it isn't! Of course I don't know about boil proof but it definitely isn't weather proof as it started to delaminate after just one winter. This didn't really matter originally, as I didn't expect to enjoy running little engines as much as I had, but now I wanted both to extend the line, and find a better, more long-lasting way of building the rest of it.

By now I was a regular reader of *Garden Rail*, thanks to Janet buying me a subscription for Christmas, so I had whiled away the cold months with these to find out how to improve things.

It seemed that some builders opted for building their track on decking boards, basically planks with grooves in, the benefit is that these are intended to be outside and so are pressure treated which seemed like a great idea. As I didn't want the light colour of the decking boards as supplied, I decided to add a coat of brown Cuprinol to make the planking less noticeable in the garden.



My initial design, fresh from the AnyRail software.



The final design. Or is it?



Laying out the balloon loop, with some feline assistance.

I had already shown management my plans for the new extension and although Janet said she had no idea what I was on about she also said I was just to go ahead with it.

She does understand these things really but I think what was confusing was that I intended to spring all of the points so that when the engine approached them as a facing point the point would ensure that the same route was always taken but when pushed through from the trailing side the spring would still keep the route that it was meant to. Yes, yes. I know this sounds odd, and she has your sympathy, but if I could make this work it would mean that once you let the engine go it would travel over every piece of track at least once before it found its way back to you.

At this stage please look at my plan - L indicates that the point is sprung left and R that it is sprung to the right. If you follow it round you will see that I have achieved my aim of covering all the track at least once if when you let it go you are at the footpath edge.

Of course as this is only on paper all this depends on a couple of factors:

1. Can I make the points keep springing back to the same direction? Well of course any point lever should do that, shouldn't it?
2. Can I make the lines on slopes work so they go over/under a bridge when I haven't got a very long run up to it, due to the fairly close proximity of the points?

I decided that I would do the long straight down from the newly installed bridge and round to the farthest point

first, as this would give me some practice with cutting and fixing decking, and also with how to work out cutting curves in straight planks. This would also allow me to still be able to run a train or two as the original line would not be broken into too soon.

Cutting the curves was not too bad and in general I had more room to form a curve than I thought, so the work progressed well. Once this was completed I went to the other end of the bridge and finished the line round to the new point, then put in the bungalow end balloon loop. All this time I left the points sprung in the direction of the old line and so was still able to have a steam up and I used my

lovely electric engine, 'Stumpy' to check that loco's could go up and down the slopes I had made and yes they could.

Eventually I had to lift some of the old line to be able to start the downhill work to go under the bridge and as I cut into the turf it occurred to me that I should really check what depth I needed to dig down to. Of course this was, by its very nature, a compromise between the locos being able to get under the bridge and that they could also climb up the slope back to the normal level of working.

By digging out the track bed a little more and then offering up a makeshift gauge made up of a piece of decking, a piece of track and then topped off with my steam engine, Silver Lady, I was eventually able to agree that the whole lot could go under the bridge. Although I admit that until I saw her do this without any problems, it still gave me sleepless nights.

Now it was time to put in the longest piece of straight on the line along the edge of the path, but I had an idea that I would like it to have a mock granite bed for this piece of track. I put down the track board and track, then an edging around the upright piers of the rising track going to the bridge and a bit beyond; this was followed by a layer of weed suppressant membrane and topped off with several bags of granite, offering a result which I hope you agree is quite pleasing and railway like, sort of.

I continued to complete all the circuits and place points in where needed but still kept them with their original Peco springs until the whole railway was completed.



The original loop. Sadly, the plywood delaminated after a single winter.



Silver Lady taking it easy on a sunny afternoon.

Testing times

Now it was time for testing, initially with a push along trial, which seemed to show that Silver Lady would indeed go under the bridge. Buoyed up by this success, I quickly steamed her up and very gingerly drove her, to tumultuous applause. Then, still with care we drove her all around the track and found she managed the climb up the slopes to go across the bridge with comparative ease, it was perhaps the downhill which seemed the most worrying initially, but with care I found that just dropping right back on the regulator allowed her to steadily continue her journey, instead of running hell for leather as she had done the first time. Even with the few trucks I had available, Silver Lady dealt with it all admirably.

When she ran out of steam I put her aside to cool and put dear old 'Stumpy' on the front of the trucks and set her off to enjoy the full journey for the first time. Of course you have all worked out what happened and I am ashamed to say it hadn't even occurred to me, I thought that Silver Lady would be one of the tallest engines around - I can now tell you she is one of the lower engines that I have come across.

Gratefully 'Stumpy' was a slow engine and so he suffered no damage but this meant my fleet of loco's was down by half, which was not good. Yes I was making progress with

the kits Janet had given me for Christmas but finishing those was a task I wanted for after the line was completed.

What to do? Well I had bought the loco from Anything Narrow Gauge and so I gave Simon a call, and he said he would have it back, so that was the first worry gone. Now began the search for a lower loco, and I found out how many tall loco's there are!

The next railway task was to sort out the points operating in the right direction. I purchased a couple of different point lever kits but once assembled they would either fall over onto the direction the loco had just taken or if I added more weight to the lever they would then derail the loco or the rolling stock unless I put some horrendous amount of weight in every piece of stock. It seemed I would have to find my own solution.

As I wanted the point blade to spring back to the same place each time I started messing around with heavy wire and springs, but either I didn't have the right kind, didn't have the means to fix it all. Eventually I found that just using some heavy duty bent sprung wire (piano wire is the best I could find) I could make a fixing point and screw the wire in place on the decking and by careful adjustment could make the point blades return to the same place all the time. This did mean I had to

remove the Peco return spring out of the point but once done, I had achieved the auto return I was looking for.

Now I could try out the full route without moving from my seat and yes after a bit of adjustment to the springs for the first few runs I had a working circuit.

What was left then was to lift all my original track, relay the plywood with decking boards and replace the track, and we had a complete railway circuit.

At this stage there was nothing more to do but invite other 16mm modellers from around North Norfolk to come and try out our railway and this we did. We had several wonderful open afternoons and some lovely locomotives came along to try out our line, all of which coped with the inclines admirably. Of course I did have to let all our visitors know that nothing over 150mm in height would be able to visit but they still arrived and seemed to enjoy the quirky layout of the MidSummer Garden Railway. ■

Garden Rail Resource

AnyRail
www.anyrail.com

Anything Narrow Gauge
www.anythingnarrowgauge.co.uk

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

Forest of Glee

Graham Arnold likes a challenge,
he built a real garden railway,
in November, in Scotland.





It all started over a coffee. My son, Martin, and I were having a chat with the Falkirk Model Railway Club and mentioned an idea of creating a garden railway in the exhibition hall for the show.

“Okay let’s book it in for next year”, agreed the Exhibition Manager, and then we wondered why we had opened our mouths.

At that time, it was just an idea and obviously we hadn’t thought it through. Flowers in November; not a great time, how do we transport them safely? What about containing the soil (no water allowed on the exhibition hall floor)? How about managing the weight of it all, and this all before we started on a track plan or even how it would all go together.

Anyway, we were committed, so in May seeds were purchased, a lightweight soil was mixed and seeds trays and pots were planted. 100 pots and 12 seed trays to be precise.

A track plan was put together, using die-cast Mamod track originally, and a layout size of 12 ft by 8 ft was deemed practical.

Martin suggested using plastic boxes as a base as these could be used to transport the plants in their pots and seed trays and then ‘simply’ raise them inside the boxes to provide the garden. Great idea except when the plants grow too large to fit in the boxes, but that one we didn’t think about in May.

We would need something to support these plastic boxes so a wooden frame was designed that held a number of these boxes together while also itself being supported on wooden ‘A’ frames. There needed to be plenty of leg supports, so hopefully the weight would be nicely distributed and the plastic boxes would contain any moisture leakage.



The boxes and trackwork were set up on our drive for testing.



With the track ballasted the ceremonial first run takes place - in the kitchen.



Trying to get the plants to flower in November.



Two of the 18 Scenic boxes ready to go. Yes, that is snow on the ground!



The full layout, set up on the stage, and with log roll and fake grass to complete the display.

18 strong plastic boxes with tops where purchased each capable of holding the seed trays or plant pots. Many meters of white wood where glued and screwed together to create the framework structure and 'A' frames and the whole lot was roughly assembled on our drive. To our amazement it actually seemed to come together rather well.

On to the track. We wanted the track to look like it was ballasted in the garden, but obviously loose ballast was not going to work and cement might be too heavy!

At this time a nearby road was resurfaced, well sprayed with tar and small granite chippings thrown down. After a few days piles of loose chippings appeared at the side of the road, thrown up by passing cars, so doing my civic duty I tidied up these piles which just happened to be a nice size for garden railway ballast.

Looking into a suitable track base material, I came across PVC foam sheets, available in all colours, lightweight but strong and used for outside signs, so they are waterproof, we were a bit worried about moisture from the planting effecting a wooden base. A couple of large sheets were purchased, the track plan drawn onto them and the basic track base shape cut-out. The track base was split into 6 sections, each joined to its neighbour by a hinge or hinges with the pins replaced by 3mm brass rod. The hinges are mounted on the underside and attached using short screws and Gorilla glue.



A short train of coal wagons, made from Ferrero Rocher boxes, leave the scenic section.



Almost the entire station area, including the flowerbed between the tracks, is visible here.

Now we had a track base which would be supported on the plastic boxes into which the flowers in their pots and seed trays would reside. Around this time, we acquired through the 16mm society a number of SM32 Peco set track points and some second-hand flexible track. Abandoning the Mamod track we opted to use the Peco track instead, the points certainly looking more realistic.

Slight differences in the curve radius and point sizes meant the already cut track base didn't quite work with Peco set track curves, so we spent a wonderful couple of days bending and cutting flexible track to suit the already cut track base. Finally, it all came together and we had a layout consisting of a circle of track, passing station with siding and a two-road fiddle yard all of which could be separate into six sections, including one with a lift up section, for transport in the family car.

The edges of the track base were painted, partly because the sheets I brought were a nice bright white colour and partly to add a seal at the edges. Then ballasting of the track was accomplished with the usual indoor method, using diluted PVA. This took a few days to dry out completely, but did work successfully holding the larger, and heavier, granite chippings in place.

A platform was constructed of old slates cut to size with a stone cutter, and any areas left not ballasted were covered with smaller black cinder ballast from the Woodland Scenic range to hide the white base. Hindsight is great, and a black or dark PVC foam would have been better but...

Peter, who helps us at exhibitions, constructed a marvellous water tower from the Spey Models range, and we borrowed a station shelter from his own garden railway to give the railway travellers somewhere to stay dry.



Looking along the front of the layout, you can see just how many plants we persuaded to be at their best in November.



A high level view, showing the entire layout.



Considering it's nearly Christmas, our flowerbed is full of colour!



The Wickham Trolley pushes its way through the garden.



Built from a HGLW kit, the Wittenberg Schafer Loco with Harecroft wagons.

The small garden area between the tracks at the station was constructed from Plastikard, planted with alpines, and stays outside until needed. Carried in the one of the many plastic boxes it just was positioned between the tracks at the exhibition and looked like it had been there all along.

Stock was our own or came from Peter's own Strathmore Railway with a number of items from Houston Gate Works and

Harecroft constructed (in a bit of a panic) within weeks of the exhibition date.

Oh, and the plants, well after the summer we put together a small indoor growing area with LED grow lights and boxes full of growing plants, trying to fool them that summer had come. I'll let you decide from the photos whether we succeed but certainly we had some interesting and positive comments, plus some invitations to future shows. ■

Garden Rail Resource

Harecroft
www.harecroft.co.uk

Houston Gate Locomotive Works (HGLW)
www.hglw.co.uk

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www.ipenginnering.com

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www.pendlevalleyworkshop.uk

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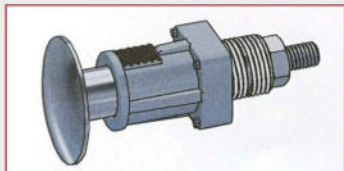
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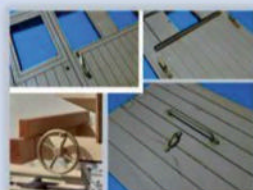
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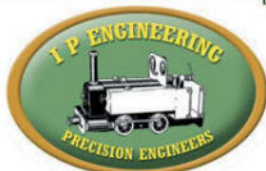


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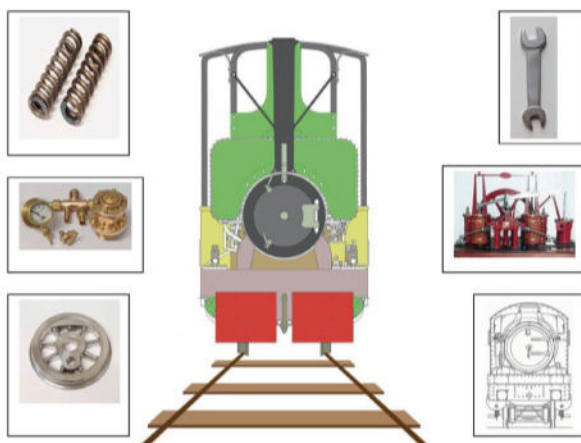
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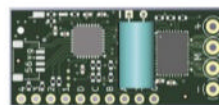
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Engineers' wagons

Amy and Ben Bucki add to their permanent way train.

Once we'd finalised the plans to have our line set in a 1990's British Rail-era, the first complete rake of wagons would be an Engineering/Works Train, starting with tool vans and a Manrider. We then decided that we needed some opens or flats, both to provide a bit of visual interest, and to give some practical purpose to the train.

The idea we're developing is that the 'revenue earning' goods fleet on our fictional, 'what-if' line will feature freight trains hauling quite modern-looking wagons. So older, more traditional stock (wooden open wagons, vans etc.) will have been cascaded down to the engineers, but repainted into modern liveries.

We turned once again to the range by PS Models, mainly to keep a unified look with the Tool Vans already built, and decided that a couple of open wagons would give us what we needed, though changed one to a flat wagon after spotting a suitable load for it to convey.

There's not much to say about the construction of these kits, they're excellent

value, and machined to a high standard; we've not had any bother with the half-dozen we've made so far. Follow the instructions and you won't go far wrong. The only change we made was to build them up fully, including the wheels, before painting. With some of the previous kits, we've done the bearings and wheels once the wagons have had their primer and main body colours, but the cosmetic frames on the flat wagon made us suspect it might be tricky to fit the wheels afterwards.

Speaking of painting, the two wagons were once again finished in a livery inspired by the British Rail 'Dutch' colour scheme. Across the whole rake of wagons, the splash of yellow paint helps give a bit of unity to a varied rake. They were given quite a heavy weathering, as befitted wagons that were earning their keep on messy jobs; mainly dry brushed acrylics, and a few washes of watered-down blacks, greys, and browns to really bring out the relief details.

As with the vans, we turned to Playmobil for the loads. Second-hand construction/building site accessories gave

us the majority of the load for the open wagon, including a rather nice modern wheelbarrow and a bag of cement. The garish plastic was toned-down with a couple of washes of Citadel 'Nuln Oil' and 'Agrax Earthshade'. In amongst the bits purchased were a couple of generator trailers, the slightly smaller one of the pair made an excellent load for the flat wagon, once modified with some tie-down rings from small metal washers.

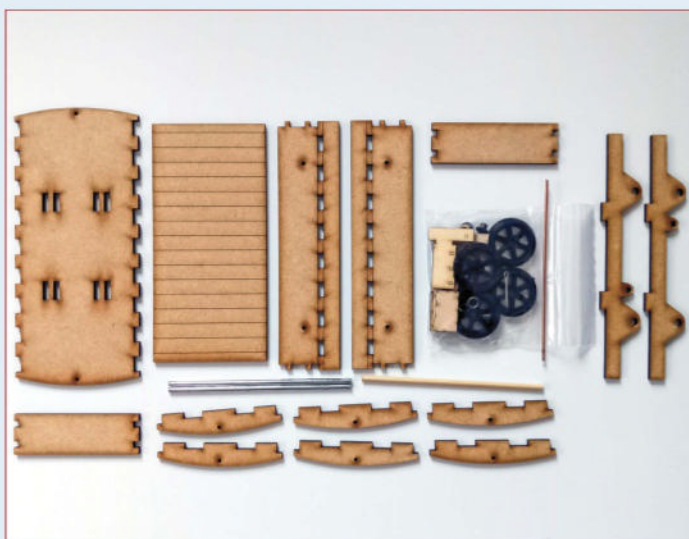
These were two more very nice kits to build, and it was fun to be able to go to town a bit with the detailing/loads. They provide a bit of purpose for the rake, and visual interest too, and help create an eye-catching little train to potter around the line. Now we just need a brake van, and of course a dedicated, liveried locomotive to haul them all... ■

Garden Rail Resource

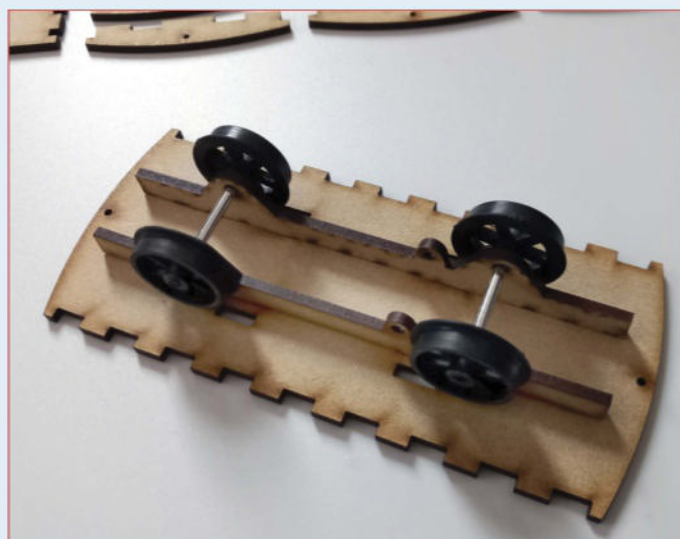
Phil Sharples Models
www.philsharples.com

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

THE BUILD: STEP-BY-STEP



1 The components for the open wagon; it builds up into a pleasingly chunky, usefully-sized wagon.



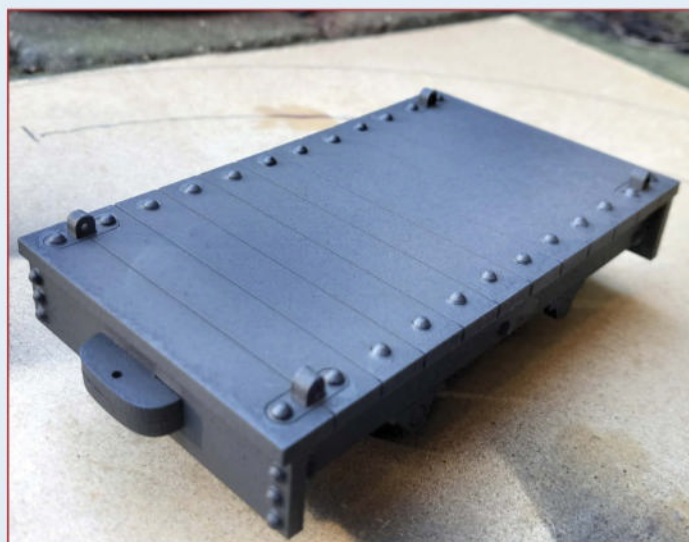
2 With these kits, we built the chassis up first, wheels and all, with some of the other kits, we left the wheels off until after the initial painting stage.



3 It does occur to us that a wagon like this should probably have the tarpaulin fitted, there are rings provided for just this purpose, but having the load on show is more interesting.



4 We built up the flat wagon, wheels and all, before painting. In this case, it's because we anticipated it might be too tricky to fit the wheels with the cosmetic side-frames glued in place.



5 As with the open wagon, we'd added some more of the rivets - gems for decorating phone cases. Most of our goods wagons have these, so it unites the fleet a bit.



6 More Playmobil parts for the loads, this generator is perfect for the flat wagon. Lashing it down with thick cord was a fiddly job; thin washers glued to the corners of the trailer give something to attach to.

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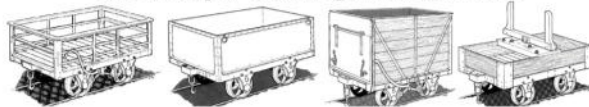
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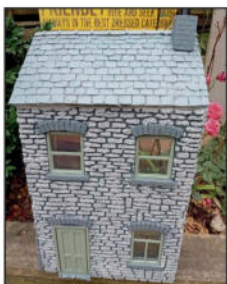
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LGB

BVO Bahn Class L45H-083 diesel G scale

More than 300 Class L45H diesel locomotives were built at the famous 23 August Works locomotive factory in Bucharest, Romania. The majority entered service in Poland, Romania and Hungary.

Following German reunification in 1990, a number of the class found their way into Germany, including L45H-083. This locomotive was acquired by BVO Bahn GmbH (Busverkehr Ober- und Westergelbige), then operator of the Fichtelberg Railway between Cranzahl and Oberwiesenthal. Repainted in an attractive blue livery with a yellow waist stripe, it entered service in 2001. Today, the line is operated by the Saxon Steam Railway Company (SDG).

This model represents L45H-083 in its Era V BVO Bahn GmbH guise. Both bogies are powered, allowing operation on curves down to an R1 radius of 600mm (23½in). An mfx/DCC decoder is factory-fitted, providing a wide range of lighting and sound functions, while a buffer capacitor ensures smooth running. Directional white and red lighting can be controlled digitally, and the illuminated cab, with opening doors, includes a driver figure.

Details

Length over buffers: 520mm (20½in)

Price: 1299 €

Website: www.lgb.com



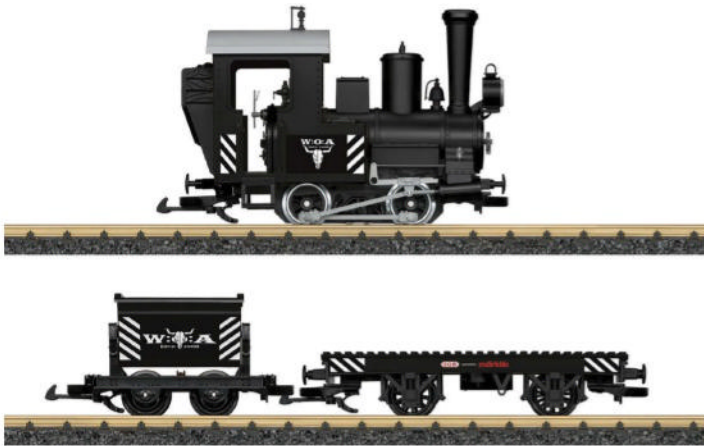
LGB

Wacken Open Air Starter Set G scale

Bringing the spirit of the legendary Wacken Open Air music festival to your railway, this starter set includes a tank locomotive, building block wagon and a tipper wagon, all finished in a fictional festival-inspired design.

The tank locomotive features working headlights, while the two wagons offer plenty of interactive play value. The tipper wagon can be loaded and unloaded, and the building block wagon, which is compatible with Lego bricks, can be customised and rebuilt to suit your imagination. A sheet of stickers is included, allowing you to personalise the locomotive and rolling stock.

Everything needed to get started is included in the box: a complete circle of track, a 230V power supply and a speed controller.



Details

Train length: approx. 70cm (27½in)

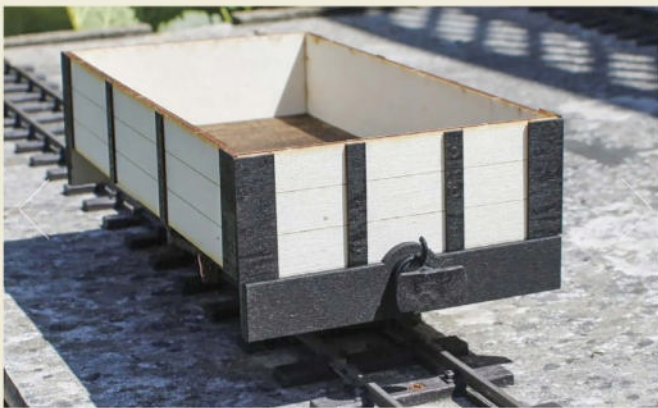
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Three-plank wagon kit 7/8th scale

A typical 5' 5" wide, wooden bodied three-plank narrow gauge wagon with a wealth of detail, iron strapping, thick buffers, outline brake mechanism and brake blocks.



Details

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Price: £32

Website: www.platewaymodels.co.uk



PRIOR LOCOWORKS

'Joshua' Locomotive Kit 16mm scale

'Joshua' is steam outline tank locomotive for 32mm gauge. This kit is aimed at beginners to the hobby who want a simple to build steam outline locomotive for their line. Most of the parts are 3D printed in either PLA or resin.

The kit runs on a supplied PS Models 50mm wheelbase motorised chassis kit.

Details

Dimensions: Height: 145mm, Width: 78mm, Length: 176mm

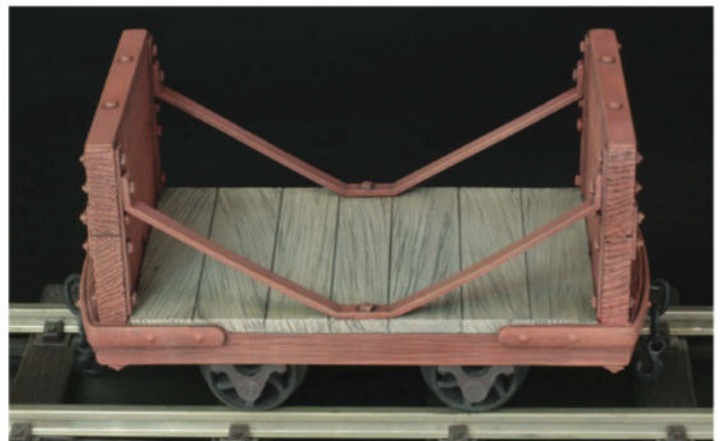
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TRENARREN MODELS

Dinorwic Yard Wagon 16mm scale

Part of the Meadow Valley range of resin-cast rolling stock. This pressure cast resin kit is supplied with Slaters Wheels, metal axle boxes and couplings.



Details

Gauge: 32 gauge only.

Price: £45

Website: www.trenarrenmodelsonline.co.uk



RESURGAM ROLLING STOCK

DHR 'GKP First Class Chair Car 75 – Kanchanjanga' Kit 16mm scale

This vehicle represents DHR GKP Carriage 75 which was initially rebuilt as a 'High Window' vehicle in the 1980s, followed by further work in 1998-99, which saw the provision of 'observation windows' in one end and enhanced first class seating.

Available in MDF or Plywood, this 16mm scale, laser cut kit features proven, hidden slot and tab construction throughout as an aid to easy and accurate assembly and all of the 'split windows' are modelled in full relief. Whilst the interiors are comparatively spartan, all of the relevant furniture is catered for as part of the kit.

For those potentially concerned about fitting the roof to the compound curve, the roof sheet is a hybrid design, featuring individual planks cut right through, but held together with small tabs to form a highly flexible fret, which can be easily applied and formed to shape. Lateral and longitudinal alignment is provided by a central row of slots, locating with tabs on the roof ribs and a substantial jig is also provided to hold this fret in position on the roof, whilst the glue cures. Once cured, the result is a strong, rigid structure over which you can apply a covering of your choice.

Due to the wide range of preferences expressed on this matter, no final roof covering is supplied. However, the prototype shown here, is covered with 'Duck Tape' of all things. It is easy to cut and apply in strips and with a coat of satin varnish to finish gives a good representation of aluminium sheeting.

Other incorporated details include the bevelled sides to the doorways supplied as 3D printed insets, brake levers and brake lever guards, safety chains including Binnie Engineering nylon hooks, as well as wire and base fittings to make up the handrails. Not to mention the distinctive, semi-circular 'Dumb Buffer' couplings, which are integral to the construction of the kit.

Available for 32mm or 45mm gauge, the kit is supplied with steel wheelsets as standard, running in phosphor bronze bearings, mounted in prototypical arch-bar bogies. On test these vehicles have negotiated curves down to 2ft 6in radius on 32mm gauge without issue, but may require a larger minimum radius on 45mm gauge.

Details

Dimensions: Length Over Headstocks: 388mm, Length Over Couplings: 420mm, Max Height: 138mm, Width Over Sides: 107mm, Extreme Width: 120mm

Prices: MDF: £110, Plywood: £140

Website: www.resurgamrollingstock.co.uk

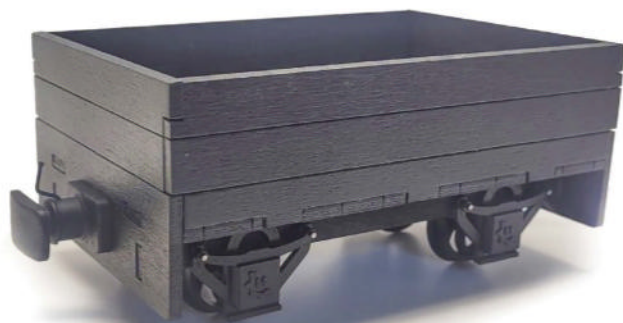
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Each kit comes with everything you need to build the wagon, including Binnie wheels, Steel axles, CNC machined brass bearings and couplings, specially designed for the Basic Series of wagons. The main body and frames are a kit of parts, laser cut from plywood. For the guards van, the duckets and axlebox details are FDM 3D printed parts. All couplings are resin printed.



Details

Gauge: Available in 32 and 45mm gauge.

Prices: Flat wagon: £16.95, Open wagon: £19.95, Guards van: £29.95

Website: www.hjonesengineering.com



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DeWinton Vertical Boiler Locomotive

16L001 Our kit represents "Chaloner" from Pen-yr Orsedd quarry, which later became very well-known by being preserved in working order at Leighton Buzzard. The frames, boiler, tank and bunker are all detailed polyurethane resin mouldings, with lots of lost wax castings in brass and nickel silver. A hidden functional etched brass chassis houses the wheels, motor and gearbox (which are included). The visible valve gear, complete with crank axle, is also included.

Price: £381.15



The Dinorwic Slate Quarry Range

16L02 Dinorwic Slate Quarry Hunslet "Rough Pup". Complete kit, with steel tyred wheels, high quality 'coreless' gearhead motor and gearbox. The body and chassis uses a mixture of urethane resin, etched brass, lost wax castings, whitmetal castings and precision turnings.

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16W01 Dinorwic Slate Wagon (single flanged wheels).

Price: £29.75

16W02 Dinorwic Slate Wagon (double flanged wheels)

Price: £30.60



16W01 (illustrated). 16W02 is similar, but with double flanged wheels.



The Festiniog Railway Range

16L03 "Prince" in 1900-1960 condition. Etched brass with resin saddle tank, smokebox etc, with lots of turned and cast brass fittings. Complete with wheels, motor and gearbox. Two-rail, but suitable for conversion to battery.

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Price: £101.65

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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 low cost wagon

I wondered if you would be interested in the attached photos of a wagon I am building. This is my very first attempt at 16mm scale modelling.

I retired earlier this year, and started building a garden railway. This is something I have wanted to do for many years.

As a retirement gift, my wife bought me a Roundhouse Harrogate. Apparently I had mentioned (many times) how much I liked it.

I needed something for Harrogate to pull so I set myself the challenge of building something at minimal cost. The wagon is a freelance design and is built entirely from spare parts and cardboard.



Since I also model in 7mm finescale, I have an ample spares box.

The bogies are from an O gauge Lima Mark 1 coach. They run really well. Cardboard was in stock from other projects, as was paint and transfers. I have bought couplings to match my Roundhouse. There are still some details to finish, but the total

cost for the build has been £20.

I am building a raised trackbed for my railway as I have trouble with bending for longer periods. I did not anticipate problems with insects and suffered a poisoned leg following bites. I guess this is a hazard of the hobby!

Paul Webster

Tank wagons

I built this rake of Swift Sixteen tank wagons sometime ago. These are very solid kits as the tank is a solid resin cast unit! The lettering is printed on water slide inkjet paper, and the ladders are from a signal ladders from Cambrian models.

I chose united dairies as it took me back to my 00 days. The lettering was inspired from internet research, and produced in Microsoft Word.

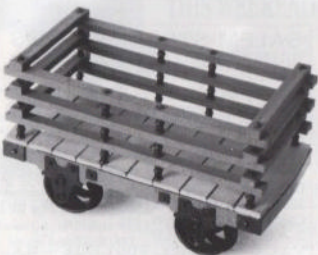
Peter Charles





Binnie Beginnings

When the kit that launched the Binnie empire returned to the market, the Editor couldn't resist building one.



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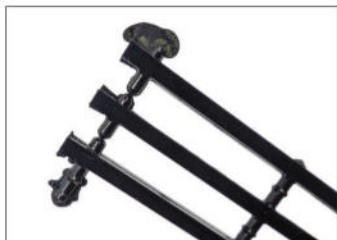
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The first advert I can find for this wagon, from Steamlines No.14. Sadly, these magazines don't have publishing dates, so I can't tell how long ago this was.



The instructions warn builders that the 40-year-old moulds mean we'll find a bit of flash on some of the parts. This is the worst I encountered, quickly dealt with using a sharp knife.



Originally supplied with finescale wheels, the modern kits versions are to 16mm Association standards, requiring some of the inner solebars under the floor to be cut away for clearance.



Clever. The sides are fitted to the floor, and then the ends sprung apart to accept cross-pieces. All this is assembled with lashings of MEK glue. Painting used Life Color's Weathered Wood and Rust Wizard packs. Couplings are my own, but scale versions are supplied. www.peterbinnie.com for more details.



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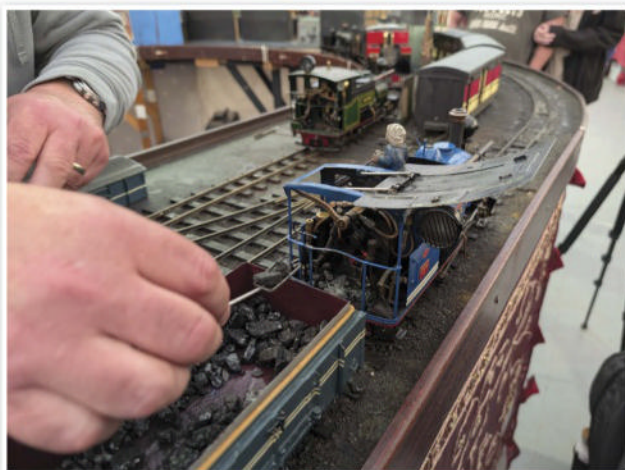
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Due to the success of this years open day back in June, as well as multiple requests from customers we have decided to host a second open day to celebrate Christmas. We will have a sale in effect for the day and we will be serving turkey baps, mince pies and drinks. Thank you to all of those who attended our summer open day; we hope to see you all again in December.

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