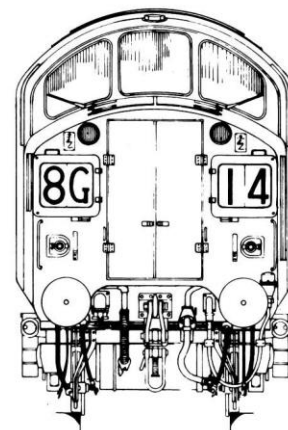


ALSAGER RAILWAY ASSOCIATION



NEWSLETTER

January 2021

Welcome to the first issue of what is hoped to become a monthly club newsletter. This first newsletter has been created quickly with contributions from a few members, in order to prompt more. Future issues will need content, so all club members are encouraged to submit content (short or long, with or without pictures) to the current editor – the more, the better!

Jules Attard, Editor

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Club Announcements

AGM - Paul Whittaker

As a reminder, the AGM has been scheduled for 26th March 2021 and will be held via a Zoom meeting at 19:30. A provisional agenda has been sent out along with a provisional revised constitution and nomination forms for voting. If you need any copies of these please let me know. The date to return the nomination forms or anything to add to the agenda is 28th February 2021.

ARA Exhibition - John Cox

At the time of writing, we are still planning to hold our 2021 exhibition at the normal time (this year, 13/14 November).

The venue is booked (Legends at Bentley Motors once again), and invitations have been sent to the traders and exhibitors who were invited last year, to establish whether they want to come this year. Planning for this year's show has started later than usual (for obvious reasons), so preparation will need to accelerate once we confirm it is going ahead.

Club News

0 Gauge Group – Mike Sant

All the 0 gauge group would like to wish all club members a Happy New Year and hope you all kept well, healthy and Covid-free.

Not much progress has taken place on the new Station boards and buildings for the last 10 months although we did manage to do some work on the layout during August and September when a max of 6 club members could visit the club house then we went into lockdown again and now don't know when restrictions will be lifted again, maybe March/April.

I have included a couple of photographs of the Station building and road overbridge that we were working on last September. The station building was produced by one of our members Phil Morton who has a laser cutter at home, as and you can see he did a super job and it saved us a lot of time.

The road overbridge is one job to start on when we return to the club and also finishing of the wiring and new yard control panel and other jobs.

We had some sad news in the new year that one of our elderly group members Peter Jenkins sadly passed away on Christmas Eve.

Whilst I realise that for many of us this has been an extraordinarily busy time particularly those key workers who have done a magnificent job in keeping us all safe. We have had to stay at home with more time on our hands and I for one have been making a couple of loco kits in between decorating our house and our other members have been busy as well. As railway modellers I think we can award ourselves a smile at having such good fortune in having an all-embracing hobby that as kept me at least sane and I hope all of you too.

Keep safe and healthy and keep washing hands.





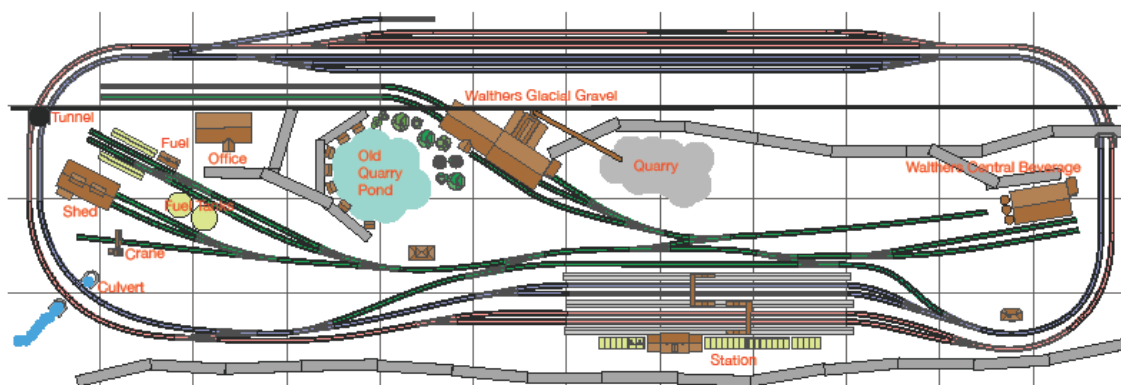
N Gauge Group – the new layout, Smalldale Quarry – Paul Whittaker

Smalldale is a small village situated between Buxton and Chapel-en-le-Frith just east of Dove Holes. The quarry is now a popular rock climbing area, but it was once part of the ICI Buxton lime operations. Our layout is not based on the actual quarry, but is a depiction of what it could have been like in the 1970s and 80s.

The layout is 12 feet by 4 feet and will consist of four baseboards, sitting on a separate trestle. The main features of the track plan are a four platform station, the quarry, a spring water bottling plant and a small maintenance and refuelling point. There are two continuous loops (Blue and Red) plus an extensive shunting area for the industries (Green). The green and blue tracks are to be DCC only, but the pink track can be DCC or DC. It is expected to keep three operators busy.

On the left of the layout is the loco maintenance and refuelling area. This will contain a re-fuelling point, oil tanks (kindly donated by Richard who won them in the BRM virtual exhibition), office, crane and shed. To the right of the loco maintenance area is an old quarry pond that has been turned into a fishing and water sports area. In the middle of the layout is the quarry. The quarry building will be based on a Walthers Glacial Gravel kit. On the right of the layout is the Bottling Plant which is based on the Walthers Central Beverage Distributors. To the front of the layout is the four platform station (using a kit from In the Greenwood) with avoiding line.

Empty stone trains will come into the headshunt by the bottling plant and the loco will uncouple. An industrial loco (e.g. the N gauge Hunslet) can then pick up the empty wagons and take them into the quarry building and carrying on through the backdrop so that the empty wagons can be replaced by full wagons by the operator. The mainline loco can then go to be refuelled. Once loaded the Hunslet can bring the loaded wagons out to the headshunt and uncouple, waiting for the main line loco to pick up the loaded stone train and exit on the left via the crossover or to the right via running round the train.



Meanwhile the bottling plant can receive raw materials and take away loaded goods. The station can keep an operator busy with through and stopping trains.

There is a fiddle yard at the back with a crossover to a wing extension when required.

Progress has been slow due to the club being shut. So far, we have bought some of the track and points and a DCC controller, but have not actually started building anything. However, it promises to be an interesting layout to build and operate when we do get chance to meet at the club again.

Industry News

Product Review – Graham Farish Class 31 new release – Andy Small



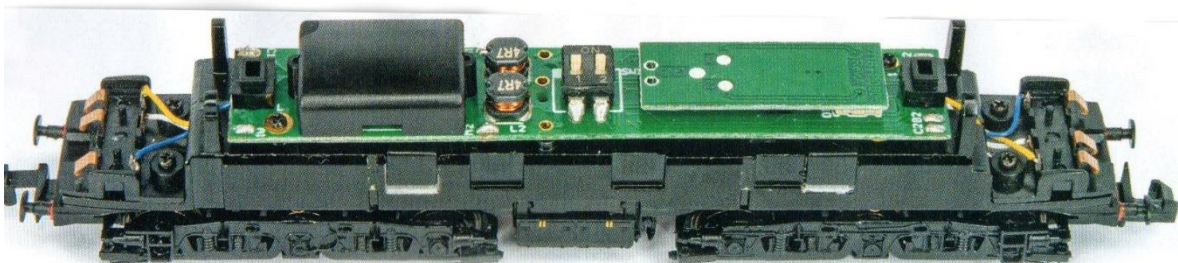
The class 31 (Brush Type 2) was introduced in 1957, 263 were built & all were completed by 1962. Initially allocated to the Eastern region with Tinsley, Immingham & Stratford having large allocations.

During the 70s the class were given a life extension refurbishment with the removal of the train heat boiler where still retained, sealing the cab communication doors & dual braking to allow the class to work with vacuum & air braked stock.

During the 80s the class also gained a high intensity head light the position of which differed from loco to loco. Mass withdrawals occurred during the mid-90s, but a few soldiered on with Network Rail & a few still survive in preservation.

Graham Farish released it's previous updated Class 31 in 2015 following the previous Poole version from the 1990's This previous update included a DCC socket & working lights.

This new model has new chassis & body tooling & comes complete with a Next 18 decoder socket & speaker housing fitted as standard.



The model is also available with sound fitted as standard. Several liveries have been included in the release including D5616, BR Green, 31131, BR Blue, 31154, Railfreight plain grey, 31319, Railfreight Triple Grey Petroleum sector, 31106, Network Rail Yellow & 97204, RTC red & blue livery.

The performance of the 31319 I have is silky smooth, with slow speed running down to a crawl. The livery is superbly rendered & the plated boiler roof port, no raised bodyside beading along with the correct bodyside grilles are correct for this loco.

The star depot plaque correctly depicts an Immingham loco which saw action, usually in tandem with a classmate, transporting oil tankers around the country from the refineries in the Immingham area before the introduction of the Class 60s resulted in them being made surplus to requirements.

The sound function is available in a limited capacity on analogue control & includes engine start up, brake release, engine idling & full power thrash. However, the sound function really comes alive on DCC when all the functions are available, including two tone horn, cab doors, coupling up, braking, etc along with full inertia control.

A great model that follows on from the introduction of the "Sound ready" Class 40 earlier last year.

One livery that is obviously missing from the recent release of the Class 31 & one familiar to anyone who visited Crewe in the 80s & 90s is Regional Railways blue as they worked passenger services in & around the North West & North Wales prior to Class 37s taking over.

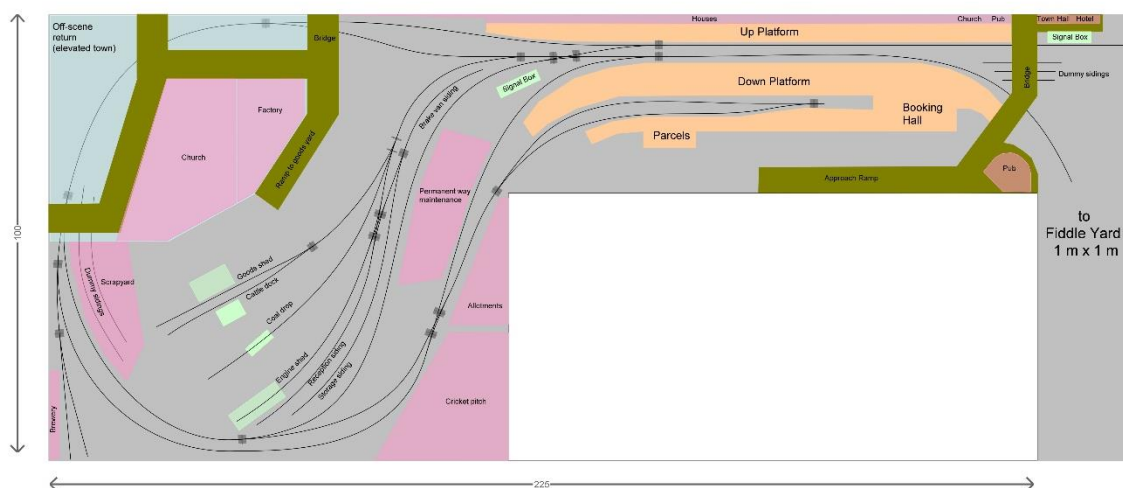


Member's Activities

Astbury Junction - Jules Attard



I started my first layout (in N gauge) in late 2019, around the time I joined the club. After a year of not going on holiday, the layout is now finished (as far as any layout is ever finished), so I felt ready to share it. Since the layout is loft-based and screwed to the rafters of my house, this is probably the only way anyone will ever see it. (However, if you do want to see more, many other photos of the layout can be found in the *Member's Layouts* part of the club website.)



Astbury Junction is fictional, 1950s steam, and town-based. It's inspired by the former lines of Cheshire, which gives me an excuse to run a variety of pre-nationalisation and BR standard stock, although the buildings are more Peak District stone than Cheshire brick. The 3 x 1 m design is dumbbell-shaped, allowing me to fit the maximum track at a comfortable height between the

sloping rafters with a space for me to sit; access is only from the front, and I painted and fitted backscenes early on so I didn't have to look at the roof all day.

The junction format allows me to run a single line continuous loop that appears to be a twin-track mainline station. The line is briefly doubled after the junction until it enters a hidden return loop under a removable raised town.



Points are all operated by Cobalt motors, of which there are now 39: I didn't plan on that many and initially used wire-and-tube control for the fiddle yard, but found the Cobalts so easy to install and reliable that I've now retrofitted them there too.

Having no existing stock of locos, it was easy for me to go DCC from the beginning. Most of the Farish and Dapol locos are sound-fitted; the smaller tanks and the Union Mills are DCC soundless. As I've very little to do on the scenic side now, I'm getting stuck into detailing the locos and adding lights and people to the passenger stock.



I've built several small cameos around the scenery, although some of them are almost invisible from the front or at normal viewing distances due to poor planning or size – the cats are the smallest thing I've ever tried to paint. However, I know they're there!

