

WICKWAR – Farnham and District Model Railway Club (F&DMRC)



Wickwar is a small town on the important secondary main line between Bristol and Gloucester; modelled as it was around the early 1950s. The small goods yard was removed in 1963 and the station was closed in 1965, though the line is still heavily used. The Bristol and Gloucester Railway was built under the guidance of Brunel as broad gauge, opened in 1844. The GWR expected to buy it, but in 1845 the Midland outbid them breaking the GWR's monopoly of Bristol. It was transferred from BR(M) to BR(W) in 1957.

As well as local trains, there were many long distance expresses with destinations such as Plymouth, Bournemouth, Manchester, Bradford, and Newcastle. Goods trains were mostly to or from Bristol or Avonmouth docks. Motive power was mainly LMR tender locos, e.g. 4Fs, Jubilees, and Black 5s, with a few GWR and (later) LNER locos. We aim to reproduce a typical selection of trains and stock for the time.

To the south-west [left as seen] the line comes out of a tunnel and along the side of a valley; to the north-east [right] it starts to cross the valley. There is a 30m height difference between the highest and lowest parts modelled (8" in N) so open plan baseboards have been used, built from Styrofoam sandwiched between 3mm layers of Gaboon ply. Styrofoam has also been used for the scenery, covered with a layer of Sculptamold.

All the buildings are scratch built, many from printouts of photos of the current buildings. The station building, designed by Brunel, was unique due to the narrow space. Next to the tunnel is the large brewery, built by the railway company to replace existing breweries whose water supply the tunnel cut through. At the period modelled it had become a cider factory, which later closed but has now reopened as the Wickwar Brewing Company. The backscene was "Photoshopped" from photographs of the real location and printed on vinyl.

Each of the 2 tracks can operate on DC or DCC, selected when the layout is set-up. The small goods yard only had 1 train per day; to do any shunting necessitated blocking both main lines. The fiddle yard has 3 roads in each direction, each divided into sections so that 24+ trains can be stored. The movement of trains in the fiddle yard is automated using MERG Train On Track (TOTI) detectors which work with both DC and DCC. The boards and control panels are connected via a MERG CBUS system. Points, signals, and the car system are controlled by servo motors in MERG mounts, the signals are operated automatically as trains pass. Video cameras display views of the layout on screens at each end. RFID is used to automate whistle signals.

Lorries and buses run along the front using the Faller moving vehicle system (internal battery), with a 'taxi rank' at one end storing up to 4 vehicles. The vehicles are controlled from a tablet connected by WiFi, and RFID is used to identify and display where vehicles are. The lady at the station puts her arm out to stop the bus!

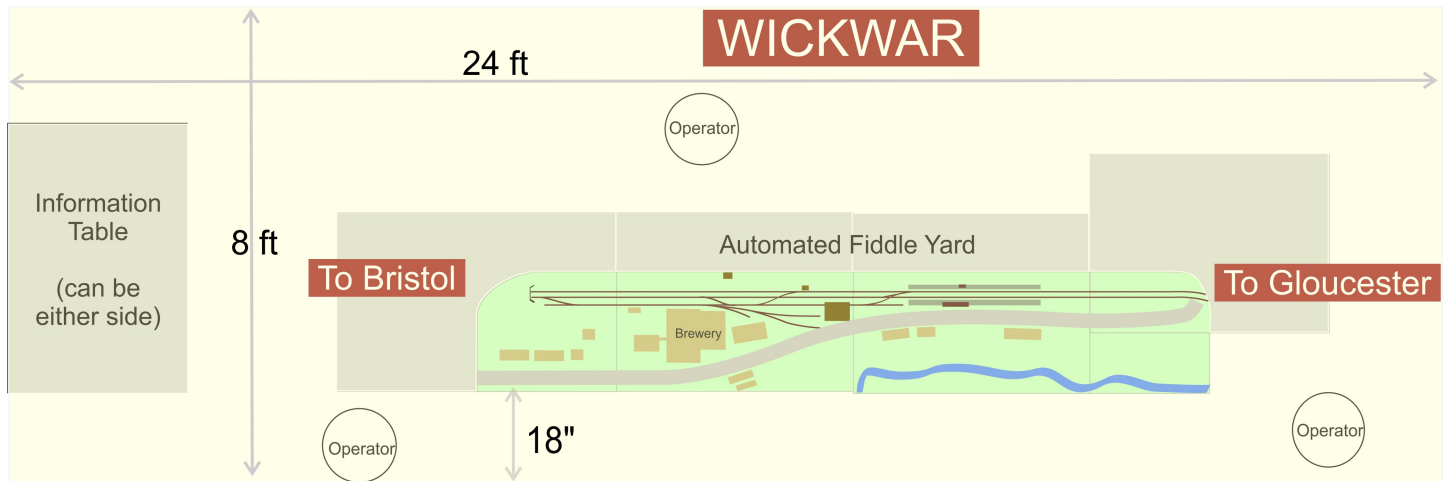
A third of the time the lights are turned down to provide a dusk running mode: trains have illuminated head and tail lights and illuminated carriages. Signals and several of the buildings are lit, some buses have headlights.

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Information for Exhibition Managers

We prefer an area not in direct sunlight for our dusk/night running, we have full lighting so a dark area is fine.

In addition to the layout we want to have an information/demo table one side or the other, preferably viewable from the side, to display historic and current photos of the site, a small demo of the Faller car, samples of the Styrofoam baseboards, Scupltamold scenery and backscene material, and a demo of the electronics used.



Layout name	Wickwar
Owner	Farnham and District MRC
Scale/Gauge	British N, 1:148
Area/Era	BR(M) early 50s
Contact	ngaue@farnhammrc.org.uk
Layout size	17' x 3' 6"
Space required	24' x 8'. Operated from both sides at front, with fiddle yard attendant at rear, and information/demo table on one side or the other of the layout.
Viewable area	Central scenic section is 12 feet wide.
Layout type	Twin track oval.
Operators	6
Expenses	We normally need to hire a van (£155), with one, sometimes two, cars for operators and possibly some rail fares. Accommodation required if much more than 50 miles from Aldershot, 2 twins and 2 singles. Overnight for 2 on Friday if around 50 miles.
Power	5A (13A socket) required.
Barriers	We will bring our own unless you want us to use yours
Lighting	Included.
Tables/Chairs	4 chairs, no tables needed.
Insurance value	15,000 (layout £5,000; stock £10,000).
Availability	2 day shows preferred. We need 4 hours+ to set up.
More	Details and photographs: www.farnhammrc.co.uk/?page_id=390
Articles	Model Rail (2018), BRM (2019)