

Association of Shrewsbury Railway Modellers

JOURNAL

No.1 March 2025

Editorial

'Begin at the beginning, the King said, very gravely, and go on till you come to the end: then stop.' So wrote Lewis Carroll in his 1865 novel 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland', which makes one wonder whether the King of Hearts was considering an end-to-end layout, perhaps without buffer stops, in which case it is excellent advice. Maria Von Trapp voiced similar sentiments in the 'Sound of Music' but I have always felt the Swiss Alps to be better suited to a 'roundy roundy' plan. Anyway, I digress. Whatever your chosen design, starting a layout usually begins with the baseboards, be they tried and trusted plywood, 'Kingspan' style foamboard, or lazer-cut MDF. This is often the most exciting point giving rise to visions (or perhaps delusions) of grandeur, great scenic Pendonesque gestures with gracefully flowing double track sweeping into bucolic country stations or bustling town termini. Even the smallest of schemes can often prompt fondly imagined scenes that in reality one doesn't stand a chance of squeezing in. I am full of admiration for modellers who start any project big or small and, although it may take many years, actually manage to see it through to completion, (*although is any layout ever really finished*)? Such levels of dedication are inspiring and model railway exhibitions might not be quite so entertaining if everything on show was half finished due to excessive ennui. The odd 'work in progress' can be fascinating and educational but we all like to see the full monty. However, the finished product, impressive as it may be is often unable to convey the sheer pleasure we derive from tinkering, fettling, tweaking, and generally fiddling with our models.

Our hobby is perhaps unique in supporting so many different aspects from carpentry to electronics, from painstakingly creating everything from scratch to standing back and admiring a recently acquired near perfect ready-to-run locomotive and carriages. That's really the point of it all, taking pleasure from whatever it is that you enjoy, who really cares if it's finished or not? It's very easy to feel the weight of expectation to complete a project but I suspect we bring this pressure upon ourselves. Enjoy the process, the time spent just standing and watching trains go round, it really doesn't matter if that platform doesn't actually have a station on it, or you haven't got around to glueing grass to the embankment or ballasting the track, you'll get there in the end...but don't feel you have to stop when you do, and don't worry if it never happens. Just enjoy the journey!

I like to squeeze in a link to something I hope will be of interest at this point, so the following is something spotted on YouTube by Chris Kapolka. It's a truly stunning example of how to construct a large area of trackwork without losing any of the quality one might expect with the drudge of endless ballasting. It's also presented as a bit of a 'how to' video so well worth a replay too.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZE2WqYFK3Y>

This year's ASRM Journal will be published in June, September, and December 2025. Deadlines for contributions will be as follows:

May 30th - August 29th - November 28th

To assist with my task of editing, please could contributions be in the form of a simple email or an attached Word document with all images as separate jpegs (not embedded in the text). If you have a lot to send and/or the file size is large, then file transfer tools such as WeTransfer.com are free and easy to use and save clogging up the email system. Thank you. XXXXXXXXXX

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Chris Kapolka's cracking shot at Beeston this December with 60007 Sir Nigel Gresley on the last leg of the outward trip to Chester.

Coalbrookdale Modelling Day

The fourth Coalbrookdale Modelling Day was a great success with 10 of us beavering away on a wide variety of projects. The usual tea, coffee, biscuits, and homemade cake was provided, and the feedback has been very positive with folks achieving much more than if they had stayed at home! The next Modelling Day will be held on 29th March 2025. Please contact your editor if you would like to take part, chriscox5and9@gmail.com. Photos below courtesy of Sam Ryan.



A bit of loco research – Nick Coppin

I did enjoy Vernon's talk about researching. He said he was interested in buildings, not particularly locos or coaches. That is fine but I am currently interested in locos; two locos in particular. In 1980, I saw the only real, working live steam I can truly remember. We were travelling home from Pembrokeshire to Hampshire after a holiday and called in at Mountain Ash to see the Phurnacite works. Phurnacite was a smokeless fuel, probably made from compressed coal dust and cement. It had a lot of the constituents in coal that produce smoke driven off so people living in 'smokeless zones' of the UK could burn it relatively cleanly. All well and good for them but the process meant Mountain Ash was permanently shrouded in coal smoke! The Phurnacite works still had live steam and we saw and photographed a couple of tanks engines at work.



Robert Stephenson & Hawthorns 'Austerity' 0-6-0 saddle tank 'NCB No.8' (Works No. 7139 built in 1944) at Mountain Ash 'Phurnacite' works.

Before we got to Mountain Ash, we had visited Pontardulais where the coal trains from the Graig Merthyr pit transferred to BR. There we saw two locos in steam, both Austerity saddle tanks. They were hauling mostly 21 ton steel mineral wagons; loaded downhill from the pit and empties back up again. At the time of our visit, the pit had closed and they were removing the last of the coal stocks. For years afterwards I fondly recalled that day when I saw steam working, not just pulling tourists and enthusiasts around on preserved lines.

With Dapol poised to bring 0 gauge models of the Austerity to the shops, I had to decide whether to buy one and which one to model. I studied my forty year old photos under a lens and discovered one had a nameplate, 'Norma'. This turned out to be a Hunslet loco, works number 3770 built in 1952. After the National Coal Board sold it, it ended up in Shropshire at Oswestry. We saw in last July on our trip to the Cambrian Heritage Railways, sadly in pieces. So, I decided to make that my model. However, I really wanted a green loco and Norma had been blue.



'Norma' with 21 ton minerals at Pontardulais

Studying colour photos on the internet, I found that there was another loco at Graig Merthyr which was green (under all that coal dust). This was a Bagnall; the same Austerity design as Norma. Number 2758 was built in 1944 and ended her career with Norma at Graig Merthyr. It then went to the Gwili Railway near Carmarthen. It seems to have been cannibalised and some parts of it were on display at Cefn Coed Colliery Museum. The cab and tank went to another Austerity, now named 'Welsh Guardsman' and currently residing in the yard at Severn Valley Railway in Bridgnorth! In some of the photos of it working at Graig Merthyr, you can see two dents in the bunker. ASRM member and train driver, Neal Cooper, suggests these match up with the heights of the 16 ton and 21 ton mineral wagons used on the railway. Close inspection of my 1980 photos clearly showed the dents and rather than looking at the rear of Norma bringing in a train, I had photographed the green Bagnall so *that* is the loco I shall be repainting and weathering once my shiny Dapol loco is delivered. Nice to think I will have a long lived, if tenuous, connection with the original and see at least its tank and cab every Thursday when I go to work at SVR.

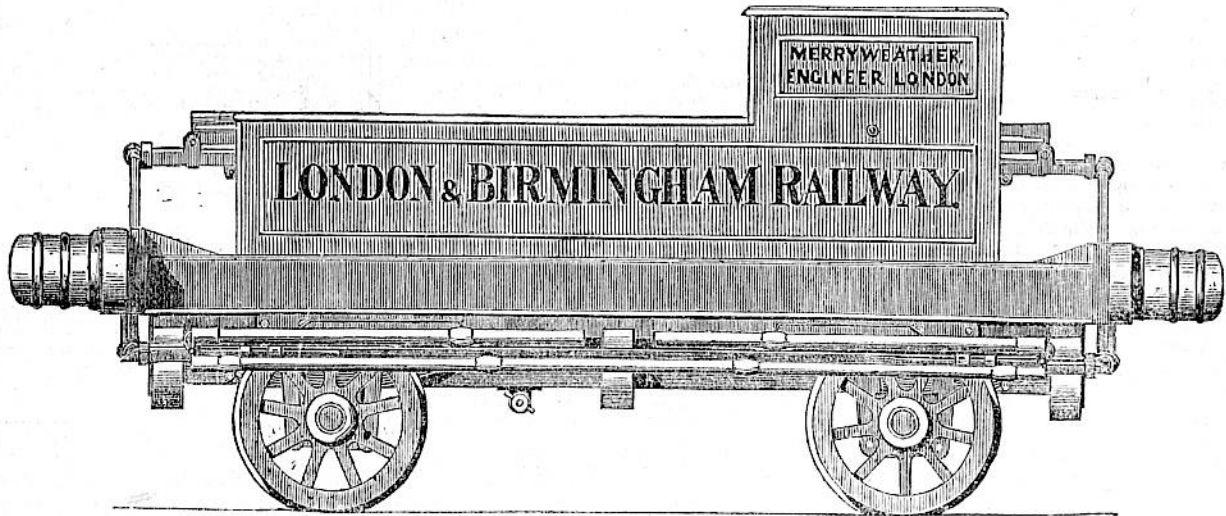


Chosen prototype; Bagnall with dents in her bunker bringing 21 ton minerals into Pontardulais

The London & Birmingham Railway fire tender – Tom Nicholls

On 10th June 1842, to much aplomb, the press announced that the railway property from Euston to Camden and along the length of the line would be protected by a fire tender that could be quickly brought to the location of any fire on company property by virtue of being mounted on a railway wagon and thus able to be pulled by an engine at some speed. The Berkshire Chronicle tells us 'A *first class [fire] engine to run on the London & Birmingham Railway was put on the line a few days back at the Camden Town station by Mr Merryweather, the engineer, when it was attached to one of the locomotives and propelled to Euston-Square station. The engine is mounted on railway wheels, and fitted with buffers, similar to the carriages... The engine being well manned by forty of the railway men, a hose was put to each side, when two distinct bodies of water were delivered, showing that if two buildings near each other were on fire the engine can be brought to bear upon them both at one and the same time.*'

MERRYWEATHER'S RAILWAY FIRE-ENGINE.



The original, and only known, contemporary illustration from Mechanics Magazine, 9th July 1842 p17-18 and reproduced in the Railway Times.

Back in 1837 the London and Birmingham Railway (L&BR) had decided that they would not insure their buildings against fire. Mr Bruyeres, on 20th May, brought to the Directors' attention that 'in the event of a fire there is no engine on the premises.' and he wondered whether 'it would not be expedient to have one at both Euston and Birmingham mounted on rail wheels as being more efficient for these stations in case of accident.' The subsequent report, a week later, concluded that Birmingham did not need an engine due to the number of 'plug' points for water around the station but that a hose should be ordered. 'At the Euston station there is a considerable command of water but having different opinions as to the capability of its reaching the tops of buildings without the assistance of an engine, I have instructed Mr Smith to try with the pipes and report the result to me for the information of the committee. I have also written to Mr Bury to enquire if he thinks it advisable that there be an engine stationed at Wolverton.' Minute 242 concludes 'That the superintendent be authorised to procure a fire engine for the Camden station with apparatus to complete as estimated at £95 4s 0d - also the necessary length of hose for the Birmingham Station.' Although the London Metropolitan Archives does have reference to a purchase of the Merryweather fire engines for Swindon by Daniel Gooch, I couldn't find reference to the L&BR engine.



In 1841 the Merryweather Company had delivered to the L&BR a manual pump fire engine. Whether this was already converted to a rail mounted version or not is unclear. This was described as differing from their standard model as shown by design similarities with existing museum pieces. Merryweather at this time was based at Long Acre. In 1791 Henry Lott had joined the firm and later took over full control of the company and, when he retired, handed it over to his nephew by marriage. Moses Merryweather (1791-1872). He and his sons, including Richard Moses Merryweather (1839-1877), managed the business and it was known as Merryweather and Sons. In the 1830s customers included parishes and vestries in London and beyond including Ireland, fire insurance companies including Sun Fire Office and the Hand in Hand, for other businesses and for individuals, mainly the aristocracy. Supplementary to the feeble efforts of the Parish Officers, the various fire insurance companies ran their own engines worked by their own men.

Left: Moses Merryweather (1791-1872). (From Merryweather & Sons Ltd by Horton, Ralph. Copyright Fire Brigade Society).

Merryweather evidently thought that the railway market was one to develop. Interestingly, there is evidence that it did, but not quite as he expected. His sending of letters to newspapers shows a good sense of marketing capability and an astuteness to gain free publicity. The following transcript is from the Bucks Herald – Saturday 30th October 1841.

‘To the Editor of the Bucks Herald and Windsor and Eton Journal

Sir, - I have received a letter from London this morning informing me, that in consequence of so many fires happening in different parts of the country, the Directors of the London and Birmingham Railway have ordered of Mr. Merryweather, the engine-maker, Long Acre, London, a new and powerful fire engine, one of the largest size, which will be capable of throwing above 200 gallons of water per minute, fitted up in the first style, with railway wheels and buffers, to run on the line same as the engines and carriages do. In case of fire on the line or otherwise, they will be able to attach it to an engine or train, and start it at a moment's notice. Should the above be worthy of a place in your valuable columns, you will much oblige, Sir,

*Your obedient Servant,
R. Merryweather,
Engineer
(Stowe, October 28th, 1841.)’*

Much of the Merryweather history has references to good connections to aristocracy and the well to do. Many journalists and writers, as well as Merryweather’s own self publicity, talk of the machinery’s beauty, elegance, technological superiority and incredible capacity. While we can lay these aside as boasts, Merryweather’s connections definitely played a role in the company’s success.



The model above by Chris Cox from a 4mm scale 3D print with Gibson wheels and detailing from scratch.

One such connection was the Dukes of Buckingham. They had various involvements in railways, and it is claimed that the 3rd Duke had such an interest in Merryweather's and extinguishing fires that he was present as a volunteer and taking much interest in the 'work of the firm'. This Duke, the 3rd Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, was to become the Chairman of the LNWR between 1853 and 1861. Perhaps he had some influence in attracting the L&BR Directors' attention to Merryweather's product?

Right: Merryweather's premises in Long Acre. (From Merryweather & Sons Ltd by Horton, Ralph. Copyright Fire Brigade Society).



The fire tender was still at work in 1846, as The Sun newspaper, amongst others, reported that a fire in the Chalk Farm stores caused much alarm, an account of 'cotton wipings' having caught alight following an explosion of some fog signals. The fire tender arrived quickly and 'judiciously' distributed water extinguishing the flames. The building however was much damaged, particularly the floor which was 'much burned', and the contents were damaged by both fire and, as happens, the water.

The building however was much damaged, particularly the floor which was 'much burned', and the contents were damaged by both fire and, as happens, the water.

Around this time the Great Western Railway ordered fire engines for Swindon, and the Grand Junction Railway (GJR) ordered one for Crewe. The latter gained fame being stabled adjacent to the Webb Coupé under the Chester Bridge. This location was used later for a fire train, but I haven't been able to find details of the original GJR purchase. Three forms of railway fire appliance emerged in later years, there were several examples of horse drawn fire engines being mounted on railway flat wagons, such as at Derby on the Midland Railway, Tyne Yard on the North Eastern Railway and Horwich on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway. All the examples I have found had Merryweather steam horsedrawn pump engines that were normally mounted on railway flats but could also be demounted and brought to fires beyond the range of the tracks. This form overcame the restricted range of rail mounted fire appliances. Another form was the establishment of (road vehicle) fire stations under the administration of the railway company, and finally the creation of fire-fighting trains. David Bond is researching the Wolverton fire train which included a fire engine mounted on a locomotive tender chassis. This, like those at Crewe and Horwich, being a very different beast.

I would like to thank the following: Chris Cox for bringing the original drawing to my attention; Peter Banbury and Gail Rogers of the Whitstable Museum for their kind support and taking the time to provide dimensions of their 1842 Merryweather engines; Melissa Barnett also for providing information on the Parish of Chippenham 1842 Merryweather: Richard Hickman of the FBS (Fire Brigade Society); and Jeff Wright of Merryweather and Sons for putting me in touch with Neil Bennett to whom I am extremely grateful for the extra references.

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The National Archives (TNA).

Minutes of the Coaching & Policing Committee (Carriage Sub Committee) of the London and Birmingham Railway, RAIL 384/94 and 95 - Dec 1839 - Feb 1842.

London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) Title: Day book (Merryweather document)- Reference Code: LMA/4516/01/001 - Dates of Creation: Dec 1830 - Feb 1844. Scope: Contains daily accounts giving the date, customer's name, details of the order and cost (Dec 1830 - Jul 1835), At back of volume: draft out-going letters to customers (Aug 1842 - Feb 1844).

Newspapers

Railway Times -Vol 4 pl 168. 184 | -'Order placed with Merryweather'

Bucks Herald - Saturday 30th October 1841 - Letter to the Editor, R MERRYWEATHER
Railway Times - 11th June 1842 - 'Euston Sq. Demonstration'
Morning Post - 11th June 1842 p7
Berkshire Chronicle - 25th June 1842 p4
Mechanics Magazine - 9th July 1842 p7-18
Globe - Monday 12 January 1846 - 'Chalk Farm stores fire'
The Sun - Tuesday 13th January 1846 - 'Chalk Farm stores fire'

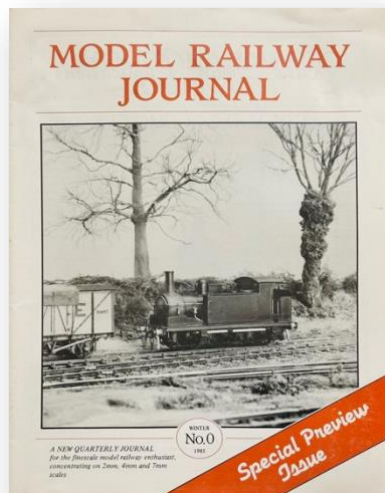
Books

The House of Merryweather: A Record of Two Centuries, Merryweather & Sons Ltd (attributed to James Compton Merryweather). Publisher by Merritt and Hatcher Ltd 1901
Merryweather & Sons Ltd. Horton Ralph, Publisher: Fire Brigade Society: 2013. Edition:
1st. ISBN Number: 1871335175. ISBN-I3: 9781871335170

Links

<https://corinthian.online/stowes-rich-history>

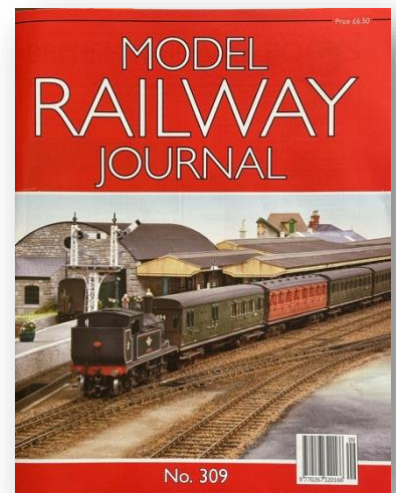
<https://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk/about-us/local-fire-stations/crewe-fire-station/history>



40 years of the Model Railway Journal

An interview with Paul Karau

From Issue 0 way back in 1985 the Model Railway Journal has been the guiding light of model railway publications. It's careful selection of examples of the very best of the hobby have provided readers with inspiration and advice, entertainment, and sheer visual pleasure for 40 years. Even a cursory glance over the extensive index of articles reveals a long list of legendary modellers who have contributed in so many



ways, names to evoke memories of favourite layouts and moments of inspiration and epiphany. MRJ editor-in-chief Paul Karau has kindly agreed to allow us a glimpse into the world of model railway journalism and shares some of his memories of a life dedicated to the best of our hobby.

Q: What are your earliest memories of railways and the moments when you felt inspired to model?

My father apparently used to take me to Reading station to relieve the pressure of lodging with my mother's parents in a small, terraced house in Henley. I was too young to recall any of this, but he said I would shake with excitement at the express trains. My earliest memories from about 2 years old are of GWR railcar No. 1 and pannier tanks with the ex slip coaches at Henley and watching Southern trains from the Forbury Gardens at Reading. My father wasn't interested in railways, but he gave me a Hornby Dublo trainset for Christmas when I was four years old and that began my lifelong enjoyment of our hobby. I had no end of pleasure from the 3-rail operation until one teatime my mother arrived at my Grandmother's with the first model railway magazine I had ever seen - the February 1962 Railway Modeller. I was overwhelmed with inspiration and still get a lot from that treasured issue today. I then persuaded my grandfather to take me to the Easter Model Railway Club exhibition in Westminster which changed my whole perception of modelling and gave me the ambition to build a 'proper' layout.

Q: At what point did you feel that the hobby should have a Journal to showcase finescale modelling and who were the key individuals who helped shape your ambition?

Not long after starting Wild Swan Publications we started the British Railway Journal mainly because I wasn't inspired by the HMRS Journal and thought we could do something ourselves. We included some modelling which led to co-editor Gerry Beale and myself being lobbied throughout both days of Scaleforum to start a model magazine devoted to finescale. At the time we were all despondent that Model Railways had been relaunched as Your Model Railway catering for beginners and departing even further from its origins as the long established and valued Model Railway News. Gerry and I didn't want to overstretch ourselves so having spent much of the exhibition talking to Bob Barlow about the East Suffolk Light Railway which he'd built with Iain Rice, we decided to ask if he fancied working with us on a possible Model Railway Journal. Bob had already written for the BRJ so it made some sort of sense and when he agreed we all set out on our adventure together.

Q: How easy or hard was it to establish MRJ in the early years and was the hobby ready to receive such a publication?

Launching a new magazine was a big financial risk but I felt reasonably confident the demand was there. The newstrade wouldn't take the magazine unless they could see it first and they were unwilling to start with No. 2, so we produced a No. 0 for our own distribution to model shops so the distributor could start with No. 1, and fortunately it all went well. I am still continually inspired looking through backnumbers of older magazines but I was not enjoying those of the 1980s so I hoped people who felt the same might welcome a more discerning finescale approach, and luckily they did.

Q: Can you provide a few stand-out moments (there must be many over the years when you have discovered or been introduced to an inspiring example of railway modelling?)

The real stand-out moment for Bob and I was receiving sample pictures of Martyn Welch's Hursley layout and the brilliantly weathered locos and stock. It looked so real and we were thrilled to cover it. You can detect Martyn's influence in many subsequent models so its influence lives on. There are many other inspiring examples of modelling in MRJ, in fact thankfully too many to list here. We really are lucky.

Q: Our hobby is peppered with memorable characters. Can you recall a few individuals who have inspired, entertained, educated, frustrated, or simply made you laugh over the years.

Bob Essery wrote the article on Portreath which appeared in the first Railway Modeller I saw when I was 11 years old, and he went on to inspire me further through realistic pictures of his scratchbuilt wagons in subsequent issues. To publish his work when we started Wild Swan Publications therefore meant a lot to me and he was a huge supporter of MRJ and would always do anything for us. Even now I can't believe how lucky we've been with warm and generous support from the likes of Guy Williams, Tony Reynolds, John Hayes, Don Rowland, Roy Jackson, Geoff Kent, Chris Pendelton, Martyn Welch, etc, etc. The list really does go on and on. There have been plenty of laughs, not least from Roy Jackson who really was a character but above everything is the generosity from so many modellers to help with whatever they can, and I feel so lucky to sit in the midst of it all.

Q: Have there been any moments of doubt or lessons learned the hard way in the history of MRJ, and who or what helped you through these.

In the earlier years of MRJ we suffered two distributor collapses through which we lost thousands of pounds. It nearly finished us but somehow, we managed to survive without taking up kind offers of financial help from a number of readers. That apart, I have never doubted MRJ's value to finescale followers, and the lovely messages of thanks scribbled on subscription renewal forms alone make the effort seem worthwhile.

Q: Are there any layouts you feel you might have missed or could be considered 'the one that got away'? Perhaps something from the early days that came and went before you had an opportunity to record it?

From the outset I have always searched for layouts and occasionally been sad to miss a few that I would have liked to present in MRJ, but none of us can have everything in life. I think we have been exceptionally lucky to have had such high-quality material throughout our existence.

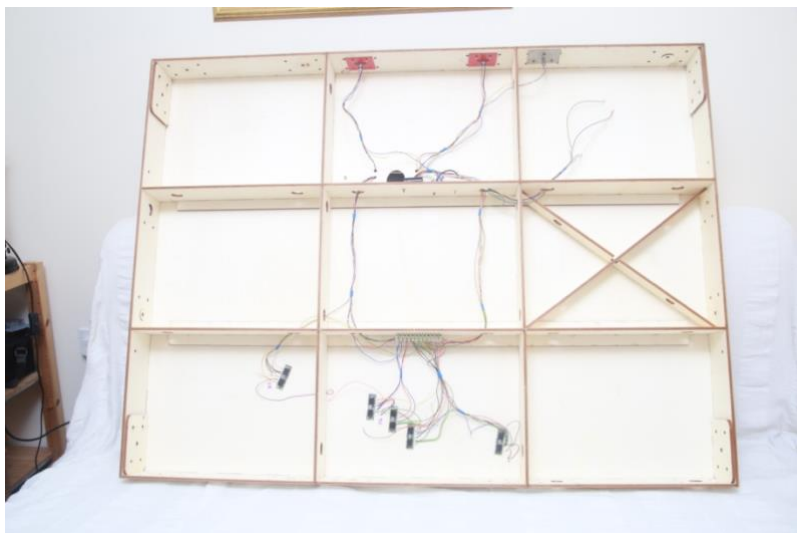
Q: Looking to the future, how do you see MRJ continuing to be the outstanding record of our fascinating hobby?

Fortunately, the excitement continues because there are always new projects and new discoveries to find. I feel every bit as enthusiastic today as I did before we even started, and I feel the magazine is at

least as good today as it has ever been. MRJ has always been a team effort but one of the best things has been the addition of guest editors. I love working with them and they help to keep things fresh. I only wish I'd come up with the idea a few years earlier.

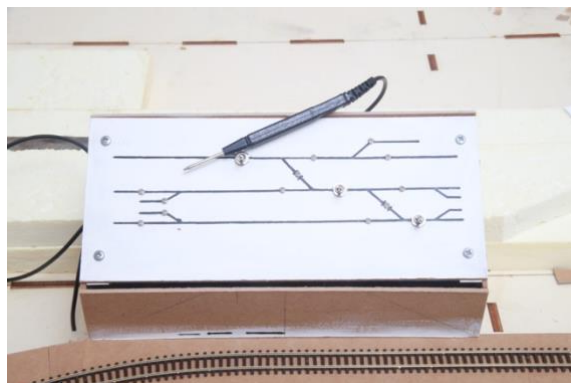
'Tabletop' layout project – Graham Betts

After seeing the various 'Tabletop' displays in July 2023 I had decided to follow suit and build an N gauge example utilising my collection of British outline locomotives and stock. November 2024 saw me start it!

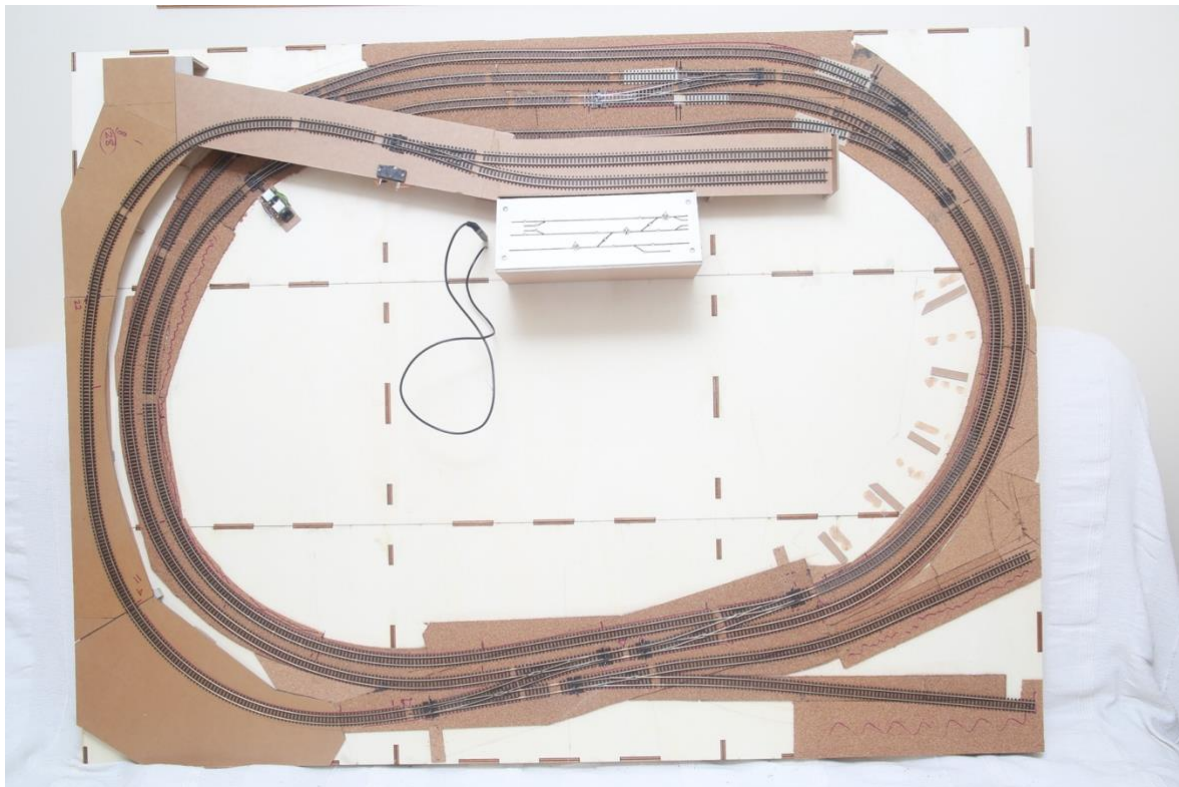


I bought a standard Grainge & Hodder base board, 1200mm x 900mm for £117 delivered, that saved me much time, cutting and sawing (including fingers). The whole thing was finished in a couple of hours, following a 'dry run'.

The model is intended to reflect the mid war steam era and for the first time will not have a station included but reflect a double track with a branch line junction. A couple of sidings are included with a goods shed. So far, the track has proven the most expensive item, but once laid and wired the pleasure from landscaping has quickly followed on.



At the time of writing, ballasting is completed, insulation has been laid to start the height contours and some retaining walls made for the cutting and branch line elevations. I now await a delivery of 'stuff' to continue.



The scene is intended to depict an industrial area where I can use some of my 4mm Scale Scenes card plans printed at 50%. These have proven far easier to make in 4mm than 2mm.

Night time at Earl's Hall – Michael Bennet

I have been experimenting with a bit of night-time photography on my N gauge layout "Earl's Hall", and the first, reasonably acceptable attempts are shown below:



1. ARC liveried PGA wagon scene.

This was the first attempt using an iPhone 11 which made up its own mind and made the unilateral decision of: 1000 ASA @ f.1.8 for 1/20th sec.

For the remainder I reverted to my old and trusted digital SLR Canon Mk1 EOS 7D using an 18-200 zoom lens. This is perhaps an unusual choice as my (much more expensive) EF-S 10-22 ultra wide angle would normally be the 'go to' lens to provide a better depth of field. However by using the telephoto lens and a long exposure I found I could set the tripod up further away and get a reasonable (though not perfect) depth of field. I know the professional model railway photographers have editing suites that can overcome the problem with depth of field but I cannot justify such a purchase to the keeper of the privy purse.



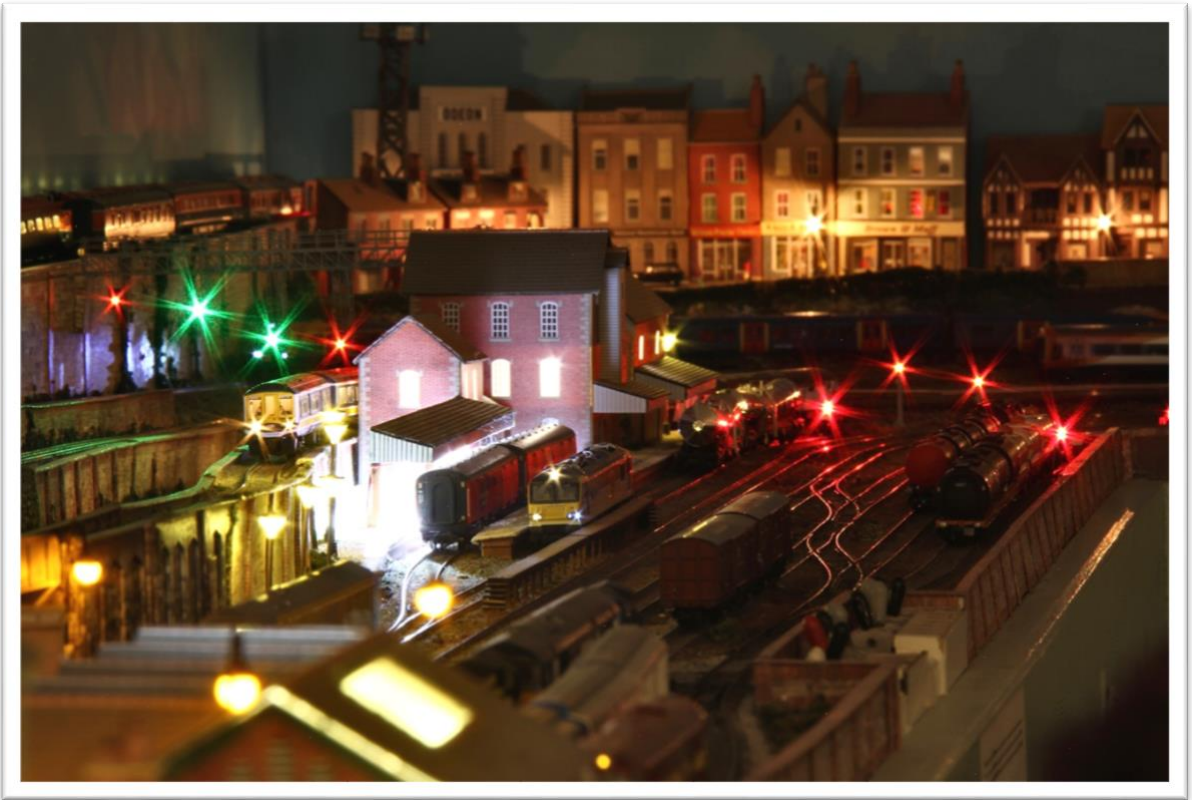
2. Street Scene: 400ASA @ f.36 for 13.0 secs

The rest were all taken at:
100ASA @ f.22 for 30secs.

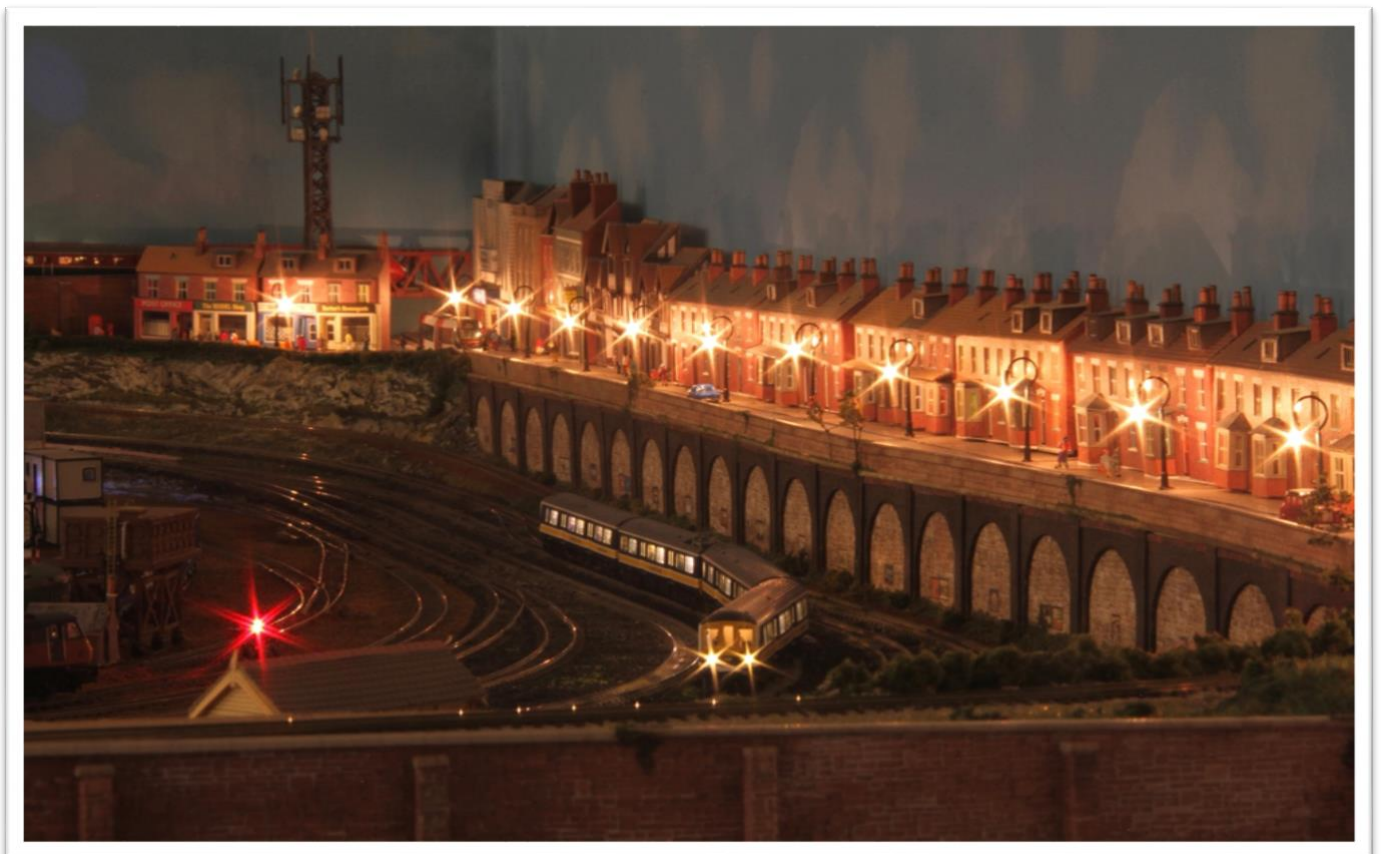


In order to obtain some clarity where not illuminated by street lights etc., I found it better with the overhead LED strip light off and the two dimmable LED wall lights on low. With all lights off much of

the non-illuminated parts were in darkness and even post-production techniques were insufficient to provide the detail in these parts of the scene.

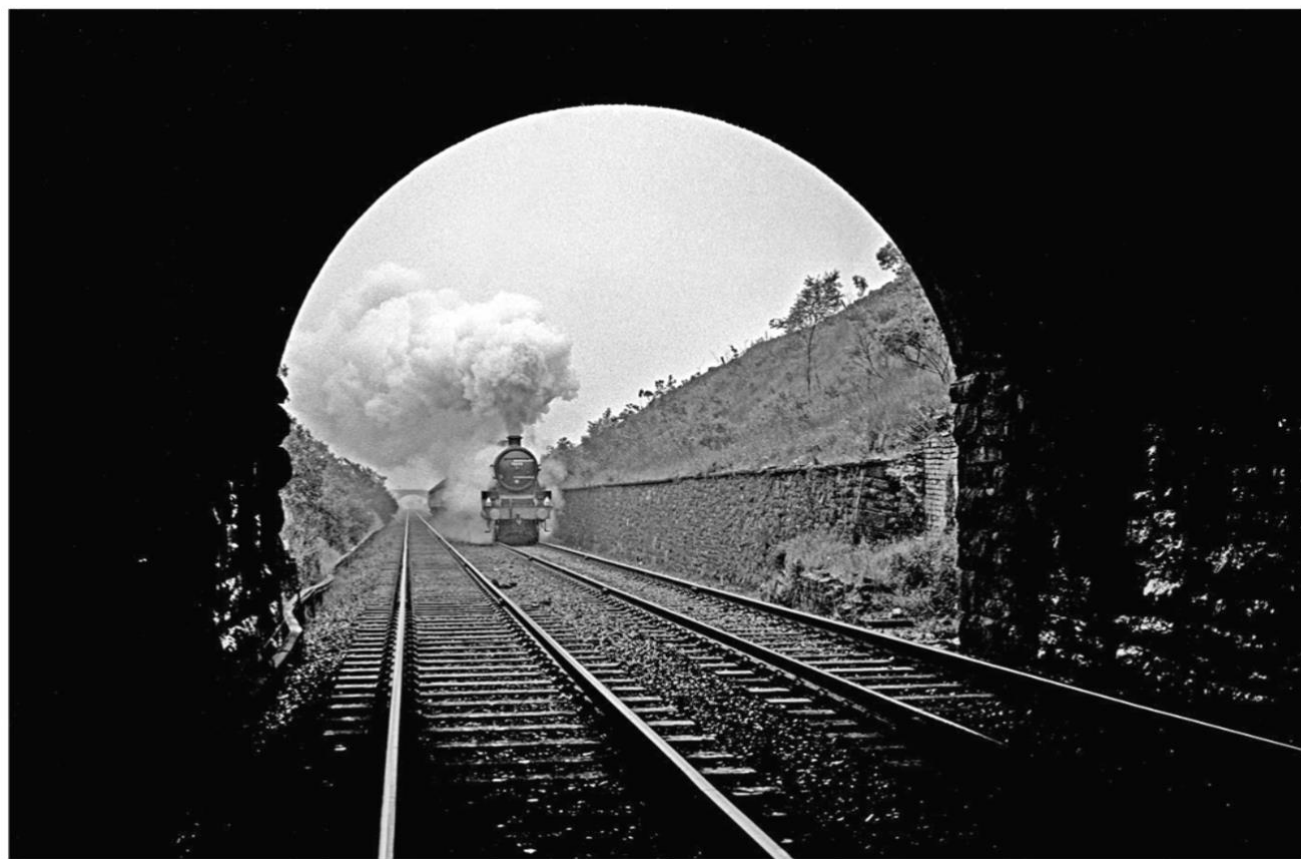


I should have liked to experiment with an ASA of 25 or 50 as per the old colour slide film, but 100 is the slowest film speed programmed into the 7D. And yes, being curmudgeonly, I still say ASA rather than ISO!



Tunnel Visions – Chris Kapolka

Is there light at the end of the tunnel? Yes... but it may not be quite what you think! ... it just may be the headlight of a train racing towards you! Tunnels are not places to loiter and I learnt that at an early age. I was just sixteen when I was photographing steam trains on the Settle and Carlisle line staying at local Youth Hostels for a fortnight. I had borrowed my dad's *Voightlander Vito B* camera and had one roll of 35mm black and white film. Every picture was going to be precious, as I knew the end of the steam was nigh. The steam grapevine informed me that the last of the LMS Jubilee class locos were still working the Saturday *Thames – Clyde Express* relief trains and I was going to try my luck snapping these. My first shot was of 45562 *Alberta* crossing the Ribbleshead viaduct for a classic view but dull weather as usual. For the following service I would emulate one of railway photographer Colin Gifford's pictures, he was my hero of the time alongside Bob Dylan... *Times They Are A Changin* and all that of the era! I left my friends behind at the very remote Blea Moor signal box and ambled trackside that extra half mile to the sylvian gloom of the southern entrance of the long lonely sinister Blea Moor tunnel. My plan was to use the tunnel arch to frame my picture. Youthful enthusiasm had taken over and I was excited of getting another snap. I knew what time it was expected and when it was due I wandered into the darkness to compose my shot using the glint of the rails to lead into my shot. Sure enough on time I heard the faint distant sound of a steam loco hammering up that relentless gradient. The distinctive blast of the LMS hooter as it roared past Blea Moor box confirmed my suspicions as it came into view.



Leeds Holbeck MPD based LMS Jubilee No. 45593 Kolhapur roars towards Blea Moor tunnel on a relief Thames Clyde Express in August 67. The last Jubs were much cosseted by depot staff and the trains were full of enthusiasts.

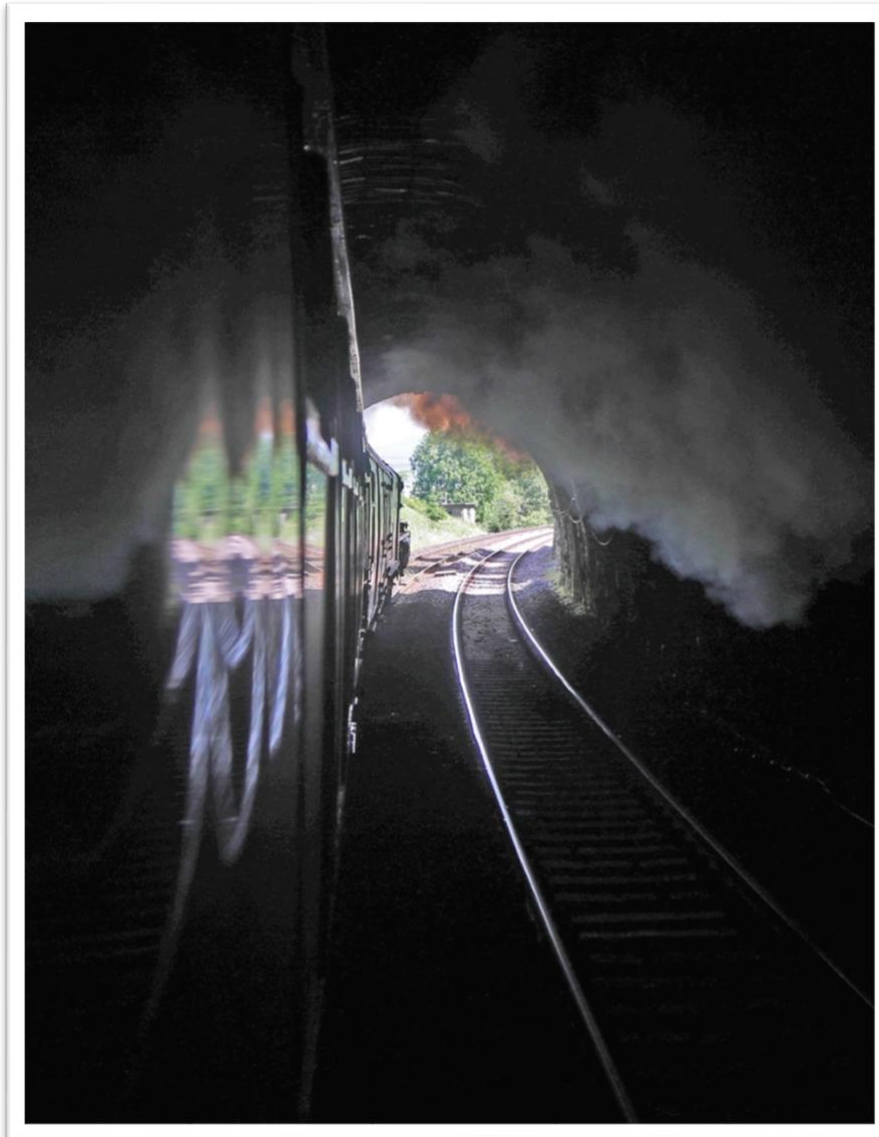
I checked the camera settings and took my position standing in the up lines. Loco 45593 *Kolhapur* put up a volcanic display as it approached at speed, *The Long Drag* wasn't going to wind this machine ... I pressed the shutter as it roared past with a demonic vigour and I hurried out of the tunnel before the steam would envelope me and stepped out of the track contemplating the awesome magic of the moment listening to the train fading away in the tunnel and then took a pause. There was just a massive woosh when suddenly something stole my attention and I noticed a smoke deflector flying past above me like some evil prehistoric monster. The cylinder must have been just an inch from my ear and I froze in fear and disbelief...It was like an earthquake a deafening rumble and the ground was shaking. I stood frozen motionless till I saw the brake van clank past me. Just seconds earlier I had

been wandering in those tracks totally oblivious that there could have been a train coasting downhill...I was just moments from meeting my maker and I would have just been mincemeat to be found by track workers. I wouldn't have got away with just a few scratches ...it was but the greatest of wake up calls!



Evoking train spotting memories 'Streak' 60007 Sir Nigel Gresley burst out of Welwyn North Tunnel, also known as Digswell Tunnel, with a KX bound excursion. The 25KV overhead wires and infrastructure have been removed by Photoshop.

Tunnels had a fascination for me from the earliest of train spotting days. Oakleigh Park station in the outer north London suburbs was a twenty minutes cycle ride. Here there are two footbridges over the East Coast Main Line which had some had some four running lines and a relief road. In the early Sixties these bridges were a Mecca for train spotters on Saturday afternoons, and all eyes were on the fast lines looking south through the short tunnel towards New Southgate. The magical appearance of a distant white plume of steam beyond the tunnel was the first sign of a northbound express accelerating our way. It would grow and then the dark outlines of a loco beneath it would become visible. As it entered the tunnel all would go dark for few pregnant seconds then suddenly it would burst out with the drama of expectation. Every so often there would be a shout from the boys ..."Streak!". All eyes were totally focussed on that front numberplate, would it be a new cop? *Mallard* and *Silver Link* were regulars on this patch. Southbound trains were of lesser interest as they were down to coasting at a modest 60mph for their final run into the 'Cross'. Every hour we would see some six or seven A4s but there were many of Gresley's other creations like A3s and V2s. The A1s , A2s B1s, Britannia's were just regarded as also rans! On a couple occasions I watched trains at Welwyn North where there was also a tunnel.

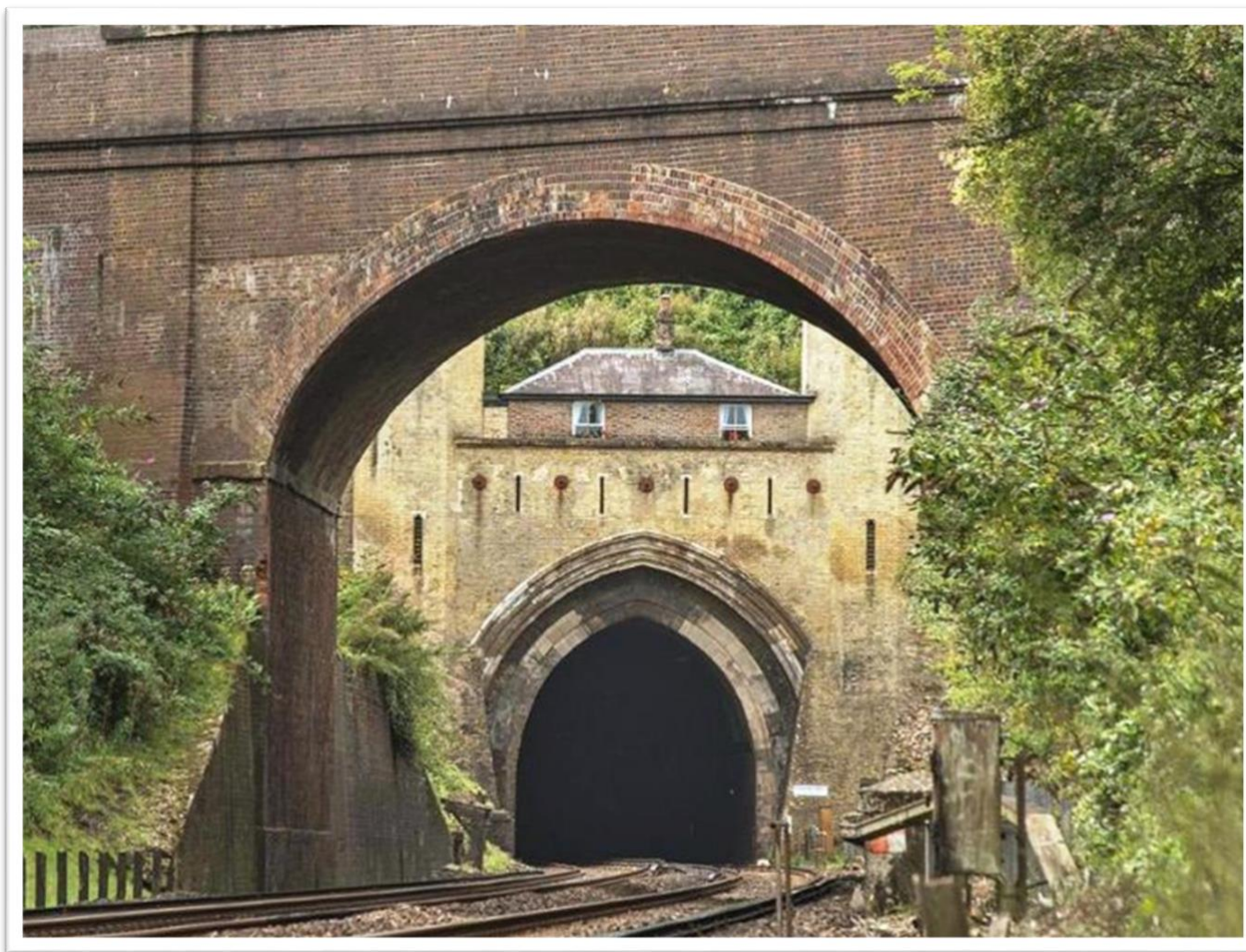


Restored LMS Jubilee 45699 Galatea leads a Chester to Carlisle Dalesman excursion train north through Rise Hill tunnel which lies between Dent and Garsdale stations.

In my later train spotting days I travelled through several of the most famous tunnels, most memorable being the Severn tunnel, Standedge, Woodhead, Box and Boniface Down. Living in Finchley Central in north London I became a regular commuter on the 17 mile Northern Line on the Underground and must have accumulated several months of being crushed and jolted on the journey to and from work in central London ...nice! In the days before air-conditioned trains, the summer commute was worse than any job could ever be! Underground trains held no magic!

A chum had been an Old Oak depot train driver and signed up to join EPS who were training staff for the Channel Tunnel project. He became a Eurostar driver and when the tunnel was eventually completed a special train was organised to acquaint staff in dealing with a volume of travellers. I was invited to ride with some two hundred others on a boozy day return trip to Paris...even before HRH the late Queen Elizabeth officially opened the international tunnel. A few years on and I was heading to Avignon in Provence by car. Having been tossed as I crossed 'Le Manche' many times by Ferry, and once by SRN 9 Horror-craft, I decided to take note of the Eurotunnel Shuttle promotion of the time, *Take the Easy Way rather than the Queasy Way*. We arrived at the departure terminal and as I was driving my new Land Cruiser Amazon we were marshalled to line up with the oversize vehicles. Whilst waiting in the queue I noticed something that set me off on a train of thought. The vehicle in front was a Land Rover and it was towing a trailer on which was perched a sailing dingy. A boat on a road vehicle, that was going to be loaded onto a train, to cross the sea, by going under it ...How very Bizarre! I sent a letter about my observations to the Railway Magazine, and they published it in the letters page under the title Deep Thinking! I wondered if they had any tinned Tuna in their box of essential provisions! Who is going to be the first model such a bizarre load on a goods train.... something for the new Rapido Lowmac....it might have happened in the Severn Tunnel.

My quarterly modelling spread in the Bluebell Railway News journal suddenly had to change direction. A review feature had already been prepared when I was informed that the launch into service of the New Build Brighton Atlantic was imminent. It had been a bit of a cliff hanger as to when it would happen, but 32424 Beachy Head was ready. Suddenly I had to jump into action and prepare a model feature based on the Bachmann 00 gauge model to coincide with launch of this incredible new build replica locomotive. I wanted an appropriate setting, something L B & SCR and immediately the whacky northern portal of Clayton Tunnel came to mind.



A face on image of Clayton Tunnel taken from the trackside found on the internet provides the basis for the initial scale drawing.

Without a minute to waste I decided getting plans officially would take too long and there would be no way I could ever get permission to take my own measurements. I collated as many images as I could

find on the internet. Two pictures taken from track level yielded a close representation of the Gothic arch inner portal. From there it was a lot of sketches of trial and error, with mainly the latter. I started by building the twin towers and working from there with copious quantities of guesstimation.

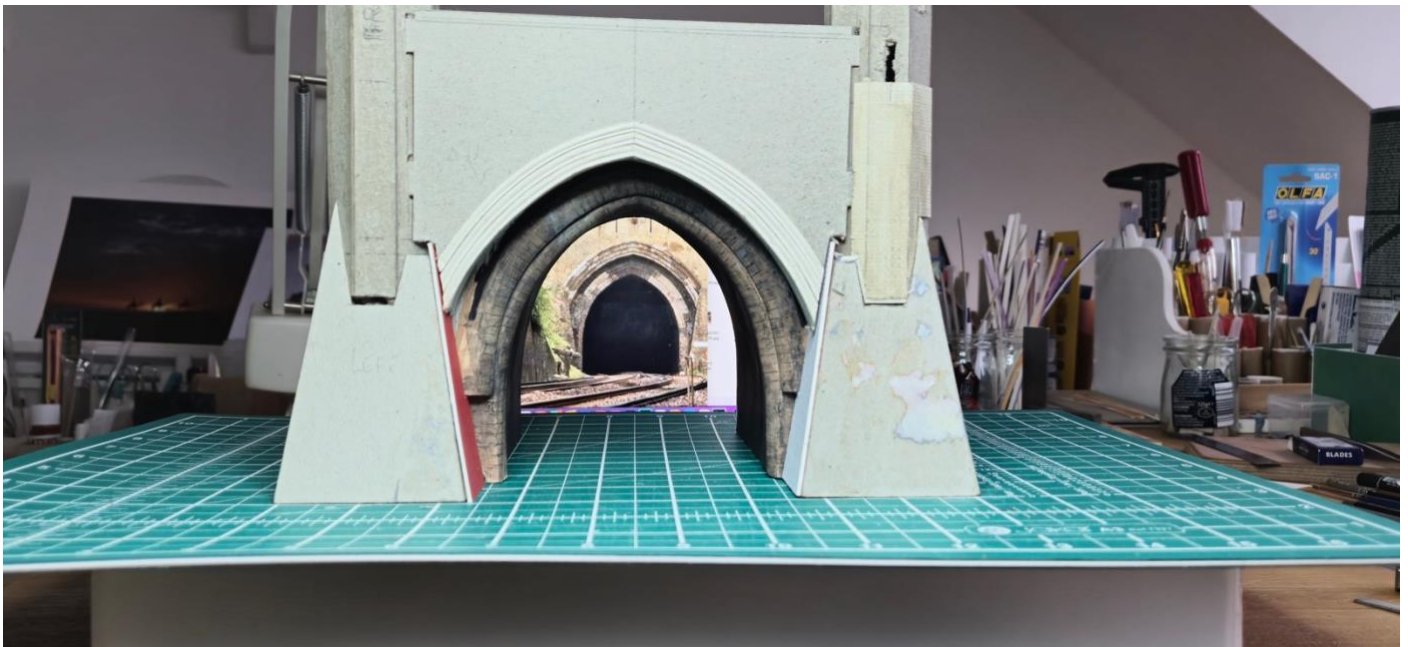


Checking the tight clearances with two Hornby Maunsell coaches.

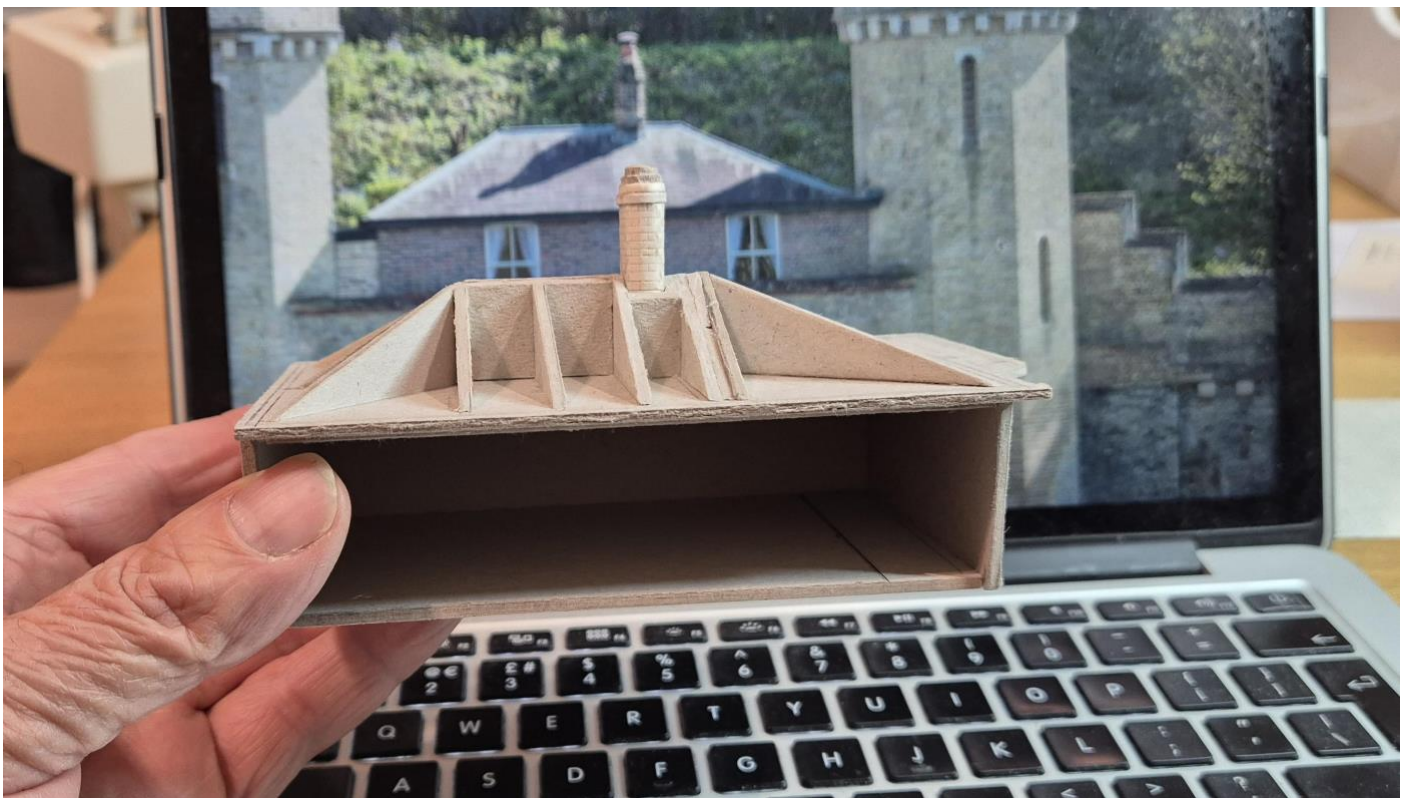
I placed two SR normal width Maunsell coaches on lengths of track to ensure I could replicate the tight clearances of the tunnel. Sadly, this tunnel had a second historic tragic incident that influenced railway operation. In 2001 when a 32-year-old man lost his head literally by leaning out the train window and immediately all SR trains were then fitted with bars across opening windows.



The outer portal stonework detail made from the fold ridges of gateaux box



A view through the portal at the image on the lap top to check the shape of the inner arch.



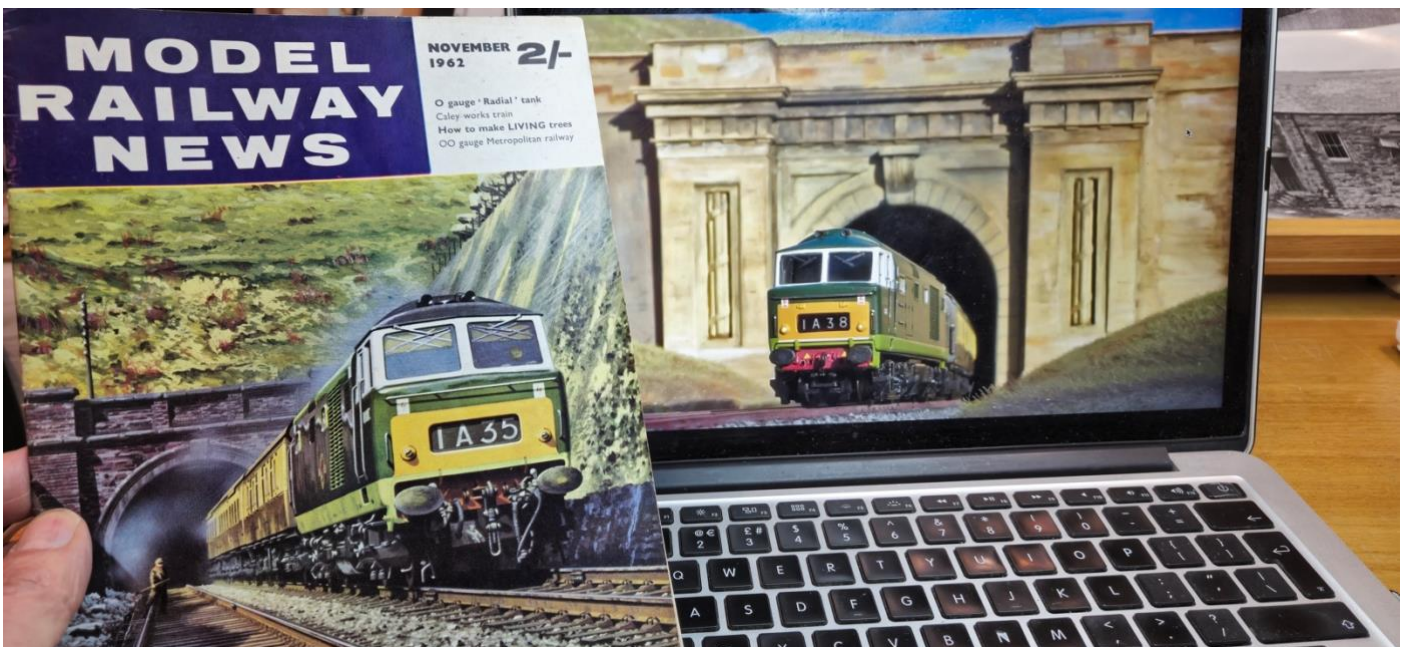
Making the chimney for the strange cottage perched above the portal

Satisfied with the aperture of the inner portal I worked outwards and upwards and I reckon I am pretty close with all the dimensions. With the printing deadline looming, I went into a bit of a headless chicken mode to produce something that I could use and concentrated on the detail around the portal. I had built a selection of test pieces on which I tried my painting skills. One of these was fitted when I set up a test photo to see just how much else I needed to model for the final photograph. Just as everything was set up for the test shot a rare moment of sunlight shone through the window onto the set up. It all looked OK, and I took the pictures having thought I had cracked it. Only when I had sent it off to the editor did I realise I had substituted the wrong outer portal, and it was too late to change it. I purposely wrote a new picture caption that diverted attention to the head-code discs thus away from the mistake. My pic sufficed for the feature without a mention of Clayton Tunnel, but the tunnel will be rebuilt in its entirety. I humbly use this portal to admit to my failings with that portal!



The opening shot of the Modelling review feature with Beachy Head bursting out of the tunnel

Recently I found an old copy of the *Model Railway News* with George Heiron's lovely painting on the cover inspired me to take a pic of the Dapol N gauge Hymek diesel on my Box Middlehill Tunnel cameo and the God's provided the sunlight.... I must have been righteous some time in my past!



Dapol's lovely N gauge Hymek diesel burst out of my Box Middlehill tunnel. I hated these diesels at the time as they stole the work from steam rosters on both the Western and Southern region.

Is Hornby boxing clever? – Andy Butler

Over the past few years although prices have remained roughly the same, my favourite chocolate bars have drastically reduced in size and are now sold in packs of 5 instead of 7. My kitchen rolls are now narrower and shorter than ever. My tea bags are still sold in the same size box, but it contains 210 tea bags, instead of 240. These are just a few examples of the modern phenomena commonly referred to as 'Shrinkflation'.

So, what exactly are Hornby up to? Whilst thankfully their OO gauge locomotives and rolling stock remain the same gauge and scale, both their OO gauge packaging and prices seem to have become rather over inflated. Could there be a hidden agenda behind this?

Not long before Christmas, I took delivery of an all-new Hornby B17/5 Streamlined 4-6-0 Ex LNER locomotive 'City of London'. It's been a while since I purchased a new Hornby RTR loco and as I unwrapped the parcel, I became increasingly concerned at the sheer size of the Hornby box. In fact, so concerned, for a moment I thought I'd unwittingly ordered an O gauge, instead of an OO gauge model.

Thankfully my new loco was an OO gauge model, in fact a very fine model, and so it should be given its £250+ price tag, and that's just the analogue version. It's definitely one for the display cabinet when it's not in use, it easily outclasses a kit-built version I have of its twin, 'East Anglian'. However, I've since scaled-up the dimensions of a B17 locomotive and I can confirm, but for a few millimetres, an O gauge equivalent would have fitted in the Hornby OO box.

The problem I now have is, what do I do with this ruddy great box! Even if it did dimensionally fit in my storage units, which it doesn't, it would take up at least twice the amount of space of most of my other OO RTR locos boxes. I'm also only to aware of how the resale value of RTR stock plummets when sold without an original box, so I'm reluctant to part with it. I'm going to have to give serious consideration to storage when it comes to future OO purchases, especially if they're going to come in boxes of this size.

It's now almost 90 years since Frank Hornby, founder of the original Hornby O gauge system, managed to convince enough modellers, his new 'Hornby Dublo' OO gauge range, was the most practical and economic solution to the problem of new homes and their rooms, being built to smaller sizes.

Call me cynical, but having worked in advertising and marketing for over 20 years, I ask you; In the case of Hornby, could the inflation of their OO gauge packaging and prices be a ploy to boost sales of their relatively new TT:120 range? After all, this is a market Hornby are attempting to develop pretty much on their own. As with 90 years ago, and the transition of many O gauge modellers to OO gauge, are Hornby trying to coerce modellers, particularly new ones, into thinking their homes are not big enough and their pockets not deep enough, to consider OO gauge to be the right gauge for them? Is Hornby in affect attempting to generate its own form of gauge 'Shrinkflation' by selling TT:120 in more modestly sized boxes and at what were, not so long ago, OO prices? I'll let you decide.



Left:

The oversized Hornby B17/5 box in question, it measures 130cms high x 380cms wide x 90cms deep. The image on the front of the box is the exact size of the OO B17/5 model, so there's a lot of wasted space inside.

Right:
 On the left is the OO gauge Hornby B17/5 box, which is only slightly smaller than the O gauge EFE Class 15 diesel box in the middle. On the right is the previous style of OO gauge Hornby loco box.



Left:
 Discounted at less than £100, an easy to store TT:120 Hornby loco and box, in front of the OO gauge Hornby B17/5 box. (With thanks to Chris Kapolka for the loan of the TT:120 loco).

Sales and Wants

Neal Cooper [REDACTED] has the following 7mm scale rolling stock for sale.



Left:
 Dapol O gauge six wheel Milk Tank wagon as new in box £55

Right:
Brass O gauge 20 ton Petrol Tank wagon in
Redline and Ensign livery with box £70



Below:
Dapol O gauge SR 20t Brake Van in BR bauxite
with some brake gear repair underneath, boxed.
£40.



Graham Betts has the following available, and is after any broken locos and surplus spares.

If any members are planning on a 4mm scratch build, I have a collection of chassis blocks and parts that may be of use. These are mostly 6 coupled which should suit anything from 0-6-0 to 4-6-4 for example with a compatible wheel spacing. These were mostly donated by members for spares – repairs which I do, mostly for our members, and come free of charge.

Transformers:

I have available a number of transformers with 16-18V AC or 12V DC outputs and also a Hammant & Morgan Duette controller. Note: Do not use the H&M with dcc – it likes burning them! If these can be used for any of your project let me know. Again – Free of charge.

Wanted:

Old and broken items surplus to your requirements which I will hold as a spare part for members and/or recycle as a repair-spare part. Anything associated with locomotives and or rolling stock, surplus bits like buffers, brush springs, pickups and plates, wheels and coupling rods etc, will be welcome.

Please contact Graham Betts [REDACTED] if you are interested in the above items or can donate surplus bits and bobs.

Chris Kapolka [REDACTED] has the following two locos for sale.

Bachmann 32-851 00 gauge BR Standard 9F class 2-10-0 No. **92192** with double chimney and BR 1F tender. DCC ready

Like mint condition total run time of less than 15 minutes ... spent some of its life as a shelf queen but the majority of its life in its box with other shelf queens. Unopened detail pack included as per new.

£125.00



Bachmann 32-525 00 gauge BR class 55 Deltic **D9004** *Queens Own Highlander* in BR green with small yellow panel.

Like mint condition total run time of less than 15 minutes ... spent some of its life as a shelf queen but the majority of its life in its box with other shelf queens. Unopened detail pack included as per new with etched nickel silver nameplates.

£125.00



Tales from the dining room table

On your editors dining room table this month is a 4mm scale model of Coventry Station c1839. This scratch build has occupied me since Christmas and is nearing completion. The trouble is, I can't install it on the layout until I've built the large forecourt and steps down to track level, so round we go again, another three months of brick embossed Plastikard and Limonene fumes!



The roof is now finished but awaits some guttering and associated brackets etc. This will involve leaning on your club secretary to work some engineering magic and produce a small device to press gutters from thin foil. Perhaps more of this in a future Journal...



And finally...

Another atmospheric image from the Kapolka lens, Chris writes: *'I was out for Royal Scot passing Beeston today, but the wind blew the steam across the view of the train ...win some... lose some!... that's how it goes with train photography. My original location near Bunbury had become unsightly due to lengths of replacement rail being left in between the tracks ...a feature not often modelled. Royal Scot was working the Irish Mail.'*

