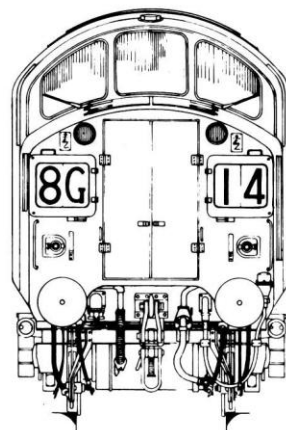


# ALSAGER RAILWAY ASSOCIATION



## NEWSLETTER

*March 2021*

Welcome to the third issue of our approximately-monthly club newsletter. As always, all club members are encouraged to submit content (short or long, with or without pictures) to the current editor – the more, the better! Content is preferred in Word, or in an email, rather than pdf. Pictures can be sent embedded in Word or separately as jpegs (high resolution if available).

Copies of the newsletter are posted on the website as well as sent to members by email. Authors of each article will be credited on the website unless they tell me when submitting their content, in which case their submission will be posted anonymously, although they will continue to be credited in the email version sent to members.

Jules Attard, Editor

[Jules.attard81@gmail.com](mailto:Jules.attard81@gmail.com)

### AGM – Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March – Zoom

You should have received your invite to take part in the AGM using Zoom. If you're unsure about using Zoom (join the club – this is new to most of us!), please reach out to Paul Whittaker, Andy Small or Jules Attard before the day and we'll try to help.

## Member's Layouts

### 1950s Stoke - Jon Honeysett

Work still continues on my 00-scale 'representation' of Stoke in the 1950's (in reality, there was no quadruple track through the station with Up and Down Loop platforms or the 'triangle bay' platforms). Scenery and narrow-boat building are taking longer than thought, but I thought our ARA readers might like the following pictures.

*Stanier Black Five stands at War Memorial Hill Tunnel Siding*



*Class 3F 0-6-0 stands at Siding signal*





*Jubilee 4-6-0 brings Euston-Manchester into Down Platform 5*



*Fitted freight headed by an 8F 2-8-0 on the Up Main*





This layout has taken me fifteen years to build, and there's still much scenic work to complete – it is nowhere near as finely detailed as our ARA Lawton Hey display since I have indifferent health, and the stroke I suffered in 1997, and arthritis, has left me with problems in my left hand, but at the end of the day it is good to be able to show visitors – I hope one day to submit it to The Railway Modeller for publication once the final work is completed.

*Stoke-Leek Push-Pull set on Platform 2. awaits the road*



*Un-rebuilt 'Royal Scot' waits at Platform 4 for Up siding to take over Manchester-Euston*





I look forward to the A.R.A. opening up the club-house when the coronavirus pandemic has reduced to a level considered safe enough for us to meet – my Kind Regards to one and all.

*BWB Narrow-boat loads high-value palletised freight at Inder's Wharf*



*Narrow-boat with flint chippings, awaits Deep Lock beneath pipe-bridge*



## Neerby – Peter Swaffield

The 14ft x 8ft 00 gauge layout called “Neerby” began life in the loft some 30 years ago principally for my 2 sons but as it took nearly 25 years to reach a point of almost completion, their interest in it had long since gone. Access was always an issue and my work bench was very cramped and right under the eaves so not ideal. Then 4 years ago I was persuaded by John Day’s wife Kath, to have a garden room built to re-home the layout. The “Garden Room” or “The Shed”, as most people call it, was duly constructed in April 2017 and was officially opened in May and named “Petersroom”. With John’s help the “almost” complete layout, was then cut up into manageable sections, to get it out of the loft, 2 scenic sections (Monkton and Tapham) were removed almost complete so these were not totally destroyed like the rest.

*“Petersroom” - also known as  
“The Shed” (Thanks Kath!)*



New free standing frames were built in the room and reconstruction began. The original track plan and concept was retained and once again with the aid of John, new track was laid throughout and nearly all the points were replaced. John also did most of the basic wiring for me in one of his visits to Harrow having first tried to talk me into going down the DCC route. However, he was unsuccessful on this matter but he did convince me to electrify most of the points rather than rely on the finger from the sky. With the aid of Roy Yates, planning was well underway for this to happen when Covid struck, meaning that progress down this route had to be shelved for the foreseeable future. As I am rubbish at most things electrical and wouldn’t tackle anything like this unless shown first, John was planning to come down to Harrow to show me what to do but of course this couldn’t happen so the consequence of this is that the finger still rules.

*Overview of the 14’  
x 8’ layout from the  
Monkton Town end  
with Tapham  
village top left &  
the TMD top right.*





When the 1st “Lockdown” happened an excuse to push on and work on the layout presented itself and since last April significant progress has been made. The many kits accumulated over the years were constructed and various others were bought on-line to add further interest to the layout and a lot of the scenic areas have almost been completed. Anything that wasn’t readily available was scratch built which in some ways was a lot more rewarding. The majority of the ballasting still needs to be done but with the electrical work on the points still outstanding this will have to wait. The majority of the walls were made using thin ply covered in stone or brick Superquick papers topped with plastic strip to act as the coping stones. Not as good as using the Wills products, but pretty effective. The back scenes are from the Peco range mixed with some Townscene sheets and images of various buildings, houses and shops which are sold by Scale Model Scenery have been used.

In brief, the layout has up and down main lines with passing loops in the main station area, an intermediate station at Holme, on an inner loop, a branch line to Littleden and separately controlled marshalling yard and MPD. Scenic wise there is the main town of Neerby, a high level town called Monkton with shops, houses, school, church etc, a high level village called Tapham with cricket ground, a canal with “Carriages Restaurant”, named after the one in Newhaven, Derbyshire. There is also a TMD, goods depot, timber merchant, coal merchants, scrap yard and there’s a bus rally going on at Holme station, so there is plenty going on. There are a few personal references as well. Streets and businesses are named after family members, there is a John Day Square, St Kathleen’s Church and HMSO Neerby Press. This is a reference to HMSO Harrow Press, where I began work as an apprentice engineer in 1967, plus a few others which are dedicated to some of our friends, even Roy has his own business which is advertised around the layout and he is also getting his own van soon. A full range of manufacturers materials/kits have been used such as Metcalfe, Wills, Ratio, Langley, Superquick, Hornby, Airfix, Peco, Springfield, basically anything that does the job.

*Branchline station of Littleden. Highbury Farm tea rooms and B&B is behind the farm yard which fronts the Highbury Farm Scout Camp entrance.*



The push pull coach was given to me by John Day. The Elizabethan building is a Superquick kit along with Hornby, Wills and Oxford ranges. Peco backscenes are predominant with Townscene and Scale Model Scenery sheets also being used.

*Tapham Village CC entertaining my old club St Margaret's. I'm not batting, still a few wickets to fall first. Very slow scoring game though, the total hasn't changed in 35 years! Peco, Wills, Airfix, Oxford, items on display – cricket teams from the Langley range.*



Knowing the quality of the existing layouts being constructed at the Club, mine doesn't fall anywhere close to their quality, but this layout has plenty of flexibility when running trains, has good operating potential and provides hours of enjoyment not only for myself but "younger" members of the family as well which has always been the main objective. The grandsons love playing shunting in the marshalling yard and taking a trick from Roy's shunting puzzle gives them both challenges to make up goods trains in a specific order as per the cards. I must admit even I enjoy doing that myself. (Mind you the kids are better at it.)



*Part view of Neerby MPD. The Ratio oil tank kit has had a scratch built bund wall fitted with steps for a bit more authenticity. The usual clutter and rubbish has been added around the ash disposal and cooling area as well as by the Ratio Boiler House. An Alsager wagon (J Settle) also in this view.*

The layout is set nowhere in particular, anything can run on it, despite the era being set around 1963. Every rule in the modelling handbook has been broken i.e. the track appeared before the scenery not the other way around and if it was visited by a railway inspector not only would it be closed down but I would probably also be arrested for encouraging bad practices! But that's model railways for you. I have also produced a booklet which lists all the loco's used on the layout, 30 in all, with a brief account of their history and their fate & why I have them in my Loco stable as well, which people who view the layout have found to be very interesting.



*View from Monkton  
across layout  
towards Holme  
Station in the  
distance, top right.  
St Kathleen's church  
roof is just visible.*



Next on the agenda is to finish the point wiring at some stage, ballasting, some building lighting and tidying up some of the scenic sections which were never really finished off properly. My one disappointment is not being able to get the Peco turntable to work properly using the Peco motor. Despite advice from the Peco Technical Bureau its operation is still pretty poor with jerky movement and trying to line up the entry and exit roads is nigh on impossible, so any ideas would be most welcome. More development work required on this bit of kit so at the moment once again the finger rules.



*View down one  
of Monkton's  
streets. The  
entrance to  
"John Day  
Square" is  
between  
Bradford &  
Bingley and the  
Art Shop.  
Metcalfe,  
Hornby, Model  
Scene and Wills  
kits used in this  
scene.*

The layouts only claim to fame is that it made a brief appearance on a recent episode of Rip Off Britain – Holidays, shown on 14th Jan which did have some good images of it actually running and I also sent an article off to CMRA which they distributed through their newsletter last year, which some members may have seen.

I hope you have enjoyed hearing about my layout and I hope that the pictures show off the layout in a reasonable light.

Happy modelling to everyone at the ARA, keep well and safe and let's hope it won't be long before the Club is open for business as usual.

*A view of the canal setting showing the “Carriages and Signal Box Restaurant” on the LHS. The canal boats are from Craftline Models Range bought and made 30 years ago. Pullman coaches are cleaned up Tri-ang models from the early 60’s. I think I paid 13/- (65p in new money) for each of them. I remember saving up my pocket money allowance for a long time to buy these.*



*Part view of Highbury Farm Scout Camp. Some scratch built bits on show and once again the Langley ranges of white metal scouts and cubs from all 3 of the kits, then available, have been used.*



## Modelling (with a bit of local history)

### The Middlewich Dodger – Paul Whittaker

Middlewich station closed to passengers on 4<sup>th</sup> January 1960, however it was a busy freight line and remained open to freight until 27<sup>th</sup> November 1967.

The line runs from Sandbach to Northwich through the Cheshire countryside and was once important for the many salt works and other industries along the line. The track is still there and occasionally used for freight, but the station has long gone, although there are talks of trying to open a new station along the line in Middlewich, the largest town in Cheshire without a railway station.

Passenger trains ran between Crewe and Northwich or Acton Bridge but by 1947 there were only 3 up and 4 down services from Middlewich station Monday-to-Friday, and 5 each way on Saturdays.

The trains were operated by push pull sets where the last coach was modified to provide space for the driver to sit at the front of the train and operate the steam locomotive at the rear by means of linkages under the train. The train was nicknamed the Middlewich Dodger.



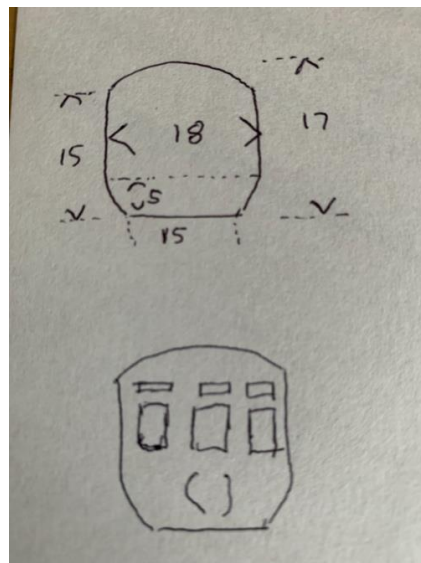
Middlewich station looking north in 1959. A Northwich to Crewe service is seen arriving at the up platform where a couple of passengers are waiting to board the train.

Photo from the Jim Lake collection courtesy of [www.disused-stations.org.uk](http://www.disused-stations.org.uk)

There are no Ready to Run versions of this coach so I had to make my own. To start with you need a donor coach, something like an old Graham Farish 57ft Brake End Coach Suburban BR (Poole built 0615).



We need to remove the guards end and replace it with a scratch-built end with the three windows. Carefully measure the end and draw a template.



Cut a piece of plasticard into a 18mm by 17mm square then round off the roof and bottom sides to make a coach end shape. Use a needle file to create a smooth roofline and keep checking against the end of the coach. When you are happy with the fit carefully cut holes for the windows. Using a small drill, cut holes at the corners of the windows and then using a craft knife cut the windows out. File flat with a needle file.



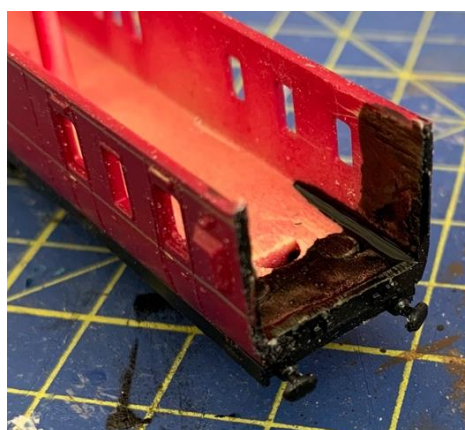
I found it easier to cut the full rectangle out and file flat for all three windows leaving one large rectangle and then fill in the frames for the inner windows with small strips of plasticard glued into place. This allowed me to get the window size equal by eye. Glue some small pieces of plasticard above the windows for the sunshades. Test fit against the end of the coach; once happy, paint the end matt black.



Now turn to the coach, remove the roof, seats and side glazing. Carefully remove the bogies and keep all the bits in a safe place. Don't lose one of the cellophane window pieces like I did.



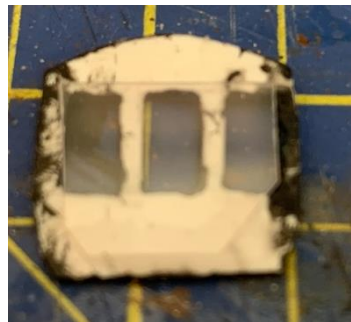
Carefully cut down the sides of the guards end as close to the side as possible with a razor saw. Snap out the end section and file it flat. You may want to paint the inside black to cover any marks on the inside.



Insert the seats and test fit. You will notice the seats obscure the window, so remove the front seat with a craft knife and file flat. The plastic is quite soft so easy to cut.



Moving back to the front end find a thin piece of clear plastic for the windows and cut to size. Glue in place with PVA glue.



Replace side window glazing (or make a fresh one with the cellophane from the front of the box if you have lost one), seats and roof, you may want to add a driver at this point then carefully glue the end in place. Job done!





You may wish to further enhance the front end by adding vacuum pipes and lamp etc. But that is a project for another day.



## The Bollington Bug – Jules Attard

Westinghouse built a single petrol-electric bogie railcar for the GCR in 1912. Initially running between Marylebone and South Harrow, it moved to Glossop by 1914, and from August 1921 until withdrawal ran a shuttle service between Macclesfield Central and Bollington, where it became known as the “Bollington Bug” (LNER number 51907) due to the buzzing sound it made.



Petrol-electric railcars were common in Central Europe at the time (especially in Hungary), but were rare in the U.K. (the NER built 2) despite their advantages over steam. However, the roof-mounted radiator tended to freeze at night in severe frosts experienced at Glossop, so it had to be drained every night and refilled every morning. The Bollington Bug was withdrawn in July 1935, replaced by a Sentinel steam railcar.

History taken from [lner.info](http://lner.info)

I came across a 3D-printed body for this railcar on Shapeways so decided to give it a try. A Tomytec TM-22 chassis fits this well after the chassis ends have been pared away, giving a snug fit into the body. I fixed strips of Plasticard beneath the windows to push the chassis up against; no further fixing was needed. I then added handrails, brake pipes and a horn.





I had never attempted the simulation of LNER teak-effect before, so decorating the railcar broke some new ground for me. I dragged Precision Paints teak over a ground of Halford Ford ivory. I had more trouble finding the right gloss level for varnishing: pure gloss was just way too shiny, and satin way to dull. In the end, like Goldilocks, I went for something in between – a very light coat of gloss brushed thinly over a satin base.



There are some inevitable compromises which I still have to address. First is the large underhanging motor which needs hiding with something to represent the underframe. Second, the motor is visible in the passenger compartment, even more so after installing a DCC chip and speaker (which I had done after taking this shot), and I plan to hide this using mirror film as glazing.

The third compromise was the bogies: in the prototype, the bogie beneath the passenger compartment is longer than that beneath the engine (on the left in the photos above). Tomytec also produce a chassis with longer bogies so I considered buying it and swapping one bogie, but decided my ability to mess up a well-running chassis was too great and parked the idea. Also, the GCR only ever made one of these, so unless I get a commission to make another, what will I do with the second chassis? (And no, that isn't an invitation!)

## Methods

### DCC++ Base Station for Less than £14 – Arthur Roberts

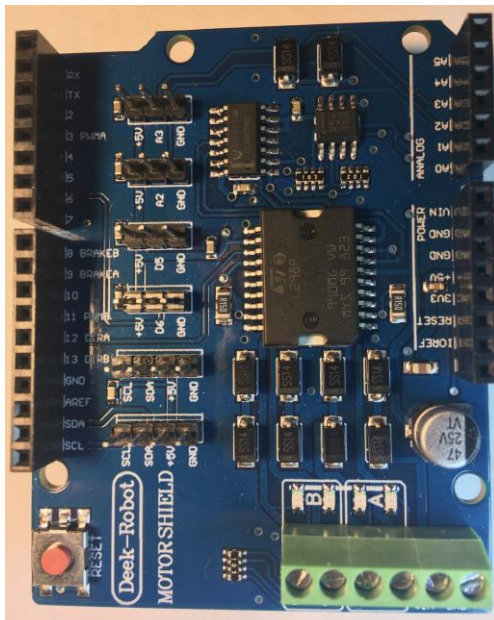
This is a general overview – for more information or help please contact me, or better still, watch the excellent video *Little Wicket Railway Digital Controller (DCC++)* by Rob on YouTube.

I wanted a small, cheap DCC Base (Command) Station Unit that I could take anywhere. Whilst watching the video Little Wicket, I found how to do this using an Arduino UNO & L298P Motor Shield (this plugs directly into the UNO). (The **P** is important: there are other L298 shields available so be sure to get the L298P.) It is advisable to watch Rob's video as he explains everything so well.

On your PC or laptop etc load JAVA(Oracle) version 8 update 281 – earlier versions may work. Also, need to load JMRI (see JMRI website for latest version & instructions) software via GitHub.

It is very important to remove the Vin Connect link under the L298P board before connecting it to the UNO & applying the supply voltage to the L298P. This is done by gently scratching the connecting link between the two solder pads with a pointed craft knife, but be very careful to not go too deep. Failure to remove the link may result in damaging the UNO when connecting power to L298P!

**Equipment:**     Arduino Uno     (£5.87 from Banggood – UK base)     Free postage for both  
                          L298P Motor Shield   (£8.01 from dubdivina – UK base)     (other suppliers available)  
                          Laptop or PC with Windows 10 (previous OS versions may work) or iMac  
                          JAVA, JMRI, GitHub & Arduino IDE software freely available from the websites. (To  
                          download the software, watch the Little Wicket video. Rob explains this really well.)  
                          Mobile phone (iPhone or Android) - optional  
                          I assume you will already have a PC , mobile phone & power supply – needed, but  
                          not included in costing



Terminal Connections - Left to Right  
 1 & 2     3 & 4     5     6  
 Program Track   Main Track   12-16vdc   0v  
**L298P Motor Shield**



USB Lead to PC     Socket for  
 12vdc Plug (optional)  
**Arduino UNO**



**Sequence of operation:** Having loaded all necessary software onto PC & into UNO, you should now have Decoder Pro & Panel Pro on the PC desk top.  
Plug L298P motor shield into UNO taking care to align pins correctly.  
On the L298P connect pin 13 to pin 5 and pin 12 to pin 10 with jumper wires.  
Connect Main Track, Programming track & a 12–16v dc, 2A or 3A power supply to the L298P shield.  
Connect UNO to computer using suitable USB lead.  
Follow instructions on video, use Decoder Pro to build a loco roster & Panel Pro to control speed of loco.  
By downloading Apps (Engine Driver for PC & WiThrottle Lite for iPhone (both free) onto your phone you can now operate locos wirelessly: up to 6 locos with Engine Driver & 1 loco with WiThrottle Lite (for more locos you need WiThrottle Pro).  
All control is done via a router, so this needs to be nearby.

## ARA in the press

**Richard Hart** reminds us that his Hartley Poole Too layout was reviewed in BRM, who kindly uploaded a short video to YouTube. If you haven't seen it already, here's the link:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cNwit4s899A>