

THE FLIMSY

NMRA Division 2 Newsletter

November-December 2016

Year-end 2016

Greetings. This issue is a little late as I hoped that the December ARC meeting might have had some news of note for the Division. However, that wasn't the case as it turned out. This will be the last issue of *The Flimsy* for 2016.

The Flimsy will be back next year with a regular publication schedule with all the Div. 2 news and meeting reports. As always, contributions are welcome, particularly the new features about member's layouts, questions and answers for Buffer Stop, and any great websites, and blogs that can contribute to our knowledge and help us in our modelling endeavours.

There is no December 2016 meeting. The next meeting is on 21 January.

In This Issue

- November meeting
- Switching Layouts
- Show and Tell
- Member's Layout
- Buffer Stop
- From the internet
- The last say...

The November meeting featured a presentation on switching layouts. The photo below is an example of an Inglenook switching layout. "Industry Lane" is British 4mm scale (Photo: B. Hinton).



November 2016 meeting

The November meeting was hosted by Wal Pywell on the southside of Canberra. We had a smaller than usual gathering with just nine attendees. Nevertheless, the afternoon was a great success.

Dion reported that there are still some monthly meetings to fill next year (June and July) before we round out the forthcoming year's program. Dion also reported that he was working on the Div. 2 website and hoped to have more time to spend on it over the Christmas period.

Dion reported that at the ARC meeting attended by John Gillies, the issue of NMRA personal liability insurance came up again. An article in the forthcoming *Mainline* magazine would have all the details. One of the key points is that exhibitors who are NMRA members can obtain liability insurance cover under the NMRA policy if the event is "sanctioned" by the ARC of the NMRA. A form needs to be filled out beforehand.

Former Div. 2 member John Prattis was visiting from Adelaide and reported on the preparations for the 2017 NMRA Convention in Adelaide next September. John is hoping that interstate NMRA members will attend.

The Convention will be a single day event on Saturday 17 September with layout tours planned for the Sunday. Layout tours will be grouped together based on a north or south Adelaide geographic location to make travel to layouts more efficient. If possible, some operating sessions might be held on the Friday for members looking to spend some time enjoying this particular aspect of the hobby.

The program will include two concurrent clinics in the morning and afternoon sessions. There will be the usual NMRA model contests and judging of photographs (which drew a lot of comment at the meeting as concerns were raised about the way photos are judged), as well as an evening dinner with special guest speaker. A "bring and buy" stall will also operate during the day.

A ladies program is also being finalised for those accompanying partners looking to see some of the local sights.

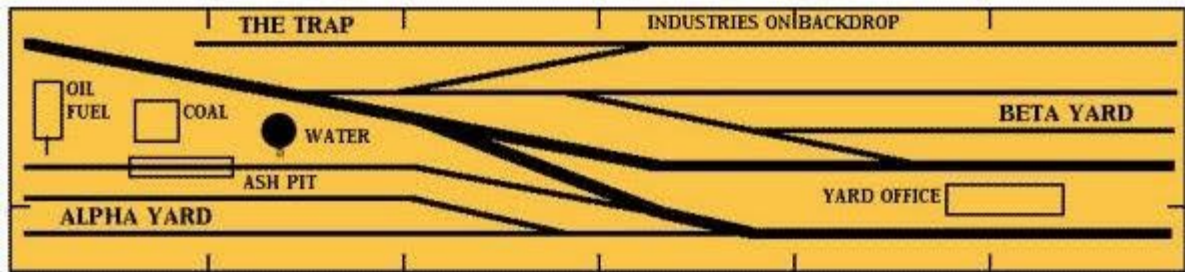
It looks like September 2017 will be a busy month in Adelaide for railway modellers. The [Modelling the Railways of South Australia Convention](#) is tentatively scheduled for Saturday 2nd September while the [15th National N scale Convention](#) is on 7th-10th September. Fortunately, there are no clashes of dates!

An example of SAR modelling that we hope to see at the 2017 NMRA Convention (Photo: B. Hinton)



Some switching ideas—Wal Pywell

The main event was a presentation by our host, Wal Pywell, on “Some switching ideas: Simple switching layouts which can be added to any other layout”. Wal gave a number of examples, from an early Linn Westcott switching puzzle (The Switchman’s Nightmare) to the famous “Timesaver” configuration by John Allen.

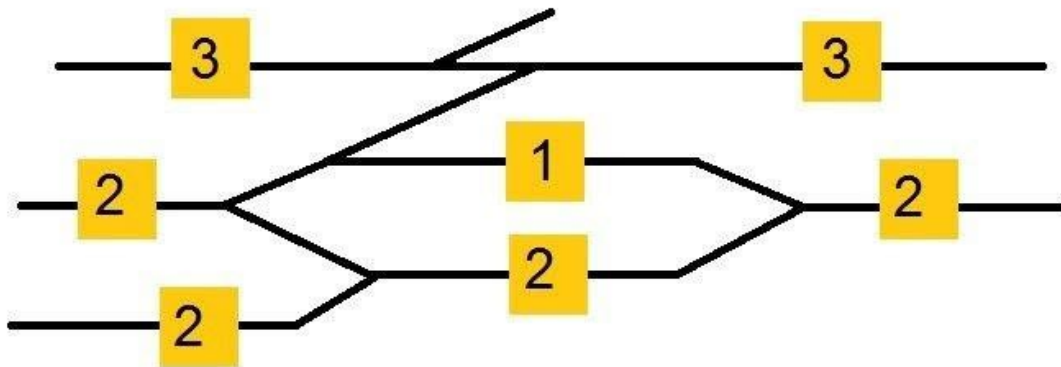


Switchman's Nightmare

by Linn Westcott, c. 1958
HO, 16x72in, #6 switches

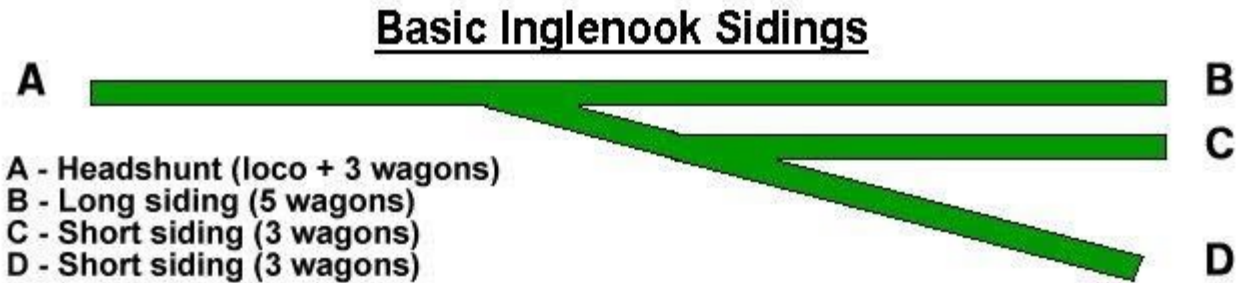
Timesaver

Track schematic with spur capacity



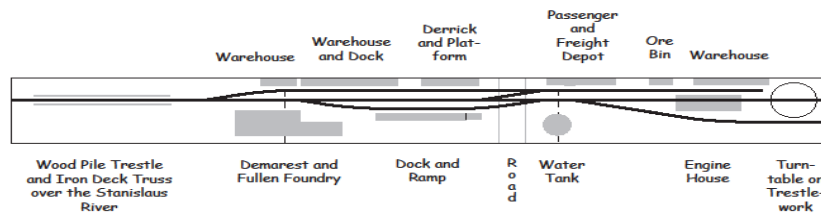
Another switching-based theme is the Noti switching puzzle which was discussed in the July 2016 issue of *Model Railroad Hobbyist*. You can access the article from [this link](#). The arrangement is essentially a single length of track with two sidings; one siding with a facing point and the other with a trailing point. There is no run-around but there are two locos on the head of a three car train. Wal had set up a length of timber and plywood with this track arrangement and encouraged us all to have a go with the loco and freight cars he supplied. Intrepid Adelaide interloper John Prattis took up the challenge and successfully switched the three freight cars, splitting the locos to switch the facing and trailing point sidings.

Another example is the “Inglenook” developed by Alan Wright in the UK. The object of the Inglenook Sidings shunting puzzle is fairly simple, the order for the shunting crew being: A departing train consists of 5 out of the 8 wagons sitting in the sidings. The loco (usually a small switching engine) sits in the yard throat. In addition (and this is where the "game element" of the puzzle comes in) the shunting order states: The 5 wagons are selected at random often using a card or token to represent each wagon. More information can be obtained from [this website](#).



A more complex switching arrangement is illustrated by the Sierra Railway’s Angels Branch (see below).

Sierra Railway's Angels Branch Portable Switching Railroad



Drawing Scale: 3/4 inch = 1 foot

HO scale standard gauge model railroad
 Overall size is 15" x 144" in three sections, each 4 feet long
 All turnouts are number 5

R. W. Pethoud
 June, 2014

The afternoon concluded with a very appetising afternoon tea provided by the lovely Mrs Pywell. Thank you!

For further reading:

- [Cleveland Flats layout](#) - *Model Railroad Hobbyist*, October 2016
- “Switching in a small town” - *Model Railroader*, September 2016
- [Saving time on the southside](#) (based on a Timesaver) - *Small urban rails blog*
- [The Inglenook layout and shunting puzzles](#) - *Noquay blog*

Show and tell

Brad started the session with his recent purchase of the Kalmbach Publications book, "Space-saving industries for your layout" by Tony Koester. The book comprises ten chapters looking at a range of industries served by rail, both within yard limits and beyond.

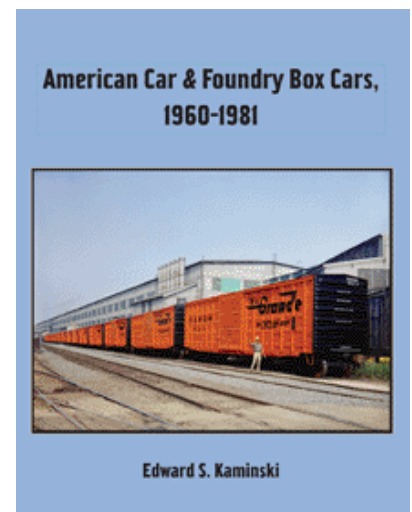
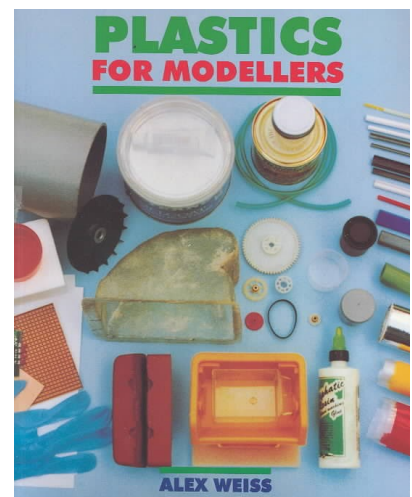
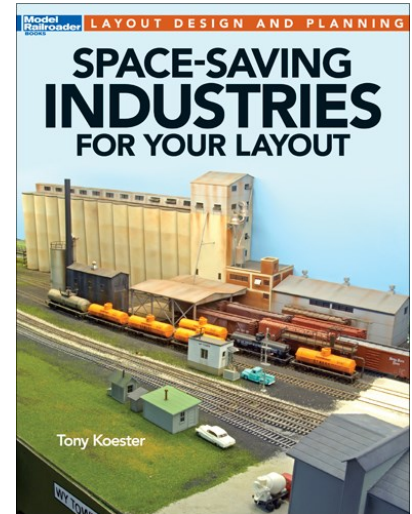
Matt Waterreus had a book, called "Plastics for Modellers", that he purchased off the Fishpond website.

John Gillies brought along the book, *American Car and Foundry (ACF) Box Cars 1960-1981*, published by Signature Press. John also showed us his recently acquired DVD of the Official Railway Equipment Register collection he bought on eBay. The DVD has 11 scanned ORERs from 1899 through 1975 plus a number of Passenger Car Registers and Railroad Equipment Lists that are useful depending on the era you model. John was surprised to see a scan of his 1976 Burlington Northern List of Equipment on the DVD! The DVD is currently selling for USD 19.99 or about AUD 26.76 plus postage and handling—check out eBay and see what's available.

Host Wal Pywell showed us a recent purchase from Train World in Melbourne—a Circuitron AR-1 Automatic Reverse Circuit that he wants to use to change polarity in a reverse loop. Wal wasn't certain that this device would do the job (see Buffer Stop on page 7).

John Prattis brought a selection of HO scale models of pre-1900 NSW railways steam locomotives recently painted by Div. 2 member David Low. These "early days" models were built from white metal Ezi-Kits. The models comprised of two D class locomotives (one with bissel truck and one with pony truck), an A class loco (which later became the 19 class—photo p.7), and a T class which was used on the prototype as "The Flyer" between Sydney and Penrith. Note the gold plated dome on the D class loco in the photo below which gives a rather striking appearance. The domes are electroplated and cost about \$10-12 per dome depending on the numbers required.

That's all we have for show and tell for this month. Please bring along your items of interest to our next meeting in January 2017.



Member's layouts—Rob Nesbitt

I have been thinking about constructing a HO model of Wagga for around 20 years, but until recently it has been not possible. Well, I hope to shortly embark on what will be probably my last sizeable layout once I get the room prepared.

The size of the room is 9 x 6 metres (less a kitchenette) and is situated in the back half of my 12 x 9 metre garage. It will consist of two decks and staging. The upper deck will be a representation of the Tumbarumba branchline, including Ladysmith, Borambla, Humula, and Tumbarumba stations. The timeframe for operations is approximately 1970, but I am not going to be too picky here. If I like a feature, or a train, then I most likely will incorporate it.

The lower deck will be the mainline, running from Shepherds Siding, Bomen, Murrumbidgee River (bridge), Wagga, and Wagga Stockyards. The mainline will run from Junee staging to Albury Staging - both stub ended. The mainline staging lead-in tracks can also be connected to form a continuous run. Technically, the layout is known as a "X Factor" design - introduced by Byron Henderson in *Model Railroad Planning 2004* and commented upon by Tony Koester on p. 81 of his book, *Realistic Model Railroad Design*.

I have not settled on layout height but the main deck will be about one metre above the floor, and the branch 50 cm above that. I am hoping that the width of shelves on the upper deck will be reasonably narrow - around 10" - but the lower deck will be somewhat wider - with the exception of Wagga - at around 15". This should speed up construction.

Construction (once the room is finished) will be Staging yards - fully tested, and then the lower deck. The upper deck is planned, but not needed initially. The branch will include the sidings of the Wagga Shunt; the rest of the branch will be staging.

I have had to mirror image a number of the stations - Shepherds Siding, Bomen, Ladysmith, and Tumbarumba. I am also utilising a triangle at Humula, something that was pulled up soon after the line reached Tumbarumba (modeller's licence). I have tried to stagger the positions of all stations on the upper deck to not impact the one below. The radius of curves will be 75cm for the main, and 60cm for the branch. Gradients on the mainline are gentle (2%), but a bit more for the branch. At this stage, I do not know if I will need one or more loops on the helix.

Operations are utmost in the design plan. Operating the signal frame at Wagga will need a full time position, and the 56 lever frame that I have already built will get used. Local shunting engine at Wagga serves all sidings in Wagga area, Mainline trains are either through trains, or drop-off goods at Wagga, and Bomen. Stocktrain (with staging tracks) will go to the Bomen meatworks. Railmotor passenger trains go to Albury, Griffith, Tumbarumba and Kywong, all to terminate at Wagga. Engine-only movements (Junee to the out-depots of The Rock, Culcairn and Albury) will be included. Goods trains operate to Tumbarumba - fruit, timber, stock trains, and general freight. Wheat trains will go to Shepherds Siding and Ladysmith silos. Mainline trains will run from staging yard to staging yard without needing to shunt at either end. The advantage of the X factor design is that resetting staging for the next operating session is made possible by simply reversing the trains across the hidden crossover tracks (there is a void in the corner behind the Murrumbidgee river bridge as a non operating position to manage this process outside an operation session.)

Key points

- Room size 9m x 6m
- Two decks linked by a helix
- 1/33.3 scale layout mock-up in card to visualise design (see photo at right)
- Timeframe is approximately 1970 with some allowance for flexibility either side
- Design for operations and prototypical train movements





Locomotive number 95 sits in front of the elevated signal box in Goulburn on David Low's under-construction layout. The loco is a white metal kit from Ezi-kits. The model is owned by John Prattis (Photo: B. Hinton).

Buffer stop

This section of *The Flimsy* is our equivalent of Q&A. Members can contact me with questions about any aspect of model railways. I will endeavor to publish them in a forthcoming issue of the newsletter. Members can respond at a meeting, or with an email, for inclusion in the following issue.

Q: How to wire an automatic polarity switch device to power a wye or reversing loop? The "Frog Juicer" or similar seems to do the job, but the "Automatic Reverse Circuit", Circuitron model AR-1, certainly will not unless someone can suggest a method. What is the best "box" to do the job? (Wal Pywell)

From the internet

One of the great things about the World Wide Web is the immense amount of information out there in cyberspace. And some of the best sources of information that I have found is on Youtube. Youtube hosts many videos on model and prototype railways, including layout features, how-to videos, and railway history.

The National Film and Sound Archives (NFSA) has a selection of [videos on trains](#) that are well worth a look. It shows a collection of train film and videos available for public viewing. Thanks for the suggestion, JG!

For fans of historic US railroads, a number of promotional films from the 1950s have become available on Youtube. They are great to watch, both in terms of the railroad content and also the way the films have been produced. I especially like the films of freight operations, such as this one about the [Santa Fe](#). This one from the [Pennsy](#) (for you, Viv!) is about the railroad technology of the times.

Another great series of videos available via Youtube is *How it's made*. I use these videos to help me understand how an industry works and whether it is useful for my model railroad. For example, check out this Youtube video about [canned corn](#).

The last say....

As Christmas approaches, we tend to reflect upon the year that has passed and the year that is ahead of us. We can use this period of reflection to assess our achievements during the year, and what our priorities and goals will be for the future. For some of us, next year offers the prospect of working on our home model railway layout. For member Rob Nesbitt, as we have read in this issue, he will be starting a completely new layout with bold aspirations. Other members will continue their practical involvement in the hobby through club layouts and exhibitions. And there are those modellers who are happy to enjoy the hobby in their own particular way; armchair or active.

It is good to reflect on why we are in the hobby and what benefits this all brings to our lives. The hobby can be a time consuming and expensive business. It doesn't have to be of course, but if we are involved in the hobby then this usually means a time commitment at the very least. And time is a precious commodity.

So my last say for 2016 is this: what is it that we individually and collectively get out of the hobby, and how can NMRA Div. 2 membership help and support us all in getting the very best out of our involvement in the "world's greatest hobby"?

Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 21 January 2017 at the residence of Mal Risby. Please note the address and contact details in the email Dion will send out in the week prior to the meeting. Please let Mal know if you will be attending or not.

Christmas wishes

I hope that everyone in Division 2 has a safe and wonderful Christmas. Naturally, I also hope that Santa Claus will be busy delivering your much-needed model railway supplies and equipment. I look forward to a great "show and tell" at the next meeting in 2017!

Membership dues

A gentle reminder for any Div. 2 members who are still to renew their membership. Please do so ASAP.

The Flimsy contact

Brad via Dion at
div2supt@gmail.com

3026 approaching the Lake Road level crossing on its way to Ladysmith — sample scene for Rob's layout (Photo: Rob Nesbitt)

