

## August 2018

Hello, it's been a while but here at last is the next N-Trak UK Newsletter. I normally blame the shortage of material for not publishing, but I can't this time with three contributions from Bill Hamilton-Turner and two from Russ Kaufman as a starter. The only person I can blame is myself! Where does the time go?

I've spent quite a bit of time (and money) so far this year fitting decoders in locos. Now I don't know about you, but when I see the words 'drop in fit' on something I always get suspicious and that has proved to be the case with decoders. The prime example was trying to put a Digitrax decoder in a TruLine Trains (remember them) Canadian National RS-10.



'Drop in Fit' the instructions said! I'd done a couple of installations the day before so full of confidence I removed the shell and started to remove the old light board. That's when one side of the chassis fell in five pieces onto the workbench. It had obviously had a knock at some stage and the bits of chassis were

being held in place by gravity and the body shell!



Attempt to repair frames before final collapse

After several aborted attempts at a repair with various types of superglue, I noticed that the other frame said Atlas on it. After a bit of research on the interwebnet thingy and an email conversation with Steve at Atlas it emerged that TrueLine had been supplied with Atlas chassis on an OEM basis for their RS-10s and RS-18s.

The RS-10 had used the Atlas RS-11 chassis and Atlas still had spare frames in stock. A quick online order to Atlas and within a few days (I still can't believe how quick it was!) the replacements were to hand. Of course, the 'drop in' was now a complete chassis rebuild but within a very short time my RS-10 was up and running with the decoder installed.

Speaking of good customer service Bill Hamilton-Turner writes: -

"Hi Ralph

It's not often these days that I find myself really elated - and I'm not talking about wine, women or song.

I've had a really good experience recently and feel I must tell you as it will benefit our Members.

I bought a DCC chip in April 2017 from Sunningwell (nice people) to put into my Bachmann Plymouth switcher.

I only got around to it last month, March 2018. And guess what? I made a complete mess of the installation. Somehow (not my fault, surely?) I short circuited the loco. I sensed there was something wrong when I smelled burning - and BBQ weather was a least 8 weeks away. Yep, I had fried the chip. I noticed that TCS, the maker of the chip, offered a "goof-proof" replacement service for idiots like me. Well, we all know these guarantees, which usually have small print such as "free replacement but post will be \$100", or similar.

Anyway, I thought I'd give it a try and I sent it off to the States with little expectation of even hearing from them.

How wrong I was. Having advised them of the problem via their website, they acknowledged immediately; then let me know when the chip arrived; then advised that their engineer had discovered the motors-drive connections were damaged beyond repair; then let me know that a new one was in the post; and, finally, advised me that in spite of the postage to them being \$14+ there would be no charge to me. The new chip arrived a couple of days ago (April 2018).

Wow, this is a level of service we don't expect these days!

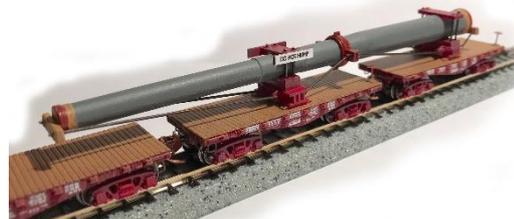
Bill (A Very Happy Railway Modeller).

PS. I've promised the TCS team I shall be more careful this time....!"

## New to You

Two from Russ Kaufman at N' Scale Architect.

Firstly - We've again teamed up with James' Train Parts of the UK to further expand our line of 3-D printed N-Scale kits. This instalment features a 'Naval Gun Load' kit (#20100), a Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) F22 Flatcar 3-Pak kit (#20101) and Box Set (#20102) which includes both kits at a special price.



The Naval Gun Load kit is based on the Mark VII Naval Gun designed in 1939 and first used aboard low-Class Battleships during World War II. Measuring 16" in diameter, these guns could fire a 2,400 lbs projectile up to 24 miles. Each of these 68-foot guns weigh nearly 270,000 lbs and were shipped (breech first) across two heavy weight flatcars with a third flatcar used as an idler. Many of these guns were manufactured by Bethlehem Steel in Pennsylvania and transported via the Pennsylvania Railroad across three F22 flatcars. This kit comes complete with Frosted Ultra Detail (FUD) 3-D printed parts, full-colour illustrated instructions, sixteen

inches of phosphor bronze rod and a 'DO NOT HUMP' placard sheet.



The Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) F22 Flatcar 3-Pak Kit builds three of these wood-decked 30-foot heavy-duty flatcars which had a loading capacity of nearly 200,000 lbs when upgraded to the Crown 2F-F1 cast steel trucks modelled in this kit. These flatcars were originally designed in 1913 and, at their peak in the 1940s, there were over 100 in use on the Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) roster with some of them surviving into the 1960s. This kit comes complete with Frosted Ultra Detail (FUD) 3-D printed parts, full-colour illustrated instructions, photo-etched stirrups & cut-levers, brass car weights, Micro-Trains brake wheels and body-mounted couplers, Fox Valley metal wheel sets and a PRR F22 decal sheet that features nine verified road numbers, pertinent car data and prototypical reporting marks.

The 'Naval Gun Load' kit (#20100) retails for \$39.95, the 'Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) F22 Flatcar 3-Pak' kit (#20101) retails for \$69.95 and the 'Box Set' (#20102) retails for \$89.95 - a \$20.00 Saving!!! These kits are available exclusively at the [THENARCH.COM](https://www.thenarch.com). Additional 3-D printing material options are available at our Shapeways Shop: <https://www.shapeways.com/shops/the-n-scale-architect>.

Secondly – The latest offering from Russ.

Announcing the eleventh of our Trainside Series kits!!! These kits feature easy-to-build laser-cut structures, full colour signage and decals, illustrated step-by-step instructions, custom detail parts and re-purposed rolling stock and vehicles from major manufacturers.



This new "Job Site" kit includes two re-purposed 48' Containers with concrete bases, a laser-cut modular office, window glazing, a full colour sign sheet and over a dozen scenic detail parts. The completed scene shown measures approximately 7.75"L x 4.50"W x 1.25"H. It retails for \$45.95 and is available from local retailers or direct from [THENARCH.COM](https://www.thenarch.com). Vehicles shown are not included.



Expanded "Job Sites" can be accommodated with the "Modular Office" (#10046) & "Storage Container" (#10047) add-on kits which are available only from [THENARCH.COM](https://www.thenarch.com) for \$17.95 and \$22.95 respectively. The photo-etched 12' Security fence shown (#61065) and a "Job Site

Assortment" pack (#20103), with over a dozen additional scenic details, are available from local retailers or direct from [THEARCH.COM](http://THEARCH.COM) for \$19.95 and \$14.95 respectively.

## The Transfer Window!

The big transfer news coming from the USA is the acquisition, by Atlas, of the Walthers N gauge loco and rolling stock range and tooling. This includes the former LifeLike range which Walthers acquired some years ago. Let's hope this means that some of those lovely LifeLike diesels will re-appear but now with updated DCC ready chassis. We live in hope!

## Convention 2019

Next years Convention will once again be held at The Trouville Hotel in Bournemouth from 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> March 2019 and this will be our 25<sup>th</sup> such gathering. Booking forms have already been sent out, but please remember the deadline for booking up. The price has gone up for the weekend but only by 50p and Russ Cook is handling bookings this year.

There is a slight error in the booking information. The threshold is not 35 rooms as shown but **35 members**. This shouldn't make a great deal of difference to anyone but actually makes the threshold a little easier to reach.

One thing we need to consider for this gathering is how we make sure everyone gets a fair crack at running trains. We don't want to start making draconian rules but on the other hand if a member has come to run a train or trains he/she should get that opportunity. We're open to ideas as to how this can be achieved;

perhaps using time slots or something similar. Please have a think and let me know what you think.

## Maintenance

I've moaned several times about the poor performance of my Broadway Limited Centipedes, but no more; they now run beautifully. The solution – cleanliness! The problem was a build-up of dirt / crud round the pickups. The solution was suggested to me during a visit to Ron Lines shop in Southampton. He was describing how they serviced second hand locos prior to resale and one of the tools they used was a spray electrical contact cleaner and a spray on switch lubricant – basically a very light conductive oil. Both had been thoroughly tested on most types of plastic without ill effect so a can of each was purchased.

Now a word of caution – both these products are very highly flammable and could be toxic in extreme quantities so use them in a well-ventilated area, preferably outdoors and well away from any possible source of ignition.

I sprayed the trucks with the cleaner first (Servisol Aero Klene 50) and waited until any residual liquid had evaporated (watch your fingers or you could freeze them). Then a very light spray of the lubricant (Servisol Super 10) using a fine tube nozzle to focus the spray round the axles and pickups. I have to admit that at this point I was a: nervous – had I just ruined a loco and b: sceptical – how could anything so simple cure such a long-standing problem.

I needn't have worried – I placed the loco on my test track, selected it and as I opened the throttle the sound came on loud and clear and the loco moved away slowly but steadily without any of the stalling and restarts which had dogged it before. It was almost miraculous and these two products are now a permanent part of my tool kit.

## **Two Items from Bill Hamilton-Turner**

### **“U.S. TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD COMPLETED”**

American train enthusiasts as well as historians are getting excited.

Next year on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2019 there will be a celebration. It's the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the historic meeting of the Union Pacific Railway and the Central Pacific Railway at Promontory Point, Utah on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1869. It's often called the Golden Spike ceremony.

What a lot of people don't know is the surprising connection between this event and the Isle of Man.

The two railroads were competing fiercely to finish building the track, one from the East and one from the West. The U.P. was struggling with the construction schedule - until it hired new contractors, brothers named Jack and Dan Casement.

The Casement brothers built a special train to provide all the needs of a construction crew; it vastly improved the workforce's productivity.

The Casement family had emigrated from the Isle of Man in the

1820s to New York where Jack was born in 1829.

In the Isle of Man, the Casement family enjoyed huge respect for their engineering skills. Robert Casement was responsible for the construction in 1854 of the Laxey Wheel, “Lady Isabella”. The wheel was – and still is – the largest working water wheel in the world.

The transcontinental railway was completed seven years earlier than scheduled.

*Continuing with Bill's Isle of Man Theme :-*

### **Meals on Wheels**

A dining-only train is fairly rare. But a dining-only train with kitchen car and bar car on a narrow-gauge railway is about as unusual as you can get! Luckily for my family and me we have one on the doorstep in the Isle of Man.

Opened in 1873, the Isle of Man steam railway, including much of the rolling stock, has been largely preserved. In the last ten years, some of carriages have been converted to dining and kitchen cars.

The resulting novelty ride combined with good and varied menus have ensured the popularity of the dining train. Passengers have a choice of types of dining at various times. For instance, there is the Friday commuter train offering bacon baps on the way into work, and bar service on the way home: a pleasant way to start the weekend.

The Sunday lunch service offers a three-course lunch with table service for both food and drinks. The afternoon tea service comprises sandwiches, scones and cake with a choice of tea or coffee. And then there's the dinner trains which have three variations: Pie and chips, a 3-course menu, or the curry night (sample menu below).

**RED**  
 Ochagavia Valle Central Melon 2016 £16  
 A sweet and succulent melon with a hint of citrus, perfectly paired with a light dressing.

**WHITE**  
 Ochagavia Valle Central Pinot Noir 2016 £16  
 A smooth and elegant wine with a hint of citrus, perfectly paired with a light dressing.

**THE DINING CAR**  
 Pinar Centro Prosecco £10  
 A crisp and refreshing wine with a hint of citrus, perfectly paired with a light dressing.

**BUBBLES**  
 Pinar Centro Prosecco £10  
 A crisp and refreshing wine with a hint of citrus, perfectly paired with a light dressing.

**BEERS**  
 Hooded Ram - Ram's Head Pils 2.7% £3.50  
 Dogfish Head 4.5% £4.00  
 Peroni Nastro Azzurro Bi 5.0% £3.50  
 Stella 4.5 440ml £3.00

**ROSE**  
 Piqueur Gamache Cuvée Rose 2017 £17  
 A light and refreshing wine with a hint of citrus, perfectly paired with a light dressing.

**SPRITS**  
 Ram's Head £3.00  
 Dogfish Head £4.00  
 Whiskey £3.00  
 Almond Brandy £3.50  
 Ricard £3.00

**Curry Club**

**APPETISER**  
 Poppadoms & Mango Chutney £3

**Beef Madras**  
 Family hot curry with tomatoes & chilli

**Chicken Korma**  
 Mild rich & creamy curry with almonds

**Thai Green Prawn Curry**  
 Chilli, lemongrass & ginger curry

**Sweet Potato & Butternut Squash Curry**  
 All served with Pilau rice & naan bread

**DESSERTS**  
 Chocolate Truffle  
 Vanilla sauce  
 Rhubarb & Ginger Crumble  
 Custard  
 The Dining Car Cheese Slate  
 A selection of artisan cheeses celery sticks, grapes & red onion jam  
 Steam dining 01624 697457  
 The Tickethall 01624 627888

At the furthest point, passengers can get off, stretch their legs or pop into the pub for 30 minutes. Then it's all aboard for the return journey when dessert and tea/coffee is served.

The train journey is deliberately slow and gentle. While you have the main course, it stops; this allows the passengers to enjoy wonderful views of the countryside and out to sea while they eat.

Lots of fun ways to have your meals on wheels.

Bill Hamilton-Turner

Ahh! Brings back fond memories of dinner on the Pacific Starlight train along Vancouver Sound and lunch on the Nappa Valley Railway. When trains do cater properly boy do they do it well!

## From the Archive

Digging around on the hard drive I found some pictures of past models of mine to share. All are kit built.



The Methodist Chapel



The Majestic Cinema



Paul's Pumpkin Place



The Blue House Hotel