

Apart from modelling in 16mm, we also have an interest in HO model railways.

My father went to Portugal for the first time in 1978, mainly to see the tram systems. However, the narrow gauge steam was still running and did so until the mid eighties. After more trips, he soon became interested in the main railway system over there and began to build or modify Diesel Locos, Coaches and wagons. After that, he then got into the steam locomotives they had and then decided to do heavy modifying to some locos. Out of all 12 locomotives on the layout, only 2 are commercial items that were bought off the shelf.

Around the beginning of 2016, his friends in the modelling world started asking whether or not he would build a layout for the stock to run on. The simple answer was no, because it would have to be small enough for our car (then a 2004 Ford Fiesta) and also long enough for suitable train lengths. I at the time had this 4.4ft x 2.7ft board which had an N gauge layout on it that was not used. It was then decided that we would rip up the track and then think about a track design, but had to consider some things. The first being that the station has to be long enough to accept a passenger train (one steam loco + 3 x 4 wheelers or one diesel + one silver coach and van). Second was how the Loco would run round its train, and third enough room for some sidings to shunt around in. To save space, the layout depends on a 3-way point so all of this can be fitted into such a small area.

In August 2016, the final track plan was then decided and construction soon began. The first thing to do was to cut out some holes, so that the point motors could be mounted directly to the points. Then some cork was laid to act as track surface and then finally some track! I was given the task to wire up the layout whilst Dad did the scenery (with some help). About 3 weeks later, some trains ran for the first time. It was then 6 months' work to finish off the layout ready for its debut in February 2017. All the buildings except 2 were scratch built and static grass was used. A great feature on the layout is the church, which has a smoke generator to give the impression of too much incense! Wherever you look, there is always that little bit of detail that sets it off. 4 days before the show, the final piece of scenery was added and brought the end to many months of work. It then was exhibited at Eurotrack and the layout received positive comments. Also at the show was Andrew Burnham, editor for Continental Modeller who spent an afternoon photographing the layout. It was in the August 2017 edition and was the "plan of the month". At that show, we got 5 show invites over the weekend and so far the layout has been to 9 exhibitions in Hampshire, Isle Of Wight, Dorset, Birmingham, and Portsmouth. We have already 3 shows booked for 2019, so lets bring it on!

End of article, thanks for reading.