

## Dioramas and model photography

Having completed your model it is ideal to be able to add it to your layout or roadways if you are fortunate enough to have one.

Although I have a larger than average shed kitted out as my workshop and storage area, plus an indoor workroom/office I haven't any spare room in either to set up a permanent diorama. So my substitute is a good library of models and dioramas added to each quarter and stored on CD which is available for sale at £6.00 plus £2 separate P&P, or at exhibitions for £6.

Most of my modelling these days is for new releases, and on completion photography is the next step toward inclusion on the illustrated sheet that we issue quarterly as well as inclusion in modelling magazines which editors are happy to use because of the "background atmosphere" that we include, their words, not mine.



The two images on the left amply illustrate their comments. The far left model is better detailed, as the front wheels are turned and a fog lamp fitted, and a rubbing strake fitted at the top of the side rave. But the second shot is more authentic, just by adding the background building.

All of my buildings/scenery are separate pieces mostly constructed from Metcalfe ready cut card kits, some by Super Quick and some very good London buildings from Street Level Models. If you

have access to web sites: Scalesscenes.com offer an extensive range that can be downloaded for a reasonable fee, and once paid for can be printed off time and again. The range includes railway buildings; town scenes; railway scenes; warehouses & docks; roads, cobbles and many other items.



One the left are some of the buildings you may recognise laid out on a 30x18inch 3ply board painted matt dark grey, on a bed in front of a south-facing window. The three-storey warehouse/loading bank and workshops at the rear, with other wharves and buildings laid flat in front.

I will refer to the content and position of the picture again later.

So, although I don't have the space for a layout, I have a stock of portable buildings and back scenes that enable me to quickly set the scene for any particular lorry setting I require, which I can save and refer to whenever I want.

Reg Davis a relative of the Davis Bros. fleet has written:

"After spending hours building a model, what better way to display it than by using a scenic setting.

This guide is not an instruction manual, but what can be achieved fairly easily without great expense.

At the start, decide what you want to achieve: Refer to magazines and transport history pictures of the era required.

A simple setting would be a lorry parked against the kerb behind which is a pavement and a brick wall. If you later want to photograph the model in situ, the base will need to be 2-3 times larger than the model to allow for positioning the camera.

The baseboard can be of 3 ply or MDF; off-cuts available at some stores are useful for this. Start by making the wall and adding the parallel pavement. Remember you are working in 4mm to the foot, so 1-1.5mm for the pavement is about right.

Paint the road surface a mid to dark grey matt, adding some suitable staining to the surface to show where vehicle have 'left their mark'. The kerb and pavement can be made from fine decorating filler or Milliput type material. Before the material sets, scribe with a pin to form the kerb edge and paving slabs. When cured, paint the slabs and kerb a suitable colour and run a very dilute mix of black paint into the cracks wiping off any excess.

The wall can be covered using 'brick paper' obtainable from model railway shops, or various brands of embossed plasticard. The kerb/pavement could also be covered with paper or embossed card depending on the detail required.

The whole scene can be enhanced by adding a lamp post and/or a bench seat against the wall, even a spare wheel and tyre could be propped against the wall, or even add a couple of pigeons or maybe a cat!

Before any photography, ensure a suitable background\* is set up behind, as you don't want all this detail baked by floral curtains or a vase of flowers do you?

If you want to be more ambitious, there are some excellent kits available from Metcalfe and Superquick (referred to above), but make sure they are compatible with the era of the vehicle. Make sure the vehicle is parked, or it will need a driver in the cab.

\* A large range of back scenes is available from Peco (from model shops) or Scalesscenes.com on line.

## **Over the page- Model photography**

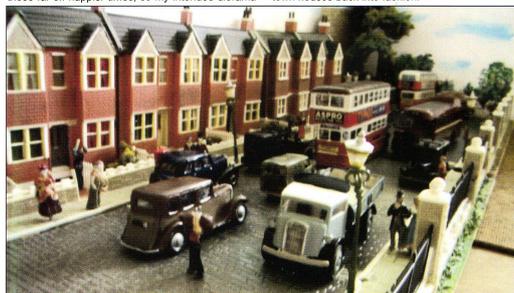
## Photographing your models with a digital camera

I bought my first 35mm camera in 1956 whilst in the RAF and in 1958 changed to 35mm colour slides with which I continued until I retired in 2002, building up a documented library of 11,000 images the storage of which requires an entire double wardrobe.

Upon retirement, one of my gifts was a Fuji digital camera and once I started using it, photography (and storage space) has improved without question. I'm now on my third Fuji, which is now about six years old, and I must add right now, despite all those years of photography, I am far, far from an expert.

1. This is about the basics needed for digital photography, positioning and posing the subject matter.
2. **My camera:** have 4.0-mega pixel capabilities and 10 x zoom (which I don't use for models). Prices have dropped considerably and spec' has increased since I bought mine and it's now possible to buy budget priced models with greater capabilities than mine has got.
3. **Camera specification:** The 'must haves' that I have experienced are: A Macro setting for close-up work; aperture settings that are marked Auto = automatic (speed & aperture); A=aperture adjustment; S=speed. I have seen some superb shots taken of our models at exhibitions on mini digital cameras with these basis features.
4. **Aperture setting:** I have been advised the best aperture setting is F5 to F6 or somewhere in between. My setting is F5.6 and I have seen a marked improvement in detail since moving to that from Auto.
5. **Setting up:** From the picture overleaf you will see that my baseboard and buildings are laid out on a bed. This is my 'studio' as it has natural light from a south facing window, the bed being an ideal height to kneel beside. The best conditions are a good sunny day, but without the sun streaming through the window onto the board. Wait for the right weather conditions, using a flash isn't an option as it's too fierce.

6. **Framing your picture:** If you were a seagull or blackbird this is how you would view things: Plenty of rooftops and tarmac but not a lot of vehicle detail. I'm afraid this is a trap that even the best photographers fall into. It's easy to be so concerned with capturing the whole scene; the only way to do it is from above looking down. When you are standing in the street or in a yard, it's only possible to see what is immediately around you, not around and over the top of vehicles. Get your camera lens down to surface level and capture the detail of one, possibly two subjects and it's surroundings in detail, then move the lens at ground level to the neighbouring item.



7. **Taking the picture:** Set up your scene using the above criteria. A bed or table is ideal, something you are able to crouch beside at eye level to the baseboard. Ensure the light is correct; the camera setting is set to A (aperture) and is set between F5-F6. Ensure the macro setting is on (a flower symbol within the viewing screen). Check for the usual errors



before starting to take any pictures: Check all wheels are touching the ground, nothing in view has fallen over or become dislodged, everything is standing upright as you intended it to be. Lower the camera to rest on the baseboard and focus on the main subject. Lightly press the shutter button to activate the

'macro' focus. If nothing happens, move the camera back slightly, and again if necessary until the 'macro' activates which will sharpen the image in the viewfinder. Resting the camera firmly on the baseboard take your shot.

8. Save them into a file or take them for processing as you prefer. Share them with other **RTI** modellers for display on the 'Modellers Gallery' within the RTI website. Email them as attachments to: [garyk1977@gmail.com](mailto:garyk1977@gmail.com) or post hard copies to: Mr G. Knight, 71 Roche Road, Bugle, Cornwall. PL26 8PP. Please include an SAE if you want prints returned to you.
9. The gallery is building steadily, go to: [roadtransportimages.com](http://roadtransportimages.com) – click on Modellers Gallery