



ASSOCIATION OF SHREWSBURY RAILWAY MODELLERS

NEWSLETTER No. 20 – JUNE 2022



Little Burford; built and photographed by Dan Evason. Note the superb 3D figures by Allan Butler of Modelu. Dan was our guest presenter on 4th May 2022.

Welcome to the twentieth edition of our ASRM Newsletter. Issue No. 1 was published back in March 2020 at the start of the Covid-19 lockdown, and since then the variety of modelling activities, together with the willingness to take the trouble to write these up for our Newsletter, have remained joyous constants in a world which seems to be changing day by day.

Once again, we are pleased to present a selection of articles covering a wide range of topics.

We look forward to our next meeting at Bayston Hill on Wednesday 1st June, when Geoff Kent will be describing modelling coaches in Plastikard. Geoff is an expert on modelling in this medium, and previously presented to us in May 2019 on the subject of constructing Plastikard buildings.

The following meeting, on July 6th, will be held at the Telford Steam Railway, where we will be able to ride in either a DMU or a brake van behind a diesel loco, and also the Phoenix MES 5" Gauge line. The OO Gauge model railway will also be open, and refreshments will be provided. There will be no charge for members, spouses and partners, as the ASRM will be paying the cost from Association funds. Members are also welcome to bring other guests at a cost of £10 a head.

Further information will be available at the meeting on 1st June.

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1. Earl's Hall – Working to a Timetable

In the previous Newsletter I made reference to CJ Freezer's book on model railway operation,* and how the chapter on producing a timetable had inspired me. At the time I could not see how in practice I could run to a timetable on what is basically a 'roundy roundy', and in consequence had great fun drawing up over four hours of running to a sequence, and then even more fun putting it to the test, sometimes producing incidents with which the RAIB would have been involved had this been the real railway.

With the running schedule fully operating, four trains would be happily traversing the main lines with another trundling around the goods-only line, whilst I would be merrily ensconced running a little shuttle up and down the branch line fully independent of other train movements. It was after doing this for some time that I started to time this branch line shuttle from the MPD platforms to the platforms at the end of the branch. This was about 2 minutes at a typical branch line speed of around 40 to 50mph. Curiosity then kicked in and I started to wonder how long a journey would take if I cleared both main and goods lines of stock and ran the branch line train to cross over the main lines, squeeze through the goods yard to terminate at one of the parcels platforms; and moreover to achieve this without travelling over the same section of track twice, effectively not dissimilar to an end-to-end layout. This had to be tried, and I timed it at 6 minutes non-stop at speeds up to 70mph, slowing as per the prototype for 2 scissor crossings and a double slip. A very rewarding experience, but only providing all 29 points were set correctly, there were no SPADS and the train was driven in accordance with the line speeds.

Both up and down slow lines have passing loops at platforms 6 & 7 and 8 & 9 respectively, so the route could be treated as a single track with the ability to pass in these two locations. It then dawned on me that I could indeed run to a timetable using this route setting, and by utilising both sets of loops I could run 4 trains, 2 in each direction each stopping at a different platform, which imagination would turn into two different stations along the route. Time then to reach again for Freezer's book and re-read his excellent chapter on creating a timetable. Clearly it would be essential to select four trains that provided faultless running and for this I choose first generation DMU's which, importantly, were readily distinguishable from each other:

single bubble car (white cab roof)	2-car class 108
bubble car with trailer (white cab roofs)	4-car class 101

It was easy to ascertain journey times between stations for a single train but not so easy to establish dwell times to permit the passing of 2 trains which would, or should, arrive at the same time from different directions. My first thought on a 15 second dwell time was completely unworkable as it assumed each train *would* arrive at the same time and it did not permit the signalman to change the points in time for each train to leave on time, thus producing a knock-on effect down the line and the whole thing becoming pressured to make up for lost time. And when things become fraught the consequences can be unwelcome, such as trying to re-rail a semi-permanently coupled 4 car DMU with two motor cars on a curved point and without stopping the stop watch.

TIMETABLE FOR OPERATING LAYOUT AS A SINGLE TRACK

RUNNING BETWEEN:

MPD platforms 13 or 14 (Deeville Yard) and platforms 1 or 3 (Ayville Parkway)

Deeville Yard		trains A and B				trains C and D		
<p>The diagram shows a vertical main line. At the top, it branches to Deeville Yard with platforms 13 and 14. Further down, it branches to Ceeton Bank with platforms 8 and 9. Below that, it branches to Beeton Junction with platforms 6 and 7. At the bottom, it branches to Ayton Parkway with platforms 1 and 3. The main line is labeled 'main lines' at both ends.</p>		Deeville Yard	dep.	pl. 13	00:15	dep.	pl. 14	07:30
		Ceeton Bank	arr.	pl. 9	02:15	arr.	pl. 9	09:30
		Ceeton Bank	dep.	pl. 9	02:30	dep.	pl. 9	10:30
		Beeton Junction	arr.	pl. 7	05:00	arr.	pl. 7	13:00
		Beeton Junction	dep.	pl. 7	06:00	dep.	pl. 7	14:00
		Ayton Parkway	arr.	pl. 1	07:30	arr.	pl. 3	15:30
		Ayton Parkway	dep.	pl. 1	04:00	dep.	pl. 3	12:00
		Beeton Jct	arr.	pl. 6	05:30	arr.	pl. 6	13:30
		Beeton Junction	dep.	pl. 6	06:30	dep.	pl. 6	14:30
		Ceeton Bank	arr.	pl. 8	09:00			
Ceeton Bank	dep.	pl. 8	10:00					
Deeville Yard	arr.	pl. 14	12:00	arr.	pl. 13	19:00		
Ayton Parkway								

PLATFORM DEPARTURE TIMES

<u>time</u>	<u>station</u>	<u>platform</u>	<u>platform</u>	<u>times</u>
00:15	Deeville Yard	13	1	04:00
02:15	Ceeton Bank	9	3	12:00
04:00	Ayton Parkway	1	6	06:30 14:30
06:00	Beeton Junction	7	7	06:00 14:00
06:30	Beeton Junction	6	8	10:00
07:30	Deeville Yard	14	9	02:30 10:30
10:00	Ceeton Bank	8	13	00:15
10:30	Ceeton Bank	9	14	07:30
12:00	Ayton Parkway	3		
14:00	Beeton Junction	7		
14:30	Beeton Junction	6		

Ah yes, the infernal stop watch! For this I was using my mobile 'phone which inconveniently turned off after 1 minute of non-use. This is a new and unfamiliar 'phone to me, reluctantly purchased to replace an older version for which Apple had annoyingly decided to discontinue to recognise the App which controls my hearing aids. I know I am an advocate of DCC, but this digital world which tends to be in charge of us rather than the other way round and thinks for itself is not always, if rarely, in accordance with my way of thinking. And for the 'phone to turn off just at the point when you need to see the time for the next departure is unhelpful to say the least. Of course the 'phone settings can be adjusted such that it never switches off but then you have to remember to return to the default setting or the battery runs down exceedingly fast! A small grandchild has subsequently found me a stopwatch app in which the numbers fill the screen and the 'phone remains on!

Looking at the book it quickly became apparent that the way to achieve passing trains without conflict was to construct a "Train Graph". This plots time on the x axis and distance on the y axis such that if the distance is accurately plotted to represent the length of each section, the average speed of the train on that section is clearly shown by the slope of the graph. For simplicity I chose to assume a minute on the stopwatch to be one hour in real life. This produces a journey time of some 6 hours, a distance for which the chosen trains would unlikely to be rostered in the prototype; also, dwell times of one hour are similarly nonsensical, but I chose to ignore these for my first attempt. Chapter 5 deals with this perennial vexed question of scale time and it is not for me to plagiarise CJ's excellent work on the subject. Suffice it to be said that he provides a schematic diagram of an electrically driven clock and also of a slave clock driven by a master pulse generator with each gear train producing a 12:1 ratio. He also touches upon Froude's Law which he states has been erroneously applied to scale time and since I last used this Law just the once at college in the late 60's and never since, I choose to ignore it on the basis that those particular grey cells have been eroded by time – real time that is. Interestingly the ZTC Master Controllers 511 and 611 have the facility to input a scale time ratio between 1 and 15. But for now, at least, and because I have only just embarked upon timetabling I am more than happy to equate 1 minute of model time to 1 hour of real time and accept any criticism of my feebly unscientific approach to the subject.

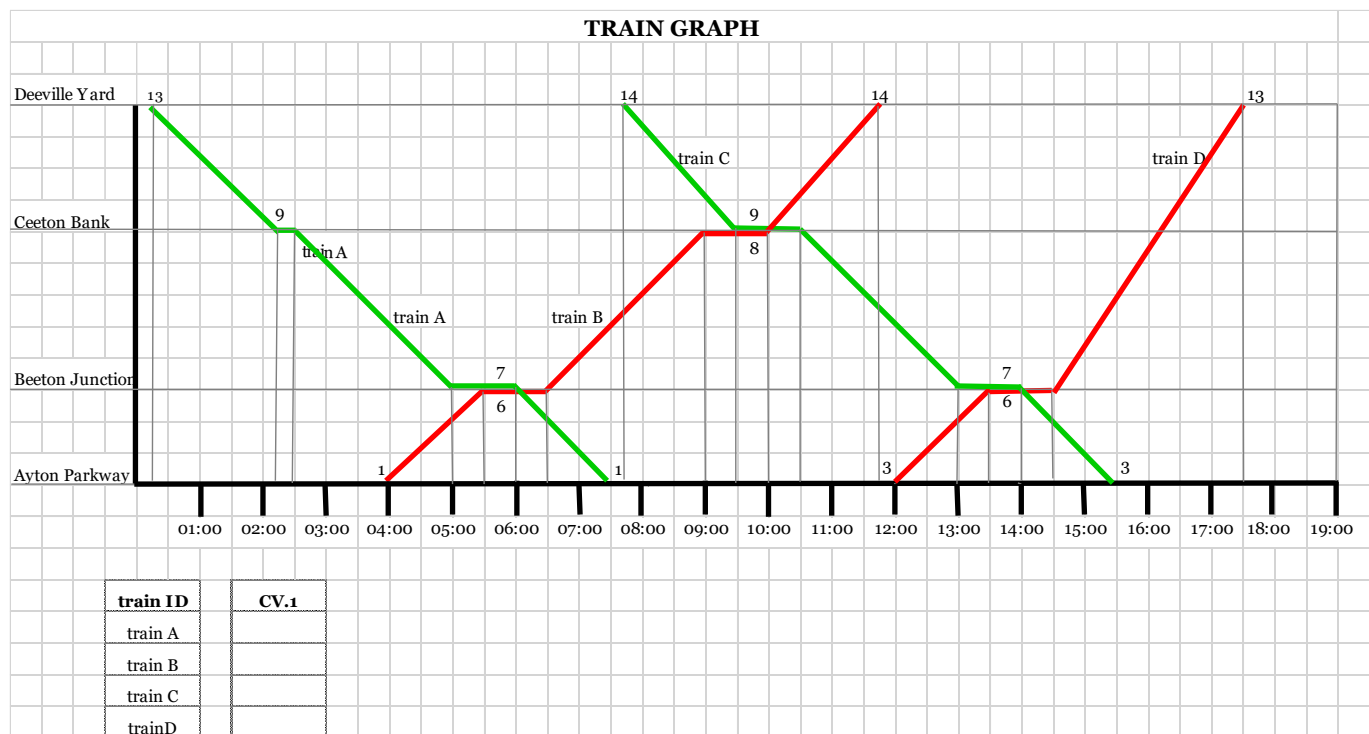
I mentioned a scale one hour of dwell time for passing trains. This really is unacceptably long for the prototype and I have tried to reduce it but found that any reduction does not give sufficient unhurried time within which to stop two trains, check the departure for each, switch points, pull off signals and re-start each train, even providing the first train pulls into the loop on time. If there were two people operating then the dwell time could be reduced, but as the points for leaving the loops need to be changed it would still not be possible to reduce to a scale time as a stop as long as 5 minutes would be represented by just 5 seconds and I stopped living in the fast lane many years ago now.

Below is my rendition of Mr Freezer's Train Graph depicting the movements of 4 trains and the platform numbers into which they are to pull – not for us a last minute platform change! For easy identification I have added a box to both the graph and the timetable that may be filled in to give their addresses. This is best done in pencil as for the return

journey the train identity must change – just as per prototype. For instance Train A would start at platform 13 and terminate at platform 1, such that this train becomes Train B for the return trip in the second sequence. It will be seen that I have staggered the arrival and departure times at each station, but only to give me some leeway. With more than one operator I am sure it would be fun to have each train arrive and depart at the same time thus reducing the dwell time and testing the concentration of each operator, not to mention the beleaguered signalman.

There is nothing original in any of this as I have followed the book pretty closely, even to the point of giving station names beginning with Ay, Bee, Cee and Dee – a nice touch I thought from the writings of CJ. However, I have also added platform numbers to the graph and provided schedules to the timetable showing at what time one should be prepared to wave flags and blow whistles for each train at each platform – imagination again!

**The full title of CJ Freezer's book is: "Model Railway Operation in Accordance with Prototype Practice". ISBN 1 85260 421 1. Published by Patrick Stephens Limited, an imprint of Haynes Publishing and first published 1993, costing at that time a whopping £14.99, but worth every penny.*



Mike Bennett

2. Low Relief Warehouses in Plastikard

Needing some buildings suitable for an industrial setting to give a more complete look to my layout I decided that some Plastikard low relief warehouses would be ideal, rather than card options, where the design variations are limited. These would contrast with the urban housing that bordered moorland at the opposite end of the layout and provide a residential/open/industrial variation over the model as a whole.

The actual designs were straight out of my head with no reference to anything other than general photos on the net, including places like Hebden Bridge, Brighouse and Huddersfield, taken in the early 20th century.

There are three different structures shown in the photos, just loosely placed at the moment, pending other scenic work surrounding them.

All of the buildings are on the side frontage of the baseboards, to be looked over by the viewer and will not need a high backscene which will be needed and fitted elsewhere on the model.

The Plastikard used was the Slaters embossed and painted with Humbrol to suit whatever building material they depict. Individual bricks were picked out in different shades and following Andy's session at the Association meeting, heavy weathering applied – it was very dirty in this part of Yorkshire between 1923 and 1947. I now have the task of weathering other buildings to the same level.



Graham Betts

3. Static Grass By The Bagful

Back in November for my birthday the family wanted to buy me somethings for my Dearness Valley Junction railway; I had been coveting one of John Lloyd's most recent static grass machines – the FLOCKIT device – marketed at the time under his Greenscene label which will be well known to many members. John has been to many exhibitions and was a regular at ASRM meetings in the late 1980s; indeed I possess one of his Mk1 static grass machines – not much more than a tea strainer on a battery handle!

The on-line reviews of the latest Flockit device were very favourable, especially from the wargaming community on value for money, although it was still north of £80. I rang John to discuss the machine and he gave me a load of top tips. Having ordered the machine he then told me he was planning to retire to do other things, and said he was in detailed discussions with Squires (well-known model tool suppliers) to buy his business. It was three months before the news hit the model rail press and another couple of months before Squires had updated their website with all of John's stock (especially his static grass range of all things!). But Squires said they could deliver the static grasses I wanted (over 10 bagfuls, given the extensive area I needed to cover.)

A substantial part of the area I needed to cover were two long and relatively steep embankments, and John's tip was to ensure the top of the embankment was light shades (straw colour) with the bottom of the bank a darker shade of green, reflecting the natural drainage down the embankment. Given that my railway is set in mid-summer around the time of the Durham Miners Gala (with many special train services), this made much sense.

Further research online suggested that any steep embankment is particularly tricky (see Kathy Millet on YouTube for example). I got away with Flockit on most of the embankments but I remembered reading, in Tony Wright's excellent book on modelling the East Coast Mainline, the section where he reasonably well combined using grass with some Noch grass matting. It is not cheap (Gaugemaster supply) but I reckoned I could do a better job with the grass matting than even the great Tony Wright could achieve, which is quite a claim I admit. This is where the next part comes in.

Further research online took me from the original Greenscene website to the website of War World Scenics (www.wwscenics.com). Here I was introduced to the idea of **LAYERING** – new to me, but probably not to others. War World Scenics is based in Neath/Port Talbot, and as the name suggests they began trading as war gamers but they are at heart railway modellers. Their instructions/guidance is simple, clear and clever, and they are suppliers of related tools and excellent scenic materials (available in big bags too!).

The principal of LAYERING takes some unpacking and is more than a little counter intuitive. The basics are that :

1. You start with the shortest grass fibres.
2. These are dropped into glue spread thinly on the relevant surface. Greenscene and WWS market a variant of PVA for this. John Lloyd has always been coy about what is in it. It is very gloopy but you need very little of it. I believe it is also electrically conductive, which is ideal for the static element.
3. Further layers are added using increased length of fibre step by step.

Again, WWS supplies a specialist layering glue in a spray can. Many have advocated using cheap hair spray for this process (the cheaper the better apparently, but I have no direct experience of this). I think Andy Vaugh may use it for flocking his dioramas.

Each layer can be sprayed without much delay. WWS markets its fibres by length in millimetres; Greenscene sticks to short, medium and long. (Just how short is short?)

A further tip is to pinch the still-wet grass fibres into clumps to get variations on texture as well as colour. An old tooth brush can also help with this.

As for the underlying embankments, the steeper slopes were based crudely on sculpted Kingspan insulation material left over from an extension. This is light weight, sturdy and makes relatively little mess when cut (best done with a saw), but I found it good to wear nitrile gloves as the Kingspan can have tiny glass fibres within it.

The 'lesser' embankments were formed from smaller offcuts of expanded polystyrene, which is very messy to cut - all those white balls! It is even lighter than the Kingspan but significantly less rigid and thus easy to mark.

In both cases I used Polyfilla Plaster Repair Mix for filling gaps and final shaping around the edges, which is ideal; it is not conventional Polyfilla but it is relatively cheap (a large tub was about £6 from Amazon and came the next day). This Polyfilla comes in a tub, pre-mixed and slightly/granular (gritty), but it is easy to apply and sculpt with simple artists' or domestic tools and it does not appear to crack or split on drying (always good).

Overall, this has been a great learning experience for me although as ever, and repeated by many scenic or weathering experts, it is usually always helpful to work from photographs where you can. In my case I have been collecting articles and books on my beloved BR (NE) since 1996 so you can guess how much I have! And I am still buying more as new high-quality books come out which provide, over and above direct train interest, all sorts of information on streetscapes, surface textures in collieries, buildings and vegetation, not to mention 'period style.' How did miners dress in the early 1960s? By no means in orange dayglow kit. Dark donkey jackets were the order of the day...and flat caps.



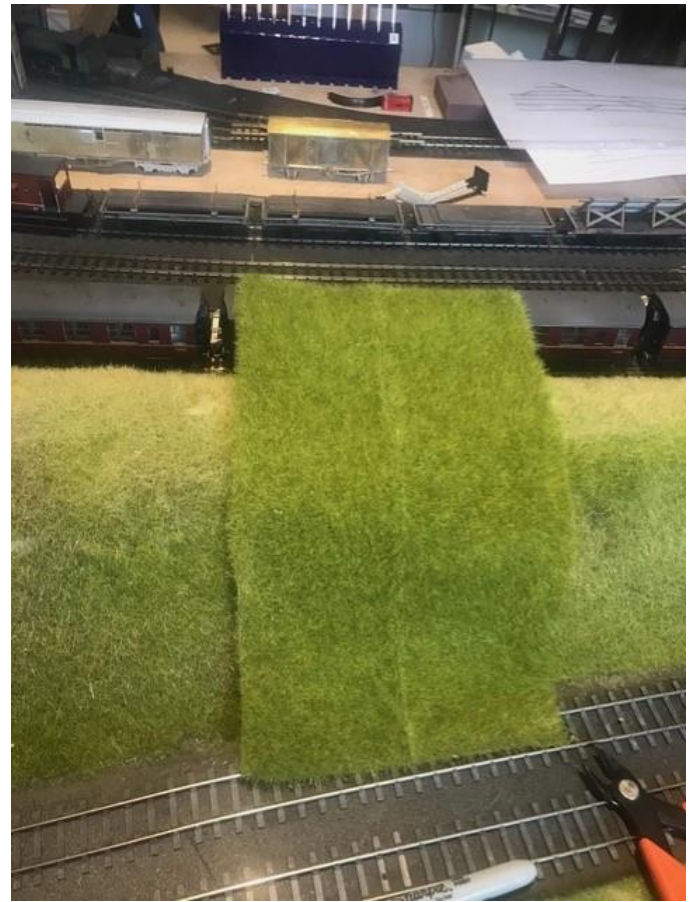
Lightweight polystyrene, rough cut by carving knife. Also shown is the Plaster Repair mix I like to use.



Mocking up a crude incline. In the end I decided not to do this!



Noch matting (unimproved) on the steep left-hand side of the cutting. The right-hand side shows layering with static grass.



An unimproved strip of Noch grass matting, with the same either side, but after layering with static grass.

Gordon Woods

4. Photographing Kyburg

Do you remember the old days, when Covid lockdowns meant that we weren't allowed to meet at Bayston Hill? If so, you may remember our Zoom meeting on 5th January 2022 – a very enjoyable evening consisting of a series of short presentations on a variety of railway-related subjects. During that evening, Gordon Woods showed us a selection of photographs of Gavin Clark's outstanding P4 layout, Kerrinhead. Part of the quality of Gordon's presentation lay in the excellence of the photographs. Gordon helpfully had a slide setting out a few basic principles for achieving good model railway photographs, where good detail and depth of field are required. Gordon's slide is shown below.

- Lighting
- Camera set up:
 - Aperture priority (let the camera work out exposure length)
 - Highest F number possible (smallest aperture = greatest depth of field)
 - Low ISO (ideally 100 or 200) for detail and less pixelation
 - Tripod or bean bag to reduce camera shake / noise
 - Remote (cable) release to reduce 'noise'
- Angle of attack (cliché v something more interesting)
- Subject matter (detail v big picture)

Now I am not a photographer, and although I possess a digital SLR camera (a generous Christmas gift from my youngest son a few years back) I generally leave it on Auto as I don't know how to use the myriad manual settings available. The Auto setting doesn't really work for photographing model railways, when trying to obtain good depth of field where the subject is close to the camera, and I have therefore always obtained disappointing results when trying to capture pictures of my Z Gauge layouts. But following Gordon's presentation I dug out my tripod, bought a remote cable shutter release, set up a few spotlights and decided to give it another try.

The results are shown below. The photos were all taken on my Canon EOS 1100D, using the Av (Aperture Priority) setting, F25, ISO100, with the camera mounted on a tripod and using the remote shutter release. While not of professional quality, the photos are a vast improvement on everything I had done previously.

Many years ago my previous N Gauge exhibition layout Maybury was Railway of the Month in *Railway Modeller* (July 1989). I had always intended to submit an article and a selection of photos of my Swiss Z Scale layout Kyburg to *Railway Modeller's* sister magazine *Continental Modeller*. As a result of Gordon's advice and my newly-acquired enthusiasm for photography I am now inspired to experiment further with photographing Kyburg and write the article. I'll let you know how I get on.



An express service from Basel leaves Kyburg, From here it will travel along the south shore of Lake Zurich to Landquart, where it will turn south to reach its destination of Chur. It is hauled by RE460 loco no. 460 035. At a staggering 8,180 hp, Class RE460 was claimed to be the most powerful 8-wheeled loco in the world when introduced in 1991.



A freight train approaches Kyburg, heading west towards Basel, where it will cross into France. In charge is a German-built Siemens Class BR182 no. 731119. In the background, a Class RBDe560 "Kolibri" (humming bird) EMU awaits departure on a local service to Romanshorn, on the shore of Lake Constance. This set (and the RBe540 in the next picture) are hand-made bodies mounted on Marklin chassis.



A general view of Kyburg station approach. A HUPAC freight train hauled by a Siemens BR182 hurries through Kyburg station, while an ageing RBe540 EMU is about to depart on a local service to St Gallen. Meanwhile, locals enjoy a coffee at the coffee shop in front of the taxi rank. The observant may notice the man on the left is drinking a flat white and the man on the right, a cappuccino!



The road and rail tunnel to the north of Kyburg station. This configuration is based on Baden in North-West Switzerland. The RDe560 Kolibri EMU has now departed for Romanshorn.

Dave Gotliffe

5. A Regner Vincent

I always like locos that are a bit different so, until last year, had owned a Regner Vincent since 2013. For those who are unfamiliar with these live-steam model locos, they are internally gas fired, single cylinder, with gears and chain drive, made in Germany by the company founded by the late Manfred Regner back in 1978.



The Vincent, one of his earlier designs, was loosely based on a single cylinder chain drive industrial locomotive works number 96, built in 1869 by Schwartzkopff based in Berlin.

There is a similar prototype in the UK, built by Eveling and Porter in 1872 for the Oxford & Aylesbury Tramroad. This loco, now owned by Transport for London, is currently in store the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre. The photo below was taken in 2018.

Last year I found myself in needing some money in a hurry for some unexpected laser eye surgery so, knowing how fast live steam model locos sell, I put my Vincent up for sale via Facebook and, within a couple of hours the loco was sold for considerably more than I'd paid for it.

In early April this year, I noticed a Vincent, for sale at an extremely low price, on Facebook. I'd quite missed having the Vincent as it was always popular with the public at events where model live steam locos were running.



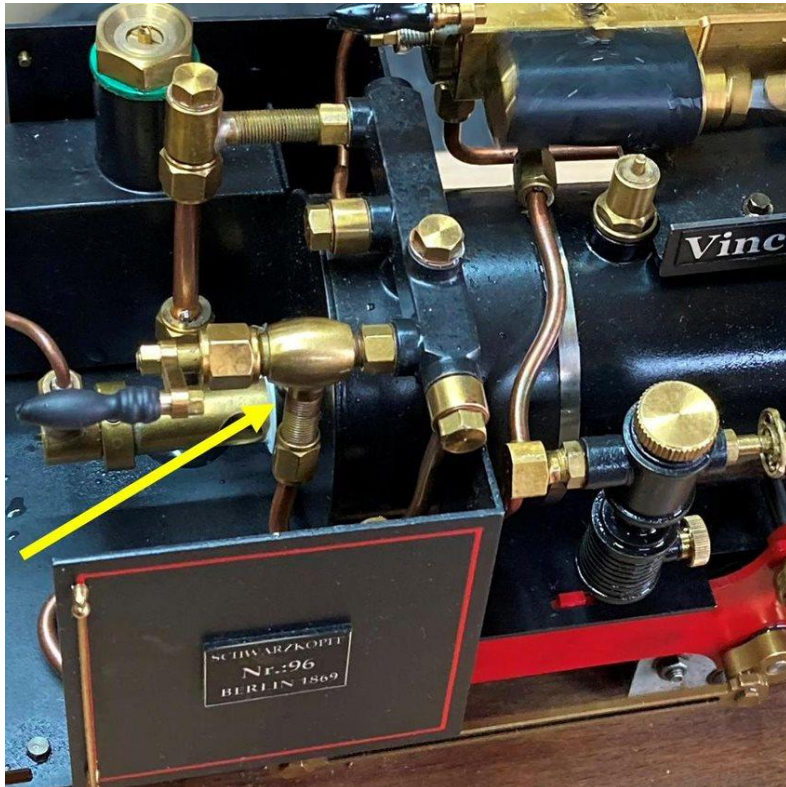
I quickly communicated with the seller who told me he'd had the loco from new in 2019 but had never managed to get it to work properly, so it had been sitting on a shelf. Looking at the photo of the loco he sent me, and ignoring the odd cobweb, I could see the paint on the front of the boiler and chimney was damaged while the rest of the loco was like new, as you can see in the photo.

It seemed the seller had been unable to get the flame to "pop-back" onto the burner and instead had been burning in the smoke box, so causing the paint damage.

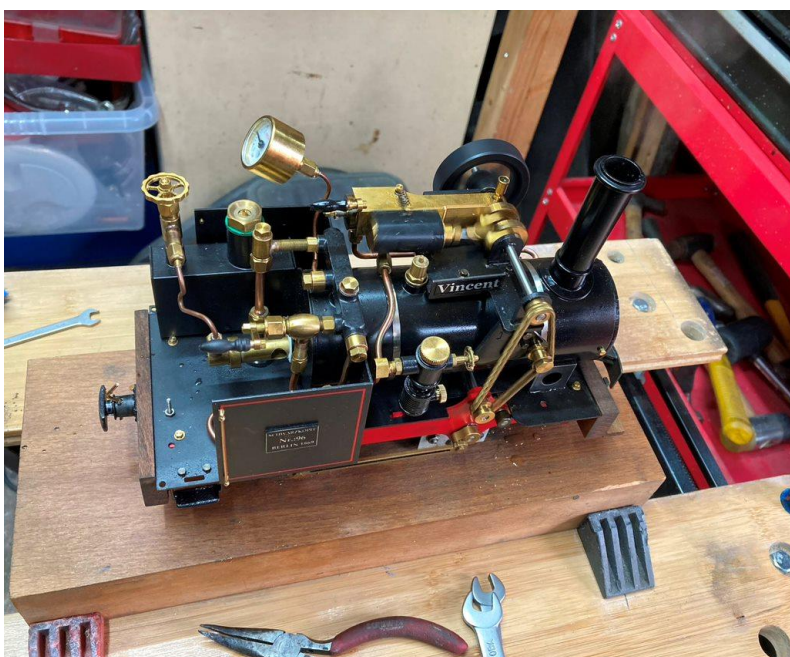


As the seller was able to show me the original receipt and the boiler certificate, money was quickly transferred and a couple of days I had my hands in the loco. It arrived on April 13th, but as it wasn't a Friday I reckoned I'd got myself a bargain.

I proceeded to completely dismantle the Vincent to work out what the problem was, although I was sure it was nothing serious. I quickly found the burner to be a loose fit in the burner tube with maybe 0.5mm side-to-side play, so it was letting in far too much air. Both the tube and the burner are separate castings, so it's quite normal for there to be some movement, but not usually 0.5mm. The fix was quite simple; a couple of turns of PTFE tape (see the yellow arrow on the photo below) and re-tighten the securing bolt.



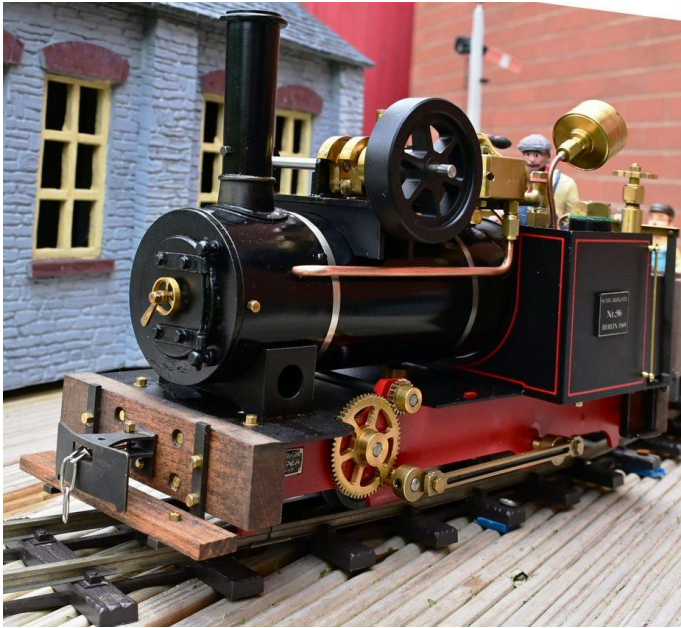
I partly re-assembled the loco to confirm the flame would now "pop-back" reliably, then dismantled everything again, repainted the boiler and chimney, and finally put it all back together.



Here is a photo of the repainted loco on its first test run on the rolling road. For the observant amongst you the sight glass does look a bit odd. I'd managed to break it so replaced it with a piece of copper tube of the same diameter while I waited for a replacement sight glass to arrive.

While fixing the sight glass, I did what I normally do to my Regner horizontally boiler locos, and altered the smoke box door so it could be hinged open, as this makes lighting the burner even easier.

Here's the loco on a run on my garden railway.

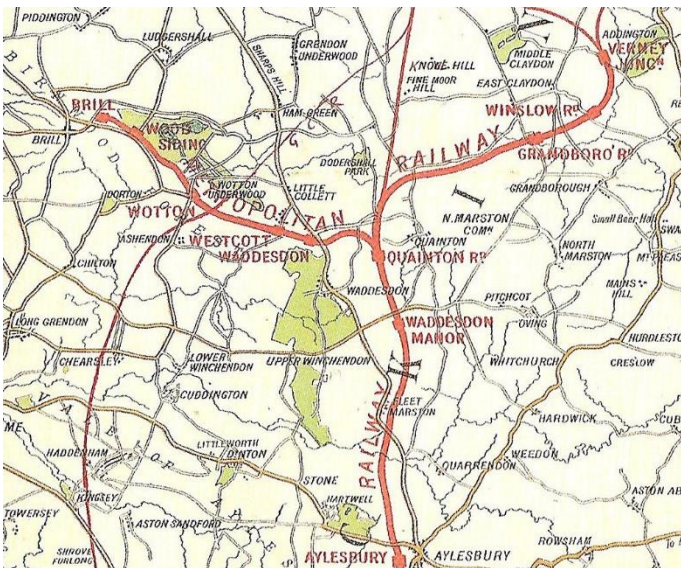


On May 14th the Vincent was one of the locos I took to the Llangollen Garden railway Festival to run on the Phurcombe Hall layout. Judging by the number of photos being taken by Phil Parker, I'm hoping it may feature in the next edition of Garden Rail.

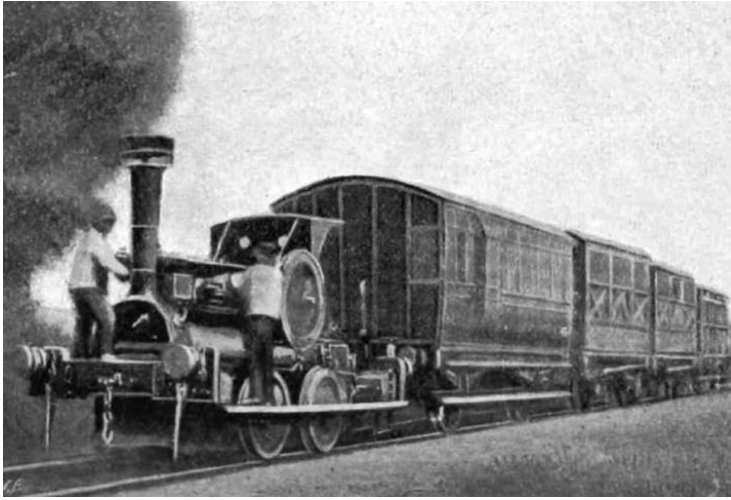


For those of you who like a bit of railway history, here's a bit more about Transport for London's Eveling and Porter loco:

In 1871 the 3rd Duke of Buckingham built the Wotton Tramway as a horse tram line to help transport goods between his lands around Wotton House in Buckinghamshire and the then national rail network. Lobbying from the nearby village of Brill led to the tramway's extension to Brill and conversion to passenger use in early 1872.



In 1872 two locomotives were bought from Eveling and Porter in Rochester. These locos, which cost £400 each when purchased, were based on a traction engine design so had a single cylinder, gears and a chain drive. As they could only run at 4mph, they were both withdrawn in 1894 and one of the two, with works number 807, was sold to the Blisworth and Stowe Brick & Tile Co. at Nether Heyford in Northamptonshire, to work in the brickworks.



From 1899 the Wotton Tramway was operated by the Metropolitan Railway and known as the Brill branch. It was the most distant section of the Underground, Brill being 51 miles from Baker Street. In 1935 it closed.

The Blisworth and Stowe brickworks closed in 1940 and was then used as an ammunition store by the War Department. Loco 807 remained stored until 1950 when it was purchased by the Industrial Locomotive Society.

In 1951 London Transport agreed to hold it in safe custody at Neasden Depot until a final home was ready for it. The locomotive was cosmetically restored by London Transport to as near as possible to its original condition. In 1957 it was officially handed over to the British Transport Commission for display at the Museum of British Transport at Clapham.

It was transferred to the new London Transport Museum at Covent Garden in 1980. When the London Transport Museum was closed for refurbishment, the locomotive was loaned to the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre, where it remains today.

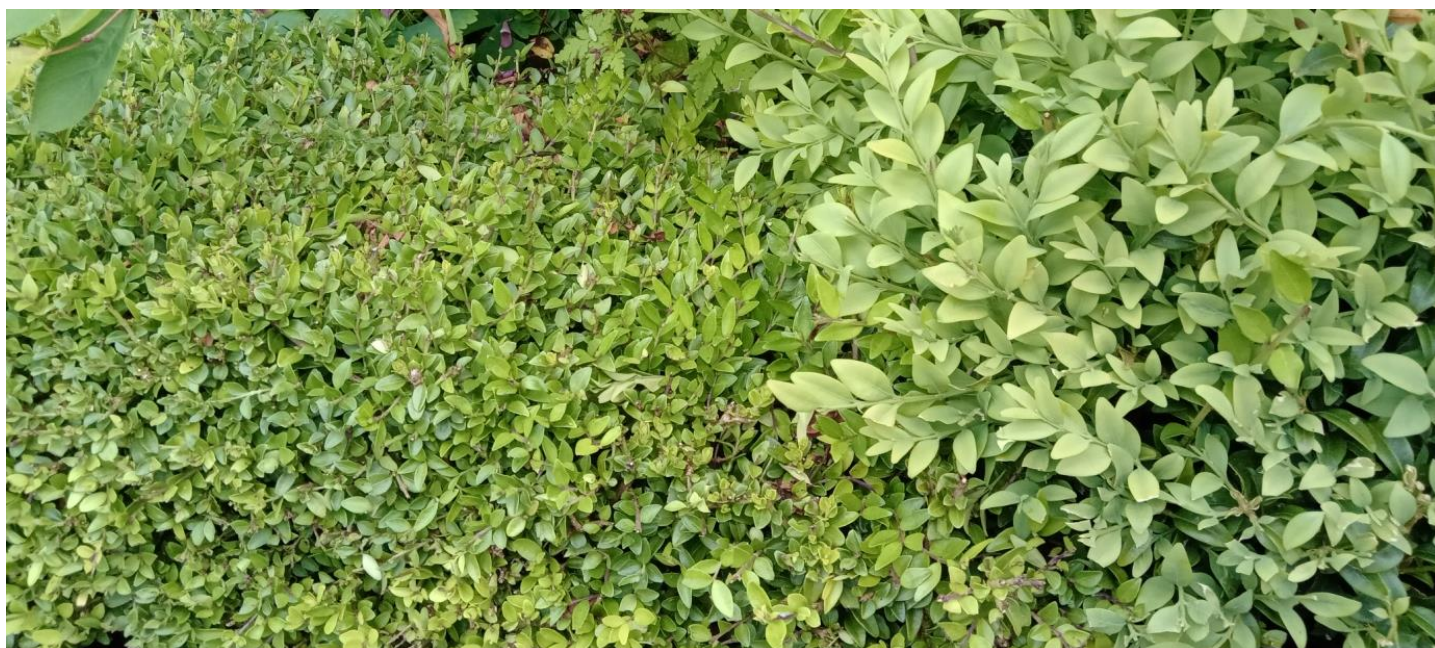


Mike Wakefield

6. 'Gardening' Notes

If you subscribe to Rail-Online, apart from the lists of super railway photos to trawl through, Tony, the chap who administers the site, starts with the latest news from his allotment. You hear what he has planted or sown or dug up! I am not suggesting we have a similar feature in the ASRM newsletter but I thought a few notes on my hedging might be of some interest to anyone considering moving into the Great Outdoors with their railway.

When we moved to our present house in 2016, the railway was part of the plan for the garden. I cast concrete beams to take the single track and laid a 'dog-bone' with two return loops separated by a length of nearly straight track and sidings off one of the loops. The track is basically level for free running steam locos. It starts about three feet off the ground and eventually dives into a shallow cutting where the garden rises up. To hide the concrete beams and the galvanized legs holding them up, I planted some hedging. The choice seemed to be between the native Box (*Buxus sempervirens*) and either Box-leaved honeysuckle (*Lonicera pileata*) or Shrubby honeysuckle (*Lonicera nitida*). They are all evergreen. I already had a few box plants and they are incorporated into the hedge but they can suffer from box blight which kills them and infestations of box tree moth which eats them.



Box-leaved honeysuckle on the left, Box on the right

I bought 100 little box-leaved honeysuckle plants and planted them either side of the railway line in a staggered pattern. I ran out of plants and not knowing better, bought more plants which turned out to be the Shrubby variety. So I have two types; the box leaved have bigger leaves and are lighter in colour. Other than that, they are pretty similar.



Box-leaved honeysuckle on the left, Shrubby honeysuckle on the right

Once planted, a friend told me he wished he had used box for his railway as the honeysuckles grow too quickly. That is what I thought I needed, as I wanted the cover as soon as possible. Well now I have the cover and at this time of year (May) they do grow like the clappers!



Here is a photo taken soon after the hedging was planted in 2017



A similar view taken now showing how the hedging has grown up around the track.

The hedging is supposed to be level with the track apart from at the junctions where I wanted to hide the view of the track coming in. I have really let them grow a bit too high and it is proving difficult to trim them back to the correct height. The track bed is low enough to require kneeling on the lawn to either use a hedge trimmer or shears. As mentioned, it grows very quickly and it can be a bit of a bind having to keep trimming it. My ballast is glued with SBR so you can brush or blow off the hedge cuttings from the track. Loose ballast would not really work; you would have to stop the cuttings finding their way onto the track.

There are good things about this type of hedging. If a steam engine races away and comes off the track, it is gently cushioned at track height rather than plummeting down to the ground. The bees like the little flowers which is a good thing. While trying to electrify part of the line, I was hiding a wire under the concrete beams and found a hedgehog's nest! It is following a tradition of homeless folk going back to the birth of the railway, of seeking shelter under the arches. Birds also use the railway as a path to walk along and little creatures can move around the garden underneath it, safe from cats and other predators.

Another benefit, is the way it divides up the garden. I call it a knot garden or parterre with a railway running along the top! It has formed a nice little lawn outside the conservatory. Inside one of the 'teardrop' shaped loops, we have planted a little cherry tree and daffodils.

Nick Coppin

7. Resin Casting Curly Spokes

I need some wheels for a 16mm/ft scale Dick Kerr petrol electric locomotive, but nobody makes the right ones at the right size. Having seen Nick make resin cast wheels I have followed his process to make my own. Luckily I could get just the steel tyre in the right size, so it's been a case of casting new hubs. The plan was to make one wheel hub on Nick's pantograph milling machine then use it to make a mould to resin cast a set.

Photo 1 : first thing to do – make a template four times over scale. This one was lasered out on a Neje laser (similar to the one Mike Wakefield demonstrated for us).



Photo 2 : The pantograph machine then follows this template and machines one at finish size in a piece of Tufnol hard plastic. We used two sizes of follower pin, so I could get a narrower front edge to the spoke. Then I fitted it in a tyre, and with some dollops of car body filler and several hours with needle files, I sculpted and smoothed out the spokes of my 'master' wheel.

Photo 3 : Then glue the master wheel in the bottom of a water-tight box, mix up the two-pack silicon moulding rubber, and pour gently to fill the box.





Photo 4 : Once cured, prise away the box from the outside and extract the master wheel. I now have a rubber mould negative of the wheel.

Photo 5 : Insert a steel tyre into the mould, and fill in the remaining space with polyurethane resin. I got slow setting resin this time – it lets the bubbles escape more easily. I also used a disposable brush to be sure resin got into all the corners.

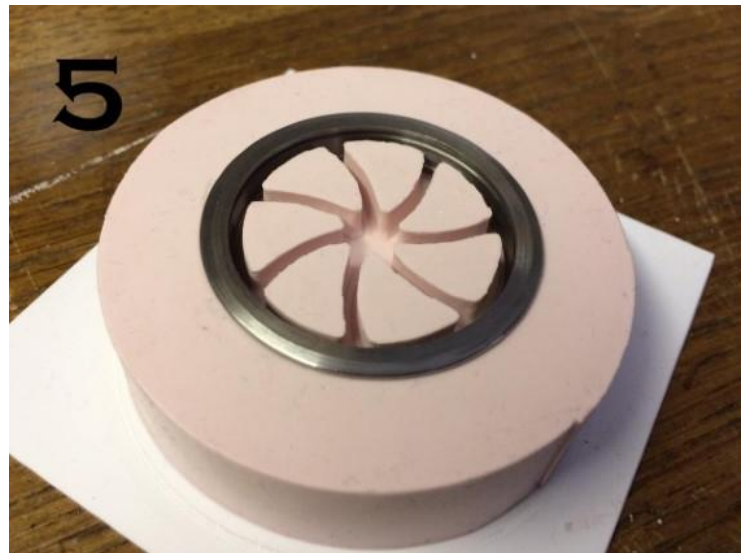


Photo 6 : When the resin is set, pop it out of the mould and repeat. The excess resin on the backs of the wheels is sanded off until flush with the tyre.

So now I have curly spoke wheels!

Now just the rest of the locomotive...

8. Good News and Bad News (or - Win Some, Lose Some)

First the bad news:

Some of you will remember from the April meeting that I was attempting to print and apply homemade transfers to my railcars. We see so many examples of excellence at our meetings, excellence that can both inspire and, perhaps, be a little depressing too when set against our own inadequacies. I write this in the hope that sharing with you my unmitigated transfer-making disaster will produce the warm fellow feeling that you are not alone when things go wrong. (And if instead it just give you a quick burst of schadenfreude, I can cope with that!)

I used a trial pack of three different decal papers, Waterslide Decal Paper, White Inkjet Waterslide Paper, and Dry Rub Off Decal Paper purchased online from MDP (Mr Decal Paper), and followed their instructions. Getting the size of the transfer right is comparatively easy. I used Excel to produce cells of precisely the measurement I needed. So far, so good. I wanted my numbers and letters to be in as bright a gold/yellow colour as I could achieve, and, because yellow does not cover the underlying colour well, this meant printing them onto white transfer paper rather than clear, with the rest of the transfer printed to match the green of the Budd railcar's livery. The first problem that arises is trying to match the background colour. I used the Custom Colour feature in Excel, but the matching turned into a marathon (a marathon from the Persian point of view - like them, I lost) The difficulty is that:

- (a) the colour on the monitor differs from that which prints on the plain paper used in my trials,
- (b) the colour on the plain paper differs from that which prints on the transfer paper,
- (c) the colour on the transfer paper differs once varnish has been applied.

Later, oh so very much later, once I thought I had got close enough, I printed off the transfers I needed, applied the three light coats of gloss varnish recommended to protect the ink, and set about applying them. It was recommended to put them in water for 30 seconds, but I found that the transfer was still reluctant to come off the backing paper after that time, even though the water was beginning to leach out the background colour from round the edges. I had not come this far not to press on (grrr!), so I applied the transfers with the intention of painting the livery green colour over the top where the white background paper was showing through. This is where I found that the background colour was not as good a match as I had hoped, meaning that I would have to paint right up to the edge of the letters. I had chosen Times New Roman as my typeface because it was (conveniently) right for the period, and because Railroad Roman was too florid and extended. But even Times New Roman has fine points to its letters, which made painting tricky, or, as it is called, beyond my capability.

The results for the end of car lettering can be seen in the photograph below. (In fact I am surprised that they do not look quite as bad in the picture as they do to me in real life.) You can see the darker green of the transfer close up to the edge of the letters, but with a new 000 paintbrush and after about three hours of zen meditation to reduce my heartbeat to near zero, I may even be able to improve this enough for any remaining imperfections to be concealed under a little weathering.



However, the finer lettering on the side of the car, which was on a very narrow strip (3mm) of transfer, is a total disaster, shown in all its horror below.



If the backing colour choice had been correct - and had not leached out at the edges - , then this would have been quite a triumph as the positioning is spot on despite the small size. As it is, it is a failure and will have to go.

So where did I go wrong? Did I spray the protective varnish too lightly or too heavily? Is there a better way other than trial and error of trying to match the background colour? I think the errors are mine rather than with the paper. Others online speak of great success with their efforts. It looks rather more complicated, but perhaps I should try the Dry Rub Off Paper next. I have had success with Woodland Scenics dry decals, but at the moment my enthusiasm is sagging! So it is a good job that there is still

the good news:

My other recent project has involved lighting the layout better. We talked about the importance of this at the last meeting, so I thought you might like to hear about my solution. The sunroom we have, of which the layout now takes just under half the space, came with two one metre long lighting strips named Robus made by a firm called Lyco, with four sliding 50W halogen spotlights on each. These provide a good light, but were not in the correct position to light the layout well, especially the more recent area of it, which was very shaded and gloomy. I liked the effect of the spots, which seem to me to give the equivalent of a nice bright summer day - always the happiest days in one's memory - , and, as I am replacing the 50W halogens by 5W LEDs as they burn out, the power consumption is very low.

The Robus system is modular and comes in metre lengths with straight and 90 degree joining pieces, so I decided that the simplest way to proceed would be to move and expand my present system. The problem is that the existing unit of the two, the one which lights the layout, is mounted on the large gable that supports the roof, but is therefore too far back. In order to mount the units correctly I had to construct a new timber frame. I kept this at the same height, and with the same basic construction as the existing gables, but with much smaller timber (1½" square with 2" x 1" bracing). This and the gable on which the strip was previously mounted can be seen in the photograph.



Because of all the angles involved it was not an entirely straightforward process (when is it ever?), but I now have a firm, rigid frame on which I was able to mount 3 metres of track along the front and 2 metres from front to back along the aisle.

The next job was to connect the track to the light switch, and then to mount the spotlights. I have placed four along the front scene, which seem to give a very clear, sunny light -



and I have placed four along the aisle for the town scene –



I realise now that I should have posted 'before' and 'after' photographs, but I hope these show that it is a now the nice sunny day in Appalachia that I was seeking. The important thing for me is that the colours look the same under the artificial lights as they do in daylight. Funny things happen on some layouts when the lights go on. Technically these bulbs provide 345 lumens each and, most critically for the appearance, at a 'temperature' of 2700K.

I bought four one metre strips and relocated the one that was already in place, plus six spotlights to add to the four already on that existing strip, making a total outlay of about £125. This has transformed the appearance of the layout to a far greater extent than buying a new loco (!), so I think it has been money well spent. At 5W per bulb, a maximum of 50W in total, the running costs will be very low, even under the new soaring electricity prices.

These photographs were taken for this article as a first attempt at placing the lights, and I had only positioned eight of the ten spots that I have. I can see now that another spot will be needed in the town area to give a more even coverage, but the improvement is already remarkable.

So there you have it, a hobby of alternating hope and despair. “If you can meet with triumph and disaster, and treat those two impostors just the same”, then you may well be a railway modeller, my son.

Peter Cox

9. Down but Not Out



One of the remaining Inter City 125 High Speed Train sets, passing through Exeter St Thomas on a Cardiff Central to Penzance service on Friday 13th May 2022.

Nick Coppin

10.Extensive OO collection for sale

Dear ASRM Members

Some of you may have been fortunate enough to have known Ian Dormor, who sadly passed away earlier this year. Among many other things he was a founder member of the old Church Stretton Model Railway Club and a member of his local Rail User Group. He was a keen railway modeller and had an impressive layout in a dedicated room at his house. I have been asked to help with the cataloguing and disposal of Ian's model train collection, which I have to say is pretty immense!

Predominantly OO gauge, the collection includes examples from all major manufacturers since around the year 2000 to the present. Ian's main interest was in pre-war GWR, both main and branch line. However, there are examples from others of the Big Four, a huge array of private owner wagons, some early B.R. and a bit of OO9.

My plan is to catalogue the collection in a series of separate lists, due to the large number of items, and to crate-up the collection in readiness for distribution to various commercial outlets. However, Ian's widow Lorna is keen for Ian's former colleagues and other local enthusiasts to have first refusal on locos, coaches and wagons from the collection, prior to their dispatch. Lorna has therefore agreed for the items to be offered via the Craven Arms club to Craven Arms and ASRM members on a first come, first served basis. Discounts will be available for multiple purchases, e.g. a rake of coaches as opposed to a single coach. Lorna has agreed for a small amount of commission being retained by CADMRC for their assistance with cataloguing, card sales, etc. The remaining sale proceeds will be paid to Lorna.

If you would like to see the lists, please contact me as soon as possible at arbutle@gmail.com . I will email the lists to you as I complete them. If there are any items of interest to you, you should contact me within 2 weeks of each list's publication at arbutle@gmail.com . I will then provide further details, including a quotation, viewing arrangements and methods of payment. You can, of course, also speak with me about the collection at ASRM meetings.

Ian kept his collection in superb condition, therefore all items are in at least excellent, if not mint, condition, as are their boxes. If for any reason an item is found to have a defect, a note will be made by its listing. All locos are set for analogue operation and will be tested prior to packing.

This really is an ideal opportunity to expand your collection of Locos, Coaches and Wagons at realistic prices. Other items from the collection, such as kits, scenic materials and tools, will be available at the Craven Arms Summer Show on the 20th August.

Happy Modelling.

Regards,

Andy Butler, on behalf of Lorna Dormor