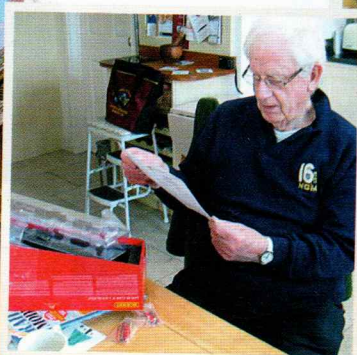
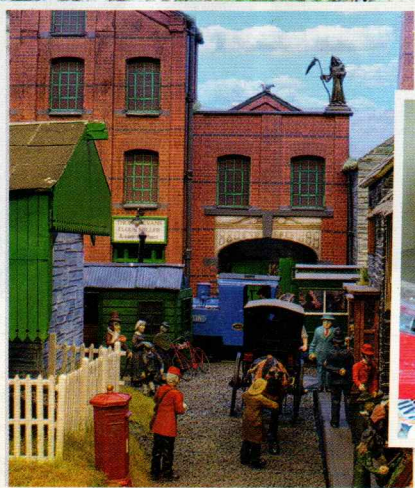




Clockwise from left: A live-steam locomotive on an outdoor railway; members at their annual summer lunch; Geoff Evans' dockside scene featuring coal and slate as it might have appeared on the Corris Railway in Wales; Keith Robinson tackles a Hornby kit; and Geoff's fictional 1900 street featuring a flour mill



reason for building a model railway but other parts of the hobby are often involved. For example, you can be interested in locomotives and collect or build quality models, but if you want to see them running you have to get involved in planning and building a track. You may be interested in making buildings, but how much better will they look if sited on a layout with a context?

One part of the hobby tends to lead to another. Some modellers even go so far as to draw up a timetable to operate (not 'play with', you will note) their railway.

Model railways are fictional but based on historical facts. Most are long-term projects built over many years, with members joining model railway groups to acquire the skills needed. Famous model railway fans include Rod Stewart, Jools Holland and Pete Waterman.

“Why do we do it? Who knows! There are many reasons”

Railway modelling scales in this country have historically been ratios of millimetres to one foot. The smaller scales, up to 7mm, modelled in our group are indoor layouts with the engines obtaining electrical power through the two rails.

Four of our members have larger-scale outdoor railways – two are powered by electricity from the rails and the other two use independent power either from on-board batteries or by live steam.

Why do we do it? Who knows! There can be as many reasons as there are modellers. With some people, it stems from childhood, either from playing with trains or perhaps trainspotting or wanting to capture the look of days gone by.

For others, it is about recreating stunning engineering, or the thrill of operating model trains.

One of the most detailed model railway landscapes is on show at Pendon Museum in Oxfordshire (pendonmuseum.com), which is one man's way of preserving the countryside he saw in England in the 1920s and 1930s.

Very few of us have the skills to create our own Pendon – but we can try.

● **Are you a model railway enthusiast? Send your details and photos to tam.editor@u3a.org.uk**