

Zeitschrift: Swiss express : the Swiss Railways Society journal
Herausgeber: Swiss Railways Society
Band: - (2011)
Heft: 106

Artikel: Go on! Start railway modelling today : Peter Marriott says this is the best time of all to begin modelling railways
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-854694>

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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).

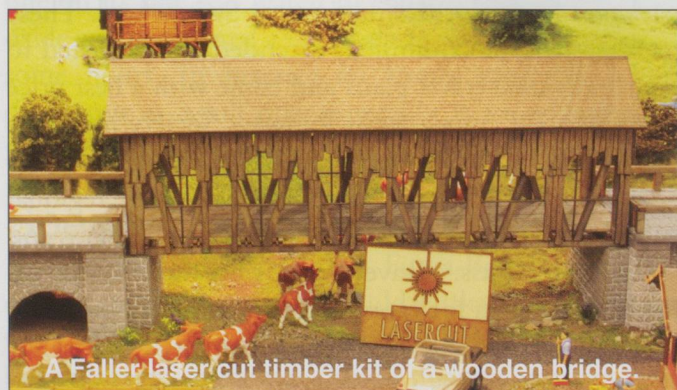
- Various manufacturers now manufacture made-up model buildings from resin. These include Hornby International's Skaletal (HO scale). These "ready to plant" buildings are nicely detailed and come already painted. Apart from positioning them on the layout they can be used straight out of the box.

- 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.