

**SWANSEA RAILWAY MODELLERS GROUP**  
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**NOW OPEN AGAIN ON A CONTROLLED BASIS**

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**MEMBERS' UPDATE No. 122 – July 2021**



From a Robert Masterman photo, and used with many thanks, this shows railcar W44026 arriving at Penarth Town Station with a service from Cadoxton, via Sully. This unit was destroyed by fire whilst awaiting restoration at the now defunct Swansea Vale Railway. Club member John Evans will remember that event with great sadness, being a Swansea Vale Railway stalwart at the time.

**COMMENT**

Well, it's July already, but I wouldn't put your umbrellas away just yet! But there's *some* sunshine at least in this month's newsletter as, with our cautious reopening plan, there's a little more to write about now than what has passed for normal over the past year or so.

So, this month, an update on Box [our big N gauge show piece], lots of photographs from members and followers of their modelling over the past months, information about another stock-sale and an update on our website [with your views sought].

But, best wishes, too, to member Mike Ahern who has recently been indisposed: we hope to see you back working on Box soon, Mike!

Regrettably, I have also to advise that at the time of writing, the lift is *still* out of order and awaiting an engineer's visit. I have not yet been advised by FOYD when this will take place.

The inconvenience that this has caused a number of members is genuinely understood and rest assured that we are doing all that we can to bring this to a speedy conclusion.

### ***Another stock sale ?***

Well, *yes* and *no*. First though, the recent sale was extremely successful and allowed members and others to purchase a great deal of quite diverse stock, including some interesting kits, at very reasonable prices. Everything went and the club earned a little through commission as a result, too. We do not charge commission on sales involving late member's estates though and every penny always goes to the surviving partner, so thank you all for supporting that part of the sale so generously. Both vendors were extremely happy with the outcome.

Secondly, the phone just keeps ringing! We have agreed to take in for sale a fair collection of N Gauge stock, including a pair of BR-liveried A4 locos, a pair of BR-liveried Panniers, an LMS Ivatt tank, a two-car Turbostar unit [awaiting repair], two lots of Mk1 coaches, some BR suburban coaches, various goods vehicles [BR and GWR] and *lots* of accessories. The vast majority of the rolling stock is boxed and in good order. There isn't enough there to justify a sale on its own however and so the collection will be held over until later in August or very early September for our next stock sale, by which time, doubtless, other stock will have come forward for sale. But this is good news as N Gauge stock is rarely presented to us for disposal, so start saving!

Interestingly, I was also recently approached to sell a collection of pre-war Hornby O Gauge three-rail stock with an accompanying collection of Triang Minic clockwork vehicles. Interesting though these all are, they are a bit too specialist [and expensive] for us and the vendor was put in touch with a specialist trader.

### ***Members' modelling***

Some interesting photos have been sent to me by members and others who follow us through the website, and it's good to see that people have been busy throughout the pandemic. First are these photos of a rake of GWR Siphon F bogie vans, built from long-out-of-production Keyser kits. These turn up on eBay from time-to-time and make a pleasant change from endless examples of r-t-r Siphons.



Two of the vans are branded to indicate contents or locations for use and one is decorated in the later Shirtbutton livery, too, which I think always looked best on brown vehicles. The branding in the photo opposite indicates that the vehicle was used by Messrs. Harris Brothers for their sausage traffic exclusively. All of the vans have different, correct running numbers.

Next, from member David Williams [who can usually be found working in O Gauge on Kingston], are some shots of his home Z Gauge creation, modelled on a German MPD. David says that the entire scene just measures around 20" by 40" and most of the stock is Marklin.



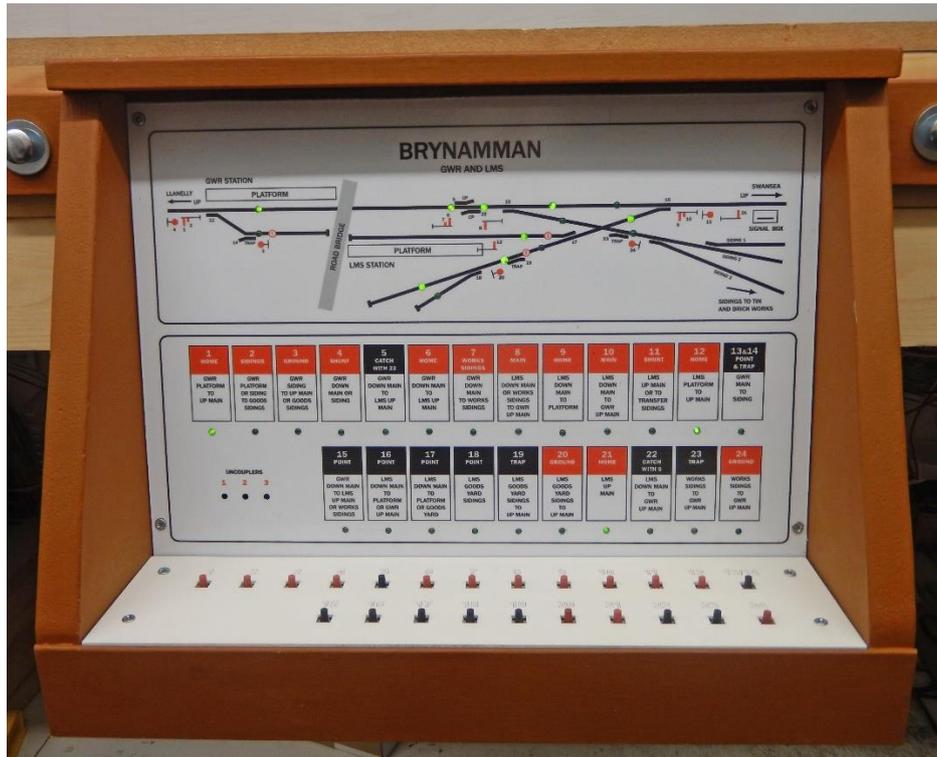
Something different now from a website follower, Bill Aylott, who lives in Berkshire. He has sent photographs of a model of Pontarddulais that he is building in OO, together with a request for information. But first, some of his photos [the buildings are scratch-built]...



Bill is particularly keen to know whether any members have photographs or a clear memory of the *inside* of the booking hall and the *non-steps end* of the GWR signal box. He has not been able to find shots of those locations and wishes to be as close to prototype as possible. Perhaps you could let me know if you are able to assist?



And finally for this month, overleaf are some photos from Geoff Taylor of his OO build of Brynamman GWR and LMS. Geoff contacted me after seeing the photo-article on Brynamman in the newsletter last year. His buildings are scratch-built with their walls being laser cut from MDF. Geoff's control panel has left me speechless with envy! That is how it should be done!



An unmistakable Midland Box and, below, the station in LMS days with its Ratio Midland suburban set.

Geoff says '...I constructed all of the track from C&L components, using bullhead rail and individual chairs with the point blades being made in jigs borrowed from a friend...'. The layout is DCC controlled.

The GWR station [just visible] will be served by a B-Set in due course.



### ***Box, un update...***

With the club now partially reopened for business, work has recommenced on Box after more than a year's sojourn. This large N Gauge layout required little cleaning because of the effectiveness of its covers, but it cannot run as yet. Some remedial work has been undertaken to create more space for locos or wagons to use the short spur behind the water tower and work will commence shortly to ensure faultless electrical continuity before ballasting commences. At least, that's the plan....!

Signals are currently being explored also and member Niel Clements has offered to assist with their correct spacing and installation when he returns to the club. Some further horse-drawn vehicle kits are also on order. If any members who have experience of ballasting wish to assist with this arduous task, please contact either myself or Ian Stevenson.

It was always intended that Box would be exhibited and it now seems likely that we will receive an invitation to show it at a large event sometime during 2022. Nothing has been confirmed as yet and further information will be given when it is at hand. And for those of you who have forgotten what it all looks like, here's a photograph of the entrance to Middle Hill Tunnel, under Ian Stevenson's brooding late-summer sky.



### ***The club's website***

Historically, the website has been extremely helpful in generating both new members and income, income because of regular requests from the public to sell stock on a commission basis and also the 'Products' section in which our limited-edition private owner coal wagons are advertised. The 'Projects' section often generates queries from casual viewers, too. The website's format has not changed much over recent years however and we are looking now at ways of refreshing it. A number of ideas are already on the table, including the possibility of a members' sales section but first, before any decisions and changes are undertaken, it would be really helpful to know what the wider membership's views are of website:

- What do you use the website for?
- What sort of changes would you like to see?
- Could the website be constructed or used in a different way?
- Are we missing any opportunities to help build the membership?

And whilst you are about it:

- Could / should the newsletter be presented in a different format?
- And to try to assess the readership, do you look at it every month?

It would be enormously helpful if you could give a little time thinking around the above questions and either send me a short e-mail [actually, it can be as long as you want!!] with a response or put a hand-written note in the club's suggestion box [on the wall alongside the signing-in book on the third floor] by the middle of July. I'll provide a review of your responses in the August newsletter. Many thanks all.

### ***Update on reopening***

To date, everything has gone really smoothly. It's too early to predict when the doors can be thrown fully open – and we are hoping that the Delta virus does not impose further lockdowns in the meantime – but it's good to see people back enjoying the facilities and work starting on layouts again. It has also been agreed that a *small* number of people can attend on Sunday afternoons, although that **has** to be predicated upon one of those attending being able to both open and lock-up the building, including the car-park gate. If you do wish to attend on Sunday afternoons but have no keys, please first e-mail Simon Durrer to check whether he is attending as he has a set [**simon.durrer@btopenworld.com**]. Clearly, anyone without keys would have to leave at the same time as the key holder.

We are also waiting for Gwydyr Upholstery to resume full service and fit the new upholstered benches and reupholstered chairs in the library. This will make the library far more usable and it is being chased up.

Best wishes all

Tony



**In late September 2006, 'Bubbles' – 55032 – saunters along the Bute Road branch in Cardiff. But for the tall buildings in the background, it would have been difficult to have identified this almost rural scene as the City. The Western Region's use of purpose-built single railcars for light passenger use was resonant of Great Western Railway practice and these vehicles are much missed.**

**A Brian Rolley photograph, used with thanks.**