



KENT NEWSLETTER

Newsletter 25

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Fair “Chuffed” Article by Roger Ashley

Not wanting to go without notice I decided that the one remedy was to announce the loco's presence and add sound to an otherwise barely noticed progress of the train.

To put the parts needed into the loco was not a reality, the boiler and cab are already taken up with the receiver, processor and speed control taking power from the track. However, there is a large volume in the goods wagons. OK so it needs to earn it's keep.

As I am using radio control of my own design, I needed a receiver, signal processor, sound generator, amplifier and speaker. The decision was made to power from rechargeable batteries in a stack of 9 volts. (although at present still on standard batteries).



For indoor use the amplifier would not be needed, but insufficient volume for outdoors. To trigger the “chuffs” I made an interrupter of brass on the first axle on the lathe which cut through a UV beam back to the processor. After trying to separate the wheel assembly and being afraid of destroying it I made the cam in split parts.



Unless there is movement the signal processor goes to sleep, waking on truck movement.

From the control panel which can be anywhere in the garden I can call up, Loco Whistle, Guards Whistle, Air Pump, Injector, Pressure Release and a short whistle blast. The coloured buttons on the upper most part of the control panel do the calling.

The lower section controls two loco's forward, reverse, stop and speed. The switches on the right control 6 sets of points and the turntable. As I only have a small garden the transmitter is set at "LOW" power, but on high power can achieve over 1 Km.



Unfortunately, I don't have a steady enough hand to paint the track layout so have to rely on black marker pens which are not very successful. My photographic skills are second to everyone else's, so I apologise for poor quality.

LOOSE LAY AT PRATTS BOTTOM SUMMER SHOW

Kent Group was invited for the 21st/22nd May weekend to this multi-gauge model railway exhibition, organised by Orpington & District MRS, to demonstrate our hobby. With the help of a number of members we were able to talk to the public and answer questions concerning G Scale.



Wayne answering some questions



The overall set-up in the Marquee beside the Hall

It was a good time to show off our scale and many adults and children showed interest and 2 people joined which is great. Children had a chance to operate Thomas & Co which went down well. Thanks to Jeff, Roger, Martin, Wayne and Andrew Wyld for being in attendance and to John Morgan for providing the track. More pictures on Facebook.

Article by Brian Roy Rosen

VALROSA AND BRIENZERWALD: STRETCHING FANTASY AND REALITY ON TO A DUMBBELL.

I have previously spun some of the mythical outline history of the Valrosabahn in Kent Newsletter No 14 October 2020, but I've never quite been able to contrive a convincing story for the stations. As we'll see, the problem is with dumbbells, the prototypical disadvantage of which is offset (for me at least) by their simple way of providing for continuous running. Anyway, here is an update on the layout and story.

As previously explained, the basic layout of the Valrosabahn is a rather disguised dumbbell loop bent into a kind of U-shape which wraps around parts of three sides of our garden apart from some recent realignments and extensions to the run-round loops to take longer trains, I have just about stayed wise enough to leave it unchanged for some years now, despite temptations to make some more fundamental changes. With space tight, ingenuity and industry will be a premium however, and with my 80th birthday fast fading into the mists of time, I must be realistic.



So, I have been concentrating recent attention instead on my two unfinished station areas, one of which has consisted of no more than some run-round loops and nowhere to put station buildings. This part of the line has a quirky history. During its construction (about 600 mm above ground level, because of the garden slope), I had to swing the line away from the side border it ran along, in order take it round an old apple tree's trunk right by the fence. Some years later, the apple tree collapsed during a heatwave, and when I'd finally dealt with all the aftermath, I was left with a void between the railway and the fence. Just last year, I partly filled this gap with a triangular weatherproof baseboard which I could use for station buildings.



The stations have not just needed practical work but required a considerable amount of imagination to fit them into my long-standing mythical story of the Valrosabahn. As previously explained, the line is supposed to run through a cross-border area of the Alps where Switzerland, Austria and Italy meet, so the stations had to be consistent with this. I'd been shilly-shallying about it for years, but as I had no station buildings anyway, the solution would have been academic - until now, that is, when I have adequate station areas, layouts and buildings. So, it has become crunch time for the story line.

Of course, some might think any attempt at 'realism', whether concrete or plausibly fictional, for a garden model railway, is unfeasible or even plain silly - even more so for a would-be Alpine layout in a garden in suburban London, well below the eternal snow-line, closely surrounded by illusion-killing 2m-high 'dreaded fences' (as one modeller has rightly called them), red-brick house backdrops, Brobdingnagian daffodils and roses, and uncompromising '12ins-to-the-foot' garden sheds, water butts, timber stacks, compost bin, wheelbarrow, and rotary clothes drier.

On the other hand, having a locational and historical context for a layout has long been a key to creative railway modelling generally, and it also focuses the mind on what to buy and make. I had long ago decided that one of my stations was to be in or near the Engadin valley in the SE corner of Switzerland, and the other across the border in the Mals area of the northern German-speaking part of Italy (Süd Tirol) which was part of Austria until 1919. The Swiss part of the story allows running of Rhaetian Railway (RhB) stock, for which there is plenty of ready-to-run G-scale choice. The Italian (former Austrian) part, based partly on a mythical preserved remnant of the Ofenberg Line project (see below), permits running of Austrian outline stock plus the occasional, plausible, non-native stock acquired by its fictional preservation society. With a bit more licence, I also decided that there were mutual agreements about joint RhB-Italian-Austrian running over the entire line. Improbable? Well, it is a good thing I'm not trying to find an excuse to also run Durango & Silverton stock over it.

But where to cut the Gordian Knot of my dumbbell to locate the Swiss-Italian frontier, and where to put which station? The 'natural' border easily chose itself to be where the summit tunnel complex runs under the shed step and path, with ramps leading down on to the rockeries, one in Switzerland and the other in Süd Tirol, respectively. Each rockery carries one of the two end-loops of the dumbbell and their respective stations, but not symmetrically. At the approach to the lower, water-rockery end and station, the main dumbbell tracks are squashed together in parallel and the 'throat' where they come together therefore gives the station here the illusion of being a junction and/or a point where the track doubles. This combined with the prototypical rarity of dumbbell configurations, apart from tram lines, industrial lines and metros, has stretched my imagination to its railway modelling limits.

At one time or another, in my mind, I've swapped the stations and their names between their two possible rockery locations. Should I just turn a blind eye to the dumbbell ends when running the trains, and running the layout as if it were an end-to-end layout between the two stations, or was it possible to incorporate the dumbbell ends into my story?



After much pencil-and-paper trialling of sketch maps, study of regional topography from maps on online resources, and a little historical research, I finally decided that 'Switzerland' should be on the left hand side of the garden (as you look up it) including the water rockery, and that Süd Tirol should be on the far right side where the other rockery lies. Valrosa station (my vaguely Italian/Romansch place name) could then be located on my newly-created baseboard space, and my station in Süd Tirol, Brienzerwald, would be located in the old station area on the other rockery.

This demanded some careful reality checking, or rather checking with both the reality of what is on the ground in this interesting frontier country, as well as the unrealized railway reality of various 'might-have-been' and 'might-yet-be' lines here. I guess what follows will be of interest mostly to those familiar with the region and its railways, but for anyone else who is interested, a map or two will help, and I'll also try to explain here a little of the relevant ferroviarian geography.

Taking the RhB's existing Engadin line (St Moritz/Pontresina - Scuol-Tarasp) as a base line, the first relevant 'might-have-been' is the never (or not yet) built Ofenberg Line branching off the Engadin Line SE-wards to Mals in Süd Tirol, which is also the western terminus of the standard gauge Vinschgerbahn. Route variations of the Ofenbergbahn, of differing plausibility's, can be found at <http://archiv.ivt.ethz.ch/docs/students/sa334spec.pdf>. For good reasons beyond present scope to explain, I have opted for a route which follows the fictional Valrosa (valley) over the Valrosa Pass to continue down on to what was the Austrian (now Italian) aborted stump of the Ofenberg line. Two other relevant 'might-have-been' are a (1) a line connecting Mals northwards over the Reschen Pass to Landeck on the main Ahlberg Line in Austria, W of Innsbruck, and (2) a downstream continuation of the current Engadin Line terminus at Scuol-Tarasp also to Landeck.

Note that if (as I like to think for the purposes of my layout) these three lines are now all operational, they together make a schematic triangle, with Landeck at the northern apex and Mals at the southern apex. I use this 'triangle' to mentally project the story of my two stations on to my dumbbell.



We can start at Valrosa, my recently resurrected, rebuilt, reinforced and renamed station building built as the Pola (now Faller) kit of Susch station. The supposedly weather-proof plastic cement which I had used for it many years ago had failed and substantial lumps of the building had come off. This time I used various brands of superglue and Valrosa has now withstood the last winter. Although not truly a junction (see above), I conceive Valrosa as a junction on the Engadin line extension beyond Scuol-Tarasp. The nearer track to the middle of the garden is the Valrosabahn branch proper to Mals. The other is the NE-ward Engadin Line extension. Proceeding clockwise from Valrosa, the Valrosabahn crosses the Rosa river waterfall on a recently constructed modern-appearance 'concrete' replacement bridge and invisibly merges with the real Engadin line heading 'SW-wards' to towards St. Moritz, the Albula Line and the Bernina Line. It is simply going around this end of the dumbbell loop, poised rather precipitously above the pond. As it reappears from round the rocks and shrubs to reach Valrosa again, I tell myself that it has been there-and-back from these kinds of distant lines and places, albeit rather improbably in less than a minute, and is now about to continue along the Engadin Line extension NE-wards towards Landeck.



Continuing clockwise, the line ascends the left side of the dumbbell. It eventually passes into the Minerva Tunnel (at this end of the shed-step tunnel complex) which also represents the invisible remainder of the Lower Engadin Line to Landeck, as well the return arm of the Landeck triangle over the Reschen Pass to Mals. Having passed through all

these places, the line emerges from the shed-step tunnel complex on to the top rockery which here represents the preserved stump of the Ofenberg Line. Here is the sleepy former Ofenberg Line station, Brienzerwald, set amongst crags on the edge of a local forest (some garden shrubs and conifers) on the upper end loop of the dumbbell. There is a modest logging operation here and some small storage and maintenance facilities for the Ofenberg Nostalgie Bahn, though actually these are currently awaiting further modelling work.



The line continues as the Valrosabahn through the short Felsenstein Tunnel and then up a ramp into the shed-step tunnel complex again which on this side represents the summit tunnel of the Valrosabahn. This emerges on the Swiss side to run down the 'western' ramp and back to Valrosa. In this way, I have become the proud owner of an ambitious and substantial expansion of the Rhaetian Railway network, whilst also negotiating amicable international running rights with a historic railway preservation group on the Italian (pre-1919 Austrian) side. Narrow gauge rail enthusiasts come from great distances to see, and travel on, modern outline and heritage RhB trains, as well heritage Austrian narrow-gauge trains running over the same tracks.

Kent Garden Meets

Two have been arranged for July:

Sunday 17th July – - Jeff Fray, Maple Cross Railway

Sunday 31st July - - Martin Piper, Lullingstone and Eynsford – diesel theme but all welcome

Both events will run from 13:00 to 17:00

These are our first garden meets since 2019 thus please do try to get along and support the events but **kindly let the host know in advance** if you will be coming.

If you are thinking or of organising a group event this summer do please get in touch with Jeff Fray and he can help with publicity and any advice that you might need.

Do you need any track?

The group has a substantial quantity of track for disposal, which has come from dismantled garden layouts, including the residue from Jim Sinfield. Ideal for that garden project, all track is well weathered and was originally screwed down, thus some holes in sleepers. It is however (unless indicated) in sound order, missing fishplates on some items. A small proportion of the straight track has received gentle curves but some WD40 will help straightening.

The details are as follows:

LGB –

- Straight track in standard 300mm, 600mm and 1200mm lengths plus some other pieces between 700mm and 1100mm. Price 2.25 per 300mm
- R2 Curves at £3 each
- Small Radius manual points at £11 each

Peco – 45mm

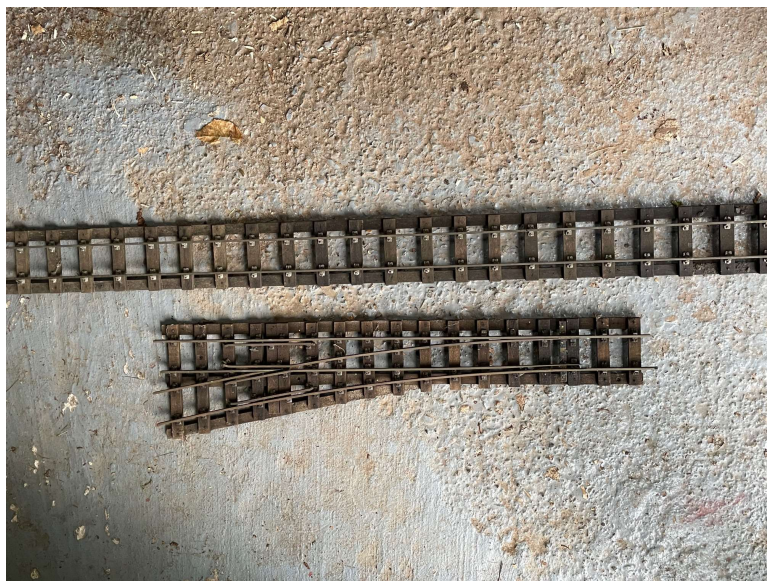
- Straight track – 914mm/1 yard lengths at £4.50 per length.
- Straight track – various oddments 150mm to 600mm
- Points – LH and RH at £16 each

Peco – 32 mm

- Straight track – 914mm/1 yard lengths at £4 per length
- Medium radius points – LH and RH at £13 each

Scratchbuilt – 32 mm track – Code 200 rail as Peco, metal chairs (possibly Bonds), wooden sleepers. Some items also have longitudinal wood lengths at right angles to the sleepers as shown in the picture below. Some of the points require TLC.

- Straight track – 1 yard lengths at £2 per length
- Points – LH and RH ,equivalent radius to Peco, at £5 each



If you are interested in buying any of the track or would like some further information, please contact Roger Allen – roger.allen1@btinternet.com.

Some advice on MTS

This piece was spotted by Andrew Lloyd on the National Facebook page. It is written by Paul Lamming of P S Models and Hobbies in Scarborough:

07-06-22

Today's gentle reminder for those of you who have or may have purchased one of the many s/h MTS digital systems that keep appearing on the market place nowadays.

If you have not got the manual please remember you can only have locomotives numbered 0 to 22 and most importantly you can run one analogue locomotive with a single motor without a decoder on 00.

To do the above you must make sure you have the correct colour on the Led panel which should be yellow NOT GREEN otherwise you will break down the electronics in not only the central station and or the loco or possibly both.

For those of you that have lost the booklets we have copies in pdf form so just ask it could save you lots of money as it is now not cost effective to repair these items as parts are no longer manufactured.

See clip showing the method for correct digital and analogue.

Operating mode display

Here, you can choose between three operating modes.

Select the operating mode: Press and hold the "0+22" button. Use a different finger to press the Reset button.

This selects a different operating mode.

Operating modes are selected in the following order:

■ Right LED off: Normal operation

■ Right LED yellow: Analog Control with a

conventional analog locomotive. With the "0+22"

Analog Control mode, you can operate one

conventional loco (without decoder) with the Multi-Train System. The conventional loco is assigned address 00 with the remotes.

Conventional locomotives without decoders may go in the opposite direction, depending on the direction