

February 2020

Greetings! It seems an age since I put together the last issue of this newsletter but it has been a rather 'trying' time. I mentioned in the last issue that I picked up a chest infection in Aberdeen. Well the after effects of that seemed to drag on and then turned into a series of viral infections which have kept me away from the keyboard for quite a while. Anyway, all seems to be repaired now and I'm back in action (depends on your definition of action).

Given a fair wind this issue should reach you before the Annual Convention in Bournemouth. Russ Cook tells me that the numbers are looking good and we will have the same three traders as last year present.

I've got to start this issue with another apology. For the last issue Ali Smith sent me an article on a steam locomotive conversion he had carried out. But then the gremlins struck and for some reason, only the first segment of the article made it into the magazine. I still can't work out how or why it got truncated, but it did. As I lost the bulk of the article, I thought the best strategy would be to repeat the complete piece in this issue so without any further ado...

Switching a Switcher

(text and pictures Ali Smith)

If you were at last year's N-TRAK UK convention you may have noticed a funny little engine with a tender as big as itself lurking in a yard on the Poole club's layout. It can also be seen on one of Hans Sodenkamp's videos of the event. That model is my attempt at a Norfolk and Western S1a switcher.

In 1950 N&W was a 100% steam railroad, to the extent that it would not permit other railroads to exercise any traffic rights they might have with diesels. Although they were very modern if somewhat individualistic with their road engines, they didn't have any purpose-built switchers but relied on elderly road engines for this task. In that year the Chesapeake and Ohio decided to dieselise yard service and so put up for sale their C-16 0-8-0s of USRA design even though they were less than two years old. N&W, having no thoughts of dieselisation, were glad to snaffle 30 of these which they designated S1. Roanoke Shops improved these engines by adding over fire jets and a second air pump plus extending the tender upwards to increase both coal and water capacity.

Desiring more of the same, between 1951 and 1953 Roanoke built another 45, but rather than copy the C&O tender they built new superstructures on redundant long USRA underframes from Y3 2-8-8-2 tenders that had been fitted with N&W standard tenders.

S1a No. 244 was the last steam locomotive built for a Class 1 railroad.

Shortly after midnight on May 7th 1960 S1a No. 291's fire was dropped at Williamson, WV. This was the end of steam on the Norfolk and Western.

It is one of these machines that I decided to build and fortunately Walthers had produced a USRA 0-8-0. It was either that or try to come up with a 4-8-0 of M, M1 or M2 class. Or the deeply strange one-off M2 Automatic.

My main reference was Mallory Hope Ferrell's "Norfolk & Western...Steam's Last Stand", Hundman Publishing 2007, which contains drawings and photographs of C-16, S1 and S1a classes. Photos were found in a number of other books, with a particularly fine side view of an S1 on the endpapers of "The Last Steam Railroad in America" Harry N Abrams Inc, NY 1995, an album of O. Winston Link's N&W photographs.

Here's a picture of an unmolested Walthers model. This is a Southern one; I actually converted a Boston and Maine one but started work on it before it occurred to me to write this article and hence didn't photograph it.

Please ignore the shipping containers, modern industrial unit and concrete track. By means of some cosmic mix-up the engine has turned up in the year 2000 in the English midlands. I foresee loading gauge difficulties...



A quick search of the internet will soon provide a selection of photographs of the real thing for your enlightenment.

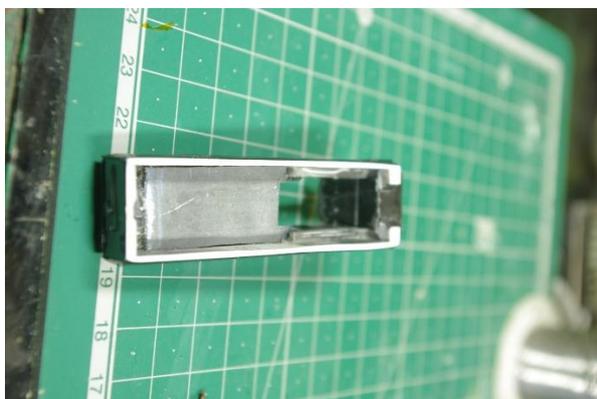
And so to work. I started with the tender because this is the most obvious difference and because it looked straightforward. I mentioned that the prototypes were built on redundant long USRA tenders. Having fitted N&W tenders (thanks to Steve D for supplying these) to Bachmann 2-6-6-2s I now had redundant long USRA tenders just like the N&W but in N-gauge. This is one of the reasons I chose the S1a over the S1. The other is that the tender superstructure was welded rather than rivetted so I didn't have to model those pesky pimples. Another advantage of the later tender, although I didn't realise this until after starting to build it is that there is room for sound.



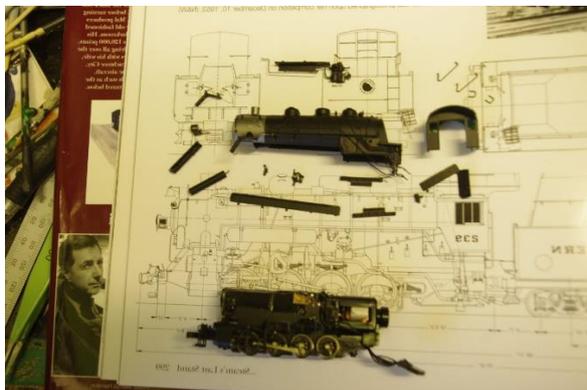
Here's a view of the tender underframe fitted out with all the electrical stuff. From the right we have a six-pin plug and socket salvaged from the original tender. The beige block is a tantalum capacitor for keep-alive purposes and the big mauve slab is a Tsunami sound decoder. The thing that looks like an electric Liquorice Allsort is the speaker and will sit in the bunker when everything is assembled. It is important to ensure that the speaker terminals don't accidentally contact other electrical devices or get shorted as this will probably blow the decoder. That is what I have read, I've been lucky enough not to do it myself. So far. Beneath all these bits are the original Bachmann pick-up strips and some white blocks of plastic which are an interference fit with the tender body. The one at the back of the decoder has a surface mount LED stuck to it for the back-up light.

The tender body is a fairly straightforward confection in sheet polystyrene. The sides are of 40thou. sandwiched between layers of 10thou. material. The outer layer is extended upwards to represent a bead around the top of the tender. The inner layer is an insurance to reduce the risk of warping due to an unbalanced laminate. The thick sides allow radii to be filed into the meat of the material rather than having to attempt to bend it into a curve.

Finally, the body was partially lined with lead to provide extra weight for pick-up.



The next step was to dismantle the locomotive.



Here it is mostly dismantled on a drawing of the finished article. This is artfully posed, I don't want you to think I use costly, rare or simply useful books as a work surface.

The components must next be divided into two groups: those which can be discarded (in reality put in a box with similar bits in the hope that they will be useful for another project) and those that will be re-used with or without modification as the case may be. There is a third group which have yet to be

made or procured (ideally from the aforementioned bits box).

Here are the main body components, all of which needed some modification.

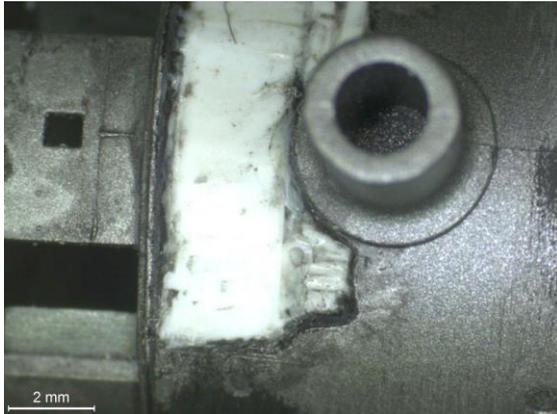


From the left, the cab was what was laughingly (I assume) known as a "sports cab" as the lower front was sloped back. This was simply cut away with a razor saw or file (I can't remember which) and the resulting hole filled with plastic strip. The boiler was shaved of most of its surface detail, using a Trumeter model chisel and some Albion Alloys Mini Sanding Sticks. These consist of what appears to be wet or dry paper attached to strips of foam core board. If you think that sounds like rubbish, you're not alone but in reality, they work really well. They are flexible and can be trimmed to fit into tight corners. You can see two of these and the chisel in the background. I am too lazy to research, buy and learn focus stacking software, hence the out-of-focusness of these items.

The smokebox also got a shave, but not on the front. This component also received some additional holes. One is the irregular black area behind the smokestack, the other is in the middle, or nearly so, of the smokebox door.

The former is for the front-end throttle housing. Unfortunately, none of the illustrations I have really show what this looked like from the outside, nor do I know how it works so there is a deal of guesswork. What I did was fit a square section piece of plastic transversely in the hole, then filled the rest of the hole so it was

only slightly sub-flush rather than the full thickness of the original moulding.



Here's a picture of it which is still not very clear even though I had to take it in to work and use a microscope to get anything at all. I suppose that shows that it wouldn't have been worthwhile to do anything more.

The headlamp originally pushed through a hole at the top of the smokebox front, but I needed it to be in the centre so a hole was made the same size as the original using a drill and then a scalpel. The original hole was filled with a small piece of plastic.

Now it was time to start adding things to the boiler. Here we see the slot for the walkway filled in with plastic strip then sand pipes, top feed (both wire), the steam turret and the housing where the throttle rod reaches the smokebox.



Most if not all of the plastic sections used are from the Evergreen range, by the way. I find these very good indeed.

And so it continues, adding bits of wire and plastic until all the necessary details are present.



Here is the body with most of the details added. The air pumps were cut from a scrap Rivarossi body and used as a pattern by Rob to cast some up at the dental lab where he works. They look a bit blobby here but once painted they are quite acceptable. Not yet added are handrails on the engine although the tender has them. No bell is present either and the original was no use as it was one of the traditional types that hangs in a sort of loop whereas I needed one that hangs from a bracket. A pack of eight 3D printed bells of the correct type was obtained from the ever more grasping scoundrels at Shapeways. I thought eight was a bit excessive but I managed to break one whilst carefully filing it so that it fitted properly. I hate 3D printing. Calling it additive layer manufacturing doesn't make it any better.

With these bits added it was time for painting. Remarkably, just the right shade is available from Halfords. Even more surprisingly we have found it is also spot on for Western Maryland, both Southern Railways and British Railways.

A few transfers from Microscale and a coat of varnish followed by final assembly and

the job's done. It will get some light weathering in due course, but N&W generally kept their engines quite clean so some restraint is called for, unlike the Pennsy...

Finally, here's the finished model, having joined the Southern switcher on its journey through time and space. Fortunately, the blue industrial units haven't been glued down yet so you can't see them here.



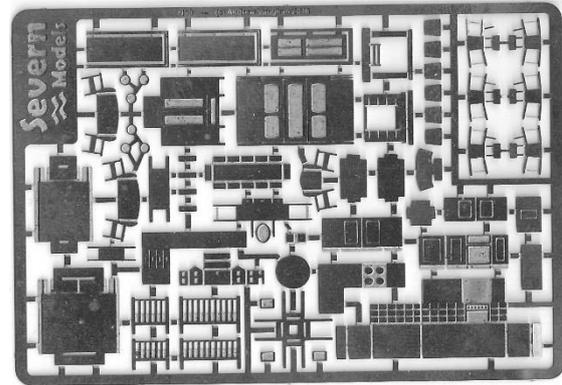
(The format of the magazine doesn't really do justice to the pictures. If anyone would like an A4 size copy of this article, please contact me with an email address and I'll send a PDF file. Ed)

Finishing Touches

Many of you may have seen a firm called Severn Models at exhibitions. This company produces many, easy to build, etched brass kits for structures and structural details in several scales including N. Particularly useful, I think, to the US modeller are some of the detail sets. One is illustrated below, for house interior fittings. It includes most items of interior furnishing, including an N Scale dolls house!

There are single and double beds, tables, chairs, kitchen units, fireplaces and doors (with frames). The parts are well etched and require only clean up, painting and simple glue assembly to complete. This set retails at £9.50 and

comes with comprehensive instructions.



The range also includes garden and workshop tools and furniture as well as major structures such as electricity pylons and small buildings. Severn Models can be contacted at www.SevernModels.com

What did Santa Bring?

In my case, two four-foot planks – or at least that's what some people might think. In fact, it was two baseboard kits from a company called Grainge and Hodder (www.Graingeandhodder.com) whose products I'd seen at Warley.

These boards are laser cut plywood kits, cut from 6mm plywood with plenty of cross bracing. These two 'standard' straight boards are 1200mm by 400mm, so do not comply directly with current NTrak standards (they can make standard four foot boards to order). However, these were intended for my home layout and I felt the extra width over the more normal 12" boards would give some extra useful scenic space. The boards were easy to assemble, though some of the tabs did need a little easing into their slots (with a mallet). The end result was very

square and rigid but very light. Grainge and Hodder can cut any size baseboard and have a useful range of 'standard' boards, including turntable boards for turning whole trains.

Work is already underway on Belleview II. Some of you may remember Belleview I, a 2ft by 1ft diorama I brought to Bournemouth a few years ago. Large parts of this have already been incorporated into the new layout but now a new depot area is being added and the township extended to include several of the buildings from earlier dioramas. Future plans include street lighting in the business district and lighting in some of the buildings. I'll post photos here as the work proceeds.



Getting started – does everyone's workspace look like this?

New from The N Scale Architect

Russ Kaufman has sent these details of his latest releases.

**TRACKSIDE SERIES...
KIT #12A(13) & #14 !!!**

Roadside Eats

BBQ Smoker Casting
Food Trailer Casting
Two(2) Picnic Table Hits
Full Color Sign Sheets
0* Picket Fence & Gates

VEHICLES & FIGURES NOT INCLUDED

#10050 \$45.95

VEHICLES & FIGURES NOT INCLUDED

#10051 \$45.95

Additional Photo-Etched Fence & Kits Available:
Picnic Tables & Umbrella Set #9642 \$10.95
Picket Fence & Gates 250' #61049 \$11.95
Picket Fence & Gates 550' #61056 \$19.95

FIGURES NOT INCLUDED

FLAG STOP STATION

4.75" L x 2.00" W x 1.50" H

FIGURES NOT INCLUDED

FLAG STOP STATION

4.75" L x 2.00" W x 1.50" H

Laser-Cut Platform, Canopy & Privy
Re-Purposed Overton Coach Body
Roof Detail Castings
Glazing Sheet
Corrugated Roofing
Look for other kits in this "Flag Stop" theme !!!

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Russ also sent details of his etched brass 'Making a Scene' detail parts range. Russ will be at the Convention and hopefully, so will his stock this year!

N-SCALE Finely Detailed Etched Brass Kits... Assemble in about One Hour... Illustrated Instructions... No Soldering or Special Tools... Just Snip, Fold & Glue!!!

Making A Scene

Concord Coach #96700 \$18.95

Wind Mill Water Pump #96707 \$22.95

Farmer's Tip Cart #96705 \$12.95

Amish Buggy #96703 \$14.95

IHC Farm Wagon #96706 \$16.95

Surrey Trap Buggy #96523 \$12.95

Cutter Sleigh #96702 \$10.95

HEIGHT: 3"
BASE: 1/2" X 1/2"
TOP: 3/4" X 1 1/4"

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Hansom Cab #96660 \$14.95

Public Lavatory w/Omate Victorian & Interior Details #96629 \$14.95

Bandstand w/Music Stands & Chairs 1 1/4"H x 1 1/2"D x 1 1/2"L #96651 \$24.95

US Telephone Booth w/Glazing, Interior Details & Optional Roof Sign #96634 \$10.95

Lattice-Back Park Benches Set of Six(6) #96605 \$11.95

Cast Iron Victorian Benches (GWR) Set of Three(3) #96643 \$8.95

024) K1 Early Telephone Box (1925) #96624 \$10.95
025) KX1000 Modern Telephone Box #96625 \$10.95
031) K8 Telephone Kiosk #96631 \$10.95

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Dry Goods Van Set of Eight(8) #96704 \$15.95

Milk & Bread Van #96701 \$15.95

Merchant's Wagon w/Sack Castings #96622 \$14.95

Bus Stop Shelter w/Glazing #96630 \$11.95

Garden Shed w/Garden Tools #96659 \$12.95

Music Grinder's Wagon #96641 \$10.95

Water Pump Wagon w/Pump Casting #96616 \$14.95

Furniture Van #96656 \$21.95

Gravestones Set of 23 #96638 \$10.95

Horses Available Separately

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Making A Scene

Dumpsters Set of Two(2) #96626 \$10.95

Ladders Two(2) Sets Long, Short & Extension #96698 \$10.95

Industrial Cage Carts Set of Three(3) #96627 \$12.95

Hand Trucks Set of Three(3) #96615 \$6.95

Baggage Carts & Hand Trucks Set of Two(2) #96601 \$12.95

Wheel Barrow & Track Tools (GWR) #96696 \$7.95

SR/LSWR Benches, Barrows & Carts Two(2) Sets (S1V) #96610 \$10.95

Wheel Barrow, Shovels & Tools #96648 \$7.95

SR Plank Benches & Carts Two(2) Sets (S2V) #96612 \$10.95

LNER/GER Luggage Carts Set of Three(3) #96618 \$8.95

LNER Benches(3), Barrow & Carts #96620 \$10.95

LMS/LNWR Platform Seats Set of Three(3) #96644 \$8.95

LMS/LTSR Platform Seats Set of Three(3) #96636 \$10.95

LMS Benches(3) & Carts (19V) #96619 \$10.95

Market Carts Set of Two(2) #96614 \$7.95

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Starting Over

Chris White writes

After the move to the west country, or should I say wet country, last year, and with all the things to do after moving in I have at last got around to building a micro layout using some boards I purchased from Scale Model scenery.

It measures only 3ft 6ins x 11 ins, with a 13 in extension for a fiddle yard, the track is Kato with electro frog points and will be DCC powered, it will just be a small loco service depot, with a maintenance shed, a switch tower, refuelling point with tanks, and an over bridge. It is very portable and will fit into one of the large very useful plastic boxes. Overhead lighting will be used.

The reason for this project is that I am getting more and more units with sound, thanks to James, and it seems silly putting them on display, and coming out once a year to run at Bournemouth.

All track will be wired in so if a point is thrown the track will remain live, so any loco anywhere will continue grumbling away to itself. Also, with a couple of changes to structures and vehicles I can anglicise it to run British stock.

The photos supplied are the project in its very basic form with nothing pinned down or wired in.

It will be very cheap to build as I have virtually all the items wanted stuffed into boxes in the hobbies room.

Some you may have heard I am now the proud owner of the "Brixham Bay" layout, I will be doing some minor work on that to bring it up to the 1960s.

I will keep you posted as the layout progresses.



Both Photos - Chris White

From HQ

Bruce Alcock has sent me this flyer for a special run of containers being produced by JTC for the forthcoming Gateway 2020 Convention. If you are interested in obtaining a set of these special run containers, they can be ordered from the NTRAK store via the NTRAK.ORG website.

LIMITED RUN NTrak & T-Trak, Gateway 2020 commemorative container set

Each set consist of one 53' container and two 20' containers, with a Special reversed integrated scheme that reads the same from both sides.

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