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◆ EFE RAIL GIVES BIRTH TO A 'BABY DELTIC'



No. 350 April 2026 £5.75

# MODEL RAIL

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MODEL RAIL

No. 350 April 2026

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MODEL OF THE  
YEAR

2025

STEP INTO THE

# GARDEN

A bucolic Kentish scene - housed in a shed



**CABIN FEVER**

Getting the best from a signal box kit

**MINIATURE CRIMEFIGHTERS**

The role of model trains in famous court cases

## REVIEWED THIS MONTH



Bachmann Class 13

Rapido Fireless 0-4-0



Hornby RailRoad Azuma



Dapol GWR Autocoach



Heljan Class 33



**BULLEID TACTICS**

Enhance a Southern diesel shunter

Step into the garden

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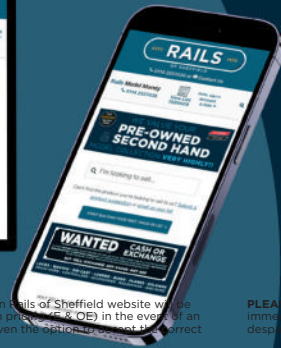
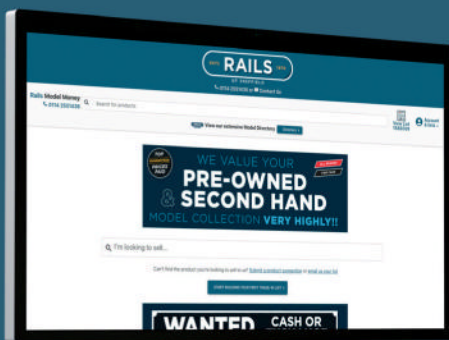
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# Welcome

Collating the data from our Model of the Year awards is always a fascinating, if time-consuming, process. Often, winners in most categories do not come as a great surprise. But in other instances, models which we thought would be in with a shout of at least a podium place fail to garner as many votes as expected.

But that's the joy of opening up our awards fully to readers and consumers; every winner is voted for by you, offering a handy barometer of what, if anything, has really stood out - and what models have appealed to a smaller, but equally dedicated audience. You can read the full results breakdown on page 28.

While our awards seek to honour the great work done by manufacturers and retailers in 2025, this year has already got off to a great start, with some cracking models featuring in this month's review pages.

Rapido's gorgeous little fireless 0-4-0 really caught our imagination, and we're looking forward to presenting more on these fascinating industrial locomotives in the May issue. I also had a blast testing and reviewing Bachmann's new Class 13, a prototype that gained something of a cult following in the years before withdrawal in the mid-1980s.

Talking of six-coupled diesel shunters, with our exclusive 'OO' gauge Class 12 models now in stock, I took the opportunity to titivate a BR green version, adding a footplate crew and giving it a typical work-stained appearance to suit the 1960s era. They may look like an '08' at first glance, but our models feature all the necessary differences have a character all their own, thanks especially to the Southern Railway's Bulleid-Firth Brown wheels.



Our exclusive Class 12s are proving popular, and George has been tinkering with one of them - see page 50.

We had some good news recently, with the Audited Bureau of Circulation (ABC) figures showing that Model Rail enjoyed an uplift of nearly 12% in sales during 2025, and we've won the prestigious 'Most Read' title award in Readly's Hobbies and Collecting category for the second year running. So thanks to everyone who buys or subscribes to Model Rail. We literally couldn't do it without you.

Happy modelling!

**George Dent** Head of Content

### This month's cover image



Jonathan Ramsden's 'Aldleford Green' transports the viewer to a glorious, sunny day in the Kent countryside. Turn to page 32 for the full story. CHRIS NEVARD

### Meet the team behind the UK's best modelling magazine



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



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



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

#### This month's contributors



**Nick Brodrick**



**Chris Leigh**



**Chris Nevard**



**Peter Marriot**



**Ben Jones**



**Ben Ando**



**Tony Streeter**

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see p26

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## 46 Build a country cottage from a plastic kit, Part 2

Chris Nevard explains how he added the finishing touches to this delightful model.

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50 Customise a Class 12



54 Model a springtime garden



58 Build a signal box kit

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98

# Opening the box

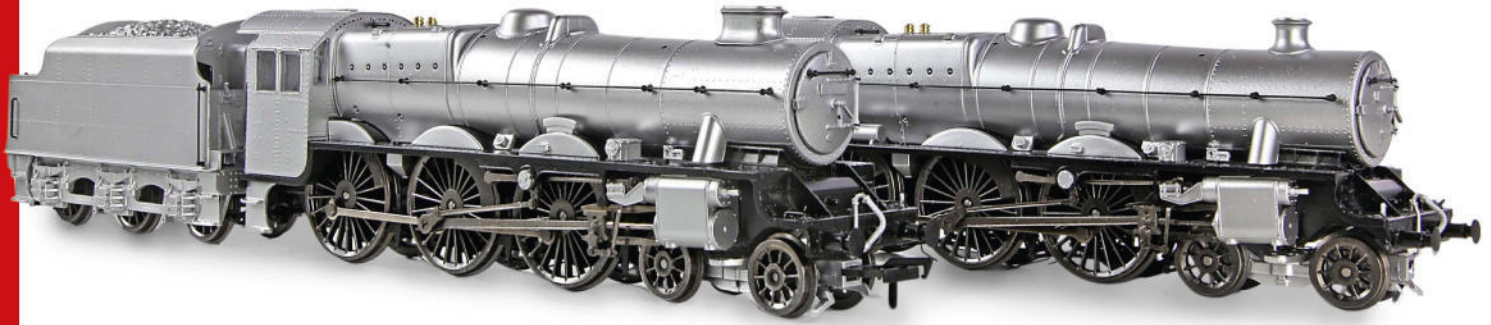
The latest happenings from the world of model railways

## The Big Picture

The once-extensive Birkenhead Dock rail system was a shadow of its former self by the 1980s. And yet it remained a fascinating location at which to watch BR diesels shunting local industries, such as coal depots and scrap metal merchants, and a rare chance to see Class 03s at work in the North West. James Rowlands' 'Corporation Road' was inspired by Birkenhead's dockland rail network during the '80s, cramming plenty of visual and operational interest into a modest footprint. Look out for the full story in a future issue of *Model Rail*.  
Photography: CHRIS NEVARD







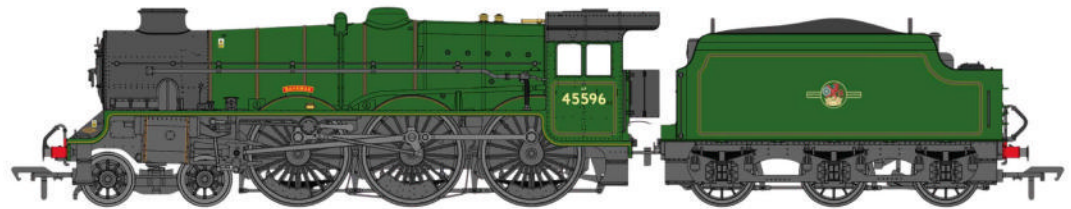
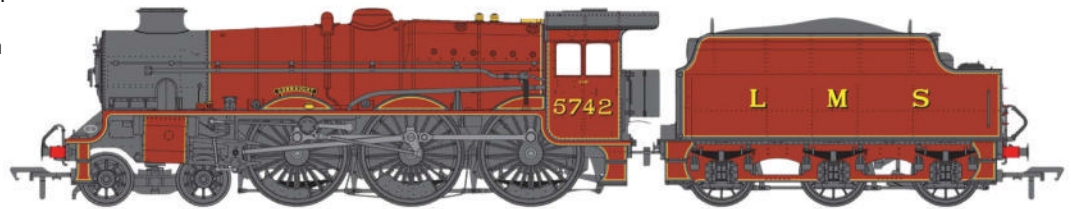
# BACHMANN TOPS OFF SPRING REVEAL WITH RETOOLED 'JUBILEE'

OO  
GAUGE

**D**ominating Bachmann Branchline's Spring 2026 range launch in early February was the news of a retooled 'OO' gauge LMS Stanier 'Jubilee'.

Four versions have been announced so far, displaying various new tooling options to cater for sloping firebox throatplates, single or double chimneys and an array of Stanier or Fowler tenders. Of note is No. 5742 *Connaught*, the final 'Jubilee' to be built by the LMS, plus the ever-popular No. 45596 *Bahamas*. The latter version has been produced in association with the Bahamas Locomotive Society, with sales helping to support the restoration of the 4-6-0.

All models will feature pre-fitted speakers and a PluX22 DCC decoder socket (factory sound-fitted options are available), plus firebox glow effect and hinged smokebox doors.



## What's planned?

- ◆ 35-975 LMS 'Jubilee' 4-6-0 No. 5742 *Connaught*, LMS Crimson Lake (Fowler tender)
- ◆ 35-976 LMS 'Jubilee' 4-6-0 No. 45671 *Prince Rupert*, BR

- lined green, early crest
- ◆ 35-977 LMS 'Jubilee' 4-6-0 No. 45704 *Leviathan*, BR lined green, late crest (Fowler tender)
- ◆ 35-977A LMS 'Jubilee' 4-6-0 No. 55596 *Bahamas*, BR lined

- green, late crest
- Prices:** £214.95 (DCC-ready), £324.95 (DCC sound)
- When's it due?** TBA
- Availability:** Bachmann stockists
- Web:** [www.bachmann.co.uk](http://www.bachmann.co.uk)

## FARISH RANGE HIGHLIGHTS

OO  
GAUGE

The BR Class 101 two-car DMU returns to the Graham Farish range, in BR green (with speed whiskers), Rail blue and Regional Railways schemes, with DCC sound-fitted options available for each version (£229.95-£249.95).

Meanwhile, to complement the all-new BR Mk 1 POT Post Office sorting van of last year, a quartet of Mk 1 POS sorting vans will soon be available, with liveries from the 1960s-1990s.

More modern bulk hoppers are also added to the Farish

range, in the form of HYA coal and the later IIA biomass carriers, each with GBRf branding.





# PRE-GROUPING COACHES ADD COLOUR



Hot on the heels of the EFE Rail 'OO' 54ft ex-LBSCR Isle of Wight coach set (reviewed in MR349), the same tooling will now be employed to depict various pre-Grouping railways which operated similar vehicle types.



Offered individually, each Third class, Composite and Brake Third car is available in a choice of LBSCR umber, Caledonian plum/off-white, S&DJR Prussian blue or generic lined teak schemes. **Price:** £58.50 each

## BRANCHLINE RANGE ROUND-UP

A pair of new 'OO' train sets now supplement the Bachmann Branchline range, with the Eastern Express set consisting of Gresley 'V2' 2-8-2 No. 60800 *Green Arrow* plus a pair of BR maroon Newton Chambers car carriers (previously offered in the EFE Rail range). Meanwhile, the Suburban Sulzer set features BR green Class 25 D5225 and a duo of BR Mk 1 Suburban coaches. Both sets come complete with an oval of track, a decorated track mat and a controller, in either analogue or DCC formats (the Sulzer set also featuring

digital sound), available (£304.95-£414.95).

The GCR/LNER 'J11' and ex-Midland '4F' 0-6-0s gain new versions, some of which feature liveries tackled for the first time on these models. Both are also being offered with a DCC sound option. More LMS



supporting the heritage project with proceeds from this model.

The pioneering LMS 'Twin' Co-Co diesels gain another production run, with 10000-1 rendered in post-Southern Region condition (with extra lamp brackets and disc headcodes), available in BR black or green liveries.

A host of wagon types gain new versions, including BR and SR 12t vans, BR 27t tippers and a quartet of the 'Covhop' is sure to be popular. The POA scrap wagon is another welcome returnee, while the new OCA batch includes some interesting weathered variants.



steam comes in the form of the 'Patriot' 4-6-0, with No. 45524 *Blackpool* joining a replica of new-build No. 5551 *The Unknown Warrior*, and Bachmann is



## COLLECTORS CLUB SPECIALS

Members of the Bachmann Collectors Club can enjoy discounts on two new exclusive models. In 'N', Gresley 'V2' *Green*

*Arrow* is presented in its later BR days, complete with 34A King's Cross shedcode and lined green livery, with analogue and DCC

sound-fitted options available (£219.95-£329.95).

In 'OO', BR Mk 1 First Open No. 3136 *Diana* depicts a West Coast Railway Company carriage regularly seen on charter

services, and complements other Mk 1, Mk 2 and Mk 3 stock in the Bachmann range (£67.95).

Collectors Club members save 10% off the listed prices.

**Web:** [www.clubmodels.co.uk](http://www.clubmodels.co.uk)



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# EFE BIRTHS A 'BABY DELTIC'



The undoubted highlight of Bachmann's 'N' gauge announcements was a BR Class 23, which is being produced under the EFE Rail banner. It's the first time that the popular 'Baby Deltic' has been

offered in RTR form in this scale, and the model will depict both the original disc headcode-fitted design and the later, rebuilt centre headcode versions, with ten guises offered in the initial batch.

Liveries cover the operational lifespan of this small fleet, and these highly detailed models will be equipped with a coreless motor, working lights, Next18 DCC interface and space provided for a speaker to be mounted

within the locomotive's battery box moulding.  
**When's it due?** Q3 2026  
**Price:** £149.95 each  
**Availability:** Bachmann stockists  
**Web:** [www.bachmann.co.uk](http://www.bachmann.co.uk)



## NEW SCENECRAFT ADDITIONS

Amongst a raft of new Bachmann Scenecraft models for 2026 is a set of Travelling Post Office lineside apparatus in 'OO', including a pair of mail bags hanging ready for collection, plus a collection net, both mounted on a small scenic base.

Also in 'OO', the popular single-road diesel servicing shed (based on the structure at

Peterborough) returns, while in 'N', a CLASP-style, single-storey concrete-and-brick office structure has many potential uses on post-1960-era layouts.

**Prices:** £29.95-£99.95  
**Availability:** Bachmann stockists  
**Web:** [www.bachmann.co.uk](http://www.bachmann.co.uk)



## ACCURASCALE PUTS ON THE BRAKE

The latest addition to Accurascale's expanding range of BR rolling stock is the once-ubiquitous 20-ton goods brake van.

Catering for the later LNER-designed 'Toad D' vehicles as well as the standardised BR brake vans, Accurascale's tooling incorporates many detail

differences, including handrail patterns, brake systems, buffers and axleboxes, with a wide range of BR (steam and diesel eras) and privatisation liveries to choose from.

The detailed cabin interior will feature working lights (including a glowing stove!), plus a set of non-working

tail and side lamps will also be provided.

Models will be available individually, and can be pre-ordered now, albeit only via Accurascale's website.

**When's it due?** Q1 2027  
**Price:** £39.95 each  
**Web:** [www.accurascale.com](http://www.accurascale.com)



## In Brief

### DEVON 'SEA DOGS' HIT THE ROAD

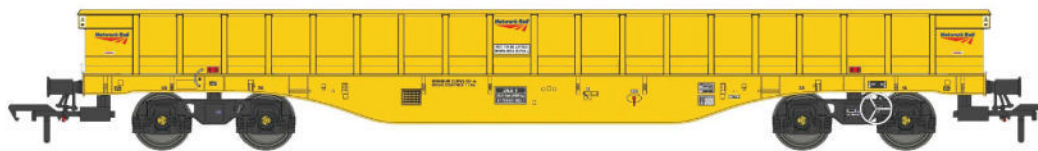


New to the EFE Road range is the open top 'Sea Dogs' Leyland Atlantean in its original Devon General guise, alongside other later variants, including one in East Yorkshire operation.

**Price:** £46.95 each  
**Availability:** Bachmann stockists  
**Web:** [www.bachmann.co.uk](http://www.bachmann.co.uk)



# 'HAWK' SWOOPS IN FROM DAPOL



A familiar sight on today's railway is the Network Rail JNA-Y 'Hawk' high-capacity open wagons, which were recently rebuilt from MRA side-tipping ballast carriers. The 'Hawks' employ the same chassis and bogies, but now feature fixed box-type steel bodies, with external reinforcement ribs, and are designed for the transport of ballast or spoil to/from work sites.

Having added the MRA wagons to its range some years back, Dapol is now also developing the JNA-Y in 'OO' gauge. Despite the JNA-Ys being able to work as single vehicles, in contrast to the fixed five-car MRA sets, the new wagons still display some minor detail variations relating to their previous 'inner' or 'outer' roles.

Dapol's tooling caters for these subtle differences, and an initial

production batch will feature six individually numbered wagons, all in Network Rail yellow. The project is currently at the engineering prototype stage, with production expected to get under way in the next few months. Pre-orders can be placed at your favourite Dapol stockist.

**When's it due?** Q4 2026

**Price:** £44.95 each

**Web:** [www.dapol.co.uk](http://www.dapol.co.uk)



## GIVE YOUR OLD 'DUB-DEE' SOME PEP



The MicroMotor.eu range continues to grow, with more bespoke 12V coreless motor and transmission packages designed for a wide range of European and UK outline locomotives in 'HO' and 'OO'.

A notable new addition is a replacement power unit for Bachmann's War Department 2-8-0, especially those produced from the late 1990s

and into the 2010s. The powerful, compact motor and worm drive are designed to fit within the existing cradle, and full instructions are provided.

The motor is compatible with DCC decoders and comes with a 1-year warranty. The re-motoring kit is available in the UK via Peter's Spares.

**Price:** £36.60

**Web:** [www.petersspares.com](http://www.petersspares.com)

## RAPIDO'S EVOLUTION IS HERE

The hotly anticipated first batch of 48ft pre-Grouping bogie coaches from Rapido Trains UK has arrived. Dubbed the 'Evolution' range, they are based around several generic vehicle types, allowing modellers to assemble convincing passenger trains across a vast timescale, with liveries offered to suit late Victorian and Edwardian eras, plus the 'Big Four' and British Railways periods.

We received a box-full of samples just before we closed for

press, and a full review will feature in the next issue of *Model Rail*, which goes on sale from April 9.

**Price:** £69.95 each, £199.95 triple-pack

**Availability:**

Rapido Trains UK stockists

**Web:** [www.rapidotrains.co.uk](http://www.rapidotrains.co.uk)



## UNBRANDED 'CORADIA' FOR KERNOW



In an exciting move for South West rail scene modellers, Kernow Model Rail Centre has commissioned Revolution Trains to produce a limited edition two-car Class 175 DMU in unbranded Transport for Wales livery.

Mirroring the appearance of the real units that have now entered service with Great Western Railway, the plain grey and red units ply their trade on local services across Devon and Cornwall, especially Exeter-Penzance stopping services, as well as the Exmouth-Barnstaple and Okehampton turns.

Revolution's forthcoming Class 175 is due to appear later on this year, and Kernow's exclusive version - depicting unit No. 175009 - is available to pre-order now, with DCC-ready and DCC sound options available. The latter model will be equipped with ESU LokSound decoders and feature authentic sound files.

**When's it due?** Q4 2026

**Price:** £279.95 (DCC-ready),

£374.95 (DCC sound)

**Web:** [www.kernowmodelrailcentre.com](http://www.kernowmodelrailcentre.com)



## In Brief

### DCCONCEPTS UNDER NEW OWNERSHIP

The hugely respected DCCconcepts firm has been acquired by Layout Concepts, which will be continuing production of the existing product range, maintaining existing lifetime warranties and providing after-sales support. Product distribution will now be handled by The Model Centre (TMC), and a new website has been developed. There are exciting plans for the showroom beside Settle station too. Richard Johnson, founder of DCCconcepts, said: "After a quarter of a century of product development, we now need the energy and fresh vision of a young team of hobby lovers to take the business towards the future with confidence. It's time for a positive change that will add back the sparkle to everything that has been - and more importantly, now can be - developed."

**Web:**

[www.layoutconcepts.com](http://www.layoutconcepts.com)



# GOLDEN WONDER – RUN 2! BR MIRRLEES TYPE 2/CLASS 30 & BR EE TYPE 2/CLASS 31

1:76.2 SCALE/OO GAUGE

EXPECTED Q1 2026

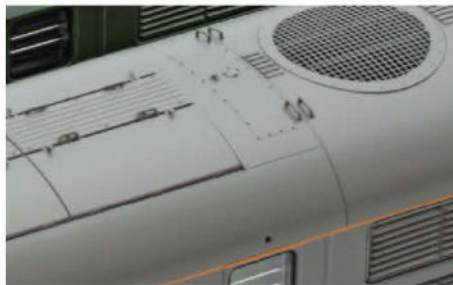
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£184.95  
DCC SOUND  
£284.96



**SIX COLOURFUL LIVERIES** feature in the new Accurascale range. Our heavy 'Ped' weighs in at 448g, with assured all-wheel drive and a powerful 5 pole skew-wound motor. Sophisticated lighting modes, Accurathrash speakers, 'powerbank' and an impressive haulage capacity backed by a lifetime warranty, ensure this is truly the ultimate Class 30/31 model. **Pre-order** direct via [accurascale.com](http://accurascale.com) or via your local stockist, priced from £184.95.



Pre-production samples subject to change

## All Class 31 models feature

- High level of detail
- Die-cast chassis
- Five-pole motor with twin flywheels
- DCC ready & DCC sound (ESU loksound v5) options
- Details specific to individual prototypes
- High fidelity metal and plastic parts
- Sprung metal buffers
- Operating Motorised Fan
- Wheel Flange Squeal Sensor on DCC Sound Fitted Locomotives
- Helical gears for maximum performance
- Comprehensive lighting functions
- And other typical Accurascale features.

Scan the QR Code or visit: [www.accurascale.com](http://www.accurascale.com) to view the full range of Class 31 locomotives available to pre-order.



# MODEL RAIL SCOTLAND ON THE HORIZON

In a change to the usual late February slot, Model Rail Scotland will take place over the long weekend of March 27-29, at the Scottish Event Campus, Glasgow.

This year's show marks the 60th anniversary of the Association of Model Railway Societies Scotland (AMRSS) annual show, and it promises to be special. Over 50 high-quality layouts are booked, across various scales, eras and regions, although there are plenty of

Scottish-themed models among the line-up, including the Scottish Diesel & Electric Group's 'Hazelbank' (pictured, right).

Pete Waterman's world record 'Making Tracks' layout will be making its Scottish debut, with visitors able to operate trains along the enormous 'OO' re-creation of Milton Keynes and the West Coast Main Line.

Joining the layouts will be leading manufacturers such as Accurascale, Cavalex, Ellis Clark

Trains, Heljan/Kato, Hornby, Oxford Diecast, Peco, Rapido and Revolution Trains, plus an impressive roster of model retailers and specialists in layout control,



scenics and craft tools. Combined with modelling and preservation societies, plus practical demonstrations, the exhibition promises to be a cracker!

Advanced tickets are available, with holders able to enter the event 30 minutes before opening time, while tickets are also available to buy on the door.

The venue is easy to access by road (just off the M8) and public transport, with train services to the nearby Exhibition Centre

station, while a free vintage bus will operate from Glasgow Central Station and George Square on each day.

**When is it?** Friday March 27-Sunday March 29 2026  
**Opening times:** 1030-1800 (1030-1700 on Sunday)

**Where is it?** SEC Glasgow, G3 8YW  
**Prices:** Adult £18, child £5, family £40

**Web:** [www.modelrail-scotland.co.uk](http://www.modelrail-scotland.co.uk)



## TMC BUILDS A TABLE-TOP TOWN



Excitement continues to build around 'TT:120' thanks to the exclusive commission of a range of Bachmann Scenecraft structures by The Model Centre (TMC).

The range consists of a dozen half-relief cottages, shops, a bank, a garage, a pub and a hotel, allowing a generic high street to be recreated to suit almost any British village, town or city. Each model is supplied fully finished and ready to plant.

TMC's Howard Smith explains:

"The TT:120 market is being shaped by novice model collectors - many of whom are discovering the hobby for the first time.

"A large proportion of these individuals want ready-to-plant architecture to complete their model scenes with speed. Our new Scenecraft range, arriving this autumn, offers a great solution to modellers of all present 'TT:120' eras."

Models can be pre-ordered now, with delivery due this autumn.



**Price:** £22.99-£36.99 each

**Availability:** The Model Centre  
**Web:** [www.tmc-direct.com](http://www.tmc-direct.com)

## In Brief

### UK MODEL SHOP DIRECTORY CLOSES

After 25 years, the UK's leading online model shop directory has now closed. Founder Adrian Hall called time on the web resource in early February, citing the increased technical and maintenance demands involved in the day-to-day running of the site.

Like countless modellers, the *Model Rail* team were regular users of the site, so we're very sorry that it has closed, but we thank Adrian for all the work he has put into the directory over the years and wish him well for the future.

We're currently exploring alternative means of hosting the free, searchable *Model Rail* index service that was previously accessed via the directory.

## ACCURASCALE RELAUNCHES GENESIS RANGE



Although most of the former Hattons Originals locomotive and rolling stock tooling found new owners soon after the retailer's demise, the future of the hugely popular Genesis range of four- and six-wheel carriages had been uncertain...

...Until now! In an exciting move, Accurascale has now taken ownership

of the tools, and the manufacturer has moved production of future batches to a dedicated factory, with a new batch currently under way.

Various improvements are being rolled out across the range, with interior lighting becoming a standard feature (switched by magnetic wand and powered by track current), complete with

'stay alive' capacitor circuitry for flicker-free operation.

Additionally, a new body style has been produced to portray a six-wheel Full Brake car with central ducts, lending it to a broader range of potential prototypes.

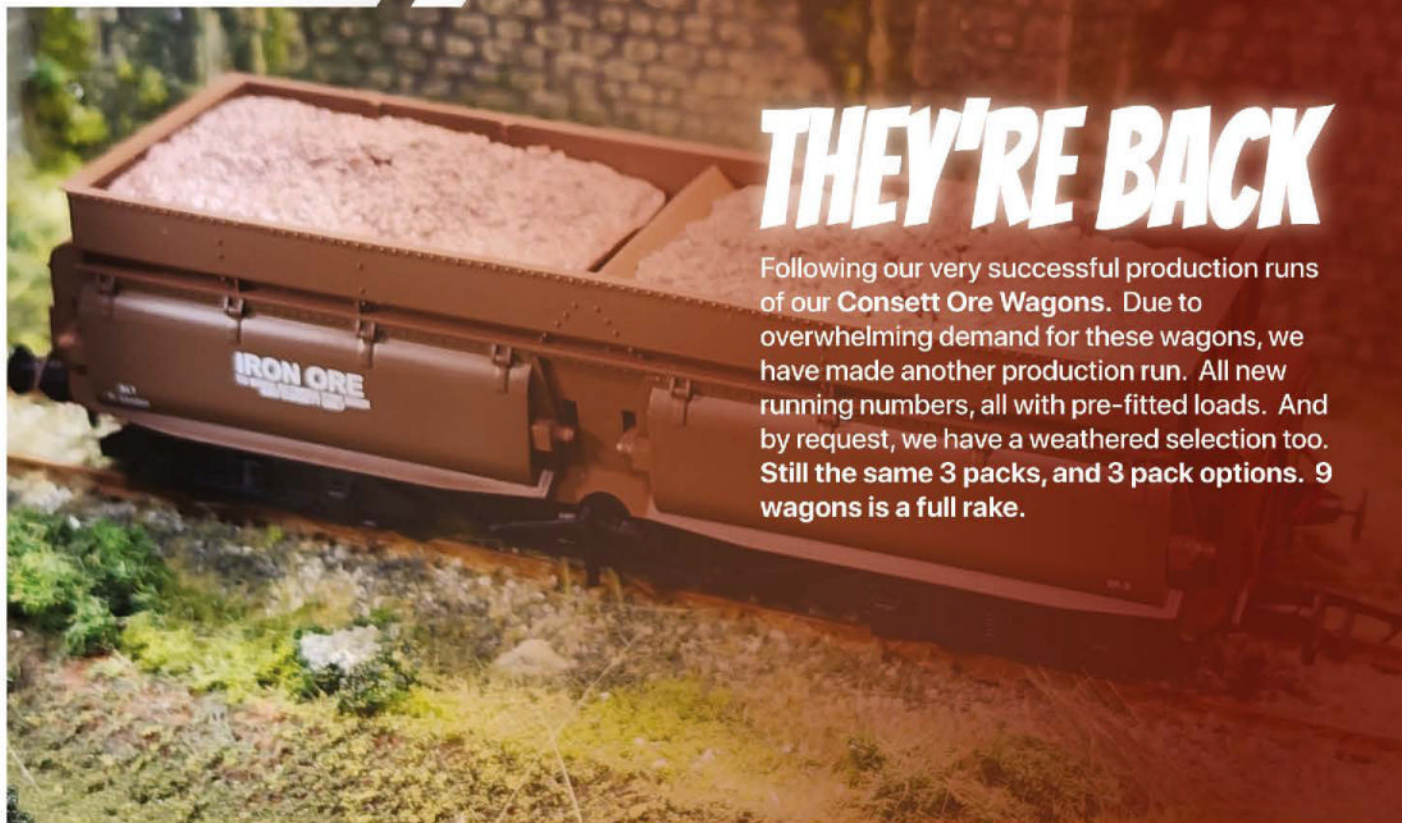
This first new production run will feature historically accurate liveries for the GER, LNER, LMS, Cambrian and Metropolitan railways, with each livery available across a range of vehicles to allow convincing rakes to be assembled.

Like some of the other ex-Hattons products now

in the Accurascale stable, the Genesis range is only available via the manufacturer's website, with pre-orders now being taken.

**When's it due?** Q4 2026  
**Price:** £33.99 each (multi-buy discounts available)  
**Availability:** only via Accurascale's website  
**Web:** [www.accurascale.co.uk](http://www.accurascale.co.uk)





# THEY'RE BACK

Following our very successful production runs of our **Consett Ore Wagons**. Due to overwhelming demand for these wagons, we have made another production run. All new running numbers, all with pre-fitted loads. And by request, we have a weathered selection too. **Still the same 3 packs, and 3 pack options. 9 wagons is a full rake.**



3 pack pristine

**£80.00**

3 pack weathered

**£99.50**

**In stock**  
ready to ship

# Order Now

from [krmodels.net](http://krmodels.net)

# AUTHENTIC SCALE BALLASTS



We were pleased to receive a comprehensive sample pack of authentic ballasts and wagon load material from the True-to-Scale range, featuring a variety of shades and textures. Produced by Specialist Aggregates, a firm which supplies high-quality aggregates for various industries, including film set decoration,

there's a host of carefully graded stone, coal and sand materials available to suit different scales, locations and eras.

Our sample pack was branded for 'TT', and the materials looked great spread among Peco track



and the surroundings of a 'TT:120' diorama. However, the ballasts also looked at home on a 'OO' layout (pictured), especially for use in sidings and industrial locations. That said, the True-to-Scale range is designed to match the scale dimensions of real ballast as closely as possible.

materials come packaged in rugged resealable bags, thus greatly reducing the risk of spillage during storage and transit. There's a huge range of scenic scatters to explore, so it's worth checking out the website.

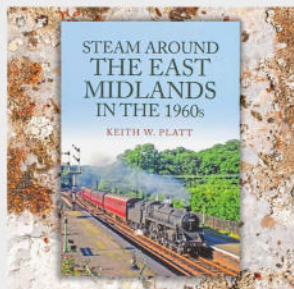
**Price:** £8.99-£14.99

**Availability:** True to Scale

**Web:** [www.truetoscale.co.uk](http://www.truetoscale.co.uk)

## Modeller's Bookshelf

Richard Gunn and George Dent present a quartet of new titles to inspire and inform your modelling.



### EAST MIDS GRIT

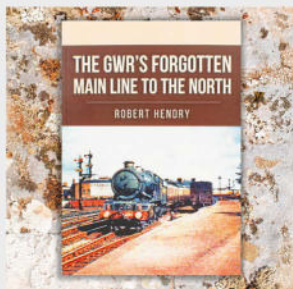
This is the first of a new series celebrating 1960s British steam, which focuses on the East Midlands, although its author notes it is rather more generous in its scope, including visits to the Sheffield area. Featuring previously unpublished images, the book reveals a surprisingly wide variety of traction and locations. The majority of images are in colour, which shows off the woeful condition of motive power during the final days of steam, making this a compelling visual feast of grit and grime. **(RG)**

**Book:** *Steam Around the East Midlands in the 1960s* by Keith W. Platt

**Price:** £15.99

**Web:**

[www.amberley-books.com](http://www.amberley-books.com)



### FROM THE SHADOWS

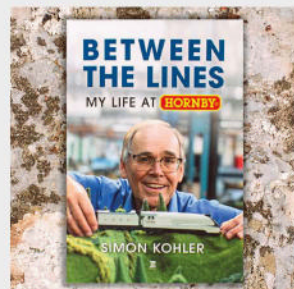
Robert Hendry looks at the GWR's London to Birmingham route, with its links to Wolverhampton, Chester, Shrewsbury and even York and Birkenhead via joint lines. To call the line and its branches 'forgotten' may be overstating things, but it has been overshadowed by other routes. The 160 images within the book provide a good impression of the railway. With captions making up the bulk of the text, it's not a comprehensive study, but an informative summary with some terrific images nevertheless. **(RG)**

**Book:** *The GWR's Forgotten Main Line to the North* by Robert Hendry

**Price:** £15.99

**Web:**

[www.amberley-books.com](http://www.amberley-books.com)



### INSIDER'S VIEW

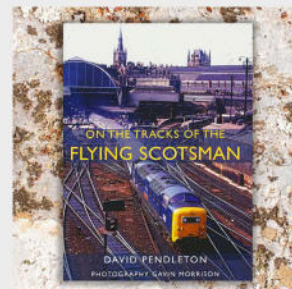
Simon Kohler's memoir charts his rise from working in a model shop, through his time as sales rep for Hammant & Morgan and ultimately his time with Hornby, for which he is best known. There's plenty of insight into how the industry has evolved over the decades, not least the rise of digital control and the shift of production to China. 'Mr Hornby' also talks us through the company's various ups and downs and provides fascinating background to innovations such as the Skaledale and Railroad ranges. An enjoyable read. **(GD)**

**Book:** *Between the Lines - my life at Hornby* by Simon Kohler

**Price:** £34.99

**Web:**

[www.keypublishing.com](http://www.keypublishing.com)



### FLYING TO THE NORTH

Billed as 'a celebration in words and pictures of the Flying Scotsman express', this is more a descriptive journey along the East Coast Main Line as a whole. That said, the first chapter briefly looks at locomotives that have worked what is arguably Britain's most famous named train, from 'A1s' through 'Deltics' to '91s'. After that, the route of the ECML is chronicled geographically from King's Cross to Edinburgh Waverley. Photographer Gavin Morrison provides the images, which focus mainly on the post-steam era. **(RG)**

**Book:** *On the Tracks of the Flying Scotsman* by David Pendleton

**Price:** £22.50

**Web:**

[www.greatnorthernbooks.co.uk](http://www.greatnorthernbooks.co.uk)



## ON THE WORKBENCH

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

### BRUSH-A-RAMA

This comprehensive set of 34 paintbrushes offers modellers the tools to tackle all manner of painting and weathering tasks. Various sizes of brush are included, with sable and synthetic bristles, in a useful array of shapes and sizes, for general and detail work. There's also some innovative foam weathering brushes (pictured) which are great for stippling effects, while a special round brush with soft bristles is designed especially for dry-brushing. A welcome addition is jar of liquid brush soap and a special repair gel to help keep the brushes in tip-top condition. A handy information booklet completes the set.

**Product:** Brush Starter Set

**Price:** £34.99

**Availability:** Green Stuff World

**Web:** [www.greenstuffworld.com](http://www.greenstuffworld.com)



### MASKING MAGIC

Covering large areas with masking tape can be a drag, especially when multiple strips of tape are required. It can prove wasteful and expensive too. This 10m roll of masking tape features an integral, fold-out clear plastic sheet to make the job easier and more economical. The low-tack masking tape is 15mm wide but the film can be stretched out to cover up to 550mm, offering extensive coverage. The thin film is extremely flexible and can be trimmed if necessary. I've found it perfect for all manner of painting and weathering tasks, on rolling stock, buildings and scenery. The tape adheres well to curved and uneven surfaces and will not damage underlying finishes.

**Product:** Tamiya 87164 masking tape with plastic sheeting

**Price:** £7.75

**Availability:** Scale Model Shop

**Web:** [www.scalemodelshop.co.uk](http://www.scalemodelshop.co.uk)



### TOWN & COUNTRY



Osborn's Models has released two characterful new figures for 'TT:120' layouts. A milkman is in typical pose as he places a pint on a doorstep, while tank top-wearing Jack the Shepherd is leaning on his crook while Hank, his trusty Border Collie, waits for instructions.

Both figure packs come fully painted and ready for use.

**Products:** • OSBFTT034 Milkman (£7.50) • OSBFTT082 Shepherd and dog (£8.95)

**Availability:** Osborn's Models

**Web:** [www.modelu3d.co.uk](http://www.modelu3d.co.uk)



## CALL OUT THE BUCKET BRIGADE



An essential addition to a signal box, station, goods yard, or lineside lamp hut is a set of sand-filled fire buckets, which were a common sight on the steam-age railway and into the 1980s. This set of 3D-printed

buckets with handles, plus a handy wall-mounted hanging panel with cast iron brackets, will suit all regions. They simply require cutting from the support fret and painting. Available in various scales, the 'OO' set

featured here provides eight buckets and two mounting panels.

**Product:** 2632 Fire buckets and stand

**Price:** £5.49

**Availability:** Modelu

**Web:** [www.modelu3d.co.uk](http://www.modelu3d.co.uk)

### UP ON THE ROOF



This handy set of laser-cut parts from York Modelmaking combines to produce a pair of realistic roof ventilation units, perfectly suited to all manner of industrial buildings and locomotive sheds. The parts slot together effortlessly, with assembly taking about 20 minutes per ventilator. A choice of end overlays is provided to suit roof pitches between 20° and 45°.

Once painted, they really look the part and offer a great way to customise kits and resin-cast buildings.

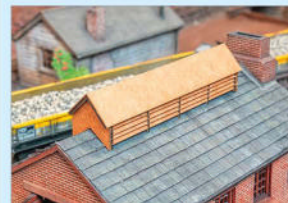
**Products:** OO-RoofVent-01 roof vent kit, pair

**Price:** £11.50

**Availability:** York Modelmaking

**Web:**

[www.yorkmodelrail.com](http://www.yorkmodelrail.com)



## EXHIBITION DIARY - MARCH 14-APRIL 19 2026

### 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, Accompanied under-18s £15, Seniors £20, Accompanied under-4s Free, Families £67 (2+2), £54 (2+1), £48 (1+2), dedicated carers Free. **Web:** [www.aerospacebristol.org](http://www.aerospacebristol.org) & [www.sodburyvalemrc.co.uk](http://www.sodburyvalemrc.co.uk) **Facebook:** [www.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, Seniors £4, Accompanied Free. **Tel:** 07773 275428. **Web:** [www.rotarygreataycliffe.org](http://www.rotarygreataycliffe.org) **Facebook:** @rotarygreataycliffe

**PUDSEY, LEEDS.** Narrow Gauge North MRE. Pudsey Civic Hall, Dawsons Corner, Pudsey, Leeds LS28 5TA. **Time:** 1030-1630. **Admission:** Adults £10, Accompanied under-16s £1 from 1330, Families £15. **Web:** [www.narrowgaugenorth.org.uk](http://www.narrowgaugenorth.org.uk) **Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/ngnorth](https://www.facebook.com/ngnorth)

### March 21

**BELPER, DERBYSHIRE.** Belper MRE 2026. Strutt's Centre, Belper, Derbyshire DE56 1UU. **Time:** 1000-1630. **Admission:** Adults £6, Accompanied children £2.

### March 21-22

**HOWDEN, YORK.** Carlton Railway Society Annual Show 2026. Howden School, Derwent Road, Howden DN14 7AL. **Times:** Sat 1000-1700, Sun 1000-1600.

### March 28

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

**CARTERKNOWLE, SHEFFIELD.** Sheffield Model Railway Enthusiasts Clubroom Open Day and Mini Exhibition. Carterknowle Church Hall, Edgedale Road, Sheffield S7 2BQ. **Time:** 1000-1630. **Admission:** Adults £3, Accompanied Free. **Tel:** 07768 513880. **Web:** [www.sheffieldmodelrailwayenthusiasts.com](http://www.sheffieldmodelrailwayenthusiasts.com) **Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/sheffieldmodelrailwayenthusiasts](https://www.facebook.com/sheffieldmodelrailwayenthusiasts)

### March 28-29

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

**COTGRAVE, NOTTS.** 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](http://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, Accompanied £4, Families £24. **Web:** [www.nailsea-district-mrc.co.uk](http://www.nailsea-district-mrc.co.uk)

### WEST SOMERSET, TAUNTON.

Taunton MRG. Bishops Lydeard Station, Platform 1, West Somerset Railway, Taunton TA4 3BX. **Times:** Both days 1000-1600. **Admission:** Small admission charge. Accompanied. **Web:** [www.tauntonmodelrailwaygroup.co.uk](http://www.tauntonmodelrailwaygroup.co.uk) **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/tauntonmodelrailwaygroup>

### April 4

**HILLINGDON, LONDON.** Hillingdon Railway Modellers. Yiewsley Baptist Church Hall (side entrance), 74 Colham Avenue, Yiewsley, Hillingdon, London UB7 8HF. **Time:** 1000-1500. **Admission:** Adults £6. **Web:** [www.hillingdonrailwaymodellers.co.uk](http://www.hillingdonrailwaymodellers.co.uk) **Tel:** 020 8368 4090

### April 10-11

**NEATH, PORT TALBOT.** Model Railway Exhibition. St David's Church, St David's Road, Neath SA11 3AA. **Times:** 1000-1600 both days. **Admission:** Adults £5, Accompanied children £2. **Email:** [stdavidsmre@btinternet.com](mailto:stdavidsmre@btinternet.com)

### April 11

**CHELMSFORD, ESSEX.** Chelmsford Model Railway Club's Exhibition. St Augustine Church, St. Augustine Way (off Beardsley Drive), Springfield, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 6GX. **Time:** 1100-1630. **Admission:** Adults £3, Accompanied under-16s £1. **Tel:** 07854 54052. **Email:** [andrew.toup@btinternet.com](mailto:andrew.toup@btinternet.com)

**HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS.** High Wycombe and District Model Railway Society. High Wycombe Cressex Community Centre, 203 Cressex Road, High Wycombe, Bucks HP12 4PZ. **Time:** 1000-1630. **Admission:** Adults £6, Accompanied under-16s £1, Accompanied under-6s Free. **Tel:** 07899 885533. **Web:** [www.hwdmrs.org.uk](http://www.hwdmrs.org.uk)

**NORWICH, NORFOLK.** Norwich Railway Heritage & Model Society. Model Railway Exhibition 2026. Hellesdon High School, Middletons Lane, Norwich NR6 5SB. **Time:** 1000-1600. **Admission:** Adults £6, Accompanied under-16s Free.

**UCKFIELD, EAST SUSSEX.** Uckfield Model Railway Club Annual Open Day. The Luxford Centre, Library Way, Uckfield TN22 1AR. **Time:** 1000-1600. **Admission:** Adults £2, Accompanied under-16s Free. **Email:** [openday@uckfieldmrc.co.uk](mailto:openday@uckfieldmrc.co.uk) **Web:** [www.uckfieldmrc.co.uk](http://www.uckfieldmrc.co.uk)

### April 11-12

**CALNE, WILTS.** Model Bentley Model Railway Group, Calne Railway Show 2026. Calne Community Campus, White Horse Way, Calne, Wiltshire SN11 OSP. **Times:** Sat 1000-1700, Sun 1000-1600. **Admission:** Adults £8, Accompanied under-18s £3, Families £20, Accompanied under-5s Free, Dedicated carers Free. **Web:** [www.calnemrs.org.uk](http://www.calnemrs.org.uk) **Facebook:** <https://fb.me/e/5BVAnGyH>

### MACCLESFIELD, MANCHESTER.

Macclesfield Model Railway Exhibition. King's School, Alderley Road, Macclesfield SK10 4RH. **Times:** Sat 1000-1700, Sun 1000-1630. **Admission:** Adults £10, Accompanied under-16s Free. **Web:** [www.macclesfieldmrg.org.uk](http://www.macclesfieldmrg.org.uk)

**POOL, CORNWALL.** The Great Cornish Model Show. Pool Academy, Church Road, Pool TR15 3PZ. **Times:** Sat 1000-1700, Sun 1000-1600. **Admission:** Adults £9, Accompanied under-16s £6, Families £18, Accompanied under-5s Free.

**RICCARTON, EDINBURGH.** Lothians Model Railway Show. Heriot-Watt University Students Union, Riccarton, Edinburgh EH14 4AS. **Times:** Sat 1000-1630, Sun 1000-1630. **Admission:** Adults £6, Accompanied under-15s Free. **Email:** [pmrgsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:pmrgsecretary@gmail.com) **Web:** [www.lothianmodelrail.co.uk](http://www.lothianmodelrail.co.uk)

### April 18

**DUDLEY, DARBY.** Cradley Heath MRC. St Peters Church, St Peters Road, Darby End, Dudley DY2 9HN. **Time:** 1000-1600. **Admission:** Free.

**EWELL, SURREY.** Epsom & Ewell MRC. Open Day. Ruxley Church, Ruxley Lane, Ewell, Surrey KT19 0AF. **Time:** 1000-1630. **Admission:** Free. **Web:** [www.eemrc.org.uk](http://www.eemrc.org.uk)

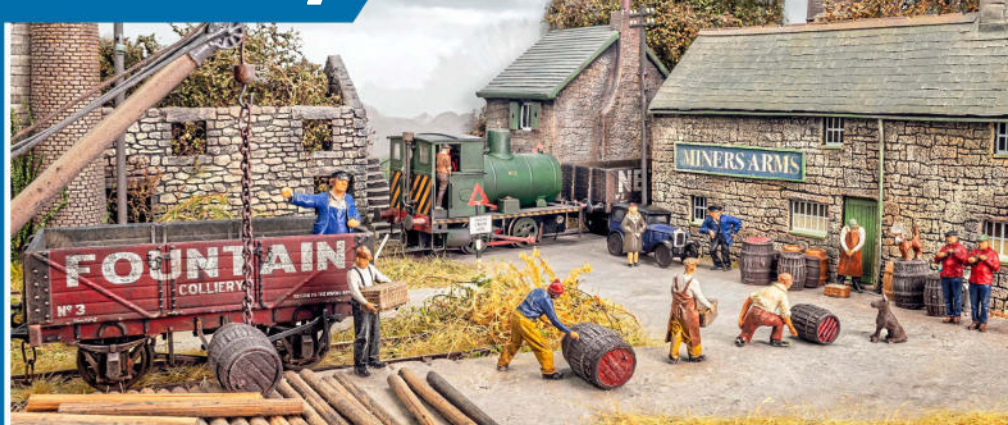
**STEVENAGE, HERTS.** De Havilland Model Railway Society. Ludwick Way Methodist Church, Ludwick Way, Welwyn Garden City AL7 3PN. **Time:** 1000-1700. **Admission:** Adults £6, Accompanied £2, Accompanied under-5s Free. **Tel:** 07989 688750

### April 19

**LEIGHTON BUZZARD, BEDS.** LBNGR Buzzrail Model Exhibition 2026. Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway. LBNGR, Pages Park, Billington Rd, Leighton Buzzard LU7 4TG. **Time:** 10.00-16.30. **Admission:** Adults £3, Accompanied under-18s £1.50. **Tel:** 01525 850703. **Email:** [r.longman@btinternet.com](mailto:r.longman@btinternet.com)

**MAIDENHEAD, BERKS.** Berkshire Area Group N Gauge Society, 25th Anniversary Exhibition. Woodlands Park Village Centre, Manifold Way, White Waltham, Maidenhead SL6 3GW. **Time:** 1000-1600. **Admission:** Adults £7, Accompanied £3, Families £10. **Tel:** 01189 760519, 07855 576873. **Email:** [percy.richard1946@gmail.com](mailto:percy.richard1946@gmail.com) **Web:** [www.bagladdies.weebly.com/2025-exhibition.html](http://www.bagladdies.weebly.com/2025-exhibition.html)

## ...and finally



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

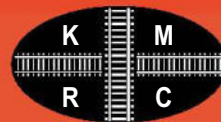
Deep in the Forest of Dean, the Miners Arms is a tricky pub to reach by road, with beer deliveries frequently getting lost for several months - or even years - in the dense woodland. In response, the pub's landlord insisted on the provision of a special siding to allow the all-important ale to be transported by rail.

A single railway wagon can carry far more than a lorry, so it's all hands on deck to offload the precious cargo before opening time.



# Kernow Model Rail Centre

Visit [www.kernowmodelrailcentre.com](http://www.kernowmodelrailcentre.com) or call our team on 01209 714099



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**GUILDFORD**  
75B Stoke Road, GU1 4HT

## LATEST ARRIVALS / OO

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- ACC3179 Class 31 Diesel 31 271 Railfreight Triple Grey with Construction decals.....£184.99
- ACC3181 Class 31/4 Diesel Locomotive No. 31 481 BR Blue.....£184.99
- ACC3182 Class 31/6 Diesel Locomotive No. 31 602 "Chimaera" Fragonset.....£184.99
- ACC3183 DCC Class 30 Diesel Locomotive No. D5501 BR Green.....DCC Sound £284.99
- ACC3185 DCC Class 31 Diesel 31 271 Railfreight Triple Grey Construction DCC Sound £284.99
- ACC3186 DCC Class 31 Diesel No. 31 301 Railfreight Red-Stripe.....DCC Sound £284.99
- ACC3187 DCC Class 31/4 Diesel Locomotive No. 31 418 BR Blue.....DCC Sound £284.99
- ACC3188 DCC Class 31/6 Diesel No. 31 602 "Chimaera" Fragonset.....DCC Sound £284.99

### EFE RAIL OO



R30440 Railroad Class 47 Diesel Loco No. 47 306 'The Sapper' Railfreight Distribution.£85.49

R30441TXS Railroad Class 47 Diesel Loco No. 47 306 'The Sapper'....DCC Sound £134.99

- E82006 Class 74 Electro-Diesel Locomotive No. E6101 BR Blue.....£182.99
- E82007 Class 74 Electro-Diesel Locomotive No. E6104 BR Blue.....£182.99
- E82008 Class 74 Electro-Diesel Locomotive No. 74 007 BR Blue.....£182.99
- E82009 Class 74 Electro-Diesel Locomotive No. 74 010 BR Blue.....£182.99



E82010 Class 74 Electro-Diesel Locomotive No. 74 009 BR Blue, weathered.....£191.99



E87108 Plasser 12T YOB Diesel-Hydraulic Crane DRP81515 BR Departmental Yellow.£84.99



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## News Real

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

▣ GB Railfreight has confirmed that it plans to sell some of its 'non-core' locomotives, such as Class 47s (including 47727 pictured), ten Class 60s and its sole Class 59 (59003). The disposals will leave GBRf with a more standardised fleet of Class 66s and Class 99s, plus smaller numbers of Class 69s, 73s and 92s. **BEN JONES**



▣ DB Cargo UK has sold 25 surplus Class 66s to Romanian open-access freight operator Grup Feroviar Roman. The first locomotive - 66014 - was prepared for export at Toton depot by the end of January, and the rest will follow by mid-2028. Of the 250 Class 66s delivered to EWS in 1998-2000, just 137 will remain in Britain, with the rest exported to France and Poland. **DB CARGO UK**



▣ Twenty-five years after they were introduced by Virgin Trains, CrossCountry's Class 220/221 'Voyager' fleet is being refurbished at Alstom's Derby Litchurch Lane works. The first completed unit, 220033, was rolled out on February 10. The £75m programme includes a new livery, new interiors, seats and at-seat charging points. **CROSSCOUNTRY TRAINS**



▣ After more than two years of testing, GWR finally launched its Class 230 fast-charge battery train into public service on January 31. The '230' is initially diagrammed only for Saturday services between West Ealing and Greenford in west London, but GWR hopes to expand its use over the course of this year, depending on how it performs. **GWR**

# Staff Show & Tell

## A problem solved

It may have been the final piece in the jigsaw of an industrial backscene, but something about the structure didn't sit right with **George Dent**. Eventually, he found the solution.

**I** made precious little progress with my 'Lisburn Lane' layout in 2025, but the hiatus has allowed me to ponder several issues I've had about some of the structures.

As explained in the July and August 2025 issues, I assembled a laser-cut kit warehouse kit to fill the remaining gap in the industrial backdrop. I had already partly assembled the kit, from Scale Model Scenery, for a different - aborted - purpose, so making major alterations to its design proved tricky.

However, the kit's central section featured a timber infill with double doors and loading platforms for all three floors. This had to go, but my initial experiments of replacing it with extra windows really disturbed the symmetry of the overall design.

Fast-forward six months, and inspiration finally struck - why not create a small extension in the centre of the building to suggest an internal stairway? That would leave the rest of the structure intact, minimising the extra work

### What George used

- ◆ **Product:** KX090-OO Robertson's Bonded Warehouse kit
- ◆ **Price:** £27.49
- ◆ **Web:** [www.scalemodelscenery.co.uk](http://www.scalemodelscenery.co.uk)

involved, and reinforcing the impression that this is the rear elevation.

Building and installing the extension took just a few evenings. I faced it with Slater's embossed brick plastic sheet to match the rest of the structure, plus some leftover windows, sills and roof tiles from other Scale Model Scenery laser-cut kits.

Once I've painted it, the new addition should blend seamlessly, and I can add extra details such as drainpipes and guttering.

It's satisfying, not only to make a little more progress on this long-running project, but also to have finally solved a minor quandary that had been niggling away at me!



### STEP BY STEP



I needed to deal with the central loading platforms and doors, as this would be the rear of an industrial structure, with minimal land behind it, rendering these features redundant.



I cut the main form from mounting card, glueing the twin sides and rear face together. Triangular internal braces added strength to the corners.



Once the card former was assembled and the glue was dry, a check was made to ensure it looked right. The outside corners of the card were tidied up with a flat file.



Once the side overlays had been trimmed, another oversized sheet of plastic was affixed. Check that the brick course aligns at the corners, clamp and, when cured, trim to size.



Raised detail on the original building was cut to allow the extension to sit flush. A roof was added and window apertures cut out. Windows and sills were spare parts from another kit.



With the windows installed, the extension was glued in position. Elastic bands are handy for clamping objects like this. Any squeezed-out glue was wiped away with a damp cloth.

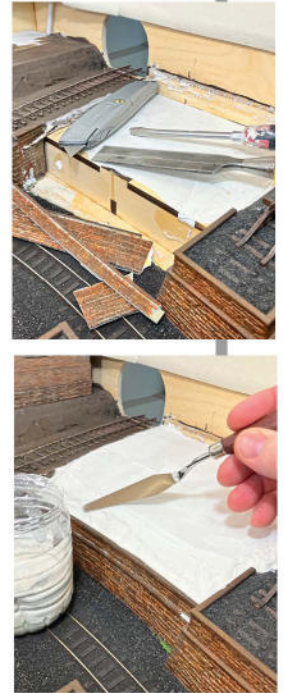


Modifications to an industrial building and retaining wall have heralded a modicum of progress on George's 'OO' gauge layout.

## SMALL THINGS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

As the alterations of George's industrial building took shape, its location on the layout was also tweaked, as it needed to be elevated a little to suit the surroundings and act as a more effective scenic break.

The extra elevation meant the adjacent retaining wall wouldn't look right, so it was carefully removed and reinstated about 15mm forward. It was a small adjustment, but once the ground level was raised by layers of foamboard and the slope refined with plaster, the overall composition looked so much better.



4

Slater's brick embossed plastic sheet was cut and laminated over the side walls. I left the plastic sections slightly oversized so they could be trimmed back once the glue had cured.



8

Any small gaps were filled with acrylic putty. The raised brick detail was added from strips of Slater's plastic sheet. Leftover roof tiles were added too. Next job: painting!

## PETER GETS WET

Peter Marriott has been trialling the 'wet palette' painting technique, whereby paints are mixed and sealed within a special container, thus preventing drying. Brushes are also stored in the container, so they don't need to be cleaned in between sessions.

This approach allows modellers to maintain a consistent range of colours and tones across several modelling sessions, which is great when you're faced with long rakes of similar rolling stock to paint and weather.

Not only is great for visual consistency, but it avoids paint waste.

Peter had seen the process demonstrated at a recent show and took the opportunity to invest in a sealable palette set. His first trial involved an EFE Rail PRA china clay hopper wagon for his 'Ponts Mill' layout - the building of which featured in several issues in 2025 - and the results have been extremely promising.

We hope to see Peter employing this technique again in future!



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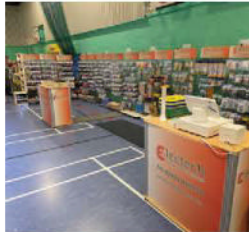
## Vehicle Lighting Kits



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21-22 March 2026 - The London Festival of Railway Modelling - Alexandra Palace, London N22 7AY

25-26 April 2026 - Model World LIVE - Hall 9, NEC, Birmingham B40 1NT

01-03 May 2026 - Bristol Model Railway Exhibition, Thornbury Leisure Centre, Alveston Hill, Thornbury BS35 3JB

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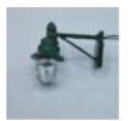
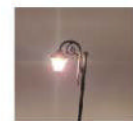
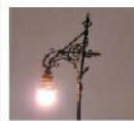
The LD101 is truly dual functional it switches from DC to DCC at the press of a button. DC function select direction turn the dial and control your loco or isolate your DC loco. Select DCC function and control Decoder fitted locos, consists, accessory functions and more. Works with most makes of Decoder (NMRA Compliant) Set includes Mains transformer, Main Control Box x1, Handheld Controller, all cables and user manual

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LD10 - 3mm "r", Colour	..
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# Inside track with Ben Ando

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

**“Even in ‘N’ gauge, sound can add a dimension of fun and is, to my mind, just as realistic as the larger scales due to the physics of real sound waves”**

## Hear all about it...

**W**hen I was a child, the closest you got to the sound of a diesel on your model railway was the hum of an electric motor or the groan of badly meshed gears in a primitive motor bogie. I also vaguely remember some larger steam engines having a piece of sandpaper rubbing against an axle in the tender to simulate chuffing sounds.

Then, from around the turn of the century, digital controls allowed for authentic sound to become a feature. Companies like ESU or Sound Traxx began offering decoders that were pre-loaded with sounds recorded from real locomotives.

Over the years, the sophistication and authenticity of the sound on offer have grown, and so has its popularity. Around half of Revolution's pre-sales are sound-fitted models, and I would not be surprised if other companies have seen a similar split in their sales.

Basic speakers are relatively cheap, so even non-DCC models often come with them factory-fitted, and even if the customer needs to fit the speaker themselves, most now have small JST connectors, so no soldering is required. With this in mind, nearly all models developed in the last few years have sound ‘baked in’ at the start, and arranging for a sound recording is a core part of development.

Recently, with the assistance of Rail Operations Group and Stadler, we ‘borrowed’ a Class 93 and placed numerous microphones in the locomotive before taking it for a spin from Worksop to Newark and back – enabling us to record it operating on pure electric, diesel, battery, and hybrid working. Of course, horn blasts, brake hisses, door slams, Spirax valve pops and compressor whines are also an important part of the day's work.

Even in ‘N’ gauge, sound can add a dimension of fun and is, to my mind, just as realistic as the larger

scales due to the physics of real sound waves.

Why do I say this? In reality, higher treble notes travel further through the air than deep bass notes. If you are standing next to a locomotive under load, you won't just hear the engine sound, but will feel the deeper notes reverberate through your body. Observe locomotives from a distance, and the sounds are much less ‘bassy’.

If we are observing our models from the customary ‘three feet’, then in ‘N’ gauge, that is roughly the same as listening from the other end of a football pitch, or from the top of a nearby tower block. At such distances, the heavier bass sounds are lost, so the ‘sugar cube’ speaker in most ‘N’ gauge locomotives suffices.

Of course, there is another difficulty when offering sound-fitted models: what if the prototype no longer exists? This is the issue we are facing with our upcoming Class 120 unit. The only surviving vehicle is a trailer buffet (my visit to survey this car was featured in *Model Rail* issue 345), and no powered cars have survived.

There appear to be very few recordings in existence. While the enthusiasts of the 1960s were avidly recording the last gasps of their beloved steam locomotives, humble units were apparently considered a waste of expensive ciné film!

It may be that the best option is to find another diesel multiple unit with the same prime mover that can stand in. The AEC-built BUT power packs fitted to the Class 120 were also used in the Class 105, 117, 122 and fellow Swindon-built 126 units, among others.

Several of these units have made it into preservation, so perhaps one can be persuaded to step in, as the modelling equivalent of a covers band, to recreate the golden sounds of their long-gone Swindon counterparts.



Recording real locomotives to capture accurate sounds is now an essential element of developing new scale models. BEN ANDO

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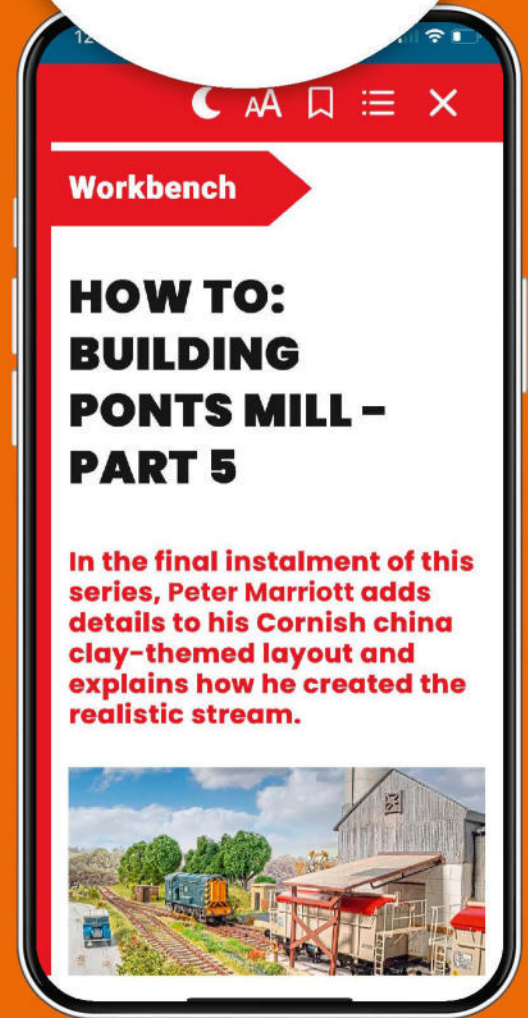
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# THE RESULTS

The votes are in and you've had your say, so now's the time to reveal the best models - and retailers - of 2025.

**W**e've been busy counting the thousands of votes cast by YOU, our loyal readers, and can now present all the winners and runners-up in *Model Rail's* Model of the Year Awards for 2025.

In what turned out to be another healthy year in terms of all-new models, some of the 19 different categories saw a very even spread of votes, with just a whisker between the nominees. None more so than in the 'OO' categories, closely fought between a diverse range of products from 14 manufacturers.

However, in a hugely impressive performance, Accurascale prevailed across all 'OO' locomotive and rolling stock categories, plus the 'O' gauge locomotive award and the revered Overall Manufacturer of the Year gong.

You also nominated your favourite model retailers of 2025, with Rails of Sheffield and

Great Eastern Models of Norwich gaining the top spots in the Large and Local categories respectively. This was a repeat performance of 2024's result.

A big thank you goes to everyone who took the time to visit the *Model Rail* website and to register votes across all the various categories. We're often reminded how much our awards mean to the people within the model industry, especially because they're voted for by you. They're a great way to register appreciation for all the hard work that goes into designing, producing, marketing and retailing the miniature trains we love so much.

We'll soon be choosing 22 names at random, from all those who registered their votes, to receive some exciting locomotive, rolling stock and model building prizes, with over £3,100 worth of booty on offer. It could be you!

## 'OO' gauge

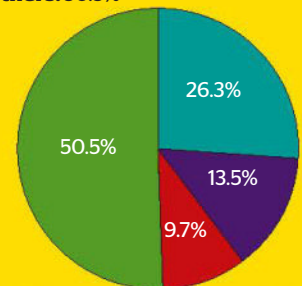
**T**he most popular modelling gauge continues to drive the most engagement from voters, helped by 2025 being yet another buoyant year. There were plenty of all-new models to choose from, across steam and diesel/electric locomotives (26), plus a healthy number of coaches (8) and wagons (19). While there was a very clear winner in the steam locomotive stakes, there was little to separate each of the top three in the diesel/electric equivalent. Indeed, the latter turned out to be a clean sweep for Accurascale, although we so nearly had two different Class 60s on the podium, with Cavalex's version coming in fourth place, just above Hornby's Class 755 'FLIRT'.

In fact, it was another superb result for Accurascale, winning each 'OO' category and snatching the 'OO' Manufacturer's award too, with over 40% of the vote. Rapido made a strong impression in 2025, as did Bachmann, the latter garnering just eight votes more than Hornby in fourth (9.1%).

### 'OO' GAUGE STEAM LOCOMOTIVE OF THE YEAR



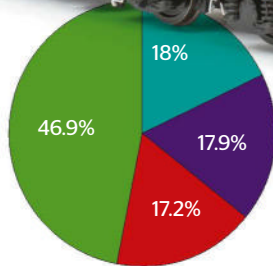
- 1** - Accurascale 'J67/68/69' 'Buckjumper' O-6-OT: 26.3%
- 2** - Hornby LMS/BR Caprotti 'Black Five' 4-6-0: 13.5%
- 3** - Rapido Trains UK Port of Par Bagnall O-4-OST: 9.7%
- Others**: 50.5%





### 'OO' GAUGE DIESEL & ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVE OF THE YEAR

- 1- Accurascale BR Class 60: 18%
- 2- Accurascale BR Class 50: 17.9%
- 3- Accurascale BR Class 89: 17.2%
- Others: 46.9%



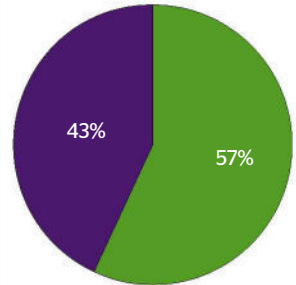
### '009' gauge

It was a very quiet year for '009' narrow gauge, with just a pair of Ffestiniog Railway carriages in the running. More than half of voters chose to skip this category, so we've based the percentages on those who actually placed a vote rather than the overall figure.



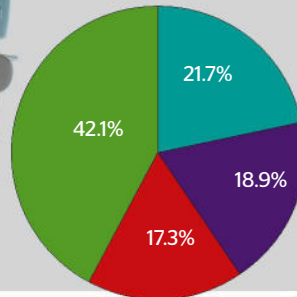
### '009' GAUGE MODEL OF THE YEAR

- 1- Bachmann FR Brake Third: 57%
- 2- Bachmann FR Curly roof van: 43%



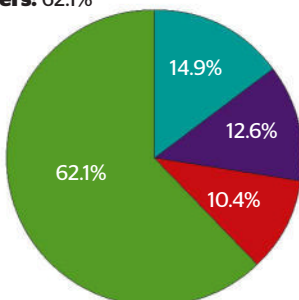
### 'OO' GAUGE COACHING STOCK OF THE YEAR

- 1- Accurascale BR Mk 2c: 21.7%
- 2- Hornby LNER 'Coronation' observation car: 18.9%
- 3- Clark Railworks LNER 'Quad-Arts': 17.3%
- Others: 42.1%



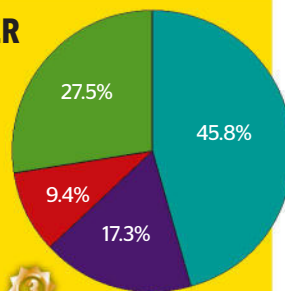
### 'OO' GAUGE FREIGHT STOCK OF THE YEAR

- 1- Accurascale BR 16t minerals: 14.9%
- 2- Accurascale BR HTO/HTV hoppers: 12.6%
- 3- Revolution Trains WIA car carriers: 10.4%
- Others: 62.1%



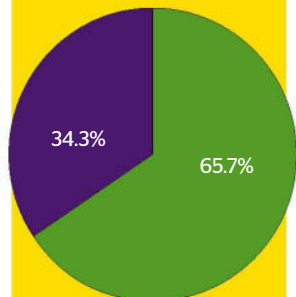
### 'OO' MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR

- 1- Accurascale: 45.8%
- 2- Rapido Trains UK: 17.3%
- 3- Bachmann Europe: 9.4%
- Others: 27.5%



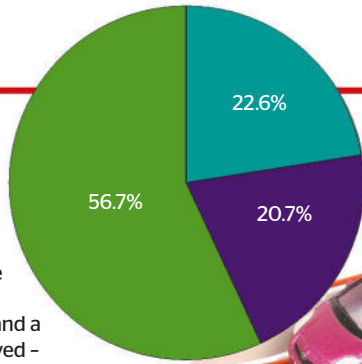
### '009' GAUGE MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR

- 1- Bachmann Europe: 65.7%
- 2- Peco: 34.3%



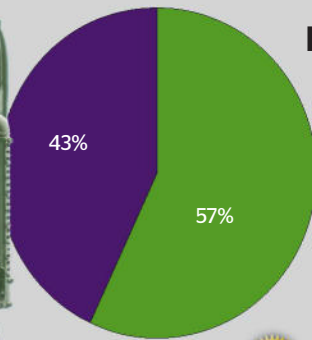
## 'N' gauge

**I**n terms of all-new locos and rolling stock in 'N' gauge, 2025 proved to be one of the quietest of the past 20 years. Only two locomotives (both diesels) and a handful of rolling stock arrived - and it's now been eight years since a steam-outline loco has won. Percentages are based on those who voted in this category (about 60% of total respondents).



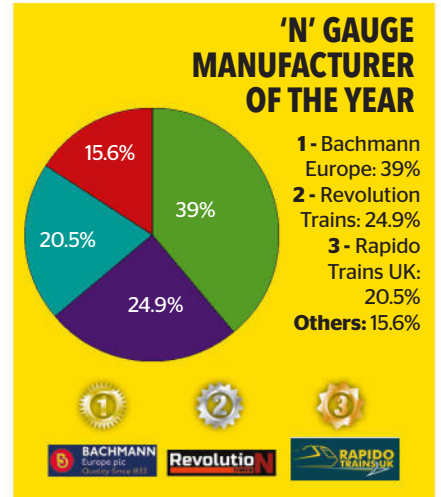
### 'N' GAUGE ROLLING STOCK OF THE YEAR

- 1 - Revolution Trains BR 'Cartic-4': 22.6%
- 2 - Rapido Trains UK 'Iron Mink' vans: 20.7%
- 3 - Peco BR 'Clayhoods': 56.7%



### 'N' GAUGE LOCOMOTIVE OF THE YEAR

- 1 - Rapido Trains UK BR Class 44 'Peak': 57%
- 2 - EFE Rail BR D600/Class 41 'Warship': 43%



### 'N' GAUGE MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR

- 1 - Bachmann Europe: 39%
  - 2 - Revolution Trains: 24.9%
  - 3 - Rapido Trains UK: 20.5%
- Others: 15.6%

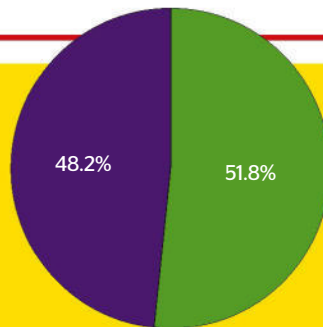


## TT:120 gauge

**A**s another category with a limited number of nominations, it was a case of voters ranking the three locomotives and the duo of wagons released by Hornby in 2025 - and no prizes for guessing which manufacturer came out on top! Again, we've based the percentages on those who actively voted, with over half of respondents skipping the 'TT:120' categories.

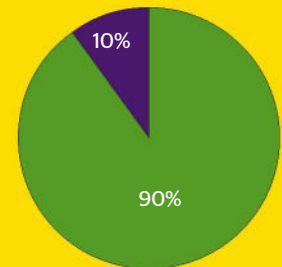
### 'TT:120' GAUGE ROLLING STOCK OF THE YEAR

- 1 - Hornby four-wheel coaches: 51.8%
- 2 - Hornby KFA container wagon: 48.2%



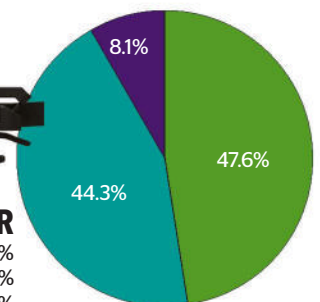
### 'TT:120' MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR

- 1 - Hornby: 90%
- 2 - Peco: 10%



### 'TT:120' GAUGE LOCOMOTIVE OF THE YEAR

- 1 - Hornby LBSCR 'Terrier' O-6-OT: 47.6%
- 2 - Hornby Class 66: 44.3%
- 3 - Hornby LSWR 'B4' O-4-OT: 8.1%



## 'O' gauge

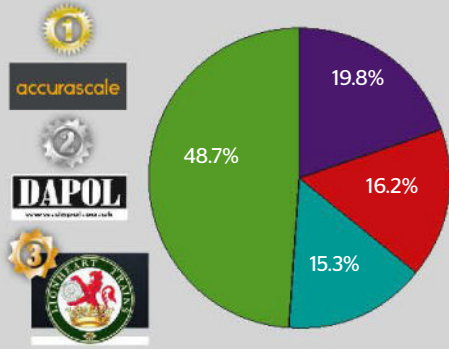


**I**t was quite a bumper year for 7mm scale, with nine different locomotives/multiple units to choose from. In contrast, only three items of new rolling stock were in the running.

Accurascale's cute little Ruston '88DS' (the manufacturer's first powered model in this scale) proved a winner. In contrast, the other small diesel in the running, Heljan's BR Class O2, trailed in last place with only 3% of the vote. There was further disappointment for Heljan, with its Class 37/0 being pipped into third place by just a handful of votes, thanks to a strong performance by Dapol and its Lionheart Trains brand, with two exceptional steam locomotives, helping the Welsh firm to scoop the 'O' gauge Manufacturer's gong.

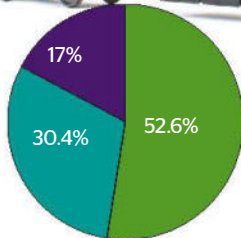
### 'O' GAUGE LOCOMOTIVE OF THE YEAR

- 1 - Accurascale Ruston '88DS': 19.8%
  - 2 - Dapol Hunslet 'Austerity' 0-6-OST: 16.2%
  - 3 - Lionheart Trains BR Class 3MT 2-6-2T: 15.3%
- Others:** 48.7%



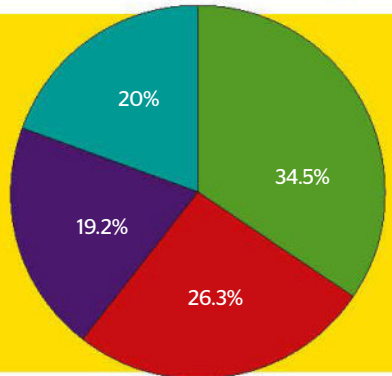
### 'O' GAUGE ROLLING STOCK OF THE YEAR

- 1 - Darstead/Ellis Clark Trains 'K-Type' Pullman cars: 52.6%
- 2 - Dapol MHA open wagon: 30.4%
- 3 - Heljan SR PLV van: 17%



### 'O' GAUGE MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR

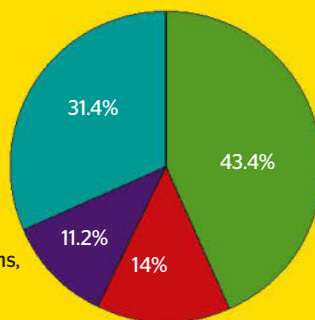
- 1 - Dapol (inc. Lionheart Trains): 34.5%
  - 2 - Heljan: 26.3%
  - 3 - Accurascale: 20%
- Others:** 19.2%



### OVERALL MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR

Our hearty congratulations go to Accurascale, which has secured the top overall prize for the fifth year in a row. Impressively, the manufacturer has increased its share of the vote by over 10% from the 2024 survey.

The status quo remains for the other podium places, with Rapido cementing the runners-up spot and Bachmann (including Graham Farish and EFE Rail brands) finishing ahead of Hornby in fourth. In total, 17 different manufacturers were nominated, with Dapol/Lionheart Trains, Cavalex Models and Revolution Trains also showing well.



- 1 - Accurascale: 43.4%
  - 2 - Rapido Trains UK: 14%
  - 3 - Bachmann Europe: 11.2%
- Others:** 31.4%

## Retailer of the Year

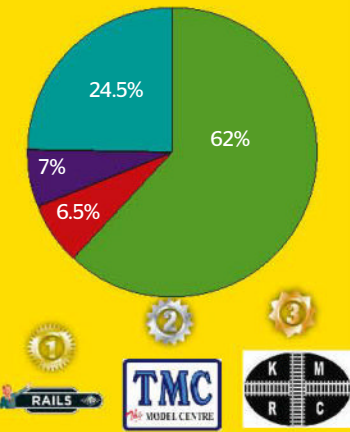
**R**ails of Sheffield proved to be the runaway leaders of *Model Rail's* Large Retailer of the Year award, gaining over 65% of the votes (up from 56.6% in 2024), with TMC and Kernow MRC sharing the podium once again.

In the Local Retailer category, Great Eastern Models of Norwich scoops first prize for a fourth year in a row, with Derails in the Forest of Dean retaining second place. A new addition to the podium is Rainbow Railways of Liniithgow, Scotland.

Interestingly - and encouragingly - many votes across each category were spread over several hundred different retailers, much more than in previous years. Furthermore, voters took the opportunity to acknowledge the excellent service provided by model stores from Canada to Australia!

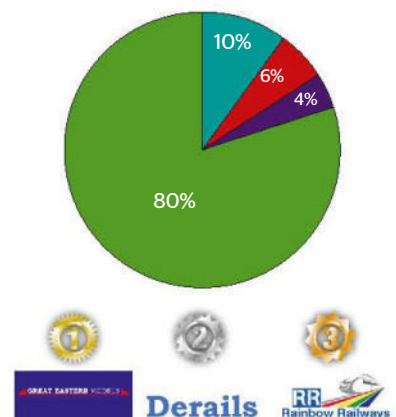
### RETAILER OF THE YEAR - LARGE

- 1 - Rails of Sheffield: 62%
  - 2 - The Model Centre (TMC): 7%
  - 3 - Kernow Model Rail Centre: 6.5%
- Others:** 24.5%



### RETAILER OF THE YEAR - LOCAL

- 1 - Great Eastern Models, Norwich: 10%
  - 2 - Derails, Coleford: 6%
  - 3 - Rainbow Railways, Liniithgow: 4%
- Others:** 80%





# GREEN AND PLEASANT

**Jonathan Ramsden** reveals how he distilled a slice of Kent's glorious 'Garden of England' in a small corner of a garden shed.

Words: **Nick Brodrick** Photography: **Chris Nevard**



“What makes this layout great? ‘Addleford Green’ combines a host of vital ingredients for a Kent-themed layout - like the oast house, and ‘Easter Eggs’ such as the hop pickers. The home-made backscene with its panoramic view of the local area adds a sense of space that distorts the perspective of this delightful little scene.”



If at first you don't succeed try, try, and try again.' Jonathan Ramsden, creator of the compact 'OO' branch line terminus 'Addleford Green', knows a thing or two about that old cliché. Construction of the station building on his bucolic layout took three attempts before it was 'right', while the stationmaster's house was completed after two attempts. And that's not all.

"I made an entire creamery, painted it all, put it on the layout and realised it didn't work – it was too big. It would have suited a suburb, maybe, but not a village. So I made a different one."

Jonathan succinctly describes his method as "madness", yet buildings remain his "favourite part of what was a great adventure". He could have gone down the kit-built route for an easier life, but as he attests, scratch building "gives you something that isn't on somebody else's layout".

The inspiration for 'Addleford Green' stems from an old photograph of Cranbrook station on the much-



loved and lamented Hawkhurst branch in Kent, discovered during research for a suitable Southern Region in Kent-themed prototype to base a model on. And there aren't suitable kits, nor ready-to-go resin structures on the market, suitable for the former 11-mile line. "The station buildings were the backbone and everything else flowed from there," he explains.

A book on the line provided a mine of helpful elevation drawings, except for the lofty station master's house – only a floorplan. "Luckily, a few of the stations still exists as dwellings so I could go and eyeball them to work out the height, widths and roof pitch. When you start to count bricks to ascertain the scale of something you do start to lose your mind!"

The Achilles' heel of those initial attempts was "always the windows". "I was relatively new to scratch building when I started, so my cutting skills and sense of scale were still developing. I often cut things too chunky, and didn't notice until assembly. You gain a better appreciation of scale when you take a step back." ►

**ABOVE** The Wainwright 'H' was a staple diet of the Hawkhurst branch on which 'Addleford Green' is based, typified by Olive Green-liveried 1324. Note the tarpaulin covering an area of the roof to be repaired on the station building.

## 3 things we like



The engine shed invites you to peer in through the doors and look around it.



Farm and wild animals dotted around smaller scenes add life to a countryside scene.



The station simply oozes summery Southern Railway/Region atmosphere.





Even the final structures “look quite rough when they’re made up out of all these different parts, colours and materials”, but primer and paint “really does hide a lot of issues, together with the odd downpipe and trellis to cover up the odd mistake”.

Jonathan does admit to accidentally cutting the roof too short on the corrugated iron station building, “which left an unsightly gap”. Rather than cut a *fourth* roof, he came up with a clever solution that actually adds more character to the scene, overlaying it with a piece of tarpaulin made from painted greaseproof paper, with a ladder propped up against it and a workman looking up as if it’s a leaking roof in the process of being repaired. “It just goes to show you can fix almost anything!”

## WORTH THE EFFORT

In a diffident fashion, Jonathan describes making the buildings as “just bodging together a load of Plasticard and hoping it all works!”

“I don’t pretend they’re perfect. There’s always room to improve and do better next time, which is why it’s very easy to make three of something.” And while he says that the one step forward, one step back process “can be a nightmare”, each successful build “makes it worth all the research, time and effort”.

“It’s gratifying when people say they recognise it as the Hawkhurst branch, which is the greatest compliment I can receive because that’s what I wanted to achieve.” ➤



## JAZZING THINGS UP

Given Jonathan's experiences, you might not be surprised to learn that 'Addleford Green' is the result of several attempts at building a layout. One of those was a large attic layout from when he was a teenager, developed with help from his father: "It was huge because I thought that's just what you had to do." Indeed, it was so big that it was never finished; a saga many of us can relate to. His 2019-2025 creation is at the opposite end of the scale – in cameo style.

The available space in his garden shed determined the maximum 9ft 4in x 1ft 4½in footprint, but it was serendipitous that by now Jonathan had "fallen in love with micro layouts", inspired by the work of the likes

**ABOVE** Before hop picking was mechanised in the 1950s, the process was hugely laborious. Train loads of Londoners would travel to Kent on special trains to spend working holidays toiling on the harvest.

of Chris Nevard. "You have to really think a lot more about what's going to go into it and make compromises. I really like that challenge."

While the buildings are based on those of the Paddock Wood – Cranbrook branch, the trackplan and surrounding environs are freelance.

Despite the size constraints, the modeller admits to being "a bit self-indulgent" by "throwing in" a bit of everything desired, including hop field, oast house, farm, creamery, cattle dock and engine shed (a single road version of Hawkhurst's two-road prototype), as well as the centrepiece station.

Slewing the platform and 'main line' at an angle across the baseboard created space for the various ►

The headshunt at the end of the platform can just accommodate the 0-4-4T wheelbase of a South Eastern & Chatham Railway 'H' and nothing bigger. Ash Grove Farm beyond completes a delightful rural picture from the 1930s.



Structures are made from embossed Plasticard, laminated onto an interior layer of plain plastic sheet for rigidity. The station building took three attempts to 'nail', and the stationmaster's house took two - but the effort was certainly worthwhile.



## 'OO' GAUGE LAYOUT **ADDLEFORD GREEN**



features, with the bonus of “squeezing a little bit more track in!”

It also helps the artistic composition to have points of interest set at varied angles: “I once saw someone say that we’re always laying our track parallel to the front and back of the layout, which draws your eye to the fact that it is a board with square edges and is therefore ‘not real!’”

Jonathan is also an advocate of “jazzing up cheaper, less refined components”, such as coarse Code 100 track, which, with a few tweaks, looks very effective.

“I wouldn’t say I’m a perfectionist, but my mantra when building this layout was to gain the greatest level of accuracy possible, but not to go so far that I lose my mind. I believe it just has to look and feel right.

“Yes, the rails are a bit chunkier than you’d like, but if you’re modelling in ‘OO’ then you’ve got to get over yourself a bit because it’s out of scale already. I was aiming to say, ‘if all you’ve got is a bit of set track from a Hornby train set, this is what you can do with it’.

“If you cut the webbing and increase the sleeper spacing, it instantly transforms it. And once you get ballast down and paint it, you really can’t tell that the sleeper height is too thick – it really does blend well. I think it’s important that we have budget options, as ►



well as the wonderfully detailed finescale bullhead track, otherwise we're pricing people out of the hobby."

## BRAIN RE-WIRE


Amid Jonathan's love and talent for the scenic aspects, he confesses to a "massive mistake" for not building anywhere for the trains to go until the 'pretty bit' was finished.

"I resent having to have any kind of off-scene area to store trains and how much space it wastes, thinking that it could be used for actual modelling. When I eventually needed it to run trains, it had to be tacked on with an awkward joining board. If I'd made them together, that would have really improved things."

**ABOVE** Every piece of track is isolated with plastic rail joiners, so Jonathan can keep each locomotive in virtually any position. "Anyone who uses DCC will probably laugh at me because they don't have to do any of that, but I like having tactile physical switches," says Jonathan.

Similarly, 'Addleford Green' was designed to be operated from the front, so when Jonathan stands behind the backscene while attending exhibitions, he is effectively using a control panel that's upside down and the wrong way round. "I have to rewire my brain!" he jokes.

Based on experience, Jonathan's humble advice to other budding builders is "try to plan as much as you can; it's easy to get carried away and jump right in, but sometimes the boring bits have to come first!"

Even so, "making mistakes and learning how to overcome them is a massive part of what makes building a layout so enjoyable and rewarding". 



## FACTFILE: 'ADDLEFORD GREEN'

**Era:** Early-mid 20th century

**Gauge and scale:** 4mm:1ft, 16.5mm gauge, 'OO'

**Size:** 5ft x 1ft 4½in scenic, 9ft 4in x 1ft 4½in total

**Track:** Peco/Hornby Code 100

**Power and control:** DC (Gaugemaster Series U)

**Time to build:** Six years



## ABOUT THE MODELLER: JONATHAN RAMSDEN

Jonathan has worked with animal charities for 20 years, currently for the welfare education team at Cats Protection. Supported by his wife Gemma, they help foster rescue cats and dogs before rehoming. There is also time for volunteering at the Kent & East Sussex Railway and the Colonel Stephens Museum at Tenterden. Keep up to date with Jonathan's modelling on his new *Fishplates and Scratchbuilds* channel on YouTube. As well as 'Addleford Green' content, you can follow the construction of his next micro layout challenge, based around a Victorian-era dog biscuit factory.



**RIGHT** Baseboard construction is traditional timber frame with a 9mm ply top, while the photographic backscene is printed onto highly durable Foamex.

YOU



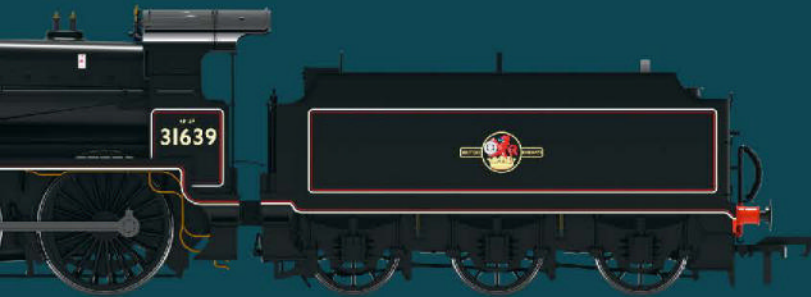
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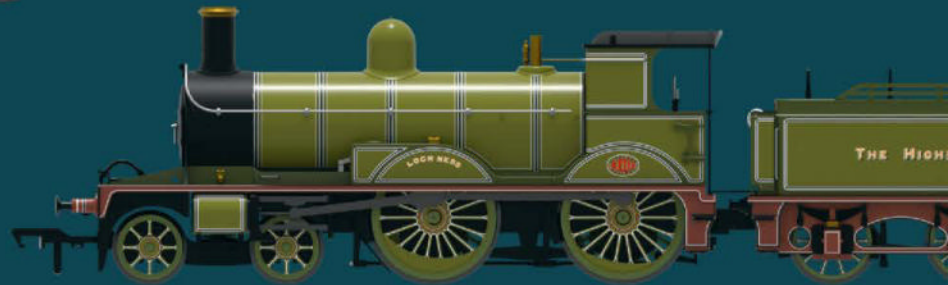
NEVER



HAVE



TOO



MANY



TRAINS





**48** Build a country cottage, Part 2



**50** Customise a Class 12

# Workbench

Inspirational projects, advice and top tips that show you how



**54** Model a springtime garden



**58** Build a signal box kit

## Meet the *Model Rail* Expert modellers



**George Dent**  
Learn from one of the country's most experienced modellers.

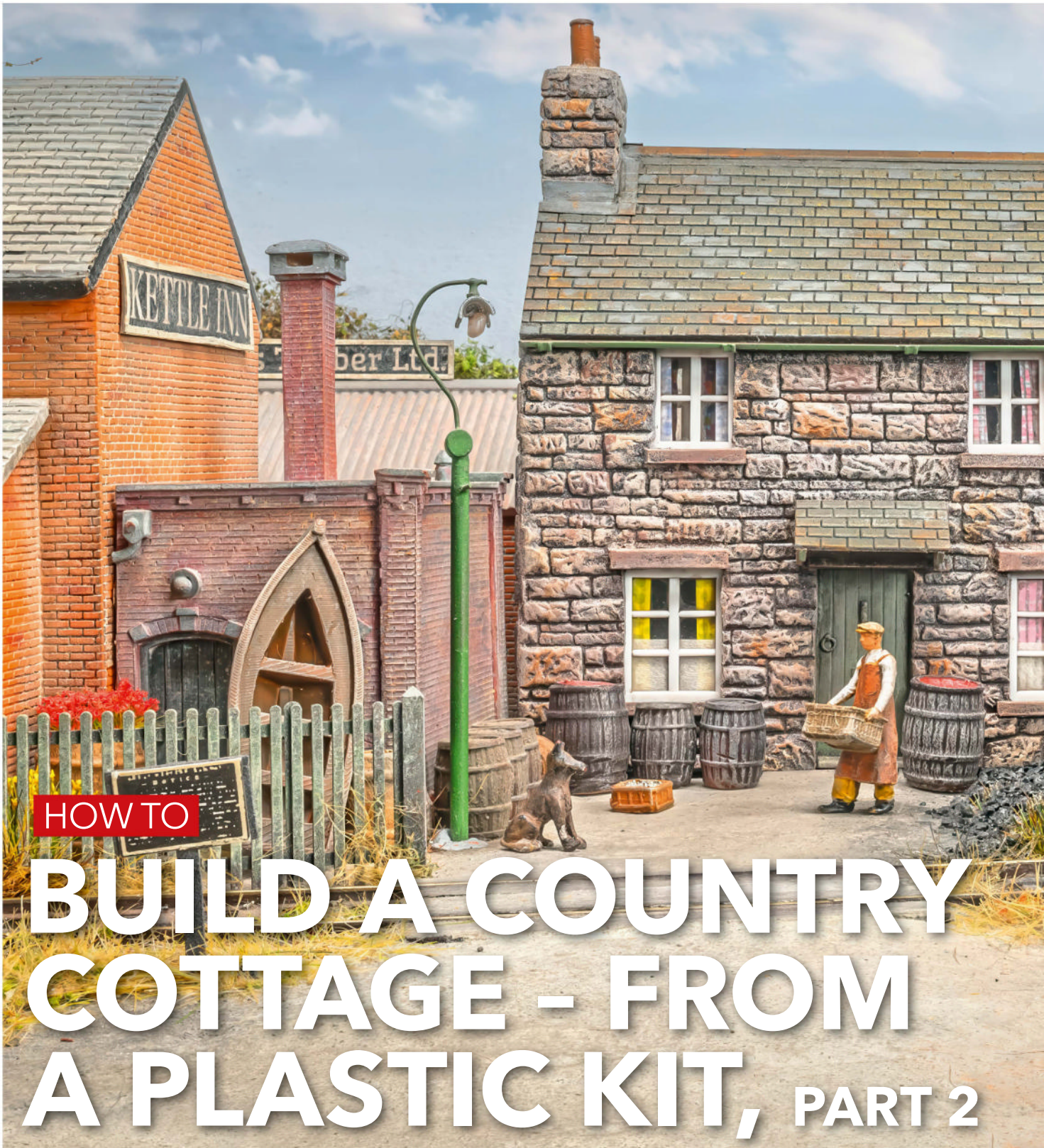


**Chris Nevard**  
His superb modelling is on a par with his photography skills.



**Peter Marriott**  
Scenic guru! Knows what's available and how to use it.

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



HOW TO

# BUILD A COUNTRY COTTAGE - FROM A PLASTIC KIT, PART 2

PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRIS NEVARD

As **Chris Nevard** hits a home run, he installs the windows and adds the final finishing touches to his idyllic-looking rural abode.

Last month, we went house hunting in a bid to create the quintessential country cottage, focusing on the Wills Craftsman series of kits - in particular, its Farm Cottage (CK10), which has always caught my eye. As I mentioned last month, there's much



Model: Wills CK10 Farm Cottage kit, Price: £22.95

Availability: Peco stockists  
Web: [www.peco-uk.com](http://www.peco-uk.com)



scope for customising this pretty-looking building, though a set of detailed paper plans is provided, which can be used as

a series of templates to help you cut the walls and roof sections to shape. You may recall that at the end of part 1, we left the cottage



## What you will need

### SHOPPING LIST

- ◆ Humbrol paints • Plastic Weld or similar liquid poly cement • DAS clay or plastic putty • plastic card  
**Availability:** Model & craft stores
- ◆ Matt black, red oxide and grey aerosol primers **Availability:** Halfords stores **Web:** [www.halfords.com](http://www.halfords.com)
- ◆ Black, beige (B&Q 'Caracas') • rust brown (B&Q 'Manzanillo') • matt household emulsion coloured 'match pots' • burnt sienna and yellow ochre artist's acrylic  
**Availability:** DIY/hardware stores

### TOOLS

- ◆ Hobby knife and spare blades
- ◆ Cutting mat
- ◆ Steel rule
- ◆ Needle files and abrasives
- ◆ 1mm drill bit and pin vice
- ◆ Paint brushes
- ◆ Old plate for paint mixing

virtually complete assembly-wise. This month, we'll be focusing on the finishing touches and the details that will elevate your modelling from 'fair' to 'fab'.

As with any house build, it's important to make sure the windows, roof and guttering are correctly fitted, and any unsightly gaps filled. It takes time to hone your modelling skills and create a realistic-looking roof and brickwork, but time spent on this stage will pay dividends

further along the line. Weathering detail can be added to the outside of the cottage and its windows, to give it that lived-in feel, while home furnishings such as curtains add 'kerb appeal'.

Researching the correct 'look' for the building's stone and paintwork using Google Street View or photographs is important - as with all modelling projects - not to mention interesting, as you explore the various local materials used.

To conclude, I'd thoroughly recommend giving one of these models - which are sold under the Wills 'Craftsman Series Kit' banners - a go. They may well test your modelling mettle and challenge you to think a little out of the box. But, with a bit of patience, you'll enjoy the result, learn new skills, and add depth and interest to your layout.



# Workbench

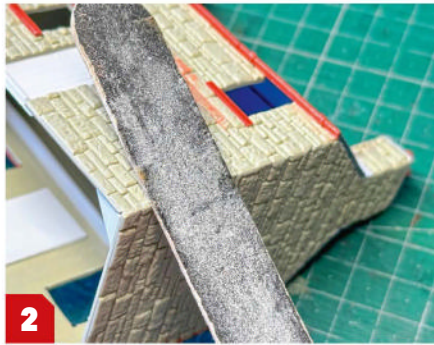
EXPERT MODELLERS SHOW YOU HOW

## STEP BY STEP



1

Last issue, assembly was virtually complete, but detail was needed before painting. The Wills kit provides guttering and downpipe materials, which need cutting to size.



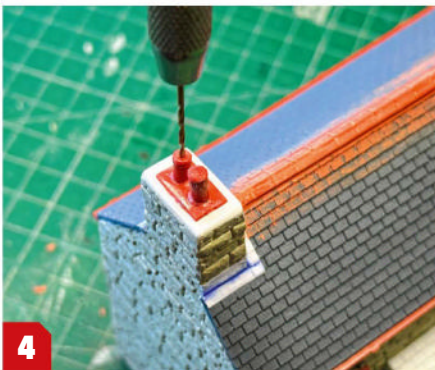
2

An important step is to tidy up the exterior corner joints to create a seamless transition. Re-scribe any mortar courses with a pin or knife and scrub away loose debris with a brush.



3

Unightly gaps can be fixed with DAS clay, and the excess sponged away. Small strips of paper were cut and glued around the base of the chimney stack to mimic lead flashing.



4

Another worthwhile job is to open out the chimney pots. You could of course do this before assembly, which may be easier!



5

With the glue and clay fully dry, and the model cleaned of debris, painting can get under way. My first step was to apply an overall coating of matt black, using a Halfords aerosol.



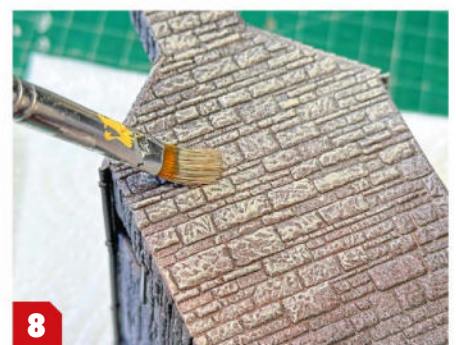
6

A light misting of Halfords Red Oxide primer followed, just enough to impart a reddish hue, but keeping the dark undercoat visible, especially in the recessed mortar courses.



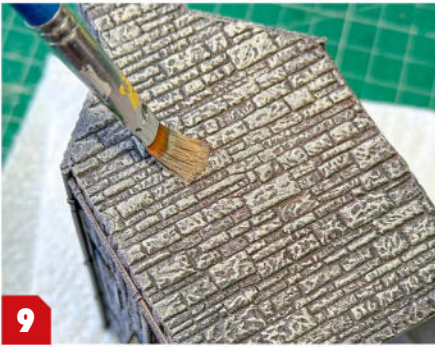
7

A can of Halfords light grey primer was then misted to give the stonework a nice tint. The mottled appearance may look strange, but it will act as a useful base for the painting stages.

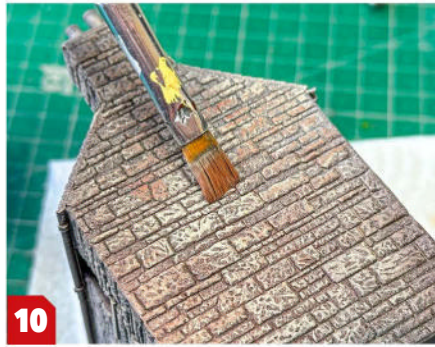


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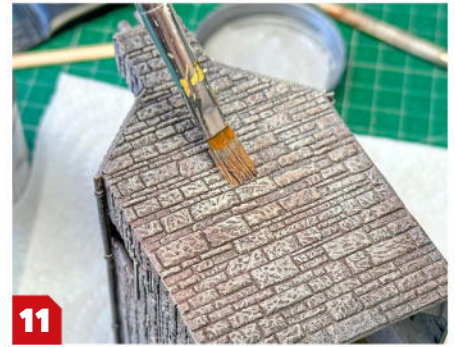
After allowing the primer to dry, hand-painting can begin. Think about the location you're modelling. Local stone often has a distinctive colour - working from photographs helps.



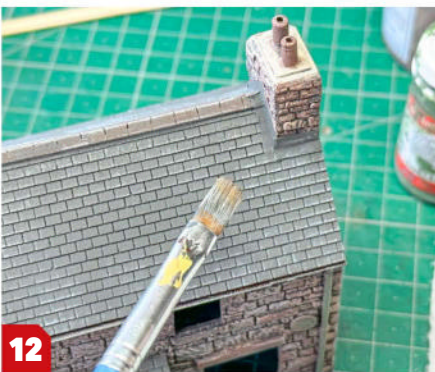
**9** For this West Country-themed project, I used a mix of beige and rust-red/brown household emulsion, dry-brushed randomly over the plastic walls. Matt enamel paint also works.



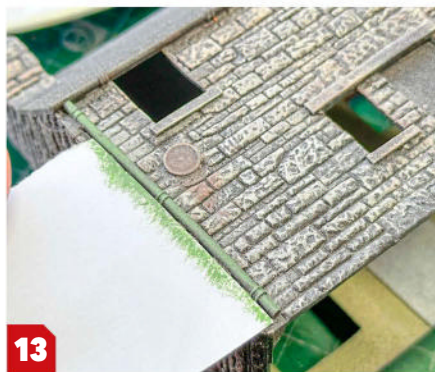
**10** Google Street View can be a great reference. Don't presume that all buildings in the area are the same. Different tones from the same palette of colours were mixed and dry-brushed.



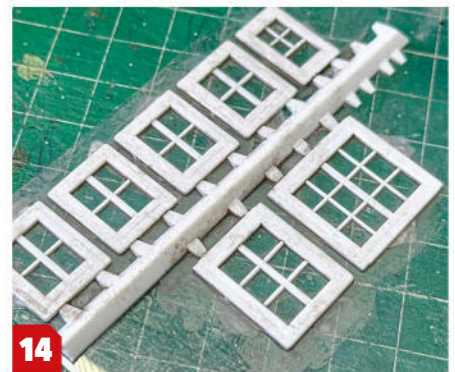
**11** Painting each stone individually can create a painting-by-numbers look and lose the natural variation seen in real life. A random, softer approach is better - and quicker.



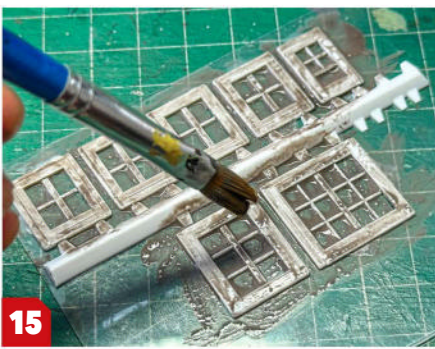
**12** The roof was painted with a slate shade. Once dry, other greys can be dry-brushed to suggest bird activity, moss and lichen. I used Humbrol 31 Slate Grey, 79 Blue Grey, and 140 Gull Grey.



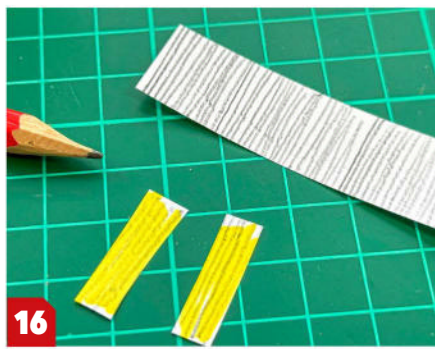
**13** For guttering and downpipes, I favour a faded green colour, giving it a more vintage feel. Masking off stonework with card will avoid stray paint getting where it's not wanted.



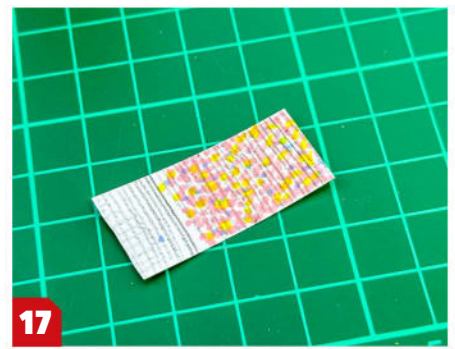
**14** The clear packaging makes excellent glazing material. If you place the window frames onto the plastic, you can flood a little Plastic Weld around the frames using a small brush.



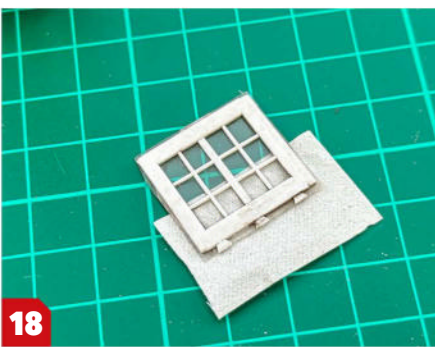
**15** I wanted the glazing to look less than perfect, so I brushed on a little black poster paint (emulsion will also do), then wiped most of it off.



**16** Curtains and such could be added once the windows are installed, but they're easier to do beforehand. You can create your own curtains using paper, a pencil and marker pens.



**17** Curtains can be made from magazine photos or a home decorating catalogue. I attach them with PVA as it gives me time to position them, and you can wipe excess glue off.



**18** If you want an alternative to patterned or coloured curtains, then de-laminated tissue is great for recreating the effect of net ones. Hold it in place with a little PVA white glue.



**19** When ready, the glazing units can be fixed inside the cottage with PVA, applied in a thin bead of adhesive. Leave it to turn tacky before fixing in place, checking the alignment.



**20** All finished: seen outside in natural sunshine, the variety of suitably different shades applied to the stonework and roof can be seen to good effect, producing a convincing appearance.

HOW TO

# CUSTOMISE A CLASS 12

With *Model Rail*'s exclusive models now on sale, **George Dent** offers some tips for making one of these fascinating diesel shunters your own.



**L**ike *Model Rail*'s existing range of Class 11s, our new Class 12 offers modellers the chance to portray these important early diesel shunters for the first time in ready-to-run form. Manufactured exclusively for us by Heljan, the '12s' feature a similar detail and technical specification to the Class 11s.



**MODEL Model Rail/Heljan Class 12**  
◆ Price £169.99 (Subscriber price £152.10)

AVAILABILITY Tel: 01209 705459  
Web: [www.modelrailoffers.co.uk](http://www.modelrailoffers.co.uk)



As anyone who has commissioned exclusive models will attest, the arrival of the finished product comes with a blend of excitement and trepidation. Several years of toil at the research

and development stage have led up to the moment, but until models start to find homes on layouts and in collections, it's hard to fully enjoy the moment.

We have produced five versions of the BR Class 12, encompassing the working career of the real thing, from as-built condition to post-BR industrial use. Just 300 of each version have been manufactured, and this may likely be the only production run, so it's a case of grabbing one while you can. Turn to page 98 to see the full range.

## THE MODEL

Sharing the same basic design as our Class 11s, Heljan has designed a heavy, sturdy die-cast metal chassis block, made up of two sections sandwiching a powerful motor and gearbox, ensuring an even distribution of weight. At a whisker under 200g, there's ample ballast to aid adhesion, with the model boasting an impressive haulage capability (under test, the '12' has hauled 10 bogie coaches with ease).

The compact motor is equipped with a flywheel, with the output shaft being linked to a brass worm via a short, flexible cardan shaft.



Representing a diesel shunter operating among the testing conditions of a steam age railway, 15221 has gained a patina of soot, grease and grime.



## What you will need

### SHOPPING LIST

- ◆ MIG Productions enamel weathering washes and thinners, paintbrushes, cotton swabs **Availability:** Scale Model Shop **Web:** [www.scalemodelshop.co.uk](http://www.scalemodelshop.co.uk)
- ◆ LifeColor paints, airbrushes and equipment **Availability:** The Airbrush Company **Web:** [www.airbrushes.com](http://www.airbrushes.com)
- ◆ Deluxe Materials Track Magic, Speed Epoxy **Availability:** Model shops or Gaugemaster **Web:** [www.gaugemasterretail.com](http://www.gaugemasterretail.com)

### TOOLS

- ◆ Miniature screwdrivers
- ◆ Fine-nosed tweezers
- ◆ Cocktail sticks
- ◆ Cotton swabs
- ◆ Paintbrushes
- ◆ Airbrush and equipment (optional)

This combination helps to smooth-out the motor's rotational forces and the transmission consists of a series of precision gears, designed for optimum slow-speed running.

### TOP TIP – WATCH YOUR STEPS

Our Class 12s are shipped with protective foam pads behind the cab footsteps, as these delicate items can be easily dislodged or bent during handling. We recommend keeping these in position when removing the body to install a DCC decoder and/or fit a crew.

They're easy to remove and push back into place, so keep them in the box for the next time you need to handle the model or when storing it.



Power from the track is collected from all six wheels via wiper contacts and there's a good degree of side-play in the non-powered axles, helping the Class 12 to negotiate first radius curves.

We have created tooling to cater for the Class 12s in as-built condition as well as their later guise with electric marker lights and conduit. These later versions feature working lights, showing a red and white 'shunting' aspect at each end. Cab interior lighting is fitted to all versions, which can be toggled on or off with the supplied magnetic wand or, for those operating under DCC, at the touch of a button. A small 'sugar cube' speaker is pre-fitted to all models, located atop the main circuit board within a plastic enclosure.

### MAKE IT YOUR OWN

Like other contemporary, highly detailed models, the modeller is faced with a few options for customisation. The most obvious job is to add a driver figure to the cab interior.

Accessing the cab is not too difficult, with the body being a screw-fit to the chassis, although the location of the screws is behind the equipment boxes on the running plate. Full instructions are provided in the model's handbook, but we've illustrated them here too for reference. Just take care to prevent damage to the body and chassis detail,

especially the footsteps (see panel). Removing the body also gives access to the Next18 DCC socket.

As well as adding a driver and shunter figure, I set about giving the model a weathered finish to suit the typical condition of a late 1960s-era Class 12 as it neared the end of its BR life. A combination of enamel



The weathering process has helped to highlight one of the Class 12s most unusual features: its larger Bulleid-Firth Brown cast metal wheels.

weathering washes and acrylic paints took care of most of the work, with an airbrush providing the final, subtle touches.

A note of caution with enamel weathering washes: always test on an inconspicuous area of a model first, to ensure the formula does not react with the paintwork. Similarly, it's a good idea to use a matching brand of thinner to suit the washes. Never use regular enamel paint thinners, as it will damage the paintwork and maybe the plastic too. Wash thinners contain much milder solvents.

Another tip, as explained in the demonstration, is to thoroughly test your model before applying weathering, to check

## Factfile: BR Class 12

The Engineering Department of the Southern Railway had been impressed by English Electric's 350hp shunting locomotives, which had initially been developed for the LMS in the late 1930s. With more examples ordered and operated by the War Department, the three-axle diesel electrics were displaying admirable performance and reliability, offering many advantages over steam traction.

Having undertaken its own trials with diesel shunters over the previous decade, the SR's Oliver Bulleid requested a number of alterations to the EE/LMS/WD design when ordering a small fleet for the Southern in the mid-1940s. The most obvious change was the larger diameter wheels (4ft 6in), which, unlike the spoked variety employed elsewhere, featured the distinctive Bulleid-Firth Brown cast metal design.

A total of 26 examples were erected at the Southern's Ashford Works, fitted-out with English Electric six-cylinder diesel power units and traction equipment.

Assembly ran from 1949 to 1952, meaning that they all appeared following the creation of British Railways. Numbered 15211-236, the fleet was intended for use at larger marshalling yards such as Norwood Junction and Hither Green, or as works pilots, with examples based at Ashford, Brighton and Eastleigh.

Latterly dubbed Class 12, four locomotives were equipped with air brake gear in order to shunt EMU stock and Continental rolling stock travelling via the Dover-Calais train ferry.

Due to their non-standard nature, the Class 12s were eventually replaced by the ubiquitous BR Class 08 and 09, which were also direct descendants of the EE/LMS design. Withdrawals began in the late 1960s, with the last example disposed of by BR in 1971. A trio survived in industrial use, with 15224 being saved for preservation after many years working at Grassington Quarry in North Yorkshire. Although currently awaiting overhaul, 15224 is based at the Spa Valley Railway.

everything is working ok. And be sure to clean the wheels and, if necessary, the wiper contacts thoroughly during re-assembly.

I'm obviously a little biased, but the Class 12 makes for a splendid model, with a high degree of prototype fidelity, fine detail, smooth performance and plenty of pulling power.

Despite being spoiled for choice in terms of Class 08s and 09s in 'OO', it's great to be able to faithfully re-create one of the important predecessors of BR's 'standard' shunter design. The unique wheels, cab profile and other subtle defining features certainly set the Class 11s and 12s apart!

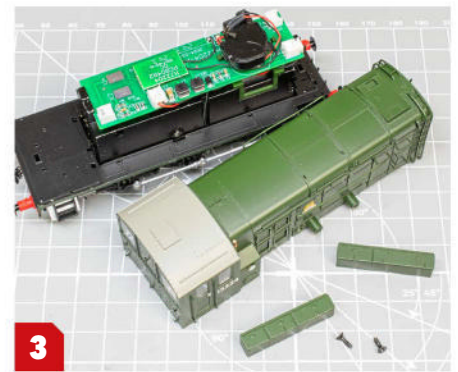
### STEP BY STEP



Gently pull away the equipment boxes from each side. Just grip either end and pull away. This reveals a small mounting screw on each side that needs to be removed.



Lift the body away from the chassis, starting at the cab end. Note that I left the small foam pads behind the cab footstep to add protection during handling - see panel.



With the body removed, the PCB is revealed, with a Next18 DCC socket and a speaker pre-installed. The cab interior can also be accessed from the underside of the body.



I created a blend of MIG 'Dark' and 'Dark Brown' enamel washes and brushed it liberally over one side of the bodyshell, working it into all the nooks and crannies.



I left it until it started to appear dry. This is the sign to start wiping away excess pigment. For a heavily soiled loco, I left much of the pigment in between the panels, grilles and doors.



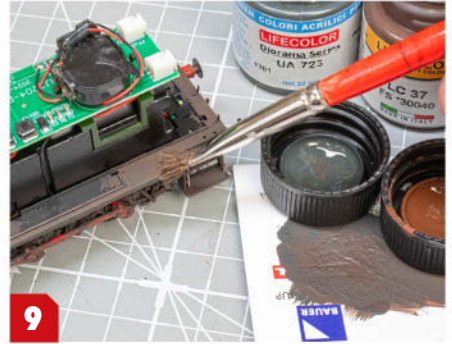
The process was repeated over both sides and the roof. Keep all movements of the swabs vertical or in line with gravity, so any streaks look like natural weather staining.



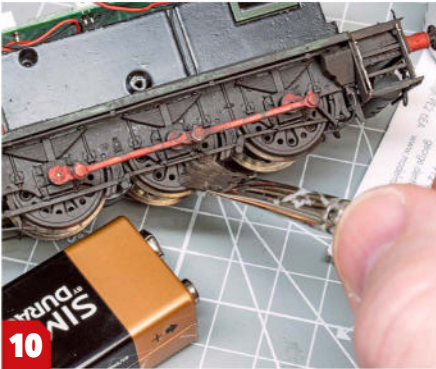
**7** The ends were treated in the same way, with the lion's share of the wash wiped away but leaving deposits. Vertical strokes with the swab can promote some subtle streaking.



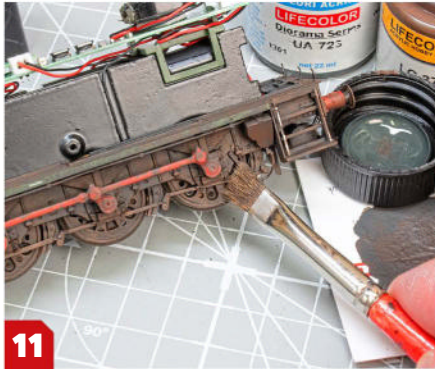
**8** Don't forget to treat the equipment boxes from the bodysides in a similar fashion. This is a great way to draw attention to the detail of the compartment covers.



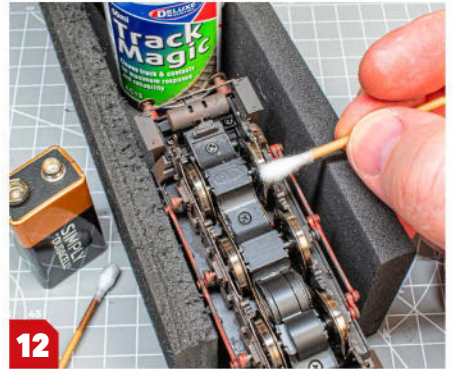
**9** A blend of dark grey and dark rusty brown acrylic paint was stippled over the running plate and footsteps. Two coats were applied, to give these surfaces a slightly gritty look.



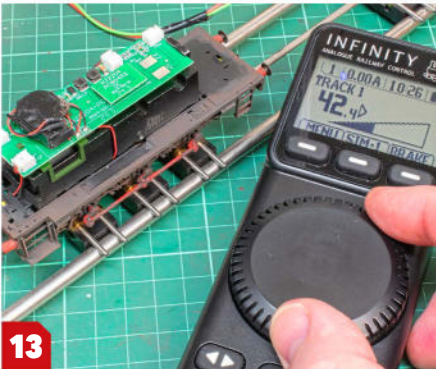
**10** The same technique was applied to the side frames and outer faces of the wheels, using a 9V battery to 'jog' the mechanism on a little at a time (without a DCC decoder installed).



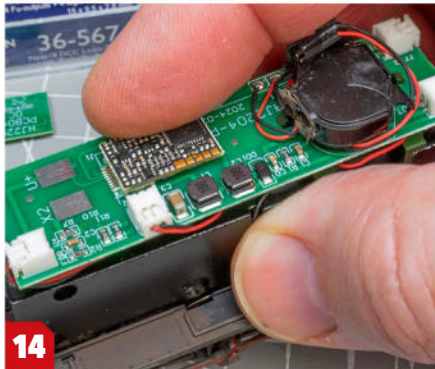
**11** Again, the process was applied in two coats. Excess paint can be wiped away with cotton swabs before it dries, from the connecting rods especially.



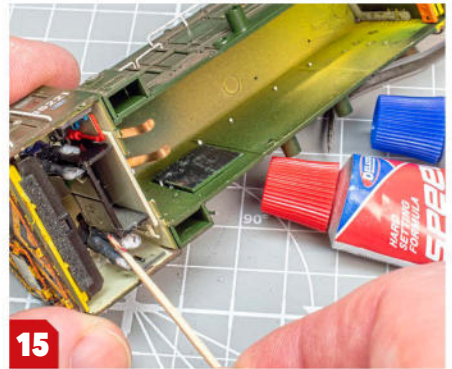
**12** I gave the wheels a thorough clean. As well as wheel treads and flanges, the inside faces were cleaned, as this is where the power is collected by the wiper contacts.



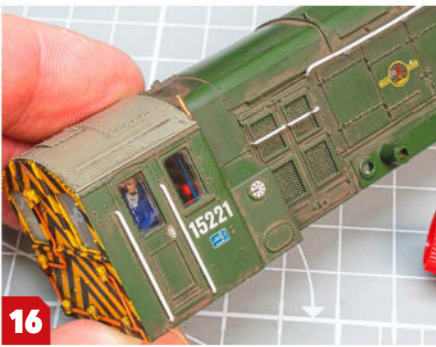
**13** With the cleaning complete, it's a good idea to test the operation of the model on your layout or a rolling road before reassembly, just to make sure everything is tickety-boo.



**14** Now's the time to install a decoder. The Class 12 is equipped with a Next18 socket. Once installed, repeat the testing procedure before re-fitting the body.



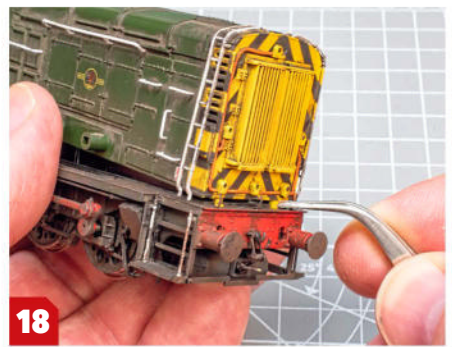
**15** A pair of 3D-printed figures (from the Modelu range) was installed inside the cab. Rather than fix them to the floor, I glued them to the side of the control desk, using fast-setting epoxy.



**16** As the epoxy began to set, I double-checked that the figure was aligned with the windows correctly. When the glue had cured, I repeated the process with the second figure.



**17** A misting of thinned RailMatch enamel matt paint adds extra finesse. I used the Frame Dirt shade over the chassis and lower areas, and Weathered Black along the upper edges.



**18** Reassemble, starting with the small tabs at the nose end in their sockets. Ensure they're free of excess paint. Push the cab end into place, insert the screws and re-fit the side boxes.

HOW TO

# MODEL A SPRINGTIME GARDEN

Now that the worst of winter is (hopefully) behind us, **Peter Marriott** sets about modelling one of the most popular seasons, while also offering some useful tips on miniature apiculture.



One of the aspects of nature that makes life interesting is the changing of the seasons. As we know, the yearly cycle is spring, summer, autumn and winter. In the UK, the seasons begin roughly as follows: spring, late March, summer, late June, autumn, late September and winter, late December. That said, specific dates vary according to geography, with some seasons beginning earlier or lasting longer (especially winter!) in certain areas, particularly further north. Climate change also brings uncertainty.

Most of us enjoy spring with the increased heat from the sun, changing the drab landscape into one of vibrant colour. Early spring flowers such as daffodils, crocuses and snowdrops add colour to the side of the road and railway, as well as gardens, meadows and woodland, the latter often being overrun with a carpet of bluebells.

Hedgerows covered in blossom and trees showing fresh green shoots, and, in upland areas, streams and rivers can be modelled full of rushing water as the ground thaws and the April showers fall.

ANY GAUGE | 4 hrs | 1 1 1 1 1

Arable fields may be full of farmers planting out their crops, or lambing will be taking place as the pasture comes to life. There will be more people out walking in towns and villages than during the winter months, wearing lighter clothing, and cyclists and horse riders become more common. And on a particularly good day, the first convertible hood will be down on an MGB or Mazda MX-5.

The sky can vary from dark clouds through to clear blue (although this can happen in any season in the UK), and the days become longer.

Daffodils epitomise the arrival of spring, and adding some of them to a layout is perhaps the most obvious way to give it a springtime appearance. There are at least four ways to add daffodils to a layout:

In the April 2001 issue of *Model Rail* magazine, Chris Leigh made bunches of daffodils from plastic wall plugs, old shaving brush bristles, and Woodland Scenics yellow

scatter material. I also offered some tips in the April 2020 issue, explaining how to employ ready-made and DIY daffodils on your layout.

Indeed, using tufts of grass with yellow colouring on the tips, as produced by Model Tree Shop, Noch, Woodland Scenics, and other companies, is simply a matter of cutting the tufts to the size of a clump of daffodils that you need.

Grass tufts and flowers are freely available in ready-to-plant form, but you can make your own with an electrostatic grass planting tool. By adding blobs of PVA glue to sheets of greaseproof paper and scattering static grass fibres into the adhesive, the tufts can be lifted away from the paper once dry. All you need to do is refine the shape of the tufts with scissors and add some yellow foam scatter material to the tips of the fibres with a little extra glue.

Snowdrops are another positive sign that Spring has started, and summer is hopefully not too far behind. They are easy to make by adding a little white paint to the grass fibres on grass tufts.

Here, I show you how I created this small springtime garden scene, making use of



An idyllic, springtime garden scene adds a dash of colour to the scenery. A beekeeper and hives brings further visual interest.

## STEP BY STEP



1

The front driveway and footpath were formed from mounting card, so that they would stand slightly proud of the surrounding earth. Once cut and fixed in place, I coated it with PVA and sprinkled fine sand over the wet glue.



2

When the glue had cured, I painted the ground and path/drive with acrylic paints. When this had dried, I began teasing out some brown poly fibre and spread some PVA onto the baseboard where the front hedge will be planted.



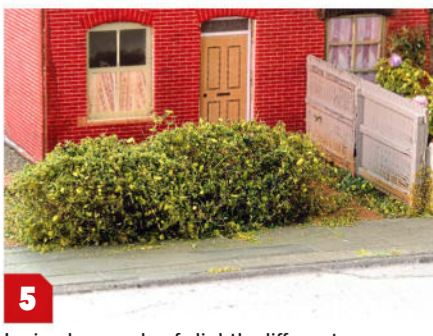
3

The teased-out poly fibre was pushed into the wet glue, which will eventually dry clear. The fibre forms the foundation for the hedge, so don't worry if it looks a odd at this stage. Once the glue has set, the fibre can be trimmed.



4

Extra-hold hairspray (I prefer the unscented variety) was sprayed lightly over the poly fibre, being careful not to overspray the house, pavement, and road! Scraps of paper or card make for handy protective masks.



5

I mixed a couple of slightly different green scatter materials, consisting of different textures, and sprinkled them over the wet hairspray, which acts as an adhesive. A sealing coat of hairspray can follow, again masking the surroundings with paper while spraying.



6

Turning my attention to the main garden area, I brushed PVA glue onto the surface of the 'soil', ready to take fine sand, which was sprinkled on to form pathway and patches of exposed earth, on which planting will shortly take place.



7

While the sand dried, I added some patches of mown grass to the front garden, brushing PVA glue along the borders and applying short static grass fibres using a puffer bottle to work into the tight confines. These work well in such circumstances.



8

To represent small white flowers, such as snowdrops, for the garden's borders, I used finely chopped white and green textured foam from 4D Modelshop. That excellent shop closed last year, but thankfully, the business continues online at [www.4d.shop](http://www.4d.shop)

various materials plus a bunch of things from the scrap box, showing how it's always worth hanging on to offcuts and spare bits and bobs - you never know when they might come in handy at some point!

## What you will need

### SHOPPING LIST

- ◆ Various scenic materials, including poly fibre, static grass fibres, foliage, ready-to-plant tufts and more
- Web:** [www.wwscenics.co.uk](http://www.wwscenics.co.uk), [www.themodeltreeshop.co.uk](http://www.themodeltreeshop.co.uk), [www.gaugemasterretail.com](http://www.gaugemasterretail.com), [www.4d.shop](http://www.4d.shop)

### TOOLS

- ◆ Tweezers
- ◆ Craft knife and blades
- ◆ Steel rule
- ◆ Cutting mat
- ◆ Scissors
- ◆ Electrostatic grass tool



9

The mixed fine foam was sprinkled over a further layer of PVA glue, brushed lightly over the static grass fibres (once they had dried), following the edges of the path. I thought these represented snowdrops quite nicely.



10

I also had to hand some small grass tufts by Mini Natur (purchased over 20 years ago!). These would be good for mimicking weeds along the middle of the driveway, applied in random patches.



11

I painted small blobs of white glue on the driveway and used tweezers to gently push the tufts into the adhesive. As well as the driveway and path, I added some of the tufts into the lawn to add a bit of textural variety.



12

At the back of the garden, I wanted to add some clutter around the sheds. Using a leftover piece of Redutex corrugated iron sheet, I cut several panels with a craft knife over a cutting board and touched in the bare white edges with dark grey colouring pencils.



13

The randomly sized corrugated iron panels, in varying shades, were leant up against the hedge, adding some interest to this corner, representing some hoarded materials. I was pleased with this quick bit of modelling, proving that it's always worth keep offcuts!



14

I also cut up various leftover pieces of wood from the waste fret of a laser-cut kit. With lifelike wood grain and texture, it's perfect for the job and didn't cost me anything. I chopped it into random shapes and sizes to represent discarded timber bits.



15

Again, the wooden debris was fixed in place beside the timber potting shed. Many gardeners tend to hoard such material for all manner of uses. Both of these sheds are from the Hornby Skaledale range.



16

Because this was intended to be a garden in early Spring, I wanted to add a fair amount of yellow in the garden to represent daffodils and other flowers. This texture sheet, also from 4D Modelshop, was gently pulled apart to represent patches of colour.



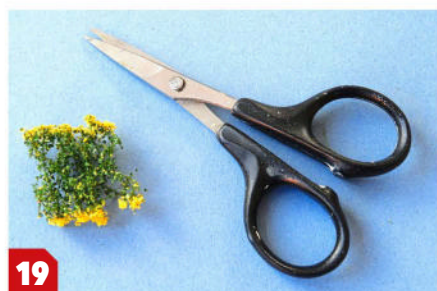
17

A little white glue was spread over the base layer of static grass fibres, ready for the teased-out textured foliage sheet.



18

Similarly, to add some taller patches of grass I tore pieces off a grass mat manufactured by Busch which I fixed to the land using a little white glue.



19

For even more variety - and colour - I employed some Mini Natur flowering shrub material which I cut in half using a small pair of scissors to provide several taller plants, which were planted beside the pathway into blobs of PVA glue.



20

The random patches of extra-textured foliage and the tall, flowering plants give the garden a much more natural, less-manicured appearance.



21

I had recently purchased a pack of flowering shrubs by Martin Welberg (a scenic manufacturer from the Netherlands) to experiment with.



22

The Martin Welberg shrubs feature a nice mixture of fine foliage and subdued colour to the flowers - just the thing for springtime when plants are beginning to come to life.

## TOP TIPS FOR MODELLING SPRINGTIME

Avoid mixing seasonal colours of trees, hedges, weeds, and grass within the same scene on your layout.

Gaugemaster's Static Grass Starter Kit (GM196) offers an effective way to start modelling the spring. For just £13.00, the kit provides a puffer bottle static grass applicator, plus glue and a bag of spring grass fibres.

Short grass fibres are best for spring landscapes, which, in 'OO', means fibres up to 2.5mm in length.

Low growth of grass and weeds is the norm with taller weeds appearing in summer.

Blossom on trees provides a visual reminder of spring.

Daffodils, crocuses, and snowdrops appear in early spring, providing a welcome burst of colour after winter.



This corner of the back garden demonstrates the effect of using static grass fibres initially up to 2mm, then adding patches of textured foam, fibres, tufts and shrubs to vary the heights and colours of the vegetation.

## BEEKEEPING IN MINIATURE

There are over a quarter of a million honey beehives in the UK, with the majority of these kept by around 44,000 amateur beekeepers, along with over 200 commercial beekeepers, making them a worthwhile scenic addition to a model scene.

Beehives are widely available in model form from the likes of Harburn Hobbies, and Penduke Models produces ready-painted beehives in 'OO'. Additionally, Langley Models produces unpainted kits and painted models for both 'N' and 'OO' featuring hives and beekeeper figures.

When a beekeeper is inspecting the bees, they remove the top from the hive, and both the Harburn and Langley products feature this. Multiple hives are usually seen together, often located in fields or at the end of gardens, away from houses.

### USEFUL WEBSITES

● Penduke Models 3D0011 3D-printed standard beehives (x4)

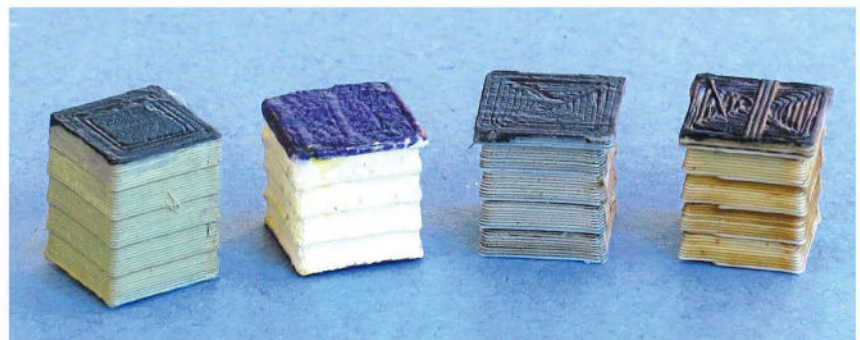
**Web:** [www.pendukemodels.co.uk](http://www.pendukemodels.co.uk)

● Harburn Hobbies • CC 225 standard design beehives (pair) • CC 226 classic design beehives (pair) • CC 227 Beekeeper and open standard beehive

**Web:** [www.harburnhobbies.co.uk](http://www.harburnhobbies.co.uk)

● Langley Models • F234 beekeepers and hives ('OO') • A100 beekeepers and hives ('N')

**Web:** [www.langleymodels.co.uk](http://www.langleymodels.co.uk)



'OO' gauge beehives by Penduke Models. Beekeepers and their hives are not very often modelled but can make an eye-catching cameo scene.



A beekeeper in 'OO' by Harburn Hobbies with a full protective suit on. They look just as bulky in real life too!



A real beekeeper at work near the hives. There are two hives in this location while at some locations you can see ten or more along the edge of a field, sometimes fenced off.

## HOW TO

# BUILD A SIGNAL BOX KIT

It's second time lucky for **George Dent**, as he assembles a delightful kit of a Cheshire Lines Committee signal box, having made a pig's ear of his first attempt!

I've had a real surge of modelling impetus since Christmas, after a fairly barren 2025 (relatively speaking). Mostly, it has been a case of completing a host of half-finished projects, partly to free up some space in my workshop but also to allay the wretched feeling I get from not seeing something through to completion.

One of the latest undertakings has been this splendid 'O' gauge signal box, built from a laser-cut kit, produced by MMR Model Kits. Purchased originally at the 2024 Guildex show in Stafford, work began in the winter of that year. As mentioned briefly in MR339, assembly of the signal box progressed well, but a few other jobs then interrupted my flow.

The hiatus gave me pause for thought about perhaps customising the kit slightly, before assembly was completed. After some prevarication - and belatedly reading the instructions - I realised I'd made a significant error by installing the internal walls to the cabin too early. Oops!

With the kit's components rendered in card, once they're bonded together, it's difficult to prise them apart without the material delaminating into a fibrous, flimsy mess. The

mistake was not insurmountable, but the glazing was meant to be sandwiched between the two layers. I could simply fit the clear

glazing on the inside and hope for the best. Alas, I intend to add interior lighting in future, so it would likely appear messy, and the thickness of the window frames would be excessive too.

As the project was pushed further back in the queue, 2025's Guildex came around and, seeing the kit on the MMR stand again, I thought 'what the heck' and bought another one. It's reasonably priced, after all. And I resolved to make a much better job this time around (and to read the instructions properly!).

## CHESHIRE'S FINEST

The fact that the kit portrays a Cheshire Lines Committee structure is the reason I bought the kit in the first place, as I'm a massive fan of all things CLC. The kit is well designed and the parts fit together effortlessly. The use of card



Model: MMR Model Kits SB07 CLC signal box kit, Price: £34.99

AVAILABILITY

Web: [www.mmrmodels.co.uk](http://www.mmrmodels.co.uk)



The addition of a few extra details and a Peco interior kit really help bring the signal box to life.



## What you will need

### SHOPPING LIST

- ◆ Peco LK-710 signal box interior kit  
**Price:** £32.00 **Availability:** Peco stockists **Web:** [www.peco-uk.com](http://www.peco-uk.com)
- ◆ York Modelmaking 0-TILES01 self-adhesive roofing tiles, slate  
**Price:** £7.50 **Availability:** York Modelmaking **Web:** [www.yorkmodelrail.com](http://www.yorkmodelrail.com)
- ◆ Dapol 7C-004-003 Fire buckets and rack **Price:** £3.00  
**Availability:** Dapol stockists **Web:** [www.dapol.co.uk](http://www.dapol.co.uk)
- ◆ Deluxe Materials Super 'Phatic, Glue 'n' Glaze, Rokat Rapid cyano adhesives **Availability:** Model shops or Gaugemaster **Web:** [www.gaugemasterretail.com](http://www.gaugemasterretail.com)
- ◆ Wolverine PVA glue  
**Availability:** Scale Model Shop **Web:** [www.scalemodelshop.co.uk](http://www.scalemodelshop.co.uk)
- ◆ LifeColor acrylic paints and paintbrushes  
**Availability:** The Airbrush Company **Web:** [www.airbrushes.com](http://www.airbrushes.com)

### TOOLS

- ◆ Knife and spare blades
- ◆ Cutting mat
- ◆ Steel rule and set square
- ◆ Tweezers
- ◆ Files and abrasives
- ◆ Fine nosed pliers
- ◆ Drill and bits
- ◆ Paintbrushes
- ◆ Elastic bands
- ◆ Spring clamps
- ◆ Cotton swabs

for all but the cabin floor (a thick piece of MDF), has many advantages, with the material being lightweight and easy to bond and paint thanks to its porous nature. Indeed, there's no need for priming coats before painting and only a handful of simple tools was required.

There are a few drawbacks, however. As mentioned, the tendency for the card to delaminate means it needs to be protected from moisture, which also dictates the types of adhesives and paints employed. Personally, I'd avoid runny, water-based glues and paints - or test them on some of the waste material first, just to be safe.

For assembly, I used Deluxe Materials Super 'Phatic, a thin, fast-acting aliphatic resin glue, albeit applied sparingly. This is an extremely sticky adhesive, offering a rapid 'grab' of components, allowing assembly to progress quickly. As it soaks into the card, the bonds are extremely strong once cured. It's also good for bonding plastics and other materials to card or wood. I also made use of Wolverine PVA from the AK Interactive range.

This is a thicker glue that, again, grabs the parts quickly, but allows more time for minor adjustments, so it's great when parts need careful alignment. It still sets much quicker than most regular PVAs. Both glues can also be cleaned up with damp cloths or swabs before curing.

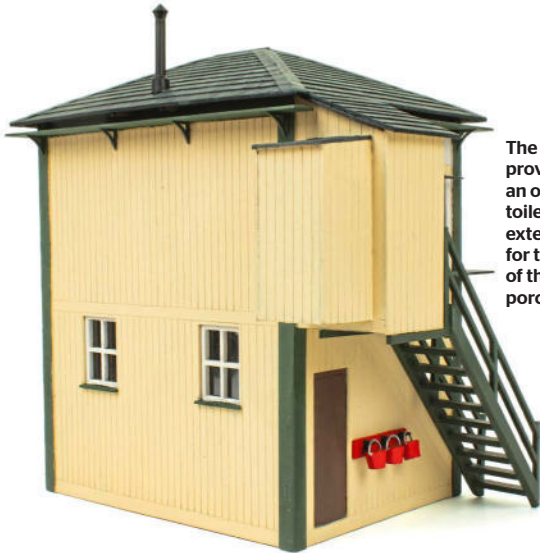
Another drawback of card is that, unless it's of a certain thickness, it can be prone to warping or distortion during handling. The kit accounts for this, with the walls being made up of external and internal layers. Indeed, I think this is where I went wrong on my initial attempt, as I rushed to get the walls more rigid. Second time around, I needn't have worried as, once complete, the structure feels extremely strong. The presence of a second kit did allow me to double-up the staircase bannisters, however, which otherwise felt a little flimsy.

Painting was achieved with just a handful of LifeColor acrylic paint shades, all applied by brush in light coats (do not apply heavy coats of water-based paint), allowing each to dry

## Top tip: Clean them up

Like most laser-cut kits, the components of the MMR kit feature a build-up of carbon on the cut edges. To ensure glues and paints adhere properly to the material, it's best to remove this with medium grade sanding pads or flat files before assembly, but take care to not inhale the dust - wear a facemask and clean up your hands and workbench afterwards.





The kit provides an optional toilet extension for the rear of the porch.



A clever aspect of the kit is that it is designed to allow the cabin's sliding windows to be posed open or closed.

fully. Only the interior detail set (Peco) and fire buckets (Dapol) required priming with aerosols before painting.

For the colour scheme, I have tried to replicate the once-ubiquitous off-white and green scheme I recall on many BR signal boxes in the North West during the late 1980s and 1990s. The main colour is, perhaps, a bit too creamy, but I'm happy enough with the final result. Having built this purely for fun, and to try a kit from a new (to me) manufacturer, I have no immediate plans for it, but it currently brightens up my display cabinet. Incidentally, I have named the

'box Sankey for now, though the real structure at Sankey-for-Penketh station was of a different design. Whether or not I rechristen it, I'm definitely going to change the sign. I simply used a Slater's Plastikard alphabet I had at hand, but I'm not keen on the typeface.

## HAPPY DAYS

The addition of a few extras has made a positive impact, especially the laser-cut roof slates and Peco's handy interior kit, which includes a 12-lever frame and a host of telegraph and tablet equipment.

There's more I could add, such as extra interior fittings (a rug would look nice on

the floor), and a track layout plan is missing from the frame above the instrument shelf. The toilet extension needs some exterior pipework adding, and a lighting unit is due to be installed.

Aside from my initial frustration (all my own making), I thoroughly enjoyed this project. The kit was fun to build, and I'm very happy with the results. The CLC had real panache when it came to structural design, and it makes a pleasant change to be able to build something from a lesser-known railway operation. The same kit is also available in 'OO' gauge, and I'm tempted to trial one of those next.

### STEP BY STEP



1

The kit provides several sheets of laser-cut components, rendered in different thicknesses of a card. A thick MDF floor component adds rigidity. Pre-cut glazing panels are provided.



2

After cutting from the fret, the parts were tidied up (see panel), then assembly began with the staircase. The parts slot into place and are secured with Super 'Phatic' glue.



3

Because I'd bought a second kit, I was able to double up the side bannisters to give the staircase more rigidity. It's not essential, but it will help prevent damage in future.



4

Construction of the main structure begins with the inner base walls, which slot together. They were retained with a set of magnetic clamps (from Proses) and excess glue wiped away.



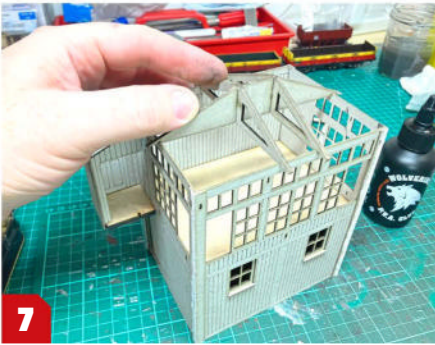
5

After leaving the base to set for an hour or so, the MDF floor could be added on top and the outer walls assembled. I used PVA to allow more time for adjustments before clamping up.



6

The main structure was left to cure before the clamps were removed. The external corner frame overlays were added. When dry, I applied acrylic putty to seal any gaps.



**7** While the putty cured, I assembled the roof trusses together with PVA. They were held in their locating tabs but not fixed to the walls - the roof is designed to be removable.



**8** The roof panels were then bonded to the trusses, again using PVA to allow time for adjustment. I later cut the porch roof extension away to make it easier to add the roof slates...



**9** To improve the etched detail, I added strips of self-adhesive laser-cut slates from York Modelmaking, working from the bottom up. Individual slates were cut to match the angles.



**10** With all the slates installed, ridge tiles were formed from a junk mail leaflet. Cut into sections and fixed with Super 'Phatic, excess glue was wiped away with a damp swab.



**11** LifeColor UA739 Broken Plaster was applied to the frames. UA742 Lime Mortar was applied to the rest of the exterior, followed by UA501 'Schwarzgrun' to the doors and framework.



**12** The staircase was painted before installation. It took a couple of coats. The exterior footboards and gutter strip, plus small mounting brackets, were also painted green before installation.



**13** After painting the interior walls, the glazing was bonded to the inside. A thin bead of Deluxe Materials Glue 'n' Glaze, allowed to turn tacky, was used to affix it.



**14** The glazed interior walls were installed using Glue 'n' Glaze. The sliding panels can be added, and I enhanced the floor with a sheet of thin hardwood veneer.



**15** The roof tiles were painted with LifeColor Slate grey, blended with a little dark brown/umber and dark grey. Finally, I dry-brushed the surface with lighter grey and a dash of olive green.



**16** The handrail was added to help the signaller to clean the windows. Lengths of 1mm brass wire were shaped and mounted into holes drilled into the walls, and bonded with cyano glue.



**17** Peco's signal box interior kit is comprehensive, featuring injection-moulded parts, and including a modular lever frame. Once assembled, they were primed and painted.



**18** Interior fixtures were fixed in place with PVA, with the exterior flue fixed to the roof over the stove. I also added a signal man figure. There's plenty of scope for adding further detail.

# A model for the prosecution

**Tony Streeter** examines how crime on Britain's railways sparked fascination and horror within the public imagination, especially during the Victorian era, and how detailed scale models were employed to help to bring perpetrators to justice.

**I**nvariably, railways and crime have always gone together. From the beginning, railways offered a new fast means of escape and gave criminals a vast pool of potential victims... and at the same time a chance to remain anonymous.

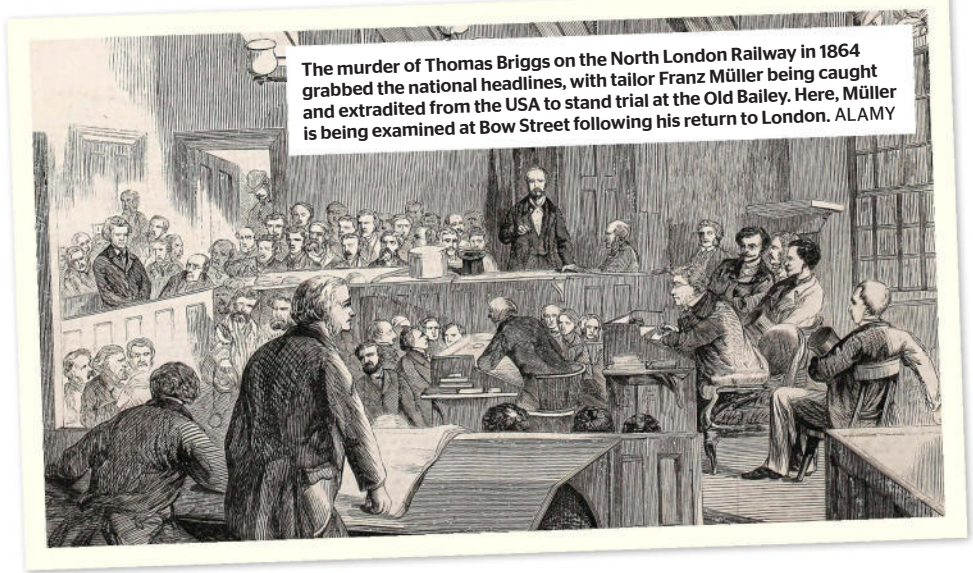
Railway crime tapped into every bit of the Victorian psyche. Perhaps no more so than after the murder of 69-year-old Thomas Briggs in 1864.

East London. A July evening around 10pm. A North London Railway driver spots someone lying by the tracks.

The man is badly injured; it turns out Thomas Briggs has been robbed and thrown out of a carriage. He is taken to a local pub, where he dies. This is now the first murder ever recorded on Britain's railways.

Investigation puts suspicion on 24-year-old tailor Franz Müller – who has fled the country for New York. And so begins a transatlantic manhunt. Yet here too this is a very Victorian tale, for Müller travels by sailing ship – and the police overtake him using a steamer. Müller was extradited, found guilty at the Old Bailey and hanged in public at Newgate.

Every bit of that story is high drama. Perhaps partly because of that, there were consequences for the railways – 1868's Regulation of Railways Act brought in the communication cord, and passengers would henceforth be able to contact train



The murder of Thomas Briggs on the North London Railway in 1864 grabbed the national headlines, with tailor Franz Müller being caught and extradited from the USA to stand trial at the Old Bailey. Here, Müller is being examined at Bow Street following his return to London. ALAMY

crews. Non-compartment stock, such as the one in which the crime took place, had 'peepholes' added (nicknamed 'Müller lights') so that people could see from one to the other, and it hastened the introduction of corridor stock too.

Crime, and the fear of it, brought various responses as railways sought to react. Ladies Only areas helped allay concerns about possible sexual violence – and demand for them increased after a woman had to flee her compartment and ride on the carriage running board to escape an attacker.

It may not be well-known, but scale models have played an important role in some of the UK's most dramatic railway crimes. As an aid for prosecuting lawyers in demonstrating the layout of railway carriage interiors (with which jury members may not have been familiar), models helped to seal the fate of murderers such as George Henry Hill.

In 1901, Hill stood accused of murdering a fellow passenger within a compartment of a Southampton to Waterloo service.

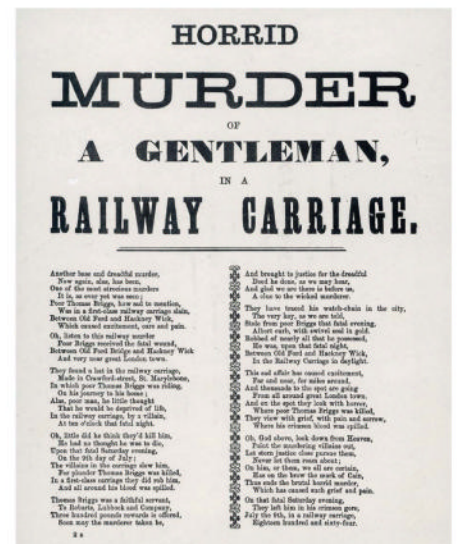
Mrs Rhoda King had boarded an empty Third Class compartment of a London & South Western Railway train at Southampton West and was soon joined by George Henry

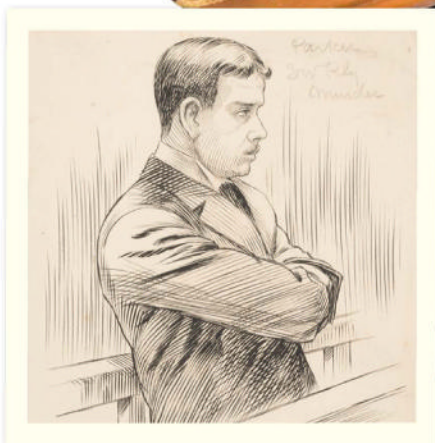
Hill at Eastleigh. At Winchester, William Pearson also entered the compartment, which featured a connecting door to a lavatory. Upon his return from the lavatory, Hill shot Pearson in the head with a pistol. Rhoda King was also injured by a second bullet but managed to plead with Hill for her life.

The murderer escaped the train but was apprehended and, to aid his trial, an extraordinarily detailed model of carriage No. 269 was created by LSWR staff. As well as patterned upholstery, luggage rack netting,



Complete in every detail, from leather droplight straps to full LSWR livery, this section of coach 269 was crafted by LSWR staff to help convict George Henry Hill of murder in 1901.





**George Henry Hill was captured in this courtroom sketch during his trial for murder in March 1901.**

lavatory fittings and window signs, the exterior panelling and livery were also accurately rendered. Hill was duly convicted and hanged.

Thankfully, this amazing model has survived and is in the care of the National Railway Museum at York.

While murder provided the horror, among the biggest public fears was robbery, and this never generated greater headlines than when it took place on a grand scale.

Today, the most famous British railway 'hold-up' is undoubtedly 1963's 'Great Train Robbery', in which a gang halted a Travelling Post Office train by tampering with a signal to show a false (red) aspect. Driver Jack Mills was attacked in that robbery, being beaten around the head, and he never fully recovered, returning to work only on light duties. The robbers escaped with more than £2.6m.

However, nearly a century before that, the headlines were about the 'Great Gold Robbery', in which Paris-bound bullion had

been stolen from a train between London Bridge and Folkestone.

Later made famous by a film starring Sean Connery and Donald Sutherland, the robbers in 1855 switched bullion for lead shot in the safes of the guard's van. Of the four people involved in the plot, two worked for the South Eastern Railway, and a third had earlier been sacked. It was an inside job... which didn't stop the perpetrators from being caught. Today, the National Railway Museum has one of the bullion boxes, complete with lead 'gold'.

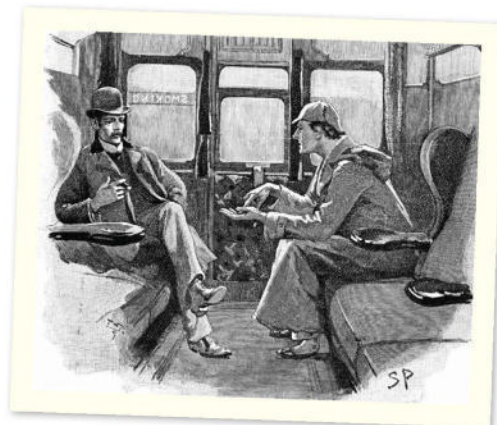
Given such dramas, it's maybe no surprise that railway crime has been fertile ground for authors – whether they write fact, or fiction. Perhaps the world's most famous detective, Sherlock Holmes was regularly helped by his Bradshaw's timetable as he ventured across Victorian and Edwardian Britain. Agatha Christie even wrote whole novels based around railways – most famously *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934), but also the *Mystery of the Blue Train* (1928) and *4.50 from Paddington* (1957).

Yet despite the drama of some of the more famous cases (whether true or make-believe), much railway crime has in fact always been mundane – from North British Railway employee Thomas Drummond stealing 12 bottles of whisky in 1918, to today's cable theft.

In the UK, railways countered crime early on through such measures as communication cords, but also by employing their own police. These were the forerunners of today's British Transport Police, created by merging the previous private railway forces after nationalisation in the 1940s. Even today, the BTP is largely funded by the industry.

The force is one of those organisations that offers a continuous thread right back to the early days of rail, and its officers still have to keep people safe from some of the same kinds of crimes as they did all those years ago.

● The LSWR 'Murder Carriage' model was described in detail in issue 509 of *Steam Railway* magazine (Aug 21-Sept 17 2020).



**Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson travel by train to Devon to investigate a murder and the disappearance of a famous racehorse in *The Adventure of Silver Blaze*. Arthur Conan Doyle's story was published in *The Strand Magazine*, London, 1892. Illustration by Sydney E. Paget, the first artist to create an image of Holmes. ALAMY**



# DIAMOND DIORAMAS

The 3mm Society celebrated its 60th anniversary by asking its members to come up with small layouts incorporating a diamond theme. Here are just four of the imaginative creations that resulted.

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



ne of the great things about railway modelling is that the scene is such a diverse one; from tiny, space-conscious 'Z' gauge through to large and imposing 'O' gauge – and beyond. However, three sizes dominate the British market: 'O', 'OO' and 'N' (albeit with 'new kid on the block', the recently introduced 'TT:120', now gaining a significant foothold).

However, back in the 1950s and 1960s, one of the major ranges was 'TT'. Launched in 1946 in the United States, it was, at the time, the smallest commercially available model railway range, and was introduced to Britain in 1957 by Tri-ang. Unlike the current incarnation of 'TT', which is 1:120 scale, Tri-ang opted for 1:101.6 (or 3mm), in order to more comfortably accommodate electric motors. For a while, 'TT' proved very successful, but its appeal declined with the advent of 'N' gauge, and Tri-ang announced it was discontinuing 'TT' production in 1965. In response to Tri-ang's departure, the 3mm Society was established.

**ABOVE** The 'Team Red' layout of Dave Bates, featuring the Class 66 diesel locomotive commissioned from Lincoln Locos by the 3mm Society to celebrate its 60 years of existence.

Set up during 1965, the aim of the group was to encourage and support modellers in the scale. Last year, to mark its diamond anniversary, it issued a fun challenge to its members; build a layout featuring a diamond theme. They responded with a variety of designs, four of which are showcased here.

"It is probably quite amazing that we have survived for 60 years," admits Martin Gentle, the 3mm Society's Chairman since 2022. "We are a minority scale, but we've evolved; we've had to." Today, there are over 500 members, both in the UK and internationally. "The 3mm Society exists to support everyone who wants to work in the scale, whether they're Tri-ang 'TT' or they aspire to finescale standards," continues Martin. "So it's a very broad church in terms of membership.

"The question that I get asked as the chair is, why would anybody want to be a 3mm modeller these days, when you've got such superb models in ready-to-run form in the other mainstream scales? I think there are probably three reasons for it. One is that it's for people ➤



who want to actually make something. We're very much a builder's scale. There's no possibility that, if you make something in 3mm, someone's going to produce the same in off-the-shelf form. However, we do support members with a society shop, with over 1,000 products in it.

"The second thing is that it's a bit different. If you go to exhibitions, if you're not careful, there's often an element of similarity in the layouts, with lots of very nice locomotives running straight out of the box. So when our layouts appear at shows, people like them because they are different. And the third thing to say is that there is a lot of comment currently about the price of RTR. But we have our own second-hand store, which sells anything from Tri-ang 'TT' to pre-owned finescale items. And when you see the price of those, people are amazed at what extremely good value they are."

Thanks to recent innovations such as 3D printing, Martin believes that 3mm is now just as viable as ever. Even the introduction of 'TT:120' has helped. "The general public doesn't often really understand the difference between 'TT:120' and the original 'TT'. So there is the opportunity for us when we're at exhibitions to talk about that and show off the difference in size between the locomotives and rolling stock, even though they all use the same 12mm track. And potentially, some of their mechanisms will be useful for 3mm, because you can change the body, perhaps with a 3D-printed top. Most of our members are fully committed to what they've got."

There's a perception, perhaps, that modelling in 3mm means having to build absolutely everything from scratch. While Martin does feel that one of the merits of 'TT' is that it does inspire people to make things themselves, he's also keen to stress that there's also quite a selection of items available for those who aren't master constructors. In addition to the society's own shop, one of its chief suppliers is Lincoln Locos, which makes bodies and chassis for steam, diesel and

electric locomotives. For its 60th birthday celebrations over the last year, the 3mm Society also commissioned a commemorative RTR Class 66 diesel from Lincoln Locos. This all helps make 'the builder's scale' more accessible and attainable for those interested in getting started.

Another initiative for the diamond jubilee was to challenge members to come up with special dioramas to mark its 60 years. "The only things that they had to do was that it should represent from 1965 onwards, and they had to incorporate a diamond somewhere," says Martin. "Beyond that, there was no stipulation. There were, I think, 20 dioramas produced, which was quite significant. Everybody came at it from a different way, and with a different logic." The next few pages showcase four of these mini-layouts, illustrating just what is possible in 'TT' today.

## BLUE DIAMOND CEMENT

Martin himself was responsible for 'Blue Diamond Cement', a small materials loading facility. "The diamond link is an obvious one; if you've ever bought any cement, you'll know that they come in bags branded Blue Circle, so I thought mine would wear Blue Diamond. The logic was that I'd never actually completed a layout before. I'd always had good intentions, but something else had always come along. ➤

**BELOW** 'Blue Diamond Cement' was the brainchild of 3mm Society chairman Martin Gentle, utilising track and wagons that he already had. The Presflo bodies date back to the Tri-ang era.





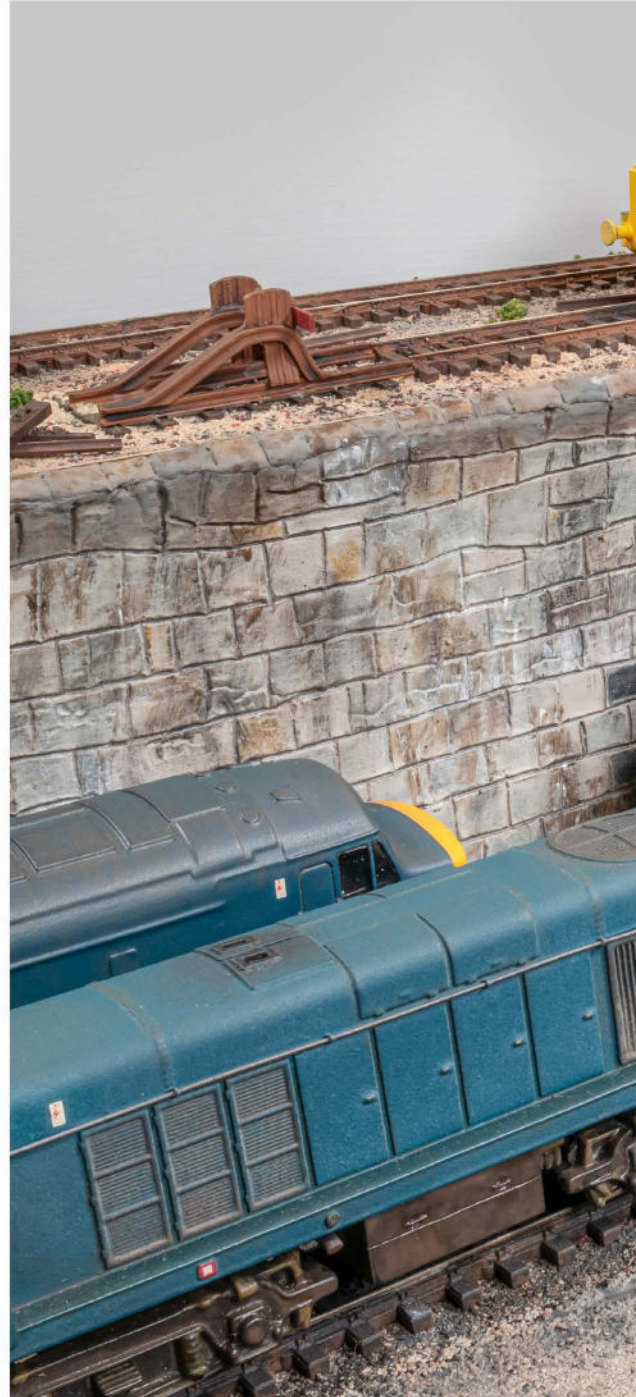
This was the excuse to finally produce something. "I bought two long and thin laser-cut baseboards from a company called Scale Model Scenery, which usefully fit into 22-litre boxes. I wanted the track to be in 14.2mm, which is our 'finescale', rather than 12mm, because I had some track that size, so I was using stuff I already had. In the day, Tri-ang produced some very good Presflo bodies; the society had sold some suitable chassis too, so I had those as well."

Ballasting of the track was done with 'N' gauge ballast and Deluxe Materials ballast bond. To represent cemented-over areas, DAS modelling clay was used, pushed between the sleepers, then painted with a mixture of white, yellow, brown and cement shades. "I think it looks effective, but I do keep returning and adding another coat here and there," says Martin.

"The Class 25 is a Lincoln Locos model, which I painted and completed. There are a couple of BR 'Vanwide' wagons, which are our own kits from the society. The pre-fab office is from MS Models, and the cement silo is a cut-down 4mm Bachmann Scenecraft model, which just looks right. Items like the cement bags, pallets and fencing are all 3D-printed. I was trying to show people that you could go and buy things rather than having to make them. The actual low-relief store shed, I did make that, but I used a Ratio provender store made over 40 years ago as a template, so it's a reduced version of that."

The signal box was made by Martin's late father, Peter, who was also a very good modeller and aficionado of 'TT'. "He specialised in buildings, the box he made for somebody, and it ended up coming back into the society shop. So I said 'Yes please', and it's on there as a nod to my father. The other thing he made that's on there is a level crossing gate."

**ABOVE** The 'Vanwides' on 'Blue Diamond Cement' are kits from the 3mm Society, while the signal box by the bridge was made many years ago by Peter's late father.



**BELOW** Starting life as a bare split-level board simply for displaying stock, 'Crate Lane' was reworked into a station and depot diorama by society member Dave Bates.



Most of the scenery is proprietary static grass. "It's all very basic, with analogue operation and the points operated by a wiring tube, with a double-pole, double-throw switch at the other end; you just push it back and forward.

"When people have seen it personally, they've said they thought it was going to be a lot bigger. The visible bit is 43in by 8.3in – the fiddlyard adds on another 22in. Obviously, the layout doesn't allow the opportunity to run long trains, just a locomotive and a few wagons, but it's easily transportable, and it was something I was able to finish. I just use it as a little layout at home now."

## CRATE LANE

To borrow an advertising phrase, 'Crate Lane' does exactly what it says on the tin – an unpowered micro-layout (or more accurately diorama, as it is unpowered) measuring 21in by 12in, that can be easily

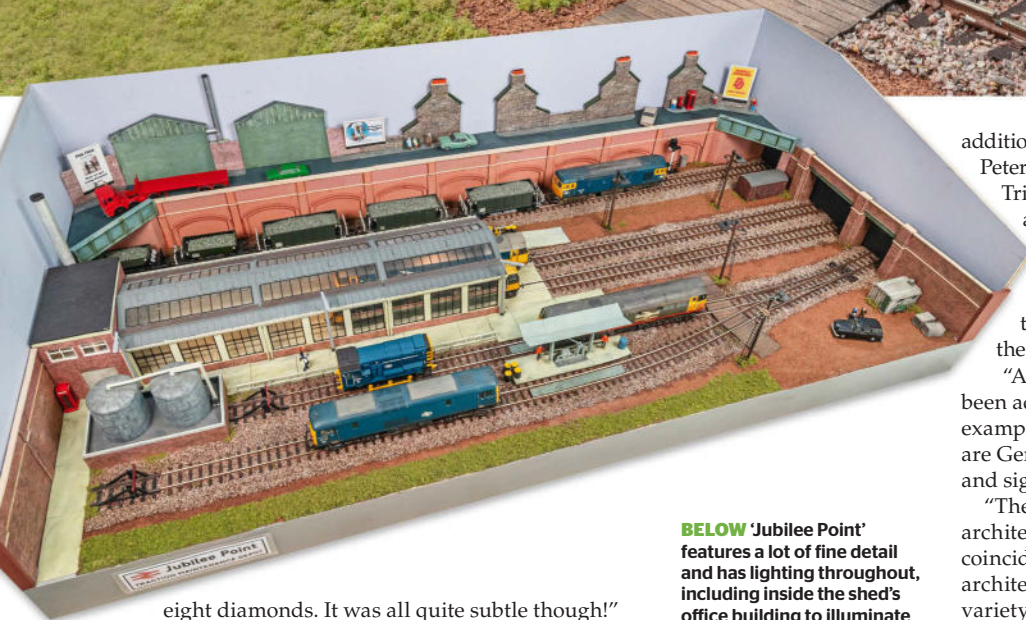


stored in a crate or similar container. Based on foamboard construction, it was originally purely a two-level stock display board but now incorporates a section of double track running line and a partial island platform, with sidings and a maintenance shed in relief on the lower level. The core era displayed is blue diesels, circa 1975 to 1981.

"The traction and rolling stock are not available as proprietary RTR," says its creator, Dave Bates. "They're a mixture of either 3D-print, resin-cast kits or 3mm Society-sourced plastic kits – the Diesel Parcels Unit, for example, features Worsley Works sides on a Tri-ang diesel multiple unit chassis. The scenics and structures are all scratchbuilt." When 'Crate Lane' was displayed at the society's 2025 AGM, "the diamonds were represented by a Class 47 locomotive that was part of the rolling stock display.

"The bogie equalising beams are of an elongated diamond shape, meaning there were no fewer than ▶





eight diamonds. It was all quite subtle though!" "Primarily, it's a display," says Martin. "Dave is an excellent modeller and takes it along to where we have our society stands, as a nice way of showing what we do. Historically, we're probably seen by some as a society for steam modellers, and we're trying to bring that more up-to-date."

## JUBILEE POINT

The 3mm Society member behind 'Jubilee Point' is Peter Bennett. Having amassed a collection of BR blue period diesels over 25 years, the maintenance shed is a nostalgic reflection of Peter's days as a trainspotter, covering the years 1968 to 1990.

"From the outset, the diorama was built with a functional modular concept in mind so that at a future point it can be extended to be part of a larger layout with

additional modules being added on either side," explains Peter. "The shed is based on three original 1960s Tri-ang TT diesel depot buildings that were adapted and spliced together with a scratchbuilt office block added at the end. Other structures were also scratchbuilt using a variety of odds and ends picked up over the years on the basis that they might come in useful one day. Necessity is the mother of invention for 3mm scale modellers..."

"As is typical with modelling in 3mm, much has been adapted from other scales," continues Peter. "For example, the rear retaining walls and barrow crossing are German 'TT:120' laser-cut kits, and the yard lights and signal have been cut down from 'OO' Eckon kits.

"The figures and some of the fittings are from architectural model maker suppliers, as, by happy coincidence, 1:100 is a mainstream scale for architectural modelling as well as wargaming, and the variety of 3D-printed offerings is ever increasing." This is something that bodes well for the future of 3mm.

**BELOW** 'Jubilee Point' features a lot of fine detail and has lighting throughout, including inside the shed's office building to illuminate its fully modelled interior.





The layout name refers to the society's diamond jubilee, and in addition, contains five diamonds. Most of them are quite obvious; the final one is a bit trickier to locate, according to Peter. "Four appear on the advertising hoardings: *Shine On You Crazy Diamond* by Pink Floyd, the Sean Connery 007 film *Diamonds Are Forever* and Double Diamond beer – which, of course, counts as two. The fifth takes some people longer to find, as it is on the signal post indicating that the signal is Rule 55-exempt."

Measuring 32in by 17in, Jubilee Point is about to quadruple in size, with Peter now working on extra modules. "It's very much a slow-burn project, although I would like to get the initial stage completed for the 3mm Society AGM in 2026."

"I think that epitomises what a 3mm model is," says Martin. "We are very innovative when it comes to doing stuff, we'll take something, and we will amend it; cut it up, do something different from what it was intended for. Many of the structures have been scratchbuilt using a variety of odds and ends."

## TTEAM RED

Inspired by Tees Yard wagon repair depot, but still a "geographic nomad", 'TTeam Red' is another micro-layout by Dave Bates, with a plywood base and hardboard backscene running into a fiddle area serviced by cassettes. With the fiddle areas in place, it measures 44in by 11in; the scenic area spans 27in. Control is analogue with switched isolating feeds. "The big advantage of it is that it can be used as a canvas to run and display traction and rolling stock from a wide area. It features a rail-served diesel fuel storage area, a diesel locomotive fuelling point and service check inspection berth, together with a wagon repair shed and jacking pad for wheelset changes. The far distance is represented by Gaugemaster's industrial photo backscene, albeit in 'N' gauge.

'TTeam Red' was initially conceived and built as a home for Dave's small 'TT:120' collection. However, while it was being put together, he decided to factor in an extra level of practicality. "During construction, I popped some 'TT' 3mm stock on the layout; it looked great, so I decided to ensure structure clearance provision would be built in to enable different scale roster flip flops could take place.


"The scenic structures and concrete ground cover are mostly scratchbuilt, with a lot of the detail and clutter being proprietary 3D print items from West Hill Wagon Works. The 3mm traction and rolling stock are a mixture of 3D print or resin-cast kits, or 3mm society-sourced plastic kits." The EWS Class 31 features a Lincoln Locos body mounted on Tri-ang Class 31 bogies. Its DB-liveried Class 66 companion is the 3mm Society's specially commissioned anniversary model.



**ABOVE** 'TTeam Red' was built by Dave Bates to be multi-scale, looking right for both modern 'TT:120' and more traditional 'TT' stock.

**BELOW** When displayed at the 3mm Society's Diamond Jubilee AGM, 'TTeam Red' was one of five dioramas to be presented with a guest judge special award.

As with some of the other jubilee layouts, the diamonds take a little searching out. "They're built into the infrastructure steel cross bracing, which is modelled on the inside walls of the wagon repair shed and the rear side of the diesel fuelling point shelter, which describes no less than nine diamond shapes."

Something that Dave is particularly proud of is the versatility of what he's put together. "The beauty of it is that both 1:120 scale and 1:100 scale can share layout infrastructure, and both be presented separately in a credible way. And that is the unique selling point of 'TTeam Red'. It's one layout, one gauge but two scales. I think of it as the layout that keeps on giving!" 



“ **What makes this layout great?** ”

Tom's own love of Cornwall shines through with 'Polbream' which, despite its diminutive dimensions, captures so well a quiet and sleepy little West Country railway location. The curved backdrop and enclosure really help to focus the attention of the viewer on a scene that's full of countryside charm and character.



# A GOOD THING IN A SMALL PACKAGE



Inspired by the 'Polbrook' layout of *Model Rail*'s own Chris Nevard, **Tom Lloyd's** 'Polbream' layout is a masterclass in magicking up a miniature marvel.

Words: **Richard Gunn** Photography: **Chris Nevard & Tom Lloyd**

**M**any 'N' gauge modellers choose a smaller scale because it allows them to fit so much more into a limited amount of room, with sprawling main line stations, busy street scenes, multiple lines and prototypically long trains. Not so Tom Lloyd. A keen 2mm modeller since boyhood, he's fond of going the other way – building layouts that are tiny in size but big on detail. "Because of lack of space, money and often patience, I've always done quite small, compact micro scenes," he says. "Quite a lot have been inspired by Cornish locations... that sort of bucolic view of a Class 08 wending its way through trees and a pastoral landscape. I've always had this thing that the model railways I make, I'd love to be able to visit them myself."

However, for his current 'Polbreem' creation, there was another influence – *Model Rail's* own Chris Nevard. "I'd hit a patch of having no real inspiration; the dreaded blank piece of plywood. Then I was looking through the 2019 issue of *Model Rail's How to Build a Model Railway* Volume 7 bookazine and saw Chris Nevard's piece on ▶

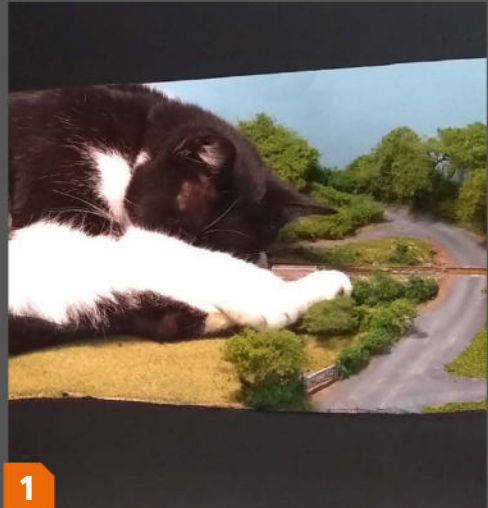
**RIGHT** The corrugated iron store building with the Land Rover parked alongside is Tom's favourite part of the layout. "That was satisfying because it came together really well."

**BELOW** Most rolling stock is Graham Farish, Dapol, Peco, Revolution, Sonic etc, but there are a few kits. Says Tom: "I do love engineers' stock, my civil engineering department has far more wagons, relatively speaking, than the real railway would have had in the area."



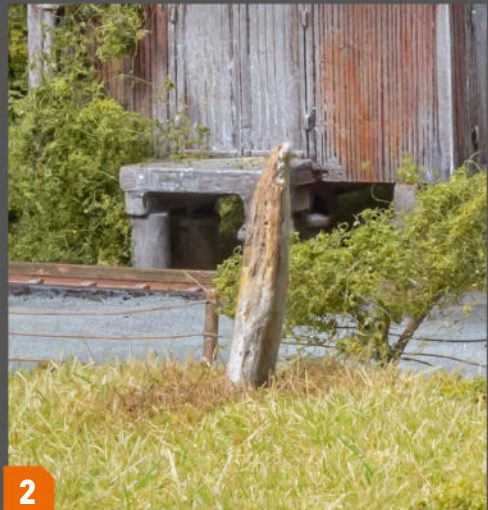


# 3 things we like



1

Monty the cat also appreciates the layout as a comfy bed. There's a Class 50 underneath him.



2

'The Old Man of Polbream' – the field standing stone. Is it neolithic or was it put there by a farmer?



3

The mum and her small child, waving at passing trains. There's no guarantee they're there to travel.





his 'Polbrook' layout, a little Cornish backwater. I thought I'd try something similar in 'N'. It's not a straight copy, but the location of the station and the curved siding are broadly the same. And it prompted me to try several different things I hadn't done before: a curved backscene, which was a bit of a challenge, and boxing a layout in. So it was a bit of a leap forward for me in that respect." Further inspiration came from the modelling blog of James Hilton. Tom's opinion is that "a lot of what he does in 'N' gauge is miraculous. It's very small, very compact and very manageable."

'Polbrook' was initially planned as the first of several different Cornish branch line modules which could be easily plugged together, using Kato Unitrack. This comes ready-ballasted, albeit perhaps a little less convincingly than most modellers might prefer. But for

Tom, this was just a starting point. "I weathered the track using Humbrol brown aerosol, then dry-brushed the sleepers an off-grey colour. I also used Cornish builders' sand, which is grey, not yellow, and mixed that, roughly, two parts sand to one part Gaugemaster granite ballast, to match the ballast shoulder on the Kato track and give it a slightly gentler edge."

For the gently descending siding by the station, Tom further disguised the Kato track by giving it a little-used, overgrown look. "With sectional track, I find the joints are the tricky bit. It works better if you're doing a weedy track; I spend ages with static grass and things, and little blobs of glue and my ballast mix, to blend the whole together. It's quite easy to disguise Kato track, although the rail does look a little chunky in some of the photos." ➤



**LEFT** The Ferguson tractor is from Oxford Diecast, but Tom modified it by chopping off the axle casting and gluing the wheels back a little closer in. "It seemed too bulky otherwise: 'Fergies' are quite delicate-looking tractors." The equine occupant of the field is a reference to the donkey that Tom and his wife Becky sponsor at a local sanctuary.

## BODMIN-BASED

Having been a volunteer at the Bodmin & Wenford Steam Railway, Tom loosely based 'Polbream' on the line to Wenfordbridge. "But it's also a sort of imaginary place that I retreat to now and again. Because of my job [palliative and end-of-life care], it's good to have a bit of an escape."

For the basic, tiny station, Tom looked at Cornish locations such as Coombe Junction and Bugle. "I was originally going to put a GWR 'pagoda' hut on the platform, but in the end I went for a Gaugemaster Kestrel Designs garden shed. I had one to hand from another layout, and just gave it quick lick of paint. It looks the part for somewhere you would expect to have the barest minimum of facilities. The platform is made out of foamboard while the surface is chinchilla dust, to represent gravel. The coping stones along the edge are very thin card. Everything was then dry-brushed and weeds and bits added."

There aren't a lot of other structures on the isolated, rural 'Polbream'. "The cottage by the level crossing is a Metcalfe kit that's been very heavily converted and carved up," says Tom. "I think it was originally the farm worker's cottage that came with

the Manor Farm set of buildings. Buildings are my bugbear; I'm not really patient enough to do them properly. But Metcalfe is good for experimenting on and adding bits to. To hide the other side of the crossing, there's a little barn scratchbuilt using Metcalfe card. The concrete lineside hut is Bachmann Scenecraft, which hides a clunky bit by the point that would be a little too obvious otherwise. And the little goods lock-up building by the siding is also Bachmann Scenecraft, but I completely resprayed and repainted it to give it a rusty roof. I can weather buildings far better than I can rolling stock. I use acrylic paint for all my weathering and painting; it dries quickly, and you get the right sort of effect."

The typically rough-and-ready countryside road surfaces were created using DAS modelling clay. "The main lane through the scene does sort of rise up and curves around to the back as well. So it's not just a sprayed piece of flat road. I used Tamiya textured grey road paint. I think it's got very fine sand in it. It's quite gloopy, but it gives you a real texture. I also drove one of the model tractors up and down before the clay dried, to put in wheel ruts.

"The trees are hydrangea flower heads; dried out, they make superb little tree armatures. I was using Woodland Scenics plastic tree armatures, and my wife said not only did they not look particularly realistic, but also why didn't I use something environmentally friendly to model part of the environment? I've also used heather as well, and various twigs and bits. I tend to go towards a grey ▶

“I've always had this thing that the model railways I make, I'd love to be able to visit them myself”







## FACTFILE: 'POLBREAM'

**Era:** Late 1980s/early 1990s

**Gauge and scale:** 2mm: 1ft, 'N' gauge

**Size:** 2ft by 1ft, with 1ft fiddleyard sections on each end

**Track:** Kato Unitrack

**Power and control:** Kato DC analogue

**Time to build:** Around six months



## ABOUT THE MODELLER: TOM LLOYD

Tom's mum modelled 'N' gauge, so introduced him to the scale. He's also tried US railroad modelling but Graham Farish's upgrade of its range brought him back to British outline. He's a keen walker, enjoys cold water swimming, reading nature books, and family life, with wife Becky very supportive of his railway hobby.


colour for tree branches, dry-brushed with a little white paint to bring the texture and definition out. Heads are then dipped in flock. I've used a spray adhesive, but for trees with a bit more density, I use a tacky or PVA glue."

One unusual feature dominates the centre of the

**ABOVE** A Graham Farish Class 101 DMU in Regional Railways livery caters for most of the passenger services on the line.

field. "There's a standing stone in the front meadow. In Cornwall, they're quite common; farmers used to put a chunk of granite up for cattle to scratch against. It's something I've never seen on another layout. But I've called it 'The Old Man of Polbream' to give it a sort of ancient Norse/Celtic aura as well. It's a piece of slate that I picked up on the coast when I was walking in Cornwall; that meant there was a natural tone there already."

For the future, Tom plans to at last begin adding modules, to create more of the Cornish branch line he originally conceived 'Polbream' to be part of. A china clay facility will probably be the next piece in the jigsaw. But whatever transpires, knowing Tom's instinctive love of scenery and detail, it will, like 'Polbream', no doubt also be small but beautifully formed.

Tom would like to thank Wayne Sharrocks of Camborne Railway Modelling Group; when Chris Nevard photographed one of Wayne's layouts, Tom brought 'Polbream' along to show Chris as well. "I sort of gatecrashed the photo session because I was proud of what I'd built, inspired by Chris, and wanted him to see it. Luckily, he liked it so much he photographed it too!" 



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# Reviews

In-depth and unbiased reviews of the latest products

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## 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.



# Rapido Andrew Barclay Fireless 0-4-0

◆ GAUGE 'OO' ◆ MODEL Rapido Trains UK Andrew Barclay Fireless 0-4-0 No. 1952 Shell Mex yellow ◆ PRICE £139.95 (DCC-ready), £249.95 (DCC sound)

◆ AVAILABILITY Rapido Trains UK stockists **Web** [www.rapidotrains.co.uk](http://www.rapidotrains.co.uk)

**F**ireless locomotives have been overlooked by many enthusiasts, despite the sterling work they performed for almost a century across a host of industries. With examples continuing in use into the 1990s, they perhaps deserve a higher profile, especially in modelling terms.

With kits having been the only means of portraying them in miniature, Rapido's new fireless 0-4-0 is a hugely welcome arrival, one that may precipitate greater interest in these curious little machines.

Based on one of the most numerous 0-4-0F designs from the Andrew Barclay stable, often referred to as 'Caledonians' after the workshop in which they were built, Rapido's model is available in 11 different identities. Ten examples are based on authentic examples, offered in some highly attractive industrial liveries, while the 'extra' option is one of Rapido's more light-hearted offerings, depicting a locomotive operated by G. Fawkes fireworks company.

Under review here, we have Andrew Barclay Works No. 1952 in the striking yellow of Shell Mex. With its black cladding bands, it gives the locomotive the appearance of a bumblebee, which is apt, given how 'busy' it looks while pootling around. The scale 3ft diameter wheels and 5ft 6in wheelbase certainly puts the model in the 'cute' category.

### NO SMOKE, NO FIRE

Presented in Rapido's usual foam-lined packaging, complete with an informative handbook, the model has clearly been crafted to a high standard. The paint finish is impressive and, mirroring the real thing, there's not a whole lot of fiddly pipes and detail fittings. However, everything that should be there

has been rendered neatly with finesse, including the wire handrails, etched footsteps, steam filling nozzle and valve, safety valve and warning bell.

The cab interior is also fully detailed, although the controls are minimal compared to a proper steam engine. And there's no firebox glow effect, obviously! I was struck by the neatness of the plug-fitting glazing panels at both ends of the cab, which are impressive and avoid any untidy extra material (and visible glue bonds) being visible on the inside. All it needs is a driver figure to finish it off.

While the cab body is plastic, the reservoir tank is cast metal, as is the running plate (with lifelike chequerplate upper face) and chassis block. Accordingly, there's a good amount of weight to this tiny locomotive that fits easily within the palm of a hand.

The buffers are un-sprung and slimline tension lock couplers are pre-installed into NEM

pockets at each end, both of which pivot freely to help when shunting wagons around tight curves (first radius curves can be tackled with ease).

Below the running plate, the metal piston rods, slide bars and coupling rods (complete with crankpin keys) look fantastic, as do the spoked wheels with balance weights and brake gear. The large apertures on each side



of the chassis frames allow the cosmetic inside valve gear to be seen, and avoid an overly 'blocky' appearance to the chassis.

### MAKING IT GO

Internally, there's a compact, coreless motor within the reservoir tank area that powers the rear axle via a series of gears. A brass flywheel is incorporated to optimise smooth running and there's a bank of capacitors

visible on the circuit board, which presumably provide a form of 'stay alive' function. For a locomotive with such a short wheelbase, even with all four wheels collecting track current (via tiny plunger-type pick-ups), any help with providing continuity while navigating points, crossings and baseboard joints is welcome.

Indeed, under test, our sample performed admirably well after the proscribed running-in period.



“The large apertures on each side of the frames allow the cosmetic inside valve gear to be seen and avoid an overly 'blocky' appearance to the chassis”

## 3 things we like



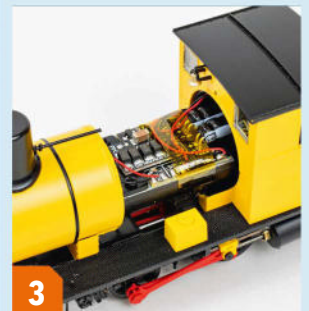
1

Convincing re-creation of the inside valve gear.



2

Detail bag provides etched numberplates, lamps and various cab shutters.



3

Remove a screw and slide the steam reservoir open to reveal DCC socket.

# Reviews

## Rapido Andrew Barclay Fireless 0-4-0 - in detail



### Factfile: Andrew Barclay Fireless 0-4-0

While steam locomotives proved to be an ideal source of traction in many industrial settings, there were instances where the presence of a fire and the creation of sparks and hot ash presented a hazard.

Paper mills, chemical works, oil refineries and, especially, munitions factories are prime examples, leading locomotive engineers to explore other options. At a time when the internal combustion engine was still in its infancy (particularly in rail applications), the fireless steam locomotive provided the answer.

Consisting of a large, mobile steam reservoir, carried on a traditional steam locomotive chassis with pistons and valves, the 'fuel' of high-pressure steam and water would be taken on board from lineside apparatus. Fully charged, the locomotive could operate for several hours. Indeed, as the steam was sent to the pistons, the pressure within the reservoir would drop, causing the water to boil, thus replenishing the supply of steam.

In most cases, the cylinders would be placed at the rear (cab) end of the locomotive, to help distribute weight and, although resembling the basic outline of a conventional steam locomotive, there was no need for a chimney, external water tanks or bunker.

Examples of fireless locomotives were designed and built by several well-known locomotive builders including R&W

Built by Andrew Barclay in 1942 (Works No. 2126) for Castle Mead Power Station in Gloucestershire, the ex-CEGB No. 1 survives in preservation at the Vale of Berkeley Railway, after previously being displayed at the British Waterways Museum. A replica of this 0-4-0F is in the Rapido range.  
ROGER WASLEY

Hawthorn, Leslie & Co., Peckett & Sons, W.G. Bagnall & Co., and Andrew Barclay, in 0-4-0 and 0-6-0 form.

Andrew Barclay proved to be the most prolific British builder of fireless locomotives, turning out 114 examples between 1913 and 1961, to a variety of designs. Examples continued in industrial use into the 1990s, leading to several examples reaching preservation, including Andrew Barclay Imperial No. 1 (built in 1956) which is part of the National Collection and currently on display at Locomotion, Shildon.

Look out for an in-depth look at fireless locomotives in the May issue of *Model Rail*, on sale April 9.



The mechanism is quiet and smooth, with excellent slow-speed performance and I didn't experience any problems over my Peco trackwork. Testing was performed in analogue form only, but those wishing to install DCC (DCC sound-fitted versions are available) can access the ESU E24 interface by removing a single screw and sliding the reservoir tank away from the cab.

In terms of haulage capability, the sample had no problems hauling or propelling ten twin-axle wagons over flat track and around second radius curves, which is ample for such a diminutive locomotive.

In terms of optional extra details, a comprehensive bag is provided, including different types of cab doors and side shutters, different headlamps and a set of etched builders plates. There are no three-link couplings, however.

As mentioned, the finish has been applied to a high standard, making for an overall feeling of quality, which makes the pricing for these models extremely attractive. I'm sure many of us will find reasons to justify the presence of one of these little beauties on our layouts, and they certainly make for something that little bit different. Indeed, with some of Rapido's versions representing fireless locomotives that worked deep into the BR diesel era, this is by no means a model aimed solely at steam buffs.

Furthermore, representing the lineside apparatus to support a fireless locomotive or two would make for an interesting modelling project. I wonder if we'll see some 3D-printed bits and pieces appearing soon...?

Rapido's team has done a great job of devising and manufacturing this fascinating little model to such a high standard. (GD)

## SUMMARY

### PROS

- Looks great.
- Faithful re-creation.
- Runs sweetly.
- Characterful prototype.
- Great value.

### CONS

- Nothing.

## FINAL VERDICT

Fabulous!



## VITAL STATISTICS: RAPIDO ANDREW BARCLAY FIRELESS 0-4-0

### OVERVIEW

**Manufacturer:** Rapido Trains UK  
**Ref. No.** 965004  
**Unit No.** 1952  
**Scale/gauge:** 1:76 scale, 'OO' gauge  
**Body:** Metal/plastic  
**Chassis:** Metal with plastic parts  
**Weight:** 105g  
**Min. curve radius:** 371mm (first radius)  
**Wheel back-to-back:** 14.4mm

### DIMENSIONS

Length (over buffers) 19ft 9in  
 Height 12ft 0in  
 Width 8ft 0in  
 Wheel diameter 3ft 0in  
 Wheelbase 5ft 6in

### PROTOTYPE

19ft 9in  
 12ft 0in  
 8ft 0in  
 3ft 0in  
 5ft 6in

### 1:76 SCALE

80mm  
 48mm  
 32mm  
 12mm  
 22mm

### MODEL

80mm  
 48mm  
 32.5mm  
 12mm  
 22mm

### ELECTRICS

**Electrical system:** 12V DC two-rail  
**Motor type:** Coreless  
**Lights:** No  
**DCC-ready?** ESU E24 socket

### MECHANISM

**Drive system:** Motor drives rear axle via gears  
**Flywheel(s):** Yes  
**Traction tyres:** No

### SERVICING

**How to dismantle:** Body unscrews from chassis  
**Where to oil:** Gears – see instructions



## Bachmann BR Class 13

◆ GAUGE '00' ◆ MODEL Bachmann Branchline 35-945 BR Class 13 D4502, BR green with 'wasp' stripes ◆ PRICE £399.95-£569.95  
 ◆ AVAILABILITY Bachmann stockists **Web** [www.bachmann.co.uk](http://www.bachmann.co.uk)

I was wowed by Bachmann's all-new, super-detailed Class 08, which arrived last year. Re-tooled from the rails up, it's a more than worthy successor to the manufacturer's previous model, which dated back to the early 2000s.

Bachmann's new tooling allows for a greater array of detail differences to be portrayed across the huge Class 08 fleet, along with the Class 09 variant. What none of us expected, however, was that the design team also had the fascinating Class 13 'super shunters' in their sights.

Having never been offered in ready-to-run form before, conversion kits or scratchbuilding (and more recently 3D printing) have been the only routes to owning one. Indeed, I recall picking up a set of cast and etched metal parts to convert a Lima '08' in the 1980s, but I never did pluck up the courage to do the work.

Only three Class 13s were created in the mid-1960s, converted from six standard '08s' into coupled pairs, each being operated by a single driver. Built expressly to operate the hump

marshalling yard at Tinsley, the unique trio worked in this one location for 20 years and carried only two basic liveries. On paper, it's not the most compelling subject for a commercial model, but 13 is, finally, a lucky number for the legion of modellers and enthusiasts with a fascination for these characterful locomotives.

### MASTERFUL MODEL

In this first production run, Bachmann has replicated two Class 13s, D4502 in BR green with

'wasp' stripes (as it appeared in the late 1960s after the radiator access steps had been removed) plus 13003 in Rail blue to cover the 1974-1985 period.

Each model is available in Bachmann's now-common triumvirate of DCC-ready, DCC sound and DCC sound deluxe formats. The Deluxe option is only £30 more than the regular sound-fitted version but comes with Bachmann's DCC-operated auto-release tension lock couplings, which are a real boon for a shunting locomotive like this.

It's also worth noting that both DCC sound-equipped versions feature separate decoders, and a speaker is fitted in each unit as standard. The 'master' locomotive is fitted with a Zimo sound chip, which drives the speakers in both units via a flexible electrical connector, with a standard decoder fitted to the 'slave' unit to control the motor and lighting. Both decoders are set to the same address.





“ Each of the key modifications carried out to both elements of the ‘Master and Slave’ ensemble have been replicated, not least the enlarged, heavy-duty headstocks installed at each end of both units ”



Talking of DCC, like the new ‘08’, the Class 13 also features lift-off bonnet roof panels to allow easy access to the decoder sockets, along with the banks of switches that allow analogue users to control the lighting functions.

With so much of the ‘13’ sharing the same specification as the ‘08’, I don’t want to repeat too much from my original review (see the August 2025 issue). That said, it’s

worth reiterating just how impressive the exterior detail is, with so many aspects of the model being well observed and executed. Furthermore, the profile and scale dimensions have been replicated faithfully. The cab interior is also fully appointed, which can be appreciated fully thanks to the LED in the ceiling (which can be toggled off if desired). All that’s lacking is a driver.

Each of the key modifications carried out to both elements of the ‘Master and Slave’ ensemble has been replicated, not least the enlarged, heavy-duty headstocks installed at each end of both units. The scale thickness is accurate, giving the locomotives a sense of real heft. The modified cab area of the ‘slave’ unit is faithfully rendered, with access panels complete with small wire grab handles, plus electrical conduit and handbrake stanchion. The revised handrail arrangement at the nose end is also correct.

Even the smaller details are present, with a small device on the side of the ‘slave’s’ header fuel tank (a shut-off valve, perhaps), plus an extra whistle and radio antenna on the ‘master’ cab front. Both nose ends are lacking the access ladders, with the addition of ground-level water filler pipes.

The two 0-6-0s are designed to be coupled nose-to-cab, which was the standard practice for most of the Class 13’s career. Articulation is provided by sprung, close-coupler NEM mounts at these ends, with a coupling bar provided. This bar is the same as supplied with Bachmann’s EMUs, but lacks the tiny electrical contacts hidden within. Instead, for those running on DCC, a small twin-wire power coupling also needs to be installed, which I found quite fiddly. Second radius curves can be tackled without issue. On a straight track, the gap between the gently sprung buffers is kept to a minimum.

Regular NEM coupler mounts are provided at the other ends of each unit, with each headstock featuring small cut-outs to allow them to operate. Optional blanking plugs are provided for all four headstocks, should you wish to display the model in its fully authentic state.

It’s also possible to marshal the duo in its original cab-to-cab formation, using tension lock couplings (or your own choice of NEM couplers), but there’s no facility for power transfer between the duo for sound operation.

Incidentally, there’s no means of transmitting track current across both units, whichever way they’re coupled.

### SLAVE TO THE RHYTHM

Bachmann’s model can’t be faulted in the looks department, and testing proved that it was equally impressive on the rails. Running smoothly and surely

## 3 things we like



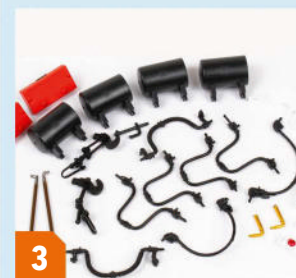
1

Appropriate details, such as heavy-duty headstocks, extra whistle and cab radio antenna.



2

The close-coupling system, which works effectively.



3

A comprehensive detailing kit is supplied with the model.

straight from the box, I did observe the recommended running-in period, after which the mechanisms became quieter and more responsive, with supreme slow-speed running. It proved a joy to watch the combo potter around the layout, with the motion of the coupling rods providing a hypnotic rhythm.

This package consists of two complete locomotives, with high-quality, flywheel-equipped motors in each unit. On analogue control, the power units remained happily in sync at all times, with no hint of one fighting against the other. The heavy die-cast metal chassis and the precision metal gears (and brass axle bearings) all combine to ▶



**Bachmann  
BR Class 13  
- in detail**

## Factfile: British Rail Class 13

Built in the 1960s, the mammoth marshalling yard at Tinsley, near Sheffield, required a small fleet of powerful shunting locomotives that could propel heavy freight trains over the steep hump, from which wagons would roll by gravity into sorting sidings. While a traditional Bo-Bo or Co-Co diesel would be prone to 'beaching' on the hump, a more flexible solution was demanded.

While pairs of Class 08 shunters were up to the job, the need to crew each locomotive would be uneconomical. Instead, British Railway's engineers came up with a simple plan to combine a pair of '08s' under the control of a single driver. Six standard '08s' were duly earmarked for conversion into a trio of 0-6-0+0-6-0s, with the cab being removed from one half of each pair, creating what became known as 'Master and Slave' locomotives.

Conversion work was undertaken at Darlington in 1965, with D4500-2 (later 13001-3) each boasting a power output of 700hp and tractive effort of 70,000lb. As part of the modification work, thick, heavy steel headstocks were installed at each end of both units, aiding adhesion and giving each duo a hefty, combined weight of 120 tons.

Initially, the twin units were marshalled with the cab of the 'Master' unit in the centre, but this was soon changed, as crews found running with the operational cab at the outer end gave better visibility.

The Class 13s were equipped with in-cab signalling and communication equipment, linking the driver to the controllers in the tower overlooking Tinsley Yard. The yard's fortunes began to decline less than a decade after opening and, by the 1980s, BR was moving away from labour-intensive wagonload traffic in favour of block trains. The hump and wagon control system was decommissioned in 1984, rendering the Class 13s redundant.

Although 13002 had been withdrawn and scrapped in 1981, the remaining pairs were officially withdrawn in early 1985, and both were stripped for spares and scrapped.

Apart from works visits to Doncaster and shuttling between Tinsley's diesel depot and yard, the '13s' did not stray from the locality. In later years, they took the odd starring role as guest traction on railtours to the area, cementing their popularity with enthusiasts. After all, there was nothing else quite like them on the BR network.



**1:** Initially, the Class 13 ensemble was coupled cab-to-cab, as modelled by newly converted D4502 at Tinsley Yard in 1965. COLOUR RAIL



**2:** The Class 13s offered an ideal traction solution to cope with the pronounced hump at Tinsley Yard, as demonstrated by 13001, posing for enthusiasts in June 1980. COLOUR RAIL



**3:** Following withdrawal, 13002 was moved to Swindon Works for component recovery and eventual scrapping. It is seen awaiting its fate in August 1982. COLOUR RAIL

provide extremely smooth running. There's a perceptible sense of inertia too, helped no doubt by the weight (over 400g) and the brass flywheels.

I also undertook tests after fitting a pair of Bachmann PluX22 DCC decoders (albeit not sound-equipped) and performance was equally fine, if not enhanced slightly, especially at crawling speed.

Some may dispute the need for each unit to be powered, and it's hard to know whether haulage capability and running quality would be anywhere near as good if the 'slave' featured a dummy chassis. But the 'power twin' arrangement is faithful to the prototype and offers plenty of muscle, allowing long rakes of freight and passenger stock to be hauled or propelled with ease.

The lighting operates well, with subtle light being emitted from the small lamps at the cab end of the 'master' unit and the nose end of the 'slave'. The tiny slide switches under the bonnet hood allow for the displays to be customised, including a shunting mode (one red and one white aspect at both ends).

## FINISHING UP

Bachmann continues to set the standards for livery application, with the Class 13 boasting a supreme finish. There's a deep lustre to the paintwork which exudes quality. In terms of sheen, the appearance is just the right side of satin, without looking overly shiny.

Correctly, only the 'master' unit carries BR totems, which are expertly printed with full opacity to the various colours. The same is also true for the numbers and tiny instructional

text along the running plates and the overhead line warning symbols.

The model comes with a comprehensive detailing kit, which provides a full suite of brake hoses and multiple working jumper cables, including some designed to fit between the 'master' and 'slave' units, being flexible enough to allow the models to run with them in place. Some of the mounting holes may need drilling or reaming to permit them to be installed however; they were a very tight fit on our sample. This was also the case with the optional drawhooks and screw couplings, the mounting lugs being much

too big for the socket in the headstocks.

Other extra details include a set of lamps (oil and battery types), shunter's poles, air tanks, infill panels for the headstocks (if removing the NEM couplers) and a pair of spare whistles.

These are certainly premium models, produced in limited numbers. There's no guarantee of when (or if) further production runs will be undertaken, so it's a case of grabbing one while you can. While we hear that sales have been healthy, many Bachmann dealers had them in stock at the time of writing, with some offering significant discounts (up to 20% off the RRP),

so it is definitely worth shopping around for a good deal.

The full retail prices are striking at first glance, but considering that this package is essentially a pair of standalone locomotives, and with the RRP of Bachmann's new '08' being just over £200 each, the '13' is actually pretty reasonable, especially given the high level of detail, fidelity, finish and performance. They certainly offer something unique and a change from the humdrum appearance of a typical shunter. I'm sure many of us will be citing the modeller's licence to justify adding a Class 13 to our collection. I've definitely got my eye on a Rail blue one... (GD)



## VITAL STATISTICS: BACHMANN BR CLASS 13 0-6-0 + 0-6-0

### OVERVIEW

**Manufacturer:** Bachmann Europe  
**Ref. No.** 35-945  
**Unit No.** D4502  
**Scale/gauge:** 1:76 scale, '00' gauge  
**Body:** Plastic with metal parts  
**Chassis:** Metal with plastic parts  
**Weight:** 411g  
**Min. curve radius:** 438mm (second radius)  
**Wheel back-to-back:** 14.3mm

### DIMENSIONS

Length (over buffers) 60ft 1in  
 Height 12ft 8<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>in  
 Width 8ft 6in  
 Wheel diameter 4ft 6in  
 Coupled wheelbase 11ft 6in+11ft 6in

### PROTOTYPE

241mm  
 51mm  
 34mm  
 18mm  
 46mm+46mm

### 1:76 SCALE

241mm  
 51mm  
 34mm  
 18mm  
 46mm+46mm

### MODEL

241mm  
 51mm  
 34mm  
 18mm  
 46mm+46mm

### ELECTRICS

**Electrical system:** 12V DC two-rail  
**Motor type:** 2x Five pole  
**Lights:** Directional/shunting lights, cab interior  
**DCC-ready?** 2x PluX22 interfaces, pre-fitted speakers

### MECHANISM

**Drive system:** Motor in each unit, driving rear coupled axles, via worm and gears  
**Flywheel(s):** Yes  
**Traction tyres:** No

### SERVICING

**How to dismantle:** Body unscrews from chassis  
**Where to oil:** Axles, crankpins - see instructions

## SUMMARY

### PROS

- Looks and fidelity.
- Attention to detail.
- Super-smooth performance.
- Top-notch finish.

### CONS

- Power connection fiddly.

## FINAL VERDICT

Hugely impressive - and a joy to have in RTR form at last.



# Hornby RailRoad Class 800 Azuma

◆ GAUGE 'OO' ◆ MODEL Hornby R30449 Hitachi IEP Class 800 driving car twin-pack (£149.99) • R40488 MS coach  
 • R40489 MC coach (£34.99 each) ◆ AVAILABILITY Hornby stockists [Web www.hornby.com](http://www.hornby.com)

One of the most arresting elements of Hornby's 2025 range launch, especially for those of us with an interest in contemporary trains, was the RailRoad Class 800. Offering a much more wallet-friendly version of Hornby's existing Hitachi IEPs, the first models arrived recently, and we were delighted to receive a LNER Azuma set.

The Class 800/2 bi-model variant is offered in a twin-pack of driving cars, plus individual MS and MC intermediate cars, all depicting LNER set 800201. A prototypical five-car set, therefore, can be assembled for just over £250 at full retail prices, which is around half the price of Hornby's main range, 'high-spec' version.

Excitingly, it's not just the LNER Class 800 that's available, with a similar suite of models also being turned out in GWR green. Additionally, the RailRoad Azuma is also offered in three-car formation as part of a train set (R1288M, £179.99), complete with oval of track, track mat and controller, which is sure to be a hit with younger modellers.

## WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

At first glance, thanks to the sleek appearance of the real thing, there aren't many obvious differences between the RailRoad and main range Azumas. However, to facilitate cost savings, there are significant changes which do become apparent the closer you look.

The packaging is much simplified and, from the outside, the most obvious economy measures can be seen on the rooftop of each car. There's greater use of moulded detail instead of individually installed components. Indeed, the pantographs may be separate fittings, but they're fixed in the lowered position. That said, they do look pretty good. In fact, the moulded detail across the

roof is generally good, and some careful painting and judicious use of weathering washes could really bring these areas to life.

The same goes for the underframes, with simplified bogie mouldings and the wheels boasting larger flange profiles to suit train set curves. The underslung equipment and panels also feature slightly less finesse than the more expensive Azuma. Again, in relative terms, everything still looks convincing, and everything is in the right place. Furthermore, the overall proportions have been scaled correctly, ensuring the Class 800 looks and character are 'spot on'.

The bodysides and outer nose ends feature crisply defined

panel seams and recessed doorways, with CCTV pods and door locking and control panels present. Once more, these are areas that would benefit from being picked out with appropriate paints. The flush glazing is neatly installed, and the correct windows are blanked out on the appropriate cars.

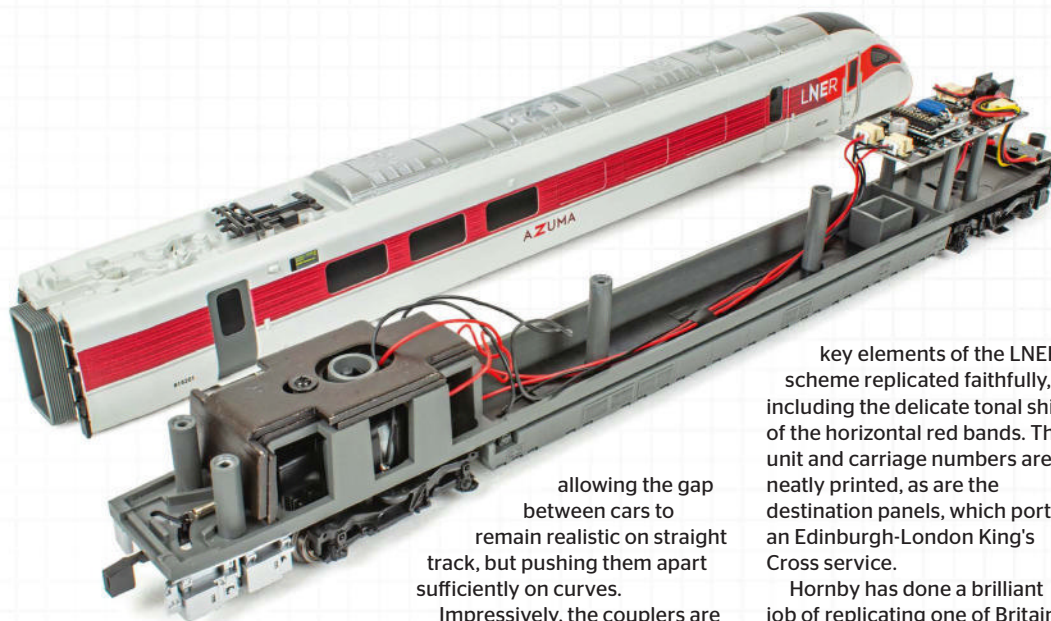
The glazing is heavily tinted, so the interiors can't be seen. In fact, the insides of the carriages are devoid of seats. Opening the powered driving car reveals a self-contained motor bogie at the 'inner' end, equipped with a stout three-pole motor which drives both axles via a series of nylon gears. The axle-mounted gears are fully exposed below the bogie frame, making lubrication easy but also leaving them exposed to dirt accumulation, so regular servicing is recommended.

Two layers of steel weights are mounted over the powered bogie to aid adhesion, which is also assisted by a pair of





“ Under test, our four-car unit ran very well, with each car being free-running and modestly weighted ”



allowing the gap between cars to remain realistic on straight track, but pushing them apart sufficiently on curves.

Impressively, the couplers are compatible with the Class 800 vehicles from the main range, so I added an extra 'high-spec' intermediate car to see how a full five-car set performed - which didn't cause any issues on flat track, nor on gentle changes of gradient.

The cheaper motor bogie does, understandably, lack the smoothness of more expensive power units, but it is still well up to its intended task.

Livery application, although simplified, is excellent, with the

key elements of the LNER scheme replicated faithfully, including the delicate tonal shifts of the horizontal red bands. The unit and carriage numbers are neatly printed, as are the destination panels, which portray an Edinburgh-London King's Cross service.

Hornby has done a brilliant job of replicating one of Britain's most ubiquitous present-day trains, especially given that this is a four-car set for such a modest price. It's perfect for beginners or anyone who is modelling on a budget. As I've hinted at, there's a great deal of potential for adding some simple upgrades, even straight from the box; it really looks the part.

With two popular liveries already in the bag, it will be interesting to see if Hornby offers more colour schemes in the future. (GD)

traction tyres on opposing wheels (a set of spares is also included). Track current is collected from all wheels on the powered car, but there is no power transfer between vehicles. The non-powered driving car also collects track current (wiper contacts employed throughout) to feed the directional head/tail light LEDs.

Both driving cars also feature 21-pin DCC sockets and ample space for speakers. For digital users, the unit can operate on a single DCC decoder, but adding a second allows for control of the lights (and sounds) at both ends. Hornby already offers a suitable sound profile for its Triplex Sound HM7000 Bluetooth decoders.

### A-ZOOMING ALONG

Under test, our four-car unit ran very well, with each car being free-running and modestly weighted. Sprung close-coupling units are fitted to the inner connections, with NEM pockets,



## 3 things we like



1

Effective close-coupling system.



2

Livery application, although simplified, is still impressive.



3

Pantograph is fixed in lowered position, but looks convincing at first glance.

### SUMMARY

#### PROS

- Looks the part.
- Runs smoothly.
- Close-coupling system works well.
- Great value option.

#### CONS

- Simplified specification - but that's the point!

### FINAL VERDICT

Fantastic!

“The large number of windows means that the interior is fully visible and, accordingly, lighting is fitted with a ‘stay alive’ capacitor in the analogue version to keep it on through short stops”



## Dapol GWR Dia. N Autocoach

◆ GAUGE ‘00’ ◆ MODEL Dapol GWR Diagram N Autocoach ◆ PRICE £80.00-£195.00 each ◆ AVAILABILITY Dapol stockists [Web www.dapol.co.uk](http://www.dapol.co.uk)

**B**ack in the 1960s, when I began modelling Western Region locations, one of my earliest requirements was a ‘14XX’ and an autocoach. The only readily available models were K’s kits, a small, under-powered

locomotive and a very heavy, cast whitemetal autocoach. Since then, we’ve had Dapol and later Hattons providing us with ready-to-run ‘14XX’ 0-4-2Ts and more modern, 1920s-30s autocoaches from Hornby and 1950s versions from

Bachmann. Now we have, from Dapol, a new 21st-century take on the Diagram N autocoach introduced in 1907. There were just six coaches to this particular diagram, but they represent the ‘classic’ timber-panelled

autocoach familiar from countless photographs - and that old K’s model.

The coach layout provided for a driving cab at one end, three passenger saloons, with a mix of conventional and inward-facing bench seats, an entrance vestibule with folding steps for low-platform halts, and a guard’s and luggage compartment.

The GWR’s push-pull system allowed the locomotive to be controlled from the remote cab by way of a mechanical linkage under the coach and up through the locomotive cab floor to the regulator. To enable two coaches to be used when





necessary, some autocoches were provided with Through Regulator Gear (TRG), which allowed the linkage to be connected to both vehicles and the locomotive. The friction and physical resistance in this mechanism made it very hard work and unpopular with crews.

As a consequence, pairs of autocoches were sometimes coupled as an 'engine sandwich' with a coach on either side of the locomotive. The 'downside' of this was that the driver was always driving from a carriage, never in the locomotive cab, but the 'upside' was that the TRG was easier to manipulate.

One example of a Diagram N autococh survives in preservation at the Telford Steam Railway.

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Well presented, in a stout card, lidded box with foam padding, Dapol's autococh immediately impresses. Seven livery versions are available, from original GWR Crimson Lake through versions of chocolate and cream to BR carmine and cream, plain carmine, and maroon. There are also basic analogue versions, DCC-fitted and DCC sound versions (autocoches had a gong, rung as a warning when the coach was leading).

I plumped for a DCC-fitted carmine and cream version, which forms the basis of this assessment, although George (who lives at the opposite end of the country) has photographed his crimson version to illustrate the review.

The large number of windows means that the interior is fully visible, and, accordingly, lighting is fitted with a stay-alive capacitor in the analogue version to keep it on through short stops.

On my DCC-fitted version, the lights are switched on and off with function 1 rather than the usual function 0, which controls the lights on my North American stock. The brightness of model lights is always a controversial subject, but in this coach, it looks just right.

A small bag of extras includes a dummy front coupling and TRG gear, which can be fitted to the cab-end bufferbeam if the tension-lock coupler and pivoted NEM coupler pocket are removed. A great deal of thought has clearly gone into this model. The interior seating unit could, perhaps, benefit from a bit more variation in the finish, but if you want to paint the seats and fit passengers, the roof is an easily removed clip-fit.

The cab end contains the handbrake standard and the regulator handle, the rather spartan equipment of the real thing. Modelu already offers a pack of digitally-printed crew and passengers to suit the model, which will finish off the interior nicely. My carmine and cream example is neatly finished with fine yellow and black lining separating the two colours.

The underframe is well detailed with the correct cast queen-post truss-rod arrangement, brake rodding, gas cylinders (for the lighting) and fully modelled leaf springs on the 8ft wheelbase American bogies.

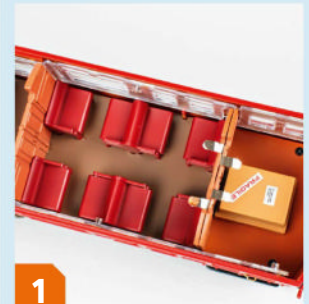
### ON TEST

Weighing just 141g (5oz), the autococh is not likely to tax any locomotive. I revived a Dapol limited edition '14XX', as No. 1401 for a *The Titfield Thunderbolt* anniversary long ago, to haul the autococh on test, but first I was in for a surprise. Despite my layout being nominally 'flat' as far as I'm aware, the autococh ran away the moment I put it on the track! Not since I first encountered a Trix 'whisky wagon' on a slightly sloping desk top have I had a model run off on its own during a test. The pinpoint axles running in metal bearings really are very free-running and would certainly assist haulage capacity - ironic, really, as the limit for autocoches coupled together was just two!

The DCC sound version (as distinct from the DCC-fitted version which just controls the lights) has functions including the guard's whistle, door slam, the warning gong, a bell and 'setting off sequences'. This model is a welcome addition to the range of GWR rolling stock and a coach with digital sound is certainly novel. (CJL)



## 3 things we like



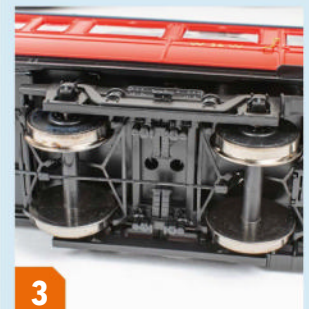
1

Easy-to-access interior, with painted furniture and a parcel in the guard's compartment.



2

Lots of separately installed details, such as handrails and emergency brake gear.



3

Detailed bogies with free-running wheels and metal axle bearings.

### SUMMARY

#### PROS

- Looks the part.
- Lighting works well.
- Quality paint finish.
- Extremely free-running.
- Very useful prototype.

#### CONS

- Not a lot.

### FINAL VERDICT

A hugely welcome addition.



## Heljan BR Class 33

◆ GAUGE 'OO' ◆ MODEL Heljan 3423 Class 33/0 33057, BR blue ◆ PRICE £199.00 (DCC-ready), £299.00 (DCC sound) ◆ AVAILABILITY Heljan stockists **Web** [www.heljan.co.uk](http://www.heljan.co.uk)

The latest 'OO' gauge Heljan diesel-outline model to receive a series of upgrades is the Class 33/0, with six new versions arriving with retailers at the start of 2026. As well as original BR green and a few different iterations of the classic Rail blue scheme, there are also

options in BR Engineer's grey and West Coast Railway Company maroon, all featuring period-specific details to suit each individual subject.

Under review here is 33057 in Rail blue, with a minor embellishment of silver-painted steps above each buffer, as seen

on the prototype in the late 1980s. The Class 33 has been a staple of Heljan's range for decades, but the existing tooling for the '33/0' was rolled out in 2020, having been enhanced significantly over previous offerings and allowing for post-1980 aspects to be replicated more faithfully.

However, to bring the product up to date, these latest releases feature a 21-pin DCC interface and improved LED lighting components (and greater functionality for DCC users), plus a pair of 15mm by 11mm 'sugar cube' speakers pre-installed within sound enclosures on all models. There's a DCC sound-fitted

option for all versions, available for the first time on the '33', with high-quality sound files created by Olivia's Trains.

The usual arrangement of a heavy-duty five-pole motor with twin flywheels and drive to all four axles remains, with the mechanism housed in a heavy die-cast metal chassis block, giving the humble Bo-Bo plenty of heft.

The tooling really captures the handsome appearance of the prototype well, with plenty of finesse to the moulded detail on the bodyside, bogies and underframe fittings. Etched radiator side and roof grilles are neatly installed, with a convincing wire mesh behind the separate outer frame for maximum realism. However, a few small areas of bare brass are visible, where the





“Another discernible upgrade over previous releases is the enhanced paint finish, which features a deeper lustre and an attractive semi-gloss sheen”

pre-painted parts have been cut from their frets during assembly.

I can't recall if previous releases featured the same level of interior detail to the cabs, but the various consoles and controls are picked out in appropriate colours, which are visible through the generous (and crystal clear) windscreens. A set of two-character headcodes is pre-fitted at each end, 'GE' and '77' on this particular model.

### QUALITY FEEL

Another discernible upgrade over previous releases is the enhanced paint finish, which features a deeper lustre and an attractive semi-gloss sheen (not too shiny, not too flat). As a result, the model has more of a quality look and feel to it. Furthermore, the paint shades look correct and are applied to a high standard, with the yellow ends being fully opaque with sharp edges. The printed numbers and logos are printed to a high standard, too, and tiny high-voltage warning symbols have been printed on the ETH jumper cables, which is a nice touch.

Most of the bufferbeam detail is supplied in the detail bag for customer fitting, if desired, with enough brake hoses and a pair of screw couplings for each end. A set of optional Southern Region style miniature snowploughs is also provided, which is apt, with images abounding of the real 33057 carrying 'ploughs, even in summertime!

Under test, our analogue '33' performed faultlessly, running smoothly and quietly from the box. I also borrowed a friend's DCC sound-fitted version and can attest to the sound profile's convincing range of tones and incidental effects, capturing the typical splutter of the Sulzer power unit well. While the output lacks the response created by a larger bass reflex speaker, it is by no means 'tinny'.

Accessing the interior to reach the DCC interface is simply a matter of unclipping the bodysell, with no fiddly wires to disconnect, which is

always a bonus. Care is needed to avoid damaging the light bars when removing the cabs to fit a crew, however.

This new batch of improved '33s' is a very welcome arrival, with these enduring diesels always proving popular with modellers of various regions and eras. (GD)



## 3 things we like



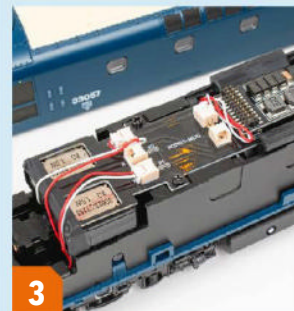
1

Etched rooftop and bodyside radiator grilles look good.



2

The paint finish is of a high quality, with correct shades.



3

Enhanced features including lighting and pre-installed speakers.

### SUMMARY

#### PROS

- Looks.
- Enhanced features.
- Quality finish.
- Performance

#### CONS

- Not a lot.

### FINAL VERDICT

A cracking new 'Crompton'.

## 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

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£152.10  
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MR-508 BR 12125, black, early crest



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



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



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

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- ◆ 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

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### Specification list

**Made by:**

Rapido Trains Inc.

**Motor:** Five-pole

**DCC socket:** Next18

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

**£149.00**

£134.10 price for Model Rail subscribers



### BR BLACK, EARLY CREST (PRISTINE)

- ◆ MR-301A: No. 1609
- ◆ MR-301C: No. 1624
- ◆ MR-301D: No. 1657
- ◆ MR-301F: No. 1658
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- ◆ MR-302A: No. 1646

LOW STOCK

### BR BLACK, EARLY CREST (WEATHERED)

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- ◆ 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

**£210.00**

£189.00 price for Model Rail subscribers

# Ruston 'PWM' 0-6-0DE

CHOOSE FROM EIGHT VERSIONS



## Specification list

- Made by:** Heljan
- Motor:** Coreless
- DCC socket:** Next18
- Features:**
  - Cab interior lights
  - NEM coupler pockets

**£169.00**

£152.10 price for Model Rail subscribers



**MR-403 PWM653**  
BR light green



**MR-405A PWM 97651**  
BR yellow



**MR-405B PWM 97652**  
BR yellow



**MR-404 PWM652**  
BR Rail blue



**MR-402 PWM651**  
BR green, 'wasp' ends



**MR-400A PWM651**  
BR green



**MR-400B PWM652**  
BR green



**MR-401 PWM654**  
BR green, 'wasp' ends

## LNER Sentinels - the latest batch



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

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

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

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

### Specifications

**Made by:** Dapol

**Motor:** Five-pole 'Super-Creep'

**DCC socket:** Eight-pin

**£99.00**

£89.10 price for Model Rail subscribers

## LNER 'J70'

### Specification list

**Made by:** Rapido  
Trains

**Motor:** Coreless

**DCC socket:** Six-pin

**Features:**

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- Space for speaker
- Removable cowcatchers
- Etched workplates

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lettering, no skirts

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## 'USA' 0-6-0T

### Specification list

**Made by:** Bachmann **Motor:** Three-pole

**DCC socket:** Six-pin

**Features:** • NEM coupler pockets • prototype-specific cab, bunker, smokebox and footstep details

**MR-107**  
**£124.95**

£112.46  
price for Model Rail subscribers

**ONE VERSION LEFT!**



**MR-107** No. 36,  
National Coal Board black

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OR 01209 705459**



### Specification list

**Made by:** Heljan

**Motor:** Five-pole

**DCC socket:** 21pin

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

## BR/BRUSH TYPE 4 CLASS 48

FOUR TO CHOOSE FROM

### What's available?

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- ◆ 4823 Class 48, D1703 BR two-tone green, full warning panels, weathered



**£230**

**£207.00**

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\* **Weathered versions**  
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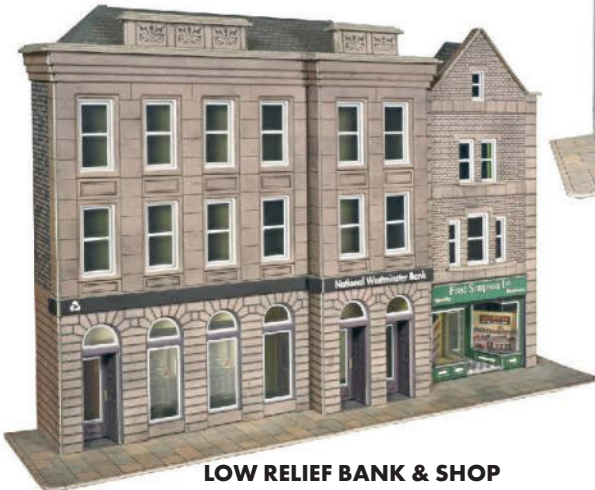
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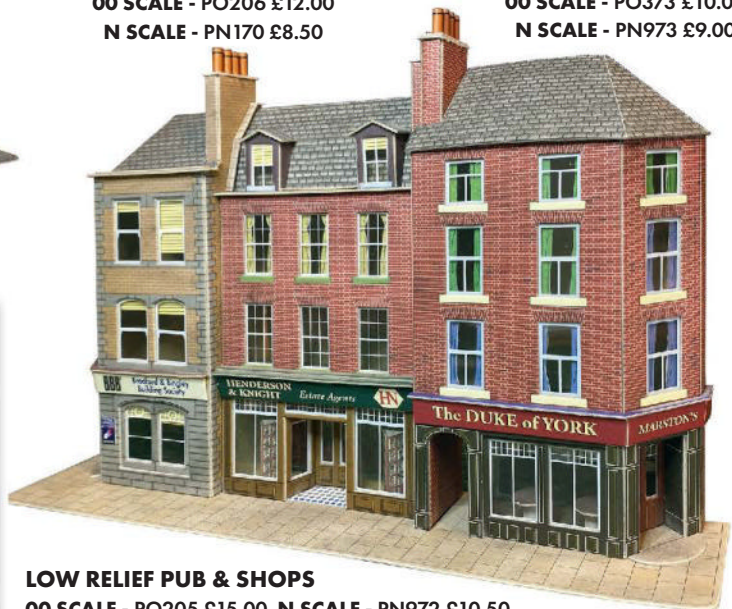
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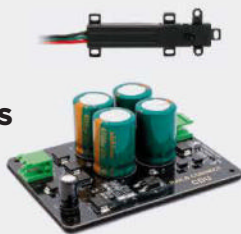


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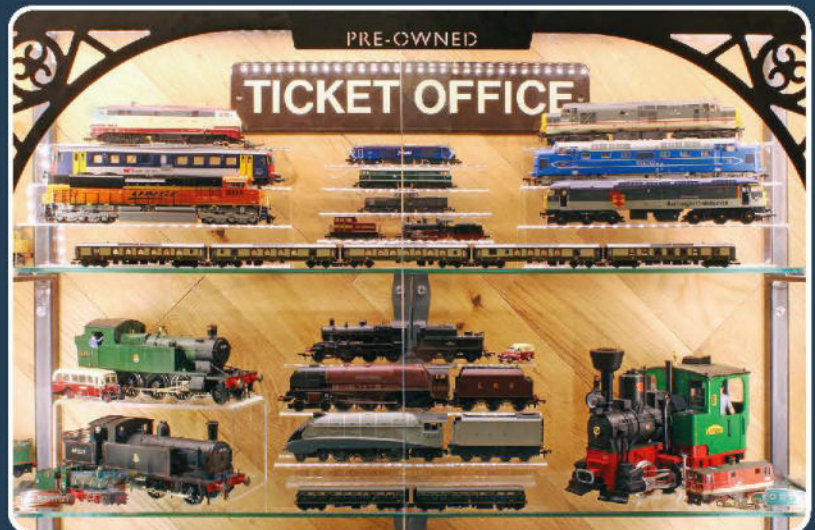
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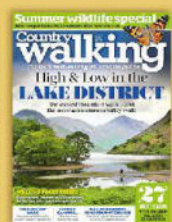
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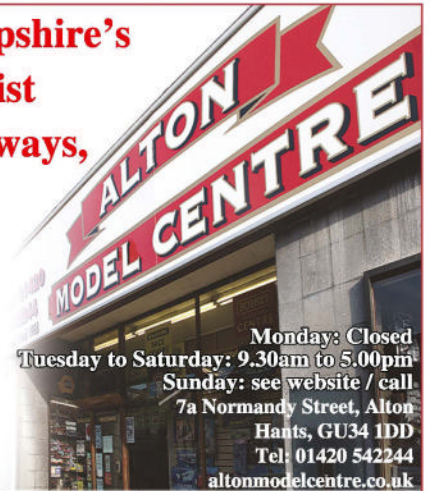
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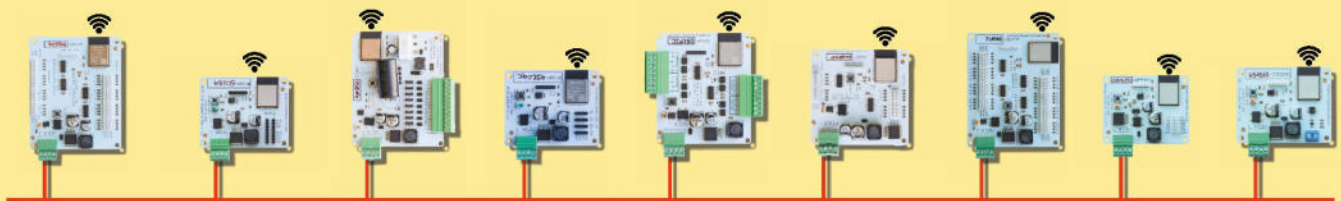
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# Backscene



Too much that's too specific? **CHRIS LEIGH** ponders the impact of modern product lines on retailers.

I've watched the model trade change dramatically over the past quarter-century.

The individual changes have been many, and they've been driven by a variety of factors. Let's just look at some:

- 1 The advancing age and passing of active modellers, leading to large amounts of secondhand models being available from relatives who are happy to get anything they can for 'grandad's old trains'.
- 2 Lack of demand for those old trains because they are mostly steam, and today's railway modelling novices grew up in the modern traction era.
- 3 The demise of cottage industry kit businesses due to the passing of proprietors and the decline in kit-building due to 1.
- 4 Changing production arrangements, which still require large production runs but now enable them to be subdivided to provide very small quantities of different detail and livery variations.
- 5 Ever more precise demand from customers for exact number/livery variants due to, or perhaps driving 4).
- 6 The rise in the number of newcomers who might once have been cottage industry kit manufacturers but who are now commissioning ready-to-run models direct from Chinese factories to get exactly what they want.
- 7 The advance in electronics, which requires models to be offered with pre-installed DCC/sound while still also being available in analog.

I don't intend those to be a comprehensive list of changes, but as I'm writing this at the very end of the first quarter of the 21st Century, I think it reflects just how substantial the change to our hobby has been in one quarter-century, compared to the whole of the 20th Century.

When considering new product proposals, the first question used to be, "Can we sell 5,000 of those?" Now, that 5,000 can be broken down into upwards of 20 variants. At first, it would be simply changing Tampo printing pads to apply



One proposed version of Heljan's 'TT' Class 122 has the two-character headcode panel painted over, when it shouldn't be there at all. A tooling change for one livery version probably wasn't cost-effective.

different numbers, but manufacturers have gradually become more flexible to include substantial changes to detail parts to cover specific variants. Production of a specific number/detail variant can be as low as 150 units. That's why some sell out very quickly. It's also why prices are higher than many modellers would wish.

It's a chicken-and-egg situation. Did demand for number/detail-specific models to high levels of accuracy, from today's modellers - who no longer build kits or kit-bash to get what they want - lead manufacturers to take the bold step of slicing up production runs? Or did the availability of a wide choice reinvigorate the market, albeit from a reduced number of railway modellers?

Now, with many mainstream locomotives - particularly steam outline - more than well covered by ready-to-run, I'm seeing some of these newer manufacturers spinning out production runs with 'nonsense' liveries or producing models of esoteric locomotives which don't stand a chance of selling out a full production run, however many liveries are offered. And all that is before we add a new scale ('TT:120') into the equation.

Back in the middle of the last century, my local model shops were tiny, dingy backstreet businesses selling metal kits, modelling materials, and little or no ready-to-run. It was, however, manageable. Today, in conversation with retailers, I'm told that they have to stock every version of every new model in case the one which the customer wants is the one they don't have. And that fear is driving them to tie up a huge amount of cash in stock to sit on shelves, some of which, I fear, will struggle to sell.

We've already seen 'anniversary' sets such as that for *Titfield Thunderbolt* now at knock-down prices because, once the anniversary was past, interest nose-dived. The same no doubt will afflict Railway200 anniversary models.

Time for the hobby to have a serious re-think?

The KR Models '4-DD' should have a driver's cab windscreen wiper. Its omission was a deal-breaker for one online commenter.



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