

Layout of the month — Merthyr Riverside



EX-LNWR 'Super D' 0-8-0 locomotives were no strangers to Welsh lines and here 8952 makes a slow entrance to the yard at Merthyr Riverside with a mixed freight train as, a few sheep graze under the watchful eye of the driver.

Welsh valleys model is winning venture in EM



AN open cabbed GWR pannier tank leaves the yard complete with shunter's truck.

THERE is something grey and sombre about Merthyr Riverside. But that's no bad thing, for this branch line layout is set in the heart of the Welsh Valleys where threatening overcast skies are not all that uncommon!

It is an effect enhanced by the simple backscenes and absence of significant buildings. In fact the only structures present are essentially functional ones and include a railway workers/navies chapel on the bank overlooking the yard.

Set in the early Post-Grouping period it enables a range of liveries, locomotives and rolling stock to be run.

It is a fictional location with its origins based in reality and its buildings are closely based on remaining Brecon and Merthyr structures.

That it is so convincing is in no small measure due to the 'tone' of the surroundings in which these buildings are set.

Its operator, Black Countryman Rob Kinsey, explained that while its track plan is purely fictional it is a genuine 'might have been'.

When the Brecon and Merthyr began running services into the town in 1868 it did so by making a junction with the Merthyr branch of the Vale of Neath Railway at Rhydyicar Junction, and exercising running rights over half-mile of track into Merthyr High Street station.

Once there, the B&M used the existing Vale of Neath passenger and goods facilities.

"The justification for this model assumes the B&M did not initially share the VoNR's station, but

instead built its own to the west of the River Taff, though it was accepted that a connection with the VoNR was desirable.

"The arrival of the LNWR line from Abergavenny in 1879 gave an additional incentive for this connection, so the line to Rhydyicar junction was built and all passenger services diverted into the High Street station", said Rob.

He added that the 'original' B&M station was retained for use for freight traffic by both the B&M and the LNWR.

Built to 4mm/EM gauge standards using 9mm birch ply with softwood legs it features a fiddle

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yard that attaches to the main boards at an angle, thus keeping the overall length down, while affording plenty of stock storage space.

Plain track is EM Gauge Society rail on C&L track bases. Points, operated by home-made slow acting rotary motors, are constructed from EM Gauge Society sleepers and rail with C&L chairs.

Wired for cab control using two controllers (currently using Modellex and AGW units) the layout is operated as freight only from the 'main line'.

In total it measures some 14 feet in length, the main boards giving a 12 feet viewing area.

Unlike the probable prototype operation, the 'one engine in steam' principle is ignored to enable a more intensive, and no doubt, more interesting programme of activities

—for both operators and spectators.

In addition, there is no 'script'; shunting is carried out on the whim of the operators and is dictated by the rolling stock present and the siding space available.

The stock is regularly changed, but consists largely of kit-built or scratch-built items, supplemented by a few heavily modified ready to run items.

As can be seen from the accompanying photographs these, and the scenery in which they run, are of an exceptionally high standard.

• *Exhibition secretaries might like to note it requires a team of three operators and can be put up in about one hour from arrival. Details from Rob Kinsey on 0121-526-3889.*

NATURAL light streams down on to this yard shunting scene (above), giving the image a 'realistic' feel as it highlights the top of the loco tanks, the goods shed roof and wagonload of timber. While below rival LMS and GWR crews exchange greetings as the tank loco takes water and the Super D draws its train through the narrow bridge at the entrance to the yard (it is fed by a fiddle yard at an angle to the end layout board, thus increasing capacity).





THE pannier tank crew (above) were no doubt grateful for the view afforded by the open cab when it came to shunting, if not when it rained (it is Wales after all). Here they are pictured as they gently ease on to their next loaded wagon under the watchful eye of the yard foreman who is calling them on.



A general view (above) of the terminus station at Merthyr, the cattle (sheep?) dock on the right having just enough space for a couple of wagons.



HANDSOME is as handsome does...LMS 'Super D' 8952 posed in the landscape and looking very much at home in the Welsh Valleys.

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P.O. wagons make their mark



WHEN private owner wagons look as good as this trio it is hard to resist them. This lovely 5-plank wagon, branded Crook & Greenway, (left) was added to the Hornby range earlier this year and features exceptionally fine lettering (the picture just can't do it justice). The only thing to mar the overall impression is the over-sized standard Hornby coupling.

Catalogue number: R6235

ENGLAND'S Glory Matches may not now be in as great a demand as when this attractive 6-plank wagon was in service, but modellers will no doubt put this colourful model to good use carrying wither coal or similar products. The brake gear appears to be a little thicker than on the 5-plank but is, nevertheless, a welcome addition to the ever growing range of Private Owner wagons currently on the market. Like the 5-plank it is fitted with the standard Hornby coupling and is a good runner.

Catalogue number: 6237



THE lettering on this colliery agent's wagon has to be seen to be believed! Even the solebar plates are perfectly legible. According to the legend on the side of the wagon, Baldwins were 'sole agents for East Cannock Collieries Ltd', but were quite happy supplying smokeless, steam, horticultural, gas producing and other Welsh (sic) coals too. The brake gear is not too overscale and the blocks are in line with the wheels. A standard Hornby coupling is fitted.

Catalogue number: R6238

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