

**'00'** GAUGE

★★★★★  
**Model**  
 Bachmann MM1701-03  
 Set of three Mk 2 coaches in RPSI green; Corridor First 180, Second Open 301, Brake Second Open/Bar 460, 4mm:1ft scale '00'

**Price**  
 £80.00 plus £10 post & packing (€110 + €10 in Rol)

**Period**  
 2007 onwards

**Availability**  
 From: www.steamtrainsireland.com, telephone (from the UK) 00353 1 2809147 or e-mail: rpsidublin@hotmail.com

# Irish railtour Mk 2 set

As regulations become stricter on Ireland's railways, the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland has been forced to replace its vintage rolling stock with more modern vehicles. In Northern Ireland, this has taken the form of ex-BR Mk 2s. South of the border, the RPSI has acquired ex-Irish Rail Cravens coaches, which are currently under restoration. Murphy Models has commissioned this set of three Bachmann Mk 2s on behalf of the RPSI. All profits from the venture

will go towards the restoration of preserved Dublin & South Eastern Railway 2-6-0 No. 461. The set contains three different types of vehicle; Brake Second/Bar 460 (ex-BR Mk 2z BSO E9385), Open Second 301 (Mk 2z TSO 5207) and Corridor First 180 (Mk 2a FK 13475). The Society also has Mk 2z TSO 302 (M5135), Mk 2b TSO 300 (ex-NIR 934) and Mk 2b FK 181 (13487) in its fleet, although the latter two are not covered by any Bachmann models. All were acquired in 2003 and restored at Whitehead, north of Belfast. The

RPSI hopes to commission further models to complete the set once this set is sold out. Having spent time with this train in May it's good to see that Bachmann has excellently recreated the livery, even down to the right number of 'No Smoking' signs in the Brake Second. The dark green livery is the correct shade, and is enlivened by fine yellow and red lining at waist level. Other correct details include yellow Resco stickers and mandatory red squares on each end. Perhaps more than any other



Bachmann Mk 2s, these coaches would benefit from a detailed interior, including enthusiasts leaning out of droplights and passengers queuing for the bar/buffet in the brake van! If you want to bring the models right up to date, fit Hurst Models Central Door Locking (CDL) orange light lenses. Although ready-to-run Irish steam is thin on the ground, these coaches do occasionally run

with diesels, including IE 141/181 Class Bo-Bos also produced for Murphy Models. Other suitable traction includes NCC 2-6-4T No. 4 and GS&WR 0-6-0 No. 186, both available in kit form. In buying this set, you won't just be getting a distinctive modern Irish train, you'll also be directly contributing to the overhaul of a unique steam locomotive to haul the real thing. Highly Recommended. (BJ)

**VERDICT**  
 ↑ Decoration, attention to detail, a very good cause  
 ↓ Little of note  
 ↑ Buy some and help put No. 461 back in steam



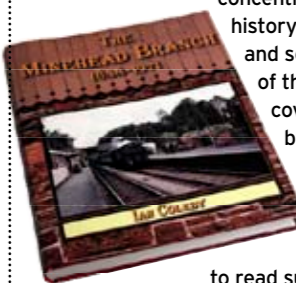
Great in green - Murphy's Bachmann Mk 2s.

# Minehead sets standard

★★★★★  
**Product**  
 The Minehead Branch 1848-1971. Ian Coleby..

**Price**  
 £24.99

**Availability**  
 Lightmoor Press ISBN 1-899-88920-5  
 West Somerset Railway shops at Bishops Lydeard and Minehead



Once in a while a book comes along which is head and shoulders above the rest. Sadly, such books often get missed by reviewers because they are not by mainstream railway publishers and review samples don't get sent out. Twenty years ago, GWR branch line histories were being published almost monthly. Written by railway historians, most concentrated on the early political history of the line, failed schemes and so on in detail. The first half of the 20th century would be covered in moderate detail, but the more recent BR history, run-down and closure would receive minimal attention. For those of us still around to read such books, the period that we remember and which most interests us, gets the least coverage. Not so in this mighty reference work from West Somerset Railway archivist Ian Coleby, published in 2006.

This is a hardcover volume of 392 pages, copiously illustrated with black and white photographs, track plans and line drawings. As a reference work on the 22 mile branch from Norton Fitzwarren to Minehead it covers every aspect of the line's history, topography and infrastructure. Every station is covered in detail, with drawings of major (and sometimes minor) buildings reproduced at 1:100. Whilst not directly suitable for any modelling scale, it is easy enough to recalculate with a calculator. Even some buildings which no longer exist are featured using dimensions from similar structures.

The Minehead branch boasts nine stations, each offering modelling potential either as it is now, or as it was in BR or GWR days. The book also describes long-gone aspects of the branch such as the two passing loops, Kentsford and Leigh Bridge, added in the 1930s. It reminds us that the Minehead branch was used to test a Whitaker-style automatic token exchange system, and has a section on the camping coaches at Stogumber and Blue Anchor.

There's a wealth of information and inspiration for anyone thinking of modelling a WR branch line, whether based on the Minehead branch or freelance, and a worthy companion to our *Model Rail Western Branch Lines* DVD. A tour de force, and very reasonably priced. (CJL)

**VERDICT**  
 ↑ Packed with information and illustration  
 ↓ Absolutely nothing!  
 ↑ Brilliant!

**'00'** GAUGE

★★★★★  
**Model**  
 Hornby Skaledale R8748 Faulkner Electrical Store, R8754 Old Toll House; R8764 Taxi rank office, R8766 Skaledale & District Bus Depot; R8768 Car Service & Repair Garage, R8771/72 Bellamy's Office/Factory

**Price**  
 R8749 £11.99, R8754 £15.99; R8764, £5.99, R8766 £22.00; R8768 £14.00, R8771 £21.25, R8772 £18.99

**Period**  
 Various

**Availability**  
 From Hornby stockists and model shops

# More handy buildings for Skaledale

Hornby's 'Skaledale' continues to grow at a rate similar to the speed at which New Labour seems to be building on our former green belts! Some of the latest releases include a toll house, a bus depot and a local car repair garage, all exuding charm and character. Firstly the square, whitewashed Old Toll House is a striking model with a pentagonal porch that once served as a tollbooth, complete with an attractive pair of dormer windows. The octagonal central chimney stack is impressive and the white-washed rendered walls have a pleasing texture to them that can be enhanced with some careful weathering. Moving into the 20th Century, the Art Deco-styled Skaledale & District bus depot is representative of many typical local bus garages that sprung up around Britain in the 1930s/40s, at a time when bus and coach travel became established. The stepped gable

was a well-used architectural device of the period, aiming to portray a sense of road transport as being a thoroughly modern mode of travel. Looking similar to the venerable Dapol plastic kit, this one-piece resin moulding is decorated in a red brick finish, washed with a light blue/green interior. Space exists for two (or maybe three at a squeeze) scale buses inside the shed and would make a very useful addition to any town or village scene. Moving up the scale is 'Bellamy's Factory'; a pair of matching pre-Second World War style brick-built industrial buildings. The classic office block is reminiscent of a certain model manufacturer's HQ in Margate, albeit on a smaller scale. The 'northlight' style factory building suggests a multitude of uses and features large skylight windows, roller shutter and double doors. The office block can be teamed with one or more factory units according to how large a



factory you want to model. The large windows expose a blank interior, but this offers lots of potential for personalising your model with a detailed factory floor and offices. Perfect for the modern station environment is 'Don's Taxi Office' - a small, prefabricated concrete building. A simple interior scene with a desk and a couple of chairs will enhance the model still further.

**Useful industrial and urban structures have been added to Hornby's Skaledale range.**

The concrete theme is maintained by 'Faulkner Electrical', a basic post-war flat roofed retail unit suitable for the High Street of any small town. Finally, another delightful building is a small car service and repair garage belonging to Skaledale Auto Services. Another one-piece moulding, the front sliding doors are disappointingly thick and a bit featureless, but

this could be ameliorated with some careful work with a paintbrush. The sign on this sample had the printing a little skew-whiff but otherwise this would look nice set around a small service station scene. As with most 'Skaledale' items, each model is suitably generic in terms of period and geography, making them versatile and good value. (GD/BJ)

**VERDICT**  
 ↑ Suitable for range of areas and periods  
 ↓ Doors of the garage are disappointing  
 ↑ Attractive and useful additions to range