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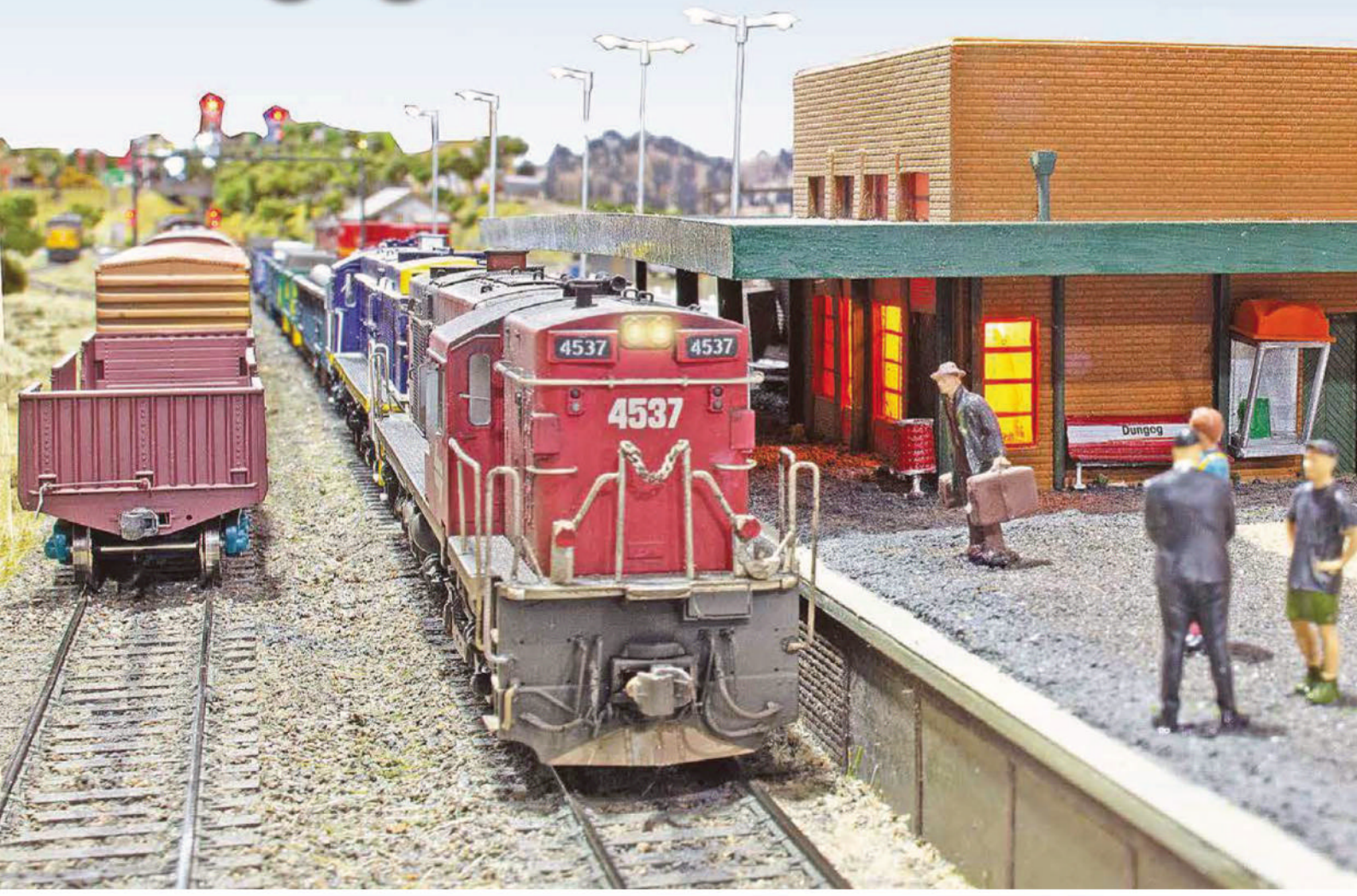
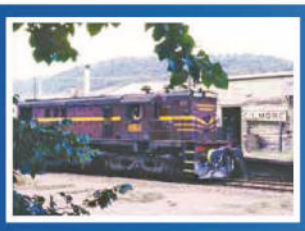
MODEL RAILWAY
MAGAZINE

Brett Watson's Dungog





Casterton Part Fifteen
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Wagon profile: SAR SGMX
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Issue 376 Vol. 32 No.7
ISSN 0045-009X

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AT ISSN 0045-009X

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October 2026	6.8.26	17.9.26
December 2026	8.10.26	19.11.26
February 2027	10. 12. 26	14. 1. 27

What's in a name – brand identity for young modellers

Even without us knowing it, brand recognition plays a key role in life and the way we model. There is a lot to be said for the concept of, seeing it in real life, being able to buy a model of what we just saw. In a subconscious way models help recreate memories.

I can share an interesting example of brand recognition, which occurred when Murray River Bridge attended an exhibition in Sydney.

A young lad appeared looking into the fiddle yard and was very excited to see that we had a long and fully weathered SCT train. He continued to ask questions and explain that we (his Dad and himself) have an SCT train. Every time that we operated the SCT train over the bridge there he was, eyes peeled absorbing everything. After a long period of time, his mother arrived to take him away.

Less than 30 minutes or so later, sure enough he was back at the layout, waiting patiently for the SCT train to appear.

At that point I had to ask, "does your mother know you are here?" He replied, "yeah, mum knows where I am". A little while later, his mother arrives at the layout (holding a shopping bag full of new SCT wagons) and states "That's where you are, come on, we need to go". His mother then looks at me, looks at the SCT train going over the bridge, now realising why her son scurried away back to this layout. She then gave me a look that pretty much said this was all my fault. She grabs her son's hand, looks me right in the eye and states "You know he is not going to sleep tonight!", she huffs and they both walk off.

Had SCT branded rolling stock not been available r-t-r this entire scenario might not have occurred.

As a brand SCT is not shy, everything they operate is painted white with big red SCT lettering applied. It is designed to stand out, and some would say that is the point.

All of this encourages young modellers to get involved. However, is there a gap in the market? Not every parent can afford or even need a highly detail r-t-r model, is there a model that can be a stepping stone, that is cheaper, more robust, more suitable to a younger modeller?

Young modellers, recognise what they see in real-life and love seeing it at an exhibition. For example, V/Line's current PT4 (gem) purple livery is very recognisable.

Recently, one of the AMRM team found a battery operated look alike V/locity in V/Line's PT4 livery at a sub $100 price tag.

Could such a model, bridge the gap between starting in modelling and later as they gain more interest graduate into detailed r-t-r?

Sure, there is the possibility that this type of product might take sales from r-t-r in the short term, however is there a possibility that offering such a model side by side, might lead to more model sales?

It is not the first time we have seen a parent being coerced into buying a more detailed model by their child.

The key part of this is the recognisable branding, maybe a Queensland Rail tilt train, or Transport NSW Explorer version of this type of model could help encourage young modellers living in other states.

A near enough V/Locity train set by Belta Brands.

Give us feedback at: amrmeditor@outlook.com

SOUTHERN CROSS MODEL RAILWAY ASSOCIATION

The Annual Membership Fee for SCMRA is $66.00 from March to February, which includes the membership data pack. Applications must be received by the first of the odd month to meet our mailing list deadlines. For applications received between the 2nd September and the 2nd January the Half Annual Fee is $33.00 (does not include October issue of AMRM). All fees are GST Inclusive.
Membership entitles you to participate in the activities of the Association, to receive AMRM and our regular newsletter *Booster*. Standards, Recommended Practices and Information Sheets covering model railway practice are included in the joining kit together with a vinyl ring binder and are also issued at regular intervals.
For further details write to the Secretary or contact the divisional representative.
Meetings are usually organised on the second Saturday of each month in New South Wales. For further details and location please contact the divisional representative.
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FEATURES

Issue 376 Vol.32 No.7

OTHER FEATURES

REGULARS

ON THE COVER

Locomotives No. 4537 and 4531 coast through the platform road on Brett Watson's Dungog. Photo by Scott Fitzgerald.

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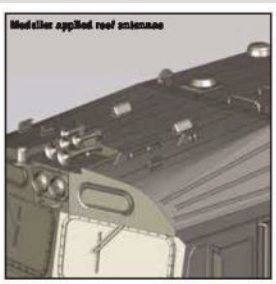

SRA - Candy

81-1 8126 SRA - Candy
81-2 8149 SRA - Candy
81-3 8157 SRA - Candy
81-4 8174 SRA - Candy

SRA - Bicentennial

81-5 8120 SRA - Bicentennial
81-6 8172 SRA - Bicentennial

Freight Rail - Stealth

81-7 8167 Freight Rail - Stealth
81-8 8175 Freight Rail - Stealth

Freight Rail

81-9 8128 Freight Rail
81-10 8153 Freight Rail

FreightCorp

81-11 8141 FreightCorp
81-12 8160 FreightCorp

National Rail

81-13 8112 National Rail
81-14 8118 National Rail

Pacific National - Intermodal

81-15 8115 Pacific National - Intermodal

Pacific National - Rural & Bulk

with Blue Cab Roof

81-16 8161 Pacific National - Rural & Bulk
81-17 8170 Pacific National - Rural & Bulk
81-18 8182 Pacific National - Rural & Bulk

Pacific National - Rural & Bulk

with Yellow Cab Roof

81-19 8130 Pacific National - Rural & Bulk
81-20 8134 Pacific National - Rural & Bulk
81-21 8156 Pacific National - Rural & Bulk

Pacific National - Rural & Bulk

with Stars

81-22 8110 Pacific National - Rural & Bulk with Stars
81-23 8137 Pacific National - Rural & Bulk with Stars

Pacific National - Rural & Bulk

'R U OK'

81-24 8148 Pacific National - Rural & Bulk 'R U OK'

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TT Class - Pacific National

GT46-28 TT105 Pacific National - Blue/Yellow
GT46-29 TT117 Pacific National - Blue/Yellow

TT Class - Pacific National

GT46-30 TT128 Pacific National - Blue/Yellow
GT46-31 TT132 Pacific National - Blue/Yellow

LDP Class - QR National

GT46-32 LDP004 QR National - Yellow/Black/Maroon
GT46-33 LDP009 QR National - Yellow/Black/Maroon

GWA Class - Genesee & Wyoming Australia

GT46-34 GWA002 Genesee & Wyoming Australia 'Richard H. Allen' - Orange/Black
GT46-35 GWA007 Genesee & Wyoming Australia - Orange/Black

GWA Class - One Rail

GT46-36 GWA003 One Rail - Orange/Black
GT46-37 GWA004 One Rail - Orange/Black

SCT Class - SCT

GT46-38 SCT003 SCT - Red/White/Black
GT46-39 SCT006 SCT - Red/White/Black
GT46-40 SCT008 SCT - Red/White/Black
GT46-41 SCT013 SCT - Red/White/Black

LDP Class - Progress Rail

GT46-42 LDP005 - Progress Rail - Yellow/Grey/White/Black

LDP Class - Pacific National

GT46-43 LDP008 Pacific National - White/Yellow/Black

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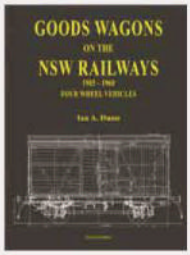

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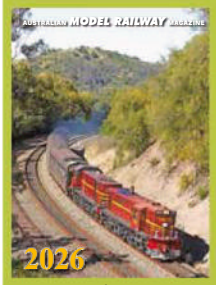

The diesel cover features 4833/4918 with AK car track inspection train. Other photos include Genesee and Wyoming Darwin to Adelaide freight service; VR B73/T407 at Broadford; NSW 4015 on a coal and grain train at Thornton; Hamersley Iron 4038 and 2004 Alco at Wombat Junction; QR 1600 class between Linville and Moore; BHP 54 within the confines of BHP Newcastle steelworks, Mayfield; CR crimson and silver GM13 and GM24 near Caltowie, east of Peterborough; TGR 2110/2112/2111 cross South Esk River, east of Longford between Launceston and Deloraine; VR Walker's railcar RM28 at Healsville; NSW 4841 leads short goods between Michelago and Royalla on the Cooma line; VR T class locomotives T389/T386/T335 approaching Tallarook; Pacific National 8250/8212/8167/8243/8222 approaches Omega, north of Geringong with a grain train.

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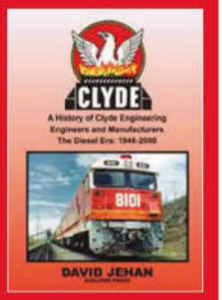
TRADE ENQUIRIES WELCOME

The steam cover features NSW Standard Goods 5439 departs Wyong with No.269 pick-up goods. Other photos include: VR J556 with No.25 approaches Wail with Melbourne to Dimboola passenger service; NSW 5132+5914 approaches Marulan between Moss Vale and Goulburn; QR BB18¼ 1016 heads to Mayne with No.35 goods; NSW 3820+6023 with No.631 goods at Fassifern, Newcastle; SAR No291 Peterborough to Port Pirie goods with Garratt 400; VR VR J523/N462 No.38 goods from Maryborough to Ballarat; NSW 3531 with No.25x passenger from Narara' north of Gosford; TGR at Launceston prior to departing for Deloraine for Railton cement train duties; NSW 3008T hauls No.24 mixed crosses the Belubula River, from Eugowra; QR C17 917 crosses the Bremer River with 'workers' train from Ipswich station; NSW 3315 departs Armidale with No.13 Glen Innes Mail; WAGR W903 at Donnybrook with No.346 goods.

Clyde – The Diesel Era
1948-2000
David Jehan



The Clyde Engineering Company Limited was one of the iconic Australian engineering firms, whose history spanned just over a century. In this book, David Jehan covers the 52 years of manufacturing diesel and electric locomotives for Australian and overseas.
Clyde Engineering entered the diesel era with the 1948 signing of an agreement with the Electro-Motive Division of General Motors to be an associate builder and covers the period of establishing the diesel power locomotive into Australian and overseas countries. The agreement details are included. But during this period Clyde Engineering was more than a locomotive builder; the engineering activities were vast and the customers also came from outside Australia. The book concludes with the breakup of the company and on-sale to EDI.

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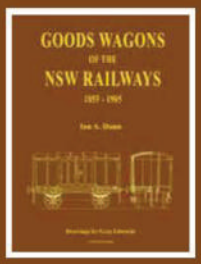

This 368 page volume charts the growth of the NSWGR's wagon fleet over its first half century, from just 52 wagons at its inception to over 11,000 assorted vehicles in 1905.
There is a chapter on each type of wagon or van, photographs of each, generally illustrating a number of variations, all illustrated with 85 superb HO scale drawings by master draughtsman Greg Edwards.
This book supplies most of the answers for those seeking to understand the development of the NSWGR and its goods wagon fleet in the 19th century.

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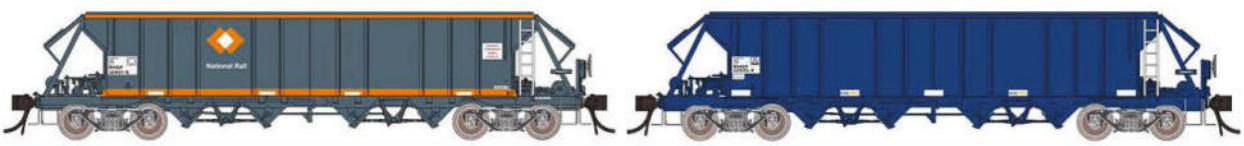

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Dungog NSW

Brett Watson describes his extensive rebuild of the layout Dungog situated on the North Coast line in New South Wales. Photos by Scott Fitzgerald.

Double Alco locomotives from the 80 and 442 class 8050 and 44203 enter Dungog loop on a heavy BHP steel train to cross an opposing southbound movement as failed 4475 looks on from the former locomotive depot.

Locomotives No. 4473 and 4531 work a down steel train through Dungog, crossing 8001 on an up goods. In what's left of the locomotive depot is stabled 4455, 4528, 4465 and 4537.

Origins

The Dungog exhibition layout was built by the North Shore Modellers Association in the 1990s, and depicts Dungog, and Martins Creek station and ballast sidings. Modeller's license was liberally used to incorporate the two stations into the 8.4 metres by 3.4 metres footprint.

Initially built for direct current (DC) running, over time it was equipped to run both DC and digital command control (DCC), and was modelled in the era of the 1940s to the early to mid 1970s. The layout was offered up for sale in 2022, and I managed to be the successful applicant. North Shore President Gary Stocks was a wealth of knowledge and guidance during and after the layout's procurement.

New ownership

In May 2022, I took possession of the layout at the Rosehill racecourse following Epping Model Railway Club's Great Train Show. Michael Holian and I travelled from Melbourne to Sydney and the North Shore Modellers had the opportunity to give the layout a sendoff with the club exhibiting the layout one last time. The layout was then packed up and transported to its new home in Melbourne, and the opportunity was taken to set up the layout in its new environment.

The layout was tired and needed a caring hand or two. Over the course of the next seven to eight months a plan was devised to rejuvenate the layout including:

- Installing modern electronics
- Stripping the scenery bare and adding hardshell scenery to hold the polystyrene in place for another 20 to 30 years

While all this was in progress, life and other events took priority, and the layout had to wait for the extensive refurbishment I had planned.

Planning

In late October of 2023 while chatting with a friend of mine, Brett Greenland, I stated that I wanted to take Dungog back to Rosehill Exhibition in May of 2024, but I thought that time had gotten away from me. During this discussion, he was made aware of the DCC Concepts componentry I had purchased to bring the layout into the true DCC age. It was during this discussion that I expressed my desire to have CTC (Centralised Traffic Control) installed on the layout with the relevant signals, which were made by Auscision Models some years ago. It was then agreed that we would devote the next six months to the refurbishment of the layout, dedicating time after work and on the weekends. The task was more than we bargained for, but well worth it. The target was now set, and we applied to exhibit at the Great Train Show 2024.

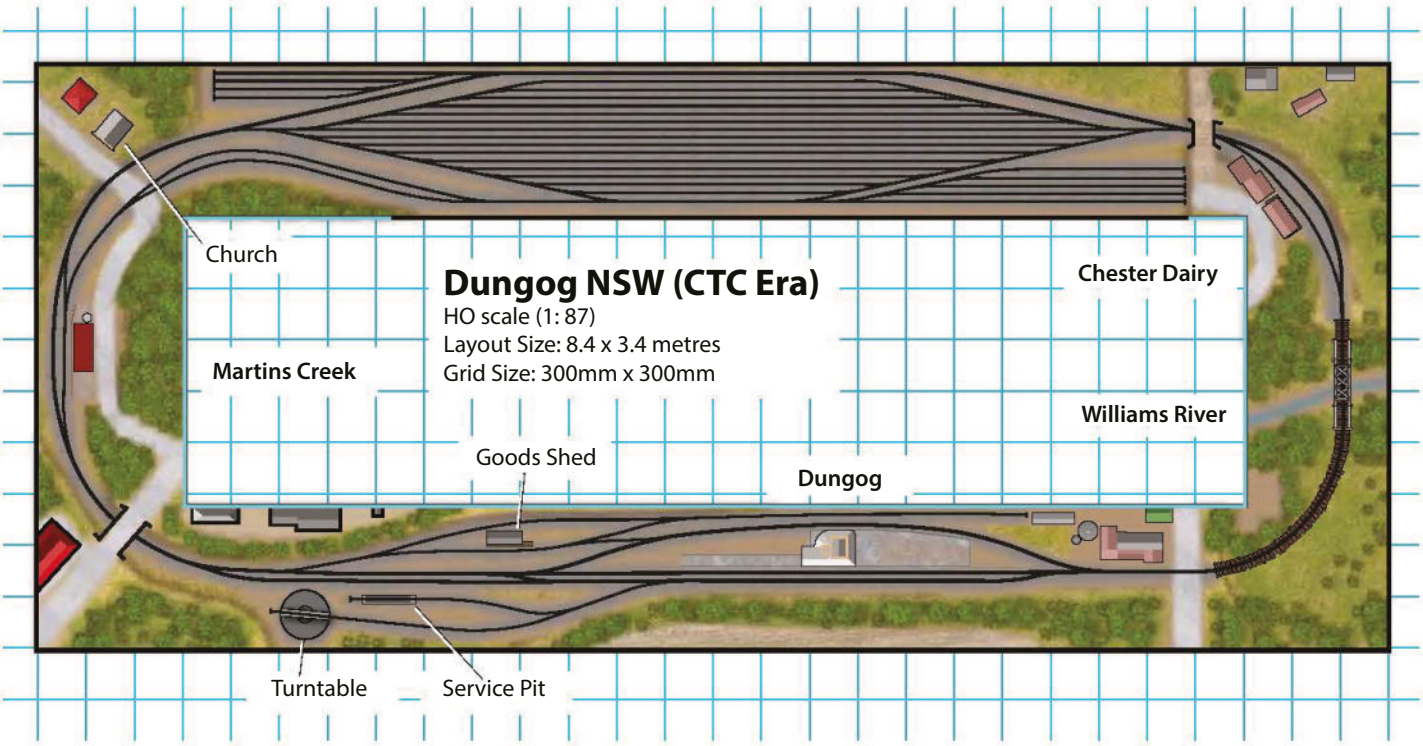
CTC

Along with the need to run CTC, Brett Greenland was introduced to a chap from England (Ian) who is a Signaller first class in the United Kingdom. He reached out to Brett when he posted a question on a signalling group on social media about CTC panels. Over the next three months Ian showed Brett how to write a program that we could run from either a raspberry pi (a small, single-board computer) or a standard computer interface. The end result was a fully interlocked signal system that operators must adhere to, just as per the prototype line on the North Coast of NSW. This makes operation an art form and when done correctly keeps people watching! Dungog is a busy place with it being the terminus for railmotor services from Newcastle, along with the parade of interstate traffic, both freight and long distance passenger services. The signal panel always creates its own interest apart from the layout itself.

Refurbishment

Mid-November 2023 the layout was pulled down into its eight sections and the mammoth task of stripping out the old wiring began. We soon had a couple

The impressive control system that is the backbone of the CTC version of Dungog.



of wheelie bins full of old well used wiring. Thankfully Brett Greenland is a very capable wiring guru. It was decided to make all the PECO code 75 points DCC-friendly and we would have to do this with the points still in place on the layout. This was not an easy task but one that we found was doable by digging out ballast etc, then installing fuse wire to make the points truly DCC friendly. This laborious task was completed by me, and involved working late into the night and early mornings in the race up to Rosehill Exhibition. Or so I thought, until Brett Greenland had told Yarra Valley Model Railway club that Dungog would like to attend their Easter 2024 exhibition. This meant that I had less time than originally planned. Mid-March would now be the target to shake down any gremlins that may present themselves. Signalling was an unforeseen issue, as we found out the signals were only designed to run on DC and without the signalling being able to operate as we would like, it will just be yet another roundy-roundy layout. Thankfully, a call and a visit to Eugene Azzopardi soon had the issue sorted and he kindly made the hardware to enable the signals to work as we wanted. We added these into the wiring (three units all up), along with 30 NCE BD20 units for block detection and we had the signals working properly. I also managed to get Dale Richards in Canberra to make the centre piece signal bridge for the crossing loop, mainline and back platform road. A trip was made to Albury in January 2024 to meet Dale and take possession of the completed signal bridge. However, upon returning home we had major issues with the signal bridge; my partner Elina drove the bridge back to Dale and drove home, and a week later she returned to pick up said signal bridge. Dungog was truly becoming a family affair. By this stage the track work across the display modules was complete, and the 17-road fiddle yard was completed by late January. Brett Greenwood installed lighting in all the buildings, including my own personal favourite 'Pizza Hut', again modeller's license being utilised here. A huge thank you to my friend Ian Wilson who realigned the curve at the butter factory end and ironed out a huge hump that was the source of many derailments leading into the fiddle yard. It helps to have a track ganger on hand.

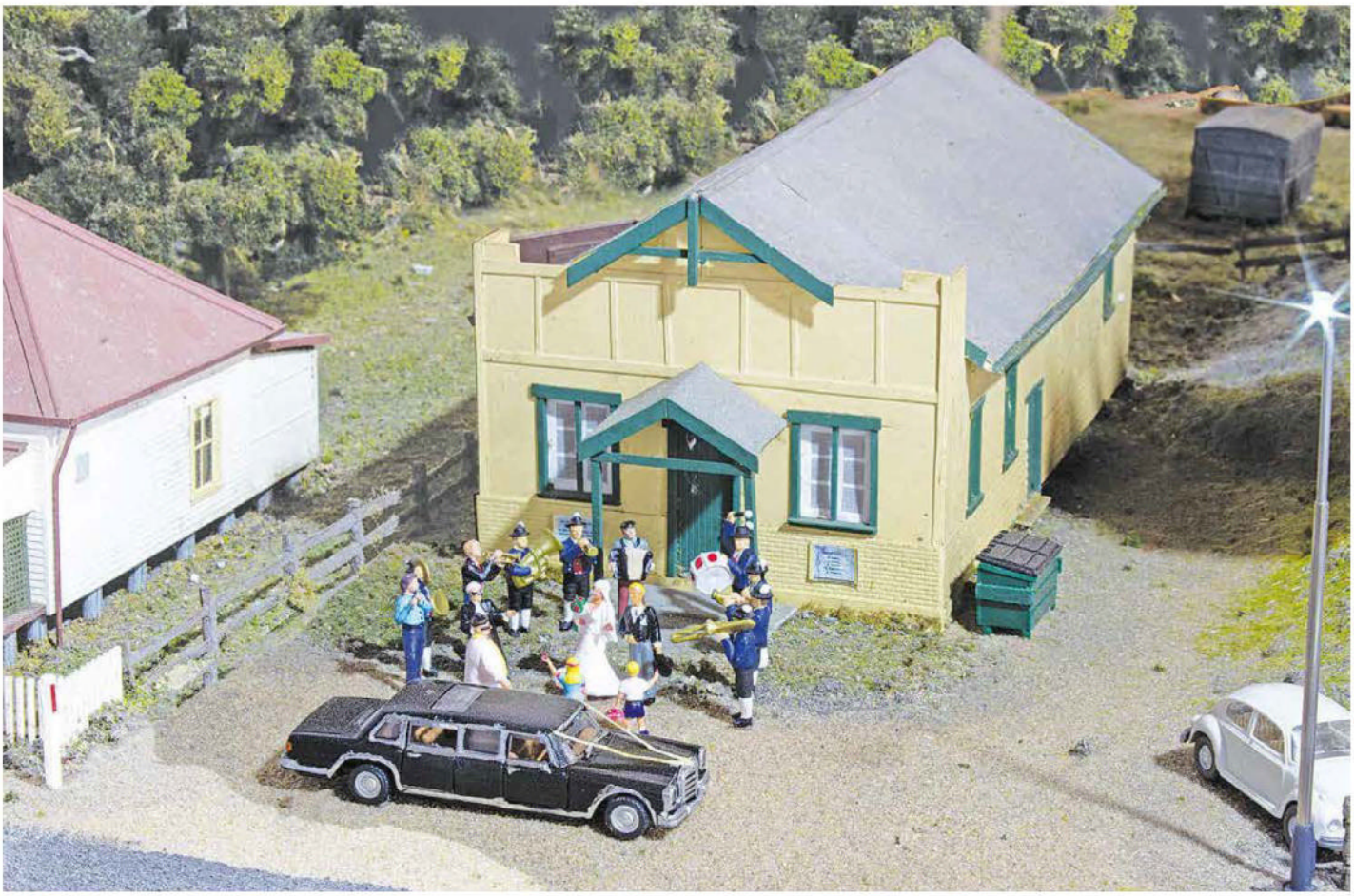
Scenic refurbishment

Michael Holian had done a great job mixing No More Gaps and grey-coloured tile grout into a rock-hard surface. The backscene had faded very badly over the years and as such needed to be replaced with a one-piece vinyl print being over six meters long.

Mary De La Lande from Brunel Hobbies was our saviour, and the new backscene made all the difference. Amy Greenland, Brett's wife, applied this to the back boards and gave the facia a new black paint job. From there the layout was

The old timber bridge north of Dungog station begins to groan with the weight of locomotives 8050 and 44203 and the heavy steel train on the drawbar, as it was on North Coast trains in the mid 1980s.

Disgraced Alco World Series locomotive No. 4475 sits in what's left of Dungog's former locomotive depot after it suffered ground relays during the evening before.



Martins Creek hall plays host to a wedding party and band sending the happy couple off towards their limousine ride.

Locomotives No. 48107 and 4502 round Wilson curve and past the former Dungog, now Chester milk siding and factory as they head south towards the river crossing at the Williams River and into Dungog crossing loop.

◀ *Locomotive No. 4537 and 4528 trundle through Dungog while No. 48107 positions a flat wagon next to the goods shed.*

▼ *The sound of cows and a tractor fills the air as a farmer goes about his business, but these gentle sounds will soon be disrupted by yet another Alco locomotive combo on the busy main north line next to the farm.*

attacked with static grass that I mixed from various shades of greens, browns, fawns etc. in order to get that summer look. I was pleased with the result. Amy Greenland also performed the resin pour for the Williams River, and the fencing around the layout. The trees were all original to the layout with new foliage applied, and my partner Elina Bosis did most of this with some assistance from Amy. The original one-road engine shed and crew barracks were removed from the layout and sold. The sawmill at the Taree end of Dungog platform was removed and replaced with some buildings from the Walthers Cornerstone© range, mixed and matched with a scratch-built loading area to make a representation of the buildings that exist in this area. The scene was completed with trackside models, appropriately named Watto's Pub that my kids put together for me.

During the build some other friends of Dungog, Brian and Craig Chester, attended a working bee day and helped weather the Dairy and Williams River bridge. Unfortunately, we lost Craig in June 2024 and the Dairy will always be known as Chester Dairy for this reason. The curve in front of the dairy is now known as Wilson curve after Ian Wilson's work there.

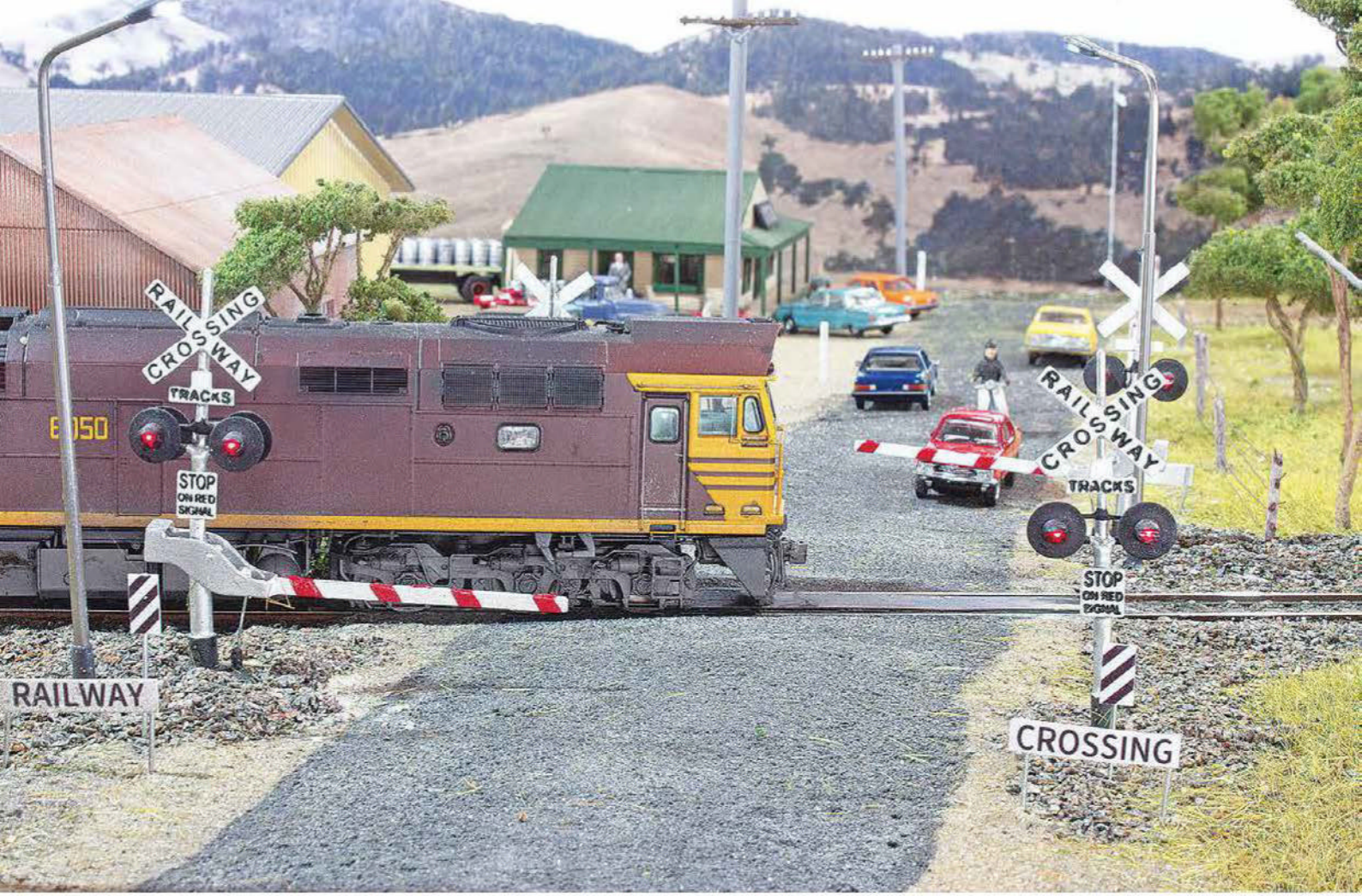
Dungog operating period

Having spent a lot of time on the NSW north coast, the Dungog area was one that, without realising it, was calling me. I watched trains from Newcastle up to Taree in the 80s as a teenager, so it goes without saying that is my preferred operating period; that and the early 90s up until the demise of the ALCO power that ruled the North Coast line during these times. I do run more modern trains at times but when exhibiting it will be the time of the ALCOs.

Dungog is operated outside the confines of the layout for practical reasons and signal viewing requirements. The operational crew consists of three main-line operators, a CTC signal control operator and an operator inside the layout to shunt the Dungog yard and Martins Creek ballast sidings.

Rolling stock

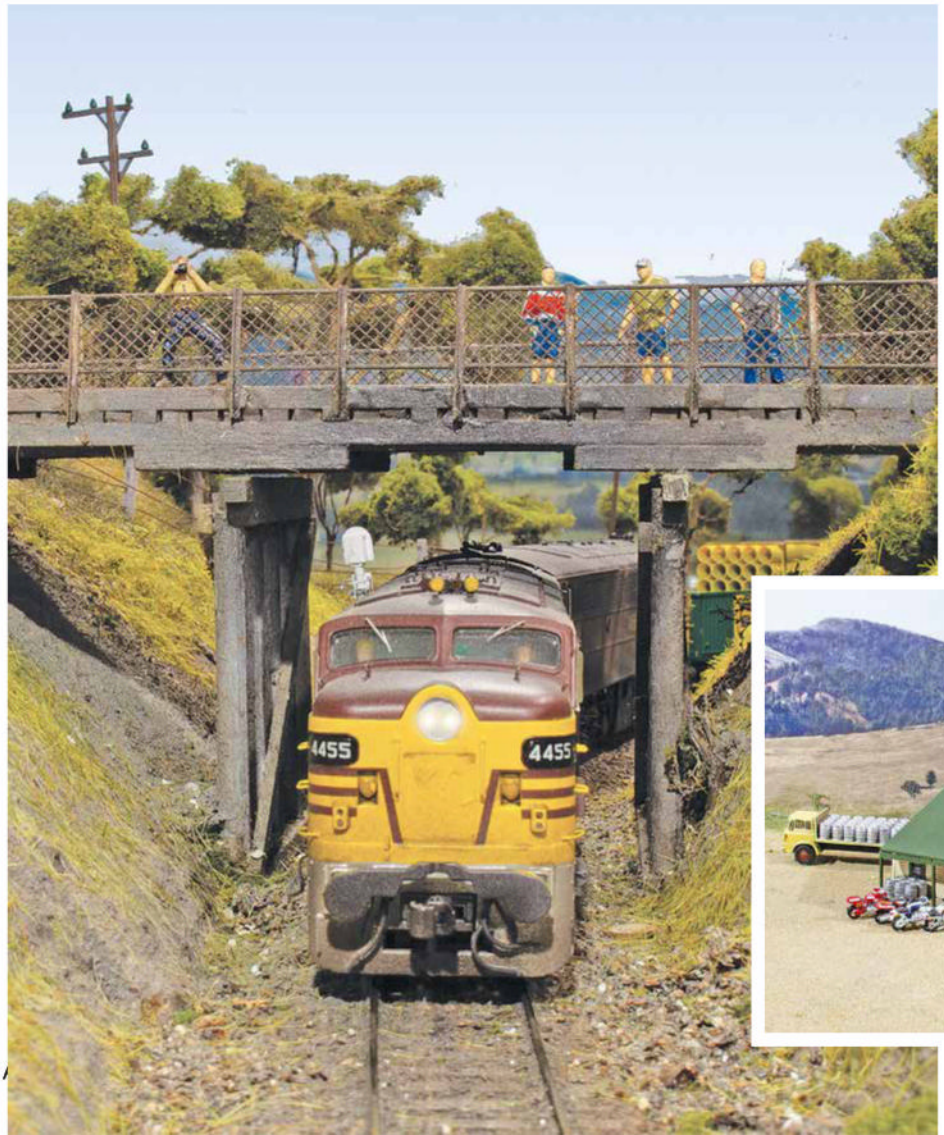
Thanks to the plethora of r-t-r models available in my era, I have been able to operate the layout with 44, 45, 48, 442, 80 class locomotives and others. Along with XPTs, the layout has something for just about everyone. A huge thanks must go to manufacturers like Austrains, Auscision Models, Powerline Models, SDS Models, Trainorama, etc. for the models we have at our disposal.



Locomotives No. 8050 and 44203 power up crossing the level crossing at Dungog North with a heavy down steel train.

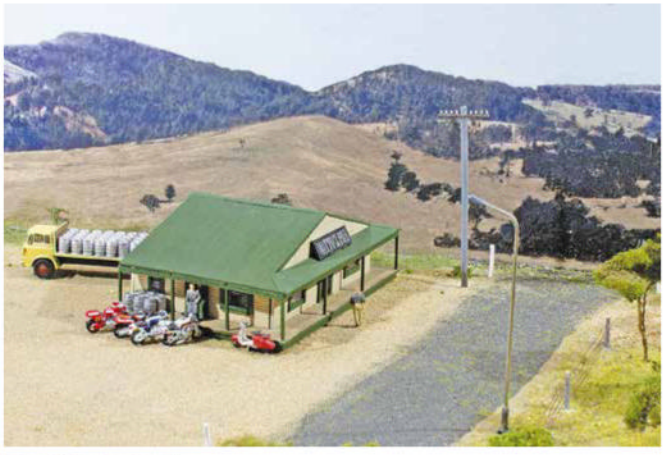
The down XPT service makes a stop at Dungog, while locomotives No. 44220 and 44223 use the back platform road.

▲ *Locomotives No. 44220 and 44223 creep around the back platform road.*



◀ *Locomotives No. 4455 and 4465 rattle the timbers of the overpass, keeping what looks like a gaggle of infamous railfans on their toes.*

▼ *The Watto Pub, looks like a popular establishment, given the quantity of deliveries.*



Dungog's Future

Dungog, under my ownership, and with thanks to my family and many friends, has been exhibited at Diamond Creek (Easter 2024), Rosehill 2024, AMRA Victoria 2024 and Kyneton 2025. At this stage the layout and the crew who run it are having a break before any decisions are made about any further exhibition attendance, but keep an eye out, Dungog could show up again.

In closing, this has been a fantastic opportunity to rebuild a great layout and give it further life. I recommend anyone wanting to take an old life-expired layout and refurbish it, to do so. It's a very rewarding thing to make something old, new again.

▶ *The down XPT passenger service, gingerly crosses the Williams River Bridge.*

▼ *The up XPT passenger service, startles a small mob of kangaroos while crossing the Williams River Bridge.*

Locomotive No. 4473 passes No. 48107 working Dungog yard.

A two-car diesel railmotor set makes a stop at Martins Creek station.

Putting the O into Casterton Part Fifteen: Bridges

Scott Whitaker describes his epic layout build. Photos by the author.

At around 8am on Saturday 20th of September 2025, class leading locomotive No. B60 crosses the first of two bridges that span the internal aisles that form the 'back of house' section of the layout. The locomotive then proceeded around the entire loop, which takes about seven minutes at prototypical line speed. This day was the culmination of five years' work.

The circle is complete

It was a rather emotional start to the 20th of September 2025, as I drove a train around the complete loop of the layout for the first time. Following it around as it traversed all that hand-laid track, over all those spikes, and around five years of toil, but mostly enjoyment, I was well and truly rewarded. The rest of the day was supposed to be dedicated to wiring up a new section of track, but no, the bug had bitten, and I just played trains all day. Such is the joys of model railways.

Building the aisle bridges

As construction of the layout continues, I need to be able to bring in large items through the aisles, such as panelling for the backdrops. Some of these items can be a bit unwieldy, so after pondering all sorts of lifting mechanisms, I settled on a simple lift-out bridge, which could be stowed up high, and away from any chance of damage. As the bridges span around 850mm, they had to be strong enough to not sag. They were built on a base of 19mm marine ply and then topped with my usual roadbed of 30mm thick foam, clad with a 6mm layer of cork. And to ensure perfect alignment, DCC Concepts baseboard alignment dowels were used.

https://www.dccconcepts.com/product-category/track-and-track-making-parts/baseboard-alignment-dowels/

The dowels come in two versions; one to simply align the baseboards, and the other both aligns and conducts track power. They are very finely machined and highly recommended. (See AMRM issue No. 359 April 2023 for a review on DCC Concepts dowels)

Installation is easy, but one must bore perfectly vertical or horizontal holes (depending upon the application) for the system to work flawlessly. My first attempt was a bit of a disaster, probably because of misguided confidence in my ability to hold a power drill exactly vertical. One of those 'mistakes are lessons' type of things, I guess. So, it was off to the drill press for a second, and much more successful attempt. The top and bottom mating plates consist of two lengths of 19 x 42mm pine, about 100mm longer than the width of the bridge to protrude about 50mm either side. These are then clamped together, the location of the dowels marked, and a pilot hole is drilled through both pieces, which serves as a

guide for the next steps in the process. The pieces are then separated, and a 19mm spade bit is inserted into the pilot hole and used to form a shallow depression on the inside of each plate, that fits the flange on the alignment dowel. A 13mm spade bit is then used to drill a hole through both pieces from the other side, again using the pilot hole as a guide. The dowels are then installed and secured with a smear of Polyvinyl Acetate (PVA) and left to cure.

After taking careful measurements, the bottom plate is secured to the benchwork in the required position. In my application, I mounted the male portion of the dowels facing up, so that the bridge section, that has the female portions, would not be damaged when the bridge was stowed. If using the dowels horizontally, some form of clamp, or a bolt with a wingnut, is needed to lock the baseboard modules together. However, I found that when used in the vertical format, the weight of the bridge is enough to secure the dowels and overcome the spring that must be compressed to conduct track power.

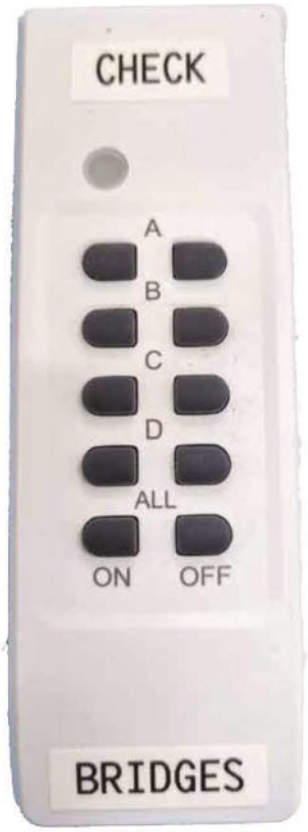
Once I was happy with the alignment, I laid the track right across the bridge, securing it with caulk to the roadbed. Once everything was dry, a rotary tool was used to cut through the rails to make the bridge removable. To ensure that the track alignment was maintained, the rails were soldered to three printed circuit board sleepers either side of the gap.

Kerbs were then installed on the bridge to prevent any derailed vehicles from falling to the floor. As an additional safety feature, mainly for the benefit of pedestrians, 'tiger-stripe' warning tape was added. To store the bridge up out of the way, I constructed a simple slide-rail storage rack from several sections of 19 x 42mm pine that places the bottom of the bridge 1910mm above floor level. A simple stop block was added to each rail, to prevent the bridge from being pushed too far.

Once the layout is complete, I'll have a look at automating the bridge so that if the power is turned on, and the bridge is raised, a motor will automatically lower the bridge into position. In the meantime, I have added a simple sign 'Check Bridges' on my remote that turns on the layout power, coupled with an alarm system, will have to suffice.

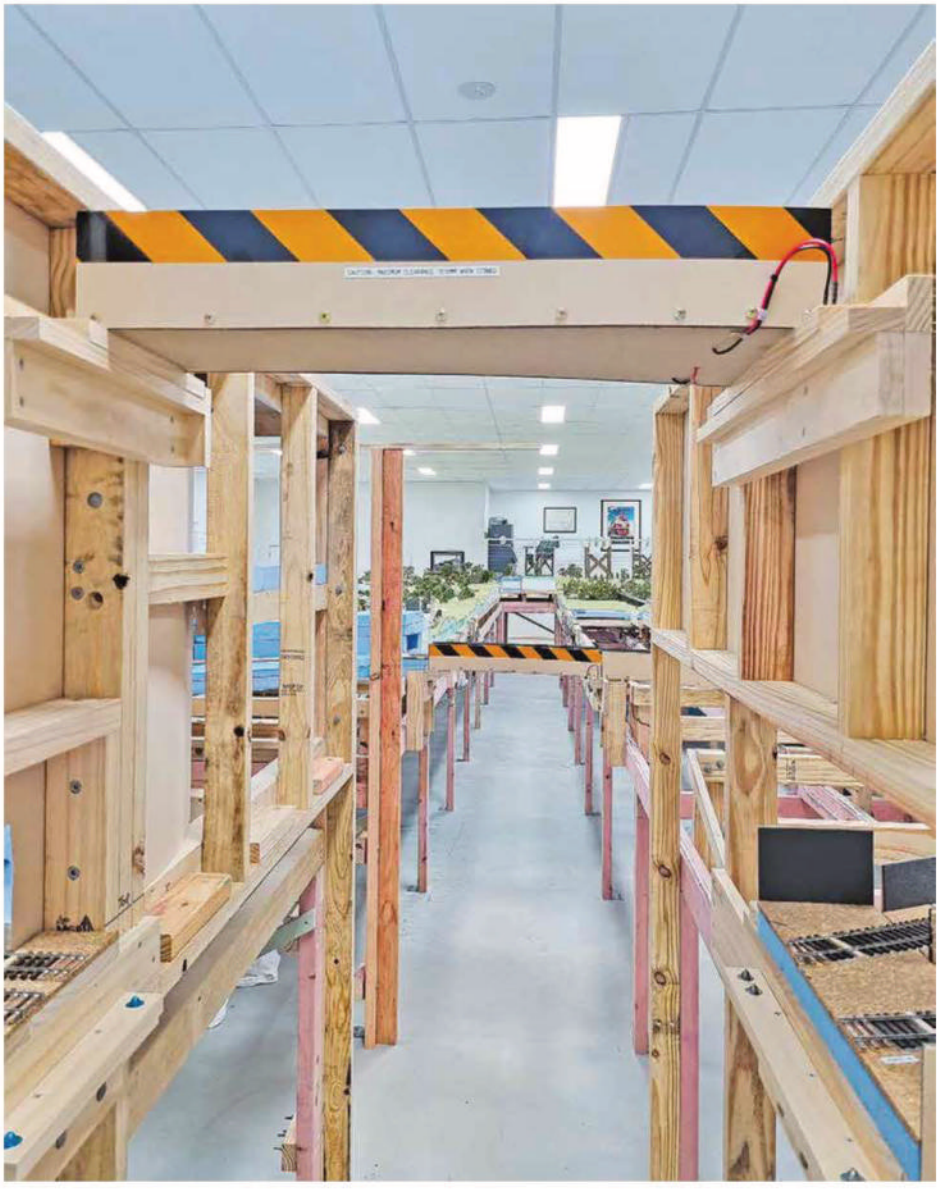
Onwards to staging

Once the bridges were finished, tracklaying of the hidden loop through to the staging yard could commence. This loop starts on the main line, just prior to the main aisle bridge where it forms the second of two tracks across that bridge. The line then loops around to cross the aisle for a second time and then passes under a section of scenery. From there the loop divides into two tracks to eventually enter the staging area or re-enter the visible section of the layout. A simple crossover midway enhances operational flexibility.



◀ *This handy little remote control turns on or off the ten 240V AC outlets that power the layout. I've added 'Check Bridges' so that, hopefully, before I turn the power on to the layout, a physical check to ensure the aisle bridges are in position is made.*

▼ *The lift-up two-track bridge in its stowed position. In this position the clearance is 1910mm. The male sections of the alignment dowels are visible bottom left (unpowered) and bottom right (powered). The second, single-track bridge is shown in the down position, midway along the aisle. The storage rack for the bridge was fabricated from 19 x 42mm pine. Two stops have been placed on the sliding rails to prevent the bridge from being pushed off the back of the rack.*



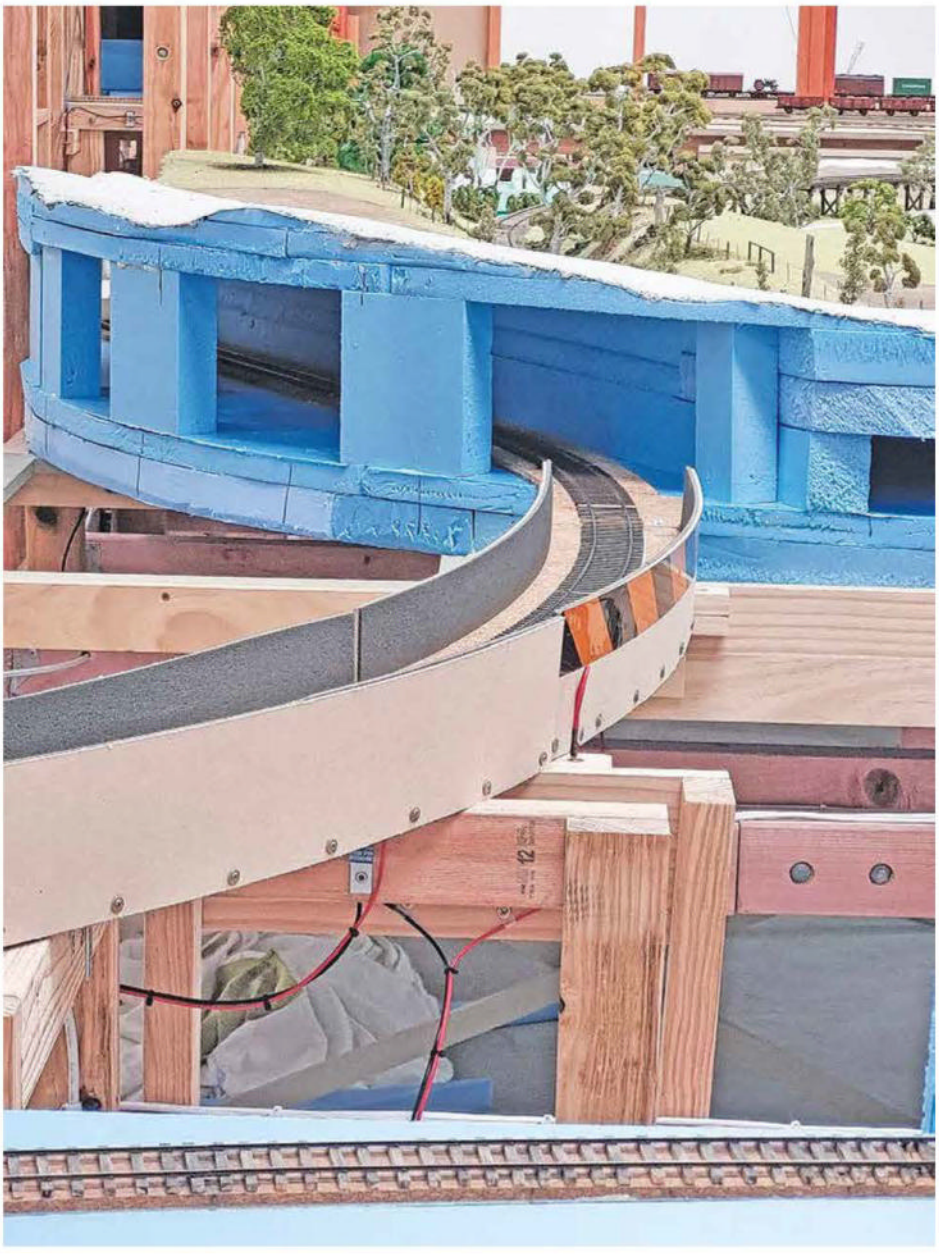
For a portion of the loop, the tracks are laid on a shelf attached to the backdrop walls that line the aisle. Eventually, a ceiling will be provided to enclose the aisle and ensure that the 'back of house' action remains hidden from public view.

To pass under the scenery, the track was laid first and the scenery built up around it. I considered various options, but after a bit of experimentation, I settled on a technique that formed a tunnel by using foam sheets lengthwise, rather than stacking horizontally. This effectively formed a tunnel, with easy access to the track when the need arises. Once the scenery is done, the curved backdrop will be installed in such a way that the access to the track is preserved.

The tracklaying of the entire staging loop will take some time as there is a significant amount of 'infill' scenery required before the track can be laid. In other areas of the layout, structural elements, such as those that support the backdrops, will also have to be installed. However, I have commissioned several isolated sections that will eventually be joined to form the staging loop. As with many other projects, my laser level has been invaluable in setting up the correct levels. It is probably one of the handiest tools I have purchased.

At the time of writing, the layout is around 50% complete, and with a bit of luck, it will be nearly finished within the next two to three years. I say nearly, as I think there will always be something to add to the layout as the years roll by. The doors to the layout are always open, so if any reader would like to visit whilst travelling through North Queensland, you can contact me via the office of Australian Model Railway Magazine. Until then, enjoy the ride.

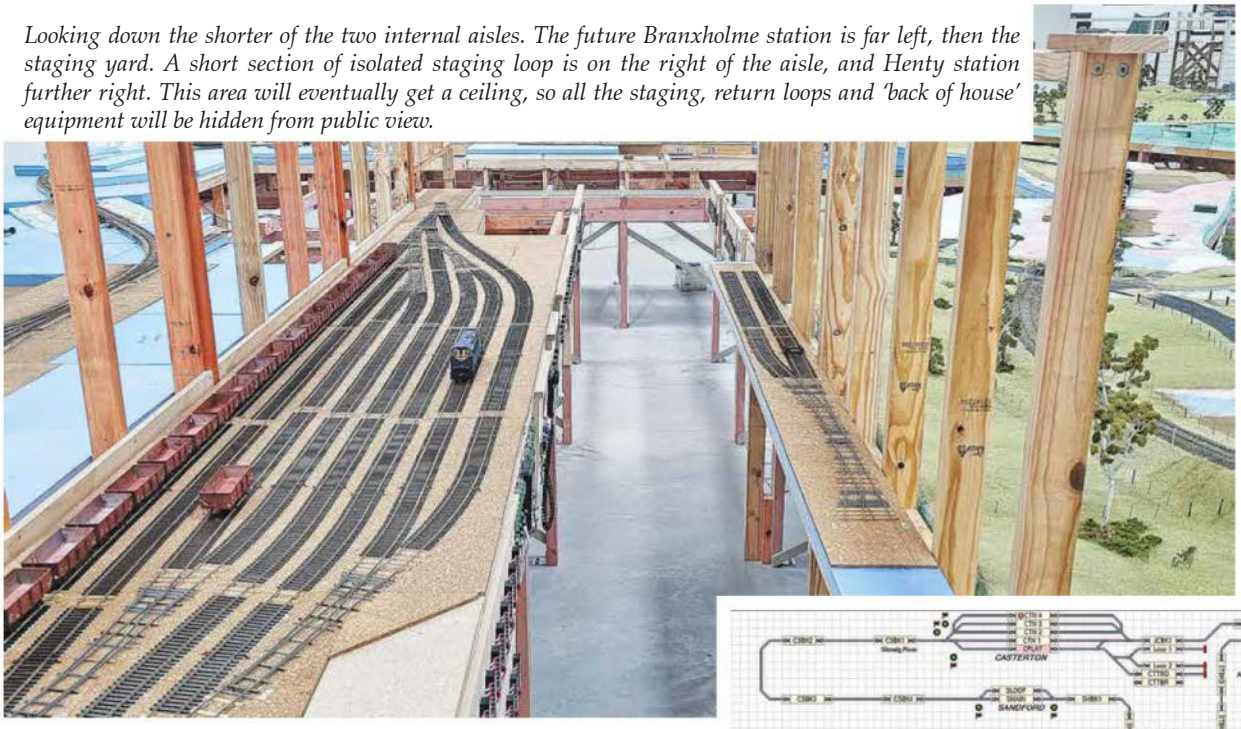
A close-up view of the join between the edge of the bridge (right) and the rest of the layout. The rails are soldered to three printed circuit board sleepers each side of the gap, which have been shimmed with strip wood to match the Micro-engineering code 100 flexible track either side. The shims are glued to the bottom of the circuit board sleepers with Pliobond (a contact adhesive), and to the cork roadbed with PVA. Once everything is secured, the gap in the rails is cut with a rotary tool. *Pliobond, a product manufactured in USA, can be difficult to source from Australian retailers, I get my supply from Fast Tracks in Canada.*

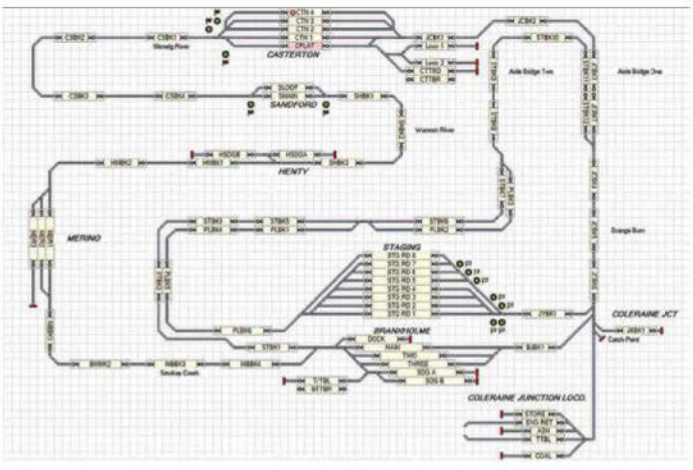


▶ *This photo shows the single-track return loop crossing the aisle for the second time before entering a 'tunnel' underneath the scenery. By using foam on its long edge rather than stacking on its short edge, a strong foundation for the scenery above is provided. The tunnel has been designed oversize to allow for easy access for such tasks as track cleaning. The radius of the curves here is 1600mm, whilst on the visible section of the main line, the radius varies between 2100 and 2300mm. The curved backdrop that encloses this scene will be clad with 3mm-thick medium density fibreboard (MDF). The kerbs on the bridge (also 3mm-thick MDF), and at any location that rolling stock may fall to the floor, has been lined with 2mm-thick EVA (Ethylene-Vinyl Acetate) foam. The foam is simply cut to size and glued to the insides of the kerb with quick-setting PVA. If something derails, the foam will protect the paintwork, especially the models made up from etched-brass kits.*

After proceeding through the tunnel underneath the scenery, the tracks emerge along the edges of the aisles. Locomotive B60 was named after a Victorian Railways Commissioner, Harold Winthrop Clapp, later Sir Harold. The model is a Precision Scale Models product that was produced around 20 years ago, and it still performs beautifully. The protective kerbs will be added when the track is in regular use. I like to use 'Harry' to test each section of new track prior to commissioning.

Looking down the shorter of the two internal aisles. The future Branxholme station is far left, then the staging yard. A short section of isolated staging loop is on the right of the aisle, and Henty station further right. This area will eventually get a ceiling, so all the staging, return loops and 'back of house' equipment will be hidden from public view.





▶ *A schematic of the layout, known as a switchboard, has been loaded into the TrainController software. Although this is still a work in progress, I have finally settled upon the track plan. I have still much to learn about this software, and, no doubt, the switchboard will develop with added functionality as I learn. The yellow rectangles depict each block, which allows the computer to keep track of and control the trains. The salmon-coloured rectangle near Casterton indicates that the block is occupied. The small green dots change to red to show that a turnout is occupied. The three turntables located at Casterton, Branxholme and Coleraine Junction are yet to appear on the switchboard. The B class locomotive in the previous photograph is located within block 'STBK7', and the bogie is at 'PLBK3'.*

A LOCATION TO MODEL

Gilmore, New South Wales

Les Fordham presents Gilmore, a New South Wales country branch-line junction on the Tumut line.

Locomotive No. 1957 with a Baldwin bogie tender on a typical up goods train of four-wheel wagons, on the 'mainline' at Gilmore. Photo by Train Hobby Publications.

There are very few lines that have as much prototype information readily available as the line from Cootamundra to Gilmore, Tumut and Batlow. It is well documented in text and photographs in Eveleigh Press publications, Byways of Steam volume 33 and the book, Tender into Tank. The Train Hobby Publications book 'Country Branch Lines NSW, Gundagai, Tumut, Batlow' also features a good range of photographs of steam operation on both branch lines. Photographs from this book have been provided by Train Hobby Publications for this article.

Gilmore is a junction station on the Cootamundra to Tumut line, and hosted unique train operations which could provide a basis for a satisfying home layout. This article will describe the line and its operation.

The line from Cootamundra to Tumut was opened in 1904, with Gilmore 328 miles from Sydney and three miles from the terminus at Tumut. As the line reached about five miles from Gilmore, steep grades of up to 1 in 50 were encountered and continued until the line reached Gilmore.

The branch line to Batlow trailed off from the up end of Gilmore yard for the 13-mile branch line to Batlow and beyond to Kunama. The line to Batlow was renowned for its sharp curves and very steep grades and is the subject of an article in the December 2023 issue of Australian Railway History.

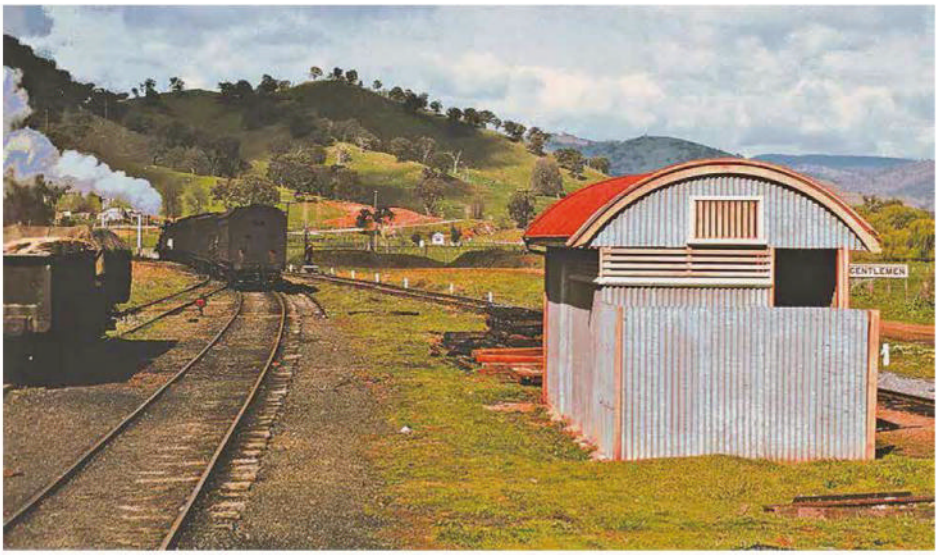
Safeworking on this line, from the 1960 Working Timetable Gilmore station was unattended, Tumut was manned Monday to Saturday, while Batlow was unattended. Staff and Ticket Working was in use Cootamundra to Tumut, but the Batlow And Kunama line was not authorised for Staff and Ticket working.

There was a telephone circuit from Cootamundra to Tumut with a phone at each station on the line. There was also a telephone circuit, Tumut to Kunama.

Gilmore station was unattended and protected in all directions by home signals operated from the 12-lever, lever frame. The frame was contained in a concrete 15" slab within a standard ground-level signal box adjacent to the station building. The station building is a wooden B2 design.

A 48 class locomotive descends the steep grade on the Batlow line. Photo by Neville Gee.

◀ *This image depicts the crossing of the three trains. On the left in the distance, the Batlow mixed is waiting past the Home signal for the two-car diesel railmotor set to leave Gilmore and commence its journey to Cootamundra. Note the white triangle on the rear of the train. On the right-hand track standing at the platform, locomotive No. 3055 is unloading passengers and parcels for Batlow, before continuing on to Tumut. Photo by Train Hobby Publications.*



◀ *Gilmore was regularly timetabled for the cross of the mixed train to Batlow, a passenger service to Tumut, and a passenger service to Cootamundra. The Batlow mixed is setting back into the platform to pick up any passengers and goods before it departs for Batlow. Photo by Train Hobby Publications.*

A layout design

A layout based on Gilmore in the 1960s would have a four-track staging yard to represent Tumut on the right-hand end and two staging yards on the left-hand end. A three-road staging yard would represent Batlow, while the second four-road staging yard would represent Cootamundra, with staging for a CPH railmotor or a 600 class two-car diesel railmotor set with three or four passenger coaches and goods stock to run the Tumut and Batlow goods trains.

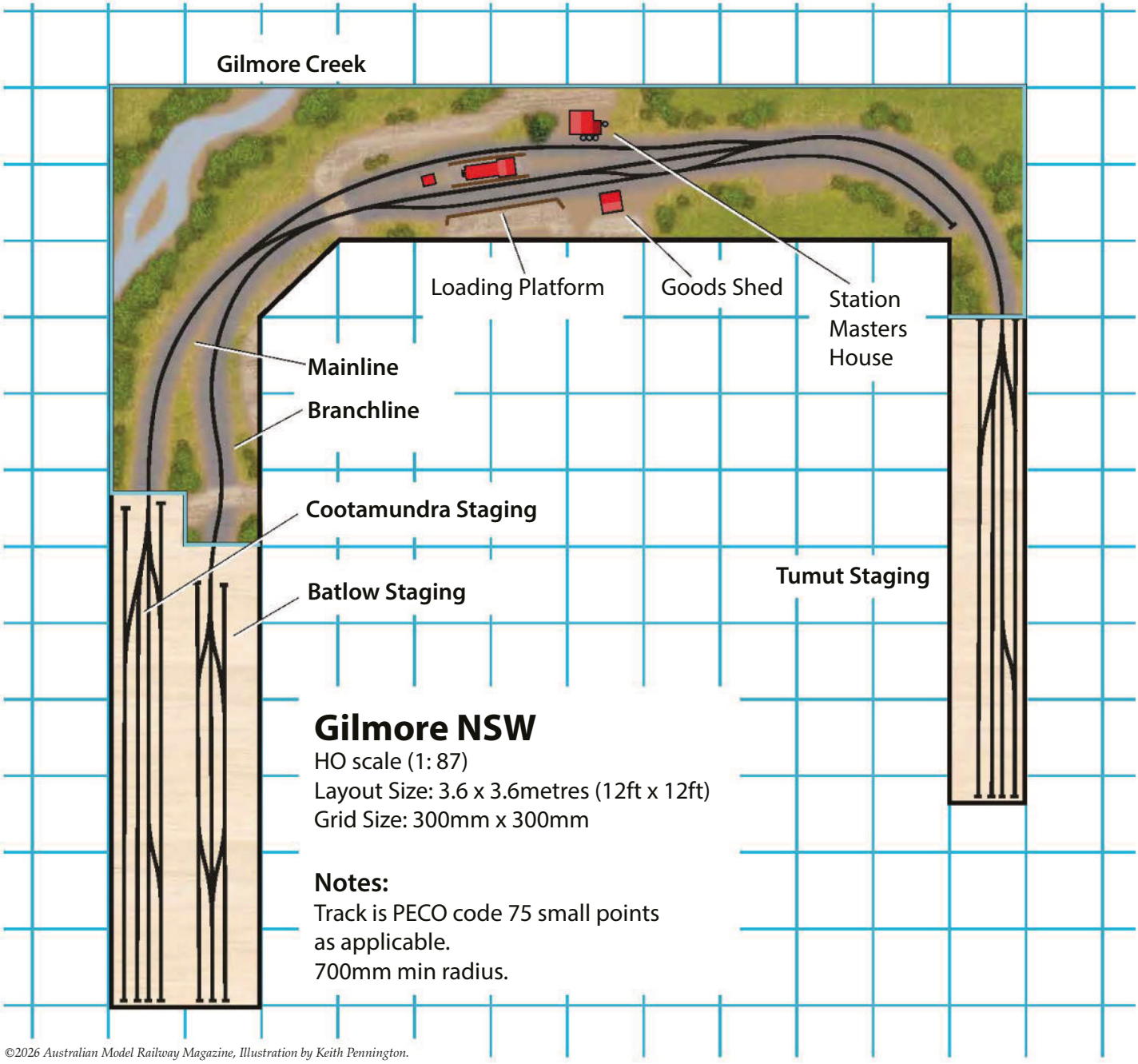
The scenicked area would present Gilmore station and yard, while Tumut, Batlow and Cootamundra are represented by staging yards. However, as time permits the Tumut staging area could be altered to model the actual Tumut yard, likewise the Batlow station area could be modelled to replace the staging area. I would suggest building the Cootamundra staging or station area slightly higher, perhaps 25-50mm, than the Batlow staging to provide for a visual separation of these two destinations.

The Batlow staging tracks could be shorter than the Cootamundra and Tumut staging tracks to match the general length of trains. Batlow staging has 700mm long tracks and 500mm (kick back) storage tracks as per the diagram. A 700mm track could hold a three-wagon mixed, an HCX coach and a 19 class locomotive with bogie tender.

The staging for Cootamundra and Tumut is at least two tracks, each 950mm long to accommodate the passenger train hauled by a 30T with six-wheel tender, an EHO passenger brake van, a CR composite coach and the ACS branchline sitting and sleeping coach. The ACS coach stayed in Tumut during the day and was on a train to Cootamundra and then to Sydney at night. Staging at Tumut and Cootamundra has been arranged so that there was a siding for the ACS and another siding for the CR and EHO.

I believe where possible, a staging yard or fiddle yard should be designed so that an incoming train can be remarshalled on the layout without the need to handle the locomotives or rolling stock. In the diagram there is standing room for a complete train with a locomotive on three tracks and there are two tracks that are suitable to hold a complete train of wagons plus a brake van. These dimensions suit my layout Yanga, but could be adjusted to suit your layout and operating requirements.

Curves of between 600 and 700mm would be suitable for these smaller locomotives and not look out of place depicting the lines' sharp curves and steep grades. Small radius PECO Code 75 Electrofrog points have been used in the proposed layout plan, and are suitable for their compact geometry. They should be wired as per the instructions to ensure reliable slow running that was such a feature of this line.



Passenger services

Tumut had a reasonably good passenger train service to Cootamundra and onward to Sydney. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday mornings there was a locomotive-hauled passenger service from Cootamundra that connected with the South or Temora Mail and then conveyed the ACS coach from Sydney to Tumut. The ACS coach had seating in first and second class compartments as well as a section for sleeping compartments. On Monday, Wednesday and Saturday this service was provided by a 600 class two-car diesel railmotor set.

At Gilmore, the Tumut to Batlow goods train with passenger accommodation waited for any Batlow passengers that were on the Cootamundra to Tumut train before continuing the 13 miles to Batlow.

The mixed train for Batlow from Tumut arrived at Gilmore first, and was directed onto the line designated as the branch line. After the guard performed the required safe-working tasks, the Batlow mixed moved forward down the branch clear of the Up home signal on the Batlow line. The Cootamundra train from Tumut arrived and stopped at the platform, on the line designated as the branch line (see proposed layout plan). The Tumut-bound train from Cootamundra arrived at the platform on the main line. Passengers and parcels for Batlow detrained and the train continued to Tumut. The train from Tumut, waiting at the back platform then departed for Cootamundra. Once the back platform was clear, the Batlow mixed backed along the branch line back to the platform to pick up any passengers and parcels from the Cootamundra to Tumut train. After all of this activity the Batlow mixed departed to wend its way to Batlow.

The Batlow train would then return that afternoon to connect with the Cootamundra train and the connection to Sydney.

On Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday there was a locomotive-hauled passenger train from Tumut, then listed in the public timetable as a mixed train that then conveyed the coaches from the morning train to Cootamundra where the ACS coach was attached to a mail train to Sydney.

There was a morning service from Tumut that connected at Cootamundra with the Riverina Express to Sydney. This train could have been a locomotive-hauled mixed train, passenger train, a CPH railmotor or 600 class two-car diesel railmotor set.

Each afternoon there was a return working from Cootamundra of the morning passenger train that then connected with the down Riverina Express to provide a service to Tumut.

The introduction of the Tulloch air-conditioned railcars on the Riverina Express in 1972 introduced a new but short-lived experience for passengers, who were able to travel direct from Sydney to Tumut three days a week. The Tumut line railcar

COOTAMUNDRA—TUMUT — TABLE 9

Height	Dist.	STATIONS	Suns Weds Fris	Mons Tues Thurs	Mons Sats	Thurs	Mons Weds Fris Suns	STATIONS	Mons Sats	Mons Thurs Sats	Weds Fris	Thurs	Tues	Fris	Mons Weds Sats
			Mail	Mail	Goods	Goods	Exp.		Goods	Diesel Train	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed	Diesel Train	Diesel Train
Feet	Miles		p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	a.m.		a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
67	—	SYDNEY..R A/V lv	9 50	9 50	..	..	8 15	TUMUT lv	8 48	9 50	2 10	3 50	5 0	6 50	7 49
			a.m.	a.m.				GILMORE	8 48	9 56	2 18	3 58	5 8	6 56	7 46
2074	137¼	GOULBURN..R lv	2 5	2 5	..	..	11 49	Gadara	..	a	a	a	a	a	a
			Mons Thurs Sats	Tues Weds Fris				Reka	..	a	a	a	a	a	a
		3	a.m.	a.m.				Callat	..	a	a	a	a	a	a
								MT. HOREB ar	..	10 30	3 16	4 56	6 6	7 32	8 22
1082	265	COOTA-MUNDRA..R ar					p.m.	lv	..	10 32	3 26	5 1	6 16	7 36	8 26
			4x18 Diesel Train	4x18 Mixed	..	..	3x11 Diesel Train	Luadra	..	a	a	a	a	a	a
								Tumblong	..	10 42	3 39	5 14	6 29	7 47	8 37
								Willie Ploma	..	a	a	a	a	a	a
		Do lv	7 0	7 30	..	..	3 25	Sth. Gundagai	..	a	a	a	a	a	a
960	271½	Brawlin	a	a	..	..	a	GUNDAGAI..R ar	..	11 5	4 19	5 49	7 9	8 14	9 4
897	278	Muttama	a	a	..	..	a	lv	..	11 8	4 50	6 10	7 30	8 18	9 8
885	279	Bongalong	a	a	..	..	a	Mingay	..	a	a	a	a	a	a
836	282½	Wambidgee	a	a	..	..	a	Pettitt's	..	a	a	a	a	a	a
789	288	Coolac	7 40	8 27	..	..	4 4	Coolac	..	11 26	5 20	6 40	8 0	8 38	9 28
797	290	Pettitt's	a	a	..	..	a	Wambidgee	..	a	a	a	a	a	a
756	291	Mingay	a	a	..	..	a	Bongalong	..	a	a	a	a	a	a
								Muttama	..	a	a	a	a	a	a
738	298½	GUNDAGAI..R ar	7 58	9 12	From Batlow	From Batlow	4 21	Brawlin	..	a	a	a	a	a	a
		lv	8 3	9 32			4 23	COOTA-MUNDRA..R..ar	..	p.m. 12x 7	6x43	7x55	9x18	9x30	10x20
763	299½	Sth. Gundagai	a	a			a			Exp.		✠	✠▽	✠▽	✠▽
726	304	Willie Ploma	a	a			a			✠		Mail	Mail	Mail	Mail
755	307½	Tumblong	8 24	10 1			4 44	Do lv	..	12 22	..	11 6	11 6	10 8	11 6
749	312½	Luadra	a	a			a								
								3				Fris	Weds	Sats	Tues Thurs Suns
807	313	MT. HOREB ar	8 37	10 20			4 57								
		lv	8 39	10 30			4 58								
989	317	Callat	a	a			a								
1290	320½	Reka	a	a			a								
1112	322½	Gadara	a	a			a			p.m.		a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.
944	326½	GILMORE	9 9	11 18	1 33	2 33	5 28	GOULBURN..R ar	..	3 49	..	3 29	3 29	2 6	3 29
900	329½	TUMUT ar	9 18	11 28	1 41	2 41	5 37	SYDNEY..R A/V .. ar	..	7 7	..	7 27	7 27	5 48	7¦27

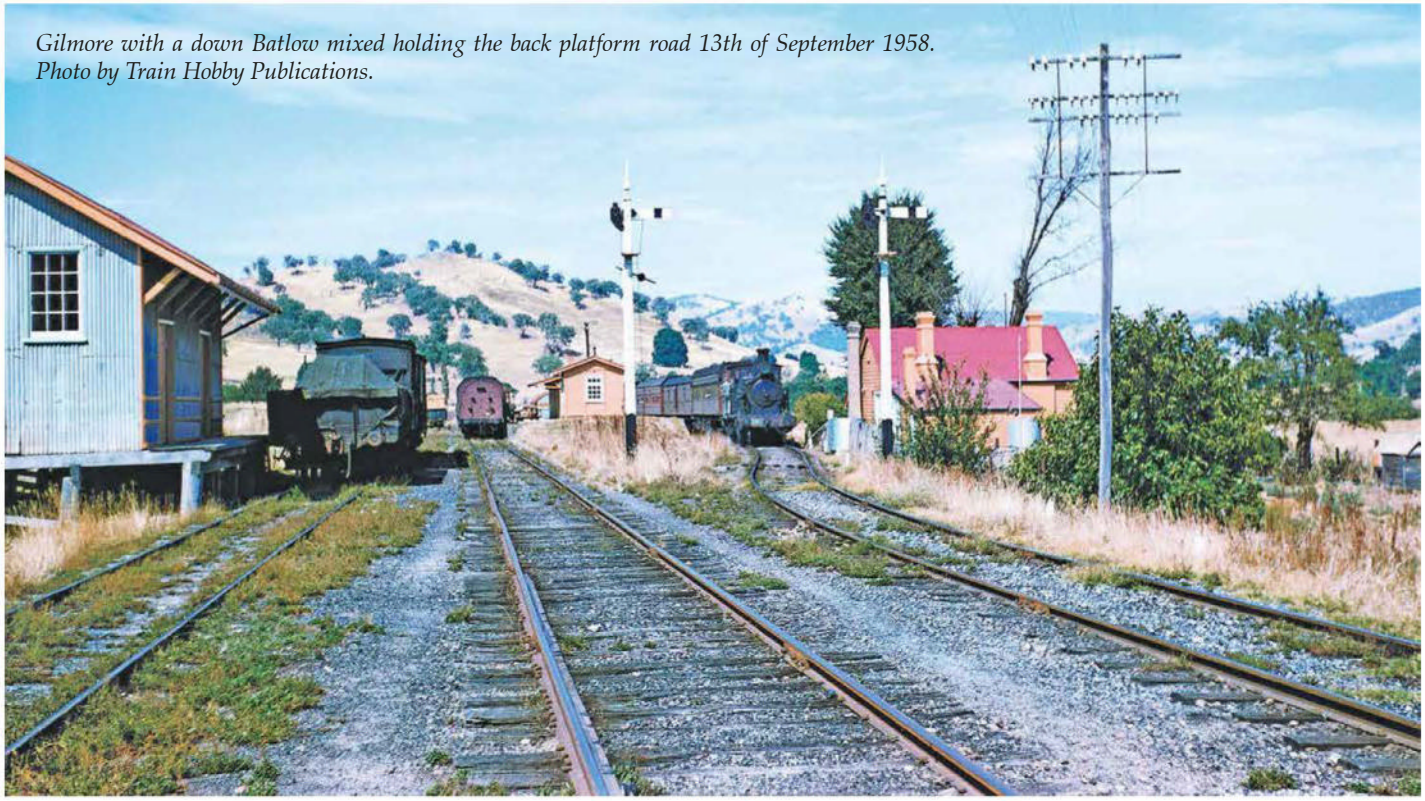
GILMORE—BATLOW — TABLE 10

Height	Dist.	STATIONS	Suns. Weds Fris	STATIONS	Thurs	Thurs	Mons Sats
			Mail p.m.		§ Goods a.m.	§ Goods p.m.	§ Goods p.m.
Feet	Miles						
67	—	SYDNEY ....R A/V .. lv	9 50	BATLOW lv	8 25	1 0	12 0
			Mons Thurs Sats	Wybalena	a	a	a
		3	a.m.	Shaw's	a	a	a
1082	265	COOTA-MUNDRA..R ar	6x18	Wereboldera	a	a	a
				Windowie	a	a	a
			Diesel Mons Sats	Diesel Thurs	GILMORE ar	9x48	2x23	1x23
			a.m.	a.m.		Diesel	Mixed	Diesel
		Do lv	7 0	7 0	Do lv	9 56	3 58	7 46
		9	9x 9	9x 9		p.m.		
944	326½	Do GILMORE ar			COOTA-MUNDRA R ar	12x 7	7x55	10x20
			§ Goods	§ Goods		✠	✠▽	✠▽
		Do lv	9 14	10 20	Do lv	Exp.	Mail	Mail
		3				12 22	11 6	11 6
974	329	Windowie	a	a			Fris	Tues Suns
1051	332½	Wereboldera	a	a	SYDNEY .... R A/V ar	p.m. 7 7	a.m. 7 27	a.m. 7¦27
2202	339½	Shaw's	a	a				
2386	346½	Wybalena	a	a				
2544	342½	BATLOW ar	10 39	11 45				

For notes e and R, see page 1. x Change trains. A/V Avis Rent-A-Car available, see page 4. ✠ Sleeping car attached, see page 15.
‡ Arrives Sydney 7.36 a.m. Sundays. § Goods train with passenger accommodation. ● Reservation of seats optional, see page 14.
▽ Reservation of seats optional, see page 14. ✠ Riverina Express, air-conditioned train between Sydney and Cootamundra with reserved seats only.

1964 Timetable.

Locomotive No. 48164 at a rather decrepit Gilmore Station on the 5th of December 1981. Photo by Neville Gee.



Gilmore with a down Batlow mixed holding the back platform road 13th of September 1958. Photo by Train Hobby Publications.

separated from the remaining 1200 class railcars on the Riverina Express at Cootamundra, completed its service at Tumut and returned to Cootamundra to rejoin the Up Riverina Express. A similar pattern occurred with other cars in the consist for other branch lines as the train made its way to Albury, reversing the pattern for the return journey. The concept was good, but reliability problems with the 1200 class railcars soon saw the return of the CPH railmotors as the mainstay of passenger services on the Tumut line.

Another regular visitor to these lines would have been the fortnightly rail paybus. This four-wheel railbus traversed the lines to pay railway staff and makes an interesting operational addition to the layout. One of these railbuses was used between Cooma and Bombala to provide a passenger service, so it would be possible to stretch history and run one from Tumut to Gilmore and then Batlow.

Goods and mixed trains

Regular goods trains to Tumut ran from Cootamundra, while goods and mixed trains to Batlow were built up in Tumut yard and departed from there. The line to Tumut was much easier to operate as the grades and curves permitted longer and heavier loads. However, the line to Batlow had sharp curves and steep grades that severely restricted the loads that the 19 class locomotives with Baldwin tender could haul.

Goods trains to Tumut and Batlow would run as traffic demanded. During the fruit season, extra trains were scheduled to move the traffic offering, and trains were run to Cootamundra so that the wagons could be attached to the mainline fruit express trains.

Locomotives

Until the arrival of the 48 and 49 class diesel electric locomotives, the 19 class steam locomotives with Baldwin bogies tenders and 30T locomotives with a six-wheel tender were the usual roster on this line. A 50ft turntable was provided at Tumut which imposed a further limit on what locomotives could easily be operated on the lines. A single road engine shed, a coal stage and elevated water tank with a water crane were provided for locomotive servicing and replenishment at Tumut.

Cootamundra was usually allocated three 19 class locomotives with Baldwin tender for Tumut and Batlow line working as well as 30T locomotives with six-wheel tenders to work the branch lines. If a 30T locomotive with a bogie tender worked to Tumut, the engine and tender had to be separated to be turned at Tumut.

Peter Neve's book, 'The Transition Years' is a very good reference source for identifying which specific locomotives were allocated to each depot and what locomotives were still in service. In 1960, Cootamundra depot had three 19 class locomotives and a number of 30T class locomotives, however by 1964 all steam locomotives had been re-allocated as dieselisation of the southern branch lines commenced in earnest with the introduction of more 48 class locomotives.

What is available

The following models have been or are currently being produced in HO scale r-t-r.

Locomotives and railmotors:

- 19 class steam locomotives with Baldwin Tender – Casula Hobbies
- 30T steam locomotive with six-wheel tender – Wombat Models
- 48 class diesel electric locomotives – TrainOrama, Auscision Models, and Powerline
- 49 class diesel electric locomotives – TrainOrama and a future release from Auscision Models
- The CPH railmotors and 620/720 two-car diesel railmotor sets – Eureka Models (previously released and planned for release respectively)

Passenger coaches.

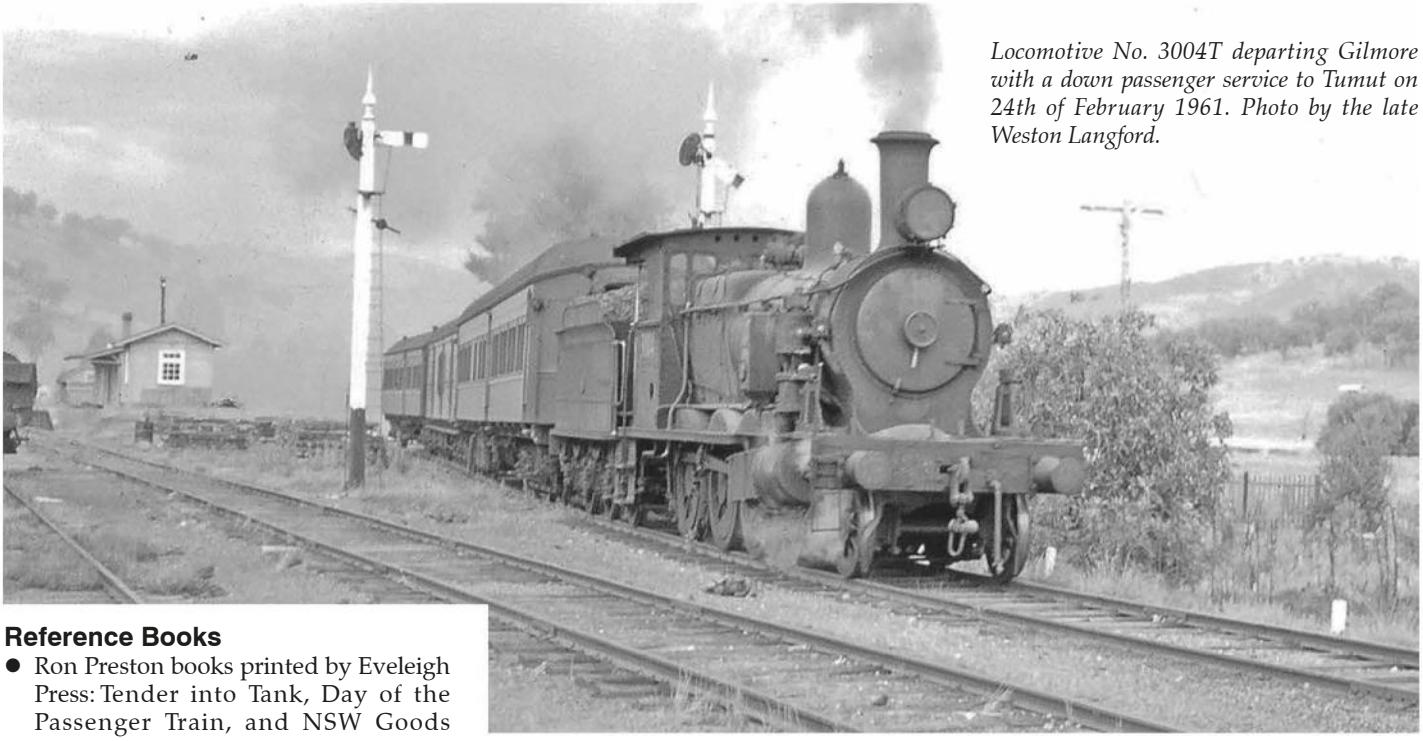
An HCX express passenger car with guards compartment, and the CR composite coach has been produced by Casula Hobbies. Various versions of the EHO passenger brake vans have been produced by Casula Hobbies and SDS Models, and the ACS branch line sleeper was available from Eureka Models.

Goods rolling stock

The manufacturers of NSW goods rollingstock are too numerous to name , however the following rollingstock would suffice to represent the 1960s in either the steam, transition or diesel eras:

- The standard NSWGR four-wheel 'S' truck, K wagon, LV van, CW stock wagon, GSV sheep van and ABV 'Arnott's Biscuits Van'.
- The LLV bogie van (used to convey traffic from the fruit packing houses) and 'E' bogie flat wagons.
- Bogie goods brake vans; MHG, PHG, and SHG.

Locomotive No. 1957 at Gilmore shunting the down Batlow mixed on 24th of February 1961. Photo by the late Weston Langford.



Locomotive No. 3004T departing Gilmore with a down passenger service to Tumut on 24th of February 1961. Photo by the late Weston Langford.

Reference Books

- Ron Preston books printed by Eveleigh Press: Tender into Tank, Day of the Passenger Train, and NSW Goods Trains.
- Byways of Steam, Volume 33
- Train Hobby Publications, Country Branch Lines NSW: Gundagai, Tumut, Batlow
- Australian Railway History, Dec 2023 issue
- Peter Neve's book, 'The Transition Years'
- New South Wales Government Railways, Curve and Gradient book.
- New South Wales Government Railways, Southern Division, Local Appendix.
- New South Wales Government Railways, various Public Timetables.
- NSWGR Signal Branch Diagrams, ARHS Signalling Diagrams CD.

I would like to thank Ray Love for his assistance with this article, as well as Neville Gee and Richard Barrack for photographs used in this article.

Locomotive No. 48111 shunts a tour train service at Gilmore on the 8th of October 1979. Photo by Neville Gee.

From toy trains to model railways

Bruce Mumford reflects on his early childhood memories of modelling and looks forward with his grandson. Photos by the author.

My first memories of toy trains were playing with my father's old 1930s vintage O gauge tinplate clockwork from his childhood.

Unfortunately, another early memory was smashing them with a brick. To my eternal shame, I now realise that smashing things with a brick is normal behaviour for four-year-olds.

But, a few years later my father constructed a train room for me in the upstairs spare room behind our shop in Haberfield in suburban Sydney. From there I could see the AD60 Garratts shunting goods wagons in the nearby marshalling yards. When we moved, I kept my Hornby Dublo trains in their boxes. I didn't get them out again until I was allowed to set up my train room in the old dairy of my parents' farm in the Southern Highlands ten years later.

This layout started with a board laid on 44-gallon seed drums situated in the old milk cooling room. I had Hornby track but I began to transition to PECO and my buildings were still proprietary, although I began to apply some scratch–built parts. I even began to modify some of my Hornby locomotives into crude representations of Australian ones. I began to experiment with plaster scenery and even a tunnel going over a high trestle bridge, although I admit that at times, we may have used this for spectacular Gomez Adams – style crashes. (Photo 1)

A new layout began to emerge as I took over the adjoining storage and tack rooms (a tack room is used to store horse riding equipment) by smashing tunnels through the concrete walls. I then planned a re-creation of Moss Vale Station and its surrounds to Bowral in the Up direction and the Marulan Limestone mines in the Down direction. I also created branch lines to the Berrima cement works and coalmine as well as a line down through Robertson and Summit Tank to Unanderra.

I have heard that model makers fall into categories ranging from the micro detailer to the 'empire builder'. I fell into the latter category. But in the process, I began turning into a railway modeller from a toy train constructor. (Photos 2 and 3).

I began taking delight in constructing scratch-built buildings and scenery, as well as my own wagons. I would even construct items when I was teaching in Forbes and bring them back in the school holidays to my Highlands railway. Hornby couplers gave way to PECO and finally to Kadee. Modelling gave me a meditative calm and a focus away from everyday stresses. I saw that link between reality and its miniature recreation.

Unfortunately, with the onset of Multiple Sclerosis my modelling abilities drastically decreased to the point where I had trouble with the miles of wiring under the baseboards. I could no longer reconnect them and instead just banged under that section of board and if they reconnected, good, and if not, then that section was decommissioned! When trying to fix things on the layout I managed to knock over at least five other things each time. I knew what was coming on and so strove to get my article completed for this magazine. In the end with the sale of my parents' farm, I had to take the model railway apart and transfer ownership to local groups such as the Robertson Railway.

The whole story of 'Moss Vale' was published in AMRM issue No. 176 October 1992.

When we moved 'Moss Vale' I thought all my modelling days were over.

Along came grandson No.1 who followed my interest in trains and soon knew all the numbers of engines not only in New South Wales but across the globe from his research on the internet. By the time he was seven he told me that for his next birthday he no longer wanted 'toy trains', but wanted "real model railway stuff, like Pa had." So, it has been back to model railways for Pa and soon an N scale layout had begun with the help of my friends Ian and Dave from The Men's Shed.

My own sons never seemed to take that much interest in my railway, but it looks like the railway modelling gene can skip generations! N Scale is new for both of us, as I have never modelled N scale before.

Photo 3.

Photo 2.

▲ *Photo 1.*

▼ *Bruce Mumford and his No.1 grandson sharing a moment watching trains at Bowral.*

Simple easy gearboxes

Robert Kosmider builds simple gear boxes using hand tools. Photos by the author.

One can build simple gear boxes with minimal hand tools. This article is about the single gear wheel / worm gear combinations, not the multi-stage. My experience does not stretch to multi-stage, but the same concept could easily be used. The other proviso is that the motor must have two parallel and flat sides, and the old Romford open frame motors with permanent magnet are perfect examples as are some of the flat sided can motors, Mashima being one. I am sure that there are plenty of others.

One of my petty hates is meshing up a single gear wheel / worm gear combination. In literature authors have written about 'keeper plates' (on which the motors are mounted) and adjusting the meshing of the gear / worm gear packing with shims. I could never get on with this method so in preference once they became available, I used can motor and commercial gear box combinations or the now defunct Portescap motors. However, I have on stock quite a number of old Romford and Tenshodo motors, bought many years ago which from the financial point, were crying out to be used.

The impetus to use them was for one application where I wanted a compact motor that would not be seen in the windows of a railmotor. I decided to use a small Tenshodo motor which I believe was intended for N scale. This is shown in Photo 1 with the supplied gears and next to it a second motor with the chosen worm gear and gear wheel.

As mentioned above the old fashioned way would be to fit the motor on a keeper plate to the chassis side plates and fiddle with the angle of the motor / keeper plate until it was 'just right'. This technique never worked for me so a stand alone motor-gearbox combination was a necessity.

Photo 1 also shows a piece of brass with a hole (which is later bushed) through which goes the driven axle. The only important dimension is the relation between this hole and the worm gear. The brass plate is laid on a thick piece of wood which has a hole to take the axle vertical with gear wheel mounted. The motor is simply 'pushed around' until the fit is 'just right' and super glue is introduced under the magnet. Two points: 'just right' means a loose mesh, not tight and not sloppy. The gear wheel teeth need to mesh about half way to their depth. You may also need to use packing washers to line up the gear wheel and worm centrally.

Now, what I described above is the final operation! Before doing the above with the motor/worm and gear wheel in position you should draw out your desired gear box shape and mark out the place where you will want fixing screws. With two pieces of brass sweated together drill out all your required holes. If you want clearance holes on both sides then of course nuts will be required, but I opted for one side clearance and the other tapped. Just for the record I used 10BA brass screws. The partially completed gear box is shown in Photo 2.

The limited space inside the model did not allow me to put a fixing screw in front

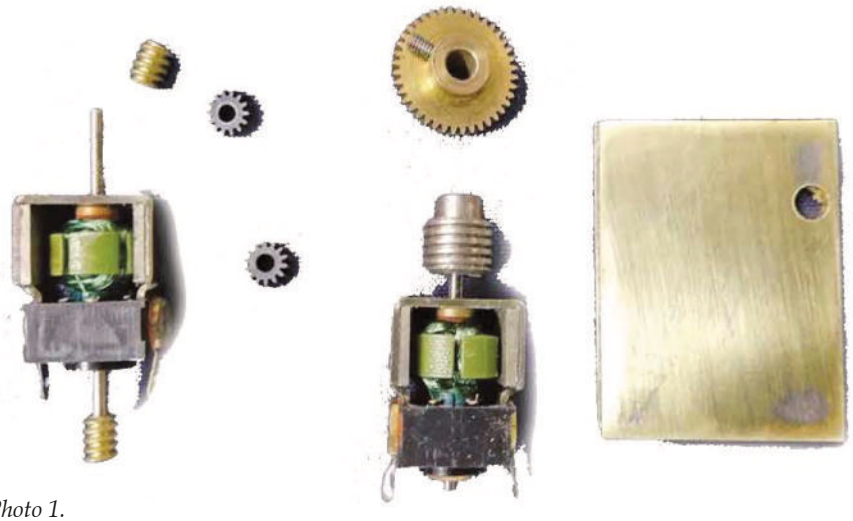


Photo 1.

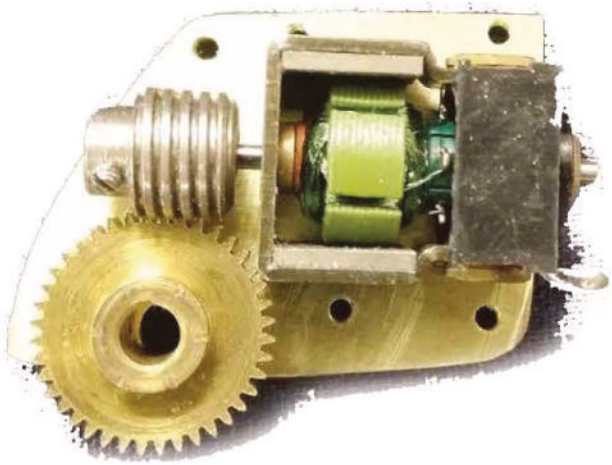


Photo 2.

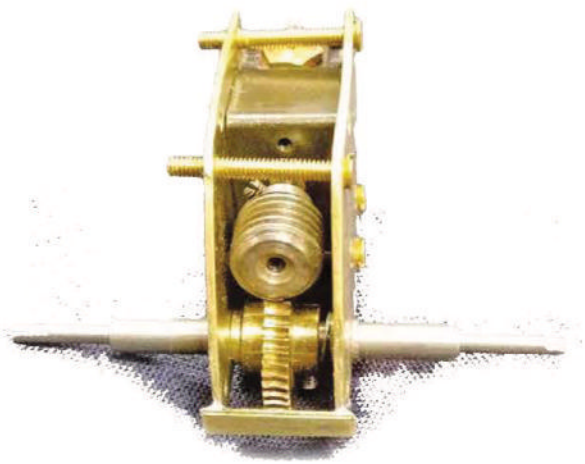


Photo 3.

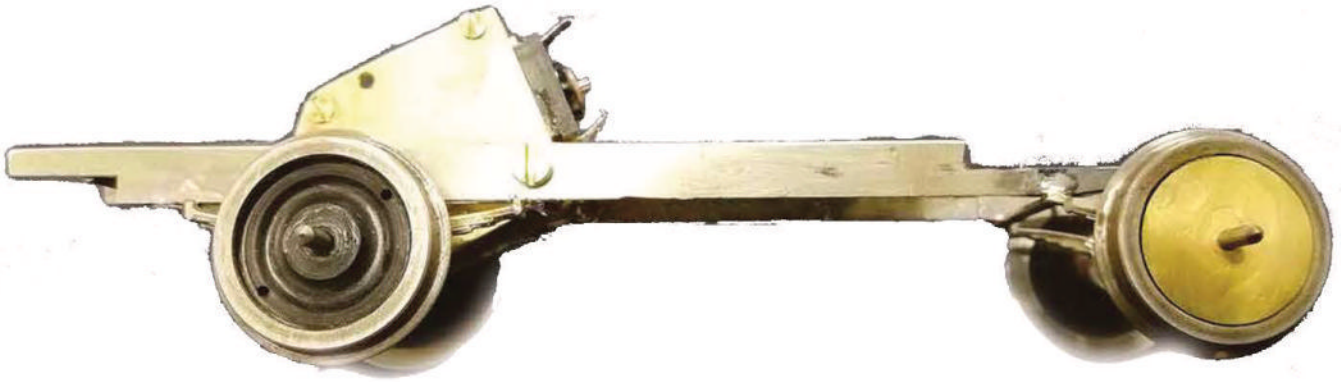


Photo 4.

Photo 5.

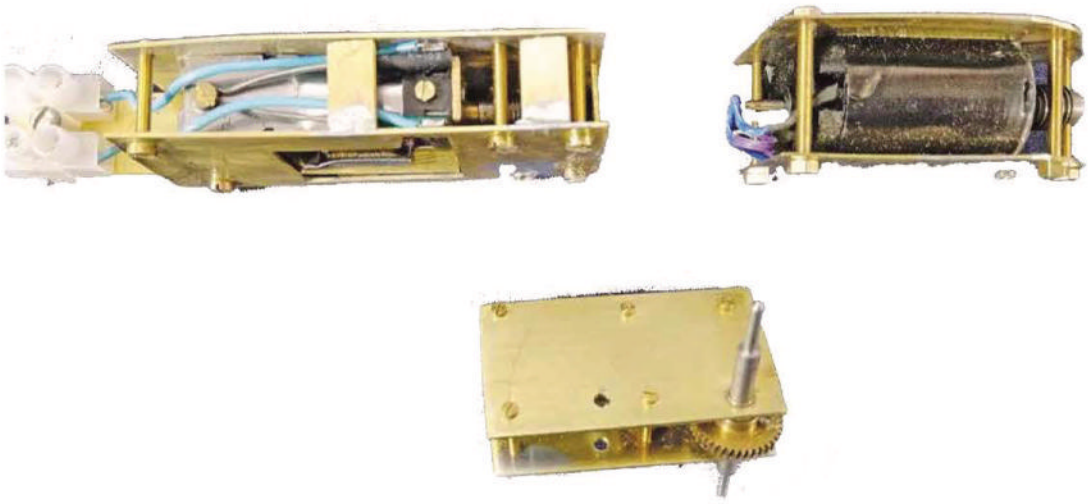


Photo 6.

of the gear wheel. Instead, I soldered a brace in place as shown at the bottom of the gearbox assembly in photo 3, which is a front view of the final assembly just prior to completion.

When things are nice and square and the gearbox is given a test run the other side can be super glued in place. Of course, when the sides are screwed together tightly, this will also form a 'bond'. The glue bond is very good as the super glue capillaries. Additionally, if you are not happy it is a simple matter to disassemble, clean off the dried glue and start again.

Photo 4 shows the railmotor chassis nearing completion with motor / gearbox mounted. One of the screw holes in the gearbox is used to lock the assembly in place via the chassis sides.

For those who like such things, photos 5 and 6 show a selection of gearboxes built in exactly the same way.

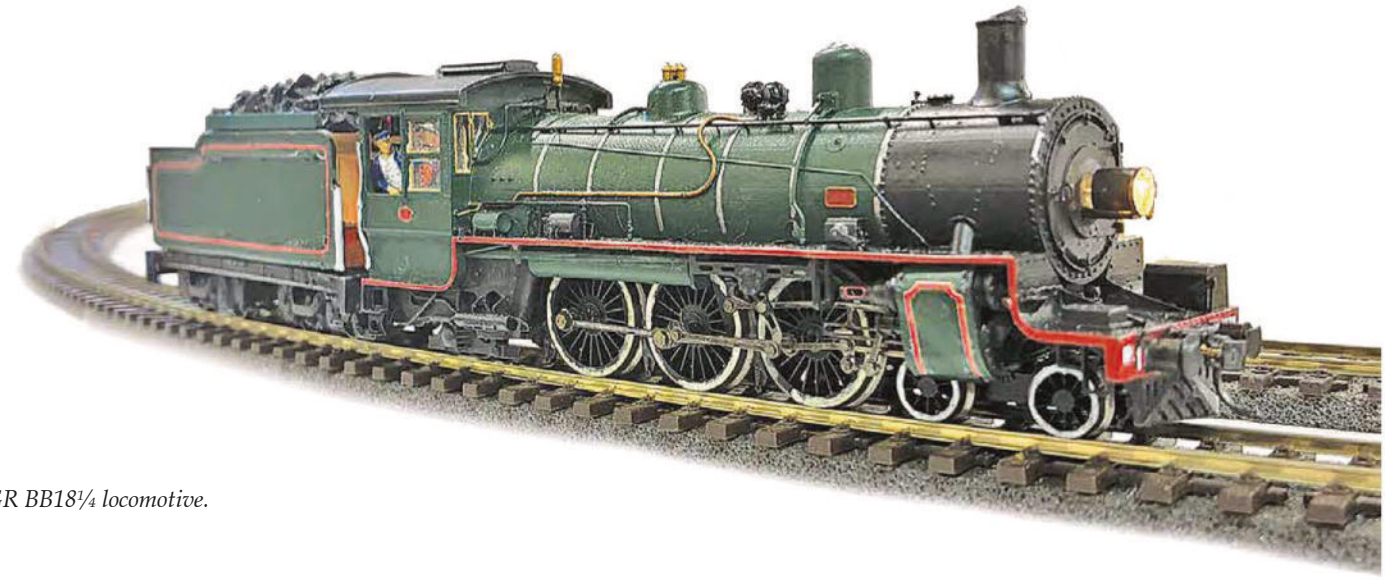
Top left is a Romford motor, the shape of the gearbox is much more complicated as dictated by the motor shape, protruding brushes etc. Top right is a flat sided Mashima Can motor. Finally, the bottom motor is another can motor with a built-in reduction gearbox.

I wrote at the beginning that only minimal hand tools are necessary which is true to a point. I do possess a pedestal drill, but since only one hole is important with respect to location to another, then with care it could well be done with a handheld drill. The other 'special' tools required would be a thread tap, but one could get away with using nuts. It would be good practice to solder the nuts in place. This is easily done by tightly screwing the nut into place and solder with plenty of flux and heat with a good fillet of solder. To prevent soldering the nut to the screw a tiny drop of oil on the screw thread goes down by capillary action into the nut. A drop on the other side beneath the screw head is also very beneficial. If the screw is a tight fit afterwards then running a steel screw through the nut will help clear any small amount of solder.

I used 0.8mm brass sheet for the gear box sides. Any thinner and the sheet was found to be too flexible and even at 0.8mm care needs be taken where to put the screws. Hence, I needed to install a strut in one of the gearbox assemblies. If I had thicker brass sheet I would have preferred to use that. In fact, any material can be used, but I prefer brass as it solders well if you need to.

Building Queensland heritage models in HOn3½

Ian Renshaw describes how Guy Limpus creates his 3D printed models of Queensland prototype. Photos by Ian Renshaw and Guy Limpus.



QGR BB18¼ locomotive.

Modelling modern image Queensland prototypes in HOn3½ scale has become popular with several manufacturers creating outstanding r-t-r models to supply the market. Many Queensland modellers are younger and these modern image models reflect the prototypes they grew up with.

There are also some younger modellers in Queensland who prefer models from before their time such as those operating on heritage railways - railways from the time when steam was king and when railmotors ran on branch lines. None of these models are currently available r-t-r, so the solution is to make your own.

One of these modellers who built his own is Guy Limpus. Some of his earliest memories were of visiting his grandparents, who lived near the then recently abandoned Bell branch. Guy states:

'I could see level crossings when being driven to their house and I remember being excited to see trains, but too young to know 'track not in use' as I was only two or three at the time,'

He started heritage modelling in 2020 and designed a 3D model of a Queensland Government Railways (QGR) BB18¼ 4-6-2 steam locomotive for a video game using Blender computer aided design (CAD) software.

Guy only took a couple of hours to learn CAD basics, but after many hours of work his video game BB18¼ locomotive was not successful.

3D printed locomotive body and tender

In 2022, Guy joined a Queensland model railway club and met another 3D modeller who also had a printer. They both discussed making a BB18¼ and decided to make a 3D printed body out of the failed computer game 3D design. The final model is a collaboration between Guy, designing the locomotive body, and a fellow modeller designing the tender.

The tender consisted of five, 3D printed parts including main body, underframe, two bogies and a plate on the coal bunker which acts as baffle for a speaker allowing for a coal load on top.

The BB18¼ has an orange light emitting diode (LED) in the firebox with digitally controlled flickering, synchronised to the exhaust using a LokSound V5 DCC chip. It also has a warm white LED mounted in the headlight with a similar warm white LED installed on the tender.

The mechanism is from a Hornby TT 1:120 scale r-t-r A3/A4 Pacific chassis, which provides a reliable and modern mechanism. The chassis has the correct wheel spacing but has a slightly oversized wheel diameter (by half a millimetre) and Walschaerts valve gear close in appearance to the BB18¼.

3D printed rolling stock

Guy has also made a HOn3½ scale QGX grain hopper wagon designed as a two-piece body. However, small and external fragile parts like buffers and brake wheels can break. Therefore, separate 3D printed parts can be easily replaced if broken, so these details are made individually.

Guy is especially proud of his QGX with the amount of brake rigging detail that he has been able to include.

Kadee® short shank No. 158 couplers are used on the models, which are close to modern QR knuckle couplers. The wheels and bogies are a mixture of Wuiske Models, Southern Rail Models and Caintode Flats Products depending on the wagon. Lead wheel weight is used to lower the model's centre of gravity and thus improve the model's running performance.

2000 class railmotor

Guy's model of the QGR 2000 class railmotor is a one-piece body with a separate floor and two 3D printed bogies. The power bogie has a can motor with the pinion engaged directly onto an axle for drive. It has a 3D printed clear resin front windscreen and side driving cab windows as separate inserts.

The excess supports for the hollow body are removed (which allow the body to be structurally rigid while printing) with clippers.

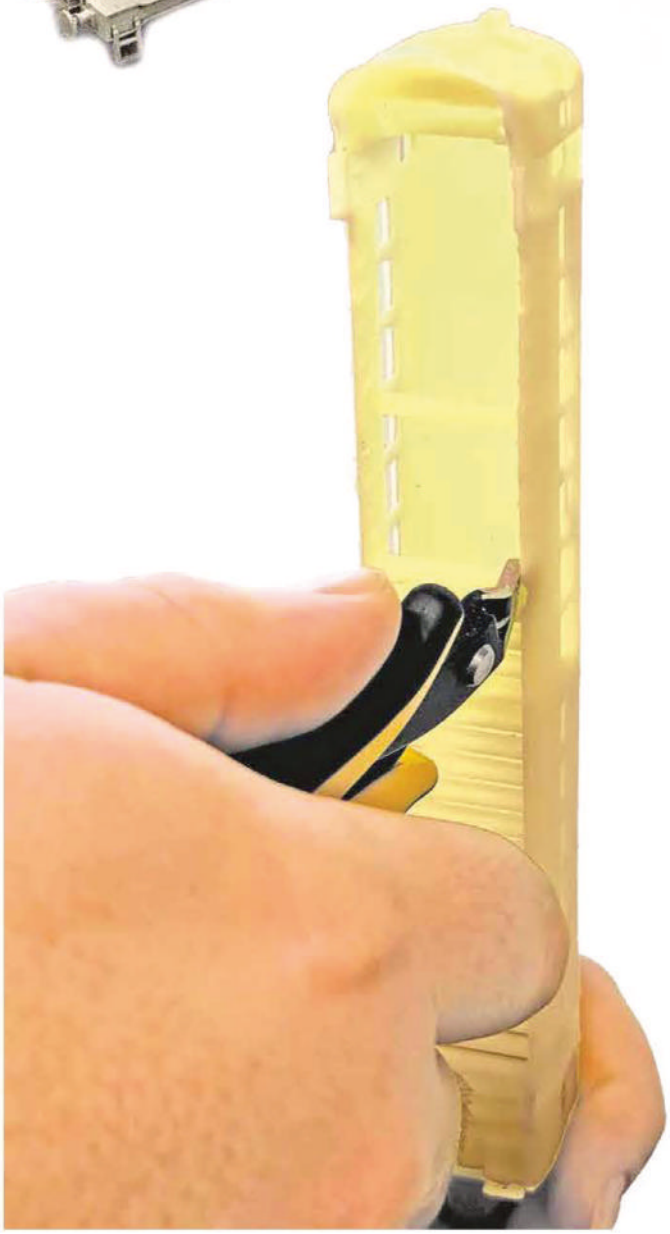
A grey Tamiya aerosol can primer is used as undercoat on the resin model. For

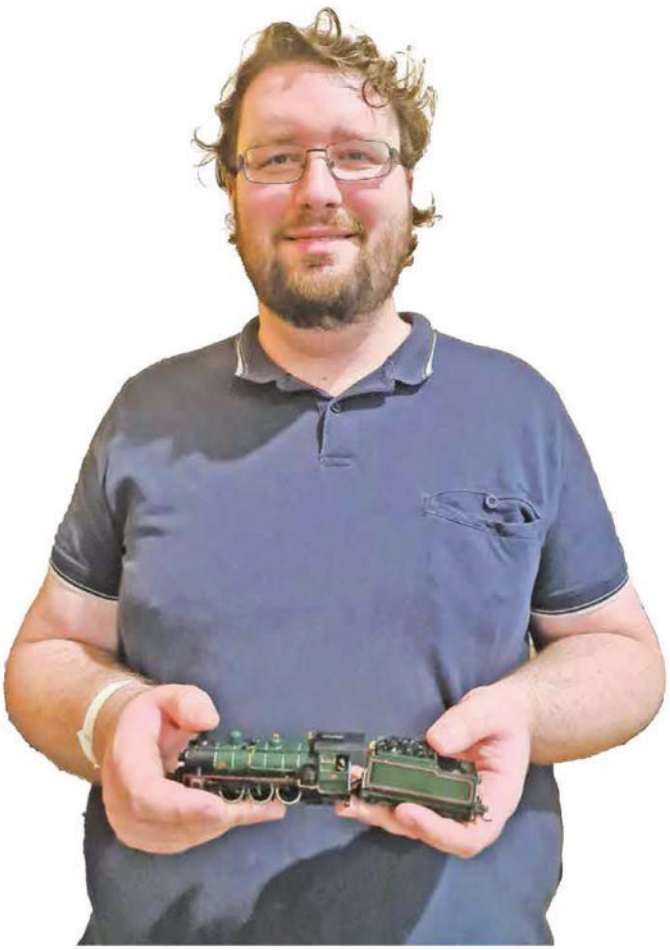
◀ *QGX grain hopper wagon.*

▲ *2000 class railmotor.*

◀ *2000 class railmotor body, removing the internal supports with side-cutters.*

▼ *Guy Limpus with this QGR BB18¼ locomotive.*





a good stainless steel or aluminium finish, Guy applies gloss black paint over the undercoat and then spray-paints Dulux chrome silver for a stainless steel finish, or Alclad II polished aluminium lacquer paint for an aluminium finish.

3D printing models tips.

Find a design program you are comfortable with. There are plenty of free-to-download CAD and 3D modelling software packages available. Tutorials are available on YouTube, forums, etc.

Use general arrangement drawings and blueprints and import them into the software to use as a guide when designing. Blueprints are detailed in specific areas and will show elements such as the shape of nuts and bolts.

Plans can be obtained from the applicable State archives, the Australian Railway Historical Society (ARHS) or even model railway clubs.

Additionally, use plenty of prototype reference photos.

Importing JPEG, TIFF and PNG files of these photos into the CAD software can help also with creating a design. Archives often scan general arrangement/blueprint files as TIFF files which can also be imported into the CAD software.

Actual 3D printing can take seven to eight hours for a HOn3½ BB18¼ locomotive body in resin, depending on printer and quality. Two BB18¼ locomotive prints at once averages 16 hours including the five parts for the tender. The locomotive body is one piece being printed using a Hi-Resolution DLP resin printer.

Depending on the detail of the model it takes around 5-6 hours to print a railmotor or a wagon in HOn3½ Special thanks to: Arthur Hayes and Greg Cash.

Build an inexpensive NSWGR 50ft turntable

Les Fordham kit-bashes an N scale PECO turntable into a HO scale representation of a NSWGR 50ft turntable. Photos by the author.

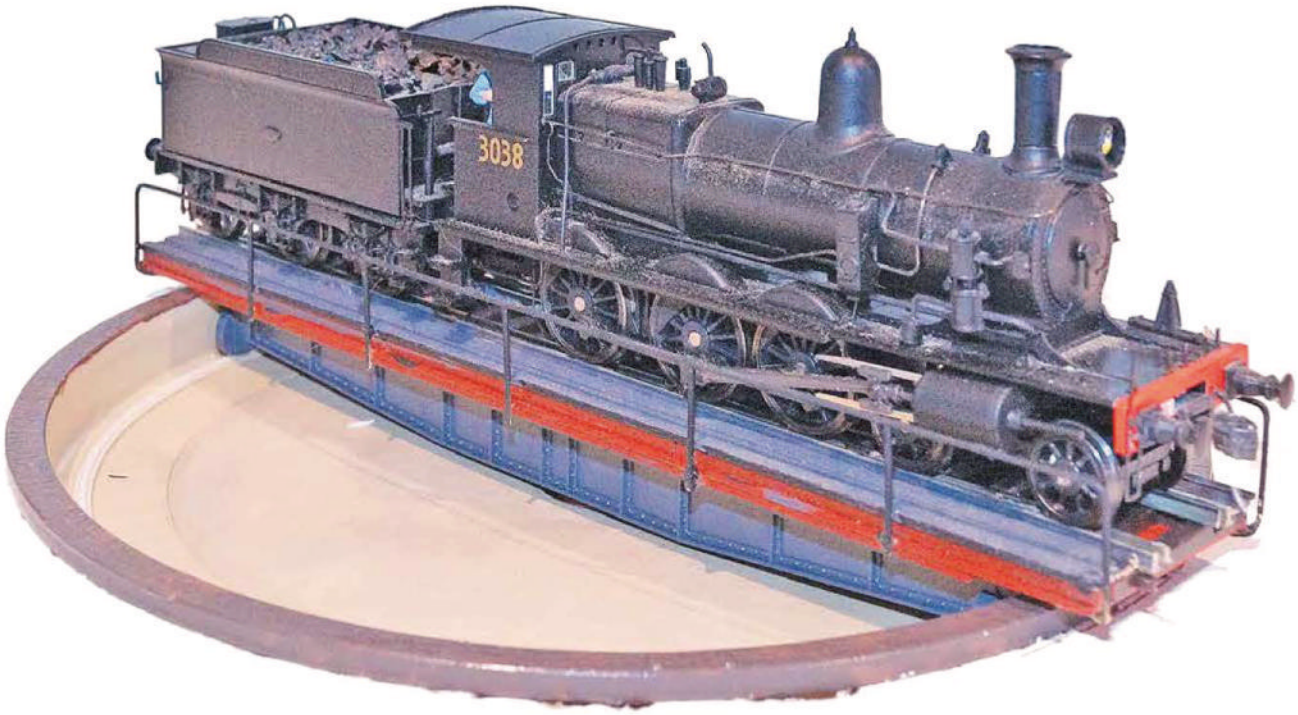


Photo 1. Locomotive No. 3038 balances on Les Fordham's kit-bashed New South Wales Government Railways (NSWGR) turntable.

Many turntables on the market are expensive and building one requires skills that put many modellers off trying. Ready-built models can retail for about $400.00 upwards, while a motorised American prototype versions sells for over $500.00. All the state railways in Australia had turntables of varying lengths to suit their operating requirements. In many cases as the railway systems expanded, the smaller diameter turntables were replaced by larger turntables and the smaller ones were reused in other parts of the system.

My layout represents a station in south-western New South Wales, and I decided that I needed to add a small turntable to the layout to achieve more prototypical operation. When I calculated the distance in miles between stations that was represented on my layout, it was found to be too far to expect a locomotive crew to drive tender first. A turntable that would be able to turn the locomotives I wanted to run needed to scale out at between 50 to 60 scale feet.

In this article I will describe the conversion of a PECO N scale turntable to make a 50ft HO scale turntable. The PECO turntable, catalogue product No. NB55, is priced under $50.00 AUD and is easily assembled (See Photo 2).

While it functions well as a turntable, it does not closely follow the appearance of the prototype, but I am satisfied with the result. If you want to enjoy the hobby, and aren't stressed about achieving accuracy to the nth degree, then this will provide an easy solution to get a 50ft turntable in HO scale at a very reasonable price.

There is no reason why this method could not be used to make turntables of other lengths or convert the model into a larger scale narrow gauge turntable. If you require a larger diameter turntable, PECO offer a scale 85ft turntable kit, catalogue product No. LK-55 [Editor, see AMRM issue No. 352 and 353 February and April 2022 for Gavin Thrum's article on kit bashing the PECO 85ft turntable into a South Australian Railways 85ft turntable]. PECO turntables have a very simple but effective electrical pickup system that does not require complicated wiring, and no polarity switching and electronics – just connect two wires.

In recent years there have been several new steam era r-t-r models such as the Casula 12 and 19 classes as well as the Wombat Models 30T that have been added to my layout 'Yanga'. This prompted me to look at rebuilding my layout and incorporating a suitable turntable. Yunga featured in an earlier issue of AMRM [Editor: refer Move it! No. 343 August 2020 and Small Layouts No. 348 June 2021].

The most common diameter of turntables in NSW were 50ft, 60ft, 75ft and 90ft. Many prototype turntables were supplied initially by British manufacturers before some were built locally.

The NSW Working Timetables list the types of turning facilities provided at each station.

Additionally, a detailed list of NSW turntables is available at the following website:

https://www.nswrail.net/photos/turntable.php?mode=listing

This website lists NSW turntables of all sizes and includes photos showing various decks and railings as well as the different ways they were installed.

Photo 2.

Photo 3.

Kit-bash

The first step is to cut a piece of 0.030 or 0.040 thou styrene to add a longer and wider deck to the model. The PECO deck is a scale 43ft. I cut a piece of styrene a scale 50ft long and 10ft wide, which is longer than the PECO deck, to be fitted on top. As per the prototype, the ends of the styrene should be cut with a radius, like the turntable base, to avoid fouling during rotation. The base unit can be used as a template.

The next step is to work upside down and place the inverted PECO deck on top of the styrene deck and carefully centre the deck both lengthways and sideways onto the styrene. This is probably the one area that requires accuracy; the rest of the process is reasonably forgiving. As I find it difficult to measure and drill accurately, I marked both pieces at each end so that I knew which way around everything fitted. When the unit was assembled the two deck parts were in their correct position.

I drilled through both pieces and screwed them together to check their positioning (see Photo 3). Once you are satisfied with this you can take them apart and follow the PECO instructions. The two plastic bearing pieces are a tight fit. Care should be taken to ensure they are pushed down hard and are vertical. The side girders can then be carefully glued in position.

Install the contact strips in the turntable pit and the contacts and rails in the PECO deck. Solder a red and a black wire to the tabs on the contact strips in the base of the turntable pit.

Install the contacts and springs in their tubes in the two plastic bearing blocks, ensuring that the two brass pins are down through the block . Slide the N scale rails into position on the PECO deck. Before the two rails are fully pushed into the deck, check that the two contact pins are sitting correctly. Invert it onto the styrene deck and mark the position of the two N scale rails so that you can drill holes for the wires to be threaded up from these rails to the rails on the HO scale track that will be mounted on the top.

The locking ring is not installed onto the turntable deck until it is in position and all of the details including handrails are complete.

Solder thin wires to the side of each rail of the PECO deck on the inside where the rail tapers at the end. These wires are then threaded through holes in the styrene deck and are soldered onto the length of track that is glued onto the new deck. I used a piece of track longer than required so that when the turntable is ready to install, they could be trimmed to an accurate length to match up with the approach tracks (see photo 4).

I measured the width of the styrene deck piece and the sleeper length of the track being installed on top. I used these dimensions to calculate the space on each side of the styrene deck, which gave me the dimension of a styrene strip that I glued along both edges of the deck to ensure the track was centred as accurately as possible, so that the rails were in the same position on both ends when the turntable was rotated.

I then painted the styrene deck in a suitable colour before I glued the track into position.

Check rails can be added along the side of each rail and timber planks can be installed or steel plates as applicable. These were painted a suitable colour.

From photos, I found a simple railing that would be easy to make. The railings on this model were constructed from styrene sections, but you can also make handrails from wire which I did on my first turntable. The method to make the styrene or wire railings follows similar methods. After bending the brass wire uprights on each end, I calculated what

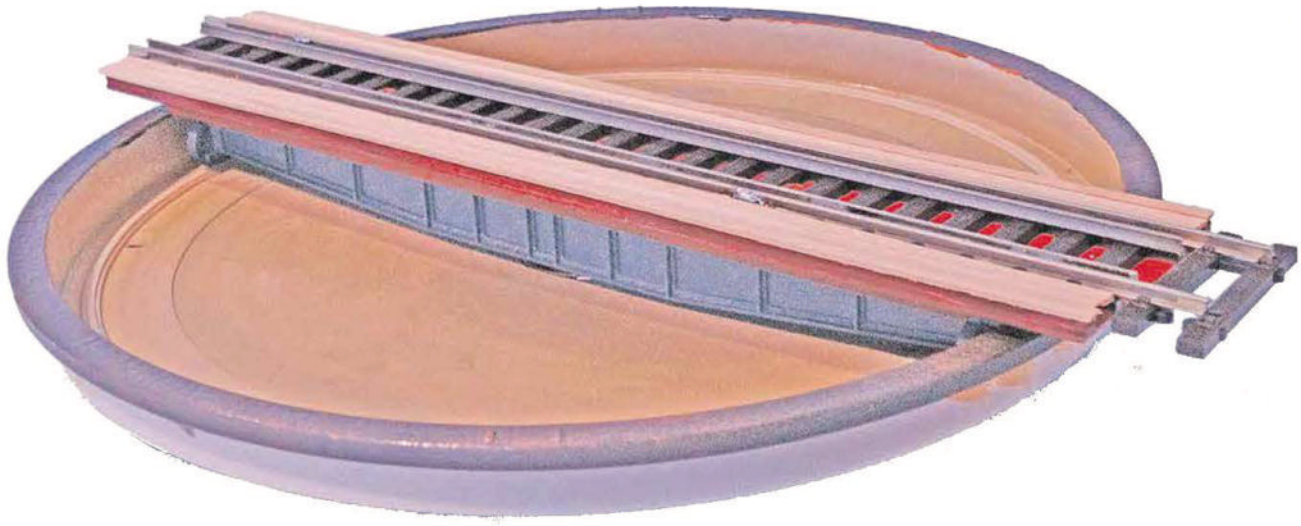


Photo 4.

spacing was required for the intermediate uprights. I taped the horizontal railing into a piece of timber and then using a square, drew lines on the timber where the uprights were required. I cut enough upright pieces, placed them on the timber in their required position and taped them down. Once all the parts were in place, I was then able to solder where they intersected and had a set of handrails for each side.

To construct the styrene railings, I started with the top railing and glued the required number of uprights to it. I then glued a styrene section of the same size as the top rail along the bottom of the upright posts. This formed a support to glue to the new styrene top piece on the turntable (see Photo 5).

The handrails are glued to each side of the deck before they are painted in the appropriate colour (see Photo 6).

Once the position of the turntable has been decided, a hole is cut in the baseboard as per the instructions provided by PECO. I aligned the gaps in the power pickup strips in the turntable base with the centreline of where my approach track was to be laid. I then placed the turntable bridge into the turntable pit, but still did not fit the fixing ring onto the turntable shaft.

If you have access to a multimeter, it would be worthwhile to check for continuity between the turntable rails and the wires connected to the brass contact strips in the base unit. It is now time to carefully trim the rails on the deck. Trim one end so that the deck rails are a good match to the approach track, and then rotate the turntable to ascertain what length to trim the other end rails to. It is easier to trim the rails with a Dremel or similar power tool with the turntable out of the base section (see Photo 7).

Once the two rail ends have been trimmed, the bridge can be placed back in position and rotated to check the alignment of both ends to the approach track. Once you are satisfied that the rails are the correct length and align with the approach track, and that the bridge rotates freely on its mounting, it is finally the time to fix the plastic ring onto the bridge shaft to hold the turntable in place.

The turntable is now ready to be placed in its final position and made to look pretty.

Additional prototype information

As the Sydney suburban railways were electrified, the railways found that they had about 70 spare tank engines. These engines were converted to tender locomotives and found gainful employment in the country branch line network, which lasted up until the end of steam. A number of the NSWGR 30T class locomotives were fitted with six-wheel tenders from older scrapped locomotives to enable them to be turned on a 50ft turntable that were used in many locations [Editor, see Les Fordham's Location to Model: Gilmore NSW in this issue].

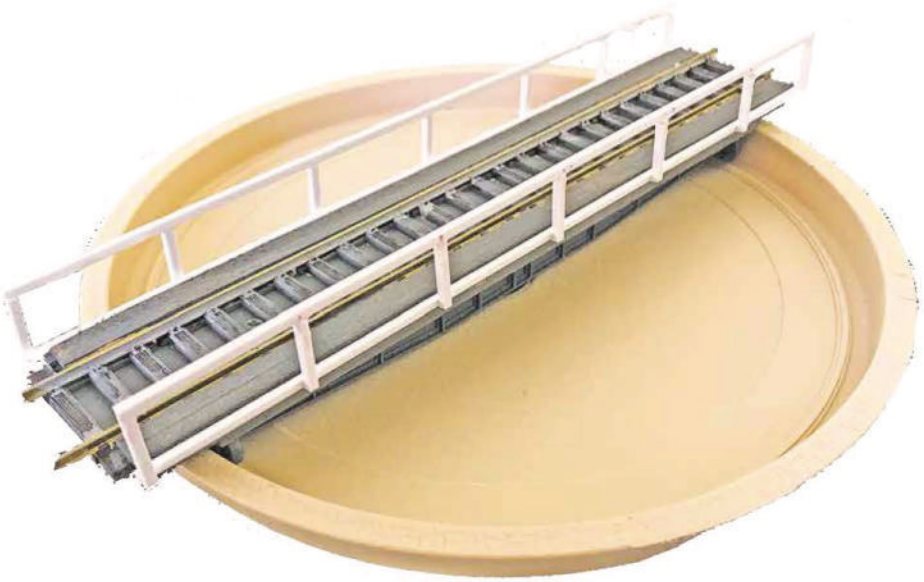


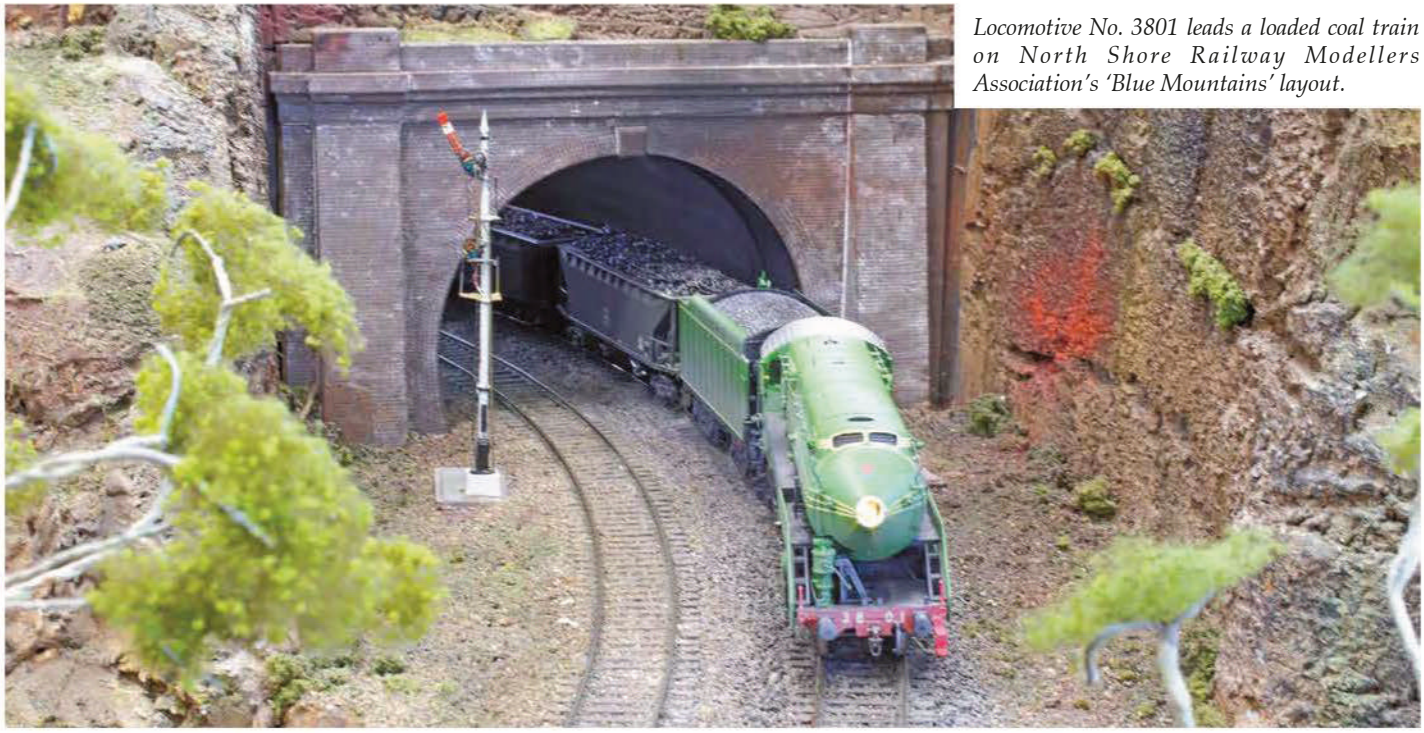
Photo 5.

Photo 6.

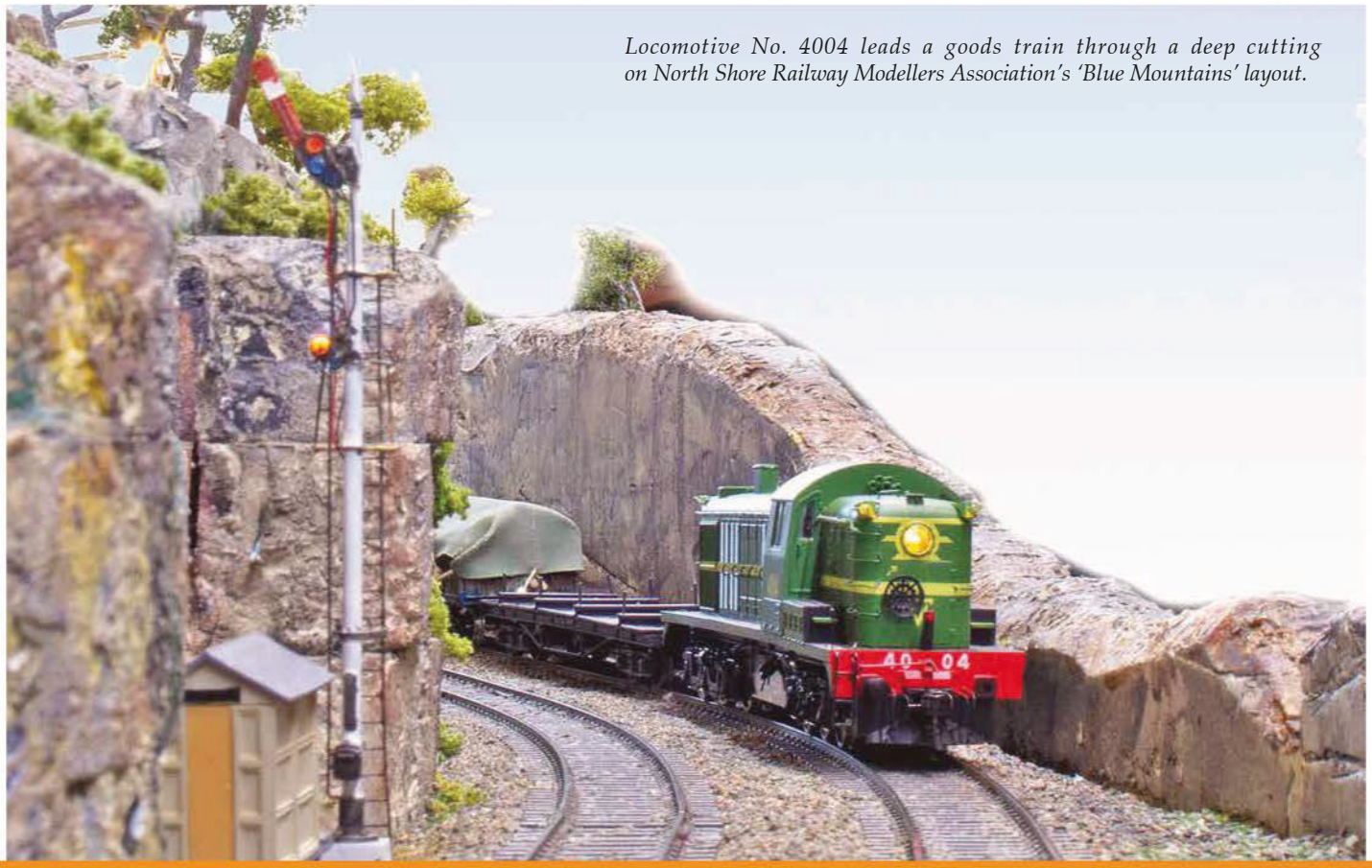
Photo 7.

North Shore Railway Modellers Association's 'Blue Mountains' layout

Photos by Scott Fitzgerald.



Locomotive No. 3801 leads a loaded coal train on North Shore Railway Modellers Association's 'Blue Mountains' layout.



Locomotive No. 4004 leads a goods train through a deep cutting on North Shore Railway Modellers Association's 'Blue Mountains' layout.

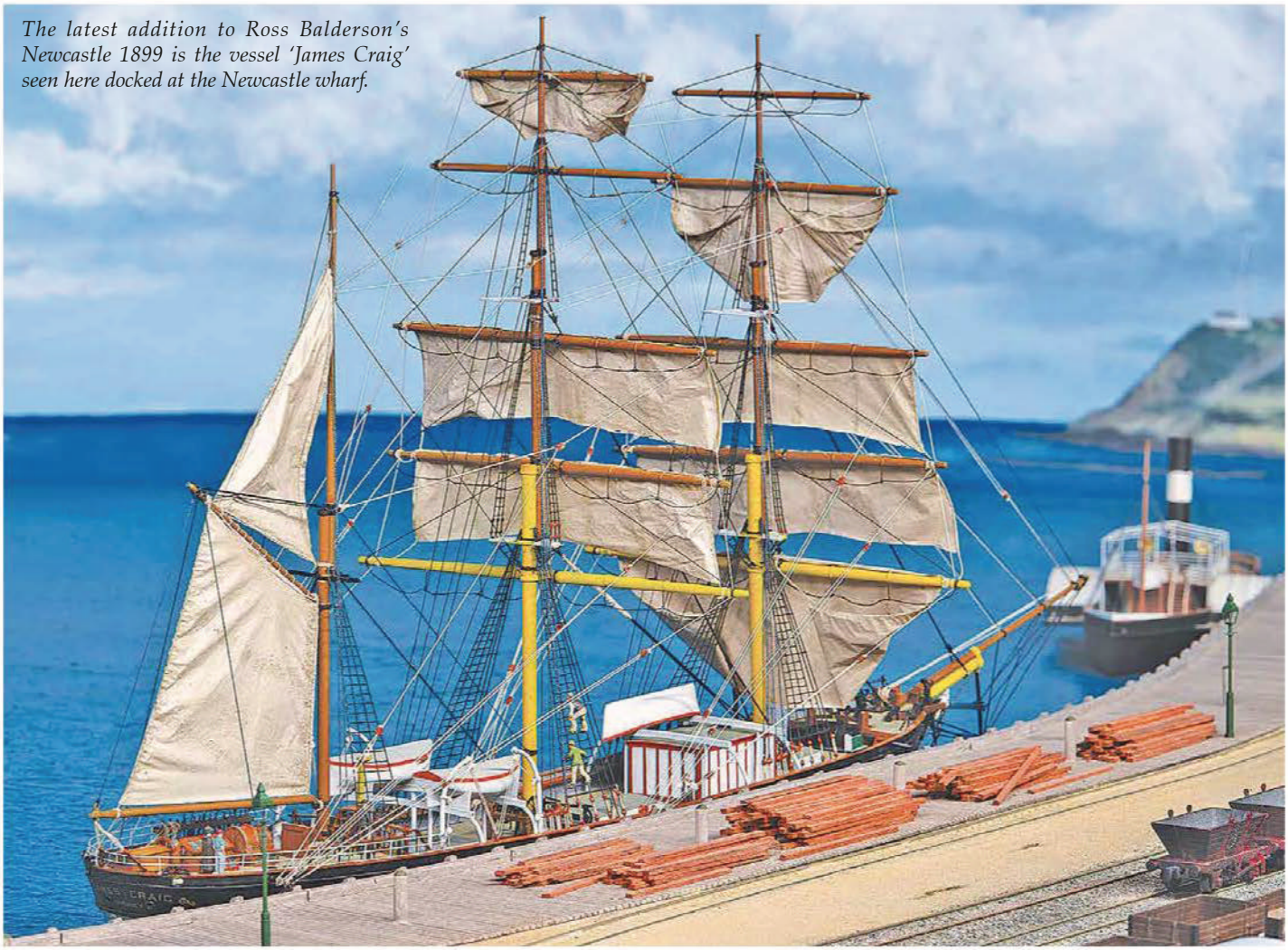
Michael Baum's Micro Layout

Michael Baum displays his latest micro layout, Mill Road. Photos by the author.

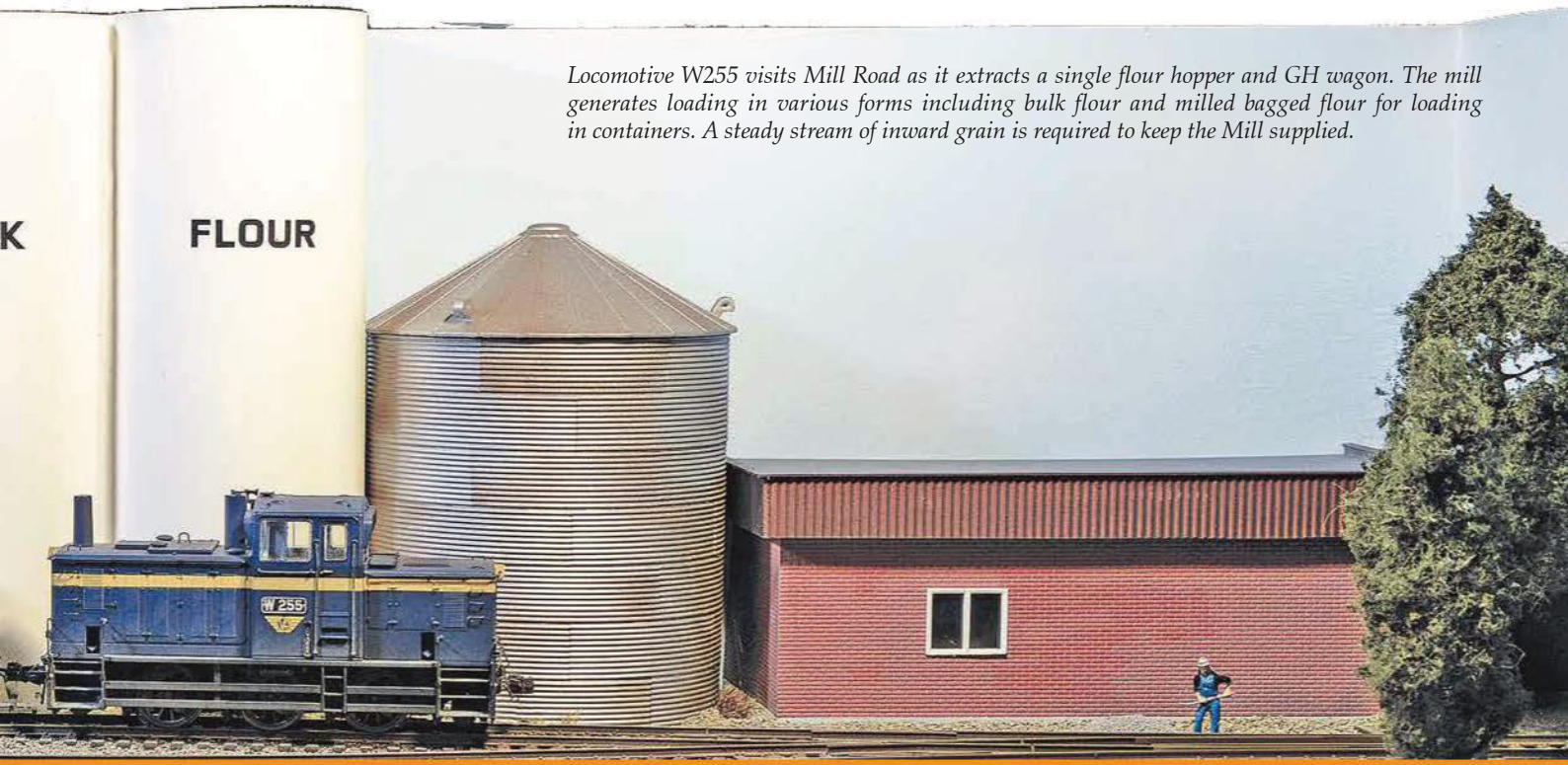
A very work-a-day scene at Grey's Bulk Four. Some employees enjoy the afternoon sun while shunting takes place.

Newcastle 1899 addendum

Ross Balderson shares his latest addition to his layout Newcastle 1899. Photo by Paul Dear.



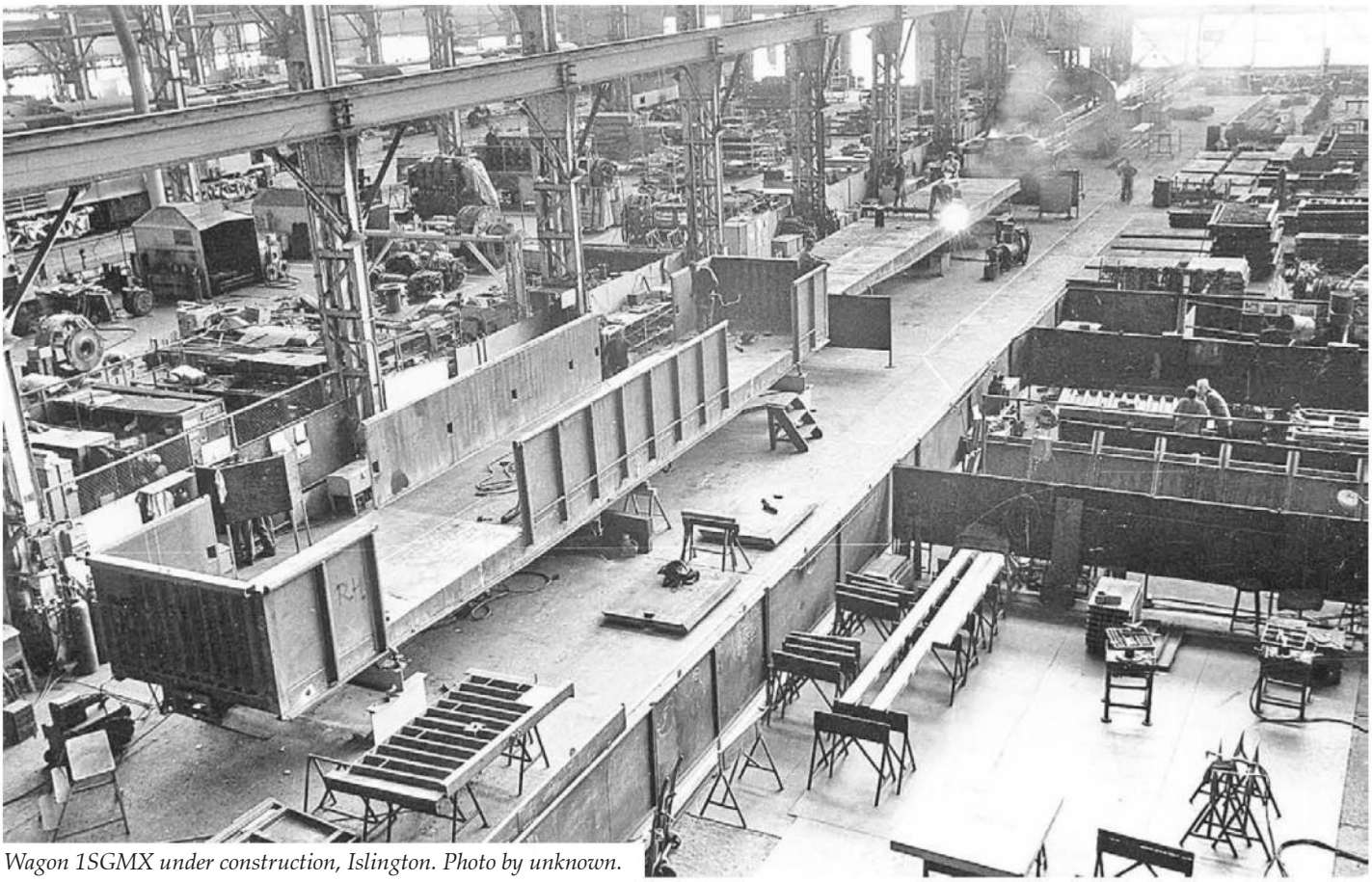
The latest addition to Ross Balderson's Newcastle 1899 is the vessel 'James Craig' seen here docked at the Newcastle wharf.



Locomotive W255 visits Mill Road as it extracts a single flour hopper and GH wagon. The mill generates loading in various forms including bulk flour and milled bagged flour for loading in containers. A steady stream of inward grain is required to keep the Mill supplied.

Wagon profile: SGMX Wagon

Mitchell Campton outlines the South Australian Railways SGMX open wagon.



Wagon 1SGMX under construction, Islington. Photo by unknown.

The SGMX wagon is a widely used open wagon entering service in the very late 1960s and early 1970s. The wagon could be seen in every major capital city on mainland Australia on both broad and standard gauge. Quite a few remain in service to the present day as RKFX steel-carrying wagons, including RKFX No. 32 M; originally SGMX No. 1.

Credit has to be given to Chris Drymalik's comrails.com website, where a vast amount of information is available for research into all manner of rolling-stock from Australian railways, including the South Australian Railways (SAR) SGMXs.

Early days

This fleet of 82 general-purpose open wagons was built by the SAR workshops at Islington, South Australia. They were a localised version of the North American-style 'mill gondola' commonly used in the United States of America (USA) and Canada to transport products from the steel mills all over the rail network. First entering service in December 1969, these wagons were coded SGMX and were built in three batches, see Table one.

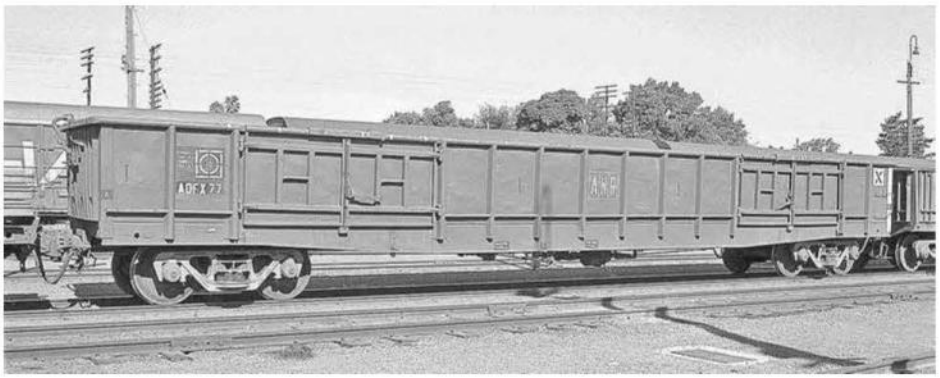
The wagons are 56′ (≈17m) long, feature 4′ 6″ (1.37m) high sides and have a total width of 9′ 6″ (2.9m). The underframe is a strong rigid steel frame with

SGMX No. 76 – Albury, Circa 1970s. Photo by Peter J Vincent.

Table One

Batch	Wagon Numbers	Qty.	Entered Service
1st	1 - 22	22	December 1969 - May 1970
2nd	23 - 42	20	May 1971 - September 1971
3rd	43 - 82	40	December 1971 - September 1972
Total	**82**		

SGMX No. 74 – Circa 1970s. Photo by Steve McElroy.



AOFX No. 77 – Albury, Circa 1980s. Photo by Peter J Vincent.

AOFX No. 76C – Circa 1980s. Photo by unknown.

AKFX No. 23T – Tottenham, March 1990. Photo by Norm Bray.

four primary girders; the outermost having a 'fishbelly' appearance tapered toward the centre, hiding most of the underframe and brake gear details. On each side of the wagon are two pairs of doors, each creating a 10' 3" (3.12m) opening. The exterior and interior sides also have tie-down bars to secure tarpaulins if required. The wagons were fitted with SAR XC or XB type bogies.

The first batch of wagons are distinguished by a ratchet handbrake handle on the B-end; the second and third batches have a handbrake wheel installed into a recess in the wagon end.

It is believed the first three wagons were delivered in SAR Grey, with the balance being painted in standard SAR goods traffic yellow, which they retained throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s. Some wagons were repainted Australian National Railways (ANR) red during the late 1970s, however most retained their yellow livery. Photographs show that at least one vehicle was repainted into Australian National (AN) green livery during the 1980s.

The wagons passed from the SAR into the ownership of ANR in 1978 when the latter was created in 1976.

Though the wagons have technically always had a four-letter code, with the 1979 Railways of Australia standardised lettering system, the wagons were recoded AOFX to reflect their ownership, usage and suitability for bogie-exchange.

Conversions and reclassifications

With the decline in general goods traffic for which they were designed, and an increase in the need for steel-carrying wagons, 60 AOFX wagons were modified between February 1986 and July 1988, primarily for carrying structural steel products. The modifications included:

- Removal of all side doors
- Removing a centre section of the wagon side between the doors (between 3.0 and 4.0m wide)
- Installing six 125x250mm timber bolsters (essentially broad-gauge sleepers) across the width of the wagon to support the wagon loads, held in place with steel restraining angles. These were installed at each 'opening'.
- Providing a winch system to restrain loads (later removed).
- Conversion to standard gauge (where applicable)
- Repainting into AN green and gold
- Additional side steps and grab-irons on the left-hand side of the wagons (AKFX 1-42 only)

The wagons received the code AKFX given their intended use on bulk-steel traffic, and renumbered AKFX 1-60. The wagons were randomly selected from the pool of AOFX wagons, and therefore their renumbering does not line-up with their original wagon number or batch. Additionally, the handbrake types are mixed across this group of wagons (See Table three).

In August 1988, the remaining AOFX

wagons were modified in a similar way by removing their doors, however the centre side section was retained. These wagons were used on broad-gauge services between Adelaide and Melbourne and coded AKGX, though they retained their original numbers. At least one wagon (RKGX No. 38-A) did have its sides modified in a similar way to the AKFX wagons, and has been noted operating on standard gauge services.

Table two outlines the codes applied to these wagons, and their intended assigned traffic:

Table Two

Code	Typical traffic allocation	Comments
SGMX	General purpose open wagon.	As introduced for batches one to three inclusive, Broad/standard gauge convertible
AOFX	General purpose open wagon.	Recoded per the ROA four-letter coding system.
AKFX	Bulk steel traffic throughout Australian standard gauge network, modified by Australian National; 'K' coding denotes steel traffic use.	Standard gauge only
AKGX	Bulk steel traffic – Adelaide to Melbourne.	Modified by AN (doors removed only); broad gauge use.
RKFX	Bulk steel traffic throughout Australian standard gauge network.	When transferred to National Rail, continued in use with Pacific National, standard gauge only.
RKGX	Bulk steel traffic – Adelaide to Melbourne	When transferred to National Rail, broad gauge use.

Current usage

With the founding of National Rail in 1992, all of AN's interstate goods traffic and operations services were transferred to the new national operator, with this being finalised in 1994. The transfer included all the remaining AKFX and AKGX wagons, recoded to RKFX and RKGX respectively. The wagons retained their AN green and gold liveries, and no further fleet-wide modifications were undertaken.

The wagons continued in service with National Rail on their standard (RKFX) and broad (RKGX) gauge SteelLink services, carrying anything from structural steel, rebar, pilings, rails and timber telegraph poles. The wagons could carry virtually anything that would fit inside them, limited only by the internal dimensions.

With National Rail being sold to create Pacific National in 2002, the wagons passed to the new owners and continued in their intended role. The only further modifications made was the occasional replacement of a side panel when these became damaged or corroded beyond repair.

The RKGX wagons were withdrawn and stored in the mid-late 2000s; and most, if not all, have now been scrapped. As of 2025 many of the RKFX wagons remain in service, still in their AN livery with a heavy layer of grime, rust and weathering, with many having new replacement side panels to repair damage from service or corrosion.

The class has now passed 50 years of service since their original construction. They are commonly seen on steel services across the national network, specifically those originating (or returning to) the steelworks at Whyalla, South Australia.

Conclusion

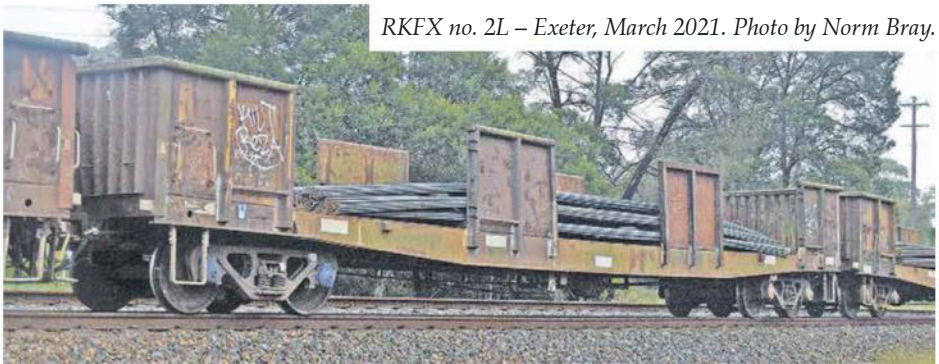
From humble beginnings in SAR's Islington Workshops, the SGMX wagons have shown that a solid design together with high-quality construction can yield a product fit for decades of continued service, with no sign of ending soon. Even today, up to ten RKFX wagons can be seen on a single PN steel train from or to Whyalla or even parked on the NSW Main North line awaiting a load of timber telegraph poles.

AKFX No. 23T – Whyalla, June 1992. Photo by Norm Bray.

AKGX no. 12F – Tottenham, December 1990. Photo by Norm Bray.

RKFX No. 38U – Whyalla, May 1995. Photo by Norm Bray.

RKFX no. 2L – Exeter, March 2021. Photo by Norm Bray.



RKFX 34H – Spencer Junction, May 2022. Photo by Norm Bray.

▲ *RKFX No. 51T – Port Pirie, Jan 2009. Photo by Malleeroute [Flickr].*

▶ *RKFX No. 35Q – Cowan, July 2024. Photo by Mitch Campton.*

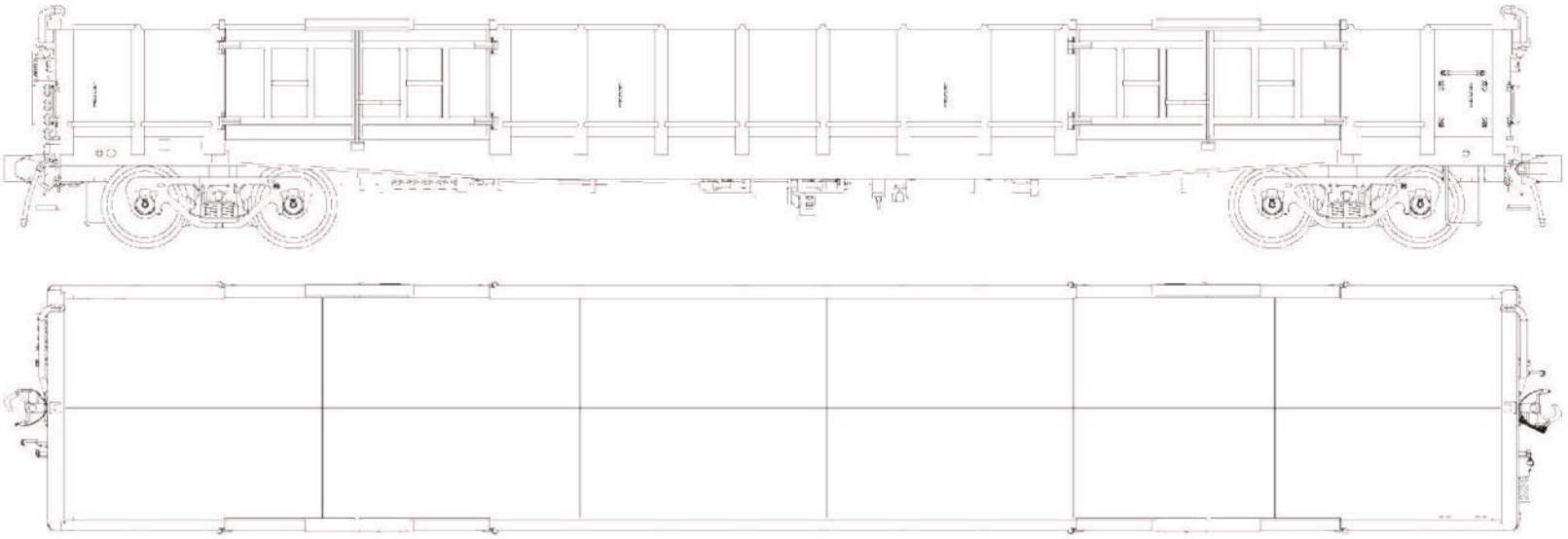
List of wagons

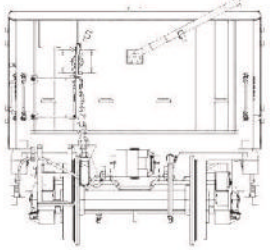
Refer Table three. This list of wagons has been derived from data sourced from comrails.com. Refer Table one for construction batch cross reference.

Table Three						
Original SGMX No.	Build date	Current wagon code	Current road No.	Check letter	Brake type	Notes
1	22. 12. 69	RKFX	32	M	Ratchet	
2	6. 2. 70	RKFX	35	Q	Ratchet	
3	12. 2. 70	RKFX	46	K	Ratchet	
4	17. 2. 70	RKFX	59	W	Ratchet	
5	25. 2. 70	RKFX	48	F	Ratchet	
6	2. 3. 70	RKGX	6	E	Ratchet	
7	5. 3. 70	RKGX	7	N	Ratchet	
8	11. 3. 70	RKFX	2	L	Ratchet	
9	11. 3. 70	RKFX	27	D	Ratchet	
10	19. 3. 70	RKFX	6	B	Ratchet	
11	23. 3. 70	RKFX	55	J	Wheel	Ratchet brake handle replaced with wheel.
12	31. 3. 70	RKGX	12	W	Ratchet	
13	6. 4. 70	RKFX	56	S	Ratchet	
14	8. 4. 70	RKFX	36	C	Ratchet	
15	14. 4. 70	RKFX	24	W	Ratchet	
16	22. 4. 70	RKFX	16	J	Ratchet	
17	24. 4. 70	RKFX	5	P	Ratchet	
18	4. 5. 70	RKFX	4	G	Ratchet	
19	18. 5. 70	RKFX	47	T	Ratchet	
20	18. 5. 70	RKFX	18	H	Ratchet	
21	21. 5. 70	RKFX	10	B	Wheel	Ratchet handle replaced with wheel.
22	24. 5. 70	RKFX	22	E	Ratchet	information is possibly RKGX 22-H. Photos show wagon with B-end flat panel as per batches two and three.
23	26. 5. 71	RKGX	22	H	Wheel	
24	27. 5. 71	RKFX	28	M	Wheel	
25	31. 5. 71	RKFX	21	S	Wheel	
26	7. 6. 71	RKGX	26	U	Wheel	
27	11. 6. 71	RKFX	37	L	Wheel	
28	17. 6. 71	RKFX	53	Y	Wheel	
29	22. 6. 71	RKFX	38	U	Wheel	
30	28. 6. 71	RKFX	9	F	Wheel	
31	1. 7. 71	RKFX	26	R	Wheel	
32	8. 7. 71	RKFX	58	N	Wheel	
33	13. 7. 71	RKGX	33	B	Wheel	
34	20. 7. 71	RKFX	15	A	Wheel	
35	28. 7. 71	RKGX	35	T	Wheel	
36	30. 7. 71	RKFX	11	K	Wheel	
37	6. 8. 71	RKFX	23	N	Wheel	
38	13. 8. 71	RKGX	38	A	Wheel	
39	17. 8. 71	RKGX	39	J	Wheel	
40	30. 8. 71	RKFX	52	F	Wheel	
41	9. 9. 71	RKFX	25	X	Wheel	

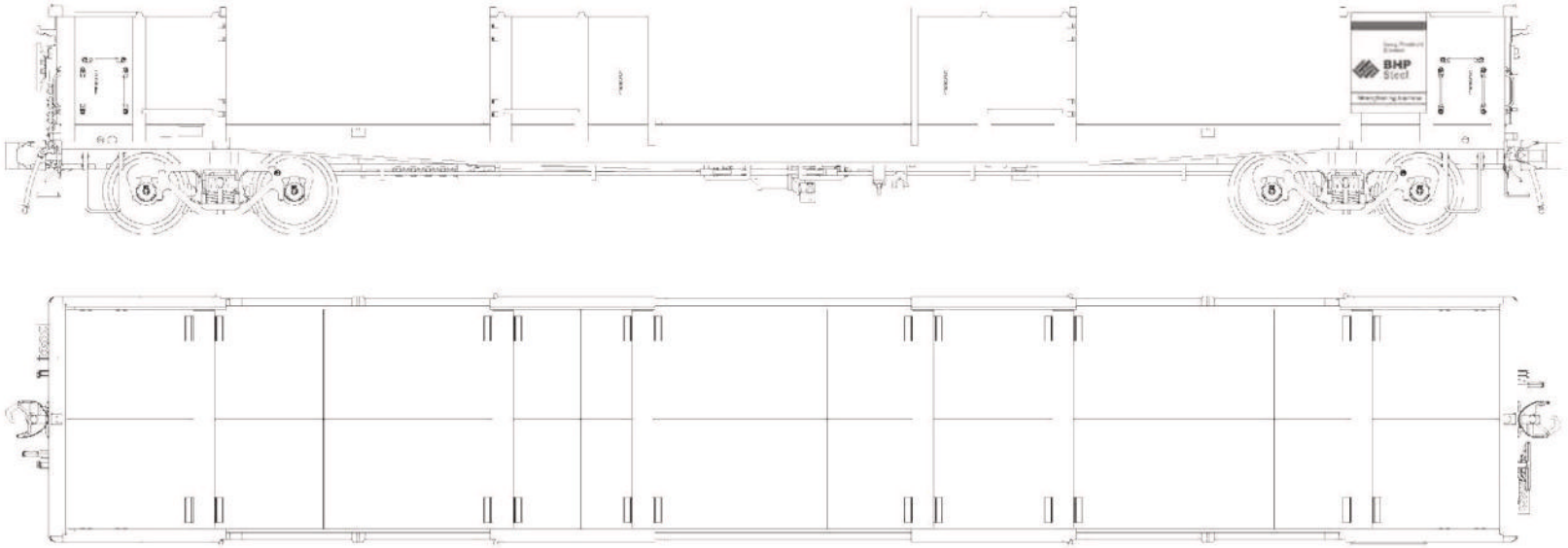
Table Three - Continued						
Original SGMX No.	Build date	Current wagon code	Current road No.	Check letter	Brake type	Notes
42	16. 9. 71	RKFX	8	T	Wheel	
43	22. 12. 71	RKFX	39	G	Wheel	
44	28. 1. 72	RKFX	40	C	Wheel	
45	7. 2. 72	RKFX	12	T	Wheel	
46	23. 2. 72	RKFX	44	P	Wheel	
47	23. 2. 72	RKGX	47	W	Wheel	
48	2. 3. 72	RKFX	41	L	Wheel	
49	8. 3. 72	RKFX	3	U	Wheel	
50	13. 3. 72	RKGX	50	N	Wheel	
51	16. 3. 72	RKFX	1	C	Wheel	
52	20. 3. 72	RKFX	31	D	Wheel	
53	7. 4. 72	RKFX	19	N	Wheel	
54	7. 4. 72	RKGX	53	R	Wheel	
55	17. 4. 72	RKFX	43	G	Wheel	
56	17. 4. 72	RKFX	49	Y	Wheel	
57	26. 4. 72	RKGX	56	V	Wheel	
58	8. 5. 72	RKFX	57	E	Wheel	
59	8. 5. 72	RKGX	59	C	Wheel	
60	26. 5. 72	RKFX	50	K	Wheel	
61	30. 5. 72	RKGX	61	H	Wheel	
62	8. 6. 72	RKFX	17	S	Wheel	
63	8. 6. 72	RKFX	34	H	Wheel	
64	14. 6. 72	RKFX	14	Y	Wheel	
65	27. 6. 72	RKFX	13	F	Wheel	
66	27. 6. 72	RKFX	45	B	Wheel	
67	5. 7. 72	RKGX	67	P	Wheel	
68	7. 7. 72	RKGX	68	B	Wheel	
69	19. 7. 72	RKFX	42	U	Wheel	
70	19. 7. 72	RKGX	69	K	Wheel	
71	26. 7. 72	RKFX	51	T	Wheel	
72	1. 8. 72	RKFX	54	A	Wheel	
73	3. 8. 72	RKFX	7	K	Wheel	
74	9. 8. 72	RKFX	29	V	Wheel	
75	15. 8. 72	RKFX	18	E	Wheel	
76	23. 8. 72	RKFX	20	J	Wheel	
77	23. 8. 72	RKGX	76	Y	Wheel	
78	31. 8. 72	RKFX	60	S	Wheel	
79	4. 9. 72	RKGX	79	S	Wheel	
80	8. 9. 72	RKGX	80	Y	Wheel	
81	15. 9. 72	RKFX	33	V	Wheel	
82	26. 9. 72	RKFX	30	R	Wheel	

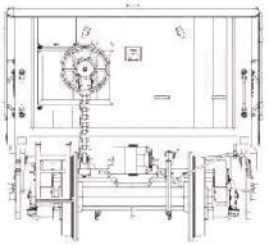
SGMX, AOFX and AKFX. Drawn by Mitch Campton.



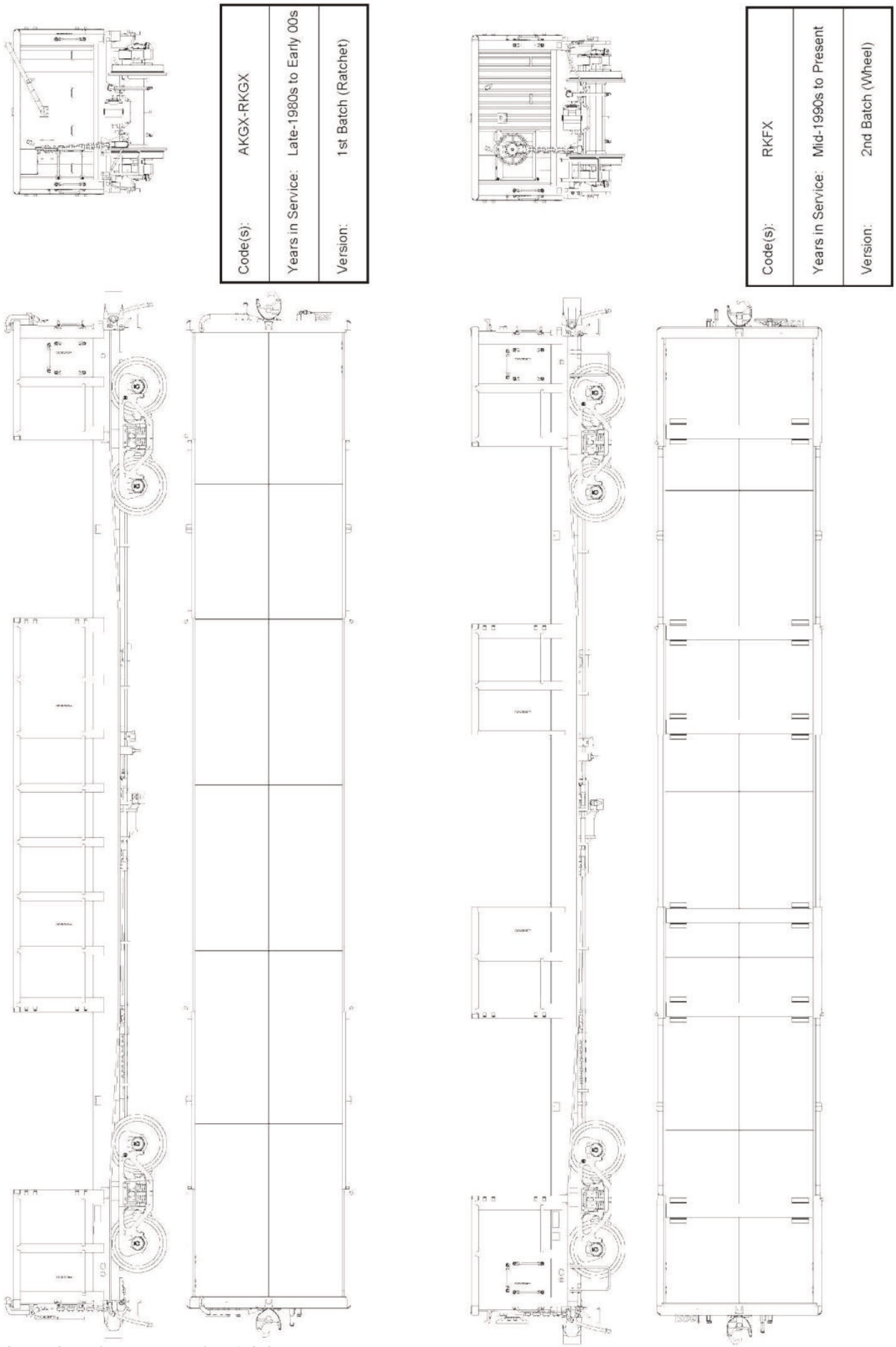


Code(s):	SGMX - AOFX
Years in Service:	1969 to mid 1980s
Version:	1st Batch (Ratchet)





Code(s):	AKFX
Years in Service:	Mid-1980s to Mid-1990s
Version:	2nd Batch (Wheel)

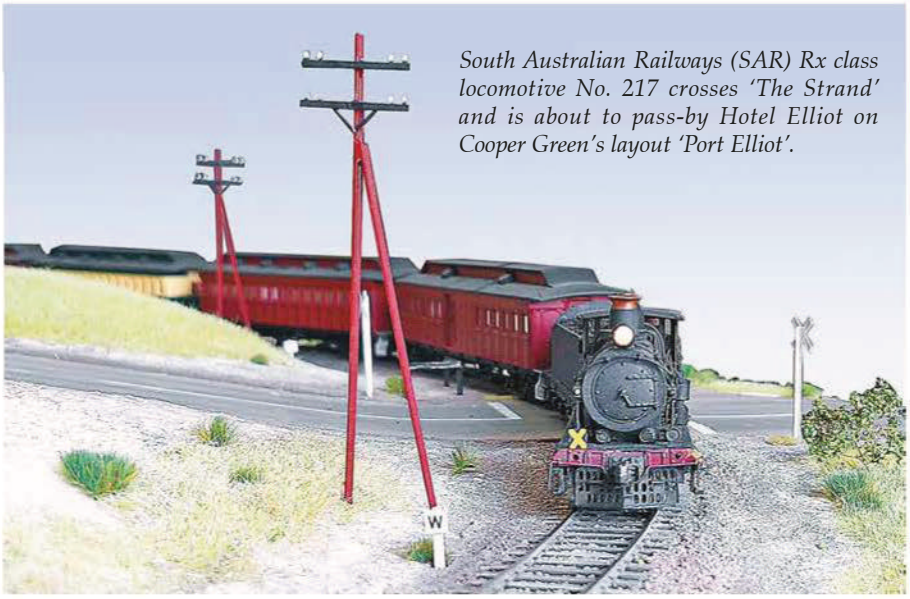


AKGX, RKGX and RKFX. Drawn by Mitch Campton.

Exhibition Gallery – Milang Show 2025

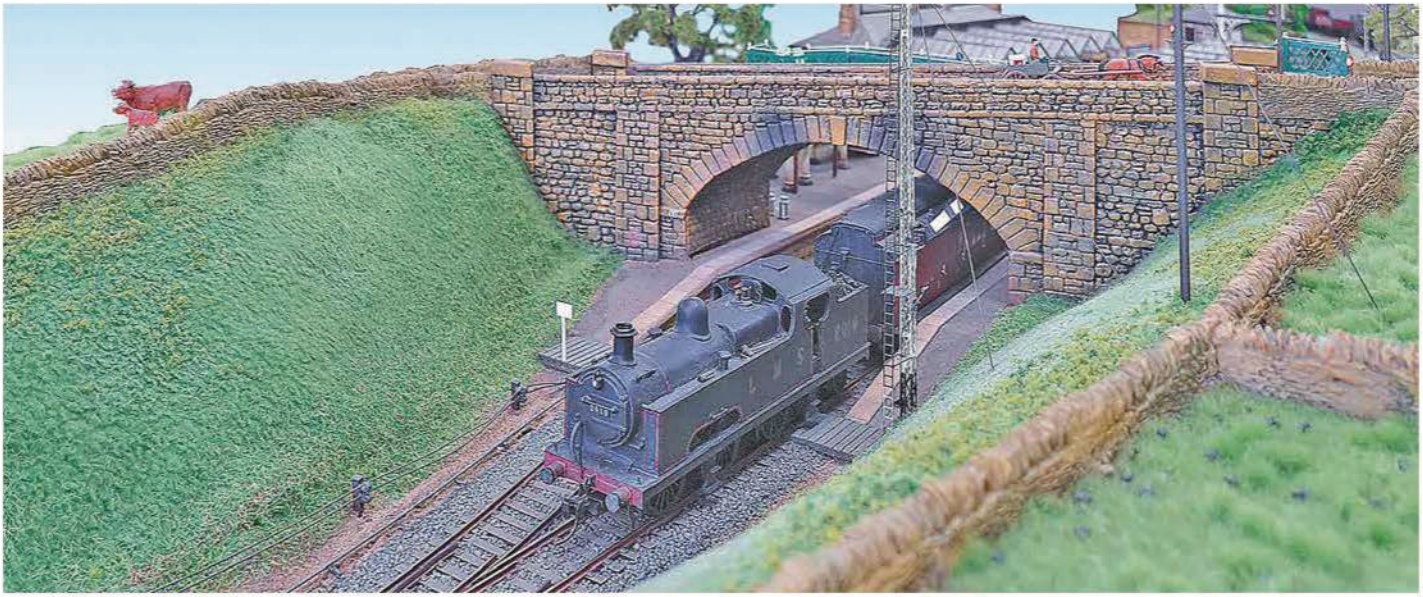
Keith Pennington presents a gallery on the Milang Model Railway Show 2025. Photos by the author.

The Milang Model Railway Show was held on the 22nd and 23rd November 2025 and was hosted by the Milang Railway Museum. Presented is a selection of photos from the event which was well attended by the public.



South Australian Railways (SAR) Rx class locomotive No. 217 crosses 'The Strand' and is about to pass-by Hotel Elliot on Cooper Green's layout 'Port Elliot'.

SAR Rx class locomotive No. 217 is bound for Victor Harbor and is seen here crossing Rosetta Terrace with a rake of Centenary coaches.



An appropriately weathered London Midland and Scottish (LMS) tank engine is departing Bakewell Bridge with a local passenger service on 'Wellingford & Bakewell Bridge'. This layout was built by Gavin Thrum and operated by the British Railway Modellers of Australia.

Auscision Models 81 class locomotive in HO scale
PO Box 1791
Castle Hill
NSW 1765
Phone: 0425 866 442
Email: information@auscisionmodels.com.au
Web Site: www.auscisionmodels.com.au
Price: $350 for DC, $485 for DCC sound

Locomotive No. 8137 rests between assignments at 'Leightonwood'.

The Prototype

Following the successful test of 'super series' traction equipment in locomotive 42220 in 1980, the State Rail Authority of New South Wales (SRA) ordered eighty, 3,000hp 81 class locomotives from Clyde Engineering on the 20th of October 1980. These were built at Clyde's Kelso factory near Bathurst, NSW, with the first of this order delivered in October 1982, and the last in February 1986. The 81s were the first locomotive class to be delivered in the new SRA Candy livery from the builder.

In 1989, the SRA's freight operations became FreightRail and later FreightCorp, and the entire class progressively received the new FreightRail blue and yellow livery. In 1990, Clyde Engineering persuaded the NSW Government to build another four locomotives from spare parts, which joined the fleet in 1991 numbered 8181 to 8184, in FreightRail blue and yellow livery. A few of the class were transferred to National Rail in the mid 1990s and received the National Rail orange and charcoal grey livery whilst in this service.

All of the class were sold to Pacific National (PN) as part of the sale of National Rail and FreightCorp in 2002, and most continue to provide service today in PN livery. A comprehensive history of the introduction of the 81 class to service, covering design, development, and impact on the NSW railways up to the FreightRail era, was published in AMRM Issue 365, April 2024. A second article covering the history of the class from the early 1990s to the present day is being collated.

The Model

Auscision released these models at 'the Great Train Show' at Rosehill Gardens in October 2025, as a new, unannounced model, with a special introductory price significantly below that of the average new diesel locomotive model anywhere on the market. Having acquired a new, DCC sound-equipped, super-detailed locomotive, with a factory-fitted keep-alive for less than $400 in 2025 is probably as close as I'm ever going to get to the feeling of winning the lotto!

The model reviewed is No. 8137 in PN rural and bulk livery, with DCC sound. I chose this number particularly, as it was one I could quickly identify as having appeared on PN's train No. 4124, whilst waiting in line to enter the Rosehill exhibition. This train has become a favourite to watch in the Newcastle region over the last few years, due to the variety of wagons, locomotives, and consist length – sometimes the train is as short as one wagon! It also invariably has at least one 81 class in the consist.

The models are available in eight different liveries and six different body versions. Interestingly, the as-delivered version of the locomotives, identifiable by their five portholes, tail disc mounted in the low position, and a mansard air intake, were not included in this production run. As these variants only lasted in this condition until the mid-1980s, when all lost one porthole window with the relocation of the mansard air intake to the side of the body, perhaps this will feature in a future release.

The locomotive is presented in Auscision's

Locomotive No. 8118 at Morandoo.

Locomotive No. 8137 cab end.

Locomotive No. 8118 No. 1 end observer's side at Morandoo.

Locomotive No. 8118 pilot detail at Morandoo.

Locomotive No. 8137 No. 1 end observer's side.

Locomotive No. 8137 pilot detail.

usual sturdy box with individual model details printed on one end, and a candy-liveried 81 side profile on the lid. Continuing the trend towards packaging improvements of other recent releases by Auscision, the model is neatly housed in soft foam. The box thoughtfully contains a bag of spare side mirrors, bogie hand brake wheels, and multiple unit cables, and another bag containing parts I'll come to shortly.

Detail items

The details on this model are impressive from the moment you open the box. The body has see-through roof fans, and fine etched-metal vents, side mirrors, lift rings, uncoupler bars, multiple unit cables, and air hoses. The interior cab detail is impressive, with a representation of the rear wall dials and switches, cab window blinds, driver's control stand and instrument display, as well as painted driver figures. Pleasingly, the drivers' seats are depicted in a similar vinyl blue as the prototype.

The body appears to have been moulded as a single piece, so there are no visible mould lines. The main measurements for the model come in at the correct scale to the prototype.

As with most contemporary models, Auscision's body style versions come with some compromises, presumably to reduce tooling costs. As examples, 81s don't have tail discs fitted anymore, though this is represented on 8137, and the crew door to the cab is lacking the ground-level door handle fitted to the modern-era prototype.

The locomotive is fitted with scale knuckle couplers, but not genuine Kadees. I personally don't find that the knuckle couplers fitted to the model work as reliably as Kadees, but this a personal choice. If you do decide to swap out the couplers, be aware that the lid of the coupler box is glued to one of the yellow rods linking the coupler release bar to the pilot. The easiest way to swap out the couplers without damaging this is to unscrew the coupler pocket lid, and while supporting the lid, gently grasp the coupler, and pull it and the coupler pocket out, being mindful of the air hoses on the pilot. Depending on the coupler used, you might need to include a thin shim of styrene between the lid and the coupler to ensure the coupler sits level in the pocket. See photo of the coupler being removed.

The locomotive also comes fitted with cab and coupler lights which are controlled per end, i.e. cab + coupler light as one function, as opposed to being able to individually control the coupler or cab lights. The cab lighting in particular is impressive, with no light bleed through the body walls or roof, or around the marker lights or headlights, the latter of which are also dimmable.

A controversial feature of these models has been the inclusion of a set of 26 radio antennae of different types, for the modeller to fit depending on the chosen era and locomotive. Auscision also have these available separately in a detail pack to fit to other classes of locomotives. On one hand, this customisable feature should be welcomed; it's not uncommon for manufacturers to receive criticism for tooling one particular variant of a locomotive in a production run, and applying multiple road numbers and liveries to it, accepting that some details – like radio antenna positioning – will ultimately be wrong compared to the prototype. Manufacturers make these conscious decisions to produce a locomotive that's mostly correct, because to make every single variant in a market the size of Australia's is prohibitively expensive. Most of the time, people who really care about having a perfect representation of their chosen locomotive will just chop the offending pieces off and place them in the correct position, or buy or fabricate an aftermarket part to achieve the look they're after. With that in mind, it's nice to have the choice of detailing a specific locomotive, with its prototype-specific details. What's unfortunately missing from the overall offering from Auscision is some guidance as to where to sink a pin vice into on the roof to accurately place the antennae for each era. I'm fairly confident this information would have been collected during the research phase, so it's an interesting omission. There's an AMRM article

on how and where to place those antennae just waiting for a budding writer!

Livery

The livery applied to No. 8137 is PN Rural and Bulk with stars. Despite the rural and bulk livery being the standard corporate livery for this class upon repainting in PN ownership, the stars located at the front of the A end underneath the driver's-side cab have only been added on the prototype in the last few years, and represent a very modern model. As I'm trying to recreate the last two years specifically, this suited me to a tee!

The pad printing is crisp throughout the model. On the prototype, the modern-era PN liveries have a 'coupler light switch' label in black on a white background on the pilot, located behind a metal step that hangs in front of it to access the ledge above the pilot. This is present on the model and readable under a magnifying glass or in close-up photos.

Bogies

The bogies are impressively detailed – with visible prototypical markings, sanding pipe details, and the handwheels so characteristic of these locomotives. The only downside here is that only the one bogie appears to have been tooled for all variants. As delivered, the 81 class had axle covers on the ends of the axle boxes, however by 2025, the class have lost these covers, and so the ultra-modern PN versions aren't correct for the prototype.

Running qualities

The model weighs 570 grams, which feels heavier in the hand than most recent locomotives released – it's at least 100 grams heavier than my Auscision 80 class! The model was tested on code 100, code 75 and code 70 track and ran smoothly without a flicker in any of the lighting functions, thanks to the factory-installed capacitor. It's truly pleasing to see these becoming a standard feature from many Australian manufacturers, as it improves reliability and enhances the play value of a sound-equipped locomotive. For the 81s in particular, a large number of the class were employed in coal haulage during the 1980s with the SRA, and were fitted with 'Speedmaster' technology, enabling the locomotive to maintain a consistent 0.2-0.4km/h while loading and 1.2-1.4km/h while unloading. Being able to reliably run your model at a low speed (combined with the drive hold function to notch the sound up and down) really enhances the fun you can have with operating trains prototypically.

While I don't have any 18-inch radius curves to put Auscision's stated minimum radius for this locomotive to the test, it performed faultlessly through PECO SL192-E points (code 75 small radius left-hand).

The DCC sound features are also impressive. Start up is via function 'F8'; pressing once will initiate a 'warm' start, where the engine-start to idle sequence takes a few seconds, while pressing 'F8' three times will initiate a 'cold' start, which takes roughly three times as long as the warm start for the engine to come to life. The low idle function, a key aspect of these locomotives, is nicely represented, and the speakers provide excellent, clear sound that doesn't distort as the engine throttles up or while multiple sounds are playing simultaneously, such as engine, rail squeal and horn. The only let-down is the use of a generic five-chime horn. A recording of an actual 81 class horn would be the icing on what is otherwise a very satisfying sound file.

Verdict

Overall, Auscision has released a very pleasing model that will appeal to a wide range of modellers. I rate this model an overall 9 out of 10.

Ben Gray

▶ *Locomotive No. 8137 No. 2 end, radiator and dynamic brake fan detail.*

▶ *Coupler removal process.*

REVIEWS

The products covered in the Review pages have been supplied or made available by the manufacturer, producer, importer or retailer listed in each product heading. AMRM welcomes access to new product lines for inclusion in the Review pages and requests items be addressed to the Editor at Australian Model Railway Magazine, PO Box 345, Matraville 2036. Readers are reminded that the prices quoted in the reviews are those applicable at the time of going to press. Those using the prices as a guide to purchasing products by mail order should always add extra for postage, or contact the supplier for the additional cost for mail order.

Editor

Queensland Railways CCH/CCHP Prairie Wagon
HOn3½ and HO scale by CGL Models
Address: P.O. Box 5288, Bundaberg West. QLD. 4670
Website: https://www cglmodels.com.au
Price: Pack of two wagons $185.00 AUD

Prototype CCH wagon photo by Keith McDonald.

The prototype

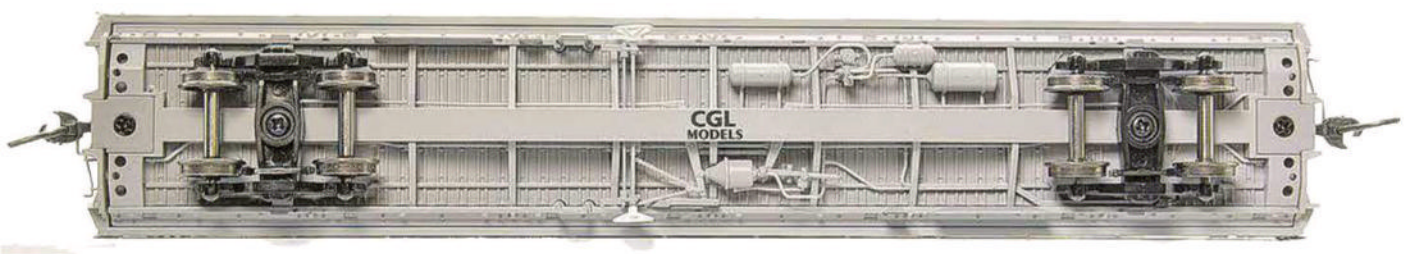
The first prototype CCH Prairie Wagon entered service in March 1991. The wagon was converted from an HWO all-door, open-sided wagon built in 1976. The HWO wagon had proved to be a winner and was a wagon of choice for freight forwarders due to their length and carrying capacity. Many of the class in this traffic were fitted with end and side gates to provide extra volume, allowing loose freight to be stacked to the loading gauge. The load was covered with company tarpaulins for weather protection during the trip. The inside door stanchions on the HWO robbed the loader of a uniform loading area, as two pallets didn't fit across the wagon between the stanchions in this area, so in 1991 some wagons were modified with an outside door stanchion to provide a uniform loading floor.

With the introduction of the side curtain wagons/containers some of the issues were addressed. They provided a uniform floor across and along the wagon and took away some of the manual labour to make the load secure and weather protected. However, the wagons were modified box wagons that were shorter, and with less carrying capacity than the HWO wagon.

The prairie wagon design allowed the entire side and roof of the wagon to be rolled back, offering greater access to a uniform clear floor allowing cranes to be used as well as forklifts to load and unload the wagon. This concept was fitted to a modified HWO wagon, where the wider floors and higher ends provided a longer and wider floor with larger capacity than the side curtain wagons. These wagons were converted at Ipswich Workshops, and the canopy system was manufactured by Structureflex. The covering was fitted to frames at each end of the wagon and supports along the wagon which were on rollers, allowing the canopy to retract back along the wagon, providing access to two thirds of the wagon length. Internally the wagon was fitted with 24 removable gates to prevent the freight from shifting in transit. The wagons were built to the maximum rollingstock gauge providing a loading area 15400mm long by 2490mm wide and 2760mm high, and could carry 40 tonnes.

The prototype CCH wagon No. 39582 was converted in March 1991. This wagon had a plain, bright orange canopy without the QR company logo. A further 20 wagons were

CCH wagon side on profile shot in QRX Livery.



CCH wagon on its side showcasing the underframe detail.

converted between November 1991 and March 1992, all of which had an orange canopy and carried QRX logos. In March 1994 the final conversion was CCHP 39564; this wagon had a grey canopy with Q-Link branding. This wagon was also permitted on passenger trains running at 80 km/h and was marked accordingly. CCH wagons were allocated to QRX traffic and were used on the North Coast Line (NCL) between Moolabin (Brisbane) and Cairns. The reason for the use of CCHPs on passenger trains is not known. Given the requirements for passenger train rollingstock (installation of solid wheels that required ultrasonic testing every three months and modified brake equipment that required additional workshop inspections), the carrying capacity of the wagon and passenger trains with freight wagons attached at the time limited the use of the wagon to the Inlander service between Townsville and Mt Isa.

The classification is an interesting choice, as during World War II a number of open sided 'H' wagons were converted to 'C' type cover box wagons. Being a bit different to the original 'C' wagons they were called the 'CH' class, with most out of service by the mid 1970's. Here we have a canopy covered wagon converted from a 'H' type open wagon and the classification is CCH. 'P' on the end of a freight wagon class identified wagons available for use on passenger trains. The wagons kept their original HWO numbers.

The CCH wagons remained in service until about 2000, when containers had become the principal means for transporting freight, and the QR container wagon fleet had been upgraded to 100 kph for running on the NCL. As a result, most freight trains running on a 100 kph timetable were known as premium freight services. This left very few train services for express freight wagons rated at 80 kph on the NCL.

Victorian Railways took delivery of 50 similar type wagons during the mid-1980's as the VFNX class.

For additional prototype images please refer to the CGL Models website.

The model

- The models are available in HOn3½ (12 mm track) and HO (16.5mm track). Four (4) different packs as below are provided for the modeller,
- Pack 1 - CCH 39531 (QRX livery), CCHP 39564 (Q-Link livery)
- Pack 2 - CCH 39496, 39544 (Both QRX livery)
- Pack 3 - CCH 39525, 39551 (Both QRX livery)
- Pack 4 - CCH 39582 (Prototype livery, no company logo), CCH 39503 (QRX livery).

Packs 1 and 4 were supplied for the review.

The models are super-detailed in every aspect. Underframe and bogies are similar to the HWO wagons produced back in 2018 which have been updated with the modifications for the CCH wagons. All the brake equipment is in the correct position with piping, levers, rods, and hand brake mechanism all present. The underbody frame is correct with coupling boxes set within the headstock assembly frame. Genuine Kadee® scale knuckle whisker couplers are fitted in the headstock sub frame, and the coupling box features a 0.55mm spacer to allow the modeller to adjust the coupling height according to their requirements. The unique floor arrangement with wooden inserts can be seen from under the wagon.

The models have captured the CCH wagon body shape spot on, including finely detailed coupling release levers as per the prototype. The locking/release lever mechanism for the canopy are also fitted across the wagon. Included in the box is a pack of buffers and headstock brake cocks/hoses for the modeller to fit if they so wish to do. The wagons entered service with buffers fitted, however I don't think they were there for very long.

Bogies fitted to the wagon are QR 37 bogies which are highly detailed with raised lettering on the side frames. RP25-88 profile blackened metal wheels are fitted to the bogies. The bogies are extremely free runners – if the wagon is placed on an uneven section of the layout, it will be gone before you turn around. Brake blocks/shoes are fitted to the bogie frame in front of the wheels. A Single Actuator Brake (SAB) load/empty changeover valve can be found on one bogie as per the prototype. The bogies have the correct size wheels and wheel spacing and mirrors the prototype.

The main body of the prototype is a one-piece PVC tarpaulin type arrangement that forms the roof and both sides. This is fixed onto movable end frames and is supported by round support bars along the wagon. As one would expect with this type of canopy covering, there will be creases, and the supports would be visible along with dips between them. This has been captured exquisitely, and looks like the real thing. You want to poke it with your finger to see

CCH wagon end face.

CCH wagon side on shot showing end and side.

CCH wagon on its side showcasing the underframe detail.

CCH wagon with QR Q-Link livery.

if it moves!

The overall accuracy of the model dimensions are good. The plans show a small 20 mm difference in width and height between the CCH and the CCHP on the prototype, which is not noticeable to eye of the HO modeller. With the coupling depressed as in a train pushing, the gap between the wagons is as per the prototype, 12mm. On the weighbridge the model weights 83 grams.

Livery

The painted finish on the model is excellent, and the true colour has been captured as if the wagon is fresh ex-works. Finish on the lettering is tremendous, clear, to scale with the smallest details being readable. The lettering is consistent to that found on the prototype. With the help of magnifiers, the paint date on the CCHP corresponds with the date on the wagon's history card. Companies' brands applied are clear and sharp.

On track performance

The wagons were taken straight from the box and placed on the layout. The layout is laid with PECO HOm track and points that has been embedded within ballast for around 20 years. The wagons were placed in various consists with other rollingstock. A train of 18 wagons with four (4) CCH/CCHPs attached was pulled and pushed around the layout, back and forward over crossovers and multiple points for two hours without any derailments. The final test was to run a NCL prototype length-train of 33 wagons with the four CCH/CCHP on the lead. Again, the wagons' performance was faultless. As indicated previously, they are very much a free runner. The wagons have been manufactured to run on a recommended minimum 18-inch radius curve.

Summary

The model captures the true spirit of the prototype in all aspects with super fine detailing along with accurate markings and an excellent finish. On the track the wagon performed faultlessly and mixed with other rollingstock without any issues or adjustments required. The wagons will be at home with your HWO, PCO and BEZY wagons on a NCL freight service. Or, if you just like bright colours, this wagon is for you. Congratulations to the CGL team for another awesome model.

Arthur Hayes.

Recent Releases

Auscision Models – HO scale

Has released the V/Line N class locomotive available r-t-r DCC ready with a 21 pin socket and DCC and sound in the following liveries:

- V/Line orange and grey, four road numbers
- V/Line pass MkI red blue and white, two road numbers
- V/Line pass MkII red blue and white, two road numbers
- V/Line pass MkIII red yellow and grey experimental livery, one road number
- V/Line pass MkIII red yellow and grey, three road numbers
- V/Line Public Transport Victoria (PTV) purple and yellow, three road numbers

Refer: https://www.auscisionmodels.com.au/N%20Class%20Page.htm

N464 'City of Geelong' in V/Line PTV livery.

N458 'City of Maryborough' in V/Line livery.

◥ *N469 'City of Morwell' V/Line Pass MkI livery.*

N469 'City of Warragul' V/Line Pass MkIII livery.

Bowser Manufacturing HO scale

Has released the ALCo C415 in Hamersley Iron livery, available r-t-r DCC ready with a 21 pin socket and DCC and sound. Refer: https://www.bowser-trains.com/new/C415.html

C415 No. 1000 in Hamersley Iron livery.

Want to be published in the AMRM?

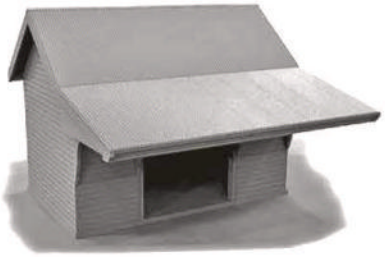
Do you have an article idea, or would you like to see your layout in AMRM? Contact the editor at: amrmeditor@outlook.com

AMRM Team

Oz Kits N scale

Have released a range of New South Wales Government Railways (NSWGR) buildings and lineside kits, including relay huts, telephone boxes, Station Masters residence, Signal boxes, goods sheds, cream sheds, A1 and A2 Station buildings.

Refer: https://www.scalemodelco.com.au/shop/oz-kits-n-building-lineside/



NSWGR A1 station building, digital rendering.

NSWGR relay hut two panel, digital rendering.

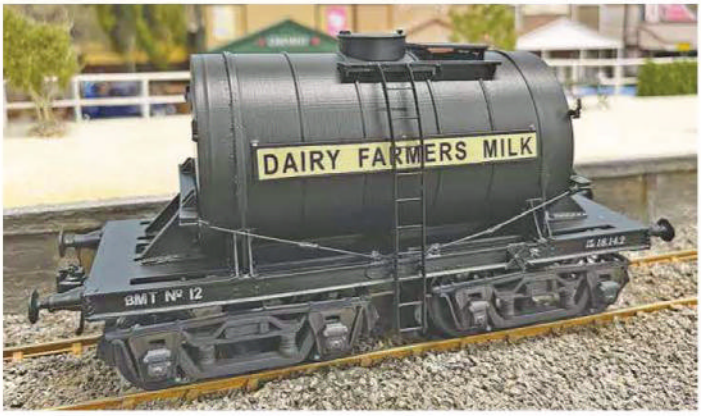
NSWGR two storey signal box, digital rendering.

Recent Releases

Waratah Models O scale (7mm)

Has released two NSWGR wagon kits, a BMT milk tanker wagon, and a WHX aluminium grain hopper wagon.

Refer: https://www.scalemodelco.com.au/shop/waratah-models/



NSWGR BMT milk tanker wagon.

NSWGR WHX aluminium grain hopper wagon.

VisionNscale N scale

Has released a 40ft curtain sided container, in Toll and Patrick liveries.

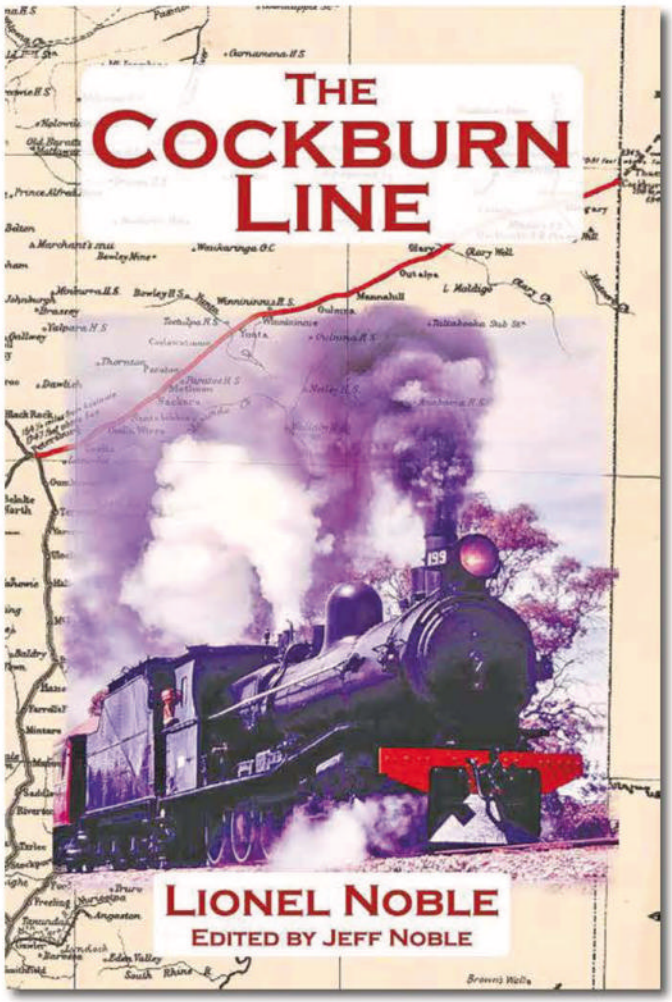
Refer: https://www.visionnscale.com.au/containers?tag=Curtain%20Side

40ft curtain sided container in Patrick livery.

40ft curtain sided container in Toll livery.

Lionel Noble

Has recently released publication the Cockburn line between Peterborough and Cockburn South Australia, 200+ pages 150+ images. Refer: https://lionelnoble.com



Front cover of the book The Cockburn Line.

Auscision Models – HO scale

Have received painted pilot models of their r-t-r Aurizon QHCH coal hopper wagons. Also received are painted pilot models of their r-t-r Australian Transport Network (ATN) XGAY grain hopper wagons and later derivatives.

◥ *Aurizion QHCH coal hopper wagons.*

ATN XGAY grain hopper wagon.

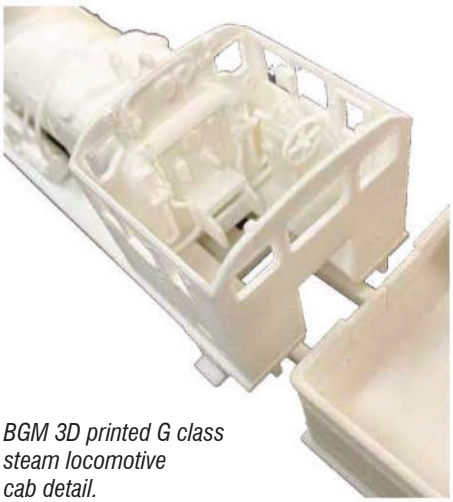
▲ *Australian Wheat Board (AWB) WGBY grain hopper wagon.*

◥ *Australian Wheat Board (AWB) WGBY grain hopper wagon.*

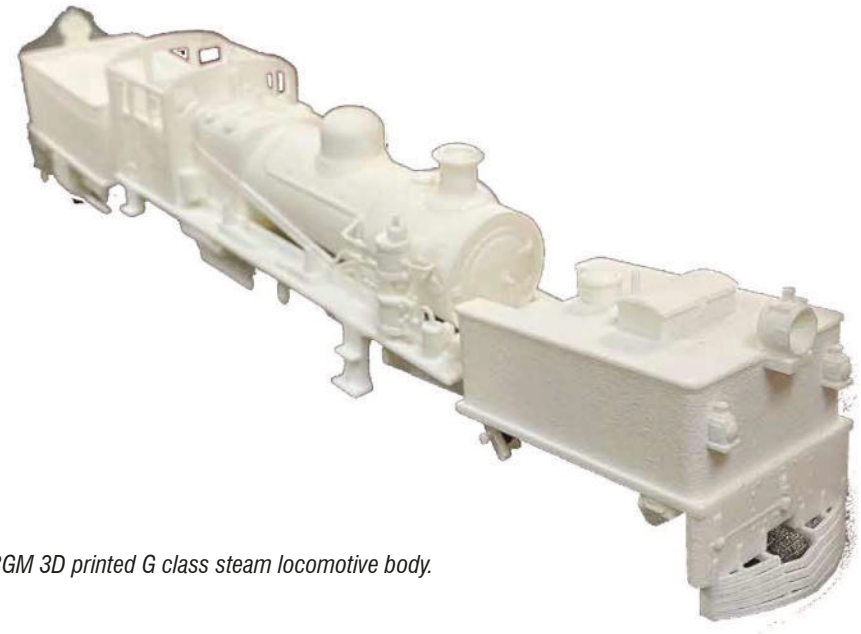
BGSY grain hopper wagon in George Weston Foods – Southern Shorthaul Railroad livery.

Broad Gauge Models – O scale

Has in development the Victorian Railways G class 2-6-0 + 0-6-2 narrow gauge steam locomotive. This model will be available in kit form and will include a brass frame etc, for the mechanism.



BGM 3D printed G class steam locomotive cab detail.



BGM 3D printed G class steam locomotive body.

SDS Models – HO Scale

Scheduled for production in 2026 are the following:

20ft ISO containers and wagon packs, covering the Queensland Railways (QR) PCO container flat wagons (four different three wagon packs), New South Wales Public Transport Commission (PTC) ICX container flat wagon (five different three wagon packs) and Victorian Railways (VR) KQ four-wheel flat wagon (four different four wagon packs).

The 20ft containers will also be available in three packs, either mixed or in sets (16 packs available). Also in production is the VR livestock container, available in two different three packs.

Additional wagons in production for 2026, include:

- PTC OCY 63ft container flat wagon
- PTC ICX 45ft container flat wagon
- VR FQX 63ft container flat wagon
- VR JX four-wheel pressurised cement wagon

Note: all images shown are digital renderings.

On Track Models HO scale

The Pacific National 94 class locomotive r-t-r has commenced the tooling phase at their factory.

Additional revisions to the Victorian Railways CJ cement hopper wagon have been completed, following confirmation this project will move to the tooling phase.

QR PCO three pack with containers.

QR PCO three pack with containers.

PTC ICX three pack with containers.

PTC ICX three pack with containers.

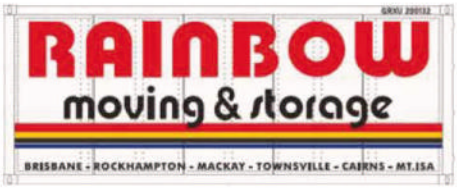
VR KQ four pack with containers.

VR KQ four pack with containers.

VR KQ four pack with containers.

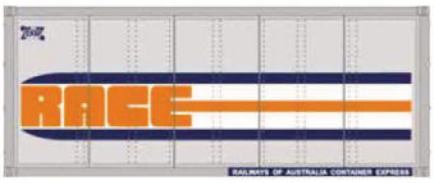
SDS Models – HO Scale - Continued

QRX smooth plate sided 20ft container.



RAINBOW smooth plate sided 20ft container.

SIMON smooth plate sided 20ft container.



RACE smooth plate sided 20ft container.

ACT rib sided 20ft container.

Commonwealth Railways smooth plate sided 20ft container.

OCL smooth plate sided 20ft container.

AJCL smooth plate sided 20ft container.

P&O smooth plate sided 20ft container.

ANL rib sided 20ft container.

Pacific Far East Line smooth plate sided 20ft container.

NYK smooth plate sided 20ft container.

Japan Line smooth plate sided 20ft container.

Y.S.Line smooth plate sided 20ft container.

K Line smooth plate sided 20ft container.

OOCL smooth plate sided 20ft container.

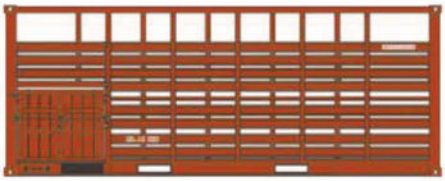
MOL smooth plate sided 20ft container.

Mitsui OSK lines smooth plate sided 20ft container.

Hapag Lloyd rib sided 20ft container.

ABC Container line smooth plate sided 20ft container,

TNT smooth plate sided 20ft container.



VR livestock container.

AMRM price rises

Due to increasing costs of production, the cover price of the magazine will increase from the April 2026 Issue.

The new price will be $14 AUD, see page 76 for our special subscription offer and you have until February 28 to lock-in existing rates for up to three years. This offer applies to both new and existing subscribers.

TrainOrama

The r-t-r Victorian Railways S class locomotive re-run is expected to ship late February early March, 2026 after the Chinese New Year China factory holiday break.

There has been a slight delay in dispatching the r-t-r GM class locomotive re-run pre-orders. This delay was unforeseen as the organiser; Bob Cooke was hospitalised after an incident where he sustained multiple fractures. He wishes to thank the many well-wishers for their concern.

Vale

Tim Stewart
1939 - 2025

Tim was born on the 9th of October 1939, at Marayong NSW. First child to Allan and Kathleen, Tim was soon joined by his brother Bernard and his sister Geraldine, later to be followed by Peter.

On the way home from school in 1948, Tim and his sister Geraldine were hit by a car and sadly Geraldine would not survive, which would prove to be one of the saddest points of Tim's life. Christmas 1954 saw Tim's father Allan, a technical teacher with what is now TAFE, transferred out to teach at Mudgee. Tim greatly enjoyed his years in Mudgee and only returned to Sydney to complete his articles in surveying. Tim became a registered land surveyor and joined the Department of Main Roads (DMR), as an engineering surveyor in April 1964. While working for the DMR, Tim met his future wife, Barbara Dales. Barbara was the chief stenographer to the Works Engineer at the M1 Mount White Interchange. Tim and Barbara were married in September 1967.

Tim and Barbara purchased a block of land in Berowra in 1967 for 12,000 pounds and using plans from the Sunday paper, and Brampton Homes built the family home which is still standing there today. Tim and Barbara had three children, Susan, Geoffrey and Barry.

Tim had an abiding and life-long love of railways, becoming an avid and passionate model railway aficionado. His love of railways stemmed from his grandfather, who was a clerk on the tramways, and before he became a technical teacher, Tim's father Allan was apprenticed to the railways. The discussion around the family dinner table about trains sparked a lifelong passion for the railways.

Tim Stewart. Photo by James McInerney.

Tim built a model railway based around the Mudgee area underneath his house of approximately 32 square metres. His layout 'Mudgee' was featured in AMRM issue No. 345 December 2020. Tim also built two exhibition layouts 'A'Beckett's Creek' [See AMRM issue No.160 February 1990] and 'Duck Creek'.

Even after losing his wife Barbara to cancer in 2001, Tim continued to model and share his love of railways with 'The Thursday Nighters,' a group of blokes drinking port and operating trains. Tim hosted his last railway Open Day on the 15th of May 2025, six weeks before his death.

Tim was a loving father to Susan, Geoffrey and Barry, father-in-law to Tom and Michelle, and 'Pop' to David, Michael, Rebekka, Arabella and Heath.

The Stewart Family

Mailbag

Leightonwood effect

I've really enjoyed seeing Ben's Leightonwood project take shape. For me it's a nice change from the usual rural setting for New South Wales Government Railways (NSWGR) layouts. Even better is the emphasis on operating with trip trains, something I always enjoyed as a goods guard at Enfield.

My take on the concept would be based on the Sandown industrial branch in Sydney. You could model the entire line without too much compression, or individual sections featuring specific industries. The diverse nature of those industries means that a wide variety of goods wagons were used on the branch. Modern era trains were mostly tank wagons for the Shell refinery sidings and containers for Seatons Transport.

Even though the line was primarily industrial, there were platforms served by workers trains. Modelling the years after 1959 allows for electrification. During race days at Rosehill the line was used to stable electric suburban trains, adding more operating interest.

[Editor note: A location to model article on the Sandown branch is in progress at this point in time.]

I belong to the Illawarra Model Railway Assocation. We're developing a number of FreeMo modules for exhibitions. I'm going to propose a few modules based on Sandown as my contribution to the FreeMo project. That will be a new direction for me, as I don't currently model an Australian prototype.

On a general note, you and the AMRM Team are doing a great job with the magazine. I think the balance of modelling and prototype articles is just right. And even though I'm not modelling the local scene, I'm always interested in what people are doing, and how they do it. I find the ideas and techniques featured are applicable for any scale, prototype or era.

Mark Newton.

▼ *Locomotive No. 48163 hauls a trip train into Leightonwood as seen on Ben Gray's Leightonwood layout. Photo by Ben Gray.*

Diary

EXHIBITIONS & EXPOS

SALISBURY – SA. January, 15-18, 2026. SANGS Model Railway will be on display at the Parabanks Shopping Centre, 68-84 John Street, Salisbury, Adelaide. Open: 9am–4.30pm daily.

COWES – VIC. January 17-18, 2026. Phillip Island & District Railway Modellers Inc Exhibition. Cowes Senior Citizens Hall, Lions Court, Cowes Victoria. Open: 10am-5pm (Sat), 10am-4pm (Sun). Adults $10, Children U/15 $5, Family $25.
Contact: Martin Murden Tel 0416 186 589.

NORLANE – VIC. January 24-25, 2026. Corio Exhibition, Centenary Hall Norlane ARC, 14-9 Cox Road, Norlane, Victoria. Open: Saturday & Sunday. Website: corio.exhibition@aep.org.au

WEST BEACH – SA. January 31, 2026. SANGS will be participating the West Torrens 'Touch-A-Truck Community' event to be held at Apex Park,
616 Burbridge Road, West Beach.
Open: 9.30am–1.30pm (Sat).

KINGSTON SE – SA. March 7-9, 2026. Kingston Model Railway & Hobby Expo, Kingston District Hall, 51 Agnes St, Kingston SE, SA 5275. Open: 9:30am-5pm (Sat & Sun), 9:30am-4pm (Mon). Adults $15, Concession $12, Family $25, Children $5, 3-Day Pass Family $30. Exhibitor, trade & sponsor enquiries welcome. Contact: Phil Southam Mobile: 0419 807 169; Email: kingstonse.ntsa@gmail.com

SPRINGVALE – VIC. 14-15 March, 2026. Train & Hobby Show, Sandown Racecourse, Gate 2 Grandstand, 591-659 Princes Hwy, Springvale Vic. Open: Saturday & Sunday. Website:
Exhibit.with.us@trainandhobbyshow.com.au

BUNDABERG WEST – QLD. March 21-22, 2026. Bundaberg Model Train & Hobby Expo. Bundaberg Multiplex Sports & Convention Centre, 1 Civic Avenue, Bundaberg West. Open: 9am-5pm (Sat), 9am-4pm (Sun). Contact: 0407 559 086.
www.facebook.com/bundabergmodeltrainexpo/

KALEEN – ACT. March 21-22, 2026. Annual Canberra Model Railway Expo at UC High School Kaleen, 104 Baldwin Drive, Kaleen ACT. Open: 9am-5pm (Sat), 9am-3pm (Sun). Adults $20, concession $15. Free entry for school age children.

LILYDALE – VIC. April 4-5, 2026. Yarra Valley Model Railway Club Exhibition. Lilydale Basketball Stadium, 26 Hutchinson St, Lilydale VIC 3140. Open: 9.30am-5pm (Sat), 10am-4pm (Sun). $20 Adult, $5 Children (15 and under), $40 Family (2 adults & 2 Children).
Contact: Matthew 0433 235 858.
Email: Secretary@yvmrc.org.au

SEMINARS & CONVENTIONS

EPPING – NSW. March, 14 2026. SCMRA Seminar. Sydney Electrified Railway II. Epping Creative Centre, 26 Stanley Road, Epping. Open: 9am-4.30pm (Sat). Registrations essential by 6 March. $50 includes lunch. Register online at
https://www.trybooking.com/CXTWX.

NOARLUNGA – SA. August, 21-23, 2026. National N Scale convention is planned August 2026 at the Hopgood Theatre, Noarlunga. Further details can be found on our website. www.nscaleconvetions.au

ADELAIDE – SA. September 12, 2026. Modelling the Railways of South Australia 30, at the Flinders Medical Centre lecture theatres, Bedford Park. Registration at 8.30 for 9am start (Sat). Registration forms: will be available late May 2026 by downloading from www.mrsac.com; from selected hobby shops; Adelaide Model Railway Exhibition in June 2026; or by email request to either
mrsaconvention@gmail.com
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Website: convention@mrsac.com.

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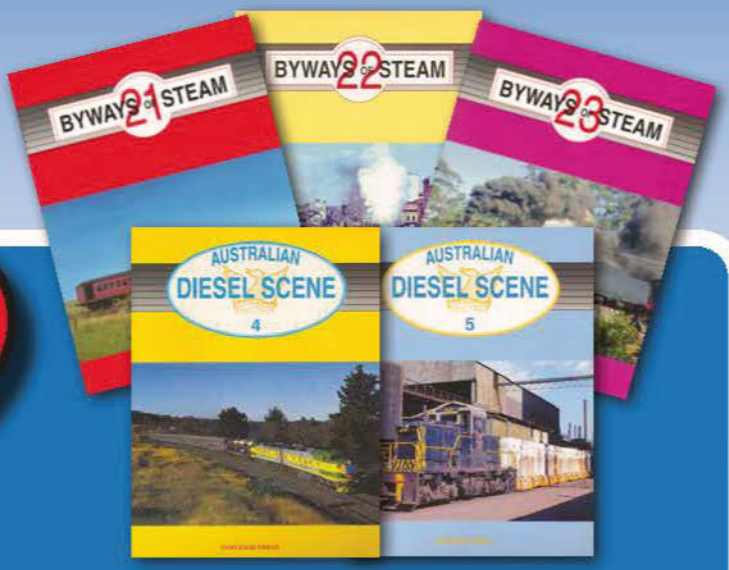

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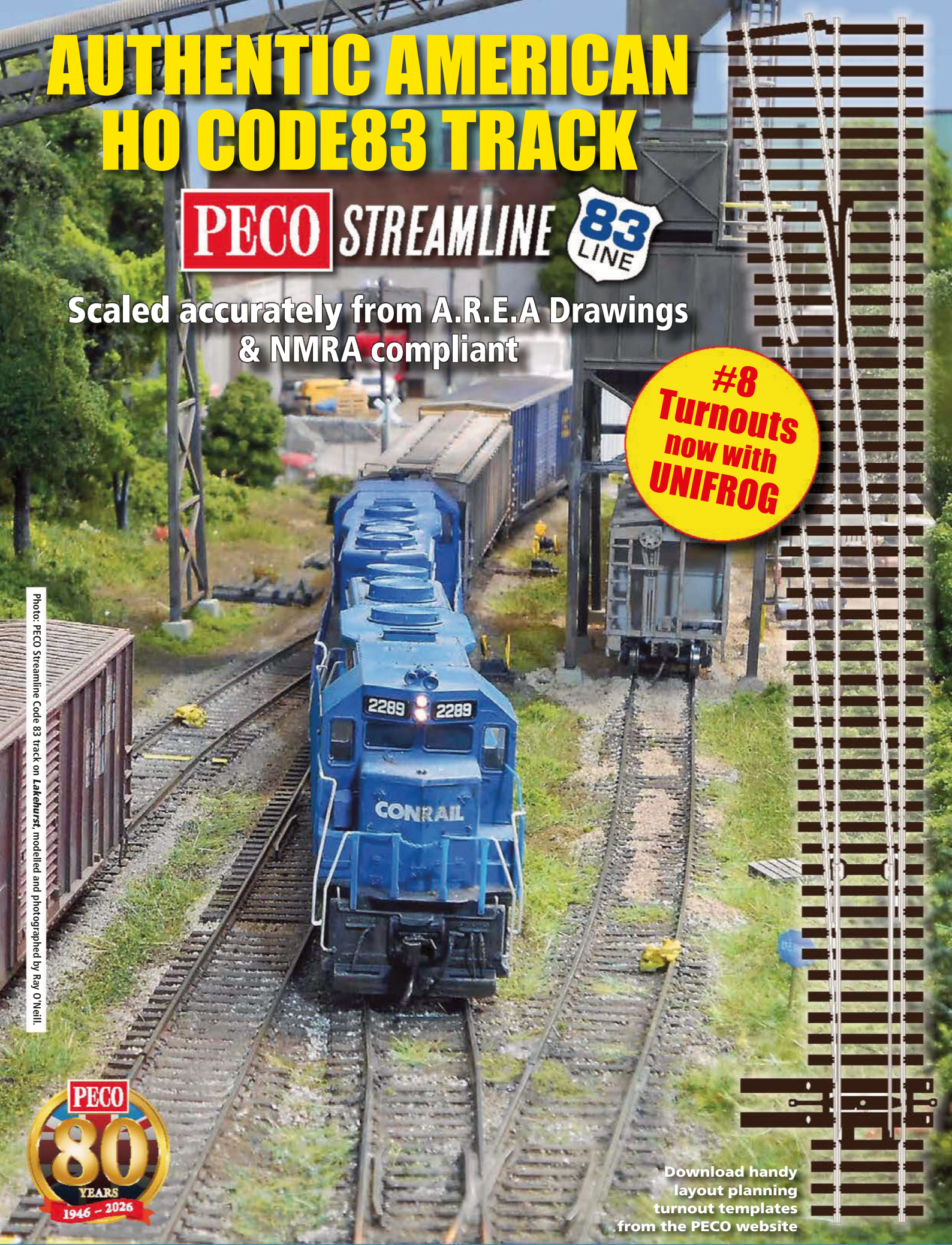

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