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GO ON! START RAILWAY MODELLING TODAY

Peter Marriott says this is the best time of all to begin modelling railways

There are many good things happening in the railway modelling hobby right now. It is a very good time to start modelling Swiss railways in a number of scales and gauges. This article lists just a few of them.



A diorama using products made by Heki.

- Locomotive models in most scales run better now than at any time in the history of the hobby. This applies to steam, electric and diesel locomotives. All wheel electrical pick up is now increasingly common on locomotives. Models also run much more quietly and smoothly than they did some years ago. The days of stalling over the points are fading fast if the track is kept clean.

- Rolling stock and locomotives are now very well detailed and finished in all scales. Paint finish, lining, numbering and the application of liveries is generally very good indeed. Flush glazing is now common and rolling stock is now becoming available in weathered or unweathered finishes.

- There are still lots of model railway exhibitions in the UK where Swiss model railway layouts can be viewed, demonstrations watched and retailer's stands scoured for the best bargains! Of course do not forget the SRS AGM that always is a feast of everything Swiss.

- Train control is a lot more fun than ever using DCC

(Digital Control Command). The DCC systems that are available, range from the simple to use or as challenging as you would like. There are starter DCC systems for small layouts which do not cost the earth that are available in good value start sets. DCC control is now also available in wireless mode. I was very reluctant to begin using DCC for years but now I've tried it it's difficult to go back to DC operation. Constant bright lighting on the locomotives is just one of the advantages of DCC operation.


- DCC sound fitted locomotives enable sound effects to be enjoyed. It adds yet another dimension to railway modelling. Just a few years ago we were content with models that ran fairly well now we expect so much more! Locomotives are now available ready to run either DCC ready (these need a decoder to be fitted but already have a pin connection to take the decoder) or DCC fitted (already fitted with a decoder), or DCC sound (fitted with decoder, a sound chip and a loudspeaker).

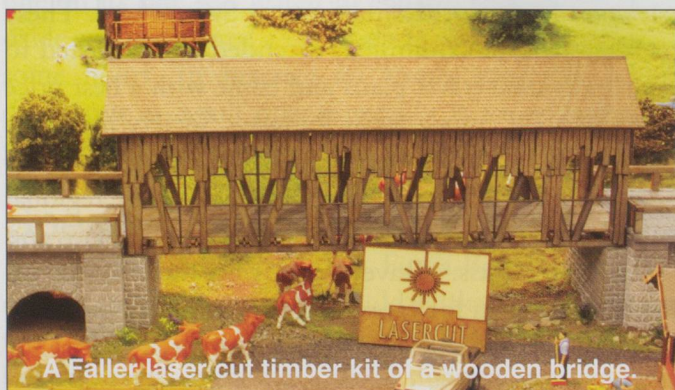
- Various manufacturers now manufacture made-up model buildings from resin. These include Hornby International's Skaletal (HO scale). These "ready to plant" buildings are nicely detailed and come already painted. Apart from positioning them on the layout they can be used straight out of the box.

- There are an enormous range of scenic products including figures and detailing accessories in most scales so that we can build very detailed layouts. Each year at the Nuremberg Toy Fair new scenic products are released.

- And if you choose to enjoy just some parts of the hobby you can probably get someone to undertake the other tasks for you. For example, if you do not wish to build your own baseboards there are a number of manufacturers who will do this for you. There are firms that offer a layout design service. If you want someone to fit a DCC decoder in your locomotive there are a number of firms offering that service. And if you want someone to weather your locomotives and rolling stock for you there are folk who will do this too.

- There are a growing number of books, magazines and publications that cover all aspects of making model railways and the prototype railways. These make research enjoyable and informative.

- There is a good range of practical modelling DVDs available that demonstrate on screen various aspects of model layout construction. We enthusiasts are blessed with a number of DVDs about the real railways too for inspiration. 



A Falser laser cut timber kit of a wooden bridge.

NUREMBURG TOY FAIR – 2011


John Jesson

The last few Toy Fairs have been interesting as manufacturers struggled with financial problems while still trying to present new models. Now, the situation has more or less stabilised. The Märklin Empire is in the hands of the banks, who have decided that the outlook is promising enough to continue their financial support. The Roco takeover of Fleischmann has settled down to a certain extent, but the stated aims of market coverage are nowhere near being achieved (Roco – all modern, Fleischmann – all historic), while Kibri seems happily settled in the Viessmann stable.

Once again, the area covered by the model railway sector has shrunk slightly, and the number of new models is smaller. Although there are few completely new models for the Swiss HO market this year, there are some of interest. The Tillig Zürich double-deck coach, once complemented by the 1st/2nd and driving trailer coaches, will give a scale-length train (with the Hag Re 450), and the Zürich suburban unit RBe 12/12 (“Mirage”) is projected from LS Models. Otherwise, the previously announced models from this manufacturer are now reaching the shops, or will be during the year. Roco are producing the Ae 3/6II in its unrebuilt form (with cab end doors), while Hag have announced the 922 shunter. In N scale, there are the EW-II coaches from Brawa, EW-IV driving trailer from Fleischmann and EW-III coach set with loco from Minitrix. Unusually from the Trix/Märklin stable, this set was not on display, so could not be checked out visually. This was a disappointment, as the catalogue illustrations do not look quite right.

The most active part of the hobby seems to be the scenic side. Laser-cut technology has come of age, with virtually all the former plastic kit manufacturers embracing the new technology, some with imaginative kits combining different materials. The technology has also seen new manufacturers come to the fore, with Joswood and Stangel standing out, although there are several others. As always, it was worth paying close attention to what the “scenic” manufacturers are making. One thing that impressed very much this year was the stone walling being made by Preiser, both single-sided (for building bases) and double-sided (for walls). Inevitably, the Faller Car System has gone digital, although my technically-minded friends are still trying to find out what this will mean in terms of what the system will be capable of doing. Also on the scenic side, although a hobby in its own right, are the road vehicles, where there are several new Swiss vehicles from Rietze & VK-Modelle

As always, there are other manufacturers who do not

exhibit at Nuremberg. Finding out what these are making new is not always straightforward. The magazines manage it by virtue of having staff to chase up the firms, so I generally leave it to them, which is why such items do not appear here. Also, as always, all errors and omissions are mine. If there are any (I cannot imagine there not being any), I apologise in advance. The full list of new Swiss items will appear on the SRS website, together with a few photographs, once our webmaster has the time to post them. 

TOP: LGB 49250, Set 2x RhB 2-axle cement silo wagons. Grey livery, Ucs8014 lettered RhB, Ucs8027 with “B” logo in orange. In background, 27420, RhB Ge 4/4III 643 “Vals”. Red livery. Fitted digital decoder. Two Bühler motor drives. Pantographs raise & lower automatically. Opening cab doors.

MIDDLE: HAG 34-009, SBB GTW 2/6 Turbo, 3-section, in overall Yellow “Top-Blitz” livery.

BOTTOM: HAG 26-046, SOB Re 456.095 “100 Jahre SOB” livery.

Editor's note: For more pictures go onto the Society's website.

