



## NEWSLETTER 95 : March 2021

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### **Editorial**

With the rapid rolling out of vaccines, it looks as though we may be nearing the end of lockdowns, and while travel abroad is more complicated, we can at least be reasonably confident of summer holidays in the UK so I have accordingly made a few provisional bookings which include visiting the Isle of Wight in August, where I hope to see first hand the improvements to the railway and try out the "new" class 484 trains.



Closer to home, track laying for my garden railway - and ballasting with cat litter (with a nod to Derek Pratt) has been delayed due to the weather, but I have been working on a couple of set-pieces to place in the garden. Inspired by Berni Flint, who has kept himself occupied

during lockdown with creating furniture - and even Christmas Trees - from old pallets, (and posting videos of the results on Facebook) I have made the house diorama, and the VW camper is inspired by my wife Joan (who occasionally appears on Zoom bringing me a cup of tea) who is a fan of VW campers, even to the extent of having WW shaped salt and pepper pots on the dining table.

Last month, Ian requested members to reply with details of the modelling projects that they had kept occupied with during lockdown, and the response has been overwhelming. Thank you for all your contributions. Some are featured in this newsletter, and others will appear next month. Contributions are always very welcome, and perhaps after reading this month's updates from Derek and Frank you may feel encouraged to submit a short piece about your own projects.

### **Forthcoming Events**

A weekly meeting is held each Friday on the Zoom platform. All members are sent a link by Ian Shulver - please remember that the link changes for each meeting so please be certain to use the most recent one.

### **Chairman's Report**

I cannot believe that it is newsletter time again. I know February is a short month, but this is ridiculous - maybe it is something to do with getting older. Anyway, first of all, thanks to those of you have already paid the subs for this year - it makes life easier for the treasurer not having to send out reminders.

Writing this before the Boris roadmap, I am wondering how quickly lockdown restrictions will be eased. I am hoping that we may be able to open up the clubrooms soon in a similar manner to last summer, but I suspect that it is some time away before we will be able to fully open up the clubrooms for normal meetings. If the target of all adults to be vaccinated by July becomes a reality then possible we may be looking at August as a start up date, which may mean that an Autumn exhibition is on the cards.

Now that Hattons (and PECO) are starting to fulfil my order for track for my layout, I thought that I would start pinning some of the track down in the fiddle yard (I have everything to complete one half of it). The baseboard is set up in the attic room, but when I went up there at the beginning of the month it was so cold there was no way that I could hold

the track pin - I was shivering too much. Consequently this activity has been deferred for a month or so, probably until after I have my first cataract operation which is in the middle of March. Instead I have been concentrating on producing the buildings. At the moment they are fairly basic models (no detailing or painting yet) in case they have to be re-modelled to fit the site once the track is in place.

Our Friday night zoom meetings continue to be a welcome means of keeping in touch with people. Typically we get 7-10 members on-line each week with fifteen of our members having joined in at one time or another. There are only four of our members who have never come on to zoom. If you are unclear how to connect with it I am more than happy to try to lead you through the process with a one-to-one tutorial. There is also a WhatsApp group - I do not know how many are on that, but at least two of the non-zoomers are involved with that. Unfortunately my mobile does not support WhatsApp and my good lady refuses to let me put the group on her phone.

I must say I look forward to receiving the newsletter each month. From experience it is surprising how much time it takes to produce, and there is always the worry of there not being enough copy. Andrew does a great job in producing it, so please help him by sending him articles, anecdotes, modelling tips, photos etc.

Ian Shulver

### **Secretary's Report**

I apologise to Andrew for keeping him waiting for this contribution, but I have been somewhat pre-occupied in the arrangements for my mother's funeral which took place on Monday. She was 96 and sharp as a needle to the end and was able to describe journeys with her grandfather to 'town' from Roe Lane on the trams which closed in 1932 and back again to Meols Cop aboard Altar Bob. Later she attended Notre Dame convent in Birkdale which some of you may remember - a majestic French Gothic pseudo-chateau in Huncoat brick with polished tile floors up steps from Weld Road. Ironically, Mother spent her last few weeks in a nursing home just across the road that gave her some comfort. The convent building was replaced in the 1980s with a low rise bungalow and is still home to some of the nuns.

Dealing with mother's affairs reminded me of the inevitability of our demise and the necessity to make provision for our relatives tasked with dealing with our affairs. As far as our hobby is concerned it is essential

that our friends and family can readily access our trains and that in general they are intact and well packaged. As Secretary I have had to deal with a number of situations where that wasn't the case and the trains were spread out across a workshop or in bits. Now I'm not the tidiest of modellers myself and I certainly don't tidy up every night, but it is important that somebody coming into your workshop will be able to work out what you were doing and where your precious models are located. It is also important to ensure that there is something on record saying what you want to happen to them. I have been able to acquire a few live steam garden models since the early days of what could be described as my retirement (especially as I have been able to continue working!) and some of them have been nominated for particular friends, the remainder being for sale. Such models generally hold their value well with little depreciation and may be worth considerably more than what had been paid for them, as they become rare. But they will be worth much less if the parts are not there and an original box is a bonus. I have an old wardrobe in the garage full of the original boxes for this reason.



And so to the present. My mother was called Margaret and in her honour (or so I tell myself) I have just acquired an Accucraft model of Large Quarry Hunslet in Penrhyn livery. She will join mainline Hunslet, Charles and Lilla a Hunslet that Penrhyn acquired from Cilgwyn Quarry high up in the Nantlle Valley, all in

Penryn livery, a deep shiny black with red and blue lining. The real Margaret is a *small* quarry Hunslet (smaller and domeless) and you can 'drive her for a fiver' at Devils Bridge. Like Lilla, Fiona's late cousin, Alastair Lamberton was deeply involved in her restoration and there is a picture in the Oakwood Book on Quarry Hunslets showing Alastair's wife Mary on the footplate. Alastair and Mary and family lived at Laxey in the Isle of Man and was Chief Engineer aboard Ben-my-chree before his early death, when he wasn't restoring steam engines or working on the Groudle Glen line.



My Quarry Hunslet is described as a Museum quality model and that it certainly is with quite exquisite attention to detail, as was the case with Dolgoch. I haven't steamed her yet but that will be fun as she is manual control as I'm not planning on running her along the main line - she is intended to pootle up and down at Dorothea Bach Quarry.

Jim Ford

### **Where's Andrew?**

After two months without any correct answers, we finally have a winner! Ian Graham correctly identified where I was last month, which was at the



Conwy Valley Railway Museum, directly opposite

Betws-y-Coed station.

Indoors there is a well-stocked shop leading through to the museum with several dioramas and a model railway, while outside there are two gauges of miniature railways offering rides, and a snack bar in a buffet

coach.

This month I am not on the Isle of Wight - but I am on another island where ex-London Underground stock can be seen.

## **Modelling realistic roads and pavements**

**Ian Shulver**

*I came across this article in a BRM email and now reproduce it here with a few changes. Although I am targeting mainly 4mm modellers, the principal applies to other scales. One thing not mentioned is the width of a road. Obviously, it can be anything you like, but typically the minimum for a single lane road is 12ft. A carriageway with 2 lanes would be 18-23ft wide, but a minimum of 22ft if it is a bus route. I will let you work out your own widths. Ian Shulver*



Even though most of us probably spend more behind the wheel than watching railways, or even modelling, it's surprising that roads are rarely modelled well. Given that it's even easier to research what's under our noses, this peripheral content for our layouts very much plays second

fiddle. Just because it may not be our primary leisure interest, it's certainly something that can elevate a layout from average to interesting. What's more, it isn't difficult or expensive to do. Here we aim to show you a few tips.

### ***Tip 1: Creating road surfaces for modelling.***

One of our main gripes with many modelled roads is the surface. Frequently a far too coarse material is used which would be the equivalent of driving over the surface of small boulders. A painted or card surface is a far better option, but we've also found that Fab Foam, obtainable from craft stores and online, has a suitable subtle texture to it that can be easily cut, formed to shapes, glued and painted.

We would recommend spraying the surface of the Fab Foam with a mixture of grey primer, satin black and tan Plastikote Suede Touch, to give a variety of grey to brown tones. To avoid the often-repeated error of a modelled road being too dark or too uniform in appearance, look at the road surfaces around you for inspiration.

### ***Tip 2: Getting the right road camber.***

Most roads have a degree of camber to them to create water run-off. The suggested angle of inclination for this is approximately 5 degrees or a 1 in 20 slope. Subtly copying this on a model can be a little tricky, but it is worth trying to replicate. In this case, cutting a slice of the Fab Foam and gluing it to the baseboard before the road surface is laid helps build the crown of the road up. When the road surface is laid, cut-outs can be made if there are any locations where you wish to model a dropped kerb or lowered pavement surface for drive entrances or pedestrian usage.

### ***Tip 3: Replicating pavements in modelling.***

Many models feature slabs for paving, but if you look around the roads of today, there are very few paved pavements, something generally only found now in pedestrianised town centres. What we see today are asphalt pavements - less costly to install and easier for the utility companies to dig up again. You can trim sections of the Fab Foam to form 32mm strips forming an 8' wide pavement that can be laid over the road surface. Dab some glue into the square cut-outs made earlier and press the pavement Fab Foam down into the rebate to form a sloped area.

A curved edge to the corner of the pavement can be created with a compass cutter. Kerbing is created with a similar mix of spray cans like the road surface, but a little lighter in tone to represent the concrete kerb stones. The painted plastic strip can be shaped by hand to make a curve, which will assist in laying the kerbing around the corners of junctions.

### ***Tip 4: Imitating the state of our roads***

Look at any road surface and it will not be long until you've found a patch that has been dug up for repair or utility access. It is this variation in surface, colouring and tone that can elevate the appearance of a modelled road to something much more realistic.

You can create a paper mask from a self-adhesive label to simulate a filled trench. Tamiya weathering pastes should also be used to dab on with cheap make-up applicators from a chemist and then the mask is removed. While the weathering pastes are out, you could smear some subtle tones onto the surface to replicate the rubber and dirt which adheres to the road surface through traffic usage. Think which way the traffic would use the junction and treat accordingly. Less is more when doing this.

Useful frets of etched ironwork for roads in older and more modern form are available from Wizard Models. It is worth recessing these into the road surface by cutting around them into the Fab Foam and compressing

the foam down and placing the drain cover or manhole cover below the level of the road indicating proper drainage and years of re-surfacing.

Potholes appear after heavy usage or winter periods. These are easy to replicate in the Fab Foam surface by picking at the road surface with the pointed end of a scalpel and treating, slightly tamped down below the road surface and with darker tones added to give some depth to the annoyance. *What about some water in the pot holes - IS?*

### ***Tip 5: Markings for model roads***

It is possible to draw in software concentric circular sectors and straight lines to make yellow lines of the correct 100mm width and 150mm spacing set away from the kerb by 250mm. An A4 sheet of self-adhesive label is printed with a variety of yellow tones, this could then be hand cut but we would recommend a Silhouette Cutter to make a neater and faster job of it. *Note - IS might be able to help here since he has a Silhouette Cutter.*

White lines along the centre of the road are used as a warning, indicating areas of potential hazard. The length and spacing of these are defined in the Traffic Signs Manual. In this case, white lines should be 4.0m in length with 2.0m spacing and 100mm in width as it is an urban road with speeds of 40 mph or less. Away from hazards, shorter lines with increased spacing can be used, the parameters for this are defined in the Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 4 – available free online.

A simple mask can be created, or you could use masking tape, with weathering pastes used to form the line. The paste gives a clearly discernible but subtly varied finish to the line. If you look at most white lines, very few are pristine white. A more complex mask is needed for the lines and warning triangle for the give way arrangement at the end of our side street. *The Silhouette cutter might be useful in this instance – IS.*

### ***Tip 6: Creating model road signs***

Up until the implementation of the Road Traffic Act of 1930, there was no national specification for signs, the first hazard signs were introduced by cycling bodies and with the advent of the car, the AA and RAC produced signs to point the way for motorists. The Motor Act of 1903 did introduce the usage of some signs, but their usage appears to be without specification.

The landmark point for the design of road signs as we are all familiar with them today came in the 1960s. The design industry magazine 'Typographica' published an article in 1961 illustrating the chaos of signs, this led to the government awarding a contract to Jock Kinneir and

Margaret Calvert to design new signage for roads. The style of signs we are now familiar with would have gradually appeared post 1963 and increasing to the point that their usage was universal by the 1970s.

See [www.britishroadsignproject.co.uk/jock-kinneir-margaret-calvert/](http://www.britishroadsignproject.co.uk/jock-kinneir-margaret-calvert/) for the story - IS.

Once again, the Traffic Signs Manual

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/traffic-signs-manual](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/traffic-signs-manual) is a good reference, this time download Chapter 3. This chapter covers a multitude of signs and information regarding their size and positioning; it doesn't cover every form of warning sign, but a full list can be found by searching for 'Highway Code Traffic Signs'

[www.assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/58170307ed915d61c500000/the-highway-code-traffic-signs.pdf](http://www.assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/58170307ed915d61c500000/the-highway-code-traffic-signs.pdf)

An easy way to create a Give Way sign on the diorama is creating a photograph of the sign, printed onto photo paper, cut out and mounted onto a brass rod, which fits into a tube embedded into the Fab Foam. Most commercially available signs and posts are simply that, a sign on a post, but observation shows that many warning signs are lit, particularly in built-up areas, so a representation of the light hood is mounted onto the post.

### **Meanwhile, on Island Line**

### **Andrew Chrysler**

Prior to 1952, there were 55½ miles of railway on the Isle of Wight, serving 41 stations, while now there is 8½ miles serving 8 stations, and a heritage line of 5½ miles serving 4 stations. Of these, one station on the heritage railway is the little used Ashley Halt, and Smallbrook Junction station, which is served by both railways, has no pedestrian or road access, existing purely for passengers to connect between lines. Island Line itself has three stations in Ryde, at St John's Road (also the main depot), Esplanade (the sea front) and Pier Head (for the Portsmouth ferry). Two inland towns, Brading and Lake are also served, together with the seaside resort towns of Sandown and Shanklin (the end of the line).

Rail services (after electrification) on the Island were firstly provided by Class 485/486 stock - built originally for London Underground in 1923, before being replaced by 1938 stock - the Class 483. The Class 484 stock are larger, being originally used on London Underground's sub-surface ("cut and cover") lines, giving the lie to the rumour that the loading gauge on the Isle of Wight is suitable only for Tube trains. They are also some 40 years "younger", being first built late 1970's / early 1980's - but

it should be remembered that this is the age of the recently retired Northern Rail Pacers!

483001, newly delivered to the Island (although already 50 years old), sits in the shed while 485044 takes a Shanklin bound service in the summer of 1989 in this photograph by Tony Dickinson, Isle of Wight railway heritage.



Island Line was suspended on 4 January for major engineering works and was scheduled to reopen on 31 March after what is said to be the biggest transformation since the line's electrification in 1967. On 12 February it was announced that the reopening would be delayed by six weeks to

mid-May, with the reason being given that Covid secure precautions (such as creating "bubbles" of workers) has had a serious effect, both on the work on the Island and also at suppliers building the new rolling stock.



Additional works will be involved to correct for the platform height, as the Class 484 rides substantially higher than the outgoing Class 483. Work on lowering tracks is seen in progress at Shanklin (photo by Mark Herbert) whilst at Smallbrook Junction, Lake and Sandown the platforms have been raised.

Currently, work seems to be concentrated on the line south of the main depot at Ryde St Johns Road, which may allow for partial reopening of the line while work continues north of the depot. Most noticeably, a new passing loop at Brading will allow 30 minute service intervals - a substantial improvement over the current 20 & 40 minute intervals, and more suitable for connections to passenger ferries from Ryde Pier Head and the pointwork for this is believed to be in place at the time of writing.



The first of the new trains, 484001 made its first journey on Island metals in the early hours of Saturday 21 November from Brickfield Siding at Sandown to Ryde Depot. It was driven on battery power, by Mike York, head of Train Operations at South Western Railway. Photo - Mike

York.

Since 2018, Island Line has been operating with the two remaining serviceable trains, 483006 and 483008, meaning that any failure resulted in a limited service. Most recently, 006 was withdrawn from service on 25 November 2020 with dropped axle box linings, leaving 008 running a reduced, hourly service until 4 December when it failed its weekly inspection with at least one wheelset requiring replacement. A rail replacement bus service operated until 11 December, when 483007, which had been withdrawn from service in October 2017 for a major overhaul and was returned to service, proudly carrying a new name plate "Jess Harper" after the recently retired Depot Manager who worked at Ryde depot in various roles for 29 years.



Major overhauls do not normally take three years, but constant failures on the other

stock meant that engineers were regularly interrupted for more urgent repair work. 007 undergoing work is shown in this photo by Alfie Crouch of the Class 483 appreciation group.

Sadly, 007 failed the mission, being back in Ryde depot just a day later, reportedly with issues applying power and closing the doors. 483007 was returned to service on 14 December, only for another fault, this time with the third rail electrics to stop trains running. Attempting to restart service on 16 December, 007 failed its "start of day" tests, so no trains ran until 483006 was returned to service on 19 December following replacement of the axlebox liners, an axle and a bogie, only to fail again on 22 December, and 483007 finally returned to service after over a week in the Depot, on Christmas Eve, with 483006 being "back in the shed" for further repairs. 483008 was never returned to service.

Throughout December, service was extremely sporadic, with either one train operating, or no trains at all. Either 483006 or 483007 ran, but both never ran on the same day, so the service - at best - was half of the scheduled service. The London Transport Traction Group had mooted a visit to ride on the last Class 483 before the line was suspended for alterations, but Coronavirus has forced these plans to be abandoned, just like so many plans have been at present. What is certain, though, is that after years without investment - indeed total closure was a distinct possibility as recently as 2016 - the Class 484 trains have arrived just in the nick of time, and the £26 million upgrade may well prove to be money well spent.

A video taken from the cab, travelling the length of Island Line is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jonGfBkGu6s>



## **Lockdown Modelling**

### **Derek Pratt**

I have been a busy little person during the latest lockdown, until it got too cold for the shed. The two main projects have been to progress the 16mm live-steam shunting layout and to build a rake of South

African wagons to go with the newly-acquired Garratt.

For the layout, in addition to the sheer excitement of cat-litter ballasting, I have added scenic grass, some cast-plaster paving, a black-paint-and-sand road and some 3D-printed floor tiling around the station building. It's more of a halt really, donated along with some wagons to the West Lancashire Light Railway, where the layout will eventually have most of its being. The station yard has been decorated with Pendle Valley buildings borrowed from other assorted layouts, and with a Bedford lorry and a 'Mostyn 7' pick-up, both kit-built.

For the pick-up, a dozen or so sacks were printed using a design from Thingiverse, which as the name suggests is a large online collection of printable objects, made available free by their designers. Such objects include, you will be glad to hear, a bemittened Bernie Sanders, which I couldn't resist adding to the download. For the lorry, something more ambitious was called for. On Facebook I came across a reference to an early 20th-century Indian railcar, based on a fairly primitive automobile, possibly French. The author had shared the files for a printable 16mm scale model, so I made two, one built and somewhat weathered and one in pieces, as if both had just been rescued from a long-abandoned barn hidden in some deep, dark Normandy baucage. They both just fitted on the lorry.



There was still a bit of space at the east end of the yard, so another search of Thingiverse threw up a tractor and trailer, already scaled to roughly 16mm, which would fit nicely. This photo shows the tractor under construction, the starboard rear wheel being printed as I write. I understand Bernie has volunteered to drive it,

provided he can keep his mittens on. The trailer will need a load, possibly more sacks or something similarly agricultural.

The wagons were another Facebook find, offered for sale by David Williams of North Wales, trading as Resurgam Models. The laser-cut wooden kits are the best I have come across in several decades of messing about in the garden, making them up into accurate and



extraordinarily detailed models of SAR stock. To try to do justice to them painting-wise I invested in an Expro mini spray booth from Hattons, and some Kobra spray paint, courtesy of Amazon. These cans are of the low-pressure variety, which makes it easier to cover fine details without obliterating

them. They also come in some non-standard colours, the orange-red being a better match than anything Halfords are likely to stock.

More wagons meant more loads, so yet more sacks were mass-produced, and just for variety some oil drums, crates and gas cylinders. For the jumbo ballast bags I folded and glued pieces of material around a wood block former, with thin slivers of cloth for the handles. More cat-littering ensued, the resulting load being massive enough to give the loco a satisfying work-out. You may not be surprised to learn that I have made a Valentine's Day's resolution to stop building stuff, and spend the rest of the year, weather permitting, actually running trains in the garden. It'll last until April Fool's Day, if I'm lucky.

### **A different kind of Puffer**

### **Frank Parkinson**



If you'll forgive the pun, I'm changing tack in my modelling for a while. Instead of railway puffers I am attempting modelling a marine puffer namely

CLOCHLIGHT, A Clyde Puffer. As you can see, I have cut the keel and fitted a few of the 20 odd bulkheads and if you're wondering about the framework above deck level, this remains intact whilst the boat is constructed in order to keep everything square but is later removed. The other picture shows the finished article as modelled by a fellow SMEC member who has kindly loaned me his plan drawings, so I can also get guidance as I go along.



I first became interested in marine modelling when, as a schoolboy, I bought a home-made tug at a jumble sale for a few shillings and pence (remember them?) This was a flat-bottomed craft powered by a single stroke meths fired motor, which not surprisingly didn't run. However, with Dad's help we soon had it running,

unfortunately being flat-bottomed and not balanced it listed severely as it drifted across the pond. So, that was that. Somewhat disheartened I vowed that one day I would build myself my own tug. OK so this isn't a tug but does have a certain amount of character and appeal as a working boat. It already looks to be an interesting diversion as we hopefully emerge from this lockdown. Wish me luck as I launch (groan) into my new project. With the Editor's permission I'll send in more pictures to show how the project develops.

### **And Finally**



On it's way... the second of the Class 484 trains was spotted on the M42 on 22 February. It is headed initially for Eastleigh, where driver training will take place.

Photo: Stephie Terry