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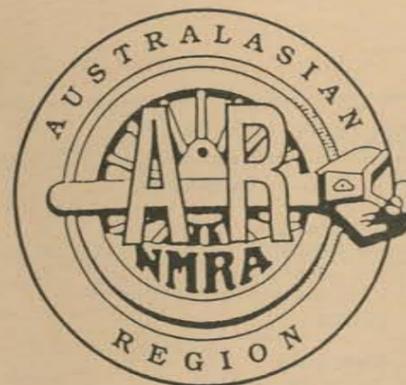
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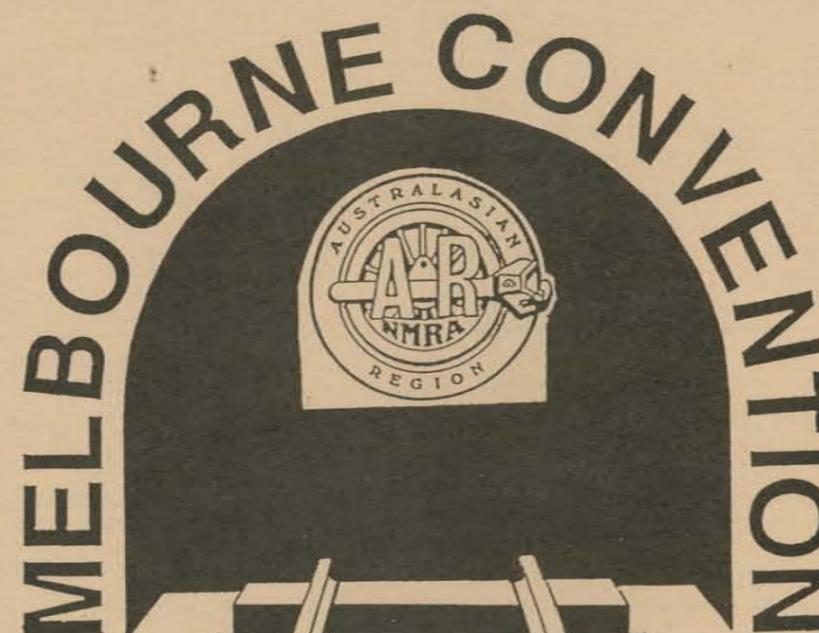
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**Main Line**

National Model Railroad Association Inc. Australasian Region  
 Volume 13 Number 1 January, February, March 1996  
 Registered By Australia Post Publication # PP241613/00080

**1996 N.M.R.A.**



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## 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 486DX4(100) computer (540M HD) running under DOS 6.22 and prepared on a BJ10ex Bubble Jet printer using WINWORD 6; MS Powerpoint; 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:

April.	29th February 1996
July.	30th April 1996
Oct.	31st August 1996
Jan.	30th November 1996

**These dates are Absolute!**

## SCHEDULE

10th February **SATURDAY** **NSW Epping**  
 Bob Carr 22 Haywood Street  
 2.00pm (02)  
 This will be our first visit to this layout. Bob's layout is HO and the prototype is Union Pacific.

18th February **SUNDAY** **VIC Ballarat**  
 Paul Ritchie 28 Ascot Street South  
 11.30 am (053) 32 1138  
 BBQ and visit the multi scales and gauges of Paul's many layouts.

24th March **SUNDAY** **VIC Hoppers Crossing**  
 Gavin Hince 16 "The Glades" Johnson Ave  
 11.30 am (03) 9749 6974  
 BBQ

23rd March **SATURDAY** **NSW Granville**  
 Victor Quince 76 Good Street  
 2.00pm (02)637 6683  
 This will be the first visit to this layout. Victor's layout is UP/SP and is built in HO.

**THE AGM WILL BE HELD AT THIS MEETING**

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

13th April **SATURDAY** **NSW Quaker's Hill**  
 Phil Badger Morrell Cres.  
 2.00 pm (02)

20th April **SATURDAY** **VIC Bacchus Marsh**  
 Peter McDonald 4 Boyd Street  
 2.00pm (053) 67 3601

11th May **SATURDAY** **NSW Toongabbie**  
 Ray Walter 18 Picasso Cres.  
 2.00pm (02)

19th May **SUNDAY** **VIC Hoppers Crossing**  
 Geoff Truman 12 Goodwin Close  
 11.00am BBQ (03) 9748 7864

### NMRA CONVENTION

6th & 7th July VIC  
 MELTON  
 Saturday & Sunday

See Front Cover Of This Issue For More Details

## WAYBILL

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This issue of the Main Line has been reduced to only twenty pages so that I could include the membership listing. If your details are not correct, please write your **corrected** details on a \$5.00 note and post it to the editor. If you are **not** on the list then your membership has lapsed. Send your membership subscription to Jack MacMicking **NOW!**

### 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).**

## Presidents Report

The major event for me in the last couple of months was the NSW Christmas party at my place on the 9th December. About 80 attended and the first to arrive was Murphy. He arrived about an hour before the main body of members and totally stopped 1/4 of my layout from working. He stayed for the whole afternoon and in addition to the usual derailments a controller appeared to die and half way through I was ready to sell the layout off, like Michael Flack did at the end of his meeting. And I thought it all worked!!! (It did the day before).

Despite my anguish the afternoon went very well with special thanks to my wife Jenny who has spent the last few months organising the lunch etc. My son Tim who cooked hundreds of sausages and all the ladies who help prepare and who brought the most fantastic deserts you have ever seen, and thanks to everybody that helped make it a great day.

This year our Convention is in Victoria and you will see the advert in this issue of Main Line. Make the effort to go, it will be well worth the trip to Melton in Victoria on July 6th and 7th. We have even timed it so you could also attend the National in Long Beach the following weekend. If you need some more information about Melton contact Laurie Green (03)9744 5188 AH or give me a call if you need some information about Long Beach.



Now for our Convention '97 in Sydney. We have just had confirmation that our guest speaker and clinic presenter will be Bob Hayden, the builder of the Carabasset and Dead River Railway, Co-author Realistic Scenery, Project Editor - Model Railroader, Editor - Fine Scale Modeller, who's work you will all be familiar with through his joint efforts with Dave Frary. Bob is a superb presenter

and will definitely be a must to see in '97. The Venue will be John Paul II High School again so you can't even use the excuse that you couldn't find the venue.

That's about all for now and as it is my last President's report with the elections due, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Board members and all the other members who have helped make this stint as stand in President so interesting and I might say even fun. I would like to thank all the members of the BOD for all the work they have put in over the last 2 years. Without their efforts we would not have an Association at all.

All the very best for the Coming Year.

### Sowerby Smith

**Fred Gill,  
Grand Master  
Model Railroader.**

from John Saxon MMR.

On Saturday, 16 December, at our Christmas meeting, I had great pleasure in presenting Fred Gill with his Grand Master Model Railroader patch plus a locally produced certificate (pending completion of design of a National Certificate in the US).

Fred Gill is the first MMR **anywhere** to go on to achieve awards in all of the eleven categories under the NMRA Achievement Program and is to be congratulated. Those who know Fred and have seen his work know this honour is well deserved.

I have known Fred for over thirty years but his interest in model railways goes much further back than the early 1960's. He is very well known in the hobby, having long been a contributor to the local model railway press and continues to still support the local prototype hobby with his articles and lectures. His photographs of his Diamond Valley Lines illustrating use of readily available hobby products have graced the Walthers catalog for many years.

Fred was one of the gang of four who reformed the region as the Australasian Region in the early 1980s, was the first vice president and first editor of Main Line when it ran to all of 4 or 8 pages and was produced on my employers copy machine. *Those were the days!*

Under Fred's guidance, the Achievement Program has blossomed with over 100 achievement certificates awarded to date and six of our local members having reached the status of Master Model Railroader. Fred continues to enthusiastically encourage the membership to improve their modelling by becoming involved in the Achievement Program and would be delighted to hear from you, the member.

Why not give Fred a call on (02) 639 4158 to enquire how you can be involved in this rewarding program.



## Convention '97

The Board of Directors has appointed Ray Parr as Chairman for the 1997 Sydney Convention. A Steering Committee has been created and consists of the following members:

- Ray Parr -Chairman
- Fred Gill -Vice Chairman
- Ken Scales -Secretary
- Sowerby Smith -Administration
- Toni Saxon -Registrations

The date for the Convention is the long weekend of June 1997 (14, 15 and 16) and the venue will be the site of the 1995 Convention, John Paul II Senior High School at Marayong.

Further details will be advised as they come to hand.

Inquiries may be made to:

Convention '97 Sydney,  
c/- PO Box 155,  
BAULKHAM HILLS 2153.

## THE NMRA MODULAR STANDARDS. from John Saxon MMR.

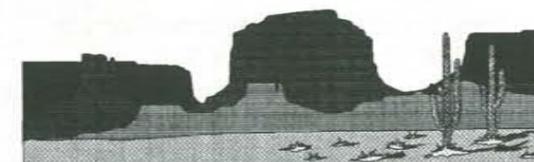
Some little time ago, one of our members, Peter Jenkinson, adapted the NMRA Module Standard MS-1 for HO scale to metric dimensions and put together a presentation which I think was featured at one of our conventions.

Unfortunately I don't believe the concept got any further which is a great pity as in the United States the growth of HO scale standard gauge modular model railroading continues to grow at an exponential rate.

The advantages of modular model railroading for the apartment dweller or even the home owner who has little space are many. By building the modules to a standard allows you to get together with other builders to run trains. Also, when the inevitable change of abode takes place, you don't have to totally wreck the layout and start again.

Although there is a standard length (1200mm, 1800mm or 2400mm) and depth (600mm to 900mm) and two tracks must terminate at each end with centres 127mm and 178mm from the front edge you can do almost anything in between. I have seen examples where coal mines, smelters, steel mills, towns, railroad terminals and so on have been modelled in the space available behind the two standard tracks which themselves do not (should not?) need to be parallel to the front edge at all.

Peter is currently in the country but I am sure would love to hear from any member who wants to know more about modular railroading. I will be pleased to pass on to Peter any letters or enquiries you might care to send to me.



## Division 3 Meeting Reports

By Paul Richie

**September 16.** This gathering was at Geoff Truman's home. Geoff is another well known V.R. Modeller. His layout has a dual personality, it is also an Exhibition layout with return loops added. At home it has a point to point run with the permanent terminals still in the construction stage. The prototype is a small branch that used to run to Daylesford, some of the prototype has been preserved. Geoff also runs steam and early diesel and a DERM (Diesel Electric Rail Motor to use the full name).

Discussion over lunch always includes the latest in kit building and techniques to use as well as future conventions and exhibitions.

Thanks to Geoff and his wife.

**November 25** saw us at Laurie Green's Home for the last meeting of the year. When I arrived Laurie was explaining the expansion plans of his R.G.S. Discussion over lunch included some of the clinics arranged for the Narrow Gauge Convention and the '96 meeting dates and a change from Saturday only to both Saturday and Sunday meetings so other members can attend and enjoy the discussions that always arise about most subjects and the company of other modellers.

Thanks to Laurie and Rosemary for their hospitality.

## HO Liquidation Sale

A large collection of HO scale Model Railway Equipment is being offered for sale and includes the following:-

Exhibition layout with overall dimensions of 16 ft X 8 ft (4.88 m X 2.4 m)  
The layout is fully sceniced on all four sides, is wired and comes with a sturdy steel frame. There are also many items of track and structures.

Please contact :-  
Lyndon Spence Tel (042) 72 9245  
Or  
Chris Smith Tel (042) 61 1323

## Less Than Car Load

By Gerry Hopkins MMR

### • New Magazine

At the Narrow Gauge Convention a new Australian Magazine will be released. The magazine is called *Narrow Gauge Down Under* and will cover all types of narrow gauge railways modelled in Australia. A number of well known modellers have already submitted articles for the inaugural issue.

### • The Last Outing . . . .

Kennebec County Railroad will be going to its last public exhibition at Camberwell in March '96. The layout will be staying in Melbourne to make its last outing anywhere at the Narrow Gauge Convention. On returning to Sydney the two side sections will be built permanently into my home layout *Franklin Somerset & Kennebec Railroad*. The wharf section will be dismantled and the buildings incorporated into the home layout. The FS&K RR will feature a bigger and hopefully a better wharf scene. As Lauris and I enjoy exhibiting we will still be around to socialise and run trains.

### • Make A Date . . .

Over the coming year a few of the meeting days will be held on a Sunday. You may have noticed that some of the Victorian meeting have been changed to Sunday.

Many people have to work on Saturdays and are there unable to attend our terrific meetings. If you wish to hold a meeting either on a Saturday or Sunday please contact Glen Coventry.

### • Board Of Directors

As of the 4th Feb '96 I have only received ONE nomination for the BOD. Have you sent in YOUR nomination?

### • Wanted

I am always looking for articles for the Main Line. Any form of article will do, either prototype or modelling. All article score points towards your Author AP.

## The Model Railroad Craftsman

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CMA Telltale - \$10-00  
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Rix Maxwell Ave. Series - \$19-75  
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Good stock Walthers Cornerstone and Micro Engineering Kits.

'N' Thrall Well Cars MDC - 12 pack \$155-50  
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NWSL True Sander - \$56-00  
NWSL Dupli-Cut - \$42-00  
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Razor Saw Set - Handle + #239 Saw - \$14-70  
X-Acto Vacuum Vise - \$18-50  
Badger #200 Air Brush & Accessories - \$149-00

### Kits - 740

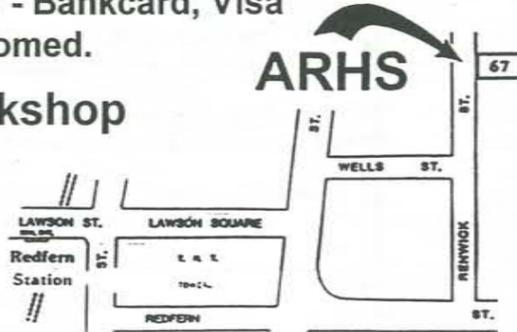
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The ARHS Archives, at the same address, are open for research on the first, second and third Saturdays of each month, 10am to 3.30pm.

## A Visit to the V&O

By Peter Jensen

Allen McClelland's visit to Australia in 1995 for the NMRA convention provided many of us the opportunity to meet and talk with perhaps one of the hobbies most influential authors. I had read many of his articles in the hobby press over the years, and have used many of his ideas in the operation and design of my own railway, the Noosa Heads Southern. Just meeting him was a highlight.

At the convention, I joined the V&O Historical Society, hoping this would provide further ideas. When the July Newsletter arrived, it announced the date of the next V&OHS Open House as November 4th. The pulse quickened, the dates were re-checked, and checked again. I would be in the US on business the following Monday!!!! Very quickly, arrangements were made to pass through Dayton for the Saturday Open House of the V&O Historical Society.

Saturday 4th November also coincided with the NMRA MCR Train Show in Dayton. So the day started at the MCR show, where bargains were the order of the day. It was held in a huge convention centre, with some 50+ vendors providing new, used, and rare equipment in all scales. I left there with a cache of goodies, bound for the start of the V&OHS Open House.

There were approx 20 members in attendance (with more coming on the Sunday). Allen had arranged the day as a mini convention. He provided a conducted tour, pointing out the features, construction, changes, and antidotes for the layout. Following the tour, each attendee was given the chance to operate a train over the layout. My turn came, and I was given control of a pair of ALCOs (numbers 342 and 347) on a westbound freight of some twenty cars.

"Dispatcher to 342 ... you are clear to leave Afton yard, westbound to Elm Grove where you will hold for AM 3042". I turned the throttle and the freight slowly accelerated. It was magic ... the train ran like clockwork, the trackwork was superb, the signals were

green. I was running a freight down the main through towns that I had only read about. At Dawson Springs the climb began, there was an ALCO RS-11 (number 325) waiting to act as helper on a later coal train. At Elm Grove, I held on the main line waiting for the empty coal train. It was hauled by AM 3042 and would head off onto the Durham Subdivision at Clintwood. After Fullerton, the line headed off onto the new section of the layout. Scenery and signalling were sparse. Allen was acting as tower controller and guiding the engineers through the new sections. The track rejoined the original section just before Indian Hill. Green lights let us continue on through Jimtown to the interchange yards. Sadly the controls were surrendered to another enthusiastic visiting engineer.

The 25 mins it took to drive the train across the railroad went far too quickly. I spent the remainder of the time, chasing trains ...

On the Saturday night, most members from the Saturday and Sunday Open Houses met for dinner. Many old slides were shown, Allen presented one of his enthralling talks on the layout. The topics were railways, models, and the V&O, mixed with good and enthusiastic company.

The opportunity to attend this open house was unbelievable, the layout was unbelievable, the timing and good luck in getting to the event was unbelievable. It was, in short, a day to remember. I hope that the coincidence and chance that enabled me to attend this year repeats itself next year, here's hoping.....

The two pages that follow show just a few of the photographs taken by Peter while on this trip. Details about the Historical Society appeared in the last issue of Main Line.

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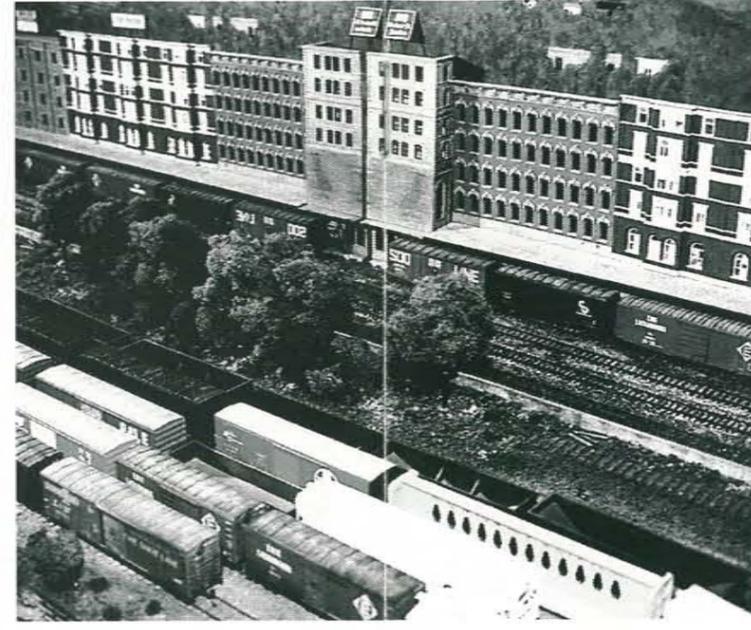
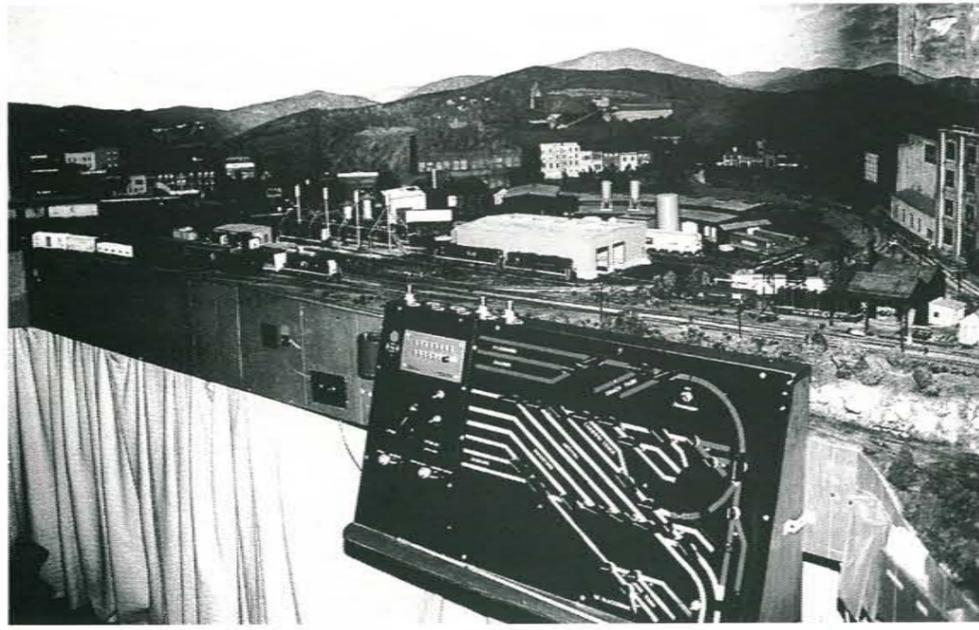
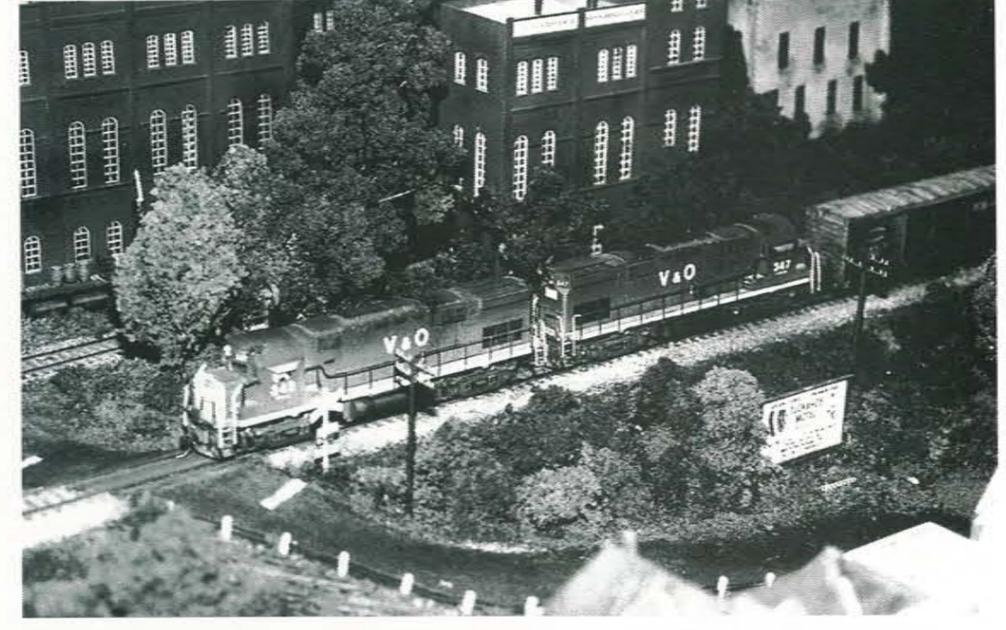
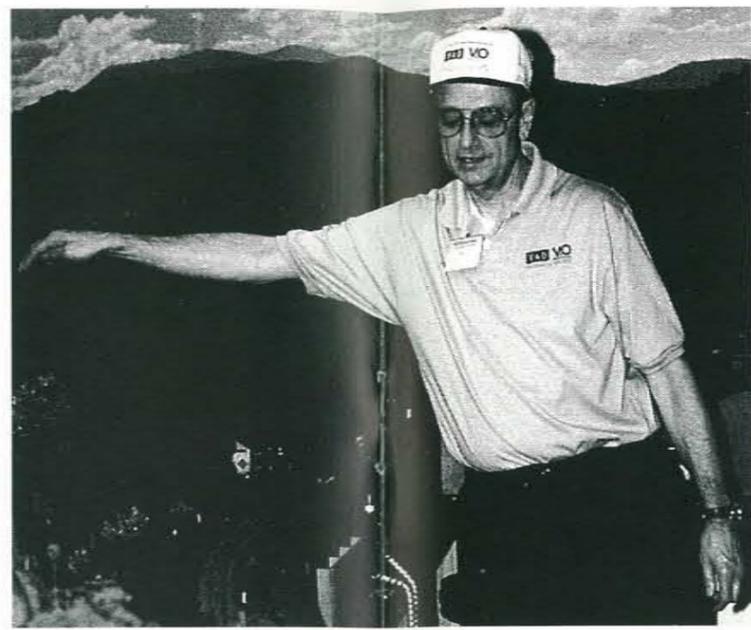


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## LONG IS THE TRAIN . . . .

## . . . . THAT HAS NO EARNING

Running unit trains - interpreting the term as widely as possible to include: passenger trains, especially through or express, stock, logging, hopper, ore, oil / petroleum, auto-rack, reefers, TOFC's is an interesting and prototypical exercise.

Their advantages are manifold: once the train is set up and adjusted, the infinity of coupler / wheel / rail mismatches is minimised, couplers between cars can be the cheapest (X2F or supplied) rather than Kadees (No. 5 at \$3.75 and above per packet) because switching from within the train is minimal, and, especially with trains of short cars such as ore jimmies, one can attain a reasonable verisimilitude of prototypical length/number.

But, in this very garden of success, fester the weeds of failure: by definition, these trains are long, usually too long for easy and reliable manipulation; by one's adopting the economics of X2F's, unit cars will not couple to other cars (although they can have Kadees at the end of each string), or, if they do, they present other awkward problems: either they and the other cars exceed the tractive effort of the loco or one needs idler cars, sometimes not possible, sometimes not desirable to make coupler matchings - so, with unit trains, operators are confronted by incorrigible strings of cars blocking mainline and passing and staging tracks.

Oh, to get them off active tracks into storage until required! And reversed without operators going crazy trying to set dozens of little wheels onto rails!

One easy solution: the arm broad sweep is effective, but, like the man who dived into a merely damp sponge from 300 metres, what does one do for an encore?

Here is a simple way of not only removing in reasonable and preservable order but also reversing those incorrigible lengths of rolling stock. Reversing is most useful in dealing with passenger trains. A string of freight cars has no definable front and rear, but, run an observation car directly behind the locomotive power - especially if it is steam - if the (imagined) passengers don't get you, self-esteem and any passing model railroaders will or should. Such were my problems on the *Dukane & Rio Grande Western Railroad*.

The main line of the *Dukane & Rio Grande Western Railroad (D&RGW)* is two ovals, overlapped and joined at one end, served by two staging/stub-end terminals; Dukane, the capital of Idaho, and Zenath, Utah, side by side. Trains leave one terminal or the other, traverse the main, arrive at the other terminal. If passenger, they are now facing "in" when they should be facing "out" for the return/repeat journey; if freight, at best, they're in the way. Reversal is easy enough to solve with the undefinable-end freights; not so easy with very definable-ended passenger trains. The solution for freight trains is a power cut-out end section which isolates the road locomotive; then another locomotive couples to the (previously-caboose) end, the train is pulled back onto the main, and the journey is repeated ad infinitum. Passenger trains can be reversed by having a switcher couple to the (observation) end and drawing them through a wye (with a fair amount of swapping motive power, end for end; pulling 80-foot cars is not much problem but *pushing* such cars is ... uuuummh... interesting.

But neither movement solves the problem of getting rid of the damned things when I run a simple freight or mixed or local-passenger. Remember: a unit train of any kind - to be plausible - should be an absolute, screaming minimum of 144 inches/12 feet/4 yards/ 0.00227 miles/0.00197 nautical miles //3660mm/366cm/3.66/0.00366km, excluding locomotives and caboose. My staging tracks (of which there are 10) soon clog up if unit-trains of oil, refrigeration, stock, passengers and all the rest turn up.

When it is time to either reverse (without trauma) or remove such a train to storage, a switcher couples to the caboose/observation car, draws the train through a double-slip switch, takes one lead itself to the loco servicing area and leaves the train to the mercies of the:

BIG 0-5-0 switcher

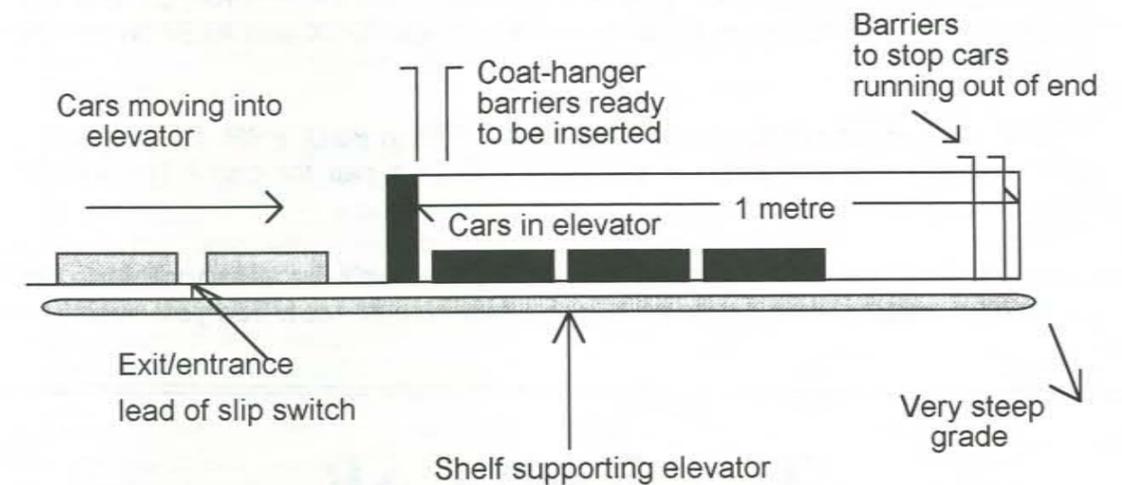
which pushes those incorrigible cars through the other lead -the entrance/exit lead - of the slip switch to the:

### ELEVATOR!

The ELEVATOR is no more than a 3 metre length of 100mm\*50mm PVC downpipe cut into three equal lengths, each able to hold 6 40-foot cars. Anything longer becomes unwieldy. The Elevator has no rails; cars simply roll-in/roll-out. A rerailer on the entrance/exit lead copes with cars returning to the *Dukane & Rio Grande Western*.

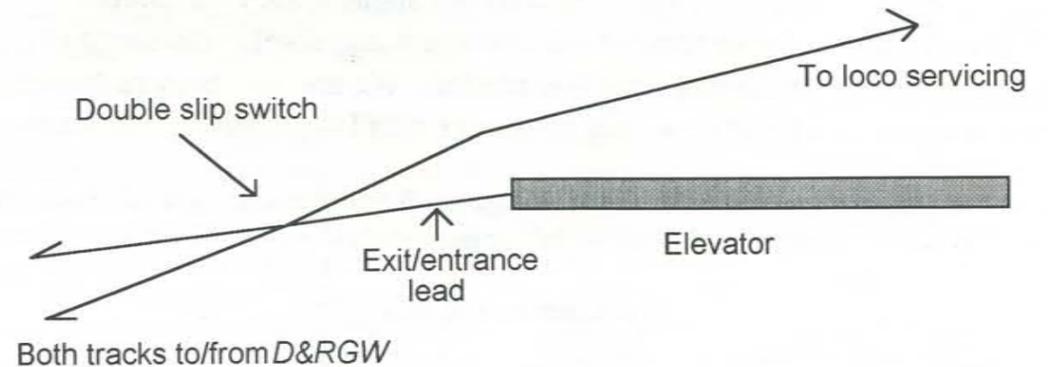
### Once in the Elevator:

1. cars are retained by barriers at each end: at the entrance, obviously, the barrier is placed after the cars are in; the other end must have the barriers in place before the cars enter. (Otherwise cars take a very steep grade!) "Barriers" is probably too high-faluting a term. Like glider paper-clips, who uses wire clothes hangers for their intended purpose? Four holes drilled through top and bottom of the elevator, 1cm from the ends, at widths to avoid catching couplers, accept lengths of coat-hanger wire:



### SIDE-VIEW OF ELEVATOR

2. the Elevator is lifted out of its docking and either:  
a) moved to the storage area where cars are trundled out/eased by hand onto a trackless board which is divided into train-lengths by strips of quad; or,  
b) turned end-for-end, then the cars are trundled out/eased by hand through the rerailer/slip switch and returned to the *Dukane & Rio Grande Western*:



### TOP VIEW OF ELEVATOR AND ITS APPROACH/EXIT/LOCO SERVICING TRACKS

Being rail-less and unpowered, the Elevator has no hardship with misalignment of trucks and tracks, and prevents locomotives taking the vertical turntable. It solved my problems of temporarily ridding the *D&RGW* of unwarranted unit trains while allowing use of all those kinds listed in the first paragraph.

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For those who missed out, the K & S Broadleaf Foliage (as demonstrated at Michael Flacks tree clinic) is now back in stock - we have plenty and the full range of trees should be here in early September.

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## NMRA (British Region) Golden Jubilee Convention

**"Golden Sands Express" Sandbanks Motel: Poole, DORSET, U.K.  
27th - 29th October 1995**

I first heard about the above Convention some months ago during a conversation with John Saxon. John was also kind enough to furnish me with a few names and addresses of people to contact in the U.K. for more details.

Over the next few days and a few weeks prior to our departure for Hong Kong and the U.K., I was able to contact Steve Park, the trustee of the British Region who put me in contact with the Convention organiser, Jym Phillips.

Both of these gentlemen provided me with further information and indeed invited both Jenice and myself to visit their layouts and/or the area's they lived with a view to them showing us around. Unfortunately, due to our reliance upon family transport and other family and pre-booked arrangements, both of these very kind offers had to be passed up.

Prior to all this I had accepted the kind offer from Jenice's cousin, Pat and her husband John, to take us from Gosport to Portsmouth - the trip being scheduled the same day as the Convention.

Fortunately John, a former Chartered Accountant who gave away a suit and tie for T-shirts and jeans and who now owns his own Tyre, Exhaust and Trucking Companies, was glad to oblige, so our trip was brought forward a day.

We left home on Thursday, a.m., for Portsmouth. Jenice, who was married to Sailor/Submariner had never before visited Portsmouth, so on Thursday 26th October a very interesting day was had by all. We toured H.M.S. WARRIOR a steam / sailing paid off in the late 18090's as well as H.M.S. VICTORY in Portsmouth Dockyard. Then it was across to Gosport to the H.M.S. ALLIANCE Submarine Museum, again very interesting but unfortunately time was at a premium.

Friday 27th October. Camera and Video were checked out. (Pat and John allowed me to borrow their video camera for our entire stay in

the U.K., hope I didn't wear it out). Lenses were cleaned and we set off for the NMRA Convention.

A couple of unplanned laps around the block in Bournemouth found us heading in the right direction of Poole. We located the Sandbanks Hotel and the Haven Hotel further down the road but we opted for more modest digs and indeed found all we required in the Sea-Witch Hotel just around the corner from the Convention at twenty-five pounds per head, per night for Bed and Breakfast.

The room was large and well appointed with an ensuite. If one was to have a complaint it would have to be with the traffic noise outside. It did not however, keep Jenice or I awake for very long.

On the flier and letter I received from Jym, it stated that the Convention started at 1200 (noon) Friday, so off we went to enrol etc. Apparently they meant that at 1200 they would start to erect layouts etc. The convention proper would start at 0930 on Saturday 28th. Rather disappointing that a one and a half day Convention was now condensed for me into the Saturday only, as we had to return home on the Saturday evening. Be that as it may, I approached the Reception desk and made myself known to Liz Pickering who was in charge of the desk. She in turn took our money and with a smile handed us our Gold Grab bags complete with our free convention mug. Then she set about introducing us to Jym Phillips who, even though he was flat out with the organisation of the Convention, still spared us a few minutes to introduce us to Tom Winlow, the President, and too many other members in the near vicinity to remember their names.

The wives of the British members were most interested with the fact that Jenice was a family member of the NMRA. We came away with the impression that many of the ladies "beaver" away in the background would like to be recognised either as individual members or as a family member. After several

introductions and starting to feel in the way, we retired to one of the coffee lounges and bought one tea and three coffees, cost 5 pound! That's about \$10 or \$11. It was lovely coffee, but in tiny cups. We chose to sit outside on the sun terrace - overlooking the beach. The sun was shining with a gentle breeze as we drank our coffee. Much to the apparent annoyance of a gentlemen at a nearby table. He was huffing and shaking his coffee at times, and appeared to take further umbrage as more people came out onto the terrace. We put it down to British eccentricity. Finished our coffee and departed the hotel, with the idea that rather than waste half a day watching people erect stands and layouts, we would take the ferry across Poole Harbour and visit Corfe Castle.

(On Saturday a large notice was prominent on the door leading to the sun terrace stating firmly "Residents only allowed into the sun terrace"; so that was bluey # 1, upsetting a resident.)

We arrived by ferry and had a delightful country lunch at a small pub in Swanage. We then took off for Corfe Castle. I raised a questions with our host, should it not be Cough Castle, as only common people *Corfe*?

We drove along delightful country lanes which are in effect, the major roads to Halman's Cross, and where we spotted a steam train. John and Pat had their first experience of *rail fanning*, as we guided them from one photo spot to another, I do believe they enjoyed it. They also took heart when at one photo location, we met a lady with her three children and a Grand-dad, who were all chasing the train, apparently to keep Grand-dad happy. Indeed, why wouldn't he be with carload of kids?

The train in question was a Southern Region M7044 Tank Loco, hauling 4 Ex BR Standard Design Cars.

Between Halman's Cross and Corfe Castle itself, there is not much opportunity from the vicinity of the road for good shots, until one gets to the castle museum field. This shot I managed to catch on video of Corfe Castle with its labyrinth of board walks, up and around the ruins. Atop the hill one side and in the narrow neck of the valley, emerging through the trees and over a beautiful stone viaduct,

came our train, disappearing at a sedate pace behind a hill to our left.

We drove around the terminus just in time to see the train taking off for its final run home to Swanage. The local historical members have done a great job at Norden with ample parking for tourists. You walk a fair distance along a footpath which is easy walking, as it runs nearly parallel with what looks like the Earth Works, to a one time very light tramway or narrow gauge railway.

One can readily make out the track bed contours through the local landscape. This was further compounded when John found me kneeling alongside an old rusting rail, he thought I had seen the lights, so to speak. I pointed out to him that we had a length of very old and rusty bull head rail; probably of about 60 lbs/ft. It was so corroded so as not to reveal any markings. We then found some three other rails along the "track bed of old". Perhaps some Southern or narrow gauge of aficionado may be able to help.

The last train gone, the sun setting, we headed home to the Sea Witch. We had been told by the proprietor that he had *the best* seafood restaurant in the Poole / Bournemouth area. Not seeing any prices on the dinner menu, we decided that perhaps a Chinese restaurant would suffice. We went to our rooms to shower and change, and upon leaving our ports, were justified. John's trusted Renault 24 was boxed in by Bentleys, Rolls Royce's, and a lonely Range Rover.

Saturday morning, after a delightful breakfast, (which made up for the mediocre Chinese dinner the night before), we arrived at the conventions. Now things were humming. In the hotel foyer were the raffle prizes. The 1st prize was an original oil of action with the Southern Pacific tunnel motors at the top of Tehachapi, approaching the first tunnel. It looked terrific. The other prizes were equally as mouth watering. From the McKeen kits, Central Valley Girder Bridges, ready to run locos, MDC kits, Athern and Stuart locos and books. (One especially caught my eye by O Winston Link, titled Link on the Norfolk and Western Railway.)

Unfortunately, the raffle was drawn on a Saturday night at the banquet, so I assume you

have to be there to claim your prize, ticket in hand!

The volume of prizes both provided and donated, was to be commended. Because of a very limited time, I did not attend any of the clinics. What I had hoped to do was get around the convention proper to see all the layouts and exhibits and film / photograph them all, also to record the competition models. I then hoped to board the shuttle bus to attend the layouts on display at Canford Heath. Then, if time allowed, to try and get around the convention again, upon returning to the hotel.

Blue #2 - A rather distinguished British gentlemen read my name tag and thought I was from "the Antipodes". "Are you staying at the hotel?" he asked, "No" I replied, "We're staying at another pub around the corner". He replied, "This is an Hotel!" as he walked off - *tck, tck, tck*. When I drove dignitaries, VIP's and socialites in Hire Cars they stayed at Pubs! Strange isn't it?

First impression of all the Bring and Buy stalls was very impressive. Prices were reasonable for what was being offered, hardly any junk with collectors labels was to be seen. Not a lot of *non-ferrous metal objects* were about. They too had labels comparable to the prices of new Brass locos in hobby shops here.

I did see many bargains in scales from N Gauge to On3, in condition from shady to mint but the prices were realistic for what was being offered. Camden Books had a tremendous array of books in U.S.A. prototype, magazines etc. Again they were selling O. Winston Link for UK 40 pounds. I saw the same book many years ago at Howwell and Dimmocks in George Street, Sydney for A\$89.00.

Jenice and I were already overweight with books in our luggage and it still grieves me to think I had to leave it behind, it's an excellent publication. Excellent photography by a master of his art. It is also a rather large and heavy book.

I was quite taken by a very small O scale layout: "Kettle Valley". This ran faultlessly and was one of only two layouts seen all day with layout lighting! Albeit a Porta Flood on a pole. But layout lighting and indeed good back scenes were not a priority. N scale was very

popular indeed, modular units that run whatever was the norm!

A trip on the "Canford Cannonball" (read - Bus) was an interesting excursion. The driver, who looked of middle eastern appearance had photos of his rather pretty wife and four children above the driving position along with St Christopher and numerous other good luck charms. Having driven busses and coaches myself here in Australia I have nothing but respect for the driver of the "Canford Cannonball". He was driving through streets as narrow as some loading bays here, to compound this it was a Saturday, "No Stopping" conditions do not apply. As he wove in and out of the endless parked cars, all the time with on coming traffic, he really needed all those good luck charms.

Upon arriving at the Canford Hall everyone descended on the refreshment bar. Tea or coffee at 30p (A\$0.60), assorted sandwiches were 1-20p (A\$2.40). These are cheap as UK prices are unreal and food quality often mediocre.

Once again the ladies behind the scenes were doing a roaring trade with the refreshments after the hotel prices (Indeed some were observed putting sandwiches into their Convention Grab Bags, for Ron maybe ..... LateR on!)

Having appeased our pangs of thirst and hunger we took to the layouts on offer. One N scale setup was finished very well. Indeed the standard of finish and attention to detail was excellent but again, no back scene or layout lighting! This layout by Steve Bruce called "The Raccan Valley" ran well and was a credit to him.

To my thinking, the best layout on show was a small On30" layout. Just about everything was scratchbuilt and built very well. His most expensive loco cost 10 pound (A\$20.00). Utilising proprietary models bought second hand and reworked from standard Hornby / Mainline items. One crowd pleaser was a tiny mine loco built from a diesel DMU powered truck with added detail including the driver sitting east - west on the loco. It looked good and ran great. Some four locos, one Galloping Goose and an assortment of cars was evident. Track was a mixture of Peco N.G. track with

home made stub switches that worked faultlessly.

I was not overly impressed by the standard of layouts generally. This being in the presentation and layout lighting as stated before. Operator on some layouts were in huge numbers for the size of the layout. Even so, operation was not enhanced by so many to operate so little. Perhaps in defence of the layouts, I should add that most layouts seen appeared to be of modular section judging from the starkly obvious bare boards to partially and well scenced boards. Even so, any criticism of layouts was more than offset by peoples friendliness and hospitality, also the standard of the layouts seen on video was very good.

Thanks a farewells were said to the folks at the hall and once again we boarded the "Canford Cannonball" to return to the Convention Hotel. It does seem strange that they cannot comprehend Australia's size, but the USA is "big" and its "a long way to Spain for their holidays". At least I felt I had enlightened them somewhat even if only temporarily.

On returning to the Convention hall I once again tried to get around all the exhibits and of course the trade stands. Again I found the competition room locked as the judges were deliberating. Unfortunately, time ran out a I never got back to the competition rooms.

Shortly we located our good wives who had been on the non-train outing to Beaulieu to see the house and gardens as well as the National Motor Museum.

Needles to say we had a long ride ahead of us so we tried to hunt down our hosts to wish them goodbye. This turned out to be easier said than done as the reception area was packed with checking the wine and seating arrangements for the Banquet. Apparently one had to order one's choice of wine for the evening meal earlier in the morning, then seating was allocated. Apparently the 'long table' with the Trustee, President etc. was highly sought after!

Our farewells and thanks were made for their hospitality and we set off to do battle with the freeways and home.

John, who had never been to a Model Railway Exhibition before, let alone a Convention, summed it up as follows; He thoroughly enjoyed the day and could see why people were so enthusiastic about our hobby. On the down side his only comments were in relation to one layout which encouraged all members to participate and have a go at "operation". John apparently heard some poor unfortunate getting a tongue lashing from the dispatcher! His comments, "its supposed to be a hobby, not an occupation, if he had spoken to me like that he would be regretting it still!" Enough said.

All up I thoroughly enjoyed myself ( but I always do ) at both the Convention and the Hall. I met some beaut people and saw, more importantly, how others put together a Convention, I was also able to compare cost etc. first hand. Thanks to John Saxon for suggesting the idea.

Peter Weller-Lewis

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