

# THE MICRO MODEL RAILWAY DISPATCH

*For the Micro Model Railway designer, builder and enthusiast*

*Issue 6. Autumn 2022*



*Peter Gordon's Concrete Block Works*

# THE DISPATCH

*For the Micro Model Railway layout designer, builder and enthusiast*

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As per usual, this issue of The Dispatch covers a very varied range of layouts, scales and prototypes.

Take a closer look at the Ivor the Engine Micro. It's clockwork. That's right, the wind-up toys that for many are a relic from another age, are capable of being used for a very remarkable micro layout. Not only do we have clockwork trains, we have puppetry, and radio controlled layouts. Scales covered go from the small of 00 6.5, all the way up to 7/8ths inch scale. Throw in a P4 layout as well, and you have to ask yourself if any other magazine can boast such a range of layouts and ideas for its readers?

Micro layout builders are the most creative in the world. This issue proves it. Mind you, the previous issue proved it, and the one before that, and the one before that, and... I think you get my drift. Enjoy your Autumn/Fall, which is traditionally when we get back to building layouts after taking the summer off, and we'll meet again just before Christmas.

Don't forget Christmas/Wintery layouts and stories are needed for the Christmas extra section. That was a very popular feature last year and I'd like to keep it going.

Feel free to get in touch if you'd like to share something. Layouts, track plans or memories, it's all good. You know the address, [MMRDeditor@gmail.com](mailto:MMRDeditor@gmail.com)

Finally, a word about the **Red number 6** on the front cover. Thanks to all the readers who got in touch to tell me I had the magazine numbering wrong for the last issue. It's been corrected now. I won't make the same mistake again.

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*“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**

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# *Empire*

*Peter Smith*

*Scale 00 6.5 4mmft 6.5mm track. Size:32" x 18" 810mm x 450mm*



*Empire uses the small scale to fit a lot of operation into a micro space.*

## **Empire was never envisaged as a micro.**

After a number of small HO layouts using Busch equipment I built a similar layout in 00 6.5 on a small portable picnic table my wife spotted in a local hardware shop.

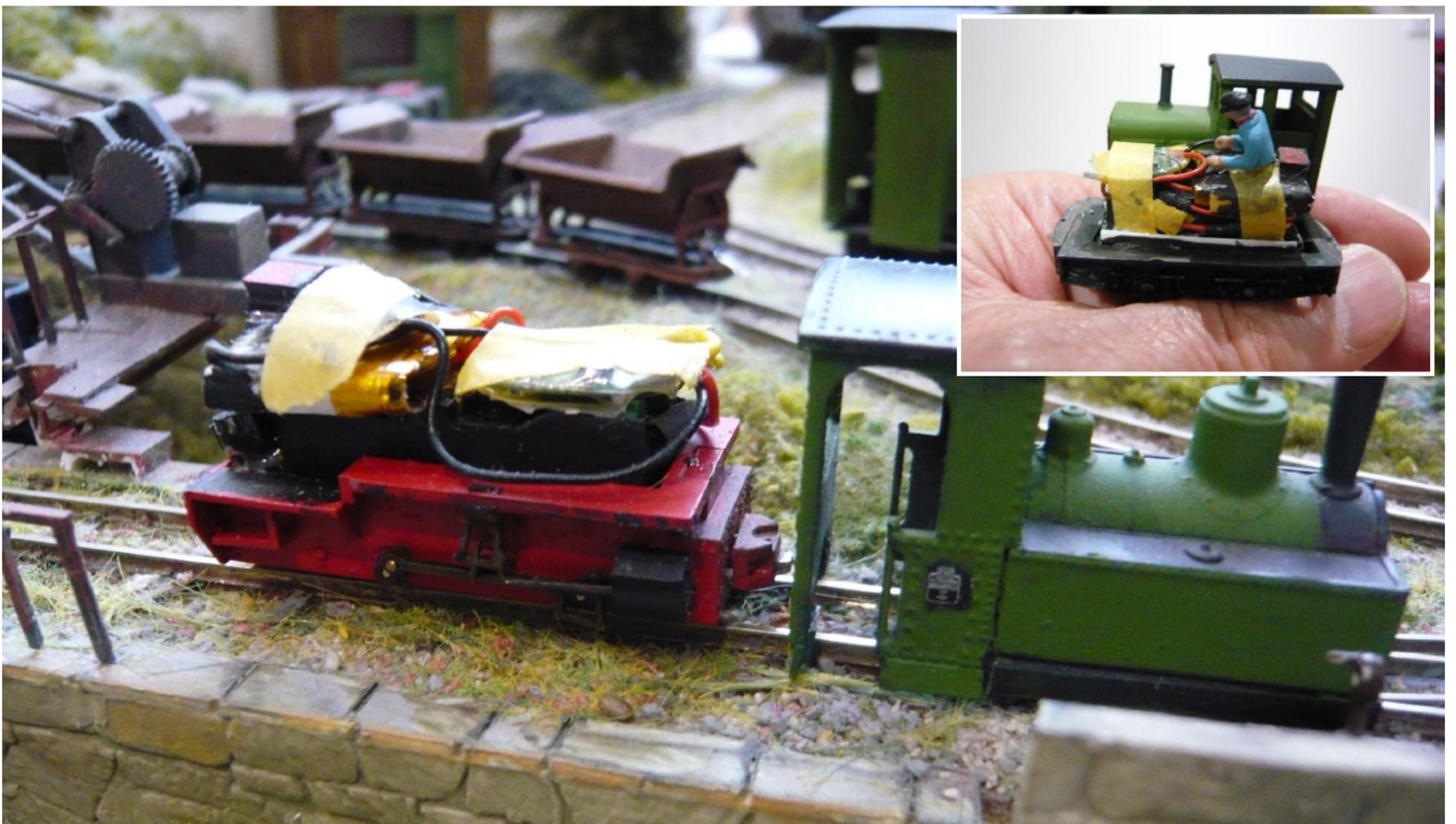
It was 24 x 17 inches and like all my layouts extended beyond the space available to a terminus and is now 32ins x 18 ins and exactly 4 square feet. A played out quarry in the South of England now used for aggregate storage. It started as a simple oval with two turnouts at the front leading to a loading point and a single turnout at the back coming through the backscene to the old quarry, where an ancient Bucyrus excavator still loads skips of aggregate for transporting elsewhere. Instead of the usual water front/canal basin scene the pier unloads into narrow gauge (009) rail trucks. An old standard gauge interchange is now unused except for wagon storage. Later another turnout was installed at the rear leading to a small terminus with a loco shed, wagon repair shop and passenger platform.

Originally wired for standard Busch operation it moved to using a downrated Gaugemaster Model W controller (6v input). But now all wiring is removed and the locos have radio control using Deltang equipment. This has transformed operation and the layout is great fun to operate with 100% reliability. There are pics of a typical R/C conversion with Deltang RC45-22 receiver, 30mA LiPo battery, on/off switch and charging plug. Battery life is never a problem and I have far more locos than the layout will accommodate. The extension built after r/c uses Marklin track and turnouts which are run through so the terminus can be operated using the run round with no hands on at all.

I have moved on to 16mm scale now as age creeps on, and here a micro will be essential in our retirement flat. Empire though is still fun to operate from time to time, and even after many weeks the batteries still retain enough charge for an operating session.



*Nice detailed atmospheric scene. Lots of scrap and detritus around.*



*How to fit a radio control receiver into one of these tiny trains. The inset shows just how small these trains are.*



*The skips have arrived at the tipper.*

### **Peter Smith**

As a young boy in the late 1940s/early 1950s, I went to sleep every night to the crash of buffers as a Jinty shunted a nearby goods yard in Leicester. I put pennies on the line to be squashed by trains passing over a local level crossing, and dashed on my bike to Leicester Midland shed when stories of a rare Jubilee 4-6-0 went round. I remember being greatly impressed when a friend with a Hornby Dublo train set showed me it with basic scenery done by his Dad. It was my first sight of a model railway as opposed to a train set.

I did some kit building but growing up, work and family got in the way of model railways. In the 1990s with retirement approaching, I made my first visit to the USA and on my return bought some US Atlas N gauge and built a

layout. I joined the High Wycombe MRS which had a strong US section and built club layouts in gauges from N to O.

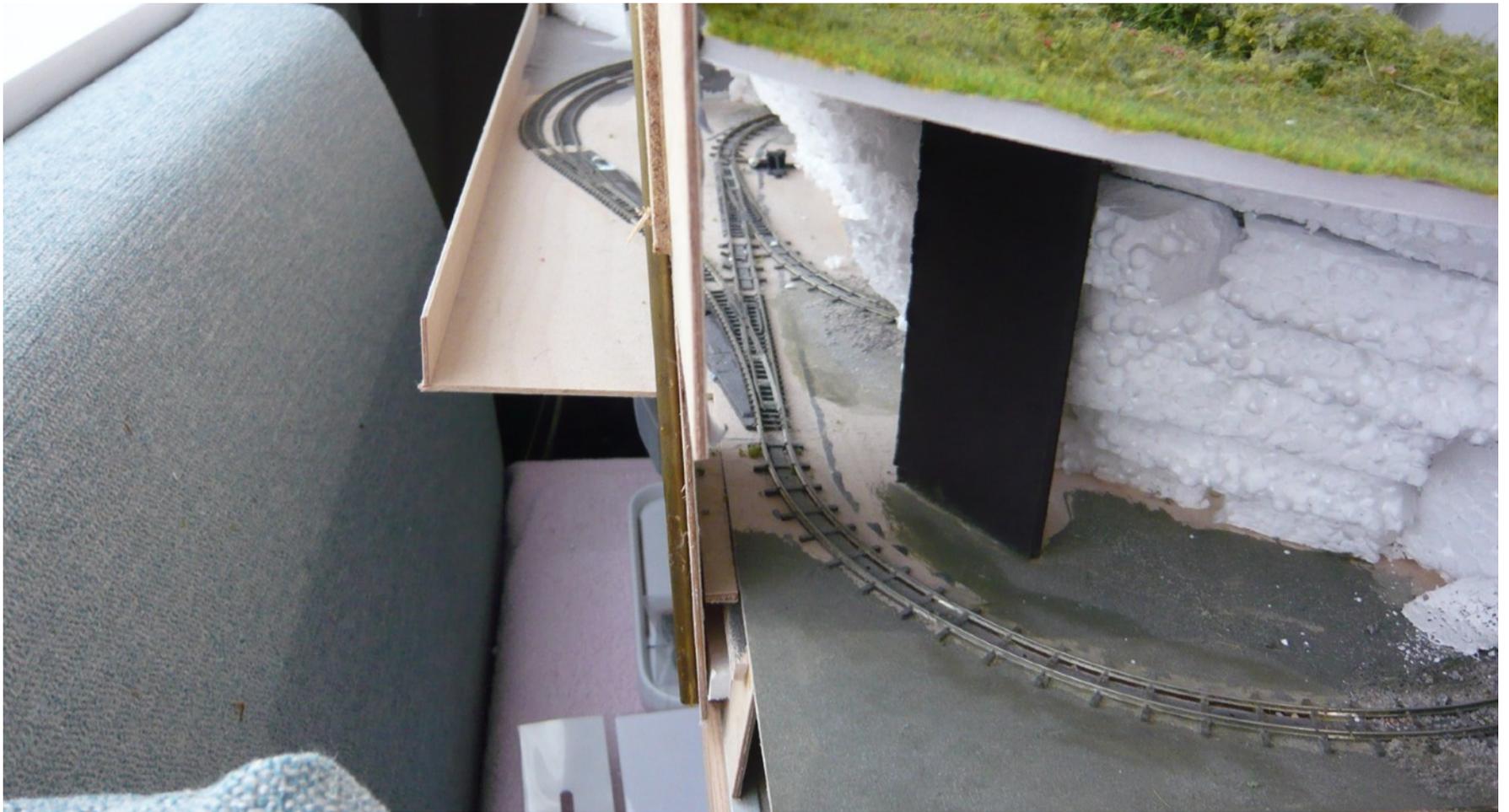
In 2000, I made my first visit to Cuba and fell in love with narrow gauge. I built and exhibited a Cuban dual gauge layout that featured in *Railway Modeller* and ended up in the Cuban National Railway Museum. Always short of space at home, I did my narrow gauge in HOn30 and later HO<sub>f</sub>. Most of my layouts were published in *Continental Modeller* and appeared at 009 Society and NMRA meets. I am now into 16mm scale, mainly as a result of COVID lock downs. I have a portable layout that fits on a single spare bed but its too big to be a micro. Thanks to *The Dispatch*, a 16mm micro is being planned.



*The yard throat. For the British among us the “OMO” sign is from a certain time.*



*Empty skips brought to the excavator for filling.*



*Behind the scenes, the construction is clear. Expanded polystyrene for the relief, with thin plywood for the baseboard.*



*In this “behind the curtain” view, we can see how the layout was built on the portable picnic table.*

# *Brewery Quay.*

*John Rogers*

*16mm scale 32mm gauge 38" x 15" 965mm x 381mm*



*That's a lot of track and some very tight curves on John's Micro seen here in its early days. The tight curves and the cramped nature of the track plan will be hidden by the layout's structures.*

**This was my second attempt at a micro** (my first, the Tram Shed, was just too big for the four square foot rule), and I set myself a fairly tough set of objectives.

Four square feet footprint, with no fiddle yards or other appurtenances.

1. 16mm / inch (1:19) scale on 32mm gauge.
2. A continuous run under radio control.
3. A capacity for shunting and associated games.
4. Re-use of buildings from a previous layout.
5. Easy disassembly and reassembly.

Essentially, I wanted a self-contained layout that could be put on a table or bookshelf, where trains would appear and disappear while I worked and played on my computer, but where I could also play trains as the mood took me.

I decided to work with Faller Playtrain plastic track, which is cheap and light and has served me well. If I wanted to shunt a couple of small wagons with a small loco, I needed a length of 38" for kickback siding, points and headshunt. This meant a maximum 38" x 15" baseboard, which would fit nicely on my shelf. I therefore ordered a pre-cut

rectangle of 10mm (3/8") expanded PVC foamboard.

However, the objective of a continuous run seemed impossible at first. The siding left a rectangle of 38" by 9½" in which to build a circuit. However, I have a cunning friend, Chris Rennie, who prints plastic 32mm gauge track in silly radii. In particular, he does 2.9" radius curves that clip neatly into Faller Playtrain track. He assured me that short (2" or so) wheelbase locos and stock will navigate this, so I bought four of these curves and lo! It was so.

I laid the track out on my desk and found that it met all my criteria and has remained unchanged throughout the project. In fact, the resulting layout was so compact that when the board arrived and I laid the track on it, there was a spare 2" between track and forward edge, which was useful when I started work on the scenery.

The only slight problem was in pushing wagons back around the curves back on to what has to be called the main circuit, after a bit of shunting.

I was excited that I'd made this possible by inventing a rather clever magnetic coupling on a rotating arm (of course I hadn't, someone had done it before).

Curves as tight as 2.9" imply generous clearances for even very small locos and stock. Being aware of this problem, I built a boxcab loco just for the job

using a Phil Sharples chassis and a Chris Rennie (again) LocoRemote Wi-Fi controller. This, I named FIRKIN after the smallest size of beer barrel. I also constructed a number of wagons on Binnie chassis to a very limited loading gauge (OK, dynamic envelope) and with those clever couplings.



*The key to operating John's micro, and negotiating these impossibly tight curves, is this scratch built box car loco, and coupler shown in close up here.*

*Battery powered, and running under radio control. 16mm scale gives plenty of room to fit batteries and receivers, and still leave room to fit a driver.*

*John's remarkable coupling system using magnets that allow trains to be pushed, pulled and shunted around these super sharp 2.9" radius curves.*

*Micro Layout builders will always find a way to solve the problems that micro layout design creation throws up. It's what micro modelling is about!*



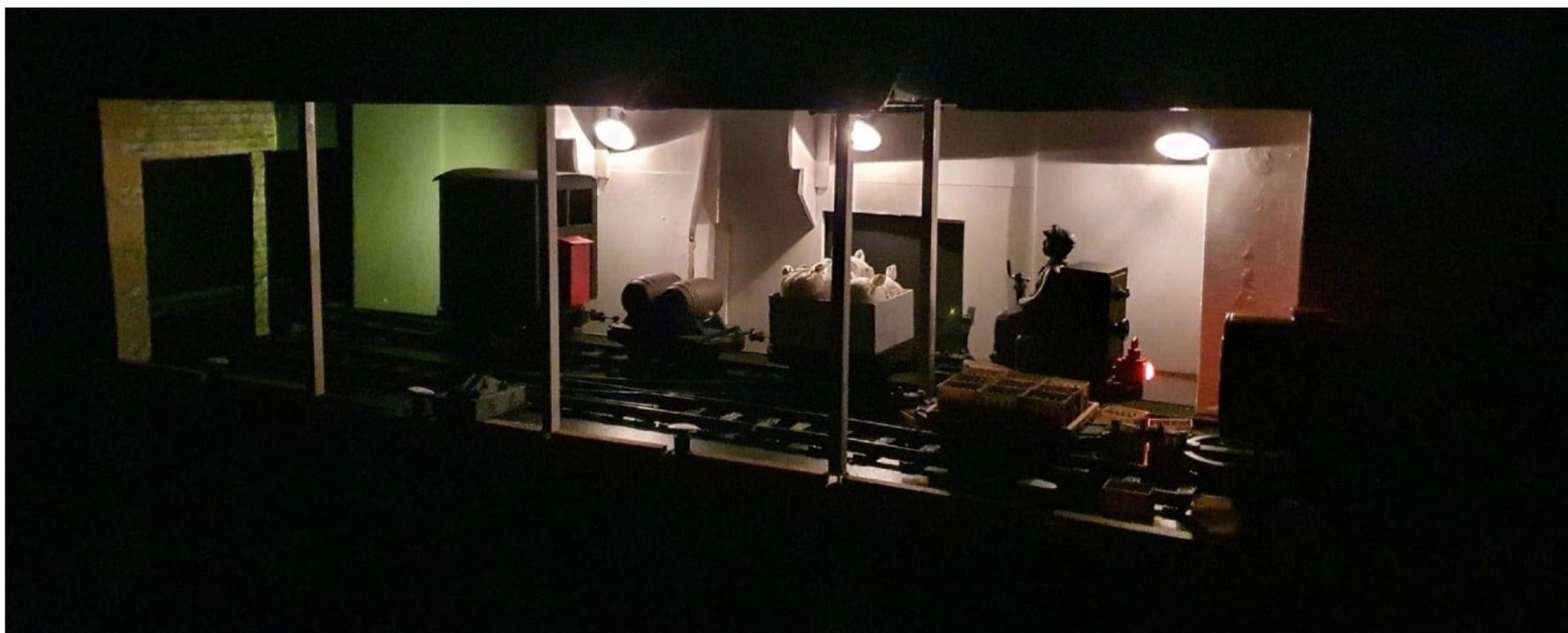


*The Quay is a busy place.*

A boring but important word about foamboard; there are two very different kinds. Expanded PVC board, often described as Foamex, is strong and heavy but slightly flexible, and quite expensive. It's sufficiently strong to form the track base for my raised outdoor railway. The other is a sandwich of light foam and thin sheets of plastic. It is not weatherproof or very strong, but it is cheap, light and easy to cut, and I use it for buildings on my indoor lines, such as this.

I build up the baseboard with slots into which the walls and supports fit, and the whole thing dismantles for transport and maintenance. And, of course, when there's a derailment behind the scenery; fortunately that's not too often.

The inspiration for my couplings was the swing coupling used on the two foot gauge Guinness Railway at the Dublin Brewery as seen in an excellent book by Hugh Oram. It gave me many ideas for this project, including trains coming through holes in walls at odd angles and a kickback quay siding. I've yet to build an indoor spiral, but I recommend this book to any micro layout builder. The idea of this layout was that the tight curves and back straight would be invisible to the casual viewer; that trains would come out of one wall and disappear into another, rather like ghosts or trains at St James Gate Brewery. This involved some tight clearances, but that's just a matter of trial and error.



*A very nice night-time view courtesy of the lighting.*



*The quay is a busy place, with crates and workers taking a tea break, who seem to be oblivious to the buxom lass sunbathing.*

So, to the buildings; the original Fish Shed had sat on my larger indoor line and had a screen between the quay and the main railway behind it, so I borrowed that whole. It also had a building at the left which became the headshunt and loco shed, and pillars to support the roof, which I cunningly rearranged to suit the new track layout. An extra building on the right was added to hide the curves from the eyes of the sensitive observer. The original roof was too big for the base, though.

I thought about it for several months, then took Stanley knife and steel rule to it, and cut its rear end flush with the baseboard. It took about a quarter of an hour, in all, and I like the result. It now sits happily against the wall and may one day get a backscene The rest is ornamentation.



*A lot of freight on the quayside.*

Lolly stick planking on either side of the siding, hardwood quay edging, lighting from various sources, including SLR Models lamps with internal cells for buffer stop and rolling stock, industrial style lighting run from two AA cells, and assorted people and goods doing more or less credible things. What needs to be done? The roof has taken a bit of a battering over the years and could do with being

refurbished, which will happen when I get a “Round Tuit”. Maybe a bit more planking and even a sea surface on which to rest the quay? The two small children who came to look at it the other day loved it, so I must be doing something right!



**John Rogers**

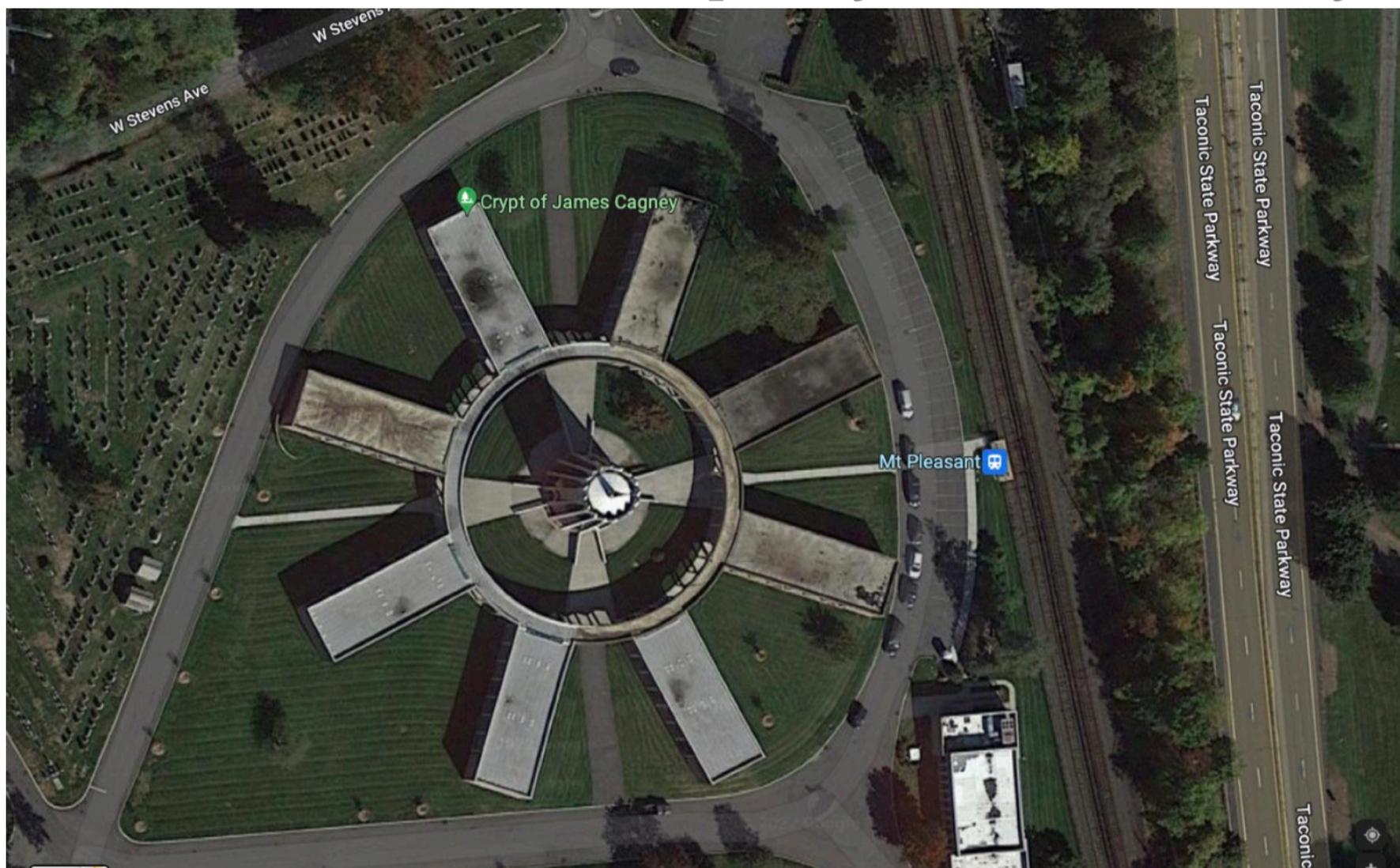
I was born and lived most of my life in Bristol, England and retired from software engineering 15 years ago. Involved in railway modelling in various scales all my adult life. I took up 16mm scale modelling in 1983, using live steam and radio controlled battery

locos, many of them built myself. These run on my garden railways, which, at in the past have been 45mm, dual or 32mm gauge, but are now settled on 32mm. For testing locos and stock, I built a portable indoor layout with 14” Faller e-train curves, which seems to have grown. Recently, I became too stiff for much bending down, so ripped up the ground level line in my garden and replaced it with a railway-on-a-stick with these same curves. I also started building mini and then micro indoor lines. My inspiration for these was the work of the great Carl Arendt. I particularly like his idea that the space above the layout is free. The Brewery Quay is my first layout built to the four square foot criterion. I suspect that it will not be my last.

# Mount Pleasant train stop

Al Bartens

*How about a micro inspired by a station at a cemetery?*



*The platform is so short at Mount Pleasant, you can barely see it under the Google Maps symbol.*

**If you first saw this halt** on a model railroad you would think it to be pure fiction. Yet it is quite real. It's a stop on the Metro North Harlem Line in Mount Pleasant, NY and serves two adjacent cemeteries: Gate of Heaven and Kensico. The stop, which is essentially a raised concrete platform around 50ft long (a little over half a car length), is served by one train in each direction on weekdays and three trains in each direction on weekends. The stop exists largely for visitors to the cemetery, as there is no parking available, and is not intended for commuters.

Gate of Heaven is the more famous of the two, being the final resting place for such well known individuals as Babe Ruth, Billy Martin, James Cagney, Dorothy Kilgallen, Bob Considine, N.Y. Mayor Jimmy Walker, Sal Mineo and Mrs. Harry Houdini. It's run by the NY Archdiocese, which is said to have been instrumental in the train stop's creation. The cemetery was consecrated in 1918. Modeling this stop should be quite easy, and seems tailor made for a micro layout. I never would have

thought that passenger service could be included in a shunting layout, but I am doing just that on a 4ft long fork TT (1:100) layout I'm building. In operation there is a freight car (e.g., milk tank on the early morning train) between the loco and the coach, which gets replaced by a car on the other fork leg, such as a goods van, after the train shuttles between stops at each end (admittedly not very far apart) of the layout. I've added a narrow gauge track adjacent to the fork leg with the freight cars. This track provides movable locations (cars) for goods transfer between between the gauges. My passenger train is essentially a push-pull operation with a brake van serving as the cab car at the opposite end from the loco. I also have a DMU car that can be used as an auto coach to serve the same purpose.



*Even in the winter, devoid of leaves on the trees. The location has charm.*



*A block of concrete for a simple platform. It's only 50 feet long. That should be a simple enough idea for a micro layout builder.*



*Behind the station platform is an interesting shelter.*



*Alfred's next micro will incorporate things he has learned from the discovery of the Mount Pleasant train stop.*

# *The Cartel “flash” layout building challenge*

*Twenty four hours to build a Micro*

When “Cartel Conversations” podcast host, Tom Conboy was lacking in inspiration he had a crazy idea of building a layout in a day. A “flash project” to get the creative juices going. The challenge started at Midnight, Saturday May 28th UTC. If, like your editor and Tom you lived in the central USA, then the start time was 6pm on the Friday.

I was due to enter the challenge but had to attend a funeral on the Saturday so I had to withdraw. But the entries looked a lot of fun and I hope to have a go the next time Tom has this crazy idea.



**Tom’s idea** used a picture frame and fishing line operation to model a street car line terminus.



**Micro layout maestro Bob Hughes** was in on the competition like you’d expect, and created this small locomotive shed and coaling stage scene.



**Will Fowler from Grand Rapids, Michigan**, was a new name to us at the Cartel, but he turned out this interesting idea in N scale using Kato Unitrack. In his own words, all the things for the layout were laying around the house gathering dust.



## *At the show*

*Rod Shazw*

*A tale about keeping your operators happy at an exhibition*



### *Chocolates anyone?*

Some years ago, I was invited to take my new American HO scale micro layout, *Yorkford, PA*, to a show near where I lived at the time in the UK. Although the layout was tiny and could easily be operated by one person, I asked a friend and fellow model railway fan to come along and help set it up and run it, partly for companionship and partly to give me a bit of a break.

My friend is a skilled British outline modeller but he prefers to watch passenger trains running round an oval and had never operated an American switching railroad or used Kadee couplers. My locos were all DCC equipped and he'd never used this either. So I'd brought along some carefully prepared switching sequences, which I thought would be just the job to keep us occupied, entertain the public and help my friend get used to operating the trains. So while one of us ran a train, the other would give instructions on the switching moves and

prepare the next train in the fiddle yard. If we each knew exactly what was supposed to run and when, everything would be plain sailing.

I'd also brought a list of all the DCC settings because I was sure he'd be interested in looking at how you can program a loco.

The show began and I made up the first short train for my friend to start moving out of the fiddle yard. He soon got used to the DCC controller, the Kadee couplers and the movement of the locos, which I'd set to run slow for switching, and for a short while all went well.



*Bananas, bananas, everywhere.*

Then he said, “Shall we put this blue boxcar on? It’s my favourite.”

“Er, no, that doesn’t go on yet”.

“Well, we can stick to the list if you like...”

I could tell he wasn’t greatly enthusiastic. “I suppose there’s no real need as long as we’ve got something running”, I said. “Yes ok, let’s put the blue boxcar on.”

“And we could put a tank car on. I like tank cars, they’re more interesting than boxcars”, he said. So I got a tank car ready.

We had brought seven locos, but only one had sound. Guess which one took up all the running time on his watch? With bell constantly on the go and horn blaring away? He wasn’t particularly interested in how I’d set it up, just in having a play. When the next couple of kids came along to watch, he said to them, “These brown boxcars have chocolate in them, and the yellow ones have bananas”. Something told me he wasn’t that interested in sticking to the operating sequence. But at a show, a layout is meant to entertain. And I realised that my friend needed to be entertained too. So the rest of his stints at the controls were focused on running the sound-equipped loco up and down, colour-grouping the freight cars and getting himself into knots by seeing how many cars

he could squeeze into a given section of track, despite my warnings that those sidings were pretty short.

It would be a matter of time before things went pear-shaped. And they did – wrong turnout settings, derailments, clogged sidings, the odd short circuit.

But nobody was really bothered. The layout was just as much fun for them. For my friend, the mini-disasters were like water off a duck’s back. And as a bonus he turned out to be an excellent frontman. He was more than happy to engage adults and kids alike, getting them to press a button on the front of the layout to make the factory chimney smoke, handing over the controller so they could have a go running a train, and talking in a very erudite way about model railways in general.

I relaxed and abandoned the switchlist, and we both came away happy. Which is important if you’re going to need your mate’s help again!

# *Autenbak*

*Paul Corkrum*

*H0 Scale 3.5mm:1ft 48" x 6" 1245mm x 165mm*



*Autenbak is a busy place there's always a train or two in the station.*

The main inspiration for this layout came when some Heathcote automation boards came my way, along with a big bag of bottlebrush trees and time made available due to an employment break. Rummaging around various boxes and shelves produced enough items and timber to build the layout on a 48" x 6" baseboard plus a German outline 0-6-0T. Only a few additional figures, a carriage for the loco to push around and a Piko Railcar as a second train were specific purchases for the project. For anyone who thinks they know the part of Germany the backscene represents, sorry, it was sold as being the Rocky Mountains in the US. The track plan was based on the functionality of the Heathcote control board which dictated a "tuning fork" arrangement.

The operation is totally hands off and fully automated, except the individual building and platform lighting which is controlled by switches accessible from the rear. Sequence begins with both trains in the station, and the two trains alternate leaving the station after receiving a green signal which resets to red after the train has passed (Out),

pausing off-scene, and returning (Back) from which the layouts name is derived.

When the first train has completed the out and back sequence the point changes and the second train moves. Occasionally other rolling stock may be used including a Blue Engine.

Operation is under control of a Heathcote Electronics SA9-S board with the Servo option using Heathcote IRDOT infra-red detector boards for train detection located near the ends of track and a further one just before the tunnel. The SA-9S supplies the train power and has an acceleration function from start with a de-acceleration function activated by the IRDOT located at the tunnel entrance. Power is routed to the appropriate train via the point blades. This board also controls the signals which are not a German pattern. For a fuller description of the SA9-S and its capabilities please see Heathcote's SA9 page at ([heathcote-electronics.co.uk](http://heathcote-electronics.co.uk)) The servo operating the point is driven from a MERG EZ-Points servo control board using a MERG servo mount to locate the servo.



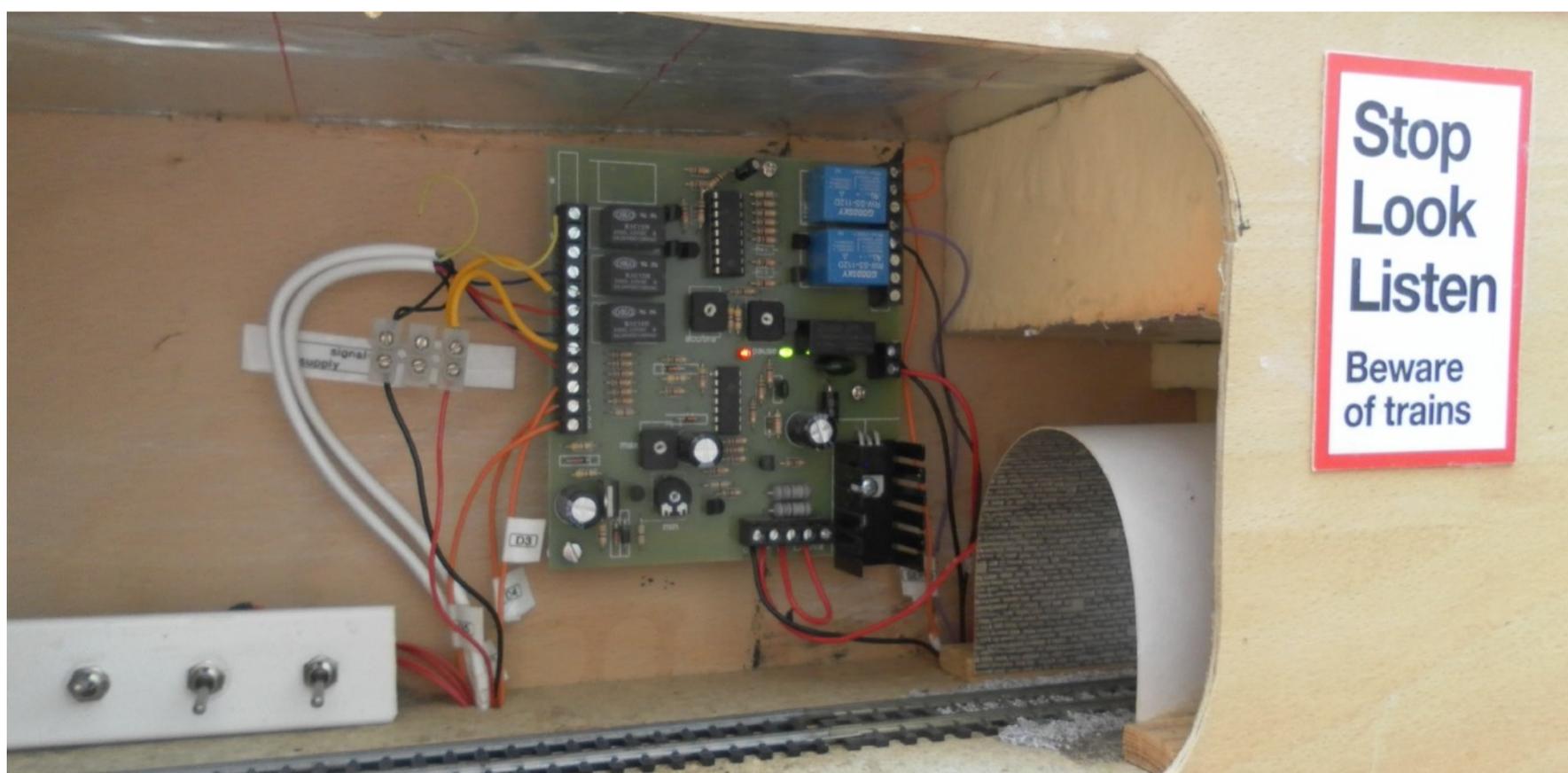
*A simple tuning fork track plan for this busy station.*

Both the Heathcote board's power and the track traction power is supplied from a 12V dc power supply, originally used with an external PC Hard drive. This also provides the power for the internal building LED lighting. Track is Peco Code 100 Setrack with the odd bit of Hornby included. Layout lighting is from LED strip lighting purchased from Ikea for a household project and never used.

The only modification to the rolling stock is a small length of white tape underneath to ensure the signal from the IR transmitter is reflected back to

the sensor.

Scenery uses usual suspects, Metcalf stonework, Merit tunnel mouth, Wills Building, Woodland Scenics and Noch scatter, Noch figures, and other assorted recognisable bits, as well as the trees that kicked the whole project off. The "Mountain" was formed with carved Celotex insulation covered in a Filler /PVA / Paint concoction, with additional use of match pots, and covered with the scatter materials. There is still the opportunity to add a few more scenic details to the layout, which may happen if it ever goes on "public" exhibition.



*The works that keep it running.*



*A view through the tunnel to the buffer stops of this busy little station.*



**CARTEL CONVERSATIONS**  
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# Jordans Cove

David Fugere

Scale : H0 3.5mm:ft. Size 12" x 26" 305mm x 915mm



*A short works train crosses the creek.*

**After building my first mini layout,** Port Haney & Tile Company a switching layout, I wanted something simple and easy to run trains to relax and watch. With some HOn30 engines and other equipment the scale and gauge was an easy choice.

Construction began with these stipulations :

1. Use surplus track building supplies.
2. Use a structures from storage bins.
- 3 Layout small enough to store on shelf or top of cabinet.
4. Have fun.

I made a full size flat mockup on cardboard before construction begins to help visualize track, roads, structures and terrain. Size was dependent on two pieces of white extruded packing material and a left over 5mm Luan plywood. The white polystyrene was glued to the Luan with Aleen's tacky glue. A full size

track base was cut from a second scrap of luan plywood and used as a temporary base to glue PC ties at every every fifth tie location. Code 70 rail pre-bent was then soldered to the PC ties. With both rails tacked to the printed circuit board ties it was carefully removed and used to position and glue the wood ties to the cork roadbed. I then shaped the white packing Styrofoam into land forms then covered them with a thin layer of sculpture mold. The water feature needed a retaining wall and the bridge and trestle needed abutments. I made rough forms from coated cardboard cut from milk cartons then mixed sloppy plaster of Paris to pour into the forms. After removing the forms random rocks were carved to resemble a wall. The small bridge and short trestle were built on the layout stick by stick. Trees, shrubs and grasses were added from my storage bins.



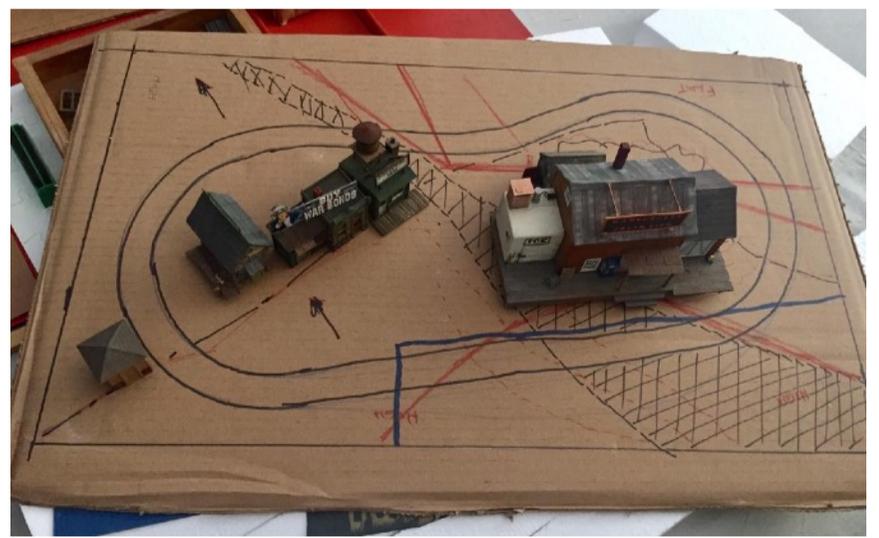
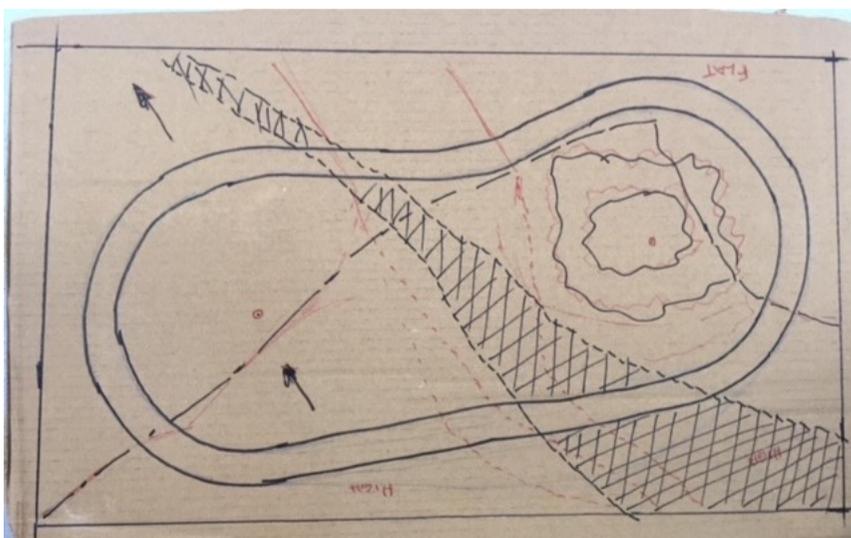
*Big Blue pulls a short train on Jordan Cove.*

This layout provides opportunity to run and trains, boats, trucks and other vehicles. I got to experiment with air dry clay, static grass applicator and hand bending rail.

Since completion, I've made a full cover from foam board. This keeps dust and dirt off the track and buildings, plus the birds can't pick the lichen off trees for their nests. A small box to store equipment and small details also keeps

everything in one place. The controller comes from bits and pieces found on Amazon, including a plastic project box, PWM control, directional switch plus on/off switch.

Even though small this layout provides plenty of opportunity for adding small details and setting up mini vignettes with little people, trains and vehicles.



*Full size layout planning, the great advantage of micro layout building.*



*Bobber caboose bobs along at the rear of the train.*



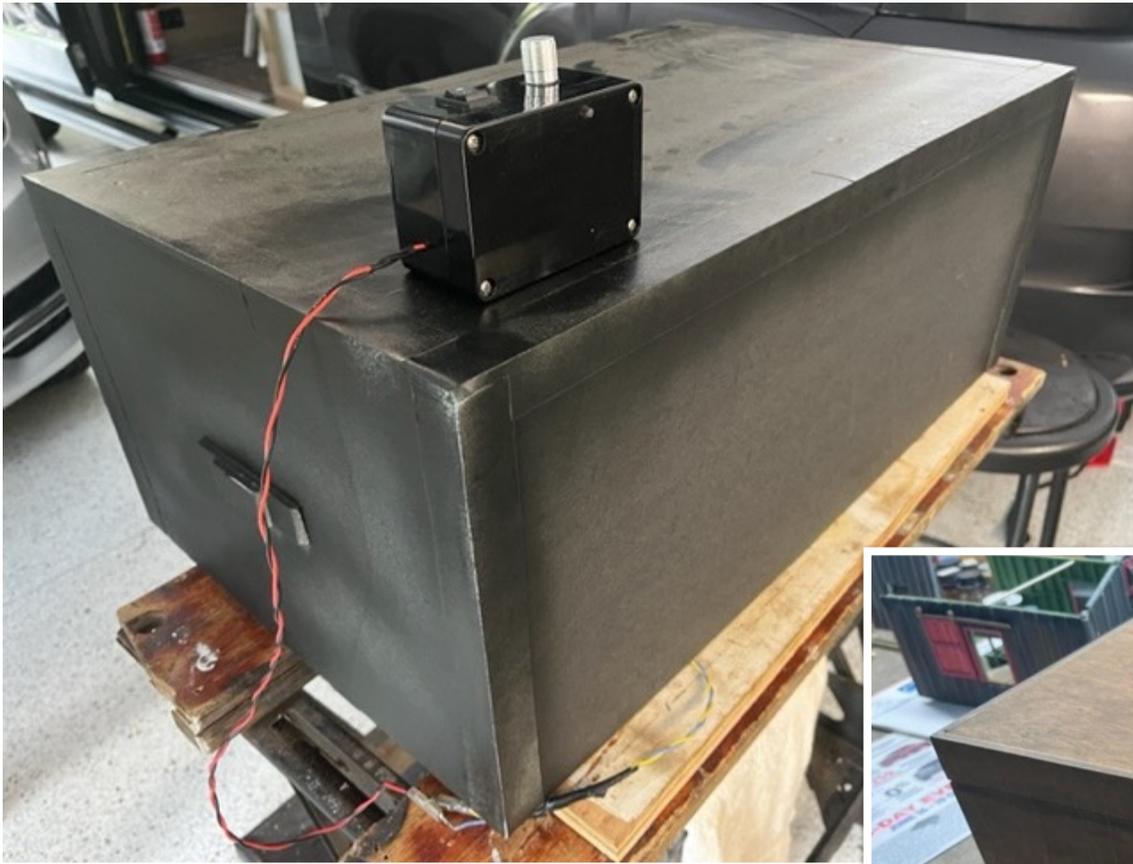
*Ol' Yeller crosses the creek with a short train.*



*Ol' Yeller trundles around the backs of the buildings.*



*“Shorty” cars are great for micro layouts enabling you to model a longer train in your confined layout space.*



*David's foam board layout cover and compact controller.*



*The storage box takes all the stock and scenic accessories.*



# Concrete Block Works

Peter Gordon

7/8ths scale 32mm gauge. Size: 9' x 18" 3,000mm x 450mm



*The loco at rest in this typical industrial location.*

**The baseboards** are two Model Railway Solutions standard types glued together, length about 150 cm and width 45/60cm. Track work is all Peco SM32 including the turntable. The manual point switch is from Bertram Heyn's G scale program but works well in 7/8ths industrials. Ballast is Noch 9172/9372/9374 which although N & H0 scale is perfect, together with sand off the beach for this scale. The rest of the scenery is Model Scene cut to fit. The bulk of the buildings are scratch built from Evergreen and Plastruct. The exceptions are the loading silo which is a Kids Globe 1:32 farm silo and the fuel tank which is an LGB wagon tank.

The loco is a Roundhouse Hercules with the end

sides removed and seat etc; and given a Ruston gearbox from the Modelearth range. It works well as a small 7/8ths loco. All the rolling stock is LGB and Slaters K skips altered and kitbashed to suit. Here, I have used axleboxes and couplings from Modelearth and Fineline models and 4 and 3 hole wheels with specially cut axles from Binnie engineering. Plastruct tubing is used to beef up the axles between the wheels.

## Editor Says:

Peter's layout is most definitely over 4 square feet in area. But is a shining example of a layout that, as Carl used to say; "is in the spirit of a micro."



*The capacity for detail in the larger scales is endless.*



*Great weathering on the lean to, with a nice mix of textures between the wood and wiggly tin.*



*Fuel wagon hidden in a siding.*



*Overall view of this small layout. The cylindrical loader is based on a children's farm toy.*

# Squarefoot Mine

Günther Klitz

Scale: O9 (7mm=1ft) Layout size 30cm x 30cm 12" x 12"



*Hi folks.*

*Sit down, be quiet and don't fidget. Uncle Günni will tell you a story...*

*In 1902, the "Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing Company" was founded by five businessmen at Two Harbors, Minnesota, USA. Their intention was to mine for minerals, suitable for the production of abrasive paper. After overcoming great initial difficulties, the 3M company, which had moved to St Paul in 1910, started to prosper at the beginning of the twenties and developed continuously to today's global player.*

*Born in 1887, Charles Williams worked as a foreman in the smallest of the corundum mines. Around 1925, 3M's sandpaper production had increased significantly. Due to its small size, it didn't have the required production capacity, and closure was decided.*

*There were some small sandpaper manufacturers with a demand for corundum, but 3M did not supply them for they required the minerals for themselves. Charles Williams saw his chance. He contacted the management and offered to take over the mine. As 3M no longer had use for it, they agreed and it was sold to Williams for the symbolic price of \$50. He left 3M, recruited staff and managed to secure long-term supply contracts with some of the smaller sandpaper*

*manufacturers. Since 3M times, there was a joke among the miners that due to the small size, the mine only offered one square foot of space for everyone. Williams, who had a great sense of humor, adopted this and called his company Squarefoot Mine. Business flourished and he achieved modest prosperity.*

*After he had died, his son and later his grandson continued to run the mine. In 1962, they got the opportunity to take over an electric locomotive including ore cars and electrical equipment from an abandoned iron ore mine at a reasonable price. This significantly increased the productivity of the mine, which had been operated with mules and hand pushed cars until then. It is run by the great-grandson of the company founder, James Williams, also known as "Big Jim" due to his impressive size. The mine still owns sufficient mineable mineral deposits for which a further demand exists. Occasionally sapphires are found in the tunnels. These are a mostly blue variation of corundum and form a welcome additional income.*

*So the future of the company is secured...*

**Note:** *The history of the 3M Company, as presented in the first paragraph, is reality. Charles Williams and his Squarefoot Mine are pure fiction.*

*The mine occupies a such a small area, to which gives it it's name*



*Big Jim is the man in charge*



*One square foot of delightful Micro layout atmosphere.*

**So much for the history.** When a layout has not much to offer in size, track length and operation, it at least should have a nice story.

When people ask me about my hobby, they often did not really understand what light railway models are. Therefore, I had the idea of building a presentation layout, small enough just to grab it with one hand to take it with me and display it where I want. I am not fond of pizza layouts, so the initial idea was just a piece of track, a small shed behind, some greenery around it, ready. To add a little sense to the operation a mining tunnel in the mountain and discharging facilities should

exist. Everything reduced to the essentials.

After I started building, however, the demands slowly were growing; idea and execution were refined more and more. Meanwhile I had built an American-style wooden mine building from coffee stirrers and corrugated cardboard just for fun. As a test, I placed it on the layout and it looked rather good in this environment so the original idea was abandoned. Now it should become a "real" railway layout. Moreover, this was a good opportunity to improve my landscaping skills. Therefore, the new topic was: a tiny private mine somewhere in the north of the USA.

To keep it handy, I had chosen a size of more or less 30 x 30 cm. In imperial dimensions this is about 1 x 1 foot, so the name was found right away: Squarefoot Mine. It all started on a base of 10 mm plywood on which the coarse landscape was formed from Styrofoam boards and pieces. The track was made from Code 80 rail profiles soldered onto copper-clad circuit board strips. To fit into the landscape a curve radius of 100 mm was necessary. The total track length is just 60 cm (2'). There is no point. The building was set on its place and rocks from cork bark were fitted all around. For the fine modelling of the landscape, I used self-made paper-maché. This was made from egg cardboard boxes dissolved in water and mixed with glue. Yard and street areas consist of glued on sand, which got some weathering after drying. Vegetation is made from electrostatically applied fibers and various green stuff from various manufacturers. A few years ago, I got some very cheap H0 scale trees. Their shape was not bad, but the foliage consisted of some rather sparse

fibrous fluffy stuff. After a treatment with spray adhesive and leaf flakes, they looked considerably better and fitted surprisingly well in size. From the same source, I had similar Z-size trees. When treated the same way they worked well as bushes.

The poles of the catenary were made from some nice dry twigs I found at a bush on a winter walk. These were cut to length and fixed with supports of brass U profiles. The cantilever is a piece of a toothpick supported by a wire. One of the poles is visible on the left of the picture of the tunnel entrance. The external contact wire consists of 0.8 mm brass wire. It is a little heavy in scale, but I could not apply tension on it due to the tight curve. So it had to have a certain stability by itself. After weathering, however, the thickness is hardly noticeable. The contact wire is suspended from the masts by means of "insulators" made of small glass beads. At the end pole, it is connected via a pulley to a "tension weight" made of round plastic material.



*Flying over the mine you get a great idea of the compact nature of the layout.*

Inside the tunnel, the catenary consists of a conductor rail, in this case a piece of code 40 rail. It is said, the reason is that a wire would be too sensitive in the rough operation inside the mine. In truth, I just ran out of brass wire.

Since the mine is believed to exist since the 1920s and nothing has been thrown away, over the course of time various scrap has accumulated everywhere. I found a lot of bits and pieces in my several scrap boxes, which I generously distributed in quiet corners, where they could comfortably grow over.

The information and warning signs come from the Internet. They were appropriately scaled, printed and spread on the layout. Likewise, the labels on the old oil cans next to the stairs.

Three snakes are crawling around in the landscape. These were made of a piece of copper wire, one end of which was filed to a point, the other end was given a dab of solder, which then was filed into a snake's head. Bent and painted to match, they now can enjoy their life. To protect the visitors on exhibitions I only used non-venomous snakes, of course.

A frame made of dark stained picture frame profile was fixed all around the bottom of the layout to achieve a decorative appearance.

All figures come from my collection. However, all were rebuilt to a greater or lesser extent, especially the arms. To get them in the desired position, I slightly cut the inside, carefully heated the outside with the soldering iron tip and then bent them in the right position. For example, the office worker with the coffee cup at the top of the stairs had a stretched arm, which now holds the cup after bending. The truck driver started as a mason with a trowel and a brick in his hand, which I removed. He stood slightly stooped so that he easily could be leaned against the slope.

The vehicles of the mine are self-made too. The steel box tipper got the chassis of an old Arnold N scale car. Its trough was disposed of, and everything on the chassis was removed except for the frame and the wheels. A new frame from 4 mm brass U profile was created and glued over it. The dump body consists of 1 mm polystyrene sheet. The openable front wall is moved in hinges made of brass strips and tubes. When tipping, it is opened by a lever made of brass wire in order to empty the load.

For the propulsion of the locomotive, the chassis of a Roco industrial diesel locomotive in H0e was at hand. It was shortened by one axle and equipped with a coreless motor. The superstructure was designed by CAD on the computer. Parts were cut from 1 mm polystyrene sheet and assembled. The rivets are made of 0.5 mm copper wire glued into pre-drilled holes. Locomotive and box tipper were weathered with heavily diluted paint and pastel chalks from artists' supplies.

The truck was found on a Christmas market. It

originally was a tow truck. The towing device was removed and a new brass chassis frame with loading area was installed. It got a license plate from Minnesota (Internet), some decorative details and a heavy weathering. Eventually it was prepared to start its service at Squarefoot Mine.

Because the train runs into the tunnel, the locomotive needed lighting. I had the idea that the light should be switched on when entering the tunnel and switched off when coming out again. This led to the idea of the overhead catenary. Because the system is operated analogue, a little trick was needed. The locomotive is powered from both rails, the lighting from the catenary and the inner rail. One might think that the common use of one rail by both voltages will create a short circuit when plus of the track voltage meets minus of the lighting voltage. This does not happen, however, as long as both voltages come from separate current sources. In my stock I had a plug-in power supply from an old answering machine that supplied both 12 V and 9 V. Bingo! 12 V for the locomotive, 9 V for the lighting. It works perfect. The lighting is switched on and off simply by the inner (mine) catenary being powered; the outer is not. Of course I also can switch on the power outside (e.g. for night driving). The building also has lighting inside and a lamp outside near the door.

The operation of the layout is more than simple. At the rear side of the mountain, the tunnel can be accessed by an opening. There is also a bit of scenery here but this area is not normally visible to exhibition visitors. The train is loaded by hand and then runs through the tunnel to the outside. There it is dumped onto the truck and the train returns to the tunnel. OK, not really a sensational operation, but the whole thing should still be a presentation layout.



*The overhead line tension weight is a nice detail.*



*This is the view that greets the operator of Günther's layout.*



*The man taking a break should be careful of the snake.*

*All Günther's figures have been converted a little, like this one to hold a coffee mug.*



The layout features loading into the truck. In a coming issue of **The Dispatch**, Günther will tell us how he achieves this.



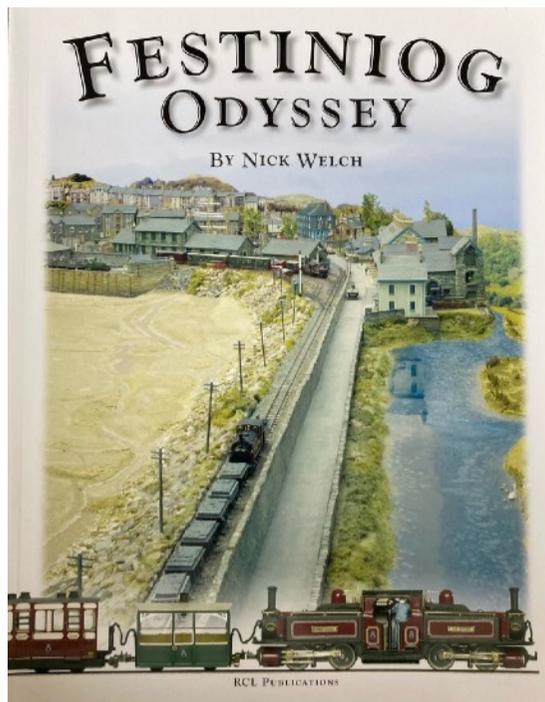
I was born on July 5, 1950 in the German town of Bebra in walking distance of the station. So, my interest in railways started early. For Christmas 1955, my grandparents presented me two starter packs of a Piko H0 railway. This infected me with the modelling virus. In childhood and youth, various railway layouts in H0 were erected, not all of them really successful.

Like with many of us, a longer break from modeling took place due to education, studies and establishing myself in work.

When I started again in the mid-1970s, I realized that I wasn't interested in standard gauge railways any longer. Coming to Hannover for job reasons, I came in contact to a group of modelers, which built narrow-gauge railways in H0e on modules. Narrow gauge! That was what I had looked for. So, I joined them and lived my modelling interests as a Fremo member for more than the next 20 years.

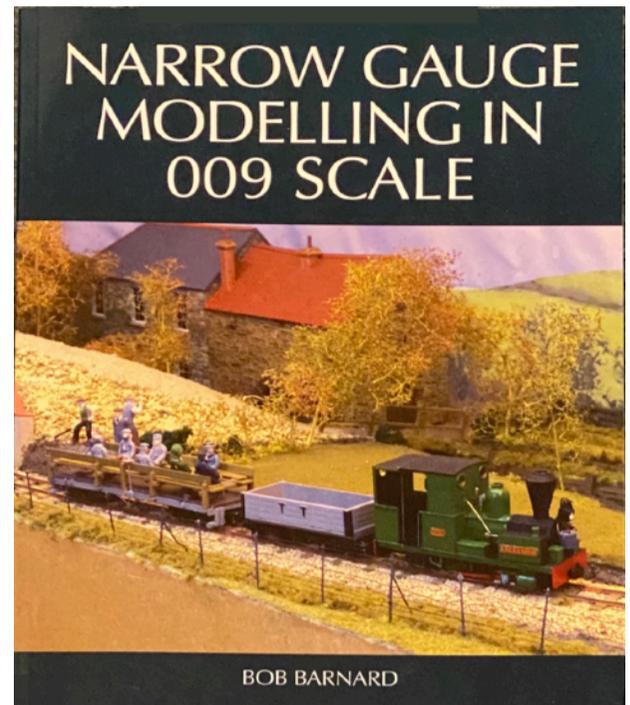
However, I didn't become younger, the precision of the hand and the sharpness of the eye decreased. The demand for more details also had grown. A larger scale was required. With Magic Train, affordable models in size 0e were available, thus the change was decided. Now I am building in 0e and especially in size 09 since then.

Meanwhile two small mining railway layouts in 09 came to existence. For ready-made models in this size are rare and expensive, I build my vehicles myself. Moreover, that's more fun.

**Festiniog Odyssey.****Nick Welch**

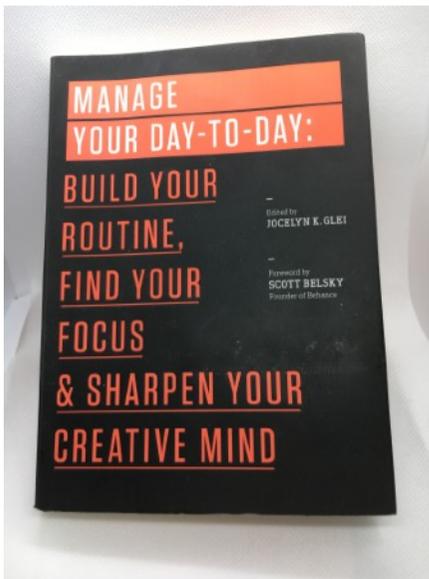
I must admit two things at the very outset: first, this is a book about a subject that is very much not a micro layout and, secondly, I've not actually read this from front to back yet. Point two is no fault of the author or publisher. It's more that every time I open it I find a picture that draws me in: a photo of one of the author's excellent locomotives, a piece of rolling stock or a scratch built building. Sometimes I barely get past the cover. I've driven down the Cob into Porthmadog more times than I can remember and when I look at the front cover I'm there, driving along, looking up eagerly for a whisp of steam or listening for the whistle of a Fairlie in the distance.

This book is one I always go to for inspiration. I have no intention of ever modelling the Ffestiniog but I can't help but want to make *something* every time I flick through the pages. The dedication involved and the determination to complete the dream layout no matter what challenges are faced are hugely inspiring. Festiniog Odyssey is, for me, a book that should be on everyone's shelf.

*Chris T.***Narrow Gauge Modelling in 009 Scale****Bob Barnard**

Narrow gauge modelling has traditionally been a scratch builder's realm, though increasingly ready-to-run models are becoming available, particularly in 009 (1:76) and versions of H0 (1:87). Adding to the problem that narrow gauge modelling has fewer participants than standard gauge modelling, narrow gauge encompasses a variety of gauges from 15" to 42". If you were a manufacturer, which one(s) would you focus on? The advent of 3D printing has come to the rescue in many cases, though this is not covered in the book. What is covered is the construction of layouts, locomotives and rolling stock, and the operation and maintenance. The lavishly illustrated book includes detailed information on techniques and goes into some real construction projects of varying degree of difficulty. There is some basic information about 009 modelling, but for the most part I would consider this a book for someone who has model building experience, and in that regard I think it is an excellent book. It was published in 2019 and is available new and used and even in digital format.

*Alfred B*



**Manage Your Day-To-Day: Build Your Routine, Find Your Focus & Sharpen Your Creative Mind.** **Jocelyn K. Glei**

For heaven's sake - what does a book titled *Manage Your Day-To-Day: Build Your Routine, Find Your Focus & Sharpen Your Creative Mind* have to do with model railroading or building a micro layout? How about everything? Building a model railroad of any size requires some discipline on the part of the hobbyist; any guidance we can obtain on this score merits attention. One chapter of Glei's book stands out amongst the rest.

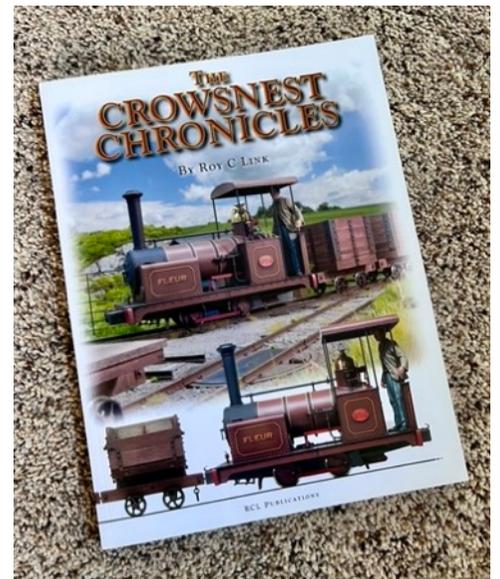
While this book's 21 chapters are largely aimed at practitioners of the artistic, virtually every page speaks to model railroaders - after all are not are model building efforts an exercise in artistry? Gretchen Rubin authors a chapter entitled "Harnessing the Power of Frequency" in which she claims "the unglamorous habit of frequency fosters both productivity and creativity". Here are the benefits she details:

- "Frequency makes starting easier"
- "Frequency keeps ideas fresh"
- "Frequency keeps the pressure off"
- "Frequency sparks creativity"
- "Frequency nurtures frequency"
- "Frequency fosters productivity"
- "Frequency is a realistic approach"

As a model railroader you will catch yourself nodding in agreement as Rubin amplifies and explains each of these mantras. It would be unfair to the editor to go into much more detail about each of her major points. Instead, I leave it to my readers to consider reading her book for themselves. If you never get to her book, then just repeat to yourself the seven mantras Glei posits and I have listed above.

Buy her book - I ordered mine on Amazon for a pittance - and apply its lessons to your model railroad building and you will thank its editor for putting this book together.

*Nick K.*



**Crowsnest Chronicles** **Roy C Link**

This is a book that I refer to a lot right now as I start my own 16mm scale project. The late Roy Link's Crowsnest Tramway concept has always resonated with me, right from its first iteration, published in *Railway Modeller* back in the 1970's, through other versions and scales, to this final version. (I was lucky enough to see Mk.3 at the National Narrow Gauge convention in Minneapolis in 2018.) The quality of the work is of the highest standard, as always. The printing of the book and the reproduction of the images are as excellent as you would come to expect from an RCL publication. All the versions of the concept are covered in the book. With lots of constructional photographs, drawings and descriptions of the techniques he used.

Roy being a professional model maker, has access to all kinds of tools and machinery that I can only dream of. Yet I never feel overawed or out of my depth looking at his work. I find myself looking at it, wondering how I can achieve what he did with my skills. For example, I plan to add a workshop with tools to my 16mm scale micro layout. I want to try to make some of the tools for that scene, a pillar drill in particular. I'm not to sure how to do it yet. But I plan to use styrene tubes and sections, and draw on the inspiration I get from the book.

The layout was pretty much completed before his passing, so it's a fitting tribute to his skills. I hope it is saved somewhere.

*Ian H.*

# Canley Sidings

Colin Beasley

OO gauge 4mm:ft scale 1100mm x 250mm 43" x 10"



*Canley Sidings is a simple Inglenook as you can see from this image.*

**Canley Sidings was a winter project.** I purchased a micro layout baseboard (1102x250x221mm) from ScaleModelScenery.co.uk. who were running a competition which provided a stimulus and a deadline for finishing it. This was the first laser-cut baseboard I have used. I have three of the Hornby Peckett locos, 2x W4 and 1x B2, and I didn't want to put decoders in them to be able to run them on my main layout.

The two warehouses are scratchbuilt from Wills sheets. I wanted to have a building at an angle to the backscene and also one where wagons could be shunted inside. There is a hole on the left of the layout to lead to a fiddle yard but it can be operated without one. With the gate closed there is just enough clearance for a 0-4-0 Peckett and two vans between there and the first turnout, so you can imagine the day has just started for the shunting and the road traffic can get back to normal. Did it turn out the way I wanted to? Yes. Along the way it

developed into what you see. I hadn't thought about lighting the layout when I started building it or putting a 'roof' on it, but after seeing pictures of other small layouts it was the best thing to do. It gives the presentation a lift and the lighting really helps to show the layout off, it is dimmable for when the warehouse lights and the streetlight are on.

Some of the figures are from Dapol and others are the very realistic ones from ModelU.

The wagons are kit-built ones I made some time ago to run on another layout and they have automatic uncouplers. Magnets are placed in strategic locations and couplings have a staple soldered on to them.

The 4mm track and turnouts are by Peco. The lorry is from a Coopercraft kit. The car was a John Day kit. The flue and vents on the warehouses are from scale3d.co.uk.

I've used static grass for the first time and painted lots of figures. The figures are attached with Tacky-Wax so they can be moved and change the scene. I used foam-core board on top of the baseboard and cut a channel for the rod and tube to operate the turnouts. The buildings are set into the ground, I wrap a piece of cling-film around the bottom of the buildings

and then put the ground filler up to them. take the buildings out, level up the ground. I then put the buildings back in when they are finished



*The entire length of the layout. Note to contributors. As the editor I am a sucker for views of layouts like this. If you want to be featured in The Dispatch, send more pictures like this.*

**The Editor says:**

Have you noticed that out of all the pictures of the layout, how few the train actually appears in them? To me, that's the mark of a good micro. To be able to give space over to all the details in a scene that help to create the atmosphere.

These little vignettes like the workers talking or the milkman delivering, can grab you attention and help forget that you are looking at something in a very small space indeed.



*A superb bit of detail, a very atmospheric vignette.*



*The yard throat.*



*Workers stand around discussing Saturday's football game perhaps. Another believable scene.*



*The milkman delivers a couple of pints for the tea room.*



*A Hornby Peckett on duty. A great locomotive for a micro layout.*

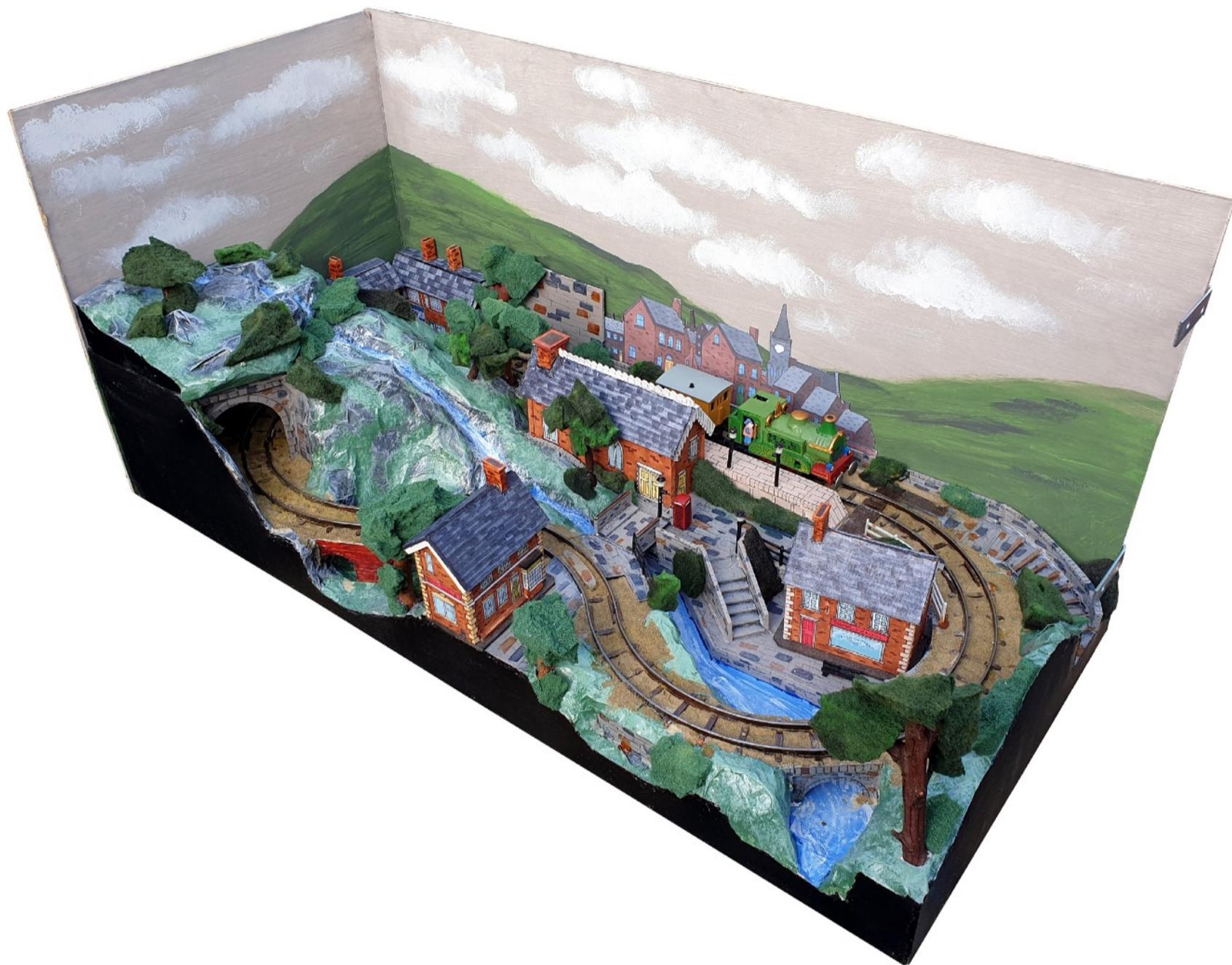


*A man alone with his thoughts, or his pipe...*

# *Ivor the Engine*

*Ben Bucki*

*Clockwork OO scale. Layout size 2' x 1' 610mm x 305mm*



*Overall view of this 2' x 1' slice of childhood memories.*

**With the first COVID-19 Lockdown** in full swing back in 2020, I found, like so many people, a need for a distraction project. It needed to be as close to zero-budget as possible, and wouldn't require specialist modelling materials with the shops closed, and be something of a nice nostalgia-trip distraction... I wanted something comforting, frankly, and after talking to some collectors of vintage O-gauge toy trains on a modelling forum, the idea of tank engines and brightly coloured little wagons and coaches endlessly whizzing round and round really clicked with me. Unfortunately, I didn't have the funds to acquire any of these beautiful tinsplate toys, and certainly not the room to house such trains even on a temporary basis, particularly

with five of us suddenly working and home-schooling in our small house.

Things clicked though when I dug out my ancient Welsotoys/Brimtoy OO-gauge clockwork set; with its ridiculously tightly curved tracks and little tank locomotive, it just screamed out as being appropriate for this build. Basic as it is, the freelance red plastic tank loco is one of my favourite childhood possessions, and might well have been the first OO-gauge train I ever came into contact with... it was at least second hand when I used to play with it in the toybox at my Grandparents house in the 1980's, and it would be fair to say this little set was the catalyst for my interest in railway modelling.



*Ivor rumbles past the Post Office.*

The Welsotoys track would allow for a very compact micro layout indeed, though an early problem was that one of the curves of the track circuit had sadly vanished years ago in a house move. A bit of chopping about with a couple of lengths of compatible early Triang track from the spares box meant I could have a nice continuous run, in a size of about 1ft by 2ft.

With no DIY shops open, a baseboard looked tricky. But then a chance find in the loft turned up a part-completed board and frame, that was built as a demonstration piece for a project back when I was a DT technician. Originally intended for a very compact 009 layout, it had been built to fit inside an underbed storage box, which neatly took care of the issues of storage (and keeping it all out of the way during the daily home-schooling sessions). Fortuitously the size of the part-built board was spot-on for the circuit of track from the Welsotoys set, and what little spare/scrap wood I had in the shed could be used for doing the rest of the woodwork.

I loved the Ivor the Engine stories when I was growing up, and returned to them in recent years to share them with our foster-daughters; the calmer alternative to the (seemingly increasingly manic) goings-on of the Island of Sodor. At the Cartwright Hall Museum and Gallery in Bradford there'd been a show of drawings and props from the Smallfilms collection, and the idea for some sort of modelling based on the Ivor stories had been rattling around my brain, in a somewhat unfocussed fashion, ever since. After a Locked-down evening of reading the stories to our youngest, and the family missing being able to go to Wales, there was another moment of realisation when I twigged that my planned little layout with its tight curves, and a tank engine and short train rattling round and round, would be perfect for a model based on the Ivor stories.

Models of Ivor the Engine seem to be most popular in the garden scales, though I know of a couple of people who've done some particularly good representations in 00 and 009. That does raise the point of trying to work out if Ivor is meant to be standard or narrow gauge, as it's very much a narrow atmosphere in most of the stories, but he does end up running out to the mainline engine sheds in one tale. Then I found myself trying to work out where Llaniog actually is, as it has coal mines (South Wales), gold mines (mid-Wales), and so on- then I remembered there's also a dragon living in an old volcano, and realised that I was probably overthinking it. It was frankly a slightly

generic, outsiders (and somewhat cliché-filled) view of Wales back in the day, but no less comforting for all that.

Sketching it out showed I could incorporate several key scenes from the books and television episodes. With model shops closed, I decided the best way of approaching this might be to try and create a 3d-representation of the pages from the storybooks. Working in card and paper, mainly with watercolours and marker pens, and odds of other scrap materials, I'd be calling back to some of the illustration work I used to do in my school and college days.



*It's difficult to believe that the church in the distance is not much more than one foot away.*

The viaduct and river bridge were the first two structures made to try the viability of the idea out; the latter is a plumbing part (a pipe bracket) which I found washed-up on a beach when I was about 8, and it's been used on about half-a-dozen model railways since. It seems fitting to include it again in such a nostalgia-led project. The viaduct was trickier, the arches were upcycled from a dismantled piece of furniture, and the rest of the structure was

bodged together from scraps of wood, lots of filler, and then it was all sanded to shape. The viaduct is based on a couple that appear frequently in the stories, but it needed to be built on an S-bend for it to fit at all on the layout, somewhat complicating things. The track immediately diving into a tunnel in a cliff-face looks contrived but is accurate to the books.



*This view of Llanioog Town has so much depth and character.*

I chose Llanioog Station, Post Office, and the Fish and Chip Shop as buildings to include, along with a tunnel (and Smoke Hill) as methods of breaking-up the scene. A couple of low-relief buildings were added in one corner too, and all the structures (and the tunnel portals) were made the same way, from MDF scraps or bits of balsawood with 2mm MDF roofs, all covered in plain card. Onto these blocks I drew on details like windows and doors with fineliners, then coloured them with marker pens. Further buildings (more of the town, and a mine) were done as simple 2d sheets, to attach to the backscene.

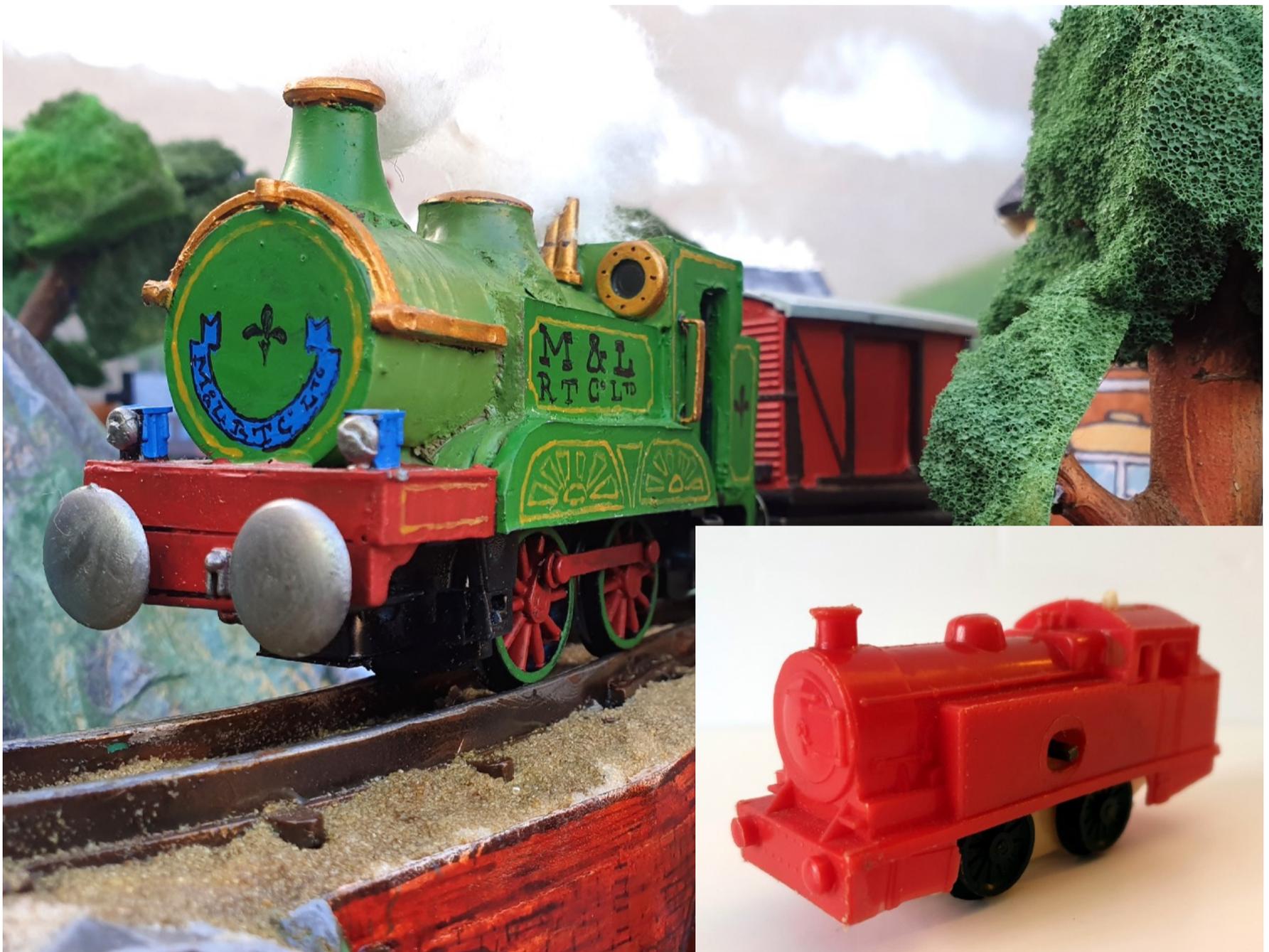
The landforms were built from whatever chunks of packing foam, polystyrene, and card were lying

around (one advantage of everything arriving mail-order in the crisis was a growing stockpile of modelling materials), which were then coated in filler, sanded, then given a topping with papier-mache. I resisted the temptation to add any textured scenic scatter or flock, instead painting details with watercolours and acrylics to try and replicate the style of the illustrations.

Trees and greenery would be an interesting challenge- in the end, I used actual sticks and twigs, and then shredded sponges, coloured with green acrylic. They're not perhaps entirely convincing, but as close to a representation of the greenery of the books as I could manage with the limited resources to hand.

Populating the layout was also going to be tricky- I couldn't easily make them as 3D figures, so decided to do them as 2D drawings instead. I worked from the illustrations, drawing my own versions of a few key characters like Jones the Steam and Dai

Station, coloured them, then scanned them and reproduced them to scale. Cutting such fiddly little figures was difficult, and some paper/card outlines remain, but I suppose it adds to the 60's/70's children's TV show atmosphere of the model.



*Ivor and a typical donor locomotive.*

I didn't want to chop-up my beloved Welsotoys tank engine, so I started acquiring (through auction sites) other clockwork starter locomotives... it would be fair to say that this has since developed into a bit of an obsession, as these old Triang, Hornby, Playcraft, Lima and Brimtoy items have quite a charm about them, as well as surprisingly well-engineered chassis, and also tend to be very cheap.

Ivor himself was built -somewhat ironically perhaps, given their effective pop-culture rivalry- around an old Hornby Thomas the Tank Engine. Lots of plasticard scraps (all I had were offcuts), and a right variety of miscellaneous items, from parts of highlighter pens to drawing pins, went into the

build. The result looks suitably Ivor-like (if a little on the large side), and hand-painting in acrylics and lining-out with marker pens means he's as close as possible as I could get to the illustrations. Standard OO rolling stock wouldn't manage the tight curves, so I raided the scrap-box again, and turned up some warped old Triang carriages. The short metal bogies though worked nicely, allowing some wagons and carriages to be built on them, generally made by cutting-down some broken Triang and Playcraft OO bodies.



*Welsh Pony stops at the Post Office to collect some mail.*

Later, I wanted a second loco. Occasionally other trains do appear in the stories. The 'Juggernaut' was a kind of rail-lorry that covers for Ivor in a story, but it was too small to build around any of the clockwork mechanisms I had. Looking for an alternative, I embraced the ambiguities of the prototype gauge and made a caricature of "Welsh Pony," my favourite locomotive. The real thing was triumphantly restored to service on the Ffestiniog Railway in 2020 around the time my layout was being built, and as I'd also made a model of it in the garden scales at the same time as I was doing the Ivor layout. It seemed fitting to add it to the fleet. The engine was built much as Ivor was, around another Hornby clockwork Thomas; much plasticard, and even more odds and ends of scrap went into it, and it was painted (as my garden-scale model was) in the distinctive light-blue livery the real thing wore in the 1930's.



*Cotton Wool coming from Ivor's chimney.  
Just like on TV*



*Jones the Steam and Dai Station discuss Llaniog Town RUFC's chances at the weekend.*

This has been an incredibly fun project to do; self-contained, different to my usual work, and genuinely enjoyable. It turned out to be just the tonic for the stresses and uncertainties of early 2020, and what's more, it gives me somewhere to run my growing collection of 00 clockwork engines. As modellers we can, I suspect, get caught up in the worry over super-fine detailing,

DCC electrics, and massive express engines or meticulously detailed branch line termini... but I realised that sometimes all I really need to relax is going back to where many of us will have started out, with little trains whizzing round and round comforting little imaginary worlds...

# Tyteford Halt

Mark Purle

P4: 4mm=1ft 18.83mm gauge 44" x 6" 1175mm x 150mm



*Typical! One working while others look on.*

**The only ever layout I built** was back in the late 70's. I started building it when I was about 12, it was N gauge and took up 2 walls of my bedroom with a removable bridge section across the door. All built by myself including baseboard, electrics and scenery. Unfortunately, I lost my Dad when I was only 4 and so it was a case of working it all out for myself. Some years later, the layout was eventually broken up and dismantled due to discovering beer and girls, as I thought it no longer cool to have trains in my bedroom.

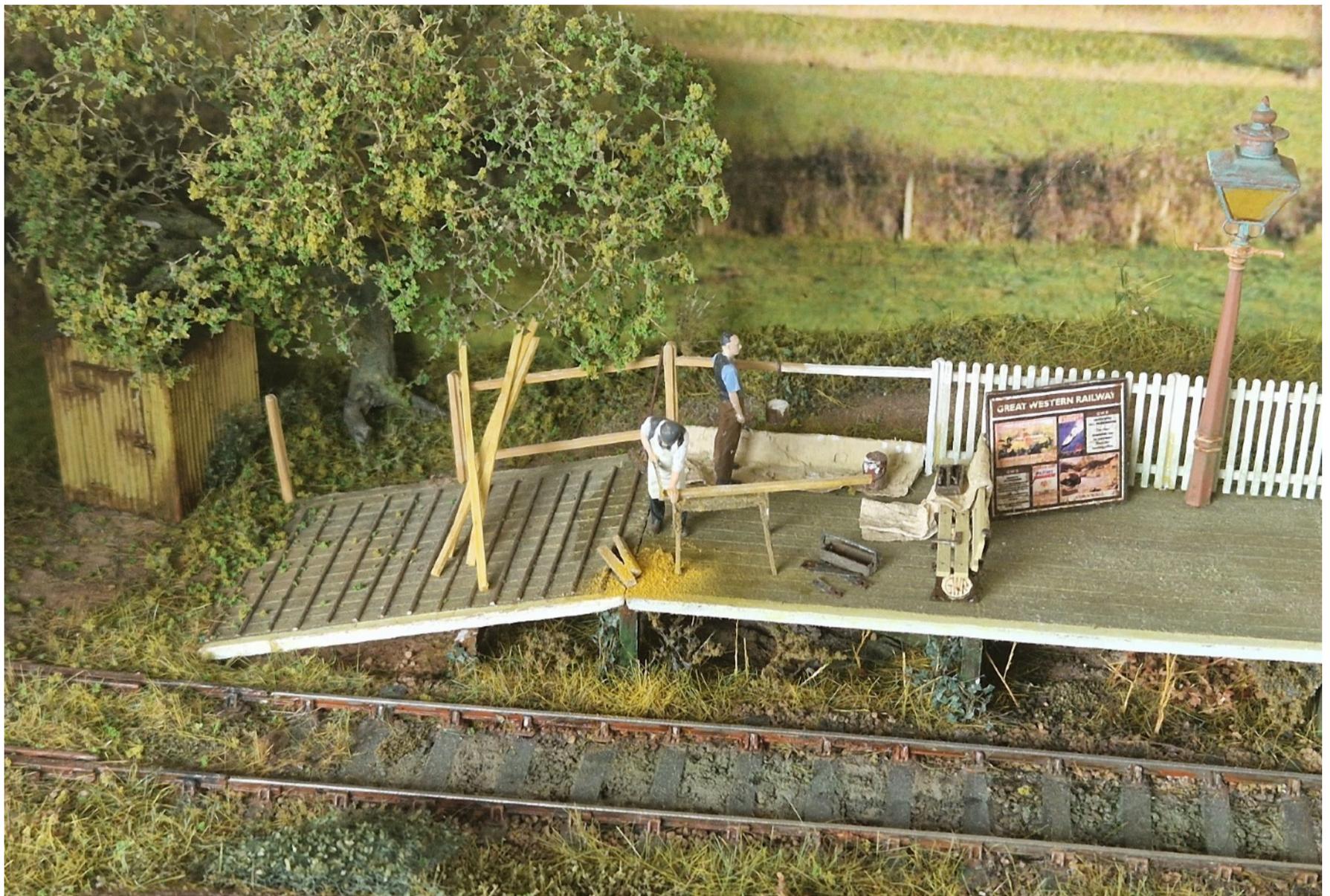
Then after nearly 40 years away, my actual re-introduction into the hobby was in 2018 with the BRM Cake Box Challenges. I eventually had success and was voted winner of round 1 of 2019 with my entry "Oh Bullocks". Then further success when Tyteford Halte was voted by the BRM team as winner of the spotlight competition for realistic modelling and it featured in the BRM October 2020 edition. Then to my surprise the BRM team also featured my garden diorama in the December 2021 edition.

I started Tyteford Halte back in January 2020 as a further way of getting back into railway modelling. It's a fictitious single line halt serving the village of Tyteford. Located, somewhere on the GWR network, set back in the mid to late 1930's. To date I have posted all progress on RMWeb.

At the time of starting Tyteford, I was also dipping my

toe into P4 gauge and the initial thought process was to create a test/programming track in P4. Then I thought, as I was still fairly new to returning to the hobby, how about introducing scenery, buildings and perhaps a few cameo scenes, so that it could also serve as a scenery practice layout and photo plank? From there on it sort of evolved, the only criteria being that certain elements needed to be included, which were:

- Laying hand-built track with effective ballasting.
- Mastering the use of static grass, flocks and scatters.
- Building a tree.
- Weathering buildings and structures using paints and weathering powders.
- Building a hillside/rockface.
- Fitting a working signal.
- Some scratch building.
- Adding lighting to buildings etc.
- Introducing cameo scenes with 3D figures to bring it all to life.
- Point rodding/signal cabling.
- To have fun!!



*Fred and Arthur, hard at work.*

That list allowed me to experiment with a number of new techniques and materials which were not available 40 years ago, this test track cum test bed seemed to be the ideal solution to develop my modelling further and learn new skills. Not long after starting it, it soon became apparent that it would also serve as lockdown therapy.

Construction was undertaken on the dining room table, there were no other spaces available (it helps to have a very understanding and patient wife).

The entire model only measures 44" x 6" (112 x 15cm) and is all scenic – under 2 square feet! The baseboard is 9mm ply, strengthened on the underside with a ladder configuration of 18 x 47mm PAR to prevent warping. The end sections, backboard and front fascia are again all 9mm ply off-cuts which I had in the shed. Applied to the backboard is a photoID countryside scene.

The model has a number of details to set the GWR scene and to add a bit of visual interest. The track itself is P4 gauge with C&L 2 bolt chairs with individually laid sleepers in 60' panels. The station platform is scratchbuilt from greyboard with scribed on wooden planking which was painted with acrylics and weathering powders. The

platform supports are made from lengths of Plastruct, the pagoda shelter is by Scenecraft and the fencing and crossing gate Ratio. There is also a scratch-built store in low relief at the back of the yard.



*Railcar No 8 emerges from Tyteford Tunnel.*



*Signalman Sid minds the fire while enjoying a brew.*

On the RMWeb thread, I ran a background story featuring the ModelU figures to try and bring it all to life. Fred and Arthur are at one end of the platform engaged in some fence repairs.

At the other end of the platform, sitting on the bench, we find Albert Plum and Mrs. Jones. We then have another scene in front of the signal cabin, where members of the PW gang are apparently involved in some adjustments at the cranks as Sid the signalman was suffering from too much slack. Fred and Arthur's Austin 7 work van is parked in the small yard where we also find a working brazier with flicker effect LED. I have also fitted yellow LED's within the signal cabin and pagoda shelter to represent oil lighting. The working GWR home signal is by Dapol and there are 2 working GWR taper post oil lamps on the platform by Gaugemaster.

Due to the limited depth of the layout (15cm), I took the decision to experiment with some ideas to see if I could trick the eye. It wasn't all successful;

however, I was particularly pleased with how the post and wire fencing leading off from the right-hand platform end ramp then merges into and continues onto the backscene. You can see the effect from the image of the signal cabin.

The layout thread is still active on RMWeb, albeit I haven't posted any updates for a while. This was mainly due to trying to move house. Thankfully, we have now moved but there are numerous house DIY tasks which unfortunately ~~absolutely~~ must take priority over railway modelling. At least, I think that's what the Mrs said!

I do however at some point plan to add a 2/3 track sector plate at the tunnel end as a separate project. I have an old Airfix 0-4-2 1400XX waiting to be modified with a High Level chassis kit. This will then be coupled up an old Airfix autocoach which I still need to upgrade.

When that's all complete, it will give a nice addition to the existing railcar for trundling up and down the track.



*Overall shot of Tyteford Halte 44" x 6" (112 x 15cm).*

# Puppetry

Bob Hughes

Bob has some new ideas on “powering” your locomotives



*A wire. A locomotive. All you need to have some fun.*

**I have something of a reputation** for doing things on the cheap, not least when it comes to model railways, and have built several layouts over the years which have used fishing line as horizontal puppet strings to pull the trains back and forth. This is OK for single track layouts but does not work where there are sidings to be shunted. The way round this, still using puppet-inspired

technology, is to use push rods. They're only attached to one end of the locomotive and can be used to shunt two or more tracks. In addition to the usual points they can also be used with the cassettes, traversers or sector plates so favoured by micro layout modellers. The photo shows Queso Shed, which uses an off stage cassette.



*All the locomotives at Queso Shed, one of Bob's many layouts, are wire operated.*



I initially designed these locomotives, using cheap Matchbox toys, for operating my 2022 MMRC Challenge layout, Infinity Aggregates. Here a sector plate provides the off stage arrangements between three tracks at three different levels, not something that could be done with fishing line but simple with the push rods.



*San Fernandez Wagon Works uses an off stage traverser instead of points but it is designed to be operated as a 3-2-2 inglenook shunting puzzle, again the use of a push rod means the loco can gain easy access to any of the three sidings.*



*A freight train prepares to leave Derrotado. Wait a moment, look closer...*

Of course such off stage ruses are not to everybody's taste so I've included Derrotado among these examples, here we have a traditional "tuning fork" layout. Freight trains are propelled into the station where they set out and pick up traffic before heading back to the junction. The photo below is a close up and clearly shows the push rod but look again at the one above, did you notice the puppetry before it was pointed out?



*The loco is powered by wire!*



*A coach bogieltruck is all you need for a chassis for a wire operated loco.*

The locos are easy to make, I've used HO scale American coach trucks but any suitably sized bogie will do the job. The cabs are built using card and wire, in the case of No.1 the rear of the original cab was reversed and used as the front of the new cab. An additional benefit of using the unplugged puppet locos is that they do not need any controllers, extension leads or RCDs normally associated with portable layouts. The final photo shows Clementine Wharf ready to go. I use public transport to get about so the less I need to carry the better.



*With a wire operated layout, this is all you need to go to a show.*

## *Fiddle Yard*

**Recently, I started work on** my Micro Model Railroad Cartel Christmas Challenge layout. If you're not up to speed on this "competition". It is to build a micro layout using Carl's original Squarefoot track plan in any size up to four square feet in area. The twist being that you can use any scale. I have chosen 16mm scale for mine. Following my abortive attempts with 7/8ths scale, and the introduction of some superb 16mm scale kits from Chris Rennie at LocoRemote, I really felt the need to build in a larger scale.

As the project moves along, I realized I haven't felt like this about the hobby in quite some time. Not since the early days of G<sub>n</sub>15, and perhaps a little when working with T gauge. Times when the interest in the scale becomes all consuming and you work on it solving all sorts of problems when you know you should be doing something else.

## *The editor shares his thoughts*

Case in point. I recently spent a couple of hours hand spiking the track for the layout when I know full well I should be working on my APA box layout ready for Trainfest in Milwaukee in November. I have never hand spiked track on a layout before. On reflection it wasn't a task I particularly enjoyed. But it was a new technique, a new skill. Like so many other things I have tried when working in a new scale.

Time will tell how many late night sessions I will have to put in on the APA box layout as a result of all these new techniques I'm learning. But never mind. I'm having a lot of fun and that's what the hobby is about.



*Blocking in my 16mm scale micro. More information on the layout's progress can be found at [sixteenmillimeterfootsteps.blogspot.com](http://sixteenmillimeterfootsteps.blogspot.com).*