

THE MICRO MODEL RAILWAY DISPATCH

For the Micro Model Railway designer, builder and enthusiast



THE DISPATCH

For the Micro Model Railway layout designer, builder and enthusiast

Welcome Back!

Issue number one of **The Dispatch** is officially here!

It's fair to say that the preview issue was very well received. Well enough for me to put together this, the first official issue.

I like to think that with this issue, we are breaking the mould immediately by featuring 7/8ths scale micro layouts! I'm pretty sure Carl Arendt would be amazed if he were still with us.

These were the entrants in the 7/8ths scale Facebook group micro layout competition. 7/8ths is the largest of scales, so to fit an operating layout within the confines of a micro layout space shows great creativity and ingenuity by all entrants.

There are layouts from the more conventional scales to inspire you too. There's a couple of great box file layouts for you to remember, and/or see for the first time, and a sideways look at how to power your layout courtesy of Bob Hughes.

Ken Hutnik describes the construction of his sector plate for Queen's Quay. This sector plate is hidden inside a building and takes the place of vital point work. So efficient, consistent working is a must.

Back that up with projects on show in the gallery and I think you'll enjoy this official "first" issue.

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I look forward to hearing from you.

"Micro layouts are small model railroads, usually less than three or four square feet in area that nonetheless have a clear purpose and excellent operating capability."

Carl Arendt

7/8ths micro competition

Chris Stockdale

A 7/8ths scale or larger micro layout competition?

Are you mad?

The above might have been a reasonable response to my idea, but bear with me a bit and I'll explain further...

Excuse 1

Since micros can exclude the space used for a fiddle yard I reckoned that Carl Arendt's 'four square feet' of actually modelled railway might make for a feasible something, even in 7/8ths scale.

For example, our late friend Andy Anderson had long visualised the simplest of layouts, consisting of nothing more than a piece of straight track that a tiny loco and wagons would shuffle to and from on through various shale oil processes. It was called a 'Tramway to Cuddle' (yes, a real place) and there's more you can read about this on Ian Holmes' <https://atributetocuddle.blogspot.com>.

Excuse 2

Around the world people were holed up thanks to a certain pesky virus, 'Why not,' I reasoned, 'grab the imagination and energy of this captive

audience and get them to build something to while away the lockdown hours?'

Lastly - and this is where I must own up to having been a management consultant, a profession where so called 'out of the box' thinking is supposed to be highly prevalent - there were no rules about height, shape of the nominal four square feet or track gauge. That final thought left options wide open for depictions of garden railways as 7/8ths scale on 00 track scales up to 8.9", and 1/12 scale on the same track is equivalent to 7.8", neither of which is a million miles away from the more typically used 10 1/4" and 7 1/4" gauges. I duly cobbled together some straightforward 'rules' and the competition went live with an end date of over six months, after all, it was by the clearly that this virus was going to be around for some considerable time.

And then we waited...

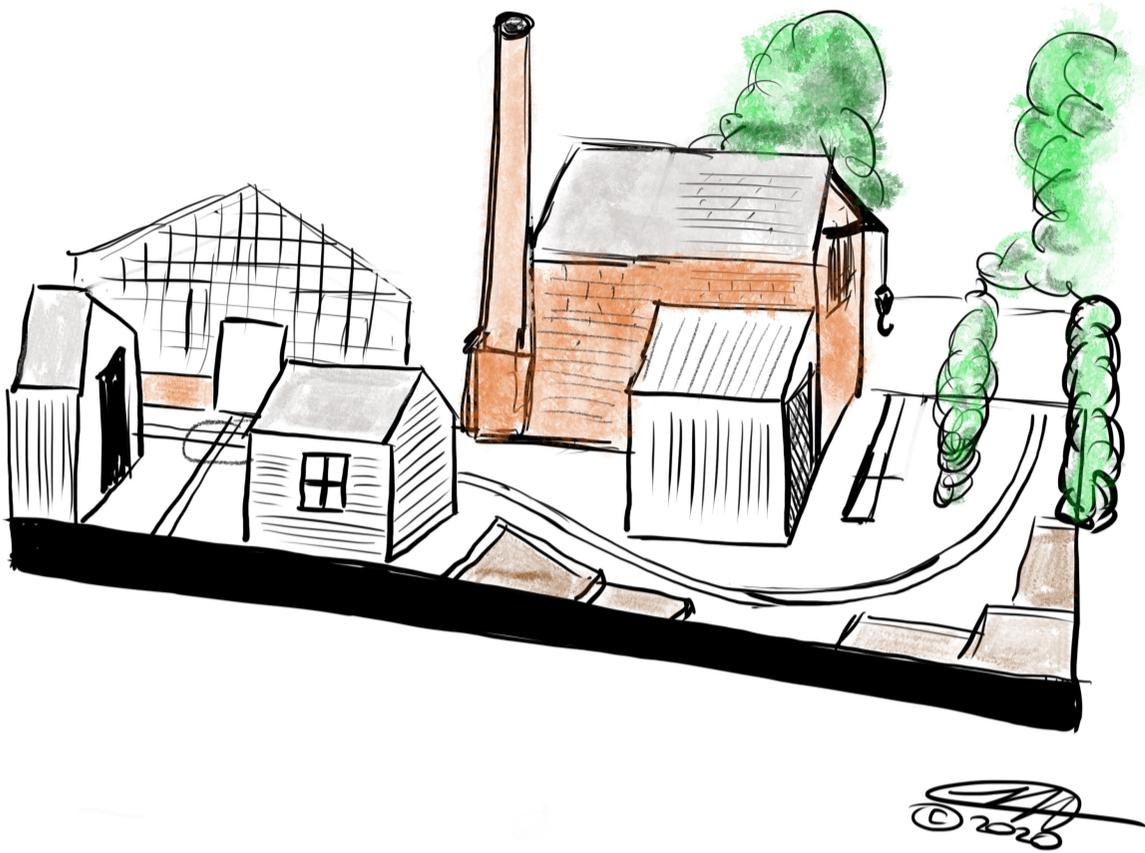
Fortunately several people began work on their ideas and posted them onto the group; what was better still is that they were innovative ideas and some really good modelling began to evolve.

Some entries were started and for various reasons didn't get finished

These are those...



Bob Hughes, micro layout maestro, was attracted by the competition as well. The completion of his layout was only hampered by not being able to get out of the house during lockdown to buy some supplies.



This was my design for a simple, single line, L shaped scheme featuring a wagon turntable. Inspired by the Poppleton Railway Nursery railway system and Vitacress railways in England. The baseboards were built, track laid and locomotives ran before I lost enthusiasm, faced with the level of detail I needed to model. I was fascinated by the experience and I think I'll be modelling in a large scale sometime in the future.

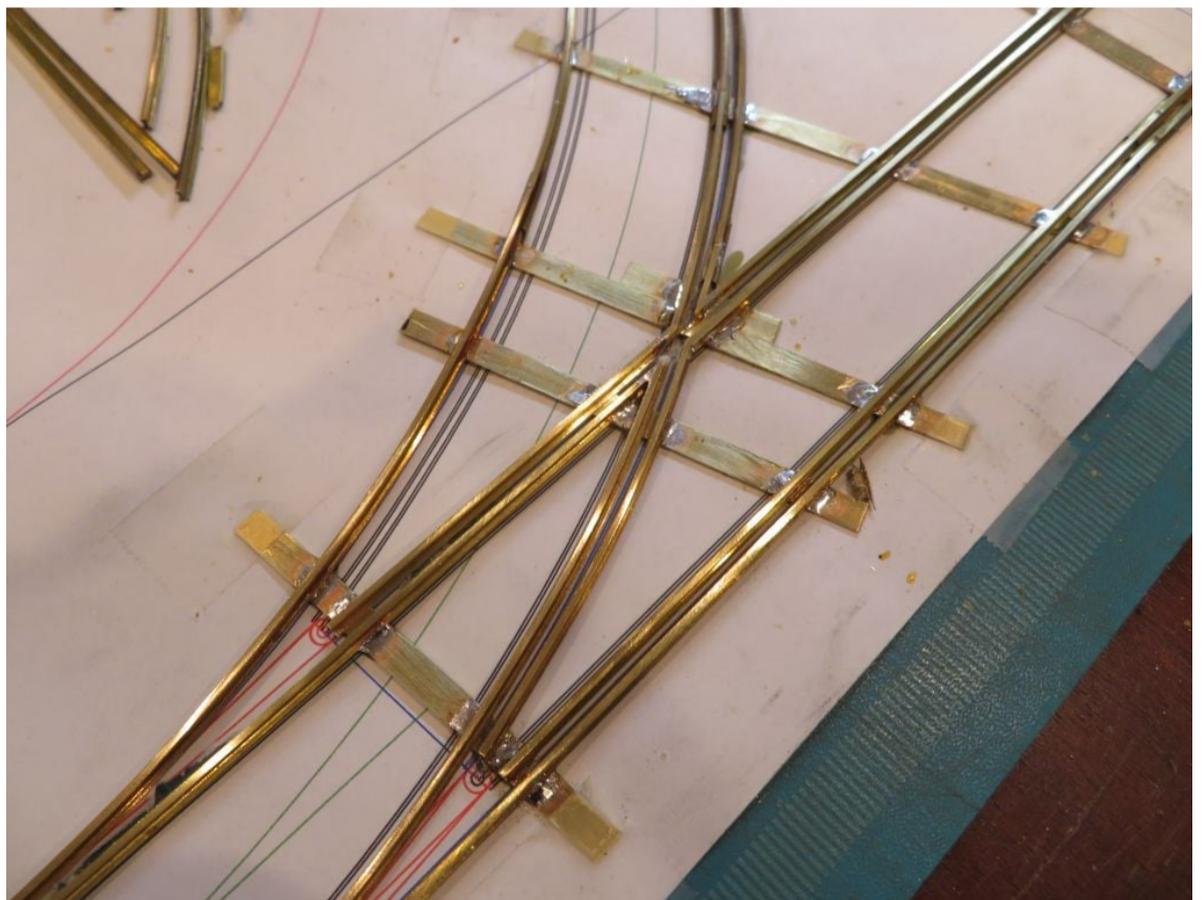


I was very surprised that trains would navigate a 16" radius curve

Michael Mott's layout was well advanced before other commitments caused him to put a stop to his effort. His layout was inspired by the remarkable railway inside the St. Jean de Dieu hospital in Montreal.



Here is a close up of a section of the wye on Michaels layout. It worked perfectly. Exquisite.



Editor adds: I'm sure that you will agree that these schemes alone show great creativity and ingenuity (apart from mine). Just wait until you see the completed layouts.

Lambak Mine Co.

Cain Howley's winning layout



A dull, drab industrial atmosphere, perfectly created



The simple track plan captures what a small mine railway is really like

The competition winner was Cain

Howley and his remarkable mine layout.

Almost everything you see on the pictures is scratch built, showing the ingenuity of 7/8ths scale modellers.

The model represents a one foot gauge line serving a small mine.

Why one foot gauge? The locomotive in front of the photograph above uses a Lemax “Jolly Trolley” as its basis, and that has a track gauge of 22mm, or about one foot in 7/8ths scale.

Lemax make the buildings and accessories for the popular model villages that decorate peoples houses at Christmas and other holidays. The locomotive operates on a modified automatic shuttle system that the trolley car comes with. Cain changed the activation of the reversing system to reed switches. Very clever.

The locomotive on the upper level uses an old Hornby locomotive chassis re-gauged to 22mm. The skip wagons are all scratch built. All the track on the layout uses the moulded plastic Lemax system, painted and weathered to look like industrial track.

The baseboard is made from the 2” thick insulation foam, carved to represent rocks and then liberally coated with grey latex masonry paint with PVA added to help seal the foam. Other shades of black and darker greys were added to give texture to the rock surface.

The atmosphere is perfectly set off by setting the layout in late autumn (fall) so the landscape is devoid of colour.

A worthy winner.



A busy day at the mine with both locos running



That must be the boss. He's so clean!



A chilly, damp, autumn landscape



The Lemax "Jolly Trolley" and the locomotive it became



Foresquare Brickworks.

Steve Mann



The simple track plan of Carl's Exports provides a lot of operational interest.



The angled section of fallen gutter actuates the tipping mechanism on the wagon



Lots of dirt and detritus adds to the atmosphere

Steve Mann's layout is called Foresquare Brickworks. The plan will be familiar to those of us who have spent hours looking through The Micro Layouts for Model Railroads website. It's a flipped version of Carl Arendts "Carl's Exports" to cater for the available point that he had to hand. The track is LGB with every other sleeper removed to improve the narrow gauge appearance, (a handy tip for narrow gauge modellers in all scales). The modified LGB Deutz runs oil track power and the wagons, are LGB too, except for the tipper which is scratch built. Dimensions are 4 foot x 1 foot, so it fits the 4 square foot

micro layout space. Figures are by Model Earth and Rob Bennett, materials used came from Melody Jane's Dollshouse Ltd and Stacey's Miniature Bricks.

Working in such a large scale as 7/8ths opens up a whole new world of scenic supplies. Those used by Dolls House model makers. There is a huge range of scenic items available out there if you look.

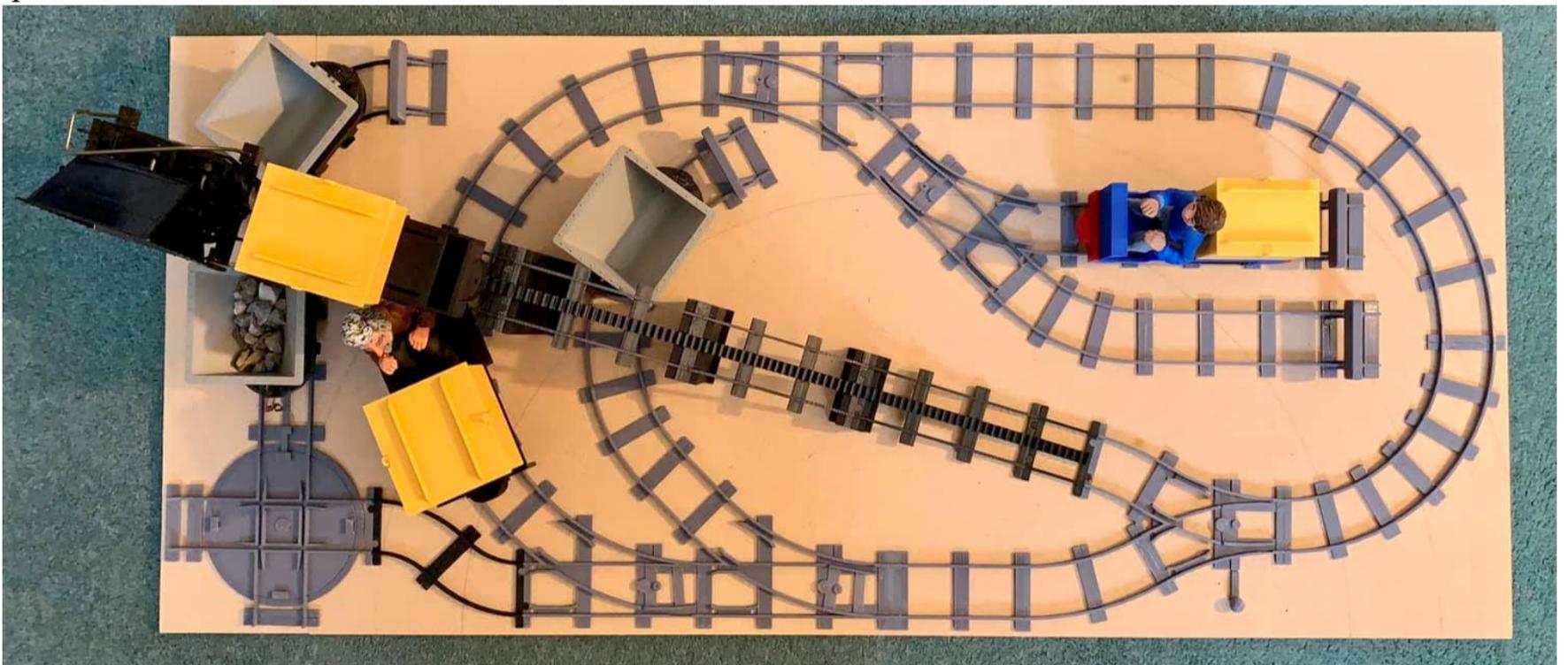
Operation is clay in, new bricks out and waste/reject bricks dumped at the tipping dock.

Infinity Tipping.

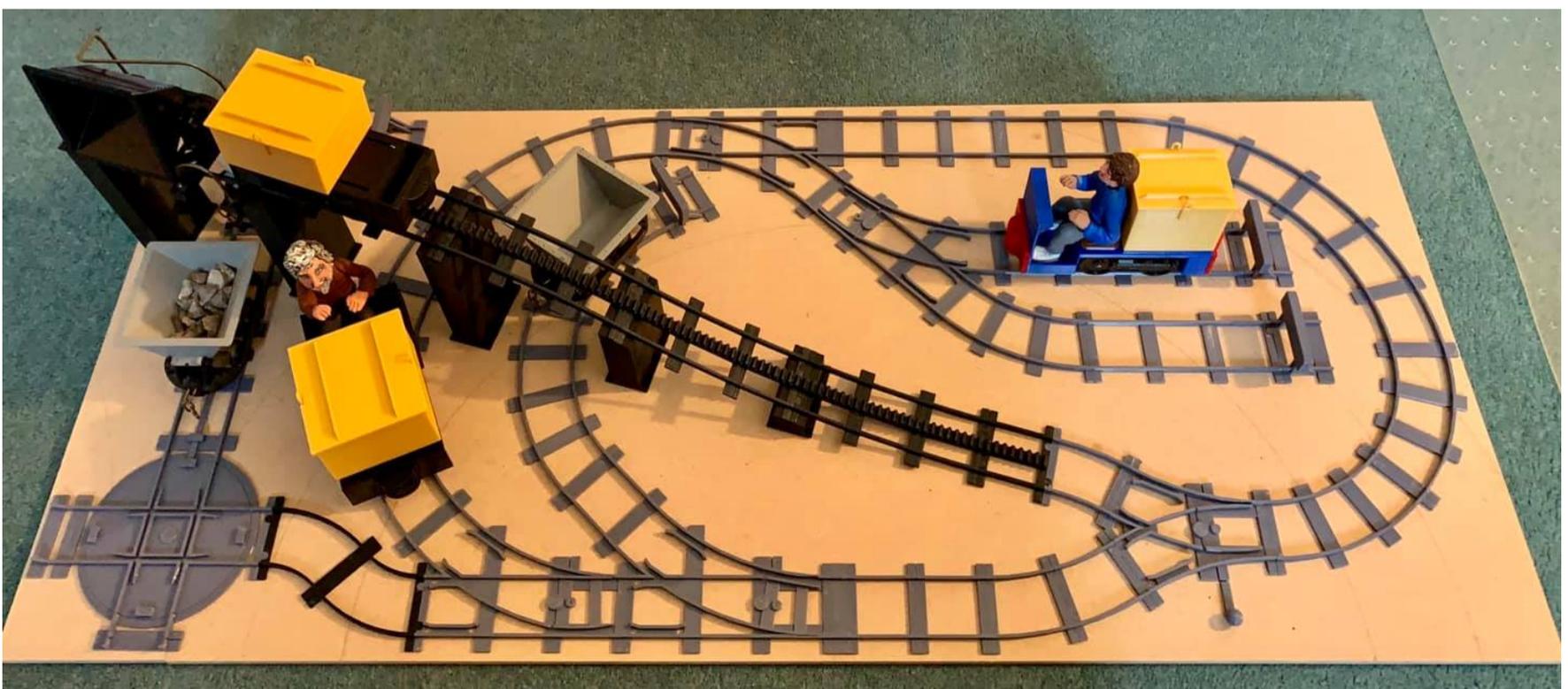
Chris Rennie

The quarry layout is 36x16 inches (4 square feet), 7/8ths inch scale, 32mm gauge. At the end of 2020 I designed an easy to 3D print and assemble standardised track system with very tight radius 4.9 inch and 6.9 inch curves to prove you can have a large scale continuous run with lots of operational interest in a tiny space. The track system has expanded with support from collaborators to include points, rack track, turntables and buffers, some

of which are on this layout. All the track files, which can be printed at either 32mm or 45mm gauge, can be downloaded from my website <http://locore mote.co.uk/> and are free for personal use. It has been really great to see many tens of other micro layouts appear in the past few months on various Facebook groups using this track.



A very busy track plan for such a small place and large scale



Every square inch of baseboard is used for maximum effect

Almost everything on the board except the Binnie skips, 3D Loco Works Simplex and Rob Bennett drivers have been designed and printed by me. There is no scenery or even painting apart from the Simplex since the track and rolling stock was printed using coloured filaments to keep things simple. The rack and pinion locos can push a loaded skip up the rack at an inline of up to 30 degrees. At the top an automatic mechanism tips the load into an

empty skip below where a second rack and pinion loco can propel this to repeat the process. A third loco can shunt the open wagon and tanker wagon about between skip movements. All the locos have custom designed 4 wheel drive chassis to easily deal with the tight curves and Loco Remote Wi-Fi controllers. They are all operated from a single cheap second hand Android phone.



All the track is 3D printed made by Chris to his own design

The editor adds:

The Binnie skip that Chris mentions is a kit available from Peterbinnie.com. Simple to build, and cheap to buy, they are an excellent introduction to modelling in the larger scales. I speak from experience.

Chris's plan puts me in mind of a design from

the late Jack Trollope called "Jaxcilli Industries", where a tipper would empty its content into another tipper below. Which would then make the journey to the upper level to tip into a wagon down below; ad infinitum.

Chris Stockdale wraps it up:

“Long before the three judges, myself, James Gilchrist (who co-runs the group with me) and Simon Harris, owner of Model Earth Design, got into our judgely huddle to declare a winner it was clear that there were as many different takes on what a large scale micro could be as there were pebbles on a beach.

What they all had in common was a fascinating level of detail, atmosphere and an interesting back story.

Picking a winner was not easy, but when it came to it we made an unanimous choice, Cain Howley’s 1’ gauged mine layout had that something extra that stood out for all of us.”



Just for fun. A last look at the editors favourite image from Cain’s layout. It takes on a different feel in black and white

String Theory Bob Hughes, fishing for other power sources

I have been building micro layouts powered by “horizontal puppet strings” for a long time. If you buy a reel of fishing line there is enough to keep you going for years. I’ve got two!

To be honest I’ve forgotten the chronological order of the early layouts, at the time I was using Webs.Com for my modelling antics, that website and most of the photos it contained went bump ages ago but I have managed to salvage some photos.

The use of fishing line does not need to be confined to shuttling a train on a fairly straight piece of track. It can be used to animate other items on a layout, the most obvious being semaphore signals of course where the prototype was operated in a similar manner, though with steel instead of nylon! Another possible use is for road vehicles, a car might be rigged up to emerge from its garage, then reverse into it again later.



Hayfinch Estate (left) was among the first, it was Gn15 and had just one loco and one tipper wagon, loading at one end and dumping at the other with the train “on stage” all the time. It was a miniature version of Green End Quarry

Hayfinch Treacle Mine, another Gn15 fishing line layout was built as an experiment in black and white modelling.

The treacle mine was awkward to operate though, with a combination of fishing line and push-rods plus the wagon turntable. Inevitably this meant it didn’t last long.





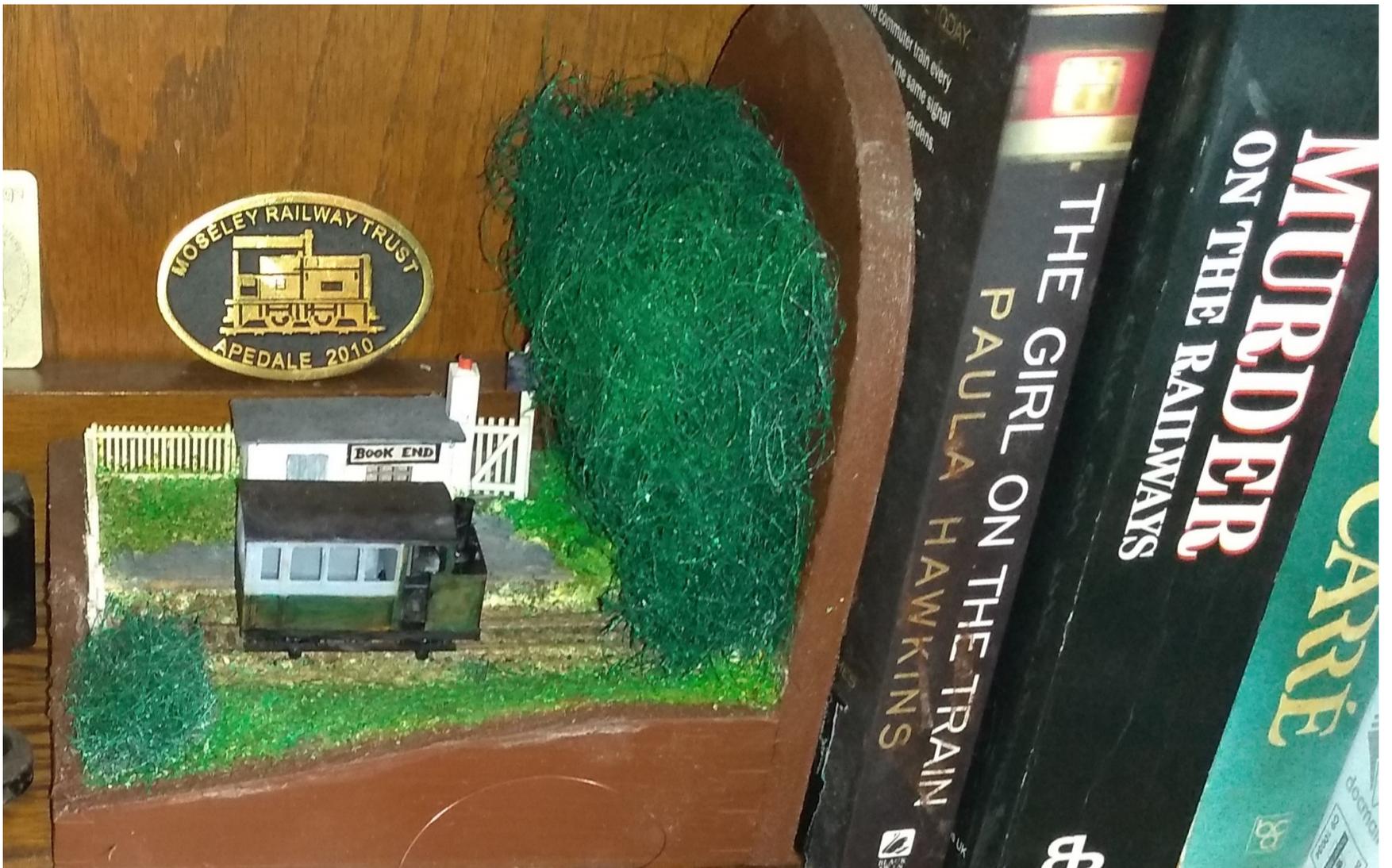
Kleinstedorf. N scale, again with a Del Prado railcar, but this time on conventional track. It's one of the smallest layouts I've ever built and depicts a tiny station on an East German branch line. In theory freight trains carry on beyond here but the railcar terminates then goes back to the junction.



Lac Isolement was built during 2020's first lockdown. It has another Del Prado N scale Picasso railcar on Del Prado track but the scenery is very different, a branch line can be seen briefly between two tunnels as it skirts the edge of the eponymous lake.



Lake Wobegon Mining was also built during the 2020 lockdowns, this is a 1:12 scale model in an Ikea Apa box. Loading takes place at one end of the line and the wagon is unloaded off stage at the other.



Book End is, well, it's a bookend. But there's more to it than initially meets the eye, the first three books on the shelf are also part of the layout. They have a tunnel cut into them so the railcar has somewhere to go.

The editor adds:

I asked Bob how you go about operating a model railway layout using a fishing line. "I generally attach the fishing line as close to the centre of the locomotive as possible and as low as possible. In the case of the Lake Wobegon Mining Company layout, the line is attached to a prong on the loco sticking down

just below rail level and is kept within the confines of the curved track by the rails. There is a reverse curve between the two ends of the track, and it's 32mm gauge. So the tension when hauling does not put very much pressure on the rails and the line stays below railhead level."

M&J Brewery Sidings.

This box file layout, was built during the second lock-down when I had run out of materials for another micro layout. It was an experiment to see how much detail I could fit in a small space whilst still providing the opportunity to shunt a few wagons with a variety of small industrial locos. The layout was also an exercise in building ‘on the cheap’. The track is Code 100 and the single point is PECO insulfrog. Ballast is a combination of modelling clay and kiln-dried paving sand. A DCC controller from my other layout provides power and control whilst two fiddlesticks, one either end and decorated with old brewery signs, allow locos and wagons to exit and enter the scene from either end.

Mike Pottage’s lockdown micro

One entry/exit point is through the brewery gates whilst the other one passes under a simple concrete bridge modelled on one down the road from where I live.

All buildings are scratch built from card and printed papers and the inside of the open building depicts inside a real brewery – photos from the internet which hopefully create a sense of depth. The hillsides are made from polystyrene packaging covered in plaster, static grass, polyfibre, scatters, kitchen spices and sprigs of seafoam, whilst the corrugated fence and gates are made from a foil take-away tray scribed with a small nail.



Delightful atmosphere in the space of a box file. I love the cloudy, ominous, grey skies reminds me of the phrase from back home. “Its grim up north”

Windows are made from plastic packaging, sticky labels and photos of grubby glass from the internet. The fence behind the bridge is also a photo from the net – cut, pasted then copied several times to produce one strip. The cobbles are Ratio setts, distressed and painted with artists acrylics. Lamps are made from sprue, shades from a Ratio lamp kit and wire from resistors. The pile of coal is from a real piece found on our local beach, the buffers are made from cut down coffee stirrers and the tarpaulin-covered loads are bits of sprue covered in tissue-soaked PVA. Figures are Dapol by origin, altered in some cases and again, painted using acrylics and a steady hand! Everything has been

weathered with thin acrylic washes and weathering powders. Finally, the backscene, a cloudy grey day, was produced using acrylic paints and chinks. Everything was designed to ‘break down’ and fit inside the box file with the lid closed, except for the backscene, which is too tall to fit inside. A cheap lamp on a sprung clip mounted on a simple stand lights the scene. I hope I have shown that there is space for a model railway in even the smallest house and that much fun can be had from a simple box file layout.



Simple, restrained detail helps create the atmosphere



With a box file, the best plan is to keep things simple



Great atmosphere. Box file layouts can be so rewarding

Porth Byhan

A classic box file micro by Stu Hilton



Why a box file? Well at the time (December 2009) it was too cold to go in the loft to work on the main layout. I'd seen several Micro Layouts on RMweb which had given me the germ of an idea and following a family afternoon trip to Mevagissey over the Christmas holiday I decided to have a go. I could do the modelling downstairs in the warm kitchen.

For those of you who don't know Mevagissey, a small town and harbour south of St Austell, there is a short, square quay jutting out into the inner harbour, behind which is a narrow roadway between the waterfront buildings. I've often thought of making a model of the area, installing an imaginary station and harbour sidings – the box file idea seemed to make sense but could concentrate on the harbour only. I had some thick foam board and some spare track, so started playing around with the concept of a couple of sidings on a quayside. Following the ideas from Mevagissey, I devised a

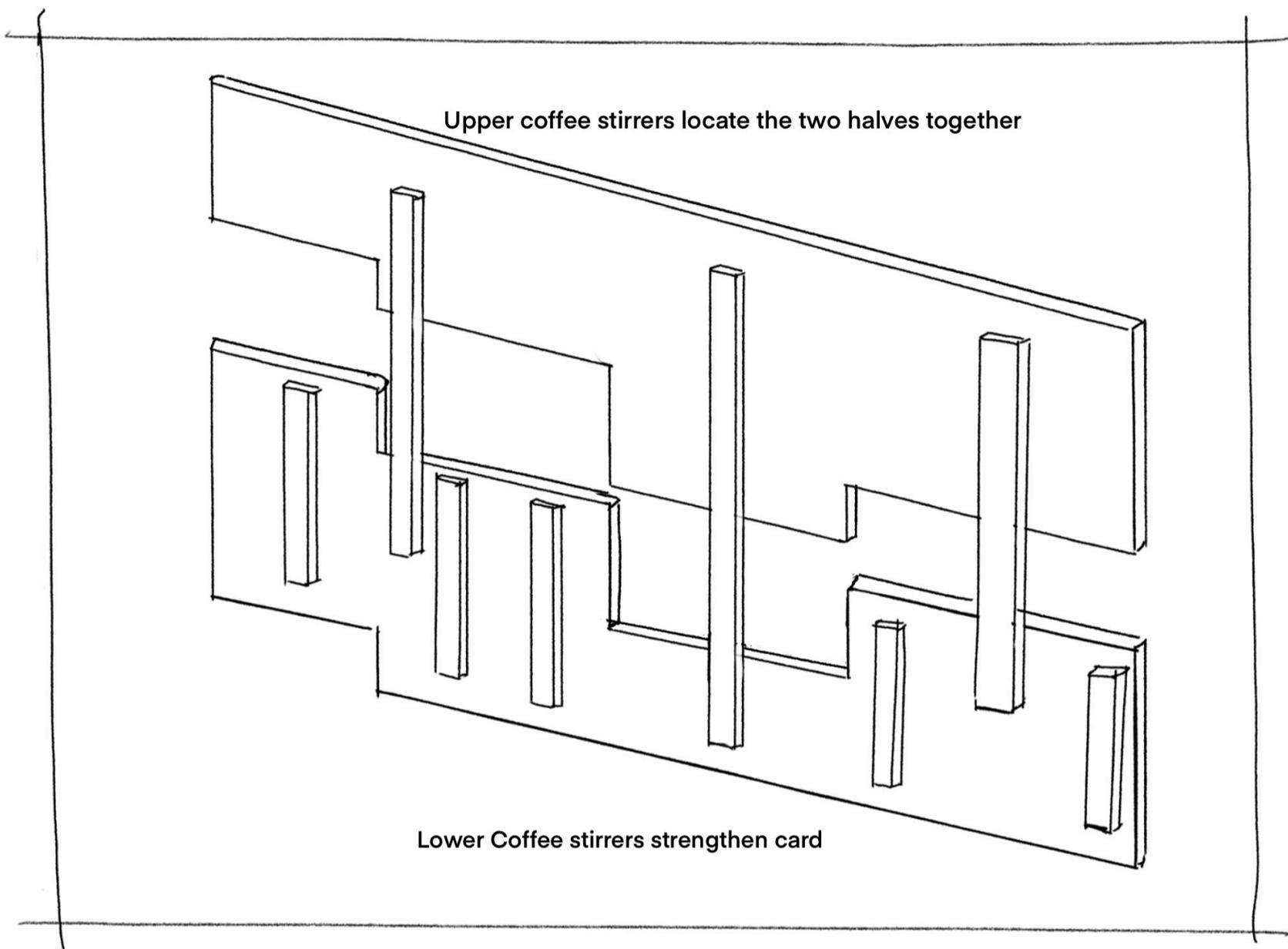
simple plan, complete with buildings, that would give me a representation of a Cornish harbour, plus the chance to experiment with different modelling techniques.

I also decided to post progress of the layout on RMweb – a decision I've not regretted as the help and encouragement I received was invaluable.

The imaginary history for the harbour had the two quays built at different times. To represent this, I used different styles of paving and stone walls. The first building I attempted was the Custom House. However, as the ground level of the harbour was halfway up the height of the box, I realised I couldn't complete the full height and still shut the box lid – shutting the lid was my self-imposed restriction of the concept of the box file layout. So, I had to devise a way to fix the upper parts to the lower parts and disguise the join.

The solution was coffee stirrers. I'd used thin foam board to form the basis of the low relief buildings. Sticking short vertical lengths of the wooden stirrer between the foam board and the box side left a thin slot. I then used longer lengths

of stirrer on the foam board for the upper parts of the buildings – these slid into the slots and kept the upper parts in place. Once I'd proved this idea, the layout came on in leaps and bounds.



Can you see the join?

The Custom House used large, formal window and door frames, and the cottage next door was made to look as contrasting as possible. I also wanted to create the half-wall, half-roof style windows so typical of the area. Both these buildings were fairly easy to split horizontally, and I turned my attention to the pub.

One of the best-known pubs in Cornwall is the *Sloop Inn* in St Ives. I took several photos, luckily without the usual throngs of holiday makers outside so was able to make a reasonable representation. In hindsight, the building is probably too small, but it sits in the corner nicely without imposing too much and gives a sense of perspective. The roof for the *Lugger* was left as a separate piece, the joins hidden under the eaves. The last building at the back is the boat repair shed. This too caused me a few scratches of the head – how could I disguise the horizontal split halfway up the doors? The solution was to make the whole of the doors removable, leaving the prototypical gap at the bottom as the join.

With two exits to the fiddle yard, I was stuck with which sort of building to disguise them. The area between the tracks was much too small to put any sort of building (I did try), so after much online discussion I created an old coaching inn converted to a fish market. This was based on another famous Cornish building, the *Keigwin Arms* in Mousehole, but extended with an arched passage. This proved to be the most difficult building to model as the two lower parts had be positioned carefully to match up with the top part.

Each siding track was two lengths of rail, stripped from the sleepers and glued in place. Pairs of door-catch magnets were placed between the rails, to enable uncoupling. Embossed plastic card was used for the quay paving and track infill.

Porth Byhan Atmosphere. Think that a box file layout can't provide atmosphere? Take a look at these outstanding images of Porth Byhan.





Operation

Once the buildings were in, the problem of how to make a lighting gantry was tackled. I knew I'd need to see into the scenic section and that the painted backscene would be quite high as it used the open lid of the box. Also, if I made the 'roof' of the layout solid it would block the view. So I made a grid using a baking cooling rack, cut to length, and fitted to a wooden frame. To the rack I fixed 20 LED bulbs, bought as a Christmas tree light set which came with its own battery supply. It was at this point I realised I'd not made any provision to power the two sidings. Fitting wires to the rails in the conventional sense was not an option as I'd left no way of accessing the underside of the track. In the end I soldered copper wire to the fiddle yard end of each rail, which was bent down over the outside of the box side.

The fiddle yard was constructed from a second boxfile, rotated 180° from the first box and a Peco Loco Lift used as the single cassette. The lids of both boxes were arranged to be vertical and a piece of thin MDF used as the backscene between the two. To cover the backscene, a piece of wallpaper lining paper was painted with a fading blue.

Conclusion

It was a great learning experience. I improved my modelling skills in both construction and painting, as well as leaning how to plan the order of things. I have since made several other small layouts, which have been shown at several local exhibitions, plus at the RMweb SWAG Members days in Taunton.



The layout now resides in the model railway museum in Mevagissey, the place that inspired it

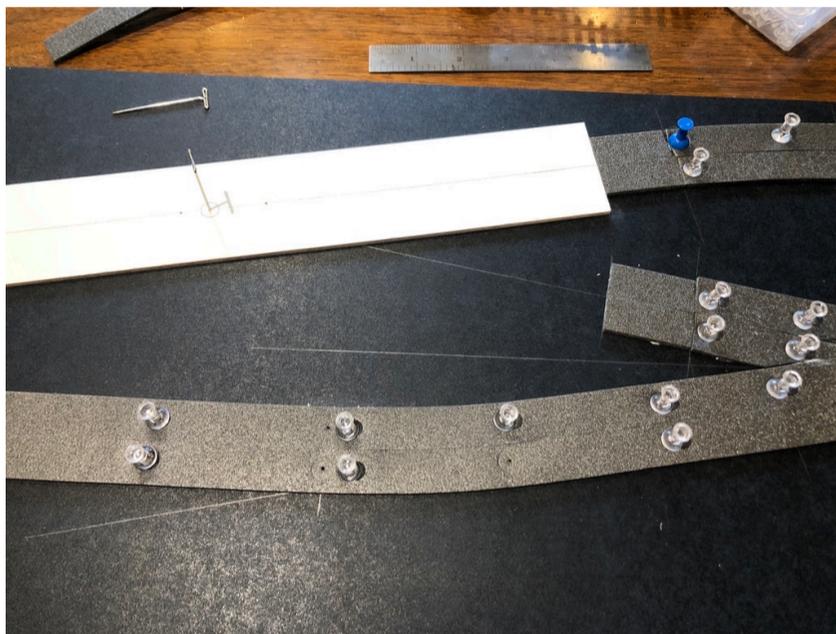
Building a Simple Sector Plate

Ken Hutnik

For my Queens Quay Micro (HO / Standard Gauge), I needed to build a sector plate that would be hidden inside a building. The sector plate pivots near the middle and allows an engine and one car to be switched between two tracks, with one track also being a through track to a third leg.

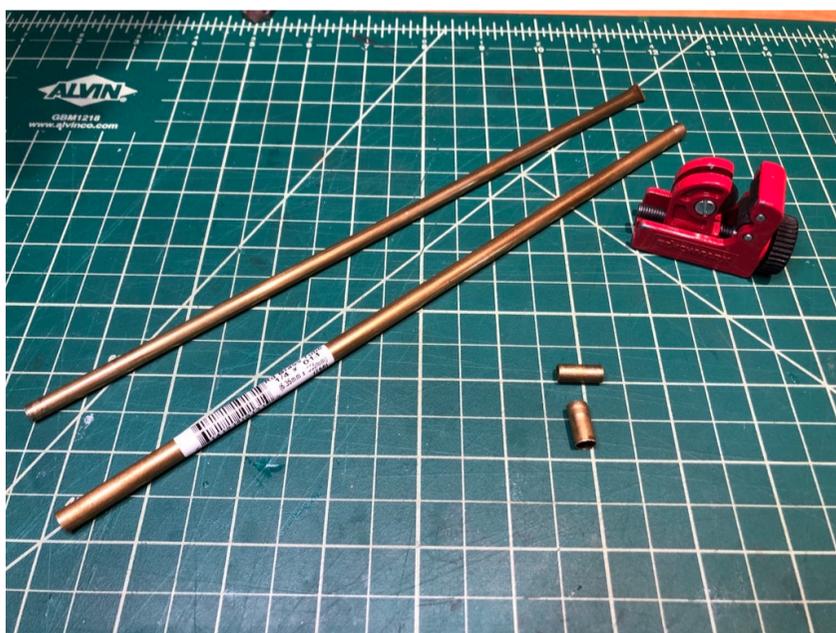
Using materials on hand during the pandemic, I devised a simple construction for my first sector plate build. The sector plate material is thick

black artist board cut to size. Brass tubing was used to create the pivot pin for the sector plate and matching bushing for the baseboard. Printed Circuit Board (PCB) pin sockets were used for electrical connections. Since the sector plate pivots only a small amount, a length of feeder wire pushed into the pin connectors was all that was needed for connectivity.



The sector plate mocked up in foamcore is positioned in place on track center lines. The grey foam is the roadbed.

To determine how long of a sector plate I would need, I measured the length of the locomotive with the longest car that would be moved with it. I then added an inch (2.5 cm) to each end to allow room for positioning them on the sector plate. To locate the sector plate on the layout, I first marked the center lines of the two tracks that the sector plate would be servicing. Where those two lines intersected was the pivot point for the plate. I inserted a map pin and checked position for both tracks to confirm the center point was correct. The pin hole marked the location on the plate and baseboard for future drilling.



Brass tubing was cut for the plate pivot pin and baseboard bushing.

Brass tubing was used for the pivot pin and bushing in the baseboard. I had the tubing in my supplies and one happened to fit inside the other nicely. Plastic could also have been used. Having a pin on the sector plate and a bushing in the baseboard ensures there will be good alignment without slop or play.



The brass tubing for the sector plate pin and baseboard bushing glued in place with CA.

With the bushing and pin cut, the sector plate was cut from artist board using the template made in foamcore. The next step was to drill proper size holes in the plate and baseboard for the brass tube. The map pin holes from earlier test fitting were used as the center point guides for the drill bit.

I placed the sector plate top-down on a piece of glass. I pushed the pin through the drilled hole. I ensured it went through all the way and was flush and perpendicular to the plate top. Small drops of CA glue were applied to secure it.

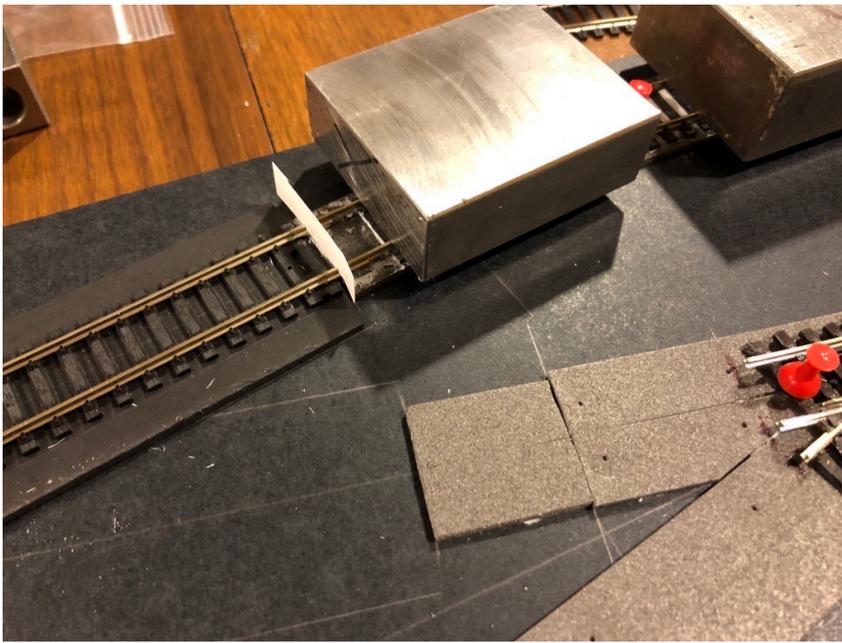
For the baseboard, I drilled the hole slightly small so I could press fit in the tube bushing. Once in place, I tested with the sector plate to ensure proper function. I secured the bushing with a bit of CA glue.



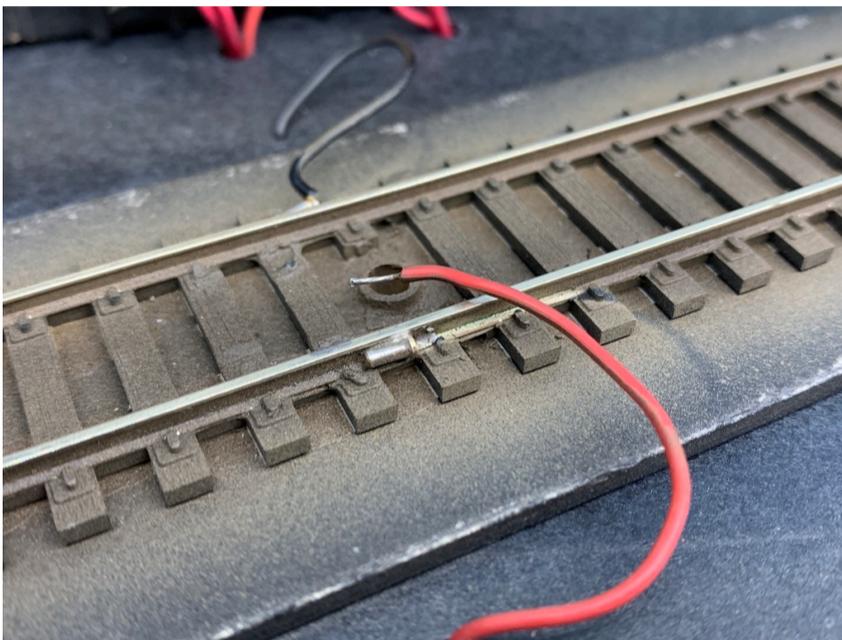
The sector plate in place, the top of the pivot pin can be seen in the middle of the sector plate.



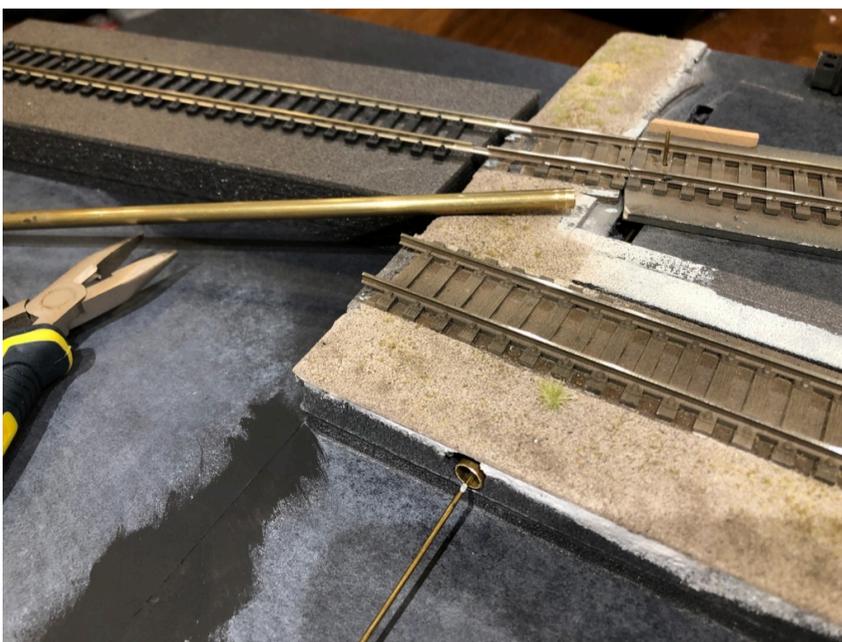
The same view later on, showing the baseboard and sector plate with track. Small pieces of wood glued to the baseboard act as position stops to ensure track alignment.



Laying track on the baseboard and the sector plate.



Printed Circuit Board (PCB) pin connector sockets were used for connections, one is seen here solder to the edge of the rail, the wire was then inserted.



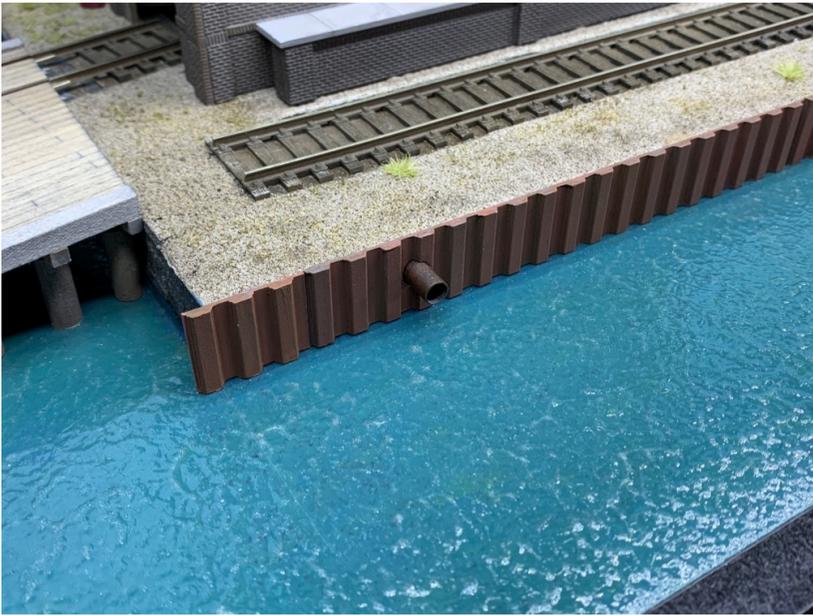
Sector plate lever under construction with brass tubing and brass wire.

With the sector plate in place, I could then lay track on the entire layout. Various track gauges, weights and styrene spacers were used to ensure good alignment as track was fixed in place with latex caulking. Throughout the process, I would continually check alignment and operation of the sector plate with the rest of the track.

With the track in place and tested, I moved on to the electrical connection for the sector plate. I soldered PCB pin connectors I had on hand to the outside of the rails. Feeder wires were brought up through the baseboard. Extra length was left in place and the wires were inserted into the connectors. Multi-strand wire was used since it is more flexible. The ends were tinned with solder to make it easier to insert them.

The sector plate is hidden, so this simple connection with extra wire to allow for the small angle of pivot was sufficient. The wires could have been soldered to the rail but with the connectors, the sector plate remains removable for servicing and adjustment.

I needed a method to move the sector plate from the front of the layout. I decided to hide a lever as a drainage pipe coming out of the seawall. The lever is two pieces of brass tubing, one sliding inside the other, just like the pivot pin and bushing. After drilling a long horizontal hole, a piece of brass tubing was inserted through the baseboard edge to the sector plate location. A second piece of tubing with brass wire soldered to it passed through the first tube. The wire was bent up and fit into a hole in the sector plate to attach to it. A few drops of oil led to a smooth mechanism.



After some weathering, the brass tube resembles a drainage pipe.



Pulling on the drainage pipe slides the tubing and wire, pivoting the sector plate.



A view of the finished building and hidden sector plate.



A view of the finished sector plate beneath the building. The holes in the backboard allow for viewing and operation from the rear at a train show / exhibition.

The editor adds:

Ken's sector plate is located inside a structure, so it needs to operate reliably. The same can be said if you use a sector plate for your train off stage. Efficient, reliable train storage is of paramount importance in the operation of a micro. Particularly at exhibitions where the ability to keep the action going by turning trains around and getting a new train in front of the viewing public helps to keep the viewers interest in the layout going.

There are many different types of train storage. Cassettes, fiddlesticks, traversers, train tables, loco lifts and even combinations of them as well. Hidden storage for your micro does not have to be a feat of engineering. We live by the motto "Keep it simple, stupid" in **The Dispatch** office. This is the perfect example. We have a series of articles lined up over the coming issues covering all types of train storage. We hope that you'll find them interesting and give you new ideas.

A very micro tram layout

David Dunmore



The name 'West Leaton' is a play on Westleton, a village in Suffolk near Dunwich.

I was inspired to model a tramway after a visit to the Tramway museum at Crich in Derbyshire.

It started as these things tend to, with an impulse purchase of a Kato pocket line tram, the Hiroshima-Hannover tram and some N scale B train shorty kits from Japan. So I needed somewhere to run them. Some Kato Unitrack and some old bits of board later and the idea was born. As I have a (very) distant family connection with Westleton in Suffolk, a version of the village's name (West Leaton) was to be the line's name. It's just a small oval with a small section of the town above. The catenary 'wire' is

just cotton thread painted silver. It really is a tiny 'micro' measuring just 51cm x 44.5cm (20" x 17.5"). The Cinema shops and pub are card buildings downloaded from the web, the Subway, fountain in the upper level park and platform/waiting shelters are 3d printed. The Subway is covered in texture papers downloaded from the web, as are the road and car park. This is my first model in over 25 years, and originally just intended as a practice piece, but it turned out much better than I expected. The cinema was downloaded from downloaded from www.haunteddimensions.raykeim.com and the brick paper from www.wordsworthmodelrailway.co.uk



A simple concept, well executed for maximum enjoyment



The cinema, downloaded from the internet has perfect atmosphere.

Diversion/Umleitung.

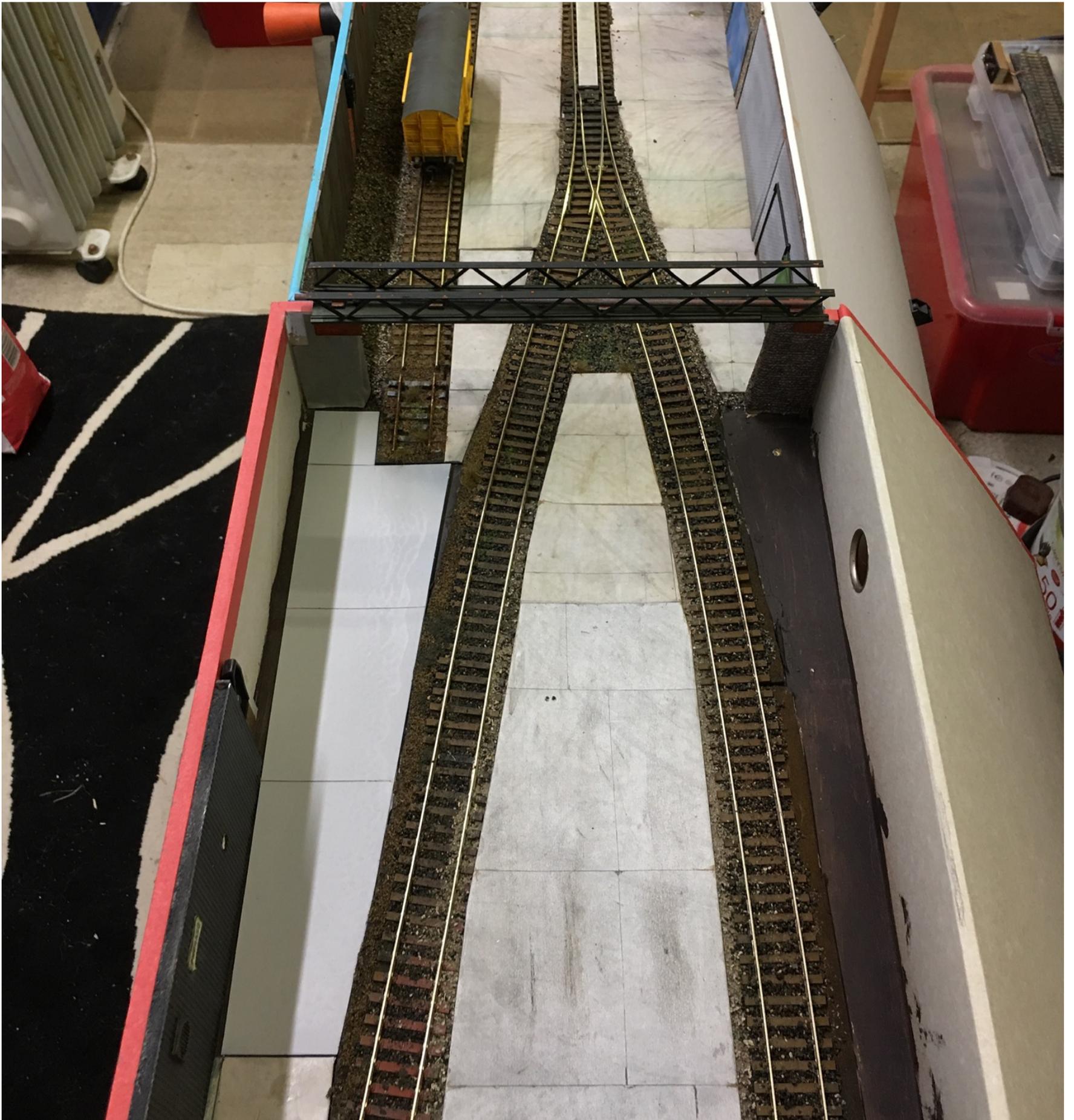
Steve Grantham

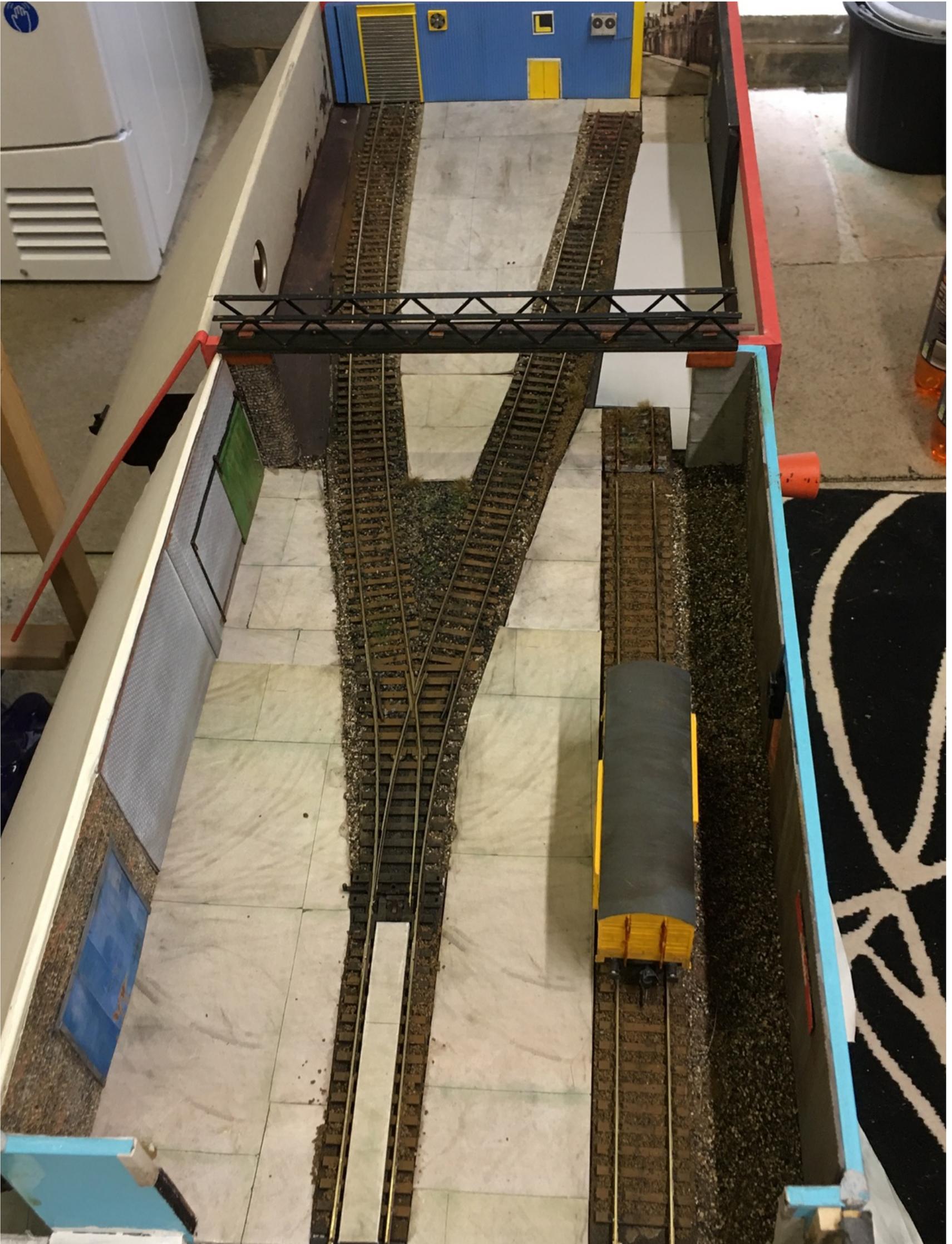
A couple of images showing my present micro project, Diversion/Umleitung.

It comprises 3 box files; two scenic with lids and the third cut down as a fiddleyard. All 3 are screwed and glued to a piece of primed and painted MDF.

The idea is to portray part of an industrial yard. The bridge is removable and there is a second

bridge, also removable., that frames the fiddleyard entry. The "industries" portrayed are international, so I can operate it in either UK or German mode, dependent on the stock chosen. As for the name, it is a diversion I started during Lockdown 1 from my 'main' layout. Umleitung is German for diversion.





Fiddle Yard

As I was getting ready to prepare this issue of *The Dispatch* for download, some exciting news was announced, and while it's not about model railways, the subject has certainly influenced the hobby greatly.

The North Wales slate landscape of Snowdonia been designated a World Heritage site by UNESCO. It's a truly spectacular part of the UK and one of my favourite places in the world. It is well deserving of this new status. Being recognised as a world heritage site marks it as a place of cultural and historic significance.

Slate has been mined in this small area of Wales for about 2,000 years, and during the years of the industrial revolution Welsh slate was used around the globe. It is often said that this area roofed the world. Millions upon millions of slate roofing tiles made their way from the mines around Blaenau Ffestiniog, Llanberis, Abergynolwyn and others, to ports where they were transported around the world.

How did the slate get from the mines to the ports on the coast?

On the narrow gauge railways.

Railways like The Festiniog, The Tal-y-lyn, and Welsh Highland. Lines which are now huge tourist attractions in their own right. But there were also lesser, almost forgotten lines like the Padarn, the Croesor Tramway and even the planned electric line, the Porthmadog, Beddgelert and South Snowdon Railway. These names are interwoven in the history and lore of the region.

I can still remember my first trip on the Festiniog Railway when I was 11 years old, it was behind the Alco "Mountaineer". That started a love affair with the line and region that has lasted to this day. To travel the FR, indeed to travel many of Snowdonia's narrow gauge railways, is to travel through the history of this world heritage site itself.

These railway lines have etched themselves into the minds of many a railway and model railway enthusiast. From the Reverend Wilbur Awdry to myself. Small locomotives hauling long trains of slate tiles, making a huge contribution to the development of the modern world.

Layouts that have been inspired by these lines are many, and one just has to flick through the

The editor shares some thoughts

pages of a model railway magazine to see them. Any month of the year, you'll find a magazine with a layout that owes something to slate carrying narrow gauge railways featured in their pages. Here are a few I remember;

"*Llareggub*" by Dave Rowe may be the first one I recall. Originally in a 4' x 2' cabinet it graced the pages of the model railway press in the 1970's.

"*The Dovey Valley Light railway*", featured in the pages of *Railway Modeller* back in the 1980's. It was still on the exhibition circuit until a couple of years ago.

"*Beddgelert 1910*", a model of a short section of the never opened, electric Porthmadog, Beddgelert, and South Snowdon railway. Just a simple oval of track where trains ran along an embankment to a road overbridge. You can still drive under the real bridge, It's just outside Beddgelert.

I'm sure many of you have your own favourite layouts.

Even though the region is small, and criss-crossed with railway lines, you could always plot the route of a line through villages and hamlets with unpronounceable names for your own imaginary model railway scheme.

I myself, imagined a line running from slate mines alongside Lake Vyrnwy, through Ty-Uchaf, Rhiwagor, and Aberhirnant down to exchange sidings with the Great Western Railway at Bala Junction. I was going to build it in 009, but never even made a start.

I doubt now that I ever will, but I still have a hankering to recreate the slate railways of North Wales somehow.

The acknowledgment of the region by UNESCO should be noted by railway modellers.

After all North Wales didn't just roof the world, it gave us a whole genre of our hobby.

How about you? What are your thoughts on the regions new found heritage status? What are your thoughts and memories about the railways of the area, both real and model?

Share them with us, drop me a line.

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