



# Wight Garden Railway

## Stock and its conversion from Standard

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A couple of years ago I penned a short missive "How to fit a Gallon into a pint pot" which was about the development of a Gauge 3 branchline in a 25ft x 25ft garden that is now known as the "Wight Garden Railway".

Well the line is still there and getting used regularly and the only real difference apart from updating the buildings is that Charmouth Station (the last link to my West Country line) has been re-named "Blackgang", a fictitious station that ensured the survival of the old Merstone to Ventnor West branchline. (yes this is the same name that Mark has used on his portable exhibition layout, it came to us both during an evening chatting, that it was the perfect name for a fictitious island location and nearly every one knows of the famous Blackgang Chine)

But just to roll back just a little in to the thoughts as to why the Isle of Wight. Being that my railway is in a confined space just like the Isle of Wight, I am limited as to what I could run, and being based on the island it also preserves the bank balance somewhat as I am now limited to what can be prototypically run. But on open days anything goes including live steam.

In this missive I am going to look at what can be modelled in the period from Nationalisation up till the end of steam on the island. During this period there were only three classes of loco in regular use i.e. The ex LB&SCR Terrier, The ex L&SWR O2 and The ex LB&SCR E1 and for a short period of time an ex LB&SCR E4 was trialed unsuccessfully on the island.

There were only two Terriers that actually survived on the island to go into British Railways ownership and they were No 8 Freshwater & No 13 Carisbrooke, their final Island livery being Southern Malachite lined Green with the words BRITISH RAILWAYS in sunshine yellow lettering with black shading. The main detail difference to a standard terrier kit as produced by GRS would be

to add a Westinghouse pump to the right hand side of the cab, remove the tool box from the rear of the bunker and then extend the bunker by sawing through the bunker and let in a piece of plastic card to extend the bunker out to the buffer beam. Also some locos had sandboxes on the front splashers, these again can be added using plastic card, filled and then sanded to shape.

The Terriers were shipped back to the Mainland in May of 1949. By the time that British Railways had taken over the running of the islands railways the 21 members of the class Nos 14 – 34 on the island had already been converted to operate with Westinghouse air braking and had also been fitted with the familiar extended bunker. To convert the GRS O2 into an Island version a Westinghouse pump as fitted to the Terrier needs to be fitted to the left hand side of the smoke box and an air reservoir cylinder (made from a suitable sized piece of steel tube with the ends blocked off) needs to



be fitted onto the left hand tank top, plus the additional pipework has to be added. The trickiest part but not that difficult is to extend the size of the bunker. This was done using an “L” shaped piece of plastic for each side extension let in to the resin moulding with another piece of plastic for the rear and the curved bottom edge filled and shaped. I did not worry too much about the join line on the bunker side extensions as from the many photos that I have this can be clearly seen on the prototype.

These modifications had all been carried out in the islands workshops at Ryde. After the two Terriers had been sent back to the mainland, two more O2s were shipped to the island however this time they were already converted to operate on air brakes and also had been fitted with the Mcleod extended Bunker. These two locomotives were allocated the numbers 35 and 36 with the names Freshwater and Carisbrooke previously carried by the last two Terriers. Nos 35 & 36 also had the distinction of being the only O2s to be fitted with Push-Pull operating equipment. I am told that these engines were tested out on the mainland on the Southampton to Alton Push-Pull service. Outwardly the only real difference was two extra cylinders (plus associated piping and rodding) on the front of the left-hand water tank and at the front of the running plate underneath the Westinghouse pump.

The only other addition was the nameplates and bunker number plates and shed plates that came from Guilplates.

The O2s carried six variants of British Railways' livery.

1. Malachite Green with BRITISH RAILWAYS in yellow on the side of the tank.
2. Lined Black with the “Cycling Lion” crest.
3. Unlined Black with the “Cycling Lion” crest ( there are pictures of No 36 in this livery.
4. From 1957 Lined Black with the early version of the “Ferret & Dartboard” crest ( this was where the lion faced the front of the loco on both sides)
5. Lined Black with the later version of the “Ferret & Dartboard” crest ( this was where the lion faced the left of the crest)

Unlined Black with the later version of the “Ferret & Dartboard” No 24 Calbourne was shipped out in this livery in 1965.

There are a couple of other variants that could be modelled i.e. some locos carried a Drummond boiler with the safety valves in the dome and others had (or did not have) rivets in the buffer

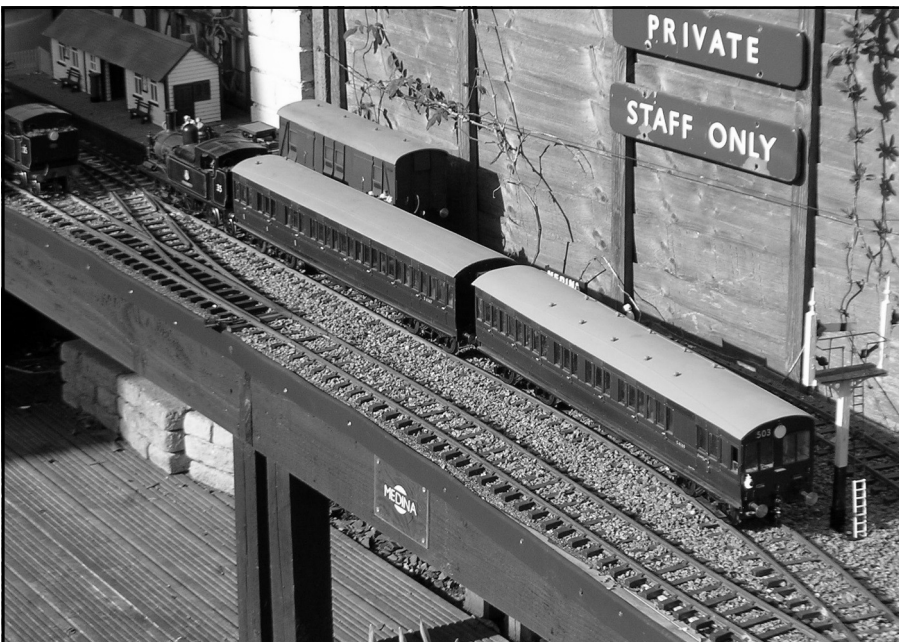
beams and rivets around the smokebox and these can be seen quite clearly in the vast amount of books depicting the islands' railways. There is no model available for the E1 but on my railway that is not a problem as the longer wheelbase and the longer footplate would cause buffer locking problems.

### Rolling Stock

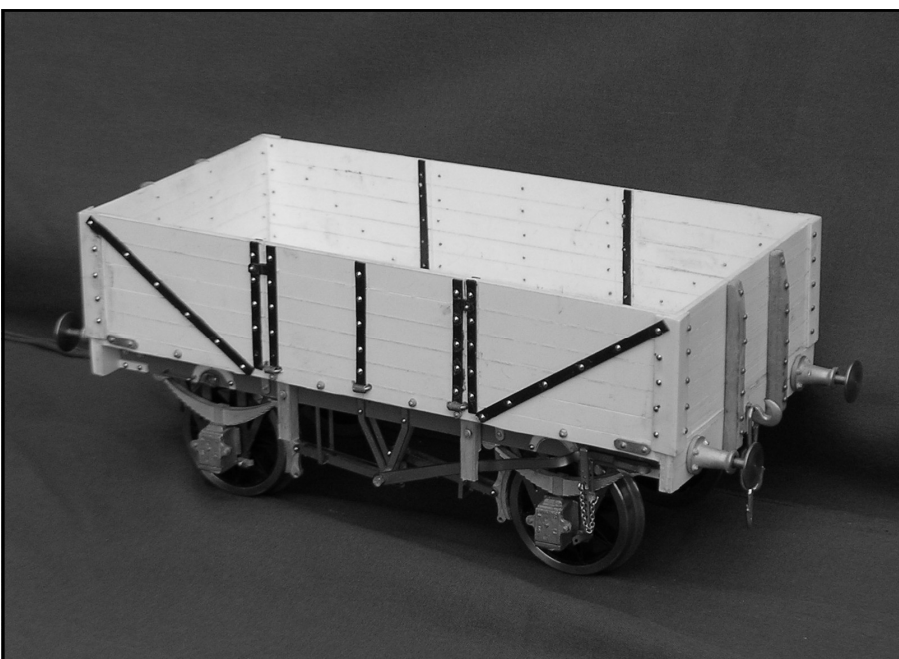
Typical with everything else on the Island the rolling stock was all second hand.

#### Coaches.

These during nationalisation were either ex SECR tri-arc roof or ex LB&SCR low arc roof panelled stock but over the years where repairs had taken place many of these panels were plated over. Quite reasonable representations of these can be made using the two LSWR coach kits available from GRS by mixing the compartment panels around to suit. The panels can be ordered separately from GRS the cost of which is £1.89 per panel and they are available as 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> class compartments. In my case I have modelled the Push-Pull set No 503 that run on the Ventnor West branch and although this was closed in 1952, I have used my modellers licence to extend this with the previously mentioned fictitious line to Blackgang.



For anyone modelling the Preservation scene these panels combined with the running gear from the GRS Southern PLV (W irons, axle boxes and springs etc.) would make up into the preserved 4 wheel coach. ( I am told that GRS are producing a three point compensation unit for the long wheel base vehicles)



#### Wagons & Vans

There were various types of wagons running on the island but the predominant ones were either an ex LB&SCR 10t five plank drop door, or an ex SR 13t eight plank drop door. Although there is no kit of these available they are very easy to scratchbuild and will be the subject of a future article. In BR days these would have been mainly used for carrying coal ( the main goods carried).



There were a few vans used and these would have been of an ex LB&SCR variety however, during the period that I am modelling there were only about 10 on the island and these went into departmental service. Most freight (parcels and packages etc) would probably have been carried in the ex SECR PLVs of which there were both the even planked and the island converted (from ex SECR four compartment brake coach) the bogie luggage vans.



There is a kit of the PLV available and the bogie luggage van can be relatively easily be built from Plastic card, scribed to represent the panelling with roof section as used in the GRS PLV kit. I built my own bogies using shaped steel sides using axle boxes and springs from the PLV kit. The bogie sides are screwed to a pivot block to give a flexible bogie that will ride over most undulations on a garden railway.

Other freight might well have been carried in the guards vans as some of these had side loading doors, however these again would have to be scratch-built as there are no kits available.

A reasonable representation of the island bolster wagon can be built by a conversion of the Mike Williams LNWR bolster wagon. The wagon is the correct length and the main conversion is to replace the dumb buffers with sprung heavy duty ones and changing the wheel base. The braking system is freighter brakes with a single shoe for each wheel and levers on each side.

