

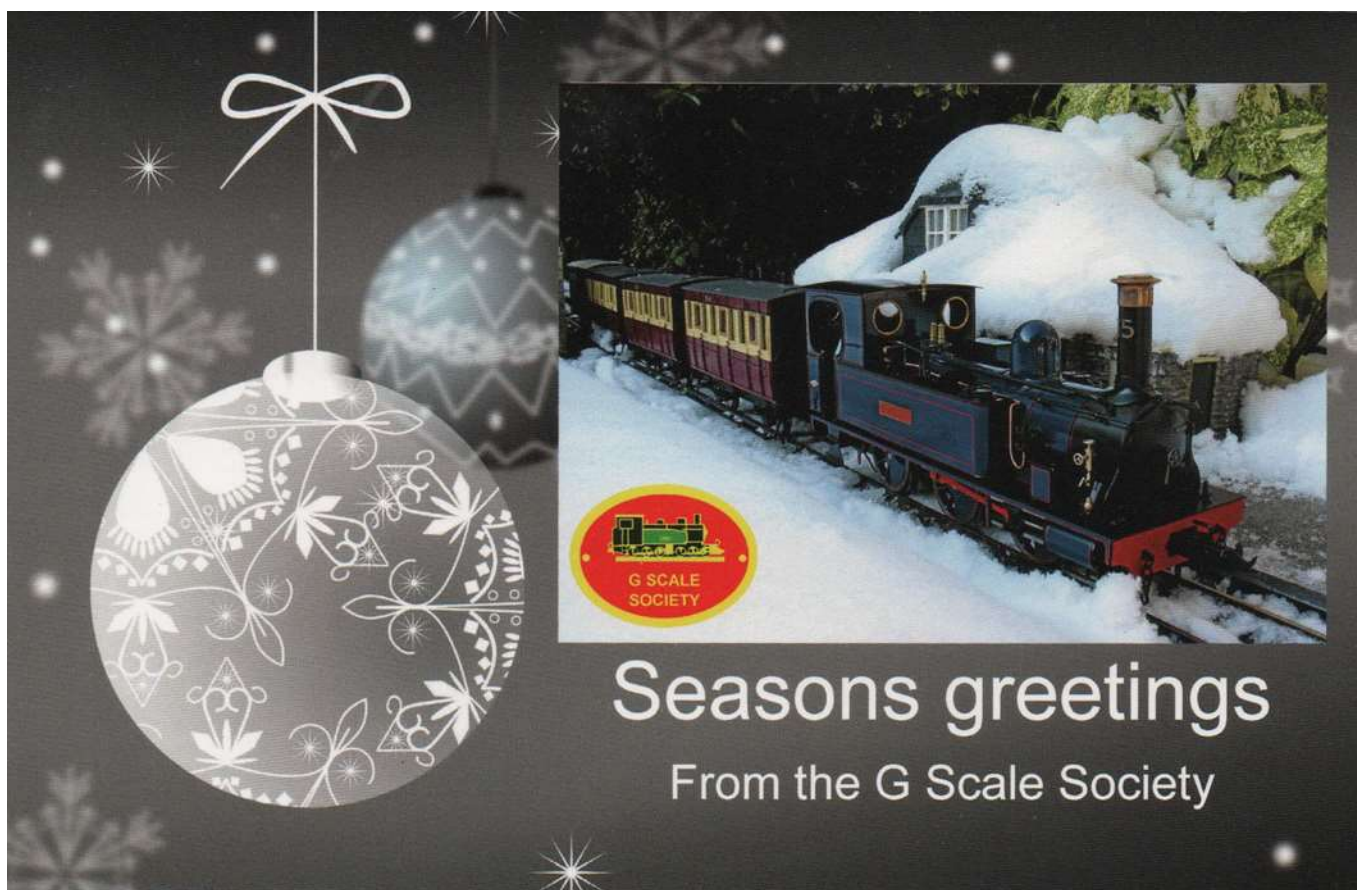


# KENT NEWSLETTER

Newsletter 21

WINTER

DECEMBER 2021



## Seasons greetings

From the G Scale Society



**The Society for Garden Railways**

Best wishes for a wonderful Christmas  
and a very happy New Year.

## Box Blight

### Article By Brian Roy Rosen

I was interested to read in the September newsletter about the Box tree blight which afflicted David Groves' little box trees along his railway. He's right that this is truly a menace but he and other readers might like to know that the blight is also hastened by an invasive moth from SE Asia whose caterpillars voraciously consume vast amounts of box leaves and therefore weaken the trees' resistance to the blight. Even for a large mature box hedge, the end comes quickly.



June 2018 Lovely green and shaped box hedge



May 2019 After Box blight has attacked the hedge

We watched some of our box hedges dying by as much as 10-20 cm a day. We lost all our box hedges and box topiary in a matter of weeks, including a large 'jelly-mould' topiary hedge at least 40 years old, through which I had constructed a slightly raised tunnel for my Valrosabahn line (see photos on this and the next page).



Box hedging removed and burnt



Repair work and a new way forward

The photos record the loss of this particular hedge, and how I re-landscaped the same area, and re-aligned the railway a bit as the box hedge trunk forced me to run the original track base very close to the boundary fence. The

viewpoint is the same for each photo, though taken from different elevations and angles. Unfortunately, loss of the hedge also exposed the raw new high fence erected by our neighbours, which completely dwarfs the railway, but the idea is that our new plants will eventually cover it. I'm currently refining the landscaping a bit.



Some wooden edging installed



plants in and trains running

For those interested, one possible small-leaved evergreen replacement for box is myrtle (*Myrtus*) and its relatives (plenty of forms to choose from), also a small-leaved holly called *Ilex crenata*. *Lonicera nitida* (green or gold-green forms) is also good, but as it can get quite large rather quickly, it needs suitable management if planted close to the railway tracks.

## **MODULAR OR NOT?**

### **Article by David Groves**

You might have seen an article in the journal about the concept of using the modular approach for G scale layouts. I have been discussing the idea with two other members. Some of our ideas are in the process of being put to the national committee. After this, it is intended to put some ideas out to the area groups.

The idea is to develop a modular system which:

- Easy to construct
- Light and easy to carry and put together
- To be able to put at least one module with buildings and stock into a medium sized car
- Allow an individual to present their modelling efforts and to run their stock along a longer layout
- To have a number of contributors arrive at a venue and put together a larger presentable and interesting layout

I am not going into more detail at the moment. We are at the stage where we need to know what interest is out there in the membership at selected group areas. When the call went out for those who would be interested in

contributing to the design of a system or making a module there was a deathly silence. I feel that many would want to see the scheme in action before diving in.

At this point there are two competing ideas: proper modules where track is fixed, has basic landscaping, and buildings and lineside features added afterwards and a tabletop system where track is put together on tables provided, and buildings added etc. as above.

Clearly the difference between the two is one does not need to make and carry boards. However, for the tabletop system, one could have one board without legs which is slung between two tables. We need to put aside the issue of electrical continuity for DCC etc. for the moment.

I put my name forward because I like the idea of modules. However, after I had done this, I had the chance to fulfil my promise to the Society to create an advertising presentation at the Folkestone Model Railway Club exhibition. By chance I was 'upgraded' to a larger space and I really did throw together a very simple layout. It could not have been simpler, being an end to end shunting loop, two sidings and just two buildings. My friend, who kindly assisted, and I were staggered at the interest shown. Interest was helped due to a working gravel loader. We both use R/C but I did have an LGB Stainz loco and even with the Peco track being connected by simple fishplates it ran quite well on DC. The layout was put up over three tables at a total length of 18 feet.

My point for quoting my experience is I put all I needed in my car with space to spare. I took lots of stock. I could have taken less stock and more lineside features. The lack of 'landscaping' did not deter viewers. I put down a layer of green breathable ground sheet (rubberised mesh) on the table which helped the image. This has led me to asking the following questions:

-Are there any members in the group who have loose track and buildings (and, of course, stock to show off) sufficient to fill a similar small space with one track joining an adjacent section?

- Could we put no more than three sections together to test the concept?

I appreciate you are asking yourself several questions like; what about DCC (electrical continuity), linking Peco to LGB, what about minimum radii, and does R/C stock short out the DCC. These issues can be solved easily. For those using Peco track I cut and bent pieces to make my own set track. Since the exhibition I have refined some of the pieces and can now make two or three different layouts with the same pieces.

To contribute to the 'modular' debate I would like to know of those of you who can positively answer the above questions and would be willing to indulge in a trial to put together a larger combined 'pop up' layout. G scale stock looks best on a larger layout and by each one bringing a smaller piece that can be achieved. At this point there is no rush and no need to worry about the technicalities. If we can put some ideas together, look at a trial sometime next year and take it from there.

David Groves. Please contact me on - [groves.ceng@gmail.com](mailto:groves.ceng@gmail.com),

## Note

In November GER was out at the West Sussex G scale show at Henfield and several G Scalers were talking about the idea above and it was interesting to listen to some of the comments for and against. But how good would it be to be able to link groups, show tracks together to make a large show track and that it could be used at any time even if a group is not available. To link the tracks into any format, ovals or long straight as Peter Waterman did last year which was 76-foot-long for model railway show which you can find on YouTube. It would need planning by all groups as stated above would be required to make their own modules to a set standard, complicated but imagine what could be done?

## WEST KINGSDOWN

**Article: - By John Dean**

A few photos of progress in West Kingsdown, shows different areas of the main line, still under construction. This will eventually be two main lines running in a loop. This has evolved slowly over the last 4 years or so when time and money permit, it's on a concrete base with stainless screws holding it down, and track clamps for continuity. Project 4 EPB has seen a little progress with construction beginning on the second driving trailer, these take a long time to produce as it's all drilled and cut by hand, the first part of the unit was completed in 2018, and is usually fitted in around other jobs in the workshop. I'm hoping in 2022 to finally finish the main line loops, albeit unballasted so I can finally run a through service!



Track on the Righthand side with part of the track laid

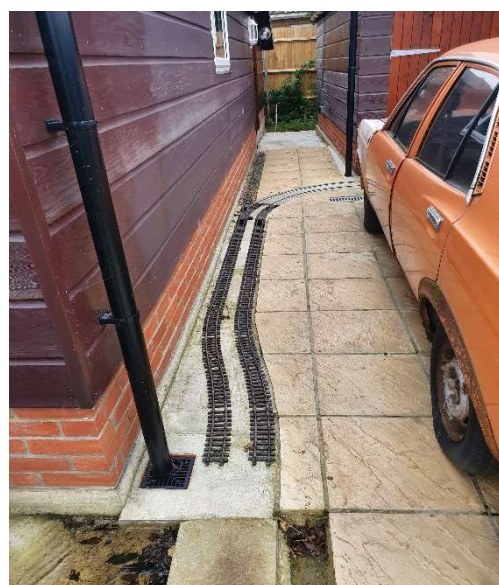


Left running down the garden with completed track

Project 4 EPB :`As many members of the Kent group will know. John is renowned for his home made rolling stock all cut out by hand and assembled to show some of his favourite trains such as the Hastings unit, which won the G Scale National prize for best model. Below is some of the work John is doing at present in between getting his track laid.



4 EPB Cutting in progress



Planning the route around the driveway

## CONVERSIONS

Article: - By Chris Worby

At an Auction some time ago, I purchased a pair of Aristocraft US locos, a 4-6-2 and a 2-8-2. See photos below



My thoughts were to use the mechanisms to build models based on British Railways types, a Clan and perhaps the never built 2-8-2 type that was dropped in favour of the 9F. Anyway, I set about fixing and cleaning them up as they'd not run probably for some years. In this process I must admit I lost my initial motivation and intention to convert them and enjoyed hanging over a dozen bogie freight cars behind them and letting them run! These models are to 1/29, a scale very slightly larger than proper gauge 1. I understand this was adopted by US manufacturers as freight cars at 1/29 for standard gauge, it's close in size/proportions to US narrow gauge cars made by LGB and Bachmann at that time. To get to the point of the article though I rather fancied adding to my US gauge 1 - 1:29 loco roster. In the scrap box were bits left over from past British conversions including a Big Hauler boiler unit; a complete bogie tender and an old Aristocraft 2-8-2 cab, as well as sundry other bits and pieces. I had also got an Annie chassis I'd bought for possibly another British build that hasn't yet got off 'the thinking about it' stage! The key to downsizing the Annie/Big Hauler seemed to be: - Smaller/shallower/narrower cab Revised narrower running plates Reducing the projection/width across the valve chests above the cylinders Reduced height boiler fittings,



To achieve this the boiler unit was shortened to accommodate the shorted cab. The last section of the boiler unit was wrapped at the back end by thin plastic card/styrene. The boiler fittings were reduced in height and missing fittings replaced including the generator/dynamo with smaller ones. The cab was glued in place, and a new firebox backhead made.

Reduced width running plates were added and these were extended to meet steps at the front to give the loco a different look. The cylinders were power filed into shape to represent a modernised perhaps Edwardian period loco, now fitted with piston valves.

The tender was reduced in width to match the Aristocraft cab unit, by filing down the side overhang in the tender chassis. The tender tank/body was sliced 4 times lengthways to reduce its width. A new coal load was added, and various bits tidied up including steps and the coal plate at the front. The whole lot was sprayed with grey primer/undercoat and top coated Matt black. So there we have it a plausible 1/29 ten-wheeler, its main short coming being the overscale rivet detail, that I hope the black Matt paint finish makes less obvious.

Hopefully the photos will illustrate the change process, and how the loco has downsized in comparison with the untouched Bachmann (narrow gauge) Anniversary loco.



The last photo shows the ten-wheeler alongside an Aristocraft Pacific



Chris setting up Crib Lane and testing his trains are running OK at Henfield. On the right of the picture you can see the new turn table, which we first saw at Pratts Bottom

## GER AT WEST SUSSEX HENFIELD SHOW

On 28<sup>th</sup> November GER was at Henfield for the West Sussex Group winter show. The event had a wide variety of attractions with several G scale layouts, plus Andy from KGR with a large amount of second-hand trains and tracks and the Group's own bring and buy stand. There was good turn out from G Scale members. A big thank you to the Kent Group contingent for all their help on a very cold the day and in particular to Roger Ashley for again towing the trailer.



Dad believe me it was only £20.



No Roger we will need me to rewire it for a third loop



Paul Wylde standing guard getting ready for the start.



Glen and Norman back again to run their battery trains

During the day a few of the members at the show were looking at ways to improve GER and Roger Allen and Martin walked around GER and compiled a list of repair jobs that are required after years of use. These involved some track work required so we can start to show our new steam train shed kindly made by Glyn Allen's father-in-law, which you would have seen in a previous Newsletter that covered this well-built shed. We also looked at maybe a way to improve running days such as Pratts Bottom and Teynham, where members bring trains to run and we have come up with a plan, if it works is to install an inner loop that will allow three people to run stock at a time. This modification would require a large amount of work and it would require the group to hire a hall for a weekend and to arrange a



working party to carry out the repairs plus the modifications. At the Teynham winter meeting we will be laying a loose lay on GER to see if the plan can be achieved.

The event saw the first running of a new John Dean/Jeff Fray creation, a six-car unit nicknamed the “Swastings Set”! - see picture below. It comprised 3 of John’s Hastings cars plus 3 Swiss (RhB) coaches from Jeff.



## **KENT GROUP WINTER MEET and AGM – Teynham Village Hall Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> January**

As we go to press with this edition, it is still the plan to go ahead with the event. We do however need to be mindful of the very rapidly increasing numbers of Covid cases and the situation may change.

We will make a further assessment in the early New Year and be back in touch with members. Should however you have any thoughts or comments relating to the event then please do share them by contacting Roger Allen – [roger.allen1@btinternet.com](mailto:roger.allen1@btinternet.com)

Regarding the AGM, following the plea in the last Newsletter the committee were pleased to see that one member has put their name forward to join the committee. We do however need at least one other so please have a think and again contact Roger Allen.