



Issue 200

Summer 2020

CHAIRMAN'S NEWS

I trust this Newsletter will find you all in good health, it seems ages since we met in the Clubroom. With the enforced closure due to the fire before Christmas and now complete lockdown it has been an odd year for the Club so far. We are living in strange and frustrating times at present, with as I write these notes, no sign of any return to normality. Hopefully everyone is finding something to occupy the time even if not model railway related. It was good to see updates from both Peter Hoare and Steve Groenstein showing their respective projects. My own railway is progressing, with the double track circuit just over two scale miles in length now complete. I am currently installing point motors at the second station approach with both approaches needing to be wired before trains can run around the whole layout. Apart from working on the railway I have raised tomato, courgette and cabbage plants from seed and last week completely renewed the sand on my block paved drive, although today's strong winds are creating mini sand dunes all over the place, including my car.

The Covid pandemic has resulted in the exhibition calendar being decimated and the latest Hornby Magazine shows everything is cancelled until at least the end of June, although they seem to be continuing with arrangements for their own event at MK in October. Looking further ahead to our own 2021 exhibition, Stantonbury have

insisted we pay the £6000 venue fee in advance and the hotel bill (this year £3000) must also be paid before we get any income. Even if restrictions are eased the Public may well shy away from indoor events in the long term and with around £9000 of advanced payment we could not guarantee the level of attendance required to recover these costs. Both Dan (as exhibition manager) and I consider an exhibition under these circumstances to be too great a risk on club funds and therefore, we should not hold one next year. As a club, we are fortunate to be financially stable; this year's event resulted in almost £6300 profit, which once the donation is made to our Charity Arm, will mean no tax being due. As a result, Club funds will remain very healthy so we can well afford not to have an exhibition again before 2022. This break would also give us time to investigate a potential new venue at Kents Hill School, who had indicated prior to the virus situation they would be interested in working with us. I am sure everyone agrees that Stantonbury, although convenient in many respects, is in a very poor state of repair with little prospect of improvement. It is certainly not worth the high charges now in force, so a new venue would be welcomed.

We are now in our fifth year at Bond Avenue, bringing with it a break clause in our lease, whereby our tenancy and rent payable can be reviewed by either Party. We have no desire to terminate our lease, and on the basis the premises are no more commercially viable now than they were when we moved in, then hopefully there will not be a major rent increase. We shall not in any case be drawing this Clause to our Landlords' attention.

Stay safe and happy modelling until we can reconvene in the Clubroom.

Chris Hughes
Chairman

Note from the Editor

During these troubled times where we cannot get together and we have no idea when we will be able to get together at the clubroom, communication within the club is essential.

Therefore, if you have any items that you think would be of interest to your fellow members, then please email them to me at the following address.

MKMRSNewsletter@courtmk.co.uk

I will then send them out to all members that get the Newsletter electronically, I can only apologise to those of you who receive the Newsletter by post, but I cannot send all of these out by post. If you do have access to a family members email address and they do not mind please send it to me and I will include you in the circulation for these items only.

In addition to these items if you are doing some modelling that you would like to share with everyone, then please submit it as an article for inclusion in the Newsletter. Officially the next Newsletter will be the Winter edition being published on the 4th December. However, if I receive sufficient content I will publish one on the 1st September.

This will be one way to keep us together as a club. In the mean time stay healthy, stay safe and keep on modelling.

Please note that the Silverfox Model Railway Exhibition due to take place in August has been cancelled.

Semaphore signals for Frimingham

By Gerhard Novak

The club members may have seen the first signal I built, well before the lockdown, but I had it in the club only for a short time as I do not want many hours of work being killed by using the layout as a shelf to put up toolboxes, abandoned locomotives, etc.

Now that some structures will start to grow on the layout, we (all club members, myself included) need to be more careful with it as the building of these structures took some of us many hours.

So just to remember – a photo of the first semaphore signal, home lower quadrant.



Now that we have the lockdown – well not for me – I am still working, probably a few hours less but I am happy that my job allows me to work from home. So now – we have the lockdown we need a lockdown build. I purchased a few more kits and servos to go on with the signal building.

First, I attacked 2 ground signals, both of the turning type, pole mounted.

The MSE kit used for that is rather a bargain as you can build 2 signals for £6. The white metal and etched brass parts come together quite well – if you know how. Why do I say that? The instructions coming with the kit are somewhat marginal to say something nice. But after spending a few hours on the internet and looking at the real stuff I got how it goes together.

Those kits do not have a working lantern – so time to do one. How to do it on this signal? It is turning 90 degrees in normal use so I decided to change the 1mm shaft against a 1.5mm brass tube. The tube is also one of the conductors for my LED, the other one is enamelled wire inside the tube. So, I drilled the whole lantern through with 1.5 to allow the tube to go in, and then I drilled from the top with 4mm to have some room for the led. Of course, I needed a plug to close it again once done and to restore the shape of the lantern. See here one lantern prepared with the holes and the second one a step further, with LED and plug back in. The LEDs used are quite small. I need 3 in average to get one soldered on... The LED is on the coin between E and P....



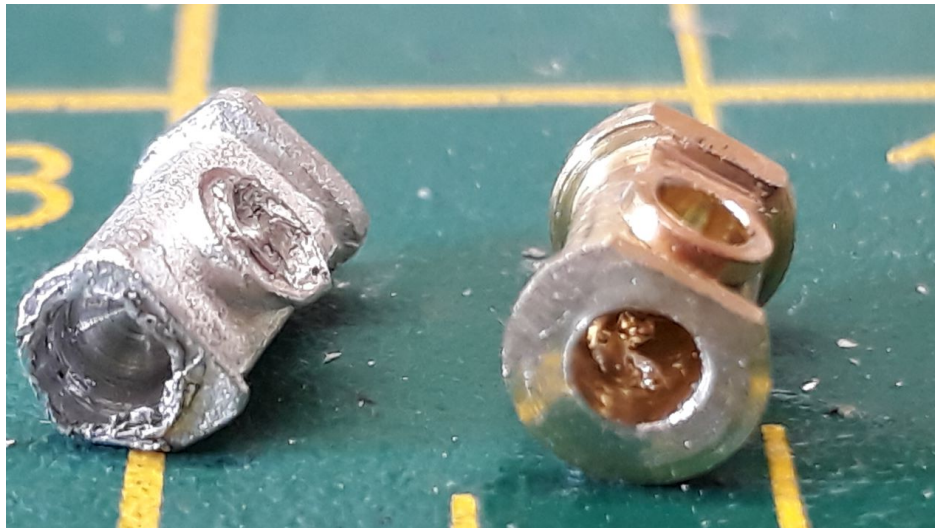
The LED is white so I need coloured lenses. Also, those come from a LED, I used 5mm LEDs as a donor and turned them down. Lens next to Lantern and now lenses in.



Finally, the ready signal. The LED is on.



Next on my list is an upper quadrant wooden pole type. Also, here we have the lantern problem. But unfortunately, the white metal casting had a hard spot so it was impossible to drill a hole into it. I decided to make the whole thing from brass. Ruined casting on the left, brass replacement on the right.



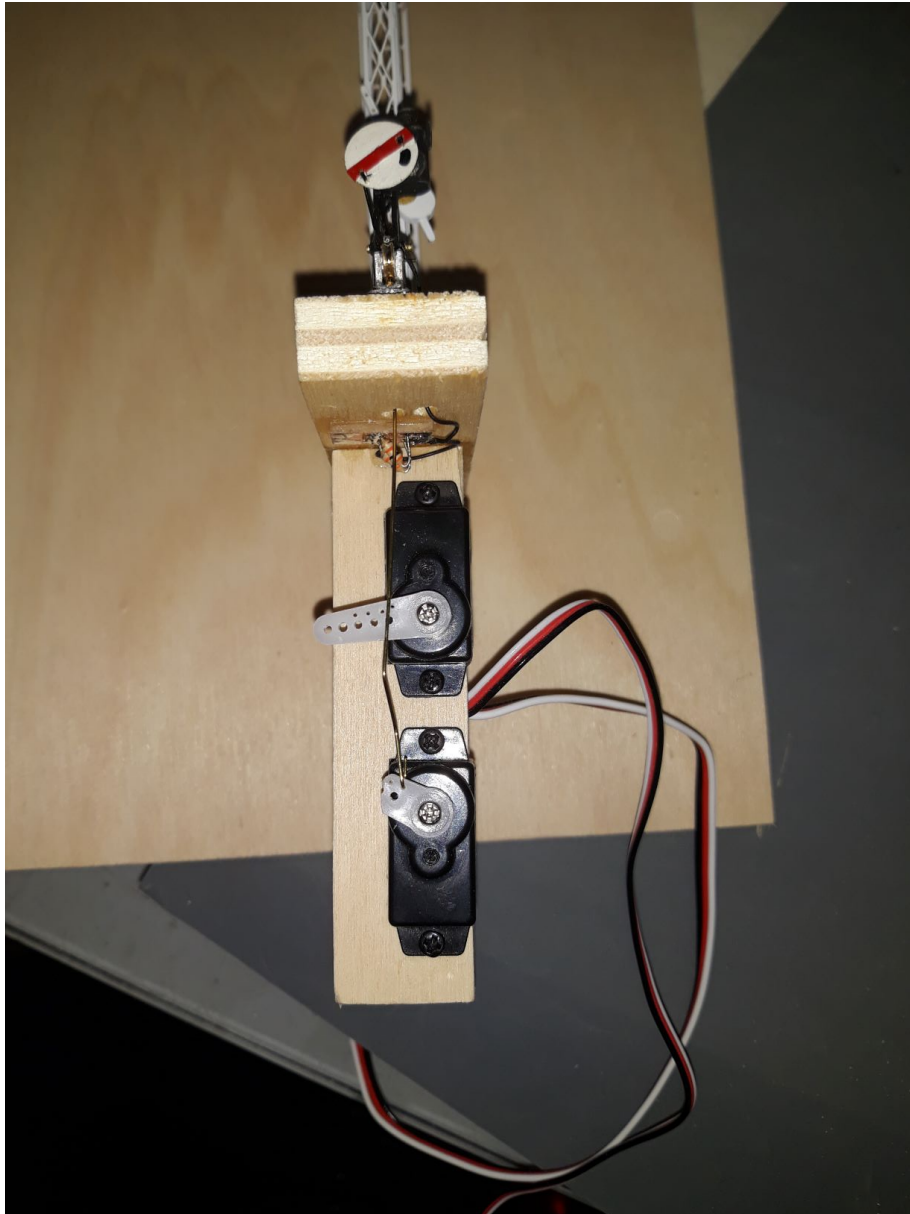
Finally, it goes into the signal.



Next is a lattice pole upper quadrant type. This is the signal on the left-hand side of the layout, so I learned that it should go together with a ground signal for the siding at the beginning of the station. And this is my solution. It is an open frame ground signal as used at GVR at the beginning of last century.



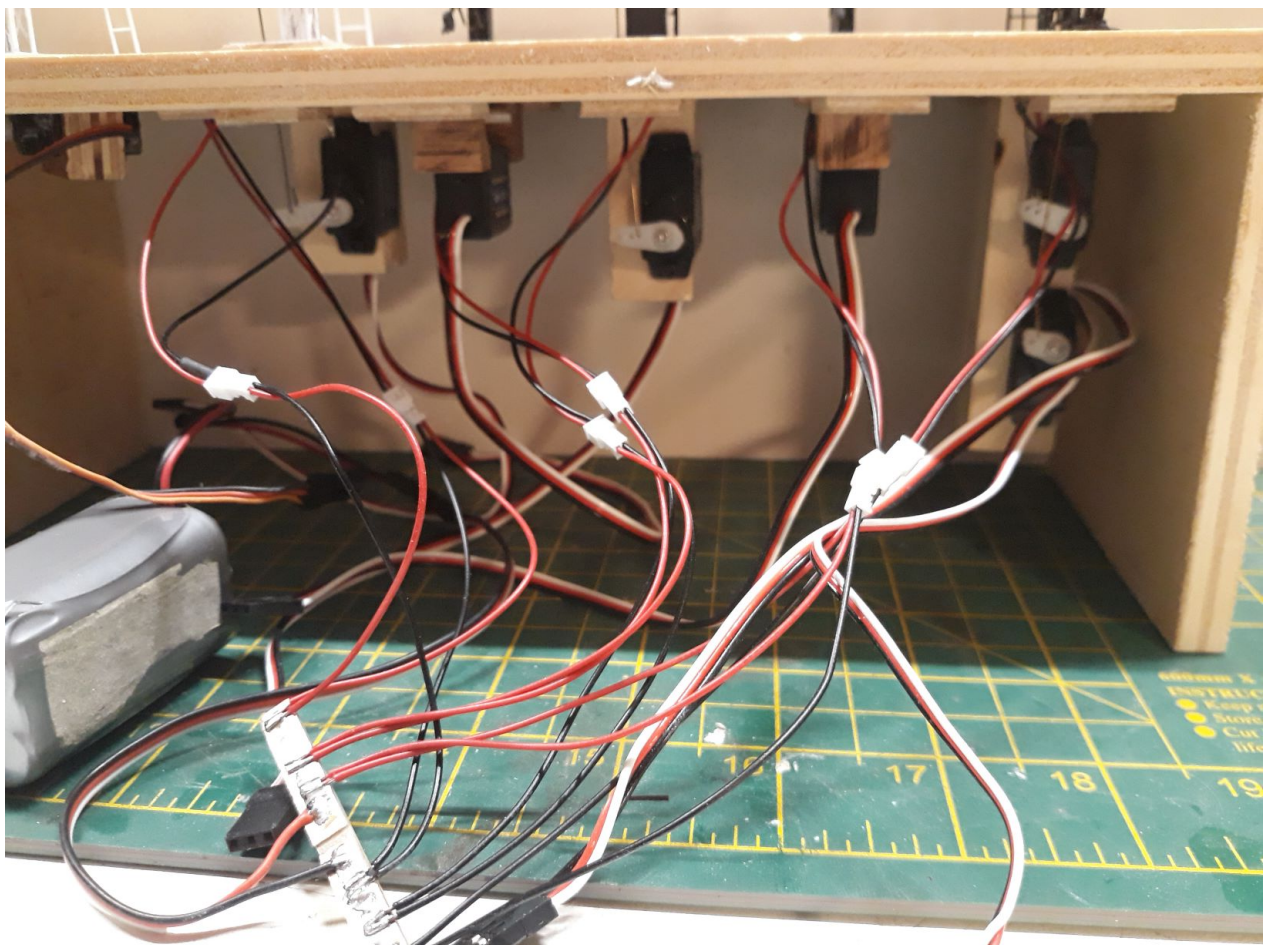
As there are 2 signals, I need also 2 servos. The solution is quite neat (I think).



On this picture you can also see that the signal can be installed from the top. Of course, during wiring you have to get the right cables in place, but to install the actual signal everything works from the top. And the signal can be removed for maintenance should this be necessary.

To make removal of signals possible I had also to find a solution for the lantern power supply. The lanterns are supplied with DC, separate from the servo supply, this allows to have them switched off during daylight but the signals are still mechanically working. When the station lights are switched on also the signal lanterns will be switched on. I found a miniature battery connector which is originally for RC models. This connector serves exactly for our purpose.

See here the bottom of the test board I made to have all semaphore signals tested. The light connectors are white.



And finally, all I have made so far. (no, there is one more open frame ground signal, I didn't find space for that on the test board...)



Happy modelling!

The Changing Face of Bletchley

By Dennis Lovett

The railways have dominated Bletchley for over 180 years, in fact without the creation of a junction for the first line to reach Bedford which opened in 1846, then Bletchley would be a vastly different place today.



Since the late 1950s the flyover has stood tall above the town built as part of the 1955 Modernisation Plan to take trains high over the West Coast Main Line rather than twisting across them on the level. Heavy wartime traffic of supplies, munitions, aviation fuel for the East Anglian airfields and coal to keep the wheels of industry turning from South Wales had emphasised the need for such a structure.

The building of lines to Oxford and Banbury (via Buckingham), Bedford and eventually Cambridge had catapulted Bletchley from a sleepy little village into a railway junction of major importance that saw it overtake

the town of Fenny Stratford in the 1920s which by the 1960s had reduced it to almost to anonymity.

Despite the emergence of the new designated new city of Milton Keynes, our transport ministers allowed the through route from Oxford to Cambridge to close. It was only the difficulty in providing an alternative bus service that saved the Bletchley – Bedford section from a similar fate, although there would be two more unsuccessful attempts to close it. The future lay in the motor car then and railways were old technology – finished in the minds of politicians who recruited Dr Richard Beeching to do the dirty work for them. Whilst many stations would have closed under the Beeching plan, he never proposed closure of the route but saw it as an essential freight artery.

In the late 1950s the 1955 plan was put into place. Large centralised Marshalling Yards such as those at Carlisle Kingmoor, Tyne Yard and elsewhere would be built. The war time sidings at Swanbourne (which started just after the bridge which linked Newton Longville with the main road to Buckingham at what was charmingly called the bottle dump junction) would be expanded and modernised, with land purchased to expand it. The flyover would link it to the rest of the world. The sidings had been built along with several junctions to connect various parts of the Oxbridge line as it was commonly called - to relieve pressure on the various railway centres through which the line passed. A link from the Great Central near Calvert on the Great Central to Claydon (still called Claydon LNE Junction today) on the Oxford – Bletchley line was one of them, allowing trains of importance to miss the nightly bombing raids on London and other major cities.

By the time the flyover was built and open for traffic in 1961, much of the freight had been diverted to the road network by the building of the first motorway and cheap fuel. Although it did carry freight trains it never did so in the manner envisaged by the planners and the plans for the new super yard at Swanbourne were abandoned. Many regarded Bletchley flyover as a white elephant, a phrase it would be stuck with for much of its sixty years existence. It last carried trains in the 1990s and since then has been mothballed. Whilst it was refurbished to carry spoil trains from the various work sites during the West Coast Route Modernisation in the late 1990s to enable locomotives to run around wagons near Newton Longville to access

the track down to the Bedford line at Fenny Stratford and take it to the tip at Forders Sidings.

As for the line to Oxford, surely It would or could never reopen. Sleepers were removed not by railway engineers but those who sought to sell them on to landscape gardeners and when scrap prices reached a high, they went back for rails. However, they could only remove these items if they were near a road.

On the 31st December 1967, the diesel multiple units ran packed along the route. The following day the stations would no longer serve the communities to which they belonged. The Bletchley-Bedford line would surely follow and the line that brought many of the lines top brains to Bletchley Park would be gone forever.

It was all to change with the creation of a body of local authorities looking to improve connections across the country from East Anglia to the West of England without the need to cross either London or Birmingham, both time consuming and unattractive to transport planners keen to get us out of our cars. It would result in the formation of East-West Rail and finally it would be taken seriously.

The saving grace to the scheme was that the line had never gone through the statutory closure process, “mothballed” meant that it did not need an Act of Parliament to reopen it which came as a shock to some of the NIMBY’s who have tried to scupper such plans particularly between Oxford and Bicester, now part of the Chiltern route linking Oxford to Marylebone. Tree huggers and bat lovers were appeased by environmental experts relocating the beloved creatures out of a tunnel which was still in regular use for military traffic to Bicester and for waste trains to Calvert.

East-West Rail

For as long as I can remember, local councils and other groups have been campaigning to get the line to Oxford re-opened. Ironically, it closed at the end of 1967 just when the new city of Milton Keynes was emerging from the drawing board.

Now after more feasibility reports on reopening the line than you can imagine, over the last months worksites have been established around Bletchley.



Whilst we have all been at home social distancing thanks to Covid-19 considerable work has been taking place on Bletchley flyover. There is some suggestion that the whole flyover is to be lifted and refurbished whilst others suggest the whole lot is going to be demolished and replaced. Now I do not know who is right, but something is certainly happening and whatever the result, the reopening of the line in the next couple of years is going to bring Bletchley back to be a major railway hub.

There is talk of introducing a second entrance to the station on the east (town centre) side. New flyover platforms will need to be linked to the existing station platforms and footbridge.



Whilst the PR machine has not been very pro-active in explaining what is going on. However, the thread on RM Web has been following it step by step and blow by blow.

I for one look forward to the day when I can walk down to Bletchley station and catch a train to either Cambridge or Oxford. Great days out in the past for those of us who set off with their trainspotting books, sandwiches made by mum and a bottle of Tizer. The trains we saw at Oxford, Bedford, Sandy or Cambridge were different to those that ran along the tracks through Bletchley.

I look forward to raising a glass of Tizer on the opening day!

Dunston Layout Update

By David Court

When I was approaching retirement age back in 2010 I had to decide just what I was going to do with all of my time. Pauline suggested that I should consider starting my model railway, which had been my hobby in my youth.

After some consideration, I jumped at the chance.

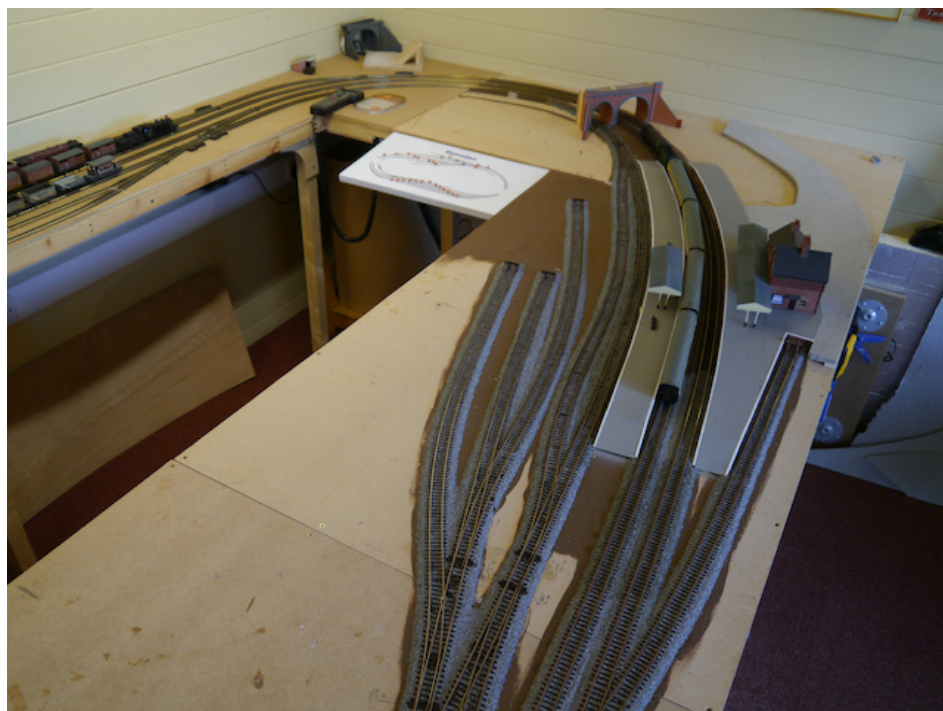
However, my problem was where to build it. As we had a large garden and we did not particularly like gardening we decided on having have a



5metre by 4metre cabin built in the garden.

The first planned layout was a total disaster as it was too complex and over engineered and was soon abandoned. I then came up with a standard circular layout with a fiddle yard at the back and which would be DCC controlled. I spent a long time researching what point motors to use and the cost of the motors themselves and the controllers. The final decision for the main layout was the new DCC Concepts Cobalt Digital point motors. I liked these point motors because they are easy to set up and wire. However, the longer I had these devices the more problems I found with them. It got so bad that I started working directly with Richard Johnson the owner of DCC Concepts based in Perth Australia, feeding back the problems and helping with solutions. To help me, Richard provided me with a number of spare motors so that if I had a problem I could swap out the faulty unit and return it directly to him, over the months the problems all got resolved.

Despite this I still think these are the best motors and are good value for money.



With the track laying completed I tested the layout and built the mimic panels to control the layout. I then built the basic scenery contours and once that was done I ran into a brick

wall, as I just could not see how to bring the scenery to life. For weeks I scratched my head and just could not release the mental block on this. I just happened to mention this to Wayne Webb and he kindly offered to come around to help me out. Within half an hour the light bulb had begun to glow



brighter and brighter. Thanks Wayne, you are a hero. This picture shows the first corner of the scenery that Wayne helped me to bring to life.

I built the station using Willis kits for the main station building, platforms and the canopies on both the main platform and the island



platform. I then decided to mock up a number of other buildings, such as the goods shed and a row of terraced houses to see what the overall appearance would look like. I also mocked up a retaining wall to act as a backdrop to the layout. My intention is that all of these buildings will be replaced with scratch-built models over the forthcoming years.

Then in early 2016 Peter Ellis and I started to talk about jointly building an exhibition layout called Fenny Stratford. Once this project started, all work on Dunston ceased as our total focus was on Fenny which we were building in my garage. You are all aware that Fenny Stratford appeared for the first time at the MKMRS 50th birthday exhibition in February 2018. Since that first exhibition we exhibited the layout at a few exhibitions as well as being featured in the BRM magazine. During these months the only time my layout was used was when I was preparing and servicing locomotives and rolling stock for an exhibition.

Our last exhibition was the Festival of Railway Modelling at Doncaster, after that all hell broke loose with the Coronavirus lock down.

For me, lock down has been a god send as I have been able to start work on Dunston again.

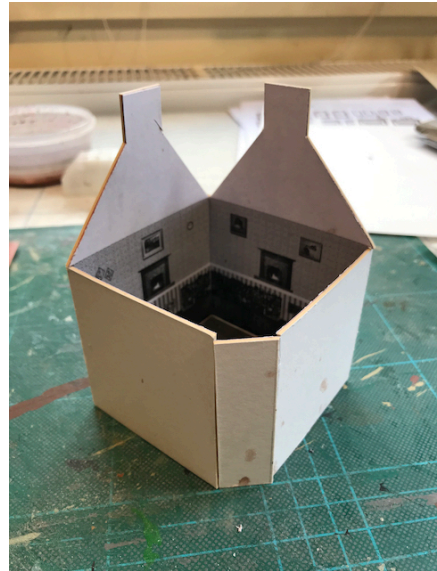
On the road to the station I had planned on 2 semi-detached shops and 2 semi-detached houses. For the last 4 years only one of the shops was completed, although I have now added lighting and shop counters, but the other buildings were only partly finished. All of these have



now been completed, painting finished and interior lights fitted. On the corner of the road opposite the station building will be a pub which I have now started to build. As you can see, I still have a long way to go with the scenery opposite the row of properties but progress has been made at least.

The 'Station Arms' public house was based on a card kit downloaded from Smart Models (RES04). I started by mocking up a rough structure using card to make sure it looked correct in the street scene.

I then took the decision to construct this model in a different way to what I normally do, which is to build the structure of the building from Imm White with the doors and window apertures in place. Once this was done, I clad the outside in brick Plastikard, only then did I put in the windows and doors.



The public house was constructed as a flatpack type assembly. I started by gluing the interior wall sheets from the download to the Imm Plastikard and cut each wall piece out. I then applied the brick embossed Plastikard to the walls, making sure, to leave excess on the edges to provide cover at the corners.

Once this was fixed the window and door apertures were cut out and the windows, doors and headers were fixed. These were then painted. It was so much simpler working with a flat item rather than working with the whole carcass. Time will tell if this was the right approach or not.



PATRIOT – 45519

By Bob Taylor

I am still working so my spare time has been limited despite the coronavirus lockdown and its spring, so my garden needed a lot of work. I have had more spare time over the last few weeks and have been able to do a lot of work on the lady. I talked to the Patriot restoration team at Warley and they were delighted that I am going to use the number 45519 with the name Lady Godiva as it was one of their favourites.

On the modelling front 45519 is now almost finished. To get to this stage has been quite a challenge as the kit had extremely limited instructions and I had to use drawings and photographs that I found online to ascertain where many of the parts had to go. Although most of the kit parts are brass, I have assembled some parts using Powerbond adhesive which I purchased at our exhibition. Other parts



and the valve gear were soldered. The last two tasks I have are making the smoke deflectors as I have been unable to purchase them and a make a section of brass to fit between the footplate and tender as there is currently a gap

between them. To construct this will be fun as it needs to fold out of the way when coupling the tender. I am not planning to fit the buffers, couplings, handrails, sand boxes and all the other detailing parts until the painting has been completed. I also want to test its running properly before painting. I tried to purchase more track to enable me to build a test track but no online dealers have stock at present so I

may need to wait until shops open again. Last week I constructed an O gauge sand wagon kit that I purchased on eBay. This proved straight forward except when I came to fit the transfers. The instructions said that the numbers etc had to be fitted on to black section transfers they provided. The wagon numbers were also black and would have become



invisible!!! Any way I have been able to purchase white on black numbers from another source.

Hope to see you all soon.

Member Updates

Please join us in welcoming the following new members to the club. If you see them in the clubroom please introduce yourself.



Olivier Jaccard



John Higgins



Lee Brown



The MKMRS Newsletter will only survive with your help, we need you to provide articles -

- ❖ These can be write-ups on exhibitions you have attended, modeling titbits, or anything that you think other members would find interesting.
- ❖ If you would like to be included in our "Meet the Members" articles in a future Newsletter, please send in your notes for inclusion.
- ❖ The articles need to be sent in by email to Newsletter@MKMRS.org.uk they need to be the words that you want to appear, include any pictures that you want in the article. All can be sent to the above email address for inclusion.
- ❖ Hoping for lots of copy for the newsletter.

Deadline for articles for the Winter Edition is the 27th November 2020 with the Newsletter being published by the 4th December 2020.