

# the ditchlight

the newsletter of the thameside sub-division, nmra british region

issue #142

september 2022



## highlights

### special features:

- ◆ Beyond the Fence *by Alan Sewell on pages 7-8*
- ◆ What has your Other Half Done on Your Railroad *by Rai Fenton on pages 9-11*
- ◆ Deal! Parts for Sale *by Patrick Grace on page 12*
- ◆ The Joy of Blue Box *by Mike Arnold on pages 13-16*
- ◆ Product News *on pages 17/18*
- ◆ Report from St Louis *on pages 19-24*
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## From the Head End

Welcome to the September Edition of Ditchlight.

Well Summer has come and almost gone, but on the bright side, we look forward to a new season of Shows, exhibitions, Open Days and our Convention in Crewe in November. Some events do take place during the summer months including the National Convention in St Louis. Mike Arnold attended that event and you can read his report on that event in this issue.

While on the subject of events. It was decided at the last Virtual Meet that we would not host a Regional Meet next Spring at Feering. The event this year was very dependent on the support of local model railway groups, and it was felt that this would still be the case next year,

If we kept the same format, that is the Group's two modular layouts, it would be difficult to achieve the same level of local support.

Instead we have opted for an Open Day at St Osyth in June. We have booked the evening before to give ourselves maximum operating time on the day. Publicity will be aimed at local residents and model railway groups. I have emailed Jonathan Small to inform him of our decision and asking if Region would like to be involved with the Open Day.

I have not been idle over the summer months. I have completed the trackwork on a second reverse loop and installed the

electronics, and have done a test run, which proved successful. I now need to do further tests with a variety of motive power and stock. As I wanted to include a spur within the loop on this occasion I opted to use a Tam Valley twin Frog Juicer

to activate the polarity reversing. I hope to do a clinic detailing the relative merits of both these methods of activating polarity reversal at the November Virtual Meet.

Over the summer we managed to secure extra storage space at a location convenient to the Village Hall. We have installed some shelving and stored some Group owned boards and loose items in the new unit. We will also discuss this further at the next virtual meet.

With Autumn approaching, my mind turns to future projects, both personal and for TMRG. There are of course always improvements to be made to existing layouts. With trackwork and electronics completed on both reversing boards I am still seeking inspiration on how I scenic them. The left hand board, as I mentioned will incorporate a spur. The turnout is installed, but I have yet to decide on whether the spur will run parallel to the mainline, or diverge for maximum length.

(Continued on page 2)



## GROUP MEETS

### NEXT THREE MEETS

#### SATURDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2022

In person meet at St Osyth - directions on last page. There will be running and work sessions so bring your trains and your tools. Please be there early to help set up. Break down around 4.00pm.

#### SATURDAY 8 OCTOBER 2022

Virtual Meet at 10.00am. Watch for an e-mail from David Ammon with log on details/weblink.

#### SATURDAY 22 OCTOBER 2022

Open House event at St Osyth. Details to follow

### DATES FOR 2022

As a general trend all meetings will be on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month so as not to clash with Region's "Brew & Natter" sessions on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays.

Meets in 2022 will be Virtual on 2nd Saturdays and at St Osyth on the 4th Saturdays, except May, June and July when it is reversed - see all dates detailed in the attachment to Alan Sewell's e-mail dated 5 April 2022.



*Right: Next time: Diesels in Detail. A good look at Metra's celebrity F40PH #101, newly decked out in the latest colour scheme. It was believed that this was its running in turn after major overhaul. Full details of this loco next time.*

## HEAD END (Continued)

Continued from page 1 .....

Will it simply be storage hidden perhaps under a hill? Or an industry, with an urban environment. Instead of an industry it could be a Freight/Passenger Depot. Or what about a more rural setting perhaps the spur could go to a log loading area, with perhaps a log camp. Perhaps I will have decided by the next issue.

As well as completing the N Gauge project, I need to decide what to do with some On30 items I acquired some time ago. I hope this will be modular, and would be interested to hear from anyone else in the group interested in starting an On30 project.

Well that's it for this issue; I hope to see at the next virtual meet or St .Osyth.

*David*

7 September 2022





## STORAGE AT ST. OSYTH by Paul Harman

When we had to leave Whitegates farm we all made an effort to try and find a new location. One day while I was at the St Osyth village hall chatting and discussing what a nice venue the hall would be if only there was somewhere to store the layouts, the then caretaker mentioned that there were some vacant garages in the adjacent council garages.

This immediately got me thinking that using the St Osyth hall might be a possibility. There was much discussion about whether St Osyth being around fifteen minutes further away from most members than Frating might be a bit too far, but once it was decided that it probably was not I joined the village hall committee as a trustee and applied online to the council for a garage.

No one will be surprised that I did not hear anything for some time so I got my local government representative to ask about the status. Very quickly I got a response that there was currently around a three year waiting list and that it would be some time before a garage would be available.

This was of course very disappointing, so in the mean time I had a discussion with the village hall chairman and identified some space under the stage which was full of equipment belonging to an evangelical church could be made available. There was also a space recently vacated by the playgroup.

Eventually the under-stage area was cleared out and a railway system was constructed so that most of the regularly used Thamesiders' equipment could be stored there. This has worked well for a few months.

Out of the blue I received an unexpected communication that a couple of garages had become available and would I like to choose one. I quickly chose the one nearest to the hall, and have regretted it a little as it has an external side wall - but I am sure it will not be a damp problem.

So keys in hand I swept out the sawdust which was on the garage floor, and ob-



tained a tin of Leyland floor paint from Screwfix, and painted the floor to seal it against getting dusty and hopefully to prevent any damp coming up.

The garage is now fitted with shelving and items can be trucked to the hall on a sack barrow making life a lot easier and saving having to store items in a Colchester storage unit. It cannot be any worse than the Frating storage anyway.

# REGION & INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## REGION EVENTS



### BRITISH REGION CONVENTION 2022 - CREWE

Advance notice of the Region Convention in 2022. Notwithstanding the notice in the November/December Roundhouse the dates are in fact a week earlier on 4-6 November. Plans have been changed yet again - the Ibis Hotel has now also been commandeered by the Home Office. A third venue has been found where all the activities can be on one site: Wychwood Park Hotel, Weston CW2 5GP.

Convention website address: <https://convention.nmrabr.org.uk/>

### OTHER EVENTS:

**Saturday 17 September 2022 sees the return of the Seaboard Southern Show in Crawley.**

#### Confirmed Layouts

Central Alonzo (Andrew Gautrey) – HO Cuban Interurban / sugar railway

Underpass (Rob Strachan) – HO Santa Fe switching in urban Los Angeles

Plant City (Andrew Browne) – HO CSX railroading in Florida

Missuola (Chris Prior) – Contemporary Upper Midwest in HO

Roundhouse (Ian Lampkin) – Inspired by the UP at Laramie (HO)

Black Sheep On30 Group – Modular On30 set up

#### Confirmed Traders

Kent Garden Railways – new and second-hand rolling stock and accessories

Anoraks Anonymous – Pre-loved railway equipment

Sunningwell Command Control – All your DCC needs

Plus Daughters – N scale specialist

JB Modelworld – stockboxes and modelling tools

Barry Clements (Baztrains) – 3D printed details & scenic accessories

Railroad Trading – Books, magazines and DVDs

Seaboard Southern Club Sales Stand

**SEABOARD  
SOUTHERN**  
MODEL RAILROAD GROUP

**Sat 17th Sept 2022, 10am—4pm**

<b>Layouts</b>	<b>THE CHARIS CENTRE</b>
<b>Trade Support</b>	<b>WEST GREEN DRIVE</b>
<b>Refreshments</b>	<b>CRAWLEY</b>
<b>Ample free parking on site</b>	<b>WEST SUSSEX RH11 7EL</b>

**[www.seaboard-southern.org.uk](http://www.seaboard-southern.org.uk)**



## DIVISION NEWS

### SEABOARD SOUTHERN OPEN WEEKEND 24/25 SEPTEMBER 2022

Following our annual show at the Charis Centre, West Green Drive Crawley on September 17<sup>th</sup>, Seaboard Southern Model Railroad Group will be holding an Open Weekend on Saturday September 24<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> for new and prospective members. This event will showcase our large 'HO' layout Clinchfield and 'N' gauge layout Three Bridges in our extensive well equipped permanent clubroom in Crawley.

Some members are also building a large multilevel On30 layout in a satellite operation on the outskirts of Brighton. On our regular Friday evening club night, we exclusively run North American stock. Typically this will be Union Pacific, Santa Fe, Burlington Northern, Great Northern, CSX etc from all historical eras. Club members will be on hand to explain our progress and future objectives. Like most clubs, we have suffered a decline in membership. Our current membership is 17 with 12 fully active. It would be good if we could attract a few more model rail enthusiasts to our excellent club. Anyone interested in joining Seaboard Southern will be assured of a warm welcome.

We are located in Tilgate Forest which is 2 minutes from junction 11 on the M23 with plenty of free parking. From junction 11 on the M23, take the road signposted Crawley. Just over half a mile, turn right at traffic lights into K2 sports centre/Tilgate Forest (this is opposite Crawley Football Club stadium). After about 30 yards, turn right into the forest, go across the narrow bridge, proceed up the road, turn right under the 2nd yellow height barrier signposted huts 9 - 16, bear left, we are second hut on the left. Our postcode is RH10 5PQ

For further details please contact our club secretary Malcolm at [Secretaryseabordsouthern@gmail.com](mailto:Secretaryseabordsouthern@gmail.com)

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### UPCOMING NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

**2023 - Grapevine, TX outside Dallas/Fort Worth (20-26 August 2023).** Registration is open for this event which promises to be a whopper. Texas is known for everything being big: BBQ, Rodeo, Dallas Cowboys, Trains, Architecture.....

See their website at [www.2023texasexpress.com](http://www.2023texasexpress.com)

Venue: Gaylord Texan Hotel and Resort, just outside Dallas.

Nearest Airport: Dallas/Forth Worth (4 minutes by taxi) or light rail to Downtown Grapevine then shuttle to hotel.

Local Attractions: Grapevine RR; Museum of the American Railroad (see next page), McKinney Avenue Trolley system, Southfork Ranch, Tower 55. BNSF HQ and more, lots more



# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## TEXAS EXPRESS 2023 NATIONAL CONVENTION

september 2022



Top: Exhibits at the Museum of the American Railroad; bottom: McKinney Avenue Trolley system cars and rodeo.... More in the next issue.



## MEMBER NEWS

september 2022

### BEHIND THE FENCE PART 5 - NOT AN OBVIOUS SWITCHER by Alan Sewell

Members will probably know my preference for four axle end-cab switchers and road switchers as these are more appropriate for my industrial and shortline railroading. Recently I have noticed with the increase in freight car size and weight there are more six axle heavy duty switchers being acquired by shortlines these are not yet appearing my layout ( except for a stray Baldwin AS616). However in my regular online surf of Portland's "Hobbysmith" model shop I came across a Genesis SD70Ace lettered for Tacoma Rail. Tacoma Rail is the publicly owned operator of the trackage in the Port of Tacoma and a number of rail lines in the area- some acquired following the MILW bankruptcy. Tacoma Rail has fifteen locomotives and over 100 miles of track including the twisting 3.5% climb up the Tacoma "gulch" to Frederickson. David and I and others visited Tacoma as part of the NMRA National in 2015. So I had to break my self-imposed restriction on purchases and have this especially as the unit was numbered 7001 the one on the ready track for the convention.

The loco is now here and the paint, detailing and sound are all I expect from a Genesis model. I am very pleased with it. In spite of its size runs well on the layout and I have spent a little time switching with it , but I guess it is more of a road engine so maybe a run around EBL should be planned. However I can imagineer a reason for its appearance in Jennis WA if, in a parallel universe, the Port of Tacoma takes a share in the Port of Longview and runs trains up to the mill. In the model world such things are possible!!!

*Photos : The real thing at Tacoma, WA in August 2015 during the National Convention in Portland, OR and the model at work on the layout in 2022.*





### BEHIND THE FENCE PART 5 - NOT A SWITCHER by Alan Sewell (Continued)



Photos clockwise from top left: The new arrival on display at Tacoma, WA in August 2015; our illustrious Chairman in the conductor's seat ("You would like us to run to you to where? Back to Portland?") and finally the model gets to work after a crew change.

### WHAT HAS YOUR OTHER HALF DONE ON YOUR RAILROAD? by Rai Fenton

I model Southern Pacific in HO during the transition years and it is very loosely based on the Siskiyou line. The layout is in a 13 foot square bedroom. The main line goes three times around with a branch line going across the middle. The basic construction is L-girder.



My wife Betty has quite an artistic flair, as you can see from this harvest mouse done in pastel pencils. Thus I was pleased when she offered to apply her expertise to my model railroad. It also helped in keeping her from going crackers in last year's lockdown!

Betty's expertise was initially applied in completing a scenery project, the first I had ever attempted to do in sixteen years of modelling; my forte is mainly in carpentry, track laying and electrics.



I had brought the scenery to the stage of applying rock mouldings and adding colouring. This had included experimenting with using two layers of Amazon brown packing paper coated with diluted PVC glue over cardboard strips. How-

ever, the paper layers were not stiff enough so I soon reverted to plaster bandage.

Betty then painted the stream and added detail such as boulders and reeds. On the rock face, shadowing and weeds etc were applied.

I couldn't resist adding a timber tunnel portal on the branch but the downside was that nothing bigger than a 2-8-2 could be accommodated, hence the notice-board warning of this.



We then moved onto the back-drops. A selection is shown as one moves from left to right around the room. Betty used acrylic paint on art paper and then trimmed the paper back to the skyline. The paper was then wall-paper pasted onto the walls.



### WHAT HAS YOUR OTHER HALF DONE ON YOUR RAILROAD? by Rai Fenton (Continued)

The walls had been painted in blue and the clouds added by Betty before the layout was even started in 2005. However, sky had to be added to those backdrops pasted onto hardboard due to a lack of wall, but a downside was that colour matching the original blue has proven nigh on impossible; we've just lived with that.

Some parts of the layout were rather wide and I had to hoist myself up and sit on the layout to do the pasting. It's a good job that the layout was built strong enough to support my weight. The only casualty was a flattened metal track bumper that tried to imbed itself in my backside; it was soon unbent.

I trust that those of you that have been to Northern California will recognise the mountain.



We've now reached the bay window. It was initially considered that continuing the back-drop across it would reduce the natural light too much. In practice, this proved not to be the case.



The layout edging into the bay window had not been completed so the opportunity was now taken to tidy this up by adding an edging strip which also supported the hardboard back-drop. In this area there is a hidden double-ended staging yard below, which required some point machines for the upper level to be mounted on small extensions to the back of the baseboard. These are now hidden from view by the back-drop.



## MEMBER NEWS

september 2022

### WHAT HAS YOUR OTHER HALF DONE ON YOUR RAILROAD? by Rai Fenton (Continued)

We have now reached the other side of the bay window.

Because I hadn't thought of back-drops early enough, there was no allowance made for curving them around corners.



In the scene at top right there is a further view of Mount Shasta. The circling birds are Bald Eagles ("bald" in this case referring to piebald, i.e. black with white head feathers). Betty drew a lot of inspiration from pictures in the book "Southern Pacific Oregon Division". As this book was published in 1997, the pictures are all in colour and thus much more helpful.

At bottom right here's the Division point at Medford. The ideas for painting the various buildings on the back-drop came from various sources on the Internet.

**TO BE CONTINUED NEXT TIME**



## MEMBER NEWS - PATRICK GRACE

september 2022

### DETAIL PARTS ETC FOR SALE

Patrick Grace acquired a job lot of parts and has a good number left over. If anyone is interested please contact him to discuss a price and postage costs. Patrick is on [pgrace@aspects.net](mailto:pgrace@aspects.net)

1	Laser kit	PRR N8 cabin car glazing kit	20	Bethlehem Car Works Kitbits	Caboose Cupola No64
2	Bethlehem Car Works Kitbits	Baldwin Camelback cab assembly single window	21	Bethlehem Car Works Kitbits	Caboose end beams with railings No6
3	Details west?	4 Kato SD40-2 anti climbers	22	Bethlehem Car Works Kitbits	Caboose stacks No 63
4	Precision Scale	39085 3 chime horn	23	State tool & Die Co	C&O Caboose conversion kit - for P2K caboose
5	Precision Scale	39085 3 chime horn	24	State tool & Die Co	C&O Caboose conversion kit - for P2K caboose
6	JJP Models	Water crane	25	Detail Associates	No 550 - Caboose AMB wood laser cut kits
7	Kemtron	14v light bulb	26	Detail Associates	No 550 - Caboose AMB wood laser cut kits
8	Kemtron	14v light bulb	27	Detail Associates	No 550 - Caboose AMB wood laser cut kits
9	California Model Co	HO door HO 954	28	?	freight car ladders and steps
10	California Model Co	HO door HO 954	29	Perlmodell	1-103 smoke box front with locking wheel
11	California Model Co	HO door HO 954	30	Perlmodell	1-450 Turbo generator
12	California Model Co	HO door HO 954	31	Perlmodell	1-720 Saftey valves
13	Kadee	Truck springs no 637 - HO	32	Bowser	Caboose end frames (N5 & N5c)
14	Kadee	Truck springs no 637 - HO	33	Bowser	Caboose trainphone antenna
15	Kadee	Truck springs no 624 - HOn3	34	Tichy	"happy holidays" billboard
16	Kadee	Truck springs no 624 - HOn3	35	Cal Scale	Leslie 3 chime horn
17	Bethlehem Car Works Kitbits	PRPO dress up kit	36	Efsi	Volvo Lorry
18	Laser kit	PRR N8 cabin car glazing kit	37	JL Innovative	Resume/slow sign set - factory painted
19	Suydam	Baggage door HO	38	Rail-Road Scenic	Rustic wood fencing kit

### THE JOY OF ATHEARN BLUEBOX - A BNSF IN HO C44-9CW FIT FOR THE 21st CENTURY (PART 1)



The launch of Athearn's new branding on 25 March 2022 (for Roundhouse; Ready-to-Run; Genesis) brought back the happy memories of how my journey into the world of HO railroad modelling started: those old glorious blue box locos that re-tailed in the mid-1990s for \$29.95 and half that price for a dummy. Those were the days! But today Athearn blue box level has been all but forgotten, absorbed into the Roundhouse range but not as kits anymore, save for boxes aplenty at train shows on second-hand sales stands at really low prices. They have been left behind in the rush for ready-to-run high detail locomotives. With a little bit of research and tender loving care I hope this article will change your views about the potential they offer for a very satisfying detailing project.

Lockdown during COVID gave me an opportunity to think about what projects I could do to fill the time (I am retired so paid employment is just a memory). I decided on a clear out of some of my stock of old locos and bodies. I looked out a number of long-discarded Athearn blue box locos and part-completed projects: various chasses with Railpower bodies and a selection of chassis, motors, bodies and parts bags. During that period I put together a good few, and fitted DCC decoders to them. However, a couple still remained, one of which was a C44-9CW in BNSF Heritage II (H2) colours but it was a dummy, with plastic wheels and no gears within the trucks. I have forgotten how long ago I bought it and where but I do recall buying a warbonnet version in 1996 newly out on the shelves at Caboosie Hobbies in Denver, Colorado. That, remarkably then, was only two years after the prototype had appeared. Also, after all these years I have noticed a factory error in the chosen locomotive 4324 – the rear hood is numbered 4234! There is no BNSF C44-9CW #4234 or any in the 4200-99 series. Does that make it a collector's item? Too late now.....



This seemed to me an opportune project to illustrate just what can be achieved with a little effort and a low cost investment in a model of choice off one of those second-hand sales stands. At the very least cheap blue box locomotives can be a great source for spares as you will read shortly. The wheels sets complete with plastic gear are a straight swap for cracked P2K ones!

As a starting point it is a good idea to take stock of what you have, which particular locomotive you want to model, the level of detail to be added, what you have in your spares box and what else you will need. I had already added detail to another Athearn BNSF C44-9CW locomotive (#4809) that I had put together some years ago but lacked a decoder and certain details I like to add. That made this task so much easier. As it is a BNSF locomotive it comes with a gull wing cab per the Santa Fe specification from the very first order - all subsequent deliveries of C44-9CW appear to have the same cab so that was a relief. Some other details vary, as we shall see, but we can keep the choice of locomotive number until we get to the work on the body.

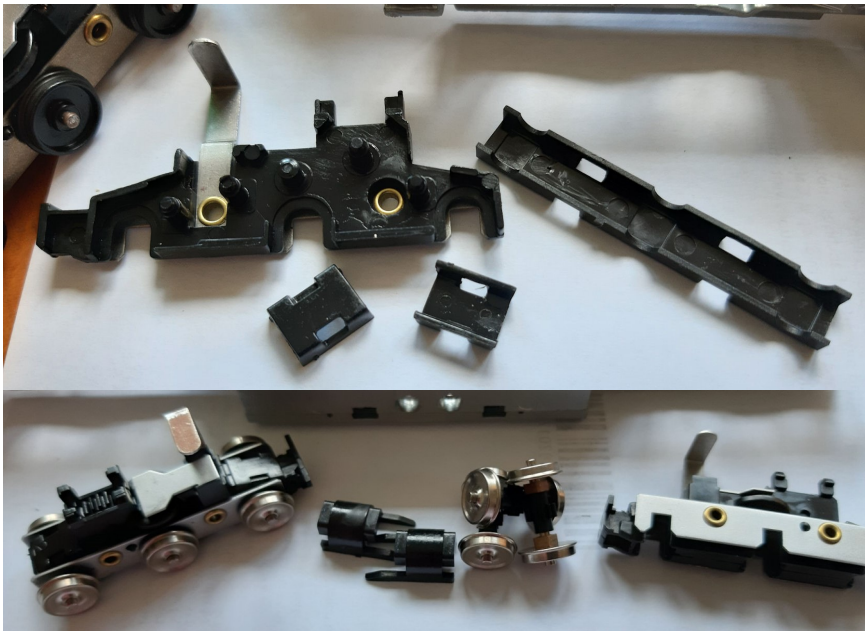
For this model I needed to replace the trucks with ones with gears and metal wheels; add a DCC decoder and better lights, possibly working ditchlights too; flush glazed windows; all grab irons on the nose and rear hood; correct plow; mu hoses; cut levers. I am sure I will think of a few more details as I progress. I also have in my spares box a set of acetal plastic handrails moulded in BNSF dark green which will be an improvement on the metal stanchions and formed wire that come with the "kit" of parts for the locomotive.



### THE JOY OF ATHEARN BLUEBOX - A BNSF HO C44-9CW FIT FOR THE 21st CENTURY (PART 1) Continued

#### The trucks

I realised very quickly (fortunately) that the fixing points for the C44-9CW truck side frames are slightly closer together than the donor ex-SD40-2 trucks. Therefore I needed to take all the gears and metal wheels from the donor powered trucks to put into the dummy trucks. To disassemble the trucks first remove the clip on the underside to release the plastic wheelsets. Do the same to the powered trucks. Then remove the two clips on the sloping top at each end of the truck so that the two halves come apart and reveal the gears inside the powered one. Remove them in sequence and insert them onto the spigots in the dummy trucks. Reverse the process, making sure that the plastic gears mesh correctly and that those on the axles between the metal wheels are sound and not cracked. Five out of the first six I tried were very badly cracked so they were discarded. Having spares was a bonus. Apply the side frames and check that all wheels revolve smoothly and in synch. Dummy trucks no more!



Photos: Show disassembled truck parts and re-assembled powered trucks

#### The motor

Again the spares box was plundered for a suitable motor, with drive train spline shafts of an appropriate length as the C44-9CW chassis is slightly longer than some other Athearn chassis. A-Line came to the rescue for me here – part #12052 cut to length.

Before inserting the motor carry out some of the preparation for DCC: either remove the bottom motor clip (beware the spring) and replace with a plain one or carefully remove the two downward bent wings that provide part of the power pick up for standard analog locomotive. Cover with a strip of insulating tape. Now insert the motor with its two insulated mounts into the holes in the chassis, and align the spline shafts. Finally spin the motor to ensure everything revolves smoothly and inside the trucks the drive train moves where it should. Decoder fitting, a TCS A6X my preferred decoder for getting working lights (not a single 12v bulb!) and, hopefully, ditchlights will come later.

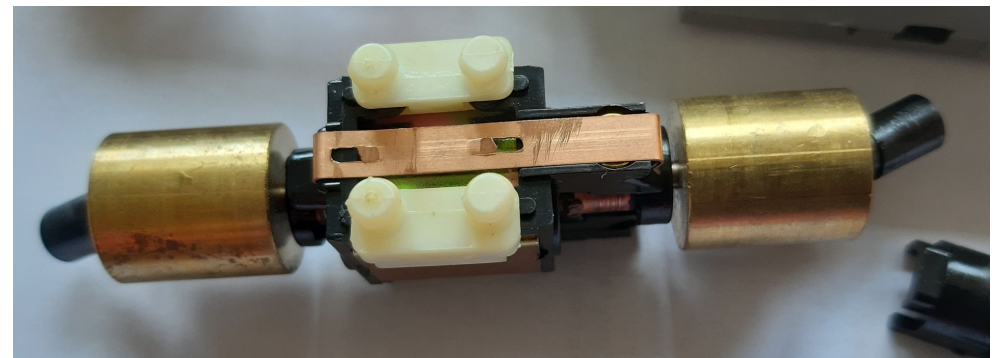


Photo: Shows underside of motor, power clip pick up “wings” removed.

#### The body

At this stage a decision has to be made about the phase of C44-9CW to be modelled because the first deliveries, ATSF #s 600-699, were the only ones with the earlier arrangement of three side windows per the Athearn loco. The prototype depicted by Athearn, #4324, is fitted with the four side windows. I opted to go for the correct windows for a later delivery. If you wanted to stay with the three side-

### THE JOY OF ATHEARN BLUEBOX - A BNSF N HO C44-9CW FIT FOR THE 21st CENTURY (PART 1) Continued

window version you would need to renumber the locomotive to say #653, #663, #672 or #684 which did receive the H2 paint scheme. Another little wrinkle was the colour below the cigar band on the nose in the corners. For some reason the paint booth decided to change from BNSF Heritage green to orange for deliveries from May 1999 onwards. The Athearn cab has green below the line; this means your choices are narrowed to locos 4300-4436; 4720-4999 (4700-19 were delivered in a BNSF branded warbonnet scheme). All others are painted orange – a small but subtle difference. As you will find painting orange is a real pain even on light colours – over dark green???? No, thanks.



As an overview of what is to be done here is a list – details will follow: flush glaze cab; fit 4-window frames etc; grabs on front of nose, on cab roof, top of nose and on top of rear hood and the rear hood itself; ditch lights; antenna on cab roof; cab sunshades; mu hoses; cut levers; and plow. I shall add a crew as there is a lot of space inside.

As with all detailing projects, access to good photographs of your chosen prototype is essential. I use [www.rpicturearchives.net](http://www.rpicturearchives.net) extensively. I also have Diesel Era Volume 10 Number 4 July/August 1999 which has as its main feature an article on the BNSF Dash 9s. This proved very helpful for siting of some details. I also discovered that there are three more parts on the BNSF Dash-9s which I subsequently bought: volumes 30 Number 6, 31 Number 1 and 31 Number 2 which completed the coverage.

So let us start with the cab, where most of the work is to be carried out.

Details West produce a detail pack for the four side windows, along with windshield frames (BN-358). I also have a Scale Rail Models detail pack #420 too which I used on the previous job. I do not think the latter is still in business. I find the Details west one rather delicate and will prove difficult to seat properly – the accompanying instructions are a little scant on detail. There is also no guidance on applying clear glazing. I therefore opted to use the Scale Rail Models product to start –

it provides a template for the aperture to be cut to create the correct space for the 4-window framing. And it provides glazing. The side window apertures were first cut and filed out of the cab and parts offered up to check for clearance etc.



I used the window frame from Scale Rail Models – I have another pack if anyone wants one after reading this article. I painted the frames orange at this stage. I then opted to try the Details West outer windows as



### THE JOY OF ATHEARN BLUEBOX - A BNSF N HO C44-9CW FIT FOR THE 21st CENTURY (PART 1) Continued



they were extremely finely detailed with rivets. This was a delicate operation, adding glazing and then adhering the whole to the frame using Kristal Clear as superglue will frost the glazing material. I opted to use the Scale Model Rail inner (centre) windows as I wanted to have one set open on the conductor's side. They were painted chrome to match the prototype. The same process was applied here to the glazing. The complete assemblies were then superglued carefully in place in the cab body.



Details West cab shades and runners were superglued above the window frame line and once hardened off drilled to take the shades. All painted BNSF orange though none of the three bottles I had matched the Athearn factory finish. The last touch was adding wind deflectors from spare P2K ones in clear plastic – Krystal Klear was again used.

Main windscreen windows and the cab rear windows were added now from the

Laser Kit set #238B for gull wing Athearn C44-9CW cab. It has a Caboose Hobbies price tag on it, \$4.95 and worth every cent. Shows you how long I had it in my stock as the last time I was there was 2003. The windscreen frames from the Details West kit were painted black and glued in place after removing the plastic representation of the frame. Holes were then drilled for the grabs above each window and the double tandem windscreen wipers (Detail Associates part #2319). Holes were drilled on the nose and cab roof for grabs there. The two pairs on the outer slopes need to be positioned at an angle around the sand fillers – see good photos for that detail. The two small grabs on the centre section are also angled slightly. Finally holes were drilled for A-Line single blade wipers on the two rear windows.



The cab roof is finished with a Hi-Tech Details antenna dome – pips to represent the anti-skid paint used were removed from the area (see top photo opposite). The baseplate was glued in place and painted orange per the prototype. Once dry I glued in place the antenna dome itself. **TO BE CONTINUED**



## PRODUCT NEWS

### ARCHER DECALS CLOSING

september 2022



Archer Decals has just sent out an e-mail to its customers announcing the owners' retirement:

#### **"NOTHING LASTS FOREVER**

*The time is well past due for me to throw in the towel and close up shop for good, so **between now and our official closing date, November 30, 2022, we will be liquidating all of our current inventory - first come, first served.** We are expecting a high volume of sales during this inventory liquidation period so we are asking for your patience, and to expect delays in receiving your orders. We will be sending periodic updates on inventory availability in the weeks ahead.*

#### **WHY NOW?**

*We've had a good run for over 33 years but I'm old, tired and ready to reclaim what's left of my life while I'm still healthy and able to do some of the things I enjoy.*

*There was a time not that long ago that I had unbounded enthusiasm for Archer but those days are sadly fading away. Age has caught up with me and I simply can't keep up with new the technologies emerging in our industry, and tech in general. Frankly, it's become a struggle to come to work lately and that's not fair to our customers, and I'm not about to hang on at your expense for no reason other than my pride.*

#### **CHEER UP, I'M NOT DEAD YET.**

*Don't expect to see me napping on the porch waiting to die. My friend and I have started a non-profit cat rescue ([thecatfarm.org](http://thecatfarm.org)) and I'm sure being a cat herder will take up a lot of my time. Incidentally, **all of the profits between now and when we close will go toward our rescue.***

#### **PARTING THOUGHTS**

*Before I go I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to all our customers who supported us over these many decades. Your patronage helped feed my family and put a roof over our heads, and for that I will be eternally grateful. I pray each and every one of you has a long, healthy and happy life.*

*In closing, allow me to take a moment to recognize and publicly thank Cookie Sewell for convincing me to get Archer started. Thank you, my friend. What a long, strange trip it's been."*

## NEW “PRODUCTS”

september 2022

### JAMES' MODEL RAILWAY Co.

James Norris, son of Bob Norris (Solent Summit etc), a keen N scale modeler and 3D printing guru, has announced the start of his own business. James is perhaps also known to some of us for working at Model Railway Solutions in Bournemouth. James tells me:

“I've just been flat-out busy, no complaints about that. The new business name is James' Model Railway Co.

Web address: <https://jamesmodelrailwayco.com/>

E-mail address: [jamesmodelrailwayco@yahoo.com](mailto:jamesmodelrailwayco@yahoo.com)

Mobile Phone no. : 07766 108827

The site is the same as my previous one, <http://www.jamestrainparts.com>, I'm transitioning over but the old email and website address will still work.

I will continue to offer 3D printed models, one of my most recent is the HO RT-624, as well as parts such as replacement gears and detail parts.

The main aspect of taking the business full time is actual layout work. The business offers the full service from design right through to finished scenic layouts. I have a team around me and we can do:

- Layout Design
- Baseboard Construction
- Track Laying
- Wiring for DC or DCC
- Computer Control
- Scenery
- Fault finding
- Repairs
- Modifications
- Loco Chipping and Sound Installation.

Any scale or Region, any railroad....

We can travel to you or build off-site and deliver a complete layout.



*Photo: Baldwin RT-624 in N scale for the PRR by Kevin Sweeny*





## GATEWAY 2022 NATIONAL CONVENTION IN ST LOUIS

Any report on a National Convention will comprise a few different components: getting there and back again; the conventions itself; layout tours; the Train Show; prototype trains in the area.

Getting there was a suggestion by fellow member Derek Murphy, my traveling companion and room mate: fly to Chicago, take Rock Island Metra Line to Joliet and rail fan there before catching the Texas Eagle the next day to St Louis. Both ways went without a hitch and Amtrak is a bargain at \$62 return each. We enjoyed many hours railfanning on the Amtrak platform at Joliet with the permission of the local staff.

The Convention went much to plan though there were clinics and some layout tours cancelled due to ill health. The biggest disappointment for most was the cancellation of the tour to Eric Brooman's "Utah Belt" (see August Model Railroader). Clinics were plentiful on all the topics you could imagine. Gordy was ever present and put in an enormous shift every day - I have never seen a President work so hard at a Convention. New initiatives were announced, to enhance our membership.

Layout tours were still plentiful but for the best one is the Layout Design SIG day, the Wednesday when it is self-drive. You will see some coverage in the pages that follow, space permitting of course - there might be an annex to come! All were excellent but you can judge for yourselves. Many were featured in Model Railroad Craftsman in the months leading up to the Convention.

The Train Show was a little disappointing in that it was a lot smaller than in past years but some key traders were there: Spring Creek Model Trains, Yankee Dabbler, Neal's NGauging Trains....plus FreeMo and NTRack layouts for starters, plus more. My shopping list had ticks all the way.

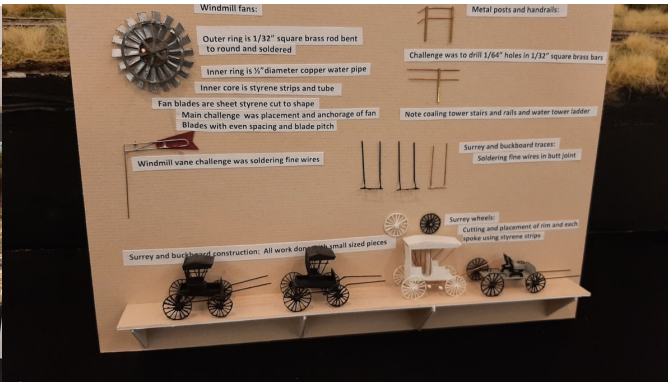
Finally there was time for some railfanning and a visit to the local Museum of Transportation. Railfanning at Joliet out and back and St Louis in between.

I hope the photos speak for themselves. Watch out for a Supplement.



*Top: View of the Gateway Arch at St Louis—adopted by the NMRA as its masthead for the Convention on Facebook; bottom: Siemens Charger on Lincoln Service from Chicago to St Louis entering the St Louis passenger loop.*





Celebration Room: Winning diorama with display of scratch-built carriage wheels!!!! Plus other entries...





## GATEWAY 2022 NATIONAL CONVENTION IN ST LOUIS - LAYOUT TOURS



John Schindler's St Louis Junction





## GATEWAY 2022 NATIONAL CONVENTION IN ST LOUIS - LAYOUT TOURS



Steve Goaring's Illinois Terminal RR, O'Fallon Branch

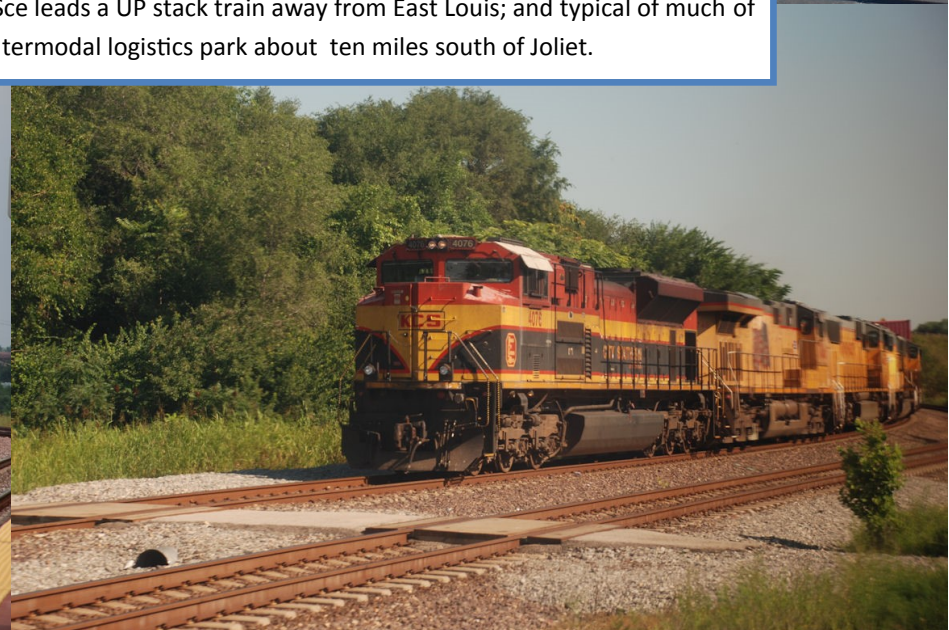




## GATEWAY 2022 NATIONAL CONVENTION IN ST LOUIS - 1:1 SCALE TRAINS



Top left clockwise: our ride from Chicago to Joliet on the Rock Island Line, MP36 Heritage unit in Rock Island colours; Terminal Railroad GP38-3s on a tour special for the Convention; KCS SD70Sce leads a UP stack train away from East Louis; and typical of much of the freight through Joliet, a BNSF stack train heading to the intermodal logistics park about ten miles south of Joliet.





## GATEWAY 2022 NATIONAL CONVENTION IN ST LOUIS - 1:1 SCALE TRAINS



Left: Catch of the week - former SP fire-fighting team water tank, still carrying its original identity, SPMW 6517, built as class O-50-13 in 19421. Still rolling 80 years later. The SP box car is PCF-built Class B-100-40 SP 656233 built in 1976, in the same train, a UP inter-yard transfer manifest 14 August 2022 entering the yard at St Louis, MO.



Right: Brand new coil cars being delivered - good interior detail showing varnished hardwood cradle decking. All TILX numbered 4040XX series on manifest into St Louis, MO; UP yard power in the former of former-SP GP40-2s. The GE unit is about to be placed in a consist to boost the front end power of a mixed manifest.



# THAMESIDERS SUB-DIVISION OFFICERS AND CONTACTS

## The Management Committee

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## Other Officers/Volunteers

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## NMRA MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Varying discounts and offers are available to NMRA members on production of their current membership card from the following suppliers:

- 10-20% off at Malc's Models (Ilkeston, Derbyshire)
- 10% off at Plus Daughters (Basildon – N scale specialists)
- 10% off at Grainge & Hodder (laser-cut base-board kits) with code nmra19
- 15% off Lenz Digital Plus at A&H Models (Brackley, Northants)

Please note not all the above supply USA/Canadian models.

The following do not offer any discounts but the following stock North American models: Invicta Models at Sidcup, Kent, and Kent Garden Railways at St Mary Cray, Orpington, Kent. Model Junction is trading from home now and will remain open for business until at least 31 December 2021.



## YOUTUBE VIDEO SUGGESTIONS (for those getting darker nights!)



Seaboard Southern promo 2022 v2 2 final



Layout Tour - BN Pacific Division in Amazing Detail HO Scale



#modeltrain #modelrailroad #trainlayout

Amazing Model Railroad Layouts And Tons Of Trains | National Train Show Recap

Top left: Seaboard Southern's short promotional video :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJNLoH7Mucw>

Top right: A video report from the National train Show in St Louis MO last month.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=855gKcDM6Vg>

Bottom left: There are quite a few videos of the BN layout built by Tim Dickinson. Tim passed away last month and was still working as a UP engineer in LA. Look for other videos on it. Enjoy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07OQM0VUBec>



## FROM THE CABOOSE - Mike Arnold

I am never sure what I will write here until I start to hit the keyboard. I sometimes have a burning issue at the back of my mind or a project or six that I am working on but I covered off a few of those at the head end of this issue. I suppose where I will start is the fellowship that flows from membership of the NMRA, or any club or association for that matter. Largely it is what you are prepared to put in rather than what you expect to get back for your buck. A couple of instances spring to mind.

At St Louis, I was chatting with Brad Joseph about the facilities available for clinicians to use to project their presentation when a guy ambled up to our small group waiting to ask a question of Brad and his organising team. When I finished and got my information, Miguel (aka Mike) Knuckey introduced himself. He was from Chile. He was here on holiday with his wife and daughter, staying in a different hotel.

We got chatting about the Convention and it was obvious that he was here to learn as much as he could about not only “stuff” but also how we run things and get members involved and engaged. He has a good few modelling friends in Chile (he runs a hobby store!!!) but they only get together at his shop when they can and share knowledge through YouTube videos. He wants to get something more organised up and running. Long story short, I encouraged him to get a ticket for the LDSIG day to visit a good few layouts under a self-drive arrangement (got him a ride too). He joined the NMRA that day. He met Gordy and tagged along with him on LDSIG day as we had to re-arrange our rides due to COVID striking our original driver.

We met up a good few times; he was outgoing and joined up with some OPSIG guys and went out operating layouts. It just shows what you can achieve in a short time with a little effort. So when you are at a Meet or a club evening and a new face appears, go shake his hand, or bump his elbow, get chatting, engage, make him (or her) welcome.

There, something came to me. Miguel is back in Chile after a great holiday chasing trains in St Louis and visiting DC. He went home with great memories, lots of new friends, all interested in what he is back home, USA trains. He got way more than he thought he had paid for. Membership with interest.

No doubt you will be hearing much more about upcoming developments from Gordy and the NMRA e-Bulletin if you read it. Coming this Autumn is a platform where NMRA members can meet, at random or by arrangement. It might provide

space for individual NMRA Groups to share their thoughts in a more interactive format than Groups-io offers. Let us see what the pilot exercises produce and thus the ultimate product.

One other message I picked up from St Louis was how disappointed members were that they were not in Birmingham (UK that is) at the proposed NMRA BR run National Convention. But it could not be helped - our venue for the train show was taken away from us due to the re-organised/re-scheduled Commonwealth Games. That all said in 2025, there is a major celebration of the bi-centenary of the first passenger railway. Who fancies offering help to organise a super BR Convention (no, not a National one) in the north East where all the railway fun will be? I floated the idea to our Board a while back and it was not turned down outright. It just needs willing and able bodies.....

As you might gather there are more new products coming out. The National Train Show was the place for that last month. We really have never had it so good. ScaleTrains has, like Athearn a few months back, in announced they will be doing the GE AC4400CW. Choices, choices - but then I have my highly detailed Athearn Blue Box ones!!!! The new boys on the block,

ClassOneModelWorks, announced they would be doing a GP40. It has been a long time since Atlas introduced theirs. And their recently announced TWF 10 well car does look really good - but I am not sure how much scope there is for running any on my layout given only 75 were ever built. Still cannot complain.

I managed to find one loco I was looking for at a price I thought was good - it is the only Bachmann loco on my roster, an Amtrak Siemens Charger. Now my layout is truly 2022 I got a few other bits and pieces. Picked up a few Diesel Era magazines I was looking for. They are a fabulous form of research for mostly modern era diesels. I guess for steam era fans the only near thing was Mainline Modeller or specialist historical societies.

Finally, anyone going to the Seaboard Southern Show on 17 September? If so I will see you there as I am operating on a layout - Cuban sugar cane! Something different. See you all soon

*Mike Arnold*

7 September 2022

## MONTHLY MEET AT ST. OSYTH VILLAGE HALL, CLACTON ROAD, DETAILS FOR MODELLERS - TRACKLAYING

### CO16 8PE



Take the A133 towards Clacton (past the Frating turnoff) until reaching the St Johns roundabout where the fire station is. Take the B1027 St Johns road exit towards St Osyth. After a few miles just after the Pump Hill BP filling station take the left turn towards St Osyth and the village hall is a little way along on the left set back from the road. Follow the one-way system around the hall and park in one of the marked bays at the front. You will come in from the right on the map on B1027 - Clacton Road is the yellow road running off the B1027 in a WSW direction. The Hall is circled.



Track at same location, Joliet, IL.

Above BNSF double track with pink ladies clear of tie centres but over tie ends.

Below UP/Amtrak trackage with grey ballast over the tie centres but not ends!



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