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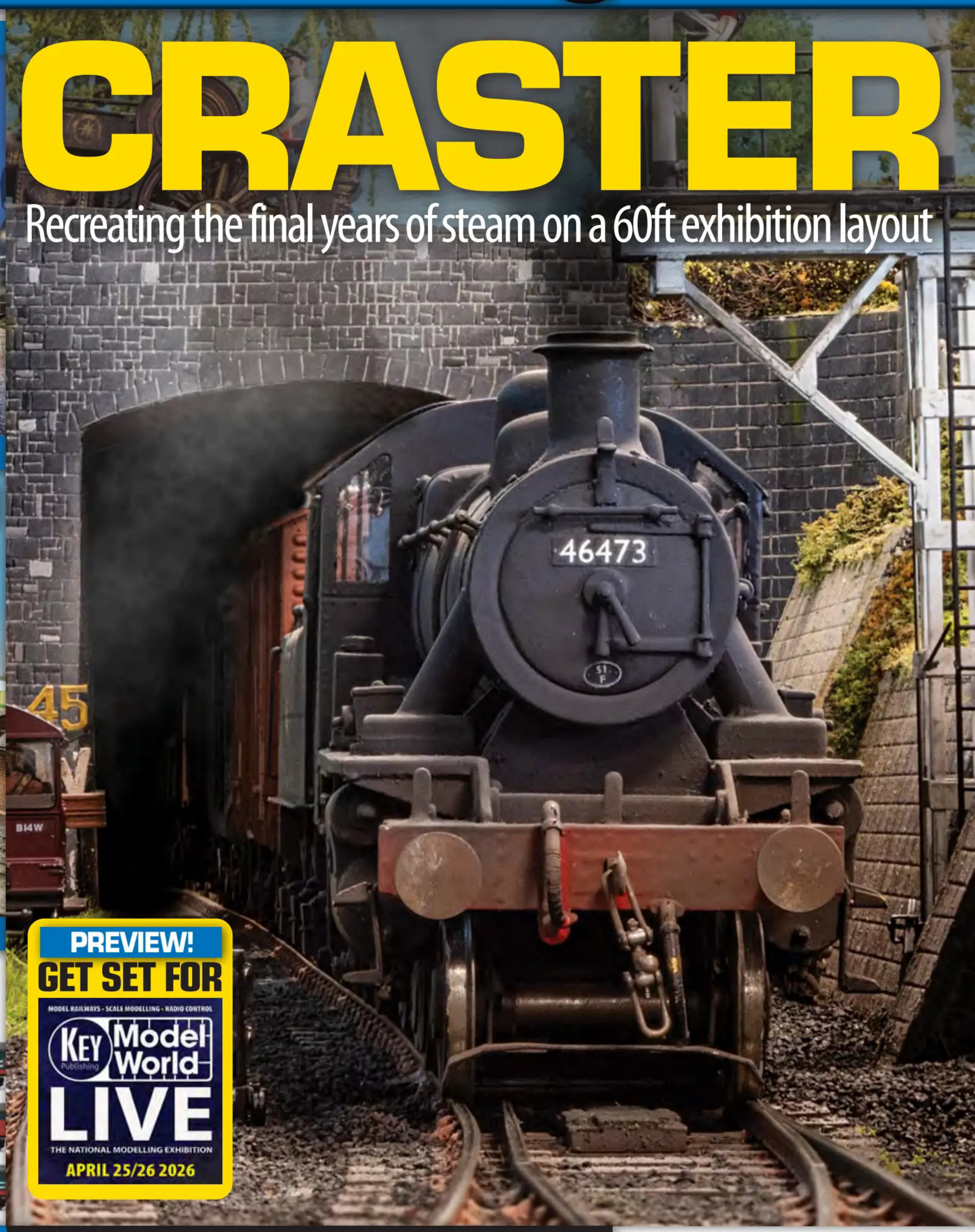
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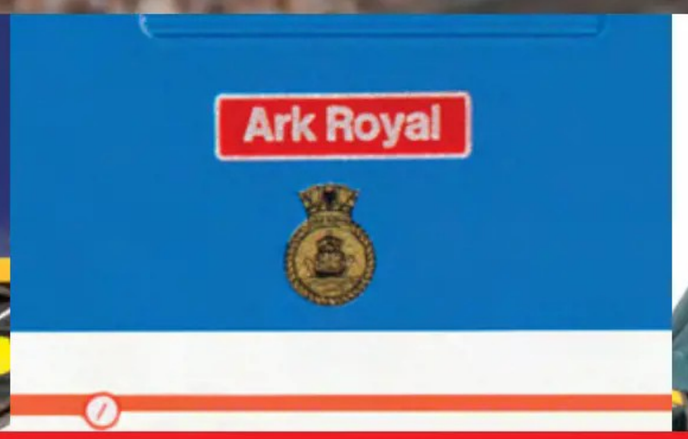
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HORNBY magazine

May 2026

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ISSUE 227

ISSN 1753-2469

HORNBY magazine

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Baby 'Boomer'	26x20x8	Single	8 Ω	1.0 W
Big 'Boomer'	40x20x7	Single	8 Ω	1.0 W
'Boom Box'	40x20x10	Twin	4 Ω	2.0 W
Slim 'Boom Box'	50x15x15	Twin	4 Ω	2.0 W
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Welcome

HELLO, AND WELCOME to the latest issue of *Hornby Magazine*. It has been another busy month behind the scenes at *Hornby Magazine* as we have been gathering details of the many outstanding motive power and rolling stock projects from the main model railway manufacturers for our annual New Model Guide survey.

While there have been many significant model releases during the past year, there have also been plenty of new announcements to refresh the listing and I hope you find your free 24-page guide included with this issue enjoyable and useful. It looks as though it is going to be another bumper year of releases – and rest assured, we will be reviewing them in the pages of *Hornby Magazine* as they are released in the months ahead.

On the subject of motive power and rolling stock, we've recently had an influx of exclusive models. Following quickly on from the arrival of our Hornby 'OO' gauge Colas Rail livered Class 43 HSTs, Cavalex Models has delivered our limited edition of Class 56 56103 in DCRail grey and the exclusive collection of Hornby Drax IIA-D biomass wagons arrived in mid-March. They've kept our warehouse team busy looking after all the pre-orders, but there are limited stocks of each available while they last from the Key Model World Shop – get yours while you can!

We are also just a few weeks away from Key Publishing's annual Model World LIVE exhibition at the NEC, Birmingham, on April 25/26. There is still time to save money on advance tickets and gain discounted travel with Avanti West Coast too. We are really looking forward to welcoming you to the show. We'll have East Coast Cement, our recently extended 'OO' gauge East Coast Main Line inspired layout on display all weekend, while the editorial team will also be on hand to answer your modelling questions. Other highlights include Pete Waterman's 144ft long Making Tracks layout, some of which is still taking shape as I write this, together with an amazing collection of stunning layouts – many of which have appeared in the pages of *Hornby Magazine* and a few that are set to do so in coming months. We also have plenty of other modelling disciplines at the show, with plenty to inspire you from scale modelling to slot car racing, radio-controlled vehicles and much more! See pages 28-31 to find out more – and we look forward to seeing you there!

In this issue, we go behind the scenes with DCRail at its Chessington aggregates terminal on the outskirts of London. We look at how the terminal operates and show how you could model this yourself – especially if you have been collecting our recent exclusive edition 'OO' gauge locomotives and JNA-T wagons. We've also got three outstanding layouts, inspirational step-by-step modelling guides, prototype articles and reviews this month include the stunning new Hornby Dublo 'Deltic' for 'OO' and much more. I hope you enjoy the issue!





Mark Chivers
Acting Editor

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HORNBY SPRING ANNOUNCEMENTS

HORNBY REVEALED a series of new 'OO' gauge models ahead of Model Rail Scotland in late March, including a new ScotRail HST, Southern Railway 'Merchant Navy' and more.

The announcements are headlined by a new ScotRail Class 43 HST train pack modelling the Class 43s used on ScotRail Inter7City services. The pack will contain one powered and one unpowered power car and will be released in Digital Command Control (DCC) Ready and DCC sound fitted forms; the latter will be fitted with two Hornby HM7000 TXS sound decoders, one in each power car. Both are due for release in December 2026.

A new steam generator-fitted 'Merchant Navy' will also join the line-up (see review on pages 84-85), modelling 21C4 *Cunard White Star Line* in Southern Railway malachite green. This model is targeted for a June 2026 release and will be fitted with Hornby's synchronised steam generator and a TXS sound decoder.



Hornby's popular 'OO' gauge Class 43 HST power cars return to the range in ScotRail Inter7City livery.



An additional 'OO' gauge steam-generator fitted Bulleid air-smoothed 'Merchant Navy' 4-6-2 has been added to the schedule, modelling 21C4 *Cunard White Star Line* in Southern Railway malachite green.

Finally, a new RailRoad Class 66 joins the roster, modelling GB Railfreight's 66775 *HMS Argyll*, which features unique F231 lettering on the side in place of the locomotive number and a White Ensign on the cabside. This will also be released in DCC Ready and HM7000 equipped TXS versions. This model is due for release in April 2026.

● **Visit *www.hornby.com* for more information.**

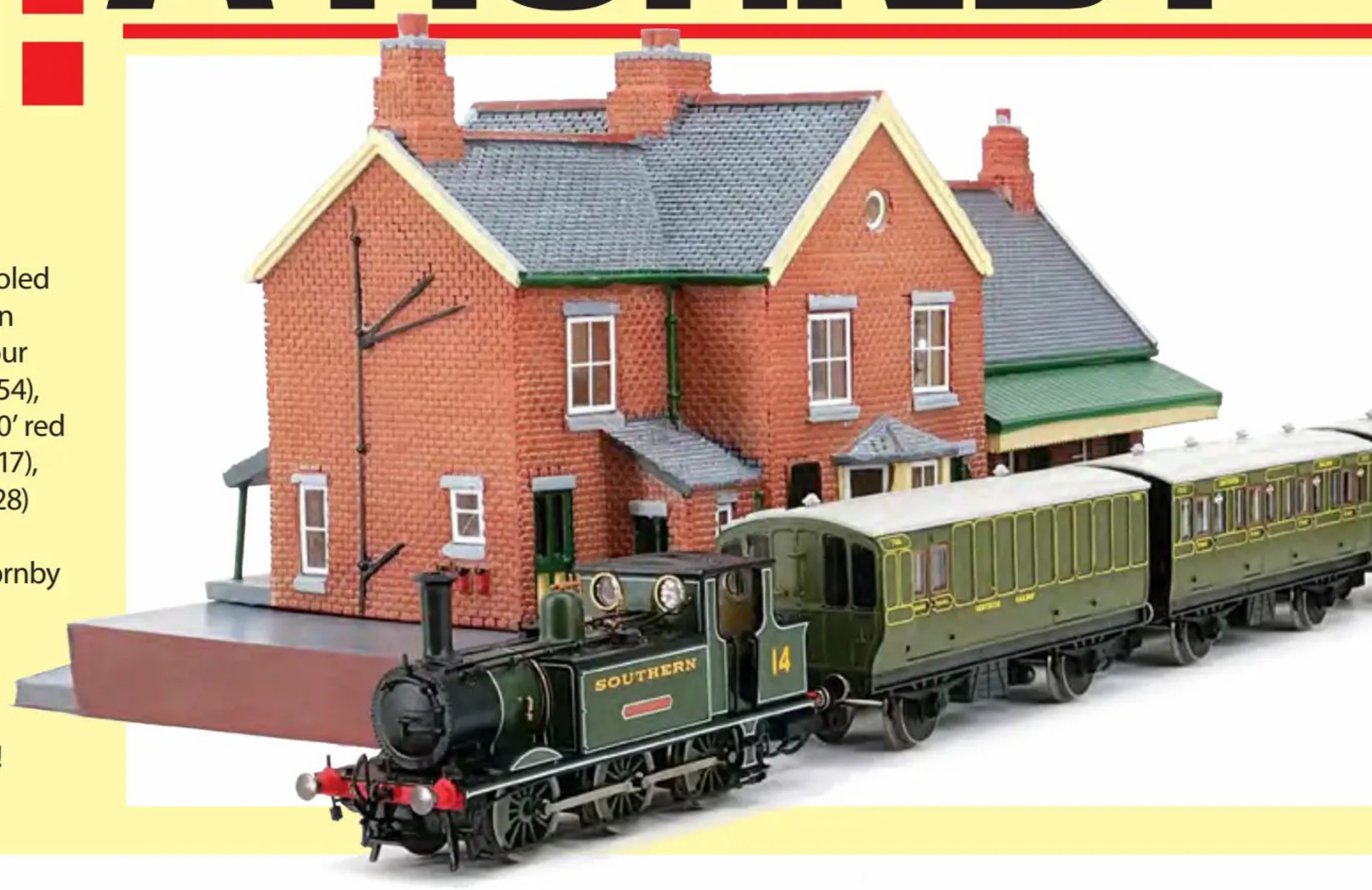
WIN! A HORNBY

KEY MODEL WORLD is offering readers a chance to win a bundle of Hornby 'TT:120' products worth £420!

The prize consists of Hornby's newly tooled 'TT:120' Stroudley 'Terrier' 0-6-0T W14 *Bembridge* in Southern Railway green (Cat No. TT3038M) and four four-wheel Southern Railway coaches (TT4051-4054), together with buildings from Hornby's new 'TT:120' red brick collection including a station building (TT9017), waiting room (TT9022), extended platform (TT9028) and signalbox (TT9021), worth a total of £420.

To be in with a chance of winning this superb Hornby 'TT:120' bundle, all you have to do is answer the accompanying question by May 25 2026.

Even if you don't win, Hornby's latest 'TT:120' models are available from selected Hornby stockists and at *www.hornby.com* now. Good luck!



3D printed Rebuilt 'Merchant Navy' revealed

HORNBY has revealed a stereo 3D printed sample of its all-new 'OO' gauge Bulleid Rebuilt 'Merchant Navy' 4-6-2, offering a glimpse of what the finished models will look like.

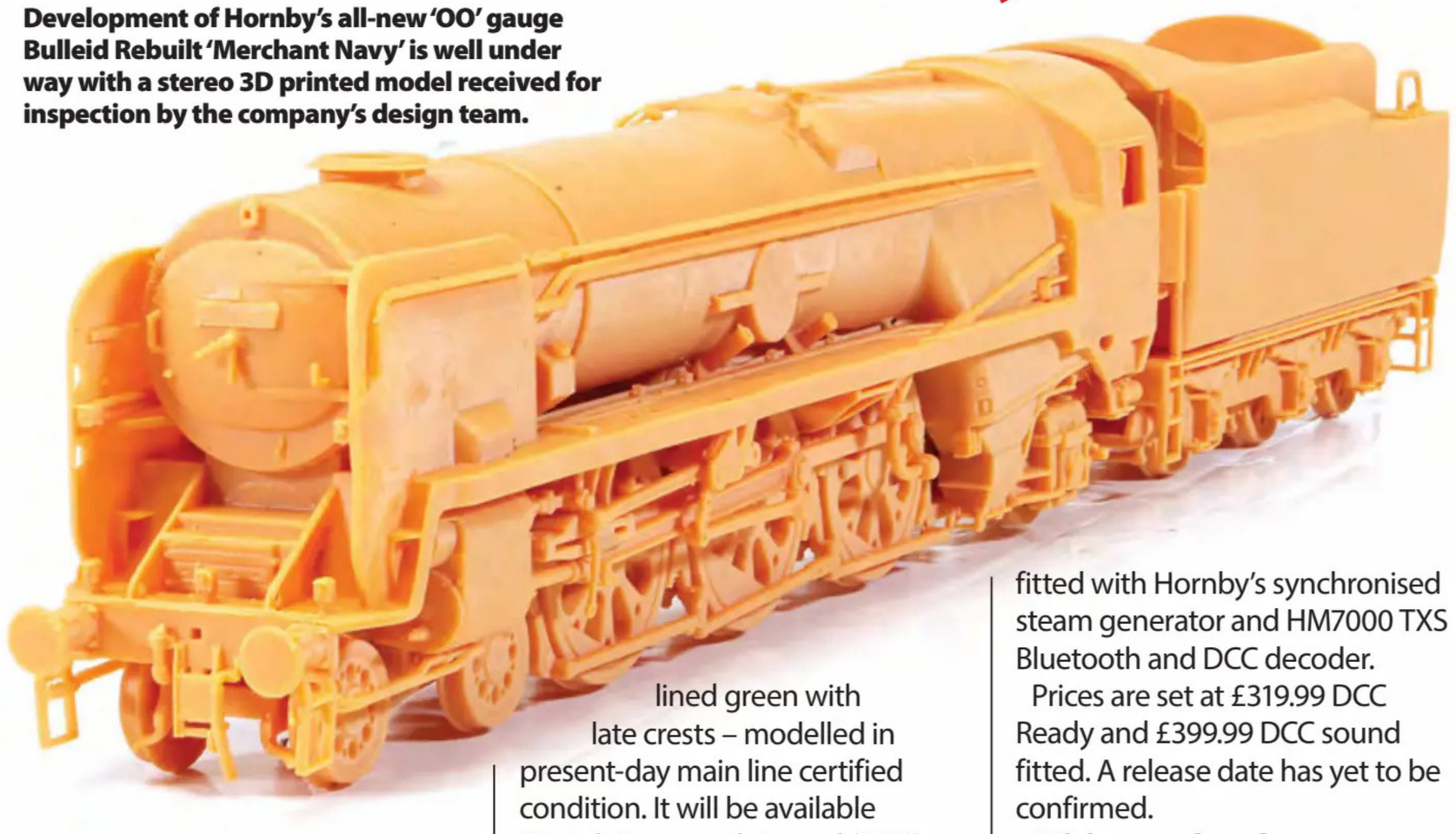
Hornby's early 3D printed model offers a first look of the new locomotive and is used for checking over the accuracy of the Computer Aided Design before tooling begins.

Hornby's new model is set to include a die-cast boiler, working electric lights, cab lights, provision for a steam generator, plus a wide range of tooling variations. Multiple types of tenders have been developed, including 35028 *Clan Line's* preservation era modified Series 3 tender.

Hornby's model will initially arrive as 35028 *Clan Line* in BR lined green with late crests – modelled in present-day main line certified condition. It will be available Digital Command Control (DCC) Ready and DCC steam and sound fitted with Hornby's synchronised steam generator and HM7000 TXS Bluetooth and DCC decoder.

Prices are set at £319.99 DCC Ready and £399.99 DCC sound fitted. A release date has yet to be confirmed.

● **Visit *www.hornby.com* for more information.**



Development of Hornby's all-new 'OO' gauge Bulleid Rebuilt 'Merchant Navy' is well under way with a stereo 3D printed model received for inspection by the company's design team.

Clear route ahead for 'TT:120' signals

PRODUCTION samples of Hornby's suite of 'TT:120' semaphore signals have been approved, ahead of the range's launch in the summer.

Hornby is producing home (Cat No. TT8045), distant (TT8046), junction home (TT8047) and junction distant signals (TT8048). Distant signals have yellow arms, rather than the standard red and are used to give drivers advance warning of the next signal's aspect – clear or danger.

Hornby's new semaphore signals feature illuminated aspects and moving arms, and can be operated via a lever at the base of the signal.

Prices are £11.99 for single aspect distant and home signals, rising to £12.99 for twin aspect distant and home junction signals.

● **Visit *www.hornby.com* for more information.**



Hornby has given the all clear for production of its new 'TT:120' scale semaphore signals.

'TT:120' BUNDLE



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QUESTION

Where were William Stroudley's LBSCR 'Terrier' 0-6-0Ts built?

A. Swindon Works
B. Derby Works
C. Brighton Works

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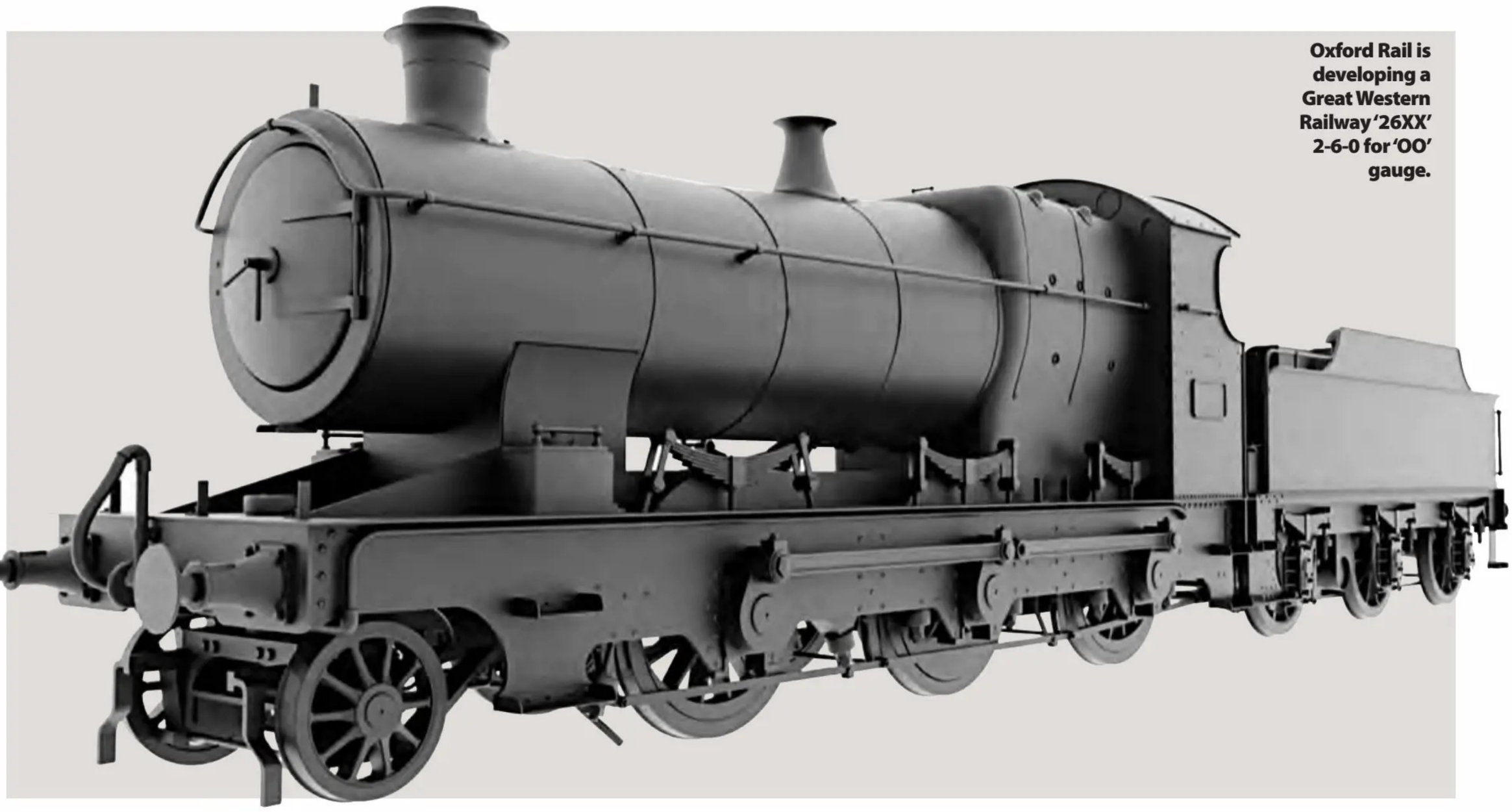
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3 ALL-NEW PROJECTS FOR OXFORD RAIL



Oxford Rail is developing a Great Western Railway '26XX' 2-6-0 for 'OO' gauge.

OXFORD RAIL is developing three all-new 'OO' gauge projects, including a Great Western Railway (GWR) '26XX' 2-6-0 freight locomotive, Caledonian Railway 'Pug' 0-4-0ST and Great Eastern Railway (GWR) cattle van.

Designed by William Dean in 1900, 81 '26XXs' – nicknamed 'Aberdares' - were constructed at Swindon Works and mainly used on coal trains from Wales. Withdrawals were started in 1934, but the Second World War paused this programme. All were withdrawn by 1949, with no survivors.

Oxford Rail's all-new model of the 'Aberdare' is due to feature a 21-pin Digital Command Control (DCC) socket plus factory-fitted stay alive, speaker and firebox glow. Seven models are planned and will appear in GWR green with Indian red frames, GWR green, GWR green with 'shirtbutton' roundel, GWR wartime black and BR GWR black. Models are priced at £179.95 DCC Ready and £289.95 DCC sound fitted.

Oxford Rail's Caledonian Railway (CR) 'Pug' 0-4-0ST models the class of 34 shunting locomotives built from 1885 to 1908. All were withdrawn by 1962 and, again, there are no survivors. Oxford Rail's new model will feature a coreless motor, 21-pin DCC socket, firebox glow and a pre-fitted speaker and stay alive.

Eight models form the initial range in CR lined black, London Midland & Scottish Railway (LMS) plain black, British Railways black, BR black with early crests, BR black with late crests, and Stewarts and Lloyds Limited steel works livery. A ninth model appears as 56025 *Smokey Joe*, reflecting the prototype when it was assigned to St Rollox Works in Glasgow, which will be exclusive to the Oxford Rail website. Models are priced at £124.95 DCC Ready and £234.95 DCC sound fitted.

Oxford Rail's third new tooling project is the Great Eastern Railway (GER) Diagram 7 cattle wagon, with 800 built between 1900 and 1909 and used extensively in East Anglia. These all-new 'OO' gauge wagons will appear in GER, LNER pre-1936, LNER post-1936 and BR colour schemes, with three running numbers available per livery. Wagons are priced at £21.95 each.

Release dates for all projects have yet to be confirmed.

●Visit *www.oxforddiecast.co.uk* for further details.



An all-new 'OO' gauge Caledonian Railway 'Pug' 0-4-0ST has also been announced by Oxford Rail.



Oxford Rail has also revealed plans for a new 'OO' Great Eastern Railway cattle van.

GWR '45XX' next for Rapido Trains UK



Rapido Trains UK is to produce an all-new Great Western Railway '45XX' 2-6-2T for 'OO'.

RAPIDO TRAINS UK's next 'OO' gauge locomotive project is the Great Western Railway '45XX' 2-6-2T.

This latest announcement from Rapido will allow early and late locomotives to be accurately modelled, with options for original or long running boards, extended or standard coal bunkers, straight or curved running boards, tall or short chimneys and safety valve bonnets, 'porthole' windows, and superheating and top feed arrangements on boilers.

Each will feature a factory-fitted speaker and a stay alive capacitor, plus a Next18 Digital Command Control (DCC) socket and firebox glow. Sprung buffers will be fitted, along with NEM coupling pockets and all models will be supplied with etched numberplates for customer fitment.

12 models form the initial range, with GWR era models in GWR pre-1906 lined green (Cat No: 951101), GWR lined green with garter crest (951102), GWR green (951103), GWR green with 'shirtbutton' roundel (951104) and GWR wartime green (951105). BR era models will appear in GWR green with BRITISH RAILWAYS Egyptian lettering (951106), BR black with early crests (951107), BR lined green with early crests (951108, BR lined green with late crests (951109) and preserved 1960s GWR green (951110). Two preservation era models are also planned, modelling 4566 in BR black with early crests (951111) and 4561 in GWR green (951112).

The project is in the tooling phase, with models priced at £172.95 DCC Ready and £284.95 DCC sound fitted. A release date has yet to be revealed.

●**Visit *www.rapidotrains.co.uk***



Rapido Trains UK is producing 12 different all-new 'OO' gauge '45XX' models, including 4555 in Great Western green.

All-new 'OO' BR 20ton brake van for Accurascale



ACCURASCALE is developing an all-new BR 20ton brake van for 'OO' gauge, the company's first vehicle of this type for its range.

Accurascale's all-new 'OO' gauge models will chart the history of these widespread vehicles from LNER 'Toad D' guise through to the end of their service careers in the privatisation era.

The manufacturer's extensive tooling suite will cater for detail differences incorporated through the decades and includes different buffer types, lamp iron positions, three axle box styles, four braking configurations, variations to handrails, air horns (where fitted), safety bars (where necessary), track-powered interior illumination and a stay alive for flicker-free operation. Tail and side lamps will be non-functional, but decorated, while inside, the model will also include a working cabin lantern and stove glow.

The new models will also feature a die-cast metal floor, and Accurascale promises a highly detailed body and underframe, turned metal wheels and small tension lock couplings in NEM pockets.



Accurascale has bolstered its 'OO' gauge range with plans for a series of all-new 'OO' gauge BR 20ton brake vans.

Colour schemes planned for the initial batch of releases include Longmoor Military Railway (LMR) blue, BR grey, BR bauxite, BR bauxite and yellow (air-piped), BR coal sector grey, BR Railfreight red/grey, Loadhaul orange and black and EWS maroon and gold.

Prices are set at £39.95 each, with delivery expected in early 2027.

●**Visit *www.accurascale.com***

ACCURASCALE ADDS 'OO' LONDON TRANSPORT '66s'



Accurascale has added a pair of 'OO' gauge London Transport themed Class 66s to its third batch of releases due in 2027.

ACCURASCALE is producing exclusive 'OO' gauge models of GB Railfreight's (GBRf) London Transport Class 66 duo, 66718 and 66721, with delivery expected in the middle of 2027.

66718 arrived at Newport Docks on April 9 2006 and arrived in First GBRf Metronet livery – intended for use on the London Underground sub-surface lines. In 2013, it was outshopped from Arlington Fleet Services' Eastleigh Works in a unique London Transport-inspired map and named *Sir Peter Hendy CBE*. The livery was refreshed in 2023, while the name was updated recently to *Peter, Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill, of Imber in the County of Wiltshire*.

66721 arrived alongside 66718 and was named *Harry Beck* in January 2007, commemorating the designer who created the first London Underground map in 1933. It was also outshopped from Eastleigh in 2013 with a London Underground map theme, with one side featuring the original 1933 map and the other a present-day version. The locomotive's livery has been updated several times since 2013.

Accurascale's third batch of Class 66s for 'OO' gauge features some small enhancements over previous production runs, including a newly tooled exhaust silencer with enhanced profile and detailing, revised handbrake linkages moulded in the off position and a new etched middle handrail bracket option which can appear on the cab fronts. Other enhancements include the ability to represent roof mounted Wi-Fi pods, Freightliner cab door modifications and new replacement BMAC lighting units. Each will also feature a five-pole motor, twin flywheels, 21-pin Digital Command Control decoder socket, all-wheel pick-up and rotating axle box covers.

Available exclusively from the Accurascale website, they are priced at £179.99 DCC Ready and £279.95 DCC sound fitted, with delivery expected in the second quarter of 2027.

● Visit *www.accurascale.com* for more information.

LAYOUT CONCEPTS ACQUIRES DCC CONCEPTS

LAYOUT CONCEPTS has acquired North Yorkshire based DCC Concepts, with distribution of the products now fulfilled by The Model Centre (TMC).

Layout Concepts intends to maintain the current product range offered by DCC Concepts, with development of the existing Settle showroom planned. TMC will fulfil product distribution for Layout Concepts, with a new Layout Concepts website launched and a new trade portal in development.

Layout Concepts says it is committed to maintaining and developing the existing range of products and will offer and maintain lifetime warranties and post-sale support. It is also promising to improve stock consistency and distribution, accelerate new product releases, and offer 'broader solutions' to analogue and Digital Command Control modellers.

Richard Johnson of DCC Concepts said: "After a quarter of a century of product development, we now need the energy and fresh vision of a young team of hobby lovers to take the business towards the future with confidence. It's time for a positive change that will add back the sparkle to everything that has been – and more importantly, now can be – developed.

Howard Smith of TMC added: "DCC Concepts earned its reputation through intelligent design and genuine passion for the hobby. We have enormous respect for what Richard built over the past 25 years. Our goal is to honour that legacy while investing in the next stage of growth – strengthening stock availability, enhancing support and enabling exciting developments already in the pipeline."

● Visit *www.layoutconcepts.com* for more information.

‘OO’ Rail Head Treatment Train returns



Accurascale is reissuing the former ‘OO’ gauge Rail Head Treatment Train wagon sets which are set to include several tooling amendments.

ACCURASCALE is releasing the former ‘OO’ gauge Hatton’s Originals Rail Head Treatment Train (RHTT) FEA-F wagon sets – with delivery due next year.

The Greenbrier FEA-F wagons were introduced from 2005 and can carry water tanks, water jet modules and Sandite applicators. The trains are powered by a wide selection of motive power and are an essential part of keeping the network operating effectively during the leaf fall season.

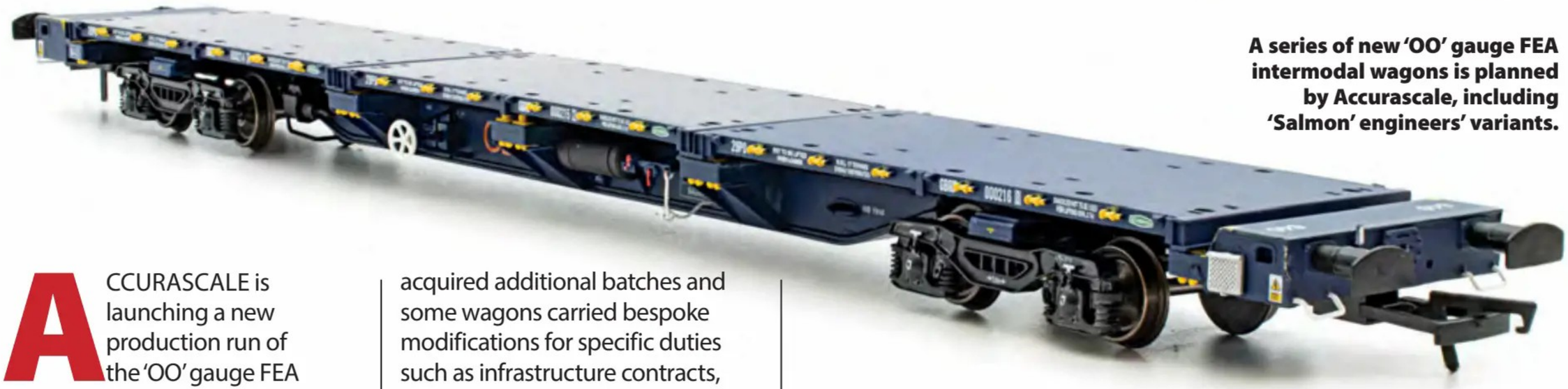
Accurascale’s model represents the wagons in post-2009 condition and can be supplied in water only and combined water and Sandite fitted forms. Accurascale has introduced several tooling upgrades, with notable improvements being revised mouldings for more accurate water pipe layout, an option to mould the early water jet module with a standard fuel tank, reorientation of the module locking levers and the removal of incorrect details.

Four twin wagon packs are to be produced with two packs in water only form and two with Sandite and water capabilities.

Twin wagon packs are exclusively available from the Accurascale website and are priced at £149.99 each. Delivery is expected in the second quarter of 2027.

● **Visit *www.accurascale.com* for more information.**

Accurascale launches new FEA wagon range



A series of new ‘OO’ gauge FEA intermodal wagons is planned by Accurascale, including ‘Salmon’ engineers’ variants.

ACCURASCALE is launching a new production run of the ‘OO’ gauge FEA intermodal wagons, which were previously part of the Hatton’s Originals range.

The FEAs were introduced with Freightliner from 2003 and initially worked in fixed two-wagon sets. Individual wagons for infrastructure work were later built. Balfour Beatty, Freightliner Heavy Haul and GB Railfreight (GBRf) acquired additional batches and some wagons carried bespoke modifications for specific duties such as infrastructure contracts, with wagons converted to general intermodal traffic as required.

Accurascale’s new production run of FEA wagons introduces tooling enhancements including revised deck profiles to accommodate fixed container spigots, removal of unnecessary pipe runs and the addition of handrails and footsteps on GBRf wagons. 20ft ‘Salmon’ modules now feature textured flooring, lashing rings and a new extension piece between the module end and headstocks – plus enhancements to the overall fit and finish of parts.

Accurascale’s first raft of wagons will focus on GBRf’s fleet and will appear in Metronet-branded yellow and blue ‘Salmon’ module variants. They will also appear in GBRf blue with ‘Salmon’ modules and debranded GBRf yellow.

The FEAs will be available in twin-wagon packs priced at £79.99 each, exclusively from the Accurascale website. Release is expected during the second quarter of 2027.

● **Visit *www.accurascale.com* for more information.**



Cavalex Models DCR

KEY PUBLISHING'S NEW exclusive 'OO' gauge model of DCRail Class 56 56103 has arrived from Cavalex Models and is in stock now with limited quantities remaining.

The new release comes with the second batch of Cavalex Models Class 56s with upgrades including repositioning of the bogie pivot centres, improvement of the kinematic coupling and new LED lighting features to correctly model the modern lighting fitted to 56103.

56103 is modelled in its post-2024 condition, as operated by DCRail on aggregates trains across the network. It returned to service in this condition in May 2024 when it worked double-headed with on-hire Class 56 56098 from Chaddesden Sidings to Middleton Towers and return.

Details specific to 56103 includes the split handrails on the cab front, high-intensity headlight, correct round and flat handrails at each door on the bodyside and correct LED lighting for the locomotive. It is available DCC Ready and DCC sound fitted - the latter equipped with a LokSound V5 sound decoder featuring Cavalex Models bespoke Class 56 sound profile.



Prices are set at £189.95 DCC Ready and £289.95 DCC sound fitted. There is also the option to order the model with the official Cavalex Models sound pack for £309.95.

Pre-orders for 56103 were being processed in early March 2026 with the remaining stock on general sale with a choice of DCC Ready and DCC Ready models with the official Soundpack to fit at home remaining.

● **Visit *www.keymodelworld.com/shop* for more information.**



DRAX BIOMASS WAGONS ARRIVE

THE EXCLUSIVE collection of Hornby 'OO' gauge Drax biomass wagons for Key Publishing have arrived in stock, with all four twin-packs available to order now.

The new collection of wagons models the Drax IIA-D wagons in their original Drax Powering Tomorrow livery with the artwork flowing across each two-wagon pack. The four packs feature individual numbers offering eight uniquely numbered wagons across the range.

Highlights include turned metal wheels, small tension locks in NEM coupling pockets, optional buffer beam accessory parts and an accurate body profile.

Each twin pack costs £89.99 and all four are available now.

● **Visit *www.keymodelworld.com/shop* for more information.**



The imposing IIA-D wagons are now available from the Key Model World Shop.

EXCLUSIVE

Class 56 arrives

EXCLUSIVE



FOR 'OO' GAUGE



New 3D printed Class 66 interior grilles

RUSTY Rails Modelling has created a new 3D printed set of interior radiator grilles for the new 2025-released Bachmann Class 66.

The twin-pack is designed to fit inside the latest Bachmann model to provide walkway and radiator room detail and including modelling of the doors for access to the engine room and cab. Supplied unpainted in 3D printed resin, the new parts require painting prior to installation and cost £5.99 each.

The full Rusty Rails Modelling 'OO' gauge collection is available from the Key Model World Shop

● **Visit *www.keymodelworld.com/shop* for more information.**



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GOATHLAND

This famous North Yorkshire Moors railway station is **CHRIS BEICHER'S** 'OO' gauge layout of a lifetime – but he has chosen to model it in a quite different time period at his home in Australia, as he explains.

PHOTOGRAPHY, CHRIS BEICHER

GAUGE	SCALE	SIZE	REGION	PERIOD	CONTROL
'OO', 16.5mm	4mm:1ft	11ft x 2ft (scenic)	NORTH EASTERN	1960s	DCC, NCE



1 Right: **Representing the new order, Gateshead allocated Sulzer Type 2 D5149 glides into Goathland with a long-distance train for Whitby.**

2 Below: **Thompson 'B1' 4-6-0 61180 departs Goathland with a short rake of non-corridor stock while a two-car Class 101 Diesel Multiple Unit prepares to head north.**

I SOMETIMES WONDER WHAT George Stephenson would have thought if he had known his quiet railway connecting York and Whitby would one day include one of the most famous stations in the country. Goathland is instantly recognisable thanks to its idyllic countryside charm, atmosphere and television and cinema appearances as Aidensfield and Hogsmeade. I have seen many exceptional models of the location over the last few years, but it was only while standing on the platform itself in freezing Yorkshire wintry conditions I decided this was the place I wanted to model too.

I've always been drawn to Yorkshire and the North East as a location to model. I had already made a couple of false starts on layouts depicting fictitious locations along the Esk Valley Line, but these layouts never quite lived up to expectations. I wanted to build a model that would enable me to sit back and just watch trains pass, and include a station, goods yard or similar to allow for some operational interest. I also wanted to experiment and push my own skills and knowledge with scenery, so early on I decided a countryside setting with a variety of trees and bushes to frame the track would be the way to go. When I first began researching places, I was initially drawn to Goathland, but it was only after a visit while on holiday in 2016 I realised the location not only ticked all my boxes but also exuded an atmosphere I wanted to recreate in my lounge.

On returning to Australia, I began designing a track plan. I would have to reproduce the location in 11ft x 2ft. In the end, this wasn't as difficult as I imagined, the biggest hurdles being how much I could selectively compress the scene without looking too squashed and how tight I could make the curves at each end to enable continuous running. By shortening the platforms by roughly a coach length, I've managed to retain most of the key elements of Goathland from the station at one end to the road bridge at the other. The only major compromise is behind the station where there are only two sidings due to the width of the boards. While this is correct in preservation, there were originally »



three sidings when the line was in revenue service – and it's at this point I started taking the layout in a new direction.

BR SETTING

Initially, I was planning on reproducing Goathland in preserved condition as the reference material is easily accessible. However, I came across John Flint's pictorial book series *The North Yorkshire Moors – Then & Now*. These books provided a reference for how Goathland looked in its days of revenue service and included some timetable excerpts from the 1960s. It got me thinking about recreating Goathland in 1960s BR North Eastern Region condition – would it be possible? Really, not much has changed, except that rather than carrying a red and white colour scheme, all buildings carried the blue and orange of the NE Region and the only way of crossing the track was via the barrow crossing at the northern end of the station: there was no footbridge yet! Six trains a day in each direction was the norm, mostly provided by Diesel Multiple Units but the mail would often be included in a short steam-hauled passenger working and a pick-up goods train rounded out a day's workings. A handful of signals have also been relocated.

As I delved down rabbit holes of research, I returned to normality by beginning construction. The layout's baseboards are all open topped, with the framework made of pinewood, while 9mm ply forms the trackbed. The fascias and backboards are 3mm MDF as it is very easy to cut and shape. C&L flexible track was used to replicate the plan, while points are pre-built from Marcway. Before fixing the track down, I soldered individual dropper wires to each length of rail to ensure reliable electrical connection. I was initially planning on using Peco code 75 (although it hadn't released its bullhead range at that stage), however a friend had introduced me to C&L. I much preferred the look, but I struggled with building points, thankfully Marcway produced ready-to-run versions with the wider sleeper spacing.

Once the track had been wired, tested and tweaked, I moved onto ballasting the track. I was keen to replicate the look of 1960s ash

3 Left: **Working its way back south, Worsdell 'J27' 65894 heads a pick-up goods train at Goathland.**

4 Right: **Capturing the essence of Goathland in a heartbeat, with the station's distinctive stone-built station buildings, platform waiting room, shelter and a pair of camping coaches in the siding.**

5 Below: **Despite the incorrect destination blind, a Whitby-bound Class 101 DMU slows for the Goathland stop, while an adjacent Class 108 prepares to continue its journey south.**





Left: **BR Standard '3MT' 2-6-2T 82029 restarts its three-coach rake of Thompson suburban stock, heading south.**

ballast along the line but struggled to find a suitable product – especially one readily available in Australia. In the end however, after some experimentation I ended up combining Woodland Scenics fine grade ballast mixed with some dark grey grout colouring to get a bit more of that 1960s look. To my eye at least, the grout colouring seems to give the ballast a darkened but not quite black, more powdered texture.

Once the track was down, I turned my attention to the landscape and buildings. The buildings are a mix of scratch builds and resin ready-to-plant products. Hornby and Bachmann both produce most of the buildings as part of their resin castings ranges, and I have used their main station

Below: **As a Thompson 'B1' eases away from Goathland station, the line's pick-up goods train, headed by a Worsdell 'J27' 0-6-0 rumbles into view.**

building, outbuildings, water cranes and tower. Before adding these to the layout, I repainted them to reflect a slightly grittier 1960s look. I have scratchbuilt the waiting room and shelter, despite also having ready-to-run offerings, mainly because they looked quite simple buildings to reproduce and I thought I could make a better representation of timber by scribing card, undercoating in black and dry brushing the white and blue colour scheme on top. The Old Mill and road bridge are also scratchbuilt with a card frame clad with embossed stone plastic sheet and then painted appropriate stone colours. Lighting and interior detail were also added to all buildings before fixing down.

MOOR YORKSHIRE

To get the scene to look right and hide some of my compromises, I held off doing any scenic work until the buildings were glued down and in position. However, while that stage took the better part of a year to finish, the scenery progressed much faster. The landscape itself is of very simple construction - polystyrene sheets which were carved to shape using sandpaper. Yes, it was ridiculously messy, but a lot of fun! I also found by running the sandpaper over the polystyrene, it almost found the natural contours, giving everything a realistic look. Once the hills were carved, a shell was created from plaster cloth, which was then painted a base of brown.

Whilst work on the layout's foundations progressed, I was also beginning to look into creating natural looking scenery. Early on I had read a few of Gordon Gravett's books on scenery, as well as come across modeller/manufacturer Martin Welberg. Both of these modellers create some of the most natural looking, hyper-realistic scenery I've ever seen and while some of the time-honoured flock and scatter techniques give a good impression of vegetation, I was keen to emulate these modellers and create vegetation that looked almost real from close-up as well as a distance. After a lot of research and experimentation, I settled on using static grass from Mininatur in its late autumn and winter blends. To my eye at least, I find the Mininatur products seem to retain a soft grassy texture. I had also been following Everard Junction on YouTube at the time. The method of applying static grass involved applying random blobs and patches with one blend of lengths and colours, then filling in the gaps with a similar but different blend. This created a very natural, varied effect, so I sought to replicate that approach.

Bushes are a mix of polyfibre sprayed brown, some with flock, others with Noch leaves scattered on top. The gorse bushes by the river are my own invention, string teased out, sprayed brown then 2mm static grass fibres sprinkled on top. Behind the station is a blend of sea foam trees, grass mats, my gorse bushes and etched bracken ferns. Most of the trees are sea foam or made from twisted wire, coated with MIG texture paint. To help blend everything together I've also sprinkled Treemendus Earth Powder around, as well as a scattering of its Forest Floor blend in areas to create an autumnal feel. Green Stuff World, Martin Welberg bushes and a handful of MBR trees make up the remainder of the vegetation. While there are areas I want to revisit where the colour palette, texture or 'look' of the plants hasn't quite hit the mark I was hoping, there are areas I am extremely happy with and can honestly say that is the absolute best of my ability.



With overcoats and hats on, a pair of passengers are prepared for the brisk conditions while waiting for the next departure south from Goathland.

TAKING STOCK

It's at this point I must confess I have far too many locomotives, no doubt like many *Hornby Magazine* readers, I'm sure. I'm not much of a kit builder when it comes to rolling stock, but nearly all of what ran on the line is available ready-to-run from the major manufacturers. When I initially set out creating Goathland and gathering reference material, I reached out to the National Railway Museum to see if it could provide any additional timetables to the ones I already had. I ended up receiving summer and winter timetables of the line from 1958 until closure in March 1965, with a couple of Working Timetables too. With these I began compiling a series of operating sequences for the layout, but to justify the locomotives and rolling stock I bought, I tried as much as possible to cross reference the workings with the images in John Flint's books. This was just as tedious»

as it sounds, but it is immensely satisfying watching and running history, as well as knowing all my stock is constantly getting a good run!

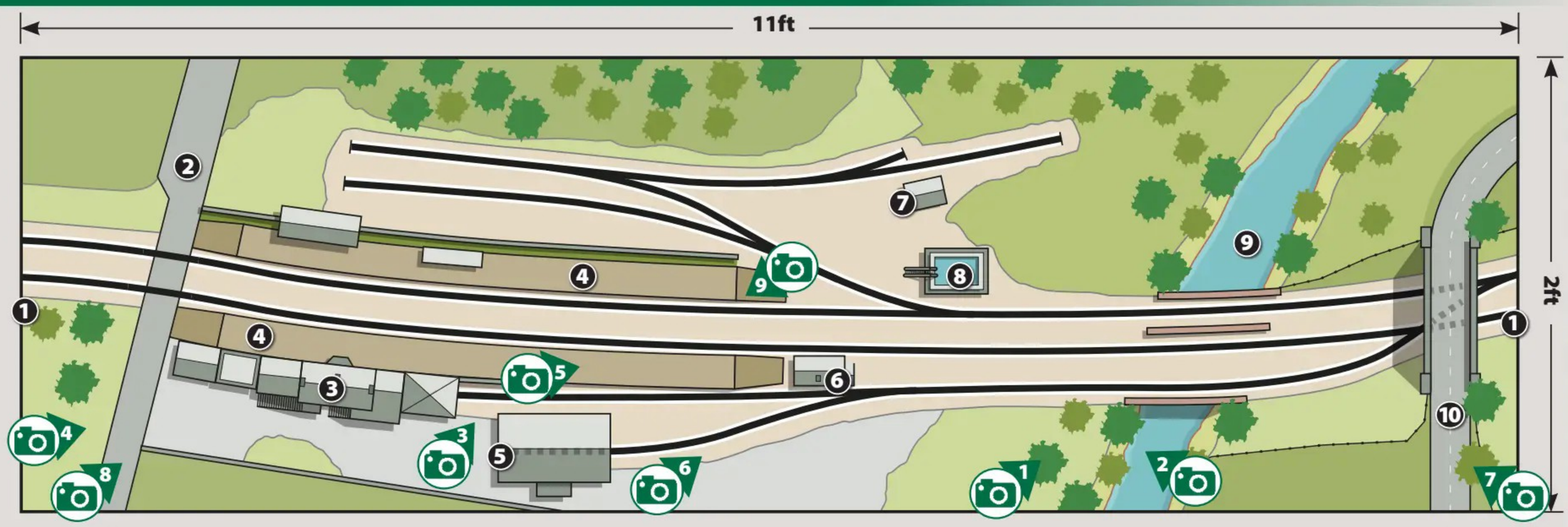
While my efforts have been mainly focussed on completing Goathland, a house move in 2019 presented an interesting opportunity. My very patient wife let me take over the front living room as my train room (our 'hobby' room), allowing me to potentially extend the Goathland scene. Around the same time, I discovered Geoff Taylor's Barmouth Junction layout, and I was captivated by his design where a train enters one scene and then disappears before reappearing in another scene across the room, creating the illusion of a train going somewhere. I was really inspired by the design, so instead of extending Goathland I began extending the whole line! After more than a few nights of creative thinking, I was able to build some baseboards and lay track which will be the future sites of Grosmont (the northern terminus of the NYMR), Levisham and Pickering (to the south). As with Goathland, Levisham will be modelled in its BR guise, but the track which has been preserved at Grosmont and Pickering was far easier to compress in the space available than what existed in BR times, so those stations are being modelled as they were when I visited again in late 2019. This also gives me a good excuse to run the locomotives I bought as souvenirs after riding behind them at the steam gala that year.

Goathland is now about 90% complete and is more in a state of refinement rather than building. My main focus has moved to Grosmont and, in a similar vein to Goathland, I just need to complete the row of railway cottages before I can begin the scenery. Levisham and Pickering remain flat baseboards with track and await building, but that is part of the joy I am fortunate enough to have. Once Goathland is complete I can continue with a 'new' layout, without discarding all that came before. It really is my layout of a lifetime!

HM

● You can read more layout articles at *www.keymodelworld.com/layout-features.*

GOATHLAND TRACK DIAGRAM (NOT TO SCALE)



KEY				
1 To/from off-scene area	3 Goathland station	5 Goods shed	7 Hut	9 River
2 Foot crossing	4 Platform	6 Signalbox	8 Water tower	10 Road bridge

9 With exhausts rattling in the station, a Class 101 waits for the signal to clear before departing for Grosmont and not Shrewsbury as the destination blind suggests!

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SCAN HERE TO SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

In just a few weeks' time, **MODEL WORLD LIVE 2026** opens its doors on the weekend of April 25/26 at the NEC in Birmingham. Featuring more than 180 stands, this is an event you don't want to miss!

THE NATIONAL MODELLING EXHIBITION

MODEL WORLD LIVE 2026 is back at the NEC in Birmingham on April 25/26. Filling Hall 9, the event features the best in model railways, scale modelling and radio control with an outstanding line-up of exhibits, demonstrations, displays, traders and manufacturers.

Entering its third year, the show has new features including being the stage for the RC Drift International Spring Major competition for radio-controlled drift cars which joins a hand-picked line up of stunning model railways as well as the best in scale modelling.



Get set for a feature-packed weekend at Model World LIVE on April 25/26 at the NEC in Birmingham.

The 2026 show is sponsored by Bachmann Europe, Pocketbond, Model Collect Create, Modelu, Oxford Diecast and TMC, with each brand hosting its own stand at the weekend event.

The two-day event is set to feature more than 180 stands, with the final bookings being confirmed as this issue closed for press. Keep a close eye on the Model World LIVE website for the latest information - and don't forget to book your discount advance tickets to save over on the day prices, gain early





Above: **The RC Drift Spring Major is a new competition event joining Model World LIVE for the first time in 2026.**

Below: **A stunning cast of model railways are lined up for Model World LIVE including favourites from *Hornby Magazine* like Redbridge Wharf by Winchester Railway Modellers.**



THE DETAILS	
When:	April 25/26 2026
Where:	Hall 9, NEC, Birmingham B40 1NT
Times:	Saturday April 25 10am-5pm, Sunday April 26 10am-4pm. Advance ticket holders enter from 9.30am each day
Website:	*www.keymodelworld.com/modelworldlive*
Contact:	01780 480404
Tickets:	Adult advance £20, child advance £10 (Saturday only), adult subscriber £18, VIP £60, Weekend Ticket £40. Adult on the day £25, child on the day £12 (Saturday only). Up to two children admitted FREE with each paying adult on Sunday only.

entry to the show from 9.30am each day and get access to discount travel with Avanti West Coast on the show weekend.

THE LAYOUTS

At the heart of any good modelling exhibition are the layouts, and Model World LIVE delivers a carefully curated selection covering a range of scales, prototypes and modelling approaches, ranging in size from 6ft long micro layouts to the biggest in this year's show at 144ft long!

Scales from 'N' to 'O' gauge are represented with highlights including the biggest Making Tracks layout of 2026 from Pete Waterman and the Railnuts extending to more than 140ft in length. It will combine the stunning stations at Milton Keynes and Watford Junction with Tring Cutting in between, as well as featuring North Church Tunnel, Watford Tunnel and Bushey Viaduct as signatures from the collection of 'OO' gauge layouts.

Big layouts are a big part of the show including Soar Valley Model Railway Club's Charnwood which measures 50ft x 13ft and models a BR steam era branch line in 'O' gauge as well as Dale Brunskill's 50ft long 'O' gauge terminus Craster which features in this issue of *Hornby Magazine*. For overseas modellers, there is the impressive RS Tower 'HO' scale American layout to look forward to which features a central continuous run layout together with Freemo modules leading to a total size of almost 45ft x 30ft.

There are also layouts at the opposite end of the size scale, including Joe Laurence's Project New Street which captures part of the Western end of Birmingham New Street station in a minimum space together with the like of Bottom of the Barrel by Joe Stamper which models a brewery scene in a barrel!

Hornby Magazine-featured layouts appearing across the weekend include Redbridge Wharf by Winchester Railway Modellers (HM201), Witham by Martyn Reynolds (HM188), Overlord by Chris Mead (HM20), Welby Lane RTC (HM212), Georgemas Junction (HM226), Whiteoak Light Railway (HM214), Bristol Avon Bridge (HM225), Tulloch Bridge (HM205), Pettleworth Downs (HM218) and Key Model World/*Hornby Magazine's* own layout East Coast Cement making only its second appearance in extended form (HM221-HM223).

Each layout selected for the show has been built to carefully represent part of the real world in miniature and across the weekend you will be see everything from giant aspirational layouts to compact scenes you could build at home, all of which can inspire the next project.

MANUFACTURERS AND TRADE

Alongside the layouts, Model World LIVE will host a strong line-up of manufacturers and specialist traders. For railway modellers, this is an opportunity to see the latest products up close from the likes of »

Accurascale, Bachmann, Cavalex Models, Hornby, Oxford Rail, Revolution Trains and more.

When it comes to the trade stands, there is something for everyone. From the latest rolling stock to scenic materials, tools, electronics, digital control decoders, details and accessories, the trade presence has it all. In total, more than 80 trade stands are taking part in the show.

Demonstration stands are also a major attraction. Experienced modellers will be showing techniques throughout the weekend across the modelling genres - making the show the perfect opportunity to learn new skills from military and aviation modellers as much as those with a focus on model railways.

For anyone starting a new layout, this is the perfect opportunity to compare products in person, ask questions and get advice from manufacturers and fellow enthusiasts.



Interactive stands are a big feature of Model World LIVE where you can try your hand at scale modelling, scenic features, RC Drifting, radio controlled truck driving and more.

MODELLING SHOWCASE

Although railway modelling will be a key part of the event, Model World LIVE is designed as a celebration of modelling in all its forms. Aircraft, armour, automotive and science-fiction subjects will all be represented by scale modellers, bringing together enthusiasts from across the wider modelling community.

For railway modellers, this can provide unexpected inspiration. Weathering techniques used by armour modellers translate beautifully to locomotives and rolling stock, while aircraft modellers' expertise with airbrushing and finishing can offer new approaches to paintwork.

The crossover between modelling disciplines continues to grow and we've even got layouts which combine model railways with radio controlled vehicles.

INTERACTIVE

A big feature at Model World LIVE is the interactive stands, and this year there will be even more opportunities to get hands-on with modelling at the show. From a Make and Take plastic modelling zone supported by Airfix and manned by Brampton IPMS members, to the Model Collect Create stand with its Pine Car racing and Woodland Scenics Make and Take, there are opportunities throughout the weekend to get involved.

You can try driving a radio



Pete Waterman's biggest layout of 2026 is coming to Model World LIVE modelling the WCML across 144ft x 14ft!



A Chieftain Main Battle Tank will be the centrepiece at Model World LIVE 2026 carrying Berlin camouflage.

controlled truck at the Tamiya Truckin arena and at selected times the RC Drift arena will have club cars available which you can take the controls of. Plus, if that isn't enough radio control experience, TMC and Tamiya are hosting a turn-up-and-drive track with a collection of cars available. Plus, Key Model World's East Coast Cement will offer turn-up-and-drive opportunities too.

MEET THE TEAM

Model World LIVE is created by modellers for modellers as the National Modelling Exhibition and you can meet the *Hornby Magazine*, Key Model World and *Airfix Model World* teams at the show.

You can't miss our centrepiece exhibits this year: a Chieftain Mk 10 Main Battle Tank and a Foden 6x6 Wrecker will be on display throughout the weekend offering inspiration for your projects or simply a picture with these two huge military vehicles.

Discount advance tickets are on sale now, offering reduced prices and early entry to the show from 9.30am each day plus access to 20% off Avanti West Coast train travel to the show. VIP tickets have now sold out, but the new limited-availability Weekend ticket which includes two-day entry to the show and a £10 voucher to spend on the Key Model World stand at Model World LIVE is available priced £40.

Advance tickets cost £20 for adults and £10 for children under 16 for Saturday, April 25. Plus, children under 16 can enter FREE on Sunday, April 26, when accompanied by a paying adult - maximum of two children per adult permitted. A new bundle ticket offer for an advance ticket to Model World LIVE and a new 3D printed Chieftain Tank kit by Trains4U is also available priced at £40, offering a total £10 saving.

With so much to offer and more than 180 stands set to take part, this is a weekend event not to be missed. **HM**

● **Find out more, see the full exhibit and trade list and book your advance tickets here: *www.keymodelworld.com/modelworldlive***



Expect stunning scale model builds on display at Model World LIVE.

MODEL WORLD LIVE 2026 LAYOUTS

NAME	SCALE	PERIOD/REGION
Arrowmouth	'OO' gauge	1960s, Midland
Black Lane TMD	'OO' gauge	1990s, Midland
Bottom of the Barrel	'OO' gauge	1950s, Midland
Bristol Avon Bridge	'OO' gauge	1990s, Western
Buckleigh	'OO' gauge	1930s, Western
Charnwood	'O' gauge	1950s, Midland
Craster	'O' gauge	1950s, North Eastern
East Coast Cement	'OO' gauge	2020s, Eastern
Essex Brick	'OO' gauge	1950s, Eastern
Fitzwilliam Basin	'O9' gauge	1940s, Yorkshire
Foldham	'OO' gauge	1960s, Eastern
Georgemas Junction	'OO' gauge	2000s, Scotland
Harefield Road	'OO' gauge	2020s, London Transport
Hazelcombe	'O' gauge	1970s, Western
Ishinaka	'N' gauge	2000s, Japan
Leicester Junction	'OO' gauge	1980s, Midland
Llanwyddyn	'TT:120' scale	1990s, Midland
Making Tracks	'OO' gauge	2020s, Midland
Millfield Yard	'N' gauge	1990s, Southern
Narroden	'OO' gauge	1950s, Southern
Overlord	'OO' gauge	1940s, dockside
Pettleworth Downs	'N' gauge	1940s-1950s, Southern
Project New Street	'OO' gauge	1990s, Midland
Redbridge Wharf	'OO' gauge	1960s, Southern
RMC Quarries	'OO' gauge	1990s, Midland
Rossiter Rise	'OO' gauge	1950s, Midland
RS Tower	'HO' gauge	2000s, America
Smalldale	'N' gauge	1980s, Midland
Somewhere in France	'OO9' gauge	1910s, France
Tamzynowo	'HO' gauge	2000s, Poland
Tulloch Bridge	'OO' gauge	2000s, Scotland
Two Bridges Up Sidings	'OO' gauge	1990s, Southern
Welby Lane RTC	'OO' gauge	1980s, RTC
Whiteoak Light Railway	'O-16.5' gauge	1950s, Southern
Witham	'OO' gauge	1960s, Western
Zlata Vychod	'HO' gauge	2000s, Czech Republic

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COUNTRYSIDE RAMBLING

Getting out in the fresh air is hugely popular – but rarely modelled. **DAN EVASON** shows how to recreate the feel of a good hike in the country in 4mm scale.

Dan has created a detailed countryside scene for his latest 4mm scale scenic diorama.

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A GOOD WALK IN THE COUNTRYSIDE – roaming over field and fell, through the woods and down the valleys. As well as being good exercise, it's a chance to slow down, relax and take in the flora and fauna around you, yet while we populate our stations and streets with people, how often do you see a group walking through the scenery on a model railway?

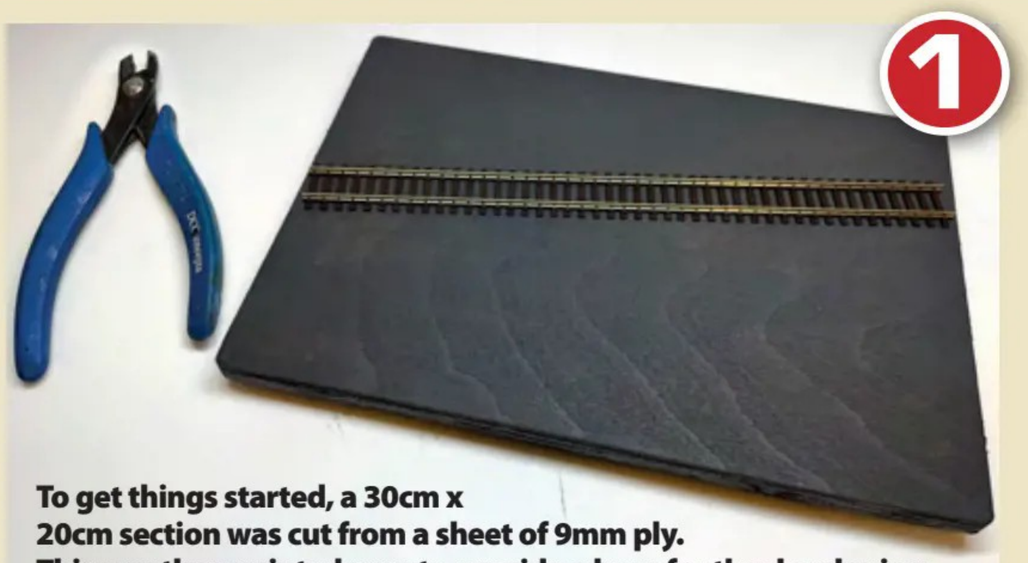
When I was at my local heritage railway, I saw a group of people walking over the line at a crossing, and the thought occurred that this could be a lovely vignette to reproduce. With the launch of ModelU's new range of hikers – and the addition of a farm crossing from Ratio – it seemed a straightforward project, and one which would suit most eras, too. **HM**

●Visit *www.keymodelworld.com/step-by-step* to discover more inspirational step-by-step modelling guides.

WHAT WE USED

DESCRIPTION	MANUFACTURER	CAT NO.
Das modelling clay	*www.hobbycraft.co.uk*	6510671000
Flory wash, Dark Dirt	*www.florymodels.org*	FMW002
Mininatur Summer Green weed tufts	*www.modeldisplayproducts.co.uk*	725-22S
ModelU hikers bundle (4mm/1:76)	*www.modelu3d.co.uk*	9040-76
Peco code 100 flexible track	*www.peco-uk.com*	SL100
Ratio occupation farm crossing	*www.peco-uk.com*	509
Tamiya Buff acrylic paint	*www.tamiya.com*	XF-57
Tamiya Flat Earth acrylic paint	*www.tamiya.com*	XF-52
Woodland Scenics burnt grass	*www.bachmann.co.uk*	T44
Woodland Scenics light foliage	*www.bachmann.co.uk*	F51
Woodland Scenics medium foliage	*www.bachmann.co.uk*	F52
WW Scenics Burnt Green foliage	*www.wwscenics.com*	WSLF-042
WW Scenics basing glue	*www.wwscenics.com*	WWS-002
WW Scenics layering spray	*www.wwscenics.com*	WW-02
WW Scenics Olive Green fine scatter	*www.wwscenics.com*	WSLF-019
WW Scenics rubberised horsehair	*www.wwscenics.com*	WWS-291
WW Scenics static grass, 2mm dead grass	*www.wwscenics.com*	WSG2-049
WW Scenics static grass, 4mm dead grass	*www.wwscenics.com*	WSG4-049
WW Scenics static grass, 2mm north European	*www.wwscenics.com*	WWS-295
WW Scenics static grass, 4mm north European	*www.wwscenics.com*	WWS-305

STEP BY STEP CREATING A RAMBLING SCENE



1

To get things started, a 30cm x 20cm section was cut from a sheet of 9mm ply. This was then painted grey to provide a base for the developing scene. A length of Peco code 100 flexible track was also cut to size.



2

While still loose, the track was sprayed Halfords camouflage brown as a base colour and left to dry.

PLEASE TURN FOR STEP BY STEP GUIDE



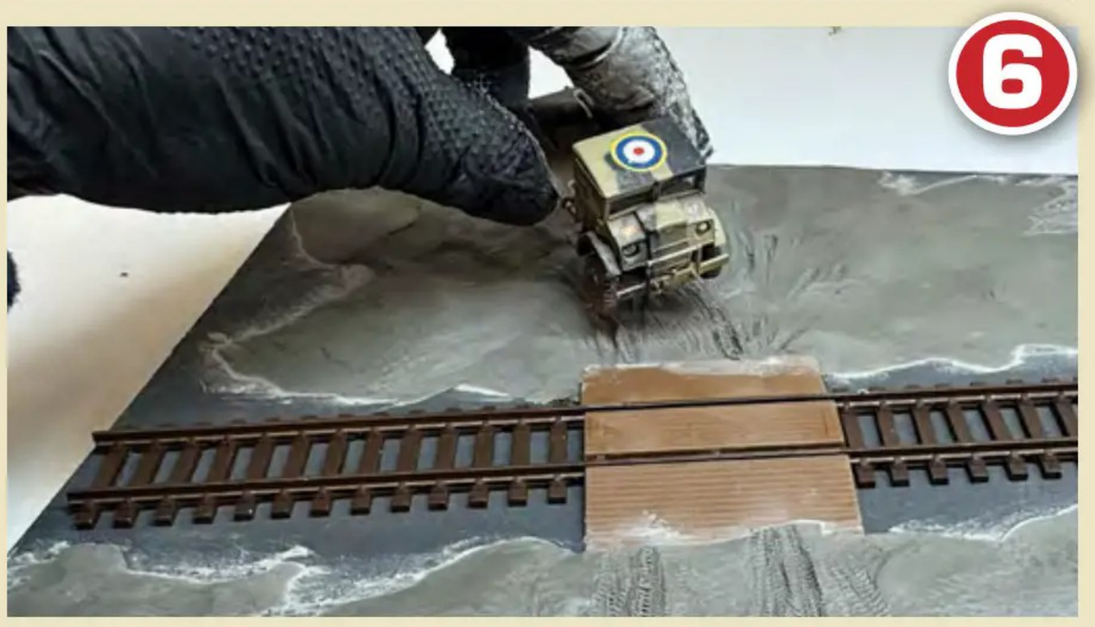
Once dry, the track was attached to the board using superglue. However, you could use track pins if you wish.



With the track now attached, I used the Ratio occupation farm crossing gates set (Cat No. 509). The ramp section was snipped from the fret and lightly sanded before gluing in place.



The next step was to add some groundwork as I didn't want the fields to be flat. Using DAS modelling clay, I set about breaking off small chunks and working these into the base.



Before the clay dried, tyre track detailing was added using an old 1:76 scale vehicle. This was gently run back and forth across the crossing area, creating the tyre tracks in the clay.



While I left the clay to dry, attention turned to the 3D-printed ModelU figures. I find the best way to paint them is to remove their supports and lightly glue them to a strip of wood, allowing enough space to be able to paint around them. To start, they are painted with a white undercoat.



Using a selection of Vallejo paints, I then moved onto the flesh tones, working outwards and leaving the larger items such as jackets and trousers until the end. I find thinning the paint helps.



With the clay and ballast dry, an airbrush was used to add Tamiya Flat Earth as a base colour over the grey clay.



Now comes the exciting part of the process. First up was to start applying the WWS basing glue. For this I use a small brush. The glue dries quite quickly, so I worked on the front section first followed by the rear section.

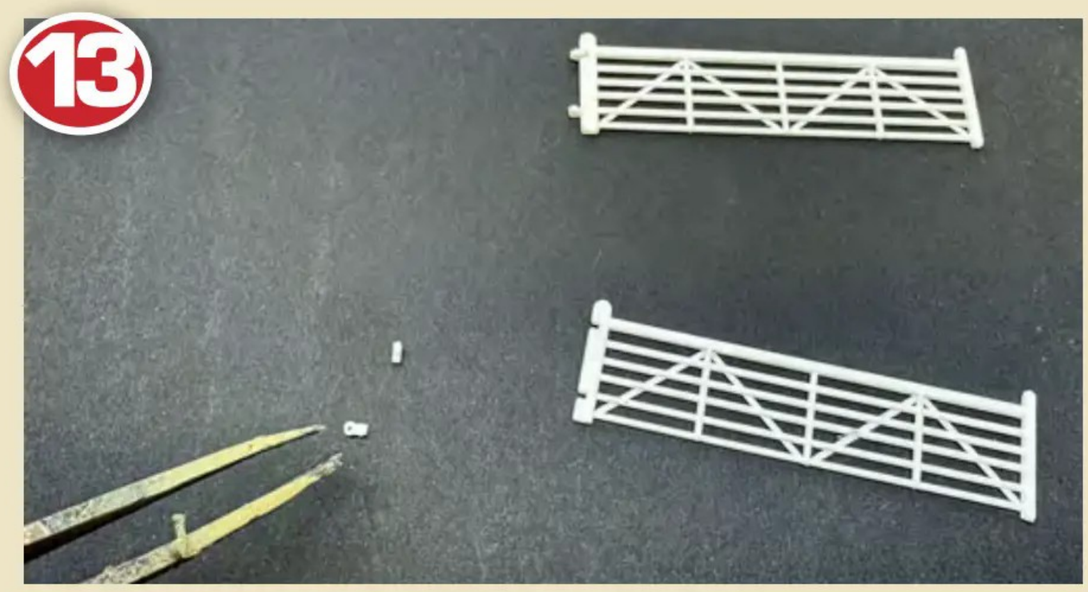
Intermediate
Beginner SKILL LEVEL Advanced



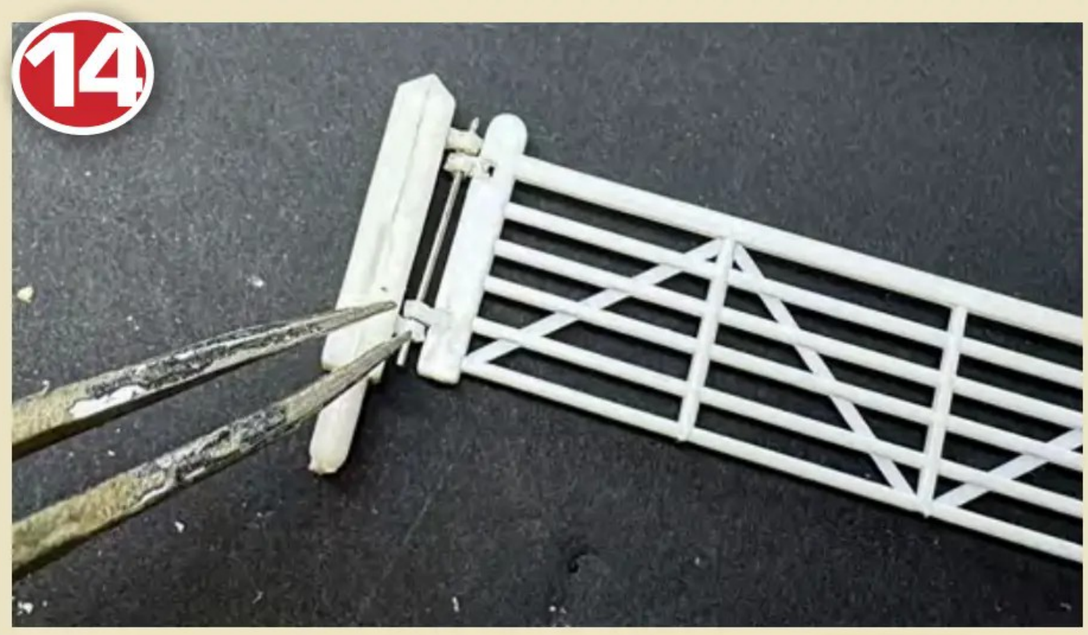
With a mixture of 2mm and 4mm Dead and North European static grass, I set about applying it with a static grass applicator.



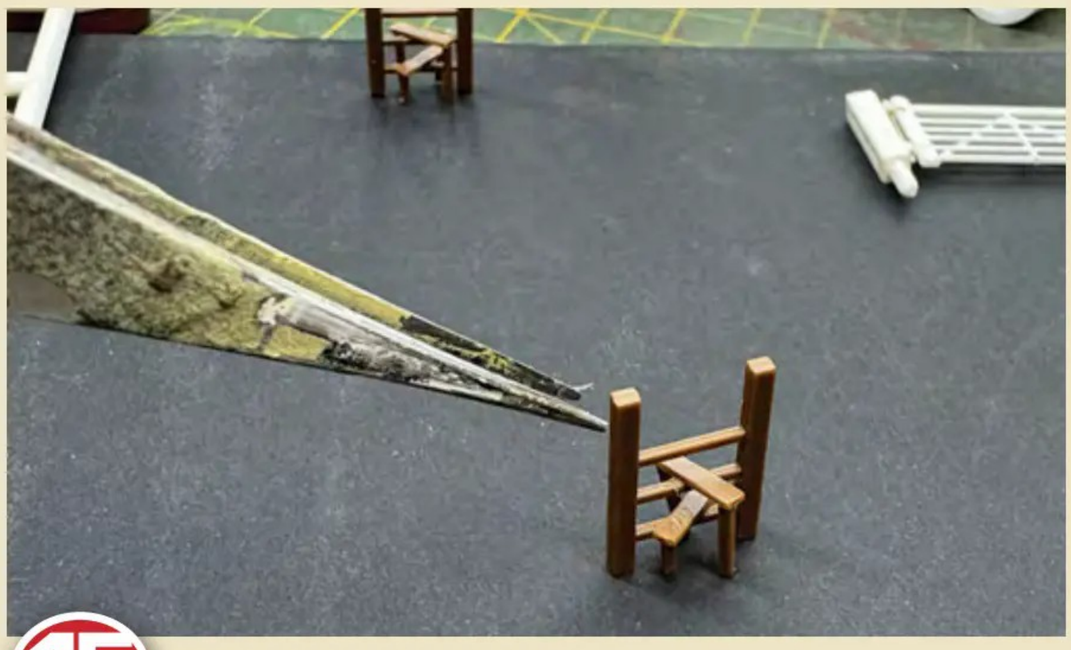
Working quickly, I tapped off the excess. Woodland Scenics Burnt Grass was then applied, which I find fills in any bald patches. The excess was tapped off and used for the rear section.



Having completed the basic grass cover, I turned my attention to the farm crossing gates. These are quite intricate, so you need to be careful when cutting them from the sprue. They were given a slight trim before being glued into place with liquid cement. Tweezers are best for this job.



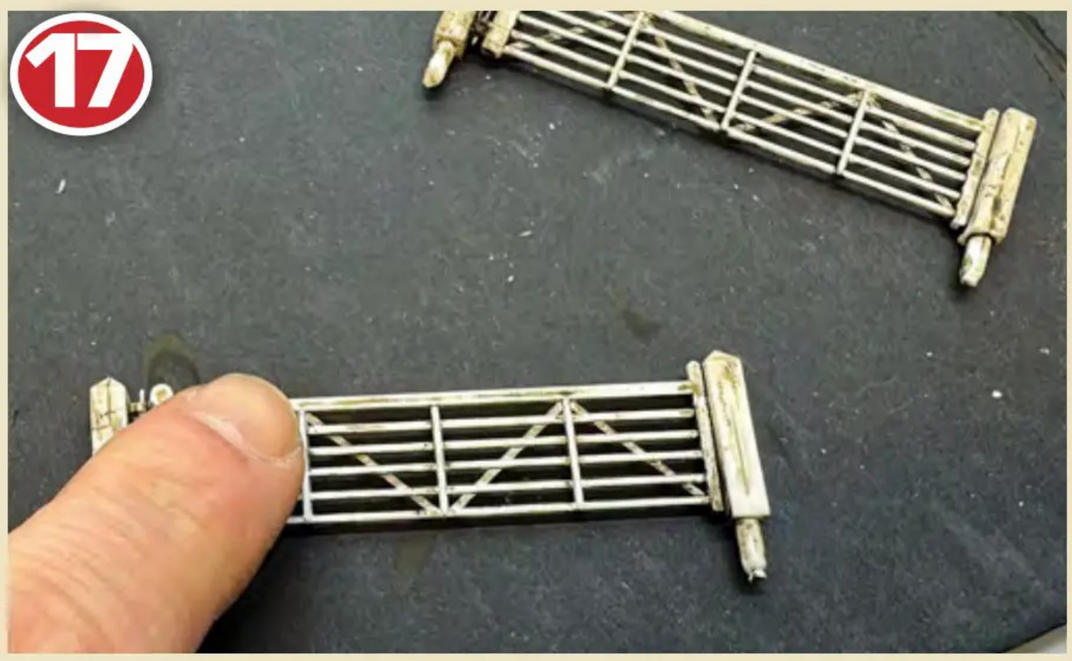
Once the hinges are fully dry, you need to insert and trim the supplied metal rod. This gives you the option of being able to operate the gates. For this scene I glued them in the closed position.



The next task was to build the stiles. Again, using liquid cement and tweezers, I set about assembling these.



Once the level crossing gates were complete, I wanted to weather them as they were far too clean. Dark Dirt Flory wash provided the necessary covering, which was applied and left to dry.



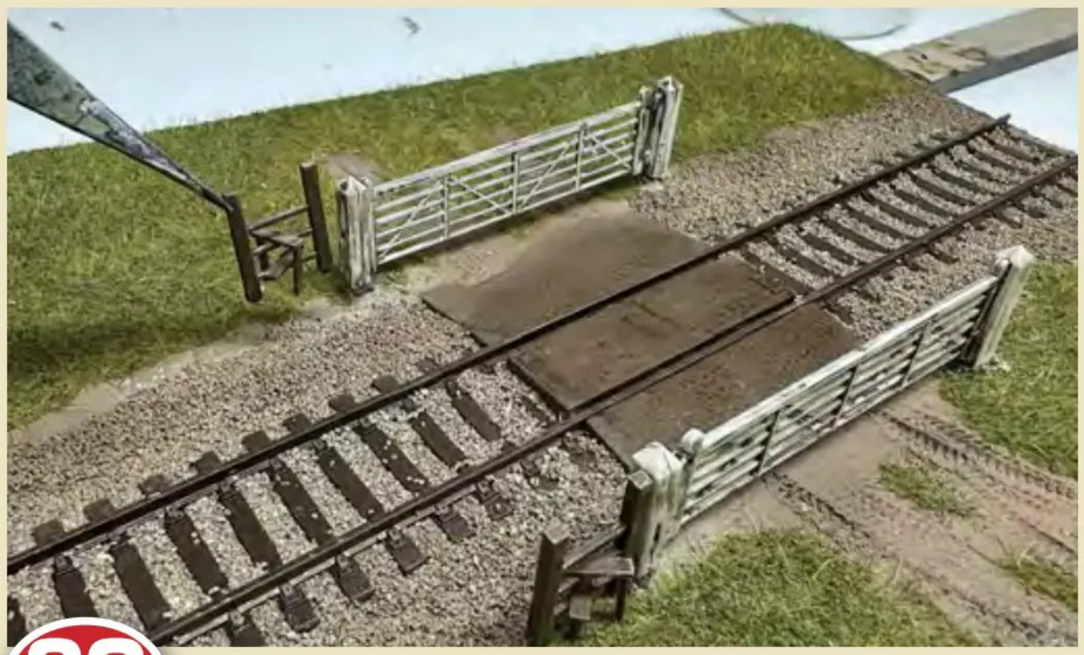
As soon as the wash was dry, I lightly scrubbed the gates with my fingertip to make them look well used.



I drilled 3mm locating holes for the gates. The gates were then pushed into place and a spot of superglue added to hold them fast.



19 Next, a dry brushing method was used on the stiles with Tamiya Buff acrylic, gently highlighting the wood grain effect.



20 A spot of superglue was then applied to the stiles to fix them in place.



21 Rubberised horsehair was chosen to represent the hedging. This was cut into strips and attached to the front of the diorama using a hot glue gun.



22 The hedges at the rear were also made from rubberised horsehair, although I was keen to add an area of thick undergrowth to them. These were also attached using hot glue.



23 A selection of Woodland Scenics light and medium foliage was used to create the overgrown look. It was applied over the rubberised horsehair - mixing the two colours gives a great effect.



24 With the hedges complete, it was time to add some underbrush details. Using the medium foliage, this was torn into small sections and applied using WWS layering spray instead to hold it in place.



25 I wanted to add some sort of height to the scene. To do this I spray painted some sea foam brown to start, then applied layering spray to the branches along with a mix of left-over green flocks. Any excess was tapped off before they were added to the rear of the scene.



26 The excess flock was used to apply the ground cover in and around the hedges to add more texture and colour.

Intermediate
Beginner SKILL LEVEL Advanced



27 **Mininatur self-adhesive static grass tufts were applied next, having been teased into little clumps and added to the grass to create darker areas.**



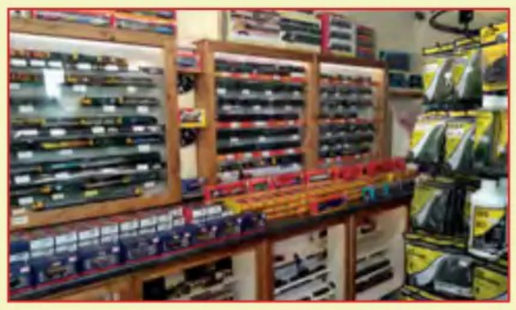
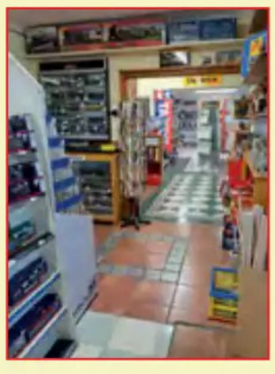
28 **Adding a little more detail, the Beware of the Trains cast sign supplied with the Ratio crossing kit was assembled and painted matt black. A white paint pen was used to pick out the detail. This was then glued into place.**



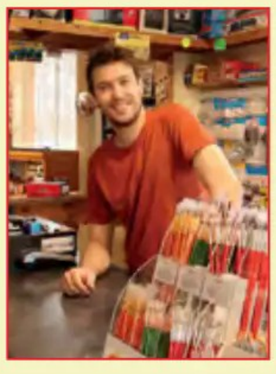
29 **Finally, the ModelU 3D-printed figures were removed from the strip of wood and placed on the scene to complete the diorama.**

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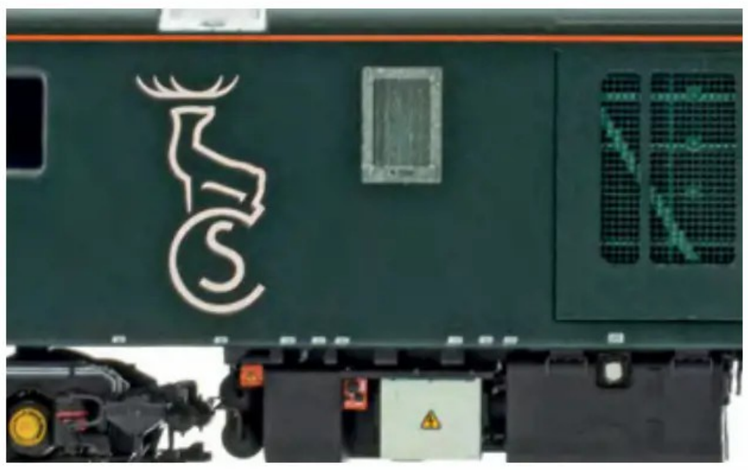
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MODERN AGGREGATE OPERATION

With exclusive access to DCRail's new Chessington aggregate terminal and concrete works, **MIKE WILD** explores how today's heavy stone trains are operated by the company and the modelling opportunities they present.



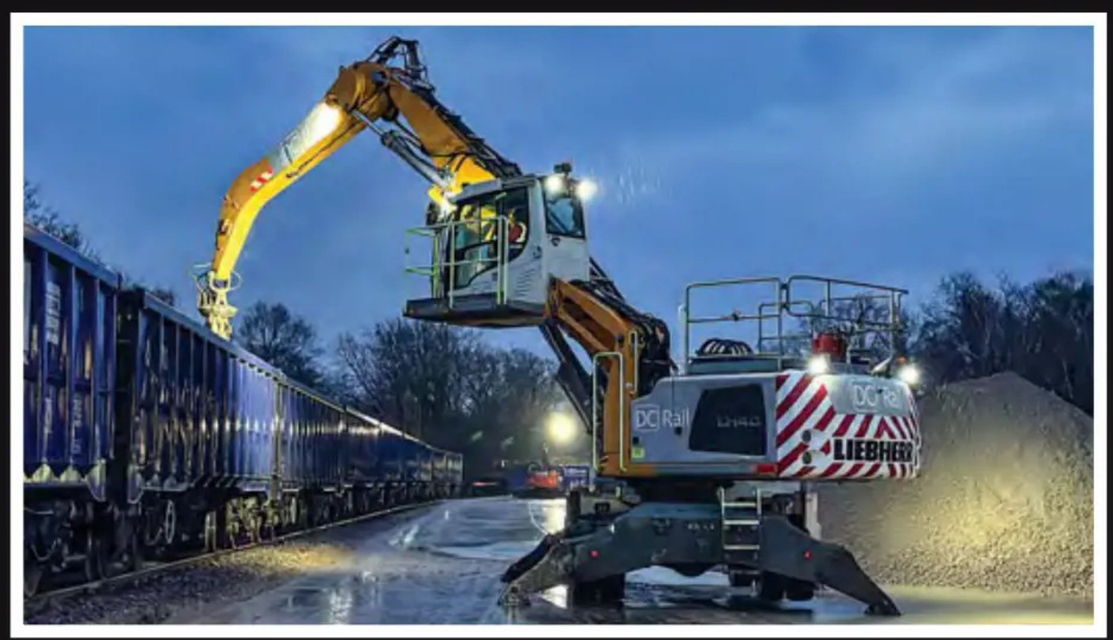
WHEN you think of modern aggregate trains, the chances are you think of huge unloading points with complex equipment, wagons galore and buildings all around, but in some cases that couldn't be further from the truth – and no more so than at Chessington South Sidings near London.

This relatively new terminal opened for DCRail operations in 2022 to support the Express Concrete works. DCRail has focused its rail operation business on the movement of aggregates in connection with owner Cappagh Group with a dedicated fleet of JNA-T bogie box wagons and a mixture of ex-BR Class 56 and 60 heavy freight locomotives to move the trains.

Cappagh Group purchased DCRail, previously known as Devon and Cornwall Railways, from British American Railway Services and since then has grown its railway operation significantly in the number of quarries and destinations as well as its fleet of traction to move those heavy trains. It now transports raw materials from quarries and loading points including Peak Forest, Tunstead, Middleton Towers, Grain, Tytherington, Penmaenmawr, Merehead and more to destinations including Norwich, HS2, Chessington and Ravenhead.



Bulk cement powder is unloaded into the concrete works from a lorry while the heavy aggregates are removed from the train behind the Class 56s. Work continues after dark at Chessington. Mike Wild.



A Liebherr excavator with an extending cab makes swift work of unloading the JNA-T wagons. The concrete apron was empty on our arrival – at the end of the unloading process there was masses of material unloaded ready for use in concrete production. Mike Wild.

The primary fleet is five Class 60s consisting of 60028, 60029 *Ben Nevis*, 60046 *William Wilberforce*, 60055 *Thomas Barnado* and the latest addition 60099 *Ben More Assynt*. More are being overhauled to continue to support the growth of DCRail's business while for the time being Class 56s 56103 and 56045 continue to work alongside the '60s'.

The Class 56s were the traction in charge of the train on our visit to Chessington South Sidings – 6Z20 Grain-Chessington South Sidings on December 18 2025 – with the pair working in multiple to match the capabilities of a Class 60. The train behind is a rake of 22 JNA-T wagons loaded with more than 1,500tons to support the Express Concrete facility at Chessington.

CLEAR SITE

The concrete works occupies the former Southern Railway goods depot which opened on July 1 1939 just beyond Chessington South station. It was built on the authorised but never completed Leatherhead branch, but survived in BR operation until March 1963 »

DCRail Class 56s 56103 and 56045 stand in the unloading siding with 11 of the 22 JNA-T wagons they arrived with from Grain. Unloading is almost complete. Note only the marker lights are switched on during shunting. Mike Wild.

and later saw use as a Charringtons Coal Concentration Depot until the late 1980s when it was closed.

Fast-forward four decades, and having been deemed a Strategic Freight Site at the start of privatisation, it is now open once more and in regular use by the Cappagh Group's DCRail and Express Concrete businesses.

On arrival, it was noticeable how empty the site was. A huge concrete apron lay ahead as we drove into the works with the railway to the right and bunkers to the left – all of which were virtually empty. The logistics of the operation are impressive as the material quantities are managed to match the output of the concrete works so the site never has too much or too little raw material on site.

We'd already seen 56103 and 56045 pass through Chessington South station with its wonderful art-deco concrete canopies, and the DCRail staff were busy preparing to split the train to bring it across for unloading. With half the train detached, the pair of Class 56s drew forward into the headshunt.

With daylight fading rapidly, the first half of the train was shunted back into the unloading siding ready for unloading by a Liebherr excavator which was skilfully operated to swing its grab inside the JNA-T wagons with precision accuracy to pick up the aggregate inside.



The shunter calls on the driver of 56103 and 56045 as they begin shunting the second half of the train for unloading at Chessington South Sidings. Mike Wild.

By now, the yard and excavator lights are the only illumination while work continues to unload the train. A lorry arrives with bulk powdered cement to unload into the concrete works for mixing with the aggregates from the train.

It takes around an hour and a half to unload each half of the train with the Class 56s working as shunting engines throughout the entire process.

By 6.30pm, the entire train is empty and the DCRail driver and ground staff start the process of reforming the train ready for the return empty run to Willesden. Finally, the locomotive runs around ready for departure and then awaits the calling on signal at the end of the sidings which allows the train to rejoin the Chessington branch in between multiple unit workings.

MODEL LOCATION

The entire operation is fascinating to watch first-hand and also offers a highly-modellable scene. It might be simple, but the idea of a rake of heavy box wagons arriving behind Type 5 motive power – which is then used as the shunter – and splitting trains all adds value to a model railway scene.

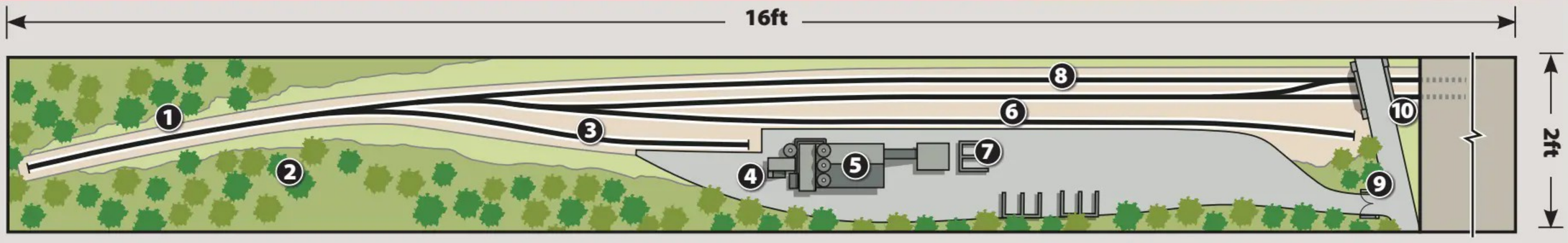
Making it fit in a home scenario would be the challenge. To make that practical, total train lengths could be shorter and depending upon how much space you have available for a headshunt, the train could be split into three or four portions for the unloading process.

When it comes to buildings, there aren't many that you need. Walthers would be a good consideration for the concrete works, but beyond that you only need a pair of portable offices stacked on top of each other and a series of concrete bunkers along the back edge of the site.

Other details which would be essential – and add more interest – include the cripple siding for defective wagons where spare vehicles could be stored while there are also features such as concrete blocks, buffer stops and the concrete apron itself to model. The site wouldn't be complete without an excavator for unloading – and it would be even better if it could be operational!

The track plan we have drawn has been designed to fit into a 16ft long frontage which can be linked to a storage yard off scene to the right. It is designed for 'OO' gauge. There is no reason why the ethos of the Chessington South Sidings site couldn't be used as

CHESSINGTON SOUTH TERMINAL TRACK DIAGRAM (NOT TO SCALE)



KEY				
1 Headshunt	3 Cripple sidings	5 Concrete works	7 Storage bunker	9 Site entrance
2 Trees	4 Hardstanding	6 Unloading line	8 Arrival/departure lines	10 Garrison Lane

part of a larger project with a main line railway running along in front of the unloading facility or you could, if you had the space, model Chessington South station as well as a separate scene.

The 16ft length of the layout plan restricts the total train length to a maximum of 11 JNA-T wagons in the loops, while the headshunt has enough space for a single locomotive and six JNA-T wagons, all measured in 'OO' gauge. If you have more space available, a longer layout will allow longer trains to be run, or you could go down to 'TT:120' or 'N' gauge to allow between 18 and 22 wagon long trains to fit into the same space, depending on which of the scales you choose. It is also worth looking up Chessington South on Google Maps if the location interests you, as the 3D map view includes aerial images of the site.

Seeing this works in operation was a superb insight into modern railway operations where simplicity and efficiency are at the core of the business and its functionality. That a pair of Class 56s built in 1978 (56045) and 1981 (56103) was still leading the train was the icing on the cake and a scene which is likely to be short-lived when the DCRail Class 60 fleet increases.

Enjoy them while you can. **HM**



At the end of the cripple siding is a rail-built buffer stop and concrete blocks. Behind are empty wagons awaiting formation of the return train to Willesden. Mike Wild.

Chessington South Sidings terminal is an efficient operation. Express Concrete trucks have returned and been cleaned ahead of the next shift while the 56s tick over in the unloading line. Mike Wild.

ENHANCING A 'OO' GAUGE 4-VEP EMU

Initial releases of Hornby's 'OO' gauge 4-VEP Electric Multiple Units featured several anomalies which can be corrected, resulting in a great model. **DAN HAVLIK** outlines some of the changes he made to enhance his early models of the four-car units.

HORNBY'S 'OO' gauge Class 423 4-VEP Electric Multiple Unit (EMU) is a lovely model and the first releases to appear certainly provided variety for modellers reflecting BR Southern Region third-rail electrification from the late 1960s onwards. However, for me, there were several areas that needed addressing. The biggest visible issue with the original 4-VEPs concerns the cab fronts. The '63 stock units have a very distinctive look and the initial releases didn't quite capture the essence of the front end for me, so I opted to replace the cab front ends. In addition, the coach roof vents and air horns also appeared a little smaller than they should be, so these were also amended.

There are other areas that will benefit from improvements, including the solid interior corridor walls in Driving Trailer Composite (DTC) vehicles, headlight appearance and the headcodes. The models particularly affected were the initial BR Rail blue and BR Network SouthEast examples. Join me as I show you how to make a few improvements to the overall appearance. **HM**

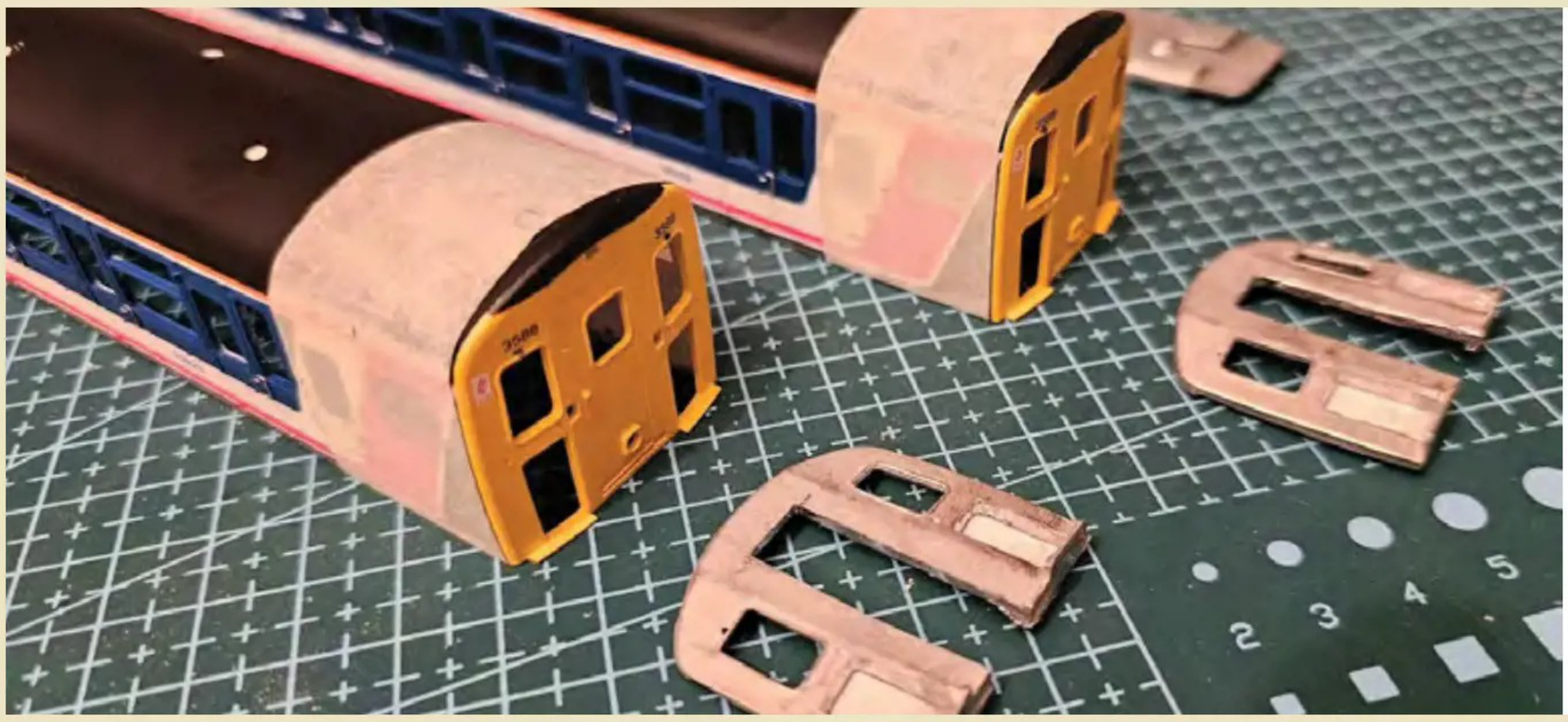
● **Visit *www.keymodelworld.com/step-by-step* and discover our archive of inspirational step-by-step modelling guides.**

TOOLS
● Cocktail sticks
● Craft knife
● Photo-etch cutters
● Flat nosed pliers
● Modellers hacksaw
● Xuron sprue cutters
● Tweezers
● Steel rule
● Files and sanding sticks (assorted grades)
● Paintbrushes (sizes 000 – 1)
● Micro Phillips screwdriver set

With Battersea Power Station looming large in the background, Class 423/1 4-VEP 3452 in revised Network SouthEast colours, but without branding, leads a sister unit past Stewarts Lane depot with a Victoria to Margate train in the mid-1990s. Rail Archive Stephenson.

STEP BY STEP

UPGRADING A HORNBY 4-VEP EMU



1 To remove the Driving Trailer Composite (DTC) cab front, place masking tape around the bodyshell at the edge of the cab front so you have a cutting line and know where not to cut - you don't want to damage the bodyshell. Using a sharp knife, gently run it along the masked line until you cut through. Once the cab front is removed, keep it to one side as you will reuse most of it.



2 The replacement section is built using a pair of MJT '63 cab fronts. These are cast metal and come in sections with the cab fascia, corridor connection, buffers, air horns and wipers. We are only using the cab fascia for this build. To prepare the cab fascia for the model, we need to remove the two cast cable boxes, buffer beams and make a space where the corridor connecting door will be fitted to enable us to use the Hornby headcode lighting strip, which is wired to the PCB.



3 Using a small hacksaw, carefully saw off the buffer beams from the base of the cab front. The cable boxes are removed by drilling out some holes, inserting a hand file in these and filing out to the edges of the cable box. The gap required for the door is the same width as the cast middle window so score down from this and then use a hacksaw to cut up from the base to the square middle window. Tidy the cut with a file and then use it to file 2mm up from the top towards the top of the cab to accommodate the lighting strip.



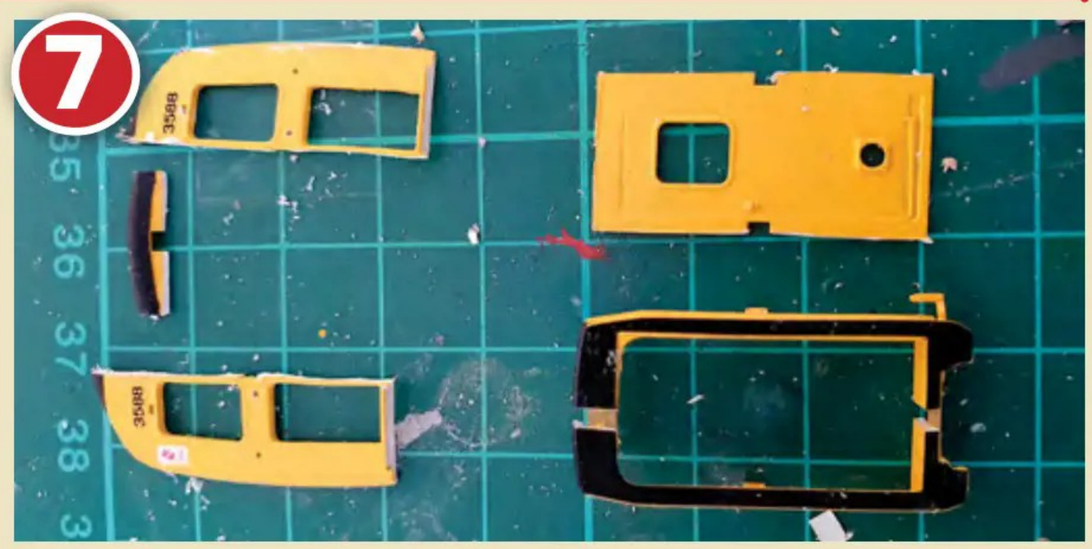
4 Next, clean the edges and remove any burrs on the cab fascia. File the back of the cable boxes so the edges are clean. These will then be glued, so the edges need to be flat and straight. Using 1mm plasticard, cut a 12mm square. This needs to sit behind the cab front, flush with the bottom, 1mm in from the curved outer edge, below the window line and in line with the door. Careful filing will ensure this is correct and 1mm in. When you fit it to the bodyshell, this will form part of the bond between the cab and body.



5 Apply superglue all around the cab edge and in the joins of the plasticard and fit the replacement cab front onto the DTC bodyshell. You may need to run the hand files over the back edges of the cab front before fitting to ensure the surface is flat and scored. It is important that the base of the cab front is level with the bottom of the bodyshell. Once the glue has dried and the cab is securely on, file the top of the cabs level with the roof line before using filler to fill any gaps. It will look a little unsightly once the filler has dried, but don't worry this will improve!



6 At all stages be careful when applying any pressure to the whitemetal ends as they can bend easily. Once the filler is dry, file and sand with wet and dry paper until the joins are seamless.



7 Building the new cab front corridor connection is simple - take the removed original Hornby cab front and cut out the corridor connecting door, using the outside of the lug holes as a guide. The cut-out door will be reused on the new end so be careful when cutting to protect it and cut away from the door. The rest of the cab front parts will be discarded.



Before and after: One of Hornby's initial 'OO' gauge 4-VEP EMU releases stands alongside one of Dan Havlik's upgraded examples of the stalwart BR Southern Region units.



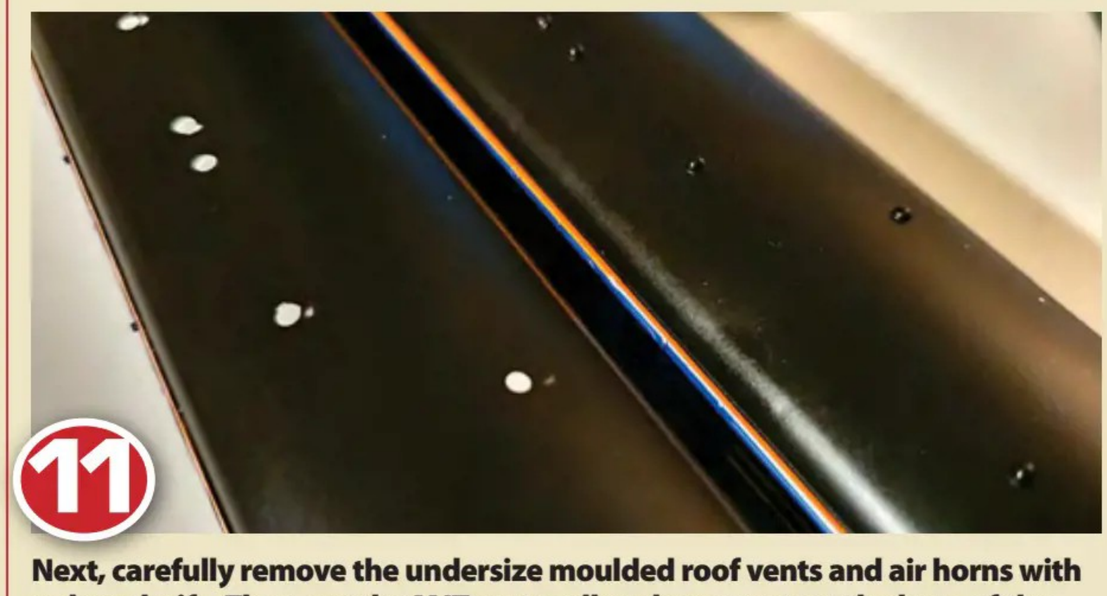
On the earlier versions, the corridor connection looked too narrow and requires 1.5mm adding to the middle to make it wide enough. To do this, cut the corridor in half at the top and the bottom using the line where the rubbing plates sit. You will see there is a line at the front to guide you. Use small slivers of plasticard to support the join.



Using the cut-out door from the Hornby cab front, file the edges to the corridor profile shape so you can fit it inside the corridor connection, ensuring the base of the door is not filed off. The base of the door sits on the corridor connection and the top has a slight curve in. There is a visible 1.5mm gap between the two halves. Cut a 2mm wide strip of 1mm thick plasticard and glue this to the back of your corridor connection door along both sides so the corridor still sits snugly around the door. With it flat on a work surface, refit the lighting unit and glue the two halves of the corridor to the door.



On all '63 stock, the corridor connecting door is not flush with the cab front and actually sits proud of it. Fill the gaps between the two halves of the corridor with 1.5mm of plasticard, file and sand until seamless. Again, use model filler for any gaps, particularly where the lug holes were. You can now fit the door onto the cab front using glue for a secure fit.



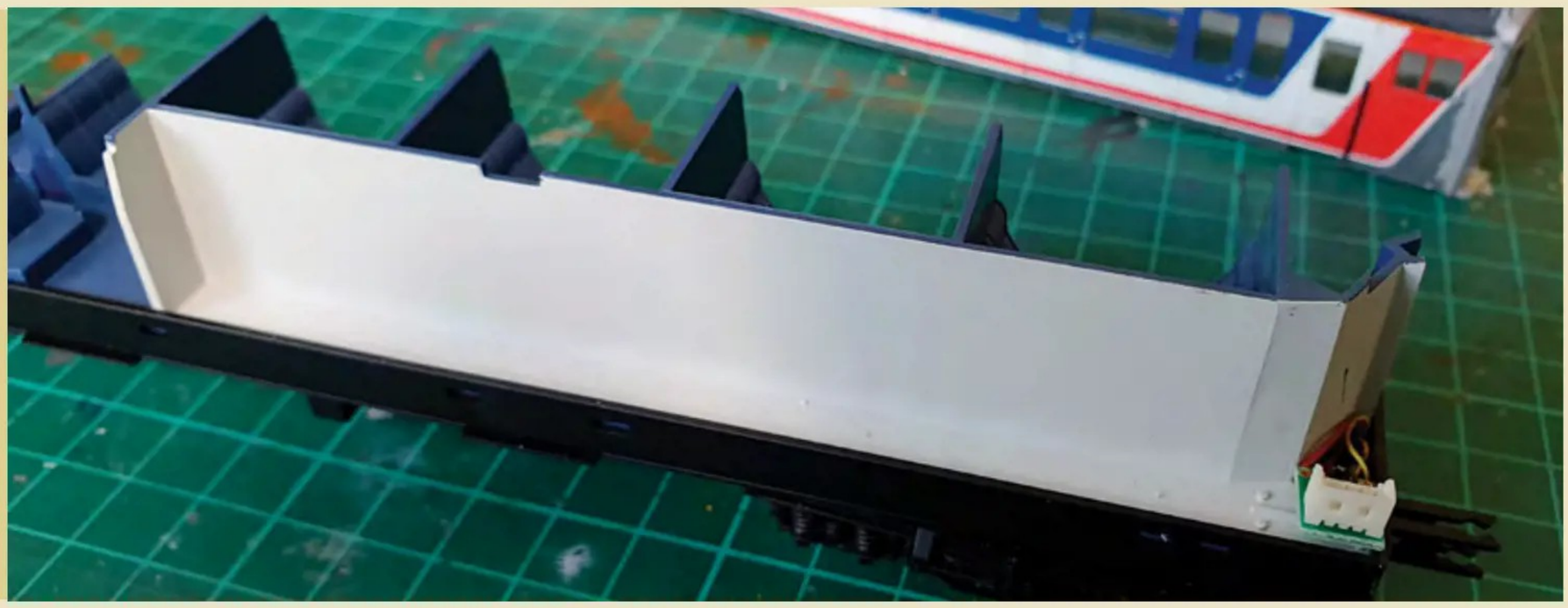
Next, carefully remove the undersize moulded roof vents and air horns with a sharp knife. Then, cut the MJT cast scallop dome vents at the base of the vent and file until the base is absolutely flat. Use the white dots on the roof as a guide and glue down the new vents. Do not drill any holes or fix with the stems on as the underside of the roof has the lighting PCBs in place.

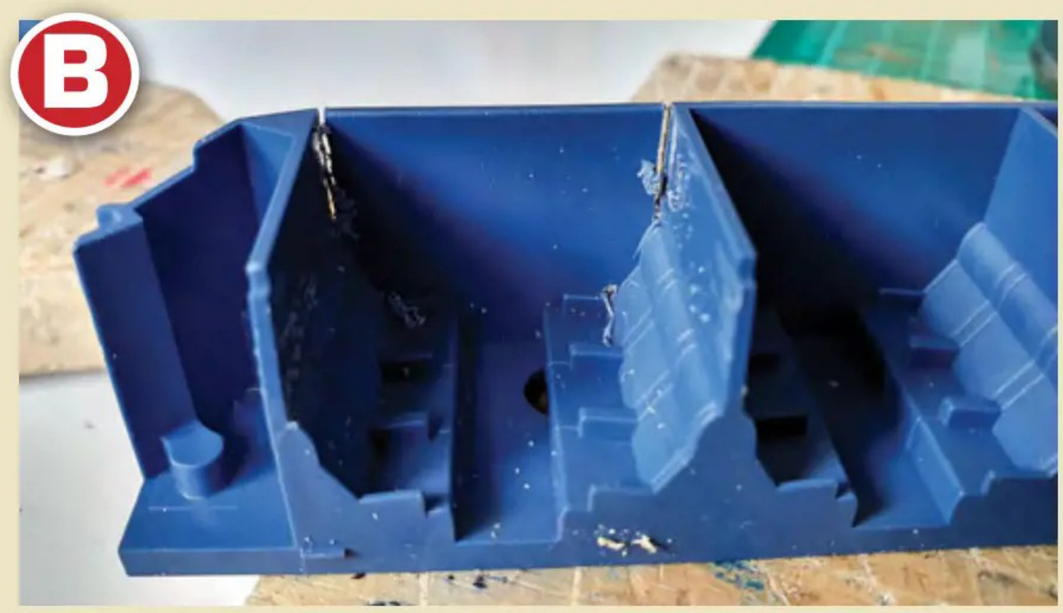
STEP BY STEP

IMPROVING THE FIRST CLASS INTERIORS



A **If using either of the initial Hornby 4-VEP releases, you will notice the compartments are solid walls without doors and windows. This affected the original Rail Blue and Network SouthEast models.**

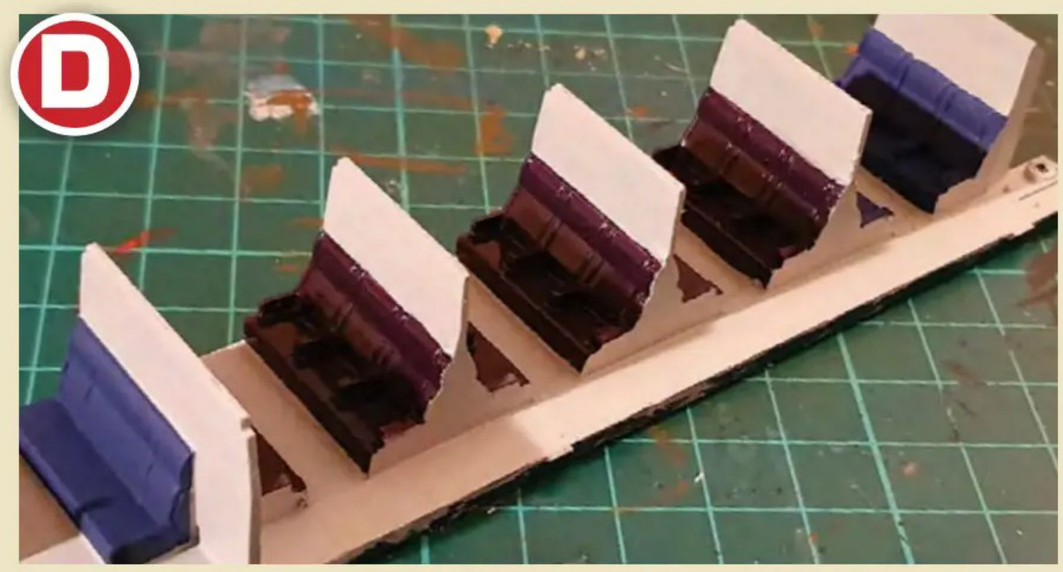




B **Firstly, we need to remove material from the seating side of the compartment. Using a small drill bit and pin vice, drill a series of holes from the top and bottom of the seatback and where passengers' knees would drop down.**



C **Once you've drilled all the holes, carefully cut between them using a sharp blade and tidy up the edges with a file.**



D **Next, check the interior colours for your modelling period from photographs. For my South West Trains era VEPs, the First Class seats were painted purple but before this they were typically black. The compartment nearest the toilet was declassified to Standard Class in the 1990s, so if modelling this period or beyond, it can remain blue.**



E **Replacement First Class compartment walls are available from Southern Pride Models which has two sets of walls in it, enough for both DTCs. The upper section should be painted BR grey, while below the window line should be painted BR blue.**



F **To add further detailing to the First Class seating compartments, you could cut 4mm x 3mm squares out of white labelling paper. Peel and place landscape above the seatbacks to represent the headrest antimacassars. Slivers of tin foil make great compartment mirrors - simply cut some 10mm x 5mm pieces and glue centrally above the seat backs in the compartments.**

Headcodes



● The Hornby VEP comes with a pack of stickers to lay over the exterior of the headcode window so you can add your own route code. It's a novel way of doing it, designed to make it easy. However, these should sit behind the glass, which is easily rectified. While the model is in its constituent parts, you will see that the DTC headcode window glazing is made up of several pieces. The glazing has a black plastic headcode frame which sits snugly inside it, held in place by a second clear length, clamped to a further black piece of plastic the length of the door which holds the light strip from the PCB.

Using a home-made print-out of several assorted headcode route numbers and plain white and red blanks, I cut out a selected route and placed it in between the black plastic stencil and the inside of the headcode window. It's very effective. Be gentle as the parts are all held in place by two clear plastic prongs, which are quite fragile.

Headlights



● The high-intensity lights on the Hornby 'OO' gauge 4-VEP represent a very specific style of headlights only carried by a few units. Most used the very flat square of framed glass with the round headlight sat behind it, but a few VEPs carried a square yellow box which sat proud of the door mounted on with a round headlamp in the middle. 3417 *Gordon Pettitt* had both!

DTC S76262 from unit 3417 has the flat square of framed glass with the round headlight behind it, whereas S76263 has the square yellow box sat proud of the door. In building this right, the latter is as-is on the model, so to build the flat square framed glass version, I cut off the square yellow box on the door and sanded it smooth with some wet and dry paper. I then painted this area silver and when dry, cut a piece of clear plastic, glued it on to the silver square with Humbrol Clear Adhesive and painted the edges warning yellow to provide the framed appearance.

A MAIL REVOLUTION

Mail on rail changed radically in 1996 with the Railnet system. SIMON BENDALL describes the development of the network, the rolling stock and the train formations.

The look of mail trains following the implementation of Railnet is exemplified by 47746 *The Bobby* as it passes Aller on June 13 1997, not long into its journey with the 5.10pm Plymouth-Low Fell mail. Note the PCV control cables and new LED taillights. The train contains two NBA Super BGs bookending three NKA Super GUVs and then a four-coach set featuring two NAA Propelling Control Vehicles (PCV) either end of two more Super GUVs. Simon Bendall Collection.

PLANNING for what would become Railnet began in the early 1990s as Royal Mail looked to radically restructure its sorting network, the centrepiece of which was the construction of new regional distribution centres sited away from increasingly congested city centres. Following the practices of the booming logistics industry, the company wanted a fast and efficient passage of mail through its collection, sorting and delivery system which minimalised handling and delays.

As far as the rail network was concerned, this involved removing mail services from large stations wherever possible to dedicated mail terminals adjoining the new regional distribution centres. On the West Coast Main Line, new facilities were provided at Warrington Dallam and Shieldmuir, near Motherwell, with a dedicated platform also created at Stafford, while over on the East Coast Main Line, terminals were constructed at Doncaster and Low Fell, to the south of Newcastle.



The Class 67s featured PCV compatibility from new with 67026 having propelled a four-coach PCV set into Swansea during February 2002 for loading ahead of departure later that night. Under EWS ownership, the RES 'blue flash' logo was progressively removed from all three types of mail van, although it was never eliminated completely. The two Super GUVs in the middle of the train just display the upper grey band as a result while the two PCVs are still fully branded and lettered. Simon Bendall Collection.



On the Western Region, a rail-served regional hub was built alongside Bristol Parkway while for the sole remaining mail service on the former Southern Region, facilities were provided next to Tonbridge station. Some terminals had just a single platform while others featured bay platforms and a through platform long enough to accommodate two trains simultaneously.

The centrepiece of the revamped network was the seven-platform Princess Royal Distribution Centre (PRDC) at Willesden in North London, which was completed in 1996 and allowed the removal of mail traffic from all of the capital's termini. Most of the other terminals were finished during 1995-97, although Bristol Parkway was not ready until 2000, four years after Railnet started operation. The new system did not completely remove the sight of mail trains from stations though with the likes of Reading, Cardiff, Swansea, Norwich, Birmingham New Street and Plymouth still served.

When Railnet was first conceived, mail train operator Rail Express Systems (RES) was a sector of British Rail but by the time the network became operational in 1996, it had been sold to Wisconsin Central late the previous year, eventually merged into the newly formed English Welsh and Scottish Railways (EWS). The Royal Mail contract had a decade still to run, and RES/EWS would provide traction, stock and traincrew for the operation of 80mph Travelling Post Office (TPO) trains and 95mph mail services, the second category covering pre-sorted First Class mail and small parcels.

STOCK UPGRADES

One of the key aspects of Railnet was to reduce the amount of labour-intensive manual handling of mail sacks, which would make the whole process faster, more efficient and more secure. This was achieved by the introduction of specialised York trolleys which could be loaded directly onto trains and then off again at their destination, doing away with the traditional method of hurling loose mail bags on and off the vans.

However, the introduction of the York cages could not be achieved without a significant upgrade to the rolling stock operated by RES. This was partly achieved by the introduction of a new fleet of 16 dual-voltage 25kV AC/750V DC, 100mph Class 325 EMUs in 1996. They also featured conventional drawgear to allow easy haulage by locomotives in the event of a failure or diversion. Mk 1 Full Brake (BG) and General Utility Van (GUV) fleets required modifications internally so trolleys could be easily manoeuvred and then restrained in transit. A major refurbishment programme was carried out to replace the doors with roller shutters and remove obsolete features such as windows, complementing a project to upgrade both bogies and brake equipment which had been ongoing in piecemeal fashion since the 1980s.

MODERNISED GUVS

The rebuilding of the van fleets began in 1994 with the appearance of the first refurbished GUVs. As well as the new roller shutter »

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doors, the vehicle ends were rebuilt to remove the obsolete three-part vehicle loading doors, while Commonwealth bogies and air brakes were standard across the fleet. Less noticeable modifications included the removal of the redundant chalk boards from the bodysides while the wooden stepboards were also replaced under the doors using chequerplate. These rebuilt vans became known as Super GUVs and were renumbered into the 94100-229 series, classified as NKA on the TOPS system and all carrying the full Rail Express Systems livery.

A further batch of Super GUVs followed in 1996, ostensibly for use with the Travelling Post Office rakes but they found their way into mail sets on occasions. These were somewhat cheaper conversions with only two roller shutter doors per side and the centre pair of hinged doors welded shut. This allowed an increase in capacity though, enabling 42 York trolleys to be carried compared to 36 in an NKA. Just 12 were rebuilt, renumbered in the 95715-763 range and coded NOA. All featured Commonwealth bogies and were always distinguishable as they were painted in allover red without the upper grey RES band or 'blue flash' logo.

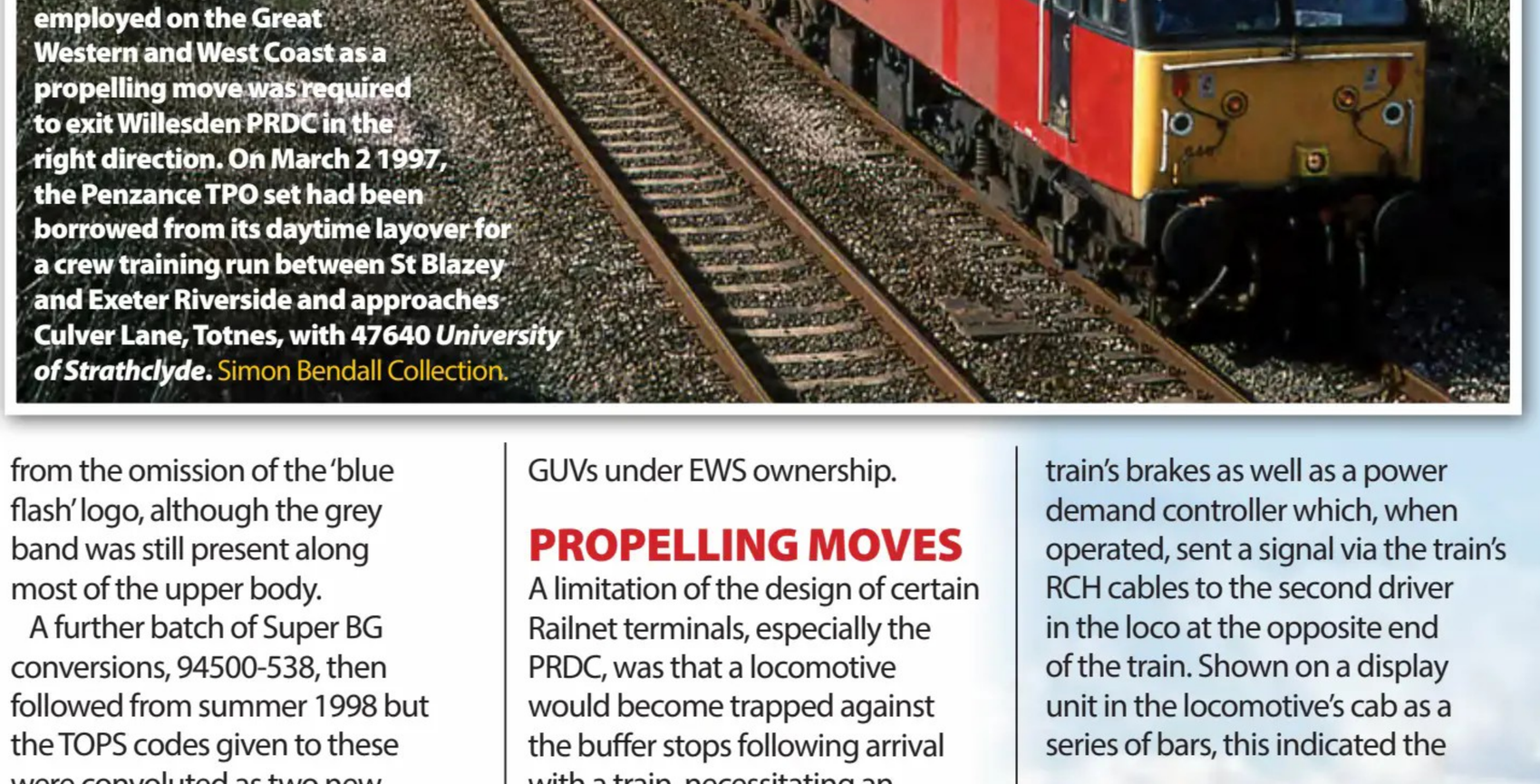
REVAMPED BGS

To complement the rebuilt GUVs, numerous BGs were also converted to 'super' status from late 1994, receiving four roller shutter doors per side while the bodyside windows were once again plated over. On the ends, the gangway connections were retained with integrated taillights fitted either side while, internally, the guard's compartment and handbrake remained but sealed off from the rest of the loading area, which could accommodate 32 York trolleys.

The first 91 Super BGs, numbered 94400-490, were converted by late 1996, featuring 100mph-rated B4 bogies, full RES livery and coded NBA. A further nine, 94491-499, then followed under EWS ownership in 1997/98 with the same characteristics apart from the omission of the 'blue flash' logo, although the grey band was still present along most of the upper body.

A further batch of Super BG conversions, 94500-538, then followed from summer 1998 but the TOPS codes given to these were convoluted as two new variants appeared alongside further 100mph-rated NBA. These additional types were authorised for 110mph operation between Willesden and Shieldmuir with special maintenance of their running gear and were initially coded NIA but further modifications saw some become NQA, the latter suitable for haulage behind the Class 90/2s. This relatively short-lived sub-class of the AC electrics was fitted with composite brake blocks, affecting their braking characteristics.

The last Super BG conversions were NBA 94539-548, completed in autumn 2001 and rode on 100mph-rated Commonwealth bogies. These last 49 vans carried unbranded RES red/grey, while the 'blue flash' graphic was progressively removed from the earlier BGs as well as the GUVs under EWS ownership.



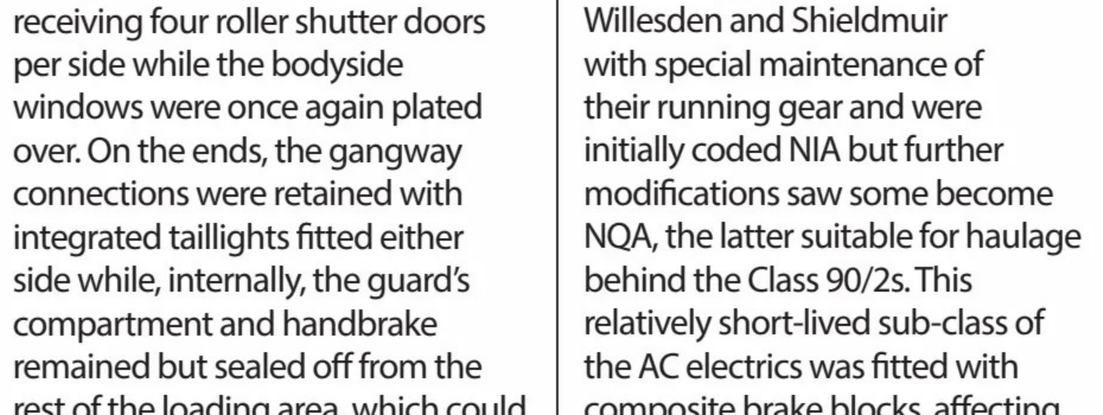
Certain Travelling Post Office (TPO) sets were partnered with PCVs, particularly those employed on the Great Western and West Coast as a propelling move was required to exit Willesden PRDC in the right direction. On March 2 1997, the Penzance TPO set had been borrowed from its daytime layover for a crew training run between St Blazey and Exeter Riverside and approaches Culver Lane, Totnes, with 47640 *University of Strathclyde*. Simon Bendall Collection.

PROPELLING MOVES

A limitation of the design of certain Railnet terminals, especially the PRDC, was that a locomotive would become trapped against the buffer stops following arrival with a train, necessitating an additional engine to release it. This was also true at those terminus stations still served under Railnet, where the presence of a station pilot was no longer a given to carry out a shunt manoeuvre.

To ensure continuity of operation the sector developed a stripped-down version of the push-pull system developed for InterCity. This saw Propelling Control Vehicles (PCV) converted from redundant Class 307 Electric Multiple Unit (EMU) driving trailer cars with the cab retained and refurbished while the former passenger saloon was rebuilt to carry 42 York trolleys. This entailed fitting two roller shutters per side and plating up all the remaining doors and windows, while B5 bogies were added. The corridor connection at the inner end was retained with a PCV marshalled at each end of a set of mail vans or TPO depending on the route. Recoded as NAA, a pair of prototype PCVs, 94300/01, first appeared in 1993 with a production batch, 94302-45, following in 1994-96. These all initially carried the full RES livery but, mirroring the other 'super' conversions, many later lost their 'blue flash' logos under EWS ownership.

Two drivers were required for a propelling move, the one in the PCV having full control of the train's brakes as well as a power demand controller which, when operated, sent a signal via the train's RCH cables to the second driver in the loco at the opposite end of the train. Shown on a display unit in the locomotive's cab as a series of bars, this indicated the



On July 11 2003, Propelling Control Vehicle 94339 was stabled for the day at Carlisle at one end of a TPO set before working south to Willesden PRDC that night. The addition of the '339' repeater number to the cab front was an EWS development, while the RES logos were never removed from this van, unlike many of its sisters. Simon Bendall.



RES-liveried 90018 powers south through the Lune Gorge on July 19, 2000, atop the 4.35pm Shieldmuir-Bristol Parkway. In tow is a complete rake of Super BGs, all seven unbranded and possibly NIA and NQA variants. As these were amongst the last conversions to appear, all were outshopped without RES logos. John Chalcraft/Rail Photoprints.

power 'notch' to be applied with notches one to four available up to a maximum permitted speed of 40mph. Moving the handle in the PCV changed the display in the locomotive, accompanied by an audible alarm each time, for the driver to increase or decrease power. The two drivers could also communicate using the driver/guard system as needed. Once a propelling move was completed, the PCV control desk would be switched out and the coach then became normal hauled stock.

The two prototype conversions of 94300/01 were non-standard and ceased to be used as PCVs during 1998. With their driving controls isolated, they became standard mail vans and were renumbered as 95300/01, later moving onto EWS logistics workings to Inverness, for which they were repainted into maroon and gold. This saw them paired with the two experimental NRA airline container vans of 95400 and 95410, these also receiving EWS colours. These logistics services were not part of Railnet but made use of spare capacity in the 'super' van fleets, especially once the number of workings expanded to include trains between Walsall and Law Junction, near Motherwell.

The surviving Travelling Post Office workings were integrated into the Railnet operation but, with the increase in automatic sorting, high operating costs and the need to replace the ageing Mk1 stock, were under threat of withdrawal. With the oldest vehicles already stood down, the surviving fleet was comprised of NSA Sorting Vans 80303-95, NTA Stowage Vans 80400-39 and NUA Brake Stowage Vans 80456-58.

MOTIVE POWER

The introduction of the PCVs required modifications to the Rail Express Systems locomotive fleet, most obvious on the still sizeable number of Class 47s employed. Many of these had already been put through a life extension programme, receiving extended range fuel tanks and refurbished cabs with cut-back buffer beams in addition to a repaint in RES colours and renumbering into the 47721-93 range. To give compatibility with the PCVs, a second round of modifications saw two RCH jumper cables added to the cab fronts in addition to the cab desk alterations, while LED taillights were also fitted around the same time.

Following the arrival of EWS, the life extension and renumbering programme was halted before all of the envisaged Class 47s could be completed, leaving some gaps in the Class 47/7 series. However, a handful of Class 47/4s still received the RCH cables and other modifications to give PCV compatibility - 47624/28/35/40, of which 47635/47640 retained the red/grey Parcels livery introduced in 1990. What other members of the class still remained amid EWS' rapid purging of the fleet were otherwise restricted to conventional haulage of mail services, while some of the Class 47/7s would go on to carry EWS maroon and gold.

Rail Express Systems also employed AC electric traction during the Railnet era in the form of Class 86s and 90s. Only a small pool of the former remained though, of which 86208 carried unbranded InterCity 'Swallow' livery with miniature RES logos while the rest, 86210/41/43/54/61 and 86401/16/17/19/24-26/30, were initially all in RES colours. Of these, 86261, 86401 and 86426 later received EWS livery. Like the Class 90s, these were all modified for PCV operation without further external modifications, the RCH cables already being in place on the cab fronts.

As for the Class 90s, only 90016-20 were initially allocated to mail work but as the EWS fleet became more common user, 90021-40 all appeared as well, many of which spent long periods numbered in the 901xx and/or 902xx ranges. As a result, a colourful selection of liveries could be found atop Railnet workings during the late 1990s in particular, the schemes including RES, EWS and both the original and European versions of Railfreight Distribution. The three Freightconnection Class 90s also appeared, as did GNER-liveried 90024.

The debut of the Class 67s from 2000 was supposed to herald the next development in mail traffic with the introduction of »



One of the first vans to be delivered minus RES logos, 94499 was at Carlisle on July 11 2003. The additional conversions carried out by EWS did not always have the windows plated over flush with the bodysides, instead receiving blanking plates which stood slightly proud of the surface. Simon Bendall.



THE FORMATIONS



Class 90 Bo-Bo, RES (Bachmann) + NBA Super BG (RES), three NKA Super GUV (RES), NBA Super BG (RES)
● **Date:** 1996 ● **Location:** Doncaster ● **Train:** Low Fell-King's Cross



Class 47 Co-Co, RES (Bachmann/Heljan) + NBA Super BG (RES), three NKA Super GUV (RES), NBA Super BG (RES), NAA PCV (RES), two NKA Super GUV (RES), NAA PCV (RES)
● **Date:** 1997 ● **Location:** Newton Abbot ● **Train:** Plymouth-Low Fell



Class 47/7 Co-Co, RES (Bachmann/Heljan) + NAA PCV (RES), two NKA Super GUV (RES), two NAA PCV (RES), two NKA Super GUV (RES), NAA PCV (RES)
● **Date:** 1998 ● **Location:** Reading ● **Train:** Willesden PRDC-Plymouth



Class 47/7 Co-Co, RES (Bachmann) + two NBA Super BG (RES), three NKA Super GUV (RES), two NBA Super BG (RES)
● **Date:** 1998 ● **Location:** Newton-le-Willows ● **Train:** Bristol Temple Meads-Shieldmuir



Class 90 Bo-Bo, EWS (Bachmann) + NBA Super BG (unbranded RES), NKA Super GUV (RES), NKA Super GUV (unbranded RES), two NBA Super BG (unbranded RES),
● **Date:** 2001 ● **Location:** Stafford ● **Train:** Warrington-Willesden PRDC



Class 67 Bo-Bo, EWS (Hornby) + two NBA Super BG (RES), two NBA Super BG (unbranded RES)
● **Date:** 2002 ● **Location:** Ipswich ● **Train:** Norwich-Willesden PRDC



Class 67 Bo-Bo, EWS (Hornby) + NBA Super BG (unbranded RES), two NKA Super GUV (RES), NBA Super BG (unbranded RES), NBA Super BG (RES), two NKA Super GUV
● **Date:** 2003 ● **Location:** Carlisle ● **Train:** Willesden PRDC-Shieldmuir



Class 47/7 Co-Co, RES (Bachmann/Heljan) + NAA PCV (RES), two NKA Super GUV (unbranded RES), NAA PCV (unbranded RES)
● **Date:** 2003 ● **Location:** Cardiff ● **Train:** Swansea-Willesden PRDC



Class 67 Bo-Bo, EWS (Hornby) + NQA Super BG (unbranded RES), two NBA Super BG (RES), NIA Super BG (unbranded RES), NBA Super BG (RES), NQA Super BG
● **Date:** 2003 ● **Location:** Preston ● **Train:** Shieldmuir-Bristol Parkway (Christmas additional)



Class 90 Bo-Bo, EWS (Bachmann) + NIA Super BG (unbranded RES), NKA Super GUV (unbranded RES), two NIA Super BG (unbranded RES), three NBA Super BG (RES),
● **Date:** 2007 ● **Location:** Rugby ● **Train:** Willesden PRDC-Shieldmuir (Christmas additional)

125mph services. However, the abandonment of plans to convert Mk 3 coaches into new mail vans brought this idea to an end and meant the Spanish-built GMs could never be fully exploited on their intended duties. The class instead ended up operating alongside the remaining Class 47s on the same duties, never succeeding in ousting the venerable Type 4s completely.

Lastly on the locomotive front, a pair of Class 73/1s in 'top and tail' formation were employed on the workings from Willesden PRDC to Kent, most of the sub-class appearing over the years and ensuring a colourful variety of liveries could be seen, including EWS, Civil Engineers 'Dutch', Mainline Freight, Departmental grey and even Pullman-liveried 73101. As the class was withdrawn, it was not uncommon to see substitutions using Class 47s and even the occasional Class 59 and Class 66.

UNEXPECTED END

By the early 2000s, the Railnet network was performing well with EWS consistently achieving the stringent performance targets required by Royal Mail, while plans to expand the operation were in the early stages of development. However, this all changed in June 2003 when negotiations between the two companies over a new contract collapsed amid a dispute over pricing.

Even worse news followed as Royal Mail sought an immediate exit from using rail in an effort to reduce costs. The rundown of services commenced from July 2003 with a phased withdrawal of trains through to the end of the year. The last night of both mail and TPO services was officially January 9/10 2004, after which the TPO stock was withdrawn and the van fleet placed in store along with the Class 325 EMUs.

Royal Mail did make a limited return to using rail in May 2005, this time with GB Railfreight as its partner. However, this was only a shadow of the previous network with services confined solely to the West Coast Main Line and servicing just Willesden, Warrington and Shieldmuir using the Class 325s. EWS made a short term comeback to mail haulage in December 2007 when, now under DB ownership, it ran additional Christmas services between Willesden and Shieldmuir using a mix of Super BGs and Super GUVs extracted from store. These vans were formed in 10 or 12-coach formations and hauled by a Class 90.

Following rebranding, DB Schenker won back the full Royal Mail contract from May 2010 but, by this time, the 'super' mail vans were deemed life expired with only the Class 325s used, locomotive hauled as required during bad weather or times of poor reliability. Following the renewal of the contract in 2013, mail services made a limited return to the East Coast Main Line with a single train each way between Willesden and Low Fell, while for a couple of years or so around 2016, VGA and VKA vans were used to form the Christmas additional workings between London and Warrington. However, Royal Mail again withdrew from using rail in 2024, this time for good with the scrapping of most of the Class 325s and sale of the six remaining sets.









NKA Super GUV (unbranded RES), NKA Super GUV (RES), NBA Super BG (RES)



Typifying the look of the NKA Super GUVs following conversion, 94106 departs from the Railnet platform at Stafford in June 1998. This version of the design featured three roller shutter doors per side, and all initially carried the full RES livery. Simon Bendall.



Just 12 further Super GUVs were converted by EWS in 1996, principally for use in TPO formations hence the all-red livery, although they did appear in mail services as well on occasions. These only featured two roller shutters with the centre pair of hinged doors retained but sealed, as shown by 95759 at Carlisle on July 11 2003. Simon Bendall.



(unbranded RES), two NBA Super BG (unbranded RES), two NKA Super GUV (RES), NIA Super BG (unbranded RES)



(unbranded RES), two NIA Super BG (unbranded RES)



NKA Super GUV (unbranded RES), NBA Super BG (unbranded RES), NBA Super BG (RES)

READY-TO-RUN 'OO' GAUGE RAILNET-ERA MAIL TRAINS	
COACH TYPE	**MANUFACTURER**
NAA Propelling Control Vehicle (PCV)	EFE Rail
NBA/NIA/NQA Super BG	Bachmann
NKA Super GUV	Hornby/Lima

TRAIN FORMATIONS

During the Railnet era, the shortest formation in regular service was four coaches, typically featuring a pair of Super GUVs in the middle with either a Super BG at each end or a pair of PCVs. Two or three of these sets could also be coupled together to give a longer eight or 12-coach formation on certain routes. Four-coach sets consisting entirely of Super BGs could also be found, such as on the Norwich route.

Five-coach sets also existed with three Super GUVs in the middle of two Super BGs, as did seven-coach formations, these having pairs of Super BGs at each end of three Super GUVs. For the short-lived 110mph services, complete trains of Super BGs of TOPS codes NIA and NQA were employed, these also appearing on other services, such as the non-Railnet Law Junction to Walsall logistics workings.

The formations of the Travelling Post Office sets were only party affected by Railnet and continued to be mostly made up of sorting and stowage vans as before. However, one or more Super BG could be found at each end on some sets to give a brake vehicle and additional stowage space. On others, a Propelling Control Vehicle marshalled at each end served the same dual purpose as well as their intended function. The three-door NKA Super GUVs were not normally seen in TPO sets, only the later two-door NOA conversions being regulars.

In 'OO' gauge, the three-door Mk 1 Super GUV was originally produced by Lima with the tooling passing to Hornby while the Mk 1 Super BG has long been a staple of the Bachmann range.

The PCV was originally offered by Replica Railways before a new model appeared during 2024 as part of the EFE Rail range. The availability of suitable TPO coaches remains an issue in 4mm:1ft scale as Bachmann's sorting coach represents the earliest Mk 1 batch which had either been withdrawn by the Railnet era or modified to remove the large windows.

With the additional demise of the Southern Pride and DC Kits ranges, the Bachmann stowage van is the only readily available model of this period. Turning to 'N' gauge, the ready-to-run selection is even more restricted with Bachmann mirroring its 4mm output in the Graham Farish range with the Super BG, the same diagram of TPO sorting van and, most recently, the accompanying stowage van. Neither variety of Super GUV has been made available ready-to-run in 2mm, as yet, nor has the PCV.

The accompanying train formations make use of existing 'OO' gauge models, although not all livery variations and TOPS coding are available in the scale. Bachmann has so far mainly concentrated on RES liveried Super BGs in 'OO', although an unbranded RES example has been produced in 'N' gauge. Careful removal of the 'blue flash' elements may be necessary to replicate these in 'OO'. **HM**

● Discover more train formations articles at *www.keymodelworld.com/train-formations.*

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CRASTER

DALE BRUNSKILL explains how this beautiful 'O' gauge harbour branch set just before the Beeching cuts was created, ahead of its visit to Model World LIVE on April 25/26 at the NEC in Birmingham.

PHOTOGRAPHY, JONATHAN NEWTON

1 BR '9F' 2-10-0 92064 approaches Craster with a short rake of open wagons, while in the sidings a Raven 'Q6' 0-8-0 shunts a short pick-up goods train.

GAUGE	SCALE	SIZE	REGION	PERIOD	CONTROL
'O', 32mm	7mm:1ft	59ft x 6ft 6in	NORTH EASTERN	1957-1964	DCC, ROCO Z21

IN MY ALTERNATE UNIVERSE, George Stephenson and his son proposed a route through the grounds of Howick Hall, the seat of Earl Grey (his monument is in the centre of Newcastle) for the Newcastle and Berwick Railway in 1839. The Earl and his son objected to the proposal and set the scene for years of wrangling and counter proposals including a proposal from the Earl called the 'The Northumberland Railway'. As a result, the Stephensons changed the alignment of the railway to the west of Howick Hall to the route we know today. Despite this, the Earl continued to object to Stephenson's route and continued to promote his own. However, this was to no avail as the Earl died two weeks before the Newcastle and Berwick route was given parliamentary authorisation in July 1845.

The scene was now set for the Craster branch. In 1870, the good citizens of Craster and surrounding villages petitioned the North Eastern Railway (which had taken over the Newcastle and Berwick Railway) to build a line to serve the harbour at Craster and its expanding fishing fleet. By this time, the present Earl Grey was more astute than his father before him and saw the potential for revenue from having the line cross his land and did not object. Following the refusal of the previous Lord Grey, the fishermen had to transport their fish to Little Mill station along some very poorly maintained roads. The North Eastern Railway (NER), always with an eye to expand business, was quick to react and soon had a line built.

By 1872 the work was complete, and the line settled down to a relatively uneventful life until 1914. As a result of the First World War, traffic on the branch increased considerably and the NER re-modelled the track layout to include a run-round loop for both platforms as well as an additional coal siding and parcels bay. In 1921, the new Earl Grey started a quarry called »



2 BR Standard '3MT' 2-6-2T 82029 pauses at Craster station with a former LMS inspection saloon in tow.



3 Left: **Preparing to depart from Craster, Gresley 'V3' 2-6-2T 67682 heads a rake of suburban non-corridor stock as a BR '4MT' 2-6-0 rumbles through at the head of a mixed goods train.**

4 Right: **Goods handled at the harbour include bulk cement, transported in Presflo wagons.**

5 Below: **Thompson 'B1' 61032 awaits departure from Craster with a three-coach train. Football fans heading to St James' Park are waiting to board.**

Howick Heugh Quarry, later changed to Howick Whinstone Quarry and this was connected to the branch. Such was the connection to the branch that all trains were required to travel to the goods yard at Craster to reverse.

In 1940, due to the increasing requirements of raw materials and finished infrastructure items, a pipe works was opened using a recently found source of suitable clay next to the quarry. During the war, passenger and freight traffic increased significantly before settling back down to their usual pre-war levels after 1945. This is where we now find the branch line. The year is between 1957 and 1963. We see the workhorses of the NER slowly disappearing to be replaced by more modern BR Standard steam and diesel locomotives. Traffic is still healthy, with the quarry and pipe works likely to have enough raw materials for the next 20 years, and the increase of tourists travelling to the coast and Dunstanburgh Castle via summer excursions is keeping the passenger numbers above average. But Dr Beeching is looming – can the branch survive the impending storm?

THE MODEL

From starting my collection of model trains from a very young age, my father and I had a few small 'OO' gauge layouts on the exhibition circuit in the North East. As my love of all things NER grew, and with the lack of anything suitable ready-to-run in 4mm:1ft scale at the time, I decided if I was going to have to kit build then I would do it in 'O' gauge. At around the same time, I used to help operate Loch Yale, a 27ft 'O' gauge Scottish Region BR blue layout built by John Loade of the Middlesbrough Model Railway Club. Loch Yale was subsequently put up for sale, and I bought it in 2010. I wanted to base the layout firmly in the North East to accommodate my ever-growing stud of North Eastern Railway/Region motive power. I started planning the alteration needed to suit my wants and needs to a typical North Eastern harbour terminus.

With some help from fellow club members, a suitable location was found, and this was the start of the Craster we see today. Since then, the layout has been altered, changed and extended numerous times and is now 59ft x 6ft L shaped. We added a set of NER coal drops, a goods shed, two station run-round loops, buildings and canopies, and the newest addition of the harbour. The overall alterations and builds have taken me, fellow club members and friends 15 years to perfect.

Over that time, I have exhibited the layout as far south as Swansea and north as far as Perth and a trip to Germany thrown in, as well as multiple times to Model Rail Scotland, Railex North East and our own club show at Nissan Sunderland. Whilst on the exhibition circuit, we have picked up various ideas and plans to make the layout better, easier to erect and more operational. The original boards on Loch Yale were built of plywood but our newest boards for the harbour extension are open framed and formed of 3in x 1in timber sandwiched in plywood. We have learned how to make a strong but lightweight base to start on. There are ten scenic boards and a three-metre-long folding traverser





storage yard able to store six four-coach trains and 11 spare locomotives.

Track is all Peco on the main boards and hand-built copper-clad sleepers and rail in the harbour. This came later in the build as I altered the original layout to get closer to my desired look. However, there was one area I could not get right and did not suit my prototype - the ballast. Originally this was all red ballast from the previous layout, which I decided to remove. The Scottish red ballast didn't fit in with the North Eastern theme, so I then weathered the sleepers and painted all the rails and chairs a rusty red followed by fresh ash and cinder ballast glued in place with the normal 50:50 PVA/water mix to give it the full NER feel. This was enhanced by adding a North Eastern Railway 'over the track' signalbox built by Jack Barnard for Runswick Bay, which »





6 Left: **A mixed goods train headed by BR '4MT' 2-6-0 76049 approaches Craster. The leading vehicle is an Eastern Region horsebox.**

7 Right: **On the quayside, a Worsdell 'J71' undertakes shunting duties.**

8 Below: **A flagman stands guard over the ungated level crossing as Worsdell 'J71' 0-6-0T 68269 edges past with several engineers' wagons in tow along the harbour branch.**

eventually found its way to me for use on Craster. I also added a string of custom signals from Jon Fitness to enable the layout to have each train movement fully controlled.

I found the layout on its first public exhibition appeared to lack the feel of 'going somewhere' so I have since added the ends of the freight loops as well as a row of railway cottages and the start of the cutting towards the skew railway overbridge hiding the entrance to the storage yard. I now feel the rural nature with fields of sheep and trees add the realism of a connection to the rest of the world.

With help from club members, we have scratchbuilt all the buildings from plasticard and Slaters embossed plastic, adding lights and internal details with all rooms furnished and period correct.

Hundreds of Northumbria Painting Services' figures and detailed scenic items have been added to the layout, which now cannot be mistaken for anywhere other than the Northumberland coast in deep NER territory through the 1950s and '60s.

DEEP THINKING

While in lockdown, my idea of altering the station end became more of a reality and I have since started to model Craster harbour. As someone who has never modelled water, this was more challenging than I first thought. After numerous attempts I settled on a method using tissue paper and PVA glue as a base, painted in my choice of murky green and brown and covered by numerous layers of water-based varnish to give the 'wet' effect. Track on the harbour was built using copper-clad strips and rail soldered into place. This has been my first attempt at hand building points but after years of building locomotives and stock, this proved to be fairly simple. To keep the weight of the layout to a minimum, the track infill was made using painted plasticard and plastic putty, painted with a concrete colour textured spray can and weathered with washes.

The whole layout is fully Digital Command Control (DCC) operated using a ROCO Z21 system, using tablets for train operation and a laptop and touchscreen monitor to act as a signalbox with one

operator acting as signalman. All train movements are fully controlled by signals. This means if the signalman is on the ball, we can potentially have three or even four train movements happening at once. The challenge as a signalman is to keep trains moving but not to allow yourself to overload the layout, blocking all train movements and requiring some clever positioning of stock to release the blockage. I write from experience here!

Locomotives and rolling stock are mostly kit built by myself with the exception of Heljan and Dapol diesels and a few vans and wagons, and I have modified, repainted and weathered them all where appropriate. Over the course of an exhibition day, the stock and locomotives are rotated from start of the morning with NER 'J21', 'J26' and 'J39' 0-6-0s, 'Q6' 0-8-0s »



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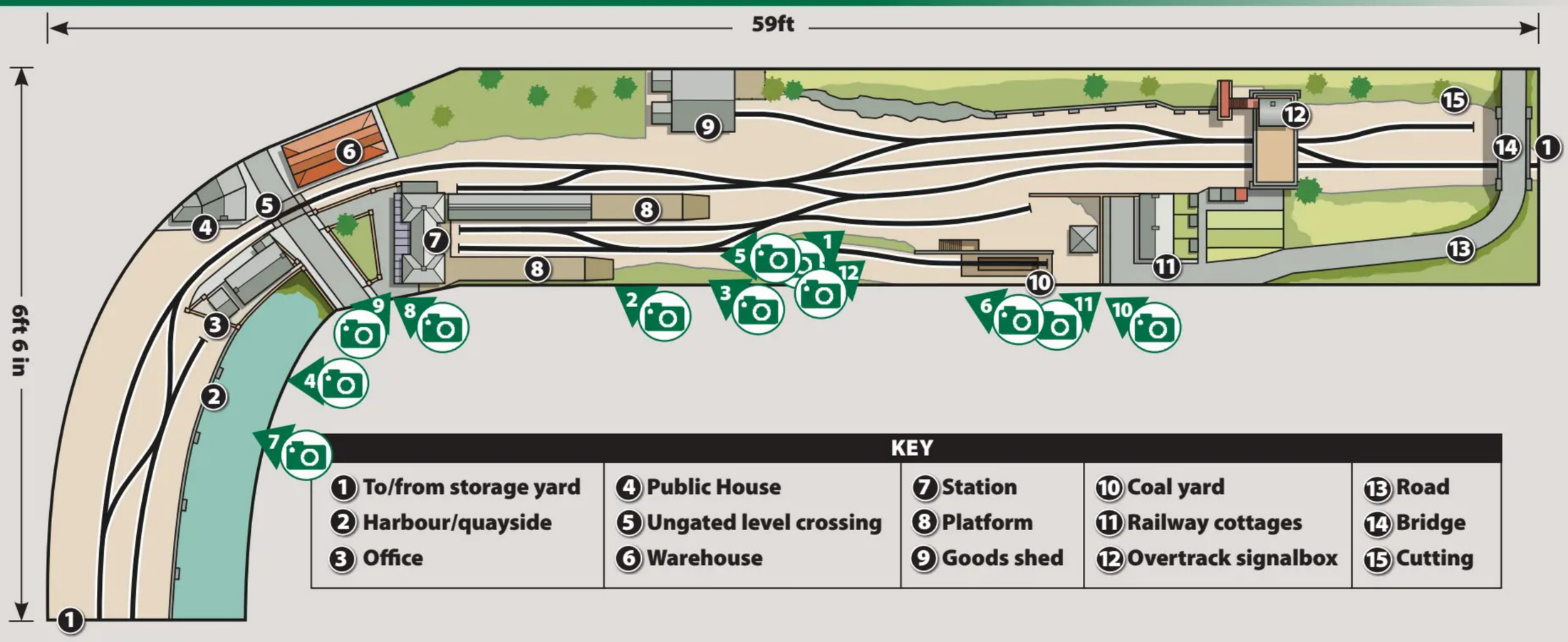
9 Recent arrivals to Craster mill around the station entrance, while a postman prepares to empty the postbox under the watchful gaze of the station cat.

plus 'G5' 0-4-4Ts on push-pull duties. As the time period progresses, BR Standard steam locomotives of '2MT' to '4MT' come on stream, and towards the end, BR diesel Classes 24/25/31/37 and a Class 101 Diesel Multiple Unit. I'm very much an 'if it ran in the North East then I'm interested in modelling it' person. As the layout is based on a fictitious fishing and harbour branch, most of the freight trains are short pick-up goods of fish vans for the harbour and kipper smoke houses and coal/oil for local suppliers. However, the harbour can handle all manner of things from bulk grain to cement transported in Presflos. Trains for the local pipe and clay works are worked in bulk trains.

Eagle-eyed readers and viewers at shows will see all locomotives are actually based on 51F West Auckland and surrounding

10 Worsdell 'J26' 65731 shunts wagons into the loop at Craster before running round and setting back to the goods shed.

CRASTER TRACK DIAGRAM (NOT TO SCALE)

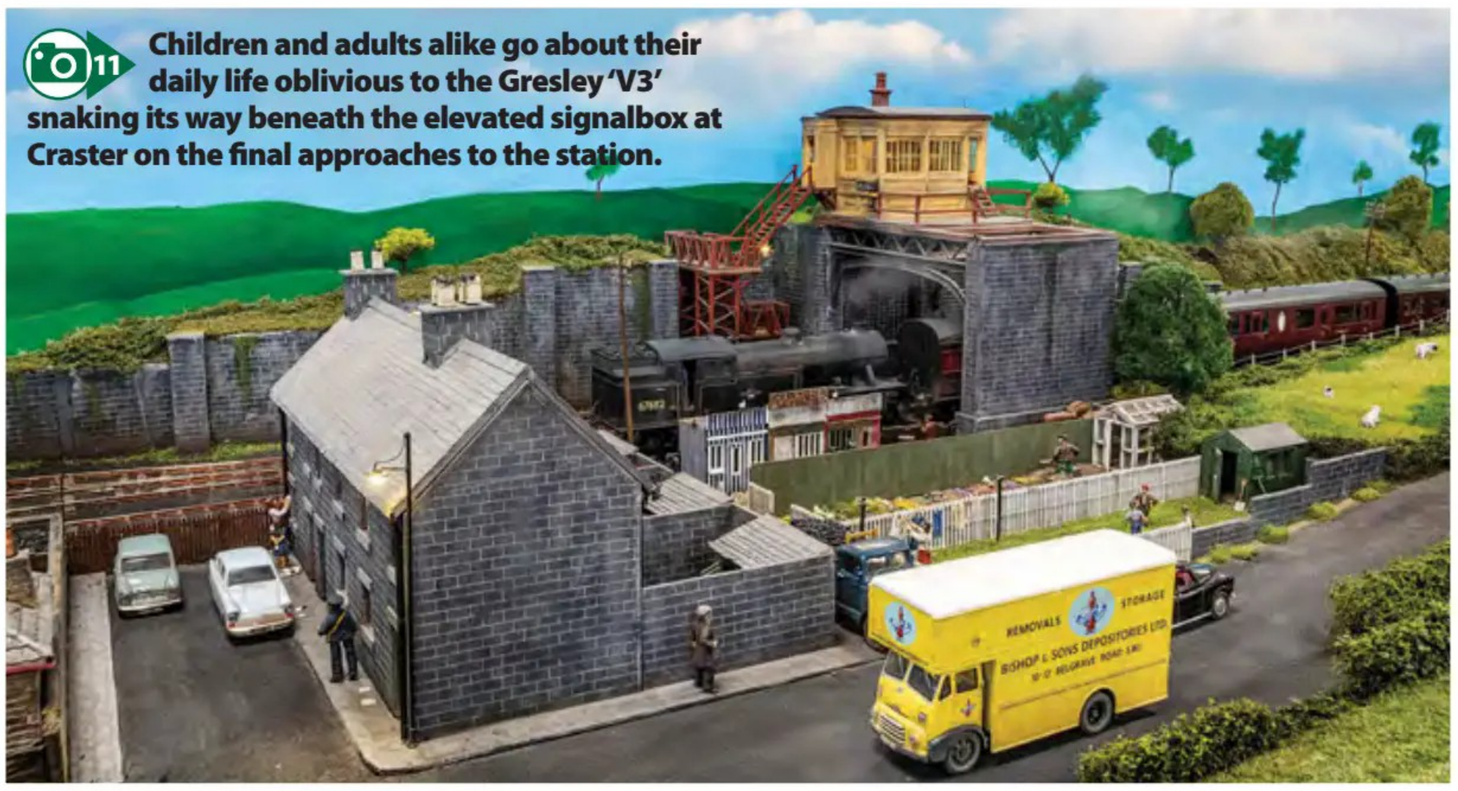


KEY				
1 To/from storage yard	4 Public House	7 Station	10 Coal yard	13 Road
2 Harbour/quayside	5 Ungated level crossing	8 Platform	11 Railway cottages	14 Bridge
3 Office	6 Warehouse	9 Goods shed	12 Overtrack signalbox	15 Cutting



sheds. This brings me on to my next project. After being heavily involved with Mick Worrall's Eastfield TMD, I have access to its huge storage yard. My next project is to build a 1950s/'60s layout using that. This will be based on 51F West Auckland Fieldon's Bridge Junction and St Helen's exchange sidings. This project is a good few years away and is still in the planning stages but I'm sure as the layout becomes a reality, *Hornby Magazine* will be along for the build. **HM**

● You can read more layout features at *www.keymodelworld.com/layout-features.*



11 Children and adults alike go about their daily life oblivious to the Gresley 'V3' snaking its way beneath the elevated signalbox at Craster on the final approaches to the station.



12 The crew of Worsdell 'J21' 65062 wait for coal to be unloaded in the yard at Craster. A Gresley 'V3' slowly eases away from the station with a rake of non-corridor coaches.

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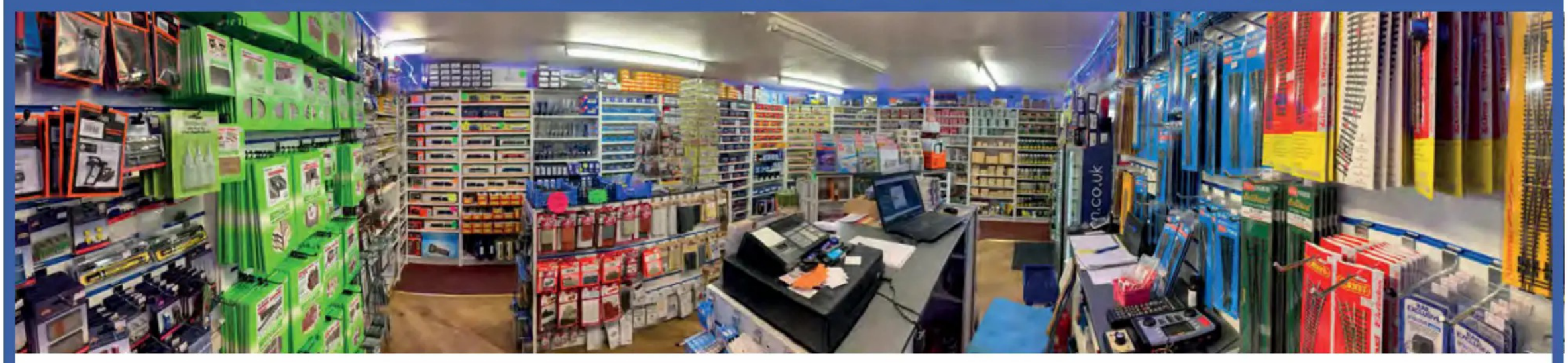
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FIRST REVIEW

The Hornby DUBLO DELTIC

Hornby Dublo's connection with the English Electric *Deltic* goes back to 1961, but its latest release modelling the prototype is one of its best models ever! **MIKE WILD** explains why.



THE ENGLISH ELECTRIC 'Deltics' are amongst the elite of diesel locomotives. When the prototype took to the rails in 1955 it was the world's most powerful single unit diesel locomotive, delivering 3,300hp and the fastest too with a maximum speed of 100mph.

The prototype was unlike anything else on the railway at that time. Decorated in a striking blue livery with cream wasp stripes and bands, it was a vision of the future alongside the murky world of coal soot and oil in which the railway operated.

Soon after the prototype, English Electric built a production batch of 22 'Deltics' for the East Coast Main Line expresses, and Hornby Dublo was quick off the mark to create a model – maybe too quick! The model arrived in 1961 – the same year as the real locomotives – but it didn't match the prototype as well as expected, particularly in its length.

Fast forward 65 years and Hornby has brought out a Hornby Dublo inspired model of the original prototype *Deltic* which puts accuracy, detail and quality before everything else, but beneath the striking exterior there is even more functionality inside with what we see as Hornby's high specification diesel locomotive produced to date.

THE MODEL

The weight of this model instantly catches your attention, even before you open the box. Incredibly, Hornby has created a die-cast body to match the ethos of its Hornby Dublo range steam locomotives – and it is incredible. The shape, look, feel and paint application all look spot on and, perhaps understandably, the die-cast metal body recreates the metal bodywork and paint finish of the real locomotive even more effectively.

The level of detail invested in this model is outstanding. At the front, the correct shape buffers are fitted and sprung while the accessory pack contains a dummy screw link coupling, brake pipes and a clip in coupling plate which slots into the NEM coupling socket. Sand pipes





The roof grilles cover powered roof fans while the central exhaust panel is removable for access to the 21-pin decoder socket.

Engine room detail is represented behind the windows, even down to Napier Deltic engine branding.



TECHNICAL DETAILS

Manufacturer:	*www.hornby.com*
Cat No:	R30297 (DCC Ready)
Description:	English Electric DP1 *Deltic*
Builder:	English Electric Vulcan Foundry
Region:	Midland/Eastern
Gauge:	'OO'
Scale:	4mm:1ft
Length:	290mm (over buffers)
Price:	£349.99 (DCC Ready),
	£404.99 (DCC sound fitted)
Couplings:	Small tension locks in NEM pockets
DCC:	21-pin socket
Speaker:	15mm x 11mm cube fitted. Space for 55mm x 24mm included
Exterior lights:	Headlights and directional lights
Interior lights:	Cab and driver's desk
Minimum curve radius:	Second
Motor type:	Coreless
Flywheel:	None
Wheel arrangement:	Co-Co
Purpose:	Express passenger
Haulage capacity (expected):	Ten Mk 1 carriages
Haulage capacity (actual):	Ten Mk 1 carriages (maximum tested)

are all modelled with metal wire while the bogie side frames are superbly fine plastic mouldings enhanced with the addition of separately fitted steps, brake cylinders, bogie chains and even rivet head detail at each end.

The bogies have 13mm diameter scale wheels, painted grey with white tyres, which does mean there is a slightly larger gap between the body and bogies in order for the model to negotiate second radius curves.

The fuel tanks between the bogies are equally well done with supremely fine pipework at each end and above. There are even magnetic cover plates included in the box to close off the base of the fuel tanks once the model has been released from its carrying plinth.

Above the solebar, the die-cast body is enhanced by flush glazing, engine room detail painted onto the chassis block inside the side windows, factory fitted pre-painted driver and secondman figures, separately fitted grilles and even correctly embossed bodyside banding. For the ultimate in detail, etched metal plates are included in the box with the model to go below each cabside window.

Topping off the detail, literally, is the roof line. Here you will find »



The new Hornby Dublo 'Deltic' is a stunning addition to Hornby's premium range. It has a fully die-cast body.

neatly moulded and separately fitted horns, fine mesh grilles covering the independently powered roof fans and a removable roof hatch which makes it a very simple process to add a decoder to the locomotive without having to take it apart should you wish.

Wrapping up the external package is a virtually flawless paint finish with this first issue of *Deltic* in its 1955 condition with attractive features including the red solebar section, baby blue and cream main body colours, grey roof and superbly applied printed details. It is exquisite.

PERFORMANCE

Inside, the new 'Deltic' is probably the most feature-rich model from Hornby we've ever seen.

It features a powerful coreless motor at its core with all wheel drive, but connected to this is a comprehensive Printed Circuit Board (PCB) offering full lighting control, independently powered roof fans, a twin speaker setup and even room for a stay alive to be added.

The lighting and sound system is built around Hornby's own Triplex Sound Bluetooth decoders. There is a 21-pin decoder socket beneath a removable hatch at the centre of the roof making it very simple to swap out the DCC Ready socket blank for a chip.

From the factory, the DCC ready models have a 15mm x 11mm cube speaker fitted in an enclosure at the No. 2 end of the locomotive – and this is surprisingly powerful and clear when used on its own. There is also provision for a 55mm x 24mm EM1 speaker to be installed at the No. 1 end (fitted as standard in DCC sound versions), but this does require removal of the roof fans and PCB for access.

Completing the internal setup is cab, instrument and locomotive lighting while the fuel tanks conceal a pre-wired space to add a stay alive capacitor with a plug-in connector available below the roof hatch to connect to a Triplex Sound chip.

All of this adds up to a comprehensive package and better still is that our sample ran smoothly and quietly throughout the speed range – and with a huge haulage capacity thanks to its impressive 800gram weight.

OVERALL

Deltic was a subject once deemed 'never to be produced' as a ready-to-run model. We can remember the amazement of the first version of this historic diesel locomotive, but this new release from Hornby is on another level.

The die-cast body is superb, the specification is mouthwatering and it runs like a dream too. This is Hornby at its very, very best and we think this new model is worth every penny of the £350 price tag , particularly as the model is aimed at being the ultimate top of the range model.

We hope it will be the first of many to receive this level of treatment in the Hornby Dublo collection. It really is fantastic. (MW)



Detailing of the bogies is very fine and includes bogie chains, correctly coloured wheels and separately fitted steps.

The box artwork features the same artwork as the 1960s Hornby Dublo catalogue as well as the classic blue with white banding on the ends. DP1 is supplied on a plastic plinth.

Separately powered roof fans

Cab interior lighting

Working directional lights

The internal specification is the best we have seen yet from Hornby and includes powered roof fans, twin speaker spaces, cab and instrument lighting plus a powerful five-pole motor with twin flywheels.

Detailed fuel tanks with space for a stay alive

Fully detailed multi-part bogies

Cavalex's second round of 'GRIDS' ARRIVE!

SPECIFICATION

- **Gauge:** 'OO'
- **Price:** from £189.95 DCC Ready/ £289.95 DCC sound fitted
- **Cat No:** CM-56103-DCR/CM-56107-LH/CM-56301-FL/CM-56089-RSR/CM-56045-BRB-DCR (reviewed)
- **Site:** *www.cavalexmodels.com*
- **DCC:** 21-pin DCC socket
- **Era:** 11

Right: **Cavalex Models' latest 'OO' gauge Class 56s feature see-through roof grilles, separately fitted etched metal parts, handrails, aerials and more.**

CAVALEX MODELS' DEBUT 'OO' gauge diesel – the Class 56 – is back, with the latest production run covering examples of the 135-strong class from introduction in the 1970s to the sectorisation era and onwards to privatisation and the present day. 2026 marks the 50th anniversary of the class entering service, with several examples still in regular use on the main line. See Reality Check on pages 76-79 to discover more.

This second production run of the Cavalex Class 56 mirrors the specification of the first, with all models equipped with a five-pole motor with twin flywheels, independently operating roof fans, fully controllable interior and exterior lighting and stay alive capacitor. Digital Command Control (DCC) sound fitted models also feature an ESU passive radiator speaker and Cavalex's bespoke sound profile for the Class 56 on a Loksound V5 21-pin decoder.



Small details such as light lenses are also well detailed with an appropriate textured finish, according to prototype.

This latest raft of models also includes several small alterations from the initial batch, including revised bogie centre position, a redesigned kinematic coupling design and a new sound profile to cater for modern LED lighting fitted to some models.

Nine examples form the standard range offerings, appearing in BR blue, Railfreight grey, Railfreight red stripe, BR large logo blue, BR triple grey, Transrail triple grey, Loadhaul orange and black and Colas Rail Freight livery. Several retailer exclusives have also been commissioned, including 56001 (Railfreight Construction), 56045 (DC Rail retro BR blue) and 56301 (ex-Fastline) for Ultimate Model Railways, 56036 and 56133 (BR large logo blue) for Rails of Sheffield, 56037 (BR blue) for Railway Icons, 56047 and 56048 (Departmental



Cavalex Models' second run of 'OO' gauge Class 56 Co-Co diesels are now available.



Nineteen different models have been produced in total, with nine general releases and ten exclusive editions, including Key Publishing's 56103 in DCRail grey – available now from the Key Publishing Shop, while stocks last.

'Dutch') for Trains4U, 56302 (Colas Rail Freight) for Model Rail Scotland and 56103 (DCRail grey) for Key Publishing.

Delivered in Cavalex Models' usual substantial packaging, all our samples were screwed into a plastic plinth, with two screws holding it in place. Once again, these models capture the character of these 50-year-old locomotives. Each sports a wide collection of separately applied details, including handrails, lamp irons, multiple working equipment, sprung buffers, windscreen wipers and cab aerials - all neatly fitted on our review samples. A standout feature on 56045 and 56301 is the cutaway cabs. This modification was implemented by Fastline Freight when 56301 was overhauled at Brush Traction in the mid-2000s and has required new tooling to replicate this detail on these models, which has, in our view, been executed extremely well.

Through the cab windows, the extensive cab detail can be inspected, which includes a fully detailed driver's control desk and a full relief driver and secondman's seat. Romanian and early Doncaster built locomotives sport rubber seals around the cab windows and have a different cab profile to later built members of the class. Each light lens features subtle ribs, while those models with LED light clusters feature small bumps to mimic the appearance of individual LEDs – a nice touch. Along the sides of the locomotive, the cantrail grilles are crisp with a fine mesh on the side grille at the No. 1 end. Underneath, the bogies are superbly replicated and once again brimming with separately fitted details, including pipework, securing loops, extensive spring detail and cab access steps.

Decoration is once again to the high standards set with the first run of models, with all our samples superbly finished. In all instances, colours were crisp, with no bleed where colours met. Printed details are just as impressive, with each of our samples featuring high-quality application. Lighting was also excellent, with appropriate lighting temperatures fitted to each model. Original incandescent lighting units have a yellow glow, while modern LED lights – such as those fitted to 56103 - illuminate with a bright blue hue and display no fade-in when turned on.

During our tests, this latest batch of models proved powerful and surefooted on the *Hornby Magazine* test layout, displaying smooth and quiet running characteristics throughout the speed range. As expected, the digital sound profile also matched the previous releases - crisp, loud and responsive.

Cavalex Model's second wave of Class 56s has built on and improved the best 'OO' gauge representation of the Class 56 to date. With models spanning the type's half-century of service, there is a 'Grid' suitable for almost any modeller from the 1970s onwards. (BC)



CLASS 56 Swansong

At 50 years old the Class 56 heavy freight diesel locomotives are now reaching the end of their service lives, yet a few are still gainfully employed on the railway network, as **EVAN GREEN-HUGHES** explains.

DESPITE MOST OF THE work for which it was specifically designed having been lost to the railways, the Class 56 has proved a remarkable survivor. Although the first was withdrawn more than 30 years ago a handful are still around, mainly in the hands of the smaller freight operators in this country, and on mainland Europe, and these provide a welcome variation to the freight scene which is now dominated by the ubiquitous Class 66.

The class has its origins in the early 1970s when British Rail (BR) revised its traction policy, which had previously concentrated on medium-powered all-purpose locomotives, to allow for the design and introduction of a purpose-built heavy freight design which could cope with bulk loads such as merry-go-round coal trains. At the time BR itself was unable to provide such a design and so Brush – builder of the Class 47s - was contracted to provide the new locomotive based on the Class 47 bodyshell but fitted with a 3,000hp power unit, an alternator rather than a generator and electronic traction control.

Although Brush did all the design work, due to manufacturing capacity constraints and a tight delivery schedule, the first batch of what were to become the Class 56s were actually assembled at the Electroputere plant at Craiova in Romania with the bogies coming from another Romanian plant at Resida and the





Diverging from the East Coast Main Line towards Stamford, 56098 in retro BR large logo blue passes over Helpston level crossing with 6M89 Middleton Towers to Ravenhead Sidings on February 3 2024. Mike Wild.

FACTS AND FIGURES	
Built by:	Electroputere, Romania (56001-030) BREL Doncaster (56031-115) BREL Crewe (56116-56135))
Route availability:	7
Introduced:	1976-1984
Withdrawal:	1991 onwards
Number series (original):	56001-135
Wheel arrangement:	Co-Co
Bogie type:	CP2
Engine (original):	Ruston 16RK3CT
Cylinders:	16
Horsepower:	3,250hp
Alternator:	Brush BA1101A
Traction motors:	6 x Brush TM 73-62
Train heat:	Not fitted
Brakes (locomotive):	Air
Brakes (train):	Air
Maximum tractive effort:	61,800lbs
Continuous tractive effort:	53,950lbs
Length:	63ft 6in
Width over cabs:	9ft 2in
Weight:	123tons
Wheel diameter:	3ft 9in
Maximum speed:	80mph
Fuel tank:	1,150gallons
Number built:	135
Number in service:	11
Preserved:	1

electrical equipment from England. The first of the class, 56001, was completed in April 1976 and arrived via ferry with second-built 56002 in August that year.

Unfortunately, when the locomotives were inspected it was found that their construction had been carried out to a very unsatisfactory standard, with welding deficiencies, poor materials and electrical issues amongst the problems identified. Early locomotives had to undergo an extensive upgrade and rectification programme which in some cases meant it took two years to get them into service. Deliveries continued, however, with some improvements in quality but it was still the end of the following year before the last of the 30 Romanian-built examples arrived in the country.

BR 'GRIDS'

By this time the decision had been taken that the remainder of the batch, which eventually was to run to 135 locomotives, would be assembled by British Rail Engineering with Doncaster and Crewe Works involved in this work. UK-assembled locomotives had some slight differences which set them apart, particularly in the design of the side grilles and the cab, and the first of these, 56031, was completed in May 1977 some months before the last of the Romanian-built engines arrived in the country.

The first revenue-earning train to be hauled by the class was in February 1977 when 56006 began its regular duties hauling coal trains in South Yorkshire, soon being joined at its base at Tinsley by many classmates. Duties included taking »

While on hire to DC Rail, Colas Rail 56049 sweeps past Hoods Mill Crossing, near Stamford with the 6M89 Middleton Towers to Chaddesden Sidings sand train on December 13 2025. Ben Church.

merry-go-round trains to power stations such as Ferrybridge, Eggborough and Drax, replacing mainly the Class 47s which had been used on these duties. As deliveries accelerated, ten were allocated to South Wales for use on Port Talbot-Llanwern ore trains; others went to Cricklewood where they were used on bulk cement traffic and some were deployed for use on power station traffic in the west of England. From 1982, a few were also sent to Westbury to work heavy aggregate trains.

At sectorisation the Class 56 fleet was split between the coal and construction sectors, but this did not affect the work to which they had been allocated. Later another reorganisation saw the locomotives split between shadow franchise companies LoadHaul, Mainline Freight and Transrail and finally all were reunited once again in 1996 when American-owned English, Welsh and Scottish Railways (EWS) took over almost all the country's freight operations.

Once the newer Class 66s started to arrive, the Class 56s were concentrated in the North East and Humberside and their duties widened to include steel, chemicals and bitumen trains. There were occasional passenger duties too, with the class sometimes being deployed to haul electric trains diverted due to engineering work and also for special and enthusiast workings, amongst these being the use of 56039 in connection with an open day at Westbury depot in 1989.

The arrival of newer and more efficient locomotives and a steady reduction of coal traffic over the following years resulted in an uncertain future for the class. The first example to be withdrawn was 56042, which had experimental bogies fitted, in 1991 while 56002 followed it in 1994 after sustaining collision damage. Others were taken out of service steadily over the next ten years with the result that more than half had gone by the turn of the century and only 25 were in service by 2003.

SECOND LIVES

It might have been expected that the rest of the class would follow and that would have been the end for these powerful but workaday, freight locomotives but then 30 were given an extended lease of life when they were hired out for construction work in France. In the UK small startup freight operators also began to eye up the Class 56s with one of the earliest being DCRail which obtained six examples for use on the spot-hire market. Two of these were later retained by the company while four others went to UK Rail Leasing. The two act as back-ups for DCR's fleet of Class 60s and can often be seen working in pairs due to their slightly lower tractive effort compared with newer locomotives. This fleet has appeared in several guises, including in DCR's original green livery and later, following the takeover of the company by the Cappagh Group, in the company's standard grey. One, 56045, is painted in a version of the former BR blue livery. This latter is interesting for, as 56301, it spent a time in preservation before returning to main line use.

Class 56s have also proved popular with infrastructure provider Colas Rail, which has ten in its fleet. These have historically been used mainly for trains in connection with track relaying and engineering work but also have been used for hauling steel trains from Immingham to Birmingham. These have all been painted in the company's striking yellow, orange and black livery.

GB Railfreight obtained 16 locomotives, including the four from DCR/UK Rail Leasing, and some of which had previously been in France. These were destined for upgrading and re-engineering with American power units as Class 69s, so while they look similar, they are to all intents and purposes more like Class 66s.

Of the 30 Class 56s sent to France, all returned to the UK around 2007 but then three of them were then sold to Hungarian operator Floyd Group, deployed on the company's freight operations in that country. These have since passed to infrastructure company V-Hid which is using them on its track renewals operation.

As might have been expected, there has also been interest from the heritage sector in the class, although its usefulness on



Left: **On a glorious spring day, 56103 rests between duties in company with 56301 at Chaddesden Sidings in Derby as its rake of JNA-T wagons undergo internal cleaning on March 20 2025.** Mike Wild.



Above: **56045 and 56103 depart Chessington South with 6M17 Chessington South Sidings-Willesden DC Rail Sidings on December 18 2025.** Mike Wild.

preserved railways is limited by its air brake system, which is incompatible with the vacuum brake used on most lines. Romanian-built 56006 was returned to its original livery in 1999 by EWS and was placed in a special heritage locomotive pool where it existed for four years before final withdrawal. Storage followed at the Barrow Hill site before a final move to the East Lancashire Railway in 2012 where it is in service, last used to haul a UK Railtours special on the heritage line at the end of March. It is also a regular at diesel galas. 56301 was also preserved for a time but was returned to main line use, while 56097 spent many years at the Nottingham Heritage Centre before being sold to GB Railfreight for its Class 69 programme.

There are still 11 Class 56s out of the 135 originally built registered for main line service, all with DCRail or Colas so it is still possible to see one in regular traffic, although instances of this are becoming rarer. How long the class will last is not yet known but increased focus on emissions will likely cause them to have a shorter, rather than a longer-term future, as their Ruston engines are notorious for the amount of smoke that they produce – not to mention their sheer age.

Given the total collapse of the country's coal traffic for which the Class 56 was originally designed, and the fact that the first one was taken out of traffic more than 30 years ago, it is remarkable that any of these workhorses survive to celebrate their half century, but the message must surely be to catch sight of one while you can, as their distinctive engine note is of a kind unlikely to be heard on the national network ever again. **HM**

● **For more in-depth prototype Reality Check articles, *visit www.keymodelworld.com/reality-check*.**



Colas Rail 56078 runs light through Helpston on the Fast line as 0Z70 Doncaster-Doncaster via the ECML, Peterborough and the Spalding Joint Line on July 18 2024. Mike Wild.

FIRST REVIEW

IRM's Northern Ireland Railways

DL HUNSLET LANDS!



Left: **IRM's new 'OO' Hunslet DL's feature a five-pole motor, twin flywheels, rotating roof fan, stay alive and factory-fitted passive radiator speaker.**



IRISH RAILWAY MODELS (IRM) announced in 2024 that it was to produce the three members of the Northern Ireland Railways (NIR) 101 Class DL Hunslets through Accurascale. These locomotives were introduced in 1970 to haul the 'Enterprise' train from Dublin to Belfast. IRM committed to modelling all three locomotives - *Eagle*, *Falcon* and *Merlin* - in the three main liveries carried while in service.

In the late 1960s, NIR was seeking new motive power for the 'Enterprise' Dublin to Belfast service, and the Hunslet Engine Company of Leeds won the contract to construct a trio of Bo-Bo diesel locomotives. Intended to run with an eight-coach formation of BR Mk 2b coaches in a push-pull configuration, the new locomotives used an English Electric 8CSVT Mk II engine – essentially an updated version of the engine found in BR's Class 20. Final assembly of the locomotives was subcontracted to British Rail Engineering Limited, with the locomotives assembled at Doncaster and then sent to Preston for export to Belfast, where the locomotives were fitted with 5ft 3in gauge bogies. While principally used on 'Enterprise' duties for 13 years, the class could be seen on other locomotive-hauled trains and freight.

In later life, the trio was cascaded to secondary passenger duties and freight, with 103 *Merlin* taken out of service in 1989 and the last, 102 *Falcon*, withdrawn in 1998, although it received a brief reinstatement to traffic in 2002. Of the three, 103 *Merlin* was scrapped in 1997, while *Eagle* and *Falcon* were sold to the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland in 2005. A full restoration of Falcon was planned, but this was never completed, and it was sold to the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum at Cultra in 2011, where it is on display. *Eagle* had been heavily stripped for parts, and it was scrapped when no buyer for the heavily stripped locomotive could be found in 2010.



11 different models have been produced including NIR 101 *Eagle* in maroon with revised arc, 102 *Falcon* in blue with red arc and 103 *Merlin* in blue with red chevrons.

THE MODEL

In all, 11 models have been produced, covering all three locomotives in as-delivered NIR red, NIR blue and NIR blue with red chevrons. Additional models are

Irish Railway Models' new 'OO' gauge Northern Ireland Railways 101 Class DL Hunslet is here. **BEN CHURCH** investigates this new arrival.



Each locomotive features fine buffer beam detailing, crisp grilles and intricately detailed bogies.

TECHNICAL DETAILS	
Manufacturer:	*www.accurascale.com*
Cat No:	IRM1330/5/9
Description:	Northern Ireland Railway Hunslet 101 Class Bo-Bo diesel
Builder:	Hunslet Engine Company Leeds/BREL Doncaster
Region:	Ireland
Gauge:	'00'
Scale:	4mm:1ft
Length:	180mm (over buffers)
Price:	£220 (DCC Ready), £319.99 (DCC sound fitted)
Couplings:	Small tension locks in NEM pockets
DCC:	21-pin decoder socket
Speaker:	42mm x 22mm passive radiator speaker
Exterior lights:	Headlights and directional lights
Interior lights:	Cab and driver's desk
Minimum curve radius:	Second
Motor type:	Five-pole
Flywheel:	Two
Wheel arrangement:	Bo-Bo
Purpose:	Express passenger
Haulage capacity (expected):	Eight Mk 1 carriages
Haulage capacity (actual):	Ten Mk 1 carriages (maximum tested)



Below: **Irish Railway Models' all-new 'OO' gauge NIR Hunslet DL Bo-Bo diesels are now available.**

Eagle in NIR maroon with a revised yellow arc and *Falcon* in NIR blue with a black cab and small yellow warning panels.

The stubby Bo-Bos have been modelled well, with a superbly detailed body and heavyweight die-cast chassis, resulting in a robust, intricately detailed model. Produced to the same high standards as previous IRM/Accurascale models, the 101 Class features a broad range of lighting features, with full control of the directional lights, headlight, cab light and driver's control desk lights. A rotating roof fan is included, along with a five-pole motor, twin flywheels, stay-alive and provision to regauge the model to 21mm finescale standards.

Looking beyond the wealth of features, both cab ends are extensively detailed. The two large front windows are recessed slightly and are securely fitted, with handrails, horns, windscreen wipers, headlight and lamp iron all separately fitted. Front marker lights are modelled, and the buffer beam is fitted with sprung buffers – each fitted with a fine chain – cosmetic coupling hook and pre-fitted Electric Train Supply and multiple working cables. Cab detail is crisp, with a separately fitted handbrake wheel, full relief seats and driver's desk picked out inside. Along the side, a series of grilles, windows and full-length handrails are fitted.

Chassis detail is equally impressive, with cylinders, piping runs and other equipment fitted to the chassis. Bogie detail is also good, with each featuring bogie chains, cab access steps and crisply moulded axle boxes, springs and bogie side frames.

Each of our three review samples featured excellent livery application, with the NIR blue and maroon taking to the diesels well. Yellow or red embellishments were crisply applied, with printed detail crisp in all instances. A detail pack is included with a full selection of buffer beam detail for both ends, etched nameplates, printed metal builder's plates and a selection of additional metal plates depending on the model. A tail lamp is also included, which can be secured to the model by removing one of the small lamp brackets.

PERFORMANCE

Performance of our review samples was superb straight from the box, each hauling ten Bachmann BR Mk 1 coaches with ease - more than enough power for prototypical loads. IRM's new Hunslets ran smoothly and near silent at high and slow speeds, with the built-in stay alive helping the Bo-Bo cross any larger dead zones in trackwork. To access the internals of the model, the large roof hatch can be removed to reveal the 21-pin Digital Command Control (DCC) decoder socket and switch bank – sited behind the fan. Body removal is possible and it is held in place with several clips. Each was fitted with a 42mm x 22mm passive radiator speaker, with sound replication excellent across the board. The engine sounds are reminiscent of a Class 20, with a full complement of ancillary sounds also included in the sound profile, with other features such as drive hold, active braking and cold start functions.

OVERALL

IRM's Hunslet 101 Class is an excellent model with accurate detailing and an extremely high standard of construction. With a suite of matching coaches, these models can be at the head – or tail – of some truly impressive Irish trains. Available now, exclusively from the Accurascale website. (BC)

Accurascale

CLASS 31

RETURNS FOR SECOND OUTING

The Brush Type 2 is in favour once more with the arrival of Accurascale's second batch of Class 31s for 'OO' gauge. **MIKE WILD** checks out the second selection and choices that are on offer.





Left: **The most modern in the latest collection of Class 31s is 31602 in Fragonset black and red.**

Right: **The accessory pack with each locomotive provides a comprehensive set of buffer beam parts. D5501 also has a set of etched metal headcode discs.**



The latest batch of Class 31s from Accurascale for 'OO' gauge models locomotives from the 1960s to the 2010s. Each is available DCC ready and DCC sound fitted.

THE CLASS 30/31 HAS become a popular part of the Accurascale diesel-electric model range with the latest releases covering six of the class in colour schemes suitable for layouts from the early 1960s to the early 2010s.

This second batch follows 12 months on from the first with highlights including the sold-out Accurascale exclusive model of D5579 in golden ochre livery with small yellow warning panels, Fragonset liveried 31602 *Chimaera* which was seen on Network Rail test trains for several years, and BR blue liveried 31418 which defied the odds to keep its BR blue livery until withdrawal in 1995.

The specification matches that of the first batch with each locomotive being offered DCC Ready and DCC sound fitted. Internally there is a powerful five-pole motor with twin flywheels, drive to the outer axles (just like the real thing) of each bogie, fully functioning independent lighting plus cab lights and a separately powered roof fan which can be controlled through the decoder on DCC sound models.

Externally detail differences are catered for with each model including D5501 and 31418 using the early 'Skinhead' body style – with 31418 also featuring plated communication doors – while the other four (D5579, 31271, 31301 and 31602) all use the later body style with roof mounted four-character headcode boxes – both original and plated. 31301 even comes with optional high-intensity headlights to allow it to be modelled for different eras.

The finish on each locomotive is superb and matches the high standard we expect from an Accurascale product. Main body colours have clear definition at their edges while printing of numbers, logos, builder's plates and data panels is excellent and clear. The cab interior is also superbly detailed with a full set of controls on the driver's desk, illuminated gauges and a detailed bulkhead behind.

Performance on the track was excellent with each of our DCC Ready samples. In all cases the models ran smoothly and quietly throughout the speed range and had plenty of capacity to haul an eight-coach train. All models are factory fitted with stay alives and a 15mm x 11mm cube speaker while DCC sound fitted models benefit from the addition of the ESU LokSound V5 decoder together with Accurascale's standard choice of a 55mm x 24mm speaker to play the custom recorded sound profile through.

Whether you already have an Accurascale Class 31 or you missed out on the first batch, there is a great selection here to suit layouts set in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and 2000s and we can see these being a popular collection of models in 'OO' gauge. Excellent and available now. (MW)

31418 models the locomotive in BR blue livery with welded communication doors. It retained its headcode discs on each cab front in this livery.



SPECIFICATION

- **Gauge:** 'OO'
- **Price:** £184.96 DCC Ready, £284.95 DCC sound fitted
- **Cat No:** Various
- **Site:** *www.accurascale.com*
- **Era:** 5-10

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For freight modellers, 31271 and 31301 will make an excellent pairing to head construction trains.

HORNBY'S 'Merchant Navy' BUILDS UP STEAM



Right: **Tooling modifications have been made to accommodate the steam generator behind the magnetic removable smokebox door.**

- **Gauge:** 'OO'
- **Price:** £364.99
- **Cat No:** R30399SS
- **Site:** *www.hornby.com*
- **DCC:** 21-pin decoder socket
- **Era:** 3



Right: **Bearing the hallmarks of previous releases, Hornby's steam-generator-fitted air-smoothed 'Merchant Navy' features a die-cast chassis, five-pole skew-wound motor, flywheel, factory-fitted brake rigging, sprung metal buffers and more.**

HORNBY'S LATEST steam generator-equipped locomotive - Bulleid air-smoothed 'Merchant Navy' 21C1 *Channel Packet* – is out now.

Outshopped from Eastleigh Works in February 1941, 21C1 *Channel Packet* was the first of Oliver Bulleid's innovative 'Merchant Navy' 4-6-2s, built by the Southern Railway to haul heavy express

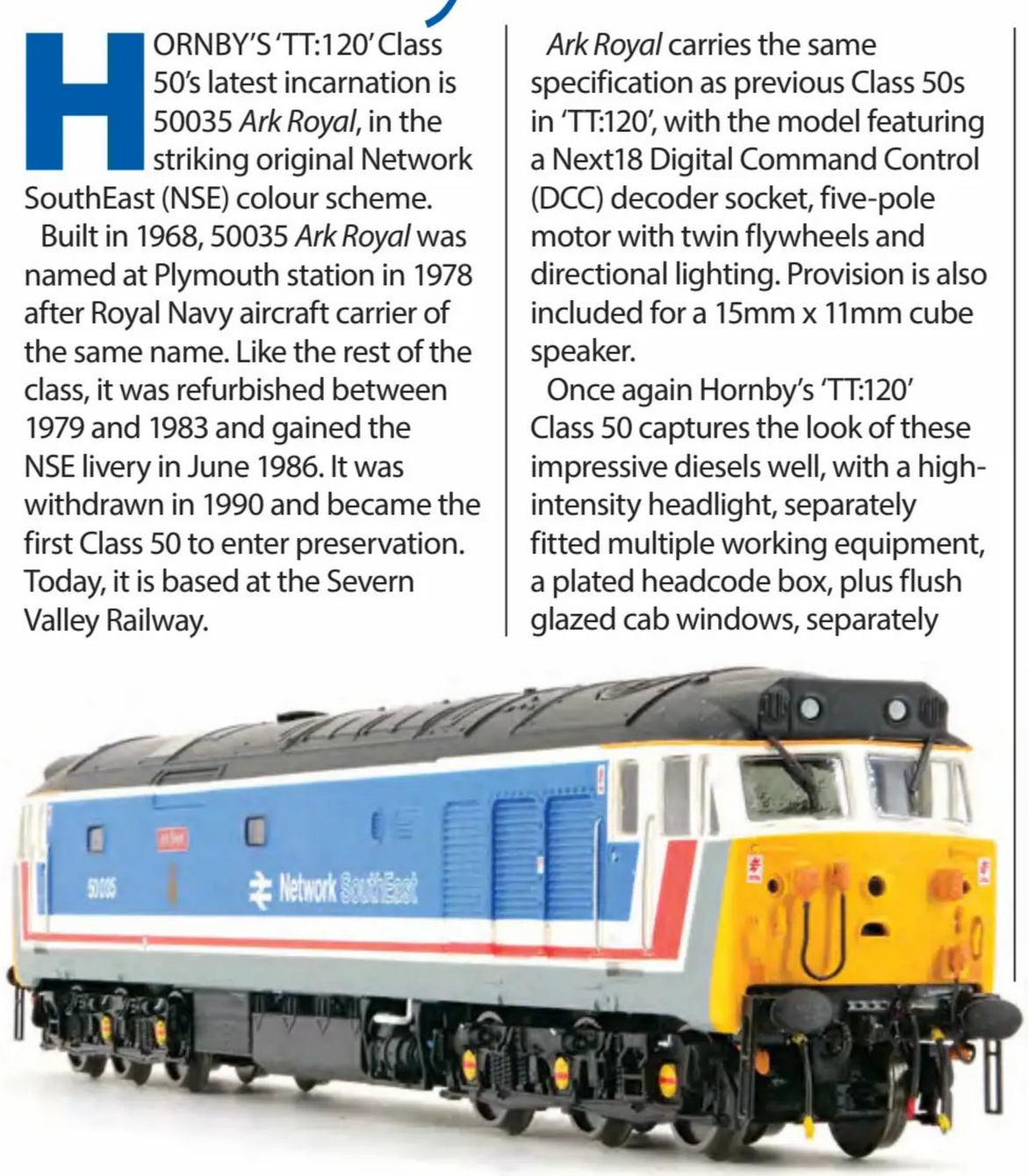
Hornby's 'TT:120' *Ark Royal* sails in

HORNBY'S 'TT:120' Class 50's latest incarnation is 50035 *Ark Royal*, in the striking original Network SouthEast (NSE) colour scheme.

Built in 1968, 50035 *Ark Royal* was named at Plymouth station in 1978 after Royal Navy aircraft carrier of the same name. Like the rest of the class, it was refurbished between 1979 and 1983 and gained the NSE livery in June 1986. It was withdrawn in 1990 and became the first Class 50 to enter preservation. Today, it is based at the Severn Valley Railway.

Ark Royal carries the same specification as previous Class 50s in 'TT:120', with the model featuring a Next18 Digital Command Control (DCC) decoder socket, five-pole motor with twin flywheels and directional lighting. Provision is also included for a 15mm x 11mm cube speaker.

Once again Hornby's 'TT:120' Class 50 captures the look of these impressive diesels well, with a high-intensity headlight, separately fitted multiple working equipment, a plated headcode box, plus flush glazed cab windows, separately





A new version of Hornby's 'TT:120' Class 50 Co-Co diesel is now available as 50035 *Ark Royal* in Network SouthEast livery.



passenger and boat trains. It was withdrawn from Bournemouth in 1964 and scrapped.

Hornby's air-smoothed 'Merchant Navy' tooling dates from 2016 and is still well regarded. The manufacturer has chosen to represent its first steam generator-fitted example as *Channel Packet* in as-built condition, with Bulleid's original front cowling arrangement, cab style and full tender fairing. The model has been turned out well, with separately fitted cosmetic electric lights, pre-fitted brake rigging, and extensive cab detail. Decoration is also excellent, with Southern Railway Malachite green accented by yellow bodyside stripes along the slab-sided locomotive.

Of course, it's the steam generator which is the main attraction here. Its water reservoir is filled by removing the smokebox door and adding water with the supplied pipette. It is fitted with Hornby's HM7000 Bluetooth and Digital Command Control (DCC) Triplex Sound decoder, which can work via the HM|DCC mobile application, or a conventional DCC controller. In operation, the locomotive performs identically to previous steam generator-fitted locomotives, with exhaust steam released in synchronisation with the wheel rotation. A full suite of sound functions is included with the decoder, with playable whistles on F2 and F3, along with ancillary sounds such as wheel slip, safety valves, coal shovelling, guard's whistle and automatic function control on F28.

For fans of Bulleid's superb 'Pacifics', Hornby's steam generator is a great addition to the 'Merchant Navy', offering superb 'play value' to an already excellent model. (BC)



This latest release features plenty of separately applied detailing and comes with metal nameplates for placing over the factory printed examples.

fitted windscreen wipers and crisply moulded side grilles. The NSE livery is well applied, with bright colours, although we did notice some misting on our review sample where colours met in a few locations. The model is supplied with a full complement of pipework at both ends, along with miniature snowploughs and printed metal nameplates for customer fitment.

Another superb 'TT:120' Class 50 from Hornby which captures a popular sectorisation era livery, just in time for the 40th anniversary of the formation of Network SouthEast in June. (BC)

- **Gauge:** 'TT:120'
- **Price:** £167.99
- **Cat No:** TT3042M
- **Site:** *www.hornby.com*
- **DCC:** Next18 Digital Command Control decoder socket
- **Era:** 8

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FIRST REVIEW

Rapido Trains UK's 'EVOLUTION' COACHES ARRIVE

The first coaches in Rapido Trains UK's expansive range of generic 'OO' gauge 'Evolution' coaches have arrived for examination. **BEN CHURCH** examines these new arrivals in detail.



New from Rapido Trains UK is a collection of generic steam era bogie carriages for 'OO' gauge.

IN SEPTEMBER 2024, Rapido Trains UK revealed 'Project Evolution', a range of generic pre-Grouping 48ft bogie coaches, produced along the lines of the preceding Hatton's 'Genesis' coach range. While initially announced as three types of coach in nine liveries, the scope of the range rapidly grew, eventually spanning five coach types in 33 colour schemes. With the first examples of the initial batch now arriving with retailers and modellers, we take a look to find what these useful models can bring to your layouts.

While maligned by some, the popularity of generic pre-Grouping coaches has grown in recent years, with the initial spark provided by Hatton's and Hornby's respective ranges of four- and six-wheel vehicles. Rapido's range has clearly been developed to complement those, with these new 'Evolution' coaches appearing in First Class, Full Brake, Brake Third, Third and Composite non-corridor forms.

There are several variations to allow for as accurate a representation as possible of specific railway companies' coaches. Arc, elliptical and clerestory roofs have been tooled, along with variations to the lighting arrangements with gas and electric lighting catered for and different styles of footboards.

Five 'Evolution' coaches arrived for assessment - a London Brighton & South Coast Railway (LBSCR) triple pack, containing a Brake Third, Third and Composite coach, plus a single South Eastern & Chatham Railway (SECR) First and Longmoor Military Railway (LMR) Full Brake.

Our samples arrived mostly unscathed, with one end step falling off in transit – this was straightforward to refit to the coach. To the casual observer, Rapido's 'Evolution' coaches capture the look of a pre-Grouping coach well. The manufacturer has included some additional glazing with each model so windows can be modelled open or closed. This



LB&SCR is one of the colour schemes in the first batch.



Etched metal luggage racks are modelled above each set of seats.

- **Gauge:** 'OO'
- **Price:** £199.95 (triple pack), £69.95 (single)
- **Cat No:** 978029a-c (LBSCR, triple-pack), 978037 (SECR), 978054 (LMR)
- **Site:** *www.rapidotrains.co.uk*
- **Era:** 2

Below: **The SECR liveried First is smartly finished with ornate lining on the body panels.**





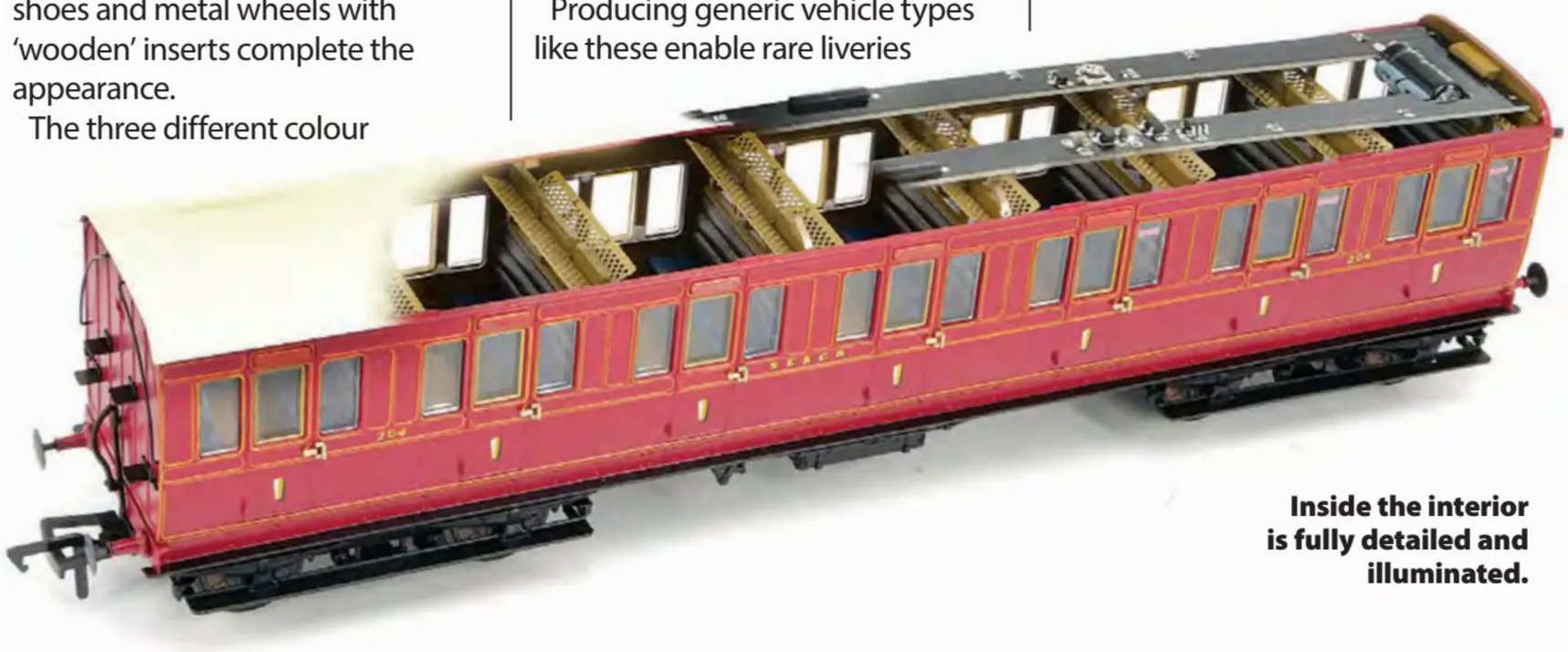
is swapped by gently pushing the factory-fitted glazing out of the model. Coaches are also supplied with a pair of short and long NEM close couplings, two screw link couplings, two steam heat pipes, four bogie footboards and two long footboards for attachment to the coach body.

Inside, detail is comprehensive and well-executed, with etched-metal luggage racks fitted above the seats along with small painted information boards. Removing the roof is straightforward, as it is held in by ten small clips. This allows access to the interior – made even easier by removing the lighting PCB, which can be unhooked from the coach ends. The lighting bar features a potentiometer allowing for control of the intensity of the lighting. The lighting can be switched on or off using the included magnetic wand. Stay alive capacitors are fitted, and we found that the coaches would stay illuminated for a few seconds after being taken off the track.

Underneath, detail is extensive, with an array of neatly fitted underframe boxes, brake gear, vacuum cylinders and more. Bogies are fitted with moulded springs and axle boxes, while in-line brake shoes and metal wheels with 'wooden' inserts complete the appearance.

The three different colour schemes applied to our 'Evolution' coach samples were up to the high standard we have come to expect from the manufacturer, with the intricate lining and lettering suiting the panelled sides of the coaches well. Application of colours was crisp, with printed elements applied to an equally high standard.

Producing generic vehicle types like these enable rare liveries to be applied to ready-to-run coaches which might otherwise be impractical and unviable to produce and make for a more varied and colourful modelling scene. Rapido has clearly answered the growing interest in pre-Grouping railways with these models, and 'Project Evolution' has been executed superbly. (BC)



Inside the interior is fully detailed and illuminated.

LMS 20TON HOPPERS

- **Gauge:** 'OO'
- **Price:** £34.95
- **Cat No:** 963012 (BR), 963005 (LMS)
- **Site:** *www.rapidotrains.co.uk*
- **Era:** 3-5

RAPIDO TRAINS UK's first 'OO' gauge hopper wagon has arrived in the form of the London, Midland & Scottish Railway (LMS) 20ton fleet.

These wagons were constructed from the early-1920s to the mid-1930s, initially for carrying iron ore. The hoppers lasted into BR service, with some by this time fitted with covers to carry lime. Many found second lives with private operators, and several are preserved at Rocks by Rail: The Living Ironstone Museum in Rutland.

17 different hoppers have been produced covering LMS grey, LMS bauxite, BR grey, British Sugar Corporation yellow, National Coal Board black and Longmoor Military Railway grey.

Our review samples included a LMS bauxite and a BR lime wagon in grey. Both hoppers were well formed, with a neatly moulded hopper body – complete with several areas of moulded rivet detail. Hopper supports are well executed, and the lime wagon's cover features neatly moulded



Below: **17 different models form the initial releases including 691702 in LMS bauxite.**





M690386 in BR grey is additionally fitted with a lime hood to protect the payload.

RAPIDO TRAINS UK GWR 'OPEN C'

THE LATEST WAGON in Rapido Trains UK's ever-growing catalogue of pre-Grouping wagons is the Great Western Railway (GWR) O19 open wagon for 'OO' gauge.

These wagons can trace their roots back to the GWR's Diagram O8 design of 1907. Successive refinements were made to these 15ft long wagons until 1914 which resulted in the Diagram O19 version. These wagons were produced until 1927 and lasted in service beyond nationalisation, with some examples preserved. One can be seen today at the Great Western Society in Didcot.

Rapido Trains UK's new 'OO' wagon is available in 13 different forms, covering GWR grey, BR Western Region grey, BR grey and Port of London Authority orange.

Our GWR grey review sample, numbered 94887, featured neatly moulded details with crisply represented side doors and wooden plank detail – plus a quartet of separately fitted lashing rings attached to each side. Finely riveted metal supporting stanchions and wagon corners adorn the ends.

Underneath, chassis detail is impressive, with a complex array of separately fitted brake linkage visible when observing the wagon side-on. Turned metal wheels run in metal bearing cups, complemented by crisp spring and axle box detail. The wagons are fitted with NEM coupling pockets at both ends.

Rapido has replicated the GWR grey well, with the sides and underframe of the wagon all sporting the same colour. Printed details were neatly applied for the most part, although we noticed some imperfections on the large GW lettering on our review sample.

Rapido Trains UK's new GWR 'Open C' wagons will seamlessly blend into many GWR era layouts – and beyond, such was their longevity. Available now. (BC)

TOUCH DOWN

FIRST REVIEW

Rapido Trains UK's all-new 'OO' gauge LMS 20ton iron ore hopper wagons have arrived with retailers.



doors and separately fitted handrails.

Chassis detail is good, with brake rigging, in-line brake shoes and moulded axle boxes and springs all represented well. Our samples featured disc and split spoke wheels, the former featuring white tyres, running in metal bearings. NEM coupling pockets allow easy replacement of the supplied couplings if desired.

Decoration on our samples was excellent throughout, with the BR grey and LMS bauxite colour schemes looking accurate. Printed details are applied well, with crisp application in all instances.

These LMS hoppers are sure to look the part on LMS, BR or industrial themed layouts and will be very useful additions for many modellers. (BC)



The new wagon features separately fitted detailing including lashing rings, door bangers and brake gear.

- **Gauge:** 'OO'
- **Price:** £35.95
- **Cat No:** 964002
- **Site:** *www.rapidotrains.co.uk*
- **Era:** 2/3

Hornby delivers

‘West Riding Limited’ COACHES

- **Gauge:** ‘OO’
- **Price:** £149.99 per twin set
- **Cat No:** R40477 – R40480
- **Site:** *www.hornby.com*
- **Era:** 3

HORNBY’S follow-up act to the hugely popular ‘Coronation’ coaches (HM211) has arrived in the form of the ‘West Riding Limited’ coaches, modelling the London and North Eastern Railway’s (LNER) service from London King’s Cross to Bradford.

Inaugurated in September 1937, the ‘West Riding Limited’ used the same design of twin-articulated coach as the ‘Coronation’ but with no observation car at the rear. The onset of the Second World War curtailed its operation – as with the other streamlined trains on the LNER and London Midland & Scottish Railway - and the coaches were placed into storage.

To create a prototypical eight-car formation of the ‘West Riding

ONE:ONE COLLECTION LNER



Hornby’s latest ‘OO’ gauge ‘Coronation’ observation car release models the One:One Collection’s 1729.



Hornby's 'OO' gauge LNER 'West Riding Limited' articulated coaches are now available.



Four twin-coach articulated sets have been produced, including this Kitchen Third/Brake Third pairing.



Decoration and detailing is superb with foil decals and lining on the exterior and full complement of seats, tables and illumination inside.

Limited', Hornby has produced four twin-coach packs with Brake Third, Kitchen Third and Double Open First vehicles.

Once again, Hornby's LNER twin-articulated coaches are impressive, with the Art Deco styling well replicated. To replicate the stainless steel typeface and decorative styling, Hornby has employed foil to great effect. Care should be taken when handling the model to avoid damaging the delicate silver detailing. The LNER garter and Marlborough blue are applied superbly and the coaches once again feature red wheels and neat white tyres.

Interior detailing is superb, with First and Third Class interiors enhanced by factory-fitted coach lighting, with all coaches featuring capacitors for flicker-free illumination. Each coach pairing features kinematic NEM coupling pockets on the outer ends, with bespoke couplings for joining the inner ends of the articulated pair together. When connecting multiple twin sets, cosmetic corridor ends have been provided to replicate the streamlined rubber fairing fitted to the prototype. Standard corridor ends are also provided with magnetic attachments, allowing for straightforward swapping. Underneath, bogie detail is crisp, with elements of underframe detail hidden beneath the coach valances.

Hornby's 'West Riding Limited' coaches are a wonderful way to reintroduce these vehicles to the market and replicate another of the LNER's most stylish trains. They are truly impressive coaches which are available now from Hornby stockists. (BC)

'CORONATION' OBSERVATION CAR

- **Gauge:** 'OO'
- **Price:** £81.99
- **Cat No:** R40481
- **Site:** *www.hornby.com*
- **Era:** 3/11



The sleek release features a neatly applied LNER two-tone blue colour scheme, together with foil embellishments and white walled wheels with red centres.

THE PAIR OF OBSERVATION cars used on the London and North Eastern Railway's 'Coronation' train in the 1930s were the final flourish to this famous service, and happily, both are preserved. 1719 remains in BR condition with the redesigned observation end, while 1729 was restored to as-built 'beavertail' condition. Today, it is restored as part of the One:One Collection.

Hornby's initial wave of 'Coronation' coaches arrived at the end of 2024 and were very popular. The latest release retains the high quality of the early batches, with flawless and very intricate silver detailing around the windows, solebar and doors. The LNER, 'Coronation' text and coach number are also finished in the same silver styling and represent the stainless steel lettering of the prototype superbly. A two-tone blue finish complements the silver detailing, rounded off by red wheels complete with white tyres.

Inside, the interior is just as impressive, with detailing applied to the seats, a wooden finish to some of the internal walls and surfaces and factory-fitted interior lighting to further enhance the interior of the model.

Underneath, bogies are crisply moulded and underframe equipment is fitted behind the streamlined valance on the side of the coach. Sprung buffers and a pair of illuminated tail lamps are at the observation end of the coach – vacuum and steam heating pipes can also be fitted. At the corridor end are metal non-sprung buffers, along with provision for the buffer beam pipes. Alternative corridor ends are provided which can be magnetically attached to represent either a traditional corridor connection or a streamlined one, the latter used when connecting the observation car to other 'Coronation' coaches.

Hornby's One:One 'Coronation' observation car maintains the high standards set with the initial release. An outstanding recreation of the preserved example, which could be used on present-day and LNER era layouts. (BC)

FIRST REVIEW

Rapido Trains UK LNER DYNAMOMETER CAR

Rapido Trains UK's 'N' gauge version of the LNER Dynamometer Car has arrived. **BEN CHURCH** sees how this unique vehicle measures up in 2mm:1ft scale.



This delightful new model captures the essence of this unique LNER vehicle superbly.

- **Gauge:** 'N' gauge
- **Price:** £99.95
- **Cat No:** 955002 (reviewed)
- **Site:** *www.rapidotrains.co.uk*
- **Era:** 3

BUILT in 1906 by the Great Northern Railway, the LNER Dynamometer Car has been witness to moments etched into railway history, most notably 4468 *Mallard's* record-breaking 126mph run on July 3 1938. 'OO' gauge modellers have had access to this famous vehicle in ready-to-run form for a while and now Rapido Trains UK aims to mimic the impressive suite of features found on its 'OO' counterpart in 2mm scale.

All of Rapido Trains UK's 'N' gauge models depict the Dynamometer Car in post-1928 condition, when it was fitted with Gresley-designed bogies. Our sample modelled the car in post-1946 condition, with the model also available in 1938, post-1949 and fictional Railway Technical Centre (RTC) livery. Two exclusives have also been produced - one in BR lined maroon for Rails of Sheffield and one in present-day preserved condition for the Railway Icons range.

Rapido Trains has captured the lines of this unusual vehicle well, with a complex suite of external and internal detailing. Windows are flush glazed, with superbly formed duckets and centre raised coach side setting this vehicle apart. The clerestory roof is well modelled and is flanked on both sides by shell ventilators. At one end is a shortened corridor connection for use with suitably fitted locomotives, while the other has a standard corridor. This has pre-fitted window covers and end steps. An additional set of window covers is included in the detail pack, plus two cosmetic screw link couplings, and a pair of vacuum and steam heat pipes.

Inside, the detail is comprehensive. A vast array of test equipment, seats and tables can be seen within the coach, enhanced by the factory-fitted interior lighting. A magnetic wand is supplied to control the lights.

Underneath, chassis detail impresses with a collection of underframe equipment, as well as the fifth wheel used to collect data, plus short and long footboards fitted underneath the doors. NEM coupling pockets are mounted on kinematic coupling arms and are pre-fitted with Rapido couplings.

Decoration to our sample was excellent, with a super wooden effect applied across the model, complemented and contrasted by light maroon frames, clerestory roof and corridor doors. Printed elements are applied equally well, with the LNER text, car number and Dynamometer Car lettering applied crisply and clearly, echoing the gold leaf lettering on the prototype.

Rapido Trains UK has translated this famous vehicle into 'N' gauge brilliantly, maintaining the high-fidelity detailing seen in the preceding 'OO' gauge model. (BC)



Rapido Trains UK has delivered its 'N' gauge version of the LNER Dynamometer Car.

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‘TT:120’ BUILDINGS

FIRST REVIEW



- **Gauge:** ‘TT:120’
- **Price:** £12.99 - £58.99
- **Cat No:** See text
- **Site:** *www.hornby.com*
- **Era:** 2-11

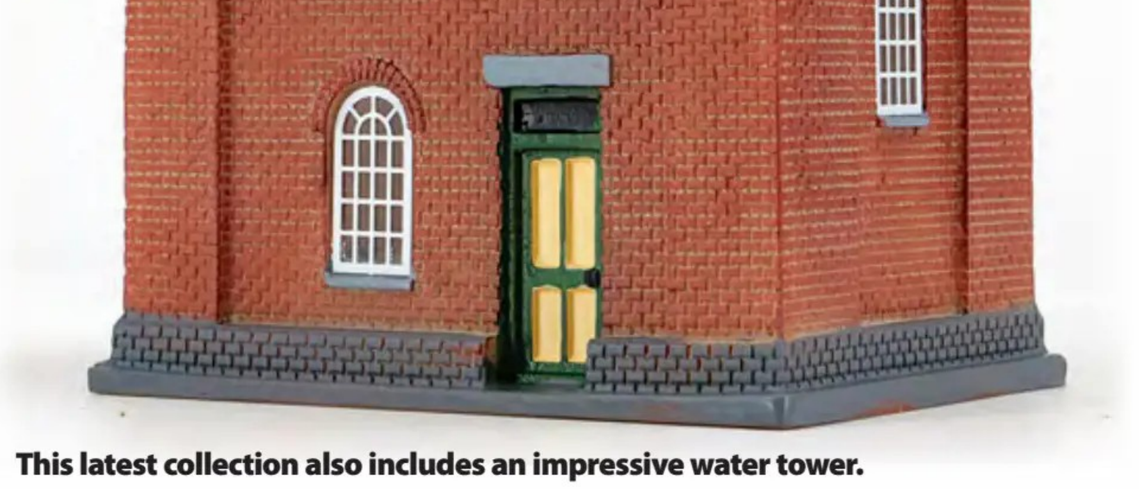
Hornby has released a new selection of ‘TT :120’ ready-built structures including station buildings.

A RANGE OF NEW ‘TT:120’ buildings has recently arrived from Hornby, and as with the ‘OO’ gauge Skaledale range, the fully painted resin buildings can be placed straight onto a layout.

The new buildings include wooden or concrete platelayers’ huts (Cat No: TT9024/5), a coaling stage (TT9029), signalbox (TT9021), water tower (TT9018), goods shed (TT9020), double engine shed (TT9019) and two-road diesel depot (TT9023). Measurements for these delightful new additions range from 25mm x 25mm for the concrete hut to 245mm x 110mm for the diesel depot. Meanwhile, a new series of station structures has also been produced, featuring a station building (TT9017), waiting room (TT9022) and an extended platform (TT9028). The red brick station building measures 84mm x 72mm, while the similarly constructed waiting room is 72mm x 62mm.

All feature clear glazing where appropriate and each of our samples was neatly painted, with good, accurate representation of the brickwork and accented colours.

The station buildings can be placed onto the extended station platform, which can be bolstered by the addition of Hornby’s straight platform sections (TT9008) and platform ramps (TT9009) to quickly create a highly detailed station scene.



This latest collection also includes an impressive water tower.



New motive power depot buildings include steam era and diesel era structures.

Other buildings such as the steam shed or diesel depot can be used to great effect as a backdrop to stabling and servicing locomotives, with both featuring large side windows and excellent external detailing – the steam shed additionally features posable doors.

This superb selection of new buildings is ideal for steam and diesel era ‘TT:120’ modellers and provides high-quality, pre-painted buildings which can be seamlessly integrated into a ‘TT:120’ layout or scene. (BC)

SHOP THE FULL HORNBY ‘TT:120’ RANGE FROM US AT KEY MODEL WORLD
WWW.KEYMODELWORLD.COM/SHOP

'TT:120' CDA and MHAs roll in

- **Gauge:** 'TT:120'
- **Price:** £27.99 (single), £80.99 (triple pack)
- **Cat No:** TT6050/1 (single/triple MHA), TT6048/9 (single/triple CDA)
- **Site:** *www.hornby.com*
- **Era:** 8-11



FIRST REVIEW

Above: **Hornby's new 'TT:120' MHA ballast/ spoil wagons carry EWS maroon and are also available singly and in triple wagon packs.**



Right: **The new CDA hopper wagons carry the distinctive English China Clay (ECC) blue and silver colour scheme.**

HORNBY'S ALL-NEW 'TT:120' CDA china clay hopper and MHA ballast wagons have arrived.

The CDAs were derived from the HAA merry-go-round coal hopper wagons, with more than 120 built at Doncaster Works between 1987 and 1988. They were developed for use on china clay workings - primarily in the West Country - and fitted with canopies to protect the payload from the elements. After more than three decades in revenue service, they were eventually withdrawn by DB Cargo UK in 2023.

The MHA 'Coalfish' ballast/ spoil wagons were developed in the late 1990s to increase the number of air-braked engineers' wagons and utilised redundant HAA hopper wagon underframes, with around 1,150 examples converted by RFS, Doncaster. The first batches of MHAs featured 16 vertical strengthening ribs along the side, but this was reduced to 11 on later examples. Hornby's model reflects the 11 bodyside rib variation.

Hornby's new CDA and MHA wagons are available singly or in triple packs, with the triple wagon packs containing three sequentially numbered vehicles. The large hopper body of the CDA is well modelled, with small, neatly moulded rivets across the hopper body and a crisply moulded canopy hood on top. The roller mechanism on the roof is well captured, enhanced by ripples in the cover and zig-zag securing line on one side. Chassis-mounted operating mechanisms are also well done.

MHA wagons feature a low profile, but substantial, body, complete with ribs along the sides and ends. The top of the wagon is slightly tapered, with a plain interior. Both wagon types feature non-sprung buffers at each end, together with cosmetic coupling hooks. They also share the same chassis, which is complete with moulded axle boxes and springs, and kinematic NEM coupling pockets. In-line brakes with shoes fitted to one wheel on each side of the wagon are complemented by fine brake linkage and separately fitted handbrake handles.

Decoration of our review samples was excellent throughout, with crisp colours and high-quality application of printed elements. CDAs feature a bright silver paint scheme on the hoppers, contrasted by blue canopies and hopper cradles. Our MHA examples sported English, Welsh & Scottish Railways (EWS) maroon, with a neatly applied yellow band around the top edge of each wagon.

Hornby's new CDA and MHA wagons are good representations of the prototypes and are sure to look impressive in long formations or stabled in wagon yards. They are in stock now at the Key Model World shop and Hornby 'TT:120' stockists. (BC)



Hornby's newly-tooled 'TT:120' CDA china clay hopper wagons are available now.

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Credit: Harry Rawding

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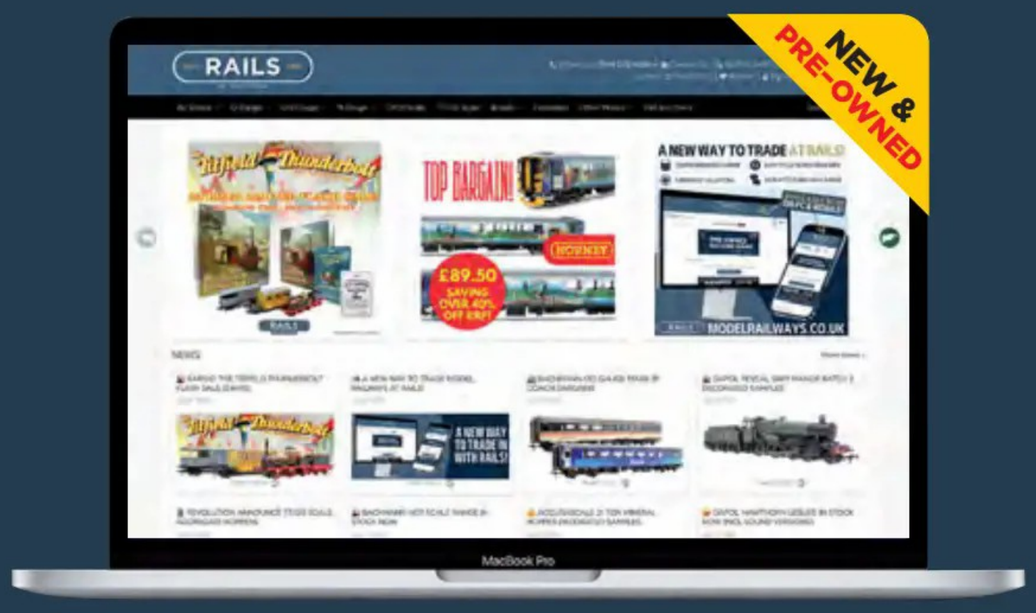


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WOW!! SOME OF OUR Google Reviews ★★★★★ FANTASTIC REVIEWS

T. Smart ★★★★★

I sold some used items to Rails recently, handled by Jake in the second-hand department.

All went very smoothly - once I'd packaged the items up, it was collected free of charge and I got a good price that was transferred direct to my bank a day after they received the items.

My first port of call for all buying and selling, new and used. A+

S. Barltett ★★★★★

Popped in last week to have a quick look. Wow, blast from the past! Huge collection of vintage toys, like a kid in a sweet shop. Recommend to anyone, shop assistant was very friendly and helpful, I'll definitely be going again.

R. Smalley ★★★★★

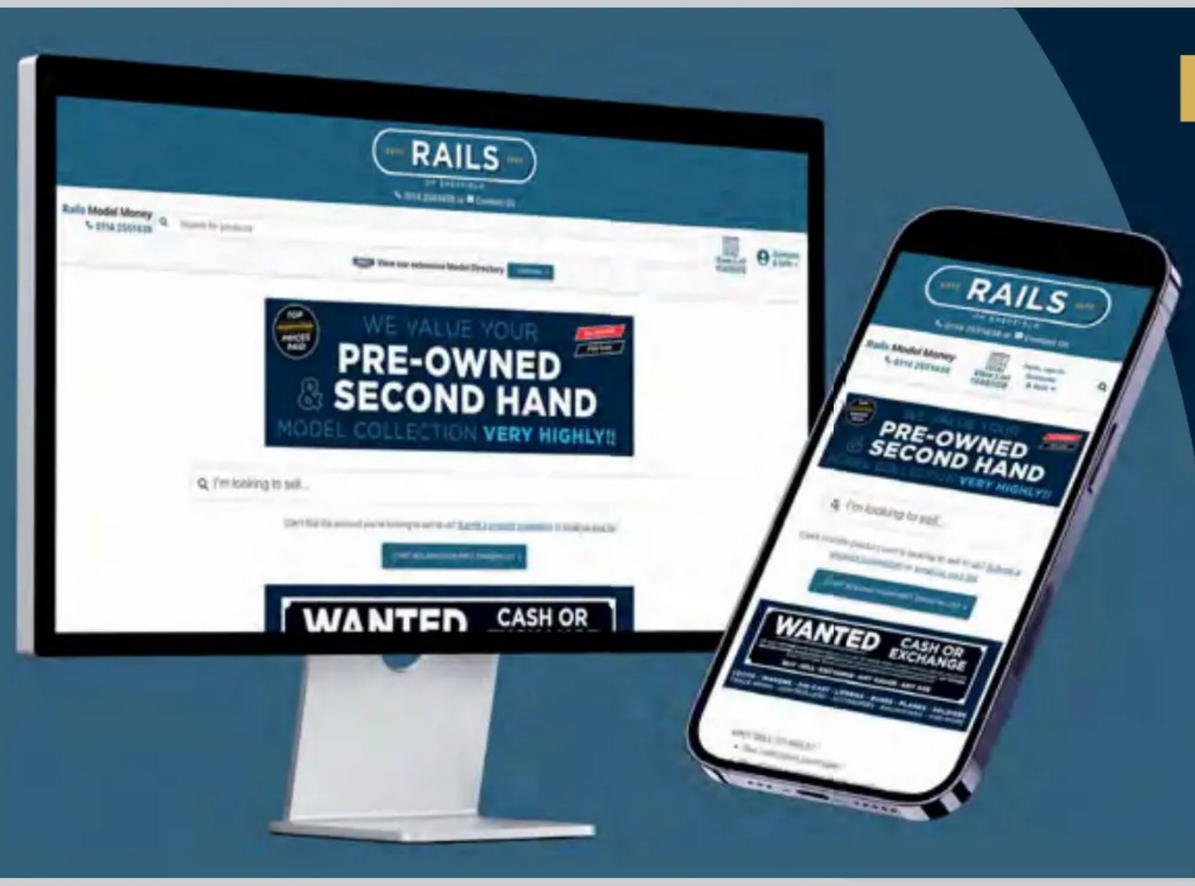
Perfect service from Rails as usual. Excellent packaging, quick delivery and outstanding customer service from Joe, who is friendly, helpful and goes out of his way to provide assistance, even when the circumstances are outside his control.

D. Ager ★★★★★

I'm an international buyer, and particularly a fan of British N Gauge, my orders have always been fulfilled and packed above and beyond my expectations. The prices even factoring in the current exchange rate of the AUD to GDP and postage are often cheaper than what I can source here in Australia. A wide selection of manufacturers and models. I'd highly recommend this store.

D. ★★★★★

I've been a satisfied customer of Rails for a long time with my previous online orders. I'm happy to say that my first visit to the store today did not disappoint, as I expected! The service was outstanding, the staff know exactly what they're doing and are more than competent enough to help you get exactly what you're looking for. Would recommend to anyone looking for anything to try them first!



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R. Rae ★★★★★

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UPGRADE

LOCOMAN

NORTH EASTERN

Locoman Sounds has created a new sound profile for the LNER 'J27' 0-6-0 which is perfect to breath life into Oxford Rail's 'J26' and 'J27' locomotives. **MIKE WILD** discovers just how simple it is to add sound to this model in 10 steps.



FUNCTIONS	
F0	Light on/off if fitted
F1	Sound on/off
F2	Playable whistle
F3	Short whistle
F4	Vacuum brakes
F5	Drain cocks
F6	Long whistle
F7	Close doors and guard's whistle (stationary) Flange squeal (moving)
F8	Buffer clash
F9	Forced coasting
F10	Coal shovelling
F11	Injector
F12	Ejector/Blower
F13	Coupling sound
F14	Whistle with echo
F15	Safety valve
F16	Water filling (stationary)
F17	Shunting mode with auto-coasting
F18	Vacuum destroy
F19	Volume control
F20	Points transition
F21	Momentum off
F22	No brake squeal
F23	Sound fade
F24	Forced heavy exhaust
F25	Seuthe smoke unit (if fitted)
F26	Whistle

SOMETIMES ADDING sound is one of the most straightforward tasks you can undertake, and the Oxford Rail 'J26' 0-6-0 for 'OO' gauge is an ideal first project if you have never added your own sound before.

The model arrived in 2025 and has a 21-pin decoder socket in the tender and a pre-fitted 18mm x 13mm speaker. These raw ingredients make it as simple as removing the tender body and plugging in an appropriate decoder to bring the model to life.

In this case we are using Locoman Sounds new LNER 'J27' sound file, which is a very close match with the related 'J26' locomotives. The sound file as all the functionality you could want together with high-quality recordings to replicate the sounds of these hard-working North Eastern Railway introduced 0-6-0 goods engines.

Highlights from the sound file include working brakes, coasting sounds, heavy exhaust, live volume control and a suite of ancillary functions to recreate the operation of the locomotive.

To add an extra level to this installation we added a stay alive to the ESU chip. The V5 decoders can operate with either three or two-wire stay alives, but it is recommended to carry out any programming of the locomotive without a stay alive fitted if you are following the two wire route.

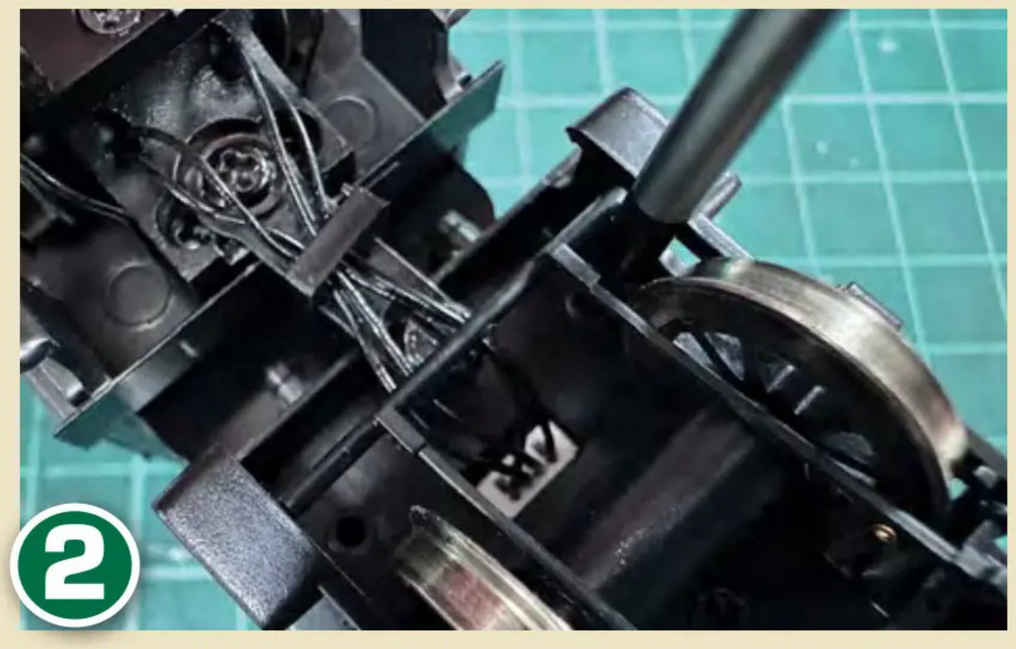
In the case of this installation, an AE Models two-wire stay alive was the choice as it allowed the flexibility to fit the capacitors in around the PCB and tender interior spaces without the need for a single larger space.

The following step by step guide goes through the process from start to finish and you can see video of this model in action on our test track with its new sound decoder installed at *keymodelworld.com/video* **HM**

STEP BY STEP INSTALLING SOUND IN A 'J26'



The Oxford Rail 'J26' 0-6-0 arrived in 2025 and offers a useful workhorse for North Eastern Region layouts. We are adding an ESU LokSound V5 chip loaded with Locoman Sounds' new sound profile into the model.



All of the work for this installation is confined to the tender. Two crosshead screws hold the tender body in place located in front of the leading wheels. Once removed, the tender body lifts up from the front to disengage the rear lugs.

USEFUL LINKS	
Locoman Sounds	*www.locomansounds.com*

Left: **The Oxford Rail 'J26' 0-6-0 is an attractive addition for North Eastern Region layouts. With the addition of Locoman Sounds sound, it comes to life with an authentic audio profile.**

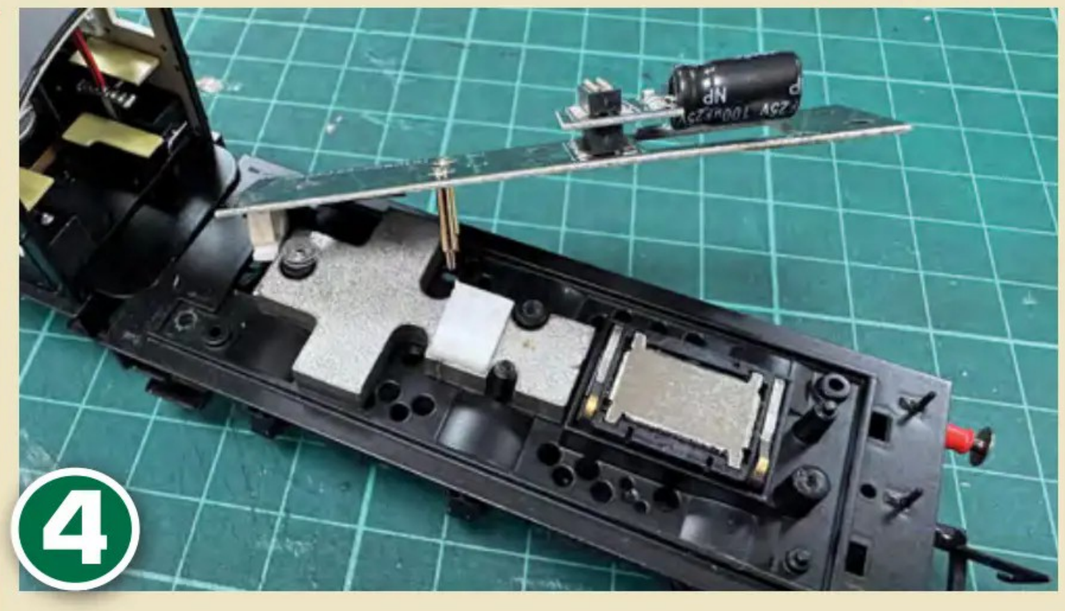
STEP BY STEP

INSTALLING SOUND IN AN OXFORD RAIL 'J26' 0-6-0

Beginner — Intermediate — Advanced — SKILL LEVEL



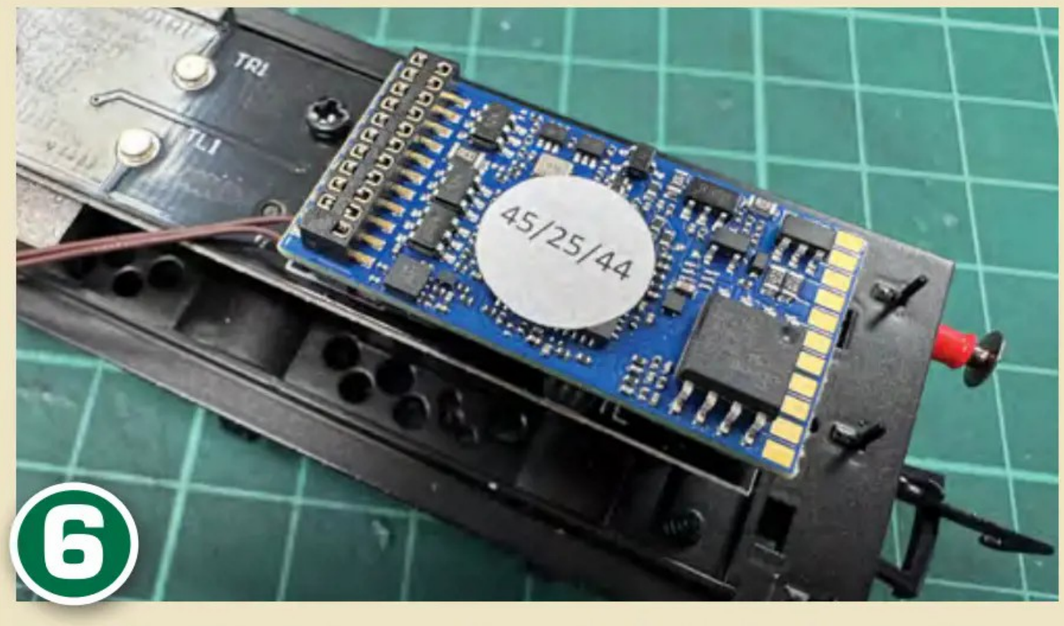
Inside is a cleanly installed Printed Circuit Board (PCB) with a 21-pin decoder socket on top and a pre-fitted 18mm x 13mm speaker below. This makes adding a sound chip very straightforward.



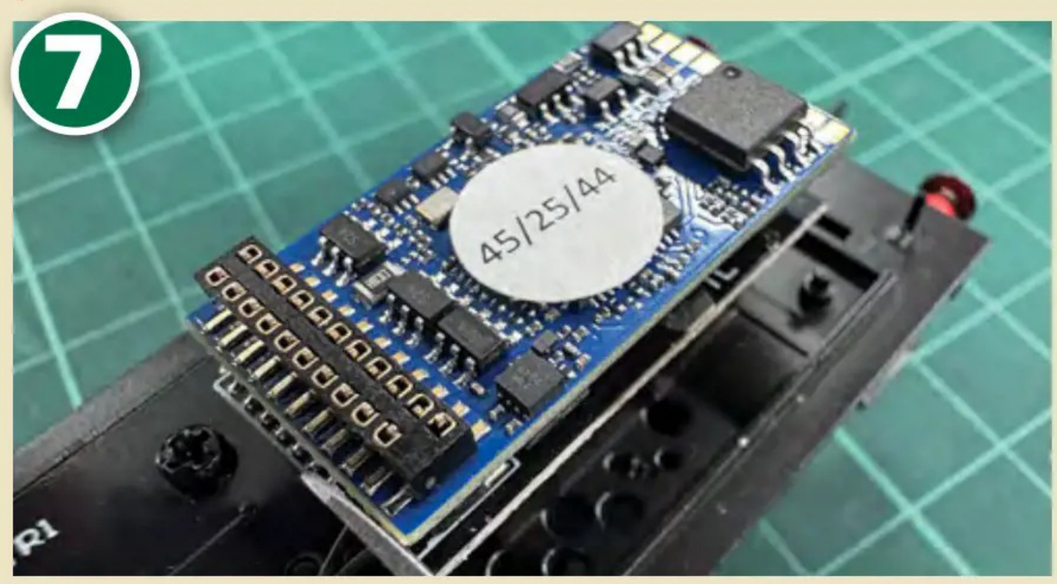
To add sound, you don't need to remove the PCB – we have lifted it clear here to show the metal weight underneath and the 18mm x 13mm speaker at the rear.



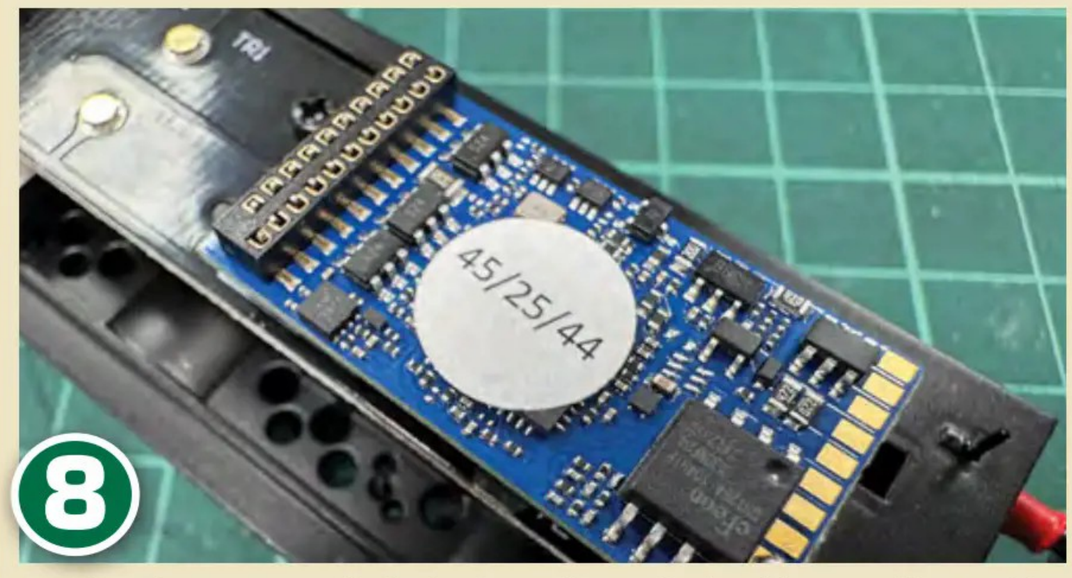
To add the sound chip, the factory fitted 21-pin blank needs to be removed. Ensure you apply even pressure to each side as you lift the decoder blank to avoid bending the pins on the socket.



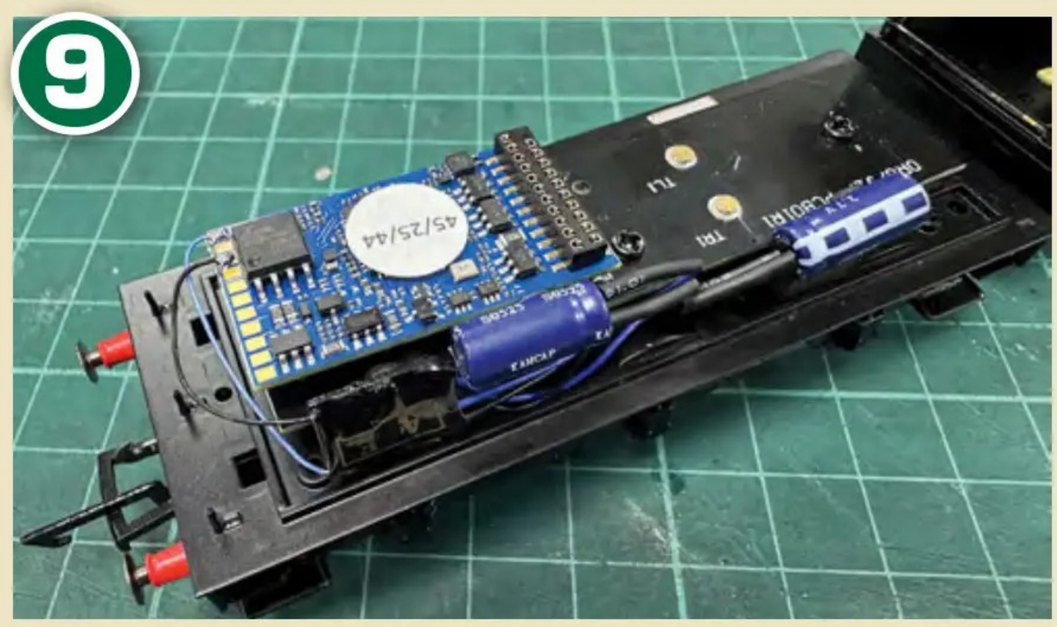
The LokSound V5 chip is a straight swap for the blank and fits neatly within the footprint of the locomotive PCB. The pre-loaded sound file from Locoman Sounds makes it ready to go.



A pre-fitted 15mm x 11mm cube speaker is attached to the decoder – this can be removed by cutting the two brown wires as close to the decoder as possible, as the traces on the PCB will link to the speaker already fitted in the 0-6-0.



At this point you can refit the body, or alternatively add a stay alive. In this case we used a two-wire AE Model stay alive as this provided the flexibility to position the capacitors. It is recommended to programme the chip address before adding a two-wire stay alive to an ESU chip.



The AE stay alive allowed the two capacitors to be positioned along the side of the tender fitting around the components and coal space. Each is held in place with a spot of Black Tack.



Finally, the tender body can be refitted completing the installation for the 'J26' and making the locomotive ready to enter service or remain on the workbench for the addition of lamps, a crew, coal and weathering for a realistic finish.

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GRAHAM FARISH



1 **In the shadows of the imposing church towers, Northern Rail Class 150 150220 calls at Kingsway South, while a West Coast Railways Class 37 diesel rumbles through the station with a short rake of BR Mk 1 charter vehicles.**

GAUGE	SCALE	SIZE	REGION	PERIOD	CONTROL
'N', 9mm	2mm:1ft	8ft x 3ft (scenic)	EASTERN	2000s	DCC, Gaugemaster

KINGSWAY SOUTH

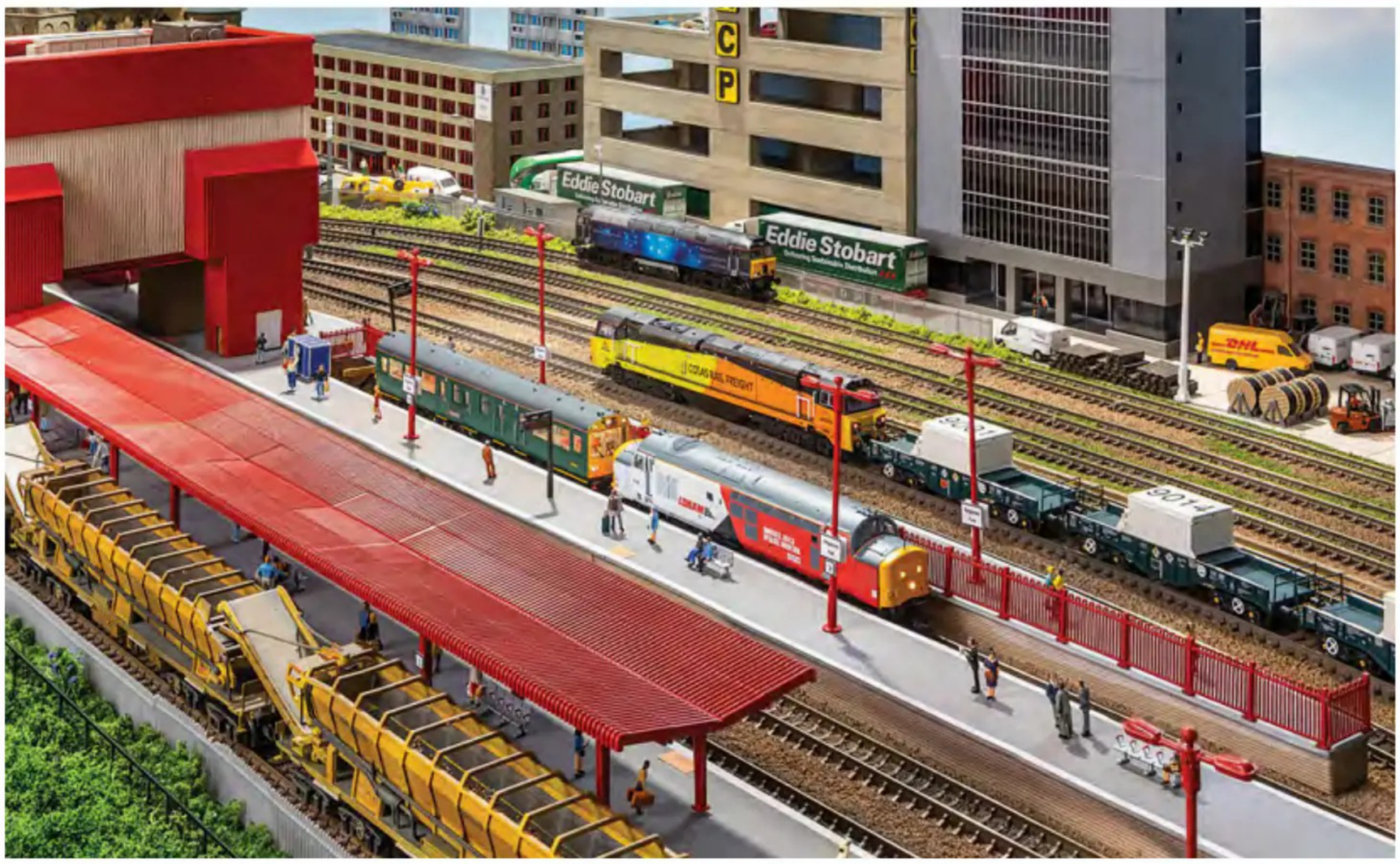
The modern railway in 'N' gauge was a perfect birthday present for **RICHARD BOOTHBY'S** son – and this intricately detailed layout is enjoyed at home and at exhibitions.

PHOTOGRAPHY, JONATHAN NEWTON

KINGSWAY SOUTH CAME about as an 18th birthday present for my son Oliver. Oliver is neurodiverse and I wanted to get him something very personal - we couldn't think of anything better than a new layout built by me. I was in serious trouble with him after selling my previous layout Roberts Road and moving up to 'O' gauge.

For this new layout, I opted for baseboards from the excellent Grainge and Hodder range: they are very light and fit together easily, so they were a good choice. Baseboard building, track laying and electrics aren't my forte, so I had this part completed by Steve Hornsey, which allowed me to concentrate on the scenic side - the part I really enjoy.

The layout is 8ft x 3ft, splits in half and is operated by a Gaugemaster Digital Command Control (DCC) setup. All points are operated via SEEP motors and a stud and probe board over the storage yard. I have made use of Peco set track curved points for crossovers that allow a train to run from the outer track, around the avoiding loops and then back onto the outer track. Most rolling stock will run through these quite happily. I have also tried to model the layout to a consistent »



3 Left: **Network Rail's inspection saloon *Caroline*, is stabled in the bay platform behind Loram Rail's 37418. In the distance a Rail Operations Group Class 57 rumbles into view, bound for replenishment at the diesel fuelling point.**

4 Right: **Freightliner and Network Rail motive power stables either side of a stored Class 66 in the yard at Kingsway South. 66587 *AS ONE WE CAN* in Ocean Network Express (ONE) colours is about to be refuelled.**

standard - there is no single part intended to draw your eye. I often see layouts at exhibition which have an absolutely stunning bit of modelling next to something not quite of the same standard. The layout is designed to be able to keep trains running and always have something moving - very important given the number of exhibitions we visit.

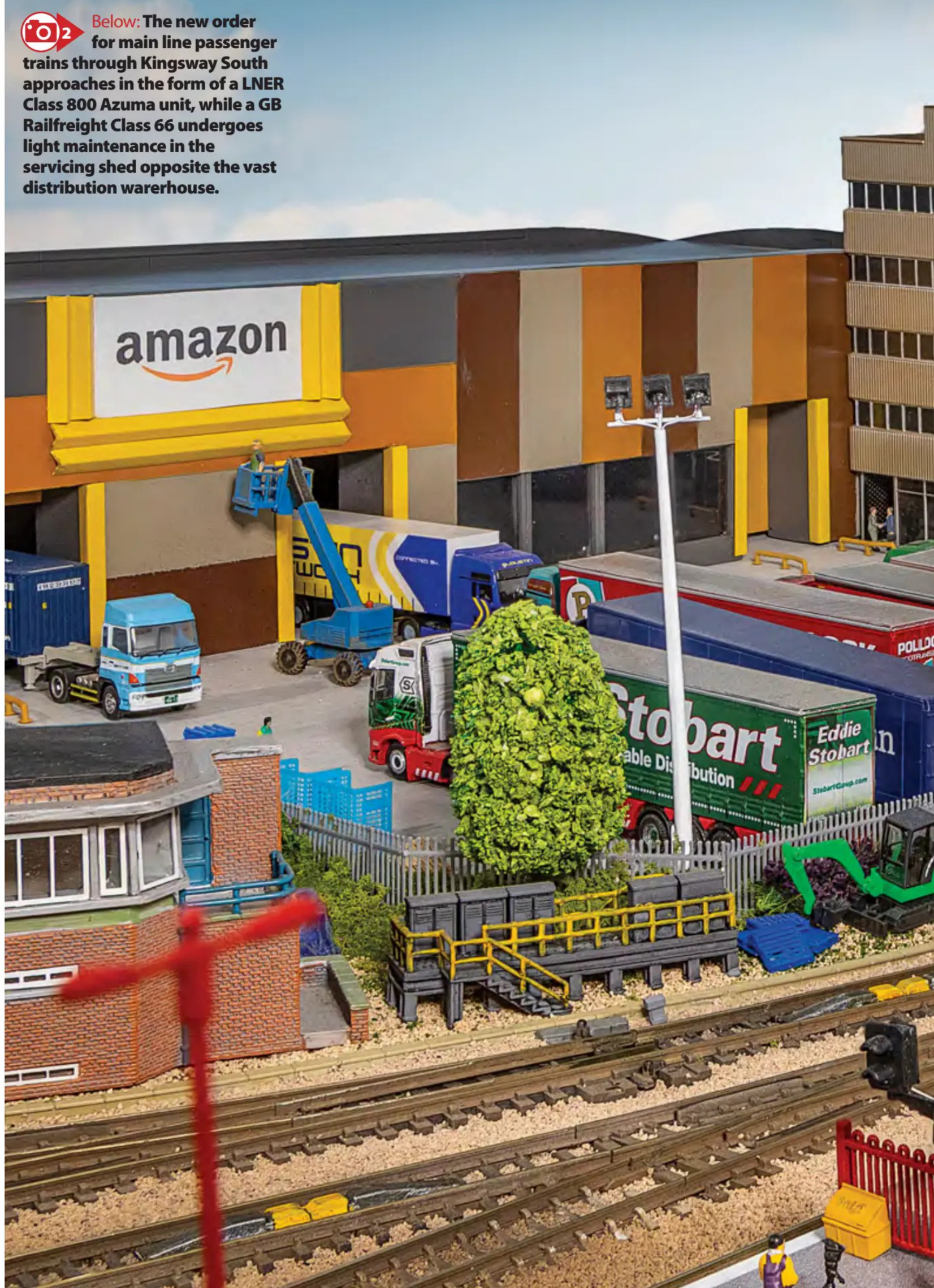
I had some fairly strict instructions from Oliver to follow. It must be modern image, easy to run, a big station and based in a city. Doncaster station is one of his favourite places to visit, so I decided to try and incorporate similar buildings so anyone looking at it would think it looks familiar. It took a total of nine months to build from inception to where it could be called finished. I view layout building as a form of art and expression. I like to show the nitty gritty side of life and railways; dirty, weathered and untidy, but with real life scenes. The good thing with 'N' gauge is that you can model a whole scene and view over a layout of this size which can tell a story. The layout is suitable for home and exhibition running.

A FULL SCENE

The backscene is 3mm ply painted with a mixture of emulsion paints and is also attached to the main board with cabinet magnets. This makes it a lot easier to transport and get out of the loft hatch. The church is a Kibri kit. It went together easily and was just weathered with a series of washes and dry brushing to the stonework and the roof - a mixture of greens, browns, greys and black. It totally dominates that part of the layout. I would longer term like to put sound into the church of bells ringing – it's the only conventionally pretty part of the layout, after all.

Kingsway South B Division police station is next to the church. This is a laser-cut wooden kit and based on the old HMRC building on Station Road in Scunthorpe. Outside the police station are several armed units and dog section starting to

2 Below: **The new order for main line passenger trains through Kingsway South approaches in the form of a LNER Class 800 Azuma unit, while a GB Railfreight Class 66 undergoes light maintenance in the servicing shed opposite the vast distribution warerhouse.**



load up to be ready to go out on a raid with an ambulance waiting to follow. The armed police were found on an auction website and repainted to a more suitable appearance.

The next building is a car park. This was made entirely out of Lego, with plasticard spray painted to replicate the tarmac surface. I use a mixture of spray paint – grey, white, black, brown and red brown all misted over the surface of the plasticard. It takes a little practice, but the effort is really worth it. The Lego comprised random bricks I had lying about superglued together and painted in a stone acrylic with talcum powder mixed in to provide texture. On the top level is a photographer looking down over the station, just as you sometimes see at Doncaster. There are also the parking wardens dealing with an expired ticket.

The next part Oliver wanted was some industry using the sidings. I used a mixture of Kato buildings and Scenecraft buildings to recreate this. The large»







5 Left: **A Northern Rail two-car Class 158 DMU awaits custom in the bay platform at Kingsway South.**

6 Below: **DB Cargo's climate hero 66004 rushes through Kingsway South at the head of a domestic waste train while passengers prepare to join a two-car Class 158 DMU in the bay platform. Alongside the yard, Class 60 60074 *Teenage Spirit* waits before proceeding with a rake of loaded JUA bogie tippler wagons.**

Network Rail office is a Kato building, and the factory backdrop and yard offices are Scenecraft. There are cameos here - the open curtainsider truck being loaded, stillages dotted around the yard, fuel tank and modern fuelling point (Bachmann Scenecraft), plus quite a few Network Rail vehicles.

Next to the Network Rail yard is the Amazon distribution depot - a sight familiar across the country. This is made of a Lego frame clad in plasticard, masked and painted. The office is a Kato building and a Scenecraft portable building provides the yard office. The yard is full of lorries from hauliers waiting to load at the depot. Around the yard are stacks of 3D printed pallets. The lights are a purchase from the internet, and although they're not functional, they look good. The yard surface is mounting board, painted with greys and browns with talcum powder dusted over it and blended to create that uneven colour across the yard. As with any new technique, it's worth practicing on a separate piece of card – in this case - before committing to the layout: mistakes can and will happen, but it is also how you learn.

Lego really is a fantastic medium to use for modelling - it wouldn't be suitable for small buildings but for warehouses, car parks, large factories and so on it is perfect and the corners are always going to be square and true. Around the rail yard is clutter - pallets, drums, bits of rail, ballast bags and stillages dotted all over the place. Special mention goes to West Hill Wagon Works – its Network Rail trolleys are really something else and something that has been lacking in any gauge I've modelled in previously.

STATION OPERATIONS

For the station, Oliver wanted several through platforms and a bay platform, plus a couple of passing loops for freight to run behind the station (again much like Doncaster) and a fairly modern style »

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7 A lone photographer is positioned at the top of the multi-storey car park as DB Cargo's 66004 in climate hero colours slows to a halt with a train of domestic waste. West Coast Railways' 37669 powers away from the station with a short rake of empty charter stock.

building. The Lego came out again to form the over-the-station building, tied in with parts from the Kato station sets, with some roof detailing such as air-conditioning units. The platforms have passengers dotted about plus the usual spotters at the end of the station. I have made a couple of the display screens which are simply plasticard and a scaled down photograph. These are very quick and simple to create but easily missed off a modern station model. British Transport Police officers are having a wander about waiting to meet a train with a passenger who has refused to purchase a ticket. There is a single road maintenance facility just off from the platform, used for light servicing. The shed and staff building are Bachmann Scenecraft products.

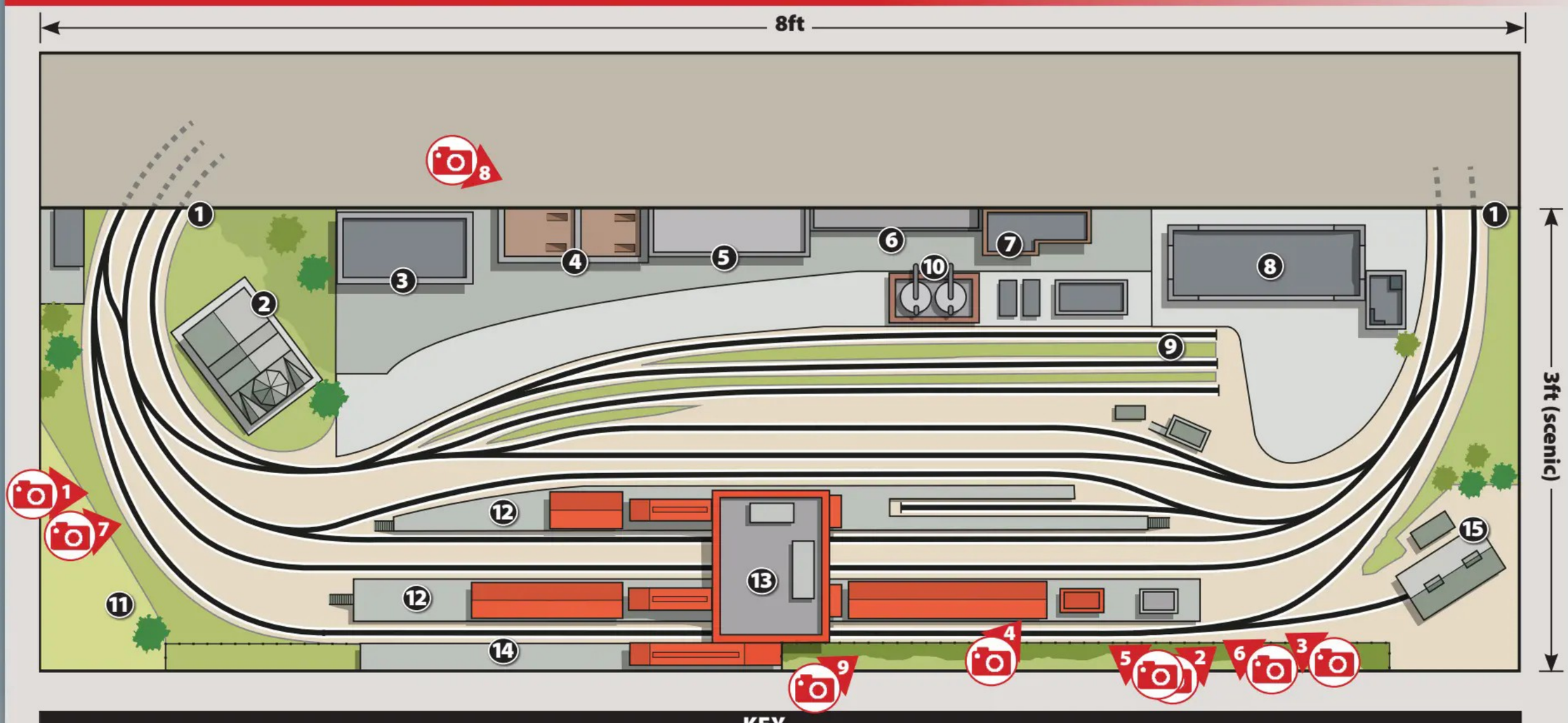
Leaving the station, opposite the church is a demolition site. I think this was a Greenmax building, suitably weathered. To get the right type of base, I crushed bits of brick and concrete to try and recreate the ground cover. The concrete breaking tracked vehicle is from the Tomytec vehicle range - it is truly brilliant – and there is a mixture of 3D printed and metal vehicles on site. On the rock crusher, I wanted to show it at work, so I smeared PVA glue on a piece of plasticard, let it



8 A rake of Network Rail Autoballaster hopper wagons negotiates the maintenance yard sidings alongside Kingsway South as an LNER Class 800 Azuma approaches the station and a nuclear flask train rumbles by on one of the avoiding lines headed by a Colas Rail Freight Class 70.

9 The Kingsway South signaller is kept busy as an LNER Class 800 sweeps round the curve on approach to the station, which also plays host to a Network Rail inspection saloon in the bay platform and a Colas Rail-hauled nuclear flask train bypassing the station. One of the Network Rail High Output Ballast Cleaners is also recessed in the platform awaiting a clear route for its onward journey.

KINGSWAY SOUTH TRACK DIAGRAM (NOT TO SCALE)



KEY				
1 To/from storage yard	4 Multi-storey car park	7 Offices	10 Refuelling point	13 Kingsway South station
2 Church	5 Network Rail offices	8 Distribution warehouse	11 Semi-demolished building	14 Station car park
3 Police station	6 Factory	9 Locomotive stabling	12 Platform	15 Locomotive servicing shed



dry, scraped it off and cut it to shape and then glued fine ballast to it - fixed to the crusher it looks like smaller stone coming out onto a pile.

The rolling stock is a mixture of ready-to-run, resprays, kit and 3D printed items. I have quite a few favourites, the main one being the High Output Ballast Cleaner, which is 3D printed and scratchbuilt. It looks stunning running on the layout. There is also the Manchester domestic waste, BSC iron ore train and Balfour Beatty cement wagons. Many vehicles have been resprayed – some by me and others by Rainbow Railways. Viewers can see Loram Rail and Europhoenix Class 37s, GB Railfreight and Rail Operations Group Class 57s, Drax and Teenage Cancer Trust Class 60s and DB Cargo Climate Hero, Transport for London and Maritime Class 66s - to name a few of the more distinctive models.

All of the rolling stock is DCC fitted with a variety of decoders. There are several sound fitted locomotives and multiple units which when running gives an immersive experience. We can be sat downstairs and know when Oliver is having a running session!

I would also like to take this opportunity to mention Geoff Buttler who sadly passed away in 2024. Many will remember his Dragonby and Roxby layouts. Geoff was one of my greatest constructive critics and a great motivator. His advice and help are much missed. I have also been very lucky to acquire some of his rolling stock, so we keep his memory alive when we run that stock. Oliver, meanwhile, gets the fix of railway operation he missed when I shifted to 'O' gauge! **HM**

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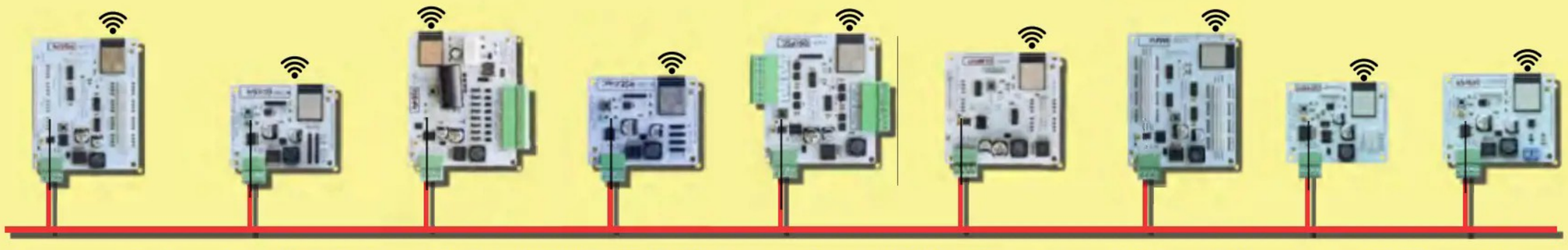
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The privatisation experiment

It's now 30 years since Britain's railways were privatised and now, once again, the system is on the edge of a major change. **EVAN GREEN-HUGHES** and *Modern Railways* Deputy Editor **ANDY BOWES-RODEN** look back on the privatised years and ask whether the railway is better than three decades ago.

Virgin Trains operated the InterCity West Coast passenger franchise from 1997 to 2019. In May 2023, 86260 *Driver Wallace Oakes G.C.* propels an up express for Euston towards Northchurch tunnel, Berkhamsted. Brian Stephenson.



During the official launch of rail privatisation at London Waterloo station on February 5 1996, Transport Secretary Sir George Young leans out of the cab of immaculate InterCity HST power car 43185 *Great Western*. Colin J. Marsden.

AS IS WELL KNOWN, Britain's railways were built and financed by the private sector and for the first 100 years it was a chaotic system governed by a multitude of different companies with wasteful duplication of routes and lines built to places which could never have hoped to generate sufficient traffic to be profitable.

This changed in 1923 when the Government dictated that all these companies should be amalgamated into four large private organisations. Nationalisation was discussed, but it was eventually decided the private sector was best placed to take the railways forward, and so it proved. However, the demands of the Second World War left the railways in a parlous state, with insufficient capital to make good what had become worn out.

The answer then was to nationalise the 'Big Four' in 1948, with promises that the people's railway would bring with it efficiencies, better services and plough profits back to the public sector. In the event, under state ownership, losses spiralled out of control, major initiatives such as the continued reliance on steam traction and the botched Modernisation Plan were badly handled. Then came the Beeching report and the loss of more than half of the system in a further effort to bring the system back into profit, which again failed to bring results.

By the 1980s, British Rail, as it had become, was in a very bad state. Trains and stations were poorly presented, customer service was poor, losses continued to mount and the buffet car stale sandwich had become the butt of many a comedian's jokes. The Government of the day was unable to provide the finance required for major projects such as rolling stock replacement and it became clear that a different way forward had to be found. Yet as the decade went on, BR revived with a new sector-based structure. Passenger numbers boomed, helped by targeted investments in routes and trains, and major upgrades such as East Coast Main Line electrification were delivered on time and on budget. By the early 1990s, despite severe recession, BR was amongst the most efficient and best run railways in Europe, if not the world.

MAJOR CHANGE

Although railway privatisation is often placed at the feet of Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, she was against this. It was actually her successor, John Major, who brought forward legislation that saw the light of day as the Railways Act 1993. The purpose behind this was to remove the burden of financing the railways away from the public purse and into the private sector. The infrastructure was to pass to a company called Railtrack, financed by a share issue, while train services were to be provided by 25 new companies, roughly based on the existing passenger sectors. The legislation »



The official launch of the newly privatised South West Trains franchise also took place at London Waterloo on February 5 1996 and involved re-branded Class 442 Wessex electric unit 442402 and a Stagecoach bus. Colin J. Marsden.

provided for train leasing companies to be set up, owning and financing rolling stock which would then be leased to the actual operators. The idea behind this was that the trains themselves had lives of up to 40 years while the new operating companies, called franchises, would be limited to around seven and thus would not be able to borrow the money to finance new trains they could not guarantee to use for their whole life cycle.

Freight operations were treated rather differently and were split into six units without specific geographical areas of operation, with the intention of promoting competition and thus driving down prices. This did not go as planned, however, as five of the six all went to American company Wisconsin Central, which branded its UK arm English, Welsh and Scottish Railways (EWS).

At first, the new privatised railway did not get off to a good start. Competition was squashed by companies being largely limited to geographically defined areas, and the new passenger franchises were slow to invest in new rolling stock. A major issue which began to arise was that of ticketing, with confusion where a passenger wished to use more than one operator for a longer journey. This resulted in wide variations in prices and in some cases massive increases. The one bright light on the horizon was EWS, which quickly invested in 250 new Class 66 freight locomotives and aggressively sought out freight traffic, which began to increase.

FAILING FINANCES

It wasn't long before cracks began to appear in the privatisation model John Major's government had chosen. Infrastructure owner Railtrack had embarked on an ill-thought-out regime which sub-contracted vital maintenance it was ill-equipped to monitor. This came to a head when a Great North Eastern Railway (GNER) express derailed at Hatfield in October 2000 due to a broken rail. This uncovered management failings and low standards amongst sub-contractors as well as a lack of investment by the private company.

In 2002, a Class 365 Electric Multiple Unit derailed at Potters Bar, again due to infrastructure failures, and again with fatal results. These and other issues led to claims that Railtrack was putting profits before the safety of passengers. As its finances deteriorated, Railtrack needed a bailout, but the Government was not prepared to give it the money it required and as a result it went into administration, in time reappearing as the not-for-profit company Network Rail (NR). NR was government owned but nominally not government controlled and was able to borrow money for vital investments until it was later reclassified as a public body.

Life was not much better for some of the privatised passenger operators, with some such as Sea Containers-owned GNER themselves failing in the second generation of franchises in the 2000s and having to be rescued by the Government. Others such as Connex South Eastern offered such a poor level of service they had to be stripped of their franchise. Franchise bidders sometimes overestimated revenues and when some couldn't deliver on their financial commitments to Government, either to pay premiums or reduce subsidy, the Government had to take over – even if only relatively briefly – as the Operator of Last Resort.

TAKING STOCK

On the positive side, privatisation enabled private capital to be introduced into the rolling stock leasing market, with the result that new fleets of trains started appearing from the late 1990s. However, there was a notorious pause in new train orders after the last generation of BR DMUs and EMUs were delivered which was only relieved by the order of Chiltern Railways' Class 168s from Adtranz (later Bombardier and now Alstom).

The verdict on the rolling stock leasing companies – known as ROSCOs – is nuanced. They have unquestionably saved governments the up-front cost of acquiring new trains, which can now run to around £4 million for a single bi-mode unit coach, but critics argue they have cost the railway more in the longer term. Whether governments of any colour would have been willing to fund the large-scale fleet replacements outright since the 2000s is questionable, and given the state of public finances, it may well be that the ROSCOs have an important role for many years to come.

The one unqualified success of privatisation is the freight sector. New companies have entered the field, such as DCRail, GB Railfreight and Colas while others such as Freightliner have expanded their operations. Although the rail freight market has changed radically since the 1990s – coal is no longer carried in significant quantities, for example – the dynamism of many companies in the sector means it is primed for growth.

Another major change is the advent of open access operators running alongside franchised and now state-owned counterparts. They receive no direct subsidy from taxpayers, although in some cases track access charges are discounted compared to franchised and now Department for Transport-owned operators on their routes. Hull Trains kicked it off in the 2000s, running Anglia Railways Class 170 Turbostars from King's Cross. It was later joined by Grand Central, which began running between Sunderland and King's Cross in 2007, and more recently by FirstGroup-owned Lumo, which also runs from King's Cross to Edinburgh and Glasgow. Charter operators such as West Coast Railways and Locomotive Services Ltd also fall under the open access regime.

There has also been a considerable amount of devolution of rail services to countries and regions. ScotRail and Caledonian Sleeper are owned by the Scottish Government, and Transport for Wales Rail by the Welsh Government. In London, Transport for London operates the London Overground network and Elizabeth Line, while in the Liverpool City Region, Merseyrail is operated under a



The beginning of a new era for freight in the UK, EWS's first Class 66 Co-Co diesel – 66001- debuts in the yard at Immingham on April 20 1998. Colin J. Marsden.



The official hand over/sale of the three shadow freight companies (Loadhaul/Mainline Freight/ Transrail) to Wisconsin Central took place at London Marylebone station on February 24 1996. One locomotive from each of the constituent companies – 56102, 58050 and 60055 – was provided for the event. Colin J. Marsden.



In April 1996, Sea Containers took control of the InterCity East Coast franchise with its Great North Eastern Railway (GNER) brand. On March 27 1997, 89001 in GNER livery stands at King's Cross with the 7.50am departure for Bradford. Colin J. Marsden.

concession awarded by Merseytravel.

The Government is now bringing most English former franchise passenger operators under full state control, with the last likely to be CrossCountry in 2027. A new body called Great British Railways will operate those passenger services in England and manage and maintain most of the rail infrastructure in England, Wales and Scotland. It will be responsible for setting and developing timetables and fares, deciding on access rights from freight and open access operators and running the system as a single entity. However, it will not operate services controlled by the devolved governments of Scotland and Wales, nor Transport for London or Merseyrail services. Freight remains outside Great British Railways, as do open access operators.

It will be a more integrated railway, but it will not be a fully integrated one. The ROSCOs are likely to fund the next generation of trains rather than government – and it seems vanishingly unlikely their trains will be acquired by the public purse.

SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

So, was privatisation a success? Looking at the numbers, you might think so. In the final years of British Rail, around 800 million people travelled by rail each year and this has now doubled to around 1.6 billion, despite public unease at the level of rail fares and the complexity of the booking system. On the freight side, in BR days 13.5 billion tons a year was moved and this rose to 23.2 billion in 2012 but has since fallen to 16 billion, largely due to the loss of coal traffic. On those numbers alone, privatisation has worked.

But there's a huge caveat here. Most of the money for operating the passenger railway and operating and maintaining the infrastructure still comes from the Government in the form of subsidy or direct grant to Network Rail. This amount has risen from £1,627m in 1994 to around £9.1bn today – far more, even in real terms, than BR was receiving at privatisation. It can be argued coherently that privatisation has not, in fact, saved the Government money.

There is no question that companies such as Virgin Trains, Great North Eastern Railway, Chiltern and others reinvigorated parts of the rail network with flair and pizazz. With incentives to run more trains to generate more revenue, many locations have a better and more frequent service than they ever did under BR: that must be considered a win.

Again, however, the counterfactual is that BR seldom received the investment the privatised railway did, and if it had done so, might have delivered many of the upgrades we've seen since privatisation without the costly fragmentation. Costs have soared, as have fares (although it should be noted that BR was not immune to some very hefty increases), and the sheer complexity of the ticketing system baffles all but the most expert.

The reality, based on long experience all over the world, is that neither privatisation nor nationalisation of a railway are good or bad in themselves. What matters much more is how the railway is structured, how it is funded, and what government policy is. Splitting BR up into so many parts and separating track from train look, with the benefit of hindsight, to have been a costly mistake. The biggest problem with privatisation of rail in the UK was not so much that it was privatised, but the way it was done.

Now the railway is moving into a new era, and as with privatisation, what will define the success of Great British Railways is its structure, funding and policy. Get those right, and the railway will blossom. Fail and who knows what might happen.

What we can say with absolute certainty is that passengers and freight customers and railway staff from mess room to board room will be hoping the right decisions are made as the Railways Bill progresses through Parliament. **HM**

● **Discover more railway realism prototype articles at *www.keymodelworld.com/railway-realism.***



Since launching in 1999 GB Railfreight (GBRf) has grown significantly to become a major player in the railfreight sector. On April 9 2018, GBRf 73964 heads the 1.41pm Dollands Moor to Derby RTC Network Rail test train. Brian Stephenson.

DIESEL DEPOT DEVELOPMENTS

BEN CHURCH outlines the latest developments with his new 'OO' gauge diesel depot, which includes a revised track plan, new buildings and the weathering and ballasting of track.

PLANS change, and while I was initially very happy with the original form of my track plan for my new diesel depot, Shottery Fields TMD, the more I used it, the more I wanted to add more 'play value' and flexibility of operations.

I also wanted to incorporate a modern depot building which will stand in contrast to the PJM Models Stratford depot kit and this spurred me into action. Only four additional points were needed, with one set added to the lower section of the layout, creating a run-round loop, and the other pair creating another way to access the top siding; the position for the points already in place for this siding was moved much further back, creating sufficient space for a diesel fuelling point – something which did not feature in the original plan. The changes might have been small, but the additional track and scenic options were well worth the effort!

After using the layout extensively to ensure everything worked properly, it was on to track weathering and ballasting. Before this, I used a mini drill to cut all tracks which crossed the baseboard joins, then soldered the rails to DCC Concepts etched sleepers to prevent any rail movement. I also secured three Layouts 4U lighting tower masts to the layout as I wanted to cover the bases in ballast to give the illusion they were sunk into the ground. At this time, the PJM Models hardstanding kit for the GB Railfreight (GBRf) depot was also installed, so it could all be ballasted together.

Covering the point blades with masking tape first, I used a mixture of Humbrol Matt Dark Earth (Cat No. 29) acrylic spray paint and Railmatch Sleeper Grime (1406) enamel spray paint to coat the rails and sleepers. Once happy with the covering on both sides of the rails, the masking tape was removed, the track was cleaned and then it was tested to make sure all worked properly. Once I was satisfied, I then applied ballast, which was a mixture of the medium and fine grey blends by Woodland Scenics,

Development of Ben's new diesel depot layout is progressing well, with ballast laid prior to hardstanding and further details being added.

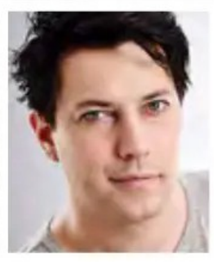




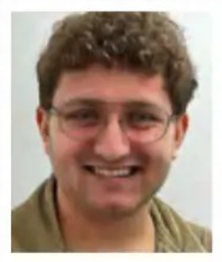
MIKE WILD
The station building for Topley Dale has been started - and its a substantial addition!



MARK CHIVERS
A Class 74 from EFE Rail has been worked through to add a decoder and set up the motor.



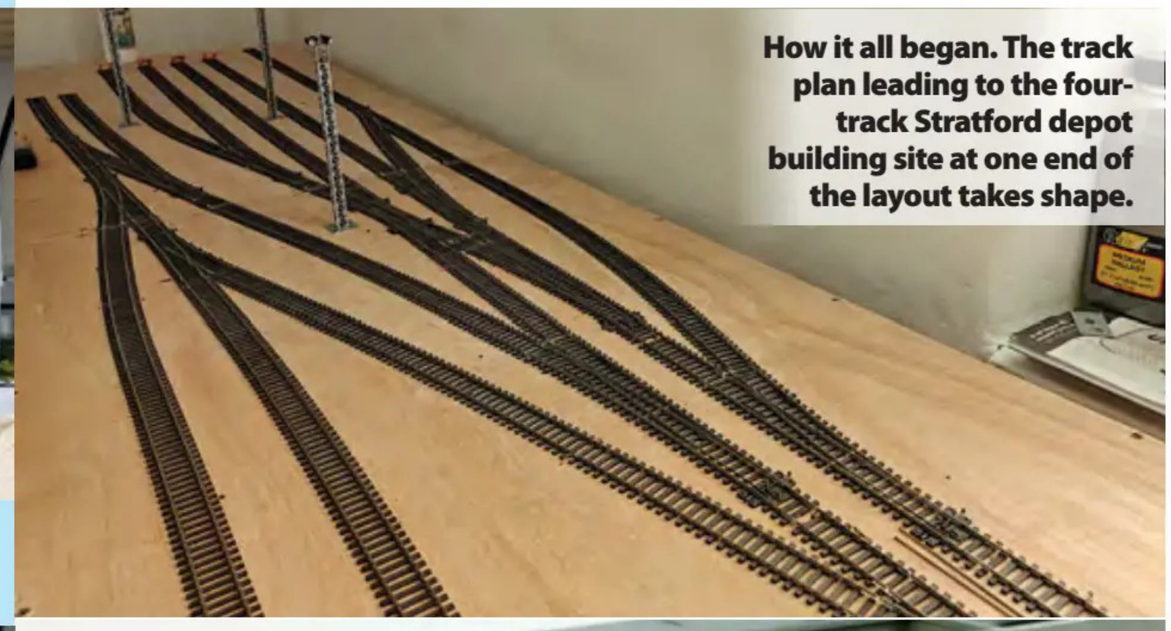
JONATHAN NEWTON
Jonathan has been continuing work on his 'O' gauge Midland steam shed.



BEN CHURCH
Ben has started his next project which is to build the bridge for the scenic break on his depot.

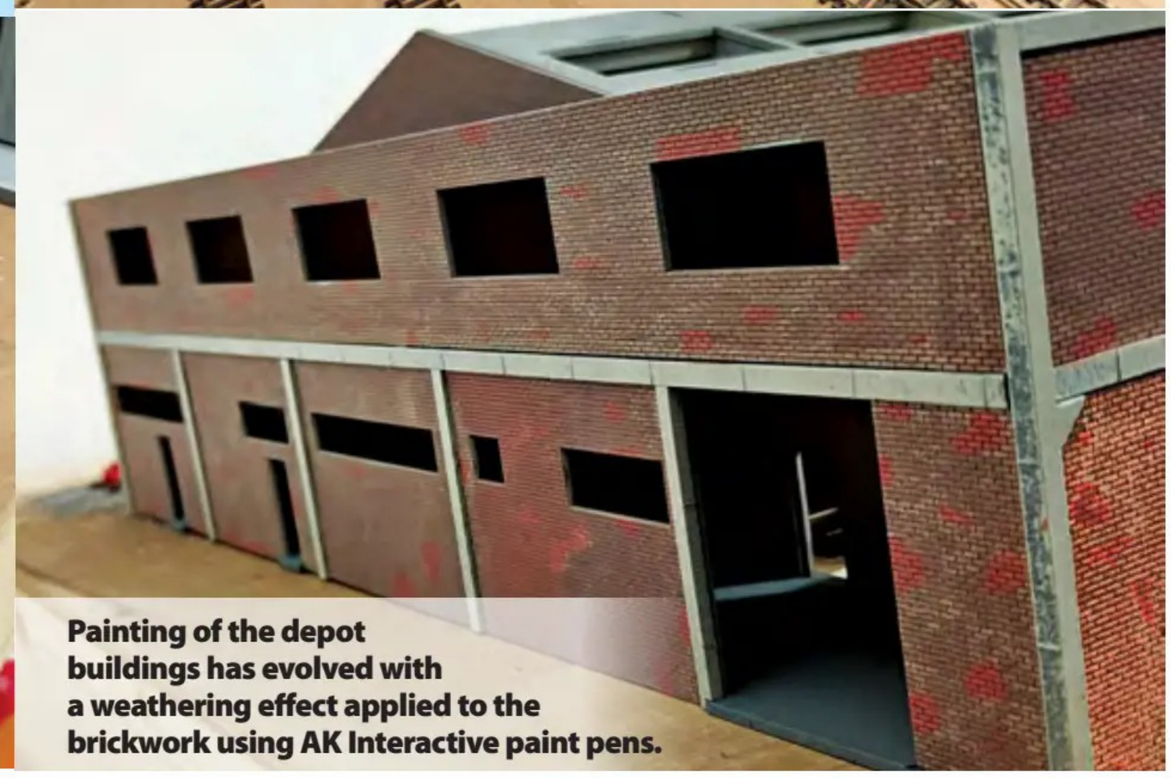


Above: **The modern depot building at the opposite end of the layout is also coming together well, with hardstanding and ballast now in place.**



How it all began. The track plan leading to the four-track Stratford depot building site at one end of the layout takes shape.





Painting of the depot buildings has evolved with a weathering effect applied to the brickwork using AK Interactive paint pens.

Above: **Meticulous ballasting of the track followed with a mix of Woodland Scenics medium and fine blends.**



secured with SBR adhesive.

While this dried, I looked to the buildings. Mike Wild very kindly primed and applied a base coat of Ford Dove Grey to the PJM Models Stratford depot kit, which I then painted using AK Interactive paint pens to create a weathered brick effect, using different colours to highlight small areas of the brickwork. The PJM Models GB Railfreight depot kit had been painted a grey colour, similar to that of UK Rail Leasing's new depot building in Leicester, as I didn't want to restrict myself to only GBRf stock. DCC Concepts Cobalt IP point motors were then installed across the layout, all controlled from the Roco Z21 control system, which has been integrated into the layout.



Humbrol and Railmatch spray cans were used to weather the track, prior to ballasting.

Ballasting isn't complete, as I am waiting to install hardstanding around the Stratford depot building, but I have made a great start, and the layout is slowly coming to life. Recent stock additions have been welcome, with Accurascale's second batch of Class 66s and Bachmann's Class 66 and 69s bolstering the number of GBRf locomotives by a significant amount.

My next areas of focus will be the installation of hardstanding around the Stratford depot building, construction of the bridge that will form the scenic break at the end of the depot and building a diesel-fuelling point. I can't wait to get started on the next stages of the layout's development and see what new techniques I can employ in the build. **HM**

● **Read more Staff Projects at *www.keymodelworld.com/staff-projects*.**

HORNBY magazine

SHOW GUIDE

Welcome to the *Hornby Magazine Show Guide* – your guide to the exhibitions that are taking place throughout the country every weekend. This listing is a guide to events planned by model railway clubs and societies and is updated each issue. We recommend checking the club or society website or using the contact details provided to check a show or event is on before travelling, as changes may occur at short notice. All information is provided in good faith, and *Hornby Magazine* cannot be held responsible for any changes that may take place following publication.

April 2026

4 HILLINGDON RAILWAY MODELLERS TEST TRACK OPEN DAY

Hosts: Hillingdon Railway Modellers
Location: Yiewsley Baptist Church, 74 Colham Avenue, Yiewsley, Hillingdon, London UB7 8HF
Times: 10am-3pm
Prices: Adults £6
Website: *www.hillingdonrailwaymodellers.co.uk*
Features: Test track in 'O', 'OO' and 'N' gauges plus refreshments.

4/5 GAINSBOROUGH MODEL RAILWAY SOCIETY OPEN DAY

Hosts: Gainsborough Model Railway Society
Location: Florence Terrace, Gainsborough DN21 1BE
Times: Sat 1.30pm–5.30pm, Sun 1.30pm–5.30pm
Prices: Adults £5, children £4, family £15
Website: *www.gainsboroughmodelrailway.co.uk*
Features: Extensive 'O' gauge East Coast Main Line themed layout plus refreshments.

4-6 YORK MODEL RAILWAY SHOW

Hosts: York Model Railway Show
Location: Knavesmire Stand, York Racecourse, York YO23 1EX
Times: Sat 10am–5pm, Sun 10am–5pm, Monday 10am-4pm
Prices: Adults £14, children £2, family £30 (advance ticket prices)
Website: *www.yorkshow.org.uk*
Features: Layouts, trade support, societies, demos, refreshments, parking and disabled access.

11 NORWICH MODEL RAILWAY EXHIBITION

Hosts: Norwich Railway Heritage and Model Society
Location: Hellesdon High School, Middletons Lane, Norwich NR6 5SB
Times: 10am–4pm
Prices: Adults £6, accompanied under 16s free
Website: *www.norhams.org.uk*
Features: 17 layouts, trade support, demonstrations, societies, parking and disabled access.

11 HIGH WYCOMBE MRX26

Hosts: High Wycombe and District Model Railway Society
Location: Cressex Community Centre, Cressex Road, High Wycombe HP12 4PZ
Times: 10am–4.30pm
Prices: Adults £6, under 16s £1
Website: *www.hwdmrs.org.uk*
Features: Ten layouts, trade support, demonstrations, societies, parking and disabled access.

11/12 CHELTENHAM MODEL RAILWAY SHOW

Hosts: Cheltenham Great Western Modellers Group
Location: St Margaret's Hall, Coniston Road, Hatherley, Cheltenham GL51 3NU
Times: Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 10am-4.30pm
Prices: Adults £6, under 14s £2, family £12
Website: *www.cheltmodrail.org.uk*
Features: Layouts, trade support, demonstrations, refreshments, parking and disabled access.

11/12 CALNE MODEL RAILWAY SHOW 2026

Hosts: Bentley Model Railway Group
Location: Calne Community Campus, White Horse Way, Calne SN11 0SP
Times: Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 10am-4pm
Prices: Adults £8, under 17s £3, family £20
Website: *www.calnemrs.org.uk*
Features: Layouts, trade support, refreshments, parking and disabled access.

11/12 GREAT CORNISH MODEL SHOW

Hosts: Helston and Falmouth Model Railway Club
Location: Pool Academy, Church Road, Pool TR15 3PZ
Times: Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 10am-4pm
Prices: Adults £9, under 16s £6, family £28
Website: *www.hfmrc.uk*
Features: Layouts, trade support, demonstrations, scale modelling displays, refreshments, parking and disabled access.

11/12 LOTHIANS MODEL RAILWAY SHOW

Hosts: Pentland Model Railway Group
Location: Heriot-Watt University Students Union, Riccarton, Edinburgh EH14 4AS
Times: Sat 10am-4.30pm, Sun 10am-4.30pm
Prices: Adults £6, accompanied under 15s free
Website: *www.lothianmodelrail.co.uk*
Features: 18 layouts, trade support, demos, societies, refreshments, parking and disabled access.

PRIME LISTING

11/12 MACCLESFIELD MODEL RAILWAY EXHIBITION

Hosts: Macclesfield Model Railway Group
Location: King's School, Alderley Road, Macclesfield, SK10 4RH
Times: Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 10am-4.30pm
Prices: Adults £10, accompanied children free
Website: *www.macclesfieldmrg.org.uk*
Features: 30 layouts, trade support, societies, refreshments, parking and disabled access. See the full prime listing on *www.keymodelworld.com/events.*

PRIME LISTING

11/12 SWANAGE RAILWAY MODEL RAILWAY WEEKEND

Hosts: Swanage Railway
Location: Swanage Railway, Station Approach, Swanage BH19 1HB
Times: Sat 10am-5.35pm, Sun 10am-5.35pm
Prices: Adults £25 (£30), children £12.50 (£15), under 5s free. Tickets include travel and entry and allow unlimited travel on the Swanage Railway (on the day prices in brackets)
Website: *www.swanagerailway.co.uk*
Features: 40 layouts and displays sited along the Swanage Railway at various stations, trade support, refreshments and parking. See the full prime listing on *www.keymodelworld.com/events.*

18 CRADLEY HEATH MODEL RAILWAY CLUB 40TH ANNIVERSARY OPEN DAY

Hosts: Cradley Heath Model Railway Club
Location: St. Peter's Church, St. Peter's Road, Darby End, Dudley DY2 9HN
Times: 10am–4pm
Prices: Free admission
Website: *www.cradleyheathmrc.co.uk*
Features: Club and members' layouts, light refreshments and parking.

18 DE HAVILLAND MODEL RAILWAY SOCIETY EXHIBITION

Hosts: De Havilland Model Railway Society
Location: Ludwick Way Methodist Church, Ludwick Way, Welwyn Garden City AL7 3PN
Times: 10am–5pm
Prices: Adults £6, children £2, under 5s free
Website: *www.dhmrs.co.uk*
Features: Layouts, trade support, societies, refreshments, parking and disabled access.

18 EPSOM AND EWELL MODEL RAILWAY CLUB OPEN DAY

Hosts: Epsom and Ewell Model Railway Club
Location: Ruxley Church, Ruxley Lane, West Ewell KT19 0AF
Times: 10am–4.30pm
Prices: Free admission
Website: *www.eemrc.org.uk*
Features: Layouts, trade support, demonstrations, refreshments, parking and disabled access.

PRIME LISTING

18/19 WINTERSLOW MODEL RAILEX

Hosts: Winterslow Model Railex
Location: Winterslow Village Hall, Middleton Road, Sailsbury SP5 1SH
Times: Sat 10.30am-5pm, Sun 10am-4pm
Prices: Adults £8, children £4, family £20, under 5s free
Website: *www.winterslowmodelrailex.com*
Features: 12 layouts, trade support, refreshments, parking and disabled access. See the full prime listing on *www.keymodelworld.com/events.*

25 32A MODEL RAILWAY CLUB SHOW

Hosts: 32a Model Railway Club
Location: Bawdeswell Village Hall, Reepham Road, Bawdswell NR20 4RY
Times: 10am–4pm
Prices: Adults £6, children £3, family £12
Website: *www.32amrc.co.uk*
Features: Layouts, trade support, demos, displays, refreshments, parking and disabled access.

25 CRAWLEY MODEL RAILWAY SOCIETY EXHIBITION

Hosts: Crawley Model Railway Society
Location: Milton Mount School, Grattons Drive, Pound Hill, Crawley RH10 3AG
Times: 10am–4pm
Prices: Adults £3.50, accompanied under 16s free
Website: *www.crawleymrs.org*
Features: Layouts, trade support, refreshments, parking and disabled access.

25 GOGG SPRING OPEN DAY

Hosts: Guildford O Gauge Group
Location: Normandy Village Hall, Manor Fruit Farm,

Glaziers Lane, Normandy, Guildford GU3 2DD
Times: 10am–4pm
Prices: Adults £5
Website: *www.gogg.co.uk*
Features: Layouts, trade support, refreshments, parking and disabled access.

DON'T MISS

26/27 MODEL WORLD LIVE 2026

Hosts: Key Publishing
Location: Hall 9, National Exhibition Centre, Pendigo Way, Marston Green, Birmingham B40 1NT
Times: Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 10am-4pm
Prices: Adults £20 (£25), subscribers £18, weekend £40, children £10 (£12), VIP £60, (on-the-day prices in brackets)
Website: *www.keymodelworld.com/modelworldlive*
Features: Model railway layouts, scale modelling displays, demonstrations, trade support, manufacturers, societies, full-size exhibits, slot cars, radio-controlled vehicles, refreshments, parking and disabled access. Advance ticket holders gain entry to the event from 9.30am both days and children can enter free on Sunday with a paying adult.

May 2026

1-4 TAUNTON MODEL RAILWAY GROUP OPEN DAY

Hosts: Taunton Model Railway Group
Location: Bishops Lydeard Station, Platform 1, West Somerset Railway, Taunton TA4 3BX
Times: 10am-4.30pm
Prices: Small admission charge
Website: *www.tauntonmodelrailwaygroup.co.uk*
Features: Bath Green Park and Tamerig New layouts on display with refreshments and parking.

2 KING'S LYNN MODEL RAILWAY CLUB OPEN DAY

Hosts: King's Lynn Model Railway Club
Location: Grimston Village Hall, Cliffe-en-Howe Road, Pott Row, King's Lynn PE32 1BY
Times: 10am–4pm
Prices: Free admission
Contact: 07449 319393
Features: Club and member layouts, trade support, refreshments and parking.

2-4 SADDLEWORTH CHARITY MODEL RAILWAY EXHIBITION

Hosts: Saddleworth Museum and Art Gallery
Location: Saddleworth Museum and Art Gallery, High Street, Uppermill, Oldham OL3 6HS
Times: Sat 10am-4pm, Sun 10.30am-4pm, Monday 11am-4pm
Prices: Adults £5, one child free per paying adult
Contact: *andysawmaker@hotmail.co.uk*
Features: Seven layouts, trade support, refreshments, parking and disabled access.

4 CLEVELAND MODEL RAILWAY CLUB OPEN DAY

Hosts: Cleveland Model Railway Club
Location: Unit 2, The B-Hive, Skelton Industrial Estate, Skelton, Cleveland TS12 2LQ
Times: 10am–4pm
Prices: Adults £1, children 50p
Website: *www.clevelandmrc.co.uk*
Features: Club layouts, trade support, refreshments and parking.

9 SOMPTING MODEL RAILWAY EXHIBITION

Hosts: Sompting and District Model Railway Club
Location: St Peter the Apostle Church, Bowness Avenue, Sompting, Lancing BN15 9TS
Times: 10am–4pm
Prices: Adults £4, children £1
Website: *www.somptingdistrictmrc.co.uk*
Features: Layouts, trade support, refreshments and parking.

9 SOUTH-WEST HERTS MODEL RAILWAY SOCIETY EXHIBITION

Hosts: South-West Herts Model Railway Society
Location: Queens' School, Aldenham Road, Bushey WD23 2TY
Times: 10am–4.30pm
Prices: Adults £8, accompanied under 16s free (up to two free per adult)
Website: *www.southwesthertsmrs.org.uk*
Features: 20 layouts, trade support, societies, refreshments, parking and disabled access.

9 STAFFORD SPRING MODEL RAILWAY SHOW

Hosts: Stafford Railway Circle
Location: Berkswich Methodist Church Hall, The Rise, Stafford ST17 0LH
Times: 10am-6pm
Prices: Adults £6, under 16s free
Website: *www.staffordrailwaycircle.org.uk*
Features: 11 layouts, trade support, refreshments and parking.

9 STOCKPORT AND DISTRICT RAILWAY MODELLERS OPEN DAY

Hosts: Stockport and District Railway Modellers
Location: The Scout Hut, Cartwright Street, Newton, Hyde SK14 4FH
Times: 10am–4pm
Prices: Admission by donation
Website: *www.sdrm.co.uk*
Features: Club and visiting layouts, trade support, club stand, demonstrations and refreshments.

9 SUSSEX VINTAGE MODEL RAILWAY SHOW

Hosts: Sussex Vintage Model Railway Collectors
Location: Plumpton Village Hall, Westgate, Plumpton BN7 3BQ.
Times: 10am–4.30pm
Prices: Adults £5, accompanied children free, family £8
Contact: 07785 567251
Features: Vintage model railways, trade support, refreshments, parking and disabled access.

9/10 GLENROTHES MODEL RAILWAY CLUB EXHIBITION

Hosts: Glenrothes Model Railway Club
Location: The Lomond Centre, Woodside Way, Glenrothes KY7 5RA
Times: Sat 10am-4pm, Sun 10.30am-4pm
Prices: Adults £7, children free
Website: *www.glenrothesmrc.org.uk*
Features: Layouts, trade support, societies, refreshments, parking and disabled access.

9/10 IMMINGHAM MODEL RAIL SHOW

Hosts: Immingham Museum
Location: Civic Centre, Pelham Road, Immingham DN40 1QF
Times: Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 10am-4pm
Prices: Adults £7, accompanied children free
Website: *www.imminghammuseum.org*
Features: 19 layouts, trade support, societies, refreshments, parking and disabled access to main exhibition.

PRIME LISTING

9/10 STAMFORD MODEL RAILWAY SHOW

Hosts: Market Deeping Model Railway Club
Location: Stamford Welland Academy, Green Lane, Stamford PE9 1HE
Times: Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 10am-4pm
Prices: Adults £8, children £4, concessions £4, family £22
Website: *www.mdmrc.org*
Features: 28 layouts, trade support, refreshments, parking and disabled access. See the full prime listing on *www.keymodelworld.com/events*.

16 LIVERPOOL AND WEST LANCS 'O' GAUGE GROUP OPEN DAY

Hosts: Liverpool and West Lancs 'O' Gauge Group
Location: 1st floor St. Monica's Parish Centre, Stewart Avenue, Bootle L20 9JD
Times: 10am-4pm
Prices: Free admission
Website: *www.lawlogg.uk*
Features: Club layouts, demonstrations, refreshments and parking.

16/17 JARROW MODEL RAILWAY EXHIBITION

Hosts: Jarrow Model Railway Club
Location: Primrose Community Association, Lambton Terrace, Jarrow, Tyne and Wear NE32 5QY
Times: Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 10am-4pm
Prices: Adults £7, children £3, family £14
Website: *www.jarrowmrc.org*
Features: Layouts, trade support, refreshments, parking and disabled access.

16/17 NEEPSEND MODEL RAILWAY EXHIBITION

Hosts: Neepsend Model Railway Society
Location: Grenoside Community Centre, Main Street, Sheffield S35 8PR
Times: Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 10am-4.30pm
Prices: Adults £8, children £2
Website: *www.neepsendmrs.weebly.com*
Features: 15 layouts, trade support, refreshments, parking and disabled access.

16/17 ORPINGTON AND DISTRICT MODEL RAILWAY SOCIETY EXHIBITION

Hosts: Orpington and District Model Railway Society
Location: Pratts Bottom Village Hall, Norsted Lane, Pratts Bottom, Orpington BR6 7PQ
Times: Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 10am-4pm
Prices: Adults £6, children £1.50
Website: *www.odmrs.uk*
Features: Layouts, trade support, demonstrations, refreshments and parking.

16/17 PORTHMADOG MODEL RAILWAY SHOW AND WORKSHOP

Hosts: Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railway
Location: Y Ganolfan Stryd Fawr, Porthmadog LL49 9LU
Times: Sat 10am-4pm, Sun 10am-4pm
Prices: Adults £6, children £2
Website: *www.festrail.co.uk*
Features: Layouts, trade support, refreshments, parking and disabled access.

PLANNING AN EXHIBITION?

● Is your club or society planning a model railway exhibition?

Hornby Magazine's Show Guide is a free listing that allows you to promote a forthcoming model railway show. If you have a show to add to the Show Guide, contact us at *Hornby Magazine* by e-mailing: *hornbymagazine@keypublishing.com* and please ensure you include appropriate contact details for the public as we are unable to publish listings without this.

FULL LISTING ONLINE!

● For more shows and the very latest event details visit *www.keymodelworld.com* for our online Show Guide.

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OO Gauge GW Aberdare's - Due 2027ish

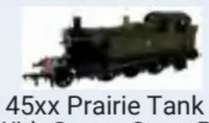


OR76ABD001 - GW Aberdare 2-6-0 2612 GW Lined Green Red Frames.....£161.95
OR76ABD002 - GW Aberdare 2-6-0 2666 GW Lined Great Western Green.....£161.95
OR76ABD003 - GW Aberdare 2-6-0 2634 GW Green Great Western.....£161.95
OR76ABD004 - GW Aberdare 2-6-0 2637 GW Green Shirtbutton.....£161.95
OR76ABD005 - GW Aberdare 2-6-0 2680 GW Green GWR.....£161.95
OR76ABD006 - GW Aberdare 2-6-0 2651 GW Wartime Black GWR.....£161.95
OR76ABD007 - GW Aberdare 2-6-0 2667 BR Black Patched GWR.....£161.95

OO Gauge 45xx Prairie Tanks - Due In The Future



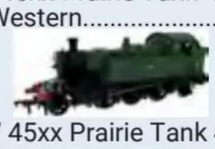
951101 - GW 45xx Prairie Tank 2171 GW Pre 1906 Lined Green.....£147.00



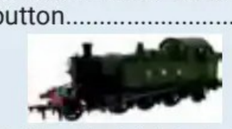
951102 - GW 45xx Prairie Tank 2173 GW Lined Green With Garter Crest Pre-WW1.....£147.00



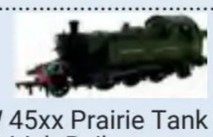
951103 - GW 45xx Prairie Tank 4505 GW Green Great Western.....£147.00



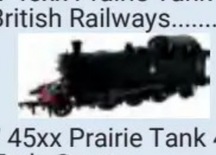
951104 - GW 45xx Prairie Tank 4560 GW Green Shirtbutton.....£147.00



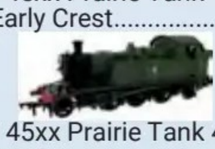
951105 - GW 45xx Prairie Tank 4512 GW Green GWR.....£147.00



951106 - GW 45xx Prairie Tank 4571 BR Plain Green British Railways.....£147.00



951107 - GW 45xx Prairie Tank 4510 BR Black Small Early Crest.....£147.00



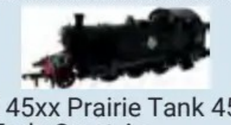
951108 - GW 45xx Prairie Tank 4562 BR Green Early Crest.....£147.00



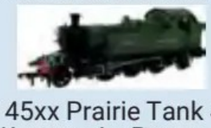
951109 - GW 45xx Prairie Tank 4507 BR Green Late Crest.....£147.00



951110 - GW 45xx Prairie Tank 4555 GW Green Great Western As Preserved 1960s Condition.....£147.00



951111 - GW 45xx Prairie Tank 4566 BR Plain Black Large Early Crest As Preserved.....£147.00

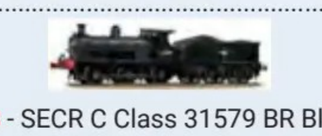


951112 - GW 45xx Prairie Tank 4561 GW Green Great Western As Preserved 1990s Condition.....£147.00

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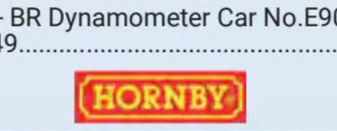
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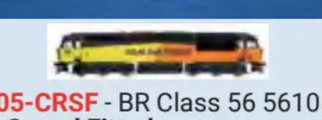
OO Gauge Merchant Navy - In Stock



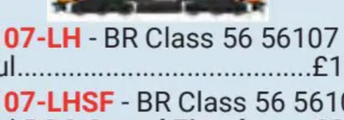
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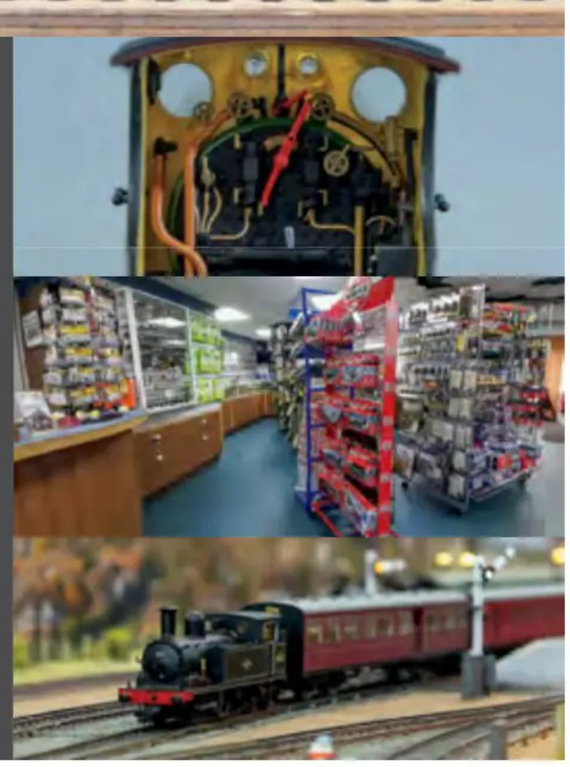
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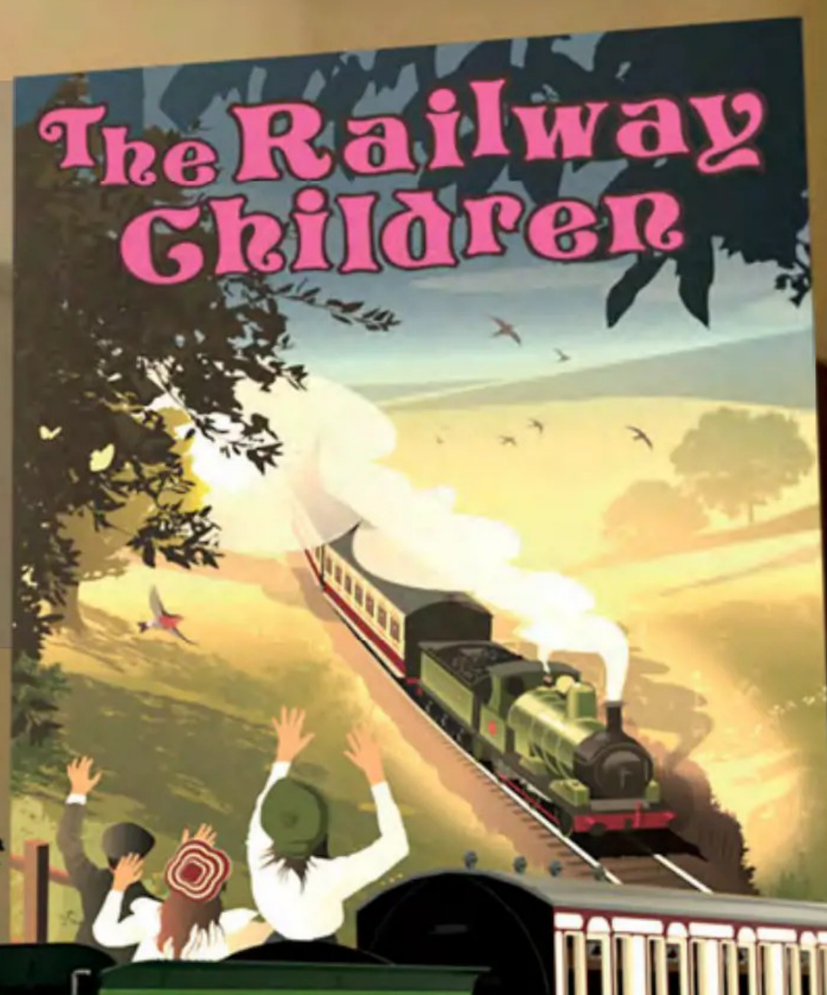
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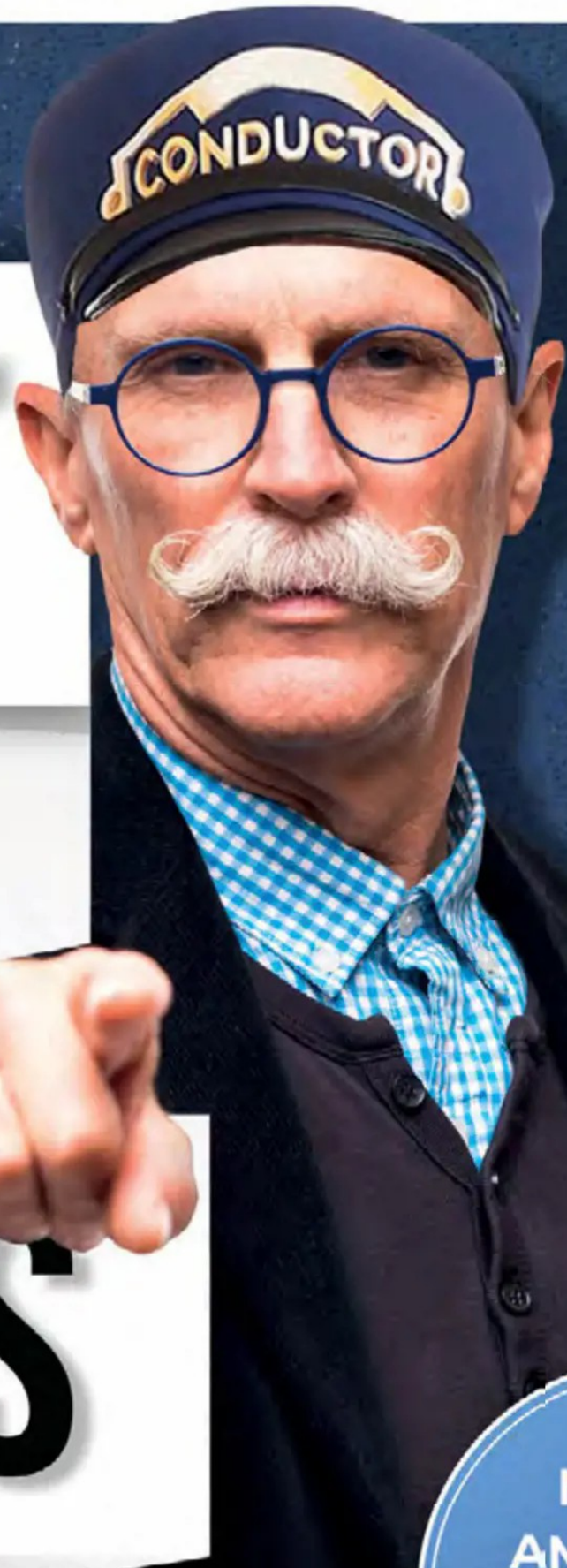
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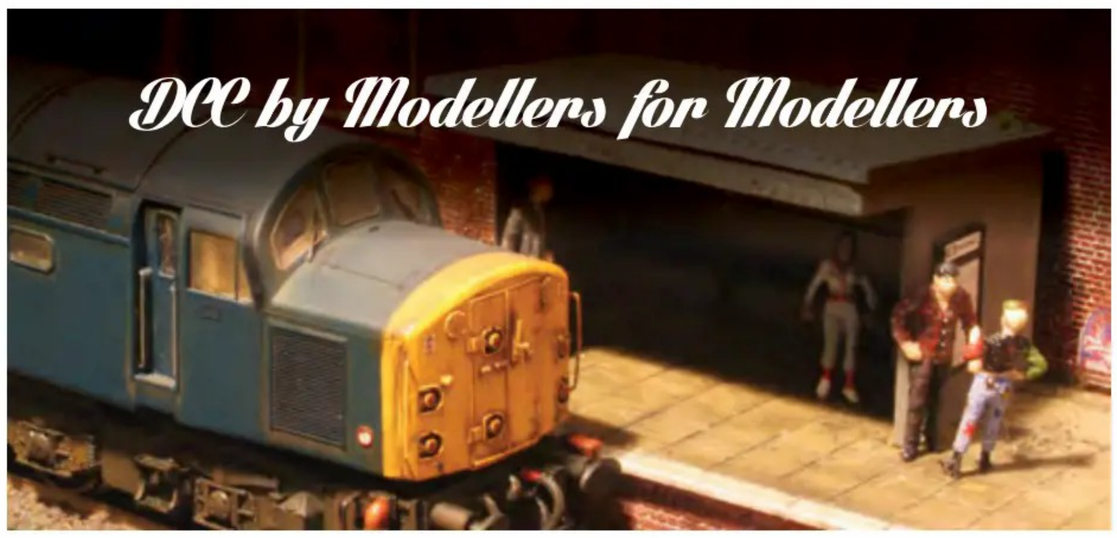
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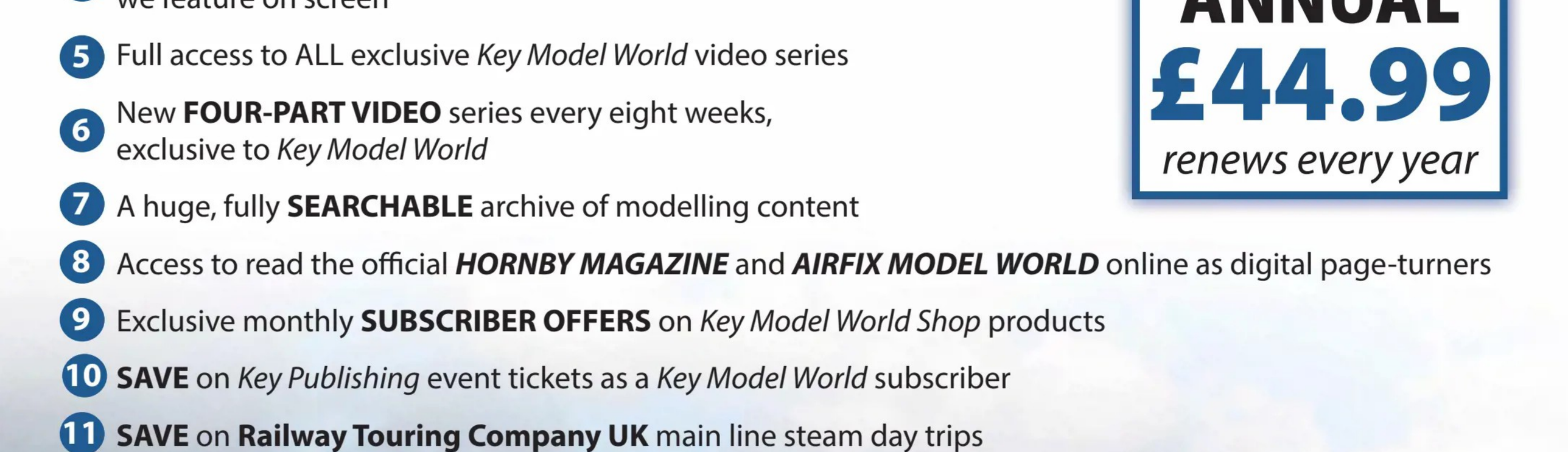
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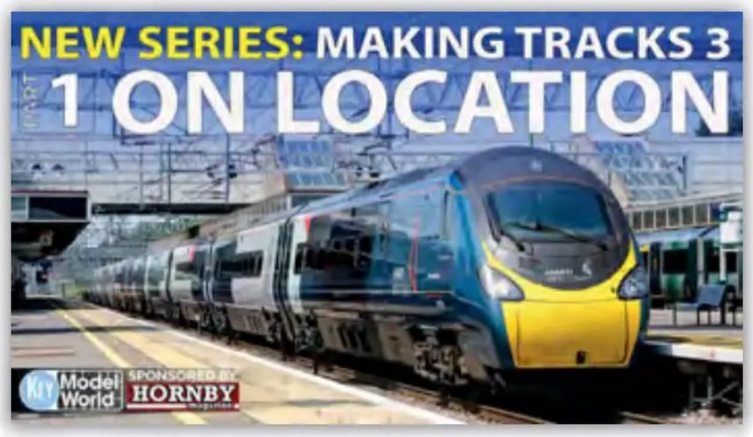
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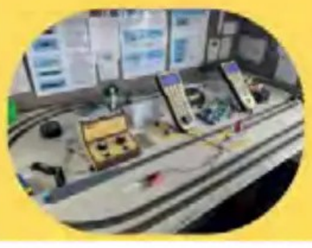
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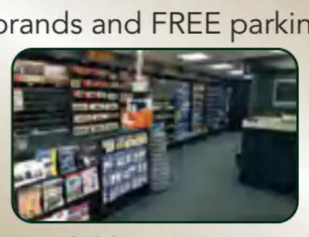
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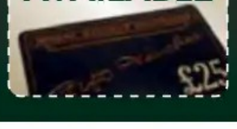
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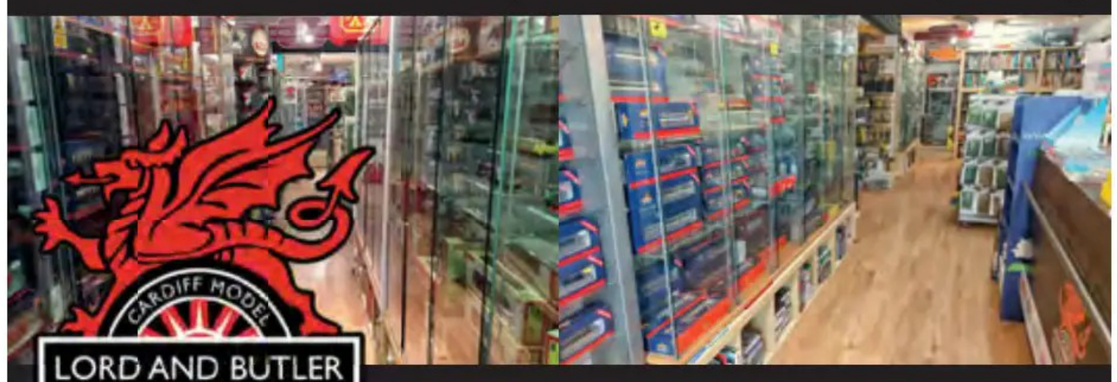
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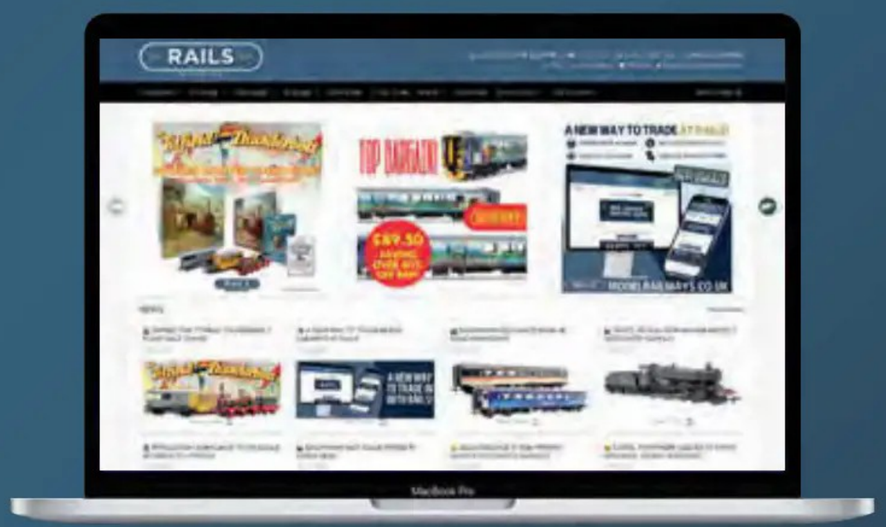
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'OO' GAUGE

BEN CHURCH outlines the range of ongoing and newly announced 'OO' gauge projects from all the major manufacturers.

CONTINUING ITS dominance of the UK model railway market, 'OO' gauge is as popular as ever with the majority of all-new projects in our survey being developed for this scale. The past year has been another outstanding year for releases in the scale.

INDEED, the final months of 2025 and initial few weeks of 2026 witnessed a level of all-new tooled releases not seen in quite some time. Amongst these were Bachmann's all-new 'OO' gauge Class 13 shunter and Class 66 and 69 Co-Co diesels and Heljan's Class 104 DMUs, Rapido Trains UK's 'OO' LNER 'J52' 0-6-0ST, KR Models' new 4-DD double deck Electric Multiple Unit (EMU), Hornby's new RailRoad Class 800 InterCity Express Train and more.

More than 200 new tooling projects are currently either in development or at the research stage, with 112 of those projects for 'OO' gauge, 39 for 'N' gauge, 27 for 'TT:120', 13 'O' gauge and 12 'OO9' narrow gauge subjects. The scope of new projects is vast. From esoteric steam locomotives to the latest motive power on the modern railway being developed, there is a lot to look forward to, especially for 'OO' gauge modellers. As in 2025, there are just over 70 'OO' gauge motive power projects under way at the moment, while 41 rolling stock projects are also in development, so let's take a closer look at what is currently in the melting pot.



Development of Hornby's all-new 'OO' gauge Bulleid Rebuilt 'Merchant Navy' 4-6-2 is under way with a stereo 3D-printed model revealed in late March.

HORNBY

Returning to the company's roots, Hornby headlined its 2026 range with the announcements of an all-new Rebuilt 'Merchant Navy' 4-6-2, initially appearing as 35028 *Clan Line* in present-day condition. Hornby's specification for the new 'Merchant Navy' is mouthwatering, with the model to feature a die-cast boiler, working electric lights, cab lights, and provision for a steam generator. A huge range of tooling options is planned with several tender variations, including *Clan Line's* unique present-day Series Three tender. Hornby's all-new 'Merchant Navy' is likely to appear in 2027, although this has yet to be confirmed.

Catering for budget-conscious modellers, Hornby revealed details of a newly tooled 'OO' Class 60 for its RailRoad range, mirroring 2025's RailRoad Class 800. Hornby's Class 60 will feature a three-pole motor, all-wheel pick-up and directional lighting as well as supporting the Hornby family of Bluetooth/DCC decoders. Delivery is expected in late 2026/early 2027, with three models appearing in DCC Ready and DCC sound fitted forms.

In similar vein to last year, keep an eye out across the year for more new 'OO' gauge announcements to come from Hornby.

BACHMANN

Bachmann continues to reveal new projects in quarterly announcements, with newly tooled models often released soon after, thus occasionally missing out on our survey. Enthusiasts of the London Midland & Scottish Railway (LMS) are being treated to an updated version of Bachmann's longstanding 'OO' gauge 'Jubilee' 4-6-0, which now features new tooling to allow for modelling of locomotives fitted with long fireboxes. The models will also now feature firebox glow, 21-pin DCC socket, and pick-ups on all driving and tender wheels. These are expected to arrive during the fourth quarter of 2026.

Bachmann is also developing an enhanced version of its recently retooled 'OO' Class 47, with a suite of new



features and upgrades to keep this model up-to-date. The upgraded models will feature a stay alive capacitor, improved twin speaker setup with a new bass speaker, improvements to the fit of the cab windscreen, and optional body-mounted snow ploughs. DCC Sound-fitted Deluxe models will feature Bachmann's DCC auto-release coupling system. Two exclusives have since joined the roster - D1676 *Vulcan* in BR two-tone green for The Model Centre (TMC) and 47521 in revised Network SouthEast livery for Kernow Model Rail Centre (KMRC).

Bachmann is also developing – in conjunction with Rails of Sheffield – a new model of the Caledonian Railway (CR) '439' 0-4-4T. The model will feature a coreless motor, all-wheel pick-up, die-cast chassis and gearbox, firebox glow, stay alive capacitor, factory-fitted speaker and a Next18 DCC socket. DCC Sound-fitted Deluxe models will also feature DCC auto-release couplings. Several models are planned, covering CR, LMS and BR colour schemes, with an exclusive for the Scottish Railway Preservation Society also planned. These models are currently due to arrive in 2027.



Hornby is developing a new 'OO' gauge Class 60 Co-Co diesel for its RailRoad range.

Launched in the latter part of 2025, Locomotion Models announced a new North Eastern Railway snowplough, produced exclusively for Railway Icons by Bachmann. The model is set to feature separately fitted handrails, chimney and lamp irons. Delivery is planned for 2026.

ACCURASCALE

Accurascale continues to reveal new projects for 'OO' gauge, with the latest, the Class 73/9s never before seen ready-to-run. The new models represent the GB Railfreight and Caledonian Sleeper locomotives, repowered with MTU engines in the 2010s. Models will sport a die-cast chassis, five-pole motor, 21-pin DCC socket, operating roof fan, etched grilles, flush glazing and variations to the body, cab, roof and underframe. All models are exclusively available via the Accurascale website and appear in GBRf and Caledonian Sleeper liveries with delivery due in the fourth quarter of 2026.

Staying with new locomotive projects, the manufacturer has also revealed an all-new family of Class 08s, Class 08/9s and Class 10s. The cut-down cab Class 08/9s have never been produced in ready-to-run form and all models feature a five-pole motor, working directional and shunting lights, etched grilles, removable roof section and several aspects of separately fitted detail. Release is slated for early 2027.

The most recent rolling stock announcement from Accurascale is the BR 20ton brake van. An extensive range of detail differences is planned, with all models featuring a glowing stove and interior lighting with a stay alive capacitor. They will be exclusively available from the Accurascale website with delivery expected in early 2027.

Also making significant progress is the ongoing Electrostar EMU project revealed in early 2025, with EP samples arriving for scrutiny recently. Release is scheduled for later this year.

CAVALEX MODELS

Cavalex Models continues to develop a range of diesel era motive power and rolling stock, with both the 'OO' PXA and JXA steel wagons due to arrive exclusively with Rails of Sheffield as this issue of the New Model Guide closed for press. These models feature a heavyweight die-cast chassis, extensive underframe and bogie detail and sprung buffers.

Cavalex Models' active locomotive project is the all-new 'OO' gauge Class 47, with full details of the specification revealed last summer. All models will feature a coreless motor with twin flywheels, 21-pin Digital Command Control (DCC) socket, photo-etched grilles, independently controllable rotating roof fans and hall sensors for automatic flange squeal on sound-fitted models. A full suite of lighting controls will also be included. Each will have parked and light engine light configurations.

14 standard models form the main range and appear in



Cavalex Models is producing an all-new 'OO' gauge Class 47 Co-Co diesel with 20 or so different models forming the initial batch of releases.



Decorated samples of Accurascale's all-new 'OO' gauge Class 73/9 electro-diesels have arrived for inspection by the team.

»

BR two-tone green, BR large logo blue, original Railfreight, Railfreight triple grey with Petroleum and Distribution decals, InterCity 'Executive', 'Main Line' and 'Swallow', plus ScotRail, revised Network SouthEast and Rail Express Systems. Several retailer exclusives are also planned.

CLARK RAILWORKS

Development continues on two 'OO' gauge motive power projects for Clark Railworks – namely, the 'WD' 2-10-0 and Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway 'Pug' 0-4-0ST. Of the two, the 'WD' – announced in 2024 – is at an advanced stage, with early decorated samples unveiled towards the end of 2025. Ten standard 'WD' 2-10-0s are planned, along with two for Railway Icons, and a model of 600 *Gordon* in 1960s' Longmoor Military Railway (LMR) blue for Key Publishing. Delivery for this model is expected during the second half of 2026. The manufacturer's 'Pug' project is at an early stage of development and will feature provision for 'EM and 'P4' gauges, a stay alive capacitor, firebox glow and factory fitted speaker and will initially arrive in 11 forms. Delivery is due in late 2026/early 2027.

DAPOL

Whilst Dapol does not have any newly announced 'OO' gauge locomotive projects in our motive power survey, several ongoing projects are at an advanced stage of development. The first of its GWR 0-4-2T duo was due imminently as this supplement was being compiled, with the GWR '517s' set to arrive first. These will be followed by the more recognisable Collett '14XXs' and '58XXs', with both classes due to arrive in the second quarter of 2026. Keeping with the Western theme, the longstanding GWR '28XX' and '2884' 2-8-0 is pencilled to arrive later this year and will feature a die-cast footplate and boiler, plus a compensated chassis and firebox glow.

Dapol's 'Black Label' Southern Railway (SR) 'Light Pacific' project – produced in collaboration with Rails of Sheffield – continues, with revised decorated samples received in early 2026. These are set to include a die-cast body, chassis and tender body, with working electric lighting, firebox glow, twin speakers and a steam generator.

Dapol's all-new 'OO' Class 323 Electric Multiple Unit (EMU) also saw a significant update in the latter half of 2025, with a working EP sample revealed. These will feature electrical connections between each coach, a PluX22 DCC decoder socket, factory-fitted speaker in each driving car, controllable door lock and saloon illumination, directional and cab lights and working BSI couplings. The Class 323s are set to arrive during the third quarter of 2026.



Clark Railworks' all-new 'OO' gauge War Department 2-10-0 is progressing well, with completed models expected later this year.

Dapol's latest wagon 'OO' gauge project is the JNA-Y bogie scrap wagon – used by Network Rail on engineering duties across the network. Based on Dapol's previously produced MRA wagons, these new vehicles will feature a die-cast chassis, kinematic NEM coupling pocket and turned metal wheels. Delivery is expected in the fourth quarter of 2026.

EFE RAIL

EFE Rail continues to reveal products alongside Bachmann's quarterly announcement schedule. In terms of motive power, the first of the 'OO' gauge LSWR 'T3' 4-4-0s were due to arrive in the country as this New Model Guide was being compiled. Five models are due for release, appearing in LSWR Adams, Urie and Drummond green, plus SR lined Maunsell green. DCC sound fitted models will be available exclusively from KMRC.

Also set to arrive soon are the 'OO' gauge Class 313 and 314 three-car EMUs. Both models will sport two coreless motors, die-cast metal chassis, PluX22 decoder socket and working cab, directional, headcode, destination blind, and door lock illumination, with appropriate models also including a high-intensity headlight. Nine Class 313s and four Class 314s are set to be released.

Two new EFE Rail 'OO' rolling stock projects are ongoing - both commissioned by TMC – covering a BR Thompson six-wheel 'BZ' and North Eastern Railway 'V4' brake vans. Eight brake vans are planned, along with eight 'BZ's. Both are slated for release in 2026.

HELJAN

While no new 'OO' projects from Heljan feature in our survey so far this year, several models continue to inch towards delivery. In November 2025, Heljan revealed decorated samples of the Class 42 'Warships'. Alongside the decorated samples was the revealing of V200 021 *Windhund* in the striking DB-inspired livery applied to the full-size D821 *Greyhound* in preservation in the late 1980s at the North Yorkshire Moors Railway. Standard range models will appear in BR green, maroon and blue. A batch of locomotives which can carry GWR steam era train reporting numbers is also being produced for Rails of Sheffield – all in BR green. All will feature a 21-pin DCC decoder socket,



Rapido Trains UK's newly tooled 'OO' gauge USATC 'S160' 2-8-0 edges closer.

controllable cab, engine room and directional lighting, plus a five-pole motor with twin flywheels and are expected to arrive in mid 2026.

Other projects are also progressing, with running samples of the 'OO' Class 155 DMU showcased towards the end of 2025. The model will feature a low-profile motor, 21-pin DCC socket, controllable door lock lights, saloon lights, directional lights and cab lights, which Heljan's Class 153 DMU also shares. Heljan's ongoing LNER 'U1' project is also expected to arrive in the middle of 2026, with decorated samples observed during the Greatest Gathering event in Derby last summer. Heljan's 'OO' Class 86/2 is now expected to arrive in the third quarter of 2026, with livery artwork for this project revealed in September 2026. A new model of 86241 *Glenfiddich* in Parcels Sector red was also added to the range.



Oxford Rail's newly tooled 'OO' gauge GWR 'Totem A' is set to appear later this year, with several new colour schemes added including this fictional red oxide scheme.

KR MODELS

Late 2025 saw KR models deliver its 4-DD EMU project for 'OO' gauge, with several other projects continuing development. Models such as the Midland Railway 'Lickey Banker' 0-10-0, War Department 2-10-0, Class 40 Co-Co diesel, Haydock Foundry 0-6-0WT and Clayton DHP1 continue to develop, although no release date has yet been revealed. The next model expected to arrive from KR is the GWR 'Mica B' refrigerated van, which is slated for an early 2026 release.

OXFORD RAIL

Oxford Rail revealed in early 2026 (HM227) three all-new 'OO' gauge projects. The Great Western Railway (GWR) '26XX' 2-6-0 was a surprise – but welcome - announcement and models one of the longest-lived double frame designs on the GWR. The model will sport a 21-pin Digital Command Control (DCC) socket plus factory-fitted stay alive, speaker and firebox glow.

Announced alongside was the Caledonian Railway (CR) 'Pug' 0-4-0ST, with these due to feature a coreless motor, 21-pin DCC decoder socket, firebox glow and a pre-fitted speaker and stay alive. Eight standard release models are planned, with a model of 56025 *Smokey Joe* set to appear as an Oxford Rail exclusive.

Oxford Rail's third all-new announcement was the GER Diagram 7 cattle wagon, with eight wagons across four liveries planned. Release dates for all three projects are yet to be confirmed.

Meanwhile, development of the manufacturer's ongoing 'OO' Cowans Sheldon 15ton crane has progressed to the EP sample stage, while the »

TABLE 1 – 'OO' GAUGE MOTIVE POWER PROJECTS 2026 AND BEYOND

PRODUCT	REGION	MANUFACTURER	EXPECTED
Ivor the Engine	Wales	Rapido Trains UK	Q3 2026
CR 'Pug' 0-4-0ST	Scottish	Oxford Rail	Q2 2027
CR '439' 0-4-4T	Scottish	Bachmann/Rails of Sheffield	2027
CR 'Single' 4-2-2	Scottish	Rapido Trains UK	Q4 2026
GNR 'C12' 4-4-2	Eastern	Rapido Trains UK	TBA
GWR '26XX' 2-6-0	Western	Oxford Rail	Q3 2027
GWR '28XX' 2-8-0	Western	Dapol	Q3 2026
GWR '2884' 2-8-0	Western	Dapol	Q3 2026
GWR '45XX' 2-6-2T	Western	Rapido Trains UK	TBA
GWR '517' 0-4-2T	Western	Dapol	Imminent
GWR '58XX'/'14XX' 0-4-2T	Western	Dapol	Q2 2026
GWR 'County' 4-6-0	Western	Rapido Trains UK	Q4 2026
HR 'Loch' 4-4-0	Scottish	Rapido Trains UK	TBA
LBSCR 'K' 2-6-0	Southern	Sonic Models	Q2 2026
LMS 'Jubilee' 4-6-0 (short firebox)	Midland	Bachmann	Q4 2026
LMS 'Jubilee' 4-6-0 (long firebox)	Midland	Bachmann	Q4 2026
LMS '8F' 2-8-0	Midland	Bachmann	Q4 2026
LNER 'A4' 4-6-2 (steam generator mods)	Eastern	Hornby Dublo	Q4 2026
LNER 'A4' 4-6-2 (steam generator mods)	Eastern	Hornby	Q4 2026
LNER 'D34' 4-4-0	Scottish/Eastern	Sonic Models	Q4 2026/Q1 2027
LNER 'D40' 4-4-0	Scottish/Eastern	Rapido Trains UK	TBA
LNER 'J71' 0-6-0T	Eastern	Bachmann	Q2/Q3 2026
LNER 'U1' 2-8-0+0-8-2	Eastern	Heljan	Q2 2026
LSWR 'T3' 4-4-0	Southern	EFE Rail	Q2 2026
LSWR 'B4' 0-4-0T (train set model)	Southern	Hornby RailRoad	TBA
LYR 'Pug' 0-4-0ST	Midland	Clark Railworks	Q4 2026/Q1 2027
MR '482' 4-4-0	Midland	Rapido Trains UK	Q4 2026
MR 'Big Bertha' 0-10-0	Midland	KR Models	TBA
SECR 'G' 4-4-0	Southern	Rapido Trains UK	TBA
SR 'U' 2-6-0	Southern	Rapido Trains UK	TBA
SR Air-smoothed 'WC'/'BB' 4-6-2	Southern	Dapol	Q3 2026
SR Rebuilt 'Merchant Navy' 4-6-2	Southern	Hornby	TBA
USATC 'S160' 2-8-0	Various	Rapido Trains UK	Q2 2026
WD 'Austerity' 2-10-0	Various	Clark Railworks	Q3 2026
WD 'Austerity' 2-10-0	Various	KR Models	TBA
Clayton DHP1	Demonstrator	KR Models	TBA
Haydock Foundry 0-6-0WT	Industrial	KR Models	Q2/Q3 2026
Hunslet 'Austerity'/LNER 'J94' 0-6-0ST	Industrial/Eastern	Accurascale	Q2 2026
Hunslet 0-6-0DH	Industrial	Revolution Trains	TBA
Manning Wardle 'L' 0-6-0ST	Industrial	Rapido Trains UK	Q3 2026
GSR '800' 4-6-0	Ireland	Irish Railway Models	Q3 2026
Class 08 0-6-0	Various	Accurascale	Q1 2027
Class 08/9 0-6-0	Various	Accurascale	Q1 2027
Class 10 0-6-0	Various	Accurascale	Q1 2027
Class 18 Clayton CBD90 Bo-Bo	Industrial	Revolution Trains/Rails	Q3/Q4 2026
Class 37/9 Co-Co	Various	Accurascale	Q2 2026
Class 40 1Co-Co1	Various	KR Models	TBA
Class 42 'Warship' Bo-Bo	Western	Heljan	Q2 2026
Class 44 1Co-Co1	Midland	Heljan	Q3 2026
Class 47 Co-Co (upgrade)	Various	Bachmann	2026
Class 47 Co-Co	Various	Cavalex Models	Q1 2027
Class 60 (RailRoad)	Various	Hornby RailRoad	Q1 2027
Class 73/9 Bo-Bo	Southern/Scottish	Accurascale	Q4 2026
Class 86/2 Bo-Bo	Midland	Heljan	Q3 2026
Class 93 tri-mode Bo-Bo	Various	Revolution Trains	Q3/Q4 2026
Class 99 tri-mode Co-Co	Various	Revolution Trains	Q3/Q4 2026
Class 153 single-car DMU	Various	Heljan	Q4 2026
Class 155 two-car DMU	Various	Heljan	Q4 2026
Class 175 two-car DMU	Various	Revolution Trains	Q3 2026
Class 175 three-car DMU	Various	Revolution Trains	Q3 2026
Class 180 five-car DMU	Various	Revolution Trains	Q3 2026
Class 313 three-car EMU	Eastern/Southern	EFE Rail	Q2/Q3 2026
Class 314 three-car EMU	Scottish	EFE Rail	Q2/Q3 2026
Class 320 three-car EMU	Scottish	Revolution Trains	TBA
Class 321 four-car EMU	Midland/Eastern	Revolution Trains	TBA
Class 323 three-car EMU	Midland	Dapol	Q3 2026
Class 375 Electrostar EMU	Southern	Accurascale	2026
Class 377 Electrostar EMU	Southern	Accurascale	2026
Class 379 Electrostar EMU	Eastern	Accurascale	2026
Class 387 Electrostar EMU	Various	Accurascale	2026
IE Class 22000 Railcars	IE/Ireland	Irish Railway Models	Q2 2026
Total: 71			



Oxford Rail has received Engineering Prototype samples of its eagerly-awaited Cowans Sheldon 15ton crane, now with improved functionality.

company's new GWR 'Totem A' wagon is set to gain a couple more colour schemes.

RAPIDO TRAINS UK

Rapido Trains UK's new product announcements continue apace, with the manufacturer primarily focusing on pre-Grouping and 'Big Four' steam locomotives and wagons. The most recent announcement is the Great Western Railway (GWR) '45XX' 2-6-2T, a follow-up from 2025's '44XX'. The new models will appear in GWR green, BR black and BR green. A delivery date has yet to be confirmed.

Other new products from Rapido Trains UK include a trio of Great Central wagons - the Diagram 9A/9B six-plank open wagon, 6C three plank open wagon and 17B covered van. All three wagons are offered with subtle detail differences and will all be fitted with turned metal wheels in split spoke or disc styles.

Other projects have seen significant updates, with Rapido's 'S160' 2-8-0 receiving an upgraded die-cast running plate; these models are now expected to arrive in the second quarter of 2026. Rapido also expects several other motive power projects to arrive before the end of 2026, including the GWR 'County' 4-6-0 which saw an updated engineering prototype arrive at the end of 2025, plus the MR '483' 4-4-0, CR 'Single' 4-2-2 123 and Manning Wardle 'L' 0-6-0T all at the decorated sample stage of development.

REVOLUTION TRAINS

Revolution Trains - while not seeing any new 'OO' additions in our survey – is on the cusp of completing several all-new projects. Among these are the duo of Alstom-built Class 175 and Class 180 DMUs, which have progressed to the decorated sample stage. Both classes will feature a pre-fitted speaker, electrical connections between cars and controllable saloon, directional and door lock lighting.

Other projects are also advancing, with running engineering prototypes of the three-car Class 320 and four-car Class 321 EMUs arriving for inspection in early 2026. Both classes will feature directional lighting, destination blinds, saloon and driver control illumination, motorised pantographs and operating door lock lights.

Several wagon projects are also due imminently, including the 'Borail B/C' bogie wagons, 'Cartic 4' articulated car carriers, 'YQA' 'Parr' bogie wagon, 'YQA' 'Super Tench' wagon and the KSA Rover cube wagons/ timber carriers.



An all-new 'OO' gauge BR 20ton brake van is in development with Accurascale.

TABLE 2 – 'OO' GAUGE ROLLING STOCK PROJECTS 2026 AND BEYOND

PRODUCT	REGION	MANUFACTURER	EXPECTED
CIE Park Royal D176 carriages	CIE/IR Ireland	Irish Railway Models	Q2 2026
Bulleid Dia. 2406 Brake Corridor Third	Southern	Bachmann	Q3/Q4 2026
Bulleid Dia. 2017 Open Third	Southern	Bachmann	Q3/Q4 2026
Four- and six-wheel Genesis coaches (new variant)	Various	Accurascale	Q4 2026
BR(E) BZ six-wheel van	Eastern	EFE Rail/TMC	2026
GCR 6C three-plank open wagon	Eastern	Rapido Trains UK	TBA
GCR 9A/B six-plank open wagon	Eastern	Rapido Trains UK	TBA
GCR 17B van	Eastern	Rapido Trains UK	TBA
GCR 15ton six-wheel brake van	Eastern	Rapido Trains UK	Q3 2026
GER five-plank open wagon	Eastern	Rapido Trains UK	Q2 2026
GER seven-plank open wagon	Eastern	Rapido Trains UK	Q2 2026
GER cattle wagon	Eastern	Oxford Rail	Q4 2026
GNR 8ton ventilated van	Eastern	Rapido Trains UK	Q2 2026
GWR 'Mica B' refrigerated meat van	Western	KR Models	Q1 2026
GWR 'Totem A' wagon	Western	Oxford Rail	Q4 2026
LBSCR Diagram 8 van	Southern	Rapido Trains UK	Q2 2026
LBSCR brake van	Southern	Rapido Trains UK/Rails	Q4 2026/Q1 2027
LNWR four-plank open wagon	Midland	Rapido Trains UK	Q2 2026
LNWR Diagram 17B brake van	Midland	Rapido Trains UK	Q4 2026
LMS 12ton ventilated van	Midland	Rapido Trains UK	Q2 2026
NER V4 brake van	Eastern	EFE Rail/TMC	Q4 2026
NER Snowplough	Eastern	Bachmann	Q2/Q3 2026
RCH 1907 salt wagons	Various	Rapido Trains UK	Q4 2026
BR 20ton brake van	Various	Accurascale	Q1 2027
BR 'Borail B' bogie wagon	Various	Revolution Trains	Q1 2026
BR 'Borail C' bogie wagon	Various	Revolution Trains	Q1 2026
BR 'Mullet' bogie wagon	Various	Revolution Trains	Q1 2026
BR 'Cartic 4' articulated car carriers	Various	Revolution Trains	Q1 2026
BR YQA 'Parr' bogie wagon	Various	Revolution Trains	Q1 2026
BR YQA 'Super Tench' bogie wagon	Various	Revolution Trains	Q1 2026
BIA/BWA/BXA/BZA covered steel carriers	Various	Cavalex Models	TBA
KSA Rover cube wagons	Various	Revolution Trains	Q1 2026
KSA timber carriers	Various	Revolution Trains	Q1 2026
Ministry of Munitions chemical tanks	Various	Rapido Trains UK	Q2 2026
Cowans Sheldon 15ton crane	Various	Oxford Rail	Q4 2026
FCA/FYA 60ft intermodal wagon	Various	Accurascale	Q2 2026
IIA-B/HOA-I/IIA-F aggregate hoppers	Various	Revolution Trains	TBA
PXA steel coil wagons	Various	Cavalex Models	Imminent
JXA steel scrap wagons	Various	Cavalex Models	Imminent
JNA-Y bogie ballast wagons	Various	Dapol	2026
Scunthorpe steelworks torpedo wagon	Industrial	KR Models	Q3 2026
Total: 41			

SONIC MODELS

Sonic Models continues development of its two outstanding 'OO' gauge steam locomotive projects – the London Brighton & South Coast Railway 'K' 2-6-0 and LNER 'D34' 4-4-0. Updated liveries and identities for the 'K' were revealed in mid-2025, with the 2-6-0 at the engineering prototype stage and the 'D34' still at the CAD stage. Delivery for the 'Mogul' is slated for the second quarter of 2026, while the 'D34' is due around the new year.

NO LET UP

Incredibly, the pace of all-new releases looks set to continue in the coming months with an abundance of new tooled models expected to be realised. Combine this with the number of new identities and reliveries on existing tooling and it is likely to be another amazing year. See the accompanying tables (Table 1 and Table 2) for the latest updates on outstanding 'OO' gauge all-new tooled projects. Do bear in mind that in some cases these are best estimates and could change at short notice due to unexpected circumstances. **NMG**

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'N' GAUGE

A varied selection of steam and diesel models is on the cards in the smallest popular scale. **MARK CHIVERS** runs through the planned releases.



EFE Rail is producing an all-new Class 23 'Baby Deltic' Bo-Bo diesel for 'N' gauge.



Dapol's all-new 'N' gauge Class 66 Co-Co diesel is in production with completed models expected to arrive shortly.

IT HAS BEEN ANOTHER steady year for 'N' gauge releases, with some significant new models appearing during the past 12 months including Bachmann's all-new LNER 'V2' 2-6-2 and Rapido Trains UK's new Class 44/45/46 1Co-Co1 diesels.

THEY were joined by the LNER Dynamometer Car and GWR 'Iron Mink' vans, together with Revolution Trains' all-new Class 66 Co-Co diesel, WIA car carriers, 'Cartic 4s', IHA covered steel wagons and more. As this issue closed for press, C-Rail's new 'N' gauge FSA/FTA intermodal container flat wagons arrived for review – see HM228 – adding another set of useful wagons to the 'N' gauge roster.

Looking ahead, the number of new 'N' gauge projects remains at 40, although there is a little churn in terms of the actual models. Last year, there were 25 motive power and 15 rolling stock projects in the mix, while this year there are 24 and 16, respectively.

STEAM LOCOS

Bachmann recently announced its intention to produce all-new 'N' gauge Great Western Railway (GWR) 'Hall' and 'Modified Hall' 4-6-0s for its Graham Farish range. A new Hawksworth tender is being tooled to accompany the Collett 4,000gallon example from the GWR 'Castle' in the existing Graham Farish range. Four models will form the initial releases – two 'Halls' and two 'Modified Halls' – and all will feature a factory-fitted cube speaker, while DCC sound fitted models will also be available.

Behind the scenes, Dapol has been working on its existing 'N' gauge projects with progress made on the Bulleid air-smoothed 'West Country' and 'Battle of Britain' 4-6-2s and the diminutive LNER 'J72' 0-6-0T. Decorated samples of each project have been received by the company's development team and running samples of both projects have been subjected to haulage tests lately, with the Bulleid 'Light Pacifics' seen hauling 30 carriages during Dapol's tests and the 'J72' 0-6-0T 14. Progress on the manufacturer's GWR 'Manor' 4-6-0 and '63XX' 2-6-0 has been quieter, with an Engineering Prototype (EP) sample of the former appearing for scrutiny in mid-2025 - completion remains on track for release this year.

Development continues on Sonic Models' all-new 'N' gauge Great Central Railway 'A5' 4-6-2T, with hand-decorated samples showing how the completed models should look when they arrive soon. Eight different models are planned, covering colour schemes from Great Central lined green to BR lined black with late crests. Release is expected during the second quarter of the year.

DIESEL LOCOS

Following the arrival of Bachmann's all-new 'OO' gauge Class 69 Co-Co diesel,

Revolution Trains' eagerly awaited all-new 'N' gauge LT 1938 stock is due soon.



TABLE 3 - 'N' GAUGE MOTIVE POWER PROJECTS 2026 AND BEYOND

PRODUCT	REGION	MANUFACTURER	EXPECTED
GCR 'A5' 4-6-2T	Eastern	Sonic Models	Q2 2026
GWR '63XX' 2-6-0	Western	Dapol	Q2 2026
GWR 'Manor' 4-6-0	Western	Dapol	Q2 2026
GWR 'Hall' 4-6-0	Western	Graham Farish	Q2/Q3 2026
GWR 'Modified Hall' 4-6-0	Western	Graham Farish	Q2/Q3 2026
LMS '2MT' 2-6-2T (upgraded tooling)	Midland	Dapol	Q2 2026
LNER 'J72' 0-6-0T	Eastern	Dapol	Q3 2026
SR Air-smoothed 'West Country'/'Battle of Britain 4-6-2	Southern	Dapol	Q2 2026
SR Rebuilt 'West Country'/'Battle of Britain' 4-6-2	Southern	Dapol	TBA
Class 23 'Baby Deltic' Bo-Bo	Eastern	EFE Rail	Q3/Q4 2026
Class 56 Co-Co (retool)	Various	Dapol	2026
Class 66 Co-Co	Various	Dapol	Q2 2026
Class 69 Co-Co	Various	Graham Farish	2027
Class 87 Bo-Bo	Midland	Dapol	Q2 2026
Class 120 Swindon cross-country DMU	Various	Revolution Trains	TBA
Class 143 two-car 'Pacer' DMU	Various	Dapol	Q2 2026
Class 144 two-car 'Pacer' DMU	Various	Dapol	Q2 2026
Class 175 two-car DMU	Various	Revolution Trains	Q3 2026
Class 175 three-car DMU	Various	Revolution Trains	Q3 2026
Class 180 five-car DMU	Various	Revolution Trains	Q3 2026
Class 313 three-car EMU	Various	Revolution Trains	Q2 2026
Class 314 three-car EMU	Various	Revolution Trains	Q2 2026
Class 377 Electrostar EMU	Various	Revolution Trains	TBA
LT 1938 tube stock	London	Revolution Trains	Q1/Q2 2026
TOTAL: 24			

TABLE 4 - 'N' GAUGE ROLLING STOCK PROJECTS 2026 AND BEYOND

PRODUCT	REGION	MANUFACTURER	EXPECTED
Gresley Full Brake	Eastern	Dapol	TBA
Gresley Buffet Car	Eastern	Dapol	TBA
LMS Period III non-corridor Third	Midland	Dapol	TBA
LMS Period III non-corridor Composite	Midland	Dapol	TBA
LMS Period III non-corridor Brake Third	Midland	Dapol	TBA
LMS Period III non-corridor Driving Brake Third	Midland	Dapol	TBA
Pullman K Type all-steel Parlour Brake Third	Various	Revolution Trains	TBA
Pullman K Type all-steel Parlour First	Various	Revolution Trains	TBA
Pullman K Type all-steel Parlour Third	Various	Revolution Trains	TBA
Pullman K Type all-steel Kitchen First	Various	Revolution Trains	TBA
Pullman K Type all-steel Kitchen Third	Various	Revolution Trains	TBA
BR 24.5ton iron ore hopper	Midland/Eastern	Revolution Trains	TBA
JSA steel wagons	Various	Revolution Trains	Q2/Q3 2026
PTA/JTA bogie tippler wagon	Various	Revolution Trains	Q2/Q3 2026
Cowans Sheldon hand crane	Various	N Gauge Society	TBA
PCA alumina powder tank wagon	Eastern/Scottish	Revolution Trains	Q2 2026
TOTAL: 16			

expectations are high for a new 'N' gauge model for the Graham Farish range to a similar appearance. While no further specific details have yet been released, a scheduled completion date has now been slated, with release expected in 2027.

Bachmann's EFE Rail brand is also developing an all-new Class 23 'Baby Deltic' Bo-Bo diesel for 'N' gauge. It is set to feature a coreless motor, all-axle drive and a Next18 DCC socket. Ten models are scheduled to be released, with multiples of identities in the popular BR green colour schemes. Release is expected in late 2026.

Dapol's all-new Class 66 Co-Co diesel project is nearing completion, with release expected during the first half of the year and nine different liveries planned for the initial batch of releases. The company's retooled 'N' gauge Class 56 Co-Co is also nearing completion. Two new bodies have been tooled, modelling the Romanian and later UK built examples. Release is expected later this year. The company's new 'N' gauge Class 143 and 144 'Pacer' DMUs are also due release during the year, due for a second quarter arrival in 2026.

Revolution Trains' release schedule is set to ramp up this year with several 'N' gauge multiple unit projects appearing, including the London Transport 1938 stock and Class 313/314 Electric Multiple Units (EMUs). These projects should appear during the first half of 2026, while Class 175 and 180 Adelante DMUs should surface during the second half of the year.

ROLLING STOCK

Outstanding 'N' gauge coaching stock and wagon projects have reduced a little, with space made for recent announcements from Dapol for new LNER and LMS rolling stock. While the Gresley Full Brake and Buffet Car have been in development for a while now, the recently mooted LMS Period III non-corridor stock has just been given the go-ahead for tooling following sufficient interest in the project. Four different body styles are planned.

Engineering Prototype (EP) samples of Revolution Trains' forthcoming K Type all-steel Pullman Cars arrived for inspection last Summer and since then development has continued in the background. Five vehicle types make up the collection, with a series of train packs intended to enable accurate train formations to be assembled. A release date has yet to be confirmed.

Revolution's next 'N' gauge wagon project to be completed should be the alumina PCA wagons, with a scheduled release expected during the second quarter of the year. This should then be followed by the JSA steel wagons and PTA/JTA bogie tippler wagons, which are expected to be complete by the Summer.

As you can see, if everything listed for 2026 arrives on schedule it is likely to be a busy year for 'N' gauge modellers. As always, the dates shown are predictions from the manufacturers, and may change at short notice, resulting in unforeseen delays.

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‘O’ GAUGE

The UK’s largest mainstream scale might have seen a slowdown in recent years, but there is a steady stream of new projects under development. **BEN CHURCH** outlines some of these new announcements.

THE UK’S LARGEST mainstream scale has witnessed a slight slowdown recently, with only three all-new ‘O’ gauge projects added to our survey, while manufacturers have also caught up with the backlog of outstanding projects.

HELJAN

The ready-to-run ‘O’ gauge market is still primarily populated by diesel traction, with Heljan continuing to dominate this space, following release of the recent Class 153 and Class 117/121/122 DMUs.



An Engineering Prototype (EP) sample of Ellis Clark Trains’ all-new ‘O’ gauge Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway (LYR) ‘Pug’ 0-4-0ST.

Heljan announced in late 2025 that it was continuing to expand its offering of Class 37s, revealing a suite of new Class 37/5 and 37/7 Co-Co diesels. The new body tooling will allow for standard or heavyweight bodies to be modelled, plus cast or fabricated bogies, ribbed or plain boiler roof port, oval or rectangular buffers and standard or modified fuel tanks. Release is expected towards the end of the year, with a choice of colour scehems recreating

Heljan is working on new ‘O’ gauge Class 37/5 and Class 37/7 Co-Co diesels. Development is progressing well with a mix of numbered and unnumbered models planned, including 37517 in Railfreight ‘red stripe’ (hand painted model shown).



A CAD render of the Dapol/ Footplate Models 'O' gauge Hawthorn Leslie 0-4-0ST.

the most popular liveries on the refurbished Class 37s with flush front noses.

DAPOL

Following the acclaimed 'OO' gauge Hawthorn Leslie 0-4-0ST, Dapol is producing an all-new model of the prototype in 'O' gauge in conjunction with Footplate Models. Nine locomotives were announced for the initial batch, which will be fitted with a five-pole motor, flywheel, die-cast chassis with compensated axle boxes, firebox glow and 21-pin DCC decoder socket, with the models expected to arrive with retailers in late 2026.

Dapol's other 'O' gauge locomotive project is the EMD Class 66. This continues in development following a major update and reworking of the project in 2024, with decorated samples revealed in the middle of 2026. These are now due for arrival in the middle of 2026 with nine models set to appear – six standard and three exclusive editions for retailers.

Dapol also has a couple of ongoing 'O' gauge rolling stock projects progressing, with the GWR M3 and M4 shunter's trucks expected to appear this year, while the modern-era PFA/ KFA container flat wagons are also in development, although a completion date for this project has yet to be announced.

TABLE 5 – 'O' GAUGE NEW PROJECTS 2026 AND BEYOND

DESCRIPTION	REGION	MANUFACTURER	EXPECTED
LYR 'Pug 0-4-0ST	Midland	Ellis Clark Trains	Q3 2026
LMS '2MT' 2-6-2T	Midland	Lionheart Trains	Q3 2026
Hawthorn Leslie 0-4-0ST	Industrial	Dapol/Footplate Trains	Q4 2026
Class 24/1 Bo-Bo	Various	Heljan	Q4 2026
Class 37/5 Co-Co	Various	Heljan	Q4 2026
Class 37/7 Co-Co	Various	Heljan	Q4 2026
Class 66 Co-Co	Various	Heljan	Q2 2026
BR Mk 1 BCK	Various	Lionheart Trains	TBA
BR Mk 1 FK	Various	Lionheart Trains	TBA
GWR M3/M4 shunter's trucks	Western	Dapol	Q2 2026
GWR Cattle van	Western	Minerva Models	2026
PFA/KFA container flat	Various	Dapol	TBA
ZJV 'Mermaid' ballast hopper	Departmental	Flangeway Models	TBA
TOTAL: 13			

LIONHEART TRAINS

Lionheart Trains launched an all-new 'O' gauge steam locomotive in late 2024, modelling the London Midland & Scottish Railway's 130-strong Ivatt '2MT' 2-6-2T built from 1946 to 1952. Similarly to the BR Standard '3MT' 2-6-2T, the model will feature metal construction with die-cast wheels and tyres, five-pole motor, all-metal coupling and connecting rods, firebox glow, sprung driving wheels and pony trucks, sprung buffers, screw link couplings and more.

Work on expanding the manufacturer's 'O' gauge BR Mk 1 range also continues, with Corridor First (FK) and Brake Corridor First (BCK) vehicles in development. No less than 36 different FKs and 33 BCKs are planned for release in BR carmine and cream, BR chocolate and cream, BR maroon, BR green and BR blue and grey colour schemes, with a mix of numbered and unnumbered vehicles set to appear.

ELLIS CLARK TRAINS

Ellis Clark Trains' 'O' gauge Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway 'Pug' 0-4-0ST continues apace, with an engineering prototype of the 'O' gauge locomotive revealed alongside the announcement. The model is planned to use a substantial amount of die-cast metal in construction, and will feature a coreless motor, working inside motion, firebox and ashpan glow, a stay alive capacitor and twin speakers. 11 models are planned and will cover LYR LMS and BR liveries. Delivery is anticipated for the middle of 2026.

MINERVA MODELS

Following the release of its 'O' gauge Southern Railway 'S100' USA 0-6-0T last summer, Minerva Models' next 7mm scale model will be a GWR cattle van, to Diagram W8. This particular variant was the first to feature a higher arced roof, compared to previous lower, flatter versions. The tooling suite will cater for early and late types of central door and will also feature compensated axleboxes, sprung buffers and three-link couplings.

They will be available in 1903 Great Western and 1923 GW and BR bauxite guises, with different numbers available for added variety. Ale van versions will also be available too. Decorated samples have already been received for inspection and release is expected this year. **NMG**

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'TT:120' SCALE

New models for 'TT:120' are arriving at a steady pace, with Hornby's extensive range set to be bolstered by a new entrant to the scale in 2026. **BEN CHURCH** outlines what's to come this year.



Decorated samples of Heljan's all-new 'TT:120' scale Class 55 'Deltic' arrived for scrutiny in early 2026.

'TT:120' IS A FLEDGLING scale and while further companies have entered the scale recently, Hornby remains the dominant manufacturer delivering newly-tooled projects.

HORNBY

Late 2025 saw Hornby deliver the 'TT:120' model of the Class 37 - a major new release for the scale and suitable to run alongside many of the company's current and future projects. Since then, several new rolling stock releases have come to fruition including the 21ton steel mineral wagons (HM226) and BR Mk 2e air-conditioned carriages, which arrived as this edition of the New Model Guide closed for press, completing its outstanding projects for the scale.

The manufacturer has several further 'TT:120' projects planned to go forward, with more new tooling for the scale set to be revealed in late April, along with new liveries on existing tooling and a new 'TT:120' catalogue.

HELJAN

2025 saw Heljan launch a new range of 'TT:120' products, focusing on the Eastern Region's popular Class 55 'Deltics' and the versatile Class 122 Diesel Multiple Unit.

First decorated samples of Heljan's 'TT:120' Class 55 'Deltic' were recently revealed, showcasing what the finished models will look like when they arrive in the third quarter of 2026, with options for open or plated headcode panels and variations to the windscreen wiper arrangement being catered for in the tooling suite.

Heljan's new Class 122 Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) is due to arrive in mid-2026 with decorated samples also recently revealed. Each will feature a coreless motor, flywheel, E24 DCC decoder socket, switchable taillights and headcodes and a fully detailed interior with lights.

The manufacturer is also producing rolling stock for 'TT:120' modellers, with a range of BR Mk 2 coaches announced in conjunction with The Model Centre (TMC). These all-new Mk 2s will feature detailed interiors, flush glazing and B4 bogies, together with provision for a lighting bar (sold separately). The coaches will initially appear in Corridor First (FK), Tourist Second Open (TSO), Brake Second Open (BSO) and Brake Corridor First (BFK) forms. They will be available in BR blue and grey, Network SouthEast, Regional Railways and West Coast Railways colour schemes singly and in four-vehicle packs, with release planned in 2027.

TABLE 6 – 'TT:120' GAUGE NEW PROJECTS 2026 AND BEYOND

DESCRIPTION	REGION	MANUFACTURER	EXPECTED
GWR '57XX' 0-6-0PT	Western	Hornby	TBC
GWR 'Castle' 4-6-0	Western	Hornby	TBC
LMS 'Black Five' 4-6-0	Midland	Hornby	TBC
LNER 'J94'/Hunslet 'Austerity' 0-6-0ST	Eastern/Industrial	Hornby	TBC
BR 'Britannia' 4-6-2	Various	Hornby	TBC
BR Class 31 A1A-A1A	Various	Hornby	TBC
Class 47 Co-Co diesel	Various	Hornby	TBC
Class 67 Bo-Bo diesel	Various	Hornby	TBC
Class 73 Bo-Bo electro diesel	Southern	Hornby	TBC
Class 55 'Deltic' Co-Co diesel	Eastern	Heljan	Q3 2026
Class 122 diesel railcar	Various	Heljan	Q2 2026
Class 800 InterCity Express Train (IET)	Various	Hornby	TBC
GWR Collett bow-end Brake Third	Western	Hornby	TBC
GWR Collett bow-end Corridor Composite	Western	Hornby	TBC
LNER Gresley Corridor Composite	Eastern	Hornby	TBC
LNER Gresley Corridor Brake Third	Eastern	Hornby	TBC
BR Mk 1 horsebox	Various	Hornby	TBC
BR Mk 2/2a/2z BSO/BSO(T)	Various	Heljan/TMC	2027
BR Mk 2/2a/2z BFK	Various	Heljan/TMC	2027
BR Mk 2/2a/2z TSO	Various	Heljan/TMC	2027
BR Mk 2/2a/2z FK	Various	Heljan/TMC	2027
LMS vent van	Midland	Peco	Early 2026
BR 16ton steel mineral open wagon	Various	Peco	Early 2026
BR Conflat wagon	Various	Hornby	TBC
'Seacow' bogie ballast wagon	Various	Hornby	TBC
VEA box van	Various	Hornby	TBC
VGA box van	Various	Hornby	TBC
MMA/JNA EALNOS bogie box wagons	Various	Revolution Train	Q3/Q4 2026
Total: 28			

REVOLUTION TRAINS

Development work on Revolution Trains' new 'TT:120' MMA/JNA EALNOS bogie box wagons continues, with decorated samples expected to arrive imminently for inspection. Five colour schemes are planned, covering Ermewa grey, GBRf blue, VTG Mendip Rail silver, Wascosa/ Network Rail yellow and DB Cargo red. Multiple versions of each scheme will appear with different running numbers. Release is expected during the second half of 2026. **NMG**

‘OO9’ GAUGE

The UK’s most popular narrow-gauge scale is set for a new collection of locomotives and rolling stock. **BEN CHURCH** looks at what modellers have to look forward to in 2026 for ‘OO9’ narrow gauge

NARROW GAUGE announcements are thin on the ground for 2026, but there is much to look forward to, with Rapido Trains’ huge collection of ‘OO9’ models progressing steadily, and the long-awaited Vale of Rheidol 2-6-2Ts edging ever closer to release.

In terms of motive power, the Revolution Trains Vale of Rheidol 2-6-2Ts are now expected to touch down in the second half of 2026, with decorated samples of these models revealed in late 2025.

Rapido Trains UK’s range of Kerr, Stuart *Sirdar* 0-4-0Ts is gathering pace, with running samples revealed in 2025. These appear in both long and short tank variations, with a selection of prototypical and fictional liveries on offer. Eight liveries are planned for long tank models and six for short tank models, with all supplied with a selection of alternate detail parts including chimneys, dumb buffers, vacuum brake gear, tool boxes, coal bunker covers and front steps, which can be swapped easily. Further leaning into the customisability - and recognising the thriving custom locomotive scene in ‘OO9’ - Rapido Trains will be offering the chassis for the Kerr, Stuart *Sirdar* as a standalone item, with Fourdees Limited developing a series of locomotive body kits to work with the chassis. These models will feature a coreless motor and a six-pin Digital Command Control socket.

Complementing the motive power, Rapido Trains is also developing a suite of generic wagons, with all ten vehicle types sharing a common underframe. They include dropside opens, tanks, gunpowder vans, covered vans, single-verandah brake vans, man riders, livestock open wagons, peaked roof vans, stake wagons and ordnance carriers. In all, more than 50 liveries are being produced, with some exclusive to Rails of Sheffield and The Wagon Yard.

Rapido’s range of ‘OO9’ wagons is expected to arrive in the fourth quarter of 2026 offering an attractive range of choices. **NMG**



Rapido Trains UK is developing a new range of ‘OO9’ products, including a selection of Kerr, Stuart *Sirdar* 0-4-0Ts.

TABLE 7 – ‘OO9’ GAUGE NEW PROJECTS 2026 AND BEYOND

DESCRIPTION	REGION	MANUFACTURER	EXPECTED
Vale of Rheidol 2-6-2T	Western	Revolution Trains/Bauer Media	Q3/Q4 2026
Kerr, Stuart ‘Sirdar’ 0-4-0T (short tank)	Any	Rapido Trains UK	TBA
Kerr, Stuart ‘Sirdar’ 0-4-0T (long tank)	Any	Rapido Trains UK	TBA
Dropside open	Any	Rapido Trains UK	Q4 2026
Cylindrical tank	Any	Rapido Trains UK	Q4 2026
Gunpowder van	Any	Rapido Trains UK	Q4 2026
Covered van	Any	Rapido Trains UK	Q4 2026
Peaked roof van	Any	Rapido Trains UK	Q4 2026
Manrider	Any	Rapido Trains UK	Q4 2026
Livestock wagon	Any	Rapido Trains UK	Q4 2026
Stake wagon	Any	Rapido Trains UK	Q4 2026
Single veranda brake van	Any	Rapido Trains UK	Q4 2026
Ordnance carrier	Any	Rapido Trains UK	Q4 2026
Total: 13			



Left: **Rapido’s ‘OO9’ scale range will also include a suite of generic wagons, with 11 different vehicles planned in more than 50 colour schemes.**

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