



Newsletter – FEBRUARY 2026

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Chairman's Message – February 2026

By Mark Peddle

Dear Model Train Enthusiasts,

Greetings to you all, as our first month of the year has already come and gone.

Our club held its AGM on Saturday 24th January, with 14 members present and five proxies submitted. The meeting ran smoothly, with the committee re-elected, the previous year's finances approved, and the budget adopted. This included confirmation of the club subscription for the year at R240.00.

At our AGM, we announced the honorary membership of one of the founding members of the Club, namely John Burkhardt. John has been a pivotal member of the club over the years and has contributed many hours to EMRIG. He has seen the club operating in so many various locations over the years. The club's success is owed to members like John, who, through both the Good and the Bad times, ensured that it has kept operating. We want to say thank you to John for your contribution over the years, and may we have many more enjoyable years of training with you.



John Burkhardt (right) is being congratulated as an Honorary Life member of EMRIG

Looking ahead, 2026 is shaping up to be a busy and exciting year. We plan to attend most of the Swap Meets throughout the year, as well as hosting club meets at Benoni Junior School during the school holidays. These sessions will allow members and other model holders a full week of running trains, building modules, and further developing their passion for the hobby. In addition, we will be increasing our presence at malls to showcase the hobby to the public.

Please keep an eye out for upcoming dates, as we would love as many members as possible to be part of this journey. Better still, feel free to bring a buddy or two along, to share in the enjoyment.

To the committee, thank you for your willingness to remain on for another year. I am confident that we are going to have a lot of FUN together.

VISITS

Our visits over the past year have unfortunately been a bit hit-and-miss, and it would have been great to have had more regular get-togethers. This year, we ask members to please let Brian Dawson know if they are aware of anyone willing to host the club for a visit. We can then gauge interest and attendance. These visits are always a wonderful opportunity to catch up with fellow modellers.

EVENTS

Please remember that the first Swap Meet of the year will take place on 7th February 2026 at Northmead Mall, hosted by EMRIG.

That's all for now. Until next time, keep your trains running.

Kind regards,

Mark Peddle

Chairman

Other Club News

By Brian Dawson (Newsletter Editor)

Scheduled Layout Set-ups And Future Activities

At the AGM, Mark provided, and we discussed, a long list of potential activities / club get-together opportunities for the year ahead.

The first two scheduled activities, where we will be setting up our layout, are at our Swap Meet at Northmead Mall on 7th February, and then again at the NTMTK Swap Meet at the Voortrekker Monument on 28th February. We will then continue with setting up the layout at each of our own Swap Meets.

We'll talk to PMT to discuss as to which of their Swap Meets we will attend, seeing as they also now have the potential to set up their own mini-modular layout (how far have they got with development?), and also have a couple of other portable layouts belonging to club members, that they may wish to make use of.

We will also talk to Josh, organiser of the Richie's Toy Fairs, and will likely participate there again at at least one or two of those events this year, if he is in agreement.

Mark has provisionally booked the Benoni Junior School hall for each of the school holidays - March/April, June/July and September/October - for us to be able to set up the biggest layout we can manage, and run trains there on various days throughout those holidays.

And we will again participate at both the Transportation Fair in August and the Great Model Train Expo at the end of October.

We will wait to hear from the organisers whether The Hobby Show is to be held again this year, and if so, when, as there was some talk of it maybe being rescheduled, possibly to the October school holidays. And if we're invited back there, we'll once again be part of it, with it having been such a positive experience for us as a club last year.

The possibility of doing another layout set-up at RynPark Retirement Village will be discussed with Jan Kruger, and there is also an opportunity to set up at one of the shopping centres at Edenvale.

And then, for those of us who have N Gauge trains, Duncan has been asked to organise a few days during the year where we can run the littlies on the club's N Gauge layout that he has been storing for us.

Brief Mini-modules Updates

The Knysna Model Railroaders, where our friend Brian Messenger is involved, between them have recently placed an order for an inverse curve and a few more straights. They will then have, between them, 10 straights, six regular curves, and the inverse curve. And then... surprise! surprise!... they've also ordered a bridge module! That means they can make up a pretty decent little layout down there in Knysna! Hopefully we will get to see some pics of what they're up to, one day...



And the Pretoria Model Trainclub (PMT) and its members has also now become active in this area, having recently bought four regular curve modules, as well as further straight modules, bringing up to ten the number of straights the club or its members own between them!

Who is going to be the first of our “local” modellers to purchase and develop a bridge module set? (I think I know the answer to that one.....!)

At the moment, from Niel’s records, there are currently 69 straight modules, 17 standard curves, 2 inverse curves, and one bridge module out there, admittedly spread around the country a bit, and in various stages of completion.... But the concept is most definitely catching on!!

Swap Meets Feedback and Schedule, and Toy Fair Dates

There have been no Swap Meets in the past month, so there is nothing to report back on at this time.

The next Swap Meet will be the EMRIG Swap Meet at Northmead Mall on Saturday 7th February. EMRIG will be there as a club, and we will have our layout on display and operating. Then the next one will be at the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria, arranged and hosted by the Noord-Transvaalse Modeltrein Klub, at the end of the month. Once again, we’ve committed to having our layout there on display.

Here is the full **Swap Meets calendar for 2026**, for all those Swap Meets that we know about. If any additional Swap Meets are arranged and added, the schedule will be amended.

February	7/2/2026	EMRIG	Northmead Mall (*)	Benoni
	28/2/2026	NTMTK	Voortrekker Monument (*)	Pretoria
March	28/3/2026	PMT	John Vorster Technical High School	Pretoria
May	30/5/2026	EMRIG	Northmead Mall (*)	Benoni
June	27/6/2026	PMT	John Vorster Technical High School	Pretoria
August	28/8/2026	EMRIG	Northmead Mall (*)	Benoni
October	3/10/2026	PMT	John Vorster Technical High School	Pretoria
November	28/11/2026	EMRIG	Northmead Mall (*)	Benoni
December	12/12/2026	PMT	John Vorster Technical High School	Pretoria

() = intending to have the EMRIG portable layout set up and running at these events*

*(Other * info will be added once the Committee has investigated and decided in this regard...)*

And here is that list, in poster form again, in case you wish to copy and paste, and forward to anyone else who may be interested...



Other relevant dates....

The 2026 **Richie's Toy Fair** dates were also provided, being 7th March, 25th July, and 7th November.

The **Transportation Fair** will be held on **Saturday 1st August 2026**. (See advert later in the newsletter)

The Great Model Train Expo 2026 will take place on the weekend **31st October to 1st November 2026**.

And then we'll wait for confirmation, but the annual **CSME Engineering Fair**, with its live steam action and renowned radio-controlled trucks, will probably take place on the long-weekend 24th to 27th September.

EMRIG Newsletter "Index" Available and on the Club Website

An "Index" (actually a listing of content by month, and by article title / author) has been compiled, covering the period February 2017 to December 2023 (the Index will soon be expanded to include 2024 and 2025 as well). This is available as a PDF document if anyone wants a copy of it. You can just email me your request at editor@emrig.co.za. It is also available on the club website, under the Newsletter section, right at the top, for ease of reference.

Club Communications Media (our routine monthly reminder)

These are our Newsletter, our Website, our Whatsapp Group, and our Facebook page, and occasional general Email correspondence...

The club's **Website** address is www.emrig.co.za.

The **Newsletter** is uploaded to the club's website each month, and a link to the website location is posted on the Whatsapp Chatgroup once the latest newsletter is available, and also sent to a number of other "friends of EMRIG". Members who have requested such, are emailed a copy of the newsletter.

The **Whatsapp Chatgroup** is administered by Niel Wilson. To be added to the group, you need to be an active paid-up member of the club. Send Niel a message at 078-305-5248, and he will add you to the group.



The **Facebook page**... Type “EMRIG” in the searchbox at the top of your Facebook homepage (this assumes you are on Facebook). This will bring up the club’s page. And if you like it, “Like” it, and Follow us!!! 😊

Emails are sent to club members when there is something urgent or “special” that you need to be notified about. You need to have been added to our “Google Groups” mailing list... Let Glynn know if you aren’t receiving mails this way, have paid or are paying your subs, and believe you should be receiving mail.

Letters To The Editor

Editor’s Note: I received an email in October 2021, which inter alia suggested that we routinely have a **Letters To The Editor** section in this newsletter... 😊 😊 😊

Come on, guys and girls! Let’s hear what you have to say... about the newsletter (what you do and don’t find interesting!), about our railroad modelling hobby, about prototypical trains... in fact, anything train- or club-related!!! Send your comments / suggestions / contributions to me by email at editor@emrig.co.za.

This month we have another emailed “Letter to the Editor” from Don Davidson, a member of SAG and WFG, and an avid reader of and contributor to this newsletter, adding a suggestion to those he provided in his “Recollections” article in our new “Gauteng Model Railway History” series which started last month...

EMRIG Newsletter January 2026 – Follow-up

Hi Brian,

I refer to my article “Some Personal Recollections From The Past” published in your January 2026 Newsletter.

I was giving some further thought to the Rand Model Railway Club and my participation at that club. In my article I had mentioned that there was a divider between the American and British/European sections. It dawned on me that although this might have been the case initially, in subsequent years Hans Bac, being a well-known model tram enthusiast, and the tram club members including James Smith, were very involved in constructing a tram set-up between the American and British/European sections. I remember how precise and professionally the work was done.

Prior to Hans’ involvement in the Rand Model Railway Club, Hans was also involved in the model railway set-up from a tram perspective at the Pretoria show grounds. I believe in later years the tram guys also had their small tram layout permanently set-up in The Transport Museum at Wemmer Pan.

As tram modelling appears to have been a very specialised interest in this country, it would be great if Hans could provide his recollections on the history and activities of the tram group in Gauteng, particularly as it was quite unique in Gauteng. I remember having a number of visits with SAG to see Hans’ impressive tram layout at his home. I so enjoyed those visits, as I am sure so did all those SAG members who attended.

With kind regards,

Don

Editor' Response: Thank you, Don! I will certainly follow up with Hans!!

Below are some photos taken from the club's November 2015 newsletter, during our visit to Hans' layout. The author of the layout visit report is not revealed, but likely to have been Kevin or Glynn Chamberlain.



Hans Bac, alongside the late Colin Tanner-Tremaine

OUR EMRIG 2026 AGM – Some AGM Feedback

By Brian Dawson

The AGM took place, this time on a Saturday for a change, on 24th January 2026, but once again held at Niel Wilson's home in Marister, in Benoni.

There was tea and coffee available before the meeting, for those who had arrived early enough. Duncan's wife Julie had once again baked a double batch of delicious iced cupcakes, decorated on top with colourful edible locos. Thank you Julie! Very much appreciated!

We had an excellent turnout, with 14 of our 23 paid-up members in attendance, 8 members sending apologies, and 5 of those providing proxy votes to various club members. Two of our paid-up members are actually resident in the UK (although one of them – no names mentioned, of course! – was actually out here in sunny South Africa, but sunning himself on a South Coast beach at the time of the AGM!), another member was busy holidaying in Perth, and two were down in the Cape, with Mia sadly laid up in Tygerberg hospital while we were meeting... Sterkte, Mia! We were thinking of you!



Mark reading his report...



... and everyone else listening attentively!

Next up was the club's financial report, which Mark dealt with in Mia's absence. Although we had spent a bit more than we had budgeted and "earned" during last year, the overspend was all on items (related to expanding and developing our layout) and events – particularly The Hobby Show – which greatly expanded our exposure as a club and as an active and attractive hobby, to the wider public.

John Burkhardt, with his years of corporate financial management experienced, had again reviewed the 2025 finances for us, reported that he had found everything in order, and was happy with the integrity of the financial report.

Thanks were expressed to Mia for all her local cash-and-receipt handling and banking, etc., and also to Glynn for his bookkeeping and regular financial reporting to the committee, and the Financial Report was

adopted.

Mark then presented the proposed Budget for 2026, based largely on the 2025 Budget and expenses, with income adjustments due to increased membership, and increased swap meet costs, due to a charge now to be levied by Northmead Mall for the use of the Mall as our Swap Meet venue. A further provision is made for spending some money on Modules and Layout, as we look to including a further inverse curve and some other modifications to the layout this year. In addition, the club will now be paying the cost of our website hosting, which Glynn had previously been paying personally.

It was agreed that the membership subscription for this year should be kept at R240.00, thus no increase over the charge last year.

And then it came to the election of new office-bearers for the club. Guess what? The only new offer was from James, offering to assist and shadow Kobus with the swap meet arrangements. So for the rest, it was same old... same old...!, with each of the 2025 committee members continuing with their old portfolios yet again. Mia and Glynn too were re-elected, but in absentia, and are thus not present in the following revealing photos...



Outgoing committee members, relieved...



Re-elected committee members, ecstatic at the idea!

There was discussion about at which of the swap meets and other events during the year we would be setting up our layout, and then we're also looking at doing something, somewhere, during each of the school holidays (April, June/July and Sept/October). Detail will be provided here, and on the Whatsapp Chatgroup, as and when arrangements are finalised. We'll also commit to being at the Transportation Fair and The Great Model Train Expo again, and likely also The Hobby Show if it happens again and we're invited back. Then – something new to do (if you have any N Gauge trains, that is!) is that we're looking to have a few N Gauge Days, on the club's old N Gauge Exhibition Layout, which is currently set up in Duncan's garage. So, all told, there should be a lot of opportunities for members to get involved and run trains...

There was a feeling that we should be doing more with our website, with more regular updating and additional postings, other than adding the newsletter, particularly providing swap meet dates and info and feedback. Although Facebook is definitely our most popular social media platform, we could also be promoting our website if we have regular additions to the content there. James has offered to get "their IT

guy” involved in looking at how we can spice things up...

We then had a bit of a discussion about the age of our club, and when EMRIG actually started. With the new “Gauteng Model Railway History” series that Brian has started in the newsletter, he is keen to finalise and write up the history of EMRIG, as one of the older model train clubs in Gauteng. But it seems that there are different versions of when the club got going, depending on who one talks to. It looks as though we have 1982 as a pretty likely start-up date, though, meaning that the club will turn 45 years old sometime next year (sadly we missed out on celebrating our 40th!). John Burkhardt has “promised” that he will get on with raking through the info that he has, so that we can have better clarity, and feature an “EMRIG History” article in our newsletter in the not too distant future.

And then, speaking of John Burkhardt – as one of the founder members of EMRIG all those years ago – the committee proposed conferring Honorary Membership on John, for his continued loyalty and monumental contribution to the club over the years, in terms of Item 3.4 of our club’s Constitution... *“The committee may grant honorary membership to any member that according to the committee deserves that honour.”*

We believe that this is definitely the case, as far as John is concerned, and the club agreed. Mark then “conferred Honorary Membership” on John, with a handshake! This doesn’t mean that John gets any special treatment from us, other than that he doesn’t need to pay his club subs anymore (having been paying them for 40+ years!) 😊 😊 😊!
Congratulations from all of us, JohnB!!



That then ended the formal proceedings, and the AGM was closed. Niel lit the braai fire, and his Mom took a lot of “social” pictures of us as we sat or stood around and chewed the fat, talked about trains and the state of the country, and the state of the world from which we have to buy our trains... and generally had a most enjoyable remainder of the morning, lunchtime, and early afternoon.



Earnest discussions



John and Terrence



Our "I'm not the Layout Manager"



Sorry... what did you say?



Braai-side discussions



Are they doing it right, Jimmy?



See – even committee members can have FUN!



Sorry Jean, no space yet...



Die boere maak so....



... and that's the way it should be...



This was those of us still there at the end of lunchtime, William, Colin and Richard having already left...

... Brian, Kobus, Jean, Mark, Niel, John, James, Robyn, Jimmy, Duncan and Terrence (Photo by Sally)

Chairman's Report for 2025

By Mark Peddle

Good morning to everyone,

I would like to thank you for taking the time to attend today's AGM. I want to welcome our new members here today, and we wish them a happy journey with us as a club

Well, 2025 has been a busy and exciting year for the club. It was two years ago at the AGM where we unveiled the mini-modular concept.

This has grown organically, and the number of modules now owned by Club members and members from other clubs in Pretoria and Knysna is impressive.

We have really been active, in that we attended 14 events over the year. Apart from the Swap Meets and Richies' Toy Fair we did the weekend at Rynpark Retirement Home, Model Transportation Fair, The Great Model Train Expo, and, to go out with a bang, the NASREC Hobby show, which took place over 3 days.

Without going into too much detail for each event, I do believe that every time we venture out into the public domain, we make an impact at that event. People are amazed at the modules and what is displayed on such a small area. The detail comes to life.

I must elaborate on the NASREC Hobby show – although the attendance figures were nowhere near what the organiser hoped for, we sure benefited from everyone who attended. Being at the main entrance / exit, we were the first and last stop, and we had a busy 3 days. The team pulled out all the stops, from getting the donations for the Roco train we put up for a draw, to managing the children to run trains on the layout. Some children returned a few times to savour the joy and fun. I must just mention that everyone rallied together to ensure that trains were continuing to run. But I must say, MR NOODLE, you really made us proud in getting the kids involved, you are gifted for this, and have booked your place for future shows.

I want to say thank you to the club members who were always available for transporting, setting up, and operating the trains, and then breaking them down at the various events. To Niel Wilson for always sorting out the technical issues, Kobus Pelser for providing the transport and trailer, and with Noodle, Kobus' partner in crime, in fine-tuning the track connections, Brian Dawson for manning the spanners, and Duncan Hornby, who did some work, and otherwise entertained us most of the time. Of course, John Burkhardt was always there to support and give a hand where he could.

We went from a small run-around of just 4 corners and 8 straights two years ago at the first EMRIG Swap Meet, to a year-end layout at NASREC consisting of 5 corners, 1 reverse curve, and 26 straights.

Overall, if we could assemble all the modules out there, we would have 69 straights, 21 corners, 2 reverse curves, and now 1 bridge module. In running meters, that equates to approximately 50 metres.

The club's image has grown substantially over the year, and especially after the NASREC show. Our Facebook number of views has skyrocketed. On one reel alone, we have hit 12,4K views. This is of Ralph's

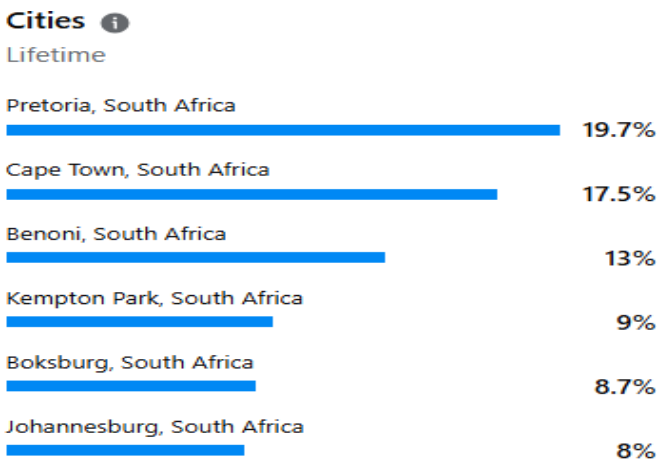


5Es with the Trans Karroo Carriages.

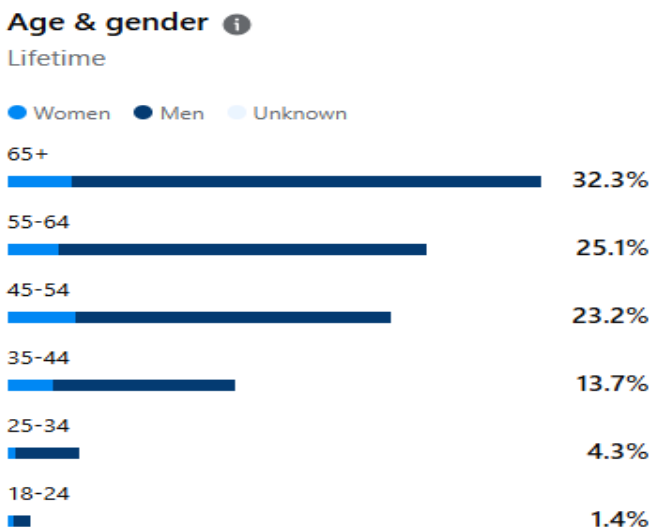
We have viewers from around the world:



Our biggest following in South Africa is:



The age group following:



Well done to everyone involved this past year.

I look forward to the further growth of the mini-modular system this year, to even more exciting offerings. Perhaps, just perhaps, in time to come, there could be a nationwide modular gathering of all modellers for a weekend of operating.

Our Swap Meet is always a well-attended event, which we host on four Saturdays during the year. There is a slight change on this front, in that Northmead Mall has now started to charge a fee for the use of the venue. The amount is R1150, VAT included. We have had to pass this on to the traders, and so the new table cost is R100, up from the R80 we used to charge. The R100 is in line with what other Swap Meets request.

So thanks to Kobus for ensuring that the tables are delivered and that all the Traders are allocated the tables they requested. It is one time we get most of the club members down to help in some fashion or other, and have time for some catching up. And maybe even for finding a bargain or two on the tables.

On the committee front, a big thank you to everyone involved. It's been a year of virtual meetings with Glynn in England, ensuring that we kept it time-zone appropriate. (PS, this is our overseas branch ...

E = England, **M** = Model, **R**= Railway, **I** = Interest, **G**= Group)

Glynn has helped Mia with the Finances by setting it up on an accounting platform. Mia has ensured that the bank accounts are monitored, and the Finances are up to date. So big thanks to you both.

Thank you to John Burkhardt for once again reviewing our financials. It is always appreciated.

Brian has kept our monthly newsletter rolling and very topical, with the information gathered to put this out every month. I must say, he keeps me on my toes with a gentle nudge every month on "Where's the Chairman's letter?" Big thank you to you, Brian, for all your efforts.

As we look forward to the new year, we are excited about the projects and events planned. Let's continue to support each other, share our expertise, and most importantly, enjoy the journey of creating and running our model railways

So, thanks to everyone here today, and here's to a successful AGM and 2026 year.

MARK PEDDLE , CHAIRMAN

24th January 2026



("Phew! Glad that's all over for this year!...")

Transportation Fair

For the model enthusiast

When: 1 August 2026

Where: Wynand Marais
Community hall
Houtkapper street
Birchleigh

Time: 09h00 to 14h00



Items available

Model trains, Aircraft models/dioramas,
Trams, Tractors, Boats,
Bicycles, military vehicles, Busses, motor
bikes, Diecast cars,



Contact person:

Willie Vorster: 082 563 9283

All bookings to be sent to Willie with pop.



Costs

Bookings essential: Per table = R80
Entrance Fee: R30 per person
Kids under 12 Free



Bridging the Gap (Part 1) - My Build

By Ralph Davey

Hi everyone. The EMRIG and our own modular model railway builds and layouts continue to expand.

Once we saw the many modules set up at the recent displays, discussions started on what next to add, to create other scenes. My first idea was to look to getting a bridge scene with a realistic look and feel, with some bridge structures in place.

Niel and I discussed this. My thought was to have a gap in the table set-up, with the bridge straddling the gap. Niel went and did some planning and testing, and developed a bridge module set that fits into the current design.

The Module Components

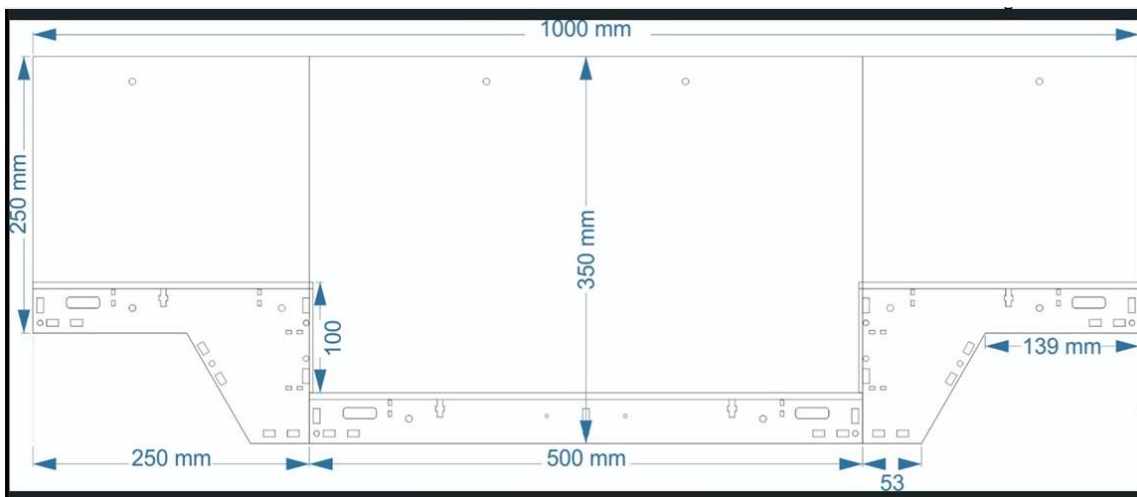
The bridge set comprises a middle section that drops between the table set-up, with a length of 500mm, the same length as a standard module.

The lower valley portion measures 100mm in depth.

There are two end support module sections measuring 250mm each. These two add 500mm to the design. The combined module set thus equates to two standard modules, measuring 1metre in length.



The modules for the bridge. Photo and drawing credits: Niel Wilson.



A perfect design and fit!

I decided that this bridge design would be the next module-set I would build.

The Bridge Concept I decided on

As my own home model railroad theme is SAR, I looked to modelling a scene that incorporates the look and feel of typical SAR trestle bridges.

I follow a local YouTube channel run by Jaco Marais in KZN. Jaco posts regular videos of the trains running on the NATCOR line in KZN. One of the sites he films at is Lions River.

Included in the area are a number of bridges, and I decided to use these as a starting point for my bridge build. I need to still decide whether to have a single span, or a double span, scene for both tracks.

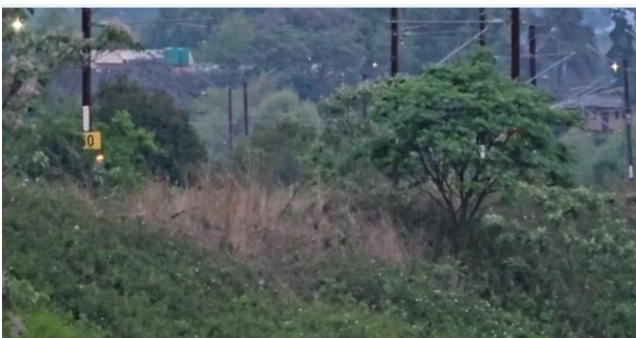
The SAR bridges are silver in colour, but have a faded and weathered look.



View of the bridges leading into the Lions River station. Photo credit: Jaco Marais.

The two Natal lines cross the Lions River here. This makes for an interesting setting and scenery build.

The two track bridges have a single span at this crossing, but with a lot to add in the scene. This is one of the options I am considering.





Above are views of the bridges crossing the Lions River, and adjacent surrounds. Photo credit: Jaco Marais.

A Bridge Too Far – or rather A Bridge From Afar

I started looking at bridge options in anticipation of getting a module set to build. I could not find any suitable bridges in local searches and at swap meets.

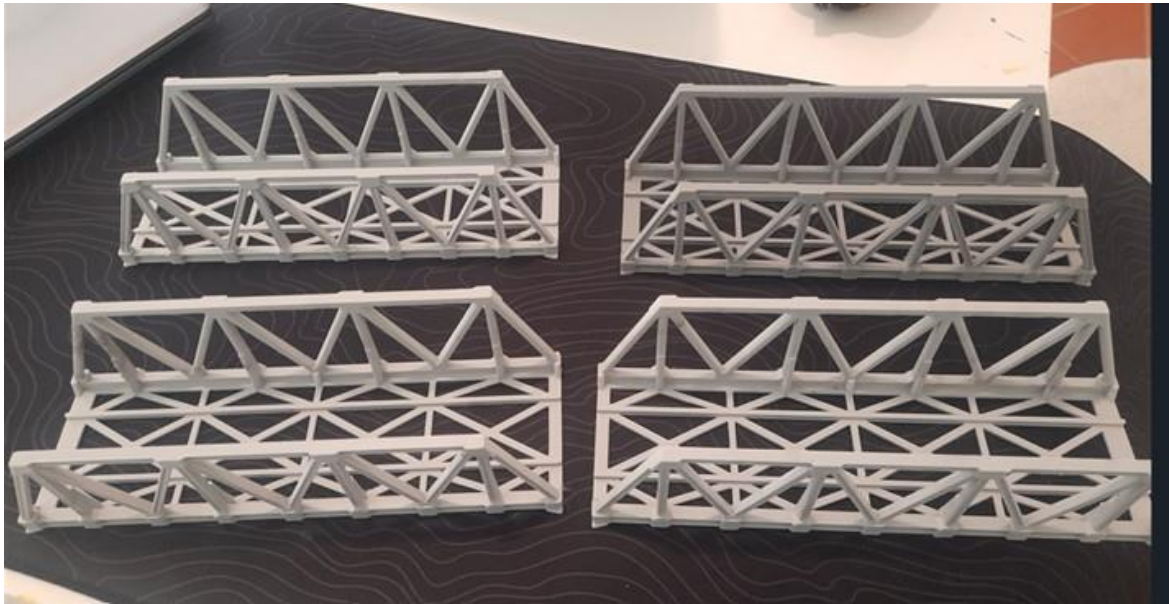
As my upcoming trip to Perth in Australia was arranged for December 2025, I then planned to look at the hobby shops in Perth. When I checked and visited the hobby shops in Perth, again I did not find bridge models that suited my requirements.

While discussing this with my son-in-law David, he said we should look to printing these on his 3-D printer. I showed him pictures of what I was looking for, and also a free download site he could look at. David printed the first one, and it was perfect.

As the span is 200mm I asked if he minded printing three more, as I might look to a two-span bridge scene.

He printed these and they turned out perfect for my requirement.

So again, my second visit to Perth rewards me with SAR-themed items!



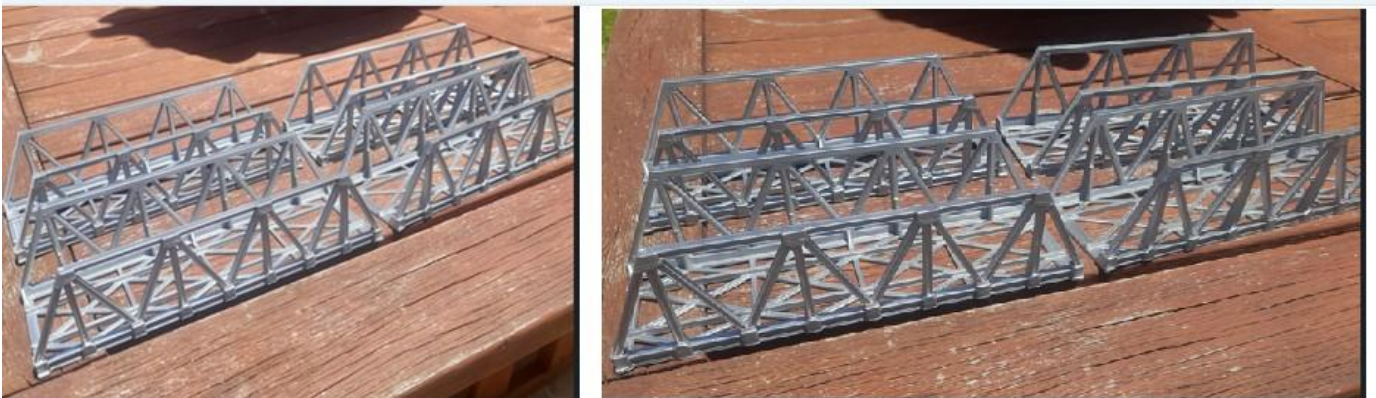
Bridges after the 3-D printing

Painting the Bridges

I had some free time while still here in Australia (*this article being written and sent through from Perth*), so I decided to start on the painting and some weathering of the four bridge structures.

This turned out to be a good start, and I will continue with additional weathering and additional painting when the assembly of the bridges starts on the new sections.

I used a Tamiya metallic silver colour.

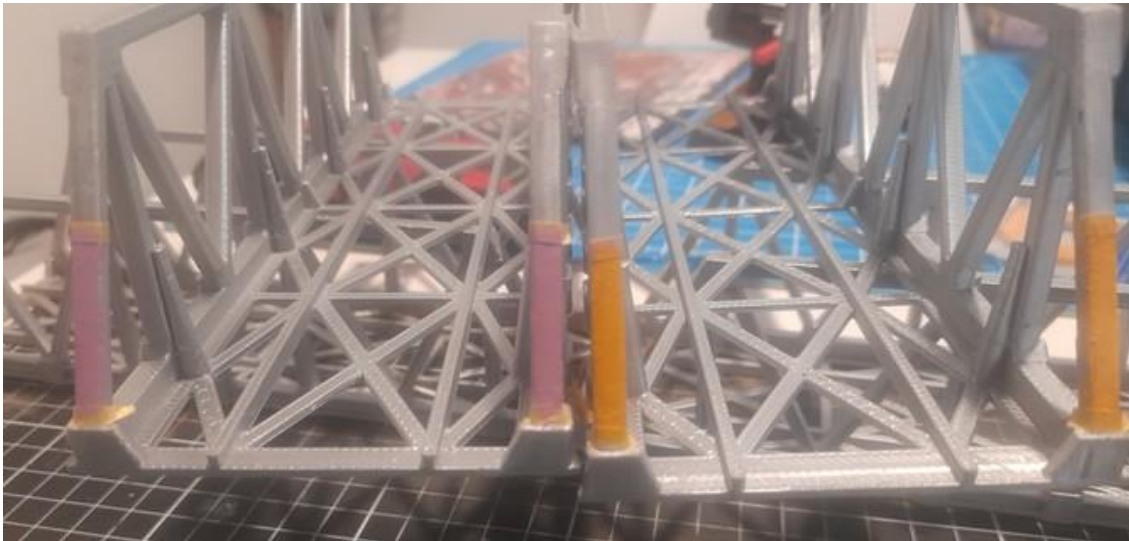


The bridges with first coat of metallic silver

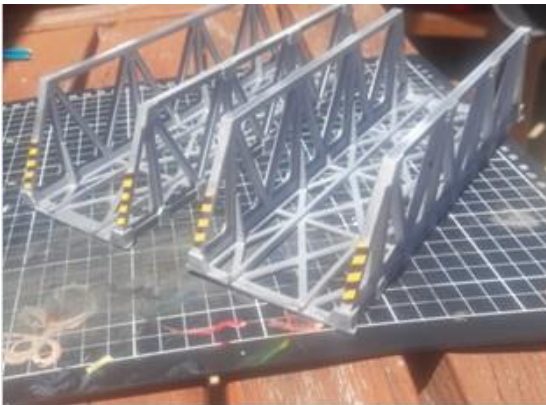
I then added the black and yellow chevron warning markings. I first painted the pink undercoat for the yellow. Doing a pink undercoat is a tip that enhances the yellow, and it allows for fewer coats of yellow to be applied.

I then masked off the yellow and sprayed on a black coat.

The result looks good and adds to the finish for the bridges.



Pink undercoat and masked off area for the chevron application



Black sections added. Result is good.

Weathering and toning things down

After the initial shiny silver was applied I needed to tone it down, and look to weathering each bridge.

The pictures I saw for the Lions River bridges show the silver as faded to look greyish in certain views.

Doing a bit of research and Google checking, I noted these bridges on the SAR are mainly painted in a silver colour.

The weathering state varies. I will adopt which suits my scene as I progress.

My son-in-law has a very good matt clear finish that I used. It is called Army Painter. It is made to tone down and make the paint look flat and dull.

I hope to be able to buy this in South Africa for future use, but have not seen it on sale anywhere.



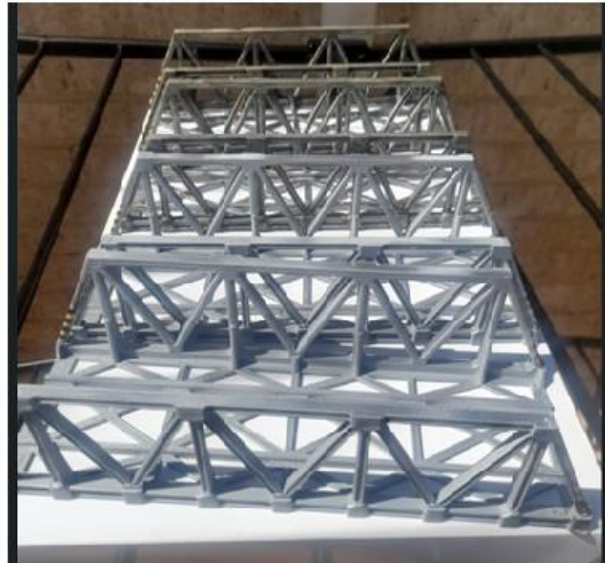
I used pictures off the internet as well, to see the level of weathering on various bridges.



Some pictures of SAR trestle bridges.

So phase one is done for now....





The bridges at this stage

The bridges are looking good, and I am looking forward to buying my bridge modules and building the scene when I get back to RSA.

Model Railroading and 3-D Printing

We have a number of modellers and manufacturers doing 3-D printing here in South Africa. While the items produced are very good and cater for the South African-themed requirements, the selling price for these is high for structures and buildings. This results in us modellers planning and saving in order to get specific items.

Many of the modellers I follow in Britain have invested in 3-D printers to be able to make items for their own layouts, and also to sell. What is now happening in Britain, and other countries, is that modellers are using their own 3-D printers for structures, rolling stock and even figures, and this could happen here as modellers are looking at investing in 3-D printers. These 3-D printers are amazing, and the cost is reduced significantly for a home printed item.

If I was younger I would probably have invested in the technology.

Next time: Bridging the Gap (Part 2)

This will cover the module build and the scenery applied.

Conclusion

I hope you enjoyed reading this article. I hope that more members will take up the request to get themselves a module or two, to be used as part of the layout the club sets up, when we visit shows or different venues.

Depression and (a Different) Epiphany:

Part 1: My BNSF "TBA" Yard... A project for the future one day???

By Glynn Chamberlain

Is this just a pipedream, or could it too one day become a reality? Who knows...? Dreaming while on holiday..... 😊

Before you wonder what this article is about, and what has happened to my proposed Barge / Ferry module switching layout, that layout is still progressing, **and is still priority #1**. However, the first three articles (in previous newsletter editions [Oct – Dec 2025]) were around ideas, research and design. Stuff that is quicklyish thought of in one's head, researched on the Internet, and then put to paper (actually – computer!) quite easily. Sitting at home, with nothing to do, allows one to ponder, as well as sit at the computer and write to your heart's content. Much like now with this article..... (*Ed: except that he wasn't at home while writing this one!*) Anyway, the project is still on the go, but at this stage, it is about getting the materials, assembling, gluing times, drying times, and the like. So, the next rail barge article will be ready sometime in the future. Hopefully early March or April 2026... Another year has started!

What is this article then!!? Too much time on my hands? Well, no, and a bit of yes. Going back to my first article, you may remember me wanting my old layout size back, and eventually coming to terms with not having it. Thus, the Barge layout as a compromise... Basically, and importantly, holding out for a 6 x 12 metre layout room again was hindering me in a multitude of ways. Quite literally. Once over that mental block, the ideas and thoughts started flowing again. And now I'm on holiday, and I'm dreaming.....!!

And so, to this article – BNSF's "TBA" Yard...

Kevin and I have been going to many model railway shows here in the United Kingdom. Every time we go, I, for one, am in awe of what the British do here. They have predominantly small layouts (a few modules) that are very detailed, and very operations orientated. They do also have the traditional loop-type layouts that are a bit bigger, normally in the 3 metre to 4 metre size range, and then there are the biggest of layouts that can be 8 metres or more, although they are few and far between.

Every time, Kevin and I reminisce or chat about doing our own modular layout in much the same way, but it is a sacrilege having a big American train running on a tiny modular layout! To the right is back in 2002 sometime, when Kevin and I had just relocated to Johannesburg, with the modules we had built ourselves for the Cape Town N-Trak Club.



This set up was ideal as far as we were concerned, and suited us down to the ground. We got to run longish trains, which ran well, and, as per this show, amazed many a visitor.

One of the dilemmas, however, is staging! If you cannot stage long trains, and a number of them at the same time, things become self-defeating. As per my visible staging at Stryker / Browning on my old home layout in Benoni at the time, space becomes a problem, as well as track (needed anyway) and switches (the number required) becoming prohibitive. Also, the deeper you start adding more sidings, the shorter they get...



So, to further whet your appetite... enter another project coming soon to a newsletter near you ☺ ... My train elevator! At the moment it is in the Design and Development stage, and not just pie in the sky as it was in the past. The thing about an elevator is that it will consist of shelves (6 at the moment) that are all the same length (between 3 to 4 metres) with 2 tracks per shelf, allowing for 12 full-length trains of between 3 to 4 metres long.

So, my staging is in progress, but parked for the current time. But, what about the main layout for the show? Will it be adaptable to run as a home layout as well? This is where the creativity started flowing again.

If I were to do a modular show layout....., what would I need to consider?

Flexibility: -

Having built my Whitefish Yard for “N-Trak” as well as having used it in my Benoni home layout, I had complete flexibility. I could, and still can, take it to an N-Trak meet, if only there was one close by (the nearest is 500kms away!). I could still use it in a home layout, and finally, it is so portable, that I was able to bring it over to the UK with me in a “move cube” (mini container).



Action: -

Many of the layouts at the UK shows continuously have action, even if it is a switching layout. Not that there are many, but the less “action orientated” layouts at shows do not hold people for very long before they move on. I have noticed that the layouts with many passing trains that actually stop on the layout for a short period, are the ones that keep people watching. A common concept is to have stations where trains arrive and depart to schedules. Some switching or wagon re-arrangements are to be completed, maybe with a shunter running back and forth... I would need to do something similar, to keep the action going.



Detailing: -

I have mentioned many times that the UK layouts are super-detailed. Things such as bicycles, picnic tables, oil and milk drums, tools and the like, litter a really good layout, keeping visitors continuously looking around the layout for “details” as such. With reference to the image on the right, there is no sign of trains or tracks, just gardening everywhere. Also, look at all the detail, especially the colourful flowers at the top middle right, and trolleys, even bird boxes, at the bottom centre.



Interest, attention-drawing: -

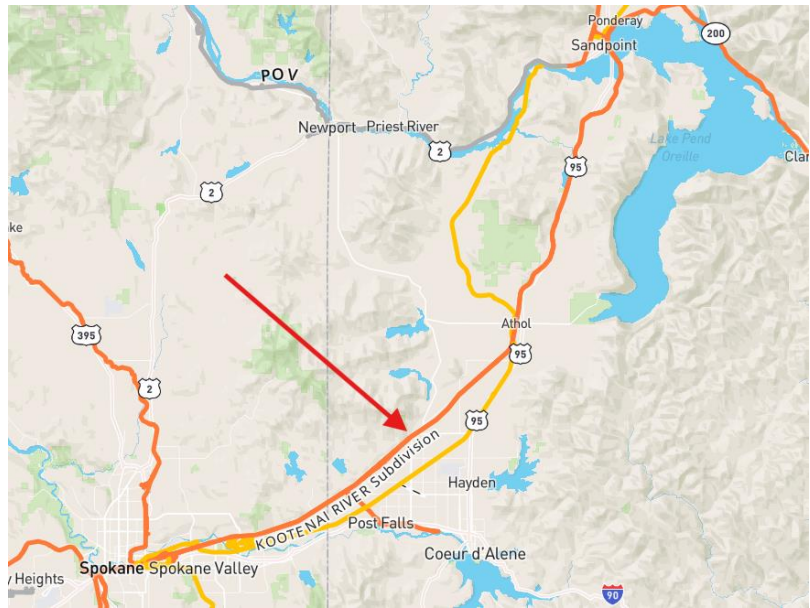
This is the be all and end all of everything. Having everything listed above, it would be a portable and interesting layout. But what is needed is true attention-pulling action, i.e. trains running constantly. Not the same ones going round and round... New, different, trains arriving and leaving constantly! Action that would really keep the visitor there, watching and captured!

So, from all of the above, I would need a yard where there is way more action than my Whitefish Yard could handle, and incorporating substantial switching if necessary.

To the Internet I went, scouring all of BNSF’s yards, looking for yards where there would be many trains running through, with some switching action. Yes, there are busy yards such as in Chicago and / or Seattle and the like, but they are more like terminating or origin yards. Furthermore, they are normally either just an intermodal (container) yard, or a tanker yard. I needed one with trains running in either direction, AND with significant switching opportunities.

Another requirement would be refuelling facilities! Imagine a train arriving in the yard, and needing to be serviced. Also, imagine the bottleneck it would cause to following trains or trains heading in the opposite direction.

One such yard that I looked at was BNSF's Hauser Yard, between Sandpoint and Spokane. Hauser Yard is actually called a "refuelling facility", and is a massive facility featuring several large fuel storage tanks, capable of holding thousands of gallons of diesel fuel. The facility moves 250,000 gallons of fuel **daily** and almost **7 million per month**. These tanks are connected to a network of pumps and hoses that allow trains to be refuelled quickly and efficiently. In addition to fuelling services, the facility also provides routine maintenance and repair services for BNSF locomotives and railcars. The refuelling pads are based under a large warehouse roof, and number four tracks now. Locomotives literally stop on the refuelling pad with the balance of the long train held on the same mainline track. They are quickly refuelled, and literally on their way again. No pulling off locomotives for refuelling elsewhere in the yard, either later returned or swapped out with refuelled locomotives.

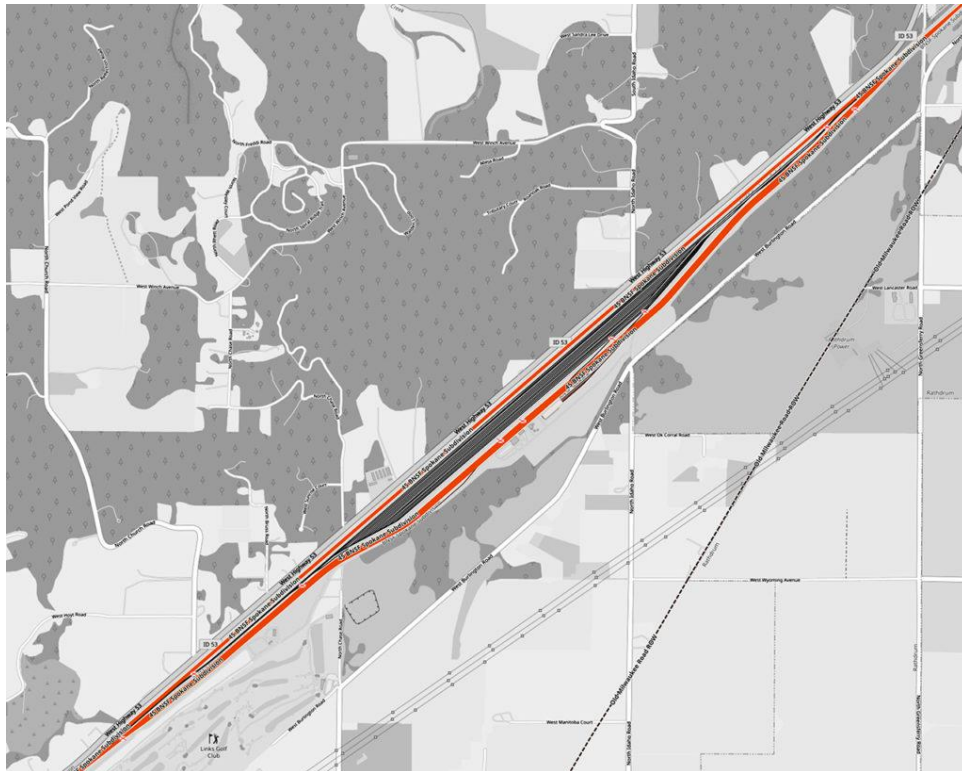


Although the Hauser refuelling facility caught my interest, as it is not too far from Whitefish as such, and was an interesting and possible find, it did not have the operational interest I wanted. Trains literally stop, refuel and go, with only the wagons or locos needing maintenance being pulled out for work.



Orientation plan of Hauser Refuelling Facility

So, have I found the yard of my dreams... and why? Well, that will come next month! Yes, I have found a truly amazing yard, with everything I could ask for and more. So – look forward to next month’s article, and finally the reveal of the name of my “TBA” yard! “Watch this space”, as they say!



WFG – Building A Layout For TGMTE 2025:

Part 2. Landscaping and Scenery – The Mountain and Back Modules

By Brian Dawson

In last month's article (in the January 2026 Newsletter) I described the basic design, the sorting out of a track plan, and getting the track laid for this layout, built specifically by the **Westrand Freemo Group** for **The Great Model Train Expo**, which took place at the beginning of November 2025. From when we decided to take on the project, we had a little over six months in which to pull it all together. Six months seemed – then – like a long time, with plenty of time to make it all happen!

Ballasting and Vegetation

Once the track plan for a particular section of the layout had been agreed, and the track laid and track-pinned in place, ballasting of that section could begin. I did much of the ballasting on the straight sections (while Neil and Richard got on with the more technical stuff elsewhere), although we all did some ballasting, somewhere. Not all of our ballasting was immediately successful, and quite a lot of "touch-up" work was required. Wolf (successfully!) ballasted the lake / sawmill end-module (apart from the sawmill area), and Richard ballasted the logging camp yard. We had a real mish-mash of ballast types (i.t.o. grain-size and colour), with everyone having contributed whatever ballast they had, as well as the club's stock, so we did quite a lot of mixing. But, between us, we had nowhere near enough to do all the ballasting required.

I was familiar with the ballasting that John Burkhardt had recently done on portions of his home layout. I liked the dark colour and the fine grain-size, and asked where he had bought it. "At @Trainz", he replied. So I bought us 10 bags of their HO ballast, through their online shop, which Rod Herring (an ex-EMRIG member from a long time ago) was helpful in getting to me (being way on the other side of town to @Trainz). We used narrow cork strips, glued in place next to the foam track underlay, to reduce the amount of ballast needed. Only one further bag of ballast was required, towards the end, mixed in with all the other left-over scraps, for the finishing off.

Once ballasting of an area was completed, if no further development was to take place in that area (placement of industries, etc.), then that area could be vegetated. As an ex-revegetation contractor (in real life, pre-retirement) I did a lot of the vegetation establishment, particularly on the straight modules.

Before applying vegetation, the baseboard was painted with a neutral brown colour. Once the paint was dry, slightly-diluted (60-70%) cold glue was painted on to the surface, and a mix of five or six vegetation materials (different colours and different textures) was then sprinkled onto the glue, and spongy material was tamped lightly in place. Coarser and greener material was deliberately used at a higher density in the depressions and drainage lines, to achieve the impression of somewhat lush vegetation in those areas.

Clumps of foam were placed strategically, wherever "shrubby" vegetation was desired, and particularly to hide intrusive items such as the blocks on which the point motors were to be mounted.

All vegetated areas were then later over-sprayed with a dilute cold glue spray, to tack down any vegetation not yet glued in place by the underlying glue application.



The Mountain

The rough shape of the mountain on that end-module had been achieved by Wolf, using blocks and sheets of polystyrene. But it was still “very rough”. I decided that it needed some shaping, to provide a more realistic landform, and did a lot of filling in with small offcuts of polystyrene, as well as a lot of trimming and shaping, using Neil’s homemade 12V “polystyrene knife”, made out of the innards of a mosquito “Zapper” and some high-resistance fuse-wire. This wire heats up nicely whenever the Zapper button is depressed, and cuts through polystyrene “like a hot knife through butter”! Rhinolite was used to fill in smaller gaps and cracks. Wolf was not entirely happy when he saw what I had ended up with, as he had intended to have a deep “kloof” and a bit of a waterfall on the mountain, but I had filled in the kloof with polystyrene offcuts and Rhinolite... I argued that the waterfall would have been inappropriate on that landform (with no real catchment area), and there was in any case nowhere for the water to easily be discharged. I got away with it, mainly because my handiwork was already a “*fait accompli*” before Wolf, who had been working on the lake module in the shed alongside, got to see it.

Once the shape of the mountain had been finalized, next step was to produce a decent surface that we could cover. Gustav had provided a stock of medical plaster bandages (like you would use to form a cast on a broken limb), obtained at a fraction of what Woodlands Scenics plaster bandages would have cost us, and was keen to get on with this project. He and Neil did the bulk of the plaster-bandage work, while I watched (while ballasting elsewhere) and learnt from their experience.



The polystyrene building blocks of the mountain now covered with plaster bandage

Wolf and Dave then did the initial vegetation cover on the mountain with static grass, after which Wolf proceeded to cover much of the mountain with “tree stumps”, where the very industrious logging crew had clear-felled the forest. We then added a lot of “slash” (yip – that’s what it’s called – the fine branches / leaves / bark etc. left behind on the surface after the logging operations), finding that dried rooibos teabag contents applied sparingly work quite well to simulate the woodchips and dried tree remnants, along with fine crushed twigs.



The stumps of felled trees glued in place, with slash discarded over the harvested area

Wolf planted a large number of trees of different varieties on parts of the mountain, representing the areas not yet felled by the logging crew, and even added a few deer, and a group of Boy Scouts hiking through his forest! We had hoped to include a logging road onto the mountain, but the shape of our mountain precluded this, and access up onto the mountain had to be imagined “off-stage”.



The Logging Yard

One weekend when I was away, and not around to be involved, the other guys got on and developed the logging camp Yard, where the cut timber would be loaded on the train for transport to the sawmill. I was back the following session, to see what they had done... They did an excellent job of it!

We had stacks of felled logs lying around in the yard, waiting to be loaded. We had two mobile cranes (one a crane car, the other a skid-type, mounted on a flatcar). Herman also later added hand-built loading derricks. There was a rusty corrugated iron workshop shed, and an old water tower for filling the Shay loco up with water. It all came together very nicely!

The guys had also meanwhile done an excellent job on colouring and vegetating the exposed mountain areas adjacent to the yard.



The Logging Camp / Village

Wolf also took responsibility for the development of the small “logging camp / village”, in the space lower down on the module, between the logging yard and the selector blade. He used a lot of tile cement (one of his favoured materials!), and then stuck down the small cabins and rough houses that we had accumulated, in the village layout that he wanted. Neil provided a very appropriate small church (on loan! – not to be stuck down, Wolf!), which we established on a slight prominence, having to do a bit of shaping and

Rhinoliting to produce the platform that we needed for it to sit on. We even provided a small graveyard (up on the mountain), where deceased members of the logging crew had been laid to rest!

Wolf's Selector Blade

Installation of the selector blade had proved to be “a bit of a challenge”. Portion of the module had to be cut away to accommodate it to get the depth right, to vertically align with the tracks on Geoff's Yard. We then needed to do some additional track-laying and moving of tracks (and installing lots of track-joints!), to get the yard tracks to line up with the selector blade. It was worth it in the end (even although at the Expo we never actually got to make use of the selector blade). But we will!



The selector blade, with the village to the right. The track on the right into the blade is the “run-around” track, while the track on the far left leads to the loco service area.

Including the selector blade meant that we would then use one of the yard tracks to run around rakes of freight cars brought into the yard. It also meant that we could develop a service area for the locomotives, for which we then installed an additional track between the yard tracks and the passing mainlines, accessed off the selector blade. (Our track plan kept changing, as new ideas were introduced! ☺)

Loco Service Area

In the club's stock of structures we found nice coaling and sanding facilities that could be included, as well as a rather gaudy diesel tank installation, and a small Maintenance of Way facility with a small water tank. Dave provided another very attractive large old wooden water tank. I took on the project of developing the service area using these items, which would then also need a road for access to them. We had visions of delivering coal and sand to these facilities by rail, as well as bringing locos in there for servicing, but never actually got that far during the Expo. But the service area looked good, anyway!



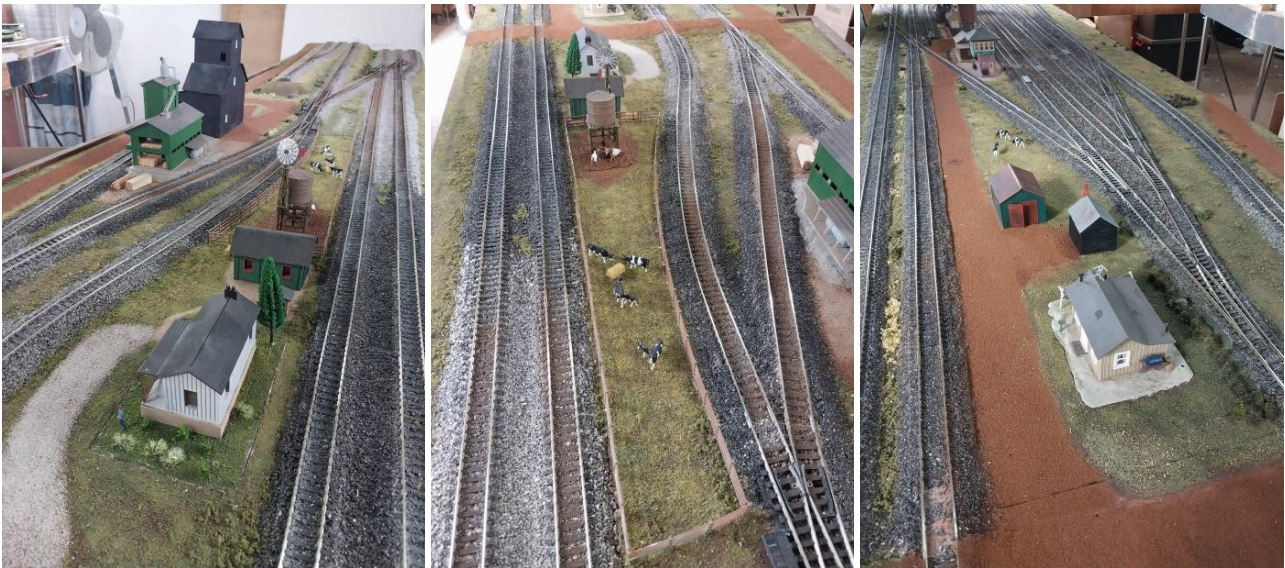
We had decided that all the structures on the modules should be removable, just placed loose in their identifiable positions, in order to reduce the risk of damage to the structures (and height of the modules) during transportation of the modules. Oops... Wolf had stuck down all the logging village structures (including a couple of others that were also “on loan”).... Seems he never got that memo!

The Back Module Farms

Once the trackwork on the two back modules was completed, I looked at it and wondered “What can we do here?” Not an awful lot, because of the way that the tracks had needed to cut through the module, to get to the mid-line entrance to Geoff’s yard, and also up to the sawmill. But we’d provided a siding for a couple of industries, and there was also just enough space for two small homesteads (“*maplotters*”). So that’s what ended up on the back modules, and looked quite attractive, I thought.

Dave had provided a Life-Like Western Homestead kit, which I assembled. It came with a water tank and windmill pump, and a couple of longhorn steers (as well as the lady of the house hanging up the washing on the line). Dave provided a few more cows and some fencing, I had a shed and some hay bales, and soon we had a rather nice looking (if rather long and narrow) little track-side farm.

And then, in the other narrow strip on the opposite side of the road which ran across the module, there was place for a second narrow farm, alongside the access road to the loco service area.



Roadways

The roads on the rear modules, linking the sawmill, the industries, the two farms and the loco service area, were all “dirt roads”. I drew in their rough outline on the baseboard with a pencil, painted the roadway area with the slightly-diluted glue mixture, and then sifted a very fine red Hutton soil, through a tea strainer, onto the roadway. The roads looked great, but just a bit too “pristine”! – no ruts or vehicle tracks anywhere. Gustav sorted out that problem, by sprinkling a second layer of a different soil (or was that actually the very fine dried Joko teabag contents?) over the road, wetting the roads slightly with dilute glue mix sprayed over them, and then “driving” along the roads with a vehicle, creating the irregularity and vehicle tracks that we desired.



The grade crossings were achieved by building up the road level with Rhinolite (one of my favourite materials!), painted to hide the white, and then coated with “road soil”. Wooden planking was used to achieve the correct road height between the rails. We had intended to have grade crossing lights and signage in place for the Expo, but ran out of time before getting around to this (except on the Lake module, where Dave did the detailing, and at least had warning signage in place).

The Backdrops

We realised, once everything was coming together, and not long before the Expo, that we needed to have backdrops in place, especially behind the logging track, to close off the view to the modules behind to some extent, and then also behind the modules at the rear, where they would back up against a brick wall. Neil designed, measured, cut, and then painted the backdrops (he’s really quite the artist too!).



In Part 3 next month we will describe the landscaping and “finishing” of the Lake and Front modules, and in Part 4 a month later we’ll end off by covering the scratch-built sawmill, as well as a few operational hitches we encountered.

A New Series just started.....

Gauteng Model Railway History

2. Northern Transvaal Model Train Club

Part 1 - By FP Goodenough and PH Goodenough (written in 2008)

Part 2 - By Willie Porter (current club Chairman)

Part 3 - By Tish Goodenough (daughter-in-law of club founder Pat Goodenough)

Editor's Note: *To the best of our knowledge, the club currently known as the Noord-Transvaalse Modeltrein Klub (Northern Transvaal Model Train Club, in English) is the oldest model train club in what is now Gauteng, having been founded in 1949, and still in existence. (If anyone has any information to the contrary, PLEASE will you bring it to my attention?)*

Although I did say in my introduction to this series in December that I would not necessarily be following any chronological sequence in dealing with model train history in Gauteng, I had available a copy of the early history (2008 version) of this club, and Willie Porter has kindly and quickly provided an addendum to bring that history right up to date, and so I am starting off with NTMTK as far as the club histories are concerned...

Part 1. 1949 to 2008 – The Northern Transvaal Model Club *By FP and PH Goodenough*

Editor's Note: *This original account of the club's history was written in 2008, when the club still was, and had long been, established in a large hall at the Pretoria Show Grounds, with an annual exhibition routinely taking place as part of the Pretoria Show. Things have changed since then, including the situation that the Club is no longer housed there, and the Pretoria Show no longer takes place. The O Gauge layout referred to sadly no longer exists. Accordingly, tenses in the original text have been altered (reflected in italics) by the Editor, to reflect this situation when read today, 18 years later.*

The annual Industrial Exhibition was, for many years, held at the Pretoria City Hall and in the surrounding gardens. This exhibition was to become the Pretoria Show.

In 1948/49 the exhibition was relocated to ~~the present site~~ (*the Pretoria Show Grounds*), which at that time still had the grandstands from the "dog racing" Racecourse. These grandstands were approximately where the Skilpad Saal was situated.

Mr Louis de Wyn, Colonel Watson (the then head of the show grounds) along with Wayfarer, a journalist for the Pretoria News, reported in that paper that they were looking to start a model train club. The first meeting was held at the old Polley's Hotel, Schoeman Street, Pretoria in 1949. Many people had read the newspaper report and attended, for the sole purpose of starting the Model Club in Pretoria.

At this meeting a small number of like-minded modellers got together to establish the Northern Transvaal Model Club. The club was open to all modellers irrespective of their modelling preference. These members



were Pat Goodenough, Les Carroll, Louis de Wyn, Colonel Watson, Eddie Stevens, Mr A Newman, Mr Matthysen, Mr Nichol, Mr Holliday, Mr Gilson, Mr Blok, Mr Rom and Mr Gainsford.

For the 1950 Pretoria Show, the Club exhibited in a small hall adjacent to the one we *would later* occupy. During these early years all types of models were exhibited – trains, boats, airplanes, etc.

The large hall next door, *which we later came to occupy*, was used to store Jute from India, but due to the coming to power of the National Party in 1948, India stopped supplying Jute and the hall became vacant. About 1951, Mr Les Carroll and Mr Louis de Wyn, the club Secretary and Chairman, were approached by the then Pretoria City Council's Parks and Recreation Director, Mr Bruin-lich, with the proposal that the Club could occupy the larger hall, in perpetuity, on the strict condition that the Club would exhibit at the Pretoria Show every year from then on. This condition the Club *had* adhered to, *to date of writing (2008) and beyond*.

As soon as the hall had been cleared, the O Gauge layout was started. The river area on the layout *dated* from 1952/3 and *was still in its original state in 2008*. This (O Gauge) layout *represented* the original toy train, the size that was first manufactured in the 1920s. The entire track was hand-laid, with each sleeper being hand-cut and each chair nailed with two nails. All the points *were* also hand-laid. The layout was officially opened by Mr Grubb, the Chief Mechanical Engineer of the South African Railways at the time.

The O Gauge track and rolling stock (Les Carroll's and Mo le Roux's collections *having* been left to Pat) as well as the majority of the OO track *was then* on loan to the club by Pat Goodenough.

In the mid to late 1950s a second layout, the OO or HO, was started, partly due to other modellers starting their own clubs and the fact that the interest in the model trains had grown. By the early 1960s the club had become a purely model **trains** club.

To this end the O and OO layouts were expanded, the OO layout becoming, to our knowledge, the largest layout of that scale in the Southern Hemisphere at that time.

For many years the O Gauge layout was considerably larger than it *was in 2008*, and was reduced when for a considerable period of time we, the club members, were refused entry to the show grounds. In consequence we put in a door on Souter Street, allowing us access to the building, so we could continue with "this great hobby of ours".

Most of the locomotives and rolling stock on the O Gauge layout *were* homemade and therefore *were* one of a kind, priceless and irreplaceable. During a Show the O Gauge locos and rolling stock *averaged* 1000 kilometres each. Over the years these pieces of equipment *had* run the equivalent of Pretoria to Cape Town and back. Some were a long way in going to Cape Town for a fourth time, and maybe a sixth.

The O Gauge infrastructure along with the locos and rolling stock collection *was* worth about R1 000 000 (*in 2008 terms*).

The ~~present~~ *then* OO layout *was* essentially the second layout, albeit very modified from the original concept of the mid-1970s. *That* new layout replaced a largely typically American-style layout that occupied the same area.

The transfer from old to the new layout took place between shows. Willie Porter and crew broke down the old layout the day after the show ended, and by the first day of the next show the new layout was operational. This was some feat, as the area in question was some 55m² with 250m of track and 45 points, all electronics and power installed.



Newspaper cutting, acquired at an antiques fair by Steven Steenkamp (name of newspaper unknown, and also sadly not dated, but likely to be from the early to mid-1960s), of kids enthralled by the O Gauge layout at the Pretoria Show (something seems wrong with that reported value, though....?)



Over the years the OO layout *was* added to, and modified to the 2008 state. A model layout is never finished, and this one *was* no exception. There *were* still years of work to do. The layout (*as it was back in 2008*) *had* approximately 400m of track, 100 points and 80 point motors. Should a train run for the whole duration of the show, it would run about 140kms – the truck wheels would turn about 3 250 000 times. The OO infrastructure *was then (in 2008 terms)* worth about R60 000.

There have over the years been a number of members who all have put effort in to this hobby in one way or another, some more than others, these being: Les Carroll – the driving force behind the club for many years; Pat Goodenough – the original “financier” and later finance backer, the stalwart and person that kept the club going through the club’s turbulent times; Louis de Wyn – the founder and long-time member, and pioneer N model builder; Mo le Roux – O Gauge builder and long-time member (his Trucks and Coaches *made up* part of the [*as at 2008*] collection); Bob Batty – draughtsman and pioneer modeller; Judge Helfershee – Horse nails to enemy and friend; Len Fryer – early pioneer and ~~current~~ (*then*) modeller; CJ Nienaber – pioneer loco builder in both O and OO (his locos *were* to be found on the O Gauge layout); Willie Porter – Master layout Builder and point motor man; Dennis James – O and OO modeller who brought his electrical knowledge to the hobby in so many ways; to name a few...

The success of the club is due to its small size/number of members, and the camaraderie the small number of members brings to the hobby and club. The club is for the enjoyment of all in the hobby, not necessarily for idealistic modellers.

Pretoria Show times over the years ~~have~~ changed – years ago, due to the fact that all the members were working, the club’s hours were 4pm to 10pm. Members came directly from work. Saturdays and the public holiday (first Monday in September, also the last day of the Show) was 10am to 10pm. Sunday the Show was closed, and that gave time to repair any faulty equipment. In 1955 – for the centenary of Pretoria – the Show ran for three weeks, and during this Show many of the wives assisted. ~~Currently~~ (*as at 2008*) our Show hours *were* 2pm to 8pm Sunday through Thursday, and 2pm to 9pm on Friday, and 10am to 9pm on Saturday.

Over the years there *had* been a number of thefts, and a break-in in 1968. To this end we insist on two members being together in the hall at any time.

Over the years we ~~have~~ tried to piece together the history of the hall we *had* been occupying at the Show Grounds. The hall *was then (in 2008)* over 100 years old, and was used as the Officers’ Mess by the British Army during the Boer War. It was used to store hay, for the horse-drawn trams in early Pretoria, for storage of Jute from India in the 1940s, and then most importantly, to house the Northern Transvaal Model Club for 55 years (*as at 2008*).

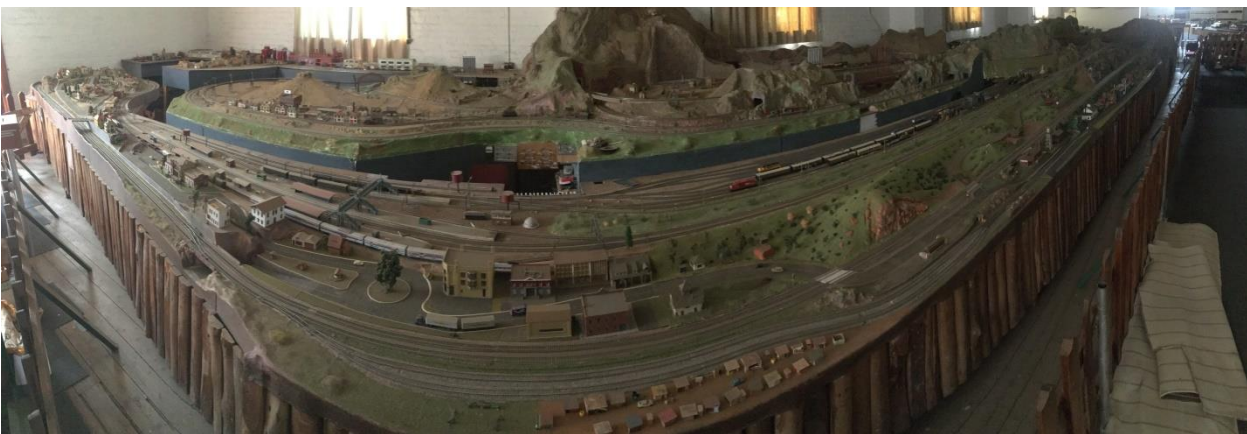
The club was formed in 1949, and to our knowledge is the oldest model railway club in the country, if not, then the oldest to be in the same hall. In fact, there cannot be too many model clubs in the world, that can brag at being 58 years old and still in the same club house.

With the coming of the New South Africa, the Transvaal name had disappeared, and in consequence the club in 2008 changed its name to the Tshwabac Model Railway Club. Some 58 years as Northern Transvaal Model Club, now we look forward to the next 58 years with our partners the Tshwabac Events Centre. (**Ed.** *Sadly, this proved not to be the case.*)

The O Gauge Layout at the Show Grounds (Photos from Willie Porter [top two]) and Norman Kendall)



The HO Layout at the Show Grounds (Photos from Willie Porter [top four], the club website, and Norman Kendall [last four])





Dismantling the Layouts at the Show Grounds (Oct/Nov 2021) (Photos from Norman Kendall [upper six])





These last two are fairly recent photos of the interior of the hall where NTMTK used to be housed, at the Pretoria Show Grounds – >4 years later. Photo credits: Steven Steenkamp

Part 2. 2008 to Present Time (2026) - Tshwabac Model Railway Club -> Noord-Transvaalse Modeltrein Klub *By Willie Porter*

During the time that the show grounds were known as the Tshwabac (Tshwane Business and Agricultural Corporation) Events Centre (from 1995), the club received excellent support from the Tshwabac management, who were very positive about the club's activities.

Signage reflecting the change in the club's name →

Unfortunately, Tshwabac encountered significant issues with the Tshwane City Council, due to arrears in water and electricity bills. Although they made considerable progress in reducing the debt, the arrival of COVID-19 in 2020 dealt them a final blow, cutting off all income and revenue. This led the Council to take back management of the show grounds and evict Tshwabac.



Initially, the club managed to remain active at the show grounds, when gathering was allowed during the COVID period, because the security personnel were familiar with us and allowed us access. However, in time, the Council also evicted the club.

We received a notification from them at the end of August 2021, giving us a most unreasonable "1 day notice" to remove our layout and other assets from the hall! We managed to convince them that this was not physically possible. Dismantling of the layout started at the beginning of October of that year, and we were finally out of the hall at the show grounds on the 20th November 2021.

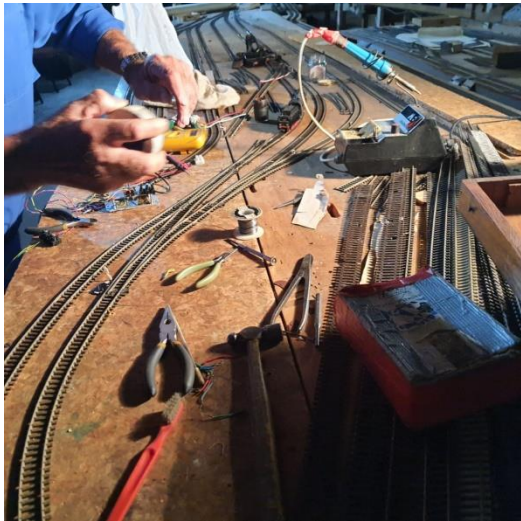
Jan Pieterse, through liaison with friends at the Voortrekker Monument, had explained our situation to Mr. Danie Langner, the Curator of the Monument. He graciously offered the club space at the back of the Pioneer Hall, under a 25-year contract, with the option to renew after this term expires.

The O gauge models, on loan to the club, were returned to their owner, Mrs. Tish Goodenough (with Patrick, her husband [son of Pat Goodenough, one of the founding members] having meantime passed away), and the remaining O gauge items were sold.

The OO/HO gauge layout was dismantled into 10 sections, each between four and six meters long, and transported to the Amphitheatre store at the Voortrekker Monument. From there, we selected and reassembled sections to fit the space made available to us in the back of the Pioneer Hall.

During the reassembling of the layout, significant work was required. More than half of the original layout could not be used, so the scenery and the trackwork had to be adjusted and some repairs done due to damage during dismantling, transportation and storage, and the entire layout had to be rewired.

Building the new Layout at Voortrekker Monument (Photos from Norman Kendall)



Thanks to the dedication of the club members, who worked as a cohesive team, the layout in its present form was completed. On the evening of 22nd September 2022, the club was officially reopened, with a celebration attended by numerous invited guests.



Photos during the official opening of the club layout at Voortrekker Monument (Photo credit: Jan Pieterse)

At the request of Mr. Danie Langner, the club's name was changed back from Tshwabac Model Railway Club to its original name, the **Northern Transvaal Model Train Club**.

The club is currently growing, with a membership of 15 active members.



Group photo taken at NTMTK Swap Meet, 8th February 2025 (Photo provided by Carel Janse van Rensburg)

Editor's Footnote: I happened to visit the Voortrekker Monument on a Monday morning in August 2022, blissfully unaware that a model train layout was in the process of being established there. We stumbled across it while visiting the Pioneer Hall, and I naturally took a few pictures... It was very evidently a layout under (re)construction! There were very few buildings on the layout, and there was a big hole near one end of the layout, surrounded by an area of white Rhinolite... It was quite evidently a "work in progress"...!!



In October that year I went back there for a visit, having heard from friend Gustav de Villiers that that was the new home of the model train club that used to be at the Pretoria Show Grounds. What a transformation!...



... and where there had previously been a hole surrounded by Rhinolite, there was now a model of the Voortrekker Monument, surrounded by bell tents and campers there in 1949 (which is coincidentally the same year as the founding of the NTMTK) celebrating the inauguration of the Monument!!





The Monument before positioning on the layout and now in position! (Photo credits: Norman Kendall)

Since then, and particularly in the past year (2025) there have been numerous relatively minor additions to the layout, with additional buildings added, a few buildings changed, and also many animals, vehicles and people added in the form of very attractive and detailed dioramas / scenes on the layout. A small mountain was cut away, to provide space for the development of a “yard” behind the main station, where now there is a large cattle stockyard, and a cement batching plant, while a major new pipeline is shown in the process of being laid, and other construction activity is underway. The airport was upgraded. Another small town has been added, as has a beautifully detailed cricket field, with numerous spectators, and with flood lights that turn on when a nearby sensor is activated. A fishermen’s village is in the process of development, as is an aerial cableway, and the development of the harbour section is now also gaining momentum...





But pride of place on the layout goes to the very detailed and accurate replica of the Voortrekker Monument, through whose Association the club is now most fortunate to enjoy such a wonderful venue.



Photo credit: Jan Pieterse, October 2025

Part 3. Some Memories and Reflections *By Tish Goodenough (Daughter-in-law of one of the club founders, Pat Goodenough)*

In 1986, I married Patrick Goodenough (Jnr), but little did I know what I had let myself into when I married into the Goodenough family. This meant that everything we did revolved around trains – especially model railways. I had no idea that this would become such a big part of my life, with both Pat Goodenough (Snr) and Patrick (Jnr) having an unending passion for this wonderful hobby.

With Pat Goodenough being one of the founders of the Northern Transvaal Model Club, Patrick's enthusiasm for model trains had started at a very early age. His father had a layout in the garage at home, which sparked his interest in model railways, and he also had the advantage of accompanying his father to the Model Club, later becoming the youngest member of the club.

I was soon introduced to the Northern Transvaal Model Club, which was based at the Pretoria Show Grounds. Members such as Les Carroll, Dennis James, Len Fryer, Willie Porter and CJ Nienaber – just to name a few – were very friendly and welcomed me into the club. Len loved sharing stories of Patrick when he was younger, always wanting to get involved and “help”, even when he could hardly reach or see over the layout.

Members who were retired would go to the club during the week, while those who worked met on Saturday afternoons. Patrick and his father's lives revolved religiously around going to the Model Club, and all our activities were planned around this. I did not accompany them on Saturdays very often, especially after our girls were born. Many times, I had to attend functions – such as birthday parties – on my own if they were held on a Saturday afternoon. And so, I became a “model railway widow”.

Patrick would always joke that at least I knew where he was, which was very true. My father-in-law would also remind me that I should be thankful Patrick was not spending his money on alcohol and cigarettes, but rather on his hobby, and that being at the club on a Saturday afternoon was far better than spending time in the pubs. Nevertheless, I still never knew what time he would be home, as many evenings Patrick would end up chatting to one of the members long after the club had locked up and everyone else had gone.

Patrick Goodenough with an O Gauge loco, at the layout at the Show Grounds

(Photo provided by Tish Goodenough)

Every year, when the Pretoria Show took place, the club was expected to exhibit to the public. We all became involved when show time came around. In the weeks leading up to the show, everyone helped clean the hall –



you can imagine the dust and dirt that accumulated in an old building like that. Everything had to be checked to ensure it was working properly and ready for the show.

I remember one year when Patrick could not get the cable car on the O-gauge layout to work, and some very choice words escaped in his frustration. He also had problems trying to plug a leak when filling the river with water. Another concern was the fear that the old wooden flooring might one day give way under

the weight of the public walking through. Thankfully, that never happened.

Because the club was housed in the show grounds hall with no security, no trains were left permanently on the HO layout. Members would bring their own locomotives, passenger coaches, rolling stock, buildings, cars and figures, and place them on the layout. It was amazing to see the entire layout come to life.

The O-gauge layout was not run much between shows, as the Bassett-Lowke locomotives were old and showing signs of their age. During show time, however, the club members would run both the O-gauge and HO layouts for the public to enjoy, answering questions and always encouraging aspiring modellers to get involved.



← *Goodenough Junction, one of the various stations on the (O Gauge) layout named after club members*

The O-gauge layout was primarily run by Pat Goodenough, with assistance from Erwin, who was constantly repairing the locomotives to keep them running. As long as I can remember, Willie always ran the main station on the HO layout, while Len – the shortest member – used to hijack the station at

the back of the layout. There was a raised platform that he had to stand on just to see over it.

Members took turns running their own trains, and it was lovely to see the variety of countries represented, with different railway companies modelled. My father-in-law was from Britain and worked on the LNER (London and North Eastern Railway), so naturally he modelled British steam. The majority of the O-gauge locomotives were from his collection, which he had inherited from Les Carroll and Mo le Roux. There was also the famous Garratt locomotive, which to the best of my knowledge was built by CJ and ran on the O-gauge layout.

There is still a Flying Scotsman running on the HO layout today, keeping Pat Goodenough's legacy alive. Some members modelled European railways, including German, French and Swiss. One year, we even had the high-speed ICE (Intercity Express) train from Germany running. This was very different to see after so many years of mainly steam locomotives, with some diesels and very few bright colours.

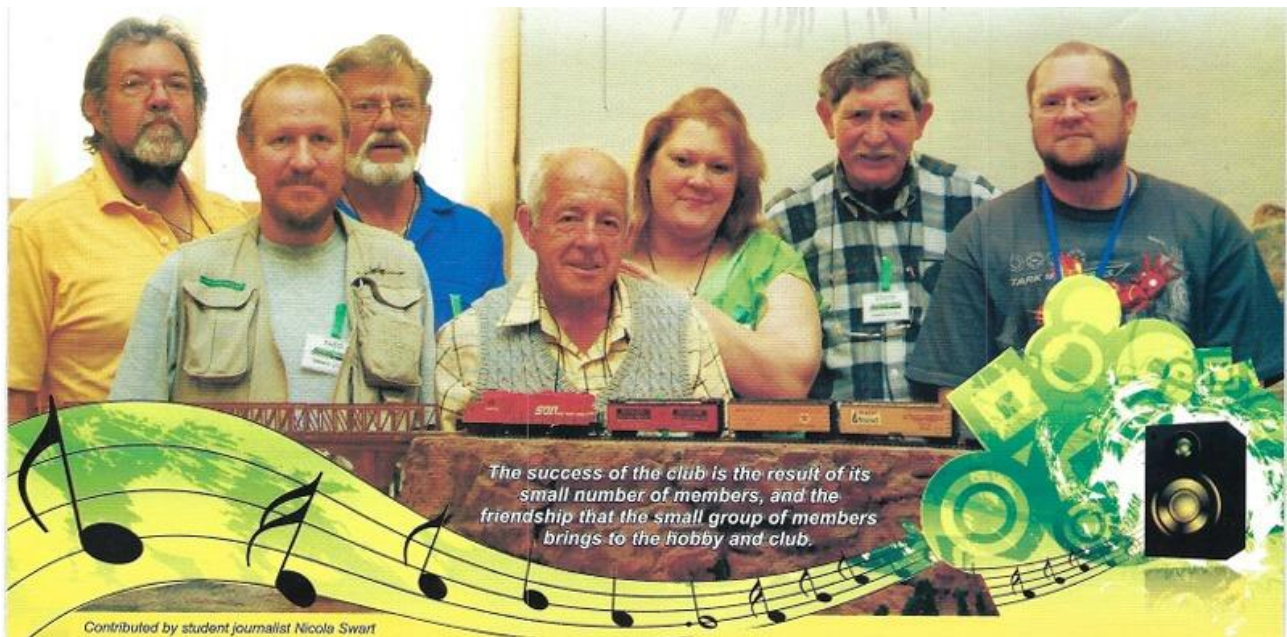
There were also American trains, such as Union Pacific and PRR (Pennsylvania Railroad), which Patrick loved. He enjoyed running long trains, often with a double-header and as many refrigeration cars as possible.

And most importantly we have to mention South African Railways. They ran trains, such as the Blue Train and Trans Karoo.

The wives provided lunches and suppers to keep the men's energy levels up throughout the day and into the evenings, and of course ensured there was a never-ending supply of coffee. In the evenings, I would prepare hot meals at home and arrive at supper time, sneaking the food in through the outside door in Souter Street.

Over the years, I got to know many of the members, and each contributed in their own way. On Saturdays, once the work on the layout was done, the members would socialise, which was always enjoyable. At the end of the year, they would host a braai before closing for the festive season, setting it up outside the hall

doors and enjoying a boerie roll together.



Some club members at the Tshwabac Show in 2010 (Photo from Tish Goodenough)

It was a very sad time when the club was no longer allowed to remain in the hall at the show grounds. Thankfully, space was offered at the Voortrekker Monument to relocate the layout, even though it was much smaller. Many photos were taken before the layouts were dismantled (*these can be viewed on the club's website*). The HO layout was cut into sections so it could be re-used in the smaller space, but unfortunately there was no room for the O-gauge layout, which had to be completely dismantled.

We are grateful for the opportunity to continue as the Northern Transvaal Model Train Club. Thanks to Willie and all the members for the countless hours they spent reconstructing and rewiring the layout in the Pioneer Hall at the Voortrekker Monument, where it is housed today. In hindsight, it is a far better venue, with much greater public interest.

As members continue to work on the layout, it is wonderful to see the level of detail that has been added – from the cricket field lighting up, to the accident scene, squatter camp and fire. I am very proud of what they have achieved, and it is a privilege to be an honorary member of the Northern Transvaal Model Train Club.

How It All Began For Me...

We have no-one's story again this month ☹️ ☹️ ☹️

Those who have told us their stories so far are: John B (May 2021), Jimmy M (June 2021), Colin A (July 2021), Kobus P (Aug 2021), Mia vB (Sept 2021), Kevin C (Oct 2021), Ralph D (Nov 2021), Rene' B (Dec 2021), Brian D



(Feb 2022), Mark P (Aug 2022), Glynn C (Sept 2022), Clive S (Oct 2022), Jean D (Nov 2022), Ash P (Dec 2022), guest Don Davidson – from SAG and GFG (Jan 2023), Niel W (Mar 2023), Duncan H (Apr 2023), Shane B (May 2023), guest Brian Stockland – from HRCASA (July 2023), guest Brian Clark – from SAG and GFG (Aug 2023), guest Johnny Everitt – ex DMR and honorary member of John B’s Ops Group (Sept 2023), guest Andrew Mabin – from HRCASA and owner of MiniModels (Dec 2023), guest Neil Plumbly from GFG / WFG (March 2024), Brian McM – all the way from the UK (April 2024), Eugene S (May 2024), Terrence Marx (July 2024), Kallie vB (Aug 2024), guest Mike Richardson – from SAG and GFG (Oct 2024), Kevin B (Nov 2024), guest Richard Goodfellow – from HRCASA (February 2025), and guest Michelle Lines-Dovey – from HRCASA (August 2025).

The EMRIG Water Tower Challenge...

By no-one again this month

Water Tower Challenge Honours Board

- 2015 October Glynn Chamberlain
- 2015 November Niel Wilson
- 2015 December Terrence Marx (Part 1)
- 2016 January Terrence Marx (Part 2)
- 2016 February Terrence Marx (Part 3)
- 2016 March Terrence Marx (Part 4)
- 2016 April Peter Fish
- 2016 May Colin Anstis
- 2016 June Dave Wynne
- then the ball got dropped for a bit... (no newsletters, change of Editor, etc...)
- 2017 March Brian Dawson
- 2017 April Kevin Chamberlain
- 2017 May Kobus Pelsler (Part 1)
- 2017 June Kobus Pelsler (Part 2)
- 2017 July Kobus Pelsler (Part 3)

- 2017 August *Doug Buchanan didn't participate (write), needs to donate to charity!*
- 2017 September Karel van Breda
- 2017 October Carl Andrews
- 2017 November and December and 2018 January **..... no contributions**
- 2018 February Margaret Wynne (who stepped in and offered to fill the gap!)
- 2018 March & April ... *waiting for articles*
- 2018 May Ash Pappa
- 2018 June John Henry (volunteered an article)
- 2018 July Margaret Wynne entertained us with her story on trollies!
- 2018 August *Nothing once again...* ☹
- 2018 September Brian Dawson
- 2018 October *Nothing once again...* ☹
- 2018 November ... *same story...*
- 2018 December ... *same story....* ☹
- 2019 Jan to Apl ...*still nothing had changed* ☹ ... *and THEN.....!!!!*
- 2019 May, June, July & Aug Kobus Pelsler (*thank you for all your hard work, Kobus!*)
- 2019 September Shane Brinkley (all the way from Perth!!)
- *and nothing happened after that.....* ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹, *until.....!!*
- 2020 April Mark Peddle
- 2020 May George Lagoudis
- 2020 July, Aug, Sept Harry Ostrofsky
- 2020 November Jean Dulez
- 2020 December *No contribution (no one was nominated.....)*
- 2021 January *No contribution – Theuns dropped the ball!, and so I challenged Glynn...*
- 2021 February Glynn Chamberlain
- 2021 March Shane Brinkley
- 2021 April *Mark asked for a month's grace, and then another couple....*
- 2021 August Mark Peddle (who then challenged Craig...)

- 2021 September ... *waiting..*
- 2021 October Craig Beretta
- 2021 December Eugene Saayman
- 2022 January Jean Dulez (*who kindly volunteered and submitted another article*)
- 2022 February Niel Wilson
- 2022 April & May Kobus Pelser
- 2022 July Colin Anstis
- 2022 October Richard Mustoe
- 2022 November Brian McMahon
- 2023 July Glynn Chamberlain
- 2023 August Kallie van Breda
- 2023 September Mia van Breda
- 2023 November Clive Shepherd
- 2024 February Duncan Hornby
- 2024 October Kallie van Breda

Club Diary and Other Upcoming Activities:-

- **Saturday 7th February** **EMRIG Swap Meet at Northmead Mall, Benoni**
- Saturday 28th February NTMTK Swap Meet at Voortrekker Monument, Pretoria
- Saturday 7th March Richie's Toy Fair, Mosaic Church Hall, Fairland
- Saturday 28th March PMT Swap Meet, John Vorster Tech. High School, Pretoria
- Saturday 1st August Transportation Fair, Wynand Marais Hall, Birchleigh
- Weekend 31/10 – 1/11 The next Great Model Train Expo, *venue to be confirmed*

2026 Club Committee Contact details:-

The committee membership for 2026 remained unchanged... same composition and portfolios as for 2025... At the AGM, the 2025 Committee was re-elected *en bloc*, with just James Job offering to assist Kobus with Swap Meet arrangements.

Chairman – Mark Peddle	mark@icemountain.co.za
Secretary – Duncan Hornby	info@emrig.co.za
Treasurer – Mia van Breda	finance@emrig.co.za
Webmaster – Glynn Chamberlain	glynn.chamberlain@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor – Brian Dawson	brian.dawson@iafrica.com
Publicity – Kobus Pelser	swapmeets@emrig.co.za
Swap Meet Manager – Kobus Pelser (now assisted by James Job)	swapmeets@emrig.co.za

Club Banking Details:-

Banking details: -

Name: - Eastern Model Railway Interest Group

Bank: - FNB Northmead Square Account No: - 625 483 74149 Branch code: - **250 655.**

Please, ***DO NOT forget to put YOUR NAME as the reference.***

THE CLUB'S BUDGET FOR 2026 WAS DISCUSSED AT THE AGM IN JANUARY. IT WAS DECIDED THAT THE SUBSCRIPTION FEE FOR 2026 WOULD REMAIN UNCHANGED, AT R240,00 FOR THE YEAR. A FAMILY MEMBERSHIP RATE DOES NO LONGER APPLY.

MEMBERS JOINING DURING THE COURSE OF THE YEAR WILL PAY ON A PRO-RATA BASIS.

SO IT IS NOW TIME TO PAY YOUR SUBS! 😊

PLEASE CAN WE ASK THAT EVERYONE PAY BY INTERNET TRANSFER IF AT ALL POSSIBLE? – CASH DEPOSITS END UP COSTING THE CLUB MONEY!!!