

September 2022 Newsletter.... Running Late!

GORDON WOODS

Many of you will have known Gordon, who sadly passed away this summer, as a talented, friendly and generously helpful recent member of the ASRM, an outstanding modeller with expertise in a wide spread of techniques; while longer-standing members will also remember him from his first spell of membership many years ago. What you may not know is much about the background and achievements of this very modest man. Gordon was born in Scotland, and spent his childhood in County Durham, before going on to read Geography at Oxford, where he stroked the university light-weight crew to victory over Cambridge. He taught Geography with infectious enthusiasm at Shrewsbury School for many years, which is where I got to know him well, coached the first rowing eight, and met and married his wife, Emma. He was a Housemaster (twice) and Second Master before returning to his Scottish roots by taking up the post of Warden (Headmaster) at Glenalmond. From there, on retirement, he returned to Shropshire to live in Baschurch, rejoined the ASRM and coached regularly at the Pengwern Boat Club, with every expectation of a full and active life with plenty of time to pursue his many interests, an expectation cut brutally short by his early and much regretted death at the age of 66, after a painful and debilitating illness borne with great courage and fortitude.

It was as a modeller, rail enthusiast and photographer that most members knew him best though, and Tim can tell you better than I of his interests and achievements in these respects.

Peter Cox

I first met Gordon during his initial stint as an ASRM member in the 1990s. Given our mutual interest in the railways of the north-east, it was inevitable that we should become good friends. From a personal point of view, I was sad when he moved up to Scotland, but then delighted when he decided to relocate back to Shropshire on retirement. I introduced Gordon to the Shropshire and Herefordshire Area Group of the Scalefour Society, who have regular meetings at members' houses throughout Shropshire. Although nominally a P4 group, there are members modelling in various other scales and gauges, and Gordon (working in OO finescape) soon became an integral and very popular member and regular attendee. There was always lots of good-natured banter about the differences and relative merits of the "broad" and "narrow" gauges! We both worked on some of the scenic elements of Gavin Clark's Kerrinhead layout and were part of the operating team at several exhibitions. These were always very enjoyable weekends, helped by a beer or two, and only served to strengthen our friendship. Gordon was particularly skilled at painting and weathering, and we joked that his superb weathering of the coal drop area on Kerrinhead was the main reason that the layout was awarded the MRJ Chalice at Scaleforum one year!

Gordon's own modelling was focussed on the development of a representation of Dearness Valley Junction. For those who don't know, this was part of a complex of junctions just south of Durham, involving the East Coast Main Line and lines to Consett, Bishop Auckland and the Dearness Valley itself. Gordon lived near there for part of his childhood, and had always wanted to reproduce the junction in model form. This was an ambitious project in what was a relatively small space, but the way in which Gordon arranged the different routes without

looking cramped was ingenious, and the layout was progressing well, with his handbuilt trackwork giving a prototypical free-flowing look. Various railway structures and buildings, including part of the adjacent colliery, were all built from scratch, and the scenic work was also developing nicely. Several prototypical trains had been assembled from a combination of RTR and kits. It was always a pleasure to see Gordon's excellent painting and weathering skills transform models from "out of the box" to something much more realistic.

It will come as no surprise, given his presentation to the ASRM on the subject, that most of Gordon's locos were sound-fitted, and he spent many hours tweaking various parameters to improve the realism of the sound, to impressive effect. Members will already be aware that he also enjoyed and was very good at photography, both of model railways and the real thing, an interest probably inherited from his father, who took many railway photos during the '50s, '60s and '70s. Gordon was thrilled when one of his photos of Kerrinhead was chosen for the front cover of the 2018 Scaleforum show guide. As well as giving presentations to the ASRM and writing articles for the Newsletter, Gordon was also a regular contributor of articles to the Shropshire Railway Society magazine, which he often used as a further excuse to indulge his love of railway photography!

Gordon always had a remarkably positive attitude to everything he did, and he continued actively modelling throughout his illness. Just two days before he was taken into hospital for what turned out to be the final time, I was round at his house underneath the baseboards sorting out a Tortoise point motor that was misbehaving, and he was telling me his plans for further development of the colliery area and modifications to the fiddle yard. We ran several trains: V2, B1, Q6, J27, all with sound of course. I will miss him greatly, but that afternoon will be a treasured memory.

My thoughts and condolences, and I'm sure those of all ASRM members, are with Emma, their son James and daughter Kate.

Rest in peace my friend.

Tim Lewis



Gordon took this photo of A4 Pacific 'Sir Nigel Gresley' at the level crossing at Baschurch in May of this year

Someweir Junction

In July, I (Young Eric Challenor) went down to North Devon for a few days; my first real holiday since Covid first struck. As a life member, I was able to visit the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway while I was there and I thoroughly enjoyed this, but I also wanted to make a special

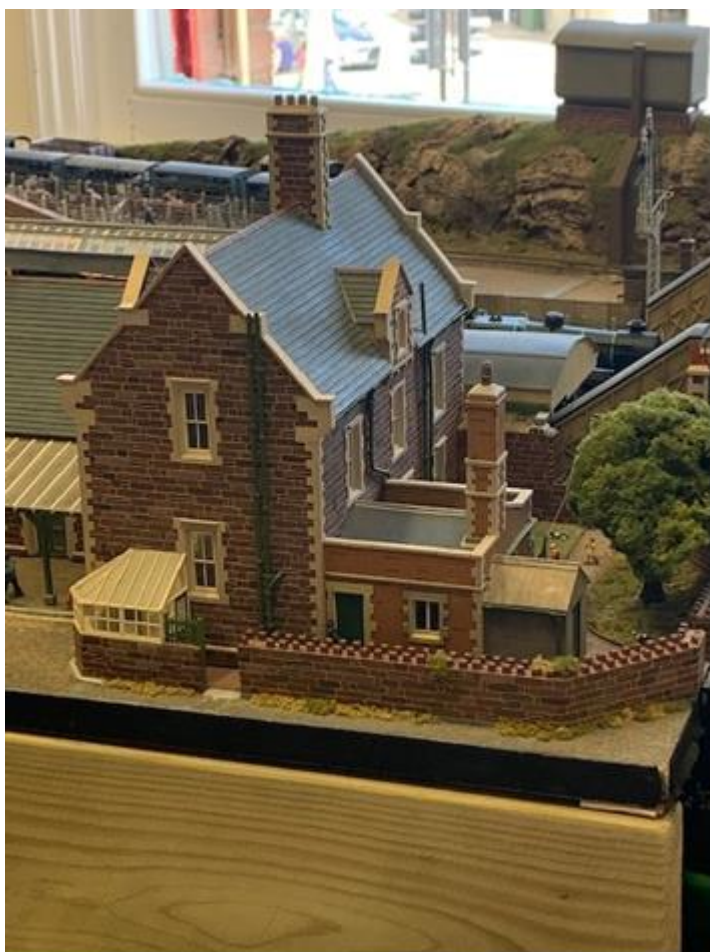


visit on behalf of the late David Knight, one of our much loved and sadly missed founder members. Many of our older members will remember that as his health began to fail back in 2019, David tentatively offered his layout, Someweir Junction - the spelling is correct - to Barnstaple Museum, for them to display. The layout is based on Barnstaple Junction in LSWR/SR days and the hope was that it would stand as an accurate portrayal and reminder of the past for future visitors to the museum to enjoy. Such was the high standard and reputation of David's work that a deputation from the museum immediately travelled over 200 miles to

view the layout. Needless to say; his offer was immediately accepted and in due course, the layout was carefully dismantled and transported back to North Devon.

I wanted to see how work had progressed, so mid-week, I made my way across Exmoor to Barnstaple Museum where his layout has now been erected in a purpose-built room on the first floor, where it is available to view. Though not yet fully operational as the room length does not allow the end sections to be attached, Alison the Curator, advises me that the intention is to erect a fully secure gazebo type structure on the main apron in front of the building in the near future, when it should then be possible to have the full layout assembled and running on regular occasions during opening hours, subject to





members of the local model railway group being available to operate it. If you are ever down that way, I can recommend a visit.

Eric Challoner.



N.B. - Scott, all the pictures were taken in the museum apart from one, which was taken on one of our open days at the Morris Hall. If you are wondering about the SR barley twist station lamp, there were none available, so David wrapped/soldered fuse-wire around a brass tube to get the effect!



Great Eastern Railway wagon wheels

I am slowly building a model of Tollesbury station in Essex. It was on the Kelvedon and Tollesbury Light Railway and the model is set in 1911. The line was opened in 1904 and closed in 1951. Traffic was very light and I only have to build a limited amount of stock: an 0-6-0 side tank loco, a couple of 4 wheeled coaches and some



wagons. To date, I have built two Private Owner coal wagons, a GE van and a few open wagons. What I need is a brake van. There is a kit but talking to an exhibitor at the Craven Arms show who has one, it is not very good and expensive. So, it is scratchbuilding again. The GE wagon wheels are unusual in having a riveted ring just inside the rim. I

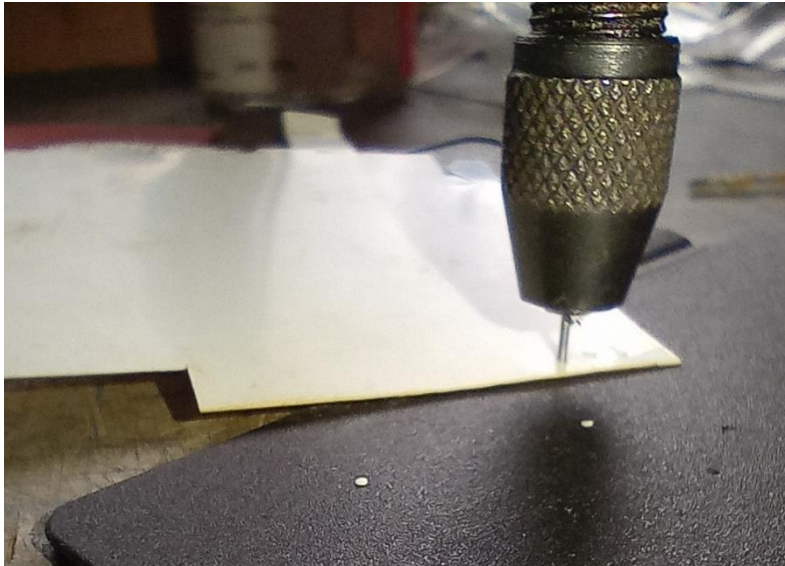
decided this needs to be modelled if I was to capture the character of these wagons.

I thought about etched brass or circles cut on the pantograph engraver but settled on 10 thou plasticard cut on the pantograph. These are glued into the rim of a Wizard Models split spoke wheel with Mek-pak.

I tried marking the position of the rivets on the engraving machine but somehow they did not coincide with the spokes. Now I punch out rivets from 10 thou plasticard and glue them in the correct position again with Mek-pak. It is a bit nerdy but surprisingly easy and gives good results. You need a pin chuck and a suitable diameter drill; 0.55mm in this case. They are a little overscale but I wanted them to show! Mount the drill the wrong way round in the pin chuck with about 3 – 4mm protruding. Holding it upright, rub it backwards and forwards on a flat piece of fine emery to square off the end. I have different grades of emery paper glued to off cuts of mdf for all kinds of flattening and smoothing.



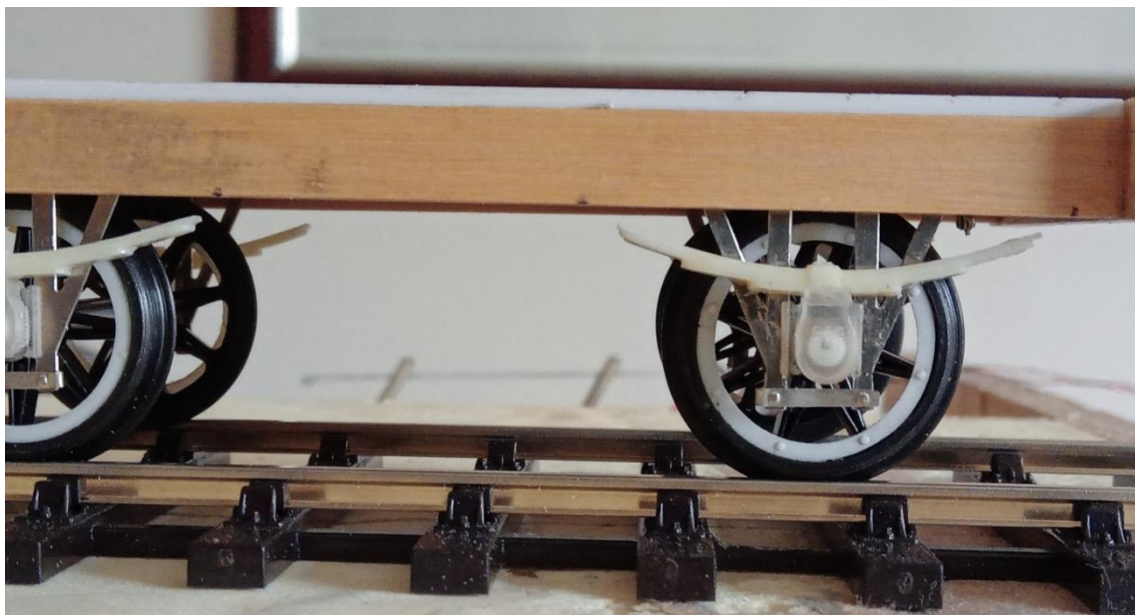
You need some polypropylene sheet; labels attached to pliers, socks and other items are often made of this tough plastic. Lay an offcut of 10 plasticard on the



polypropylene and with care, press the end of the drill hard onto the plastic until it punches out a perfect disc of plasticard.

If you press too hard, it will be buried in the polypropylene but you can bend it about until it pops out. The punching process formed a beautifully domed 'rivet head' which can be glued onto a plastic model.

I believe you can do the same thing with very thin lead sheet obtained from wine bottles.



Riveted ring on right hand wheel of part-built GE brake van; left one still to finish!

Nick Coppin

WALLS AND BUCKLED TRACK

And just how are walls and buckled track related? One may well ask. Well the disastrous buckled track on one layout brought a sudden and unwelcome halt to the industrious building of walls on another.

Backscenes have, and always will be, the subject of discussion amongst railway



modellers and it would seem that there are as many preferences as there are modellers. But the one thing that is rarely discussed, or even thought about on many layouts, is how best to present the front of the layout. Many ingenious solutions have been found

especially amongst the exhibition fraternity, of which my favourite is a dock or sea scape, which in my view gently leads the eye into the sceniced railway because one can accept an expanse of water as having no definitive starting point. Where there is room to portray the odd boat or ship, even better.

In the case of 'Earls Hall' where each baseboard has been crowded with track, such a solution is not possible – not an unusual situation for home layouts where long term operational fun is more desirable than looking at completed scenery. The answer, at

least to my satisfaction, was to build walls to the front edge of the boards in the hope the eye would accept that the view of the railway was as seen from looking over a wall – well a fanciful imagination helps in this regard! And so a massive construction exercise was embarked upon to build said walls –



totalling a scale $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of different renditions on the same theme. Hopefully the 'before and after' photographs will illustrate the improvement this has achieved.

And this is where we associate walls with buckled track. Whilst the builders were up to speed and laying their quota of 500 bricks a day at Earls Hall, the buckling of the track at Much Pending brought a sudden halt to their progress as labour had to be diverted to the priority of track re-alignment.

Much Pending is a small N gauge layout measuring just 6 ft long and formed of two boards. It had been booked to appear at the forthcoming Welshpool and Llanfair Steam Gala and mindful of the fact it was approaching 20 years old was found to be in need of some TLC. Additionally, the past years have brought about new techniques such as static grass which does effect a great improvement. Hence the layout was moved into the workshop where easy all-round access was possible with all the tools and facilities ready to hand. With the layout now ready to be worked upon we received an unexpected visitation in the morning which was followed by a heavy lunch and the mandatory afternoon snooze in the favourite armchair – what bliss! While all this inactivity was being enjoyed the temperature outside was building and building; yes we had been warned, but I refused to panic – unlike the millennials, I remember 1976 when there was no panic, we were merely advised to put on a hat and go out to enjoy the sunshine.

Thus it was that by 16:00 when I ventured into the man-cave the temperature had reached 40 deg and the damage was done, as depicted in the photographs. The boards were hastily removed to the cool of the house and deposited on the dining room table – the hobby rightly taking preference



over the need to eat comfortably at a table. All my fault of course, but, which like all such circumstances, required a number of factors to contribute to the disaster. Ignoring my after-lunch



tardiness, the main cause was that fishplates had been soldered. Whilst I have received criticism for so doing, in defence, each of the two boards permit only about 2 ft of straight track and therefore it had been necessary when laying the track to solder lengths together while straight and then introduce the bend. If there had been room perhaps soldering could have been avoided but radii of 12" were necessary. Secondly, had I realised in time I would have separated the two boards to allow for expansion, but now some of the curves had now grown outwards and lifted from the ballast while one of the straight sections at the board end had caused the solder joint on the brass screw to shear, as another photo shows, which was taken during the realignment process.



Once the few days of hot weather had passed the layout was returned to the workshop, repairs effected and trains run to test before another few days of similar temperatures necessitated a return to the dining room, by which time I detected that I was losing my popularity with a certain family member. However once that hiatus was over a move back to the workshop ensured the originally intended TLC could be applied and as I write all is ready for the Steam Gala at the beginning of September. Not, however without some intricate, albeit drastic, track relaying had taken place involving the careful removal of the ballast from under the sleepers by way of a slitting disc in the Dremel but

causing some collateral damage to the adjacent scenery.

Perhaps now the bricklaying gang can be restored to the original pursuit of constructing the rest of the $\frac{3}{4}$ miles of wall and in the future perhaps I should take heed of the forecast instead of dismissing it as just another Michael Fish episode?

Mike Bennett

Penrhos and Lydgate

My name is Ian Perrin. I'm a member of Newtown MRS and I've been to several ASRM meetings in the past but I've now decided to join your group - so I'm taking this opportunity to introduce myself and talk about my layouts.



Since Father Christmas gave me a Tri-Ang 0-6-0 tank engine, 3x wagons and a circle of track back in the early 1960's I've had an interest in railways. Trix, Wrenn, Hornby, Superquick and Airfix were names that would always feature on my childhood birthday lists and pocket money would help to augment my collection. Trainspotting on Reading Station was a regular activity in my early teens and my first Saturday job was in Eames (of Reading) Ltd. But then work, family commitments and a number of house moves meant a railway layout was never to quite become a reality for many years.



With children eventually having moved out and the prospect of retirement on the horizon I made more of an effort to re-establish my hobby. Realising that I was a bit out of touch with developments I signed on at Pendon Museum as a volunteer and was part of the Sunday team working on the scenery. In fact I was responsible for 'growing' a fair amount of the crops in Pendon's fields... largely on account of my ability to climb around the network of struts and vent pipes beneath the renowned 'Vale of White Horse' layout and appear up through the various "pop-holes" incorporated into the rolling hills. Whilst at Pendon I befriended one Dave Spencer who, as it happens, was selling his layout 'Penrhos'. This was a 4mm exhibition layout that had featured in several magazines. Dave is a very good modeller and he paid much attention to creating a railway scene that looked as if it had been engineered through undulating terrain, which I liked. So I decided to take it on and I continued to show it on the circuit for a few years.

In 2013 my wife and I decided that the time was right to sell-up our Berkshire home and establish roots elsewhere. We found a plot of land in Montgomery and embarked on a self-build project which was to take some four years before house and garden was finished. One of the advantages of designing a house from scratch is that I could finally get the railway room I'd always craved... though, in retrospect, I could have done with it being a few feet bigger!

Penrhos, by this time, was beginning to show its age after a hard working life and so I chose to retire it and have it permanently set up in my room. Penrhos is branch line in a fictitious rural community set somewhere in a relatively remote part of Wales in the 1950's-60's – primarily to service a quarry. It was end-to-end 13'7" x 23" layout with a small fiddle yard at one end and a sector plate at the other. Shunting manoeuvres and shuttles are fine for a viewing public but I also wanted the option to sit and relax and just watch trains running so I



opted to extend one of the bays at either end in order to incorporate it into a "roundy-roundy" set-up. The idea was to make an oval that would link up to my own layout and I then set about building some shelving beneath. I discarded the show supports in favour of the layout baseboards resting on two parallel box-section beams – a method employed at NMRS for our club

layouts. This enabled me to slot in two refurbished and adapted Ikea desks underneath for storage.

Whilst this layout adaptation and carpentry was underway it so happened that Dave contacted me again to ask if I might be interested in another of his layouts as he was having to sell it. Even though 'Lydgate' was a bit too big for the space (some 14') and would require some shoe-horning I felt it too good an opportunity to miss to acquire a high quality layout in favour of my own layout which I knew would have taken me years to complete (and not be as good!). So I sold on my other layout and set about

modifying Lydgate instead, which needed one of the baseboard sections, 'Forest End', to be separated and set at 90° with bridged access to the centre of the room in between. Again, more storage and shelving needed to be built underneath.

Lydgate is based on a drift mine and cable works in the Forest of Dean in the 1950's – 60's (convenient, because some of the rolling stock could be common to either layout!) and also appeared in railway mags. It features a steep-sided valley with railways cutting through the landscape at different levels including a single platform station and a siding serving a small electrical works at the bottom.

In 2022, I now have Penrhos and Lydgate working as separate end-to-end layouts, as they were originally intended, but both now have

extensions that run around the back of each other to form complete ovals for when I'm lazy and just want to watch the trains go by. I have one intermediate section,



some 4'x3', which still requires the scenery to be done on it... so enough to keep me occupied for the time being. Electrics I struggle with and so have I rely on the help of others for assistance in this department. My interest is in the scenics element and trying to create a layout where the railway has been integrated with both the natural and built environment and not just added as an afterthought. Capturing a spirit of time and place is the goal!

Ian Perrin

Ordnance maps for planning a layout

As a former cartographic draughtsman, maps have always been of interest to me and the mapping link from the British Rail database is of immense help to anyone planning a model railway. See [BRDatabase - the Complete British Railways Locomotive Database 1948-1997](#) for the database if you are not familiar.

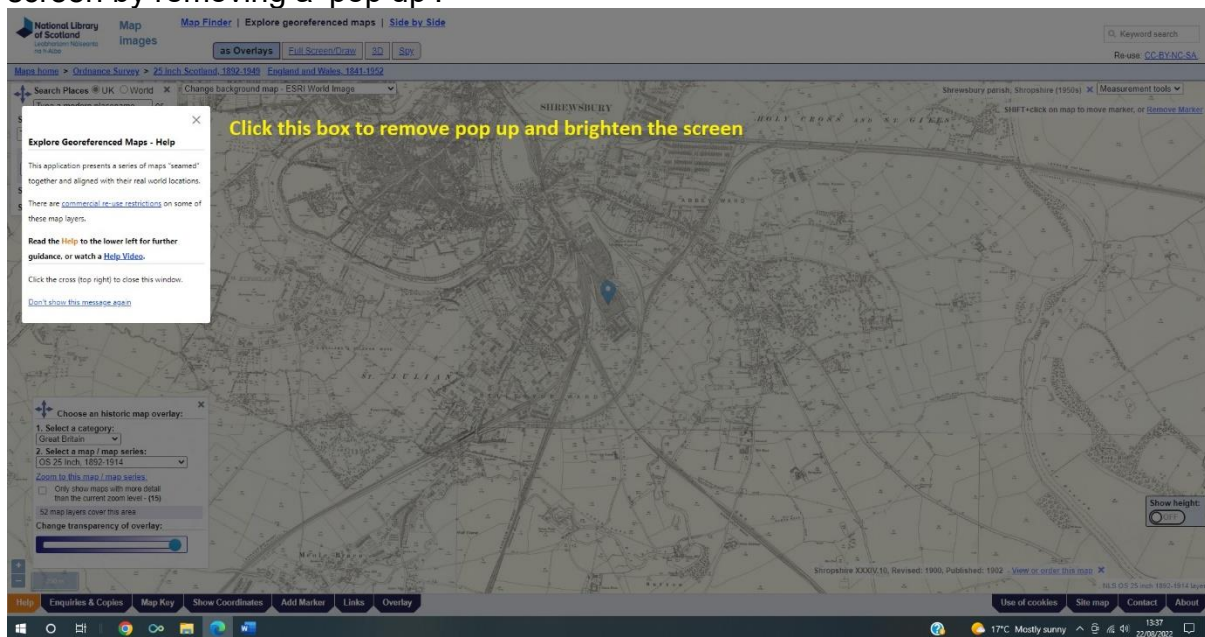
From this site, it is possible to access the 25 inch 'County' series of OS maps dating back to circa 1900 or thereabouts. Using the zoom in – zoom out facility trackwork, positions and size of building plus the location of equipment such as signal posts can be identified for any location on the original network, as built at that time.

Here is a shortcut:

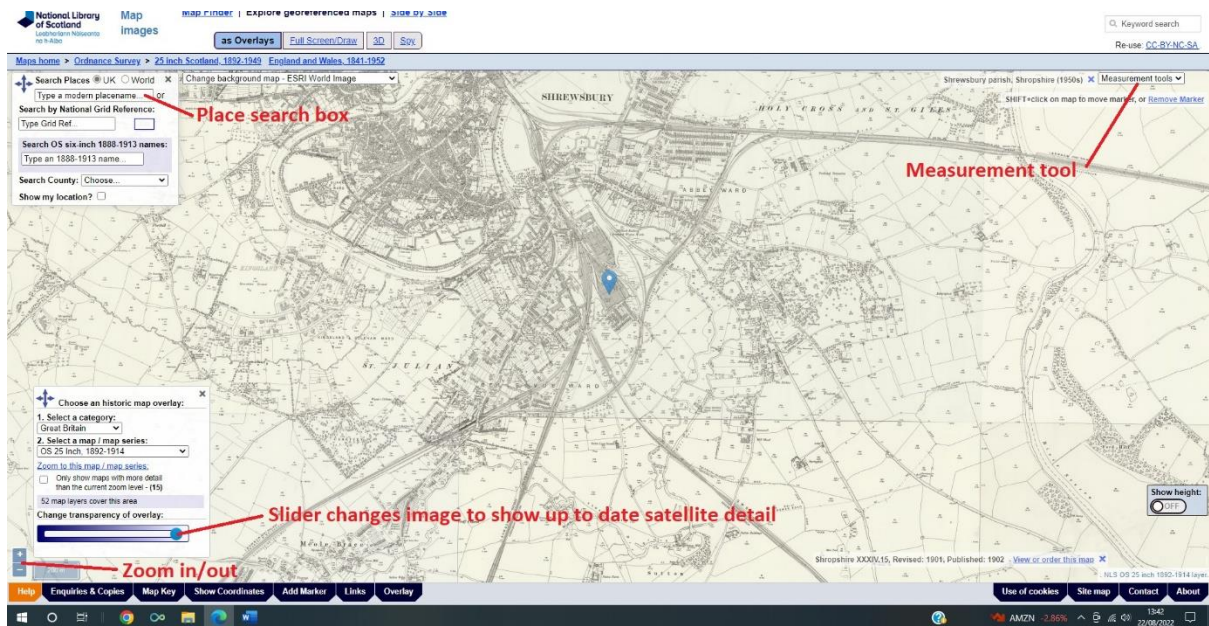
The screen prints show what is available and the following link takes you straight to Shrewsbury MPD and the 25 inch series as a start point: Link [Explore georeferenced maps - Map images - National Library of Scotland \(nls.uk\)](#) From here you can slide the map to any location in the country or use the 'search place' box to go directly to another location.

Images:

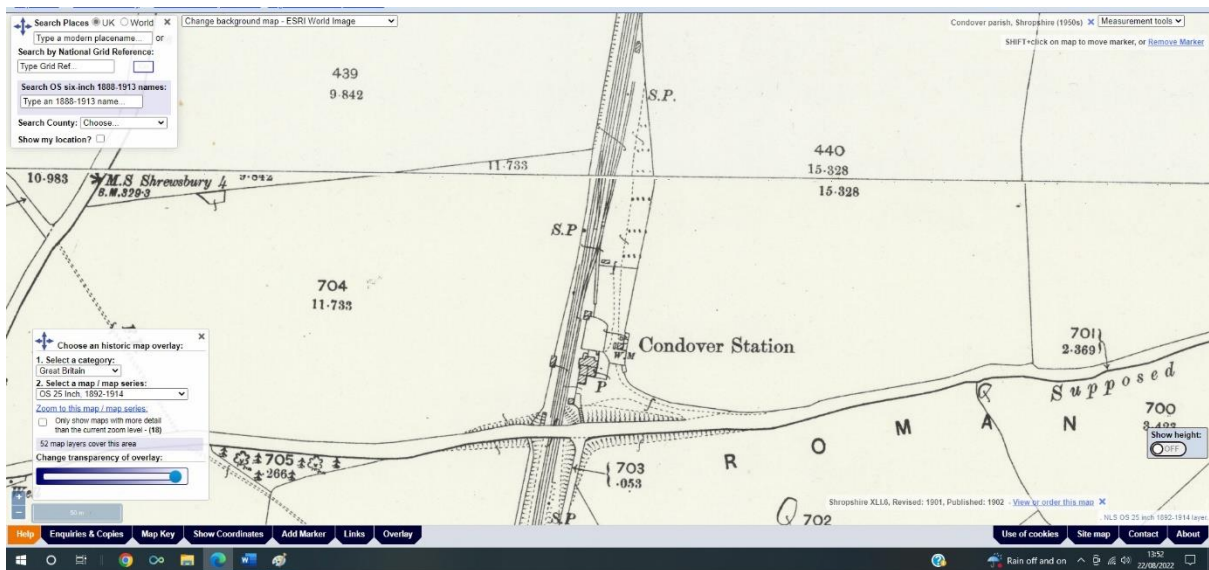
Map 1 shows what you get on opening using the link above and how to brighten the screen by removing a 'pop up'.



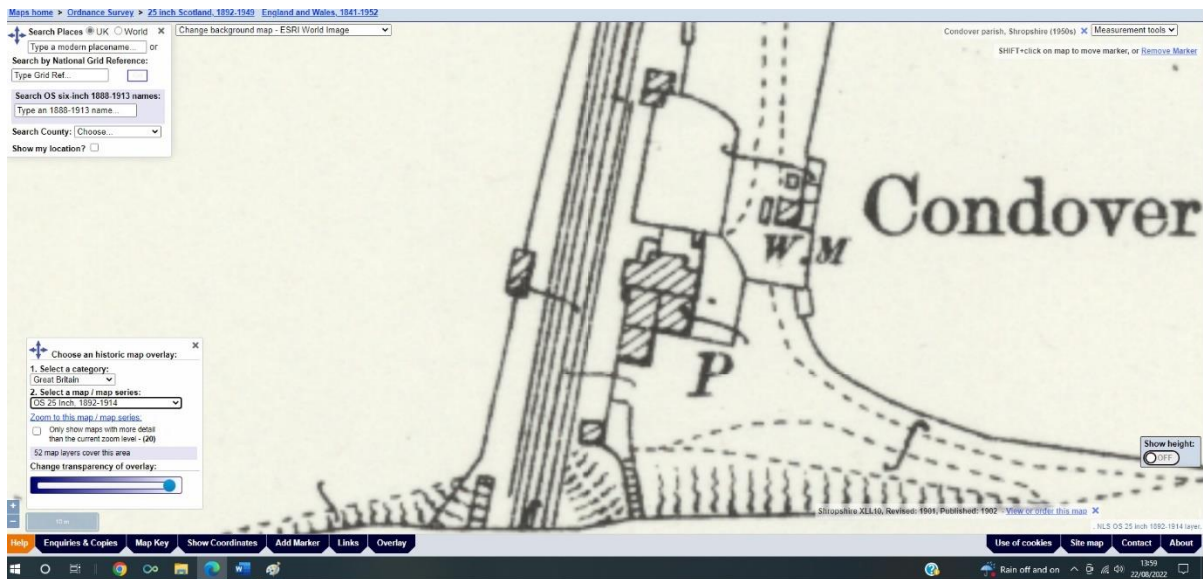
Map 2 shows the brighter screen and the tools available.



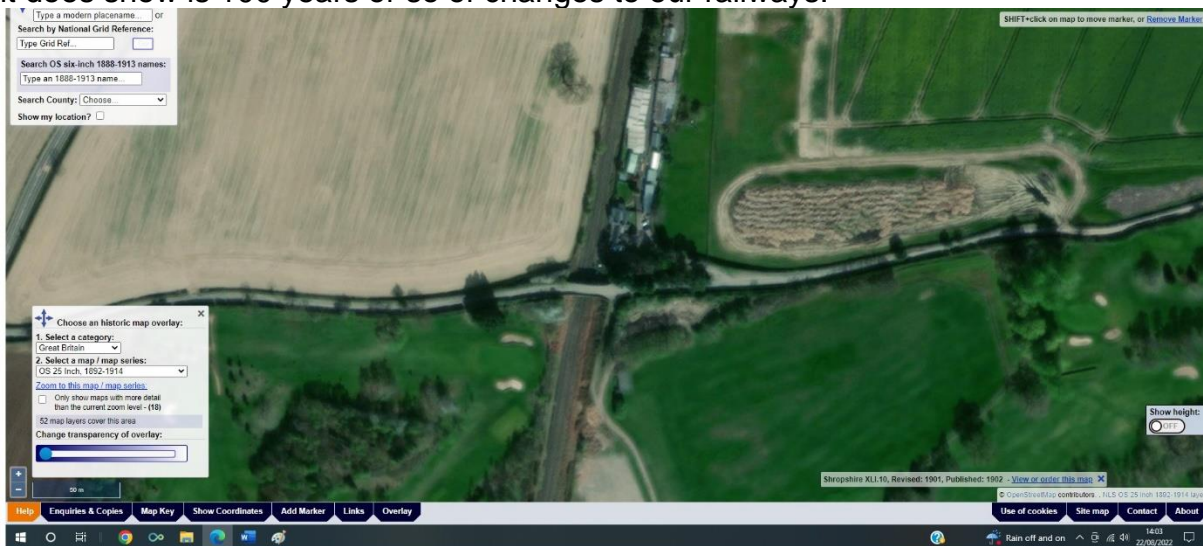
Map 3 shows Condover Station (the nearest to our meeting room) and the detail available from the maps. If necessary, you can zoom in further as shown on Map 4



where the station building, waiting room, steps from the road and weigh machine are shown relative to each other.



Map 5 shows how the slider changes to the modern satellite image. Very useful for modern image modellers, although 'Google Earth' may have the edge on this. What it does show is 100 years or so of changes to our railways.



The best way to check this is to try it and have an interesting time looking at the places you remember.

Graham Betts

BELDMAN

The n gauge layout featured for sale in a recent Newsletter received no 'sale' interest and will now be available for shows etc.

The model has previously been to several shows and featured in Continental Modeller.

Please contact Graham Betts on

with any requests.

