



The Micro Model Railway ISO A CONTROL STRUCTURE For the Micro Layout enthusiast

irst things first. You'll notice a different look to **The Dispatch** from now on. A change to the design.

This is how I wanted the pages to look originally. There were a couple of the April Fools joke pages done to this design. But they never got shared, as I was still learning how to use the software. Now, three years later, I have more experience putting the publication together. That means I can assemble the magazine the way I originally envisioned it. With that done, I then received an email from a reader telling me how people with reading difficulties like dyslexia, can struggle to read conventionally printed materials. I did some research and found that yes, serif typefaces and black text on white surfaces are difficult for those people to read. So following some guidelines. I experimented with tinted pages, and I'll be honest with you, after a few hours of working on page layouts, even I find these coloured pages easier on my eye. I hope that you will too.

I'm still trying to keep the design simple to make it stand out compared to the busier pages of some of the mainstream model magazines. I hope I'm on the right track (excuse the pun), so please let me know what you think about the design changes.

STOP PRESS!

The Almost Annual Small Layout Meet will be held at the Northwest Ohio Railroad Preservation and Riverside Train site, 12505 County Road 99, Findlay, Ohio, on Saturday, June 17th. Micro layouts are always on show. Registration for the meet costs \$10. Details from Jeff Schumaker and Russ Haig. They can be contacted at jschumaker@cros.net or haigh44094@gmail.com.

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If you like what you read here, then you can subscribe. Just email <u>MMRDeditor@gmail.com</u> and I'll put you on the mailing list. You'll be able to download the magazine a whole week before general release. I look forward to hearing from you.

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

Carl Arendt

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Chelfi Bernard Hallas.

009 Scale. Size:30" x 15" 760mm x 370mm



An overall view of this atmospheric micro.

y interest in narrow gauge railway modelling began many years ago, when I saw a 009 layout in a UK model railway magazine built into a coffee table. My interest was rekindled after I retired, but now

living in an apartment, a small layout would be required. I had a bookshelf space available and challenged myself to create a layout in that space, which measures 30" (760mm) wide by 10.5" (265mm) deep. I realised that the finished layout would overhang the front edge of the shelf, but it could be simply secured to prevent it falling off. For lightness and portability I intended to make the base from 5mm thick foamcore sheet with foamcore supports underneath. A fellow club member gifted me with some strong, but light, foam board, which was 15mm thick, and it became my base instead. I added wooden trim strips around the edges, raising the base enough for turnout control and wiring underneath and added a thin sheet of cork over the top surface.

I knew that I wanted my layout to have a "station loop" at the front edge, and a hidden "passing loop" at the back edge, so that I could at least have two trains available to run around the layout. To design the track-plan I taped drawing paper to a sheet of plywood and set out my plan by hand. I quickly realised that I needed the baseboard depth to be 14.5" (370mm) to allow for track curves of 6" (150mm) radius, to accommodate a greater variety of rolling stock.

To be able to make it work, curved turnouts, were needed so I created them using code 70 rails soldered to copper-clad ties. I curved the sections of rail by hand on top of a drawing taped to a piece of pine, and staked them to the correct positions, then inserted the pc board ties as required and soldered them in place.

As each section was finished, I transferred the sections to the full size paper drawing of my trackplan on the plywood sheet and joined up the pieces. I ran rolling stock over the layout, and fine-tuned the turnouts as required until all worked well. It was then lifted off in one piece and secured to the base using track-pins through the copper clad ties. The final task was to set dyed wooden ties in place using Weldbond PVA adhesive.



Great details in this house and garden.

Initially, I used temporary hand-thrown turnout controls, but once mounted I added electricallyoperated switch-motors (type MP1, from www.mtb-model.com). Using the MP1's allowed the layout to be operated from the front face, when positioned on the shelf, or from behind when placed on a table at a show.

Once I was happy with the operation, I ballasted the track using ground walnut shells, bleached and dyed, secured in the usual way, with diluted white glue.

The building fronts, ends and backs were created on the computer. Printed on basic printer paper then glued onto matte-board card-stock (1.5mm thick). The windows and door rectangles were cut out, and the raw edges were treated with grey marker. Clear glazing plastic (acetate or similar sheet) was added to the inside faces behind the window spaces, and then printed windows glued to the inner face of the glazing. The doors were fixed to card and glued in place from behind to give depth and enhance the 3D effect. The surfaces were sealed with matte acrylic medium. The four front buildings are complete, with full sides and backs and are illuminated by flat LEDs. Current for the LEDs is fed through flat head screws driven into the baseboard just below the surface.

and align and attach to steel plates secured to the undersides of the buildings.

The LEDs have series resistors to adjust the current as required. The magnets provide the current path between the baseboard screws and the buildings, and securely attach the buildings. Each of the buildings can be lifted off to have access to their interiors for positioning and wiring the LEDs. The magnetic pull is sufficient to enable the whole layout to be stood on end without fear of the buildings moving.

The row of buildings at the rear are only front faces with minimal sides. Each was created as an individual building front, in the same way as the four free-standing buildings. They were then brought together in a slight curve, in plan-view, to follow the rear storage track. Each has a ¼" (6mm) section of wood stuck to the rear bottom edge. Each of these sections has two holes drilled through and is then screwed down to the base.

This had to be done to prevent movement, because there is minimal clearance for the rolling stock passing behind them. The roof sections were added after the fronts had been secured.

The illumination is again by LEDs, with individual resistors, with a common power feed to a terminal strip and the wires from each building being fed from the terminal strip.

Rare earth magnets attach to the screw flatheads

The drystone walls come from a two-part urethane resin cast in silicone rubber moulds from Scalecast UK. If the castings are removed before they are fully set, they can be curved to the desired shape. They were primed and painted with acrylics before being set in place. The white fence at the front edge is a commercial product, primed & sprayed, secured by brass pins in holes in the baseboard.

The the flowers and plants in the garden are made from dyed paper, artfully cut or punched out with a craft punch, sisal fibres (dyed green), bits of natural plants and beads from Styrofoam bead board. The blooms are simply acrylic paint "blobs". The overall grassy areas were made using the usual static grass mixes. The trees are a mix of wire and plastic armatures with Woodland Scenics foliage. The background, is composed of a foamcore back & sides, with 160lb watercolour paper forming the curved sections, secured with wallpaper paste. This was painted with a sky-blue from tester pots from the hardware store, then the clouds added. Suitable scenic backdrops were sourced from the internet, and adjusted and printed on printer paper. They were coated with a spray fixative before being attached to the painted curved section with wallpaper paste. The whole was protected with a coating of matt artists' acrylic medium.

All the figures are plastic, hand-painted with acrylics, some have had their postures adjusted by plastic surgery before being painted.

The coaches all have passengers, and the locos all have drivers.



Trains pass in the station.

The rolling stock is a mixture of 3D printed locos, coaches and other wagons. There are some traditional injection-moulded plastic kits and some "fold-up" brass kits. I also have some Minitrains & Bachmann HOn30/009 locos

A hand-held controller provides the power to the rails. It contains a simple dc control circuit (circuit from 009 News October 2013), at the heart of which is a three terminal voltage regulator. A single toggle switch provides three different output voltages, the full range of each is controlled by the rotary control. A second toggle switch provides for output voltage reversal with a centre "off" position.

My controller also has 3 slide switches which power the switch-motors to control the turnouts. One switch controls both ends of the station loop, a second controls both ends of the bypass loop and the third controls the spur to the rail-bus shelter. The controller can be positioned to the front or rear (or either end) of the layout. It connects to the underside of the baseboard with a 15 way Dconnector. There are separate power supplies for the rail power, the switch-motors and 12Vdc for the LEDs. (Each has its own connector at the present time, on the underside of the base.)

The voltage selection on the control circuit is a very useful feature as it gives a full range of control for each range (12V (high), 6V (centre), 9V (normal)). In practice most of the locos work well on the 6V range.

The Kerr-Stuart Wren in one of the pictures has a motor whose maximum is stated as 4.5 volts. It is fitted with a series resistor inside the loco body, so the 6V range of the controller is ideal for smooth control.



The Kerr-Stuart "Wren" peeks around the corner of the house, with a passenger train. The house owner is more interested in pottering around in his garden than watching the train.



Lights in the shops and houses impart a warm, homely feel.

The stone faced buildings were created on the computer in Word. I used stone wall and roof slate images captured from "Model Railway Buildings.com" pdf files. The images were pasted into Word documents, the pieces were measured for size using the "size and position" option. It is important to keep the size of the individual stones or bricks consistent when adjusting the size of each wall panel. As required, images were in some cases pasted together, then combined as one to create "panels" of texture of appropriate size for each wall of a building. The doors and window images were similarly captured and pasted in place on the stone wall images to create a house front or end. For image processing, I use a program called Irfanview (a free download), which is simple to use. The row of house fronts at the rear were downloaded from a site called Kirtley Model Buildings..

I took the images and resized them for 00 scale. I captured the shop fronts and manipulated them to suit my purpose, and created the shop signs using Word. The images behind the shop windows I captured from the internet, searching for images which I thought suitable.

The cobblestone patterned street was created from an image captured from the internet. Like the walls it was "patched together" from several copies pasted into Word to create enough to pave the street, using two printed pages. (Texturelib.com has many images of many things, explore it!)

The whimsical name for my village diorama is CHELFI. The name came because as I was starting a *shelf* layout, there was a lot of chat on the radio about people taking *selfies*, and I ran the words together and didn't like *shelfi*, but I thought that Chelfi sounded like a fictitious English village.



The last train of the day calls at Chelfi.



These two views show the track layout on the bare baseboard and how it is hidden by the houses and shops on the main street. What is very apparent from this view is how the main street winds along and isn't dead starght.

Cinema Sidings

Ken Jones.

N Scale. Size:30" x 15" 760mm x 370mm



"I haven't got any choc ices, I've only got this model railway" (with apologies to the Monty Python "Albatross sketch").

Ken proves you can build a model railway anywhere.

wanted to build a small sized layout for shunting rather than continuous running. I also wanted to have working electric accessories which are absent from my rural suitcase scenes, but which can be a welcome to audiences.

I tried to acquire an old metal cinema usherette's ice cream tray without success, and found that even plastic ones were becoming quite rare as multi screen cinemas prefer to sell drinks and ice creams in their foyers, as we do not have intermissions these days.

So, the layout is built in a bright yellow, unused plastic ice cream tray donated by Northampton Ice Cream, acquired via my wife who promised it would not be used for selling ice cream. The layout was completed by the end of 2002 and appeared in N Bahn Magazin.

It is a fictitious British 1:148 N scale scene. Sawing the hole in the side to take double track proved harder than I first thought. The plastic is very rigid and needed a saw attached to a Stanley Knife, followed by filing the sharp edges. The underlay is inverted linoleum stuck to the plastic with PVA adhesive. I wanted a town scene so this is reflected in the backdrops. I used Peco Setrack to show what can be done with fixed track. The base of the tray is actually not level, so layers of linoleum were needed in some places to compensate for this. The track uses a mixture of adhesives to fix it to the underlay. There are 7 points (turnouts) on the layout, and 7 small sidings used as stabling points for locomotives and stock, done as a herring bone effect The layout is a locomotive stabling point within an inner-city derelict area, which in parts, is being renovated behind a building being demolished. Trains enter the yard under a road bridge – now overgrown and used by cows.

The main building, a Model Power prebuilt kit once was a hotel with its own grounds. The developers want to lift the track and seal off the entrance under the bridge. So, the scene is caught somewhere during this change. Already established on the site, but not yet occupied is one new unit a Kestrel Kit, and a café just opened. Which is a modified kit of Japanese origin with internal lights. The theatre, formerly the cinema is still on the left-hand side, note the Neon signs Theatre/Café from Noch that are used to give added interest. The building site contains scaffolding from Faller, Preiser building workers, and various vehicles from Wiking, Tomix and others. A worker is near the fence looking at the cows rather than working on the demolition and there are others sitting down out of general view. The layout has working 2 streetlights made by Viessmann, and a lit up modified telephone box from Brava. Humbrol_paint has been used throughout. Graham Avis, P&D Marsh, and other accessories are also used.

The Fiddle Yard is built on one tongue and groove wooden inverted floor board. It is 12cm x 71cm long with 3 sidings plus another access line, and further floor boards can be added. Power from the controller is to one place in the fiddle yard giving access to every line when the points are set properly. All points are manually operated including the 4 in the fiddle yard.

Note the usherette selling ice cream at the front of the queue for the cinema. The illuminated cinema advertising boards are from Model Power.



It may well be a small space but Ken has included a lot of details and operational capability in this Micro.



A crowd gathers outside the movie theatre (cinema). Just one of the tiny details that Ken has incorporated into the fun little layout.

I have turned the front of the fiddle yard into a large cinema billboard with lights and wording like "now showing".

The "Cinema Sidings" layout can still be worn on the shoulders, as an ice cream tray would be, depicting the diorama. Such a photograph has appeared in The N Gauge Society Journal in the UK, (and reproduced on page 9).

Thus, the blue straps have been retained but the intention has always been to have trains running back and forth

When running, the layout uses a mixture of BR outline Graham Farish and Minitrix locomotives, with Graham Farish, Lima and Peco rolling stock, plus a Wrenn (Lima) breakdown train.

The layout has been mothballed for several years mainly due to not liking exhibiting end to end layouts, and my time being occupied with building other, some smaller, and different layouts. Perhaps I can find someone to run it for me at exhibitions while I talk to the public. Ken has built many small layouts in the UK, which have been seen at exhibitions since 1999. He prefers round and round layouts rather than end to end because he likes talking to people and that is easier if the train just goes around a circuit. He started with a suitcase layout in 1999 to address comments from members of the public saying they didn't have room for a layout, and was persuaded to build an end to end layout in 2002.

More details of all his layouts can be seen at https:// www.ukmodelshops.co.uk/layouts/kjl.html



A close up. It looks there might have been a fire recently and a crew is demolishing the building.



Ken placed a 16mm scale photographer and camera on the plastic cash container. There is a minute working flash bulb system. He wants the audience to think they are having their picture taken as they look at the details.



Ken models the layout as if he were an ice cream vendor. Remarkable vision from Ken to think that something like this could become a basis for a micro layout. The side view clearly shows how the layout exits to the fiddle yard. Of course it's not possible to operate the layout when being worn like this. Though the idea of a person walking around model railway exhibition operating a layout is a very interesting concept and wouldn't be too difficult to pull off with a roundy-roundy layout.



Littleton John Pond.

00 Scale. Size:36" x 6" 750mm x 150mm

had sought a location for a micro layout for a while and the proviso from the "Planning Authorities" was that when not in use it would be hidden. A clever interior designer came up with this idea and my wife had the space installed when the room was updated and redecorated. The base board is 6mm ply made to fit the bespoke location.



Now you see it, now you don't! The remarkable location and storage system for John's Micro.

My aim was to build something that once it was completed, I could simply sit and watch the train run and use the scene as a basis for improving my skills. Track is a single length of Peco bullhead track which sits on "Traklay" underlay and is ballasted using N gauge ballast. The stock consists of a Heljan AC Railbus which suits this micro layout well. The train operates fully automatically using a Block Signalling "simple shuttle" unit. The unit enables you to set the speed of the train together with the rate of acceleration and time of stop. It only requires a single 12v DC connection to the unit and two wires to the track. Diodes at each end facilitate the train to stop and reverse. The simple shuttle unit has an acceleration function which results in the lights on the Railbus coming on before the train starts to move which is a nice touch, plus there is no sudden acceleration away from a standstill. The station is a second-hand Hornby station halt suitably altered to look better, but further detailing and improvements are needed. The other buildings, fencing etc were sourced from the "come in handy" modelling box. Figures are from Hardy's Hobbies. The vehicles are from Oxford Finecast.



The AC Railbus (a great micro layout passenger train) waits to depart.

One of the moist entertaining parts of micro layout building is the creation of a history, and this layout is no exception.

The Swindon & Much Binding Railway (SMBR) Company were granted permission to build a line from Swindon to Much Binding in the Marsh. One of the stipulations in getting permission granted was that Viscount Lyttelton, through whose land the line would pass, insisted that the company would build a station halt at Lyttelton village on its way to Much Binding.

However, the Company only managed to construct the line as far as Lyttelton before running out of capital. The line was absorbed by the GWR and subsequently into the Western Region of British Railways. The line never made a profit and has been under constant threat of closure. Only the intervention of the present Viscount Lyttelton, who can be seen waiting on the platform, has averted its demise. The use of a railbus is the final effort to try and make the line pay. The Beeching Report into Britain's Railways will consign this line to history.



The Viscount waits on the platform.



A quiet day a Littleton. The driver of the car at the level crossing isn't in any hurry.



An overall view of this remarkable micro layout.

So, I finally got something built! I believe it shows that there is always room for a model of a railway no matter how small your available space. I am still working on this micro as time permits. There is much more to be done and improve but is a diorama or micro layout ever finally completed?

Battery Navarone

Chris Salmon.

00 Scale. Size:Boxfile

ast year, our local Facebook Group and model shop were sponsoring a Micro-Layout Boxfile
competition.

The Guns of Navarone, a favourite film of mine, came to mind and then my ambition to be creative with a multi-level offering got the better of me, and I decided to build a 00 gauge working ammoshunting micro-diorama of the twin gun emplacement from the movie.

A very interesting touch in Chris' Micro scene is the "removable ground surface. The arid land of the Aegean island can be removed to reveal the detailed gun battery underneath. A nicely executed touch.



With the front wall flap over-hanging the table edge, the gun emplacement encompasses no less than three levels from the bottom of the soon-to-besabotaged lift shaft up to the anti-aircraft battery on top of the Navarone escarpment set against the Greek Islands and the Aegean.

(N.B. In the competition, my 13 year-old Grandson beat me to 2nd Place!! Thomas –nicknamed The Tank - is now out of my will for my extensive train collection.)



KISS: Keep It Simple, Stupid. There's not much room for a switching point that appeared in the movie, so I opted for a more simple, single terminal ammunition siding that enters from a tunnel and serves both guns in tandem. Points sit outside of the box as part of an oval of track affording shunting of ammunition at the gun siding...slowly and carefully!!

Scratch built using all set track with Scalescenes Stone and Concrete texture downloads, I dug out some old Hornby rolling stock items for the Germanic-looking railway stock, building the guns and lift shaft from card, skewers, dowel, chopsticks, tape, Air-Con filter, egg boxes and matchsticks. The rock faces are plasterers' Scrim Tape under textured plaster. The Kubelwagen and figures are vintage Airfix. The shell-cases are live copper percussion caps! I mentioned shunting: "Stirred NOT shaken!!" This Micro-Model was dedicated to Thomas's brother, 9 years-old James, nicknamed James With The Tender Behind. Someone single-handedly capable of far more destruction than the Guns of Navarone ever could...



The raiding party scale the cliff ready to launch their attack.



Some scenes on Chris' Batterie Navarone Micro. I particularly like this first one. The ceiling, which is part of the removable ground level really creates a claustrophobic feeling. The view on the right depicts the security checkpoint entering the gun battery.

Note: In Germany the swastika is legally banned as a result of the extremist, controlling and restrictive minority, far-wing National Socialists of the 1930s. To this end Chris has reversed this symbol of waging war to the religious symbol of peace.







Top image: The locomotive rumbles past in the background with a load of armaments.

Left image: This gives a good idea of the three levels of the Micro.

S an admirer of the exhibition model railroad layouts one sees in foreign modeling magazines or just by perusing the internet, I noticed a feature I wanted on my layout. Before going forward, I should add European and British layouts can frequently be in scales we modelers in the United States might find strange or at least rare. For that reason, some of these layouts will post their layout scale somewhere on the valance or elsewhere. I suspect that posting their scale on their valance, also can catch the eye of

visitors across what in many instances are large exhibition halls.

Given my layout may come off as a bit of an oddball scale (Fn3 which comes out to 1:20.3) and given some visitors may be reticent to ask what scale I model in, I thought my valance should display my scale. Painting the numbers on my valance was out of the question due to the paucity of my painting skills.

In furtherance of this, I ordered self-adhesive brown vinyl letters from a commercial sign firm I have done business with for almost two decades The lettering I ordered was six inches tall and bold in brown. On their own initiative, the sign shop also sent me fourinch-tall letters; which I elected to use I might add, instead of the six-inch tall letters I had initially thought to use.

How did I apply my numbers? First, I used blue tape and a ruler to align my vinyl letters. My next step was to peel away their hard paper backing. My third step was to carefully and thoroughly burnish these self-adhesive vinyl letters so they would adhere to my valance. Last step was to remove the thin paper to which these vinyl letters had been adhered. The last time I had applied lettering to my layout, I had used a great burnishing tool with a blade of about six inches in width that KRT had provided me to apply decals to my home mailbox, this time I could not locate it so I made due with an improvised replacement; it all worked fine. I was pleased with the results. I had two concerns going into this process and neither was realized. First, would the scale create visual clutter? The answer is no.

Second, would the chosen color of the lettering prove harmonious? Here the answer was yes.



On the left, lettering as supplied by the sign shop. On the right applied to the layout fascia.

Editor adds: As someone who worked in a sign shop for almost 20 years. I can tell you that display numbers for a model railroad fascia would be nothing out of the ordinary. A good sign maker would be able suggest the correct size of lettering for the purpose, as Nick's provider did. Application of lettering to a surface is simple. Modern vinyls are thin and go down very easily. Unlike the thicker vinyls available when I worked in the industry. You had to use soapy water to get an air bubble free finish.

Mossdale Road

David Churchill.

N Scale. Size:43" x 11" 1092mm x 275mm



The old factory with a worker watching the trains from a top floor office window. The fading sign on the wall of the viaduct is a very nice scenic touch.

ossdale Road is an N gauge layout representing somewhere in the English Midlands set sometime during the crossover from steam to diesel.

It is located on the edge of a large industrial town, the single track viaduct becomes a double track with the entrance to the town's goods yard controlled by the ex-Midland Railway signal box.

Around the viaduct a small yard has developed to connect a small creamery and a factory to the goods yard. The factory is less busy than in earlier times and the track is starting to be reclaimed by nature. The yard has a small engine shed to service the shunting engine that takes the wagons to and from the town's goods yard although there are often visiting engines from other nearby yards.

The layout is 43 inches long with another 11 inches for the fiddle yard/turntable and just 9 inches wide. The layout has enough of a headshunt to be used without the extra board but operates better if trains

can leave the layout engine first and return later again engine first. The layout's size means that it spends most of its time of an Ikea Lack shelf but it also fits of a keyboard stand for portability. The layout has been wired for DCC and DC but is mostly run as DC, as this suits the small locomotives in use and the lack of space inside the 0-4-0ST for decoders. The Hunslet diesel is DCC fitted from new but also runs on DC. The points are controlled by servos driven by a PCA9685 connected to an Arduino Uno, in turn connected to a Raspberry Pi 4 computer. The Pi is a small minicomputer running JMRI software to control the layout. It has no display screen but the Pi can be accessed via its own wi-fi network allowing control from a phone or tablet. On the front of the baseboard is a 5 pin socket on the layout, where I can connect the Arduino based DCC base station when I want the layout to run on DCC or a hand held DC controller.



The viaduct track is wired for a train to randomly shuttle back and forth. Control is provided by a block signalling module. The layout is very simple to operate. The only switches are for turntable polarity and to adjust the brightness of the lights. The trains and points are controlled from hand held devices.



The engine shed hides the exit to the fiddle yard.



A view along the inside of the creamery loading dock.



Tanks cars waiting to be collected at the creamery as a DMU passes by on the viaduct.

As it is a shunting layout, the big locos are absent. So the focus is on small locos, even a 0-6-0T takes up a lot of track space. The two Peckett saddle tanks were built from N Brass kits, with the chassis from N Drive. The Hunslet diesel is from the N Gauge Society and has yet to be weathered or crewed. The milk tank wagons are Peco. The covered vans are built from N Gauge Society kits, and many have small magnets on one of their couplings.

Fitting a 2mm magnet to the couplings was one of the trickiest tasks, their smooth round shape meant they would fly across the work desk to any nearby steel, adding super glue to them increased their desire to attach to anything or anyone. It was worth it though, in combination with some concealed magnets on the track, shunting and uncoupling is now hands free, each track magnet's position is marked by either spare sleepers or a bush growing through the ballast.



The Green Peckett waits for its turn in the engine shed.



The Green Peckett prepares to leave with a long train of milk tanks.



A drivers eye view entering Mossdale Road.

Dounreay

Alan Monk.

H0 Scale. Size:40" x 10" 1100mm x 260mm



A scene that screams Railways in the North of Scotland.

B uilt at the turn of the 20th Century, by the Highland Railway to serve the small fishing town of Dounreay. Rather like the similar and actually built branch to Lybster on the Wick line. A single-track branch diverging off the mainline at Georgemas Junction and heading roughly westnorth-west for the 10 miles or so to Dounreay via Halkirk, Forsie and Shebster.

The line was retained during WW2 to serve RAF Coastal Command's Dounreay airfield, which was then taken over post-war by the UK Atomic Energy Authority and the MoD for a joint facility to develop and test experimental nuclear reactor technology for civilian and Naval use. This meant that traffic levels remained high enough through base staff transfers and construction materials, in addition to the existing local traffic, to retain the branch at least into the late-1960s and early-1970s, when the layout is set. The station is a rough amalgam of Wick and Thurso (rather more of the former than the latter) and features a typical Highland Railway short overall roof (essential in the winter!) and single platform with run-round loop and single siding for freight. The old loading dock is modelled out of use, with its track partially lifted.

I did consider adding a bay platform to the rear, however the 26cm board width restriction made this just a tad too tight. Likewise plans for an HR wooden goods shed were dropped due to lack of space. Perhaps next time I'll go wider, it's fairly straightforward to butt 2 Lacks together but would still be portable enough...just! My remit, as always, is for an operationally and scenically interesting micro layout, portable enough to easily travel on public transport (bus/train) to exhibitions with stock, etc; be cheap and quick to build and something which adds a bit of a challenge, be it an unusual scale that I've not done before, an unusual prototype or simply a different modelling challenge.



Dounreay presented at a show. The stock and fiddle yard is on view, along with a booklet of research materials. Things like a booklet of research materials, (or even some materials on micro layouts are good for involving the public in the layout and the subject of micro layouts.

Dounreay is the third in a series of layouts built on the Ikea 'LACK' 110cm x 26cm floating shelf. This provides a lightweight, portable, sturdy and cheap baseboard, around which a 4mm ply display box is affixed to protect the model and provide an integral lighting rig. A simple fiddlestick rests on a Tim Horn stock display stand, with the layout raised to match on simple plywood risers, giving a viewing height to rail level of around 40" on a standard table. The stand allows the spare stock to be accessible and on show. The layout is front operated. The photographic backscene is a series of screenshots from Google Streetview, stitched together in photoshop and home printed using Posteriza, one of the 'poster-generating' free software packages found online.

The track is Peco Code 75 with electrofrog medium radius points, laid on my standard 2mm eva foam sheet trackbed. The crossover is worked by simple wire-in-tube operation to the front fascia, the front siding point is out of use and fixed for the diverging road as the old loading dock by the bridge is disused and partly lifted. I have modified the crossover points to bring the track centres in to give a scale 6ft in H0. I've done my usual trick of using a 'half-point' at the scenic break, cutting down a point with a broken tie-bar to use just the vee-end. This gains a few millimetres of track length, and saves having to run another operating rod to the front and makes use of a broken point that might otherwise end up in the bin.

Wiring is very simple, there is none on the scenic section! The fiddle-stick has 2 wires in from the dc analogue controller and is simply attached to whichever of the 3 roads I need to use via the joiners soldered to the fiddlestick. Simples! I am seriously considering radio control for the small loco fleet, using on-board batteries and small scale model railway transmitter/receivers from Deltang, which would remove the need for track power, wiring and loco pick-ups completely! Once the track was laid, I could put in the platforms. These are square strips of 12mm softwood, faced with Slaters stone sheet and topped with 1mm card. With these in place, ballasting was done using N scale ballast fixed down with Klear acrylic floor polish and the track then painted and weathered. Lastly the static grass and clumps were added, with careful application of the pva to keep the grass between the sleepers on the overgrown track sections.

Most of the structures are scratchbuilt in card and/ or plasticard, including the typical Highland Railway signal cabin and the overall roof. Much use was made of Slaters embossed stone sheet for retaining walls and platform faces, primed with a light grey rattle-can then 'painted' using coloured pencils, picking out some individual stones with different shades and then adding an overall weathering wash to bring it all together. The scenic break overbridge bridge is an old Heljan girder, suitably reduced in length. Platform lamps are 3mm bamboo skewers with a 1in wire nail bent to shape, as detailed in Chris Nevard's blog some years ago. Very simple. Very cheap!

And lastly some figures, vehicles and platform furniture from various sources, including some scratchbuilt 'step-ups' that were an iconic feature of many Highland Railway stations.

I deliberately chose H0 scale to set myself a decent degree of modelling challenge (rather than OO, where everything could be run simply 'out of the box') with the added bonus of fitting slightly more into the space than I could with OO.

This means that the stock is all either modified from the limited RTR offerings from the 1970s. Over-wide Lima BRCW type 3 (now a 1160hp type 2) and Playcraft NBL type 2 (now a rebuilt NBL/Paxman type 2) are being extensively reworked to produce scale width motive power. A Derby Sulzer type Two (1160hp) has been recently completed, thanks to Lincoln Locos upscaling their 3mm model. This is a 3D resin print, running on a parts from a Roco DB V90 in a plasticard chassis frame. A second one is under construction.

A micro layout such as this requires minimal passenger stock – a handful of Mk1 coaches (BCK/ BSK/SK/CK and RMB) and a couple of BGs. The Fleischmann Bulleid Third in maroon is legitimate, as a dozen ended up in Scotland in the mid-60s, replacing Mk1s taken for conversion to SR EMUs. Suitable prototypical passenger train formations are taken from the Wick/Thurso to Inverness trains detailed in the ScR Carriage Working Books for 1969 and 1970. Given my chosen era spans the change between maroon and blue/grey, I have examples in both liveries. Pre-owned Lima H0 Mk1 coaches have had new sides cut on my Silhouette cutter and homebrew scale-length BR1 bogies with resin cast sideframes from cut & shut Playcraft masters.



Running around the train, preparing to return to civilisation.

On the freight side, an assortment of 12t vans, 13t lowfit/highfit/conflats, 16t and 21t minerals and TTVs tanks for the general freight traffic, some bogie bolsters, tubes and plates loaded with constructional steel for nuclear facility and a brake van or two. A Salmon and a couple of Grampus give a permanent way train to round out the stock. The freight stock is a mix, some vintage RTR and scratchbuilt/DIY resin bodies on modified Lima or Jouef underframes. All the stock is fitted with 'scale head' Kadee buckeye couplers, with uncoupling done using a bamboo kebab skewer.

There's a temptation to also model either a nuclear flask wagon (the 6-axle Flatrol MJJ) and/or a Transformer MC set (for which I do have .stl files for

3D printing, easy enough to scale down to H0...) even though either would easily overwhelm such a small layout!

While I don't run to a timetable, I do try and run prototypical train formations, based on photos of the FNoS (Far North of Scotland) line at the time. The layout debuted at a local show in Reading in February 2023, ahead of a outing to the DEMU Showcase (the premier D&E modelling exhibition) in June 2023 up in Sutton Coldfield. Futher exhibition invites are in the diary for later 2023 and into 2024. Many thanks to Ken Gibbons, whose Port Pennan EM micro layout provided much inspiration, and members of the British 1/87 Society.



A view down the layout. A short 2-coach passenger train sits in the long platform.



Freight train stock waits in the platform road.



The driver of the passenger train awaits the signal to depart from the signalman, stood on the steps of the archetypal Highland Railway Signal Box.



The overall platform roof under construction.



This close up shows the Highland Railway Signal Box and the 'half-point' at the scenic break, cutting down a point with a broken tie-bar to use just the vee-end. Another great space saving trick.





Take a look at the construction photograph at the top of the page, taken when the display frame was being fixed in place.. You can see a carrying handle in the middle. If you take a look at the picture below, you can see that the handle is hidden by the display drape.

Multiple Box File Micro

Ken Nash.

00 Scale 4mm:1ft. Size:Two Boxfiles



Ken has successfully joined both boxfile micros together to create two individual vignettes in one layout.

Couple of years ago or so, I had read that there was to be a micro model railway exhibited in a Minneapolis exhibition by Ian Holmes and I was intrigued to see it. So we drove up there and met Ian and his wife Lorrie. (*Ed: It was the World's Greatest Hobby Show in 2019, the last show before Covid shut everything down for two years*) I found their little micro to be an attractive idea so I subsequently downloaded the two Scalescenes box files thinking I could build them side by side. The first challenge was finding box files: there were none to be found in our part of the USA. I did find two sturdy boxes that were similar in Hobby Lobby. They turned out to be larger. Not to be deterred, I

The difficulty of getting proper "English" box files in America can be a problem for the prospective micro layout builder. Ken shows that if you check the shelves of your local craft store chain you can find something that will suit the purpose. The great versatility of the Scalescenes kits means that they can be easily adapted to the new container.

Michaels and JoAnn both carry suitable boxes, like the one pictured here (from Michaels). added some length to the Scalescenes buildings; it was not quite so easy as I thought but got it done. I added lighting during the build and decided to use Kadee couplers and magnetic uncouplers. There is sector plate off the right hand side and a

small head shunt on the left. Originally, I built the box file components to be

individually disassembled as per the design with a folding lid, but having seen permanent micros on line I decided to make mine permanent with interior overhead lighting.

There is still lots of detail to be added but I like the results so far.

Thank you Ian and Lorrie for the inspiration!



This box is called "Botanical" and is 17" x 11.5" x 5". When the layout is put away on a shelf in the living room it will look quite attractive.



The yellow Sentinel loco seems perfectly at home in this industrial scene.



Yet inches away is a canal basin scene from another time.



With the buildings lit up inside, there's a while different atmosphere in both scenes.

Tuppers Yard Adrian Banfield.

Gn15 1:24 scale 2' x 1' 610mm x 305mm



The simple track plan provides plenty of shunting opportunities.

n 1912, local businessman John Tupper, proposed that a narrow gauge line should be built from the town, (his yard), to the nearby standard gauge line, via the town centre to help improve movement of goods and people. With the support of the local squire (on condition that a branch line extended to his farm for the movement of his vegetables, fruit and supplies), the town council approved the plan. The start of the First World War saw the arrival of the Royal Navy who extended the line from Tupper's Yard, to the nearby coast, where they built a small base. The railway being used to transport men, goods and small pieces of equipment. The end of the war, saw the military leaving the site promptly. They left one engine and various wagons on site. The town council quietly absorbed the engine and wagons into the town's railway fleet. The period between the First and Second World Wars was the heyday of the railway.

The decline in the railway's fortunes began after the Second World War (which had bypassed the town), due to lorries, cars and buses moving goods and people cheaply, which under-cut the railway's prices. The line continued losing revenue, and closed in 1957. The layout is set at some point in the mid-1930's. Even though I have enjoyed viewing railway layouts at exhibitions over the decades, for one reason or another I've never got around to building a model railway.

Until now. Having taken retirement in September, 2022 after working for Britain's railways for over thirty-three years, time is now available. I have over the years bought quite a lot of modelling materials, so it made sense to build a layout using what I had, rather than buying yet more items. I chose Gn15, using H0 scale Peco track, in 1:24 scale as I was impressed by the various layouts in this scale I have seen over the years and the level of detail that can be achieved.

A small micro layout was the preferred choice, as the building time should be shorter, thus seeing quicker progress, not getting bogged down (hopefully!), in one aspect of the building, which could lead to loss of interest half way through the project. I also wanted the layout to have operational interest for me and finally the layout needed to be 'de-constructed,' so it can be stored away when not in use.



Track laying complete, the foam baseboard and track is sprayed.

Editor adds: Many times I have just nipped outside and spray painted on top of the recyclables bin.

The unofficial home for all things Gn15, was the now defunct Gnatterbox Forum, which posted many fascinating posts and helpful hints. One series of posts in particular which caught my attention was written by Steve Bennett, regarding the building of a micro layout using polystyrene baseboards. The well written series of posts complete with photographs showed a step by step approach to building a small layout. This seemed a good approach to follow for my first layout. I followed Steve's instructions as regards the 'baseboards', but after that, worked to my own plan, as regards scene, buildings, track plans and operational train movements. Fortunately, I have a number of 1 foot by 1 foot; $1 \frac{3}{4}$ inches thick, polystyrene scenic tiles from my wargaming days. Two were stuck together with Gorilla Glue, with cardboard stuck on the bare sides. The track was ballasted with Wood Scenic's ballast, not the right scale for this size, (but I'm applying the 'my railway, my rules,' law), mixed with ballast magic powder. After that had dried, I applied a dose

of watery PVA using a syringe so to 'bolt and brace' the ballast.

Buildings are made either with Balsa wood or thick card with the roof and tiles made from thick card and painted with Games Workshop Khorne Red, followed by Games Workshop black wash. The drainpipe was constructed using plastic cylinder tubes (one fitting inside the other), and fixed to the wall by green wire.

I'm happy to report, that I have enjoyed my first model railway build. I've been completely floored by what I have been able to achieve. The building of structures looks like one of my strong points, landscaping less so. More reading up is required on this subject. I've used half of the allotted space, so I'll see what I can come up with for the other half.



The layout under construction.



A view down the layout, a bustling industrial scene. From this end on view, the structures are particularly convincing.



Narrow Minded Models kit of the Brush Amberley battery electric locomotive.



Have The minions taken over the layout? No, this is the Narrow Minded Models kit of the utility vehicle that ran at the Solva water treatment plant in Wales.



A couple of views of the bridge that makes an outstanding exit to the fiddle yard. The stone work was applied individually by hand, using a glue gun to stick the bricks to the bridge. The process is similar to painting the Forth Bridge, - it goes on a bit. But the results are well worth it. The foam bricks are glued to thick cardboard, the rivets on the matchstick 'metal bars' are small plastic beads. The pipe running across the top of the bridge is a used kitchen aluminium foil centre.

Lone Pine Railroad

Ken Hutnik.

Lone Pine Station

That's all there is to it.

Candle Jar Lid

• his past Christmas season, as I looked at an empty candle jar that I was about to recycle, I wondered if I could build a micro that would fit it. I had previously seen modellers put micros in all sorts of containers, like a Pringles Chips can, or a bento box and many other interesting items. I was fascinated by how small a radius you could bend rail, and that there are drives that work on such small radii. I had purchased a rail bender off eBay a while back, so it would be a perfect learning experience for the new tool. Given that the candle was Evergreen scented, and I had been working on some logging layout ideas, I came up with perhaps doing a logging theme.

 Cancel Micro

 Observation

The first step was to take some measurements of the candle jar and draw a template for the track in PowerPoint with a radius of 37mm (1.5 in.)

Then I removed the rails from some Peco HOn30 track. (With Peco track, you can remove both rails from the ties/sleepers for bending to tight radii.) I watched a video on YouTube from a Japanese modeller showing how he bent rail. After a couple of views, it was time to give it a try. Taking my time and comparing the rails to the template, I was able to get the two rails to the proper radii. I trimmed them and then inserted them back into the ties. With some trial and error, trimming and filing, they fit together well.



To join the rails together, I used a razor saw to cut standard rail joiners in half. The half size allowed for some wiggle room, so I could get the rails together and not have them kink. I soldered the loop together. With a single 1.5V battery and a TomyTec drive, I successfully ran around the loop. Now that I successfully created the loop, I needed to finalize the train itself. Getting a small loco to pull a log bunk around the loop did not quite work out. I came up with the idea of loggers getting into the bush using a railbus. That then evolved into a general railbus stopping in the forest. The railbus I used was by TomyTec with a TomyTec drive. It runs at a good slow speed with only 1.5V. (I ran it at an exhibit for 14 hours on one battery!)Having seen how well carved foam can work for stone, I created the base from a disc of foam by carving vertical and horizontal lines in it and then picking them out with my fingernail. Space for a battery was carved into

the bottom and wires soldered to the rail. The track was glued in place and some ground foam applied.



The rails bent and located on the tiny baseboard.



Space for the battery that powers the micro is carved out of the foam base.

When I had measured how tall of a tree would actually fit in the candle jar, I knew that it was not tall enough. So, with a tree I had on hand, and inspiration from our artificial Christmas tree, I decided to divide up the tree into four pieces and fit it in the candle jar. I drilled into the trunk and added pieces of wire so that it could be reassembled just like an artificial Christmas tree.

The figure, animals, stumps and a re-purposed outhouse with an added chimney were incorporated. The station platform is a piece of wood fencing. The track and ties were painted, the stone foam base got a bit of dry brushing with a tan acrylic paint. Everything was test fit along the way to ensure that the station, railbus, figure, tree trunk and stackable pieces would all fit into the jar for storage. The name plate was printed from PowerPoint and two track spikes hold it to the foam base.

I am very happy with how Lone Pine came together and turned out. Having seen what other modellers have done was a definite inspiration. I was able to try new techniques and skills while finishing a project, which is a great benefit of micros. Go find some inspiration yourself and give something a go!



Waiting for the train.



All the component parts of this wonderful micro (above), actually pack away inside the now cleaned out candle jar (below). It's at this point we traditionally say, "don't tell me you have no room for a model railway.



Foamcore baseboard construction

Ian Holmes.

The editor describes how he makes foamcore baseboards



I have built quite a few foamcore baseboards using this method, and it seems to work very well for me.

I start with a flat, square sheet of 6mm foamcore. I find that the black sheet is a better material than white. The foam and the backing paper seem different to the white material.

Two sets of strips are cut. 75mm deep and 63mm deep. The 12mm difference being the thickness of the 12mm surface board. The 75mm (3") depth was purely arbitrary on my part, you can use what you like should you choose to try to make some.





It will be apparent from this photo that the baseboard surface is going to sit on the ledge inside the frame created by the different depths of foamcore. This is the method used on the seminal P4 layout "Heckmondwyke" in the 1970's. Though in their instance, plywood was the material used. My preferred adhesive for gluing foamcore is Gorilla Glue woodworking glue. Great attention needs to be paid to the corners. With all the overlaps, the measuring and cutting needs to be approached with care. Otherwise you may end up with some pieces that are 6mm too short. (Don't ask me how I know).





All those overlaps around the corner, make for a very strong, rigid edge. The great advantage of using foamcore in construction is that it is so very easy to use pins to hold parts in place while the adhesive is setting.

If you've paid attention and cut carefully, You will find that the underside of the baseboard looks like this. You can see I have added extra bracing for further rigidity. This will give you a lightweight, flat and rigid baseboard.



Ontario Train Show Ken Hutnik.

Ken Hutnik visits the Narrow Gauge Madness show

arrow gauge models and micro layouts go hand in hand. On April 15th, I was able to attend the Ontario Narrow Gauge show in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. There were many inspirational micros and small layouts exhibited in different scales. Here are some photos to help with

your own inspiration, including some pizza layouts which are this year's theme for the Micro Model Railroad Cartel Facebook group challenge. Photos are by the author, unless otherwise noted. More info on the show can be found on the show's Facebook page, or at www.narrowgaugeontario.com.



Christopher Creighton's "Carl's Troutateria". Gn15 with a touch of Whimsy. The layout was featured in Railroad Model Craftsman September 2012.





Jim Burchell's 0-1-0 Experimental Steam Works, featured a whimsical inventor's theme as they test drive their 0-1-0 locomotive. Scale 1:24, size 18" square.

(The spirit of the Listowel and Ballybunion Railway is still alive and well: Ed.)





There was a large selection of O scale (1:48) on display, including Garry Johnston's small On30 layout called Feisty Mining Railway.





Bernie Hills' Bradley Fold in OO9 won best display in show, featuring a busy village with lots of detailed vignettes. (Top photo by David Woodhead)





Fayle's Sales: Another Christopher Creighton Gn15 gem. A simple pizza layout depicting a line serving a used goods dealer.

Named for the late Brian Fayle, an extremely well known model railway enthusiast, whose layouts and articles have graced the pages of the British model railway press since the 1950's.

In his later years, Brian enjoyed building layouts in Gn15. "Upton Whent" and "Red Fox Amusement Park" were well known amongst Gn15 modellers. He was also one of the early members of the now defunct Gn15 forum "The Gnatterbox". Those who had dealings with Brian will remember him as a modeller always there with encouraging words from his years of experience in the hobby. (Lower photo by David Woodhead)

<image>



Jim Burchell made a micro out of a model of a model train layout, complete with action figures sporting face masks from the pandemic.



Joel Schraven's HOn30 layout of a small town was part of his vendor display for the show.

The Ontario Narrow Gauge show is an exhibition of some standing, and has been a showcase for smaller layouts for a long time. Thanks to Ken for sharing his pictures. If you go to a show with some good micro layout content. Please feel free to submit a show report to **The Dispatch** for others to read about.

Fiddle Yard - Give Way To Trains

Ian Holmes.

16mm 1:19 scale 30" x 18" 760mm x 450mm



Carl's original simple trackplan is faithfully copied. The other siding is hidden inside the long, thin shed.

s with so many of my micro layouts, what I end up with, is often not what I start out planning.

I had some great ideas for my Micro Model Railroad Cartel Christmas Challenge layout. I had many great ideas. Probably too many. I have pages and pages of sketches for concepts. All were good ideas. But none really grabbed my total attention. In fact it wasn't until after the competition was over that I found photographs online that really pulled everything together into one coherent whole.

The baseboard is made from foamcore board, the construction of which is described on page 45. The surface is 12mm cork faced board and the framing plain 6mm. I used a method that the Model Railway Club used on their "Heckmondwyke" layout many years ago.

Working in these large scales opened up my eyes to using things for purposes others than the ones they were made for. One such example is the sleepers for the panel track. These were cut from Plastruct embossed styrene sheet. It takes a while to cut the sleepers to size. But they certainly look the part. The layout also saw my first attempt at static grass modelling, using one of those Woodland Scenics beginner sets using a puffer bottle. I think that's all you need for a micro like this. I'm quite impressed with the results.

As many of you will know, my wife, Lorrie, like to help. So the painting of the figures was turned over to her. The leather jacket and overcoat being particularly convincing.

Overall, there's nothing too clever about the layout. The locomotives are from LocoRemote of whom I am a very happy customer. The wagons are all from kits from Peter Binnie. The people populating the layout are from Narrow Minded Railways and David Clavey.

Despite the larger size of the scale, operation of the layout is somewhat limited so an extension is being planned. It will be capable of being operated as a stand-alone micro layout.



The MotorRail heads out with the fuel train.



Oh my! A brand new skip wagon is in the workshop!



A favourite vignette that has appeared on other layouts of mine. Two guys discuss cleaning out the gutters or perhaps the state of the paint on the wall.



The yard is busy with two locos at work. I'm working hard to get a lot of clutter in the scene.