

WHY A SECOND EDITION?

When I put the first edition of 'Monjouet' to bed I was fairly sure that my model was complete and that I had exhausted all my ideas for the layout and its rolling stock. However, I'm an indolent retiree with few demands on my time, living in a sleepy French village and, not being of a religious bent, I had completely forgotten that "The devil makes work for idle hands."

In my case he does this by making me conduct regular, exhaustive searches for my specs, which he has hidden in the most unlikely places (*sometimes on my face!*); by sowing innumerable weed seeds amongst my vegetables; and, nowadays, by presenting me with irresistibly tempting images in books, magazines and on the Internet, or even interestingly-shaped fragments of household flotsam, which are just crying out to be translated into extra engines and rolling stock for Monjouet.

Having thus been inspired to make several new trains since the original publication, I thought it was time to bring my book up to date with descriptions of these. The front section remains more or less unchanged from the first edition, but one or two of the photographs have been replaced with better versions. So here we go again....



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Dedicated to my dorter, Rachel, who helpt me with the speling and pointed out all the greengrocers's apostrophes I had scattered about (*and have hopefully now removed*), and also to the editors of "Narrow Lines", the 7mm Narrow Gauge Association magazine, whose willingness to publish my nonsense led to its proliferation!



NOTE

The large font size has been chosen so that this book may be read more comfortably on a small computer screen or tablet. It is not meant to imply that my prospective readers are half blind. (*Though many of them are getting on a bit!*)

PREFACE

A while ago a friend got hooked on computerised 'cerebral gymnastics' and was delighted when she acquired a mental age of 40, 10 years below her actual age. Sadly, I had to explain that she was wasting money on such programs because after 50, or thereabouts, mental rejuvenation is a natural process, otherwise known as reversion to childhood.

For instance, I am an OAP (*if the term is still legal in these insanely politically correct times*) but now have a mental age of about 9. I have more toys now than I ever had when I was a kid, a favourite being Monjouet, my new 'train set'. What follows is a series of articles written for Narrow Lines, which describe its development.

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TRAINING SESSIONS.....

Monjouet began with a push along Gnomy tram, a souvenir from a holiday in Austria. Once home I managed to squeeze into it the motorised chassis of a very basic Hornby engine bought for a pound or so at a swap meet. The trailer (*now augmented with another*) was fitted with a 4-wheel bogie from the Dapol shop, close to where I then lived. I dithered about the pantograph but in the end decided that a catenary would be a pain in the wotsit when it came to track accessibility, so I converted my tram to internal combustion by removing the current collector and sticking an exhaust pipe on each end.



Flushed with success, I bought a Gnomy steam engine and some carriages and wagons. More Dapol bogies were used for the rolling stock, while another old chassis, this time a Lima, was more or less crammed into the loco - the cab having to be extended a bit to accommodate the pancake motor. I also added a small rear coal bunker (to cover the last vestiges of the hump) and changed the chimney a bit.



At this time we were in the process of emigrating to France, so the layout I was doodling with had to wait. I filled the time by

assembling an Alphagraphix card model of an Irish rail bus. I couldn't find a suitably priced (*i.e. dirt cheap*) chassis for this in a swap meet, but Dapol had a sale on so I gritted my teeth and splashed out on a brand new one. It's a 2-4-0 rather than the 2-2-0 of the prototype, but when you're only 9 or so, who cares about such details?



Other fleet additions were a Bachmann Gas Mechanical; a Bachmann Gandy Dancer (*I cut*

off the little men and stuck odd bits on to make a tiny quarry engine); and a Hornby Pug (for which I made a larger cab and fitted a taller chimney).



Later I bought an OO Mantua 'Goat' switcher, which struck me as being quirky enough to make, with a new cab, an attractive narrow gauge engine. *(If you read much further you will realize that I rather like quirk!)*



What I didn't spot at the time of purchase was that the sloping tender, which I had thought to discard, contained essential electrical pick ups. Rather than making life complicated by trying to sort out independent pick ups for the engine alone, I decided to retain the tender and disguise it as an open wagon loaded with scrap.

I've also two non-powered locos for ornamental use only. After admiring a picture of an old loco-tractor in a Smokey Bottom Lumber

Company ad. I shamelessly cribbed the design and made myself one using the bonnet of an old toy car and another Dapol chassis. The second is another Gnomy steam engine which, apart from a wheel change and a repaint, is in its original guise.



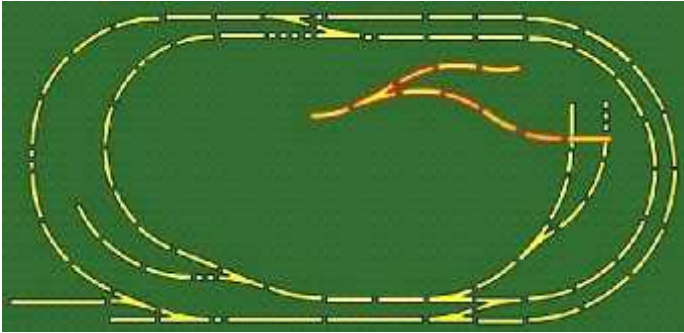
Rolling stock is mainly tweaked Gnomy, apart from a couple of scratch built vehicles on commercial OO chassis and the home made quarry trucks which are mounted on 4-wheel plastic bogies from a couple of cheap HO models. Couplings are cheap and cheerful, single-ended tension hooks and some home made links. *(I've no plans to do any hands free shunting.)*

MAKING TRACKS.....

Our cottage in France was previously a holiday home and came complete with many beds. One was the bottom half of a bunk set and seemed ideal to support my new railway. Onto this I fitted a pine frame to support a base of light-weight, but rigid and strong, foam insulation panels. These were also used to create variations in level and, stood on end, the 'mountain' which hides the back of the layout. Incidentally, if distressed a bit with sharp tools, this stuff makes a quite reasonable rock face.



The track plan is fairly simple, being two ovals (*I wanted moving trains passing each other*) with a couple of sidings on each. A separate higher level quarry track serves a tippler.



The track itself is a mix of second-hand Jouet small radius set-track (*which I thought would give a smoother run on my tight curves than strangled flexi-track*); Dapol flexible track, used for the gentler curves and straight bits; and Peco 'Electrofrog' points to provide the switching. The rear (*behind the scenes*) crossover is operated by the 'straightened out coat hanger in a trench' method - a substitute for the 'wire in a tube' method for those of us having no wires or tubes about their person. Reachable points are digitally controlled, i.e. changed with a finger. The track is ballasted with budgie grit.

A SMALL (really small!) TOWN IN FRANCE.....

The railway serves the little French town of Monjouet (*'my toy'*). Apart from a ruined cottage and the quarry's derelict engine shed (*from a war games shop*) and the columns in the Temple Garden (*aquarium ornaments*) the buildings have been largely (*or should I say small-ly*) made from foam board. Non are replicas of actual buildings, though certain features have been inspired by local architecture.



The church tower has its origins in that of our village, Niort la Fontaine, while its rose window is a photograph of the real thing. The Mairie (*town hall*) has the double front steps of a little house round the corner, while the adjacent loo carries the charming legend 'Chalet de Nécessité' encountered once on a trip to Boulogne. The towers of the château (*plumbing off-cuts*) bear a passing resemblance to those of the Château of Lassay just down the road.



Apart from the aforementioned borrowed features the buildings are all freelance, made to fit their sites. Since most of the sites are tiny they would not stand up to close scrutiny by a scale-rule wielding perfectionist. However, I would direct anyone too critical of their

dimensions to visit Conwy, where the smallest house in Britain stands just 6 feet across.

On a couple of buildings (*the cinema and dental surgery*) I attempted the ailing mortar look by excavating the foam board and inserting bits of brick or stone textured plastic before applying an emery paper 'rendering'.



Finishing off:- Roads are emery paper, the tippler is balsa wood, fencing is either shop bought plastic, matchsticks strung with 'barbed wire' from a war games shop or, for the station steps, insulated copper wire. The few trees are real twiggy bits of an old hedge with flock added

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