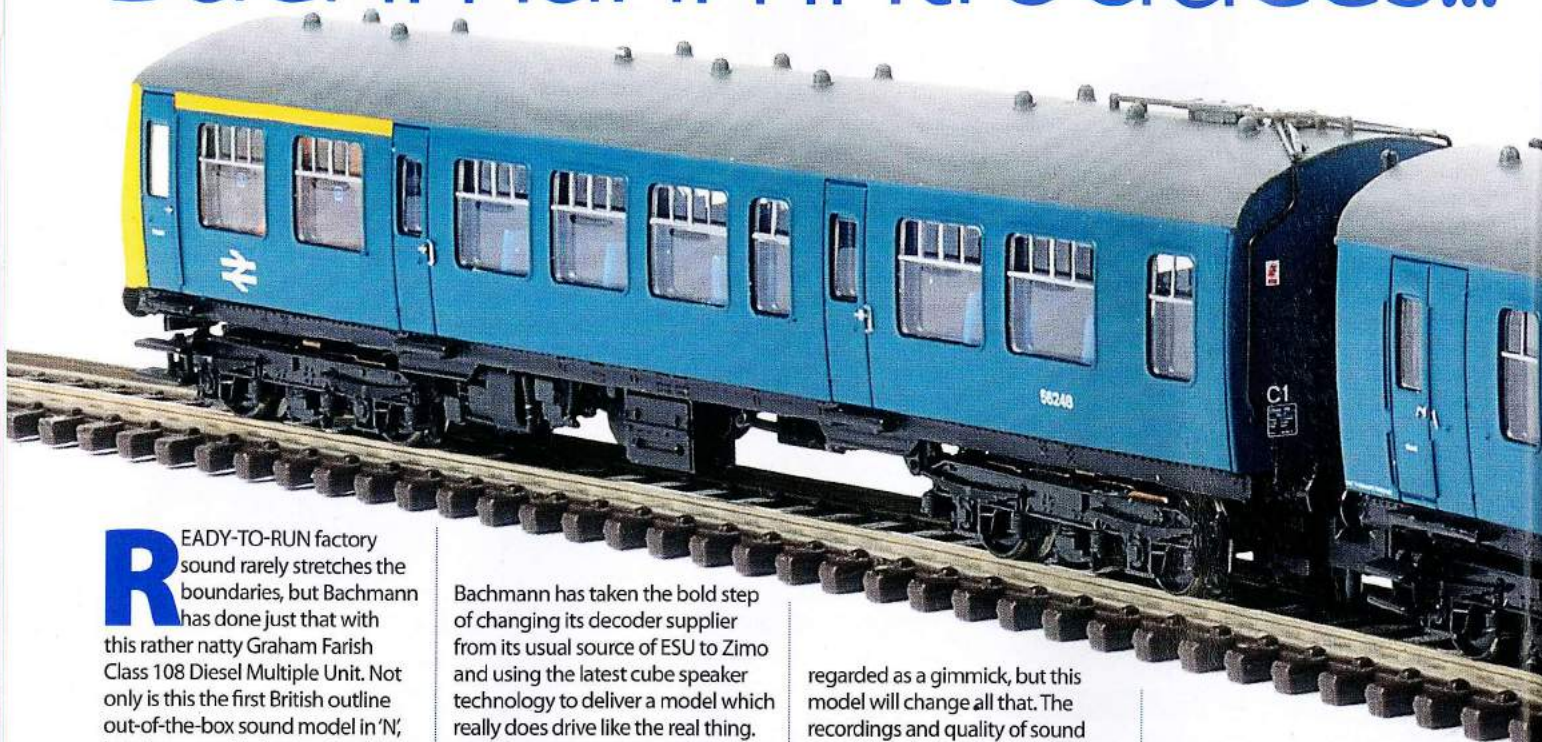


Bachmann introduces...



READY-TO-RUN factory sound rarely stretches the boundaries, but Bachmann has done just that with this rather natty Graham Farish Class 108 Diesel Multiple Unit. Not only is this the first British outline out-of-the-box sound model in 'N', but also one which takes the driving experience beyond simply turning the speed control up and down.

The Class 108 was introduced in 2008 by Bachmann for its Graham Farish range and from the start it was aimed at being Digital Command Control (DCC) sound compatible, to a point at least. Space was provided for a speaker, but such has been the pace for change in digital sound that the enclosure was now irrelevant.

For this new version of the Class 108, delivered in BR blue with full yellow ends as a Midland Region set,

Bachmann has taken the bold step of changing its decoder supplier from its usual source of ESU to Zimo and using the latest cube speaker technology to deliver a model which really does drive like the real thing.

Inside is a MX646N sound decoder and a cube speaker in the driving car while the lighting functions of the trailer are taken care of by a Zimo MX681N decoder. Both are 6-pin decoders and provide all the functionality required for the model including smooth motor control, consistent lighting and an impressive 20 sound functions. As delivered, the model is set to address 0003 and will require operation in 128 speed step mode for the best performance. Sound in 'N' gauge could be

regarded as a gimmick, but this model will change all that. The recordings and quality of sound output are outstanding, especially for a factory model, and is on a level with what you would expect from a high-end aftermarket sound decoder. Moreover, the driving experience is phenomenally accurate and realistic and puts you firmly in the driving seat.

There are two ways to drive the 108 which are explained in full in the accompanying data sheets. First, you can follow the gear change pattern laid down by increasing the speed – speed step 1 selects first gear, speed step 29 second gear,

step 44 for third and 56 for fourth gear. However, you also have total control over the gear changes too, making it possible to go through all four gears in as little as 3ft and without needing to reach high speeds. To do this, drive the model away from a stand and let the revs build in first gear, allow them to idle down then decrease the speed by one step and up by two and it will select second gear. You can repeat this at your discretion for third and, to set the model in fourth for cruising simply press F6 on the

Zimo sound in 'N'

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THE DETAILS	
Manufacturer:	www.bachmann.co.uk
Cat No:	371-876DS
Description:	Class 108 DMU, BR blue
Price:	£269.95
Era:	6/7
DCC:	DCC sound fitted
Couplings:	Rapido couplings in NEM pockets



controller keypad. Turning F6 off and stepping the speed back by one returns the model to coast to allow it to slow for a station stop.

All this combined with the additional functionality of three horns, guard's whistles and buzzers and even door and window opening sounds builds up into one of the, if not the, most sophisticated and

drivable factory produced sound projects available today for the British market. And that's in 'N' gauge too – let's hope there is more to come on this level from Bachmann, as the new '108'

blows all of its previous sound models out of the water. (MW)

Ice blue 'Covhops' look sweet

Bachmann's recent 'OO' gauge 23ton BR covered hopper wagon ('Covhop') returns in a new guise decorated in BR ice blue livery with Sugar branding, exclusive to The Model Centre (TMC).

Representing wagons that were converted for use on processed sugar beet operations between the mid-1960s and late-1970s, these latest variants from

Bachmann feature new tooling to reflect the detail differences.

Each pack contains four vehicles – B870785, B870803, B886629 and B886743. Decoration is superb with each wagon featuring a rich satin BR ice blue paint finish to the hopper and a black chassis. In addition to the pristine set, TMC's own weathered sets are also available with a choice of weathering finishes from light to heavy. (MC)



THE DETAILS	
Supplier:	www.themodelcentre.com
Cat No:	38-500Z
Description:	BSC Sugar 'Covhop' wagons, Ice blue, pristine (pack of four)
Price:	£99.95
Cat No:	38-500ZTMC
Description:	BSC Sugar 'Covhop' wagons, Ice blue, weathered by TMC (pack of four)
Price:	£119.99
Scale:	'OO'
Era:	5-7



Virgin Mk2s

Virgin Trains' (VT) red and grey colour scheme is the latest livery to grace Hornby's 2015 introduced 'OO' gauge BR Mk 2e carriages (HM91).

Representing vehicles used on VT's locomotive-hauled Cross Country and West Coast operations until the early-2000s, this is the first time Hornby's new Mk 2s have carried this livery. Interestingly, numerous prototypes can still be seen in these colours with charter train operators today. A First Open is also to be released.

Decoration is generally well executed. Crisp parallel white bodyside lining, Virgin branding, numbering and lettering feature, together with yellow edged footboards and neatly printed no smoking signs on the tinted flush glazing.

Elsewhere, chassis and bogie detail remains the same as previous



BR and Intercity liveried models while Hornby's interior lighting bar is fitted to the ceiling. Door locking lights, which usually sit alongside the passenger entry doors on the real thing, are not represented. Bogies are fitted with metal wheels to aid pick-up together with small tension lock couplings in NEM pockets. (MC)

THE DETAILS	
Manufacturer:	www.hornby.com
Cat No:	R4702
Description:	BR Mk 2e Tourist Open Standard 5801 with lights, Virgin
Cat No:	R4704
Description:	BR Mk 2e Brake Open Standard 9507 with lights, Virgin
Price:	£34.99
Scale:	'OO'
Era:	9
Couplings:	Small tension locks in NEM pockets