

Impressed with British outline T-Trak modelling



I am impressed by what was achieved within the rules for T-Trak modules by the Peco team (RAILWAY MODELLER October 2019): you've really shown what is possible for a British scene in the space available.

One aim of the T-Trak standard is to encourage people to take up railway modelling because you only have to build a 355mm x 308mm size module at a time. I've been using this approach, as a STEM Ambassador, to

build modules with the Monkton Park Primary School T-Trak Club in Chippenham: we've been able to create a layout quickly that the children are proud of and have fun driving trains on. Bentley Model Railway Group kindly invited us to their Trainwest exhibition this year where hopefully we raised the profile of the T-Trak concept.

I wish I had discovered T-Trak sooner: it has many advantages for those short of space or who want to build dioramas. As the photo by Hiroshi Kato of the diorama competition in your article showed (left), T-Trak layouts have a rather random appearance that is part of their charm and quite unlike traditional exhibition layouts.

DANIEL SMART

Ed. - STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths - topics can be found on the website www.stem.org.uk

Owning a model of a train you've ridden on

Whilst perusing RM's 70th Special Supplement and contemplating my own modelling history which coincidentally began also around 1949 with a Hornby clockwork train-set on the dining room floor - red 0-4-0 tender loco (no reverse), two coaches and an oval of track - I was interested in the article by Nick Garner, and especially by his comments on young people who might well wish to possess a model of a train on which they'd recently travelled upon.

Earlier this year I went on a railway themed holiday in Switzerland and one of the excursions was on The Glacier Express between Andermatt and Chur. During lunch one of the dining car stewards made the rounds selling souvenirs such as mugs, postcards, badges etc. but also a delightful N gauge model of the train. It's manufactured by Kato and comes with three pieces of sectional track for display purposes and even a railer!

It's quite amazing, come to think of it, just how similar in content this rather unusual souvenir is to my original start-up train-set all those years ago!

JAMES WOOD



Technology vs 'traditional' skills: don't wait to learn

I read with interest the current issue, especially Nicholas Garner's Comment piece (p951). I get where he is coming from even though I'm 28 years older!

The 'older skills' for me were only ever a necessity to get what I required for the layout - be it a wagon kit of a prototype unavailable ready-to-run, or sticking small fiddly details on a Lima loco! I will never need to learn to make brass kits because they simply don't apply to my diesel era modelling...do I feel worse off for not having that experience? No, not at all; we all have limited time and that has to be spent on the areas of modelling we enjoy, not practicing skills that, sadly, will be redundant in the future. Bring on the laser cutting, the 3D printing - the future is bright!

ROB DAGG

I read with interest the perceptive commentary by Nicholas Garner in the November 2019 issue as to the direction the hobby is taking, from the 'other end' of the age perspective. However, I would caution waiting too long to try some of those 'traditional techniques and methods' that his piece concludes with.

In particular, the people from whom you can actually learn the black arts of soldering, filing, and shaping metal,

drilling small holes without breaking drills, tapping threads, marking out sheet materials and perhaps even a smattering of basic lathe work, are all getting very thin on the ground.

It took me around 20 years on and off of building locomotives before I started to feel I had got the hang of the business. And even now, I still get frustrated with issues that should have been addressed by the kit's designer in the first place.

My personal *bête noire* is brake shoes and hangers that are meant to be soldered on for keeps. So, how to do you get the wheels off to paint the thing? Drill and tap the chassis side

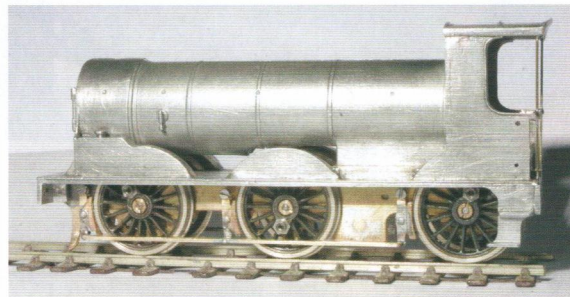
frames for M1.2 screws, turn up some wee brass spacers... as in the photo.

All these sorts of things can only be picked up through experience. It amounts to a lifelong apprenticeship - but one that can give one a lifetime of interest and pleasure.

None of this matters of course, if - and it is a big if - you are happy to accept what the trade decides to bring to the market.

But it would be a dull world indeed, if there was no-one left able to inspire the rest of us with the likes of, say, a scratchbuilt Sand Hutton 18" Hunslet well tank in 1:32 scale...

FRANCIS SAMISH



Snippets...

70 years of RM

We would just like to take the opportunity to congratulate the team at Peco Publications on RM's 70th anniversary. Many of our members purchase the magazine on a regular basis and have found inspiration and enjoyment in its content so let's hope that this continues for many years to come.

JOHN SPENCE

Chairman, Melton Mowbray RM

I had just purchased the November edition of RAILWAY MODELLER, and the other day a friend gave me several old copies of *The Railway Magazine*.

I picked out, purely at random, the copy for January 1950. Imagine my surprise when turning to the back pages, under the section titled 'Railway Literature', an entry for the RM Vol 1 No 1 for October-November 1949. The very first copy. I could not believe the coincidence!

PAUL NICHOLLS

Ed. - the Railway Magazine remarked that "in the editorial to this new periodical, Mr G P Keen, Chairman of The Model Railway Club, stresses the importance of following real railway practice on model railways." Plus ça change...

Congratulations on another decade. I have just been re-reading for the n'th time the very first MODELLER bought for me, the May 1966 issue purchased from the W H Smith stand at Victoria (eastern side) by my mum. At 2/6 it was an expensive purchase for her then. Now I'm a regular subscriber - it started a few years ago as a Christmas present from my Mum!

SIMON JAMES

Thank you very much for the reminder that it is 70 years since the day when, on the way home from work, I paused as usual to scan the display on the stall of W H Smith at Waterloo station, and spotted (and purchased) this new railway modelling magazine, RAILWAY MODELLER. Congratulations, and thanks for the many years of interesting and instructing reading.

DAVID CURTIS

Playing card operation

The enquiry by Revd Hewlett (letters October) is referring to a series of articles in *Model Railway News* titled *Freight Train Operation on Model Railways*, written by E W Gilmour, who was employed in freight traffic management on British Railways. The articles ran from May 1961 to April 1962 and featured the author's *Loddiswell, Modbury and Salcombe* railway. Unfortunately although the April 1962 instalment had 'continued next month' at its foot there were no more articles as far as I know, which left the reader somewhat in limbo!

GEORGE BENN