

# Main Line

Summer 2011  
Volume 28 No4

National Model Railroad  
Association Inc.  
Australasian Region



**Features:**

***Union Pacific Railrow Division  
Beyond the Static Signal Part 1  
OP Till You DROP  
2011 Melbourne NMRA Convention  
Ballasting Track***

***Regional reports***

**Registered as Australia Post Publications # PP241613/0080**



# Australasian Regional Directory

www.nmra.org.au – NMRA Inc. PO Box 25 Pymble NSW 2073

## Regional Committee

President	David Howarth MMR (02) 9498 4995	president@nmra.org.au
Vice President	Erik Bennett (02) 9997 7971	vicepresident@nmra.org.au
Secretary	Kelly Loyd (02) 4956 5793	secretary@nmra.org.au
Treasurer	James Wyatt (02) 4751 1596	treasure@nmra.org.au
Pacific District Director	Peter Jensen (02) 4024 1903	director@nmra.org.au
Member	Phillip Anderson (02) 9879 0307	phillip@nmra.org.au
Member	Rowan Mangion 0416 113 588	rowan@nmra.org.au
Member	Paul Marrant (02) 4959 6683	paul@nmra.org.au
Public Officer	Rob Peterson 0408 682 336	publicofficer@nmra.org.au

## Superintendents

Division1 Queensland	Not yet available	div1sup@nmra.org.au
Division 2 ACT	Viv Brice (02)6254 8204	div2sup@nmra.org.au
Division 3 Vic/Tas	Grant McAdam (03) 9578 8685	div3sup@nmra.org.au
Division 4 WA	Alan Burrough (08) 9364 6527	div4sup@nmra.org.au
Division 5 New Zealand	Kelvin Sherson (04) 234 8577	div5sup@nmra.org.au
Division 6 SA	Geoff Chatwin 0414 702 755	div6sup@nmra.org.au
Division 7 NSW	Erik Bennett (02) 9997 7971	div7sup@nmra.org.au
Division 8 Nth Rivers	Ian Phemister (02) 6658 2626	div8sup@nmra.org.au
Division 9 mid North Coast	Mike Bartlett (02) 6553 6227	div9sup@nmra.org.au
Taiwan TSD	Ivan Yih	ivan_yih@anemodel.com

## Regional Volunteers

A.P. Manager	Gerry Hopkins MMR (02) 4329 0242	ap@nmra.org.au
A.P. Asst. Manager, Vic	Laurie Green MMR (03) 9744 5188	apvicevic@nmra.org.au
A.P. Asst. Manager, S.A.	Ray Brownbill (08) 8389 1045	apvicesa@nmra.org.au
A.P. Asst. Manager, Qld Nth	Graham Emery (07) 3409 4784	apviceqldnth@nmra.org.au
A.P. Asst. Manager, Qld Sth	Martyn Jenkins (07) 5563 7554	apviceqldsth@nmra.org.au
A.P. Asst. Manager, W.A.	Phil Knife MMR (08) 9459 4506	apvicewa@nmra.org.au
A.P. Asst. Manager, ACT	John Prattis (02) 6291 7898	apviceact@nmra.org.au
Librarian	Paul Marrant (02) 4959 6683	librarian@nmra.org.au
Contest Chairman	Gerry Hopkins MMR (02) 4329 0242	contest@nmra.org.au
Editor –MainLine	Geoff Horne (02) 4954 7632	editor@nmra.org.au
Web Master	Wayne Eagle (02) 9627 9892	webmaster@nmra.org.au
Web Updates	Gerry Hopkins MMR (02) 4329 0242	updates@nmra.org.au
Education Chairman	Gerry Hopkins MMR (02) 4329 0242	education@nmra.org.au
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## Official Publication of the National Model Railroad Association Australasian Region

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- \* Autumn 2012 10th February
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The Editor

Mainline

29 Kenley Crescent

Macquarie Hills, NSW 2285

Email: [editor@nmra.org.au](mailto:editor@nmra.org.au)

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## Photo Credits

*Front Cover:*

*UP Diesels on the Rainbow Division*

by Mike Bartlett

*Centrefold:*

*Left side: More Rainbow Division*

By Mike Bartlett

*Right side: 2011 Melbourne Convention*

By Gavin Hince

*Back Cover: 2011 Melbourne Convention*

By Gavin Hince



# The Computer Keyboard

with

Editor - Geoff Horne

**M**erry Christmas from your MainLine Editor and I hope that you all get what you have asked Santa (or your wife) for. It has been a very turbulent and sad year with Nature doing its best to wash us all away and also the loss of several very well known members to whose families I would like to pass on the condolences of all of the Australasian Region NMRA members. We must always remember that we are not just members of an association, but more the members of a very large family and ready to support the family members.

**I also have to inform you that I will be standing down as the Editor of MainLine following the printing of the Autumn 2012 issue.**

**Our President David Howarth, has asked if I would put the feelers out to see if anyone may be interested in taking on this important post. Obviously the prime requisite is that you MUST be computer literate and also with an understanding of the handling and alteration (re-sizing) of photographs so that they are acceptable to the printer. If you are considering this position, I am available to field any questions that you may have at: [editor@nmra.org.au](mailto:editor@nmra.org.au) or 02 4954 7632.**

**To register yourself for consideration, please contact David Howarth at 02 9498 4995 or mobile: 0411 555 588.**

In the time as Editor I have been very pleased to have had so many members saying that they have enjoyed reading MainLine. It is also a bit of a buzz to receive emails out of the blue from people overseas to say "keep up the good work".

I hope that you all support the future Editor with articles and photographs as you have for me.

To all of these people I cannot thank you enough, because there is only so much that a person can draw on personal experiences even though I have been in the hobby for over 50 years and enjoy being able to help fellow railway modellers if I can.

Some of the older techniques that we all have running around inside our heads can often be still the best solution to a modern problem.

Keep the articles coming as it is always nice to be able to pass on to the next person.

I realise I have also given some people a bit of a hard time with constant reminders and these will no doubt continue to arrive. I realise that we are all very busy in our private lives and I hope that the gentle prods were only taken in the "in case you have forgotten" folder in your heads.



# From the CAB

with  
David Howarth MMR - President NMRA AR

the like, to promote the Region. As an example of how this helps, we had a booth at the AMRA show in Sydney during the October Long Weekend, and had over a dozen new people apply for membership.

Please note that elections will be held for the Regional Committee in the first half of next year. Why not put your hand up and seek election for one of the positions available? A healthy organisation is one where many candidates seek election for elected positions. It will also help you gain another certificate in the Achievement Program. We will be circulating information on the process in a timely fashion early in the New Year.

Like many of you I am a member of a historical society covering a railroad of special interest. For me it's the New York Central System Historical Society. Have a look at their website [www.nycshs.org](http://www.nycshs.org) where they have started a new free on-line magazine - **The NYCentral Modeler**. I was asked by the Editor to write an article which you can find in Q4. I describe a 0-8-0 locomotive which I have heavily modified to reflect a NYC specific locomotive. I have also tried to promote the NMRA and our Achievement Program.

Until next time, David

One of the opportunities we have as NMRA members is to attend our Regional Conventions. Our most recent one was held at the Carwatha College, Noble Park North, in Melbourne on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> October 2011. It was a great success and special thanks go to all our members in Victoria who helped organise the event, particularly Grant McAdam, our Divisional Superintendent, and Laurie Green.

Our Regional Committee agreed to hold a joint sitting of all our Divisional Superintendents and the Regional Committee for the first time in our history. Travel and accommodation costs were covered by the Association, as required. This was held on the 2 October 2011 in Sydney. It was a great success. The Objectives of the meeting were as follows:

- Get to know each other;
- Transfer knowledge between Divisions;
- Achieve common goals;
- Review growth and attract new members;
- Retain existing members.

The meeting addressed all of these objectives and more, and came away from the all-day meeting with a comprehensive Action List and a desire to follow through and completed the actions with the aim to strengthen our Region. Thanks to all who attended and contributed so well.

One of the important issues raised was the need to get in



The local group of Australians who were lucky enough to be able to attend the US Convention this year in Sacramento



front of the model railway public so they are aware we exist and know the benefits of belonging to the NMRA. So please help your Divisional Superintendent when he asks you to man a booth at a local railway exhibition, or

# Report from the PACIFIC DISTRICT DIRECTOR

## Have you heard about the Cruise Convention?

There is a team from the west coast putting together a proposal for a "cruise Convention" in 2016. Initial plans a cruise from Vancouver (British Columbia) and end in San Diego with the National Train Show. There would be stopovers down the west coast for layout and prototype tours, with all sailing at night. Clinics and presentations would be on board. All ship board activities and meals would be included in the fare/convention fees.

This is a proposal by a group looking for something different ... and very unique. For more information read the President's column in the October and December issues of the *NMRA Magazine*. Also, it is important that you complete the survey in the October issue. This will help the National BOD to make a decision on whether this proposal should be accepted. For some time now, the BOD has been looking for new ideas for the convention, and this is a very novel and very interesting proposal. Please give us your thoughts.

## PDD Elections

In February, you will be invited to vote for a new Pacific District Director. Look for the candidate statements for the three candidates in the February issue of *NMRA Magazine*. The three nominees, Mike Bartlett, Kelly Loyd and Rob Peterson are all outstanding candidates. If you do not know any of them, get to know them and ask them about their vision for the NMRA. Remember, this is a position on the National Board of Directors and they will be responsible for the direction of our organisation over the next three years.

Best regards'

Peter Jensen

Pacific District Director

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# ***DIVISIONAL CALENDAR***

## ***Queensland***

### ***Division 1 - 2012***

For details contact Martyn Jenkins, Tel.(07) 5563 7554  
Meetings Start at 1.30pm - unless shown otherwise

January: No Meeting

February: 18 Eddie Stavleu 10.30 Lunch

March: 17 Leigh Craig 10.30 Lunch

April: 21 Ian Wellings 10.30 Lunch

May: 5,6,7 Brisbane Train Show

May: 19,20 NMRA Train Show

June: Toowoomba

July: 14 Ken Leitch 10.30 Lunch

August: 18 Colin Upton 10.30 Lunch

September: 15 Mike Crnjanin

September: 15 NMRA Convention

October: 20 Marty Jenkins 10.30 Lunch

November: 17 Bob Brown 10.30 Lunch

December: 15 Xmas Party

## ***Victoria***

### ***Division 3 - 2012***

Meetings Start at 2.00pm

February 12 Paul & Kath Richie

March 25 Rod & Julie Hutchinson

August 19 Ken Hughes

September 23 Bob & Myra Thornton

October 21 Laurie & Rosemary Green

December 2 Grant McAdam

## ***Sydney***

### ***Division 7 - 2012***

Meetings Start at 2.00pm - unless shown otherwise.

Contact Erik Bennett for further information Tel. 9997 7971

14-Jan AMRA Clubhouse, 48 Barry Ave, Mortdale 9153 5901

11-Feb Dave Cuff 7 Hakea Court, St Clair 9834 1356

10-Mar David Latham 10A Venetia St, Kangaroo Point 9522 2193

14-Apr Richard Biggs 299 Old Stock Route Rd, Oakville 4572 3627

***For any further information of meetings in your Division, please contact your Divisional Superintendant on the phone numbers in the Directory on page 2 of this issue. - Ed.***

# BEYOND THE STATIC SIGNAL

## Part 1

by John Parker

Over the years I've been kit-bashing HO-scale signal bridge kits into something that does not look like a child's plaything. Whilst I haven't attempted to model any specific prototype with any great degree of fidelity, I try to produce something that looks at least "believable". However, following this approach you can alter the structural appearance to suit your specific needs.

In this series of articles, I'm going to describe how to specifically kit-bash the Life-Like HO-scale Signal Bridge kit, as shown in figure 1 into something which will enhance your layout. I'll also discuss how to choose, and install illuminated signals. Nonetheless, you'll also need to do some minor scratch-building and soldering.



**DISCLAIMER:** At this point I wish to make it evident that whilst the finished product includes working LEDs, on my personal layout I use such signals to merely reflect the status of nearby turnouts. I make no claim in respect of a fully fledged track detection and occupancy signalling system. How and what you connect the wired signals to is entirely your decision.

### STEP 1 – REBUILD THE TRESTLE LEGS

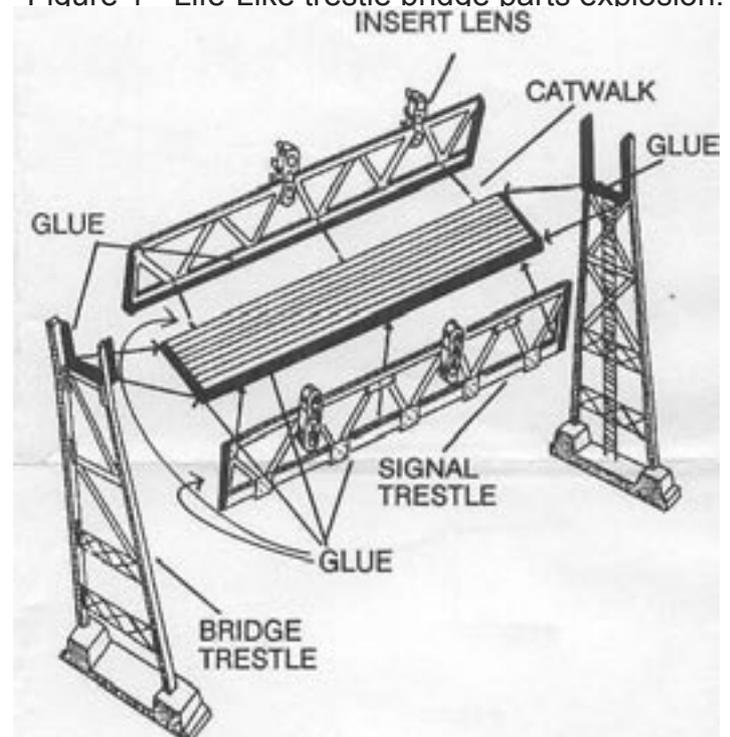
Looking at figure 1, you can dispense with all the parts except the two "bridge trestles" and the "catwalk" [aka the walkway].

Use a sharp knife to clean up any excess flashing on these parts. Also, fill the moulding dimples [small circular indentions] on the sides of the concrete footings using plastic putty. Once the putty has dried, sand them smooth with a very fine grade automotive



sand paper.

Figure 1 - Life-Like trestle bridge parts explosion.



The problem I have with these bridge trestles is the unusual lattice truss work below the conventional X bracing. This fabrication may be accurate and authentic, but I prefer the simpler X-bracing.

Using a sharp knife, remove the lattice bracing as shown in figure 2. Repeat this for the other trestle leg. You will notice that one leg has the access ladder moulded onto the X-bracing. If you have a spare kit you could use another ladder-less trestle leg, however I opted to carefully carve the ladder off the upper X-bracings with an Exacto chisel blade. If it ends up being a little "rough around the edges", just remember you probably won't notice it once it has been painted.

In the past I've used the IHC and Life-Like HO-scale signal bridge kits and in doing so I've accumulated from them a veritable treasure trove of useful components.

I use and recommend Tamiya plastic putty, but you can use whatever brand you prefer. *continued page 10*

## Central Coast Wednesday Night – Model Railway Club (NMRA 100% Club)

The CCWN-MRC will be hosting an “Op Till You Drop” weekend on the 26 & 27 May 2012. This will consist of 8 layouts – four on Saturday (Southern) and four on Sunday (Northern). At each layout the “operators” (you) will be given 15 – 20 minutes instruction about the layout and its operating system – then – you will have approx. one hour operating the layout in the correct manner. Then you will drive to the next layout and do the same on it. You will do this for the four layouts on the day.

The same thing will happen on the Sunday on four different layouts. You will be able to sign up for either or both days as you wish. A booking fee of \$2 will be required for each day. This will cover cost of tea, coffee, bickies at each layout.

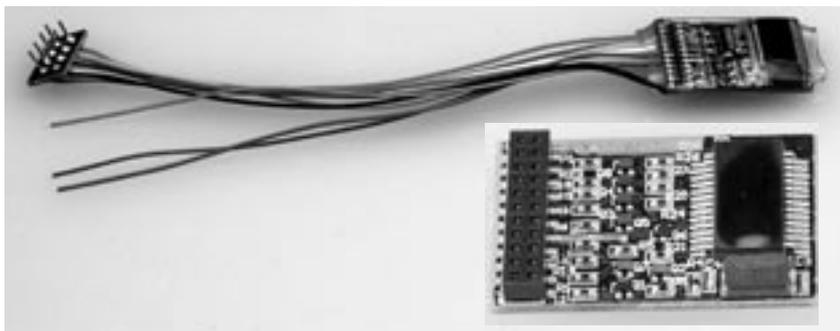
The layouts will be N & HO scales and both American and Australian. The operating systems used will be waybill & car cards, switch list, timetable, warrant sheet, train order, CTC control, and staff exchangers. It is hoped that the guest “operator” can learn a little about operating a layout in a more prototypical manner.

More information will be given in the next *MainLine* and on the web at the CCWN-MRC web page at: <http://tinyurl.com/3s5bqv>

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Using Evergreen #291 [.060"/1.5mm] angle styrene, make replacement X-braces by measuring and cutting them to size. Where the braces intersect, make a small notch so they sit flat across each other.

Using some thin flat styrene make 4 new reinforcement gusset plates about a scale 12"x24" and glue them where the new X-braces have been added to the trestle legs as shown in figure 3.



Figure 2 - Trestle legs - before and after

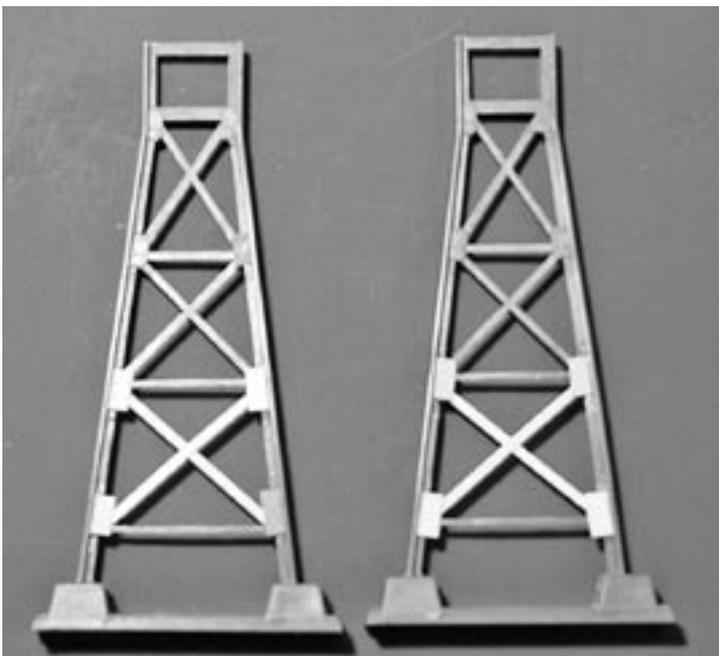


Figure 3 – New X-braces and gussets

## STEP 2 – PREPARING THE TRESTLE LEGS

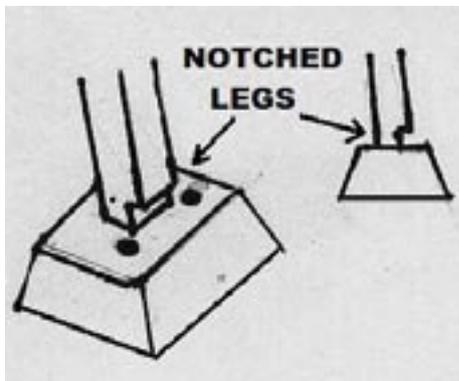
Down the sides of the trestle legs you will find a moulding seam. Using an Exacto chisel blade, carefully shave off this seam line until it is flat. It is essential that you get these edges flat as you will later have to glue some double sided PCB strips onto them.

Cut four lengths of Clover House HO [#262] PCB Board Ties [Low Contour – Old Time 8" wide] to the

same length of the trestle legs.

**IMPORTANT** - Make sure when you hold the PCB strip along the trestle leg, you hold down the strip where there is a slight kink in the leg, before cutting it off square with your wire cutters.

Drill two small holes in the concrete footing just near the trestle leg as shown below in figure 4. Repeat this for each of the remaining trestle legs.



File a small notch at the base of each trestle leg as shown in Figure 4. This will allow [wire soldered underneath] the PCB strip to sit flat along the leg.

The wires will disappear into the concrete footing and then below the baseboard and onto the power source.

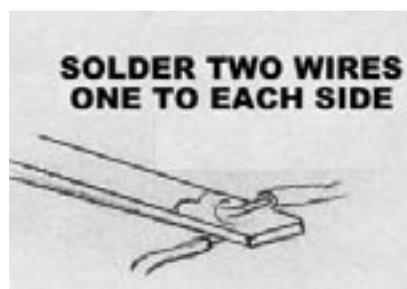
Cut 8 short lengths of fine wire [50mm/2"], with preferably 8 different colours. I use my DCC decoder wire off-cuts for this task.

The Clover House PCB strips have a copper surface on both sides and consequentially there are potentially two electrical conductors for each trestle leg.

---

Evergreen Scale Model styrene structural shapes are widely available in most hobby shops.

---



At the bottom end of each PCB strip, tin each side with a thin coat of solder as shown in figure 5, and solder two of the 8 wires, one to each side. Repeat this for the remaining three PCB strips.

There is a slight kink in the trestle leg where the walkway is glued to it. It is at this point where 2 more short wires have to be soldered onto each side of the PCB strips [using the same colours as before]. Looking at figure 6, you will see where the two wires [one on each side] comes out from the PCB strip to near where the walkway is to be located.

Apply a thin smear of solder to each side of the PCB strip at this point and solder the same coloured wires to their respective sides. Do this for the remaining 3 PCB strips.

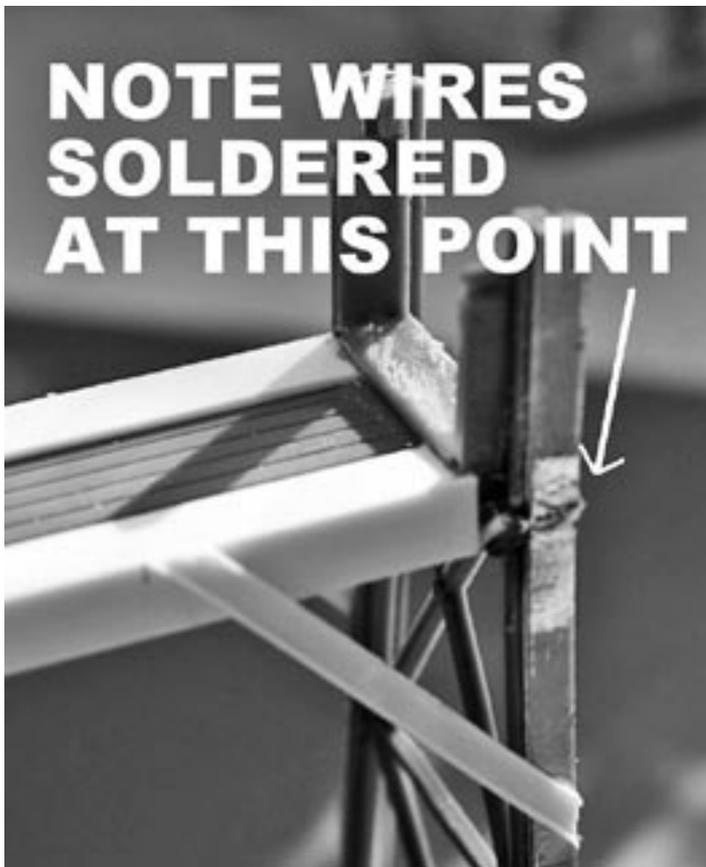


Figure 6 - Next point to be wired



Figure 7 - Gluing the PCB strip.

Where the wire on the underside of the PCB strip touches the plastic trestle leg, file another notch across the trestle leg so it will lay flat. Failure to do this will cause the PCB strip stick up and detract from the model.

Once all 4 PCB strips have all been wired up, grab your multimeter and using the circuit continuity tester, ensure that all 8 circuits are “alive” and there are no dry joints or shorts.

You now should be in a position to glue the PCB strips along the edges of the trestle legs.

The bottom 8 wires are then fed down each of the

8 holes drilled in the concrete footings. The other 8 wires nearer to the top should for the time being stick outwards.

Using contact cement , apply a light coating to one side of each PCB strip and the trestle leg. Clamp the PCB strip to the trestle leg as shown in figure 7. Put this trestle leg aside to dry and set, and repeat this step for the other trestle.

When the contact cement has dried, repeat this step on the other side of the remaining trestle legs.

When all four PCB strips have been successfully glued onto the trestle legs, shave off any excess dried contact cement that may have been squeezed out along the PCB strips. This is important as any lumps of dried cement will detract from the completed signal.

I use “Selleys Gel Grip”, but any similar contact cement will suffice.

### STEP 3 – WALKWAY BUS STRIPS

If you are using the Life-Like walkway as suggested, you will need to slice off any “locating pins” and excess flashing. On each of the two trestle legs there are two lugs used to align the walkway when it is glued to them. As these lugs are not used, you should remove them.

Presuming you are not changing the length of the walkway cut two lengths of scale 36’6” Ever-green #295 [5/32”/4mm] angle styrene. This should leave a scale 6”edge clear at each end of the slightly longer walkway.

Glue each strip of angle styrene face down along the edge of the walkway, so that it hangs down over the edge.

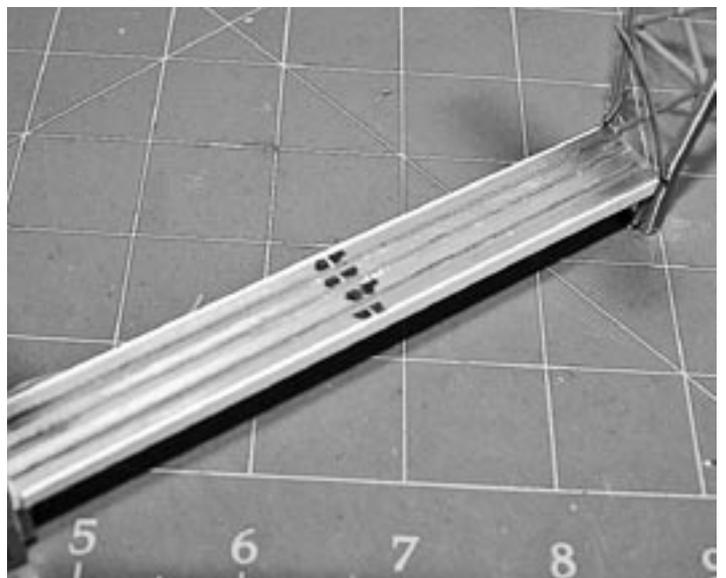


Figure 8 – 4 PCB BUS strips on the underside of the walkway

Take four lengths of PCB strips and cut them to the same length of the walkway. At the halfway point of each PCB strip, file a groove in the copper layer. Using your multimeter's circuit continuity tester, make sure that each half of the PCB strip is electrically isolated.

Glue the walkway to the two trestle legs and make sure that the legs are square with it. Put it aside to thoroughly dry and set overnight.

Once the trestle legs and walkway have been glued, flip it over onto its back and with some contact cement, glue the four PCB BUS strips to the underside of the walkway as shown in figure 8.

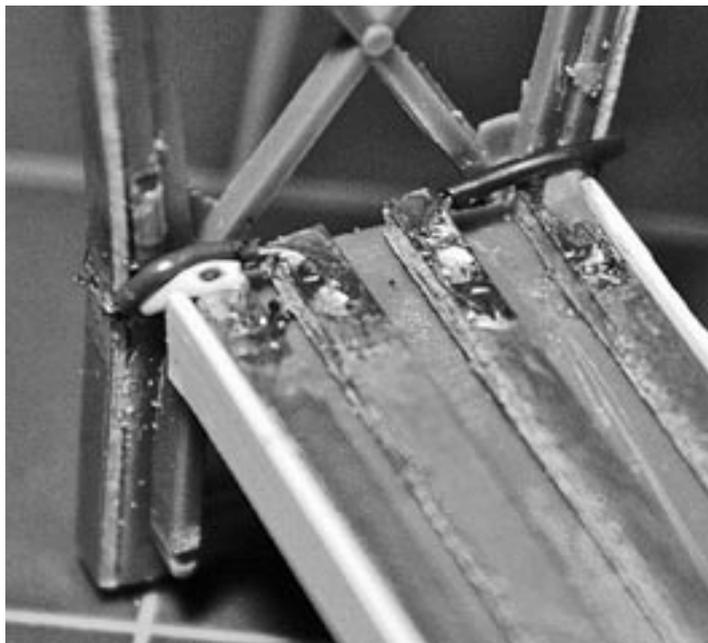
Looking at figure 8, you will also notice the 4 PCB BUS strips glued underneath the walkway. The styrene angle strips will hide the 4 BUS strips from view.

If you look carefully you can also see the highlighted gaps in the middle of each BUS strip, thereby doubling its usefulness.

#### STEP 4 – WIRING UP THE BUS STRIPS

At this point we need to solder the two electrical conductors on each trestle leg to their relative PCB BUS on the underside of the walkway.

**IMPORTANT** - The sequence in which you solder the wires on the upper and lower sides of the trestle leg PCB strip to its respective PCB BUS strip is up to you, but make sure whatever sequence you do choose, that it is consistent for all of them.



Looking closely at figure 9 you will see that the wire soldered to the upper side of the PCB strip on the trestle leg is always soldered to second PCB BUS strip in from the edge. The wire soldered to the under side of the same PCB strip is always soldered to the first

PCB BUS strip along and next to the edge.

This “rule” is consistent regardless of which end of the PCB BUS strip you are looking at.

Once you have completed soldering all 8 wires, I would recommend you note the 8 wire colours for future reference. Eventually all these connecting wires would normally be painted.

Now is a good time to once again take your multimeter and using the circuit continuity tester, ensure that all 8 circuits are “alive” between their ends and that there are no dry joints or shorts in between. Finding an electrical problem now is a lot easier when there is no superstructure to get in the way once the model has been completed.

#### STEP 5 – COMPLETING THE WALKWAY DETAILS

Now that we have reduced the need to worry about a hot soldering iron moving in and around soft plastic detail parts, we can complete the bracing and safety fence.

If you go back and look at figure 6, you will see a brace glued across the corner of the walkway and trestle leg. You can choose to omit this detail, but most of the signal bridge gantries which use this style of construction in the US seem to have these corner braces to steady them.

Looking typically at one corner, I measured 5 scale feet from the inside corner of the trestle leg along the walkway and marked it. Then measuring the same distance from the inside corner of the same trestle leg mark it.

Take a length of Evergreen #261 [.060”/1.5mm] styrene channel and lay it across the two marks and draw a line at 45° to define how long the brace will need to be cut. Repeat this procedure for the remaining 3 corners. Glue all four braces using ACC superglue without sticking your fingers to it!

---

Each wire colour should be the same for each circuit starting from where it starts from beneath the layout up until it reaches the PCB BUS strips under the walkway. Once you paint the completed model, the only unpainted wire will be that showing under the concrete footings.

---

Next deduce which side of the walkway will retain the end top truss support and which end will need to be “opened up” to allow a ladder unimpeded access to the walkway. Looking at figure 10, and using a pair of sharp rail cutters carefully cut away the intervening

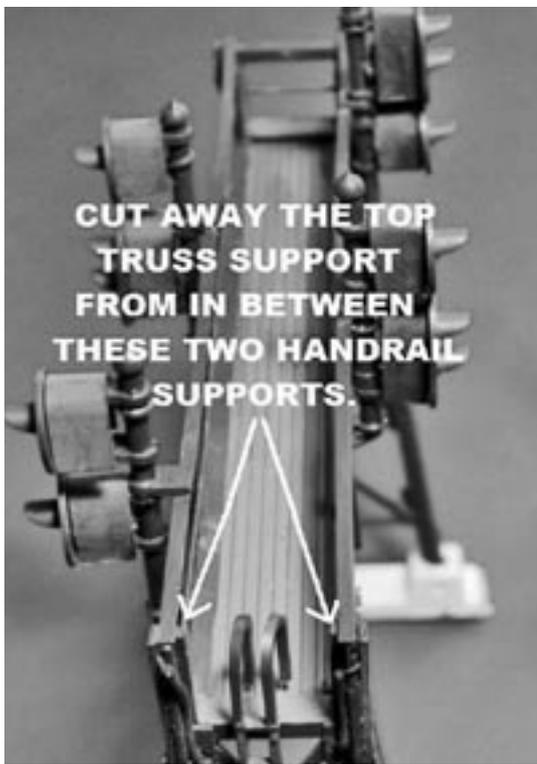
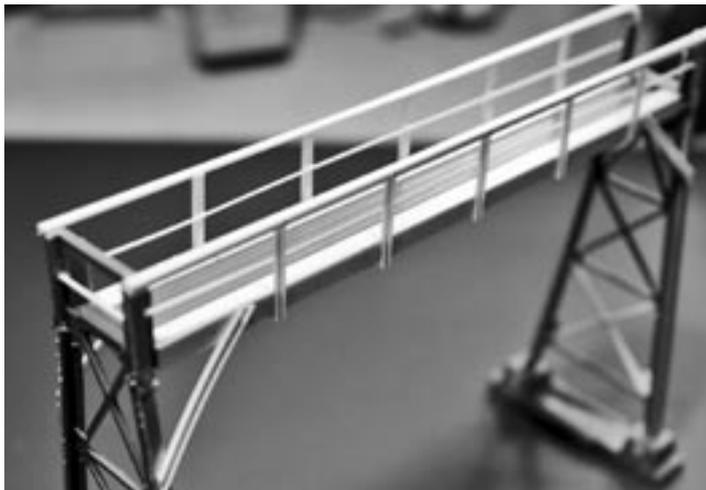


Figure 10 - Making access to the walkway

hand railings along each side of the walkway as shown in figure 11.

As I'm modelling steel safety fencing, I chose cross sections that are typically all metal. Take a length of Evergreen #291 [.060"/1.5mm] styrene angle and lay it across the top of the walkway. As it will be the top handrail, it should be as long as the top structure is wide. Mark it off and cut to suit. Repeat this step for the handrail on the other side.



We need at least 5 fence post locations equally spaced along each side of the walkway. Measure and mark along the edge of the walkway five equally spaced fence post locations. Once you have completed this step, use a small toolmaker's square to mark the same post locations on the other side of the walkway.

Glue both top handrails across the top of the signal bridge. Using the toolmaker's square transfer the 10

plastic truss support at the top of the bridge trestle. The access ladder will be one of the last items to be added prior to painting the completed model.

Our next task is to fabricate the safety

fence post location marks up to the 2 top handrails. This will help when you get to glue the fence posts in their upright positions.

Once the handrails are dry, you need to make an estimate of the length of a fence post. As the top rail will at this stage tend to be somewhat flexible, lay the project upside down. The posts will be glued vertically to the underside of the top rail and to the side of the walkway below it. So when you make your preliminary measurement, make an allowance for error. It won't matter if the fence posts are slightly longer, so long as they are not slightly too short!

Using your measurement, cut a sample piece of scrap strip styrene and hold it in the fence post position. If it's too short you have just saved wasting 10 pieces of Evergreen styrene! If it hangs below the bottom of the walkway, that's OK as we can trim it off later on.

To make the posts I use Evergreen #261 [.060"/1.5mm] styrene channel. This is also where a North West Short Lines "Chopper" [or similar tool] comes in handy to cut all the 10 fence posts to the exact same length. Otherwise, use the first post as a guide and manually cut them without short-ening your finger!

Next glue these posts to the underside of the handrails and along the walkway sides. Check each post to see that it's vertical and looks right as you go. Put the job aside for a few minutes. Repeat this exercise for the safety rail on the other side of the walkway.

The handrail and walkway needs to have an intermediate rail to prevent people falling through the gap. I chose to use Evergreen #218 [.020"/0.50mm] styrene rod to simulate a tubular railing. Cut the rod to fit exactly between the end posts. Lay the signal on its side and place the rod across the back of the 5 fence posts. Try to get the rod lying equidistant between the handrail and the walkway. Then dab some Tamiya Extra Thin plastic glue onto the rod wherever it crosses a post.

Once it has dried sufficient for you to be able to pick up the project without it moving, lay it over the other way and glue the 2 ends onto the front of the end posts as shown in figure 11.

Looking at the near-end of the signal bridge in figure 11, you will notice that a short piece of styrene rod has also been applied at the same height to the side to finish off the railings.

Finally, flip the project onto its back with its legs up; use a sprue cutter [or your wire cutter] to trim off the excess posts hanging below the walkway.

## PART 2

### AUTUMN ISSUE 2012

# FURTHER UPDATE UNION PACIFIC - RAINBOW DIVISION

by Mike Bartlett

Some members may remember my previous article which was titled "Update on the New Rainbow Flat Division Railway" and appeared in the summer edition of Mainline in 2005. I thought it might be time for an update. The basic layout is the same and includes a 700 ft mainline, maximum 1% grade and minimum 36" radius on the mainline. I have upgraded the booster to the EasyDCC Zonemaster Dual DZB7 and added a RRampMeter to the circuit near the main controller. After writing to the Union Pacific Railroad in Omaha, Nebraska I have been given official permission to use the name. Union

and a timber yard. There are five 21 ft storage roads plus the roads servicing the grain facility and the mainline. The mainline disappears under the sawmill and coalmine, travelling on a hidden track to the other end of the shed before emerging 50 ft away past painted scenery depicting the wonderful rocky outcrops seen around Green River. I do have a green river which disappears into the mountain and the wall painting.

Wahsatch has only a central passing siding station and scenery. The track continues on to Curve where



Pacific - Rainbow Division.

So, what improvements have been wrought on the Rainbow Division since 2005? I have placed a Georgia Pacific sawmill, together with log pond, storage area and warehouse, on a branch line behind Green River. Sharing this branch is a coalmine and associated trackage. This development occupies an area 10 ft x 8 ft plus the branch line from behind the grain elevators that is 40 ft long. The scenery in this area is complete and includes a large number of trees and a branch line to bring in the logs from the forest. The Green River area, whilst not to scale, contains a grain terminal that can hold 70 grain wagons and a diesel engine terminal servicing area and shed with four roads. There is also a number of buildings such as grain silos, warehouses and engine-servicing sheds and equipment plus a fuel distribution property

the lines cross over each other to attain lefthand running. The yard at Echo contains a station plus warehouse, 2 storage tracks, roadworks and bridges. Further down the mountain is the now abandoned locality of Emory which has some storage tracks remaining. The next major site is Devil's Slide. Here, there is a central passing track plus trackage associated with the large cement plant that is still working in this area. The model area has had to be compacted but occupies a space of 18 ft x 2 - 4 ft. The next place of interest, after some more tunnels, is Strawberry where there is a cattle/meat loading facility.

From Strawberry to Riverdale the lines diverge where the gradients are different as per the prototype. Riverdale/Ogden is where the line changes to lefthand running to take advantage of the 1%



gradient offered by the new line built by Union Pacific in 1916. At Ogden we find passenger car storage which services the main Union Station with its five roads together with its covered platforms. In this area there are 25 buildings which represent the town of Ogden. (See Photo 7.) Further along, there is a container yard and warehouses which cover an area of 7 ft x 6 ft. This leads into the main Ogden yard that has 4 x 18 ft and 3 x 27-35 ft roads. Completing the Ogden area is the engine and diesel facility. The engine facility contains a 135 ft diamond scale turntable and 7-stall roundhouse. The diesel facility has 9 service roads and storage shed.

To date, I have ballasted some of the railway but still have a way to go. Scenery covers about 70% of the layout but there remains considerable work to be done. I have opted for mainly hand-operated turnouts, using

the John Saxon model. There are some electrically-operated points using tortoise motors which also operate some electric signals. The equipment has been upgraded with several new diesels, turbines and some steam locomotives including a new Big Boy, all with sound. The place gets a bit noisy at times but the sound certainly adds another interesting dimension to my layout.

To the future. There are enormous possibilities emerging when one considers all the ins and outs of DCC and DCC accessories. These will evolve with time and spousal permission. Scenery needs renewing and upgrading, taking into account all the new techniques and products that are now available. As I stated at the end of my last article, who ever finished a layout?





Melbourne 2011  
NMRA Convention



# 2011 NMRA Convention Cawartha College - Melbourne

by Rod Hutchinon

The NMRA Australian Region Convention for 2011 was held on the 8th & 9th October 2011 at Cawartha College, Nobel Park North, Melbourne, Victoria. The committee for this convention was ably led by Grant McAdam and Laurie Green of Narrow Gauge Convention fame.

The venue is very popular with Division 3 members. It has a large gymnasium which can house all attendees, commercial stands and displays in one space. In addition there is a lecture theatre with raked seating enabling occupants to have a clear view of proceedings in addition to smaller rooms for competition and lectures. Access to rooms and facilities is within the main building allowing attendees to move about without inclement weather dampening enthusiasm.



83 registrations were received with people coming from as far away as Western Australia and Queensland. One principle feature of these conventions is to catch up with friends and colleagues with whom you have been in phone or email contact in the past. By far the opportunity to interact with fellow modellers in person is a most delightful spin off in such a hobby as ours.

*Gum Trees - Dan Pickard*

Friday evening was set aside for setting up and early registrations. A large number of people turned up and assisted with last minute purchases, established eating and sitting areas, ensured that commercial stands were ably assisted and display and lecture rooms were functioning as expected.

Items on display covered many scales, prototype and genre. A mix of mainline and narrow gauge modelling enhanced the participants experience and helps us all to think of modelling in more broad terms. The quality presented was extremely high. Competition voting was by popular vote and results are listed below.

NMRA Achievement Program (AP) evaluation that made available for members requiring it.

## **The convention was supported by the following Vendors:**

Outback Model Co. / Brunel Hobbies / NGDU / Fine Art Model Trains / Ian Wilson Models

## **Agenda for the convention:**

### **Saturday**

*Registration & Contest Entry*

*Welcome & housekeeping*

*Gerry Hopkins – Surface Mount Devices - LEDs*

*Dan Pickard – A Guide to Building Iconic Aussie Gum Trees*

*Grant McAdam – Masters, Mould Making & Castings*

*John Hunter – NYC – A New Layout*

*Phil Badger – Considerations for Scratch Building*

*Ken Hayward Jr – Prototype Operations to Model Railways*

*Peter Keddie - First, catch your train*

*Ian Wilson - Practical demonstration of CNC Milling*

*Brett Whelan - Firing a Locomotive*

*Dinner & Awards & Contest Results*

*Dinner Speaker – Laurie Green – Start to Finish*

### **Sunday**

*John McCallum – Casting with Low Melting Point Alloy in the Home Workshop*

*Peter Jackson - Modelling Thoughts and Techniques*

*Frank Kelly – Some Hints on Scratch Building Brass Model Locos*

*Adrian Gunzburg – Evolution of a model railway – From prototype to model*

*Chris Pearce – Gathering Information*

*Closing remarks*

*Self drive layout tours*

*Sn3 - The Animas and Lobato Southern*

*N - Santa Fe Southern Division*

*On30 – North Coast Narrow Gauge*

*On30 – Stoney Creek*

*HO – Santa Fe and Pacific*

*HO – Freelance Railways*

*HO & N – Freelance Railways*

Feedback received would indicate that attendees enjoyed what was on offer. The breadth of subject matter ensured food for thought for the most discerning of modellers. All too soon the convention drew to a close. However, the enjoyment of like minded company, the anticipation of layout tours and the camaraderie all made for a wonderful weekend. The committee was concluded by remarks from Grant McAdam who wished all participants a safe journey to their respective homes.

Rod Hutchinon

NMRA Division 3



*John Hunter - Laurie Green*

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# Ballasting Track

*Article and Photographs by Doug Cook*

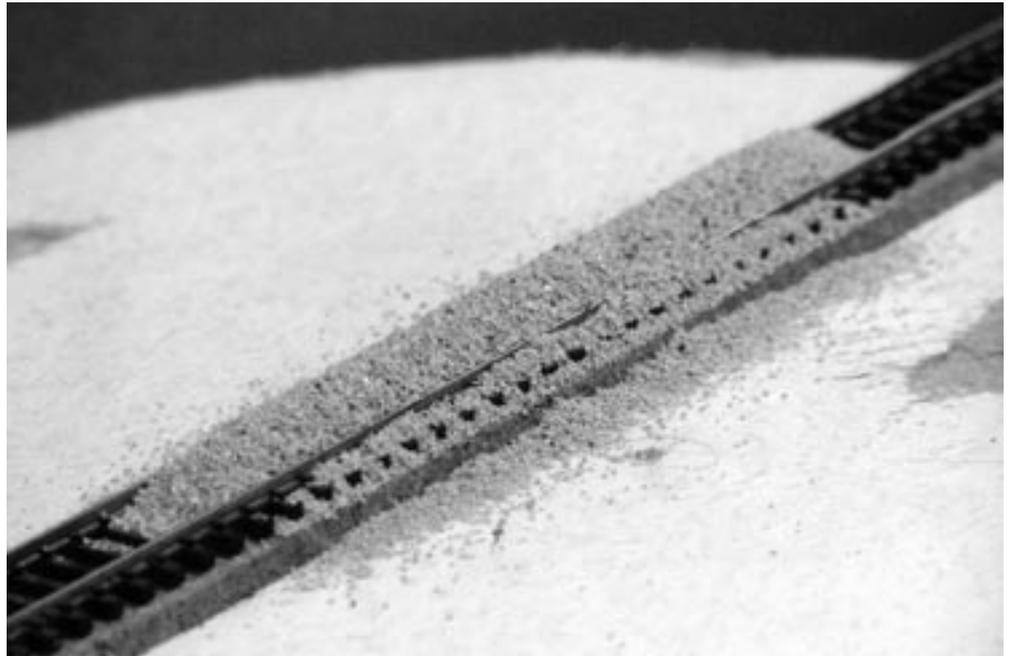
I have had numerous visitors to my layout ask how I went about doing the ballasting of the track on the layout. This question was the catalyst behind the writing of this article.

Before I get into how I ballasted the track on the layout, I would like to give a bit of an insight into the ballasting of track in the real world. To do this I shall quote from the old State Rail Authority of NSW Way and Works training manual.

Ballast is provided to serve two functions. Firstly it is provided to lock the rest of the track structure (sleepers, rail and fittings) in position, allowing maintenance of the surface (keeping the top of the rail level) and alignment (straightness of the track and evenness of the curves). Secondly the ballast acts as a cushion allowing axle loads placed on the rails to be transmitted evenly over the full width of the formation. To insure that these two functions are carried out efficiently, it is necessary to look at the required quality and quantity of ballast used on the track.

To function as it should, ballast must be:

- Durable – The material must be tough enough to resist weathering and crushing.
- Sharp and angular – So that it will lock together



and hold the tracks stable.

- Graded to specifications – So that the voids formed are neither too small or too large.
- Free running – To allow water to run through and off to the drainage systems. To this end the ballast should be free from fines and dust – it should be clean.

Materials suitable for track ballast in order of quality are crushed stone, gravel, sand, ashes and loam.

The quality of ballast provided will greatly determine

the stability of the track. The standard ballast profile which has been adopted for main lines in NSW is a minimum of 250mm of ballast between the underside of the sleeper and the top of the formation. A minimum shoulder width of 400mm from the end of the sleepers and level with the top of the sleepers and the crib or bays between the rails must be filled level with the sleeper tops. This is known





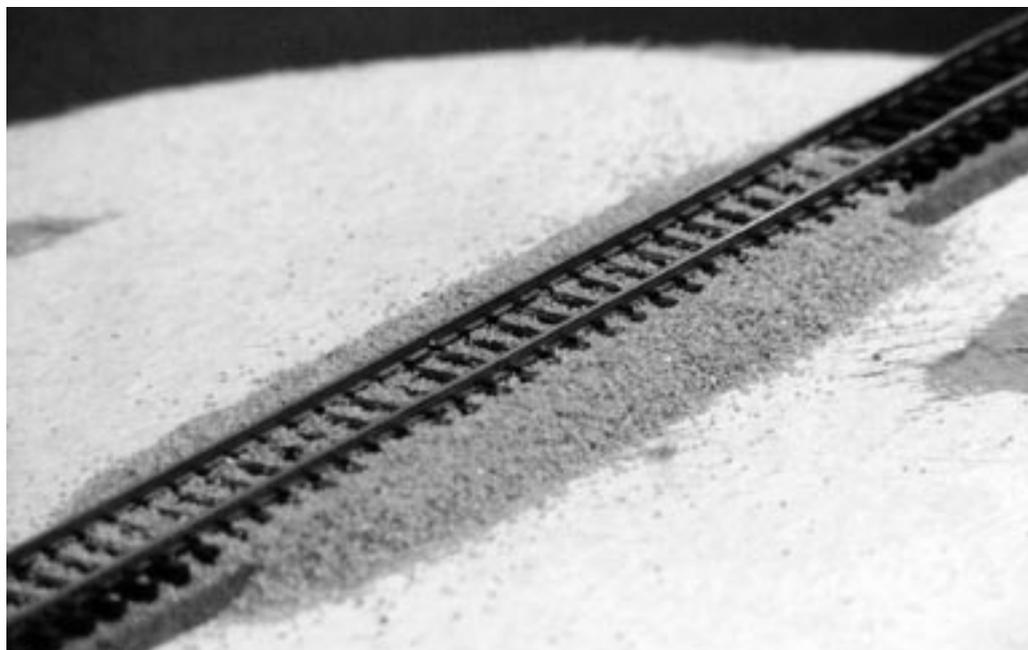
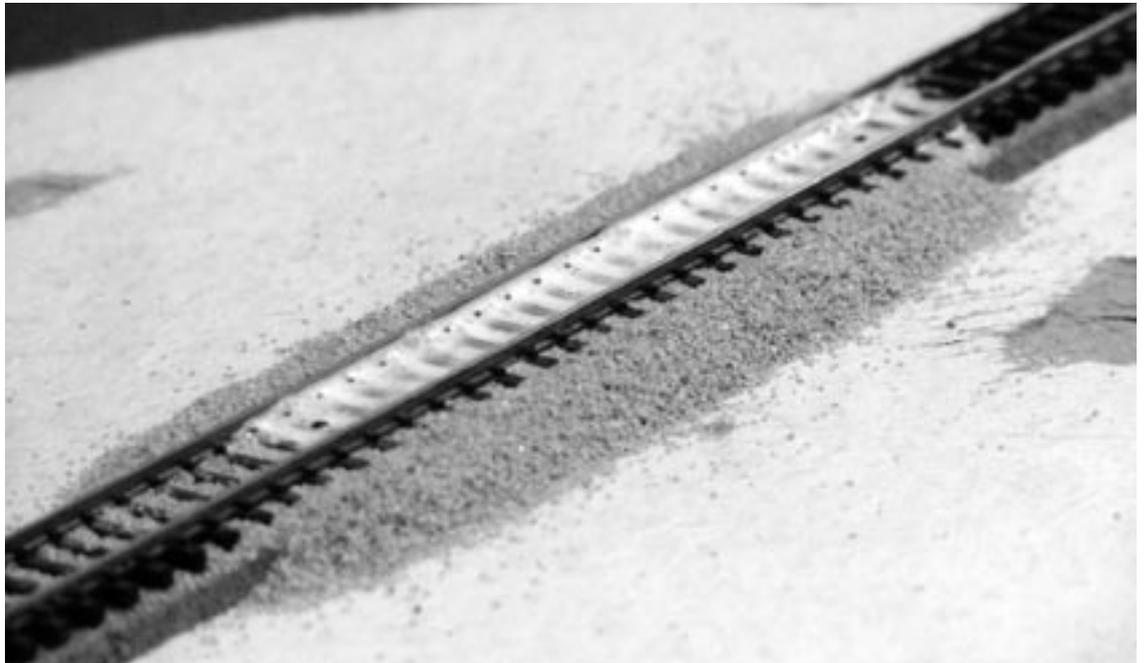
thick cork between the underside of the sleepers and the top of the caneite. The reasons I use the cork are to give a better ballast profile and also generally, mainlines tend to be higher than the sidings. Usually ballasting tracks is one of the last things to be done when scenicng a layout so with that in mind lets start ballasting.

Firstly, I use a teaspoon to heap the ballast between the rails until it starts to spill over the rails (photo 1) and usually work over short

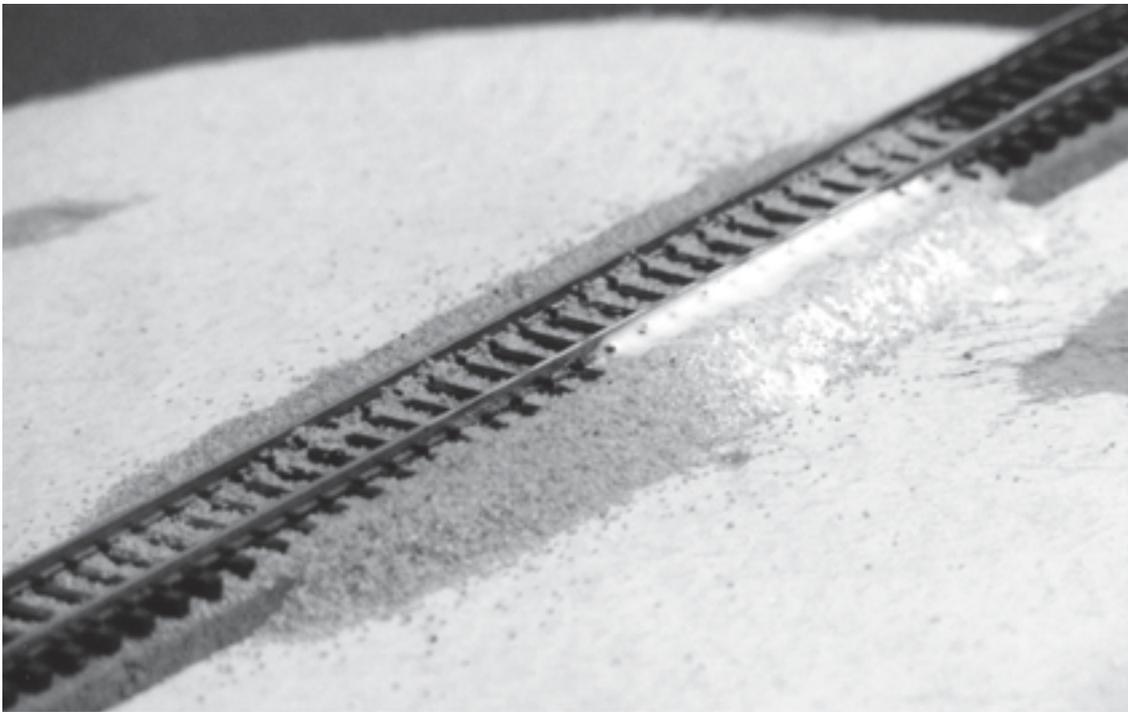
as the ballast profile.

Because I have attempted to model a class one main line track on my layout, I use the standards in the previous paragraph as a guide for my modelling.

Now on with the modelling. On my layout I use 12mm plywood capped with 12mm caneite (fibreboard) for the baseboard and on the mainline sections of track I use 3mm



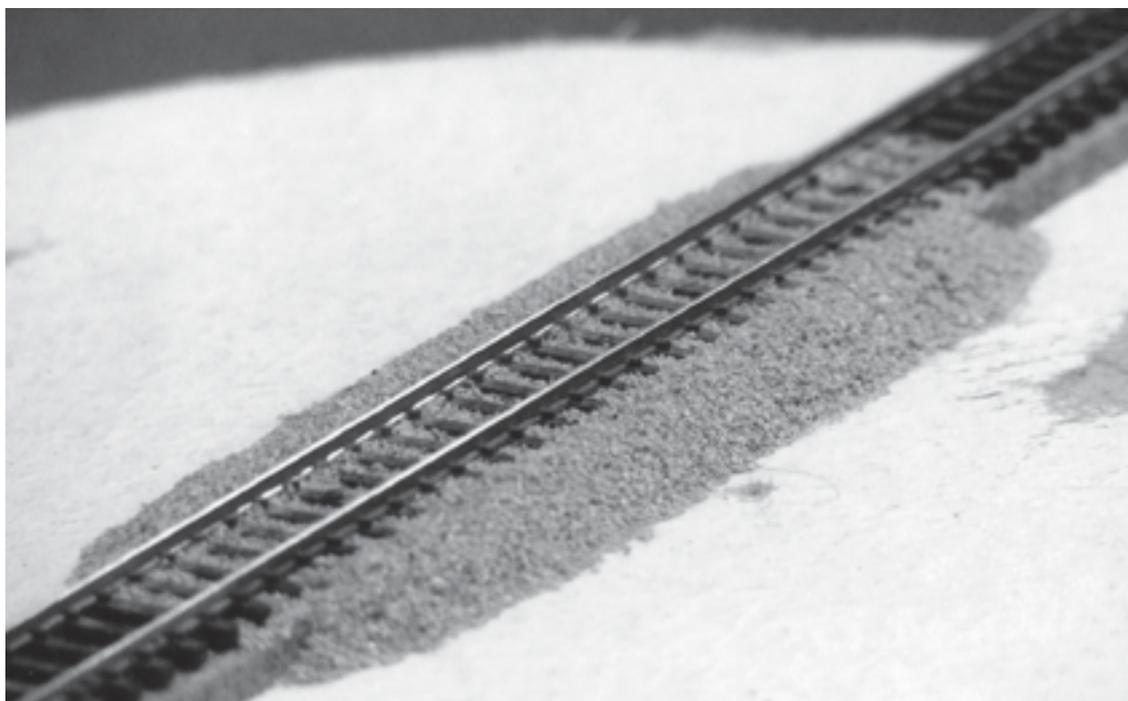
distances at a time of about 30cm to 40cm. Next I take a 10mm flat paint brush (HO modellers may require a wider brush) and brush the ballast until it is level with the tops of the sleepers allowing excess ballast over both of the rails (photo 2 ). Next brush along the outside of the rails again to get the ballast level with the tops of the sleepers (photo 3). Then I go back to check what I have just done and I usually will find some small areas on the outside of the rails and shoulders where there are some shortages of ballast. I fix these areas by applying small amounts of ballast carefully



with my trusty teaspoon. With the ballast in place and meeting with my approval (photo 4) I go along and tap the top of the rail with the back of the spoon and this vibration compacts the ballast.

The next step is to glue it all in place and to do this I use a mixture of 50 / 50 PVA white glue and water with a few drops of washing up detergent added to the mix (this detergent reduces the surface tension created when added to the ballast otherwise it can float on top of the glue mix).

I next go along with the glue mix and flood the area between the two rails (photo5) and keep applying the glue mix between the rails until I can see the glue seeping out and down through the shoulder ballast. Do not apply glue to the shoulder ballast while it is still dry because it tends to run down the shoulder and to scour out the ballast. When I can see that the glue mix has seeped out and down through the shoulder ballast, I then apply small amounts of glue



along the outside foot of the rails (photo 6) and I keep doing this until the glue has seeped down through all of the shoulder ballast and all of the ballast is damp. If any of the areas get disturbed while applying the glue, don't attempt to fix it while it is still wet, wait until it is all dry and then go back and do the touch-ups.

When all of the ballasting is finished and glued, I give it a day or so for the glue to dry properly and then I go over the freshly ballasted track with a track rubber

and give the rails a good clean. I also use a small screw driver (photo 7) to remove pieces of ballast that may have become stuck to the foot of the rails. When I ballast the track in my yards or sidings I am not as particular with the ballast profile as I am with the main-lines, because in the real world these tracks are not maintained to the same standards.

In summary I have found that if one wants to model the track of a well maintained and ballasted class one main-line it can be achieved but it takes a fair amount of time, care and patience to do so. One other thing about ballasting your track is to not to be afraid to have different sections of track ballasted with different colours of ballast.

Take a look at track in the real world where freshly ballasted track is always a different colour to the track that was ballasted at an earlier time. This is because ballast

becomes dirty over time (oil, grease, brake dust, sand from locomotives, road grime, dust from wagons loads to name a few sources), ballast from different quarries can also be different colours and the ballast material used for sidings can be as simple as cinders, local gravel or plain dirt.

***That's all folks, so happy ballasting.***

# Australasian Divisional Reports

## Division 1 Queensland

With the sudden passing of our Superintendent Glenn Stevens the membership felt that the division could run until the end of this year with Glenn's intentions and planning as a mark of respect.

The division will be voting for a new superintendent shortly and hopefully some other members to assist in helping our division to function.

Glenn is sadly missed however the spirit in which he wanted the Queensland division to operate and move forward will continue the ways in which he so successfully had things working so well.

Other news is the AP awards to Ian Venables receiving Volunteer and Martyn Jenkins for Electrical. Congratulations to both members and special thanks to Ian who does our newsletter so well.

Meetings were held as per the schedule and we thank those who provided the venues for our monthly meetings. We need to get plaques for those members for these meetings and we are also appreciative to the wives for their contributions for the BBQ days.

As members of the Queensland NMRA Division it is our intention to remember Glenn Stevens in some way formally and a special award has been mentioned. The spirit in which he encouraged members and other fellow model railroaders will never be forgotten and in the New Year we hope to do something to honour his contributions.

The last few meetings were well attended and we have updated our communications list with members updating their contact details. We have also worked out a monthly meeting schedule for 2012 and this will be available via our newsletter from Ian Venables.

Our Christmas Party will be held at Beerwah Hotel.

This is a brief report of activities in the absence of the usual report from our Superintendent. We wish to thank those who have helped keep things rolling along here.

*Laurie McLean MMR*

### *Lynn Zelmer - Flying the Flag at the Archer Park Rail Museum October*

My NMRA badged brake van was on the small On30 diorama and scratchbuilt several merit award models were on display... plus the NMRA logo on the wall behind. While it provided exposure for modelling as a rail heritage activity, the day is really oriented towards the kids and I didn't have a single modeller, novice or experienced, that I could talk to about the benefits of membership. However I hopefully sparked some modelling interest in a couple of teens and they may be suitable targets for membership sometime in the future.



## Division 2 ACT

At the end of July, we had our second meeting of the month, this time at Ken Macleay's. Ken showed us a few of his railway movies of the '60s, taken with his trusty Bolex 16mm, very good they were too. Then we had a look at Ken's O scale switching layout and the new signaling he has installed. I had the privilege

of handing out more AP awards, to Stephe Jitts, for Model Railroad Engineer, Civil and Despatcher and to Wal Pywell for Model Railroad Engineer, Electrical.

Our August meeting was at Rob Anderson's home, where we were treated to a discourse on the Louisville

& Nashville Railroad, Rob's US railroad love. Once again, I had the privilege to award Ross Balderson with his AP award as a Model Railroad Author.

In September, we visited John Gillies and listened to a fine presentation on "Online Information as an Aid to Modelling and Operations". John talked about the online resources available and linked them all through his own research into Sand Point, Idaho, which is where his layout is based. Sadly, we said goodbye at the meeting to David Bromage, who is moving to a

new job in Brisbane – we wish him all the best, and our loss is Division 1's gain.

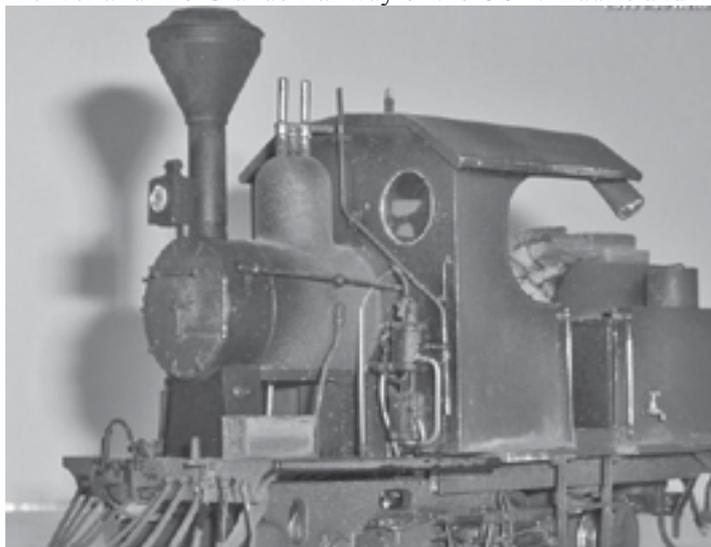
As always, for a much more complete version of our meetings, plus many more photos and other modeling tidbits, see our newsletter, "The Flimsy", that is available on the NMRA AR web site under 'Links'.

Viv Bryce

## Division 3 Victoria / Tasmania

### August 2011

Nineteen members and guests attended the meeting at the home of Laurie and Rosemary Green. Laurie's model room is a testament to his skill at diorama building over his many years in the hobby. Walking through the room you garner an idea of the prolific work that Laurie has contributed to the hobby and the things he enjoys the most; structure building, second only to his love of the Denver and Rio Grande Railway of the USA. Laurie and



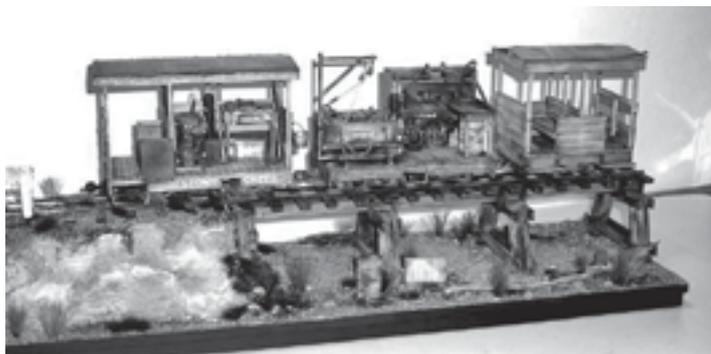
Rosemary's home has beautiful vistas across a broad valley providing a relaxing enPthings model railways.

Models on display

Peter MacDonald: On30 Coffee Pot Derivative **ABOVE**

Geoff Truman: RKIY container flats

Richard Grinyer: On30 Scratch built Rolling Stock **BELOW**



Robert Goslin: N scale Scratch built buildings

Paul Ritchie: S & On30 Rolling Stock and buildings

### September 2011

Seventeen members and guest arrived at the home of Moire and Bob Thornton. Bob is taking his hobby seriously with the purchase of small Taig lathe. Finally members have access to heavy duty equipment for producing turned metal parts. A beautiful day was enjoyed in the backyard under the shelter of suitable shades to keep the sun at bay.

As always reading material was in abundance and models for display included;

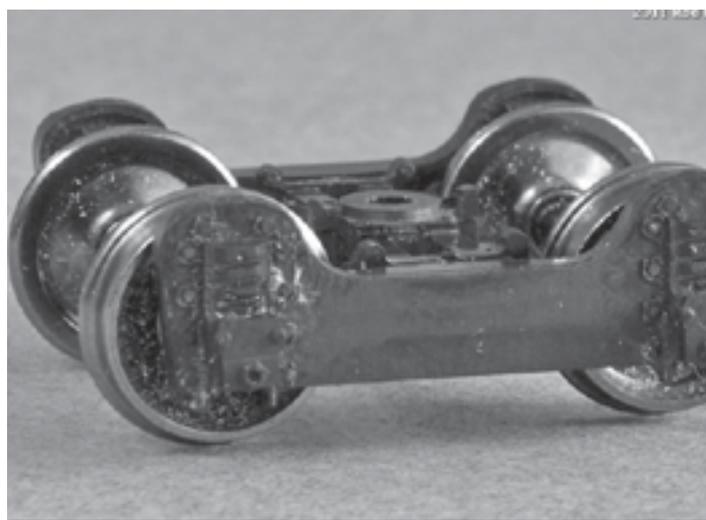
Grant McAdam: O scale Mercantile Building from Outback Models

John Cracknell: HO SAR Cclass 900 **BELOW**



Bob Thornton: Taig Lathe

Peter Keddie: Milled ABS, O scale fox bogies and a church entrance





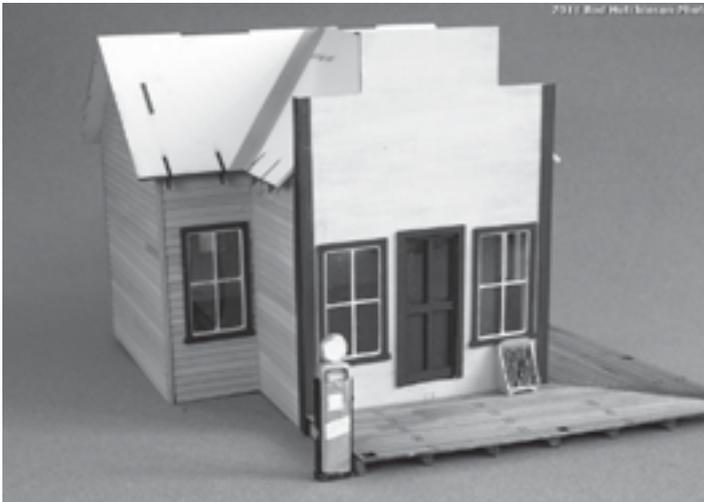
*Dan Pickard - Church*

Dan Pickard: Gum Trees for workshop display  
 Ian Johnson: On16.5 (7mm) SlimRails (Chivers) wagon,  
 van and flat car



*Ian Johnston Chivers Slimlines Box Wagon*

Rod Hutchinson: HO Banta Service Station, scratch built  
 repair yard and truck



*Grant McAdam O Carver Mercantile*

**General**

At both meetings the members of the 2011 NMRA Convention Committee held sub-meetings to discuss matters requiring some attention. The convention appears well on track with clinics and layouts organised and attendees signing up for a great weekend. Grant presented each of the hosts with an NMRA thank you plaque for opening up thosir homes and allowing members a venue to get together and enjoy the camaraderie that is model railways.

***Rod Hutchinson,***

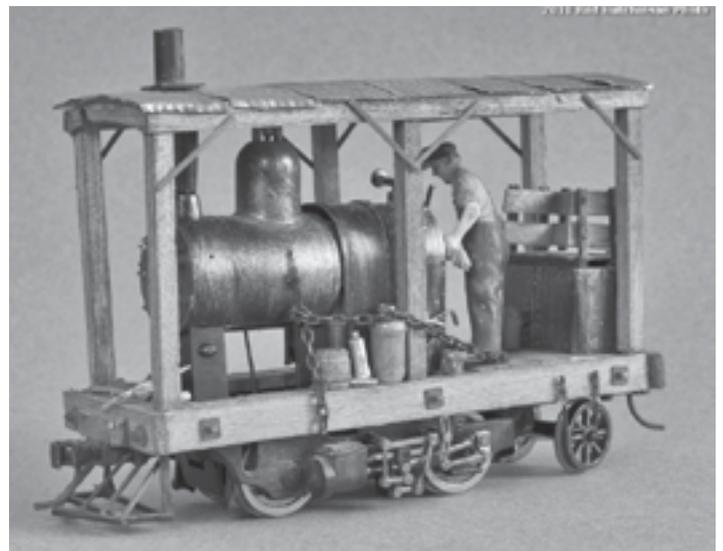
***Mooroolbark, Victoria.***



*Rod Hutchinson HO Banta Models Service Station*



*Robert Goslin N Scraathbuilt Buildings*



*Laurie Green On30 Coffee Pot Conversion*

# Division 4 Western Australia

## August 2011

Five members and one guest travelled to the far north for the August meeting at Rod Tonkin's. Our module specification was presented and discussed. Agreement was reached on a range of issues Inter module track power bus cables be connected using banana plugs. Universal DCC throttle sockets will be used to allow flexibility of DCC system. The minimum main line curve radius will be 900 millimetres.

Kathy Knife demonstrated embossing card with a roller embossing machine. The idea has possibilities for modelling a range of model building surfaces. Our visitor Ken showed us a professionally made video of the award winning

us plied with tea and coffee throughout the afternoon.

## September 2011

Six members and one visitor made their way to Bob Kollwyn's on the 25th.



"Sierra Pacific" layout. Rod showed us the section of



a curved module he has built. Rod's wife Pauline kept

local artist. We look forward to seeing the back scene at our December meeting.

Most of the formal discussion centred on our model guidelines. Basic agreement was reached on main line ballast colour and ground cover at module ends. Painting of rails was discussed but was yet not agreed on. Alan showed us some DCC throttle connection panels suitable for either Digitrax or NCE. We agreed modules would be fitted with this type of throttle connection panels. Our first module outing will be to take Rod's modules to AMRA WA's "Model Rail" open day in November this year.

Peter showed us photos of the now installed back scene he had painted by a

Alan has dismantled his HO scale layout in preparation for building his HOn3 layout.

Rod showed us his results to date of using a roller embossing machine (His wife's) to make paper and card roof, wall, flooring and paving materials using commercially available moulded plastic roof, wall, flooring and paving. His best results have been with dampened paper and card. Rod advised he will demonstrate the technique once he has gained more experience with the method.

After a splendid afternoon tea we were able to

explore Bob's extensive layout. While Bob is a model railway enthusiast, judging by the number of trucks on his layout he is also partial to road transport. He is currently rebuilding his DCC installation. Following the DCC system upgrade Bob intends to build a pair

honours with a 45 mm gauge one twentieth scale coach. Rod showed us the locomotive name plates and coach destination boards he has made using Excell and an ink jet printer.



of container ships for his container port.

### ***October 2011***

Nine members and two visitors attended the division meeting at Phil Knife's. The meeting discussed the emerging Division module standard and modular layout operations.

Frank showed us his photos of the Narrow Gauge Convention in the US. The modelling shown in the photos is superb. Show and tell developed into a contest as to who had acquired the largest model recently. Garth Cesar convincingly carried off the

Phil demonstrated his automated signalling system and his Infra Red cordless DCC system. We were able to closely examine the dual gauge layout Phil displayed at this year's June model railway exhibition. Phil's wife provided a greatly appreciated sumptuous afternoon tea.

### **Photo Captions**

Bob Kollwyn's double headed 38 Class on a passenger train

Division members admiring Bob Kollwyn's layout

Bob Kollwyn is not only a railway modeller.

One of Rod Tonkin's home built locomotive name plates

## **Division 5 New Zealand**

*I am sure that we all join in wishing Kel all the best and a fast recovery - Editor*

# Division 7 NSW

## August 2011 Meeting

Sixty nine Div 7 members attended the September meeting which was hosted by the Hills Model Railway Society at their club rooms at Baulkham Hills. A large number of club members were also in attendance. The Hills Club has members interested in Australian, American, British, Japanese and European prototypes, covering HO, OO and N. The Club has two main layouts, a large HO layout, Springfield Junction, and a large N scale layout, the South Bend and Hilltop Railway. Both use NCE DCC systems and are also able to run DC.

On the day, the N scale layout was being exhibited at a local exhibition, so the main interest focussed on Springfield Junction.

At the meeting, a novel event was conducted, perhaps the first in Australia for the NMRA. Members would be familiar with Concours d'Elegance events held by car clubs such as the MG Car Club, the Morgan Car Club, vintage clubs and the like – where the best cars are paraded in their splendour.

At this meeting, a Concours d'Elegance was held for light engines – model locomotives brought along by members to compete for a range of show classifications. A set of rules had been previously published by the Div 7 Super and at 3pm, the event was conducted according to the rules. A large number of locomotives were entered and paraded and members vied for the best positions around the layout to view the entries. A panel of judges judged the event and at the conclusion of proceedings, awards were presented by the Div 7 Super to the following members:

Best Steam Sound NSW 3229	Sam Wyatt
Best Diesel Sound 4494/4998	Marcus Garbutt NSW
Best Steam Running NSW 5915	Gerry Hopkins
Best Diesel Running NSW 4494/4998	Marcus Garbutt
Steam Prototype Likeness 0-4-0 Porter #8	John Montgomery
Diesel Prototype Likeness Burlington E7 9929	Grant Harris
Best in Show Burlington E7 9929	Grant Harris

After the event, afternoon tea was served, including sandwiches prepared by Natalie Oliver and goodies by Fran Bouchier and her helpers. The Div 7 Super thanked Hills Club president Doug Bouchier and his members for their hospitality, and presented an NMRA meeting plate to the Club.

## November 2011 Meeting

The November meeting was held at the mountain home of Bob and Carol Best. 72 members and wives attended and Bob and Carol organized perfect weather for the day.

The meeting marked the last showing of Bob's N scale layout. In fact it had been decommissioned the day before and looked a bit forlorn – devoid of many of its structures and other items. The layout had been a popular show-piece, best known for its great structures and long trains.

Bob has started on his new HO layout and showed us his first module, the track bed for which is complete. He is using the spline technique, using 6mm MDF cut in strips of 20mm width. To form curved track bed, strips are glued together, vertically, to the shape of curve required. The number of strips glued together determines the width of the track bed. Bob ensures a good base for the track by covering the spline top with strips of the foam underlay material used for artificial wood flooring.

John Montgomery, Paul Marrant and Gary Norwood showed us their Show & Tell items. John had a number of items but the most interesting for me was a On30 tender which looked like a weathered brass tender but which he had made from a piece of dressed pine, with detail parts



added, then painted and weathered.

Paul showed us the HO old farmhouse which he had scratch-built and entered in the structure competition at the recent Melbourne convention. It had won second prize and deservedly so.

Gary Norwood showed us his HOn3 tanker which had won Best in Show at the first NMRA convention (in 1986). He told us that he had been encouraged to enter it by some of the expert modellers of the day and was motivated by its



### ***Division 7 Hopkins/Bone Award 2011***

The Division 7 Hopkins Bone award was presented to Rowan Mangion at the final AR Committee meeting of the year on 28th November 2011 by the Division 7 Super, Erik Bennett. It was appropriate to present the award at the ARC meeting because as well

as being the final meeting for the year, Rowan's involvement in the ARC is one of the contributing factors to his award.

Erik praised Rowan for his contribution to the hobby and the NMRA and cited the following factors

Rowan had displayed youthful enthusiasm

- For the hobby
- In his research of prototype
- In offering advice and guidance to other modellers
- In participating in conventions, layout meetings and other NMRA functions.

Rowan is constructing an innovative and challenging layout which has already established itself as a yardstick in layout construction.

Rowan contributes to the NMRA as an active member of AR Committee. His volunteer activities in other community-oriented activities were also noted.

## **Div 8 Nth Rivers**

I have been landed with the publicity role for the Coffs Harbour Model Railway Club's Exhibition layout, and my first task is to publicise the forthcoming showing of the layout at Coffs Harbour Showground in January. Would you please include some writings about this in the forthcoming Mainline Journal.

The club's layout is an multi award winning layout covering the best of New South Wales, American and British operation delivered to the public in separate two hour sessions, and will be on display at Coffs Harbour Showground on the 7th and 8th of January 2012. All are welcome and admission is by gold coin donation.

Many thanks      David L Smith

# Taiwan Sub District

The most activities of NMRA TSD in the second half of the year are static discussions. At the mean time, there are several DCC seminars. The topic will be aimed to the current DCC decoder market. So, each member will understand the specificity of DCC and the features of each brand of DCC decoder.

Furthermore, the website of NMRA TSD will be revised at the end of the year. The dedicated internal discussion area will be adjusted. Not only the introduction for general people, but rebuild the forum for member's internal

discussion. It will be easier to search the past reorganised information.

We hope this revised project can be completed before the end of the year.

*Div Super Ivan Yih*



**From left to right Desmend Pong, Andy Chen, The Factory Guide, Ivan Yih and Railstar Chang**

Four of the Members of the Taiwan Sub Division on a day outing to a factory specialising in the lost wax moulding techniques.

The members are most enthusiastic in building models of railway equipment and rail lines that are due for closure and are spreading the word all over Taiwan about the NMRA.

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**Melbourne 2011  
NMRA Convention**

*top: Kawarren - Dan Pickard    bottom: Card Model - Lynn Zelmer*