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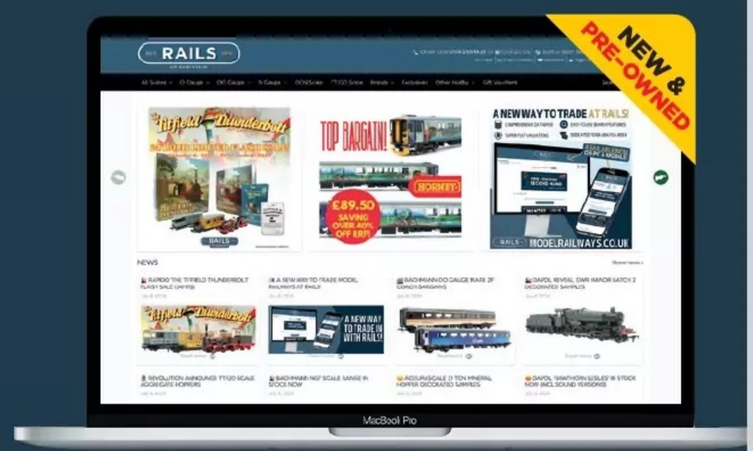

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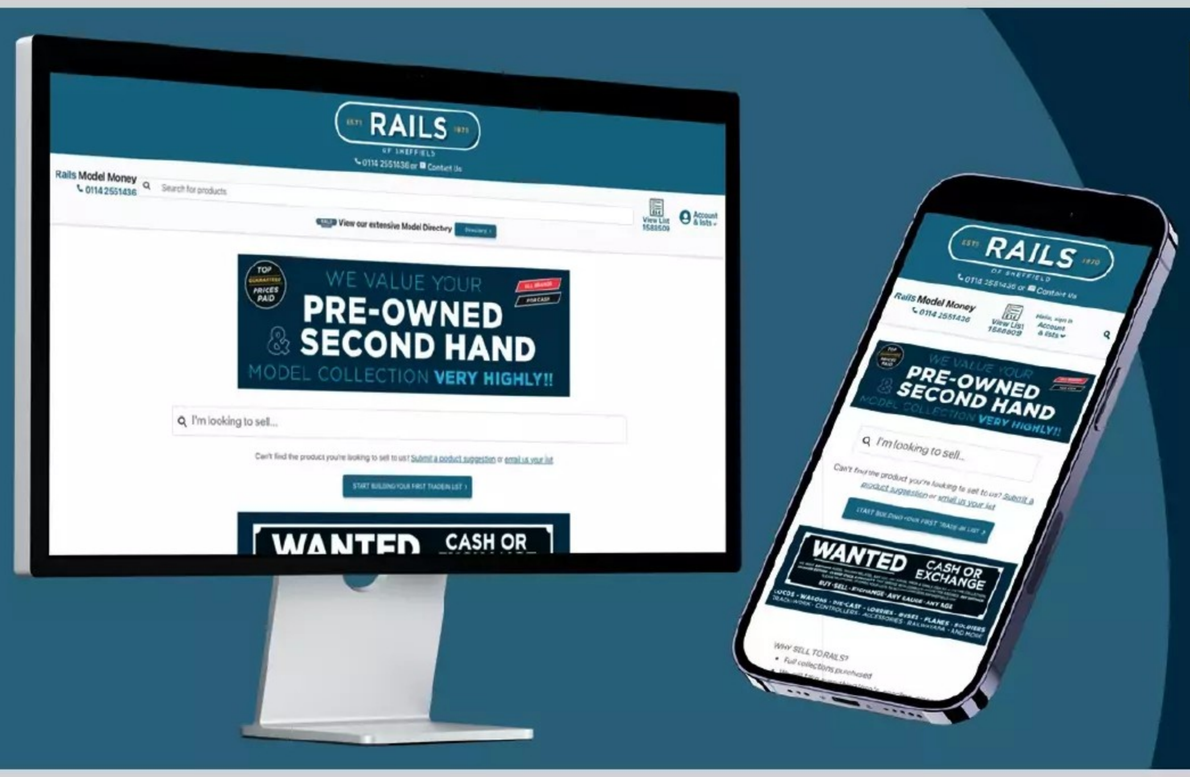

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This month's cover image

Alex Rockey's 'Whittlesmarch' portrays a cement works in a sleepy southern location. Turn to page 28 for the full story. CHRIS NEVARD

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www.instagram.com/modelrailmag

Welcome

I write this in early January after a welcome festive break. The end of the year is always a busy time at *MR*, particularly so in 2025 with a huge influx of new models arriving for review, along with samples of our own exclusive projects (see page 8).

Amidst the hubbub, I greatly enjoyed a visit to Manchester MRS' Centenary Exhibition in mid-December, which featured a superb array of layouts, spread across two large halls in a comfortable modern venue only a short walk from Piccadilly station. I do love a good city-centre exhibition that's easy to get to on public transport. Judging by the healthy crowd numbers, I'm not alone in that!

As well as enjoying the layouts, it was great to catch up with many familiar faces. I also met up with a local artist friend, who was visiting a model show for the first time. I was sure that the innovation and creative flair of the layouts would appeal to him, but I hadn't expected him to be so smitten. Over a few pints in town afterwards, he was soon hatching plans for his first layout, with the huge scenic potential of 2mm scale piquing his interest. I blame 'Copenhagen Fields'!

The show featured too many highlights to mention here, but Gordon and Maggie Gravett's 'Port de Crozon' really caught my attention with its evocation of a sleepy French coastal scene. I wasn't surprised to hear that it had scooped both the MMRS Cup and Scenic Award during the show. It was also great to see MMRS' own 'Dewsbury Midland' on show for the first time in many years.

MR Johnson 4-4-0 No. 1757 *Beatrice*, exquisitely crafted from scratch by Sid Stubbs over 50 years ago, runs into 'Grimesthorpe' during the Manchester MRS show.

Also noteworthy was 'Grimesthorpe (for Attercliffe)', built by MMRS members to the original 'Manchester EM' gauge (18.0mm), thus allowing the operation of locomotives and stock built over 50 years ago by late MMRS members, including Sid Stubbs. I was treated to a peek at some of the mechanisms within these exquisite models – all built by hand – which were, frankly, mind-blowing.

The Manchester show returns to the same city-centre venue in 2026 (December 12-13), so be sure to pop the date in your diary.

Happy modelling!

George Dent Head of Content

Meet the team behind the UK's best modelling magazine

Helen Milbank – Deputy Head of Content
Our newest member is 'on track' to help the team keep to the timetable.

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

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

This month's contributors

Chris Nevard

Peter Marriott

Dave Lowery

Chris Leigh

Ben Ando

Ben Jones

Steve Nall

Model Rail essential information

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Former British Rail employee Andy Gibbs set about re-creating Kensington Olympia, complete with Motorail terminal, in 'N' gauge.

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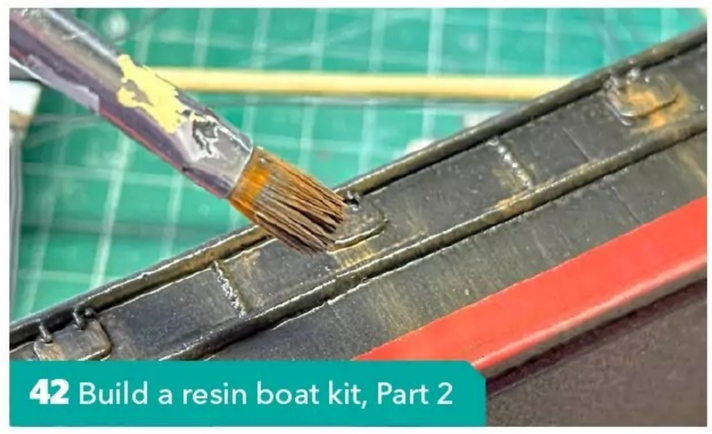
Chris Nevard chronicles the painting and weathering stages of this delightful 'Clyde Puffer' tramp steamer, using simple materials and techniques.

46 Building Ponts Mill, Part 5
In the final instalment of Peter Marriott's Cornish odyssey, he explains how the fast-running stream and pot-holed access road was modelled.

50 Build a modern track-carrying wagon
Network Rail's IFA tilting track panel wagons make for a fascinating modelling subject. Dave Lowery explains how he crafted a set for his 'O' gauge layout.

54 Model grounded goods van bodies
Steve Nall employs a variety of techniques to create some stunning line-side features.

58 Portray an archaeological dig
With the aid of an off-the-shelf foam casting, Peter Marriott creates a trackside scenic feature with a difference!


42 Build a resin boat kit, Part 2

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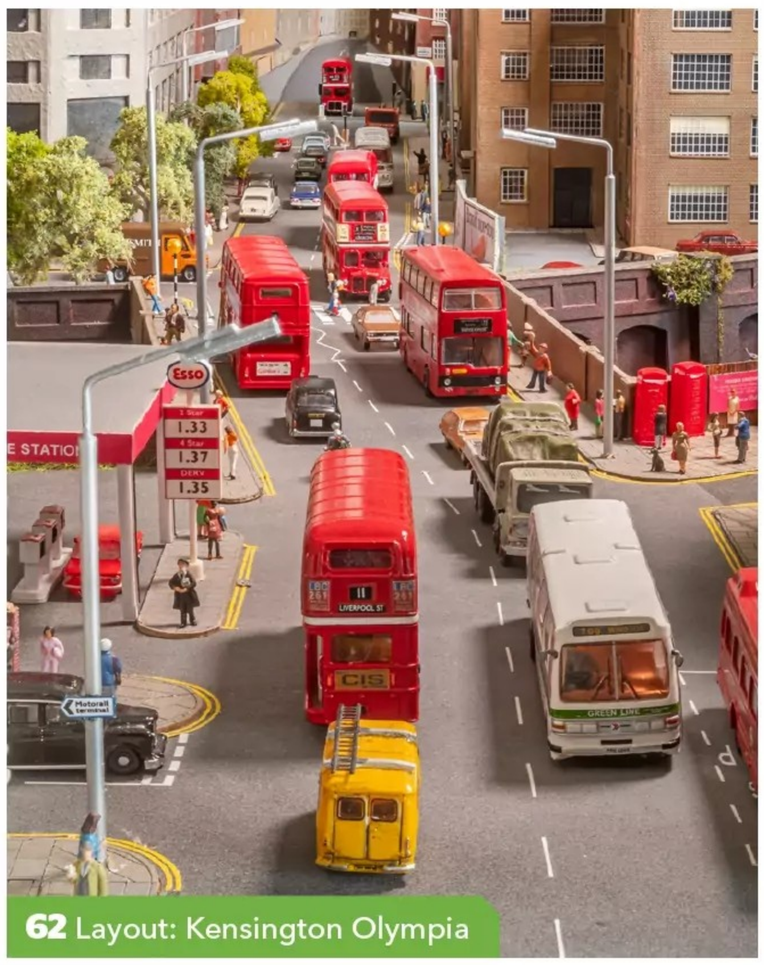
62 Layout: Kensington Olympia

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Opening the box

The latest happenings from the world of model railways

The Big Picture

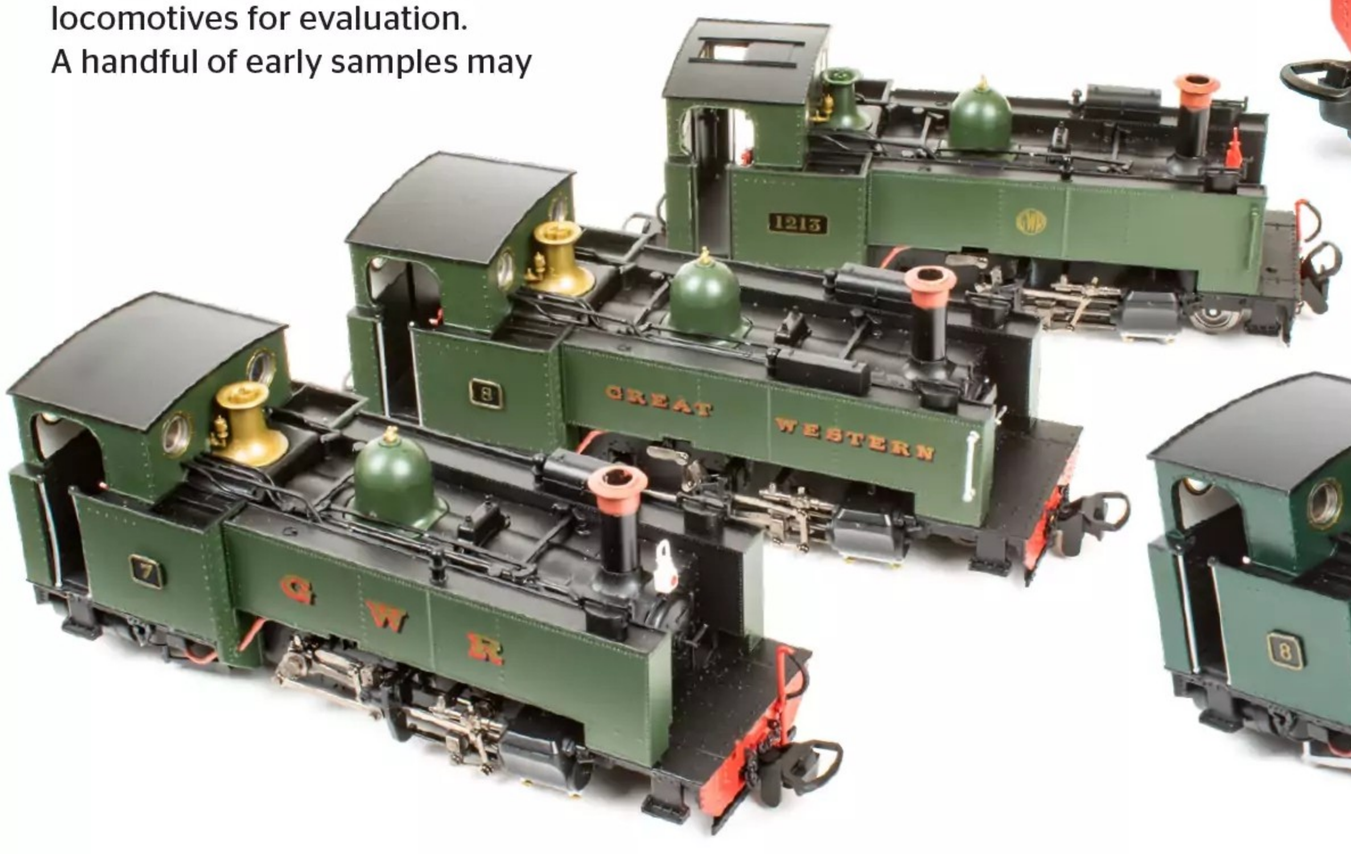
During the German bombing offensive of 1940-1941, over 100,000 Londoners took refuge in the Capital's subterranean railway system while fires and destruction raged above ground. Basildon Model Railway Club's innovative layout pays tribute to the heroism of the British people during this time, capturing the sights and sounds above and below ground. Look out for the full story in a future issue of *Model Rail*. Photography: CHRIS NEVARD

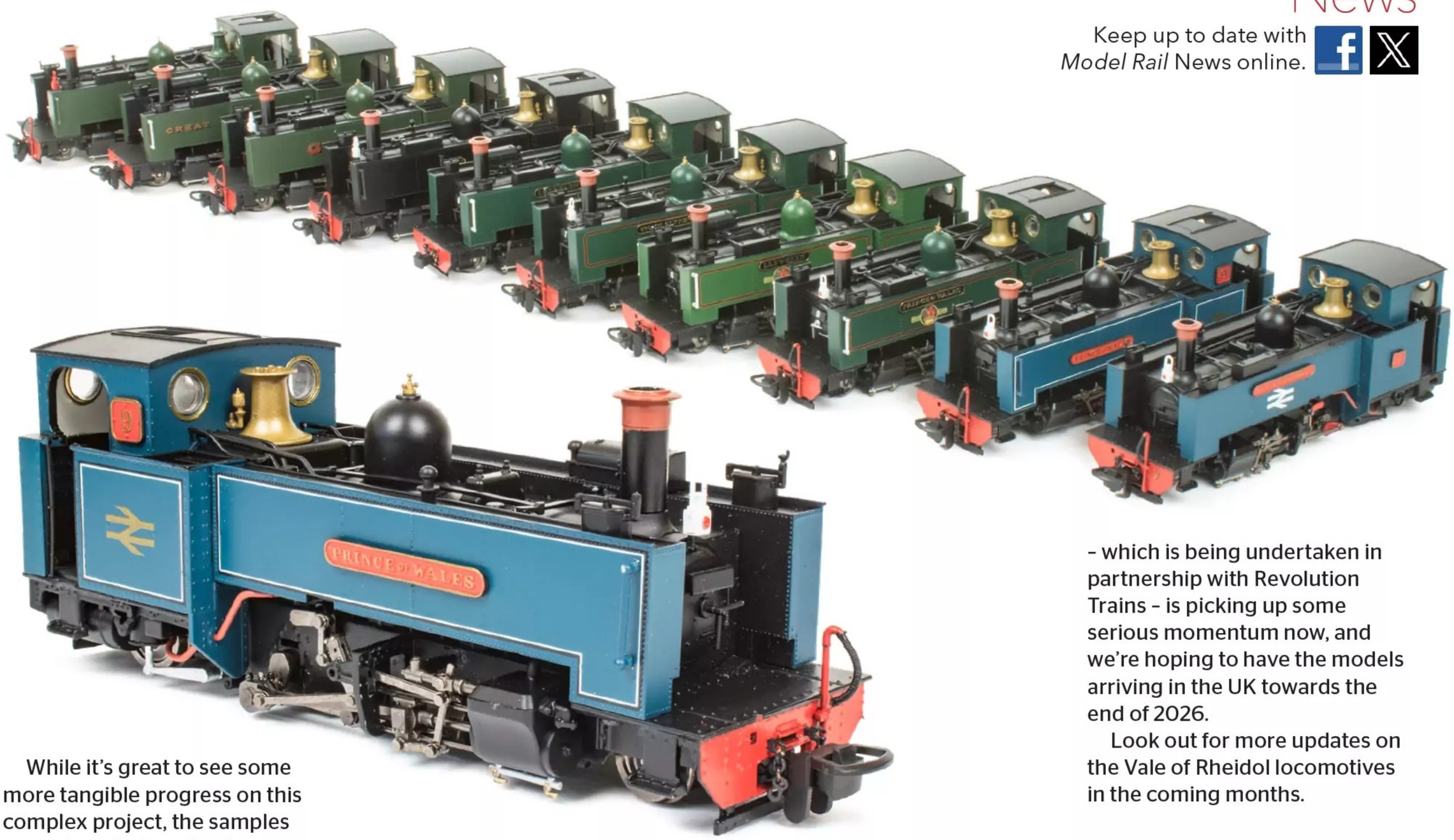
The Big Picture

RHEIDOL TANKS – IN COLOUR!

009 GAUGE

We were delighted to receive fully decorated samples of all ten proposed versions of our forthcoming ‘009’ Vale of Rheidol 2-6-2T locomotives for evaluation. A handful of early samples may have been glimpsed at the NEC event in November, but now we can present all of the GWR and BR liveried examples here for the first time.





While it's great to see some more tangible progress on this complex project, the samples are not perfect, and we've identified a number of areas for improvement.

As previously stated, we're producing models of Nos. 7, 8 and 9, with the tooling allowing for the slight detail differences between each locomotive. Our tooling represents the Rheidol tanks in their 1944-1988 condition, so the chosen liveries reflect this, ranging from Great Western green to lined BR blue.

Away from the cosmetic side of things, we're also awaiting more fully motorised samples from the factory before we give the green light to start production in earnest. However, the project – which is being undertaken in partnership with Revolution Trains – is picking up some serious momentum now, and we're hoping to have the models arriving in the UK towards the end of 2026.

Look out for more updates on the Vale of Rheidol locomotives in the coming months.

'FLATROLS' MOVE CLOSER

OO GAUGE

Further progress has also been made on *Model Rail*'s exclusive BR 'Flatrol MJ' atomic flask-carrying wagons.

As revealed in MR344, the first decorated samples had arrived for checking, but we've now received the rest of the ten planned versions, which are split between the as-built six-axle version and the later rebuilt four-axle wagons.

Each model features slightly different markings, based on photographs of the real wagons, with the shift from XKV/XKB to FNA TOPS codes replicated where appropriate. The bauxite-liveried six-axle wagons are equipped with vacuum brake gear, while the rebuilt versions are air-braked.

The removable atomic flasks also feature appropriate markings, while the sun shades are adorned with running numbers to match each wagon, as was the practice in real life.

Spanning the 1960s-1990s eras, these wagons operated behind a variety of steam and diesel locomotives during their lives, working across the network, servicing the nation's Magnox nuclear power stations.

By the time this issue hits the shelves, the factory should be gearing up for production, with the wagons likely to arrive in stock by summertime.

Prices are still being finalised, but we'll have more details to share soon.

Ellis Clark
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ACCURASCALE REVIVES CLASS 73/9 PROJECT

OO GAUGE

Much-requested by modellers, the Wabtec/GBRf Class 73/9 bi-mode locomotives are to be produced by Accurascale. Originally mooted as an exclusive retailer commission about six years ago, the project will now continue under Accurascale's own brand, providing the ideal traction for the manufacturer's Mk 5 Caledonian Sleeper coaches.

Thirteen of the 1960s-era electro-diesel Class 73s were re-engineered by Wabtec at Loughborough under the direction of GBRf's Bob Tiller, involving bodywork modifications, along with fully renewed electrical and cooling systems.

Accurascale's tooling focuses on the 11 locos re-engineered with MTU 8V4000R43L power units and reflects a number of important variations between Phase 1 and Phase 2 rebuilds, including lighting, cab windows, roof gear, snowploughs, third-rail fittings, and bodyside vents.

Eight versions have been announced so far, all of which will only be available via Accurascale's website, and for which customer pre-orders are now being taken.

To complement the '73/9s', Accurascale is also producing a second batch of Caledonian Sleeper Mk 5s, available as single cars for the first time and featuring new running numbers. Again, these are available exclusively from Accurascale's website (£59.45 each), with multi-buy discounts available.

What's planned?

- Class 73/9 (current condition) 73961 GBRf blue
- Class 73/9 (early condition) 73962 *Dick Mabbutt* GBRf blue
- Class 73/9 (early condition) 73963 *Janice,* GBRf Europorte
- Class 73/9 (current condition) 73965 *Des O'Brien,* GBRf blue
- Class 73/9 (current condition) 73966, Caledonian Sleeper
- Class 73/9 (early condition) 73967, Caledonian Sleeper
- Class 73/9 (early condition) 73968, Caledonian Sleeper
- Class 73/9 (current condition) 73970 *W.S. Sellar*, Caledonian Sleeper

When's it due? Q1 2027
Prices: £179.99 (DCC-ready), £279.99 (DCC sound)
Web: *www.accurascale.com*

LOCOMOTION ANNOUNCES SOME SPECIAL 'SHEDS'

N GAUGE

Soon after the first batch of Revolution Trains' Class 66s landed (see review on page 90), Locomotion Models and Rails of Sheffield announced the launch of a special 'Shed' duo.

Produced exclusively for the Railway Icons range, the fresh '66s' depict GB Railfreight's special red Railway200 anniversary liveried No. 66710 *Karen Harrison* and 66719 *Michael Portillo*. They also feature the crests of the 'Big Four' railway companies under each cab window. Both models will feature prototype-specific detail to correctly represent the real locomotives, and they're available to pre-order now from Locomotion Models or Rails of Sheffield.

When's it due? Late 2026
Prices (each): £159.99 (DCC-ready), £254.95 (DCC sound)
Web:
www.locomotionmodels.com
www.railsofsheffield.com

'TERRIERS' AND 10000: RAILS COMMISSIONS RE-TOOLED FAVES

OO GAUGE

Rails of Sheffield has commissioned the return of Dapol's 'OO' LBSCR 'Terrier' 0-6-0T, with seven new versions catering for the LBSCR, Isle of Wight, K&ESR, Southern and BR eras. Due this autumn, the tooling has been upgraded with new cabs, etched coal rails and better access to the Next18 DCC socket, along with the superior speakers and a 'stay alive' circuit. All versions will be available DCC-ready or DCC sound-fitted.

Also set to return this year is the LMS prototype diesel-electric 10000, produced for Rails by Bachmann Branchline. Boasting an improved level of finish compared to previous releases, the iconic Co-Co is offered in original black livery with chrome LMS lettering and is available in DCC-ready or DCC sound-fitted format. Delivery is slated for Q2 of 2026.

The 'Terriers' and 10000 can be pre-ordered now.

Prices: £139.95-£239.95 ('Terrier'), £209.95-£339.95 (10000)
Web: *www.railsofsheffield.com*

OBITUARY: MIKE ROMANS

Chris Leigh writes: It was with much sadness that I learned of the passing of Mike Romans, following a short illness, on December 12. Mike was one of the last dyed-in-the-wool railway managers, a lifelong railwayman who had begun his career in the booking office at Slough. Progressing to management, he worked in the freight yards of South Wales, and later in Paris and Brussels as Operations Planning Manager at Eurostar.

A GWR man through and through, Mike was hugely knowledgeable about all aspects of the Western Region and its predecessor. His wisdom and willingness to offer his thoughts on a wide range of railway and model railway topics – including the fortunes, or not, of hobby shops and Hornby – will be very much missed.

HORNBY'S TYPE 3s ROLL IN

TT GAUGE

The emerging 'TT:120' scale received a real boost with the arrival of Hornby's new BR Class 37 diesel locomotives, with three versions received by stockists in December. EWS-liveried 'Heavyweight' Class 37/7 37704 was the first to turn up at *MR* HQ – see the review on page 92.

Joining the Type 3 fleet is pioneer D6700 in plain BR green, plus 37408 *Loch Rannoch* in 'Large Logo' Rail blue. All three models include different bodyshell detail, notably split, centre and flush headcodes, along with pre- and post-refurbishment appointments. A Next18 interface is installed and sound-fitted options are available. Appropriately, the Scottish Region's 37408 is supplied with a set of optional miniature three-piece snowploughs, along with etched nameplates.

Products: • TT3036M Class 37 D6700 • TT3035M Class 37/4 37408 *Loch Rannoch*
Prices: £159.99-£214.99
Availability: Hornby stockists
Web: *www.hornby.com*

IRISH BUBBLES CEMENT THEIR PLACE

OO GAUGE

One of Irish Railway Models' earliest RTR offerings in 4mm scale was the CIÉ cement tank wagon, and a welcome new production run has recently been delivered. Introduced in the mid-1960s, 150 of these twin-axle wagons were built by CIÉ, affectionately known as 'Bubbles', with the fleet continuing in operation until 2009. IRM's new raft of models is available in 1970s orange and the later ivory livery, with multiple triple-packs produced to allow trains of individually numbered wagons to be assembled.

Price: £109.95 per triple-pack
Availability: IRM/ Accurascale stockists
Web: *Accurascale.com*

NEW STEAMERS ARRIVE

OO GAUGE

Amongst the glut of new models arriving in the run-up to Christmas was the first of Hornby's newly tooled GWR 'Saint' class 4-6-0, along with Accurascale's GWR '57XX'/'8750' pannier tanks.

We'll have full reviews of these models in the next issue of *Model Rail*.

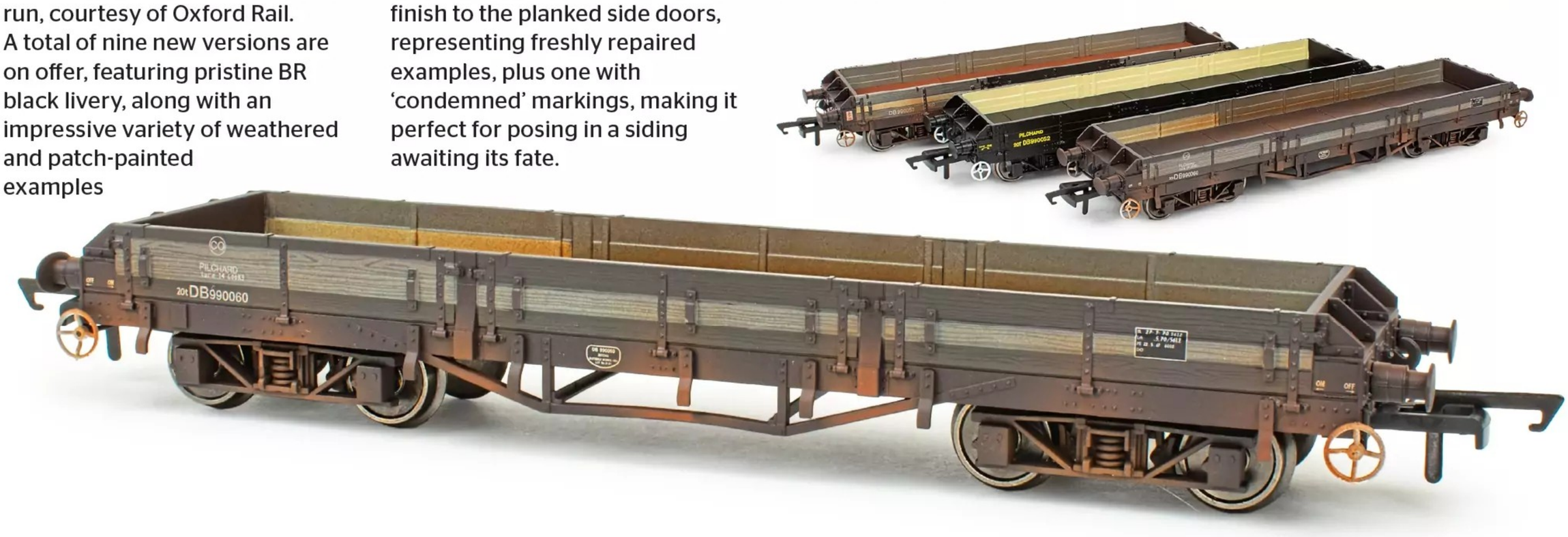
Web: *www.accurascale.com www.hornby.com*

OXFORD'S SCHOOL OF PILCHARDS

00 GAUGE

First released in 2022, the BR 'Pilchard' bogie ballast wagon has enjoyed another production run, courtesy of Oxford Rail. A total of nine new versions are on offer, featuring pristine BR black livery, along with an impressive variety of weathered and patch-painted examples (which is how most of them appeared in service). There are even a couple with a 'bare timber' finish to the planked side doors, representing freshly repaired examples, plus one with 'condemned' markings, making it perfect for posing in a siding awaiting its fate.

Price: £24.95 each
Availability: Oxford Rail stockists
Web: *www.oxforddie-cast.co.uk*



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ESU LOKSOUND EST. 1999

THETFORD & DISTRICT MRS

Mick King writes: Have you ever been asked "How did your railway model club start?" Fifty years ago, Thetford and District Model Railway Society (TDMRS) began when an advert in a local newspaper shop was spotted by one of the founder members' wives.

After a few phone calls in June 1976, an initial meeting was held around a kitchen table, featuring four founder members: Colin Wood, Fred Glynn, Bruce Scott and Brian Dickson. Brian, a curator at Kilverstone Wildlife Park, secured the use of a room above the park's café, thanks to the owner, Lord Fisher, who was made honorary president. Brian would occasionally turn up on club nights with one of the zoo's marmosets in tow!

Thanks to numerous local businesses and landlords, the club has been fortunate to meet at various locations over the years. After having the use of a room at a pub, the club moved to Breckland Middle School in Brandon, where a 16mm scale layout was built in the grounds with the help of the caretaker. We then moved into our current location in Thetford, a former school converted into a community hub, where we have our own dedicated space.

TDMRS currently has two large 'OO' gauge layouts, plus a trio of 'N' gauge and one 'O' projects in various stages of development. They're a mix of DC and DCC. Indeed, our most recent project is to be dual control, allowing us to test both DC and DCC models.

The club also has a couple of finished layouts that are always available for shows, 'Dagenham East' and 'Fen Lane'. With members also involved with Bressingham Steam Museum, TDMRS was tasked with building a large layout to be displayed there, which is based on the Thetford-Bury St Edmunds line at Thetford Bridge.

What of the future? Discussions are ongoing regarding moving into a larger room within the current location, to provide more space for layouts, a reading room or maybe even a workshop. Time will tell. Like any project, it will be dependent on member support.

The club holds its regular meetings on Wednesday nights from 1900, and new members are always welcome.
Where is it? Charles Burrel Centre, Staniforth Road, Thetford, Norfolk, IP24 3LH
Web: *www.tdmrs.co.uk*

DAPOL SEEKS INTEREST IN STANIER STOCK

N GAUGE

Having garnered enough expressions of interest to advance its Gresley BG and Modified Buffet projects, Dapol is seeking a similar level of interest in the LMS Period III 57ft non-lavatory suburban coaching stock.

The proposed range of 'N' gauge models would consist of four different vehicle types – Dia. 1906/1906A Third, Dia. 1921/1921A Composite, Dia. 1907 Brake Third and, for those wanting to portray push-pull sets, a Dia. 1856 Driving Brake Third. Built between 1933 and 1950, examples of these carriages lasted in BR passenger use until 1967.

Four liveries are planned, across LMS and BR eras, and while CAD work has been completed, the project will only move forward if enough expressions of interest are received, with a decision expected by Dapol in February.
Price: £39.95 each
Web: *www.dapol.co.uk*

009 GAUGE

LITTLE WELSH WONDERS

A range of new 3D-printed body kits is now available from Miniature Modellers Hub, designed to fit Bachmann's RTR 'OO9' gauge *Sir Handel* 0-4-0T chassis (from the Thomas and Friends range). Portraying Corris and Talyllyn prototypes, these items are the latest additions to an existing range of narrow gauge locomotive and rolling stock kits, covering 'OO9', 'NG7' and 5.5mm gauge.
Products: • TM-CR010 Corris Railway No. 10 009
• TM-CR102 Corris Railway Falcon Hughes (Late)
• TM-TR103 Talyllyn Railway *Sir Haydn* body kits
Prices: £29.99 each
Web: *www.teamimmersion.com/shop*

DR3D RELEASES 5-PLANK GLOUCESTER OPENS

00 GAUGE

DR3D Models has released two new 3D-printed kits of dumb-buffered five-plank private owner open wagons, based on vehicles designed by the Gloucester Railway Carriage and Wagon Company in the 1880s.

The kits cover either raised or rounded end wagons and consist of a single-piece body, with wooden or iron brake shoes, different axleguard patterns, plus separate axlebox and spring assemblies. The chassis can be built in rigid or compensated form, to 'OO', 'P4' or 'EM' standards.

Also available is a set of 3D-printed alternative raised round ends for Hornby's three-plank wagons, plus packs of Gloucester RC&W axlebox and spring units.
Price: £15.00 each
Web: *www.dr3d.uk*

KRModels

YOU ASKED FOR IT, AND WE MADE IT.

Network South Livery. Limited run.

SR 4DD EMU

In 1948 BR asked O.V.S Bulleid to come up with a solution to help reduce overcrowding on suburban routes to and from London. In 1949 2 Double Deck units rolled off the production line, numbered 4001/4002 these were an experiment that lasted 22 years and finished on 1st October 1971. These were renumbered to 4901/4902 for the BR Blue livery.

- All running numbers
- Internal lights
- Close coupling
- Steel buffers

Available now to ship.

4901 only, both DCC Ready and DCC sound.

Limited stock of all other models.

In Full Green, Green Small Yellow End, BR Green
Full Yellow Ends, BR Blue

Prices start $390.00

In stock
ready to ship

krmodels.net

MORE BESPOKE FOOTPLATE CREWS

ANY GAUGE

3D-printing specialists Modelu has released a host of new footplate crew packs, designed specifically to fit within particular model steam locomotives. Timed to coincide with some of the most recent 'OO' releases from Rapido and Bachmann, each pack provides a pair of workers in appropriate – and characterful – poses.

In most cases, a driver and fireman are supplied, but for the forthcoming Rapido fireless 0-4-0T, the driver is accompanied by a shunter brandishing a coupling pole. Certain models also feature a choice of multiple packs to suit different eras.

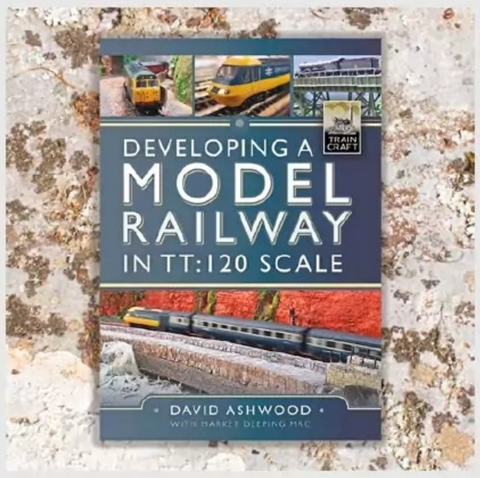
Notably, the crew of the 'Port of Par' Bagnall 0-4-0STs – reviewed in last month's issue – feature suitably stooped poses! Although designed initially for 'OO', all figures are also available in other scales.

Products:
- 11286/7 Rapido 'E1' crews
- 11288/11299 Rapido 'O1' crews
- 11292 Hattons '14XX' crew
- 11292 Bachmann '45XX' crew
- 11293 Talyllyn F&G Co crew
- 11294 Rapido '44XX' crew
- 11296 Rapido Andrew Barcley fireless crews
- 11297/8 Port of Par Bagnall crews

Prices: from £8.95 per pack
Web: *www.modelu3d.co.uk*

Modeller's Bookshelf

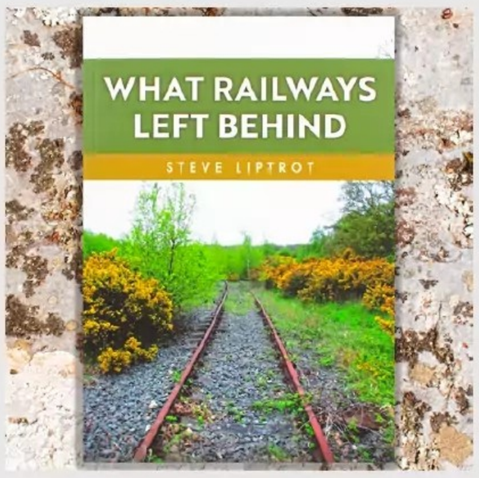
George Dent and Helen Milbank present four new titles that will inspire and inform your modelling.



TABLETOP TRIALS

Adoption of 'TT:120' seems to be gathering momentum, thanks to more RTR models and kits coming on stream, and Market Deeping MRC set out to create a display layout in this scale. This new book charts its design and development, based on the Devon Riviera, plus a back-up project based in Co. Durham. There's plenty of information for anyone drawn to 'TT', with demonstrations of various techniques, and the adoption of 3D-printing is interesting. There's also an insightful look into DCC and layout lighting. An enjoyable read. ***(GD)***

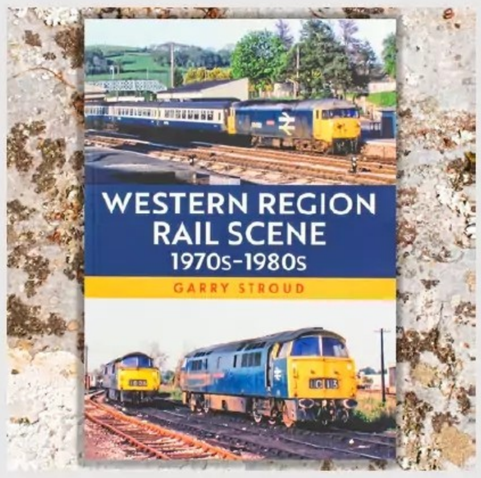
Book: *Developing a Model Railway in TT:120 Scale* by David Ashwood
Price: £25.00
Availability: *www.pen-and-sword.co.uk*



WHAT'S LEFT BEHIND

More than 5,000 miles of track and 2,300 stations vanished across the UK in the 1960s – but not without trace. Two hundred years of railways is a tricky thing to completely erase, and today, station buildings, disused track and discarded stock litter Britain's former network. Steve Liptrot takes us on a pictorial tour of the railways' remnants, together with a brief history of each site, covering Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire, as well as some European lines. It's an interesting read, and a useful guide if you plan to see for yourself what remains. ***(HM)***

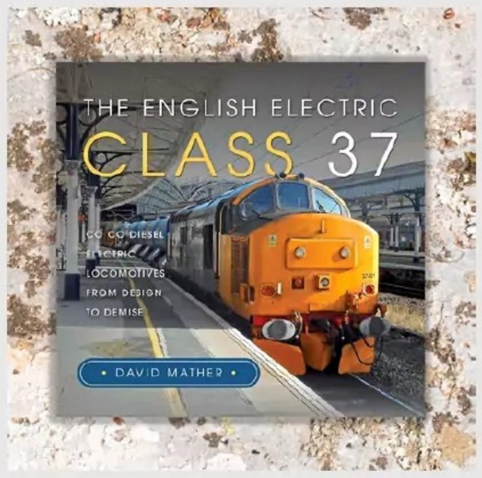
Book: *What Railways Left Behind* by Steve Liptrot
Price: £15.99
Availability: *www.amberley-books.com*



WESTERN BLUES

Anyone with a love of BR Western Region diesel traction in the Rail blue period will appreciate this collection of previously unpublished images. Although the hydraulics play a fleeting role, with the bulk of content captured after their demise, there's a pleasing variety of subjects, capturing freight and passenger workings across a wide swathe of the region. Views of the infrastructure are inspirational for modellers, while detailed captions provide plenty of information. A great addition to the bookshelf. ***(GD)***

Book: *Western Region Rail Scene 1970s-1980s* by Garry Stroud
Price: £15.99
Availability: *www.amberley-books.com*



VERSATILITY DEFINED

The latest in Pen & Sword's series of locomotive profiles sees the Class 37 examined 'from design to demise'. There's a wealth of technical detail here, examining assembly and refurbishment, explaining the various sub-classes that appeared in the 1980s and, most usefully, there are histories of each locomotive – no mean feat in a fleet of this size, even if the level of detail varies. This quality hardback features a mix of monochrome and colour images, covering the whole lifetime of the class, providing a mine of vital reference information. ***(GD)***

Book: *The English Electric Class 37* by David Mather
Price: £35.00
Availability: *www.pen-and-sword.co.uk*

ON THE WORKBENCH

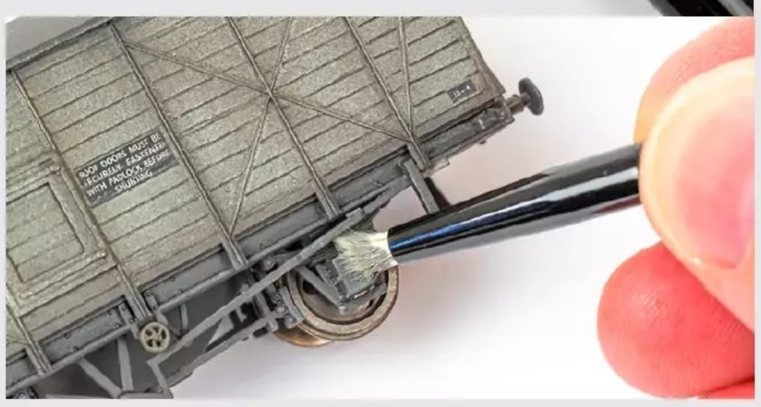
What new items have appeared in **George's** workshop this month?

KEEP IT DRY

The art of dry-brushing, whereby just a faint trace of paint is left on a brush's bristles, allowing it to be deposited onto a surface to highlight texture and detail, is a simple and effective process. Much depends on the brush, however, so this new range from AK Interactive makes the job easier. Available in four different sizes, ranging from small to extra-large, the rounded profile of the soft, synthetic bristles is optimum for the task, while also proving resilient to aggressive stippling action – something that often ruins ordinary paintbrushes.

Easy to clean and comfortable to use, a nice extra touch is the satin finish of the handle, which affords better grip for the fingers.

Product: AK Interactive AKB023 Dry Brush S
Price: £3.95
Availability: Scale Model Shop
Web: *www.scalemodelshop.co.uk*



COMPACT CUTTER

A small razor saw is a handy tool to have in the arsenal, especially when building or customising kits. This compact tool, with an innovative two-piece alloy handle, allows the blade to be protected while in storage, while also creating an extended grip while in use, with magnets holding the segments together securely.

Capable of working in confined spaces, the fine-tooth blade cuts quickly through a variety of plastics, as well as wood and resin. The 0.3mm thick stainless steel blade is tough yet flexible, featuring a 45mm long cutting edge and retained by two small bolts, making it easy to replace when necessary. Presented in a neat, foam-lined box, the tool has already proven its worth on a number of projects.

Product: DSPIAE AT-HW razor saw
Price: £17.99
Availability: Squires Model & Craft Tools
Web: *www.squirestools.com*

PECO'S ISLAND THEME

TT GAUGE

Hot on the heels of Hornby's gorgeous 'Terrier' 0-6-0T (see MR347) and matching four-wheel coaches, Peco has released a new set of laser-cut building kits in 'TT:120', depicting structures at Ventnor West on the Isle of Wight Railway (IoWR).

The station building kit has been cleverly designed to be assembled either as the substantial Ventnor West structure or as two smaller self-contained buildings to populate a pair of platforms. The architectural styling, although a close rendition of the prototype, can easily be transplanted to other geographic areas.

Other kits depict Ventnor West's timber signal box and goods shed, which can also be tailored to suit other regions if desired.

Like Peco's existing 'TT:120' GWR structures and generic platform kits, the IoWR kits consist primarily of laser-cut wood components and include an impressive array of details, with many parts featuring tab-and-slot joints for ease of assembly and strength. Detailed, illustrated instructions are provided, along with clear glazing material.

Products: Peco • LK12111 IoWR Signal Box kit (£19.96) • LK12112 IoWR Station Building kit (£68.50) • LK12113 IoWR Goods Shed kit (£20.95)
Availability: Peco stockists
Web: *www.peco-uk.com*

DAPOL'S GLYN VALLEY DELIGHT

009 GAUGE 00 GAUGE

Based on Glyn Ceiriog, on the Glyn Valley Tramway, Dapol's new laser-cut kit provides a useful brick-built structure for 4mm scale narrow gauge – or standard gauge – layouts. Designed and manufactured at Dapol's Chirk HQ, the parts are rendered in various thicknesses of card and fibreboard, with details such as gutters and downpipes being 3D-printed. A matching engine shed kit is now also available, and hopefully we'll see more similar kits appearing in future.

Product: Dapol 4B-000-001 Narrow gauge station building kit
Price: £34.99
Availability: Dapol stockists
Web: *www.dapol.co.uk*

BOXING CLEVER

00 GAUGE

Modeltex manufactures digitally produced photographic prints on 5mm thick foamboard, with the latest addition to the range featuring stacked shipping containers. Much easier than stacking and/or cutting plastic containers to form a backdrop, these printed sheets come with a satin finish and, due to the nature of the foamboard, they're easy to cut to the desired size, and to add surface texture with a knife or other tools.

Perfect for a dockside, warehouse or inter-modal yard scene, the ends of the containers feature a suitably weathered and faded appearance, with a range of colours and markings on show. Two different sheets are available, so there's plenty of variety. Free postage to the UK is possible – see the website for the latest information.

Product: Modeltex 1:87 Container Wall, A3 sheet
Price: £22.00
Availability: Modeltex stockists

EXHIBITION DIARY – JANUARY 17–MARCH 7 2026

Saturday 17 January

BLACKBURN. East Lancashire Model Railway Exhibition, St Marks Conservative Club, Preston Old Road, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB2 2SS. **Times:** Sat 11.00-17.00, Sun 10.00-15.00. **Admission:** Adult £5, Children/OAP £3, Families £12.

Saturday January 24

LANGTOFT. In aid of The Jamies Quest – Teenage Cancer Charity Event supported by Market Deeping MRC, Sleaford MRC, March and District MRC and the NG34 Model Railway Society. St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church, East End, Langtoft, PE6 9LP. **Times:** 10.00-16.00. **Admission:** Adults £5, Accompanied under-16s Free. **Email:** *Webman@MDMRC.Org* **Facebook:** *www.facebook.com/p/Jamies-Quest-for-lifesaving-cancer-treatment-61565582260764*

IRVINE. Kilmarnock and District Model Railway Club Exhibition 2026, Scottish Maritime Museum, Linthouse Building, Harbour Rd, Irvine, KA12 8BT. **Times:** Sat 10.00-17.00, Sun 10.00-16.00. **Admission:** Adults £7, Concessions £5, Accompanied under-16s Free. **Web:** *www.kilmarnockmrc.com* **Facebook:** *www.facebook.com/KDMRC71*

KENDAL. Kendal Model Railway Club Annual Exhibition 2026, Kendal Leisure Centre, Burton Road, Kendal, LA9 7HX. **Times:** Sat 10.00-17.00, Sun 10.00-16.00. **Admission:** Adults £6.50, Children (6-18) £2.50. **Tel:** 01539 733844. **Web:** *www.kendalmrc.org*

PONTEFRACT. Normanton & Pontefract Railway Modellers Society, Pontefract Model Railway Exhibition, Pontefract Racecourse, Park Road, Pontefract, WF8 4QD. **Times:** Sat 10.00-17.00, Sun 10.00-16.00. **Admission:** Adults £10, Accompanied under-16s Free. **Facebook:** Normanton and Pontefract RMS

Saturday January 31

SHIREHAMPTON. Shirehampton MRC Annual Model Rail Exhibition, Shirehampton Public Hall, Station Road, Shirehampton, Bristol, BS11 9TU. **Times:** 10.00-16.00. **Admission:** £6, Families (4) £8. **Web:** *www.shirehamptonmrc.com*

Saturday February 7

DEAL. East Kent Model Railway Society Exhibition 2026, The Landmark Centre, 129 High Street, Deal, Kent, CT14 6BB. **Times:** 10.00-16.00. **Admission:** Adults £7, Children (5-16) £1, Under-5s Free, Families £12. **Email:** *ekmrswhitstable@gmail.com*

HILLINGDON. Hillingdon Railway Modellers Test Track Public Open Day, Yiewsley Baptist Church Hall (side entrance), 74 Colham Avenue, Yiewsley, Hillingdon, London, UB7 8HF. **Times:** 10.00-15.00. **Admission:** £6. **Tel:** 020 8368 4090. **Web:** *www.hillingdonrailwaymodellers.co.uk*

Friday February 13

SOUTH SHIELDS. The Salvation Army Model Rail 2026, Community & Worship Centre, Wawn Street, South Shields, NE33 4EB. **Times:** Fri 13.00-20.00, Sat 10.00-17.00. **Admission:** Adults £5, Accompanied under-16s Free.

Saturday February 14

CHAPEL EN LE FRITH. New Mills & District Railway Modellers (NMDRM), Chapel en le Frith Leisure Centre, Long Lane, Chapel en le Frith, Derbyshire, SK23 0TQ. **Times:** Sat 10.00-17.00, Sun 10.00-16.30. **Admission:** Adults £8, Accompanied children Free. **Email:** *exhibition@nmdrm.co.uk* **Web:** *www.nmdrm.co.uk*

WESTON-SUPER-MARE. Burnham Model Railway Club Model Railway Exhibition, Priory Community School, Queens Way, Weston-Super-Mare, BS22 6BP. **Times:** 10.00-16.00 both days. **Admission:** Adults £8, Children Free. **Web:** *bdmrc.co.uk/weston-super-mare-2026*

Sunday February 15

REDRUTH. Cambourne Railway Modelling, Portreath Exhibition '26, The Millennium Hall, 3 Penberthy Road, Portreath, Redruth, Cornwall, TR16 4LP. **Times:** 10.00-16.00. **Admission:** Adults £3, Under-5s Free.

Saturday February 21

READING. Kenavon Railway Society in support of the Cholsey & Wallingford Railway Exhibition, The Warehouse, 1a Cumberland Road, Reading, RG1 3LB. **Times:** 10.00-16.30. **Admission:** Adults £5, Seniors £4, Children £2.50, Families £11. **Tel:** 0776 0285 383. **Email:** *standing_richard@yahoo.co.uk* **Web:** *www.standingrichard.wixsite.com/kenavon/exhibition*

TONBRIDGE. Tonbridge MRC annual exhibition, Angel Leisure Centre, Angel Lane, off High Street, Tonbridge, TN9 1SF. **Times:** 10.00-17.00. **Admission:** Adults £8, Accompanied under-16s Free. **Tel:** 01959 523840. **Web:** *www.tonbridgemrc.com*

YORK. EBOR Group of Railway Modellers York Against Cancer Model Railway Show, Holy Trinity Church Hall, Melrosegate, Heworth, York, YO31 0RP. **Times:** Sat 10.00-17.00, Sun 10.00-16.00. **Admission:** Adults £5, Children Free. **Tel:** 07899 861943

TENTERDEN. Ashford Model Railway Club, 2026 Tenterden Model Railway Exhibition, Homewood School, Ashford Rd, Tenterden, Kent, TN30 6LT. **Times:** Sat 10.00-17.00, Sun 10.00-16.00. **Admission:** Adults £6, Children £3, Under-5s Free, Concessions £5, Families (2+2) £15.

HIGHBRIDGE. Annual Model Railway Show from Sedgemoor Gauge O Group, The King Alfred School & Academy, Burnham Road, Highbridge, Somerset, TA9 3EE. **Times:** Sat 10.00-16.30, Sun 10.00-16.00. **Admission:** Adults £7, Accompanied under-14s Free.

Sunday March 1

CHESHAM. Chesham Model Railway Club Annual Exhibition, White Hill Centre, White Hill, Chesham, Bucks, HP5 1AG. **Times:** 10.00-16.00. **Admission:** Adults (no Concessions) £6, Children (4-16) £3, Under-4s Free, Families (2+2) £12. **Tel:** 07939 327947. **Web:** *www.chesham-mrc.co.uk*

Friday March 6

WOMBOURNE. Midarc Promotions Wombourne Railex, Wombourne Civic Centre, Gravel Hill, Wombourne, WV5 9HA. **Times:** 10.00-16.00. **Admission:** Adults £8, Accompanied under-16s Free. **Tel:** 07927 059930.

Saturday March 7

DEAL. East Kent Model Railway Society, The Landmark Centre, 129 High Street, Deal, Kent, CT14 6BB. **Times:** 10.00-16.00. **Admission:** Adults £7, Children 5-16 £1, Under-5s Free, Families £12. **Email:** *ekmrswhitstable@gmail.com*

GATESHEAD. Birtley Model Railway Engineers, Birtley Model Railway Exhibition, Ravensworth Road, Birtley, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, DH3 1EN. **Times:** Both days 10.00-16.00. **Admission:** Adults £6, Accompanied under-16s Free. **Tel:** 07806 323860. **Email:** *michaelnhedley@gmail.com*

RAINHILL. Rainhill Model Railway Club, 'Model Rail 2026' Exhibition, Rainhill High School, Warrington Road, Rainhill, L35 6NY. **Times:** Sat 10.00-17.00, Sun 10.00-16.30. **Admission:** Adults £8, Children £1, Families (2+2) £17. **Web:** *www.rainhillmrc.org.uk* **Tel:** 01925 226266.

REDDITCH. The 53rd Redditch Model Railway Exhibition, Trinity High School, Grove Street, Redditch Town Centre, Redditch, B98 8DS. **Times:** Sat 10.00-17.00, Sun 10.00-16.30. **Admission:** Adults £6, Children Free. **Tel:** 01527 540289. **Email:** *enquiry@redditch*-mrc.com **Web:** *www.redditch-mrc.com*

...and finally

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

We encounter leaves on the line every year since the railway authorities gave up trimming back the lineside to save money. We now have expensive leaf-blowing trains with high-pressure jets to literally blast the leaves off the line instead.

But Ganger Graeme has never seen anything like this. So bad is the ingress of vegetation along this route that the railway will need more than a water cannon. Will someone have to invent a chainsaw-toting tree plough...? *Photography: Chris Nevard*

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KMRC EXCLUSIVE / OO / NOW IN STOCK

35-805Z Bachmann Class 31/1 Diesel Locomotive No. 31 309 'Cricklewood' BR Blue...**£182.99** 35-805ZSF DCC Sound...**£276.99** 35-805ZSFX DCC Sound Deluxe...**£319.99**

LATEST ARRIVALS / OO

ACCURASCALE OO

ACC3013 Class 66 Diesel Locomotive No. 66 414 Freightliner Powerhaul.....£179.95
ACC3015 Class 66 Diesel Locomotive No. 66 789 "British Rail 1948-1997" GBRf.....£179.95
ACC3016 Class 66 Diesel Locomotive No. 66 421 "Gresty Bridge TMD" DRS.....£179.95

BACHMANN OO

35-822 Class 31/1 Diesel Locomotive No. 31 188 BR Engineers Grey & Yellow.....£182.99
35-822SF Class 31/1 Diesel No. 31 188 BR Engineers Grey & Yellow...DCC Sound £276.99
35-822SFX Class 31/1 No. 31 188 BR Engineers Grey & Yellow..DCC Sound Deluxe £318.99
35-827 Class 31/4 Diesel No. 31 423 'Jerome K. Jerome' BR InterCity Mainline.....£182.99
35-827SF Class 31/4 31 423 'Jerome K. Jerome' BR InterCity Mainline.DCC Sound £276.99
35-827SFX Class 31/4 31 423 'Jerome K. Jerome' BR InterCity.DCC Sound Deluxe £318.99

35-946 Class 13 Diesel Locomotive No. 13 003 BR Blue.....£339.99
35-946SF Class 13 Diesel Locomotive No. 13 003 BR Blue.....DCC Sound £458.99
35-946SFX Class 13 Diesel Locomotive No. 13 003 BR Blue....DCC Sound Deluxe £484.99

50-000ASF Class 66/0 Diesel Locomotive No. 66 096 EWS.....DCC Sound £288.99
50-000ASFX Class 66/0 Diesel Locomotive No. 66 096 EWS....DCC Sound Deluxe £314.49
50-001 Class 66/5 Diesel Locomotive No. 66 515 Freightliner Green.....£195.49
50-001SF Class 66/5 Diesel Locomotive No. 66 515 Freightliner Green.DCC Sound £288.99
50-002 Class 66/6 Diesel Locomotive No. 66 606 Freightliner Green.....£195.49
50-002SF Class 66/6 Diesel Loco No. 66 606 Freightliner Green.....DCC Sound £288.99
50-002SFX Class 66/6 Diesel No. 66 606 Freightliner Green.....DCC Sound Deluxe £314.49
50-004 Class 66/8 Diesel Locomotive No. 66 847 'Terry Baker' Colas Rail Freight.....£195.49
50-004SF Class 66/8 Diesel No. 66 847 'Terry Baker' Colas Rail Freight.DCC Sound £288.99
50-004SFX Class 66/8 No. 66 847 'Terry Baker' Colas Rail Freight.DCC Sound Deluxe £314.49
50-004A Class 66/8 Diesel No. 66 850 'David Maidment OBE' Colas Rail Freight.....£195.49
50-004ASF Class 66/8 66 850 'David Maidment OBE' Colas Rail Freight.DCC Sound £288.99
50-004ASFX Class 66/8 66 850 'David Maidment OBE' Colas...DCC Sound Deluxe £314.49

BACHMANN SCENECRAFT OO

44-1022 BR(E) Signal Box.....£72.99
44-1022A BR(E) Signal Box - Blue & White.....£72.99
50-001SFX Class 66/5 Diesel No. 66 515 Freightliner Green.....DCC Sound Deluxe £314.49
50-002 Class 66/6 Diesel Locomotive No. 66 606 Freightliner Green.....£195.49
50-002SF Class 66/6 Diesel Locomotive No. 66 606 Freightliner Green.DCC Sound £288.99
50-002SFX Class 66/6 Diesel No. 66 606 Freightliner Green.....DCC Sound Deluxe £314.49

DAPOL OO

4P-004-001 GWR Autocoach 37 GWR Lined Crimson Lake.....£70.99
4P-004-002 GWR Autocoach 40 GWR Lined Chocolate/Cream.....£70.99
4P-004-003 GWR Autocoach 41 GWR Twin Cities Chocolate/Cream.....£70.99
4P-004-004 GWR Autocoach 39 GWR Shirtbutton Chocolate/Cream.....£70.99

4P-004-005 GWR Autocoach W37W BR Crimson & Cream.....£70.99
4P-004-006 GWR Autocoach W36 BR Crimson.....£70.99
4P-004-007 GWR Autocoach W38 BR Maroon.....£70.99

CLARK RAILWORKS OO

C3041 Prestwins Bauxite Triple Pack.....£120.00

C3041A Prestwins Bauxite Triple Pack.....£120.00
C3042 Prestwins Bauxite Triple Pack.....£120.00
C3042A Prestwins Bauxite Triple Pack.....£120.00
C3042B Prestwins Bauxite Triple Pack.....£120.00
C3042C Prestwins Bauxite Triple Pack.....£120.00

EFE RAIL OO

E82010 Class 74 Electro-Diesel Loco No. 74 009 BR Blue, weathered.....£191.99
E86021 LBSCR 54ft 'Isle of Wight' 4-Coach Pack SR Maunsell.....£229.99
E86022 LBSCR 54ft 'Isle of Wight' 4-Coach Pack SR Malachite Green.....£229.99

HORNBY OO

R30401 Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 Steam No. 35015 "Rotterdam Lloyd" BR Blue..£215.99
R30404 Saint 4-6-0 Steam Loco No. 2999 "Lady of Legend" Great Western Green...£211.49
R30405 Saint 4-6-0 Steam Loco No. 2975 "Lord Palmer" Great Western Green.....£211.49

R30426 Class 87 Electric Loco No. 87 012 "The Olympian" Network SouthEast.....£215.99
R30435TXS Railroad Class 37 Diesel Locomotive No. 37 093 Police....DCC Sound £134.99
R30438 Railroad Class 55 Deltic No. 55 002 "The Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry".£67.49
R30438TXS Railroad Class 55 Deltic "The Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry".DCC Sound £116.99
R40470 BR Kitchen and Buttery Car & Composite Restaurant White Horse 7833 Twin Pack.£125.99
R40471 BR Kitchen and Buttery Car & Composite Restaurant Jolly Tar 7834 Twin Pack.£125.99
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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.

▶ After 49 years, the final Inter-City 125 passenger duties in England ceased at the December timetable change, when Great Western Railway retired its remaining 'Castle' sets. ScotRail is now the only operator of the type, which was introduced by British Rail Western Region in October 1976. BEN JONES

▲ Northern EMU 323239 is the first train to receive Transport for Greater Manchester's new 'Bee Network' livery, promoting better integration with the city's bus and tram systems. Eight local rail routes in and around Manchester are to switch to TfGM control, starting with the lines to Glossop/ Hatfield and Stalybridge. TFGM

▼ GWR has replaced the 'Castle' HST sets on its West Country regional diagrams with ex-Transport for Wales Class 175 DMUs. The 26 two and three-car sets will gradually take over much of GWR's regional traffic in Devon and Cornwall, allowing Class 158s to be deployed elsewhere on the GWR network to increase capacity. BEN JONES

◀ A computer-generated mock-up of the proposed Great British Railways livery was unveiled in mid-December, showing a Hitachi Class 80X unit in the red, white and blue livery that should start to be rolled out across nationalised passenger train operators from 2026. DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT

Staff Show & Tell

Irish holiday fun

Feeling an urge for something different, **George Dent** spent the festive season focusing on his Irish rolling stock.

Despite having a ‘to-do’ list as long as my arm, with a ‘OO’ layout I desperately want to finish and plenty of kits to build, I decided to spend the short window of modelling time afforded me over Christmas to get some of my Irish stock in order.

Thanks to the impressive products emanating from Irish Railway Models and Murphy’s Models over the past decade, modelling the railways of Ireland becomes ever-more viable – and attractive. Although I’ve yet to build a layout suitable for them, my growing collection of diesel locomotives and rolling stock is making such a project more pressing. I have several ideas under consideration, but I daren’t make a start until my UK-based layout project is completed, thus freeing up some workshop space.

However, it doesn’t hurt to kill time with some self-contained modelling projects, so I opened up a few boxes of IRM’s Bulleid vans and set-to, aiming to give them a much more authentic weathered appearance.

What George used

- Irish Railway Models CIÉ Bulleid ‘H’ vans **Price:** £109.95 per triple-pack **Availability:** Accurascale stockists **Web:** *www.accurascale.com*

Given the limited time, I simply used my tried-and-trusted technique, beginning with an overall coat of a generic ‘dirty’ brown shade paint, most of which was quickly wiped away with cotton buds. Using slow-drying enamel paints for this is recommended, as the pigment remains workable for plenty of time, aided by white spirit or weak enamel thinners (the type formulated for use with weathering washes, NOT for thinning paints for airbrushing).

But instead, I used LifeColor acrylics, which dry a little too fast for comfort, but if one works quickly, the job can be done satisfactorily. Besides, I find these paints work well for the express purpose of imparting more of an ingrained dirt effect, especially when using jars that are nearly empty and, thus, with a slightly denser pigment.

You’ll have heard it before, no doubt, but practice makes perfect and trialling such techniques on old models is a perfect way of seeing how paints react and how they can be manipulated on the surface before they dry. Alcohol-based acrylic thinners can help to remove LifeColor and similar paints once they start to dry out, but it gets less easy the longer the paint is left.

Once that initial ‘brush-on-wipe-off’ stage was complete, the wagons gained a more lived-in appearance, albeit with a slightly crude feel to them. And this is where the airbrush excels, as it allows a thinner and more diffuse layer of paint to be applied, which softens any harder edges and imparts an authentic dusty sheen.

For this second stage, I employed a blend of Tamiya acrylic paint, thinned with the same brand of thinners, to create a generic dark brown/grey shade. Misted predominantly over the underframe and roof, it was used more sparingly along the sides and ends.

There is still some refinement work to take care of, such as adding a burnished edge to brake handles and door handles, via dry-brushing, but the wagons treated thus far look much more businesslike.

STEP BY STEP

1 Irish Railway Models has produced various triple-packs of CIÉ ‘H’ vans, with plenty still in stock at the time of writing. They’re hugely impressive models, but they can look even better with a weathered finish.

2 Work began with some generic dark brown shades, using jars of LifeColor acrylics that were nearly empty, which often results in a thicker, denser paint. I brushed on a coat of paint, working it into any recesses.

3 Instantly, I grabbed a dry cotton bud and wiped most of the paint away, working in downward strokes. As the swab became clogged, I switched to a clean swab and continued until the pigment was left in recesses and in streaks.

5 With the paint still wet, the roof was dabbed with kitchen tissue, whose rough surface imparted a random texture into the paint, suggestive of a waterproof coating covering the van’s roof.

6 When the body and roof were dry enough to handle, the intricate chassis frames were stippled with a mix of earthy brown and dark grey/black acrylics. I wanted the underframes to appear much dirtier than the bodywork.

7 To add finesse to the weathering, a second stage consisted of a light misting of a dirty brown/grey mix of acrylics, sprayed through an airbrush at a low pressure. I began the process by treating the underframe.

IRM's Bulleid 'H' vans are fabulous models which look even better with a weathered finish.

The two distinct layers of weathering help give the vans a more convincing appearance.

As well as having more wagons to finish, George will also need to weather his 'A' class Co-Co diesel to match its load.

4

The process was repeated, panel by panel, around each side and end of each van. Next, the roof was brushed over with a blend of dark grey and matt black, working from side to side with a flat brush to encourage lateral streaking.

8

Minimal spraying of the sides and ends softened the rough edges of the initial stage and suggested a finer layer of dust, while the roof was given more layers of airbrushed grime, working laterally to promote subtle streaking.

DAVE'S SUPER '60'

One of the latest 'O' gauge locomotives to roll off Dave Lowery's production line is this handsome BR Class 60, depicting 60007 in the popular Load Haul livery. It's not a Heljan RTR model, but a hand-built masterpiece, based on a David Parkins brass kit.

As well as an impressive level of exterior detail, the interior is well-appointed, with the cooler group gubbins visible behind the etched grilles, while the cabs are also fully kitted out. Dave has added interior lighting to show off all the goodies, including a set of illuminated dials on the driver's consoles! A full DCC sound package is on board, too.

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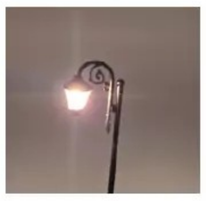

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Inside track with Ben Ando

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

Rapido's entrance into the UK market with its APT-E helped breathe new life into the hobby. RAPIDO TRAINS

Tribes... and diatribes

Model railways are booming. At the turn of the century the market was dominated by the big two names – Hornby and Bachmann. The remainder comprised smaller British manufacturers such as Dapol and Graham Farish, and a handful of continental manufacturers, including Heljan and Vi-Trains, who dabbled with the occasional locomotive or piece of rolling stock.

Then, in 2013, everything changed. A little-known Canadian company named Rapido Trains decided to enter the British 'OO' market with an all-new model of the APT-E, the 1970s-era prototype gas turbine-powered tilting train.

It caused a sensation, especially as, at the time, conventional wisdom dictated that such a train was far too niche to be the subject of a ready-to-run model; I don't think there had even been a kit.

Rapido, and its charismatic founder Jason Shron, breathed new life into the British market; not just with their irreverent 'fun' approach but also by opening up the possibility of modellers bypassing the existing companies and going to direct to China to source the models they wanted.

Revolution's crowdfunded 'Pendolino' – incidentally, the first complete train to be produced in this way – was only one of several models that came about as modellers were prepared to step up and make things happen.

What followed was something of a gold rush as new entrants, such as Accurascale, Cavalex, EFE, Ellis Clark, Footplate, KR Models, Realtrack and Sonic, plus retailers such as Hattons, Gaugemaster and Kernow, began producing models under their own brands.

This didn't always end well, not least for Hattons. Another fledgling manufacturer went bust after seemingly taking on too many projects, then spending more time on social media or misunderstanding patent law than actually producing models.

But, for the most part, these new companies have thrived, massively increasing the choice available to the model railway consumer and proving that, despite the occasional portents of doom, the hobby is thriving.

However, more choice doesn't just mean diversity; it also leads to duplication. This is nothing new. Spending my Christmas money in the late 1970s, I recall agonising between the Lima Western and the Hornby one; in the end, choosing the Italian model because of the blackened wheels.

But, in the social media era, such choices become matters of public discourse, and we will all have observed the rise of the model train fanboys who become almost tribal in their support of one manufacturer over another.

In my view, that can be problematic. I cannot speak for others, but I know we at Revolution are genuinely thrilled when customers are happy with our models; however, we also respect and admire many of the models produced by other manufacturers.

As an 'N' gauge enthusiast, I am an avid collector of some of Farish's superb recent releases. That doesn't make me any less proud of Revolution's own models.

There is nothing wrong with supporting a favourite manufacturer. But there is something wrong with actively seeking to belittle, undermine or put down another.

Model railways is a hobby we all enjoy; for many, it is a safe space to escape the pressures of life, if only for a few hours. Let's take out the toxic tribalism.

"Rapido, and its charismatic founder Jason Shron, breathed new life into the British market"

In recent years, there has been a boom of new manufacturers, including Cavalex Models, massively increasing the choice for modellers. CAVALEX MODELS

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MORRIS

348 DXV

1

CEMENTING FOUNDATIONS

When **Alex Rockey** decided he wanted to revamp his layout to show standards, bricks gave way to cement for his industrial-themed 'Whittlesmarch' creation.

Words: **Richard Gunn** Photography: **Chris Nevard**

What makes this layout great?

Alex set out to build a layout he'd be comfortable with exhibiting, despite not having done one to show standards before. We think it's a fine job. What especially stands out are all the 'concrete' features in a scene that depicts a facility dedicated to making one of the material's key ingredients.

For those familiar with the once widespread brick-making concerns of East Anglia, the name of Alex Rockey's 'OO' gauge layout may seem familiar. 'Whittlesmarch' is a portmanteau of 'Whittlesey' and 'March', two Cambridgeshire towns once synonymous with brick production. But wait… Alex's compact tableau depicts a cement works, while the locomotives visiting the company sidings from the main line have a distinctly Southern flavour. What's the story?

"It was originally a brickworks with a kiln, set in the Fens, as I come from Norfolk," confesses Alex. "But it was all to a much lower standard and had sat dormant for a few years. However, it was the first proper layout I'd ever done. Then, one Christmas, I decided to build a rake of Presflos from old Dapol Kitmaster kits I had – so I had this nice rake of wagons that I needed an excuse to run. Thus, I decided on a bit of a reshuffle and to convert the layout into a cement works. That felt more right for the Southern Region, hence the change of area as well.

"The story we always tell is that it's a small exchange sidings at the edge of a bigger cement factory complex. We sometimes use it as an excuse to run things from the main line, so it's a bit of a holding siding, too. That adds a bit of operational interest."

The origins of 'Whittlesmarch' date back further than its brickworks era. "Its baseboard was left over ➤

ABOVE The road cones are Alex's own 3D-print design, as he couldn't find any off-the-shelf cones representing the 1950s types. "Funnily enough, people didn't take too many pictures of road cones back then. They were good fun to build, but very fiddly. And they always fall off."

LEFT The Southern's very epitome of a no-nonsense freight hauler, a 'Q1', arrives from the main line with construction materials. The model is a Hornby product. Alex has weathered all the motive power and rolling stock; some of the locomotives also have sound fitments.

3 things we like

1

Alex's long-established dog walker and canine, investigating the gradually sinking pillbox.

2

A scene of industrial activity outside one of the buildings, with its 'corporate identity' doors.

3

"This should probably be a Royal Mail van," admits Alex. "But instead, the driver's going to fix the wood-burner or something."

4 The company Drewry 0-6-0 diesel-mechanical shunter (the industrial variant of the Class 04) proved unreliable; that and its lack of DCC capability means it's been withdrawn.

from an abandoned project using timbers from my parents' kitchen – so it was all a bit higgledy-piggledy and basic, but it did develop over the years," explains Alex. "But when the cement factory idea came along, I knew I also wanted to do it to exhibition standard."

The reborn layout reused the existing trackplan, with the addition of a new runaround loop. "After ballasting and spraying the track with sleeper grime, I added lots of clay covering the baseboard, to represent concrete," Alex says. "The track is largely Peco Bullhead, but the points are Streamline – mainly because I was a student when I was putting it all together, and couldn't afford the Bullhead points on my budget. They might not even have been out, come to think of it – but it was whatever I could find on the cheap. The clay has done a grand job of masking the differences between Bullhead and Streamline. It's quite a good trick and one I shamelessly copied from *Model Rail*'s Chris Nevard after seeing him use it. Following stippling and toning it down, I also added static grass and scatter in areas, using quite washed-out colours."

Away from the tracks, there are other 'concrete' panels used as surfacing. "These are again clay, laid out flat and cut into squares with a scalpel. Over time, some have just naturally cracked, but I've left them because I think it looks good." For roadway sections, Alex gouged out indentations while the clay was setting. ➤

The figure in front of the '4MT' 2-6-4T is known as the 'flag man'. "He's always entertaining because he's been knocked down countless times when placed too close to the line. The bit of land he stands on is about 5mm higher than what's around it because he's been glued back in place so much."

MORRIS
348 DXV

Alex found an old, stiff paintbrush to be quite effective, pushing up the edges, as if the ground had been displaced. Adding bits of ballast also created a more broken effect. He also 'drove' vehicles through the drying clay for more pronounced wear and tear.

TREE INTRIGUE

The surrounding natural scenery was built up using Mod-Roc and papier-mâché over a cardboard skeleton. "At shows, we always get asked about the trees," says Alex. "They're sea moss armatures; a quick coat of brown or green, a blast of hairspray, then dipped in foliage. They always seem to go down well and add quite a nice effect."

While Alex used Bachmann Scenecraft and Hornby Skaledale buildings for the cement facilities, the brick buildings were all scratchbuilt. "I got a lot of satisfaction from them, as it was my first time attempting my own buildings, and I was quite pleased with how they turned out." Construction was out of Plastikard: a carcass with embossed brickwork covering the outer surface. "The guttering was from the spares box, whatever I could lay my hands on," Alex continues. "Some of the window arches were from Wills. In terms of painting, it was all pretty straightforward; the usual undercoat of brick colour, ➤

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DANGE
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AHEA

then a wash of mortar-coloured RailMatch paint. I then picked out a lot of individual bricks in different colours to get a more natural look. The water tower was constructed in that manner; then, the top was made of plain Plastikard cut to shape, and metalwork fixtures were added. That took lots of patience with a very fine knife. I think the round centres of the iron trusses are hole-punched."

One thing that Alex has done to inject a uniform appearance is to choose a 'corporate colour'. "So things like doors and lamps are all in a sort of turquoise-blue. I think that just subtly ties everything together." And speaking of lamps, the yard ones and those on the buildings are all functional, courtesy of Kytes Lights. "The buffers also have little red lanterns, and some of the buildings have interior illumination too. There's a lighting pelmet for the whole layout as well, using LED strips. We can dim those at shows to get an atmospheric dusky feel to things."

BELOW The clay and grass scatter applied around the lines does a good job of disguising the differences between the Peco Bullhead and Streamline rail sections.

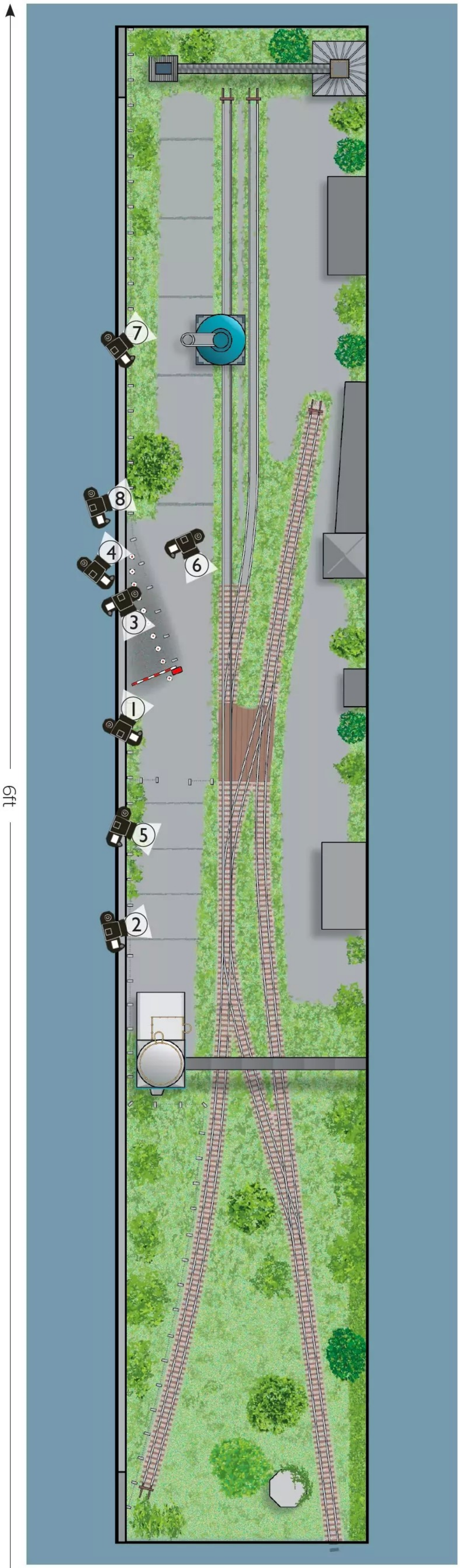
The company motive power comprises three industrial engines: an 'Austerity' 0-6-0ST, 0-6-0 Sentinel and an SR 'USA' tank, all repainted by Alex in 'Whittlesmarch Blue', as it's become known. "They're the stalwarts of the layout," Alex says. "There's also an old Bachmann diesel shunter, but that has been retired; it kept breaking down and couldn't be converted to DCC. A friend's Peckett 'B2' is also a frequent visitor. Then there's what arrives from the main line. We try to run prototypical stuff at shows, but we're pretty relaxed really, so anything really can turn up." ➤

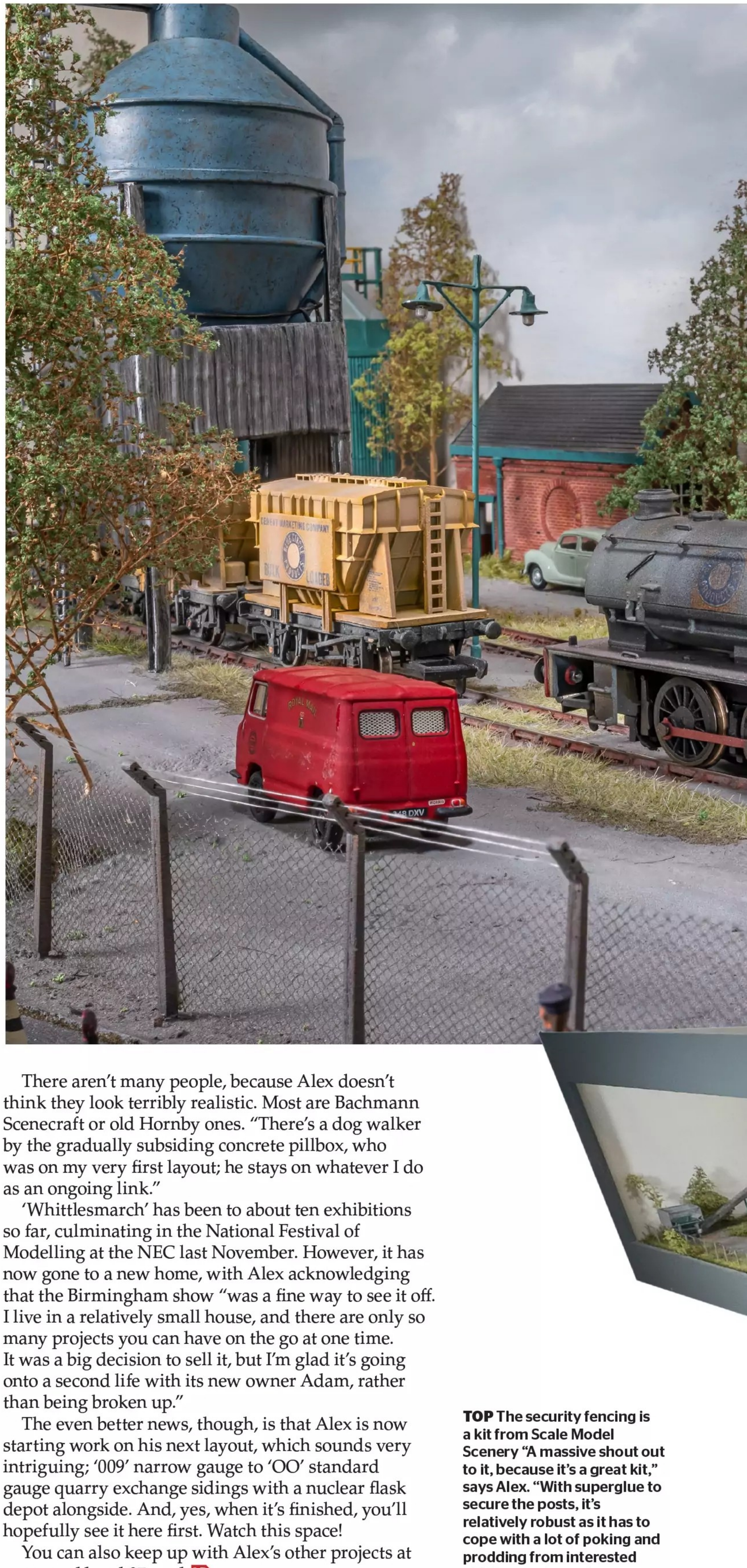
6

ABOVE It was Presflos that provided the impetus for the change from brick-making to cement production. There are now 12 Presflos, most of which are Dapol Kitmaster items but they have been bolstered by modern ready-to-run examples.

RIGHT Most of the road vehicles on 'Whittlesmarch' are Oxford Diecast, with some trucks from Base Toys, plus some industrial forklifts.

Artwork: **Andrew Mackintosh**





There aren't many people, because Alex doesn't think they look terribly realistic. Most are Bachmann Scenecraft or old Hornby ones. "There's a dog walker by the gradually subsiding concrete pillbox, who was on my very first layout; he stays on whatever I do as an ongoing link."

'Whittlesmarch' has been to about ten exhibitions so far, culminating in the National Festival of Modelling at the NEC last November. However, it has now gone to a new home, with Alex acknowledging that the Birmingham show "was a fine way to see it off. I live in a relatively small house, and there are only so many projects you can have on the go at one time. It was a big decision to sell it, but I'm glad it's going onto a second life with its new owner Adam, rather than being broken up."

The even better news, though, is that Alex is now starting work on his next layout, which sounds very intriguing; '009' narrow gauge to 'OO' standard gauge quarry exchange sidings with a nuclear flask depot alongside. And, yes, when it's finished, you'll hopefully see it here first. Watch this space!

You can also keep up with Alex's other projects at *www.workbench97.co.uk* MR

TOP The security fencing is a kit from Scale Model Scenery "A massive shout out to it, because it's a great kit," says Alex. "With superglue to secure the posts, it's relatively robust as it has to cope with a lot of poking and prodding from interested children at shows."

FACTFILE: 'WHITTLESMARCH'

Era: 1950s/1960s

Gauge and scale: 4mm: 1ft, 'OO' gauge

Size: 6ft x 1ft 2in plus 4ft 3in x 1ft 2in fiddleyard

Track: Peco Code 75 Bullhead with Peco Code 75 Streamline for points

Power and control: DCC Digitrax system, with Seep point motors

Time to build: Around two years

ABOUT THE MODELLER: ALEX ROCKEY

As a youngster, Alex had a model railway under his bed that his mum, a landscape architect, helped him build. 'Whittlesmarch' is his "first proper attempt" at a serious layout to exhibition standards. Away from scale modelling, he likes visiting full-size heritage railway lines and walking with the family dog, a rescue greyhound, as well as cycling.

ABOVE The scenic aspect of 'Whittlesmarch' measures a compact 6ft by just over 1ft. The wood surround hides the strips of LED lighting, which supplement those on and in the buildings and locos.

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Meet the *Model Rail* Expert Modellers

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Equally skilled with a scalpel and paintbrush as with a camera.

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Steve loves trying new and unusual modelling techniques.

Project difficulty ranges from easy: one screwdriver, to very hard: five screwdrivers.

HOW TO

BUILD A RESIN BOAT KIT

PART 2

Chris Nevard sets sail on the final part of his journey to build a coal-fired 'Clyde Puffer' steam cargo ship.

00 GAUGE **Model: VMM4001 'Clyde Puffer' from Vintage Miniature Model Scenics ◆ Price £65.00** | 6 hrs

AVAILABILITY *www.vintageminiaturemodelscenics.co.uk*

In last month's issue of *Model Rail*, I explained why and how I assembled this resin kit from Vintage Miniature Model Scenics, depicting a modest coal-fired steam cargo ship, of a design closely associated with the west coast and islands of Scotland.

These handsome 'Clyde Puffers' were built between the 1850s and the late 1930s, operating on all manner of general cargo duties around the Scottish coast and even down to South Wales.

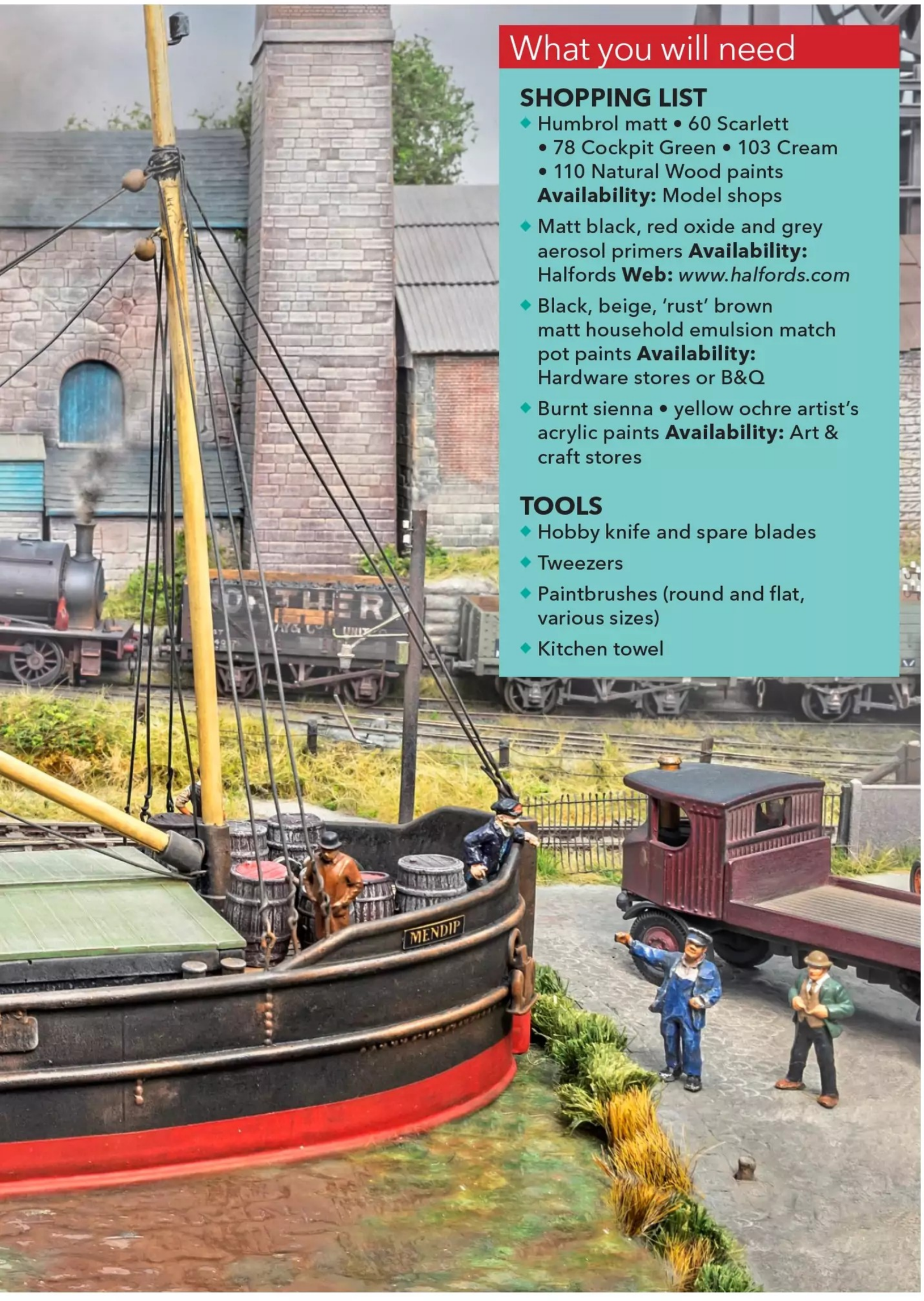
The challenges and benefits of working with resin components were discussed in Part 1. With a host of extra detailing parts improvised from plastic card, brass and copper wire, the model was ready for the priming and painting stage.

It's worth repeating some cautionary notes about resin here: always wash your hands after handling resin components and avoid inhaling or ingesting any dust or debris, as the material can be hazardous.

Additionally, silicone is employed in the casting process, residues of which will impair the adhesion of paint, so it's good practice to wash all parts, both before assembly and again before painting, to ensure surfaces are clean and thoroughly dry before the first primer coats are sprayed.

I used my usual combination of Halfords aerosol primers to act as a base for the acrylic and enamel topcoats. Spraying aerosols also calls for a few safety precautions, namely wearing a suitable

PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRIS NEVARD



What you will need

SHOPPING LIST

- Humbrol matt • 60 Scarlett • 78 Cockpit Green • 103 Cream • 110 Natural Wood paints **Availability:** Model shops
- Matt black, red oxide and grey aerosol primers **Availability:** Halfords **Web:** *www.halfords.com*
- Black, beige, 'rust' brown matt household emulsion match pot paints **Availability:** Hardware stores or B&Q
- Burnt sienna • yellow ochre artist's acrylic paints **Availability:** Art & craft stores

TOOLS

- Hobby knife and spare blades
- Tweezers
- Paintbrushes (round and flat, various sizes)
- Kitchen towel

facemask and working outdoors if possible (choose a dry, calm day).

The subsequent painting and weathering steps are relatively straightforward, with various matt emulsion paints – available cheaply in 'match' or 'tester' pots from hardware stores – giving the hull, decking and superstructure a suitably lived-in appearance.

I, like many modellers, have a soft spot for boats, as they add something extra to any model railway scene. Alas, we don't have a great deal of choice in terms of kits and ready-made models specifically to suit model railway scales, so we often have to compromise a little in terms of fidelity. But some digging online, in model shops or at exhibitions is bound to reveal numerous options. I mentioned the Artitec and Langley Models ranges last time, but there are also some viable options in the Revell plastic kit range to suit 4mm and 2mm scale layouts (albeit with a little compromise).

Working on kits like this means you're supporting small suppliers, who – often working out of a garden shed – may only produce a handful of kits when not doing the day job. As a bonus, the finished result is likely to be unique and not found on other layouts.

I'm certainly not under any illusion that this is a fine-scale model, as much more authentic additional parts could be employed, sourced from proper model boat suppliers. But hopefully my attempt at building and enhancing this excellent kit has proven a success.

STEP BY STEP

1

Last issue, I explained how the resin parts were fettled, assembled and enhanced with a few extra details. The superstructure was not fixed in place to make painting easier, and all parts were washed and dried thoroughly.

2

The painting began with some Halfords red primer. This is particularly important for the copper rigging, which will chip if un-primed. It's a job best done outdoors unless you have a spray booth. Latex gloves will be useful.

3

Next, I tackled the bridge and cabin. The funnel will be painted red, and because red modelling enamel paint usually needs several coats, I painted it with red primer, masking off the cabin.

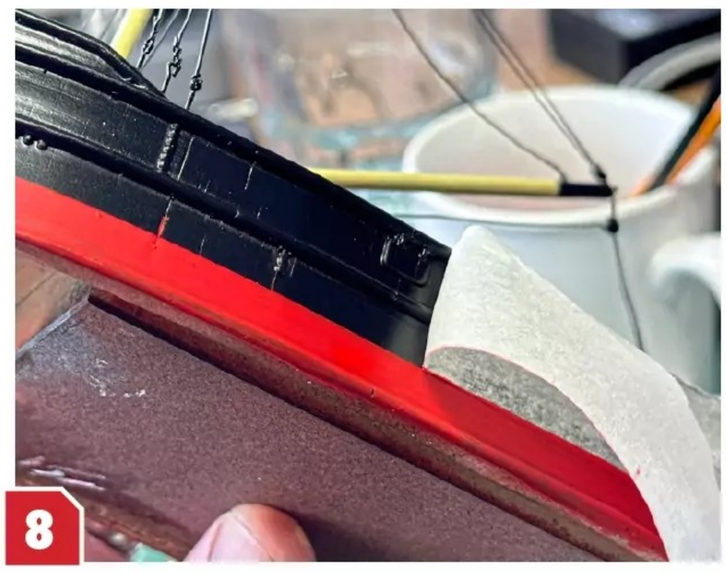
4

When dry, the funnel was masked off so I could use a pale grey primer on the rest of the cabin superstructure. This will provide a more suitable base for the subsequent topcoat colours.

5 The superstructure was hand-painted with Humbrol Matt 103 Cream and Matt 110 Natural Wood (enamel or acrylics will do). Looking at various prototype photos, all sorts of colours were used; this was just my personal choice.

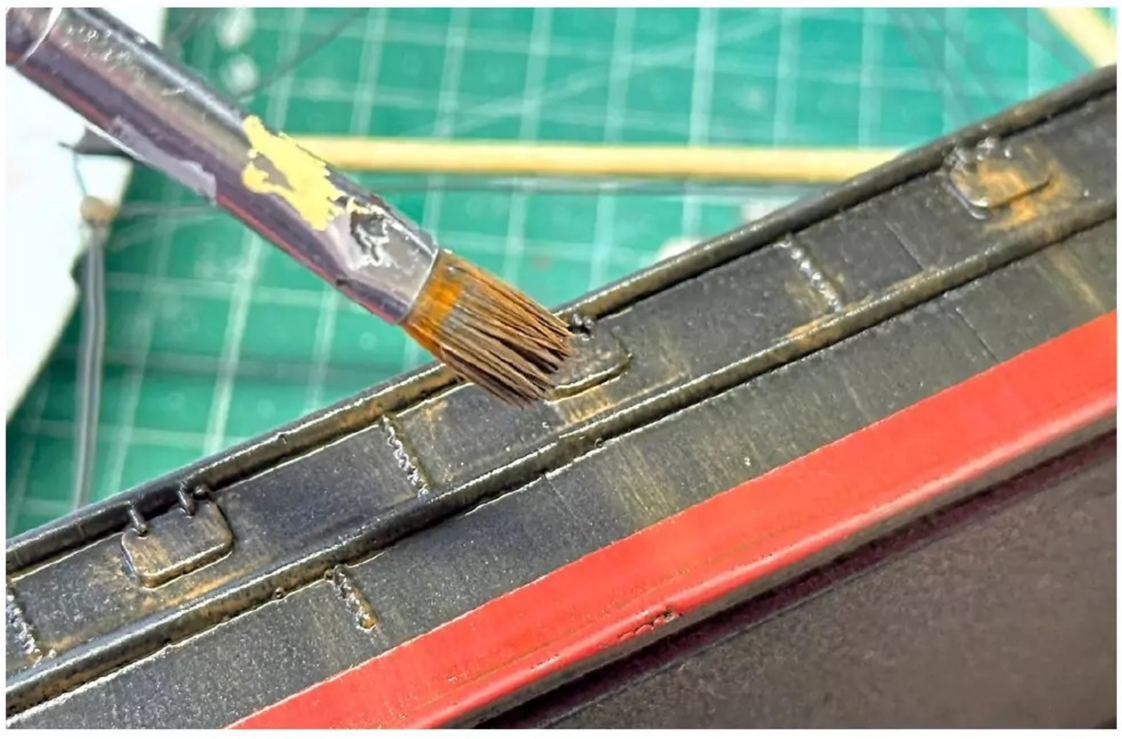
6 A little weathering followed, splashing on a mucky, gloopy mixture of slightly diluted black and burnt sienna artists' acrylic paints, using a round brush.

7 The weathering wash was brushed over the whole cabin and bridge then dabbed off with kitchen tissue, leaving some paint behind in the recesses. The detail relief is thus enhanced, as well as adding a slightly murky sheen.



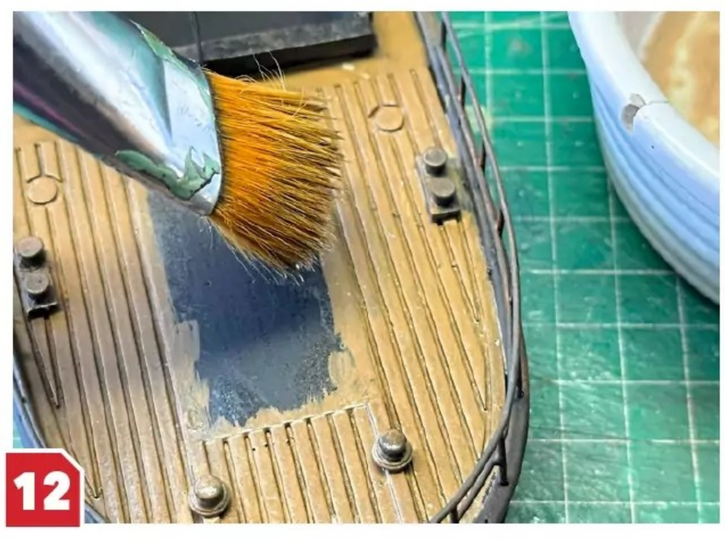
8 The hull was sprayed with Halfords Matt Black aerosol paint. When fully dry, the waterline was masked off, and Humbrol Matt 60 Scarlett acrylic was applied. Several coats were required, the red acrylic not covering too well.

9 Luckily, modellers' acrylic dries quickly, unlike enamel and can be recoated without much delay. Don't leave the masking tape on too long – sometimes it will pull the underlying paint off when being removed.



10 The hull was then weathered with a similar approach to the superstructure, using the same artist acrylic mix and a little neat 'rusty' brown (B&Q Manzanillo) matt household emulsion dabbed on. It's not an exact science, and can be easily wiped off if still wet.

11 I mix up my weathering paint shades on an old china plate, which illustrates the typical shades I employ. It's not Wedgwood, should anyone ask!

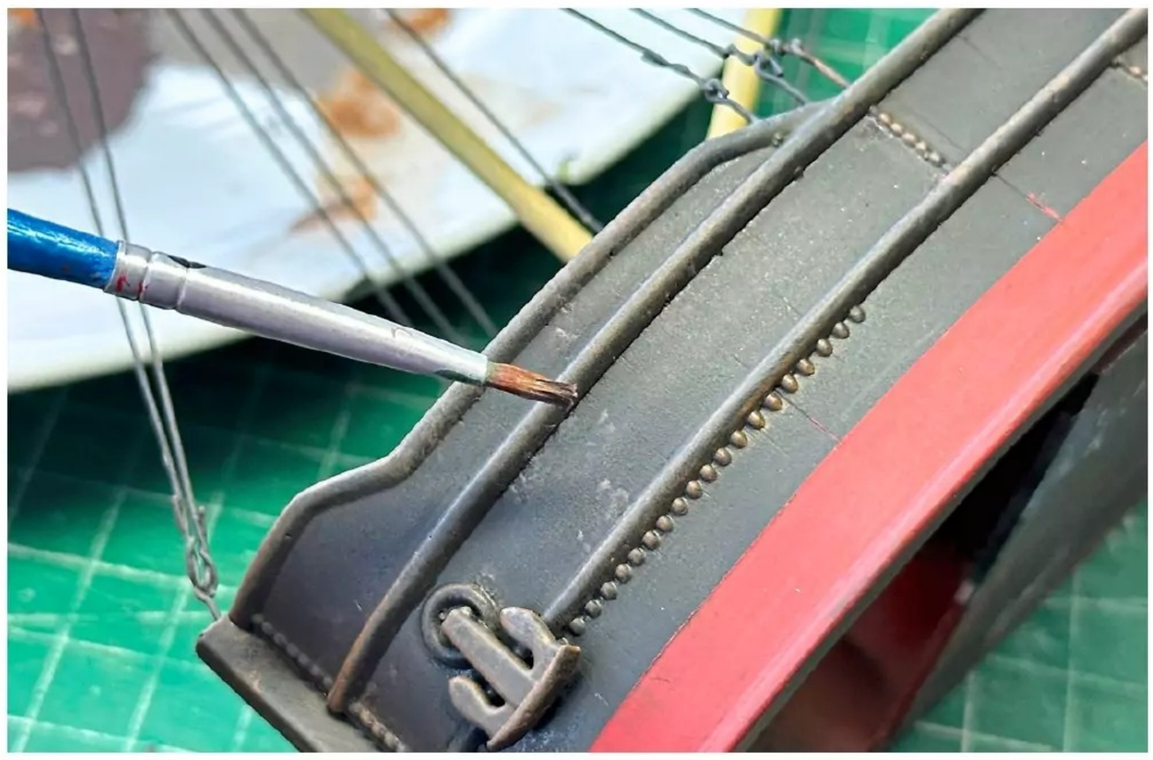


12 Humbrol Matt 110 Natural Wood was applied by brush to the deck areas and, when fully dry, a little more of that mucky, diluted acrylic weathering mix was applied, with the excess carefully dabbed away.

13 I also left the hold cover loose to ease the painting and weathering process, and it was treated to the same acrylic weathering wash, applied over a base colour of Humbrol Matt 78 Cockpit Green, which suggests a canvas weather cover.

14

Careful dabbing and wiping away of the wet wash mix ensures the, grubby-looking pigment remains in the recesses, while the texture of the kitchen towel helps to impart random shading patterns. Experimentation is key.



15

Finally, the hull, boom, rigging and superstructure were lightly dry-brushed with a matt beige paint (B&Q Caracas emulsion), although any similar beige shade will work just as well. I don't find modelling or artist acrylic paints good for dry-brushing.

16

A few extra details, such as a stock of wood barrels, were prepared. These were then lightly fixed to a scrap of foamboard to allow them to be sprayed with red and brown aerosol primers.

17

When the primer had dried, I dry-brushed the barrels with beige emulsion paint, wiping most of the paint off the brush onto tissue before lightly running the bristles over the surface. The texture is instantly highlighted.

18

With the various sections of the boat now installed, the barrels were loaded, and the crew was added. The etched *Mendip* name is a spare locomotive plate, although I will probably replace it with waterslide transfers.

HOW TO

BUILDING PONTS MILL

PART 5

In the final instalment of this series, **Peter Marriott** adds details to his Cornish china clay-themed layout and explains how he created the realistic stream.

PHOTOGRAPHY: PETER MARRIOTT, CHRIS NEVARD

As my ‘Ponts Mill’ layout project comes to an end, I thought I should explain how I created the narrow stream, which forms a subtle but important feature in the middle foreground.

No doubt the course of this waterway was modified when the real Ponts Mill drying plant was constructed, running as it does underground to emerge at one end of the works, beneath the throat of the sidings. It then runs along a straight channel between the ‘main’ line and the sidings.

Modelling most water features demands that work be spread over a period of days to ensure that everything has fully dried before moving onto the next stage. I find it best to pour water effect fluids before applying the surrounding ‘green’ scenic work, as the fluid is likely to seep up the banks or among the grass and foliage, potentially ruining the scene.

Furthermore, be patient and wait for the water effect fluid to harden completely before working on the surrounding scenery.

Although it may feel dry to the touch, the resin may require a good few days to cure fully and reduce the risk of dust, debris and grass fibres from becoming trapped in the clear fluid.

I also thoroughly recommend taking the time to study the instructions for your chosen water effect product(s), not only to discover how best

What you will need:

SHOPPING LIST

- Scale Model Scenery KX147-OO Lifebuoys and cabinets **Availability:** *www.scalemodelscenery.co.uk*
- Woodland Scenics Hunter Green Water Undercoats, Realistic Water fluid, White Water Highlights, Water Ripples
  Availability: Bachmann stockists
  Web: *www.bachmann.co.uk*

TOOLS

- Modelling knife and spare blades
- Tweezers
- Paintbrushes
- Wooden coffee stirrer
- Small vacuum cleaner

to use it, but also for guidelines of storage, to ensure it remains usable for some time ahead. Always replace the lids on bottles firmly after use, and undertake one or more test runs on a mock-up diorama, so you can gauge how the material works and check compatibility with any paints you may be thinking of using for the riverbed or banks. Some paints and adhesives can react negatively with water features, as I've discovered in the past.

For fluids that have been used before and stored on a shelf for a few months or longer, a test-shot is also useful to check that it will still dry clear – or dry at all, as some resins lose the ability to harden over time. This is a good reason to choose the quantity of water effect carefully, as there's little point in paying for a large bottle if your water feature is modest, as the risk of the product going 'off' in storage before you use the rest of it must be considered.

Finally, take the time to prepare the model's surface and your working environment before committing to pouring the water effects. The layout needs to be flat – use a spirit level to check – and any open ends of the watercourse at the baseboard edges need to be sealed to prevent the fluid running away and dripping onto the floor. It's best to work in a warm, dry environment too, as some fluids may take a long time to cure, or may turn cloudy, in cold and damp situations.

Another water feature, of sorts, on this layout is the collection of rain-filled potholes in the surface of the works access road. These were simple to create, but add some welcome visual variety to the scene. ➤

STEP BY STEP

1

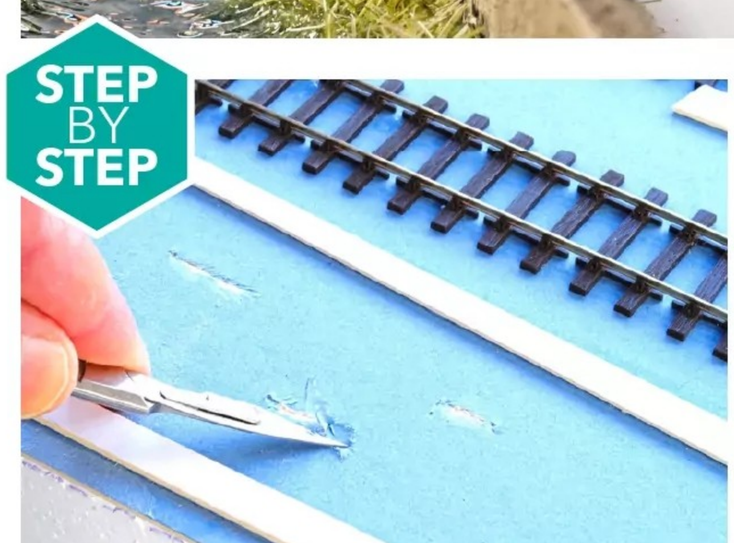
A road runs along side the sidings and, given that it supported heavy works and agricultural traffic, has potholes. The road was laid using mounting board, and I gouged out several indentations in the surface with a craft knife.

2

Once I'd made the indentations, I smoothed the sides and edges with a sanding stick. The raised strips of mounting card forming the sides of the road would be covered with plaster cloth to take weeds and grass (see MR346).

3

After clearing away any loose debris, the road surface was painted with acrylics. I used a blend of Woodland Scenics Concrete Top Coat and Earth Colour shades, applied with a wide, flat brush.



4

When the painted road was fully dry, I used a soft pencil to make pairs of rough lines to mimic tyre tracks.

5

Ready-mixed water fluids, such as Woodland Scenics Realistic Water, can be poured directly from the bottle. This formula is water-soluble and crack-resistant, with minimal shrinkage.

6

Just a few drops of the Realistic Water fluid were needed to fill the puddles on the road surface. The scene was left for 24 hours to allow the fluid to harden fully.

7 The finished road surface, complete with water-filled potholes, has a suitably dusty and rough texture, thanks to the distressed card surface and acrylic paints.

8 Between the main line and the two sidings is a small stream. I used strips of mounting card to form the banks, which were covered in plaster cloth to form contours. Wet plaster is also suitable, shaped with a spatula.

9 I chose Woodland Scenics' Hunter Green acrylic undercoat paint, which seals the porous surface and provides an authentic colour for a fast-flowing stream in this type of location. A couple of coats were applied by brush and left to dry.

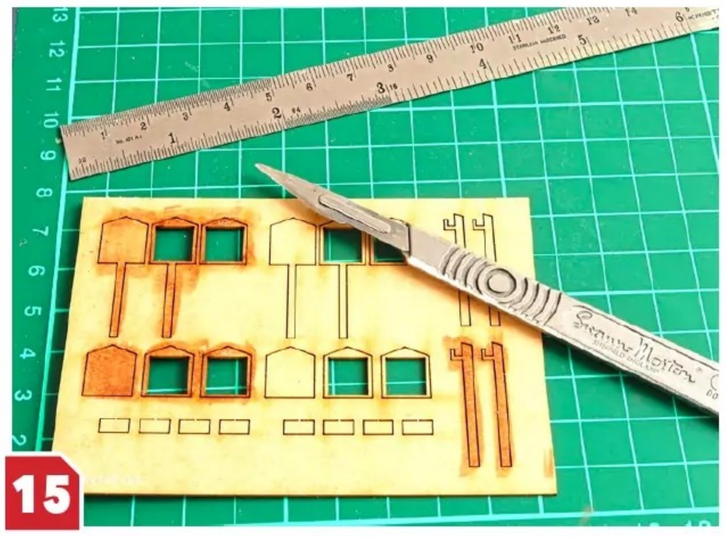
10 After sealing the open ends of the stream at the baseboard edges with masking tape, and with the layout set absolutely flat, more of the Realistic Water was poured into the bed, allowing it to find its own level.

11 The edge of a wooden knife or coffee stirrer is handy for dragging the Realistic Water fluid along the base of the stream, ensuring it runs into all the nooks and crannies. The fluid is cloudy when first poured, but dries clear.

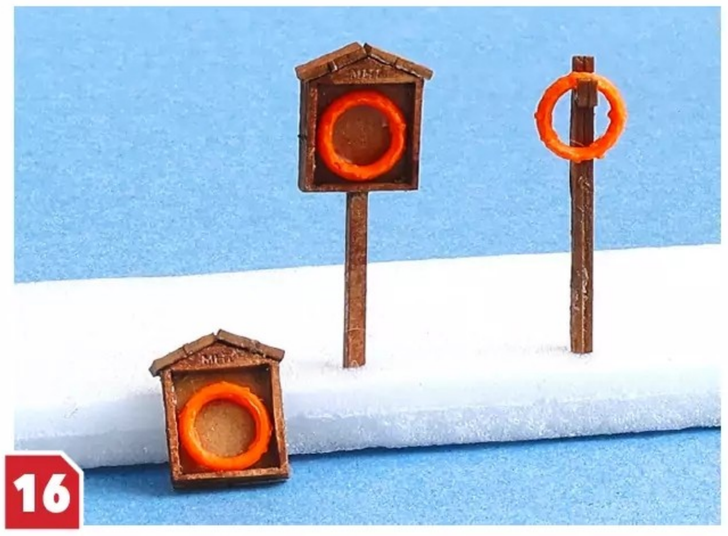
12 When the 'base' later of water was fully cured (I allowed a couple of days), some surface texture was created using Woodland Scenics Water Ripples, a clear gel that can mimic waves and ripples, and which dries overnight.

13 Fast-moving water tends to foam and froth, so adding White Water Highlight will help to recreate this feature. Similarly, a regular off-white acrylic paint formula can also be effective.

14 With a flat brush, and after brushing most of the White Water Highlight paint onto tissue, the ripples and waves on the water surface were picked out by gently dry-brushing over the top, depositing just a trace of the colour.



15 The water course may be deep, so I thought it wise to add a lifebuoy. This kit from Scale Model Scenery includes various mounting options I coloured the required parts with a felt-tip pen before cutting them from the fret.



16 After cutting the parts from the fret, any small remnants of the locating tangs were sanded away with an abrasive pad and the parts assembled with Deluxe Materials Canopy Glue. Further painting then finished everything off.

17 Once the scenic work and greenery were added to the scene, using long static grass fibres to line the sides of the stream, the lifebuoy and stand were installed, completing the scene nicely.

HOW TO

BUILD A MODERN TRACK-CARRYING WAGON

Always with an eye on replicating interesting modern rolling stock, **Dave Lowery** assembles a 3D-printed kit of Network Rail's innovative IFA tilting track panel wagons.

PHOTOS: DAVE LOWERY

Some modern wagons in my 'O' gauge fleet have come courtesy of 3D-printed kits produced by Simon ('SimonBRBlue'), which help to fill some significant gaps in the ready-to-run 7mm scale market.

The most recent kits from Simon have been superb, especially the biomass bulk hoppers (see MR330), and I light-heartedly challenged him about a year ago to try tackling the Network Rail Kirow IFA wagons with their innovative tilting decks for carrying prefabricated track and crossing panels.

Well, he was up for the challenge and, just before holidays, he appeared like Father Christmas with a large bag of goodies! His first stabs at the IFA were impressive and, after assembling them, I can now share them with you. I must say I love them!

The parts are well designed, and assembly is simply a matter of glueing everything together and painting, so there's no complex shaping of parts or soldering required. I employed my usual combination of UHU general-purpose, solvent-based adhesive, plus cyanoacrylate ('Superglue') and an accelerator spray. Why use both glues on the same joints? The UHU forms the main structural bond, as it's much more resilient and flexible than cyano, but the slower curing time means the parts must be held in position for longer.

However, adding some small spots of cyano glue to the joint after initial bonding with UHU creates an almost instant fix, so the parts stay in place while the UHU sets overnight.

The fleet of Kirow IFA wagons were part of Network Rail's mission to improve efficiency and minimise disruption during track renewal work. NETWORK RAIL

What you will need

SHOPPING LIST

- Network Rail IFA 3D-printed kit by SimonBRBlue
- **Web:** *www.gaugeoguild.com/traders/traders_details.aspx?id=849*
- *www.flickr.com/photos/49976725@N08/with/53583143572*
- Slater's wheels and 'top hat' brass bearings
  Web: *www.slatersplastikard.com*

TOOLS

- Modelling knife and spare blades
- Cutting mat
- Steel rule and set square
- Tweezers
- Files and abrasives
- Sheet of glass

FACTFILE
NETWORK RAIL IFAs

As part of Network Rail's mission to improve efficiency and minimise disruption during track renewal work, a fleet of 26 specialised wagons was ordered from German engineering firm Kirow in 2008. Utilising the common IFA skeletal inter-modal flat wagon design, commonly seen carrying shipping containers across the UK and Europe, a unique tilting deck framework was installed.

Although out of gauge when laid flat, the deck is designed to tilt up to an angle of 60 degrees, which allows sections of prefabricated points and crossings to be safely carried to renewal sites. With the track panels assembled and thoroughly tested beforehand, the new sections are put together on site with the aid of cranes and lifting booms, like a big kit.

Costing £10m, the wagons were delivered in a mix of single units and semi-permanent three-car units, with each vehicle capable of carrying track panels up to 26.5m long. The Network Rail IFAs run in trains of varying length, often marshalled with other wagon types, depending on the nature of the work.

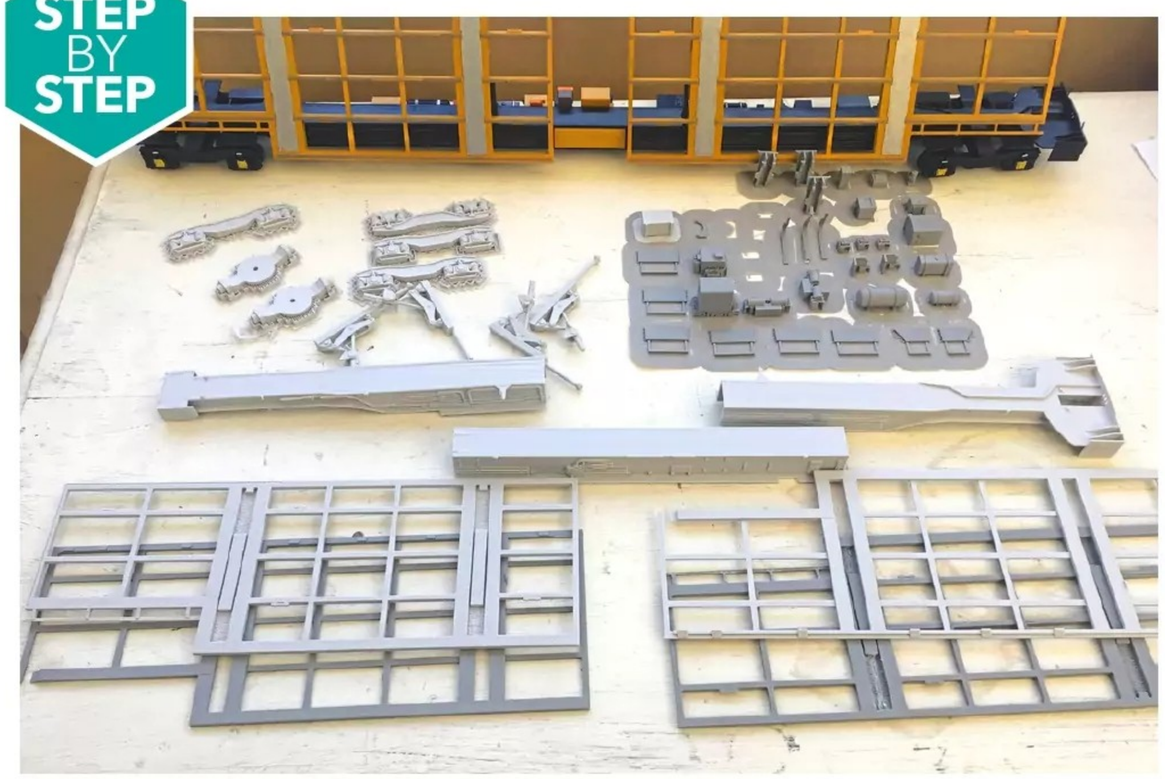
The whole kit is 3D-printed, with only wheels, buffers and couplings required to finish it off, plus some suitable decals which can be obtained from a bespoke supplier such as Rainbow Railways (*www.rainbowrailways.co.uk*).

Due to the lightweight nature of the components, a little extra ballast is required. I use fine lead shot, secured within the main beam of the chassis, located mostly around the bogies, to provide some downforce on the axles, thus helping keep the wagons on the track.

As with any modelling project, arming yourself with plenty of prototype reference material makes the job easier, and the internet came up trumps with lots of useful images, showing all the intricate detail on the chassis and hydraulic tilting gear.

The cherry on this cake is the 3D-printed track and crossing sections that Simon also produced, providing an appropriate, eye-catching load for the wagons. As you can probably tell, I'm thrilled to have this pair of three-car IFA wagons in my collection, as they run superbly around the layout behind a Class 66.

STEP BY STEP

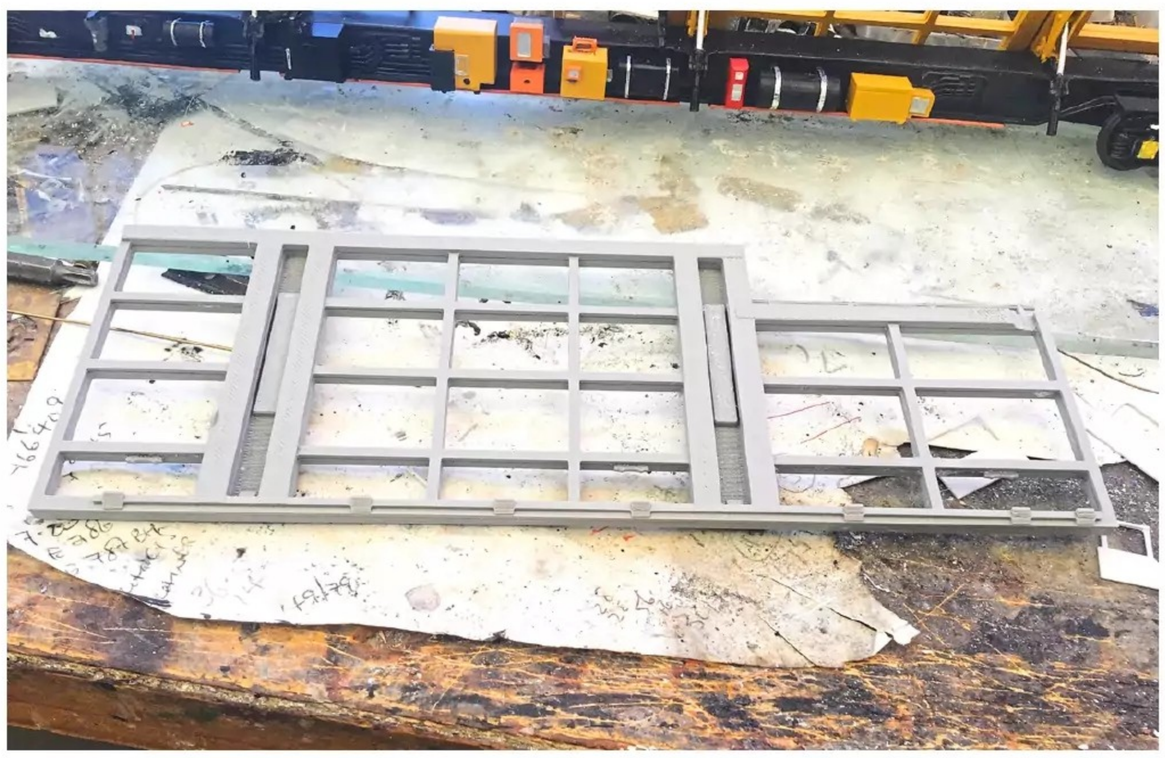


1 These are the main components included in the 3D-printed kit. Simon also loaned me a pre-assembled kit as a reference guide, which proved useful instead of the regular printed instructions. It helped me to understand where all the bits ought to go.

2 The IFA consists of a skeletal frame, formed around a long beam, which has been rendered in two halves. I reinforced the joint with strips of plastic card and glued them into one end, using UHU adhesive, then left them to dry.

3 The joint surfaces were coated with UHU. When tacky, the beam sections were joined on a flat surface. I then applied a couple of spots of cyanoacrylate ('superglue'), followed by an accelerator, clamping the parts with weights.

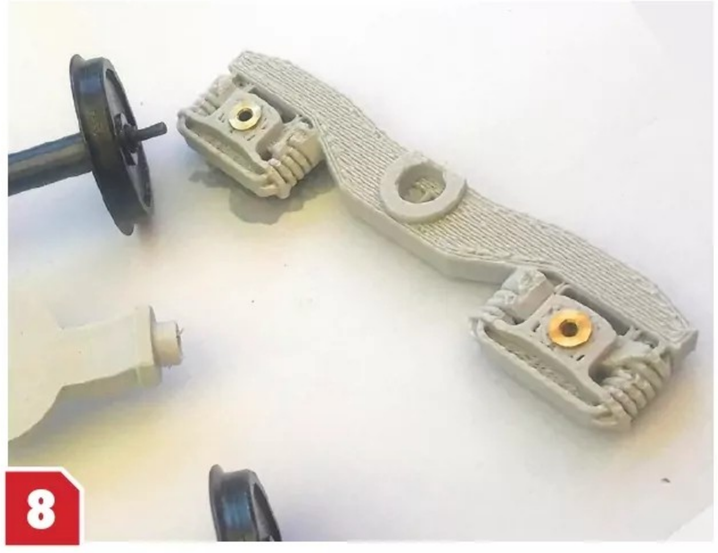
4 When the frame was fully cured, it was time to add some of the various boxes, tanks and detail fittings to the chassis, fettling the parts where necessary before installation. Not all parts were fixed yet, as some would be painted separately.



5 The other main element of these wagons is the tilting deck framework. Each wagon is equipped with two deck panels, both of which are made up of two halves in the kit, which need to be joined together. Each section is 'handed', so I double-checked which was which.

6 Once the two halves are joined, the hydraulic rams can be installed. Again, UHU was spread over both surfaces along with a spot of cyano, followed by a spray with accelerator to keep the part in place while the UHU cured.

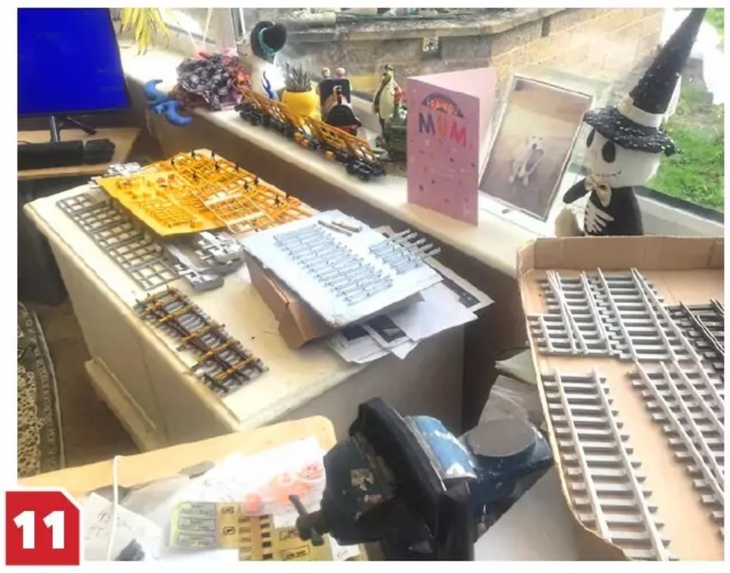
7 Once the deck panels have fully cured (I left them overnight), it is a good idea to test-fit them to the chassis, fettling or shimming the joint surfaces where necessary. It's easier to get the fit perfect now rather than later.



8 Each bogie is made up of two side frames and a stretcher, with holes to accept Slater's brass 'top hat' bearings, which need to be glued in place before assembly. The stretcher was glued into one side frame and allowed to dry.

9 The wheels were slotted into place, and the other side frame was glued to the stretcher. I checked that everything was square on a sheet of glass (all wheel flanges must be in contact with the glass) and that the axles turned freely.

10 Many individual detail parts would be easier to paint before assembly, so I laid them out onto a scrap of card, held in place with strips of double-sided tape. They can then be primed and painted with aerosols.



11 As well as the wagon details, I sprayed the deck panels yellow and the main frames black. Various track and crossing sections were also supplied in 3D-printed form, so these were primed and painted in suitable colours too.

12 When the yellow deck panels had dried, the large areas that needed to be painted silver were filled in with a thick tip paint pen. This proved so much quicker than masking and painting with a brush or aerosol.

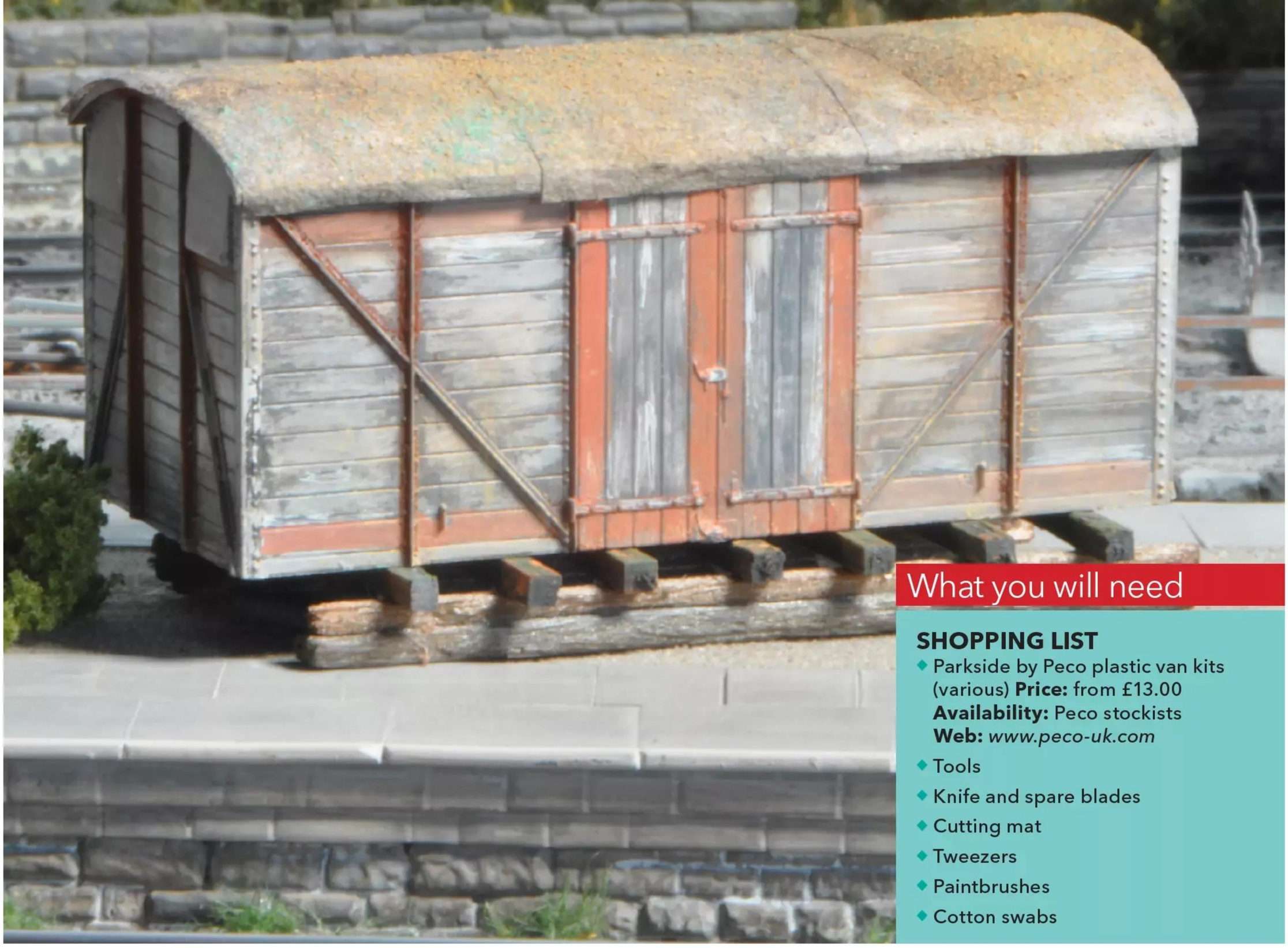
13 Once all the components had been painted – and had cured completely – final assembly could begin. Always remove paint from the mating faces of each part. Bonds will be much stronger when glueing bare materials.

14 Any touching-up of paintwork was taken care of before installing the bogies, buffers and screw couplings. I employed magnetic couplers for the inner connections of this three-car set. The wagons are now ready to be loaded with track panels.

HOW TO

MODEL GROUNDED GOODS VAN BODIES

Grounded van bodies can still be seen across the UK. **Steve Nall** created a handful of vans, in varying states of dereliction, trying out different weathering techniques in the process.



PHOTOGRAPHY: STEVE NALL

What you will need

SHOPPING LIST

- Parkside by Peco plastic van kits (various) **Price:** from £13.00 **Availability:** Peco stockists **Web:** *www.peco-uk.com*
- Tools
- Knife and spare blades
- Cutting mat
- Tweezers
- Paintbrushes
- Cotton swabs

Every so often, something takes my modelling fancy. And off I go, down an unplanned route, driven by spare resources in my studio and prototype research, plus memories of being on site somewhere.

This happened recently and, as a result, I soon ended up with a bunch of individual models of old van bodies, grounded and awaiting reclamation or restoration, or in regular use as static storage huts.

You can have a lot of fun with these items, once you gather a few simple materials around your workbench, figure out a simple modelling sequence and take things easy.

00 GAUGE | 2-4 hrs per van

Also, real grounded van bodies are to be found all over the country, some many miles from the nearest railway (or former railway route), so they provide an opportunity to get out and about, visiting and documenting the real thing, to inform and inspire your own modelling projects.

The grounded vans I'd seen were rich in visual content, and before I'd even got the scalpel out, I noted a few interesting features that I would later incorporate into my models.

If the running gear of older kits or wagons is not up to scratch or damaged, but the body detailing is still good, this is an excellent use of your older models, whether they are ready-to-run wagons or kit-built efforts.

It's also a great opportunity to practise weathering techniques for the first time, without the high risk of ruining operational models or more expensive items. Familiarising yourself with new weathering pigments and products is well worth doing on this kind of project.

So why not grab yourself some photographs of the real thing – in person or by searching books or online – and off you go...

Prototype inspiration

This former Southern Railway PMV van body, in use as a store at Buckfastleigh on the South Devon Railway, can be replicated using a Bachmann RTR body or, more economically, a Parkside plastic kit (Ref. PC36).

These two former British Railways Type BD containers, originally designed for carriage aboard 'Conflat' wagons, were captured at the Great Western Society's HQ at Didcot. Bachmann has offered packs of spare containers, while there's also a plastic kit in the Parkside range, making them easy to replicate. Made redundant in the late 1960s by steel shipping containers, these steel-framed timber units could be seen all over the BR network as lineside stores. Many examples also turned up on farms.

THE WIDEBOY

This grounded van was created from a BR 12ton 'Vanwide', assembled from a Parkside plastic kit (ref PC41), using just the body components, plus the solebars and bufferbeams.

Assembly was achieved with Tamiya Extra Thin liquid poly cement, applied to the inside face of each joint where possible, after fettling the parts carefully to ensure a neat finish. The top faces of the solebars had to be filed to shape to remove the moulding seams, and, once glued in place, they gave the body extra strength and rigidity.

These prototype wagons were formed from a steel frame and corrugated ends, with plywood side panels and doors. As well as some rusty areas, I also included some tiny spots of 'grey primer' on the corner frame rivets, to represent early attempts at restoration, or perhaps last-minute attempts to prevent further corrosion.

The green moss effects along the lower edges are a balanced mix of Humbrol Chrome Oxide 97920 powder (too vivid when used alone) and Malachite powder from Cornelissen Pigments (again too bright on its own!), tapped on by a wide brush over a coat of light clear varnish, before it dried.

Two plates cover imaginary holes on the body itself, using thin plastic squares painted first, then glued on. A white pencil was used to scribble random marks on the side. Some aspects of interest had already been identified from other prototypes, so I added two other thin, vertical plastic strips, then made a final light 'sanding off' with a sanding stick over the door handles, which gave them greater definition, even though they are moulded.

The dappled effects gradually appear after a few thin washes, dried off with a cotton bud, then more washes using a slightly different tone. These were followed by a very light dusting with weathering powders. Most of this powder was brushed off anyway, which really helps create a fantastic effect.

Dirty areas around the door handle recesses were treated quite a few times with thin, black washes, just building up enough pigment in these areas to add shading and represent wear and tear. Similar dark patches were carefully applied along the top ridge where the roof meets the body.

For the roof, I glued on three strips of fabric, cut from sachets of clothes whiteners. They were fixed in place with lightly diluted PVA glue and left to dry overnight, before applying various subtle enamel washes by brush, leaving some corners deliberately peeling and curling.

A final touch for the roof was a wispy spray of matt varnish. While the coating was tacky, I sprinkled on very short 2mm lengths of Anita Décor AD19 Wild Grass strands. Obviously, at some point in its recent history, the van had been near some sort of vegetation.

The buffers were treated to a subtle coat of brown enamel, just about enough to differentiate them from the body.

Left on an abandoned platform of a closed branch line station, the van had clearly been storing some materials, but had since been emptied, perhaps in readiness for transit to a new site and eventual preservation.

MOGO-A-GO-GO

For my first attempt, I started with a simple project, using an old Bachmann ready-to-run van body, complete with GWR lettering and markings still intact. I toned down the plasticky surface and didn't worry about tiny details to begin with, but I soon got into the habit of turning the vehicle on its side for any 'runny' weathering (using diluted paints or thin washes), one side at a time, so the paint or weathering pigment flows in a realistic way, ideally settling within the plank grooves.

The roof was treated in a straightforward way on this occasion, but the overall effect was acceptable. Adding a few 3D-printed scenic items around the van gave it a suitable setting within a present-day preservation site, giving it all a sense of belonging on the layout.

I had another go with a Bachmann GWR 'Mogo' van more recently, adding more weathering to the planked surface relief. Snow powder spray from the 'Dirty Down' range of products was added (I couldn't resist it, just this once), and the van body was set into a snowy, desolate landscape, redolent of the vans seen in remote fields as animal shelters or remote feed stores.

ROTTEN GOODS

I really enjoyed working on this van, which was assembled from another Parkside kit (Ref. PC85), this time of a GWR 6ton 'Mica B' insulated van. It looked like it would be at home in the yard at the Great Western Society's Didcot base, and resembled several images found online.

Before the sides were glued, I started drilling and cutting out some random planks, then worked them open with a scalpel. Next, I carefully abraded most of the planks, using flat needle files (sanding sticks are also suitable), working along the length of the planks, to add a grain-like texture to the plastic.

To replicate more rotten planks, I filed individual planks further, so they would stand out from those surrounding them. Some were left looking more ragged than others. Once painted and weathered, all this texture began to show through more vividly.

I noticed that there should be a strap across the side doors, but I decided to leave these parts off. I quite like the two empty holes that resulted – they add extra character.

Before painting, I took some time to apply black enamel washes into the recessed grooves, allowing these to dry for about 5-10 minutes before I wiped away the rest of the wash with cotton buds dampened with a little lighter fuel, which evaporates far quicker than turpentine or white spirit. This leaves the pre-shaded grooves black (helping give a shadow and depth effect), but removes the paint from the planks. Subsequent washes did not seem to interfere with this approach.

In the meantime, I cut a couple of dozen lengths of balsa wood, using some offcuts I'd retained (never throw anything away!), fettling them to slot snugly within the gaps I'd cut between the planks on the bodysides.

Once trimmed to size, I stained them with wood dye. I'd left the roof off for easy access and, when all the balsa planks were squeezed into place, I applied a few drops of cyanoacrylate glue to hold them securely.

Minor weathering was applied around various raised details, including the rotten wood areas. Some planks were treated separately, and if my painting spilt over to another plank, a light scrape with a scalpel blade tightened up the appearance.

The roof was then fitted. Again, three strips of fabric were cut and glued onto the surface, with peeling corners of course, then painted and weathered using powders tapped on over a tacky coat of matt varnish spray. I omitted the bufferheads, but for a little variation, fitted the full chassis frames, giving them a rusty effect with dry powders.

The kit was supplied with a length of wire to make various fittings: two handles on the roof, and four almost-impossible-to-get-right handrails. I was happy with the handles, but left some of the others dangling, as if they had partially rusted off. Nobody on the 'imaginary restoration team' would be using these, for obvious health and safety reasons, but they have been touched up to highlight them.

BARE TIMBER

I wanted to treat this van differently, with each plank treated individually, while maintaining a pale grey appearance to most of the bodywork, typical of weather-stained bare timber, as seen on numerous prototype images. This would contrast nicely with a few areas of red oxide primer.

I masked some of the metal struts and treated them to rusty patches, with others primed in grey. It is interesting how wood changes colour when exposed to the elements.

The diagonal struts were masked, and a light, thinned layer of matt varnish was applied by brush before I sprinkled AK Interactive rust powder (AK-044 Light Rust) over them in a random way, to create a dappled effect that represents rusty patches, rather than an overall rusty surface.

The roof was kept off so I could glue patches of fabric on top, leaving uneven edges, plus an extra patch at an angle, as if the first application hadn't been sufficiently waterproof. Several thin washes and a varnish coat later, I tapped on some green (to represent natural growth) and brown weathering powders, brushed them off gently, then reapplied a few dribbles of weathering wash, which accentuated the fabric's texture.

Balsa offcuts and matchsticks were painted and distressed, then glued together to represent a mounting cradle, suggesting this van body is only temporarily placed on the platform, perhaps ready for moving off-site or to be mounted on a new chassis.

With the refuse bins and fresh tanks stacking up, as well as an engineer's wagon in the siding, something is definitely in the pipeline.

STORAGE SOLUTION

Choosing yet another Parkside kit (Ref. PC08A), of a BR Dia. 1/213 12ton van, I cut out the doors before glueing the sides and ends together. The doors on one side were installed, leaving them open just enough to allow a peek at the contents inside, but not wide enough to require too much detail.

Following my usual priming and weathering wash coat stages, I added a few areas of fresh grey primer to represent a start to the preservation process, along with an extra plate 'welded' onto one end to secure an oil lamp.

Another lamp (superb 3D-printed items from Rusty Rails Modelling) was added on the side, as well as a few very small printouts of enamel advertising signs. It's beginning to look like both a storage shed and a personalised museum piece. No railway markings or numbers were added.

Before attaching to the body, salt crystals were sprinkled on the roof (no fabric this time), then a few gentle dabs of paint and various powders were applied. This was left to dry before removing the salt with a soft brush, leading to a subtle chipped, distressed finish.

This is a working storage van, so the contents (a pile of pallets) were added before the roof was fixed in place.

HOW TO

PORTRAY AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG

A common hindrance to modern infrastructure programmes is the need to preserve historic remains uncovered during excavation works. **Peter Marriott** imagines a surprise find that may add further delays to the building of HS2!

PHOTOGRAPHY: PETER MARRIOTT

The various trials and tribulations of Britain's high speed rail link between London and Birmingham – HS2 – are well known. But putting aside all the political and environmental arguments, the richness of the archaeological finds along the route has been fascinating.

The HS2 project has employed its own dedicated archaeological team, whose role has been to document and preserve the artefacts uncovered during excavation works. And what has been uncovered has certainly been diverse, ranging from traces of Neolithic monuments, Roman artefacts and infrastructure, rare forms of Iron Age coinage, foundations of early medieval churches and burial grounds, and even the still intact remains of the world's oldest steam roundhouse, which were found at Curzon Street in Birmingham. The archaeology section of the official HS2 website is well worth a look (*www.hs2.org.uk/building-hs2/archaeology/*).

While modelling HS2 in an operational state seems premature, given that we don't know what the trains will look like yet, the construction sites would make for an interesting addition to a contemporary layout. Given the route criss-crosses existing railway lines, it's certainly viable. But instead of simply modelling earthworks and incomplete concrete structures, how about portraying the preliminary sitework of engineers and, especially, HS2's archaeologists?

The idea for such an approach came with the release of some of Noch's recent scenic cameo sets, depicting recently uncovered dinosaur remains. Rendered in hard foam and pre-painted, it's ideal for dropping into a scene. If the dinosaur theme doesn't appeal,

What you will need

SHOPPING LIST

- Noch • 58614 T-Rex Excavation set (£23.75) • 15043 Archaeologist figure set (£17.25) **Web:** *www.gaugemasterretail.com*
- Mifoshape sculpting powder (1.5kg) **Price:** £25.00 **Web:** *www.dcctrainautomation.co.uk*
- WW Scenics WSLF-139/140 Woodland Soil **Price:** £5.25 (180ml) – £8.99 (500ml) **Web:** *www.wwscenics.co.uk*

TOOLS

- Knife and spare blades
- Steel rule
- Paintbrushes
- Mixing bowl
- Small trowel
- Electrostatic grass planting tool (optional)

The Noch set portrays the remains of a very dead Tyrannosaurus.

SCULPTURE CLUB

Mifoshape is a sculpting powder from Belgium, which is perfect for creating rock faces and landscape contours. Unlike many regular dry plaster formulas, which tend to dry rapidly, Mifoshape can be manipulated for up to 30 minutes before it begins to set, allowing you to add any desired textures and details to the landscape.

The plaster comes as a dry powder, which is activated by water. Various mixing ratios are possible, which will dictate drying times, while the addition of a little PVA wood glue to the mix will improve adhesion and help 'plasticise' the mix, making it easier to spread and manipulate.

The powder has a minimum shelf life of six months once the bag has been opened. A sealing strip is provided to prevent moisture ingress, so remember to seal it tight after use!

To watch a short video of the product and its uses and how to use it go to *www.dcctrainautomation.co.uk/mifoshape-sculpting-powder.html*

STEP BY STEP

1

This Noch T-Rex excavation scene is rendered in a hard foam material and marketed for 'HO' scale, it's ideal for 'OO' or 'TT:120' layouts, or even 'N' and 'O', representing a baby or giant dinosaur!

2

While forming the surrounding landscape from layers of 5mm thick foamboard (available from craft stores such as Hobbycraft), I cut out a rectangular slot for the Noch T-Rex panel to sit within.

6

A small trowel proved ideal for mixing and applying the Mifoshape paste, which was spread evenly over the dried layer of plaster cloth, to a depth of around 2mm.

7

After about 15 minutes, while the Mifoshape layer was still pliable, I used the blade of the trowel to shape the rock face texture. The mixture remains workable for at least 30 minutes after application.

11

Lightweight plaster or putty can be spread into any gaps and smoothed out with a spatula. I used Foam Putty from Woodland Scenics, which is ready-mixed and easy to use. Leave overnight to dry before painting.

12

To add piles of excavated earth around the dig site, WW Scenics Woodland Soil was carefully shaped into piles. This material is real soil, dried and sifted, and forms part of a new range of products by WW Scenics.

then the Roman thermal bath excavation set may be more appropriate, especially if your layout is set somewhere with a strong Roman link, such as Bath, York or Chester.

Measuring around 135mm long by 68mm wide, both excavation scenes are perfect for 4mm scale layouts, and can be complemented by Noch's pack of archaeologist figures (or should that be palaeontologists?!), which come pre-painted and feature appropriate poses for a dig site. In fact, the figure set includes human skeletal remains and a useful tripod.

This proved to be a fun project and the finished scene certainly offers something different. Blending the foam dinosaur section into the surrounding landscape was the main challenge, taking into account the need to include mounds of recently dug earth. I kept these to a minimum but modellers may wish to include some heavy plant and machinery for deeper digs, but my diorama gives an idea of how good the Noch components can look.

Noch's pack of archaeologist figures are the ideal complement.

After test-fitting the T-Rex panel, I removed it while the landscape contouring was achieved with plaster cloth, as this stage can get rather messy.

The plaster cloth helped form the rough contours, being stretched over the layered foamboard, but the final shaping would be done with a wet plaster. Mifoshape is a useful powder, ideal for rock faces and landscapes.

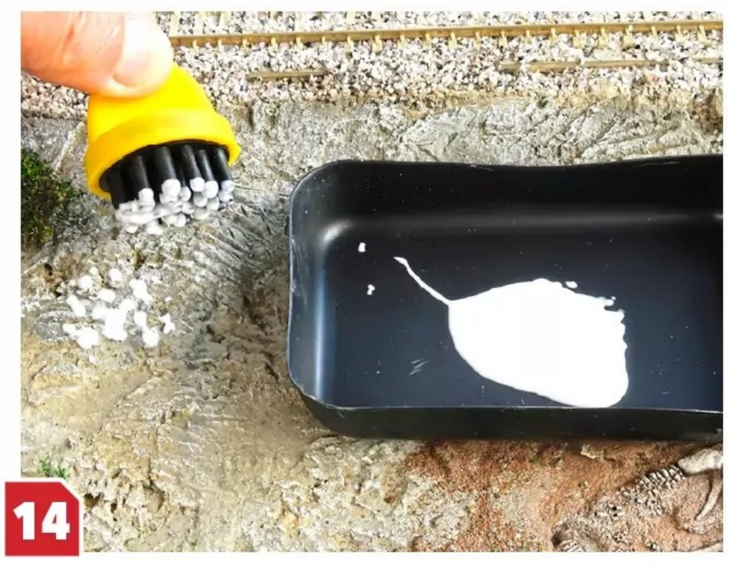
To improve adhesion and the workability of the Mifoshape, I added PVA glue (10% by volume) to the mix of plater and water, mixing all three components fully until a thick paste was created.

Once the plaster began to dry out, I glued the Noch T-Rex scene into place and then put the diorama aside overnight to let everything dry fully.

Next day, the painting stage began. I chose several Woodland Scenics Earth Colours, diluting each about 50/50 with water to create thin washes, which will soak easily into the porous surface.

I applied various acrylic paint shades with a sponge, one colour at a time, using a 'leopard spot' technique to ensure a random appearance. When it was dry, I applied a thin black wash to highlight the texture.

The WW Scenics soil was fixed in place using a thin PVA-type adhesive (Woodland Scenics scenic cement), applied from a pipette. The soil is finely textured and provides a useful form of ground scatter material.



The next step: the surrounding greenery. As I was going to use a static grass applicator, I made use of Noch's special applicators (soon to become available separately) to add random blobs of PVA glue.

A blend of slightly different shades of short static grass fibres were loaded into my Noch Gras-master electrostatic tool, which was then run over the wet blobs of glue. The scene was left to dry before removing excess fibres.

The random patches of greenery looked appropriate for this rocky area of scrub land, creating a realistic transition between the trackbed, rockface and the excavated dinosaur remains.

This Noch figure pack offers a quick and straightforward way to make a cameo scene. It provides six archaeologist figures in appropriate garb and poses, along with a human skeleton, tripod and theodolite.

To complete the scene, I added some safety fencing from the Busch range, along with a red Ford Ranger truck from the same manufacturer, both from Golden Valley Hobbies (*www.goldenvalleyhobbies.co.uk*).

AN OLYMPIA ACHIEVEMENT

Having once worked for British Rail with Kensington Olympia as part of his patch, **Andy Gibbs** set out to recreate the station and its Motorail terminal in 2mm scale.

Words: **Richard Gunn** Photography: **Chris Nevard**

What makes this layout great?

Thanks to going for ‘N’ gauge, Andy has been able to portray a significant chunk of West London without too many concessions. He’s also chosen an interesting location with great operating potential, not least the Motorail trains, making this a feast for fans of both rail and road vehicles.

One of the chief benefits of modelling in 'N' gauge is just how much more you can fit in. While larger scales may have the edge in detail and range of available items, for those wanting to portray a main line with prototypical lengthy passenger and goods trains, the smaller dimensions of 'N' gauge present a much bigger canvas with which to be creative. There's much more potential for sprawling railway locations, multi-platform major stations and extensive freight facilities.

That's why, when Andy Gibbs set out to model West London's Kensington Olympia station along with its Motorail terminal and a significant section of the surrounding cityscape, 2mm scale seemed the natural choice for a layout that also had to comfortably fit into his loft and be portable enough for the occasional exhibitions. "The real Kensington Olympia sometimes saw Motorail trains consisting of up to 20 vehicles, with two portions from Dover and Brockenhurst combined," he explains. "I can run some prototypical size trains; I can get 12 coaches and a locomotive into a platform, for example."

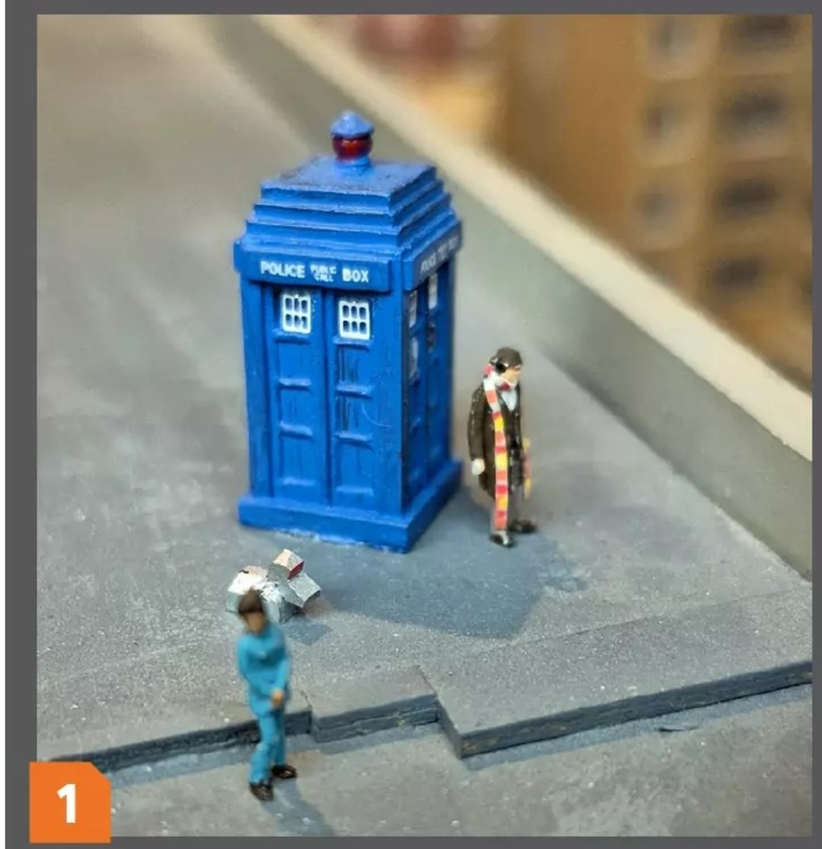
Andy chose the capital's western transport hub to model because "I'm a career railwayman, and it ended up being my patch at work; I worked for Southern Railway and was the Train Service Manager for what was originally the Brighton to Rugby services. I've also always been interested in the Brighton cross-country trains (which served the station) and have a website about them (*www.1s76.com*), so I had a lot of information about Kensington Olympia. There's so ➤

BELOW A Class 47 approaches 'Kensington Olympia' with a train of Esso TTA tankers. The signals are working Dapol ones and are the only items, aside from the locomotives, that have illumination.

3

The retaining walls (which are Metcalfe kits chopped down in size to fit) that frame the quadruple track section (including the London Underground line) leading into the fiddleyard. This is one of Andy's favourite views to watch the trains of 'Kensington Olympia' because he likes how it looks "quite gritty and urban".

3 things we like



1

The fourth Doctor, Sarah Jane and K9 making a surprise roof-top cameo, alongside the TARDIS.

2

The not-quite-so covert MI5 side entrance to the Charles House building. What goes on inside?

3

A typically hectic London street scene, with red buses almost outnumbering the cars.

4

Most of the buses are Oxford, but Andy has carried out some modifications. “I turned some of the RM Routemasters into RMLs (lengthened Routemasters) by using a cutting disc on a mini drill and chopping two buses just over halfway through, then glueing a front and rear back together again.

much variety of services through there that it seemed an ideal place to pick."

Its creator wanted to make things as accurate as possible, although there have been some inevitable concessions, even in 'N'. "Most of the buildings are scratchbuilt; the station building is pretty much spot on, and the Motorail terminal is condensed a bit. I've moved one or two things around elsewhere to fit them in." There are three pubs on the layout (The Radnor Arms, The Hand and Flower and the Bricklayer's Arms), all of which were going during the circa 1980 era depicted, but two of which have now gone. "Fortunately, there are plenty of old photos for reference," Andy says.

'Kensington Olympia' took around seven years to complete, with much work done during the Covid lockdown. "I got furloughed, so I managed to do all the wiring and a lot else while I was off work," recalls Andy. 6mm plywood baseboards formed the foundations, with the track layout planned using Peco paper track templates, including an 11-road fiddleyard, all of which bar one are through lines.

The Peco Code 55 Finescale track was laid with Electrofrog points throughout and Woodland Scenics ballast. After being secured in place by diluted PVA, it was sprayed with sleeper grime-coloured paint. While being an urban scene means nature is minimal, what grass there is also comes from the Woodland Scenics range, while the trees are from the Model Tree Shop. The station platforms and surface of the neighbouring street are effectively the same height. "They were done in 10mm foamboard, with any gradients also in foamboard," explains Andy. "The raised areas, which have the vast majority of the buildings on them, are on a ply sheet on top of some blocks." ➤

As the sign says, the real Kensington Olympia was once Europe's largest Motorail terminal, and a hub for car-carrying services north, south and west.

5

RIGHT: Andy is pleased with the way that the station building has turned out, regarding it as near enough "spot on" when compared to the real structure as it was in the late 1970s/early 1980s.

LEFT The Motorail terminal gives Andy a further excuse to deploy some of his extensive collection of 'N' gauge vehicles. Note the nun in front of the brick gatepost; she's one of several on 'Kensington Olympia', along with some pub-going priests.

ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL

When it came to researching and constructing the buildings, "I visited a few times and took loads of photos," says Andy. "You can always scale things out by counting the numbers of bricks, although it's a bit laborious. Google Streetview was also a great source." For the scratchbuilt structures, some were entirely Plastikard while others employed a cardboard inner framework and Slater's embossed Plastikard outer wall. "In the case of the station buildings, they've been wrapped with Scalescenes brick papers," clarifies Andy. "Some of the windows came from York Model Rail which does laser-cut window sets, others are from pre-printed glazing sets. Yet more, especially on the station and signal boxes, have been done using a method I came across where you print a gridwork onto a sticky label, shade the bits inside the grid so you end up with the frame, then you cut all the shaded bits out ➤

and stick them onto clear plastic. It's fiddly, but it allows you to do very fine window frames.

"The Georgian terraced houses are some of the few kits on there; from Kingsway Models, but now discontinued. Close up, they're not so great, but from a distance they're excellent. However, I am in the process of replacing them with scratchbuilt carcasses, as they should be a bit taller and wider."

There are two very substantial structures in place. The biggest is a condensed version of the now-demolished Charles House. This huge building housed the Post Office savings bank, other Post Office and government departments, and allegedly MI5's phone tapping service. Andy has jokingly referenced this with one of the back doors displaying a not-very-secret 'MI5 only' sign in front of a queue of suspicious-looking characters. There's also the West London Air Terminal building of Trans World Airlines (TWA), which is catering for travellers through space and time as well as air passengers; on its roof is the TARDIS complete with Tom Baker's kaleidoscopic scarf-wearing Doctor, companion Sarah Jane Smith and robot dog K9.

Motive power is mainly Dapol, Graham Farish, Revolution Trains and Rapido, several featuring sound. There are some scratchbuilt and kit pieces ➤

6

‘N’ gauge isn’t yet that well-served by a large amount of road vehicles, but through the use of kits and scratchbuilding, Andy has been able to build up a diverse selection of British and European cars, in addition to off-the-shelf models.

FACTFILE: ‘KENSINGTON OLYMPIA’

Era: Late 1970s/early 1980s

Gauge and scale: 2mm: 1ft, ‘N’ gauge

Size: 10ft x 6ft (with 6ft x 2ft operator well in the centre)

Track: Peco Code 55 Finescale

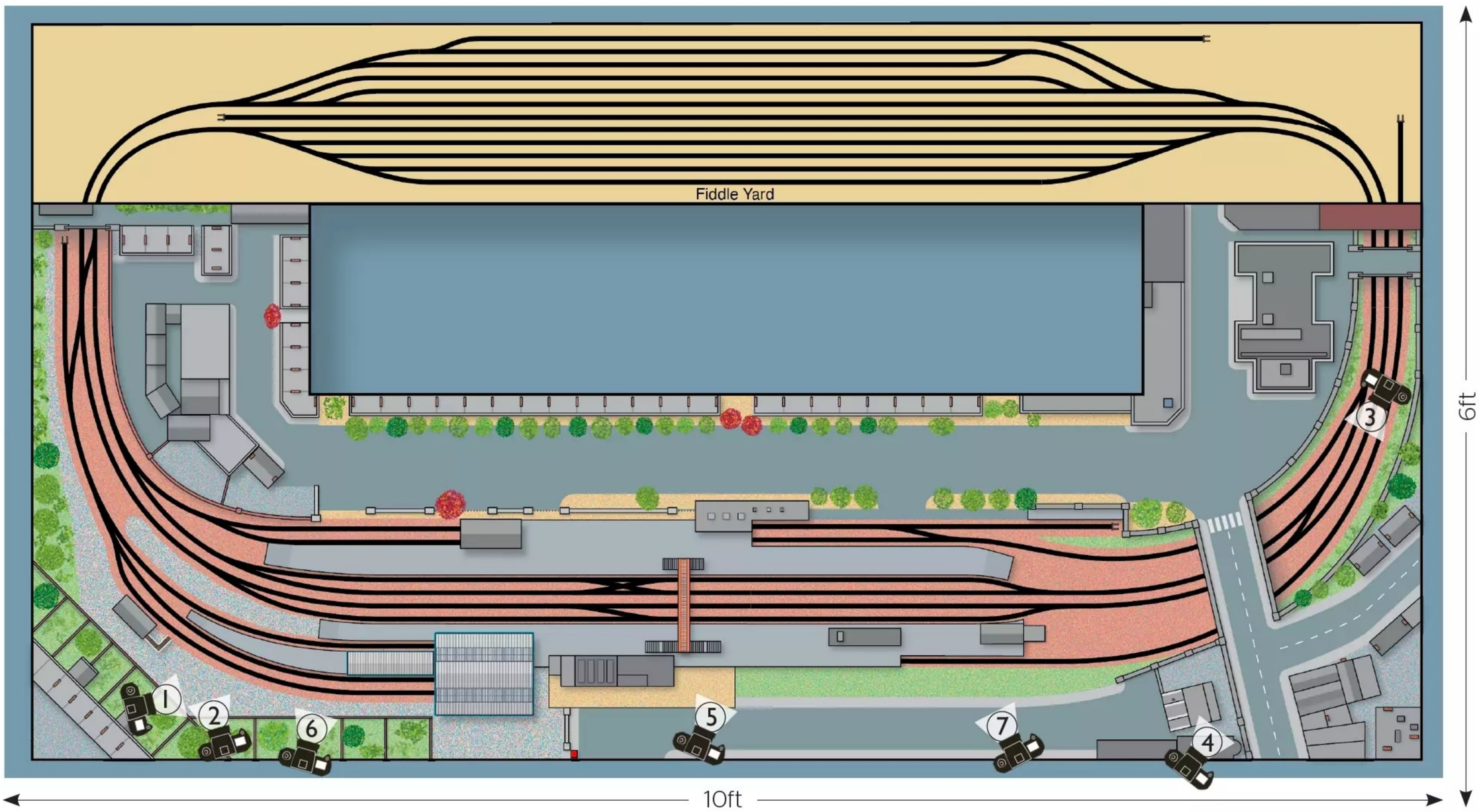
Power and control: DCC Digitrax system

Time to build: Around seven years

ABOUT THE MODELLER: ANDY GIBBS

Andy’s first model railway came when he was six or seven, and prompted him to later join the Brighton Model Railway Club in 1974. He’s still a member, despite now living in York. After leaving school, he joined British Rail and spent 37 years working on the railway. He also enjoys travelling, eating, drinking and photography.

RIGHT ‘Kensington Olympia’ also features the London Transport electrified line into the station. “The conductor rails are ‘T’ gauge rail, soldered to some white-painted track pins. The plan originally was to run the Radley Models LT battery locomotive on it, but its Tomix chassis fouls the centre rail.”



Artwork: **Andrew Mackintosh**

of rolling stock, such as a '4-TC' unpowered multiple unit (pushed or pulled by a Class 33/1). "That's converted from Graham Farish Mk 1s; the cabs were 3D-printed for me by an N Gauge Society member." Andy's also made some 'cut-and-shut' Mk 1s and Mk 2s, covering coach variations unavailable off the shelf.

Away from the rails, Andy reckons over 100 road vehicles crowd the streets, Motorail terminal and car carrier wagons. Some are Oxford, others are 3D-printed from several sources or totally scratchbuilt. There are vignettes referencing the Ford Granadas of *The Sweeney*, plus Arthur's Jaguar and Terry's Ford Capri from *Minder*. "My dad only ever drove three-wheelers; he never had a full driving licence, so there are several 3D-printed three-wheelers, such as Reliants and Bond Bugs, to be found too," adds Andy.

The figures that populate 'Kensington Olympia' are from the Preiser, Noch, Faller, Woodland Scenics, and Graham Farish ranges. "It's a big mix to basically fill the streets," says Andy. "But there aren't that many on the station, as there was only really a rush-hour service morning and evening."

While the station platform itself may not be that busy, though, with 'Kensington Olympia', Andy has come up with a layout overflowing with plenty of visual and operating interest, surrounded by scenes of a chaotic capital. And still with plenty of room for realistically long trains. Possibly even 20 Motorail wagons and coaches… MR

LEFT The '4-TC' multiple unit, seen here calling at the station, was a conversion from Mk 1 coaches (just as the real things were). The cabs are 3D-printed. Andy has also built a 'Hastings' diesel-electric multiple unit for the layout as well.

RIGHT A police Morris Marina blocks off the entrance to Olympia Motors. Has something nefarious been taking place at this back-street garage?

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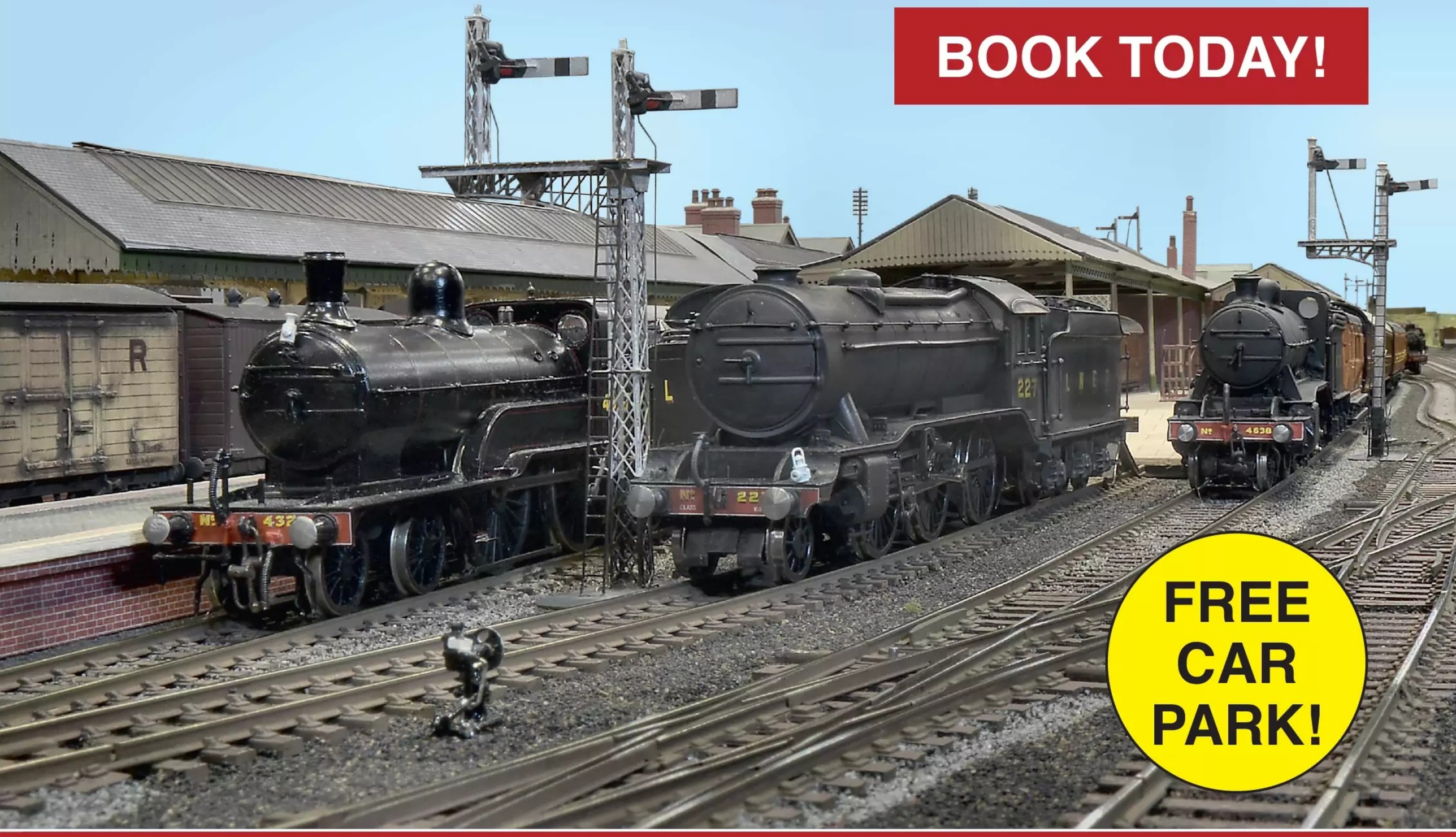

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Reviews

In-depth and unbiased reviews of the latest products

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84 **KR Models SR/BR '4-DD' EMU**

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Our reviewers

George Dent
Model Rail's modern image expert.

Richard Gunn
A keen modeller with eclectic tastes.

Chris Leigh
Wrote his first review in 1964!

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.

Bachmann Class 69

◆ **GAUGE** 'OO' ◆ **MODEL** Bachmann 35-778 Class 69 69003 *The Railway Observer*, GBRf blue ◆ **PRICE** £249.95-£389.95
◆ **AVAILABILITY** Bachmann stockists **Web** *www.bachmann.co.uk*

The railway has always been adept at re-purposing locomotives and rolling stock, and, as shown by GB Railfreight over the past few years, it's a practice that survives in the current era. Thwarted in its mission to expand its Class 66 fleet, the freight operator turned instead to a spot of recycling.

Taking a motley collection of British Rail Class 56s, some of which were nearly 50 years old, they were stripped back to bare bodyshells and re-equipped with General Motors diesel engines, plus new electrical, control and cooling gear, creating a virtually new fleet of powerful locomotives – the Class 69.

First announced in 2021, just as the first prototype took to the rails, Bachmann's models have now arrived, not long after the 16th – and final – locomotive was completed. Produced with full co-operation of GB Railfreight, Bachmann's Class 69s have been hotly anticipated by modellers of the current scene.

Some attractive livery options are available in this initial batch, including a few of the retro-style BR schemes, but our sample is one of the more sober versions, depicting 69003 *The Railway Observer* (formerly 56018), in GBRf's house colours.

As is now the norm for Bachmann 'OO' modern image locomotives, all versions are available in DCC-ready, DCC sound-fitted and DCC sound deluxe format, the latter featuring Bachmann's auto-release tension lock couplings. Those with digital sound are equipped with Bachmann's new twin speaker arrangement for improved audio performance,

“The underframe is a real treat for the eyes, with the unique Class 56 bogies expertly captured”

and a ‘Bach-up’ stay-alive circuit is pre-fitted to all versions, with an isolating slide switch located below the chassis. While this feature is a boon for digital users, it also has its uses on analogue layouts, although the model may no longer stop as expected in DC mode, so it’s something analogue users ought to use with care.

GOT THE LOOK

Presented in Bachmann’s usual plastic clamshell and card packaging, the ‘69’ is highly impressive when first unpacked. At nearly 650g, it’s a weighty beast and, like the real thing, there’s enough of the original ‘56’ left to make the locomotive appear familiar, yet the utilitarian lighting units and revised roof profile make for a fascinating contrast.

Indeed, the roof is perhaps the most eye-catching element, with a huge exhaust silencer unit at one end and a purposeful set of cooling fans at the other. These aspects are replicated faithfully, and there’s a touch of finesse about the etched fan grilles.

On the whole, the body, cab and roof profiles are spot-on, and with 69003 being based on a Romanian-built Class 56, the characteristic windscreen surround profile of these Eastern Bloc Type 5s looks correct. There are no cab roof aerial mounts, however, which I’ve noticed on the real 69003 (at both ends).

The etched bodyside grilles feature fine mesh with the distinctive internal framework visible, along with a convincing rendition of the cooling equipment inside the locomotive. The new side grille, at the exhaust end, is similarly ➤

3 things we like

1 Internal detail and body framework visible through etched side grilles.

2 Cooling fans and etched grilles.

3 Bogies feature a wealth of individual detail parts.

Bachmann Class 69 – in detail

Factfile: GBRf Class 69

Faced with a need for more diesel locomotives to cope with its growing business, and with further Class 66 construction impossible, GB Railfreight took the option of re-engineering a fleet of redundant British Rail Class 56s. Built originally in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the '56' donors were drawn from a variety of sources and include four Romanian-built examples, with the initial aim of creating ten new Class 69s.

While the basic bodyshell, wheels, bogies and traction motors would be retained – and comprehensively overhauled – the Ruston-Paxman diesel engines would be replaced by American EMD12N-70 two-stroke engines, as fitted to the all-conquering Class 66s. Alternators and cooler group equipment also came from US locomotive designs, while an entirely new electrical system was designed and installed, and the cab interiors were re-fitted with a similar arrangement to the Class 66.

Externally, a new cooler group, roof profile and large exhaust units changed the appearance of the '56' bodyshell significantly. New headlamp clusters and removal of the grilles also altered the look of the front ends.

Conversion work was carried out by US firm Progress Rail at its Longport facility near Stoke-on-Trent, while the bogie reconditioning work was contracted to Pullman Rail at Cardiff Canton. The original order was eventually expanded to create a fleet of 16 Class 69s, with the first entering traffic in 2021 and the last in autumn 2025.

Although not as widely travelled as GBRf's Class 66 fleet, the Class 69s are usually seen south of Doncaster on the East Coast Main Line, in East Anglia and the South East, working infrastructure trains, seasonal railhead treatment trains, stock moves, and general freight.

The fleet carries a colourful mix of liveries, many based on retro British Rail schemes, in honour of the Class 56 heritage. A handful of examples carry GBRf's usual house colours of blue and orange.

1. Captured at Mount Pleasant in August 2022, 69005 *Eastleigh* (ex-56007) looks handsome in retro-style BR green. PHIL METCALFE/*RAIL*

2. Inspired by the colour scheme of the prototype *Kestrel* locomotive from the 1960s, 69014 *EMD Longport* (ex-56104) entered traffic in March 2025. GB RAILFREIGHT

3. Unveiled in August 2025 in BR Railfreight 'red stripe' livery, 69015 is unusual in also carrying its original number of 56009. This was the final '69' to enter traffic. ARLINGTON FLEET SERVICES

effective. Painted wire handrails are fitted to the cab doors, and the austere cab fronts feature a nice rendition of the central multiple working sockets, plus lamp brackets and the bulky modern light clusters, all equipped with authentic lens patterns.

The underframe is a real treat for the eyes, with the unique Class 56 bogies expertly captured, with each side frame seemingly made up of many individual components. The separately applied air brake pipework adds the final touch, while the disc wheels sport a faithful profile, and the faces are neatly painted black.

Between the bogies, the new equipment surrounding the '56's' original fuel tank is all correctly rendered, again with associated pipework installed, including sanding gear.

Modern, angular buffers are installed – and lightly sprung – and the headstocks can be adorned with the supplied air brake hoses, cosmetic screw couplings, air horns and protective grilles, if dispensing with the NEM coupler pockets which are mounted on sprung cams.

Inside the cabs, the revised control desks, which are akin to those found within a Class 66, are fully detailed and painted, as are the bulkheads. All that's missing is a driver.

POWER AND PERFORMANCE

Traction comes from Bachmann's usual arrangement of a centrally mounted five-pole motor with dual flywheels and cardan shafts linked to gear towers. Power is thus transmitted to all six axles, and electrical current is collected from all wheels via wiper pick-ups.

The body is a screw-fit and, once removed, the extensive cast metal chassis block accounts for most of the model's heft. The interior detail, visible through the side grilles, is really impressive, and the main circuit board atop the block houses a PluX22 DCC interface and a speaker at the exhaust end. Sound-fitted models come with a second speaker, mounted below the PCB.

There are a couple of mini slide switches below the chassis for analogue users to govern some of the lighting functions, but DCC operation allows for greater freedom and the chance to switch from day to night-time illumination patterns.

Performance proved to be first class, with the powerful mechanism producing a silky-smooth ride with minimal noise. The highly detailed bogies rotate freely and the '69' hauled a substantial rake of freight wagons and coaches without any problems.

Application of the GBRf livery is also faultless, with an even finish and clean separation to each colour element. The printed logos and lined-out 'whiskers' are all immaculate. Also great are the printed nameplates and plaques, but even so, a set of etched replacements is also provided, if required.

With the Class 69s set to be a fixture of the real railway for many years to come, it's gratifying to now have a top-notch replica in 'OO' gauge. For those working in 'N' gauge, let's hope that the Farish version is not too far behind. ***(GD)***

SUMMARY

PROS
- Looks and fidelity.
- Superb level of detail.
- Runs like a dream.
- Faultless finish.
- Ultra-popular modern prototype.

CONS
- Not a lot.

FINAL VERDICT

Well worth the wait!

VITAL STATISTICS: BACHMANN CLASS 69

OVERVIEW
Manufacturer: Bachmann Europe
Ref. No. 35-778
Unit No. 69003
Scale/gauge: 1:76 scale, 'OO' gauge
Body: Plastic with metal parts
Chassis: Metal with plastic parts
Weight: 649g
Min. curve radius: 438mm (second radius)
Wheel back-to-back: 14.3mm

DIMENSIONS	PROTOTYPE	1:76 SCALE	MODEL
Length (over buffers)	63ft 6in	254mm	253mm
Height	12ft 9¾in	51.5mm	51.5mm
Width	9ft 2in	36.5mm	36mm
Wheel diameter	3ft 9in	15mm	15mm
Bogie wheelbase	13ft 6in	54mm	54mm

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

ELECTRICS
Electrical system: 12V DC two-rail
Motor type: Five-pole
Lights: Directional head/tail lights, cab, engine room
DCC-ready? PluX22 socket and speaker installed

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

EFE Rail BR Class 74

◆ **GAUGE** 'OO' ◆ **MODEL** EFE Rail E82008 BR Class 74, 74003 BR Rail blue ◆ **PRICE** £214.95 ◆ **AVAILABILITY** Bachmann stockists **Web** *www.bachmann.co.uk*

Revealed initially last Spring, the EFE Rail Class 74s arrived into stock in time for Christmas, offering this compelling, yet short-lived, class in ready-to-run form for the first time.

Rebuilt from ten Class 71 Bo-Bo electrics, the '74s' were electro-diesel locomotives, designed to offer a more versatile option for British Rail's Southern Region, inspired by the success of the Class 73. Both Hornby and DJ Models have produced the Class 71 in 'OO' in recent years, but it's a collaboration of Kernow Model Rail Centre and Bachmann Europe that sees the '74' appear under the EFE Rail banner.

Five versions have been produced, all in BR Rail blue – the only livery carried by this class – with a choice of E-prefix and TOPS numbers, and a single factory-weathered option. All come in DCC-ready format, and they're presented in a good quality foam-lined box.

With the model extracted from the packaging, there are numerous similarities to the DJ Models Class 71, especially in terms of the chassis and mechanism. That said, Bachmann's design team has created a hugely attractive and authentic rendition of the '74'. The looks of the real thing have been faithfully replicated, with everything where it should be and scaled correctly.

There's plenty of fine detail to be seen on the bodyshell, including etched metal grilles, with sections of the body framework visible below in some

instances, plus a radiator fan below the roof grille. Fine wire handrails are installed, mimicking a polished steel appearance and the etched chequerplate kick panels on the cab doors are superbly done.

Etched Crewe Works plates are pre-installed, which is a welcome bonus, and the neatly installed glazing is super-clear, revealing detailed cab interiors which are illuminated by small LEDs. Like the DJ Models '71', the headcode panels are also illuminated (according to direction), and interchangeable blinds are provided, including an array of suitable numerical and alpha-numerical codes which can be ➤

3 things we like

1 Impressively detailed bogies with intricate pipework.

2 Etched chequerplate kick panels on doors and builder's plates.

3 Easy-to-install two-character headcode blinds.

"At a time when we're faced with multiple models of the same subjects, it's great to see a BR Blue-era locomotive class being tackled for the very first time in RTR 'OO'"

EFE Rail BR Class 74 – in detail

Factfile: BR Class 74 electro-diesels

British Rail's Class 74 electro-diesel fleet consisted of ten former Class 71 all-electric Bo-Bos. Rebuilt at Crewe Works in the late 1960s to feature a six-cylinder diesel engine, the rebuilding project was inspired by the success of BR's Class 73 electro-diesels, which proved to be highly versatile, reliable workhorses.

However, in contrast to the English Electric diesel engines installed in the '73s', the Class 74s were equipped with Davey Paxman power units which would ultimately be their undoing.

The growth of the Southern Region's electric multiple unit fleet had rendered many of the Class 71s redundant, so the electro-diesel conversion project was expected to create a more versatile locomotive. Class 74 rebuilds – or 'HBs' as they were initially known – proved adept at hauling express and secondary passenger services, including heavy boat trains to Weymouth and Southampton, as well as mail and general freight trains. With the ability to harness up to 2,500hp via the 750V DC third-rail electric supply, or 650hp when working on diesel power, they packed quite a punch for a modest Bo-Bo.

Moreover, the '74s' were able to operate cross-London freights away from Southern electrified territory, regularly appearing on London Midland and Western routes around the Capital.

However, continuing issues with the Paxman diesel units and associated electrical equipment saw all ten Class 74s withdrawn by the end of 1977. A re-engining programme could have solved the problem, but by this time, there was no longer enough work for them, so BR decided to concentrate on maintaining its Class 73 fleet instead, with the '74s' quietly scrapped.

The Class 74s only ever wore BR Rail blue livery and were initially numbered as E6101-10, with numbers and BR logos repeated at each end. Following the adoption of TOPS (Total Operations Processing System) in 1973, the class was re-numbered 74001-10, with the numbers worn on the left-hand end of each side.

1: Fresh from rebuilding as an electro-diesel, E6109 is seen at Clapham Junction in 1968. COLOUR RAIL

2: Class 74s were regulars on inter-regional milk trains to and from Acton Yard. Heading a load of empty tanks, 74008 heads through Kensington Olympia in July 1976. COLOUR RAIL

3: Working on the non-electrified lines, E6107 is seen at Southampton with a van train, in September 1972. COLOUR RAIL

slotted into position after unclipping the body from the chassis. Plain white or red rectangle blinds are also supplied.

Waist-level control pipes adorn the cab fronts, along with individually fitted lamp brackets and windscreen wipers, plus pairs of air horns atop the cab roofs.

BONZA BOGIES

The underframe detail is as compelling as the bodywork, with the bogies a real highlight. A blend of finely moulded suspension and pipework detail, plus numerous separately installed fittings, combine to produce a very busy, businesslike appearance. The correct style of third rail shoe gear is installed, along with footsteps and sanding gear, while the spoked wheels feature a convincing profile.

The battery boxes, fuel tanks and associated pipework complete the picture and sprung, close-coupling units are installed behind the headstocks, with NEM pockets to accept the supplied slimline tension locks. Alternatively, the detail bag can be raided for a full set of brake hoses and jumper cables, plus cosmetic buckeye couplers.

A set of optional bogie-locomotive mounting brackets is also supplied, which can be slotted into position, but these are only suitable for display purposes or for running on layouts with virtually no curves.

POWER TRAIN

On the inside, the heavy cast metal chassis block houses a twin-shaft coreless motor, mounted centrally, with dual flywheels and cardan shafts transmitting power to all four axles. Power is collected from the rails via each wheel, employing the brass axle bearings rather than wiper or plunger contacts, for improved performance and longevity.

The model has been geared to match the prototype's scale, speed and performance, and after the recommended 30-minute running-in period, our sample ran exceptionally well. Due to the type of motor, the usual warnings regarding the use of old controllers and high-frequency track cleaners are provided in the instruction manual.

A 21pin DCC socket is located on top of the main circuit board, alongside a generous space for a speaker, should you wish to add a decoder and sound setup. For analogue users, a pair of slide switches below the chassis govern the cab interior and directional lighting functions.

At a time when we're faced with multiple models of the same subjects, it's great to see a BR blue-era locomotive class being tackled for the very first time in RTR 'OO'. While it may not be deemed a 'classic' BR type, the Class 74 story is an interesting one nevertheless, and EFE Rail's model is a very attractive prospect, especially for those modelling the Southern Region and the London area during the late 1960s and 1970s.

The build quality and level of paint finish on this sample are first-class. While the full retail price is well north of the £200 mark, a little shopping around will reveal some significant savings. I hear they're already selling well, so it may be worth acting quickly if you fancy adding a '74' to your collection. ***(GD)***

SUMMARY

PROS

- Really looks the part.
- Excellent level of detail.
- Top class finish.
- Good runner.

CONS

- Not a lot.

FINAL VERDICT

Impressive.

VITAL STATISTICS: EFE RAIL BR CLASS 74

OVERVIEW

Manufacturer: Bachmann Europe
Ref. No. E82008
Unit No. 74007
Scale/gauge: 1:76 scale, 'OO' gauge
Body: Plastic with metal parts
Chassis: Metal with plastic parts
Weight: 345g
Min. curve radius: 438mm (second radius)
Wheel back-to-back: 14.4mm

DIMENSIONS	PROTOTYPE	1:76 SCALE	MODEL
Length (over buffers)	50ft 5¾in	202mm	201mm
Height	13ft 0in	52mm	52.2mm
Width	9ft 3in	37mm	36mm
Wheel diameter	4ft 0in	16.1mm	16.3mm
Bogie wheelbase	10ft 6in	42mm	42mm

SERVICING

How to dismantle: Body unclips from chassis.
Where to oil: Gears, axle bearings – see instructions.

ELECTRICS

Electrical system: 12V DC two-rail
Motor type: Coreless
Lights: Directional headcode panels, cab interior
DCC-ready? 21pin socket

MECHANISM

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

KR Models BR/Bulleid '4-DD'

◆ **GAUGE** 'OO' ◆ **MODEL** KR Models BR/Bulleid '4-DD' four-car EMU, BR green ◆ **PRICE** £375.00 (DCC-ready), £405 (DCC sound)
◆ **AVAILABILITY** KR Models stockists or Rails of Sheffield **Web** *www.railsofsheffield.com*

I cannot recall any particular fascination for Bulleid's curious double-deck electric units beyond a modest interest in all the Southern's vast fleet of electric multiple units. The two four-car '4-DD' units operated as a pair on Cannon Street to Dartford commuter services, so they were about as far removed from my area of interest on the Western Section as it was possible to be and yet still be on the Southern Region.

Nevertheless, the weird and wonderful is always interesting, and Bulleid's efforts were always a bit out of the ordinary. Doubtless, that's what made the '4-DD' attractive to KR Models, whose self-imposed remit is to make the weird and wonderful that no other manufacturer is willing to try. What better follow-up is there to Bulleid's disastrous 'Leader' than his much more successful but equally bizarre double-deck EMU?

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Both prototype units have been replicated in miniature, each available in plain BR green, as featured here, BR dark green with small or full yellow ends, or Rail blue. Each unit comes in a stout, flat card box with hard foam lining, which is adequate for the job and avoids the over-packaging which is evident from some manufacturers of late. Thankfully, there are none of those vac-formed 'clamshells'. The vehicles are easy to extract from the packaging, and the immediate impression is that they look good, accurate, tidy and well-presented without any 'presentation overkill'.

There's a look of 'design-clever' about them, but to be fair, Southern EMUs, and these units in particular, did not have a lot of extraneous, fiddly detail that would require countless separate fittings.

There's a smart A4-sized, ten-page booklet which gives both a prototype history and all the details for maintenance and operation of both analogue and DCC sound versions of the model. It's just a pity that it wasn't proofread after the spellchecker had erroneously changed the spelling of Bulleid, reversing the 'ei' throughout the document. Those of us who have been writing about him for years will be well aware of that pitfall!

EMU

“I’ve seen some debate about how well the character of the front end has been captured, but to me it looks pretty good”

IN DETAIL

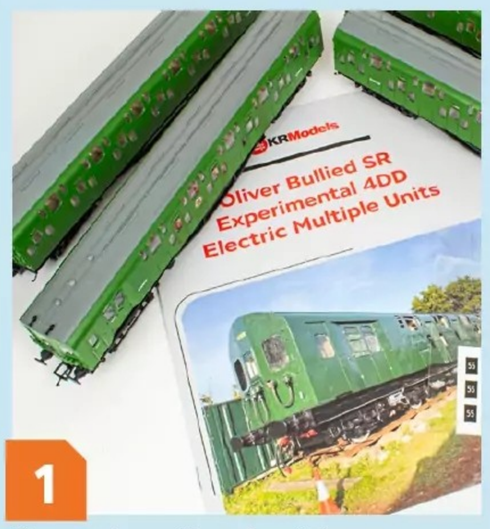
There are a lot of windows in these vehicles, and I was keen to see how well the flush-glazed effect of the real thing had been captured in model form. It’s pretty good, especially the curved upper windows, and the interior is certainly visible. It is a simple cream plastic moulding made up of two sections, upper and lower, which appear to clip together, and could use some painting and fitting of passengers.

A metal strip carries the lighting and electronics along the top of the upper level, including the DCC interface, located within the guard’s compartment of the motor car.

As the bodyshell simply unclips, it should not be difficult to lend a bit of attention to the interior and the fact that it is lit when the train is running means that it will certainly show up and be worth doing.

I’ve seen some debate about how well the character of the front end has been captured, but

3 things we like



1 Smart handbook with prototype and model information.

2 Double-deck interior is easy to access.

3 Bogie detail is nice and crisp.

KR Models BR ‘4-DD’ – in detail

Factfile: BR/Bulleid ‘4-DD’ EMU

The Southern Railway invested heavily in electrifying all its suburban routes, serving Waterloo, Victoria, Charing Cross and London Bridge stations. This enabled fast and efficient movement of commuters, but at peak times, there was still insufficient capacity, particularly on the line from Dartford to Charing Cross.

There was neither the money nor space to lengthen platforms to accommodate longer trains, so it fell to the Southern’s innovative but controversial Chief Mechanical Engineer, Oliver Bulleid, to come up with a solution. In urban areas of North America, double-deck trains had proved to be the answer. Such a solution was not available to Bulleid owing to Britain’s restricted loading gauge, so he solved the issue with customary ingenuity and failure to allow for human nature. He designed a pair of experimental four-car EMUs with a one-and-a-half deck arrangement, which emerged from Lancing Works in 1949.

By sacrificing one seat in the centre of each side of a compartment and replacing it with steps, he was able to interlace two levels of seating. Passengers in the upper compartment sat facing the opposite direction to those immediately below them, their ‘seat’ just inches above the head of the person in the lower compartment. Upper compartments also had two tip-up seats where the doors would have been. The seats appear to have been ‘minimalist’ and cramped but passenger comfort is unlikely to have been a design priority.

The floor level was lowered between the bogies, and inevitably, as with any Bulleid design, there were ‘issues’. The cramped space and curved glass in the upper compartments meant that windows could not be opened and pressure ventilation was necessary. When this was not working, the compartments became unbearably hot. They also had no emergency stop cords and presented personal security issues for passengers travelling alone at quiet times. With hindsight, passenger escape in the event of an accident would have been a nightmare.

However, the most serious ‘issue’ was the increased dwell time at stations to load over 20 passengers through the same doors that would cope with fewer than a dozen on an ordinary unit. Longer station stops then affected the number of trains that could be operated on the route, and this, to a degree, affected their usefulness.

Nevertheless, the 4-DD units did what was required of them and accordingly they lasted in traffic until 1971.

1: With a traditional oil tail lamp mounted on the end, Bulleid ‘4-DD’ set 4002/4902 departs Guildford in the mid-1960s. COLOUR RAIL

2: Wearing BR Rail blue, recently withdrawn ‘4-DD’ unit 4002/4902 is seen at Ashford Works in 1972. COLOUR RAIL

3: One of two surviving ‘4-DD’ driving motor coaches is seen stored at Pitsford & Brampton in the 1990s. CHRIS LEIGH

to me, it looks pretty good. However, there should be a single windscreen wiper on the driver's side, and this is absent. The guard's van areas have the deeply recessed doors well represented, though why Bulleid considered this was necessary, I am not sure.

Below the windscreens, conduit and jumper cables are separately applied details, as are the twin air horns on the roof. Corner steps at the inner ends of the trailer cars are attached to the chassis, and these are blackened metal fittings. Warning – they are easily hooked into woollen clothing and can be a nightmare to detach!

The cabs feature control desks and seats, but there are no other cab details. A sheet of self-adhesive headcodes is supplied for the two-character display, which is illuminated when the train is moving. Reflecting their modernity, the '4-DD' sets featured roller blinds from the outset, rather than the Southern's traditional stencil headcodes.

Truss rods and underframe details are moulded in black plastic. The truss rods are a little on the chunky side, and some of the details could do with a spot of paint, as not everything was black, and there's an unsightly vertical seam on each of the buffer heads. Bogies are moulded in black plastic with the shoe beams allowing a little more than scale clearance from rail level – a wise precaution.

The two driving motor coaches feature a longer wheelbase powered bogie at the outer ends, with the mechanism mounted discreetly below window level, keeping the interior clear. Power from the small coreless motors is transmitted to both axles via gears.

All bogies are fitted with metal wheels on insulated axles, running in 'live' brass bearings which also serve as electrical pick-ups and are connected by fine wires to the overhead electrical and LED strips. Eight-pin miniature plugs and sockets are incorporated in the press-fit couplings. I found it easiest to couple the cars in pairs on a flat surface before putting the two halves of the unit on the track and bringing the final plug and socket together. It's a good deal simpler than the systems used by some other manufacturers, and it produces an authentically close-coupled unit.

The quality of finish on this green version is particularly pleasing. The BR carriage roundels are neat, and the car numbers are applied at both ends. Curiously, the running numbers and door signage are white, but they should be yellow. So, too, is the loading instruction information on the guard's van side, which is also in upper and lower case, which is more appropriate for a Rail blue version.

On test, the unit was impressively smooth and quiet, but it quickly became apparent that one motor coach was doing all the work. The trailing motor coach was dead and was actually being dragged with locked wheels without, apparently, any detrimental effect on performance.

Due to the electrical layout of the unit, both power cars can be operated with a single decoder if DCC is used. Pick-ups on the second power car thus have to transmit the power through the three other cars by way of the couplers, to the decoder interface/blanking plug and back again to the motor of the second car. Thus, any minor break in the contact through the couplers will prevent current from reaching the second power car.

Some careful fettling of the couplers and a few thou' filed off the lower edge of the headstocks, to allow the couplers to move more easily, largely resolved the problem with my set, ensuring full continuity.

As with the Bulleid 'Leader', I feel kindly disposed towards the '4-DD' despite its flaws, and it allows us to replicate a highly unusual prototype in RTR form for the first time. Incidentally, on analogue control, the motors emit a very realistic EMU whine, even without the benefit of DCC sound! ***(CJL)***

• With thanks to Rails of Sheffield for the loan of this model.

SUMMARY

PROS

- Overall looks and proportions.
- Decent finish.
- Unusual prototype.

CONS

- Modest overall level of detail.
- Some decoration errors.
- Care needed to ensure conductive couplers operate correctly.

FINAL VERDICT

A good effort.

VITAL STATISTICS: KR MODELS '4-DD'

OVERVIEW

Manufacturer: KR Models
Ref. No. N/A
Unit No. 4001
Scale/gauge: 1:76 scale, 'OO' gauge
Body: Plastic
Chassis: Metal with plastic parts
Weight: Motor coach 274g, trailer coach 249g
Min. curve radius: Not specified
Wheel back-to-back: 14.5mm

DIMENSIONS	PROTOTYPE	1:76 SCALE	MODEL
Length (4-car unit)	257ft 4½in	1,029mm	1,022mm
Height	12ft 9in	51mm	51mm
Width	9ft 3in	37mm	39mm
Wheel diameter	3ft 0in	12mm	12mm
Bogie wheelbase (motor)	8ft 9in	35mm	35mm
Bogie wheelbase (non-motor)	8ft 0in	32mm	32mm

SERVICING

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

ELECTRICS

Electrical system: 12V DC two-rail
Motor type: 2 x Coreless
Lights: Interior, headcode blinds
DCC-ready? 21pin socket

MECHANISM

Drive system: 2x low-level motor bogies
Flywheel(s): No
Traction tyres: No

Graham Farish LNER Class V2

◆ **GAUGE** 'N' ◆ **MODEL** Graham Farish 372-612 LNER Class V2, No. 60845 BR lined black (early crest) ◆ **PRICE** £219.95 (DCC-ready), £329.95 (DCC sound)
◆ **AVAILABILITY** Bachmann/Graham Farish stockists **Web** *www.bachmann.co.uk*

Initially announced in summer 2024, Graham Farish's 'N' gauge versions of the LNER's handsome and powerful 'V2' 2-6-2 locomotives have now reached stockists. Five variations have been launched in DCC-ready and DCC sound forms; two in LNER Apple Green, a single BR lined black example with early crest, and a further pair in BR lined green with late emblems.

It's not the first time these Eastern 'Prairies' have been available in 2mm scale via Graham Farish, with models released back in 2004. However, this new batch has fresh tooling from the rails up, benefiting from the research Bachmann carried out for its more recent 'OO' re-creation. Does it improve upon its predecessor? The answer is a resounding yes, both in looks and performance.

The real 'V2s' were versatile and strong machines, with 184 constructed between 1936 and 1944 for heavy and fast mixed traffic duties. Their finest hour was arguably during the Second World War; not for nothing were they described as "the engines that won the war" thanks to their immense abilities.

Our review sample is BR black-liveried No. 60845. Immediately out of the (well-packaged) box, it's obvious that it has captured the purposeful and commanding character of the actual locomotives extremely well. There's a sleekness and elegance that was lacking from its chunkier-looking Farish counterpart of two decades ago.

Also present is a wealth of fine detail – such as separate handrails, whistle, lamp irons and buffers, along with an accessory pack including guard irons, cylinder drain cocks, and cab and tender doors. Some of these are intended for static display, though, or layouts only with very gentle curves.

SMALL SCALE CLARITY

The BR black livery has been very well applied, with faultlessly delicate, well-spaced lining. However, it's the quality of lettering and numbering that really stands out. The clarity that has been achieved in such a small scale is astonishing; with a strong magnifying glass, you can just about make out 'London North Eastern Railway Co.', 'No. 4845', 'Doncaster' and '1939' on the smokebox works plates. They're impossible to read with the naked eye. Also extraordinarily good is the fully decorated cab with backhead controls and gauges picked out – all this in a barely visible area measuring just 10mm by 15mm. The cab also boasts a hinged tender metal fallplate. Only the tender coal load is slightly unconvincing, looking a bit too shiny. However, it's an easily removable metal section for those who'd like to add something more realistic.

Even before running in, the 'V2' ran smoothly and quietly; then, it just got better with use. All the tender wheels and driving wheels feature electrical pick-ups; however, as standard, the rear coupled axle has traction tyres. A replacement tyre-less axle is included though and can be fitted very easily. But it's unlikely to be necessary, though; even without it, our sample handled points without any hesitation and was able to maintain a slow-speed crawl without

“Also extraordinarily good is the fully decorated cab with backhead controls and gauges picked out – in a barely visible area measuring just 10mm by 15mm”

VITAL STATISTICS: GRAHAM FARISH LNER CLASS V2

OVERVIEW

Manufacturer: Graham Farish
Ref. No. 372-612
Unit No. 60845
Scale/gauge: 1:148 scale, ‘N’ gauge
Body: Injection-moulded plastic with metal parts
Chassis: Die-cast metal with plastic
Weight: 75g
Min. curve radius: 263.5mm (second radius)
Wheel back-to-back: 7.5mm

DIMENSIONS	PROTOTYPE	1:148 SCALE	MODEL
Length (over buffers)	66ft 5in	136.8mm	141mm
Height	13ft 1in	26.9mm	28mm
Width	9ft	18.5mm	18.5mm
Wheel diameter (pony)	3ft 2in	6.5mm	6.5mm
Wheel diameter (driving)	6ft 2in	12.7mm	12.5mm
Wheel diameter (trailing)	3ft 8in	7.6mm	7.5mm
Wheel diameter (tender)	3ft 9in	7.7mm	8mm

SERVICING

How to dismantle: Body unscrews from chassis
Where to oil: Axles and connecting rods – see instructions

ELECTRICS

Electrical system: 12V DC two-rail
Motor type: Coreless
Lights: No
DCC-ready? Next18 DCC socket in tender

MECHANISM

Drive system: Motor drives centre coupled axle via worm and gears
Flywheel: Yes
Traction tyres: Optional, rear driving wheels as standard

stalling. With gearing set up for prototypical running speeds and haulage capability, the ‘V2’ handled 12 Mk 1 coaches on our test layout (with second radius curves and sharp fiddleyard points) without even breaking into a sweat. And watching the Walschaerts valve gear in its complex action is almost hypnotic.

This new ‘V2’ is light years ahead of its predecessor in quality, appearance and running. It’s a masterclass in just how good ‘N’ gauge can be these days. ***(RG)***

3 things we like

1 Beautifully complex Walschaerts motion gear superbly recreated – it’s a joy to observe.

2 Quality of the numbering, lining and other print details, plus a hinged cab fallplate.

3 Fully detailed and painted cab interior – applied to an area the size of a thumbnail!

SUMMARY

PROS

- Captures the stylish looks of the ‘V2’ locomotives wonderfully well.
- Superbly intricate multi-stage tampo printing.
- Impressive haulage and low-speed capabilities.

CONS

- The usual somewhat unrealistic coal load.

FINAL VERDICT

A minute masterpiece.

Revolution Trains Class 66

“These are hugely impressive models, not least in visual terms, as the overall level of detail and finesse is fantastic”

◆ **GAUGE** ‘N’ ◆ **MODEL** Revolution Trains • RT-N66-FL-538 Class 66/5 66538 Freightliner green • RT-N66-GBE-752 Class 66/7 66752 *The Hoosier State*, GBRf blue/orange
◆ **PRICE** £159.95 (DCC-ready), £254.95 (DCC sound) ◆ **AVAILABILITY** Revolution Trains stockists **Web** *www.revolutiontrains.com*

If my circle of ‘N’ gauge modelling friends is anything to go by, Revolution’s Class 66 has been one of the most eagerly awaited models in this scale, certainly over the past year or two. Initially expected to arrive earlier last year, the first production run came to fruition in December.

As befitting such a sizeable fleet, constructed over a long period, Revolution’s tooling covers each of the various sub-classes, with all of the key detail differences observed, including low-emission variants, plus smaller variations such as light clusters, valances, cab-side windows, the provision of mirrors where appropriate, and even different cab interiors.

Also matching the real thing, a colourful array of liveries is on offer, from EWS maroon/gold, DB red, Freightliner green and W&G orange, DRS blue and multiple iterations of GB Railfreight’s house colours. All models are available in DCC-ready or DCC sound-fitted format, although all come pre-fitted with speakers, located in the underfloor fuel tank.

Presented in Revolution’s usual high-quality, foam-lined packaging, the ‘66s’ come supplied with one super-detailed end, complete with a full valance, cosmetic scale coupling and brake hoses installed, while the opposite end features a partial valance and a standard ‘N’ gauge coupler. However, a detail bag provides spare parts to allow both ends to be detailed or equipped with operable standard couplers (the pre-installed parts are easy to remove).

These are hugely impressive models, not least in visual terms, as the overall level of detail and finesse is fantastic. They capture the look and proportions of the prototype perfectly, especially the all-important ‘face’, with subtle yet crisp definition to the various panel lines. Super-fine wire handrails are impeccably installed along with other tiny details, including wipers and lamp brackets. The roof and side grilles are adorned with finely etched metal parts, with a convincing suggestion of the cooler group equipment visible behind. The exhaust components, complete with a hollow, painted outlet, really look the part.

Below the footplate, the side frames are festooned with sanding gear, pipework and conduit detail, being a mix of moulded and separately fitted parts. The bogies are similarly appointed, with handbrake operating chains a real highlight. The fuel tanks and battery boxes feature glimpses of daylight between them and the underside of the chassis, as in real life, which is a bonus.

The modular bodywork of the Class 66 has been harnessed to allow for easy access to the ESU

E24 Nano DCC interface, with the engine room section being a simple clip fit. It's a discreet solution, released with a fingernail and, provided the body cover is clipped back into place correctly, there are no unsightly gaps around the panel.

The removable cover also gives access to a bank of slide switches to allow analogue users the chance to customise the various exterior and interior lighting functions. For those running on DCC, however, a greater array of lighting options is available, including shunting, parked and emergency flashing settings.

The heavy, die-cast metal chassis block houses a centrally mounted motor with twin flywheels and cardan shafts, sending power to all six axles. Track current is collected via the axle bearings, so there are no fiddly wiper contacts to maintain, while access ports are moulded into the bogie frames to make periodic lubrication of the gears easy.

After the recommended running-in period, both our samples performed supremely well, offering smooth acceleration, reliable slow-speed running and ample haulage power.

Decoration and build quality are first class, with each livery well observed and the colours crisply separated. The printed nameplates on 66752 are not easy to read, given the corrugated sides – an issue with '66s' in all scales – but a set of superior etched 'plates is provided for customer fitment.

Arguably the best '66' to be offered in 2mm scale thus far, Revolution's models have certainly been worth the wait. By all accounts, they're selling well, too. With Dapol's all-new Class 66 still to arrive, it'll be interesting to compare the two offerings. And with Bachmann having re-tooled its 'OO' version, will a new Farish '66' be on the cards?

Having been the go-to freight mover on Britain's railways for over 20 years, and with no sign of its dominance ending anytime soon, the Class 66 is an essential addition to any post-2000 layout, so it's great for 'N' gauge modellers to have plenty of choice. Priced well and finished to a very high standard. Revolution's version will be a hard act to follow. ***(GD)***

VITAL STATISTICS: REVOLUTION TRAINS CLASS 66

OVERVIEW

Manufacturer: Revolution Trains
Ref. Nos • RT-N66-FL-538 • RT-N66-GBE-752
Unit No. 66538, 66752
Scale/gauge: 1:148 scale, 'N' gauge
Body: Plastic with metal parts
Chassis: Metal with plastic parts
Weight: 104g
Min. curve radius: 263.5mm (second radius)
Wheel back-to-back: 7.4mm

DIMENSIONS	PROTOTYPE	1:148 SCALE	MODEL
Length (over buffers)	70ft 0½in	144.2mm	144.4mm
Height	12ft 10in	26.4mm	26.8mm
Width	8ft 8¼in	17.9mm	18.2mm
Wheel diameter	3ft 6in	7.2mm	7mm
Bogie wheelbase	13ft 7in	28mm	28mm

SERVICING

How to dismantle: Body unclips from chassis.
Where to oil: Gears and axles – see instructions.

ELECTRICS

Electrical system: 12V DC two-rail
Motor type: Coreless
Lights: Directional head/tail lamps, cab interiors
DCC-ready? E24 Nano socket, pre-fitted speaker

MECHANISM

Drive system: Motor drives all six axles via cardan shafts and gears
Flywheel(s): Two
Traction tyres: No

3 things we like

1 The easy lift-off body panel gives access to DCC socket.

2 Etched metal grilles, with convincing detail behind.

3 Bogies and sideframes boast a high standard of detailing.

SUMMARY

PROS
- Really looks the part.
- Impressive level of detail.
- Top-class fit and finish.
- Performance.

CONS
- Not a lot.

FINAL VERDICT

A supreme '66'.

“The cab windscreen panels are formed as separate components in clear plastic, with the frames painted to match the surrounding bodywork”

Hornby ‘TT:120’ BR Class 37

◆ **GAUGE** ‘TT:120’ ◆ **MODEL** Hornby TT3037TXSM BR Class 37/7, 37704 EWS red/gold ◆ **PRICE** £159.99 (DCC-ready), £214.99 (DCC sound)
◆ **AVAILABILITY** Hornby stockists **Web** *www.hornby.com*

Hornby has already furnished us with the BR Class 08 and 50 diesels, plus the ubiquitous Class 66, but this latest addition to the ‘TT:120’ stable is sure to broaden the appeal of this scale. The Class 37 is one of the most successful of British Railways diesel locomotive types, launched during the late steam era and still in frontline use today.

A handful of variants have been produced, encompassing the original ‘37/0’ and refurbished ‘37/4’ and ‘37/7’ sub-classes (see page 12). First to arrive at *Model Rail* HQ is ‘Heavyweight’ 37704, which was rebuilt from 37034 in the mid-1980s for heavy freight duties, lasting in service with EWS until 2003.

Hornby’s design team have developed this ‘TT:120’ model from scratch and, as a result, it’s a much more accurate and authentic-looking ‘37’ than those offered by the manufacturer in ‘OO’ over the years. All scale dimensions are spot on, and the overall character of the real thing has been captured extremely well, even down to the usually troublesome cab windscreen and body profiles.

The plastic bodyshell boasts an excellent array of subtle, yet well-defined moulded details, enhanced by a finely etched radiator roof grille. The cab windscreen panels are formed as separate components in clear plastic, with the frames painted to match the surrounding bodywork. This innovative approach ensures the window frames are not overly bulky. All glazing panels are crystal clear, and I found myself mightily impressed by the tiny individual windscreen wipers.

A set of fine wire handrails adorn the cab doorways, and the noses are enhanced by separately installed lamp brackets, plus nicely rendered sandbox fillers and marker light units. The bodyside grilles include sharp louvre detail, and the exhaust port interiors are recessed and painted black to exaggerate their depth.

The underframe is equally impressive, the bogie frames especially, with the brake gear in line with the elegantly profiled wheels. Handbrake chain brackets are fixed to the chassis block, and the fuel tanks are equipped with filler and drain cocks, plus printed gauge dials.

A heavy die-cast metal chassis block provides heft, inside which is mounted a powerful motor with dual flywheels, with the drive transmitted to all six axles via cardan shafts and gears. Power is collected from all wheels via the brass inner axle bearings, and small access holes are provided in the bogie base plates to allow the gears to be lubricated without disassembly.

The main circuit board houses a Next18 DCC interface, with our DCC sound-fitted sample featuring a Bluetooth-enabled HM7000 chip along with a 15mm by 12mm speaker set within a generous sound enclosure. The sound files are convincing, with

22.5mm

157mm

32.5mm

VITAL STATISTICS: HORNBY 'TT:120' BR CLASS 37

OVERVIEW

Manufacturer: Hornby
Ref. No. TT3037TXSM
Unit No. 37704
Scale/gauge: 1:120 scale, 'TT' gauge
Body: Plastic with metal parts
Chassis: Metal with plastic parts
Weight: 175g
Min. curve radius: 310mm (second radius)
Wheel back-to-back: 10.2mm

DIMENSIONS	PROTOTYPE	1:120 SCALE	MODEL
Length (over buffers)	61ft 6in	156mm	157mm
Height	12ft 9½in	32.5mm	32.5mm
Width	8ft 10in	22.4mm	22.5mm
Wheel diameter	3ft 9in	9.5mm	9mm
Bogie wheelbase	13ft 6in	34mm	34mm

SERVICING

How to dismantle: Body unclips from chassis.
Where to oil: Gears and axles – see instructions.

ELECTRICS

Electrical system: 12V DC two-rail
Motor type: Five-pole, skew-wound
Lights: Directional head/tail lamps, cab interiors
DCC-ready? Next18 socket

MECHANISM

Drive system: Motor drives all six axles via cardan shafts and gears
Flywheel(s): Two
Traction tyres: No

the speaker producing some classic – and surprisingly beefy – Class 37 tones.

The detailed cab interiors sport separately installed seats, and it will be a simple task for modellers to add a crew and pick out the control and bulkhead detail with appropriate paints. Indeed, a special plastic tool is provided that makes removal of the clip-fit bodyshell easy, which is a fantastic idea – bravo Hornby! Just remember to free the jumper cables at each end beforehand, or they'll get snagged on the buffers as the body is lifted away.

On the test track, the '37' performed impressively, with the mechanism working quietly and smoothly, with plenty of power on tap. A ten-car rake of Mk 1s and Mk 2s was hauled with ease. The lighting package is effective, including the cab interior LEDs.

A set of standard 'TT' couplers is installed in NEM pockets, mounted in sprung, close-coupling units, but they're easy to unclip if you wish to upgrade them or to install the supplied bufferbeam detail (which is comprehensive).

Livery application is first class, with clean separation of the livery elements and finely printed information and warning panels.

With BR green, Rail blue and 'large logo' blue '37s' also due from Hornby, it's great to have a long-lived BR diesel available in this scale, and Hornby's existing MGR hoppers and Mk 1 and Mk 2 coaches are ideal loads.

Let's hope for more classic BR diesels in future! ***(GD)***

3 things we like

1 Special tool provided to ease body removal.

2 Cab windscreen area looks really good.

3 Etched radiator roof grille and fan detail below.

SUMMARY

PROS

- Captures looks and character of prototype.
- Excellent level of detail.
- Performance.
- Iconic, versatile prototype.

CONS

- Not a lot.

FINAL VERDICT

Fabulous!

Heljan BR Class 28

◆ **GAUGE** 'OO' ◆ **MODEL** Heljan 28053 BR Type 2/Class 28 Co-Bo D5701, BR Rail blue ◆ **PRICE** £199.95 (DCC-ready), £329.95 DCC sound
◆ **AVAILABILITY** Rails of Sheffield **Web** *www.railsofsheffield.com*

Commissioned originally in 2011 by erstwhile Liverpool retailer Hattons, Heljan's 'OO' gauge Metropolitan Vickers Type 2 'Co-Bo' has received several welcome upgrades and is now available exclusively from Rails of Sheffield.

Five different versions have been produced in this new batch, offering plain BR green, green with small yellow ends (in pristine or factory-weathered condition), green with full yellow ends and, as seen here, BR Rail blue.

One of the most notable enhancements over earlier production batches concerns the livery application, with a tangible uplift in quality. On this sample, the Rail blue sports a deep lustre and pleasing semi-satin sheen, with razor-sharp separation against the yellow ends. The yellow presents a matching sheen, so there's no discrepancy, and the colour is fully opaque, even around all the nose-end details, without clogging any of the relief.

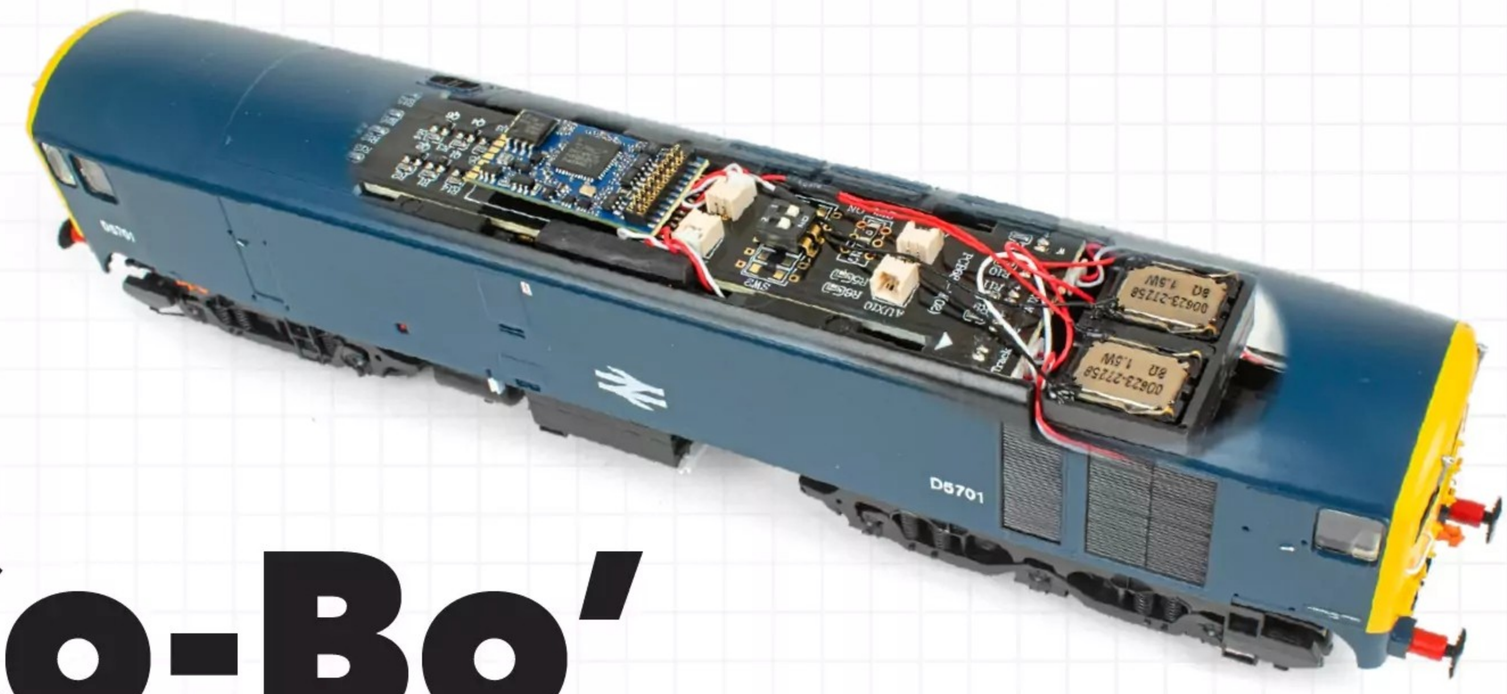
The white BR logos and loco numbers, plus the overhead line warning stickers, are also applied to a high standard. The separately installed electrical conduit and air brake plumbing along the lower bodysides is neat and tidy, and the cab front handrails are correctly (for D5701) picked out in white.

The side ventilation louvres and grilles are painted black, as is the radiator fan, visible below the fine etched metal mesh. The rubber grommets around the windscreen glazing panels are also rendered in black, which is faultlessly executed.

It's a couple of years since I last tinkered with a Heljan 'Co-Bo', so I can't recall whether the cab interiors featured painted controls on the driver's console, but that is the case here.

The other key upgrade to Heljan's tooling is hidden inside the model, with a change from

> **“One of the most notable enhancements over earlier production batches concerns the livery application, with a tangible uplift in quality”**



‘Co-Bo’

a fairly basic (by today’s standards) 8-pin DCC socket to a 21-pin interface, offering greater flexibility to the various lighting functions, but also in terms of digital sound. Indeed, DCC sound-fitted models are offered in the range for the first time, featuring an ESU LokSound V5 decoder and twin-speaker set-up, with the sound project developed by Olivia’s Trains.

Otherwise, the mechanics of the model are unchanged from previous releases, with Heljan’s trusty five-pole motor and gear arrangement providing smooth, quiet running and plenty of power.

Our sample, following the prescribed running-in period, performed admirably under test, with the various sound functions capturing the loco’s character well. The twin speaker arrangement works well, and some of the ‘bonus’ sound files, such as the clacking of rails, are a nice addition to the various brake, flange squeal and compressor noises.

Packaged in attractive foam-lined boxes, a plastic bag provides a bumper array of customer-fit detail parts, including cab door handrails, bufferbeam hoses, dummy screw couplings, air horns, headcode discs, plus a pair of slimline tension lock couplers. As our sample was on loan from Rails of Sheffield, we were unable to fit all these parts, but they look simple to install.

It’s great to see the Metro-Vick ‘Co-Bo’ make a return, especially with these various upgrades. The first-class paint finish alone would be enough to get excited about, but the enhanced DCC functionality brings this distinctive model right up to date. ***(GD)***

3 things we like

1 Overall paint finish is superb.

2 Separately installed conduit and pipework.

3 Neatly picked-out grilles and printed Metro-Vick builder’s plates.

SUMMARY

PROS
- Superb finish.
- Welcome DCC upgrade.
- Sound-fitted versions now available.
- Characterful prototype.
- Excellent performance.

CONS
- Not a lot.

FINAL VERDICT

Great to see Ol’ Sad Eyes return.

“The level of detail on each wagon is impressive, with excellent definition to the moulded planks and brackets on the bodyshells, both externally and internally”

Accurascale BR ‘Clayhoods’

◆ **GAUGE** ‘OO’ ◆ **MODEL** Accurascale • ACC3079 13t Clay opens, BR grey • ACC3085 BR 13t ‘Clayhoods’ BR bauxite ◆ **PRICE** £89.95 per triple-pack
◆ **AVAILABILITY** Accurascale stockists **Web** *www.accurascale.com*

As the GWR’s twin-axle china clay open wagons approached the end of their lives, British Railways built almost 900 replacements between 1954 and 1960. Due to the loading and unloading infrastructure already in place within Devon and Cornwall, BR’s new 13t wagons followed a similar design to the GWR vehicles, continuing the use of a 9ft wheelbase chassis and overall body dimensions.

That said, some updates were made during the career of the BR wagons, which operated into the late 1980s. Most received vacuum brakes and, eventually, roller bearings. But the most notable change was the shift from traditional flat tarpaulins to a distinctive ‘tent’-style cover, hoisted over a raised longitudinal bar. This arrangement promoted more effective run-off of rainwater (thus affording the sensitive cargo greater protection), as well as leading to the nickname of ‘Clayhoods’ being coined.

Despite being limited to certain geographic areas, china clay has been an enduringly popular cargo for modellers to try and recreate in miniature. While most operations were concentrated in the South West of England, long-haul flows did operate for many years to the Staffordshire Potteries and even up into Scotland, serving the ceramic and paper industries.

While RTR models already exist in ‘OO’, Bachmann’s model has been around for many decades, and now looks rather dated, especially the bulky underframe and fabric covers. Accurascale’s new range affords a choice of flat or ‘tent’ tarpaulin types, with the former available in original unfitted or vacuum-braked condition, while various small detail differences have been incorporated, including oil or roller axle bearings.

In fact, 12 different triple-packs make up this initial production run, offering 36 individually numbered wagons with myriad decoration quirks to match real prototypes across the working lives of each type, including pre- and post-TOPS era markings. Under review here is a set of un-fitted clay opens in BR grey with dark grey covers, plus a trio of vacuum-fitted UCVs, complete with pale blue hoods decorated with small English China Clay logos.

The level of detail on each wagon is impressive, with excellent definition to the moulded planks and brackets on the bodyshells, both externally and internally. Small wire handrails are installed on the end doors, which also feature a good representation of the lateral hinge rods.

The moulded plastic covers are removable, being a simple push fit, and the various creases and undulations – plus the overall sheen – make for a convincing appearance. Varying shades of blue are employed on the ECC hoods, reflecting the fading seen on the real things. The longitudinal bars are formed from stiff metal wire.

The underframes are equally well appointed, with the cast metal floor and solebar casting being adorned with plastic axleguards and an excellent array of brake details, wire safety loops, plus door bump stops, sprung buffers and lamp brackets. The fine-profile metal wheels turn within brass pinpoint axle bearings and are extremely free-running as a result.

There's a healthy amount of weight to these wagons (45g each), thanks to the metal chassis frame and a set of slimline tension locks is installed into pivoting NEM coupler pockets. Optional three-link and Instanter couplings are supplied, where appropriate.

All six samples showed a high level of finish and build quality, although a couple of the brake lever brackets had come adrift and required re-glueing. Performance was also first class.

Having spent countless hours improving most of my Bachmann 'Clayhoods' with kit-built chassis and homemade tarpaulins, it's great to now have a viable alternative with all the desired detail straight from the box. The extra detail variations by Accurascale are a further attraction.

Enterprising modellers may be tempted to enhance the moulded plastic hoods with securing straps, and a weathered finish is de rigueur for all china clay stock, so modellers can have some fun with pigments and dry-brushing. I can't wait to get to work on these! ***(GD)***

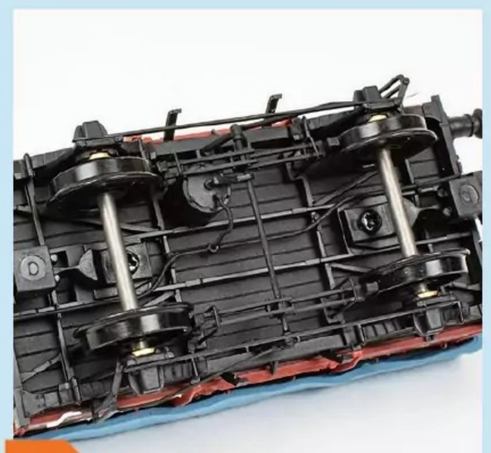
3 things we like

1

The various moulded covers really look the part.

2

There's sharp detail relief to the exterior and interior.



3

Fully detailed underframes and brass axle bearings.

SUMMARY

PROS

- Looks and accuracy.
- Realistic covers.
- Smooth runners.
- Impressive detail and finish.

CONS

- A few loose parts.

FINAL VERDICT

Terrific.

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LMS/BR CLASS 11 0-6-0DE

CHOOSE FROM 15 VERSIONS

00 GAUGE

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Our exclusive model has been several years in the making and is based on exhaustive research by the *Model Rail* and Heljan teams, along with detailed measurements of preserved locomotives.

To reflect the long and varied careers of the real Class 11s, we've produced 15 different versions, each limited to just 300 pieces. The tooling has been carefully designed to allow several key variations to be observed across LMS, War Department and British Railways locomotives, while the handful of Western Region locomotives built at Swindon have also been included.

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

MR-503 LMS 7120, pre-war black

MR-501
War Department 70271, olive green

MR-504 LMS 7128, post-war black

MR-505 BR 12043, black, BRITISH RAILWAYS lettering

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

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-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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'16XX' 0-6-0PT

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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

£149.00

£134.10 price for *Model Rail* subscribers

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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Specification list

Made by: Heljan

Motor: Five pole

DCC socket: 21pin

Features: • Working head/tail and interior lights • NEM coupler pockets • optional snowploughs, air horn covers and footsteps.

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£189.00 price for *Model Rail* subscribers

Ruston 'PWM' 0-6-0DE

CHOOSE FROM EIGHT VERSIONS

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

£152.10 price for *Model Rail* subscribers

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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£89.10 price for *Model Rail* subscribers

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LNER ‘J70’ 00 GAUGE

Specification list

Made by: Rapido Trains

Motor: Coreless

DCC socket: Six-pin

Features:

- NEM coupler pockets
- Space for speaker
- Removable cowcatchers
- Etched worksplates

£127.50

£114.75 price for *Model Rail* subscribers

JUST ONE VERSION LEFT!

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

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‘USA’ 0-6-0T 00 GAUGE

MR-107
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£112.46 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

ONE VERSION LEFT!

MR-107 No. 36, National Coal Board black

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- 4820 Class 48, D1702 BR two-tone green, small warning panels
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- 4822 Class 48, D1706 BR two-tone green, full warning panels
- 4823 Class 48, D1703 BR two-tone green, full warning panels, weathered

Specification list

Made by: Heljan

Motor: Five-pole

DCC socket: 21pin

Features: • NEM coupler pockets • directional and interior lighting • sprung buffers • speaker mounts • includes optional snowploughs

£230

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*** Weathered versions £245.00** (Subscribers' price £220.50)

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DCC socket: 21pin

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Chris Nevard starts building a miniature stone dwelling, sharing a host of handy tips and tricks.

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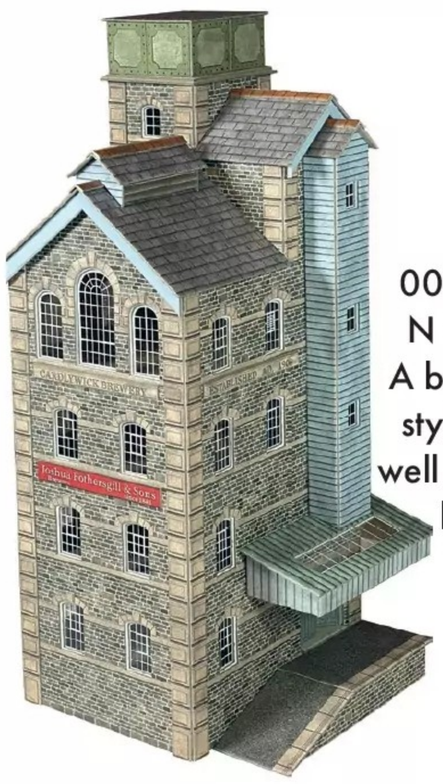

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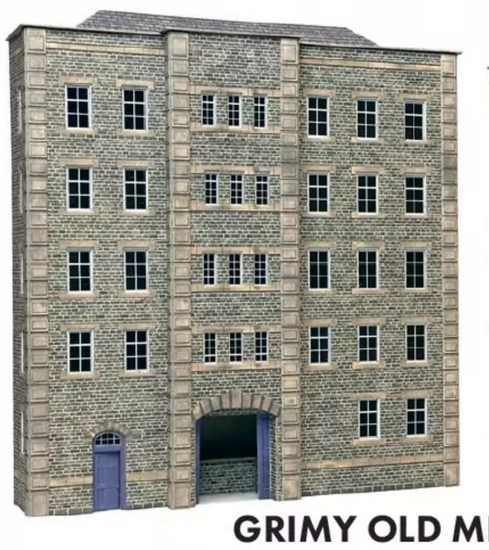

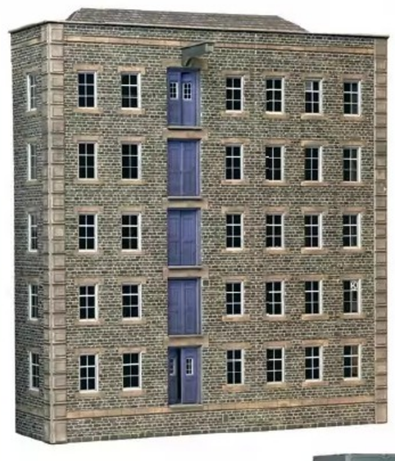

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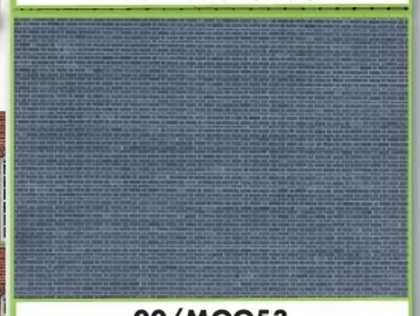

00/MO053
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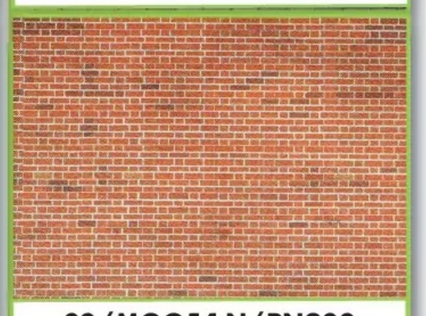

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00 & N TARMAC

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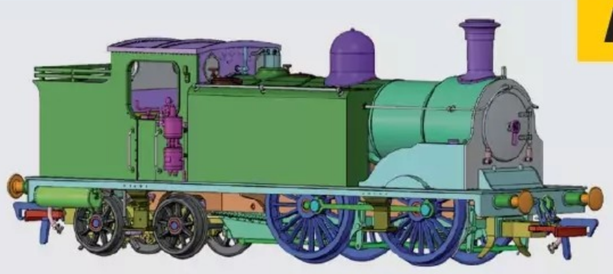

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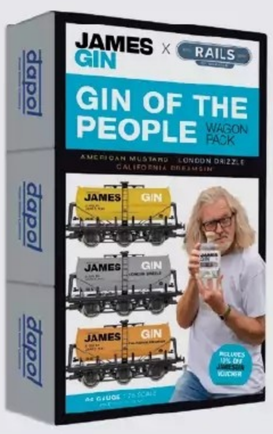

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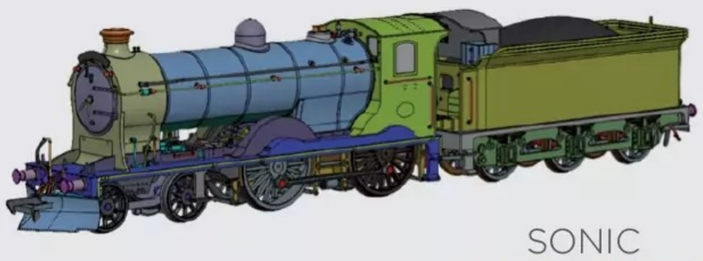

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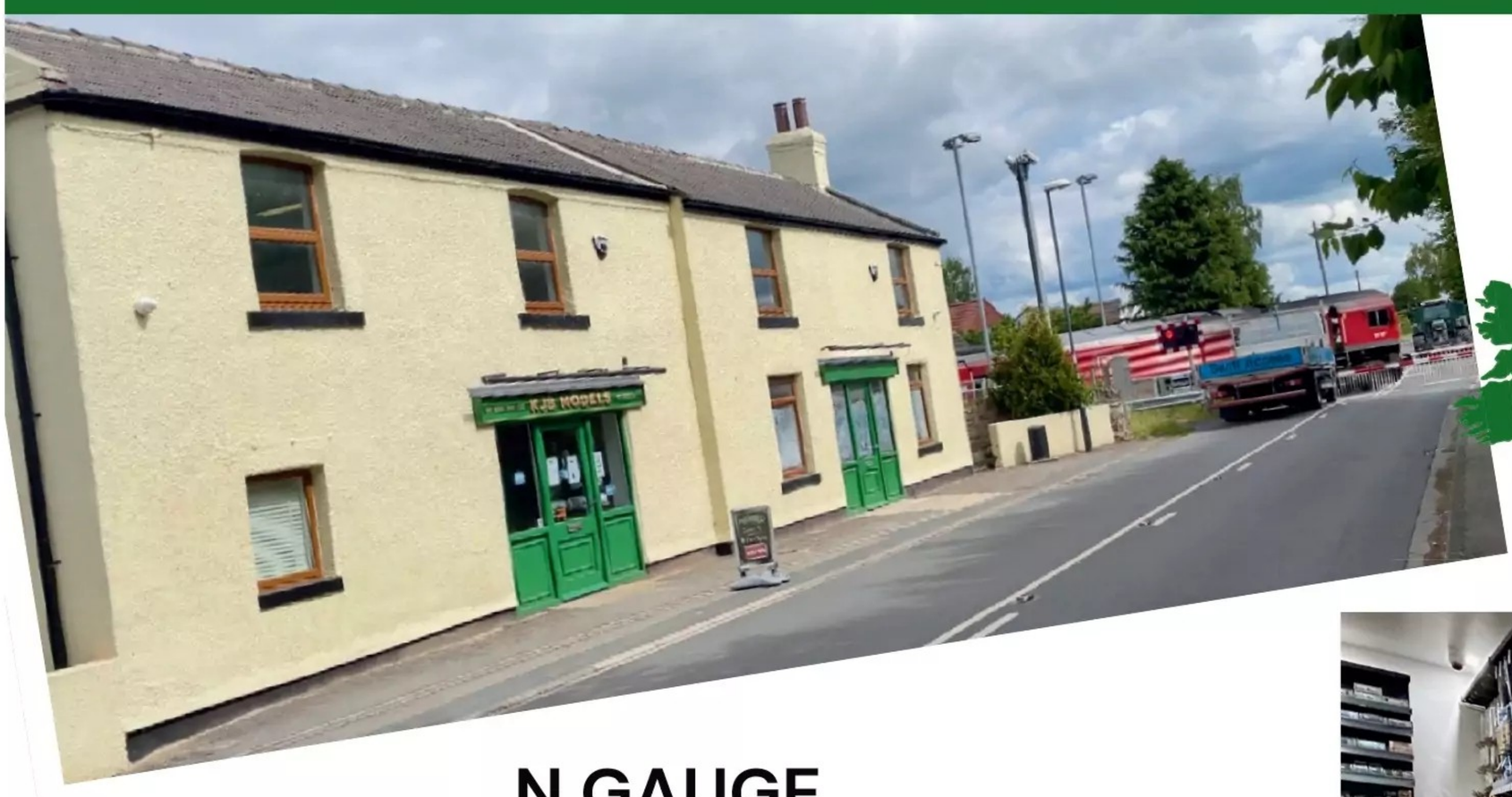

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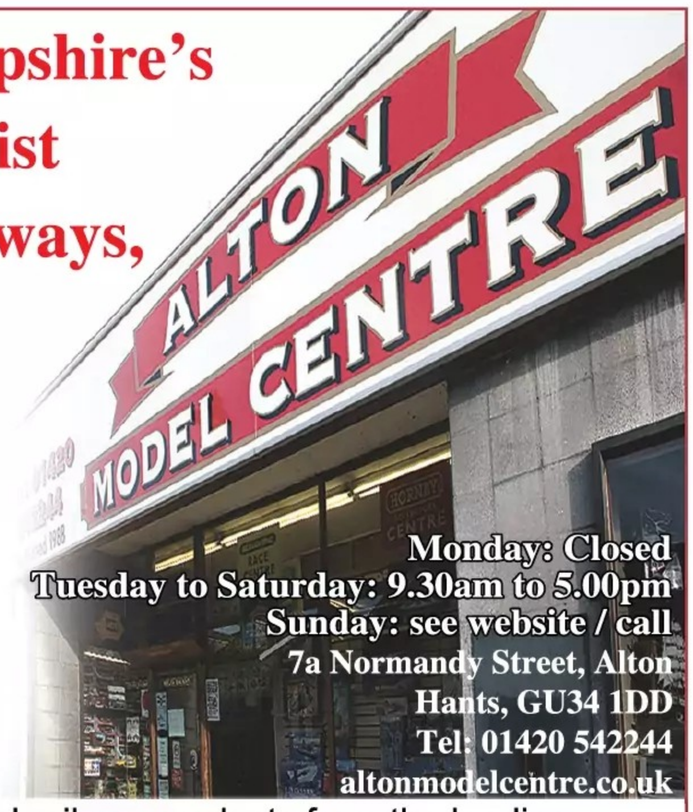

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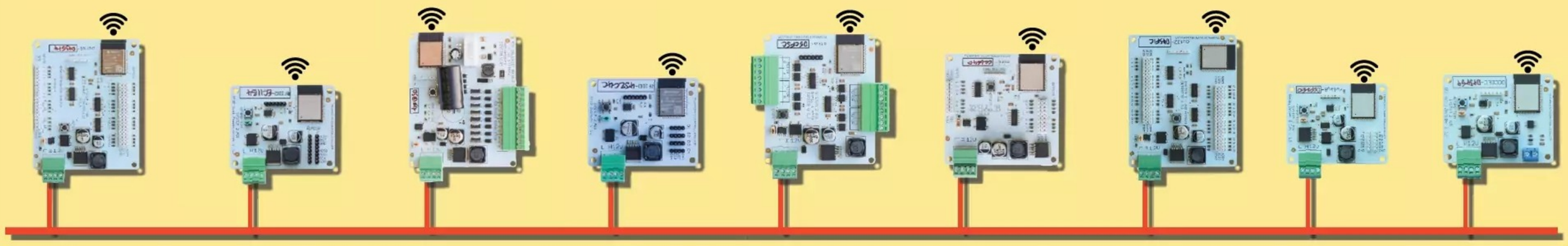

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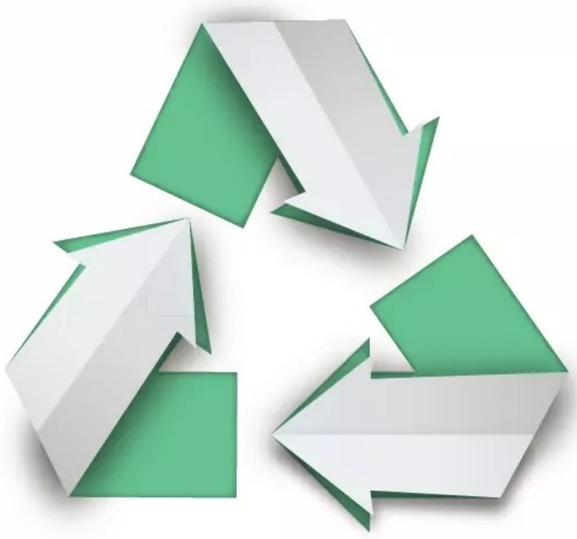

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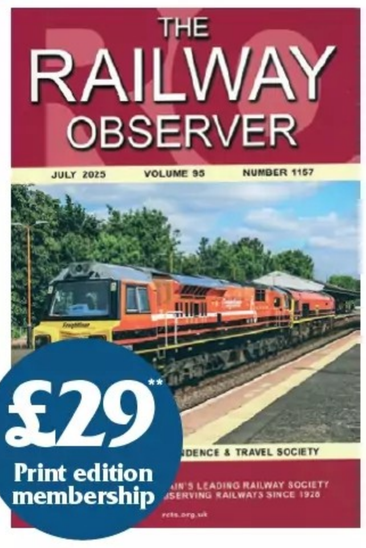

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Backscene

Chris Leigh ponders whether a bus on a bridge is a railway modelling cliché, or a useful scenic device to fix the location and period of the layout.

There was a time when we, the *Model Rail* editorial team, used to scan Chris Nevard's layout pictures for the seemingly obligatory 'bus on a bridge picture.' It wasn't that Chris staged such pictures deliberately. It was simply a common 'device', often used to make a bridge, used as a scenic break, less obvious.

I recall, as a teenage modeller, being annoyed that the Dinky Toys double-decker bus, one of the few Dinkies that was approximately to 4mm:1ft scale, did not represent the London Transport double-deckers. However, when I started to model real locations, I chose Much Wenlock in the West Midlands and for that I would need a particular type of bus.

My brother and I went there by train (to Wellington) and bus, changing at the evocatively named Tontine in Ironbridge. The buses were like nothing we 'Londoners' had ever seen – long single-deckers with a strange-shaped grille, which my mother described as a 'scowl.' In time, we learned that Midland Red had its own unique bus designs, and if common LT vehicles were not available in model form, then Midland Red's oddballs certainly weren't going to be. Sixty years on, that is still true.

Determined not to be beaten, I set about making my own Midland Red buses from Plastikard. I used the models on a diorama,

If I recall correctly, my first Midland Red bus models were an S-9 and an S-14, seen here on the demolition diorama. CHRIS LEIGH

which was one of the first models I built for *Model Railway Constructor* around the same time. It was a demolition scene based around parts of a Superquick Elizabethan shops kit. Our boss told me that I couldn't demolish an Elizabethan building, so I had to try and disguise its origin.

I still have one photograph that I took of that scene, and I still have those buses. There can be few better ways to confirm the location of one's layout than some regional-coloured station signs and the local operator's bus standing on the station forecourt. It doesn't need to be on a bridge!

Since then, I have collected models of LT 'country' buses as they are what I remember from my youth – green RT, RF, GS and RLHs. I use them to fix the location of my main station firmly in the outer London countryside. If I want to change the location to, say, deeper Surrey, I have an Aldershot & District Dennis Loline, or for the West of England, a Western National Bristol or two.

I also collect MacBrayne's vehicles, just because I like the Scottish company's livery, though I've yet to build a Scottish layout.

The four Midland Red buses made from Plastikard when I was a teenager, D-9, S-17, S-14 and S-9, I think. CHRIS LEIGH

Midland Red S-14s 'scowl' outside the Tontine at Ironbridge on the occasion of our research trip to Much Wenlock in 1967. CHRIS LEIGH

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