



THE FLIMSY

NMRA Division 2 Newsletter

February 2021

In this issue.

From the editor

Show-n-tell

The last say

COVID-19 ~ adhere to medical advices.

February meeting.

The first meeting of the year with a good turnout having a clear sunny Canberra day outside under the large pergola at host Steve & Lorraine WALKER's residence. Members travelled from across the Division, Bemboka, Batemans Bay, Junee, Bowning, Yass, Bungendore, Bywong, Oak Flats and Canberra. Some members coming out of isolation as the Covid-19 risks ease.

Malcolm RISBY was recognized for his 25 years of NMRA membership. January meetings seemed set in stone with Malcolm hosting at the start of each year. Malcom is also a member of the Canberra Monaro N Scale Group and is building an extensive N scale layout in his triple garage

Members will also recognize Malcom's mother, Marlene for her welcoming hospitality especially over the afternoon teas. We thank both Malcolm and Marlene.

Show-n-Tell produces diverse modelling and lively discussion, with a closing presentation by Steve Walker on his thoughts on "What Makes a Good Layout" centered around the layout of Rob Anderson when he lived in Canberra. Rob now lives in Bemboka and it was fortunate he was at the meeting. The presentation brought back memories for those who attended operating nights.

Even a couple of professional railroaders from the US made the effort to operate on Rob's layout.

A very enjoyable meeting with much socializing and a wonderful afternoon tea to finish, to Steve and Lorraine for hosting our first meeting.

Noel ANDREWS of Moruya NSW was welcomed to Division 2. Noel is a member of the Eurobodalla Model Railway Club on the south coast.

Finally, pencil in your diaries, the March meeting in Tumut NSW at the home of Martin Canteros-Paz on Sunday 21st. An email will be sent to advise members on final details.

John Gillies is inviting members to his home for the September Div 2 meeting on the usual third Saturday of the month.

Discussion on future meeting being at least 4 outside the ACT.

Not all members have the space to host meetings, for the 1.5 metre ruling under current COVID-19 guidelines, where investigations are being made to approach the various Clubs within the area for holding meetings.

March Meeting

Martin and Nico Canteros-Paz are inviting Division 2 members to Tumut NSW.

Two Dates are being offered, Saturday 13th or Sunday 21st.

Martin is also offering to provide lunch at cost to members.

The final date will be based on the majority of members wishing to attend.

For your consideration members may like to bring their wife/partner and make it a long weekend. Members wishing to make it a day only might consider car-pooling.

Previous meetings to Tumut have enjoyed the Canteros-Paz family hospitality.

Please indicate your preferred day by Friday 27th February.

Future Meetings in 2021

If you would like to host a meeting in 2021 it would be most appreciated.

Not having a home layout is not a requirement for hosting a meeting.

Preferably a meeting should be on the 3rd weekend of the month.

Presentations at Meetings, many of the items presented at Show-n-tell can be a presentation in themselves. They can go for more than five minutes and generate a lot of discussion amongst the members. So, if you have a topic or an item that is worthy of a presentation, say 15 minutes..... go for it.

A presentation/clinic can be part of the meeting agenda to give it, it's value.

From Saturday's 20th Feb. meeting, if you Show-n-tell an item could you please send a short description to Robin Foster, The FLIMSY editor, to assist in preparing the next issue of The Flimsy.

Finally, if you have comments, suggestions please email me for the benefit of our members.

Division 2 Members make the meetings!

Feel free to contact me at sob1952@hotmail.com with your comments, suggestions as what you would like from your NMRA membership and Division 2.

Thank you,

Stephen.

Members were requested to look under their seat where a 'surprise' was to be found which Brad HINTON being the winner of a box of railway magazines.

Update to The FLIMSY (non) postings to the NMRA Web Site.

John GILLIES instigated an enquiry to find out 'why no posting for over a year of The FLIMSY', it must also be noted that there were no postings from other Divisions to the Web site, there were many an emails exchange where upon those 'many back issues' of the FLIMSY were emailed separately to the nominated addressee's. No replies or bounces were received.

Those Division publications are not only for that Division but other Divisions as others who are searching information in a quest to learn 'what is happen', this also is a tool to recruit potential New Members

I am pleased to report that the NMRA website Newsletters for the missing year for Division Two - The FLIMSY has now been posted. <https://www.nmra.org.au/region/Newsletters.html> hopefully the other Divisions happenings will follow in time.

There are three kinds of people.

Those who make things happen.

Those who watch; and

Those who wonder, what happened.

Keep on training.

Robin.

Mal RISBY is presented with his 25 years NMRA Membership plaque by Stephen O'BRIEN.



Show-n-tell.

John BULLEN:

Following on with the Christmas theme within January 2021 The FLIMSY the 'snow season is gearing up'

A vote of thanks to our editor to the production of The FLIMSY for the benefit of informing members activities [response from your editor] The FLIMSY owes its thanks to Members support given for its contents from Members during tis COVID-19 situation.

Brad HINTON:

Advised that the National Library of AUSTRALIA Archives has just released & posted online early advertising signages used within various States & Territories of AUSTRALIA.

John GILLIES:

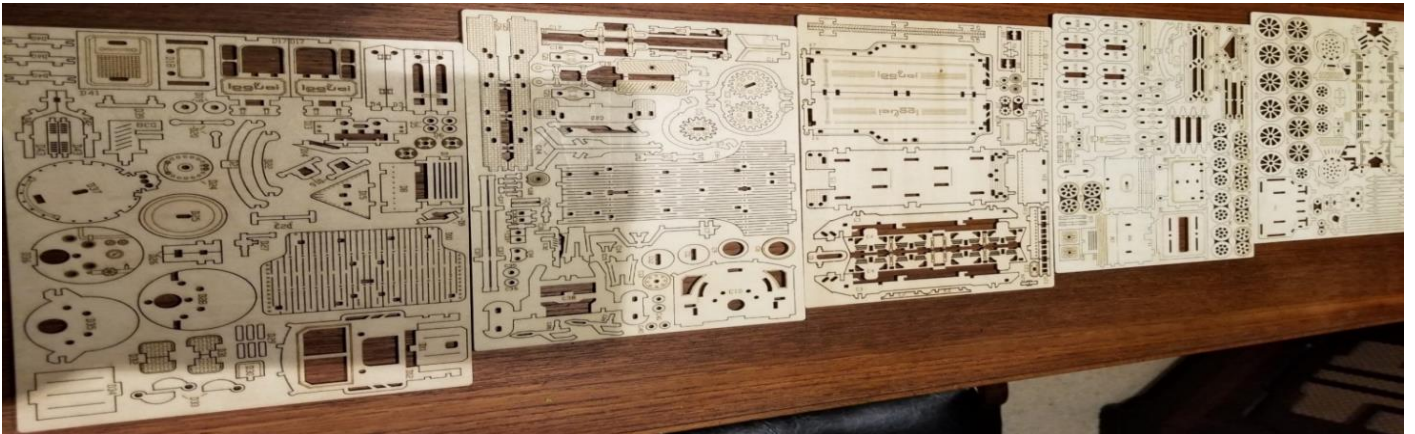
Consideration with discussion on members views requested for the Div 2 activities & future planning.

Here's a different car in a UP executive train car as added to the freight car collection at Railcar Photos <https://www.railcarphotos.com/index.php?> today. The coyote was always the victim!



Wai PYWELL:

I was impressed with the number of small parts and the accuracy of the laser-cut wood parts on five separate sprue sheets.



Here are some examples of the sheets before assembly started. Everything went together exactly with no glue required. I did use a spot of superglue on the cabin roof to hold the curved part down. The instructions were clear but must be followed exactly as to the order of assembly, otherwise the next part will not fit where it is meant to go.

The made-up model, NO GLUE required, except for one small part that was inadvertently broken.



Some quotes from the Instruction Sheet might be of interest.

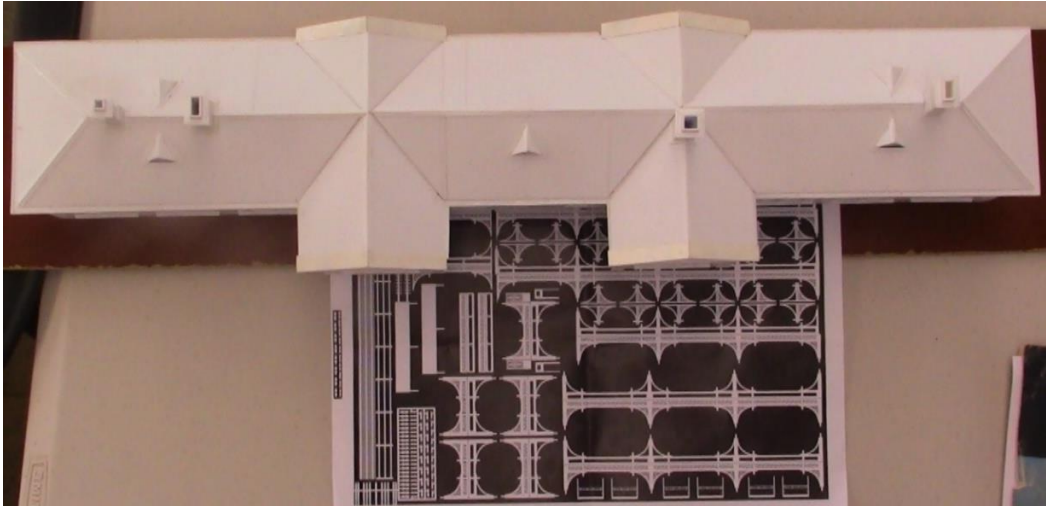
“This product is suitable for people over 8 years old, Children must be assembled by an adult”

“Please put this product close to the fire source and into the water by mistake.”

Rob NESBITT:

The newly roofed Wagga station to the meeting was admired and measured, particularly by Ross, who has offered to assist in the tricky distinctive veranda iron work. The footprint of the station is just a smidge over 53 x 8cm. Rob estimates that the station is about 2/3 completed, and probably needs another 3 months - having spent 5 months to get to this stage.

Wagga station arial view showing the printed artwork for the brass etchings by Ross BALDERSON of the iron work for the station - which is a collaborative & what the NMRA is all about.



The front entrance of the station against the rural backdrop



The rear / platform of the station, that backdrop really enhances the yet to be painted areas.



Ian BARNES:

The two photos are of the remains of one of the original Roman roads between the Mediterranean and Paris part of which I walked in 2012. The horse and cart traffic over the centuries was enough to wear down wheel ruts in the solid rock in places where the road narrowed through a gorge and it was important that the cart stayed its course lest it fall over the side. That is me in the photo and I measured the distance between the ruts at approximately four feet eight and a half inches.



YOU WILL LOVE THE LOGIC HERE...

The U.S. standard railroad gauge (distance between the rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches. that is an exceedingly odd number. Why was that gauge used?

Because that is the way they built them in England and English expatriates designed the U.S. railroads.

Why did the English build them like that?

Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways and that's the gauge they used. Why did 'they' use that gauge then?

Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they had used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing.

Why did the wagons have that particular odd wheel spacing?

Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon wheels would break on some of the old, long distance roads in England because that is the spacing of the wheel ruts.

So, who built those old, rutted roads? Imperial Rome built the first long distance roads in Europe (including England) for their legions. Those roads have been used ever since and the ruts in the roads?

Roman war chariots formed the initial ruts, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagon wheels, since the chariots were made for Imperial Rome, they were alike in the matter of wheel spacing.

Therefore, the United States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches is derived from the original specifications for an Imperial Roman war chariot. In other words, bureaucracies live forever.

So the next time you are handed a specification, procedure, or process and wonder, 'What horse's ass came up with this?', you may be exactly right. Imperial Roman army chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the rear ends of two war horses.

Now, the twist to the story: When you see a Space Shuttle sitting on its launch pad, you will notice that there are two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank. These are solid rocket boosters or SRBs. The SRBs are made by Thiokol at their factory in Utah.

The engineers who designed the SRBs would have preferred to make them a bit larger, but the SRBs had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site.

The railroad line from the factory happens to run through a tunnel in the mountains, and the SRBs had to fit through that tunnel.

The tunnel is slightly wider than the railroad track and the railroad track, as you now know, is about as wide as two horses' behinds. So, a major Space Shuttle design feature of what is arguably the world's most advanced transportation system was determined over two thousand years ago by the width of a horse's ass and you thought being a horse's ass wasn't important!

Now you know, Horses' Asses control almost everything.

Explains a whole lot of stuff, doesn't it?

Warren BACKHOUSE:

The Accutrack II speedometer uses the precision of a microcontroller to measure the time between two infrared beams that the train passes through. Based on this time, the scale speed can be calculated from a mathematically derived calibration factor.

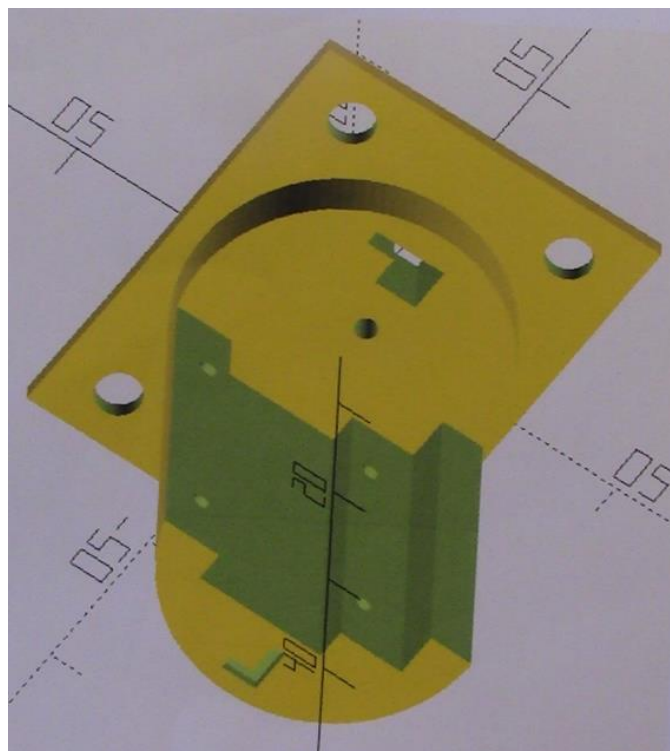
Built into the software are the calibration factors for US (1:160) and UK (1:148) N scales, US H0 and British 00, and these factors are selectable from a button accessible from the front panel of the device.

Speed is displayed for 5 seconds and then unit goes into power saving mode.

Auto shut off after 5 minutes of no trains.

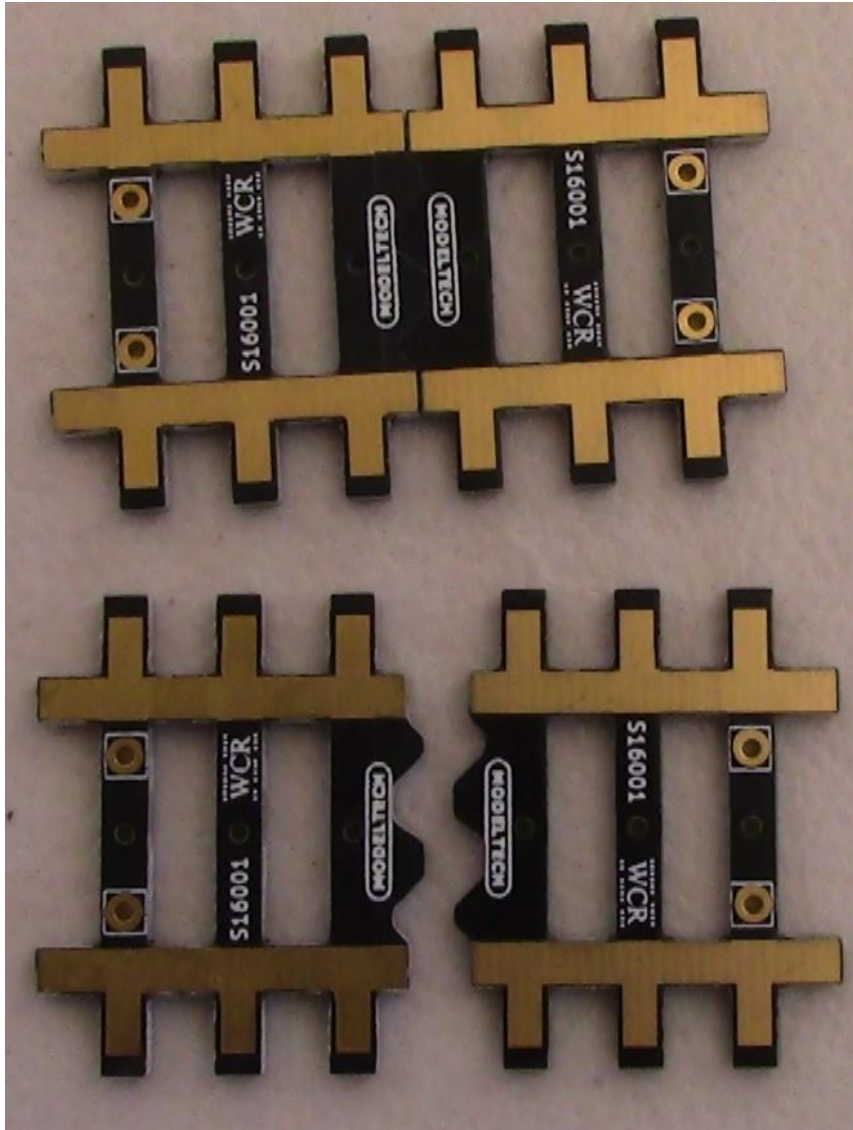


Diagram of a mounting plate for tortoise / Arduino motors / signals

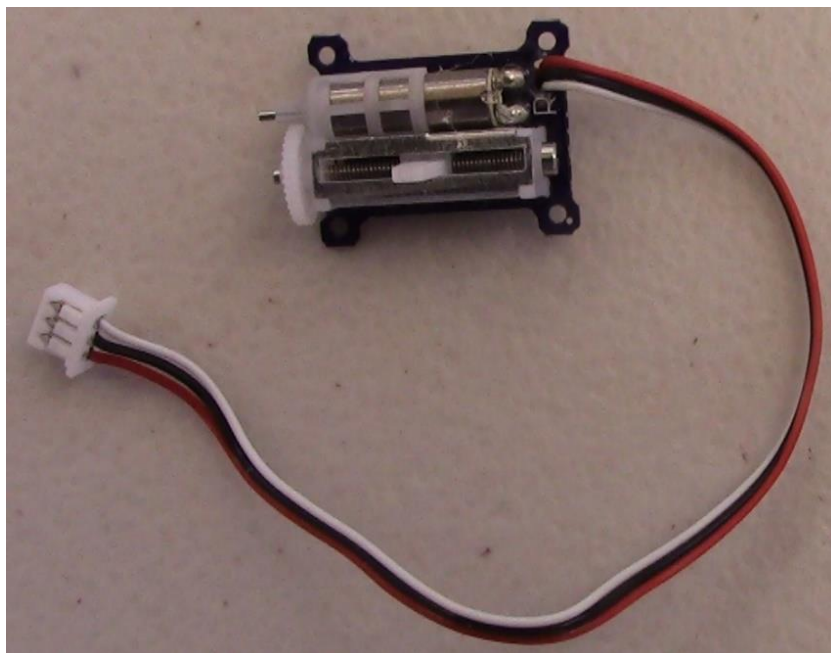


Edge connector for soldering when connecting end boards these are made for various gauges

Model Tech website <https://www.modeltech.uk/shop>



Micro Linear servo motor DCC Guy



Test construction for the FREMO AUS HO test boards, half board, full board & a half board



Close up showing the cork subbase, roadbed for track entrance in to double track

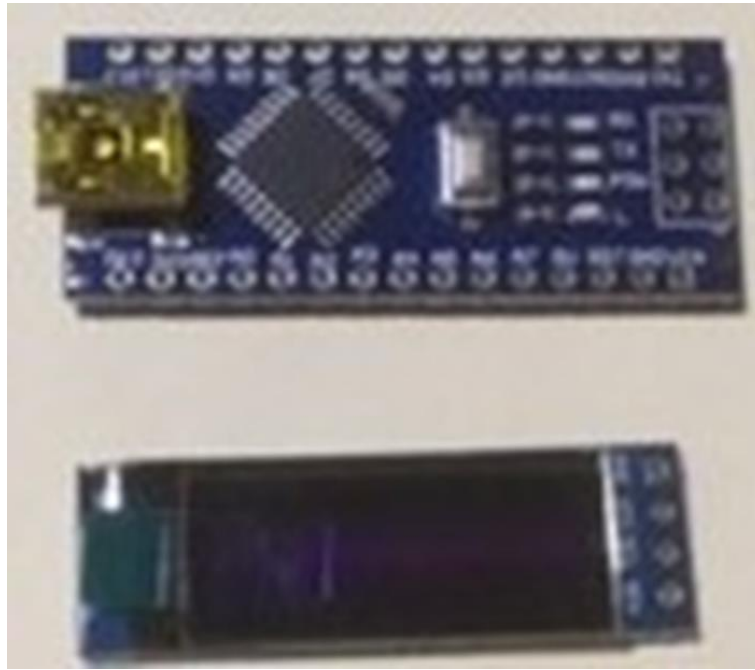


It is hoped that Div 2 members will be encouraged to participate to this project.

Jack CHILD:

Arduino: A Rolling Speedometer

Having seen the track-based speedometers at various exhibitions, I thought it would be fun to build a speedometer capability into a bit of rolling stock. I found an old Lima OO horse wagon, and on close inspection realised how well suited it was for this task. The OO horse wagon is large enough to house the Arduino Nano, an OLED [Organic Light Emitting Diode] display and a 9v battery. The fixed two-axle suspension is also the best option for fitting a wiper to the wheel.



The OLED displays are great. They have a simple two wire interface, low current draw, and an easy-to-use library (www.adafruit.com) makes installation a snap. The Arduino Nano below is 45mm in length, while the OLED display is 37mm.



The horse wagon with all the goodies in place.

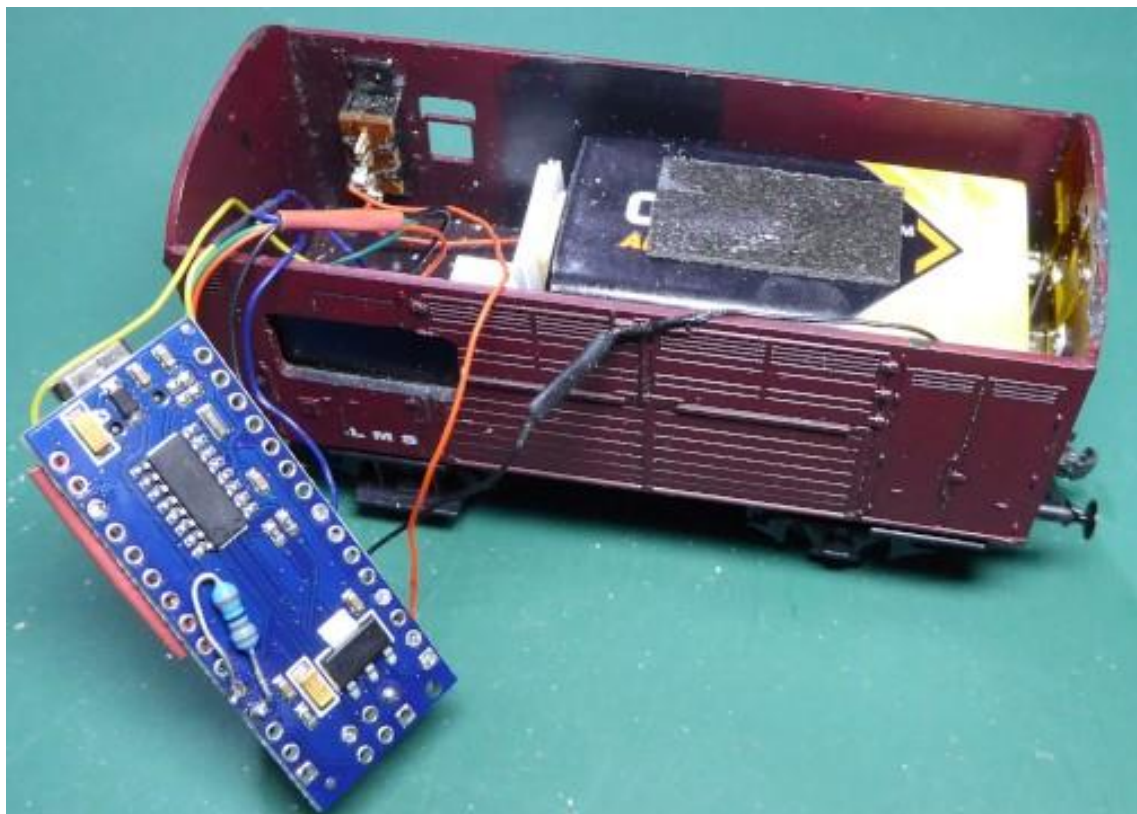
The on/off switch was set in the window of the door, while the display was set behind the rear window.



A lot of troubleshooting, calibration and various debounce methods were tried. I ultimately chose to use a hardware debounce as opposed to software; it just seemed to make more sense. But the circuit I selected was in error and caused the Nano to reset quite frequently. When I finally sorted out the problem it all started working very nicely.

Because the OLED display is rather slow, calibration was a challenge. Calibration is distance-based, so I wrote a program to count the number contacts over 5 metres. Dividing 5 by number of counts gave an accurate measure of the wheel circumference.

The image below shows the wiper assembly. It was made with a styrene disc and a strip of adhesive copper foil. A phosphor bronze wiper for the disc and another for the axle completes the job.



The unit does not rely on track power in any way. The 9v battery life is more than 24hrs, so many measurements can be made before a simple battery replacement / recharging as required.

There may be better options than the wiper method used here, but it seems to work (finally).

The Speed wagon can be used to measure the top speed of a locomotive, as well as for setting up speed tables to give standard speeds at specific speed steps, such as step 8 = 20km/h, step 12 = 50km/h, step 28 = 100km/h, etc. It could also be used for speed matching locos used with consists.



NSWGR 4479 on the test run trials.



John MARTIN:

Arrowhead Models HO Scale Railgon Gondola, the tie down lashing detail is not all that clear in this boxed S&T picture not showing the side post tie downs on the top of the sills.



Full top chord detail, including: Wine Drop Lok #1613 tie downs and properly spaced appropriately dimensioned fastener holes.



Farmers COOP Pullman-Standard 4750 3-Bay Covered Hopper Farmers Co-op Farnhamville, IOWA



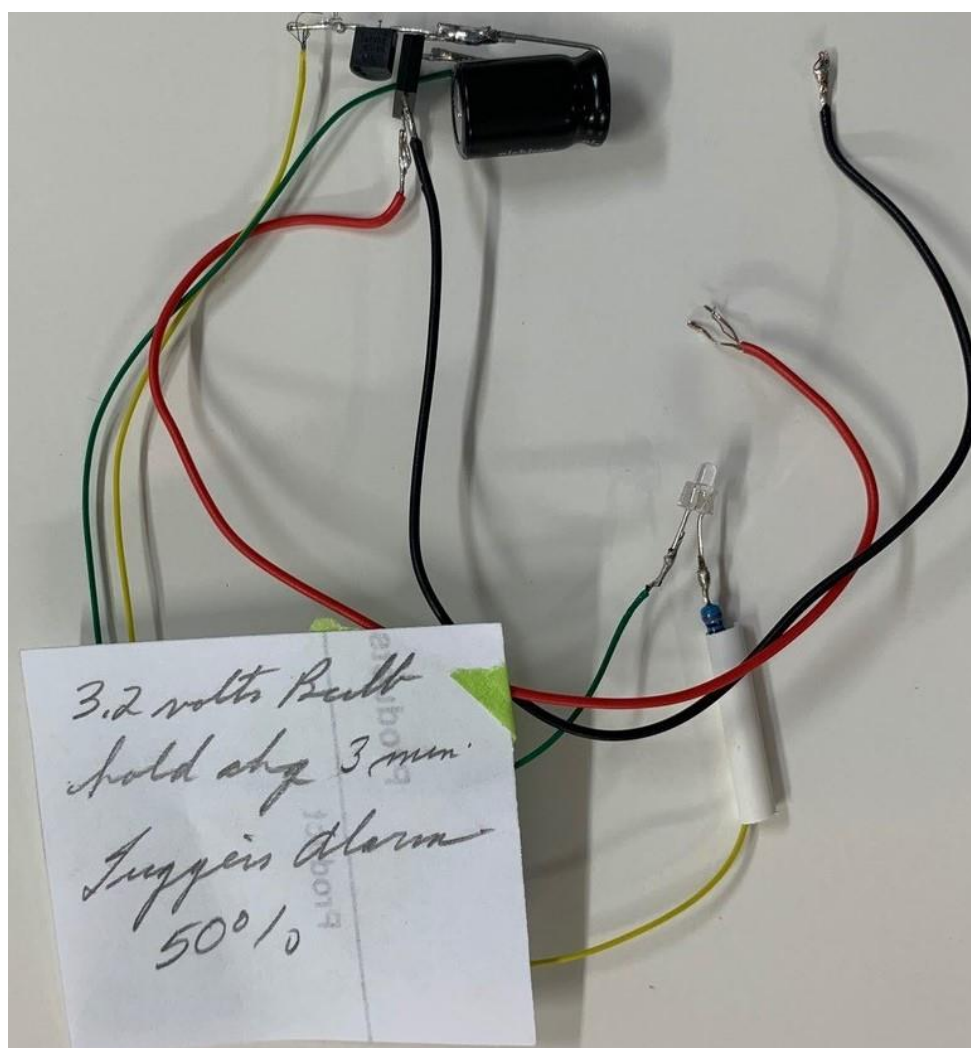
Mathew WATERREUS:

BLMA HO Scale Bx-166 60ft Beer Car Box Car Santa Fe ATSF #621505 Indian Red

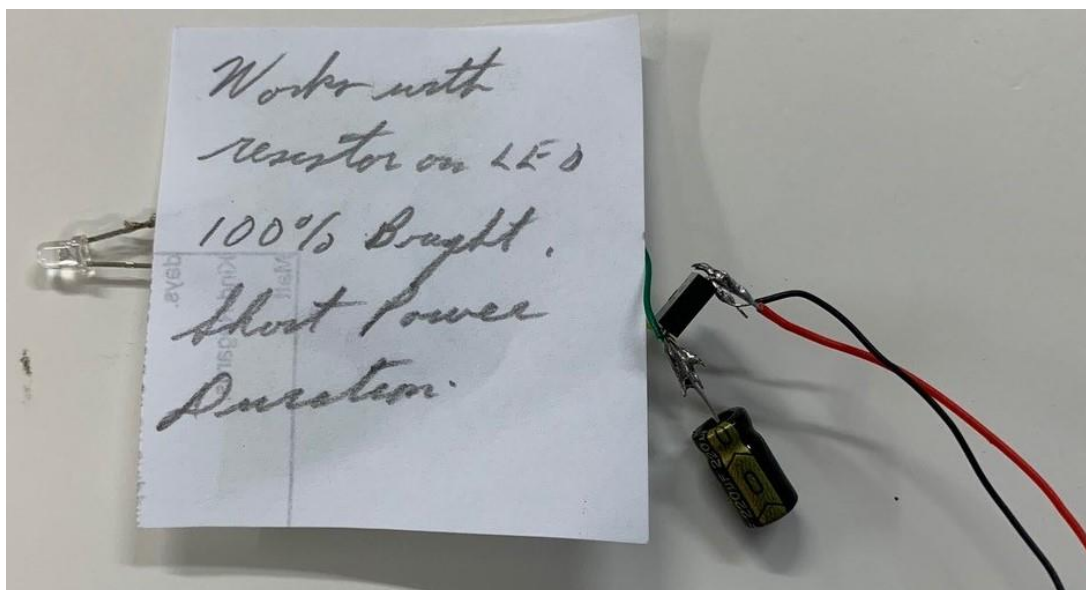


Matt SEMENAS:

My experience with trying different current keepers for lighted passenger cars. The first is based on an article I read and followed the instructions it consists of a capacitor, a rectifier and a diode. What I found with this set up is the brightness of the light bulb is decreased by about 50%. In addition, every time I connect it to the track power, I initially get a power interruption that the circuit breaker on my district senses and the alarm goes off for a short period of time over the long term this would be a real pain.

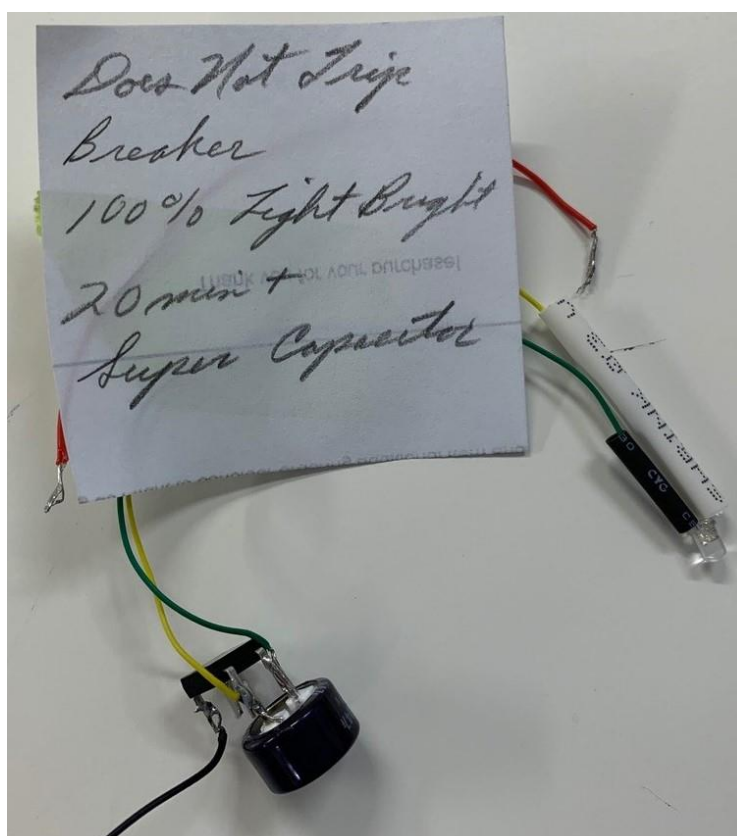


Next, I tried a setup with a smaller capacitor and just the rectifier and it works great the capacitor keeps the light going for a few seconds after signal interruption. Also, the light was at 100% brightness and no triggering of my PSX circuit breaker on initial connection. This is probably the option I am going to go with in the long term.



The setup included a 5-volt super capacitor and a rectifier and to my amazement it worked at 100% brightness and stayed on for 20 minutes or more after power was cut. There was no power surge or tripping of circuit breaker as it was connected to the track. I did express my concern on using it and that was justified when Jack told me that if left connected to the track the capacitor could and would blow up and potentially cause a lot of damage to the passenger car a true and real explosion and derailment on the HO tracks. Jack did indicate that if connected in a series this setup would work but I believe would still require a voltage regulator. *Jack, can you advise me as to what the voltage regulator would be and where I could get one please.*

Super Capacitor [JAYCAR] requires recharges at 30 minutes



The last item for discussion was the John Bull that I converted to DCC and had sent out a video of the train running. I installed a XL steam decoder with sound and a light for the locomotive as well as the 4 passenger cars. The decoder works great but the locomotive being so light it does not take much to make it skip a beat on the tracks. Unfortunately, the XL steam decoder does not provide for a plug-in current keeper. So, I have purchased a TCS WOW Sound decoder for steam as shown in the photo below and have solder on an iPhone 4 speaker (Rapido is using iPhone 4 speaker in all the locomotives now), I will be removing the XL decoder and installing the TCS WOW Steam decoder with its factory installed current keeper. An interesting feature is the braking function, TCS describes the current DCC braking similar to a slot car where you simply turn a dial to slow down or speed up. With the TCS Steam decoder you must press a designated F key for braking increments like the real steam locomotives. This will be interesting to test out and add further confusion to the operating group I have set up for my operating sessions.



The installation of adding a TCS WOW Sound system to the John BULL [refer The FLIMSY August 2020] is in progress to work out where to install the WOW decoder, iPhone speaker also the issues for wiring the lighting.

Ben FEATHERSON:

Assembled Pullman car 'Lake Augusta' this is a 10-1-2 section sleeper with ice air-conditioning of note is the large ice box under the car.



The Pullman pool car is now almost ready for service and will be a great addition to any train when the home railroad requires more rolling stock than they have on the roster to fill a bumper season.



This kit took a bit of time to put together having some nice detail. The instructions are superbly detailed with some information on the pullman cars included. The helpful photo of sprue with labelled parts makes much easier to identify parts. Passengers are scale 1:100



Some light weathering will be applied to the trucks eventually when I have the other two kits built. A project for another holiday maybe...

Branchline PULLMAN 'BISON' now under construction.

These Blueprint Branchline kits have now been acquired by ATLAS with some upgrades to detailing and are now RTR at a price.

An at home afterthought: Designing a working track plan.

Attending the February meeting and listening to the comments Members made on layouts past, made me contemplate my own journey in creating my layout. I do not have a lot of experience in operating other layouts. With that in mind I wondered if I might be able to tap into some of this experience and knowledge amongst the membership.

I am a novice in the hobby but am fortunate enough to have some space to build an HO layout. My interest lies primarily in passenger operations focused those of the golden age of rail travel. The two railroads I have chosen to focus on are the Great Northern and the Southern Pacific in the pacific northwest of the US. The time period is the 50's & early 60's. This allows me to run streamliners, railcars and heavyweights on secondary services or as fill in cars. Freights can have cabooses and I have an excuse to run some steam operations.

My proto freelanced layout was a folded dog bone, this had allowed me to have a continuous run while not giving the appearance of trains chasing their tail. Off this dog bone was a spur that ran into a terminus with a small yard.

Late last year and during 2020 I made the decision that a section of my home layout needed to be replaced rather than repaired. As a few years before I had altered my track plan correcting one hard to reach area however this had left me with somewhat of a conundrum as an unworkable grade had effectively left me with a layout in two sections. The second turn back curve remained unreachable, except for the most limber who could rescue a stranded train.

I have since revised the track plan and with it would like to get more into operations...eventually, rather than continually running circulating trains (although an option to do so would be attractive for when the nieces and nephews visit). In altering the track plan to firm up a better 'operational' plan I have opted to rebuild sections in module format so that I could approach this in a progressive way and in so doing so have something to run as I go. The added benefit will be some portability should the situation arise.

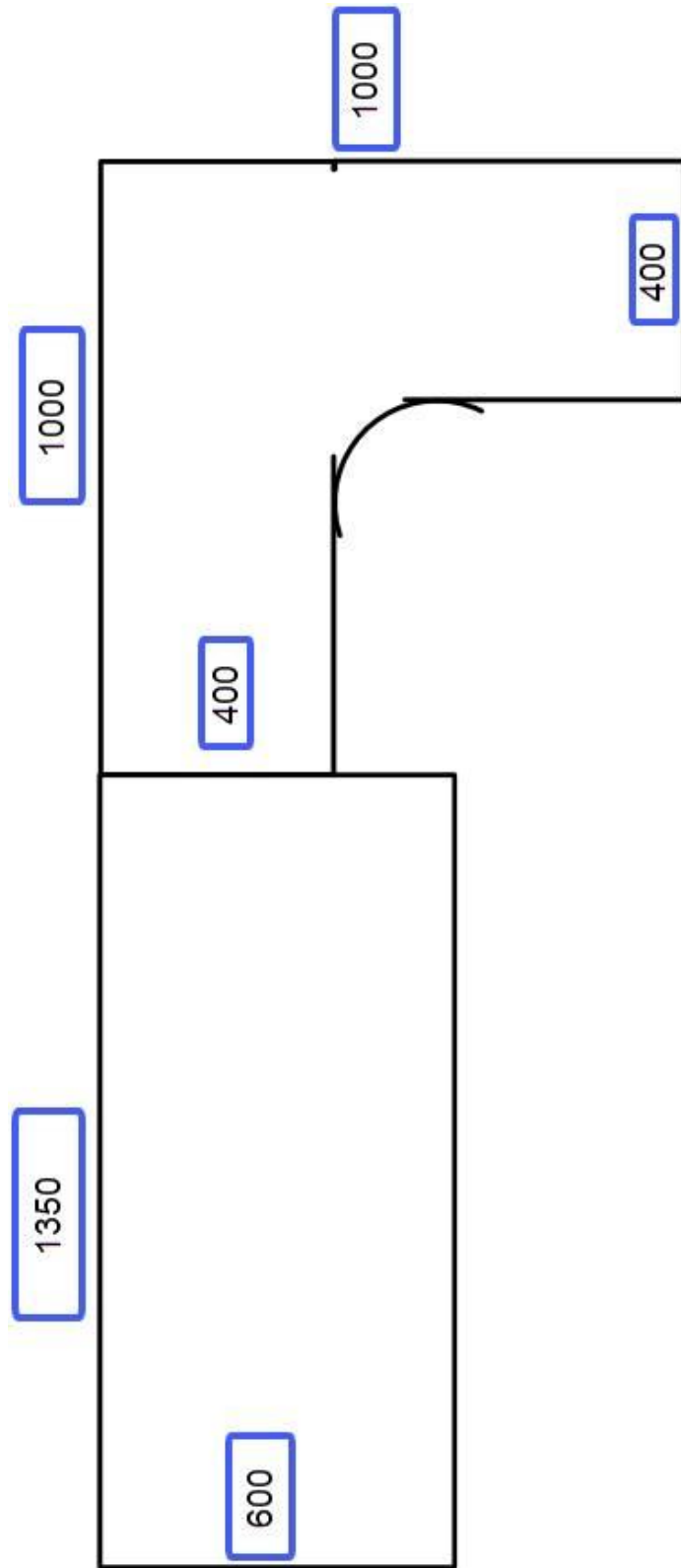
This is where I would be grateful for any suggestions from the collective experience of the members as I go, I will be designing modules 'along that line'.

So, what have we got to work with? Two modules a rectangular 600 x 1350mm and a corner module 400 x 1000mm.

As we come out of the terminal (in my case King street station, Seattle) we make a 90 degree turn onto the module in question here I envisage an engine facility for the servicing requirements of the locomotive fleet. I do require a through road/line to continue along the line, which starts with two tracks entering from the left-hand side (Seattle) and one exiting stage right off the corner module. Those tracks entering from Seattle enter at 400mm from the back and curve on a 32inch(812.8mm) radius to approximately 200mm from the back (with roughly 330mm of travel on the horizontal axis).

I am open to any ideas should you wish to contribute them. I know space is limited however I am trying for something that is operationally interesting and provides some on layout storage for some locomotives. This area is part of the city limits as the mainline travels on past it enters small towns and countryside. One day my wish list includes a future extension for a coach yard, but I may need a bigger studio!!

Everything else is up to your imagination.



The parameters to work with are;

Scale	HO
Minimum mainline Radius	32 inches
Governing Rollingstock	4-10-2

Items that can be included.

Turntable	Pit Diameter 34.9cm
Round House	36.2 x 36.2cm
Coaling Tower	12.7 x 15.2cm

Div 2 Hosted meeting.

Steve WALKER posed the Question: What makes trains?

Rolling stock being prototypical but with free-lance trackage's & Scenics.

The set of rules (SOP)

1st rule: The fat controller is always right.

This topic was bantered around giving instances to workings as re alignment to some trackage for enhanced operations where at times some consists were found to be exceeding their length at sidings where 'saw by' movements were required to allow trains to progress onto their assigned destinations, making operation sessions an interesting time constraint for arrivals.

The last say.

Austerity Frugal & Recycle.

Remember and adhere to the ~COVID-19~ medical advises.

Discussion on colours; when viewing at any angle whether from natural day / night as temperature, atmospheric conditions a mist / dust or in a controlled environment as a studio with artificial lighting can affect the colouring where photoshop may correct but doesn't display the true product as on photographed prototypical rolling stock where filters for either film / digital formats are used then when downloaded to a file then transferred to printing papers / mediums the inks are as close as to what is perceived. There are instances where the wordings "depending on your monitor colours may vary".

This is very apparent on the arial view of Rob NESBITT'S Wagga Station photographed at the meeting & the two outdoor photographs by Rob in natural settings. This model is HO 3.5mm foot.

The others being John MARTIN'S Railgon showing the colour of the end of the FARMERS COOP & Ben FEATHERSON'S Pullman under the same lighting but with different angles.

I am not a fan of 'photoshop'; only to edit for resizing photographs for fit within the pages.

Div 2 meetings are sort of an 'ad hock' for the moment / on a month-by-month notification basis until this virus is curtailed, so continue to 'BLING' my inbox on those 'at home' show-n-tell projects.

Keep on training

Robin.

To comply with current COVID-19 rules meetings will be advised.

2021: a year yet to be determined for scheduled events.

Keep an eye on your in box for hosted Meeting notifications.