7th Heaven

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In this issue:

Straight Down the Line - Opinion

by Trevor Hodges

The Future Of The Hobby

Over the many years of my involvement in the hobby of railway modelling one question that crops up on an irregular basis is a concern about the future of the hobby. More often than not the question is posed in a such a way that makes it clear the questioner is worried about what is to become of the hobby when the current "old guard" dies out and there are no young participants to take up the reigns? I've heard the same proposition put at bowls clubs, antique car groups, rail preservation societies and I'd guess it would be true of many other, similar groups. I don't know what the future of the hobby or O-scale is but a couple of conversations I've had over the last few months provide an interesting insight into the state of the hobby and more specifically, O-scale modelling.

A hobby retailer I know, who in the past had sold a wide range of US outline HO stock, told me he "couldn't give the stuff away" these days. The implication was that online sales of these items had killed the trade for Australian retailers in spite of the high dollar. He also felt that there had been a general decline in the number of Australian hobbyists buying US outline stock. He knew of several who had swapped from US to Australian outline mainly due to the price, quality and availability of the recent Aussie outline stock coming onto the Australian market.

An N-scale manufacturer and retailer recently told me that Australian outline N-scale was "dead in the water". These were his words. He went on to say that there had been no growth in the number of N-scale modellers over the last few years.

If you had told me 10 years ago that today literally dozens of NSW/ Australian locomotive classes, both steam and diesel, and rolling stock types would be available as high quality r-t-r items I'd have laughed at you. However if you'd told me when the Aus7 Modellers Group was formed that the number of financial members would essentially be static for the next ten years, I would have been a little disappointed but not terribly surprised. Membership numbers of community groups such as rail preservation societies and model railway clubs have been declining for years and this seems to be a trend that is continuing.

Do these trends mean the end of our hobby? It seems pretty clear that the retail and manufacturing side of the Australian model railway hobby has been going through some enormous changes over the last few years. While this is another trend that looks set to continue it can fairly safely be said this has always been the case: change is inevitable and it will suit some and see others fall by the wayside. While modelling standard gauge Australian outline in HO has never been easier or cheaper, to some extent this growth appears to have been partly at the expense of some of the "minority scales/gauges" such as N and O. These changes may have seen few modellers swap from N and O to HO but perhaps it has stolen (or borrowed) some of the growth these scales would otherwise have seen. And we shouldn't ignore the real growth in areas like On30 modelling and narrow gauge modelling in general.

One thing we can say about the future is that we are no better at predicting it today than we were a decade ago. All we can say with certainty is that the hobby we know today won't be the same in ten or twenty years time: it will go on changing, evolving and hopefully growing. I think O-scale has a lot to offer and I know that I'm not the only one who thinks so. The best way to ensure the survival of your hobby is to do it: get in and enjoy it, build some models and run some trains. The future of the hobby will take care of itself and that's one thing that will never change!

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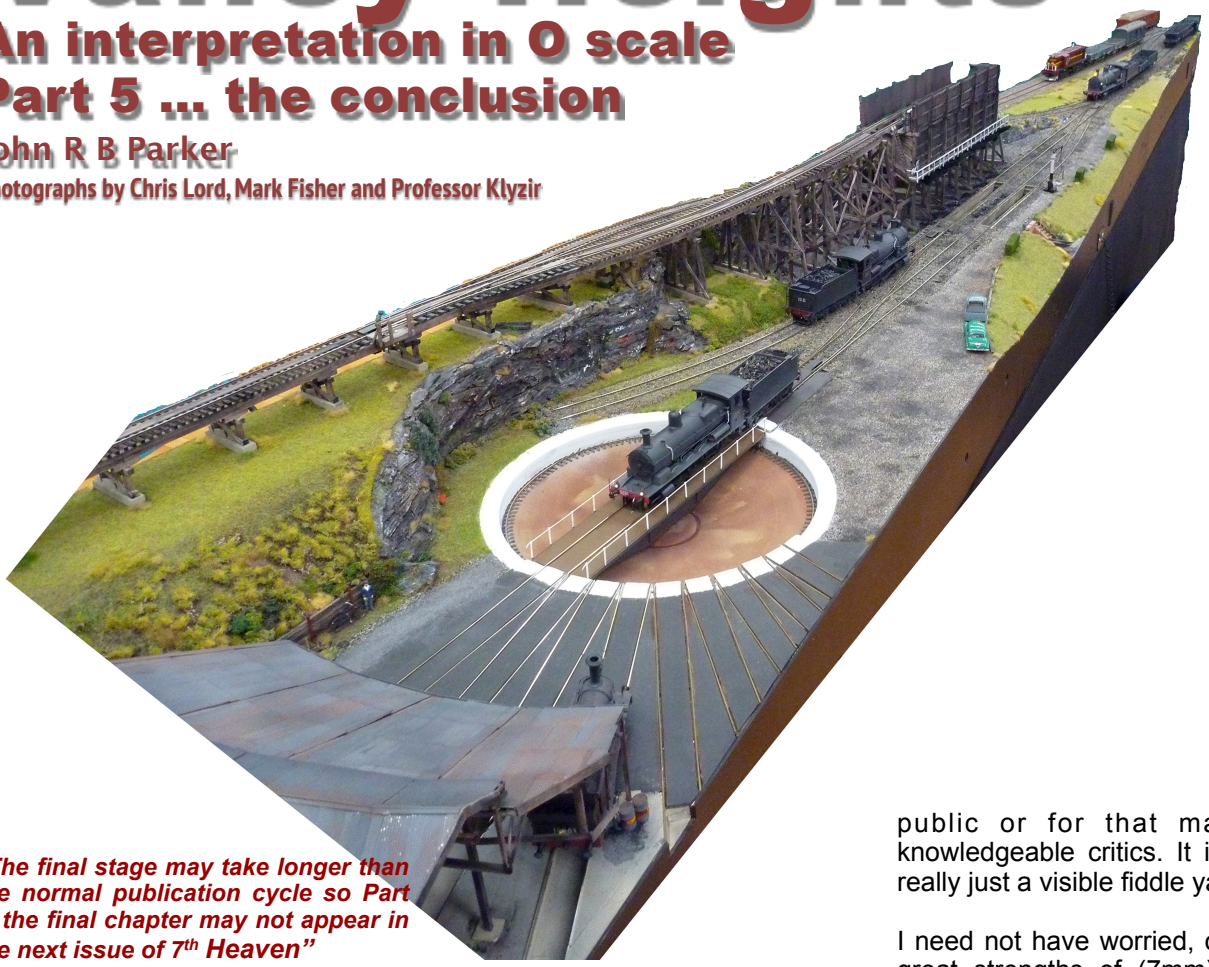
On The Cover
Tank loco 1803 rests inside the roundhouse at Valley Heights. Photo taken at the exhibition debut of John Parker's layout at the Epping Model Railway Club Exhibition - Thornleigh in June.

Photo by Chris Lord

Valley Heights

An interpretation in O scale
Part 5 ... the conclusion

John R B Parker
Photographs by Chris Lord, Mark Fisher and Professor Klyzir



"The final stage may take longer than the normal publication cycle so Part 5, the final chapter may not appear in the next issue of 7th Heaven"

These are the last few words from Part 4, which appeared in issue No 32! Somehow everything always takes a little longer than expected.

Valley Heights did actually appear in public for the first time at the Epping Model Railway Club's Exhibition held at the Brickpit Stadium Thornleigh, over the weekend of June 8-10 2013. The layout has been completed, although a number of refinements are planned before its next and probably final appearance as part of the Aus7 Expo. This will be held next year at The Casula Power House Arts Centre on Saturday 1st March 2014.

The whole project has been an interesting and rewarding exercise, and I thoroughly enjoyed my first experience on the exhibition scene. The three days passed very quickly, I was wonderfully supported by Roger Porter, who was responsible for most of the operations over the three days. That was particularly helpful as I know I spent most of my time talking to interested observers. Thank you Roger. It might be possible to build a layout on your own but I realised that you really need help when exhibiting. Valley Heights also received assistance over the weekend from Professor Klyzir, Paul Chisholm and my three eldest grandsons, Ryan, Mitchel and Wesley… thanks guys.

I managed to achieve most, but not all of the original design objectives and have been rewarded with feedback from many modellers who have decided to try some of the techniques used in building this fairly unusual layout. It was great to hear of some, first-ever O scale layout construction currently underway; a number of these layouts will premiere next year at Aus7 Expo.

Valley Heights was always intended as a test bed for some new and different construction methods and although designed primarily as an exhibition layout I was concerned that it might not have sufficient operating flexibility for the general public or for that matter the knowledgeable critics. It is after all really just a visible fiddle yard!

I need not have worried, one of the great strengths of (7mm) O scale modelling is that the models are very visible, they are comparatively speaking, large, with 'heft' and you can not only see but hear them working. The switchback trestle and associated coal stage provided a visual appeal that seemed to attract attention even if not much was happening at the time. Most onlookers were also very tolerant of the fact that some of the operating locomotives may not have ever visited the prototype location.

Aus7 Expo

Valley Heights – an interpretation in O scale, is just one of a number of layouts that will be featured at Aus7 Expo next year. It will be part of our celebration of all things O scale marking the tenth anniversary of the Aus7 Modellers Group. The exhibition, open to the general public, will be held at the Casula Power House Arts Centre on Saturday 1st March 2014.

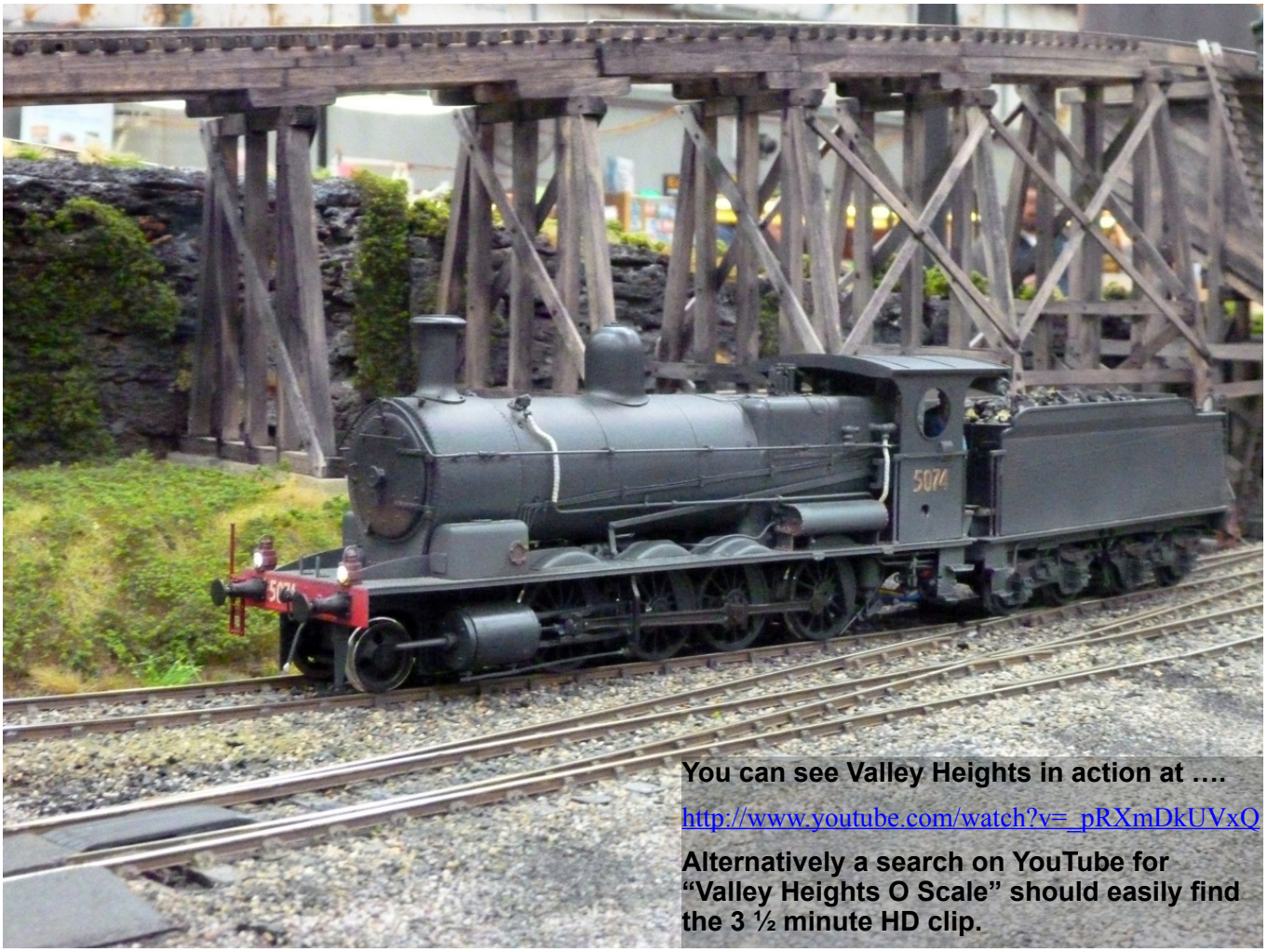
Previous articles in this series have concentrated on the layouts design and construction, in this final article I will allow the photographs taken by others to tell the story.

One of the key reasons for the selection of Valley Heights as a modelling project can be seen in these photographs, the track as it enters the coal stage is over 30 scale feet above the depot's ground level. The sight of a 50 class locomotive tentatively progressing up this 1 in 20 grade proved to be every bit as appealing as I expected. The top of the coal stage is 50 feet above the ground.

This scene in front of the engine shed gives an indication of the use of 'soft rocks', described earlier in this series, together with a timber retaining wall and various ground covers. Even though there is some 'junk' near the wall, the scene lacks 'clutter' and is in my eyes 'way too clean'. Definitely room for improvement.

During the weekend's operation at the Brickpit Stadium, Valley Heights hosted visits from a number of locomotives which in real life probably never visited the depot. One such visitor was 1957, representative of a class which frequently operated on elevated coal stages. Not Valley Heights however which regularly used the 50 class locomotives stabled there as pilot or bank engines together with the occasional 32 class.

The photograph below could attract the same criticism as that on the previous page. It is too clean and there is nowhere enough visible 'junk'. What was that about the layout being 'finished'?



You can see Valley Heights in action at ….

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_pRXmDkUVxQ

Alternatively a search on YouTube for "Valley Heights O Scale" should easily find the 3 ½ minute HD clip.

A number of experts over the weekend informed us that saturated 50 class locomotives never operated at Valley Heights. Well Roger's beautiful model of 5074 did, and it ran perfectly, sharing duties with 5163 and 5221. Whilst 'refilling' the tender of 5074 with 'water' through that open hatch (see previous page), I even noticed that there was still some 'water' in the tank at the end of the day's operations.

Even 4002 and 4103 proved popular, particularly with small children, especially when they were offered a controller to blow the horn.

Some perception of the length of the layout can be seen from this photograph. It was a real challenge to 'drive' a locomotive and trucks up and down the switch back trestle on to the coal stage, whilst standing at the other end of the layout answering questions from curious onlookers …
(Yet another scene which I think needs more 'clutter.')

LOWERING YOUR WARATAH CPH RAILMOTOR

Roger Porter

The Waratah CPH has been subjected to some criticism for riding slightly too high on its bogies. The method of manufacturing the chassis and bogies is such that it's not possible to easily remove material from the bogie bolster to lower the body over the bogies.

However there is a method of adjusting the position of the axleboxes within the bogie side frame to achieve a lowering of the body by about 2.0 mm. Following these steps, this can be achieved externally without removing the body or the bogies…….

1….Remove the coil springs from the bogie side frames. You may wish to loop a piece of cotton thread around them to prevent the springs from pinging into orbit. These springs are way too stiff for their intended purpose and offer no springing action at all.

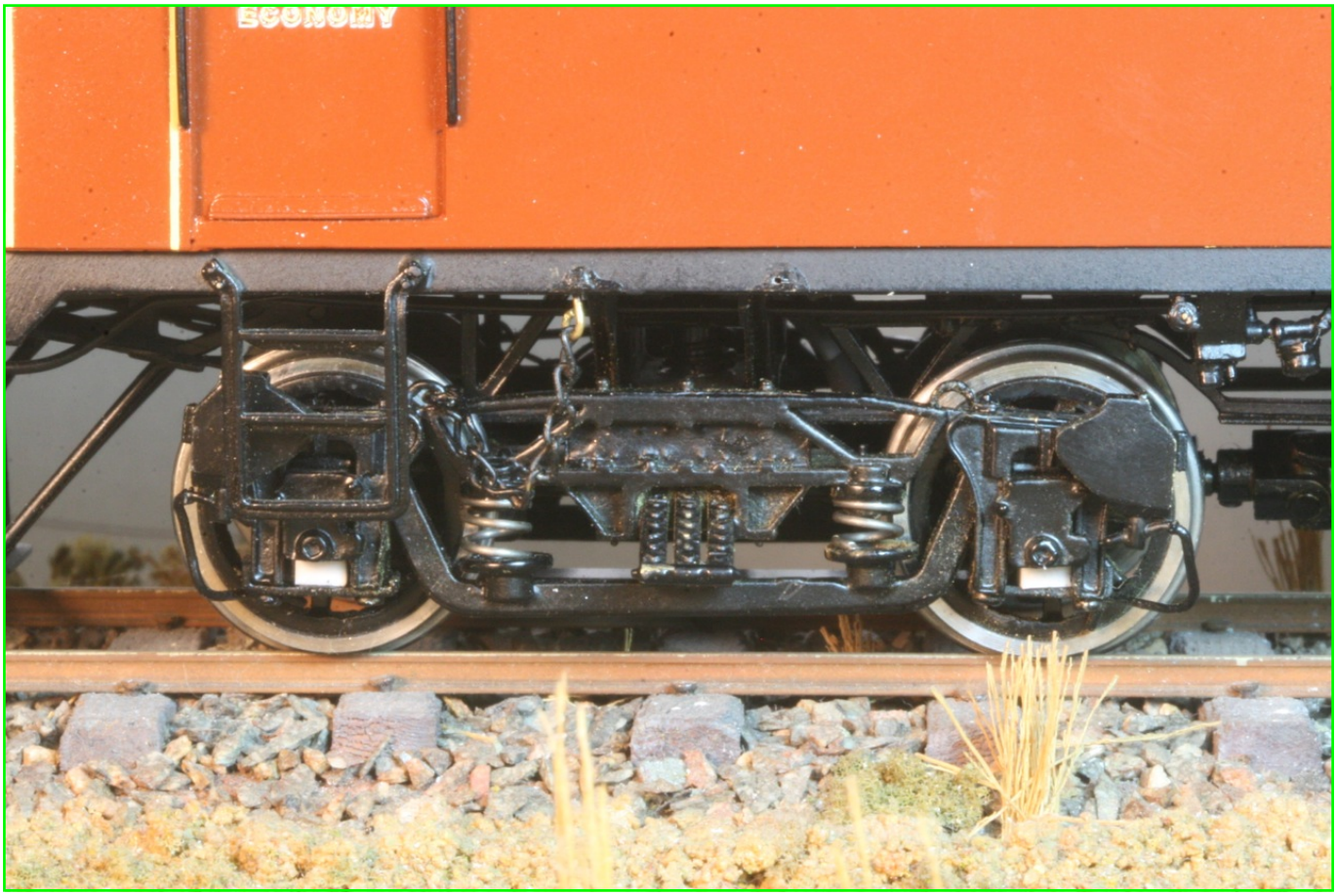
2….With the coil springs removed, the axleboxes are now free to slide vertically within their guides. Push the axleboxes upwards until there is a gap of about 2.0 mm between the bottom of the axlebox and the keeper plate. You may need to scrape some burrs and paint off the upper part the axlebox guides to achieve that.

3….The equalising beam joining the axleboxes will also move upwards, but it will foul the leaf springs before 2.0 mm of axlebox is achieved. To allow 2.0 mm of movement for the equalising beam, the inside bottom edge of the leaf spring casting must be notched with a dremel disc to clear the equalising beam in its raised position.

4….Make some blocks of styrene, 2.0 x 2.0 x 3.0 mm long and push them into the gaps between the bottom of the axleboxes and keeper plates. The blocks could be made from laminations of lesser thickness styrene strips. Secure the blocks in place with a tiny dab of ACC. ..Photo No.2 shows the raised axleboxes with the styrene blocks in place below the axleboxes. A dab of black paint will render the styrene blocks invisible.

5….Cut the previously removed coil springs in half with a dremel disc, and replace them from where they came, secured with a tiny dab of ACC. The coil springs are now purely decorative, but then they always were.

6….Photo No.1 shows the lowered car on the RHS, compared to the standard car on the LHS. Note that the lowered car sits down over its bogies, whereas the standard car seems to be perched up high. The difference doesn't become apparent until this comparison is made, and the difference is quite noticeable when comparing buffers and cowcatchers.



Postcards from Toronto

By Stephen Reynolds

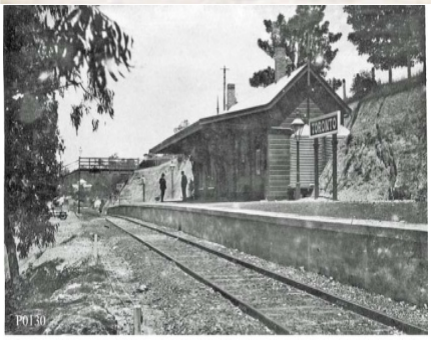


Photo 1 The station today.

I have been interested in the Toronto branch line as a modelling subject for some time now. The reasons for this are many. Not the least of these is the fact that the line, now closed, is only a little over 30 minutes drive from me and the right-of-way still exists as well as some infrastructure.

First a few short notes on the life of the line. Construction was started on a 4.5km tramway from Fassifern on the NSWGR to Toronto Pier around 1890 by the Excelsior Investment Company to convey passengers to their resort at Toronto on the shores of Lake Macquarie. A few of the first locomotives were a Manning Wardle from the Blacktown to Richmond line and a steam tram from Brighton-le-Sands Tramway. Passengers rode in vintage Hudson Bros. curved clerestory roof cars as well as other crude substitutes. It was taken over by the NSWGR in the early 1900s.

While photographic evidence shows that there was some goods traffic on the line, it was mainly used for commuter traffic to and from Newcastle especially in its later years. In the mid years of the 1900s services were handled by 30 class Tank locos. with a rake of American Suburban cars. From the 70`s on it seems that 620/720 rail cars took over these duties. The line closed on the 28/3/1995

Research

A big plus as far as research goes is that the Lake Macquarie & District Historical Society is housed in the old Toronto station building. It was on a visit to the Society to add to my research that I uncovered somewhat of a mystery and at the same time making, at least for me, a discovery, which is the source of this article.

Prototype Plan

From the outside the station building looks like a standard A4 NSWGR station. I was given, by the society staff, a copy the original plan of the station building. This included the floor plan as well as the station awning

brackets plus other details. According to Greg Edwards Data Sheet an A4 station is 68ft long. I measured the Toronto station, it is 74 ft long! The mystery begins. Closer perusal of the Toronto station plan shows that on the western end of the building ladies were well catered for. There was the usual ladies waiting room but off this and accessed only from this room, was the ladies lavatory. It contains not one as was standard but three W.C. cubicles. This would go some way to explaining the extra 8 ft. in length.

That's the women taken care off but what about the men? Here the mystery deepens, at least to me, with three lavatories for the ladies but nothing for the men to go on! Was this the usual practice on the NSWGR? Well it would seem so as Greg`s Data Sheet for the A4 shows only a ladies room with one cubicle and no men's toilet and the station at Toronto followed suit. So how did the men get on?

Mystery Revealed.

A further study of the plan gave the answer or was it just my lack of knowledge of the NSWGR infrastructure. On the plan in a somewhat smudged condition, in amongst the other detail, was a drawing of a smaller separate building with a hip roof and though you could not make out the measurements you could distinguish the title of this shed "Lamp Room and Sanitary Accommodation". Mystery solved. Toronto had a combined men's toilet lamp room not that uncommon for the NSWGR. The floor plan showed four WC cubicles, a urinal with room for six people and a wall partitioning the toilets from the lamp room.

Photo 2. All that is left of the structure now.

The Model

As stated the measurements on the plan were indistinguishable, although there was a scale but this plan was a photocopy of a photocopy and no doubt had been reduced to fit the smaller size paper it was now printed on. So the scale on the plan was now redundant but two things were in my favour. One, the lamp room still existed but only just. It has been badly vandalised. The toilet part had long been removed and two, I had measured the existing building around a decade ago not knowing of its previous life.

This gave me the width and the height of the walls and the pitch of the roof. All that I had to "guesstimate" was the length of the building. This I achieved by consulting a plumber friend of mine. On his advice I allowed 4ft for each of the cubicles plus another 6inches for the three internal walls between each cubicle. Also including the frame work for the external wall and adding the known dimensions of the lamp room I came to the conclusion that the combined lamp room and men's toilets was 26 feet in length and 11-1/2 feet in width.

Making a Start.

I started by making a dam out of scrap timber ¼" thick of the perimeter of the building on a piece of ply ½" thick. This ply was to be the base of the diorama. I then poured a runny mix of casting plaster, levelled it out and let it set. This was to represent the concrete base that the whole building stood on.

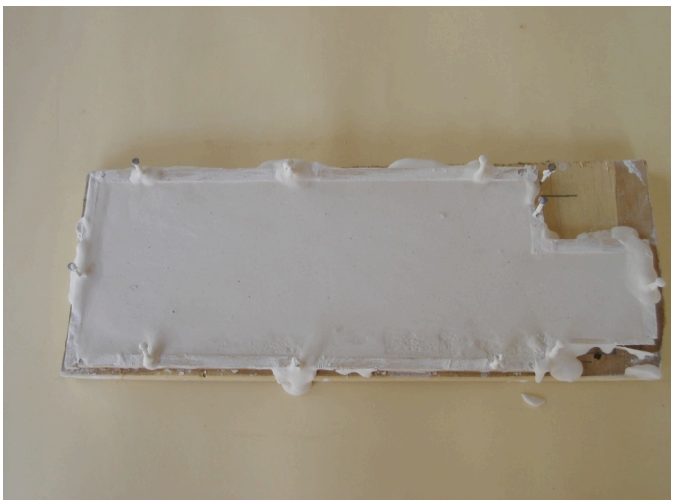


Photo 3 The base with the runny mix now dry.

Once dry I removed the formwork timber, cleaned up my concrete slab and removed it to one side. At a later date I painted the slab with a few coats Woodlands Concrete Grey

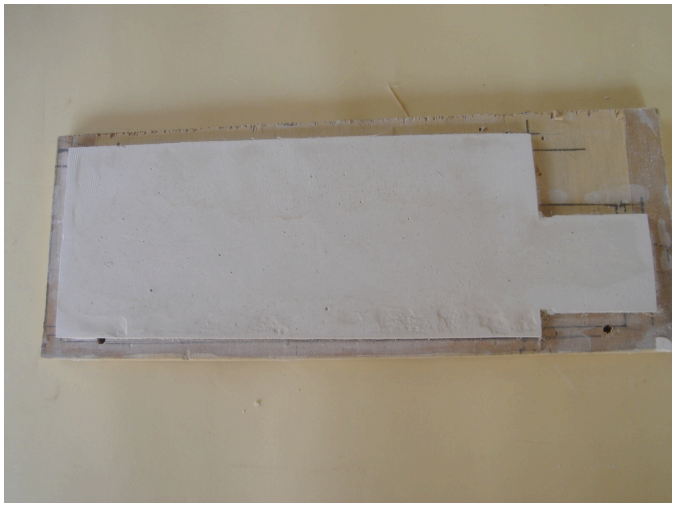


Photo 4 The finished concrete slab, ready to be painted.

Timber Frame.

I constructed the walls out of approximately scale 4 inch by 3 inch strip wood cut out from cedar on my band saw. This was sanded and stained using a mix of India ink and Isocol, rubbing alcohol, the mix being of no great accuracy. This method gives a good representation of aged hardwood. The wall frames were assembled in much the same way as the prototype would be built. A bottom plate, a top plate, studs two feet apart and noggins as well as timber heads were required, all held together with weights while the PVA wood glue dried.

Once the walls were completed they were glued together and squared up.

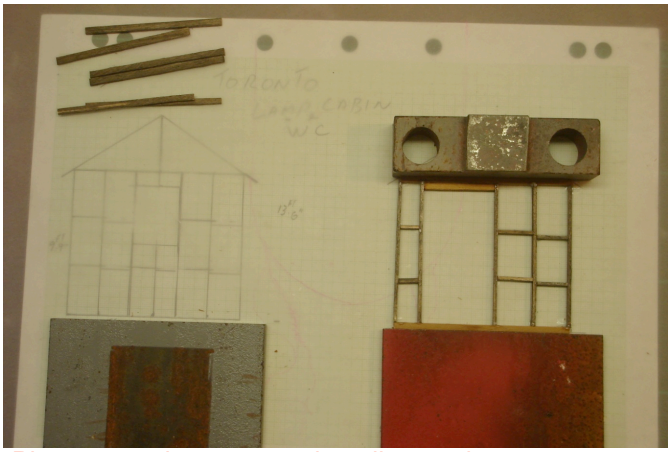


Photo 5 graph paper used to align studs

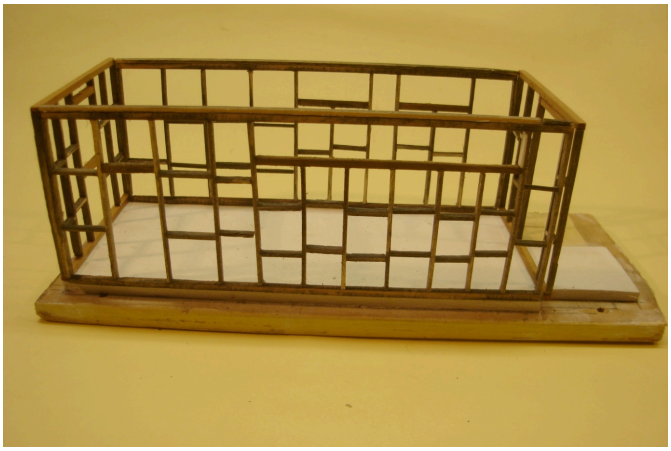


Photo 6 The frame is glued together and squared

The corrugated iron was cut to the same width and length and bent around the corners as it was on the prototype and attached to the frame with clear silastic. I marked out widths of 2-1/2 ft and slightly creased the iron at these marks to give the impression of individual sheets. All were given a spray coat of grey undercoat before gluing.

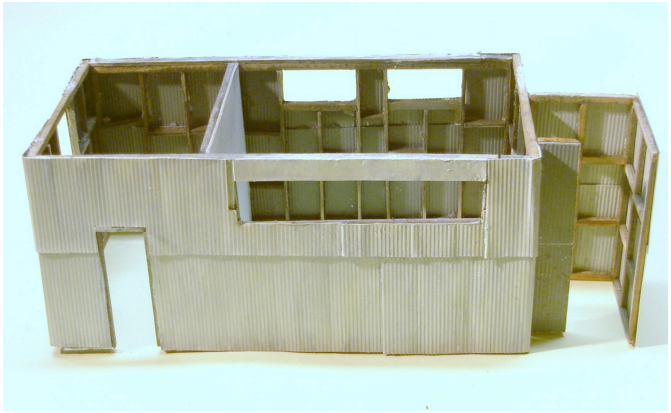


Photo 7 Cladding added and undercoated

The Roof

The roof was formed using cardstock or picture frame backing. This was also used for the bracing on the inside as well as the barge boards on the hip and side fascia.

The corrugated iron for this was some old stock that had rusted naturally. So I applied it just how it was using silastic to bond it to the cardstock and was pleased with its appearance. I made the roof removable, as I do with many of my buildings. This was so I could add interior detail and lights,,, one day.

Photo 9 The finished roof, rusting away naturall

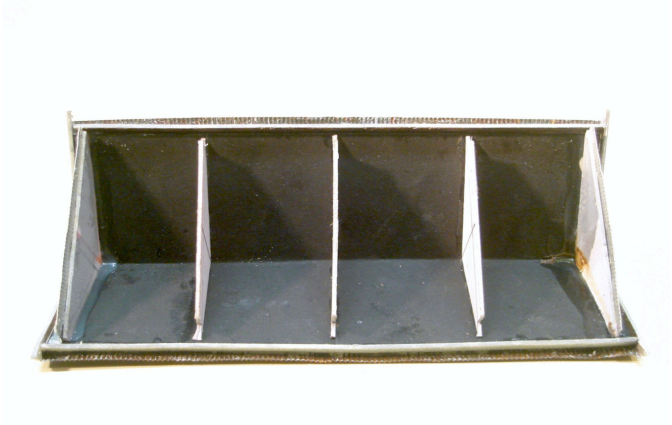


Photo 10 The underside of the removable roof.

Details

The window, window vents and door were scratch built.

A tea bag was used for the curtain, hung on the window.

A brass pin used for the handle on the door.

The window vents were scratch built using styrene. Don't look to closely as they're a bit rough.

The finials were strip wood with a dressmakers pin inserted in the top.

Painting

As stated previously the iron cladding was sprayed with a few coats of cheap undercoat grey. I tried to match the colour as best I could using the photos I had taken last decade. I applied washes of Humbrol # Matt 81 and then over these washes Humbrol # 22 achieving a close enough finish. At this stage I have no knowledge what the colour sceme was when the full building was in use.

The usual details were added to bring the model to life; water taps, the door ajar, pipes and vents, the list goes on; you can add and add to this type of model.

That brings us to the end of the great Toronto Lavatory Mystery.

Look forward to further Postcards from Toronto where surely the journey is the destination.

All photos are by the author or sourced from the internet

Fences are a vital part of the built landscape in the real world; they define land boundaries, keep valuable livestock confined and, if the old saying about high fences making good neighbours is to be believed, keep social relationships in good order. In the modelled world the role of fences is not quite so clear cut. Our white-metal cows don't tend to wander far and our plastic neighbours seem quite content to go on hanging out the washing or mowing the lawn for years without a hint of conflict.

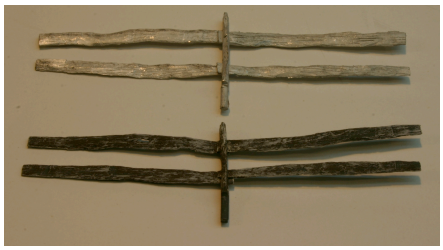
So do we actually need fences on a model railway layout? Certainly not for the same reason they are needed in the real world but they do have a function in the modelled landscape that mirrors the real world, even if it doesn't replicate the practical application of real fences. Fences define the western agricultural and industrial landscape in a way that speaks volumes about modern notions of land ownership and usage. You can't get much more industrial than the railways so if you want to replicate a "modern" landscape (by this I mean a post industrial revolution landscape), you need fences along the right of way if the scene is to be authentic. Fences signify human occupation in a way that no other structure does: without a single figure or building in a scene a fence screams "this land is owned and utilized". Fences in a railway context divide the right of way from the other uses to which land can be put and they can be used to set an era, indicate the type of use to which the land is being put and hint at an industrial use without the actual industry being modelled. This last is a very useful feature in O-scale modelling.

So if we can agree that a layout needs fences, how do we go about making them realistic? All railway systems had standardised fencing but a comprehensive look at these is beyond the scope of this short article. The way to get fences to appear a part of the landscape, as opposed to being plonked on top of it, is to get the colouring and foliage that surrounds a fence right. This is how I do it. I'm using Waratah, white-metal post and rail fencing for this exercise but the same principles apply to any commercial or home-made fence, in any scale.

The first step in my fencing sequence is to lay down a base layer of ground foam over the modelled landscape and let this dry. I use Woodland Scenics Earth Blend scatter and a very small amount of green. I don't put any bushes, shrubs or trees in place at this stage, I just want to cover the ground.

The next step is to adjust the fencing sections to the landscape by filing it to get it to go together, assembling it and poking holes in the ground where the posts are to be located. I install the fence into position as a dry run (no glue at this stage).

When I'm happy with its position I remove the fence and start colouring it. The aim is to get the colour to look right for the lighting you use on your layout. I light my layouts using a mix of warm white fluorescent tubes and warm yellow LED down lights so the colour I apply works for this set-up: you will need to adjust your colours for your lighting. As I remove the white-metal sections of fence from the layout I make sure I lay them out in the order they were installed so they can be placed back in their correct positions after colouring. I start by spraying on a coat of grey metal primer. Once this has dried I dry brush on a heavy layer of Floquil Roof Brown and then a light dry brush of white acrylic (any brand will do). After the paint has dried I install the fence by gluing the posts with white PVA.



Only after the PVA has dried do I begin to shrub up the landscape around the fence with bushes, trees and grass tufts. This is important because if you try to glue a fence into a landscape that has already had foliage applied, it will never look as if it's a part of the landscape. Grass and weeds need to look as if they have grown onto and around a fence, not the other way around.

There you have it, my way to grow fences.

Praising Potential Peri-urban Prototypes

Jim Longworth

One Sunday morning as I stood at the ironing board beside the family room windows, I glanced along the window sill. That's longer than my existing baseboard! At that stage my layout ran along the top of the bench-top divider between the kitchen and family room (While the Kettle Boils, 7th Heaven, Autumn 2011). Judy reacted positively to my offer to relocate off the divider and across to the other side of the family room, provided the layout didn't encroach too far outwards into the room.

The window sill measured 5000mm long by 185mm deep. The sill is 1080mm high, which is quite convenient for sitting on a chair at, or standing at to operate. Two pieces of 2700mm long by 185mm wide by 17mm thick Meranti shelving were purchased and butted together end-to-end to give an overall baseboard of about 5600mm by 370mm. Timber for 25mm^2 legs and 40mm by 20mm bracing came from under the bench in the shed. The baseboard is stabilised by being attached by brackets to the book cases at both ends, and is supported in the middle on legs. Screws were all as found in the shed. One day the new timber can be estapoled similarly to that of the existing window sill so blend into the room decor.

A few new Peco points and a couple of lengths of Peco flexitrack were acquired from Bergs. To keep the track in place it is pinned through the occasional sleeper to the new baseboard; but not to the window sill. The pinned-down track keeps the floating-track in place. Track around the curve was deliberately laid with staggered joints in the rails to prevent any kinky joints. One rail of each length was pushed through the sleeper strip to the half way point. The curve is nominally of about 5ft 6in radius. Might the much promulgated 6ft radius be more good practice than absolutely necessary?

The vast majority of NSW branch line termini have been in country areas. Traditionally primary agricultural produce was railed out to markets in the city or to coastal ports for transhipping into boats for shipping along the coast or overseas. Traditionally country towns received manufactured products that were railed in from factories in the city or goods imported into Australia via coastal ports. The few people who travelled, arrived at or left town via the railway station in a mixed train or railmotor. Train traffic at termini in wheat growing areas was dominated by grain wagons, and concentrated into the grain haulage season. Train traffic in sheep or cattle grazing areas was dominated by livestock wagons. Mixed traffic was confined to the once or twice weekly mixed train. Agricultural industries tend to be relatively similar across their wide-spread country region. Therefore the vast majority of intermediate through stations along rural branch lines were of a similar country character to that of their termini. Train traffic was light and used a limited range of locomotive classes and types of rolling stock. One train a day was common at many country branch line railway stations, e.g. Tumbarumba. While rural branch lines might be iconically Australian, operationally nothing much happened along them.

Another type of branch line was that which ran through heavily developed suburban and inner city areas. These can make fascinating shunting layouts, and can include passenger trains running to factory platforms for transporting workers, such as along the Sandown branch.

A third type of branch line was that of a country town in the area around a metropolis. As the city expanded outwards and engulfed them, some country towns were transformed into city suburbs. These areas are called peri-urban. Peri-urban areas are belts of neither fully urban nor fully rural land that surround metropolitan areas. They form a variable mosaic of often heterogeneous and unplanned land uses. Such areas contain denser populations than true country areas, secondary industries associated with urban areas, plus importantly, they retain relatively intensive agricultural pursuits. They may contain natural resources, remnant biodiversity, and significant country landscapes, often remain important for recreation, and attract diverse populations of people. Peri-urban areas are under continual threat from development and overuse through urban expansion and agricultural retreat. Importantly for

railway modelling purposes, peri-urban areas contain elements of both urban and rural areas.

Sydney has or had several potential peri-urban railways. The Richmond to Kurrajong extension, the Campbelltown to Camden line, and the Westmead to Rogans Hills line all served essentially rural areas, around metropolitan Sydney. However these lines were closed before Sydney's suburbia grew outwards and engulfed them. Had they survived, they would also have been incorporated by encroaching suburbia, so becoming peri-urban branch lines. However the Clyde to Carlingford line and Blacktown to Richmond line started as purely rural branch lines, survived peri-urbanisation, servicing both rural and urban activities, and are now totally urban in character.

I chose the Clyde to Carlingford line as inspiration for my model layout. Many of the stations along the Carlingford branch line serviced a range of secondary industries, plus there were several sidings to industries that were located along-the-line in-between the station yards. There was at least one proposed branch line. All this variation adds to the potential diversity in train types and operations. Histories of the Carlingford line have been published in the Australian Railway Historical Society Bulletin (May 1955; December 1974).

A terminus, rather than an intermediary through station, would better fit into my available space. An imaginary station; rather than scaling down a real one, would allow for greater compression of features into the available space. Imagination would also allow for inclusion of a wider range of industries which might have used rail for transporting raw materials inwards and processed product outwards, hence greater diversity in rolling stock. With land values being greater in and around suburbia than country, a peri-urban site may logically have its railway infrastructure gradually compressed into a smaller land area than in a sprawling country yard. The peri-urban offered a more intensive timetabling of both passenger and goods trains than country. The peri-urban offered a greater range of train types. The peri-urban offered greater potential for the appearance of different locomotive types. The peri-urban offered greater potential for the occasional appearance of unusual locomotive types.

In addition there were passenger services and goods shunting trips that did not reach the terminus at Carlingford, but worked the branch to Sandown.

Industries tend to be relatively varied across peri-urban areas. Therefore stations along peri-urban branch lines can offer a wide variety of different facilities to other stations along the same line.

Because of the narrow baseboard my scenery is minimalist. All infrastructural items are modelled in shallow relief. Pieces of artist's 5mm thick white foamboard are being used to mock-up lineside structures to indicate to operators where rolling stock is to be located. 5600mm is not very long in O gauge. A fiddle track, a length of track on which to run round beyond the yard loop, and four sets of points in the mainline rapidly gobbled-up the available length. That left me precious little length for loops and sidings for locating industries along. Perhaps the available length for plain running track is a limiting factor in O gauge modelling?

Electrical control is via an antiquarian Hornby controller, feeding via pairs of speaker wire, which pass up through holes drilled through the new baseboard. The wires are soldered to the underside of a pair of slide-on metal rail joiners. With the frogs of all points isolated and the electrical connectors positioned throughout the yard keeps electrical control simple and generally reliable.

The available track space limited the amount of rolling stock to be acquired. This limitation makes O gauge relatively cheap. Yes, O gauge can be relatively cheap! One doesn't need several locomotives, and multiple carriages, and numerous goods wagons to operate convincingly. The short length of my run-rounds and fiddle track limited the number of wagons or carriages that could be marshalled into short train consists.

Six locomotives are available to haul the trains. A 16 class purchased on eBay and converted from three-rail to two-rail by John Parker; a 30 class tank purchased on eBay and re-wheeled and re-motored by David Peterson; a 32 class as purchased on eBay; a 53 class standard goods re-wheeled and motored by David Peterson; a Lima 4-wheel diesel I purchased about forty years ago; and an 0-4-0 saddle tank purchased from Ixion. The 16 and 30 class locomotives haul the passenger trains. The 32 and 53 class locomotives haul the freight trains. The Lima diesel represents a private-owner locomotive from the starch mill up the line. The saddle tank locomotive represents a private-owner locomotive from the basalt quarry up the line. Only three locomotives would be really needed, one to represent each function.

Passenger rolling stock is limited to one end platform American carriage. Another is being assembled from a Fox kit. That will be sufficient for the short station platform and loop. Goods rolling stock consists of: one bogie milk tanker; three livestock wagons; two refrigerator wagons; one petrol tanker; two bogie louvre vans; six S trucks; one D truck; two old style timber-bodied and one new style metal ribbed BD wagons; one U truck; one CU truck; three RU trucks; and two guards vans, one of which is unnecessary. Even this limited rolling stock roster is too numerous to all be on the layout at once.

Trains are run to a daily operating sequence, which is being refined and diversified:

- An early morning factory worker passenger train arrives empty; then leaves picking up more passengers on its way.
- A morning office worker and school student passenger train arrives empty; then leaves picking up more passengers on its way. This also takes out the loaded bulk milk tanker.
- A late morning shopper's passenger train arrives empty; then leaves picking up more passengers on its way.
- On Monday morning a rake of empty wheat hoppers arrives from the starch mill up the line. The mill locomotive takes back a rake of full hoppers for unloading at the mill.

- On Tuesday morning a rake of full gravel wagons arrives from the local quarry up the line. The quarry locomotive takes back a rake of empty wagons for loading at the quarry.
- On Wednesday morning a loaded livestock special comes in to unload its livestock at the abattoir; then leaves empty.
- On Thursday morning another rake of empty wheat hoppers and another rake of full gravel trucks arrive from their industries up the line. The locomotives take back their respective full hoppers and empty trucks.
- On Friday morning a bogie louvre wagon, loaded with 44 gallon drums of starch, arrives from the starch mill up the line. The mill locomotive takes back an empty bogie louvre wagon for loading at the mill.
- A lunchtime passenger train arrives; then leaves dropping off and picking up passengers in both directions.
- Each day an afternoon general goods train with loaded and empty wagons comes in, shunts the yard, and departs with empty and loaded wagons.
- An afternoon factory workers, shopper's, and school student passenger train arrives full; then leaves empty. This also takes out any loaded refrigerator vans from the abattoir.
- An evening office worker passenger train arrives full; then leaves empty.
- A late evening passenger train arrives full; then leaves empty.
-

There are no locomotives or passenger carriages parked in the yard overnight. Some variety is imparted by having different locomotives operate each of the types of train, and having different types of goods trains each day. Further operational interest is provided by having one of the trains arriving early or late while another train is still in the yard. The short loops and even shorter run-round dead-end provide operational challenges. Taking out the bogie milk tanker, and a refrigerator van, provides some variety in the otherwise repetitive passenger train movements. Then of course sometimes I just run trains as I feel like.

Michael, our son, suggested extending the line by curving the mainline around the corner and running it along the returning window sill. I had thought of that; but feared Judy would not agree. Nevertheless, to support his coming forth with good ideas, she agreed. The line was dutifully extended. The line is now an end-to-end run of 7000mm long. Michael then suggested installing an additional set of points so a siding could be run along the window sill deep into the corner where the two walls meet. I did not install this additional siding because I felt it would detract from the aesthetics of the yard throat which I find quite appealing. Judy suggested making some building facades to sit on the back of the goods platforms to indicate more fully what the industries are intended to be. She wants some people populating the station platform. Our two year old granddaughter likes to give her toys rides in the open wagons. She stands on a dining table chair to watch, and now insists on taking control of the controller knob. I'm teaching her that one notch on the throttle is fast enough. A friend from church helped me make a video of train movements with the open wagons loaded with my grandchildren's smaller toys – they love watching it. Two friends have helped to resolve some of the electrical problems. These are all good positive personal interactions!

This layout is reaching a developmental plateau. Sidings for the starch mill and quarry could be installed along the return window sill. A traverser at the end of the fiddle track is required to ease operating without using the operator's hands to rearrange the rolling stock between train movements. A couple of electrically dead sections should be inserted to allow for two locomotives to be in the yard at the same time. There is some limited potential for scenic embellishment. Some of my Kadee couplings need to be adjusted to be of a consistent height above the rail level. Some detailing can be added to the rolling stock.

My larger dream layout may, or may not, be built in the future. Either way, I'm having fun now. Most of the fun occurs in my mind. The layout is but a model, a representation, fairly rudimentary, but adequate. The model provides visual and aural clues for me to read, decode, interpret, and mentally transform into an imaginary railway. As advocated in my previous article, stop procrastinating, get something basic mocked up, and start running. Exercise your hands, stimulate your mind, and have fun playing trains!

Commercial News continued from page 18

Ixion Models

Ixion Models*Ixion Models*, PO Box 303, Quakers Hill, NSW, 2763, Australia, (02) 9626 9273 or (02) 4957 415, info@ixionmodels.com and www.ixionmodels.com have passed on the news the On30 Coffee Pot is now officially a sell-out while the Hudswell Clarke has sold out in Australia, but good stocks remain in the UK.

Their next project, the 7mm scale Fowler 0-4-0 DM (diesel mechanical) loco is now at the stage where they are receiving test shots from the tooling. They had to re-tool the front radiator, as photos which surfaced after production started showed that it was curved, not straight, as the drawings indicated. This has meant a slight delay, but they still expect the locos to be available for Christmas.

The loco will be produced in two colour schemes: one fully lined and lettered as the prototypical GWR No.1; The other version will be plain, unlined green. Only 1000 Fowlers will be produced, and only a handful of models are slated to come to Australia, so emails with expressions of interest can be sent to info@ixionmodels.com. This will help determine how many to ship to Australia.

Model Railroad Craftsman

Model Railroad Craftsman, shop 2 Level 1, 64-70 Main St, Blacktown, NSW, 2148, (02) 98318217 or fax (02) 98314132 sales@mrrc.com.au and http://www.mrrc.com.au/ have announced that their NSWR r-t-r gantry crane has been delivered and is now available for purchase. The 1:43.5 model is all brass construction, painted and ready to install. The model is based on scale drawings by Greg Edwards and photographs taken at Merriwa. The completed model is static only and is a limited run. An under layout sound file is to be offered to reflect sounds of this item by ModelFxs.

Commercial News

Trevor Hodges

Model O Kits

Model O Kits - PO Box 379, Ermington, NSW, 1700, Tel 0404 935 663, email glenn.scott@hhpackaging.com.au and www.modelOkits.com, a relatively new company who had a range of structure kits available for sale at the most recent Aus7 Modellers' Forum, have announced they have joined forces with DJH Models in the UK to launch a 7mm brass and white metal kit of the NSWGR (AD)60, 4-8-4 + 4-8-4 Beyer-Garratt to run on 32mm gauge track.

The kit will be manufactured in the UK to the well known DJH standard and will be supplied with Slater's wheels and Slater's GBO30R-3M 30:1 gearboxes fitted with Mashima 1833 motors. Provision for the fitting of DCC decoders and speakers of the modelers choice is being taken into consideration in the kit's design. The boiler, water tank and coal bunker assemblies will be supplied pre-formed from etched parts. It is intended that a locomotive built from the kit will be able to traverse curves with a minimum radius of 1.8 meters (6') and when built the resulting loco is expected to weigh in at around 2kg.

The kit will be a limited production run and will retail for $2599. "Across the counter" sale of kits post delivery cannot be guaranteed. The only way to ensure the purchase of a kit is via a deposit of $500. The closing date for orders with deposits is 31/10/13. A mechanism and selected components will be on display at the AMRA Liverpool Exhibition in Oct 2013 and at the next Aus7 Modellers Forum. A pilot model is scheduled to arrive in December 2013 with an anticipated delivery date for the kits of March, 2014 if the pilot proves satisfactory. Arrangements for viewing of the pilot model in motion on a test track will be communicated to those who have paid a deposit at the appropriate time.

For those not confident or willing to build the kit themselves, a partial factory built option may be offered if there is sufficient interest (a minimum of 5 orders would be required). This option would produce the two operational mechanisms and body sections but would exclude the fitting of small detail items, pipe-work and finishing. The details and pipe material would be supplied but this would need to be fitted by the purchaser. The price guide on this option will be $6800, which includes the cost of the kit and assembly to this level. Pricing will be confirmed in December 2013. Any purchaser interested in the partial build option will need to register this interest upon placing the order and paying the deposit of $500. When the price for the partial build option is confirmed in December the balance, to bring the total up to 50% of the total price, will be required at that time. A fully r-t-r option may be considered if there is sufficient interest, however the partial build is significantly cheaper than a r-t-r model would be. Purchasers who might be interested in this option would need to contact Model O Kits to register their interest.

Order forms are available from the Model O Kits website, you can contact Model O Kits via phone or email to arrange for an order form to be sent by mail or simply use the order form included in this issue of 7th Heaven.

Model O Kits also advised that they have a website where their range of laser cut kits can be viewed. Refer to our advertisement in this issue of 7th Heaven for the kits that are currently available and watch the website for new products.

O-Aust

O-Aust Kits info@oaustkits.com.au, and via the web site at www.oaustkits.com.au, at PO Box 743, Albany Creek, Qld, 4035, mob 0419680584 or (07) 3298 6283 have advised that O-Aust Kits advises that its website has had a rather dramatic "face-lift". The link to the site remains the same http://www.oaustkits.com.au/. Readers will notice there is now a blog site named Pete's Prattles where they can keep up to date with new product developments, and Peter Krause hopes to also include updates from time to time on progress on his personal modelling projects. Also the Products page has been revamped and includes links to Assembly Instructions for the kits that they produce. New Exhibitions, Links and Retailers pages have also been added.

Now that the Queensland Rail DH has been released, thoughts turn to whether its NSW “cousin” (73) would be worth considering as a new project for 2014. Some feedback may assist the decision making process.

Work on the 30T steam locomotive with 6 wheel P class tender is progressing well and should be ready in time for release at Liverpool in October.

It can be confirmed that the new tender announced in the last issue and planned for release in conjunction with the upgraded D50 class loco will be the Commonwealth tender.

The Victorian ZLP guards van is now in production.

David Peterson Modelling Services

David Peterson Modelling Services, PO Box 644 St Ives, NSW 2075, Tel 61 2 9144 1521, Mob 0402 156 048, email dwpeterson@optusnet.com.au announced that there will be a delay in the production of the NSWR 13 class due to health related issues. David strongly recommends that anyone with any questions regarding the production of the 13 should contact him direct.

continued on page 17

Membership Renewals Due

Membership fees for the next year are now due and can be made by internet deposit of $30 to the groups bank account BSB 062-233 a/n 1017 2076 (please supply your name in the reference field) or by cheque or money order to the Treasurer at P.O Box 3404 Asquith NSW 2077.

MODEL KITS
specialists in NSWGR O gauge model kits & accessories

N.S.W.G.R (AD) 60 CLASS
4-8-4 + 4-8-4
BEYER - GARRATT

1:43.5 (7mm) O Scale

DJH MADE IN UK MODELLOCO
Supplied to the high DJH standards

Model O Kits & DJH Modelloco UK have joined forces to announce the release of the NSWGR (AD) 60 Class Beyer Garratt loco in O Scale

Fine detailed brass & white metal kit

Features

- Slaters Wheels
- Slaters Plunger pick ups
- 2 x Mashima 1833 motors
- 2 x Slaters GBO30R-3M 30:1 gearboxes
- Minimum radius 1.8 metres/ 6 feet (TBC)
- Space provision for fitting DCC decoders and speakers
- Boiler, Water Tank and Coal Bunker assemblies will be provided as pre-formed etch parts.

Kit price $2599 - $500 deposit with order. Orders for limited production run close 31/10/13

Factory Partial build and r-t-r options being considered if sufficient interest (refer website/order form for details)

Pilot model due December 2013 and Kits expected March 2014

Visit us at www.modelokits.com Telephone: 02 9707 3390 or 0404 935 663

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