

# ASSOCIATION OF SHREWSBURY RAILWAY MODELLERS



Chris Kapolka took this atmospheric shot while on a photo charter on the Mid Hants Railway with SR Schools class 30925 *Cheltenham* on the last day of its boiler ticket. He rode on the footplate for an hour which was rather fun, though the weather was dire.

## NOVEMBER 2022 NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the fifth of our quarterly newsletters. Thank you to all of you who have sent in photos and articles. Please continue to send in material. The next edition will be edited by Peter Cox.

Nick Coppin

### **My Ordinary - Layout update.**

When the call for newsletter items was posted, I had nothing out of 'my ordinary' to submit and so I thought an update on 'my ordinary' may be of interest. This was started at the very beginning of the Covid pandemic and what is shown in the photos is progress to date. I remember driving to IKEA to buy some trestles for my layout and en route hearing about the proposed lockdown period in 2020.

The layout is basically to represent an industrial area in the West Riding of Yorkshire around Dewsbury. This location was served by the GN, L&Y, LNWR & MR. The GC was to the south around Sheffield and the NER to the north at Leeds and Harrogate. The model was based on 'sketchy' details found on the 'net' which indicated that around 1906, the MR were buying

up land in Bradford to extend south from their Forster Square station (N. side of Bradford) to connect with their Goods only depot at Savile Town, south of Dewsbury. This would give a route from the Midlands, Sheffield, London, Derby etc through to Bradford and Carlisle that effectively bypassed Leeds. The MR also had several joint ventures with the NER in Yorkshire, including running powers between Harrogate (NER) and Bradford (MR). This, in theory, is another joint venture and I have a collection of MR - NER and LMS – LNER items to run on it. I favour the periods 1923 just before grouping and 1947 preceding nationalisation.

The board construction is mdf on a 2" x 1" frame with hardboard fascias – big mistake. Whilst this has worked many times before, for reasons unknown, there has been a lot of ‘sagging’ of the boards this time. Track is 00 Scaleway bullhead or PECO bullhead. Some points are handmade using copper clad sleepers, although a little bit of PECO Streamline does come into play due to my decision to extend the scenic section. Buildings are a mix of scratch built Plasticard, Metcalfe card kits, Scale Scenes print offs, my first attempt at a DAS building, one Ratio signal box kit and a ‘butchered’ Hornby viaduct. The remaining scenery/levels is made from styrene, cardboard, paper mache, static grass, and Woodland Scenic materials.

I have recently made some backscenes by wetting and bending some hardboard. These are presently painted white waiting for my ‘Bob Ross’ transplant to come through.



The goods yard with scratch build good shed made from recycled Ratio walls.



View looking in the northerly direction.



Passing the Power Station with the coal feeder line girder bridge ahead.



View looking south just before the good yard.



Housing area just south of the station.



View looking south to north – I still haven't found how to weather platform tops.

Graham Betts



Detail of Schools class Cheltenham taken by Chris Kapolka

### **My attempt at creating a Backscene.**

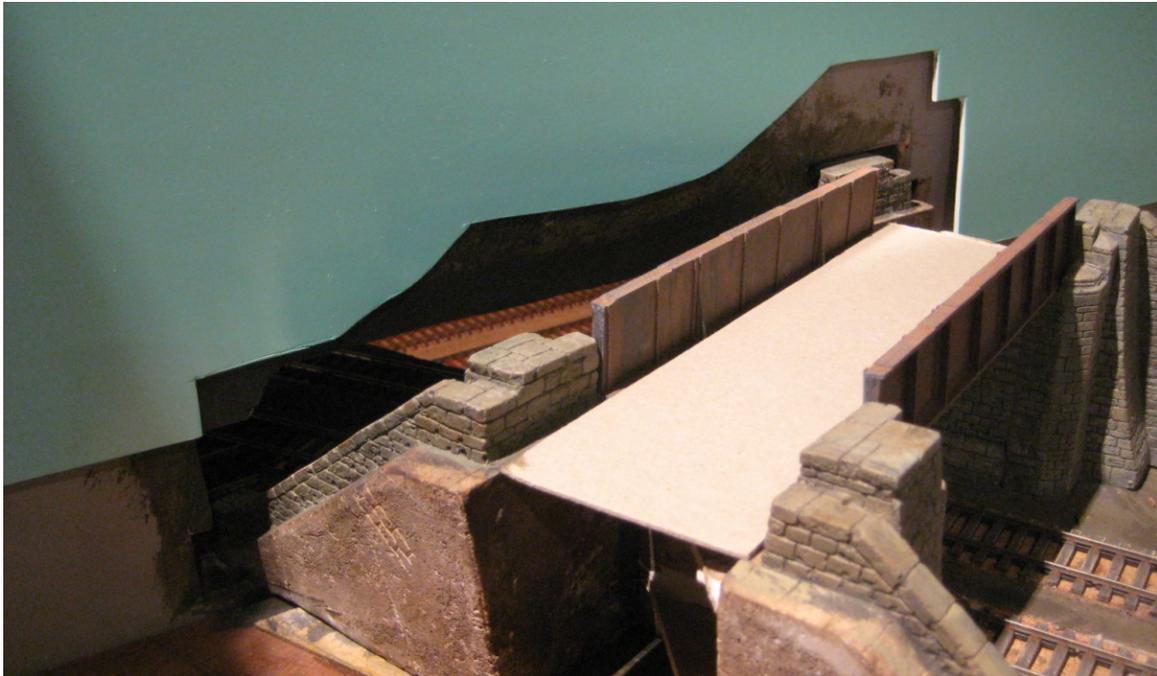
One section of my layout has remained in a very basic state for quite a while. Some time ago my two end-to-end layouts (Penrhos and Lydgate) were each extended to form circles and which crossed over each other at this point and the intention was for this baseboard section to be a rustic diorama, in contrast with the stations, coal mine, quarry and industry etc. elsewhere on the layout. The main feature being a railway embankment running through the middle of a hillside.



Before I could get started on the landscaping, I needed a decent backdrop to set it off and whilst I had already chosen a photo-backscene to use from the range of 'id Backscenes' I couldn't make up my mind as to the best way to mount it. It needed to be an L-shape with a curve in the corner and because it would straddle two baseboard sections I wanted to make it removable. I purchased the "Village" P203 pack AA from Art Printers which is supplied, rolled up, in two 1.5m x 380mm sections and printed on a self-adhesive, "water, scratch and tear resistant" polypropylene material. I concluded that it would be too difficult to make the frame in one piece (and too unwieldy) so compromised by having two sections - knowing that the join could be largely hidden by trees etc. For the rear section I used a sheet of hardboard mounted on a lightweight frame and with a 90° stub on one side to support the curve.



I'd seen several video clips where modellers had used 'Foamex' to mount the backscene onto, which seemed a good approach. It is made from expanded PVC and provides a lightweight flat surface that is fairly rigid but, crucially, is flexible enough to form a tight curve. Fortunately, I managed to get hold of two offcuts of 2mm 'FoamLite Xpress' that I felt would be just the job. The smaller section for the LH flank required a shaped opening to be cut around a bridge under which the track would exit, stage left.



The curve and back section proved a bit more tricky to get right but was eventually glued to the hardboard using a “no nails” type adhesive.



So far, so good but I had more than a little trepidation about the final stage... ie, sticking the photo-backscene on. It had to work first time or the entire look would be ruined, so there was absolutely no room for error. The task ideally requires three pairs of hands at once. The backscene comes tightly rolled up and definitely does not want to stay flat and is very easily creased – as I found to my cost when trying to lose the curl by rolling the other way around. The backing paper is plastic, rather than paper, so can't be folded back on itself in order to get the leading edge stuck down. Of course it would have been a little easier to stick on the flat but, as I'd noted from the YouTube clips, it creases horribly if you then try and bend it... and so has to be applied once the curve has been formed. All in all a very tricky operation to perform... and then there is the concern that once committed, with the leading edge that the bottom edge remains parallel to the base as the print is unrolled. Furthermore, having a big enough space to work in, as well as a clean, flat surface is also critical to getting a good end result. Any speck of dust or dirt that should find its way onto the sticky surface will show up in the sky.





After a great deal of cursing (fortunately, one extra pair of hands was available at short notice) I did manage to get the backscene on without there being any major mishaps... just one or two small creases if you look very closely and the board joint will be disguised by greenery.

I'm fairly pleased with the end result and, moreover, it's a job that I'm very glad to have gotten out of the way!





Ian Perrin

Some photos attached from the September meeting.

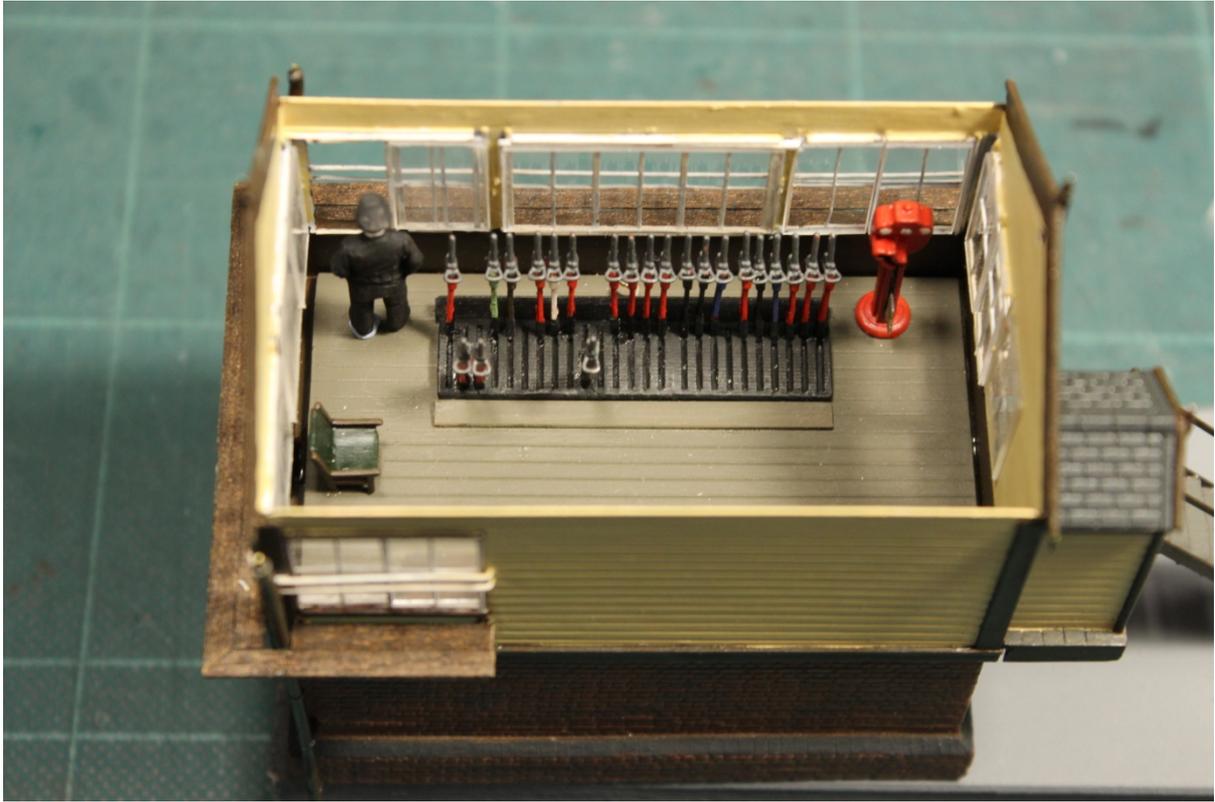




LMS (ex MR) Belpaire Rebuild Johnson 1142 class (2F) no 22918 c. late 1930s in EM Gauge.  
(still awaiting smokebox door shed plate!)



LNWR Type 4 Signal Box - 25 Lever Frame - c1939



LNWR Type 4 Signal Box for Woodsall. Size 'E' (length 18'9") with 25 lever frame.  
Again c. late 1930s LMS period.

Dave York

### Graphite – An Antidote To Track Cleaning?

Rather like Marmite, one either loves graphite or one hates it.

Having listened to several arguments for and against, I remained unconvinced as to the efficacy of graphite as a means of improving electrical contact between wheels and track.

However there were certain factors that induced me to experiment — somewhat cautiously, I might add.

These being:

a)...A pal who swears by it, regularly exhibits and claims he no longer cleans the track, but merely applies a top up of graphite very occasionally and as necessary.

b)...My own home layout which is difficult to keep clean owing to the amount of track, the difficult access to a number of places and the need to move stock to do the job properly.

In fact it would be possible to spend more time cleaning than operating.

Therefore I purchased a 6B graphite stick from an online art supplier which, 18 months ago cost £1.50. [Now £2.40] The unavoidable postage costs induced me to buy two, but frankly one stick could last a lifetime, subject to one's age of course!



In summary the findings were as follows:-

- 1...the track must have all stock removed and the track thoroughly cleaned using one's personal preference.
- 2...track cleaning should be done in minute detail with close inspection and taking particular care at points and crossings.
- 3...to check this cleaning had been done fully I ran a test loco with clean wheels around to identify any remaining troublesome areas.
- 4...with the power then off, the graphite stick was run around the track. The width of the stick conveniently matched the N gauge track such that both lines could be done at the same time.
- 5...care needs to be taken not to mark the ballast as 6B is soft and easily marks light coloured ballast.
- 6...whilst running the stick along the track worked well on plain track, it was found necessary to wipe it across the track at the points to ensure a reasonable deposit, care being taken to ensure the live frog was well coated.
- 7...on plain track it was found that continuous application was not too important, as after a few passes the stock successfully carried deposits on the wheels and spread the graphite along the track.
- 8...for coaches with interior lighting the bogies were removed and immersed in an ultrasonic bath to ensure both wheels and contacts were thoroughly cleaned.
- 9...for older locos with wipers it was found beneficial to apply a small quantity of graphite to the rear of the wheels.
- 10... even once the track is coated with graphite some locomotives benefited from being run for a short while to pick up deposits on the wheels to improve electrical contact.

And now for the downsides:-

The obvious disadvantage is wheel slip. However I have found this to be a minor factor affecting only uphill stretches and then only those locomotives that are either very light or are pulling heavy trains. None of my diesels had any problem with 1 in 50 gradients and even 12 car Eurostars had no problem – but that is not surprising since they are manufactured by Kato. Perhaps the worst affected loco was the 0-6-0 Collett by Peco which, with a tender drive relies upon loco body weight to turn the driving wheels. Another downside is that the application of graphite means the track is no longer nice and shiny as it would be on well used real track, and I must admit there is no longer the ability to admire intricate shining pointwork as you look along it.

If there is a need to add graphite to a troublesome spot during operation, unlike the usual cleaners, the track power should preferably be switched off.

[If the power is accidentally left on the resulting spark from the lightest touch across the track proves, if proof were necessary, just what a good conductor graphite is]

Conclusions:-

The inconvenience of some older and lighter steam locos slipping on the gradients, can be overcome, as with prototypical practice, either by reducing the train length or by the employment of double heading.

The inconvenience of a sound fitted locomotive stalling and then having to wait while it again goes through the start up sequence is overcome.

It is a godsend on points and sidings. It has been stated that one way to ensure good running is to regularly run trains. This is not feasible in either sidings or MPD's and so graphite provides a good solution.

Thus, in my humble opinion it works and it works well – graphite is for me, and apart from

very occasional topping up on the odd isolated sections of track (no doubt caused by poor track laying) I have had no problems over the past 18 months; have certainly not cleaned it in that period of time and would recommend trying it. Yes, there are downsides but for me at least these are small beer compared to the advantages, and yes, I love Marmite as well!

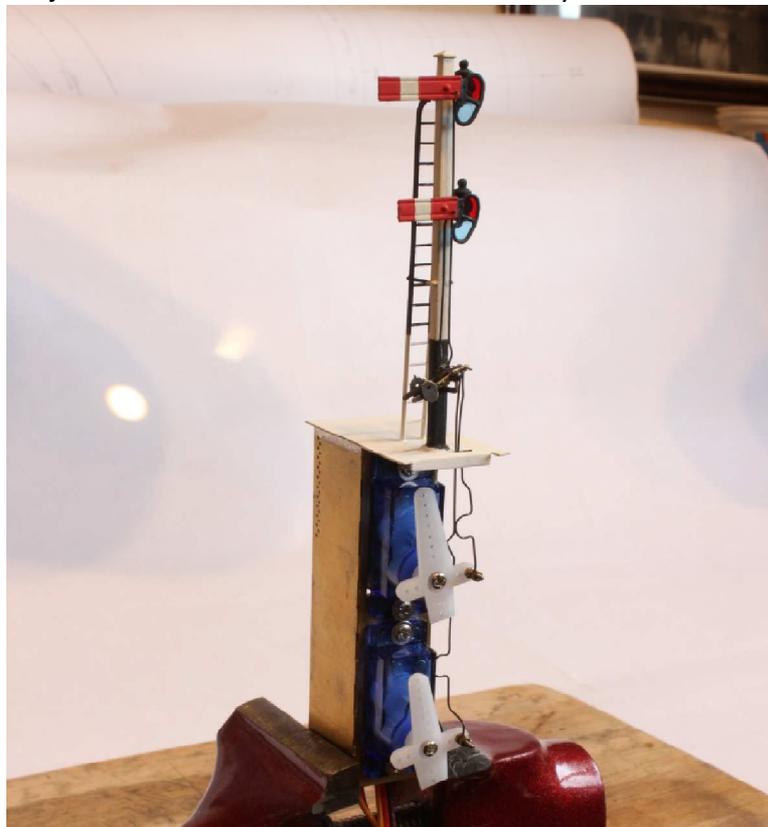
Mike Bennett



16mm to the foot scale steam tram body recently completed by Phil Rowe from a Swift Sixteen etched brass kit.

#### 4mm scale signals

All signals produced from Wizard (ex MSE) components operated with Tower-Pro SG 90 servos housed in Wizard Retford servo mounts controlled via Peco Smart Switch (ANE) boards. Final fine adjustments to made on installation on layout.



LNWR timber post with 4' arm for platform starter and 3' arm for shunt out arm below.



LNWR timber post modernised with LMS miniature u/q arm controlling loop line at level crossing.



LNWR timber post with 5' arm for inner home plus LMS twin discs controlling access to sidings.

Dave York

## The Craven Arms Hotel



*The Craven Arms Hotel, photographed in October 2022; unoccupied, unloved and unsold.*

I have written previously about the Craven Arms & District MRC, of which I am a member, and of my involvement with the refurbishment of our large but ageing layout based on Craven Arms as it was in the early 1960s. One of the buildings on the layout is The Craven Arms Hotel - a large, if ugly, hotel/restaurant/public house located on the main A49 Shrewsbury to Hereford road in the centre of town. The original, despite being a Grade II Listed Building (presumably due to its historic, rather than its aesthetic, interest), is currently unoccupied and for sale, creating an even greater eyesore than before. But it remains the most prominent structure in the town.

The Craven Arms Hotel on our layout was built in 1975, and so far has lasted 47 years despite being constructed from card. But it is ready for retirement and I volunteered to build its replacement. Little did I know what I was taking on!

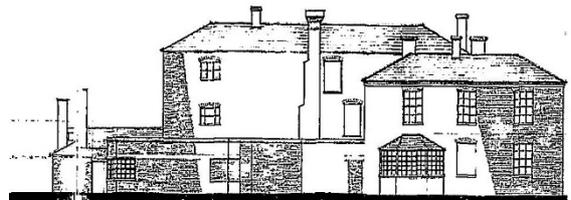
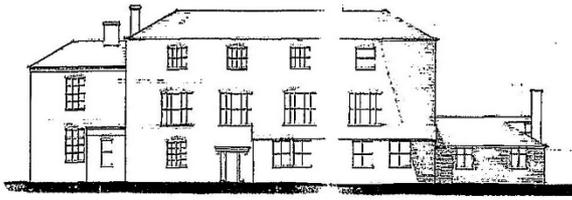


*The original version of the model, built in 1975*



*The replacement version, currently under construction*

As the building still exists, I was able to photograph it extensively. I was also fortunate to be provided with a set of drawings which had originally been created as part of a planning application to re-purpose the building in the 1990s (which never went ahead). These two sources enabled me to create accurate drawings for the model.



***Drawings of the Craven Arms Hotel, taken from an abandoned planning application in 1992.***

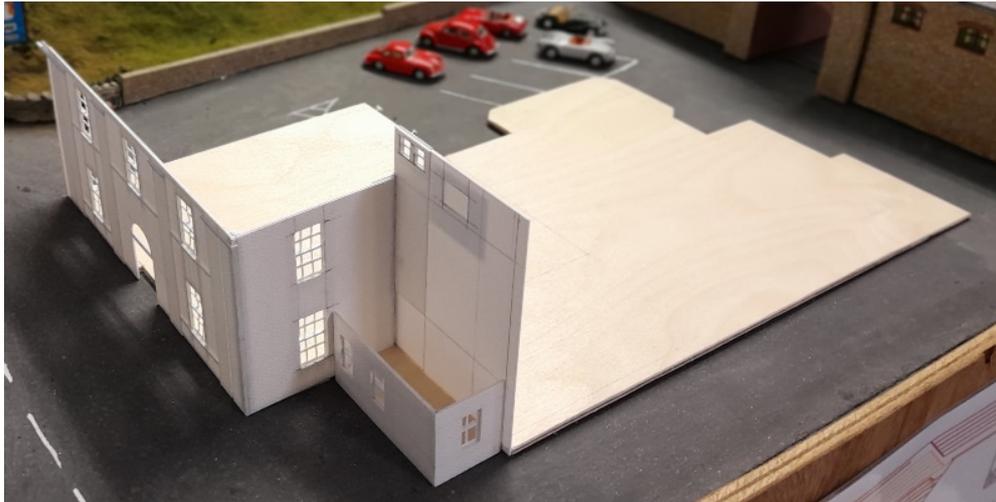
The Craven Arms Hotel is the largest and most complex structure I have ever attempted to build. Although, by and large, I am using my usual construction methods using laminated styrene sheets (Plastikard) and thin plywood, I have had to devise some new techniques, and I have also found myself taking various short cuts as my experience in working with these materials increases.

The hotel has numerous outbuildings and extensions that have been added over the years. The club's original model did not include these. Neither did it include the building's seven chimneys, which seem to have been built with no sense of symmetry or consistent design, and serve to enhance the building's ugliness. But they are a distinctive feature of the building, so I decided to include both the chimneys and the outbuildings in my model.

My next decision was whether to construct each section of the building separately or to build it in one piece, incorporating all of the outbuildings into one complete structure. I eventually settled on the latter. I figured that separate sections would eventually have to be joined, and if built separately there was a chance of inaccuracies creeping in, making them difficult to join together seamlessly.

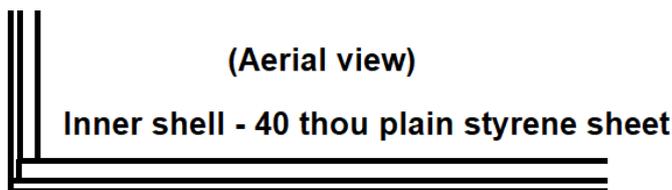
I therefore began by creating an accurate drawing of the footprint of the building and constructing a base from 3mm plywood (from Penn Models of Kingswinford, an excellent source of modelling materials). The length and width of the base is 3mm shorter than the footprint, to allow for the thickness of the building material. The carcass of the building was built up gradually to wrap around the base. Bulkheads were then added to the interior, resulting in a building which fits perfectly around its base and creates a stable, rigid structure despite the relatively thin walls.

Basic construction was carried out using my usual method of marking up and cutting the walls and windows on embossed styrene sheet; I used South East Finecast 4mm brick, which has a thickness of 0.5mm (20 thou) as is most embossed styrene sheets. I then laminated this onto sheets of 1mm (40 thou) plain styrene sheet, giving a total wall thickness of 1.5mm (60 thou).

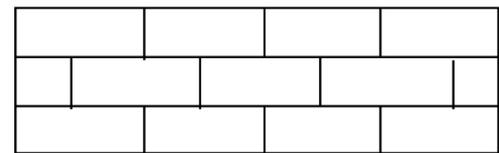


*This photo shows the 3mm plywood base, accurately cut to be 3mm shorter than the building footprint, together with the walls, which were cut to fit precisely around the base.*

For plain brick buildings that don't have stone quoins on their corners, such as the Craven Arms Hotel, especially in the smaller scales (OO or smaller), I don't worry too much about leaving a small seam of plain plastic at the corners. However, in order to minimize the thickness of the seam I fabricate the corners as shown in the diagrams below.



(Side view)



**Outer shell - 20 thou embossed styrene sheet**

**Corner seam -**

**0.5mm ↑**

In the past I made detailed drawings of how all the corners would fit together, but these days I just work out the corner configurations in my head and cut the pieces to size as I go along.

The building has 45 windows, making it too expensive to have them professionally made, and impracticable to construct them individually with flush glazing bars. I therefore compromised by installing the horizontal and vertical glazing bars in a crisscross pattern, apart from windows that consisted of only two crossed glazing bars. Even then, the windows took many hours to construct and install.



The horizontal glazing bars in this window are behind the vertical bars, a time-saving cheat. The window still consists of 10 separate pieces and took some time to construct



As these windows have only 2 glazing bars, these have been constructed flush from 3 pieces. Each complete window consists of 8 separate pieces.

The conservatory was particularly challenging. I could fill several pages describing its construction alone. But to summarize, my compromise here was to reduce the number of individual panes from 70 to 48. To get it to look reasonably authentic there seemed to be no alternative to building up the panes from individual pieces of microstrip, which were mounted on three frames, which were then pieced together around two hexagonal formers. The completed window module, consisting of over 80 separate pieces, was then inserted inside the lower wall, which had previously been constructed as part of the carcass of the whole building. The capping stones and roof were added last.



The conservatory under construction ...



... and complete, except for guttering

## Next Steps

The (removable) roofs have been constructed and are currently with Chris Rowlatt, who is adding the roof slates and lead flashing, a particular area of expertise for Chris. He has recently had a hip operation, and has kindly offered to do this during his recuperation.

Another Craven Arms member, Andy Bounds, has constructed the 68 window shutters using his 3D printer, and these are awaiting trimming, painting and installation.

The main building is currently being painted, as can be seen in the photos, below. The glazing will be added after the painting is complete. My plan is to install the glazing for each wall as a single sheet of clear styrene, held in place by square columns on the inside corners. This will avoid the necessity to apply adhesive to the glazing. This is my preferred method of installing glazing wherever possible. (I haven't worked out how to glaze the conservatory yet. This will be another process I will make up as I go along when I get round to it!)

Finally, the guttering will be added after the rest of the building is complete.

All in all, construction is taking far longer than I originally thought, but I am enjoying it, and if it serves the layout for another 47 years it will be time well spent.

Meanwhile, the real thing is still for sale, as far as I know, if anybody would like to buy it!



**The Craven Arms Hotel in its present state, minus roofs and in the process of being painted. The two different colours are purely a consequence of different lighting in different parts of the club room.**

Dave Gotliffe

### **Barleyminster, Miggelborough and Reevesham Railway**

Old age and frailty are a \*! Memories of past successes, achievements and joys are increasingly important but sorting out for an ever shortening future is crucial for peace of mind. Eight years ago, on retirement from self-employment in a large studio, we had the chance to build a railway that would invigorate and excite us. Planning, as many of you may remember from my Zoom presentation during lockdown, took a year and a half with the goal of an imaginary railway with prototypical working practices. We have ended up with a 6 platform terminus capable of holding ten carriage trains, a motive power depot that can service up to twenty locomotives at a time, a two platform through station for seven carriage trains and a horse and parcel bay, track linking all these aspects and a 15 track twelve feet long traverser for train storage. The railway is DCC controlled with point motors for the mpd and terminus while the through station is mechanically interlocked so technically we have created three independent interconnected model railways. Here is where it gets sad. We have had to make the decision to downsize and say goodbye to some stock and attempt to pass on to other enthusiasts a dismantled railway. The terminus although fully operative has never been developed scenically so that won't be too difficult to take apart. The digging up of Miggelborough, the through station will hurt unless someone shows interest and has a large building into which it could fit. It has a fully developed townscape at one end of terraced housing and shops. However Reevesham Shed, the mpd is complete and fully functioning with all points working, lighting circuit and a Heljan turntable in fine fettle. The fine detailing is a task I was looking forward to but could be an interesting long term project for whoever takes the model on. At 14½ by 3 feet, and built on 18mm mdf with edge supports, it isn't too enormous. This is available for purchase or large donation as is any other part of the railway.

This might seem a depressing article but very necessary as writing this is helping us to come

to terms with the prospect of a self-imposed Beeching axe.

The following pictures give a flavour of the two main models, both being incomplete and in the main sans stock.



Marbler's Mews and Reevesham Road shops



Miggleborough with Railway Terrace on the left



Miggleborough horse and Mail bay



Reevesham Shed The old and the new sheds.



Reevesham Shed. Coaling, Sanding, turning and in the distance despatch lines



Reevesham Shed. The Ash tower with pits and narrow gauge hand hauled tubs. The sanding plant, and NE shed



Reevesham Shed. The yard approaches from the turntable with the over foot bridge



Reevesham Shed. Towards the mainline and Barleyminster approaches from the mpd

If anyone is at all interested in any aspect of this railway, please contact me for a viewing on email

Chris Rowlatt