

# MainLine

National Model Railroad Association Inc - Australasian Region

Summer 2009  
Volume 26 No. 4



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- 25th Convention Photos and Reports
- Design your layout almost like magic
- Regional Roundup

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Australasian Region Directory [www.nmra.org.au](http://www.nmra.org.au) NMRA Inc. PO Box 382, Forestville NSW 2087

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**Photographers:** Gerry Hopkins

**Assistants:** All NMRA AR Members

**Article Submissions:** The editor  
welcomes any train related articles,  
photos, drawings, cartoons, letters to the  
editor and other material.

Any submissions can be either emailed or  
"snail mailed". It is preferable that any  
submissions be made using a computer,  
(PC or Mac) Publication of articles  
submitted are at the discretion of the editor.

Cut-off dates for Article submissions

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The Editor

Mainline

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### Photo Credits

**Front cover - Kansas City Southern MP15DC No. 4365,  
fresh out of the paint shop delivers cars from Coburg  
Yard to the KCS on Kelly Loyd's Milwaukee Road Kansas  
City Subdivision.**

**Centre - A montage of the 25th Anniversary Convention.**

**Back - Taree Club Layout and Noel Sawyer's NSW Layout.**

**Photos by Kelly Loyd**

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For details contact Glen Stevens, Tel.(07) 3207 2442  
Meetings Start at 1.30pm - unless shown otherwise

**Division 2 - ACT**

Meetings Start at 2.00pm Contact Jess Brisbane for details div2sup@nmra.org.au

16 Jan Host: Mal Risby  
13 Feb Host: Steve Walker  
13 Mar Host: Tony Payne  
10 Apr Host:  
8 May Host: Viv Brice  
5 Jun Host:  
3 Jul Host:  
31 Jul Host: John Bullen  
28 Aug Host:  
18 Sep Host: Rob Anderson  
23 Oct Host: John Gillies  
20 Nov Host: David O'Hearn  
11 Dec Host: Stephen O'Brien

**Division 3 - Victoria**

Meetings Start at 2.00pm for details contact Grant McAdam

on (03) 9578 8685

**Division 4 - Western Australia**

Meetings Start at 2.00pm

For details Contact Allan Burrough 08 9364 6527

**Division 5 - New Zealand**

Contact Kelvin Sherson on (04) 234-8577 or email div5sup@nmra.org.au

**Division 6 - South Australia**

Meetings Start at 1.30 pm Contact the Divisional Superintendent on 8395 6014 or div6sup@nmra.org.au for details

27 Feb Trev Triplov  
27 Mar Peter Jackson  
24 Apr Ron Solly  
22 May Ron Solly  
05 Jun Graham Capper  
24 Jul TBA  
28 Aug Bob Bevan  
25 Sep Al Harris  
23 Oct Scott Taylor  
13 Nov Ian Wade  
04 Dec Ray Brownbill (XMAS BBQ)

**Division 7 - New South Wales**

9 Jan	Jim Poole	3 Yarpole Ave, WEST PENNANT HILLS
13 Feb	Don Davis	5 Wake Place, KINGS PARK Note: 1:00 PM Start
13 Mar	Lauris & Gerry Hopkins MMR	15 Narara Crescent, NARARA Note: 1:00 PM Start
10 Apr	Toni & John Saxon MMR	186B Davistown Road, YATTALUNGA
8 May	Paul Marrant	23 Puntee Street, KILABEN BAY
12 Jun	Laurel & Phil Anderson	55 Westminster Rd, GLADESVILLE AGM Will be held at this meeting
10 Jul	Jenny & Ken Scales MMR	4 The Circuit, BLUEHAVEN
14 Aug	Doug Wallace	12 Meares Road, McGRATHS HILL
4/5 Sep	Regional Convention	Broadmeadow, NEWCASTLE
16 Oct	TBA	
13 Nov	Rowan Mangion	9 Elouera Ave, BUFF POINT
Dec	Ho Ho Ho	TBA

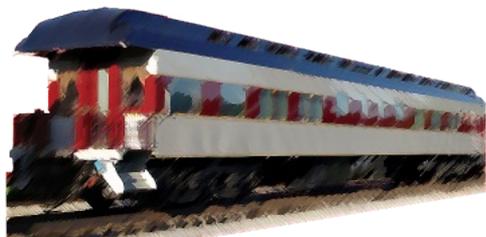
**Division 8 - Northern Rivers**

Meetings Start at 2.00pm Contact Ian Phemister on (02) 6658 9871 or email div8sup@nmra.org.au

**Division 9 - Mid-North Coast**

Meetings Start at 2.00pm

Contact Mike Bartlett on (02) 6553 6227 or email div9sup@nmra.org.au



## From the Business Car Presidents Report

I would like to congratulate the Organising Committee of our 25th Anniversary Convention, headed by David Howarth. My special thanks to our keynote speaker

Charlie (Phut!) Getz, Vice President Alan Pollock, Tony Koester and Al Westerfield for coming all this way to present clinics and all our very special local presenters, clinicians, layout hosts, both at the convention and in their homes. Most important of all, our delegates for making our 25th Anniversary convention such a great success and making all the hard work worthwhile. A special thanks to the Ladies committee headed by Yvonne Howarth and Jenny Smith as their tours were a great success.

So what is next? Next year we have a special event planned for Newcastle. The weekend of the 4th and 5th September will be exciting as that is the date for our next Annual Region Convention. Saturday will be Clinics and Presentations with a Dinner in the evening. The next day, Sunday we have a special breakfast running session on the Macquarie Lakes Light Railway 2 foot gauge steam railway. This will be followed by layout tours of several fine layouts in the Newcastle area for the rest of the day. Our convention Chair is Geoff Horne. Geoff will become very familiar to you all as he has agreed to take on the role as MainLine Editor starting with the first issue in 2010 and I'd like to welcome him aboard.

I would like to say a special thanks to Kelly Loyd for all his fine work as editor of the MainLine. It is a very big task editing and producing the artwork for MainLine every three months. Our journal is one of the key ways we keep in touch with our members who due to the size of Australia cannot always attend division meetings. MainLine is your magazine, so keep supporting it by sending in your articles and as a side benefit, they all count towards your Author Achievement Certificate.

Just a little information I received this morning via the headquarters Info-net. "After five years of research and planning, the NMRA and California State Railroad Museum (CSRM) have announced the signing of an agreement authorizing the development of a 3,500 square foot model railroading exhibit at the CSRM. The exhibit will be housed in the museum's gallery, which is visited by more than 600,000 people annually. This will be great public exposure for model railroading! More details will follow in an article in Scale Rails."

Additionally in the near future we will be announcing some very exciting news about the content of the exhibit. More on that later.

Also next year is the 75th anniversary of the NMRA and the Milwaukee Convention will be something special. With our strong dollar and low airfares to the States, if you are thinking of going, book now and lock in the savings. Also from head office the NMRA Kalmbach library has reprinted Dean Freytag's book "The History, Making, and Modeling of Steel" \$47.50 for NMRA members plus shipping. Visit the online store at [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org)

Looking a little further ahead the 2011 national Convention in the USA is in Sacramento. Sacramento is the state capital of California and is home to the California State Railroad Museum I mentioned earlier. A little later that year our next Regional Convention to be held in Victoria in September 2011.

Bill Kerr of the "N Scaler" fame attended the Div 7 meeting in the mountains just 3 weeks after a successful heart operation and our best wishes for a complete recover. John Baker has also been unwell necessitating a long stay in Hospital. My best wishes for a speedy recovery.

At this time of year we all start to get very busy on the social scene with the run up to the Christmas Holidays and summer vacations. I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our members and their family's the very best for Christmas and the New Year and just to be politically correct a Happy Holiday Season to all!

Sowerby Smith  
President NMRA-AR

# Pacific Director's Report

By Peter Jensen

Well you would have recovered by now from the 25th Anniversary convention. What a great event it turned out to be. Congratulations to all concerned, and thanks to our guest speakers and vice president Pollock for travelling down under. We made the front page of National's Website with a min report. There will be a more detailed report in an upcoming Scale Rails.

While speaking of anniversary conventions, the NMRA's 75 year convention will be held in Milwaukee in 2010. The reports from the planning indicate this too will be a very special event. If you are a mid-west US modeller, this maybe the convention for you.

News from the US: After five years of research, planning and several false starts, the NMRA and the California State Railroad Museum (CSRM) in Sacramento have announced an agreement authorising the development of a 3,500 square foot model railroading exhibit at the CSRM. The exhibit is to be housed in the museum's gallery, which is visited by more than 600,000 people annually. This will be great public exposure for model railroading and the NMRA. There will be a lot more information to follow on this as the planning turns into reality.

That's all for now

Two new MMRs, one HLM and a 50 year membership award were among the highlights of the 25th Anniversary Convention.



Robert Nelson receives his 50 Years award from Allan Pollock HLM



David North receiving his Honorary Life Member award from Allan Pollock HLM



Frank Godde MMR - Awarded by Phil Knife MMR



George Paxon MMR - Awarded by Allan Pollock HLM

# Highball! - Editorial

## So long... and thanks for all the Trains!

This is my last issue of MainLine as the Editor. It has been an interesting 3 and a bit years as I have tried to guide our magazine into a standardised format. I would like to thank all of our regular contributors, The Division Superintendents and Secretaries who send in their reports, along with Gerry Hopkins MMR, who always has something for the magazine. Please welcome our new MainLine Editor, Geoff Horne, on board. Geoff has a history of magazine publishing and brings that wealth of experience to this job. I wish him well with the MainLine and look forward to seeing what he brings to the magazine.

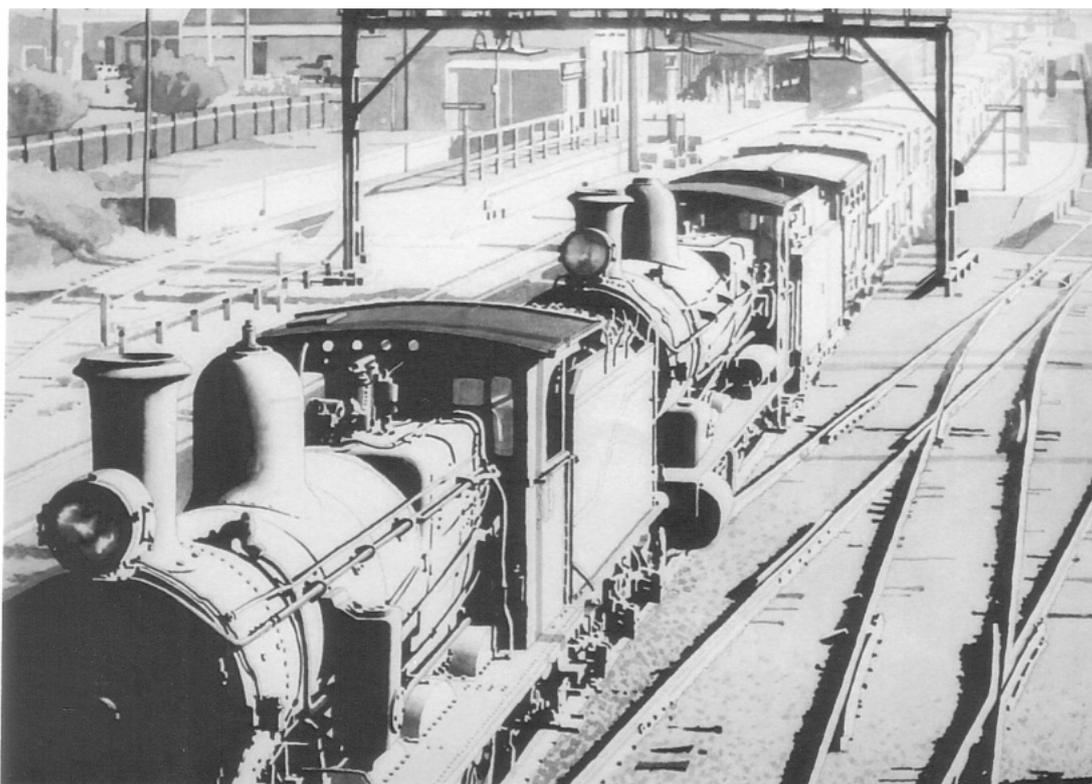
*Kelly*



John Saxon MMR HLM receiving his NMRA Fellow plaque with his wife Toni

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*This is the first in a series of different aspects of steam locomotives on NSW railways I am proposing to issue.*

*Please note: The black and white reproduction shown here is representative only in terms of quality.*

# 25th Anniversary – Australasian Region NMRA Convention

by Brett Payne

I got to celebrate two 25th anniversaries in October, the first at the beginning of the month was this really great model railway convention, and the second at the end of the month was my 25th Wedding Anniversary. Now how auspicious was that!

I will save advising on how to stay married for another article. This one is about how we have kept the fun alive in the NMRA Australasian Region for the past 25 years and how it has led us to a great 2-day plus 3 more days of layout tours here in New South Wales.



It was always going to be a significant date in the history of the NMRA in the region and the turnout of just on 200 registered delegates ensured the success of the event. It was well organized and there was plenty of everyone to see and do.

Registration opened early and the carry bag was filled with complimentary copies of Model Railroader, a CD with clinic notes for the weekend, a souvenir programme guide, anniversary patch and the latest copy of our very own Mainline magazine.

The opening addresses included a range of speakers including some of our overseas guests as well as member of the organizing team. The initial topic was all about how far the NMRA region had come in the past 25 years and was accompanied by some rather humorously captions PowerPoint slides compiled for the occasion.

There weren't many of our stalwart members that avoided embarrassment.

Keynote address was given by Charlie Getz from the

USA. Charlie talked about how far the hobby had come in his almost 50 years as a model railroader and yet how much of the really good stuff from the 1960s was still there today often with extra value that keeps it state of the model railroading art. He also talked on the advent of technology in our hobby and how the moment he touches any of it, it tends to go "Phuut" and lets out the magic smoke.



Prominent local members also came in for critique during Charlie's talk especially one Laurie McLean who had recently wowed the US Narrow Gauge fraternity with scale working hand lanterns in HO scale and brass Hon3 locos with surround sound (or so Charlie claimed).

From the keynotes we went straight into the first session of clinics. There were topics for everyone and the attendance across all sessions that I was able to observe indicated that the subject matter was well received. Most clinics were repeated over the two day schedule and as many faces appeared at the second session as had at the first. Congratulations to all the



clinicians and to the organizer for putting such a great selection of topics together.

If you missed the convention I recommend you beg, borrow or steal a copy of the clinic notes. They will make for hours of peaceful bed time reading. Topics ranged from the latest trends in Operating your layout, model photography, how to programme decoders, modelling the prototype, weathering, kit-bashing and super-detailing freight cars and constructing detailed laser structure kits.



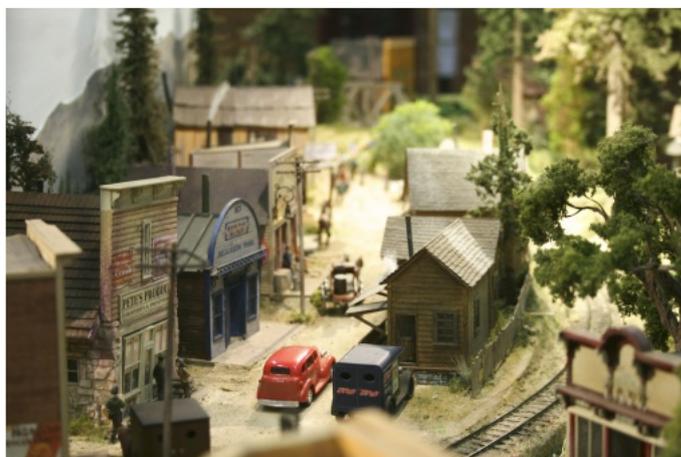
The end of the day saw many tired conventioners repatriated with their better halves and enjoying pre-dinner nibbles and drinks in the main hall. We duly transferred to our tables and were seated for a pre-dinner quiz and fine spit roast meal. The roasting did not end there however as Charlie Getz regaled us in his well known fashion with a tail on the benefits of model railroading to our marriage and partnerships.

A highlight and surprise for the evening was when one of our members was hailed for his commitment and achievement in the NMRA over many years. John Saxon was inducted as a fellow of the NMRA only the third person to obtain that award. Another member to be honoured was David North for his efforts in establishing the concept of the ABC regions in the reorganized NMRA. For his dedication, David received an honorary life membership.

Next morning and despite the beginning of daylight saving we all arrived in the main lecture theatre bright and bushy tailed to hear Tony Koester talk on the benefits and concepts of multi-deck layouts. This represents some of the latest thinking on the topic of layout design and breaks many of the traditional concepts such as layout depth and backdrop painting that we are familiar with.

To let the cat out of the bag – 8 to 12 inch deep HO Benchwork may become the norm with extra depth only when yards or specific track work requires it and photo realistic detailed backdrops can be better than impressionist backdrop painting. Well we all learned something!

The day progressed much as the day before with clinics



and breaks in between where we could peruse the display layouts and do a little business at the trade stands. Until winding up around 6pm with a brief closing address, Gerry giving instruction about the following 3-days of layout tours and the drawing of the raffle prizes.

Next year the convention will be held in Newcastle. I understand there will be a full day of clinics, annual dinner and on the Sunday – a visit to a 2-foot gauge live steam group at Lake MacQuarie. I hope to get a leave pass!

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# 25th Anniversary Convention Oakhill College Castle Hill by John Montgomery

The 25th anniversary convention was held on the first weekend in October at the Oakhill College in Castle Hill. The setting for the convention was exceptional, unfortunately, the drought broke on the same weekend and it rained for the entire convention.

The set-up for the convention started on Friday afternoon and continued until Friday evening. This allowed everyone to relax on Saturday morning when the convention was opened by Charlie Getz.

Charlie provided a wonderful opening plenary session on the history and future of the model railroading hobby. His views on the future were positive and his talk was very entertaining.

Alan Pollock and Peter Jensen also spoke at the opening of the convention as representatives of the NMRA. Alan Pollock is the Vice President of the Association and Peter Jensen is the Pacific Director.

The convention then got into full swing with the many clinics and demonstrations by the NMRA members. During the course of the convention a layout was also constructed, wired and scenicked then raffled at the closing of the convention on the Sunday afternoon. A number of members participated in the construction of this layout. They are to be congratulated for their efforts.

There were 5 layouts on display to support the clinics and demonstrations. All of these layouts were of a high standard and it is obvious that there are many good modelers in the Association.

A model competition was held and the standard of modeling was very high. My congratulations go to all members who participated in the competition.

Two traders were invited to support the convention. They were The Railcar and Geoff Horne with his electronic products. My thanks go to both of these traders and I am sure that they were both well patronized over the weekend.

Prior to the banquet attendees enjoyed a few drinks and some finger food to set the mood for the remaining part of the evening. Approximately 220 people attended the banquet which was held in an adjoining hall at the college. The caterers provided a high quality meal for such a large number of people.

During the course of the evening the 25 year plaques were presented by Alan Pollock to the qualifying members. Gerry Hopkins also handed out 3 MMR awards plus a number of other AP awards.

Charlie Getz then finished the evening with a very entertaining after dinner speech complete with some very humorous anecdotes. His speech was well received by all in attendance.

The ladies program ran over Saturday and Sunday of the convention. The bus trip on both days was hampered by the wet weather but from all reports both days were a hit for the ladies who took the opportunity to visit the many sites of Sydney. The driver of the bus was exceptional with his knowledge and kept the ladies entertained on both days.

Layout tours on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and most people who opened their layout for the visitors had around 50 people visit their house. My thanks go to all of the people who showcased their layouts on the layout tour with particular thanks to John and Toni Saxon for providing lunch to the tourist on Monday and Tuesday.

From all of the reports I have heard the Convention was a huge success with some even stating that it was the best NMRA convention held to date.

I would like to thank all of the organizing committee for their efforts in putting together the convention and any other members who assisted in any capacity on the day. Without these people the convention would not have the success that it was.



John Saxon HLM MMR - 25 Year Award



Graham Saint - 25 Year Award



Lynn Zelmer - 25 Year Award



Paul Richie - 25 Year Award



Paul Hobbs - 25 Year Award



Brian Moosman - 25 Year Award



Gary Wheatly - 25 Year Award



George Paxon MMR - 25 Year Award



John Lebsanft - 25 Year Award



Gerry Hopkins MMR - 25 Year Award



Ray Brownbill - 25 Year Award



Jim Crum - 25 Year Award

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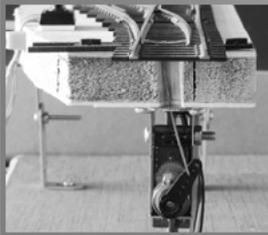
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## Region Roundup

### Division 1 Queensland By Ian Venables

#### SEPTEMBER 2009 - Our First Overseas Outing

Well it was a long time coming and that is part of the reason there was a good roll up at the home of Graham and Audrey Emery on Macleay Island. Another reason is the fact that we could expect to see some ground breaking technology designed by Graham and we weren't disappointed. It was one of those balmy days when the southern end of Moreton Bay looks like it might have the world's best scenery. Three waves of invaders (or asylum seekers) landed on Macleay Island and were treated to a grand tour of the island as well as arriving at Graham's home and layout. After morning tea with delicious homemade cakes and biscuits by Audrey we had a very short management chat from our superintendent, Glenn Stevens. Next it was down to the train room. At this stage it looks promising and Graham has some very ambitious plans for the future. Then we had a look at the latest development of Graham's signal system which I personally would like to see become some sort of a standard. This system is so versatile, is easy to maintain, is about as accident proof as you can get and is relatively easy to install.

Graham has also developed a points motor from cheap radio control escapements that are small and lightweight and very simple to set up. Both of these items are still being developed but you will hear more about them in the future.

There was a very short show-and-tell with Glenn Stevens showing a Weaver 'O' scale WM hopper alongside of a 'HO' scale WM hopper. Surprising there was very little difference in weight!

Next Ian Venables showed what can be done with a standard Athearn hopper by adding a few simple flat styrene pieces. This one will eventually be a NYC covered hopper. Bob Cuffe had a set of plans of old railway yards around Brisbane. These were both interesting and nostalgic particularly for we older folk.

The extensive switching yard at Newstead was the subject of one set. This was just the thing for module switching layout builders. Bob also had Mayne yards, Central station and several others that brought back lots of memories and caused much discussion.

We then went upstairs again to an incredible lunch of soup and Italian goulash, both served hot with plenty of extras.

A few of us even went for a walk on the beach after. Then it was a car shuttle to get everyone back to the ferry on time. We even modelled on the way across the

bay by ferry with discussion and photos taken of the cloud formations! Another leading discussion on the way back across the Bay was when are we going to do this again?

#### Comment

When we meet either as a group or as a couple of friends, our conversation is usually about things railroad. Engines, rolling stock, layout, DCC, scenery, techniques, etc. make up the subjects of our discussion. But we should probably think occasionally of our fellow modellers and the things that interest them, the difficulties they might be having and how a small bunch of us might be able to help them on their layouts to give it a good shove towards conclusion. All of this came home to me recently when talking on the phone to one of our senior members, Ross Evans. Ross has been an NMRA member longer than just about anyone. Some years ago he felt that his dream was not being realised.

Offers of help were sadly curtailed when the possible helper had enough health problems to doubt his ability. In our recent talk, Ross mentioned that his eyes weren't as good, his deftness of hand was diminishing and his ability to crawl under the layout was just about over. We saw how Graham Emery's layout is planned and how a bit of help might give him a kick start to getting the whole thing running. Even Bob Brown, owner of one of the bigger and best layouts and who is good at most things modelling has sometimes said how he would like help with scenery. I wonder what sort of progress could be made on these layouts and others if small local gangs of us went in and worked maybe half a dozen days on each of these layouts. Well for starters there would be a lot of ribbing and laughs and that is supposed to be good for us. Secondly, we would all come away with some new ideas. Thirdly we should make sure that certain aims about the layout are met and maybe that would take away a great task and leave foreseeable work to conclude the layout in the not too distant future. It Ross had his layout running, that is, all of the mainline and all of the sidings, at least he could run his collection all over the layout and perhaps put in a few industries to give him years of pleasure. If Graham Emery got the track and the wiring for about half of his down he would be well on the way to meeting his aims. If Bob had all of the open benchwork covered with ground and some vegetation, rock cuttings a few more trees, weeds and other scenic features, it would seem that much easier.

Bob throws his layout open often for us to run and I'm sure all of that would give him so much more pleasure. In each of these jobs, the back of the major task would be broken.

We all have callings on our time and our own MR callings are an important part of that. Finishing our modules, for example, is a major concern for us but it's pretty close for each of these owners really. A commitment to help is difficult because all sorts of problems can crop up and diminish our modelling time.

I remember last year was going to be “the year of the layout” for a lot of us but it never eventuated! Maybe we could achieve something by being in a ‘layout helping flying gang’. Besides we would learn techniques that will be handy for each of us on the next “year of the layout”. Finally, why should we help? Simple! We owe it to these guys.

### Useful Website

The web gets better and better for we modellers and it's good to find a site that covers a lot of useful information easy to find. For all you guys sitting up late at night detailing your rolling stock so that it doesn't look like plastic, nor as though it was shaken out of a blue or white or red or yellow box, here is a very useful website: [www.rrpicturearchive.net/rs](http://www.rrpicturearchive.net/rs) Now you can ensure that the silver IC reefer you have does have its door hinges, ladders and grabs painted black, has a green logo and oddly could have a pink destination board! There you go – Rivarossi was almost spot on years ago. Thank you to whoever it was that gave me one and all I have to do is paint that tack pink board!

### Rolling Stock

After a discussion with other members, I decided to check how many freight cars I owned. Shock horror, this is something that can creep up you!

I found that I own over 300 cars. Many of them are propriety brands but they never enter service until they have modifications to enhance their prototypical appearance, get metal wheels, weighted correctly, get Kadee couplers, are properly weathered, etc. About 40% are scratch-built and a considerable number of those have never been released by any manufacturer to my knowledge. Some are well-known brands but have extensive modifications to represent a prototype that simply isn't available, e.g. the NYC covered hopper of which there is a photo in Mainline Modeller, March 1982, page 27. It's made from an Athearn USRA type hopper and most of the rest is Evergreen styrene and Detail Associates brass wire. It's just been finished.

Microscale did the decal for this one in a set of four different hopper decals of which only one remains to be used. This is a Virginian hopper and the decal is sized for Athearn.

One of the scratchbuilt items is an Ohio Seamless Tubes gondola with a gantry over one end and decal by Walther. You can't buy that! The plan was in Model Railroader years ago and it is an attractive car. Then finally there are a good number of them still boxed and untouched or almost so. I've been smart with some by throwing in four Kadee or Bachmann axles, maybe a packet of Kadee No.5's and some I know have a large chunk of lead already glued to the base to bring them up to NMRA standards. However there is still a lot to be done. Will I ever live long enough to finish them? I suppose that's one incentive to keep alive! Harder to answer is, will I have the will-power not to get any

more. I already know the answer. There's a nice vinegar car I'd like to scratchbuild in a recent edition of Railroad Model Craftsman. I already have a pickling factory on my module so it's got to be built. I pride myself in getting only locomotives that suit my ultimate goals but manufacturers keep bringing out these beautiful new freight cars. There's really only one way out. Get the layout up so I can lavish bits and pieces and time on something else. I just hope no one brings out a helium tank car and if you know of one out there, please don't bother to tell me about it.

## NOVEMBER 2009

### Visit to Justin Walker's Layout

There is another great layout being built by Justin Walker at Pacific Pines. Our outing there on September 19th was a great surprise for many of us. Justin has certainly laid down most of what looks like a superb future layout. He has used some innovative methods with the workmanship and track design is top class.

There is no scenery yet but I'm pleased to have had the chance to see this layout in its bare bones state. There was some great motive power on display and Justin is bringing it up to his strict standards and ideals. His fleet of rolling stock that was on display is sensitively weathered and has that extra detailing that is aimed at a holistic approach to a great layout. If Justin can conclude his track laying and keeps this standard up for his scenery and his structures he is going to finish with one of the best layouts in the country. From this approach and the way it all looks at the moment, this is going to be a particularly inspiring layout to operate on. I think we all learnt a lot from this visit.

### The Sydney Convention

The silver jubilee Convention in Sydney drew about 20 of our Division 1 members. It lived up to expectations with excellent clinics, interesting layout tours, great show models both layout and equipment and friendships re-ignited or new ones made. The dinner speech by Charlie Getz was outstanding. Charlie had us roaring with laughter yet at the same time delivered an insightful history of model railroading with a peek into the future. Many of we Queenslanders partook in the Saxon's generosity and lunched at their place in Gosford. This gave us a further chance to talk to the US visitors besides looking over John's great layout.

Unfortunately, to do the entire programme of clinics was impossible and careful selection of what to do became a paramount choice. There were some surprises in these and after the Convention I heard several people comment about how interesting American visitor, Al Westerfield's clinic “How Government Regulations Affected Car Building” was. Not a must-hear title but superbly handled by the producer of those wonderful freight car kits that are cleverly conceived but most satisfying once finished. Tony Koester has lost none of his skills since he was last here and his “Operating with

Timetables and Real Waybills” was a worthy addition to a similar clinic by Peter Jensen. These two clinics complemented each other and important to hear now that prototypical operation is very much a part of the local scene these days.

Having built several scratchbuilt locos from brass I thought I had fallen into every pitfall possible and dug myself out many times. Yet Phil Knife’s presentation “Building Locos – Kit/Scratchbuilding” was a revelation from which we learnt a lot and it was also an educating supplement to Sowerby Smith’s “Loco Reliability”.

Perhaps after carefully listening to these two presenters, I can now work out what’s wrong with a 0-4-0T I’ve had on my workbench for 20 years! It goes, but not well and yet everything lines up and measures correctly. At least I now have the desire to have another go. That’s one of the wonderful things about a Convention, the new lease of life for recalcitrant projects.

“Designing Your Layout (Almost) Like Magic” by Lyndon Spence was a popular clinic and maybe 2010 will really be the Year of the Layout for all of those who failed in 2009. Lyndon gave many ideas including the site of the freeware computer programme for layout design: XtrCAD The other clinics I attended were all well done and all clinics gave me and my two passengers plenty to talk about on the long drive home. The convention dinner was very good indeed and even without considering the food the after dinner address was a classic by Charlie Getz.

### Award Well Deserved

Glenn has built this Division up from a few members to over 75 members plus those clubs and their members who have amalgamated with us for various reasons.

Besides this increase over the time that Glenn has been at the tiller, we have become a much more active and friendly group. Also, we are a group who can rely on each other for all sorts of advice and help. For some of us, especially those retired and lacking the company of born comedians, our get togethers of the NMRA Division 1 group is a chance to push the grim reaper further away by good doses of humour and laughter. Glenn and Sandra have been both part of all of this and much more. They have given us their time and hard work to ensure that our aims are met and that the Division runs smoothly. Congratulations to both Glenn and Sandra and best wishes to them from us all for their future.

### Rockhampton Expedition

In August, the long awaited visit to Rockhampton took place thanks to the excellent organisation of Lyn and Amy Zelmer.

The enthusiasts, predominantly from the Caloundra district club arrived on Thursday night. Friday morning was spent looking around the very busy city’s attractions and rail facilities.

We then continued on the Friday afternoon, meeting at



Our Division 1 superintendent receiving his well deserved “gong” from both the AR national President Sowerby Smith and the NMRA vice-President Allen Pollock at the Sydney Convention.

the Zelmer home with lots of interesting dioramas and working displays on cane and narrow-gauge railways.

The meeting discussed in detail many aspects of the Achievement Program with some very involved clinics.

The group participating in the judging explained how the point scores to the scratchbuilt models were earned. John Lebsaft from Bundaberg took away the forms to start in his AP program and he hope to see him succeed in the future. Friday night’s dinner was generously hosted by Lyn and Amy in their home. On Saturday afternoon we were made very welcome by Bruce Russell and the members of the Rockhampton MR Club at their layout room, located on the second floor of the RCC Community Centre. This site is in a magnificent old vintage three story building which also has rooms for music, ballet, crafts and community learning classes. On Saturday night dinner was at a restaurant and a photo show and talk on the historical development of the local railways was enjoyed by all. Sunday morning we visited Archer Park Rail Museum where the QR main line travels right through the town on Denison Street. Highlights of that visit was our many rides on the 1909 Purry Steam Tram which leaves the station and traverses track out on to a part on the ex-QR street track. Some members made a trip to historic Mt Morgan where there is an interesting collection of rolling stock at the preserved QR station with its “listed” water tank, rack railway cutting and the display in the main street. We were all amazed how Central Queensland was so busy and so interesting and we came away with a greater understanding of the local rail history and workings and are all eager for a future visit.

### Comment

After visiting a MR near Newcastle after the Sydney convention I look back on my life and wonder if I haven’t wasted a lot of time. This MR has a very long way to go before it is finished. It is being constructed in a huge purpose built back yard shed and it’s expected it will take over an hour to run a train from one end of it to

the other!

A massive number of points are being hand built and laid using the Fast Tracks system. The sheer complexity of the bench work is breath-taking. It is double deck and in one part even triple. The floor heights are being designed for safe and satisfactory walk around engineering. The owner and constructor is in his early thirties and still has time and enthusiasm on his side.

But once built, I wonder how much maintenance it's going to take. Insulation and air conditioning is being installed and by the level of work quality it seems like it is all definitely possible. For anyone interested, it will be on show at next year's convention in Newcastle. This layout is following NSWGR prototype so a lot of the rolling stock will probably be scratchbuilt or by kit-building. Consider our personal hobby time and how each of us uses it. It seems silly to attempt such a massive construction unless you have the skills, enthusiasm, a definite aim, the money and the time. This layout intends modelling from Sydney to Goulburn to Junee which should be believable for the size of the model. Less believable are layouts I've seen trying to model Chicago to Los Angeles in a large bedroom! We have some good layouts in our division that may be modelling a small section of that line and that's enough. As in "eastern" modeller I like to think that the temptation of modelling the UP or the ATSF or BNSF (the Buffett line?) almost demands a large railroad. But there are other alternatives without going "narrow-minded".

There are hundreds of short lines and many of them either interchange with larger lines or off-shoots of larger lines and have appropriate motive power.

I've never seen any models of California Western RR & Navigation Co., nor the San Diego & Arizona Eastern, nor the McCloud River for that matter. Yet all of these are western lines that must be swamped by the huge RR's around them and perhaps more suitable to model in the size of room that we usually use. Eastern lines enthusiast have ever more RR's and some that are quite short yet have mallets, mikados, consolidation, etc. and a considerable variety of rolling stock e.g. the Interstate RR in Virginia. Others have several brands and types of diesel-electric and the track mileage is something that could be aptly fitted into a typical railroad room. I wonder if our expectations of the ultimate Class 1 RR isn't one of the reasons so many of us never get started.

### Monthly Modeller's Tip

Anyone interested in a HO Scale bulkhead flat car, 50' in length, should seriously consider the Atlas pulpwood cars as a starting point. I had to remove the load on three of these cars recently and I was really surprised by the detail in the flooring. Definitely worth considering if you are interested in a similar model. The other thing that caught my attention was the ease with which the load was removed and replaced, with the load only

being held by two plastic posts and a small snap-in mechanism. This makes these cars ideal candidates for an empties in/loads out scenario, (or loads in /empties out) on your layout, working a treat with a forestry branch line or a siding to a paper mill. Glenn Stevens.

### Track Laying

It may have been around for a while but I noticed in the local newsagent a publication by Kalmbach titled "How to Build Realistic Track" No.6 in the How to Build series.

With several of our members building handmade turnouts using Fast Tracks tools this might have some good information and help in it.

There are chapters such as:

- . How to super detail a turnout,
- . Quiet roadbed,
- . Make the most of flex track,
- . Customising track the easy way,
- . How to mass-produce hand-built turnouts,
- . Kink-free curves, etc.

There are plenty of illustrations and the text is written by acknowledged experts, e.g. Tony Koester, Andy Sperandio, Paul Dolkos, etc.

I must admit though that the Fast Tracks people produce a superb DVD explaining their system and how to use it.

### Paints

I have taken to using the Tamiya acrylics for scenery and even some rolling stock use. They have the advantage of easy clean-up and dry very flat. Floquil make a really good cement colour and Tamiya have Deck Tan which is the closest thing I've seen to fresh raw cement powder. This is good for weathering cement covered hoppers, highway cement mixers and trucks.

Some of their other colours have use where you need a bit of weathering and you can get away with brush painting. It is easy to get gradual colour by dipping your paint brush in more and more water as you get away from the source of the weathering.

Blacks and the range of greys are great for weathering and mix easily with other pigments to give a variety of shades with a particular colour theme. Their brown, perhaps with a touch of another earth colour, goes well on wheels and axles and resembles a dirty and road grimed rust. These colours are very flat and their texture adds variety to the general landscape of a MR, so are a great addition to your more definite RR colours.

### An Excellent Model Railroad

In the October 2009 edition of Model Railroader on page 54 is an article that all aspiring model railroaders should read. It is about an industrial shelf RR, not unlike our modular layout and anyone considering joining our modular group ought to read it for great ideas.

I believe it could be the basis of a great railroad for a

home layout too. In the article are good photos, a very clear track plan, heaps of ideas and a website: [www.trainweb.org/gnw/](http://www.trainweb.org/gnw/) that is an extension of the article, which keeps you up to date and publishes a regular newsletter about the progress of the layout.

## Division 3 - Victoria



Your reporter has been travelling quite a lot this year so reports have been quite sporadic.

The division has been quite busy with meetings held in member's homes each month. The meeting for June was held in Sunbury at the home of Laurie and Rosemary Green, and the August meeting was held in Glenhuntly at the home of Arian and Lynda Gunzberg.

Between 15 and 18 members, guests and partners attended both meetings.



The division meetings have a party atmosphere with the food being the centre of the day, with the models becoming more appreciated after a generous repast.

The division is very fortunate to have a very active group of modellers who provide inspiration and encouragement in all aspects of model making. As always a large number of models were presented for display, and all to a high standard. These include a variety of subjects including Trees, Structures, Rolling Stock and Locomotives, covering many scales including 009, HOn30, Sn3, On30, and G.

A highlight of holding a meeting at Laurie's home was an opportunity to see his diorama displays. It is



interesting to view the work he has completed over a very long time in the hobby. Probably the most outstanding item was Dan Pickard's models of a



Mountain Ash tree which stood about a metre high.

This imposing model can be seen if you scroll to the bottom of [http://www.railroad-line.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC\\_ID=26509&whichpage=1](http://www.railroad-line.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=26509&whichpage=1). Dan's is building a new On30 layout destined to remain at home; "TRIPLE CREEK, BRANCHLINE OF THE BEECHY...". Laurie was completing work on his O scale sawmill diorama and Ron Wrigglesworth featured a Gscale VR crane.

The August meeting was a chance to view the



outstanding model building of Adrian Gunzberg. Adrian models Western Australian outline in Sn3. Most of his locomotives are scratch built, and his pièce de résistance



was his model of the Australian Standard Garratt.

Adrian is co-author of the book “Rails through the Bush” a history of Timber and firewood tramways and railway contractors of Western Australia. Peter McDonald continued his prolific work with three models for display, and Laurie did not disappoint, with another of his magnificent structures. Highlight of the day was a commemoration plaque presented to Peter Duckett for serving for 25 years membership of NMRA.

Peter was the former principal of The Model Dockyard; the Mecca for model railway enthusiasts.

For both venues, eating proved to be the catalyst for share time and space with fellow modellers and their partners. Festive occasion allowed all those in attendance to enjoy the company of shared fellowship.

Grant kept the formalities to a minimum presenting awards and reminding us of opportunities to extend our interest through convention, forums and competitions.

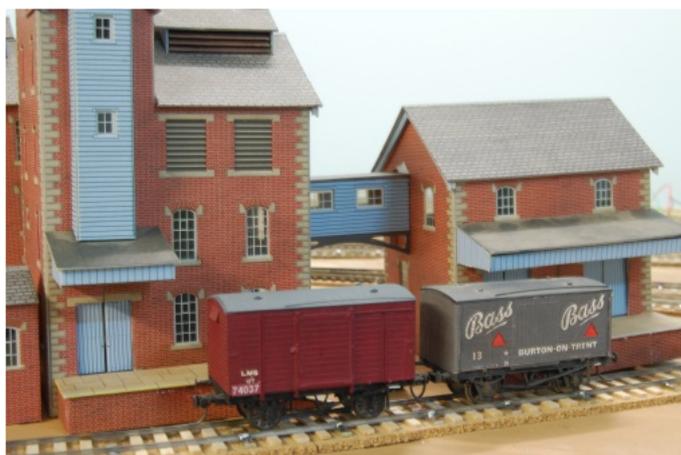


## Division 6 - South Australia By Al Harris

The August Division 6 meeting saw 1 former and 12 current members assemble at the home of our amended host, Ron Solly. Scott was unavailable due to Army Reserve commitments but will be back to host the October meeting



The agenda for the afternoon included: AP report and update; discussion on holding monthly meetings, meeting hosts and host details for publication in 2010; reminder for the Convention in Sydney on the October long weekend; report on the feasibility of holding a convention in SA; Show-n-tell segment and an NMRA presence at the AMRE exhibition in 2010.



Ray's AP desk was deferred as Ray was otherwise occupied presenting CFS training courses. Some hosts for 2010 meetings were determined although defined meeting dates were not determined. Al reminded members that it wasn't too late to forward applications for the 25th Convention. No decision was made on the format of the NMRA presence at 2010 AMRE exhibition, however Geoff and Al were prepared to organise something.

To complete a rather full agenda the “Show and Tell”

segment still had a number of members giving a small talk and or demonstration. Ian Wade had the latest TCS Z2 1amp 2 function DCC Decoder with back EMF which is designed to fit in "Z" Scale locos. Geoff Chatwin gave a number of presentations, including: the use of Gun Blue, obtainable from Gunsmiths, as a means of blacking nickel silver; a small diorama in which he used tile grout to simulate soil; Ron Solly gave a presentation on cardboard structures which are available on the web and the Div Super gave a short presentation on his latest scratch building project – a brass single target three colour led signal which incorporated 2mm thin wall brass tubing and etched brass components from Model Etch. Throughout the



Show and Tell segment the group engaged in lively conversation with members adding more information on aspects of the topic being shown or discussed. More details on Geoff's topics and a list of web sites with templates for cardboard structures and other useful items are contained below.

At this point the members partook of afternoon tea. This meetings "lucky envelope" raffle was drawn during refreshments and was won by Adam Wade.

Following refreshments Sol hosted a tour of the latest version of his layout. Though still a work in progress one could see some US design elements in the track plan. Unable to obtain Hobby Black in recent years Geoff described how he has started to use Gun Blue as a means of blacking nickel silver and advised the group that it is obtainable at Gunsmiths.

After recalling a Model Railroader article from some years ago Geoff created a small diorama to demonstrate how to use tile grout as soil. Using a small sieve to spread the grout over the area, he then wets it with a mixture of water and denatured alcohol, lets it sit for around a minute and then uses a 50/50 mix of acrylic mat medium and water as a setting agent. He also pointed out that lately the Model Railroader crew has been using 70% isopropyl alcohol as the wetting agent. Originally, Geoff used concrete oxide colouring as soil but found it stuck to anything exceptionally well resulting in any wayward application of oxide on the

layout, himself, the floor or the walls being virtually impossible to remove. This created several disasters and resulted in an in depth discussion with his wife.

However, he did find that when applied to sleepers it left them with a slightly dusty and weathered appearance. When mixed with a little denatured alcohol and "painted" to the sides of the rails it gave a very realistic rust appearance. He also reiterated his warning that once applied it was extremely difficult remove.

Even an application of ballast using common bonding techniques barely hid any of the oxide applied.

Following are some of sites that Ron provided with downloadable files which you may find useful for your modelling.

<http://www.modeltrainsoftware.com/>

<http://www.cgtextures.com/>

[http://www.illinoishistory.gov/ps/construct\\_mainstreet.htm](http://www.illinoishistory.gov/ps/construct_mainstreet.htm)

<http://www.2guyzandsumtrains.com/Content/pa=showpage/pid=31.html>This

<http://www.igshansa.de/igsdownloadeng.html>

<http://www.trainweb.org/tylick/signintro.htm>

## Division 7 - New South Wales

By John Montgomery

### September

Richard and Freda Biggs hosted the September meeting at their Oakville residence. Oakville is a semi rural suburb in the north west of Sydney. Approximately 60 people attended the meeting on a beautiful warm Spring day.

Richard has a large HO scale NSW layout. Although it is not quite complete it has had a lot of very nice work completed on the scenery and other aspects of the layout. The layout depicted a very nice rural setting complete with weeping willow trees growing next to a pond. The layout ran without a problem all afternoon and many of the visitors appeared impressed with the quality of the work undertaken by Richard.

Promotion of the 25th anniversary convention occurred and tickets were also on sale for the upcoming Christmas party at Northmead Bowling Club.

Afternoon tea was provided by Freda and the other ladies.

I would like to thank Richard and Freda for opening their house to the members and providing such a glorious setting for the meeting.

November



The November meeting was held at Bob and Carol Best's residence in Blaxland, a suburb of the lower Blue Mountains. The beautiful weather enticed over 80 members and guests to attend the meeting. Bob with the help of some of his friends has completed his N Scale layout which depicts an American mid western style transition era. A photo of Bob in a section of his layout is shown in the report. Bob had a couple of his friends run the layout for him and it ran flawlessly all afternoon.

The formal part of the meeting included thanking all members for their assistance at the October convention. Without members contributing it would not have been the great success that it turned out to be.

Mention was made of John Baker being hospitalized. We all hope that John makes a speedy recovery.

Geoff Horne announced that a mini convention will be held on the first weekend in September 2010. Gerry Hopkins made an announcement that he has some awards to present at the upcoming Christmas party.

After the formal part of the meeting everyone enjoyed the sumptuous afternoon tea that Carol and the ladies provided.

I would like to thank both Bob and Carol for their hospitality and opening their home to us for the meeting.

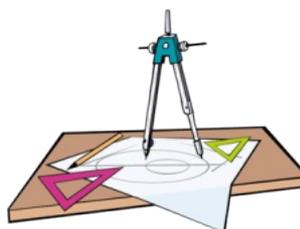
## Design Your Layout (Almost) Like Magic!

by Lyndon Spence

NMRA-AR 25th Convention October 2009 ©  
Lyndon Spence 06-2009

### Why Design?

What does all this stuff have in common? An aircraft, the Sydney Harbour Bridge, a house, the Egyptian pyramids, a toaster, the Eiffel Tower, the Space Shuttle, or even a toothbrush? If you said: "they have all been designed", you would have to be pretty close to being right on the money. If any of this stuff had been built without design, what mistakes would the builders have made? What money, time or even lives would have been wasted?



So, why design a model railway layout? Is your model railway any different? It is made up of hundreds of components. All have to be built and assembled in such a

fashion to provide a reliable, low maintenance layout that will be a pleasure to own, operate and display for years to come. Consider the following: Economy – My hobby budget is limited. How about yours? Time – As per budget, we all have time constraints as well. Efficiency – Do you waste time on repetitive corrections? Procurement lists of materials and equipment – Do you already have stuff surplus to your needs? Sure, everyone has! Minimise mistakes – Nobody's perfect. But wouldn't it be great if we could at least minimise some of our mistakes?

Building your layout without design? Hmmm. You can try, but chances are that you may end up with:

Disappointments, Material wastage, Curves too tight, Grades too steep, Poor reliability, Early layout burn-out.

Design like magic? In the best traditions of Harry Potter or Macbeth's 3 witches:

Take some Frank Ellison, simmer with ample helpings of John Armstrong, Paul Mallery and Linn Westcott. Then update your brew with sprinkles of Iain Rice, Joe Fugate, Pelle Sjøeborg and Tony Koester.

No. It sure doesn't work that way! Design like magic? Well . . . . Almost! Did I stretch the truth just a little? At the very least, I'm going to show you a great formula or two for design success. Let's start gathering the ingredients for our design brew!

### Here's a proven formula for design success

There are three fundamental steps in the layout design process:

1. Preparation – The research and development (R&D) of all of your layout requirements.

2. Concept sketch – As per your layout room constraints and layout specifications results.

3. Detail design – Detail, check and finalise your layout design.

Would you paint your house, kitchen, bedroom or even that \$1,000 brass locomotive without preparation? No? I didn't think so. I recently painted my bathroom and honestly, the time spent stripping off the old paint, treating the mould, then thoroughly cleaning the walls and ceiling down, not to mention filling and minor repairs was way more than the time to do the actual painting itself! What if I had not done all that prep work? Well, the new paint probably would look dreadful and not last very long. I imagine it would start to peel and go mouldy again within too short a time, as well as putting a large dent in my housekeeping money. Similarly, you can't succeed with layout design without adequate preparation.

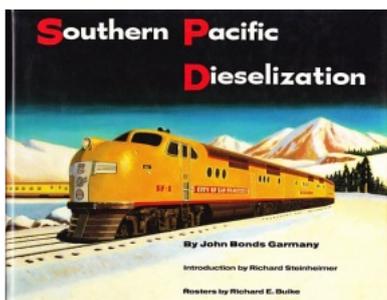
PREPARATION is my key point. It is the foundation stone for the design magic. It will definitely make or break your design. Quite unashamedly, I'm going to devote a major part of this clinic to preparation.

## Step One – The Preparation

### Do Your Research

Inspiration vs Perspiration. Is research an almost never-ending quest? Is it a hobby in itself? Probably. The amount of information now available compared to 50, or even 10 years ago, is mind-boggling. Do your research as both a prequel and a compliment to your design. Compile a list of references that will be essential to your final design. Use your computer to keep track, perhaps in spreadsheet format. If new information on your favourite prototype materialises, use it to your advantage in your design. But, don't let it jeopardise good design. Nowadays, resources include:

Magazines and annuals. AMRM, MR, RMC, NGG, Kalmbach's annual Model Railroad Planning, Model railway books. Many available from publishers such as Peco, Kalmbach or Carstens, Prototype books. Many, many books, for sure. Copies of out-of-print books can often be acquired second hand from sources such as eBay. Timetables. Available from internet sites, swap meets and collectors. Internet. Forums, maps, historical,



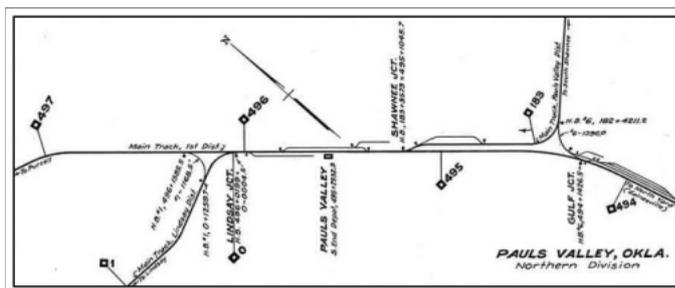
organisation & individual web pages. Libraries. Yep, they still exist & some have research material on line. Railway historical societies. eg ARHS, NSWRTM, SFRH&MS, NRHS. Model railway clubs &

associations. NMRA, AMRA & your local club. Special interest groups (SIGs). eg NMRA Layout Design SIG.

## Supplement your Design Formula with LDEs

Layout Design Elements ( LDE ). This concept has actually been around for quite a while. But, it took Tony Koester to both define and refine LDEs. They have been covered in Kalmbach books such as Realistic Model RR Design, their Model Railroad Planning annuals and even one of their recent Workshop Tips supplements authored by Tony.

The basic idea is if you come across a prototype plan of say, a junction, station area or engine service facility that could easily be modelled then why not utilise it in your layout design? It would be nice if it was the prototype that you are modelling. But, so what if it's not? If the prototype used it, your design will be the more



plausible. Use one as a main feature of your design and build on it. Or, use several LDEs right throughout your layout design. Don't dismiss this idea if you are strictly freelance, you'll surprise yourself how you can still use LDEs to your advantage.

## Do a self-analysis of your layout requirements

You've done your research. You've been in the hobby long enough to know what your likes are and what you want to model. On the way, you've picked up plenty of stuff and looked at plenty of track plans. Don't keep your ideas in the back of your mind. Sit down and get all your layout requirements and specifications down on paper. Alternatively, document using good old spreadsheet formats. John Armstrong used many clever design techniques. Allow me to show you some of John's ideas and then modify them to help you do a self-analysis of your own layout design requirements.

## The Legacies of John Armstrong

John Armstrong was a prolific US designer who sadly passed away in 2004. If you do a search on the Kalmbach model train magazine index you will get over 330 hits. Some of those hits will include dozens of books he authored on both model railways and the prototype. Some texts were even used by real USA railroad companies for training purposes. Right from its inception, his O-scale Canandaigua Southern layout had many innovative and original design ideas. We can still learn a lot from some of John's published ideas

including:

Your operating style. Are you an engineer, dispatcher or spectator? The relative emphasis. Analysis of your needs. Track vs scenery. Mainline running vs switching. Givens and druthers. Your layout design mandatory factors plus your wish list. Doodling by the squares. A quick method of checking layout design options for a given space. Your operating style

Are you an engineer, dispatcher or spectator? John first described this technique of identifying operating styles in an article titled "Build Your Pike to Suit Yourself" in the November 1954 issue of Model Railroader magazine. Maybe you are a combination of two or even all three types? Early identification or recognition of your unique operating style will greatly assist your layout design.

The Engineer is hands-on and enjoys driving trains with plenty of switching and making up of trains. The engineer may be less interested in timetables or train watching. The Dispatcher loves train meets and timetabling. Switching and scenery have lower priorities. However, ample passing sidings to assist train operation are featured. The Spectator is also a rail fan. Loves to run and watch trains. Operation is not as important as the thrill of watching trains run through towns and scenery.

### The Relative Emphasis

As a professional layout designer, John used to send his clients a four-page questionnaire. Included in this was an exercise he called "Relative Emphasis". He devised and used simple sliding cursors to help his clients clarify their ideas. Refer to the diagrams shown below. Moving the top cursor towards the track / operation end will be at the detriment of scenic realism. Similarly, a move of the bottom cursor across to switching may affect mainline running features. Vice-versa applies. You too, can also use these sliders to help you get your operating balance right.

TRACK / OPERATION                      SCENIC REALISM  
MAINLINE RUNNING                      SWITCHING

### Givens and Druthers

**GIVENS.** Your Givens list consists of your mandatory factors. In other words, stuff you either cannot change or simply have no desire to change. For simplicity's sake, I'm going to subdivide your Givens list into three modules:

- . Your REAL ESTATE - This, of course, is your layout room.
- . Your RAILWAY PROTOTYPE – Your prototype's attributes.
- . Your MODEL RAILWAY LAYOUT - Your layout's idiosyncrasies.

**GIVENS – YOUR REAL ESTATE.** Consider this module as the most important mandatory factor list of the three. It may well be a little difficult to build the Grand Central Union Station in O-scale in a spare room

GIVENS	MY LAYOUT ROOM
DIMENSIONS	<i>Your usable area, rather than overall.</i>
TYPE OF ROOM	<i>i.e. garage, spare room, yard shed.</i>
ROOM FIXTURES	<i>Utilities, sewer, water pipes, A/C ?</i>
CEILING	<i>Height &amp; type. E.g. Suspended.</i>
LIGHTING	<i>Fixed light fittings or relocatable.</i>
WORK BENCH	<i>Fixed workbench or modellers desk.</i>
DOORS	<i>Size &amp; location of doors.</i>
WINDOWS	<i>Ditto for windows.</i>
POWER OUTLETS	<i>Number and locations.</i>

only 3m x 2m! As well as the Givens table below, you have to also prepare an accurate scale drawing of your layout room. Carefully record all details of your room inclusive of fixtures such as windows, doors, utility services and water or sewage piping.

### GIVENS – YOUR RAILWAY PROTOTYPE.

GIVENS	MY RAILWAY PROTOTYPE
GAUGE	<i>Narrow, standard or broad.</i>
PROTOTYPE	<i>e.g. NSW, VR, BR, UP, ATSF ?</i>
ERA	<i>Vintage, transition, modern?</i>
RR CLASS	<i>Class 1 or down-and-out secondary.</i>
GEOGRAPHICAL	<i>NSW? NZ South Island, Utah? Cajon?</i>
SCENERY	<i>Farmland, prairie, mountains, coastal?</i>
MOTIVE POWER	<i>Steam, diesels, electric, all ?</i>
TRAIN TYPES	<i>Freight and/or passenger trains</i>
INTERCHANGE	<i>Any interchange &amp; with what roads?</i>

Now prepare a similar table describing all of your chosen railway prototype's mandatory factors. This should include the attributes, essentials and characteristics that make your prototype unique. The example at left shows what this may include.

### GIVENS – YOUR MODEL RAILWAY LAYOUT.

GIVENS	MY MODEL RAILWAY LAYOUT
SCALE	<i>Z, N, HO, OO, S, O, G, whatever?</i>
STYLE	<i>Continuous, dogbone, point-to-point?</i>
MIN RADIUS	<i>Mainline, sidings &amp; industrial.</i>
TURNOUTS	<i>Mainline, sidings &amp; industrial.</i>
MAX GRADE	<i>Mainline &amp; branch lines.</i>
OP GOVERNANCE	<i>Full length pass cars? Artic steamers?</i>
CONTROL TYPE	<i>DCC, DC, walkaround?</i>
MIN AISLE WIDTH	<i>Are you B6 or N6?</i>
OPERATING CREW	<i>Loner or multi crew/operators.</i>

Yep, another table describing your model railway layout's mandatory factors. Here's another example of such a table.

**DRUTHERS.** This is an American slang word that John loved to use. Its origin is a corruption of I'd rather or 'd rather. i.e. your wish list. This will be the stuff you would love to include on your layout. But realistically, life is a compromise and you may not be able to achieve all of your Druthers. Don't worry if your list is long and optimistic. That doesn't matter; as long as you have one.

Typically your Druthers list could look like this:  
 Minimal hidden track. Easy access to turnouts. At least three towns. Realistic scenic transitions. Generous staging yards. Harbour with car ferry. Features unique to area. Several types of industries. Few duck-unders. Remote-control turnouts. Local control panels. Walkaround control. Loco servicing facilities. Thru freights & local turns. Streamliners & locals. Facility to turn trains. Major junction. Block signaling.

Doodling by the squares. John prepared "squares" with dimensions based on a layout's scale, parallel track centre line spacing and minimum radius. He then used these squares to roughly work out model railway design concepts to suit the layout space available.

Unfortunately, a full description of this technique would take up too much space in this clinic. Refer to the November 1980 issue of Model Railroader magazine for a further details of this method.

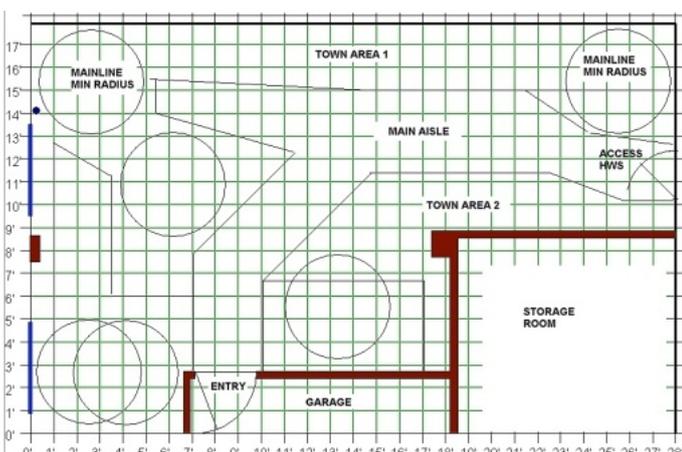
### Your ingredients for your magical design brew are now ready!

Now, you have a formula for some design magic! By now, you should have the essential ingredients identified and carefully recorded. If you have prepared them with the help of your computer, print them out. Stick your print-outs up on your layout room's walls for study and review. You should now have: Your prototype research results. Your selection of Layout Design Elements. Your operating style identified. Your relative emphasis (sliding scales) prepared. Your layout room defined with special attention to usable space. Your layout room's scale plan accurately drawn up. Your givens for your railway prototype tabled. Your givens for your model railway layout tabled. Your druthers listed.

### On to your next step - Brew the design magic

Would you believe the hardest part is almost over? With all of the ingredients of your formula now identified, all you have to do is produce the design drawing! Yeah, I know, I'm guilty of just a little exaggeration again! But, taking one step at a time and being patient, you can and will produce your design with fewer hassles than you think.

### Step Two - The rough concept sketch



There are a couple of ways you can do this. You could use John Armstrong's "Doodling by the Squares" method or just grab your scale plan of your room and start drawing arcs set to your layout's defined minimum mainline radius. Personally, I find the latter method the simplest and quickest.

The two most critical factors of this technique are your room's usable area and the minimum mainline radius. Once you start sketching, you'll soon find out what you can or cannot do in your defined space. The idea is to rough up a concept plan of your mainline run. Details such as sidings, yards, industries etc will come in the next step. Take into account main access aisles as well as areas needing access for construction and maintenance.

Do lots of sketches. Only some will get close to what you want. If you're using one or two Layout Design Elements, you may be forced to do some selective compression or bend the tangents to get the LDE in your space. That's OK. You will get there. Don't forget to separate S-curves with tangent track at least the length of your longest item of rolling stock.

### Step three - The Detail Design



The detail design. Next: on with your detail design. Keep asking yourself if you are keeping with your original prototype and the layout specifications originally identified during your preparation stages. Add your passing sidings, stations, industries, loco servicing. Detail your staging yards. Try different ladder arrangements. If a simple ladder won't work because of the space it gobbles up, try a compound ladder instead. Remember the basic rules for track standards such as parallel track separations, easements, grade separations, tangents between S-curves and so on.

Name 'em! Name your towns, rivers, roads, scenic features and industries. This is a simple action that identifies your railway's geographical location, its purpose and personality. Anyway, if you have included any Layout Design Elements in your layout design, the prototype will have already done the naming for you.

Checking your design. Your checking process must be thorough. You don't want to find out the hard way that your Union Pacific articulated is going to side-swipe your streamliner on parallel curvature. Nor do you want complicated track- work in an inaccessible corner of

your layout. Share your plan with some friends and ask them to give you some constructive criticism. They may see something obvious that you have overlooked. If you've worked closely with a project over a long period, it is very common that the most obvious errors will not be noticed by you. In the professional design World, this happens all the time. It's sort of akin to the old saying: "you can't see the woods for the trees".

Corrections and finalising. Do your corrections, check again, correct again and attempt a finalised design. But, like all good model railways that are never supposed to be finished, you need to keep your mind open. You never know; a day, a week or months later something will pop into your mind, you may see a photo or receive a suggestion that may inspire you to re-think your plan. In other words, don't be afraid to revise your plan. Finalised, then? Maybe?

### Choice of design drawing media

Until relatively recently, choice of drawing media came down to these: Sketching. Rough and ready sketches. Writing or sketch pads, even the back-of-an-envelope. Graph paper. A great step forward. Graph paper with graduations suited to your drawing scale. Your essential hardware would include scale rules, tee square, protractor, a compass set, circle gauges and French curves. Drawing board and machine. By "machine", I refer to some sort of device that automatically keeps your straight edges parallel and square to your work. For example, a track machine or pantograph type drafting machine. The essential hardware items described above are also utilised. Full-size plan. This would involve drawing a full size plan on butcher's paper. Your own track components such as turnouts and crossings are used as templates and simply traced around.

But, not everyone has the skills necessary to draw. Having spent most of my working career as a design and project management professional, I'm the first to acknowledge that. The computer age has revolutionised tasks in industry, commerce and office. So, let's step up to the computer age with the ultimate design step:

### Computer-Aided Design or CAD

A short history of CAD. Computer-Aided Design or CAD systems have actually been around longer than you might think. They can trace their roots to US military needs in the mid-1950s. But, shortage of computer capabilities and expense meant that there was a long gestation period. CAD developers included MIT, General Motors, Ford, Lockheed and McDonald-Douglas. It wasn't until the 1980s that they became more available and easier to use. By the end of the 1980s several CAD companies had emerged that were successful in providing CAD systems to customers all over the World. In the 1990s PCs became powerful and affordable enough to run CAD software.

Who can use it? Remember not so long ago, companies depended on typists for any typing tasks? With the PC

revolution, anyone lacking typing skills could now do their own word processing. Corrections, alterations, copying and pasting text were so much easier. Similarly, CAD has revolutionised how companies are structured. Architects or engineers no longer have to give their sketches to detail draftsmen to draw up. Instead they can directly produce their designs in a neat, accurate, finished drawing. Accuracy is improved; drafting and hand lettering skills are not an essential requirement and boy, the ease of any alterations and corrections!

CAD Advantages. There are a zillion advantages of CAD drawing compared with any other method. E.g. Accuracy & speed. Ease of drawing, lettering. Ease of corrections, alterations. Copying objects & complete designs. Using built-in library objects. Efficient storage of designs. Print out designs in various scales. Print out full-size drawings. Uses cheap, readily available hardware. Less paper wastage. Less dependence on drafting skills. Can be emailed to colleagues & friends. Less office space taken up (compared to drawing board & machine).

CAD Disadvantages. Not that many, strangely enough. One big one as follows, but the second one not so much of a deterrent these days. Steep learning curve. Expense of both hardware & software.

CAD systems available. There are many commercial systems now available. In simple terms, it comes down to two choices: Either a generic CAD type aimed at all user types. i.e. engineering, architecture, professionals or hobbyists or CAD software designed specifically for model railway layout design.

### But wait! Theres more!

**THIS IS THE BEST PART:** One of the simplest and easiest-to-learn model railway layout design CAD systems is now FREE!

XTrkCAD.

My recommendation. There is no way I'm going to endorse any commercial CAD system, when this one is so darn good and available to anyone as a free download!

XTrkCAD is open source software, so it really is a free download. No strings, time limits or obligations attached. It does not take up much space on your hard drive - less than 5 MB complete with its included track and structure libraries. XTrkCAD started off as a commercial product written by some very clever Canadian model railroaders for LINUX. Later, not only did it become open source but also available for both the Windows and MAC operating systems as well. Further good news is that it is continued to be supported and upgraded by not only the original authors, but model railway enthusiasts from all over the World.

This has become my preferred model railway design CAD programme. I searched for a relatively easy to use layout design programme and was prepared to pay good money for it. Then I found XTrkCAD about 18 months ago. What a bargain! I then put a friend on to it and he was hooked within the week.

XTrkCAD will also let you design control panel layouts complete with turnout and signal indications.

Some of the many features of XTrkCAD: Minimal system requirements. Major manufacturers' track supported. NMRA standard turnouts in its library. Working with flex-track is a breeze. Easy to design your own objects. Any scale, gauge or layout size. Learn at your own pace. Tutorials available on line. Built-in animated help feature. Will create full-size track templates. Automatically draws easements. Generates grade profiles. Generates material lists. Benchwork design capability. Run a virtual train to test your design. Up to 99 layers of editable graphics.

### How or where do you get it?

Just go to the XTrkCAD home page at:  
<http://www.xtrkcad.org/Wikka/HomePage>

Learning & using XTrkCAD Persevere with it and you could be drawing within a week. BUT . . . .

This is almost mandatory; find the tutorials on the XTrkCAD site and print them out. You need to do the tutorials first before you can progress. It's worth repeating: you do have to print out the tutorials first. English enthusiast, Mike Sutton, has also published on the web some very helpful tutorials in 4 parts. Mike's first part is at:

[http://smallphry.com/eecore/index.php?/site/xtrkcad\\_tutorial\\_part1/](http://smallphry.com/eecore/index.php?/site/xtrkcad_tutorial_part1/)

For further help or encouragement, there is a Yahoo XTrkCAD support group at:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/XTrkCad/>

Printing out your XTrkCAD designs. When it comes time to print them out, the XTrkCAD software includes a great little printing utility that allows you to print out your designs in any scale including full size. About your only limitation will be the capabilities of your printer or plotter. Even though it is capable of quite sophisticated layout design including 99 multi layers in full colour, the format it uses results in file sizes being quite small when compared to other graphic formats such as bitmap or jpeg. Therefore, complete and complex layout designs can be easily shared and emailed between users.

### Achieving Design Success

Space restraints are such that it has been impractical to pass on detailed descriptions of successful design processes. But, I do hope you have picked up at least one or two concepts or ideas that will help you to achieve your dream design. Remember my formula for performing design magic? The first step is so important that I am going to repeat it:

Preparation. Do your research. Your R & D. Prepare an accurate plan of your layout room and do your self-analysis of all of your own requirements for your layout. Perhaps you may get lucky and find a published plan that will suit you? Even if you have to do a few minor modifications here and there? Another "maybe"! At the

very least, I have no doubt that you will pick up some great ideas from others' track plans that you may be able to utilise in your own design.

Layout design is such a complex topic that there have been dozens of books written on the subject. From Frank Ellison writings of the early 1950s through to Iain Rice and Tony Koester's of the 2000s, there has been some great stuff published. So in closing, here is a short list of my favourites. The out-of-prints (OOP) are well worth tracking down.

. 18 Tailor Made Model RR Track Plans – John Armstrong (Kalmbach - OOP)

. Creative Layout Design – John Armstrong (Kalmbach - OOP)

. Design Handbook of Model Railroads – Paul Mallery (Carstens - OOP)

. Mid-sized & Manageable Track Plans – Iain Rice (Kalmbach)

. Realistic Model RR Design – Tony Koester (Kalmbach)

. Track Planning for Realistic Operation – John Armstrong (Kalmbach)

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 Website: <http://www.gwydirvalleymodels.com>

## Junction Models

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 Fx: (08) 8349 7463  
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 Open everyday except public holidays

## Model Railroad Craftsman

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 Full range available at: The Railcar (NSW), Model Railroad Craftsman (NSW), Buffer Stop (VIC), Cyanotic Hobbies (VIC), Brunel Hobbies (VIC), Christmas Every Day (QLD) Trains & Track (QLD)

## The N Scaler - N Scale By Mail

PO Box 254 Rydalmere NSW 1701  
 Ph/Fx: (02) 9832 8913  
 Mo: 0407 217927  
 Email [kerr43@ozemail.com.au](mailto:kerr43@ozemail.com.au)  
 Website: <http://www.ozemail.com.au/~kerr43/nscaler.html>

## The Railcar

17 The Breakwater, Corlette NSW 2315  
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 Fx: (02) 4981 0668  
 Email: [railcar@hunterlink.net.au](mailto:railcar@hunterlink.net.au)  
 Website: <http://www.railcar.com.au>  
 Contact: Herna or Paul Ward

## The Signal Box Model Railways

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 Website: <http://www.tomshobbies.com.au>  
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## Vic Barnes Cycle & Model Train Centre

213 Lambton Road  
 New Lambton NSW 2305  
 Ph: (02) 4952 1886

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 Fx: (02) 9631 4204  
 Email: [wmr@zeta.org.au](mailto:wmr@zeta.org.au)  
 Mon-Fri 10am-5:30pm Sat 9am-2pm



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