

# MainLine

National Model Railroad Association Inc - Australasian Region

Autumn 2009  
Volume 26 No. 1



Inside this issue

- Problem solving tips for EasyDCC users
- Product Review Smartswitch by ANEmodel
- Shoot it when you see it!

Registered at Australia Post Publication # PP241613/00080





**Australasian Region Directory [www.nmra.org.au](http://www.nmra.org.au) NMRA Inc. PO Box 382, Forestville NSW 2087**

## Board

President	Sowerby Smith	(02) 9411 5726	<a href="mailto:president@nmra.org.au">president@nmra.org.au</a>
Vice President	David Howarth	(02) 9498-4995	<a href="mailto:vicepresident@nmra.org.au">vicepresident@nmra.org.au</a>
Secretary	David Jupp	0416 280 517	<a href="mailto:secretary@nmra.org.au">secretary@nmra.org.au</a>
Treasurer	Erik Bennett	(02) 9997 7971	<a href="mailto:treasurer@nmra.org.au">treasurer@nmra.org.au</a>
Pacific District Director	Peter Jensen	(02) 4990 9855	<a href="mailto:director@nmra.org.au">director@nmra.org.au</a>
Members	Julian Israel		<a href="mailto:julian@nmra.org.au">julian@nmra.org.au</a>
	Bob Williams		
	Ron Seddon		

## Superintendents

Div 1 Qld	Glenn Stevens	(07) 3207 2442	<a href="mailto:div1sup@nmra.org.au">div1sup@nmra.org.au</a>
Div 2 ACT	Jess Brisbane	(02) 6260 6427	<a href="mailto:div2sup@nmra.org.au">div2sup@nmra.org.au</a>
Div 3 Vic/Tas	Grant McAdam	(03) 9578 8685	<a href="mailto:div3sup@nmra.org.au">div3sup@nmra.org.au</a>
Div 4 WA	Frank Godde	(08) 9293 0667	<a href="mailto:div4sup@nmra.org.au">div4sup@nmra.org.au</a>
Div 5 New Zealand	Kelvin Sherson	(04) 234 8577	<a href="mailto:div5sup@nmra.org.au">div5sup@nmra.org.au</a>
Div 6 SA	Al Harris	(08) 8395 6014	<a href="mailto:div6sup@nmra.org.au">div6sup@nmra.org.au</a>
Div 7 NSW	John Montgomery	(02) 9628 9921	<a href="mailto:div7sup@nmra.org.au">div7sup@nmra.org.au</a>
Div 8 Nth Rivers	Ian Phemister	(02) 6658 9871	<a href="mailto:div8sup@nmra.org.au">div8sup@nmra.org.au</a>
Div 9 Mid North Coast	Mike Bartlett	(02) 6553 6227	<a href="mailto:div9sup@nmra.org.au">div9sup@nmra.org.au</a>

## Other Officers

A.P. Chairman	Gerry Hopkins MMR	(02) 4329 0242	<a href="mailto:apchair@nmra.org.au">apchair@nmra.org.au</a>
A.P. Vice Chairman, VIC	Laurie Green MMR	(03) 9744 5188	<a href="mailto:apvicelaurie@nmra.org.au">apvicelaurie@nmra.org.au</a>
A.P. Vice Chairman, SA	Ray Brownbill	(08) 8389 1045	<a href="mailto:wildcreek@activ8.net.au">wildcreek@activ8.net.au</a>
A.P. Vice Chairman, QLD	Graeme Davis	(07) 5463 1475	<a href="mailto:apvicechairqld@nmra.org.au">apvicechairqld@nmra.org.au</a>
A.P. Vice Chairman, WA	Phil Knife MMR	(08) 9459 4506	<a href="mailto:pkni5191@bigpond.net.au">pkni5191@bigpond.net.au</a>
Librarian	Paul Marrant	(02) 4959 6683	<a href="mailto:librarian@nmra.org.au">librarian@nmra.org.au</a>
Contest Chair	Gerry Hopkins MMR	(02) 4329 0242	<a href="mailto:contest@nmra.org.au">contest@nmra.org.au</a>
Public Officer	Rob Peterson	(02) 9871 4157	<a href="mailto:publicofficer@nmra.org.au">publicofficer@nmra.org.au</a>
Editor MainLine	Kelly Loyd	(02) 4956 5793	<a href="mailto:editor@nmra.org.au">editor@nmra.org.au</a>
Web Master	Wayne Eagle	(02) 9627 9892	<a href="mailto:webmaster@nmra.org.au">webmaster@nmra.org.au</a>
Membership	Denise Bennett	(02) 9997 7971	<a href="mailto:membership@nmra.org.au">membership@nmra.org.au</a>
	33 Kanook Avenue	Bayview, NSW 2104	



One of the layouts featured in the 25th Anniversary Convention Layout Tours  
Cedar Valley Lines by John Saxon, MMR, HLM



Official Publication of the  
National Model Railroad Association  
Australasian Region

Registered at Australia Post Publication #  
PP241613/00080

**Editor:** Kelly Loyd

**Proof Reader:** Greg Harper

**Photographers:** Josh Loyd, Gerry  
Hopkins

**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

Winter 2009 - 16/5/09

Spring 2009 - 14/8/09

Summer 2009 - 13/11/09

Autumn 2010 - 05/02/10

The Editor

MainLine

27 Whitehaven Drive

Lakelands NSW 2282

Email: editor@nmra.org.au

Advertising: The NMRA Australasian  
Region welcomes any proposals for  
advertising. All advertising inquiries  
should be directed to the Advertising  
manager (Josh Loyd,  
aspec@internode.on.net). MainLine  
reserves the right to refuse or drop  
advertising for any reason. Advertising in  
MainLine in no way constitutes an  
endorsement by the National Model  
Railroad Association.

NMRA Inc.

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

## Feature Articles

**The Achievement Program.....8**

**Product Review Smartswitch by ANEmodel... 12**

**Warranty – To be or not 2B.....19**

**The Station at Pauline’s Bend..... 20**

**Shoot it when you see it!..... 21**

## Regular Articles

**From The Business Car..... 5**

**Pacific Director's Report..... 6**

**Highball! - Editorial..... 7**

**Region Roundup.....15**

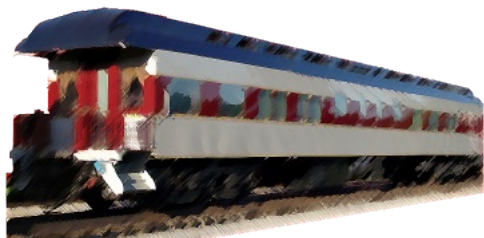
### Photo Credits

**Front cover and Centre Photo**

**Steel Rails by Frank Godde**

**Photos by John Rumming**





## From the Business Car

The Victorian bush fires and the Queensland floods are the current news as I write this. One's heart cannot help but go out to the families affected. I offer condolences to the bereaved and wish all those affected with loss of family, friends, property and pets our sympathy and hope

that recovery is possible and that their lives return to some semblance of normality as quickly as possible. I received from Fred Bock MMR of Division Six (South Texas) of the Lone Star Region, NMRA his best wishes for all the fire victims. Fred, as you might recall, is the co-author of the DVD *Operations 101* that is in every divisional video library.

I hope our members have had a good Christmas break and that they are mostly back to normal. We have an NMRA National election coming up in the next couple of months and you will all be receiving a copy of *Scale Rails* even if you don't subscribe. This is because it contains the voting forms for the positions vacant. The role of President and Vice President are up for election this year and there are a couple of alternative candidates for each position. I urge all our members to exercise their right to vote and carefully consider the positions of both candidates for the role of President. We are in what is called an ABC region; that is Australia, Britain and Canada. We administer, on behalf of Chattanooga, our own memberships and organise all dealings with head office on behalf of our members. We also organise and pay for our own Public Risk Insurance for our events. By doing these tasks we have a reduced cost of membership with the one exception of *Scale Rails* where we pay full rate for all postage. All our members are full members of the NMRA in the USA.

Some of the members who read the January *Scale Rails* have been concerned by the comments made by the President. I have been assured that the position taken was not intended to indicate we, as an ABC country, were thought of as second class members and nor did the current incumbent President intend to cause offence. However, I would urge all members to consider the statements of each candidate for the role and to make their own decision as to who is likely to be more aware and supportive of the ABC regions. We are, incidentally, the only regions that have recorded membership growth in the last few years. So maybe we do something right for our members? I received from Eric Dervinis, who is standing as a candidate for NMRA President, a link to a special web site he has set up in co-operation with his running mate, NMRA Vice President candidate Ray deBlieck, outlining their policies and their extensive experience within the NMRA. The site also has a contact point for questions to be answered.

**<http://www.ericandray.org>** So check out the site. As of this time, I have not received any information from any other candidate. Any further developments will be included in the email newsletters. I urge you to vote and to make it an informed vote and not just a donkey vote. Just stick four 55 cent stamps on your envelope when you return your ballot to the USA and write AIR MAIL on the front. There is no need for a sticker. The postage is \$2.05 if you take it in to the post office. It will be money well spent.

Recent delays in *Scale Rails* delivery have been causing some concern to the members affected. Due to a combination of our bank, the NAB, messing up the name change on a credit card and failing to expedite a limit increase combined with Chattanooga not recognising membership or subscriptions until they receive the money has caused these delays. I have escalated the problem to the National Board and it is an agenda item at the next National Board of Directors meeting in the USA this February. Hopefully we can sort out this procedural problem that the administration has caused and prevent these delays from occurring in the future. All missing *Scale Rails* magazines will be delivered as soon as possible.

Sowerby Smith  
President NMRA Australasian Region

PS. Don't forget to book your place for the October Convention and save \$10.00 for early registration.



# Pacific Director's Report

By Peter Jensen

The mid-year Board of Directors meeting has been delayed until late February this year. This is as a result of changing the organisation's financial year to the calendar year. Financial issues will be at the forefront of the upcoming meeting, as outlined by the National President in *Scale Rails*. Model railways are not immune from the global financial crisis we keep hearing about. There will be time to discuss these issues after the meeting.



The Hartford convention is on track for the 4th of July. This looks like it will be another great convention. If you are planning on attending, please send me an email ([jenso@bigpond.net.au](mailto:jenso@bigpond.net.au)). There will be an informal get together for all Australasian Region members on the Sunday evening.



Later in the year, don't forget the 25th Anniversary Australasian Region convention. This promises to be one of the best local conventions ever. Check out the web site.

Lastly, it is election time for the National Board of Directors and the Executive. There are two candidates for President and two for Vice President. Please read all that you can on the candidates and make an informed decision. This election will be critical for our organisation's future.

That's all for now.

Peter Jensen

Pacific District Director



One of the layouts featured in the 25th Anniversary Convention Layout Tours  
Barnedman by Dennis Clarke

# Highball! - Editorial

## Conventions

We are now looking forward to the 2009 Conventions. This year has two great conventions planned starting with the Narrow Gauge convention in April and our 25th Anniversary Convention, 2nd - 5th October (Friday-Monday). The 25th Anniversary Convention will be bringing a few big names in from the U.S. and loads of layout tours and clinics. Make sure you mark your calendar for this year!

## Material for MainLine

The editor of a magazine always seems to be two articles short of a full magazine. This issue had to be cut down by four pages. The magazine is a publication by and for the members. If members would like to see it continue, we welcome any and all submissions. I'm sure there are a lot of ideas out there, that with just a little work can be published and shared with all members. We can help you. In the past members have sent in handwritten articles and letters. We can type them up and run them. Have you taken a good photo? Send it in. Pictures of the prototype are always good to see and give us ideas for modeling.

## Happy Modeling!

*Kelly*



One of the layouts featured in the 25th Anniversary Convention Layout Tours  
White Stag by Geoff Nott



# The Achievement Program

## By Gerry Hopkins MMR

The Achievement Program is one of the most rewarding activities run by the NMRA. The Achievement Program is like a travel guide to help you on your journey through the world of model railroading. It provides an incentive to learn the many crafts and skills which are a part of the hobby and gives a feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment. It is tailored to suit all gauges, scales and prototypes. It recognizes the wide range of interests of model railroaders and also service to the hobby.

How does it work? The program starts with an introduction called the "Golden Spike". If you already have a home layout you probably have most of the requirements to earn a Golden Spike. This part of the program is designed as an incentive to improve our modelling by reaching a fairly simple goal. To obtain a Golden Spike you need to:

- . Display six units of rolling stock either scratch built, craftsman kits or super detailed commercial kits.
- . Construct a minimum of eight square feet of layout including scenery.
- . Construct five structures either scratch built, craftsman kits or super detailed commercial kits.
- . Lay three types of trackage (e.g. turnout, crossing, crossover, etc.) which must be properly ballasted and installed on proper roadbed.
- . Track must be wired so that two trains can be operated simultaneously. Commercial trackage may be used.
- . Provide one additional electrical feature such as power operated turnouts, signalling, turnout indication, or lighted buildings.

There is a required standard for all sections of the Achievement Program. This standard is reasonably high

but is achievable by most modellers. Models are judged using similar rules to contests. The allocation of points for Achievement Program judging is not as strict as contest judging. This means that your achievements in the hobby can be measured by a standard that is recognized by your fellow modellers. Models that score sufficient points and receive a Merit Award in an NMRA contest are counted towards an Achievement Award.

There are eleven main categories in the Achievement Program which are grouped into four broad areas. These are building Model Railroad Equipment, building Model Railroad Settings, Railroad Construction and Operation and Service to the hobby. The ultimate honour bestowed by the Achievement Program is the title of Master Model Railroader (MMR). This is awarded to those who have qualified for seven achievement awards.

There are more details about the program set out in the attached booklet from the US. There is also a lot of information about the AP program on the main NMRA website.

This is an over simplification of what the Achievement Program is about. It can, however, guide you through the learning process and get you more involved in the hobby. It will also help you to get to know other members of the association and allow your achievements to be measured by a standard that is recognized by other fellow modellers.

"Where do I start?" Contact either the Regional AP Manager or one of the AP Assistant Managers who are listed in the directory in the local NMRA Mainline Magazine or on the web at

<http://www.nmra.org.au/awards/awards.html>

The easiest way to contact me is by email at [gerrymmr@bigpond.net.au](mailto:gerrymmr@bigpond.net.au). I will either supply you with the information you require or put you in contact with your local AP person. Request a copy of the Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) form and guidance in preparing the documentation for the category involved. Also, request any forms that you might need. All AP regulations and associated forms are available on your "Data Plus" CD or on the NMRA web site

<http://www.nmra.org>.

## Mountain Blue

MINIATURES

*O Scale figures in pewter for your On30 layout.*





**Etch-primed  
or  
fully painted**

tel: 02 4739 9885

[www.mountainblueminatures.com](http://www.mountainblueminatures.com)

PO Box 287 Blaxland NSW 2774

[info@mountainblueminatures.com](mailto:info@mountainblueminatures.com)



# Gwydir Valley Models

## EasyDCC Now Available in Australia

The Easiest to use DCC System

Modular for Easy Expansion

Fully expandable & upgradable

Full support for all 13 NMRA-DCC functions

Guaranteed to work with all brands of decoders

Coming Soon Zonemaster 7 Amp Dual Zone Booster

### Also Available:

Decoders from: Soundtraxx, TCS, NCE, Lenz

Auto Reverser, Circuit Breaker, & Rampmeter

Powerpax Programming Track Booster

Decoder Wire, Speakers & Pin Connectors 2, 3, & 4 pin



Create highly accurate turnouts that stay in perfect gauge.

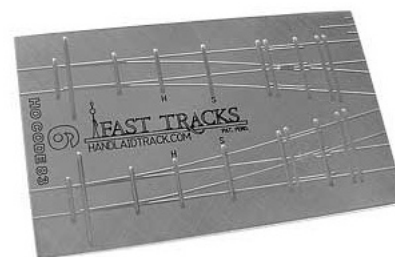
Easy to build: No special skills needed

Build a turnout in less than 1 hour at the workbench

Create perfect frog and point blades in minutes

Ready to use laser cut sleepers

Go To: <http://gwydirvalley.fast-tracks.net>



Don't forget to call us for a discount code to get a 10% discount on all our Fast Tracks products.

### Also available from *Gwydir Valley Models*:

IRDOT Infrared Detection System

Miniature Drills and Modelling Tools: Xuron

Micro-Engineering: Rail, Track, Joiners, Track Gauges,  
Spikes, Bridges, Windows

Clover House: PC Ties, Barrels, Window Glass Cable

Miniature Globes: 1.5 volt, clear, red & green, 12 volt, 14 volt

Golden White LEDs: 3mm, 0.8mm with leads attached

Fibre Optic: 0.5mm to 1.5mm

Kappler Scale Wood: HO Sheet, Strip, Bulk packs, Ties

Tortoise Switch Machines: Single or 6 Packs

Kadee Products: Couplers, Tools, Uncouplers

Light Works: Neon Signs and Billboards

BA Bolts & Nuts: 8 BA to 16 BA up to 1" long

Brass Wire & Strip: 10 to 30thou, Phosphor Bronze & N, Silver

Carr's Products: Solders, Fluxes Metal Blackening

AIM: Weathering Powders

Steel Plate Load Kits: Various sizes

Uneek: Detail items

Agent for: TRAINMASTER,

EUREKA & TRAINORAMA



## Gwydir Valley Models

P.O. Box 740 GLEN INNES NSW 2370

Phone: 02 6732 5711 Fax: 02 6732 1731

Web: [www.gwydirvalleymodels.com](http://www.gwydirvalleymodels.com)

Fast Tracks - <http://gwydirvalley.fast-tracks.net>

VISA

MASTERCARD





**Steel Rails** by Frank Godde  
Photo by John Rumming







# Product Review

## Smartswitch by ANEmodel

### A Slow-motion Switch Machine

By Gerry Hopkins MMR

For many years we have had the twin solenoid machines (Peco, Tenshodo), then along came the motor driven screw machine (Fulgarex, MannMade), then the stall motor (Switch Master, Tortoise) and now we have the SmartSwitch from ANEmodel. This is a servo type device.

The servo is not new to modelling; it has been used on model boats, model planes, and model automobiles (cars) for many years. The servo is quiet, powerful, reliable and very easy to adjust with electronics – as easy as turning the volume up and down on your TV.

SmartSwitch comes in assorted sets. The set shown in



Figure Two

illustrated and the explanations are very clear.

Fig 2 shows the two methods of mounting the servo in the supplied brackets, on the left the servo will operate just like a Tortoise – the bar through the baseboard moving side to side. On the right it can be mounted above or below the baseboard and operates like a SwitchMaster – this requires a 1mm brass tube through the baseboard with the wire in the tube. This method is good if the turnout is already fixed to the baseboard.

#### How I used mine

I have one section on my layout that is at the end of a peninsula, and to switch the industries the operator has to move from side to side to get at the 4 turnouts. Fig 3 shows the slide switch used to operate the turnout. In Fig 3 you can see a small arm on the far side of the turnout. This passes down through the baseboard to the servo. Once the servo was fitted the slide switch was



Figure Three

removed. The turnout shown is hand laid Code 55.

Mounting the servo under the baseboard is very straight forward, two small screws through the bracket into the baseboard - exact positioning is not important – just the shaft of the servo must be in line with rod through the layout. Using the Tortoise method is just as easy, you just need a larger hole through the baseboard. The instructions illustrate all this very well.



Figure One

Figure 1, is the “DCC Accessory” set which includes:

- . Four servos,
- . Four brackets,
- . Driver Board,
- . Decoder Board,
- . Four centre off switches,
- . And assorted hardware for mounting such as screws, spacers, link wire (piano wire).
- . Assorted 3 core cables in different lengths with plugs.

You can see in the photo the difference in size between the servo in its bracket and the Tortoise. There is also a P2K tank car for reference.

The set also comes with an 18 page installation manual. 16 pages show you various ways of setting up the servo and 2 pages on how to program and operate the units. I will not repeat the manual here but I will say it is the best manual of this type I have seen – it is well





Figure Four

Fig 4 shows the mounted servo. The white arm is attached to the servo with a small screw – sort of in the mid position - easy adjustment soon! I had already mounted the tube and wire through the layout. I added an extra piece of ply to set the servo at the right height.

There is a selection of cables to choose from to plug between the servo and the driver board. The board has neat screw terminals for the power in. This is 12-24 volts DC (small wall wart) or straight to the track power

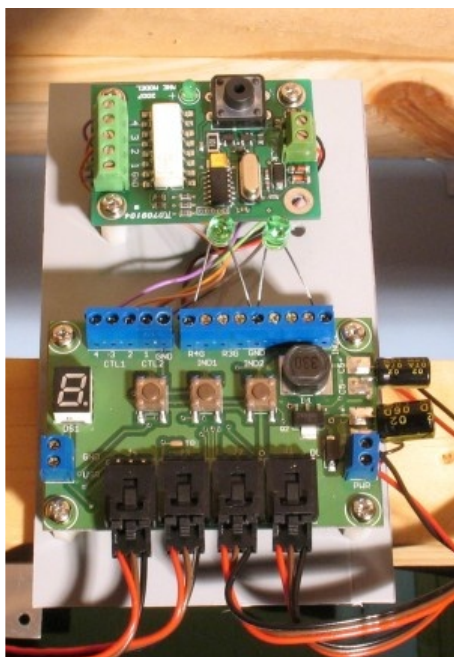


Figure Five

if using DCC.

There are also 5 terminals for the 4 switches or pushbuttons with 1 common – very easy to follow illustrations in the manual. There are also 9 more screw terminals for signals and indicators – 1 common and 2 for each servo. You can use bi-colour LEDs with two or three legs. There is no need for a resistor – the output is current limited. Two LEDs can be mounted in series if

required.

I mounted my driver on a piece of 2mm styrene just for convenience when setting up. There are two green LEDs connected just for initial setup. The servos and the driver board are all that are needed for basic switch/pushbutton operation.

I have the optional DCC Accessory Decoder so I mounted this above the other board. There are five connections run between the 2 boards. If you require switching for the frogs on your turnouts there is also a small board available – SmartFrog. This plugs into the driver board between the servo and the driver board for “short free power routing”. I use dead frogs so I did not need this board.

### The Setup

I used a single switch to set the servos up before I connected the decoder. I switched the power on and all the servos went to the ‘home’ position. For turnout #1 this put the point rail about 1mm away from the stock rail. So, press button #3 on the driver board until [1] showed on the display. I then used buttons #2 (clockwise) and #1 (anti-clockwise) to set the correct home position. I threw the toggle switch and the arm moved to the other position – the rail was 0.5 mm away from the stock rail. So, again press button #3 on the driver board until [2] showed on the display. I then used buttons #2 (clockwise) and #1 (anti-clockwise) to set the correct position. Once I was happy press #3 until the display showed [-]. This saved the new settings. I did this with the 3 other servos - the easiest adjustments I have ever made on a turnout motor. How easy is this?

The other very neat thing you can do is adjust the servo speed. There are nine settings available - the slowest is 20 seconds and the quickest is 0.078 seconds. The default is 2.5 seconds and this seems to be ideal for my turnouts. The speed of each servo can be set independently.

### Adding the Accessory Decoder

Now it was time to add the Accessory Decoder. For those who have not used this bit of your DCC system, it means you can operate the turnout from anywhere in the train room just using your controller. The decoder is shown in Fig 6.

The other bonus is that you can set up a “route” and by a single command; throw any number of turnouts in sequence – great for staging yards or setting the route for your “Flyer”.

The 5 wires were run from the decoder to the driver board and the decoder was connected to the track bus. Here the original page in the manual was very hard to understand but by the time you get your manual this page will have been updated. The programming is done “on the main” or “ops mode programming” and is quite straight forward.

I set my four servos up as #25, #26, #27, #28. My other decoders run from 1 to 24 - so a logical progression. I used 2 legged Bi-Colour LEDs as ground signals and

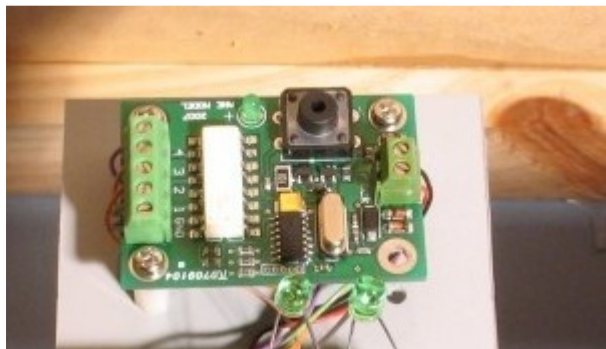


Figure Six

used 2 per turnout. These were connected in series and look great. (Fig. 7)

There is another option for operation. You can add a toggle switch to the 2 pin terminal on the left of the driver board; this will allow you to switch between pushbutton control and Decoder control. Why? I hear you ask, some layouts that are used in operating sessions only allow the dispatcher (Fat Controller) to throw the turnouts – decoder control, while the control can be switched back to local control between sessions for ordinary running.

Another method of control is to use the supplied SPST Centre Off switch to set the turnout or give control back to DCC for each turnout. Ideal for setting up a staging yard, you can use the switch when setting up the yard and then switch back to Accessory control so you can




Figure Seven

use route selection during an operating session. Just a note, setting up a route is like setting up a consist for accessories.

Being a lazy modeller I tend to put off any work under the layout – I could easily fall asleep there – but this exercise was very easy and straight forward. The instructions were first class, well illustrated and all possibilities explained.

To me the biggest benefits of using the servos was the ease of fitting, adjusting and the small space required for mounting. The servo can also be mounted on top of the baseboard and concealed with a switch tower or similar building.

The operation is very smooth and very quiet.

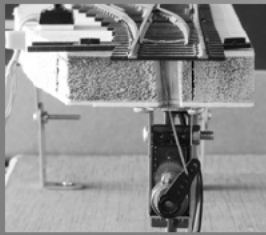


### SmartSwitch™ Slow Motion Turnout Machine


Choose the speed to control your turnout


### LocoCruiser DCC Decoder is coming

1. Easy to install.
2. Virtual centre line for easy trouble free mounting.
3. Minimal structural interference & more mounting possibilities.
4. Adjustable servo speed and position.
5. One chip controls up to four turnouts (points).
6. Support toggle switch and push button.
7. DCC friendly.
8. SmartFrog™ for easy power route wiring. Zero chance for short circuit.



Visit us at <http://www.anemodel.com> to find an ANE Model dealer near you.







# Timesaver Layouts

0418543409 – 0437413427  
Leave a message if unattended

timesaverlayouts1@bigpond.com  
www.timesaverlayouts.com



- SmartSwitches™ are still at the same price.
- 9 speeds and fully adjustable throw distance.
- Five different methods of mounting them.
- Everything required to fit them to your layout and get them working is supplied in the magic box.
- Bi-Colour LEDs are available as an extra to take advantage of the lighting outputs (LED voltage)





Supporter

We now are stocking Optic Fibre in the following sizes: 0.5mm, 0.75mm, 1.0mm and 1.5mm "GREAT FOR MARKER LIGHTS"  
LEDs available from 1.6mm to 1.8mm to 2mm and 3mm and 5mm in red/yellow/green/warm white and flashing red and bi-colour

**Payment options: Paypal, Personal Cheque, Bank Cheque, Money Order, Account Debit**





Figure Eight

Something that will appeal to most modellers is the cost. The base set (each set includes all the hardware) – no decoder or SmartFrog - is only A\$99, the set with a decoder it is only A\$114. These are available from Timersaver Layouts in Newcastle. (See add in this issue)

The set can be used on DC just as well as DCC.

The low current draw is a bonus – no need for the big wires used with a capacitor discharge system. Using the conventional control panel the switch can be placed on the panel over the turnout drawing along with indicator lights for each turnout – except for the LEDs everything is provided. Other applications include:- semaphore signals, train order signals, level crossing gates (Fig. 8), operating water spout and whatever the twisted mind can come up with.

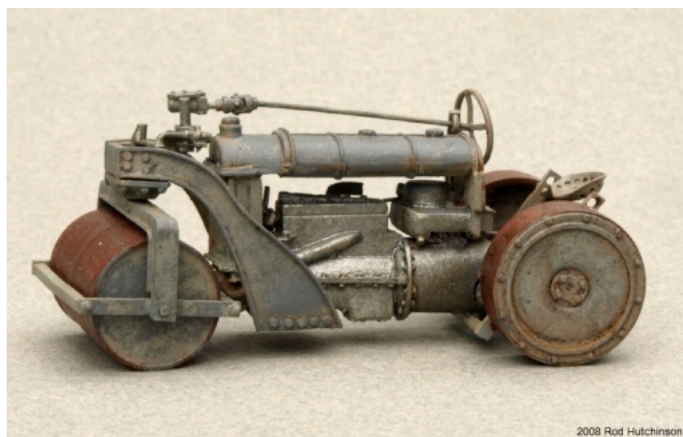
Look for more Product Reviews in future issues.

**Gerry Hopkins MMR**

**[gerrymmr@bigpond.net.au](mailto:gerrymmr@bigpond.net.au)**

meetings in 2009. He presented himself with a thank you plaque and wished all the members a merry Christmas and happy New Year.

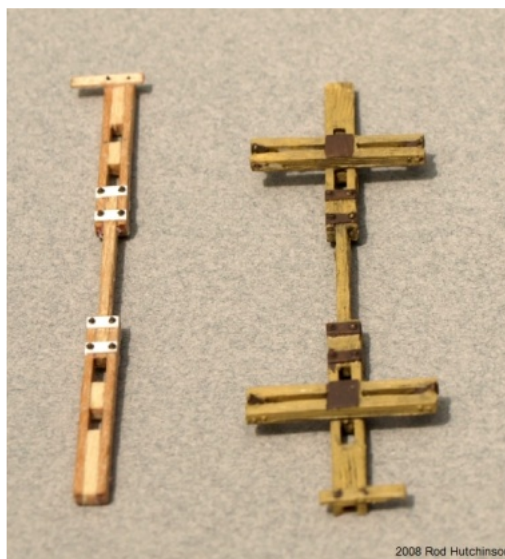
Next meeting at Rod Hutchinson's home in Mooroolbark on the 18th January 2009.



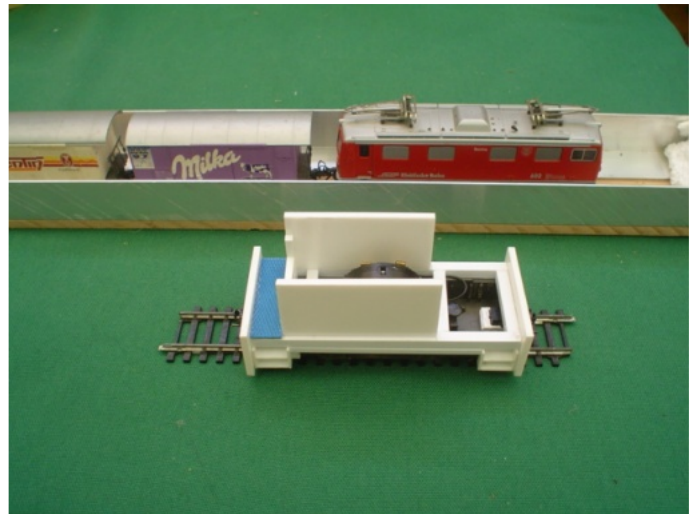
## Region Roundup

### Division 3 - Victoria By Rod Hutchinson

Gavin Hince – ¼" scale Fordson Road Roller from Model Co of NZ, scratchbuilt switch stand and telegraph poles and Book - *The Locomotives of the Fairymead Mill*; Laurie Green – ¼" scale Building kit by Stony Creek; Dan Pickard – On30 Dolly Varden trestle bridge No 16A; Adrian Gunzberg – Photographs from his trip to the USA; John Franklin – HOn30 log bogie resin castings and pattern; Bob Thornton – Book - *Guide to Narrow Gauge Railways of Europe*. Afterwards participants ate their fill of our superintendent, Grant McAdam's, culinary desserts. Grant concluded the day with thanks to all those who offered to host







Show 'n tell - Scott Taylor's GN15 Loco work in progress / Geoff Chatwin's Deutsche Bahn Railways HOem cassette as used in UK/Europe



Max Wright's Layout - shows size of layout with members looking on.

# Division 6 South Australia By Al Harris

No meeting reports, but we have some pictures.



NMRA Meet 07-02-09 - members gathered for Feb meet



Max Wright's Layout - Show's the yard at night / low light



# Division 7 New South Wales

By John Montgomery

## November Report

David and Yvonne Howarth were the hosts for the November meeting which was held at West Pymble. Approximately 85 people attended the meeting which meant that it was probably the largest gathering for a meeting during 2008. Although the weather was overcast and a couple of light showers fell on the meeting everyone seemed to enjoy the afternoon.

David's layout is called Beaumouth. The layout is modeled on an English seaside railway station. It is 7mm which is true British O scale and is run by a DCC system. Most of the points are electrified and most of the buildings are scratchbuilt. David is a very proficient scratch builder. A good example of his work is the elaborate gates at the front of the station and the signal box with a fully working interior. He has also represented the English type of scenery extremely well. David has also developed a unique transfer system for taking trains on and off the layout.

David also had some track on a shelf around 2 walls of the train room which he demonstrates his expanding collection of American O scale locos and rolling stock.

David was ably assisted for the afternoon by Bob Best and Ron Seddon who ran the layout.

The formal part of the meeting was very brief. The Christmas party was again promoted with members having their last opportunity to purchase tickets at a meeting before the date of the party.

Both the 2009 Narrow Gauge Convention at Easter and the 2009 25th Anniversary Convention in October were promoted by various members of the committees.

The clinic on air brushing at Sowerby Smith's studio in January was promoted.

Gerry Hopkins had a few locos for sale which he called his pre-estate sale. Perhaps more members should consider this type of approach for disposing of excess model railway paraphernalia.

After the meeting Yvonne and the ladies provided a sumptuous afternoon tea.

Many thanks to both David and Yvonne for hosting the day.

## December Report

The December meeting was the 2008 Christmas party. It was held at the Waterview restaurant at Berowra Waters. Ninety three people attended the party and all had a fantastic time.

The restaurant provided us with a wonderful smorgasbord seafood luncheon. Non seafood fare was also on the menu.

The happy party goers chatted and mingled while enjoying their meal. It was great to see so many partners of the members attend the gathering.

On behalf of the association I wish all members and their partners a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.



One of the layouts featured in the 25th Anniversary Convention Layout Tours  
Barren Creek and Santa Fe by John Parker

# Division 8 - Northern Rivers

## By Ian Phemister

It's been a while since my last report and much has happened. With the birth of my baby daughter, I have been a little pre occupied. Work has continued throughout the year on our exhibition layout. Along with continued improvements to the operational characteristics, the basics of the scenery are completed along the front side of the display. Adding trees, bushes and shrubs to the landscape improves the appearance each time. The layout made its Sydney debut appearance at the Bligh Park train show back in August. The layout ran very well and we all had a great weekend with the guys from the Mid West Model Railroaders.



In October the layout returned to Sydney for the annual AMRA show at Hurstville. Again the layout ran smoothly and was well received by all those that attended. We were also lucky enough to receive an award for 'Best Non Australian Prototype Layout'. We had won the same prize in 2000 for the old layout.

Unfortunately upon return home to Coffs Harbour, our use of the A J Pipelines factory was lost. This had been the home of the layout over the past 12 months where we were able to have the layout completely set up to work on. We thank Al Johnson for the use of his factory.



Luckily we had been able to get all, bar four, of the modules near completion before losing the area. We have set up the four incomplete modules in member Charlie Reid's garage. We plan on finishing this end with a small town scene complete with working 1950s drive-in picture theatre. There will be some 25 buildings for this end of the layout. Most are the DPM shops and small factories. We have an old Durango press 'The Palms' station building as the centre feature. I also hope to have the Clyde Puffer cargo boat rock in the harbour with the gentle swell of the ocean. Maybe even a pelican atop the dock post. The layout should look a little different for this year's Brisbane exhibition in May.



I have also presented the Hopkins Bone award this year to Keith Morrison. Keith has been a great help with the layout construction as well as taken on the role as our treasurer. Keith has over the past year built up a new NSWGR home layout. Keith's modelling continues to improve as more challenging tasks are taken on. Keith's dedication to helping with the layout at exhibitions and with construction has been fantastic. Congratulations Keith and well done!

We have plans now to set the layout up for testing prior to the Brisbane show. The layout will have to live in the trailer from then. Monthly meetings may go back to setup-and-run weekends at the Guide hall.



# Warranty – To be or not 2B

By Ian Petherick

Warranty claims have not been part of my modelling experience until relatively recently. Several experiences now show there is some difference between one business and another for claims satisfaction.

I'm not about to talk of specific companies as manufacturers or retail suppliers, just events as they have unfolded.

Setting the scene: It has been my experience that N scale steam locomotives in the past have been poor cousins of the diesels as far as mechanical operation, smooth starting, etc. Sure, if you pay four times as much, you get into the better mechanism class. In MainLine a few months back Gerry Hopkins wrote of his experience installing DCC decoders into N scale diesel locos. Reading his article made me realize I had the locos, the DCC controller and at least two decoders waiting for installation. All I needed was the time to dedicate to the task.

Loco 1, Kato P42 was soon on the track with decoder and performed OK for a few minutes then began to get erratic, needing a push start every second start. Not good, and certainly not as good as the loco had been on good old DC. I decided to push on with the second loco and seek advice from others about the erratic loco.

Loco 2, an Atlas SD60, was an excellent performer on DC and following the installation of the decoder, appeared to perform just as well, with the extras of DCC – constant lighting with manual switching – smooth starting at low speed and it looked pretty much okay.

After a short period of starting and stopping with no body on the loco, there was a small puff of black smoke from the front end of the decoder board. A surface mount resistor flared up like a match and the front light went out. I also had switched off the power to the power supply.

Wow! Definitely one decoder now not working and one doubtful.

My local retailer confirmed the warranty provided by Digitrax and other DCC manufacturers and some weeks later a replacement decoder arrived. It was installed and has worked faultlessly ever since. That is, apart from my programming some wrong values – easily restored and properly setup the second time.

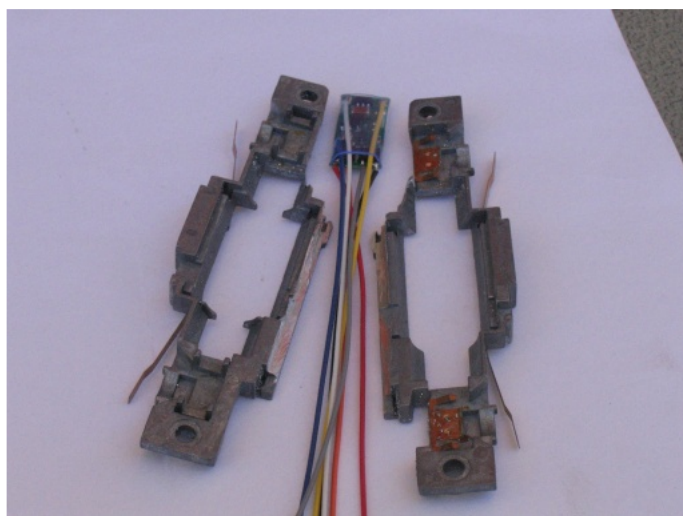
Some advice regarding the P42 decoder installation was that I would be better off soldering the motor leads onto the board. That worked fine and between two of us we now have four of these decoders (Digitrax DN163K0A) installed, all working fine. I also have 'drop-in' decoders in seven other locos where the original loco had a lighting PC board from the factory.

Now feeling I was mastering the techniques, it was time to try a 'wired' installation using a small decoder

with seven fine wires to be soldered onto connections. I chose the LifeLike GP18 currently available for a reasonable price – about one third of the cost of a Kato loco. There was no factory provision for a decoder and little space for any of the decoders available in the local shops. I am fortunate to fly around a lot so I checked out Perth, Melbourne and Brisbane over a couple of months. (Having an understanding wife is a big help when holiday time is spent seeking out model train shops.)



The decoder I found was a small one – 8.6 x 18 x 3.2 mm. Sold as NCE N12SR it is a 2 function decoder which means it has motor control and two separately controlled outputs for lights – head lamp at front and rear for the GP18. The model's frame needs to be milled (cut) to enlarge the space available until it is large enough for the decoder and a wiring channel. Not necessarily a job for beginners, but in reality a job not as difficult as I first expected. A motorized tool with small cutter made it practical and reasonably quick.



The loco is working fine. I did cheat a little; I only have the front headlight working at the moment but will return to the job and install a rear light when I get into the mood.

Have you ever experienced the pleasure of getting a

modelling job done then realizing you can do something more challenging? Of course! It is the path to getting into a job you wish you hadn't started. So a visit to "the local model shop" found a neat steam loco for sale. A shiny new 2-8-0 with coal tender and Union Pacific lettering. It ran well in the shop and my reticence about steam models in N scale was overcome. I saw space in the tender for a speaker and sound chip and expected to find space in the loco for wiring and maybe a second decoder if necessary. I have only one sound equipped diesel but a steamer without sound is like a footballer with laryngitis.

At home the loco worked well on DCC as Loco 00.

Three days later however it refused to move or react to any power or prodding, so back to the shop for discussion of warranty. (Warming to my subject now!).

I had some doubts about what to do –

1. request a local fix,
- 2a. return to the American supplier
- 2B. return to the Australian distributor, or
3. demand a cash refund.

The brand of the loco is one where I have had to return an earlier loco for a refund when I found that others had the same fault as mine. I had also some concerns about local repairs of N scale. I feel confident that I can do as well as some over eager modellers. The loco was restored to working condition while I watched but no fault was identified. At home, with less than half an hour's operation, it stopped again and refused to start.

Is the shop provided 'warranty' going to satisfy me?

The warranty paperwork provided within the packaging wants me to return the loco to an American address.

The loco is clearly identified as Made-in-China.

Am I any better off than when I started modelling?

Back then when we purchased locos of average quality, we accepted that we had to modify them to improve them. To do this we needed to put in better gear boxes, motors, drive shafts, maybe wheels and lighting.

I am sure that the purchasers off eBay and by email from retailers in USA must experience some frustration when a newly arrived model is not up to the expected standard or won't work reliably.

Warranty!

Is it to be the solution to modelling problems, or the challenge to do better than the initial performance straight out of the box?

## The Station at Pauline's Bend

or, Australianising the Plasticville "Suburban Station" kit

by Rod Tonkin

Wombat Gully's modelled locality "Pauline's Bend" needs, among things, a station. The station needed

- . Station master/train order office
- . Ticket office come waiting room
- . Parcels/luggage room

The Plasticville "Suburban Station" kit fitted the bill for all three operational requirements. Unfortunately it was designed for straight track and the roof didn't look right.

The station at Pauline's Bend will be installed on the inside of a 390 mm radius curve. The straight platform supplied with the kit was of little use. I decided to cut the walls off level with the base of the front wall at the bay window. This allowed the completed building to sit on a level surface. Dispensing with the platform meant I had to cement the building sides together.

The roof I felt could be made more Australian looking by cutting off the original roof eaves at the end walls and superimposing the steeper pitched covered platform roof on top of the shortened existing roof. The steeper pitched main roof now looked Australian.

The oversized moulded on slates on the moulded roof didn't look very Australian. I made up some corrugated iron sheeting using the "Model Builder" computer program for the roof. Some vertical siding courtesy of "Model Builder" filled in the end gables.

Attaching the end gable siding and corrugated iron sheeting to the re profiled roof completed the transformation.

I decided to change the grey coloured moulded doors supplied with the kit with printed doors from "Model Builder".

The attached photo shows progress on the station building to date.





# Shoot it when you see it!

By Geoff Horne

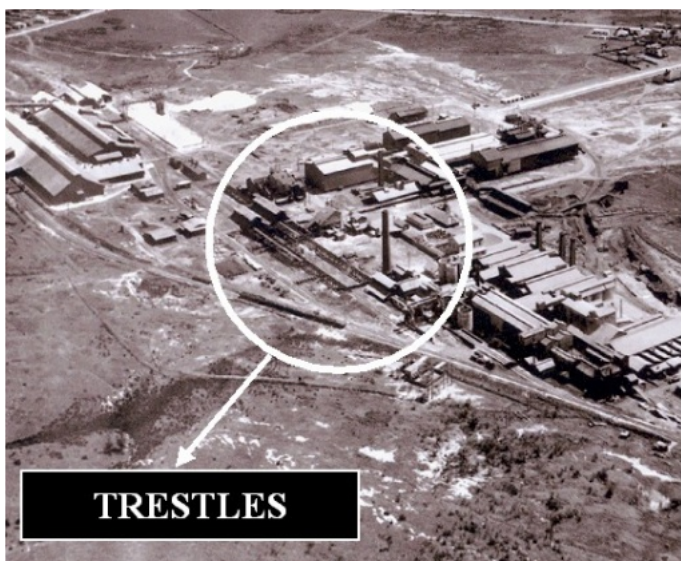
Photos by Geoff Horne

No, we aren't going on a hunting expedition, however you should always be on the lookout as if you were.

How often have you ever heard or thought that "I should have taken some photos or measured that signal box or something similar", but now IT IS GONE?

Many times luck has a lot to do with you happening to be in the right place at the right time or hearing about the proposed demolition of a very interesting structure and you are given the last chance to document it before the bulldozers arrive. With the decrease in the cost of digital cameras today and also with the quality of the photos that they are capable of taking you have no excuse at all to make the statement above.

This was driven home to me personally at a very early age because I grew up beside the main North line near Waratah Station and with an interest in trains literally as soon as soon as I could walk and also making friends with the station staff as well as the signal box crews, I was shocked to go down for one of my weekly visit to the signal box only to find that it was no longer there.



To this day I wish that I had borrowed my father's Kodak Box Brownie camera and taken some photos.

From then on I have always been aware of the possibility of these structures disappearing and today they seem to be going at a greatly increased rate.

Recently in a bundle of junk mail that was put into our letter box was an information leaflet intended for people living in the vicinity of the old Pasminco Zinc and Lead Smelter at Boolaroo at the northern end of Lake Macquarie. With the urban sprawl and with the help of Mother Nature to spread the contamination around it was only a matter of time before the death notice of this facility was signed and sealed.



The leaflet reminded me that trains used to run around the site and although most of the buildings are now demolished, the rear of the site is still being used by Incitec Pivot and the two timber railway trestles are still there even though they are not in the best of condition.

Because of their heritage significance they had to be photographed and detail measured before they are knocked down and after a few phone calls I was given permission to visit the site under supervision to take as many photos as I wanted.



You cannot just wander onto a site especially while there is work still being carried out and with hazardous conditions still present so after meeting up with my contact, the paperwork begins as well as being given a quick induction. In this case touching or picking anything up without gloves is a no no because of the contamination that has been sucked into the timber over almost 100 years.

It is not feasible to print all of the photos that I took on the day but concentrate on the differences of it, such as original parts as compared to other bits that have been replaced or repaired over the life of the trestle. You will also notice that if the vertical supports are further apart at any section then the engineer will obviously make alterations to increase the mechanical strength by adding an extra horizontal beam. If the trestle is as old as this one then you can easily pick out the repaired sections either by timber or more modern steel channel iron.

If you follow the rules and ask the right questions of



Thanks also to the Local History Section of the Lake Macquarie City Council at Boolaroo.



the right people then you may just get the legal access that you need to get the photos that you want. Always offer copies of your pickies to the company as a thank you. In this case I have also given a copy to the Lake Macquarie City Library Historical section. This also leads to another opening in your investigation. If you wish to continue by using the Local History Section at the Library and by giving them the copies of your photos they may just be able to help you out as in this case by supplying me with a few other photos taken when the site was working. You will have to sign permission forms that gives the Library the right to allow permission to people doing research but if the photos are to be used in something such as a saleable publication, the Library will contact you to organise arrangements to be carried out between you as the photographer and the author as you always retain the Copyright and being digital photos I always make sure that they have my name in the file log information.

I hope that this information has given you a bit of an idea about keeping an eye out for unusual activity or an article in the local newspaper to allow you to get those very precious photos. Lastly take a tape measure as well to be able to take a few general measurements such as a doorway height and width and a few window dimensions. This is then all that you require to be able to make your own drawings and then the construction of the building for your layout.

Thank you to Incitec Pivot Ltd and Mandis Roberts for organising access to the site.



# Retail Directory

## Anton's Trains Order Service

PO Box 236 Castle Hill NSW 1765  
 Fx: (02) 9899 4484  
 Email: bognar@bigpond.com

## ARHS NSW Bookshop

67 Renwick St, Redfern NSW 2016  
 Ph: (02) 9699 4595  
 Fx: (02) 9699 1714  
 Website: <http://www.arhsnsw.com.au>  
 Mon-Fri 11am-5pm  
 Sat 9:30am-3:30pm

## Asquith Model Railways

Unit 4/113 Hunter Street Hornsby NSW 2077  
 Ph/Fx: (02) 9482 3242  
 (PO Box 106 Asquith NSW 2077)

## Austral Modelcraft

Shop 15 Fairfield St Mt. Gravatt QLD 4122  
 Ph: (07) 3849 2655  
 Fx: (07) 3849 8664  
 Walthers Dealer  
 Tue 9:30am-1pm Thu-Fri 4pm-8pm  
 Sat 9am-4pm

## Berg's Hobbies

181 Church Street Parramatta NSW 2150  
 Ph: (02) 9635 8618  
 Fx: (02) 9689 1840  
 Email [mail@bergshobbies.com](mailto:mail@bergshobbies.com)  
 Website: <http://www.bergshobbies.com>  
 Open 7 days

## Casula Hobbies

62 Moore St Liverpool NSW 2170  
 Ph: (02) 9602 8640 Fx: (02) 96028874  
 Authorised Walthers Partner On-Line Dealer  
 Email [casulahobbies@casulahobbies.com.au](mailto:casulahobbies@casulahobbies.com.au)  
 Website: <http://www.casulahobbies.com.au>  
 Mon-Fri 9am-5:30pm Thu 9am-8pm Sat 9am-3pm

## End Of The Line Hobbies

74 Ocean Street Victor Harbour SA 5211  
 Ph: (08) 8552 7900  
 Fx: (08) 8552 7933  
 Email [shop@endofthelinehobbies.com.au](mailto:shop@endofthelinehobbies.com.au)  
 Website: <http://www.endofthelinehobbies.com.au>

## Gwydir Valley Models

PO Box 740 Glen Innes NSW 2370  
 Ph: (02) 6732 5711  
 Fx: (02) 6732 1731  
 Email: [info@gwydirvalleymodels.com](mailto:info@gwydirvalleymodels.com)  
 Website: <http://www.gwydirvalleymodels.com>

## Junction Models

Shop 5/449 Main North Rd Enfield SA 5085  
 Ph: (08) 8349 7464  
 Fx: (08) 8349 7463  
 Website: <http://www.junctionmodels.com.au>  
 Open everyday except public holidays

## Model Railroad Craftsman

Shop 2 - Level 1, 64-70 Main Street, Blacktown NSW 2148  
 Ph: (02) 9831 8217  
 Fx: (02) 9831 4132  
 Email: [sales@mrrc.com.au](mailto:sales@mrrc.com.au)  
 Website: <http://www.mrrc.com.au>  
 Tue-Wed 10am-5pm Thu 10am-7pm Sat 9:30am-3:00pm

## Mountain Blue Miniatures

PO Box 287 Blaxland NSW 2774  
 Email: [keith@mountainblueminatures.com](mailto:keith@mountainblueminatures.com)  
 Website: <http://www.mountainblueminatures.com.au>  
 Full range available at: The Railcar (NSW), Model Railroad Craftsman (NSW), Buffer Stop (VIC), Cyanotic Hobbies (VIC), Brunel Hobbies (VIC), Christmas Every Day (QLD) Trains & Track (QLD)

## The N Scaler - N Scale By Mail

PO Box 254 Rydalmere NSW 1701  
 Ph/Fx: (02) 9832 8913  
 Mo: 0407 217927  
 Email [kerr43@ozemail.com.au](mailto:kerr43@ozemail.com.au)  
 Website: <http://www.ozemail.com.au/~kerr43/nscaler.html>

## The Railcar

17 The Breakwater, Corlette NSW 2315  
 Ph: (02) 4981 0668  
 Fx: (02) 4981 0668  
 Email: [railcar@hunterlink.net.au](mailto:railcar@hunterlink.net.au)  
 Website: <http://www.railcar.com.au>  
 Contact: Herna or Paul Ward

## The Signal Box Model Railways

8/15a Gt Western Hwy Blaxland NSW 2774  
 Ph: (02) 4739 1799  
 Mail & Phone Orders Welcome  
 Open Tuesday-Saturday

## Tom's Hobbies

1001 Victoria Rd West Ryde NSW 2114  
 Ph: (02) 9809 0530  
 Fx: (02) 9809 0650  
 Email: [info@tomshobbies.com.au](mailto:info@tomshobbies.com.au)  
 Website: <http://www.tomshobbies.com.au>  
 Mon-Fri 8:30am-5pm Sat 8:30am-3:30pm

## Vic Barnes Cycle & Model Train Centre

213 Lambton Road  
 New Lambton NSW 2305  
 Ph: (02) 4952 1886

## Woodpecker Model Railways

8 Joyce Street Pendle Hill NSW 2145  
 Ph: (02) 9636 3855  
 Fx: (02) 9631 4204  
 Email: [wmr@zeta.org.au](mailto:wmr@zeta.org.au)  
 Mon-Fri 10am-5:30pm Sat 9am-2pm



# NMRA Sydney Anniversary Convention

October 2nd - 5th 2009

Convention update

Celebrate our 25 Years of Model Railroading



## Meet Charlie Getz

Plenary Session Presenter & After Dinner Speaker



**B**orn in occupied Japan to be near his parents, Charlie was presented with the obligatory Lionel Train set at an early age; it did not take. A second try with a Mantua/Tyco "General" set at Christmas 1961 did take and was followed by a ghastly layout of papier mache, brass track and balsa buildings on a Ping-Pong table platform. By college, "N" scale was

tried, then HO<sub>N3</sub> after a visit to "SS Ltd" and their marvellous HO/HO<sub>N3</sub> display layout. A stint building models for Hollywood studios, and custom building paid college and law school bills. First layout ever visited? John Allen's Gorre and Daphetid. Thought all layouts were supposed to look like that.

Started writing a column for the Narrow Gauge and Shortline Gazette when it commenced publication and over 200 columns later, still doing so. Models in HO, HO<sub>N3</sub> and On3. Retires in June 2010 and his next job will be building layout(s) to utilize shelves of models and boxes of kits. Estimates finishing at age 135 based on unbuilt inventory.

"Loves Australia; has visited twice before and is proficient in pronouncing "al-u-min-i-um" and other strange words (since a " gratuitous "u" seems inserted in just about every other word!). Looking forward to meeting many old friends, making new ones and seeing some of the BEST model building in the world".

## Clinics Clinics Clinics

**T**he big news is "Three Streams of Clinics" plus we build a switching layout during the convention, just in case you get bored between clinics. Our Gala Dinner will honour our members with 25 years or more membership in the NMRA. A plaque to be presented by the National President who will be attending from the USA. After Dinner Charlie Getz will regale us with some of his famous oratory.



Special hands on clinics where you build a laser cut building kit in the scale of your choice. A limited number of places available and a small extra fee to cover the cost of the kit and materials.

During the breaks between clinics watch and learn all the basic layout building skills as our enthusiastic team of modellers construct a switching layout. No more excuses, you can build a layout at home after seeing how easy it is.

Signalling, Scratch building structures, Loco building, Prototype modelling US, Australian, Standard and Narrow Gauge, Structure detailing, Weathering rolling stock using an air brush, Train orders and card operation, Installing decoders, Tuning decoders, Photographing your models, Layout lighting, Loco reliability, Building locos kit/scratch and Designing your layout are just a few of the clinics. The program has been guided by your responses to a survey last year. Full details and listing of presenters are on our web site :- [www.nmra.org.au](http://www.nmra.org.au)



Exciting Partner Program exploring our wonderful City of Sydney and it's many attractions

**\$10 Saving for Early Registration** visit [www.nmra.org.au](http://www.nmra.org.au) for details

So, note the dates in your diaries, check the NMRA Australasian Region website for additional details and download your registration form. We look forward to welcoming you in October 2009.

David Howarth, 2009 Convention Chairman