

Display Schemes and Scenery

HORNBY-DUBLO owners sometimes have their layouts on show in connection with some local exhibition or other function and there is little doubt that the display of a working railway in this way is a joy to all concerned. Sometimes we are asked to give advice on the type of layout that should be employed, and invariably a continuous track of fairly simple type is recommended. Much of course depends on the site and the conditions, as obviously the character of the layout must be governed to some extent by the space available, whether a baseboard with the track ready laid or a temporary table-top is to be used.

Now, why advise using a continuous track? Simply because it allows traffic to be kept moving, which is a definite advantage for exhibition purposes. A simple layout that is well run gives a very much better impression to those who watch it than one on which traffic working is complex and liable to delays. Where shunting operations are carried out, and they can of

Mr. W. R. G. Russell, of Didcot, operating the Hornby-Dublo layout that he arranged for display purposes. In addition to the railway, realistic scenic detail is incorporated. Photograph by Studio Atlanta, Didcot.

course be very fascinating, it is a good scheme not to have too many vehicles involved as this tends to make the operation become tedious.

If a definite cycle of working is adopted things are made more easy for the operator, but of course variations can be planned in order to provide some variety. An important thing to remember is that each particular performance should finish with the engines and rolling stock ready to begin the next cycle. As a rule it is wise not to attempt timetable working and in any case a continuous layout does not really lend itself successfully to this sort of thing. Trains can be run at regular intervals and a particular cycle or episode can be timed

to occupy a given number of minutes. It must not be forgotten that the operator is liable to be interrupted by enthusiastic remarks or questions.

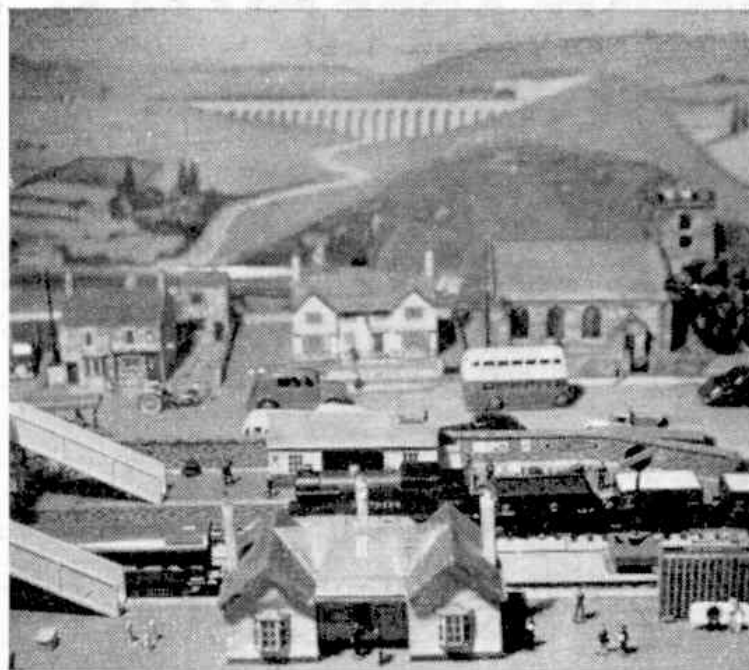
It is worth noting that even large layouts at trade and similar exhibitions are basically simple, even though their extent may cause them to appear complicated to the onlooker. Not all those who see an exhibition layout are miniature railway or even railway enthusiasts, but they can follow operations more easily and are more liable to become enthusiasts themselves if what they see is reasonably simple.

A splendid example of an exhibition layout of simple character, although undoubtedly effective, is shown in the illustration here where Mr. W. R. G. Russell, of Didcot, is working a Hornby-Dublo railway that he arranged recently for a local function. This has continuous main tracks



so that one train at least can be kept on the run while more detailed operations including shunting and uncoupling are carried out with another. Particular care was taken not to run the trains or to carry out movements at excessive speed. Starting and stopping were carried out gently and a very realistic impression was thus given.

This is a point sometimes missed by younger operators. Hornby-Dublo engines are perfectly controllable and the skill required for perfect operation is soon attained. There is no need for an engine



that is backing on to its train to run into it violently. An easy approach that results in the couplings engaging without moving the train is very much better. This applies to goods train operations, including shunting, as well. On the other hand it is necessary to move the wagons along smartly up to the point of uncoupling and then to check the engine quickly so that vehicles detached run along a siding for a little distance, but this is usual of course in real "fly-shunting." The reversing of an engine that is shunting should not be too rapid; in real practice this is quite a deliberate business.

On Mr. Russell's layout some attention was devoted to lineside affairs with considerable success, as the illustration clearly shows. Wisely, no attempt at scenic detail was made on the outer side of the track as this can sometimes interfere with the view of the trains in motion. A certain amount of restraint is necessary when scenic detail is attempted, whether a layout is a temporary one for exhibition purposes or a permanent installation at home. It is possible to overdo things, especially in the matter of detail, and then the realistic impression that is aimed at can be missed.

A nice balance between actual lineside details and scenic background features is

The illustrations on this page show parts of the well-developed scenic Hornby-Dublo railway of Mr. K. W. J. Austin, of Taunton. Apart from actual lineside features the background scenery is most effective, as these pictures show.

characteristic of the two illustrations on this page. These show part of the system of K. W. J. Austin, of Taunton, which has been referred to previously in the *M M*. The railway itself is not elaborate in its track plan, but like all good railways the operations that it makes possible provide for the ready movement of traffic, both passenger and goods. Similarly, shunting movements involved in the making up and despatch of trains and in their subsequent disposal are easily made.

The immediate lineside buildings fit in well with the general scheme and the opportunity has not been neglected of introducing numerous Hornby-Dublo and other miniature figures on the platforms and elsewhere. Quite frequently, although most layouts give some attention to Dinky Toys road traffic, the "human" element is apt to be neglected. After all, if there are no people there is no need for the railway, the motors or even the town that they serve!

There is no hint of crowding together in the various features that go to make up the layout and the scenic background provides the final touch to the whole scheme. It

gives a splendid effect of distance, and it is difficult for the observer to tell where the actual modelling ends and the background begins. This is an ideal that is constantly sought, but it is not always realised so successfully.



Where Does the Railway Run?

Lineside Topics in Hornby-Dublo

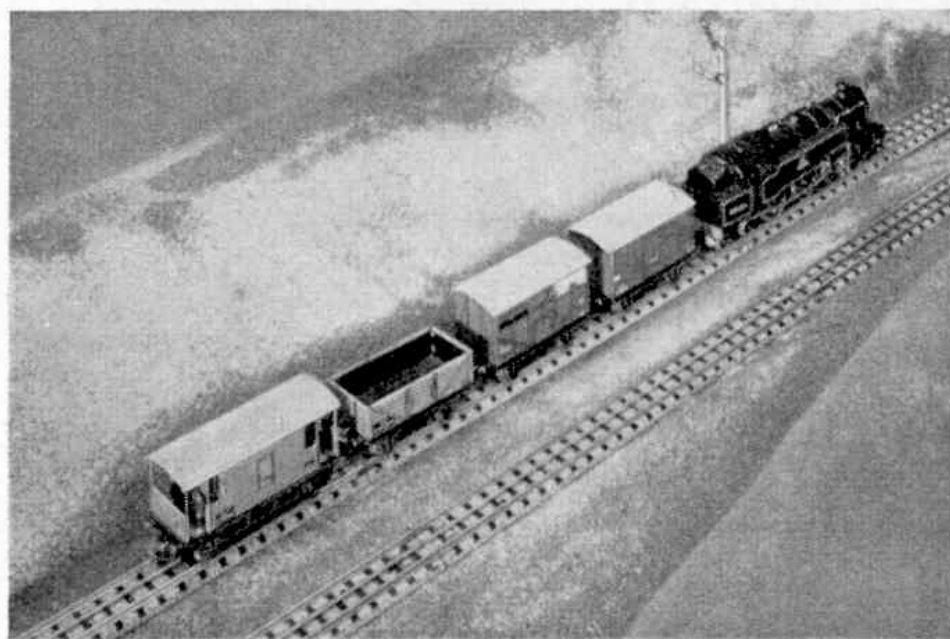
ALTHOUGH some Hornby-Dublo layouts are operated quite happily by their owners in perfectly plain surroundings on a simple baseboard, there is little doubt that many more enthusiasts take the view that things are made much more realistic if the railway has some town or country to run through and so appears to "go somewhere."

It is really easy to improve the simple type of layout board, and even the enthusiast who has to put his trains away

purposes when running is over perhaps, it is probably the best type of surface to apply. On the other hand, good effects follow the use of sand, coloured sawdust or one or other of the surfacing or ballast materials for miniature railways that can be had at many hobby shops, fixing whatever is used with a suitable adhesive. Any material of this kind should be carefully applied, and surplus should be removed before the board is put into use.

Simple walls or background scenes, and individual buildings, can be carried out quite effectively, and here you can get useful ideas by looking out during a railway journey, or better still perhaps, examining railway pictures, in which railway scenes are already reduced in scale so that their effect can be better judged.

Embankments give a real air to model railways, and almost every miniature railway engineer has his own favourite method of making them. Whatever



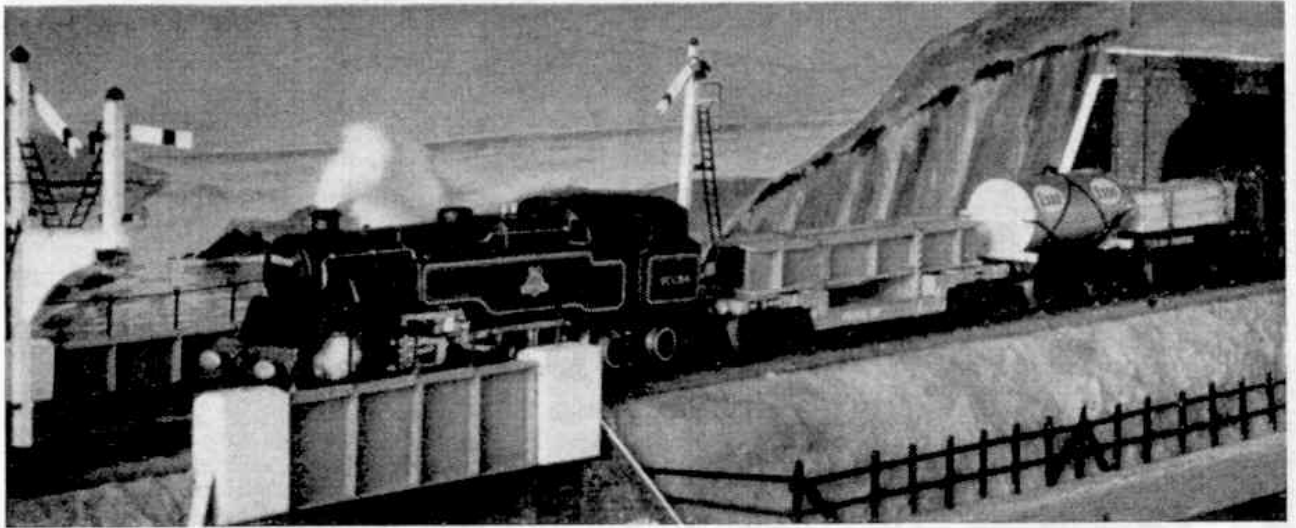
A short goods train in charge of a Hornby-Dublo 2-6-4T makes its way through a cutting. Evidently the railway runs through chalky ground at this point.

when running is over can readily provide some lineside and other items to improve the general scene. With permanent systems there is practically no limit to the scope of the surrounding effects, and during past months the pages of the *M.M.* have included many pictures of Hornby-Dublo railways in which special attention has been given to the realistic presentation of the railway as a whole.

Now let us see what the home-worker can do to improve his layout in this respect. The first thing is to get away from the stark appearance a plain timber or composition baseboard presents. Paint is quite effective and where a baseboard has to stand a good deal of handling, in setting up and in removal for storage

the covering material may be, it is usual to provide a framework knocked up with rough lengths of wood. Those who go in for really permanent structures can cover this with wire mesh, over which suitable modelling material, such as plaster of good quality, can be laid. But you can get convincing results with such simple material as ordinary newspaper, or perhaps brown paper, well pasted and crumpled—rather a messy business—before being laid over the prepared framework. Paint, sawdust, sand and small stones can be used to dress up this apparently unpromising material when it is dry and set.

A lot can be done with cardboard and wood strip, and in this direction one of our readers, Mr. R. K. Battson, some of



A section of line incorporating various items of cardboard modelling and scenic background. This is the work of R. K. Battson, whose notes are incorporated in the accompanying article.

whose work you see in the upper picture on this page, has obtained some really splendid results. On this layout the girders on the Well Wagon and those of the bridge, also the bridge retaining walls, the tunnel mouths, the fencing and all the signals except the actual posts, have a convincingly solid air—and all are made largely of cardboard.

"Cardboard is simple and clean in working," says this enthusiast. "It requires no costly tools. A steel straight-edge and a stiff-backed razor blade will do all you want—but mind your fingers!" Quite right.

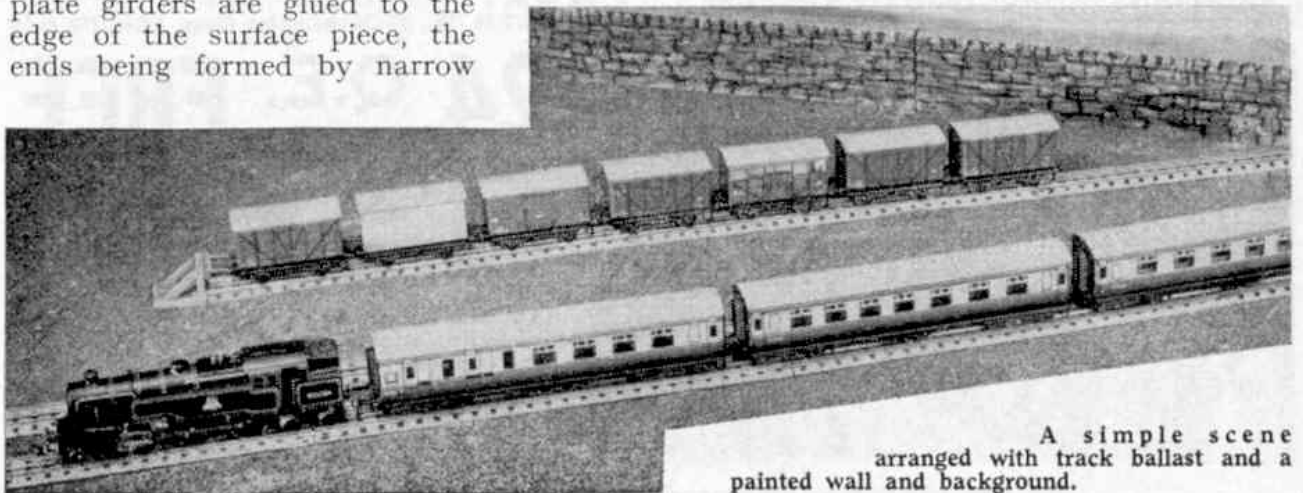
"The girder work consists entirely of strips of varying widths, glued up with Durofix, which is clean and quick-setting, and afterwards painted either flat grey or red oxide. The bridge, the track surface of the embankment, and the sides (except for the actual bridge opening) are of $\frac{1}{2}$ in. wood, afterwards covered with water-coloured medical lint. The plate girders are glued to the edge of the surface piece, the ends being formed by narrow

wood blocks painted to represent concrete.

"The brick walling is cut from sheet card, on which the lines of the brickwork are scribed with the straight-edge and a divider point, the vertical joints being impressed with an $\frac{1}{8}$ in. chisel. A good 'mixed brick' effect is then applied by washing over a fairly strong mix of Vandyke Brown poster colour, and while still wet, dropping in patches of vermilion, blue and green. A little practice on this work is advisable on scrap card, but the result, which, of course, dries matt, can be very convincing, and much superior to brick papers, which are apt to be monotonous in their colouring.

"The tunnel mouths are treated in the same way, the curve of the arch being cut with a fine-toothed fretsaw. The face can be improved with brick piers and string course in scribed strip card, and a coping strip of white card, slightly dirtied, added to finish off the construction. Do not omit the smoke effects above the tracks which should be added to dilute black when the rest of the work is dry."

Well, there are some useful hints that will no doubt be applied by many of you.



A simple scene arranged with track ballast and a painted wall and background.