

Hornby Trains in the Garden

Some Hints on a Summer Pastime

ON a fine summer day it is very tempting to take a Hornby railway out into the garden and enjoy railway operations in the fresh air and sunshine. We receive many enquiries at this time of the year as to whether it is wise to take Hornby track out of doors, and the object of this short article is to provide a general reply to such queries.

First of all it must be said quite definitely that the Hornby system is designed for indoor use, and is quite unsuitable for permanent outdoor layouts. Exposure to wet or damp, even for a very short period, would cause the track to rust, with disastrous effects on points and serious depreciation of the railway in general. It would be very unwise to leave the track out for even a single night in this country.

On the other hand it is quite practicable to lay down a line for a few hours on a dry sunny day; but the whole of the material must be packed up and taken in again when finished with, the rails and other track components being carefully wiped over before they are put away. If the track should happen to be caught in a sudden shower this wiping must be done with particular care. The locomotives and rolling stock also should be dried carefully. Apart from the danger of rust, the only trouble that is likely to be experienced arises from sand or grit finding its way into the mechanism of the locomotives. If there is any reason to suspect grit the mechanism should be washed clean with a brush moistened with paraffin or petrol, and afterwards lubricated with Meccano Oil.

The great fun about a railway in the garden lies in the ample space available and in the possibilities for arranging realistic surroundings. In almost any garden something can be done in the way of making cuttings and embankments, and even tunnels. The line may be carried over small valleys by means of viaducts improvised from pieces of plank, or by simple girder bridges built from Meccano. Perhaps

the most successful tunnel is made from an old drain pipe sunk into a trough and covered with earth.

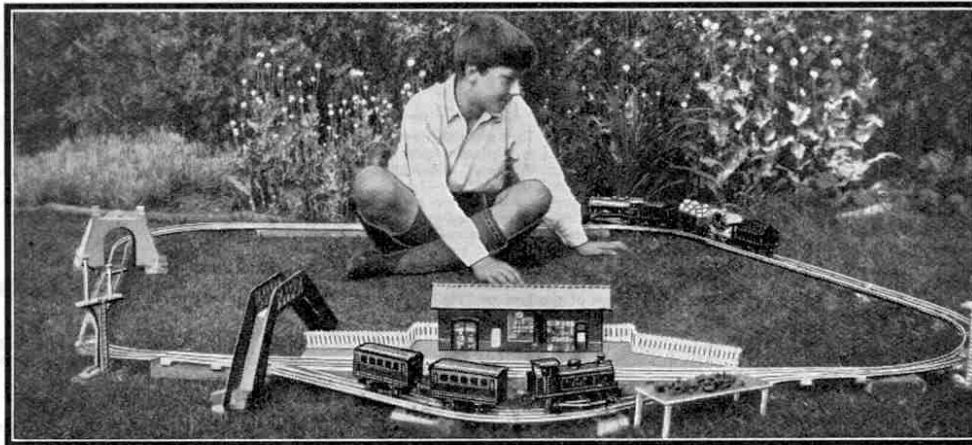
A stretch of level lawn naturally suggests itself as a suitable site for the layout, but as a matter of fact it is far from an ideal situation unless the grass is very short. If it is found that the grass is too long to admit of the rails being laid down satisfactorily, the difficulty may be overcome by raising the whole track above the grass by means of wooden blocks or small pieces of wood. The upper photograph on this page shows an arrangement of this kind.

As an alternative to the lawn, any level path or tiled walk may be brought into service. The lower photograph shows an interesting path layout, with a portion of the lawn made use of to provide space for a large circle of rails. A long single line run is very effective on a path, especially if matters can be arranged so that at certain points the trains disappear momentarily behind bushes or other obstacles.

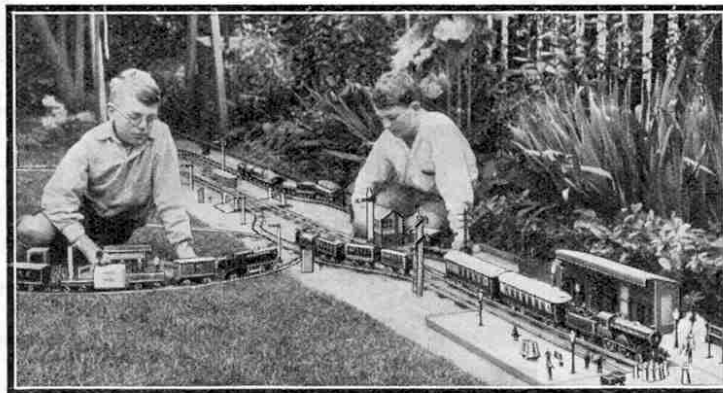
Perhaps the greatest drawback to using a Hornby train in the garden is the amount of time taken up in laying out the track and accessories, and subsequently collecting them and bringing them indoors again. This disadvantage

has led many readers to adopt a scheme that we have often recommended, namely to fix the rails to suitable wooden baseboards arranged in sections. The advantage of this arrangement is that, instead of a large number of individual rails, points and other items having to be handled separately, there are only a few sections to be dealt with as complete units. Many readers use this sectional baseboard system for their

indoor railways, and in such cases the transferring of the layout to the garden is quite a simple matter. The baseboard scheme may be carried still further by arranging the whole layout, including stations and all accessories, permanently on a wooden foundation. The parts are thus kept from contact with the ground.



A simple but effective layout operated by M. Richardson of Wanstead, E.11. The rails are raised up on wooden blocks in order to clear the grass, the length of which might impede the running of the trains.



Two H.R.C. members operating their layout in the garden. This is good fun on a warm dry day but the railway must not be left out all night.