Risborough and District Model Railway Club

## Jan-Mar 2016 Winter

# FOOTPLATE

## Who's who!

| | |
|---|---|
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Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to everyone. Winter is a good time for modelling with fewer distractions such as gardening. It's also a good time for anyone who is modelling or thinking of modelling trees. Take a look at all the different shapes and the way the branches twist around.

**Aylesbury Town**: the new plan for Aylesbury Town has been approved. All the buildings, point work, etc. from the existing boards will be transferred to a new larger layout. This makes a much better layout and allows longer trains and a greater amount of stock to be run. The main issue the committee had to discuss was the boards. It has been proposed that the boards are to a new design using the blue foam sheets laminated with thin ply. This gives a light weight rigid board. The problem is, these boards cannot be built at the club and require specialised equipment. This can be done at Jon's workshop as he has the space and facilities. However, due to the amount of time this would take the suggestion was to pay Jon for his time. The committee were happy with the design of the boards and were confident we would get good value from Jon but in the past we have not bought in baseboards. The committee has agreed to this as it will give a complete set of baseboards, storage boxes and legs with all the fittings,

which will be produced fairly quickly and will enable this project to advance much more quickly than it otherwise would.

This does mean we need to find the space in the clubroom for the boards being worked on, so it's clear up time again.

We have also had to repair the fridge cabinet due to some leaking cans. So from now on only dry supplies will be kept in the cupboard under the fridge. This includes: tea, coffee, sugar, bin bags and cutlery.

Paul

# From the Internet

The SVR produced 3 GWR Manors for an event which celebrated the last days of Manors on the Cambrian line 50 years ago: 7802 Bradley Manor, 7812 Erlestoke Manor and guest 7820 Dinmore Manor. 4566 was the supporting loco. The weather was mainly very dull with the occasional bright spell.
4566 leaving Bridgnorth and Oldbury Viaduct; 7812 at Eardington Station and Eardington Bank; 7802 at Hay Bridge ; 7820 at Oldbury Viaduct and Knowlesands

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOfpkHbbZfA

After a five year hiatus given the lack of "Giants", the traditional Bluebell autumn spectacular returned with a bang in 2015, the first time the event had extended to East Grinstead. Recently restored Q class 30541 and longer term returnee 847 were joined by the debuting Standard 5MT no.73082 Camelot for the home fleet. This was bolstered by visiting engines in the form of 925 Cheltenham from the Mid Hants Railway and A4 4464 Bittern (a late replacement for 70000 Britannia).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9lpqld1W6U

Great Central Diesel Gala: A great day out with plenty of diesel action. Locos running on the day included...

Class 24081 (D5081), Class 25035 (D5185), Class 26007 (D5300), Class 27056 (D5401), Class 33116 (D6535), Class 45041 (D53), Class 45125 (D123).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oiEGWXVLfzs

Front cover: Rotterdam Oct 2015, one of the new class 186 multi voltage electric locos on an intercity train to Amsterdam Centraal. Paul

# THE ONLY WAY IS….ROMFORD (PART 2)

There were two Queen Mary Brake Vans located in Romford Goods Yard (S56302 and S56304). They were positioned at the end of the sidings (apparently after an accident), in order to prevent loaded coal wagons shunting down the incline from the main line and over-running the buffer stops into South Street.

The Bachmann version provided a good basis to recreate the above image. What I considered to be a relatively straightforward detailing job, proved not to be the case. I started off by replacing the moulded handrails with 0.5mm brass wire. Three link couplings and vacuum pipes were added. I also fitted flush glazing by applying very thin Perspex. This small detail enhanced the model considerably.

I wrongly presumed that my Exactoscale P4 scale wheel sets would simply slot in where the Bachmann versions once sat. This was not to be the case, as the wheels rubbed on the moulded brake shoes. Another solution was therefore

required. This came in the shape of a Brassmasters bogie kit. This basically requires the existing plastic bogie sides to be butchered and fitted to the sides of the newly constructed brass frames. The bogie sides need to be hollowed out for the wheel bearings and bogie connecting pins. Care needs to be taken here to ensure you do not go straight through the frame. Although the kit instructions were straightforward, the way in which the component parts connect makes for a very delicate construction. My biggest mistake was to construct the frames without considering how they would fit to the proprietary model. This error resulted in me having to dismantle my newly constructed frames in order to drill out for the securing screw. I am sure that construction of the Brassmasters kit would be perfected with practise. However, I am left to wonder whether I could achieve a better result with a Comet bogie kit. Perhaps I will try the Comet bogie for the sister wagon. To finish off, I painted the interior to match the photo and applied some light weathering. Overall, a pleasing project with lessons learnt along the way.

Gary

# Using photographs to make a Laser cutter/ etcher produce complex textures

The Laser cutter that the club has purchased is normally used with a drawing/diagram produced by a CAD package, requiring some familiarity with such software.

It has another mode of operation, whereby a photograph (in BMP) can be used for input. The Laser then reproduces the image by scanning the image completely and 'burning" a copy of the image into a piece of MDF. The use of Laser power for etching wood dates back at least 30 years to judge from the pencil holder sitting on my desk.

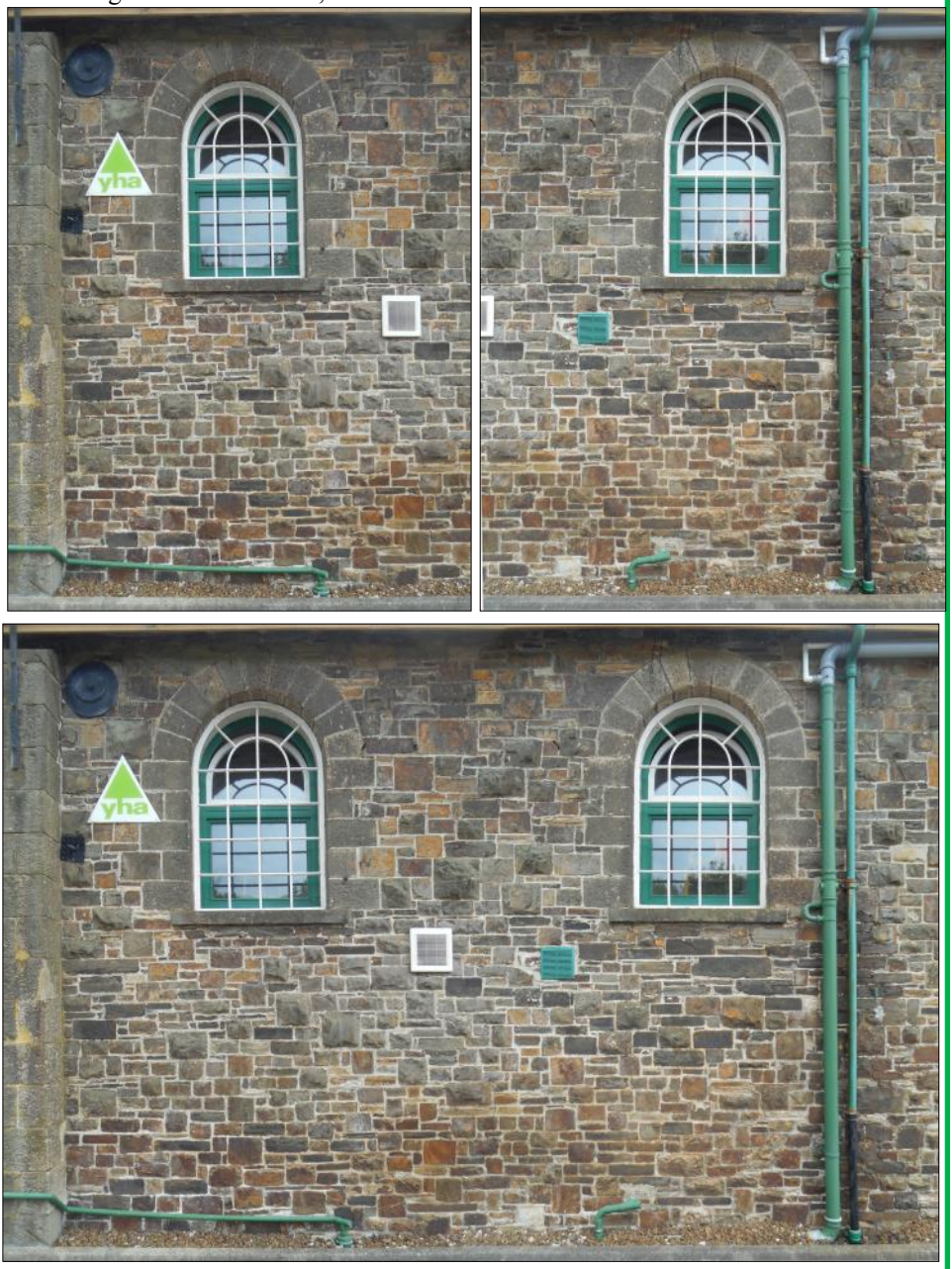
When I rashly offered to model the Goods Shed for the Okehampton project I little realised what I had let myself in for. This large building (now a Youth Hostel) was built out of local stonework (in 2 phases) which utilises a large variety of shapes and sizes of stone, and which also has a variety of colour shades. The stones are also irregular in that some project quite markedly from the vertical plane. The realistic representation of the surface therefore presents a number of challenges to the modeller. I knew from experience that an attempt to scribe the pattern of the stones accurately would be extremely difficult/impossible. Enter a 'Light Bulb' moment! Could I use the photographic etching facility to make some part of the construction easier!

**Photoshop to the rescue?**

I possess a copy of the software called Photoshop Elements (PSE for short) through participating in an Open University course on Digital Photography, but had not used more than a fraction of its features. (There is also an Open Source product called GIMP which is free – Photoshop costs a fair a bit to purchase a legal copy (£50 on offer compared with standard of £80 when I looked)). So I had another learning curve to experience, fortunately I found a guidebook (Photoshop Elements 8 for Windows) which I picked up in Oxfam for £2.99 and that has been essential to what I have been able to do so far.

I had taken some photos of the Goods shed when I looked round Okehampton a few years ago, but I soon realised they were not going to be good starting points. I had just 'snapped' away, without worrying about getting a consistent viewpoint for each image. A particular problem was caused by the deep set windows in the building, which affected the window image if not taken as square on as possible. Finding that Russ was about to visit the site, I asked him if he could take a consistent set of images of the shed walls – one window at a time and from square on to the window. Despite all the care in the world this was a hard ask, but Russ did a good job. You can see from the images that there is some distortion, and of course lots of overlap. Also, inevitably, since the building has a new purpose in life, there are some features which were not part of the original structure (YHA sign, a couple of fan mountings, some new plumbing – just the slim rainwater pipe from the gutter is original). The down pipes could be a useful disguise for joins in the etched results. So the first thing I set about was straightening out and squaring up the images, before trying to join them together. The first part can be done in PSE by use of cropping and transforming facilities. These allow a 'frame' to be attached to part of the image with 'handles' which can be used to rotate and skew the

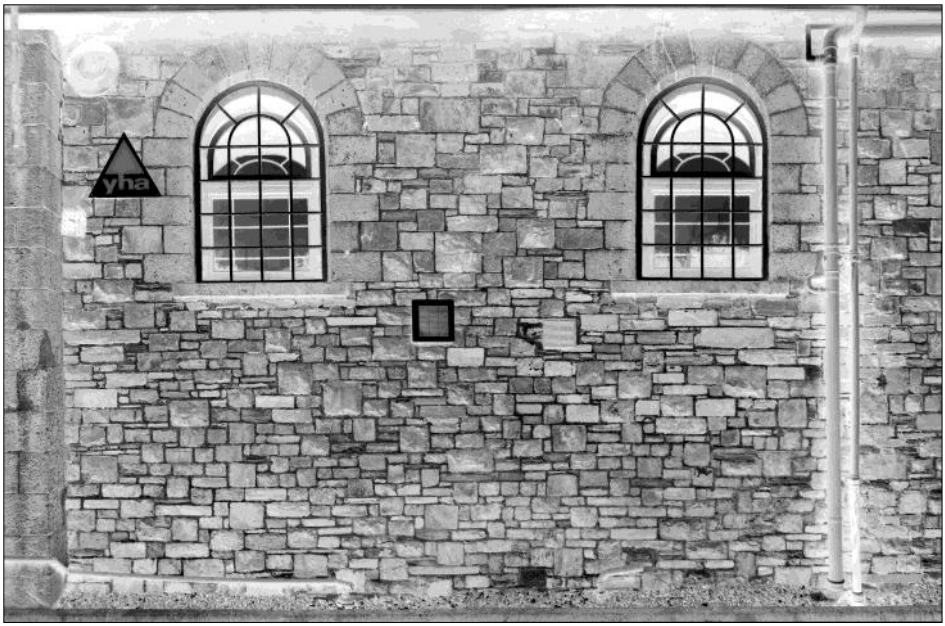
image until it looks much squarer. The second part is done by the 'panorama' command, which is specifically intended for making large images out of a series of overlapping ones. The amount of overlap has to be enough for the software to be able to match parts in each image and for it to make a seamless join. The result, after a lot of learning and trial and error, looked like this:-



Can you spot the join? It's impressive. When I tried it by hand, you could see the overlap even after many attempts to improve it.

What's next to do? Well, we don't need colour for the laser etching process. What we want is an image where the mortar courses are cut for us, and the rest is left untouched. So we have to make a black and white image, and then make a negative version.

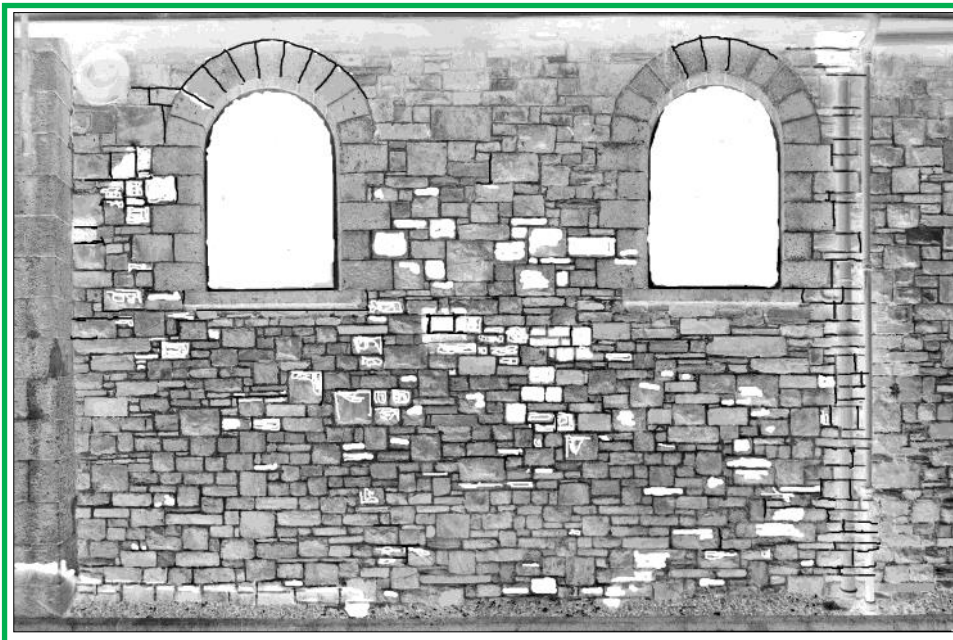
You can see the result:-




Looks promising? Well, we have to do a lot of work yet. Remove all the stuff that is modern. Then work on the image to lighten all those blocks which look dark, because we want those left light coloured – so will be unetched and can be painted by hand. There are two commands which can be used here – Clone, and Erase. The first copies a selected part of the image to another location. The second is more obvious. PSE allows the image to be blown up considerably so fine detail can be brushed in (or out). This is done using the mouse, which is not as easy as it sounds – it's very difficult to 'draw' a straight line with a mouse control.

# Video/DVD Library

We have a good selection of railway videos and DVDs which can be borrowed from the club. They are kept in the cupboard by the single door. To borrow any item just add the details to the loan book which should be on the book shelf.



So far, the best I have been able to achieve, looks like this. Some way to go yet, but we are looking at how much more needs to be done to get something which will stand up after painting. My art advisor is busy at the moment so that will have to wait. You can see the result on the Okehampton layout, where a pirated copy of part of the image has been pasted together to get a surface for the underside of the road bridge.

Adrian Harford

# A new model shop

SPD UK now has a Model Railways & Scenics Showroom (OO & N gauge only at present)

Unit 15,
Bessemer Crescent,
Rabans Lane Industrial Estate,
Aylesbury,
HP19 8TF.

They are open Mon-Sat 10am to 6pm and Sun 10am to 4pm.

# Progress at Okehampton Station

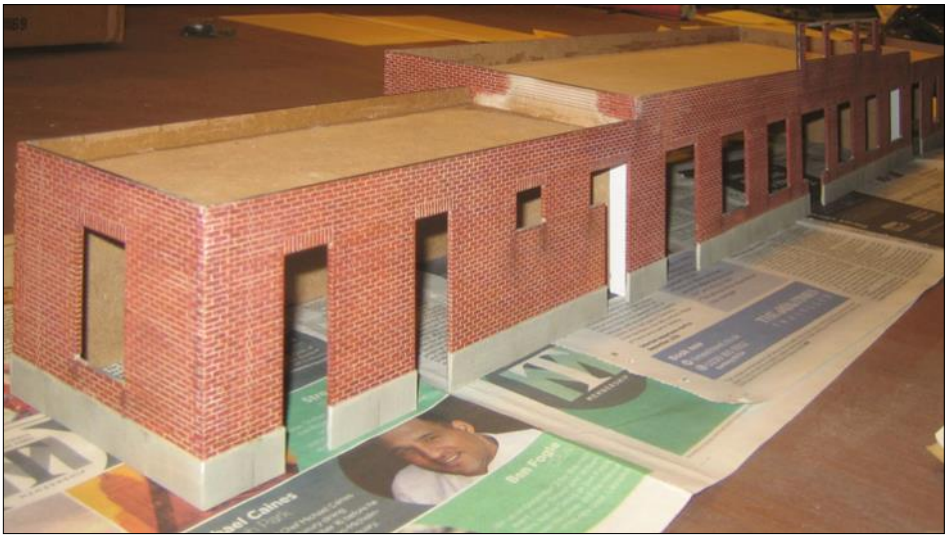
I agreed to make the station building for Okehampton over a year ago, little realising what a mammoth task I had taken on. Drawing up the basic brickwork was challenging enough because the measurements taken on site didn't quite match up with the pictures I had and there were a number or sections where I did not have any suitable photographs. I had almost come to the conclusion that I would have to drive down to Devon to take some photographs when someone kindly gave me some photos taken in the 1950s of the platform side. This resolved the brick pattern and dimensions so I could get the design ready for laser cutting in MDF.

The next challenge came with how to colour the brickwork. I had started out by experimenting on a 4 mm scale low relief model which I had drawn up for my own layout. I was about to embark on dry brushing (which has never worked for me in the past) when I heard that Tim had used watercolour pencils to good effect so I thought I'd try those.

Applying the colour (Faber Castell water colour pencils: Venetian Red, Burnt Sienna, and Red-Violet) was as easy as scribbling, overlaying lots of colours to get a variation in the brickwork. At first the colours were a bit pale and anaemic until I tried putting the model in a cloud of steam from my kettle. This magically transformed the colours into a vibrant set of tones, which I was then able to overwork

to get even more variation into the brick colours. This worked fine in 4 mm scale and I could work on the assembled model because it wasn't too large to handle. Okehampton Station was a completely different matter. I had assembled the first set of laser cut pieces with an internal framework and realised that this would be hard to colour in and steam because the building is so massive. Added to which, Russ mentioned that the building was going to be lit and I would have to model the insides as well. I realised that the internal framework was in the way so I would have to start again.

I redesigned the internal framework and toddled over to James to produce a second set of sides. This time I primed and painted the sides a mortar colour and then started with my watercolour pencils and steam. Working on the unassembled sides was quite easy and the use of MDF for the brickwork helps because the surface isn't truly flat, which helps to put a variation into the brick colouring. I found that the steam from the kettle made the colours run into the mortar courses so I had to etch these out using a knife blade as a scraper.



Getting the colour on was relatively quick; scraping the colour out of the mortar courses was the slow bit. Finally, I had all the pieces prepared and ready for assembly. Once the building had been put together, the corners needed finishing off, which required some filler in places to make everything look right before colouring in and steaming.

Since assembly I have added the concrete plinth (from 0.5 mm Rowmark) which has been weathered with charcoal. I have also sprayed the whole structure with flat varnish to seal the colours. So now I will move on to fitting the windows, doing the roof, adding lighting, making the insides, the list never seems to end.

Jennifer

# Okehampton Update

Previous page: Pete adds filler to form the basic rock shape.

Above: Roy experiments with colour for the stonework.
Below: Tim adding rust to the track.

# A quick trip to Oslo

The phone rang. It was Phil M. “Do you and Karen fancy seeing Royksopp in Oslo in December?” “Sounds great”, I replied. So there we were, visiting Oslo for a weekend to see a band play at a big indoor venue. And as some of you will be saying “Who” (not Pete as he’s a fan too), they are a Norwegian electronic duo with singers, and it has to be one of the best light shows I’ve ever seen. Lasers everywhere! And the music wasn’t bad either!

Oslo has a pretty good and efficient transport system. The airport is some way out of town, but is linked in Heathrow Express form by a dedicated line. 20 minutes to the centre of Oslo and trains run every ten minutes. Turn up, swipe your credit card at the barrier and get on. No tickets are issued but they must have some way to check that your card  has been swiped.


Having arrived in Oslo we headed for our hotel as it was late on Friday. The city centre is quiet, even at night, unlike any other city I’ve ever been to. Wide roads with buses, trams and a few taxis. Everyone seems to walk everywhere as


MAJORSTUA
Taxi
70


164

the centre is pretty compact. On the Sunday, we spotted on old tram. Perhaps they bring them out especially.

The normal trams were modern but as we didn't know the language or the geography we decided against having a ride. There are lots of tram tracks in the road – including many that just stopped, going nowhere. Obviously they don't believe in taking up old track.

All in all a great weekend. Interesting city, expensive beer (£7 a pint), but good food.

James

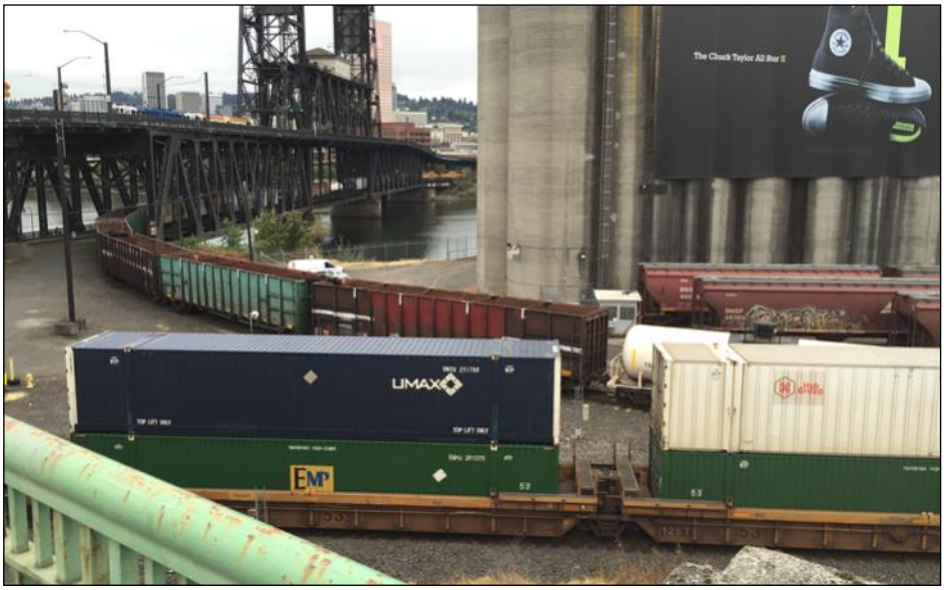
# What's this?

A self-guarding point frog awaiting use at Albina yard in Portland. While on the train between Seattle, WA and Portland, Oregon, I also saw a number of switch-nose frogs and also quite a lot of lifting frogs. These are frogs which lift the wheels on the diverging route over the main line rail, which has no breaks on it and no check rails.

A self-guarding frog in inset track by a grain elevator in Portland. Note the lack of check rails.

A loaded grain train accelerating away from the Steel Bridge. Two head end locos, this GM SD70M-2 and the just-visible trailing GE C40-8W 2157, 97 loaded grain cars and two more rear-end pusher locomotives. Total weight something like 10000 tons.

A UP train from Albina yard heads north across the Steel Bridge with three locos. The Steel Bridge is a unique structure now owned by Union Pacific Railroad: the train deck lifts upwards, telescoping into the road deck, and if necessary, that all lifts up the towers to give 160' clearance for shipping. Note the sharp curve on to the bridge (327' radius, apparently) and the even sharper curve on the track around the grain elevator




Mick

# Articles for publication in Footplate

Articles can be on paper or in electronic form (preferred) with minimal formatting, preferably doc, txt or rtf. Digital photos should be at as high a resolution as possible to allow editing and good print quality.

We would like to hear about your railway and modelling interests, places you have visited or models you have bought or made. Reviews of models, gadgets, books etc. are particularly welcome.

Articles should be sent at least 1 month before publication dates, i.e. beginning of March, June, September and December for publication in April, July, October and January

# Railway modellers are avoiding dementia

Club members will be well aware that for several months (years?) I have been boring the sleepers off anyone with the idea that railway modellers did not appear to suffer from dementia. Furthermore, this was because although we come in all shapes, sizes and backgrounds, we have a significant common characteristic: dexterity, as we fiddle, file and fettle away at our pastime.

Earlier in the year, I circulated a discussion paper to various research organisations with an interest in dementia, proposing a new direction for research, namely, find groups of people who did not appear to suffer from the disease and identify any common characteristics. I suggested railway modellers for the pilot studies. The response was a blank.

So I embarked on my own very basic field research at this year's Warley National Model Railway Exhibition at the NEC. Between show duties in the control office I found time to interview exhibitors from 20 model railway clubs. They represented a research sample of some 1,200 railway modellers. Although it is appearing earlier, dementia is normally associated with the over 65s, Alzheimer's UK was projecting 14.7 cases per hundred in the UK for this age group in 2015. The Scalefour society stand provided data on railway modeller demographics which was used to project that my 1,200 sample should produce at least 40 plus cases, possibly as many as 90. The result of my survey was – 3.

One could argue that my research conversations were over simplistic, they were not based on actual medical records, my findings could be too optimistic and didn't take sufficient note of modellers who had left clubs as they were finding it difficult to travel or whose eyesight was failing so they were giving up modelling. However, regardless of the detail, the big picture is that there was a large difference between the number expected and the number reported. Therefore, based on the NEC research I can say with some confidence that railway modellers are indeed avoiding dementia while still suffering similar levels of strokes, cancers etc. as the rest of the population.

As to why this may be happening, and my theory of the role of handicraft skills and dexterity, we know that most railway modellers are exposed to a wide range of tools and techniques. For evidence, just look at the content of a typical model railway journal with articles about working in metal, card, wood, plastic, paints etc. to make, operate and enjoy the end products.

Furthermore, most of the hand skills involved require positive control; that needs concentration, and that means those little grey cells just keep humming. At a model railway exhibition, note how most demonstrators either concentrate while they fettle or put down the soldering iron and then chat. Combining the two usually leads to a loss of concentration and mistakes. As I found out after a pleasant day building a 7mm Parkside Van at one Railex. One side had been glued in upside down! Recently, the letter section in a magazine included a visitor to a model railway exhibition complaining about the rudeness of a layout operator for not engaging him in conversation. I am sorry sir, but as I know too well, operating even the simplest layout requires significant concentration and dexterity to keep things running smoothly. This I demonstrated several times with my Bledlow Road layout which I was operating at the St Dunstan's autumn fair last September when promoting the hobby and the club with our Chairman. And, that layout only has one turnout and 9 foot of straight track!

From my brother-in-law, a jazz musician, I discovered that the famous guitarist Django Reinhart repeatedly emphasised that when certain hand actions are subject to sustained repetition through intensive practice and repetition, such as playing an instrument, the dexterity required migrated to a different part of the brain to be hard-wired for when required.

Reverse engineering Django Reinhart's exhortations about practising to embed the finger work under the control of the brain's limbic systems, the 'back-office', highlighted the significance of railway modellers using a wide range of hand actions spasmodically. It meant that most of our actions never became 'hard-wired' but continue to be delivered through direct control of the hand movements. Consequently, modelling and operating dexterity needs concentration. This continues to exercise and keep healthy the 'front office' the neocortex which is that part of the brain at most risk from atrophy leading to dementia.

The NEC findings and the dexterity connection could have tremendous impact on our wonderful hobby. It could lead to a major injection of individuals wanting to develop an interest which can develop protection against dementia. Furthermore, another recent study has identified increasing cases of dementia in 40 and 50 year olds. This not only challenges the dogma that dementia is a an inevitable 1 in 3 probable consequence of people living longer, it would could mean not just new blood but also younger blood being attracted to our hobby. This would be a tremendous boost to the future of railway modelling, the supporting trade and to model railway club and society membership numbers.

Me? I am off to enjoy some dementia supressing, spasmodic, dexterity-concentrating railway modelling. Pass me that craft knife please!

David Powell

# Belgrade

This loco is the one use to pull Josip Broz Tito's Blue Train, as used in the 1960s (-ish) during his many rail trips around Europe when he was president of Yugoslavia. The loco is now set as a monument to him, and is just beside Belgrade's main railway station. I took the photo a few weeks ago when I was in Belgrade, at the wedding of my son David to his Serbian fiancée.

Ian

# Modelling Saturdays

The following dates have been booked 09.00 to 17.00

Jan 2, Jan 9, Feb 13, Mar 12, Apr 9, May 14, Jun 11, Jul 9,
Aug 13, Sep 10, Oct 8, Nov 12, Dec 10.

I try to arrange modelling Saturdays not to clash with other events but this is not always possible. If you are involved in or know of events that are likely to be of interest to our members then let me or Ant know so we can put them in the diary.

Paul

# Test Track Nights

Here is the list of proposed test track nights. If you want to make use of the test track then you need to get it out and set it up. Don't wait for someone else to do it. We will also have the small meeting room booked to provide more space.

Jan 8, Feb 12, Mar 11, Apr 8, May 13, Jun 10, Jul 8,
Aug 12, Sep 9, Oct 14, Nov 18, Dec 9

# Laser cutting materials

In stock we have:
0.5, 0.75, 1, 1.5 & 2mm white plastic (Rowmark) with some 1.5 & 2mm in black. Sheets are 1220 by 610mm.

Clear acrylic in 0.5 & 1mm. Sheet sizes vary but some are 1000 by 1000mm.

MDF in: 1.5, 2, 3.2, 4 & 6mm, sheet sizes are 1220 by 600mm

The max size the cutter takes is about 350 by 450mm. The larger sheets will be cut down to approx. A3 or A4 and we will calculate the prices.

# Club Diary

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| January | 8 | Test Track |
| | 9 | Modelling Day |
| | 16-17 | St Albans Exhibition, The Alban Arena, Civic Centre, St Albans |
| February | 12 | Test Track |
| | 13 | Modelling Day |
| | 19 | **Risex Setup** |
| | 20 | **RISEX 2016 Exhibition, Community Centre, Princes Risborough** |
| March | 11 | Test Track |
| | 12 | Modelling Day |
| April | 8 | Test Track |
| | 9 | Modelling Day |
| May | 13 | Test Track |
| | 14 | Modelling Day |
| | 27 | **Railex Set Up** |
| | 28-29 | **RAILEX 2016 Exhibition, Stoke Mandeville Stadium, Aylesbury** |

# Rubbish and Recycling

Please remember to put a black plastic bag in the dustbin before use and empty it when full. There is a wheeled metal bin at the end of the community centre; please put our bags in there when they are full. Spare bin bags are under our fridge.

Recycling will be collected each club night, this includes card, plastic bottles and cans. Please leave it in the kitchen.

Above: This years Member of the Year, Phil Baxendale (left), being presented with the trophy by our President, Tim. Photo by Ant

Below: A filthy 'WD' slogs Northbound with a string of empty coal wagons between West Wycombe & Saunderton summit, probably 1962/3. R&DMRC Morris collection