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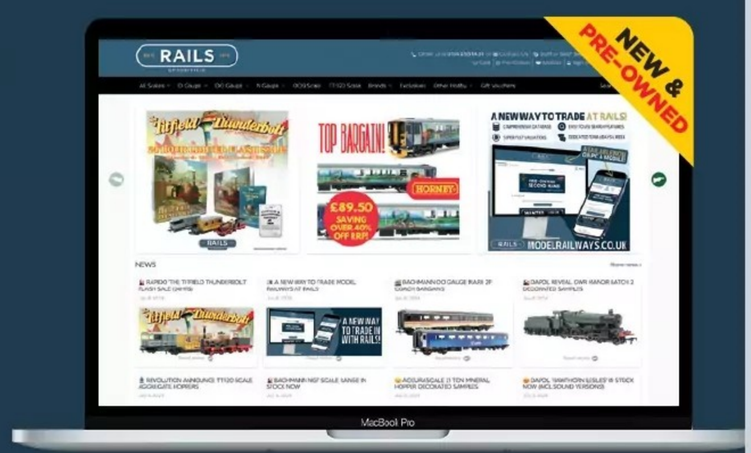

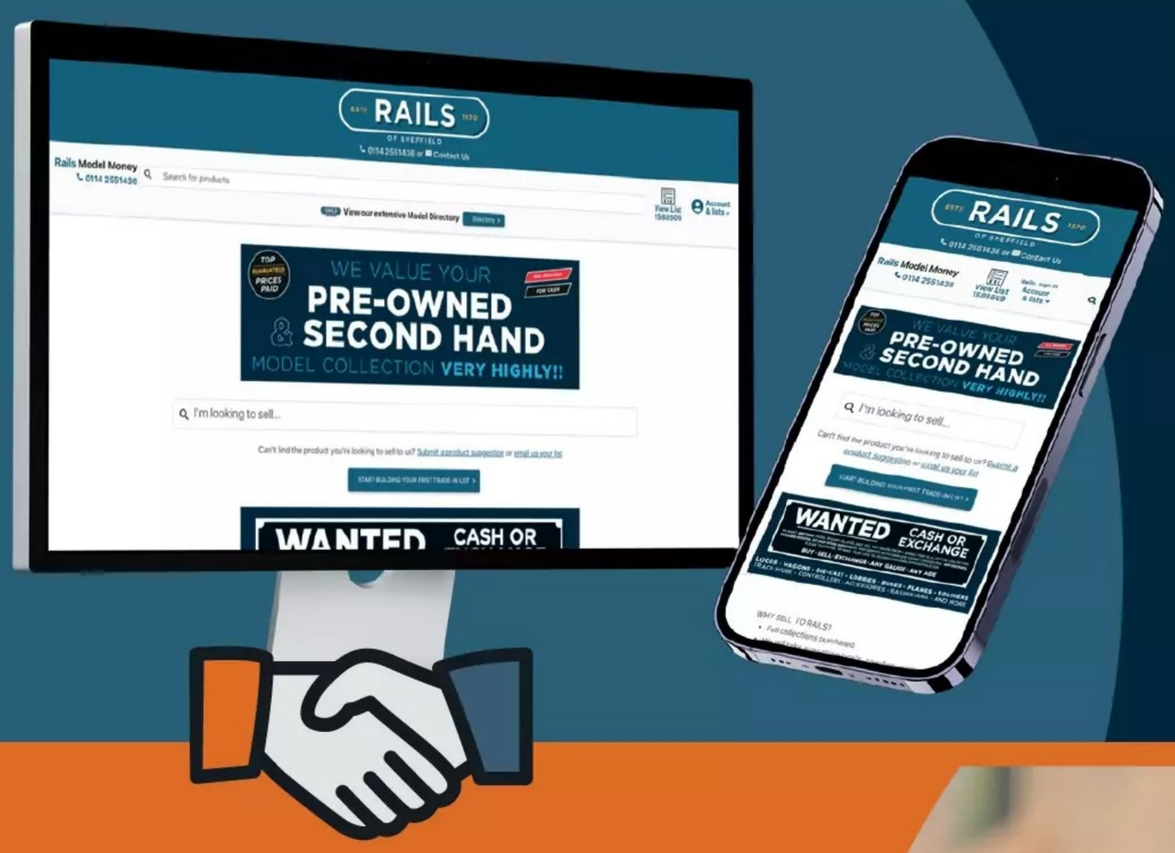

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This month's cover image

Paul Gosden created this superb working diorama of a modern traction servicing depot, specialising in green technology. Read the full story on page 56.
CHRIS NEVARD

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Welcome

You wait ages for one, then two turn up together... after a few months of mostly diesel-themed models, a few all-new steam locomotives arrived for review this month.

By the time this issue appears in the big wide world, The Greatest Gathering will be about to begin. Held at Alstom's Derby Works over August 1-3, the event sold out months ago, with a line-up of over 100 steam, diesel and electric locomotives, plus multiple units and rolling stock, showcasing the UK's railway heritage alongside today's innovations.

One of the key events of 2025's Railway 200 calendar, The Greatest Gathering is sure to live long in the memory of those lucky enough to attend. Alas, I won't be among them, but Paul Gosden's fabulous 'GB Rail Tech' diorama – which graces this month's cover – really caught my attention recently, due to its theme of modernity. Depicting a contemporary servicing facility, specialising in green technology, it offers a fascinating juxtaposition of existing (and classic) traction types being employed to move experimental vehicles around the network, while also supporting alternative fuel trials.

Having recently collaborated with my colleagues on *Steam Railway* and *RAIL* to produce a special *RAIL 200* publication (see page 14), I've been reminded of the never-ceasing innovation within the UK rail sector, so Paul's layout appeared at an opportune moment. Indeed, I've since acquired 'GB Rail Tech' for use as a display diorama and photographic backdrop, so you can expect it to turn up in *Model Rail* again in future.

Moving away from the modern scene, after several months of primarily diesel-themed locomotive releases, it has been great to see some new steam locomotives arriving onto the market. This month's review pages are graced by Hornby's LNER 'J52' and Rapido's LBSCR 'E1', while a couple of Accurascale's LNER 'Buckjumpers' also turned up at *MR* HQ just before we closed for press, so they'll feature in the September issue, out on August 28.

It's great to see each of these humble 0-6-0Ts portrayed to such exacting standards and I'm looking forward to tinkering with some of them in the coming months.

Enjoy the issue!

George Dent Head of Content

Meet the team behind the UK's best modelling magazine

Thomas Bright – News Editor
Has a gift for telling great stories and a real passion for steam.

Richard Gunn – Features Editor
Loosely modelling the Longmoor Military Railway in 'N' gauge.

This month's contributors

Model Rail essential information

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Opening the box

The latest happenings from the world of model railways

The Big Picture

Phil Mason's 'Bluish TMD', a 3mm scale layout depicting the final days of the famous Woodhead route between Manchester and Sheffield, first appeared in the April 2024 issue of *Model Rail*. Since then, Phil has significantly extended the layout to include – amongst other things – a wagon repair depot based on the former Crescent Works at Peterborough, as modelled by Chris Leigh in one of the very earliest issues of *Model Rail*. Read the full story of the extended layout in the September issue, on sale August 28. Photography: Chris Nevard

The Big Picture

RAILS REVEAL NORTH BRITISH 'GLEN' 4-4-0

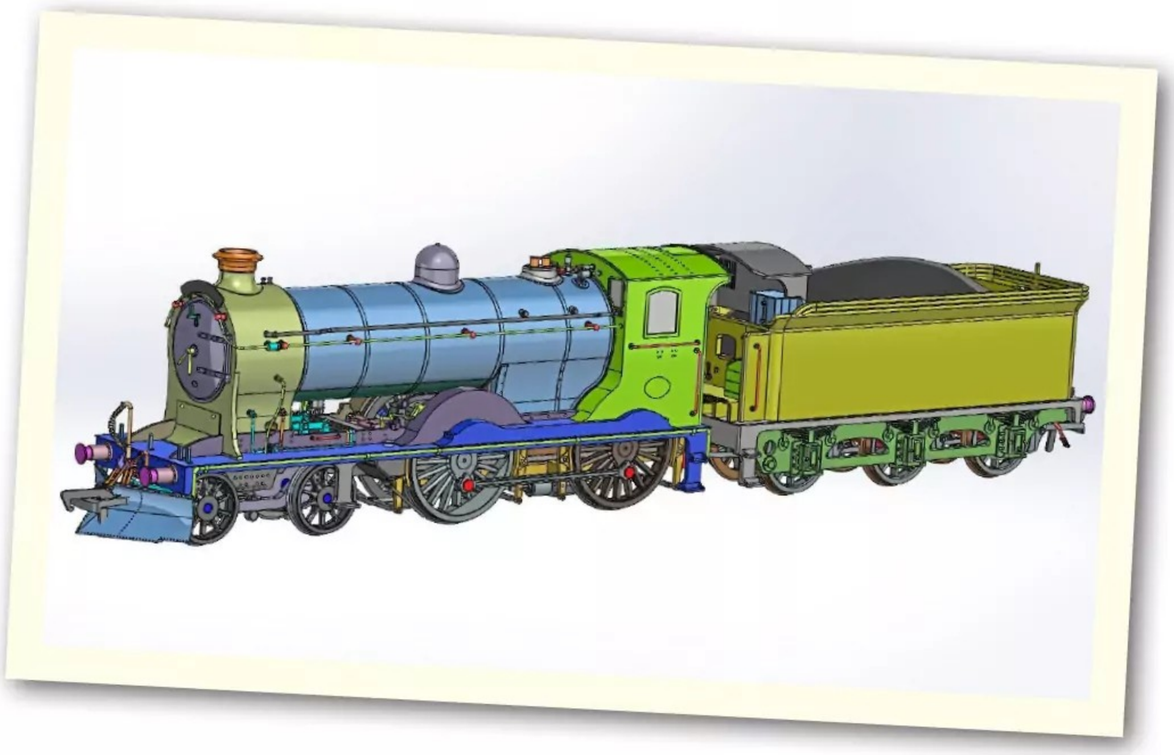
OO GAUGE

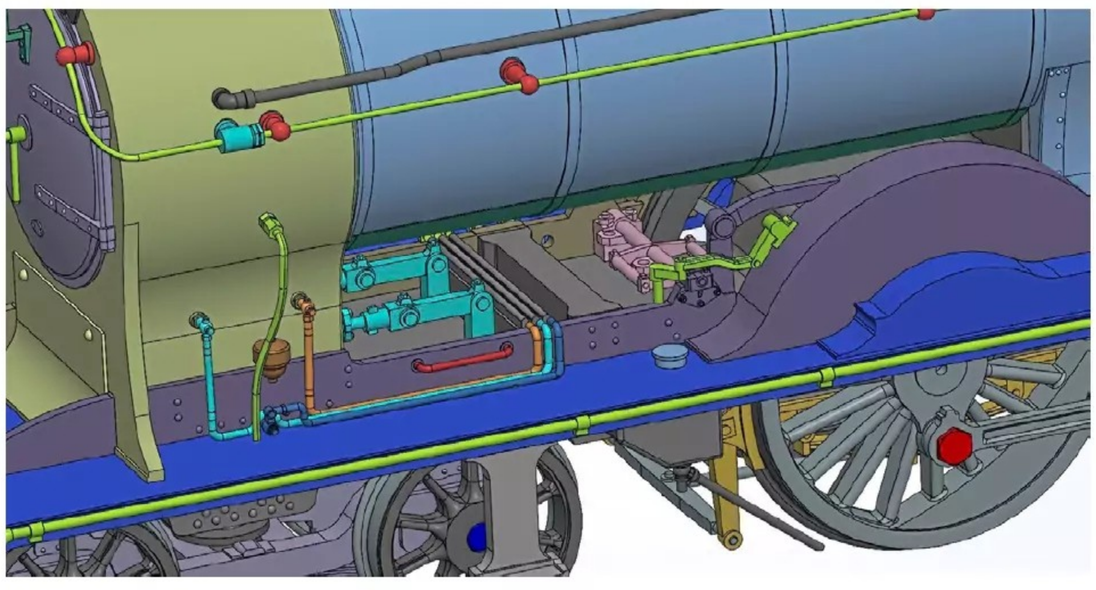
In partnership with Sonic Models, Rails of Sheffield is developing a 'OO' gauge model of the North British Railway K Class (D34), better known as the 'Glen' 4-4-0. Long sought after by modellers of Scottish railways, the 'Glen' was a long-lived, versatile locomotive that lasted well into BR days.

Each was named after Scottish Glens, lending the locomotives a romantic air, and the Rails/Sonic model will boast a high level of detail, including a cosmetic rendition of the internal motion, plus a fully appointed cab interior, enhanced by a glowing firebox effect. All models feature a 21pin DCC interface and pre-fitted speaker to make sound installation easier, while a detail pack provides lamps, fireirons and optional snowplough.

The range covers NBR, LNER and BR liveries and the preserved *Glen Douglas* is not overlooked. A special twin-pack is also being offered, containing *Glen Loy* and *Glen Falloch*, as they appeared in the BBC TV series *Railway Roundabout*, in 1959.

The 'Glens' will be available only from Rails of Sheffield and the project is due to move to the tooling stage imminently, with pre-orders now being taken.





What's planned?

- S4103-01 Class D43 'Glen' No. 221 *Glen Orchy*, NB Olive Brown
- S4103-02 Class D43 'Glen' No. 291 *Glen Quoich*, NB Olive Brown
- S4103-03 Class D43 'Glen' No. 9493 *Glen Luss*, LNER lined green
- S4103-04 Class D43 'Glen' No. 9307 *Glen Nevis*, LNER lined green
- S4103-05 Class D43 'Glen' No. 9153 *Glen Fruin*, LNER lined black
- S4103-06 Class D43 'Glen' No. 221 *Glen Aladale*, BR lined black
- S4103-07 Class D43 'Glen' No. 221 *Glenfinnan*, BR lined black
- S4103-08 Class D43 'Glen' No. 221 *Glen Douglas*, NB Dark Olive green (as preserved)
- S4103-09 Class D43 'Glen' twin-pack, BBC Film Special, May 1959

When's it due? October 2026
Prices: £179.95-£189.95, £369.95 (twin pack)
Web: *www.railsofsheffield.com*

CALEDONIAN '812' MAKES A COMEBACK

00 GAUGE

Released initially in 2022, Bachmann's superb model of Caledonian Railway 812 Class 0-6-0, produced exclusively for Rails of Sheffield, is to make a welcome return. Two versions of the preserved No. 828 are at an advanced stage of development, with delivery expected early next year, with pre-orders now being taken.

What's planned?

- 35-280Z/SF Caledonian Railway '812' No. 828, CR light blue (as built)
- 35-280Z/SF Caledonian Railway '812' No. 828, CR dark blue (as preserved)

When's it due? Q1 2026
Prices: £214.95 (DCC-ready), £329.95 (DCC sound)
Availability: Bachmann stockists
Web: *www.bachmann.co.uk*

EFE 4-4-0 GOES GREEN

00 GAUGE

EFE Rail's LSWR Adams Class T3 has taken a major leap forward, with the revealing of fully decorated samples across various iterations of LSWR and SR green liveries. So far, five identities have been confirmed, with the tooling allowing for multiple detail differences across individual models.

What's planned?

- E85019 LSWR Adams 'T3' No. 561, LSWR Adams lined green
- E85023 LSWR Adams 'T3' No. 564, LSWR Urie lined green E85024 LSWR Adams 'T3' No. 560, SR lined Maunsell green
- E85025 LSWR Adams 'T3' No. 558, SR lined Maunsell green
- E85030 LSWR Adams 'T3' No. 563, LSWR Drummond lined green

When's it due? Q4 2025
Prices: £199.95 (DCC-ready),
Availability: Bachmann stockists
Web: *www.bachmann.co.uk*

MANNING, WARDLE DUO ADDED TO RANGE

00 GAUGE

By popular demand, Rapido has added two more Manning, Wardle L Class 0-6-0Ts to its forthcoming range of 'OO' models, each depicting 'what if' colour schemes. SECR No. 331 depicts a likely works shunter in lined Wainwright green, while No. 481 *Hawthorn* takes inspiration from

Rapido's SECR 'O1' *Bramble* in an attractive lined blue.

Both models will feature the same high specification as the previously announced Manning, Wardles, including ESU E24 decoder sockets and provision for sound.
Prices: £149.95 (DCC-ready), £259.95 (DCC sound)
Web: *www.rapidotrains.co.uk*

CALEDONIAN No. 123 SIGHTED FOR THE FIRST TIME

00 GAUGE

Rapido's forthcoming Caledonian Railway No. 123 has reached the first engineering prototype stage.

Four versions of this unique locomotive are being produced in 'OO', across CR and LMS liveries, plus a 'what if' option in BR lined black.
Prices: £249.95 (DCC-ready), £364.95 (DCC sound)
Web: *www.rapidotrains.co.uk*

In Brief

OPEN WEEKEND AT HORNBY & ONE:ONE COLLECTION

00 GAUGE

Visitors can explore full-size locomotives, model railways, slot car racing and hands-on hobby fun at the historic home of Hornby this summer. The open weekend on August 9-10 will be held across Hornby's WonderWorks visitor centre and the neighbouring One:One Collection, which is yet to officially open to the public, but is home to an amazing line-up of locomotives and rolling stock.

The list of full-size exhibits includes an LMS 'Black Five' and 'Royal Scot' and even Churchill's funeral carriage, while WonderWorks features plenty of interactive model train layouts, a Scalextric race track and an Airfix 'make and paint' zone. A number of local modelling societies will also be in attendance and all ticket holders will receive a £5 voucher for the shop or cafe on the day.
When is it? August 9-10
Where is it? The WonderWorks by Hornby Hobbies, Westwood, Margate, CT9 4JX
Prices: • Adults £25, Children £10 • Families £50 Concessions £15 • Under-5s Free

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MORE CLASS 50S AND Mk 2S ON THE WAY

OO GAUGE

Accurascale is following up its initial 'OO' gauge Class 50s with a fresh run of six 'Hoovers', including the celebrity GB Railfreight-liveried duo of 50007 and 50149. 50007 will be in its multiple identity form with *Hercules* nameplate on one side and *Furious* on the other.

Complementing the GBRf load-luggers will be 50019 *Ramillies* in Departmental 'Laira' blue as well as 50029 *Renown* in Revised Network SouthEast colours. Finally will be 50035 *Ark Royal* and 50046 *Ajax*. The former will portray the Class 50 in pre-refurbishment BR blue while the latter will come in 'large logo' blue with grey roof.

Also fresh will be new Mk 2b and Mk 2c coaches. Accurascale previous Mk 2c releases have focused on Phase 2 variants; this latest collection will portray the Phase 1 with different roof vent and toilet window configurations, something never available in ready-to-run form before. Over 20 types are planned, with liveries including BR blue/grey, Network SouthEast and South Wales & West dark blue and maroon, plus a Derby RTC twin-pack.

The Mk 2b and 2c coaches are due to arrive during the third quarter of 2026, with the Class 50s following towards the end of next year.

Prices: Class 50s £189.99 (DCC-ready), £299.99 (DCC sound), Mk 2c £79.95
Web: *www.accurascale.com*

CLARK RAILWORKS FOR THE PRESTWIN

OO GAUGE

Hot on the tracks of its recently announced demountable tank wagons, Clark Railworks is to produce yet another unusual design with a series of 'OO' gauge twin-silo Prestwins. The distinctive-looking wagons, with dual rounded tops, were built to address an issue with the more familiar but earlier Presflo wagons where finer-grained powder could get trapped in the square corners. The curved Prestwin layout eliminated this problem, while having two containers meant quicker unloading. Common loads were lime, sand and soda ash, with Prestwins seeing service throughout the network between 1960 and the 1980s.

The Clark Railworks' models will depict the later 12ft wheelbase examples (earlier ones were 10ft 6in) and will be finished in the BR bauxite livery they carried throughout their lives. As they generally ran in rakes, they will be sold as packs of three, with six sets of individually-numbered wagons in pre- and post-TOPs form available. Subtle variations in printed details have been promised across each trio, along with features such as a die-cast chassis, 'Ultraflex' vacuum pipes, brass bearings, axlebox variations and fine metal steps and handles.

In a bonus for 'EM'/'P4' modellers, Clark Railworks also reckons that the 26mm axle should allow easy conversion to these scales.
When's it due? November 2025
Price: £120 per triple-pack
Web: *www.clarkrailworks.com*

ACCURASCALE IN LARGE SCALE

A full-sized DB Cargo UK Class 66 has been named *Accurascale,* in honour of the model manufacturer's charity fundraising efforts.

The christening of 66091 was carried out by prominent enthusiast and record producer Pete Waterman at the Midland Railway Centre – Butterley on July 19, with Accurascale employees and DB's Chief Transformation and Digitalisation Officer Mike Gray in attendance. To date, Accurascale has raised over £45,000 for good causes, with its recent limited edition DB Cargo No. 66190 locomotive helping to achieve £10,000 for Martin's House Children's Hospice.

A 'OO' gauge representation of 66091 *Accurascale* is also due to be revealed in autumn this year.
Web: *www.accurascale.com*

RAPIDO'S READY-SALTED VANS

Rapido is sprinkling its existing range of private owner wagons with a new series of 'OO' gauge 1907 Railway Clearing House peaked roof salt vans. The 15 variations will cover nine different companies, including some very colourful paint schemes for such famous names such as Saxa, Chance & Hunt and ICI.

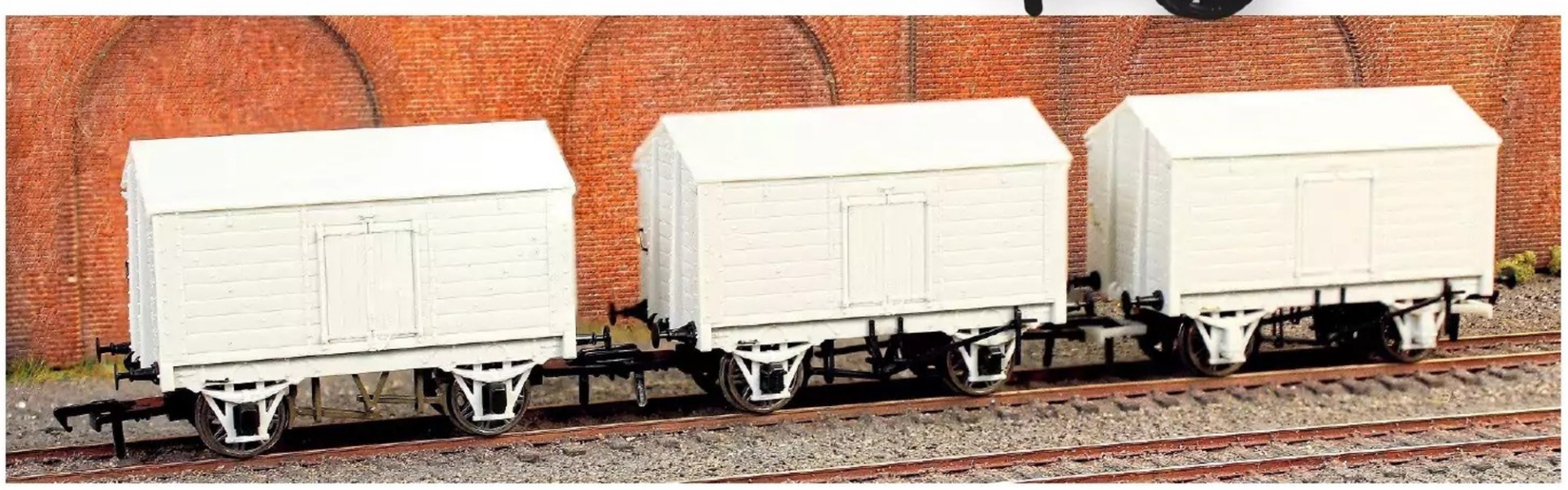
The Railway Clearing House rolling stock of 1907 was an early attempt at standardisation, using common underframe components across a number of different body styles and from assorted builders. The characteristic peaked roofs were to enable rain to run off quickly, minimising the likelihood of water getting inside and causing the contents to quickly and expensively dissolve. Some of the vans remained in service through to the 1960s, even managing to avoid the onslaught of bauxite paint that afflicted so many other wagons.

The Rapido range will feature brass bearings for smooth running, along with split-spoked wheels and NEM coupling pockets. Differences between the individual models will include ribbed or smooth-tapered buffers, single- or double-sided brakes and five axle box variations.

Orders are now open with Rapido; with the salt wagons currently at the tooling stage. As yet, no release date has been formalised.

Price: £32.95 each

Web: *www.rapidotrains.co.uk*



REVOLUTION UPDATES

Revolution Trains has teased two of its forthcoming releases, contrasting glamour and luxury in 'N' gauge with utilitarian load-lugging in 'TT:120', by unveiling unpainted samples of its Pullman cars and Ealnos MMA/JNA wagons.

The 'N' gauge Pullmans portray the steel-bodied K-types of 1928, used on expresses such as the *Queen of Scots* and *Bournemouth Belle* along with other crack LNER, SR, GWR and BR services. Some of the cars remain in service with Belmond British Pullman today. The samples show fully detailed interiors with working table lamps and saloon lights while, when decorated, liveries and roof colours will be true to the intended era of the two-, three- and four-coach packs. Pre-order prices range from £104.99 to £209.95.

Meanwhile, early images of Revolution's first ever 'TT:120' project show MMA/JNA wagons in Wascosa and Touax 11-rib form with no side doors, a GBRf 11-rib example with side doors, and a Ermewa/Tarmac one with nine ribs and no side doors. DB and Mendip Rail stock will also be released. Textured removable loads will be supplied with all models and each livery will be available with five different running numbers.

Both the Pullmans and the box wagons are being mooted for an early 2026 delivery.

Web: *www.revolutiontrains.com*

TMC GOES FOR 'BZ'

TMC – The Model Centre – has been getting busy recently with a new 'BZ', exclusively produced in 'OO' gauge for the retailer by EFE Rail and now available to pre-order for delivery during early 2026.

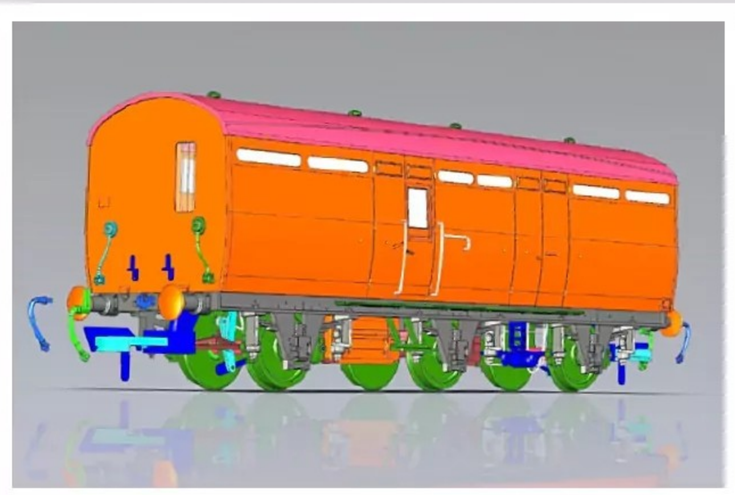
The six-wheeled brake/parcels vans were a late LNER design but didn't come to fruition until BR days, with 80 examples entering traffic in 1950. Christened with the telegraph code 'BZ', they saw widespread use for parcels and agricultural produce far beyond the Eastern Region until 1979, after which they could still be seen lingering on in various states of withdrawn decrepitude until the early 1980s. Nine have been preserved; research has been carried out on the Great Central Railway's example to produce the model.

The TMC/EFE six-wheelers will encompass crimson (lined and unlined), maroon (lined and unlined) and all-over blue liveries, with the option of weathering, renumbering and customisation carried out by TMC. Key features promised include separately fitted handrails, finely tooled battery boxes and underframe brake equipment, detailed vehicle ends with electrical lighting sockets and sprung NEM coupling pockets. The centre axle will be compensated for smooth running and the 'BZ' should be suitable for second radius and greater curves. A lighting accessory pack will be available separately.

When's it due? Early 2026

Prices: £47.95 each (discounts for 2 or more models)

Web: *www.themodelcentre.com*



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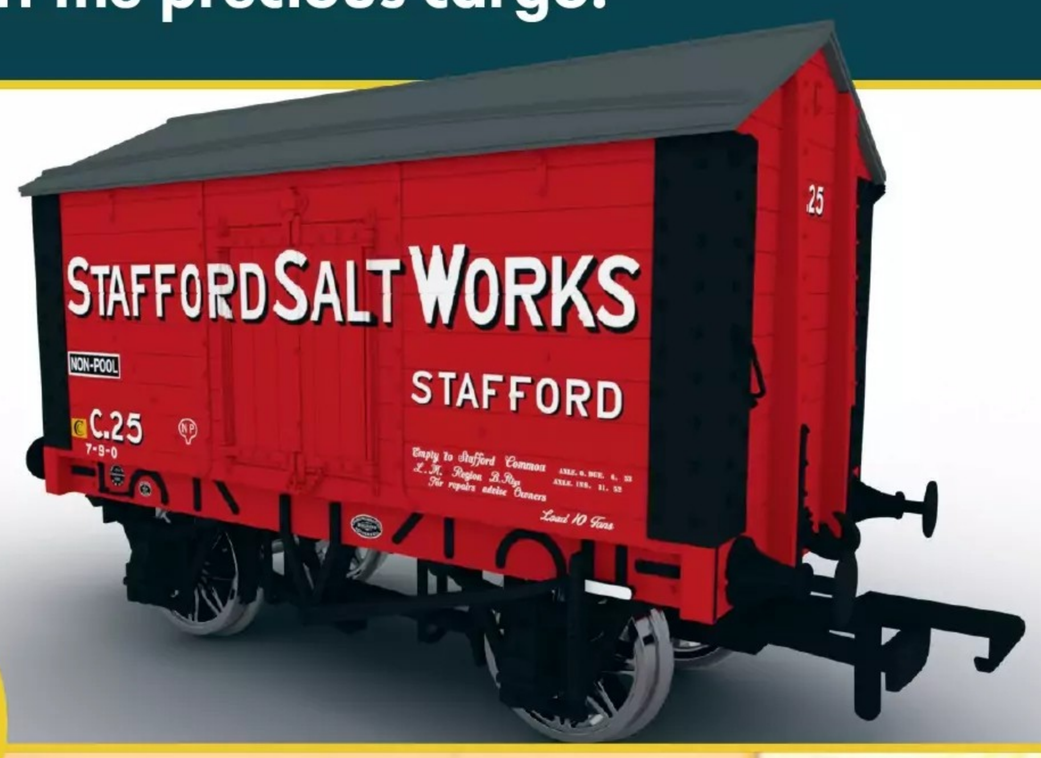

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RAPIDO TRAINS UK

THE LATEST ARRIVALS

Amongst a booty of new models arriving just before we closed for press was a pair of Accurascale's LNER 'Buckjumpers'. Great Eastern blue 'J67' No. 84 and BR black 'J68' No. 68646 are striking little locomotives, and we'll have a full review of these 0-6-0Ts in next month's issue – on sale August 28.

Another eye-catching new arrival is Hornby's Class 73 electro-diesel 73128 *Kent and East Sussex Railway*, wearing GB Railfreight's retro-style Network SouthEast livery. Offered in the RailRoad Plus range, the '73' features a high-quality paint finish, which brings out the best in the former Lima tooling. The model features Hornby's TXS DCC sound on board, courtesy of a HM7000 wireless-enabled decoder, and the user can switch between diesel or electric motor sounds, which capture the character of the 'ED' well. A set of optional etched nameplates is provided.

Model: Hornby R30432TXS Class 73 73128
Price: £144.99

◆ Hornby has just added another TOUAX Sffgmss IFA wagon to its 'TT:120' range (see review in MR333), complete with a 45ft container in the blue livery of Caribbean shipping company Geest.

Model: Hornby TT6033 TOUAX IFA wagon
Price: £52.99
Availability: Hornby stockists
Web: *www.hornby.com*

AIMREC GETS BACK ON TRACK

After many years of searching, the team behind Ashford International Model Railway Education Centre (AIMREC) has finally acquired a building to house its expanding collection.

After contamination problems precluded the use of the old Ashford railway works site, AIMREC has been housed in temporary accommodation, but the recent discovery of a large former hay store in Bethersden, Kent, has provided an ideal, permanent base. Conversion work has been under way, fitting out the interior – including the addition of a mezzanine floor with stairs and lift access – along with levelling of the car park and frontage area. Laying of a five-inch gauge garden railway has also begun!

Once the building is complete, AIMREC will be able to display its collection of model railway layouts and rail-related artefacts, as well as providing space for visiting layouts to be set up in a dedicated exhibition hall. An expanded shop and refreshment area will also be housed.

AIMREC is a not-for-profit charity, which aims to preserve some of the finest exhibition layouts for the nation, while educating visitors about the importance of our railway history.

The new Bethersden site will feature free parking, easy access from Junction 9 of the M20 at Ashford and is situated only a short distance from the A28 Ashford to Tenterden road. The Kent and East Sussex Railway and Romney Hythe and Dymchurch Railway are not too far away.

AIMREC hopes to have the work completed, layouts installed and the building open to the public by early Autumn 2025. The group is currently looking for quality 3mm and 7mm layouts for display, while new volunteers are welcome.

Web: *www.aimrec.co.uk*

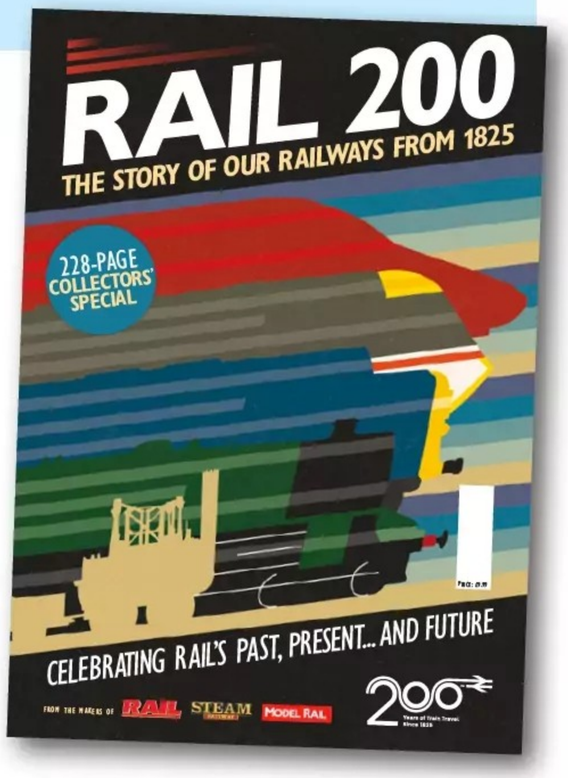
COMING SOON! SPECIAL RAIL 200 BOOKAZINE

September marks 200 years since the 1825 opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway and the beginnings of modern rail. Bauer Media's three titles in the sector – *RAIL*, *Steam Railway* and *Model Rail* – have produced a special souvenir edition to mark the auspicious bicentenary.

This collaborative first will trace the past, present and future of rail over three centuries. Lavishly illustrated over 228 pages, it features fabulous pictures, extraordinary facts and amazing figures to tell the story of rail in a way it's never been told before.

As well as rail's glories, with all the key landmarks and events, it also takes some detours to shine a light into the secret corners and unexpected episodes in rail's history. Explore how rail has shaped – and continues to shape – our home and work lives, the places around us and the future of world travel.

On-sale: August 6
Price: £9.99
Web: *https://magsdirect.co.uk/magazine/rail-200*



KRModels

HUNSLET BO-BO DIESEL SHUNTERS

Named locomotives

- 73 Original Green
- 71 British Steel Blue
- 72 British steel Yellow/Blue
- 79 British Steel Yellow/ White 'Big Keith'

The models will have directional lights in both ends. With a centre-mounted motor, both bogies are driven. As these units are still in operation today in the Scunthorpe steelworks, we have obtaines the sound file from one of the engines.

DCC Ready £200

DCC Fitted £230

DCC sound £300

Scunthorpe Steelworks ordered 10 Hunslet BO-BO shunters in 1972. After several overhauls and improvements, KR models would like to produce the three remaining units still running in Scunthorpe today.
To complement them, the torpedo molten iron wagons will also be available from KR Models.

Hunslet BO-BO Shunter Order Book

73 Original Green

71 British Steel Blue

72 British Steel Yellow/Blue

79 British Steel Yellow/White 'Big Keith'

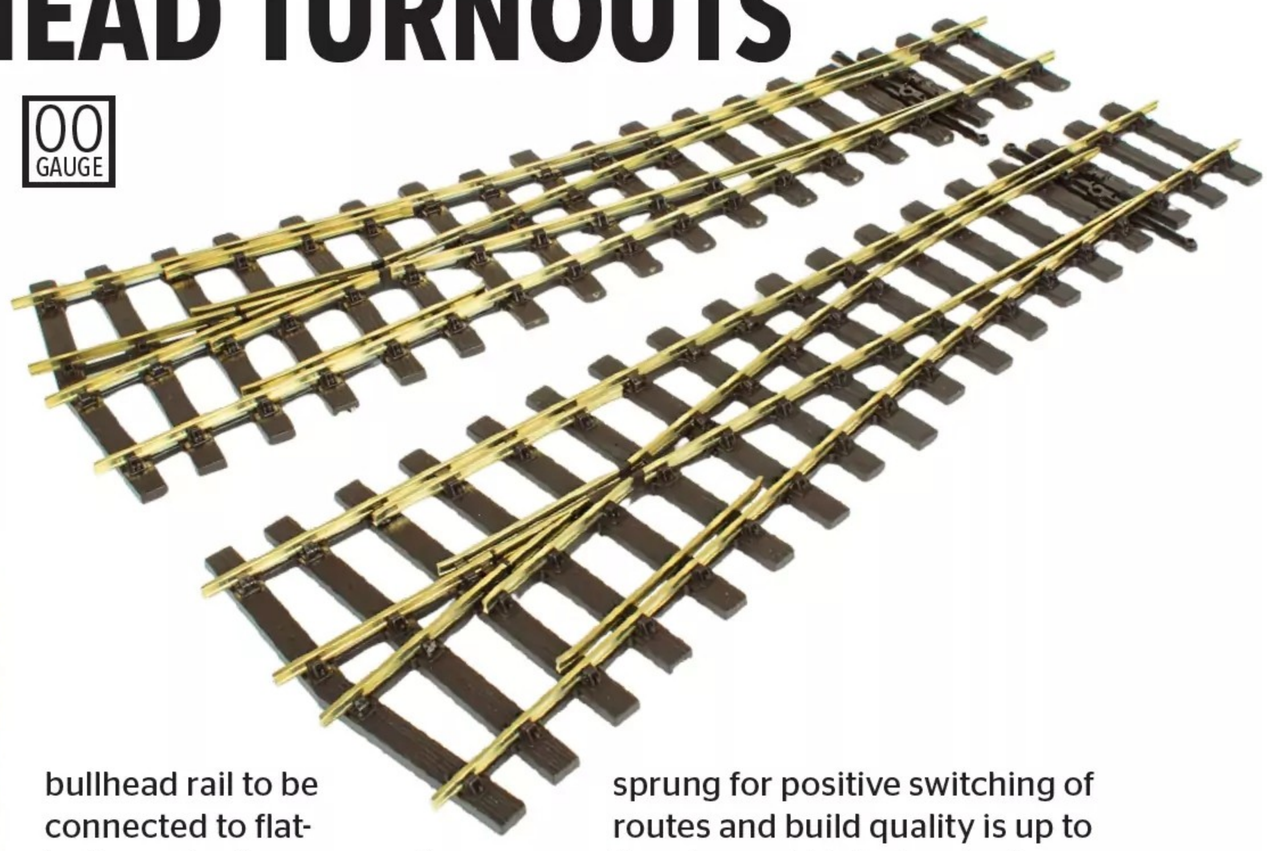
In Stock Now Ready To Ship

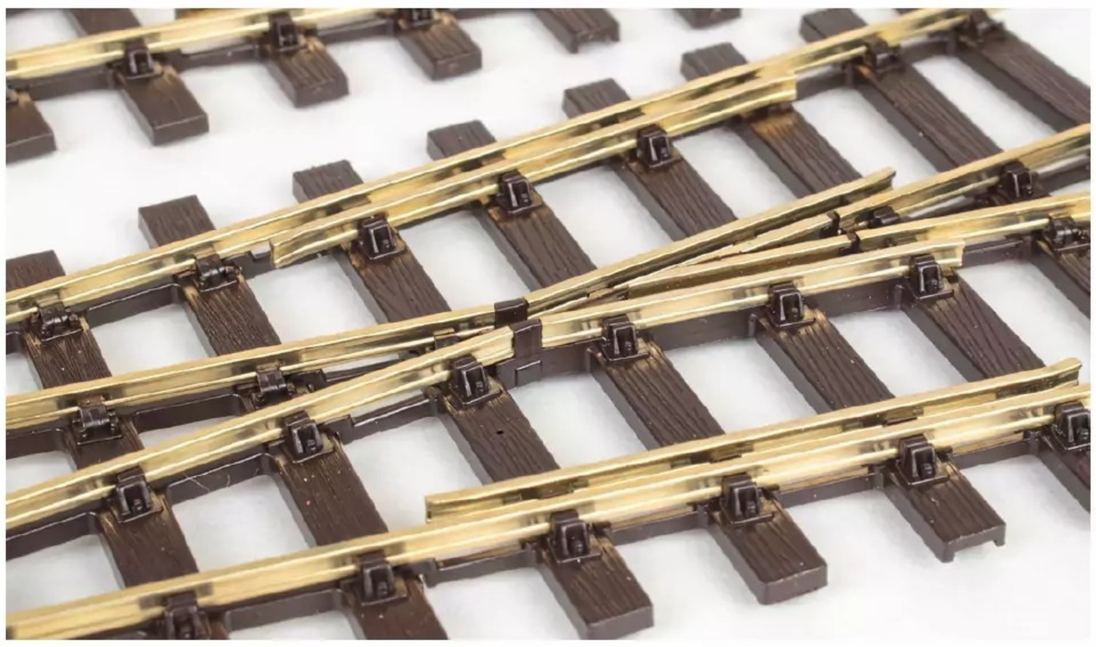
Express your interest at **krmodels.net**

SMALL RADIUS BULLHEAD TURNOUTS

A welcome addition to Peco's range of Code 75 Streamline bullhead track is a pair of small radius turnouts, available in either left- or right-hand formation. Adding to the existing medium and long radius points, these smaller versions are ideal for use when space is at a premium or in sidings and goods yards.

At 185mm long, the timber-effect sleepers are correctly spaced and feature chairs with square head fixing bolts and wooden keys for extra authenticity. Transition packs are available from Peco to allow bullhead rail to be connected to flat-bottomed rail, as occurs in the real world.



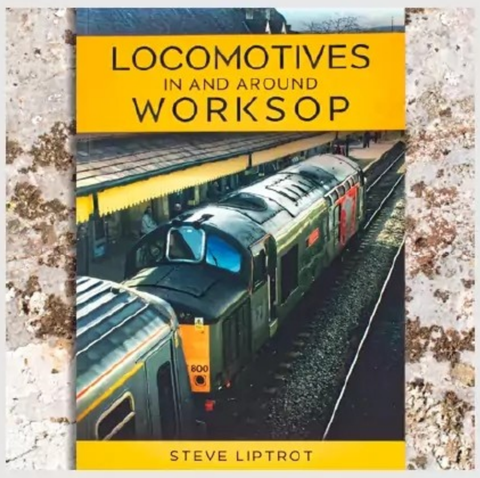


Employing the now-standard Unifrog crossing frog, full wiring instructions are provided for those wanting to switch polarities. A low-profile tie-bar is sprung for positive switching of routes and build quality is up to Peco's usual high standards.

Products: Peco small radius turnouts • SLU1191 Right-hand • SLU1192 Left-hand
Price: £32.75 each
Availability: Peco stockists
Web: *www.peco-uk.com*

Modeller's Bookshelf

George Dent, Chris Leigh and Peter Marriott present four new titles that will inspire and inform your modelling.



WORKSOP WANDERER

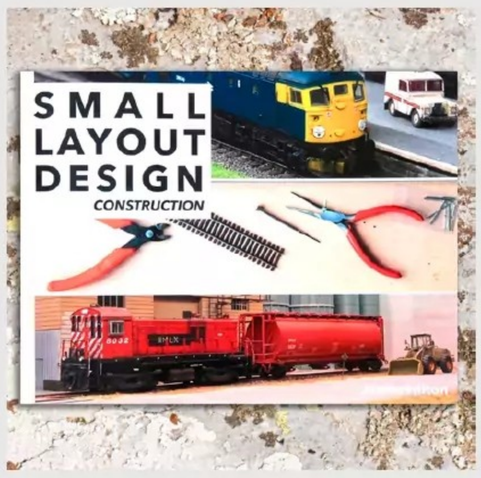
While Worksop's importance dwindled considerably following pit and power station closures, the Nottinghamshire town's railway still plays a vital role, not least in providing storage facilities for various main line operators. This book provides a snapshot of railway activity within the town and surrounding area, in terms of passenger and freight traffic, infrastructure trains and stock movements. Image standards vary, but there's plenty of supporting information about the local network, plus maps and diagrams, affording the reader a good understanding of the location. ***(GD)***

Book: *Locomotives in and Around Worksop* by Steve Liptrot
Price: £15.99
Availability: *www.amberley-books.com*

PLATFORM SOUL

This handsome book features high production values and great design, as the author takes an architect's approach to stations and platforms, with full colour illustrations and an opening spread of tickets, reminding us that the station is our introduction to the railway and the platform our access to the train. There's coverage of valancing designs in colour and, for modellers, there plenty of detail of platforms and station buildings, from the work of Brunel through to the post-BR modern era. There's also coverage of refreshment rooms, canopy brackets, signs and bespoke railway alphabets. ***(CJL)***

Book: *Platforms and Pavilions* by David Lawrence
Price: £29.95
Availability: *ttpublishing.co.uk*



BUILD IT SMALL

James Hilton's latest book provides 27 new track plans, along with prototype images of real locations, coupled with sketches and useful notes on construction. Indeed, the volume focuses more on the practical aspects of layout building, offering many useful tips – I've certainly learned a thing or two, despite having built many layouts in the past. The plans cover 'OO', 'HO' and 'N', plus a few narrow gauge options, taking in locations across the UK, Ireland and mainland Europe. I will be flicking through this book from time to time for inspiration and to remind myself what can be achieved in small spaces. ***(PM)***

Book: *Small Layout Design Construction* by James Hilton
Price: £17.50
Availability: *www.titfield.co.uk*

MANCHESTER METRO

Manchester has been a vital cog in the rail network since 1830 and remains an incredibly busy hub, boasting one of the largest urban networks outside of London. This book contains nearly 200 previously unpublished colour images, from the early 1980s to the present day, along with detailed captions, revealing a huge variety of traction types and contrasting locations, many of which make ideal modelling subjects. Accordingly, there's a colourful array of liveries on show and interesting views of the changing infrastructure and townscape across the decades. ***(GD)***

Book: *Rails Around Manchester* by Mike Rhodes
Price: £15.99
Availability: *www.amberley-books.com*

ON THE WORKBENCH

What new items have appeared in **George's** workshop this month?

MONSTER GLUE

Modellers aren't short of options when it comes to PVA-type adhesives, but this new fast-drying formula from AK Interactive 'grabs' parts quickly, speeding up the assembly of wood and card kits, and is also ideal for bonding foamboard, resin and plastics, especially clear glazing due to its transparent nature once cured. It's fairly thick and can be spread evenly or placed precisely with a cocktail stick and can be thinned and cleaned up with water.

The clog-free nozzle and plastic bottle are easy to use, and the glue has minimal odour. Tacking within a few minutes, it's fully cured in about 6 hours (depending on ambient temperature). I've enjoyed working with this glue on several kits and multiple scenic jobs in recent months.

Product: AK Interactive Wolverine PVA Glue, 100ml
Price: £3.95
Availability: Scale Model Shop
Web: *www.scalemodelshop.co.uk*

POLISHING AIDS

These advanced carbon-fibre polishing plates are designed to help modellers achieve super-smooth surfaces, during initial surface preparation, when knocking back paintwork between coats, or the polishing of finish coats. This pack offers three pads, each with a slightly different shaped 'nose', all rendered in 1mm thick carbon fibre, which is extremely strong yet slightly flexible.

The idea is to bond small strips of your chosen abrasive paper to the nose of the tool (I used double-sided tape), trimming it to match the profile of the pad. This allows awkward areas of models to be abraded without damaging surrounding details. Anyone modifying or enhancing RTR locomotives will appreciate these tools, especially after cutting away moulded detail in favour of etched brass replacement parts or treating imperfections in paintwork.

Product: DSPIAE CFB-S01 Carbon Fibre Polishing Plates
Price: £3.99
Availability: Scale Model Shop
Web: *www.scalemodelshop.co.uk*

'TUG' CREWS

OO GAUGE

Modelu's range of bespoke train crew to suit specific models has been bolstered by two different packs for the Cavalex Class 60. Each provide a driver and assistant, with a choice of late BR or modern eras, with uniforms to match. Interestingly, each figure incorporates a seat, which slots easily into the cab's interior. With a little tweaking, we found that they also fit into a Hornby '60' too. 'OO' gauge versions are featured here, but the same figures are also available in other scales.

Products: • 10234-076 BR crew • 10236-076 Modern
Price: £7.95 per pack
Availability: Modelu
Web: *www.modelu3d.co.uk*

SOUTHERN FIXTURES

OO GAUGE

A delightful range of 3D-printed station details for Southern Railway enthusiasts has appeared in the Modelu range, including customisable concrete running-in boards. A pack of five LSWR barley twist lampposts feature a supreme level of detail, with clear lenses and they even feature a small central bore to allow brass rod to be inserted for extra strength, or tube with super-fine electric cables if adding LEDs.

For the lineside, concrete SR gradient posts (pack of six) feature various grades, while a bumper pack of 24 mileposts also feature a range of figures. We have the 'OO' versions here, but they're all available also in 'O' gauge at a slightly higher price.

Products: • 2601-076 LSWR Barley Twist lamps (£7.95) • 2625-076 SR Mileposts (£7.95) • 2626-076 SR Gradient Posts (£4.95) • 2628-076 Customised SR Running-in Boards (£7.95)
Availability: Modelu
Web: *www.modelu3d.co.uk*

SHOP-TASTIC KIT

OO GAUGE

New from Scale Model Scenery is an attractive modern terraced shop kit in 'OO', depicting a typical post-1960s architectural style. Several of these modest buildings can be combined to form a parade of shops, with each being 51mm wide and consisting of the usual format of laser-cut MDF walls and various sheets of thinner fibreboard providing detail fittings such as windows, doors and rainwater goods. High-quality printed red brick overlays sheets are provided, for wrapping around the walls during assembly, along with a sheet of pre-weathered roof slates, clear plastic glazing and a colourful variety of signs.

Available separately is a handy set of waterslide transfers to enhance the shop windows, catering for everything from taxi firms, fast food joints, angling supplied or something a little more risqué.

Products: KX119-OO Modern Terraced Shop (red brick) (£17.99), DC054 Shop Window Detailing Transfers (£4.99)
Availability: Scale Model Scenery
Web: *www.scalemodelscenery.co.uk*

EXHIBITION DIARY – AUGUST 2025

August 2 & 3

REDCAR, N YORKS. Redcar Model Railway Exhibition, Redcar and Cleveland College, Corporation Road, Redcar TS10 1EZ. **Times:** 1000–1600 both days. **Admission:** Adults £6, Children £4, Family (2+2) £18. **Email:** *Clevelandmrc.publicity@gmail.com* **Facebook:** Cleveland Model Railway Club.

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA, ESSEX. Shoeburyness Model Railway Club, 41st Annual Exhibition, The Seaglass Centre, Thorpe Hall School, Wakering Road, Southend-on-Sea, SS3 9SF. **Times:** Sat 1000–1700, Sun 1000–1600. **Admission:** Adults £8, Children under 16 £1, Under 3s Free.

August 6

BISHOPS LYDEARD, SOMERSET. Taunton Model Railway Group, Bishops Lydeard Station, Platform 1, West Somerset Railway, Taunton, TA4 3BX. **Time:** 1000–1630. **Admission:** Small charge, children to be accompanied. **Tel:** 07879 852736. **Web:** *www.tauntonmodelrailwaygroup.co.uk* **Facebook:** *www.facebook.com/tauntonmodelrailwaygroup* **Instagram:** Taunton Model Railway Group (*@tmrg1968*).

August 8 & 9

PORT TALBOT, W GLAM. Porthcawl Railway Club Model Railway Exhibition, The Orangery, Margam Park, Port Talbot, SA13 2TJ. **Times:** Fri 1500–1900, Sat 1000–1600. **Admission:** Adults £10, Under-16s £4, Under-5s Free, Family (2+3) £25. **Tel:** 07923 095772. **Email:** *alan@mibmodels.co.uk*

August 9

CONWY, GWYNEDD. North Wales Small Scale Model Railway Club Exhibition, St Mary's Church Hall, Conwy, LL32 8LD. **Time:** 1000–1600. **Admission:** Adults £5, Accompanied under-16s Free. **Tel:** 07796 640131. **Email:** *oakleygrange@hotmail.co.uk*

August 9 & 10

ELLESMERE, SHROPS. Ellesmere Model Railway Club Exhibition, Lower School, Ellesmere College, Birch Road, Ellesmere, SY12 9AB. **Times:** Sat 1000–1700, Sun 1000–1600. **Admission:** Adults £5, Children 5–16 £2, Accompanied under-5s Free. **Email:** *Ellesmere.mrc@gmail.com* **Web:** *www.ellesmere-modelrailwayclub.weebly.com*

SWANAGE, DORSET. Isle of Purbeck Model Railway Exhibition, Harman's Cross Village Hall, Haycrafts Lane, Harman's Cross, Swanage, BH19 3EB. **Times:** Sat 1000–1700, Sun 1000–1600. **Admission:** Adults £6, Children £1, Family £14.

August 13

BISHOPS LYDEARD, SOMERSET. Taunton Model Railway Group, Bishops Lydeard Station, Platform 1, West Somerset Railway, Taunton, TA4 3BX. **Time:** 1000–1630. **Admission:** Small charge, children to be accompanied. **Tel:** 07879 852736. **Web:** *www.tauntonmodelrailwaygroup.co.uk* **Facebook:** *www.facebook.com/tauntonmodelrailwaygroup* **Instagram:** Taunton Model Railway Group (*@tmrg1968*).

August 16 & 17

HAYLE, CORNWALL. Hayle Railway Modellers Exhibition, Hayle Day Care Centre, TR27 4DE. **Times:** Sat 1000–1700, Sun 1000–1600. **Admission:** Adults £5, Under-14s Free. **Web:** *www.haylerail.co.uk*

MATLOCK, DERBYSHIRE. Crich Tramway Village Model Tram, Bus and Railway Exhibition, The National Tramway Museum, Crich Tramway Village, Crich, DE4 5DP. **Times:** 1000–1700 both days. **Admission:** Adults £25, Concessions £25, Children £15, Family £55. **Tel:** 01773 854321. **Email:** *john.huddlestone@tramway.co.uk* **Web:** *www.tramway.co.uk*

ROSS-ON-WYE, HEREFORDSHIRE. Rotary Ross-on-Wye Model Railway Exhibition, John Kyrle High School Sports Hall, Ledbury Road, Ross-on-Wye, HR9 7ET. **Times:** Sat 1000–1700, Sun 1000–1600. **Admission:** Adults £6, Children £5, Family (2+2) £14. **Tel:** 01594 543330. **Email:** *brian.sylvia@me.com* **Web:** *www.rotary-ribi.org*

LOUGHBOROUGH, LEICS. Soar Valley Model Railway Club Exhibition, Loughborough Grammar School, Burton Walks, Loughborough, LE11 2DU. **Times:** Sat 1000–1700, Sun 1000–1600. **Admission:** Adults £10, Under-16s £5, Family (2+3) £25. **Web:** *www.svmrc.co.uk*

August 20

BISHOPS LYDEARD, SOMERSET. Taunton Model Railway Group, Bishops Lydeard Station, Platform 1, West Somerset Railway, Taunton TA4 3BX. **Time:** 1000–1630. **Admission:** Small charge, children to be accompanied. **Tel:** 07879 852736. **Web:** *www.tauntonmodelrailwaygroup.co.uk* **Facebook:** *www.facebook.com/tauntonmodelrailwaygroup* **Instagram:** Taunton Model Railway Group (*@tmrg1968*).

August 23 & 24

HIGHBRIDGE, SOMERSET. Burnham-on-Sea Model Railway Exhibition, The King Alfred School, Highbridge, TA9 3EE. **Times:** 1000–1600 both days. **Admission:** Adults £8, Children Free. **Web:** *www.bdmrc.co.uk*

INVERNESS, HIGHLAND. Inverness and District Model Railway Club Exhibition, Leonardo Hotel (formerly Jurys Inn), Millburn Road, Inverness, IV2 3TR. **Times:** Sat 1000–1700, Sun 1000–1600. **Admission:** Adults £5, Children (accompanied) £2, Family (2+2) £10. **Email:** *idmrcexman@gmail.com* **Facebook:** *www.facebook.com/invernessmrc* **Tel:** 07495 778117

August 25

HARROGATE, N YORKS. Harrogate Model Railway Group, Constance Green Hall, St Aidan's School, Oatlands Drive, Harrogate, HG2 8JR. **Time:** 1000–1600. **Admission:** Adults £7, Children £2, Family (2+2) £15. **Email:** *contact-us@harrogate-modelrailwaygroup.org.uk* **Web:** *www.harrogate-modelrailwaygroup.org.uk*

August 27

BISHOPS LYDEARD, SOMERSET. Taunton Model Railway Group, Bishops Lydeard Station, Platform 1, West Somerset Railway, Taunton, TA4 3BX. **Time:** 1000–1630. **Admission:** Small charge, children to be accompanied. **Tel:** 07879 852736. **Web:** *www.tauntonmodelrailwaygroup.co.uk* **Facebook:** *www.facebook.com/tauntonmodelrailwaygroup* **Instagram:** Taunton Model Railway Group (*@tmrg1968*).

August 28

WELLING, KENT. Rotary Club of Bexley, Charity Toy and Train Fair (sponsored by Falconwood Books), Falconwood Community Centre, The Green, Welling, DA16 2PG. **Time:** 1700–2130. **Admission:** Adults £1.50, Children (accompanied) Free. **Tel:** 020 8310 5018. **Email:** *david.boneafcw1@gmail.com*

August 30 & 31

OSWESTRY, SHROPS. Ellesmere Model Railway Club Exhibition, Oswestry Railway Station, The Old Railway Station, 28B Oswald Road, Oswestry, SY11 1RE. **Times:** Doors open 1000 both days. **Admission:** Adults £10, Children £7, Family £25. **Web:** *www.cambrianrailways.com*

...and finally

Unusual scenes captured by the lens of **Chris Nevard**

The level crossing is shut for maintenance. Apparently, it's going to be closed to road traffic for a whole week as Driver Harry Hunslet trundles over the crossing. Meanwhile, Bob is a chatty cat with many wonderful stories to tell of being stuck in trees and having to be rescued by the fire brigade, catching mice, birds and only last week stealing freshly grilled kippers from Mrs Miggins at number 42. If only Barry the Road Mender could understand Bob, for all he can hear is "meow, meow, meeeeooooww, purr, meow". *Chris Nevard*

THE HEREFORD MODEL CENTRE

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01432 352809
EMail - sales@herefordmodelcentre.co.uk
www.herefordmodels.com
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EXHIBITIONS 2025/6:

• Swansea 13-14th September • Statfold 11-12th October • Cheltenham 25-26th October
• NEC 22-23th November • Doncaster 7-8th February • Cheltenham 11-12th April

HORNBY

R3527 N15 SR Black 'Camelot' £139.45
R3635 BR Lord Nelson 'Lord Rodney' £152.95
R3731 BR H class £143.99
R3733 BR Robert Blake BR green late.....£202.50
R3763 SR H class £143.99
R3781 K&ESR Terrier.....£80.75
R3833 LNER A2/3 Chamossaire £171.00
R3859 BR J36 .....£175.49
R3974 LNER Class A2/3 Airborne £251.99
R3977 BR Class A2/2 Earl Marischal.....£251.99
R3982 BR 2MT Green £206.10
R30134 LMS Turbomotive 6202 .....£239.85
R30140 BR M7 class.....£193.49
R30200 Railroad 0-4-0ST BR £43.19
R30221 The Railway Children Return 4F.....£125.99
R30228 LMS Coronation Queen Mary.....£217.79
R30285 S&DJR Class 4F..£139.50
R30286 S&DJR Class2P...£139.50
R30287 United Glass Bottle 0-4-0ST PUG.....£76.50
R30317 Railroad M&GNJR 0-4-0T £49.50

HORNBY Diesel Electric Locomotives

R3373 Class 71 BR Green w/panel £134.95
R3374 Class 71 BR Blue £134.95
R3376 Class 71 BR Green £134.95
R3705 R&H 48Ds Dewars.£71.99
R3707 R&H 48Ds Longmorn £71.99

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You must state these prices when ordering
POSTAGE & PACKING RATES PER ORDER:
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R3742F Class 92 DB Romania £98.99
R3896 R&H 88DS BR 84 .....£102.59
R3899 BR Class 08 yellow £166.95
R3901 Cl 60 Colas.....£161.99
R30010 Sentinel Hitachi £98.09
R30013 R&H 48DS Gower Princess £98.10
R30026 GBRf Class 60.....£206.09
R30030 BR Class 87 Large Logo £196.20
R30083 Sentinel 0-6-0 P o B £98.09
R30084 Sentinel 0-6-0 M.S.C. £98.09
R30115 Cl08 Blue 604 Phantom £167.40
R30141 GBRF Class 08 .....£179.99
R30150 GBRf Class 66 Grey £87.30
R30151 GBRf Class 66 HS2 Green £87.30
R30167 Class 66 Fastline Freight £87.30
R30172 BR Cl. 101 Strathclyde £121.50
R30180 BR Cl.37 Intercity ..£87.30
R30203 Class 121 Coca-Cola £87.30
R30223 DRS Class 66.....£87.30
R30301TXS BR Cl. 08 SOUND £237.60
R30424 *GNER* Class 91....£220.49
R30429 GBRf Cl. 66 Chinook..... .....£85.50

HORNBY TRACK

R083 Buffer Stop.....£2.95
R207 Track Fixing Pins £3.25
R600 Straight.....£2.70
R601 Double Straight £3.15
R604 Curve 2nd radius.....£2.85
R605 Double Curve 1st Rad. £3.90
R606 Curve 2nd Rad. £3.05
R607 Double Curve 2nd Rad. £3.90
R608 Curve 3rd Rad.....£3.15
R609 Double Curve 3rd Rad. £3.90
R610 Short Straight.....£2.00
R614 LH Diamond Crossing £16.85
R615 RH Diamond Crossing £16.85
R617 Uncoupling Ramp £3.95
R618 Double Isolating Rail £12.15
R620 Railer Uncoupler.....£6.95
R628 Half Curve 3rd Rad. .£2.80
R643 Half Curve 2nd Rad..£2.25
R8072 LH Point.....£11.85
R8073 RH Point £11.85
R8074 LH Curved Point £18.85
R8075 RH Curved Point....£18.85
R8076 Y Point.....£13.90
R8077 LH Express Point ...£18.85
R8078 RH Express Point...£18.85
R8261 4th Radius Curve.....£2.80

HORNBY Track Accessories

R076 Footbridge.....£16.20
R169 Junction Home Signal £16.85
R170 Junction Distant Signal £16.85
R171 Single Home Signal£12.90
R172 Single Distant Signal £12.90
R189 Single Brick Bridge £12.80
R406 Colour Light Signal ..£9.90
R574 Trackside Accessories £14.90
R626 Point Underlay.....£6.90
R636 Double Level Crossing £28.80
R645 Single Level Crossing £18.85
R658 Inclined Pier Set £9.90
R659 High Level Pier Set ..£8.10

HORNBY Trackside

R460 Straight Platform £4.00
R462 Large Curve Platform £4.00
R463 Small Curve Platform £4.00
R464 Platform Ramp £3.00
R8003 Water Tower.....£14.85
R8007 Booking Hall.....£26.99

HORNBY Control Equipment

R044 Point Switch.....£10.75
R046 Two Way Switch £10.75
R047 On/Off Switch.....£10.75
R602 Power Connecting Clip £2.80
R8014 Point Motor £9.45
R8015 Point Motor Housing £6.60

BACHMANN Steam Locomotives

31-002 Robinson BR Early Crest £94.99
31-127 CL3000 BR ROD .£118.45
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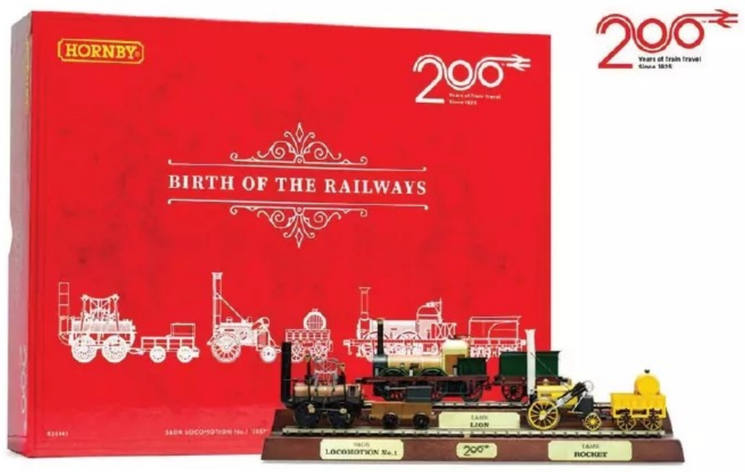

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News Real

Our full-size railways are constantly evolving, providing fresh inspiration for modelling projects. BEN JONES looks at a few of the latest developments that could soon be appearing on our layouts.

▶ Buckingham Palace has announced that the Royal Train will cease operations by March 2027, ending a tradition stretching back more than 150 years. The train has only been used twice in the last 12 months and with the current vehicles approaching 50 years old they are increasingly costly to maintain. On December 18 2020, 67005 *Queen's Messenger* heads the train away from Cardiff. JACK BOSKETT

▲ The first examples of Britain's newest and most powerful locomotive class have arrived for testing ahead of their entry into service later this year. UKDuals 99001 and 99002 were built at Stadler's plant in Valencia in 2024 and have undertaken extensive testing at the Velim test centre in Czechia. Following initial dynamic testing, the locomotives were expected to start solo running on the network as this issue went to press. GB Railfreight's 99001 is seen at the locomotive's official launch at Peterborough,on June 17. PIP DUNN

▼ 'Inspiration' – the Railway 200 exhibition train began its year-long tour of Britain in late-June, heading to Kidderminster on the Severn Valley Railway after its official launch at London Paddington on June 26. The five-coach train formed of specially converted Mk 3s is powered by two GB Railfreight Class 66s and will visit 60 locations over the coming year. NETWORK RAIL

▲ First Group open access operator Lumo has out-shopped Hitachi EMU 803004 in a new promotional livery advertising the latest 'Smurfs' movie. Colourful graphics throughout the train feature characters from the long-running animated series. SIMON@CREST PHOTOGRAPHY/LUMO

Staff Show & Tell

Networking opportunity

After tinkering with a Network SouthEast-liveried Class 50 in last month's issue, **George Dent** has been trying to find time to create some matching rolling stock.

Next year marks the 40th anniversary of the launch of British Rail's Network SouthEast passenger sector, with its attractive red, white and blue colour scheme. This livery has been a glaring omission from my 1980s/1990s collection of 'OO' gauge rolling stock until fairly recently, so I've been working on a small assortment of locomotives and rolling stock, most notably a Hornby Class 50, as described in last month's Workbench pages.

The arrival of Hornby's newly revamped '4-VEP' multiple unit – see review on page 92 – proved to be good timing, as that has been shunted into the queue for some detail enhancements and a weathered finish. It currently sits behind a couple of Accurascale Mk 2b coaches, which are awaiting the same treatment, with passengers and crew to add before a more lived-in appearance is recreated.

In the meantime, I managed to grab a couple of spare hours to work on a Bachmann Mk 1 BG, which had no need for passengers, only a mild coating of grime, keeping the sides pretty clean with the aid of masking tape. An airbrush was used for

Masking the sides of the carriage while weathering the rest of the vehicle ensures a pleasing contrast between the cleaner bodywork and the grimy underframe, roof and ends.

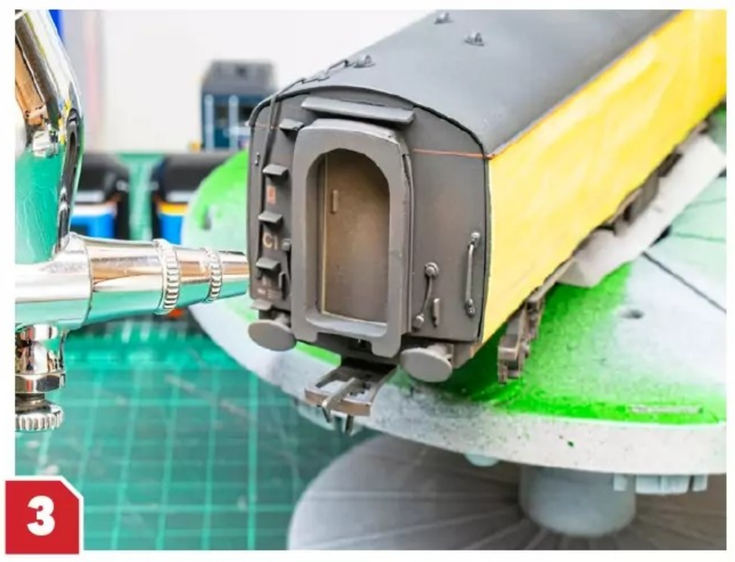
STEP BY STEP

1

The first task was to cover the sides with masking tape. Starting with RailMatch enamel Frame Dirt, diluted with enamel thinners, the dirty brown paint was airbrushed gradually over the bodies and underframe.

2

Using thinned paint and a low air pressure setting (about 12psi), the Frame Dirt can be sprayed gently over and around all the underframe detail. I mixed in a little Roof Dirt and added darker shading here and there.



3

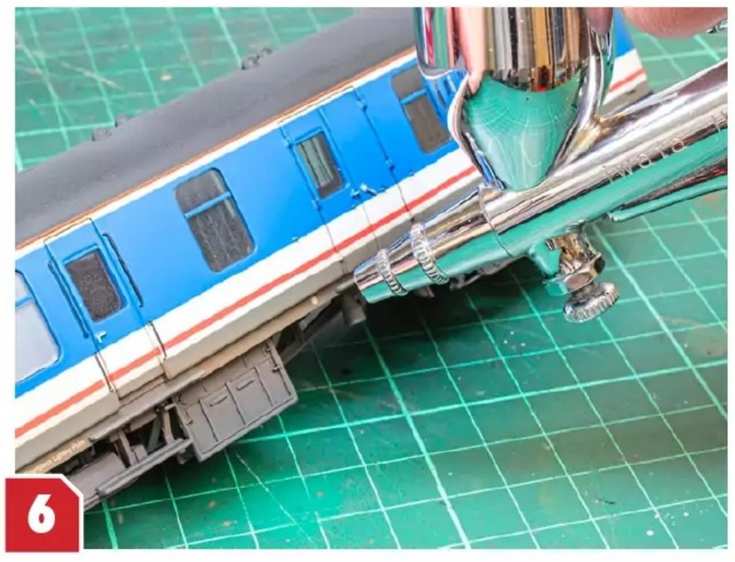
The ends of the coach were treated in the same way. Working at lower air pressures means I could work with the airbrush closer to the surface. Thin the paint to the same consistency as skimmed milk.

4

The roof was then tackled, using a blend of RailMatch enamel Roof Dirt and Weathered Black, working with lateral strokes, so any visible streaks mimic gravity pulling rain and dirt downwards over the curved profile.

5

The wheels were sprayed with the same shades as the underframe and bogies. When fully dry, the tips of the pinpoint axles and the wheel treads were cleaned with cotton swabs dipped in Track Magic from Deluxe Materials.



6

With the tape off the carriage sides, I misted a very light layer of the RailMatch Frame Dirt along the lower and upper edges, as well as the ends. This removes the hard demarcation between 'clean' and 'dirty' areas.

virtually all the work, spraying diluted mixes of RailMatch enamel paints. However, a dark weathering wash, applied with a fine brush, ensured the 'grime' got into the fine recessed door seams, helping to bring out the relief in the Bachmann bodyshell.

With the Mk 2b coaches next in line, a host of seated passengers have been sourced and primed, ready for painting. But oh, this is one of those repetitive jobs for which I need to be in the right kind of mood. Do I have the discipline to plough through, or will I find a compelling reason to work on something more interesting instead...?!

7 When the airbrushed enamel paints had dried, I applied a 'pin wash' of Dark Brown enamel weathering wash to the recessed door seams, using a fine brush. Shake the wash thoroughly before use to disperse the pigment evenly, which allows the fluid to run into the seams more easily.

What George used

- RailMatch enamel • 402 Frame Dirt • 403 Roof Dirt • 412 Weathered Black • Enamel thinners
  Web: *www.fox-transfers.co.uk*
- AMMO/MIG 1005 Dark Brown enamel weathering wash
  Web: *www.hobbyworkshop.co.uk*
- Deluxe Materials Track Magic fluid • Low-tack masking tape Availability Good hobby shops or Gaugemaster
  Web: *www.gaugemasterretail.com*

8 Any excess wash can be gently wiped away from the surface with a dry cotton swab. The wash can appear very dark while wet, but dries to a more subtle, matt finish. Like all weathering techniques, it helps to practise on old, scrap models to help you master the use of an airbrush and to get accustomed to how different paints and washes behave.

THE JOY OF SHUNTING

Peter Marriott was keenly awaiting Bachmann's new Class 08 with auto-release couplings.

When Bachmann announced that some of its new locomotives were to be fitted with DCC-operated auto-release tension lock couplings, I was eager to get my hands on one. For me, shunting can be too 'hands on' to be realistic, but locomotives that can shunt without needing a 'hand from the sky' will be a real bonus.

Over the past couple of years I have used various high-grade European-outline models from ESU and Mabar, each fitted with auto couplings, and I have found them to be a lot of fun. While my personal interest in model railways usually lies in building them rather than operating them, my interest has been piqued and I am keen to see if this new feature can enhance and broaden my love of our hobby.

Therefore, over the past three months I have been busy building a shunting layout, an 'Inglenook' even, based on one of the designs in James Hilton's *Small Layout Design* book. The idea is to see how models such as Bachmann's new Class 08 perform on a compact layout – how much 'play value' will it add to a model railway?

Having initially operated the layout with a 15-year-old Bachmann Class 08 (below), a DCC-fitted deluxe version of the '08' has recently arrived (bottom right), complete with the auto-release couplers, and I am keen to put it through its shunting paces.

Initial observations are that the new '08' looks an awful lot more authentic, and it runs very sweetly. The sound is great and the stay-alive unit helps the model navigate the points. I will report back on how I've found the operation of the auto-release couplings in the near future.

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Inside track with Ben Ando

Ben Ando is the founder of Revolution Trains and a regular contributor to *Model Rail*.

The God Complex...

The mental health benefits of having a hobby or pastime – whether it's painting, fishing, stamp-collecting, knitting or collecting records – are well known.

But I was recently asked by my eldest child to explain why, specifically, I enjoy model railways instead of, say, planes or tanks. After all, I find aircraft and military vehicles just as fascinating as trains.

I thought briefly and said: "Because they work."

"But," she replied, "you can get radio-controlled cars or aircraft that work."

I thought about this. She was right. There are lots of models that, having been bought or built, can be operated (or rather, played with).

I said: "It's the scenery too. I like the trains, of course, but for me one of the most enjoyable aspects of the hobby is the landscaping: creating realistic contours for tunnels and cuttings, adding ground cover, fabricating trees, constructing miniature houses or industrial buildings and so on. And then driving trains through it all."

"So," she said, "you enjoy creating and ruling over your own miniature world. It's obvious – you've got a God Complex!"

I harrumphed and immediately Googled 'God Complex' and discovered she was completely wrong. A God Complex is defined as 'inflated feelings of personal ability, privilege or infallibility.' The recognised diagnostic name for such behaviour is Narcissistic Personality Disorder.

Now very few of the railway modellers I know could be described as narcissists, though maybe there are a couple!

But she was right in a way: it is undeniable that the opportunity to play God – creating the world we want, rather than the world as it is – can be seductive.

> **"...creating the world we want, rather than the world as it is, can be seductive"**

One of Ben's favourite aspects of the hobby is the creation of realistic landscapes, something which Daniel McMillan achieved to great effect with his 'Torbay Sands' layout (MR332). CHRIS NEVARD

For some of us, that means rolling hills and meadows; a small green steam tank engine with a couple of chocolate and cream coaches and a perpetual summer's day in 1935; for others it can mean the desolate urban landscape of the 1970s with grubby blue diesels and dirty brown vans shuffling between corrugated steel sheds.

Those modelling in smaller scales, such as 'N', may see ourselves as the benevolent rulers of a relatively large expanse of countryside or a townscape with rows of houses and busy streets; while others prefer a larger scale so they can depict a smaller scene in minute detail.

Sometimes, too, we are even the bringers of doom when we move house, or change scales; and a once-loved layout has to be sold or even broken up and thrown in a skip.

But I would suggest the reasons we choose to play God aren't complex at all, but simple: in an increasingly chaotic and challenging world, it can be reassuring to have an imaginary world to enjoy where the grass is always green, the sun never sets and the trains run on time.

● *Revolution Trains is attending The Greatest Gathering, the showpiece Railway 200 event at taking place at Alstom, Derby on August 1-3 and I look forward to meeting readers and other supporters there.*

There's real comfort in creating miniature worlds through which we can run our model trains, especially when they incorporate idyllic scenery like Phil Mason's 'Culthwaite' (MR317). CHRIS NEVARD

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WELSH WONDERS

With a large room to fill, **Cliff Thomas** created a wonderful tribute to the preserved narrow gauge railways of Wales, as well as the dramatic scenery in which they operate.

Words: **Cliff Thomas** Photography: **Chris Nevard**

1

What makes this layout great?

“This wonderful layout encapsulates so much of the character and quirkiness that attracts enthusiasts to the real narrow gauge railways of Wales. There’s so much to see and watch; the scale may be small but it’s big on ideas and ambition.”

At the top end of the layout Bachmann double Fairlie *Merddin Emrys* leaves Pontarfynach station. The tanc incline in the background is based on the restored Dinorwic V2 winding house and incline at Gilfach Ddu.

The origins of 'Rheilffordd Bae Gwyrdd' (Green Bay Railway) date back to 1990 when a start was made on building baseboards, fortunately constructed in sections rather than a single unit. The layout progressed in fits and starts for a number of reasons involving work, other activities, building two other model railways and realisation that I loved making buildings – but contrary to the advice of the late great Alan Downes (do not model what you cannot see) I could not resist incorporating extensive interior detailing – they do have interior lighting so this is not totally wasted effort.

By 2018 the track was down, trains were running, buildings completed, and major scenery constructed – then we decided to move house. A primary consideration was that our new home would offer space to rebuild the layout and, as it transpired, we had more bedrooms than we needed so the stud wall separating two of them was removed providing a spacious new 'railway room'.

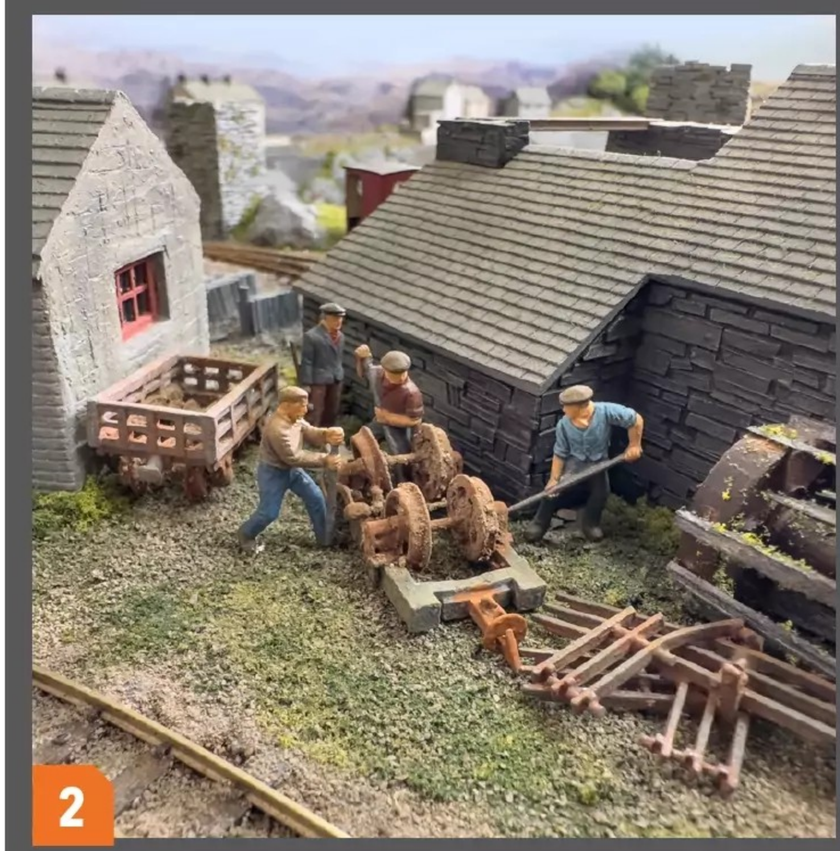
The layout was broken down into five sections (vindication of that early construction decision) and relocated successfully. Then things became more complicated. With more space available it seemed a good idea to extend two legs of the 'U' shaped layout. The main line incorporates a continuous climb from 'sea level' to the slate quarry. Splitting this line (in four places) obviously messes up the gradient profile, which then needed to be adjusted. Moreover, the opportunity arose to alter some aspects of the route, while enhancing the layout in other respects. The upshot was wholesale removal of track, re-working of the trackbed and the addition of several new baseboards.

My main enjoyment arises from making buildings and scenery. I am not keen on tracklaying and struggle with wiring. Reconstruction required ordering 162ft of plain track and 41 points. Figuring that if I were to lay all this myself (basically for the second time) I might not live long enough to run trains again! I sought help from Neil Stevenson who spent a few days laying track and dealing with the electrics, while I got on with what I enjoyed doing. Richard Tuplin should also be thanked for kindly ➤

3 things we like

1

An ancient henge, for those who worship things even older than Welsh narrow gauge railways.



2

The joys of railway preservation, as workers try to separate rusty wheels from a corroded wagon frame.

3

The wagon transporter incline adds even more interest to a layout already packed with fascinating features.

preparing the diagrams for the control panels to speed things along.

While the rebuilt layout was fully operational by 2022, it took another couple of years to complete the scenic work before I felt ready for a visit from Chris Nevard to photograph it.

VERY MUCH A WELSH LAYOUT

Wales led the way in the development of narrow gauge railways, notably serving the slate industry in North Wales, and is the founding home of today's preservation movement, with the Talyllyn Railway being the world's first preserved railway, closely followed by the Ffestiniog.

Rather than picking a period in history and/or a specific location, 'Bae Gwyrdd' is set as a present day preserved railway incorporating museums and restoration projects, with inspiration drawn from several Welsh lines.

Potentially identifiable locations are drawn from the north of the country with a main line linking slate quarries with a port, plus a 'later' extension to meet a standard gauge line when that arrived to compete with sea borne transport. Further elements encompass Mid-Wales and hints of my West Wales home area being the sea cliff dolerite/granite quarry and historically important structures at Porthgain which were once linked by a steam-worked narrow gauge line and a model of St Anne's 'tin-tabernacle' at New Hedges.

For me, the present-day setting is the ideal solution. Today's preserved lines supplement historic stock with locomotives and vehicles from around the world, so I need no excuses to run my eclectic collection of self-built and ready-to-run stock.

My preference is to run trains from somewhere to ➤

3

Bachmann double Fairlie *Merddin Emrys* draws into Gorsaf yr Harbwr station. The train includes Ffestiniog Railway van No. 10 built from a Parkside Dundas kit and Peco Bowsider carriages.

4

5

somewhere rather than round in circles. The layout centres on a main station beside the harbour. Any resemblance to Porthmadog is not coincidental, but my version is simply named Gorsaf yr Harbwr (Harbour station). The main line runs up to a junction, whereupon one line continues up into a small, worked out slate quarry. Here, the slate mill has been turned into a museum housing historic machinery, while the line continues into a tunnel which, in fiction, would lead to further slate workings, but in practice leads into two hidden storage roads.

The other line from the junction runs into a passenger terminus. Although the station building is a scale model of the Vale of Rheidol Railway's Devil's Bridge, I've named it Pontarfynach, the actual Welsh location which translates as 'The bridge on the Mynach' (Afon Mynach – River Mynach) not the Devil's Bridge appellation based on legend.

Bachmann Baldwin 4-6-0T No. 590 makes its way between the harbour and village. The corner pub is named The Packer and painted in the colours of the Green Bay Packers American Football team, in reference to the layout name.

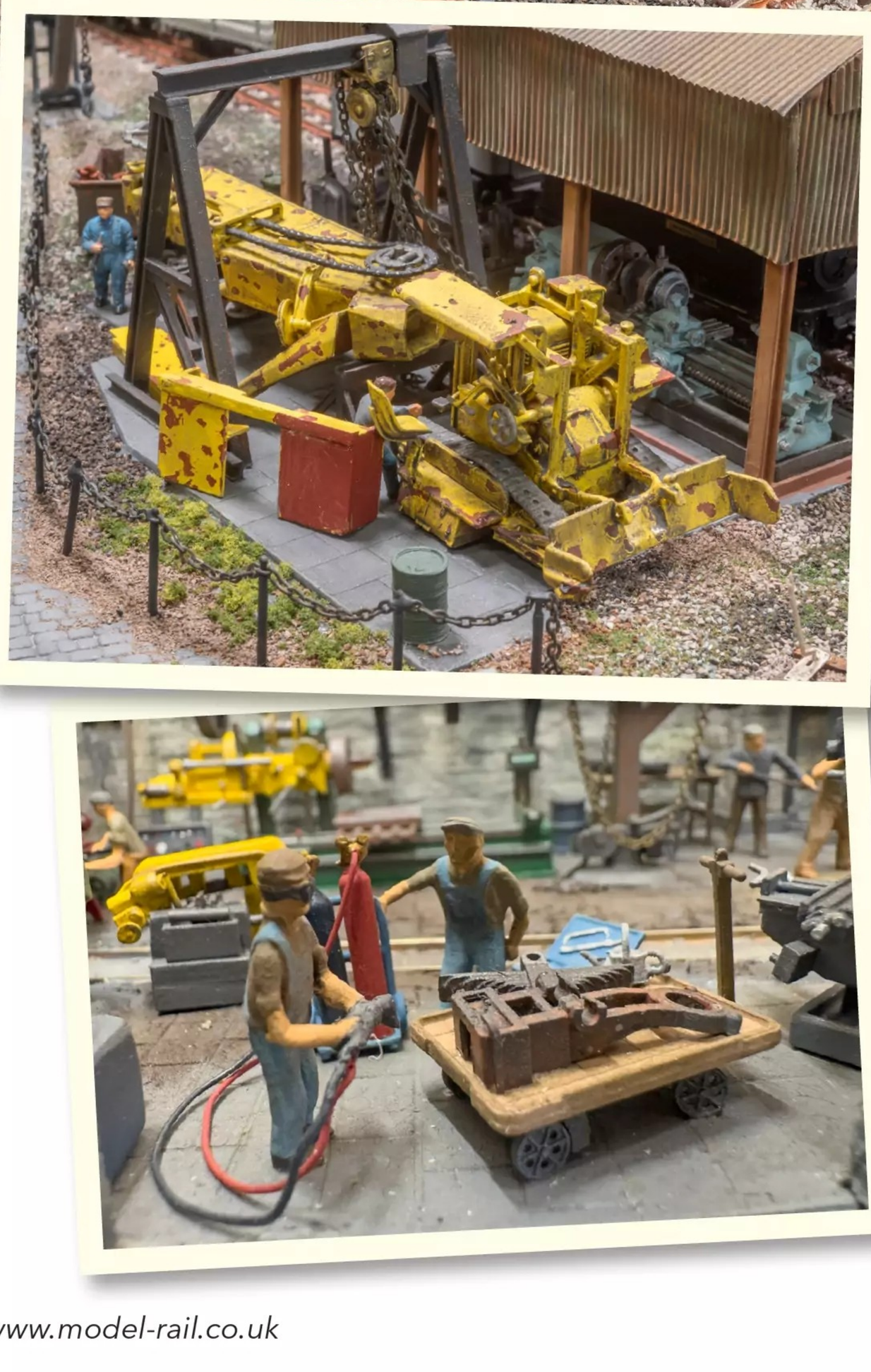
Reverting to the harbour, there are two branch lines. One runs directly from Gorsaf yr Harbwr round past the MPD to Tywyn Wharf station. This has a scale model of the Talyllyn Railway's Wharf station as expanded in preservation but prior to its major ➤

"Any resemblance to Porthmadog is not coincidental, but my version is simply named Gorsaf yr Harbwr"

6

7

Bachmann Collectors Club Hunslet 2-4-0STT *Linda* picks her way between buildings on the line between Gorsaf yr Harbwr and the dolerite/ granite quarry with a train of roofing slate and slab wagons.



reconstruction in 2005. The station area and wharf (served by a standard gauge line) is very much inspired by the layout of the real Talyllyn station, although it has my own version of a museum which houses some of my earliest models as display items. Beyond the road bridge the line curves into a large yard with a four-road storage building housing more off-scene trains.

The other line from Gorsaf yr Harbwr runs in the opposite direction, threading its way through the village to get to a terminus below the old dolerite/granite quarry where there is a small run-round loop, sidings, various restoration projects and an off-scene three-road sector plate housing further trains under the Porthgain structures.

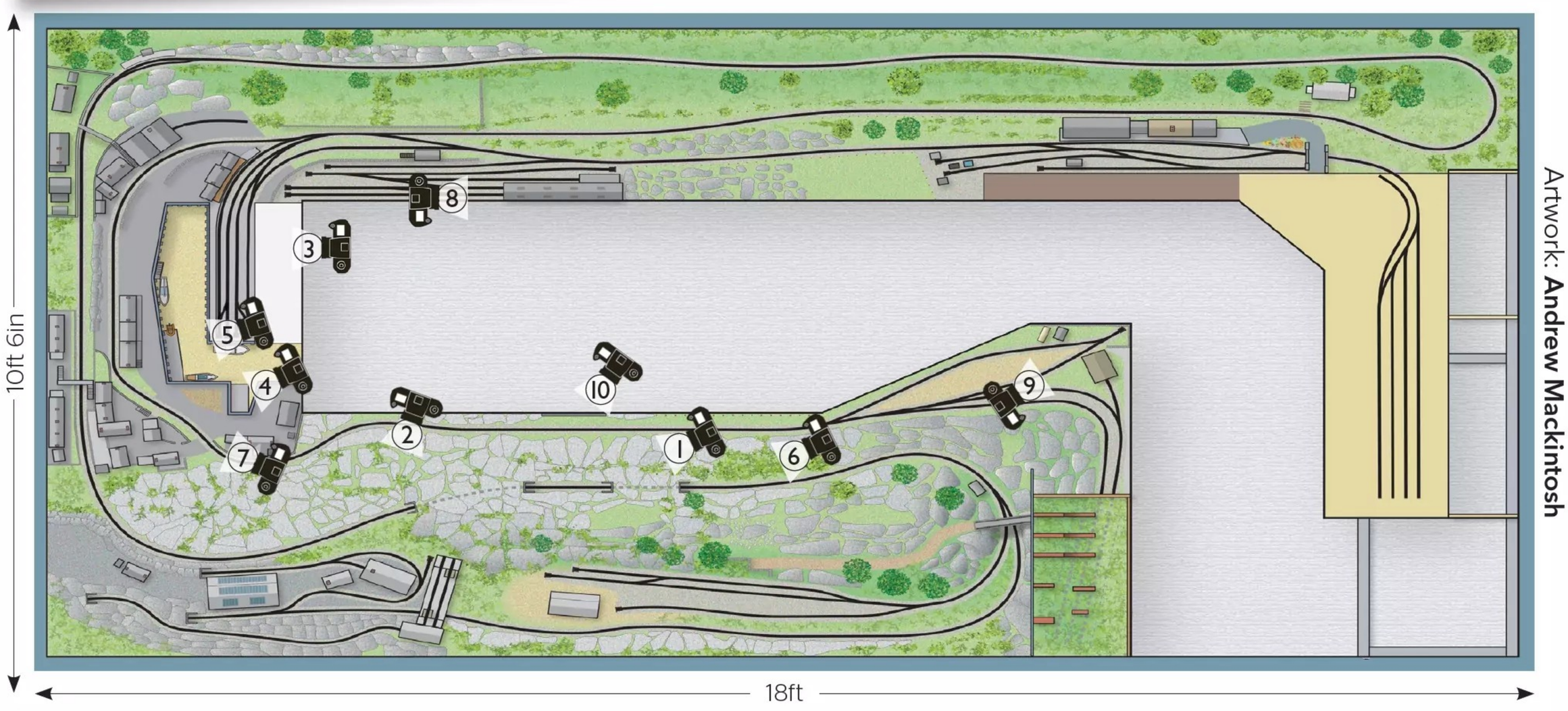
I tend to view 'Bae Gwyrdd' as a very large, working, diorama portraying what I am interested in and have been writing about for some three decades. The layout provides a usable way of running a large traction fleet (there are generally around 25-30 locomotives on the layout at any given time) by rotating locomotives between out and back workings rather than running round – great during gala events, massively uneconomic in the real world. With off-scene sidings at three termini it is possible to have far more train combinations than the operational layout could possibly accommodate.

INTO THE FUTURE

While the 'OO9' layout is essentially done (inevitably details continue to be added) the project to fill the remainder of the railway room continues. The standard gauge line which terminates alongside the Wharf edge also now has a small terminus station suited to my collection of DCC railcars and there is an even smaller terminus station for 12mm gauge vehicles (I also have a collection of Irish and Manx 3ft gauge railcars) adjacent to the 'OO9' yard. Dual gauge track ➤

(16.5mm/12mm) has been laid on further baseboards along another wall of the room with the far end termini yet to be modelled. A 16.5mm gauge American 'On30' (DCC) line has also been laid in a zig-zag formation above this section which is operational but has a long way to go in terms of scenery.

I should record appreciation to my hugely supportive wife Carrie and to Steven Dodd (of South Wales-based GLR Bespoke) who has added the more recent extensions to the 'OO9' track, magically resolves the odd electrical glitch and has accelerated progress on the new phases of development by laying the track and sorting out the DCC stuff which, frankly, I barely understand beyond how to make things move – but the trains sound great blasting up the steeply graded zig-zag. MR



Artwork: **Andrew Mackintosh**

FACTFILE: 'RHEILFFORDD BAE GWYRDD'

Era: Present day

Gauge and scale: 4mm:1ft, 9mm gauge, plus a standard (16.5mm) gauge 'feeder' line

Size: 18ft by 10ft 6in

Track: Peco 'OO9'

Power and control: Analogue DC

Time to build: Six years (with much older origins and elements)

ABOUT THE MODELLER: CLIFF THOMAS

"As a child I had a 'OO' layout, but on 'discovering' narrow gauge that became my main interest. I have been modelling in 'OO9' since about 1973 and, over time, the hobby became a job as I became a heritage railway journalist and book author. There are low-key references to West Ham United and American Football team the Green Bay Packers on the layout – which reveals where the name of the layout came from!"

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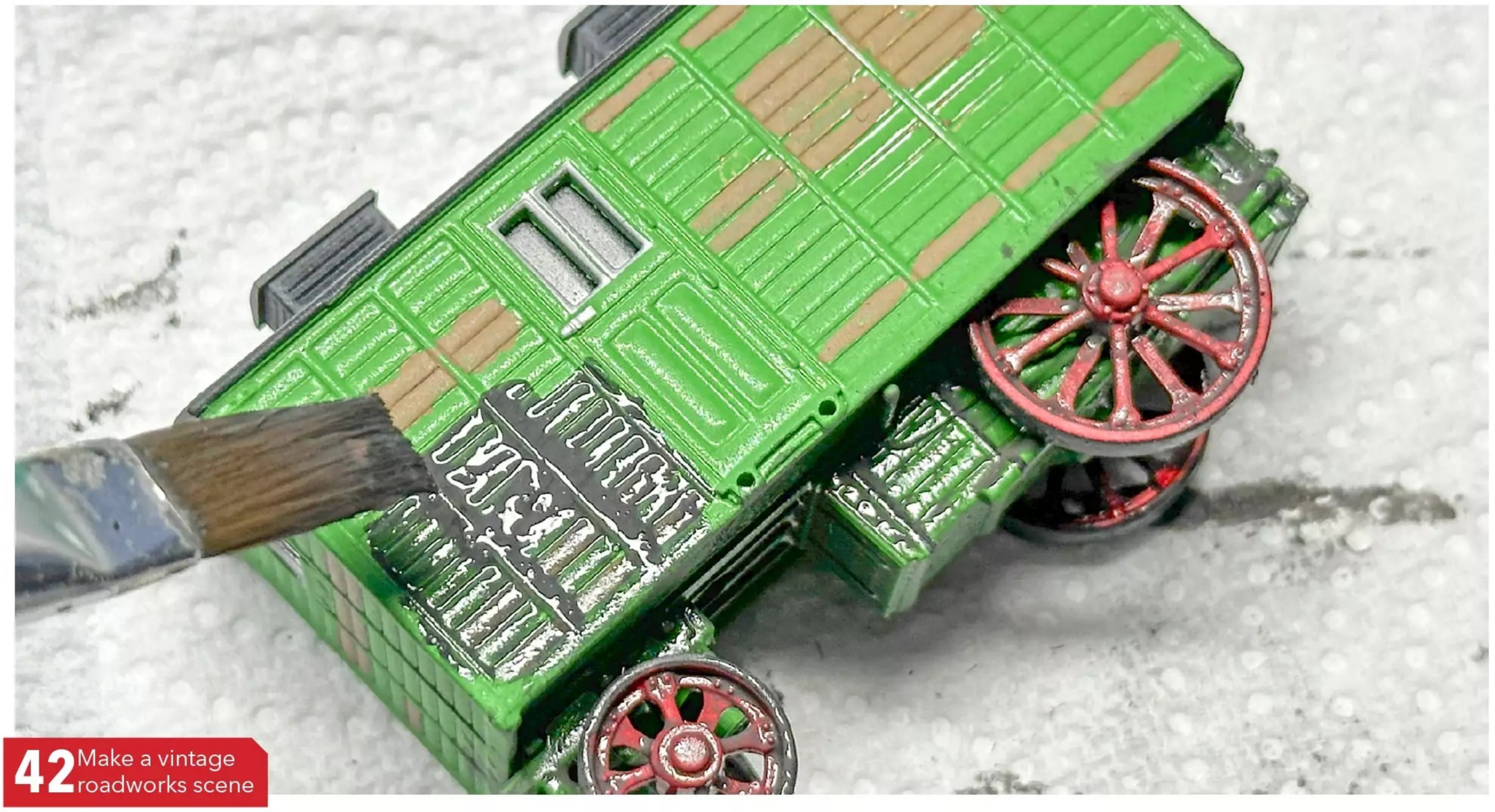

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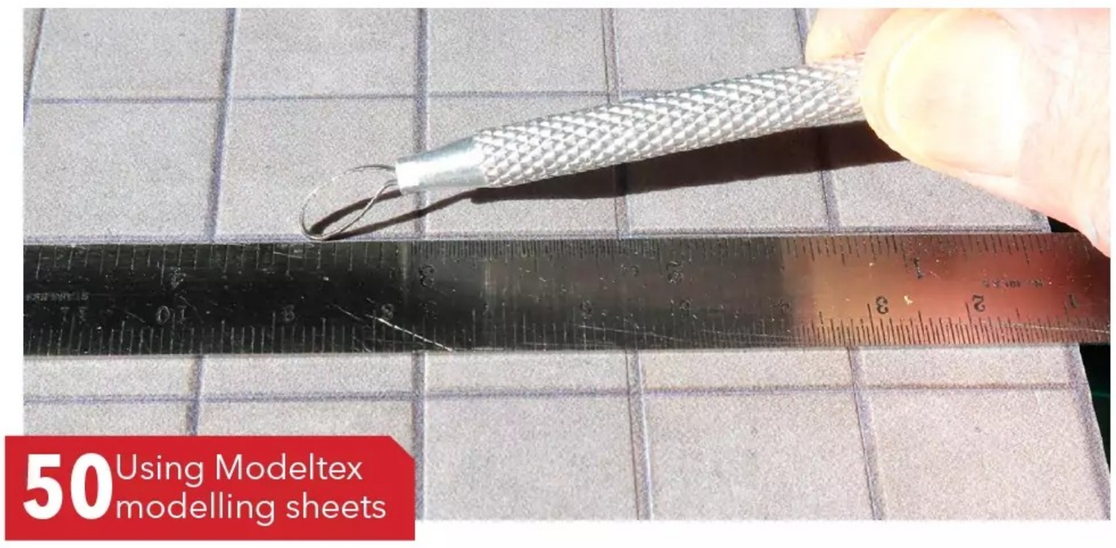

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HOW TO

MAKE A VINTAGE ROADWORKS SCENE

A chance buy inspired **Chris Nevard** to create a little-modelled cameo that you can re-create with some simple weathering and scratchbuilding.

PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRIS NEVARD

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- Halfords 258635 White Primer
  Availability: Halfords stores or *www.halfords.com*
- Wickes • Vinyl Matt Emulsion Butterscotch No. 440 tester pot • Wickes Tough & Washable Matt Emulsion Hazel No. 821 tester pot • Dulux Easycare Rich Black tester pot **Availability:** Wickes stores
  Web: *www.wickes.co.uk*

TOOLS

- Scalpel with fresh blades
- Sharp scissors
- Selection of paint brushes
- Old bowl
- Eco-friendly cotton buds
- Barbecue skewers
- Glass fibre brush
- Kitchen tissue

STEP BY STEP

1

The first job is to remove the printed lettering. A glass fibre brush makes light work of this. As the paint is quite thin, you might expose some of the metal beneath, but as the model is to be weathered, this isn't too much of an issue.

2

Work the brush until the lettering disappears. Wear gloves as the glass fibre can cause irritation (don't inhale it either!). Remove the fibres with a hand-held vacuum cleaner or sweep them into the bin with a soft paintbrush.

3

Living vans were made from wood, not metal. To enhance its realism, I picked out some planks with brown to suggest that they've been repaired. This also hides where I've been a bit too enthusiastic with the glass fibre brush!

4

Give the models a good coat of Humbrol Acrylic Varnish aerosol. Support the models by wedging a barbecue skewer into the hole where the packaging screw went. This will let you access almost the whole of both models.

00 GAUGE MODEL Oxford Diecast 76APR004 Aveling & Porter Road Roller/Betsy & Wagon | 5 hrs

◆ **RRP: £36.95 AVAILABILITY Oxford Diecast stockists**

It was while browsing through my local model shop that I discovered this Oxford Diecast steam roller and living van pack. I'm a fan of cameos and thought it an ideal addition to my miniature world.

As with all die-cast models, it was very shiny and needed weathering. I must admit that I didn't notice when I bought it that the set depicts the Aveling & Porter roller bought and restored by the late, great Fred Dibnah. Hopefully, he'll forgive me for the disgraceful condition I've turned his pride and joy into!

The inevitable question was 'what am I going to do with it'? I had, in my stash, some of that coarse scenic material from some ancient starter pack that you might call 'coloured sawdust'. It was utterly awful for use as scenery but might be of use as freshly poured tarred chipping, waiting to be flattened by the steam roller.

This turned out to be quite a fun little job and it's the sort of cameo you can add to your layout. You can either permanently fix it in place or keep it loose, so you can move it around your miniature world depending on your mood.

Before: the immaculate Oxford Diecast Aveling & Porter steam roller and living van.

Bright plastic cones weren't a thing in the steam era. Instead, road works were surrounded by a length of chain supported by steel posts, wooden barriers and posts or, quite often, nothing at all! Chris' scene would be protected by red and white wooden barriers. ALAMY

5

The aerosol varnish dries in minutes so now's the time to mix a weathering wash. I favour water-based paint for this as you can wash it off and start again if need be. This is matt black interior emulsion mixed with a dash of brown.

6

Let's get dirty! Apply the mix, working on one side at a time. If the paint won't adhere, stir in a tiny amount of washing-up liquid. Work on to the whole model. It's not an exact science and be prepared to revisit an area if need be.

7

Before the paint dries, use a larger – and dry – brush to stipple the paint until it dries. This will push the paint into all the recesses with only a small amount on the raised surfaces. Regularly wipe the brush to remove paint.

8

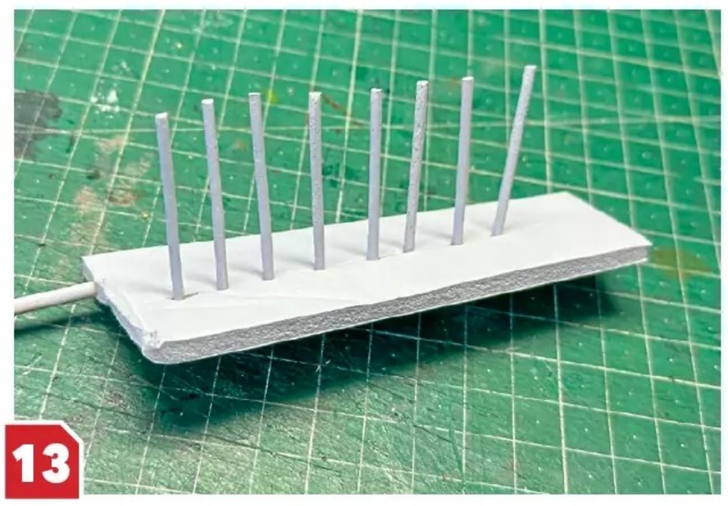
With the paint dry, now damp the end of a cotton bud. This is where the real magic happens – the removal of the weathering wash. Gently wipe the bud over the model and use a fresh one when each end turns black.

9 For the ‘working’ areas of the roller, drybrush on a little Humbrol 27004 Metal Cote. Put a little onto a brush and lightly rub it over the raised detail. You can ‘work’ Metal Cote well after it’s dry.

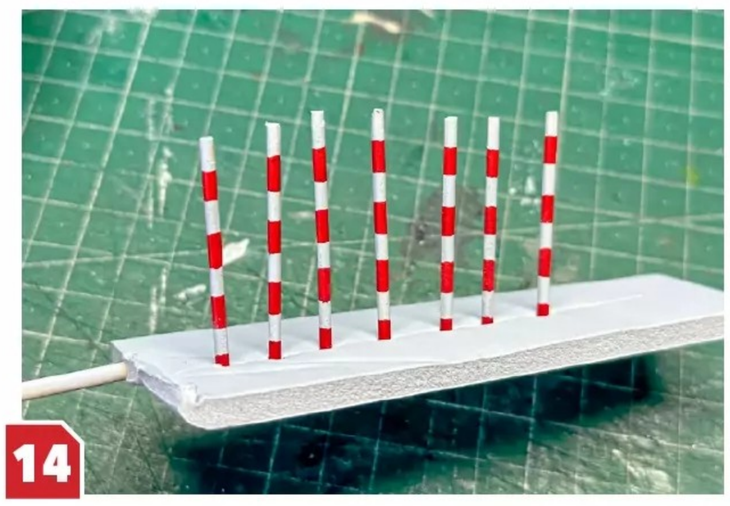
10 For the wheel and roller treads, drybrush on a little beige matt emulsion. A browse of the internet will reveal suitable images if you’re not able to see the real thing. Note the application of brown and rust colours.

11 Finished and ready for action! Matt emulsion will harden after a few hours and can take a reasonable amount of handling. A quick blast of Humbrol Acrylic Varnish will give you a resilient finish but you’ll lose the Metal Cote’s oily sheen. Adding a driver figure is a must!

12 Wooden cocktail sticks are perfect for 4mm scale safety poles. Remove the pointed ends to leave them about 40mm long. That represents a real pole of 10ft length. I’ve no idea if there was a standard length, but they look ‘right’.

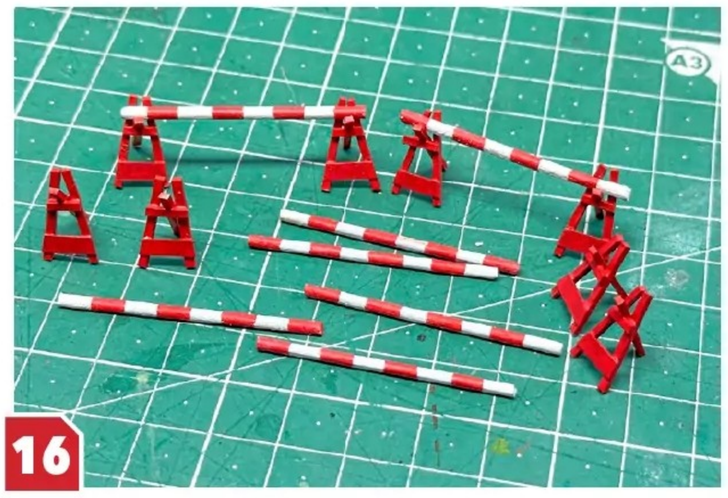


13 Cut a slit into an offcut of foamboard to make a ‘pole holder’. Slot them into place and then spray with Halfords White Primer aerosol. When dry, invert them and spray the unpainted end. Work in a well-ventilated area.



14 The red is Humbrol Matt 60 acrylic. I applied the paint freehand. They’re not perfect, but good enough from normal viewing distances. It’s doubtful that much care would have gone into painting the originals!

15 I made some simple triangular supports from plastic strip and thin plastic card to hold the poles. I cut the parts with a sharp blade on a self-healing cutting mat and secured them with Plastic Weld. I started with the main ‘triangle’ and then added the support leg.



16 With the glue fully cured, I painted the supports with Matt 60 acrylic. They hold the pole about 15mm off the baseboard, just under a scale 4ft – again, it looks about right according to my eye. The finishing touch will be some suitable warning signs.

17 I sprinkled the coarse ‘sawdust’ scenic material to suit the shape I wanted. This was to be a temporary cameo so I didn’t glue it. But dribbling on some PVA, quite thickly, will give you a suitable ‘humpy’ shape on which to sprinkle the ‘sawdust’ – ready for rolling!

Fixing the roads

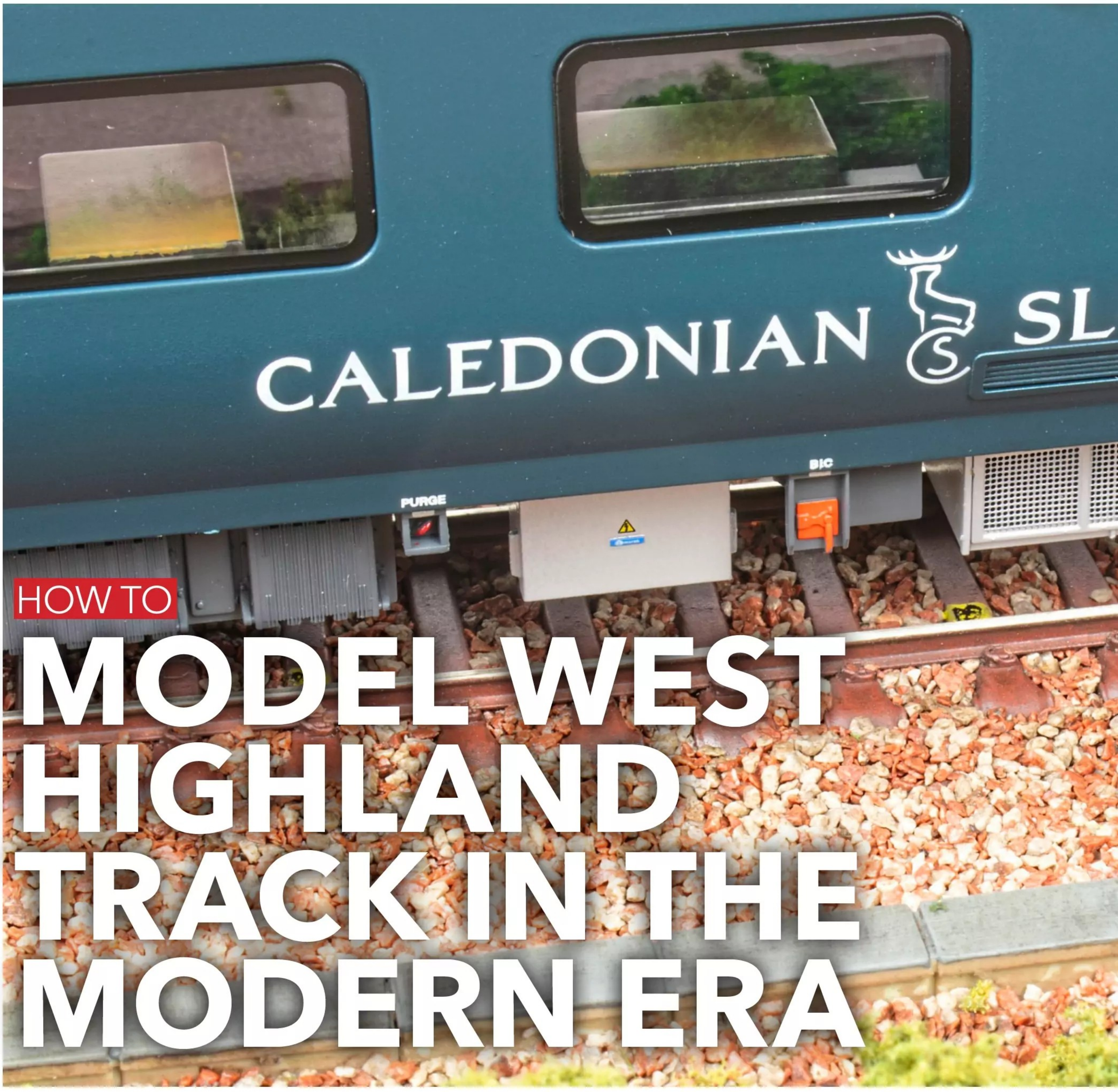
Today’s roads owe their origins to two men: John Loudon McAdam and Edgar Purnell Hooley. The road was brought to Britain by the Romans but it took until 1815 and McAdam to develop what we have today: a raised camber and drainage down each side. McAdam also gave us macadam, a surface of crushed stones filled with sand or smaller stones.

The final piece in the modern road jigsaw came from Hooley, who, in 1901, spotted that someone had tried to clear up spilt tar by covering it in small stones. Hooley noticed that this surface was not as dusty as its surroundings, a perennial problem with macadam. He registered Tar Macadam (Purnell Hooley’s Patent) Syndicate, which, eventually, became Tarmac in 1905.

Local councils became responsible for maintaining roads in 1894 but it took until 1910 for the Government to allocate money specifically for road maintenance. Steam wagons took over from railways for moving tarred chippings from the 1930s.

Generally speaking, a steam-era road works scene would comprise men in caps and working waist coats, with the site boundaried either by wooden barriers, a chain or no protection whatsoever.

There would generally be a tar boiler to heat tar that, via a lance, would be spread onto pre-tarred chippings. These would be spread by hand, using a bucket and shovels. Later, steam wagons or motor lorry tar spreaders would be used. The chippings would either be tamped by hand or rolled with a steam roller.



HOW TO

MODEL WEST HIGHLAND TRACK IN THE MODERN ERA

Having built a small diorama, **George Dent** tests a new ballast product aimed at the contemporary Scottish scene, and offers a range of application tips.

PHOTOGRAPHY: GEORGE DENT

A recent break saw me exploring the lower reaches of the West Highland line between Helensburgh Upper and Crianlarich, and while the intention was to switch off a little from the world of model railways (we all need a break sometimes!), I couldn't help being struck with modelling inspiration.

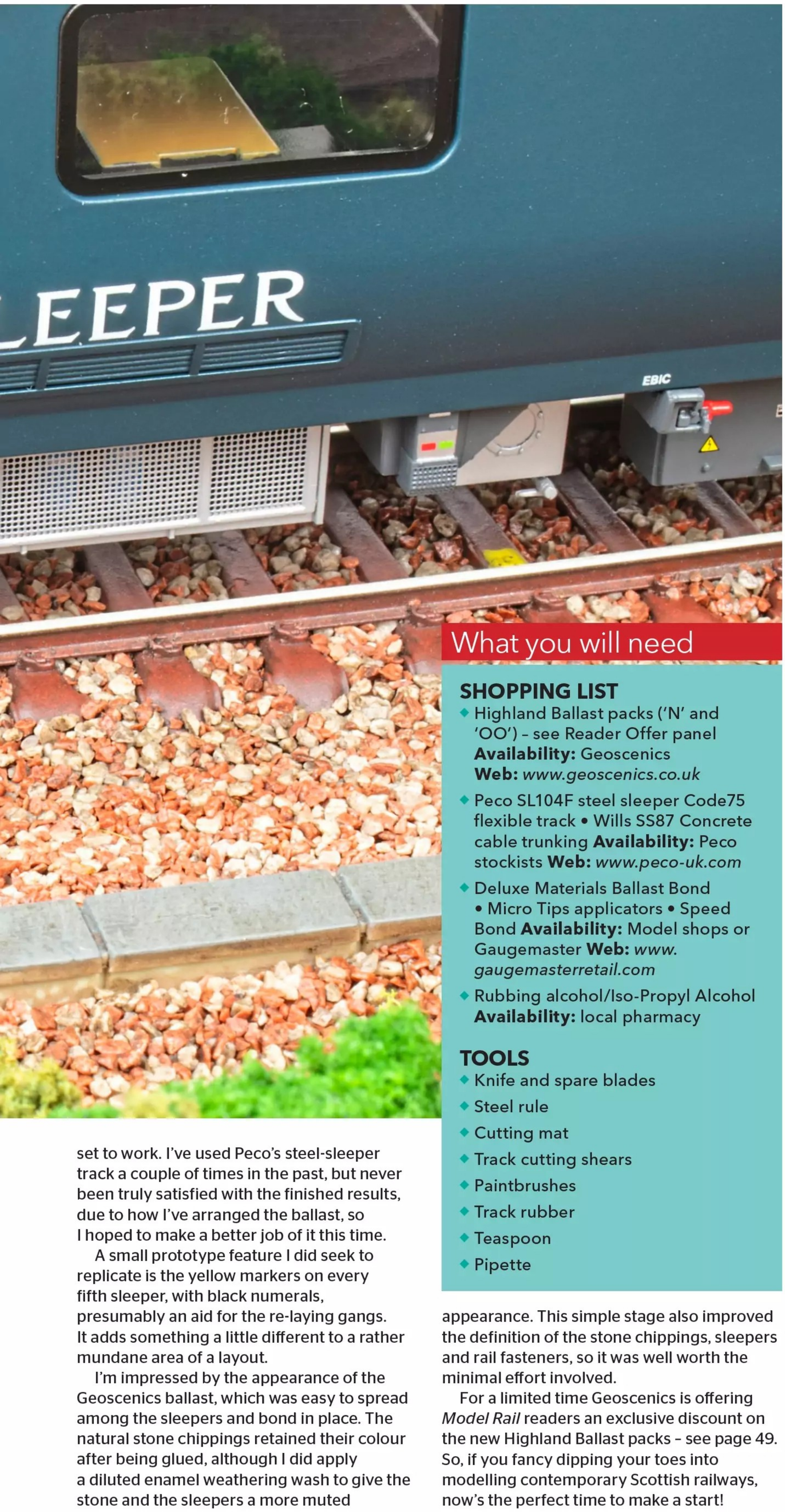
The various station and signal box kits that have appeared in the Peco range over the past couple of years, and Peter Marriott's features in *Model Rail*, had whetted my appetite. But there's nothing like an in-person visit to a location for sparking some new ideas.

One of the line's features that caught my attention was the track itself, numerous stretches of which looked to have been re-laid fairly recently. Steel sleepers abound, coupled with the attractive reddish stone ballast, making for a distinct contrast to murky brown or dull grey ballast I'm used to on my local lines.

Building a West Highland-themed layout is likely to remain a pipedream for some time, but I was moved to build an experimental diorama, especially when

I heard about Geoscenics' new packs of Highland Ballast. Available in two grades, for 'N' and 'OO' gauges, the real stone chippings are made up of various red/brown shades, plus a little grey granite to avoid an overly uniform appearance, which can often spoil the effect somewhat.

Geoscenics kindly supplied a 1kg bag of each grade for me to trial and, with a length of Peco steel-sleeper flexible 'OO' track, I could



What you will need

SHOPPING LIST

- Highland Ballast packs ('N' and 'OO') – see Reader Offer panel **Availability:** Geoscenics **Web:** *www.geoscenics.co.uk*
- Peco SL104F steel sleeper Code75 flexible track • Wills SS87 Concrete cable trunking **Availability:** Peco stockists **Web:** *www.peco-uk.com*
- Deluxe Materials Ballast Bond • Micro Tips applicators • Speed Bond **Availability:** Model shops or Gaugemaster **Web:** *www.gaugemasterretail.com*
- Rubbing alcohol/Iso-Propyl Alcohol **Availability:** local pharmacy

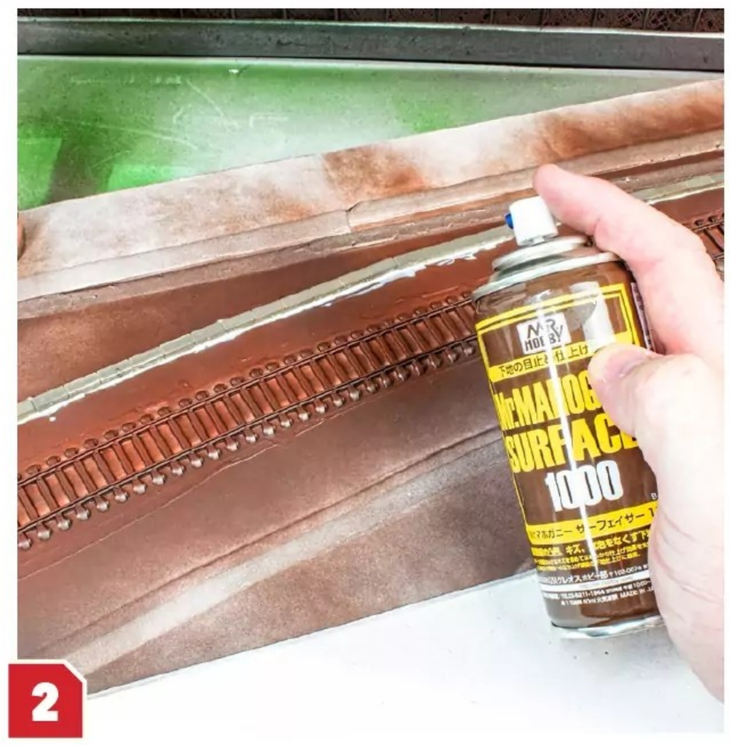
TOOLS

- Knife and spare blades
- Steel rule
- Cutting mat
- Track cutting shears
- Paintbrushes
- Track rubber
- Teaspoon
- Pipette

STEP BY STEP

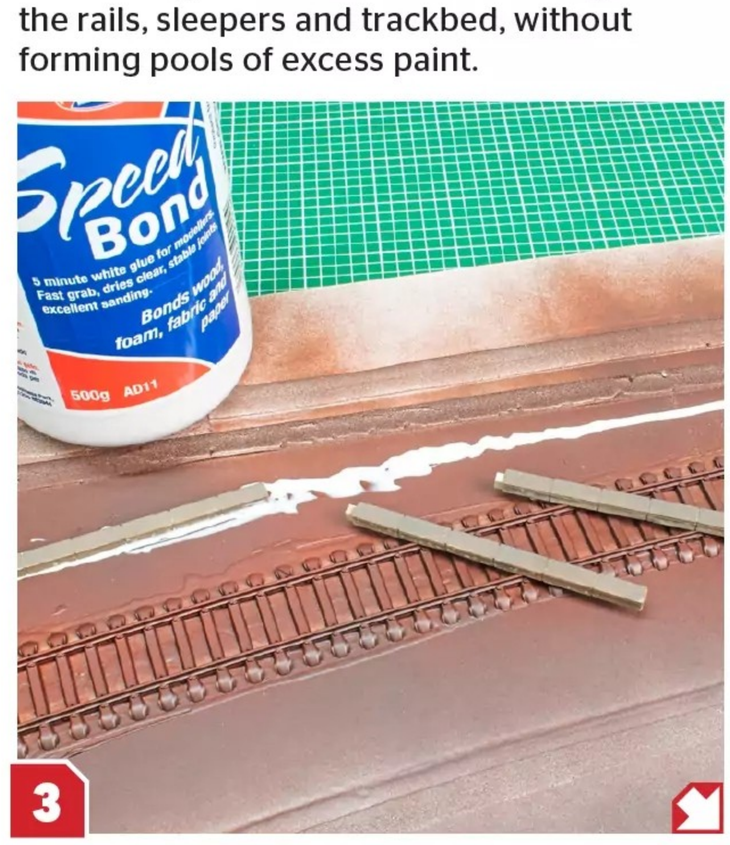
1

The diorama was formed from layers of 5mm thick foamboard, built up in layers in order to create a contoured effect. Having cut the Peco steel sleeper flexible track to length, it was fixed with Speed Bond PVA-type adhesive. The offcut of track would be used as a test bed (see step 4).



2

When the glue had set, the track and surrounding area was misted with brown and red oxide aerosol-based primers. The paint was built up in light coats, sprayed from various angles to ensure even coverage of the rails, sleepers and trackbed, without forming pools of excess paint.



3

I had some lengths of Wills concrete cable trunking in stock, salvaged from a previous layout, so this was re-purposed, bonded to the side of the trackbed with the Speed Bond glue, following the line's gentle curvature as neatly as possible.

set to work. I've used Peco's steel-sleeper track a couple of times in the past, but never been truly satisfied with the finished results, due to how I've arranged the ballast, so I hoped to make a better job of it this time.

A small prototype feature I did seek to replicate is the yellow markers on every fifth sleeper, with black numerals, presumably an aid for the re-laying gangs. It adds something a little different to a rather mundane area of a layout.

I'm impressed by the appearance of the Geoscenics ballast, which was easy to spread among the sleepers and bond in place. The natural stone chippings retained their colour after being glued, although I did apply a diluted enamel weathering wash to give the stone and the sleepers a more muted appearance. This simple stage also improved the definition of the stone chippings, sleepers and rail fasteners, so it was well worth the minimal effort involved.

For a limited time Geoscenics is offering *Model Rail* readers an exclusive discount on the new Highland Ballast packs – see page 49. So, if you fancy dipping your toes into modelling contemporary Scottish railways, now's the perfect time to make a start!

4 To determine which of the Geoscenics Highland Ballast grades I preferred, the track offcut was bonded to a scrap of foamboard, painted in the same way, and then ballasted, with the 'N' gauge grade on one side (right) and 'OO' on the other. The difference is subtle, but I opted for the 'OO' pack.

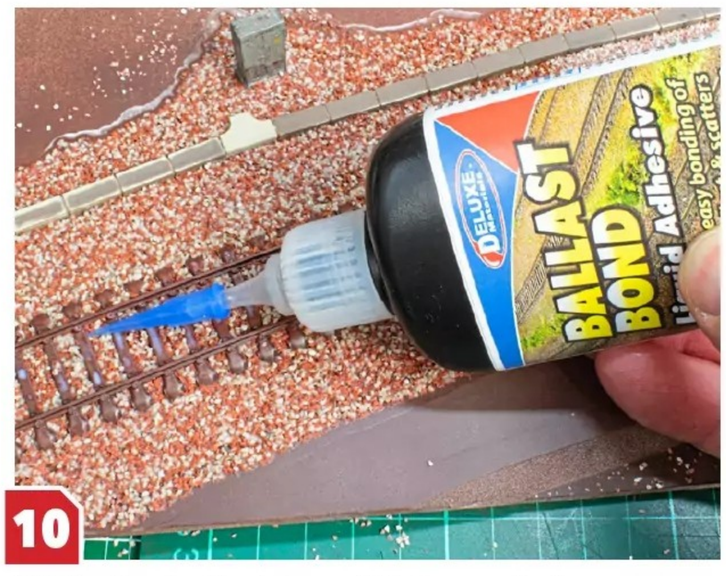
5 A quantity of the ballast was decanted into a dish and spooned gently over the track, using a flat brush to help guide the finely chipped stone between the sleepers and under the rails. It's a gradual process – applying too much stone makes the job more difficult.

6 Lightly running a flat paintbrush along the tops of the sleepers helps manipulate the stone into position. It takes several passes and lightly tapping the tops of the rails also helps – much like a real tamper machine! Taking the time to get things right now will be rewarded later.

7 The ballast 'shoulders', along both sides of the track, were also tidied with the brush, aiming for a consistent shape and spread from the ends of the sleepers.

8 My recent visit to the West Highland showed a wide spread of ballast down into the cess on either side of the track, so I added the 'N' gauge grade, for a bit of variety, spreading with the flat brush, especially around the cable trunking, tidying the outer edges as before.

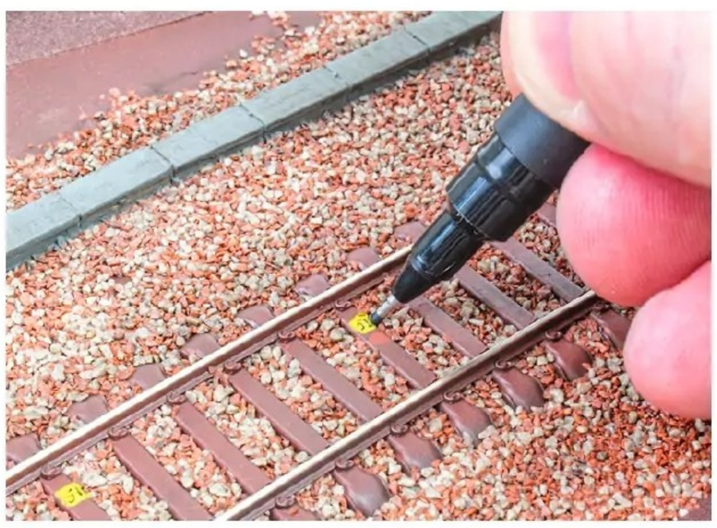
9 With the ballast arranged as neatly as possible, it's time to bond it in place. A helpful first step is to dampen the porous stone with Rubbing Alcohol, available from pharmacies, and applied with a pipette. I treated about 6 linear inches of track at a time.



10 While the ballast was still damp, Deluxe Materials' Ballast Bond was applied straight from the bottle, using a pinpoint applicator tip. Thin or diluted PVA glue is also effective, although Ballast Bond cures much quicker. The thin glue penetrates instantly into the wet stone.

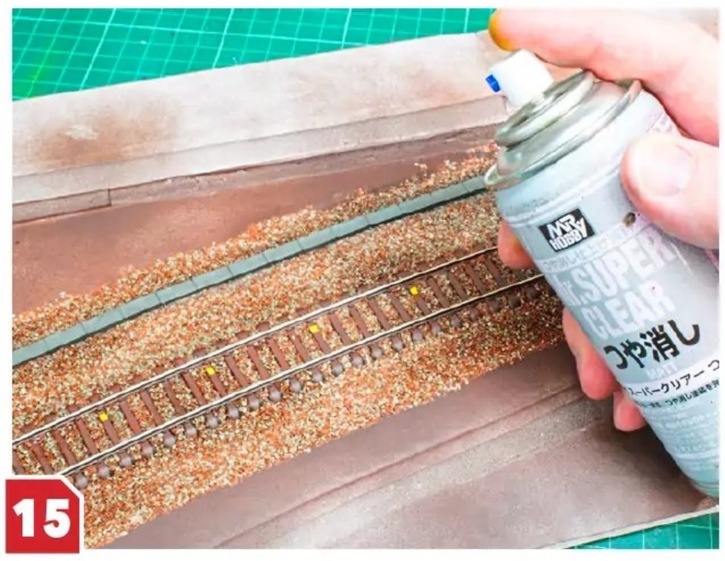
11 You'll be able to see the glue spreading effortlessly throughout the damp ballast. The beauty of using the Rubbing Alcohol instead of water to dampen the ballast is that the former evaporates quickly, allowing the glue to dry faster. The process was repeated along the length of the diorama, about 6 inches at a time.

12 The ballast had cured within 24 hours, allowing me to add the small yellow squares on every fifth sleeper. I also gave the Wills concrete trunking a fresh lick of paint.



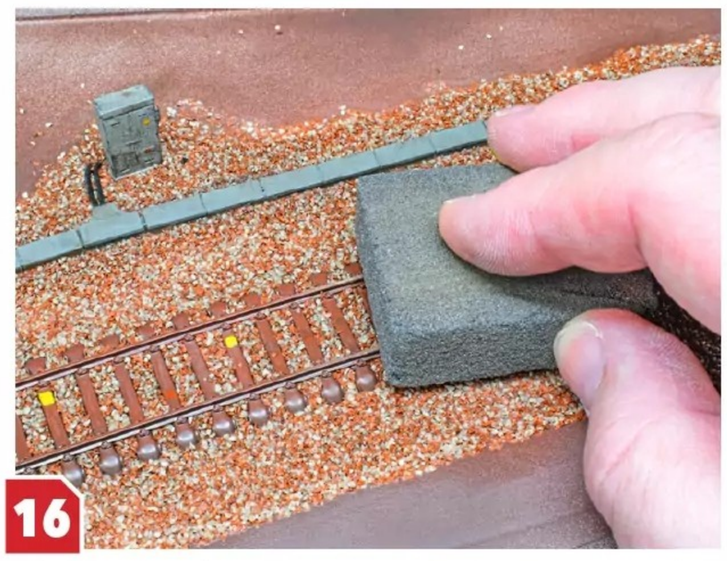
13 When the yellow paint had dried, I did my best to add neat numbers with a fine black artist's ink pen. My eyesight's not what it was, so they turned out a bit rough!

14 To give the track and ballast a slightly lived-in appearance, I diluted a dark enamel wash with the appropriate thinners, and brushed the fluid over the entire area, allowing it to soak into the ballast. Drying to a matt finish, the wash pigments brought extra definition to the stone chippings.



15

I noted a few areas where excess ballast glue had left a slightly shiny coating on some of the sleepers, so a light misting of a clear gloss finish flattened everything down to a consistent sheen.



16

The final task was to give the tops of the rails a thorough clean, using a track rubber initially, followed by finer grades of abrasive pads, brushing away the resulting debris. A rub with a cloth dampened with a track cleaning fluid helps to remove any lingering residues before the line opens to traffic!

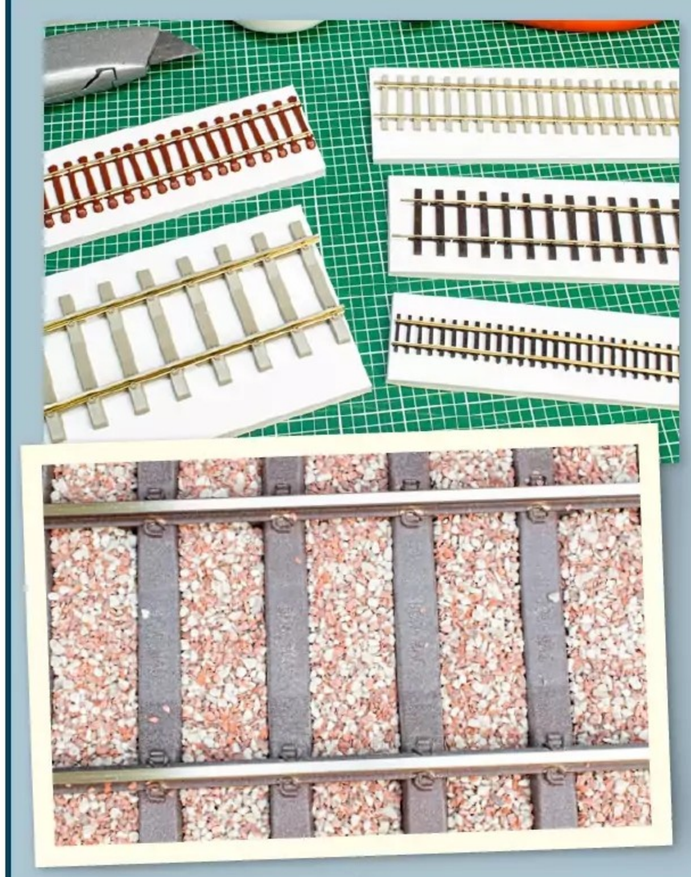
The rendition of the yellow sleeper markers adds a little extra visual interest.

Geoscenics' new Highland Ballast has a suitably reddish tint, mixed with more conventional grey granite chippings for a more natural tonal variation.

Steel-sleeper track at Helensburgh Upper station, complete with yellow-backed number panels at five sleeper intervals. GEORGE DENT

Another stretch of the West Highland line near Helensburgh, with more of the yellow number panels and the distinctive red-brown ballast in evidence. GEORGE DENT

TESTING TRACKS



In order to trial the new ballast before committing to laying it on a diorama or layout, why not try it on some track offcuts, mounted to scraps of foamboard or similar sheet materials. The Geoscenics Highland Ballast is offered in two slightly different grades, aimed at the 'N' and 'OO' markets, so employed offcuts of various types of 'OO' track, plus scraps of 'O', 'N' and 'TT' track.

The finer 'N' grade looked fine when bonded to Peco 'N' track, but it also looked the part on the 'TT' and even the 'OO' track. The 'OO' grade naturally looked good with that gauge of track, but didn't look too out of place with 'O' track.

Many modellers prefer erring on the side of smaller scale grades of ballast, but it's a matter of personal preference and testing before use on the 'proper' layout helps you to determine which looks right to you.

EXCLUSIVE READER OFFER

Geoscenics is offering a £2.00 saving per pack of its new Highland ballast range, exclusively for *Model Rail* readers. Available in 'N' and 'OO' gauge grades, each pack provides 1kg of real stone ballast.

To claim your discount off the usual price of £16.50 per pack, enter the code **Ballast25** at the checkout stage when ordering from the Geoscenics website.

The offer runs until September 30 and is available for web orders only.

Web: *www.geoscenics.co.uk*

HOW TO

USE MODELTEX FOAM-BACKED SHEETS

Always happy to try new materials, **Peter Marriott** experiments with an interesting range of modelling sheets that hail from Belgium.

ANY GAUGE **Product: Modeltex Stelcon New building sheets ◆ Price: from £12.00 per A4 sheet plus p&p ◆ Availability: *www.modeltex.be*** | **AVAILABILITY www.modeltex.be** | 3 hrs

While visiting a model railway show in Belgium last September, I came across several products with great potential for use on modern image, UK-outline layouts. One product, produced by Modeltex, really caught my eye.

Consisting of foamboard coated with printed surface overlays, the sheets are available in A3 and A4 sizes, offering realistic materials to mimic concrete retaining walls and all manner of 'panelled' concrete ground coverings, some ostensibly aimed at airfield scenes, plus larger panels suitable for internal and external areas of hardstanding.

There are also asphalt and roads (with lane markings). Just the thing for a contemporary depot, goods terminal, warehouse or even a dock scene.

I opted for the Stelcon New pack. Stelcon is a heavy-duty form of concrete base commonly found in industrial locations, especially where heavy equipment is in operation. There's also an option for 'used' Stelcon, which features a more weather-worn appearance.

The printed coatings look convincing, with varying degrees of subtle – or extensive – weathering. Some also feature areas of graffiti for gritty, urban environments. They feature a waterproof finish, so they're less likely to smudge upon contact with water-based paints and adhesives.

The basic sheets are 3mm thick and they're designed for 'N' gauge or 'HO'/'OO' layouts. Having chatted to the Modeltex team, there's a good chance that these sheets will be offered in other scales in the future.

While the printed detail looks convincing, thanks to the use of foamboard as a backing material, it's possible to introduce extra surface texture using a variety of tools. The sheets possess a slightly satin finish, but once cut and installed, they can be toned down easily with a spray of matt varnish from an aerosol, which will also seal in any weathering (dry pigments would be worth trialing) or painted areas, while also offering a greater protection against UV light and subsequent fading.

I am pleased with the results of my first test of the Modeltex material which, incidentally, can be ordered online and shipped to the UK.

PHOTOGRAPHY: PETER MARRIOTT

What you will need

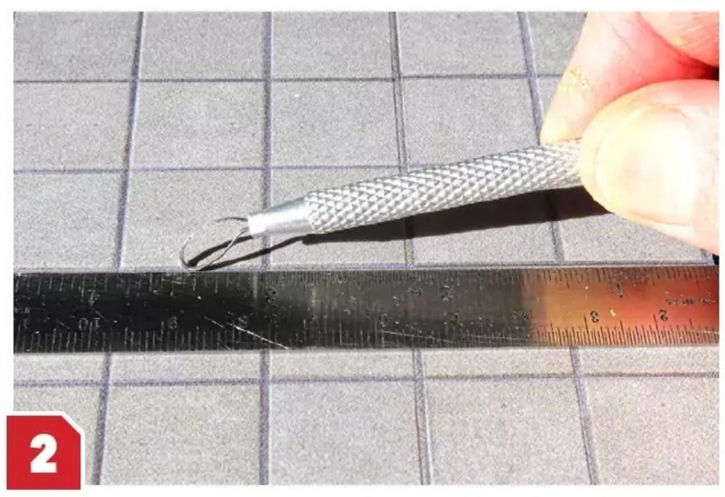
TOOLS

- Craft knife and spare blades
- Cutting board
- Steel rule
- Paintbrushes
- Clay shaping tool
- Wooden cocktail sticks

STEP BY STEP

1

The first step is to cut off the header from the Modeltex sheet, using a sharp craft knife, steel ruler and self-sealing cutting board. I found it best to cut gradually through the thick material, over several light strokes. A fresh blade helps.

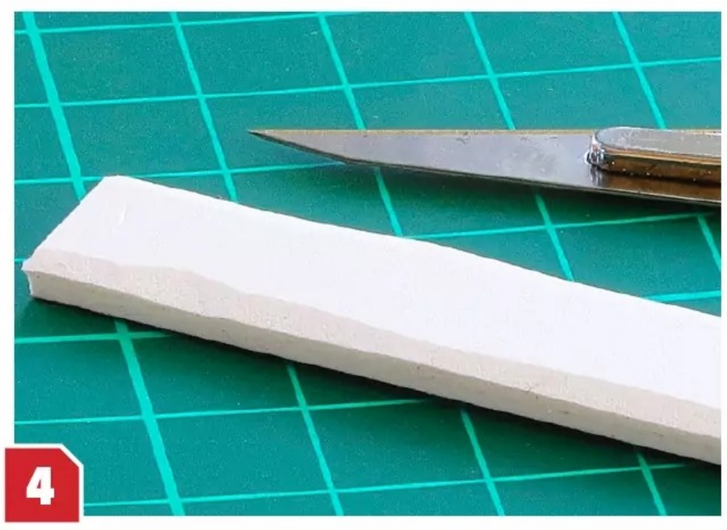


2

Due to the nature of the foamboard backing, the material will retain any impressions pushed into it. A steel clay cutting tool or a wooden stick can be useful for creating indentations into the top surface, especially recessed seams between the concrete panels, guided by a steel rule.

3

For my diorama, I wanted to feature a railway line running through the concrete apron, so I cut a channel into the material to match the 'OO' gauge track. Again, I cut gradually through the board to achieve a clean, accurate cut.



4

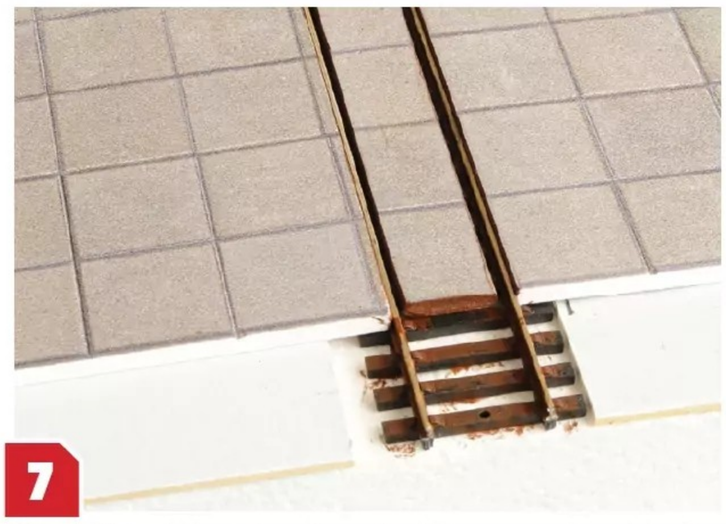
To allow the in-fill strip to sit between the rails, I chamfered the underside of each edge to give clearance for the moulded rail chairs and fasteners. The width of the infill also had to allow sufficient clearance for the wheel flanges of rolling stock.

5

To colour the white, exposed edges of the Modeltex board, I used a pair of grey and brown weathering wash shades I had to hand, which did the trick well. They were brushed along the edge of the foam and allowed to dry.

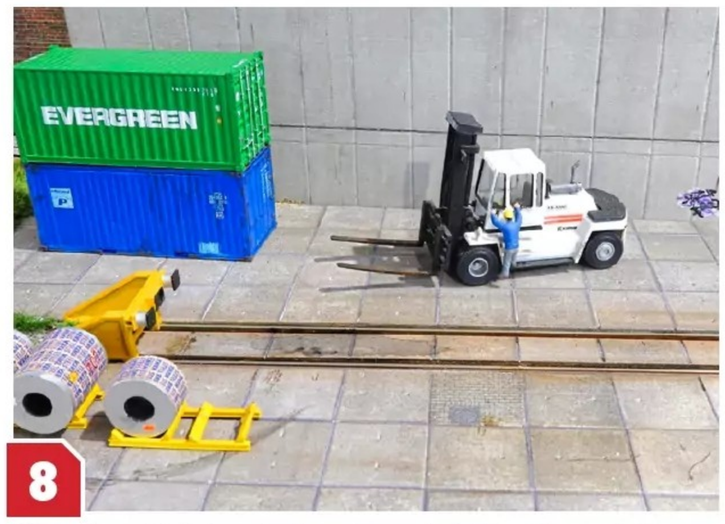
6

It took time to get the Modeltex board set at the right height in relation to the rails, which need to sit slightly proud of the surface to allow them to be cleaned. Eventually, I settled on mounting card fillets.



7

Woodland Scenics Scenic Glue was used to fix the Modeltex and card in place, although most PVA formulas will be suitable. The infill strips were added too, ensuring an even gap to the rail on each side and double-checking wheel clearance.



8

Here's a finished diorama. Adding imprints into the Modeltex sheets gives the surface more effective relief, and some weathering alongside and between the rails adds extra realism. The concrete retaining walls are also formed from Modeltex sheets.

HOW TO

CREATE A UNIQUE CLASS 37

Dave Lowery shows you how to bring variety to your 'O' gauge 'Tractor' fleet.

00 GAUGE

Model: PH Designs Class 37/9 Engine Deck Conversion
RRP: £35.00 plus p&p

10 hrs

AVAILABILITY: PH Designs. Web: www.phd-design-etchings.co.uk

The blossoming of ready-to-run has enabled more modellers to try their hand at 'O' gauge, but the only problem with mass-produced models is that everybody's layout now has the same trains running on them.

Of course, with the standardised fleets now in operation on the railway, most of the trains you see all look the same. Happily, some operators still run classic traction, and within those fleets are one or two oddballs. One such operator is Europhoenix, which restores old UK machines for export, offers locos for hire or is employed to move stock around the country.

It has seven Class 37s. Four are '37/5s', refurbished in the mid-1980s with re-geared bogies and new electrical gear but lacking train heating. Two are Class 37/7s, another mid-1980s subclass but with gearing and additional weight for working heavy freight trains. And then there's 37901.

There were six Class 37/9s, which received new engines in 1986/87. 37901-904 received Mirrlees MB275T engines and Brush alternators in 1986, while 37905/906 were fitted with Ruston RK270T engines and GEC alternators in 1987. The Mirrlees engine would be used in the Class 60.

There were even differences between these six locomotives: 37901-904 had modified roofs that spoilt the smooth curve of the original roof; the Ruston engines retained their roof profile. Of the six '37/9s', only three survive, two of those being the Ruston engines, 37905 and 37906. 37901 is the only survivor of the four Mirrlees engine machines but, thanks to Europhoenix, is still in action on the main line. Although it was recently repainted back into a 'heritage' British Rail livery, I intended to recreate the striking Europhoenix scheme it previously wore.

PH Designs offers the modern image modeller a range of kits and parts designed to reflect the detail differences found on Britain's railways over the last 30 years or so. Naturally, in its 7mm:1ft scale range is a kit for the Mirrlees-fitted Class 37s. The new roof unit is ideal if you've never worked with metal before. Most of it folds together and it requires minimal soldering.

With a few hours of work, you can model a contemporary locomotive that stands out from the crowd.

GEORGE DENT (2)

The unique survivor, 37901 *Mirrlees Pioneer*, has recently lost its Europhoenix livery in favour of a return to BR Trainload Metals livery, harking back to the late 1980s/early 1990s. It is seen on an empty coaching stock transfer from Castle Donnington to Immingham, June 24 2025. ALAMY

What you will need

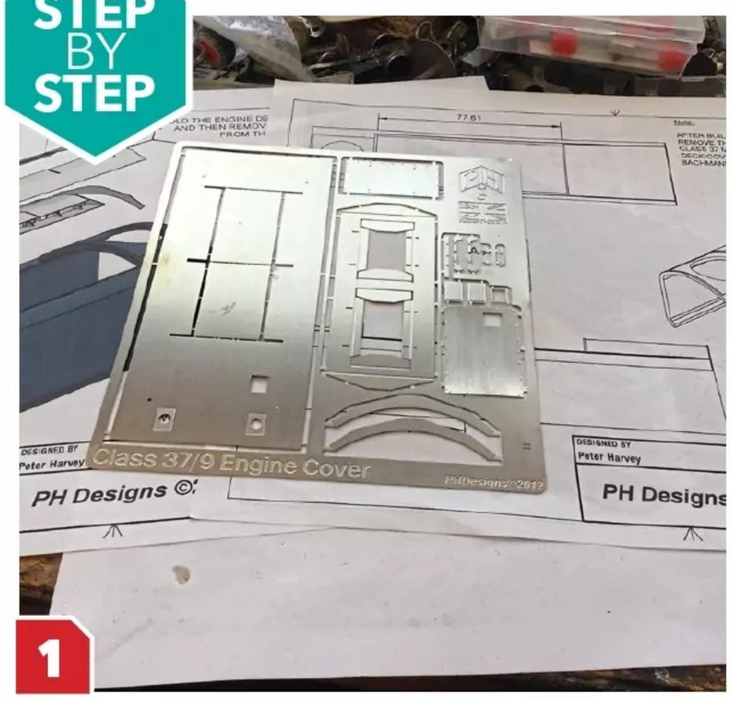
SHOPPING LIST

- Europhoenix decals, 30ml South Western Railways grey
  Availability: Rainbow Railways
  Web: *www.rainbowrailways.co.uk*
- RailMatch • 241 Royal Mail/Res 15ml enamel • 201 Executive Dark Grey 15ml enamel • 226 Railfreight grey 15ml enamel **Availability:** Howes Models **Tel:** 01865 848000
  Web: *www.howesmodels.co.uk*

TOOLS

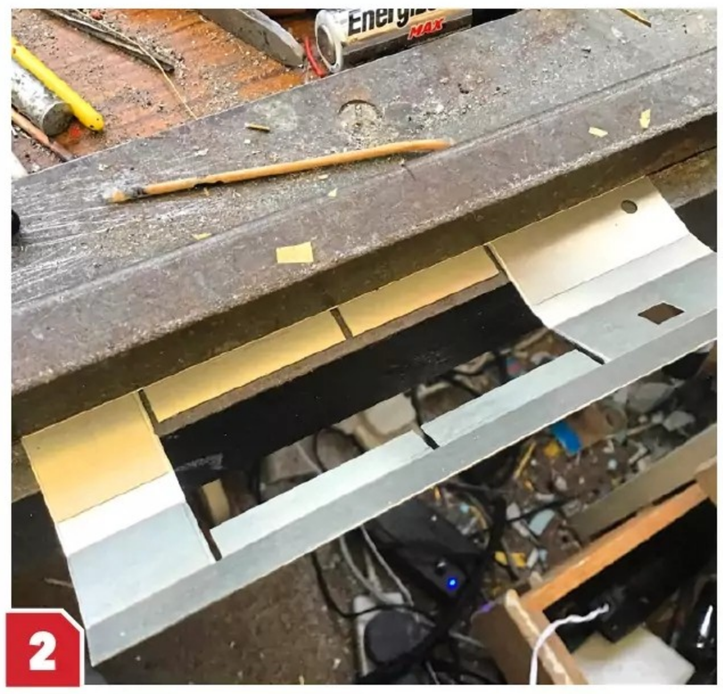
- Knife and spare blades
- Razor saw/slitting disc
- Selection of files
- Soldering iron and accessories
- Jeweller's screwdrivers
- Glass fibre brush
- Airbrush and equipment

STEP BY STEP



1

All of the PH Designs kits and detailing packs that I have used are excellent. They are not only very detailed, but they also go together well. The instructions are really detailed too. In fact, the only thing you need are good reference photographs.



2

The starting point is folding the main roof unit to shape. I used a set of bending bars that I've used for decades. You can buy folding bars from Metalsmith (*www.metalsmith.co.uk*). Carefully bend the main unit to shape and hold it up against the end formers.

3

The internal unit is very detailed with supports for the inner walls. Clean the surfaces with abrasives (a file or a glass fibre pencil) and, when folded to shape, solder the corner fillets in place, followed by the roof panels.

4

There are detailed overlays for the exhaust ports. These need to be folded accurately to match the profile of the main roof unit so you don't getting any springy gaps between them. Again, clean with abrasives first before soldering.

5

Now you have the two main sub-assemblies for the new roof. Offer the main unit up to your Heljan Class 37. Mark its position, using reference photographs. When you're happy with its position, you can now start to make the aperture.

6

A slitting disc makes light work of cutting through the Heljan bodyshell but a handheld razor saw will do just as well. Cut well inside your lines and then tidy with files. Keep checking your roof unit against the model so you don' t remove too much plastic.

7

You should be left with an interference fit between metal part and Heljan bodyshell. When you're happy with the fit, coat the joining surfaces with UHU glue. Allow it to dry slightly before pushing the roof unit into place.

8

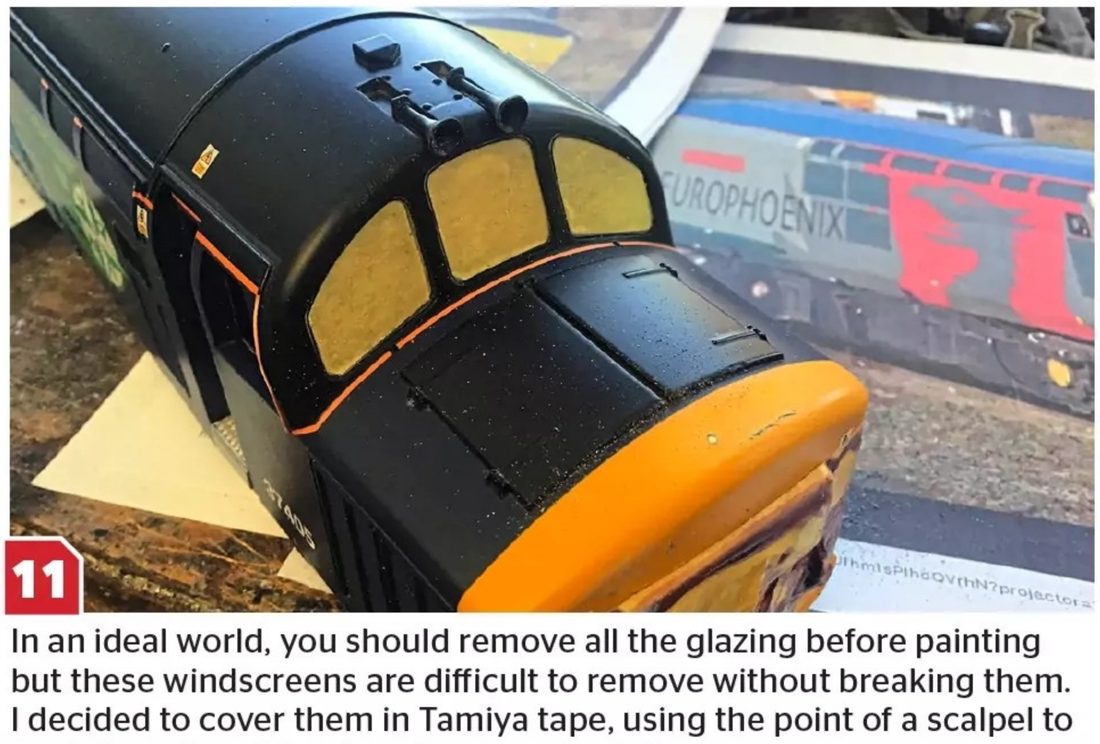
It's essential to get a secure fit in each of the four corners. Therefore, I gave the UHU a helping hand with some cyanoacrylate and accelerator. You'll need to firmly hold the roof unit in place while the cyano cures.

9

When dry, seal any gaps from the underneath using cyano and an accelerator to help it cure. It's best to leave your '37' overnight to make sure that everything has dried properly. You can add more glue to fix any gaps later.

10

Depending on your donor model, there's a little bit of bodywork to do before we can turn our attention to the paint. 37901 has lost its bodyside window, boiler access door and grab handles. Fill the window apertures and handles with filler and abrade flat.



11

In an ideal world, you should remove all the glazing before painting but these windscreens are difficult to remove without breaking them. I decided to cover them in Tamiya tape, using the point of a scalpel to push the edges into place to prevent paint creep.

12

The Europhoenix livery makes use of some old friends: Intercity Executive dark grey for the roof, nose end tops and solebar strip; Railfreight grey for the bodyside panels. When you apply the Executive grey, don't forget the second roof assembly.

13

Here I hit a snag. The Rainbow Railways decal sheet included the large grey and red phoenix logo that makes this livery so eye-catching. However, the raised detail on the Heljan meant that I couldn't get the decals to adhere.

GEORGE DENT

The decals

I commissioned Rainbow Railways to produce the Europhoenix decals and they're available to purchase by anyone who requests them. To order, call Rainbow Railways on 01506 237099 or go to *www.rainbowrailways.co.uk/contact-us/* and fill in the contact form.

14

I made some masks by drawing the logo onto paper. I painted the SWR light grey first, masked it off and then applied Royal Mail red. I fixed each mask using low-tack Tamyia tape and a little Humbrol Maskol. Then I applied Executive and Railfreight grey as before.

15

With the paint completely dry and the masking removed, I decided to fix the centre roof sub-assembly in place. I used the same glueing procedure as before: UHU around the edge (leaving it to go off for a bit) followed by cyano.

16

Here's the finished body, with the grilles picked out in black and varnished. Before it re-fit the body, I took the opportunity to fit a Bryan Robertson sound file, a controllable red tail light, working fan and cab lights. But that's beyond the scope of this feature.

The Europhoenix livery has been one of the most striking to appear in recent years. While application on a model can be a wee bit tricky, the job is helped by the availability of waterslide decals.

What makes this layout great?

This is a depot layout that stands out from the crowd. There's no need for the retaining wall backdrop and other depot layout cliches. It's utterly convincing – which is why we've bought it as a photographic backdrop! So look out for this diorama in future issues of *Model Rail*.

Sustainable **building**

After a chance encounter with a laser-cut depot kit, **Paul Gosden** set about building a fictional contemporary engineering facility, where green technology is embraced.

Words: **Paul Gosden** Photography: **Chris Nevard**

It's almost a bit of a cliché to say that the purchase of a new model then inspires a new layout, but that's what happened to me when I went to the first National Festival of Railway Modelling at the NEC in November 2024. This time, however, it was not a locomotive that caught my eye but a laser-cut maintenance depot kit from PJ Models. Normally, I build all the structures for my dioramas and layouts, but this kit impressed me.

There were two kits available: one comprises a four-road depot building with a complementary office block. The other is a four-road add-on to the main depot building. Looking at them, I could envision their use on a new diorama, so I bought both.

One growth area for the rail industry is the development of sustainable power. Operators are making significant investment in new bi- and tri-mode locomotives, while rolling stock is becoming more environmentally friendly. Research and development ➤

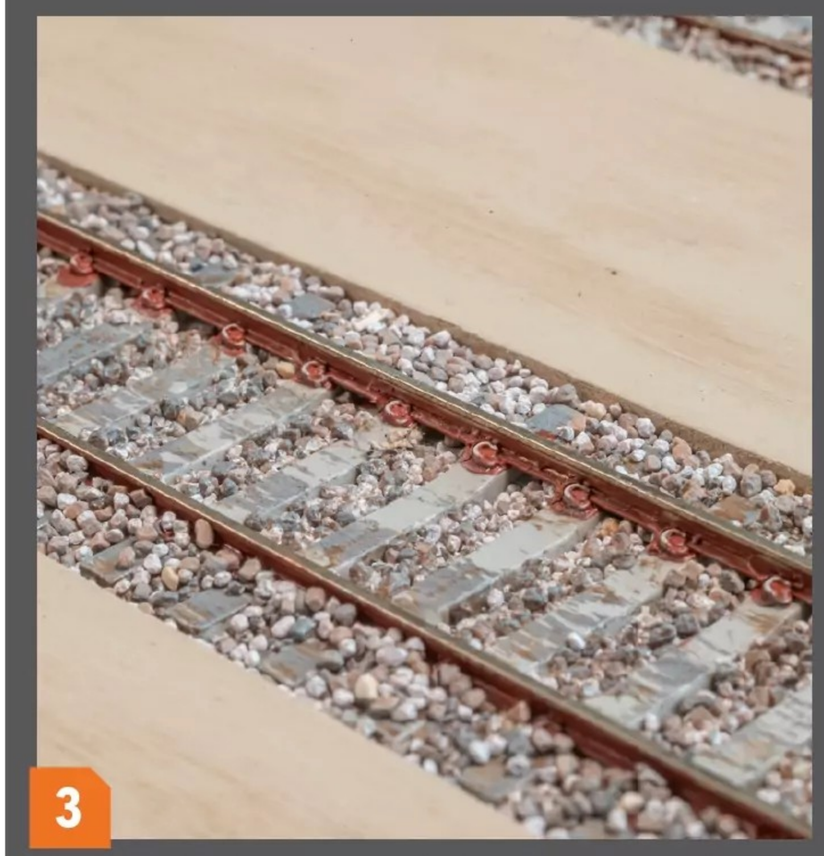
Above: GB Rail is working on two former CrossCountry Mk 3 coaches that are being prepared for export. The screw jacks are from West Hill Wagon Works.

Network Rail Class 37 97304 *John Tiley* rests outside the GB Rail depot with two test coaches. The bufferstops are also illuminated, using Train-Tech BL1 lights, now available from Gaugemaster.

3 things we like

1 Paul has skilfully used Tamiya flat aluminium paint and varnish to make timber look like metal.

2 The hardstanding is mount board that's been painted, weathered with acrylics and then varnished.



3 The track has been beautifully weathered; painting the Pandrol clip tops is a neat touch.

is being carried out to extend the working life of existing traction, retrofit greener technology and explore the potential of new fuels, such as Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) and hydrogen.

GB Rail is one such organisation. It's a new, innovative company that's developing technology and solutions to make Britain's railways greener. OK, it's a figment of my imagination but it allowed me to display locomotives from different operators. I've also imagined that GB Rail has won some kind of contract with Network Rail to maintain its rolling stock.

The depot kits' instructions were clear and concise and it went together very well indeed. I had to make it look as though it was a contemporary structure and one striving to make itself sustainable, so it's clad in Slater's Plastikard Sheet 4mm spaced Planking. This is very effective at creating the look of a modern, portal frame building.

It also needed solar panels. I looked for pictures on the internet, took screenshots and then re-sized them on my computer, using Pages software. I simply printed them out and used them to replace two bays of skylights and added a panel to the front elevation. ➤

Europhoenix's Class 37 37800 is a temporary visitor, having just brought in the failed Network Rail HST. You can buy similar yard lights from Gaugemaster (GM467).

DB Cargo 66004, which runs on vegetable oil, is making preparations to leave after efficiency checks since the modification from running on diesel fuel.

Other modifications included fitting out the office block with furniture, staff and computers. The whole build took me about three months to complete and, once it was finished, I then had to paint it and weather it so that it reflected a new site that had only recently opened.

The baseboard is only 4ft long and 18in wide. The trackplan is as simple as you can get – six straight lengths of track. Being portable, there's no mains wiring. The diorama is powered by four 9V batteries. They last a long time and can be replaced easily.

Each battery has a specific role, as well as its own switch. One controls the internal roof lights, another is responsible for the lighting in the inspection pits. A third switch activates the external lighting towers while the fourth controls the track power.

Now, the diorama is non-operational, but to give it a bit of extra life I take one of the locomotives and program it on my main DCC layout to have the lights on and for the engine to just tick over. Then I put it on the diorama, activate the 9V battery and it sits there quite happily running as programmed. Each track is connected to the fourth battery and my two Bachmann Class 37s and one Bachmann Class 66 are sound-fitted so I'm not tied to having just one locomotive positioned in the same place all the time.

I did buy a small portable stand to go underneath ➤

the layout so that I can lift it up in the air in order to work on the wiring if required. The actual depot building can be removed from the base by removing six fixing screws. This gives me access to the interior to carry out any maintenance or to update the diorama.

It also allows me access to the inspection pits. These are Peco kits (ref. LK-156) that have been transformed with LED lighting strips. They're protected by a homemade 'fence', made using thin yellow thread, while the warning chevrons are from West Hill Wagon Works (*www.westhillwagonworks.com).*

I've built a number of depot layouts over the years (see MR212/258), amassing plenty of photographs to get those essential details right. I was able to scratchbuild the crane from plastic beams using photographs I'd taken during visits to Freightliner depots. It's lifting Hornby Class 66 66733 *Cambridge PSB*. I like the Hornby RailRoad Class 66s for use in the depot as they look good from a distance.

Having been round many a depot, I've gained a good idea of what you need to make a convincing scene. I did make some of the cabinets and bits and pieces myself but the West Hill Wagon Works range has been invaluable for things such as the racks of oil drums, pallets loaded with equipment and the multitude of waste bins.

This has been a really enjoyable project, especially given that it was a chance encounter with the PJ Models kit (*www.pjmmodels.co.uk).* It's particularly gratifying that *MR* Editor George Dent decided it was worthy of being a photographic backdrop for *Model Rail*, and it's now housed in George's workshop. So while I no longer have 'GB Rail', you'll be seeing more of it in future issues. MR

FACTFILE: ‘GB RAIL TECH’

Gauge and scale: 4mm:1ft, 16.5mm gauge, ‘OO’

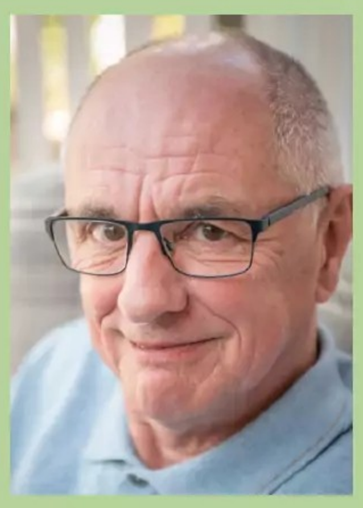
Size: 4ft 4in by 18in

Track: Peco Code 75

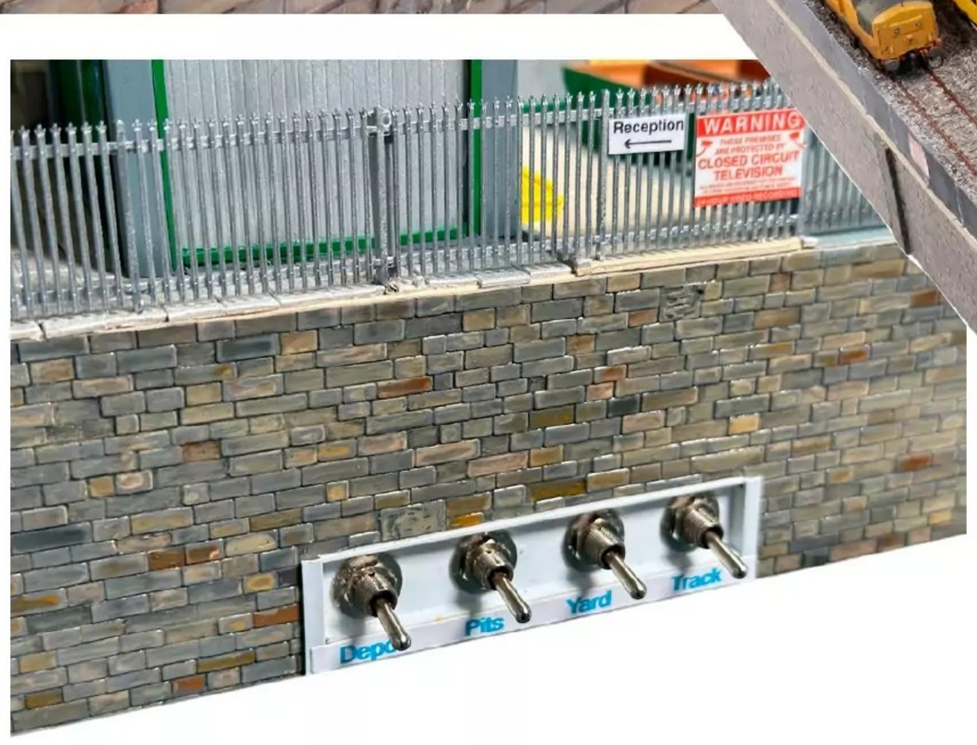
Power and control: 9V battery

Time to build: Six months

ABOUT THE MODELLER: PAUL GOSDEN



“Originally from Hammersmith in West London, I have lived in Leighton Buzzard for well over 40 years. I love gardening and being out in the fresh air, and spend of a lot of time travelling on the railway, taking the opportunity to photograph freight trains.”



MYFORD
MACHINE TOOLS

THOMAS
MERCHANT

What makes this layout great?

Alan wanted a layout where the trains disappear behind buildings and he's achieved just that. The detail in the foreground can hold your attention for ages so you really don't notice what's going on the railway in the background.

GOING SMALL
IN A BIG SCALE

Seasoned 'O' gauge modeller **Alan Thompson** fancied a break from larger layouts, and set himself a challenge of creating a highly detailed 7mm scale scene in less than 5ft.

Words: **Richard Foster** Photography: **Chris Nevard**

1

Appearances can be deceptive. Looking at Alan Thompson's 'Wilne Lane Yard' from a distance, it has all the hallmarks of a 21st-century micro-layout. It's beautifully lit and framed by a neat fascia panel, the layout name tastefully represented by a maroon BR 'hotdog' totem. You could imagine it sitting in the corner of a spare room, the only space Alan has for layout building.

It's 'O' gauge and you could also imagine Alan browsing the Dapol and Heljan ranges, ideas for micro layouts forming with every new announcement.

'Wilne Lane Yard' might be new – it took Alan roughly five years to build – but he is a long-time 'O' gauge convert.

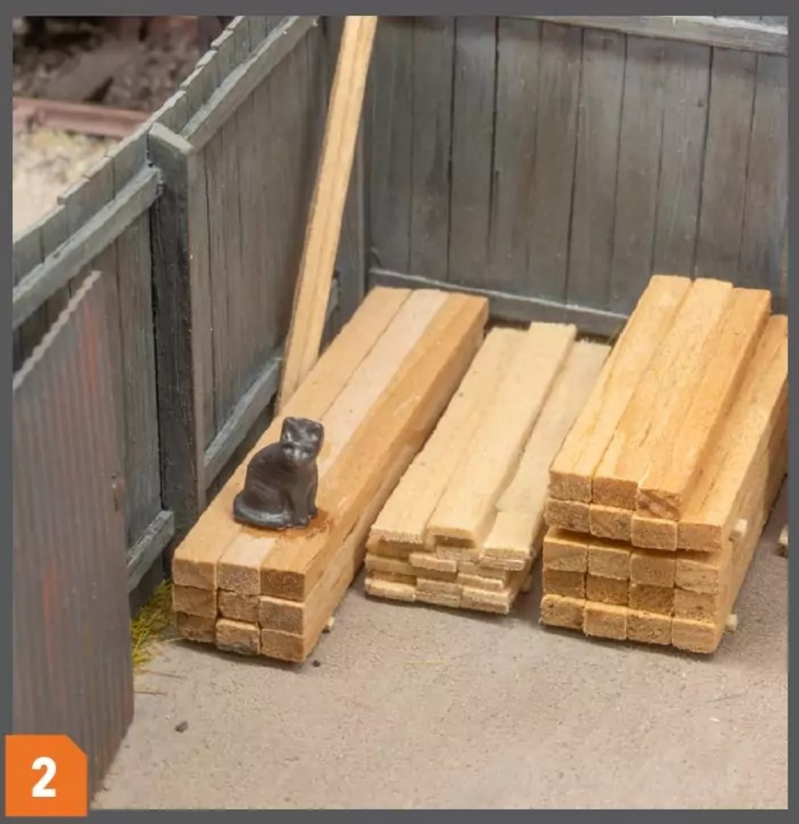
"I've been modelling in 'O' gauge for quite a few years now. My daughter was a baby when I first started and she's in her 30s now."

Look beyond the contemporary fascia and you can see some of that legacy. There's a hand-held Gaugemaster controller. It's fed from an old Hammant & Morgan Duette, which also feeds power to the point motors. There's no DCC here. ➤

3 things we like

1

The paving slabs were cut from the card on the back of A4 pads and painted grey. The card's texture creates the effect of natural stone.



2

Good use of Gordon Gravett's technique for giving texture to concrete: a gloss grey paint has talcum powder all over it.

3

The transition between track ballast and surrounding landscape cleverly uses corrugated cardboard placed close to the sleepers and then given a skim of Polyfilla.

2

The layout's buildings have been crafted from scratch, using textured plastic sheet around a foamboard core.

Alan's father worked at Myford Machine Tools, giving the factory backdrop a personal twist.

Nor are the figures laser-scanned and 3D printed affairs. They're all whitemetal. And neither are the trains ready-to-run; locomotives and wagons are all kit-built, the latter coming from the Slater's or Parkside ranges.

"When I started in 'O' gauge there wasn't much at all ready-to-run apart from Lima."

'O' gauge has grown in popularity, partly thanks to its size, making it easier as fingers become less flexible and eyesight gets a little foggier. Alan, however, started his 'O' gauge journey when such physical foibles were a long way in the future. So what attracted him to the 'Senior Scale'?

"It's just the sort of mass of it really," he explains. "Even if you've just got a locomotive and three or four wagons, it's got some presence about it. I used to find myself going to model railway exhibitions and lingering longer at the 'O' gauge layouts. But I've done them all over the years – 'OO9', 'N' gauge and 'OO' of course."

'Wilne Lane Yard' is, therefore, not Alan's first layout and thus another misconception about this layout is dispelled. This isn't a micro layout fighting for space in a spare room for doubled up as a railway room. In fact, Alan has built his own railway room – about the size of a single garage - in his garden.

"As my wife says, all you need is a bed in there and you'll stay in there," he jokes.

This railway room was once home to a 15ft long 'O' gauge layout, but Alan had a desire for something a bit ➤

smaller, a shunting puzzle type layout. But Alan wanted his to stand out from the crowd.

In order to do this, he decided to have buildings at the forefront of the scene with the railway behind because "I liked the idea of the trains disappearing behind the buildings so that, you know, you don't see them all in one go when they enter the scene".

These buildings would have to include a lot of detail, being that this is an 'O' gauge layout and that they were the first things you would see. As you can see from the accompanying photographs, Alan has created three highly detailed and convincing structures that do hold the attention. That's due to the sheer level of detail he has been able to incorporate.

You might think that the little mechanic's workshop, complete with its boarded-over inspection pit, suggests that Alan is a classic car lover, possibly a fan of the Austin A35 given the fact that one is parked out front. But he admits that the choice of a mechanic's workshop and a builder's yard was purely based on what would look good rather than any personal connection.

The exception was the small print shop.

"When I first left school, I was actually a compositor ➤

44587

Alan began his working career as a compositor, so the small print shop, with fully detailed interior, is a throwback to those days.

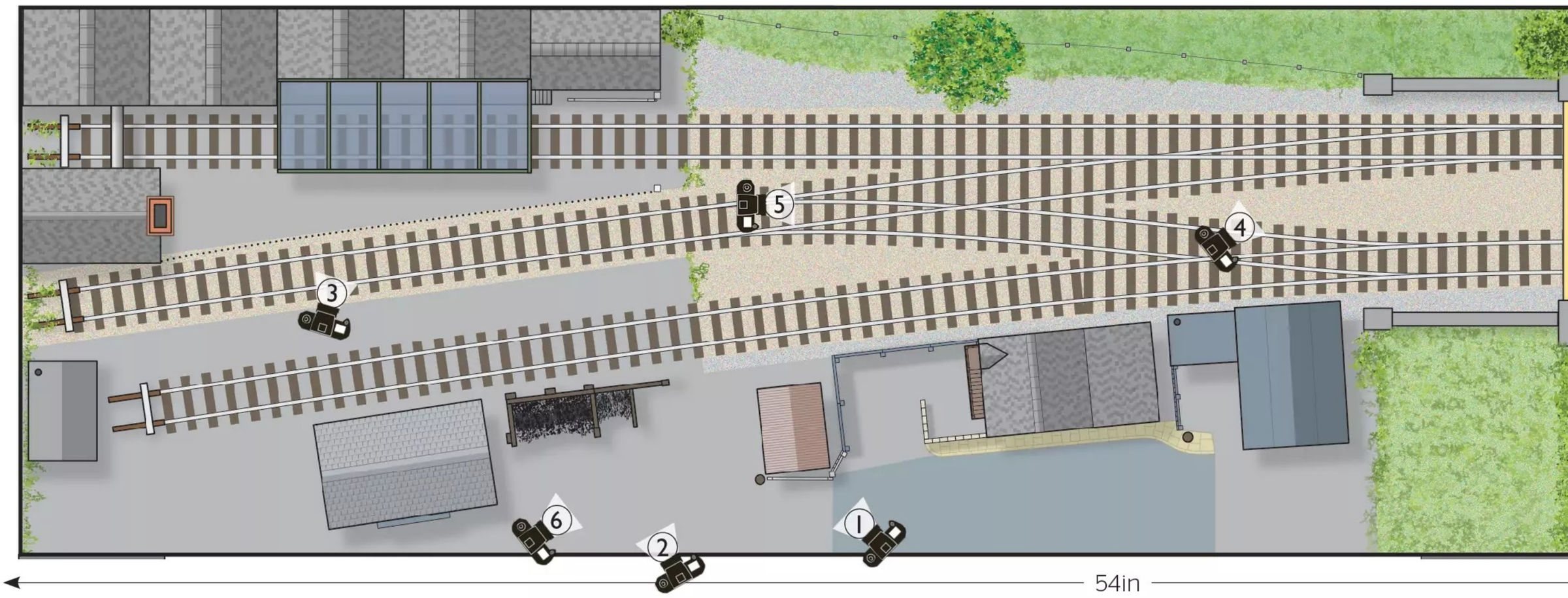
in the print trade. I did that for a few years and then moved on to working for software companies that supply publishing systems," Alan explains. "So it's a bit of a throwback to that."

That's not the only personal link on the layout. The industrial buildings that form the backdrop are named Myford Machine Tools. Model engineering enthusiasts are likely to recognise the name for the company – which is still going – made lathes and other machine tools.

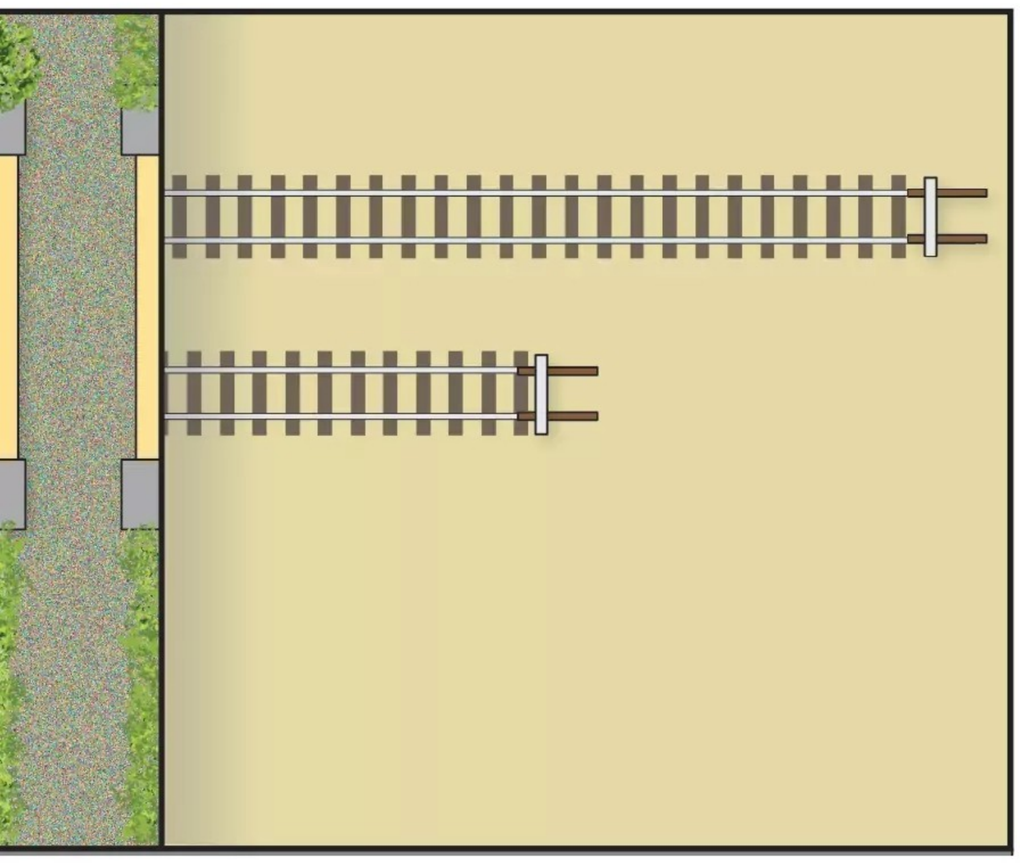
"My father worked there," Alan recalls. "He was never actually employed by them. He was a contractor that worked there for about 40 years."

The buildings themselves are made from foamboard, clad in plastic sheet. The interior detail is a mixture of off-the-shelf detailing parts and scratchbuilt items; it is the print shop that, naturally, features the most homemade items. Complementing the buildings are carefully positioned figures, which, as we've said, are all whitemetal castings. Alan's ➤

5



Artwork: **Andrew Mackintosh**



Shunting manoeuvres are made according to a simple card and dice game, presenting Alan with the interesting challenge of moving specific wagons into particular sidings.

6

"The two headshunts are both deliberately short so you can only put a locomotive and one wagon in them"

painted them himself, no mean feat when you're slightly colourblind.

That blend of ex-LMS and ex-LNER locomotives might be reminiscent of what you would have once seen around Alan's native Nottinghamshire. But the layout, he stresses, is entirely freelance. The track plan was formed by playing around with a few bits of track, a locomotive and a couple of wagons.

"The two headshunts are both deliberately short so you can only put a locomotive and one wagon in them," he says. "When you go back into the fiddleyard, the headshunt is [also] short, so you have to do a bit of thinking when you're shunting the front sidings."

Alan has devised a simple shunting game when he gets half an hour to "shunt a few wagons around". Each wagon is allocated a card and you can tell Alan worked for a software company for the cards have been clearly designed by someone who knows their way around a computer. Pick a card, roll the dice and the number dictates where the wagon on the card is deposited: one siding is allocated to even numbers, the other odd numbers. This game also keeps Alan entertained on the very few occasions he takes the layout out to exhibitions.

In fact, if 'Wilne Lane Yard' does go out, he likes to keep it local. But that means peering through these wonderful buildings, hoping to catch a glimpse of the trains pottering around, is an experience only a comparative few people will enjoy.

You might also assume that, as with most layout building stories, Alan still has much to do to 'Wilne Lane Yard' before it's considered finished. Not so. In fact, Alan is already working on a new layout, something considerably larger.

"It's going to include a station with an island platform," he says. "I wanted to go back to something with a couple of coaches. But it's very early days at the moment." MR

FACTFILE: 'WILNE LANE YARD'

Gauge and scale: 7mm:1ft scale, 32mm gauge, 'O'

Size: 54in by 21in

Track: Peco

Power and control: Gaugemaster hand-held controller, Hammant & Morgan 12V DC

Time to build: Five years

ABOUT THE MODELLER: ALAN THOMPSON

"I am a retired IT Customer Services Manager living in Buckinghamshire. When not railway modelling, I play bass guitar in a rock covers band and enjoy spending time with my grandchildren."

BEST FOR 'O' GAUGE

Alan has been a long-time Gauge O Guild member and heartily recommends membership for anyone interested in 'Senior Scale' modelling. It is "an international community of modellers working in 'O' Gauge or 7mm variations, in all eras offering advice, resources and support". See *www.gaugeoguild.com* for more details.

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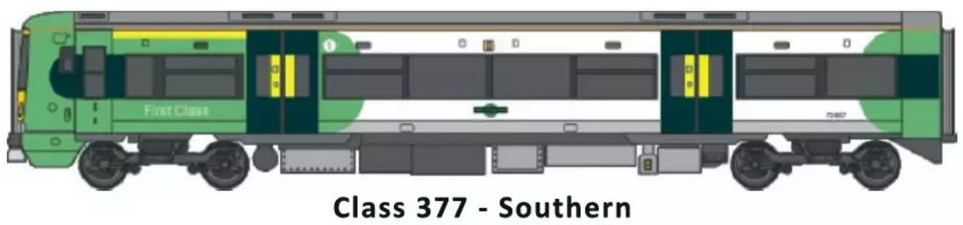
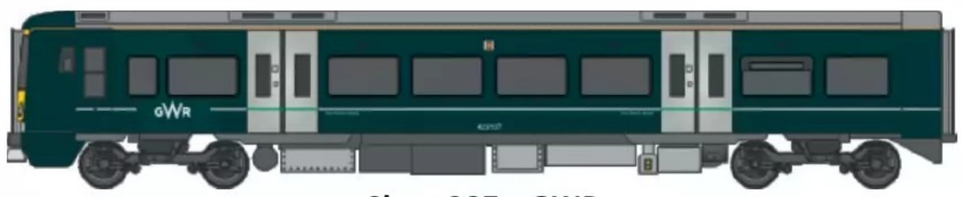


Class 377 - Southern

377118 Brighton - Portsmouth Harbour
377101 London Victoria - Brighton
377214 South Croydon - Milton Keynes
377210 Thameslink: Brighton - Bedford

Class 377 - Urban Lights

377501 First Capital Connect: Bedford - Brighton
377510 Thameslink: Brighton - Bedford



Class 387 - GWR

387152 London Paddington - Cardiff
387133 London Paddington - Didcot

Class 387 - Gatwick Exprress

387204 Gatwick Express: Brighton - London Victoria
387201 Debranded: King's Cross - Ely
387205 Debranded: Paddington - Newbury

Class 387 - Great Northern

387124 London King's Cross - King's Lynn
387127 London King's Cross - King's Lynn

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Reviews

In-depth and unbiased reviews of the latest products

80 **Hornby LNER Class J52**

84 **Rapido LBSCR Class E1**

88 **KR Models Hunslet British Steel Bo-Bo**

92 **Hornby BR Class 423 '4-VEP'**

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97 **Hornby TTA tanks**

Our reviewers

George Dent
Model Rail's modern image expert.

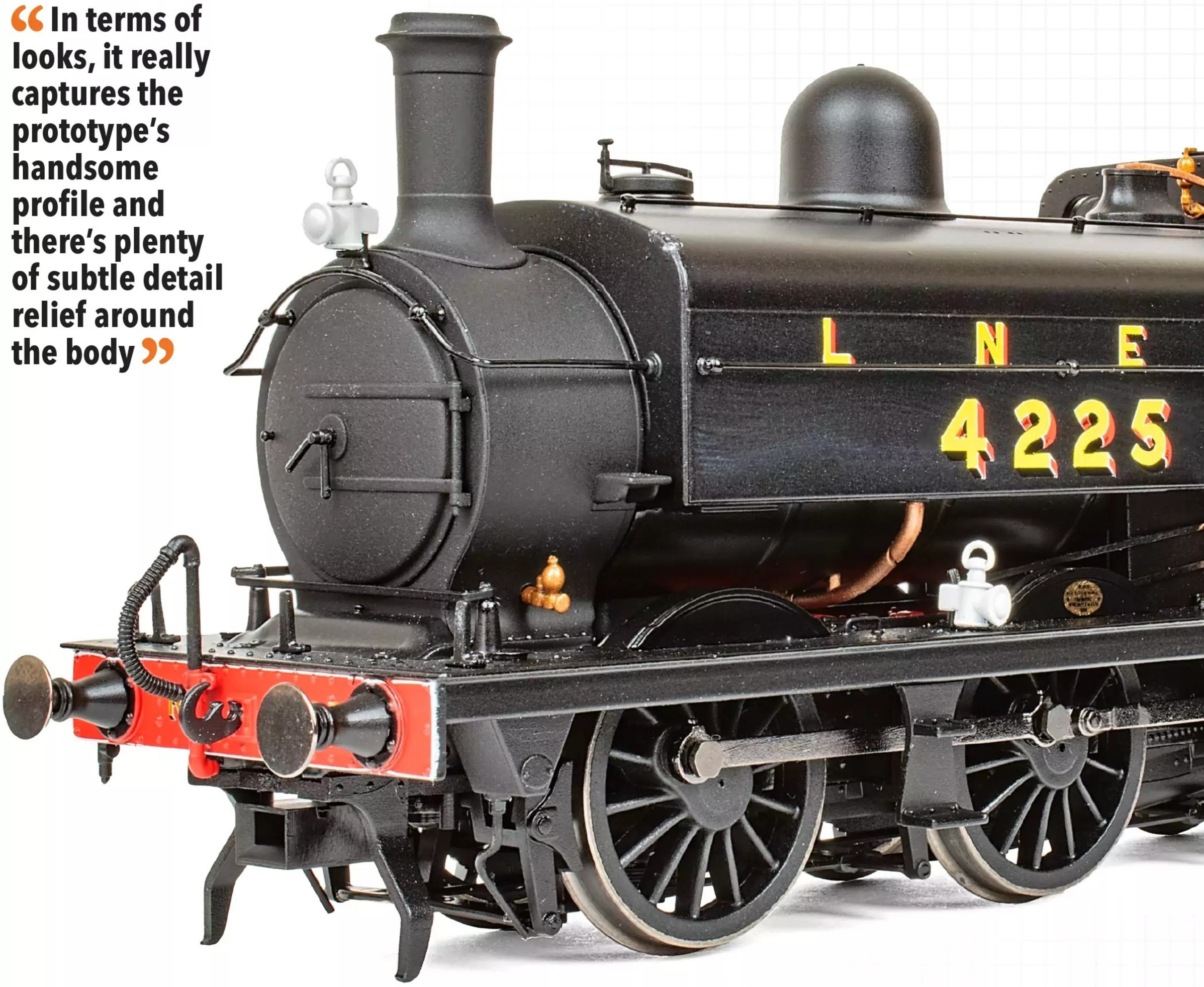
Chris Leigh
Wrote his first review in 1964!

Richard Gunn
A keen 'N' gauge modeller.

How we test

At *Model Rail*, we pride ourselves on the quality, thoroughness and unbiased nature of our reviews. We assess models on their looks, performance, features and value for money. We also run them on our own test tracks, which feature various gradients and numerous challenging track configurations.

“In terms of looks, it really captures the prototype’s handsome profile and there’s plenty of subtle detail relief around the body”



Hornby LNER Class J52

◆ **GAUGE** ‘OO’ ◆ **MODEL** Hornby R30366 LNER Class J52 0-6-0ST No. 4225, LNER black ◆ **PRICE** £174.99 ◆ **AVAILABILITY** Hornby stockists **Web** *www.hornby.com*

Hornby has boasted a model of the Ivatt Class J52 in its range since 1981 and, despite its age, the tooling did capture the profile and character of the 0-6-0ST well and included such luxuries as wire handrails and nicely moulded injector pipework in front of the cab. The drive unit and chassis had begun to appear primitive by the 2000s, and various cottage industries offered detail and chassis upgrade kits which made for an enjoyable project.

Unsurprisingly, Hornby announced an all-new ‘J52’ last November, promising a hugely superior mechanism, full DCC provision and a wealth of detail, with the tooling allowing for period-specific fixtures and fittings to be accurately rendered. Alternative bunkers, chimneys, safety valves, fluted or plain coupling rods, and other key differences will be observed, catering for the Great Northern, LNER and BR eras.

Three versions were announced initially, consisting of GNR lined green No. 1257, BR black No. 68873 and LNER black No. 4225. The latter was the first to arrive – and is the subject of our review – with the others due to follow soon. Presented in Hornby’s new lift-top, foam-lined box, first impressions are favourable, with the model appearing light years ahead of the original 1980s tooling.

NEWCASTLE-MADE

LNER No. 4225 represents one of 10 ‘J52s’ – originally classified as ‘J13’ by the GNR – to be built at Robert Stephenson & Co., on the banks of the Tyne in 1898-99. Wearing plain black livery, the shaded lettering and numerals makes for a classy finish, and the model features several period-correct appointments for the 1920s-1930s, the original safety valves and open coal rails being the most obvious, along with the tall chimney. The three tank-side handrail knobs is a nod to this locomotive’s Tyneside birthplace, as Doncaster-built versions had four.

For a small locomotive, it’s a weighty model, thanks to ample use of die-cast metal on various segments of the body and the chassis block. In terms of looks, it

really captures the prototype's handsome profile and there's plenty of subtle detail relief around the body, especially the cab's raised beading and riveted front and rear spectacle plates. The wire handrails are admirably fine and resilient to the inevitable handling of the model by the tank sides.

The chimney shape looks spot-on, and its fully hollow nature adds to the effect. Separately fitted lamp brackets, sanding levers, lubricator pots, reverser rod, fireiron brackets (on the left-hand running plate), whistle and smokebox door handles all add to an overall feel of quality. The moulded plastic coal load in the bunker is the only element that's disappointing, but most of us would cover that with real coal anyway.

The cab interior is fully equipped, with painted controls, gauges and pipework, although the easiest access for adding a footplate crew looks to be through the side apertures. A glowing firebox effect is provided.

The elegantly tapered buffershanks are equipped with sprung metal heads and, below the running plate, the spoked wheels, lifeguards, sanding pipes and ashpan detail are convincing. The blackened, plain coupling rods are compensated, and a full array of brake gear (including rigging) is pre-installed.

The rear (bunker end) NEM coupler pocket is mounted to a sprung, close-coupling unit, whereas the front version pivots around a screw mount, with a self-centring mechanism. A slimline tension lock coupler is pre-fitted to the rear, with another supplied in the detail bag for the smokebox end.

Talking of which, a set of vacuum pipes is provided, which slot into holes formed in the bufferbeams, plus a half-dozen oil lamps which slot handily over the fine metal lamp brackets at either end. They're held securely once in place, but can be repositioned at will, with no need for adhesive. ➤

3 things we like

1 Cosmetic internal valve gear looks convincing.

2 Fully detailed cab interior and firebox glow effect.

3 Lamps slot over the brackets, and can be repositioned at will.

Hornby LNER Class J52 – in detail

GETTING INSIDE

Accessing the 21pin DCC socket involves removing the bodyshell, which is retained by three screws. It's a simple job, aided by clear instructions, and the DCC interface is mounted towards the front end of the chassis block, above a pre-installed 'sugar cube'-style speaker. Space has been provided for an optional Hornby Power Bank (R7377), which is designed to maintain the locomotive's operation during short breaks in power – a welcome addition to a short wheelbase locomotive when digital sound is in play.

The drive unit is a very compact affair, driving the centre axle via a series of gears. Power is collected from all six wheels, via wiper pick-ups, and there's a good degree of sideplay

Factfile: Great Northern 'J13'/LNER 'J52'

Derived from an existing design by Patrick Stirling, the Great Northern Railway's J13 Class 0-6-0ST first appeared in 1897, overseen by Henry Ivatt. A total of 85 were built, with work spread between Doncaster Works, Robert Stephenson & Co. and Sharp, Stewart & Co. After being absorbed into LNER stock at the Grouping, the locomotives became known as the J52 Class.

Stirling's preceding 0-6-0STs, the GNR 'J14', were rebuilt with the same larger boiler as the 'J13', and these were also placed into the J52 Class. To help differentiate between the locomotives' heritage, the rebuilt Stirling machines became the 'J52/1' sub-class, while Ivatt's 'J13s' became the 'J52/2'.

Built primarily for shunting work, the 'J52s' became a common sight, especially at major marshalling yards along the Great Northern route, while a few London-based examples gained condensing equipment for use on transfer freight workings on the Metropolitan lines.

Although withdrawals began in the late 1930s, over 100 examples remained on the LNER's books by the time of nationalisation. The arrival of BR's new diesel shunting locomotives brought about the end for the 'J52s', with a handful surviving beyond 1961 in Departmental use. One 'J52', No. 68846, became the first steam locomotive to be purchased by a private individual in May 1959, and was later donated to the National Railway Museum.

Sharp, Stewart-built Class J52/2 No. 68835 hauls a transfer freight through Doncaster station during the early years of British Railways. COLOUR RAIL

Having been 'bulled-up' for its role on a RCTS Hertfordshire rail tour, King's Cross shed's 'J52/2' No. 68878 rests at St Albans Abbey, on April 30 1955. COLOUR RAIL

One of the four 'J52s' retained for Departmental use, No. 9 (ex-68840) is seen at Doncaster Works in May 1960. COLOUR RAIL

in the axles, but no form of vertical compensation. The die-cast metal chassis block incorporates the lower portion of the boiler, allowing daylight to be seen between it and the frames, while a cosmetic rendition of the inside valve gear is a welcome and effective addition.

Under test, our sample ran sweetly from the offing, the motor operating smoothly throughout the speed range. Slow-speed running improved markedly following a running-in period, with the 'J52' soon pootling about the sidings, shunting away in its natural environment. Haulage power was more than ample for the kind of work this locomotive would be tasked with, thanks to the model's ample mass.

In terms of finish, the overall black livery is applied neatly, with a slight satin sheen that veers towards matt on the smokebox and chimney, which looks great. The delicate white lining and gold numerals on the front bufferbeam are impressive, while the shaded yellow lettering and numbers on the tank side are immaculate. The front shoulders of the water tank sport small blemishes, presumably from the packaging receiving a bump in transit, but otherwise the finish is flawless.

Hornby has done a great job with this all-new 'J52', finally doing justice to Ivatt's attractive and reliable 0-6-0ST. With Rapido's version getting closer to fruition, modellers will soon be spoiled for choice, although both manufacturers have collaborated to offer different prototype versions, making the best of the unfortunate duplication issue. Hornby's GNR green 'J13' is due to be the next arrival, with the BR version expected by the end of the year. ***(GD)***

SUMMARY

PROS

- Captures the prototype well.
- Excellent level of detail.
- Performance.
- Massive upgrade over older tooling.

CONS

- Minor paintwork blemishes.

FINAL VERDICT

Fabulous!

VITAL STATISTICS: HORNBY LNER 'J52'

OVERVIEW

Manufacturer: Hornby
Ref. No. R30366
Unit No. 4225
Scale/gauge: 1:76 scale, 'OO' gauge
Body: Plastic with metal parts
Chassis: Metal with plastic parts
Weight: 237g
Min. curve radius: 438mm (second radius)
Wheel back-to-back: 14.4mm

DIMENSIONS	PROTOTYPE	1:76 SCALE	MODEL
Length (over buffers)	31ft 3¼in	125.5mm	125mm
Height	13ft 1in	52.4mm	52.4mm
Width	8ft 6in	34.4mm	34mm
Wheel diameter	4ft 8in	19.2mm	19mm
Wheelbase	15ft 6in	62.4mm	62mm

SERVICING

How to dismantle: Body unscrews from chassis
Where to oil: Gears, crankpins and axles – see instructions

ELECTRICS

Electrical system: 12V DC two-rail
Motor type: Five-pole, skew-wound
Lights: Firebox glow
DCC-ready? 21pin socket, speaker pre-fitted

MECHANISM

Drive system: Motor drives centre axle via worm and gears
Flywheel(s): No
Traction tyres: No

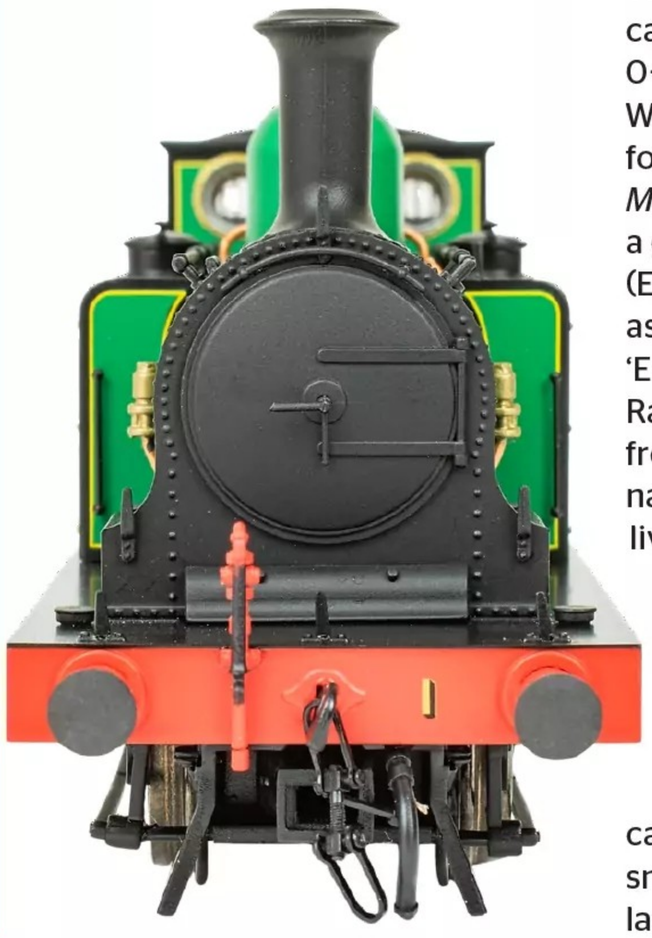
Rapido LBSCR 'E1' 0-6-0T

◆ **GAUGE** 'OO' ◆ **MODEL** 936012 LBSCR 'E1' 0-6-0 BR Green (IOW) No. 1 *Medina* ◆ **PRICE** £164.95 ◆ **AVAILABILITY** Rapido Trains UK stockists

Web *www.rapidotrains.co.uk*

I must admit to taking more than my usual level of personal interest in Rapido Trains' LBSCR 'E1' 0-6-0T because, as a project, it originated in *Model Rail* editorial discussions back in 2018. As an enthusiast of the SR's West Country lines, I recall pressing for an 'E1R' 0-6-2T version, but it soon became clear that the tooling changes to accommodate a new cab and rear pony truck would not be practical.

There were concerns too that with the 'E1' being a 'Terrier on steroids', it would be competing with two 'Terriers' already available from other manufacturers. The market for pretty-coloured pre-Grouping locomotives had yet to prove itself and caution was necessary. The 'E1' was nevertheless briefly launched as a *Model Rail* exclusive, before being absorbed into newly created Rapido UK's own range (with our blessing).



FINESSE GALORE

Rapido has produced 16 versions of the 'E1' in differing guises, liveries and detail variations. Having recently been captivated by EFE Rail's 'O2' 0-4-4T in Malachite as Isle of Wight No. 24 *Calbourne* I opted for the 'E1' as Isle of Wight No. 1 *Medina* in similar livery. It is a good match in all respects (EFE Rail's Malachite is not quite as 'vibrant' as Rapido's) but the 'E1' carries the 1948 'British Railways' lettering which dates from the period before the nationalised railway's standard liveries were introduced.

Rapido has caught the character of the 0-6-0T remarkably well, from the smokebox front with its distinctive wing plates to the Stroudley trademark 'dished' cab roof. The separately applied small details are unusually fine – lamp irons, smokebox door handles and handrails. I've seen one online reviewer complain about the plastic handrails, stating that, for the price, he expects wire and separate handrail knobs. I don't. The plastic handrails on my sample are neat, straight and finer than is normal with wire.

The one flaw in the appearance of this model is the join between the upper and lower sections of the boiler, visible as a horizontal line from the smokebox rear to the tank front on the first 'ring' of the boiler. It shows as a black line on the Malachite green but probably would be far less obvious on a black or dark brown version. From most viewing angles it won't be seen.

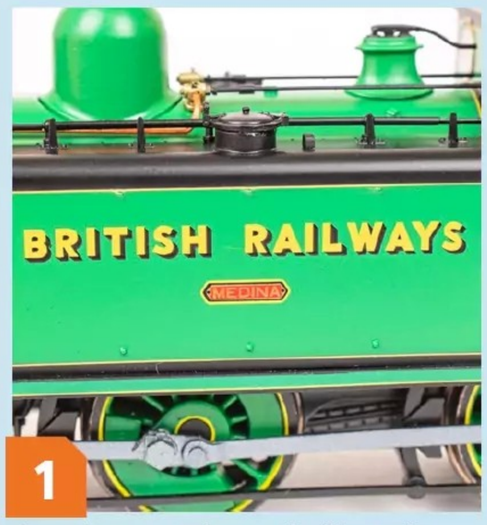
Red-painted inside motion can be glimpsed between the frames ahead of the tanks, and there are fine, crisply moulded guard irons and sand pipes on the chassis.

The 'brassed' and 'coppered' fittings on the boiler are convincing, but for a real treat take a look inside the cab where the backhead bristles with separately applied fittings, valves and controls, framed by open cab doorways with the neatest of handrails (they're plastic, too).

The model has sprung, blackened metal buffers front and back, and tension-lock couplers in pivoted NEM pockets. Dismantling, in order to fit a decoder, could be problematic as at least some of the brake hangers appear to be glued into the underside of the body. A detailed 16-page instruction booklet shows which screws need to be undone to remove the body for fitting a Next18 decoder and which require undoing to remove the keeper plate for lubrication, which should not be necessary for some time.

As DCC sound-fitted versions are available I would go for one of

3 things we like



1 Southern-style early 'British Railways' sunshine lettering looks very effective.

2 Exquisitely detailed cab with a wealth of separate fitments and controls.

3 The finish is superb, with very finely reproduced lining.

"As we have come to expect from Rapido, the decoration is top-notch. The yellow lining on the boiler bands and around the black edging is the finest I've seen and it really does set this model apart"

those if I wanted DCC rather than doing a DIY installation as this is a complex little model and I'm not sure I would want to attempt re-assembly. If you do decide to do it, the instruction booklet is certainly helpful, and the decoder replaces a blanking panel in the right-hand side tank.

FINISH LINE

As we have come to expect from Rapido, the decoration is top-notch. The yellow lining on the boiler bands and around the black edging is the finest I've seen and it really does set this model apart. The number and 'sunshine' lettering are similarly crisp, while the printed nameplate is outlined in yellow, black and 'brass' although the name itself is a little indistinct.

A Southern Railway oval number plate is printed on the bunker back. Unusually no etched plates are provided ➤

Rapido LBSCR 'E1' 0-6-0T – in detail

Factfile: LBSCR 'E1' 0-6-0T

Chief Mechanical Engineer of the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway, William Stroudley, followed his highly successful 1872 passenger tank engine (the diminutive 'A1X' or 'Terrier' 0-6-0T) in 1874 with a larger goods engine version. Known initially as the 'E' tank it was subsequently designated 'E1'. The new 0-6-0T proved itself in service, and repeated small builds eventually brought the class to 78 examples.

They were used mainly on goods and shunting work and were, apparently, not popular in passenger service. Withdrawals began as early as 1908 with some examples being disposed of to industry. However, in the early 1930s others were overhauled and four were sent to the Isle of Wight while six others were converted to 0-6-2Ts, reclassified 'E1/R' and set to work in the west of England where they saw service on the North Devon & Cornwall Junction Light Railway (Torrington-Halwill Junction) and also as bankers between Exeter St Davids and Central stations.

LBSCR devotee the late Brian Haresnape wrote that 'no two 'E' tanks were exactly alike by the end of the LBSCR days it seems, with the various permutations of boiler, chimney, dome, condensing/non-condensing etc'. Thus, there were combinations of Marsh or Billinton boilers with Stroudley chimneys and Marsh chimneys with earlier boilers, making it a minefield for a model manufacturer trying to offer the correct combinations in appropriate liveries.

In 1948 30 'E1s' (including the Isle of Wight four) and 10 'E1R's passed into BR ownership. Three that were employed in Southampton Docks received 'walkie-talkie' radios in 1955 and were identifiable by a 'box' on the cab roof.

Only one example escaped the scrapyard and that was sold to Cannock & Rugeley Colliery. It entered preservation by way of the East Somerset Railway and is now on the Isle of Wight.

1: Several years after grouping, Stroudley 'E1' No. 110 still carries LBSC livery as it is captured during shunting operations at Hove, on March 3 1929. O.J. MORRIS/RAIL ARCHIVE STEPHENSON

2: Isle of Wight 'E1' 0-6-0T No. W3 *Ryde* in 1930s SR olive green. Note the concave end to the tank beneath the bunker. Those on the model are convex. A.B. MACLEOD/CJL COLLECTION

3: Wearing BR plain black livery, No. 2 *Yarmouth* is pictured here hard at work shunting at Shanklin Gas Works Siding on the Isle of Wight during June 1954. COLOUR RAIL

for this or the nameplates. The bag of small detail parts contains both tall and short vacuum and air pipes and alternative functional or dummy three-link couplings.

RUNNING

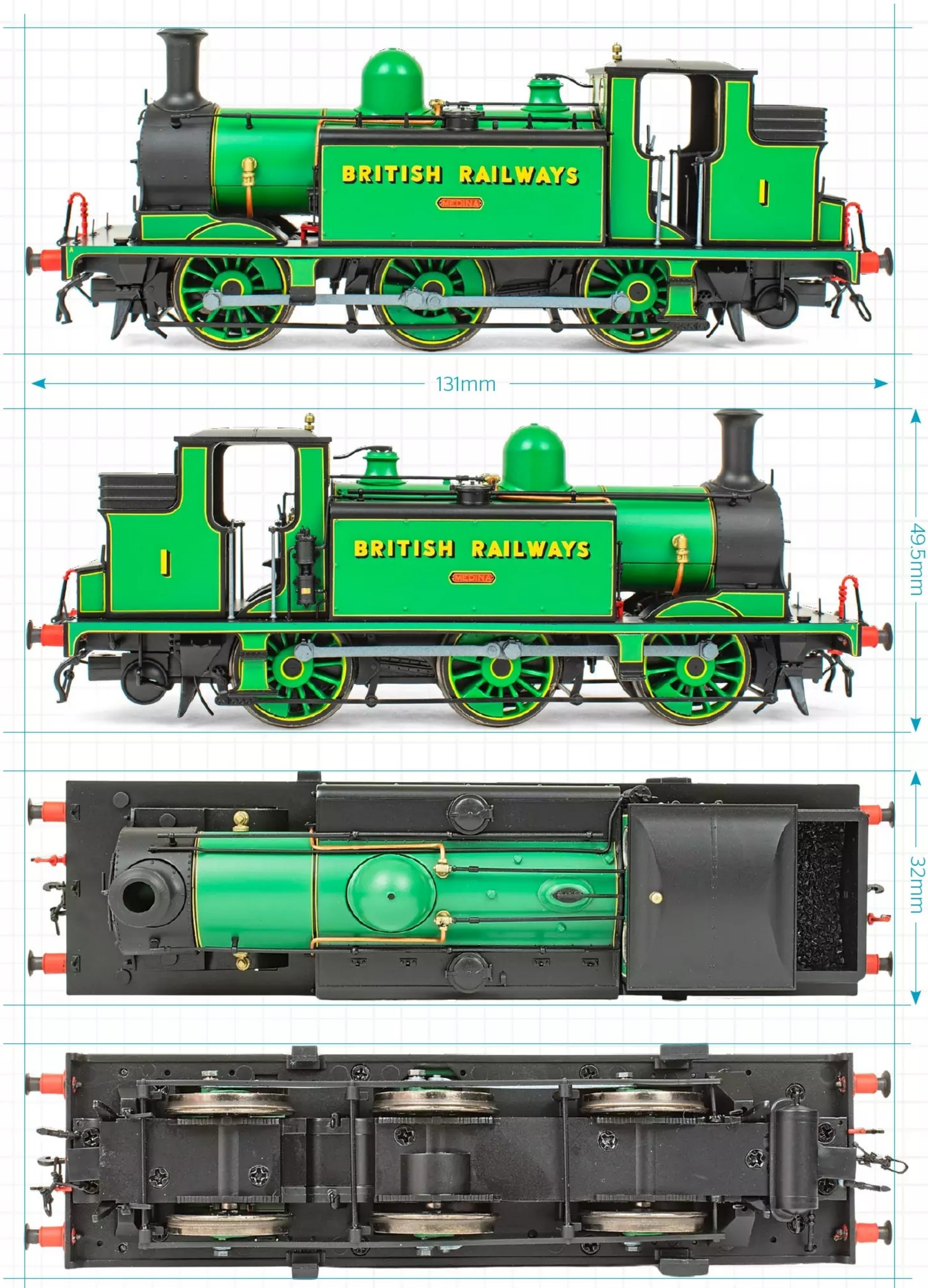
Delight at how the 'E1' looks turned to disappointment when, on initial running tests, it derailed repeatedly on the curved side of a Peco medium-radius turnout. It derailed at the same point whether running forward or backwards and regardless of whether it entered the turnout from the toe or frog end. Suspecting a problem with gauging, I checked the wheel back-to-backs but all three axles were correctly at 14.5mm. I could find no problem with the turnout and review locomotives on previous tests have not revealed any issues.

Further test running showed that the 'E1' with its long wheelbase, very limited side-play on the middle axle, and comparatively light weight, is simply intolerant of tight spots or any less-than-perfect tracklaying on curves. I could find no reference to minimum radius in the instruction booklet but the 'E1' is certainly at its best on larger radii.

The 'E1' has jointed coupling rods and there is side-play on both the centre and rear wheelsets, so it should be flexible enough to cope. However, the side-play may be limited in practice by a fairly strong self-centring arrangement. Longer term, I think it may be simpler to adjust the track layout than to attempt to change the set-up of the locomotive.

Its temperamental behaviour was limited to just one turnout on the inner of my two circuits. Otherwise, its running was remarkably smooth and quiet at all speeds. On the larger radius circuit it ran faultlessly with a train of 15 four-wheeled wagons and a Bachmann 'Queen Mary' brake van, which is quite a heavy model.

The 'E1' took the addition of four bogie coaches (two Bachmann 'birdcages' and two Mk 1s) to the 15-wagon freight in its stride but it was really at the locomotive's limit. Its haulage capacity and very smooth running certainly impress but it is also a very pretty model, whether in the Malachite or the earlier Stroudley 'improved engine green'. ***(CJL)***



SUMMARY

PROS
- Accuracy.
- Good looks.
- Superb finish.

CONS
- Tendency to derail on tight curves.

FINAL VERDICT

Worth tweaking track hotspots to ensure optimum running.

VITAL STATISTICS: LBSCR 'E1' 0-6-0T

OVERVIEW
Manufacturer: Rapido Trains UK
Ref. No. 936012
Unit No. 1
Scale/gauge: 1:76 scale, 'OO' gauge
Body: Plastic and cast metal
Chassis: Metal with plastic parts
Weight: 178g/6.28oz
Min. curve radius: 438mm (second radius)
Wheel back-to-back: 14.5mm

DIMENSIONS	PROTOTYPE	1:76 SCALE	MODEL
Length (over buffers)	32ft 4½in	129mm	131mm
Height	12ft 4½in 4	9.5mm	49.5mm
Width	8ft 4in	32mm	32mm
Wheel diameter	4ft 6in	18mm	18mm
Coupled wheelbase	15ft 3in	61mm	61mm

SERVICING
How to dismantle: Body unscrews from chassis – see instructions
Where to oil: Gears and axles – see instructions

ELECTRICS
Electrical system: 12V DC two-rail
Motor type: Coreless
Lights: Firebox 'glow'
DCC-ready? Next18

MECHANISM
Drive system: Worm and gears to middle axle
Flywheel(s): One
Traction tyres: No

KR Models Hunslet Bo-Bo

◆ **GAUGE** 'OO' ◆ **MODEL** KR Models Hunslet Bo-Bo British Steel blue/grey ◆ **PRICE** £180.00-£280.00
◆ **AVAILABILITY** KR Models stockists **Web** *www.krmodels.net*

It's been a few years in the making, but KR Models' Scunthorpe Steelworks Hunslet Bo-Bo diesel electrics should be landing with retailers as this issue hits the shelves. The manufacturer kindly air-freighted a review sample to us, depicting No. 71 in the stylish blue-grey and British Steel livery.

Other versions are available in yellow and white (No. 79), yellow and blue (No. 72) and original 1970s pale green (No. 73), with various tooling differences to reflect the prototype's early or later operating conditions. All are available in DCC-ready, DCC-fitted and DCC sound format.

Our sample of No. 71 is suitable for the more recent era, after the locomotives were re-engineered with Perkins power units and equipped with remote control equipment, plus a revised lighting arrangement.

Presented in KR Models' usual smart white, foam-lined packaging, the Hunslet's large handrails are protected by pads of dense foam. Once these are removed, it's best to handle the model around the central cab, as the plastic handrails – while resilient – are easy to bend out of their vertical orientation.

PRIMARY SOURCES

The model looks great, matching the proportions and profile of the real thing admirably. Indeed, these Hunslet Bo-Bos are good-looking industrial locomotives, and the model captures the prototype's character perfectly. The KR Models team has been furnished with extensive assistance from Andrew Plumtree at the Appleby Frodingham Railway, and the

> **“Being an industrial locomotive, there aren’t many fancy little details, but what is there is well executed”**

3 things we like

1 Impressive level of detail, including cab interior.

2 Lighting functions are effective.

3 Tooling allows for period-specific details, including rooftop-mounted remote control gear.

designers were given access to the original plans, which shows in the attention to detail within the tooling.

The moulded relief in the various bonnet access doors and louvres is well defined, and the cab features crystal clear, flush-fitting glazing panels, allowing the interior control console to be admired. The interior would look even better with a little detail painting and the addition of a driver (unless depicting it under remote control!), with the body being simple to remove. A search on YouTube will reveal video footage of these diesels at work, often with drivers in the cab and ground crew jumping on and off the running plate.

The cab roof features twin air horns, remote control receiver equipment and twin orange warning lights. These are not illuminated, alas, but those on the side of the solebars do flash when the locomotive is in motion, adding an extra dimension to operations. Directional headlamp clusters are mounted on the end panels (featuring the correct layout to suit this livery’s period), which work effectively, although the depth of the fittings are somewhat overscale to accommodate the LED gear. This isn’t particularly noticeable, however.

Below the heavy-duty solebars is a set of equally tough-looking bogies, which correspond with the prototype, with sandboxes and attendant pipes in place. Being an industrial locomotive, there aren’t many fancy little details, but what is there is well executed, including the small wire grab handles atop the bonnets, radiator filler caps, printed cab door hinges, wipers and lifting eyes.

RUNNING FREE

The Hunslet makes use of a five-pole, centrally mounted motor which drives all four axles via twin flywheels, cardan shafts and low-ratio gears. After the proscribed running-in period, our sample ran extremely well, particularly at slow speeds. The diecast metal chassis adds plenty of mass and haulage capacity proved well up to ➤

KR Models Hunslet Bo-Bo – in detail

expectations for a locomotive of this size and type.

All models feature a 21pin DCC decoder interface located atop the circuit board, within one of the bonnet spaces, with connections for a 'sugar cube' speaker within the opposite bonnet. Our sample came with DCC sound on board and the various sound files – produced with the aid of British Steel's Lix Brown – are clear and authentic.

Following KR Models' travails with its last release, the Bulleid 'Leader' (see MR336), it's reassuring to see that overall build quality of this sample is impressive.

Factfile: Hunslet 'Scunthorpe' Bo-Bo

In tandem with a major refurbishment of British Steel's Scunthorpe Steelworks, a fleet of 10 new diesel-electric locomotives were ordered from the Hunslet Engine Company of Leeds. Delivery took place during 1972-73, with the Bo-Bo locomotives – numbered 70-79 – equipped with two Rolls-Royce V8 engines, producing over 1,100hp. Electric equipment was supplied by Brush.

Weighing in at 90 tons each, the locomotives were designed primarily for hauling huge molten iron ladle carriers, known as 'torpedo' wagons. An extra locomotive was ordered in 1977, numbered 80, albeit with a number of detail variations from the initial batch.

A re-engineering programme began in 1990, with a pair of Perkins CV12 power units installed in each locomotive, leading to a revised grille and equipment cabinet arrangement along each bonnet, plus other modifications to the cabs. Remote control equipment was installed at this time too, to reduce the risks for operational staff.

A few of the Hunslet Bo-Bos have been scrapped in recent years, although an overhaul of the remaining locomotives was undertaken in the late 2010s, with many of these still at work. However, the long term future of Scunthorpe Steelworks remains in the balance, following Government intervention to keep the furnaces alight earlier this year.

1: With its head/tail lamps mounted to the running plate, British Steel's No. 75 rests outside the locomotive servicing facility at Scunthorpe Steel Works, August 1995. COLOUR RAIL

2: Wearing Corus' silver and yellow livery, Scunthorpe's No. 78 is in charge of a rake of billet wagons, in June 2006. COLOUR RAIL

3: The revised twin head/tail lamp units are seen in the later, higher position, on No. 70, as it hauls a 'torpedo' molten iron container at Scunthorpe works, August 2006. COLOUR RAIL

Everything fits together neatly and securely, and the paintwork is excellent, with accurate livery shades, consistent finish and neatly applied logos and markings, including the 'wasp' hazard stripes. All in all, it's a terrific model.

With the matching 'Torpedo' molten iron ladle wagons also due to arrive this summer, it's a great time to plan a layout based around a steelworks. With Scunthorpe's future still uncertain after the recent Government intervention, our steel-making heritage has been brought back into the public consciousness, and celebrating this history in the form of miniature models is one way of showing our appreciation for the generations of workers who have braved this hazardous, yet vital, industry. ***(GD)***

SUMMARY

PROS
- Convincing looks.
- Impressive level of detail.
- Smooth mechanism.
- Quality finish.

CONS
- Not a lot.

FINAL VERDICT

Arguably KR Models' best offering so far.

VITAL STATISTICS: KR MODELS HUNSLET BO-BO

OVERVIEW
Manufacturer: KR Models
Ref. No. N/A
Unit No. 71
Scale/gauge: 1:76 scale, 'OO' gauge
Body: Plastic with metal parts
Chassis: Metal with plastic parts
Weight: 270g
Min. curve radius: 438mm (second radius)
Wheel back-to-back: 14.3mm

DIMENSIONS	PROTOTYPE	1:76 SCALE	MODEL
Length (over buffers)	44ft 0in	176mm	177mm
Height	N/A	N/A	53mm
Width	N/A	N/A	35.6mm
Wheel diameter	3ft 6in	14.2mm	14.2mm
Wheelbase	8ft 6in	34mm	34mm

SERVICING
How to dismantle: Body unscrews from chassis
Where to oil: See instructions

ELECTRICS
Electrical system: 12V DC two-rail
Motor type: Five-pole
Lights: Directional head/tail lamps, cab interior, flashing warning lights
DCC-ready? 21pin DCC socket

MECHANISM
Drive system: Central motor drives all four axles via cardan shafts and gears
Flywheel(s): Two
Traction tyres: No

“Of the various multiple unit couplings I’ve reviewed, including various Bachmann couplers and the Rapido APT-E, the Hornby ‘4-VEP’ is by far the easiest”

Hornby ‘4-VEP’ Electric Multiple Unit (revised)

◆ **GAUGE** ‘OO’ ◆ **MODEL** Hornby R30447/R30448 BR Class 423 ‘4-VEP’ EMUs ◆ **PRICE** £359.99 per set
◆ **AVAILABILITY** Hornby stockists **Web** *www.hornby.com*

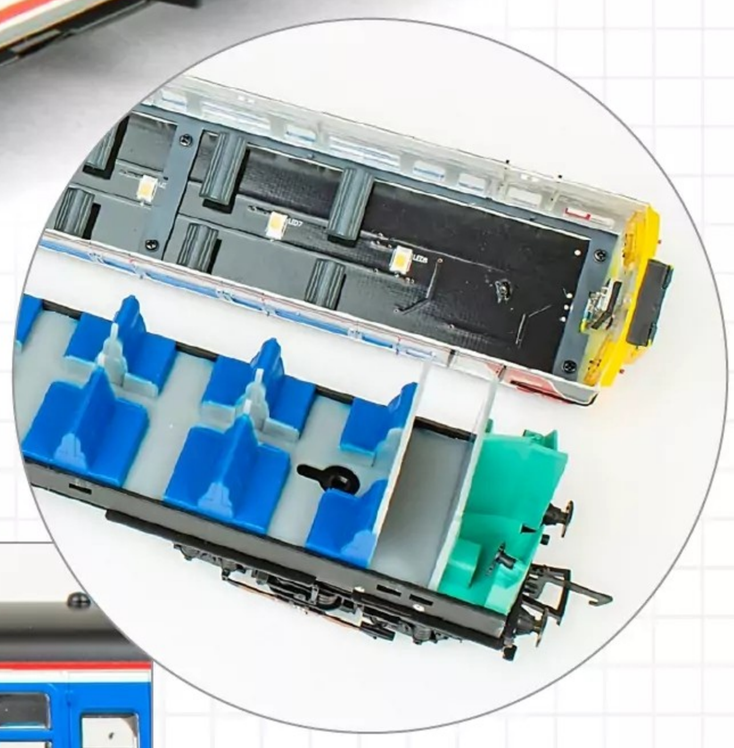
Like my recent review of the re-released EFE Rail ‘O2’ 0-4-4T this is an appraisal of a revised model. And, like the ‘O2’ it is an opportunity to examine a model which received a somewhat less than enthusiastic review first time around (September 2011).

The introduction of a modern Southern Region EMU from Hornby was most welcome but the original suffered from a front-end which just missed catching the character of the real thing, and from design compromises such as a solid internal partition and a motor bogie which intruded into the passenger saloon. I was keen to see if Hornby had put those features right, as the ‘4-VEP’ marked an important point in the SR’s EMU evolution.

I remember them as the first new-build units to enter service around home, in 1967. They were also the first to appear in Rail blue, still representing the original concept of the corporate image that suburban and semi-fast units would be in all-over blue. On the Reading line they replaced elderly SR units, the ‘2-HAL’/’2-BIL’ and ‘4-COR’ units but in many respects, with Second class open accommodation and compartments for first class, they were still very traditional.

They were formed with a Driving Trailer Composite (DTC) at each end, sandwiching a Motor Brake Second Open (MBSO) and a Trailer Second Open (TSO). They were, too, the first manifestation of the revised ‘Eastleigh’ cab end with improved styling and rounded edges, replacing the earlier version which was merely a Mk 1 coach end with cab windows inserted. Nevertheless it was hardly a design masterpiece though I prefer its simplicity to the latest over-designed EMUs with their 1970s-style wrap-round windscreens.

The first of Hornby’s revamped ‘4-VEPs’ appeared last year in privatisation-era schemes, but this year sees the release of BR blue and Network SouthEast (NSE) versions. I’d ordered a blue set for my own layout, while Hornby kindly supplied the NSE set to *Model Rail* for review purposes.



ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY

Each set comes in Hornby's new 'environmentally friendly' packaging with a pressed cardboard tray containing the four coaches. Only the motor coach has additional packaging in the customary clear clamshell and sleeve. The BR blue set, with small yellow panels, depicts unit No. 7712, but I have seen suggestions that 7712 did not have polished window frames when in this livery. However, in my view, the polished frames and the familiar orange curtains are features which really enhance this model.

A quick check of the box illustration shows the order and orientation in which the coaches are to be coupled. The coupling is a multi-pin plug and socket arrangement which is best located with the coaches on a flat surface or straight track. Once located correctly, the coupling is just pressed home. Of the various multiple unit couplings I've reviewed, including various Bachmann couplers and the Rapido APT-E, the Hornby '4-VEP' is by far the easiest. The outer ends of the DTSOs have bogie-mounted tension-lock couplings in pivoted NEM pockets.

Most of the original criticisms have been successfully addressed. The motor bogie is housed in the guard's compartment area of the MBSO, correctly reflecting the powered vehicle in the real thing, while also meaning that the mechanism is largely hidden from view. However, the solebar-mounted footboards do not line up correctly with the guard's doors, suggesting that perhaps one of the original tools has not been corrected. This coach weighs in at a substantial 425g (15oz). For comparison, the DTC weighs 172g (6oz). Pick-ups are provided on both bogies of the MBSO. The plugs and sockets linking the vehicles are only to provide for the carriage lighting, headcode panels and DCC operation.

The interior features the correct types of accommodation, with back-to-back seats with high-backed headrests in Second class open sections and compartments with pale grey partitions in the First class section. A small bag of extras includes a bar coupling for attaching a second unit, and a plastic speaker mounting box for digital sound.

SMOOTH AND QUIET

On test, the unit proved smooth and quiet throughout the speed range. The separately fitted shoe beams on the outer bogie of the DTSOs are very slender and quite vulnerable to 'snagging' on point rodding or slightly displaced third rails (as they are on the real thing) so a check of your layout for such hazards is worth doing.

On DC analog control, the interior lights and headcode displays are illuminated when power is applied, white at the front and red at the rear. Self-adhesive headcode numbers and bars for the rear headcode display are provided and these need tweezers and care to position them, providing a nice finishing touch. Headcode 28 was the Waterloo-Reading code with which I grew up.

Well done, Hornby, an excellent revamp. ***(CJL)***

3 things we like

1 User-friendly conductive couplers between cars.

2 Window frame and interior detail modelled very effectively.

3 Corrected front 'face' with option of different headcodes.

SUMMARY

PROS

- Looks the part.
- Good level of exterior and interior detail.
- Excellent smooth-running and quiet performance.
- High-quality paint finish.

CONS

- Not a lot.

FINAL VERDICT

A very successful revamp.

Accurascale ICI hoppers

◆ **GAUGE** 'OO' ◆ **MODEL** Accurascale ICI hoppers ◆ **PRICE** £79.95 per twin-pack ◆ **AVAILABILITY** Accurascale stockists **Web** *www.accurascale.com*

Originally manufactured on behalf of Hattons, by Oxford Rail, the famous ICI limestone hoppers first appeared as RTR models in 2018, selling through extremely quickly. As someone with a passion for Peak District stone trains, I sadly missed out on these models first time round and have been deterred by subsequent high prices on the pre-owned market.

Thankfully, after the demise of the Merseyside retailer, Accurascale secured the tooling for the hoppers, with a new production run arriving a little earlier than originally planned. Built from the late 1930s until 1953, over three different batches, by Charles Roberts in Horbury, the sturdy steel wagons were ordered by ICI to transport crushed limestone from Tunstead Quarry to the soda ash plants in Northwich.

Representing some of the first high-capacity hopper wagons to work in the UK, they lasted in frontline use until 1997, being withdrawn due to a lack of air brakes, as many examples were still in good condition – a testament to the quality of design and construction.

Offered in 15 different twin-packs, Accurascale kindly supplied three different pairs for review, spanning the 1950s-1973 (pre-TOPS), 1973-1992 and 1992-1997 periods. Accordingly, each set of wagons feature slight detail and lettering differences to suit each era, most notably in terms of bogies, as the tooling caters for the original diamond frame pattern and later plate-style frames, the latter featuring either oil or roller bearing axleboxes, according to era. There are also variations in the size of the raised ICI lettering, as per the real thing, while the later set has the characters removed.

IN DETAIL

These are impressive models, with the open frame chassis being delightfully captured, along with the various hopper support brackets and a veritable sea of rivet head detail. The vacuum cylinders at each end, with attendant pipework, look the part and the hopper door control gear is also accurately rendered, as is the hopper interior.

Metal bufferheads (un-sprung) have a refined profile and NEM coupler pockets, although fixed to the underside of the chassis, have flexible pivots to help the wagons cope with second radius curves. The wagons feel fairly light, each weighing-in at 46g, but the finely profiled

“These are impressive models, with the open frame chassis being delightfully captured, along with the various hopper support brackets and a veritable sea of rivet head detail”

three-hole disc wheels rotate freely on their axles and all six of our samples ran faultlessly under test conditions.

The drab grey paintwork is evenly applied and the various printed number and information panels are crisply printed and fully legible. Coupled with the excellent surface relief and a wealth of detail, the overall effect is satisfying.

Anyone with an interest in the limestone and aggregates traffic from the Peak District – and the North West freight scene in general – will be tempted by these new models. The prototype's long career saw them hauled by a wide range of classic locomotives, from the LMS '8Fs' through to Class 25s, pairs of '20s', Class 40s and 'Peaks' and, latterly, by pairs of EWS Class 37s.

It's great to see the Hattons tooling enjoying a new lease of life. ***(GD)***

3 things we like

1

Distinctive open frame chassis replicated faithfully.

2

Early and later style bogie frames feature.

3

Vacuum brake gear at each end is well crafted.

SUMMARY

PROS

- Looks and fidelity.
- Impressive level of detail.
- Finish.
- Smooth runners.

CONS

- Nothing.

FINAL VERDICT

Excellent – a very welcome return.

Bachmann *Emily's* coach and *Emily's* brake coach

◆ **GAUGE** 'N' ◆ **MODEL** • 76092 *Emily*'s coach • 76093 *Emily*'s brake coach ◆ £34.25 each ◆ **AVAILABILITY** Bachmann stockists **Web** *www.bachmann.co.uk*

We can imagine some eyebrows being raised at *MR* reviewing a couple of coaches from the 'N' gauge *Thomas & Friends* range by Bachmann (despite being 2mm scale, they're not branded as Graham Farish or EFE). But bear with us, because we reckon these very Victorian-looking six-wheeled clerestory coaches hold interest for the wider railway modelling community, not just those of more tender years wanting to recreate the Isle of Sodor on the family kitchen table.

For the benefit of those whose knowledge of *Thomas the Tank Engine* may be a little lacking, *Emily* is a steam locomotive from the *Thomas & Friends* TV series and didn't appear in the original Reverend W. Awdry books. She first popped up in Series 7 during late 2003, as Sodor's North Western Railway No. 12 engine. *Emily*'s design was based on that of Patrick Stirling's '1003 Series' 4-2-2 'Singles' built by the Great Northern Railway. Her initial adventure saw her borrow *Thomas*' coaches, *Annie and Clarabel*, before being given her very own pair of carriages, as represented here.

While the duo are generic representations of typical wooden-bodied clerestory stock from the 19th Century, their look is, in part, influenced by William Stroudley's four-wheeled designs of the 1870s and 1880s for the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway.

Unlike much of the *Thomas* range, these coaches don't have faces, which makes them more suitable to run on 'grown-up' layouts without modification. 'N' gauge modellers wanting older coaching stock have a very limited choice; the old and very coarse Grafar four-wheel coaches, a few kits, or taking the scratchbuilding route. However, as Rails of Sheffield's (ex-Hattons Originals) 'Genesis' and Rapido's 'Evolution' projects for 'OO' demonstrated, there is a demand for pre-Grouping carriages, even if they aren't strictly accurate but just capture the look and sense of Victorian and Edwardian stock.

Being primarily intended for younger enthusiasts, there isn't much detail to these coaches. There are no separate parts; everything is moulded as part of the body, roof or underframe. Some of the details you'd expect from a more adult-orientated release, such as pipework, end steps or roof features, are absent although there is riveting on the frame. The undercarriage is chunkily modelled, with the focus on robustness rather than delicacy; the brake shoes aren't in line with the wheels for example. However, the overall effect is realistic enough at this scale. The coaches roll well thanks to metal wheels (with white-painted rims) and with Bachmann no doubt mindful that they'll be expected to negotiate tight curves, the centre pair are flangeless. Our set wasn't fazed by small radii or points on the *MR* test track.

There's no interior, although it would be difficult to make out through the small windows anyway. The only concession to one of the coaches being a brake is that half its windows at one end are painted white; otherwise the carriages are identical. This is far from prototypical of course (similar Stroudley coaches having guard's end duckets), but it is true to the *Thomas* universe. As is the very shiny emerald green livery with yellow lining (with no numbering or lettering) and gloss black roof, which looks quite close to Irish Córas Iompair Éireann colours.

While expanding the *Thomas & Friends* range into 'N' gauge (and other scales) is a good move by Bachmann, as it will bring youngsters to the hobby beyond just 'OO' gauge, these particular coaches also have something to offer adult modellers. They're decent representations of typical Victorian clerestory coaches, of the sort that would have lingered on lightly used branches, been used in private industry workers' trains, or ended up in departmental stock for decades. With suitable detailing, weathering and repainting if required, we can imagine these making their way onto layouts set far beyond the Isle of Sodor. And perhaps Bachmann could be encouraged to introduce non-*Thomas* variations and liveries in the future, perhaps with non-clerestory roofs and four-wheeled chassis? We can but hope... ***(RG)***

SUMMARY

PROS

- Simple and rugged.
- No *Thomas & Friends* face.
- Flangeless centre wheels for tight curves.

CONS

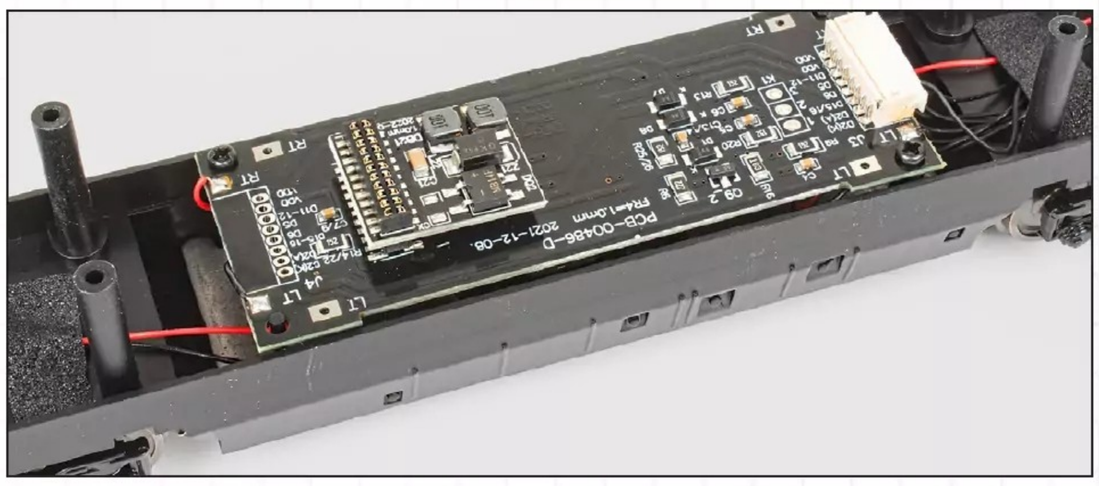
- Aimed at kids and built for that purpose.

FINAL VERDICT

Great potential for use beyond the world of *Thomas*.

Hornby Mk 4 DVT

◆ **GAUGE** 'OO' ◆ **MODEL** Hornby R40448 BR Mk 4 Driving Van Trailer, BR Intercity
◆ **PRICE** £94.99 ◆ **AVAILABILITY** Hornby stockists **Web** *www.hornby.com*



Hornby's revamp of its range of Class 91s and matching Mk 4 coaching stock, in 2022, has kept modellers of the East Coast route in clover, with various liveries and identities being offered over the past few years. Amongst 2025's releases is a suite of models in the original (and some would say 'best') colour scheme – BR Intercity 'Swallow'.

A suitable Class 91 arrived with stockists a few months back, in the form of 91031 *Sir Henry Royce* (see review in MR339), plus a full rake of Mk 4 coaches. The last piece in the jigsaw is now here, with the Mk 4 Driving Van Trailer. Boasting working head and tail lamps, powered from the rails, the interior features a 21pin DCC socket, while a set of air brake hoses are provided to enhance the bufferbeam.

The tooling reflects the correct as-built condition, while the other two versions in Hornby's 2025 range – in GNER blue and LNER red – feature the appropriate rooftop communications dome and transponders. Class 91s and Mk 4 coaches are now available in these colour schemes too.

Our sample ran extremely well, with no perceptible drag from the power collectors and the livery application is to an impressive standard. Great stuff! ***(GD)***

SUMMARY

PROS
- Looks and finish.
- DCC functionality.
- Smooth runner.

CONS
- Not a lot.

FINAL VERDICT

Great model in a classic livery!

Hornby TTA wagons

GAUGE 'OO' ◆ **MODEL** Hornby R60291 TTA wagons, BP green, triple-pack ◆ **PRICE** £119.99 ◆ **AVAILABILITY** Hornby stockists **Web** *www.hornby.com*

Hornby's superb TTA tank wagons, initially released last year to great acclaim (MR322), have been re-released in a trio of triple-packs, encompassing Total grey, Shell black and BP green. A set of the latter arrived for review, each adorned with individual numbers, BR Railfreight sector logos and Hazchem panels denoting the carriage of petroleum oil. Wagons in this livery worked well into the privatisation era, most notably to fuel storage depots in far-flung areas, such as Fort William.

Each wagon features a superb level of detail and finish, with the etched walkway and access ladders adding a refined air. All three triple-packs are likely to be popular, so don't hang around if you fancy boosting your tank wagon fleet. ***(GD)***

PROS:
- Looks and finish.
- Highly detailed.
- Popular livery.

CONS:
- Nothing.

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MR-502
War Department 878 *Basra*, Longmoor Military Railway blue/red

MR-505 BR 12043, black, BRITISH RAILWAYS lettering

MR-503 LMS 7120, pre-war black

MR-506 BR 15101, WR green, BRITISH RAILWAYS shaded lettering

MR-501
War Department 70271, olive green

MR-504 LMS 7128, post-war black

MR-507 BR 15106, WR green, BRITISH RAILWAYS shaded lettering

BR/SR CLASS 12 0-6-0DE

00 GAUGE

FIVE VERSIONS UNDER DEVELOPMENT

Specification list

Made by: Heljan
Motor: Five-pole
DCC socket: Next18
Features: • NEM coupler pockets • brass flywheel and high-reduction gears • working exterior lights (where appropriate) • cab interior lights • factory-fitted speaker • tooling allows for early and late BR versions.

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MR-508 BR 12125, black, early crest

MR-512
BR D12062, Rail blue with 'wasp' stripes

MR-509 BR 12131, black, early crest, weathered

MR-513 BR 12052, Rail blue with 'wasp' stripes

MR-510
BR 12105, green, late crest

MR-514 MP228 (ex-12052), Derek Crouch Mining Co. red/cream

MR-511 BR 12100, green with 'wasp' stripes, late crest

MR-515 (ex-12099), National Coal Board orange

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- MR-520 BR/SR Class 12, 15220, BR black, early emblem
- MR-521 BR/SR Class 12, 15224, BR green, early emblem
- MR-522 BR/SR Class 12, 15221, BR green with 'wasp' stripes, late emblem
- MR-523 BR/SR Class 12, 15212, BR Rail blue with 'wasp' stripes
- MR-524 BR/SR Class 12, (ex-15231) Tilcon blue with 'wasp' ends

MR-520

MR-522

MR-521

MR-523

MR-524

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Specification list

Made by: Rapido Trains Inc.

Motor: Five-pole

DCC socket: Next18

Features: • Speaker fitted • firebox glow effect • NEM pockets

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BR BLACK, EARLY CREST (PRISTINE)

- MR-301A: No. 1609
- MR-301B: No. 1623 ← LAST FEW
- MR-301C: No. 1624
- MR-301D: No. 1657
- MR-301F: No. 1658
- MR-301G: No. 1668
- MR-302A: No. 1646 ← LOW STOCK

BR BLACK, EARLY CREST (WEATHERED)

- MR-302B: No. 1649
- MR-303: No. 1604

BR BLACK, LATE CREST (PRISTINE)

- MR-304A: No. 1636
- MR-304B: No. 1655

BR BLACK, LATE CREST (WEATHERED)

- MR-305A: No. 1627
- MR-305B: No. 1628

'BUSBY' CHIMNEY

- MR-307A: BR black early crest, No. 1616
- MR-307B: BR black early crest, No. 1629
- MR-308: BR black early crest, No. 1661 (weathered)

NCB GREEN

- MR-309A: NCB green, No. 1600
- MR-309B: NCB green, No. 1607

PRESERVED GREEN

- MR-310A: BR green early crest, No. 1638
- MR-310B: Green 'Dart Valley', No. 1638

BR Class 26/1 26043

2647 BR Class 26/1 26043 in Rail blue with DCE stripes and Haymarket depot logos

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Ruston 'PWM' 0-6-0DE

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00 GAUGE

MR-403 PWM653
BR light green

MR-405A PWM 97651
BR yellow

MR-405B PWM 97652
BR yellow

MR-404 PWM652
BR Rail blue

Specification list

Made by: Heljan

Motor: Coreless

DCC socket: Next18

Features: • Cab interior lights • NEM coupler pockets

£169.00

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MR-402 PWM651
BR green, 'wasp' ends

MR-400A PWM651
BR green

MR-400B PWM652
BR green

MR-401 PWM654
BR green, 'wasp' ends

LNER Sentinels – the latest batch

00 GAUGE

MR-018 LNER Class Y3 Sentinel, No. 8172, LNER black with Gill Sans lettering/numerals

MR-021 LNER Class Y1 Sentinel, No. 45, LNER black with shaded lettering/numerals

MR-019 BR Class Y1 Sentinel, No. 68144, BR black, early crest

MR-020 BR Class Y3 Sentinel, No. 68162, BR black, early crest

Specifications

Made by: Dapol

Motor: Five-pole 'Super-Creep'

DCC socket: Eight-pin

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LNER 'J70' 00 GAUGE

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Specification list

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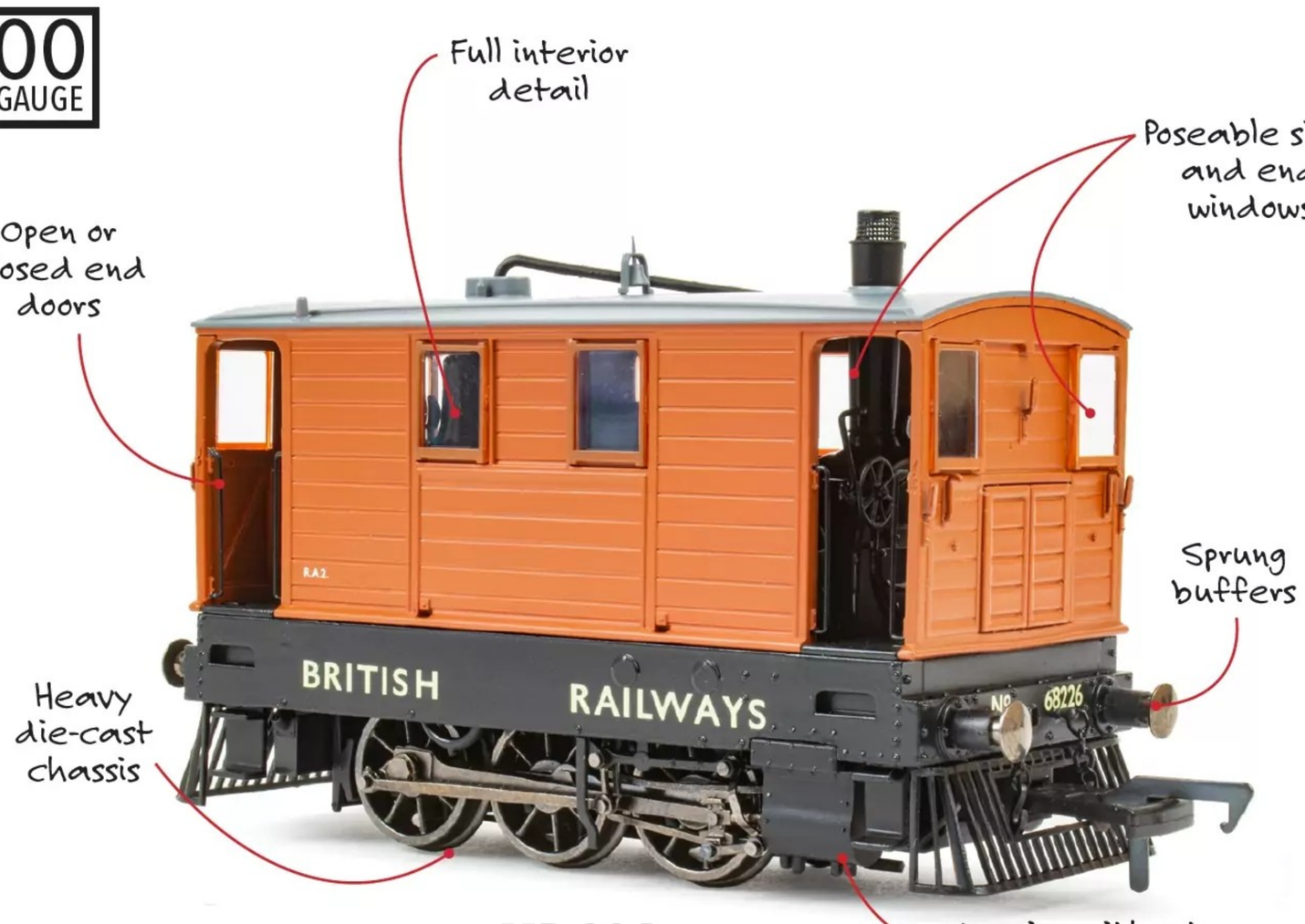

MR-204
No. 68226, British Railways lettering, no skirts

'USA' 0-6-0T 00 GAUGE

MR-111
£129.95
£116.95 price for *Model Rail* subscribers

Specification list

Made by: Bachmann **Motor**: Three-pole
DCC socket: Six-pin
Features: • NEM coupler pockets • prototype-specific cab, bunker, smokebox and footstep details

MR-111
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British Railways unlined black, 'Sunshine lettering'

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National Coal Board black

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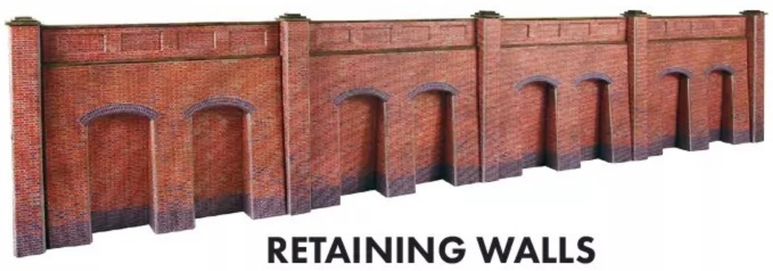

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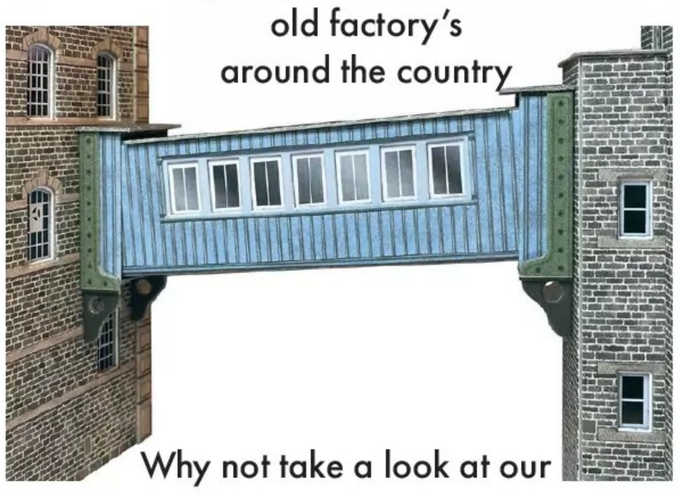

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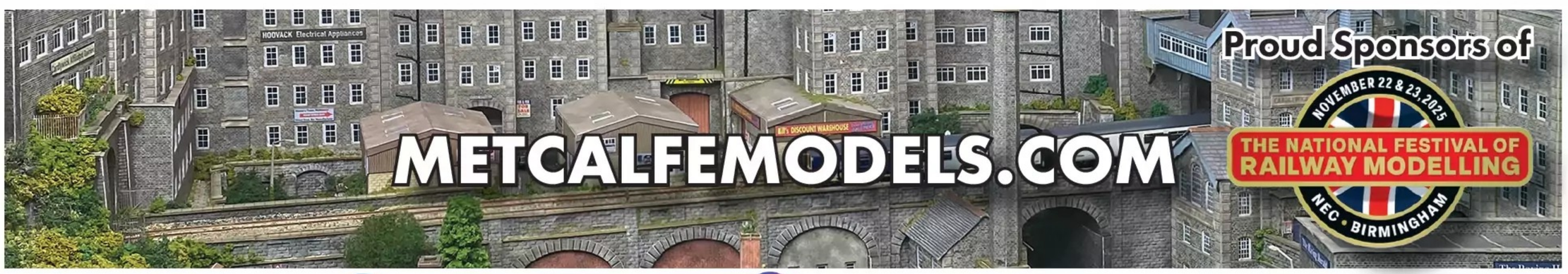

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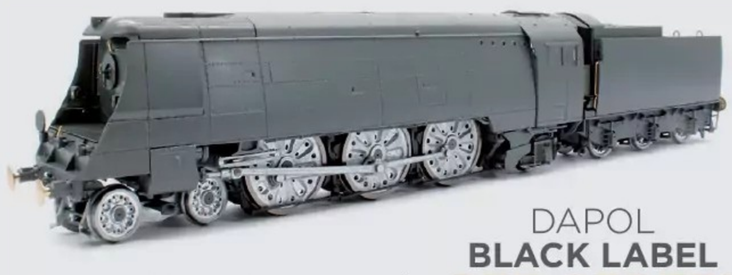

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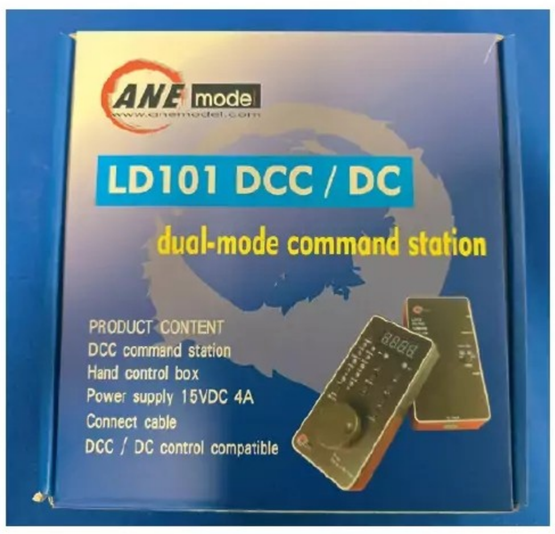

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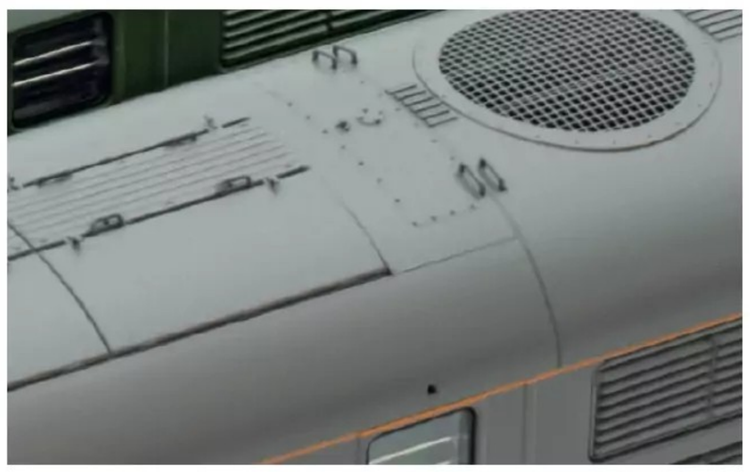

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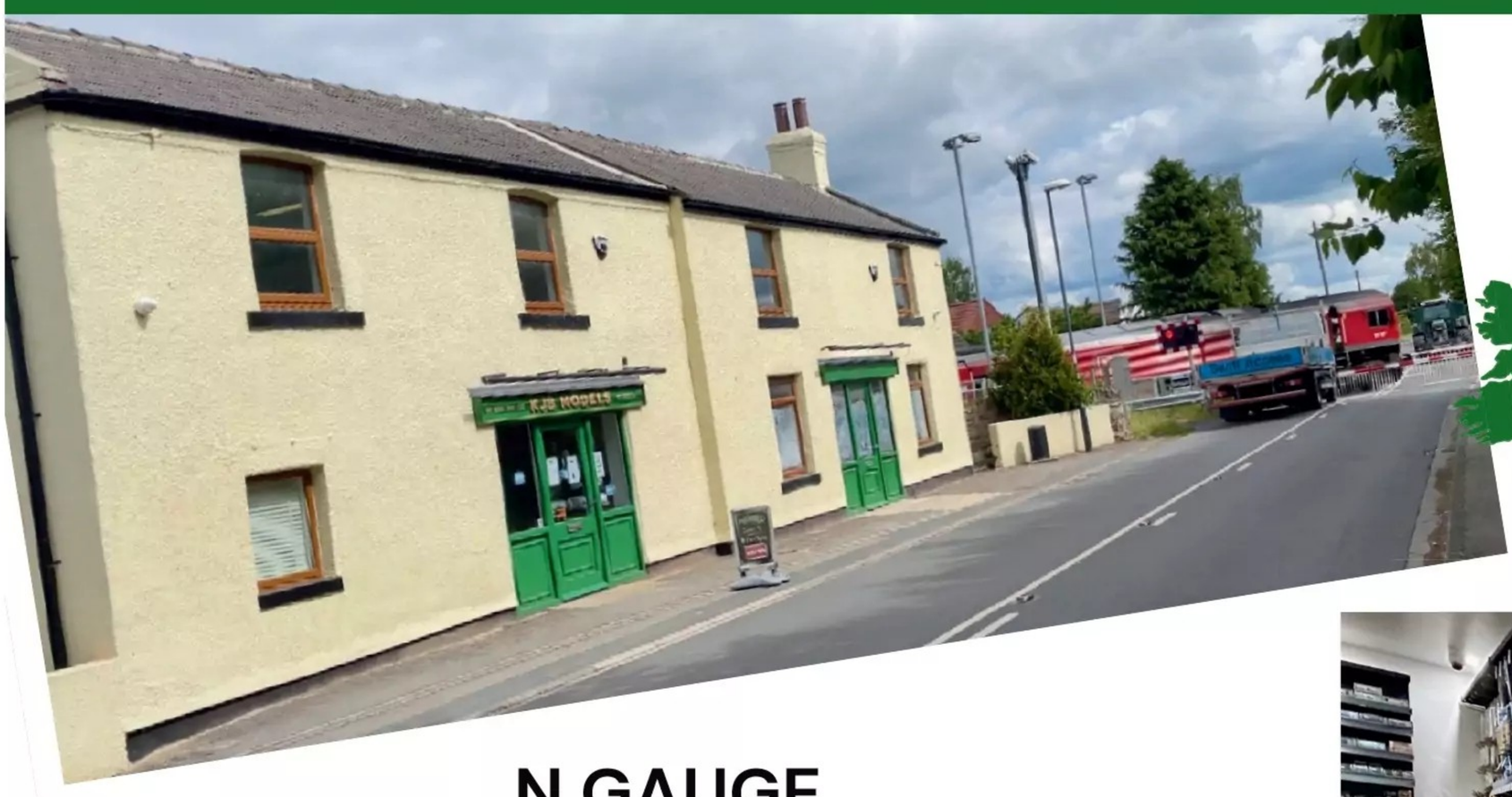

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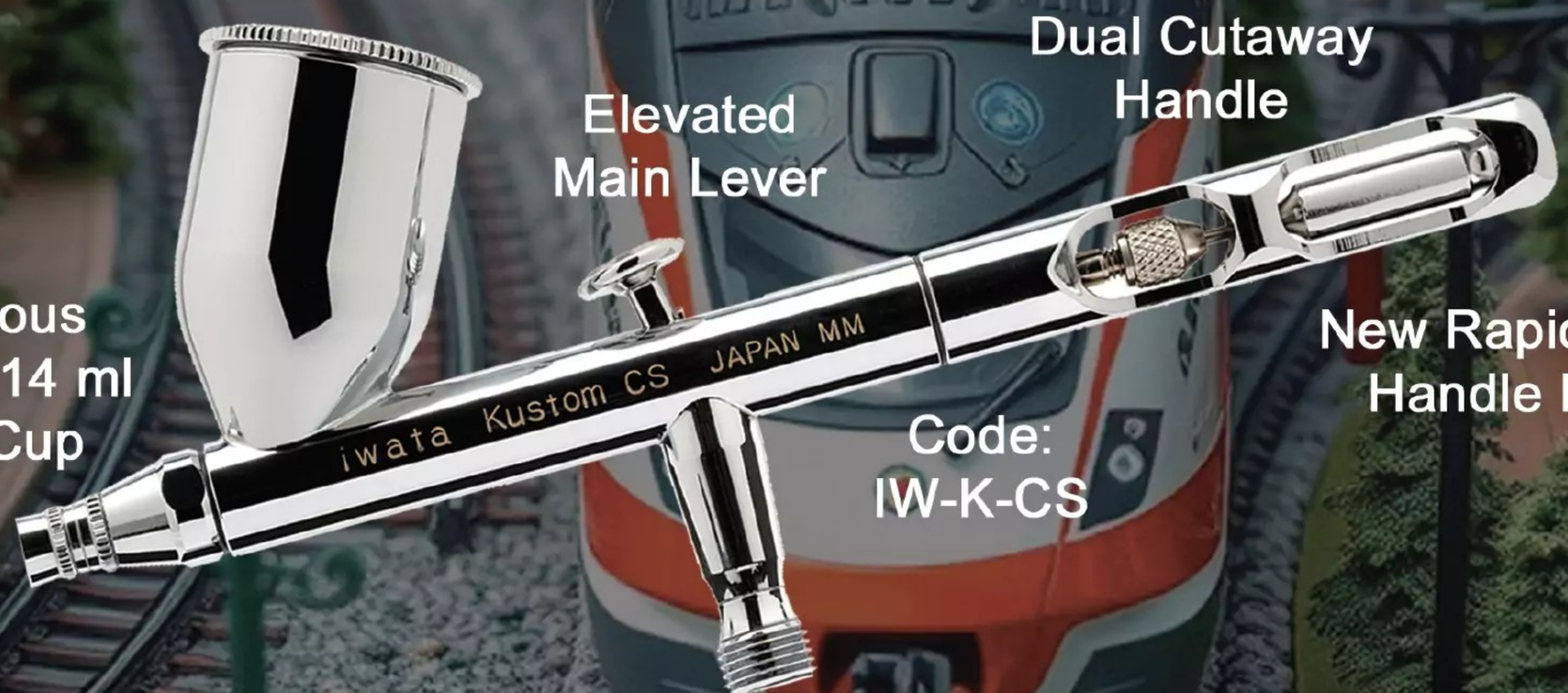

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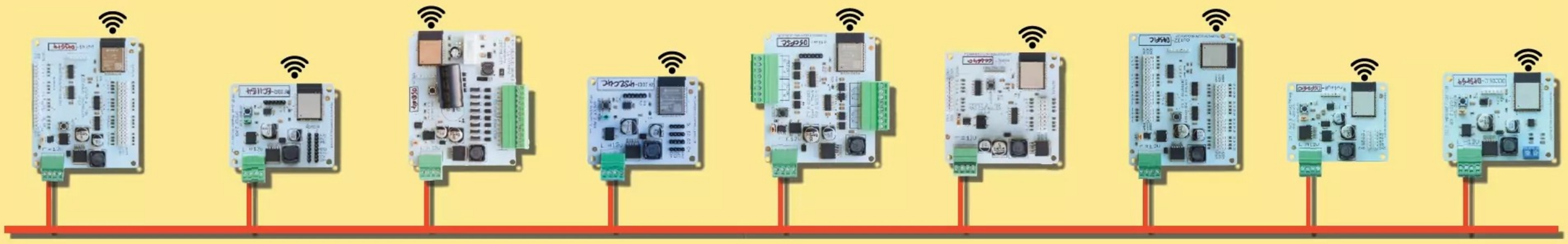

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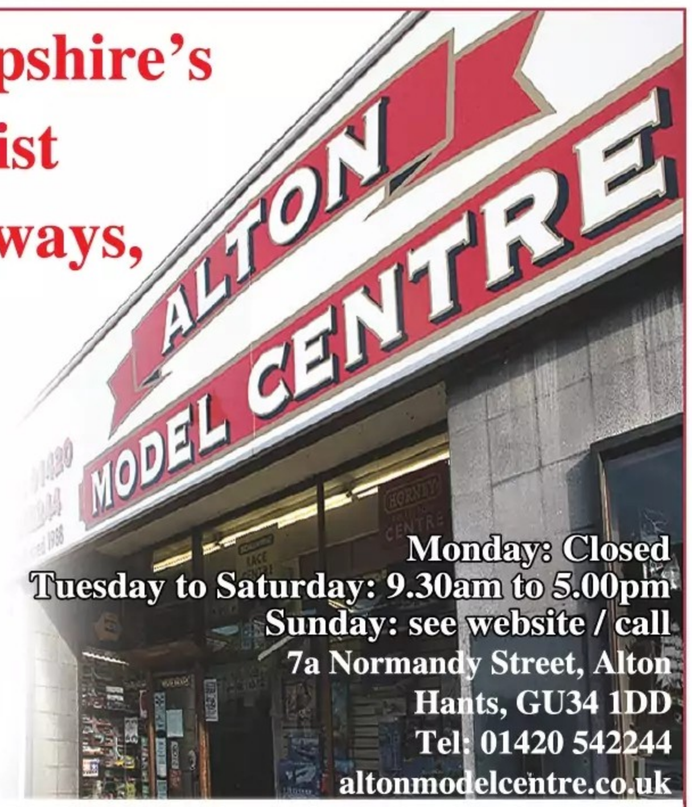

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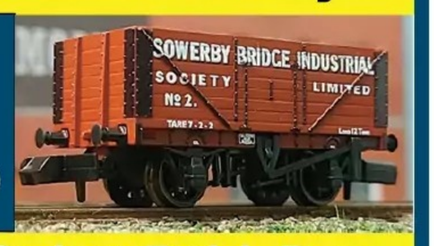

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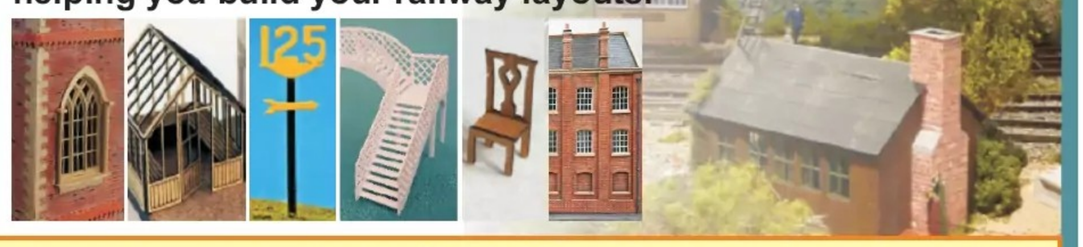

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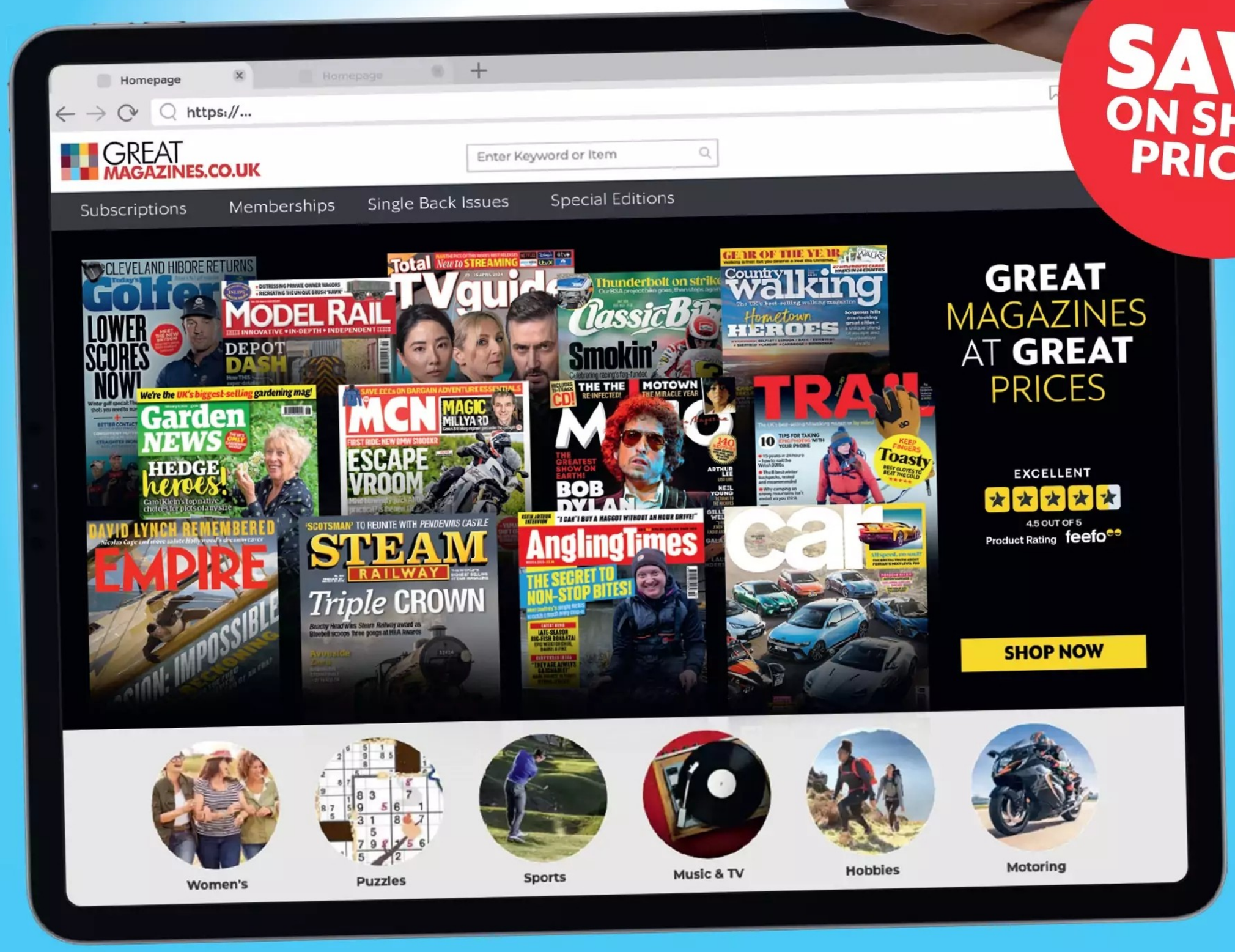

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Backscene

How much of your layout is make-believe? CHRIS LEIGH isn't a slave to prototype fidelity, as he explains.

A 'Nightstar' sleeping car at Halifax, Nova Scotia in 'The Ocean' overnight service to Montreal in 2012. Still in 'Nightstar' livery, the coaches featured a Mk 4-based body on unpowered Class 158 bogies. CHRIS LEIGH

How much of your modelling is make-believe? Most layouts involve a degree of make believe or fantasy. Even if we model a real location in perfect scale and perfect detail, we require some suspension of belief when we stoop down to eye level to imagine ourselves actually at that location. Fitting a scale-size version of a real place into our modelling space usually means compromising some of the dimensions in a process known as 'selective compression'.

Perfect prototype fidelity is near impossible, especially if your track gauge itself is a compromise, as is 'OO'. American modellers took the view, years ago, that if you modelled a fictitious railroad you had much greater freedom. You could bring together locomotives and rolling stock which, in reality, would never have been seen together and you could 'personalise' them with your choice of railroad name and livery.

It is not something that has ever been widely practised by British modellers, who tend to be more conservative in their approach to modelling aspects of British railways that they know or can remember. However, look back before 1948 and there were light railways which were very much outside the mainstream and used antiquated stock emblazoned with their independent company name, Kent & East Sussex, Derwent Valley, or whatever.

With my 'O' gauge I've taken a few liberties with reality, imagining that the Lambourn Valley Railway was not swallowed by the Great Western and that the owners of the Welford Park estate operated their own very smart ex-Southern Railway horsebox. I bought the wagon off eBay, did not like the murky olive green livery and gave it a repaint into dark blue to match my LVR four-wheel coaches.

I suspect I'm not alone in adapting history to suit my own modelling tastes. For instance, I wonder how many Rapido Trains APT-E units are operating in passenger service on readers' 'OO' layouts? Or what about those short-lived Trans-Pennine Express sets with Mk5 coaches and a Class 68? I doubt that many modellers, having invested in a set, will have followed prototype practice and withdrawn their models!

It won't be long before Hornby Bulleid 'Tavern cars' are operating on lots of layouts despite the fact that the real thing saw only a short time in service before being, first, repainted, and later rebuilt.

While I'm on the subject of coaches, it would involve some scratchbuilding or conversion, but what if the 'Nightstar' had actually operated? These were the Mk 4-based coaches and sleeping cars for operation through the Channel Tunnel with, I believe, Class 92 locomotives. The train never entered service and the coaches were sold to Canada. I had a ride on them back in 2012 and though some of them had undergone extensive alteration, they remained in 'Nightstar' livery and markings. With a Class 92 in matching livery they really would have looked quite something!

A nicely built etched brass kit, believed to be by Western Wagon Works, carries my contrived Lambourn Valley Railway livery. CHRIS LEIGH

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