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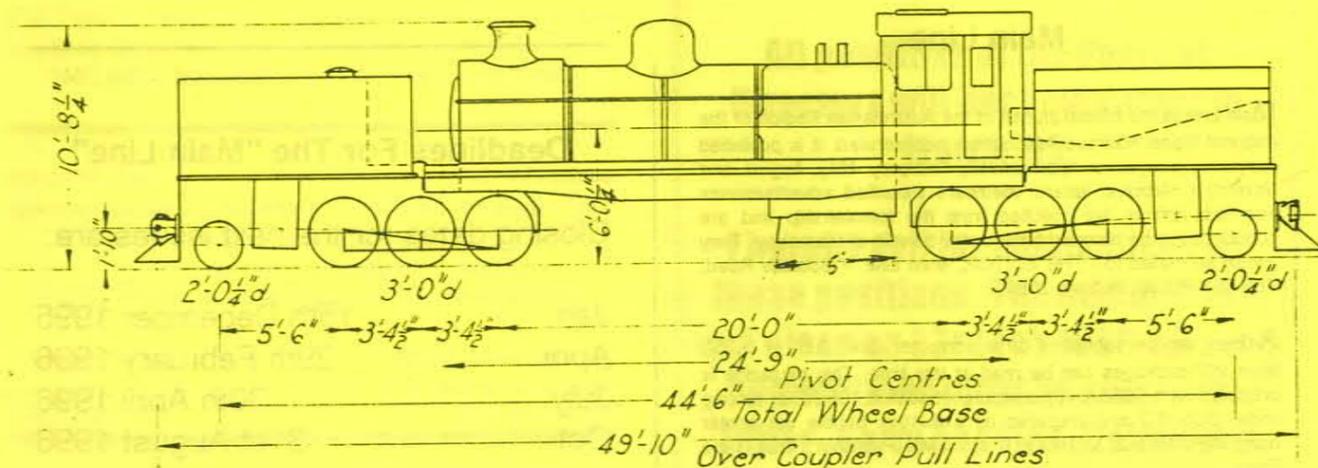
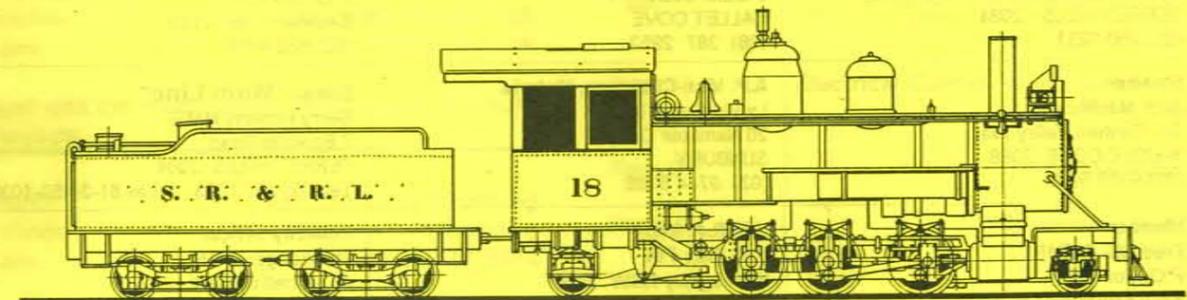
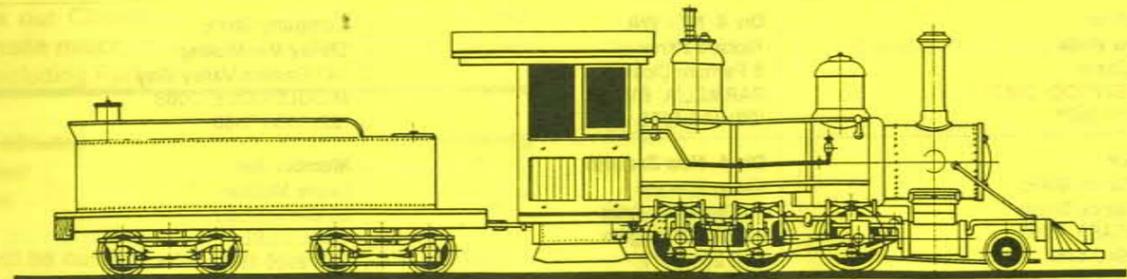
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Atlas Track and Accessories, Peco, Shinohara, North Yard Wheels, Romford, Detail Associates, Wheel Works, Sentinal, Cal Scale, Kadee, Mitronics, Labelle Lubricants, Micro Scale Decals, Kerrob Models, AMRI Signals, J&C Models, Front Range, Brawa, Eda, Floquil, Dremel, Pro Edge Knives, Drills and Taps, K&S Metal, Fuller Pliers, Jewellers Screw Driver Sets, G Clamps, and many other tools.



Main Line

National Model Railroad Association Inc. Australasian Region
 Volume 12 Number 4 October, November, December 1995
 Registered By Australia Post Publication # PP241613/00080



"A Touch of REAL Narrow Gauge"

Australasian Region Directory

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Main Line

Main Line is the official journal of the Australasian Region of the National Model Railroad Association Incorporated. 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 mailed to:- THE EDITOR, Main Line, 7 Booralie Road, TERREY HILLS. N.S.W. 2084.

Articles can be submitted on a computer disk 3.5" or 5.25". Most WP packages can be read at this time. This magazine is prepared on a 386DX(40) computer (540M & 105 HD's) running under DOS 6.2 and prepared on a BJ10ex Bubble Jet printer using WPMWIN 5.2; WINWORD 6; MS Publisher; True Type Fonts.

Paid advertising is welcomed. Current rates 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. All enquiries regarding advertising should be directed to the Editor.

Deadlines For The "Main Line"

Closing dates for the next issues are:

Jan.	15th December 1995
April.	29th February 1996
July.	30th April 1996
Oct.	31st August 1996

These dates are Absolute!

18th November
 Michael Flack
 2.00 pm

NSW EPPING
 14 Dawson Street
 (02) 868 1723

This will be your last time to enjoy Michael's layout before he dismantles / sells it to make way for Sn3.

25th November
 Laurie Green MMR
 11.30 BYO BBQ

VIC Sunbury
 20 Nambour Drive
 (03) 9744 5188

9th December
 Sowerby Smith
 1.00 pm

NSW Chatswood
 174 Fullers Road
 (02) 411 5726

This is our Christmas Party meeting. Sowerby has also made major changes to his layout since the last visit, including Radio Control

10th February
 Bob Carr
 2.00pm

NSW Epping
 22 Haywood Street
 (02)

This will be our first visit to this layout. Bob's layout is HO and the prototype is Union Pacific.

17th February
 Paul Ritchie
 11.30 am

VIC Ballarat
 28 Ascot Street South
 (053) 32 1138

BBQ and visit the multi scales and gauges of Paul's many layouts.

16th March
 Gavin Hince
 11.30 am

VIC Hoppers Crossing
 16 "The Glades" Johnson Ave
 (03) 9749 6974

BBQ

23rd March
 SteamFest Weekend

NSW Maitland

Full Details next issue. We may all go in one of the coaches (passenger cars) behind a steam train!

THE AGM WILL BE HELD AT THIS MEETING

6th & 7th April
 Narrow Gauge Convention
 Contact: Grant McAdam
 194 Booran Rd. Glentuntly 3163
 Hosted By The Croydon Narrow Gauge Group Inc.

VIC Wantirna

13th April
 Bill Kerr
 2.00 pm

NSW Minchinbury
 122 McFarlane Drive
 (02) 636 1283

NMRA CONVENTION

6th July
 VIC MELTON

See Next Issue For More Details

WAYBILL

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ANNOUNCEMENT

All positions of the Board of Directors will become vacant in March '96.

I hereby call for nominations for these positions. The nominations will close on 23rd Feb 1996. All such nominations must be sent to the Editor, Gerry Hopkins, before this date. Please enclose a brief resume with your nomination (and Photo).

President's Report

By Sowerby Smith

Hi! Back again for a short stint as President, it's only till February!. The feeling of *de-ja-vu* is strong. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Kevin for the work he has put in as president over the last year and a half and I am sure we all wish him well.

As you know from the last issue of **Main Line** nominations for Trustee have been called for and in this issue there is a call for nominations to the Board of Directors for the Region. Now is your chance to nominate and help the region grow and it gives you the opportunity to make a difference to the direction of the Region.

The jobs and the requirements are listed elsewhere in the magazine. Take the time to see if you feel you can put a little bit back into the hobby. Don't forget to send in a short resume so that we can send it out with the voting forms.

Last month I made the annual trip to Newcastle and it was interesting to see the new life given to the Newcastle show by incorporating a large range of hobbies in the with the trains. The quality of the ship modelling was an eye opener and so was the sight of the 14' bulk carrier turning in the 15' wide tank! The race cars on the basketball court had a strong following. I must say I enjoyed their new format.

Mike Hallinan staged his annual open house and his garden layout though now bigger than last time was well worth the trip to see it again. Mike promised us that if he was still living in Newcastle next year he will have finished the trestle and have the track up to the top section! There is nothing like a meet at your place to spur things along.

That reminds me, the Christmas meeting is at my place so I'd better go and finish a bit more of my layout.

Division 3 Reports

By Paul Richie

July 22nd was the date to visit the Bacchus Marsh home of Peter McDonald. After greetings we adjourned to the layout which is housed in the unused portion of most homes - the apex of the roof, thus showing the ingenious methods some people go to in order to construct a layout. In this case the centre piece was a shortened version of Bacchus Marsh. Kit built and scratchbuilt rolling stock abound as some of the items were before any of the kits appeared. Peter's skills are well known in Victoria, the awards in Sydney are proof of this.

The layout is single track containing a lot of hidden track with staging yards and reverse loops at both ends but folded on itself. The locos were mostly steam with a "B" & "Derm" the exceptions [some form of Victorian diesel ? - Ed]. The layout runs well and looks excellent, backdrop painting was also excellent .

Over afternoon tea, a short meeting / discussion took place about the convention in Sydney and possible dates for the one next year so as not to conflict with exhibition commitments. Overall an excellent gathering.

Thanks to our hosts, Peter and his wife.

26th August found us visiting Stuart Mitchell in Wendouree. Discussion commenced with the models and items brought by members. Construction and any new materials being experimented with on Buildings, construction of "O" scale bullrushes and extra detail on kits. Next year's Narrow Gauge and NMRA Conventions and dates were then discussed.

Thanks to our hosts, Stuart and his wife.

Meeting Reports

By Gerry Hopkins MMR

July - The meeting was held at Phil Moore's home due to Peter Burrows being overseas on business. For those of us who were unable to see Phil's layout on the Convention tour, this was a golden opportunity to see Command Control in action.

Phil has backdated the layout since I last saw it. It now has F units instead of the modern diesels. Much more has been done to the scenery, you get the feeling you ARE in California.

There were two videos running during the afternoon, a new release - Gorrie & Dapheted, a must for anyone who enjoys the work of John Allen, and some footage of Tony Koester's layout taken by Phil earlier his year.

The other big attraction was the fish tank! - To sit and look at it made you feel you were looking through a window at the Great Barrier Reef.

Thank you to Phil and his wife for accommodating us at the last minute.

August was a dual delight, visiting the **New** Newcastle Exhibition and the trip to Mike Hallinan's delightful garden railroad. Normally at this time of year the temperature in Newcastle is around 6 to 12 deg C -- *not this year* -- 26 to 30 deg C was the mark.

Sowerby has mentioned the Exhibition in his report, and as I was exhibiting *Lost River Canyon* I did not get to Mike's but I can tell you that those who did visit had nothing but praise for his layout. It is LGB, radio controlled and winds is way through natural bush land.

Thanks to Mike's and his wife for letting us attend their home again.

September took us to Helensburgh, a more southerly suburb of Sydney. Due to work commitments Richard Roth has not yet begun the scenery on his layout. This enabled many members without layouts (and new members) to see how to construct a layout. Richard had made a scale model of his proposed layout before starting construction. This model caused Richard to change a few ideas *before* the main construction started. How many other models make a model first? -- it would save a lot of frustration in the long run.

Thanks to Richard and his wife for opening their home.

Welcome Aboard

Please welcome the following members to the Australasian Region.

Malcolm Risby, N scale Burlington Northern	12 Borrowdale St RED HILL ACT 2603
Paul Smith HO & N SP & UP	9 Cheyne Road TERREY HILLS NSW 2084
Mrs Susan Smith HO & N SP & UP	9 Cheyne Road TERREY HILLS NSW 2084
Michael Owens N scale	12 Douglas Haig St OATIEY NSW 2223
Steve Pettit Hon3 Colorado NG	1 Leo Place TELOPEA NSW 2117
Steve Chapman On3 (tramway) AT&SF - NSW (SRA)	138 Railway Road MARAYONG NSW 2148
John Rigby HO / Hon3 West USA / Logging	44 Moonshine Ave CABRAMATTA NSW 2166
Richard Ash HO BN - CB&Q - NP -SP	1 Woodstock Cres PARA HILLS WEST S A 5069

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 40' AAR Steel G&W - \$15-50 [March]
 40' Outside Braced MKT - \$17-50 [March]
 40' AAR Steel SP Overnight 3 pack - \$48-00 [April]
 40' AAR Steel EL - \$15-50 [May]
 40' PS 1 C&IM - \$17-50 [May]
 40' AAR Steel SF Map 3 pack - \$48-00 [June]
 40' AAR Steel D&RGW "Cookie Box" - \$15-50 [July]
 40' AAR Steel GN,NP,GM&O - \$48-00 [Aug.]

TIMBER PRODUCTS

Foam [20 colours / 15 greens] 6.25 /pkt
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 Wild Weeds - \$6-95 / pkt [24 colours]

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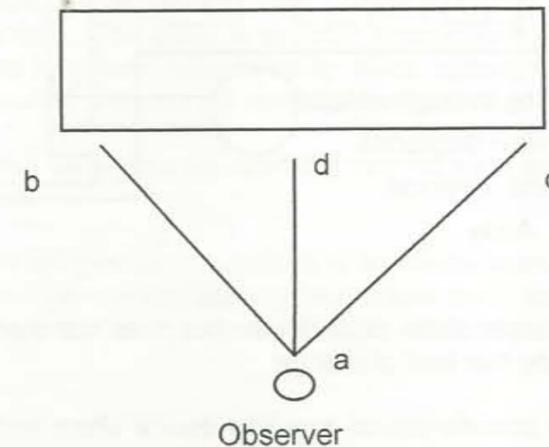
Grandt Line - full HO & N
 scale in stock at all times

MANAGEMENT OF THE POINT-OF-VIEW

Frank Ellison wrote: "Model railroading is definitely a play. It is the presentation of the drama of railroading in which tracks are the stage, the buildings and scenery are the setting, the trains are the actors, and the operating schedule is the plot."

A model railroad has another vital similarity with theatre: management of the point-of-view from which the setting and action are viewed.

In a conventional theatre, the audience has the stage directly in front and action moves from the wings to center stage, and towards and away from the audience. The audience never changes its position relative to the action; essentially, it looks down a shape like an arrow head:



This is similar to the conventional point-of-view of the model railroad in which the observer sees all or most of the model from one point. Clearly, in this situation, the railroad observer can move, unlike the theatre observer, sideways and along the axis a-d but always the scene appears in the same scale of proportion to the observer. That is, even if the observer stood right up against the stage/railroad, there remains the difference of scale between observer and model, there is a lack of the sense of *being in the scene*, of being equivalent in scale. This is not to say that the *spectacle* of an expanse is faulty or deficient in itself; railroads such as Jack Parker's *Northern Pacific*, a 56-foot panorama, are unbelievably dramatic in their sweep, and, obviously, literally making the observer the equivalent scale of the model has practical difficulties. (The movie *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids* notwithstanding.)

Modellers do interrupt the sweeping gaze by viewblocks of mountains, trees, bridges, buildings and mirrors, so dividing the railroad into discrete scenes. These dividers can be as simple as a masonite-sky with very different scenes on either side.

Although one cannot make the observer literally smaller, control can transform the point-of-view, the *view*, into different scales and unusual angles; that is change the scale and proportion between observer and scene. (And without going to the extremes shown in the cartoon accompanying Lee Vande Visse's "Guilty as charged", in *Great Model Railroads 1995!*)

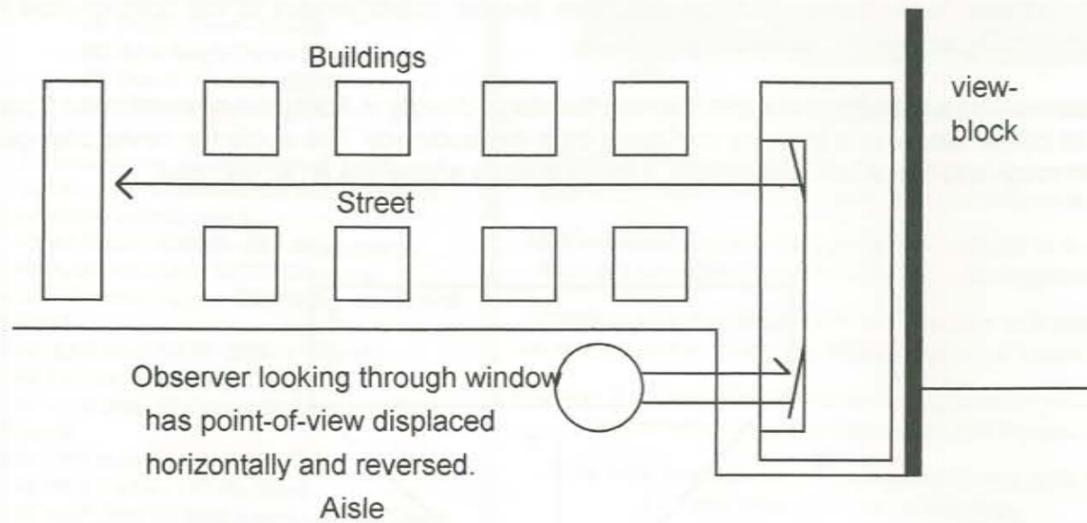
We have been made familiar with this idea by the camera's viewfinder. Some of the prize-winning entries of *Model Railroader's* annual photographic contests gain their best effect by having been viewed this way. But the effect is lost when the camera is removed; what we need to do is to retain some means to permanently control the point-of-view.

Showroom Unit 4, Level 1 / 47 Bedford Road, Blacktown Tele 02-622-1916 Fax 02-831-4132

Showroom opens - Thursday 5 p.m. - 9 p.m. / Saturday 9.30 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.

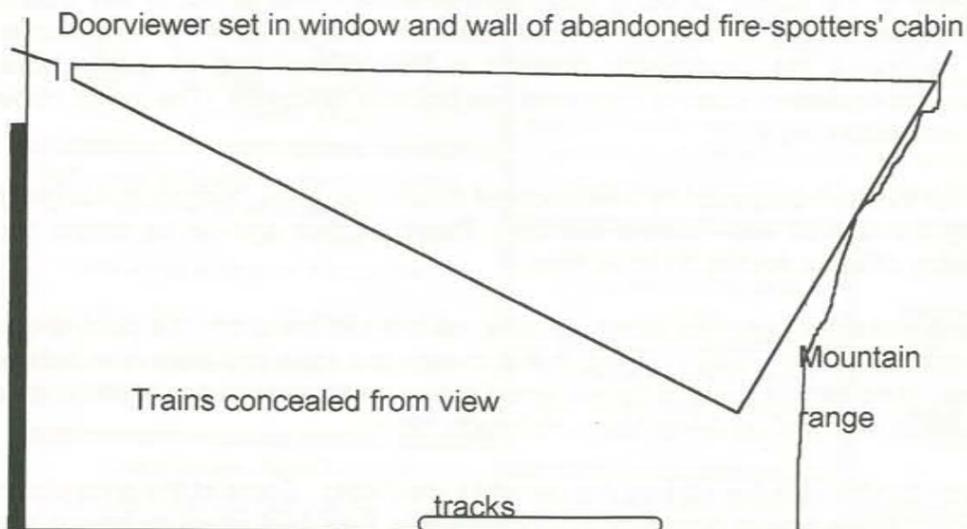
MasterCard - Visa - Bankcard

A simple and effective device is the periscope. Jack Burgess installed one in his El Portal station to give a view through its second storey windows. However, a periscope is not restricted to the vertical axis; it can look horizontally around corners. The "lower" end can even be placed behind a building's window to give a view down the street. So doing gives a strong sense of the enclosure and confinement one experiences in a close-packed cityscape:



The periscope changes the angle of the point-of-view but does not change its scale. There are two very simple ways of making that kind of change.

The first is the ordinary door security-viewer, that little device which enables the householder to see a caller without having to open the door. These can be placed anywhere in the railroad: in buildings, in natural scenery, in the fascia, high (overlooking a scene and creating a panorama) or low (giving a roadbed view). I have two such: one placed high gives a view into a valley which, for practical and access reasons, is modelled only in part, and the other placed low to give a worm's-eye view along pounding wheels as the track curves through another valley:



The wall of the fire-watchers' cabin is high enough to prevent to an observer overlooking it. Concealing trains from view avoids a problem of discrepancy in scale between them and the

surrounding scenery. Scenery here is minimal because there is a nest of turnouts in the area, and what they can do is no secret to any modeller.

In my other example, the doorviewer is set low, its point-of-view is shared with an uncontrolled view over the hill top. The observer can watch the train rounding the curve through a screen of trees and then get a close-up of the same scene through the viewer, a kind of bifocality.

The second method of changing scale in the point-of-view is with a Fresnel lens. The top panel of the access door to my *Dukane & Rio Grande Western Railroad* is glazed. Even when the door is closed, the observer can see the rail scene of a city directly behind this panel. I have placed three Fresnel lenses across the panel so that the viewer will get, with the considerable distortion caused by these lenses, three quite different aspects of a very simple scene.

With gaps in between the lenses though which the observer can see parts of the scene undistorted, surprising, bifocal changes in perspective are experienced. Buildings and train appear, through the lenses, to be distant; then suddenly appear close, then distant as the observer's eyes follow the train. The effect is to upset expectations of normal distance and scale and time. (So far, no one has been nauseated by these apparent changes in perspective. If some-one succumbs, no matter: they are still outside the layout room.)

Viewers and lenses are also very good for speciality scenes such as overlooking large junctions and into underground mines.

Control of the point-of-view brings new dimensions to traditional scene-dividing methods and is a useful supplement to those perspective-altering techniques such as different-scale figures and equipment; the means are inexpensive, easy to install and can usually be retrofitted.

Graeme HODGES

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RIO GRANDE SOUTHERN - HO_{n3}

Welcome to my Rio Grande Southern layout. This layout is based on published photographs of the prototype and is set in the period of 1938 to 1941.

The Rio Grande Southern captured my interest back in 1962 when I purchased a copy of "Narrow Gauge in the Rockies" by Beebe & Clegg. The fascination of the RGS has not diminished over the years, it has increased. This is due to the increasing number of books on the RGS.

Due to various circumstances actual building of my RGS did not start until 1986. With valued assistance from several people the layout has progressed to its current state. Most scenes are based on the prototype and are suitably compressed to fit available space. This selective compression is not too difficult to achieve and will be discussed later.

One interesting item with this layout is the backdrop material. It is one continuous sheet of fibreglass running completely around the room. It is nailed to wall header plate at the top and stapled at its lower edge. Top securing is hidden behind cornice trim, lower securing is hidden by scenery. Fibreglass does not shrink or crack and will take acrylic paint without any surface preparation.

The layout framework is mainly L girder construction except for the latest revision in the main garage area. This new section is constructed with plywood frames and cantilevered from the wall studs. Hopefully this type of construction will cut down on the dust problems previously experienced. Work on this section was only started two weeks prior to the Convention this year. Two articles entitled "Bookshelf Railroads" were published in January and February 1977 Model Railroader. The new extension is based on these articles.

Trackwork is mainly Railcraft code 55, with some hidden trackage laid with Shinohara code 70.

Track is laid on Homosote roadbed using half of the HO standard gauge size. This is to obtain effect of "ballast" shoulder with tie ends

sticking out in the breeze like the prototype RGS.

Homosote is recycled and processed newsprint. See information sheet for source.

Most turnouts are scratchbuilt, some are Railcraft modified to stub turnouts.

Turnouts are operated by three different methods.

- Caboose Industries ground throws with microswitch to back feed frog.
- Switchmaster "Baked Bean Can" motors with microswitch to back feed frog.
- Slide switch method. This is the most reliable method of operation. These consist of a Tandy two position slide switch with short piece of piano wire attached to switch knob to engage in throw bar of turnout.

Knob of switch is also drilled and tapped to take threaded operating rod. The switch provides back feed function and detent action to hold blades against stock rails. Switch is attached to aluminium angle mounting bracket and screwed under roadbed. Operating rod runs through layout facia with large push pin for operating knob. These things never fail!

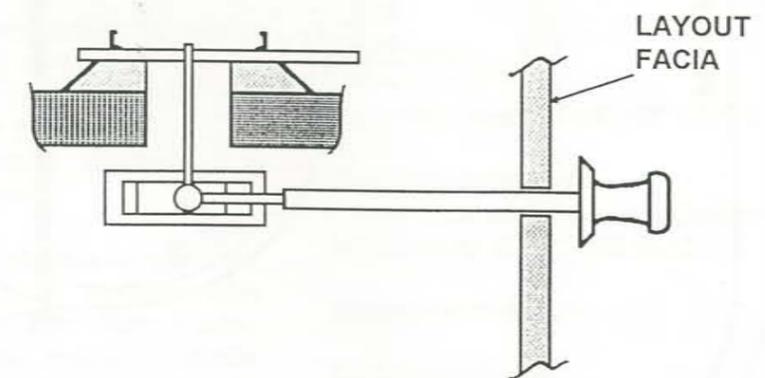
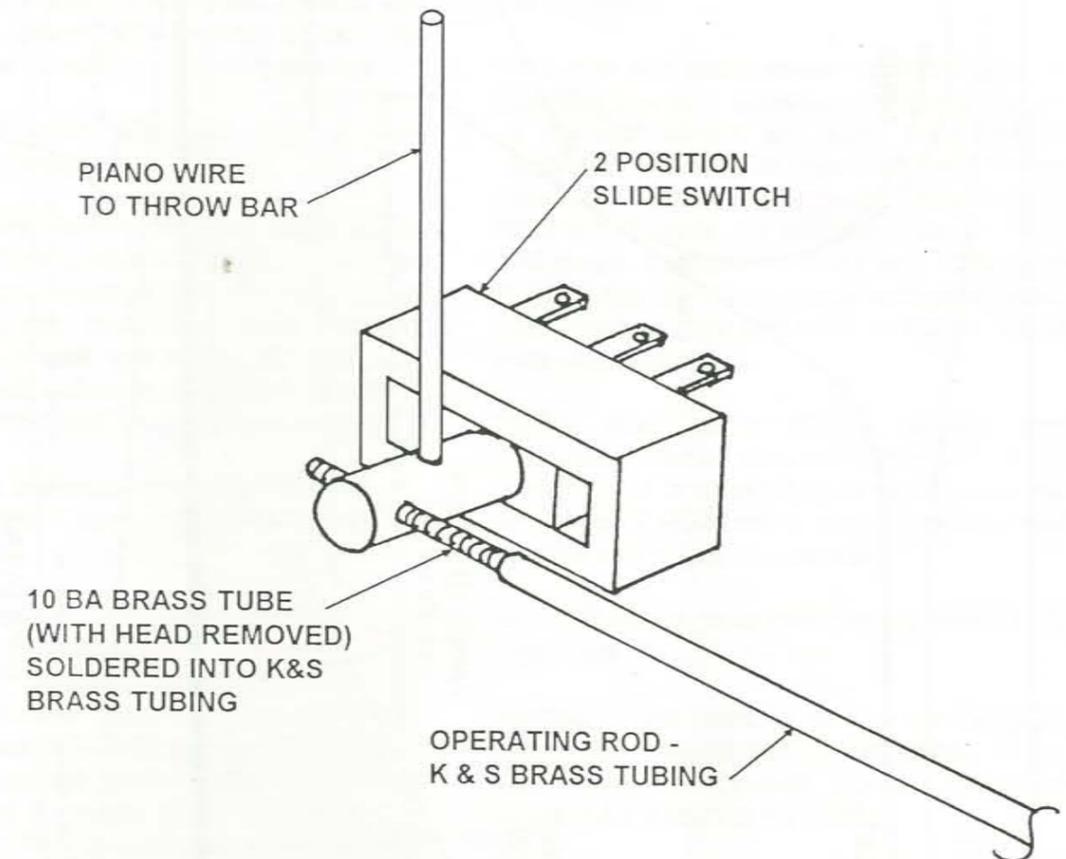
Wiring is by the common rail method with the switched rail broken into blocks and controlled by non shorting rotary switches.

Rotary switch knobs and indicator discs were discovered in an electrical supply shop. Indicator discs are dramatic improvement on trying to hand letter numbers direct on to panels.

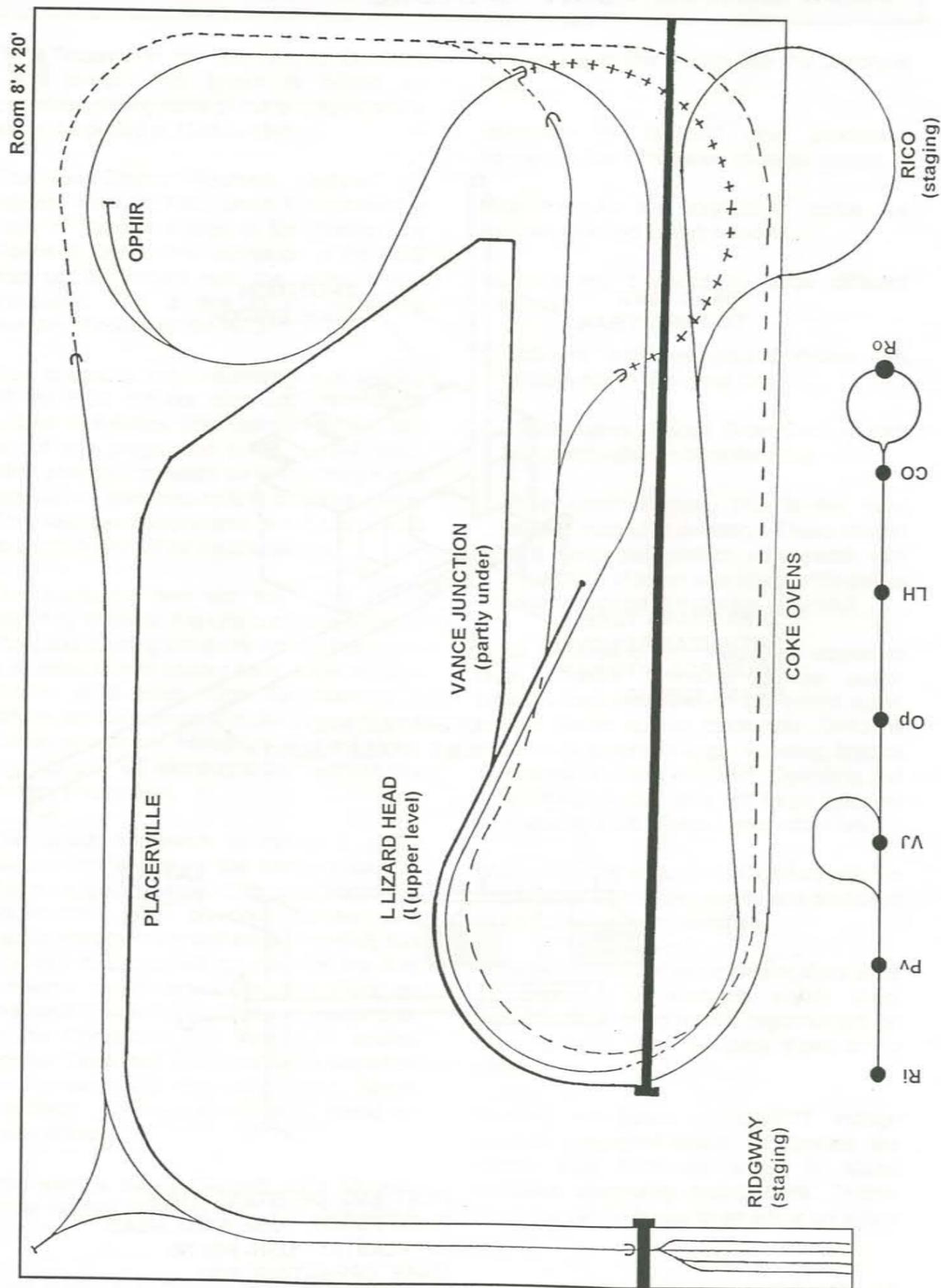
Throttles are based on LM317T voltage regulator integrated circuit. All throttles are scratch built from an article in Model Railroader electronics project book. Throttle circuit diagram is buried in an article on sound system.

Each throttle is supplied with 12.5 volts AC from separate transformers via dedicated AC bus wiring around layout which connects to throttle DIN plug connectors on panels.

SLIDE SWITCH POINT "MOTORS"



HEAT END OF BRASS TUBE, THEN FORCE TUBE INTO HEAD OF PLASTIC PUSH-PIN TO MAKE OPERATING ROD.



Scenery is mainly old method of chicken wire with paper towels soaked in plaster to form basic scenery shell. One section is cardboard strips and covered with Chux Super Wipes soaked in plaster. This method has an unexpected bonus - it does not leak wet plaster onto everything underneath. Some areas have been formed up with Dow Corning blue styrene insulation foam and hacked into shape with knives and sanding block. This foam method makes for easy tree planting.

Trees have been produced from a wide variety of materials.

Pine trees are made from balsa wood trunks and caspia branches. Slow method but good results. Second method is to use dried flower head from Pride of Maderia plant, (*Echium fastuosum*). These are simply sprayed with pressure pack adhesive and rolled in coarse texture ground foam. Very quick pine trees.

Aspen trees are made from dried flower head from Nandina bush, (Japanese sacred bamboo).

Basic armature is painted with pressure pack white paint. When dry Woodlands Scenics polyfibre is stretched over armature and trimmed to shape. This is then sprayed with pressure pack adhesive and lightly sprinkled with coarse texture ground foam. Best results are achieved if ground foam is applied with small seive. The brilliant yellow and orange colours are from Timber Products.

Structures are initially produced by using photocopy of plans glued to card as three dimensional mock up. This ensures the structure will fit available space. Saves time and effort building finished structure and finding it is too big to fit layout.

Some structures are undersize - yes not actually HO scale! Structures at Ophir loop are an example of this. Depot, tram house, section house are HO scale. House on hillside above depot is 3mm to the foot and reduced in depth to fit available space. Ophir Merchandise building is 3/32" to the foot - you would never know just by looking at it.

This is the selective compression mentioned earlier. Due to space limitations, very few of us have enough space to build any given prototype scene in our chosen scale. By constructing main and foreground structures

to scale and constructing background structures underscale, adds to the perspective effect.

An excellent article on perspective modelling was published in the U.K "Model Railway Journal" issue number 36 in 1990. The author, Geoff Williams has utilised these principles to the maximum.

Well, that just about wraps up the basics of how this layout is constructed. Nearly forgot, all the locomotives are brass from various Japanese and Korean manufacturers. Some have had substantial rebuilds into specific RGS locomotives, for example, No. 41. This has major changes to body and remotored with Faulharber micro motor and gear head. This now has gear reduction of 103 to 1 and runs very well.

Rolling stock is a mixture of kits and scratchbuilt. Some cars are rather old - RGS reefer #2101 is an old Balboa kit that was my first piece of RGS rolling stock. This was built in 1964 and is now 31 years old.

My RGS needs more rolling stock, particularly cabooses.

Thanks to the band of narrow gauge guys who have helped with construction, Greg, Geoff, Paul and Stewart. Special thanks to Deanna for tolerating my hobby.

Gary Norwood.

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Computers in Model Railroading

A C Lynn Zelmer

Games can be effective at promoting the hobby...

My work involves me looking at the use of computers in education. I'm looking for tools which make teaching an easier task for both lecturer and student. Exploring new media—the use of the Internet and multimedia—are our current priorities.

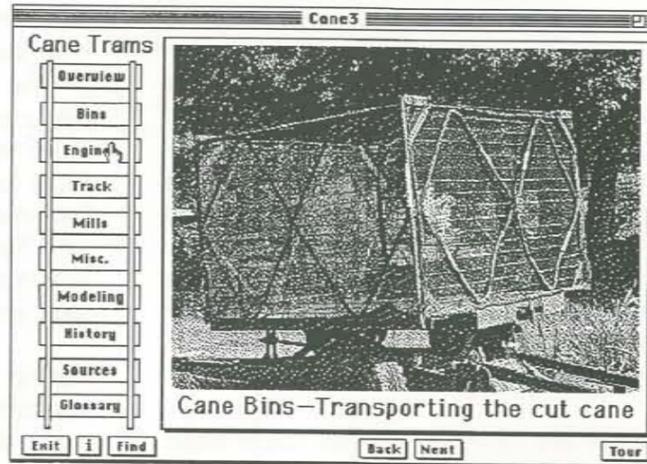
We're successful in that we are developing instructional systems where our lecturers can develop materials which college students find exciting and challenging. As with many things, our best tools are simple but effective.

One of the things that I keep asking myself is, 'If computers can help provide education for college kids, why can't they be used for promoting the hobby and for model railroad clinics?'

We know that kids are attracted by adventure (interactive) games on computers and will play them for hours. While the first games required an experienced programmer to develop, we now have generic adventure game frameworks and special game languages—usually specialised database managers with the game elements stored and manipulated as data files. Kids (or parents) can make their own games!

One such tool for Intel-type computers is the *Adventure Game Toolkit*, a PC-SIG shareware package (Manacom Pty Ltd, 9 Camford St, Milton QLD 4064) and other sources. 'Shareware' is a marketing strategy—you get trial copies of the software for the cost of duplication and shipping. If you like the product enough to use it or give to others you send the developer a specified fee, otherwise you aren't obligated further.

I tested the *Adventure Game*



Toolkit by developing an adventure based on a tour of one of our university buildings. It featured some of the building hazards as it identified occupants, provided information about the use of special equipment, and challenged the user to locate resources. I used it as a means of introducing the staff to the use of their new computers but they were also captivated by the game itself.

Similarly, adventures could be built around the activities of a dispatcher, conductor, engine driver, etc. Alternatively, an adventure could have drug smugglers, terrorists, fast trains, and our hero travelling his/her way across the country.

My daughter and one of her friends used to spend hours with the computer developing *Time Tables*, *Way Bill* forms, tickets, etc., using the computer. The layout occupied a single 4' x 8' sheet of plywood, but developing these operating forms connected the tracks with the rest of the world. If you really want to get young people interested in model railroading show them how to use something like the *Adventure*

Game Toolkit and let them write their own railroad adventure.

Looking down a slightly different track, the screen image above shows the result of one of my presentation experiments—a black and white clinic on cane trams which combines photos, text, and sound. In time I'll include colour photos, sketch maps showing typical track arrangements, and sketches of typical bin and engine designs.

Some of our presentation tools are very sophisticated but others, such as *HyperCard*, *ToolBook* and *Visual Basic*, are simple enough that most teenagers could use them to prepare a clinic similar to mine on cane trams.

My clinic isn't quite ready for use at a Convention yet [and I have not asked whether the Conventions are ready for me with my computer-based presentation] but I'm having fun putting it together and maybe it will help interest modellers in QLD cane trams...

Computers are effective learning tools. Maybe we should also look at how to use them to attract young people into the hobby.



Some of you may have seen the posters, picked up the flier or heard me speak briefly about the Narrow Gauge Convention that is being organised for the Easter weekend, 1996. I have been approached by several people with questions about the convention and I would like to clarify some points.

Why a Narrow Gauge Convention?

The interest in modelling narrow gauge railways / railroads has been growing over the years which has become more obvious with the increasing number of narrow gauge layouts on the exhibition circuit. It was felt that there was sufficient interest to warrant a convention to allow narrow gaugers to meet one another to exchange information and ideas.

Where did the idea come from?

In a number of the letters I have received I have been congratulated for coming up with the idea for the convention. In no way can I claim any of the responsibility. The original idea was put to the Croydon Narrow Gauge Group by Rod Parker and George Paxon. They are both narrow gauge modellers from New South Wales.

Who or what is the Croydon Narrow Gauge Group?

The Croydon Narrow Gauge Group (CNGG) is a group set up to promote narrow gauge modelling as part of our fascinating hobby. The CNGG was formed in 1981 and has participated on the exhibition circuit all over Victoria (where we are based) with several trips into South Australia and New South Wales. The CNGG does not have clubrooms and meets at least once a month in the homes of different members. The CNGG works in two scales: HO (track gauge 9 mm) and O (track gauge 16.5 mm); and uses a modular design that allows interchangeability of the units. It allows us to vary the display from exhibition to exhibition and display the work of the different members.

Why is the CNGG hosting the convention?

The CNGG is the only organised (some would say disorganised) group set up specifically to model narrow gauge (as far as we know). There is the added advantage of the CNGG being based in Melbourne and holding the convention there because there are a number of prototype narrow gauge railways nearby (e.g. Puffing Billy). The decision was taken in Easter of this year to start planning the convention and input into the organisation is still coming from Rod and George.

What happens to any profit?

It is planned to run the convention to break even. If a small profit is made it will be used to help fund the next

convention. If sufficient interest is generated it will hopefully be held in a different state in two years time. If a more substantial profit is made it is planned to donate most of the money to some narrow gauge related activity which is still to be decided.

What can attendees expect at the convention?

It is hoped that the content will contain something to interest enthusiasts and modellers. It is planned to run a series of lectures on the different prototypes which will include: Australia; New Zealand; Europe; U.S.A.; and the U.K. Clinics will be run on specific aspects of modelling such as detailing and weathering structures; construction and detailing of a DRGW and CS cars and modelling the Queensland two footers (cane trains). If there is something else you would like to see presented or a topic you are willing to present please contact the organisers. A number of traders are being invited to attend so you may be able to purchase that elusive item. A number of quality layouts have been invited. It is hoped that Kingfield, Twin Lakes and Maine (HO30); Kennebec County (HO30); Big Sky Lumber Co. (On3) and others will be in attendance.

Where is the convention being held?

The convention is being held in the Conference Rooms of the King Village Resort, 137-141 Mountain Highway, Wantirna, Victoria. Wantirna is an eastern suburb of Melbourne less than hours drive from the city centre. The venue has available a wide range of sporting and leisure facilities as part of the complex which may be used by the delegates and their families who chose to stay at the resort.

When is the convention being held?

The convention is on Saturday 6 and Sunday 7, April, 1996 which is the Easter weekend. This will allow interstate attendees time to travel to and from the convention. For those people willing to spend a little more time in and around Melbourne there are other attractions. There are the prototype railways that have already been mentioned or there are two model railway exhibitions; one is at Hobsons Bay just south of the centre of the city and the other is at Bendigo.

What will the convention cost?

At this stage the convention costs have not been finalised. It is hoped that the cost will be around sixty dollars. There is likely to be a convention dinner which will be an additional cost.

Sufficient interest has already been generated to ensure that the event will go ahead. If you would like to know more; receive the convention updates; or offer your services please contact:

Grant M'Adam
Convention Secretary
194 Booran Road
Glenhuntly, Vic, 3163
(03) 9578 8685

A Logical Next Step

by **Tony Koester**,
General Manager,
Allegheny Midland R.R. Co.

Back in 1966 when, with Glenn Pizer, I founded the Nickel Plate Historical & Technical Society, it was a new concept. Only a group supporting the New Haven predated our efforts, and I clearly recall the excitement and rewards of blazing a new trail.

Now Allen and Sharon McClelland are similarly venturing into unknown but exciting new territory with the founding of the Virginian & Ohio Historical Society. I know of no other such group devoted exclusively to the dissemination of information and the exchange of ideas about a freelanced, private model railroad. But knowing Allen as I have since 1970, and knowing how creative and entrepreneurial Sharon is, I'm not at all suprised that the McClellands and -- at age 30-something and counting -- the world renoned Virginian & Ohio would take this intriguing next step forward. They have my unconditional admiration and support in this new venture.

The above item is from **V&O Innovations**, the publication of the V&O Historical Society. Any one can become a member of this society by writting to Sharon McClelland. This is a new concept for a model railroad and is something few of us could ever follow. For futher information write to: Box 81, Dayton, Ohio 45449

K.I.S.S. Principle No. 1

By **Gavin Hince**

For a simple, manually operated turntable, consider using a headphone jack as the table's pivot. The jack gives a strong pivot point, provides power to the turntable rails, and even allows the turntable deck to be removed for maintenance!

Discard the plastic cover and cut off the threaded portion. Glue the jack to the under side of the turn table deck, and install the head phone socket in the centre of the pit. I made my turn table deck oversize, sanding it to clear the edges of the pit. In this fashion, the only precision work is to ensure the rails on the turntable deck over hang both end equally.

Operation and alignment with the approach track are manual. I added a rounded wooden block underneath each approach track to prevent the table moving as locomotives rolled on and off.

There will be more of these KISS Principles in future issues - Editor



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THE PROS AND CONS OF MODEL CONTESTS

By **Fred Gill GMMR**

Once again we are heading for an AR Convention in July 1996 at Melton, Victoria, where part of the elaborate program will be the presentation of our Regional Model Contests.

Perhaps one of the most controversial and least understood components of the convention program is model contest judging. At the conclusion of every convention contest there are those members (Contest Winners) who think that the judges are the wisest and best qualified men around. From the balance of contestants a small number regard the judges as a collection of 'dimwits'.

It always annoys me how many contestants never lose a contest. They are always robbed of points, but they never lose because of their workmanship. The bickering and complaining that emerges after the contests are very annoying at times. Everyone wants to win. Let's face it, it's an ego trip and anyone who says it isn't either is deceiving himself or herself. When a modeller wins a contest, or even better, a Best in Show award, they are proud of it and they enjoy receiving the plaudits of their peers. Personally I believe they should be proud of their personal efforts that they put into winning the top place in a regional contest.

You DON'T win contests by bitching, you win them by working hard and completing finely detailed models. The judges are always available after a contest to discuss their comments on the Judges' Comment Sheet. Talk to them, find out where your entry is lacking or where you may be able to fine tune your construction methods. TALK to the judges, DON'T berate them. You can still catch a lot more flies with a spoonful of honey than with a whole barrel of vinegar.

The average person who enters a competition in sport, etc or a model railroad contest does not start out by winning everything in sight. Most of our Contest Judges started out by being average model builders. They persisted with their quests for first place in contests and many of them have reached their goals which in the case of Laurie Green and Gavin Hince includes the NMRA National contests.

The best idea is to communicate with Judges AND Contest winners and ask about the other person's techniques and features, but also ask the Judges where the winners excelled and in what section did they earn the most points. Study photos in the NMRA Bulletin magazine and other magazines of NMRA National prize winners and see if you can pick up some further clues on how the models were built. The whole thing boils down to picking the other person's brains and then applying the same

ideas to your model. Maybe you can even improve on their methods and come up with a winning contest model.

Many modellers just can't seem to accept the fact that there are some modellers who actually build a model specifically for a contest. This person starts out with the intention of winning a contest. What's so hard to accept? This modeller wants to win, so he goes to the 'Nth' degree in scratchbuilding, detail and care in construction. Fine, that's his prerogative. He sets his own standards as he is not obliged to abide by yours or anyone else's and it is these builders who other modellers should be talking to and asking those pertinent questions on how the model was constructed, etc.

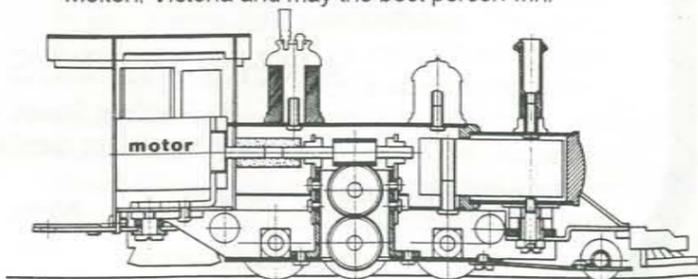
The underlying purpose of model contests, besides the obvious reason, it to help all modellers to improve their work. If a modeller's skills can be improved then that modeller will undoubtedly enjoy the benefits of his improvement and this will help another up and coming modeller to enjoy our hobby better.

All judges are instructed at each contest time that they must be absolutely certain that all your efforts are noticed and credit is given where credit is due. They are to be absolutely certain that the first place winner IS the first place winner. You want to be a first prize winner? The judges will try to see that you get one but they will want to be sure that it is THE BEST ENTRANT IN IT'S CATEGORY.

You can reap many benefits from entering a contest. It can be an ego trip. It's anything that you want it to be. But above all it's the satisfaction of knowing that you have endeavoured to improve your modelling skills.

Remember that even if you don't earn enough points to reach first place in a contest, you can gain a Merit Award for the Achievement Program if you score at least 87.5 points. All contestants who earn this score and a 1st, 2nd or 3rd place in a contest actually are doubly rewarded for their efforts.

So come along now, let's see a good number of modellers entering the next Regional Contests at Melton, Victoria and may the best person win.



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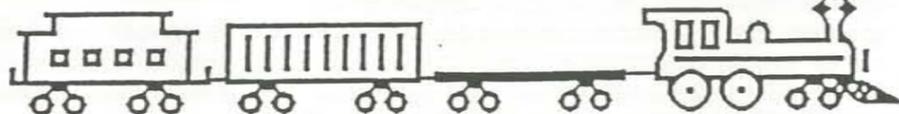
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ELECTRICAL CONTROL FOR MODEL RAILROADS

by Ken Scales

DESIGN AND WIRING

This is the first of a series of three articles based more on experience than theory. They are aimed at modellers who are not professionally trained in electronics.

The first subject I will address is the supply of power to switch machines. There are two types of switch machines used by the majority of serious modellers.

Firstly there are the twin coil solenoid types which includes Peco. There are two cheap and simple ways to power these machines for trouble free operation. The first is to use an A.C. supply with a voltage of 16 to 18 volts and a minimum of 1 Amp. The second is to use a capacitor discharge machine, either home made or one of the many commercial units available in your local hobby shop. Given the low price of many of the commercial units many modellers do not consider the effort of building these units yourself is worthwhile.

There is an interesting point to be made here. The use of a capacitor discharge unit does not always stop push buttons jamming or failing. It does provide a much more powerful charge to throw the point but it requires that you wait for the unit to recharge before changing a second point.

I have always preferred to use a good A.C. supply instead. The A.C. current is less likely to damage or jam push buttons and you can set the points as quickly as you like. The trick is to protect the supply with a fuse. A small capacity fuse will blow before the switch motor burns out if the button jams.

I would discourage the use of 12 Volt D.C. current particularly if the switch machines are supplied by thin wire such as single strand telephone wire. The D.C. current is much more demanding on the switch contacts, the thin wire increases this load because it puts more resistance in the circuit and by the time the current reaches the switch machine it is

down to about 10 Volts. Consequently you have to hold the push button down longer. This creates heat in the push button contacts and the switch jams.

The second type of switch machine is the slow motion motor driven type. These normally require the use of a 12 Volt D.C. supply. I would not recommend using a supply other than that recommended by the manufacturer of these units.

The next subject is that of wiring. This is often neglected by modellers who spend hundreds of dollars on controllers and use old leftover single strand telephone wire to supply current to the locos. Much of the thin multistrand wire sold in hobby shops is not suitable for supplying loco power. The reason for this is that thin wire has too much resistance and effects the way the controller supplies power to the train. Even worse is the fact that it mainly effects the low speed control of the train. The minimum thickness of wire for a layout if you want optimum performance from controllers is the 7 amp domestic cable use in lampcords or light extension leads. It should be multistrand pure copper wire as this usually has the lowest resistance. Generally the thinner the strands are with this type of wire the lower its resistance. The bigger your layout is the more effect the wiring has on the operation of trains and the low speed response of the controller used.

The next subject in this article is the method of junctioning and joining cables. A good example of how to join and junction cables is the method used for domestic 240 Volt systems. The modern house does not have many dedicated junctions. Instead wires are joined where they connect to fittings such as power points and light sockets. The same system can be used for model train layouts. The connecting pins on switches make ideal junctions as do switch machine pins and even track feed if you can hide the joined wires. Wires can simply be twisted together and soldered to the pin or track. Every time

you do this on a layout that's one less terminal block screw that can come loose cut through the wire or simply provide extra resistance you do not want.

I developed this concept even further on one layout by soldering all wires to printed circuit boards so that the layout had no terminal blocks or normal joiners. The only other joins in the wiring were RCA connectors which allowed me to separate each block to diagnose faults. I further simplified this by making two test leads each fitted with an RCA connector. The first of these connected is to a multimeter the other to a power source. This allowed each block to be diagnosed in isolation which I found considerably simplified finding any electrical faults.

The real bonus was that the layout after five years of constant operation and a collision with the family car was virtually trouble free electrically. I have attached diagrams and drawings which illustrate this system.

Whichever system you use the first step is to draw a schematic drawing before you start. When you are happy with the schematic prepare a circuit diagram in a format that you can work with. Study these carefully before you attach the first wire to determine if your proposed system will work. Take special care with the point feed wiring and mark all point isolation breaks on the schematic to help diagnose any problems.

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- Plus other dirty jobs nobody wants to do.

Job Description - Vice President

- Regularly attend BOD meetings and monthly member meetings.
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- 4 - 6 hours per month in normal month, 20 hours in convention months, 10 hours at end of financial year.
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- Keep minutes of all BOD and General meetings.
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- Responsible for all correspondence.

Job Description - Member of the Board

- Three positions are filled by the general membership. They are responsible for looking after the interests of the members and for keeping the rest of the BOD Honest!

The Position of Trustee is a separate issue. For information on this position contact John Saxon MMR.

CROSSROADS ATLANTA '95

Kathy, my wife, and I were at *Crossroads Atlanta '95* last July, the NMRA's National Convention for 1995. We spent the convention week in Atlanta, the Olympic city, as part of a North American holiday we took during the northern summer. It was twenty-two years ago that we last attended a "national", and that was also at Atlanta! We had a wonderful time then in 1973, so made a special effort to attend this year. Were we disappointed after all these years of waiting? Not at all! It was a fabulous show, and we enjoyed every minute of it. Let me tell you a bit about it.

Atlanta is in America's "Deep South", and is the capital of the State of Georgia. It is incredibly green, gets lots of rain (but not while we were there), and has a climate rather like Brisbane. So, in July, it was hot and humid. No problem though, the convention was in a magnificent air-conditioned hotel, as was the incredible Train Show exhibition, and too the buses and even the local subway trains. I'm sure that, if it were possible, the citizens of Atlanta would build a huge dome over the whole city and air-condition that, too! We stayed at the convention hotel in five-star comfort, and at a cheaper rate than any Sydney suburban motel.

As we average attending only one National Convention every twenty years or so, we opted to take in as many tours as we could. I saw many layouts, most just average, but some quite outstanding. My top vote goes to Norm Stenzel's *Brandywine and Benedictine*, a V&O-style Allegheny coal-hauler, which you too can tour on Allen Keller's *Great Model Railroads* No. 20. Outside tours included the Tennessee Valley RR Museum at Chattanooga (including the NMRA headquarters), and the South Eastern Railroad Museum near Atlanta. Both featured limited steam rides. However, there was no main line steam tour due to Norfolk Southern's axing of the steam program, pity!

We had a great party night at Stone Mountain, a local version of Ayers Rock, complete with Confederate-era theme park. But the best part of the tours was the

incredibly well organised bus boarding. Even hardened American national convention goers thought it was the best they had ever experienced.

At the convention itself, the clinics that I saw were worthwhile, although I didn't really have time to see many of them. There were some nice models in the contest, but some categories were very under-subscribed - especially passenger cars. The silent auction saw a whole galaxy of mouth-watering temptations but I found that, unless you bully your way through the packed hall in the last five minutes before bids closed, you were out-bid on everything! By contrast, the live auction on the last night was well-organised and run, but not very well patronised.

The biggest and best event, though, was the Train Show, held over the last three days. It was in a separate location, but had some *seven hundred* stands, mostly trade stands of one kind or another, in a hall about the size of a football field. We just walked around and drooled - this was a model railroader's heaven! Kathy was disappointed though, because not one of those stands had a railroad picture jig-saw puzzle! Still, I suppose you can't please everybody.

How would I sum it up? A great show, and just being there was a wonderful experience. There were very few Australians at the show, not surprising considering the distance from home, but we made some great new friends among the locals. Kathy was so impressed, that she signed us both up for next year's national at Long Beach. I just hope we can have the time off! Of course, Long Beach is right near Los Angeles International Airport, and would be the easiest (and cheapest) National Convention that Australians can get to. So, make your plans for next year, and maybe we'll see you there!

Phil Knife MMR

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MAIL - FAX - PHONE ORDERS MOST WELCOME
BANKCARD-VISA-MASTERCARD-AMEX-CHEQUES- INSTORE EFTPOS

