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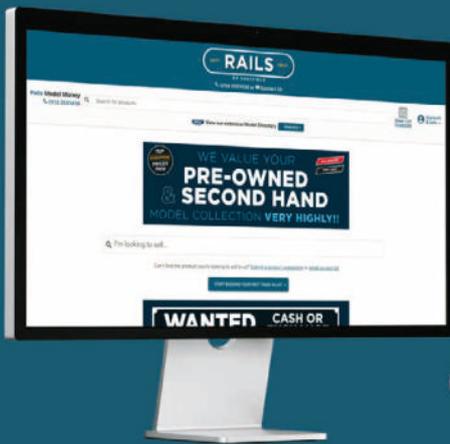
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This month's cover image



Alistair Stripp's 'Beachdale' was born out of youthful memories of the Scottish Highlands line during the BR blue era. Turn to page 28 for the full story. CHRIS NEVARD

Welcome

All of the layouts featured in *Model Rail* over the years have been inspirational, for many different reasons. Maybe one will feature an innovative fiddleyard arrangement, or another will have captured a feel for a particular location. The latter is particularly true of 'Beachdale', a Scottish Highland-themed creation that harks back to those glorious days of Class 26s and 37s.

One of my biggest regrets is that I was never able to travel to Mallaig or Kyle of Localsh during that period, but such is the joy of model railways – we can create the next best thing!

Another layout featured in this issue is a sobering depiction of the London Blitz, which had me thinking about the role of models in telling important stories. Indeed, many museums still rely on scale models to portray visual information, and this is a subject we'll expand upon in next month's issue.

The social aspect of modelling is a fascinating subject too and, despite seemingly infinite online resources, traditional model railway clubs still play an important role. They remain a major source of exhibition layouts for the national circuit, offer members the chance to work on a diverse range of projects and allow for a pooling of resources and expertise. And they can be a great place to visit for a cuppa and a natter too!

Our recent visit to Merseyside MRS confirmed all of this – read about it on page 66. Readers can still vote in our Model of the Year Awards, until midnight on February 20. So, if you haven't already nominated your favourite models, manufacturers and retailers from 2025, this is your last chance. Over £3,000 worth of



There's beauty in the mundane... The humble Class 153 is the subject of this month's Masterclass, and George has given his Heljan model a few finishing touches.

models are up for grabs, with free entry into the prize draw for anyone who votes.

Voting is open to all, so head along to www.model-rail.co.uk to have your say.

Happy modelling!

George Dent Head of Content

This month's contributors



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.

Model Rail essential information

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A: Check out the online index, kindly provided by UK Model Shops, at www.ukmodelshops.co.uk/other/modelrail.html

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- EFE Rail Isle of Wight coach set



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Workbench

**52** Build a country cottage**52** Build a country cottage
- from a plastic kit

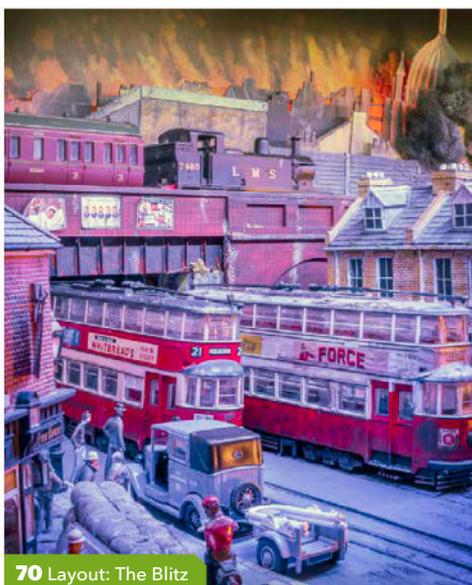
In the first instalment of a two-part feature, Chris Nevard talks us through how he got the best from a venerable Wills kit of an idyllic rural dwelling.

56 Modify a Heljan Class 47

Adding a bit of variety to a fleet of similar locomotives makes life more interesting. Dave Lowery explains how he replicated a key late BR-era modification to a Railfreight Brush Type 4.

60 Bring an industrial locomotive to life

Plucked from a display shelf, an Andrew Barclay O-4-OST is brought to life at the hands of Chris Nevard.

**56** Modify a Heljan Class 47**60** Bring an industrial locomotive to life**70** Layout: The Blitz

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**98**

Opening the box

The latest happenings from the world of model railways

The Big Picture

Although 'Addleford Green' is a fictional station, Jonathan Ramsden's gorgeous 'OO' layout is based heavily on the Hawkhurst Branch, with a host of scratchbuilt structures and amazing attention to detail. The scenic area may only be 5ft long, but it's easy to immerse yourself in the delightful Kent countryside. Look out for the full story behind this layout in a future issue of *Model Rail*.

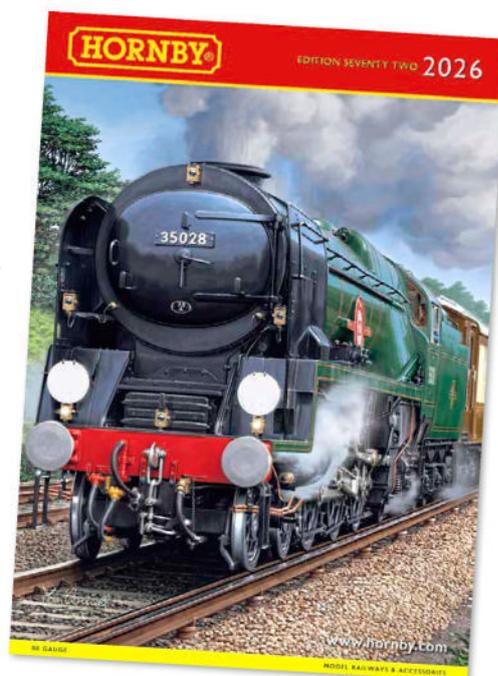
Photography:
CHRIS NEVARD







'MERCHANT NAVY' LEADS HORNBY PLANS FOR 2026



The striking image on the cover of Hornby's 2026 catalogue previews the headline addition to the manufacturer's 'OO' gauge range, with the rebuilt Bulleid 'Merchant Navy' 4-6-2 being completely re-tooled to provide a more refined, authentic model with a thoroughly modern specification.

The tooling suite caters for multiple detail variations and tender types, including a rendition of preserved No. 35028 *Clan Line*

'*Line*'s current tender. Indeed, *Clan Line* forms the first release of the 'Merchant Navy', in its post-BR guise, available in DCC-ready and DCC sound format (featuring a HM7000 decoder), the latter also featuring a steam generator unit.

All models will feature working head lamps, firebox glow and even cab interior illumination.

More versions are likely to be revealed, with Hornby scheduling more announcements throughout the year.

Model: R30490 'Merchant Navy' No. 35028

Clan Line, BR green (preserved)

Price: £249.99 (DCC-ready), £329.99 (DCC sound/steam generator)

When's it due? Early 2027

Web: www.hornby.com

'TUG' ADDED TO RAILROAD RANGE

Perhaps one of the biggest surprises of Hornby's 2026 range is the addition of an all-new Class 60 to the affordable RailRoad range. Rather than employ the old Lima tooling or adapt Hornby's existing main range '60', a fully redesigned model is being produced.

Boasting a three-pole motor with flywheel, directional lighting, and an impressive detail specification, a 21-pin DCC interface and speaker mounts will be included. Three versions of the 'Tug' have been announced, encompassing BR, EWS and DB liveries, which are available with and without DCC sound on board.

Models: • R30535 Class 60 60038 *Avesta Polarit*, EWS red/gold • R30536 Class 60 60069

Humphrey Davy, BR Trainload Coal grey • R30537 Class 60 60039 *Dove Holes*, DB red

Price: £104.99 (DCC-ready), £159.99 (DCC sound)
When's it due? Early 2027





HORNBY 2026 MODERN IMAGE HIGHLIGHTS

Hornby now offers a choice of Class 91s to suit different budgets, thanks to the RailRoad range gaining the pre-2020s tooling of the BR electric in InterCity 'Swallow' livery, along with a range of matching Mk 4 coaches and DVT. Similarly, Hornby's 'high-fidelity' version of '91', Mk 4 and DVT are available in LNER's current retro colour scheme. Also for East Coast operations is a new Class 802/3 in Hull Trains livery, plus a new '803' in Lumo blue.

More HST power car packs are also added to the range, including a pairing of East Midlands Railway's 43274 in purple and 43044 in original BR InterCity 125

livery, depicting the last days of HSTs on the Midland Mainline. Virgin Trains' red/grey scheme is also reprised, with a power car set and a fleet of matching Mk 3s available. Hornby's Class 56 makes a welcome return, including an example in 'Dutch' yellow/grey with Transrail logos.

Under the RailRoad banner, more Class 66s appear in up-to-the-minute liveries, along with a colourful array of new Class 37s, 47s, 90s, and a Class 395 'Javelin' train pack (with optional intermediate cars).



HORNBY 2026: STREAKS AMONG STEAM-ERA HIGHLIGHTS

Aside from the all-new 'Merchant Navy', Hornby is also tweaking the tooling of its Gresley 'A4' to present the option of a DCC-controlled steam generator for the first time. Three 'A4s' are added to the range this year, with *Mallard* appearing in the Hornby-Dublo range (with die-cast metal body), while *Seagull* and *Sir Nigel Gresley* are added to the main range, the latter as part of a limited-edition Great Railway Engineers Collection, along with LMS streamlined 'Coronation' No. 6220.

DCC sound and steam generator-fitted 'A4' *Sir Nigel Gresley*

is also offered in a prestige 'Sovereign Pullman' train set, wearing BR blue livery, along with a trio of Pullman cars and a twin oval of track.

An interesting new twin locomotive pack features No. 4071 *Pendennis Castle* and



No. 4472 *Flying Scotsman* as they appeared during their landmark tour of Australia in the 1980s, with the 'Castle' being equipped with its distinctive smokebox-mounted headlamp.

New versions of some existing classics are also in the pipeline, including two new 'Black Fives', 'K1s' and 'B12s', a 'Battle of Britain' in rebuilt form, a BR '9F' and 'Royal Scot' No. 46100 for the One:One Collection. Gresley 'P2' *Mons Meg* is another notable addition, along with GWR 'Castle' No. 5071 *Spitfire*, marking the 90th

anniversary of the famous fighter aircraft.

Additionally, due to customer demand, Stephenson's *Rocket* is also being offered individually, rather than as part of a train pack.

On the rolling stock front, Hornby's LNER articulated 'West Riding Limited' set is a popular addition, following on from the 'Coronation' sets previously released, while a new version of the 'Beavertail' observation car No. 1729 depicts the surviving vehicle in the One:One Collection.

A new version of the Bulleid Tavern Car twin-set, in BR carmine and cream, offers the unique vehicles without the faux public house decoration on the exterior.

ACCURASCALE REVEALS TINSLEY SPECIAL '31'



Accurascale's new batch of Class 31s is due to land in the UK soon, with the impending event prompting a reveal of a future exclusive Brush Type 2, depicting the unique Railfreight Distribution 31160.

Showing some of the typical livery idiosyncrasies of Tinsley depot's handywork, 31160 received the

unofficial name of 'Phoenix', plus oversized TOPS numbers, red bufferbeams and a few other alterations to the 'standard' BR sub-sector scheme during a repaint in 1989.

Although it operated in this guise for only a brief while, it proved an instant hit with

enthusiasts at the time. This limited edition '31' is available to pre-order now, available only via Accurascale's website. **Price:** £184.95 (DCC-ready), £284.95 (DCC sound) **When's it due?** Early 2027 **Web:** www.accurascale.com



In Brief



LAST CHANCE TO CAST YOUR VOTE

We've extended the voting deadline slightly for *Model Rail's* prestigious Model of the Year 2025 awards, until midnight on 20 February. So, if you haven't yet cast your votes for your favourite models, manufacturers and retailers of the past year, head to *Model Rail's* website and have your say.

Voting is completely free and open to all, with everyone taking part automatically entered into a special prize draw, with over £3,000 worth of prizes to be won. **Web:** www.model-rail.co.uk

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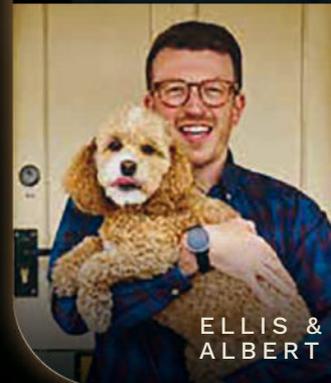
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FULL MARITIME '66' FLEET AVAILABLE NOW!



In an ambitious move, Revolution Trains has teamed up with Rainbow Railways and The Model Centre to produce all seven of DB Cargo's blue Maritime Intermodal-liveried Class 66s in 'N' gauge.

The seven models - 66005 *Maritime Intermodal One*, 66047 *Maritime Intermodal Two*, 66142 *Maritime Intermodal Three*, 66051 *Maritime Intermodal Four*, 66162 *Maritime Intermodal Five*, 66090 *Maritime Intermodal Six* and 66148 *Maritime Intermodal Seven* - are officially licensed by Maritime Transport Ltd, and each



comes supplied with photo-etched nameplates.

Revolution's Mike Hale says: "Our Class 66 models have been very well received by 'N' gauge

modellers so far, but we knew there was significant demand for the stylish blue Maritime

locomotives as they have not been available ready-to-run

before now. We are delighted to be able to team up with Rainbow and TMC to offer these models."

Available now, the models have been produced as part of Revolution's recent '66' project (see review in last month's issue), and each of the Maritime blue specials is available in DCC-ready and DCC sound versions. Also, thanks to Rainbow Railways and TMC's experts, professionally weathered options are also on offer.

Prices: from £169.95 each
Web: www.rainbowrailways.co.uk
www.themodelcentre.com

LEGENDARY BRAKE VAN FROM TMC



In partnership with EFE Rail, The Model Centre has launched a 'OO' gauge model of the North Eastern's landmark Dia. V4 goods brake van, which is being produced with the aid of the North Eastern Railway Association.

First introduced in 1908, the V4 became the NER's standard brake van until the Grouping of 1923. Employing a steel chassis

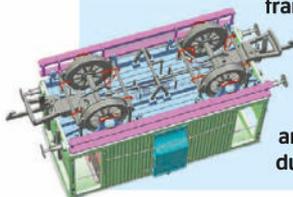
frame and timber body, with twin verandas and side duckets, the

van's design

was developed further by the LNER to produce the ubiquitous 'Toad B'.

TMC's tooling caters for numerous design tweaks, including plank arrangements, lamp bracket and handrail positions, with liveries covering the NER, LNER and BR eras. Offering the ideal partner for Accurascale's new NER P6 and P7 hoppers (see review on page 94), the brake vans are due to arrive later this year, with pre-orders now being taken.

Prices: £45.95 each
Web: www.themodelcentre.com



HORNBY'S SOUTHERN REGION ARRIVALS



Arriving with Hornby stockists during January was an eye-catching SR 'Merchant Navy' 4-6-2, the fourth in a series of special editions to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day in 2025.

Depicting No. 21C9 *Shaw Savill* in wartime black livery with 'sunshine' Southern Railway lettering, the model features a 21-pin DCC interface and Hornby's new clip-together conductive loco-tender coupling (£239.99).

There's a welcome return of SR Maunsell



coaching stock too, with Composite, Brake Third, and Brake Composite vehicle types now available in BR crimson/cream livery (£61.99 each).
Web: www.hornby.com



POWERED WHEEL CLEANERS



We all know the importance of keeping our locomotive wheels clean, to ensure optimum performance, so TMC's new modular Powered Wheel Cleaner should make the task much quicker, easier and safer. Instead of holding delicate models upside down in a foam cradle while rubbing the wheels with swabs and brushes, these new devices allow locomotives to be held upright and require no extra tools or solvents.

Connect the tool to a power source, via screw terminals, and gently hold the locomotive in place as the wheels turn over a bed of metal brushes, which

scrape away dirt and debris. They can be used freestanding or secured to a worktop using the mounting holes.

Options cater for 'N' gauge through to 'O', including various narrow gauge scales, and they're available now in single and multi-packs to cope with anything from small shunters to larger locomotives.

Prices: £22.75-£129.99
Web: www.themodelcentre.com



BRIDGING THE DCC GAP



A boon for 'TT:120' users is this DCC bridge harness that will facilitate Next18 decoders to be installed into E24 sockets. Designed with Heljan's forthcoming 'Deltic' and Class 122 models in mind (see page 14), users will be able to install Hornby's HM7000 Next18 sound decoders into the Heljan models, offering full compatibility with Hornby's app-based DCC control system, which is especially popular with the 'TT:120' community.

TMC's bridge harness offers plug-and-play compatibility, with no soldering required, and multi-packs are available for extra value.

Prices: £15.95 each or £45.57 per triple-pack
Web: www.tmc-direct.co.uk/
TMCbridge



CAVALEX CLASS 47 UPDATE

Progress on Cavalex Models' 'OO' gauge Class 47 continues, with price details released in early January for analogue and DCC sound-equipped versions.

Tooling has been created, with the first mouldings due to be created soon as part of the prototyping stage.

Livery artworks have also progressed for the numerous versions already announced, with the 3D

renders looking very promising, although the Cavalex team are still tweaking some of the finer elements.

Prices: £209.95 (DCC-ready), £309.95 (DCC sound)

Web: www.cavalexmodels.com



ROBINSON 'A5' MOVES ALONG A STEP



Rails of Sheffield unveiled a pair of hand-decorated prototypes of its forthcoming 'N' gauge Robinson 'A5' 4-6-2T, which is being manufactured by Sonic Models. The Great Central and BR liveries give a good idea of how these models will appear in due course, although several tweaks and refinements are to be made to the tooling and livery artworks before production gets under way.

Pre-orders can be made now for a £30 deposit. Delivery is still slated for Q2 2026.

Price: £139.95

Web: www.railsofsheffield.com

A SPECIAL '56' - AVAILABLE IN TWO GUISES



As part of the second production run of its acclaimed Class 56, Cavalex is launching a pair of exclusive versions for Ultimate Model Railways. One depicts 56301 in un-branded Fastline Freight livery, as it appeared across the network during the 2010s on all manner of work. The other model presents the same prototype, albeit in its current guise after regaining its original number of 56045 last year, following a repaint into BR blue (with DC Rail logos).

Both models feature specific features to suit the prototype as it appeared in each guise, and a DCC sound-fitted option is available. Delivery is expected in February/March, and they're available only from Ultimate Model Railways.



Prices: £199.95 (DCC-ready), £299.95 (DCC sound)

Web: www.ultimatemodelrailways.com



RUGBY MAKES A RETURN



Accurascale's PCA cement hoppers return with some welcome re-runs of two popular liveries, including original STS grey, as the wagons appeared new in 1982, which will be handy for inclusion in mixed Speedlink freight services.

Another sought-after livery is also reprised, featuring Rugby Cement branding, which is another key 1980s-era scheme, seen particularly on block trains operating over the Southern Region.

Eight new triple-packs are in development, all keenly priced and available only through Accurascale's website, with multi-buy savings available. Delivery is scheduled for early 2027.

Price: £69.95 per triple-pack
Web: www.accurascale.com



RAPIDO UNVEILS GCR TRIO



Three new wagons have been added to Rapido's 'OO' range, portraying some important Great Central designs that also saw work under the Cheshire Lines Committee, LMS, LNER and BR.

Several hundred Dia. 17B general-purpose vans were built from 1910, with a small number surviving into BR ownership, some of which were converted into mess vans. Much more numerous was the 12ton capacity Dia. 9A six-plank open, with over 2,000 examples being assembled, and the design was perpetuated by the

LNER (to Dia. 9B). The GCR Dia. 6C 10ton three-plank open completes the trio.

Each wagon type shared a common steel-framed chassis design and Rapido's tooling reflects differing axlebox designs and brake gear, plus different doors on the van.

Design work was still being finalised at the time of writing, but pre-orders can be placed now with your preferred stockist.

Price: £32.95-£34.95 each

Web: www.rapidotrains.co.uk



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An enthusiasts favourite Run 2 of our Class 50 locomotive introduces six new prototype identities, including the 'two for the price of one' numbering of 50007, which also wears the number and name of 50034 Furious on one side. With sophisticated lighting modes, Accurathrash speakers, 'powerbank' and designed from scans of the real thing, as well as information from the people who built them, it's a blockbuster model. **Pre-order** direct via [accurascale.com](https://www.accurascale.com), or via your local stockist from just £189.98.



Pre-production samples subject to change

All Class 50 models feature

- High level of detail
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- Details specific to individual prototypes
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- Comprehensive lighting functions
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to view the full range of
Class 50 locomotives
currently available
to order.



ESU

LOK SOUND
EST. 1999

HELJAN 'DELTAIC' TWEAKS

Production of Heljan's highly anticipated 'TT:120' Class 55 'Deltics' was due to get under way as this issue closed for press, after some last-minute tweaks to the tooling and artwork following the arrival of decorated samples. Expected to arrive with stockists later this year, they will follow the 'TT:120' Class 122 railcars, which are already being assembled, with delivery slated for late spring.

On the 'OO' gauge front, the impressive LNER Beyer-Garratt 'U1' also went into production at



the start of the year and should be available in May. Production of the Class 42 'Warship' and original 'Peak' Class 44 is well under way too. **Web:** www.heljan.co.uk



DAPOL INITIATIVE DOES IT BY THE BOOK



Dapol has teamed up with Browsers Bookshop in Porthmadog and well-known transport specialists Booklaw Publications to champion independent booksellers and publishers. A range of special wagons has been

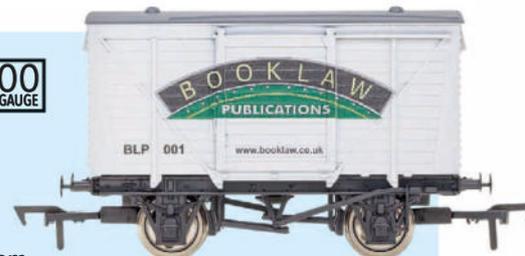
commissioned, with proceeds going to support the World Book Day charity, which encourages children and young people to read for fun.

Today, only one in three children enjoys reading but World Book Day, which takes place on March 5, aims to inspire youngsters to see it as an enjoyable and social activity.

Wagons will feature the logo of World Book Day, Browsers Book Shop and Booklaw, with a choice of

vans and 'Conflats' with branded containers available in 'OO' and 'O' gauge. Models are due to arrive in March and can be purchased from your local Dapol stockist.

Price: £15.20-£78.20 each
Web: www.dapol.co.uk



In Brief

ALMOST TIME FOR GARDEN RAIL SHOW

The UK's premier garden railway exhibition returns to the Warwickshire Event Centre on Saturday, February 28 and Sunday, March 1 2026.

The Midlands Garden Rail show offers a unique opportunity to explore an impressive range of larger scale layouts, in 'O' gauge, Gauge 1, 'G' Scale, and more.

Over 15 layouts, clubs, and societies will be in attendance, plus a host of specialist suppliers, offering expert advice and guidance.

When is it? Saturday February 28 and Sunday March 1 2026

Where is it? Warwickshire Event Centre, Nr Leamington Spa, CV31 1XN

Web: www.midlandsgardenrailshow.co.uk

TWO CENTURIES OF WONDER

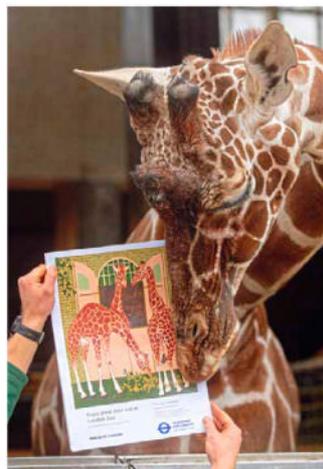
Last year marked 200 years of the modern railway, and 2026 is the bicentenary of ZSL, the charity behind London Zoo, an anniversary being recognised by London Transport Museum and Transport for London.

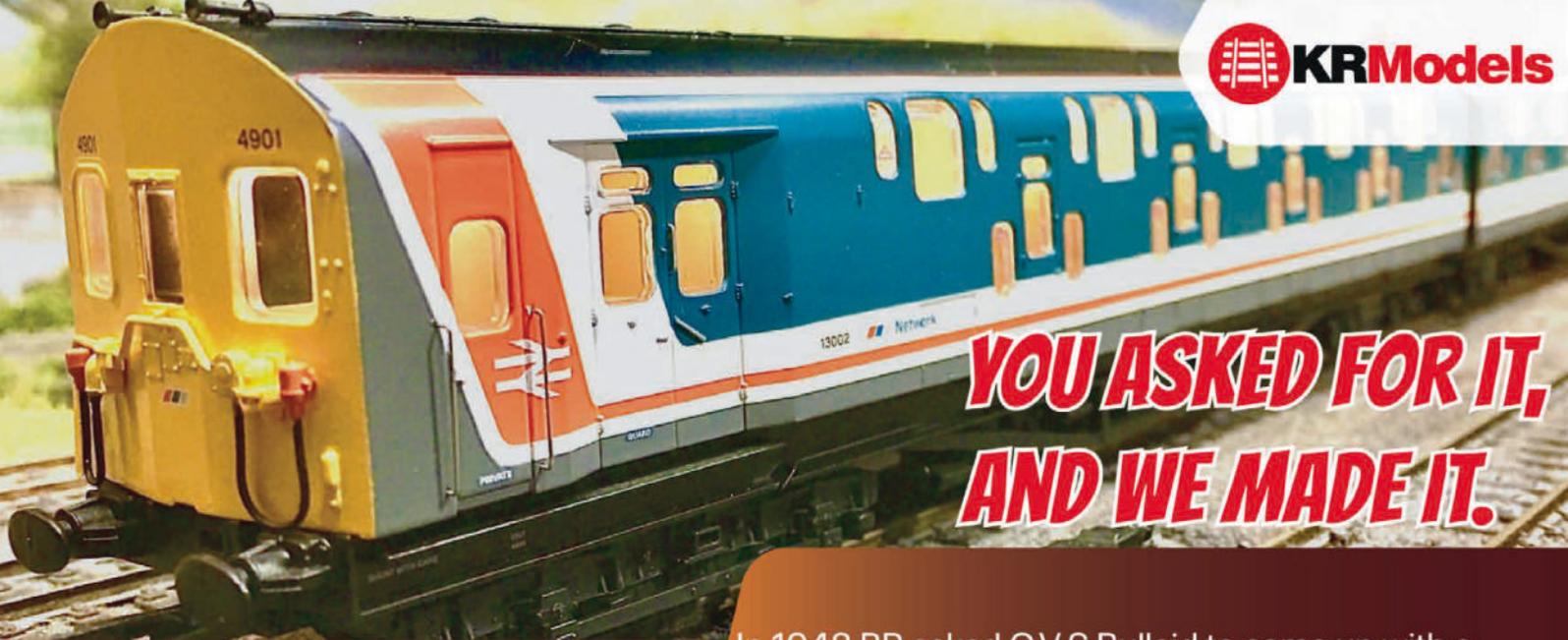
To mark the occasion, a striking new poster has been commissioned, which has already begun to appear at Underground stations. Featuring a stylish depiction of the Zoo's giraffes, the poster is the latest in a series of 'Great Days Out' artworks, showcasing famous cultural

attractions in the capital.

The Zoo has been a popular subject with Underground and London Transport artists since 1913, when Frank Pick - the brains behind LT's iconic design identity - commissioned the first poster encouraging visitors to London Zoo by train, bus and tram.

Copies and prints of the poster artwork can be purchased from London Zoo, which is based in Regents Park, or via the London Transport Museum's store. **Web:** www.londonzoo.org, www.ltmuseumshop.co.uk





**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

GWR PLATFORM ESSENTIALS OO GAUGE

Modelu's range of lineside details continues to expand, thanks to the addition of GWR running-in boards, which can be customised with your chosen station name.

Multiple lines of text are possible to cater for longer names or the addition of 'change for...' suffixes, with each pack offering a pair of boards, with matching posts that slot together, and featuring mounting lugs for secure mounting into a platform surface.

To round off the platforms or to mark the railway's boundary, packs of tapered concrete fence posts are also available, including reinforced sections and end posts. Drill out the partially formed holes and add fine wire (not supplied) to complete.

All parts are 3D-printed in a tough resin and simply require



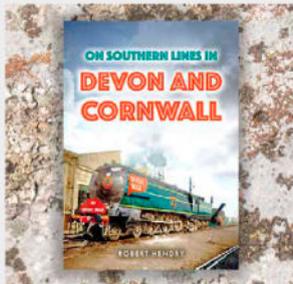
painting and planting. We tested the 'OO' packs, but the fence posts and running-in boards are

also available for 'O' gauge. **Products:** • 2640-076 Customisable GWR running-in

boards, pair (£14.49) • 2635-076 GWR concrete posts x20 (£8.95) **Web:** www.modelu3d.co.uk

Modeller's Bookshelf

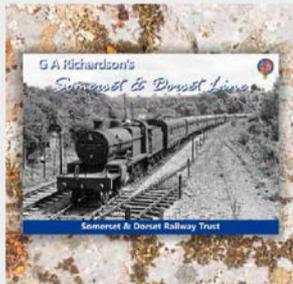
Richard Gunn and George Dent present four new titles that will inform and inspire your modelling.



SOUTHERN OUT WEST

While the GWR dominated Devon and Cornwall, the LSWR also extended into the counties, reaching Ilfracombe in the north, Bude and Padstow on the Atlantic Coast, and Plymouth in the south. The Southern and BR inherited these lines, but the Beeching Axe and post-1963 WR rivalry saw widespread rationalisation and closures. This pictorial review covers all the Southern's former West Country possessions, and it's an informative reminder of just how diverse they were; main lines, sleepy backwaters, and the ever-fascinating Lynton and Barnstaple line. Coverage spans steam through to the early 21st Century, with plenty of shots to encourage modellers. (RG)

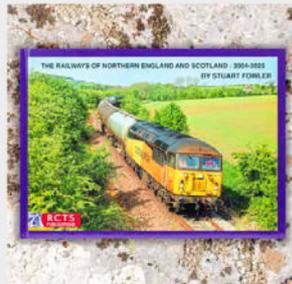
Book: *On Southern Lines in Devon and Cornwall*, by Robert Hendry
Price: £15.99
Web: www.amberley-books.com



S&DJR CHRONICLE

The Somerset & Dorset Railway remains one of the best-loved and most missed of all lost lines, and with this year marking 60 years since its closure, this book - benefitting the Somerset and Dorset Railway Trust - is timely. Tony Richardson started photographing the line in 1956, with his pictures covering its entire length and breadth. He had a great eye for composition, and the reproduction of the medium format shots is excellent. With the focus on locomotives and trains in action (plus a welcome section on the men employed on the S&D), those modelling the route may not find too much new visual information, but the quality of the images will appeal. (RG)

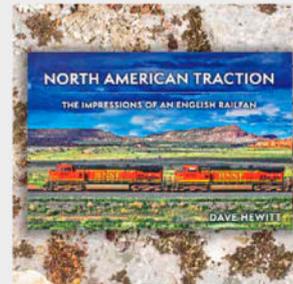
Book: *G A Richardson's Somerset & Dorset Line*
Price: £25.00
Web: sdrtr.org



LOOK NORTH

This pleasing collection of over 140 colour images showcases the locomotives and multiple units that have operated across Scotland's network and the northern reaches of England over the past 20 years. The large, landscape format allows the images to be reproduced big enough to allow the scenic and railway detail to be enjoyed, with the captions providing useful data. Reproduction is to a high standard and geographic coverage is wide, albeit with the Highlands featuring relatively sparingly, but this is balanced by many less obvious locations receiving coverage. There's a huge variety of traction and liveries on show. (GD)

Book: *The Railways of Northern England and Scotland: 2004-2025* by Stuart Fowler
Price: £25.00 plus £4.00 p&p
Web: www.rcts.org.uk



STATESIDE SPLENDOUR

While we rarely cover overseas subjects, this book proved hard to resist. The subtitle 'Impressions of an English Railfan' gives a clue as to the content, as the author regales us with tales of his travels across North America in the pursuit of trains. The photographs are excellent, showing off the majesty and diversity of the scenery, from the Arizona desert to the mountains of British Columbia. From a UK enthusiast's point of view, it's interesting to see the G&W livery in its natural habitat, given its spread across Freightliner's fleet, and there's much to inspire anyone with even a passing interest in the Stateside rail scene. (GD)

Book: *North American Traction* by Dave Hewitt
Price: £19.99
Web: www.amberley-books.com



ON THE WORKBENCH

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

FLEXIBLE FRIENDS

These packs of foam-backed sanding pads are available in various grits and are ideal for rubbing down surfaces **before** painting or between coats.

Suitable for use on all types of materials, especially plastic, resin and wood, the 4mm thick memory foam provides cushioning and flexibility, allowing the abrasive to be worked **over** uneven surfaces while evenly distributing pressure. Colour-coded to help identify the different grits, the pads can be used wet or, for finer work, with soapy water to lubricate the abrasive. Available in mixed or single grit packs, 10 pads are provided, making them great value.

Tool: Green Stuff World 10772 800 Grit, 10773 1200 grit

Price: £3.39 per pack

Availability: Scale Model Shop

Web: www.scalemodelshop.co.uk



A CLOSE SHAVE

Cleaning up the edges of injection moulded plastic or 3D-printed **components** can be a drag, but this **handy** little tool greatly speeds up the process and produces a smoother, less 'fuzzy' surface compared to the use of files and abrasives. At just 100mm long, the tool's tip does not feature a sharp blade, rather a finely rolled scraper edge, only just discernible to touch, making it safe for youngsters to use.

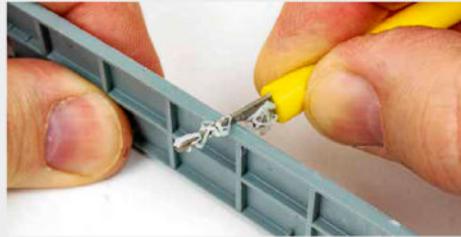
Capable of working into awkward areas, such as around wagon chassis detail, the working tip is simply drawn along the edge to remove fine shavings of waste, obliterating moulded seam lines quickly and safely. A slightly larger version is also available to deal with bigger components. This is a tool that kit builders won't want to live without!

Tool: Model Craft Collection micro mould line remover

Price: £5.99

Availability: Squires Model & Craft Tools

Web: www.squirestools.com



WEIGHING UP YOUR OPTIONS



Cast iron weigh bridges were once a common sight at railway goods yards all over the UK, allowing staff to calculate the mass of road vehicles before and after loading cargo transhipped from rail wagons. Examples could be seen in situ into the 1990s in some locations. These laser-cut panels from York Modelmaking feature crisp detail and a convincing texture. Once painted and drybrushed to highlight the detail, they mimic the look of the real thing admirably.

Each pack provides the main bridge panel plus a matching outer frame. The 'O' gauge version is illustrated (measuring 915mm by 64.5mm), but identical versions are also available in 'OO' and 'TT'.

Product: Laser-cut weigh bridge

Price: £7.00-£9.00 each

Web: www.yorkmodelrail.com

BUSY BEES



This great little set by Netherlands manufacturer Artitec features a beekeeper inspecting a frame of bees along with eight nicely made and realistically painted hives. One of the hives has the lid off showing the top of the frames of bees. A super little pack for a cameo scene!

Product: Artitec 387.477

Beekeeper set

Price: £15.00

Availability: Artitec stockists

Web:

www.aandhmodels.co.uk

POINTING THE WAY



Add authentic levers beside your yard turnouts courtesy of Modelu. Offered in packs of four, MacNee and Williams lever mechanisms are replicated, along with the GWR's 1900s style of weighted levers.

The levers are 3D-printed and require careful removal of the

support fretwork and painting before fixing them in place. They each feature impressive detail, but despite the resin being fairly rugged, they're still prone to damage if accidentally caught by a track rubber or a stray hand, so locating them strategically is recommended. The levers are also

offered to suit 'O' gauge layouts at a price of £8.95 per pack.

Products: • 2634-076 Macnee point levers x4 (£5.49)

• 2642-076 Williams Point Levers x4 (£5.49) • 2636 GWR 1900s point levers x4

Price: from £5.49 per set

Web: www.modelu3d.co.uk



EXHIBITION DIARY - FEBRUARY 14-MARCH 29 2026

FEBRUARY 14 & 15

CHAPEL EN LE FRITH, DERBYSHIRE. New Mills & District Railway Modellers (NMDRM). Chapel en le Frith Leisure Centre, Long Lane, Chapel en le Frith, Derbyshire SK23 0TQ. **Times:** Sat 1000-1700, Sun 1000-1630. **Admission:** Adults £8, Accompanied children Free. **Email:** exhibition@nmdrm.co.uk **Web:** www.nmdrm.co.uk

WESTON-SUPER-MARE, NORTH SOMERSET. Burnham Model Railway Club Model Railway Exhibition. Priory Community School, Queens Way, Weston-Super-Mare BS22 6BP. **Time:** 1000-1600 both days. **Admission:** Adults £8, Children Free. **Web:** bdmrc.co.uk/weston-super-mare-2026/

FEBRUARY 15

REDRUTH, CORNWALL. Cambourne Railway Modelling, Portreath Exhibition '26. The Millennium Hall, 3 Penberthy Road, Portreath, Redruth, Cornwall TR16 4LP. **Time:** 1000-1600. **Admission:** Adults £3, Under-5s Free.

FEBRUARY 21

READING, BERKSHIRE. Kenavon Railway Society in support of the Cholsey & Wallingford Railway Exhibition. The Warehouse, 1a Cumberland Road, Reading RG1 3LB. **Time:** 1000-1630. **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, KENT. Tonbridge MRC annual exhibition. Angel Leisure Centre, Angel Lane, off High Street, Tonbridge TN9 1SF. **Time:** 1000-1700. **Admission:** Adults £8, Accompanied under-16s Free. **Tel:** 01959 523840. **Email:** tonbridgemrc@yahoo.co.uk **Web:** www.tonbridgemrc.com

FEBRUARY 21 & 22

YORK, NORTH YORKSHIRE. EBOR Group of Railway Modellers York Against Cancer MRS. Holy Trinity Church Hall, Melrosegate, Heworth York YO31 0RP. **Times:** Sat 1000-1700, Sun 1000-1600. **Admission:** Adults £5, Children Free. **Tel:** 07899 861943

TENTERDEN, KENT. Ashford Model Railway Club, 2026 Tenterden Model Railway Exhibition. Homewood School, Ashford Rd, Tenterden, Kent TN30 6LT. **Times:** Sat 1000-1700, Sun 1000-1600. **Admission:** Adults £6, Children £3, Under-5s Free, Concessions £5, Families (2+2) £15

HIGHBRIDGE, SOMERSET. Annual MRS from Sedgemoor Gauge O Group. The King Alfred School & Academy, Burnham Road, Highbridge, Somerset TA9 3EE. **Time:** Sat 1000-1630, Sun 1000-1600. **Admission:** Adults £7, Accompanied under-14s Free

MARCH 1

CHESHAM, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE. Chesham MRC Annual Exhibition. White Hill Centre, White Hill, Chesham, Bucks HP5 1AG. **Time:** 1000-1600. **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/

MARCH 6

WOMBOURNE, SOUTH STAFFS. Midarc Promotions Wombourne Railx. Wombourne Civic Centre, Gravel Hill, Wombourne WV5 9HA. **Time:** 1000-1600. **Admission:** Adults £8, Accompanied 16yrs & under Free. **Tel:** 07927 059930

MARCH 7

DEAL, KENT. East Kent Model Railway Society. The Landmark Centre, 129 High Street, Deal, Kent CT14 6BB. **Time:** 1000-1600. **Admission:** Adults £7, Children 5-16 £1, Under-5s Free, Families £12. **Email:** ekmrswhitstable@gmail.com

SWINDON, WILTSHIRE. Swindon Model Railway Club, Model Rail 2026. STEAM Museum of the Great Western, Fire Fly Avenue, Swindon SN2 2EY. **Time:** 1000-1630. **Admission:** Adults £8, Accompanied under-16s Free. **Tel:** 07880 654755. **Email:** imburbidge@btinternet.com **Web:** www.swindonmodelrailwayclub.com

MARCH 7 & 8

GATESHEAD, TYNE AND WEAR. Birtley Model Railway Engineers Model Railway Exhibition. Ravensworth Road, Birtley, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear DH3 1EN. **Time:** 1000-1600 both days. **Admission:** Adults £6, Accompanied under-16s Free. **Tel:** 07806 323860. **Email:** michaelnhedley@gmail.com

RAINHILL, MERSEYSIDE. Rainhill Model Railway Club, 'Model Rail 2026' Exhibition. Rainhill High School, Warrington Road, Rainhill L35 6NY. **Time:** Sat 1000-1700, Sun 1000-1630. **Admission:** Adults £8, Children £1, Families (2+2) £17. **Web:** www.rainhillmrc.org.uk **Tel:** 01925 226266.

REDDITCH, WORCESTERSHIRE.

The 53rd Redditch Model Railway Exhibition. Trinity High School, Grove Street, Redditch Town Centre, Redditch B98 8DS. **Times:** Sat 1000-1700, Sun 1000-1630. **Admission:** Adults £6, Children Free. **Tel:** 01527 540289. **Email:** enquiry@redditch-mrc.com **Web:** www.redditch-mrc.com

MARCH 14

BRISTOL, AVON. Sodbury Vale Model Railway 50th Anniversary. Bristol Aerospace Museum, Concorde Hangar, Hayes Way, Patchway, Bristol BS34 5BZ. **Time:** 1000-1630. **Admission:** Adults £22, Children (4-17) £15, Students £20, Under-4s Free, Families £67 (2+2), £54 (2+1), £48 (1+2), Dedicated carers Free. **Web:** www.aerospacebristol.org & www.sodburyvalemrc.co.uk **Facebook:** [facebook.com/Sodbury](https://www.facebook.com/Sodbury)

NEWTON AYCLIFFE, CO DURHAM.

Rotary Great Aycliffe and Shildon MRC. 16th annual exhibition. Newton Aycliffe Youth and Community Centre, Burn Lane, Newton Aycliffe DL5 4HT. **Time:** 1000-1700. **Admission:** Preferred donation, Adults £5, Concession £4, Accompanied children and wheelchair users Free. **Tel:** 07773 275428. **Web:** www.rotarygreataycliffe.org **Facebook:** [@rotarygreataycliffe](https://www.facebook.com/rotarygreataycliffe)

PUDSEY, LEEDS.

Narrow Gauge North Model Railway Exhibition. Pudsey Civic Hall, Dawson's Corner, Pudsey, Leeds LS28 5TA. **Time:** 1030-1630. **Admission:** Adults £10, Accompanied under-16s £1 from 1330, Families (2 adults & accompanied children) £15. **Web:** www.narrowgaugenorth.org.uk **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/ngnorth

MARCH 21

BELPER, DERBYSHIRE. Belper Model Railway Exhibition 2026. Strutt's Centre, Belper, Derbyshire DE56 1UU. **Time:** 1000-1630. **Admission:** Adults £6, Children £2

MARCH 28

BASSINGBOURN, ROYSTON. Royston District Model Railway Club. Bassingbourn Village College, Bassingbourn, near Royston SG8 5NG. **Time:** 1030-1600. **Admission:** Adults £5, Children Free

MARCH 28-29

BANGOR, NORTHERN IRELAND. North Down Model Railway Society Model Show. Bangor Grammar School, Gransha Road, Bangor BT19 7QU. **Times:** Sat 1000-1700, Sun 1200-1700. **Admission:** £10, Accompanied under-16s Free. **Email:** exhibitions@ndmrs.org.uk **Web:** www.ndmrs.org.uk **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/NorthDownModelRailwaySociety>

COTGRAVE, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

Bingham Model Railway Club's Annual South Notts Model Railway Show. Cotgrave Welfare Club, Wood View, Cotgrave NG12 3PJ. **Times:** Sat 1000-1630, Sun 1000-1600. **Admission:** Adults £7, Accompanied under-16s Free. **Web:** www.bingham-model-railway.co.uk

NORTH SOMERSET, BRISTOL.

Nailsea MRC exhibition. Nailsea School, Mizzymead Road, Nailsea, North Somerset BS48 2LE. **Time:** Sat 1000-1700, Sun 1000-1600. **Admission:** Adults £10, Children £4, Families £24. **Web:** www.nailsea-district-mrc.co.uk

...and finally



Unusual scenes captured by the lens of Chris Nevard

Back in the olden days, before the UK's motorway and trunk road system was developed, the police operated a fleet of souped-up railway locomotives, allowing bobbies to zoom around the network in their relentless fight against crime. Here, the long arm of the law has caught up with a giant penguin who has escaped from a local zoo, unleashing a semi-aquatic crime wave. It took a multi-agency response - and Tiddles the station cat - to ensure his apprehension.

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P R E S E N T S

ABRAIL 2026

Abingdon Model Railway Show

Saturday-Sunday
7 & 8 MARCH 2026

SATURDAY : 10.30AM* - 5.00PM | SUNDAY: 10.30AM* - 4.30PM

* Advance ticket holders get early entry from 10.00

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The details within this advertisement are based on best available information as at the copy date of this publication. Errors and omissions excepted. For the very latest listings, visit www.ukmodelshops.co.uk/exhibitions

OVER 50 QUALITY LAYOUTS

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Artist's Valley (00) | Horsebridge Wharf (EM) |
| Ashfield (N) | Incyhra Paper Mill (EM) |
| Atherley Narrows (HO) | Kinmundy (EM) |
| Barnard Castle (EM) | Lambourn (2mm FS) |
| Blackfriars Bridge (P4) | Manston Airport (00) |
| Bottom of the Barrel (00) | Market Bosworth (P4) |
| Bridge Street (N) | Midford (N) |
| Brinklow (N) | Moor Boxes (N) |
| Buxton (2mm FS) | Newchapel Junction (O) |
| Corrieshalloch (2mm FS) | North Cornwall Brewery (00) |
| Cowley Yard (O) | OO Live Steam Roadshow (00) |
| Dawlish Warren (N) | Pine Bluffs Freight Yard (HO) |
| Dorehill St Stephens (00) | Rye Sands (00) |
| Duxbury (00) | Sandsifters (P4) |
| Eardley Mor Halt (00) | Silverbury (00) |
| Eastgate Harbour (00) | Sheepcroft (EM) |
| Ettington Verso (00) | Stanhope Brewery (00) |
| Fredstone Lane (N) | Tan-Y-Bwlch (009) |
| Golden Mile (2mm FS) | Wantage Tramway (P4) |
| Hatch End (N) | Wellbridge (00) |
| Helston? (00) | Wendover (00) |
| Hergest (00 & 009) | Wheal Imogen (00) |
| Heybridge Wharf (3mm) | Wolfstätt (HO) |
| Holgate (N) | |

CHILDREN'S LAYOUTS:

Funville (00), Rainbow Rock (Gn15), Sodor Island (00)

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City of Oxford Society of Model Engineers

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SOCIETIES

2mm Association, Double O Gauge Association, Great Western Society, Great Western Study Group, N Gauge Society, Oxfordshire Railway Society, Pendon Museum



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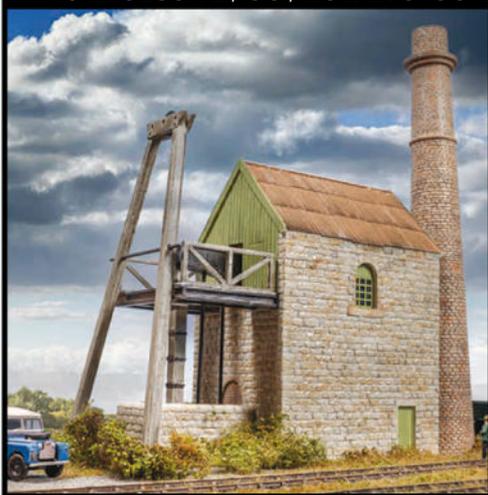
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News Real

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

Early January saw heavy snowfall in Scotland and, to a lesser extent, in parts of northern and central England. Heavy and drifting snow disrupted routes in the Scottish Highlands, and Network Rail's independent snowplough fleet saw intensive use for several days. Class 37s from Colas, Swietelsky Rail and West Coast Railways powered the 'ploughs' and also operated route-proving duties to ensure that lines were clear for scheduled services. On January 4, WCR's 37685 pauses at Helmsdale on the Far North Line so that snow can be cleared from its bonnet. **NETWORK RAIL**



South Western Railway retired its final Class 455 EMUs in December, marking the end of the type after more than 40 years of reliable service on London's inner-suburban third-rail network. Introduced in 1983, the EMUs were withdrawn by SWR at the December timetable change. However, two farewell tours were required to accommodate all the enthusiasts who wanted to say goodbye to the '455s' on December 21. **STEVE UPTON**



Avanti West Coast made full use of its Class 805 bi-mode trains in January during the closure of the West Coast Main Line for bridge replacement work near Penrith. The '805s' operated Wigan/Preston-Carlisle trains via the Settle-Carlisle Line between January 1 and 15 - the first Hitachi Class 80X trains to work over the classic Midland Railway route. **AVANTI WEST COAST**



Numerous initiatives are under way to develop hydrogen technology as an alternative fuel source for railways. On December 4, Network Rail, Freightliner and Rail Operations Group combined to make the UK's first shipment of hydrogen by rail. The gas was carried in containers between Doncaster and NR's test track at High Marnham in Nottinghamshire. **CHRIS MILNER/FREIGHTLINER**

Staff Show & Tell

MODELLING HERO – MARCEL ACKLE

A pre-Christmas trip to Switzerland saw **Peter Marriott** meet one of his modelling heroes, giving him renewed inspiration for future projects.

In early December, I travelled to Switzerland to attend the open day of the Swiss model railway magazine *LOKI*, which is held in the foyer of its printer's premises each year.

It's an annual event and, this year, there was an impressive selection of mini layouts which, although they were naturally based on Swiss prototypes, each presented many useful lessons in scenery creation that I'd like to attempt to copy on my UK layout projects.

Another highlight of the day was the chance to meet Marcel Ackle, whose work has appeared in this magazine in the past, along with one of his superb dioramas. Marcel's work never ceases to amaze me, thanks to the incredible level of detail and atmosphere he manages to cram into every scene. Detail is not enough on its own, however, and his knack for weathering and distressing materials and surfaces really brings everything to life.

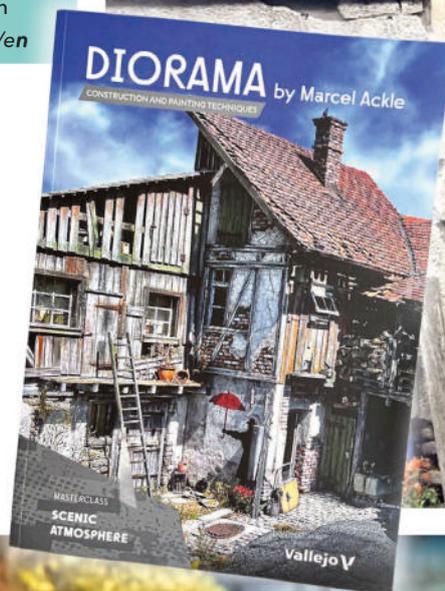
As well as being enchanted by the 1:35 scale diorama, I was delighted to discover that Marcel had recently produced a book explaining how he builds his superb models, so I made sure I ordered an English-language version as soon as I got back home. Published by model paint manufacturer Vallejo, Marcel's

Recommended reading

- ◆ **Book:** *Diorama: Construction and painting Techniques*, by Marcel Ackle (Vallejo Book 75065)
- ◆ **Price:** £51.59
- ◆ **Availability:** Vallejo stockists, specialist booksellers or Amazon
- ◆ **Web:** www.acrylicosvallejo.com/en

book is crammed with useful step-by-step demonstrations showing his favoured techniques. Topics include brick and plaster walls, weathered wood, vegetation, roofs, and adding the finer details. It's not a cheap book, but after shopping around, I got my copy online for about £30.

There is a lot to take in, but I'm sure I'll be absorbing hints and tips into my own modelling work. Indeed, after leafing through the book, I felt highly motivated to get to work on several projects that have been on the backburner for a while, so watch this space!



Marcel's gift for weathering and distressing really helps to bring these miniature scenes to life.
PETER MARRIOTT





This fantastic scale diorama was built by Marcel Ackle and displayed at the recent *LOKI* open day in Switzerland. PETER MARRIOTT

1:35
SCALE

CEMENTING AN IDEA

Although most of George Dent's recent modelling time has been spent on customising a Heljan Class 153 (see page 47), he also found time to finish off a few half-completed projects recently. Amongst the motley selection of rolling stock in his 'in tray' was a trio of Lima PCV cement tanks, which had been detailed last summer with new wheels and bearings, etched walkways, wire handrails, new buffers and a few other bits 'n' bobs.

George explains: "All I needed to do to finish them off was to apply some suitable weathering, initially using an airbrush to apply very thin layers of dirty grey acrylic paints, applied in a streaking effect. While the paint was still tacky, I dabbed a blend of dry weathering pigments around the filler hatches, brushing the material lightly down



the sides. The empty airbrush blew the excess powder away, leaving some welcome extra texture. Another fine misting of paint from the airbrush finished things off.

"I've been assembling a rake of these depressed centre tanks, mostly from Lima models bought cheaply at exhibitions or from bargain bins, plus a few post-2005 Hornby-branded versions, which have been similarly

treated. The train is approaching 10 wagons long now, and Alex Rockey's excellent 'Whittlesmarch' layout in last month's issue has rekindled my desire for a cement terminal-themed layout - but that project will have to join the queue!"



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Inside track with Ben Ando

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

“Model railways should be fun, but show layouts also require a performative element”

'Leadenhall' uses an array of LED strip lights to cycle from day to night, with subtle transitions through dusk and dawn.

It's party time!

The model railway show season is in full swing, as the winter months are traditionally the time when we can enjoy our relaxing indoor hobby. A model railway exhibition makes for an ideal day out, as it is immune to the impact of rain or cold.

The diary page of *Model Rail* lists numerous shows that are running up and down the country every weekend. Most are hosted by model railway clubs and provide a useful way to boost funds. Some are staged by larger associations or groups, such as the Association of Model Railway Societies in Scotland's event in Glasgow, known as Model Rail Scotland. Still more are fully commercialised operations put on by magazines or companies, but, until last month, I had never heard of someone putting on a full model railway exhibition for their own birthday...

Eric French (known as 'Underground Eric' on social media) hired a hall near Leighton Buzzard, invited a number of his model railway friends (including me) to bring layouts, and then put on his own celebratory show. The centrepiece was Eric's own layout, 'Harefield Road', but among the six or seven others in attendance was my colleague Simon Veasey's 'N' gauge 'Leadenhall', making its show debut.

There is always something a bit special when a layout is shown to a wider audience for the first time, and though 'Leadenhall' is small, it features not just remarkable attention to detail, but has been designed, from the outset, to be a display model. It features a fully enclosed fascia, and all models are sound-fitted. It also has a Model Light Controller unit by the Little Layout Company installed, which uses an array of white, red and blue LED strip lights to cycle from day to night with subtle transitions through dusk and dawn. The effect is almost hypnotic.

Controls are at the front of the layout, enabling Simon to engage with show visitors and lets them drive the trains. This proved especially popular with 11-year-old Noah, who was engrossed for well over an hour!



Ben with Simon Veasey, whose 'N' gauge layout 'Leadenhall' made its show debut at the Leighton Buzzard event.

The aim is to complete a fully immersive experience, albeit at just 1:148 scale and in a space little more than three feet long. This brings me to a point I make no apology for repeating: model railways should be fun, but show layouts also require a performative element. Their operations require a degree of discipline.

When visiting an attraction nowadays, families expect a professional approach and to be entertained. They have paid an entrance fee and they want to see not just modelling skills and moving trains, but also to be treated to information about the location, backstory or operation from the layout operators.

When compared to watching a football match, going to the cinema or attending a theme park, a model railway exhibition offers excellent value. Good show layouts don't just offer a passive viewing experience, but transport visitors on a journey through both the scene depicted and their own imagination.

● *'Leadenhall' can be seen at the Chesham MRC Show on Saturday March 1, at the White Hill Centre, White Hill, Chesham, HP5 1AG, and will be featured in a future issue of Model Rail.*



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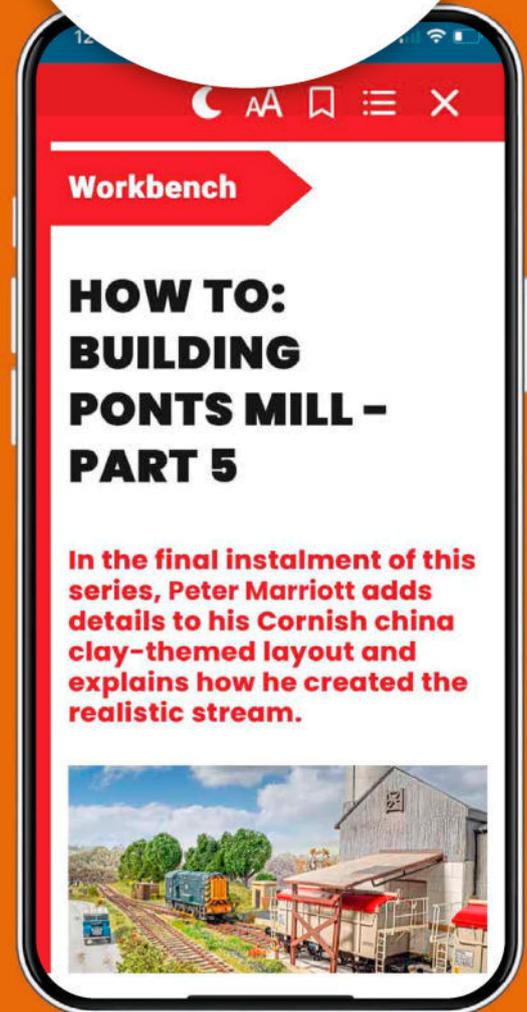


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GREAT SCOT

Northern engineering endeavour, tinged with 1980s teenage memories, inspired **Alistair Stripp** to model a Scottish Highland railway, 'Beachdale'.

Words: **Alistair Stripp** Photography: **Chris Nevard**





“ **What makes this layout great?** ”

We love the way the railway snakes through the rugged landscape. The lack of rigid, straight edges to the baseboards gives the layout an organic feel, capturing the uneven terrain of the West Highland coast. ”

Close your eyes and visualise a Scottish Highland railway. For me, it's the thundering sound of a large logo blue Class 37, stained with dirt and oil and emblazoned with bold graphics. The deep bass of the exhaust, echoing off epic geography; a landscape bent to the passage of a Scottie dog-stickered locomotive. Scotland is a picture frame for engineering endeavour.

If I had an aim for this layout, 'Beachdale', it was to compress all the 1980s teenage memories of visits to Scotland... A summer holiday at Georgemas Junction, watching two faded Class 26s shunting stock for Thurso and Wick while listening to The Human League. Walking the West Highland Way the day after Live Aid, flashes of a large BR logo on a Class 37, glimpsed through trees across Loch Lomond – this

BELOW One thing that Alistair was keen to achieve was the impression of the railway having to carve its way through the landscape, rather than the scenery looking like it had been added around it.

time to the soundtrack of Depeche Mode. The Kyle of Lochalsh and a trip to Skye, behind another '37', on that occasion with a Highland stag sticker on the sides and Prefab Sprout as the musical accompaniment.

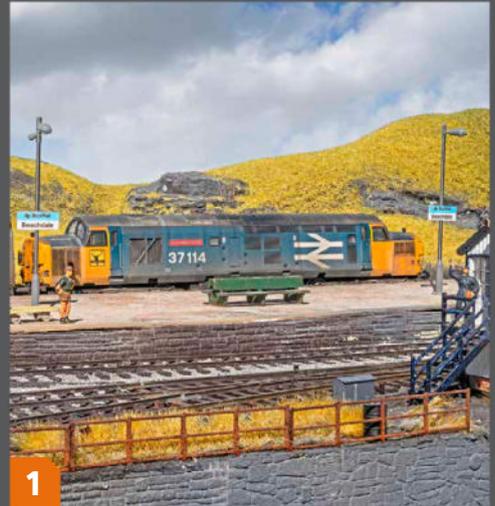
So, how do you model of all that? A wire-mesh Munro? A loch from two metres of glass? And how to fit all this into any space at all? My work as a designer and space planner has taught me that one idea at a time works best. Save other ideas for the next project. Short layouts can feel cramped, large exhibition layouts often focus on track, not scenery. Or they lack a sense of a region or place. I wanted to address this.

I asked myself, where am I trying to build? How hilly is it? What is the density of the place? If scenery happens after the track is laid, you have a landscape reacting to the railway, not the other way around. I chose to add a railway to my landscape. ►



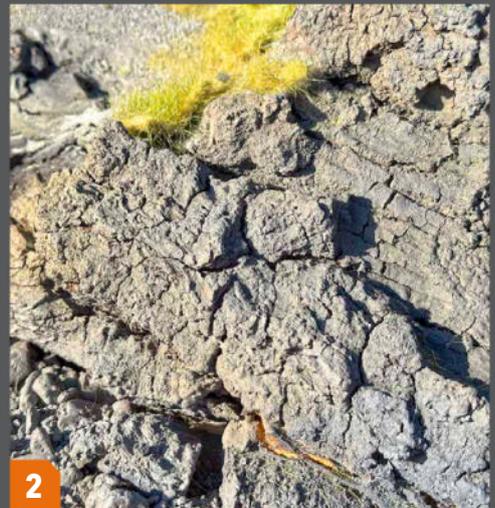


3 things we like



1

BR-era ScotRail platform signage and furniture is so very redolent of both the era and the area.



2

The way that natural materials were used to create the rocky cliff faces.



3

The realistic water; Scottish streams often go this colour due to iron and manganese in rocks and soil.



THE PLANNING STAGE

Space planning starts with constraints. I treated my first proper layout as a holiday from work and just started making it. However liberating this was, things get big quickly when you want to model both the destination and the journey.

Sections needed to be lightweight and portable. Starting with the bay scene, I cut plywood formers in 5mm thick plywood to match the profile of the hills I wanted as a backdrop, testing the scale with a model locomotive and carriages. Hills and trees, I soon discovered, are all bigger than you think.

Here's a tip: look closely at relative scale in photographs, and set the locomotive as a small element, not a big one.

It's relatively easy to get a jigsaw out, template a hillside with a pen on plywood, and cut a silhouette of a landform. Within an hour, you can have four sections cut, then joined with 44mm x 20mm softwood ▶



BELOW Class 37 No. 37114 *Dunrobin Castle* was a personal favourite locomotive of Alistair; the real thing being generally quite filthy in service provided plenty of opportunity for weathering.

4





battens, screwed and glued. Go on, put this magazine down (after reading it, of course), and try it!

Drawing an arc on taped-together newspaper, I used our flat living room wood floor as a datum and got started. Naturally, it's a good idea to avoid glueing your baseboards to the floor...

Next time, I would make the gable ends in a thicker plywood, as in one case, this bowed and caused alignment issues later.

The trackbed and small flat sections of 5mm plywood (I will go thicker next time) were screwed and glued to short battens. The only large flat expanses of wood were for those areas of baseboard below the water and the beach. Chicken wire mesh was tensioned over the timber frame at the rear, fixed by a hot-weld glue gun. Here's another tip, learnt the hard way: wear gloves as melted glue is very hot.

Expanded polystyrene was shaved to the desired profile for the foreground scenery and coated with lightweight filler. It was then a case of sanding, painting and adding static grass fibres, of 2mm and 4mm lengths. I found that expandable foam, sprayed to the underside of the scenery, boosts rigidity, but it's horribly sticky stuff.

A source of good reference material proved essential for 'Beachdale'. *Scotland East & North* by Roger Siviter, and *Diesels in the Highlands* by Andrew Vines are both full of excellent colour photographs of the Scottish Highland routes, displaying the scenery as well as BR Rail blue era trains. 'Portchullin', the superb 'P4' layout built by Mark Tatlow, is still a benchmark reference layout for me, but I also recommend treating yourself to a ticket on 'The Jacobite' from Fort William to Mallaig for a huge dose of real-world inspiration.

Curves are more seductive to the eye than straight tracks, as the presence of trains alters how we view a scene. But they need to be gentle curves. I wanted to replicate a super-elevated track and used strips of cork placed below the main foam trackbed to help trains 'lean into' the corners. Along with gradients, it's surprising what a model train will cope with, even with finescale track.

Cliffs and rocks were created from tree bark 'liberated' by storm Arwen, then hot-glued into place. A microwave or oven is needed, as this material continues to move and shrink unless the moisture content is reduced. ➤





ABOVE The lattice girder bridges on 'Beachdale' were inspired by the structure just north of Rannoch station. 3D-printing and laser-cutting was employed to create the extensive metalwork.

6





My cliffs show signs of ongoing erosion. I enhanced the appearance of the bark by spraying it with grey and camouflage shades of Halfords spray paint, before adding grass fibres from above. Sieved river gravel was poured down the embankments, then painted with PVA glue and sprayed.

For the water, I used a resin by Woodland Scenics, which looks great, but is prone to cracking. It can be remelted with a cooking blow torch. Just avoid melting your harbour wall!

TAKING SHAPE

The next stage proved tricky, as I needed to create a pair of steel truss bridges. Inspired by the situation at Rannoch, I compressed the island station entrance with the bridges, but still, there were a lot of trusses and railings required.

Creating the trusses and girders using 3D-printing and laser-cutting helped hugely. You might notice that the line's level falls 50mm along the length of the

ABOVE 'Beachdale' includes gradients, something Alistair had noticed are rarely featured on other layouts, despite being part of the real railway scene... especially in an area like the Highlands.

LEFT The Storr Hotel, and its impressive adjoining barn, are scratchbuilt structures. Getting the whitewashed rough stone walls to look right took considerable time and effort.

bridges. This was something I had seen on the West Highland, and I imagined the original civil engineer thinking the cutting wouldn't have to be as deep if the bridges ramped up to the cutting. Gradients seem to be seldom modelled, despite their importance in the real railway. Loch Eilt to Glenfinnan, and the Horseshoe to Tyndrum, simply wouldn't be believed if you modelled them correctly!

The station section took longer to create, as more buildings were needed. The magnificent station, based on Tyndrum Upper, was made to order, before Peco's great laser-cut kits arrived a couple of years ago. I wrote to Airfix, Hornby, Bachmann and Peco asking why they didn't make more good buildings, as they're always so time-consuming to build from scratch.

Now, we're blessed with excellent 'OO' gauge kits of Rannoch and Glenfinnan stations, as well as the North British Clachnaharry signal box. I had to scratchbuild my signal box, with Peco's kit inevitably arriving just as I finished it. The Storr Hotel and barn were also ►

BELOW Behind the scenes of 'Beachdale', showing how the impressive scenery was built up. The image beneath shows the same view during the early stages of construction.

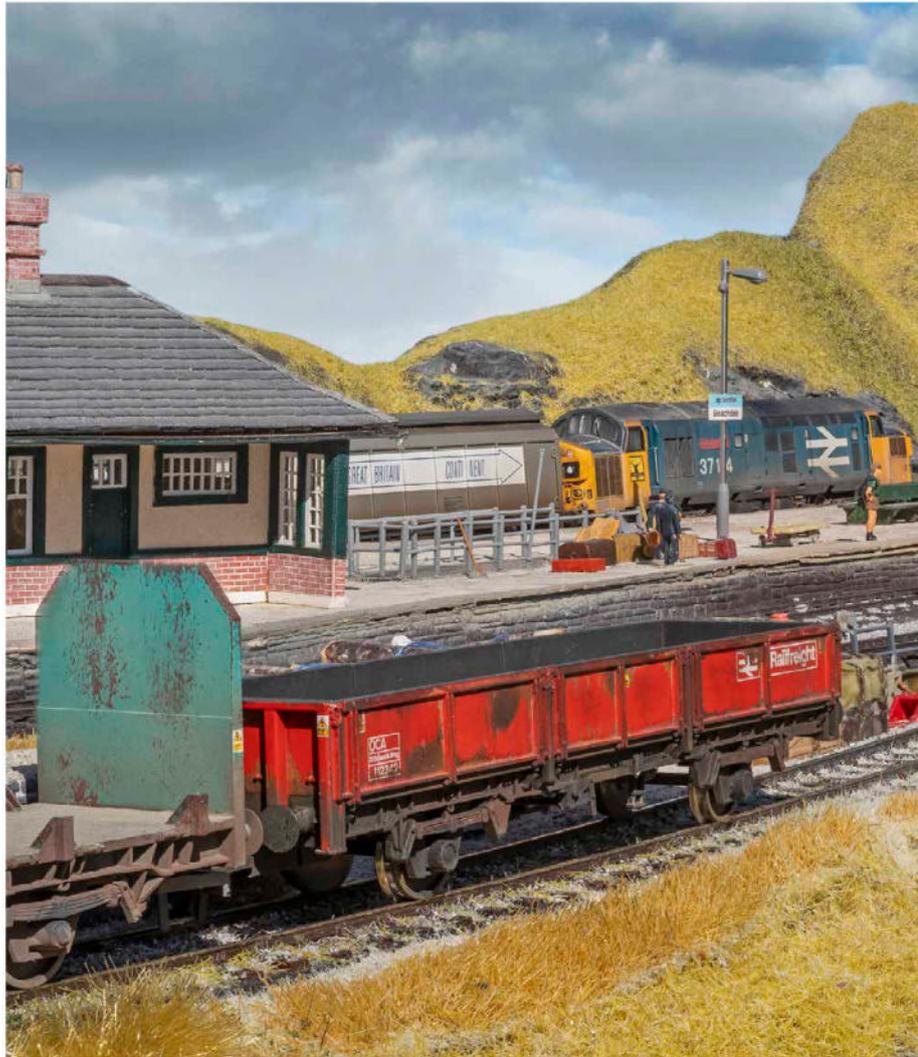


scratchbuilt, which added months to the overall project, but I hope they are worth it.

The last section, made in 2024, was based on Erbusaig, near Kyle of Lochalsh. The end of the oval loop became a scenic section and is the only section of single track on the layout.

A traditional semaphore signal was needed, and Simon Fountain – skilled 'O' gauge brass locomotive builder – made two from brass kits of the finialed lattice signals at Glenfinnan. They're delicate but add fantastic detail. Fellow modeller Pat Maloney brought the station signalling up to date, with ingenious blue LED radio signs linked to a control panel. Pat was key to the completion of this as a working layout, ahead of its only exhibition outing to Aln Valley Railway. He only called in for a cup of tea and left, three weeks later, after relaying much track and rewiring the DCC. If you have seen Pat's model of Bradford Forster Square, you will know he was wasted on this task.

Trevor Smith at Blyth & Tyne Model Railway Club must also be thanked for his care and patience in repairing DCC faults around a double slip.



THE DETAILS

The rolling stock fleet started with a pair of Rail blue Heljan Class 26s, detailed and weathered by Andy Fothergill of Wakefield, which are absolute works of art. He added the essential Austin Mini headlights, as well as the Shawplan laser-cut glazing, stained and washed, airbrushed and detailed, with sound chips to finish things off.

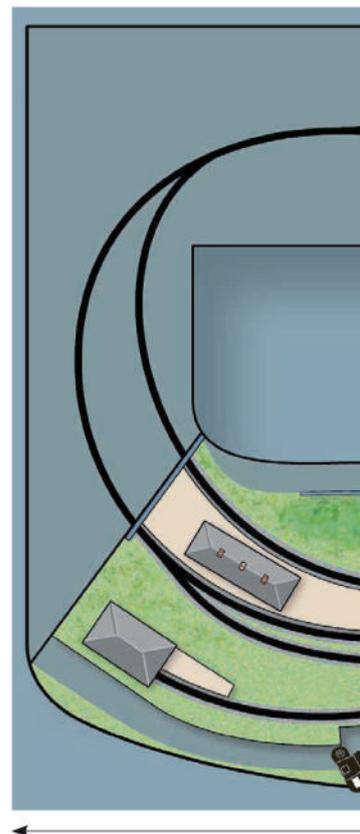
Over the years, Andy has added four large logo blue Class 37s, in conditions from pristine to scrap-ready. A personal favourite, 37114 *Dunrobin Castle*, must be the filthiest nationalised diesel ever. All have DCC sound. It's a shame that sound is so expensive, but wow, on a Class 37 especially, the layout really comes to life.

What have I learned from creating 'Beachdale'? First, that cambered, curved, elevated gradient finescale track offers a particular challenge at baseboard joints.

However, as a survival mechanism to counter stressful work designing public buildings, this project was a lifesaver (if you love cutting-edge modern architecture and need to build a house around a layout, I now run a business for just that, see www.strippdesign.com).

I also learned that a 10 metre long layout is not something you just have lying around. And finally, I discovered that thinking about it, talking about it and reading about it is much less fun than actually making it. In short, if you have a layout in mind, get off your backside and start right now, on that leftover plywood or whatever materials you can find.

Creativity is like trains: the journey is as much fun as the destination. **MR**





FACTFILE: 'BEACHDALE'

Era: 1980s

Gauge and scale: 'OO' gauge, finescale track

Size: 31ft 2in by 13ft 1in

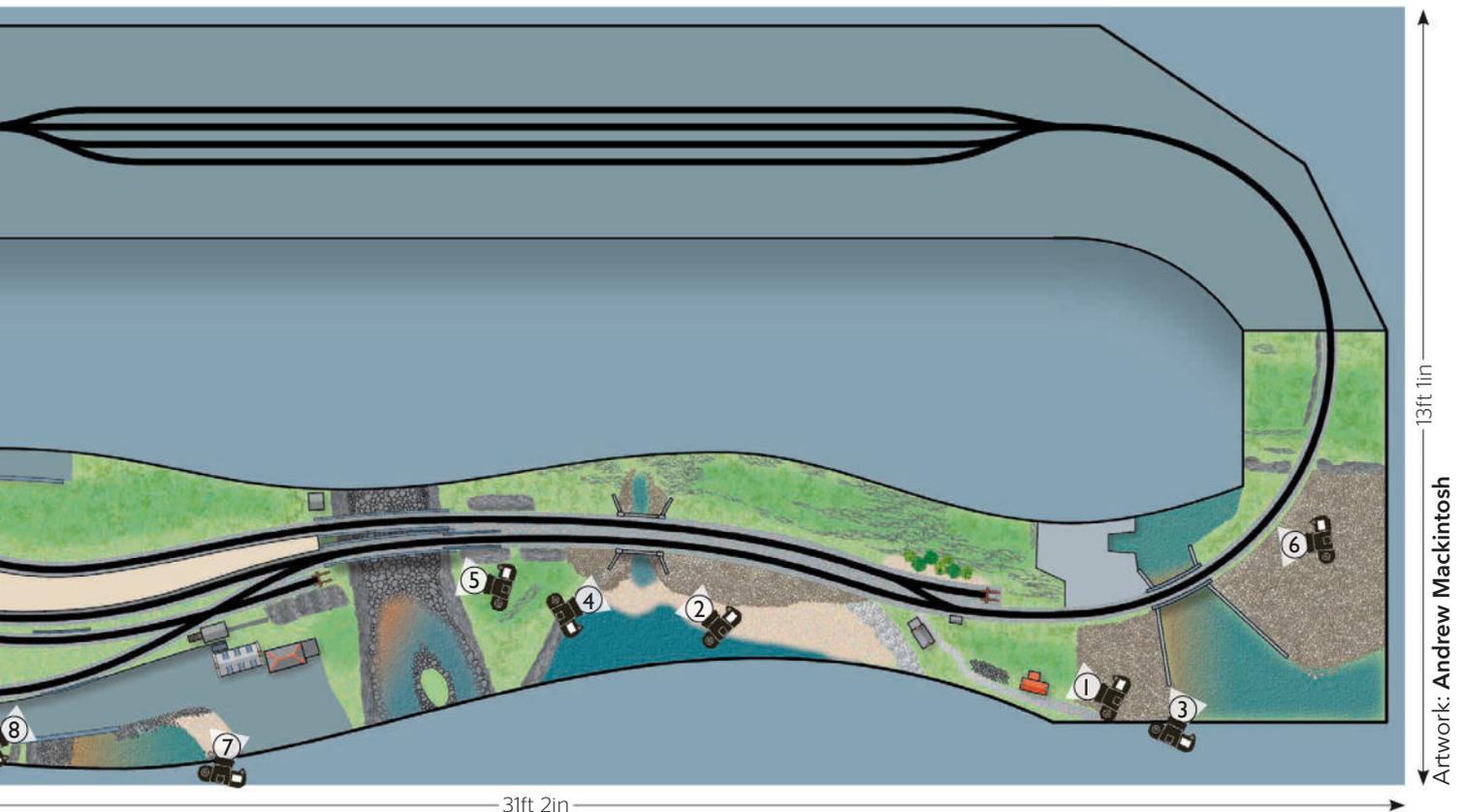
Power and control: DCC with sound, PowerCab

Time to build: Six years, on and off



ABOUT THE MODELLER: ALISTAIR STRIPP

Following a career designing and creating Moschino clothing stores, Bentley Supersports launches, university buildings, and now homes for model railways, Alistair enjoys mountain biking and watching his talented sons do anything except model railways! His passion for modelling stems from childhood trips to his grandparents in North London, playing trains in the loft from a choice of over 100 locos, with branch line stations named after family members.



Masterclass

Looking at railways in detail

SINGULAR POTENTIAL

Few classes can match the nationwide reach of the Class 153s or their modelling potential. **BEN JONES** charts the history of the type in passenger and departmental service.

Way back in May 2002, *Model Rail* published its first *Masterclass* article on Class 153s. Almost 24 years later, much has happened, both to the prototype vehicles and the options available to modellers.

No longer do we have to take a hacksaw to a Dapol or Hornby Class 155 and convert it into a '153' using whitmetal parts. With ready-to-run options in 'N', 'OO' and 'O' gauges, there's never been a better time to take another look at these regional workhorses. But first a little background.

Between the mid-1980s and early 1990s, British Rail's Provincial Services sector, later rebranded as Regional Railways, revolutionised its regional services through the introduction of hundreds of new DMUs and railbuses. The Class 14X and Class 15X units replaced first-generation DMUs and railcars and, on longer routes, a mixed bag of locomotive-hauled trains powered by Class 31s, 33s, 37s, 47s and 50s.

As part of this, 35 two-car Class 155 'Super Sprinter' units were ordered from Leyland Bus for cross-country routes radiating from Cardiff to west Wales, the north-west of England, south-west England and the south coast.

By 1990, faster and more comfortable

Class 158s were on order to replace the troublesome Class 155s and the Leyland units were set to be cascaded to more rural, shorter-distance duties. However, for many of these routes, two-car units were excessive, and the decision was taken to convert most of them into single railcars.

Despite the large-scale introduction of 'Sprinters' and 'Pacers', pockets of first-generation Class 101/108/117 DMUs and Class 121/122 railcars remained in operation, and 70 modern railcars would go a long way towards eliminating them.

Following engineering studies and trials in Cornwall and the Cotswolds using temporarily modified Class 155 vehicles,

“The conversion involved the rebuilding of the inner end of each vehicle to add a second cab, which was significantly smaller than the original driving cab”



A pair of BR Regional Railways-branded Class 153s, 153362/305, meet at Llanwrtyd Wells in 1998. The '153s' have been staple traction on the Heart of Wales line since their introduction. COLOUR RAIL

Hunslet-Barclay's Kilmarnock works was awarded a contract in 1990 to rebuild the Class 155s into single-car Class 153s. First to arrive for conversion were Driving Motor Second Lavatory (DMSL) 52323 and Driving Motor Second (DMS) 57304, which would become 153323 and 153354.

The conversion involved the rebuilding of the inner end of each vehicle to add a second cab, which was significantly smaller than the original driving cab. The two exhaust pipes on the inner end of each car were removed, and the exhaust system was rerouted to run up through the body to a new outlet next to the toilet.

DMS cars were fitted with a toilet, and all vehicles had their interior layout modified

LEFT: Wearing redundant First North Western livery, Arriva Trains Wales' 153310 calls at Newport with a Milford Haven-bound service in 2005. COLOUR RAIL



RIGHT: In de-branded Arriva Trains Northern livery - and coupled to a former Northern Spirit '156', 153317 departs Horton in Ribblesdale with a Carlisle train in July 2004. The '153's were employed to strengthen busier services on the Settle-Carlisle for many years. COLOUR RAIL

with a revised seating layout, wheelchair space and a lockable parcels cupboard, the latter more usually used as a luggage rack. National Radio Network (NRN) equipment was also fitted along with the associated roof pods above each cab.

Former DMSL cars 52301-335 became 153301-335, and DMS vehicles 57301-335 were numbered 153351-385. To reduce confusion, the vehicle numbers of 153351-385 were changed to 57351-385 between July 1992 and January 1994.

June 1991 saw the first completed '153' (No. 153354) emerge from Kilmarnock, ▶





Central Trains' green livery was carried by 16 '153s' during the mid-2000s, as seen on 153325 at Walsall in August 2007. COLOUR RAIL

and deliveries continued through to December 1992, when 153315 was the final example to be delivered.

Complaints about the cramped 'micro cab' led to the Class 153s being blocked by drivers' trades unions in late 1991 and early 1992, leading to their use in pairs with the original cabs coupled outwards as per a Class 155. However, this was a brief interruption, and they were soon operating singly again and spread rapidly across the Regional Railways network.

REGIONAL RAILWAYS

The 70 vehicles were initially allocated to five depots – Newcastle Heaton (15), Cardiff Canton (9), Tyseley in Birmingham (20), Plymouth Laira (10) and Norwich Crown Point (16). Later bases also included Manchester Newton Heath, and Neville Hill in Leeds. From these points, they were deployed over huge areas of England and Wales, from Cornwall to East Anglia, North Wales, Cumbria, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire and local services in the East and West Midlands. Other notable duties include the Stourbridge Junction-Stourbridge Town shuttle, Swansea-Shrewsbury Heart of Wales Line and Devon branches radiating from Exeter.

Their standard BSI auto-couplers meant that they could work in multiple with other Class 153s but also with Class 141-144 'Pacers' and Class 150, 155, 156 and 158 DMUs (plus Class 170/172 'Turbostars' in later years). Occasionally, Class 153s were also paired with spare vehicles from a Class 150/2, 156 or 158 to form temporary units. As with their

RIGHT: A common sight in Devon and Cornwall for 30-odd years, the Class 153s operated branch line services alone, or strengthened longer-distance stopping services, in tandem with Class 150s. Passing Dawlish, First Great Western 153373 – wearing the stylish 'Dynamic Lines' livery – heads to Paignton with a '150' in tow, in May 2016. COLOUR RAIL



Class 121/122 predecessors, the '153s' were often used to strengthen busier services worked by compatible units, especially on commuter lines around Leeds, Manchester and Birmingham.

Privatisation in 1994 saw the Class 153s owned by Porterbrook (30) and Angel Trains (40). The fleet was split between Central Trains, Anglia Railways, North Western Trains, Wales & West and Northern Spirit. Most retained their Regional Railways livery until the early 2000s, in some cases with new branding applied.

Areas of operation remained relatively stable in the 21st Century, although the regular churn of refranchising and reorganisation of TOCs meant that the names and branding carried by Class 153s changed frequently, even if their duties did not.

NORTHERN ENGLAND

Regional Railways' services in northern England were split into north-west and north-east divisions in the mid-1990s, initially as North Western Trains (later First North Western) and Northern Spirit. First North Western (FNW) started to apply

its blue and gold stars livery in July 2000, and it proved an enduring scheme, with the original branding being replaced by Arriva logos on a few '153s' after 2001 and Northern Rail branding from 2004. Blue/gold '153s' also worked for Arriva Trains Wales and First Great Western.

East of the Pennines, Northern Spirit was rebranded as Arriva Trains Northern in April 2001, with 153352 becoming the first vehicle to receive ATN's turquoise and cream livery in July of that year.

A further reorganisation saw ATN and FNW combined into a new franchise covering the whole of northern England from December 2004. Northern Rail, operated by Serco-Abellio, was the largest user of Class 153s in this period, with up to 20 vehicles. In 2016, the franchise was awarded to Arriva again, changing identity to Arriva Rail North (ARN). Gradually Northern replaced the inherited liveries with its blue/purple/white house colours.

In December 2007, two vehicles were transferred to East Midlands Trains and in

2018, five (153305/370/373/377/380) moved temporarily from Great Western Railway (GWR) to boost Northern's DMU fleet pending the delivery of new Class 195s. In 2019/20, the de-branded GWR quintet was transferred to ScotRail and converted into 'Active Travel' vehicles for the West Highland Line (see below).

In March 2020, ARN was replaced by the government-run Northern Trains, but by this stage, its '153' fleet was already scheduled for replacement. By December 2021, all Northern Class 153s were withdrawn and sent for storage at Potter Group in Ely and Long Marston.

EAST ANGLIA

The small fleet of Norwich-based Class 153s (153306/309/311/314/322/326/335) was adopted by Anglia Railways in January 1997. Again, a complex franchising story saw them carry various branding and liveries before being transferred to Transport for Wales in 2019. Anglia initially modified the existing Regional Railways livery but applied its turquoise/white livery in 2002/2003.

Between 2003 and 2005, 153314 carried a one-off orange/black livery advertising the Norwich & Norfolk Festival.

In March 2004, Anglia was absorbed into the Greater Anglia franchise, initially known as 'one' and from 2008 as National Express East Anglia (NXEA). The mid-blue 'one' livery was initially enhanced by colourful stripes applied on the upper bodyside at the

cab ends, although these were removed when the livery was modified by NXEA. Instead, a white band was applied along the lower bodyside containing NXEA branding.

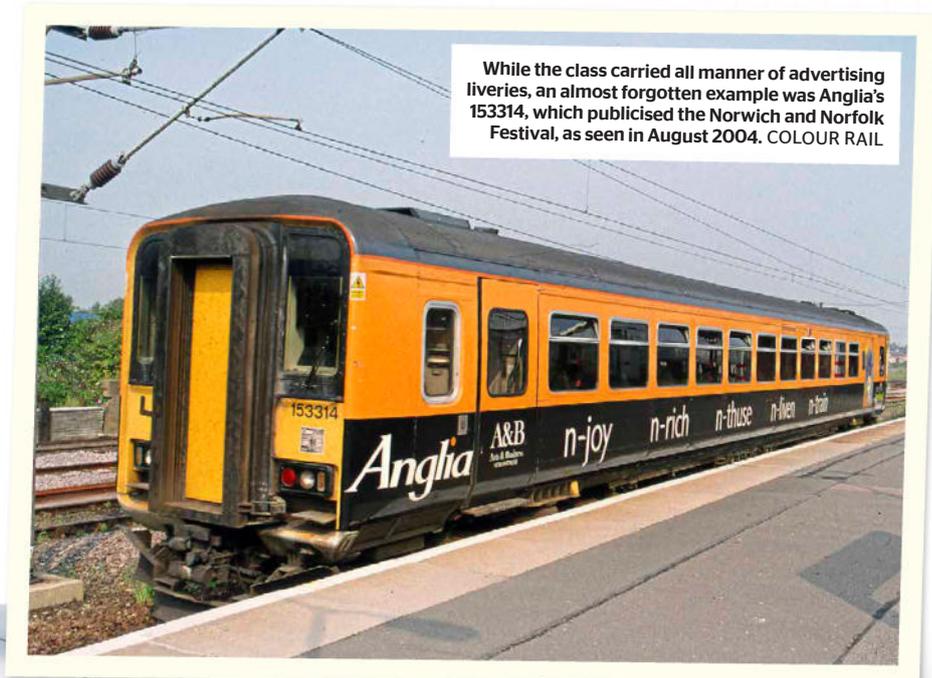
Two vehicles (153311/326) were transferred to Arriva Trains Wales in the mid-2000s and subsequently passed to East Midlands Trains.

In 2012, the franchise became Abellio Greater Anglia, and from 2014, its '153s' were refurbished and outshopped in plain white livery with red doors and GA branding.

By late 2019, the GA fleet had been replaced by Class 755 bi-mode units and 153306/309/314/322/335 were transferred to TfW (see below).

WALES

Transport for Wales is one of just two passenger TOCs still using Class 153s, and they could be in traffic for up to another eight to ten years. TfW's fleet of 30 consists of 15 fully refurbished, PRM compliant vehicles with a much larger accessible toilet (153303 ▶



While the class carried all manner of advertising liveries, an almost forgotten example was Anglia's 153314, which publicised the Norwich and Norfolk Festival, as seen in August 2004. COLOUR RAIL



Working in multiple with a Class 170 'Turbostar', London Midland 153333 runs into Bescot station in May 2010. COLOUR RAIL

Masterclass



The only operator to refurbish its Class 153s to modern passenger accessibility standards is Transport for Wales. One such example is 153329, working in tandem with a similar unit, seen at Cardiff Central in March 2022. COLOUR RAIL

TfW Active Travel Sets	Final Formations
AT01	153507+153362
AT02	153528+153353
AT03	153531+153303
AT04	153552+153382
AT05	153572+153318
AT06	153568+153327

/312/318/320/323/325/327/329/333/353/361/362/367/369/382), nine partially refurbished Class 153/9s with their original toilet locked out of use (153906/909/910/913/914/921/922/926/935) and six Class 153/5 'Active Travel' vehicles modified in 2024/25 to carry bicycles on the scenic Heart of Wales Line (153507/528/531/552/568/572).

In the case of the Class 153/5s and 153/9s, the fourth digit of the set number has been changed to reflect their status.

The '153/5s' have been extensively refurbished by Chrysalis Rail at Swansea Landore, with one half of the passenger saloon now featuring secure cycle stands and larger luggage racks. Externally, they also differ from other TfW vehicles in carrying attractive vinyls depicting various locations, events and sights along the Swansea-Shrewsbury route. All other TfW '153s' are now painted in the operator's standard grey/black/red livery.

TfW is the only operator to refurbish Class 153s to meet the accessibility standards which became mandatory in 2020, although the programme was not completed until 2022. As they have no toilet, the '153/9s' should only work in multiples with PRM-compliant units, but they also work singly on short-distance trips such as the Cardiff Queen Street to Cardiff Bay shuttle.

In summer 2025, TfW started to marshal the '153/5s' into semi-permanent 'Active Travel' sets numbered AT01-06. To ensure that the accessible toilet is always in the centre of the unit (due to the many short platforms on the Heart of Wales Line), the No. 1 End of the PRM-compliant Class 153/3 is coupled to the No.2 End of the '153/5'. The 'Active Travel' sets can only be diagrammed as coupled formations and and to remind drivers of this, yellow 'Multi Only' labels have been applied in the windscreens of the inner, coupled ends.

It's a significant change from 2018, when TfW inherited just eight Class 153s (153303/312/320/323/327/353/362/367) from its predecessor, Arriva Trains Wales (ATW). As new trains were delivered to TOCs in England, five vehicles transferred from GWR in April 2019, six from Greater Anglia in December of that year, and six came from East Midlands Railway (EMR) in 2020.

In June 2021, TfW purchased a further eight vehicles as a substitute for ex-Anglia Class 170/2s transferred to EMR.

Looking back to the early years of privatisation, the Welsh '153s' were initially allocated to the sprawling Wales & West franchise. A reorganisation in 2001-03 saw W&W's Welsh operations combined with Valley Lines and Welsh routes operated by Central Trains and First North Western to create Wales & Borders Trains. Routes in south-west England were handed over to Wessex Trains (see below). Initially, W&B had just five vehicles, but 153320/321/323 were later drafted in from Central Trains.

W&B became Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) in December 2003, which inherited a fleet of 11 Class 153s. Three vehicles were transferred to East Midlands Trains and GWR in December

2006, leaving ATW with just eight to cover the Heart of Wales Line and other duties across the Principality. Ex-FNW blue/gold 153367 was also based in Cardiff from around 2005.

Despite the frequent changes in the name 'above the door', Welsh Class 153 liveries have been comparatively straightforward over the years. Arriva Trains Wales applied its turquoise and cream livery from 2003 onwards – with the application of the colour scheme only differing from the Arriva Trains Northern version by having curved cream panels on the upper part of the cab sides. A second ATW livery appeared in the early 2010s, with this one featuring a darker main body colour, light turquoise body ends and six lighter colour bands below the passenger windows.



RIGHT: Recently converted to a Visual Inspection Unit, Network Rail's 153311 is seen at Barnet Green in May 2025. COLOUR RAIL

SOUTH WEST ENGLAND

Rural lines in Somerset, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall were a priority for Regional Railways when it introduced the Class 153s. Initially allocated to Cardiff Canton, vehicles used in the south-west were based at Exeter from 2001 until 2019.

After privatisation, 18 Class 153s were allocated to Wales & West. In late-2001 the fleet was split between Wales & Borders (5) and Wessex Trains (13). Most of the W&W (later Wessex Trains) '153s' received vinyls promoting routes on the operator's network in 2001, before the split, including black/gold 'Great Scenic Railways of Devon & Cornwall', pink 'Heart of Wessex' and light blue for the St Ives Bay line.

Despite their branding, the vehicles wandered widely across the south and west of England, working as far away as Weymouth, Worcester and Southampton. Two additional Class 153s were received from Central Trains in mid-2004.

In April 2006, Wessex Trains was merged into First Great Western to create the 'Greater Western' franchise. In December of that year, four FGW Class 153s were stored and then transferred to East Midlands Trains, although the fleet was boosted back to 12 by the arrival of ex-FNW Blue/Gold 153361 in December 2007. London Midland 153325/333 were loaned to FGW in summer 2011 and eventually made the switch permanently, taking the fleet to 14.

FGW gradually replaced its hotchpotch of inherited liveries with First Group blue/pink in the early to mid-2010s with two versions being applied – plain blue with pink doors and a version of the 'dynamic lines' livery with waves of text formed of towns and cities served by FGW services.

From 2014 onwards, FGW dropped its First Group branding, adopting a new name – Great Western Railway – and dark green livery with silver GWR lettering. The exception was 153305, outshopped from overhaul in plain white, which it retained until joining TfW. Uniquely among passenger carrying '153s', the GWR fleet had the small handrails under each windscreen removed at the same time.

As more Class 150s, 158s and 166s became available through internal cascades, GWR's Class 153s were made surplus, nine moved on loan to Northern in 2018 before being dispersed to new operators and the remaining five (153325/329/333/361/369) switched to TfW in April 2019.

MIDLANDS

Class 153 operation in the Midlands hinges on two depots – Tyseley in Birmingham and Nottingham Eastcroft – and the reorganisations that have seen TOC boundaries redrawn over the last 25 years.

Services across the East and West Midlands were in the hands of Central Trains between March 1997 and November 2007. In 2000, CT leased 21 vehicles (153320/321/323/325/329/333/334/354/356/ 364-366/369/371/375/376/379/381/383-385). These retained their original livery longer than most, ►

Modifications

Liveries apart, most Class 153s look relatively unchanged since the early-1990s although there have been incremental updates over the years. The first change was the addition of NRN cab radio roof pods from 1992. In recent years many surviving vehicles have lost these pods as the radio system has been replaced by GSM-R cab telephone. In common with other Class 15X DMUs, obstacle deflectors were fitted at each end below the cab in 1994-95. During major overhauls from the early-2000s onwards, the window in the gangway door at each end was removed in favour of a solid door. From the mid-2010s, the original headlight arrangement with small rectangular sidelights was replaced by new LED units with just a headlight and tail light. Refurbished TfW Class 153s have recently been fitted with onboard Wi-Fi and received several small receiver/transmitter pods along the centre of the roof. Northern's Class 155s also now have these Wi-Fi pods. Various operators have also modified the interior layout of their Class 153s over the years, replacing the original seats and tables and changing the colours of interior walls to match their corporate image. However, there have been more major modifications in the last five years...

SCOTRAIL

It's perhaps surprising that Class 153s did not make their debut in regular passenger service north of the border until July 2021. Five ex-GWR vehicles (153305/370/373/377/380) were rebuilt in 2019/20 by Brodies Engineering in Kilmarnock to create new 'Active Travel' accommodation for West Highland Line services. Around half of the passenger saloon has been repurposed to carry bicycles and bulky luggage, while the other half retains seats. The ScotRail '153s' work in multiple with Class 156s on the Glasgow Queen Street-Oban route, with their larger 'A End' cab facing outwards and the 'micro cab' out of use. Since April 2023 they have also worked through to Fort William and Mallaig. All five vehicles carry attractive vinyls combining ScotRail's dark blue livery with large cycle pictograms and scenery from the West Highland Line.

NETWORK RAIL

Since 2021, Network Rail has been operating a small fleet of heavily modified '153s' on track inspection duties. Known as Visual Inspection Units (VIUs), the trains are designed to replace older inspection vehicles and reduce the need for permanent way (PW) staff to examine track condition on live railways. VIUs are fitted with front-facing and downwards-facing video cameras and floodlights mounted on the cab fronts and on the underframe. Internally, the passenger saloon has been rebuilt with an enclosed diesel generator pack, workstations and computers which relay data from the cameras directly to the Cloud, where it can be reviewed by NR engineers. Externally, six windows are plated over on the left side, two of which have large ventilation louvres for the generator pack. On the right side, just two additional windows are plated over at the 'A End'.

Three ex-EMR vehicles were initially converted; 153311/376/385 becoming VIU1-VIU3. Operation was initially focused on lines across southern England and NR's Eastern Region, but later conversions are expanding the fleet to cover Wales & Western, Scotland and North West & Central regions. The success of the VIU conversions led to an expansion of the fleet with Track Condition Monitoring Unit 153379/384 (designated TCMU1 and TCMU2, respectively, but usually operated as a pair) and a fleet of nine vehicles forming seven trains expected by 2026. Included in this will be a new Track Recording Unit to replace Class 150-based two-car DMU 950001. VIU1-3 and TCMU1/2 now carry a light blue livery with company branding for Network Rail and its technology and operating partners. In mid-2025, VIU4 and 5 retained de-branded Stagecoach EMT colours but with black NR logos. Angel Trains-owned 153317 has also been repurposed for infrastructure work and now carries a light grey livery with a dark grey band around the windows. In conjunction with Network Rail, it has been rebuilt as a Railhead Treatment Train (RHTT) demonstration vehicle.

Network Rail's Class 153s are likely to be around for at least another decade, outlasting the remaining passenger vehicles. However, the story won't end there. Four '153s' have so far been purchased for further use; 153334 has been acquired by Ashville Aggregates for conversion into a conference room, the empty shell of 153374 is now a café/shop and community hub at the Llanelli & Mynydd Mawr Railway in Wales and 153308/371 are now based at the Great Central Railway. To date, just 12 of the 70 Class 153s have been scrapped, and although some have now been stored in the open for several years, they could still return to play a useful role on the railway.

Masterclass

although Central's two-tone green livery was applied in the mid-2000s.

In late-2007 CT was disbanded; West Midlands and East Midlands regional services were split between new London Midland and East Midlands Trains franchises.

LM received 153325/333/334/354/356/364-366/371/375 for West Midlands local routes, the Stourbridge Town shuttle, Coventry-Nuneaton and Bedford-Bletchley. They were also used to boost capacity on commuter lines radiating from Birmingham, working in multiple with Class 150s and 170s. All were repainted in London Midland City livery by the early-2010s and they continued in use until withdrawal in December 2020.

Over in the East Midlands, EMT started with seven Class 153s inherited from Central Trains (153321/376/379/381/383-385) plus two cascaded from National Express East Anglia (153311/326), four from Wessex Trains (153302/308/374/382), 153313/321 from Arriva Trains Wales and 153319/357 from Northern. All eventually received Stagecoach EMT colours and were based at Eastcroft depot in Nottingham.

They were used across a wide area from Crewe and Matlock to Skegness, Grimsby and Barton-on-Humber on the East Coast and Peterborough in the south. Occasionally they were also unpopular substitutes for Class 158s on long-distance Norwich-Liverpool trains.

EMT became East Midlands Railway (EMR) in August 2019 with the new franchise including a commitment to withdraw the Class 153s. Four were transferred to TfW in January 2020 and most of the rest were soon laid up due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although some returned to service, five were taken off lease for good and the final EMR '153s' were withdrawn in December 2021.

● Thanks to Mike Campbell and Andrew Donnelly for their invaluable assistance with this article.

LIVERIES CARRIED BY CLASS 153, 1991-2025

Regional Railways	153301-335/351-385
ScotRail 'Active Travel'	153305/370/373/377/380
Abellio Greater Anglia white/red	153306/309/314/322/335
Arriva Trains Northern turquoise/cream	153301/304/307/315/317/319/328/ 331/351/352/357/378
Arriva Trains Wales turquoise/cream	153303/312/320/323/327/353/362/367
Arriva Trains Wales dark/light blue	153303/312/327/353/362
Heart of Wales orange	153303/312/320/321/323/327/ 353/362/368
ATW 'Times are changing' black	153323
Anglia Railways turquoise/white	153306/309/314/322/335
Anglia Norwich & Norfolk Festival	153314
Central Trains green	153325/333/334/354/356/364-366/ 371/375/376/379/381/383-385
Stagecoach East Midlands Trains	153302/308/310/311/313/318/319/321/ 326/355/357/368/372/374/376/379/ 381-385
'One' Anglia	153306/314
National Express East Anglia	153306/314
North Western Trains/FNW blue/gold	153310/313/316/324/330/332/ 358-361/363/367
Northern blue/purple	153301/304/307/315-317/324/328/ 330-332/351/352/358-360/363/378
GWR green	153318/368/370/372/373/377/380/382
FGW 'dynamic lines'	153305/318/361/368/369/370/372/373/ 377/380/382
FGW blue/pink	153329/361/369
London Midland City	153325/333/334/354/356/ 364-366/371/375
Wessex Trains St Ives Line	153369
Wessex Trains Heart of Wessex	153305/318/327/355/368/370/372/373
Wessex Trains Devon & Cornwall	153302/303/308/374/377/380/382
W&B Heart of Wales Line	153303/312/321/323/353/362/368
Network Rail Blue	153311/376/379/384/385
Angel Trains/NR grey	153317
Network Rail/Stagecoach	153311/376/379/384/385
TfW grey/black	153303/312/318/320/323/325/327/329/3 33/353/361/362/367/369/382, 153906/90 9/910/913/914/921/922/926/935/968/972
TfW Active Travel	153507/528/531/552/568/572
GA white/red with TfW branding	153309
EMT Stagecoach with TfW branding	153310, 153926
FGW blue/pink with TfW branding	153329/361/369
London Midland City with FGW branding	153325
ATN green/cream with EMT branding	153357
GWR light grey undercoat	153305
GWR 'Citizens Rail' pink	153325
GWR 'Visit South Devon'	153333

Converted to carry extra luggage and cycles, ScotRail's fleet of Class 153s work the West Highland routes in company with Class 156s. SCOTRAIL

The Heljan Class 153 offers 'O' gauge modellers an extremely useful prototype.



HOW TO

CUSTOMISE A CLASS 153

George Dent clears space on his workbench for Heljan's new 'O' gauge railcar, adds a suitable load of passengers and crew, plus a few extra touches to make a great model even better.



Modelu's pack of bespoke passengers fit perfectly into the Heljan '153', bringing the interior to life.

The Class 153 holds a special place in my heart, not least for its association with some of Britain's most scenic railway lines.

I've been lucky enough to ride on countless examples over the years, exploring the branch lines of Devon, Cornwall, and Norfolk, plus longer-distance jaunts along the Cumbrian Coast, Settle-Carlisle and West Highland routes and many more mundane routes around the north of England and East Midlands.

Indeed, I recall engaging in some lighthearted banter with rail staff at Westbury after opting for a Class 153 'stopper' to Exeter St Davids in preference over an express HST. There are times when taking the slow train is the better option!

Heljan's recent release of the Class 153 in 'O' gauge (see review in MR347) was greeted enthusiastically by 7mm scale modellers, as

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well as by those with a serious urge to explore this larger scale. Single-car units offer myriad layout opportunities for those of us with limited space and, just like Heljan's preceding Class 121/122 railcars, the '153' makes the inclusion of passenger operations more viable. After all, not everyone appreciates a freight-only shunting plank!

The same can be said for Class 153s in other scales, with Hornby's 'OO' model still current and, if shopping around, some bargain prices can be found. Heljan's 4mm scale '153' should be with us later this year too and, in 'N' gauge, Dapol's model continues to appear in a range of colourful liveries. Each model has a place on many modern image layouts, whether big or small.

CHOICE UPGRADES

Thanks to the high level of detail on Heljan's '153', there wasn't a great deal to do with this model, other than to add some crew, passengers and a slightly lived-in weathered appearance.

That said, I did note some areas of the interior that would benefit from extra attention. Thanks to the large windows and interior lighting, the bulkheads are highly visible, so adding printed adverts and information panels to the empty frames is a simple gesture, but one that brings significant reward.

Likewise, picking out the door operating buttons and control panels with appropriate paints was a quick job that proved worthwhile. ▶

PHOTOGRAPHY: GEORGE DENT

Masterclass

Thanks to Modelu, packs of train crew and passengers are available in 3D-printed resin and designed especially to fit into the seats of the Heljan model, so there was no need to cut and fettle limbs in order to squeeze the people into position. The two crew figures even take into account the differing cab layout at each end of a '153'. The figures packs are available in other scales too.

Just one passenger pack was employed, as I wanted to keep my '153' lightly loaded. The figures are perfect for more recent years, due to the clothing and hairstyles, and because several passengers are engrossed in their mobile phones.

Painting the little people took a couple of hours, as did the weathering of the '153's' exterior and interior, achieved over two separate stages. My aim was to portray a well-maintained train, but with ingrained dirt visible in the panel seams, around the pronounced rivet heads and along the roof. A generic, dirty brown coating over the underframe equipment would present a convincing contrast with the more regularly washed bodywork.

The weathering also gave me a chance to try a new masking fluid in earnest, having only used it on smaller items so far. It helped protect the glazing from the weathering washes and airbrushed enamel paints and, thanks to its water-based nature, was so much easier to remove than other latex-based formulas.

All-in-all, this was a highly enjoyable project, although I plan to revisit the interior at some point and add some luggage and coats (sculpted from Milliput perhaps), plus cups, newspapers and other detritus.

Another welcome addition, in terms of the human element, would be a guard standing in the aisle serving a passenger with a ticket.

That's the beauty of 'O' gauge - there's always scope for adding more detail!

What you will need

SHOPPING LIST

- ◆ Modelu • 10239-043 Class 153 Crew (£14.49) • 10241-043 Class 153 passengers (£29.95)

Web: www.modelu3d.co.uk

- ◆ Deluxe Materials Opaque Masking Magic and Speed Epoxy • RailMatch enamel paints and thinners

Availability: Model shops or Gaugemaster

Web: www.gaugemasterretail.com

- ◆ MIG weathering washes, paintbrushes

Availability: Scale Model Shop

Web: www.scalemodelshop.co.uk

TOOLS

- ◆ Knife and spare blades
- ◆ Cocktail sticks
- ◆ Cotton swabs
- ◆ Paintbrushes
- ◆ Airbrush and equipment (optional)



1

The Modelu figures were trimmed of most of the support structures and tacked to scraps of foamboard. As they would be highly visible, I took my time and tried to give them plenty of character.



2

To protect the clear glazing during the weathering stages, I coated the exterior of each window with Deluxe Materials Masking Magic fluid. It is simply brushed over the surface after giving the bottle a good shake.



3

It's not essential to brush the Masking Magic perfectly into each aperture as, once fully dry, it can be trimmed carefully in situ. I ran a fresh scalpel blade very gently around the inner edges of the window frames.



4

The excess Masking Magic was gently peeled away using a toothpick. It took some time to treat each side and end of the railcar, but it would save much time later and proved easier and less fiddly than using masking tape.



5

Weathering began by creating a blend of MIG Neutral and Brown enamel-based washes. The mix was then brushed over one side of the body, working the pigment into the panel seams. It was left for about 10 minutes to dry.



6

It looked a real mess at this point, but wiping away most of the wash with a rag, using vertical strokes, instantly improved matters. The key is to allow the pigment to remain in the seams and around the details and rivet heads.



7

The enamel washes remain workable for an hour or so. The shades can be tailored to suit the livery elements - only a pale grey-brown was needed on this light livery, but a darker wash would be needed on deeper colours.



8

The process was repeated on the other side and both ends. It takes time to treat a model of this size. The roof was next, using a much darker blend of enamel washes (MIG Dark and Dark Brown shades), brushed from side to side.



9

Again, a cotton rag was used to wipe away much of the wash after it had begun to dry out. The rag was rubbed lightly, working laterally, to promote streaking effects to match the action of gravity.



10

The model was left for 24 hours to dry completely. RailMatch enamel Frame Dirt was airbrushed around the underframe and bogies, working gradually with a fine mist and moving the tool to ensure even coverage.



11

The same Frame Dirt shade was misted along the very lowest edge of the bodyshell, just to give a wispy hint of dust and debris. As the bodywork is likely to be cleaned regularly, restraint and a good aim was important here.



12

To treat the roof, I thinned RailMatch Weathered Black and misted it over the roof. A few passes of side-to-side misting followed, but I didn't want to obscure the streaking created. Extra misting was applied around the exhaust.



13

Another overnight rest followed to allow the enamel paints to dry fully, and then the masking film was peeled away. A wooden toothpick is useful for lifting a corner which can be grabbed with a fine set of tweezers.



14

Some areas of Masking Magic film were a little stubborn. Simply rubbing with a cotton swab dampened with water will remove all traces. The opaque formula made it easier to notice any areas of film that remained.



15

I'd given the interior bulkheads a light weathering wash treatment, using the MIG Neutral shade. The frames were picked out with silver paint and printed adverts cut from some card kit spares.



16

The final step was to install the driver and passenger figures, which fitted easily into the seats without any need to trim limbs. For a secure bond, I mixed up some 4-minute epoxy glue and applied a small blob to each person's rump. The model was left overnight again before final reassembly.



With a crew, passengers and a slightly lived-in appearance, the Heljan model is now ready for action.



The use of thin enamel weathering washes brings the rivet head detail into sharp relief.

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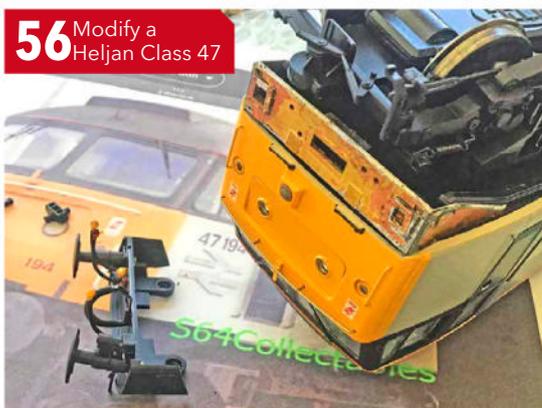
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Workbench

Inspirational projects, advice and top tips that show you how

56 Modify a Heljan Class 47



Meet the *Model Rail* Expert modellers



Chris Nevard
Our ace photographer is also a hugely talented modeller.



Dave Lowery
Professional model maker with a lifetime's experience.

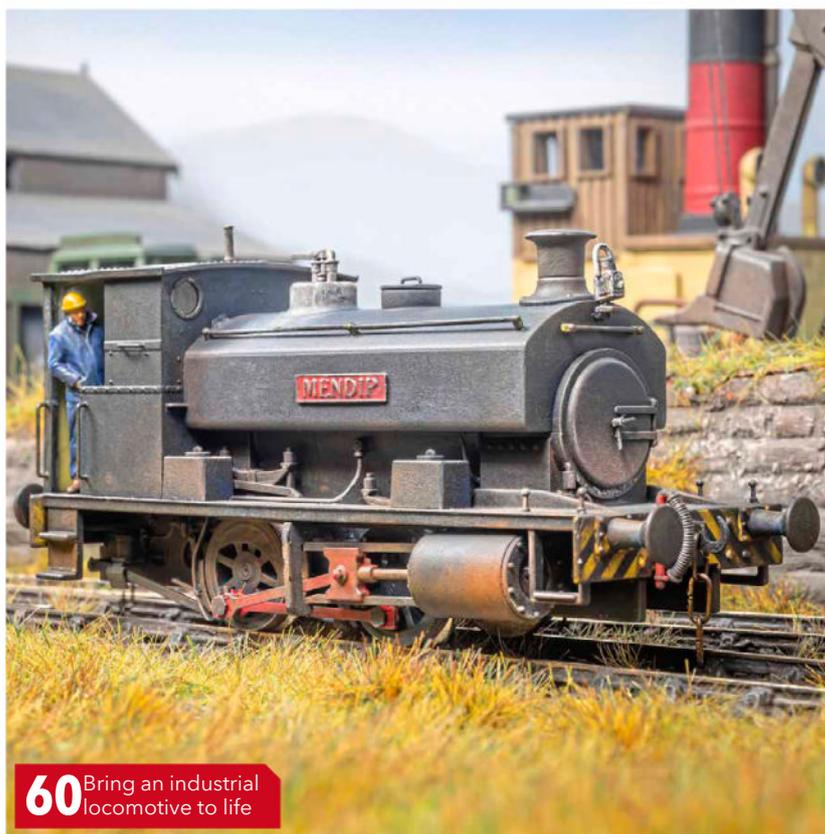
Project difficulty ratings



Easy:
one screwdriver



Very hard:
five screwdrivers



60 Bring an industrial locomotive to life



HOW TO

BUILD A COUNTRY COTTAGE - FROM A PLASTIC KIT

PART ONE

PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRIS NEVARD



Quintessentially English, creating the country cottage idyll for your layout is easier than you might think, as **Chris Nevard** discovered...

00 GAUGE **PRODUCT** Wills CK10 Farm Cottage kit ♦ Price £22.95 | **Availability** Peco stockists **Web:** www.peco-uk.com | **6 hrs** |

The Wills Craftsman series of kits has been around for many, many years. The Farm Cottage (CK10) in particular has always attracted me, as I've seen built examples on layouts and on the shelves of countless model shops.

I always thought it would be a simple kit to assemble, rather like other Wills kits, which have beginners in mind. But, when I took it up to the counter to pay at my local Kernow Model Rail Centre, I was told that it's more of a box of scratchbuilding materials, rather than an archetypal kit.

Indeed, this range of 'kits' provides sheets of uncut textured plastic sheet, with brick or stone patterns for the walls, plus appropriate roofing and paving. Sets of moulded plastic windows, doors, guttering and chimneys complete the ingredients, all of which you may recognise from packs of general building materials that are available separately.

Accordingly, there's plenty of scope for customising, as you can cut out apertures for doors and windows wherever you like. That said, a set of detailed paper plans is provided, which can be used as templates to help cut the walls and roof sections to shape.

I've always been impressed with the quality of the Wills embossed plastic building sheets. The same moulds must have churned out many thousands of these sheets over the decades, but the detail is still crisp and responds extremely well during the painting and weathering stage.

The plastic sheets are also nice and thick, so little, if any, extra layers or bracing are required to keep everything straight and true.

Because of this approach, some people may have been put off buying the Craftsman Series kits, thinking that they might be a bit beyond their abilities. Hopefully, the following

demonstration will help to explain that it's not as difficult as you may think.

As I say, full-sized plans and instructions are included, which feature tips on how to prepare the parts and then put them together. However, having never been one to follow instructions too closely, and knowing that there's always another way to do things, here's how I went about it.

This was certainly a very different kit compared to what I'm used to. Construction probably took twice as long as with a traditional kit. However, the joy of this one is that you can make something a little more bespoke. My deviation was to have chimneys at either end of the building rather than the single gabled roof as suggested in the instructions.

In the next issue, I'll show you how I installed the windows and added some extra detail touches. Plus, I'll explain my preparation, painting and weathering process, using a modest palette of everyday paints.

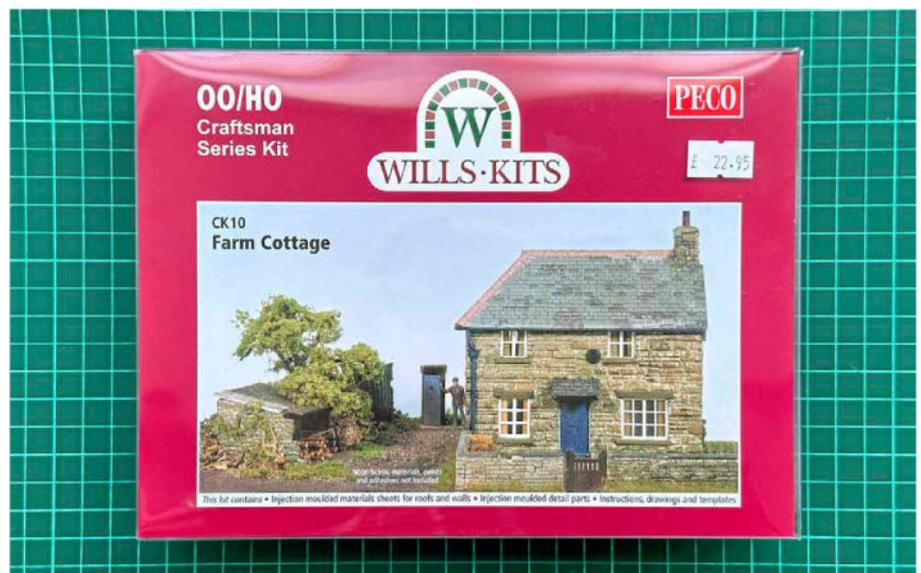
What you will need

SHOPPING LIST

- ♦ Plastic Weld or similar liquid poly cement • 1mm thick plastic card
- Availability:** Model & craft stores

TOOLS

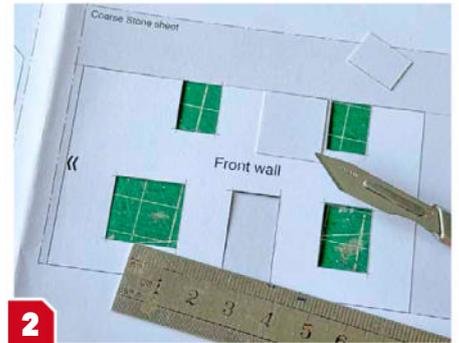
- ♦ Hobby knife and spare blades
- ♦ Cutting mat
- ♦ Steel rule
- ♦ Needle files
- ♦ 1mm drill bit and brace
- ♦ Paper nail files or sandpaper



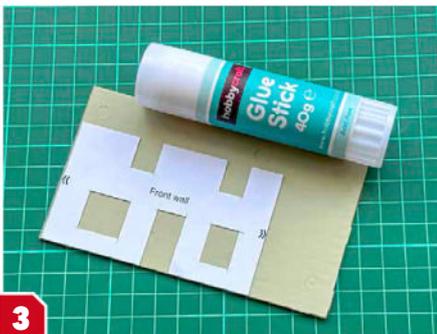
STEP BY STEP



1 What you get with the Wills Craftsman Series kit. It's a good idea to lay everything out and familiarise yourself with the parts and materials. Reading the instructions helps too. Remember to keep the clear box - that's your glazing for the windows.



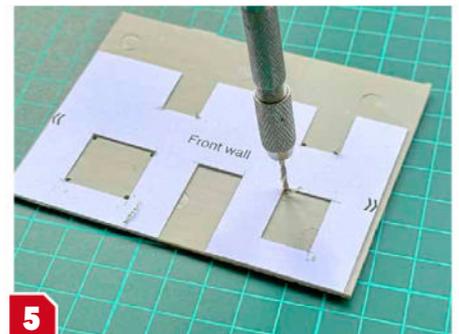
2 There is a full-sized plan of the building if you want your model to look like the photograph on the cover of the box. However, there's enough plastic sheeting supplied if you want to expand the footprint of the building a little.



3 I decided to go with the supplied paper plan. With a scalpel and ruler, I cut it out and, with a glue stick, I attached it to the rear of one of the stone-effect plastic sheets.



4 I then cut the plastic sheet to size, using a fresh blade in a stout trimming knife, working against a steel rule. Rather than trying to cut all the way through, cut halfway through and then snap the plastic.



5 In the instructions, it suggested cutting the window apertures with a fret saw, but I preferred a different approach. I began by drilling 1mm (or thereabouts) holes close to each corner of the apertures.



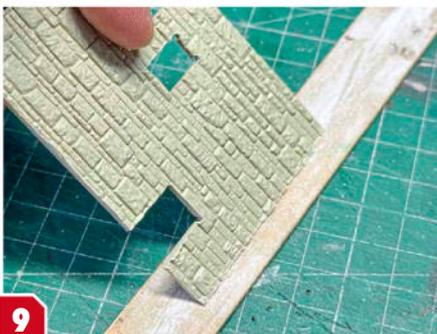
6 Next, I used the knife and steel rule to cut lines linking up the holes. As before, I only cut about halfway through the thick plastic, then cut an 'X' pattern to allow the waste to be snapped away in quarter segments.



7 The process was repeated for each window and door opening, and then the edges were tidied up and formed to their final size using needle files and a sanding stick. Cosmetic nail files are also handy for this job.



8 Once you've cut out all four walls of the building, to get a really neat finish to the corner joints, chamfer the mating surfaces to as close to 45° as possible. I used a knife to carve away the bulk of the material - watch those fingers!



9 Complete the chamfering by running the edges over a flat file or coarse sanding paper. Check the fit of the parts until you get a nice, clean joint. Any gaps can be addressed later if the fit is not 100% perfect.



10 I adapted my cottage to feature twin gable ends, which would require two chimney stacks. I opted to make these before assembling the main walls. They're simply a small box, again with chamfered corners to each joint.

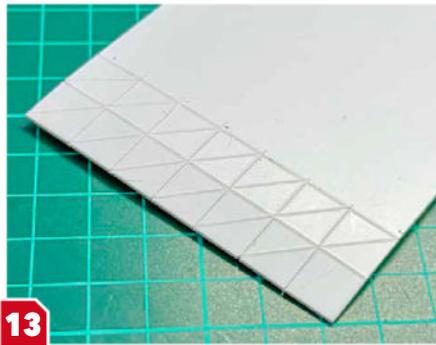


11 The chimney stacks were glued together on the inside face of each gable end, using poly cement, applied by brush from the inside of each joint. Masking tape can be used to clamp the assembly while the solvent cures.



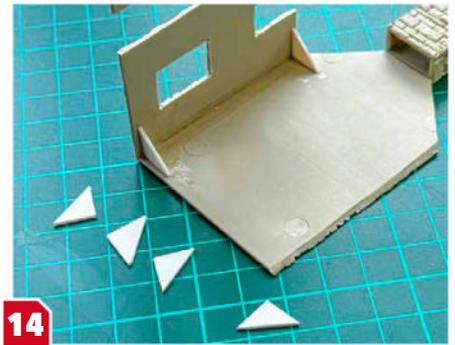
12

Once the chimney stacks had set enough for the gable end walls to be handled, the cottage's main structure was bonded together, one corner at a time. Blu Tack is useful for holding things in place if you don't have three hands.



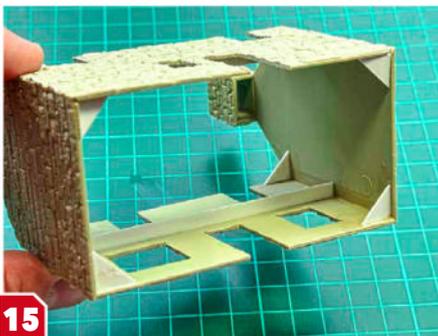
13

To ensure each corner of the building is square, and to add reinforcement against any future bumps, I cut up some spare 1mm plastic card, initially into squares, which were then bisected diagonally to form right-angle triangles.



14

Again, I only cut about halfway through the plastic with the knife before snapping all the segments away. After dressing the edges, the plastic gussets were bonded to the inside of the corners with liquid poly cement.



15

The other corner joints were made in turn, checking everything was aligned and adding reinforcing gussets. I also added longitudinal strips of plastic to the inside of the long walls to guard against bowing over time.



16

The roof is much like the sides, in that it's up to you to determine its size. Using the building for reference, I cut the panels a little too large to begin with, then trimmed them down little by little until I got a good fit.



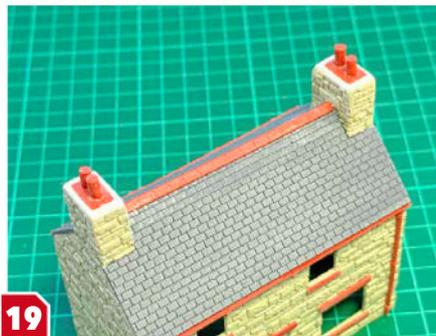
17

The roof panels, once fettled, were bonded in place, which soon gave the structure a more rigid feel. The ridge tile strip was cut from the fret, trimmed to length and then glued into place.



18

The open tops of the chimney stacks needed capping off, so rectangles of plastic card were cut and trimmed to size. A flat file was run over the top of the stacks to ensure a flat surface for the caps to sit onto.



19

After the glue had set, the chimney caps were filed and sanded to blend with the stone stacks. Pairs of chimney pots were cut from the supplied fret and mounted onto base plates, which were then fixed into position.



20

The detailing can now begin, with windowsills and lintels fixed in place, along with gutters and downpipes, all cut to the required size and bonded with the liquid poly cement.



21

The front door and small porch roof were fixed into position, and I added some of the wall strengthening plates to lend some extra character. Fitting of the windows will wait until after the painting stage.



22 Now that the lion's share of assembly is complete, it's time to tidy up the joints and start adding some extra details before painting commences - all of which will be covered in the April issue of *Model Rail* - on sale March 12.



HOW TO

MODIFY A HELJAN CLASS 47

In a bid to introduce some variety to his Brush Type 4 fleet, **Dave Lowery** employs a simple conversion kit to represent a common late-BR era modification.

The ready-to-run 'O' gauge market has come on in leaps and bounds over the past couple of decades. But while Heljan, and a few other manufacturers, have brought superb models to the table, it's hard not to think that everybody's trains look the same!

Unlike 'OO' diesel outline locomotives, there just isn't the same breadth of choice in 'O' in terms of sub-classes and representation of detail differences.

The once-ubiquitous British Rail/Brush Class 47 is a perfect example. Modellers working in 'OO' have the luxury of choosing between excellent models from Bachmann and Heljan, soon to be joined by Cavalex's version of course. All three of these products cater for endless headcode panels, cant rail grilles, boiler compartment fittings, fuel tanks, buffers and headlamp combinations, on top of a rainbow of potential colour schemes. Even the Graham Farish 'N' gauge Class 47 comes with a wide range of tooling options too!

 **MODEL: Heljan Class 47 Price: £729.00**
(shop around for significant discounts)

AVAILABILITY: Heljan stockists ♦ **Web: www.heljan.co.uk**

 4 hrs | 

As good as the Heljan 'O' gauge Class 47 is, there is - currently at least - a finite choice of variations, so some good old-fashioned customising is needed to replicate any quirks that your chosen prototype may have sported.

This little project is nice and straightforward, offering the chance to bring a little difference to your locomotive fleet without spending a fortune on parts, hacking a lovely new RTR model to bits, or having to apply a new coat of paint.

NINETIES CUT-BACKS

With the fashions and music of the 1990s now in vogue with the cool kids, it's a good time to look back at a very Nineties modification carried out to the BR Class 47

fleet. At this time, a sizeable chunk of the Brush Type 4s were allocated to the Railfreight Distribution (RfD) sector and, with privatisation of the state-owned railway on the horizon, operators were looking to extend the lives of ageing BR diesel types.

Various life-extension programmes were under way, some involving heavy repairs, but others were more modest, simply looking at ways of reducing the need for corrosion repairs or improving the conditions for the footplate crew.

In the case of RfD '47s', well over 100 examples had their original raised bufferbeam cowlings removed and the lower edges of the cab sides trimmed in an effort to resolve problematic areas of corrosion and reduce draughts within the cabs. It resulted in



a slightly brutal appearance, but it seemed to prove successful, with the InterCity sector following suit with its Class 47/4s.

When the Class 57 re-engineering programme began, the donor '47' bodysells received the same treatment (if they hadn't already) as part of the rebuilding process.

For modellers of the late BR and post-privatisation eras, this is a feature well worth recreating, as it opens up the possibility of replicating a huge number of passenger and freight Class 47s. The job is made easier thanks to an etched brass kit from Proto Neo.

The kit provides parts for a pair of replacement bufferbeams or, as the manufacturer describes them, 'cutaway headstocks'. Whatever the correct term might be, the kit consists of parts etched from 30thou' (0.76mm) brass, which are pre-cut and only require a little fettling before assembly. Each headstock is made up of twin layers, with the outer face featuring half-etched detail to represent the raised buffer shank mounts and beading around the drawhook aperture.

Some extra, smaller parts are also provided, to allow the buffer mounts to be built up to

the required depth (the Heljan buffers are re-fitted later), while holes are preformed to accept the various brake and control hoses.

The twin layers require folding and laminating before installation. I chose to solder the parts for a strong, consistent bond. Given the size of the parts, a powerful iron or, preferably, a mini blowtorch is required to heat the brass sufficiently to allow the solder to flow between the layers. But if soldering scares you, it's easy enough to use glue, such as epoxy or a contact adhesive like UHU.

A helpful feature of Heljan's model is the fact that the bufferbeams are held in place with pairs of screws, making them easy to remove as complete units without having to disassemble the whole chassis or cut anything away. The kit takes this into account and provides twin mounting lugs to allow the new headstocks to simply screw into position.

Just like the real thing, however, the lower edges of the cab sides require cutting back. After carefully marking out, I used a coarse flat file to remove the unwanted material, tidying up the edges with a finer-toothed file and abrasive pads. Working gently and

What you will need

SHOPPING LIST

- ◆ Class 47/57 cut-away headstock kit, etched BR logos and depot motifs
Availability: Proto Neo **Web:** www.protoneo.com **Email:** protoneo.nameplates@gmail.com
- ◆ Waterslide Class 47 TOPS numbers, black **Availability:** Railtec Transfers **Web:** www.railtec-models.com

TOOLS

- ◆ Knife and spare blades
- ◆ Miniature screwdrivers
- ◆ Tweezers
- ◆ Spring clamps
- ◆ Files
- ◆ Pliers
- ◆ Soldering iron and equipment (optional)

keeping the tools away from the outer faces of the bodysell kept the paintwork intact, so I didn't have to do any touching up. In fact, a little airbrushed weathering finished things off nicely and disguised the surgery.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

With the original buffers, brake pipes, corner footsteps and screw couplings reinstated to the new headstocks, the '47' was almost complete.

Like many Heljan 'O' gauge diesels, this '47' came without numbers or BR logos, so I could choose my own identity for this RfD Type 4. Railtec does some lovely packs for Heljan 'O' gauge models that include all the markings you'll need for the job. The pack employed here included TOPS numbers (for the cab sides and ends), RfD sub-sector logos, data panels, overhead line warning flashes and a few other useful bits and bobs. For the cast BR 'double arrow' logos and Tinsley depot plaques, Proto Neo produce some great etched plates, as do Fox Transfers.

It's important to spray the areas to receive decals with clear gloss varnish and allow it to cure fully beforehand. This will improve adhesion of waterslide films and render them invisible, thus avoiding the unpleasant 'silvering' effect. I masked the glazing before spraying, rather than trying to remove it. I used tape, or you can use a masking fluid, as George did on his Class 153 (see page 47).

With the decals applied, they were left to dry overnight before sealing them in place with a light spray coat of satin varnish.

It feels great to put your own stamp on your fleet, and introducing some detail variety makes things much more interesting, not least to viewers of your layout, especially if you have multiple locomotives of the same class.

The late 1990s and early 2000s was a fascinating time on Britain's railways, with so many tweaks made to classic BR traction types in order to keep them running, so it's important to replicate such things if you can.

**STEP
BY
STEP**



1

The subject for this project is the Heljan 'O' gauge Class 47. It's great, but it has only (so far) been available with the original pattern bufferbeam cowling. As always, sourcing good images of the real thing can be really useful.



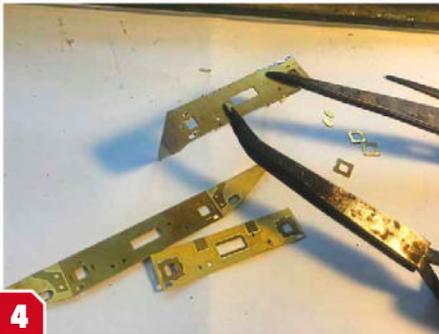
2

The Proto Neo conversion kit provides new headstock parts etched in 30thou' brass. The parts come pre-cut, so they only need a light fettling of the edges with a file to clean up any ridges from the etching process.



3

It's good practice to clean etched brass parts with some household detergent to remove any unwanted debris and residues. After folding the parts to shape, the two laminations are aligned and clamped together.



4

I soldered the two layers together, applying the hot iron and molten solder along the edges. If soldering doesn't appeal, the parts can be readily glued together with epoxy or contact adhesive and clamped securely.



5

Once the twin layers are laminated, the smaller detail parts can be installed, building up the buffershank bases and adding the small oval parts to the side panels. When complete, clean the parts thoroughly.



6

The original bufferbeams can be removed from the Heljan '47'. The buffers, brake hoses, couplings and footsteps at each corner all need to be salvaged, along with the screws, so keep them in a safe place.



7

With the originals removed, the replacement brass headstocks were test-fitted. You may need to adjust the mounting lugs to ensure the mounting holes line up. I also had to tweak the side panels a fraction to get a perfect fit.



8

Using a pencil, and with the headstocks in place, mark out the areas of the cab edges that will need to be cut away, making use of your reference images. Use a straight edge to mark out the line along the sides.

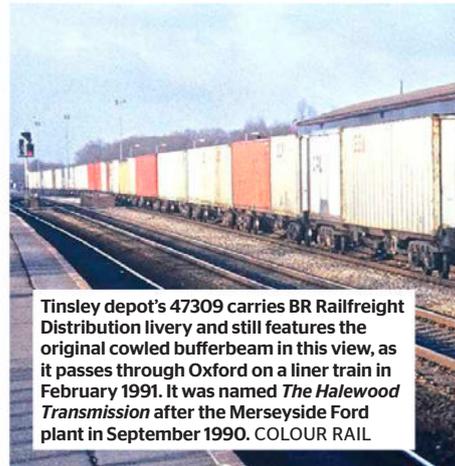


9

With a flat, coarse file, I began cutting away the waste, working up to my pencil lines gradually, while taking care not to damage the paintwork. When complete, the rough tool marks were smoothed with a file and abrasives.



Heljan's impressive 'O' gauge Class 47 has yet to be offered in 'cut-back' headstock form, so this quick conversion project helps modellers add variety to their fleet.



Tinsley depot's 47309 carries BR Railfreight Distribution livery and still features the original cowed bufferbeam in this view, as it passes through Oxford on a liner train in February 1991. It was named *The Halewood Transmission* after the Merseyside Ford plant in September 1990. COLOUR RAIL

10 The new headstocks were primed and painted satin black using aerosol-based paints. When dry, the Heljan buffers, brake hoses and footsteps were glued in position. All the underframe parts were removed and weathered away from the model, making it easier to achieve an even coating of grime. Much better than those so-called weathering jobs that only touch the outer surface!



11 This Heljan '47' came without a number or logos, so I applied some waterslide decals following an initial coat of clear gloss varnish. When the decals were dry, satin varnish followed before the bodyshell was weathered.



12 With all the details installed, the painted and weathered headstocks were mounted to the chassis using the pairs of original screws. The '47' was reassembled and it was ready for action!



The cutaway bufferbeam treatment was meted out to 47309 in the late 1990s, as can be seen in this view at Loughborough. Following privatisation, 47309 became a Freightliner locomotive and was re-named *European Rail Operator of the Year* in 1998. A set of large sandboxes was also fitted to each bogie. The end came in 2009, when 47309 was scrapped. COLOUR RAIL



HOW TO

BRING AN INDUSTRIAL LOCOMOTIVE TO LIFE

Having sat patiently on a shelf for a few years, the time has come for this Andrew Barclay 0-4-0ST to shine, as **Chris Nevard** portrays an oily, dusty and careworn industrial workhorse.

I think it's safe to say that we're all guilty of purchasing locomotives on a whim, whether they fit into the theme of our layouts or not. Sometimes, a model is just too hard to resist.

In many instances, they sit on a shelf, often for years, waiting for the call. Perhaps there was an initial idea to customise or repaint the model to suit a specific project, but a lack of time - or simply apathy in my case - gets in the way.

I had such a locomotive sitting patiently on my shelf, looking pretty but gathering dust as it waited its turn in my list of projects. The model in question is an Andrew Barclay 16in 0-4-0ST, wearing the fetching blue industrial livery of the Corn Products Company.

Manufactured as part of the Hattons Originals range, I was shocked to recall that the model was released back in 2018, so it had been on that shelf much longer than I'd

00 GAUGE MODEL: Accurascale Andrew Barclay 0-4-0ST ♦ Price: £99.95

AVAILABILITY
www.accurascale.com

6 hrs



realised. Indeed, the years pass more quickly the closer one gets to the great marshalling yard in the sky, so, without wanting to sound morbid, it doesn't hurt to be reminded that your projects and aspirations need to get done, as it's all too easy to keep putting things off for another day!

As many readers will be aware, the Andrew Barclay 0-4-0ST tooling passed to Accurascale following the demise of Hattons, along with various other steam and diesel locomotives and rolling stock, which was great news.

Hattons were actually well into a new production run of these 0-4-0STs when the retailer was forced to close, so Accurascale saw the project to fruition last year.

They're only available via the Accurascale website and, at the time of writing (late January), there were seven livery versions still in stock, across both the 16in and 14in variants, including a few without branding or numbers, which makes customisation that bit easier.

At less than £100 each, they're superb value in today's market and, with a little searching, earlier Hattons releases can also still be found, either as 'new old stock' or second-hand, so it's worth shopping around a little.

Also available from Accurascale is a suitable 6pin DCC decoder, plus packs of pre-coloured 3D-printed footplate crew designed especially for the 14in and 16in Hunslets by Modelu. Regular, non-coloured



What you will need

SHOPPING LIST

- ◆ Andrew Barclay footplate crew pack (ref. 11213-076) **Availability:** Modelu **Web:** www.modelu3d.co.uk
- ◆ Smiths 3-link scale couplings, Springside locomotive lamps **Availability:** Peter's Spares **Web:** www.petersspares.com
- ◆ Bespoke etched locomotive nameplates **Availability:** Light Railway Stores **Web:** www.lightrailwaystores.co.uk

TOOLS

- ◆ Knife and spare blades
- ◆ Cutting mat
- ◆ Paint brushes
- ◆ Cotton buds
- ◆ Needle files
- ◆ Nail files

figures can be found on Modelu's website too, designed especially for the Andrew Barclay 0-4-OST, so I picked up a set featuring driver and fireman in suitable poses and industrial garb.

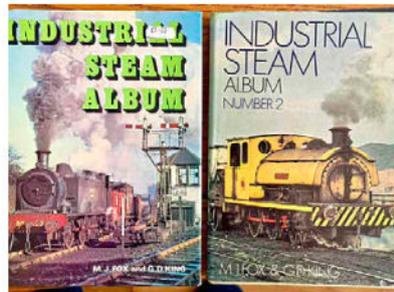
I always have great fun painting these figures; they feature so much detail, which, in my experience, makes them easier to paint thanks to the clearer definition. All the folds and creases in the clothing create natural shadows, but a gentle wash treatment with diluted paint at the end of the process serves to exaggerate these features, bringing the little people to life.

GRIME TIME

When I originally bought this CPC-branded locomotive, my thought was to remove the existing branding and give it a suitably weathered finish, with an eye on portraying a machine that has been working long, hard

REFERENCE WORKS

To inspire my weathering, I needed to find some photographs of industrial steam locomotives in service. Luckily there is quite a bit of information available online, and of course some wonderful books which can be picked up inexpensively on your favourite auction site, or from second-hand specialist book dealers. Here are a couple of my favourites from the 1970s when industrial steam was still a thing.



shifts in a harsh colliery environment. I know some steam locomotives were treated like pets at some locations, with the paintwork and copper pipes kept gleaming, but my mind wandered back to visits I made to Poland in the early 1990s to see steam locomotives still at work.

Rather than simply being coated in a uniform layer of rust and dust, as is often portrayed by modellers, the appearance of the real things was more about grease and soot. The engines were literally warm and sticky to the touch, much like they'd been smeared in Christmas pudding!

So, that was my mission - to give this little locomotive a more authentic, textured coating of grime and grease, suggesting a build-up of dirt, ash, limescale, rust and soot that has occurred gradually, over several years.

That's not to say that it should look derelict. On the contrary, I wanted it to look very much like a hardworking, well-maintained machine.

Something I find interesting is that no two locomotives ever look the same in terms of weathering. They may have a similar overall air of misuse and lack of cleaning, and some types may leak oil or water from similar locations, but scrutiny often reveals that staining, bumps and scrapes are all unique to individual engines.

It's all a world away from the clean, polished look you'd expect to see on a heritage railway, that's for sure. I find it's vital to arm myself with plenty of prototype inspiration (see panel) before starting a project like this. If weathering more than one engine at a time, bear in mind that they don't need to be weathered to look the same.

One important tip that I'd like to expand upon is the use of a clear matt varnish coat, sprayed from an aerosol before the weathering paints are applied. The reason for this is to create a key for the weathering paints to adhere to, or they may struggle to stick to the smooth, factory finish, especially when using acrylic paints.

KEEP THOSE WHEELS CLEAN

Trying to keep paint off the wheel treads and wiper contacts is difficult during weathering, especially when trying to get the 'grime' into all the nooks and crannies of the chassis and spoked wheels. It's essential, therefore, to clean the wheels and pickups thoroughly once work is complete.

Lots of proprietary cleaning fluids are available for this purpose, such as Loco Go! from Hobby Traxx (www.hobbytraxx.co.uk), many of which are safe for use on plastics and painted surfaces. Always read the instructions before use and, if in any doubt, try on a small area of the model first. They can be applied with fine-tipped cosmetic cotton buds or micro-brushes, especially when reaching into awkward areas.

On non-DCC-equipped locomotives, you can press the terminals of a 9volt battery against the powered wheels, which will turn the motor over. Holding a cotton swab soaked in cleaning fluid against the wheel tread, flange and inner face (where the pickups bear against) while the wheels turn speeds up the job.

Another handy device is Peco's wheel cleaning brush (ref. PL-42), which you connect to your layout controller. With the model held upside down in a foam cradle, power is applied to the wheels with the tool's conductive brass brushes (and a crocodile clip or test probe to the other opposite wheel for both polarities). As the wheels rotate, the brass brushes clean away any paint and debris leaving them spotless - it's effortless! Better still, use two of the Peco brushes, one for each polarity, and clean both sides at the same time.

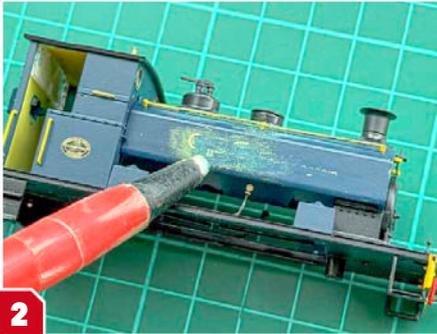


I used Humbrol's matt acrylic varnish, but Tamiya's version is also recommended, both of which are easy to find in model shops and online. Try to avoid spraying when it's very cold and don't apply the varnish too thickly, because the finish can turn a little cloudy in both instances. This happened to me, but I was able to hide it under the weathering, luckily. Also, remember to use aerosol paints only in a well-ventilated space, ideally outdoors and of course, when it's not raining - something that's been a struggle in 2026 so far!

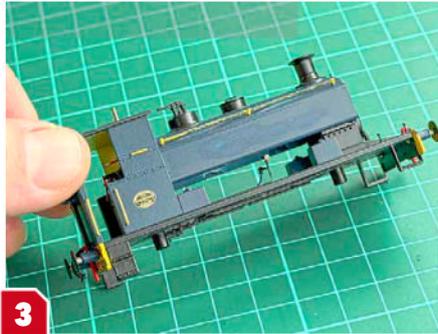
STEP BY STEP



1 Here's the model as it came from the box. I'm guessing it's a 1970s-era livery, given the stripy bufferbeams and modern lettering, the latter looking completely out of place on a steam engine - to me anyway! But what a nice model.



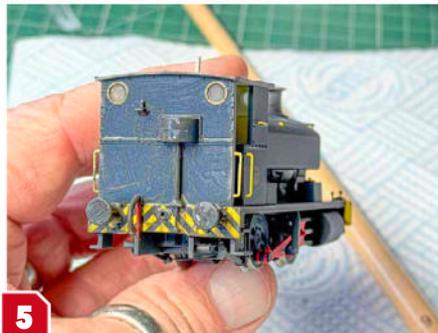
2 The first job is to remove the lettering. I used a fibreglass pen, rubbing it gently over the printed characters, trying not to cut through the underlying paint. Watch out for the glass fibres, which can irritate the skin.



3 It's important to avoid inhaling the fibres from the pen. After cleaning up, the treated surfaces were not perfect, but they'll be OK. A weathered finish and new nameplates will cover a multitude of sins.



4 As mentioned in the main text, spraying a coat of clear matt acrylic varnish over the bodyshell will help subsequent layers of paints to adhere better. I used Humbrol's No. 49 clear varnish, spraying a light, even coat.



5 Next, I made up a generic 'gloop', out of mostly matt black interior emulsion, with a dash of a rust-brown shade and diluted slightly with water. The mixture was gently painted over the entire model, working it into all the crevices.



6 With a fresh, clean flat brush, I worked the paint over the surface, using strokes and a dabbing action. The excess was wiped off the brush at regular intervals, encouraging heavier deposits of paint to remain in recessed areas.



7 With a moist cotton bud, I removed excess paint from areas like the bufferbeam. Often what you remove is as important as what you add, which is a great tip I learned from weathering ace George Dent, the editor of this magazine.



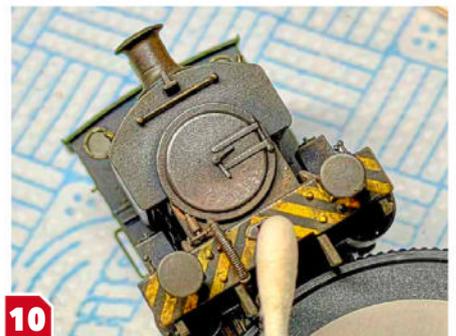
8 Humbrol 27004 Metal Cote Gunmetal is a great weathering medium. It can be dry-brushed wherever you need it to create an oily sheen.



Andrew Barclay 16in Mendip shunts the wharf at 'Whimsy Pit' - a new Nevard creation, the building of which will feature in *Model Rail* soon.



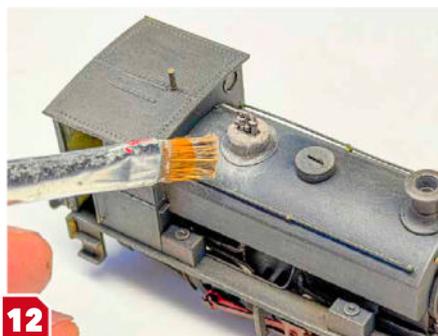
9 Here, I'm dry-brushing a thin layer of the Metal Cote Gunmetal. The tiniest amount of paint goes a long way. The more you work it, the shinier and more metallic the effect. I've had the same tin since 2011!



10 You can see the effect of the dry-brushed Metal Cote here. Once dry, buffing the surface slightly with a swab or dry brush creates an oily, metallic sheen. The rough texture is created by the initial treatment with the emulsion paints.



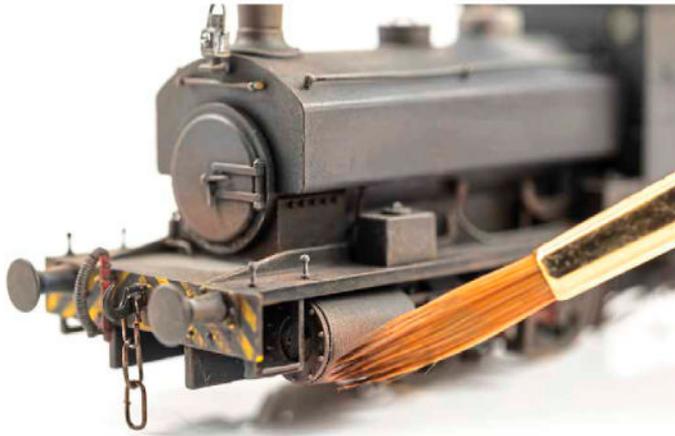
11 Limescale can be a feature of steam locomotives, with photographs often showing streaking. I used a little diluted beige interior matt emulsion. You can remove it to a degree with a moist cotton bud if overdone.



12 Pale grey and or beige matt emulsion is great for representing limescale around safety valves. Of course, it depends on the area being modelled as to how far you go. Note the slight sheen from the Metal Cote on the cab sides



13 Upper surfaces, such as the running plate, can benefit from a little dry-brushing with appropriate shades to suggest ash deposits from the regular cleaning out of the smokebox.



14 Looking at old colour photographs, I could see rust deposits around cylinder covers, along with limescale staining. Dry-brushing rusty red-brown shades, using matt emulsion or matt enamel paints, works wonders. But if in doubt, don't overdo things. Less is more.

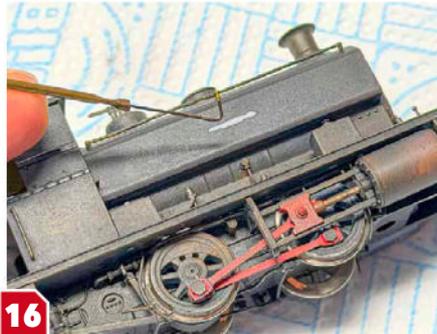


Small industrial locomotives, like this Hattons Original model (now in the Accurascale range) are ideal for micro layouts. Application of a weathered, careworn finish really brings the scene to life.



15

A little rust around the smokebox door can look good. The environment in which the locomotive works will have an impact too; a coal mine locomotives will look different to ones that work in a limestone quarry.



16

I've found a good way to attach etched nameplates is with a tiny amount of PVA which allows enough time for precise positioning. If some glue squirts out from under the plate, you can wipe it off with a moist cotton bud.



17

I've found that PVA holds the plates in place more than adequately. With nameplate in place, here I am adding a little more rust and oily grime to the underframe. Humbrol Metal Cote is great for suggesting grease and soot.



18

All locomotives need a crew, and to make the process simple with a crew designed specifically for your engine, those wonderful people at Modelu have a whole range of 3D-printed figures.



19

The figures come attached to a support structure which needs to be removed with a sharp scalpel, taking care not to accidentally damage any fine details, outstretched limbs or any tools that they might be holding.



20

I leave the figures' feet attached to their bases where possible, as it makes them easier to handle while painting. I attach them to a scrap of foamboard with a Pritt Stick before spraying with primer.



21

Using a selection of Humbrol acrylic paints, I usually start with the skin areas, followed by clothing and any other details like neckerchiefs and hats. Be prepared to touch things up if you get the paint in the wrong place.



22

The final touch: a dilute wash of matt black emulsion, which is dabbed off to leave paint in the recesses to accentuate shadows. Once dry, drybrushing a beige matt emulsion softens the colours and brings out the relief.



23 The crew was fixed into the cab using tweezers and a little dab of PVA glue under their feet. This looks painful for the little people being grasped by the neck, but because they're made of resin I've been assured that the installation process is painless for them.



24

For realism, I'm employing scale three-link couplings on my layout, so a pair of Smiths etched brass drawhooks and couplings were assembled. They're also available in pre-assembled form for a little extra cost.



25

The Smiths couplings were installed into the slots in the headstocks (fettling the holes slightly), along with an oil headlamp from the Springside range, which has been toned down suitably from the bright white as supplied.

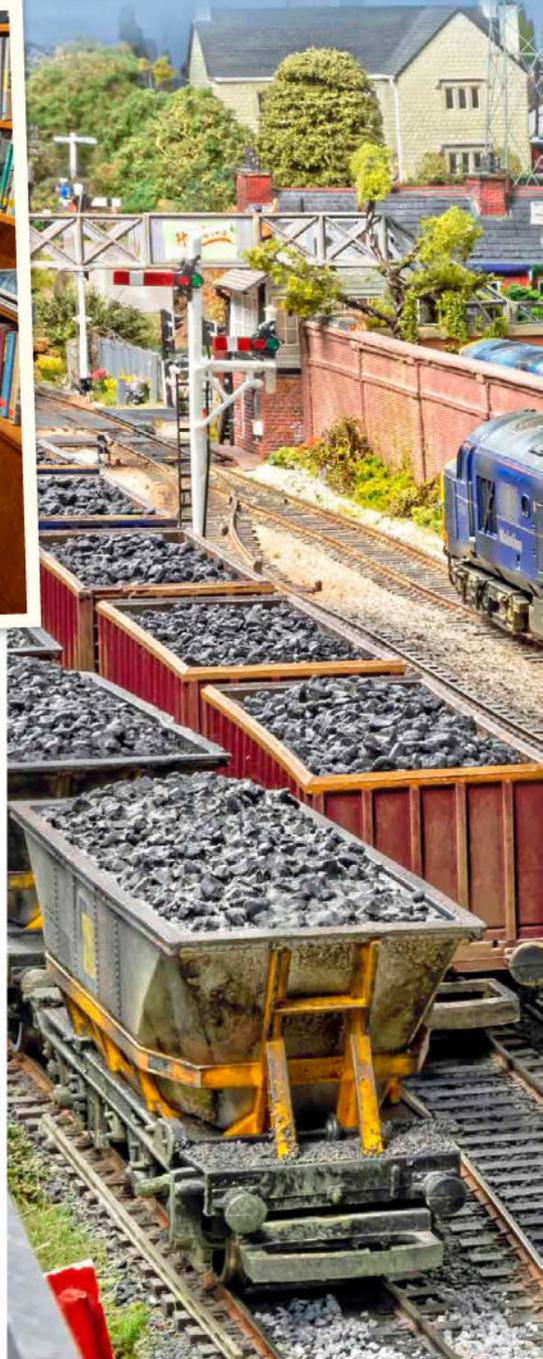


26

The finished locomotive is now ready for service. The various layers of weathering have produced some convincing textures, shades and highlights which I think captures the look of an industrial steam locomotive well. It shows what you can achieve without an airbrush too!



Members of Merseyside MRS pose in the reading/social room. Rear standing L-R: Peter Mullen, Frank Fry, Callum Mackintosh, Neil Moughton, Tom Fells, Dave Burrell. Middle standing L-R: Stephen Sharp, Peter Sloan (Chairman), Gordon Young, Nigel Greenwood, Ken Baker, Scott Thompson, Bill Fry. Front row sitting L-R: Paul Rees, John Ince.



MERSEYSIDE MRS: 77 YEARS YOUNG

George Dent pays a visit to Merseyside Model Railway Society's Birkenhead clubrooms, discovers some great layouts, enjoys a convivial atmosphere... and parks himself on some very special seats!

Photography: Chris Nevard

There has been a lot of discourse within the hobby in recent years about the continuing role of modelling clubs and societies. In today's hectic, high-tech world, where face-to-face interaction is deemed inefficient (think self-service tills and ticket machines), many of us have begun searching for more traditional ways to connect with our fellow humans. We are social animals, after all.

Despite so many modelling programmes and tutorials being available online via the internet these days, it can be hard to sort the wheat from the chaff, especially when negative or sensationalist content tends to be favoured by social media algorithms.

In line with a rising appreciation for tactile, 'old-school' objects such as books, CDs/vinyl, board games, and the resurgence of traditional crafts and hobbies, could the humble model club make a comeback?

The truth is that clubs never went away, and there are still countless modelling societies active around the UK, both formal and otherwise. There's been an undeniable trend for online groups and virtual exhibitions, but there's still a lot to be said for getting together in person, which many online club members have realised.

The traditional advantages of a club environment are well-documented. Unless you're lucky enough to live in a sprawling mansion, a club with a dedicated room affords more space in which to enjoy your hobby. Working within a team offers the opportunity to pool financial resources and technical expertise, allowing modellers to take part in the planning, building and operating of layouts of a size and type that would be otherwise unobtainable.

Club members also invariably benefit from access to research materials, books, shared magazine and journal subscriptions and even cheaper group travel to events.

There are mutual support and social elements too. If you're nervous about making a start in the hobby, just pop along for a cuppa and a chat. The more you hang around with active modellers, the more you're likely to grow in confidence and feel like pitching in.

But what of the perennial question surrounding age? This is a topic that has been prescient for decades, with a constant worry about the future of clubs and societies as the average age of members remains in the more 'senior' bracket.

It was refreshing, therefore, to meet a handful of 'younger' members during a visit to Merseyside Model Railway

“ There's still a lot to be said for getting together in person, which many online club members have realised ”

Society's clubrooms. Most of us term 'younger' as being under 50, but there was a posse of keen members much younger than that, which was great to see, especially as they were actively involved in some of the layout projects.

MERSEY GET-TOGETHER

Over the years, especially before I moved away from the area, I've attended numerous exhibitions organised by Merseyside MRS. Indeed, I have fond memories of helping *Model Rail's* Chris Leigh operate his 'Herculeaneum Dock' layout, which incorporated a working section of the famous Liverpool Overhead Railway, at a Merseyside MRS-hosted show.

Although the club has not staged a full exhibition for a while, Merseyside MRS celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2024, and a chance meeting with Nigel Greenwood, Membership Secretary of the society, that same year led to an invitation to the Birkenhead clubrooms. It took some time for our diaries to align, but Chris Nevard and I spent a hugely enjoyable day with



'Banks Road', one of the excellent layouts built by Merseyside MRS members, featured in *Model Rail's* August 2023 issue.

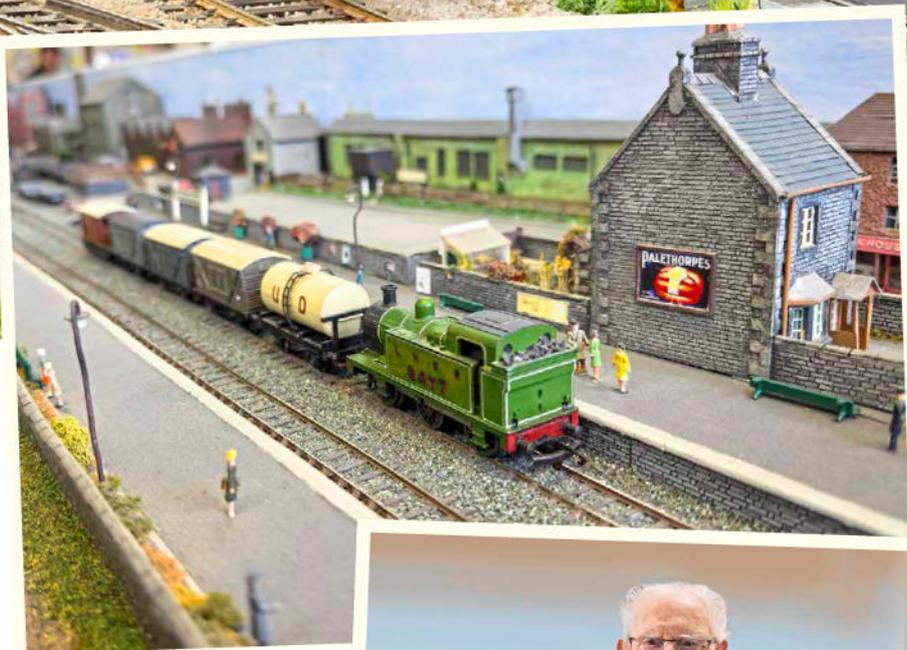
Merseyside MRS members. We were treated to a full tour of the club's extensive facilities as well as a host of impressive layouts.

FINDING A HOME

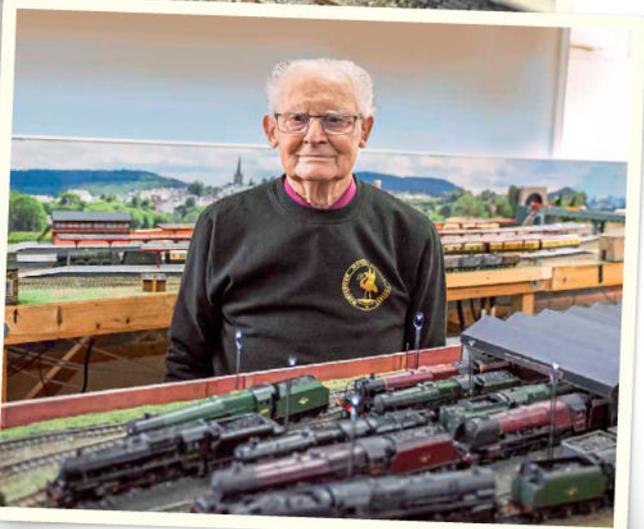
Founded originally in 1949 by a group of like-minded modellers, meetings were initially held at various locations around Liverpool before switching to permanent premises 'over the water' in Birkenhead during the 1950s.

Based in first-storey rooms in Chester Street, above a row of shops, the group gradually expanded operations into neighbouring buildings. In 1996, the society moved into more suitable ground-floor accommodation with the help of Wirral Borough Council. This was located on Brassey Street, conveniently close to Birkenhead Park station, in a former school.

By 2009, the local council had plans to develop the Brassey Street site, but an alternative property was offered nearby. The society thus moved to a former fire station just down the road, which offered large interior spaces ideal for housing model



ABOVE: 'Market Northrop' is a delightful 'TT' exhibition layout, employing 12mm gauge track, and built by Charlie Smith, the late Brian Percival, Graham Dykes and Bill Fry.



RIGHT: John Ince, one of the society's longest serving members, stands behind 'Kirkfield', a fantastic layout that will feature in *Model Rail* later this year. Many of the superbly weathered steam locomotives seen 'on-shed' in the foreground were created by John, built from a variety of kits.

railways. Rented initially from the council, then bought outright by the club in 2013, the buildings are maintained courtesy of a generous bequest from a late member, Martyn Hudson.

Where fire appliances once rested, a diverse mix of large club layouts now stand, fully set up and operational. Others are scattered throughout the rest of the main building, which has something of a 'TARDIS' feel about it.

There's a sizeable annexe at the rear too, housing yet more layouts. Most of the projects appeared complete or were being gradually updated, but there were a handful of new projects also getting under way. Multiple scales (mainstream and finescale), regions and eras are catered for, including a substantial 'HO' scale US-outline layout depicting the Norfolk & Western in the 1940s/50s.

Other notable projects include 'Banks Road', a large 'OO' modern image layout that has been to several exhibitions and appeared in *Model Rail's* August 2023 issue. Another

'OO' layout with exhibition pedigree is the amusingly named 'Cwmbach-yn-Triardd', a 1930s GWR-themed Welsh scene that incorporates an impressive steelworks and a breathtakingly huge viaduct. Originally built in the mid-1990s, the layout has been updated to operate on DCC and features computer-controlled operating sequences.

'Four Bridges' is another layout that caught our eye, being a multi-level 'roundy' affair that offers maximum operational possibilities, which, I gathered, was proving popular with the younger members. If I ever gain a large spare room at home, this is the type of layout I'd love to build!

Chris spent some quality time with 'Kirkfield', an innovative – and extensive – 'OO' layout that transitions from the BR steam era to the modern day. With a full photo shoot in the bag, 'Kirkfield' will feature in full in a future issue of *Model Rail*.

FAB FACILITIES

They may have started out with an old wardrobe as a makeshift library, but the

society's current reading and social room provides a cosy, convivial space. The walls are lined with a remarkable collection of reference books and journals which members can borrow. The shelves are also filled with some fantastic models and dioramas too, showing off the skills and imagination of members.

I spent some time chatting to members in this comfortable area, parking myself on a set of plush seats from what I assumed was an old bus. It was exciting to discover they were actually recovered from one of the Liverpool Overhead Railway trains after the line's closure in 1956.

Other key facilities on offer at the club premises include a dedicated workshop space, equipped with woodworking tools, as well as the essential Snack Station kitchen area. There's a club shop too, where members can buy and sell rolling stock, accessories and materials.

REFLECTIONS

Chris and I thoroughly enjoyed our time with the members of Merseyside MRS, and we'd like to extend our gratitude for their hospitality. It was great to hear about how the club has developed over three-quarters of a century, with a small group of keen younger members on board; things are looking promising for the future.

It's heartening to see people of all ages and backgrounds coming together to share



LEFT: Dave Burrell and Gordon Young, who have built an 'HO' American layout.

BELOW: Bill Fry and Peter Sloan (Chairman) share an item from the club's history.



Peter Evans loads a locomotive onto 'Kirkfield'.



Ken Baker and Frank Fry pose beside the GWR-themed layout, 'Cwmbach-Yn-Triardd', housed in the club's annex building.

a common passion. All clubs depend on their members for their survival. Indeed, the Merseysiders had just been faced with repairs to the roof at the time of our visit, so membership subscriptions, club shop sales and other income streams are always important to keep the coffers topped up.

Why not check out your local club and see what it has to offer. And if you're based in the North West or North Wales, please consider popping along to one of the regular open evenings in Birkenhead. The clubrooms are easy to reach by car, being close to Junction 1 of the M53 or via public transport, and a warm Merseyside welcome is assured. You may even be able to sit on one of the Overhead Railway seats!



ABOVE: Neil Moughton holds a superb diorama depicting a section of the Liverpool Overhead Railway, scratchbuilt by the late Howard Jones.



RIGHT: Longstanding member Paul Rees, with his model of one of the famous hydraulic bascule lifting bridges that dominated Birkenhead's extensive docks.

JOIN THE CLUB!

Merseyside MRS' clubrooms are usually open two days per week. The best time for that first visit is on the special Open Evenings held on the first Friday of every month, with club layouts in operation and the shop open for business.

The club is also open on Tuesdays and Fridays, both mornings and evenings, for modelling and socialising sessions respectively. The doors open between 1900 and 2200.

The next open evening will be held on Friday, March 6, and more information can be found on the society's website, which also contains contact details. It's recommended to email or phone ahead, so members know you'll be coming.

Where is it? 349 Laird Street, Birkenhead, Wirral, CH41 7AJ

Web: www.merseysidemrs.weebly.com



'Four Bridges', a substantial multi-layer 'OO' layout with some impressive electronics and a six-track through station, plus servicing depots and goods yards. This layout has been particularly popular with the 'younger' members.

PUTTING ON THE BLITZ



The Basildon Model Railway Club's re-creation of the London Blitz highlights how the railways – and the capital – kept running through some of Britain's darkest days.

Words: Richard Gunn Photography: Chris Nevard



What makes this layout great?
“The destruction of large areas of London (and other UK towns and cities) during the war is a sobering subject, but while this layout vividly illustrates some of the terrors, there are also little fun and hopeful cameos that show life going on amid the chaos - truly 'The Blitz' spirit.”



The Second World War brought conflict to Britain in a way it had never experienced before. No longer did everything happen overseas; aircraft now delivered horror to the home front. Between September 1940 and May 1941, the Luftwaffe's intensive bombing campaign ravaged UK towns and cities, becoming known as the Blitz. The chief target for these raids was London.

And yet, despite the destruction and chaos, the country and the capital kept going. The continued operation of the railways was a crucial part of life carrying on. However, wartime isn't an era too often covered by railway modellers (unlike those of other genres), so the Basildon Model Railway Club's depiction of London's East End during the early 1940s is both unusual and thought-provoking.

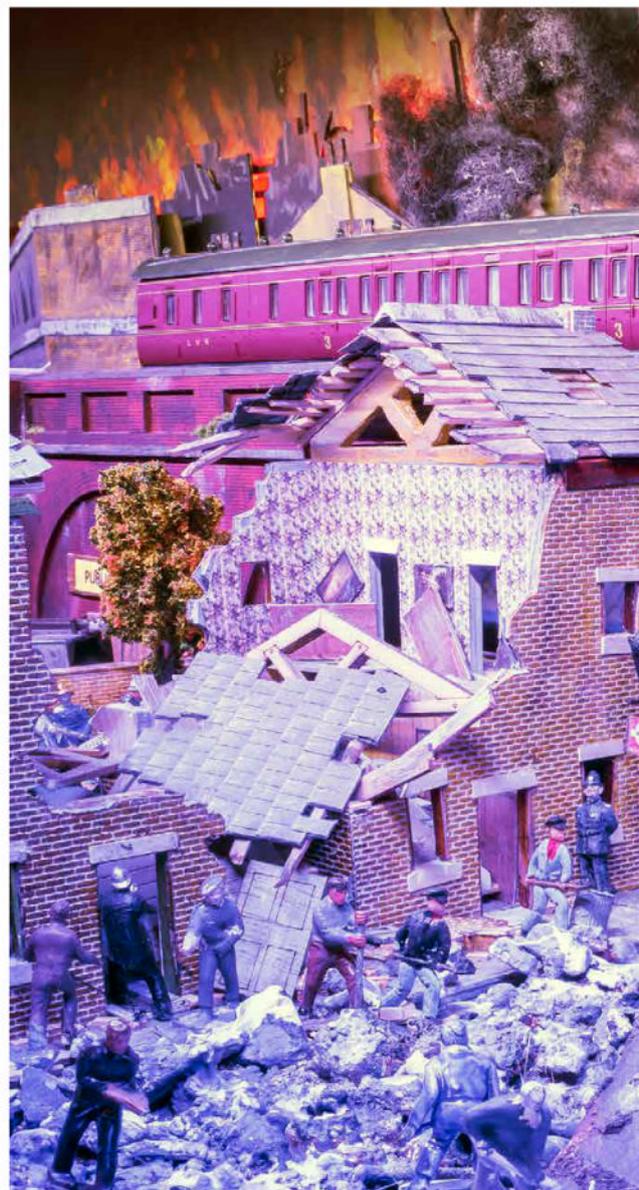
The genesis of 'The Blitz' came from BMRC member Pete Briscoe. He was a child during the Second World War, born in Poplar, where the layout is set. His family was bombed out when he was just five. "Because I grew up during the time, I was able to put a bit more into it than some of the others perhaps didn't know about," he says. "We'd built an earlier Underground layout previously, which was in *Model Rail* (July 2018). After that was finished, we decided to start something else, and 'The Blitz' seemed a good idea, because there was so much detail we could put in it.

"We were going to cook up a name of our own, but when we thought about it, we realised that Poplar was a big part of the East End." Although the urban landscape is typical of the area, the streets and Streamline Moderne-styled Underground station building, Poplar East, are fictional. "The only part that's actually authentic is the dome of St Paul's Cathedral on the backdrop," says Roy Emery, one of the six club members who built 'The Blitz'. "We have some effective fire and smoke effects around it, as in the iconic photograph. But the rest of the layout is purely made up, albeit based on the East End, as we all knew it or have seen in pictures."

Another famous wartime image – that of a London bus embedded in a bomb crater – was also an inspiration. "The bus is an old six-wheel AEC LT model that I had," says Pete. "We put it in a hole, then basically built everything around it. It makes it look quite authentic." Because the club still had the Underground stock from its previous layout, its new effort was always intended to be split-level. "We started properly during the early part of 2020, with Roy doing the backdrop during Covid; we finished it enough to go out to shows about two years ago," continues Pete. "There was no point in finishing any earlier because there weren't any shows to take it to."

The Underground section was finished first, after which what Roy refers to as "the floor" went on top, ➤

ABOVE While 'The Blitz' presents a generally upbeat view of a resilient city carrying on against all the odds, it does not shy away from some of the more tragic scenes of 1940s London.

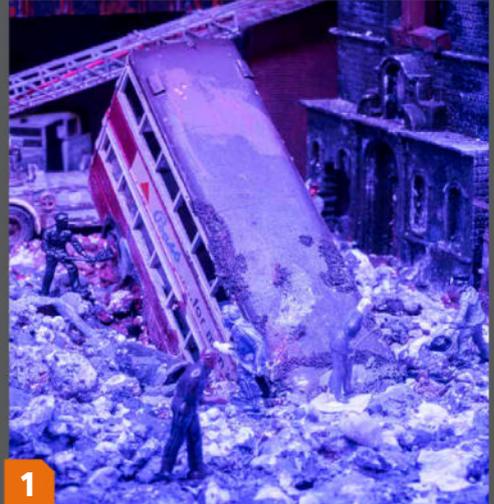


BELOW The ruined church was donated to the BMRC; its exact origins are unknown. Standing at the other end of the layout to the Poplar East station tower, it's a thought-provoking counterpoint to its clean and untouched modern style.





3 things we like



1

The bus in a bomb crater is a homage to the famous photograph taken in Balham in 1940.



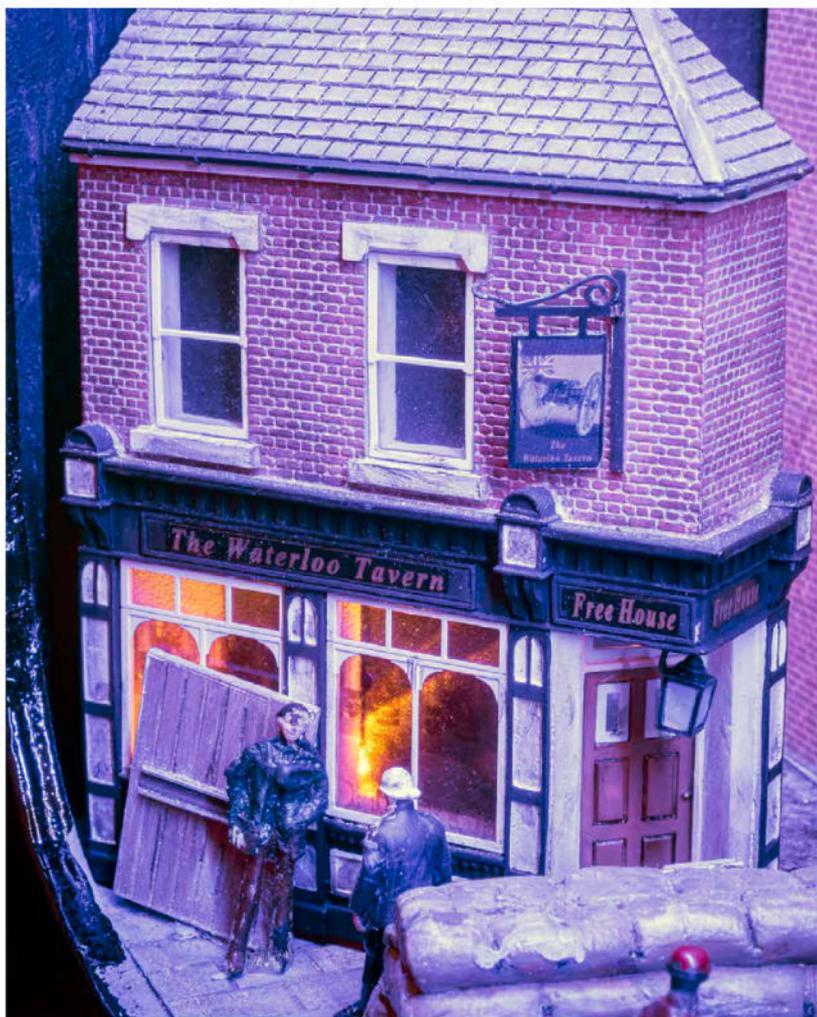
2

On most layouts, there's rarely much need to do house interiors, but 'The Blitz' is different...

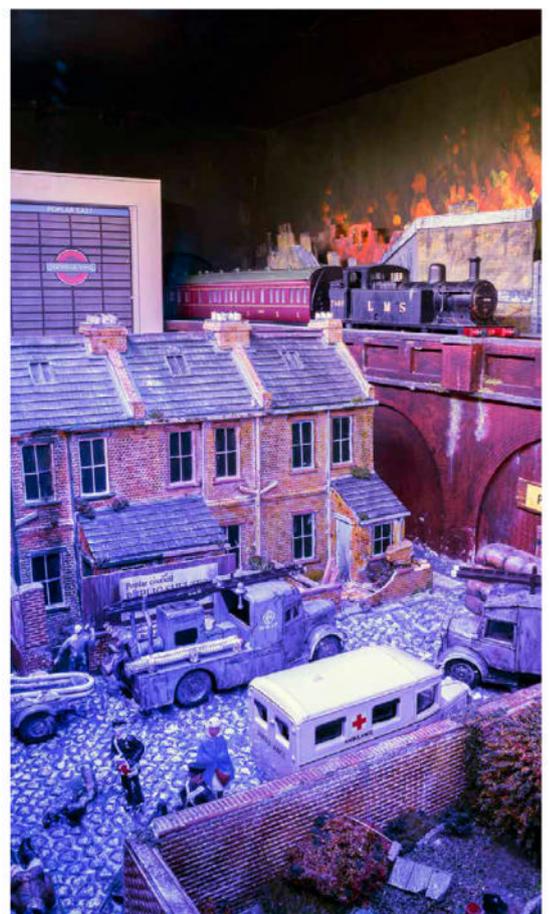


3

The interactive LED board means that this layout is educational as well as interesting.



BELOW The towering Streamline Moderne architecture of Poplar East Underground station contrasts with the Victorian architecture (or at least the remains of it) surrounding it. The building is a Kingsway Models product.





allowing the street scene to be built. "That where most of the work was done, of course."

There are two operational lines below ground, and one above it, on the viaduct that overlooks the scene of chaos and carnage below. "The line on the bridge is on an auto-shuttle system from Layouts4U, as is the rear Underground one. The company supplied all the electrics; sadly, owner Bob Carter passed away in December. The front tube line is manually controlled. We bring in either the 'bun train' or repair train, as there's some bomb damage by the tunnel mouth."

THE 'BUN TRAIN'

The 'bun train' deserves some explanation; once tube stations began to be used as shelters by the local populace, authorities organised 'Refreshment Specials' to run throughout the network. Naturally, grateful Londoners soon christened it with a less formal moniker. The two-car electric unit, adorned with

ABOVE The trams come from the collection of BMRC member Pete Bristoe. There are no overhead wires for the section under the bridge, as in areas with low clearance, units would pick up power from conduits in the centre of the track.

posters proclaiming its sustaining purpose, was made by a modeller outside of the club, Bob. Other below-the-surface stock includes a 'Growler' – no, not a Class 37 diesel; the Metropolitan Bo-Bo electric locomotives of 1922-1923 vintage were also known by this nickname. Appropriately, the Heljan example on 'The Blitz' sports wartime grey.

Up above, shuttle services over the viaduct are handled by a Hornby 'Jinty' renumbered into one of the few auto-fitted examples. A Dapol coach, modified at one end to look like an autococh, handles passenger duties.

The buildings of Poplar, both intact and damaged, are a mixture of off-the-shelf, kits and scratchbuilt. "There's a parade of shops, picked up at a model railway show," says Roy. "The pub is Bachmann, the concrete Underground station building is Kingsway Models, the church was donated to us, and the viaduct we got made. The derelict buildings are scratchbuilt." For these ►



RIGHT The two-car tube 'Refreshment Special', more colloquially known as the 'Bun train', is controlled by operators, as bomb damage further up the line stops it going any further than Poplar East.



BELOW The layout is populated by a variety of figures, some of them metal ones that almost date back to the era in which 'The Blitz' is set.



bombed houses, Roy added an interior – or at least fragments of one – with flowery 1930s-era wallpaper.

Although blackout conditions apply above ground, the layout still has lighting. "There are red and yellow LEDs to simulate fires," explains Roy. "At the front, there are two lighting strips, one white and one blue. We can adjust them to give the effect of night." However, out of sight of any enemy aircraft, the tube station is fully lit, with signalling and an illuminated escalator.

The simulated smoke cloaking the background has a somewhat unusual source. "It's actually a fake Halloween cobwebs pack, which is some sort of cotton wool. We didn't even need to re-colour it," says Roy. The barrage balloons overhead also have unexpected origins. "They're tank wagons from the Hornby RailRoad range, cunningly disguised with tail fins."

The road vehicles (including the trams) came from Pete's own assortment, from manufacturers such as EFE and Corgi. "I've collected all sorts over the years, so when we started doing 'The Blitz', I thought some of



them might come in handy." The people are also a Heinz variety, some of them so old that they're metal castings. Scenes to look out for that exemplify the 'Keep calm and carry on' attitude of the times include a group sitting around the mobile canteen (another Layouts4U item), casually drinking tea, despite the presence of a large unexploded bomb nearby.

Completing things are an interactive map, put together by member Graham Davies, showing the density of bombing during 1940-41 along with a digital photo frame showing Blitz images. Both of these help mask the fiddleyards and also put the layout in context. Says Graham: "One of the things you can always guarantee is that somebody will come up, remember the Blitz and start reminiscing. Then there's young children, looking wide-eyed that this actually happened. At our last show, a secondary school history teacher came up and said she'd love to have it as an educational tool for her lessons. But it is very tiring to operate. The layout itself is a doddle, but by the end, you do need throat sweets because of all the talking. And that's probably the best part!" 

ABOVE Bomb damage within the tube tunnels being dealt with. Because it's beneath street level, the Underground station and its environs are fully illuminated.

FACTFILE: 'THE BLITZ'

Era: September 1940-May 1941

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

Size: 7ft by 14in

Track: Peco Code 100

Power and control: DC analogue with Layouts4U auto-shuttle system

Time to build: Around four years



ABOUT THE MODELLERS: BASILDON MODEL RAILWAY CLUB

Founded in 1979, Basildon Model Railway Club currently has 23 members, with six of them mainly responsible for constructing 'The Blitz'. Peter, Roy, Max, Bob (not in the club but responsible for the 'Refreshment Special' tube train), Mathew and Graham are pictured left to right. Another member, David (not in the photo) did much of the woodwork. For more club information, see www.basildon-mrc.org.uk

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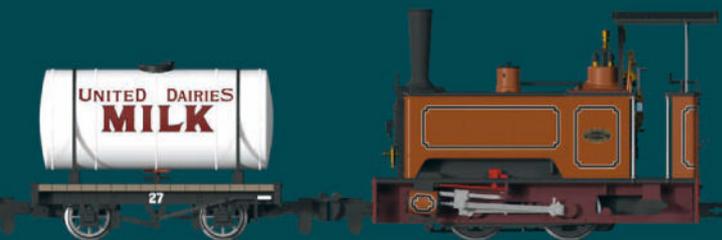
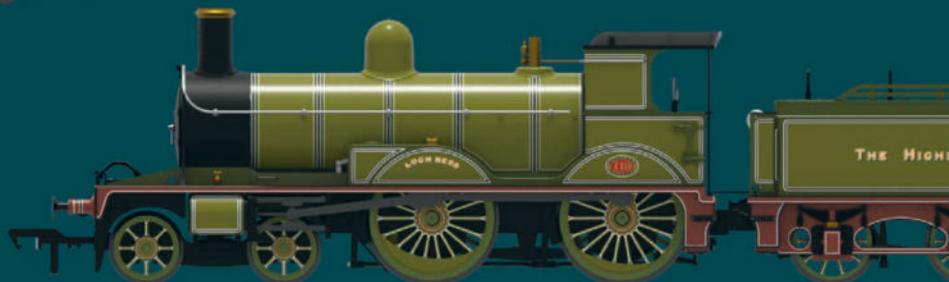
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TRAINS





Reviews

In-depth and unbiased reviews of the latest products

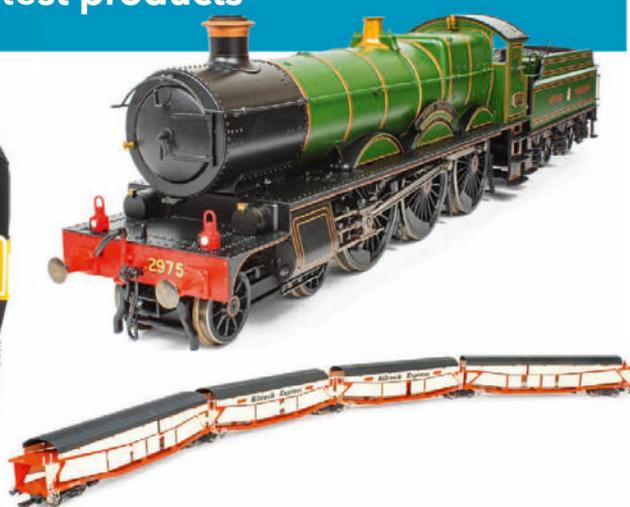
80 Accurascale GWR '57XX' pannier tanks

84 Hornby GWR 'Saint' 4-6-0

88 Bachmann Branchline Class 66

91 Revolution Trains 'Cartic-4' wagons

92 Hornby SR Bulleid Tavern Car set



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96 Revolution Trains WIA car-carrier set

97 EFE Rail Isle of Wight 54ft coaches



Our reviewers

George Dent

Model Rail's modern image expert also has a passion for steam.

Chris Leigh

Wrote his first review in 1964 and hasn't stopped since!

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.





Accurascale GWR '57XX' 0-6-0PT

◆ GAUGE '00' ◆ MODELS Accurascale • GWR '57XX' class 0-6-0PT No. 5754 GWR green • '8750' class No. 8763 BR lined black
◆ PRICES £139.99 (DCC-ready), £239.99 (DCC sound) ◆ AVAILABILITY Accurascale stockists • Web www.accurascale.com

There's no doubt that for each of us, some models are simply a 'must have.' For me that is certainly true of the Accurascale '8750' class pannier tank. I grew up with GWR pannier tanks, although in my day this would simply have been known as a '57XX'. A Gaiety '57XX' was the first GWR locomotive model I bought as a teenager (see page 122).

Subsequently, I upgraded to a Bachmann model, but that must be more than 40 years ago. So the time was certainly ripe for a 21st Century take on Collett's ubiquitous pannier tank class. Fortunately, Accurascale has stepped up to the plate with a suite of 0-6-0Ts, encompassing the '57XX', '67XX' and '8750' classes, a project announced back in 2023.

There are several hundred potential subjects among this cadre; 203 in the '8750' form in particular, providing Accurascale with numerous detail and livery variations. Indeed, there's an eye-watering choice of 11 models in this first run, across GWR, BR, and London Transport liveries. There's also a National Coal Board green '57XX'.

Model Rail received a pair for review (illustrated here), namely '57XX' No. 5754 in GWR green and '8750' No. 8763 in lined BR black. For my own collection, I settled on No. 9741 in GWR green but with British Railways lettering on the tank sides.

Accurascale tells us that 9741 was built in 1935 and worked from Wolverhampton Stafford Road, ending its days at Wellington, from where, no doubt, it would have worked the Much Wenlock branch, which is a particular favourite railway location of mine.

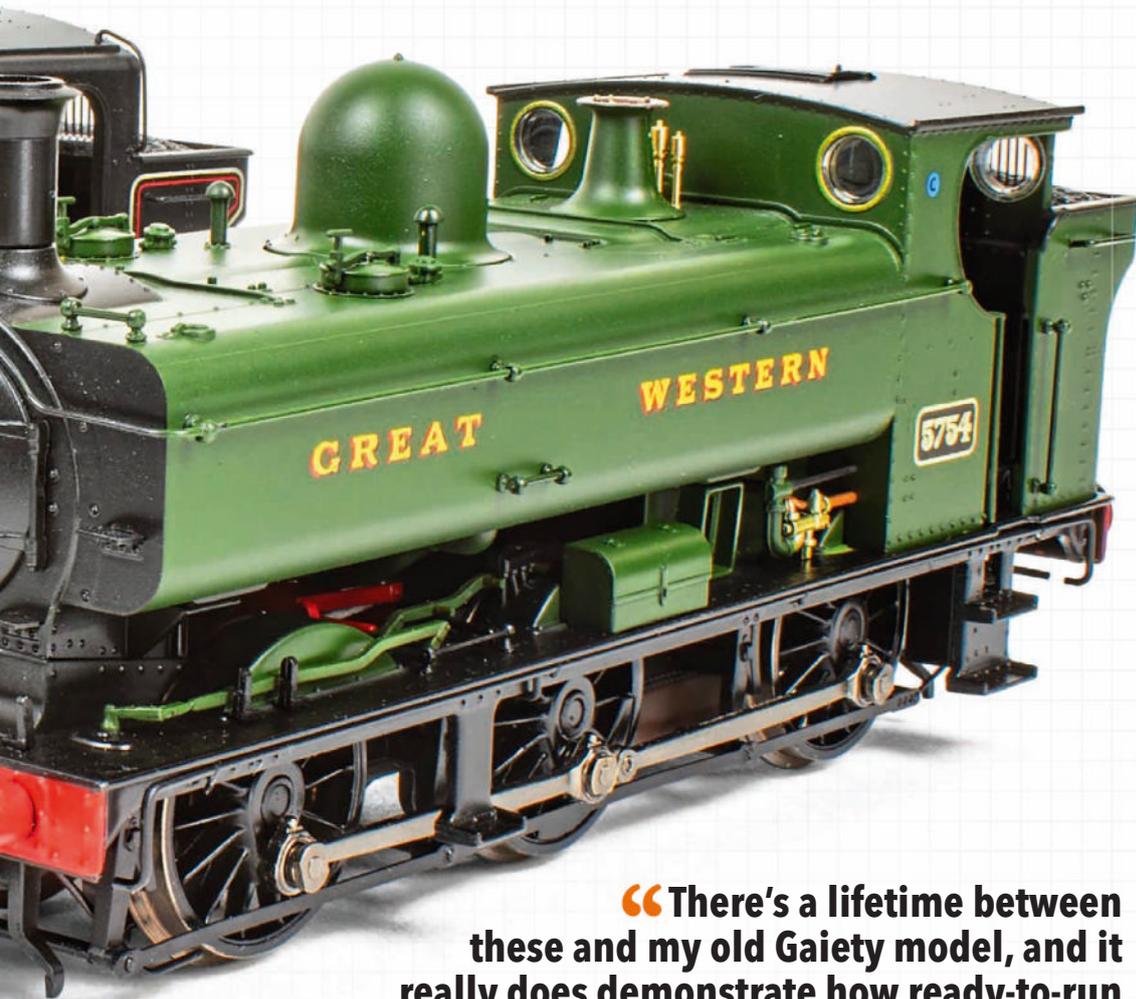
No. 8763 was an Old Oak Common-based 0-6-0PT for its entire life, treated to lined BR livery due to its regular use as a station pilot at Paddington, while 5754 was also allocated to Old Oak Common during the GWR years.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

As usual with this manufacturer, the packaging is, in my view, somewhat excessive, featuring a locomotive in a clamshell 'ice box' surrounded by extensive foam cushioning inside a substantial, lidded cardboard box. The box is protected by a clear plastic sleeve. Nice, generous, and no doubt necessary to protect the model, but incredibly greedy on shelf space, which, for this modeller, is at a premium.

Included in the box is an instruction sheet, a booklet about the prototype locomotives, and a card warning about the





“There’s a lifetime between these and my old Gaiety model, and it really does demonstrate how ready-to-run has progressed in that time”

incompatibility of ancient analogue controllers and modern can motors. There is a small bag of tiny detail parts, including headlamps (non-working) and a pair of optional etched brass numberplates. There is also a pair of special tweezers designed to extract and install DCC decoders via the magnetic smokebox door. More on this later...

The overwhelming first impression of the models is that they are stunning. There’s a lifetime between these and my old Gaiety model, and it really does demonstrate how ready-to-run has progressed in that time.

Immediately obvious are the full-width splashers and the ‘daylight’ under the boiler and tanks, with the carefully modelled (but non-working) inside motion picked out in red, as was Swindon practice. Other separately fitted parts include the injector pipework ahead of the cab and some very fine reversing rods and sanding linkages. And that’s all just under the boiler and tanks.

On top, the detail is equally crisp and accurate. The chimney, dome and green-painted safety valve bonnet are all crisp and

accurately shaped, while there are separate tank fillers, tank vents and a pair of brassed whistles. Whistle shields are included where the prototype demands it, as seen on BR black No. 8763.

The cab has a fully detailed interior, and the large side openings reveal the need for a suitable crew. The bunker back carries separate fire-iron hooks and lamp irons, and lightly sprung black metal buffers are fitted all round.

Of the samples under review, No. 9741 was an example with no top-feed, the later style cab, bunker-side steps, and the injector overflow routed through the running plate. GWR No. 5754 also lacks a top feed apparatus but sports an early cab without bunker access steps. In contrast, BR No. 8763 boasts the later, taller cab with enlarged spectacle plates and side steps, revised handrails, backwards-sliding roof vent, top feed with accompanying water pipes and injector pipe passing over the edge of the footplate.

The attention to detail on each

version is impressive, with the characteristic profile of the upper chimney rim captured well. The cast metal coupling rods look great, with a convincing representation of the oil points atop the crank pins and authentic-looking crankpin bolt heads - although it looks like a special tool may be required to remove them.

My only disappointment is the unconvincing coal load in the bunker, which is filled almost to the top, so adding any real coal on top will make for a very full bunker. Additionally, the printed cabside numberplates are OK, ▶



3 things we like



1

Easy to remove Next18 DCC interface - although re-fitting it is not quite so simple!



2

Attention to detail, including cosmetic inside valve gear.



3

Superb paint finish, including lining and printing.



Accurascale GWR '57XX' 0-6-0PT - in detail

FACTFILE: GWR '57XX' 0-6-0PT

The '57XX' 0-6-0PTs were introduced in 1929 by C.B. Collett as a modern replacement for the '2721' class, which had been converted from earlier saddle tanks. By this time, the GWR had settled upon the pannier tank arrangement and Belpaire boiler as being the ideal for an easy-to-maintain, 'go anywhere' locomotive. The new design had an enclosed cab as the most obvious development from its half-cab predecessors.

Of the first order for 100 locomotives, 50 were built by North British in Glasgow and 50 by the GWR at Swindon. Almost immediately, a further 200 were ordered, paid for by the Government as part of a work creation scheme. There were six contractors; NBL, Bagnall, Beyer Peacock, Kerr Stuart, Armstrong Whitworth and Yorkshire Engine Co.

Fifty locomotives numbered in the 6700 series were without steam heat, vacuum brake or ATC, being reserved for yard shunting and short trip work. They had three-link couplings.

From 1933, the '57XX' design was further modified, the most obvious feature being a much-improved cab on locomotives numbered from 8750 onwards. Nearly 500 were built, the last examples being post-nationalisation in 1948.

A final variant was the ten examples in the '97XX' series built with a condensing apparatus for working over the Metropolitan widened lines to Smithfield market. The pannier tanks were shortened to clear the condensing apparatus, and the consequent reduced water capacity was made up by extending the tanks downwards ahead of the cab.

Between 1956 and 1963, the following locomotives were sold to London Transport for use on maintenance trains, 5752/57/64/75/86 and 7711/15/39/41/49/52/60/79. Sixteen members of the class have been preserved.



1: Ex-GWR '57XX' No. 7761 trundles along with an Exe Valley branch line train at Thorveton, in April 1960. COLOUR RAIL



2: Old Oak Common's No. 8763, with its lined black livery just visible under the grime, rests at its home shed in the early 1960s. COLOUR RAIL



3: Built at Swindon in 1945, and representing the final development of Collett's design, No. 9600 is seen at Merthyr Vale in 1966, a year after being acquired by the NCB. The 0-6-0PT was subsequently saved for preservation and is based at Tyseley. COLOUR RAIL

but adding the supplied etched versions offers a drastic improvement. Ditto the smokebox numberplate on the BR black version. Various extra details are supplied, although the screw-link couplings proved uncommonly fiddly to install.

My eye keeps being drawn to the tap to the left of the smokebox door, which was used to supply steam and water when cleaning the smokebox. It is a tiny, separately fitted plastic item with a lifelike brass finish, but it sums up the attention to detail on this model. Equally fine, on the opposite end of the model, are the protective bars over the rear spectacle windows to prevent over-zealous coaling from breaking the glass.

PERFORMANCE

The flywheel-fitted motor sits in the centre of the locomotive and power is directed to the middle axle via a worm and three precision gears. A Next18 decoder socket can be accessed via the magnetic smokebox door, with the supplied tweezers making removal of the interface simple.

Re-fitting it is not so easy; the location of the 12-pin socket is obscured, and no guide rails are provided, as per similar arrangements on other manufacturers' models. It's a small, simple feature that would greatly ease the process, so hopefully it will be added to any future production batches.

DCC sound-fitted models are available of all 11 versions, each featuring a twin-speaker sound set-up along with 'stay alive' circuitry.

On test, one of the locomotives was a little hesitant at first, but quickly settled down. Despite having the knuckle joint in the coupling rods neatly represented, the rods are not articulated. Though there is some side-play in

all three axles, the rods do limit any flexibility that there might have been and accordingly, the model is intolerant of track defects.

Apart from that, all of our samples proved to be very sweet runners - and powerful too. My test train of three bogie coaches, 15 four-wheel wagons and

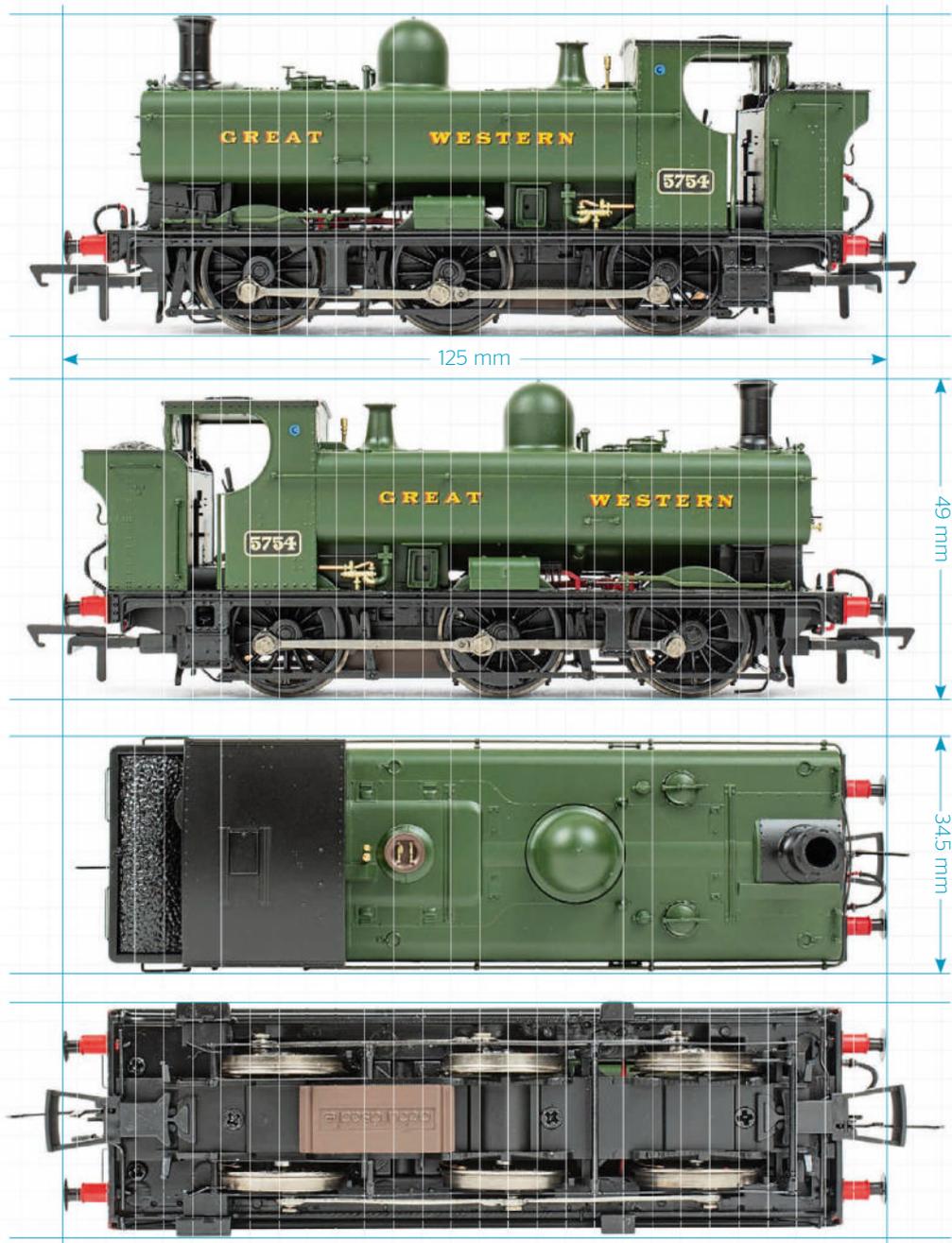
a 'Queen Mary' brake van was handled with ease.

George Dent tested the DCC sound-equipped version, reporting an excellent package, aided by the twin 'sugar cube' speakers, and with a range of authentic running and optional incidental noises, including coal being shovelled, the tanks being

filled with water and various shunting and coupling effects.

CONCLUSIONS

Everything on this model is just captivating. Looks and performance are top-notch; the character is well captured and the paint and print finish is faultless. Bravo! (CJL)



SUMMARY

PROS

- Accuracy.
- Good looks.
- Superb finish.
- Performance.

CONS

- Very little.

FINAL VERDICT

A little beauty.

VITAL STATISTICS: ACCURASCALE '57XX' CLASS 0-6-0PT

OVERVIEW

Manufacturer: Accurascale
Ref. No. ACC2875, ACC2881DCC
Unit No. 5754, 8763
Scale/gauge: 1:76 scale, '00' gauge
Body: Plastic and cast metal
Chassis: Metal with plastic parts
Weight: 202g
Min. curve radius: 438mm (second radius)
Wheel back-to-back: 14.5mm

DIMENSIONS

Length (over buffers)
 Height
 Width
 Wheel diameter
 Coupled wheelbase

PROTOTYPE

31ft 2in
 12ft 3in
 8ft 7in
 4ft 7½in
 15ft 6in

1:76 SCALE

125mm
 49mm
 34mm
 18mm
 62mm

MODEL

125mm
 49mm
 34.5mm
 18mm
 62mm

ELECTRICS

Electrical system: 12V DC two-rail
Motor type: Coreless
Lights: Firebox flicker
DCC-ready? Next18 interface

MECHANISM

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

SERVICING

How to dismantle: Body unscrews from chassis.
Where to oil: Gears and axles - see instructions.

Hornby GWR 'Saint'

◆ GAUGE 'OO' ◆ MODEL Hornby R30405 GWR 'Saint' 4-6-0 No. 2975 *Lord Palmer*, GWR green ◆ PRICE £234.99 ◆ AVAILABILITY Hornby stockists **Web** www.hornby.com

Revealed as part of Hornby's 2025 programme, the 'Saint' depicts an important prototype from the turn of the 20th Century, one that heralded a huge stride forward for the Great Western. Furthermore, Churchward's legendary design also directly inspired a host of famous 4-6-0 designs subsequently created for the LMS, LNER and British Railways' 'Standards'.

Three versions of the 'Saint' are now with retailers, depicting No. 2920 *Saint David* in BR lined black, No. 2975 *Lord Palmer* in GWR green, plus new-build No. 2999 *Lady of Legend*, also in GWR livery.

The tooling caters for various detail differences, most notably inside or external steam pipes, and early straight or later curved frames. Hornby kindly supplied a sample of No. 2975 for review. This prototype was not one of the 47 'Saints' to survive into BR ownership, having been damaged beyond economic repair in 1942.

Sporting the elegantly lined Great Western livery, *Lord Palmer* comes in a good quality, foam-lined box, with a set of optional details, including a superb set of etched numberplates (which I installed before photography), plus a footplate crew, cylinder drain pipes, brake rodding, cosmetic screw couplings, and a set of headlamps (non-working).

There's also an optional set of front cylinder cover plugs to ameliorate the small cut-outs necessary to allow the bogie to negotiate second radius curves. All detail parts fit well, save for the mounting plug of the drawhook, which was a very tight fit and some fettling was required.

PERIOD PIECE

Hornby's rendition of No. 2975 places the 4-6-0 in its mid-1930s condition, due to the *Lord Palmer*

nameplates, which were installed in 1933 (it was previously named *Sir Ernest Palmer* before he was 'promoted'). While the model's boiler and cab are moulded in plastic, the footplate and chassis block are cast metal, ensuring an even distribution of weight over all five axles.

Notably, the tender chassis and frames are also cast metal, which removes the need for a separate weight block inside the plastic body, thus freeing up space for a speaker and the 21-pin DCC interface.

All of the wheels are beautifully executed, with fine spoke and profile detail, plus the addition of etched axle covers with indented centres. The metal coupling rods are articulated, and everything has been chemically blackened to a pleasing hue.

The profile of the tapered

boiler, smokebox and cab looks correct, and the body is enhanced by fine wire handrails, separate lamp brackets and smokebox door handles, along with an oil pot for the vacuum pump, twin whistles and delicately beaded splashers covers. The protruding valve covers also feature oil pots, and the upper surface of the metal footplate features impressive rivet heads and panel relief.

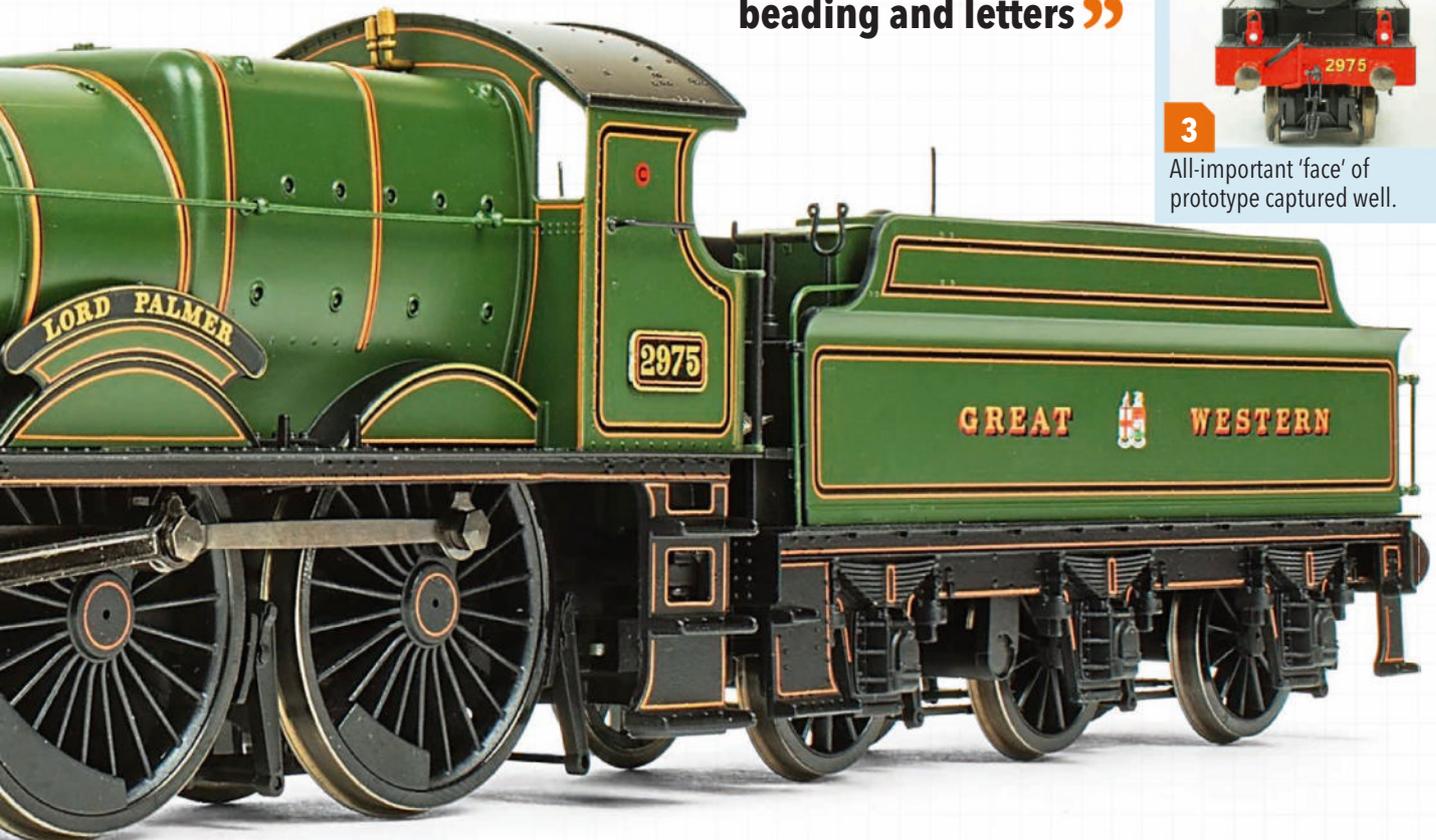
The elegantly tapered buffers are nicely sprung, and the cab interior is fully detailed, with painted pipework valves and controls (including printed gauge dials), plus fold-down seats for the footplate crew. There's a hinged, etched metal fall plate between locomotive and tender, which looks great, but when in the horizontal position it interferes with the ▶



4-6-0



“An undoubted highlight is the etched brass nameplates that come pre-fitted, complete with delicately raised beading and letters”



3 things we like



1

Livery application is top class, especially lining and logos.



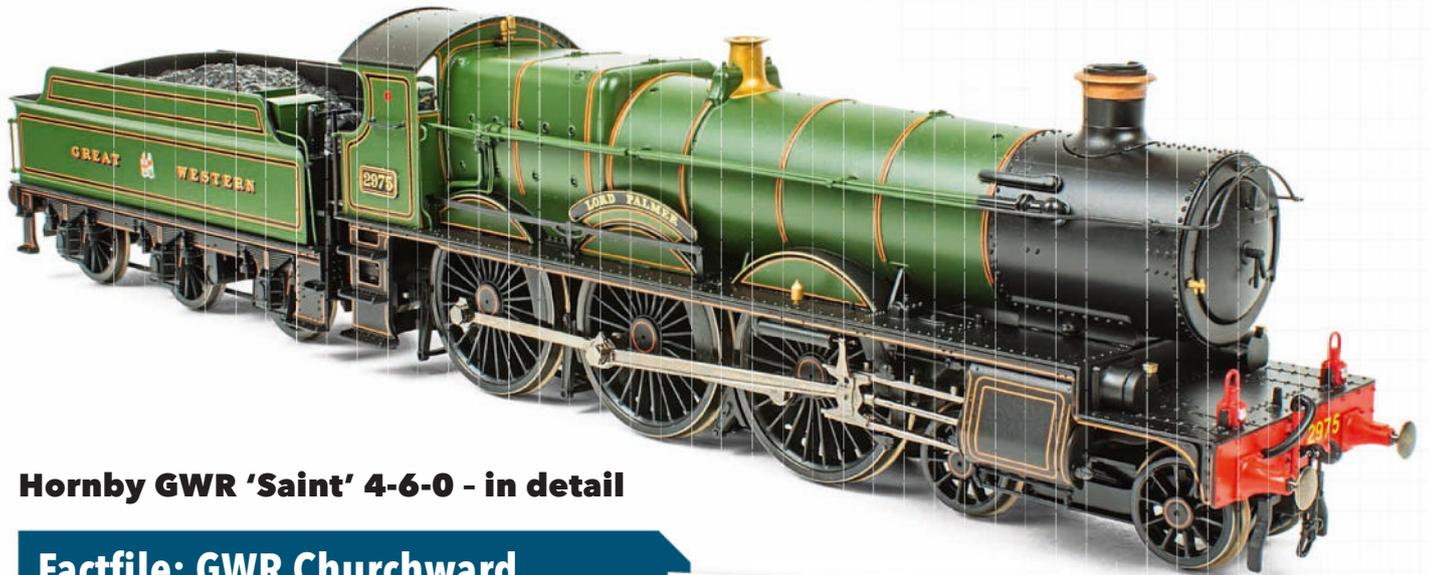
2

Detailed cab interior and crew. User-friendly loco-tender coupling a bonus.



3

All-important 'face' of prototype captured well.



Hornby GWR 'Saint' 4-6-0 - in detail

Factfile: GWR Churchward 'Saint' Class 4-6-0

Designed by George Jackson Churchward, the GWR's prototype outside-cylinder 4-6-0 was completed at Swindon in 1902 as No. 100, although it would later be re-numbered as No. 2900 and named *William Dean*.

A total of 77 locomotives were eventually built, featuring high, straight running plates to clear the twin cylinders, with the fleet numbered 2900-55, 2971-2990 and 2998. Of that total, Nos. 2972 and 2979-2990 had originally been built as 4-4-2s but were converted in 1912-13.

Built as true mixed traffic locomotives, they were allotted the GWR's C power classification (later BR Class 4P). They were named after 'ladies' - both real and fictional - as well as famous courts, characters from Walter Scott novels, a few GWR directors and various members of the aristocracy. But it was those named after saints that gave the fleet its nickname.

Churchward's design was adapted over the various batches, with many differences visible across the fleet, with examples paired with a variety of tenders. Traditional Stephenson valve gear and piston valves were fitted throughout, save for No. 2935 *Caynham Court*, which was modified by Charles Collett in 1932 as a testbed for Caprotti valve gear and rotary cam poppet valves, giving it a somewhat ungainly appearance.

The 'Saints' proved the precursor of the many famous twin-cylinder GWR 4-6-0s that followed, including the 'Hall', 'Manor', 'Grange' and 'County' classes, while the LMS 'Black Five' and LNER 'B1' also owed much to Churchward's influence.

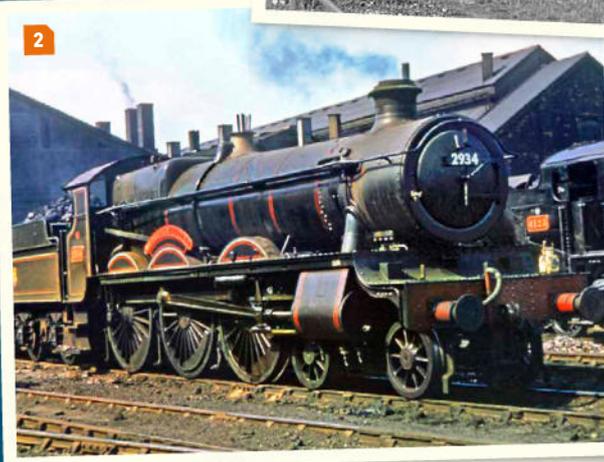
Employed on services along the West of England main line, 'Saints' also regularly worked to Wolverhampton, West and South Wales, while No. 2915 had the honour of hauling the inaugural 'Cheltenham Flyer'.

Withdrawals began in 1931, with British Railways inheriting 47 'Saints' in 1948, although the final example had been withdrawn by 1953, No. 2920 *Saint David* being the last in service. None were preserved, although construction of a new 'Saint' began in the 1990s, making use of ex-Barry 'Hall' No. 4942. The Great Western Society steamed No. 2999 *Lady of Legend* for the first time in 2019.



1

1: Paired with a large capacity tender, Churchward 'Saint' No. 2930 *Saint Vincent* heads towards Newton Abbott in April 1936. COLOUR RAIL



2

2: BR eschewed the GWR green livery in favour of 'mixed traffic' lined black, as seen on No. 2934 *Butleigh Court* outside Swindon shed in June 1950. COLOUR RAIL



3

3: Un-named No. 2978 is seen at Swindon, displaying the straight footplate style of early 'Saints', which demanded tall cab footsteps. Originally named *Kirkland*, it would be renamed *Charles J Hambro* in May 1935, presumably not long after this view was captured. Note the absence of outside steam pipes. COLOUR RAIL

water scoop stanchion when encountering the slightest curve. The fall plate thus requires a notch cutting into it.

Spectacle plates are glazed as part of a larger clear plastic moulding, fitting up against the inside of the cab, onto which is fitted the backhead detail. This is a discreet and effective solution, avoiding any prismatic effect around the edges of the windows and bulky retaining tags on the inside.

Moving to the tender, there's just as much detail to admire here, with handrails, hand brake and water scoop stanchions, fire iron storage bracket and recess, plus hinge and hasp detail on the lockers. Crisply moulded rows of rivets adorn the top of the water tank, and the lifting eyes are well observed.

The moulded plastic coal load has a surprisingly effective glistening effect when it catches the light, although the fuel is piled a little too uniformly for my liking, appearing as layers, like geological strata! It's easily removed, revealing a fully rendered empty bunker.

The tender frames feature excellent spring and axlebox detail, and the brake gear and rodding on both locomotive and tender are excellent.

TOP NOTCH DECO

The shade of GWR green looks, to my eyes at least, to be an improvement over previous offerings, with a pleasing overall satin sheen and deep lustre. The application of the lining and shaded lettering is superb. Ditto the GWR 'two cities' crests. An undoubted highlight is the etched brass nameplates that come pre-fitted, complete with delicately raised beading and letters.

The cabside numberplates are

printed to a high standard, but the optional etched replacements are a marked improvement. The copper and brass effect paints applied to the chimney cap and dome, respectively, are ultra-convincing and very neatly applied. There's a pleasing depth to the safety valves within the dome, too. Coupled with the fully hollow chimney, the view from above the model is impressive all around.

ON THE RAILS

The motor sits within the firebox area, with its output directed to the centre coupled axle via a vertical gear tower. Due to the motor's location, there's no room for a brass

flywheel, which I feel does impact the performance to a small extent. There's no characteristic 'run-on' as the model slows to a stop, which may not be noticeable for DCC users but is apparent on analogue control. It's a small thing, admittedly, and the performance of this sample was otherwise flawless, especially after a running-in period for the motor and gears.

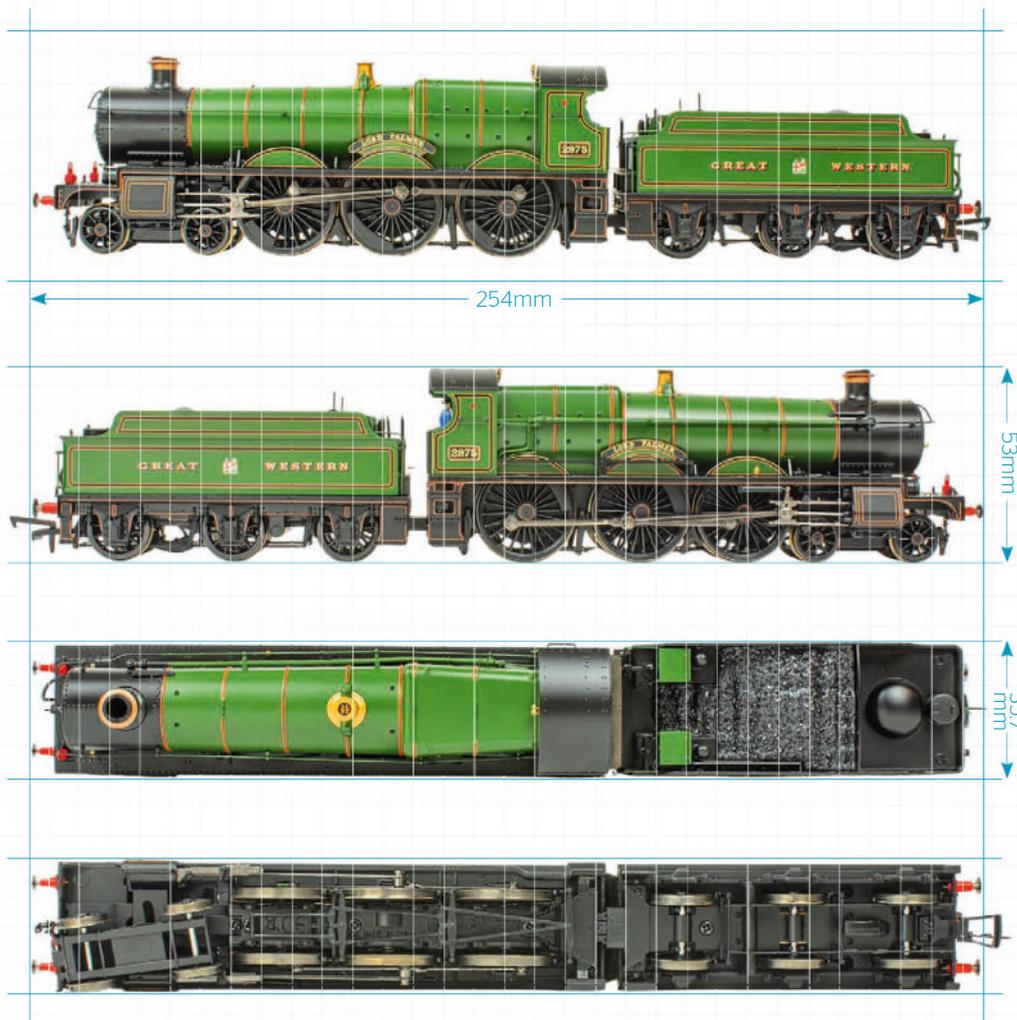
Given the free space in the front section of the boiler, is there scope for a steam generator version in future...?

The clip-fit loco-tender coupling is a welcome addition, making it easy - and safe - to mate or separate the vehicles at will

without damaging delicate cables. Power from the rails is collected from all coupled and tender wheels via wiper contacts, which work well on our sample, although there is some discernible drag on the tender wheels.

A cast metal front bogie is another welcome feature, mounted within a pivoting cam system, helping the leading axles to negotiate complex trackwork.

Hornby has scored a real winner with its 'Saint', capturing the look of a hugely popular prototype and offering a high level of detail, first-class finish and admirable performance, with plenty of haulage power on tap. It's divine! (GD)



VITAL STATISTICS: HORNBY GWR 'SAINT' 4-6-0

OVERVIEW

Manufacturer: Hornby
Ref. No.: R30405
Unit No.: 2975
Scale/gauge: 1:76 scale, '00' gauge
Body: Plastic with metal parts
Chassis: Metal with plastic parts
Weight: 346g
Min. curve radius: 438mm (second radius)
Wheel back-to-back: 14.4mm

DIMENSIONS

Length (over buffers)	63ft 0¼in
Height	13ft 3¼in
Width	8ft 11in
Wheel diameter (pony)	3ft 2in
Wheel diameter (driving)	6ft 8½in
Wheel diameter (tender)	4ft 1½in
Coupled wheelbase	14ft 9in

PROTOTYPE

Length	252.5mm
Height	53mm
Width	35.7mm
Wheel diameter (pony)	12.7mm
Wheel diameter (driving)	26.9mm
Wheel diameter (tender)	16.5mm
Coupled wheelbase	57.3mm

1:76 SCALE

Length	254mm
Height	53mm
Width	35.7mm
Wheel diameter (pony)	12.7mm
Wheel diameter (driving)	26.9mm
Wheel diameter (tender)	16mm
Coupled wheelbase	59mm

MODEL

Length	254mm
Height	53mm
Width	35.7mm
Wheel diameter (pony)	12.7mm
Wheel diameter (driving)	26.9mm
Wheel diameter (tender)	16mm
Coupled wheelbase	59mm

ELECTRICS

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

MECHANISM

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

SERVICING

How to dismantle: Body unscrews from chassis
Where to oil: Gears, axle bearings, crankpins - see instructions

SUMMARY

PROS

- Captures prototype's character.
- Detail fidelity.
- Superb finish.
- Performance.

CONS

- Not a lot.

FINAL VERDICT

A real beauty.



Bachmann Class 66

◆ GAUGE 'OO' ◆ MODEL Bachmann Branchline 50-004 Class 66 66847 Terry Baker, Colas Rail Freight ◆ PRICE £229.95 (DCC-ready), £339.95 (DCC sound), £369.95 (DCC sound deluxe) ◆ AVAILABILITY Bachmann stockists **Web** www.bachmann.co.uk

The Class 66 has been one of the most important locomotive types to have operated in the UK and, with the earliest examples now 27 years old, they're not far from being deemed 'classic' traction! Models of the General Motors Type 5s appeared soon after the real thing began landing in the UK, thanks to Lima's 'OO' offering, the tooling of which survives in Hornby's current range, albeit with several upgrades.

Bachmann's first Class 66 followed in 2005 and instantly offered superior looks and performance, with various tweaks and partial retooling rolled out over the years.

With Hattons launching a rival model (to some controversy) in 2020, which is now part of the Accurascale range, the stakes were raised in terms of refinement and the ability to accurately portray the increasing detail variations found on the real '66s'. Unsurprisingly, Bachmann

Branchline announced its all-new Class 66 just under a year ago.

The first versions landed with Bachmann stockists at the turn of the year, encompassing EWS red/gold, DRS blue, Freightliner green, GBRf blue and Colas liveries, each with multiple number options. A couple more Freightliner liveries are also in the pipeline, so there's already plenty of choice, especially with all versions offered in DCC-ready, DCC sound and DCC sound deluxe formats, the latter also

featuring auto-release tension lock couplings.

MARKED IMPROVEMENT

Our review sample depicts Colas Rail Freight's 66847, one of the ex-Freightliner Class 66/5s that were formed into the '66/8' sub-class during 2011. Notably, Bachmann's model comes without printed names, however a set of high-quality, etched stainless steel *Terry Baker* plates is provided as an optional fit.



“It’s clear that the new ‘66’ has been thoroughly re-designed from the wheels up, as so many facets of the bodyside and underframe are superior to previous versions”

Given how poor even the best printed names appear on the corrugated sides of a ‘66’, I’m pleased that modellers have the option of naming the locomotive if desired. Incidentally, 66847 was named in April 2019 in honour of a Colas driver who had passed away the year before.

It’s clear that the new ‘66’ has been thoroughly re-designed from the wheels up, as so many facets of the bodyside and underframe are superior to previous versions (which were not bad by any means). There’s greater finesse in the moulded body panels, and the overall shape is much more faithful to the prototype.

One of the most striking enhancements is in the front ends, with the windscreens and side windows much improved,

and there’s no unsightly seam between the lower cab and valance, which was an issue with Bachmann’s earlier models. The ‘face’ of the ‘66’ thus looks spot-on.

The super-fine etched mesh of the bodyside and roof-mounted cooler group vents is also impressive (it’s possible to see right through the locomotive with multi-layer detail visible inside), and other, smaller features such as the air horn covers, rooftop aerial pods, exhaust unit and various handrails are all executed perfectly, with the correct number of mounting posts to suit this prototype.

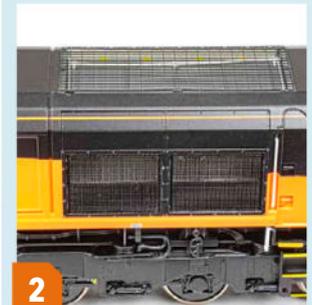


The cab interiors are fully appointed, with controls, dials and gauges discernible, plus printed instruction and warning panels on the bulkheads. The distinctive hotplate rings are also visible on the second man’s side. As supplied, tension lock couplers are installed at each end, with slots formed in the valances to allow the close-coupling mounts to swing from

3 things we like



1 Ultra-neat lift-off roof panel gives access to DCC socket.



2 Finely etched grilles and louvres, with detail inside.



3 Top quality etched stainless steel nameplates supplied.

side to side. The functional couplers look unobtrusive thanks to this arrangement. For those wanting greater realism, a pair of full valances is supplied in the detail bag, being a simple screw-fit to the underside of the chassis. Also provided is a set of brake hoses and screw couplings.

The correct style of circular headlamp clusters features on 66847, and the sprung buffers function well and look the part. I was impressed by the holes in each of the securing shackles at each end, which is a small but important feature to capture.

The bogie frames and lower side frames are festooned with detail, with many individual parts installed neatly and securely. The



Bachmann Class 66 - in detail

dished profile wheels are authentic, and there's daylight visible between the frames and the fuel tank and battery boxes, as per the real thing.

UNDER THE HOOD

To access the PluX22 DCC interface, a section of the roof is simply lifted away, which also reveals a bank of switches governing the head/tail lamp functions as well as isolating the 'Bach-Up' stay alive circuitry, which is geared more towards DCC and sound-fitted operation. The roof panel is secured by four strong magnets, and the fit on our sample was superb - if the instructions didn't mention the feature, it would be hard to discern that the roof wasn't a single moulding.

Inside, a weighty cast metal chassis block houses a five-pole, twin-shaft motor - mounted centrally - with twin flywheels and the usual cardan shaft and gear drivetrain sending power to all six axles. The gearboxes and bogie towers are die-cast metal, and the gearing is arranged for prototypical operating speeds.

Current is collected from all wheels via wiper contacts, and our sample performed effortlessly straight from the box, although a running-in period was observed before 66847 was put to work on long rakes of bogie hoppers. There's plenty of

haulage capability on tap and the locomotive proved extremely sure-footed with a smooth transition through the speed range in both directions.

Those opting for DCC sound-fitted models can enjoy Bachmann's new twin-speaker system, with superior bass response and a comprehensive suite of sound files programmed into a LokSound V5 decoder.

Finally, thoughts turn to the decoration, which is top class, as we expect from Bachmann. The yellow and orange elements feature accurate shades, and the colour separation is razor-sharp. All the tiny painted details, such as the bright alloy headlamp surrounds and cabside grilles, are faultless, and the Colas

logos and lettering are equally well rendered.

Bachmann's all-new '66' certainly has a premium feel about it, in terms of specification, design, build quality and finish, and although the RRP is around £40 more than Accurascale's offering, many retailers were offering discounts that bring the two different models closer in price, so it's definitely worth shopping around.

It's hard to object to duplication of such a ubiquitous locomotive type, given the hundreds of prototypes that will still be around for many years. There are certainly endless livery and detail variations, giving manufacturers plenty of material to work with.

Furthermore, it's great to see that Bachmann has moved the '66' so far ahead of the previous tooling, making this a worthy addition to the 'OO' market. **(GD)**



SUMMARY

- Really looks the part.
- Impressive detail.
- High level of finish and build quality.
- Top-notch performance.

CONS

- Not a lot.

FINAL VERDICT

A superb upgrade for the '66'.

VITAL STATISTICS: BACHMANN CLASS 66

OVERVIEW

Manufacturer: Bachmann
Ref. No. 50-004
Unit No. 66847
Scale/gauge: 1:76 scale, 'OO' gauge
Body: Plastic with metal parts
Chassis: Metal with plastic parts
Weight: 594g
Min. curve radius: 438mm (second radius)
Wheel back-to-back: 14.3mm

DIMENSIONS

Length (over buffers) 70ft 0½in
 Height 12ft 10in
 Width 8ft 8¼in
 Wheel diameter 3ft 6in
 Bogie wheelbase 13ft 7in

PROTOTYPE

70ft 0½in
 12ft 10in
 8ft 8¼in
 3ft 6in
 13ft 7in

1:76 SCALE

281mm
 51.3mm
 34.7mm
 14mm
 54.3mm

MODEL

281mm
 52mm
 35mm
 14mm
 55mm

ELECTRICS

Electrical system: 12V DC two-rail
Motor type: Five-pole
Lights: Directional head/tail lamps, interior
DCC-ready? PluX22 socket

SERVICING

How to dismantle: Body unscrews from chassis
Where to oil: Axle bearings - see instructions

MECHANISM

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



Revolution Trains 'Cartic-4' car-carrier set

◆ GAUGE 'OO' ◆ MODEL Revolution Trains RT-OO-CAR4-425A 'Cartic-4' quad car-carrier wagon set, Silcock Express ◆ PRICE £159.95

◆ AVAILABILITY Revolution Trains stockists [Web www.revolutiontrains.com](http://www.revolutiontrains.com)

The sight of British Rail's double-decker Motorail wagon sets was always a treat for trainspotters, while they were also a daily fixture at Ford's Halewood plant, where most of my family worked. In fact, these wagons emerged as part of a collaboration between BR and Ford in the late 1960s, with the high-capacity car carriers offering a marked improvement over existing stock.

Employed for the transit of new cars between factories, ports and distribution hubs, BR also assembled its own Motorail fleet, allowing drivers to let the 'train take the strain' on long-distance jaunts. The growth of the UK's motorway network soon put paid to that idea, however.

Designed as a series of articulated four-car sets (or 'quads'), permanently coupled, they could be marshalled into rakes of varying length according to demand. The open frames made loading and unloading easy, but the cars were prone to damage from flying debris and vandalism, leading to the fitting of various types of side and roof panels from the 1980s onwards.

Revolution Trains has already produced a superb rendition of the 'Cartic-4' wagons in 'N' (see MR338), and now the 'OO' versions have arrived, with a host of packs to choose from, in early BR Motorail condition and with

various later modifications, with mesh or solid side screens.

For review, we have an attractive Silcock Express branded set, with side covers and detachable roofs. The individual cars are linked with a simple pin and socket arrangement. There's an option for authentic close coupling (for layouts with the gentlest of curves), or a more forgiving setting to cope with curves up to second radius. Hinged flaps ensure a continuous internal roadway over each inner bogie.

The die-cast metal chassis provides plenty of mass, with the superstructure made up of moulded plastic parts. Etched metal inserts replicate the distinctive mesh roadways on both decks, and the access ladders, stanchions and safety chains are all replicated with an impressive level of finesse.



The plastic bogie frames are equally well executed, with distinctive curved air pipes, while the underside of each floor is fitted out with air brake gear and pipework. The orange-red and cream paintwork really looks the part, and the roof panels slot into position, being held securely enough to stay in place during operation, yet they're easy to remove to allow cars to be loaded or unloaded.

At the 'outer' ends, NEM coupler pockets are mounted to the bogie frames, and a small bag contains optional brake hoses, stowed screw couplings and a tail lamp, which will enhance the rear end of a fixed formation.

At 820mm long, the four-car set provides plenty of 'train' for the money and, at a combined weight of 502g, it didn't prove taxing for any of the locomotives I employed during testing.

thanks to the extremely free-running axles fitted to all of the bogies. The articulation units over each bogie also move freely, reducing drag and ensuring that the set coped very well with any short radius points and second radius curves, while being hauled or propelled.

This is a fabulous wagon set, which provides modellers with something a little different to run behind a diesel or electric locomotive. Their long-lived and well-travelled nature lends them to various eras and main line locations, and the chance to fill them with model cars of your choice adds even more interest. **(GD)**

SUMMARY

PROS

- Accurate replica.
- Excellent detail and finish.
- Simple, effective articulation.
- Sweet runners.

CONS

- Not a lot.

FINAL VERDICT

Terrific.



Hornby Bulleid Tavern Cars

◆ GAUGE 'OO' ◆ MODEL Hornby • R40470 Kitchen & Buttery Car & Composite Restaurant 'White Horse' coach twin-pack (crimson/cream)
 • R40471 BR Kitchen & Buttery Car & Composite Restaurant 'Jolly Tar' coach twin-pack (green) ◆ PRICE £139.99 ◆ AVAILABILITY Hornby ◆ Web uk.hornby.com

It seems, recently, to have been reviewing a glut of models of Bulleid prototypes, having covered all three of his weirdest offerings - the 'Leader' locomotive, and the '4-DD' double-deck EMU, both from KR Models, and now the Southern Region 'Tavern Cars' from Hornby.

Faced with a commercial desire to speed the throughput of restaurant car customers on its front-line expresses, the Southern's CME Oliver Bulleid came up with a variation on the Southern's preferred two-car restaurant sets. Eight pairs were built in the spring of 1949, thus under British Railways rather than the Southern Railway, though ordered by the latter.

The new pairs comprised a kitchen vehicle and a dining car in the usual SR format but, somewhere along the way, it was decided to have the buffet area of the kitchen car presented as an English village pub on wheels. Arguably more controversial was the lack of windows in the dining car, with tables facing inwards to the central aisle. This must have made serving easier but travelling sideways, without a window view, was not liked by diners. "All the ambience of a school dining hall," was the verdict.

The external decoration used the standard crimson and cream livery as an opportunity to embellish the bar area with painted brickwork, half-timbering

and a pub sign. The result was widely ridiculed, but was arguably just years ahead of its time. In an era when vinyl coverings are employed for all manner of liveries and branding, a bit of brickwork and some Elizabethan-style 'woodwork' seems quite tame.

As a fan of all things Bulleid, I had, over the years, suggested the Tavern Cars to manufacturers as an opportunity to show off their tampo-printing prowess. Hornby has taken up the challenge, and two versions of the Tavern Car pairs have now been released. The original crimson and cream version is presented as S7833/7892 at the sign of the White Horse, and the rebuilt

version in green as S7836/7893 at the sign of the Jolly Tar.

These are 100% newly tooled with an exceptional level of detail on the widely different underframes of the two vehicles. The usual close-coupling cam mechanism is fitted, with standard tension lock couplers in NEM pockets on the outer end of both cars. The inner ends have the same close-coupling arrangement, but fitted with a magnetic coupler housed in a dummy buckeye. This arrangement ensures that the vehicles can only be coupled in the correct orientation.

Bogies are the 8ft wheelbase SR 'steam' type assembled from separate components to give an exceptional level of relief and



“These are 100% newly tooled with an exceptional level of detail on the widely different underframes of the two vehicles”



brake shoes in line with the wheels. Metal wheels on insulated axles run in brass bearing plates, which provide for power collection without pick-ups. This is for the interior lighting, which is fitted in both cars. The circuitry includes stay-alive capacitors that keep the lights on during station stops.

Both vehicles feature a modicum of interior detail, although the lack of large windows makes it difficult to see. The white tables can just be glimpsed through the narrow vent windows of the restaurant

car, while the 'buttery' car, as Hornby calls it, contains details of the wood-panelled bar and its 'leaning' area. The kitchen has a basic impression of the stainless steel worktops, and the main shutter is firmly closed.

The body is correctly 'skirted' over the solebars, the first time I've seen this feature of some Bulleid vehicles on a ready-to-run model. The windows are flush-glazed and the character of Bulleid coaching stock with its distinctive oval toplights in the doors is well captured.

The R40471 set represents the

rebuilt version in which the kitchen/buttery car remained the same, including its inn sign, but lost the external decoration in favour of a coat of the usual plain green. The restaurant car, however, has a completely different body moulding with full windows revealing the internal detail of white-topped tables with brass table lamps. The table lamps are not operational, but the car is lit by LEDs on a bar in the ceiling.

Without doubt, this gets my vote for rolling stock model of the year. Superb! (CJL)

3 things we like



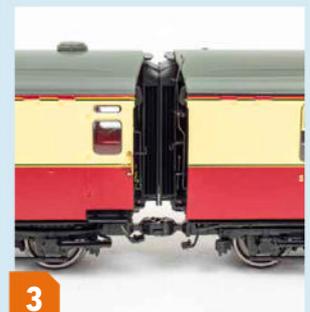
1

The all-round level of exterior detail is excellent.



2

Superb quality paint finish and printing.



3

Magnetic close couplers at 'inner' ends of cars.

SUMMARY

PROS

- Fantastic level of detail.
- Great to see these controversial cars finally released.
- Correctly 'skirted' over the solebars.

CONS

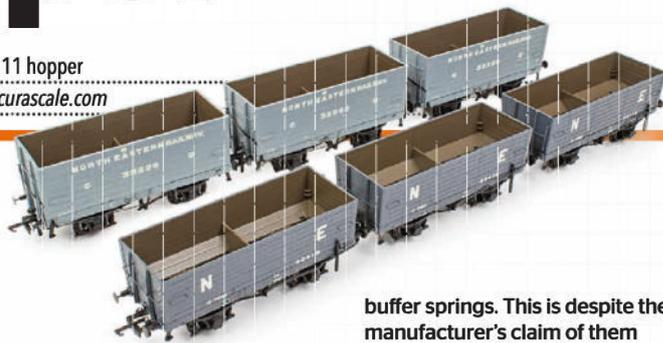
- Not a lot.

FINAL VERDICT

An early contender for rolling stock model of the year.

Accurascale NER P6/P7 hopper

◆ GAUGE '00' ◆ MODEL Accurascale • ACC2819 NER P7 hopper • ACC2822 LNER Dia. 11 hopper
 ◆ PRICE £84.95 per triple-pack ◆ AVAILABILITY Accurascale stockists ◆ Web www.accurascale.com



As part of a modernisation strategy, the North Eastern Railway designed and implemented a raft of new, higher capacity hopper wagons to handle the enormous tonnages of coal emanating from the region's collieries.

The Diagram P6 hopper was the first of the new stock to emerge in 1902. Standing 8ft 3in tall and boasting a 20ft long chassis (with 10ft 6in wheelbase), the twin-axle wagons featured a 15-ton capacity, offering a significant improvement over the prevailing chaldron-type waggons still in use at this time. Nearly 2,000 examples were eventually built, but the P6 type was soon overshadowed by the larger P7.

Built atop a similar chassis, the P7 stood 9ft 10in high and many were equipped with brake handles on the ends, rather than the sides, to suit the nature of operations at collieries and inclines. A whopping 12,000 of these wagons had been built by 1923.

Accurascale's new models cover the NER P6, P7, and P8 hoppers (the latter featuring an even higher load

capacity). Additionally, the Q3 locomotive coal wagons are also included, which eschewed the bottom-discharge hopper arrangement in favour of a flat floor and side doors. The tooling allows for various detail differences across production batches, while liveries cater for the NER, LNER and BR eras (examples remained in BR use until the early 1960s), plus various industrial users, including the NCB and British Steel.

Reviewed here is a pack of P6 hoppers in LNER grey, featuring revised end stanchions and traditional side-mounted brake levers, plus a set of NER light grey P7 wagons, with end-mounted brake handles and original stanchions. The latter continue below the chassis, making them compatible with dumb-buffered chaldron waggons.

The combination of a die-cast metal floor/chassis frame, featuring full interior and exterior detail, and injection moulded plastic bodyshell and detail parts, makes for a highly attractive and sturdy model. At 40g each, there's plenty of mass to

aid performance, helped by the brass pinpoint axle bearings and metal wheels.

The metal bufferheads are sprung, and the fine wire handrails, brake levers, rods and brackets are all neatly installed, complementing the crisply moulded plank, plating and fastener detail on the bodyshells. The brake gear is impressive too, with extra braces included as optional fittings, which sit behind the rear faces of the wheels to complete the equipment. The detail bags also provide three-link couplings for those who wish to remove the tension locks.

Talking of which, the NEM mounts are set quite a way inboard at each end, leading to the wagons being closely coupled at all times (there is no cam system). While this looks great on straight track, with barely a gap between buffers, it does risk buffer locking and derailments when propelling over short radius points and tight curves, especially given the tension in the

buffer springs. This is despite the manufacturer's claim of them being suitable for first radius trackwork. No alternative NEM couplers were provided with our samples, but modellers may wish to replace them with longer shanked versions.

Coupling issue aside, the wagons ran smoothly under test, and they really look the part. It's great to see such important wagon types now available in RTR form for the first time. They're ideal for those modelling a northern England location or various industrial sites during the steam era. (GD)

SUMMARY

PROS

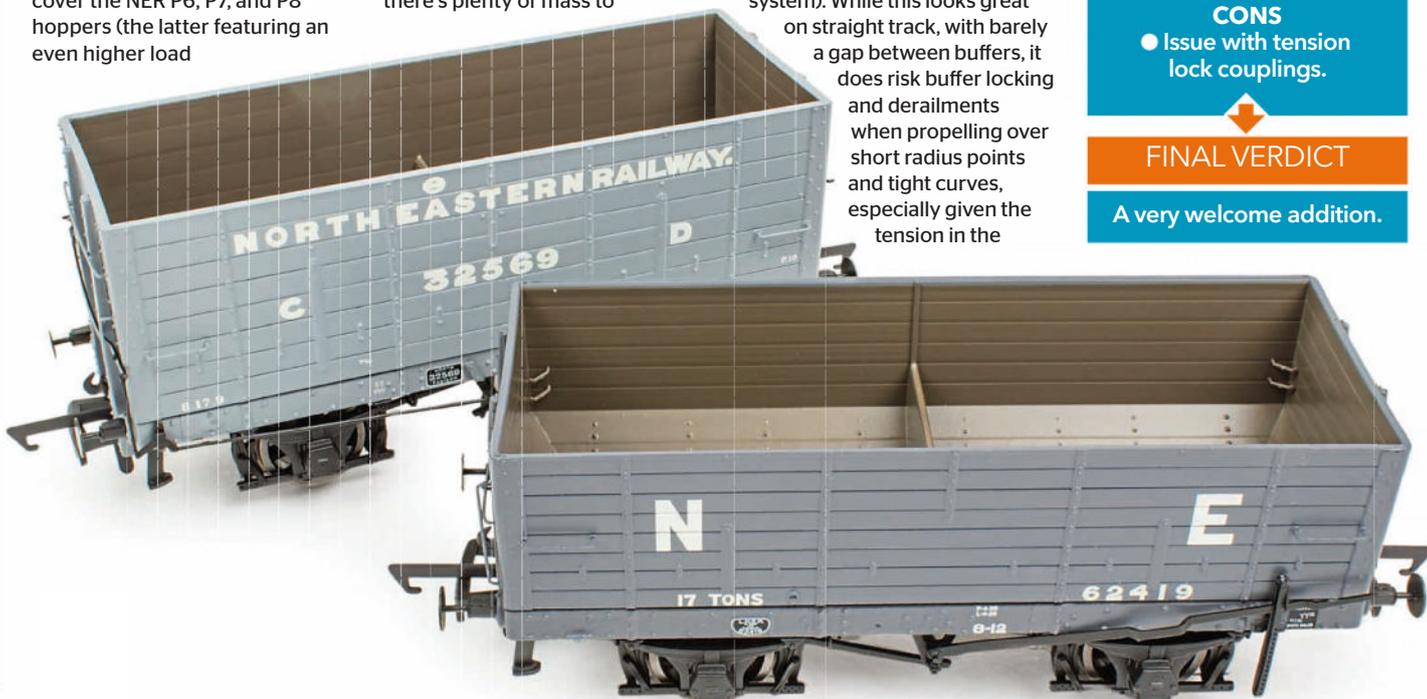
- Looks and accuracy.
- Impressive detail and finish.
- Smooth runners.

CONS

- Issue with tension lock couplings.

FINAL VERDICT

A very welcome addition.





Clark Railworks BR 'Prestwin' wagons

◆ GAUGE 'OO' ◆ MODEL Clark Railworks C3042A BR 'Prestwin' bulk powder wagons, triple-pack ◆ PRICE £120.00

◆ AVAILABILITY Clark Railworks Web www.clarkrailworks.com

First introduced in 1960, the 12-ton twin-silo 'Prestwin' wagon offered an economical means of transporting various bulk powder consignments by rail, with a pressure discharge system ensuring swift and effective unloading. Employed on flows of cement, alumina, soda ash and other materials, the 'Prestwins' remained in traffic well into the 1980s.

Modellers have been served by the enduringly popular Kitmaster/Airfix plastic kit, dating back to the 1960s and still produced by Dapol, but a RTR offering is now available under the Clark Railworks brand. Bachmann had initially announced a 'Prestwin' in its 'OO' range in the late 2010s. Still, nothing came of it, and it's actually something *Model Rail* had been considering as an exclusive commission until the team at Ellis Clark Trains stepped up.

Presented in high-quality, foam-lined boxes, six different triple-wagon packs are available, offering individually numbered examples, with a variety of marking styles to suit pre- and post-TOPS eras. These are highly detailed, highly impressive models, which capture the distinctive nature of these unusual wagons accurately.

There's a host of individually applied components adorning

the silos, with the filler hatches, walkways and all the pipework and valves associated with the discharge equipment rendered superbly. The instruction panel atop the small operating platform is a highlight, as are the etched metal ladders and grab handles. The dials of the pressure gauges are even picked out with paint!

A die-cast metal chassis lends each wagon some welcome mass without the need to hide a bulky metal slab weight and, at 48g each, they're just about the perfect mass for a 12ft wheelbase, twin-axle wagon. The chassis deck features chequer tread pattern texture, mirroring that of the upper walkway, and the sprung Oleo buffers, sideframe detail, brake gear and underfloor chutes and pipework are exquisite.

Blackened, three-hole disc wheels turn within brass pinpoint bearings for super-smooth running, and the wagons have been designed with easy conversion to 'EM/P4' in mind. Decoration is first-class, with the various number and information panels printed crisply, including builder's plates on the solebars.

At £40 per wagon, this seems a fair price given the level of detail (and the assembly work involved), quality finish and limited production run. It's great to have a RTR re-creation of these important wagons at

last, and the fact that it's such a superb rendition is a bonus. (GD)

SUMMARY

PROS

- Superb level of detail.
- Accuracy.
- Build quality and finish.
- Performance.
- Useful prototype.

CONS

- Nothing.

FINAL VERDICT

Exquisite.





Revolution WIA articulated car carriers

◆ GAUGE 'N' ◆ MODEL Revolution Trains RT-N-WIA-201A articulated car carrier set ◆ PRICE £149.95 ◆ AVAILABILITY Revolution Trains stockists ◆ Web www.revolutiontrains.com



Having recently reviewed Revolution's 'OO' gauge version of the WIA articulated car carrier sets (see MR347) - and been moved to buy a couple of sets for my own layout - it's exciting to see the 'N' gauge version arriving from the same manufacturer.

Again, the five-car sets come packaged in a stylish box, and the individual vehicles simply clip together over the shared 'inner' bogies. The outer ends are equipped with traditional

'N' gauge couplers, mounted in sprung, cam-mounted NEM pockets to permit safe close-coupling on layouts with up to second radius curves.

Various packs are available to cater for the latter BR era (the WIAs were first introduced in the mid-1990s) up to the present day. Our sample sports BR's attractive Railfreight Distribution logos, along with an incredible array of minuscule instruction and number panels, plus assorted other markings - all neatly printed and legible under a magnifier.

Separately installed handrails adorn the outer ends, with small etched tread panels installed above the buffershanks. The underside of each car features a good representation of the channel framework, with airbrake equipment, parking brake hand wheels and ferry lashing points precisely installed and painted where appropriate.

The low-profile bogies and wheels look the part too, with everything rotating freely. Each car is discreetly numbered

SUMMARY

PROS

- Looks great.
- Articulated couplings work well.
- Build quality and finish.

CONS

- Nothing.

FINAL VERDICT

Impressive rendition of an attractive prototype.

1-5 underneath, to make it easier to assemble the set correctly, and optional sets of brake hoses and control boxes are provided.

A fully assembled five-car rake measures 450mm long and looks great snaking around a layout behind one of Revolution's new Class 66s, with the simple articulation system working a treat. *(GD)*





EFE Rail ex-LBSCR Isle of Wight coach pack

◆ GAUGE 'OO' ◆ MODEL EFE Rail E86024 LBSCR loW 54ft four-coach pack, BR (SR) green ◆ PRICE £269.95 ◆ AVAILABILITY Bachmann stockists Web www.bachmann.co.uk

The Southern Railway transferred a large number of carriages to the Isle of Wight during the 1930s, cascaded from main line duties and rebuilt to suit operations on the island. Amongst this influx was a fleet of former LBSR vehicles, rebuilt onto 54ft chassis and with the addition of Westinghouse brakes, marshalled into four- and six-car sets for use primarily on Ryde-Newport-Yarmouth services.

The latest set of coaches to be added to the EFE Rail range depicts these ex-LBSCR vehicles in Isle of Wight condition, presented in attractive, foam-lined book-style packaging. Four different packs are available, in SR Maunsell or Malachite green, BR crimson or BR green.

Our sample pack features the latter livery, and the prevalent non-gangwayed vehicle types have been tooled for these sets, consisting of six- and seven-

compartment Brake Thirds, eight-compartment Composite and nine-compartment Third.

The models really look the part and are scaled correctly, with a pleasing array of separately fitted parts adorning the bodysheils, including handrails, lamp brackets and emergency brake equipment at the end. The panelling detail on the sides and ends is crisply moulded with an impressive definition.

The underframes are equally well appointed, with two different types of truss arrangements on show across the rake, plus Westinghouse gear and associated pipework. The spring, brake and axlebox detail on the bogies looks great too, while the blackened metal disc wheels rotate freely.

Each coach is fitted with cam-style close coupler mounts and NEM sockets, which, although a bit 'springy' while being hauled, operated well under test.

Decoration is neat and tidy, with the BR Southern Region green having an almost matt sheen, giving it a slight aged appearance, which may not be to everyone's taste, but I like it - it provides a helpful base for some interesting weathering work.

The printed numerals and legends, including the various window stickers, are applied to a high standard. Indeed, the glazing is another highlight, being crystal clear and allowing the painted interiors to be seen.

A small bag of optional extra details is provided, including cosmetic screw couplings, brake and steam heat hoses, with mounting hole pre-formed in the headstocks for easy installation.

Our sample set looked splendid running around the test track behind a 'Terrier' 0-6-0T, and these packs are sure to be popular with anyone with an interest in the Island Line during the SR and BR (and preservation) eras. (GD)

SUMMARY

PROS

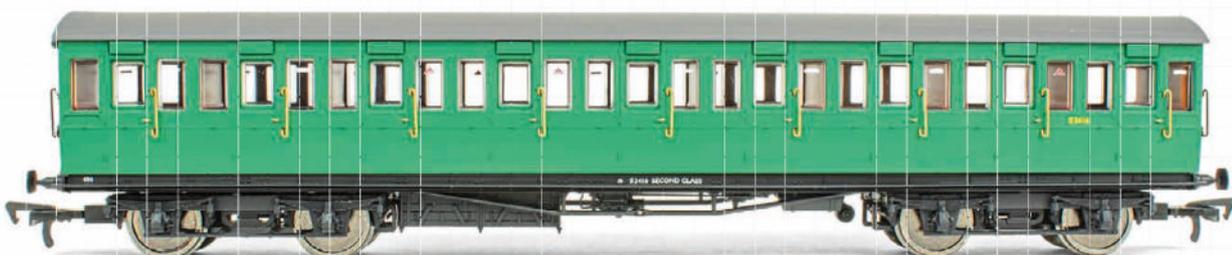
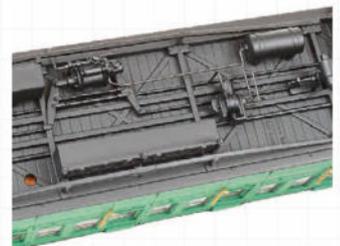
- Convincing replicas.
- Overall level of detail.
- Smooth runners.
- Neat finish.

CONS

- Coupling units a little 'springy'.

FINAL VERDICT

Welcome additions to the EFE range.



LMS/BR CLASS 11 0-6-0DE

CHOOSE FROM 15 VERSIONS

The Class 11 holds an important place in railway history, emerging in the steam era and offering sterling service to the Allied cause during the Second World War.

00 GAUGE

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-505 BR 12043, black, BRITISH RAILWAYS lettering



MR-503 LMS 7120, pre-war black



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



MR-501 War Department 70271, olive green



MR-504 LMS 7128, post-war black



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

WEATHERED

BR/SR CLASS 12 0-6-0DE

FIVE VERSIONS AVAILABLE

00 GAUGE

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

OUT NOW

Featuring Bulleid-Firth Brown wheels, our tooling caters for the original and later versions, with and without electric head/tail lamps. *All five versions now in stock!*



Pristine models

£169.00

£152.10

Model Rail subscribers price



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, WEATHERED



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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TO SEE THE LATEST SPECIAL OFFERS

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 LMS, WD, GWR and BR versions

OUT NOW

Pristine models £152.10
 Model Rail subscribers price
£169.00

Weathered versions £161.10
 Model Rail subscribers price
£179.00

What's available?

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



MR-520



MR-522



MR-521



MR-523



MR-524

'16XX' 0-6-0PT

CHOOSE FROM 19 VERSIONS 

GO TO
**WWW.MODELRAIL
OFFERS.CO.UK**
TO SEE THE LATEST
SPECIAL OFFERS

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-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: 21-pin

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

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Specification list

Made by: Heljan

Motor: Coreless

DCC socket: Next18

Features: • Cab interior lights
• NEM coupler pockets

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MR-405A PWM 97651
BR yellow



MR-405B PWM 97652
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MR-404 PWM652
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MR-402 PWM651
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MR-019 BR Class Y1
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BR black, early crest



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Specifications

Made by: Dapol

Motor: Five-pole 'Super-Creep'

DCC socket: Eight-pin

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Specification list

Made by: Rapido
Trains

Motor: Coreless

DCC socket: Six-pin

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Motor: Five-pole

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12**

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As the voting period draws to a close, who has been nominated as your favourite manufacturer and retailer - and which models have come out on top? Join us next month to find out!

Hidden diamonds

Model Rail visits the 3mm Society, which recently celebrated its 60th anniversary, and explores what this charming, often overlooked scale has to offer.

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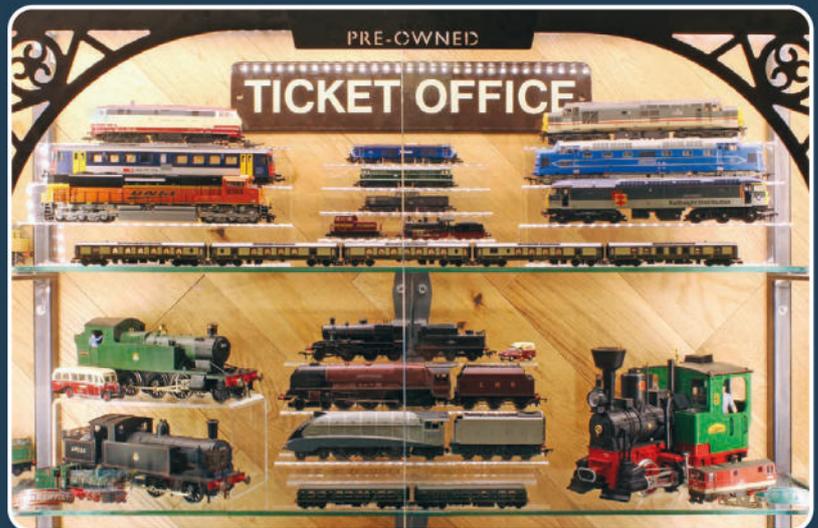
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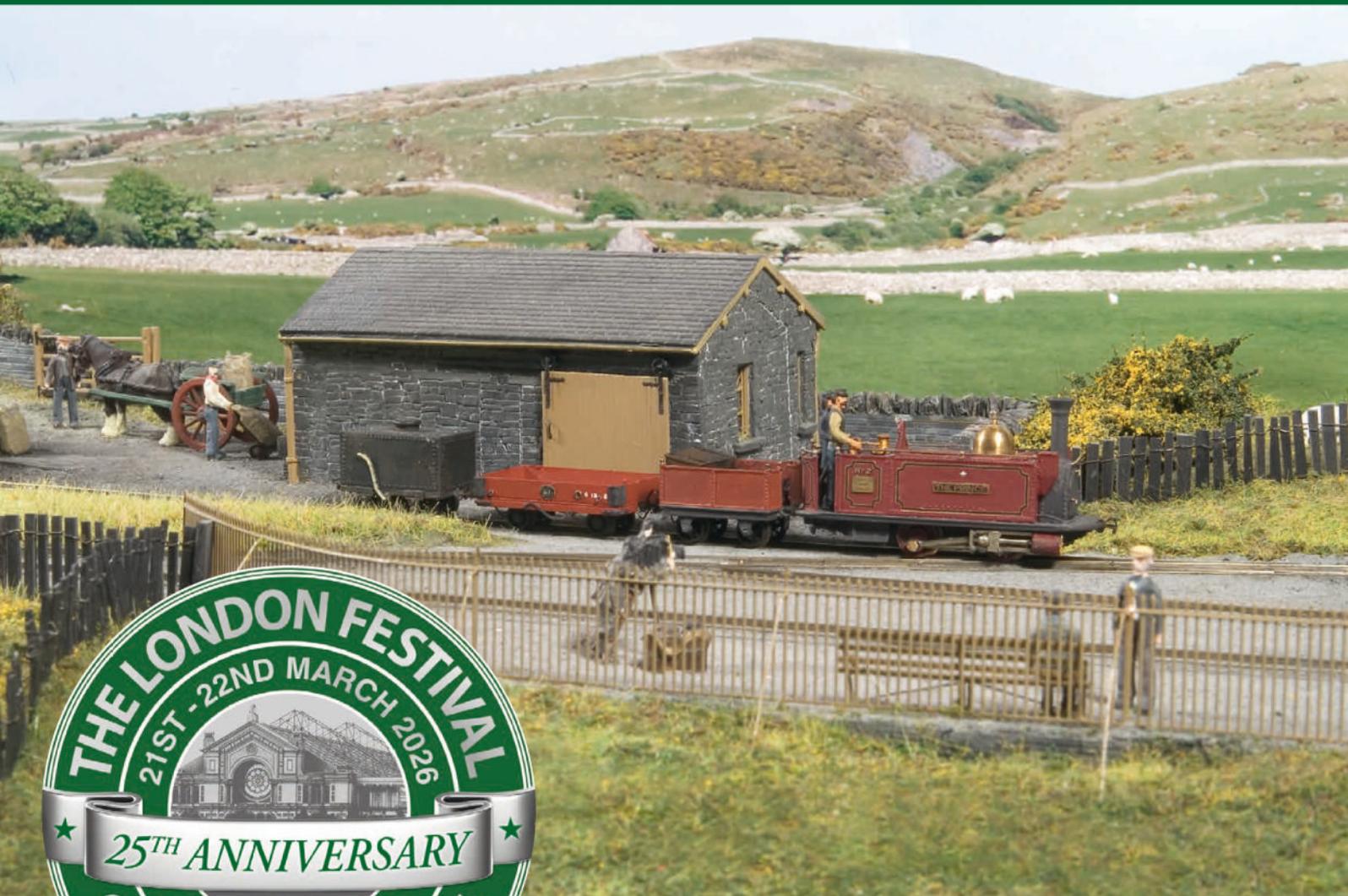
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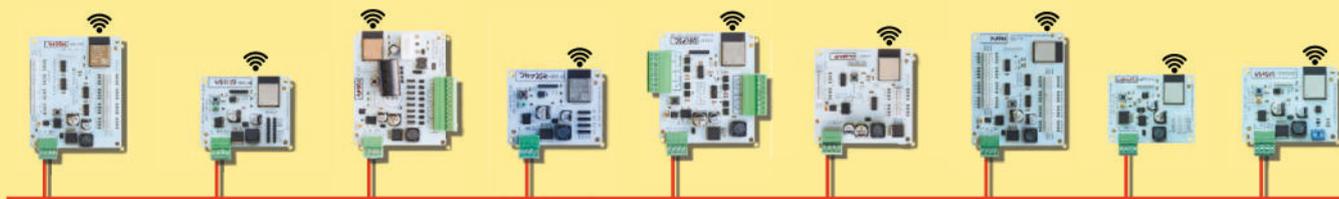
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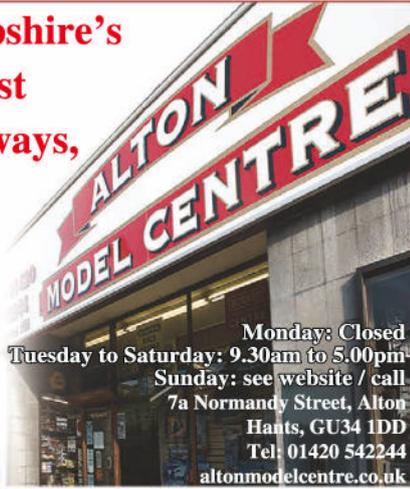
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Backscene



A direct comparison across 60 years sets **CHRIS LEIGH** thinking about standards.

Modellers of my age (I'll be 80 next birthday) working in 4mm:1ft scale, will have lived through the development of the model railway hobby from toy train sets to fine scale masterpieces over the past 60 years. The arrival of Accurascale's '57XX' O-6-OPT threw the comparison into sharp focus, for I still have the first model of a Great Western locomotive that I ever bought, and it's a '57XX'. You may have already read my review of the Accurascale model on page 80.

My old model came from Hatton's of Liverpool, and it is by Gaiety, a one-piece cast mazak 'lump' of a body on a Hornby-Dublo 'R1' O-6-O-T chassis. As a teenager, if you wanted a GWR tank locomotive to run with your Dublo 'Castle', it was Hobson's choice. That or nothing. However, once I saw that you could put a different body onto a ready-to-run chassis, it was only a matter of time before I spotted the Wills body kits, which were designed to do just exactly that.

The only problem was that most Wills kits were designed to fit a Tri-ang chassis, and Tri-ang wheels would not run on Hornby track. Suddenly, there was a whole new learning curve - about 'standards', wheel and track standards, and the realisation that what was a 'scale model' to one modeller wasn't necessarily so to another.

I moved pretty quickly on from my train set oval of Hornby three-rail. A circuit of two-rail track round the outside allowed me to run a Kitmaster Blue Pullman that was fitted with a Tri-ang-style motor bogie but with much finer wheels.

Even into the 1970s, however, there was really only the Hornby-Dublo EE Type 1 (Class 20) and Tri-ang Brush Type 2 in ready-to-run diesels, plus Hornby-Dublo's dismal shorty 'Deltic'. Steam still reigned supreme among ready-to-run models as it disappeared from the real railway.

Unlike the steam locomotive body kits from Wills and full body and chassis kits



Accurascale's new '57XX' (right) stands beside Chris' first ever GWR locomotive purchase, a Gaiety/Hornby-Dublo rendition of the same prototype.

from K's, there was no equivalent for fans of modern traction. That was, until Colin Massingham started offering his MTK kits from his tiny shop in Stoke Road, Slough.

I have one of his first kits, a BR/Sulzer Type 2 (Class 24). It is a reasonable representation of the prototype, for the time, built from white metal castings. Two Tri-ang motor bogies with turned-down 'scale' wheels were supplied and were necessary to move a model weighing a whopping 1.67lb.

If you wanted a Class 24, it was this or nothing. Its success prompted a rapid expansion. I seem to recall that big 16-wheelers came next, a 'Peak' and/or a Class 40. However, where most model manufacturers develop their reputation for quality as they develop their range, Colin's MTK (Modern Traction Kits) went the other way. Rushed new kits from poorly made patterns were often unbuildable, and a cavalier attitude to matters of copyright undermined relations with other manufacturers.

What it did, however, was to kick-start interest in what became known as 'modern image' modelling, leading the ready-to-run manufacturers to take modellers' interest in diesels and electric locomotives more seriously.

For a time, the Slough shop was my local model shop. Colin was involved in full-size diesel preservation, in a bid to preserve a Class 22. When BR scrapped it in error, it provided 'Warship' D821 Greyhound instead. It used to worry me that one of the nameplates was on full view behind the shop counter in what was not the most secure of premises!

Happily, top-notch ready-to-run diesels and electrics are now par for the course, and the whitmetal kit is now something you'd have to look for on eBay.

Chris' Sulzer Type 2, built from an MTK kit, was acceptable for the time, but is far behind the standards of RTR products of today.
BOTH: CHRIS LEIGH



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