

Do You Know How...



...to
plan a
layout
(pike)?

Robin Swan with his live steam garden layout

Robin Swan describes how he plans a layout

Back in 1999, the 19th February to be precise, I attended the Brighton Show and purchased a book "Remember the Rock". Inspirational photographs by Philip R Hastings, M.D. So began an "on - off" love affair with Rock Island Railroad.

In 2012 I was thinking about building a small HO layout on a 165 cm by 28 cm baseboard built in 1976. Inspiration for the track plan came from an article by Julian Andrews in an old copy of Continental Modeller magazine.

But that is only the initial step. The piece of railroad being modelled must, for me, have a rationale: reasons for the operations and a geographical context. This is the phase that puts the whole project into context: gives meaning to the layout. To develop this, the industries served had to be described. They were a cement delivery facility and a maintenance facility. The former requiring covered hoppers and box cars, the latter any type of freight car that needs minor maintenance. I wanted to run Rock Island, Baltimore & Ohio and possibly Chicago Great Western locomotives. This narrowed the location to somewhere in the Chicago area.

This is a small yard that is very close to a much larger yard. Cars are pushed into the yard - the railroad uses a transfer caboose to control the manoeuvre. They are then switched to the relevant industries. The departing train then returns to the main yard with the locomotive pulling the train in the conventional way.

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