

# RAILWAY MODELLER

APRIL 1988

£1.10

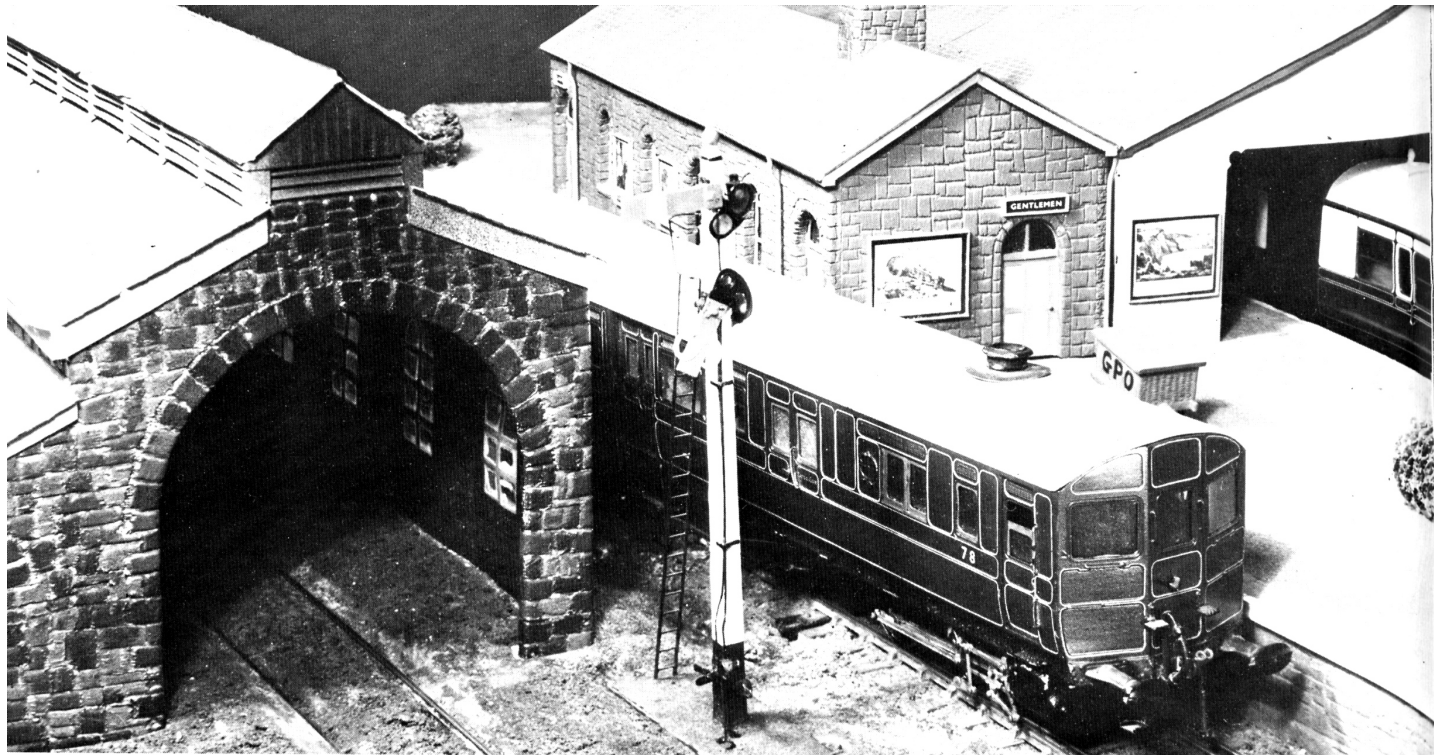
FOR THE AVERAGE ENTHUSIAST

**'Chewton Mendip'  
IMREX  
show layout**

Full contents—see Editorial page 145



**FREE  
BOOKLET  
INSIDE**



Steam railmotor No 78 in the crimson lake livery of c1912 leaves the branch platform under the 'shunt ahead' signal command.

# RAILWAY OF THE MONTH

## Chewton Mendip

Robert Harper's 7mm scale Great Western layout re-visited

Text and captions from notes supplied by the builder

Photographs by Brian Monaghan

THIS layout was first described in *RAILWAY MODELLER* for May 1983 and, in the intervening five years, it has matured and developed to a considerable extent. This fact, together with the railway's welcome appearance at IMREX this month, inspired us to ask builder and owner Bob Harper for an up-dated description for the benefit of RM readers. Brian Monaghan took the photographs at very short notice, and we are grateful to both gentlemen for this fine record of the classic Great Western branch theme in 7mm scale.

### Description (from Bob Harper's notes)

Chewton Mendip is a flourishing market town in the Mendips, just south of Bristol, and is the main station on a Great Western branch line from Wells. Most trains terminate at Chewton Mendip, although the branch does extend a few miles further on into the hills, to a terminus at Hinton Blewett. General traffic on this section beyond Chewton Mendip is sparse; a local passenger service and occasional freight wagons are sufficient, but there is considerable movement of mineral wagons to and from the stone quarries and coal pits near Hinton Blewett. A weight-restricted viaduct beyond Chewton Mendip means that only certain small locomotives are allowed on this section of line.

Passenger and freight traffic to Chewton Mendip itself is considerable, with regular branch trains from Wells supplemented by through services from Bristol and occasional excursion trains, sometimes from other railways. Fairly large engines are allowed as far as Chewton Mendip, and a turntable is being installed to avoid the tender-first working that has been necessary in the past. Regular general freight trains are joined by mineral and milk trains, and that seasonal speciality of the Mendip area, strawberry specials.

The rolling stock is a mixture of kit and scratchbuilt items, and represents the period 1900-1925, with all future construction concen-

trating on the 1900-1914 period. The six-wheeled coaches have fully sprung suspension with PTFE bearings and four of the wheels are mounted on a sub-bogie. This ensures quiet and trouble-free running round sharp curves and over crossings, the 'point' at which centre wheels usually come off if they have been left free to float sideways and upwards.

Ordinary trackwork is PECO Streamline, with points handbuilt from that firm's components. Point and signal operation is by mechanical means, using rodding under the baseboard. Outlying points are worked by mains voltage motors — NB don't touch!

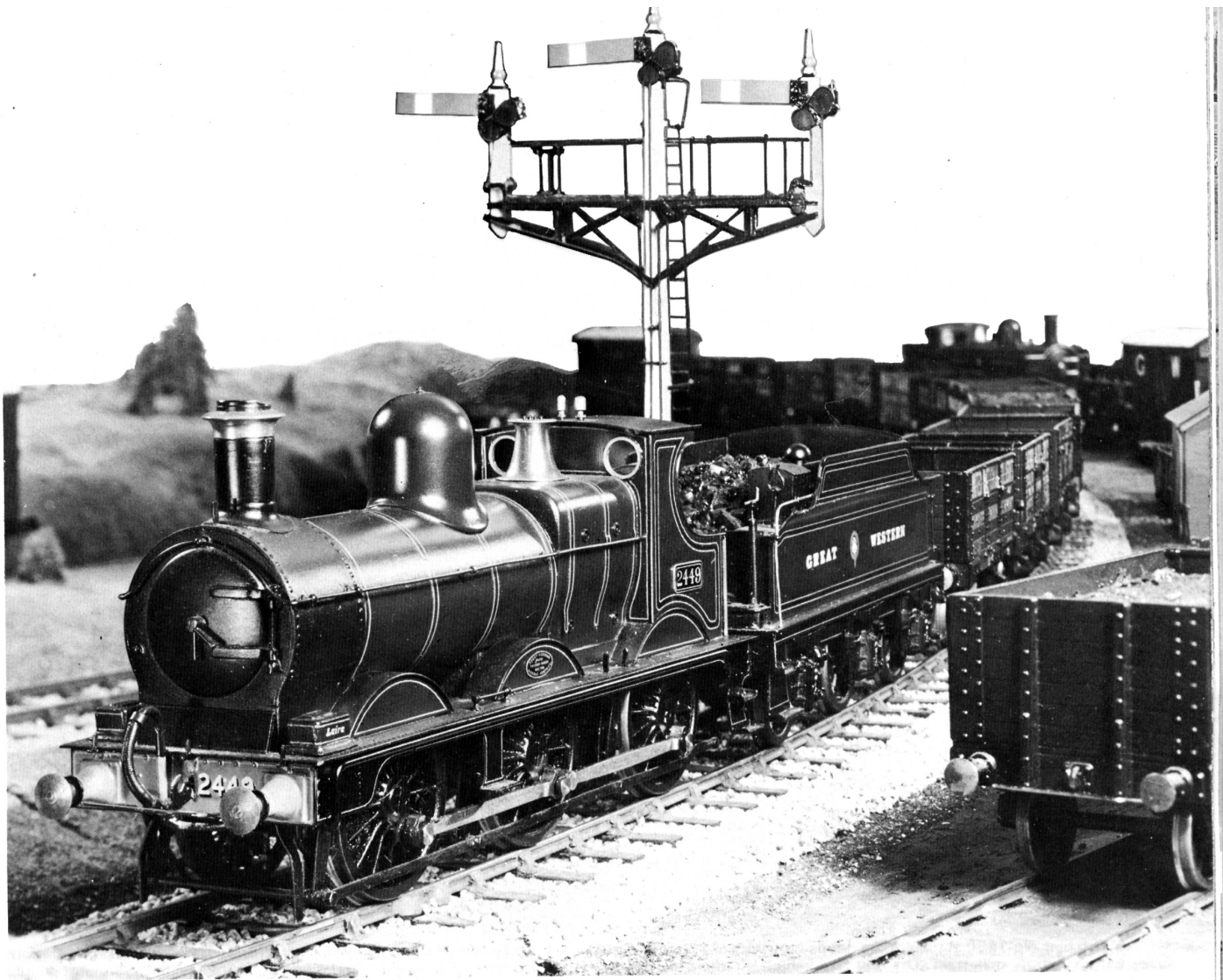
Buildings are scratchbuilt from plasticard and balsa, and are based on various GWR prototypes in the West Country. The station building and overall roof come from Moretonhampstead, and the goods shed from Hatch on the Chard branch. These were early models and were scaled up from photographs. The water tower is based on that at Abbotsbury, with the smooth Dorset stone surfaces changed to match the rougher granite of the other buildings. The locomotive shed again comes from Moretonhampstead, with slight alterations. The signal box is based on the stonebuilt, platform-mounted example once at Burngullow. All these buildings have been constructed using plans and photographs in various OPC publications.

### Locomotives

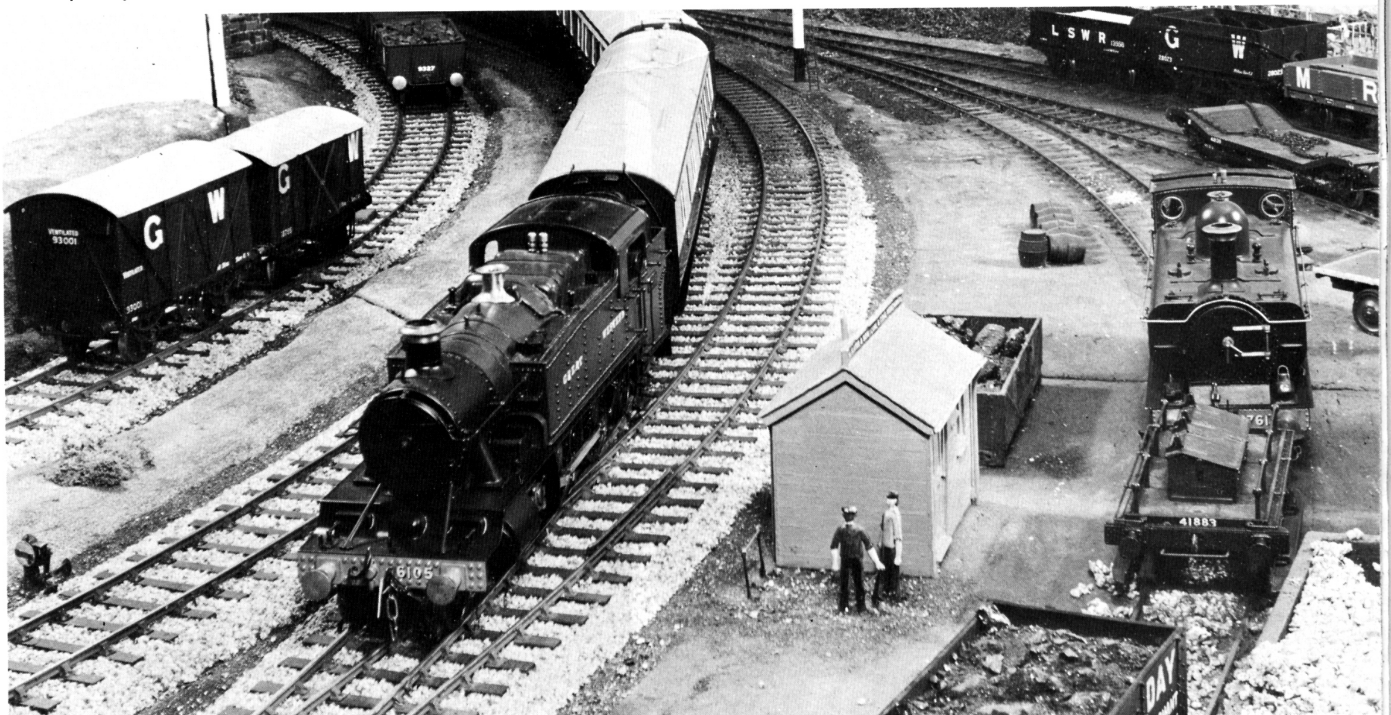
Locomotives either have split frames and Portescap RG7 motors or will be rebuilt to conform. The Dean goods still has an old 7-pole Pittman open-frame motor, which runs well but is getting noisy and will soon be rebuilt as above. Split frames are essential for outside-cylindere locomotives on layouts with curves as sharp as those which are, sadly, necessary on 'Chewton Mendip'. Otherwise, short circuits between the pony wheels and cylinders are very difficult to avoid.

One of the photographs shows the storage sidings, with an all-too-common situation — every siding is full up and another train has just arrived to jam things up even more! I don't recommend building 4-way points. The basic design of the yard is very simple, but generally efficient and easy to operate — a single arrival loop with run-round, and a fan of sidings all leading off the same running loop. Any track can thus be set for departure and energised by pulling only one point lever, which at the same time isolates all other tracks.

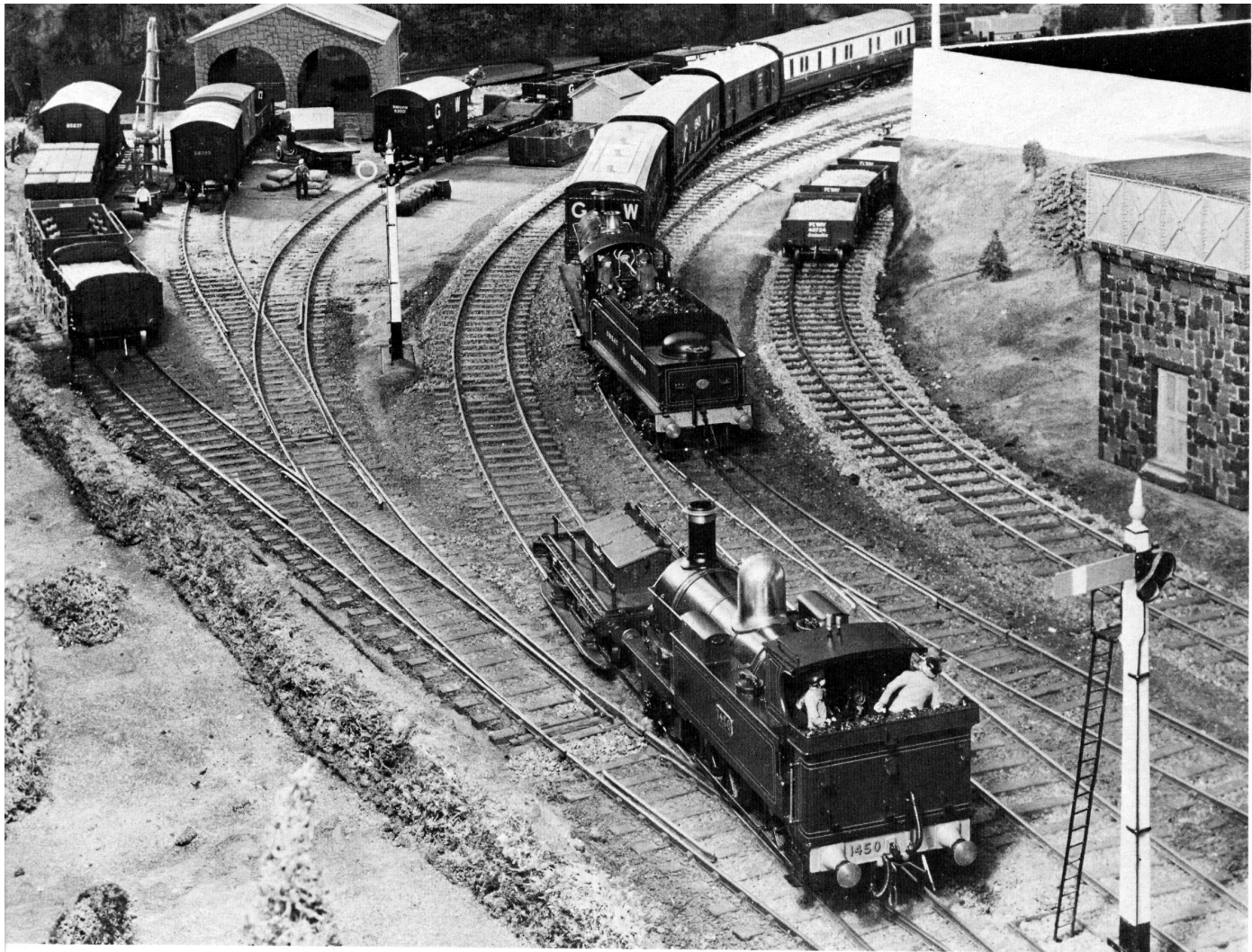
Chewton Mendip can be seen in operation at the International Model Railway Exhibition, at the Royal Horticultural Society's Halls, Westminster, London SW1 on April 2-7.



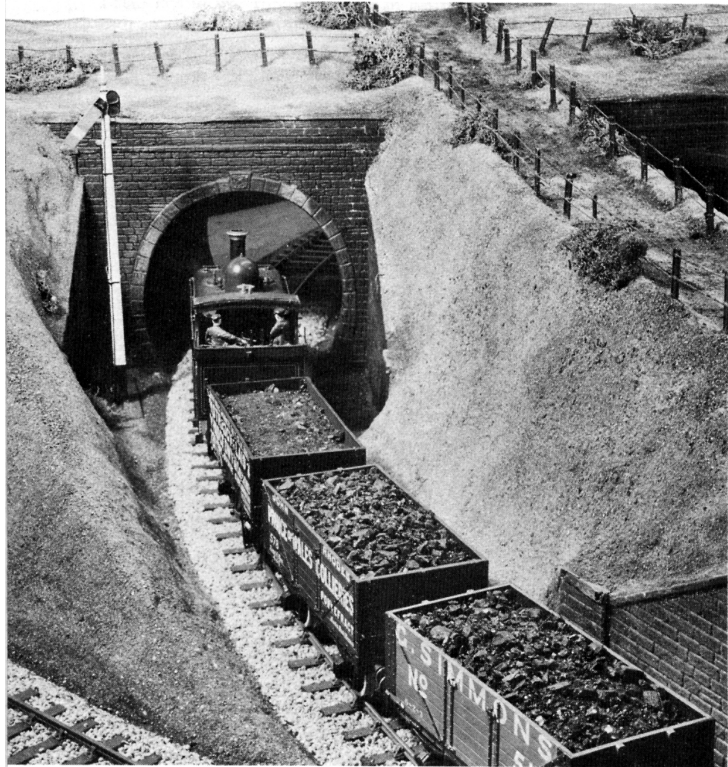
Dean Goods No 2449 was reboilered with a Belpaire B4 boiler in 1908. It is shown here in the post-1904 dark green with parallel copper-capped chimney but painted-over dome, as was generally typical of locos fitted with such boilers after 1904.



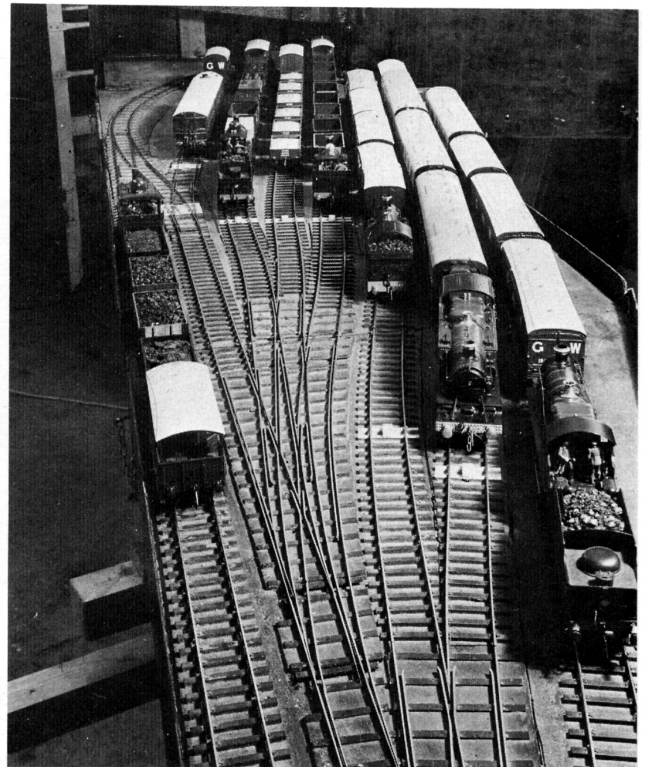
No 6105 eases out on to the main line with a through departure for Bristol and beyond. The train of bow-ended corridor coaches is fitted with several varieties of 'wobbly' bogie, to provide the flexibility needed for imperfect track.



Metro tank No 1450 shunts in the goods loop with M1 shunters truck as 4-4-0 Bulldog 'Columbia' eases over the points into the branch platform with an empty milk train. The first two vehicles in the train are 40' bogie siphons — Siphon Fs — followed by a 4-wheel milk van with guard's compartment in crimson lake livery to diagram 013, and a bow-ended full brake of c1925.



No 2761 passes the advanced starter with a coal train.

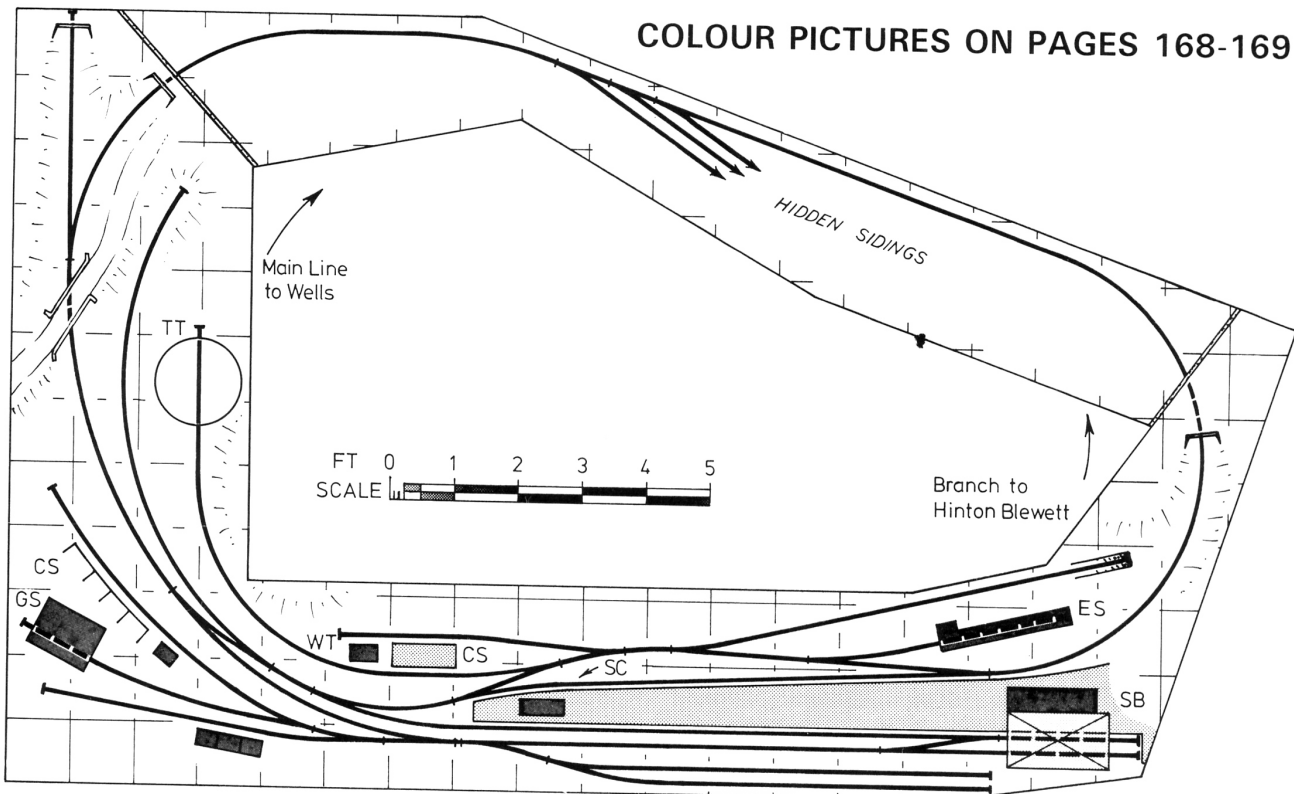


Storage sidings, with a four-way turnout.



No 6105, dating from 1930, and its train of bow-ended coaches c1925, are now slightly out of period for the layout, which is nearly fully stocked with vehicles from the 1900-1914 era. They are, nevertheless, fine models and are needed to complete the timetable roster for the time being. No 6105 has 'real' rivet detail, is fitted with an RG7 motor, and has all wheels and pony trucks sprung.

COLOUR PICTURES ON PAGES 168-169





No 4540 waits in the branch platform as No 6105 prepares to depart for Bristol with a train of bow-ended coaches.

## Railway of the Month

# COLOUR FEATURE

*Continued from page 145*

'Chewton Mendip' is Robert Harper's O gauge Great Western branch, on display at IMREX this Easter. Description and more pictures on pages 146-149 of this issue.



The signal box is one of the very few GWR stone-built boxes, at Burngallow in Cornwall. It has full interior detail.



Chewton Mendip station, with the early morning local train to Wells waiting to depart. Crimson lake liveried railmotor in background.



The view from the overbridge at the entrance to the station, showing goods yard, carriage siding and turntable road.