



This Year's Card:

H0 H0 H0 ! God Jul

"Royal Disclaimer": Photoshop has **not** be used in this year's card & letter production: [[web version: www.fillin.co.uk](http://www.fillin.co.uk)] We **always** use "Photodesk" and "Artworks" on "RISC OS": now on a Pinebook Pro + RPCem on a Dell XPS13.



The Card Photo (taken on Sunday 8th December), on our dining room table, features an H0 Swedish SJ 1200, and 60103 Flying Scotsman; both from Trix (Marklin), with Snow White, the Seven Dwarves, Snow boarders and struggling Postal workers helping Santa; from the Preisser and Noch Personnel Recruitment Agencies. The Maxus van is an unpainted 3D print Phil made in 2018, with 'photorealistic' bonnet and windscreen overlaid.

Apart from providing the content for the card this year, the H0 Skandi layout has been 'dormant', along with the garden G-Scale (due to poor weather), whilst the Bruksbanen Mk3e Shunting Puzzle made appearances at East Horsley, Ilfracombe and 3 events at Hollycombe this year. The extended shunting puzzle kept us very busy with shunting at one end and robot-arm loading and unloading in the industrial siding at the other.



A major effort has been made with 'Beechingless Barnstaple' in the loft throughout the year, and this is still ongoing. This has involved 'tweaking' some junctions and scenic arrangements and was combined with a major renumbering of all the points and signals - which are, as always, operated via dcc [Z21]. Now also with a section of "Faller Roadway" after a delay of 30 years! (R/C cars & lorries can now also drive on and off the ferry).



Visiting Shows: From Exeter to Maidstone we saw many impressive layouts including "Portsmouth Harbour" in TT, Dawn Quest's monochrome 'Brief Encounter', and also with a film / tv connection; the "The Titfield Thunderbolt" and forthcoming "Ivor the Engine Set". (videos on You Tube) We also revisited Lin's Secondary School town of Steyning for a local model railway show and the Alresford Vintage Toy Fair [below]



We were invited to 'Fawley Hill' (MacAlpine's Estate) where Phil got to drive & shunt live steam R/C trains on Steve's Hambledon Valley. Then at Exeter again, we enjoyed Steve's Pen-Y-Bont live steam 16mm layout with live vegetation. Our year concluded with attending our Solent G- Scale's Wickham Show where we ran videos, on a large screen display, of 'Layouts which could not be (there)' (see YouTube: Phil Spiegel (Fillin)).



[Pen-Y-Bont above and centre, Hambledon Valley on the right] Lin continued with craft projects, attempting to use up the stashed yarn accumulated over the years: more bookmarks for Amanda's School craft Fayre helped, and expanding her Lego Flower Collection. With Caroline, Lin had a pottery-painting session near Wokingham; producing a woodland themed mug for her Lego Daffodils.





The Maxus only needed a new clutch cylinder this year, but the Disco continued with its 'parking brake warning' problem until Phil resolved it by driving it back and forth, in low-ratio, on a friends straight farm track; 'reprogramming' all the gear ratios using a modification of a 2010 Land Rover procedure intended for use on a rolling road, that he found on the web - cured! However, during its Easter MoT, the physical parking brake cable jammed and had to be cut to release the car from the MoT ramp then problems with the replacement system until finally resolved in August!

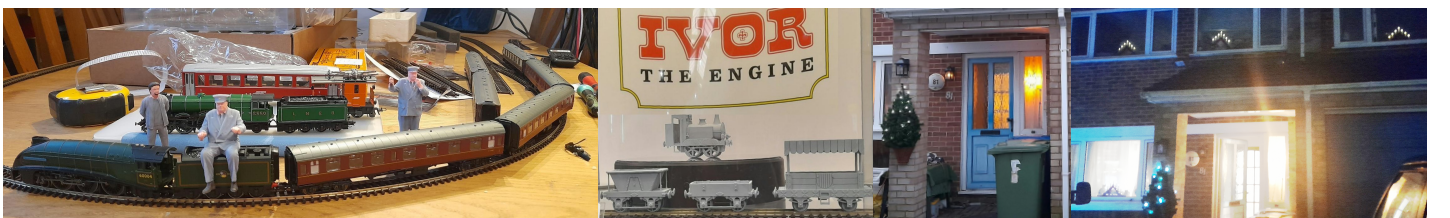


As well as staying with Jonica on our Devon Trips, we also visited both Ilfracombe MRS and Holsworthy MR constructors Club at 'Lizzies Larder' Farm Shop - recording some more experimental on-train/car video sequences. (*Phil's brother Martin is a member of both clubs*)

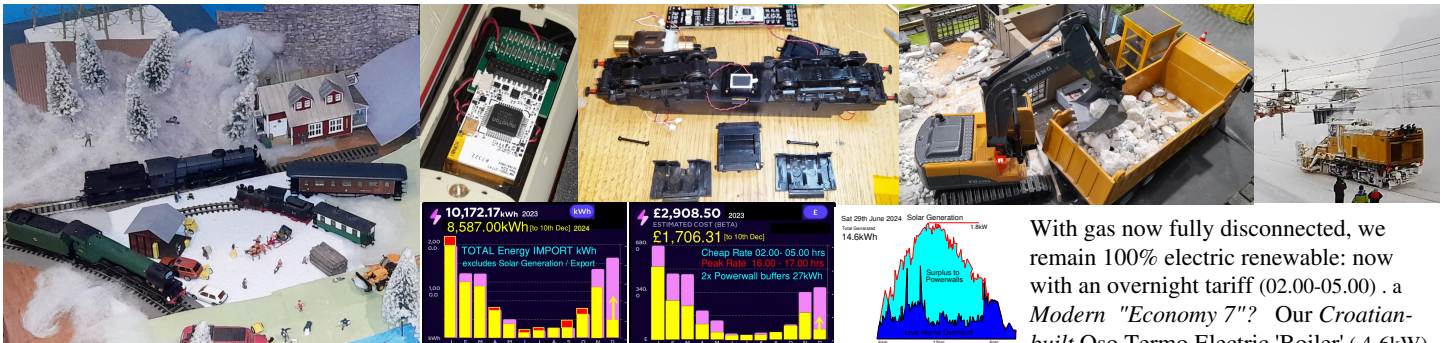
We used the Maxus for a North-Devon based Touring Holiday extending east to North Cornwall (Launceston Steam Railway) and then Blue Anchor (West Somerset Railway) - making use of Solar Power in the sunshine at a superb clifftop site near Lynton for two days as we watched ships passing in the Bristol Channel - identifying them with the 'Marine Traffic' App, read, and drank their cider. (*Sweden but without the lake ?*) We also tried to guess the nationality of our neighbours who, whilst having a British Campervan, were 'almost' speaking German: they were a Swiss family who had had to hire a camper whilst theirs was being repaired! (*Reminiscent of a confused Dutch Cyclist we had met on our way up to Nord Kapp in 2010, and then met again at Tromso , where we had a loaned Red Mazda whilst our first Discovery's Gearbox was being replaced*)



Whilst the original plan had been to meet up with Matt and Amanda's families in Devon, it was not until the 'Hogs Back Brewery Family Fun Day' that we met up - this time in sunshine and not Shakespearian Rain. We have only used our new Bus passes in Barnstaple so far, but we renewed



our OAP Railcards and have used them for 2 Barnstaple-Exeter trips, and also Farnborough-Maidstone (West) for the Rapido show - on a Friday. This year we have been enjoying the benefit of having 2 Tesla Powerwalls giving us 27kWh of storage so that we can use whatever Solar we generate (the unchanged 'maximum possible' of just 3.2kW); resulting in some self-sufficiency' in the summer, and much lower import overall



With gas now fully disconnected, we remain 100% electric renewable: now with an overnight tariff (02.00-05.00) . a Modern "Economy 7"? Our Croatian-built Oso Termo Electric 'Boiler' (4-6kW)

continues to provide our central heating running our radiators*: at 38-48-55C depending on external temperature with no scalding - and highly suitable for a heat pump in the future# - thanks to Ray Bibby's over-specification back in the late 80's (when we then *also* added Double Glazing and Rockwall insulation) [*and underfloor in the 2005+ extensions] # BUT NOT WHILE INSTALLERS and GOVERNMENT GRANT seem to INSIST ON A COMPLETE REBUILD OF AN EXISTING WORKING SYSTEM

Life expiry of some flourescents in the loft provided an opportunity to replace them with conrollable LED lights, and their success resulted in updating the central living room light to a 450mm² variable LED panel. Phil continues to fit discounted Hornby TXS sound decoders to his OO fleet, and Lin is continuing to use up yarn - having bought a *Swedish Lucia Train pattern* via friends in Sweden,- two sets are ready to adorn the windows come Lucia, as well as a crochet nativity from a free pattern being issued over advent. *Next year we hope* to rebuild the full G-Scale Linear Modular layout-half of which is in store under canvas at Martin's onto lightweight aluminium frames, in common with the Mk3e and Mk4 shunting puzzles. *And we always hope to get abroad again to the Netherlands and then Sweden.*

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Healthy Happy New Year

TT120 for now ? (just to finish with another bad pun) v4d