

WJVintage

Pandemic Special Newsletter

July 2020 – Pt1



Welcome to the seventh edition of the 'Pandemic Special' WJVintage mini-newsletter. Wow, how time flies and suddenly we find ourselves in the second half of the year with summer upon us, albeit in a very different way to our expected norm. Like many of you I suspect, we have shelved our holiday plans for the time being. Thank goodness we have our trains to keep us busy!

As I mentioned last month, I too am looking at ways to embrace the new 'normal' and I am pleased to say that my first 'product reveal' video is now finished and I am really looking forward to your feedback. Scroll down to the '**What's New**' feature for details and a link to my new **WJVintage** Youtube channel.

I will soon be working on the second video as I have now received notification that the next delivery from ETS will be with us in a week or so. Again, there are full details in the '**What's New**' feature below. Remember, the videos are intended to enhance the content of the newsletter, not to replace it, so everything will still be featured here as well.

In keeping with some of the recent customer photographs submitted and featured, there is also a distinctly military feel to some of the other new releases in the '**What's New**' section below.

Finally, don't miss the '**Customer Corner**' feature, particularly if you like conversion and restoration projects. We show you how one customer transformed a job lot of cheap coaches into something quite special.

Stay 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

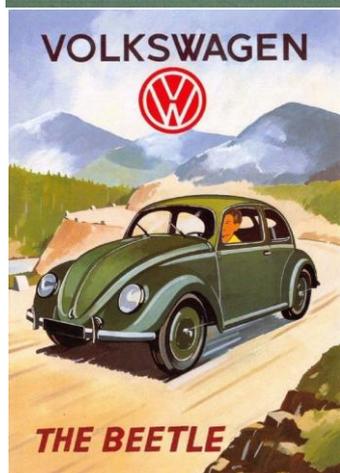
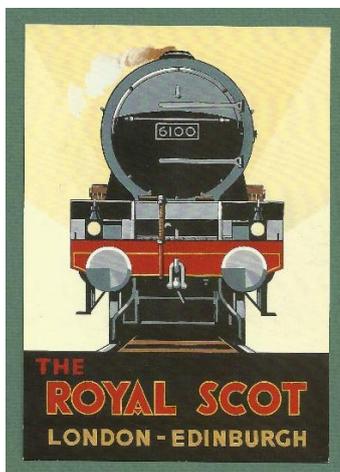


As a rule, I don't generally publish 'In Memoriam' or 'Obituary' type articles in the newsletter. At the end of the day, we are an ageing group and it is a sad fact of life that more and more of us do, and will continue to, fall off our perches over time. I would rather focus on the joy we get from the hobby and the good times we all have. However, I make an exception in this edition. I was saddened to learn from Graham Lock, that the Tappers oldest member, Colin Ashford has died at the fine

old age of 102. During his working years, Colin was a professional illustrator, mainly of transport subjects, including aircraft, ships, cars and, of course, railways. He was a founder member of the Guild of Aviation Artists and did some superb work, a few examples of which I am pleased to show below. I met Colin at a couple of Tappers meets and I did actually buy from him a few postcards of his artworks – the VW Beetle below being one.

Sadly, his son Adrian, also a Tappers member, passed away last year so we send our sincerest condolences to the Ashford family at this really sad time.

As Graham said to me; 'Colin was our oldest member, and he will probably always be our oldest member'.



Customer Corner (aka - Your 'Lockdown Locos')



Breathing New Life into Lima Coaches

Sometimes you have to look beyond what first meets the eye! Ron Galton from Kent did just this when he picked up ten Lima coaches cheaply at auction and turned them into a project that has resulted in some really inspired and beautiful pieces. I'll let Ron tell the full story.

'I still have a long way to go with restoring my ten scrap Lima coaches that I only bought at auction to get one item I wanted in the lot, but then I thought they were a good subject for trying restoration and am surprising myself with what I have done so far, with only one completely unrestorable coach scrapped as a donor.

Lima coaches were cheap, intended more as toys than for the serious enthusiast, the finish was dull and easily damaged, you dare not let methylated spirit near it, the couplings were effective but destroyed the image and the buffers were seldom glued in, so soon became lost. The interiors were actually realistic but in horrid yellow plastic and looked awful.

But on the plus side, they were nearer to scale length than other makes available at the time with quite good detailing in the moulding and I always thought they could be transformed. The roofs and glazing take a couple of seconds to remove which is helpful, and the plastic wheels spin very freely making them ideal for 2- or 3-rail. Now I had a box full, and the opportunity to test out my ideas.

I also had a few Darstaed couplings and a lot of Halfords part used Acrylic paint spray cans, plus a box of bits removed from all sorts of junk before disposal on the basis it might be useful one day, which proved to be the case in this project. So, I made a start.

I first experimented with the donor LMS coach that was beyond redemption and discovered that a coat of clear laquer produced a superb LMS deep gloss finish. That was a real bonus. The Halfords range of paints reproduce very close matches to all the other railway colours so full repaints were no problem from my stock. For the interiors I started with a mist coat of red oxide over the

yellow, and when clear lacquered, the result was lovely mahogany or teak colour for the woodwork. I then painted the seating and the end result was very nice interiors.



Apart from essential repairs I discovered that the coaches were too low in height compared to other manufacturers when they were all coupled together. So, I solved that problem by removing the pressed in pivots and putting junk box 1.25inch dia mudguard washers between the pivot bearings after cutting off the radius limiters. I also used heavy plated bolts for new pivots screwed straight into new threaded holes in the chassis and spring loaded the bogies using old electric motor brush springs, the photo shows the result.



I cut off the old couplings before re assembly. I used my few drop link couplings by screwing through timber pads glued to the chassis with self-cutting screws that went up into the interior floor and held the interior in place. The screws became coupling pivots that could be adjusted for height to get the coupling fitting just right. A bit of adjustment with a file to the bottom of the corridor connections was all that was needed to ensure adequate clearances.

I decided to add steps under the doors to replicate the real thing and close off the corridor connections. The result is a vast aesthetic improvement. Painting and some of what I have described above still has to be finished but so far no real expense thanks to the junk box. Little touches like the thin 0.5 mm black line between the blood and custard on one brake end coach makes all the difference. White lining on the blue and grey coaches should do the same if I can maintain a steady hand.



In exasperation waiting for buffers, I decided to try and make some out of plastic junk box notice board pins, originally from Ryman's stationers. The small round end makes a round buffer head the right size for trucks and I made new coach buffer shaped heads from black plastic card out of an old Filofax and glued them on. Once the large round pin end was cut off and the shaft diameter reduced slightly the new buffers fitted the Lima holes perfectly.



So far, I have only made buffers for the Southern coach, see Photos of the end result. If I wanted a complete round buffer it is only necessary to cut off the pin and once glued to the chassis it looks very realistic on a truck or coach needing round buffers. See photo for a row of buffers being painted before being ready for adapting and fitting. If I do not use them, they will go into the junk box.



Flushed with buffer success I decided to try making couplings for the Southern coach. Brass is not too easy to work, and I did not have any, but I found some aluminium sheet of the right thickness in that junk box. I had no trouble cutting out the required shapes and drilling the holes, then I made the drop links out of an old large paper clip. Twisting through 90 degrees was easy with Aluminium and the result was very satisfying once painted black. See photos.



The interiors cried out for internal lighting and the brake ends needed a working taillight. I had two 3-amp terminal strips, plenty of wire, some in line" connectors. some small on/off switches, 12K and 1K resistors, a few 3 mm LED's, and best of all I found a box of unused 12-volt LED self-adhesive rope lights from Liddle, with connectors for cutting and extending. I used Maldon Track fish plate retaining strip for brackets and offcuts of mini trunking lid to support the rope light. Guess where I found all these items?



I drew up a wiring diagram and after testing a mock up on 12 volts I decided to reduce the illuminance by dropping the voltage to 9 volts so that the system could run off a 9 volt standard battery in each coach. I have done the lighting in both brake ends and the only addition needed was a battery retainer in each coach to hold them in place. These came from two old smoke alarms, complete with terminal connectors that were in that wonderful junk box. The on /off switch is fixed under the interior with access via a hole in the coach chassis. see photos of the end result, with the hole still unfinished. As all the gear is in the luggage compartments and can be seen through the windows with lights on, I

will disguise it in some way yet to be decided. I believe in simplicity and easy dismantling, so I have used 3-amp terminal blocks cut from a strip instead of soldered joints, this takes up more room but for my purposes they are more practical.

Working taillights cost a fortune to buy, and I needed two, so I used a non-working Ace Trains lamp as the example to aim for in appearance. I made each lamp from one segment of a 3 amp terminal strip after removing the brass terminal and two screws, cutting with a Stanley knife for best appearance was easy and a cut down paper clip made the handle. The photos show the lamps painted and in position after fitting the LED. I have now worked out how to improve on the handle which makes the lamp nearer to scale, but I am happy with the two that I made as a first attempt.



Interior lighting in the other seven coaches is still not started, but I have worked out how to fit the gear into the two small lavatory spaces so that it will not be seen. Luckily no space needed for taillights. Incidentally, the extra weight seems to improve the running on the track.

I now have just one nearly finished coach (waiting for lighting), the Southern, complete with home-made couplings and buffers, the rest are in various stages of production, but most are not yet quite as advanced.



That is my story so far, and thanks to my junk box, at no cost for anything specially for this project. However, I do not relish the thought of making a lot more couplings or buffers needed to finish the job, so please Paul, if you can help an old guy whose hands, eyes and concentration are not as steady as they once were, I would still appreciate your finding those couplings for me, and Lima buffers too if any come your way.'

Ron, thanks so much for sharing this project with us in such detail. It really shows what can be done with a little imagination and a well-stocked junk box. Brilliant work!

Everybody Loves a Streamliner!

Streamlined locomotives have always been popular subjects, especially here in the UK where A4s, Coronations and Spam Cans have all been modelled for us in O Gauge for 3-rail running by the likes of Ace, Darstaed and Seven Mill Models.

They are also popular across the pond and when I saw the following photos from Robin Dodson in Canada, I just had to share them with you. They all represent pre-war O Gauge, but they are not all 100% original – one is original, one is restored and two are modern reproductions. They are all beautiful, I'm sure you will agree!

First up is this original Lionel Blue Streak set headed by a Commodore Vanderbilt style engine.



Next, we have a beautifully restored train, which is an American Flyer Illinois Central "Green Diamond" passenger train from the 1930's.



Now we move to the contemporary reproductions. First up is this fabulous Williams reproduction of the iconic Ives 1694 electric engine pulling 169. series cars. This was made in the days when Lionel was not in a litigious mood regarding its copyright of the Ives trademark.





Finally, we have a Lionel "Classics" reproduction of its 1930 streamlined Milwaukee Road Hiawatha set.



Thank you Robin for sharing these fantastic locomotives from your collection. Robin confirms that these have all been recent acquisitions so I guess you could say they really are 'Lockdown Locos'.

More on Streamliners

Before we leave the subject of streamlined locomotives, David Bates from Norfolk has been experimenting in recent years and has now perfected not only a viable battery driven, radio controlled operating system for his Seven Mills A4 Pacific, but also a very realistic smoke and sounds system too. Below are links to two of his Youtube videos, the first showing the loco running on batteries with r/c control, and the second demonstrates the smoke and sound. Both are ideal for his garden layout. Here are the links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9sEzLVLsXBs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wccmfPtclek&feature=youtu.be>

Very impressive David and hopefully an inspiration to others – thanks for sharing.

The Enquiries Desk

Last edition I invited you to submit any technical queries or problems you might have to see if the broader readership might have a solution.

I haven't exactly been inundated but it is early days yet. However, I do have one query received from Toby Ross on Malta.

Over to Toby:

'This is a MTH Chapelon, and it's a beautiful model. But it doesn't work. I bought it about five years ago, second hand from Kevin (The Station Master). I had just moved, so had no layout. Due to a number of circumstances, I did not try to run it until a couple of months ago. I imagine that Kevin would take it back even now, but I want to keep it. I also have a set of MTH CIWL coaches to go with it.'



MTH locos are fiendishly complicated, with sound, smoke, etc. Quite impressive when they run. But I don't need all the complications. So, you say, drop the chassis out and hot-wire it. The detailing and complication of the valve gear makes me believe that I would never be able to get it back together again.

The brain is in the tender, and a large number of wires are incorporated in the coupling. The whole thing looks like a nightmare. Help!

Can anyone out there offer any help to Toby? These are beautiful locos and we have one that has fairly regularly run at the NAROGG meets so I know there are at least one or two out there. Does anyone have any experience of 'hot wiring' one to use it without all the 'bells and whistles'? Or possibly a wiring diagram?

If you think you might be able to assist, please drop me a line and I can put you in touch with Toby.

In the meantime, does anyone else have any queries that have them stumped? If you do, why not drop me a line and we'll see if the answers are out there.

I look forward to hearing from you.

What's New

J94/Hunslet Austerity Update - New 'Product Reveal'



I am pleased to report that first **WJVintage** 'Product Reveal' video has now been completed and is ready for your viewing over on my brand new 'Youtube' channel. Here is a link to the video which features the newly arrived Austerity 0-6-0 Saddle Tank in NCB lined Apple Green livery and named 'Robert'

<https://youtu.be/CJv74z75hn8>

Please subscribe to the [WJVintage channel](#) for regular notifications of new videos.

Let me know what you think – but go easy on me! 😊 It is my first time at this sort of thing, and I can already see things to improve and that I will do differently in the future. However, it's a start and I hope you enjoy it and find it useful

J94 – British Railways Unlined Black

Hot on the heels of 'Robert' comes the next J94 release, a very workmanlike 'British Railways' unlined black livery. This has literally just left Prague and is due to arrive during the course of next week.

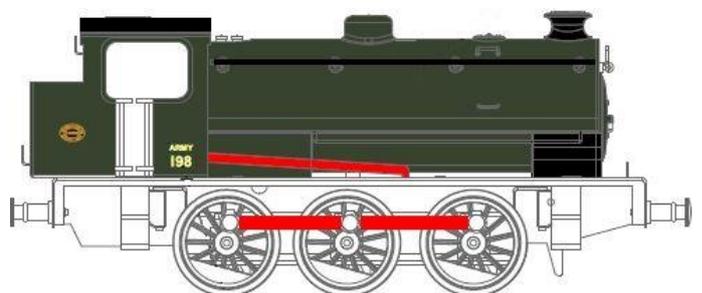
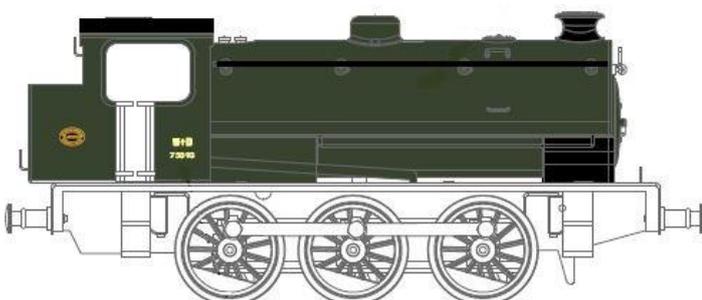


To me this type of livery really suits the austere lines of the J94 and would look superb with a long rake of goods wagons.



It is a really limited release for this livery - just 10 pieces. My allocation is half that and I have sold 2 already on pre-order! Needless to say, I would advise getting in touch pretty quickly to avoid disappointment if you fancy one of these. As with all the Austerity/J94 locos, this one is priced at just **£375.00** plus P&P

The final livery of the Austerity is now being worked on. This is the British Army version which we have split into two variants – wartime and postwar. They are very similar as you will see from the artworks below. The wartime (WD - left) is slightly less colourful than the postwar loco.



There will be just 10 of each variant so my allocation will be 5 x wartime and 5 x postwar only. We cannot produce any more as all the parts are now used up! Please get in touch quickly if you would like to secure one. Price again is **£375.00** plus P&P.

Brake Van Update

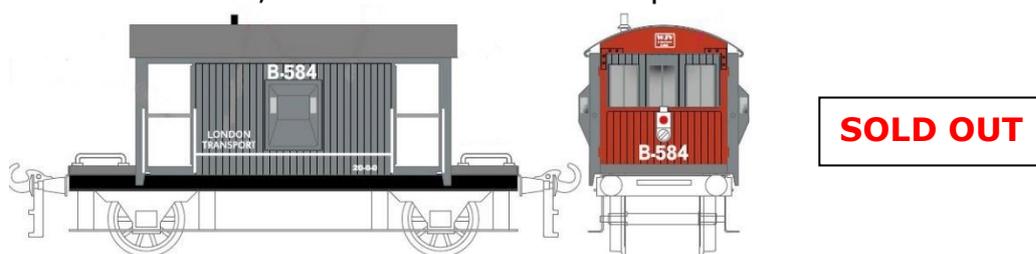
I have been really pleased with the reception the new brake vans have received. So far, the Longmoor Military Railway and the BR Grey versions have both sold out.

Next to arrive is the North Eastern version in Red Oxide, which is due in the next week or so.



Its another fine-looking van and is also proving popular. I have sold half of these already. Do get in touch if you would like to reserve one.

The final Brake Van of this run will be the London Transport version. These have all sold out, so I am unable to accept more orders at this time.



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.

More from Graham Lock

With all the recent interest (within this newsletter) in things military, and as a result of a special request from a particular customer, Graham has been busy painting up a range of his figures for use on military railways.



Note – all figures are in the same shade of Khaki. Photos were taken at different times under different lighting

I am pleased to be able to offer military railway figures as follows:
 Driver/Fireman - **£15.00** per set plus P&P
 Shunter - **£8.50** each plus P&P
 Guards (red flag or green flag) - **£8.50** each plus P&P
 These are all cast in metal and hand painted by Graham to order.
 Please do allow a couple of weeks for orders to be fulfilled.

..... and Yet More Military



Something a little bit different but, given the amount of military interest of late, I thought these might be of interest as a load for a WW2 era military train.

Diecast models of tanks have tended to be in either 1:32 scale or 1:48 scale to-date. That has now changed with the introduction of a (partworks) magazine series from Deagostini which features a full range of armour all at 1:43 scale – ideal for O Gauge!

What's more I have managed to obtain some brand-new surplus stock of two of the most popular allied tanks of WW2 - the Churchill MkVII and the M4 Sherman.



These are boxed but do not include the magazine and I only have a very small quantity (although I may be able to obtain a few more if there is demand).

They feature diecast metal bodies with other parts in plastic but are really very nicely detailed, especially for the price - they are offered at just **£15.00** each plus P&P

Approx dimensions are as follows:

Churchill: 170 x 70 x 65mm (LxWxH)

Sherman: 140 x 62 x 65mm (LxWxH and excludes overhang of gun)

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.

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.

With the relaxation of the lockdown measures in the UK, I am now happier to make more regular trips to the post office so hopefully this will remove one potential source of delays and hopefully other services will start to operate more normally over the coming weeks. Fingers crossed!

Just to repeat my statement from previous newsletters this is still relevant:

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.

All the best

Paul

WJVintage

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