

## **December 2021**

Hello everyone,

It seems like a long time since I sat down to put together the last newsletter and it probably is a long time – too long in fact.

We now know that the Convention in March will go ahead – Covid and governments permitting. So, keep that first weekend in March marked in your diaries etc. There's still time to book!

As far as we know the format will be the usual arrangement of layouts and trade and the indications are that we should have good trade support this time.

Despite the pandemic there seems to have been a flurry of new releases and announcements since I last put pen to paper (or finger to keyboard) and I'll make mention of these later.

It's good that exhibitions have restarted, albeit in a limited way, and it brought home what we were missing when Alan Cross asked me to help run Mohawk Valley at the Gosport Group mini-exhibition at Alverstoke a week ago. Despite having been in storage for best part of two years, Mohawk performed well after a quick clean up of the track work. There was also a small(ish) American presence at The International N Gauge show (TINGS) last September. Again, an enjoyable experience and a chance to raid Anoraks Anonymous' vast stocks of second-hand goodies.

Let's hope that Omicron doesn't throw too big a spanner in the works and the gradual resumption of that aspect of our hobby can continue.

Ralph

### **London Bus Syndrome**

How often have we heard the expression 'You wait ages for one to come then two come together'.

Well the same seems to apply to Big-Boys (UP articulated 2-8-8-4 steam locos). No sooner had I received information from Neal Carnaby about the Kato model than Broadway Limited announced theirs! It appears that the information from Kato was an unofficial leak from a wholesaler and this has forced Broadway's hand in announcing their competitor. Both models are in a similar price bracket but, as yet, no release dates have been published. Neal has given me details of his pricing for various version of the Kato model which I circulated earlier.

*[Neal's prices for the Kato model are*

*DC only - \$280.00*

*DCC silent - \$315*

*DCC Sound by Kato - \$425*

*DCC Sound by Norman using a Soundtraxx*

*Tsunami - \$385.*

*As above but with dual speakers - \$400.*

*Contact nealsngauge@aol.com*

*The advertised price for the Broadway model seems to be around \$499 (DCC Sound)]*

My thanks to Neal for the clarification regarding the two releases.

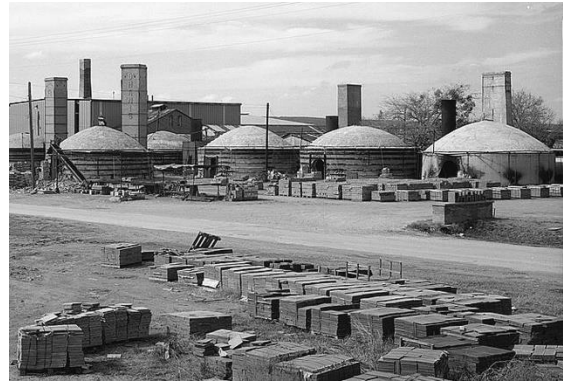
### ***Spotlight***

Continuing the series of short articles by Russ Kaufman This time he continues his look at the brick industry.

#### ***Brick Making Part III - The Kilns***

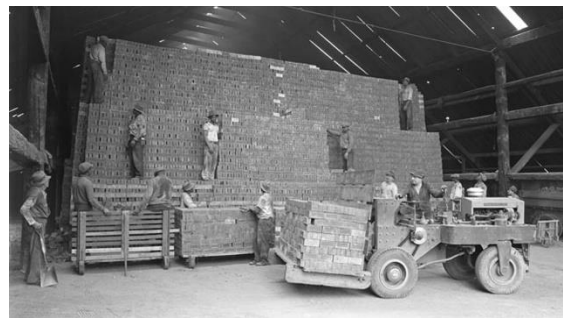
The first kilns, commonly known as 'scove kilns' or 'brick clamps', were temporary structures created from 'green' (unfired) bricks stacked over a fuel source and typically covered with mud. Wood or straw was the fuel of choice in these early kilns to be followed by coal, natural gas and electric power over the subsequent millennia. The designs of brick and ceramic kilns changed over the centuries usually with the objectives of more consistent airflow, better temperature control, reduced fuel consumption and, more recently, less environmental impact.

There were several experimental designs such as 'Hoffmann Continuous Kiln' which was invented in Germany by Freidrich Hoffmann in 1858. This complex oblong design allowed for the constant feeding and firing of bricks but it never overtook the more prevalent 'intermittent' (batch) approach still used today. Probably the most recognized kiln shape is the classic 'bottle', which was popular in the United Kingdom especially for production of porcelain dishware, and the 'beehive' which was pervasive in the United States. These domed roof beehive kilns were usually constructed from bricks bound by metal bands with arched fuel (wood or coal) ports spaced around the perimeter and were often later retrofitted with piping to be used with natural gas (see photo).



As with most industries, the success of a brick manufacturing facility relied on its workers. The stacking of bricks inside a kiln is truly an artform as they need to be arranged in a way to promote airflow while maximizing floor space.

Prior to large scale mechanization, once the firing process was completed, these bricks (that were once heated to over 2000 degrees!) were removed and restacked by hand. Some of these stacks rose to well over 20 feet above the floor and resembled a huge game of Jenga (see photo).



Of course, when the bricks were ready to be shipped via barge or rail, this process was reversed and the stacking started all over again! This is the third and final part of this series on the brickmaking industry. Hope you've enjoyed it as much as I have in researching and writing about it!

## ***New to You***

Broadway Limited have kept up their string of release announcements over recent months, ranging from the 'common place' (USRA Pacifics, SD40-2s in high and low nose variants) to the obscure (Pennsylvania P5a Electric)

I purchased a USRA light pacific in Canadian Pacific livery (other liveries are available). Now, I don't know if the CP ever had any of these locos, but the model is an accurate model of the prototype USRA loco which runs very nicely and has good sound. Even if it's not totally correct, the model looks much like some classes of CP pacific and looks very good at the head of a rake of maroon CP varnish.



*Photo 1*



*Photo 2*

At this point a few words of explanation may be needed. Firstly, the typical CP octagonal enclosed water tower is a

scratchbuilt plastic structure I purchased many years ago from a hobby store in Victoria, B.C. Of more concern may be the grey object behind the loco in photo 2. Yes, it's a dinosaur!

The explanation is in photo 3 below.



*Photo 3*

It doesn't show that well in the photo but the building on the right bears the name of 'Fantasy Model Works Inc.'

I had included this small group of structures to fill a rather large void in the landscape of Eliasville. Then one of my grandchildren found this plastic dinosaur and placed it on the layout – just for fun and to wind Grandpa up!

That's when the light bulb flashed on and suddenly the group of buildings had a name and a purpose – Fantasy Model Works Inc., fabricators of theme park animatronics and displays. Now the dinosaur is being completed for delivery, by rail of course, to a theme park outside a big city. OK, it's my railway and Rule 1 applies!

Another firm that continues to deliver the goods is Rapido Trains of Canada. They have recently released the first accurate model of a Canadian FP9A. Now before anyone complains, I know that Intermountain released an excellent and accurate FP9A some time ago, but it was not a Canadian FP9A!

There are considerable differences in the detailing.



Photo 4

Photo 4 shows my Rapido CN version in 'Sergeant's Stripes' livery, standing by the water tower again. The detail is superb, the sound truly realistic and the performance excellent. Now all we need is a matching 'B' unit to accompany it – please!

Moving down in size, a new tool has been released by DCC Concepts. This is an axle hole turning tool. Now these have been available for OO and HO for some time from various manufacturers, but this is the first time I've found an N gauge version.



Put simply, it's a miniature drill, mounted to fit into the axle holes of a truck and provided with the means to rotate the drill in the hole, thus clearing swarf, excess paint or just an overtight moulding. Very useful, but at less than £13 it moves into the essential category.

DM-Toys, in Germany, continue to release all sorts of structures and accessories, and, while some may be of limited value to the American modeller, many have wider application. Take a look at their cobbled road sections and the cobbled road sections with provision for tramlines. These are very detailed and come complete with drain holes with covers and manholes, again with covers. Visit <https://www.dm-toys.de/en/index.html> for more details.

Well, I think that's about all for now; it just remains for me to wish everyone a

Happy Christmas,  
Happy Holidays,  
Gelukkig kerstfeest,  
Frohe Weihnachten,  
Joyeux Noel  
Feliz Navidad.

I hope I haven't missed any of our members native tongues from that list.

Ralph