



KEEPING YOU INFORMED

*YOUR
NEWSLETTER
IS FOUR
YEARS OLD
THIS
MONTH!*



**JUNE 2017
ISSUE 47**

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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You can help to maintain that integrity by 'keeping in touch' let us know what you think, what you are doing with your hobby. If you have any ideas about how this Newsletter could be improved, what you like or don't like about it, then please contact the Newsletter either through "Over to You" or to the Editor direct at.....

"MMRG-NewsLetter@hotmail.com"

THE NEWSLETTER

YOUR TEAM (so far)

Editor	Mike Hebblethwaite
Research (internet trawling!)	Mike Hebblethwaite
The fun bits	Mike Hebblethwaite
	Alek Adamski

If you would like to join the team and set up a regular (or even occasional!) feature, please contact the Editor. At the moment this Newsletter is too much a "one man band"! All contributions are welcome.

CONTACT THE NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter now has its own e-mail contact address, which is :-

"MMRG-NewsLetter@hotmail.com"

We hope we will have a very full 'in-tray' each month!

Any ideas about what we should include, any contributions you may wish to make about yourself and your interests, any news, recommended hobby outlets or just a general "Hi" to fellow readers would be very welcome.

It's your Newsletter! Use it.

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Our policy, at present, is that this publication will carry no commercial advertising. It is a Newsletter! However, should you wish to place an "advertising article" concerning a new product, an up-grade to an existing product or a more general "of benefit/interest to railway modellers" article, please contact "The Editor" via e-mail initially. It is understood that such features do not carry the endorsement of MMRG unless specified.

AND FINALLY

This Newsletter is produced for and on behalf of Macclesfield Model Railway Group as part of their 'constitutional' obligation to promote and support the hobby of railway modelling. MMRG, under it's own rules, is obliged to pursue 'educational' opportunities within the hobby and this Newsletter is proud to play its part.

No price can be placed on the value of 'education', which is why this Newsletter is, and always will be, free.

EDITORIAL

Four years old!

To quote Victor Meldrew, "I don't believe it!"

It really doesn't seem four years ago that this Newsletter was 'resurrected' as a *trial!* And what a long way we've come since then!

Gone are the days of simply reporting what is happening within the Club (though, of course, that still happens!). The Newsletter tries very hard to have as broad an appeal as possible even (and especially) for non Club members.

We try to feature as many layouts as we can, produce articles for those more interested in the '12" to the foot scenes of both the present and days gone by, show you how we make buildings and scenery, the Club's layouts and try to explain some of the more complex aspects of our hobby. Look out, for example, for a new series of articles coming very soon on using different lighting systems on your layout.

For those, like me, who think a bulb is a bulb is a bulb I'm about to be learning a whole lot about bulbs and LEDs! That should help me throw some light on the darker areas of my hobby. OK, OK, I know! That was an excruciatingly bad pun, but there is more than a little truth in it! Creating lighting effects within and around buildings, areas of work (in model form!) and more general street/platform lighting is not something I've really paid that much attention to. I've thought, in the past, that it can be very gimmicky and can appear very toy like. If done well, however, it can undoubtedly create/enhance an 'atmosphere' that only light can give. Hopefully, we'll be able to show you that not only can appropriate lighting be installed, its brightness can also be controlled and that goes a long way toward creating 'atmosphere'!

The very fact that we do offer such a wide variety of articles is entirely due to the generosity of those who are willing to share their hobby, general interests, their history and contribute articles. Without their support, this Newsletter could not exist!

As Editor of this Newsletter, I look forward to all those new contributions that drop into my in-box. I get a fantastic 'buzz' as I open contributor's e-mails and see, for the first time, what they have so generously given to share with all our readers (and there's almost 400 of you!). Some are excellent articles in their own right and need little or no attention from me other than to put the photos in the right place! Others come as a series of notes with a couple (or more) photos and I build the article from those notes. Sometimes I add background information, sometimes a location map but at the of the day, there would be no article without those notes! Each and every contribution finds its way into these pages.

I cannot offer 'Pullizer Prizes' and nor would I wish to. What is offered is a guarantee that every contribution will be published in this Newsletter. If I have to 'edit' it in any way (i.e. add or change details/text) I will *always* submit it to the author for approval before publishing.

We've not been able to award a 'gold star' for new contributors for some time but maybe, just maybe, you could change that. The 'gold star' is on file and ready for use could it appear next to an article initiated or produced by you? I'd like to think that the 'gold star' will be making some welcome appearances in the not too distant future.

Looking back, it's been a great four years. Our readership has risen from an initial circulation of 24 (Club members who had no choice!) to almost 400 (who did have a choice!) and, amazingly, in that same four years only 2 'subscribers' have cancelled. From information I've been given, I know that more than a few readers forward this Newsletter to family members and friends, others read it on the Club's website (albeit 2 weeks after publishing!), download it and forward it to who knows where. I guess I'll never know what our actual readership is and, if I'm honest, it matters little. This Newsletter may 'go out' through the sponsorship and support of Macclesfield Model Railway Group but it is 'owned' by each and every reader.

It is yours!

And, I hope, it will long continue to be so.

Macclesfield Model Railway Group
supports the development of
“MegaPoint Controllers”
through the On3o Group

“LOXLEY” - an 'N' Gauge Layout in Germany

Dominic Emery

them and a Kestrel fire station. The fire station kit arrived and was built, the engines were out of stock and came much later. As most 'N' gaugers know,



Mike asked for more articles so I thought I would write about my modern image N gauge layout, “Loxley“. It is the second layout that I have built for exhibiting here in Berlin. The layout is 1,50 x 1,00 m any bigger and it wouldn't fit in my ex-wife's car! I didn't want to make the same mistake with this layout as I did with the last and bought the largest set curves that would fit and made sure there was enough space between them for modern image stock to pass each other on the curves.

The track plan is fairly simple with 2 circles and a loop in the station and there are 2 loops on the outer and 3 on the inner circuit in the hidden fiddle yard. If you are like me and enjoy looking behind the scenes and seeing what's in the fiddle yards at Exhibitions, it's sometimes better than what's on the front! I don't use the crossover or the branchline, which I may use later to extend the layout to a Traction Depot and sidings.

The curves are from ROCO and the rest of the track and points are Code 80 from Peco. Although Code 55 would look better, Peco code 80 connects better to the ROCO curves and my old Farish diesels and old wagon wheels are, maybe, a little coarse for code 55 track.

The buildings on the layout are a mixture of plastic and card kits and even some salvaged from my old layout. I must be the world's worst layout planner! The only thing I had planned for the layout was a farm to show off the range of Wiking tractors I had bought cheaply a few years before. DM Toys had 2 Scania Hong Kong fire engines on offer, so I ordered

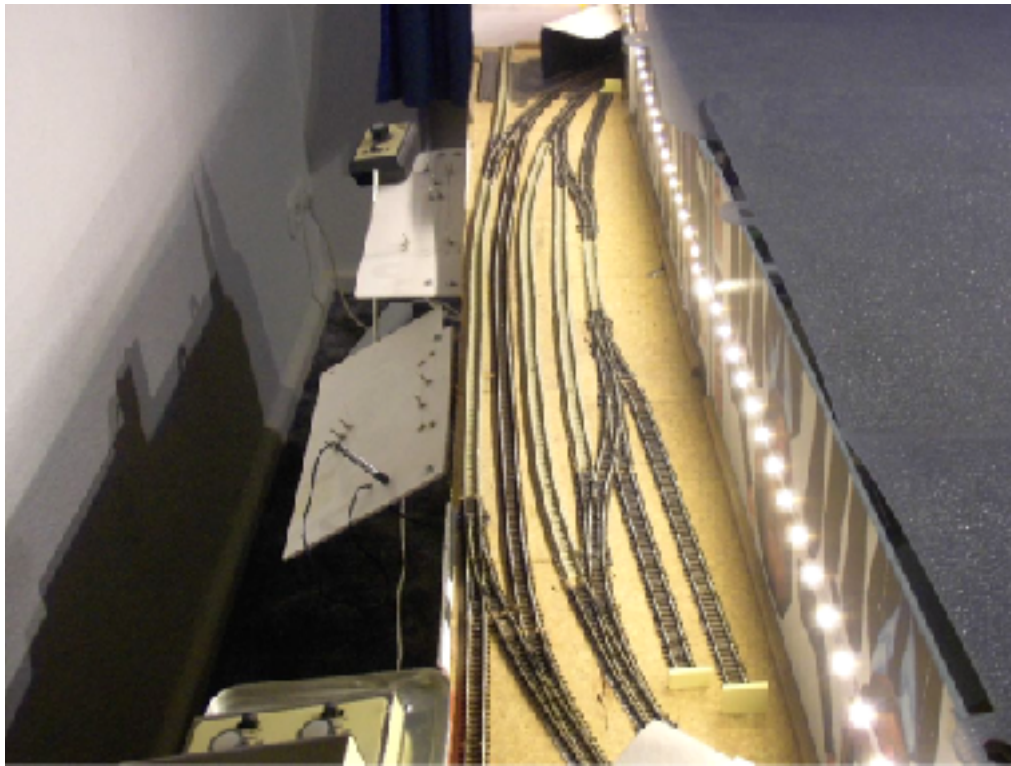
Kestrel kits are rather small and, as you can guess, the fire station was too small for the engines! I did not have enough room to extend the kit, so the engines stand outside.....ready for action!

The factory in the middle of the town area is a leftover from my last layout and is made from various Piko kits. The hill is made of layers of polystyrene blocks covered in grass flock paper. The roads are covered with card material that I think was used as an underlay for flooring. I also used the same card to make the stone walls. The card was cut into strips, covered with PVA wood glue and then covered with OO gauge ballast on both sides and the top. The glue makes the card flexible enough to follow the contours of the hillside. The stone walls pass to North Staffordshire and Derbyshire, the sandstone cutting passes to the Leek area (Churnet Valley). When the visitors see the terraced houses with red telephone and letter boxes, even if they don't know anything about which trains run in England, they recognise where it's supposed to be! The street and station lamps are cheap Chinese imports and the rather over-scale, original street lamps have since been

replaced by more 'true to scale' lights. I had bought a multi pack of unpainted figures in a fit of madness immediately despaired at the thought of painting them. My girlfriend took on the task of placing them on the layout. I think she got carried away a bit!

The blue sky back scene was painted with a tester paint pot and where it's not covered the white background looks a bit like clouds.





The layout is 12v DC and controlled from a Gaugemaster Model B dual controller. I discovered at an Exhibition that controlling both tracks with two operators at the back left hand side of the layout doesn't work very well. I bought a Gaugemaster hand held Model W which is now used for the outside track from the right side of the layout, It is held in place with Velcro. What I have been doing is replacing the Chinese cars of which I think there are only three different ones with Oxford cars and vans. The signals are Breko LED but you have to look direct into the signal to see if the light is working or not!!

I would love to run scale length trains but the layout is too small and I can't afford 18 or 19 bogie coal wagons etc. Luckily, timetabled departmental trains can be very short.

It can be quite dark behind the back scene in the fiddle yard at exhibitions so I bought an LED strip and fitted it across the back. I still need my reading glasses to get any stock on the track but it definitely makes life easier! The tracks are very close together at the back and very close to the edge! Yes, I have lost at least one Class 66 over the edge. I will hopefully learn from my mistake in the future if the layout goes out again.

Buying too many engines and hoping to show off as many as possible at a weekend show doesn't work either! I think I've learnt my lesson now and the last engine I bought was a Class 33, 33102 and only because it's at Cheddleton. The next engines on my list should take a while before they are available, Dapol Class 68 and Revolution Trains Class 92. I hope it doesn't turn out like the OO engines that I ordered over a period of 6 months or so that all turned up within a few weeks of each other! It took a bit of explaining to my girlfriend but, luckily, she knows what I am like and its my money.

Layout lighting is provided by an LED 3 spot ceiling light on a pole..... not very high tech, but it's easy to transport. I use Velcro strips to hang a curtain around the layout to hide the bits and bobs and the rest of the stock. The curtain can also be used on my Thomas the Tank Engine layout and on the new OO layout when its finished. I think that every time I build a layout, which takes years, I have learn a bit more and hope that the new layout will be better . I suppose I will be 80 when I have finished learning (as soon as that?!? Ed) still, its part of the fun of modelling!



Thank you, Dominic. It's great to hear about your support for 'British outline' in Berlin, Germany and I wish you as much, if not greater success with your new 'OO' layout. Maybe you'll win over a few 'converts' amongst our German railway modelling colleagues!

I think your layout demonstrates very well that it is possible to combine both rural and urban themes within a very small space and even if 'scaled up' to 'OO' would measure only 3mtrs x 2mtrs (approx 10ft x 6ft 6ins) it would make for a great garden shed/small box room project!

If any readers have also built 'compact' layoutswe'd love to hear about them. In fact we'd love to hear about any of your railway modelling projects!

MORE WINTRY SHOTS OF STEAM IN SADDLEWORTH

(.....to cool us down in 'flaming summer'??)

Ken Ratcliffe

where the trains are climbing, is still with bullhead rail, whereas the up line has by this date been fitted with flat-bottomed rail, though still jointed. The lineside fencing on the snowier photo was such a trademark of the railway in those days, though, being made of softwood, was rather prone to rotting.



Following on from the chilly photographs of trains approaching Diggle Junction, here are two more taken in similar winter conditions, though one is actually without snow. These are about a half a mile before the previous ones, on the 'main' line (ex LNWR) from Manchester to Leeds, in the cutting immediately north of Saddleworth Station, and about a mile from the summit of the line at Standedge Tunnel. Again, the cold weather makes for strong steam effects. I assume that I was trespassing on railway property to take these, but in those days no one seemed to bother. Both trains are clearly bound for Leeds (City) and beyond, either Hull or Newcastle, because they include Gresley coaches as third and fourth vehicles, at least. The first and second vehicles are BR Mark 1s in each case. I can't read the numbers of the locos on either of the photos, which were taken in the mid nineteen fifties. The coaches are in crimson and cream, and the locomotives have the early BR tender emblem. The train engine in both photographs is a Jubilee 4-6-0, with 3500 gallon Fowler tender, which would be from either Edge Hill, Newton Heath, or Farnley Junction (Leeds). The pilot on the double-header is a Black Five which will have hooked on at Manchester Exchange and will go all the way to Leeds.

The same wonky telegraph pole features on each shot, with its double guy-lines on the West, windward side. The down line,

In the right background of the same photo can be seen some of the buildings of the village of Dobcross. Beyond are the snow covered fields at the top of Wall Hill, where I lived, and from where I commuted by bus to school in Manchester, a world away. It is noticeable how tidy the lineside is, thanks to the gangers who regularly trod their lengths.



You can quite easily imagine the sound made by those trains – the rapid roar of the jubilees with six exhaust beats per revolution, together with the more ordinary four beats of the Black Five, making quite a cacophony on the climb from Stalybridge up to Standedge. When these trains were replaced by the Transpennine intercity units, the gradients appeared to have become flattened. Nowadays the service is provided by 2-car class 158 DMUs. In contrast, a double-headed steam train like the photo, or even a single Jubilee slogging up on its own, certainly let you know of its presence.

By some criteria it would appear to be wasteful and very inefficient, but it made quite a spectacle, and, let's not forget, the trains carried lots of people, and on cold days, like those depicted, there was usually a nice warm steamy fug in the compartments. They were comfortable places to be,

unless the horsehair stuffing was sticking out of the seats. Also, by contrast with today's Pendolinos and similar, there was a strong sense of movement when travelling, as there was no double glazing or soundproofing, the sliding ventilators could be draughty, and rattle, and there was the constant rhythm of wheels over rail joints indicating relative speed – in fact as enthusiasts we would count the number of rail joints in forty-one seconds which gave the speed in miles per hour, or so it was said. Generally speeds on the trans-Pennine route were leisurely, but the alternative by road, with no motorways and the rigours/delights of Leyland Tiger single-decker long-distance buses, The photographs were taken with a Kodak Retina IIa 35mm camera, a neat folding job with an F2 Schneider Zenon lens, which served me very well, though I had to part with my Hornby Dublo collection to pay for it!!

TOO MUCH SNOW?

Alek Adamski

(with additional material by Mike Hebblethwaite)



It's maybe not so much the snow causing a derailment that's the problem. If I was a trucker looking for an overnight stop, I'd be pretty racked off to find the lay-by full of train!



But it's not just the 12" to the foot guys that have to deal with snow spare a thought for those with garden railways!

But, somehow, the show has to go on as this photo of a train on the Silverton and Durango Railroad in Colorado demonstrates.....



I'm proud to be a railway modeler. It means more to me to be on the cover of Model Railroader than to be on the cover of a music magazine.

Rod Stewart

HOW DO THEY DO THAT?

Building a jetty for 'Purgatory Junction' - Part 2

Mike Hebblethwaite



Following on from last month, when we saw the jetty's structure completed, it is now time to have a look at weathering the project.

Weathering

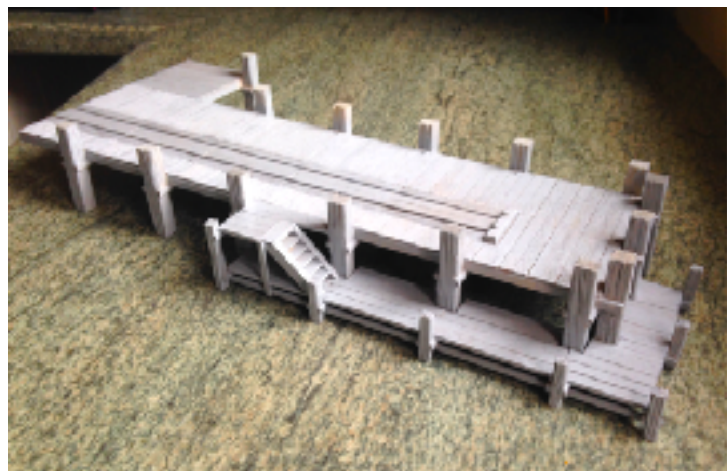
With the best will in the world, and no matter what 'protection' is applied, timber when used outdoors will be affected by the weather! Eventually it will rot. Those of us lucky enough to have garden sheds, wooden framed greenhouses and even garden fences will know only too well that wood deteriorates when exposed to the elements.

Of course, it deteriorates and shows the varying effects of weathering depending very much on the prevailing climate. Very damp conditions produce mildews, mosses, lichens and a whole host of other 'damp loving' growths. These tend to be quite dark in colour with, predominantly, blacks, dark greys and greens. Timber that is exposed to continual, strong sunlight becomes bleached and silver greys/ off whites tend to predominate. These are the extremes, granted, and most timbers (especially in this country) will show a combination of both. The sun in the UK (what little we have!) will bleach timber but those nasty fungi, etc, will grow where water collects or dampness is retained.

There are endless articles on the internet and in magazines showing you how to create the weathering effects that suits the location of your model best. This article will concentrate on the weathering techniques used for this jetty.

The setting for Purgatory Junction is a lakeside within the San Juan mountains. Long, dry and hot summers with plenty of sunshine with winters that could, by UK standards, be described as 'harsh'. The timber for the jetty was weathered to reflect this. Bleached by the sun yet exposed to rain, snow and early morning mists over the lake. A climate almost guaranteed to rot any timber! Not only is the structure exposed to the elements, it is standing in possibly the worst element of all. Water!

So. How was it 'weathered'?



Firstly, the entire structure was given a light coating of grey undercoat. This was simply applied directly from a tin of Halfords grey primer. Care was taken not to make this first coat too thick as other colours also have to be applied and they need to be 'absorbed' by the wood.

Using a very thinned acrylic paint (almost any make will do) a black wash was applied and was 'encouraged' to penetrate between the boards on both the upper and lower deck. This wash creates the 'shadow' effect between the boards and, where it penetrates through the grey, highlights the grain of the timber.



Felt pens, in various shades of grey, were used to highlight the weathering effects on the jetty's upright supports make sure they are of 'permanent marker' type otherwise the colours will fade! My set of pens came from 'Poundland' and cost mmmm£1 for 20 different colours! They didn't last long but, hey, they only had to last for one project!!

The bases of the upright supports were painted black for 2-3mm from the base upwards and this was blended into greens for a further 3-4mm. This, hopefully, represents the algae growths the timber would be 'attacked' by. Let's face it, the timber is not so much attacked, it's the algae and fungi that see this

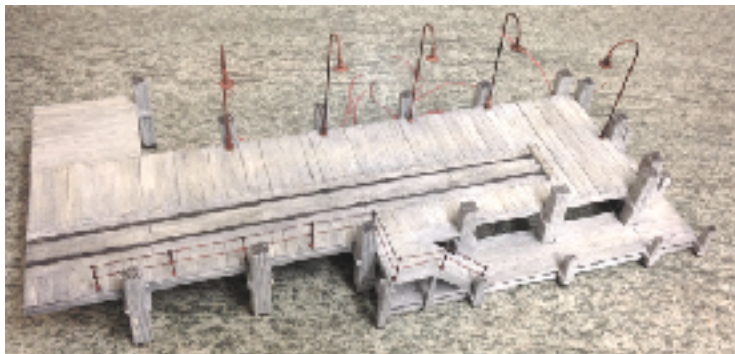
exposed wood as being an ideal home!

The final areas to receive 'weathering' attention are the surfaces of the two decks.

Now it's time to use weathering powders. I prefer 'Tamiya' powders to any other commercial powders, but I have also used powders intended for eye shadow! The CO has looked at me a little quizzically over the last few weeks as I've raided her make-up bag! At least I didn't raid the 'glitter' powders!

OK! Raid successful. Tamiya powders and eye shadow at the ready.

These powders were used to highlight where people had been walking and



working, presumably for many years, and they had worn away some of the weathering effects. These were represented by off-whites and light browns applied with cotton buds....heavier effects were applied by index finger! The only edge of the jetty that was weathered in this way was the edge by the lights to give the impression that this is the side of the jetty used for loading the boats. Again, the weathering was not applied evenly some areas are walked on less than others and individual boards vary in their tolerance to 'wear and tear'. Some additional staining was added to represent the effects of spills and for this some darker colours were blended (browns and mid/dark greys).

Railings and lights were added after they had both been painted black and then 'rusted'. There are a variety of paint manufacturers who produce a whole range of 'rust' colours in both enamel and acrylic paints. Beware! Never apply enamel paints over acrylics - they will crack and peel! It might produce an interesting effect at times, but the extent of the reaction is difficult to predict. Acrylic paints can be applied safely over enamels.

Detailing

They say the 'devil is in the detail' and with some justice! It is easy to become overly zealous with detail and the trick is knowing when enough is enough! Too much and it looks cluttered, too little and it looks unconvincing.

Having said that, some detail is **essential** to create both atmosphere and credibility. For example, because this is a fairly large scale model (1:48), it is glaringly obvious that pieces of wood do not simply join themselves together!

Question.

What would be used on a real jetty of this type?

Answer.

Iron/steel rods with threaded ends and large nuts with substantial washers!

Now, I'm not into making these for myself but, fortunately, there are manufacturers that do. 'Grandt Line' is one such manufacturer who produces nuts and bolts, with and without washers, in a range of different scale sizes in both '0' scale and '00/H0'. I opted for 2.25" nuts

on heavy square washers for all timber joining on the upper deck and lighter 2.25" nuts on smaller washers for the lower deck.

These details come moulded on plastic on a sprue. The detail is excellent but, a word of advice, paint them **before** you separate them! Even at 1:48 scale, they are small and fiddly. You'll need to drill appropriate sized holes in your structure before you add them.

If your structure is intended to be used during dark winter evenings or even long into the night, you are going to need lights! Those used on this jetty are simple 'goose neck' lamps with 12v grain of wheat bulbs. Of course, there are a multitude of different lamp styles available to suit the period and location your model is set in. They are also available in a variety of scales from 'N' up to 1:32 (Gauge 1). A quick trawl through the internet will show you just how many! The lights used on this project were sourced from Hong Kong and took just four days to arrive!

Again, they were painted before being installed in the holes drilled in the



deck for them. The wires were then attached to two 'feeder' wires that run the length of the jetty (see photo above)



Railings were added after painting. The stanchions are intended for model boats (what the Hell, the jetty's on the water!) and come in a

variety of shapes and sizes the choice is yours and the rails are simply made from piano wire. Old steel guitar strings are just as good, so, if you know someone who is restringing their guitar make a bid for their old strings!

Next, the rails were laid in their 'channels' which had already been painted to represent accumulated muck and grime. The sleepers were carefully stripped off the rails for the required length. The rails were then 'weathered'



with darker rust colours and then set into the deck. Care should be taken with this to ensure that the rails maintain their correct gauge (width apart). Using a track gauge would be ideal, but as I didn't have one to hand I simply rolled a wagon up and down the jetty! It worked!

Finally the jetty has to be turned into a 'working environment'. A few 'piles' of crates, sacks and smaller boxes were added in groups to represent different



'shipments'. Individual items were painted a variety of different colours but 'bright' colours were avoided! Crates, barrels and wooden boxes were painted in colours representative of wood or colours painted on to wood (allowing some of the 'wood' colouring to show through). Sacks were painted using 'canvas' colours (i.e. mainly light browns and fauns). All 'piles' of goods were then over sprayed with thinned shades of grey (varying from dark grey to light grey) to enhance textures, detail and shadows.

A tip is in order here don't be tempted to brush on these final coats of paint! It doesn't matter whether you are using water based acrylics or solvent based enamels. The very fact that you are applying thinned coats of paint applied with a brush will affect the underlying paint and the brushing action will also encourage the 'thinning' of the surface below. It may even remove the paint you have already carefully applied!

The 'final' over spraying should be carefully applied and built up over several coats until the desired effect is reached. If, like me, you are wary of using a spray brush, fear not. 'Boots' sell some great little soft plastic bottles very cheaply with 'atomiser' spray heads. They are intended for perfumes, but make great little spray guns! Make sure you test your spray on something other than your model to make sure that you have thinned your paint enough and that the spray itself isn't 'blotchy'.

That almost completes the detailing of the jetty.

All that remains is to add some coiled ropes, a bit of day-to-day clutter, a couple of jerry cans of fuel on the lower deck and, of course, some people!

The addition of the final details will appear in a short article as they are added in the future. The intention of this model, as it stands, is to help 'set the scene'

But I'm not building a jetty!

No, you probably aren't. Nor are you likely to unless your layout has a seaside/lakeside/riverside theme. So the point of the article is?

We all need platforms of some kind or another and, let's face it, a jetty is simply a platform that sticks out over water. The building that will accompany the jetty will also require a loading platform on 'dry land' and this will be constructed using **exactly** the same principals and methods as used for the jetty. Logically, a platform is a platform, is a platform.

It is something you could build, regardless of scale, that would add that 'rustic' look to any setting. Even 'modern image' layouts need to inherit something of the original railway's history and constructing a platform (whether goods or passenger) using the jetty's format could well provide that historical perspective.

Editor's comment

Why not 'give it a go' but let us know what you've built. Others may be inspired by what you do!

OBVIOUSLY THE WRONG KIND OF RAIN!



Flooding at North Llanrwst station, North Wales - January 2016



Seriously, flooding can bring destruction. The piles of timber brought down by the flooding in Asheville, North Carolina, July 1916 following the destruction of buildings, mills, homes and many businesses.



Back to this country and Banbury station during the floods of July 2007.



Ryde, Isle of Wight, November 2010



Even the 'Great Little Trains of Wales' can suffer as this photo of the Talylyn Railway at Cynfal (June 2012) shows.

The next time you hear the announcement that your train has been delayed by water on the tracks be patient. It might be several feet deep!!



Not a new phenomenon and not confined to the UK! This photo shows the flooding in 1907 Melbourne, Australia. Amazing it didn't flood the firebox!

MMRG Newsletter readers recommend :-

“TRIDENT TRAINS”

**Unit 10, The Craft Arcade, Dagfields Craft Centre,
Crewe Road, Walgherton, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5
7LG**

01270 842400

www.tridenttrains.co.uk

MMRG Newsletter readers recommend :-

“CHESHIRE MODELS”

37, Sunderland Street, Macclesfield

01625 511646

www.cheshiremods.org.uk

MMRG Newsletter readers recommend :-

“S.M.T.F.” (model shop)

**Brookside Garden Centre, London Road North,
Poynton, Cheshire, SK12 1BY**

01625 850427

MMRG Newsletter readers recommend :-

“THE MODEL CENTRE”

Hill Farm, Beck Hole, Whitby, North Yorkshire,

YO22 5LF

01947 899125

[“www.themodelcentre.com”](http://www.themodelcentre.com)

MMRG Newsletter readers recommend :-

“WALTONS of ALTRINCHAM”

30, Stamford St, Altrincham, WA14 1EY

0161 928 5940

[“www.WaltonsModels.co.uk”](http://www.WaltonsModels.co.uk)

It seems a long time ago since our show in March, but I've had several requests now from parents who bought their children their first train set during that, for us, very successful weekend. Their children were seriously inspired by what they saw and, despite the impact on family finances, parents wanted to encourage their children to follow their dream. A simple model railway was what they had in mind.

That, as far as it goes, is all well and good. A simple train set, an appropriate baseboard and away we go. The problem is that children's imaginations extend far beyond simply watching trains go round. They need some sense of reality. They need to have that train set 'anchored' into something they can believe. And, according to the pleas I've had, that means buildings!

We all know about 'Metcalfe' kits and the like (which I have recommended in the absence of any viable alternatives) but they are not 'pocket money' kits nor are they, necessarily, colourful enough to fire young imaginations.

There needs to be some simple and easy alternatives which you may be able to help with. What is needed, particularly for children, are some simple and easy to build cardboard building kits. Could you design such a kit? Could you design some simple and colourful buildings for a child's layout?

Most children have '00' layouts Thomas the Tank Engine and all that what we need are some simple buildings that could be printed out onto card and used to 'populate' a small layout.

If you can produce a design for a building in '00' that is easy to build, ready coloured and can be printed out on standard A4 sheets of card you could well be an unsung hero to more than a few of our younger railway modellers! Your design could be pre-coloured or require 'colouring in', but it should fit on an A4 page (or pages).

Please, if you can, help our younger modellers achieve their dreams.

Every building design submitted will be published.