

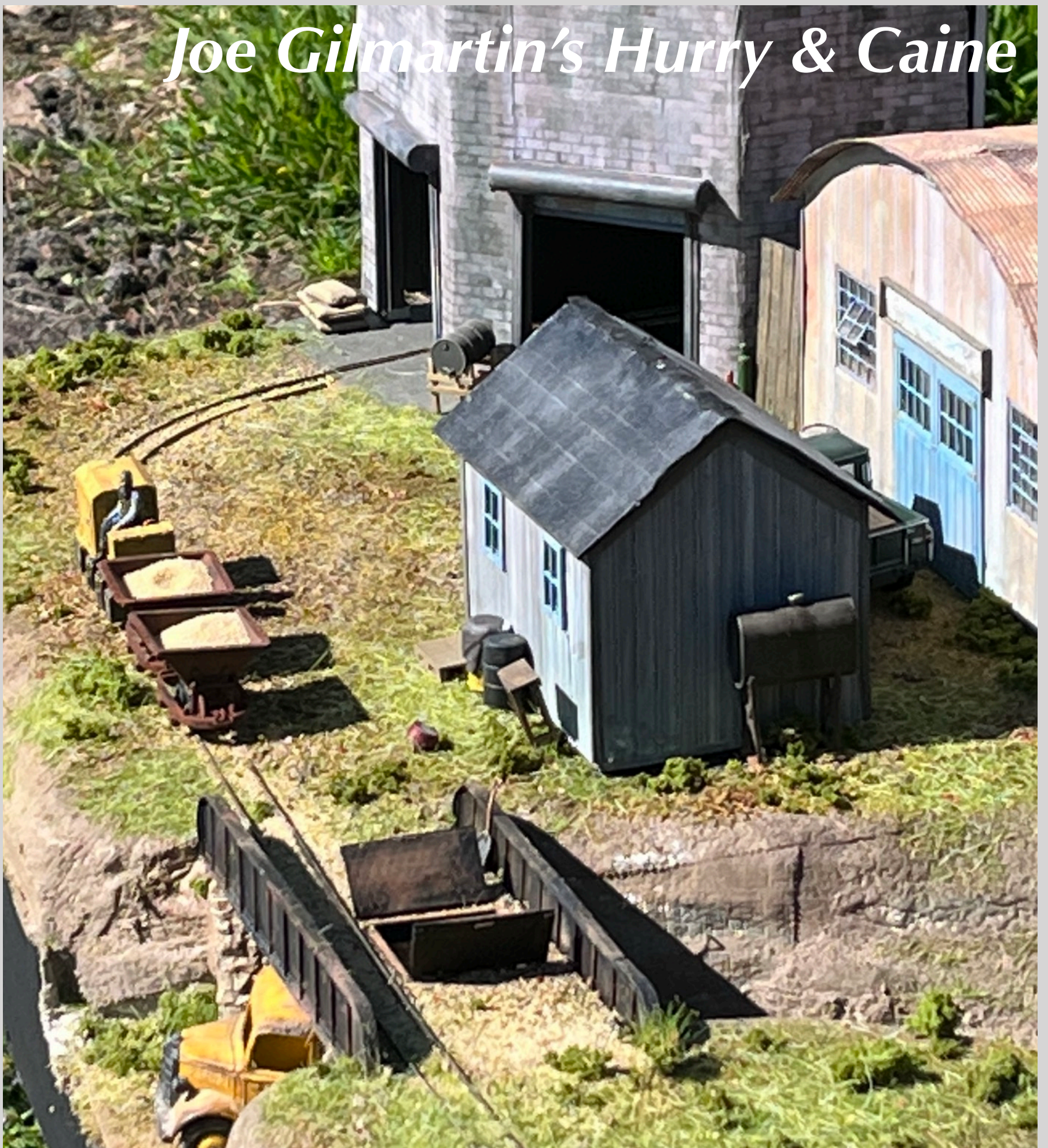
The Micro Model Railway

# *Dispatch*

*For the Micro Layout enthusiast*

Issue 10. Autumn 2023

## *Joe Gilmartin's Hurry & Caine*





# The Micro Model Railway *Dispatch* For the Micro Layout enthusiast

---

**T**his month. I'm very pleased that I am able to share with you Joe Gilmartin's Hurry and Caine Micro. Winner of the 2022 Micro Model Railroad Cartel Christmas Challenge. Joe built the layout in the aftermath of Hurricane Ian that decimated parts of Florida in September. Joe used the project to help take his mind off life in Florida until things returned to relative normality. Recently, I also received an email from a modeller who had fallen victim to a serious medical condition. They wrote to me letting me know how reading back issues of **The Dispatch** helped to get them through the dark days of recovery. Personally speaking I'm very humbled by this, and feel very proud. All contributors to **The Dispatch** should too. You helped in this person's recovery. It all goes to show how important our hobby, (all hobbies in general) is to our general well-being. I'm trying a new feature this issue. A sort of "from the archives", where I've found some old layouts from the early days of the modern micro layout era that some of you might not have seen. I thought I'd bring them into the spotlight again. There was some very good work being done back then. Perhaps you remember an old layout that has stuck in your memory for the past 20 years and you think today's modellers would like to see it. Drop me a line and let me know, and I'll see what I can do. I'm sure you know the address. Modesty forbids me from say anything in particular detail, but I have been inundated with requests to revisit my old dinosaur Purespring Watercress. So I'll dust it off and share pictures of that with you in the near future. Enjoy this new issue and we'll see you in time for Christmas! Don't forget your Christmas micros!

## Contents

<b>Hurry &amp; Caine.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<i>Joe Gilmartin's Cartel Challenge winning layout</i>	
<b>Anyone for T.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>Ken Jones builds a micro in an unlikely location.</i>	
<b>Paris World's Fair 1889.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<i>Jur Snijder's micro layout slice of history</i>	
<b>Painting Backdrops.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<i>Tom Conboy goes all Bob Ross on us.</i>	
<b>Thunder Ridge.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<i>Another micro from the creative ind of Al Barten .</i>	
<b>IKEA Baseboards.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<i>An introduction to Swedish baseboards</i>	
<b>Sorrento Park.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<i>Rod Shaw's slice of America in TT:120.</i>	
<b>Monte Sano Railroad.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<i>John Tryon Hubbard's gem from the archives.</i>	
<b>Corke Hall Railroad.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<i>Bruce Wilson has a new project on the go.</i>	
<b>Fiddle Yard.....</b>	<b>53</b>
<i>The editor went to a museum and saw some micro layout techniques in the real world. Plus, a plug to see his new layout in the flesh.</i>	

If you like what you read here, then you can subscribe. Just email [MMRDeditor@gmail.com](mailto:MMRDeditor@gmail.com) 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*

The Micro Model Railway Dispatch is designed, and edited by Ian Holmes for micro model railway enthusiasts. Copyright of the material rests with the original contributors. No copyright infringement is intended.



# Hurry & Caine

Joe Gilmartin

O9 Scale. Size: 30" x 15" 760mm x 370mm



*A busy little yard*

**I t's Oct 21 2022.** Twenty two days after Hurricane Ian took my pool cage, part of my roof, a couple of sheds, nine 60' tall pines, 140' of fence, and my flats boat.

What's a fella to do?

Listening to the Micro Model Railroad Cartel Podcast during my morning walk, I heard about the challenge and thought "Anything to get my mind off of hurricane stuff".

I went home, and immediately thought. "What the heck are you doing? You have basically a month". I looked through my stash of stuff and Narrow Gauge and Industrial Railway Modelling Review and found images of a sewage works in both Roy Link's handbook and the Review. The pictures were of North Bierley Sewage Works and thought I could adapt it to the challenge concept. I posted my idea on the Cartel Facebook page. Now I'm publicly committed to the project. Pitter-Patter lets get at 'er. I had O09 track and a O9 loco in stock. I can build a turntable with plastic and brass tube.

I didn't have any structures for the layout.

Well, I had some Micro Engineering bridge sides, and a Smokey Bottom Lumber Co. engine house. I planned to copy that in card stock and I had plenty of windows and doors in the junk pile. I model in O scale, so figures, vehicles, and detail parts were all easily to hand.

Plywood was no problem, there was lots of it lying around from boarding up windows, and I managed to get some foam from my neighbor.

I made a quick trip to my local train store for scenic materials. Plaster and electrical bits & bobs, all that got me going.

But what about the other structures? What should I build them with? How was I going to finish the engine shed?

The Internet came to the rescue with printed textures. The fact that I had never used them before, nor built in card stock, deterred me not, and since I was in unknown territory. Let's go the whole hog and build with foam core.





### *An overall view of the layout*

Since I'm retired (after 36 years working in the film industry) I had time available. With not much going on here because everything was decimated by the Cat 5 that roared thru on September 28th.

Stealing ideas from around the internet, I came up with a Square Foot plan using a three doored industrial building and dump bridge (like at North Bierley). The second leg is the engine shed. I designed a corrugated Quonset hut (Nissen Hut in UK parlance), backing flat to cover the other leg of the layout.

Layout construction was pretty standard. A plywood base, with foam to elevate the terrain for bridge installation. Earth toned latex paint was covered with Woodland Scenics textures and ground foam.

The bridge was constructed from Evergreen Styrene sections and the aforementioned girder sides.

Working with both foam core and the paper textures ended up being much less nerve wracking than I was afraid of. Standard basswood bracing and straight pins held things together while the glue dried. The paper textures went on with spray adhesive and took only two or three tries.

The rollup door was another of those ideas stolen from someone on the web. The roofing is masking

tape. I did special order the Dinky Bedford tipper from eBay.

Building the turntable was more complicated than expected but I slogged on. With the wiring completed and a Varipulse controller installed, it was onto the detailing.

All of the details were on hand but there were several late nights of painting. Black dog, Wiseman, KB scale, Chooch and Roy C Link supplied the details Roy C Link skips and a Black Dog O&K loco supplied the Railway equipment.

I was also helped immensely by everyone on the Facebook group and my incredibly supportive spouse.

The pictures were taken at the last minute, and I agonised over which one I should submit as the competition entry.

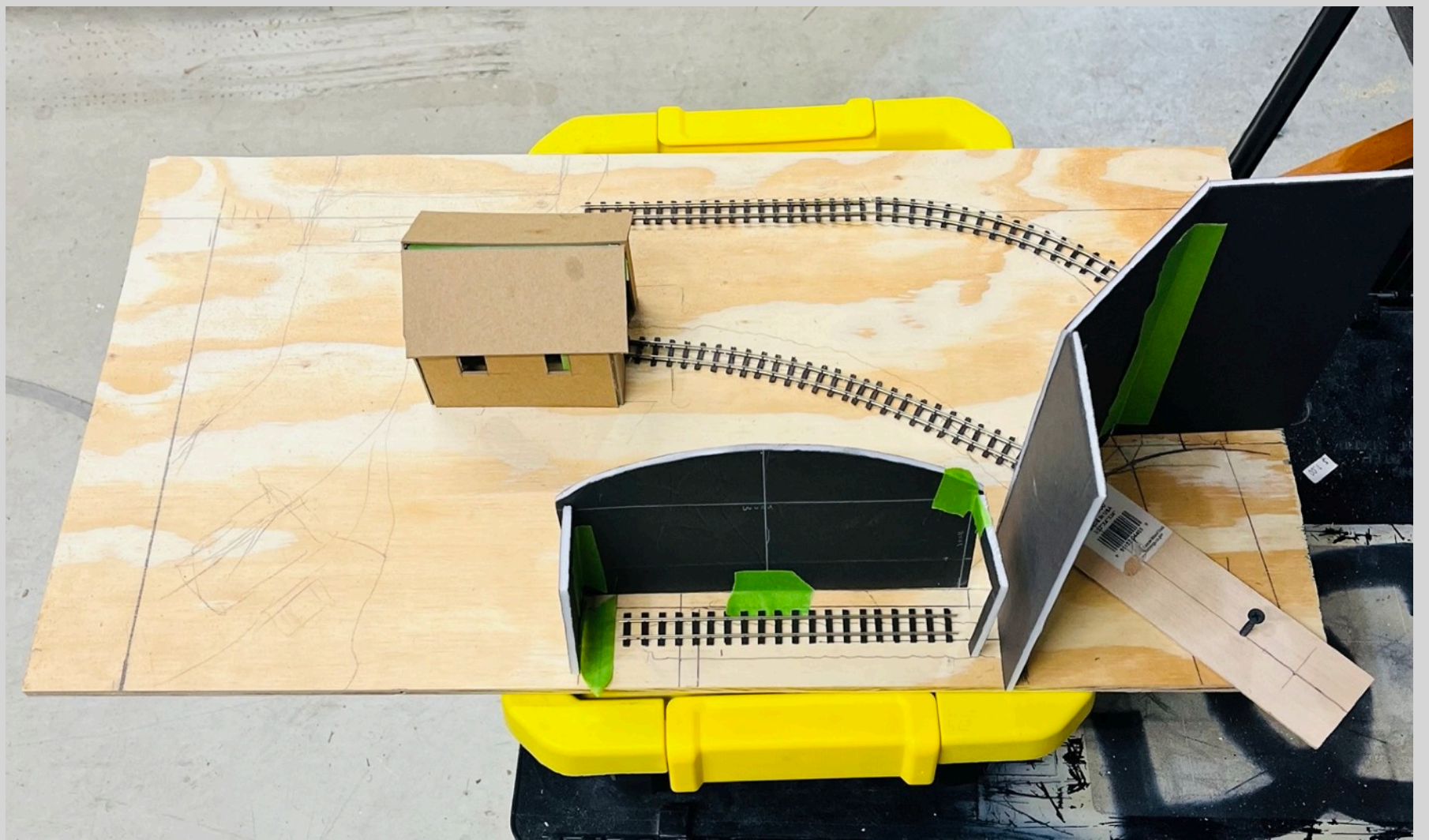
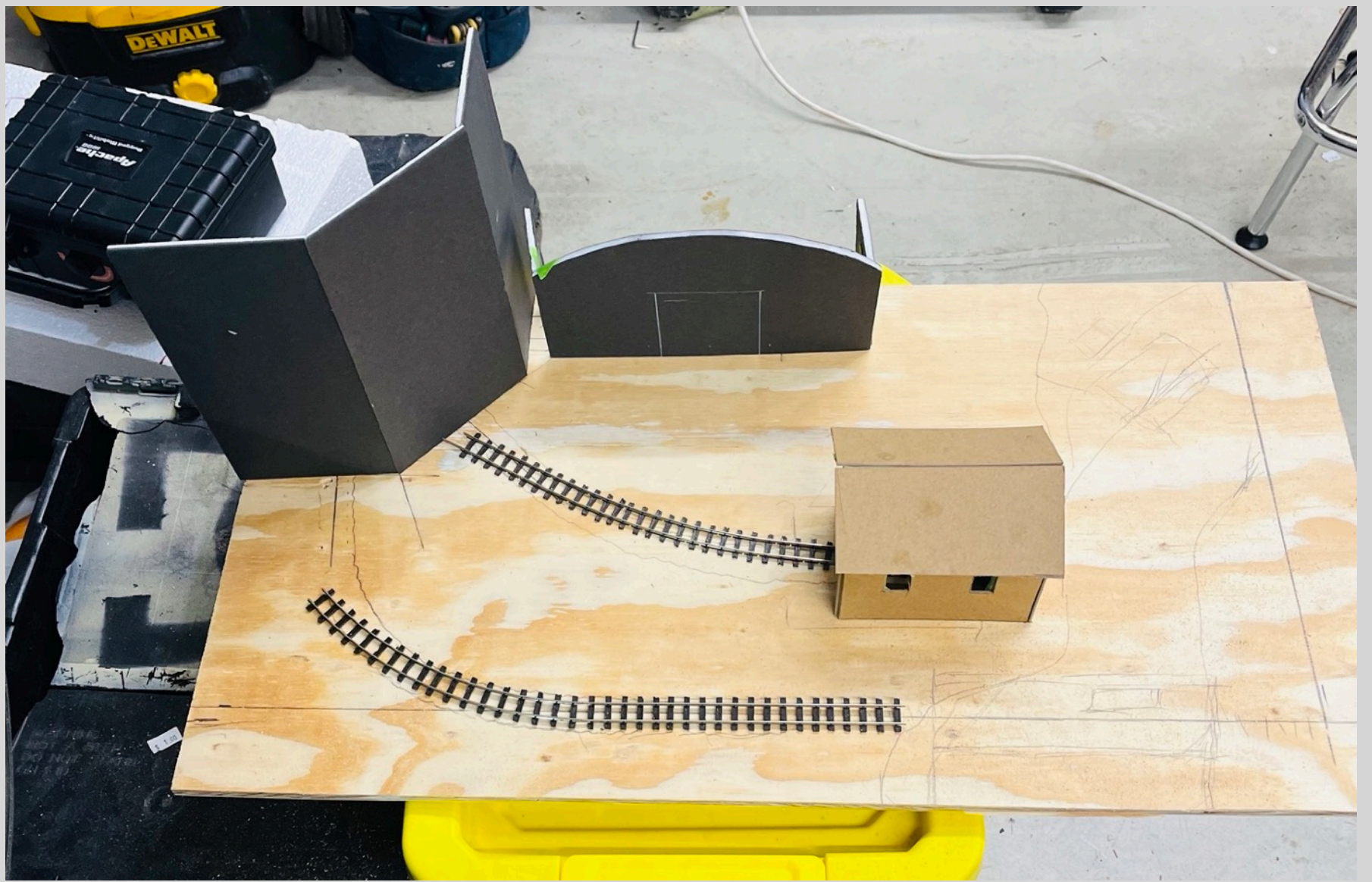
Thank You everyone for your support and assistance. I have never entered a contest before, and I don't really know why I did but I am very grateful for everyones vote.





*Close up of the loco shed and tipping bridge*





*Pre-construction views showing the blocking in of scenic items*





*Construction photos: What would we do without clamps and weights?*



*Construction photos: Checking the alignment of the sector plate*



# Anyone for T

Ken Jones.

T Scale. Size: 19" x 15" 480mm x 350mm



*An overall view of the layout.*

*Editor says: This picture brings back personal memories of the excitement of the early days of T gauge. Ken's layout was one of the early explorations of T gauge.*

**B**uilt in a cutlery box [external dimensions 35 cm x 48 cm] in 2009, and mothballed since 2013, this is actually an O gauge garden layout using O gauge scenery and the garden railway in T gauge. Part of an affluent household, their gardeners are still on site whilst some friends have popped round for lunch to see the trains running and take some pictures.

It only went to 5 exhibitions before being mothballed. It was lightly damaged at a church hall with a sprung floor when children running around the hall caused the trains to jump off the track and crash. It was more severely damaged in 2013 when a visitor with a back pack trying to reach a trader's

stand turned round and sent the whole layout to the edge of the table pulling out wires and sending the trains flying within the layout. It was lucky the layout didn't end up on the floor. I wish people with back packs at exhibitions would carry them if they have to bring them in to the exhibition.

What the lock down enabled many modellers to do is to go back and look at such mothballed layouts, and I did this with this T gauge layout.

Luckily, the scenery was not affected by the damage. The main flower beds and lawn were made for me by Rodney Hodge of the West Midland N Gauge Club.



So, the wiring was out, easily fixed and then clean the track. After this, and the usual questions like: Why is nothing happening? Are the wheels dirty? Why is this happening to me? The 2 power cars of the HST started up.

T gauge, and the original controllers for it that I'm using, have since been improved. Meaning my trains, when running, just whizz round, but at least they were running. Next, try the other track by taking off one of the power cars and cross fingers, (that's optional). Great, two tracks running, time for a coffee.

Now what else will work, well after a while, and more coffee, my blue 4-car Japanese EMU started up, and I also got the single locomotive, actually built for a garden railway, to work as well. The rolling stock involved in the 2013 crash didn't work. They are a

brown 4-car Japanese EMU and a Japanese single car unit. I needed to send them to Alan Ramsay at [www.tgauge.com](http://www.tgauge.com) to see if they can be repaired.

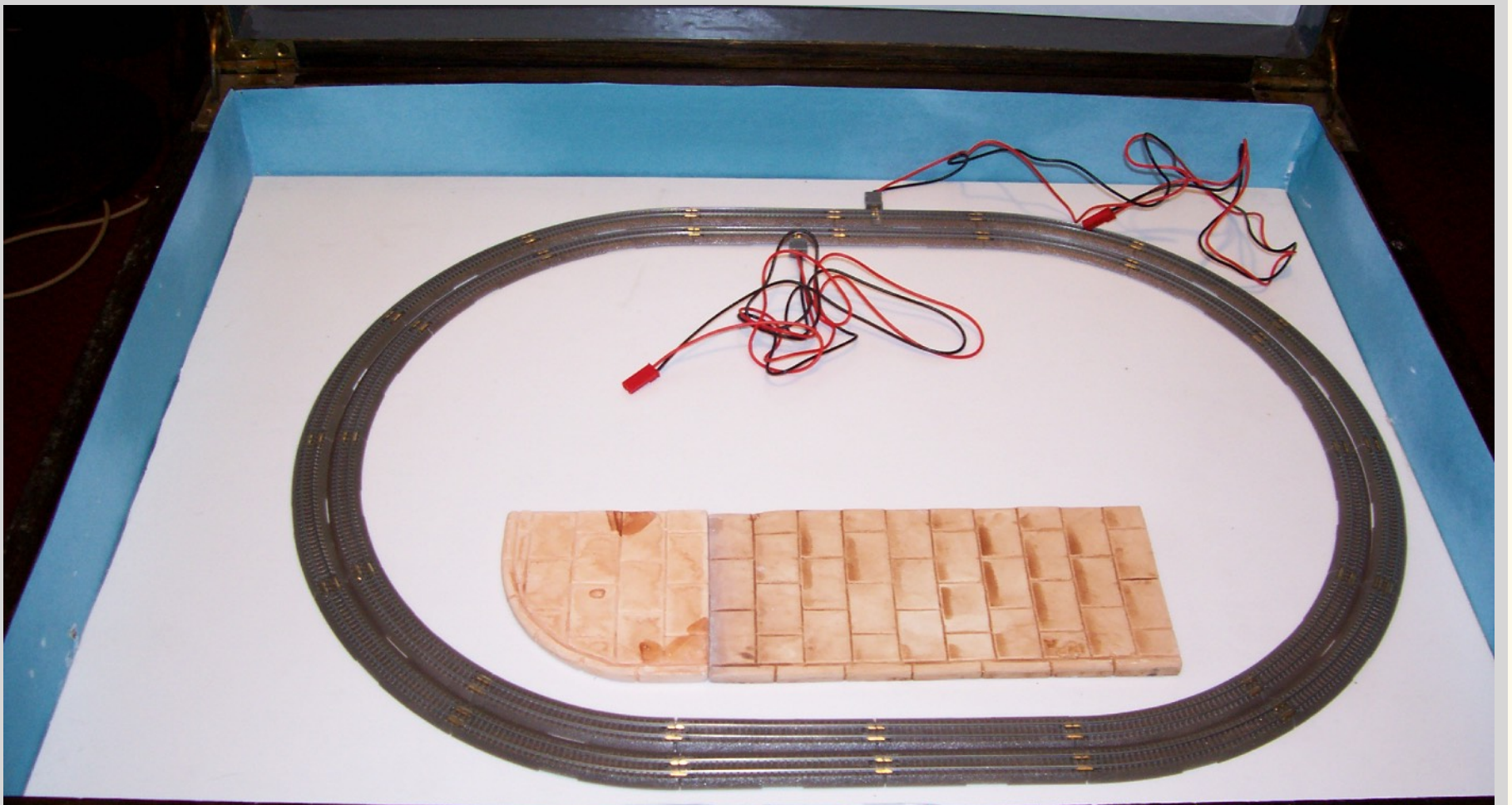
He removed all the wheels on the 5 carriages, ultrasonically cleaned and re-fitted them and the 4-car unit was working again. Not so lucky with the single unit and he had to take it apart, where he found a split gear. We decided while the unit was apart not only to change the gear wheel but to upgrade the motor to give me better overall running. It has also appeared pre 2013 in a Norwegian model railway magazine the reference is MJ-bladet Volume 3/2009 Argang 30 page 7 Verdens Minste Modelljernbane!

Having got it working again in 2020 the exhibitions it was due to attend were cancelled due to lockdown restrictions.



*The perfect garden for a railway enthusiast*





*Early days. The track is laid to see if out fits into the cutlery drawer.*







*The detail in the flower bed is quite remarkable*



*The perfect railway enthusiast's garden*



# World's Fair 1889 Pizza Layout

Jur Snijder.

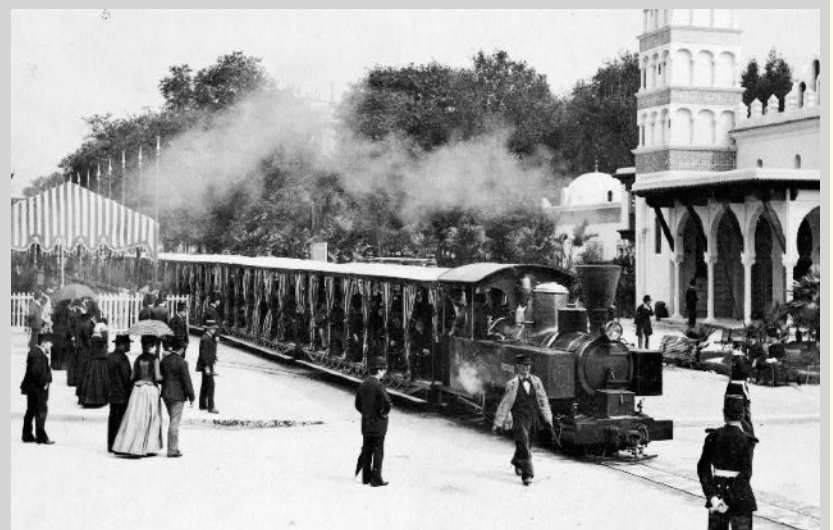
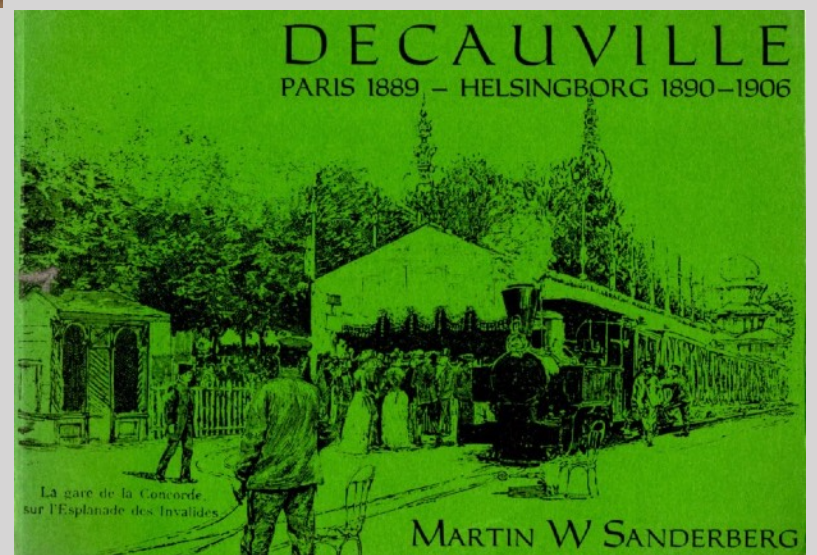
009 Scale. Size:20" 500mm diameter

**T**he inspiration came from two items I have had in my possession for a long time but that I almost forgot about. First, a little Jouef/Playcraft 009/H0e train set with a Decauville NG loco and a set of delightful open coaches: and second, a booklet (in Swedish) about the lightweight narrow-gauge Decauville railways, specifically the one that ran on

the Paris 1889 World Exhibition. The booklet contains some wonderful photos of the exhibition and that little railway. Adding one and one together I decided that I was going to build a small layout, almost a diorama, to reflect some of this atmosphere, if I could.



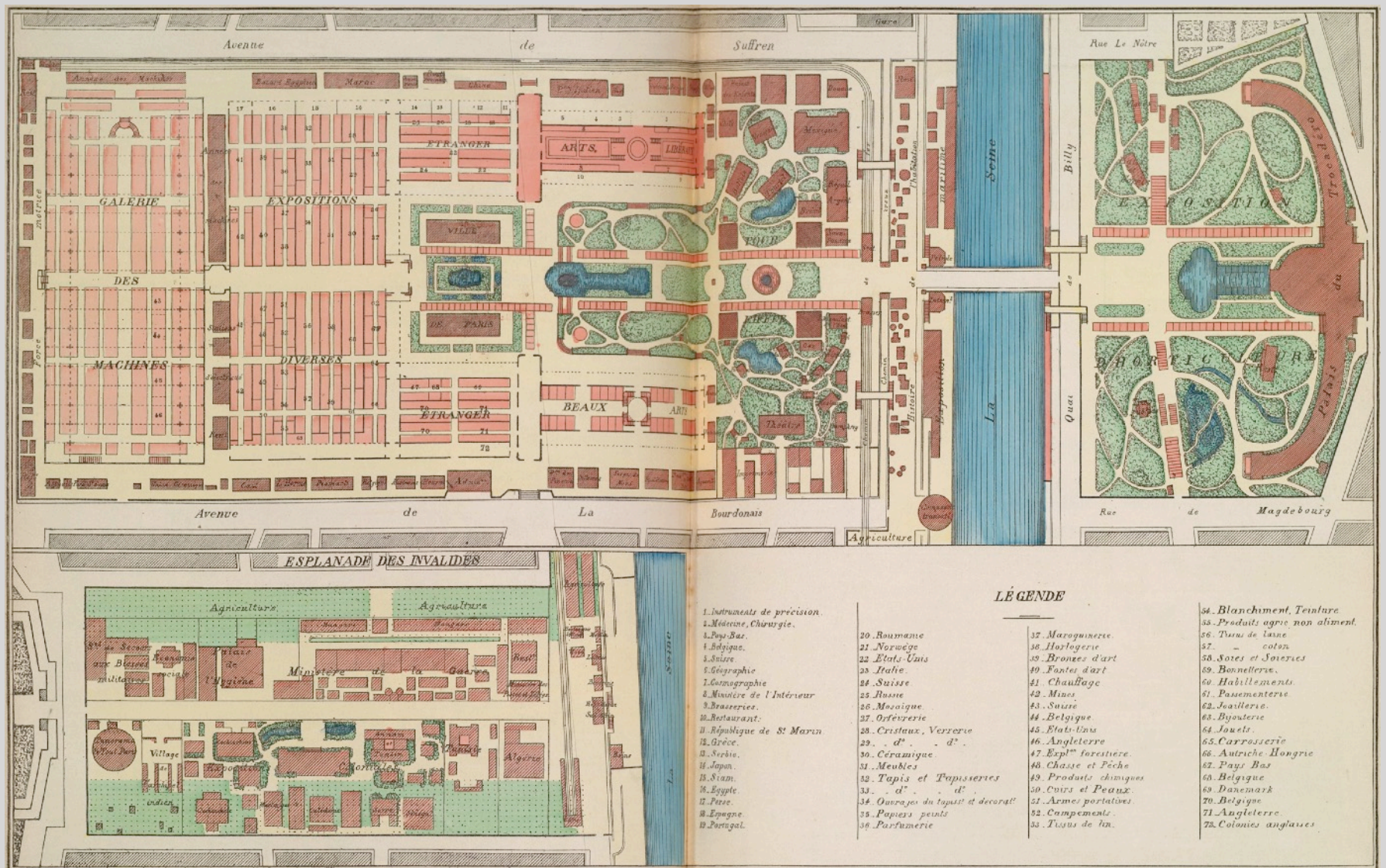
*A forgotten train set (left) and images from an old, fascinating booklet (below) led to the creation of this remarkable micro based on a very unusual prototype*





The first consideration was the layout size and the track plan. The original line ran round the periphery of the Exhibition from one end station to another. The line served to move visitors around but of course also to showcase this (at the time) new technology to the world.

The Exhibition was laid out along the banks of the Seine, mainly on what is known as the Champ de Mars. Today this area is famous because it is where the Eiffel Tower stands, which by the way, was built specifically for this exhibition.



**You can just about make out the railway, running from top left to the Seine, then curving down along the river, past the Eiffel Tower (next to the bridge over the river), and onwards towards the end station on the Quay d'Orsay.**

Conceivably, one could make a layout of most of the actual railway, or at least one that models both end stations. Unfortunately I had only very limited space. Moreover, I am not convinced about the way the little Jouef train navigates pointwork so I wanted to minimise that. Eventually I decided to minimise it altogether and simply build a pointless pizza layout. I leave the trackplan as an exercise for the reader. A circle of Peco Setrack 009 rails fit the baseboard perfectly. The little train has no problem going round a curve of this radius.



**Simple benchwork: A pre-cut circle of MDF with a diameter of 50 cm. and three wooden cabinet feet. With a second MDF circle with a diameter of 40 cm. sandwiched on top.**





*With the track down, the sleepers were disguised with some black paper and scatter. Some pieces of grass mat were placed in the middle, along with some hedging and edging. The grass mat works well to model the immaculate lawns of the exhibition site.*



*The Elephant in the room: The Eiffel Tower. Obviously, a layout of the 1889 World Exhibition needs one.*

*Also obvious is that the real thing is 324 m. high which works out as 4.26 m. at scale 1/76 - a bit tall for my living room!*

*Still, I wanted one – so, and please pardon my sin, I decided to forget all about scale. I sourced a Heller plastic kit of the thing at scale 1/650. That reduces it to a more manageable height of 47 cm.*

*As the model of the tower is so tall it does not seem the slightest bit out of place on the model, even though it's a different scale.*



***When studying an old print of the exhibition I spotted something wonderful in the air that just had to be incorporated in the layout: This:***

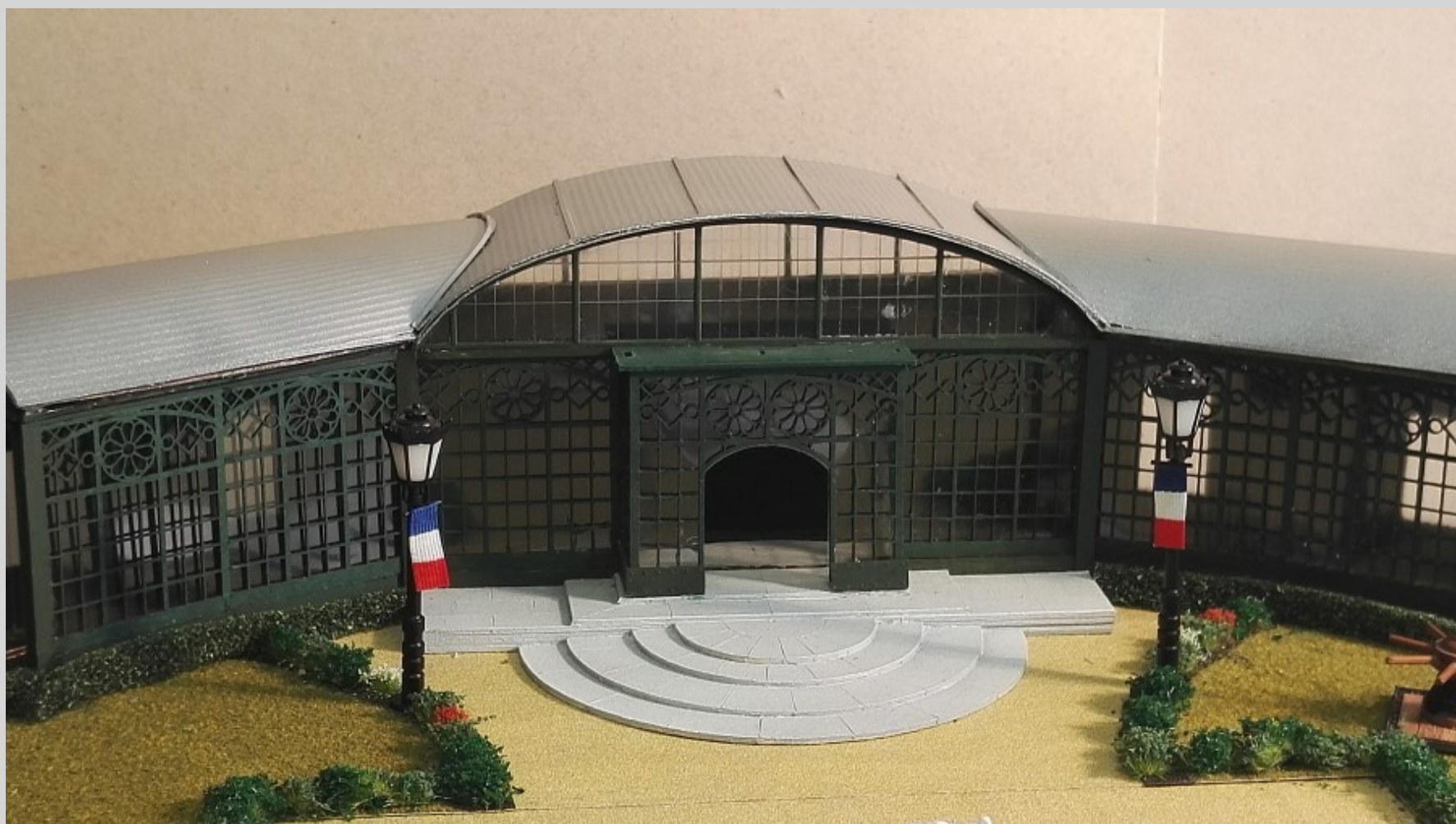


The next big question was, what to do at the back? Initially I thought of making a backscene based on a wonderful picture of the Champ de Mars during the exhibition:

That proved problematical, so I then decided to make some kind of train shed. Some kit-bashing of the Noch Orangerie gave me a structure in the style of the great exhibition buildings, with an iron framework and a corrugated roof. A bit like the Galerie des Machines but quite a bit smaller. The roof caused some problems because of the dual curvature, but in the end something reasonable emerged



***Noch Orangerie kit. The basis for the excellent station seen below***



***The station structure is a magnificent example of the kit bashers art.***





*The fountain under the tower is an outstanding detail.*



*On some of the photos you can see the type of shelters they had put up at the stations - basically some jolly striped canopies. A dash to the spares box and some plastic card later, and the passengers on the micro have a shelter too.*





*Restrained poses for the people in perfect period fashions, (wonderful metal figures produced by Andrew C Stadden).*



*The tricolour themed bushes are a wonderful touch*



# Backscene Painting

Tom Conboy shows us how.

---

**I like to paint my own backdrops** for my micro layouts. Painting your own backdrop may seem daunting, but the truth is it is not as hard as you might think. I am going to show you how I created a backdrop using the wet-on-wet oil painting method made popular by Bob Ross. You can substitute acrylic paints, but I find the wet-on-wet oil painting method to be a little easier to use, especially for the beginner. I have included a few resources at the end of the article for those who may be interested in giving this a try.

I am creating a simple autumn backdrop for my Owensville Terminal Micro Layout. I will be adding 3D model trees in front of this backdrop, so the backdrop does not require a lot of fancy details or need to be an artistic masterpiece. The focus is the

railway model and not the backdrop painting. All I need are some basic tree shapes, a road, and a blue sky with a few clouds!

I am using a 1/8" hardboard material for my backdrop. I lightly sand the smooth surface first with an inexpensive foam sanding block. Next, I apply a coat of acrylic white gesso to the smooth surface with a foam brush. I am using a 3" foam brush for this application. I prefer the 2" variety, but this is all I had on hand. I will be applying three coats to the hardboard surface. After the first coat has dried, I will lightly sand it with a sanding block. I use a cheap, foam sanding block with various sanding grits from my local hardware store. I will repeat this process for each layer of gesso. I recommend at least three coats, but sometimes two coats will do the trick.



*After the gesso has dried and been sanded, I sketched in a simple line to show where the baseboard will sit in relation to the backdrop. There is no need to paint any details below this line since the baseboard will hide it; however, I will extend the sky color just below it so no white shows up in the completed layout scene. I also need to locate a road that leads into the backdrop. The road meandering off in the distance is not important, just the location where it meets the modeled road on the baseboard.*





*I use a 1" brush loaded with Pthalo Blue, and paint the backdrop with criss-cross strokes. I extend the blue paint to just below the horizontal line.. No need to paint the parts that won't be visible! The road lines are faded, but I can still make them out. I then used a pencil to redraw the spacing of the road at the horizontal line with a couple of marks extending below the line.*



*Next, I added clouds with a fan brush and Titanium White. I use a corner of the brush and a circular motion to create cloud shapes. After this initial application, I will use a soft, 1.5" blender brush to blend the clouds and eliminate any brush marks in the paint.*





*Now comes the fun part, painting happy trees and bushes! I start with a mixture of Alizarin Crimson and Sap Green. This makes a dark, brown color which will serve as foliage and bush shadows. I load the 1" brush with the brown mix and round the end of the brush with a vertical stroke on the palette. I take the loaded brush and tap the corner of it with a light touch on the backdrop surface creating tree and bush shapes. Using the "less is more" philosophy is a big key to this step. Next, I use a Script Liner brush to paint tree trunks. I thin the*

*brown mixture to an inky consistency using a little paint thinner on the Liner brush. I apply a thinner paint mixture for the autumn foliage highlights. Just a touch of odorless paint thinner is all that is needed to thin the thicker paint. Thinner paint will stick to thicker paint. I use a variety of paint mixes using Cadmium Yellow, Bright Red, and Yellow Ochre for the foliage and bush highlights. I load the 1" brush with the various autumn color mixes the same way I did for the initial dark foliage*







*Finished! The colors complement the building and stock perfectly.*

*The oil paints will take anywhere from 7 to 14 days to fully dry to the touch. Making your own scenic backdrops is not all that difficult, and they are also a lot of fun to create. If you are interested in learning more, I recommend the following resources:*

*My Wet-on-Wet Painting Demonstration Video on YouTube...*

*<https://youtu.be/g8L6kzO0Efk>*

*The entire Bob Ross painting series, **The Joy of Painting**, is available at several free streaming services, such as Tubi, Pluto, and FreeVee. You can also find **The Joy of Painting** at YouTube.*



***The ONLY  
Podcast Dedicated  
to the  
Micro Model Railroad  
Hobby!***

**[microcartel.blogspot.com](http://microcartel.blogspot.com)**

**Hosts:  
Tom Conboy  
&  
Ian Holmes**

Monthly discussions, interviews, modeling tips,  
and recommendations.

Don't forget to listen to the podcast! Monthly discussions on all things micro layout.



# Thunder Ridge

Al Barten

H0e/OO9 Scale. Size: 31" x 12" 780mm x 305mm



*A general overview of Al's micro layout. A very simple creation, yet it provides hours of fun watching the trains go by with some simple shunting/switching as and when needed.*

**T**hunder Ridge is an OO9/HOe narrow gauge roundy on a 12"x36" Rubbermaid shelf. The actual scenic portion is 12"x31", leaving space for a controller and area for off-the-layout locos or wagons. A mountain conveniently backs up to the fiddle space, giving access to the tunnel. After building a slew of portable layouts the past few years I have come to know what I want in a layout. Your experience may differ. First, I like small portable layouts that I can build and complete before I want to try something else. I like box layouts because they can be easily stored, but I also like shelf layouts because they offer more potential, being bigger. I like continuous running as well as trouble free shunting. Thunder Ridge is the closest I've come to achieving all these things (excluding the box). First the track is Kato Unitrack N gauge. It has a minimum radius 117mm (less than 5"), so making a turn on a 12" wide shelf is no problem. I added a tunnel so the train isn't always in view, and added a gentle curve in the track for variety.

I also like shunting layouts that work flawlessly, or at least most of the time. Coupling and uncoupling work best on straight sections of rail, so I placed the one siding on a long straightaway and provided a straight section on the other branch of the one turnout. Unlike most modelers of OO9/HOe layouts, I use the Rapido N gauge couplings. I add a wing to each one, giving me a lifting point for uncoupling with my home made "hockey sticks" fashioned from old credit cards.



*The modified Rapido coupling*





*Al has done a great job re-creating rock faces here*

Rapido couplers are available for purchase, but mounting them to the exact height has been difficult for me. So instead I buy N gauge open 4-wheel wagons that already have the Rapidos installed and build the larger OO9 wagon around it. At least two Dundas OO9 kits work well this way: DM07 Snail Beach Coal Wagon and DM35 4-Wheel Goods Van. The coach is cut down from a longer Budget Model Railways kit. Locos are commercially 3D printed bodies fit over Kato 11-xxxx series chassis. I wanted to have the scenery dip below track level as a way of justifying the gentle curve coming out of the tunnel. I used 1" pink foam available in hobby shops as a base for the track. In hindsight I could have done better by using two layers for a deeper cut. The three buildings are scratch built using styrene sheet and embossed brick paper and Grandt Line windows. The mountain is formed with scraps of foam covered with tissue paper. I use a mix of water and PVA to hold the tissue down and let the wrinkles that naturally form be my rocks. While wet, I add color using acrylics. The ground cover is made by placing PVA on the desired area and then sprinkling Woodland Scenics grass and turf or ballast (for the drive by the station). These sink in, so I have to keep adding until no more

glue is visible. When dry – about 24 hours – I vacuum up the loose particles. I use these methods to avoid using plaster, which is very messy and not something I want in my office where I do my modeling.



**Offstage train storage area**





*The small station is quite busy with passengers waiting.*



*A short train on a rocky ledge*





*A typical small goods facility*



*Emerging from the tunnel mouth into daylight*



# Ikea Baseboards

Ian Holmes

*The editor discusses a popular source of micro layout baseboards*

If you are new to the world of Micro Layouts, you will at some point come across people building layouts using shelves and storage boxes from IKEA, the Swedish flat pack, modernist furniture chain. They have produced many products over the years that are useable for the micro layout modeller. There are people out there called IKEA hackers who take an IKEA product and repurpose it. Sometimes the hack can be quite subtle like the way an item is assembled to create something different. Or things being used for a different purpose. Like turning bread bins on their sides to make a bedside table for example. Even more amazingly one hacker turned some wooden bowls into Hi-Fi speaker housings. Check out [Ikeahackers.net](http://Ikeahackers.net) to see what amazing things these people can do.

I'm not sure if using shelves and toy boxes as model railway baseboards counts as a true IKEA Hack, but using the confines of an IKEA product for micro layouts certainly makes you think about your layout planning.

Many of the shelves are actually quite plain, but coupling one with the range of attractive brackets makes for the idea of a centrepiece project layout in your household.

The great attraction of the IKEA product for me is that if you have no ability in woodworking, all the

cutting and measuring is done for you. Also, if you are an apartment dweller, and the use of power tools to make things is prohibited by building regulations, all you need to make something is a screw driver or hex wrench, (which are always supplied).

I've used IKEA products off and on for a while. Most notably the APA box of course, but there was another storage box before that I had tried to use. That was the SNACK box. Many of these products are on the market for a year or two and then replaced by something else. This rapid turnover keeps their product line contemporary. The SNACK, like the APA is no longer available.

What I have started here is a list of IKEA products that may have a micro layout use. This list is not exhaustive, and with the regular changing of products it would be impossible to be so. Also some people will see possibilities in containers that I haven't. Moreover, a search on the IKEA website for "shelf" brings up 2800 results. Not all of them are relevant. I have concentrated on the cheaper items, except a couple of them. You could spend \$270 (210 GBP) on a MICKE workstation. James Hilton has suggested several layouts for such a location on his Paxton-road website. But I'm trying to keep the costs down for you.



**BILLY** - Probably IKEA's most popular product. They claim that a BILLY is sold every five minutes. This bookcase has been around since 1979. There's so many different sizes of shelves and arrangements out there, that it would probably take an article in itself to cover those. A bookcase full of your railway books topped with an alcove containing your micro layout would be a great feature for your hobby room, and perfectly possible using parts from the BILLY range.

Billy shelves (top picture) are also sold individually in several lengths. All are 10" (250mm) deep, which is a pretty useful depth.





**LACK** - The Lack shelf has been very popular for micro layout builders in the UK lately. At 43 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ " (1100mm x 275mm) in size, it is a generous size, capable of handling tuning fork and Inglenook plans. A good plain simple shelf that can be blind fixed to a wall. It also comes in 73 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (1860mm) length. For the super space starved creatives there's an 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (285mm) long version for a tightly curved shelf pizza.



**MOSSLANDA** (above and below) - Recently proposed by James Hilton, the Mosslanda is a picture shelf 21 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (550mm x 108mm). This narrow shelf would seem to be good for 9mm gauge track and lower. That groove in the surface might have uses for wiring or baseboard joining, or both.



**MALERAS** - Similar in style to the Mosslanda, it is 5 $\frac{1}{8}$ " (130mm) deep but only available in bamboo. It can be found in 21 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (546mm) and 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (750mm) lengths





**BERSGSHULT** - A plain shelf 31 1/2" x 7 7/8" (800 x 200mm). It is seen here with the GRANHULT end cap shelf bracket that as a whole looks quite stylish. The Bergschult also comes in a 47 1/4" x 11 3/4" (1200 x 300mm) size, that's almost four square feet. The end cap feature of the GRANHULT means that should you need to cut a shelf down in size, the cut face of the shelf would be hidden in the cap end.



**TROXHULT** - A very lightweight looking shelf 43 1/4" x 12 5/8" (1098 x 320mm). Again almost four square feet in area. The attractive, almost invisible mounting bracket looks like it wouldn't support much weight. But the pictures on the website show it carrying plates so it must be OK.



**TRANHULT** - Another simple shelf approximately four square foot in area. 47 1/4 x 11 3/4" (1200 x 300mm). It could be coupled with any of the stylish shelf brackets like RAMSHULT, GRANSHULT and KROKSHULT to make an attractive display.





**BURHULT** - Another simple shelf 23 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (550mm x 200mm) that could be coupled with any of the many shelf brackets available. It is also available in 31 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (800mm) and 47 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (1200mm) lengths



**EKBY ALEX** - The 46 $\frac{7}{8}$ " x 11 $\frac{3}{8}$ " ( 1990 x 290mm) size is very micro friendly. It's a bit more expensive than the regular plain shelving. But that is because it has storage drawers underneath. That means you can keep everything you need to operate the layout in one location. All your stock, and power units etc; together with the layout. A very attractive proposition.





**TROFAST** - A wall storage unit that has a long top surface 39 x 11<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" (990 x 300mm) in size. Once again slightly more expensive, but it also has a facility for a range of different storage units underneath



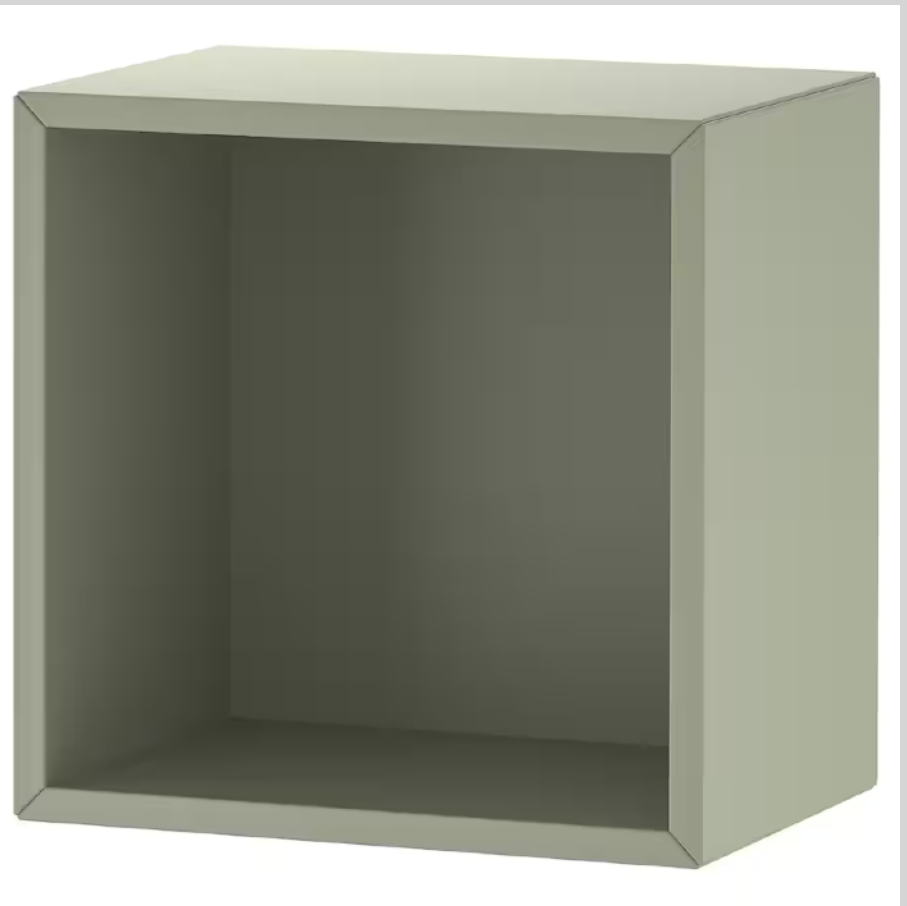
**KNAGGLIG** - A storage crate 18" x 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" x 9<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>". (450 x 311 x 248mm) I have seen several people use these turned on their sides for micro layout projects, and very successfully too. The slatted crate design makes for a different presentation. An even smaller 6" x 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" x 6" (150 x 235 x 150mm) is available.





**UPPDATERA** - This looks to be a descendent of the SNACK box. 12 1/2" x 9 1/2" x 6" (317 x 241 x 150mm) inches deep. An even smaller 9" x 12 1/4" x 6" (230 x 311 x 150mm) is available.

**EKET** - listed as a shelf, it looks more like a box. 13 3/4" square x 9 7/8" (350mm x 250mm) deep. It could give you a base for a pizza layout using a 6" (150mm) radius circle. It's also available in a large range of colours for the style conscious household.



This list should give a good idea of what you can look out for. I have concentrated on the less expensive products. For example there is the IVAR shelving unit, but it's a lot more expensive than these products. You may see something else out there as well. Some of the products come in multiple lengths and colours. One type of shelf may be exactly the same as another, but it is just a deeper size, or made

of a different material, so they give it a different name.

If you have used a current IKEA product on a project (there's little point in listing products that are unavailable), let me know and we can add it to the list. Perhaps we can keep it up to date as a valuable resource for the micro layout builder.

*All images in this article taken from the IKEA website for illustrative purposes. No copyright infringement intended. All products can be found at [www.ikea.com](http://www.ikea.com)*



# Sorrento Park

Rod Shaw

TT:120 Scale 3mm:ft. Size: 54" x 9" 1.37m x 225mm



*An aerial view of Sorrento Park showing the track plan*

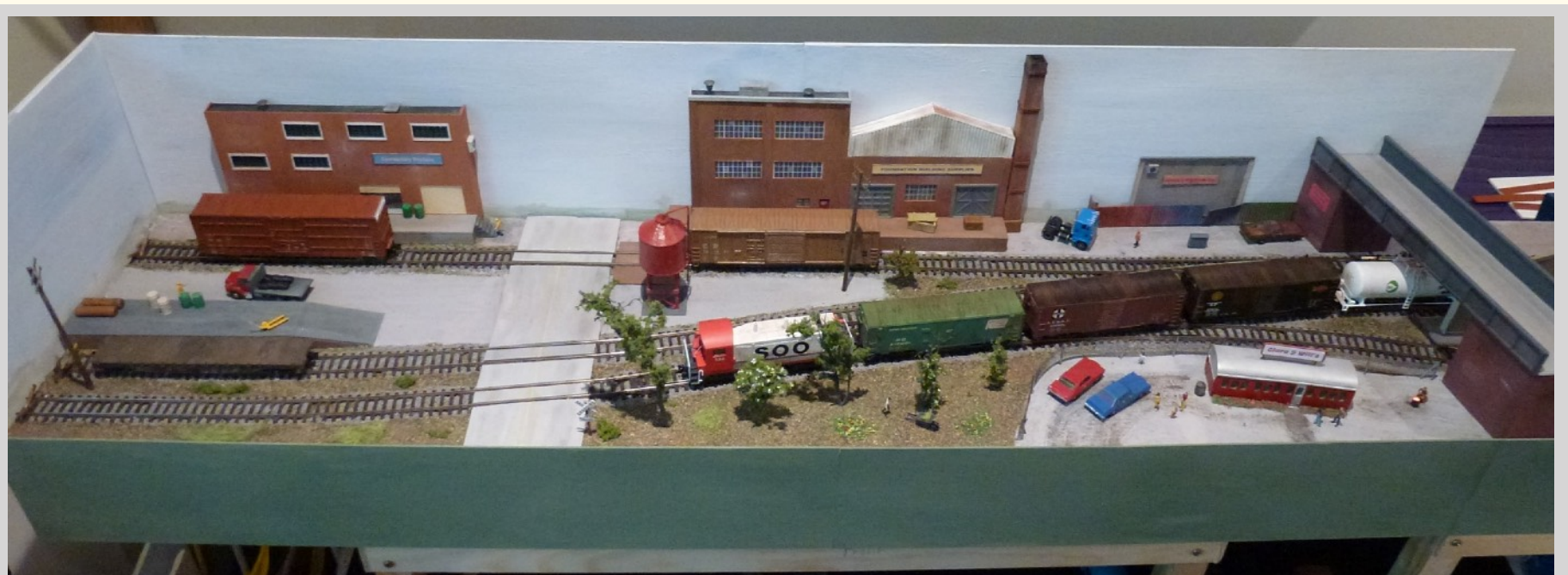
**S**orrento Park is an American micro layout in TT 1:120 scale, set in a small fictional town in the northeastern US, just large enough, in the 1970s and 1980s, to justify a small rail-served industrial park on its outskirts. The railroad is on a Conrail branch line but uses a mix of rolling stock and locomotives from various companies including CSX, Chessie and SOO.

In many respects the layout is like my previous American TT scale layout, Naples Street. The track design is almost identical and the overall dimensions are very similar. The layout also reuses the rolling stock, and some of the scenic items, of its predecessor. So why bother? Firstly, Naples Street was a bit on the heavy side for one person to carry to and from shows. Secondly, I came to regard the add-on fiddle yard as a bit of a nuisance and wanted

something integrated. Thirdly, I wasn't happy with the friction-based turnout switching mechanisms, which could get a bit stiff. Fourthly, I'd had the layout for over five years and was getting a bit fed up with it.

The clincher came when Peco released its TT 1:120 track in 2022 - all of a sudden the HOm track I'd used on *Naples Street*, simply because it's what I had available, didn't look right at all. I just had to start again.

Overall, the scenic part of the layout is six inches longer than *Naples Street*, and with a lower backscene, four turnouts instead of six, two industries fewer, and the finer profile ties of the new Peco track, I think it presents a more open, less cluttered appearance



*In this view, the open less cluttered feel that Rod was after is very apparent*





*Chessie power on duty at Sorrento Park today*

There are two baseboards, made from balsa wood frames three inches wide by half an inch thick and topped with two layers of 5mm foamboard and a layer of thin cork sheet. I have used balsa before and it is remarkably sturdy. The main board is 36in. by 9in. and the second board is 18in. by 9in., giving a total length of 54in. or about 137mm. Being very light and in two sections the layout is very easy for one person to carry, which was my main goal as it was built with possible exhibitions in mind and I usually attend any I get invited to on my own. I had to brace the layout underneath at intervals with lengths of balsa to cure a slight dishing of the foamboard tops, a problem I hadn't anticipated as I had glued two layers together opposite sides facing in the expectation of preventing warping. Apart from using a few panel pins to hold the braces in place while the glue was drying, the board materials are held together entirely by PVA. The two sections fit together by means of wooden dowels glued into the ends and are held firm by two small clamps. Each baseboard section sits on short legs which are braced together and raise the layout about eight inches above table level.



*A pair of effective small industries for a micro layout*



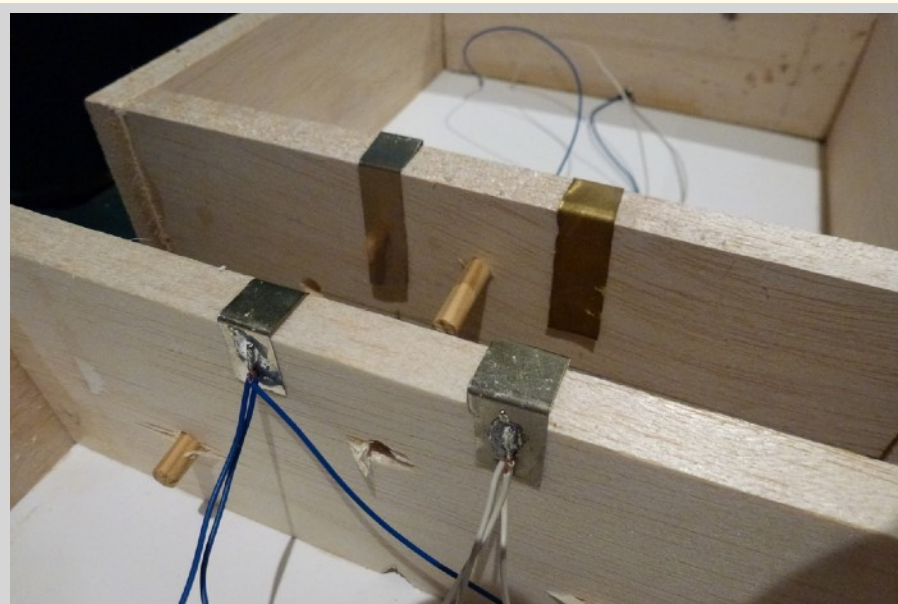


*A very atmospheric view down the layout*

I used the free version of Anyrail to design the layout. Track and turnouts are from the new Peco TT 1:120 range. The turnouts are Unifrog, and very impressive. My American twin-truck locos run over them without a hiccup, such that I haven't needed to power the frogs. Unifrog turnouts are not self-isolating like the other Peco types, which means that apart from the frogs all track is powered at all times. If you are running more than one loco at once on DC you will need some kind of isolating method for sidings, but with DCC, or if you run only one loco at a time (both of which apply in my case), this isn't a problem - that is, until you forget to switch the points and get a derailment. But of course, I never do this.

Electrical continuity between the baseboard sections is provided by conductive metal strips which clip around the baseboard ends and contact each other when the baseboard sections are pressed together. The turnouts are switched from the back of the layout by wire in tube. The fiddle yard section is arranged as a crossover, and although it is mostly screened from public view at normal viewing angles, for aesthetic

reasons I have given its left side some scenic treatment for people peeking under the bridge. Ramps on the fiddle yard tracks help in placing the trucks properly when swapping cars. A little shimmy side to side usually does the job!



*The metal strips act as electrical continuity between the two baseboards. The balsa wood baseboard frame can also be seen.*





*Stuck at the grade crossing while a train crosses again!*

The layout only sees one loco running at a time. This is either one of two Zeuke/MTB SW1200s, now out of stock, or one of three GP9s made from Lionel static display models motorised with Tillig truck and gear parts and can motors.

All locos have been fitted with Zimo decoders; one has sound via a sugarcube speaker and any two of the others can be made to sound via a couple of under-baseboard MRC diesel sounders set to the same address.

The DCC address of each loco is the first digit of its number.

The sixteen freight cars are a combination of kits, 3D prints and RTR, all from European suppliers, and comprise tankers, boxcars of various sizes, hoppers, gondolas and a flat car. In truth the smaller boxcars belong to an earlier era than I pretend the model is set in. They all came with roofwalks and I removed these, firstly to help keep up the pretence of a later era, and secondly because I don't like them anyway; I think they make a boxcar look somewhat untidy. These models were not cheap and I did the job with some trepidation, but I don't think my butchery has

harmed them. I also shortened the side ladders on a couple of them, and the surgery is only noticeable if you look closely.

Coupling and uncoupling is done manually; couplers are a mix of Kadee 713, 714 and 705, Micro Trains 1015 and proprietary. They are all mutually compatible but some couple and uncouple better than others. The 705s in particular are a bit fiddly and can be stubborn, which can result in an undignified few seconds as I wrestle with the uncoupling stick. I must get round to standardising one day.

Like many modellers, I suspect, I approach ballasting with gritted teeth. I first brushed WD40 onto the moving parts of the turnouts to make sure they didn't get glued up, then used PVA mixed roughly 50-40-10 with water and isopropyl alcohol. No matter how neatly I spread my ballast it always looks a mess after the PVA has set and much tidying up is needed.



Ground cover is either concrete roadway or various kinds of greenery and earth scatter colours. Some of the ballast is also sprinkled with scatter to give it a run-down look.

The grade crossing is made from cardboard and has a slight camber made by bending it over a narrower strip of cardboard underneath.

The industrial buildings are loosely based on photos of north American prototypes. Like the road bridge they are scratchbuilt from card and polystyrene. I had thought of adapting and reusing the buildings

from *Naples Street* but in the end I decided to make new ones. The only leftover I couldn't bear to part with is a resin casting of a 3mm scale BR coach that somehow got transported across the ocean, presumably by a nostalgic ex-pat. It has been given a makeover and attracts a regular stream of hungry customers as Clara & Will's.



***Clara and Will's railside diner. A common feature in the USA***

The road bridge helps to form a scenic break between the main layout and the fiddle yard, and also helps to hide the join between the baseboards. I have partially "scenicked" the fiddle yard to make it look like part of the layout proper if anyone peeks under the bridge.

A card panel, partly painted and partly covered with polystyrene brick sheet, forms a backdrop to one of the half-relief industries and completes the view block to the fiddle yard.

The backscene is made from two layers of thick card covered with poster paint after a failed attempt with

5mm foamboard which warped beyond recovery when painted. I had expected foamboard to bend when painted but in my previous experience it has gone flat again when dry. Not so this time - it was left with both horizontal and vertical curves which were impossible to straighten adequately. The chimney at Foundation Building Supplies is fitted with a Seuthe smoke unit which can be made to spew out its fumes on the press of a button that can be operated by spectators. A timer unit switches it off again after about a minute.





***Effective use of the road bridge to hide the fiddle yard***

The figures on the layout, both railway and non-railway related, are from the Preiser ready-painted and non-painted ranges. A good number of them like to pass the time of day at Clara & Will's. Road vehicles are either 3D prints or from RailTT in the Ukraine.

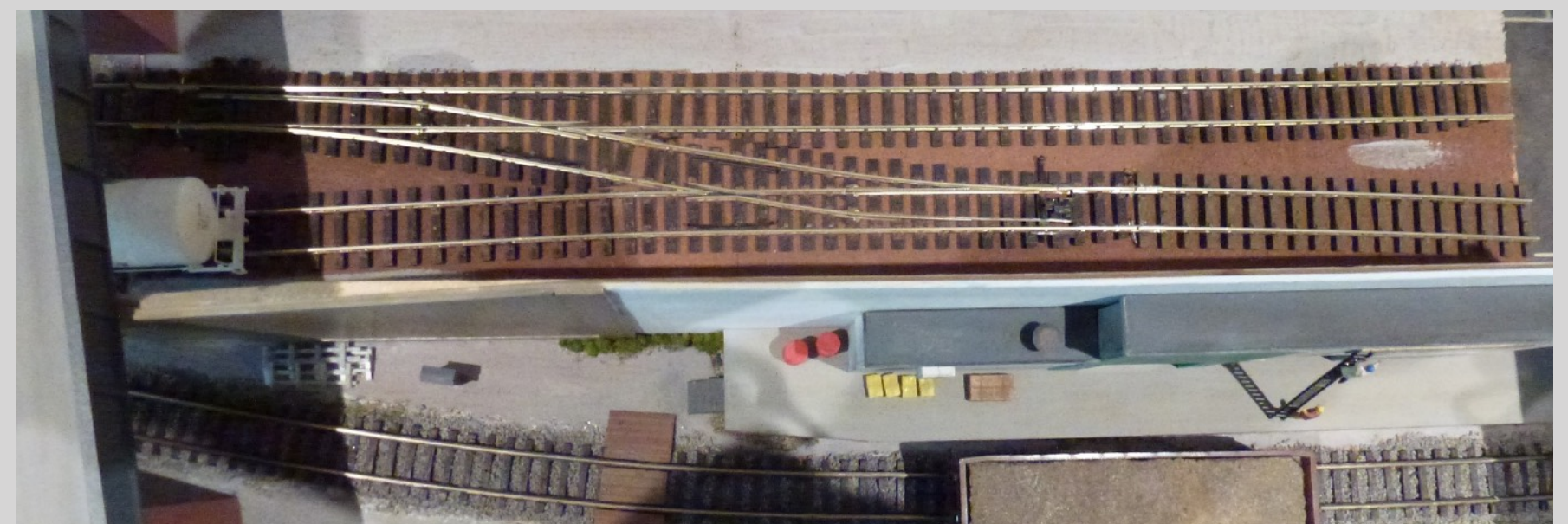
There are three industries plus a team track, which together see deliveries of canned and dried food, coal, sand, gravel, fuel oil, paint and various construction items, while glass products, chemical waste and empties are moved out. The silo is used to store sand for Foundation Building Supplies, which then bags it up for customers.

Although there is a run-round loop I use this very little. To avoid too much swapping of locos, I usually have one parked on each road in the fiddle yard. One pulls cars out and shoves them to Shard

Glassware in front of the fiddle yard, while the other shoves its cars directly to the two industries and team track at the opposite end of the layout.

If the yen to play trains takes hold of me I sometimes work off a set switch list spread over a number of trips, which ensures that all industries are served more or less equally and which cycles back to the starting positions. It is fairly simple, with each move specifying just the trip number, location, generic car type and load to be spotted.

As with previous layouts I also sometimes use my self-written Switcher program to automatically generate switching moves based on the requirements of the industries and the freight cars available. This is a PC-only application free for anyone to use by contacting me at [showerydan@live.com](mailto:showerydan@live.com).



***Behind the scenes. The other end of the loop in the fiddle yard***





*A view across a very busy Sorrento Park*



*Mom is chatting after leaving the diner while her son watches the trains*





*This building has a Seuthe smoke unit in the chimney, operated by a push button.*



*A couple of nice B&M scenes in Sorrento Park*



# From the Archives - Monte Sano Railroad

John Tryon Hubbard.

HOn30 scale 17" x 11" 420mm x 297mm



For most of the past 50 years, I have lived in Huntsville, Alabama. Back in the late 1800s, a resort hotel was built atop Monte Sano Mountain, which is on the east side of the town. The Huntsville Belt Line and Monte Sano Railroad was built to transport visitors up the mountain to the hotel. The Monte Sano Railroad was a standard gauge affair with a single 26 ton Baldwin steam dummy engine, and its primary rolling stock was a few passenger cars and one or more gondolas for hauling rock. I have some photos of the railroad under construction, when cuts were being made through the rock of the mountain; and, at that time, the little loco was hauling building materials and crushed gravel for the ballast. The photo on the following page shows the most spectacular part of the railway, a loop called O'Brien's Buttonhole. In this picture,

the roadbed enters from downhill at about 12:00, loops left across the great trestle, crosses left to right in the foreground, exits the picture at about 5:00, re-enters about 3:00, and finally exits headed uphill at about 1:00. There is a second, smaller trestle just out of the picture to the right. It does not take too much imagination to transform this open loop into a closed loop for a micro layout so that is what I did. I think it turned out to be a pretty successful interpretation of the scene.

The layout was built on a piece of white foam cut to size. The track is one yard length of N scale track which gives a loop of about 10" x 12". The track was laid in one evening and I ran trains straight away. I am particularly proud of my Americanising of an Eggerbahn loco to something more appropriate for the location.





*The original postcard view that inspired the layout*





In the beginning the motive power came from an old N scale AHM Plymouth switcher. This is a very easy conversion to get a modeller started in HOn30. Not long after that I managed to get hold of an Eggerbahn 0-4-0T steam loco. A very European looking loco it was Americanized following instructions found in a Model Railroader from the

1960's. The last locomotive added was a "steam dummy" adapted from the Eggerbahn "Fiery Elias", as the Monte Sano Railroad actually had such a loco. In fact, if you look at the picture of the stone crusher on the next page. The loco can be seen in the background. Trains look more prototypical now.



*The line's first two locomotives posed on the timber trestle. Three examples of outstanding work*

*This photo shows John's Eggerbahn "Fiery Elias" adaptation alongside the stone crusher. Compare this picture with the old postcard on the next page. Quite similar.*







*The top photo shows the prototype stone crusher, the lower photo John's outstanding model of it*



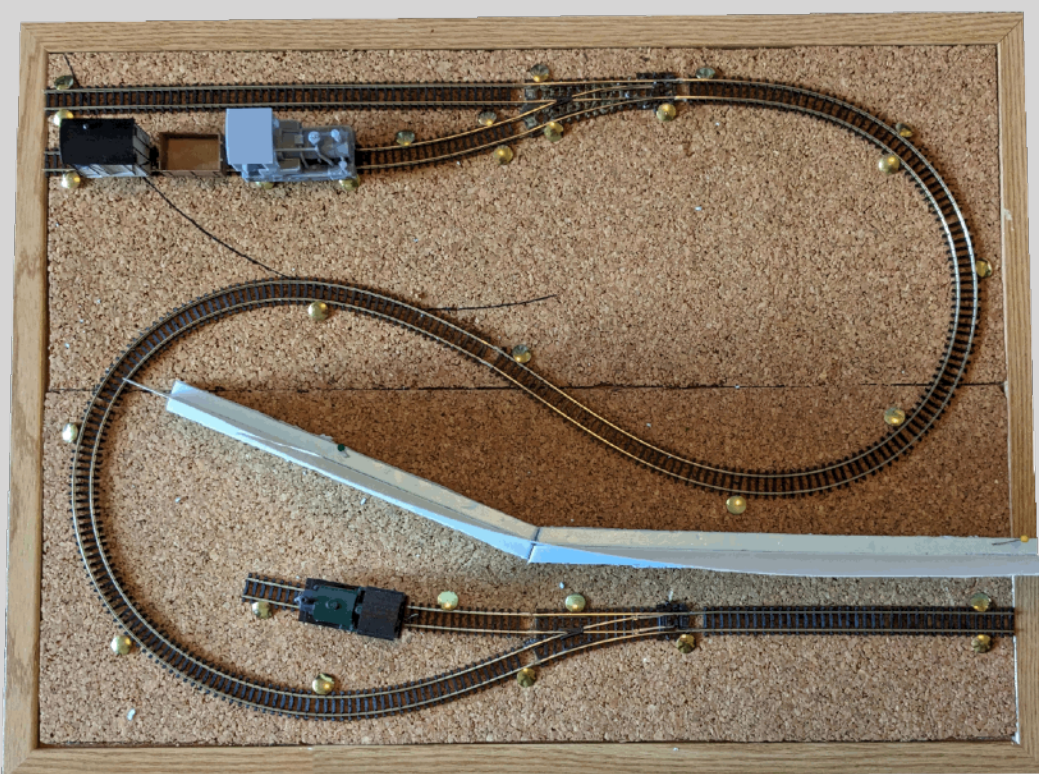
# Corke Hall Railway

*Brian Wilson.*

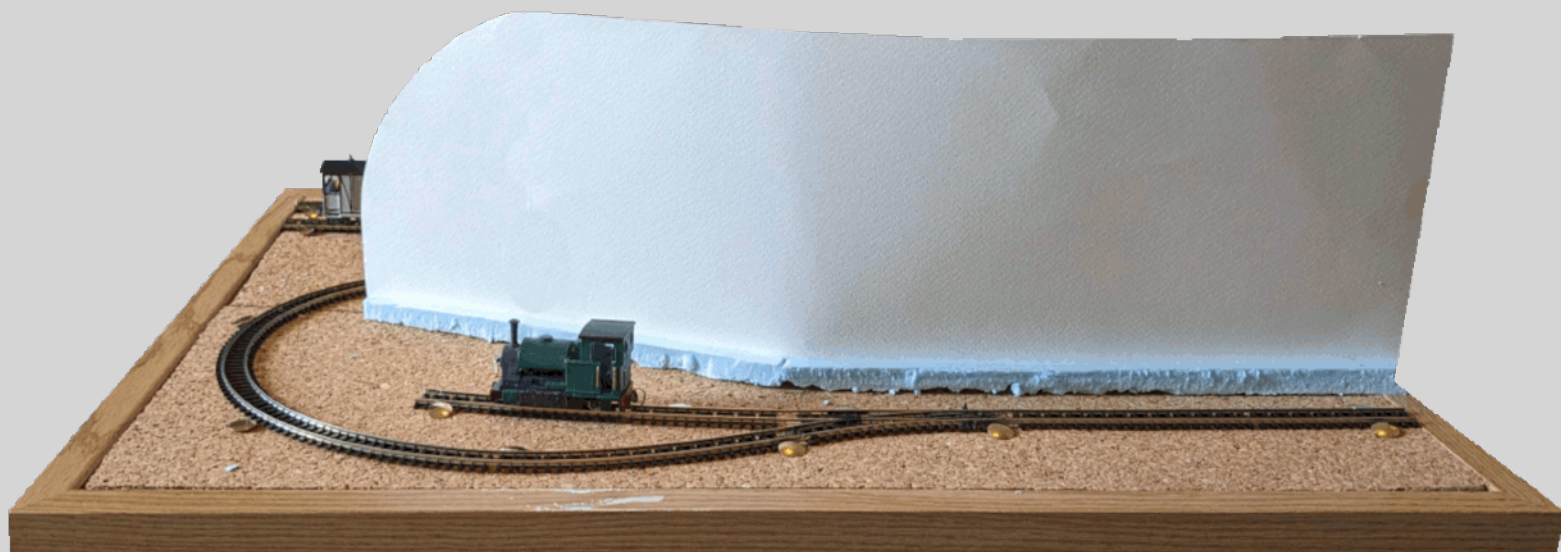
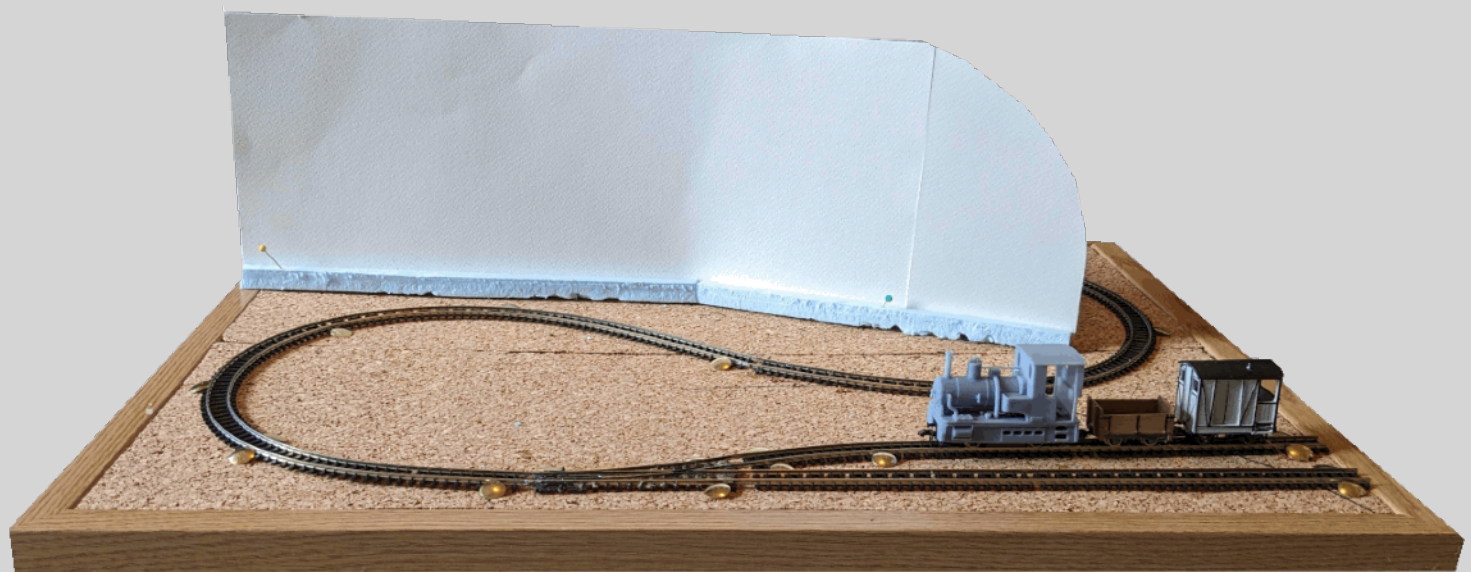
*009 scale cork notice board 24" x 18" 610mm x 450mm*

I have attached 3 early photos of my "new" micro. I am using scraps and bits and pieces from old layouts. Hopefully they will play nicely with each other. I always like a small elevation change in a

micro and in this case, I thought I would also split the layout into, effectively, 3 connected dioramas. Oh well! Some ideas work and some don't. We'll see.



*Some tantalizing views of Brian Wilson's new micro.*

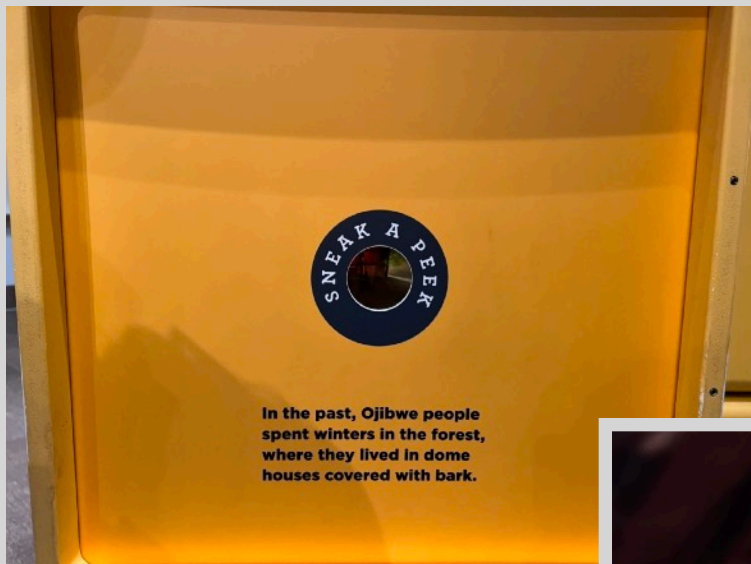




# Fiddle Yard

Ian Holmes.

The editor went to the museum and saw some familiar techniques in use



*The outer case and view inside of one of the diorama displays. I found the modelling of the fire and the lighting particularly effective in this one.*



The Minnesota History Centre is currently running a history of Charles Schulz exhibit to commemorate the centenary of his birth in St. Paul, MN. So the wife and I thought we'd take a trip over and have a look. It was quite informative. It gave a good insight into his early years.

After we had finished with that, we took a look around some of the other exhibits there, and I found a few things that might interest the railway modeller. There were some nice dioramas and a cool use of mirrors to take notice of. Each diorama was in a bright yellow cabinet with a viewing lens in front. The yellow box also contained a brief description of what you would see if you looked through the window.

Another diorama was set in a container that looked like an old luggage trunk. The different presentation set it apart from the others. All three were nice executions of the diorama craft.

In another section of the museum, was a series of displays about iron ore mining in Northern



*Another case presented this view*

Minnesota. (If you are ever in Minnesota, I recommend a trip up to the "Iron Range" to see for yourself this incredible part of American industrial history).





*Using the old trunk as the basis for this display was very effective, and the interior diorama was very nicely executed. The forced perspective inside helped create a very claustrophobic atmosphere. I could really feel that this is what it must have been like below decks.*

In a display devoted to underground mining, two loaded mine cars were on show. Except the way they were displayed with mirrors at either end, it looked like an endless line of cars! Many modellers have

used mirrors to make parts of their layouts seem larger than they actually are. So it was nice to see the technique being used in the real world, so to speak.





*The top photo shows one of the two display cars, the second photo, the seemingly endless string of cars. I'm trying to keep myself out of shot but I failed*



One last thing, a shameless plug. The editor will be showing his latest 16mm scale micro layout at Randolph Railroad Days. Details in the box below. This little train show has a surprising amount of layouts with some good micro content, and some good traders. I was very surprised at this show when I went last year. If you're not too far away. You might want to come along and say Hello. I'd love to chat with you.

Many of you will have been following the layout build on my 16mm footsteps blog. So this will be a chance to see the finished layout in person. Here's a little teaser photo of the layout...



*A scene on the editor's new 16mm sand pit micro layout*

# Randolph Railroad Days

22910 Davisson Street,  
Randolph, MN  
October 21st 9am to 3pm, &  
22nd 9am to 2pm.  
Admission \$7.