

## **Why I build paper models by Michael Irwin**

I started constructing cardstock/paper models out of sheer desperation. I model exclusively British railroads and there are almost no plastic kits of British structures. There are plenty of European plastic kits courtesy of Vollmer, Faller, Piko, etc. Thus my only reliable source of British structure kits was through Metcalfe Models (<https://www.metcalfemodels.com/>) or other internet websites (<http://www.ss42.com/pt-buildings.html>).

In the last 5 years several new sources of cardstock models have become available. These cardstock models consist of PDF downloads that you print out and glue to various thickness of cardstock. These manufacturers build quite amazingly detailed kits with interior finishes to include rugs, wallpaper, fireplaces, paintings, furniture, etc. The better of these PDF models are supplied online by <http://scalescenec.com> and <http://www.modelrailwayscenery.com/>.

Another internet stockist is Wordsworth Model Railway <http://www.wordsworthmodelrailway.co.uk>. There kits are more for the beginner modeler and are not of suitable detail, although several of their kits have been redesigned and are reasonably good.

Metcalfe Models has been my favorite supplier of cardstock models due to several reasons. First, the model is ready to construct right out of the box. Second, their kits are reasonably detailed. Third, their kits have a reasonable amount of weathering incorporated into the printing of the kits. Fourth, their kits are all printed with matte inks which give a nice flat finish (the PDF kits once printed have a shiny finish due to the plastic laser ink toner). And finally their kits are glued together with Aleene's glue (available at Walmart or any art and craft store such as Michael's) with ease and have clear assembly instructions.

### **Issues with PDF cardstock modeling**

While the individual costs of the PDF downloads are quite inexpensive the costs of printing them out brings the cost in line with plastic models. A note here in regards to paper size, European 8.5 x 11 is the metric equivalent to our 8.5 x 11 and thus slightly larger in size. Some of the PDF pages have narrow margins which will cut off some of the printed areas when printed out on American 8.5 x 11 paper. Thus you have to print them on legal or ledger size paper. If you scale the paper size down, make sure that you scale all of the PDF's down by the same value or the kit will not go together correctly.

Finding suitably thick cardstock is another issue. You need three thicknesses of paper: Normal paper, card stock, and fiber board. Fiberboard is 1 mm thick and can be found at FedEx Office and occasionally at the UPS Store. Be prepared for some weird looks and even staff that state that they do not have it. These stores use fiberboard between regular printing jobs so that the printed paper does not get damaged. Costs have ranged from free to \$1.00 or more per sheet.

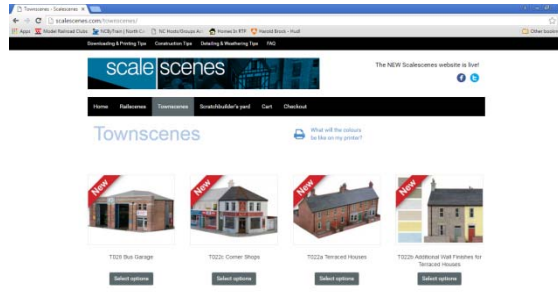
Another source of fiber board is from "cereal boxes" and other dry food packaging. Please note that fiber board coated with wax will not work as the wax inhibits glue adhesion.

Another issue with PDF models is the need to print out the windows onto clear sheets.

### **Sources of paper models**

My usual sources of good quality paper models are from the following websites. Note that most of these websites charge for their products in British Pound Sterling currency. This is usually not a problem with a standard credit card. Note that your cardholder may charge you a foreign transaction fee. Check before making a purchase.

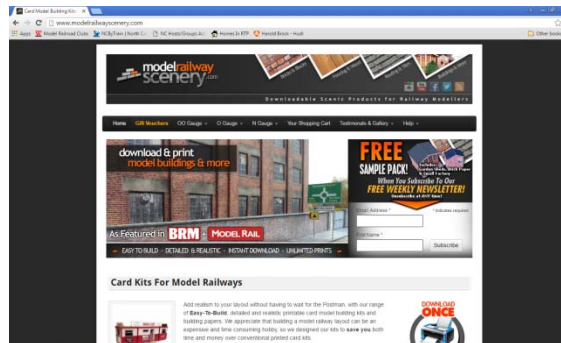
<http://scalescenes.com>



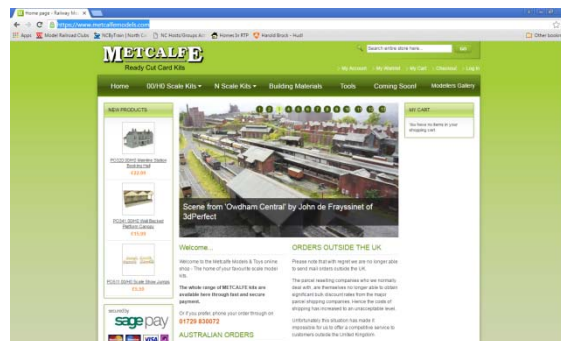
<http://www.wordsworthmodelrailway.co.uk>



<http://www.modelrailwayscenery.com/>

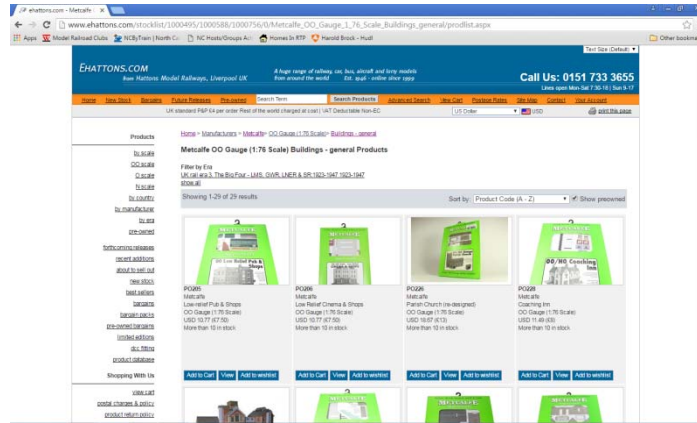


<https://www.metcafemodels.com/>



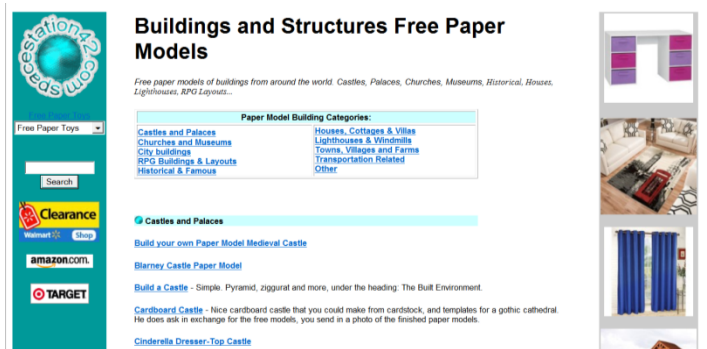
You can purchase Metcalfe Models directly from their website but usually do not ship to the United States. I utilize a British Hobby Shop called Hattons - Model Railways. Their website is

[http://www.ehattons.com/stocklist/1000495/1000588/1000756/0/Metcalfe\\_OO\\_Gauge\\_1\\_76\\_Scale\\_Buildings\\_general/prodlist.aspx](http://www.ehattons.com/stocklist/1000495/1000588/1000756/0/Metcalfe_OO_Gauge_1_76_Scale_Buildings_general/prodlist.aspx)



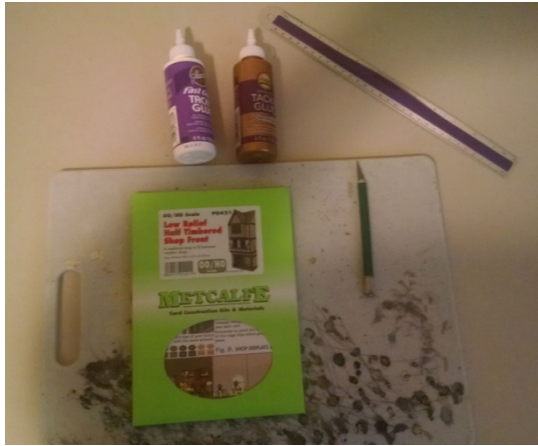
Another good source of free PDF paper models is the website listed below. Click on the various websites and take a look at their various models. Their selection is mostly non-railroad related models that are not to scale and are meant mostly for beginner modelers. Their website is updated from time to time so it is good to go and check it out occasionally to see if anything suitable to model railroading is listed.

<http://www.ss42.com/pt-buildings.html>

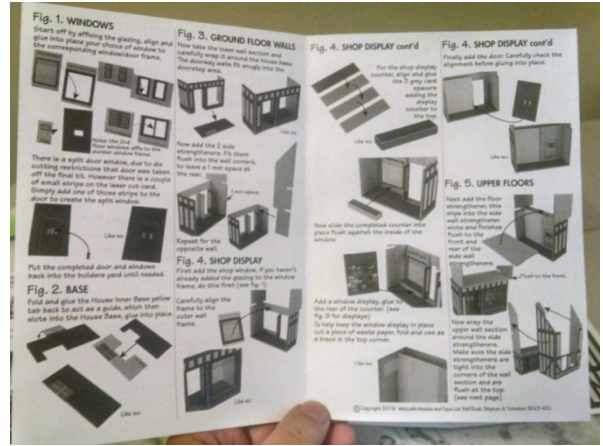


## A work in progress

Starting on the next page is a Metcalfe Model low relief paper model of a timber English shop under construction.



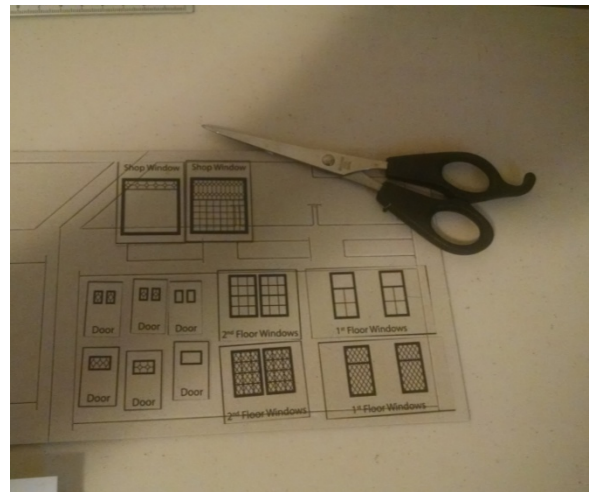
Establish a clean work area. Note I forgot to include the scissors



The instructions are quite clear and detailed.



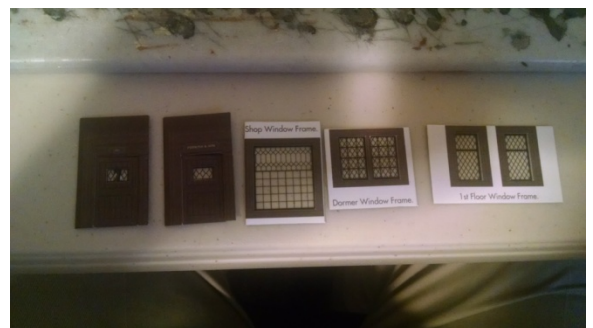
Here are all of the kit part sheets and instructions



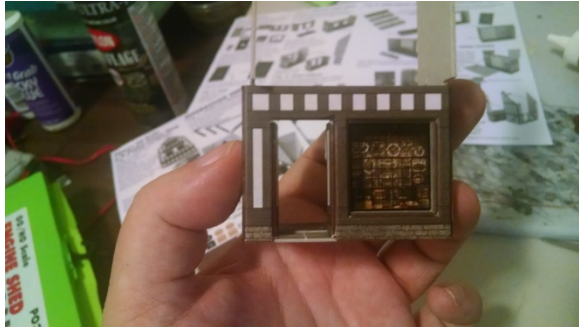
Cut the windows out with a normal pair of scissors. Use the solid lines as guides



Using light pressure, poke out the windows



Glue the windows into their frames. Do not use super glue as the fumes will craze the plastic.



Construction of the first floor is almost complete. I let the wife choose the name and type of store. In this case it is a jewelry store. It always helps to bring family members into the hobby even in small ways.



With the roof added. Almost complete.



The second and third stories coming together



The completed structure ready for the layout



The interior of the structure

A few other completed structures. All of these are Metcalfe Kits.



The Department Store. Note the laser cut kit components for more detail. This is a latest edition kit.



A close up view of the store front. Note revolving door constructed from laser cut components.

Here is an example of the detail that can be obtained from a Scalescenes PDF card model kit.



Note how shiny the roof is. This is due to the plastic ink used in laser color printers.



All of these kits have detailed interiors. There was nothing "special" to add to the kit. It was created with detailed interior walls.



The country church interior has to be seen to be believed.

## Other Metcalfe Model Kits



Low relief street structures



Country Station and waiting platform



Factory entrance and Pub



More low relief structures and factory entrance



Small Factory



Mainline station platform. Note the newspaper stand is a Scalescene Kit.



Mainline Station Platform



The village shop kit surrounded by market day