

The Micro Model Railway

# *Dispatch*

*For the Micro Layout enthusiast*

Issue 19. Autumn 2025

## Alan Woodford's Snake Valley Railway





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

**B**ack in the heyday of Micro Layouts for Model Railroads, Unique, creative ideas seemed to appear weekly. One such idea was the "Midnight Flyer". A shelf style layout presented like a stage set, complete with interchangeable scenery.

As a concept, (and someone who had spent time on the stage), I was fascinated by the idea. But I did wonder about storage of all the extra scenery. I didn't have room for all that at the time. So I noted it down as just another good idea that disappeared into the recesses of my mind.

That was, until Alan Woodford dropped me a line about his micro, The Snake Valley Railway, and would I be interested in it?

Would I? It was only a layout based on the midnight flyer! Now, I get excited about all of the layouts you send in to feature in The Dispatch. But this got me more excited than usual. Then I saw his pictures. WOW.

The basic track plan becomes something very different with each change of scenery. Creating four very different locations. From a big bustling port to a quiet country town.

During the writing of my book, I came up with the motivational phrase "Micro Layouts are like Doctor Who's Tardis. They are bigger on the inside". The Snake Valley Railway and The Midnight Flyer are the perfect example of this.

Right now I am envisaging a 009 scale layout using this concept based on North Wales, where I could follow the journey of a train from the slate mines of Blaenau Ffestiniog to Porthmadog. This is probably because I will be in those towns in a few weeks...

Until next month. Build that Model, Lay that Track, Run that Train. But above all. Have Fun.



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

*Carl Arendt*

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# Snake Valley Railway

Alan Woodford

Scale 00: Size. 2' x 1' 610mm x 305mm

**D**o you remember Carl Arendt's **Midnight Flyer**? You may recall that the main feature of his proposed scheme was making use of the theatrical technique of 'flying sets', to quickly change the layout's location by swapping the backgrounds. This came to mind one day while idly doodling track plans, and I wondered just how workable interchangeable backscenes would be as a way of creating a 'system' type layout in a small space. The more I thought about it the more I liked the idea. It appealed to my inner megalomaniac, with visions of a vast expanding railway empire, all contained within a micro layout footprint.

The idea took hold, and much to the disgust of the long-suffering unfinished projects, they were dropped yet again in order to follow this latest whim.

The Snake Valley Railway (as it is called) was built primarily as a test bed to explore the practical aspects of operating such a scheme. A 24x12 inch box, salvaged from an older dismantled layout, was used to house the

scenic section. The track plan is simply a length of main line with two sidings facing opposite directions. The scene is fed from train turntables at each end.

The basic operation consists of a train moving from turntable A into the station where it shunts the trailing siding. It then moves on to turntable B. This is rotated 180 degrees, the background and a few other props are swapped, and the train re-enters the scene which now represents the next station along the line, and so on.

The railway itself is a rather tongue-in-cheek British branch line with four stations. The accompanying diagram shows the full branch. It was the sinuous nature of this that gave rise to the layout's snaky theme. It will be apparent that one of the bizarre consequences of this setup is that all of the wagons for all of the stations are crammed into the same two sidings. The rule is that only wagons for the currently worked station can be picked up or dropped off.



*The goods facility at Adderport. One end of the branch line*



The 'zombie' wagons those belonging to other stations) that are in the sidings can be herded about during shunting but not leave. The result is a wonderfully confusing shunting puzzle. What with the main line's direction constantly changing, and the up and down sidings alternating between stations, as well as being clogged up with the undead, it is easy to mess up.

Delivering the layout's full quota of seven wagons to their destinations generally requires three return journeys along the branch. This is broken up into short operating stints spread out over several days. After all, we are talking of nearly twenty scene changes here!

There are two double-sided boards used for the backgrounds, each consisting of a sheet of foamcore painted sky blue, with the flats and low relief features glued on. The backscenes just hang from the sides of the box frame and can be swapped around easily in a matter of seconds. There is enough space at the back to store the unused board. I didn't want to spend too much time on the scenery and it is fairly primitive by today's standards, with little detail. Grey cardboard, reclaimed from food

packaging, forms the main ingredient of the landforms, structures and background flats, with Woodland Scenics providing vegetation and ballast. As might be expected, the scenery gets knocked about a fair bit with all the moving, so it is probably just as well there are not too many fiddly details to get broken. Trying to define each scene with just a narrow strip of background had its challenges. In the end I gave way and added extra loose props, such as the train sheds, to give some variation in the foreground.

In principle the railway could be expanded by another ten stations and still fit within the micro layout four square feet rule! However this layout is unlikely to go any further than you see here. As a test layout it has worked out well, and opened up new possibilities along the way. I have satisfied myself that it is a workable system despite its constraints, and I am now contemplating a more refined Mk2 version based on what I have learned so far. The unfinished projects have good reason to look worried!



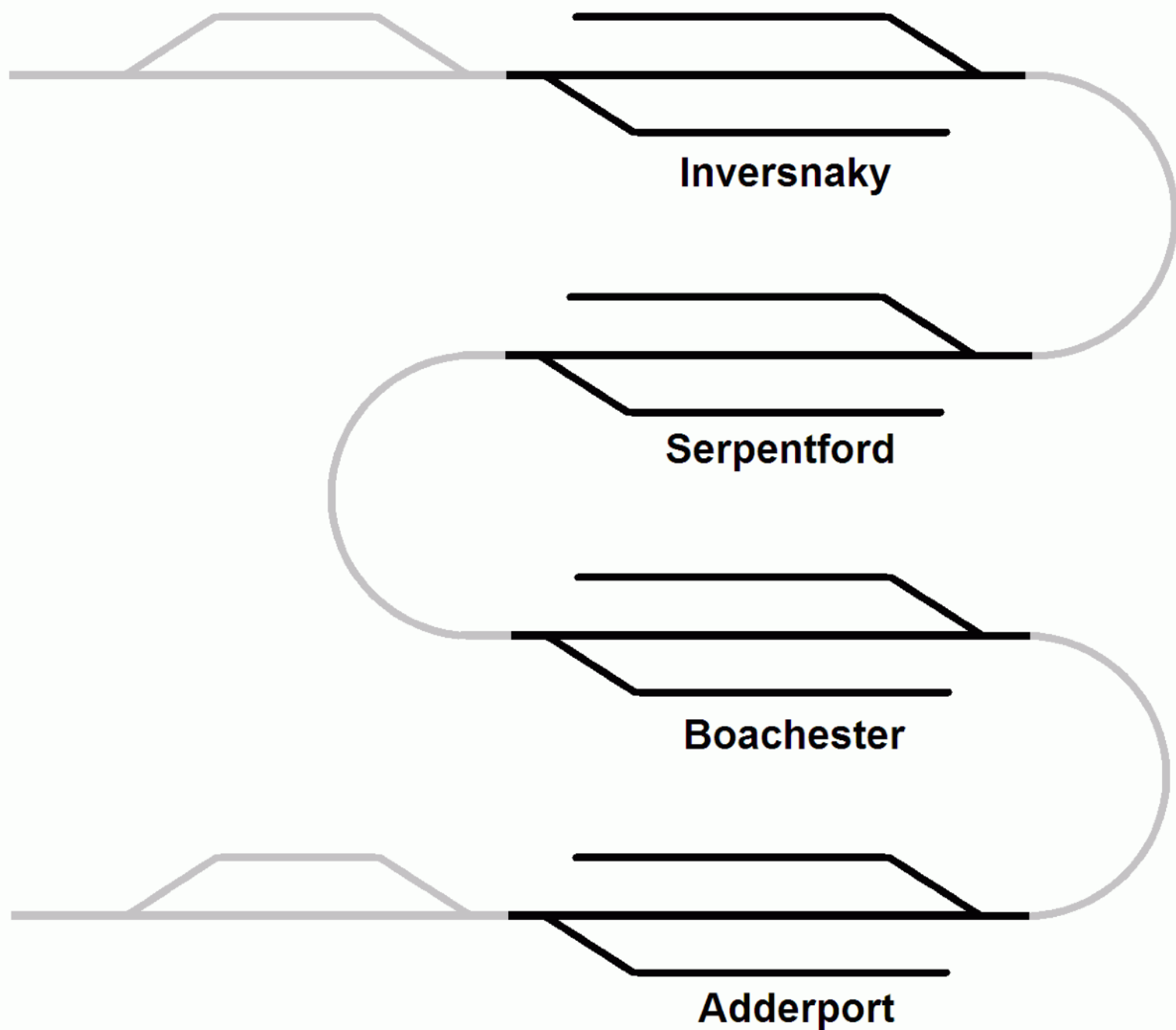
*What an atmospheric view! Those white buildings put me in mind of many a English coastal village.*





*These backscenes, though simple, are very effective and really do help to create an totally different location even though the foreground is exactly the same.*





*The route map of the Snake Valley Railway. Eagle-eyed modellers with a keen sense of the history of the hobby in the UK, will no doubt have a smile on their faces at the names of some of the stations. Can you guess what classic model railway layouts are referenced in the station names?*

*I managed to get three of them. Can you guess them all? Drop me a line [MMRDeditor@gmail.com](mailto:MMRDeditor@gmail.com) if you did. No prizes.*



*An offstage view showing the simple train turntable cassette*





*Overall views showing the effectiveness of the quick changeout of the background. From a city to bucolic, rural countryside in a matter of seconds.*





*Behind the scenes with a backscene removed. Showing that the baseboard is built onto a simple framework that extends deeper than the layout so that a backdrop, seen below can be put in place.*



*One of the simple backscenes. Backdrops do not have to be complicated works of art. Simple cut outs clad with commercial brick and tile papers work just as well.*



# Steinbruch Paul Köder (Paul Köder Quarry)

Günther Kiltz

Scale:H0e. Size:12" x 16" 300mm x 400mm

**T**he layout that doesn't want to be one.

My exhibition layouts (Squarefoot Mine, Gynthrolith Mine) have point-to-point operation. So no operation takes place when the train is at one of the ends, e.g. during loading and unloading or when emptying the truck. At these moments, visitors tend to just cast a brief, disinterested glance at the layout and pass by carelessly.

I somehow considered this annoying ("why am I standing here?") and looked for a solution. Since the higher primate Homo Sapiens, despite all its civilization, still has a hunter inside who instinctively lurks for prey, I just could use this hunting instinct for my sneaky purposes.

So I built a decoy. I'm not really a big fan of pizza layouts with their pointless, unrealistic round and round operation. But they run on their own and offer constant movement which attracts people.

As I didn't want to invest a lot of effort and money in a layout that wasn't actually supposed to be one, it all started with an inventory of my various scrap boxes. And, hurray: almost everything for a little something in H0e / 009 was there. It's amazing what kind of stuff you hoard over time. A steam locomotive, a couple of tippers and an excavator model set the theme: a quarry.

In the center, the actual quarry with the buildings, a small truck and a somewhat run down excavator are situated. The railway with the tippers runs around everything.



*The entire layout fits exactly into an IKEA picture frame (OK, I built it especially for that).*





*Some scrap has accumulated behind the sheds*



*Approaching the right-hand tunnel mouth*

The only thing I didn't have in stock were suitable buildings. As I'm lazy on the one hand, and the 1:87 scale is slowly becoming a bit too fiddly for my old thick fingers and blurred eyes on the other, I bought a set of sheds from Faller. However, I reworked these so that their industrial origins are no longer quite so obvious. So, with a few other bits and pieces, I came to a total cost of just around 20 euros.

Because it is intended to attract people, the layout is called Paul Köder Quarry ("Köder" is the German word for decoy but also can act as name).

And after that longer introduction, here are some pictures: To prevent visitors from getting the idea that this were a real model railway, I place the following sign in front of it at exhibitions :

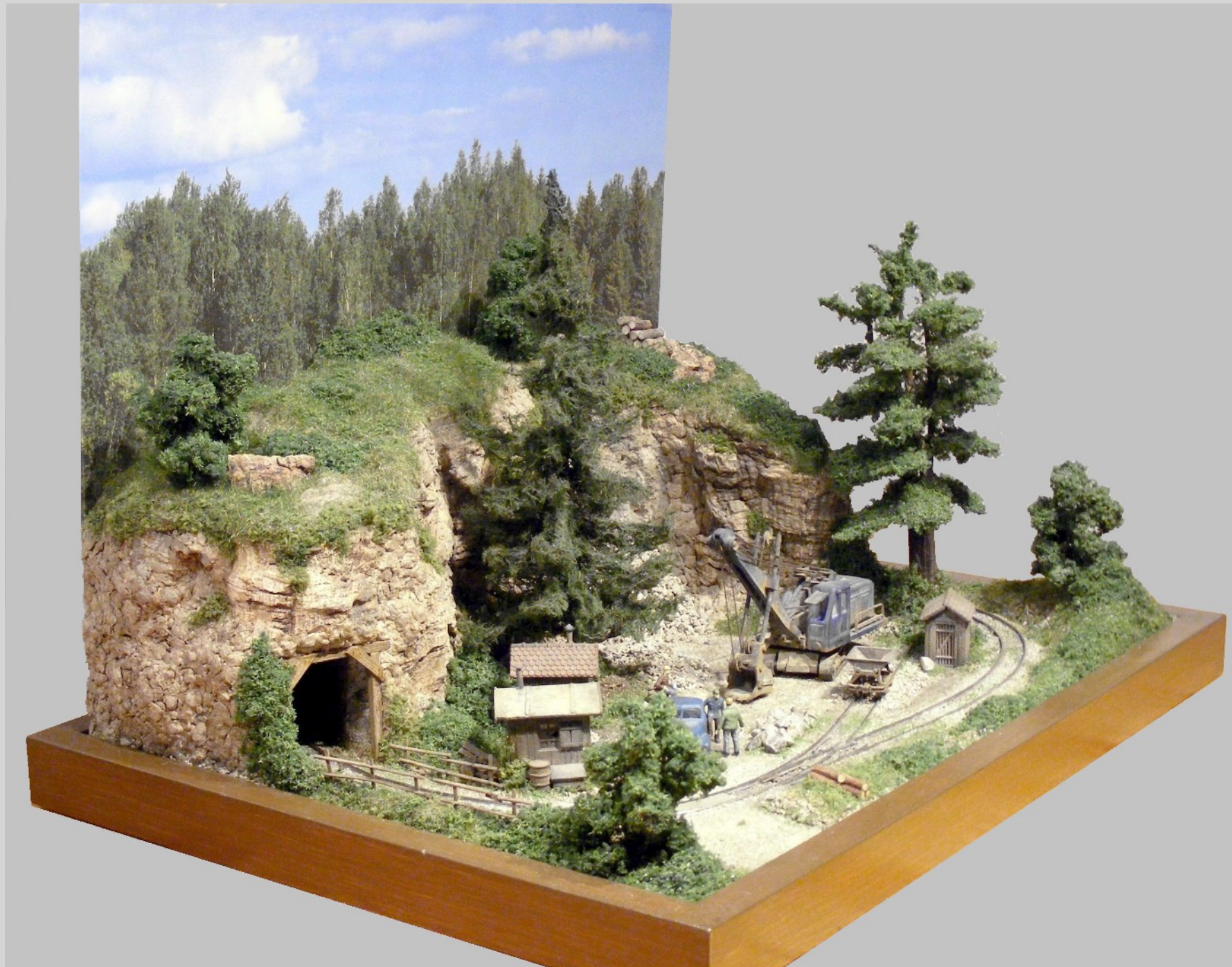
***"This is not a model railway but bait. When the actual exhibition layout is not in operation, visitors tend to walk by without paying attention. But when something is moving, they come closer to look what it is (instinctive hunter - prey reflex) and then they observe the exhibition layout as well.***

***You don't think so?***

***Well, the fact that you are standing here reading this proves that it is the case."***

It always creates an amused grin and often there is a start for a little chat. I didn't expect that the effect would be very great but at the last exhibitions it turned out that the majority of the visitors came straight up to it ("oh, look that little railway"). So the labor was worth it, the trick works.





*Paul Köder's entire realm.*



*A simple delivery job of some natural stones. Nevertheless there still seems to be the need for discussion.*





*The excavator has seen better days.*



*What will the destination of the load be?*





*The train in full length*



*The layout from behind. On the right can be seen the built-in speed controller. Everything is operated analogue. In the lower middle is a low flap to give access to the tunnel in case of emergency (Murphy's law: trains always derail in tunnels).*





*On a fully loaded train, a brakeman is essential.*



*The train leaves the left tunnel mouth*



# Tippin Bach Tramway

Roger Swan

Scale:OO9 Size: 11" x 18" 275mm x 450mm

**Y**ou may have seen **Paradise Bottom (Gn15)**, my version of Carl Arendt's wonderful Square Foot Estate Railway in the Dispatch, in issue 15 Autumn 2024'

Following on from a OO9 layout that I built and then sold earlier this year, I had an off cut of XPS foamboard that measured 11" x 8" and coupled with the idea of doing something in O9, I thought it would be good to do a version of the Square Foot that was smaller in size and scale.

O scale of 1:43.5 is a nice scale to model; not too big but big enough for some great detail both in the 3d printed figures available and the excellent 3d printed locomotive bodies one can buy that run on the incredibly smooth and slow running Kato 11-109 chassis. There is a good selection of 3d printed waggons too. The loco and skip waggon shown in the photographs are by Floyd Kraemer.

Floyd kindly printed a skip waggon that would actually tip. I used Peco OO9 track to represent 15"

gauge. I scratch built the industrial building as before using card and plastic corrugated sheet, with the rear of it open to allow me to fill a skip waggon with stones etc. Rather than having two separate working gates, this time I built one double gate that pivots in the middle and I'm rather pleased with the result – hopefully it is un-prototypical!

I bought some excellent detailing bits from 3d Printing Corner; oil drums, pallets and tools etc. A piece of brass wire was bent to shape in order that the skip waggon runs up against it and tips into the standard gauge wagon below. The skip waggon had weight added to it and two small lengths of black cotton thread glued on to stop the skip bucket from following the stone load and falling into the wagon below!

My first attempt at making a tree from twisted florist wire has turned out ok I think..Will do better next time!



*A different scale, a different location, but still unmistakably The Squarefoot Estate Railway*





*The essence of the original Squarefoot track plan is still clear in this aerial view*

I liked the idea of having a short length of standard O gauge track and a wagon (brakes on!) for “tippin” into. Track was glued to a piece of thin foamboard, ballasted and detailed and is simply placed in front of the layout. It helps to show just how small 15” gauge is.





*Great details and a high standard of modelling all contribute to making this a very atmospheric micro.*



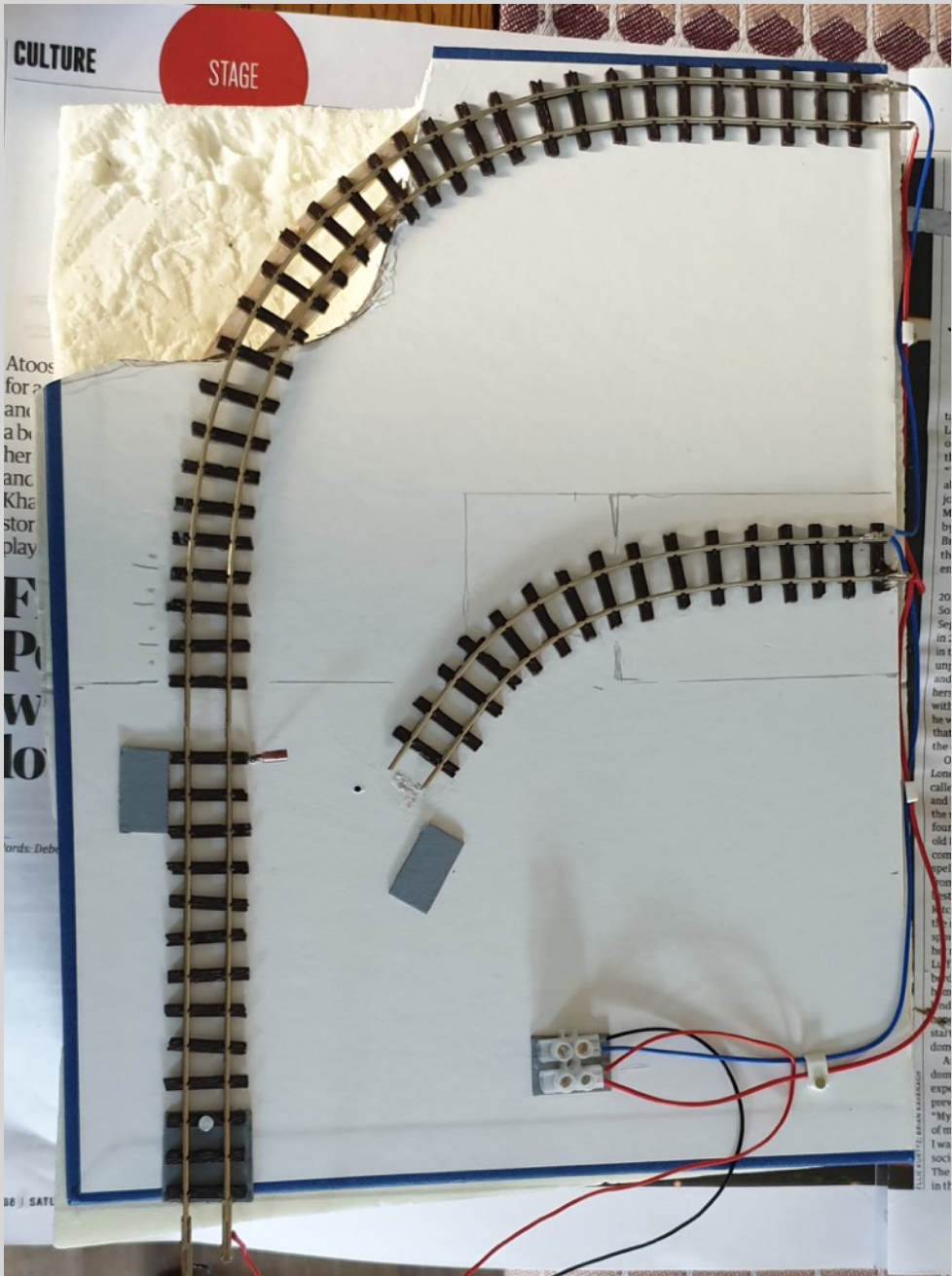








*Some under construction photographs*





# Stonham Parva

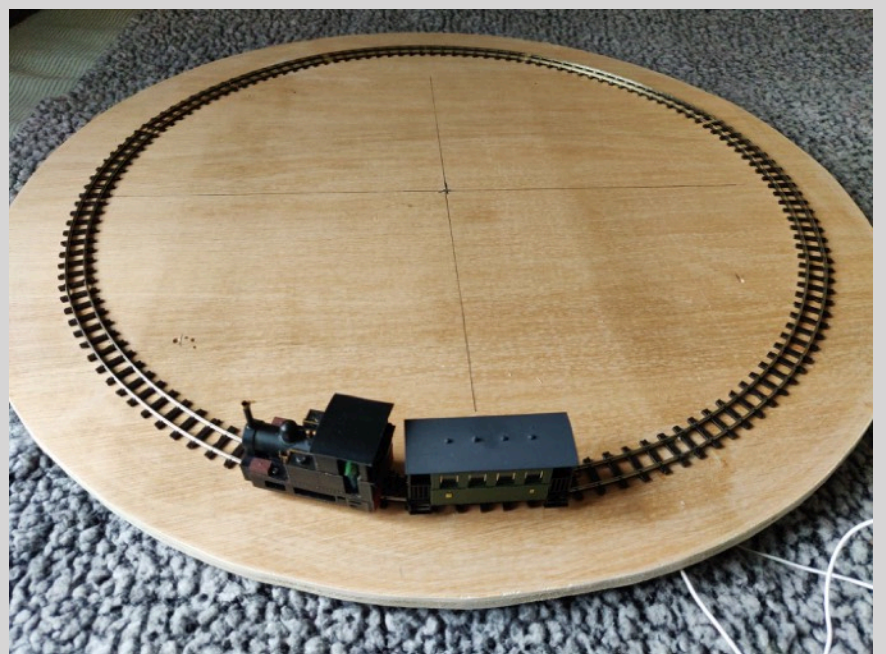
John Woodcock

Scale:009 Size 25" x 25" 640mm x 640mm



*Look how natural everything looks in this layout. Even though it's only a circle of track. It's a very believable scene*

**T**his is my third micro layout, and my second in 009/HOe. I have limited storage space and the layout fits in a cupboard in my studio. I decided on a pizza format for simplicity (I'm not overconfident in using electrical componentry and wiring points) and I decided that a circle of Peco 009 Setrack would suit my requirements, without the added complexity of having to bend flexible track into a fairly tight even curve.



*The circle of track was put onto a 3mm ply sheet and a slightly larger circle cut out with a jig saw. A strip of 1" square wood was screwed underneath, just for additional support.*





*The track was glued in place with pva glue. Once the glue was set, I sprayed it with red primer from Halfords, followed by a few squirts of grey primer, just to vary the tone. I cut a piece of 3mm ply to act as a back scene, which I intended to paint myself. I also bought a little 3D printed station halt from eBay which I cut a simple platform for, out of the same ply, carefully making sure it followed the curve of the track by putting paint on the inner rail and pressing the ply onto it to mark the curve, before cutting it out with a jig saw.*

*A close up of some of the delightful scenic detail on the back scene*



*The next step was to paint the back scene. I live in Suffolk and I wanted a rural feel to the model so I referred to some photos I took of farms locally and used those to put together a scene. I painted the board with white gesso and then drew in the image, firstly in pencil and then using brown paint to create the outlines. After that it was just a matter of using acrylic paints to fill the shapes and bring it to life. I've had trouble getting commercial back scenes to stick well and I find painting my own allows me to personalise the layout a bit more.*





*Two holes were cut in the back scene to allow trains through, and fitted it to the base board. I wanted the scene curved to match the curve of the track. I fitted two upright pieces of wood at the far end of the back scene, glued and fixed using L shaped brackets. I then clamped and glued the ply backscene, bent to as much of a curve as I dared without splitting the ply. I also cut a ply curve, glued and screwed and placed it behind the curved wood to act as further bracing.*







*I decided on a couple of buildings from Scale Model Scenery, a cottage and a little workshop. I built these on a foamboard base and added details, trees and foliage before sticking them down, and blending in the base and the baseboard with DAS. I used a SMC detail pack on the workshop to add rusty bits and pieces. The trees were a mix of cheap Chinese ones with extra detail and painting, and some I found in my local model shop and made locally.*







*After everything was in place I added more details and hope to add more. I used Modelu figures and lots of scatter materials and stick on tufts. I added the road using DAS and made a little road crossing, plus as much additional detail as I could add. There's even a little goldfish pond in the cottage garden, barely visible. There is still stuff to do but I'm quite happy how it's turned out so far. I named it Stonham Parva Halt, which I felt had an authentic rural English feel to it ( it's also a village near to me in Suffolk). My next plan is an O gauge micro, but that's another story.*



Paul Corkrum sent me this picture showing his two micro layouts at the Exe Model Railway Show at Exeter on 21st /22nd June. Autenbak and Colin Peake's Box Metals which have both featured in MMRD.

You can see a couple of adverts for The Dispatch pinned to the displays and Paul says he mentioned the magazine to many of the exhibition goers.

Thanks Paul!



# His Lordship's Railway

Ben Bucki

Scale:00 (4mm:1ft) Size 12" x 48" 305mm x 1220mm

**W**hen British Rail finally closed down the Maltings Branch of the Edenvale Tramway, 'Lord' Montague Phillips was devastated. A railway enthusiast since his childhood days of playing with Triang-Hornby sets on the carpet of his London terraced house, in later life he'd deliberately sought-out homes next to railways. He hadn't been mad enough to want to live next to busy, noisy main lines, but a chance encounter on a holiday to the Lake District with his young family in the 1980's had revealed to him the perfect home, and the perfect railway.

A shallow stream, perfect for his daughters to paddle and play in, separated the farm house from the outbuildings and farmyards. The house itself, set into a secluded offshoot of the Lesser Eden, was quiet but not completely cut off from civilisation, not far from Ambleside. The farm was manageable -if a little

dilapidated- and crucially, was for sale. With the money he'd made from his career as a successful architect in London, and the inheritance from his sadly recently-deceased Grandparents, he sold-up his flat, and the family moved into Valley Farm.

But best of all, and the reason for the relatively low asking price- an industrial tramway bisected the farm grounds, running so close to the house as to practically be in touching distance of the side door. For Montague, this was perfection. No thundering expresses or unsightly overhead electric here; as he worked in his summer-house, or tended to his beloved garden, he'd stop to watch the passage of the twice-daily goods train. The little diesel shunter would squeal past, hauling empty vans northwards, then return later with the loaded wagons on the way to the exchange with the Windemere branch.









As Montague and his family flourished, the Tramway declined, and eventually impending privatisation, the spread of the motor-lorry, and economic reality, caught up with the Tramway. To the now near-retirement Montague, known to all roundabout as 'Lord' (due to his Southern upbringing, and undoubted, if modest, wealth), it was greatly upsetting. Once the trains stopped, he struggled without the rhythm to his day generated by the passing freights, and it deeply upset him to see the already-dilapidated track running across his land get ever more overgrown.

In the year before his retirement, and with Network North-West due to recover the track of the Tramway that summer, inspiration struck. Whilst on a consultancy job in the West Midlands, where a new apartment complex he'd been commissioned to design would obliterate a 200-year old factory, he was naturally drawn to the old rails set into the cobbled roadway of the site. Tracing it to a locked shed, he slipped in through a gap in the corrugated sheeting and fell in love; inside was a neglected, but intact, diesel shunter. The little Ruston and Hornsby 48ds was soon purchased, and heading North up the M6 on a chartered lorry to the Southern Lakes. Some bartering with Network North-West secured the survival of the trackbed of the Maltings Branch within the boundary of the farm. Montagues

retirement project gradually grew; old friends from London, Scouts from the local group he helped with, colleagues from his workdays, all came north to stay in one of the converted farm buildings and help rebuild the railway. A siding was laid alongside an old barn, modified to form a locomotive shed, and two small halts were built from more structures saved from building sites on which Montague had worked.

Regularly his house and grounds are opened to the public for fellow enthusiasts to ride the trains, and Montague harbours the hope that one day the Maltings Branch will be re-opened as part of the revived, preserved Edenvale Tramway that now runs a few miles away. He has even allowed the preservationists to bring their own Ruston 48, "Sabine", for a run on this surviving stretch of its old line.

And that is how 'His Lordship' sees out his retirement. On bright summer days whilst his wife grows her roses in the garden, his daughters run the holiday cottages on his land and tend the hobby farm, and his grandchildren and their friends paddle and play with their toys in the shallow stream, Montague can be seen with his old friends, trundling happily back and forth with his diesel shunter and single wagon.







*Just delightful*





*Ben's wonderful flight of fancy is contained in this tiny area*







# Thunder Ridge Update

Al Barten

Scale:N (2mm:1ft) Size 31" x 12" 780mm x 305mm

**M**y Thunder Ridge layout (Dispatch issue 10, Autumn 2023) was originally in H0e/OO9 (1:76) scale. I recently changed the scale to N standard (1:160). My reasoning was simply that the Kato Pocket Line Steeple Cab loco is so reliable it made sense to change scale. I accomplished this by replacing the freight house, depot, and office building with new versions created on my computer and printed on

cardstock. I added two lunch wagon kits, also in cardstock. The Kato loco easily pulls eight British style wagons and uses Rapido style couplers.



*The old structure, seen left.  
With the new structure  
pictured below.*











Hi Ian,  
Greetings from Austria  
I love your magazine and am sad the podcast is ending.  
We have a small child a bit too young for model railways  
so I barely ever have time to do something.  
Yesterday I had to clean out my parents' house since my  
mother is moving away. For personal reasons I haven't  
really been back since my father died. So today I found  
myself with even more Märklin M track and old

buildings than I already had in the cellar and a lot of  
emotions.  
I bought a floating shelf considering the BMR challenge  
a while back so I build what you see in the photos using  
mostly very old materials today. It's missing a  
playground and people still but that might not happen  
anymore today.

Jana Baczko



# Le Club 143

Ken Jones

O scale: 2mm = 1ft. Size 19" x 13" 480mm x 330mm

Le Club 143 is one man's attempt to save French 1:143 rolling stock built by Rail Route in the 1960s. The company later adopted the name Majorette and dropped Rail Route and its railway products. The rolling stock is kept in what remains of a sunken / walled garden, and a line has been laid in the grounds, but the stock will never run as it was only designed to be pulled along with a track gauge of 12 mm. Rail Route never built any track. The advertisement is an original Rail Route poster and some of the rolling stock can also be seen in original packaging. This packaging also contained cardboard cut-out French signals. Later clear plastic packaging with orange bases would be used. All packaging contained the red rail Route logo.

The layout is set in the present somewhere in France, and owned by an Englishman.

The layout is built in a self-standing cutlery box which dates from at least 1935 as the original brass presentation plate has been kept. The layout was built in 2019 and measures 48 cm [19 in] x 33 cm [13 in] and is free standing as its original use was also as an occasional table. The lock has been fixed, and a key made. Some of the cutlery box fittings have been used to make display shelves in the lid.

The house is a Kleiwe kit. The Dutch barn is from <https://www.dapr3d.com/>

The people are Noch and Woodland Scenics. The trees are from Busch and The Model Tree shop

The swimming pool is a kit from Vollmer. The helicopter is from Japan 1:144 Heliborne Collection. Cars have been supplied by Piers Milne and Dennis Fisher. The Isetta comes from toyauction.de and the Citroen HY Werkautswagen is produced by Minis [Lemke Collection GmbH and supplied by <http://www.trains160.com/en/>

As 1:143 rolling stock was only ever intended as a pull a long train the owner has created an N gauge layout running in his grounds where he uses a German, American or English tank engine to pull his two Ibertren coaches.

The polycarbonate sheet in the lid was cut and supplied by Rockwell of Meridien. The layout made its first public appearance at TINGS 2021. Ken Jones is a former chairman of the West Midland N Gauge Club

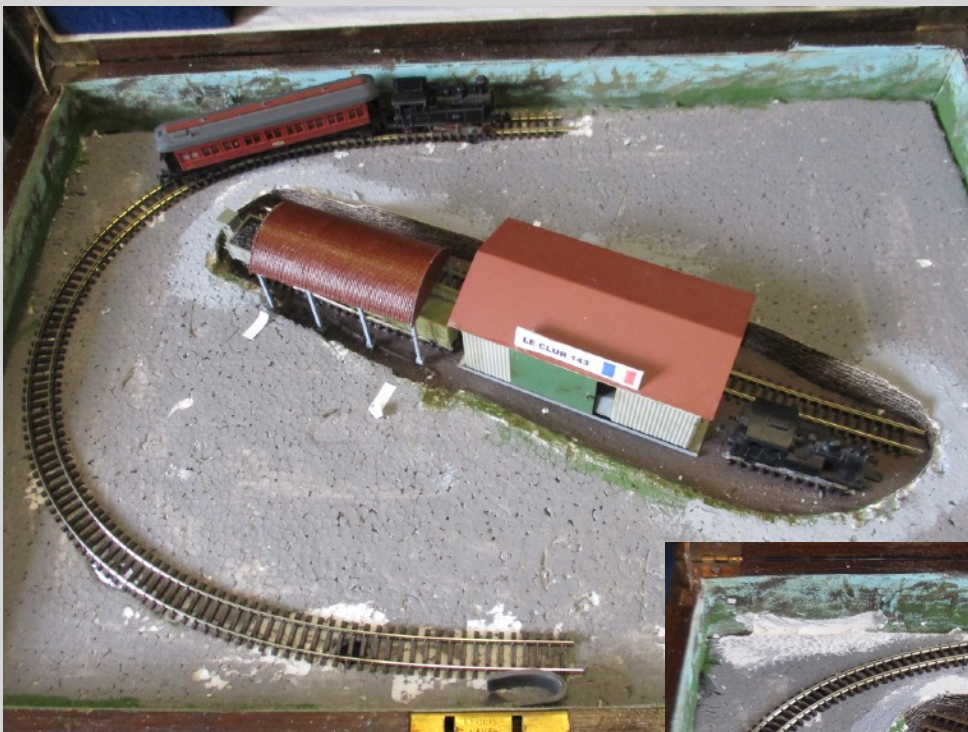


*The cutlery box and table as bought for £5. The plaque reads from Friends at Wesleys 7/9/ 1935 and was probably a full cutlery set. Possibly silver given as a wedding present.*



*The Rail Route steam loco arrives whilst buildings are placed in the sunken garden to check the cutlery box will still close. The goods shed is an old UK tinplate one*





To achieve 12mm track for the static exhibits N gauge track was cut down the middle and stuck down as 12 mm and at the same time an idea of what was needed to lay a small oval of N gauge track for the railway. the sunken garden exhibits are removed and the first N gauge train tested.



The layout is starting to look like a railway. The manor house and scenery are added, as is the swimming pool





*The finished swimming pool as fixed to the layout. Lots of people are expected so outside caterers have been employed. Detailing the swimming pool with a mixture of nude and non-nude swimmers, well it is meant to be in France*



*The finished layout prior to taking it to an exhibition*





*Deciding which rolling stock would be in the lid and this is removed after an exhibition so the stock can be changed for the next one, and the lid will close*



*Overall view of this fascinating model. The manufacturer was totally new to me*



# Ogam & Stone

Tony Harwood

Scale: 7mm = 1ft. Size 31" x 17.5" 787mm x 445mm



Overall view of the "front" of the layout.

**O**gam & Stone was built over twenty years ago for the 7mm Narrow Gauge Association annual AGM meeting in Nottingham and has appeared in NARROW LINES. The total layout is just 31" x 17 1/2" and was built on a used shelf. The track is Peco O-16.5 with the single point being a modified HO-OO item bought second hand and operated via wire in tube.

Most of the decorative items and buildings are scratch-built from a variety of different materials including card, DAS, plastic card, balsawood and items from my 'spares box'.

Earlier this year while looking after my two grandson's Finley and Charlie I was asked to get Ogam & Stone down from the attic and getting it working.

I made it very clear that I did not hold out any hopes of it running, but after a quick clean and connecting up a power supply it ran first time!

The last two weeks have seen me repair any damaged sections replace the small plastic card handle (for the wire in tube point) and strengthen the very tight track curves. Later I added some more greenery and even a couple of flowers as well as giving the two scratch built OSO Salt, Kerr Stuart diesels complete overhauls. I can confirm that the layout now runs smoothly if a little loud.

For day-to-day operations I use a Fleischmann controller and a built-in RELCO unit (housed in the main building). The engines run on Tenshodo Spud 4 wheel mechanisms and the 5 scratch built

wagons all use elements from the R. C. Link O-14 range (modified for O-16.5). The couplings are simple wire O's which allows the wagons to perform well on the tight curves.

My favourite pastime is dealing random cards – one for each of the wagons and performing intricate shunting moves.

As well as this O-16.5 layout I have two 1:27.7 or 11mm = 1 foot narrow gauge layouts, OSSO Salt and The Yellow Pelican Mining Co. and am in the process of building a 1:35th scale narrow gauge layout which is based on the tried and tested Inglenook principles.





*The reverse side of this delightful micro*







*So many great little details to take in on this layout*



# Mosslanda in H0

Eric Geneau

Scale:H0 Size :4' x 1' 1220mm x 305mm

I'm pleased to present to you my new layout, ultraportable, that can be carried easily in metros, buses and trains. This layout is a generic yard that will be used for short operating sessions. An important feature was the option of been able to run my North American or my European rolling stocks. A traditional cameo was out of question, due to space constraints and the fact that I don't own a car to carry it, so a small shelf layout was the answer to my list of requirements. James Hilton has been proposing lots of good ideas, including the use of IKEA shelves as baseboards for his N scale cameos. So, I made the decision to use the same product, but this time to create a micro H0 layout.

The Mosslanda shelves have a width of 12 cm external / 10 cm internal (4 3/4 / 4 inches) and are available in two different lengths, 55 or 115 cm (21 3/4 or 45 1/4 inches).

Mosslanda shelves are made of pieces of MDF glued together and recovered with a thin layer of vinyl or thin plastic material. I prefer a substratum made from wood, so the first step tpo be completed was to glue/screw a piece of 6 mm (1/4 in) plywood to the base.

I then built the three (3) structures located on the layout. The first one is the stone wall located at the end of the tracks. I used Evergreen .040 pieces of sheet and strips. The stones strip comes from the Wills range. When completed the structure got primed with Vallejo Black primer directly from the can. Stones were painted with Vallejo acrylic paints. I then glazed the stones using an Army Painter pre-mixed brown wash, to tone down and unify the different beige colors. The gray concrete parts of the structure were airbrushed with Tamiya paints.



*The layout boxed up and opened up showing the layout and the fiddle yard. To me, when the layout is boxed up it looks like a snooker cue case.*



The beige concrete wall is by Walthers and is from a former layout and has been used as I found it in my leftover box. I built a mundane warehouse structure with DPM and Evergreen parts. I then primed it with Tamiya gray primer directly from the can. The red bricks were painted by wet brushing various tones of Vallejo reds. Weathering consists of highly diluted Tamiya paint (10% paint /90% thinner) sprayed over the structure. Structures were permanently installed on the layout prior to the ballasting of the tracks.

Track works consist of one (1) Peco SL-E97 Y Point/ Turnout, Small Radius, two (2) ST-220 curves, and couple of lengths of code 100 flex tracks (old Roco and Peco). The tracks are attached to the layout with Atlas nails. I used Scenery express No 40 ballast for this project. I let

the ballast dry for couple of days and then masked all the structures and visible parts of the Mosslanda shelf.

I always paint the tracks and ballast together and usually use a dark color like dark gray or dark brown. This time I used Tamiya XF-63 German gray for the base color. I cleaned the top of the tracks right at the end of the painting process, with an old rag and 70% isopropyl alcohol, before the paint cures. Next step consist of a light gray drybrush over the ballast and the track ties.

Afterward I took the time to paint each tie with a medium brown color. I then airbrushed a highly diluted rusty orange/beige color over the tracks, mixed from various Tamiya colors. Last step was to airbrush a black line in the middle of the tracks to simulate oil/grease drops.





For the fiddle stick I decided to recycle couple of pieces of Kato Unitrack. European track bumpers are from a former Märklin layout, the North American ones from a Walthers kit.

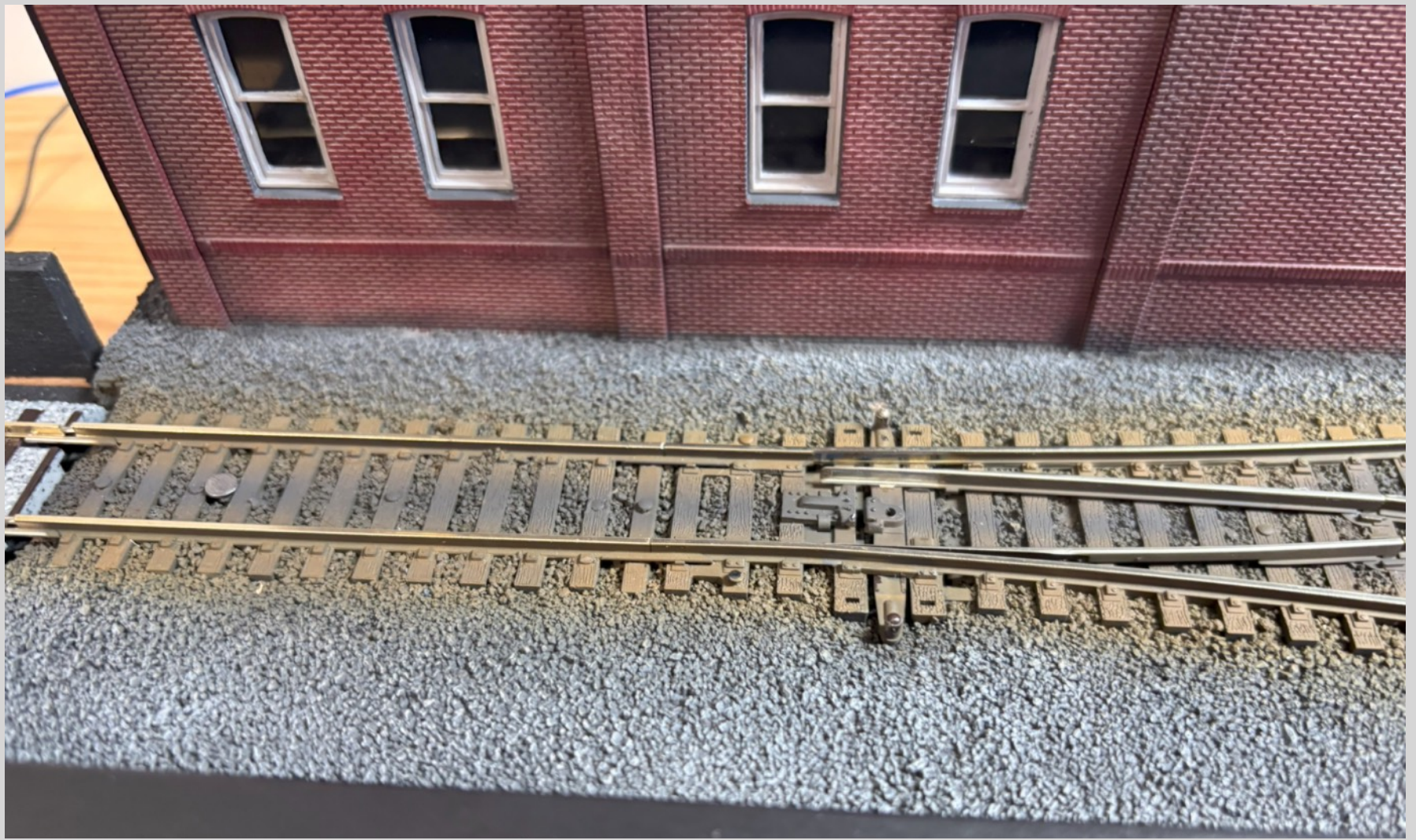
The layout can be operated in analogue or DCC. I use a Kato controller or a Hornby HM6000 Bluetooth device with their dedicated phone app. For my sound equipped locomotives, I use a Roco Z21 with their dedicated Mouse or via my smart phone. It's a simple puzzle, so I'll probably create playing cards for each piece of equipment and will create a witching list with

them at the beginning of each session. European stocks been shorter than the 40 or 50' NA box cars, it should allow longer and more complex operating sessions

On the downside the 10 cm workable width of the shelf doesn't allow for a lot of clearance. I can only use shunters of Bo-Bo locomotives due to the small radius of the Y turnout. Although it's a relatively small layout, the weight is about 4 Kg, due to fact that the shelves are made from MDF.











*Small locomotives and rolling stock are essential for this narrow layout*



**O**ver the past year or so, I have been working on a micro layout book, and it is now very close to being ready.

It's not going to be a handbook. It's not a "how to" guide to designing and building micro layouts.

It's a collection of personal thoughts and observations about designing building and operating micro layouts. In it you will find concepts from my sketchbooks. Some of them quite old. Perhaps they will give you a few ideas for projects of your own.

I think most of you would want to see the book for the layouts. and there are plenty in there. The good *and* the bad. I believe that the failures are just as important as the successes.

As I was writing down all the failures and my reasons for scrapping layouts. I started to think.

"My goodness, that was a silly reason for scrapping."

Sometimes being honest with yourself is quite revealing.

Anyway, all your favourite layouts are in there; Purespring Watercress, Bontofts, and British Oak coal loading point. There are even some never before seen pictures of Wingett's recycling that I found on an old external hard drive.

The book will be a download and will cost \$10. Further details will follow when the book is ready to be released.

p.s. My wife and I will be in the UK at the Ffestiniog Railway Bygones weekend 4th-6th of October. If you see me, feel free to say "Hi".

*Ian Holmes*

## A Little Book on Micro Layouts



*Personal thoughts about designing and building very small model railway layouts.*