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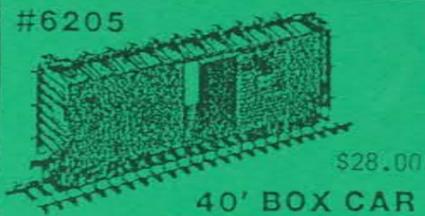
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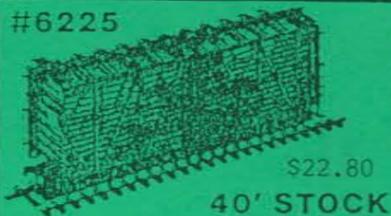
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VOLUME 6, NUMBER 4, OCT-NOV-DEC 1989
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MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL
OUR MEMBERS AND THEIR
FAMILIES



FROM THE PRESIDENT

I would like to thank all those members who gave up a little of their modelling or family time to assist at the Newcastle and Liverpool exhibitions. Both were successful and our stand attracted many enquiries plus a few new memberships. A special thanks to Sowerby Smith for organising the Liverpool exhibit in my absence.

The recent convention (Houston and Durango) in the U.S., enticed several of our members to visit and from all reports, our hobby is enjoying renewed interest with many new and interesting products becoming available. This is particularly true of the larger scales and I suspect 'G' scale is poised to become the 90's version of the popular American Flyer.

Since this is the Christmas edition I would like to extend the seasons greetings to all our members and their families. Let's hope that Santa does the right thing and seek advice on what to deposit in your Christmas stocking this year.

The new year will bring change and an opportunity for each of you to participate in the organisation of the Associations' activities. Yes it is election time again and all offices will be vacated. I urge all of you to seriously consider standing for office as it is only by change and the introduction of fresh ideas and enthusiasm that we will improve our Association and the benefits it affords members. The current executive would love to see a contested election in lieu of the usual struggle to fill vacancies.

Peter B

AUSTRALASIAN REGION DIRECTORY

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MAINLINE is the official journal of the Australasian Region of the National Model Railroad Assoc., Inc. It is published four times per year in approximately February, May, August and November. Articles, letters, members classified advertisements and club notices are solicited from the membership and are considered to be donated free for the benefit of the hobby. They should be forwarded to the Editor Mainline, P.O. Box 529 Epping NSW 2121.

Paid advertising is welcomed. Current rates payable in March for four issues are \$130 for a full page, \$70 for a half page, \$40 for a quarter page and \$150 for the back cover.

BILL'S BUMBLINGS

by Bill Cooper



OPTIMISM

Maggie thinks that my vast collection of old mags is a fire and bug hazard, and doesn't smell to well, either. Still, that doesn't stop me delving through them frequently. What a fine sense of modelling history they convey! For example, the swing of the editorial pendulum between optimism and pessimism.

In the dark, WWII days, optimism prevailed, despite the near impossibility of building a successful, operating layout. No couplers beyond the basic scale/gauge. Everything, including motors had to be built from scratch.

Oddly enough, when supplies resumed and the basic necessities of workable standards were developed, by the NRMA and others, some pessimism appeared. People actually complained about the growth of ready-to-run equipment, shake-the-box kits, PLASTICS (great horror), because of the disappearance of 'satisfaction' in creating gems from junk. Nonsense, of course. The availability of good stuff to buy freed modellers from the tyranny of scratchbuilding EVERYTHING, and letting them get along with other projects, while leaving the scratchbuilder to their own thing. If they want to build an F7 in HO, Blomberg trucks, gear drive and all, fine. No problem. But maybe no layout either. Scratchbuilding is essential to the hobby, but it is sensible to buy what you can, build what you can't.

Overall, from WWII to date, optimism has ruled. Editorial delight has occurred when something really significant appeared. The advent of cheap kits that could be made to work, like the Roundhouse SP 0-6-0, Athearn F7 and GP7, heavyweight passenger cars, Kadee couplers, RP25 wheels, SPUDs ... the list is very long. And growing.

Pessimism has appeared from time to time, not from the loss or lack of anything but from the fear of losing something, and the perception that this loss would see the ruin of the hobby. The end of steam and the decline in rail passenger travel were the source of great woe and alarm. Unnecessary, as it turned out. Today, proud, live steam still roams. The low public esteem of the tired, worn wrecks of the last steam runs have all but been forgotten. Passenger trains have hardly unseated the car, plane or bus, but have a better image than almost anybody would have predicted 10 years ago. Light Rail (trams/trolleys) is spreading, even to L.A.!

But the real concern of editors that has emerged is the loss of youth from the hobby. Years ago, kids dominated it. Older guys dabbled and guided, but 'Where will the next generation of train nuts come from?' This was a real fear, not limited to rail modellers.

Slot cars came, but evaporated as a 'threat'. The computers. There was ore to it than that. Kids just didn't seem to be interested in ANYTHING perceptible to oldies.

Lately, there has been a turnaround. The hobby has matured into the vast industry that it now is. The realisation came that it is a viable 'oldies' hobby. That the kids will do their thing, then enter the hobby arena. The fear is unfounded. Customers are there, insatiable for more and better products of all types. Things are hard to get, not because of war, or lack of plastic (a fear from the 1973 oil crisis), but because of the enormous and rising demand for products.

Magazines are now heavy with advertising and copy, with great and growing circulations. Their editorials now look to the future with glee, though with an element of puzzlement as to why the hobby is so healthy. Their bulk creates a storage problem, compared to their slim predecessors. Still, as even Maggie concedes, they smell better.

COVER

Remnant of a passing age, a high-speed interurban car of the Columbus, Delaware and Marion Electric Line will shortly leave for Columbus. The car even features a Hostess! Still, such innovations failed to stem the automobile.

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FRANKLIN COUNTY - REVISITED

By Gerry Hopkins

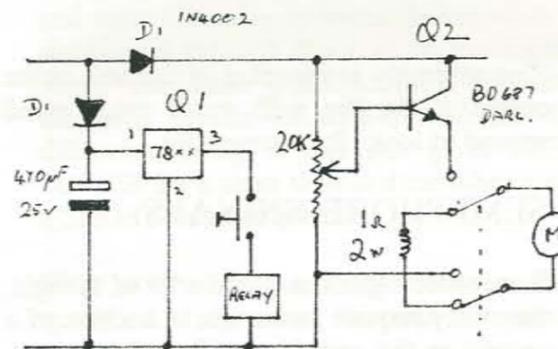
In this issue I will try and explain a few of the animations used on Franklin County.

TURNTABLE

The turntable is powered by a small DC motor with a gearhead, an ideal motor is the Switchmaster turn-out motor. The actual mounting depends on the motor used but I will only explain the electrical operation.

The power for the motor can be either AC or DC and any voltage from 5 volts to 25 volts. The circuit can be mounted on a small piece of circuit board as shown, the layout of the parts is not critical.

If you are using the motor from Switchmaster also use the resistor they supply so that you do not damage the motor.



In the circuit, {fig.1} D1 rectifies the current to DC which is supplied to the simple, adjustable voltage circuit of VR1 and Q2. The fixed regulator Q1 will supply the voltage for the relay:

- 7805 for a 5 volt relay
- 7809 for a 9 volt relay
- 7812 for a 12 volt relay
- 7824 for a 24 volt relay

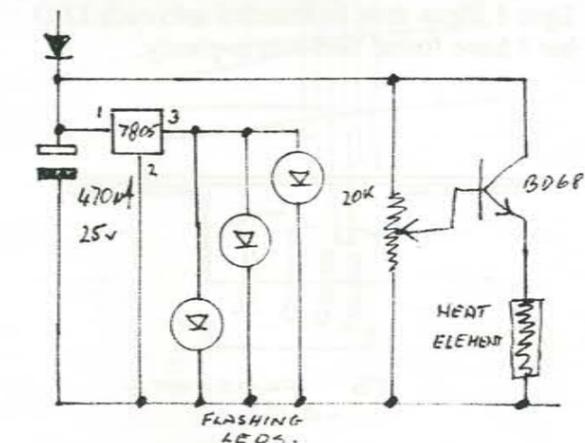
Remember to use a relay that has a voltage that is LESS than the supply voltage i.e. a 24

volt relay will not work on 14.5 volts, and a 12 volt relay will not work on a 5 volt supply!!!!

The output of the adjustable supply goes to the relay contacts and then to the motor. When you press the button the relay will energise and the motor will turn; adjust the speed of the turntable by adjusting VR1. When you release the button the turntable will stop dead! This is because the contacts of the relay connect a resistor across the motor.....Dynamic Braking.... and will stop the motor from coasting and will enable you to stop the turntable in EXACTLY the right spot.

HOBO'S CAMP

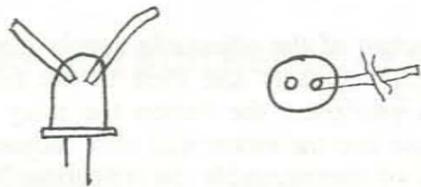
The hobo's camp has always been a good crowd pleaser. The wisps of smoke draw attention to the campsite and the flickering flames get a closer look.



The circuit {fig.2} is very similar to that of the turntable but this time a 7805 regulator MUST be used. This is used to power the three LEDs. Each LED is of the flashing type available in Red, Orange, and Yellow from JAYCAR electronics. Due to a variation in the internal tolerances the LEDs will flash at slightly different speeds on the same

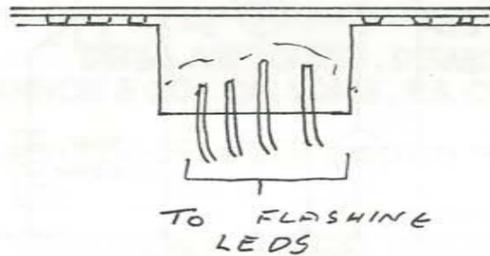
power supply voltage.

Drill two holes into each led as shown in the diagram {fig.3}. The holes are 1mm diameter and can be drilled to a depth of 2mm. Into each hole you can Superglue a piece of 1mm dia fibre optic, available from numerous hobby shops in Sydney or Melbourne. The fibre can be any length from 50mm to 200mm depending on the location.

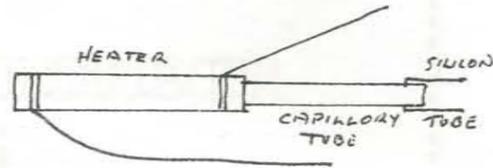


At this point you may wish to have a smokeless fire, if so, pull all the fibres into a bundle [at the loose end] and hold with a piece of tape or a rubber band. This can then be passed through a suitable hole in the baseboard and glued in place. Remember to flare the end of the fibre by placing near a naked flame. This will improve the visibility of the fibres. Place a few bits of scale twig around the fibres and you are ready to cook you breakfast!!

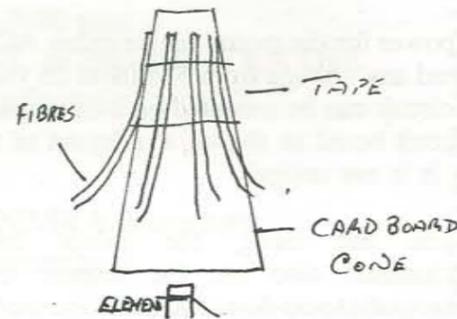
The same unit can be used to represent the coals in the ash pit at you loco depot {fig.4}. Upto 4 fibres may be inserted into each LED but I have found that two is plenty.



For those who want the full effect you will need to purchase a smoke generator from Suethe, model 503 is ideal. The generator is shown in the diagram. I fit a length of silicon tubing over the capillary end of the unit and run it to a convenient header tank set level with the top of the generator. {fig.5}



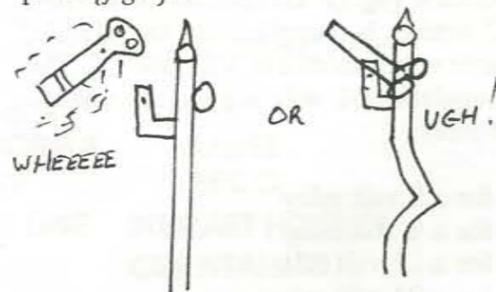
The adjustable voltage regulator is connected to the element and adjusted to a level where it just smokes in small puffs. When you are satisfied with this you can add the fibre optics. Make a cone of stiff card and to the outside of this tape the ends of the fibres as shown in the diagram {fig.6}.



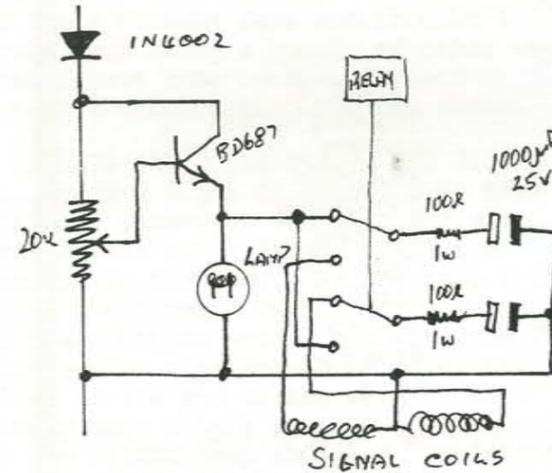
This assembly is mounted in the hole at the centre of the fire with small twigs glued around to look like a camp fire.

SEMEPHORE SIGNALS

Semaphore signals required a lot of thought, they only require power for a fraction of a second or the operating coil will burn out. Apply too much power and the force from the coil will bend the arm or tear it from the pivot {fig.7}.

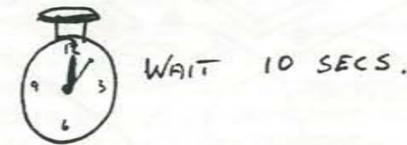


The circuit is relatively easy {fig.8}, VR1 is set so that the lamp {L1} only just glows. The relay can be operated by a simple on/off switch or by the contacts of your turn-out motor/relay. Operate the relay and count to ten....then release the relay... the arm should just move a fraction. If there is no movement, adjust VR1 slightly and try again. Keep adjusting until the signal arm moves firmly to its correct position.



The idea is that the capacitor is charged up and when the relay operates the capacitor is discharged through the coil of the signal. Much the same principle as a capacitor discharge system for turn-out motors, the difference being is that one gives HIGH POWER for a short time and the other gives a SHORT burst of power.

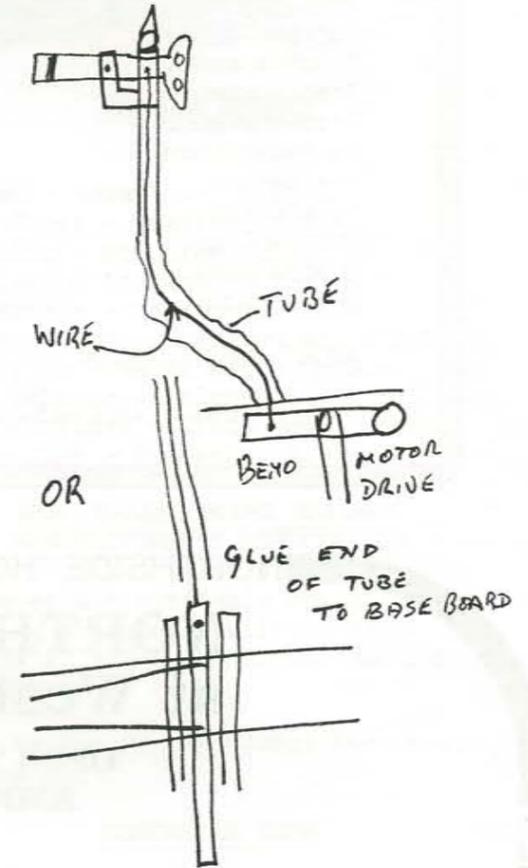
Wait at least 10 seconds between each operation of the relay, this will allow the capacitor time to recharge.



The lamp will also be at a safe brightness, the lamp will last for ever!!!



If you already have some signals with burnt out coils you can still make them operational. Remove the coil assembly from the bottom of the mast and remove the control rod that operates the signal arm. Fit a piece of stiff plastic tube (fuel line for model aircraft) that will reach to a motor drive turnout motor (Bemo are just right) or to the end of the arm that operates the turnout. Through this pass a thin piece of piano wire and attach to the signal arm. When the motor operates it will also operate the signal. {fig.9}



The same circuits can be used to operate water wheels, paddle wheels on steamers, the spout on water tanks, the fishing rod bobbing over the water when the fish are nibbling. I'm sure many other ideas will come to mind {after a few glasses of port! }.

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TO THE EDITOR

I am one of your overseas members and I have long enjoyed reading Main Line and have on occasion had a thing or two to say to the Editor - and so again.

I enjoyed the article by Richard Roth on the mounting of KD couplers to Athearn HO Scale Freight Cars and thought I would send along a couple of other ways that I have come upon, which are somewhat simpler than the one shown.

I install KD HO Old Timers (KD 711) on all my cars since it seems to me that they are closer to actual scale size than KD 5's are. In any event the process is the same. At one time I did drill the Athearn weight for clearance of the mounting screw, but with the 711 coupler the clearance hole is devilish close to the end of the weight, so I simply make a hack saw cut on each end on the weight deep enough to clear the screw. I do this with only one pass by mounting two blades side by side in an old hack saw frame dedicated to this use. I also made up a simple styrene locating jig so that I do not even have to mark the ends of the weight.

A second method, suggested to me by a friend in Portugal is to replace the Athearn weight with a full size sub-floor of styrene painted black and simple cement the KD draft gear box to this sub-floor. Then the weight for the car can be attached to the inside of the car body with double faced tape. I use commercial 1/4 oz weights (I was lucky enough to come by a substantial supply free) or I cut up wheel balancing weights which I find in the street when I go on my daily walk, and pound them flat on a piece of old rail I use for an anvil. If this method is used then some sort of brake parts - I use McKean - must be put on the sub-floor in the underbody detail desired.

Cheers

C.A. "Zeke" Forter



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Thanks to Don Wishart (Vic) for chasing that one up.

NEWCASTLE SHOW

This year's show was up to its usual high standard and saw the launch of our new display stand. Occupying an area 2m x 3m it featured photographs, magazines, company store, continuous videos and a standard module. From all accounts the stand was very successful and attracted many visitors.

I would like to thank Sowerby Smith and Gary Wheatley for their assistance in constructing the display and the following members who gave their time to many the display stand - Gordan Farnsworth, Bill Cooper, Bruce Lovett, Ray Hunt, Brian Nickles, Keith Dick, Glen Stevens, Bruce Heinzl, Sowerby Smith, Mike Hallinan and Peter Scouler.

Peter B.

NORTHSIDE HOBBIES

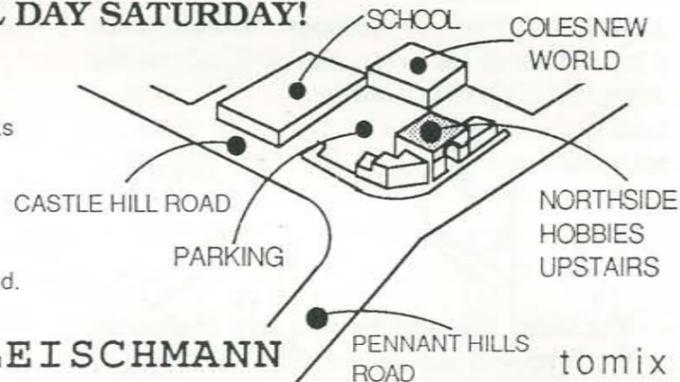
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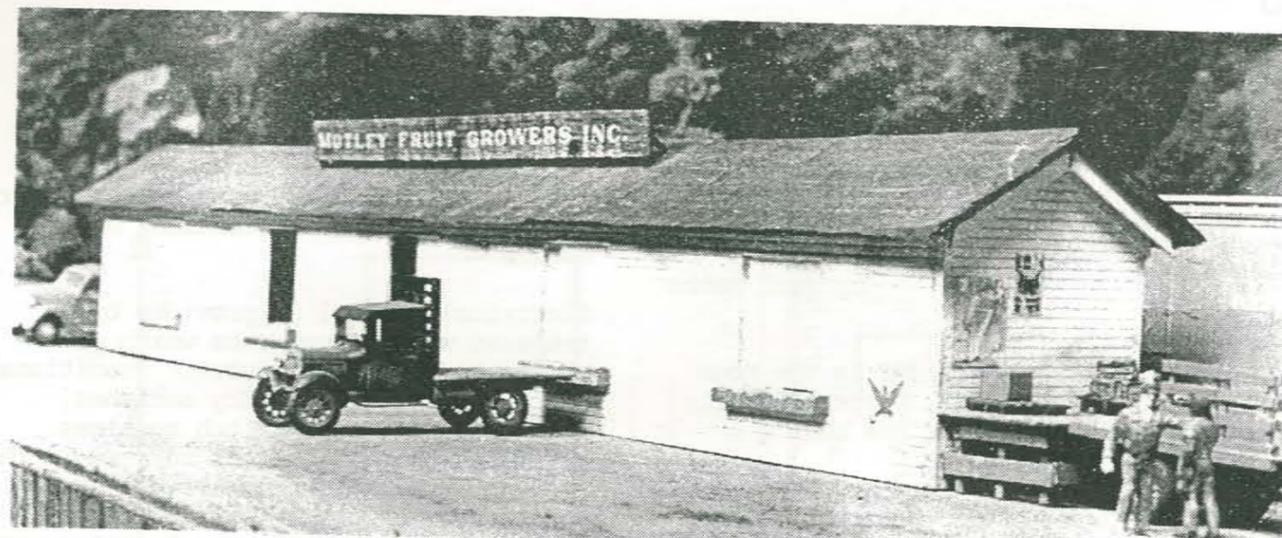
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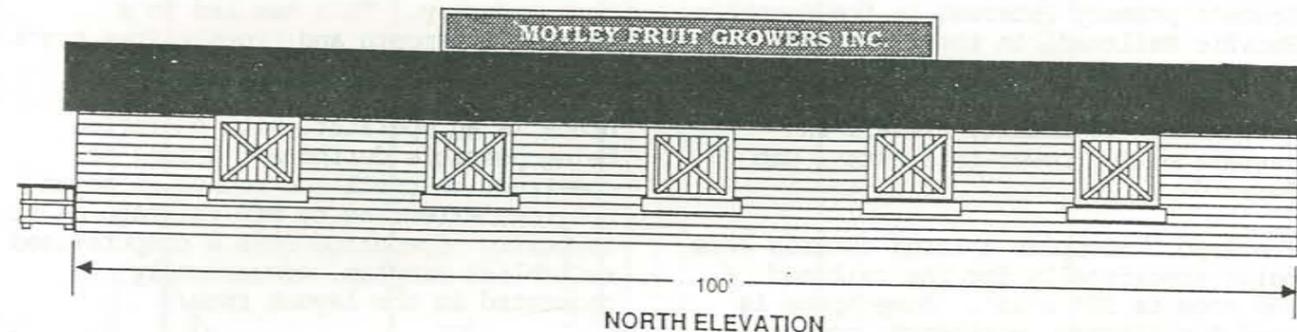
NAME (as you want it on badge)	Hometown	Plan	Extras

Please fill out in BLOCK CAPITAL PRINTING so we can read it accurately.
 Check dollar amount paid matches plans requested.

You are welcome to photocopy this form for friends who may be interested in attending WAITEMATA 150 CONVENTION.



This fruit-growers' loading dock was scratchbuilt from a fuzzy photo in a Great Northern historical society quarterly
 Photo by ROGER PARRY



A Fruit Growers' Co-Op Loading Dock

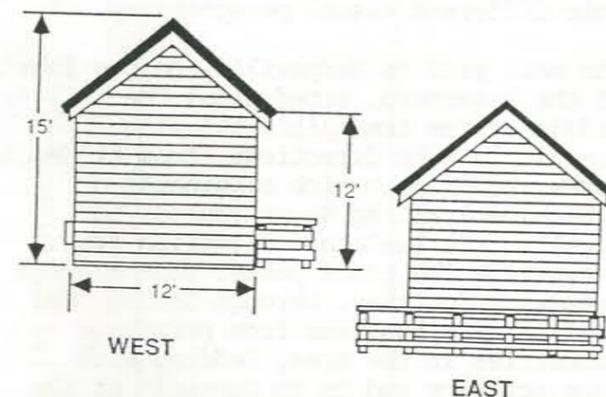
By LARRY WRIGHT
 HOTBOX Editor

"Here's what I want for the fruit growers' siding in Lou's Ford," said Roger Parry.

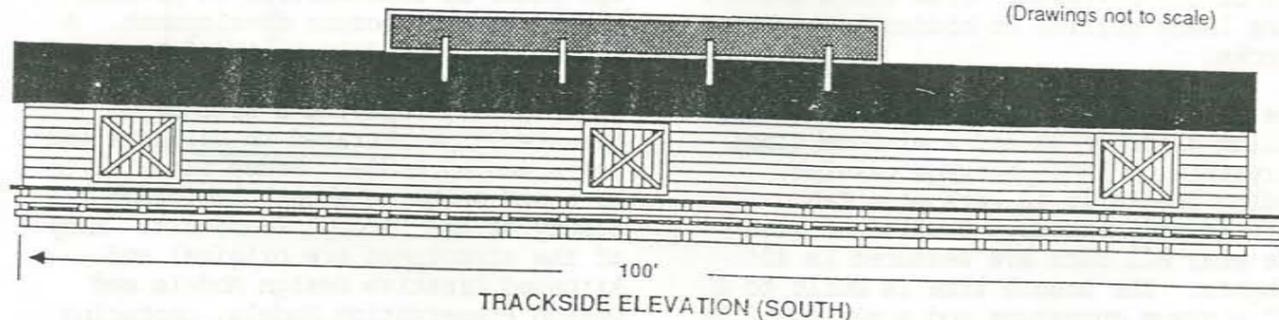
What I was looking at was a tiny, fuzzy photograph of an apple loading facility in a Great Northern historical society newsletter. Only part of the building was showing, but it was enough to get the flavor of the structure. Sometimes that's all you need.

The building is simple, but functional. Trucks unload their produce on one side, and the produce is loaded onto refrigerator cars on the other. Doors on the track side should be spaced the length of the reefers your railroad commonly uses. Spacing of the doors on the other side is not critical. We settled on a 100-foot length for the building since that would fit comfortably on the siding.

The building was built from wood, but styrene would do just as well. Strips of thin paper were used on the roof to simulate tarpaper.



(Drawings not to scale)



Courtesy NCR HOTBOX

MOUNT THUNDER RAILROAD

by Paul Hobbs

The Mount Thunder Railroad is the home layout of Bruce Seddon, Director of the New Zealand Division of the NMRA's Australasian Region.

The layout will be on the tours of Waitemata 150 Convention to be held in Auckland in 1990.

Bruce's primary interest is the Southern Pacific Railroad, in the 1947-1948 period, set in the scenic Mount Shasta area of Northern California, which enables him to indulge himself in certain motive power interests - Cab Forwards.

The layout occupies a large outside room built specifically for the railroad. The room is 30' x 15'. Some space is used for library, workbench, computer and a social area. The layout itself occupies 2/3 of the room, with a walk in format in the shape of a capital G. A scenic divider separates modelled zones into different visual perspectives.

The main yard is Marysville, on one lobe of the baseboard, sited about the middle of the trackplan, allowing traffic in both directions, from hidden yards, to Chico, which originates a branch, spiralling Mount Thunder to Magalia. In the other direction from Marysville the track passes Tehama, with several industries, through Gerber, Red Bluff - with business from primary industries in the area, Redding with more activity and on to Dunsmuir at the end of the division. From Chico another line leads offline to hidden interchange tracks.

The mainline is designed and built to a ruling grade of 2% and a minimum track curvature of 36". Average passing siding length is 13 cars plus Cab Forward and caboose. Consistent with the era, all cars are measured in 40' lengths. The branch line is built to a 32" minimum curvature and a maximum 2.5% grade. Train lengths on the branch are

restricted to 6 cars, with motive power generally being consolidations or moguls.

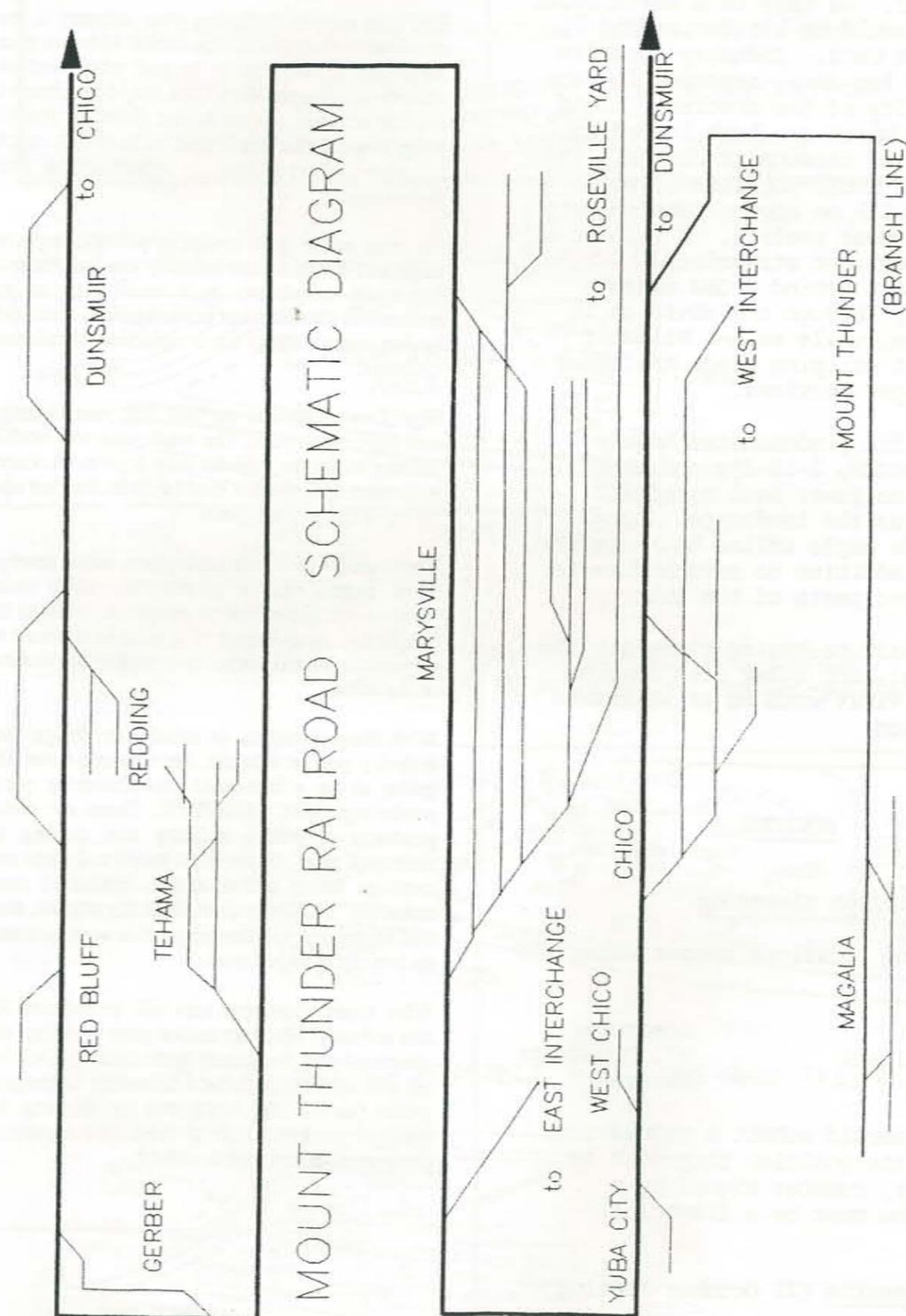
Electrical control is provided by 5 tethered walk around cabs which give access to the whole layout. Traditional block control uses rotary switches, with twin coil type switch machines activated by push buttons mounted in the fascia board. The benchwork was constructed using L Girder and open frame principles, trackage is Atlas with Shinohara turnouts, code 100, laid mainly on a form of spline roadbed with cork underlay. This has led to a relatively smooth and trouble free track alignment.

Bruce is an operator, with operation being possible during all phases of construction until the mountains began to grow, extending to new trackage as it is built. Operation uses a computerised switchlist program, conveniently generated in the layout room.

As may be surmised, rolling equipment is very much to prototype, mostly painted and lettered brass steam locomotives which served the area at the time. A few diesels in Black Widow and Daylight colours indicate future trends on the prototype. From discussions with railroad management however, it is apparent that the new fangled motive power has not found any favour and every effort is being made to secure and extend the life of steam in daily use.

This area is high fire risk country, and Bruce has an interesting Fire Train using a T-1 4-6-0 and water tankcars, all set up for instant use.

The phase of construction at present is scenery and structure development. A recent visit by John Smith of Pecos River Brass saw a mountain built in short order, repaying a similar disaster?? perpetrated in Dallas a few years ago by Bruce. Bruce is still to be heard mumbling about the former beauty of see through framework. Many of the structures are original and kitbased Creative Design Models and Design Preservation Models, capturing the dominant brick of area towns.



Rolling stock is nicely balanced with approximately 50% SP and Mount Thunder, other Western Roads and some from mid western roads. As this is a North/South route there would be little traffic using Eastern Cars. Industry specific cars include log cars, representing the lumber activity of the district, along with reefers which are both loaded on line and passed through in blocks. The tastes of the local populace is well catered for with an appropriate variety of billboard beer reefers. A variant of the Shasta Daylight streamlined passenger train behind a GS4 makes a pass each way through the division in daily service, while an A-6 Atlantic with Daylight striping heads the short local passenger services.

Freight traffic predominates however, and Cab Forwards, 2-10-2's and other large mainline power haul essential traffic across the landscape. Local towns provide ample online business for the road in addition to merchandise to and from other parts of the country.

We look forward to having you visit the Mount Thunder, and other area layouts during your visit with us at Waitemata 150 Convention.

NOTICES

1990 Elections

The following positions become vacant in May 1990:

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| President | Treasurer |
| Vice President | All Directors |
| Secretary | Trustee |

Candidates should submit a signed note indicating the position they wish to nominate for, counter signed by a nominator who must be a financial member.

Raffle Results (21 October Meeting)

The box of mushrooms generously donated by John Baker, raised \$64 and was won by Franz Persson.

CTC-16 SIG

So far 8 members have expressed interest. Hopefully we will get ourselves organised very shortly and produce some useful information.

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS
(Suggestions Appreciated)
By Keevan Burnside

The first step in designing your industry is the site development phase. You decide where on your layout an industry is to be and what kind of activity will happen there (you may have decided this earlier, during your layout planning phase). Keep in mind that you'll need to be able to reach all parts of the site for construction and maintenance.

The size of the area available will dictate how large and complex the industry can be. From a miniscule warehouse in a small area or an automobile manufacturer covering many acres and having many sidings for a multitude of railroad car types.

Hey! Don't overlook the fact that your industry will have employees. The employees will need a parking lot for the vehicles they drive to work; and remember to include a road or street for cars and trucks to get to your place.

These employees live someplace, often nearby. This means that a community must exist somewhere, either real or imagined. If it's to be imaginary, the existence of it must be apparent to the unlightened visitor to complete the realism of the scene.

With these thoughts in mind let's design that industry you've wanted: Let's theorize that it's going to be a fair-sized manufacturing plant producing 'ABC WIDGETS'. These are metal products requiring welding and cutting of structural steel shapes with machined parts and castings being added to the fabricated steel assembly. To protect them from the weather, they will be painted and then shipped in wooden crates by box car or closed truck.

What types of railroad cars will be required for this industry? Flat cars and/or gons to deliver the structural and sheet steel, tank cars with heating oil and solvents, box cars delivering castings in grates (no foundry here) and for shipping the finished product. Each of these cars requires a designated spot to load or unload.

BRASS OUT

It would appear that we bombed out with this article and ruffled a few feathers. I would like to make it very clear that the author and the magazine editorial group intended no malice toward the retailer mentioned. Let's hope that in future, HUMOROUS articles like this one are read in the spirit intended and not taken too seriously - Ed

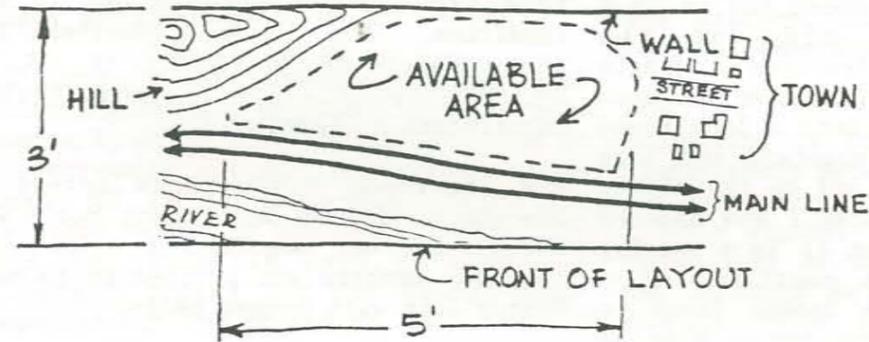
NARROW GAUGE AND SHORT LINE CONVENTION '90

17TH MARCH 1990
VETERAN CAR CLUB - QUEENS RD. FIVEDOCK N.S.W.

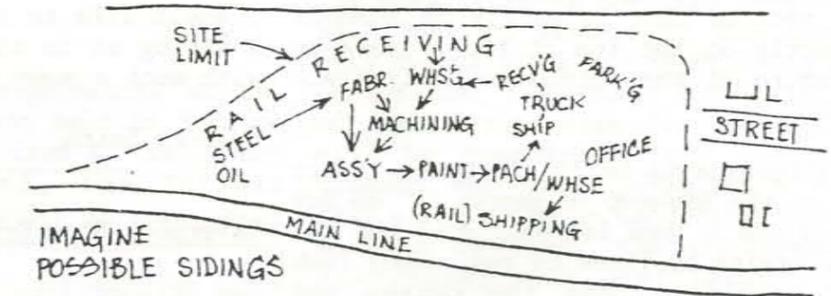
MODELLING CONTEST - SILENT AUCTION - HOBBY SHOPS - CLINICS

FURTHER DETAILS IN NEXT EDITION OF MAIN LINE OR CONTACT
JACK MACMICKING
247 EASTERN VALLEY WAY, MIDDLE COVE NSW 2068

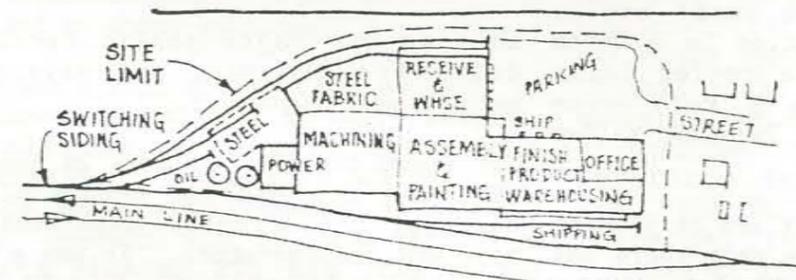
STEP ONE; THE AREA AVAILABLE:



STEP TWO; DRAW THE AREA ON PAPER, SKETCH IN A LOGICAL WORK-FLOW.



STEP THREE; SKETCH POSSIBLE BUILDINGS AND TRACK LOCATIONS.



EXPERIMENT WITH SIDINGS LOCATIONS

THEN, REDRAW YOUR AVAILABLE AREA TO FULL SIZE IN PREPARATION FOR NEXT ISSUE WHEN WE'LL DESIGN THE BUILDINGS & OTHER THINGS.

SYDNEY MEETINGS

Bcb Benson's Layout Visit

Saturday September 16th. Bob Benson was our host for the afternoon and over 40 members were on hand to enjoy Bob's layout and hospitality.

The Great Northern Railway is the theme of Bob's HO Scale layout. The majority of the running is handled by first and second generation diesels.

Now for the layout. It is situated in the basement of Bob's house and is in a room off to the side of his garage/workshop. It features a single track main line that runs from the main station (Benson Ville) into a loop round the base of a 4' high mountain and back behind the station and off to the right. This then folds over itself and appears to be double tracked but it is a passing loop. The line then continues to a reversing loop at the lowest level to complete the continuous run. Also at this level is a small stub end yard and a Bowser 150' turntable with a six stall roundhouse.

Bob has just added a high level narrow gauge section that is partly on a shelf and partly on the top of the scenery in the centre of the main line multi track spiral.

The difference in height from the lowest point to the highest is approx 18" so Bob needs 3 and 4 loco lash-ups with the 25-30 car trains he likes to run. They look great snaking around the curves and almost looping over themselves.

The station at Benson Ville has two platforms large enough to hold a 7 car passenger train and a small engine facility. Near the station is a Union Ice Co building with a reefer icing platform. There is a very nice Campbell's brewery and a Tuchahoe Valley Produce building.

About 2/3rds of the layout are at present scened and Bob tells me that there was much midnight oil burned.

The electrical side of the layout is conventional cab control with Tenshodo Steam sound unit and a Tri Teck Diesel sound unit connected to a fixed speaker. The steam and diesel sounds make such a

difference. I had great difficulty controlling my urge to blow the whistle all the time.

The diesel locos are mainly Atlas and Stuart Hobbies units with several of the Bachman Spectrum Series and a Westside E9 AB set that Bob procured on his last visit to the USA. Bob also has the most wonderful collection of every brass Great Northern locomotive that has been produced by Tenshodo in Japan. All of them are factory painted and in mint condition. For the Great Northern fans this consists of F8, C1, N3, Y1, O8, Q1, Z6, P2, M2, R2, S1, L1 locos truly a magnificent collection.

Mid afternoon a sumptuous spread was brought on and we must thank Bob's wife Cheryl for her magnificent efforts and the lady members who pitched in to help. Nobody left with hunger pangs.

The formal part of the meeting was mercifully brief as usual and everybody went back to their discussions and train watching.

I would like to thank Bob and Cheryl for inviting us to their home and proving us with such a super afternoon.

Sowerby Smith

Liverpool Show Report

The October long weekend saw us with our now traditional stand at the Australian Model Railway Association's Annual Liverpool show at the E. G. Whitlam Centre.

This is our major public recruitment drive for the year and several new members were signed up.

Our stand occupied an area 2m deep x 3m wide and featured the module of Peter Burrows', photographs, magazines, data book and company store. It was a little cramped but looked good. I would like to thank all the members who "Volunteered" to man the stand and especially Bruce Lovett and Jack MacMicking for their help with setting up the stand, John and Tony Saxon for removing it on Monday evening and John Baker for storing the trailer.

My thanks to all members who pitched in and helped and my apologies if I have missed anybody. The honour roll is as follows.

Glen Coventry, Doug Wallace, Colin Brettle, Jim Crum, Garry Wheatley, Phillip Moore, Bill Kerr, Peter Grace, Glen Stephens, Kevin Brown, Shirley and Jack MacMicking, Eric Hodgson, Lawrence Nagy, Frans Persson, Peter Webb, Kieth McCarron, Warren McLean, Richard Roth, Warren Wormald, Bob Benson, Mike Halinan, Garry Norwood, John and Toni Saxon, Bruce Lovett and John Baker.

Old issues of Model Railroader and Model Railroad Craftsman magazine that had been donated by John Kidell's family proved to be extremely popular and were a major source of funds during the exhibition. The money raised by the sale of magazines will be primarily used to provide a perpetual trophy for our annual model competition. Our thanks to John's family once again.

Sowerby Smith

Houston 1989

The region was well represented at the NMRA National Convention held in Houston in July/August with 5 from Australia and 3 from New Zealand, the largest contingent from down under in many, many years. The 1200+ attendees were not disappointed, with the convention being claimed by many regular conventioners as the best ever. The weather in Houston was hot and sultry with the humidity around 95% most of the time although the air conditioning kept it at bay for those not used to these extremes.

There was a full schedule and as usual it was impossible to get to every feature. The clinics alone made attendance worthwhile. There were 43 separate clinics, some being presented up to three times. However, with 30 local layouts on 7 tours plus an all day trip to San Antonio, it was impossible to see everything on offer.

The silent auction was mind boggling and I managed as usual to spend more than I planned as did one or two of the other

Australians present. (It's OK men, I can keep a secret). Items not sold at the silent auction then went to a live auction late at night. Prices paid at the parallel N scale convention auction were astounding with up to \$US100 not being unusual for some of the rarer cars.

The highlights for me included the 6.30am departure by bus to San Antonio to view amongst others, Lorell Joiner's O scale Great Southern (and the 2.30am return the next day!); the Bozman's "Great" Great Northern and Gil Freitag's Stoney Creek and Western. These opportunities will long be remembered.

Now for the commercial. The 1990 convention is to be held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania between 30 July and 5 August and the program indicates that it will be another winner. Now travelling overseas is as many of us know a costly business but believe me, a visit to the US in conjunction with a national NMRA convention is something never to be forgotten. So give it some thought and let's see if we can beat our record with the attendance at Pittsburgh in 1990.

The NMRA Trustees meetings were as usual held just in advance of the convention with two days and one night being devoted to official business. There was nothing of moment this time for the Region (It will be remembered that last meeting squashed very effectively the proposal to levy a surcharge on Canadian and Overseas members to cover the additional costs associated with distribution of the Bulletin)

Major action taken related to improving the organizational structure of the NMRA to better serve the Hobby; streamlining the distribution arrangements for the Executive Handbook; emphasising actions to define the long term objectives and goals of the Association; requiring that changes in Standards and Recommended Practices be published in the next available Bulletin and expanding the financial information circulated to Trustees in advance of the meetings.

On looking over the above it seems that nothing too dramatic was discussed. However the ground-work was established for significant improvements for the association in the future. There was no

dcubt that all present demonstrated a very positive and co-operative attitude for the future progress of the NMRA. Over the five years I have attended these meetings, I have seen significant improvement emerging in the team approach to our hobby, its pluses and minuses and the National (and International) responsibilities of the Association. Without exception, all members of the Executive Council and the Board of Trustees are there to improve the hobby for the benefit of us all.

John Saxon

Geoff Nott's Layout Visit

Saturday 21st October and a special treat was in store for all those members attending Geoff Nott's house to see the White Pass and Cowlitz Railroad.

State of the art is a phrase used rather indiscriminantly these days but must surely be the only suitable way to describe Geoff's magnificent scenic modeling. I have not seen finer.

Sighted in a basement next to the garage under Geoff's house is a large room approximately 30'x20'. The layout winds it's way around the outside of the room plus a couple of peninsulas. A single track loop to loop design. The magnificent scenery covers about 40% of the layout with most of the rest having preliminary hard shell in place.

The line starts at Thunder Bay a seaport with a small wharf area (under construction) moves on to Columbia Valley a classification yard and soon to be rebuilt with a simplified track plan. As Geoff has developed his scenic talents simplification of the track and more scenery are the way he is developing. Next we come to Elmwood Park a rural community with appropriate rural industries and then on to a very spectacular floor to ceiling gorge (still to be finished).

The fully sceniced part of the layout starts at White Pass Gorge. Three tracks pass through the scene at various levels with a wonderful collection of different bridges with the mountains almost touching th ceiling and a fabulous

backscene continuing the elusion. No big railroad standardization here strictly short line make do with everything finished to the standard of a Diorama.

The line continues to Falls Creek the largest town on the line. Set in a high valley with distant mountains lies a wonderful collection of buildings so well modeled that they appear to have been there for many years. There is a Campbell's Quicks coal that you would surely get covered in coal dust were you to touch any part of it. A John Allen style ice house complete with peeling posters on the wall. A delightful Perkins produce building and a small stone gem, Tucker Bros engineering works. Then there is Smith & Co woodworking shop and Wheatly's Milling Co pallet works. At the front of the layout is a row of false front buildings of great charm and variety. All of these buildings are of contest winning standard. A few are from kits but most are scratch built. It is not just the models but the whole scene has a completeness about it. It is the small details that set the scene from the hundreds of finely modeled trees to the tiny figures and general junk and clutter. The elusion of reality is further enhanced by the magnificent backscene that is exquisitely blended in to the three dimensional scenery.

The line continues on to the Cowlitz river and three tracks wind their way along and over the river. It is on this section that Geoff has very successfully simplified the scene and changed the pace visually by bringing the scenery and tracks forward and increased the size of the trees to allow a forcing of the perspective to increase the impression of distance. There is a pine tree on this section over 18" tall. The scenery truly dominates the track as it does in nature. The rest of the area is not yet sceniced but will eventually run round to a large timber mill that will provide much of the traffic for the line. Logs will be brought in and finished lumber will be shipped to the port at the other end.

The locos and rolling stock have that well used short line look and are a mixture of steam and diesel and many are of contest winning quality. Trains are short 5-6 cars in length and passing sidings are deliberately short to ensure

that they stay that way. Control is conventional walk round cabs with hand thrown turnouts. Numerous control panels are set into the fascia and the whole presentation of the layout is most professional. With the loop to loop nature of the line it is best operated with a small crew of people.

Mid afternoon a magnificent repast was laid on and after a short formal meeting we all returned to the serious business of train watching. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Geoff and his family for their invitation to their home and for the inspiration that I always get after seeing Geoff's layout.

Sowerby Smith

Next Sydney Meetings

Sat 16 Dec Christmas Meeting
1.00 p.m. Sausage Sizzle (\$2 donation)
John Saxon
37 Beatrice Street, Clontarf
Phone: 949 4767

Sat 10 Feb Gerry Hopkins/Laurie McLean
2.00 p.m. Scout Hall
Abbot Street
Curl Curl

Sat 17 Mar Narrow Gauge & Short Line
Convention
See Notice this edition

FOR SALE Bill Cooper 86 1724
SP Cab Forward 4-8-8-2
Ho by Rivarossi, NMRA Flanges
Excellent condition \$195

Union 0-10-2, Ho by United
Unpainted, Kadee couplers
Excellent condition \$350

WANTED Bill Cooper 86 1724
MDC 3 Truck Shay Kit
Half build "basket case" OK
Providing all (or most) parts still
there.

Once you try stuffing a layout depicting a mainline in any scale, into any size room, you start running into trouble. Those large radius curves swallow space with disheartening contempt, leaving precious little room for the other essential ingredient-storage yards.

Usually storage yards are crammed into under-the-layout crevices where access is difficult. Once scenery is in place, finger room for rerailing, recoupling and maintenance is a big problem. Never underestimate the aggro involved in trying to identify which wheel of a 2-10-2 or its centipede tender is off the rails, while kneeling down, head tipped sideways, right ear pressed into a switch machine, squinting into gloom.....

One solution is to cheat. Ignore the parameters set by the walls of the layout room and go beyond. The compromise is that you have to leave the layout room to correct problems, but the trade off is that working room is greatly improved.

Initially, the hidden storage yard on my Pennsylvania New England was going to be located under a branchline terminus as shown in Fig. 1a. The obvious problem was that even with 4% grades I had less than 10cm of finger room. By moving the storage yard outside the layout room into the garage, I not only gained unobstructed access to the storage yard from above, I also managed to flatten the maximum grade from 4% to 2% (I didn't need any more than 5cm vertical separation between the tracks in N scale), increased minimum radius from 35cm to 48cm, lengthened the storage yard by about six cars per track, and improved under the layout access to the turnout mechanisms at the terminus. A lid over the storage yard protects it from garage dust.

Bob Benson knocked holes in brick walls to locate his storage yard in a space under his front steps. Access is via a doorway duckunder. See fig. 2a.

Franz Persson managed to maintain his minimum mainline radius by punching through his garage wall and running the track on a shelf in his backyard, protecting the track from the weather and cirtters with metal ducting. See fig.2b. Obviously such set-ups can work well, but they are only worth contemplating if remote turnout control and immaculate track laying standards are used. It will only work if access is very infrequent.

Knocking holes in brick is a task and half (though after excavating a basement out of rock, Bob was well warmed up!). Other wall cladding such as fibro or masonite is a lot easier. Just drill a series of holes around the edge of the opening and hack out the piece with a Stanley knife or keyhole saw.

What if you decide to move house and you've knocked holes in internal walls? Whose gonna buy a house with two rooms connected via gaping holes? No-one! However, the fix is simple.

Attach some wire to a scrap of fibro-see fig.3. Apply contact cement. Insert scrap into hole and hold it against the wall with tension on the wire. After glue sets, cut wire. Cement another scrap over this to make the surface flush with wall. Plaster the small gaps. Sand smooth. Paint. Done.