

'00' GAUGE Murphy's GM family reaches 12

★★★★★

Model
Bachmann/Murphy Models 141/181 Class Bo-Bo diesels in Irish Rail/Iarnrod Éireann orange/black

Price
£80.00 (£83.50 weatheread)

Period
1980 to early-1990s (IR) mid-1990s onwards (IE)

Availability
See www.murphy-models.com or our advertisement pages

The Bachmann/Murphy Models Irish 'Small GM' diesels have been something of a sales phenomenon over the first quarter of 2008. The massive gamble of commissioning more than 5,000 models and launching them into an uncertain market appears to have paid off. Retailers report strong demand for the first ready-to-run Irish diesel locomotive, boding well for further models in the future.

Before that though, we have the remaining half of the first batch of 12 locomotives. These include four machines in 1980s Irish Rail (IR) livery and the final two Iarnrod Éireann (IE) models. Also out now are the two much anticipated - by me at least! - weatheread models - IE 177 and IR 183.

As previously reviewed, the models features many detail differences according to era, livery and class. The four IR locomotives are 143, 156, 183 and 192. Of these, 143 has 'dayglo' red warning panels and 183 is weatheread with 'dayglo' panels. Nos. 156 and 192 are pristine without the later warning panel ends. All have original style marker lights.

The two IE models are pristine 146 and weatheread 177. Both feature a brighter orange than the previous IR livery with 'dayglo' panels and revised head/tail light clusters fitted in the last few years.

The weatheread models feature a good coating of 'road dirt' which serves to highlight the excellent bogie and body detail. IR 183 is

dirtier than IE 177, although both could be regarded as lightly weatheread compared to the state of some of the prototypes! Particularly impressive though are the clean sweeps of the wipers on each windscreen.

'Under the bonnet' the models are as previously reviewed (see MR114/115). Specification includes all-wheel pick-up and drive, directional LED lighting with switchable tail lights, 21-pin DCC decoder socket, provision for DCC sound equipment, etched metal radiator grilles, sprung metal buffers and a comprehensive set of extra detailing parts. Couplings are fitted in NEM pockets and can be detached to allow fitment of the full front apron and bufferbeam details (see pictures). The extra parts are easy to fit, although there's no explanation of where to fit them on the instruction sheet.

Removal of the bodyshell to change the light settings or install a decoder is fairly straightforward, but not immediately obvious. The recommended procedure is to detach the plastic handrails, remove the cab at the non-radiator end (look for the gap between the cab and engine compartment) and finally, gently prise off the main body section.

Exceptional attention to detail and genuine quality of design and features makes this model a real contender for Model of the Year 2008. (BJ)



radius (Ref. No. 20-181, £5.45) and the obligatory transition curves required for connecting flat and banked track sections (20-182, £3.40). Also available, but less suitable for UK use, are 'Shinkansen' style elevated concrete double track viaduct sections with both transition and banked curved track.

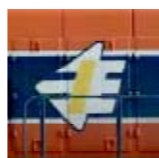
Instructions are printed on the rear of the packaging and demonstrate how simple the curves are to use and integrate with existing Unitrack components.

Matching straight sections of double track with concrete sleepers are available in pairs of 62mm, 124mm, 186mm and 248mm sections (priced from £3.25 to £6.40 for a 62mm long power feed

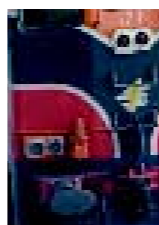
track) with fine detailed concrete sleepers and nickel silver rails on a mottled grey moulded plastic base. Like the previous wooden sleepered components, the 'ballast' base is effective enough, but can be improved with careful weatheread.

The sections snap together easily and reliably and are designed to be robust enough to stand regular assembly and dismantling, as is common in Japan. Performance of British models on Unitrack rail is also excellent as electrical continuity is maintained well by the standard 'Unijoiners'.

If you're looking to build a modern main line for HSTs or Eurostars, or simply like the idea of trains leaning prototypically into curves, then these new components are well worth a look. Highly Recommended. (BJ)



IR models cover the 1980s and early-1990s.



Era specific detail includes light clusters.

VERDICT
Attention to detail, features, weatheread, performance

Nothing of note
Another det of cracking models

'00' GAUGE ISO 20ft tank container kit

★★★★★

Product
C-Rail Intermodal Pack No.17 ISO soft tank container; Pack No.19 transfers for 20ft tank

Price
Kit £5.00 each; transfers £6.50 per pack

Period
1990s-present

Availability
Direct from Arran Aird, 'Morven' Roome Bay Avenue, Crail, Fife KY10 3TR. Telephone 01333 450976 web: www.c-rail-intermodal.co.uk

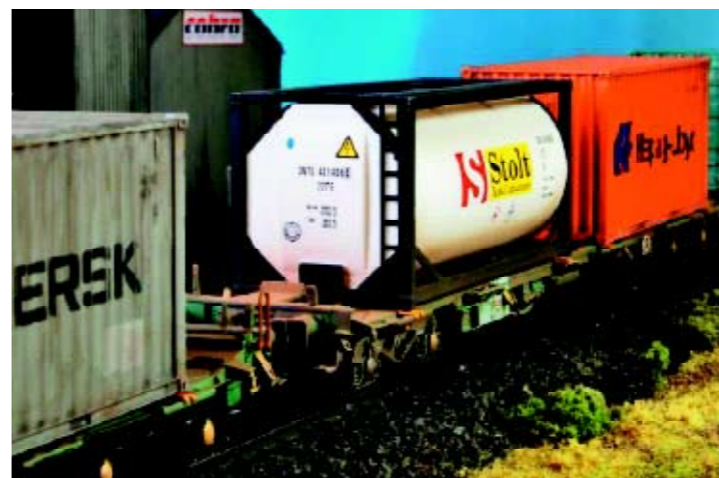
Boosting a growing range of plastic kits, in 2mm and 4mm scales, of contemporary freight containers, this new offering from C-Rail Intermodal represents a 20ft long, 8ft 6in tall ISO framed tank container, which are commonly seen on container trains (and lorries) across the UK.

Each kit consists of two sprues of white injection moulded plastic, containing the tank barrel (in two halves), tank ends, walkways, frame sides and stiffening brackets, plus other smaller details such as access ladders and filler valves.

Easy to assemble using liquid plastic cement, each tank can be constructed in less than an hour and then left overnight to harden before priming and painting. The components have been excellently rendered with virtually no trace of flash or excess material to be

removed. There are plenty of inspiring photographs on the kit maker's website (www.c-rail-intermodal.co.uk) along with a link to further photographic sites to help you choose a prototype. To complement this kit is a pack of high quality transfers that will provide enough embellishments for six tanks (from five different concerns) along with a range of hazard warning notices.

Cheap and easy to build, a first-rate model can be produced with the minimum of fuss. The provision of suitable transfers is a bonus and will help modellers of the contemporary railway scene to add further variety to their intermodal services, be it riding on a flat wagon, a lorry or deposited in a terminal site. I believe that a 2mm version will also be available soon. Highly recommended (GD)

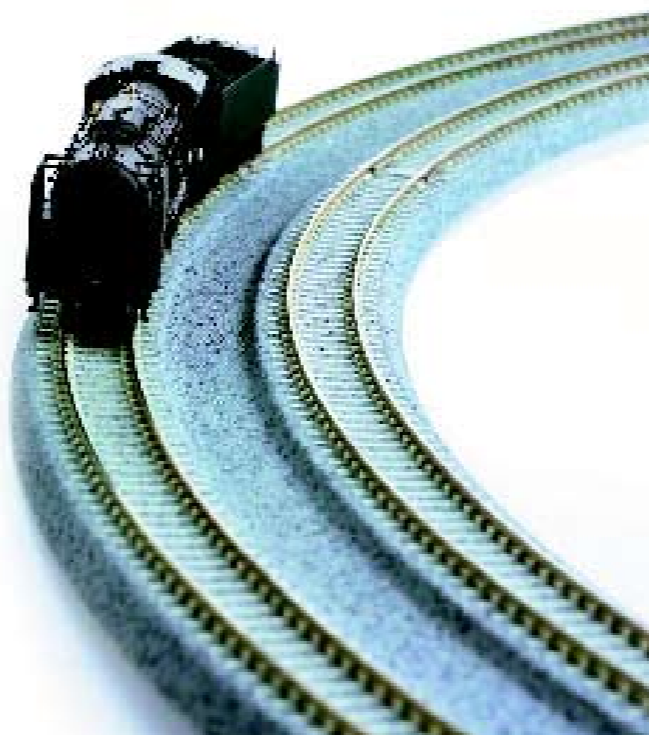


Right: C-Rail's ISO tank brings real variety to intermodal trains.

VERDICT
Excellent products, simple to assemble

Nothing of note
Great value for an essential part of the modern freight railway scene

Right: A Kato JNR 'C62' 4-6-2 leans into the super-elevated curve.



VERDICT

Great idea, well executed, build quality, ease of use

Nothing

An easy way to banked curves and modern concrete sleeper track in 'N'

Modern wagon reference guide

★★★★★

Title
Wagon Recognition Volume 1: Carriages B to W by Martin Buck & Mark Rawlinson, Freightmaster Publishing, ISBN 978 0 9558275 0 1

Price
£24.95

Availability
All good railway bookshops or www.freightmasterpublishing.co.uk

For the uninitiated, modern wagons can be a daunting subject. This new wagon recognition guide answers your questions very effectively with an illustrated overview of the current fleet. Volume 1 covers wagons with TOPS three letter codes from B to W (departmental wagons, plant and support vehicles will fill Volume 2). The book includes internationally registered wagons built for use between Britain and mainland Europe.

Designed for industry use as much as enthusiast reference, each wagon entry contains the wagon code, number series, owner, builder and build dates, typical or specific traffic flows worked, identifying features, all supported by good quality reference photographs. (BJ)

VERDICT
Wealth of information, photographs

Nothing of note

A one-stop guide to the modern revenue earning wagon fleet

Coast to Coast

★★★★★

Title
British Rail Northern Scene: Coast to Coast, Andy Sparks, Sutton Publishing, 160pp hardback, black & white, rrp £18.99, ISBN 978 0 75094 709 1

Price
£18.99

Availability
All good railway bookshops

For anyone who grew up in the 1970s and 1980s, Andy Sparks' first book - *British Rail Northern Scene* - was one of the best railway picture albums for years. His follow up takes the reader on a journey across the north of England looking at the various types of locomotive and multiple unit used in the BR blue era. Being brutally honest, most of the 200 photographs in this book don't match the very high standard of its predecessor, but there were still a good few that stopped me in my tracks. If you're modelling northern England in the blue era the album contains many images to fire the imagination and, as the region is so overlooked by book publishers, anything that adds to the library of available images is welcome. (BJ)

VERDICT
Evocative and thought-provoking images, all previously unseen

Standard of first book proves hard to match

Portrait of a lost era