

WJVintage

Pandemic Special Newsletter

June 2020 – Pt1



cc-by-sa/2.0 - 'Rocket 150' - 22 - NCB 7'... by Alan Murray-Rust - geograph.org.uk/p/6065186

Welcome to the fifth edition of the 'Pandemic Special' **WJVintage** mini-newsletter, which now sees us ten weeks into lockdown. I do hope that everyone is keeping fit and healthy and that the thought of relaxing the rules doesn't fill you all with dread. I still think we have a long way to go before we meet regularly at events and shows, which has prompted me into thinking of the future.

You can read more of my thoughts (I do have them occasionally 😊) as you scroll down to the new '**Head Boy's Thoughts**' feature below.

This issue's header photo is a lovely shot from the 'Rocket 150' event that took place at Rainhill, Merseyside in May 1980. It was British Rail's event to commemorate 150 years since the opening of the Manchester to Liverpool line and the introduction of George Stevenson's 'Rocket' locomotive. The event featured a cavalcade of locomotives from 1829 onwards and Hudswell-Clarke built Austerity 'Robert' held the distinction of being the only steam locomotive present that was still in regular commercial use. 'Robert' was finally retired from the NCB Bold Colliery in 1982 and is now in preservation at the Great Central Railway. 'Robert' also has the distinction of being the latest Austerity livery to be modelled for 3-rail, standard scale use and first production photos are shown below in the '**What's New**' feature, along with production photos of the new BR Grey Brake Van.

Customer Corner features include the wonderful layout of Derek Willcocks as previewed in the last issue, plus some fabulous outdoor shots of Les Martin's military train and the story behind his interest in the LMR.

Be alert...
Stay at home as much as possible....
Stay safe and
Keep Enjoying Your Trains

WJVintage
Serious Toys for Discerning Boys

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Head Boy's Thoughts



When will all this be over so we can return to normal life? Well, the truth of the matter is that I think it will be a very long time before we return to anything like the 'normal' we used to enjoy. The stark reality is that as far as possible the government has to try to get the economy moving forward again, and so a return to work and education for many is on the cards out of necessity. However, the virus is still with us and I think for many of the readers of this newsletter, there will be a reluctance to

venture into crowded areas, particularly indoors, even if the government further relaxes the rules.

I am now 62 and I consider myself one of the relative youngsters in this hobby. Many of you are in the most vulnerable 70-plus category age-wise, and I just cannot see thousands of us rushing back to the likes of Sandown Park for a Toyfair, certainly not this side of Christmas. I even wonder if smaller HRCA and Bassett-Lowke Society type regional meets will be viable this year. Richard Holder and I have discussed the Northants and Rutland O Gauge Group meets that we organise, and we are both doubtful as to whether they will recommence before 2021.

Assuming there is no major second wave of the virus over the summer, and assuming there is no winter return, we might be 'officially' allowed to congregate in larger groups indoors at some point later this year, but who amongst us is willing to take the risk?

With this in mind, I am actively thinking of 'other ways' to do things. I believe one of the great positives to come out of recent months is the creativity we have seen when it comes to making life work in a different way. The 'If the mountain won't come to Mohammed, then Mohammed must go to the mountain' type of approach. So, if we can't go to toy and train fairs, and we can't go to model railway club events, how can **WJVintage** bring such events to you? Well we can't in reality, but we may be able to offer a 'virtual' substitute.

It is early days yet, but I am currently exploring the thought that my '**What's New**' feature could become a video link. Click the link and watch a short video presentation of the latest products. All-round views, showing the key features, operating instructions and even running footage could all be shown to give a much more realistic view of the products.

I am even wondering whether we could have a live product launch via 'Zoom' so you could watch a new product being unveiled for the first time as part of a presentation and then take part in a question and answer

session afterwards, when hopefully I could answer any queries you might have. How many of you use 'Zoom'? How many of you have had 'Zoom' conversations with family and grand-children in recent weeks?

How about if '**Customer Corner**' could include a 'video of the month' featuring one of your layouts in action? This could be similar to the video link I have included in this edition's '**Customer Corner**' below? Given that we are all socially distanced, this would require a considerable input from some of you to actually shoot the footage and upload it, but I am sure it could become a feature, even if only occasionally.

Then how about a virtual Toyfair? My thought is that if I could get together with a number of other traders, we could put up a temporary website over an allotted and advertised weekend. Each trader would have a link on the website to his virtual table(s) and perhaps we could tempt you with some special offers – after all, we will be saving a considerable sum of money by not driving to events, paying for tables, teas, coffees, lunch etc - so I am sure a 'virtual fair discount' might be able to apply for those that attend.

This is all blue sky thinking at the moment, but the technology now exists and I am convinced it could be made to work. Nothing beats actually physically going to a fair or event, but if I could virtually replicate just a part of the experience, then I think it might be a worthwhile thing to do.

My first action will be to take the next batch of new products to arrive and see if I can make a worthwhile video presentation. Hopefully this will be able to go live with the next edition of the newsletter so Watch this space!

If any of you have recently filmed your layout in action and would be happy to share the experience with the readership, do please get in touch. They can be uploaded privately to **Youtube** where the only people who can view are those with the 'link'.

Finally, let me know what you think.

Have I completely lost the plot?

Or would you be happy to participate in some of the above if it came to fruition?

I think it could be a lot of fun and might make life a bit more bearable with a virtual train fix rather than the real thing. You know what they say:

"Out of adversity comes opportunity."

— Benjamin Franklin

Delivery Situation

Whilst postal and courier services have been operating throughout this pandemic – and thanks to all those involved as it has been a lifeline for many – I am aware that some services have been subject to considerable delays. It certainly doesn't apply everywhere in the UK, so it is impossible to predict with accuracy, how long items will take irrespective of whether they are sent first or second class.

Certainly, overseas parcels have been particularly badly hit with many flights cancelled, so hold space has become more limited. I have had parcels to Australia and New Zealand take 4 weeks to arrive when normally they are there within the week.

Please bear this in mind when ordering and please do be patient. Touch wood, nothing has been lost at all yet, but there have been, and will be, delays.

In addition to the above, I am still limiting trips to the post office with parcels to around twice a week. If there is sufficient demand I can be flexible and add an extra trip (I have done this already on a couple of occasions) but I prefer not to over-expose myself (or indeed others) to risk if I can help it.

Just to repeat my statement from previous newsletters:

Staff and Premises

- As a one-man-band I am continuing to operate from the WJ Vintage HQ in the Northamptonshire countryside.
- Currently I am fit and well and keen to crack on as usual, whilst exercising all possible caution according to government guidelines.
- I operate from a home office, plus a small, custom-built storeroom/pick and pack area and I am currently taking extra care to ensure a clean working environment with surfaces being regularly cleaned and disinfected.

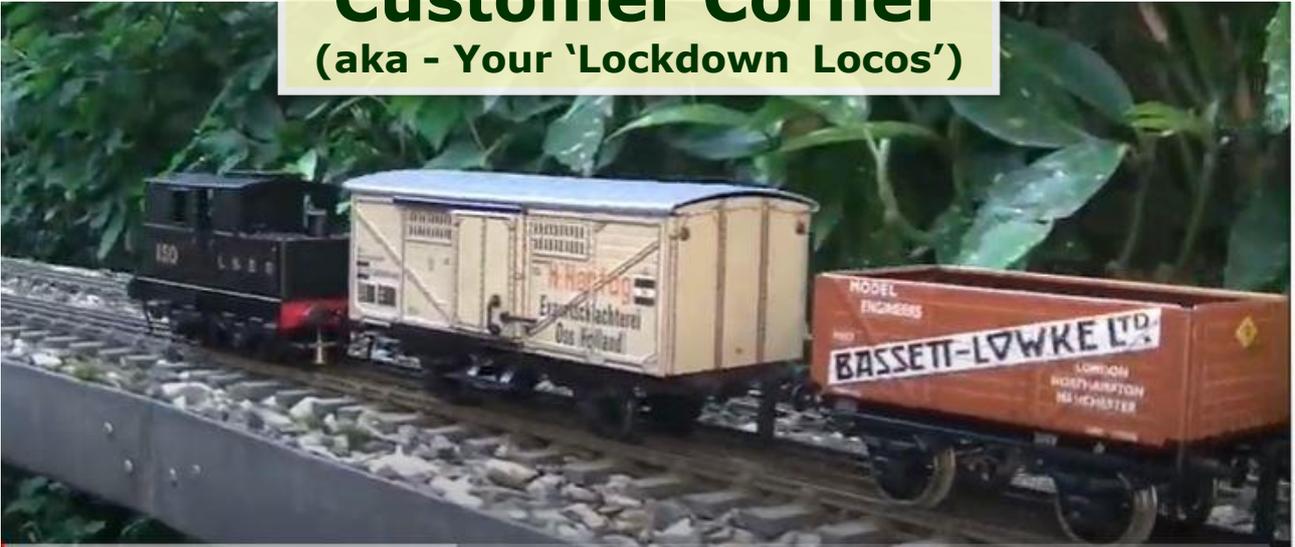
Deliveries

- I am currently continuing to work with Royal Mail, Parcelforce and other delivery services to get your parcels to you in good time.
- In most cases, delivery drivers will drop off parcels without you having to physically sign for them.
- The royal Mail have advised that domestic deliveries may now be subject to some delays. Overseas deliveries may be subject to longer delays.
- Public Health England (PHE) has advised that people receiving parcels are at virtually no risk of contracting the coronavirus. From experience with other coronaviruses, we know that these types of viruses don't survive long on objects, such as letters or parcels.
- This works in tandem with my own policy of regular hand washing and use of sanitiser gel when handling and packing goods.
- As I am currently unable to meet customers at shows I am going to offer **free postage on all UK orders over £100.00** until the end of April 2020, when I will review the situation again.

Note: Overseas postage will be discounted by an amount equivalent to the standard UK postal cost.

Customer Corner

(aka - Your 'Lockdown Locos')



Some Dutch Delights

This month I am beginning with a video from Holland that relates to my **'Head Boy's Thoughts'** editorial above.

But first, I have a confession to make. I meant to feature this **youtube** link some months ago, but somehow it was completely overlooked. However, as I have mentioned, now is perhaps a better time, given that we are not able to get out and about.

Peter Zwakhals from Holland has posted a lovely video of a friend's outdoor layout on Youtube. If you have a few minutes to relax, enjoy some great music and watch some even greater trains, then click the link, expand to full screen, sit back and enjoy the ride!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_gyFz5LIQ&feature=youtu.be

You won't regret it I can assure you. And I am really proud to see my little Sentinel shunter mixing in some very esteemed company!

Thanks to Peter for sending and sorry it has taken so long to share this.

The Secrets of Delboy's Lock-Up



Last month I shared a quick preview of Derek Willcocks' layout. Now I am pleased to share a few more photos of his fabulous collection. Looking at the photo above you could be forgiven for thinking this was a museum display with railwayana adorning every wall - and even the ceiling. But look at it from the other end of the room and you'll see that incredibly this is actually a garage layout!



Derek has always been a huge fan of the Gresley A4 (who isn't?) and has always collected interesting items, largely related to the A4. When Ace Trains first produced a 3-rail, O Gauge A4 model he was hooked and started collecting, plus had to create a layout for them! Unfortunately, he didn't consider the garage wide enough for a full oval circuit, so instead he set about an end to end 3-rail layout. Over time, he has actually ended up with 2 layouts in his garage as he now has an end to end finescale O Gauge track down the other side - best of both worlds! In case, like me, you are wondering how long the layout is, no, the layout does not continue through the wall into the house. Look carefully at the photos and you will see that Derek has used mirrors in the tunnels at either end of the mainline straights to give the illusion of a much longer layout. It really is very effective.

The layout itself is really very detailed and packed with little areas of interest. I'll let the pictures do the talking and you can see for yourself the work that has gone into this display.

The fabulous full size 'Sir Nigel Gresley' nameplate on the back wall was a purchase made during a visit to the North Yorkshire Moors Railway. Derek

saw the repro cast aluminium nameplate in the shed shop at Grosmont and decided he had to have it. Unfortunately, he had no transport available and so he and his wife between them carried it back to near Goathland – apparently, she still hasn't forgiven him! 😊 Well worth it though as a magnificent centrepiece for the display!



Many thanks to Derek for sharing these great photos with us

Marvellous Military Modelling

Les Martin has always been a keen customer for all things military, and particularly all things Longmoor Military Railway (LMR). He recently submitted photographs of some of his more recent military purchases, taken on a small, temporary layout in the garden where the natural foliage affords some very suitable camouflage.



Hauling the train is the ETS USA Class 0-6-0T in LMR livery and named 'Frank S Ross'. The two Series 1 Land Rovers on the WD Bogie Bolster are 1:43 scale models by Oxford Diecast and look very effective indeed.



Here is another view of one of the Series 1 Land Rovers on the Bogie Bolster Wagon

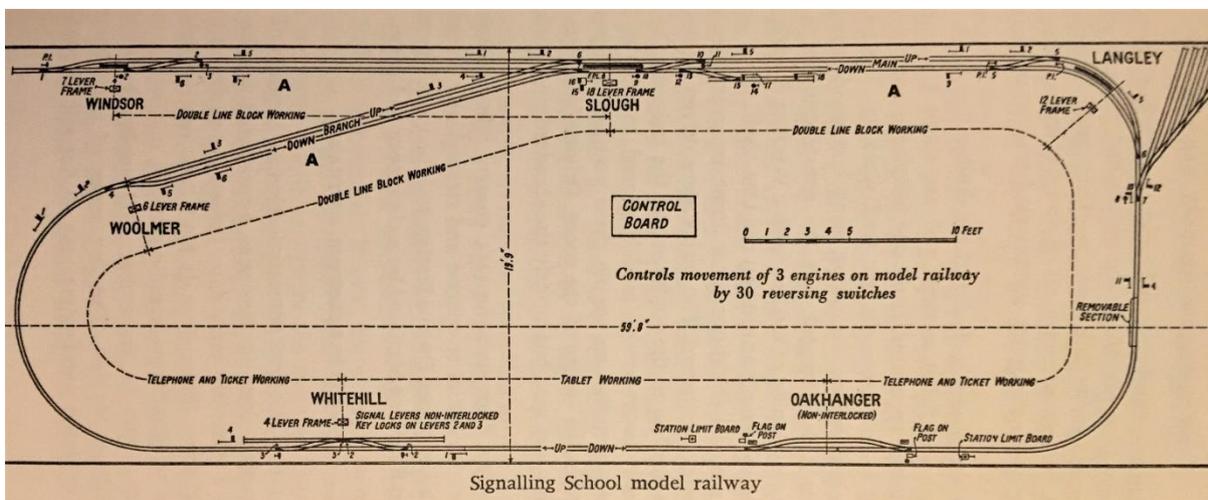


I was keen to discover more about Les' interest in the Longmoor Military Railway. It appears there were certainly local connections and childhood memories that have helped develop the interest. He explains thus:

'I live no more than 4 miles from the nearest point on the LMR which was a single siding at Griggs Green, near Liphook.

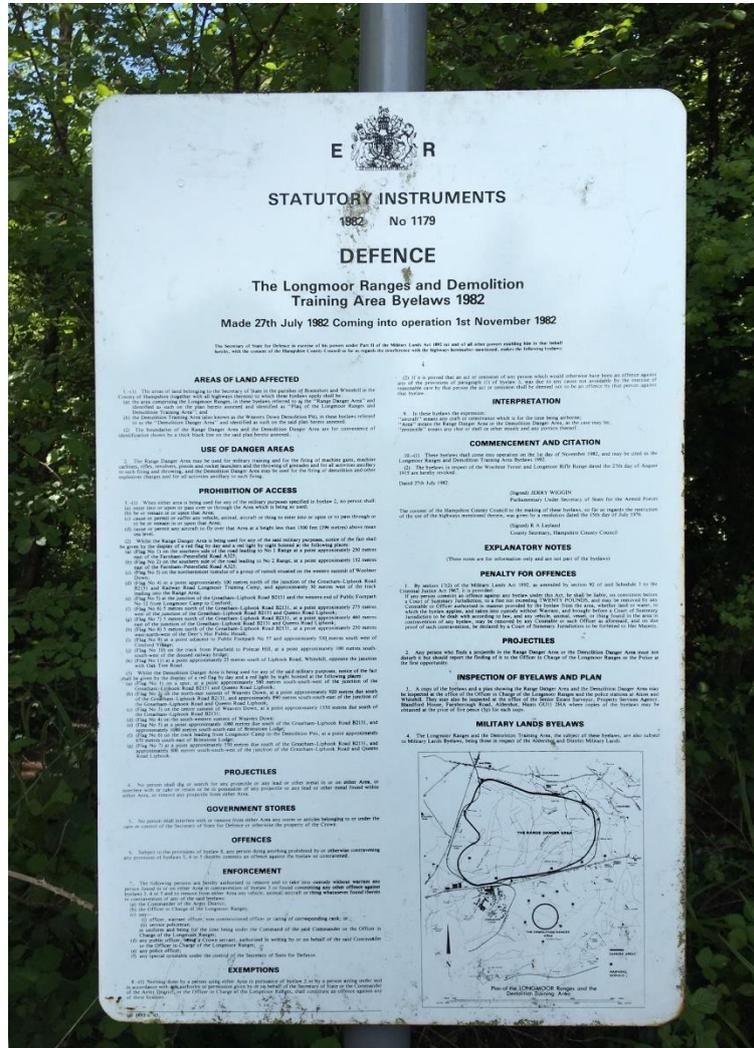
I was taken to Longmoor by a neighbour when I was young having no knowledge of its existence - I can recall the level crossings, the girder bridge and a bogie flat wagon in a roadside yard (Gypsy Hollow). I was eleven when the line closed so this would have been a little before that. Alas, I never was taken to an open day!

The signal training school building, adjacent to the rerouted A3, was only taken down within the last couple of years. This used to house the Bassett-Lowke model training railway.



I also recall an image of the preservation locos stored under canvas at Liss Station in either 1970, or 1971.

Much of the local heathland here is still owned by the MOD. I photographed this Bye-law sign a few minutes from my house only last week. It is not that old and miles from the railway! The map still shows the course of the line!



Les, thank you so much, not only for some really nice photographs of your military trains, but also for some fascinating background information, and particularly the connection with Bassett-Lowke at the Signalling School. Before I finish, I got quite excited when I saw one other photo Les sent. However, unfortunately these LMR wagons are Wessex Wagons commissions from Dapol in OO gauge – mind you, there's food for thought for the future!



What's New

J94/Hunslet Austerity Update

I am pleased to report that first production photographs of the NCB Austerity 0-6-0ST 'Robert' have just arrived, and what a stunner it is.



I think the colourful liveries on the Austerity completely transform the look and it becomes a very smart and handsome engine indeed.

Supplied for three-rail only running as standard, the loco is priced at **£375.00** plus P&P. Delivery will be in about two weeks.



At time of going to press, I still have just 2 of the beautiful maroon lined 'Harry' NCB Austerities available, both in 3-rail only configuration. Let me know if you would like one for immediate shunting duties! **£375.00** plus P&P.

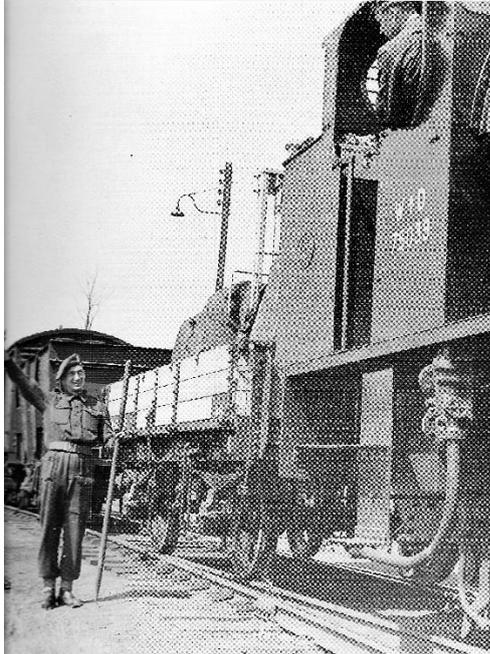
There are still limited stocks of some of the earlier Austerity/J94 releases available – although sadly no more of the Longmoor Military Railway, as these sold out very quickly indeed.

Get in touch to reserve LNER, Port of London (PLA), BR early and BR late crest versions. All **£375.00** plus P&P.



Further J94 Liveries

The final J94/Austerity livery was to have been the British Army version.

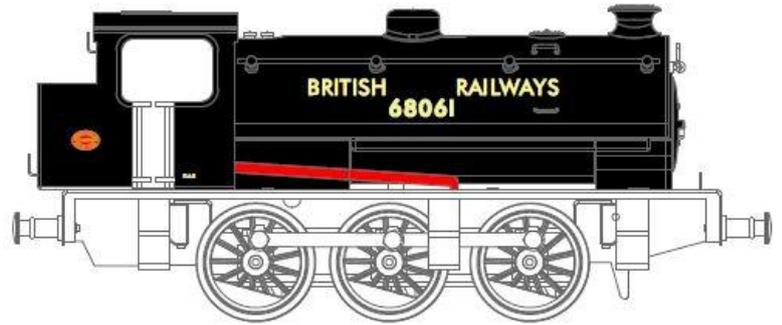
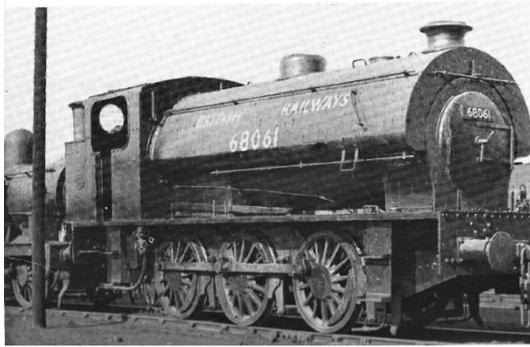


This is still planned for production and indeed we are looking at producing both wartime and post war versions. Both will be in Army Green, one with the wartime WD number 75039 and the other with the post-war number 98 (it was later renumbered 198 as below).



As previously advised, we have now decided to add a further J94 variant. This will be a 'British Railways' unlined black loco R/N 68061 as shown below.

As there are only a limited number of parts available this is going to be an extremely limited edition of just 10 pieces, with my allocation being just 5 models. I have pre-sold a couple of these already so there are 3 left!



All future J94/Austerity locomotives will be priced at **£375.00** each plus P&P and, as always you are welcome to pre-order in order to secure one of these very limited releases.

6-Wheel Milk Tank Wagon – Independent Milk Supplies (IMS)

The new IMS 6-wheel tank wagon is due to arrive towards the end of next week (12th June). Here are a couple of production shots of this colourful new tank wagon.



Once again, my allocation of these will be just 30 pieces and I am now over 2/3rds sold-out of these. There will be two running numbers so 15 each of No.23 and No.29. They will be priced at **£55.00** each plus P&P.

20 Ton Brake Van Range

The second version of the new Brake Van Range is due to arrive late next week (12th June).



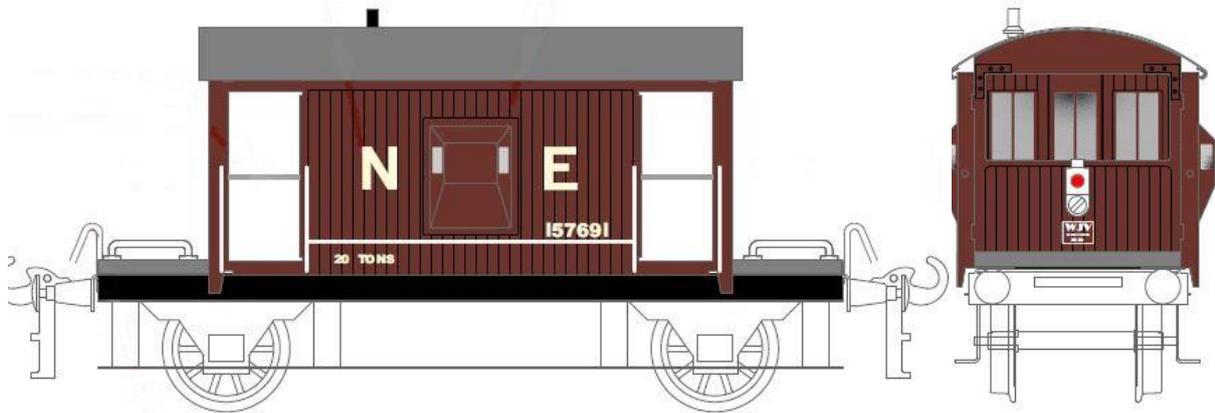
**BR
(unfitted)
Grey**



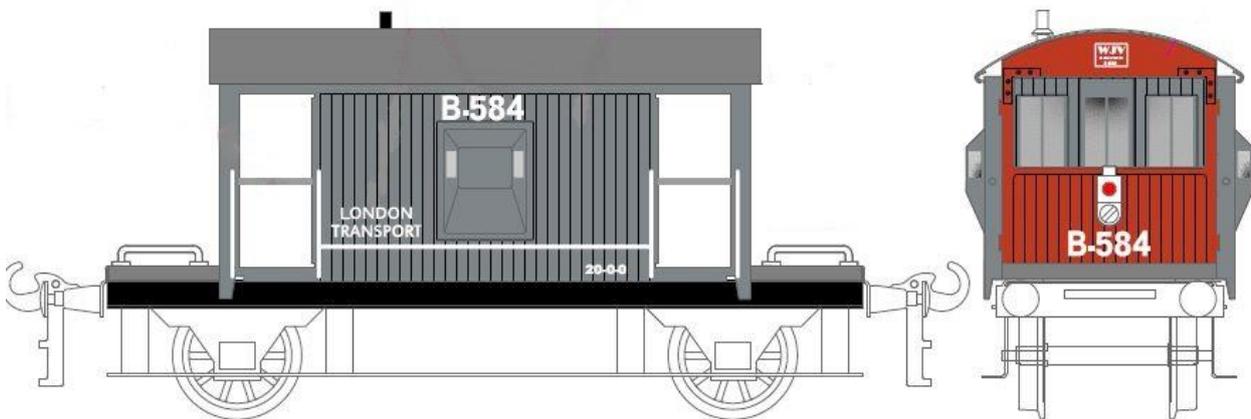
These have been selling really well and I have just 4 left of my allocation of 20 pieces. If you would like one please get in touch asap. They are priced at **£65.00** plus P&P.

The next two liveries to follow will be NE in a Bauxite brown colour and London Transport in Grey with orange/red ends as shown below

NE Brown



London Transport



As I mentioned last time the London Transport Brake Van is sold out on paper, but I have asked ETS if they can produce a few more. They will let me know next week so if you would like to go on the waiting list for one of these do get in touch and I will do my best.

These will all be released over the coming few months so keep an eye on future newsletters for further details and timings.

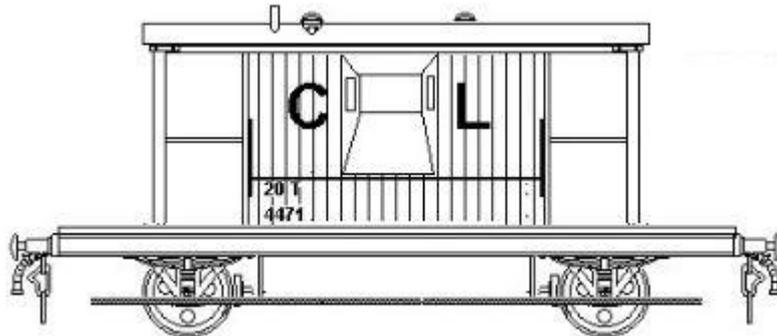
All Brake Vans feature a working taillight, which is powered by a slim button-cell style battery (supplied) mounted on the underside of the chassis (along with an on/off switch).

They are priced at just **£65.00** each plus P&P and a battery is included.

Cheshire Lines Committee

This is your very last chance to express interest in a Cheshire Lines Committee (also known as the Cheshire Lines Railway) version of the brake

van. Since the last newsletter I have had an additional expression of interest but I am still not really at a point where this will be viable. Let me know if you would like one. Another couple of pre-orders and I will probably 'push the button' and go with it. The wagon, as sketched below was in LMS grey with white CL lettering



Latest from Graham Lock Station Porters

We have a new style of Station Porter. This time he is holding a finger type board and once again you can specify the destination you would like adding to the board (see below left for an example). Cost is as before at **£9.00** each plus P&P. To remind you, the other style of porter with a station sign is also still available. The idea is that you get to choose your own railway company and station name (see below right for an example).



In either case, let me know your choice of lettering and Graham will custom make a figure for you – all for just **£9.00** each plus P&P. As these are all made to order I would ask that you allow sufficient time for Graham to make these – I would say at least a couple of weeks. I promise you, they will be well worth the wait!

See us at Shows (sadly not!)

Well, I'm afraid we won't be meeting at a show for the foreseeable future. As you will be aware current government advice is to be alert, stay home as much as possible and save lives! As a result, ALL shows have quite rightly

been cancelled.

As soon as this changes I will of course be quick to respond and book myself in to as many as I can, but I have a feeling it will be several months away yet.

However, I am still open for business, indeed I could do with your support more than ever at this tricky time financially, so do remember that I can still take your orders and despatch by post. Ordering and Payment options as below.

Ordering from WJVintage is still Easy

Online

Please use the **WJVintage** website as a shop window and then place your order by using the dropdown menu on each product page to select and submit the item you wish to purchase. This automatically sends me your details and I will be in touch to confirm your requirements and take payment. Alternatively select what you want and then give me a call or email me. Whichever method you use I will get back to you asap and I can confirm stock, particularly for highly limited items, and postage options. Please see below for full contact details.

Credit Card

We have a credit/debit card facility, so you can telephone and place your order with us by calling **07711 092497** – please have your card to hand when calling.

Cheque

If you would prefer to pay by cheque, that is no problem either. Just download the order form from our website and complete your requirements. Then make a cheque out for the total and post both order form and cheque to us at the address shown. Please make cheques payable to **WJVintage**.

Email

Alternatively, you can place your order by email and payment can then be made either by card, PayPal, direct bank transfer or cheque. Please note our email address is: wjvintage@outlook.com

BACS

A growing number of customers are now choosing to send money direct to my account by BACS transfer. If you would like to use this method please contact me and I will send you my bank account details.

All the best

Paul

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