



# Newsletter

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## Editorial.

### Wheels of misfortune.

There is no question that model railway locomotives and rolling stock manufactured today has levels of fine detail that could not even have been imagined only a few years ago. This has been brought about by a tiny minority of very vocal critics of the manufacturers demanding higher levels of detail without compromise of resilience or price. These models now require many more small parts and much more finishing off by hand and this of course reflects in the retail price. Some of this extra detail is so delicate that if a model is removed from its box without following the correct procedure and subsequently not handled correctly and with extreme care then the additional detailing ends up being broken off and probably lost for ever.

An unfortunate by-product of the slavish adherence to ultra fine scale detail is wheel and coupling standards. We all remember the wheel sets as used by Tri-ang Railways, Tri-ang Hornby and Lima Italy with their wide treads and deep flanges which were decried by the fine scale zealots but they did have a great advantage over products made today, their reliability in operation. These models would run without any difficulty on most types of track from Tri-ang Super 4 of the 1960's to Hornby System 6 and Peco Code 100 of today. When models are actually on the track and moving, do you notice or can you even see the wheel details? No, of course you can't. The problem is that with fine scale wheels with narrow treads and minuscule flanges, any slight imperfection with the track will result in annoying derailments.

As to couplings, instead of Tri-ang type X171 full size steel tension lock coupling firmly attached to the bogies, present day models now have flimsy loose fitted narrow couplings body mounted with an elaborate extending spring system which makes coupling up, especially on reverse curves, somewhat undependable. Also on curves, because of their spring system, random uncoupling is now unfortunately a common occurrence. Also if operating a push pull train with the locomotive at the rear, the flimsy sprung couplings have a bad habit of distorting resulting in buffer lock and derailment on curves. Unfortunately aesthetics has now been given priority over practical operational functionality and quality engineering in model railways. Where's the fun in that? **Allan Trotter.**

## **Events Diary.**

Sat 23rd Nov      Southport MRS Model Railway Exhibition. All Saints Parish Hall, Park Road, Southport, PR9 9JB. 10:00-16:30.

## **Chairman's Report.**

We had an "ad hoc" committee meeting earlier in October which was called to discuss a number of items before our secretary left for sunnier climes. Unfortunately the short notice given for this meeting meant that it was not a well attended as hoped for but thanks to those who did attend. I think it worthwhile summarising the key items from this meeting and must apologise to our secretary if he has already included them in his notes.

1. Some years ago committee meetings were held on a regular monthly basis, but because our previous chairman worked shifts this arrangement changed to an "as and when" schedule which has continued to date. We felt this was not ideal for both governance of the club and assisting with attendance at meetings. The general consensus was that there should be calendared meeting and the 3rd Thursday evening of each month was the agreed time.

2. For those who visit our website, you will have noticed that updates are infrequent. This is no reflection on our webmaster, Derek, but on us for not informing him of any updates required. One problem is that the software required to operate the website resides on Derek's computer and so only he can make the necessary changes. It is proposed that we move to a new web-based system, still with Derek as webmaster, but with other members having access to update it, assuming of course they have the correct log in credentials.

There are, however, a couple of downsides to this. Firstly, the cost of maintaining the website is a little more expensive. Secondly, the website needs to be rebuilt, a good opportunity for a makeover, so do not expect to see a brand new one for some weeks. Derek is open to help and suggestions.

3. You may be aware that the electricity supply system the club rooms require a major overhaul. As you know our club room is a Grade 2 listed building and we were fortunate that Network Rail carried out a major renovation, to conservation standards, on the building exterior. Unfortunately this did not extend to the interior hence the need for the rewiring along with some decoration. Our secretary has been exploring ways of funding these particular expenses and the best way forward appears to be through crowd funding. Fortunately an organisation called 'Spacehive' hosts this type of activity with an emphasis being on

community based projects. We have had significant help in setting this up through Sefton CVS and it is now ready to go live. There is some doubt when this may occur. Jim wishes it to start once he gets back from his cruise and can manage the process, whilst Sefton would like it to start earlier. We will of course keep you informed of any developments.

4. There is a further source of funding available (Lottery Heritage Funding) with grants available in one of three bands. The lowest band is apparently relatively easy to access but we are not looking to this funding stream for 'repairs' to the building but rather to enhance the heritage aspect of our important building. Apparently Sefton is Merseyside's culture region next year and our building would surely be on the local heritage trail. This would entail us producing for example some rather nice 'storey boards' about the history of the building and the railway hence the need for some heritage funding. Our Secretary is of course pursuing this matter.

5. It is now only a few weeks to our autumn exhibition; the date is Saturday 23rd November. Please try to be available on that date as the more people available the less onerous it is on the day and after all it is your club. We will need help with transport getting layouts and electrics to the venue on the Friday evening and then taking everything back to the clubroom on the Saturday evening. There are fliers available at the clubroom so if you are going to a exhibition please take some to distribute. More importantly, in the fortnight preceding the show please take some fliers and put them in your local take-away. I will circulate in the next few days a schedule of jobs to be done to make this exhibition a success.

One final thing, we have space for another layout, so if anyone knows of a small layout, preferably in OO scale then pass this information to Jim or myself.

How is HS3 going? I have to say that there has been significant progress. HS32 has the 'golden spike' installed early in October. At the moment the track is not connected to a controller so only battery or live steam is able to operate but that has not detracted from the variety of trains that have been seen, from a horse drawn wagon to a conventional diesel shunter and even live steam. HS16.5 has also seen good progress with the main wiring looms in place. We are currently building the 'control panel' and will be fitting the solenoid point motors for the loops in the near future. The club's DCC Castle has made an appearance but the DCC Eurostar does not appear to be working (anyone know anything about DCC?). Apart from finishing off laying the cork underlay, there has not really been any significant progress on HS9 line.

I think that just about wraps up my notes for this month. **Ian Shulver.**

## Secretary's Report.

Once more, I'm writing the Secretary's report from overseas, on this occasion from the MS Boudicca as we pitch and roll in the swell of the South Atlantic as we near Cape Town. We have just visited Walvis Bay and Luderwitz to the south of the Skeleton Coast which is a very long stretch of sandy beach with no harbour directly on the Namib Desert. It is littered with the bones of whales and the wrecks of ships and there is a more sinister explanation for its name as due to the strong surf which meant that ships thrown up on the coast were unable to get off and their wrecks deteriorated into skeletons. If any crew were able to get ashore, with very few settlements and no water, then they were also likely to become skeletons fairly quickly!



Interestingly, Namibia is busy re-constructing its railways, having been left with a collection of worn out 2 foot narrow gauge lines developed originally before WW1 when this area was part of German South West Africa. Before independence the lines had been part of the South African Railways and many converted to the 3'6" gauge. Now the railways are needed to enable minerals to be taken to the

coast. The station in Luderwitz has a new platform but no sign of passenger trains which presumably would link it to the capital at Windhoek, but your secretary nevertheless got to examine it!

Whilst at sea for the last two weeks, however, I have been far from idle with club affairs. Despite an indifferent internet signal I have been able to initiate and service our Spacehive page and I'm pleased to report that we are close to halfway there. So thanks for all those who have pledged so far. I am sure that you have found the process easy and do persuade your friends and family to pledge to, as they say, every little counts! Unfortunately as the newsletter goes to press I'm still awaiting news on our possible award from Sefton. Once I return on 9th November I will be redoubling efforts to help us to reach or exceed our target and starting on part 2 of our project which involves obtaining a lottery grant to install our story boards.

This is the last newsletter before our show and immediately on my return I will be engaged in promoting the show locally. Already our adverts have gone into most of the model railway magazines and on the UK Model

Shops directory. Also the newspaper advertising has been booked and the press release is in process of development. It is amazing what can be done by internet from the other half of the globe!

Before I left Southport the HS32 line had its final joining piece to fit and was christened by two live steam trains c/o Derek and Frank. The next one down, the HS16.5 has been tested and run with DCC and DC and needs the power supply sockets fitting.

If you are visiting shows or heritage railways don't forget to take some of our A5 handbills with you. Soon I will be asking for your help in distributing these locally to friendly takeaways and community supermarkets. **Jim Ford.**

## **Where's Allan?**

Once again I have been over whelmed with just one response to the October "Where's Allan" quiz. Tony Kuivala wrote: *You were at Diggle (not to be confused with Dingle) on LNWR route to Huddersfield.* Well done Tony. You are of course absolutely correct with your answer.



For November, a temporary change in the format of the "Where's Allan" quiz. This time the location is fairly obvious but it is not Southport, Sefton (or Lancashire, that is if you don't want a free over 60's Merseyrail travel pass) but elsewhere. Both Southport towns are on the coast, both are served by railways that have been electrified for over one hundred years but at this Southport the sea never recedes out of sight of land. Both towns are vacation destinations in their own right and also dormitory towns for their nearby large cities. It may assist finding the location if you if you consult a Metro North Commuter Railroad schedule. Where am I?

## **Members Miscellanea.**

### **Mail Rail (The GPO Underground Railway)**

As part of the 2019 cricket extravaganza, the second trip to this big smoke was to see the mighty England play our old foes Australia. As previously said in my last article, the fixture list was crowded due to the

World Cup and it mentions travelling down to London mid week. As a result of the bazaar and unexplainable privatised ticket pricing system, we travel to London via Glasgow Central on the new Caledonian sleeper to London Euston including 1st class travel from Oxenholme to Glasgow Central, it was still cheaper than travelling first class via virgin direct.

Our non-railway activities planned for this trip was a visit to the national archives at Kew and the new mail rail museum under London. The week before we were due to travel, there was a series of articles in the newspapers and the internet on the reliability and issues facing the new Mark 5 carriages that Serco had started to use on the lowland service, including passengers being turned out at Preston at 04:30 am and instructed to make their own way and buy new tickets to Euston. So I was not filled with confidence that we would get to London at all.

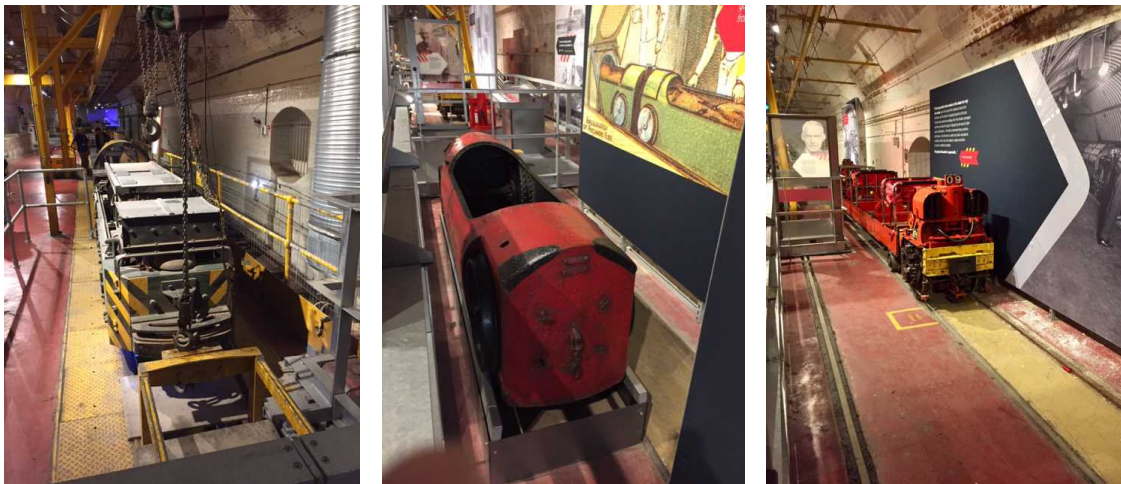
Ever the optimist, we set off towards Oxenholme station hoping all would be well. A pleasant two hours later and having enjoyed hot food and a couple of alcoholic beverages at our seat, we arrived at Glasgow Central only five minutes late. Short walk later we are in the Crystal Palace pub in Jamaica Street enjoying a couple of cool beers whilst waiting for our departure time of the sleeper.

I will review the new Sleeper in a future article. Not to spoil things too much, but to my surprise and most of Fleet Street, the next morning we woke on the outskirts of London and we arrived in London Euston on time

We made our way to London Victoria will be enjoyed a hearty breakfast at the Wetherspoons above the station concourse before making our way to Kew and enjoying a pleasant couple of hours at the national archives enjoying the excellent Cold War exhibition. It was interesting to see the many varied displays in the exhibition from Cold War paranoia to civil and nuclear defence planning. Certainly reminds me of my childhood in the early 1980s. We then made our way to central London to enjoy lunch at the Mail Rail cafe before entering the museum itself.



I have found buying tickets online for the mail rail museum problematic, but they offered a discount if bought in advance of your visit. But for whatever reason, we had to purchase our tickets on the day and risk not being able to get on the underground train part of the museum. Fortunately there was plenty of room on the day and we could buy tickets. Your ticket gives you unlimited access in to the museum and one trip on the mail rail train. The discount offered for pre-book tickets was only one pound cheaper than the on the day so the price so hardly worth the effort in hindsight really, apart from wanting to avoid disappointment of not getting on a train. We made our way down to the mail rail train where the main station is housed in the old maintenance depot for the originally remote carriage system and exhibition for the Rolling Stock.



The mail rail train itself is a new construction based on the original rolling stock, but with a cab at either end for the driver. The ride lasts for about 15 minutes and includes a couple of stops where there is an interactive video and commentary showing activity and the history of the system at old sorting stations. The system certainly seemed quite extensive uncovered a large area of central London giving a fast efficient service. You certainly get the feel of what it was like to work there and the system was quite extensive and run successfully until 2003 where it was deemed cheaper to run a fleet of road vehicles. This is reality was just another victim of a public system being run by been counters with no experience of the business. It seems fairly obvious having talked to some of the guides that today it takes far longer to deliver the mail in London than it did before 2003.

Overall the ride was interesting and enjoyable but far too short and not worth the £17 admission fee for the train which is basically an out and back loop. The rest of the museum was excellent but again much smaller than I expected, but nonetheless the museum and the exhibition is very interesting and enjoyable, bringing back memories of phone boxes, vans and phone equipment. The exhibition also focused on the staff that made up the post office in the past and gave examples of historical moments in

its history, such as the first postman to wear a turban as part of the uniform.

Since our visit to the mail rail system, they are now advertising that there is not only the train to ride on, but you can go on guided walking tours and visit another part of the system that the passenger trains does not go.

Yes it is worth a visit and as I say really quite enjoyable, but I feel I would not rush back as £17 is quite a lot to pay for what is basically a 15 minute ride. However, I would return in the future do one of walking tours to explore other parts of the system. **Peter Mills.**

### **Sidings, Passing Loops and Reversing Loops.**

Recently some as yet unanswered questions have arisen about the electrical wiring on the various running lines around the clubroom, especially concerning passing loops and sidings. Now it is time to dispel all the false myths and perceived complications you may have. You will now be able to read and see here for yourself just how simple and straightforward the solutions to these scenarios really are.

As the basic track formation of the main running line is a large continuous circle, some extra consideration must be given as the accurate placement of insulated rail gaps to avoid any possibility of short circuits occurring. Remember that all gaps illustrated are absolutely essential if using live frog points but are also operationally convenient if using insulated frog points.

First of all, a simple single track siding of the main running line. The gap shown avoids a short circuit occurring when the point is set to the siding and the associated link wire is required to maintain the electrical continuity of the remainder of the main line.

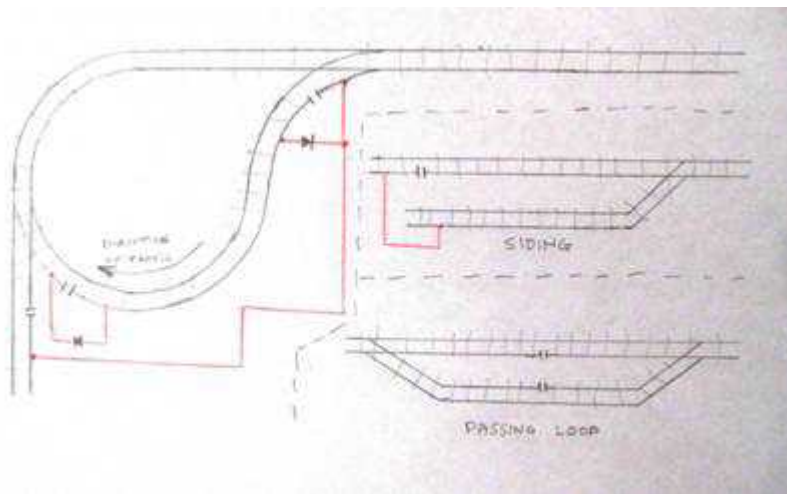
Next, a simple double track passing loop. No additional link wire is required as the electrical continuity of the main running line is maintained through the outer rails. This time the location of the two rail gaps in the centre of the loops on the inner rails may seem a little unorthodox but their placement allows for some interesting operational possibilities. See if you can work out just how this design may be utilised to its maximum potential.

Suppose you wish to reverse the direction of travel of the train on the main line without the unsophisticated method of physically removing the train from the track and turning the whole formation around. What is required is a reversing loop. Most of the published books on model railway electrics recommend that this type of track formation should be avoided



but this is not really necessary. Reversing a train may be achieved by the use of a reversing loop, two diodes and three insulated rail gaps. Correct placement of the three insulated rail gaps and the orientation of the diodes are absolutely essential. For the illustration shown, the reversing loop must only be traversed in the direction shown. If you would rather go around the loop in the opposite direction, simply reverse the direction of each of the diodes. Again the link wire bypassing the reversing loop is essential to maintain the continuity of the main running line.

So as you have now read, the solution to these three scenarios is of course very simple. So don't look for any complications, there aren't any.



Remember, all gaps and diodes illustrated are absolutely essential when using live frog points otherwise short circuits will occur. Well we don't want that, now do we. For more on basic and simple model railway electrics see my web site page at

[www.eastbank.org.uk/circuits.htm](http://www.eastbank.org.uk/circuits.htm) where the diagrams illustrate extra useful information. **Allan Trotter.**

### **How to rust your wagons for your model railway.**



The majority of models to be seen on layouts are in pristine condition, but regrettably this rarely reflects reality. It is understandable that there is some reluctance to "mess" up an expensive model particularly after the

manufacture has taken so much effort in the application of the livery. However, a well weathered model adds immensely in making a layout look realistic. Remember, if badly done or too heavily applied it will detract from the overall effect. The same comment can be made for wagon loads and people.

For some modellers, the most important thing in achieving a realistic model railway isn't the accuracy of the models or the level of detail, but the weathering. Even a model railway built from cheap, off-the-shelf items can be made to look impressive if it's well weathered.

Weathering is generally perceived as being difficult because mistakes can be embarrassing or hard to rectify, not to say costly. Why not try it on a cheap goods wagon such as a mineral wagon. The club does have some of these available at a very reasonable price. These were always dirty in service and it's difficult to overdo the weathering effects on an item of rolling stock that was never cleaned in reality. Once you've mastered the technique, you will have the confidence to try something more challenging. Remember, weathering does not only apply to rolling stock, but to buildings, track and the rest of the railway scene.

Acknowledgement is made to BRM digital for most of the procedures outlined below.

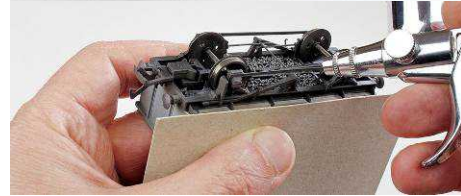
### **Shopping List**

Cheap paint	Humbrol 67 & 98	Burnt Umber
brushes	enamel paint	Gouache
Cake trays	Indian ink	PVA glue
A file	Cardboard	Newspaper
Airbrush	Diluted car screen	
Sketching/char-	wash	
coal sticks	Cotton buds	

1, Start with a mineral wagon kit or RTR item. Give the model a good wash with warm water and a little detergent to remove dust and grease.



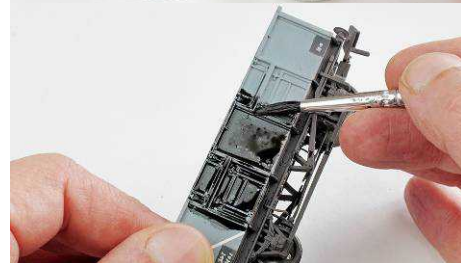
2, Spray the inside of the wagon with Humbrol 67 and below the solebars with Humbrol 98. Use a piece of cardboard as a mask for the body. If you don't have an airbrush then hand paint, but thin the paint from the tin.



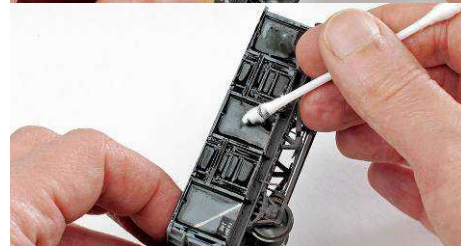
3, Make up a mix of Indian ink and car screen wash in a ratio of 1:5 – don't make the mix stronger as the former is quite potent..



4, Paint the mix onto the wagon, aiming for even coverage.



5, Wipe off excess with cotton buds using vertical strokes. Leave more residue in the corners and edges, then leave to dry.



6, If you want a wagon that's just entered traffic and hardly used, you can stop here. Even weathering to this limited degree makes your model look more realistic.



7, Apply neat Burnt Umber Gouache from the tube onto a cheap hog's hair brush. The bristles are stiff and must be spread out for a random distribution of paint. Manipulate the bristles with your fingers to achieve this.



8, Now stipple the brush onto the wagon sides aiming for an even random coverage. You'll find the mixture dries quickly so you'll need to keep applying more paint to the bristles. The model won't take long to dry.



9. Take a flat brush and dip into car screen wash. Brush this lightly down the body and immediately go over the same area with a second stroke. Keep doing this, working around the model until you have covered the entire body.



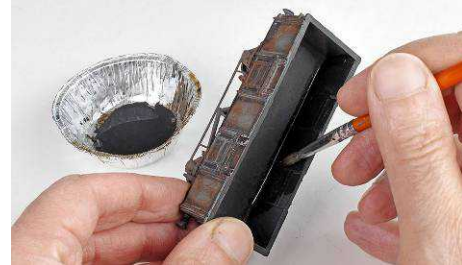
10. Using a fresh cotton bud dipped in water, remove excess rust colour from the wagon numbering. Leave the model to dry



11. Take a black pastel and grate it onto a file to get fine powder. Brush this on using a cheap, dry hog's hair brush. Apply to the model around the side and end doors. Brush light browns and greys onto the running gear to get contrast.



12. Now for the inside. Make a 1:1 mixture of PVA and screen wash with a drop of Indian Ink. Evenly coat the inside of the wagon until the surface is damp. If you add too much mixture, use a dry brush to soak up excess. Leave the corners damper so they hold a higher accumulation of material



13. Using a file, grate together a mix of black and dark grey pastel and using a loaded large soft brush, dust the powder inside the model. Work over newspaper because this is messy. Tap the model upside-down on the bench to shake-off loose material.



14 If the accumulation of coal is too heavy for your taste, use a stiff hog's hair brush to remove some of it. Again work over newspaper to catch loose material and re-use it. Finally, there may be merit in applying a coat of matt varnish, or artist fixative to protect the surface.



## **Top tips on how to add rust to your model wagons**

Use old/cheap brushes for a project like this.

If a brush sheds bristles in use, remove them from the model once it's dry. Avoid the temptation to remove hairs when the model is still wet.

Rust patches look better when they're random, or they'll look contrived. Avoid large solid patches that give a 'Holstein Friesian cow' effect.

The most important thing to remember is not to fiddle with the affects you achieve.

Give the model a chance to dry and see what it looks like before passing judgement. If you don't like the results you can always wash them off and start again. **Ian Shulver.**

**END**