

MainLine

National Model Railroad Association Inc - Australasian Region

Spring 2007
Volume 24 No. 3



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Registered at Australia Post Publication # PP241613/00080



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KCS SD-50 Going home on Kelly Loyd's Milwaukee Road Kansas City Subdivision



Official Publication of the
National Model Railroad Association
Australasian Region

Registered at Australia Post Publication #
PP241613/00080

Editor: Kelly Loyd

Proof Reader: Greg Harper

Assistants: All NMRA AR Members

Article Submissions: The editor
welcomes any train related articles,
photos, drawings, cartoons, letters to the
editor and other material.

Any submissions can be either emailed or
"snail mailed". It is preferable that any
submissions be made using a computer,
(PC or Mac) Publication of articles
submitted are at the discretion of the editor.

Cut-off dates for Article Submissions

Summer 2007 - 9/11/07

Autumn 2008 - 8/2/08

Winter 2008 - 16/5/08

Spring 2008 - 15/8/08

Summer 2008 - 14/11/08

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Advertising: The NMRA Australasian

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Advancing the global model railroading
community through advocacy, standards,
education and social interaction

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Allan Rocket's On30 G42

Photo by Gerry Hopkins MMR

Centre photo

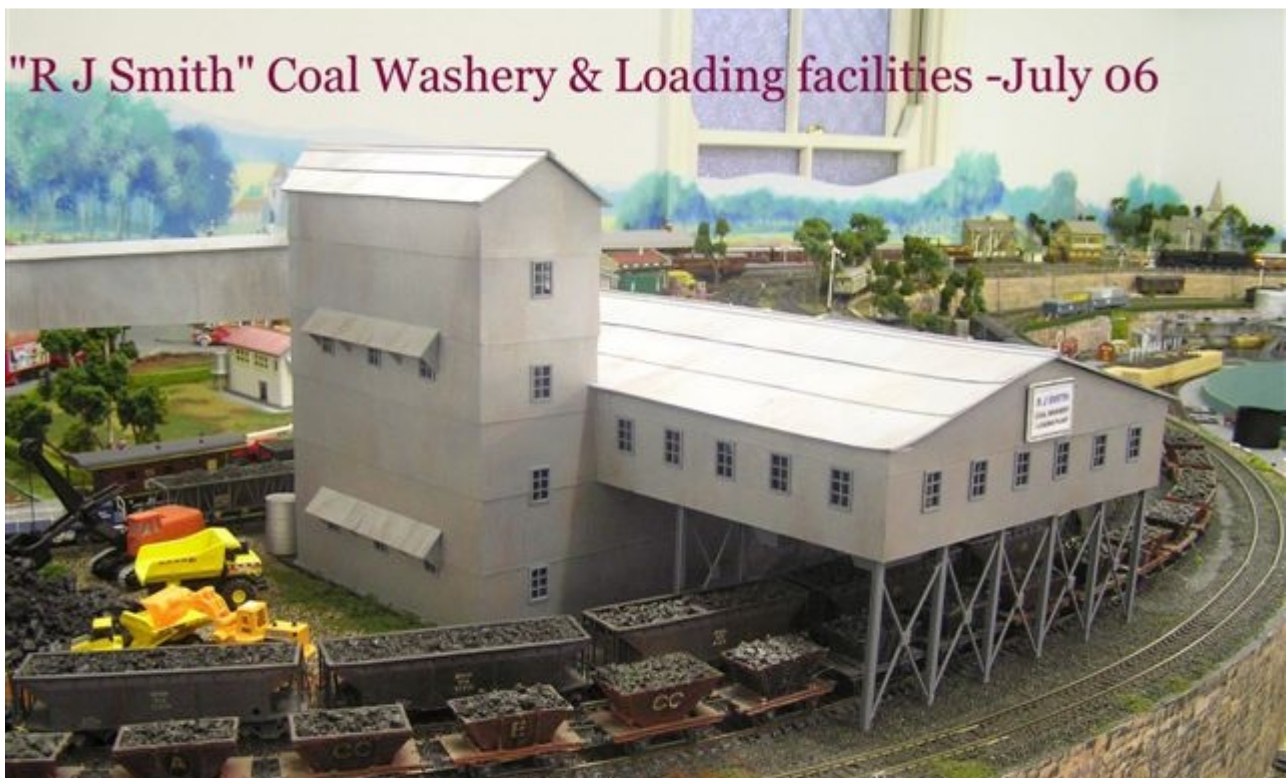
Graham Baker's Milwaukee Road Lines West

Photo by Kelly Loyd

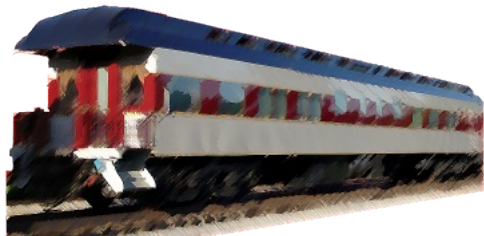
Back Cover

Alan Dunstons SP Layout

Telling Stories - Photo by Gerry Hopkins MMR



Bill Dunn's Layout, Division 1 (Qld)



From The Business Car

Fred Gill, one of founding members of the Australasian Region, passed away from complications following an abdominal operation on the 1st August. Fred served initially as secretary and later Region President for a term

and I had the pleasure of being his Vice President. His memorial service was held on the 4th of August at St Barnabus Church Westmead. I and about 20 NMRA members attended and a floral tribute was sent on behalf of all the members of the association. My deepest condolences go to Jean Gill and all of Fred's family. John Saxon has prepared an obituary for us and it appears elsewhere in this issue.



Australasian Region Early MMRs, Left to Right:-
Fred Gill GMMR, Phil Knife MMR, Gerry Hopkins MRR, John Saxon MMR HLM

Fred's passing brings me to one of the unique aspects of the NMRA and that is the Achievement Program. Fred held the position as Achievement Chairperson for several years and was instrumental in a massive increase in our Master Model Railroader numbers as well as lots of other achievement certificates. Fred was the first person in the NMRA world wide, to obtain all 11 certificates. Gerry Hopkins MMR, who is not only a member of the ARC but holds the other positions of Contest Chair and Achievement Chair, is more than willing to help any member who would like to participate. It would be a fitting memorial to Fred if we were to have a burst of new achievement awards.

Over the next couple of years we have some exciting developments in the pipeline.

Firstly, the national convention is coming up very soon. This years Convention is at the Blue Mountains Grammar School Wentworth Falls to the west of Sydney on October 6th. Details are in the MainLine and on the web site. In September 2008 we have our next Convention and this one's in Queensland. September is a lovely time of year to visit (not too hot). Queensland is our fastest growing Division in the Region and my congratulations go to Glenn Stevens for his tireless work promoting the NMRA. You may not know but at the recent Toowoomba show, 7 of the layouts on display were NMRA member's layouts. A fantastic achievement. So start thinking about a trip to Brisbane next September as air fares have never been cheaper. More information will be on the Web site and in MainLine.

The following year in 2009, it is the Regions 25th birthday. We already have a commitment from the NMRA board in the USA to fund the President coming out and lots of US members are very keen to come including the editor of Scale Rails. We have just appointed a Chairman for the organising committee, David Howarth. Many of you will know David from his role on the Committee and as our librarian. The other members of the committee are John Montgomery, Gerry Hopkins, Peter Jenson and myself. Further details will be forthcoming in the near future so start thinking about the October long weekend '09. As it is likely we will have a very large contingent of overseas attendees don't miss this opportunity to meet and mingle with several of the hobby's better known modellers. It will be a terrific convention so keep an eye out for more information and book early.

Finally, on a personal note, I have finally bitten the bullet and bought a DCC System- again. I say again as for many years I ran my layout using Zero 1, the first truly digital command system. Regarding how one should wire a layout for DCC (I just use standard Cab Wiring and use it as a cab) I can paraphrase an item from MRC's literature; there is no such thing as DCC wiring just good wiring. So don't be put off, if your cab control wiring works properly now it will work just fine for DCC.

Now I've stirred up that hornet's nest I will say goodbye 'till the next issue.

Sowerby Smith

Highball! - Editorial

Spring is in the air! By the time you get the MainLine, Spring should be making a solid appearance and the weather will be warmer!

Our Convention in the Blue Mountains is fast approaching as you read this. I would like to encourage you to come along. The Convention is a great way to catch up with old and new friends, learn a new modeling skill and participate in the contests. Hope to see you there!

Letters to the Editor?

Why the question mark? I don't get many letters or emails about the MainLine. There haven't been any comments or complaints. It would be great to hear from our readers sometime. I have had compliments from our Division Superintendents and a couple of suggestions. Drop me a line at editor@nmra.org.au and who knows, we might just print it!

Signals Department

I have just completed the first operational signals on my layout. It has been a long process involving lots of planning, thinking and reading. Since I am an ex-Tower Operator, the signals had to look and work just right. I have faithfully duplicated the style of control panel that I operated in my job with the Milwaukee Road. Look for a series of articles in coming MainLines. If you happen to visit next February on my open day, you will see a fully operational signal system. If you would like a tour at any time, just give me a call or email.

Until next issue,
Happy Modeling!



Alan Dustons SP Layout in New Zealand

NMRA Australasian Region Convention 2007

Come and join us in the beautiful Blue Mountains this

Spring for the Regional Convention.

Enjoy a day of Clinics, Workshops and catching up with old and new friends.

Plus the NMRA Contests, Traders, Bring 'N' Buy

And Layout Tours on Sunday

*** Including layouts never before seen ***

After Dinner Speaker

When Saturday, 6 October 2007

Registrations Commence 8.00am

Convention Commences 9.00am

Lunch 12.30pm – 1.30pm

Convention Closes 5.30pm

Dinner To Commence 7.00pm

Where Blue Mountains Grammar School
Matcham Avenue Wentworth Falls

What - Workshops

Making Turnouts DCC Friendly Kelly Loyd
Installing a DCC decoder Gerry Hopkins MMR
Modelling very realistic stucco/render for buildings Dieter Chidel
Checking and tuning up cars to make your layout perform better John Saxon MMR

Clinics

Railroading south of the Border (USA Border that is) Ray Walter
Using Laser and Water Jet cutting technologies to improve model building Rod Parker & John Delalande
Modelling an sea-going freighters and container ships John Montgomery
Building highly detailed and realistic structures from paper and card Micheal Flack
Modelling Roads, Highways and Tracks and other Features in the Aussie Bush Geoff Nott
Small Layout Construction Techniques and Ideas Steve Pettit MMR
Modelling the Illawarra Region of the NSW Railways Alan Garbutt
Preparing Articles for the MainLine and Earning your Model Railroad Author AP Award Kelly Loyd

Also

A Day Long Workshop on Troubleshooting and Repairing Member's Locos Phil Badger MMR

Tea and coffee provided all day by NMRA.

Lunch provided by caterer

Dinner Roast (Choice of 2 meats) plus salad or hot vegetables.
Choice of two desserts or fruit platter.
Tea and coffee provided by caterer.
China and cutlery service by caterer.

Ladies Program Bus tour of local Blue Mountains sites.

Access Plenty of parking on site.
Travel by train to Wentworth Falls then 3 minute walk from Station.
Easy access to venue for traders and layouts.

Cost Entry - \$45 per person
Dinner - \$22.50 per person

Rock and Alternative Rock Moulds

Copyright Donald Davis 2007

Why do we need rock castings?

We use rock castings/moulds to quickly duplicate rock faces, cuttings for the track to pass through, tunnel entrances or anywhere that has exposed rock faces or outcrops. By making your own moulds it is possible to give the layout its own unique look (I personally have over 60 moulds and over the last 3-4 years made over 120 moulds). A single casting can be used several times in the same area on the layout by affixing it at different angles.

If the mould is properly looked after, by keeping them in a cool dry location they can be used for several years and many repetitive castings done.

Before beginning to make your own rock castings you will need to make a mould. This is possibly the hardest, but most satisfying part, as, after doing your research as in to what type of location you want to model, it is necessary to find rocks or strata that can be used to duplicate the location.

Materials required

1. Several spray bottles
2. Throw away 20-25 mm paint brushes
3. Muslin cloth (sometimes called cheese cloth and must have a very open weave)
4. Dish cloth (chux type)
5. Scissors



Photo No. 1 Latex rubber, cheesecloth and brush

Latex rubber can be purchased from :-

Polymer Chemicals
107 Kurrajong Ave. Mt. Druitt
Phone No. 9832 7555
Daystar Australia Pty. Ltd.
394-396 Princes Highway Rockdale 2216
Phone: 9567 3328 Fax: 95972452

FMS Fibre Glass Material Service Unit
1/19 Boden Road Seven Hills
Phone: 9624 2811

6. Container with water and detergent in it to soak brush in

7. Most importantly- a suitable rock or location site

There are several sources of material to supply the masters for the moulds.



Photo No. 2 Rock, Cement and burnt timber

1. **Burnt Timber** Bob Kolwyn gave me a piece of 4x2 burnt timber to see if a latex mould was able to be taken of it. The first attempt failed as the latex formed a reaction with the charcoal, which turned into a black useless mass of black latex. Not to be deterred, I painted the other side with thinned down paving paint to seal it. This allowed the latex to lift off without any problems.

2. **Broken Cement** This came about by chance as I had a bag of cement which got wet and had set hard. (Not concrete mix with sand or aggregate). When breaking it up to dispose of it I noticed the great strata effect that it had. So I painted it with the latex but alas it had the same result as with the burnt timber. I painted the cement with paving paint and the result was a mould with very sharp rock outcrops.



Photo No. 3 Mould is on the left and casting. The size is indicated by the HO locos in front

3. **Shale** This is very unstable and needs the following procedure to obtain a satisfactory result. All dirt or residue must be completely removed from the surface to be moulded. Failure to have a totally clean

surface can ruin a lot of work. If moulding off a surface which is not stable (breaks up when using a brush) then the latex can be used in a spray bottle. It will need 3-4 spray coats before a brush can be used. Importantly, if using a spray bottle immediately after a coat has been applied, pump water with detergent added through the spray nozzle.

4. **Rock** Any common every day rock (but not sandstone as this will show the grains of sand as small boulders) which has a smooth textured finish, is ideal.

After the first 2-3 coats have been applied and, after allowing the latex to have completely dried between coats (latex has a honey colour finish), apply another coat of latex to the area and, before it starts to dry, apply a layer of muslin cloth over the area in particular making sure that any 'hollows' are covered.

Repeat this process 3-4 times then use a final layer of chux, which gives the mould strength and prevents any fine detail being distorted when the plaster is applied.

In between applying the latex coats, leave the brush in the jar of water and detergent as the latex tends to dry quickly. When removing the brush from the water remove any latex build-up by hand and remove excess water before applying latex.

If you have reached this stage of the operation you will see why the brushes need to be cheap throw-away's.



Photo No. 4 The casting after it has had a wash of earth-toned and black to highlight the crevasses and overhangs.

Allow the mould to completely cure by leaving it over night before attempting to remove the mould from the rock or location. To remove, carefully start at one spot and start to peel it off (Like a pair of rubber gloves) so as not to tear the rubber. After removing the mould, I prefer to leave it to dry and harden over night before cleaning the mould surface of any rock or dirt that has stuck to the latex.

The mould is now ready for use.



Photo No. 5 Castings used on the layout

Using Rock Moulds

This describes one of the methods of using rock moulds. There are several ways of preparing and using the moulds. One way is to, after allowing the plaster to start to cure, apply it to the layout before it has totally cured. This has the advantage of being able to form the moulded casting into a position on the layout before removing the mould from the casting.

This is not the method I use mainly because my style of scenery uses large castings and I have found this method difficult to handle on your own.

The method I use is to cast the rock castings on the workbench or backyard by laying the moulds flat and packing underneath them with pieces of timber, cardboard or paper to obtain the shape required. This method also allows you to cast more than one piece at a time and by placing the castings in place dry you are able to see if this is the right effect that is wanted. (I have about 8 -10 castings in a box that I can place on my own or other's layouts to gauge the effect before making a final casting).

Materials required

1. 2-3 large ice cream containers
2. Plastic spatula
3. Spray bottle with water and several drops of detergent in it
4. Casting or pottery plaster

To the job

If moulding the casting inside on the workbench, cover the area with plastic sheeting as this is a messy job. I prefer to make them outside.

Spray the surface of the mould with water which has had a couple of drops of detergent added (wet water) ensuring that any crevasses in the mould have been covered with the water. Shake off any excess water.

Place the mould flat on the workbench. Place paper or a rag under the mould to support the mould's overall shape. Prepare the plaster by firstly adding water to the container then adding the plaster slowly whilst stirring with the spatula. Stir slowly to prevent air bubbles from forming in the plaster. The standard formula for mixing

plaster is one cup of water to two cups of plaster. After approximately 2 minutes the mixture (continually mixing for 1-3 min.) will thicken to a consistency to a thick soupy consistency. At this stage pour half into the mould and then shake the mould gently to release any air bubbles trapped in the finer detail of the mould. Pour in the remainder of the plaster. I now prefer to leave the mould for several hours to completely start the curing process or wait until the plaster has warmed to the touch and as it commences to cool down carefully remove the mould from the casting.

I have described my preferred methods but there are several variations and it will depend on individual preference and the size of your casting as to which one you use. A good reference book is *How to Build Realistic Model Railroad Scenery* by Dave Frary and at approximately \$30 it is well worth the investment.

Light weight castings



Photo No. 6 Plaster casting with Polyurethane backing

A more recent method of making light weight castings is to perform the above tasks BUT instead of filling the mould entirely with plaster, give it a coating of plaster about 2-3 mm thick, ensuring all of the mould's internal surface is covered and not allowing any latex rubber to be exposed. This may take several movements of the mould to get an even thin coating all over. This is important as otherwise the next step will allow the foam to attach to the mould causing damage.

Two Pack foam

This is similar to the expanding foam used for sealing around pipes and filling small cavities around the home. This is more an industrial product which I used in the 1970's for insulating inside commercial freezer units. The product is ERA Polymers Polyurethane and it comes in two tins. One tin contains Erathane GP-2 Isocyanate and the other contains Erathane GP-2 Polyol. This may be purchased as FSM at Seven Hills.

This is a toxic product and it is best to ask for a Material Safety Data Sheet when purchasing so you can read about its handling instructions.

After allowing the plaster to completely cure, mix the 2-pack foam together and pour on the plaster. This is a case where a little is better than too much as the foam can expand a lot depending on the day's temperature and mixing quantities. By using a very thin coating of plaster to the mould this will have the advantage of giving a realistic staining to the plaster and the Polyurethane will give it strength without weight. This makes this system ideal for portable layouts

Moulding Cobblestones

This article is the result of a master and mould I made for a war games modeller in 1/48th scale. What he wanted was a quick easy way of duplicating 1940's streets for diorama's and to duplicate bombed out buildings. I don't see any reason why this method can't be used to duplicated stone work or large areas of brick work. It is the only thing I have done which is not found on my layout. So if anyone tries this idea let me know how it works.

Materials required:

- Latex rubber
- Cheap paintbrush
- Wire mesh 1/8" or 2mm holes
- Cheesecloth
- Containers for mixing plaster
- Spatula
- Plaster (casting or pottery)
- Most important- the master to be duplicated

1. Prepare a master form by glueing blocks of cork or tiles, which have been filed and cut to the required shape, to a piece of plywood. Ensure that the gaps between the cobbles are not too deep as when the rubber latex is applied it may tear off when removing the latex mould from the master.

2. Seal the master with paint to prevent the latex from adhering to the master. I have found that Berger paving paint works well. Allow to dry for several days. The paint is best thinned out before painting the master to allow any detail in the cobbles to show through.

3. Spray the painted master with water with several drops of dishwashing detergent added. Shake excess from the master. This is called wet water.

4. Apply the first coat of latex rubber to the master including the sides and ends. Then allow to dry until the rubber turns a honey colour. Place the paintbrush in a container of soapy water as this will help to retard the setting of the latex in the brush.

5. Apply more coats of latex until the gaps between the cobblestones are filled in with latex. Allow to dry between coats.

6. Apply a coat of latex then cover the master with the cheesecloth. Cut the cheesecloth to the correct size of the master allowing for enough to go down the sides and ends.

7. Repeat step 4 for several coats. Then apply another layer of cheesecloth as in step 6.

8. Using wire mesh (the holes to be no larger than 1/8" or 2mm) cut to the same size as the master allowing for the same amount of overhang on the sides as for the cheese cloth. Keeping it flat fold the sides over the edge of the master. Place over the master and apply latex using several coats to fully adhere the mesh to the latex mould.

9. Leave the master and mould several days to dry. VERY carefully remove the mould from the master taking special care not to bend or distort the mould. Leave the mould several days to fully cure.

10. Using the same spray bottle with the detergent added spray the inside of the mould. Shake to remove excess water or imperfections in the casting may appear.

11. Mix the plaster by pouring water into the container first and then adding the plaster. This prevents lumps from forming. Whilst stirring add more plaster until a consistency of a porridge has been reached then pour the plaster into the mould. Slight shaking or tapping on the mould will aid the plaster to fill all the crevasses in the mould. Allow to cure for several hours or longer.

12. Gently remove the mould from the plaster. After the mould has been removed allow the casting several days to dry out before painting or staining. Wash the mould to remove plaster residue.

You now should have a mould, which can be used repeatedly to reproduce either roads or walls

Yours in modelling,

Donald Davis

NMRA Standards & Recommended Practices.

By Gerry Hopkins MMR

Before the 1930s, there were no common standards pertaining to model railroad equipment. One manufacturer's equipment would not necessarily work with another manufacturer's or even run on someone else's track. Many modellers built to their own standard or from their own designs and ideas. In many cases it was difficult, if not impossible, to take your cars or locomotives to another modeller's railroad and expect them to run without problems. There were nearly as many couplers as there were manufacturers. This situation could only work to the detriment of the hobby as a whole.

The NMRA came into being in 1935 with a gathering of model railroaders, manufacturers, and publishers, in response to the need to bring order out of chaos. The NMRA Standards were developed as a way to help ensure that equipment could be interchanged between one model railroad and another and that cars and locomotives of one manufacturer could run on the track of another manufacturer together with cars and equipment of still other manufacturers and modellers.

Since 1936, many of these basic Standards have remained virtually unchanged from the time of their original publication. They have been added to and refined, but they have stood the test of time and have proven to have been of great benefit to the hobby of model railroading and have contributed greatly to allowing the hobby to develop to the point where it is today.

The Difference.....



NMRA Standards Gauge

A Standard is a figure, relationship or dimension that is mandatory, it is "cut in stone" so to speak and must be followed to facilitate interchange or interface, whichever the case may be. Standards can be changed from time to time but ONLY by the vote of the NMRA membership after proper policy procedures have been followed and the membership has been fully informed.

RPs (Recommended Practices) are those figures, relationships or dimensions that the Engineering Committee has established through actual tests and that they feel are beneficial to operation. These are not required to be voted on by the membership except when in a package such as the Module Standards and RPs. These are presented to the Board of Trustees (BOT) for their study and approval.

As charged by the NMRA CHARTER and CONSTITUTION, NMRA STANDARDS provide the primary basis upon which Interchange between equipment and various North American scale model

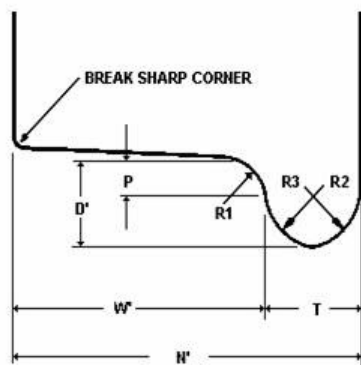
railroads is founded. Under this requirement, NMRA STANDARDS include only those factors that are considered vital to such Interchange. For less critical matters look at the NMRA RECOMMENDED PRACTICES.

What does all this mean to us?

Well in a nut shell, if you buy a loco and/or rolling stock and it conforms to NMRA standards or RPs then you can put it on the track and know it will perform reasonably well.

The parts that have the most impact are the wheels, track and weight. These days most locos and rolling stock for USA or Australian prototype have wheels that conform to RP25 and will run on any size track on the market today. For HO scale, US railways in the "Transition" era would use code 70/83 on the mainline and code 55 on other lines. Australian mainlines would be code 70 on the main and code 55 for branch lines and even code 40 for yard or industry tracks. The AD60 looks perfect on code 55!!

To give you an idea how this relates to "reality", in September 2007 the mainline between Gosford and Wyong is being upgraded to 53 kg/m (110 lbs/ft) which



RP-25 Wheel Profile

is code 70/75.

RP25 is the contour of the wheel not including the gauge. Always check the gauge of the wheels - some of the more popular brands have wheel sets slightly under gauge.

There is also a shift from code 110 wheels to code 88 wheels. Huh?? Code 110 wheels are 110 thou. wide while the code 88 wheels are 88 thou. wide and look much better. Most of the current Atlas cars have C88, so too do the Auscision Hoppers.

One of the biggest problems with any item of rolling stock or locomotive is the flanges. All current Australian items have wheels conforming to RP25, but, if you want to run that Lima XPT or 38 Class then these are way outside the RP.

The distance between the wheels, the gauge, is of great importance. Most current wheel sets are okay but always check the gauge - never take it for granted that brand ABC are the best so their wheels must be in gauge!

Many people get confused about the weight of a car.

The NMRA does not have a Standard car weight but they do have a Recommended Practice RP20.1. This gives a formula to calculate the weight of a car of a given length. The text also states that going over this weight will not improve the tracking of the car.

If you take a car from layout to layout then this is a starting point. If the car stays on your layout then you can consider making the car lighter. Use the formula but change one of the constants in the formula. On my

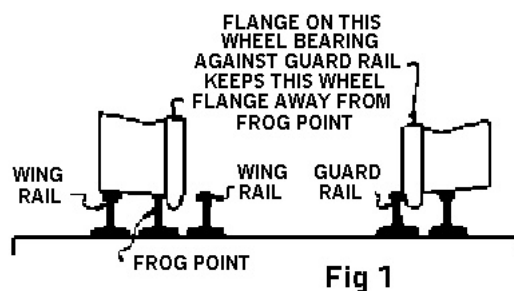


Diagram showing turnout measurements

layout cars are approx. 1 ounce lighter than in the RP. When laying the track I made sure everything was done to NMRA Standards.

A set of Standards that has benefited everyone in the hobby are those for DCC. This has meant that you can take your loco to any DCC layout and run it. You are not restricted to the same brand of system. How the system works and its features is up to the manufacturer but the power and signal to the track is always the same.

Decoders have a set of standards, e.g. colour of wire for each output, basic CV parameters for set up and control. You know that Red is always the Right Hand Rail and blue is always the common for functions.

All the current Standards and Recommended Practices can be viewed or downloaded from the NMRA site at:

<http://www.nmra.org/standards/consist.html>

or you can use the CD given to all members by the Membership Secretary when they joined.

Take the time to look. There is much in the standards & RPs that can help your modelling

Gerry Hopkins MMR



Region Roundup

Division 1 Queensland

By Ian Venables

Apology

Sorry I'm rather late with this Newsletter but my computer has been down since mid June. At that stage the Newsletter was half done but I couldn't get to it to complete it. I was away for some of that time and that didn't help. Nevertheless I got to see the Perth Model Train Show and then a trip up to Cairns gave me a chance to drop in on Bert Toogood at Innisfail. I flew up to Cairns but came back by Tilt Train. This was most interesting and I spent most of the time with my 'in seat' monitor selected to show the drivers view, speed, distance to the next stop, etc. Things have changed! Most bridges, even very small ones and culverts now have guard rails with huge cast pointed ends. Those not yet done usually have the rails lying between tracks waiting for rail crews to install them.

Another interesting feature is that nearly all bridges and culverts are ballasted including the few wooden trestles left. The only ones not ballasted are the large steel types with open girders below the rails. Now all of this was a good lesson especially after recently reading the landmark Railroad Model Craftsman for May '07. If you can, get a copy of the article by David G. Lambert 'Open Deck Railroad Bridges', all 18 pages of it and study it. This is one of the best articles I've ever read in the modelling press and it's backed up by lots of definitive pictures. Well that was a long apology but I'll try and make it up to you somehow.

Gathering at Bob Brown's

Glenn Steven's, our superintendent, gave members the latest Association news and handed out the new Australasian Region cloth patch and very attractive they are too with their silver background. He then brought us up to date on 'house keeping' notices within the NMRA. One of the segments was about the progress of work on the display layout. Sadly, there was also the news about the theft of some of our tools, the 40 jumpers we made up to connect each module, all of our screws, 3 tins of paint and various other items. There was nothing that we as NMRA could have done to prevent this theft and worse still is that almost none of the items stolen would be of much use to anyone except us! That meant that to meet our schedule to be at the Toowoomba Train Show we required a Herculean effort on the part of the workers.

Show and Tell was very quiet this time but Laurie McLean showed us his beautiful scratchbuilt Silverton station made of styrene. He then displayed his scratchbuilt wooden mine, evidence that he handles

different mediums equally well. Laurie also had some very realistic conifers and a spreading tree that he had made, bridge piers cut from plaster and plaster castings of a stone wall. We look forward to seeing these and more of his work on the home layout.

We then moved to the train rooms and found that Bob is well on the way to going DCC. This is no mean feat for Bob considering the huge number of locos he owns.



Bob Brown with one of his many Santa Fe locos running on his layout. Perhaps he is wondering how long it's going to take to convert all to DCC! Or is he watching for a puff of blue smoke!

Apparently he is offsetting the cost by the sale of some rather desirable items. As usual his layout worked flawlessly and some other members tried out locos on his lengthy track.

Our group is now a very cohesive and friendly group so the social side of proceedings was well catered for around the afternoon tea table.

I noticed Bob Cuffe with a couple of new book purchases, Denis Lane keeping everyone cheery, Graham Emery telling us about some new purchases that we will hear more of in the future, Ross Evans handing out some surplus magazines and being the doyen of knowledge about US prototype.

Thanks go to Bob Brown for having us all there and for being our congenial host.

The Toowoomba Show and the Display Layout

The Toowoomba Show as usual was a beauty. We took our display layout along and this time, after some soul searching, we have decided to make major changes and finish it before showing it again. On the Saturday night after the dinner, we were invited around to Mark Ward's layout. Graham Emery was heard to mutter after being stunned by its brilliance, 'I'm going home to cry myself to sleep!'

Once again the NMRA presented a trophy to what we judged as the best layout in the show. This year the British layouts did particularly well. The beautifully executed Lydcombe Vale won the competition and you

will read more about that in Mainline.

As always the traders there provided some new merchandise and as usual I came away thinking, 'Why didn't I buy that ???' Our table full of geniuses won first prize at the dinner for the RR Trivia and that gave us some joy. Since the Show there has been a lot of discussion and action about how to make setting up and dismantling more efficient. We also believe that having presented the layout in an unfinished condition for two shows, it must be in a finished condition before it is shown again.

Comment

How often have you heard someone say, 'I don't know much about art, but I know what I like'. Perhaps they are quite able to choose art works of reasonable merit but haven't analysed why. Have a look at your grandchildren's Beatrix Potter books. Now you must be saying, 'He's *really* lost it this time'.

Did you know that those delightful scenes in the Peter Rabbit stories are very accurate illustrations that Beatrix Potter did by looking out of the windows of 'Hill Farm', her home in the Lakes District of England? What the heck has all of this got to do with model railroading? If you look at those Potter paintings you will see strong representational watercolours that really appeal. You connect with the paintings. Much the same as you may do when you choose paintings to admire or buy in a gallery Why? The same can be said for so much of the best landscape art. You connect with the paintings! I would suggest that your connection is because you had to fill in some of the missing bits yourself. In your mind you joined the artist, even if it was the great Turner, Constable or, closer to home, Streeton, Roberts, etc. and painted in the bits they didn't. A road disappears over a hill, your mind says it leads to a broader world. A stream disappears behind some trees and you imagine it with a watermill. Your eyes have been transported to things that don't appear within the frame of the painting. Thus the picture becomes much bigger than itself! Because of your involvement you are in the painting on the canvas but unseen.

Now imagine if the painter told you everything that was in the picture- he drew the lot. There is now nothing for you to discover and the painting is less exciting and you mightn't even give it a second glance. Where is all of this leading us?

Well in your railroads, why give the whole story? Have your visitors become involved in your railroad just the same as you did looking at a great painting or a great Ansell Adam's photograph. Your visitors don't even have to pick up a paint brush or a plastering trowel. Naturally they are going to remember your railroad because they built part of it in their minds, that is those bits you didn't or those bits that connect various elements. If you have a road going over a bridge it doesn't have to lead to a farmhouse or anything in

particular. It can seem to. A stream doesn't have to lead all the way under that beautiful bridge you built. It need only give the impression that it does. In fact the base of the bridge may be hidden by other scenic elements.

By doing your scenery this way you will give a much stronger indication that the elements in your world are right and that your trains are running through much more territory than is actually there. Your trains are running through what can be seen and also the parts that aren't even there. Besides, you save yourself a lot of physical building.

Then there is another great advantage. It is much easier to put some perspective into your scenery so that the distance from the front facia to the backdrop is greatly extended.

Now go back and look at some good landscape paintings in a gallery, in a book or on the web. In Sir Arthur Streeton's 'The Purple Noon's Transparent Might' you see the Hawkesbury River stretching into the distance then it ends abruptly. But its path is 'suggested' by the line of trees going to the left and then there is another faint appearance of the river then more suggestion to the left. David Davies' 'Evening, Templestowe' shows a dirt road going through a fence. The farmhouse on the right must be accessed by that road even though it is not drawn right to the front door. Similarly Walter Withers' painting 'A Bright Winter's Morning' has a road going to the upper left. The town in the upper middle distance is assumed to be connected to this road but the painting doesn't show it. These three examples are Australian works that illustrate what I have been trying to say. America with its great tradition of realistic painting has many similar examples. Get down to your local library and grab a comfortable chair then go through a dozen or so books from the art section and you will see what this is all about. See how they extend the scope of the painting? And if you are into scenery or thinking about starting some on your layout, you will save yourself much angst by an easy learning experience from these books. You will also find several American art books depicting realistic landscape paintings with great ideas that you can apply to your railroad. And just a zany note to finish off, what I have been saying is a little like looking at a beautiful woman, clothed, and allowing your imagination to guess how she looks nude. And that might well be better than the reality!

2008 Convention

We haven't forgotten the Convention and we have some ideas on paper. As we progress we will keep you informed on developments. At the moment the committee is 'labouring' trying out restaurants to find a suitable one for the convention dinner. So far no stomach problems have been reported but I hope that by the time we find a place our bank books won't be too depleted.

Some Observations in the West

As mentioned earlier I visited the Perth Train Show. This was my second visit to the show and I was agreeably surprised at the scope and size of it this year compared to the earlier visit.

There are a lot of modellers in the west modelling W.A. railways. This has been helped by the availability of a lot of locally made, low volume bits and pieces suitable for the western prototypes. Also W.A. railways are modelled in all scales from 'N' to 'G' scale. In the west, people use a lot of initiative in all sorts of pursuits. Being so far from the populace eastern states engenders practices not known in the east. For example, bulk buying is common to minimise cartage. Also Perth is much closer to Asia than we are and there is a lot of trading from that area. The traders at the Show had quite a bit of merchandise that we never see in the east and much of it was very low priced. Some traders had enormous stacks of well known locomotive brands but at about one third to one half of the price they are sold at here. The rationale seems to be sell at the Show cheaply to get as many new modellers as possible and then have them as customers for years. In fact I went into one hobby shop a week before the Show and was almost dissuaded from buying, being told that all of the things I wanted would be about half price during the Show! No wonder that AMRA in that state has nearly 500 mostly active members and owns its own premises. The verbal assistance and advice given by people manning railroads and shops was one department that really outshone what we have come to expect here. I made a casual enquiry about signals and in half an hour received excellent advice and a very enlightened lesson on what signals mean. Up to then I thought I was reasonably well informed but I came away really excited about signals. And that sort of thing happened all day. I spend about 3 or 4 hours at the Brisbane Show but I was at this one all day. Not all of this was in among the exhibits as I spent an interesting hour over lunch talking to someone I'd never met before giving me loads of information about British Railways. A cup of coffee latter in their alfresco eating area gave me another interesting hour with an expert on the Rock Island. The Show is held in June at the Claremont Show Grounds and for their long weekend, the suburban trains stop at the Showgrounds station for the convenience of Show attendees.

Feedback Needed

While I was in the North. I asked Bert Toogood how we could better service NMRA members a long way from the southeast populous area. Bert said that although he couldn't get to our gatherings he was happy with the contacts he did make. He did suggest though that we could publish a list of inexpensive and clean motels and accommodation near the Exhibition Grounds before the May AMRA Train Show. This

would encourage some country members to come down.

I'm sure Glenn would welcome any other suggestions that country members might make on this topic.

Lyncombe Vale wins the Annual NMRA Award



The winner of the NMRA Award for the Best Modeller's Layout at the 2007 Toowoomba Model Train Exhibition (TMTEX) is "Lyncombe Vale", an OO Scale freelance layout displayed by John and Lynne Pavitt, and is well known to SE Queensland modellers. The award was presented by Glenn Stevens, the NMRA Division 1 (QLD) Superintendent at the Annual TMTEX Dinner on 16th of June. This is the second time "Lyncombe Vale" has won the Award, being a previous winner in 2005.



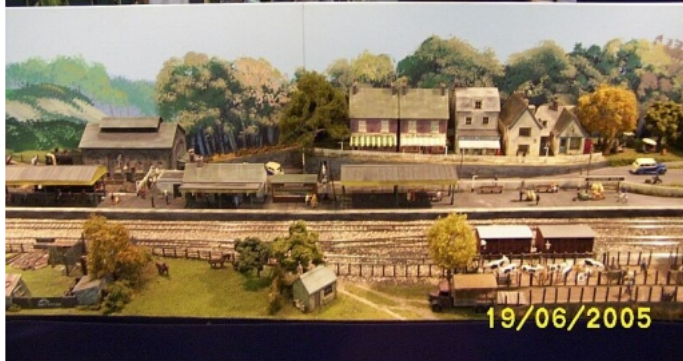
Glenn Stevens with John & Lynn Pavitt

The layout focuses on the very northern tip of the Somerset & Dorset Railway about two miles from Bath, capturing the impression and feel of the S&D during the



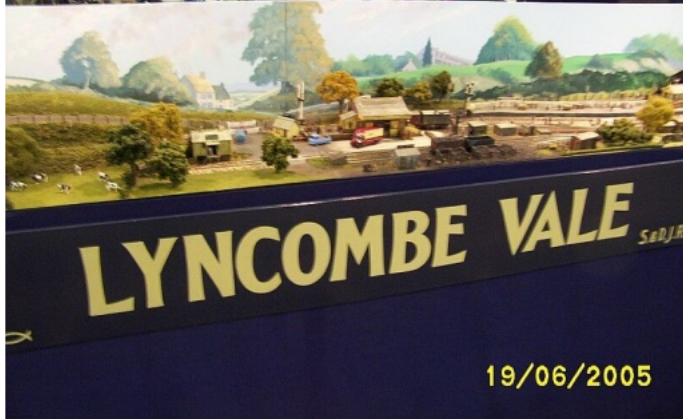
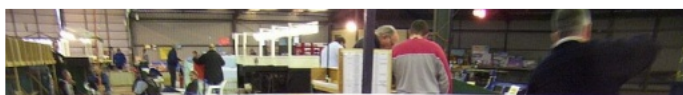
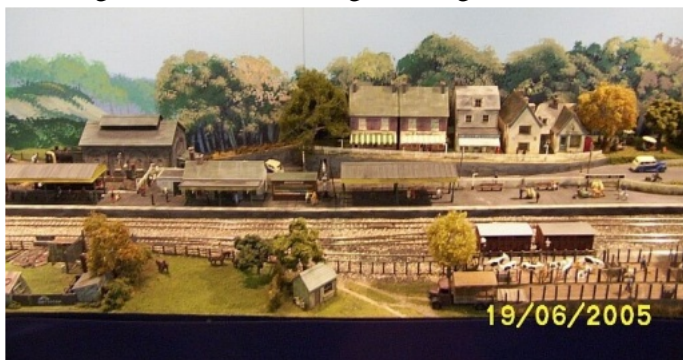
Centre Photo
Milwaukee Road 10-Wheeler
On Graham Bakers 'Lines West' Layout
Photo by Kelly Loyd





last 20 years of steam before the closure of the line in March 1966.

The busy single line emerges from Devonshire Tunnel, crossing Watery Bottom Viaduct to the proposed but never built station of "Lyncombe Vale". The single platform station and sidings reflect the increasing population and trade of the area, with cattle dock, goods shed, and coal and timber merchants. There is a single road engine shed for servicing shunting locos.



The Runners Up for the 2007 Award were:

2nd "Caintode Flats" – an HOn3 layout depicting QR in the 1960's.

Equal 3rd

"Fairfield" – an HO layout depicting a present day Brisbane suburban station, and

"Moelfryn" - a 009 mm layout depicting a Welsh tramway the early 1960's.

History of The Award

The Darling Downs Model Railway Club is a 100% NMRA club based in Toowoomba, and holds a two day model railway exhibition every June on the weekend after the Queen's birthday long weekend. Historically they had presented a trophy for the most popular layout as judged by public voting, however because the most popular layout is not necessarily the best model layout, the NMRA, through Division 1, have sponsored a trophy for the best layout as judged by railway modellers, to be presented annually at the TRAINS Exhibition.

A perpetual shield has been donated to the DDMRC to be displayed in their clubrooms, and the annual winning layout is presented with a small plaque that can be fixed to the layout.

The judging is conducted in two phases. An initial screening of the layouts on display is individually conducted by representatives from both the NMRA and DDMRC. This screening is by personal preference, with each representative submitting a list of six layouts for consideration.

The results of the screening are then aggregated, with the six layouts achieving the most 'votes' subject to formal judging. The formal judging is conducted by two Division 1 members, using the NMRA Achievement Program guidelines published for the Master Builder Scenery Award.

Previous winners of the Award have been:

2000 – "Caintode Flats".

2001 – "Ravenstor" – an N Scale layout depicting BR in the 1960's.

2002 – "Forest Hill" - an HOn3 layout depicting QR in 1965.

2003 – "Moelfryn".

2004 – "Beauraba Siding" - a OO layout based on QR practice

2005 – "Lyncombe Vale"

2006 – "Mt Mee Tramway" – a free-lance layout in On30.



Bill Dunns Layout (QLD) - Shell Fuel Depot

Division 3 Victoria

By Rod Hutchinson

June

The June meeting was held on Sunday 17 at your correspondant and wife Julie's home in Mooroolbark, east of Melbourne. 14 modellers and partners arrived on a very cold day. Hot pumpkin soup was on offer, plus the usual fare, followed by baked cheese cake and apple crumble.

Models on display

Laurie Green has been clearing out his 1/2" pieces, and presented three background structures and a set of figures. Grant McAdam has a bout of self flagellation, assembling 1/4" scale paper flowers from SDK Miniatures. His work is exquisite, and I assume time consuming.



1/4" Scale Flowers by Grant McAdam

John Dennis brought along a scratchbuilt On30 Stannary Hills bogie wagon. John Franklin presented some HOn30 USA box cars.



On30 Stannary Hills bogie wagon by John Dennis



John Franklin's Chinese Class 22 Sleeper Car

Reading matter

Grant McAdam; Timber Times, Narrow Gauge and Industrial Railway Modelling Review, Narrow Gauge News and a book the "Australian Riverboats; a Pictorial History" by P. Cristopher. Andrew Davenport presented some books on the Canadian Pacific Railway, and Robert Powell brought along some UK model railway magazines.

Grant thanked Rod and Julie for opening up their home presenting them with their thank-you plaque, after which attendees helped Rod to carry in some kitchen appliances bought that morning for which he was immensely grateful.

July

The July meeting was held on Sunday 15 at the home of Paul Dundas, not far from Wright Halt on the Puffing Billy Railway. Wright Halt has an excellent rail crossing with a replica VR wooden cattle grid. Paul has dabbled in HOn30 and On30, and loves to build model buildings in both scales. 16 Modellers ventured into cool weather, but the worst of the rain kept away.

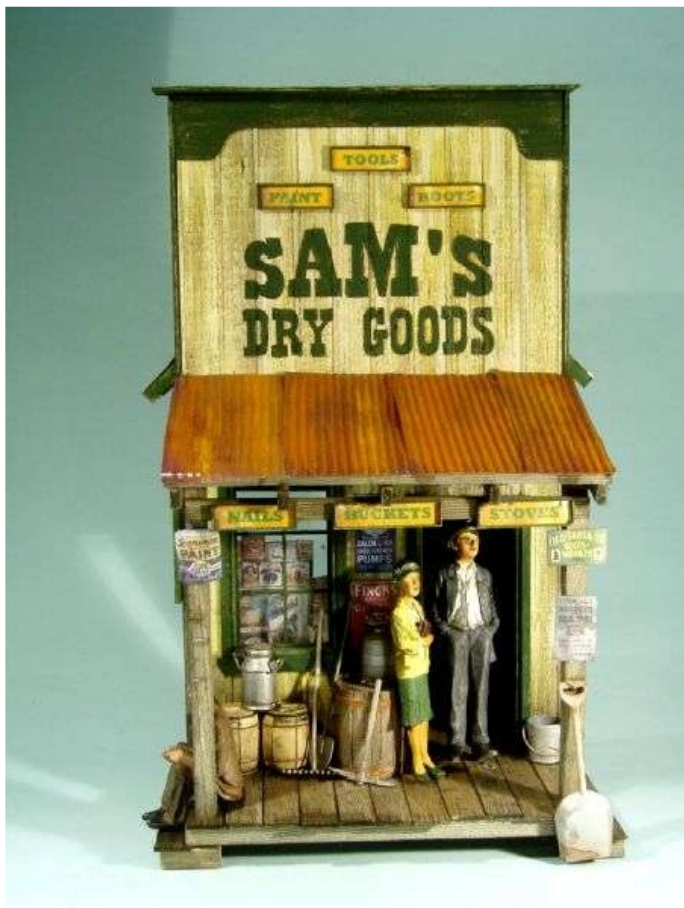
Models on display

Grant McAdam presented some 1/4" scale dolls house furniture; South Australian Railways was popular in HO with John Cracknell showing off his latest Trainorama SAR 930 class diesel, and Peter MacDonald demonstrating his metal kit building skills with an SAR 710 class steamer.



Grant McAdam's 1/4" Scale Furniture

Peter also brought along a pilot model of the VR J class tender; both metal kits are produced by Broad Gauge Models. Michael Holian is mixing gauges, this time with a weathered On30 camp car, and a pristine HO Southern Pacific G54 and tender; while John Franklin showed off a pristine model of a Chinese Class 22 sleeper car; all three items were by Bachmann. Nita Powell presented a 1/24 scale Bedford bus.



Laurie Green's background 1/2" scale structures



Reading matter

There was a large collection of reading matter including some items for sale. The region is very

well supported with members subscribing to a range of magazines, providing a great resource to local modellers.

Grant led a short formal meeting which included the promotion of a Light Railway Research Society of Australia guided walk to Mt Cole in Western Victoria, which is scheduled for late November. Grant thanked Paul for giving up his home, and presented him with his NMRA thankyou plaque.

Division 4 Western Australia By Frank Godde

Frank raised the current proposed changes to the Australian Region executive and advised that he indicated to Gerry Hopkins that WA wants him to continue in his current role in the Achievement Program and Website controller.

The NMRA's role in the litigation over Sound and DCC in USA was also discussed. Some members were concerned that such litigation should not necessarily be the function of the NMRA and that industry may ask for the return of funds provided to support the litigation. There was however more concern over the action taken by the initial litigant and the long-term effect their claim could have on the future innovations in sound and DCC in the hobby including an increase in costs to modelers should DCC be monopolised by one company.

The meeting agreed that Frank would develop a schedule for monthly meetings of the WA Division, with every second meeting including a workshop on modeling techniques. Each meeting would include the running of trains on the host's layout. He distributed the AR badges to attending members.



Frank Godde demonstrating simple structure building

Jim Anderson brought his framed Golden Spike award and thanked Frank and Phil Knife for the opportunity to be part of the Achievement Program.

This was the first time he was able to attend a meeting since the award was achieved. He also offered some quarter ounce lead weights for those members modeling in scales larger than N.

Frank Godde has now achieved certificates for Civil Engineering and Rolling Stock and is working on Electrical Engineering and Motive Power.

Frank Godde and Alan Perry brought materials to develop scenery on layouts. Frank demonstrated a simple storage shed with a double door in N, HO and O scales made from card. He had further developed the O scale shed with opening doors, internal furniture and equipment and external junk on an MDF base. The shed walls were detailed with broken plaster, underlying brickwork and shingle roof. Supplies of card, styrene, foam, MDF and timber were available for members to make an open machinery shed in their own scale to a template pattern. Frank also provided a large number of plaster castings of barrels, drums, boxes, rope, tyres in various sizes that are suitable for painting and locating on layouts to add detail to them. Members eagerly took these.



Jim Anderson demonstrating the Coffman 'Right Clamp'

Les Hodgson's wife showed a self-healing, grid marked cutting board, clear plastic guides and roller cutters that she uses in her craftwork that simplify cutting strips and patterns in card. They are available from Spotlight.

Frank demonstrated using veneer recovered from old furniture cut into strips to make distressed wood weatherboards, corrugated card separated in water for material to simulate corrugated iron, discussed various methods to make corrugated iron in different scales from aluminium foil, a small hand plane for sizing scale timber for model construction, and the all important scale rule for model railways.

Jim Anderson demonstrated the use of the Coffman 'Right Clamp' for fixing right angle walls on small buildings during construction and small surgical needle holders for clamping thin materials for gluing. The clamps were used on one corner of two of the sheds to

hold them square while the glue dried.

Peter Scarfe and Allan Perry were well on the way to completing their sheds and will bring the final product to the next meeting. Jim will make an N scale machinery shed for that meeting.

The workshop was very successful and welcomed by all at the meeting.

Division 6

South Australia

By Ron Solly

The June meeting of 16 members & visitors was held by Bob and Bev Bevan at their home on a pleasant winters day.

No raffle this month and hopefully we will have an item available in October to be drawn at the December BBQ. Suggestions were requested for raffle prizes of any type, not just Hobby Shop certificates.

The MainLine magazine of Winter 2007 is available from the Internet and the hard copy cannot be far away as some were printed for the NSW meeting in early June.

What would you, as a member, like the NMRA to provide or assist in developing the hobby?

What would you like to hear or see about modelling, etc at our local meetings?

Any ideas to be advised to either me, Ray, Geoff or Al.

Planned dates for next year's 2008 meetings are Feb 2, April 5, June 14, Aug 23, Oct 11, Dec 6 - we do have some time but would like them confirmed with hosts by the October 6 meeting. This allows time for the information to be added to the national schedule of meetings in the Mainline and on the Internet pages. If you want to put your name down, please advise me.

Something to think about - April 2008 will see elections for the Region Committee and Division Superintendents and, as I do not intend to stand again after 4 years in the seat, you may wish to consider if you want to take on this role as the Division Super'. Two terms will help towards your AP certificate.

Achievement Program; Ray asked if members had areas of the AP that they had done, so as to judge for any of the programmes.

A small discussion about the DCC problem arising in USA.

Approximate dates for various conventions over the next 3 years that we as NMRA members may be concerned with was advised.

Nibbles, refreshments, general chit-chat and having a look at the host's layout slowly developing filled in the rest of the afternoon.

Division 7 New South Wales

By John Montgomery

May Meeting

On a beautiful sunny autumn morning we headed to the residence of John and Toni Saxon which is situated on the banks of Brisbane Waters. Before the meeting started John and Toni provided the early arrivals with a sausage sizzle lunch. It was very pleasant to sit back with such a wonderful view and good company to enjoy our lunch.



SJ Tower on John Saxon's layout

Prior to the main meeting, the President, Sowerby Smith, conducted the AGM. He provided a report on the previous 12 month's activities and the current status of the Association. Sowerby also provided a financial report on behalf of Erik Bennett who is presently overseas. Copies of both of these reports were available for the members to take with them. Copies of the reports will also be mailed to all members in other Divisions.

The main meeting consisted of a report on the venue (Waterview Restaurant at Berowra) for the Christmas



Coal Mine on John Saxon's Cedar Valley Short Lines

party which was well received. An announcement was made on the upcoming convention in October at Blue Mountains Grammar School in Wentworth Falls. Registration forms will be available within the next couple of weeks. Gerry Hopkins spoke about the June meeting which is a workshop at Dence Park in Epping. This workshop is predominantly a soldering workshop.

Sowerby Smith thanked the members for supporting the auction for the disposal of Ian Hopkins' estate and a big thank you went to Peter Bone for donating the estate to the NMRA. Sowerby Smith awarded two President's Awards to John Baker and John Montgomery for helping with the sale/auction. Sowerby also thanked all the other members who assisted on the day of the auction.



Church scene on John Saxon's Cedar Valley Short Lines

Since last we visited John and Toni the layout has enjoyed a bit of an update and has some new mini scenes. These were well designed and added some extra interest to an already well constructed and scened layout.



Zeke's Emporium by Kelly Loyd and the Rusty Spike award

Kelly Loyd displayed a model he built for the Narrow Gauge Convention based on information seen in some

of the DVDs found in our library. He also displayed a very nice diesel locomotive he had constructed from a kit and some points he had scratch built. Kelly has been getting assistance from Gerry Hopkins and some of the Gosford members to improve his building skills.



Diesel Loco by Kelly Loyd

I would like to thank Toni and the other ladies who assisted in the provision of afternoon tea. As usual it was very delicious and appreciated by all.

June Meeting

This month we experimented by running an all day clinic on soldering and handmaking points. The meeting/clinic was held at Dence Park in Epping. Gerry Hopkins was ably assisted by Kelly Loyd and John Parker in presenting the clinic. Approximately 15 members attended the clinic and took up the challenge of "dispelling the myths of the black art of soldering".

All members who participated in the clinic enjoyed the experience of learning a new skill to use in their modeling ventures.

The meeting was held during the course of the clinic but was abbreviated to allow the continuance of the clinic. Not many other members attended the meeting due to the inclement weather.

The members that attended were reminded of the upcoming Convention in October and the Christmas party in December. The members were advised that



Graham Baker's City Scene

registration forms for the Convention are now available as are tickets for the Christmas party.

July Meeting

The July meeting was held at Graham Baker and Jenny Rainbow's home in Kings Langley. Around 68 members braved the cold winter's day to attend the meeting. This included a large number of wives who attended to support their spouses and the Association.



Graham Baker's 'Lines West' Layout

Graham's layout was nearing completion with most of the scenery and buildings in place. His layout is an HO suburban/industrial layout with lots of opportunities for switching. The layout ran flawlessly all afternoon. Graham was ably assisted in running the layout by Gerry Hopkins and Robert Shoemith. The city backdrops that Graham has used has a George Sellios influence and complimented the urban scenery that he has constructed. The business section of the meeting was mostly used to promote the upcoming convention in October and the Christmas party in December. During the course of the meeting mention was made of the clinic in June at Dence park where clinicians hand-built points. As this was a very successful day it is proposed to run more clinics in the future.



More city scenery on Graham Baker's layout

The day finished with a wonderful afternoon tea supplied by Jenny with the help of some of the wives. Our thanks go to Graham and Jenny for being such great hosts for the meeting.

Caveat Emptor

(Let the Buyer beware)

By David Latham

Another eBay story. Not the first and definitely not the last.



Figure 1: eBay Auction photo

A couple of months ago I was browsing eBay for HO scale rolling stock, not looking for anything in particular but maybe something interesting that might come in handy some day soon. (We all know what I'm saying). One item that screamed attention was an ATSF switcher, custom painted no less. The picture wasn't really clear (fig. 1) but I thought, if it is custom painted and decaled, it couldn't be too bad. One caveat mentioned – it didn't run. Well if I couldn't resurrect it, at least I could keep it in the display cabinet.

The model was a Walthers H-10-44 released several years ago. Before I bid on the auction, I did my homework on the model and the prototype. A couple of forums had given praise to the model – solid open frame Roco motor, runs smoothly, pulls really well. Another forum described a DCC conversion that wasn't unrealistic. A study of the 'Santa Fe Diesels' by Cynthia Priest revealed that the Santa Fe did in fact own 3 of this type of loco and also 40-odd H-12-44 locos which were similar in appearance but had a more powerful motor.

I was keen to go. The auction ended with success and the loco arrived several days later. Imagine my surprise when I opened the package to find the loco not quite looking the way I had anticipated. There were no window inserts, no stirrups, no footboards, no couplers, no light or light rods and the decals looked odd. (Later I found that two power pickups were also missing!)

OK, start with the basics and find the running problem. Get that organised and the rest is just superficial fixing. The model didn't run because the open-frame motor was clogged full of ballast! Whoever

had run it had used an iron-based ballast which had worked its way up from the track, through the drivetrain and into the chassis. Disassemble the chassis (plenty of weight here, no wonder the loco could pull so well) and motor assembly, clear the ballast, lube the gearboxes and drivetrain, fabricate two new power pickups that were missing, connect to DC and away she went. You bewdy!!

Before I went to the expense and time to convert to DCC, I went back to the peculiar (to me) look of the paint and decals. As my modelling has matured over the years I have become more exacting in my paint and decal work. I spent several hours pouring over the ATSF diesel book to find errors in decal placement and looking for quick fixes. The paint job was satisfactory but it had been applied directly over the old Pennsy paint scheme so the old words and numbers were obvious in certain light. To make matters worse, the chevrons had been applied as individual stripes rather than the one-piece designs made by Microscale, resulting in stripes of various widths and varying angles. The final nail in the paint-shop coffin – I realised from the book that the stripes should have been white, not silver. A complete strip down was the only solution. I



Figure 2: After stripping the paint

used Polly scale 'Lift Off' sparingly and a scalpel blade to remove decals and about three layers of paint. (Fig. 2)

I drilled holes for the grab irons (which weren't part of the Walthers design) and made the window panes, exhaust extensions and footboards. The ATSF zebra paint scheme couldn't be easier - black gloss (gloss for decal application) all over. I used Badger acrylic paint and I am impressed with its coverage and finish. The white chevron set, silver numbers and pin stripes were applied (the loco is now an H-12-44) as per the photos in the diesel book and a final layer of Dullcote to finish off. Kadee #5 couplers were prepared (their screws hold the frame to the body) and I was ready for the DCC conversion.

Adding the decoder wasn't as difficult as I had

feared. It always looks hard in the older pre-DCC locos but follow the rules and all is well. The power is fed to the motor from all wheels via the chassis. I isolated the motor frame from the chassis as a precaution against shorts and trimmed the Walthers power board such that the decoder wires only fed power where it was intended.

I chose an NCE N14SR decoder to fit into the small space in the chassis. This is an N scale decoder with high power rating, suitable for HO scale. The Walthers light boards were missing but weren't necessary as I used daylight LEDs (and resistors) suspended by their leads from a perf-board strip (Fig. 3) and directed at the openings in the loco body into which I had cemented clear styrene.

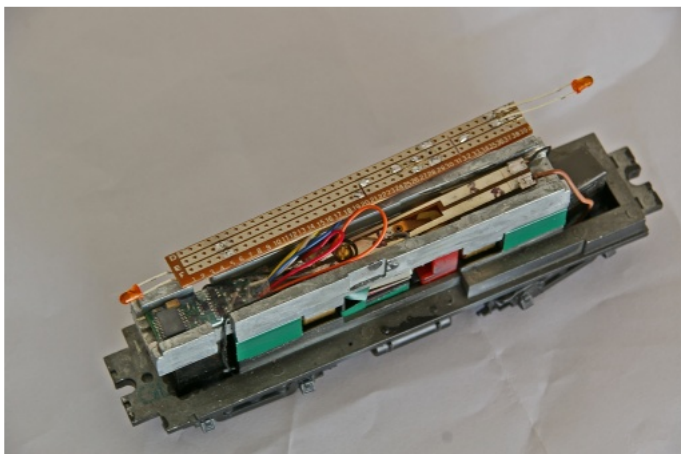


Figure 3: Decoder installation

After tuning the decoder on the programming track, I attached the body to the chassis using the Kadee screws and put the 'new' switcher to work on the railroad. All that is necessary now is to add sunshades and weathering. What had started as quick purchase with intentions of an easy repair had turned into another extended modelling effort but I can say I have an interesting and uncommon loco model (Fig. 4).

Would I do it again? Too right I would! Would I shy away from possible disasters? Why? What would this hobby be without the occasional hiccup and challenge to improve your modelling skills?



The finished product!

Meet the Member

Les Hodgson

Division 4 - WA

By Frank Godde

And so Les applied a few more reeds to the side of the river bank to enhance the overall appearance of the area. For it wasn't that long ago that his whole layout had no scenery at all.



"I just don't know how to go about it" Les said. And for so many modelers, that is the problem and you hear that sort of comment quite often.

Now the WA branch of NMRA have bi monthly meetings at a different person's home each time and with the influx of new members comes all sorts of suggestions and ideas. But, of course, it is your layout and you can take on board only the suggestions that suit you and your layout. Frank spent six hours showing how to get started with the basic scenery ideas and from there Les has been steadily moving forward under his own power.



Being a farm boy in New Zealand, Les went looking for a job in the city and finished up working for New Zealand railways at the engine shed where the steamers

were housed. He started as an engine cleaner, moving up the ranks to then be a hustler (with those early morning starts). It didn't take long for the love of railroading to get into his blood and a long life partnership was born. Further into his career, he obtained a boiler ticket and then a fireman's ticket. Life must have been quite pleasant.... and dirty too!!! It takes seven years to achieve a driver's ticket for the New Zealand railways, which Les did, and that brings our story to 1976.



Mt Newman Mining Company were advertising for drivers for the ore trains in the North West of Western Australia. Les applied and soon found himself and wife Joan, living in Port Hedland, where he worked for 13 years. Then he came to the Perth metro area, and worked at several different jobs away from railways, but once it's in your blood, it's hard to stay away from the trains, so then he went back to the railways and drove trains between Northam and Esperance in the South West of WA.



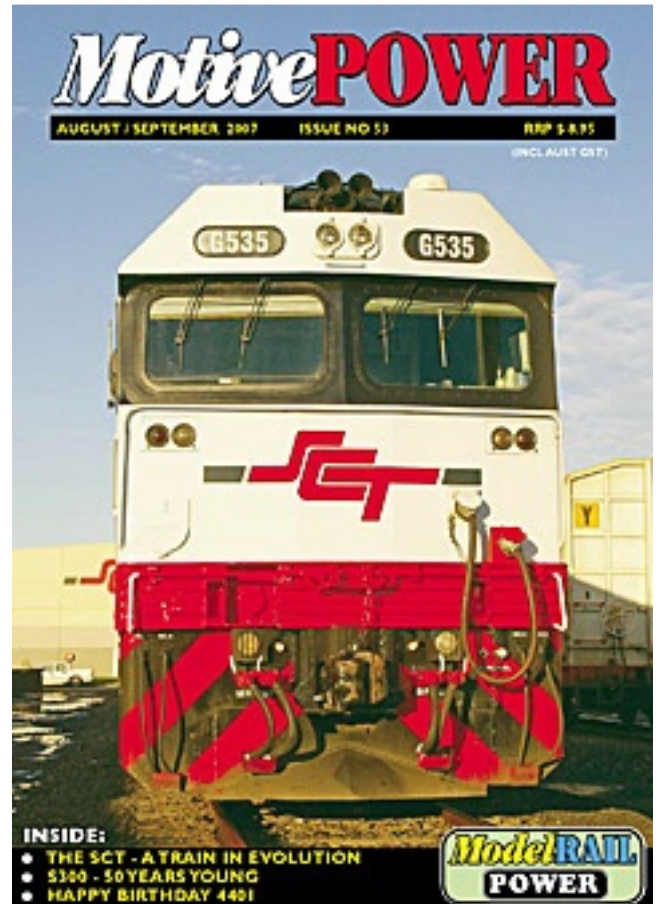
The name of Les' layout is "The 5501" as this was the number of the locomotive which he was "passed out" on. This means that he required no more supervision and was a competent driver--- Les had obtained his ultimate goal!!



Les models mainly steam trains and has a hankering for the Southern Pacific line in HO scale. His layout is housed in a 30'x25' shed with the layout taking up about 1/3 of the shed. I asked what it was about Southern Pacific that interested him, and he replied that they were similar to the steam trains in New Zealand where his love of trains first started.

Les and his layout continue to grow and with time and maybe some more help from some of the NMRA members I'm sure we will see a layout that he will be proud of in the not too distant future.

Check out Motive Power, available at your newsagent or favourite hobby shop!



Peter MacDonald's HO Scale SAR710

2007 Rod Hutchingson Photo

Division 9 and 3/4 Handy Hints

By Gerry Hopkins MMR

Over the past few months I have installed Tsunami Sound Decoders in a number of brass locos and some of the DJH kit locos. The more I do the more convinced I become that brass locos are made for display cabinets!

Here are a few notes that might help you when adding decoders to your brass locos.



This beautiful loco is a model of the Victorian S class. It was sold as a made up and painted unit by Steam Era Models from a kit by DJH. On first examination it looked good, pickups on all drivers but no pickups from the tender. Of the 6 pickups only 2 (one on each side) actually worked. The loco had been in the box for so long the solder on 4 of the pickups had broken down causing dry joints – only a few minutes to fix.

The tender was not designed to be opened after the paint job so I had to cut a rectangular hole in the bottom to allow the decoder to be placed inside. A new floor was made to carry the speaker – with holes for the sound. While I was there I added pickups to 8 of the 12 tender wheels.

The headlight was just a painted casting in the nose – 3mm hole and the addition of a Golden White LED makes a difference.



Another DJH kit is this 32 Class. Again I added extra pickups to all the wheels. The speaker is in the tender with the decoder. The new Tsunami 750 is smaller and

will be used in this type of installation in the future. I am informed by the “experts” that the K27 chip has the correct whistle for these locos.

I am showing this loco because it has a Portescap [Ed. Portescap motors web site: <http://www.portescap.com/>] motor and helical gears instead of a worm gear. This means that you can push the loco and it will roll! Nerve racking when descending a 2% grade with 14 cars – close the throttle and it keeps moving until it gets to the bottom.

This next loco is a quality brass loco. It has a wheel arrangement of 2-8-0. The normal pickup method for brass locos is that the right side is picked up by the loco and the left side by the tender. This one was OK with the tender but only one driving wheel on the loco. The discolouration on the one driver showed that it had been like this for some time.



In the past someone had used the wrong oil for the wheel bearings and they were corroded, hence no pickup. To strip and clean these would be a major job so I just added extra wipers. I also added wipers to the non pickup wheels on the tender. Never too many pickups! I drilled a 1mm hole through the headlight casting and used a fibre optic for the headlight. You can just see it before painting in this photo.



Not to show any bias toward the GN, here is a Southern Pacific AC-7 Cab Forward, the sound decoder for this has the unique sounding air pumps. They are just great!

The owner had repainted, lettered and weathered this loco. I again drilled the headlight casting and inserted a 3mm GW LED. There was plenty of room in the boiler for the decoder and the speaker (with its custom built enclosure). This loco has done plenty of running so no modifications were required – except the second axle on the lead truck was under gauge causing the odd derailment – an easy fix.



This next loco was “fun to run” once the decoder was installed. As with the cab forward, the decoder and speaker were installed in the boiler. The 1.5v Micro Lamp was already fitted, I just had to add the 680 ohm resistor. This loco is fitted with rare gearboxes. There is a rocker arm that moves in the gearbox when you change direction. This allows the loco to coast when descending a hill – no brakes!



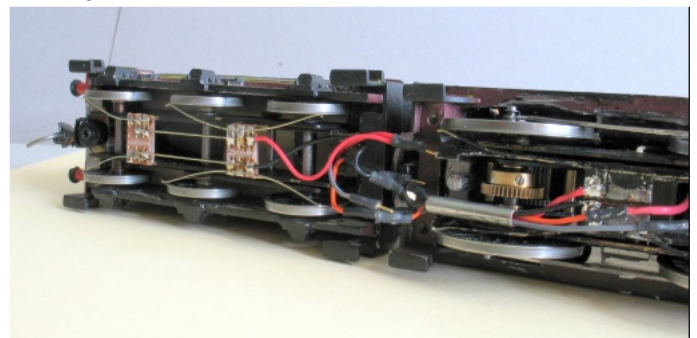
The next loco is this magnificent GN S2, my favourite loco. Well, once I stopped drooling and got to work. The headlight was wired to – nowhere. The leads came back down the inside of the boiler and were taped inside. Similarly the tender light, it came out the front of the tender, had a little 2 pin plug and was taped to the front of the tender – nowhere to plug it in. The decoder and the speaker are in the tender, extra pickups on the tender and it now works well.

Now for something a little different. This loco is a very popular British prototype, it is in OO scale (4mm = 1 ft) and has P4 wheels standards. Normal OO scale runs on 16.5 mm track (same as HO) which is 4'1.5". The Proto 4 runs on correct track gauge of 18.83mm. I



had to hand lay 6 feet of track to set this one up – I only had to set up, the owner had done the install.

You can see the fine wheels and the pickup arrangement. This loco also had a Portescap motor with bevel gears.



One loco that I worked on out-pulled all the others. It was quite a bit lighter than some but all its drivers (2-8-8-2) had very light springs above the axle boxes. These did more for its pulling power than adding extra weight. These light springs are available from NWSL if you ever need extra pulling power.

Programming these locos is straight forward as I use Decoder Pro and can save all the settings for future reference. The top speed is set for 30 smph on all locos which makes for easy consisting in the future.

There are many ways to install a decoder, just use your imagination. Of course there are no right or wrong ways of doing it – just the way that gives you, the operator, a satisfying result.

Half the fun is just driving these locos on the front of train, I set the deceleration (CV4) high so the loco coasts when you turn the throttle back then use the brake (F7, as on the QSI locos) to bring the loco to a stop.

Because of the technology used today, you can have a lot of easy fun with the locos. Many are coming off the shelves and onto layouts – it's a great hobby.



Passing of Fred Gill GMMR



Long term members will remember Fred who passed away on 1 August after many years of poor health aged just 79 years.

Fred was one of the small group that got together in the early eighties to successfully petition the NMRA in the United States to again organise the NMRA in Australia and New Zealand. He went on to serve in many roles as Vice President, MainLine editor, Achievement Program chair and Contest chair. Later he continued his service to the hobby with other local model railway organisations and continued to act as a mentor to many budding model railroaders.

Fred was a superlative scratchbuilder in HOn3 with his Diamond Valley Lines being featured in many model railway magazines, the Walther's catalogs over several years and even on local television. He was awarded his MMR in 1992 and was specially honoured with the NMRA's only Grand Master Model Railroader award in 1994.

The region was well represented at Fred's memorial service and our condolences were passed on the Jean, Fred's lovely wife of many years.

--John Saxon MMR HLM

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Alan Duston's SP Layout in New Zealand



Telling Stories - Narrow Gauge Convention 2007