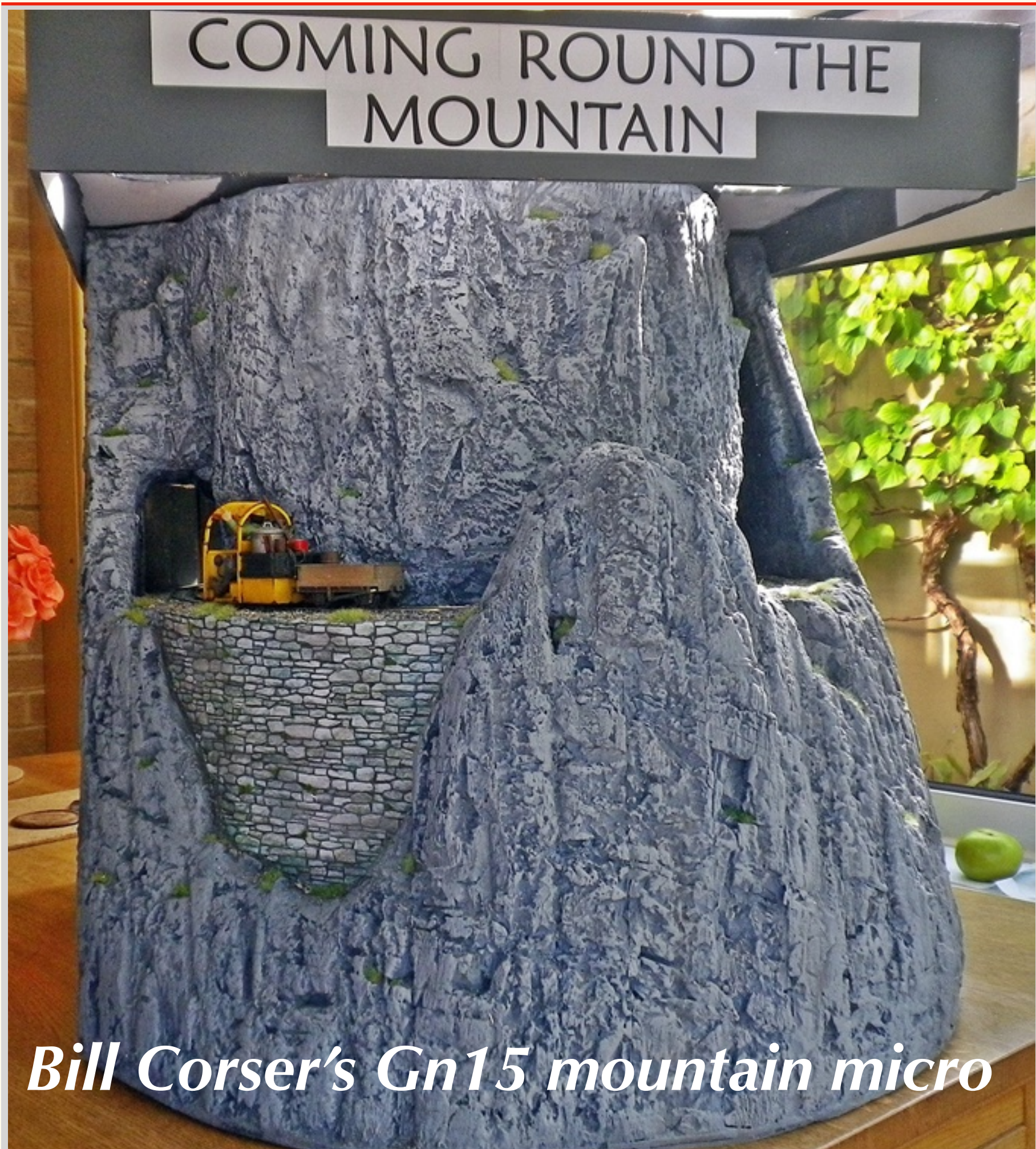


The Micro Model Railway

Dispatch

For the Micro Layout enthusiast

Issue 11. Winter 2023



Bill Corser's G_n15 mountain micro

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

Once again, we reach the end of another year, and the micro layout world seems as bright and vibrant as ever. Over the past year we've seen lots of different layouts in a whole range of scales. From the very large to the small. Just look at that baseboard for Bill Corser's layout on the front cover (featured on page 33). It's built from foam core board and it is spectacular! We micro layout builders can do anything. Who would have thought someone could recreate a railway on a mountainside scene in four square feet? How will you all amaze me next year? I often get emails that start "I wonder if you would be interested in my layout?"

The answer is of course, a resounding YES! I can't put this magazine together without your support and contributions. So please keep sending your work in. It's better to have too many layouts to feature than not enough. I can always save layouts for a future issue. This would come in most handy around autumn time when submittals become very thin on the ground.

So please, send your layouts in all year round. See you in the Spring.

Ian



If you like what you read here, then you can subscribe. Just email 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.

Contents

Verneuil-les-Vines.....	2
<i>A slice of France from Jonathan Cassidy.</i>	
The Zoo Railway.....	6
<i>Take a ride around Colin Kennington's zoo.</i>	
Cafe Fantastique.....	10
<i>Simon Dawson celebrates 60 years of Dr Who.</i>	
H0e Micro.....	12
<i>Tomas Gebert creates in just two square feet.</i>	
A Real Pizza Box Micro.....	16
<i>Al Barten found some real pizza boxes for his micro.</i>	
Walking on Glass.....	19
<i>Literary inspiration for Peter Duthie.</i>	
The Jack Nelson Diorama.....	23
<i>The editor saw a huge influence of his on vacation.</i>	
Kastenmetalle.....	26
<i>The other side of Paul Corkrum's Box Metals.</i>	
Coming Round the Mountain.....	28
<i>Bill Corser says Yes, you can fit a mountain into a Micro.</i>	
Sand Hill Aviation Fuel Depot.....	34
<i>Paul Boehlert describes the start of his new project.</i>	
The Workshop.....	36
<i>PK shares his work in progress Micro.</i>	
Morton Road.....	38
<i>Peter Blay's 16mm scale layout is in the spirit of a micro.</i>	
Exhibition Report.....	43
<i>Micro layouts seen at shows around the world.</i>	
Corke Hall Tramway.....	50
<i>More news from Brian Wilson.</i>	
The Christmas Dispatch.....	51
<i>The usual seasonal fun.</i>	
Fiddle Yard.....	63
<i>The editor has some layout schemes for next year to run through with you.</i>	

"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.

Verneuil-les-Vignes

Jonathan Cassidy

N Scale. Size: 20" x 32" 510mm x 820mm



The layout on show. The use of short locomotives and rolling stock means a lot can be fitted into this small space. There are three trains in this view.

I have had a strong interest in French Railways since spending most summer holidays of the 1990's in France. As a teenager during the 90's it was great to travel the rail network and wander around depots, often being positively welcomed. There were a number of short Bo-Bo electrics used for shunting from the 1930's still running (BB4200/BB4730 class) as well as more modern BB8100 used on freights.

Having bought models of these in both HO and N scale it was clear that they could cope with tight corners. Verneuil actually started off as an HO layout on a 4 by 2 board. A single loop had a central siding with tightened curves that the locos could manage. I made some progress with the layout but in the end decided it had got quite heavy and bulky and wasn't easy to carry around the house and in and out of the loft.

The idea never went away though, and so I thought about a similar idea but in N.

Using Kato track I worked out a track plan of a double circuit with a simple set of sidings for the inner track. I bought some of the non-standard R184 curves and tested it to see what it looked like. It was clear that short locos and wagons were fine. Full length coaches looked silly going around the corners so at that point I decided on a freight only line. A lightweight board was designed around the track measuring 51cm by 82cm. I used a 3mm piece of hard board with pine supports. I'm not a big shunting fan, so the idea was to have a visually appealing layout with the opportunity to sit and watch two trains go round and round. I felt there was no need to join the two circuits together so the outer loop is just an unconnected circle.



A couple of shots of the layout under construction. Expanded polystyrene sheets are the basis for the scenery



Using some polystyrene sheets, I built up a hillside. I had initially thought of having the tunnels more forward to disguise the curves but in the end decided that I wanted to see as much of the trains at the front as possible, despite the unrealistic curves and the trains obviously going back on themselves. I coated the scenic areas with grass sheets to start with, as I had no idea what I wanted to achieve at this point and it was very much a case of making it up as I went along.

With the layout being based on the south of France, I felt that having a few vines and sunflowers made sense, so bought a pack of each. The sunflowers were a lot of effort for something so small so I decided against any more! The Noch vines, however looked the part, and I was pleased with how they looked on the hillside.

By chance, I came across some REE tankers that were wine transportation ones, so I continued to buy more packs of vines and ended up filling the whole of the central section. Having bought the packs at different times, it was interesting to see the visual difference in them. A couple of tractors were bought. I scratch built a trailer and a small shed/barn to make more of a scene. An MKD signal box kit was cut down to

look like a mess room in the yard area. Ballast was added beside the tracks to try to increase realism of the Kato tracks. Generally I'm happy with the appearance of the ballast though perhaps I should have used a lighter shade of brown.

With the layout being freight only, I had thought about adding a disused station. But after finding some shorter coaches that looked OK on the outer circuit (Romilly coaches produced by Trains160), I decided to keep it as an open station and built a kit that I had stored away.

Naming layouts is something I don't find easy, and with the kit being called Verneuil and the vines being a prominent part of the layout, it ended up as Verneuil-les-Vignes. The layout is very simple with three electric points, a couple of signals lit as fixed ambers, plus recently I have added some level crossing lights.

A friend of mine, Stephen Leigh, had produced some excellent 1500v dc masts using his 3D printer and these are removable. Holes filled with Bluetack means that they can sit in place securely. I will not be adding wires to the posts as I think that is a step too far.



The vines on the hillside are a distinctive scenic feature.



The curves are very tight , but don't detract from the layout at all



Here you can see the cutaway in the hillside that allows access to the tracks to change the trains

Stock wise, I have ended up purchasing a decent quantity of the short SNCF electrics, many four wheel wagons as well as shorter bogie ones. There have been some lovely wagons produced by some small companies, for example Mabbar producing the short EF30 coal wagons and N160 producing some cereal wagons. For the yard, I bought a Y6400 shunter as a kit from HFR160. This required assembling the motor and painting of the resin body. It looks the part and runs smoothly around the layout. Lengths of trains are limited to the rule that you shouldn't be able to see the train from both ends of the tunnel! Era ranges from the mid 70's to the early 90's. Controller wise, a Gaugemaster model D does the job nicely.

Making a layout available for exhibitions is something I have always liked the idea of, and it was a lovely experience showing the layout off at the French Railways Society annual show in Lenham, Kent. Having such a lightweight portable layout made it easy to set up and pack away. I hope that I may be able to go to further shows in the future. I am based in Newbury and happy to travel a bit!



The simple trackplan

The Zoo Railway

Colin Kennington.

H0f Scale. Size: 15" x 12.5" 380mm x 320mm



Presto Magic!
Look how this coffee table hides Colin's micro layout. Ingenious.



One day, my wife asked if we could go to Clitheroe (a town in Lancashire, England -Ed) just for a change. While we were there she disappeared into a furniture shop for ages. I had no idea why as we didn't need any furniture. Anyway, I went in and found her looking at a coffee table. Very strange as we already had one. I spotted the lid lifted up to reveal a small space just enough for a micro layout. So the coffee table was bought on the understanding that I could have a layout under the lid.

But what would the layout be? I had seen the Busch Feldbahn models and bought a starter set. But I wanted to make something different, and eventually the idea of a zoo railway came to mind. The track plan is just a circle of track folded over itself to give a

longer run and separate areas for each animal species.

I ordered the kit of parts to make the baseboard from my local hardware shop. When I went to collect them a few days later the 'woodman' had actually made the baseboard for me, a bargain at £10. The raised track bed is card on blocks of balsa. Track is Busch Feldbahn setrack. Ballasting is a job I don't like and this was almost a challenge too far. Loose ballast and tiny trains don't mix well; just one grain of ballast is enough to cause a derailment. The scenery is mainly sculptamould, painted with cheap tester pots and covered with various shades of static grass.

A lot of research was needed to fill the penguin pool. It's made from one of the boxes the Preiser figures come in. The water is clear resin, but some resins get hot when the two parts are mixed and the heat would have melted the box and penguins. Other 'water effect' resins don't set rock hard. So if the layout was stood on its end, the 'water' would eventually run out. I settled on Deluxe Materials 'Solid Water' which stays cool while setting and dries rock solid. The first step was to fill the box about 1/3 full of resin and let it set. Penguins were then placed inside and more resin added, this was repeated until the pool was full.

A section of track is isolated so the train stops in the station. A big red button can be pressed by visitors which sets the train off on a trip round the line which takes 2 minutes and 20 seconds, not bad for a layout measuring just 38cm x 32 cm. In practice the trains

run better if you just leave them running round and round without stopping. At shows I find it necessary to change locos every couple of hours to clean wheels, pickups and the track.

When I got the layout ready for its first post covid exhibition it wouldn't work. After a lot of head scratching I discovered that many of the flimsy fishplates were no longer conducting electricity. I hadn't added droppers to each section of track and they couldn't be added now as the baseboard is effectively a wooded tray with a flat base. All I could do was solder tiny jumper wires from one section of rail to the next, a really challenging task given that all the scenery was in place. Unfortunately, I managed to destroy one section of track by melting the sleepers at one end. Replacing that was a horrendous task and there is a bit of a dip at one point.



How the plan transforms from idea to finished layout



Rolling stock all comes from the Busch Feldbahn range. The locos all come with surprisingly powerful magnets built into the chassis which work with metal strips in the track to provide good haulage capabilities. Indeed you can run a loco hanging off the track upside down. Two of the locos are standard Busch ones, while the third has a body from Narrow Planet which comes with a 3D printed skeleton to which metal overlays are glued. I did have to reduce the cab height as my bridges have very little clearance, necessitated to fit the layout in the coffee table. I also made a body to fit over a Rokuhan Z gauge 'shorty' Bo-Bo chassis, but I made it too tight a

fit and pulling it off destroyed the chassis. More 3D printed bodies for Busch and Rokuhan chassis would be useful. Two coaches are modified Busch items with a little added weight, a third one is a scratch built body on a bogie wagon chassis, but it isn't a good runner as it doesn't like the gradient changes. I've taken The Zoo to a few exhibitions, including one where I got there by bus. Being battery powered it's just a case of removing the lid, putting a train on the track and switching it on. This takes less than a minute. I'm always the first exhibitor out of the door at closing time.





All these scenes show what a great idea Colin had with his Zoo Railway. Railways (and monorails) have been popular features to get people around large sites, like zoos all around the world.



Cafe Fantastique

Simon Dawson.

009 Scale. Size:20" 500mm diameter

This one of my small working dioramas which make use of forced perspective.

This one has a Doctor Who theme (it's the 60th anniversary of the show in November 2023) and is 1/32 at front and 1/55 at back. It is built using parts of some old IKEA APA toy boxes so has a footprint of approximately 75cm by 50cm.

As much as possible has been packed into this. A lower basement level at front has a 9mm gauge railway primarily for refuse trains to run but also the occasional Dalek run past as well as a metal dog(K9) being taken for a walk!

At the back there is a tramway with a working tram, but an armoured train can also run.

One advantage of forced perspective is that various scales can be used, so wargaming figures are used at back, again mostly Dr Who themed, and various military/fantasy kit figures at front. Many of these figures are from Ukrainian companies, including some refugee children, adding another angle to this model. There is even a UFO in the foreground.

This module is easily transported(by bus or train) and can fit any odd corner at exhibitions. Other working features can be added, such as a themed working roadway, which would still fit on a small table(4ft by 3ft).

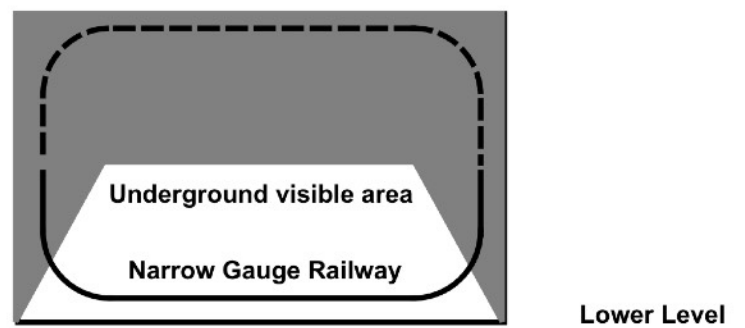
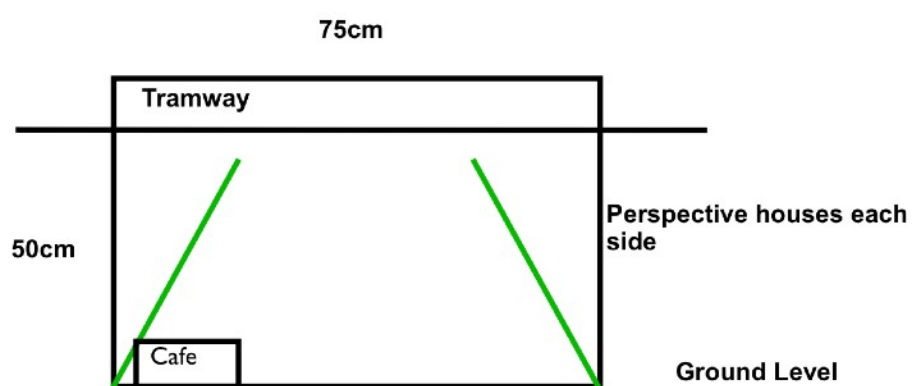


There's a Dalek in the background, and Jon Pertwee's Bessie (that dates me, I'm sure)



This image gives you an idea of how effective the forced perspective is

Café Fantastique



H0e Micro Layout

Thomas Gebert.

Scale: H0e 3.5mm:ft 9mm gauge Size 2' x 6" 600mm x 300mm



Overall view of this simple, tuning fork style layout

Narrow gauge (H0e), began to haunt my head many years ago, and it really started in May 2021, when I got a bargain on Ebay. A Roco starter set with a cute little locomotive and two pairs of turntable trucks found their way to me.

The idea for this layout was to show an operating point of a fictional small narrow-gauge railway, on which mainly different goods are transported including wood from the forest.

So the planning began and shortly afterwards construction started.

The layout is limited to the dimensions 60cm x 15cm. This is roughly 2ft x 0.5ft - about a square foot. In addition, there is a fiddle stick attached to each side.

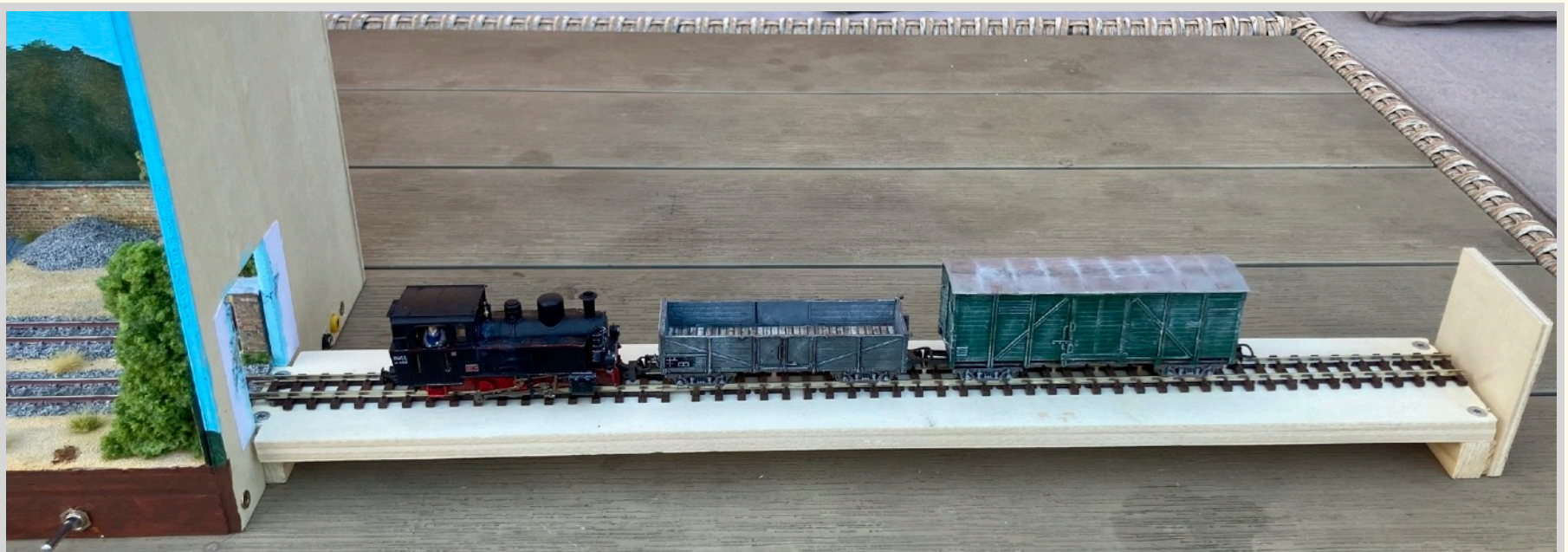
For the buildings, I used free Scalescenes kits, that I modified on my computer. The background is self-painted.

One locomotive and two pairs of turntable trucks. All very nice, but a bit little, isn't it? But what, if there is no stock like in "normal" H0, and/or if you don't have money to waste?

So you have to build or rebuild stock yourself.

First, an old two-axle vehicle (the grey one) was made narrower and converted to a four-axle vehicle.

Encouraged by the result, I ventured a covered wagon (the green one), which I converted in the same way. A flat side car (the light brown one) followed later, but this one was also shortened in length.



A simple fiddlestick provides the offstage train storage The two wagons in the train are converted by Thomas

In the meantime, I dared to do more self-construction and created a flat car. Only the bogies are made of turntable trucks from Roco. The brakeman's platform is also self-made. And another wagon was self-built (the red one): A workshop and material wagon was created from unnecessary parts of a small firehouse, more precisely the hose tower. Only the N gauge bogies are not self-made.

As last I've ventured into another self-build. From a small gauge N steam locomotive I made a gauge H0e box steam locomotive. All vehicles are weathered.



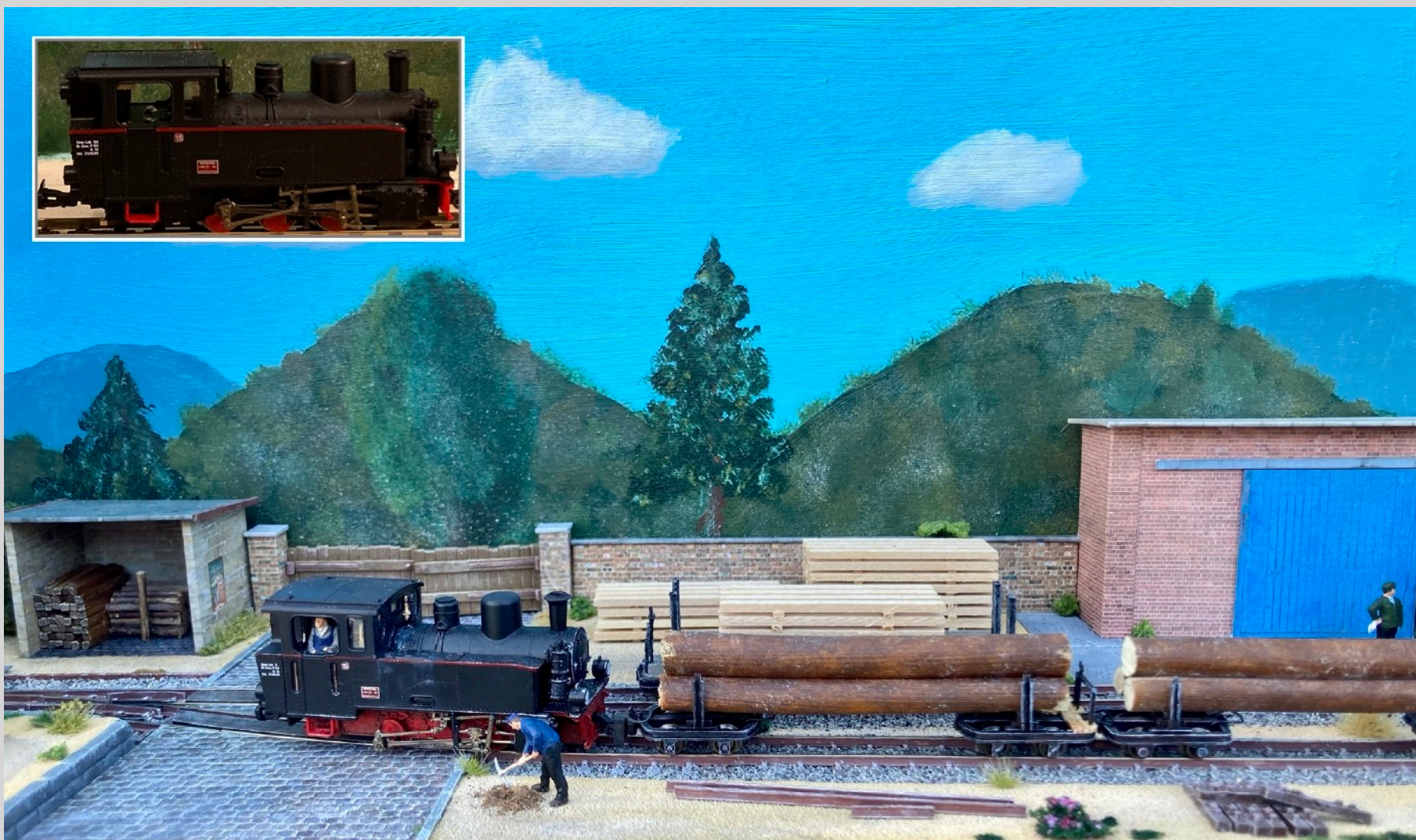
The right hand end of the layout. The exit to the fiddle yard is obstructed by a tree



The layout may only be two feet (600mm) in length but trains look very long in it.



A scratch built locomotive that looks a lot like Toby the Tram Engine



The timber train leaves the yard



The turnout at the yard entrance. The turnout operating lever actually works. You can see it change direction as the different roads are set.



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

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.

A Real Pizza Box Layout

Al Barten

H0e/OO9 Scale. Size: 10" x 10" 250mm x 250mm



The simple architecture of a modern transit station is well reproduced by the use of the Pizza box

One of the various micro layout categories is the pizza layout. Generally that means a small circular layout with lots of scenic detail.

Just for fun I decided to build a layout in a real pizza box. My initial plan was for a 12"x12" box, but as luck would have it I mistakenly purchased a package of 50 10"x10" boxes. I re-ordered 12"x12", but went ahead with the 10"x10" while waiting for the right ones to arrive. It worked!

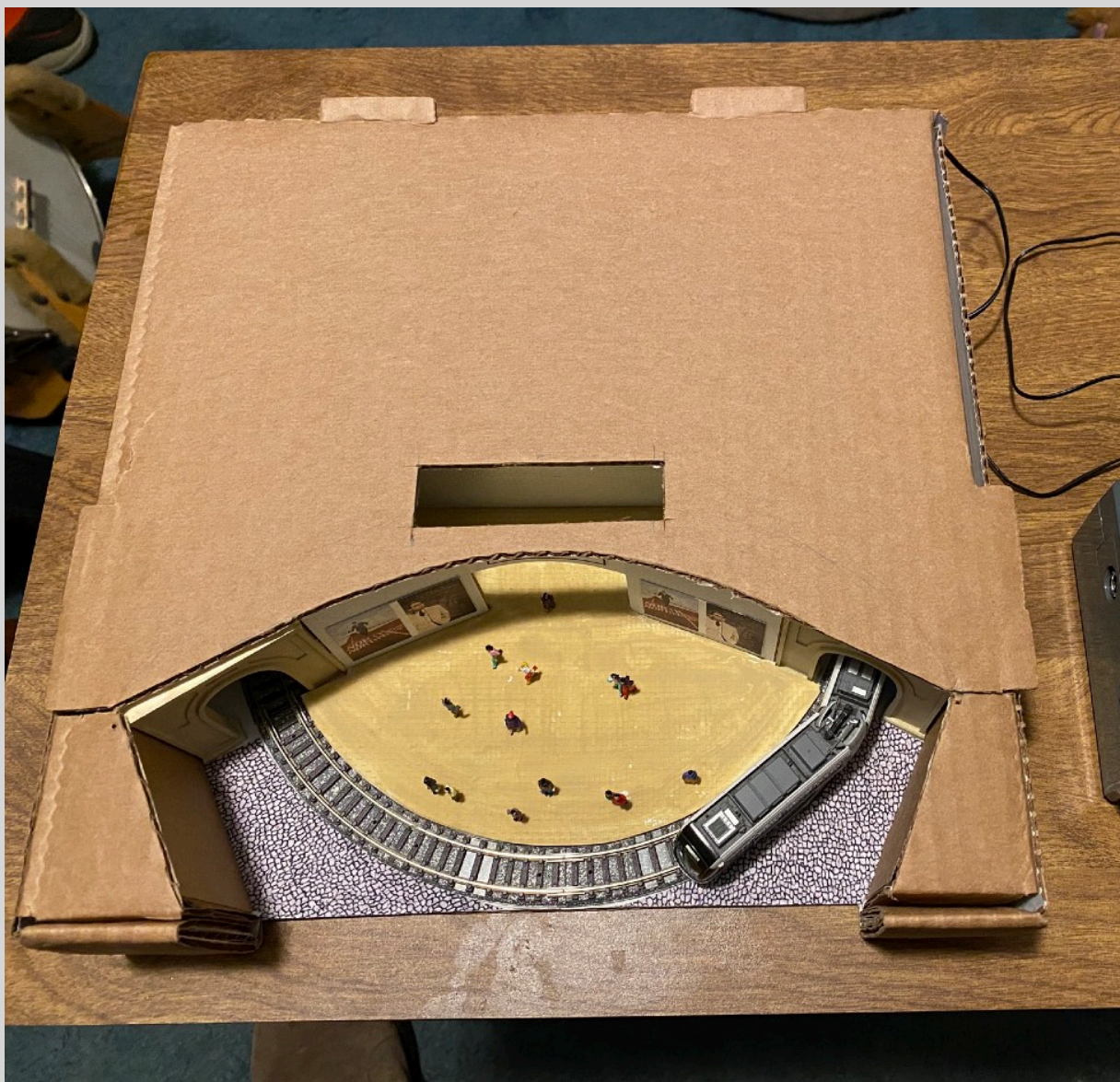
Why purchase 50, you may ask? Simple. You can't buy a single pizza box unless it's from a local pizzeria where you are friendly with the owner. I did get the 12"x12"s in a pack of ten, though, but at a higher price.

So what do I do with all those extra boxes? The 12"x12"s make good file storage; one for tax returns, one for my will and related documents, another for tax related papers, etc. I found the 10"x10" boxes are great for storing all the various things connected with our hobby – a box for scale people, another for

electronics, another for kits, etc. The boxes I bought are made of heavy corrugated cardboard, so they make good, inexpensive storage boxes.

The layout is a simple circle made of Tomix N Tram track, only a third of which is visible. The scene is a cutaway view of a hypothetical subway station for trolleys. Most, if not all N gauge trolleys can manage the 103mm radius curves. The biggest headache is making sure you have proper clearances at tunnel portals.





I like to use the Rokuhan Z gauge controller for my N gauge trolleys. It's small, has enough power, and can run on eight AAA batteries. It also has a nice plug-in connector. Battery power means the layout can easily sit on a shelf and still operate. Another feature of the Rokuhan controller is its ability to set a minimum voltage point on the throttle to enable stopping the trolley, but not entirely cutting off the power. This enables constant lighting for the

trolley. I have only one trolley that has interior lighting and that's the Kato Portram. My favorite model of all time, in all scales. The movie posters were in a Facebook ad. I just downloaded them and reduced them to fit the available wall space. The scale people came in a pack of 100 on eBay, already painted.



Flipping the box lid open reveals how simple everything is behind the scenes.



Walking on Glass

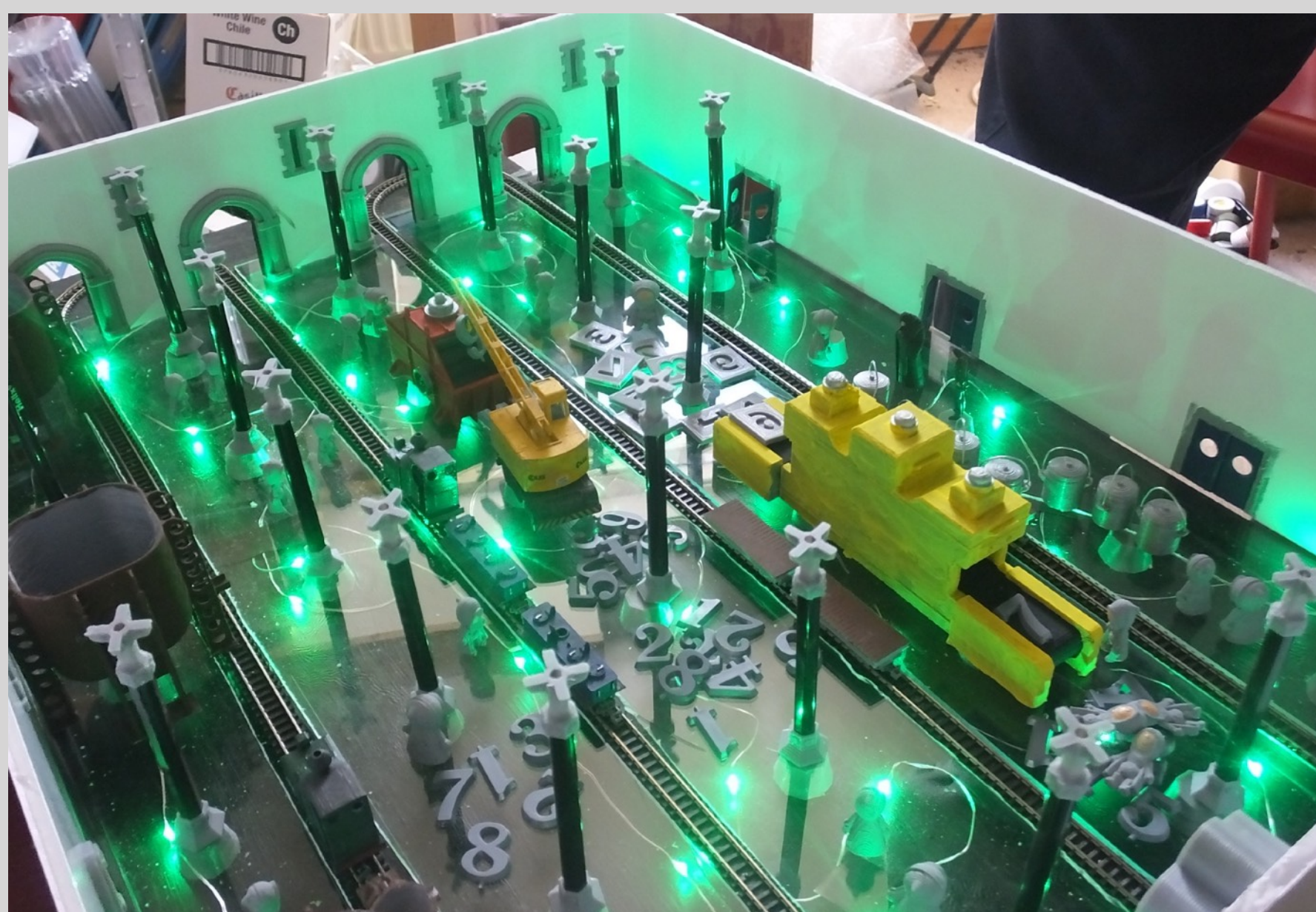
Peter Duthie

Fantasy using Z gauge track

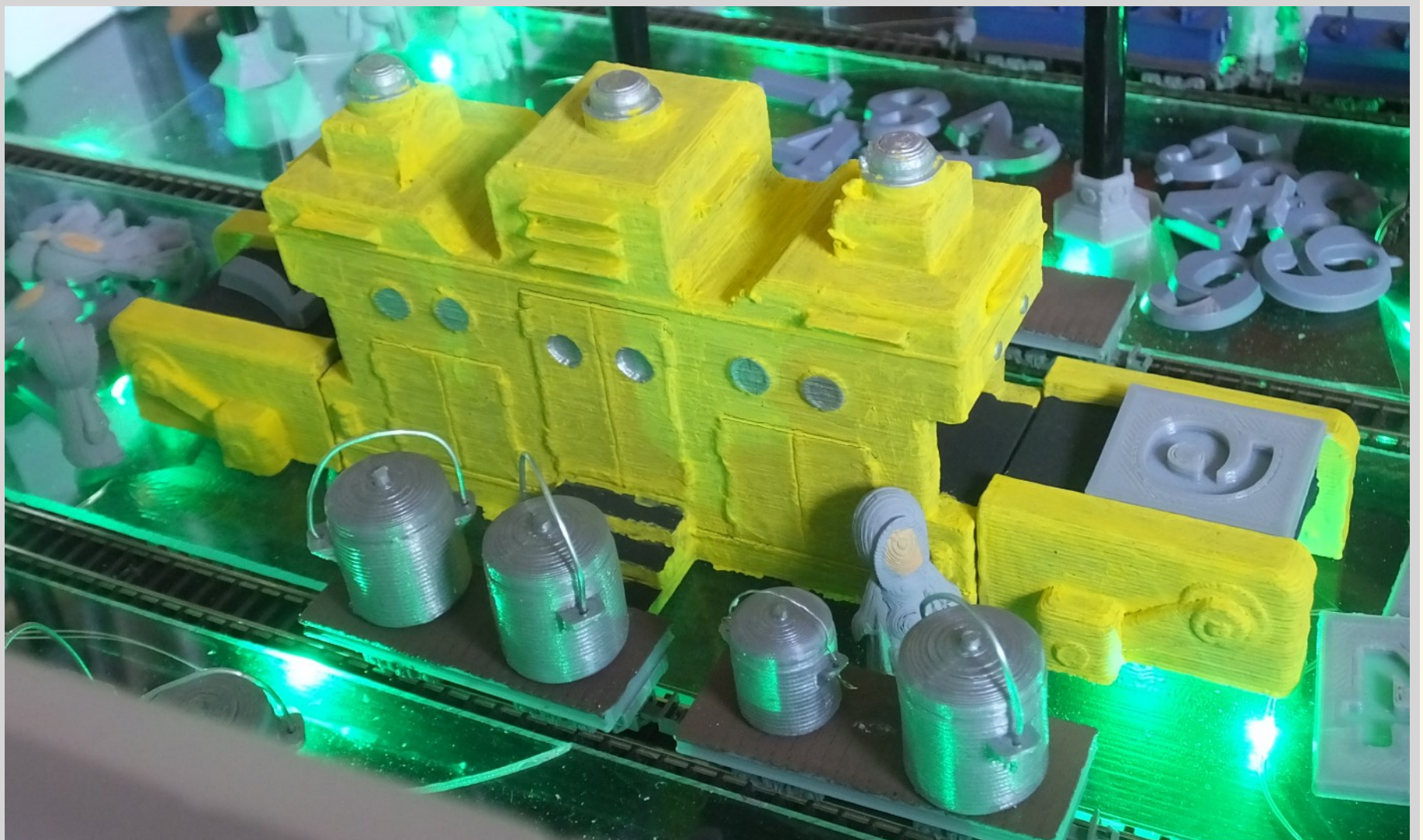
Fantasy layouts based on books such as Discworld or Lord of the Rings seem to be popular, especially at exhibitions. Comics and graphic novels like Tintin and Lucky Luke have also provided themes for model railways. I'm sure that the reader can think of more. The idea has also been commercialised as 'steampunk' by Hornby, perhaps marking a crossover with the war gaming community, from whom lessons can sometimes be learned for use in micro construction. Some of these works directly mention or even illustrate railways, with Roland Emmett being an enduring favourite. Such worlds offer scope for micro layouts with 'something different', perhaps as relief from more serious modelling.

I have based such a fantasy micro rather obscurely on the 1985 novel *Walking on Glass* by the late Iain Banks, a favourite Scottish author of mine. In one of the three ultimately linked strands, two war criminals from opposing sides in a galactic war are

imprisoned in the Castle of Bequest / Castle Doors and forced to play impossible games until they can solve the riddle "*What happens when an unstoppable force meets an immovable object?*" In the castle, rooms are lit by luminous fish swimming under glass floors – hence one reason for the title of the book, though it took me a while to make the connection. The narrow gauge steam railway is first introduced in a dramatic kitchen scene worthy of Gormenghast (a fine fantasy sadly devoid of railways). My micro layout depicts the 'Number Cruncher' cavern where letters are 'processed', apparently pointlessly, rather like this layout. A later sequence describes how the railway reaches outside the castle into the surrounding countryside and perhaps indeed across the surface of the whole planet. Taking supplies to and returning waste from myriad prisoners locked into alternative realities. And what else is a model railway other than an alternative reality?



Here you can see the railway line passing from side to side, through the scene



The model was just on the micro layout four square feet limit, built on a sheet of chipboard recovered from a skip (dumpster). The track arrangement was serpentine, with the line making four passes through the cavern. Track was 6.5mm gauge Peco z gauge flexitrack, with Rokuhan 180 degree 55mm radius curves allowing the track to fit into a small width. Z gauge points are expensive and do not always work well, so to further save space this layout instead used a multitrack traverser fiddle yard running on drawer runners to swap trains. The 'glass floor' was perspex, with a green LED lighting string underneath to represent those luminous fish.

Loco mechanisms were from the Rokuhan 'shorty' range, with matching bogie chassis for the rolling stock, which run well through those tight 55mm radius curves. The Rokuhan 'shorty' range was available cheaply from Japan at the time, and I have used it as the basis of several narrow gauge projects running on 6.5mm track. A battery powered controller was used to keep the maximum drive voltage to 6V to avoid overloading the small motors, which do not draw much current.

Other than the numbers, moulds and the Coles crane (which seemed nicely incongruous), parts were mostly 3D printed using my PLA filament printer – with layer lines rather too evident at times. These included :

- Loco bodies, representing vertical boiler geared machines to account for the bogie mechs

- Numbers (and corresponding moulds) from 0 to 9 these were moulded plastic from ebay
- The number cruncher machine, with a feed hopper and an exit chute
- Hopper wagons for the ground up letters – these were commercial z gauge models
- Elevated mixing and storage vats for the ground up numbers to produce slurry
- Ladle wagons for the slurry feeding the moulding machine, based loosely on steelworks slag wagons
- The moulding machine with conveyor belts to produce new numbers to complete the pointless cycle
- Flat wagons carrying numbers and also food tureens from the kitchens en route to the wider countryside
- 'Honey' wagons for the corresponding human waste coming back into the castle
- Figures to represent Quiss and the Senechal and the faceless 'minions'. These were adapted from designs on Thingiverse
- Floor and roof brackets to match columnar supports from cut down polygonal pencil shafts
- Arches, windows and a balcony in the foamboard walls
- The DeePee doors with round windows – it should not be difficult to guess where that reference came from.



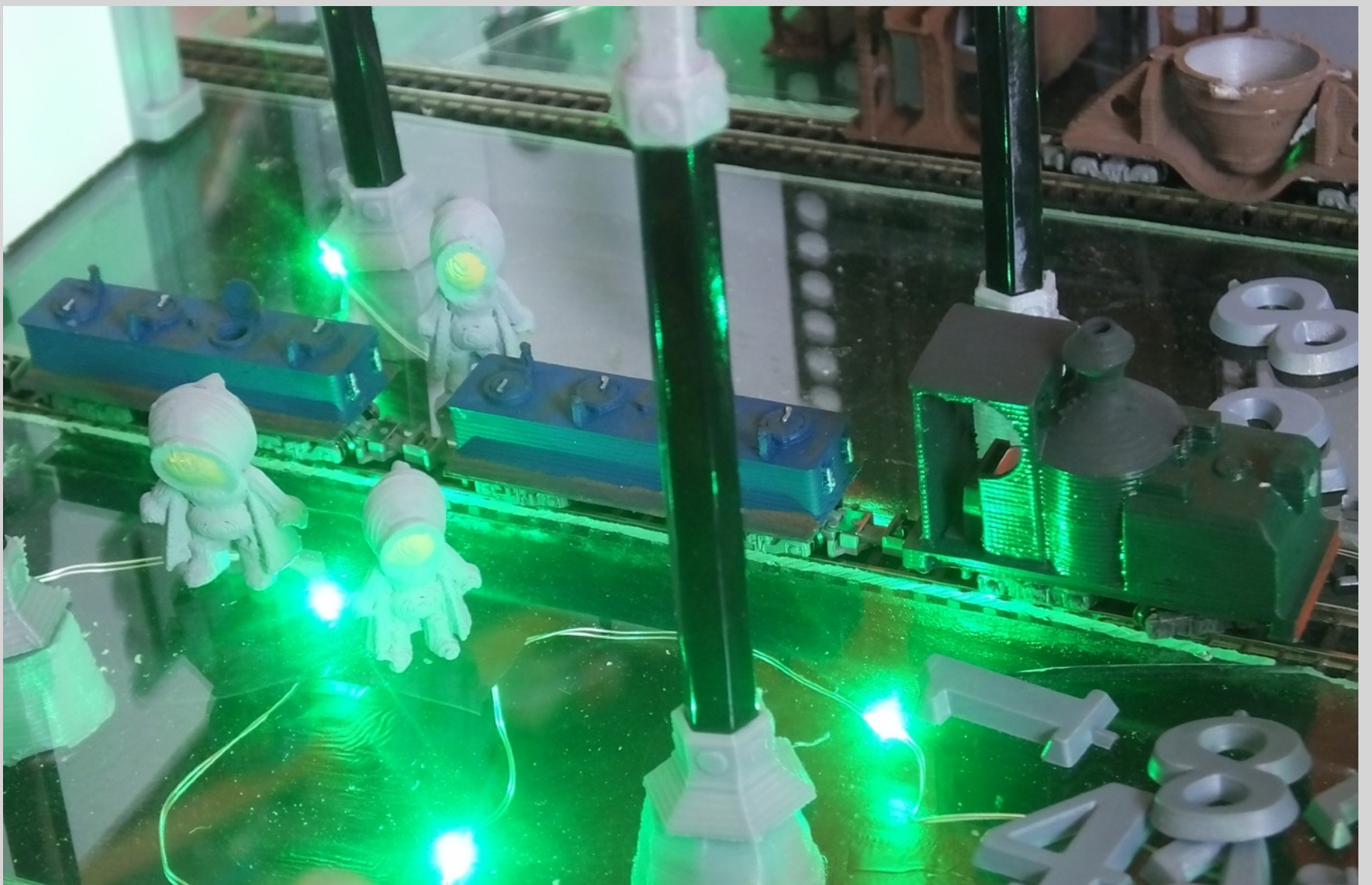
The crane feeds the number cruncher

Hopefully the photographs should help illustrate the whole pointless process and the part played by the narrow gauge railway. If it is not clear then perhaps try reading the book.

Altogether, some weeks of harmless fun were spent designing and printing the models and assembling the layout.

However, this article has been written in the past tense as Walking on Glass met a sad, but perhaps appropriate end, when a heavy bird box (an unstoppable force) fell onto the layout (the immovable object) from a height and shattered the perspex floor and many of the prints. And given that one of the characters in the book is a talking crow, then perhaps there is a significance that it was a bird box ...





The green light creates an eerie glow

The Jack Nelson Dioramas

On a recent trip back to the UK, the editor spent some time studying these historic models

It's not putting too fine a point on it to say that these models are the stuff of legend in the UK.

In the late 1960's and early 70's Jack's work was regularly featured in model railway magazines, particularly *Railway Modeller*. These were "slice of life" dioramas of the London and North Western Railway.

Scratch built and highly detailed, these models opened my eyes to what was possible in the world of model railways.

Of particular interest was the use of forced perspective to create extra depth in these small cabinet models. He used whatever scale was

appropriate to the scene being recreated. Some of the railway platform scenes used O scale principally. Others of more grand scenic vistas started in what might be TT scale and shrinking to smaller than Z. I have been fascinated with these models for the longest time, so when we stayed in Betws-y-Coed on our North Wales vacation. We had to make a stop at the Conwy Valley Railway Museum to see them. Some of the models are approaching 60 years of age and are looking a bit worn at the edges, and I believe that some restoration work is planned. But it was a joy to see these models that I haven't seen in thirty plus years.



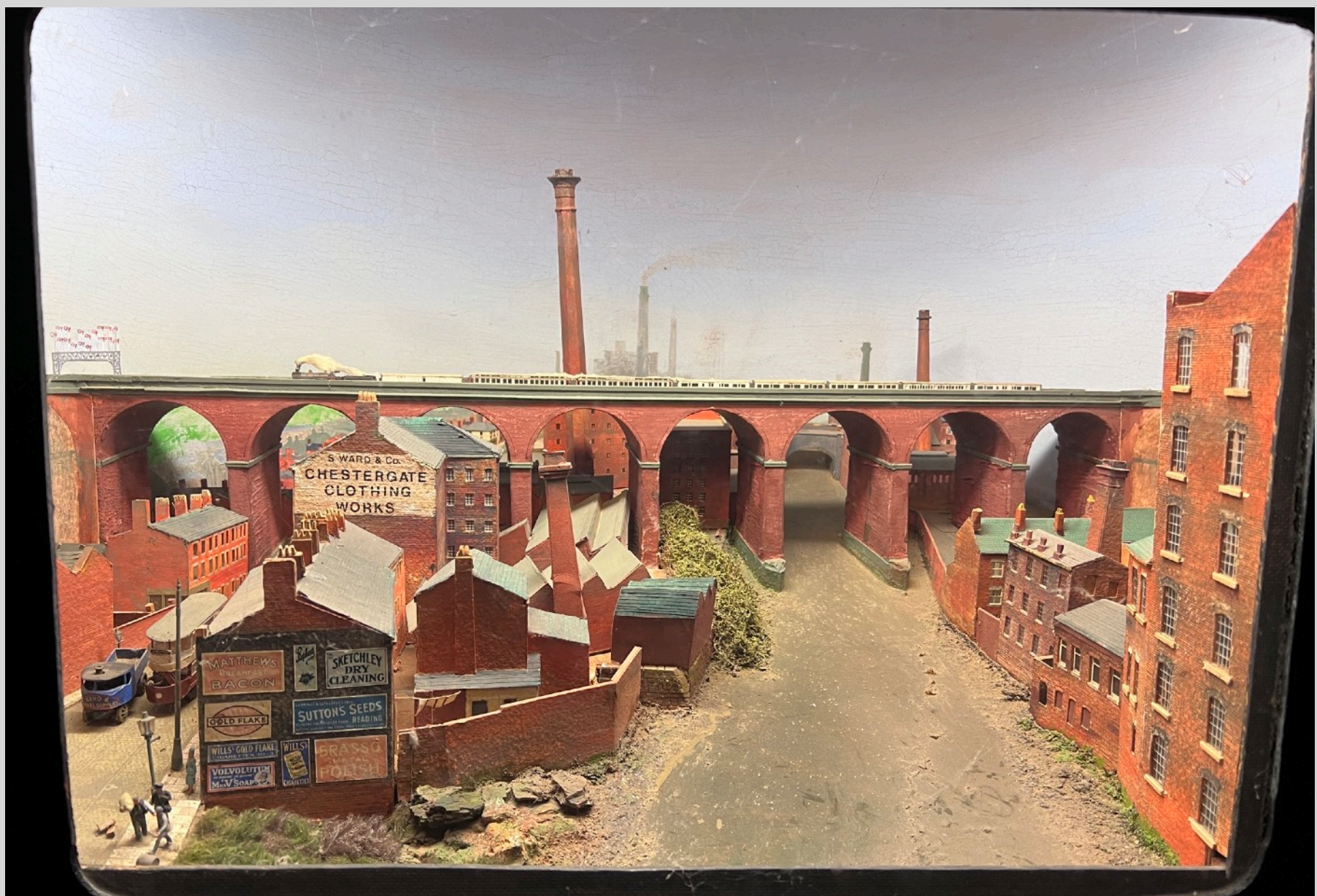
This scene inspires me the most. It is of Low Gill viaduct on the edge of the Lake District in northern England. The viaduct is now gone .

I'm sure that it would be possible to use forced perspective techniques like these on a micro layout.

The train on the viaduct could be T scale and the cottage 3mm scale or maybe even N scale.

All the cabinets are micro layout sized, hopefully you will find the models as inspiring as I do. Perhaps we'll see some forced perspective micros in these pages soon.





Viaducts always featured strongly in Jack's work. This is another stunner. It's amazing how the forced perspective makes the model look so deep, yet the model is less than a foot from front to back.



The forced perspective in the Broad Street Goods depot is incredible. See the cruel close up to the right. The case the model is in is barely a foot (305mm) deep





The approach to Liverpool Lime Street Station



Water Street railway bridge

Kastenmetalle (Box Metals)

Paul Corkrum

H0 Scale 3.5mm:ft. Boxfile



The change of stock creates a whole new feel for this box file micro

Back in the summer of 2022, Paul Corkrum shared with us some pictures of Box Metals, Colin Peake's original classic boxfile layout, that had come into his possession.

Paul also runs this layout in a German guise, and he recently sent me some more pictures of this classic micro running with German stock. As there isn't much scenery on the layout, and what there is is fairly nondescript and anonymous, then the change of location works perfectly.

At shows, Paul alternates running sessions with BR Blue and German stock.

This might be an idea for you too, if you have a collection of trains that you enjoy from all over the world.



Little shunting locos are perfect for tiny layouts like these.



It's a busy little yard at Kastenmetalle



A good close up of the fiddlestick/cassette train storage arrangement

Coming round the Mountain

Bill Corser

1:24 Scale, 2' x 2' x 2' cube: 610mm x 610mm x 610mm



A train running alongside a rocky ledge in less than four square feet. How did Bill achieve this? Read on.

I've seen some of those huge layouts in the USA, down in the modellers basements, and with scenery from floor to ceiling. Last year, I wondered if I could do something similar but on a much

smaller scale, and follow up on some mountain scenery I'd made 10 years ago. I also thought I would try making the baseboard from foam board, just to see if I could.



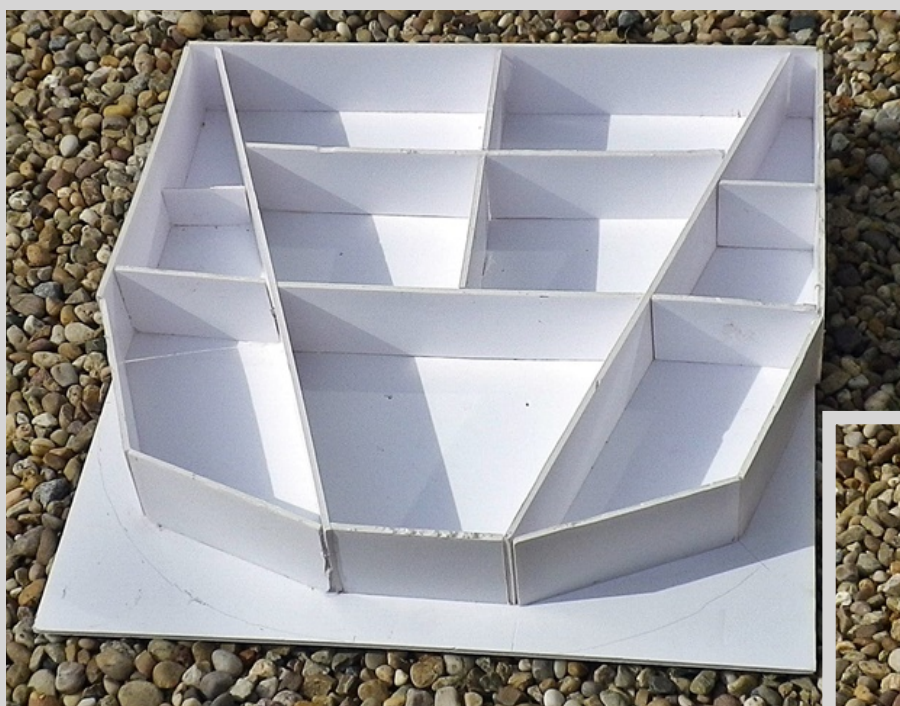
The components: A sheet of 5mm hardboard found in the back of the garage, an unused piece of extruded polystyrene insulation, and a pack of 10 A0 sheets of foam board, add a few odd off-cuts of wood.



A hardboard base and a couple of side pieces of laminated foam board

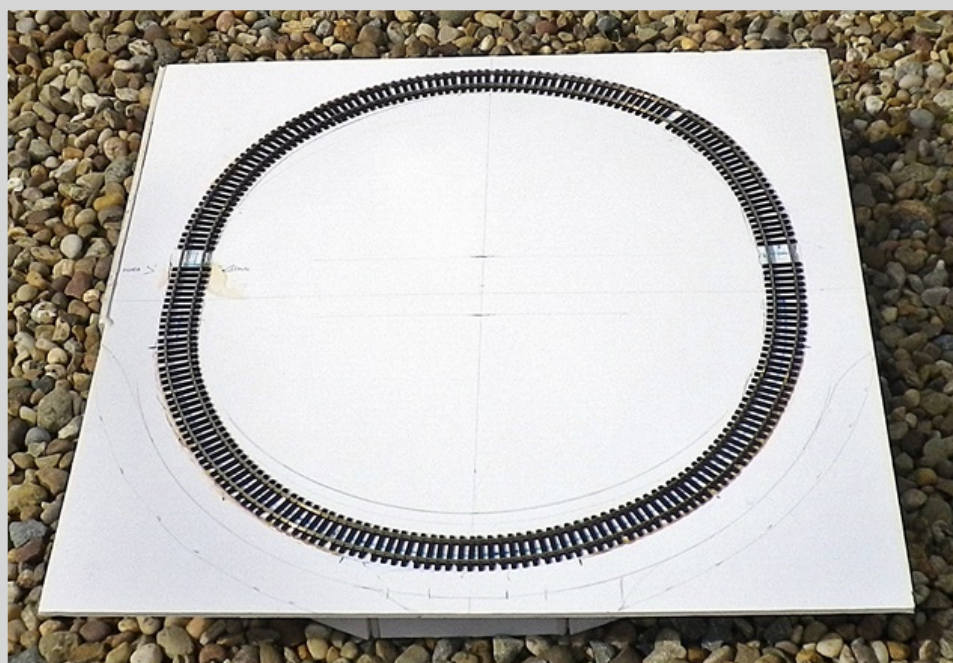


Followed by some concentrated sticking, cutting, and cursing produced a box into which the track base will fit .The base is 2' x 2', and the height is also 2'.



Talking of the track base. More cutting and sticking of foam board produced this. The underside view shows all the bracing and support.

A simple circle of track was stuck to the top surface of the 2' x 2' track base, which was then stuck into the box. The front corners were cut round to match the base.





Things are really starting to take shape. Once the layout had reached this stage, Bill took a break to join in the celebrations for the late Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee.



Out in the garden Bill could paint the huge rock faces, and what a great job he did.



The rocky outcrops help to form a scenic break between the main layout and the fiddle yard. The fiddle yard is partially "scenicked" to make it look like part of the layout proper if anyone peeks around the corner.

The insulation foam sheet was cut into strips about 2" wide which were glued together on foam board formers that joined the track base to the hardboard base. The glue used was "Sticks Like". An adhesive from the people at Evo Stik, as it will dry without air. The foam insulation is closed-cell, so glues like PVA don't dry. *(This is good to know - Ed. Who hasn't had problems with glues not setting and sticking. Sometimes finding the right adhesive is difficult.)* Then the foam was attacked with knives, cutting roughly vertically and across, then the corner of a metal scraper was dragged down and across several times, working over the whole surface to give it what I hoped would be the appearance of rock. The foam breaks off in irregular chunks and 'crumbs' – this job is best done outside in a strong wind – the old lady who lives at the other end of our village is still trying to find out where all the yellow bits that ended up on her washing came from. Then the joins and gaps were filled with decorator's caulk. Finally, several layers of acrylic texture paste coloured with acrylic paint were painted on as thick undercoats, followed

by washes to bring out the texture, and dry-brushings to highlight edges and high spots.

The white bit is going to be a supporting wall where the mountainside needed building out for the trackbed. That will have a stone paper covering in due course.

Next work was to complete the upper slopes of the rock face in the same way...

So, the painting sequence was:

1. A thick coat of acrylic texture paste mixed with white acrylic paint and a little Payne's Grey, allowed to dry.
2. A not-too watery wash of Payne's Grey, wiped off the high points and increased in the crevices, allowed to dry over several days.
3. A not-too-thick mix of acrylic texture paste and white acrylic paint, Payne's Grey and a little Burnt Sienna, brushed over the high points, using a wide, short-bristle brush
4. Allow to dry, step back, and admire.



After the large scale work I could paint the rails and ballast the track, and see if things ran.

These pictures show my 1:24 scale model of the little critter at the Solva waterworks in Wales, said to be a conversion of an electric milk float!

With success on the running, the final details, such as the retaining wall at the left side, and the odd piece of vegetation, could be finished.



This stone wall for the embankment is a downloadable texture from the internet. It looks great!



Although the layout was designed with 1:24 scale models in mind, it works just as well with 7mmNG models, like this model of the Andrew Barclay fireless loco that worked at the John Lysaght steelworks.

Sand Hill Aviation Fuel Depot

Paul Boehlert.

HO scale 46" x 7 7/8" 1658mm x 197mm



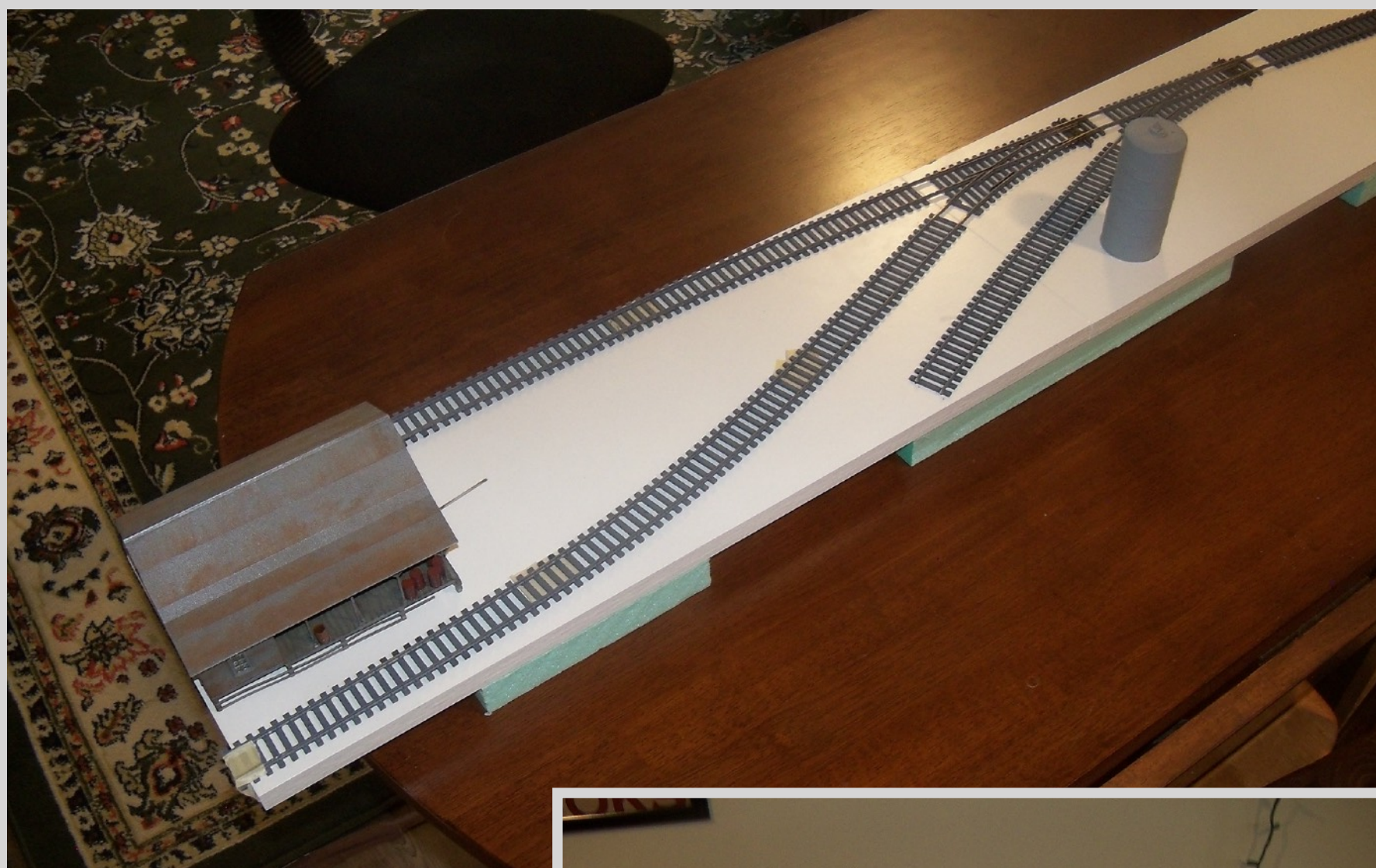
Early stages in the design laying out the track and structures. The “Inglenook” track plan is clear.

The US Army is a huge organization with enormous logistical needs. My work-in-progress micro depicts a small fuel supply depot somewhere on the sprawling grounds of Fort Benning, in central Georgia. Sand Hill Army Aviation Fuel Depot is 46" by 7 7/8". It's being built on two IKEA Bauhalt shelves, and uses Peco Setrack turnouts and Atlas flex track. Power and control will be supplied by a Bachmann Easy-DCC throttle. The sole locomotive will be a Walthers Plymouth ML-8 decorated for the US Army Transportation Corps, and Sand Hill is sized for 40-foot and 50-foot American-outline freight cars. At first glance it looks like a traditional 3-2-2 Inglenook for US-prototype cars, and it can certainly

be operated that way. But I plan to work it in reverse, so to speak.

Operating sessions will begin with two or three arriving cars on the interchange track behind the depot, which must then be spotted at one of three locations: the depot's loading dock, the tank track at front, or the holding spot halfway up the depot spur. If there's one or (shudder!) two cars for pickup, some thinking will be needed to successfully switch the depot, since the lead track/headshunt only holds the locomotive and one car.

As the photos show, work has just begun on Sand Hill. I'll provide the Dispatch with updates as work progresses.



*IKEA “BAUHALT” shelves are used as the base of the layout.
You can read more about IKEA products for model railways on page 25 of the autumn 2023 issue of **The Dispatch**.*

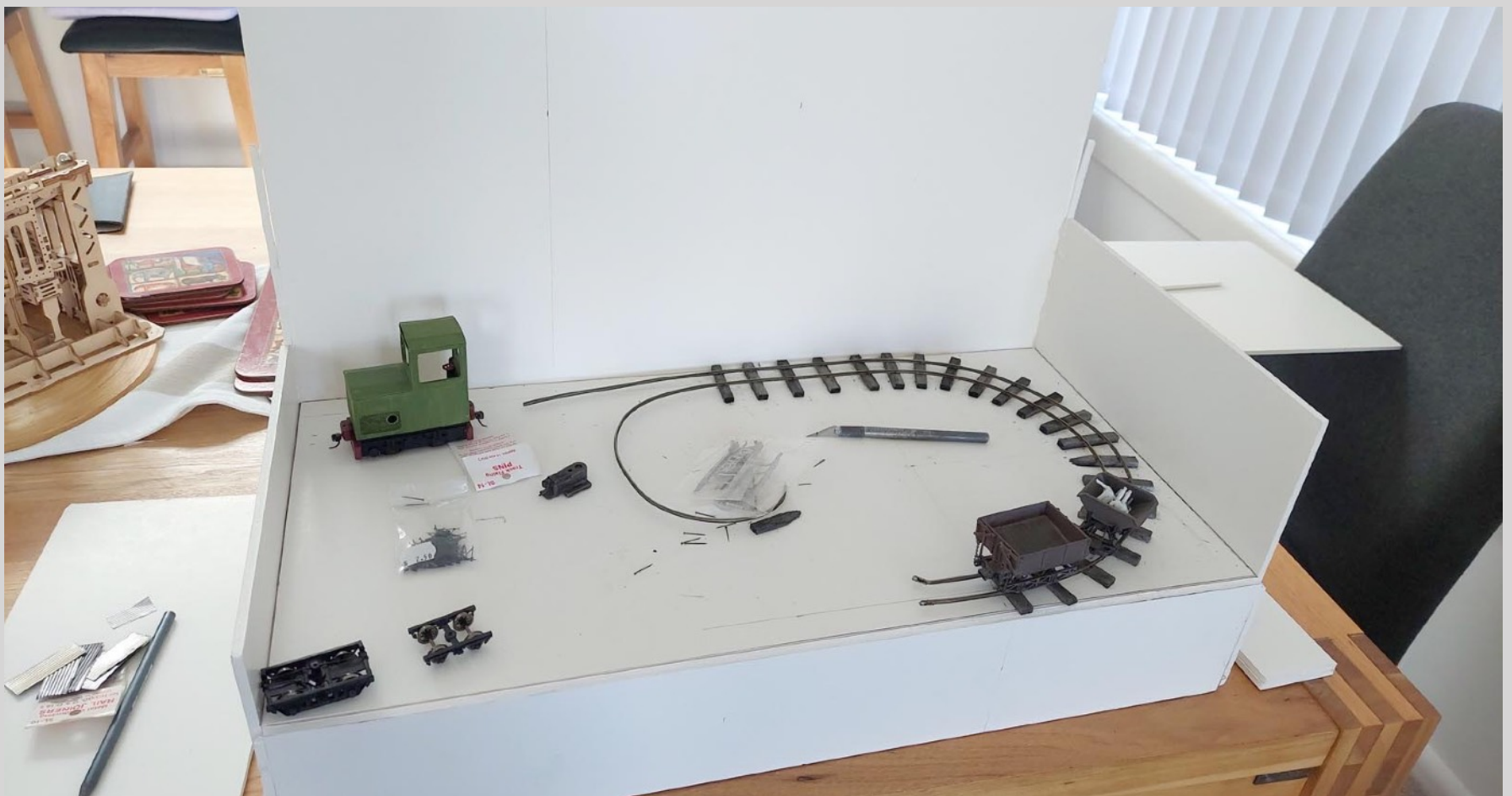
“The Workshop”

P. K.

Gn15 scale 2' x 1" 610mm x 305mm

An anonymous modeller, wishing only to be known as “PK”, sent in these images of his Gn15 layout that he describes as “a work in progress”. For a work in progress it looks pretty complete in some of these pictures. The layout baseboard is built from foamcore board. The central feature is an Italeri shipping

container and all the junk and detritus is bits from this modellers spares box. I don't know about you but I can't wait to see this so called “work in progress” finished.



A couple of under construction photographs of this layout. As you can see, it has been built from 5mm foam core board. Properly braced, this material is more than capable of handling even heavy O scale locomotives



One of the features of this layout seems to be the large amount of rubbish and detritus around the workshop area.



“PK” says the layout is a work in progress. I don’t know about you but when my layouts look like this, I like to think they are finished

Morton Road

Peter Blay

16mm:1ft scale 4' x 3' 1220mm x 915mm



An overall view of this small layout with some big trains

As a member of the Heart of England Narrow Gauge Modellers. I have built a number of 009 layouts using the Rokeby name. In parallel, I have been a bit of a collector of old tinplate models.

I wanted some track to play with my clockwork trains and acquired some Hornby tinplate track. Laying out an oval, to my mind it resembled field railway track and so the idea of a small 16mm scale layout was born. The name comes from the scout hut where our group meets, there are two side rooms named Hill and Morton.

The plan has been to keep costs down so use of low cost materials such as cardboard boxes for corrugations was important. Many of the items on the layout have come from charity shops and car boot sales although often altered or re-purposed. I was lucky enough to be gifted a baseboard from one of our group members. It is a 4ft x 3ft laser cut board from Grainge & Hodder. Some rebuilding was required but a usable board was quickly available.

As I mentioned previously, the track is Hornby O gauge tinplate, but I have added extra sleepers to hopefully make it a bit more realistic. The curves are 1ft radius, and the points are a mixture of 1 and 2ft radius items.

Points are manually operated, I love the look of the original point levers. I have put an insert to hide the rather obvious rivet that retains the blades.

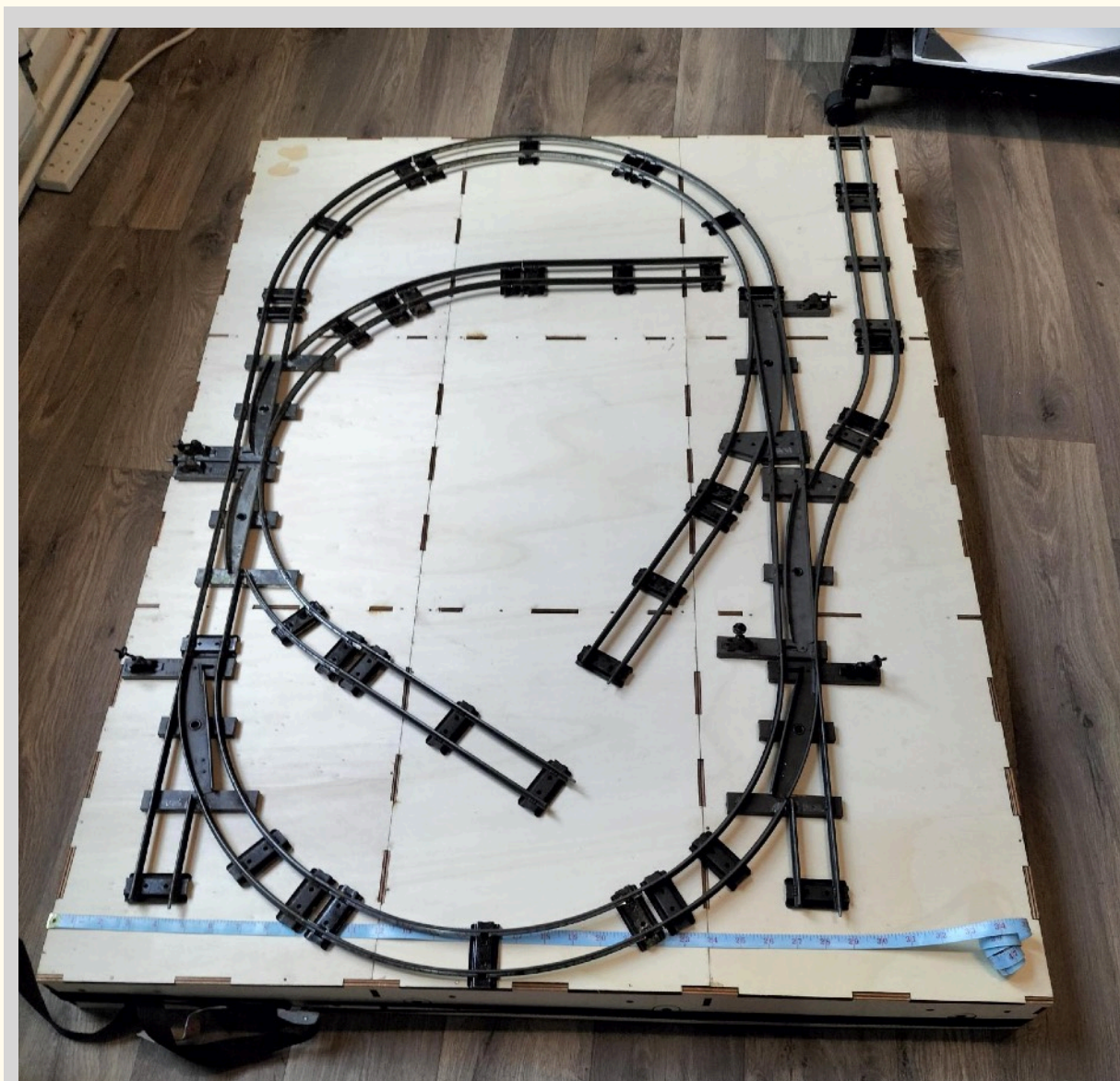
The track is unpowered, so all locos are battery powered, mostly radio control.

Buffer stops are more Hornby items and one has been fitted with a working light.

There are two main structures on the layout. The goods shed and the engine shed.

The goods shed was designed to break up the view of the layout making the oval look less trainset like. It is scratch built from card and foam board.

The roof is removable to allow the layout to fit into my storage area. The structure is covered in embossed paper stonework, whilst the roof has been covered in cardboard "slates".



This view clearly shows all the tabs and holes of a baseboard construction kit.

The layout is larger than four square feet but is most definitely "in the spirit of a Micro".

Mounted on one end is a working colour light signal which comes originally from a Lionel item. A number of posters and signs have been laser printed, including some from photos of original items.

The engine shed started life as a Calshot Beach hut kit (1:12) from seaside miniatures models. Picked up at a car boot sale for a couple of pounds. It has been cut and shut to create the shed, with scratch built doors added. The door handles once graced Postman Pat's train and the working lights are constructed using a bead and a washer.

The interior of the shed has been partially detailed with roster board, oil drums (courtesy of Playmobil) and a sink.

There are two other key structures, a lamp hut which was made to hide the battery and switch for the layout lights. Dimensions of which were scaled up from a 4mm scale version.

This is constructed from corrugated card from the middle of a delivery box. It is removable to access the battery.

The other building is the outside loo scratch built from lolly sticks and cardboard. There is a toilet which is a vintage cast metal dolls house toy picked up at Rugby's antique and collectors fayre.

The trackplan of the layout is a basic oval with sidings. The tightness of the curves means that short wheelbase rolling stock is the order of the day. There are two points to the left hand side of the layout which are planned to be able to connect to a second module which is in build with another one of our members.



The dark, dingy goods shed interior



Details, details, details. So much is possible in these larger scales



To add operational interest there is a working wagon turntable feeding a small platform. This was made from cutting down a Hornby tinplate right angled crossover. The turntable is powered by a small motor with reducing gearbox. A rotary switch is hidden under one of the oil drums next to the lamp hut. The number of points and associated sidings allows for plenty of operational interest in a small space. The key motive power for the layout is currently a Simplex from a Phil Sharples kit fitted with radio

control. Two other locos are "on shed". A scratchbuilt "Tin Turtle" and Clara built from a Boot Lane Works kit.

Current rolling stock is from a variety of sources including a Big Big Train tipper and 3D printed sheep wagon. A flat wagon carrying logs is scratchbuilt on a Hornby tinplate chassis, a further example of my re-purposing.



The use of different ground textures creates two different scenes and makes everything seem larger

To add interest for the viewer, I like to add little details to my layouts. For Morton Yard many of the items have come from toys including barrels from a stacking set, barrels from Nerf and Playmobil, whilst two cats were picked up in the shop at the South Devon Railway. Various cable drums and packing cases have also been sourced from childrens' toys, suitably repainted. A fence and gate were constructed from coffee stirrers, with a warning sign to ensure the gate is shut. An abandoned machine sits in the yard. It started life as a pencil sharpener. The coaling stage is built around some flooring from a Sylvanian Families house and a scratchbuilt staithe from lolly sticks. The coal is a mixture of IKEA black "glass" chips and real coal.

Ground cover includes my first use of static grass which worked well in most areas.

The layout made its public debut at the Heart of England Narrow Gauge Modellers Open Day in October. Overall it worked well and feedback from visitors was positive.

The unloading platform opposite the goods shed was always planned to have a crane. I am working on a plan loosely based on one seen at Beamish.

A water crane will be added near the engine shed when I locate a suitable item.

The other planned addition is a signal, modified from a Hornby tinplate item. The plan is to have the signal motorised and lit.



The structures in place. The loco shed is striking



The wagon turntable is a cut down right angle crossing



The "Tin Turtle" locomotive. Officially called an armoured Simplex

Exhibition Report - Micros to the Rescue!

Rob Jackson & Ian Holmes

Micro Layouts seen at shows around the world

Back at the start of October I made a somewhat unexpected attendance to the 18th Annual Model Railway Show in Wirksworth, Derbyshire (UK). As has been mentioned elsewhere, many UK model shows are for the most part held in small community buildings and this show is a great example of this with three separate venues in the town, all within a couple of minutes walking distance from each other, being used to house twenty layouts plus traders and societies.

One thing that did quickly become apparent whilst walking round was that there were a few absences from those listed in the exhibition guide. This does happen, and probably more often than some realise due to external factors. With new fire regulations in

place for the exhibition spaces this year, this probably wasn't something that could be easily reorganised. However, rather than let the floorspace remain empty the exhibition staff and exhibitors seemed to have filled the empty slots with no less than eight Micro layouts, a most unexpected surprise!

Unfortunately, due to the last minute nature of some of these being exhibited, some layouts and builders names don't appear in the show guide or on the layouts themselves. If you do know the name of the layout (Or even better, ARE the layout builder!) do get in contact with editor, it'd be great to properly credit them!



Doe Lea - (N) Derek Gelsthorpe

A classic example of how N gauge can work in the max 4'x1' micro layout dimensions. It's also a good example of how 'less is more' when it comes to track work. Here the layout consists of nothing more than a run round loop, a single siding, and a small traverser just out of shot to the right. Having the track set up on the embankment also does a lot to create a sense of space.



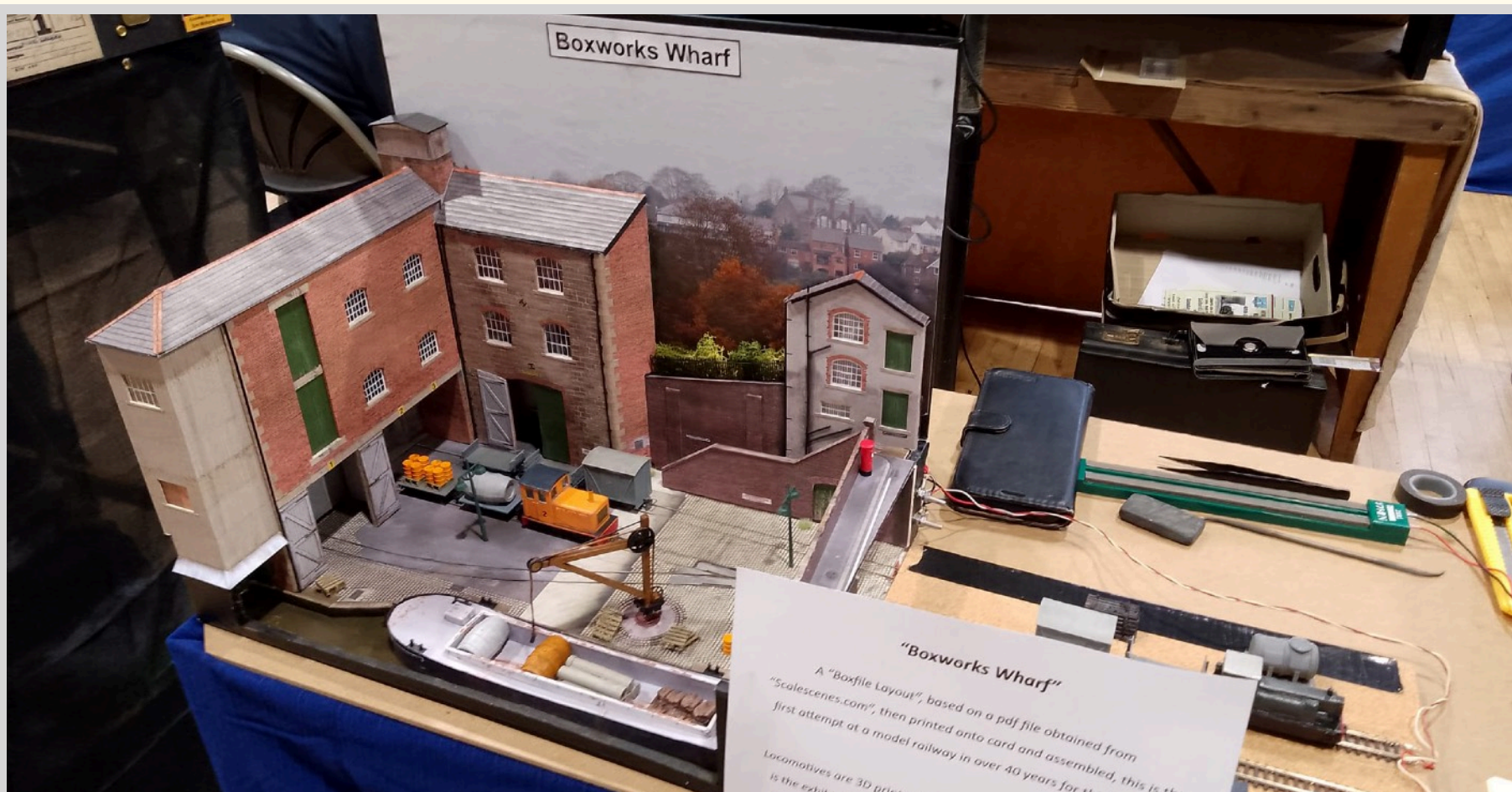
Knottmuch Moor - (OO9) Ronan's Railways

A neat little narrow gauge layout. The fiddlesticks either side of the layout were a nice touch, each being fully scenic, one side a simple half with a GWR tin pagoda and the other a small loading dock.



Knottmuch Moor (OO) Ronan's Railways

No, your eyes aren't deceiving you. The show guide lists this OO layout with the same name as the previous one. Much like Doe Lea, another example of how a loop and single siding can work well as a micro. What isn't quite apparent in this shot is that this layout had some built in automation for the engines. At the time of photographing a push pull service consisting of a tank engine and a single bogie coach would enter the station headshunt from the fiddle yard before returning a few moments later.



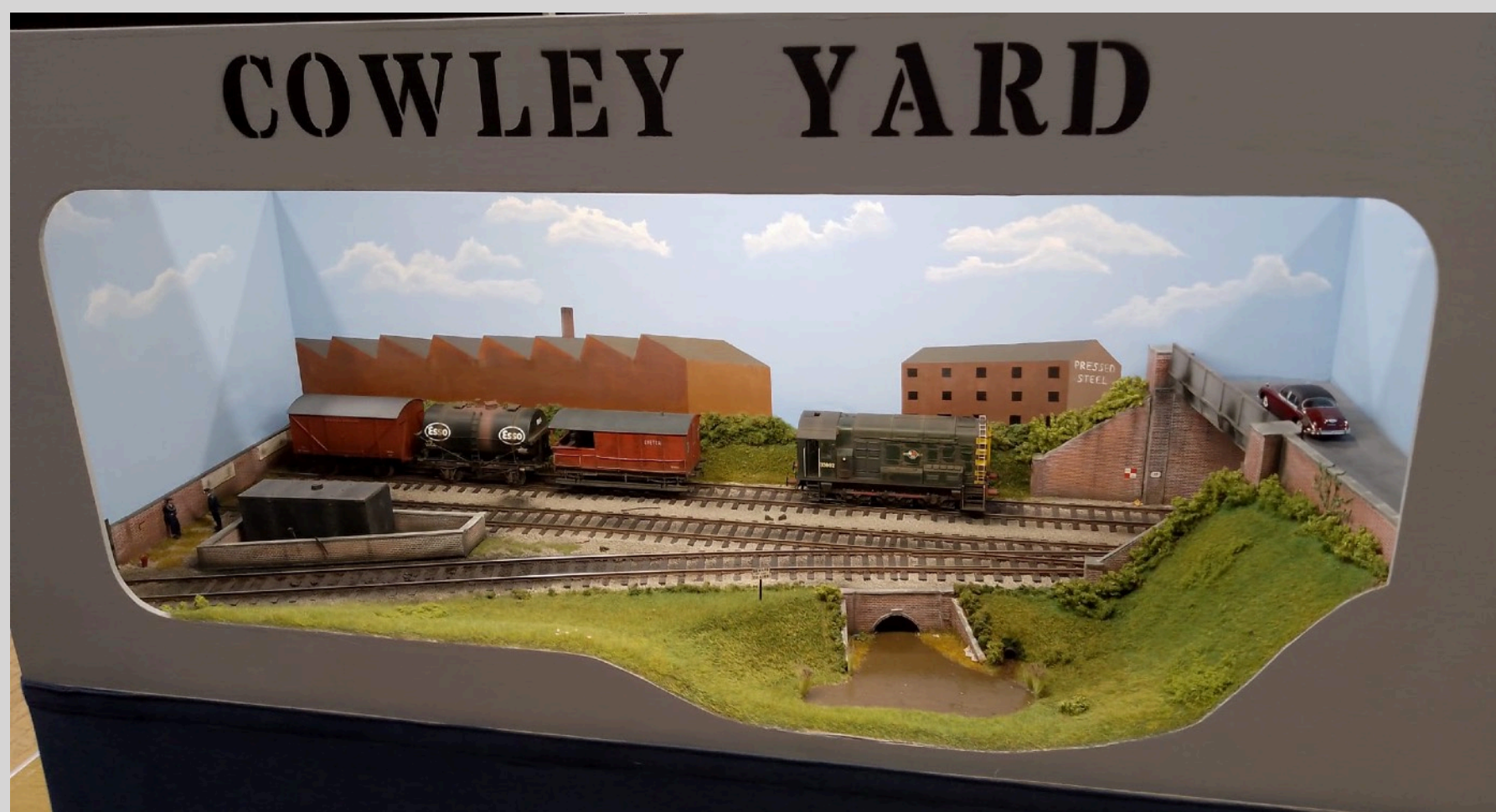
Boxworks Wharf - (009) Unknown Builder

A narrow gauge variation of the one of the downloadable box-file micro layout kits from ScaleScenes. The traverser however is a totally homemade addition.



Pizza Layout - (OO) Unknown Builder

This is sadly a layout with no known name or maker. For those curious as to how small a OO pizza that can still run bogie coaches can be, this example seemed to be close to a 2' radius, but was possibly just a bit wider as OO first radius curves have a radius of 37.1cm/14.5inches. Either way, it's a fun variant on the traditional Pizza by having the centre section removed (Donut, anyone?) creating the illusion of the train running through the landscape, rather than just round it.



Cowley Yard - (O) William Plant

It's been mentioned before how O gauge doesn't tend to lend itself to the world of Micros. Not so, as this layout proves! In essence it has the appearance of an inglenook, but the addition of the fuelling point allows for main line diesel engines to appear on the scene. Despite the large nature of O gauge, it never felt cramped.



Layout in a Suitcase - (N) Malcolm Hughes

Very much a 'fun to run' layout, and fun to watch too! It also seemed to be acting a showroom track for several pieces of old Graham Farish N gauge stock. A true retro micro layout.



Lockdown Quarry - (OO/009) Tim Oaks

Now, technically Lockdown Quarry is just beyond the four square feet maximum size for a Micro layout, however look again and you'll notice the three spurs of a compact Inglenook on the quarry floor. The curved long siding makes for a nice piece of variety, along with the narrow to standard gauge transfer hopper.

Whilst exhibiting at the Randolph show in Minnesota, the editor also saw a few

micro layout oriented things that might be of interest you. Some things were fun. The others had potential.



Little children enjoyed seeing N scale Thomas and Percy trains run around this whimsical oval of track made by joining sections of these mini modules together.

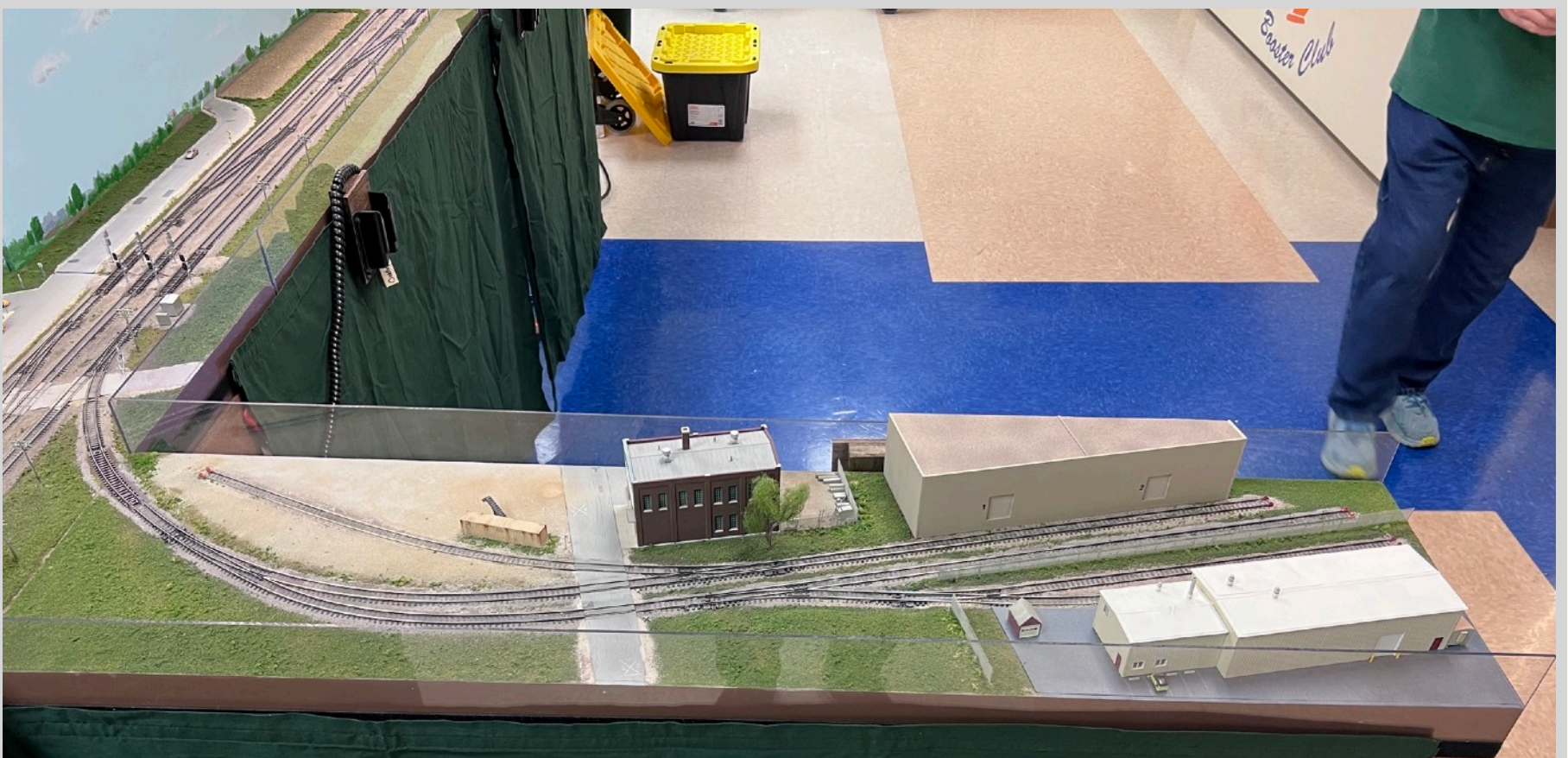
It just goes to show how easy not is to have micro layout fun!



There has been a lot of talk over on the NGRMOnline forum lately about the Kato N scale mini modules. Tiny laser cut sections that take a length of Kato roadbed track. Testing the waters was this similar product from Klawndyke, who make laser cut TTrack modules. (www.klawndyke.com) They are not in production yet.



I was most definitely amused by this oval of N scale Kato Roadbed track set on top of an old zinc washtub



The standout display was this 4' x 1' module of the Great River Valley System (GRVS) N scale modular layout.

A great example of the prototypical realism of track layout that is possible in an N scale micro layout. The owner of the module does operate this by himself at home, while also bringing it to shows to be a part of a greater whole.



Attention to detail in operation was the hallmark of this module. The loading hoses seen in the picture below were for different types of tank car. Only certain cars could be positioned in front of them for unloading



A superb detail was the chopping away of a warehouse by the baseboard edge and being able to see the details inside the building

Corke Hall Tramway

Brian Wilson

An update of Brian's cork notice board layout from the Autumn issue

Brian Wilson writes in with progress on his Corke Hall Tramway layout as seen in the Autumn issue. He reports that the basic scenery is done, but that there is still much more to do to fill in details. The micro contains 3 individual scenes (see photo links):

The boat Landing. (Top image)

Mountain scenery (Bottom image)

The resort terminus (Middle image)

He used watercolors on watercolor paper for the scenic dividers. A good quality paper, it retains its shape when the paint has dried. The dividers are painted on both sides and fitted into slots so they can easily be taken out and changed whenever he feels like it.

I'm already looking forward to Brian's next update.



The Christmas *Dispatch*

For the Micro Layout enthusiast



***The Editor
sends you all
his best wishes
this festive
season.***

The Christmas *Dispatch*

For the Micro Layout enthusiast

Here we are again. Another celebration of model railways in the holiday season. The Christmas and New Year break is something peculiar to people in the UK and there are many modellers on social media who use the spare time to create a new small layout. I'm thinking about it. Perhaps you will too, and don't forget there's a place here in these pages for you to share your work, should you decide to build something. Have a great holiday season, whatever you celebrate.

Contents

Hogswatch	53
<i>Rich Carpenter was inspired by the books of Terry Pratchett</i>	
Palmborough	57
<i>Ken Jones has the tiniest TY scale layout.</i>	
The Cartel Christmas Challenge	58
<i>The entries for this years Facebook group contest.</i>	



Danny Figg's "A train set for Christmas" from last year.

Hogswatch

Rich Carpenter.

Scale G_n15: Size 2' x 2' 610mm x 610mm

Strangely, this pizza layout started out as a cake decoration. I live near Ludlow, a town known for its historic buildings and food festivals. There used to be a small toy shop in town, and the manager asked me about Z gauge as she wanted a cake with a train running round it as a window decoration for the festival. I figured that the 00 scale models she sold could do that too, so bent a yard of flexible track into a tight circle, cut a ring of plywood and was back a couple of days later with it wired and ballasted. It ran quite happily so we joked that I

should do something for the Medieval Fair 11 weeks later.

I made a mock up in cardboard and decided that I wanted to include plenty of height to make up for the lack of width.

I'd placed the track 6" above the plywood base and ended up making the buildings out of solid blocks of wood with the details layered on with matchsticks, cereal box card and foamcore.

One is based on a well known building in town but most are freelance. The station is based on a London Underground design.



In this early “pre-snowfall” view we get a good look at Rich’s model making and how the tiny railway seems to squeeze between the structures of Ankh Mopork

The locomotive started life as a Hornby 0-4-0T with a couple of wagon chassis being used for the coaches.

It's supposed to be based on Ankh Morpork, the city from Terry Pratchett's Discworld books (where Hogswatch is a winter celebration similar to Xmas) but has never really gained the added details to say it isn't a slightly silly version of reality.

Putting the snow on top of 10 weeks of work was terrifying but worthwhile.

The layout has survived a couple of Decembers in that shop, 2 exhibitions at the Bishops Castle Railway Society and is off to spend December in the window of my girlfriend's shop in Cleobury Mortimer. I'm hoping to build an extension to wrap around the front and one side with a few sidings to shunt at a lower level to make future exhibitions more fun.



In this view, you can see the wooden blocks used for the basis of the buildings being tried in their locations to judge the effect.

Once the blocks are covered in card, wood and styrene and painted. They make very serviceable model buildings, perfect for the layout.





The addition of the snow transforms the scene. I think Terry Pratchett would approve of this vision of Ankh Morpork





These views show the unique, scratch built Gn15 train running above the rooftops of Ankh Morpork

Palmborough

Ken Jones.

TY 1:900 scale 4" x 7" 100mm x 175mm



TY trains are truly tiny

1:900 TY layouts are produced by Tim Dillion under the name of Tiny Trains in the United States and are the smallest working layouts Ken has seen so he needed one for his own collection. Actually, Tim can produce a smaller 4 inches x 4 inches circular layout, but Ken had a 4 inches x 7 inches oval commissioned. The biggest one Tim produces is 14 inches x 24 inches, but he has a lot of ideas so please visit his website.

Palmborough, the layout that sits on the Palm of your hand shows the station and small town in winter conditions, with the station, buildings and landscape covered in snow. Even the lake might freeze over, but the train continues to run. In this case a powerful Rio Grande steam locomotive pulls a passenger train through the local tunnel and over the river. Road transport continues as well in this area thanks to local people clearing the highway and station area, allowing passengers to be brought into the town from nearby villages.

Len Bane provided the British 9 VDC electrical transformer to run this American layout from UK mains supply, and Ken's late brother-in-law Allan Radbourne came up with the name for the layout. It must be the smallest layout Len has wired up, with the transformer connected to one jack plug. It runs at one speed only. The layout is belt driven, with the belt running between the tracks. The transformer produces a constant speed of 45 MPH at a scale of 1:900.

Palmborough does not appear at many if indeed at any exhibitions, so enjoy the picture. It is not designed for constant running, as it will overheat. Also bearing in mind its size, it is a layout that someone could pick up, put in their pocket and walk off with it. The layout comes with its own rigid clear plastic cover which is also ideal to stand the layout on.

Tiny Trains can be found at <http://www.tiny-trains.net>

The Cartel Christmas Challenge

The entrants for the annual Facebook creative competition

This year, the Micro Model Railroad Cartel Christmas Challenge was to build a traditional Pizza layout. It could be any size or scale, just as long as it was under four square feet. This challenge received the most entries of all the challenges so far.

The scales used were many and varied. As were the sizes. All the layouts were of a very high quality. Take a look. The winner has been left until the very end.



London Calling by Chris Rennie is 16mm scale and fits on a CD (remember those). Truly creative. You can't say you have no room for a model railroad



Will Fowler's "Tunnel vision" used Kato roadbed track on a 27" circular baseboard



Herb Fluster created TWO pizza layouts both built in 22" (560mm) diameter water heater drain pans.



Tom Conboy's Cornelius Peppermint mine in G_n15 was built in secret in just eight days!



Ken Hutnik built his layout on a candle jar top



George Peter-Knott built his trolley car micro on a 14cm diameter chocolate treats box



Ben Bucki built his pizza layout using old tinplate toy trains. Wonderful atmosphere.



Marshall Stull called his 23" diameter layout in HOn30 "Pizzatopia"



The Winner!

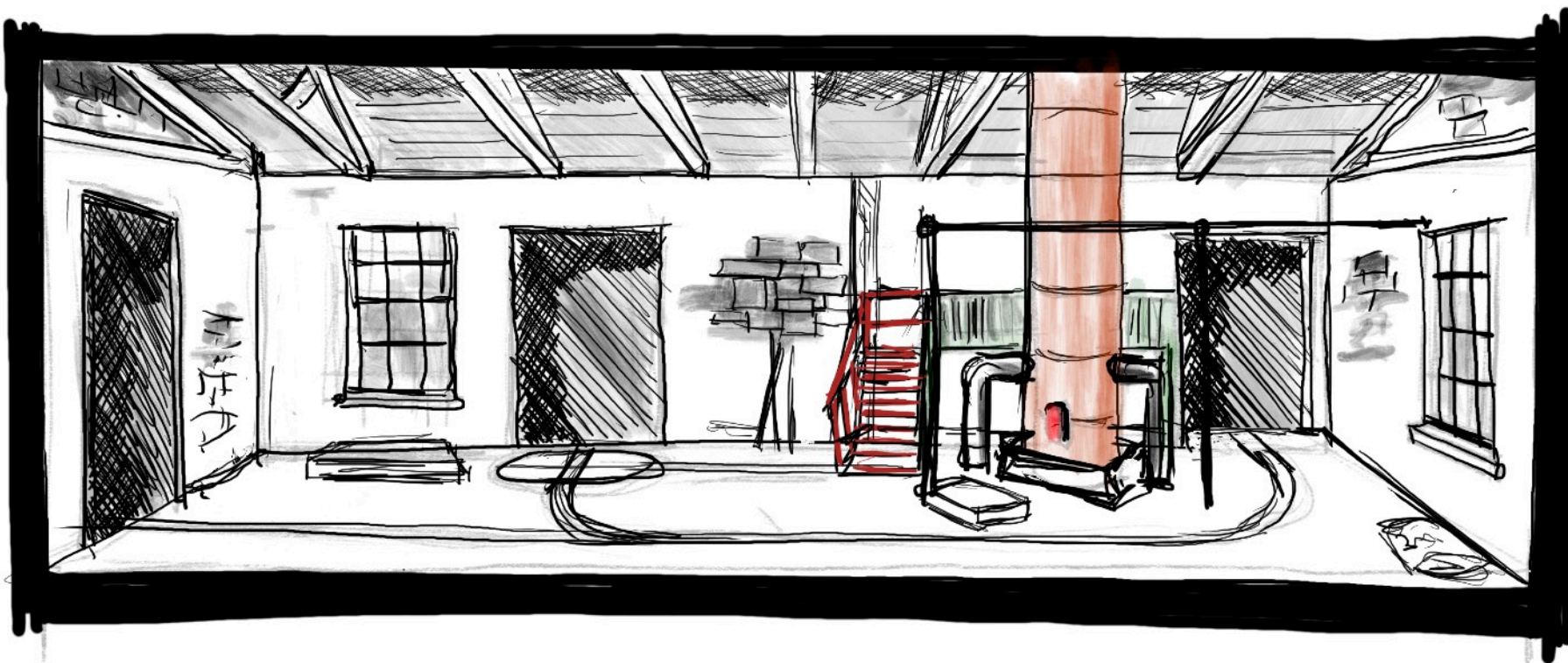
Shadow Mountain Mining by Tom Bowdler. 7/8ths inch to the foot scale on a 2' square baseboard. It is fully animated with lots of wagon loading and emptying action. 7/8ths inch to the foot is a big scale, and to fit something in four square feet is quite the achievement. Well done Tom!



Fiddle Yard

Ian Holmes.

Any other business at the end of the year



2007



What do I have to look forward to in the coming year? Here's three projects that hopefully will get off the ground in the near future. The first one is in 16mm scale that can be followed at my smalltrainlargescales.blogspot.com The next is in US O scale, you can follow along with that one at plymouthindustrialparkinO.blogspot.com

and the final one in planned to be built in English O scale. That layout's progress will be documented at oscalemicrolayout.blogspot.com I wonder how far I will get with them? Perhaps something else entirely will get built instead.