

Risborough and District Model
Railway Club

July-Sept 2008 Summer

FOOTPLATE



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Sub-Committee meeting on 13th June 2008

We are gathering information on possible future club rooms. If we are to move then it must be to a property of suitable size to allow the layouts to be permanently erected and it must be a long term move. We will investigate the cost of various types of properties: traditional construction, wooden frame, modular building as well as existing property that might be adapted. The building must also have full disabled access, a small kitchen and toilet. We will then be investigating what grants might be available to help with the purchase. Fitting it out will also not be trivial as the tables we use at the Community Centre cost £100 each and chairs could easily be £25 each so it all adds up. Our present club room plus the Carrington Room is quite low cost and moving would no doubt require an increase in the club membership subscription to cover the running costs.

WELCOME

Railex has been another great success this year with 27% more people than last year when many other exhibitions are seeing reduced numbers. So a big thank you to everyone involved. I must especially thank the car park stewards who achieved a very slick operation and got very wet again! Unfortunately I cannot control the weather. The car park stewards are the first club members the public meet so it is important to get them to their spaces as quickly as possible. This year we were using some of the car parks in the hospital grounds as well as the stadium and school parking. The hospital car parks seem to keep changing so I am not sure what will be available next year. Setup and breakdown seemed to go very smoothly and the hall was cleared by 20.30hrs on the Sunday night, the last layout to leave was "The Gresley Beat" as we suspected. Report and photos start on page 8.

We now have a new train operator running though Risborough, although they do not stop. Class 67s are being used by Wrexham & Shropshire Railway to top and tail trains until their DVTs are ready, so get your cameras out and send me some photos for the next Footplate.

Okehampton, our large O gauge project, is making good progress. New boards are arriving at the club and legs are being fitted. Trackwork and the turntable are progressing well. We have just assembled another 4 boards at our June Modelling Saturday and had all the boards laid out on the floor the following Friday. It is big, very big! It is probably not as large as Bucks Hill in terms of length and width but has more scenic depth so the area is probably larger. This is a very exciting project so do get involved.

In the modelling world the big news is that Hornby are still buying other companies, this time it is Corgi and Bassett-Lowke, a very well known model company from the start of the hobby. They have also updated the Hornby International website which is much improved and new Continental and American models are appearing regularly.

Ted (SCC) reports that the testing of the Digitrax radio throttle is progressing well. I suspect many of us will be rushing to buy these when they become available later in the year. Like most Digitrax products it will be possible to upgrade your existing DT400s.

Front cover photo: 61264 ex LNER B1 at the "LNER Festival" at Barrow Hill November 2007. Photo by Martin Randall.

Welsh Highland Railway Track Laying – Part 3

The Track Laying Volunteers

In the previous articles I've outlined the background to the WHR and track laying parties, this time I'll tell you about the volunteers.

Originally railways were constructed by navvies, a term that conjures up images of a rugged, strong, male workforce. They were probably drawn in from far and wide in need of the work to support their family. Today things are a little different; an announcement is placed on a website 'Track Laying Week – Volunteers Required' and soon over 30 offers of help roll in!

So why are volunteers important? Significant cash funding has been obtained in the form of grants, many of these require match funding, £1 for £1. Fortunately some of this can be in the form of volunteer labour and each role has a value, typically in the £10 to £40 per hour range. John Sreeves is a bridge designer by profession and has designed the major bridges, he is at the upper end of the scale and has, effectively, contributed over £40,000. Track layers are, as mere manual workers, at the lower end of the scale, however every hour is logged and the maximum volunteer matching threshold was passed during 2007. So, some construction work is completed for free and an equivalent sum in cash is released for purchasing material or employing contractors to do other jobs.

Volunteers also provide their own work wear - safety boots, high vis clothing, waterproofs and gloves (a construction site requirement). Hard hats and ear defenders are provided, however I have my own. They must also find accommodation and food. All this costs money, however I've yet to find a track layer who'd rather have signed up to the monthly donation scheme and then sat at home waiting for a ride once the line is completed. Incredibly Paul Bradshaw has completed over 300 Phase Four site inductions – so there's been no shortage of volunteers.

Everyone is required to be at the signing-on point at 08:30 ready for the work brief, load the tools required for the day onto the works train and then travel to the railhead. This can be a tall order for those stopping in a Porthmadog B&B, as Welsh landladies aren't overly keen on serving pre-07:30 breakfasts. So it's a fast dash along narrow twisty roads to Rhyd Ddu or Beddgelert, via Tesco, which doesn't open until 08:00, to pick up some lunch. Incidentally, the end of the day is equally a problem as you slip back into the B&B, hoping not to be intercepted before passing through the shower to wash all traces of track

grease and grime off!

As I've said before track laying weeks are particularly good for those living some distance away, consequently the spread of accents is wide, although most are English. The northern tones of Steve, a tool maker from Nottinghamshire, are often to be heard across the worksite, as he's a ROWG regular and often put in charge of supervising the work. In contrast it comes as no surprise to find that John Ewing, the WHR Safety Director, has recently retired from a military career. Track layers also come in all shapes and sizes. Phil may be shorter than average, but looks a fearsome sight in toecap boots, shorts and T-shirt, regardless of the temperature and is as strong as a bulldog.

On the occasions I've worked with them approximately half the North Wales gang have been Welsh speakers, fortunately all the work instructions are given



in English. One weekend we were also joined by David Blondin and a colleague who spoke limited English, from the Le Petit Train de la Haute Somme in France, so three languages were being spoken. Some of the volunteers are model engineers who've stepped up a scale, like John and Derek from Malden & District SME or Steve, who I mentioned earlier, that has given up his regular hobby for the duration of Phase Four track laying.

Even though it is heavy manual work volunteering is not limited to men, in fact there's usually a couple of women in each working party. 'Pat the Gap' (which sounds worse than intended) has carved out a niche preparing the fishplates and fasteners, gapping the expansion joint and helping bolt the lot together. Jane Ewing is one of the most regular female volunteers, not wishing to miss out on John's fun and attracts some surprised looks when dropped in his Jaguar XJR saloon, when he has commitments elsewhere on the railway. In fact we had a total of four couples on one occasion, one of whom had come over especially from Northern Ireland. Then there are Tim Evan's daughters, who were intrigued what their father did every other weekend and started coming along, his son has no interest whatsoever though.

Quite a number of the older volunteers are ex-Deviationists, including Gerald Fox who surveyed the new FR route in 1964 and led the start of construction from Dduallt. Mike Schumann, who took over from Gerald on the deviation, Paul Bradshaw, Dr Peter 'Pedr' Jarvis and others have all been involved, 25 years after Blaenau Ffestiniog was reached in 1982. Despite being twice as long as the FR, the Welsh Highland has been rebuilt significantly quicker, primarily because of the ready availability of mechanical plant and use of contractors for the ground works.

Track laying is potentially a dangerous activity and health and safety is, not surprisingly, an important issue. Medical attention has only been required once, a lad with diabetes felt a bit faint. Fortunately Pedr, who runs the FR/WHR's first aid courses, was present. We didn't like to tell the lad Peter was a retired gynaecologist and I didn't dare look how he was treating him!

Whilst a track laying day ends around 18:00, or earlier during winter months, it is common for volunteers to meet up for a meal or drink in the evening. Spooner's, the FR bar and restaurant, at Porthmadog Harbour station is a regular venue. Thursday is pub quiz night and we managed to field three teams of six, following our meals, in October. It's also a great opportunity to catch up with friends from the FR, indeed even David Waller was there that week volunteering on the FR.

In the final instalment I'll explain the sequences in laying the track and about the tools we use to manhandle rails, weighing over half a ton, into position.

Richard Neil



Railex

Rather than make up my own comment I thought it best to allow our visitors to express themselves, after all it's their money and time that keeps it all going..

“It was one of the best - if not the BEST - exhibition I personally have ever been to“
David Chappell. www.stowrailclub.org.uk

“Without any exaggeration, that was one of the best shows I have ever been to. And I am talking nearly forty years of exhibitions. Just stunning. So many great layouts. Bucks Hill was like trainspotting on speed. It was my first time at Railex, and it was a very long haul there and back, but well worth it.”
Mike (from the fens)

“Just got home, excellent show! Well worth the 350 mile round trip.”
Gordon Luck (Lincolnshire)

“Well I been today, and would like to echo the praise to all concerned with the exhibition, it was worth the four hours spent on buses today.” **David House (Witney)**

“It's possibly the best show I've attended for both quality and variety of exhibits, and I've seen a few in the last 30 years!”
Pete (Matlock)

“A group of 4 of us made the long journey (just short of 400 miles on the day - thanks Vincent). This was pretty much the sort of show I was dreaming about a few days ago. No duff layouts to fill the space. Usually, a show will have a few "star" layouts then a mix of run of the mill, average/poor make up the numbers layouts. Here, everything was top quality including the trade. Lots of what I call "proper modelling". Things that people had made/alterd/worked on and not just bought. Bucks Hill, Dewsbury, Gresley Beat, London Road (after a gap of many years, great to see this one again). It was even arranged into little sections. All the 2mm together etc.

Got to agree with all the comments - must be one of the best quality shows I've ever been to, if not THE BEST! Good venue, well lit, no duff layouts, great selection of trade stands. Thanks to all concerned - we'll definitely be back next year.”
Tim (Worcester)

Right upper: the ashmans hut on The Gresley Beat which won the best model award.
Right lower: Stoney Lane Depot (N). Most of the buildings are built in card.





Above: Steamwinders and sawdust.

Below: Stoney Middleton



“Indeed a cracking show. In fact as far as consistency with regard to quality is concerned, I can't think of another show that I have attended that was so good.”

Steve Williams (Redditch)

“Thank you David & your team for a truly excellent show, quite the best that I've ever attended. The atmosphere was relaxed with a standard of exhibits truly the highest AFAIK that have been under one roof. Rod (10800) drove me up in a four-hour journey, in torrential rain, but it was very much worth the effort. How are you going to better this next year!”

John (Devon)

“Absolutely brilliant show, well worth the 7 hours of round trip driving Very glad to have seen Bucks Hill, a great advert for 7mm, and Stoney Lane Depot was every bit as good in the flesh as in pictures. Vine Yard seemed to have plenty of action every time I passed it. Saw Gresley Beat for the first time, would like to have studied it more but so much to see elsewhere. Dewsbury Midland always a pleasure. But an exhibition with no duff (or even below par) layouts at all is a rare beast.

Congratulations to David Lane, not just for the actual show but for all the peripheral things (signage, car park stewards) that contribute to the day. And a special word of appreciation to the car park stewards who were out in the height of the deluge first thing this morning.”

Rod Cameron (Devon)

“A very big thanks to David and the crew, a seamlessly organised show in which you are made to feel well and truly at home no hassle and just to have been there was enough - i feel sorry for those who missed this show, it was just spectacular in the quality of what was on offer. We will be back!!!!”

Andy Cooper (Manchester Dewsbury layout)

“Yep, as others have said, it was a very fine show. Not a duff layout on view, plenty of appropriate traders and a great atmosphere. Oh, and the trip to the pub on Saturday evening was a hoot - a double decker bus crammed full of railway modellers descended on a rather nice just-out-of-town pub and probably drank it dry. Congratulations to the organising team. Those who missed out must be kicking themselves.”

Grahame (Stoney Lane Depot)

“A great collection of superb layouts. Bucks Hill. Dewsbury. Gresley Beat. Each one as good as the next. Plus a host of other fine layouts. A great weekend was had by all & Saturday night was an added bonus. Thanks Rod & Mike for the great conversation. My partner & I met some extremely nice people & had a great time. Looking forward to the next one already.” **Tony Daly & Brenda Murphy. South West Ireland.**

“So congratulations all round for a superb day - it's going to be hard act to follow to match it next year!”

Gerry Beale (Bristol)

“You should be congratulated on another outstanding effort by you and your team! Well worth the 8 hour/500 mile round trip from North Wales!” **Martin Wales.**

“While I clearly did not come anything like as far as some other people who have posted, just the housing group on the corner of Gresley Beat was worth a 90 min drive in pouring rain; this is truly outstanding modelling and really captures this area of housing (I grew up nearby). To my amazement the builder (Geoff Taylor) told me he had never visited the area. I found him on another layout, to which he and made a significant contribution, Dewsbury Midland.

I had gone to see these two layouts and Stoney Lane (which also impressed mightily), and was definitely not disappointed. That was a truly excellent show and sets the bar very high for the future. Thank you to the organisers and the exhibitors who made it such a good day out.” **Julian Evison (Woking)**

“It really was on of the best I've been to. There wasn't a duff layout, the demonstrators and trade were both interesting and even the general hall lighting was better than most sports halls! From an exhibitor's point of view, it was great to see the Exhibition Manager around two or three times each day to check that things were in order and the team marking out the floor deserve the thanks of the Dewsbury team for letting us unload a good hour before we should have had access to the hall.

I think it's safe to say that there'll be a delegation from Lancashire visiting next year's Railex for the weekend - we could do a day trip but we couldn't leave without a pint or six in the Hop Pole, could we?” **Phil (Manchester Dewsbury layout)**

“Farkham was fantastic - a wonderfully detailed roundy with an amazing amount of detail. I also liked Dewsbury - a terrific piece of work. Dave - you and your crew produced a fantastic show all in all - great location and thoroughly enjoyed myself from what I saw.” **Andel (Clacton)**

“What a fantastic set of layouts - every single one was top quality. I have never been to a Railex before but was inspired to make the trip by having previously seen The Gresley Beat and Dewsbury Midland. What I hadn't expected was for all the other layouts to be so good too - I especially enjoyed Steamwinders & Sawdust, although as a London boy, Stoney Lane Depot and Ripper St were very evocative of my childhood commuting to school in inner London.

Easy access, not too crowded (at least not on Sunday when I went) and very friendly. I'll definitely be a Railex regular from now on.

Thank you for putting on the best exhibition I've ever been to in over 30 years of being a railway nut.” **Simon Younger**

How to enjoy a child's eye front-row view at RAILEX

Sunday was my day to look around the exhibition with my son Noa (aged 3 and a bit) - having done my duties as a Club member on the Friday and Saturday (and again on the Monday).

We arrived when the exhibition was just opening, and Noa made immediate use of his *big red stool* (*alias* the old kitchen swing-bin), insisting that he carry it himself ('No Daddy *I* want to carry it!'), **and** that he get up onto it himself without being helped. Oblivious to the comments of other visitors, such as ('It's bigger than the boy himself!' or 'That's a good idea - why didn't we think of that!') Noa scrutinised one layout after another, enjoying an adult's eye view.

Tiredness of course crept in when it got to early afternoon, and we took our leave before there was too much dragging of the 'stool' along the floor and the possible disruption to others' free and unencumbered enjoyment of the exhibition.

Then it was early to bed, and a gentle bidding from Daddy not to miss the next steam-hauled departure for *Dreamland*...

The next day my wife recounted the following exchange between herself and Noa, from the night before:

Noa - 'No **Daddy!** I don't **want** to go home yet!'

Mummy, *enquiring gently* - 'Go home from where, Noa?' -

Noa - '.....the Model Railway exhibition!'

All this in Finnish, as mother and son usually converse, in private, in their first language - and I can vouch for the authenticity of the occurrence: my wife not being prone to approval of '*things railways*' would never have invented such an exchange of words!

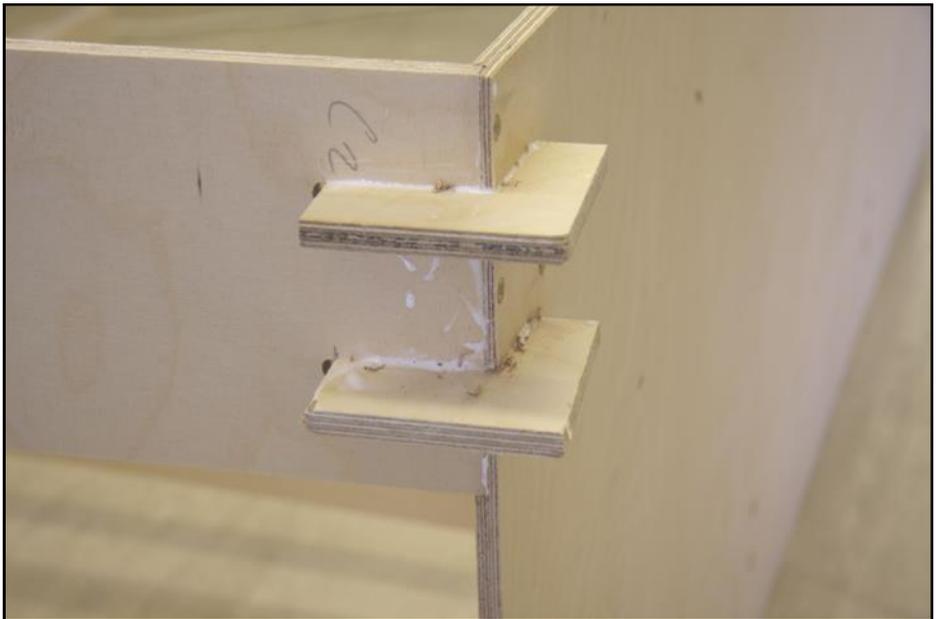
Andrew



Okehampton Progress Report

Board construction for Okehampton is now well underway. The boards are designed on a CAD program so that all the dimensions can be accurately calculated. The 9mm birch ply is then accurately cut using jigs to provide a kit of parts which can be quickly assembled. The boards are built in sets of four to ensure that they match in size and shape. The layout is an oval shape so all the boards are different shapes and sizes to form the curve. Ply wedges are fitted into the corners to ensure the sides line up correctly. This is easier than machining softwood blocks of the correct angle. These blocks of four boards are then separated when the glue has set and the wedges cut off flush with the outside. At this stage the boards are quite flexible but will be filled with large sheets of Styrofoam (an extruded polystyrene not expanded polystyrene) to give a rigid (but light weight) surface for the scenics. Trackbeds may still need to be made from a ply construction to ensure they cannot move under the weight of the trains.

Below: detail of the ply corner wedges.





Above: the kit of parts laid out on the floor.

Below: the assembled set of four boards clearly showing the shape is not square!



Workshop update

Resin casting

Hopefully you will remember the resin casting workshop during which I made a silicone rubber mould (Moldsil silicone rubber from W.P. Notcutt) of some N scale Wiking wheels. I have now cast these from polyurethane resin (Biresin G26 from Alex Tiranti). The parts are small and have a large under cut so a few air bubbles did occur. Even so I have achieved a greater than 70% success rate at casting. A little cleaning up is required on the back of the wheel which is easily achieved with a scalpel and small file. The wheels are drilled with a 1mm hole in the back and then pushed onto the axle. A small drop of superglue is used if they are not tight enough. They are then

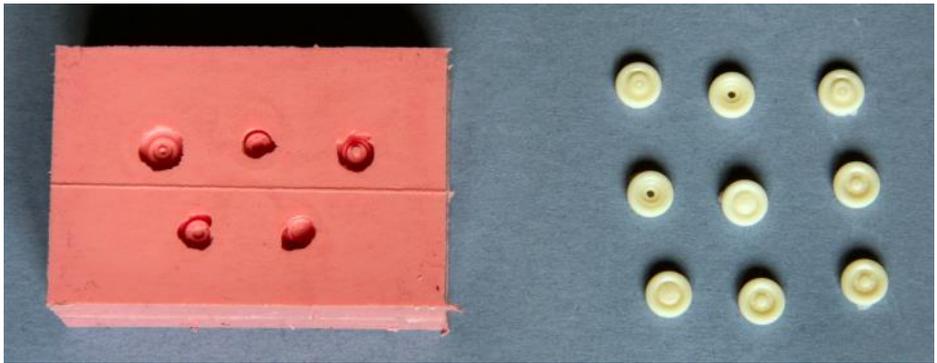


Photo 2: the finished fire engine with its new wheels.



Unit models

I first became aware of Unit Models via their website and thought the products looked interesting. It was the roof ducting that had caught my attention as I will be needing this for my town scene. I considered buying from the website, however, I like to see products before buying so I know what they are really like close up. I was therefore pleased to see them at Railex and I was able to get a close look at the range. As well as the ducting they have small buildings, huts, low relief buildings, culverts, etc. These are their own products produced in resin and are available painted as well as unpainted in scales from Z to G. The casting is to a high standard with very little cleaning required and the masters have been well made.

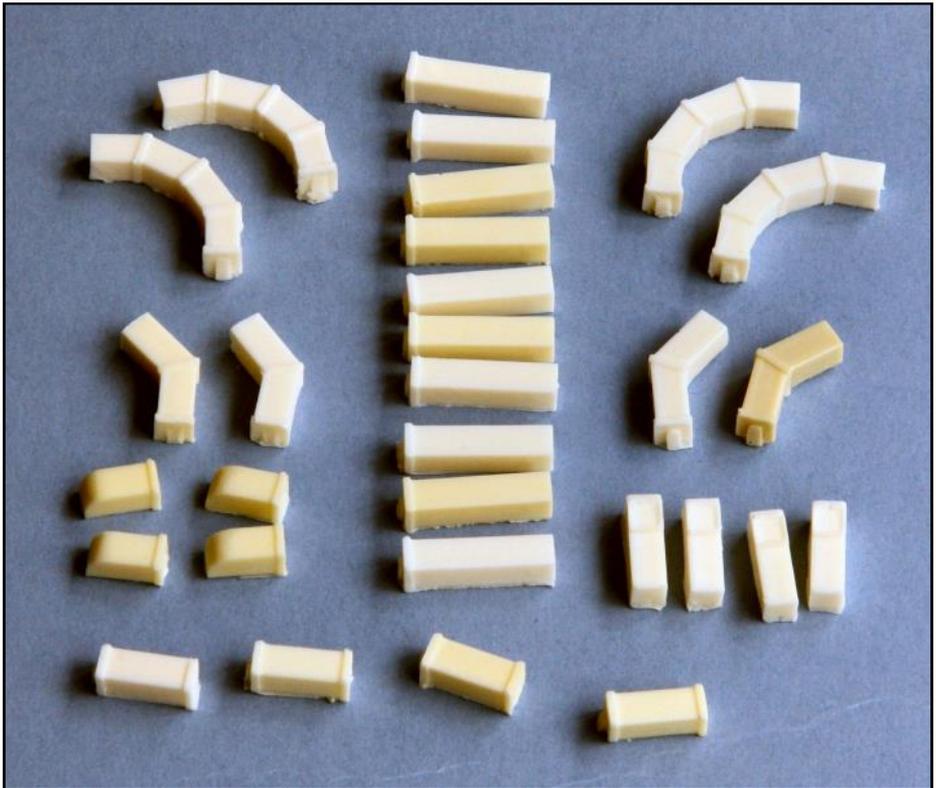
The roof ducting is the same item in N and HO (4.8mm) but this is OK as ducting does vary considerably in size. The table right gives the scale sizes.

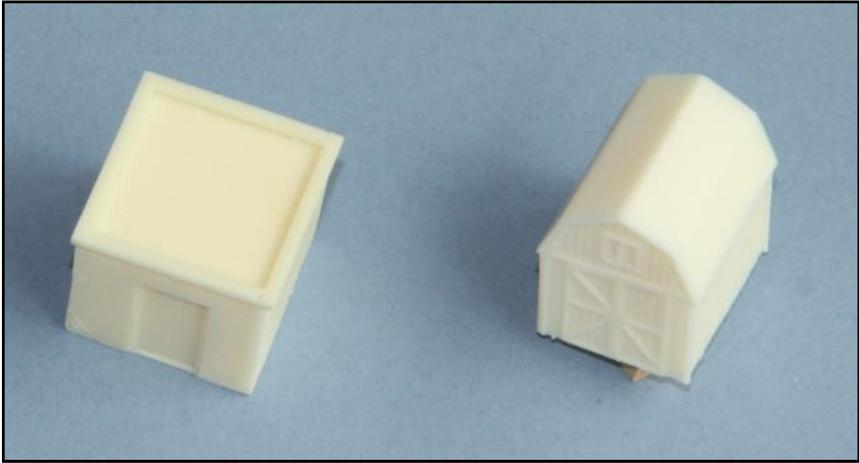
Looking at buildings in Google maps is a good guide to roof layouts and shows how large the air conditioners are, see below for a photo of a building in Utrecht.



Scale	Size / mm	Size / in
1:160	768	30
1:148	710	28
1:87	418	16
1:76	365	14
1:43	206	8

The roof ducting pack consists of 30 pieces to get you started with all parts available in packs of usually 3 or 4 parts. There is a larger range in HO than N (106 items compared to 54). Additional pieces would be easy to construct from Evergreen Styrene sections.





Above left: roof block house N-021 could also be a shed.

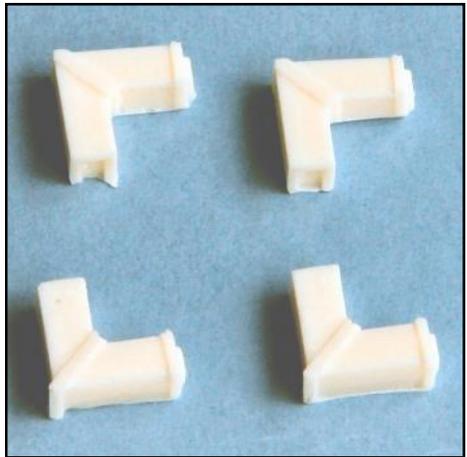
Above right: Dutch barn style shed N-055

Right: 90 elbows N(HO)-31

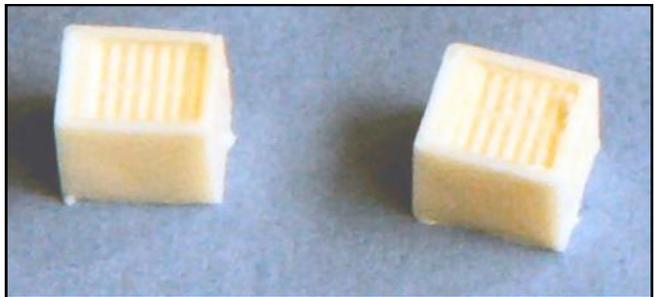
Below: small a/c units HO-39

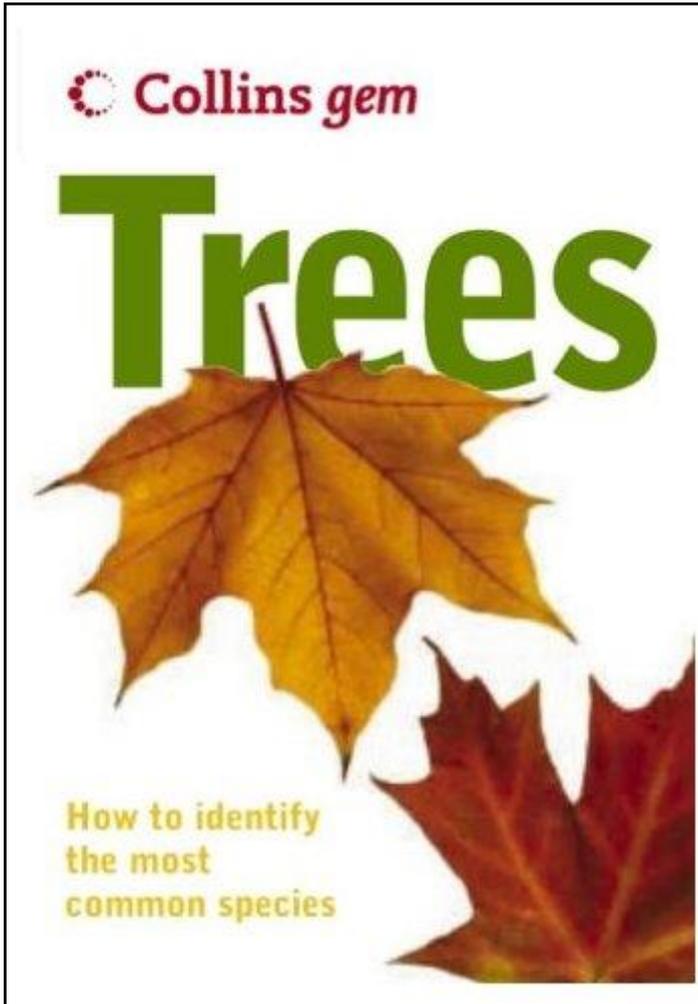
Parts numbers

- N-20(HO-25) roof access door
- 27 ducting kit 30 sections
- 29 long straight 3 section
- 30 long straight 5 section
- 31 90 ducting elbow
- 32 ducting hatch
- 33 Vent
- 38 Air conditioning units, large
- 39 Air conditioning units, small
- 75&76 trackside cable ducting



Paul





For those of you building trees here is another useful small book. It contains descriptions and diagrams which should help you get the correct shape and colour for your trees.

[Collins Gem — TREES](#) Alastair Fitter

The best-selling, unrivalled beginner's guide to identifying the most common species of tree in northern Europe.

format: Paperback
pub date: 02/08/2004
imprint: Collins
ISBN: 978-0-00-718306-7
series: Collins Gem
price: £4.99

Club workshops.

Building from plastic sheet and strip TBC

Ballasting trackwork TBC

Static grass TBC

Would anyone be interested in revisiting some of the topics already covered such as kit construction and weathering?



Useful internet addresses:

<http://members.tripod.com/~dart75/bdds.htm>

The Bulleid Double Decker Society

www.bathintime.co.uk

A set of 80 or so images of the countryside at the northern end of the S&D has been donated to the "Bath in Time" website:

<http://fr.youtube.com:80/watch?v=hxTNle8DEC8&feature=related>

How a pantograph destroys itself and the overhead line in Switzerland.

www.unitmodels.com

Unit Models website, resin accessories.

www.hfstephens-museum.org.uk

The Colonel Stephens Railway Museum

www.eustonarch.org/future.html

The Euston Arch Trust

www.trainplayer.com

train simulator, the demo can be downloaded:



Club Diary

July		Footplate Summer edition
	5 th	Modelling Saturday
	12 th	CMRA TIME (Totally Interactive Modelling Event) Westfield Community College, Watford.
August	2 nd	Modelling Saturday
	31 st	End of club financial year.
September	1 st	Club Membership Subscription due.
	6 th	Modelling Saturday
October		Footplate published
November	1 st	Camp 93 - Parsons Lumber Company, Wycrail Exhibition
	7 th	Annual General Meeting
	22 nd -23 rd	Saffron Street and Camp 93 - Parsons Lumber Company, Warley Exhibition

Test track



Evenings

July	4 th & 25 th
August	15 th
September	5 th
October	17 th

November 28th

Additional evenings if space is available.

Modelling Saturdays

The following Saturdays have been booked for the morning and afternoon:

July 5th	Aug 2nd	Sept 6th
Oct 4th	Nov 1st	Dec 13th

Camp 93 at Railex.

This is the new section with the timber trestle viaducts which has been added to the left hand end of the layout.

