

THE MICRO MODEL RAILWAY DISPATCH

For the Micro Model Railway designer, builder and enthusiast

Issue 8. Spring 2023



Les Coleman, Uraca Industries

THE DISPATCH

For the Micro Model Railway layout designer, builder and enthusiast

The micro layout world never ceases to amaze me. I always enjoy receiving your submissions, but some months I am amazed at what pops into my email inbox.

This issue was no exception. It all starts quite innocently. An email generally starts with the phrase. “I wonder if you’re interested in..” Or “I just knocked this up...”

Then I look at the pictures and I sit there, open mouthed, at the vision and creativity. You guys do the model railway world proud. Keep the layouts coming. I was really excited to receive article about a layout based on a Scalescenes box file layout kit for this issue. But with a difference. It is enlarged to 7mm scale.

What is really amazing, is that a week later, I received another article about a layout in 7mm scale built from the same kit. But thanks to the amazing creativity of the builder. It looks like a different layout. You should see that version of the box file kit in the next issue. In this issue I’ve published the rules for the Micro Model Railroad Cartel Facebook group Christmas Challenge. This is the third year of the challenge and we always receive interesting and creative entries. I look forward to seeing what you all you Facebookers create.

There’s a lot of micro layouts out there in the model railway world, and we only scratch the surface here at **The Dispatch**. So if you see something you like out there, then give the magazine a plug. Perhaps the layout creator is unaware of it. Spread the word.

In April, I will be back home in the UK on holiday. Indulging my passion for trains, real and model, and historic car racing. I hope to take in the York model Railway exhibition when there. I’ll be on the lookout for Micro Layouts of course.

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

See you all in the Summer issue!

“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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The Tram Depot

John Rogers

Scale:16mm/32mm gauge. Size:48" x 12" 1222mm x 305mm



A horse drawn dray obstructs the tramway. A scene from another time

This was my first attempt at a micro layout but, for some reason, I thought it didn't meet the four square feet criterion. In fact, it is exactly 305 x 1222 mm and, anyway, that criterion is more of a guideline than a rule for large scale layouts. I set myself this set of objectives.

1. Four square foot footprint, with no fiddle yards or other appurtenances.
2. 16mm / inch (1:19) scale on 32mm gauge.
3. A capacity for shunting and associated games under radio control.
4. Modelling local buildings and structures.
5. Easy disassembly and reassembly.

Essentially, I wanted a self-contained layout that could be put on a table or bookshelf, where I could play trains as the mood took me. I decided to work with Faller e-Train track with its 14" (355mm) radius curves. I already had a stock, and it is cheap and fairly light. It has served me well indoors and out, with battery locos and live steam. The idea was to have a two-bay shed, loosely based on those of the Bristol Tramways company, with buildings like those of the Gloucester Road, just round the corner from my house in Bristol. I also wanted two routes out under a railway bridge as

a scenic break. This would involve two sets of points, back to back, so I could run from either shed road to either route. The double slips available were huge, and would be a nightmare to make pedestrian friendly. They have them on the Bristol Harbour Railway, and they are most intricate. Even so, fitting all that on a small layout wasn't easy, and only the stub of a shed is modelled.

After trying out the track set-up on my desk, I decided on a 4 x 1 foot base, and ordered a pre-cut rectangle of 10mm (3/8") expanded PVC foamboard, herein called *Foamex*. The points are operated by the classic wire method, although not in tubes, but in grooves cut in the baseboard and capped by the road surface. I've read about this for more years than I care to think about it, but it's the first time I've used it; it works. Short wheelbase stock runs well through them; I wouldn't want to try anything longer.



Though a simple design, the tram shed is an imposing structure in 16mm scale

The scenery was the fun part for me. It was all designed using Trimble SketchUp, which I recommend. The bridge in particular would have been very difficult without it. The walls and low-relief buildings are made of 5mm Foamex covered with inkjet-printed paper or detailed plastic texture as appropriate. The pub is based on the currently-closed Victoria up ‘that’ Road, and the overbridge locally known as the “Arches” over Gloucester Road and carrying the Severn Beach

branch. I’m rather pleased with the bridge; it will happily carry my heaviest 16mm kettle without groaning. The Depot itself is based on one in Brislington, but may be repainted to resemble that on Gloucester Road. Black card blocks off the “Rest of the World” at either end. All these walls and buildings slot into the base and the bridge slots into the walls. It’s never gone to an exhibition, but it would be relatively simple to take, given suitable transport.



The passenger train heads out



An early test of the track plan using the Faller eTrain system

The track was interesting, but quite hard work. The idea was to use cobblestones around the track near the Depot, flagstones for the pavements / sidewalks, and “tarmac” elsewhere. The cobbles and flags came from Stacey's Miniature Masonry, whom I cannot recommend too highly. In fact, having done this project, I cobbled the yard at the Pigsty Brewery but that, children, is another story.

Fitting the cobblestones round and between the tracks was fiddly, and restricted the wheel profile of vehicles to run on them (LGB “dinner-plates” had no chance) but the appearance was I think, worth it. Tarmac was represented by 5 mm Foamex, marked by oiling the track and pressing it on the reverse of the Foamex. Then it could be cut out to allow space for the tracks. Done carefully, you get pieces for track infill and the roadway around them.



Street track infill pieces cut and being painted



All that work is worth it. Take a look at John's exceptionally realistic cobbles and flagstones.



Locomotive "Malt" from John's Pigsty Hill Brewery railway handles a short goods train



Brush 16307, Gerald Yorke, a Chris Rennie LocoRemote kit shunts wagons at the depot.



This close up shows how John cut the Foamex road surface around the pointwork. Always a tricky job no matter what the material you cut is.



John's wire in slot method of operating the points is shown here

Cautionary words from John:

A word about gluing Foamex; I use clear Stelmax 1985, brilliant stuff which makes a bond stronger than the plastic. However, it is seriously nasty stuff. If you have to use it indoors, open all the windows and vacate the work room until it sets and the air has cleared.

The Editor adds:

Caution should be always exercised with the use of so many modern solvents, glues and adhesives, tales of addiction have been around for many many years. These substances should be kept out of the reach of minors.



Constructional photos showing the basic building shell cut from Foamex before being dressed with scenic coverings



As you can see, the Foamex built bridge is sturdy enough to carry a 16mm scale live steam locomotive



This section of old track outside John's doctor's surgery was the inspiration for the track on the Tram Depot layout

The original plan for the rolling stock was to convert a couple of 16mm tram-like vehicles to LocoRemote control and run them in and out of the Depot and from a tram stop to the Rest of the World. This wasn't too interesting to operate, so I came up with Plan B. In this version the tramway carries passengers and goods, in the manner of the Camborne and Redruth Tramways. The motor tram uses a Phil Sharples coach body and chassis with the Chris Rennie LocoRemote Wi-Fi. This and the rolling stock use the clever magnetic coupling on a rotating arm that I thought I'd invented for the

Brewery Quay (of course I hadn't – someone had done it before). This makes shunting wagons and coaches through the reverse curves surprisingly easy. I already had a number of coaches and wagons on Binnie chassis to a very limited loading gauge (OK, dynamic envelope) and with those clever couplings. Since they were designed for 2.9" curves, the 14" curves on the layout presented no problems.

In addition there are 4-wheel Phil Sharples and IP Engineering coaches and sundry wagons for passenger and goods operations.



The works train heads out.

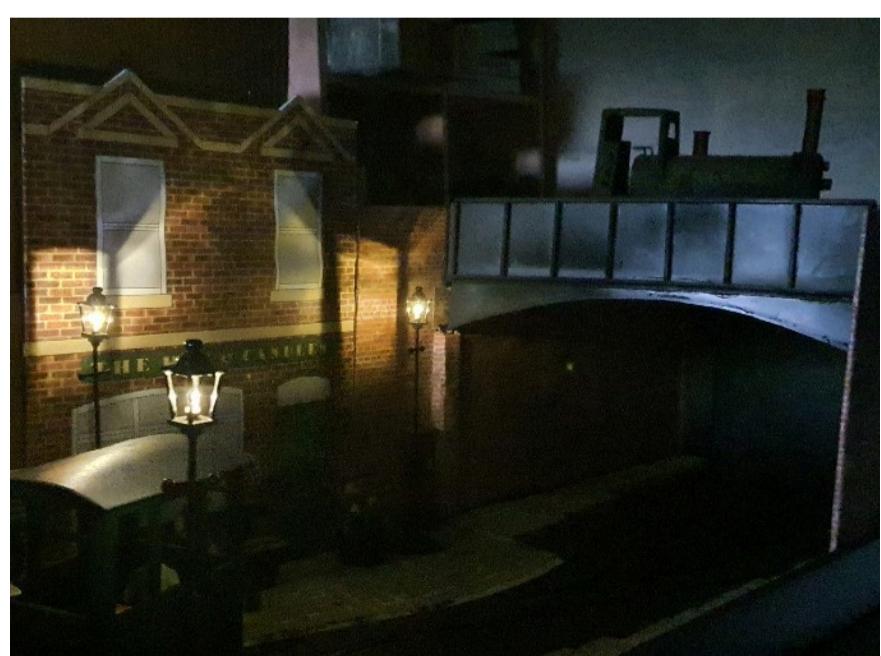
Trams, coaches and wagons are stored and maintained at the Depot and are shunted in from the Rest of the World by the motor tram or by FIRKIN from the Brewery Quay railway. The occasional works train may appear, but otherwise, the Depot doesn't handle goods as such.

Just to make life interesting, there is a tram stop that fouls the points immediately outside the Depot and a regular service is run from it. The resulting moves can be quite elaborate!

The rest is ornamentation. Some very nice Victorian street lamps with lithium cells in their bases, LGB track on the overbridge with an antique loco bought for me by my sadly departed mother-in-law, and various people and road vehicles.

What needs to be done? It wants a tram stop sign on the nearest street lamp, the Depot might be repainted in brick colour, to match the walls and the pub might

benefit from being rebuilt in low relief. There's always something to be done ...



Good night from the Tram Depot

Port Baudana.

Michel Henninot

H0e scale 3.5mm scale 9mm track 47" x 15" 1200mm x 400mm



An airplane swoops in over Port Baudana railway station. What a sight! I want to take a holiday in Port Baudana!

I am Michel Henninot, A French modeller specially keen on railway modelling and particularly countryside railways.

For many years I had the idea to build a little layout, saying to myself “one day I will build a micro layout...”.

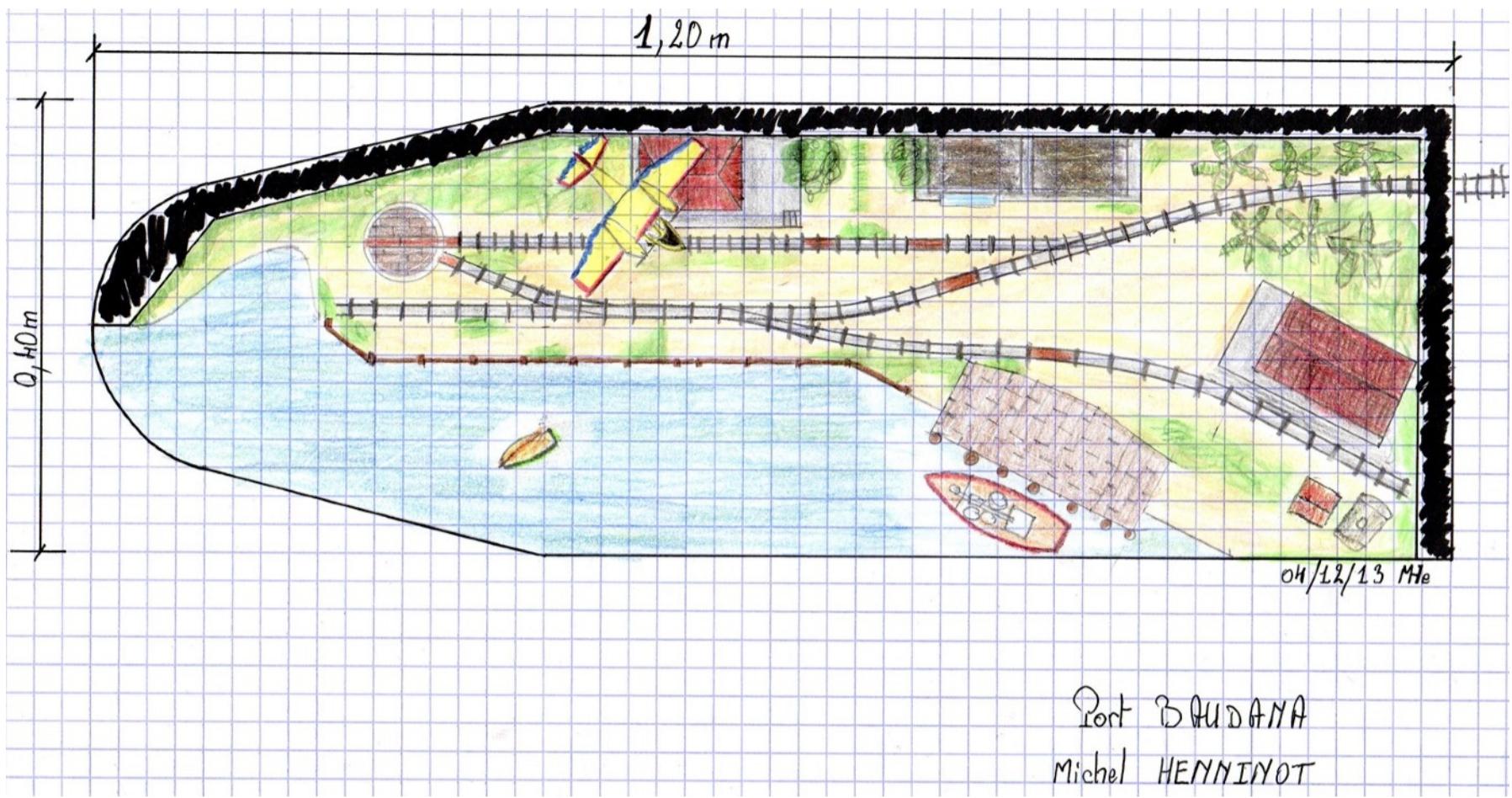
I also said to myself “one day I will build a layout in narrow gauge...”, seeing a François Fontana (*François’ Divoc Bay presented in the issue 3 of Dispatch*) drawing where a plane was drawn over a layout, I said to myself “one day, etc...”.

Ten years ago the French magazine Loco Revue proposed a challenge to its readers to build a layout on an ironing board and I said to myself “now the time has come to build a layout in narrow gauge, on an ironing board with a plane over it”, and I made it! We had a year to build it before presenting it at an exhibition in Sedan.

We had to respect some conditions, the size, put at least a line element (turnout, turntable or other), and include a meter long fiddle yard at the end of the ironing board.

The plane that appeared in François drawing was a Grumman Goose. I chose an Airfix Grumman Widgeon/Gosling. It was smaller and easier to find than the Goose. After several thoughts, I imagine rich American people leaving south Florida for a trip in a Caribbean island in their amphibian aeroplane. I enjoy a lot this idea for its originality, in France we don't see a lot of such exotic layouts.

I chose the scale of 1/72, according to the plane, with Peco H0e rails, or a gauge of 648 mm for the railway, surely the only one in the world, in narrow gauge, we can do what we want and that's a chance.



Port BAUDANA
Michel HENNINOT

Due to the small surface, and for the pleasure of the game, I opted for a terminus station with a self made turntable at the end of the tiny station. All the buildings are made with cardboard covered by several painted papers or self-adhesive sheets. The coconut trees are wooden or plastic sticks covered with paper tips, the leaves are in green paper. The soil is a polystyrene sheet covered with thin sawdust. The water is made with plaster coating formed with a brush for the waves painted in sea blue and green for the sargassum all covered by 5 or 6 coats of bright varnish. Everything was at last painted and weathered with acrylic paints and pigments. The boat, named Josephine, is built from a Heller sail fishing boat kit modified. The island inhabitants, except two tourists in line of sight of the shark, are figurines of old Egyptian soldiers more or less modified and painted. Both trains are self made with

plastic material, Evergreen, and old fashioned professional visit cards mounted on Kato motorised chassis for the trucks and Roco chassis for the coach and wagons.

The use of an ironing board to support the layout has been so successful that I have used it for my other layouts. My wife is jealous because I have four ironing boards and she only has one.

The name Baudana is the acronym of **Baude** (Yann Baude is the editor of Loco Revue) and **Fontana** (François Fontana is the editor of an other French magazine Voie Libre), both friends of mine.

I was very happy to make this layout not only because I realised a dream but also because I had to make something with conditions imposed; something new for me.





Michel sent in some photographs taken during the construction of the layout. In the top image you can clearly see that the baseboard rests on an ironing board. Many micro layout builders, myself included, have used ironing boards as a basis for a layout stand. The layout can be removed from the stand for transport and

storage. you can also see that the track is laid on thick insulation foam.

The turntable is hand operated, The rails are soldered to a disc of copper clad printed circuit board which is then faced with cardboard painted to look like wood. The turntable is moved by some small handles on it, that are unfortunately invisible in the photographs.



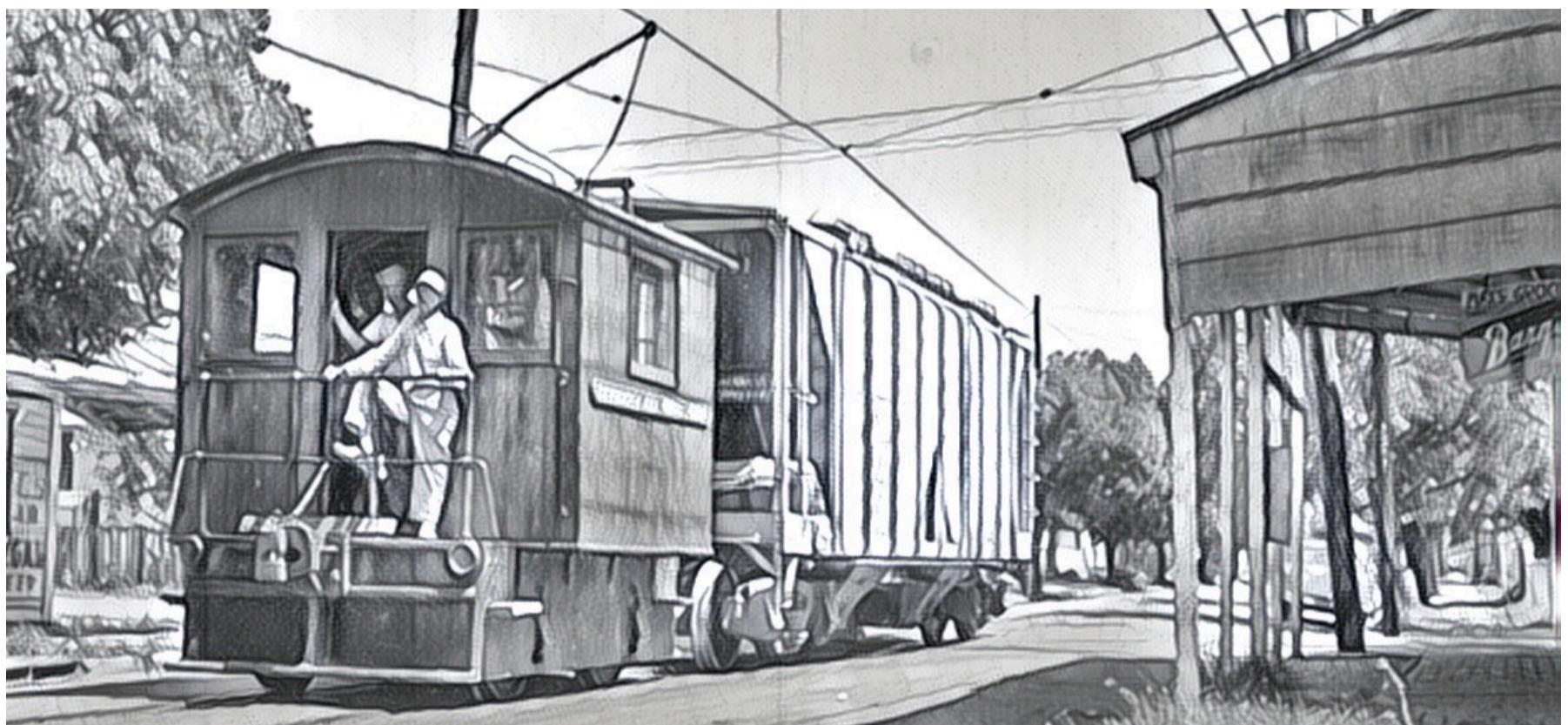
All quiet in the harbour? No! There's a shark swimming towards the tourists!



A delightfully tropical scene in the harbour at Port Baudana

New Orleans Water and Sewerage Board RR

The editor finds a prototype with lots to offer.



Artists impression of one of the box cab locos hauling a car down the street

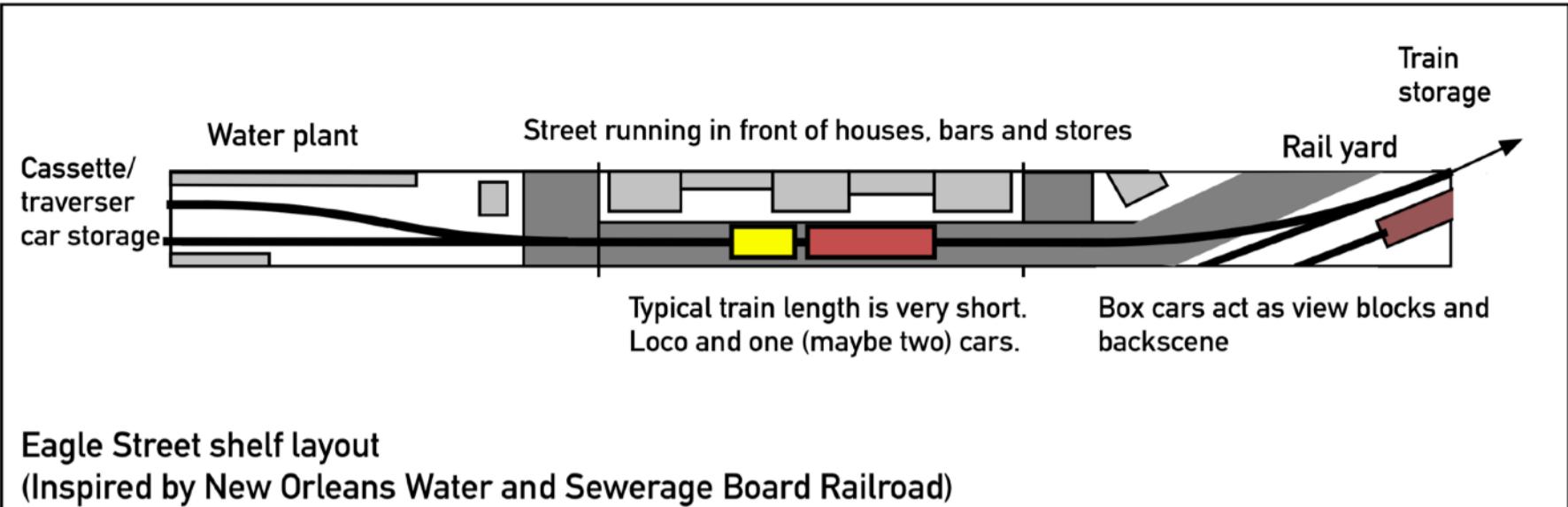
Water filtration plants and sewage farms may seem like an unlikely location for a railway, but they're not rare. In Wales there is the noted Solva sewage farm. It has a small rail system running between the sedimentation tanks and storage buildings. Operated by a unique vehicle made by a manufacturer of electric milk floats and golf carts. Many of these lines are narrow gauge, and a quick search of the website ingr.co.uk will reveal several other narrow gauge systems in the UK serving water treatment plants.

Living as I do in Minnesota, I know of the Minneapolis Filtration Plant Railway. A short, 1.5 mile line to the facility in Columbia Heights. A suburb of Minneapolis. Motive power on this line was a trolley car that ran off overhead wires, it carried 36 people, mainly workers, and could haul one loaded freight car with materials for the plant. The subject of this micro layout scheme is a line in New Orleans, the New Orleans Water and Sewerage Board Railroad. It runs for a scant eight city blocks (about seven tenths of a mile) from the exchange sidings with the New Orleans Public Belt Railroad to the treatment plant on Claiborne Ave. The line runs dead straight down the middle of Eagle Street.

Once it enters the works it continues on to serve workshops, stores and other facilities on the site. The works was opened in 1898, and up until 1959

the railroad was run by two overheard powered box cab locomotives, that were quite literally that. Boxes. Boxes that owed more to garden shed design than locomotive design. Number 50 was built by Baldwin-Westinghouse in 1907, and Number 65 by General Electric in 1910. They were a very basic design. Surely a great first scratch building project for the micro layout beginner. Number 50 survives to this day and can be found in a park in Greta, La. There was also Number 1, a compressed air loco from HK Porter built in 1915, acquired from a Cuban sugar plantation. It now resides in the Age of Steam Roundhouse museum in Sugarcreek, Ohio.

The line changed to diesel haulage in 1959 with small Plymouth switchers providing the power until the 1980's. Currently a Trackmobile is on site working the line. Traffic is infrequent these days but once in a while the Trackmobile makes the journey from the works to the exchange siding and back. Trains to the works are short. Most of the pictures I have seen are of a tiny loco and a single hopper car. Tank cars and box cars are recorded in contemporary photographs as well. In no pictures that I have seen is the train longer than three cars. Pictures of the locomotives at work can be found on rrpicturearchives.net. Just search for NOSWB.



Such a simple line is a great subject for a micro. My idea is based around the tuning fork concept. A loco hauls a single car along the street from the exchange sidings to the water works. At the exchange yard, box cars in a siding act as view blocks to obscure the exit to the hidden sidings/fiddlestick. At the other end of the line the reception sidings run into cassettes or traverser hidden by the plant buildings. This really could be a project for minimal outlay. You could start with one loco, like the Plymouth ML-8 switcher available from Walthers in H0. One hopper, and perhaps a couple of other different cars for variety.

It might even be possible to reproduce the scheme in O scale. There's the old Plymouth switcher from AHM that you can pick up very cheaply on that well known auction site, or at model railroad flea markets. If you decide to do that, then go for the 6-wheeler, it has a much lower profile and looks more prototypical against the taller freight cars.

You could get an O scale Plymouth and three cars for about \$100. With a scenic section of 6' x 8" (1830mm x 200mm) a little box cab loco and a 40' car could cover 5 times its own length, passing through urban vignettes of bars, shops and houses. It would appear to be traveling quite a long way indeed. The buildings would be reduced to scenery flats or very low relief to make things fit, but it might work. It would be a great project for people who enjoy model buildings. If you wanted to add a little extra depth, making the total area over four square feet it would still be very much in the spirit of a micro.

One feature of Eagle Street in old photos is that it is tree lined, another way to obstruct your view and make it seem like the train is traveling further than it is.

You may want to try to recreate the unique boxcab locomotives. The very short wheelbases of approximately six feet would be difficult to find

commercially, but as the loco wheels were covered by the chassis frame, the wheelbase discrepancy would be hidden from view.

There are short wheelbase motor bogies such as the Tenshodo SPUD or Black Beetle that might offer a suitable base for the project in H0 scale.

As with all tuning fork trackplan designs, you may think that it would be lacking in operational interest. But a well thought out sequence of operations should make things interesting. Principal traffic would be the hoppers, seen in so many of the pictures. This could be interspersed with the tank car or box car. All these different vehicles probably contained different chemicals and suchlike used in the water purification process. Further variety could come from the occasional flat car loaded with some heavy machinery. It wouldn't be too difficult to come up with a quite busy little scenario.

What could really set this layout above the rest is the remarkable street architecture, whatever time period you choose to model.

Many of the houses are single storey, and long and thin. This would be a handy trick to make the viewer think the layout is larger than it is. If the train is going past a lot of houses it must be going a long way.

Through the magic of Google Earth it is possible to take a "drive" along Eagle Street, and take in the architecture. Though the neighbourhood seems to be undergoing something of a refurbishment, some of the older houses are still there to give you a feel for what the properties may have looked like 50 or more years ago.

For an idea, take a look at the houses on the next page. The views came from Google Earth and another resource you may not have thought of, Realtor websites. These sites may include house plans with dimensions as well as photographs. All useful in making accurate models.

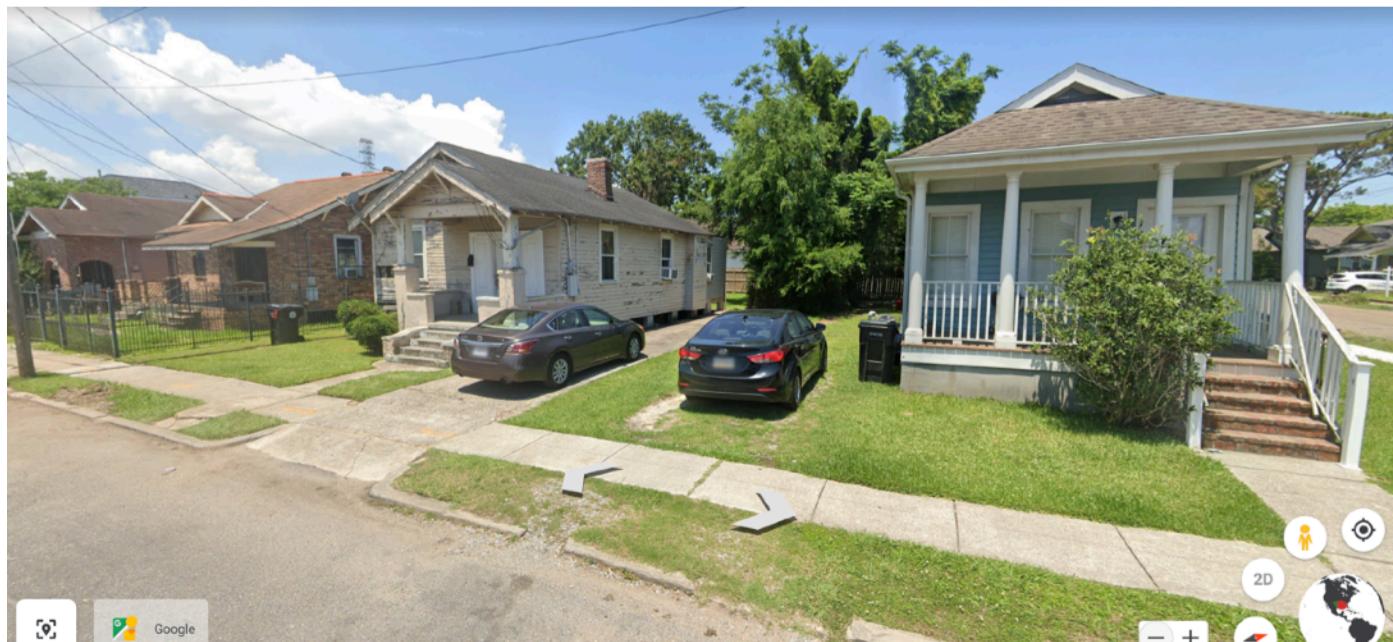
Floor plan and front elevation of a modern, refurbished, Eagle street building. You should be able to make a low relief building frontage from that.



The right hand edge of the plan above corresponds to the elevation in this photograph. The floor plan and photo came from realtor.com



Unique, narrow, Eagle street architecture.



A mix of old, refurbished, and new houses in this view

Once the railroad enters the Water Board property, it becomes a totally different line. It runs into the property for 300 yards and ends in a passing loop, from where sidings run off in many directions. Not all are in use today. Some are now covered over with tarmac, and others are obstructed by scrap and other detritus. So it's difficult to know if some are used or not. But it's clear from the images where the tracks were headed. One spur is still in place. It heads off around buildings, traversing some tight curves, and passing quite the mixture of architecture on its journey. A Quonset hut (Nissen hut for UK readers) and modern prefabricated structures, before terminating in front of a grand, whitewashed building that clearly dates from the first days of the plant. There's a kickback siding here that runs into another large warehouse. A further siding runs behind this area down an alley to terminate under a pile of rubble in front of some storage tanks. This whole area is of great visual

interest and would make a great switching game micro layout.

To fit all these features into a Micro would be quite the test for a micro layout designer.

The very nature of this area should dictate sharp curves and with all the locomotives used in the lines history having very short wheelbases you can bet that is the case. You should be able to drive your one loco and car around H0 scale 2nd radius (17" 438mm) train set curves without any problem. Perhaps even tighter.

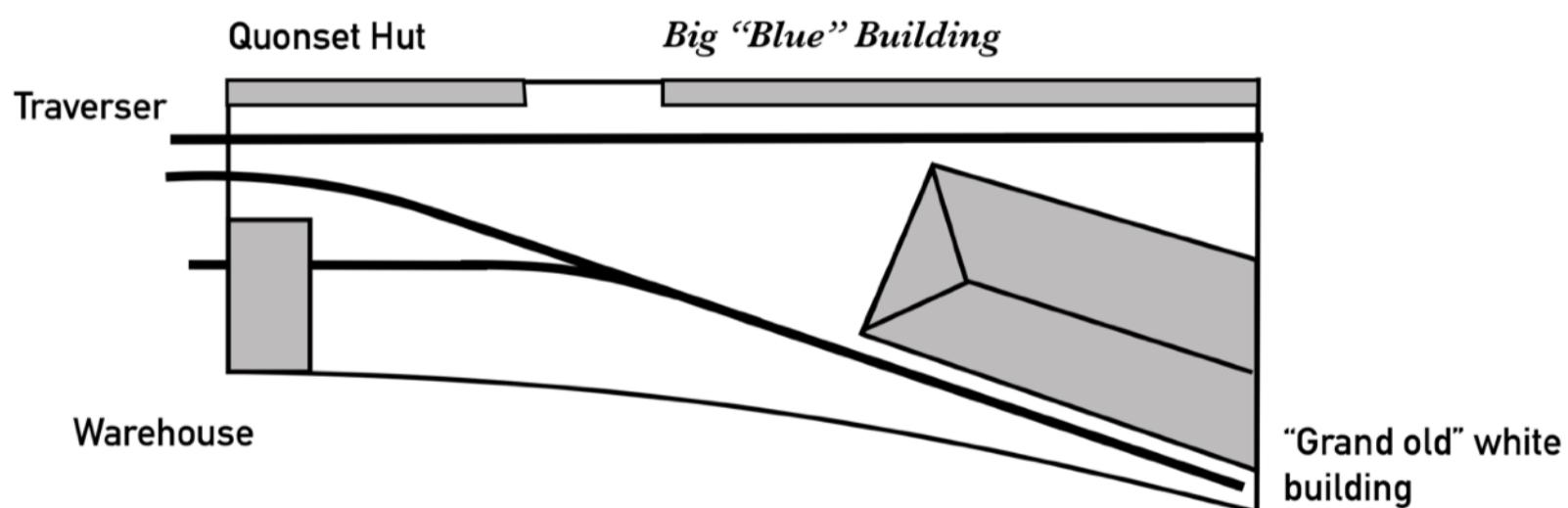
If you are considering this as an O scale Micro project and worry about the larger radius curves associated with the senior scale, the Atlas Plymouth switcher, thanks to having a flangeless centre wheels in the 6 wheel version, is more than capable of traversing 2' radius curves. I have run it on curves as sharp as 19", so you really should have no problems.



Google Earth view of the plant. The railroad is marked in red. You can see the long straight shot up Eagle Street before it enters into the Water Board property



A view of the yard. You can see the yellow Trackmobile that works the line parked in front of the white building. The great selection of architecture would make for a very interesting layout indeed.

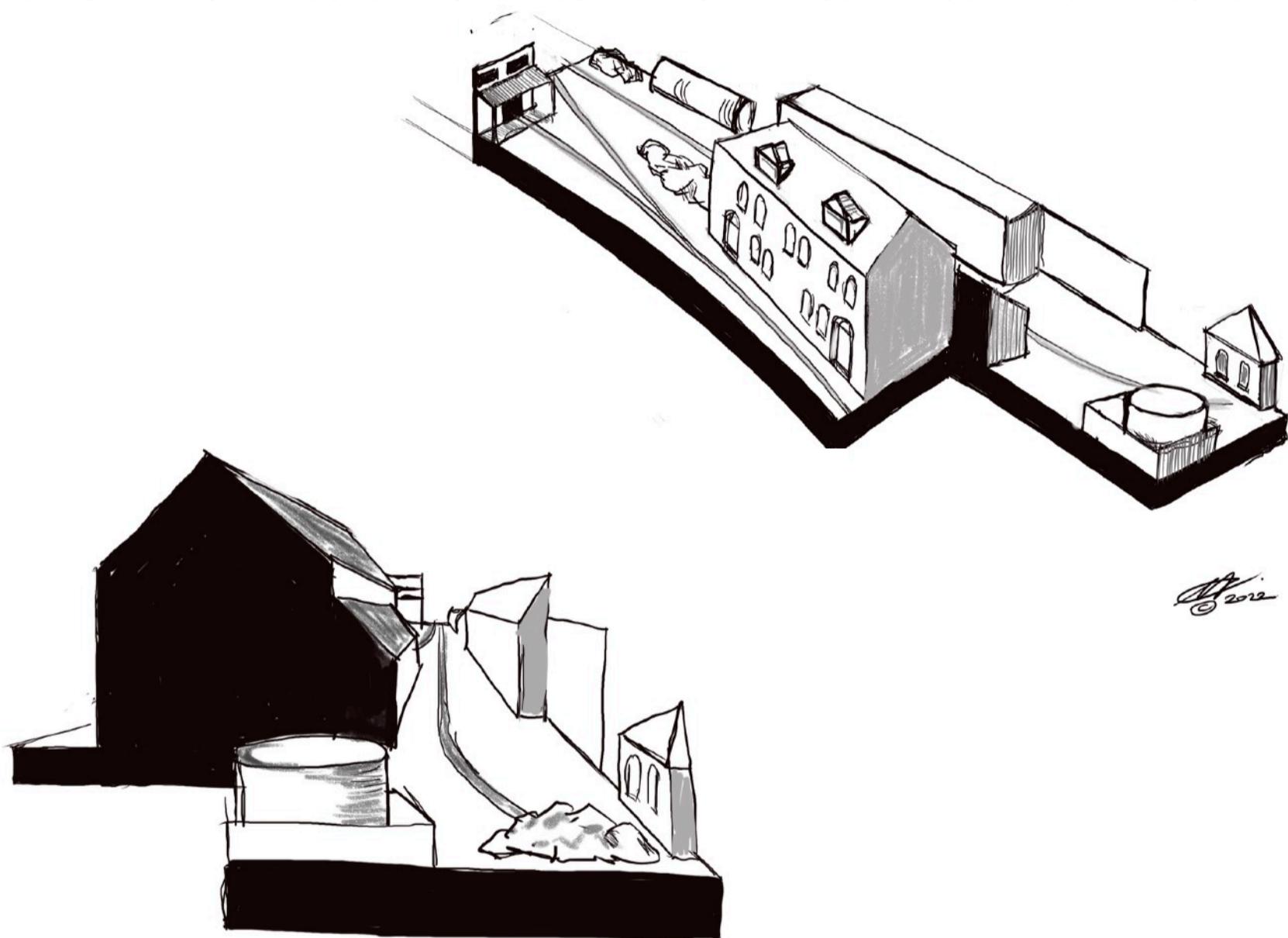
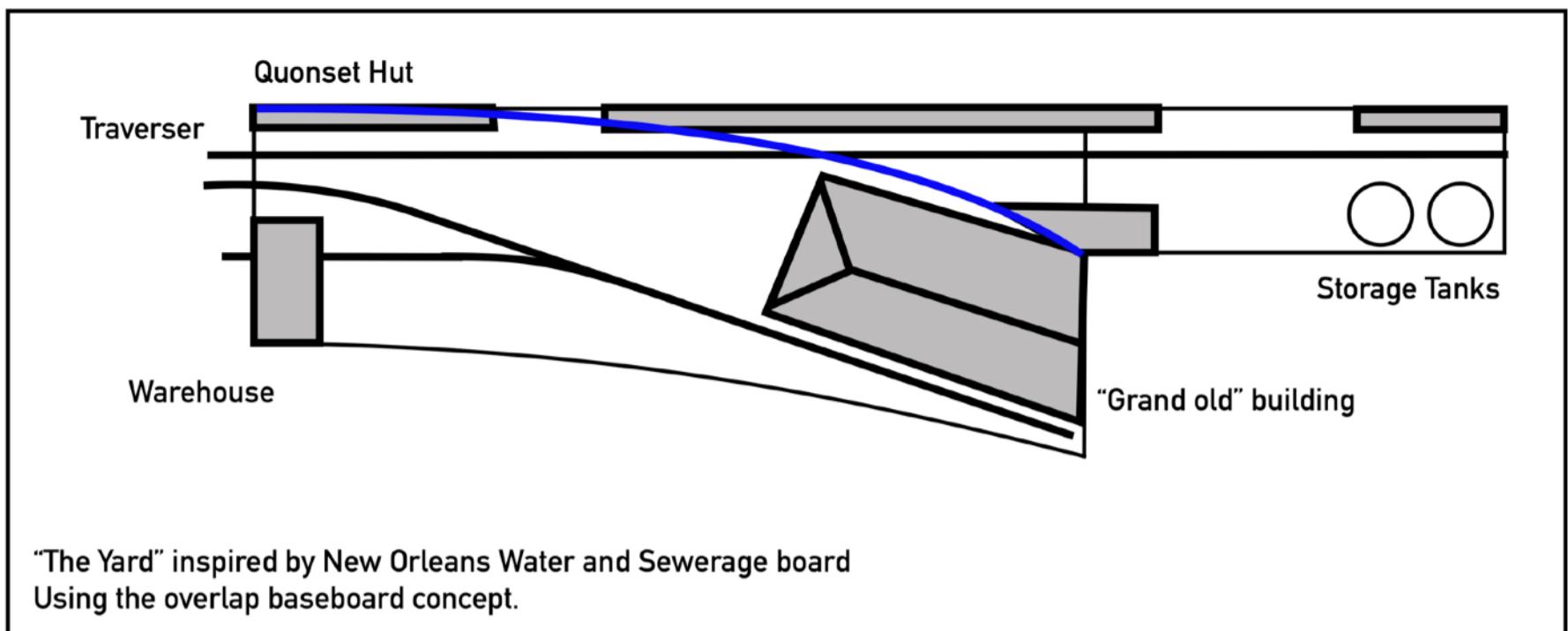


“The Yard” inspired by New Orleans Water and Sewerage board.

The Yard cannot fail to draw you in as a great subject for a micro. This is a lived in site that has developed over the years. The juxtaposition of the grand old whitewashed building with the more modern utilitarian architecture is striking. All these buildings present you with many opportunities to hide the exit tracks to your fiddle yard, traverser or fiddle stick, whatever your chosen method of offstage stock manipulation is. The physical size of the buildings might put one off, particularly if like me, you were considering recreating the location in a larger scale like O. That grand old white building is big, but such an important part of the scene.

As we often talk about small model railways in terms of stage design, think of it as stage wing. Just model enough of it to create the impression of the size. A loco can shove a car offstage behind it, ostensibly to the storage tanks.

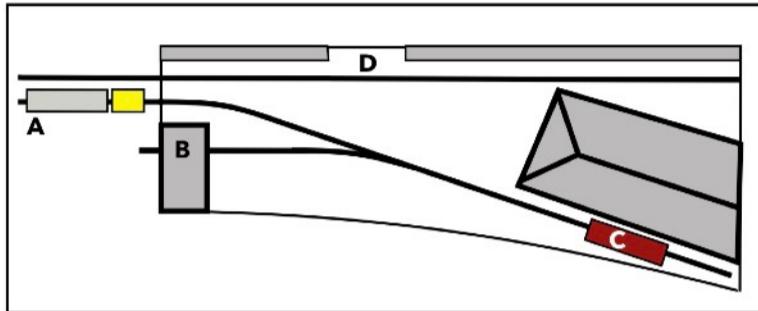
An interesting method of presentation I have seen recently that might work in this situation is called the “overlap”. A concept originally proposed by Canadian modeller Chris Mears. As you can see from the plan and sketches, the front scenic section with the large buildings overlaps the rear section with the storage tanks.



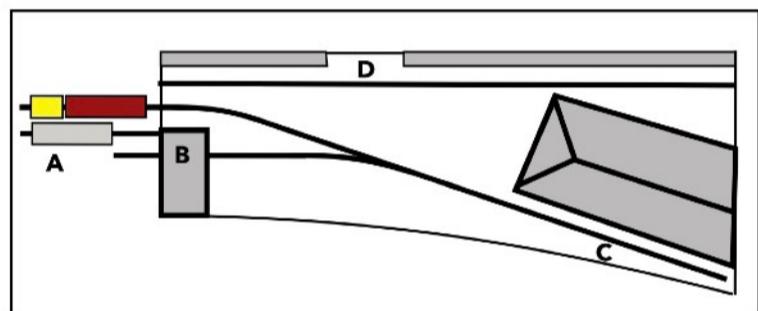
This effectively gives you two Micros. It allows the chance to recreate the alleyway behind the grand old white building as a separate vignette, something that would be difficult to recreate with a conventional arrangement without making the layout too deep. It would also give a chance to develop an idea in layout design that I am keen on developing. That is to be able to watch trains coming towards you. In the real world you can often

H 2013.
find yourself in a situation where the trains come at you. It's a scene not often recreated in models. If you made this as a simple bolt on section, then away from the layout it could double as a nice diorama base for photographing your models. James Hilton writes more about the overlap method in his book, *Small Layout Design* from Wild Swan publications, and it is a highly recommended read.

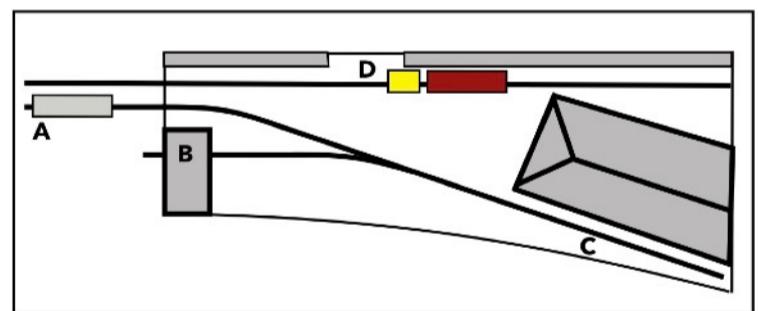
Working cars singly would be the key to entertaining operations. Let's say you need to get a car (A) into the warehouse (B), but there is a car in front of the grand old building (C). That car will have to be moved to a free spot along the siding (D) using the traverser, before you can switch the car into the warehouse, because the feed to the kickback siding is only as long as a loco and one car. The traverser is also designed to only take the loco and a single car.



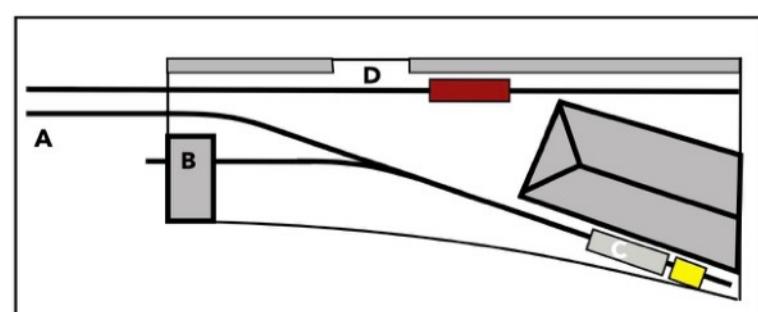
Steps involved in moving the car from A to spot B in the warehouse.



2. Loco moves the car to the free road on the two track traverser.

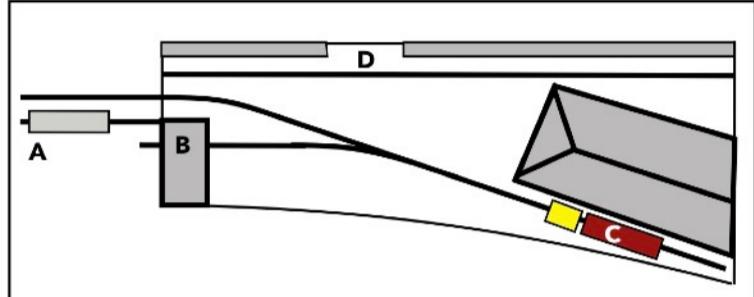


4. Loco then moves the car to a free spot on the siding D

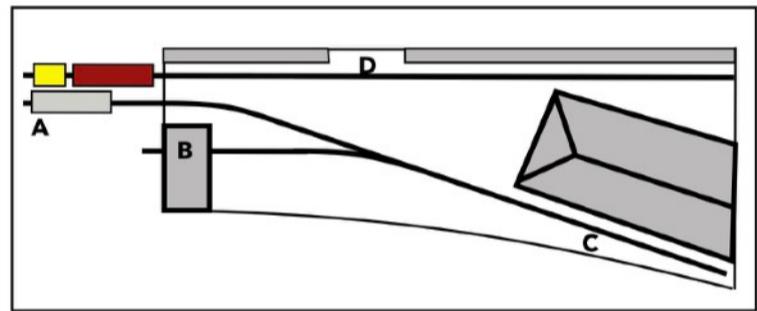


6. Loco then moves the car the head shunt

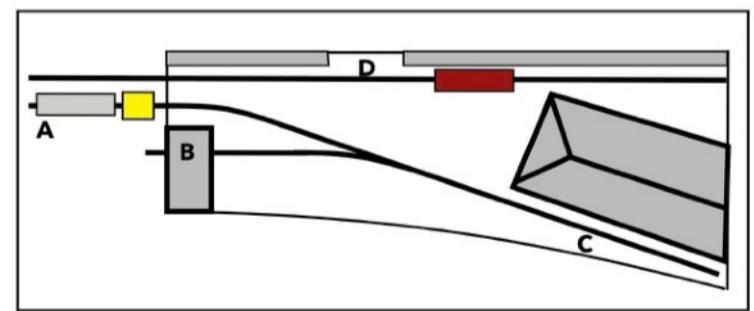
What cars would work on this little layout? How about covered hoppers and tank cars carrying chemicals for water purification. Tank cars carrying fuel oil or open hoppers carrying coal to power the generators to keep the plant working in a power cut. Add to that box cars and flat cars carrying plant and machinery for the works and you've covered almost every type of railroad car. Is that enough variety for you?



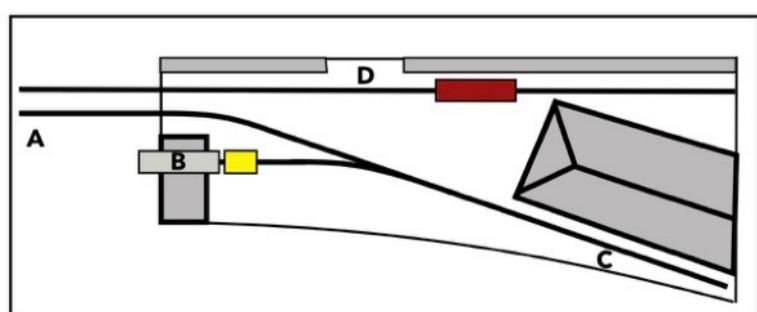
1. First the car at C needs to be moved out of the way.



3. The traverser is lined up with the rear road



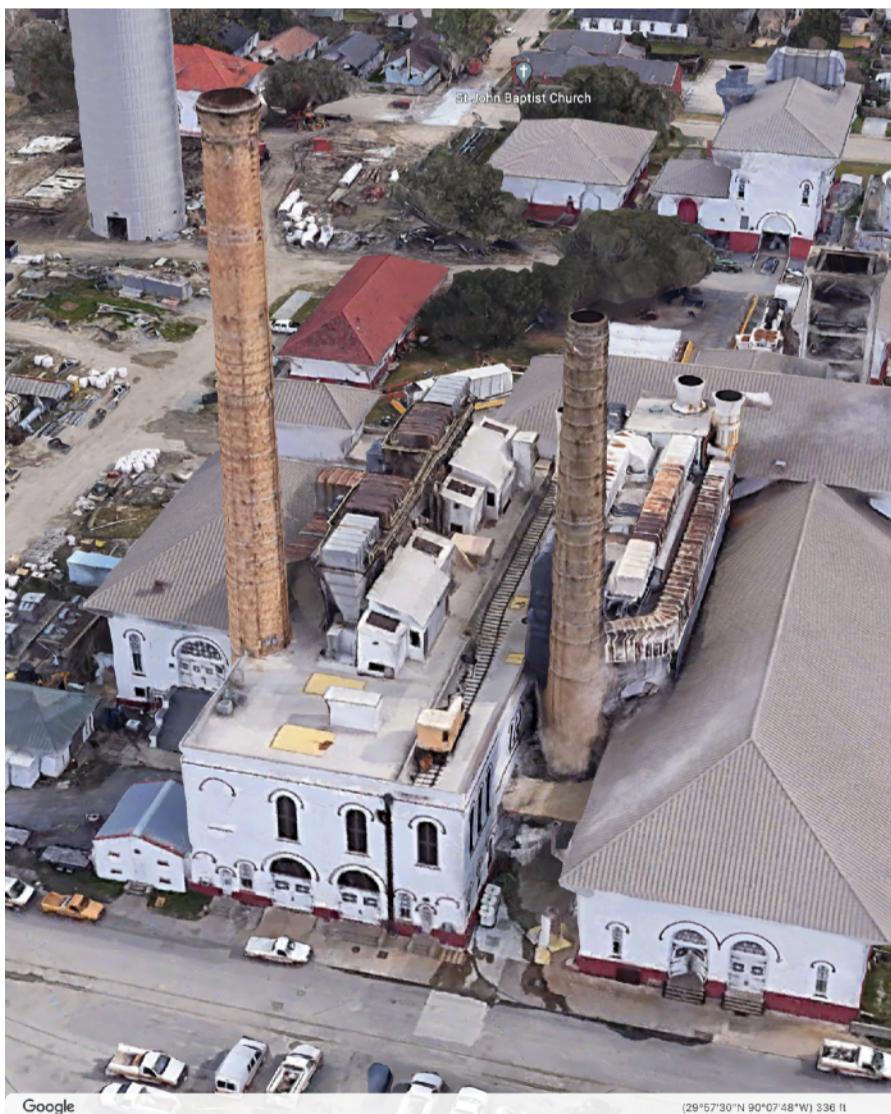
5. Loco then returns to the traverser and the car at A, to begin the move to spot B.



7. Finally, the car can be shoved to the spot in the warehouse. For extra moves, the car at D could be moved back to spot C.



A typical train for the layout in O scale and HO. Perfect for a micro, whatever scale you choose



The roof top railroad

All in all, this location would make a quite interesting micro layout in H0 scale and perhaps even 0 too.

There's one more proposal for a last bit of fun. If you take a close look on Google Earth. You should see on the roof of the power plant building, a rail mounted crane, running along a short section of track. The crane is probably used to haul equipment up onto the roof. The aerial view is unclear on what plant is up there. But there looks to be all kinds of machinery and ducting that could need replacing or repairing at some time. I know of several modellers who would be more than capable of making this a fully functional layout of its own, if a model was able to be made sturdy enough, perhaps using a remote control toy as a basis. Then what a great viewer participation feature this could be at a train show. I'm sure some young children (and perhaps grown ups too) would line up to have a go lifting a load off the back of a low loader on the road, up on to the roof of the building.

I hope I've shown you that there is great potential for much pleasure to be derived from a simple prototype location like this.

Cartel “flash” layout building challenge 2

Twenty four hours to build a Micro

The second Micro Model Railway Cartel flash challenge took place in February. This one didn't attract as many entrants as the first. With only one person, Will Fowler detailing his progress on the Cartel page. Here are some photographs of Will's layout, called “Flatwood Micro”. It just goes to

show you can put something together that looks the part very quickly when you put your mind to it.
Well done Will.





Nn3 Pizza.

Mark Fielder

Nn3 scale 2mm scale 6.5mm track 15" 400mm diameter circle



Mark's Nn3 Pizza layout. Google Earth view

Here I am in 2023, writing about a little layout, which was started in 1995 and reached a reasonable level of completion by 2000.

For quite some time prior to the Covid pandemic, my friend Phil Copleston & I have been regular exhibitors at various UK narrow gauge modelling events, promoting the cause of the small scales, N & 2mm. Initially, this was largely a static affair, often using borrowed models. However, I felt this was an unsatisfactory state of affairs so for ExpoNG in 1995 I resolved to have something running. As usual, I left it a bit late and the weekend before the show saw me looking in my local DIY store for a suitable baseboard. I found some machined MDF discs on sale, 400mm and 600mm diameter, 18mm thick, intended for use as coffee tables. It occurred to me that I could lay a circle of 6.5mm gauge track around the periphery of the 400mm disc and make a nice little working display. Much nicer than a boring coffee table, anyway.

A week of evenings saw a loop of 6.5mm gauge track together with a turnout & siding in place and operational. Technically, the gauge is actually $\frac{1}{4}$ inch as I used a slice of Tufnol* as my track gauge. The

track is made from 2mm Scale Association components, cut down PCB standard gauge sleepers and code 40 rail. Soldered track construction proceeds quickly as there's no waiting for any glue to dry. The rail is actually code 40 bullhead laid upside down, as the resulting narrow railhead looks quite realistic, despite still being oversize in scale terms.

Having built a display track, Some thought was given to providing a rationale for it, however tenuous it might be. The 3ft gauge lines which interest me are the common carriers in Ireland and the Isle of Man because they provide a variety of stock and operation which I feel is lacking in purely industrial scenarios. Two formative influences on my personal modelling are John Ahern with his Madder Valley Railway and P.D. Hancock with the Craig & Mertonford. Both had a relaxed attitude to mixing rolling stock but to a convincing overall effect.

Editor says: *Tufnol is a resin based composite material popular among railway modellers in the UK noted for its heat resistance and hard wearing qualities.



Waiting for some freight to be delivered to the goods yard. Such a natural view. It's hard to believe the layout is less than 16" (400mm) deep

Hence, after the 1995 ExpoNG, some basic scenery with a vaguely Irish/IOM feel was put in place. The most prominent building is a Shire Lane cast resin farmhouse and the other small huts and greenhouse are from various plastic kits. The siding became a small goods depot, protected by a gate: a feature that has always appealed to me. To break up the already small layout into even smaller scenes, a road was put in to roughly bisect the layout, featuring a bridge on one side, and a level crossing on the other. The level crossing provided justification for a small adjacent halt. Basic texturing was done using various static grasses dispensed from a "Noch" puffer bottle. The variety of textures obtained was very pleasing and the layout showed that 2mmNG or British/Irish Nn3 was definitely a practicable option. Personally, I'm a little elastic on scale & gauge, provided everything is of a consistent size.

This might sound like the whole thing was carefully planned. In reality, much of this is a happy accident. I'm not one for making in-depth plans, most of my modelling is conceived in my imagination with very

little being drafted on paper. The layout has never really acquired a formal name. I don't recall who first called it "The Pizza" but the nickname has stuck and I can't really imagine being able to change it now, after 27 years. It's a pretty well travelled layout, having been to model rail shows twice in the USA, once in France, once in Germany and many in the UK. It has its own custom made case, which has kept it in good condition, protected from dust and sunlight.

A question that's frequently asked is "Is this the original Pizza layout?" and the answer is that I don't actually know. There have been small circular layouts well before this one so most likely, it's not the first. It is definitely about the size of a large takeaway pizza, so in that respect, it justifies its name.

Editor says: Mark's Pizza layout is a true classic of the micro layout genre. The construction of it pre-dates the carendt.com website.

This just shows that a well designed and built micro can be for life.



Delightful rural simplicity. How long will the solitary passenger have to wait for his train, I wonder?



The Irish Turf Board adapted a bus to run on 3ft gauge track, so Mark did exactly the same thing. Combining a plastic kit for a Bristol LS bus and a Marklin railcar chassis, the result is quite unusual, but accurate.



This locomotive is built from the old PECO Glyn Valley tram loco kit that just drops onto a Märklin Z gauge chassis



Also built from a PECO kit, is this freelance saddle tank locomotive. Once again it's an easy fit onto the Märklin chassis. The coach his a converted N scale model.



A short train, pulled by a diesel loco based on a DRGW Davenport kit from Republic loco works arrives at the station. Removal of the some of the more American body styling creates a locomotive reminiscent of European design.



This diesel locomotive, vaguely inspired by the Walker diesels on the West Clare line in Ireland, uses a Marklin 8864 diesel loco as a basis, from which the cab was removed and an N scale cab built up using plastic sheet and strip.



A selection of scenes that show the little details that make this layout so special. At the top of the page, the way the farmhouse naturally sits in the landscape above the road. Natural conversations by the goods yard office and in front of the farmhouse. The figures are from Preiser and were chosen for their realistic poses.



More details. Washing on the line and a lonely wagon in the goods yard.



The layout is **NOT** stored in the Pizza box shown above when not in use.

Rather, it has its own purpose built storage and carrying case to protect everything. That includes the layout and the rolling stock. This has enabled the layout to travel to shows in the UK, mainland Europe and even two appearances at National Narrow Gauge Conventions in the USA.



Presentation fun

Günther Kiltz

Some fun, easy, presentation ideas

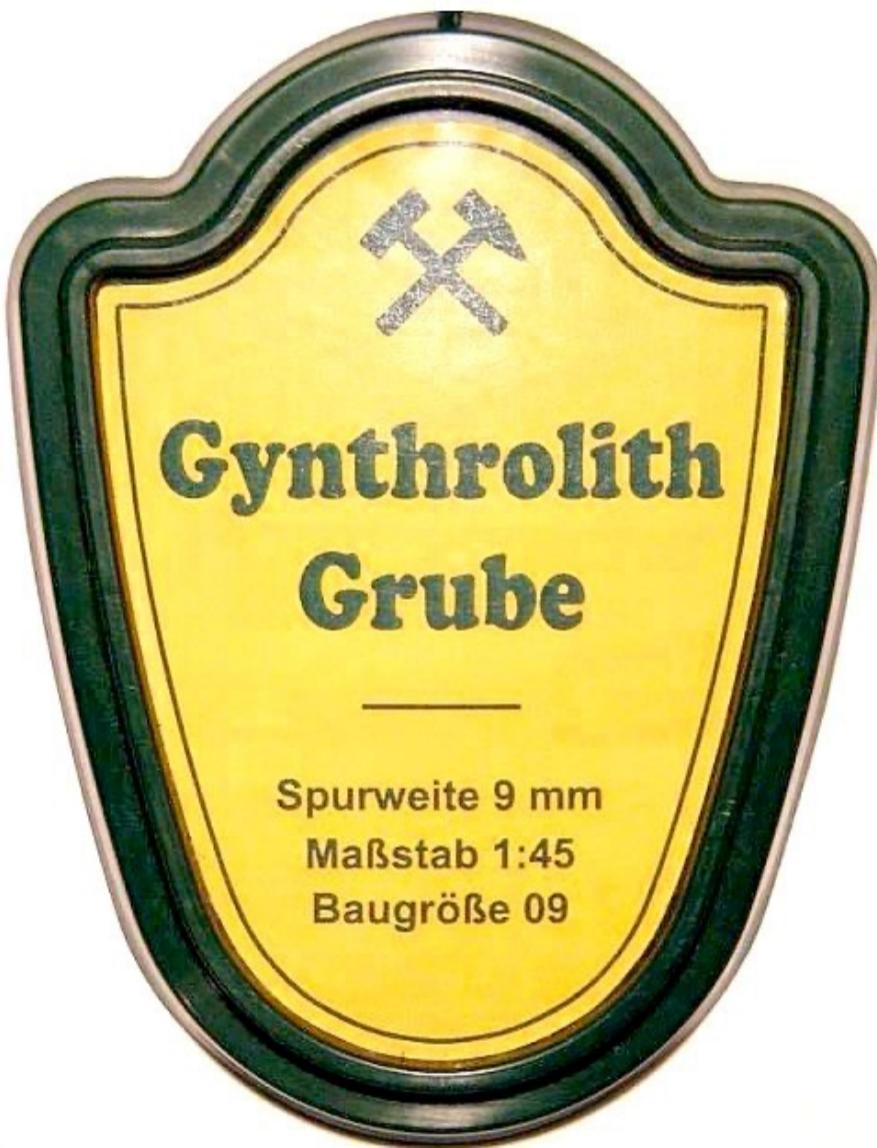
Coat of arms

One day in the supermarket, I stumbled over a little plastic can of liver sausage. The shape inspired me; it was the perfect base for a name sign for the Gynthrolith mine. So I took it with me. Nevertheless, the sausage was delicious.

I took a photo, which I imported into my CAD program. There I created a new label, using the picture as a guide for size and form. Then it was printed and glued on the lid.

Now the Gynthrolith mine has its own coat of arms. The word "Grube" means mine in German. The rest is track gauge and scale of the layout.

I love recycling!



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Break Sign

When you are a lone fighter on exhibitions, you have a problem when the call for food or the toilet occurs. Therefore, I created a sign to inform the visitors that I'm currently not available.

It all started with a picture of myself, sitting in front of a white wall in my modelling workshop, holding a coffee cup (the normal "decoration" with lying around junk and things was put away for this purpose).

This photo was loaded into MS Paint (yes, this is sufficient for that, you don't need Photoshop or so). Then I trimmed the picture to size and painted the background white to eliminate shadows and irregularities.

Next, I took a picture of the mining train at the front of the layout where it was clearly visible.

Now I went back to the picture of myself. In Paint, you choose "transparent selection" and press Ctrl + C. This copies the image alone without the white background.

In a new Paint session, I loaded the train picture, chose "transparent selection" again and pressed Ctrl + V. My picture was inserted and I now could scale its size to fit and push it to the desired place.

Finally, using the text function of paint, I inserted the information text at the bottom. The sign was printed, glued on a piece of cardboard and was ready for use.

Of course, you can do that with more sophisticated programs, but it works easy and fast with the on-board tools of Windows as well.

By the way, the text reads: "Short Operation Break"



Micro Layout Glossary

The Editor

There are always newbies coming in to the micro layout world, and they may not know all the terminology associated with it. Many of us take the terms that we use for granted, and tend to forget that people new to the discipline may have no idea what all this jargon means.

Here's a breakdown of those terms you may come across. Some are used in the big layout world as well. All are useful to know when designing micro layouts. This is an evolving list. I originally posted this in the Winter 2021 issue and it has grown in the last year as I get asked questions and have experiences with modellers

Most Importantly. Four square feet. The upper size limit for micro layouts. Four square feet is the scenic area. In scales larger than 7mm where keeping under 4 square feet is difficult, but not impossible. We have a special term; "in the spirit of a micro". That is discussed later on.

Train storage does not count towards the limit.

I have received many submissions to **The Dispatch** for layouts that are eight, or even 10 square feet in scenic area. Four square feet can be measured as four feet by

one foot, or two feet by two feet etc; that's 576 square inches.

Four feet by four feet, (a four foot square, and a popular misconception,) is 16 square feet. Four times the limit. Layouts are also sent to me in metric dimensions. In metric, a micro layout is under .371 square metres. I will have to get used to working that out. It will take some time but I'll get there.

Track plans. There are five basic, popular, designs of track plan in the micro layout world. Each is different. Each with its pros and cons.

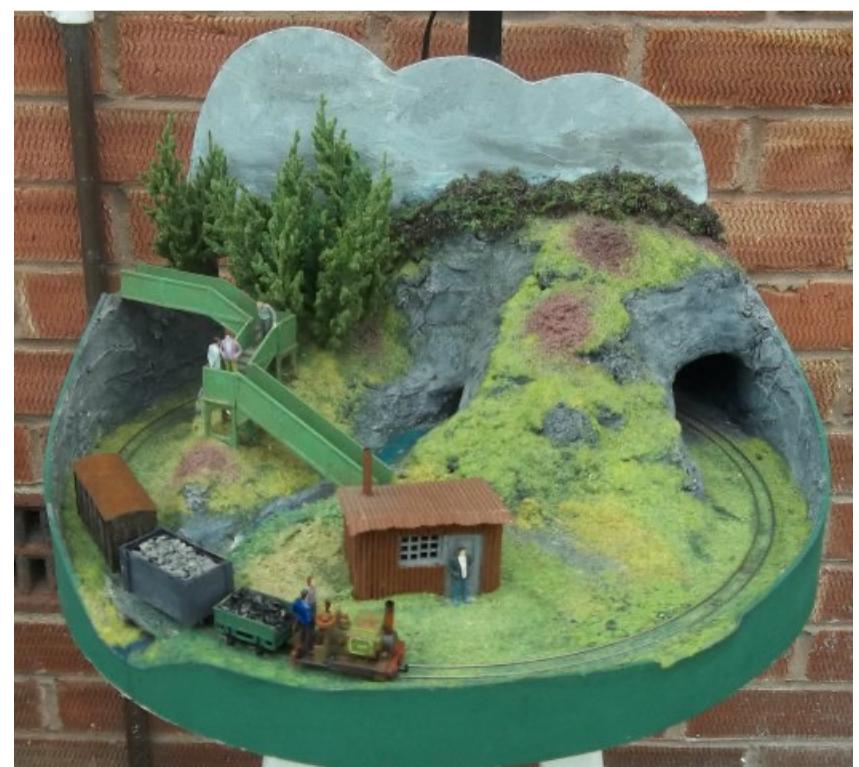
SLT As simple as it comes. SLT stands for Single Line of Track, or Single Line Terminus when referring to passenger stations. You think a single line of track makes for an uninteresting micro? Take a look at Dave Carson's Walmington on Sea pier tramway layout (right).

In these days of railway rationalisation a single line of track is a very prototypical track arrangement. And some realistic single line terminus models have been made.

SLT's can often be confused as dioramas. The difference is explained in detail later.



Pizza As simple as the SLT. Track planning at its most basic, a simple circle of track on a small circular or square baseboard. Sidings are acceptable if you can fit them in. In micro layout terms, a 27" diameter circle is four square feet. Bob Hughes "Alt na Balt" seen here, is a great example of the lengths you can go to with a simple circle of track. As with SLT's some people also consider Pizza's as dioramas.





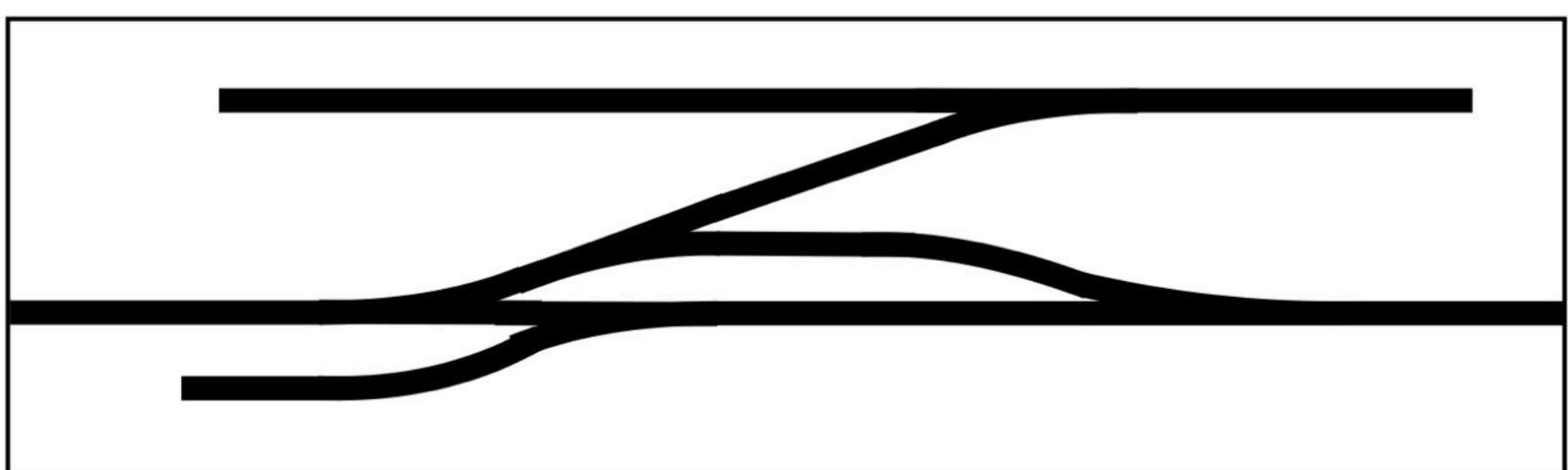
Tuning Fork. Perhaps the most prototypical switching design. A single track divides into two. Many small industries in the real world are served by just a single siding off the main line. If you can make the siding long enough, defined spots along the track for certain types of wagons could make for interesting placement problems in an operating sequence.

Larger industries could have one siding used for goods in and the other for goods out, dictating what wagons could be spotted where.



Inglenook. Often described as “The ubiquitous Inglenook” It’s one of the worlds oldest track plans. A.R. Walkley first produced a layout to this design in 1926, before being popularised again by Alan Wright in the 1970’s. A single track divides into three sidings. The capacity of the sidings is worked out to make for interesting shunting processes. The operator uses the wagons on the two shorter sidings to make up a train in a specified order on the longest siding. Working an Inglenook can be extremely absorbing and rewarding.

You will often see Inglenooks described in terms of numbers. For example 3,2,2 or 5,3,3. These numbers indicate the length of the sidings in wagons that the plan can take. The more wagons you can fit on the layout, the more possible permutations of wagons there are to assemble your train. In the 5,3,3 Inglenook there are eight wagons on the layout and you use them to make up a five wagon train on the longest siding. That means there are 6,720 arrangements of wagons in a train possible. That should keep you busy for a while.



Timesaver American Modeller John Allen is credited with creating this switching scheme back in 1972. It’s a very busy plan with a central loop and sidings going in all directions. Shoehorning it down into four square feet is tough in H0 scale, but it can be done. The plan is designed around specific siding lengths in relation to the

longest cars used on the layout. Shorter cars mean a shorter layout. Shorter wagon lengths in English 00 scale also make it easier.

Train storage. There are many different terms for train storage. Somewhere for your trains to go to or come from.

Fiddle yard The generic term. All offstage train storage can be termed a fiddle yard. Some people use it as two words, some one. Both spellings are accepted at **The Dispatch**. Hidden sidings is another term that means the same.

Traintable/Train turntable. Quite simply a turntable big enough to take a train, or several of them.

Sector plate While a traintable pivots in the center of its circle. A sector plate can pivot at any point along its centre line. Most popularly towards the end. Different locations of the pivot will describe different arcs, which can be a space saving device.

Traverser. A ladder of sidings on a sliding table that can access the main line onto the layout just by being pushed into place, so not needing any pointwork in the fiddle yard. A huge space saver.

Fiddlestick. Fiddlesticks are as simple as it gets. A length of track fixed to a piece of wood (often 2 x 1 softwood,) that joins to the layout by the track fishplates. Lightweight and easily swapped out on the layout, they

Other terms.

Arendtian. Believe it or not, there are people out there who think that layouts up to six feet, maybe more, are also micro layouts. Or that four square feet only applies to layouts using OO/H0 track. Larger track gauges have a larger size limit. This is utter poppycock of course. It's four square feet, no matter what the scale gauge combination is. Those people refer to four square feet and less layouts as "Arendtian", after Carl.

Bitsa station A "bit" or part, of a station. Stations take up a lot of room and if you don't need all of the station on your layout, or need a view block (see below). A part of a station might be all you need.

View block Anything that blocks your view of the layout. Not that small child being lifted by his father at the train show. But designed elements on the layout that obstruct the view of a train as it travels through the scene. Trees or buildings. They break up the view, and create the illusion of more space.

Ghost industry You don't see this term used a lot any more. Ghost industries are businesses that are not on a layout. But still receive traffic and are part of the operations of the layout. For example, a loco might take a car offstage and return without it, supposedly delivering this freight to another industry.

Offstage/Onstage. These theatrical terms have gained favour in recent years to describe the fiddleyard. It makes sense when you think of your micro layout as a stage set where the action of a railway takes place.

Diorama. A diorama is NOT a micro layout. I have been sent articles for The Dispatch about dioramas and

have the disadvantage of offering no protection to the stock on them, unlike Cassettes.

Cassette/Loco Lift The cassette holds the train. The cassettes have handles to hold on to when moving the cassettes off the layout and replacing with another, as well as sides protecting to protect the stock. The advantages are it is very quick to change out a train, and can also offer some protection, as you don't touch the trains with your hands. But cassettes can be unwieldy the longer they get. The Loco lift, made by PECO is a commercially available cassette. They are a foot long and made for 00/H0 scale trains though can be used in other scales like Gn15 with a little modification.

Cassette Traintable A combination of cassette and traintable. Instead of having a selection of tracks on the traintable, a cassette just plugs into a hole in the surface of the traintable. I might have pioneered this idea on my original Apple Valley Light Railway (Gn15) layout. The traintable was built around a kitchen lazy Susan and cassettes plugged into a hole I created in the surface.

I have politely refused only for the submitter to get quite offended. Dioramas are essentially static displays, whereas a micro layout involves movement and has a clear purpose. A model locomotive running up and down a bridge, no matter how well detailed the items are, is not a micro layout. There is no purpose in the scene.

In the spirit of a micro. A phrase created by Carl to include layouts in the larger scales that are larger than four square feet. With larger size trains, like 0 scale standard gauge, and garden railway scales like 16mm and 7/8ths inch, building a true micro becomes difficult. So layouts like that are "in the spirit of Micro".

It's not what you've got it's what you do with it. As you know, we micro modellers are limited for space, so there's only so much you can do with it. It's worth remembering this simple mantra if you're worried about copying something.

Are there any terms that you've heard of that you don't know what they are? Drop me a line at MMRDeditor@gmail.com and we can add them to the list.

Heere to Thar

Al Barten

Scale:TT3/H0e Size 4' x 1' 1220mm x 305mm



The yard at Heere is a hive of activity as the morning mixed train heads out

Heere-to-Thar Railway is a TT3 gauge layout with HOe narrow gauge transfer points. It conveniently mates at one end with Woodson Crate & Barrel, an A3 box roundy layout in HOe gauge. Both layouts are standalone micro layouts, Heere-to-Thar being 400 square inches and Woodson being 204. Combined they are 604, just slightly over the defined limit of 576 for a single micro.

Conceptually, Heere-to-Thar began as an intention to build a fork layout (one turnout) in an A3 or A4 box. I have plans for both and may someday build one. I also planned to experiment with TT3 gauge, which is a scale of 1:100 on 12mm track. The creator and prime mover was Tri-ang from 1957-1965. The line has been kept alive by The 3mm Society. I've been blown away by how well it works, and love that it's essentially $\frac{3}{4}$ the size of OO (1:76).

I decided to clear away one of the two box layouts I had on a 51"x18" table (probably an old typing el) alongside my desk and go with a long layout, giving me lots of operation with the simple fork. A key part of all my fork plans was to have a narrow gauge track alongside one leg of the fork. By placing and replacing movable wagons serving as transfer targets I can add some variety to my operation.

I think of the layout as having six locations, five along the route and one being imaginary.

1. Heere Station. Represents a moderate town or city. The station is substantial, having a waiting room, ticket office, restrooms, and freight transfer. Nearby is a fuel depot. This is one end of the passenger shuttle.

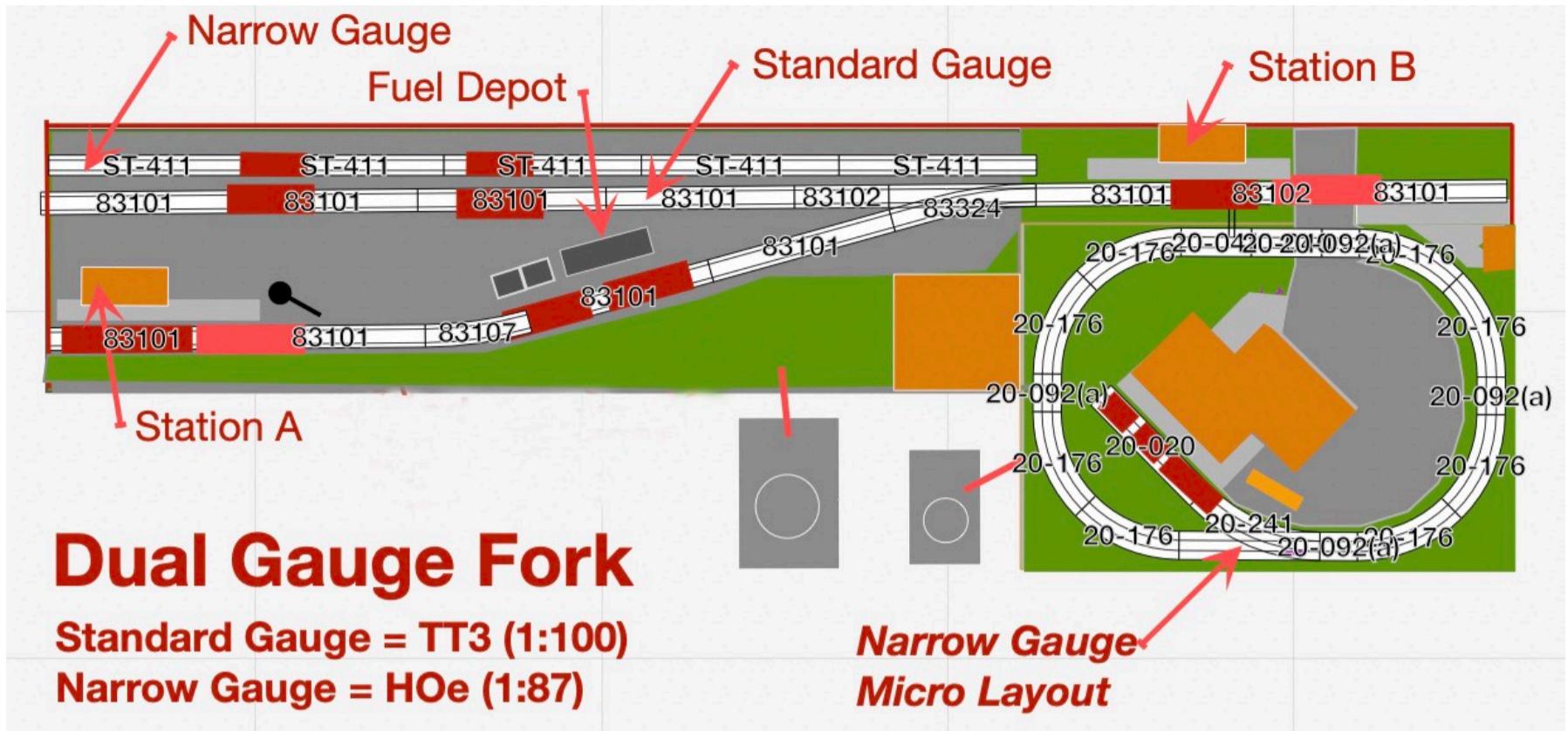
2. Transfer Yard. Located not far from Heere Station, can handle 4-5 well spaced wagons. The narrow gauge transfer track runs adjacent to the yard track.

3. Standby. Located at the righthand end of the Transfer Yard, this area is for unassigned wagons and wagons with loads needing the yard crane. It can hold 1-2 wagons depending how many are in the Transfer Yard proper.

4. Fuel Depot. Located to the right of Heere Station and provides a destination for oil deliveries.

5. Thar Station. Represents a small town with a narrow gauge (Woodson Crate & Barrel) connection. This is the other end of the passenger shuttle and provides some on-the-fly product transfers.

6. Visionary. This is the major off-site terminus representing a large city with product sources and destinations. It's somewhere between the two stations. Visionary exports fuel products (coal and oil), fruits, building materials, and machinery. It receives milk, meats, and small manufactured goods such as may come from Woodson Crate & Barrel.



Two main operation types are the passenger shuttle between Heere and Thar, and the freight transfer at the Transfer Yard. Generally, the passenger shuttle can include a coach and a wagon. The freight transfer involves exchanging wagons between train and Transfer Yard. At the start, 4 or 5 narrow gauge wagons and several standard gauge wagons are placed toward the left end. Some standard gauge wagons are placed to the right in Standby. The coach and a Jinty are placed at Heere Station. A milk tank wagon can be placed along with the coach or alongside the narrow gauge milk tank wagons if desired. What follows is one possible scenario.

Early Morning. Passenger run from Heere to Thar and back, includes coach and milk tank wagon. Upon

return, wagon is exchanged with a meat wagon. Milk wagon is spotted alongside narrow gauge milk wagons. Mid-morning. Unspotted wagons are located alongside suitable narrow gauge wagons, replacing those already in place.

Mid-day. Passenger run from Heere to Thar and back, includes coach and meat wagon. Upon return, wagon is exchanged with a goods van. Meat wagon is spotted alongside narrow gauge meat wagon.

Mid-afternoon. Fuel oil wagon is located alongside fuel depot.

Late-day. Passenger run from Heere to Thar and back, includes coach and goods van. Upon return, wagon is exchanged with a milk tank wagon. Goods van is spotted alongside narrow gauge goods van.



Heere to Thar under construction. With the existing Woodson Crate and Barrel layout tucked in the corner



The morning mixed train arrives at Thar. The loading ramp cleverly straddles the join between the two separate layouts, holding one in place against the other. A neat idea. As you know, TT3 and H0e are two different scales. But because one line is standard gauge and the other narrow gauge and there is nothing obviously one scale or the other in shot (like people) the difference is not apparent.

Using TT3 has been an eye opener for me. The 60-year old locos run beautifully (some need a simple cleaning of the commutator), starting and stopping slowly and reliably. The tension hook couplings, forerunners of the same on OO trains, work perfectly, likely because they were all made by the same manufacturer. Tri-ang also managed to produce a rather extensive line of models, and all have been proven to be rugged.

What makes TT3 especially appealing is that it has not gone away and will not go away any time soon, though it will never be considered a major scale. The 3mm Society has kept things humming, providing publications, spare parts, used equipment and commissioned new locos and other rolling stock as well as accessories and scratch building components.

Membership is highly recommended.

The layout is extremely light, being constructed of 1/8"x1" bass wood framing and 1" thick Pink Panther foam insulation board, which is sold in small sizes in hobby stores. The stations are scratch built using styrene and card. Ground cover was made by spreading PVA glue on the foam and sprinkling Woodland Scenics ground covers on the wet glue. I discovered an easy way to make asphalt by using a 1/16" black neoprene sheet.

Finding TT gauge track here in the US was not easy. I ended up using Tillig flex track and turnout. I had to file out the flangeways of the turnout to accommodate the larger flanged wheel of Tri-ang locos.

I'm using a Marklin MiniClub controller meant for Z scale trains. I like that I can reverse train direction simply by reversing the direction in which I turn the throttle. I don't have to throw a switch. I find these controllers to be great for OO scale, but too powerful for most N gauge, 009 and HOe.

Initially I ran a simple train of tank loco, freight wagon and coach shuttling back and forth. Then I realized that in real life the lead end of the coach would have to have cab control. The Great Western Railway had such an arrangement over a hundred years ago with its Autocoach, but from what little description I could find it was a physically linked control system between loco and coach (ie, cables and rods I'm guessing). Since I want to include a freight wagon between the two I have assumed the control is wireless – a modern day approach. The alternative would be to simply have the coach be a DMU, which Tri-ang conveniently included in their offerings. So my collection of alternatives includes a DMU, a 3D printed autocoach, a “converted” brake van, and a “converted” 3D printed box van. I like the DMU best.

Woodson Crate and Barrel

This an A3 boxfile roundy-roundy HOe layout that preceded the fork layout. I built it as a prototype for building more for auction at our local trolley museum. I planned it with simplicity and reliability in mind. The one building was intended as a mockup made from

heavy card and printed via my computer, though ultimately I would like it to have removable roof so goods can be physically moved in and out. I liked it, so it stayed – at least for now. The track is Kato sectional with 117mm radius curves. I use 009 and HOe rolling stock.



Woodson Crate and Barrel is a nice micro layout by itself. It fits in nicely with That station in the background

I was caught by surprise when I started looking at TT last year. I had seen a display in the early 1950s in New York. At a scale of 1:120 it was smaller than HO (1:87) and half the size of my American Flyer S gauge trains (1:63). I thought it was great, but sadly it disappeared here in the US and was replaced in the '60s by N (1:160). It turns out that TT is alive and well in Eastern European countries.

What I only discovered when I started looking into TT seriously was that the British company Tri-ang had introduced a 1:100 version, now called TT3, in 1957 and continued through 1965. Both scales run on the same 12mm gauge track and are considered standard gauge, though the 1:120 version is more correct. My TT gauge rolling stock is all previously owned Tri-ang

locos and wagons, though I do plan to build some new kits. The Tri-angs are in remarkably good condition, probably because they were not used much. They are also rugged. Initially I purchased via eBay from US or Canada based sellers, the postage being less than from UK. I later discovered a huge resource for members of The 3mm Society. Their shipping prices to the US are reasonable, as opposed to some of the eBay listings which are simply outrageous, and their sale prices quite low, especially for used equipment. I now have six 0-6-0 Jintys in several liveries and a 2-6-2 Prairie. Tri-ang thoughtfully made 4-wheel wagon chassis, which are still easy to find. They make scratch building flat and open cars and vans quite easy.



The fork left a dead corner of the layout, which was filled with dummy tracks to store a loco and the smaller cab control cars. I like the way it turned out.



Uncoupling ramps were fabricated by laying a strip of clear plastic over a shorter strip of 1/16" neoprene and fastening one end to the sleepers. I then painted the plastic flat black to downplay its appearance.

A new material for baseboards.

Don H. Sawyer

It will never warp



I never seem to get along with baseboards. I've tried plywood, chipboard, balsa and foamboard, all to no avail. The problem? They tend to fall apart, get woodworm or warp.

Whether it's too little glue, inaccurate cutting, the way I store them, or just plain ham-fistedness, I can't say. I've considered getting them made professionally but frankly I can't bring myself to spend the money.

Anyway, for my most recent micro layout I decided on a complete re-think. I wanted the new track surface to be smooth, sturdy, in one piece and straight as a die. The baseboard only needed to be 4ft by 1ft in size. What to use this time round?

Then I remembered the spare off-cut of one-inch thick granite in the garage, left over from a kitchen redesign. I thought it would be perfect if only I could cut it to size. It would mean a bit of outlay on specialist cutting tools, but I thought the results would be worth it.

So I bought the tools and suitable protective equipment, and began work. There were to be five turnouts on the new layout, so I would have to drill holes in the appropriate places in the granite for the control mechanisms. This meant another trip to the DIY shop for heavy-duty drill bits. As well as the vertical holes, I had to drill laterally through the granite from front to back to accommodate the wire in tube pushrods. I also drilled a few extra holes for wiring, and because I wanted a harbour scene, I stuck two extra slabs of granite along the back two-thirds of the baseboard to raise the level of the tracks so the front could be the sea. For the legs, which because of the weight of the granite also needed to be pretty sturdy, I went to a scrap merchant and got hold of some lengths of cast angle

iron around three in. wide and had them cut into four lengths of 40in. each. But how to fit them to the baseboard?

I decided on a slot-in mechanism, so I temporarily fitted a square wooden mould onto each corner of the upside-down baseboard, poured concrete into them and let them set with the legs stuck into the wet concrete. When it set, the concrete had firmly adhered to the underside of the granite but the legs, the tops of which I'd smeared with grease first, just slid in and out of the recesses thus made. Perfect!

There was enough angle iron left over to form a lighting gantry. I also had a piece of quarter- inch thick sheet metal to hand which turned out to be ideal for a backscene, so I screwed and glued it into the back and sides of the granite. I did the same with a length at the front to form a fascia.

Now I could get on with the fun bit - track laying and scenics. But then, with my first show looming, a problem arose – the shunting moves weren't working out and I needed to redesign the track plan, which meant that some of the drilled holes were in the wrong place. So it was back to the workshop to drill more holes.

Unfortunately, in the process, I dropped the layout onto my foot, which entailed a two-month layoff. In next to no time April 1st came round, the day of the show. It was a great success, apart from a bit of damage to the exhibition room floor, which the show manager was very good about.

The layout takes four fit people to carry, and doesn't do my car's suspension any good, but that's a small price to pay for a literally rock-solid design. Spurred on by this success, I think I'll use the same technique on my next layout, which I intend to be much bigger.

Uraca Industries

Les Coleman

Scale: O (7mm=1ft) Layout size 915mm x 450mm 3'x 18"



The Scalescenes kit enlarges very well to 7mm scale, in fact it's impossible to tell this is the larger scale and not 4mm scale, other than the fact the layout isn't in a box file.

I had always wanted to build a purely industrial setting and when I saw an advert in the model railway press for the Scalescenes' 00 "Layout in a Boxfile" I was hooked. For the modest sum of £9.99, I downloaded the kit for printing out. It didn't disappoint. I enlarged it by 175% on the printer for O scale and printed the many parts on to paper. I've only got an Epson A4 printer, so I had to print a part of each Scalescenes page at a time and piece them together, putting the joins where they are least obvious. Each Scalescenes page usually results in four A4 paper prints at the right size, so there's some overlap of detail which makes it easier to choose where to join them. I then pasted the prints using Pritt Stick or cheaper pound-shop (dollar store) equivalents onto mounting board off-cuts, generously given free by a local picture framer. The buildings took shape and fitted together without a hitch. Once built, I sprayed them with matt varnish to protect the ink-jet printing ink, which will run at the slightest hint of dampness. To guard against bowing of the larger structures, they were reinforced with 1/4"

square strips of wood that in a previous existence had been rocket sticks for fireworks.

Counter-intuitively, I made the buildings first and then constructed the baseboard to fit them. It's usually the other way around. The baseboard was very conventional - MDF top on a 2" by 1" frame. As it's just under 3ft by 18" in area it's still very light. The fiddle yard-cum-sector plate (which saves a point and therefore some length) is built on a similar baseboard, the two being connected by hinges with the pins removed, which also conduct the current between the two boards. The track and single point were scratch-built, being code 100 "00" rail stripped from second-hand track soldered to PCB sleepers. Only one sleeper in 3 is of soldered PCB, the other two-thirds are merely card, glued to the baseboard before laying the track. The point is operated by a simple method of a slide switch connected by wire to the tie-bar which changes the frog polarity at the same time as changing the point.



A quiet day at Uraca Industries

The track on the sector plate, which is “off-scene” but still clearly visible, was made more simply by cutting a length of 00 track down the middle of the sleepers and spacing the rails out to 32mm. Ballasted, it doesn’t look too silly but some deeper O gauge flanges bumped over the moulded plastic chairs, so these were reduced in height using an abrasive disc in the Dremel.

The whole of the visible ground area on the baseboard was covered in ballast and then a few static grass tufts of weed were added. The buildings are retained in place by strips of wood glued to the baseboard. The whole layout took about 3 months to build working for about an hour and a half each evening.

Oh, and the name? My German daughter-in-law’s father works in a factory called Uraca which makes pumps of various sizes and is situated just outside a pretty little town called Bad Urach in southern Germany. The factory is shiny and ultra-modern (you could eat your dinner off the floor) and nothing like the scruffy factory depicted on the layout. However, he was happy to e-mail me a selection of the company’s logos and I printed one off and attached it to one of the

layout buildings. So the sign is authentic even if the factory complex isn’t.

For those of you who think that I must have gone through a lot of printer ink cartridges, printing four times as many pages as the 00 scale kit. It wasn’t really that bad. I’ve got an Epson Photo RX620 printer and I always buy generic ink cartridges from eBay, which are a fraction of the price of branded ones, they’ve always worked well, with only one or two bad ones over the years. The colours always seem to come out fine, and once sprayed with a fixative, they look as good as if they were printed with official Epson ink.



The weathering on these Scalescenes downloadable kits is excellent

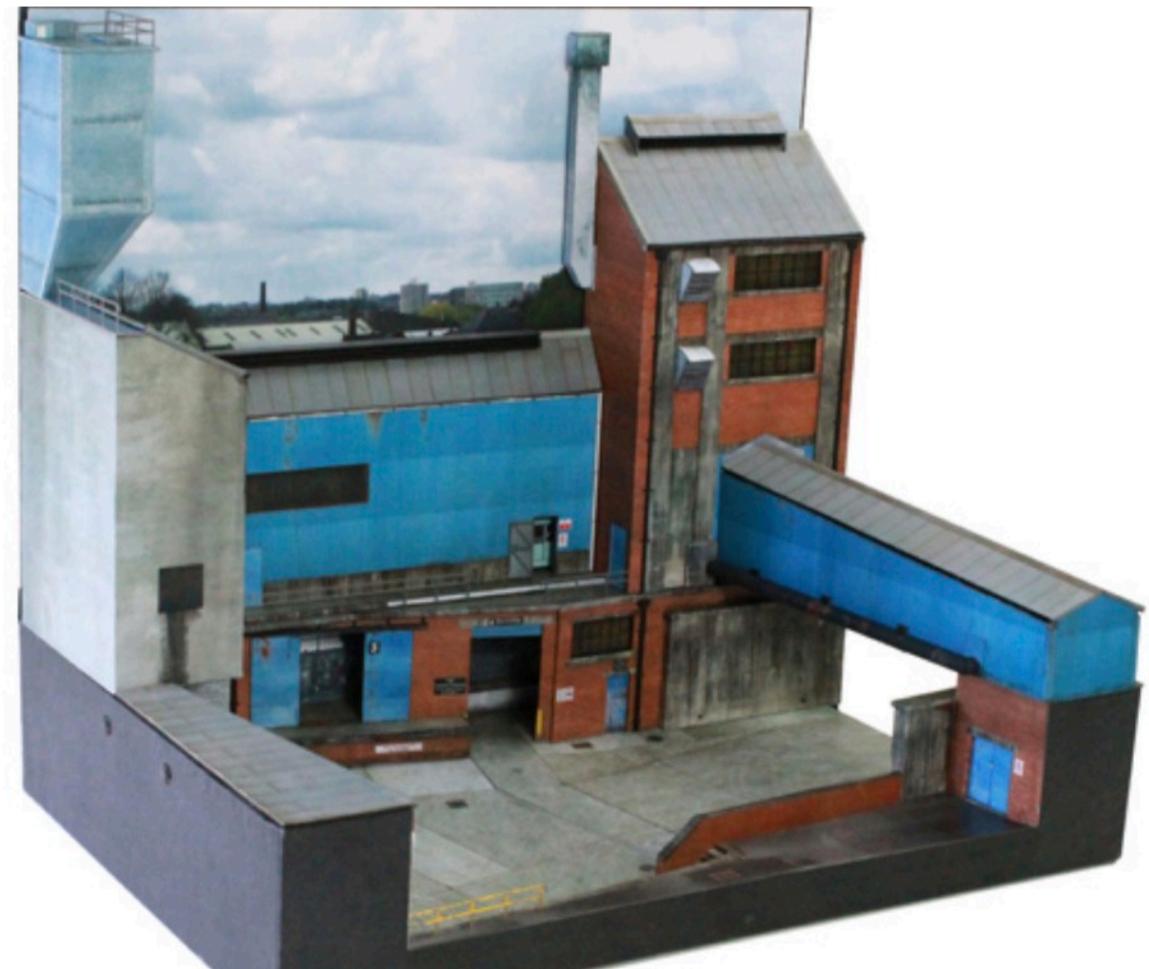




These photographs of Les' 7mm adaptation and the 4mm scale Scalescenes kit show how he added extra sections of building so that the layout size would fit in with the geometry of his scratch built track.

John Wiffen at Scalescenes is a very talented designer producing downloadable kits that you can print off and assemble yourselves. There are two kits specifically made for box file micro layouts as well as several other kits that would be suitable focal points for Micro's.

The Scalescenes website is www.scalescenes.com



Scalescenes photo

The Micro Model Railroad Cartel Challenge

Build a Pizza layout for 2023

The 2023 Micro Model Railroad Cartel Christmas Challenge.

There are no big prizes. The challenge is there to stimulate creativity and encourage micro layout building. The winning entry, voted on by the members of the Micro Model Railroad Cartel on Facebook, is featured as the header photograph on the page for the year. Plus, the winning layout will be featured in the pages of **The Dispatch** at the winners convenience. Subjects in the past have been build a layout in one square foot, and building your own take on the original Squarefoot Estate Railway plan.

This year, the challenge is much simpler. The challenge is to build a Pizza Layout.

The pizza layout was probably the most popular subject on the original carendt.com website, and there were many regular updates devoted to the concept. The term "Pizza Layout" even has its own Wikipedia entry, and the concept still has many supporters around the world today. As a small space model railway idea. You can't beat a pizza layout.

The Rules.

1. The baseboard can be no larger than four square feet. That's a maximum of a two feet by two feet square or a 27" diameter circle.
2. The baseboard can only be square or circular.
3. The track plan can be a circle, oval, or squared circle. You can use flex track, sectional track or you can hand lay your track.
4. The layout must be built between March 1st and November 30th 2023
5. Turnouts and sidings are acceptable.
6. A turnout to an external storage track to change trains is permitted but not compulsory. Any storage area **DOES NOT** count towards the size limit
7. The deadline for construction is November 30th 2023.
8. Photographs will be uploaded to an entry thread on Facebook on December 1st
9. A video proving the layout works must be uploaded.
10. You can upload as many photographs as you like of your entry but only one photo will be used in the entry judging thread.
11. Have fun!



Berth Svensons Salinas de Berth was recently featured in **The Dispatch**

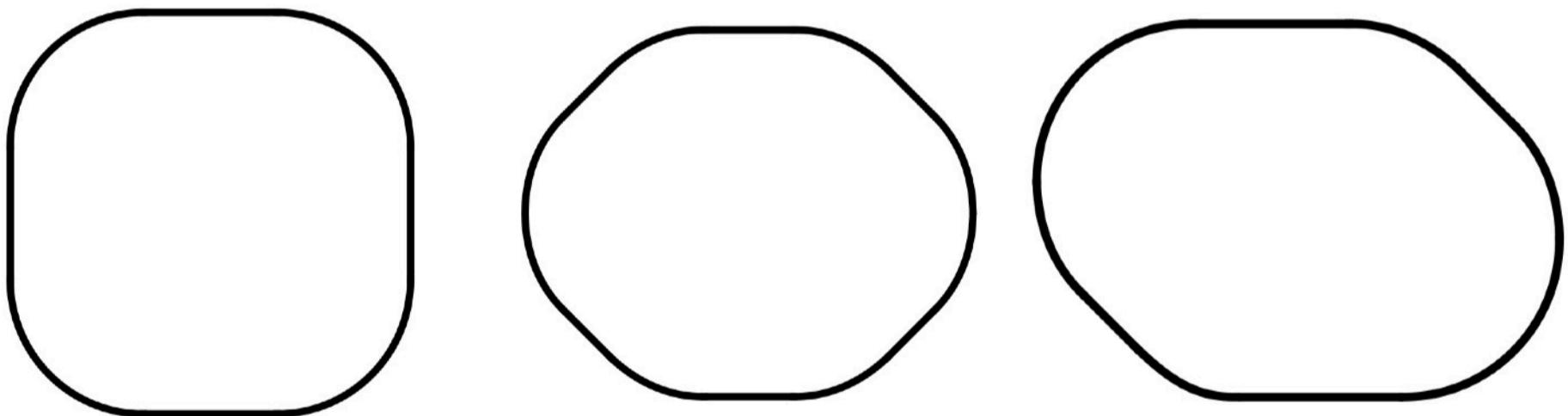


Tree trunk blanks for craft projects are basically circular, and would be perfectly acceptable in the challenge if you were so inclined. Perhaps one of you could produce a logging railroad scene

This one wooden blank is a trophy from winning our class at the 2021 Ojibwe Forests Rally.

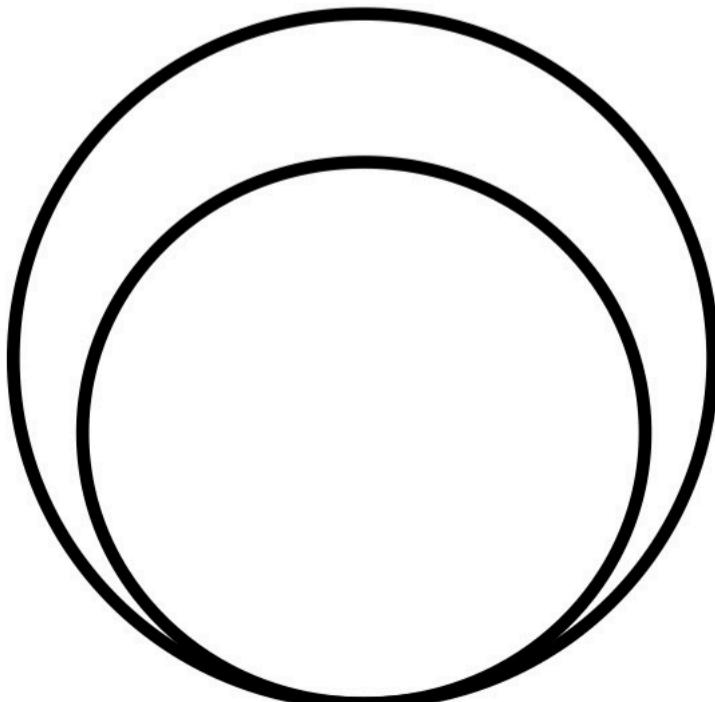


I have been known to ride around Minnesota Forests roads in a car at high speeds



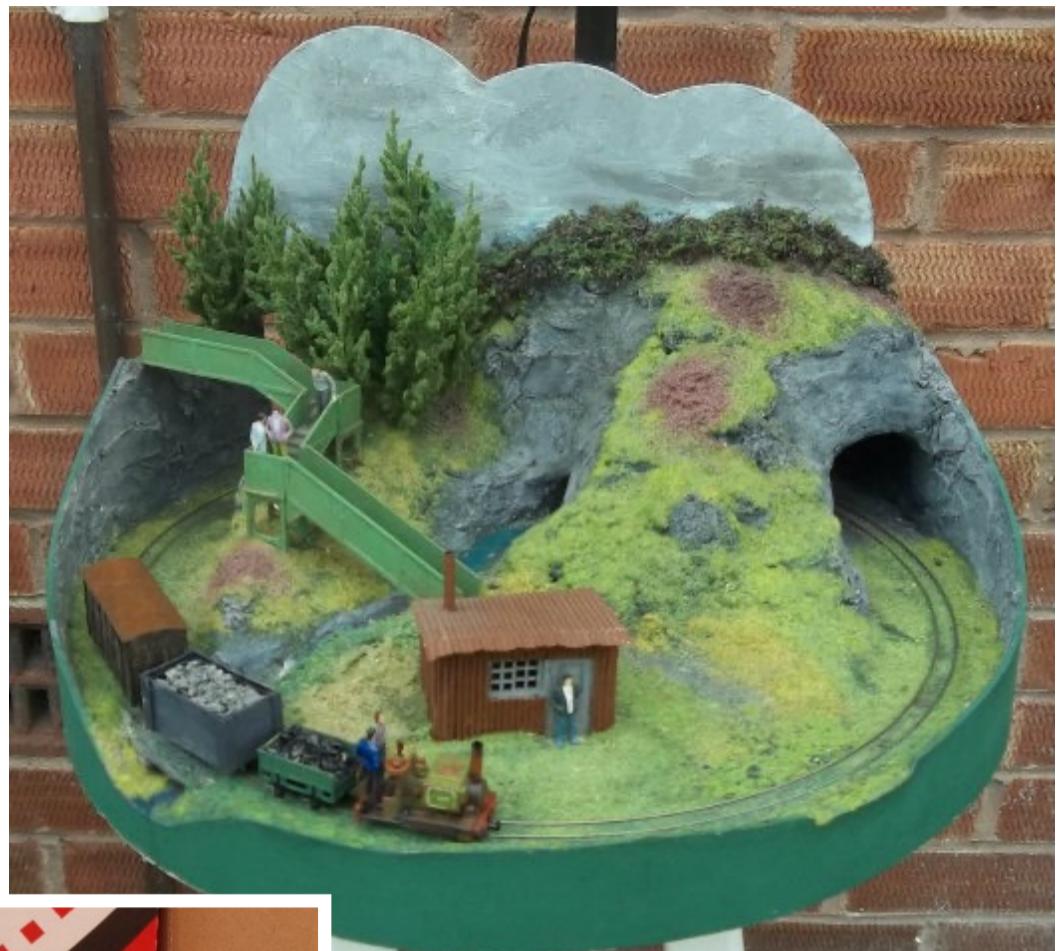
This is what is meant by a “squared circle”. Aimed at those who would use sectional track for their micro.

Quite simply, the curved elements of the continuous run are interspersed with straight track elements.



A folded figure eight is also permitted. The tracks can cross each other on the level through a diamond crossing or above each other. Having climbed a gradient. It might have to be a deep slope but I’m sure someone could do it.

Aalt-na-Baalt by Bob Hughes. A simple pizza layout full of scenic grandeur.



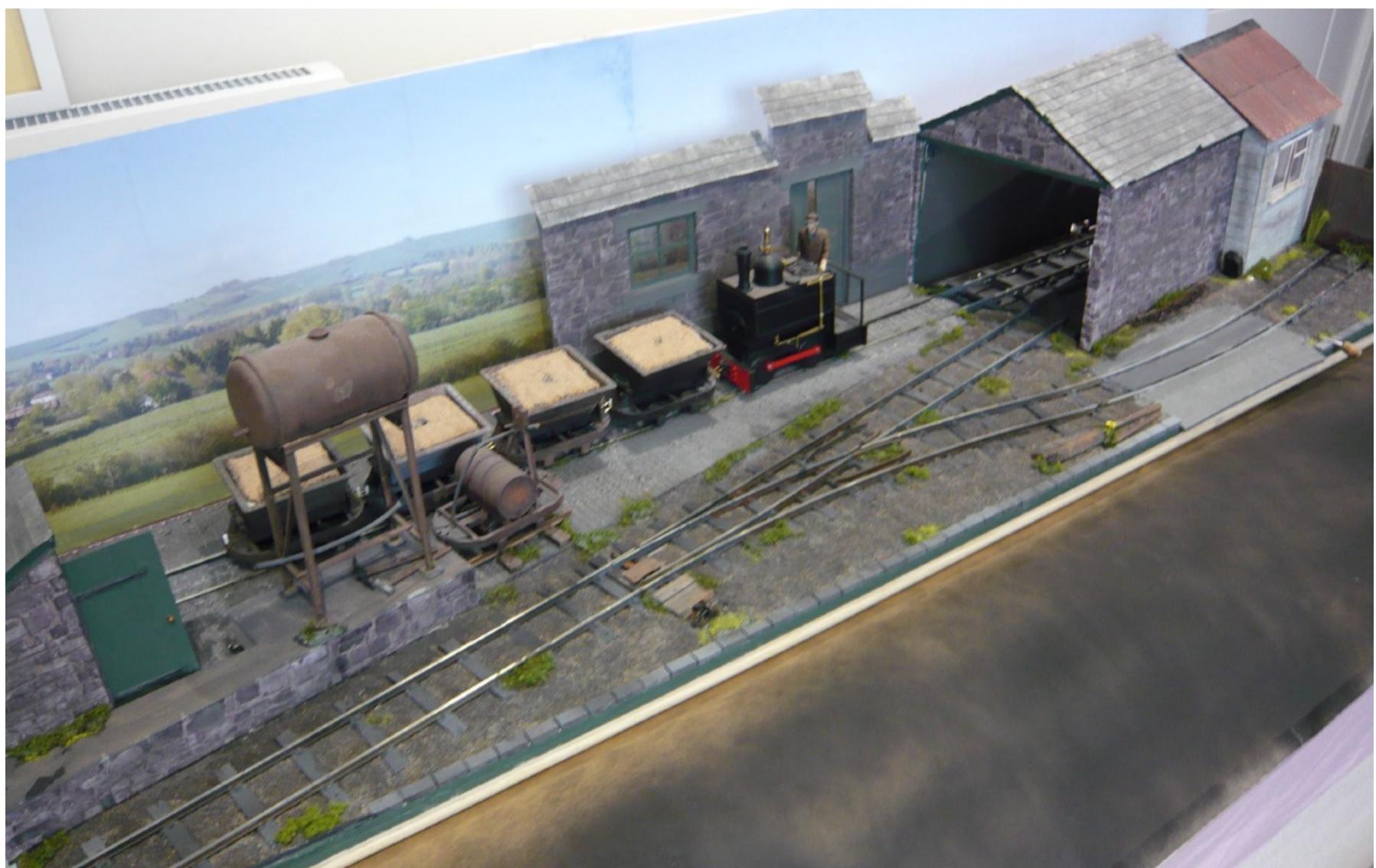
Embarrassingly, the editor found this old photograph of his first, and to date, only pizza layout. Proving if he can do it anyone can. The track was a length of N scale flexible track and all the stock and buildings came from previous layouts. It was a quick fun build, and great for testing his Gn9 (G scale N gauge track) trains.



Another Micro

Peter Smith

Scale:16mm/32mm gauge. Size:48" x 12" 1220mm x 305mm



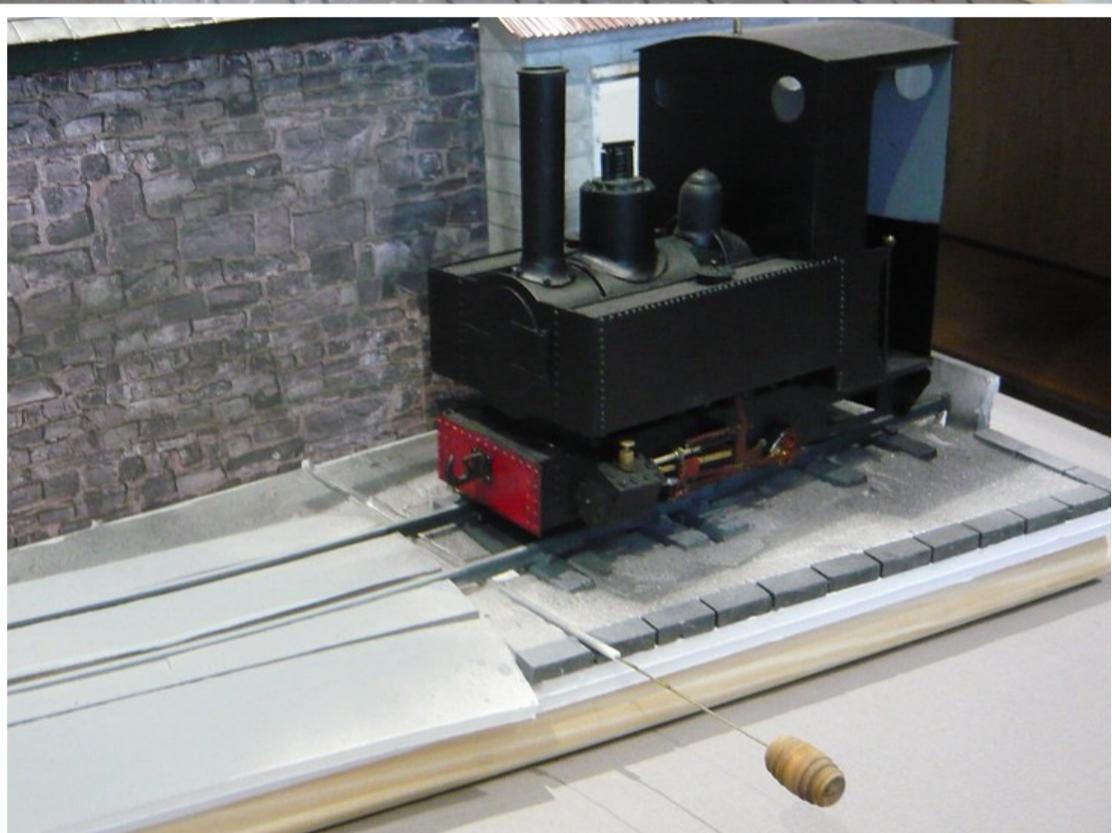
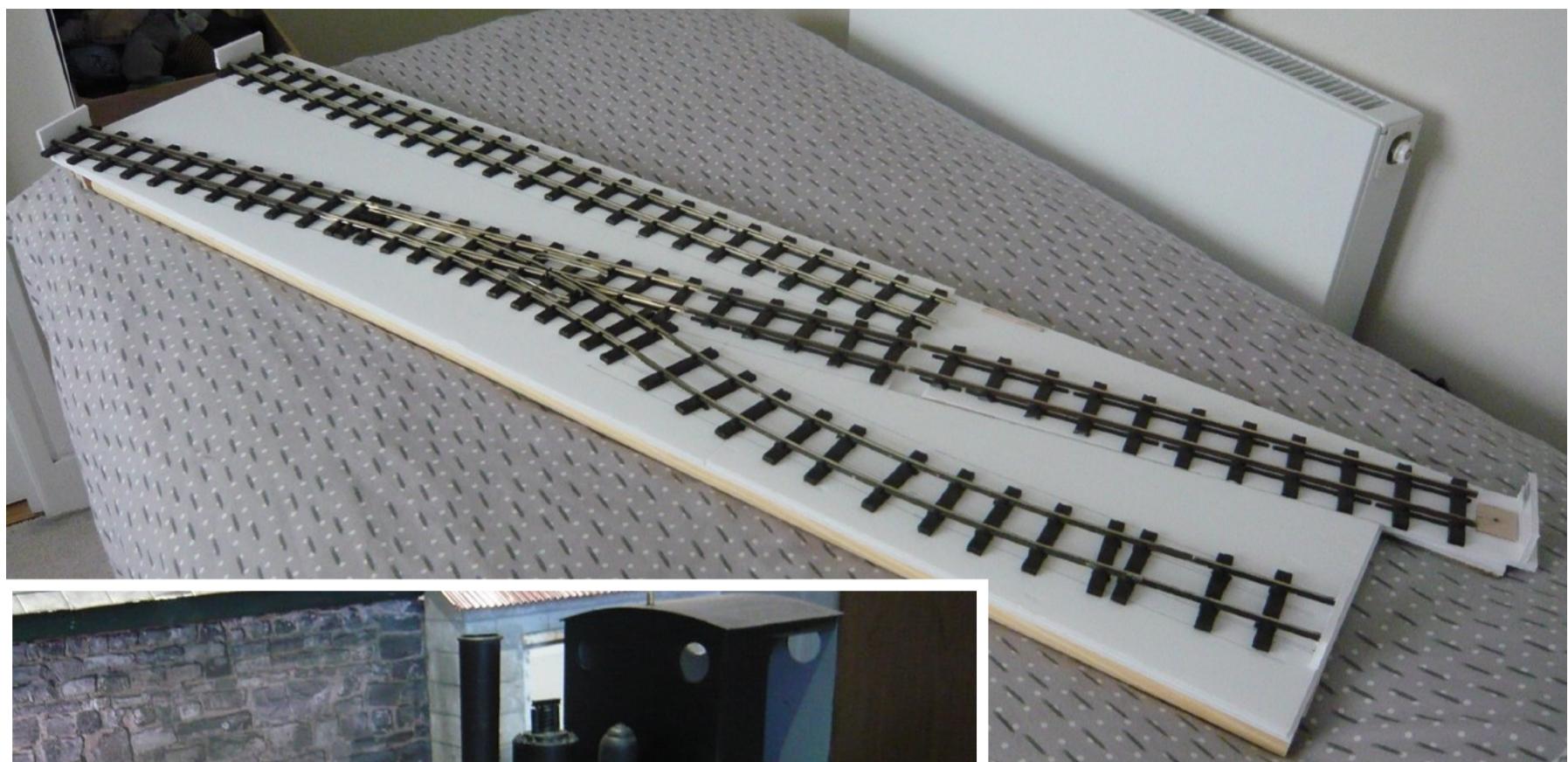
An early view of Peter's layout showing the trackplan before all the buildings are in place

I have hesitated to submit "Another Micro" because it was directly inspired by Foresquare Brickworks, a 7/8th scale layout that featured in MMRD Issue 1. The track plan is the same, and the sector plate is hidden behind a run down building at the right hand end. I considered reversing the plan but it would have been just to be different and I liked the plan as it was.

I have the slight advantage that 32mm track gives just that bit more wiggle room than the 45mm gauge of Foresquare. The single turnout bang in the middle of the 4ft board gives a focal point and draws attention away from the hopefully hidden sector plate. As the sector plate is not part of the 4ft x 1ft, I have been able to drop back the buildings on the rear wall, especially the house and pub at the left hand end. This makes industrial street running a reasonable proposition. The front of the layout is a canal bank and I can easily simulate water along the front.

To hide the street entrance, I made a small loading platform and gate house with a water tower and a grounded oil tank on a skip chassis. This is enough to hide the entrance way without losing the trains completely from view. Both the loading bay and the two buildings were ideas borrowed from Jim Reed, a fine

micro builder in 7mm scale. I am never afraid to borrow ideas but give credit where it's due. In the covid years and beyond I have built 15 radio controlled 16mm scale industrial locos so there's no shortage of variety. All this is a complete contrast with my 6.5mm layout Empire in MMRD number 6. The layout is completely portable, being 2 sheets of 5mm foam board reinforced with a couple of broom handles from my local DIY and a few bits of scrap timber, all glued with PVA. The stone buildings are scratch built and the two house/pub buildings are cast items from an internet seller. The layout was very cheap to build. Only the Peco turnout and the two buildings cost any money, well under £100. Everything else is salvaged and repurposed. I have a good few Binnie skips but also scratch built 4 mine tippers and tubs for variety and minimum length. The parked Mini represents my first real car, bought in the early 1960s and fits in nicely. 16mm is the largest scale I have modelled in and it is quite possible to change scales one way or the other by building micros. They utilise all the skills I have acquired over the years and have encouraged some new ones too.



In these constructional views of the layout you should be able to see the simple method of baseboard construction, as well as the simple track plan. Two pieces of 5mm foamcore board supported by wooden broom handles. A simple idea for what is a domestic layout.

In the middle picture, you can see the wire (with barrel handle) that operates the sector plate inside the building.

Peter lines this up by eye through the window in the building.



The fuel bowser is based on prototype that was in use at the sand pits in Leighton Buzzard in the UK



The Decauville locomotive is completely scratch built using styrene. The chassis is a PS Models short wheelbase with Hornby OO Flying Scotsman valve gear. The locomotive's diminutive size makes it perfect for a micro layout in any scale. The wagons too, are scratch built from styrene.



This is the editor's favourite view of the layout. It has a real North Wales slate mine feel to it



Character laden permanent way and rusty structures give this micro great atmosphere. The unique rail crane is based on an English prototype that used to be at Leighton Buzzard, like the fuel bowser.

Dead End

Gavin Sowry

Scale: On30. Layout size 13 1/2' x 25 1/2" 342mm x 650mm



Here's a few photos you may like.

I've just finished off this Gn15 Micro that I call Dead End. It measures 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ " by 25 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". The only reason for the odd measure, is that is the size of the $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick carpet tile I built it on (I didn't have any scrap plywood on hand, and besides, it had nice clean edges).

The building is one from Department 56 that I picked up battered and bruised at a show, for a good price. It is probably a bit under scale, but my excuse is that it is forced perspective, first time I've actually tried that trick. Looks OK I reckon. Loco is ex Bachmann On30 Davenport, with Sidelines cab, and the vehicles are 1:24 offerings. Whole thing is wired up for shuttle operation, at one end it hides behind the fence. I spent about 7 or 8 hours knocking this up.



Editor says:

What a great idea this is! Seasonal Micros are not just for Christmas. Any holiday is fair game for a fun micro layout display.

Department 56 and Lemax are the most popular names for buildings, people and other scenic accessories. Certainly here in the USA. Perhaps there are other names around the world.

The Bachmann On30 trolley car is the most obvious train to use in Christmas situations. But I really think that a creative mind could really go to town using what they call "Whimsical Railways". Inspired by the works of Rowland Emmett. I see a spooky train hauling coffins on wheels with bats and ghosts circling around. Anyone?

The Upbech Saga.

Martyn Mullender

Scale:EM 4mm:ft. Three Micros joined together



D16 at Upbech Drove. This is the through train consisting of some ancient clerestory coaches, the loco has just uncoupled and is about to run round.

Like a lot of people, I grew up with railway influences. In my case, I still remember a Christmas morning where in the dining part of our long kitchen, my eldest brother's Triang trains, and middle brother's Minic ran round the room with my clockwork train going round in a circle in the middle.

At 13, I was bought a Triang Hornby L1 4-4-0 that I still have, and I've been railway modelling ever since. A layout followed in a spare room in the house until O and A levels took over when it was dismantled. After that there were the inevitable diversions of social life, work, university, and establishing a career, though my railway interest was maintained throughout. A house purchase followed by marriage in 1995 gave me a loft with a usable space and two layouts were built there using Peco track and a gradual accumulation of new Hornby and Bachmann models based on East Anglian practice. Being born in Essex, and living there for the first forty years of my life, my layouts couldn't be set anywhere else.

We moved to Dorset in 2004 and I was given a shelf down one side of the garage around ten feet long that until recently has been shared with the car.

Work and family life means I have never built large layouts, most would qualify as micro layouts and as such quite a few featured on Carl Arendt's website. One layout called Leyton Street was included in his book 'Micro Layout Scrapbook.'

A multiple boxfile layout, the original Upbech St Mary, was featured in the July 2011 Railway Modeller.

I had been modelling in finescale 00 for around 10 years, building pointwork with printed circuit board (PCB) and Scaleway track, when I had this mad idea to build a test piece in EM to re-energise my modelling and see if I could work in the scale. I could build track, and had got an etched locomotive chassis working. If I could build a working chassis, why not work to a more realistic gauge?

My then layout, Pott Row had been well received on RM Web but the latter parts were built to a different standard to those built in 2008 when I started. The layout had served me well but it was time for a rethink.

Pott Row is a real place in Norfolk but was never served by trains. It is north east of Kings Lynn, so in my world anything that went between Kings Lynn, Hunstanton, Melton Constable, and Wells Next the Sea is OK. Thus, the Upbech saga was born.

The first part of the layout to be built was Upbech St. Mary, a module with just two points, planned on Templot. All the track was soldered up in PCB as I had everything in stock. A trip to Expo EM in Bracknell followed, and chats with very helpful demonstrators and layout owners gave me confidence to keep going. The module consists of one siding, a tiny loco depot modelled on Upwell (of Wisbech and Upwell Tramway fame). It worked, but after about twelve months the track was taken up and relaid to ensure even smoother running. The scenic treatment was also changed to include a halt based on those found north of Yarmouth beach on the M&GN. A small hut and a ground frame by Wills help complete the scene. All this took until late

2019/early 2020, then lockdown happened. This module is around three feet long and can have a 20 inch fiddle yard attached to work independently. In this form it featured in the RM Web South West area group virtual exhibition in April 2020.

I wanted to extend the layout, and had the baseboards built. I had time on my hands because schools were closed and we weren't delivering live lessons.

Most suppliers were shut. But I could get copperclad sleepers, and had a supply of SMP rail so PCB track it was. A track plan was worked out in Templot again. This became Upbech Drove, a small branchline station with station building based on Cressing in Essex, a Wills GE timber signal box and a largely low relief factory. This module is around 36 inches long with a two foot fiddle yard that acts as the rest of the run round. There is also a coal siding and signals including ground discs built from Wizard Model kits. This module appeared at RM Web's SWAG event in Taunton during April 2022.



Upbech Drove. The station is seen in a quiet moment between trains. The station building is based on Cressing in Essex.

As this progressed, I worked out there was a space just twenty four inches long where another module could be made to fit between Upbech Drove and Upbech St Mary. This became Upbech Town Quay, a rundown riverside quay influenced by places such as Kings Lynn in Norfolk and Maldon in Essex. Track was planned by eye using Tracksetta templates and a wagon turntable was scratchbuilt with a Meccano style mechanism kit to get it

rotating. A pub building became the focus of the layout loosely based on the Bell at Kersey in Suffolk. A thatched cottage, based on a prototype in Cambridgeshire, and something loosely based on the goods shed at Walton on the Naze in Essex completed the scene. This module is set to appear as a static exhibit at SWAG 2023 as I have offered to help out at the event.

Track is ballasted with Woodland Scenics N gauge ballast, dirtied with ground up charcoal before laying. Points are operated by wire in tube. The layout is DCC, simply because I have been using it for around 18 years. I only use DCC for loco control these days and do not use digital sound. I prefer to listen to music whilst running the layout and authentic sound is not available for most prototypes on the layout. The advantage of DCC even on such a small layout is that decoders can be tweaked to work best with the style of motor. The trams have stay alives but as all tracks are live these are not really necessary. Track is kept clean with a graphite stick.

Pretty much all the buildings on the layout are scratch built either from card, Plasticard or in the case of part of the factory, foam board with hand scribed bricks. Thatch was created from plumbers' hemp. Slates and tiles are either Plasticard or hand laid, some using Scalescenes papers. Some of the structures were built

years ago, such as the Wills signal box. I think that has been on every layout since 1995, and the pub which was built in the late 90s but has been completely overhauled and extended. Anything I build which I consider half decent is kept in a range of boxes, and I will drag it out and refurbish it for use on the latest project. Models are built from a range of sources, the station building and Walton goods shed were built from plans bought from the Great Eastern Railway Society of which I have been a member for over 40 years. Others are worked out from photos, which is true of the pub and thatched cottages.

The layout is operated in two distinct time periods, either 1946-51 or around 1963. The early period allows me to have much of the rolling stock in grouping liveries pre and post war, eventually to include some wartime liveries. By the latter period East Anglia was largely devoid of steam, this happened a lot earlier than it did elsewhere in the country.



Upbech Quay Cottage. An essay in card, hemp and 1:76 gardening. There is one turnout on this section that is hidden behind the fence. The trees are Sea foam.



Upbech Quay Pub. Loosely based on the Bell in Kersey, Suffolk where we have eaten a few times.



Derby Lightweight at Upbech Drove. A Bachmann model with corridor connections, new destination blinds, painted interior, passengers and a driver at one end.



Upbech Quay in black and white. The pub can be seen in the background beyond the wagon turntable which does work. The intention is that wagons will eventually move onto the siding using either rope shunting or something involving magnets.

The layout is set in the autumn so sugar beet, a seasonal traffic, is brought from local farms to Upbech St Mary and then moved up the branch. Operation involves trains that traverse the whole branch to Upbech St Mary, and those that only go to Upbech Drove. A steam era passenger service to Upbech St Mary will involve a J70, tramway carriage and a van. As there is no run round, the Tram is released by the second tram that has been sitting in the tiny motive power depot. Other passenger services run to Upbech Drove only, the six wheelers may have a van in tow. In the diesel era, passenger services are currently served by the Derby Lightweight, there is no passenger service to Upbech St Mary.

Freight services in both eras are as follows:

Sugar beet empties are taken to Upbech St Mary, full wagons are collected. Full coal wagons are placed in a siding at Upbech Drove, the empties are collected. Loads are removable so a full wagon should never be going the wrong way.

Various vans can be shunted into the factory at Upbech Drove, placed in the far end of the coal siding, on the quay, some also make it to Upbech St Mary.

There are some open wagons that will eventually be loaded with engineering/ agricultural loads, these are shunted into the factory or onto the quay.

Freight services for Upbech St Mary have to be run round at Upbech Drove and the brake van put at the front. The loco then propels along the branch in the style of trains to Snape in Suffolk. With all this shunting of wagons a reliable method of coupling is a must. I had been using Sprat and Winkle couplings for many years and at Expo EM one year, an owner showed me a clever adaptation of the 3mm mk.1 coupler for remote uncoupling so that was adopted and is still used.



Upbech St Mary Halt. Based on a Midland and Great Northern halt of a type often built to serve holiday areas in 1930s Norfolk where a full station could not be justified.



Class 10 shunter at Upbech Drove. Converted from the ubiquitous Hornby 08 model, arrives with empty sugar beet wagons for Upbech St Mary.



J72 at Upbech St Mary. A low level shot of the J72 on the daily goods at Upbech St Mary.

My approach to weathering is what often generates most comment. I live in deepest Dorset with no local model shops, and with the Royal Mail reluctant to carry certain types of paint, and my intolerance to the fumes. I have adapted my style to what I can get locally. Much of the initial colouring of stock is carried out using Tamiya rattle cans bought in the local toy store.

Weathering is carried out with the cheapest brushes I can find, (as they get ruined in my process), using artists' acrylics, pastel chalks, charcoal, talc, inks and anything else I can find and buy locally. Everything is modelled from observation.

Nothing goes on the layout unless it has been toned down, this includes buildings, any vehicles and figures as well as stock. The palette used on non rolling stock items is quite limited, mainly greys, yellows and browns.

Editor says:

What really draws me to Martyn's layout is the consistent colour palette. It goes a long way towards creating the right atmosphere. As a person who was born and raised in Lincolnshire, I know what The Fens look and feel like. Martyn's layout feels so right to me.

Even the black is mixed from other colours rather than using it straight from a pot.

A layout this size does not need a massive amount of rolling stock. Rather than constantly buying new, some of it, such as the J39, is over 20 years old, and has been rebuilt, a process I enjoy. I still have stock to modify to EM and more modules will be added.

What's next? I recently bought a book about the Lincolnshire potato railways, narrow gauge lines using army surplus equipment after World War One. So ideas are hatching in that direction as it gives a place to run M&GN stock currently sat in boxes, this will be yet another module that can be run in conjunction with Upbech. All the modules can be run separately as well as together, and are available for exhibitions should anyone be interested.

Some of this pictures even induce pangs of homesickness.

I also like the way that the three Micros join together to create a whole layout. All are capable of being operated separately yet all come together as a whole. Martin says he has other modules coming. I can't wait to see them.



You cannot have a model railway based on the Fenland of England without a J70 tram loco. One is seen here at rest at Upbech St. Mary



A wagon sits quietly at Upbech Quay. The Spratt and Winkle coupler can be seen quite clearly.

Fiddle Yard

I have finished a layout! Well, sort of finished. My Cartel Challenge Micro layout, now named “Give Way To Trains” is at that stage. You know the stage I mean. The one where we all say no layout is ever truly finished, but the layout looks pretty darned finished. I could take it to a train show at this level of completion and I would be very happy with it.

The layout runs, and the working feature (emptying the skips) works. I could spend the rest of my life adding the details to it, inspired by the work of Roy Link. Things like properly modelled weeds and plants. Pencils and opened packets of cigarettes on desks. But I don't need to do that. Not right now anyway. But I really do need to stop and call the layout finished at some point. Which begs the question. Where do you stop? How much do you do?

For example, I started adding some workplace safety signs to add to the atmosphere.

I spent 17 years in the sign industry, so signs are an important thing to me. I went to the website of my old employer in the UK, and downloaded their catalogue.

The editor shares his thoughts

I used it to cut some signs out and added them to the scene. Some of them even look like the artwork I produced over a quarter of a century ago. One said “Beware of Trains”. I put it on a pole front and centre on the layout. Lo and behold! The layout had a name “Beware of Trains”.

Then, while doing some research on other signs, I found a sign I adored. It had a big old steam locomotive warning triangle sign at the top, and the words “Give Way To Trains” underneath. It had that wide letter spacing so typical of this type of sign, I just had to make my own copy.

Design tasks like this are pretty easy and not beyond the average modeller. A few minutes in Apple's Pages app and I had it.

I put it front and centre on the layout. I suppose that it means that the layout has a new name now . “Give Way To Trains”.

This is why I need to call the layout finished, in case I find another sign that I like and it may end up with another name change.



“Give Way To Trains”. Is this the name of the layout?