

# Wealden Railway Group Newsletter

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Password this month:~ R656



## Cover Pictures

Old and new this month: Left; a view of the “Older Eastwood Vermont. Inside an account of its updating Picture Andrew Knights

Below Some new stock on the Isla Blanca currently being constructed by Giles Barnabe, more news of his activities within. Picture Giles Barnabe



## Editorial

Spring has sprung, wandered off again and now seems to be peeing around the corner? With improved weather my attention turns towards things outside and away from the smaller trains. Thus the Kitland's Light has had some attention paid to it. Improvements to the mainline, in the form of even more welded and reground joints. Smoother to run on, and easier on the unsprung driver's seating! The lack of suspension, as opposed to compensation is simply a matter of feed back. The rougher, less smooth, ride tends towards slow journeys.

The other day, fine, sunny, and dry, both locomotives were stripped of batteries and bits then everything was lubricated using thick and heavy oil. All reassembled and then cleaned up, well mostly. The track was oiled, point blade pivots and the check and running rails at the corners of the system. I have thought that the KLR may go green here and swap from mineral to vegetable oil for this. I remember that the Volk's Railway used old cooking oil whilst I was a driver on there. It seemed to work, occasionally too well if Eric (The line's CME at the time) did not tell you he had done it! Another greenish move partly affects the KLR. I am planning on cutting the lawn a lot less this summer, although I suspect that the main beneficiaries here will be dandelions and some other wildlife. The route of the KLR may become more apparent through the summer as it is the only frequent and low cut for this lawn this summer.

The smaller scales have not been totally missed out, the revisitation of Winter helped, but this month a new layout has taken shape. In truth I constructed the baseboards at the very end of last month, March 31<sup>st</sup> to be precise was spent in the shed and kitchen. After that I have made up four servo point drives and fitted them to the five foot plus radius double crossovers of Wandleford Junction. This will be the replacement for Cross Ness. It came about not just because of the sale of Cross Ness but from a temporary, I hope, impasse on the construction of stock for Mertonford HO.

It was a case of having a set of stock for a layout I did not have and a mostly complete layout with, after the discovery of its lack of going round bends, now had almost no stock. The layout was a simpler and quicker challenge, mostly.

I find it easier to do messy scenic work outside on the verandah or lawn. Construction of scenic bits can be carried out either indoors or outside, or even away from home entirely. Some jobs lend themselves to a summer's afternoon, especially those that involve the drying out of glue or paint. The sun is free! So far Wandleford Junction has all of the track work and ballasting completed. All the third rail has been fitted too, juice pots and all. I hope to outline the construction sometime within these pages. Especially the bits of the construction that are project specific. Although the layout is called Wandleford Junction that is the name of the eponymous junction which the layout depicts, it is not the name of the nearly apparent station. For this I have some ideas but could be open to suggestions. The line is NOT on the Brighton mainline, but is on a route closely associated with the slower parts of the network. More will become apparent over the next few months. The ideal is for somewhere which could have had but did not have a station in real life.

One thing I hope to include is a representation of a part of something akin to the KLR, possibly working. The very front of the layout is the far end of possibly three large suburban gardens, to be of various character.

The MaP? I have yet to include the article I wrote on the insertion of the first servo operated point into Borchester. This lead into a much more general rebuild, also not yet documented. But I did end up having to reprint all the layout diagrams around the system for the second time this year. So as usual things have slowed a bit in that corner of Vermont, as usually happens in the Tourist season. That does not mean all is quiet. The worthy people of Lornton VT may well soon awake to a major redevelopment of their town, or that part depicted on the layout. The track layout works well for what it is required to do. The problem is that scenically it is rather a hodge podge of additions, deletions and general lack of maintenance. Basically it looks tatty. So, everything from the depot end of the print works and Rice's Talc works through to the exit track at the far end of Lornton yard is to be remodelled into a more suburban and cohesive whole. Well that is the plan. So far I have some drawings of the intended development and several sheets of homemade brick paper. The plan is to manufacture most of the new buildings needed before attacking the layout. Once these are "in stock" to move in the demolition squad and flatten everything. The reconstruction should be able to proceed at pace then. Again, I will keep you all updated as to th state of developments.

Not that is the only modelling project that has sprung up. One in particular unites the MaP and Wallingford Junction.

A couple of weeks ago I had placed Wandleford into The Fiddle Yard set up in the sitting room. A chance to test everything out. There will be a note from SparkZ on this experiment some time. Eventually all ran well and it was time to see if things would actually run freely through those long points. With minor adjustments things did. Most things, well everything I tried ran through the junction points. One notable failure in this experiment was the Hornby 4-VEP. It ran on the layout well, it ran on the fiddle yard, it had problems with corners. To the extent that while most things ran much better after a half hour's spin this beautiful looking model failed entirely after twenty minutes running. It had been run but once previously, and that was on Cross Ness from fiddle yard five feet into the station itself. Hronby had repaired the model post purchase but the mechanism was not up to dragging four inside bearing fitted coaches around radius 3 and two corners and points. It ended up with one toothless drive axle and a very hot little motor. At least post Hornby's attention the chassis was flat now.

Now to the MaP and that Lornton redevelopment. Part of this involves the construction of a new branch platform alongside the yard loop. I want this to have a terminal platform up against the wall. I had been planning to make a couple of half coaches, but the above failure raised another possibility. One of the first items locally constructed for the MaP was a doodlebug built form a stretched GP40 chassis and a Bachmann combine car. The problem being that whilst this is the most powerful locomotive on the MaP it is single ended and this of no great use on the line it should work on, namely the branch. Cutting it in two will provide the Lornton half cars, the mechanism, a decent motor and driven bogie will be fitted into the 4-VEP, mostly in the brake compartment as it would have sensibly been in the first place. Another project about which you will doubtless be told.

Some smaller exhibitions seem to showing like spring shoots. I must admit that for my part I am not thinking of exhibiting before Christmas. It is just that I feel making a commitment to attend a public event six months or so into the future is a bit too far for my comfort. At present I suspect that if in October or November there is a show close to hand I may attend as a member of the crowd, and see how that goes. What are your thoughts on this?

There was another Hornby failure on that Wandleford test day. Not of any great import, as I had purchased the Hornby Brighton Belle set as a piece of pure nostalgia to sit on the display shelves. A retirement present to self as well as reminder of family days out long past. At the time I had no where to run it and no intention to do much about it. Now having Wandleford it seemed an opportunity to give the set a run and see it doing what it should. It didn't. After the 4-VEP I was a little suspicious of the set's pulling ability. There I was wrong. I was right in suspecting things would not work out though. There was no way that the set could traverse the PECO Set Track curved points that make up the ends of these "coffins". It derailed on all routes, even the one that is entirely radius 3. I did not try a reduced set but as everything else managed this, even, for a short while, that 4-VEP. While the couplers allow for swing, they seem to transfer any vertical and turning forces between cars onto the bogies. They are also a completely solid and rigid bar between the vehicles so there is no lateral play between vehicles. They do carry current well, having a four wire bus throughout, this is only to provide lighting. Still as I said I purchased only on a retirement whim not expecting a model for work. Not that I could really run the Belle on Wandleford anyway. The layout is set in 1980 and at that time most of the Belle cars were static outside pubs and the such. In which case Hornby got it about right?

## ***More Motive Power for Isla Blanca***

### **Giles Barnabe**

I was going to call this Two New Locomotives, but as the number of projects on the go increased, the title did not seem strictly accurate. The main subject matter is a pair of fun projects that are in no way necessary for the running of the railways of Isla Blanca. However, the acquisition of some cheap ingredients and some online correspondence has led to the two projects which have helped to pass some of the lockdown days over the Christmas and New Year period.



It all started with an eBay sale of a Christmas train set – the battery type with plastic track. I read an online account of a conversion for the engine to On30 which, although I did not want to follow it slavishly, showed the model might have potential. One was duly ordered in late summer and arrived a couple of weeks later. The body was removed from the battery-powered chassis and offered up to various spare OO mechanisms, but none looked quite right, so another eBay hunt was on for a reasonably priced Lima GWR Prairie. The intention at first was to use the body as the basis for an American-style tank engine, as this would provide a contrast to the rest of the FCO stable. Despite a promising sketch of the idea, it proved difficult to get the proportions of the model right, the main problem being that a sufficiently large bunker would hang out too far behind the mechanism. Also, the fat boiler looked odd when mock-up tanks were added, as the model was then too wide for its length. In the end the decision was taken to produce a Mogul, using a vintage Princess tender that had been lurking in the scrap box for some time.

Work included moving the dome further back to become the sandbox and providing a new steam dome from scraps. It was then decided to provide an extended smokebox to allow more room for the chimney, plus the installation of a generator and electric headlamp; in addition, a Westinghouse pump and an air cylinder was added on one side of the boiler. The original bell was modified to make it less toy-like and reduce it to the correct scale appearance. To cover the pancake mechanism which protruded into the cab, a firebox was worked up from some plastic tube with scraps of wire and styrene to represent the controls. The tender sides, meanwhile, were separated from the rest of the body and soaked in Dettol to strip off some crude overpainting and the original transfers. They were then remounted on a wider footplate with new ends, a larger filler-cap and rear toolbox. An old HO boxcar with a twisted underframe had its bolsters removed and was glued under the tender to take the bogies, which were re-wheeled with 12mm wagon wheels to add a little height. The original intention was for it to be a Mogul, as it has the heft of a Bachmann 2-6-0 but is a little shorter; however, during construction the front pony truck went missing, so now it's an 0-6-0. With its Christmas origins the loco should be #25 but as this has already been allocated it will become #12 (as in days of Christmas).

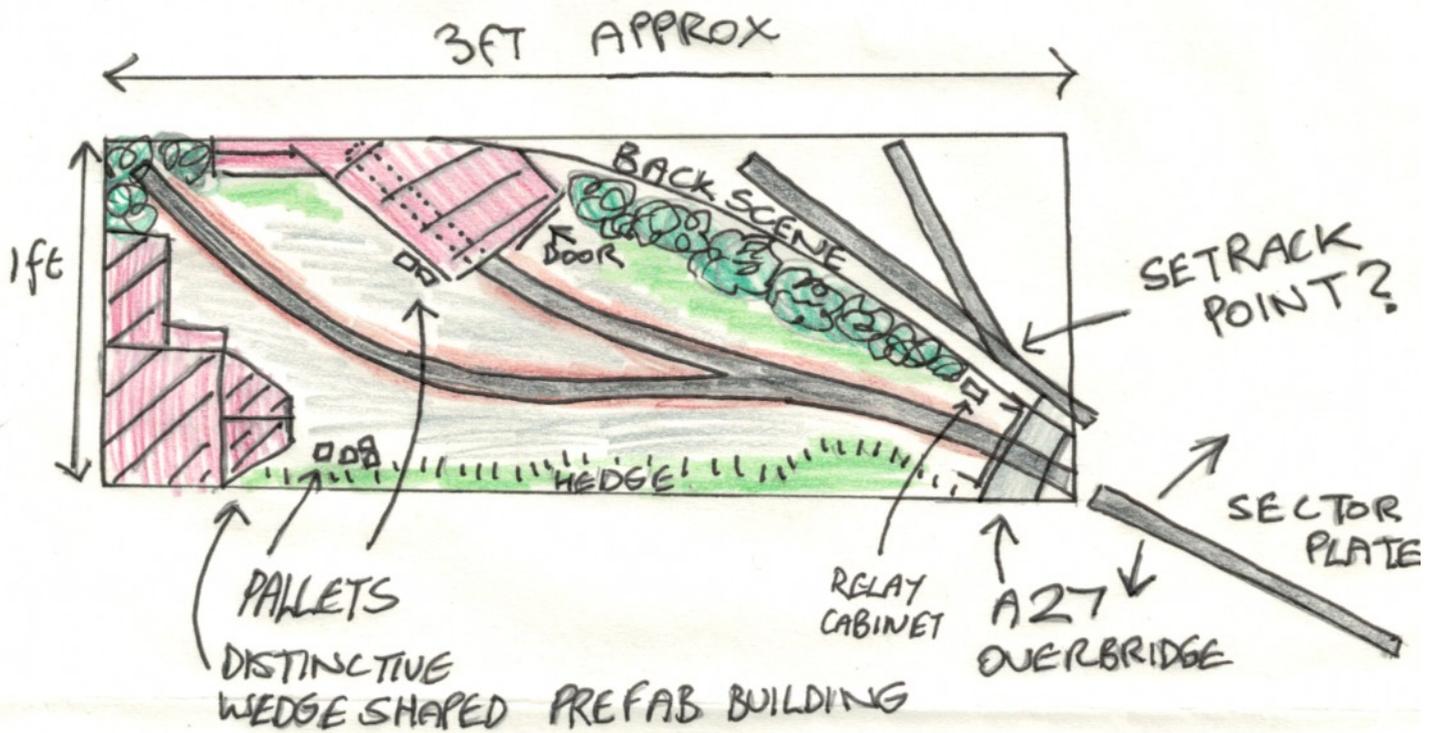
The next model could not be more different, as it is a rail/lorry conversion supporting a large tank, whose primary use is for fire-fighting purposes, but it is also capable of delivering water to those crossing keepers' cottages and small country stations without their own well (or when these run dry in drought conditions). The basis is a vintage Lima diesel mechanism. Once a footplate had been cut out to fit round the motor, a Yesteryear Ford lorry cab was fitted forward of the motor brushes and an old Jouef tank wagon, reduced in length by about 25%, was used for the water tank, I wanted to give the model plenty of character, so added a large filler-cap, accessed by a ladder and a tank-top platform, and out-board cupboards on one side in the manner of the Soller Railway's overhead line maintenance vehicle. These store coils of hose, nozzles and connectors, also hand axes for emergency use. The other side of the tank is fitted with large hooks which carry a ladder and some fire-beaters. The rear platform supports a hosepipe winch and a pump for its supply. Provision for the use of this unusual (even unlikely) vehicle can be regulated in the timetable by a situation card being drawn – it being usual to send it down the line following a steam train from the FCO during exceptionally dry weather conditions, as well as its more peaceable function as an emergency water bowser.



Another eBay purchase last Autumn was a pair of Scania buses dated c.1920. One has gone to the level-crossing queue at San Juan while the other, minus its road wheels, has become an unpowered railbus thanks to an old Lima brake-van underframe. It is planned to use this vehicle with one of the smaller mail/freight railmotors in Col. Stephens back-to-back style.

2021 should see the completion of two more Este locomotive, one steam the other a box-cab diesel, while eBay has provided a couple more 0-4-0s to tinker with. A steam railcar is a distant possibility for one – the future of the other is presently undecided.

BARTHOLOMEW'S SIDING  
 (CHICHESTER)  
 BY TOM LLOYD  
 N GAUGE



THERE WAS A SURPRISING AMOUNT OF FREIGHT ON THE SUSSEX COAST IN THE 1980's

THIS AGRICULTURAL MERCHANT'S SIDING WAS VISITED BY A TRIP FROM FRATTON YARD AS LATE AS 1987. MOTIVE POWER WAS USUALLY A CLASS 33 OR 73 BUT LATTERLY A 47 OR 37 WOULD BE PLAUSIBLE TOO. WAGONS WOULD CONSIST OF VBA / UDA / VGA. CARGOS INCLUDED WHEY / YOGURT, FERTILISER AND POSSIBLY BAGGED SEED POTATOES.

TOM LLOYD
NOT TO SCALE!

## *Eastwood revisited.*

**Andrew Knights**

Just over a year ago I added the extra set of points to The Fiddle Yard. This gave a choice of three outlets from any scene, or three double track choices. As we discovered when erecting Köln Draußen at Long field this work had introduced a problem. The new tracks interfered with the scenic “coffin” support. Fortunately a trader at the show was able to provide me with a razor saw blade.

Lesson learnt and shortly after, well over six months and the development of the Sitting Room Leg system, and Mertonford HO was checked to make sure it did actually fit and work. This was followed by Summer Springs on the New Cut. All put away ready for the next sitting Room session.

For one reason or another, although the picture is one I like, operationally Eastwood Vt. Just never quite lit that spark. I am not sure why. Anyway, I managed to procrastinate, usual state, for much of another year. So, it was not until earlier in the week when I erected the Sitting Room legs and brought Eastwood down stairs.

The good news was that it needed no modification to work. It dropped into place and was ready in under an hour, after a few trips to both carport and loft. Better. The position of the track entry points on Eastwood, although the reverse of the Son of Cross Ness (Yes, I do now have a name for this, I think...) show that the board design will work and allow for a gently curving track plan too.

I spent the rest of the day sorting out the existing stock and weeding out those cars that just always caused trouble. Those that could be sorted, truck pivots adjusted, couples moved. Those that resisted all attempts at improvement were culled, now in the spares box.

Next morning. I put away the “normal” stock and lugged it back up to the loft. I then brought out the surviving stock from my former HO loft empire, the Ahern County Railroad. A few locomotives and about twenty freight cars and some unmade kits. These were sorted into things not required for Eastwood 80's or not required at all- for disposal, and not for Eastwood but to be kept, I cannot dispose of an EMD40 or GE 44 Tonner!

The stock was put onto the track and for the most part the freight vehicles worked. A couple of cars would only work on the outer track. Jumping every time they were switched onto the inner curve of a PECO Set track curved point. Later in the day I managed to rectify the running of these Proto2000 cars. It was simply a matter of removing the added brake gear from inside of the trucks beneath the underframe. Invisible unless you are under the car, or it is upside down. These pipes just touched the backs of the flanges as they crossed the point frogs nudging them to hit the crossing nose.

Removed, nothing is to be seen but the cars run well and smoothly.

I had a pleasant afternoon assembling five Athearn Blue Box kits. Not quite shake the box, at least, only one was. The others had many grab irons and things to add. These cars were added to the non-switching stock for the layout. The cars that make up the “orbital trains”. Cars that just could not do radius 2 plus another one were treated to having their multiple varieties of couplers removed and replaced with new Kadee 148 whiskered cou-



plers. These are the switching cars and sit in the yard.

Interestingly, the yard was designed around the use of six forty foot cars. Putting five fifty and sixty foot cars on there makes for a completely different style of operation. A good change after these years. The locomotive for this caused a problem to start with. The yard had a spare Proto2000 SW1200 in B&M livery. This just sat and hummed and the sat and shorted out. I dug out the reserve spare. This was an Athearn SW1500 painted into Vermont Railway livery. It has not run since the 57<sup>th</sup> Street layout had its last outing over ten years ago. I forgot to clean the wheels and it growled a bit to start with, before spending the rest of the afternoon puttering round the yard. I did change the couplers again to Kadee 148's

So, Eastwood now has another existence; the 1980's. In this mode the only passenger trains will be RDC and maybe the odd steam special?

I have taken some pictures of the layout, and may put up a small video later. The last action for the three days was, apart from dismantling everything and putting it away, to make a set of stock boxes



for the stock. Now it has a use and has been fettled, it needs a little looking after, so we now have four boxes labelled Eastwood Vt 80's.

I think I prefer running it in this mode to its usual persona. Someone may ask to see it too, one day. If that is a two day show, you may have a chance to see Eastwood in its 80's guise too?



## ***Another One Got Away!***

**Andrew Knights**

This article really does follow on from the previous one. There I mentioned that I had constructed several kits and updated some of the stock that was to run on a revamped (well, restocked) East-

wood VT. All of this went very well except for one car. A quite modern kit for eighteen years ago of an almost contemporary vehicle. A fifty foot maximum height box car. As good as this model was both to construct, run and look at, it was never going to appear on Eastwood. It was only just able to pass through the layout entry holes at either end, it was too tall for the canopy outside Hambling's Bilt Eazi plant, the final and by far the most important was that it was taller than the cross girders of the two lift bridges at the far end of the model.

Thus its fate was cast. I had already made some new vehicles for the MaP and this car was to follow on. As the picture shows, the car was cut into two sides and a roof. This time I did not shorten the sides as the ladders were minimal anyway. New ends were made up from 2mm PlastiCard and sheathed in some large scale box steel sheeting. The roof and chassis were made up from the same PlastiCard. To the underside of the floor I glued the under frame detail that survived the butchery of the original kit. The kit roof was cemented down the middle of the new roof.

In line with the previous Lloyd's Fabrication trailer conversion, this car was painted Lloyd's Box Car Blue, with suitable labelling on the same colour background. The roof was painted silver and new Bachmann On30 trucks plus Kadee N05 couplers finished the car off. For the last couple of months the car has run through much of the MaP system acting as a modern version of my original large green box cars. Used for the transport of anything from completed restored automobiles for Carpenter's Classic Cars to more general traffics to Schulz's and other customers.



## *Polishing the Water*

### **Andrew Knights**

No. Not another name for "Moonraking". When I set up Summer Springs the other day, I noticed that the water had a dull bloom over nearly all the surface. The water in the new pond at Lawnton also tended to go dull. I put this down to the varnish sitting atop paint on a FoamCore base. This it maybe still.

I did not wish to revarnish the New Cut, and in the kitchen came across a can of Lidl W5 aerosol furniture polish. I spayed the river with this, left it for a few minutes. Time to make a cup of coffee, and then polished it off with a soft cloth. The result was a pristine New Cut. I tried a small section of "wet bit" on the MaP later in the day.

Next day all looked good and all polished was glossy. So out with can and cloth. I polished all the water on the MaP, including that new lake.

Three months on and the water still looks glossy and shiny. The main draw back to doing this will be retouching the varnish should it ever need it. I suspect the polish has some silicone as well as wax, so this would need removing before revarnishing. However in normal life, if it goes dull I will try buffing the polish up again. Worst case another squirt of the polish can should sort it all out. This polish layer still leaves the shine showing from within the yacht varnish. It has also stopped, it would seem, the dulling of the water when it has been built up on a Foam Core base. Noticeable on Ponto Mill and the Lawnton Water on the MaP.

