

Newsletter – AUGUST 2026

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Chairman's Message – August 2026

By Mark Peddle

Dear Model Train Enthusiasts,

July was a fantastic month for the club.

We set up our club modular layout at Benoni Junior School over the weekend of 3rd - 5th July and dismantled it again on 19th July. This gave us three weekends of running, plus two Wednesdays.

This was one of the largest layouts we have built since introducing the modular system two years ago. It was also our first setup with the new 7-metre staging yard, which has taken our train running to a new level.

First School Layout 27th April 2025



School Layout on 15th July 2026



Module Count

Module	27th April 2025	3rd July 2026
Straight Modules	18	37
Bridge modules	0	2
Corners	5	5
Inverse corner	1	1
Staging Yard	0	14
Chicken Wing/Banana Branch	0	2
TOTAL MODULES	24	61

We welcomed many visitors over the weekends, including several younger enthusiasts. Our open day on 18th July brought both new and familiar faces, and it was especially pleasing to see a grandfather and his grandson enjoy running trains on the layout.

We also enjoyed a braai on most days, which, as always, was a great chance to relax and socialise. Naturally, trains remained the main topic of conversation.

As with all good things, the event eventually came to an end. We dismantled the layout on Sunday, 19th July. What had taken five hours to assemble and get running on Friday 3rd was packed away, the hall cleaned, and a debrief held — all within one and a half hours.

During this period, we also welcomed two new members: Leon van Coller and Paul Jackson. We are delighted to have you in the club and wish you many happy train-running hours with us.

EVENTS

Please look out for upcoming dates. We would love as many members as possible to be part of the journey — and feel free to bring a friend or two along to share the enjoyment.

Stay up to date with upcoming activities through our monthly newsletter and our Facebook page.

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

Warm regards,

Mark Peddle

Chairman

Other Club News

By Brian Dawson (Newsletter Editor)

Welcome to some New Members!

During our recent club set-up at Benoni Junior School, we had two new members join the club! Leon van Coller, who lives even further from Benoni than I do, heard about the opportunity to run trains, and came through, bringing his Eric Bekker hand-built SAR steam locos for a run. Leon (ex-SAR) found a colleague in Kallie (also ex-SAR), who also has an Eric Bekker, and there was an immediate connection (they do also have a friend in common, though). And Leon quickly signed up, and kept coming back for more!

Niel invited Paul Jackson, who had been a member of EMRIG many years back and a friend of Niel's and his late Dad, to come and have a look at what we are doing. Paul also came back, and came back... and then re-joined EMRIG!

Welcome to both of you!

Club Layout Set Up at Benoni Junior School in July School Holidays

EMRIG was privileged to be able to once again make use of the Benoni Junior School (BJS) Hall, where a BIG layout was set up on Friday 3rd July, and only dismantled again on Sunday 19th July. Train running was thus possible for three weekends in a row, as well as on the intervening Wednesdays.

Great fun was had by all those who participated! A lot of different trains were run, many photos and videos were taken and posted on the club's chatgroup, a lot of coffee and tea was consumed, cups were (or weren't!) washed (!), occasionally cake and biscuits (but no pancakes!) were provided, and grilling of meat over hot coals also occurred on occasion (most Saturdays and Sundays, in fact!), meaning that those who indulged in that time-honoured activity also ended up well fed-up!



Setting up happened on the Friday, and a good number of members (mostly those contributing modules, but also some who do not [yet] have modules included) were in attendance. Once the modules were all in position and joined up (some of which required a bit of “under-module” activity!), the track alignment needed to be checked and adjusted where necessary. JohnB and James did a great job (pun intended)!



The layout was comprised of sixty-one modules, including 39 member modules (all straights), the club’s five “regular” corner module sets plus the inverse curve module set, and then 14 new modules making up the staging yard! Modules were contributed by Colin Anstis (2), Ralph Davey (8 including his bridge), Brian Dawson (4), James and Robyn Job (3), Terrence Marx (8), Kobus Pelser (4), and Niel Wilson (10 plus his bridge). We thus had two bridge module sets (each basic bridge module set is actually two modules, although Ralph has “stretched” his to a four-module set!). Richard Mustoe sadly had to pull his four-module set out shortly before the set-up date, requiring a bit of layout-plan adjustment by Niel, so we could have been even a bit bigger had Richard’s (and Ralph’s other four!) been included....





Some of the modules were still “under construction”, lacking a bit of scenery, and the new staging yard still needs to be ballasted, but despite this there were many new elements to look at, with Ralph’s bridges (yip – there are actually four of them spanning his river) module set being included in a layout for the first time (now that he is back home for a bit), some progress evident on Terrence’s industrial yard, and newly-painted backdrops on James’ and Robyn’s modules. But the really striking feature was the inclusion of the staging yard, with all the new staging / parking / deviating through the yard to change locos / serving as points operator/route director, etc. opportunities that this now presented.

The staging yard included the two rather odd-shaped branch-line take-off modules, presently named “Chicken Wing” and “Banana Branch” in reference to a discussion about them on the club’s chatgroup when they were first seen. Chicken Wing (on the right-hand end of the yard) was fully functional with its two tracks wired up, thus providing us with some additional train-parking space. Banana Branch had not yet had any

track laid on it, and was merely positioned there to demonstrate the future possibilities of having branch-lines going off in opposite directions from the yard.



These future branch-line opportunities provide all sorts of exciting options for expansion of the layout, away from the roundy-roundy train-running activity that has been the feature of the layout thus far, perhaps going to single-line running with passing loops, allowing for a bit more industrial space or even multiple sidings on a standard-width module. But why stick with standard width modules.....?? ☺



Even so, with two stations, and now five module sets containing sidings (Colin's Ruppertsheim Station [*pictured above*], Terrence's stockyard and his fuel-depot-in-the-making modules, Ralph's Hyena Drift, and Brian's Building Supplies), there was even the opportunity for some "operations" on the existing layout, although most of the members seemed satisfied with just running what turned out to be a wonderful variety of trains around on the layout. Ralph went as far as to draw up a proposed operations schedule, a great concept that we need to discuss and consider.

We had quite a number of visitors to the layout while it was set up at BJS, particularly on the "open day" on Saturday 18th July, but also on other occasions. Two of the visitors ended up joining EMRIG (well, one of

them had been a member from many years back), and a few of the others I spoke to are considering joining, and getting back into model trains (“we just need to decide whose garage should be cleared out to make space for a layout”, they said!). A number of the visitors brought trains of their own, and used the opportunity to run on the layout, adding even more variety to the trains on display. One grandfather and grandson had brought their analogue Lima SAR blue train along. Mark very kindly provided two of his DCC blue 5E units, and showed young Alec how to run them using Engine Driver on Mark’s phone, and after a few practice circuits under supervision they then hooked up their own blue train coaches behind Mark’s locos, and it was difficult to get young Alec to finally stop running trains when Grandpa wanted to go and visit Rene’s shop up the road...!



Young Alec running his Blue Train under supervision, with Grandpa and another visitor looking on

Mini-modules Updates



Construction, track-laying, wiring and testing of the new staging yard was duly completed in time for it to be included as part of the layout set up at Benoni Junior School during the recent school holidays! Inclusion of the staging yard proved to be a GREAT success, with opportunity now provided to stage / park five good-length trains (and even more if they are “shorties”, able to share one of the staging tracks). Presently, additional (short) trains or locos can also be parked on the two branch-line tracks on the Chicken Wing to the right of the yard.

← *A rather full staging yard! Looks like we need another one already?*

Very little adjustment work was required to ensure that the yard functioned effectively. One of the donated set of points needed to be replaced, as some track had come away from the ties, causing a few of the trains to consistently derail particularly when exiting the yard over

those points. Fortunately for us, Terrence lives nearby, and happened to have a spare left-hand medium Peco point lying around, which he went home and collected, and “loaned” to the club for the purpose of completing the set-up. Mr Noodle very efficiently removed the offending point and replaced it with Terrence’s (→), and hey presto – the yard was working beautifully! Testimony to all the hard work that was put in by all those who took part in the assembly workshops, and the subsequent testing and finishing off! Thanks, everyone – you know who you are!

Niel feels that short sections of track in the staging yard need to be re-laid (they’re not quite straight enough!), and once that is done, the yard can be ballasted, with minimalistic scenery then to be added.

Progress with module development by other members:

Terrence now had eight modules completed (with just partial scenicking on one of his double module sets), and available to be included in the school layout in July. He has his cattle farm (2x modules), a stock yard (2x modules), 2x single modules with “parkland” vegetation, and a further double module set where he is in the process of developing an oil refinery / fuel depot. His stock yard and fuel depot modules both include sidings where deliveries and pick-ups can be made, in addition to the cross-overs he provided at the stock yard and cattle farm. And he’s just bought a bunch more modules!...



Terrence’s stock yard, fuel depot-in-progress, and one of his parkland single modules

Ralph has completed the scenicking of his bridge module set (4x modules), with his dual bridges crossing “the Hyena River” (including a very pleasing-to-the-eye swing towards the inside of the module, then back to the normal alignment), and these modules (*see his Part 4 article below*) were also included in the layout at the school, placed adjacent to his set of four Hyena Drift modules, where he also has sidings.



Ralph's Hyena River bridge modules

James and Robyn are making slow but steady progress with the scenicking of their three modules. The backdrops have been painted, and there are a few pillars and some fencing erected on the "shopfront" module, where there appeared to be "a bit of construction" happening.



James and Robyn's modules coming along

James and Robyn also have a number of very interesting plans in mind for some future modules that they intend developing!!! Watch this space!!.....

Kallie preferred not to comment when asked about progress with his module set ☺. I believe he wants to just surprise us on some future occasion.....!

Neil Plumbly made a lot of progress with his double-track trestle bridge during July, and was able to bring it along, in working order, for inclusion and testing on the final weekend of running at the school. The bridge and module looked superb, and everything worked perfectly!



Inserting Neil's bridge into the layout in place of Niel's bridge (Photo credit: Terrence Marx)

Neil's bridge module kit had been provided to him without his "Built by" nameplate. He was under the impression ("had heard from somebody"!) that the nameplate was only "awarded" once the module had been completed and submitted for inclusion in the layout ☺. When he brought his nearly completed bridge module to the school on Saturday 18th July, he was very pleased to discover that the fact that he had no nameplate was merely an omission on Niel's part, and he was "awarded" his nameplate anyway (on the Sunday, when Niel remembered to bring the nameplates)!

Niel reckons that the deliberate withholding of the nameplate until module-completion actually sounds like a good idea, going forward, so you might look to see if yours is included when next you buy a module kit!



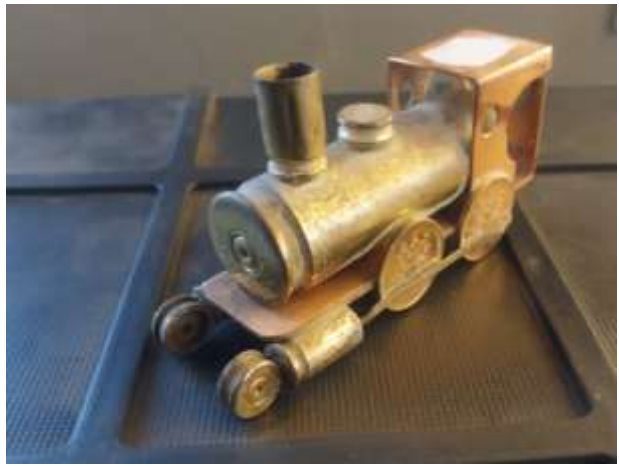
And that's what Neil's beautiful (almost complete) trestle bridge looks like! (Photo credit: Mark Peddle)

Swap Meets Feedback and Schedule, and Expo and Toy Fair etc. Dates

There was no swap meet in Gauteng during the month of July.

Instead, there was a Richie's Toy Fair again, held once more at the Mosaic Church in Fairland. EMRIG was not involved at this one, due to venue constraints this time (but we are expecting to be back there in November). There were just four traders that I could find offering model train-related wares, in addition to all the cars and other toys routinely on offer there. Three of those traders (as well as a few of the cars guys) are regulars at our swap meets. The fourth trader with trains had just three (but three very interesting!) locomotives on his table amongst all the cars... two of them were large, old tin-plate locos, and the other was a fascinating little "brass" loco (homemade in Zimbabwe, apparently), made almost entirely out of old cartridge "doppies", the boiler being a 20mm cartridge casing, and the others a 9mm and .22 doppies or percussion caps, with coins for wheels. I encountered three other EMRIG members there during my quick visit – Richard Mustoe, there assisting his friend Andrew Mabin at his table, and James and Robyn Job visiting with their daughter "Baby Noodle", having had to renew their passports in order to cross to the West Rand for the occasion, to see what was there on offer!





The only train “layout” on display there was something that Tony Den had ingeniously set up on one of his tables, amongst his Beer Trucks and other vehicles....!



Tony Den's trains display at the Toy Fair 😊

The Toy Fair was VERY well supported – LOTS of people in attendance when I was there 09h30 – 11h00.

With Northmead Mall management having confirmed to us in writing that they are kindly waiving their requirement for Public Liability Insurance cover, we are intending to go back to holding future swap meets at the mall, because we are able to accommodate more traders there, as well as for the not-insignificant hobby-promoting benefit of having greater exposure to the general public who are passing through the mall on the day. This will happen as from our end-of-November Swap Meet.

Meantime, our end-of-August Swap Meet, on the last Saturday of August, will take place at the school once again.

The **Swap Meets calendar for the remainder of 2026** follows below ↓. If any additional Swap Meets are arranged and added (but that's not looking likely at this stage), the schedule will be amended.

August	29/8/2026	EMRIG	Benoni Junior School	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...)

Here are some other relevant Gauteng model train dates.... (all previously provided)

- **CSME's annual Engineering Fair**, with superb live steam action and the renowned radio-controlled trucks, will be taking place on the weekend **26th and 27th September**, but they're also open and running trains there every Sunday.
- **The Great Model Train Expo 2026** is taking place on the weekend **24th – 25th October 2026**. (See that advert below ↓↓)
- The last **Richie's Toy Fair** of the year is on **Saturday 7th November**.





Please remember that the **Transportation Fair** organised by Willie Vorster, which would have been taking place on the 1st of August, **had unfortunately to be postponed**. Once we have a new date from Willie we will advertise it again.

Scheduled EMRIG Layout Set-ups And Future Activities

With us holding our August Swap Meet at the school again, we will not be setting up a layout on that occasion, due to space limitations. (We want to maximise space for trader tables.)

If nothing else comes up in the meantime, then we will likely be setting up the layout at **Benoni Junior School** again during the September school holidays (between 24th September and 5th October) for some more running sessions.... Keep watching this space (and the club's chat group) for updates in this regard!

But we will DEFINITELY be having a big expanded layout once again at the **Great Model Train Expo** in October, including the staging yard as a new element, along with the bridges, not seen there before.

So we weren't at **Richie's Toy Fair** in July (which happened a week after we finished our running sessions at the school), but are planning to be back there with a small layout for their next one early in November.

And then we will once again set up the layout (bigger than our usual "swap meet" size), at our Swap Meet at Northmead Mall at the end of November, where something a little different might be on the cards!

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 [= *soon as I have time!*] 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!!! 😊

NEW..... The YouTube channel! Yip – we have a YouTube channel! Hopefully more and more of the club’s train-running and other activities will also be being posted there in future...

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.

Sorry – no Letters to the Editor again this month.... ☹



The layout set up at Benoni Junior School, July 2026

Bridging the Gap (Part 4) – Final assembly

By Ralph Davey

Hi everyone.

This final part of this series covers the scenery addition and completion of the build.

The scenery is based loosely on the Natal midlands landscape which the Johannesburg to Durban double mainline traverses through. The river scene is named Hyena River, linked to my Hyena Drift modules. I used the actual Lions River bridge setting as the prototype basis for the build.

In summary:

- I added the scenery using my trusted “polystyrene and paper towel with white glue” process.
- I used the scenery to add rock features which form naturally. I added more rock features.
- I decided on a game reserve scene to be included.
- The higher ground levels depict this, with animals and fencing.
- I will still add some vehicles and other trees.

Completion of the Build

Herewith the final process and build summary, with photos of the final build and the completed modules.

I added road markings and weathered the bridge supports. I added the walkways on the bridges and weathered them. I tested the bridge alignment.



Bridge walkways, alignment and weathering of the supports

I built up the higher ground structure out of polystyrene. I then covered the polystyrene with paper towel and watered-down white PVA glue, and shaped the landscape. I painted a base coat of brown with some green, to prepare the base before applying the scenery.



Polystyrene added and covered in paper towel, then painted with a base coat

I added additional rock structures. The polystyrene and paper towel method also results in rock structures forming. I paint and highlight these, and they result in good natural-looking rocks and ground structures. This is a good reason to use my recommended process.



Additional rock structures added

I then added ground cover, plant and bush scenery.



A lot of scenic material was added to replicate a Natal scene

I added the water in the river. I use a product called Pratley Kraftex Pratliglo. This is easy to use and sets with clear water effect results.



Water effects added

The bridge structures were placed and affixed. The track was ballasted.



Bridges fixed in place and the ballasting carried out

I tested the clearance and track alignment.



Clearance and alignment checked and looking good

The rock structures were weathered and highlighted with colours and shadows.



Rocks and backdrop

I added a temporary backdrop. I added fencing, animals and trees.



Game reserve set up with fencing, trees and animals added

The modules were set up as part of the EMRIG club display at Benoni Junior School in July.



Conclusion

I hope you enjoyed reading these bridge build articles. I hope more members take up the request to get a module section to be used at the club set-up when we visit shows or other venues.

Knysna Model Train and Hobby Fair 2026

By Brian Messenger

The Knysna Model Railroaders group held an exhibition on the 3rd and 4th July, which coincided with the first weekend of the Knysna Oyster Festival running from the 3rd to the 12th July. This is the second exhibition held by the group in Knysna, and included other hobby stands this year.

Below is the set-up day (2nd July) in the Anglican Church hall in Knysna.



Up on the stage were the sales stands, with all hobby-related products for sale.



A view of the other exhibitors in the hall.



An HO layout under construction by a newcomer to the hobby, and he continued working on it for the duration of the exhibition.



A real “old-timer” Hornby layout, which ran flawlessly, all day, for both days of the Expo.



An N-scale layout under construction.



The KMR HO time-saver layout, which showed the public how the shunting of railcars to the various industries takes place.



Our new modular layout was exhibited for the first time!

The reverse curve modules have a 3D-printed oil refinery on them.



Same as above (the reverse curve), the view further round to the left.



A straight and two corner modules included a 3D-printed replica of the Knysna Station.



It also had a working roadway circling on it, with a truck and car with lights and sound.



Another view of the working roadway circling round on the three modules. Note that all the buildings and accessories here are 3D-printed.



A town scene on a corner and straight module.



A game-park-themed setup.



The bridge model attracted a lot of interest, with the water and boats under the bridge.



A Karoo-themed setup.



These modules belong to the host (the Anglican Church minister), who also happens to be a Knysna Model Railroader. (Hence our use of the Anglican church hall!)



A British-themed setup.



Another British-themed setup.



The Marklin guys provided their own modules, demonstrating both analogue and DCC.



A slot car track was a welcome addition to the exhibition, and attracted quite a few people – kids as well as grownups.



The group thought that the exhibition was a great success, with almost 400 visitors over the two days. All proceeds after costs were donated to three local Knysna charities. A big thanks to the Youth For Christ group who handled the catering over the three days (first day's catering was for everyone who set up on that day).

We are now looking forward to a third exhibition next year, which we hope will be bigger and better, with an even greater variety of stall holders.

That's all for now, and, until next time – keep modelling.

Brian - the HOn3 guy in Knysna.

RAILWAY ENTHUSIAST'S WIFE'S LAMENT

By Mrs C.P. Hodgetts

(Written December 1976 – nearly 50 years ago!!)

Editor's Note: I visited Mervyn Mark the other day, to pick up some items that I had bought at one of his Saturday Whatsapp Group Sales. And we sat chatting for a bit... He said "Oh, I've got something else for you", and hauled out a few pieces of paper. He said "I really need to clear out stuff, you can take this." As someone who has written this kind of "poking fun" poetry myself (notably as a record of amusing incidents on group hikes and camps) I could really relate to this... and I know at least a couple of ladies who would definitely relate to the sentiment that is expressed in the following, rather amusing (although admittedly very British and European) commentary.

Because the majority of the railroads and places referred to by Mrs Hodgetts will not be familiar to us non-UK types, I did a bit of Google searching, and have included images taken off the internet, to illustrate the **places** and **items** (the bold highlights) that her husband was obviously so enthusiastic about... ☺

It's good to have a hobby,	There are coaches, trucks and locomotives
Or so I've heard them say.	From ceiling to the floor.
There's football, golf and fishing,	
Or collecting stamps all day.	There's fiddly models to be made
	Of factories, houses and trees,
But spare a little pity	Tunnels constructed, bridges built,
For the train enthusiast's wife.	And talk of a landscape frieze.
It isn't just a hobby,	
It's a whole new way of life!	And so it goes on, from day to day.
	Up and down the stairs he jogs,
We should have a spare bedroom	With endless talk of mystery
Where folks can come and stay.	About live and dead frogs .
But it is taken by the trains –	
The layout – should I say.	Each magazine about the train
	He'll avidly devour,
There's yards of tracks and piles of points	And read the numerous books on trains
And sidings by the score.	For hour after hour.



But every holiday we get
Is no holiday for me,
For I'm the one who likes to go
And dabble in the sea...

... But off we go to visit Wales,
A heaven of mountains and lakes.
But after the old wrecks at **Barry**
The road for the **Rheidol** we take.

It's puff and chuff to **Devil's Bridge**,
Then back we go again.
Who cares about the waterfalls?
He wants to see the trains!

There's pretty little **Talylyn**,
And **Ffestiniog** further north.
Welshpool & Llanfair call us, next
The marvellous **Bridgnorth**.

Go on to Devon, to lovely Torbay
Especially when it's hot.
You spend the time chugging along
Behind the famous "**Flying Scot**".

Brighton is nice in the summer,
The air is fresh with brine.
"Can I sit on the beach today?"
No, it's off to the **Bluebell Line**.

There's **Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch**,
And up to the Yorkshire Moor.
We rush past **Haworth Parsonage**
On the **Keightly & Worth** once more.

We visit the museums
And model shops everywhere.
And the way the prices rocket
Makes me tear out my hair.

"No Tri-ang for me", he'll declare,
As if I had not guessed.
"It must be German Fleischmann,
It really is the best!"

Hundreds of pounds gone up in smoke,
Or, should I say, in steam.
The money could pay for a winter cruise,
But of that I can only dream.

When overseas we take the van
It's just the same old theme...
"We must go to **Moselle**
For they're still running steam."

"Is it 44 or 50?",
He'll murmur to our son,
Who's just as crazy as his Dad
About each single one.

Austria is wonderful.

I really cannot tell

The joy of seeing mountains

From the little **Zillertal**.

There are model shops in Karlsruhe

And Innsbruck and Milan.

We'll travel back a thousand miles

To visit them again!

Once they become enthusiasts

It's steam each single day.

And their obsession, I'm afraid,

Will never go away.

As I sit alone and watch TV

They're playing with their toys.

"They're perfect models!" they exclaim,

For this word them annoys.

Train whistles sound on a record,

It really sounds alive.

"Isn't it grand?" they whisper.

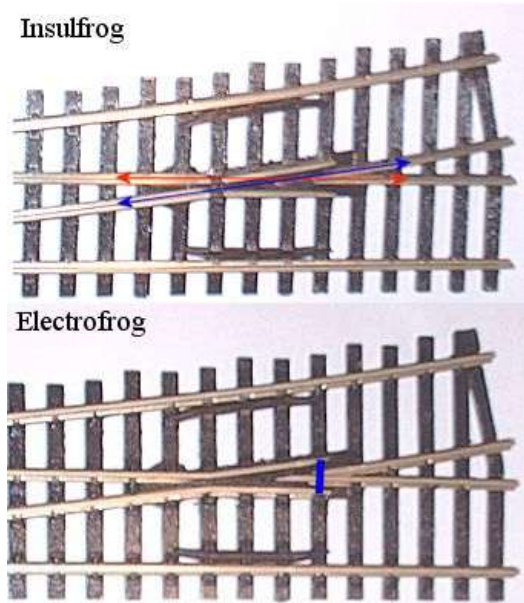
"You can't beat a **'Black Five'!**"

So now you see why I declare

I'll never more be free.

I'm just a prisoner of steam,

So, don't you pity me?



Live and dead *frogs* 😊



*The Woodham Brothers' locomotive scrapyard, at **Barry**, South Wales (297 ex-British Rail locos sent there!)*



Rheidol Railway



Ffestiniog, Wales



Devil's Bridge, Ceredigion, Wales



Welshpool & Llanfair Railway, Wales



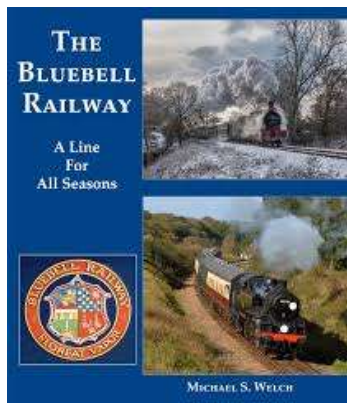
Bridgnorth Funicular Railway, Wales



Tallylyn, Wales



Flying Scotsman



Bluebell Railway advert, Sussex



Moselle Valley, Germany



Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway, Kent



Zillertal Railway, Austria



Haworth Parsonage (home of Emily Brontë)



Keighly & Worth Railway, West Yorkshire



A "Black 5"

Gauteng Model Railroad History

6. The Gauteng Free-Mo Group (GFG)

Dedicated to the memory of John Mitchell who started it all

By Mike Richardson, with *additional ("in italics") comment* provided by Herman Steyn

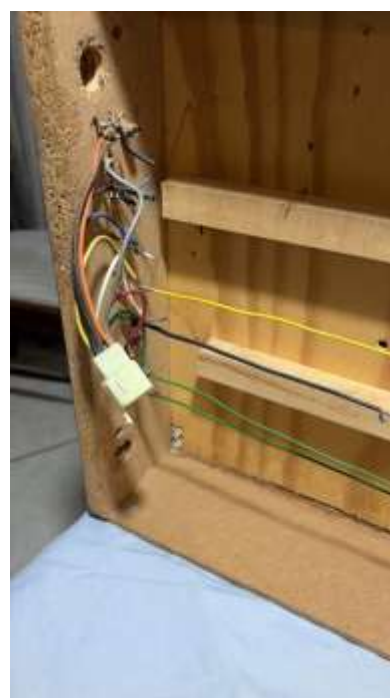


In mid-2011, the late Johnny Mitchell put a note in Mervyn Mark's "Express" newsletter, stating that he would like to form a US modular layout group on the West Rand. Herman Steyn and myself, independently, expressed our interest to Johnny, and shortly thereafter the three of us got together to discuss the idea further.

"Johnny & his European Fremo-based modular layout"

"Johnny originally built himself a modular HO Fremo-inspired European layout in his single garage, running against the wall. It was 400mm wide, with legs of round gazebo poles that he re-cycled. It was an end-to-end configuration which also allowed for some shunting to take place. For him, the Fremo concept was the way to go, as appose to fixed layouts. The idea of using the Fremo modular system took root, and it ended in him putting out that notice. This is what inspired him: <https://www.fremo-net.eu/en/modular-systems/h0-scale/h0-europe>.

"Johnny's 2x 45-degree GFG curves and my (Herman's) Antonito Wye module were put together in the same garage alongside his European Modular Fremo layout. Three of those European Fremo modules have survived and are currently in my care, with me having taken them over from Wolf (who originally had bought them from Johnny), so that Johnny's initial dabble in Fremo still exists (see pics below)."



Johnny's old lightweight modules, demonstrating wiring, gazebo pole leg-holes, chipboard usage, and his end-plate profile (Photo credits: Herman Steyn)



“What is Fremo?”

FREMO was formed in 1981 and consists of a number of Interest Groups spread over Europe.

*The name stands for: **Freundeskreises Europäischer Modellbahner.***

The following link explains the concept: <https://www.fremo-net.eu/en/fremo>

Another useful link: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FREMO>

Within FREMO there is an American section which was used as our guideline in forming GFG – see the link: <https://www.fremo-net.eu/en/modular-systems/h0-scale/h0-usa>

The North American standards, called “Free-Mo” (spelled differently to avoid confusion with FREMO), followed in 1994.”

In hindsight, I think Johnny would have liked a simpler and lighter modular concept (“Note: as stated above, Johnny was inspired by the Fremo concept – as his modules in his garage were all 400mm wide and light weight. What was more of an issue, if I remember correctly?, was that he liked using chipboard and those recycled round gazebo poles!”). But both Herman and I had been investigating the American Free-Mo concept and standards, and we persuaded / got Johnny to agree that this should be the approach we should take.

The idea behind Free-Mo was to construct a modular layout, with realistic operations being the most important criterion. By utilising the modular concept amongst a group of like-minded rail-road modellers it was hoped to build a layout significantly bigger than most home layouts, enabling longer train consists and larger, more realistic industries and other line-side features to be created in miniature. I have described the concept as a “free-form” modular layout, meaning that no fixed shapes or sizes needed to be applied to individual modules or group of modules, beyond the ability to make perfect connection with other modules or module groups by utilising standardised end-plates and connections of track and wiring circuits.

I had previously been involved in a couple of modular groups that generally failed to meet any proper operational criteria, and really just resulted in a large loop to just “play trains”. As I had been into realist operations, as described in the Model Railroader magazine and elsewhere, this to me was one of the primary reasons to build a modular layout according to the Free-Mo concept. A further consideration with Free-Mo was that, because, in general, space would not be as limited as in club or home layouts, curves should be as broad as practical, and yards, sidings, industries etc. could approach realistic dimensions.

At this early stage, Johnny, Herman and I laid down some criteria, which later led to many debates and some disagreements within the group, and ultimately caused its demise. (“A number of factors caused the later “splintering” of the group: dwindling numbers of able-bodied members to set-up and unpack; the time taken on each occasion to set up, iron out gremlins, and dismantle the layout; problems with getting suitable venues like school halls – and then, latterly due to security reasons, these premises becoming unavailable; a desire to get something permanent, in order to avoid only meeting on the few times a year that we could get a hall; some members of the group emigrating, or leaving the hobby / group, or moving out of Gauteng – so it was a multitude of factors that led to GFG’s ultimate demise.”)

The basic criteria we set out were:-

- Layout based on Mid-west American rail-roads during the steam/diesel transition period, being 1950s and 1960s, later increased to include the 1970s. There was also some misunderstanding as to the term “Mid-west”, which the group thought meant rail-roads west of the Mississippi, but really meant west of the Appalachian Mountains.
- Track standards to be based on using Peco Code 83 track with minimum grades, radii and turnout number specified.
- Scenery, structures and other details to be appropriate to the area and era.

After the initial meeting (of Johnny, Herman and myself), we called a meeting through a notice in Merv's “Express” newsletter, and had our first GFG meeting at Herman's home in July 2011. This was attended by eight interested model rail-roaders, where we explained the concept and the intended basic criteria. One attendee was effectively banned from the group because he wanted to sell us turnouts inferior to those manufactured by Peco.

A second meeting was called shortly thereafter, attended by approximately twelve people, at which Herman described the various end-plate profiles currently in use in Germany. The group decided to use the 500mm “valley” profile (“see note below”), which in hind-sight was a poor choice, as the American 600mm flat profile would have allowed more versatility. Subsequently, many modules were constructed wider, but retaining the 500mm “valley” profile at the end of a group of modules.



Illustration of the GFG valley profile end-plate (although this is one of Johnny's chipboard end-plates)

(“Note: Fremo have a number of end-plate profiles with a maximum of 500mm down to 300mm. These are all practical widths for a good reason. Within Europe you need to cart these modules around to the different venues, and a module as wide as a large suitcase [500mm] can easily fit in a car or be taken on a bus / train, and even more so the narrower widths.”)

At this stage the then current members commenced with designing their individual groups of modules, and a large order for track and turnouts was assembled. I called for quotes from a number of local hobby shops, with Hobbies & Models giving us the best price, and an order for about R20,000 was placed. Subsequently, modules started being assembled and a couple of trial set-ups were made on Erich's and Wolf's patios.

The first serious set-up (which happened in 2012) was carried out on Erich's tennis court. Fortunately it was winter and relatively cool, with no rain.



I sent an email to members of the group in April 2012, following this first trial layout set-up. This email included the names of the following eleven module-contributing members, who were the active participants at that early stage: Johnny Mitchell, Herman Steyn, Erich Dokoupil, Richard Minter, Trevor White, Jörg Willer, Don Davidson, Wolf Loob, Richard Taylor, Francois Kritzing, and myself Mike Richardson.

After these initial trial set-ups, a larger enclosed venue was sought. Fortunately for GFG, Ron Gill, a formidable (N Gauge) model railroader, was deputy headmaster of St. Martin's School, and he was able to arrange for us to use their school hall during their school holidays. The space was fairly limited, but gave us the first real flavour of operating a large layout with multiple yards. For these initial set-ups, formal operating sessions were conducted using hand-written switch lists.

St. Martin's soon proved to be too small for our rapidly growing number of modules, and a larger venue was sought. Fortunately, another railroad modeller came to our rescue in the form of Dave Osburn, who was headmaster of Greenside Primary School, and we then had access to a much larger venue. However, after a couple of set-ups at Greenside, this also proved to be too small, due to the rapidly growing number of modules and the broad interest in the Free-Mo concept.

Within one year of the formation of GFG, one of our members, Trevor White, passed away. His wife gave his modules to GFG, and Erich modified them to make a staging yard. In Trevor's memory it was named White Yard, and is still in use.

"The initial modules for Trevor were built by Johnny – so you can see Johnny's thumbprints are all over GFG modules!"



White Yard, seen here in operation at Chamdor in February 2020, is currently used in the WFG Iapa layout



Left to Right: Francois Kritzinger, Johnny Mitchell †, Richard Taylor, Donald Davidson, Richard Minter †, Herman Steyn, Erich Dokoupil, Nick Twynham †, Mike Richardson, Jörg Willer, Wolf Loob. Photo undated, but probably taken in August 2012 at St Martins School.

A further staging yard was considered necessary, and fellow model railroaders built the GLOW yard, named after the former West Rand group of modellers – **G**auteng **L**ayouts **O**ut **W**est. Tony Attwell provided a couple of base boards, I provided the points, Herman Steyn provided the track, the late Nick Twynham provided the ground throws, and Brian Clark made the scenery.

One of our members, Norbert Mohl, who never built a yard, made three turntables, which proved very useful in turning locos in the staging yards or at ends of branch lines.



GLOW Yard, with turntable attached, at Chamdor, July 2020

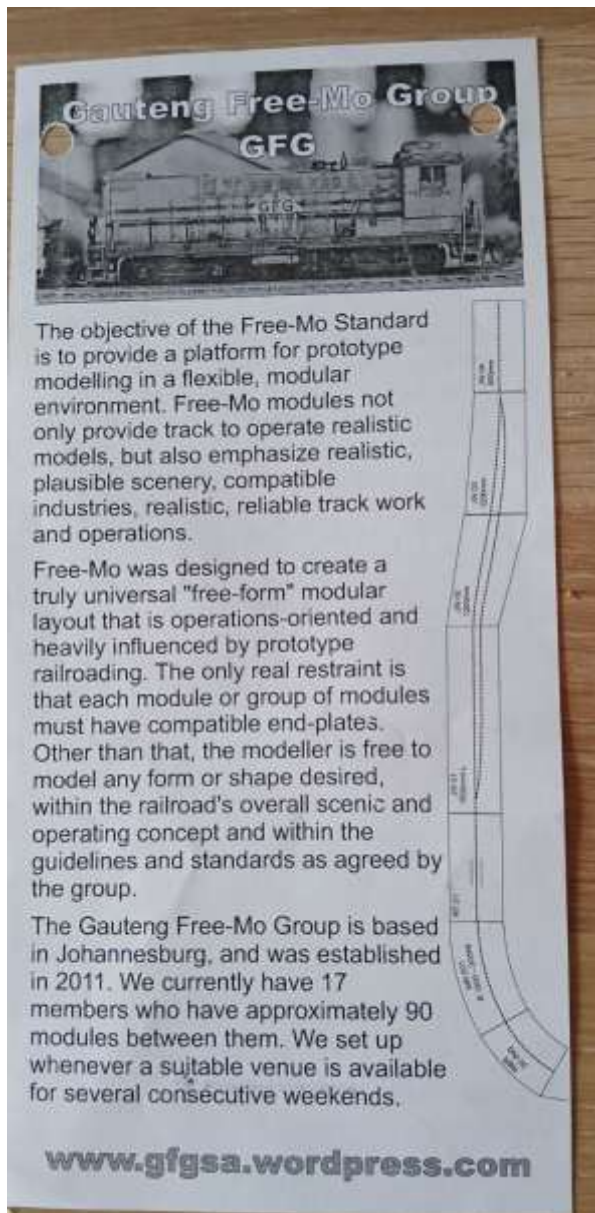
The late Richard Minter, who worked as a printer, made sets of car-cards and waybills, which are still in use today.

Subsequently, through the efforts of Herman Steyn and Neil Plumbly, we were given access to the school halls at Fairlands Laerskool and Panorama Primary School from 2014 onwards, which gave us very generous space for assembling up to 100 modules during school holidays, until 2018 when GFG effectively disbanded. This disbanding happened with the leasing by a couple of members of an old warehouse in Chamdor, where most of the modules were then based for the next five years.

Also, GFG was invited on three occasions, in October 2014, 2016 and 2018, to set up and participate at The Great Model Train Expo (TGMTE) in Randburg. Here we were confined to two sides of a hall, enabling an end-to-end layout of about 50m to be erected. This was well received by the visitors.



GFG layout on display, TGMTE October 2018



Gauteng Free-Mo Group
GFG

The objective of the Free-Mo Standard is to provide a platform for prototype modelling in a flexible, modular environment. Free-Mo modules not only provide track to operate realistic models, but also emphasize realistic, plausible scenery, compatible industries, realistic, reliable track work and operations.

Free-Mo was designed to create a truly universal "free-form" modular layout that is operations-oriented and heavily influenced by prototype railroading. The only real restraint is that each module or group of modules must have compatible end-plates. Other than that, the modeller is free to model any form or shape desired, within the railroad's overall scenic and operating concept and within the guidelines and standards as agreed by the group.

The Gauteng Free-Mo Group is based in Johannesburg, and was established in 2011. We currently have 17 members who have approximately 90 modules between them. We set up whenever a suitable venue is available for several consecutive weekends.

www.gfgsa.wordpress.com



Gauteng Free-Mo Group
GFG

A school hall during holidays is ideal, which means the group can meet and operate three or four times a year. We are also always looking for suitable alternative venues that are large enough to accommodate our expanding layouts and that will be more accessible at any time during the year.

Our concept is to model only HO-scale American prototypes in the Mid-West region during the period 1950 to 1979. Only DCC operation is considered and current practice is to operate sound equipped locomotives insofar as it is feasible for members to do so. American narrow gauge in HO_n3 and HO_n30 can also be modelled as a branch line.

Car-cards with way-bills are utilised to assign freight to the various industries and our operations include the utilisation of a despatcher with train-orders and time-tables for train control over the un-signalled line.

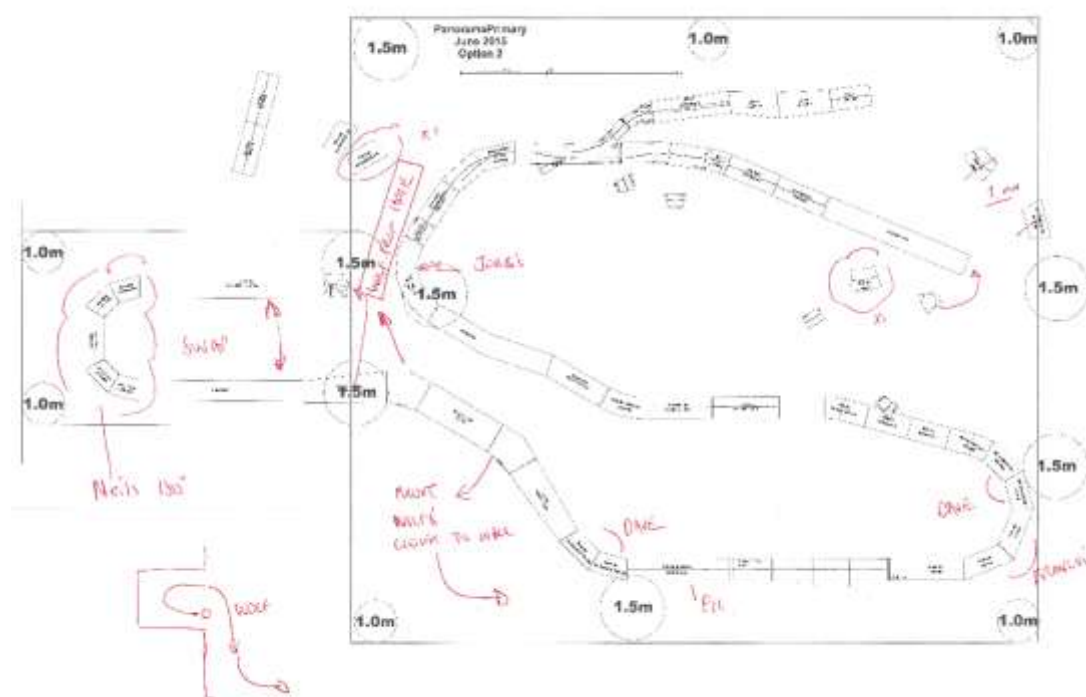
Contacts:
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www.gfgsa.wordpress.com

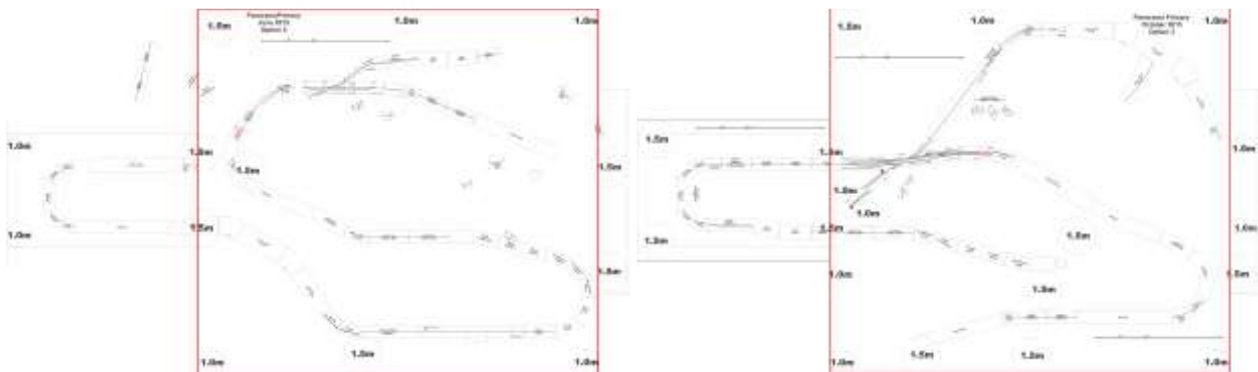
These GFG set-ups went through an operational evolution over the years, starting with hand-written switch-lists, progressing through car-cards/waybills, ultimately to dispatcher control with a timetable/train orders.

By the time we had seven or more yards in a set-up we would get congestion at some choke points in the layout. Once we started using a despatcher, it was possible to hold back trains at certain yards to ease congestion elsewhere on the layout. This was achieved thanks to Neil providing a number of hand-held portable radios, positioned at various yards for communication with the despatcher. Although we tried once to run to a timetable, this was not very successful and involved a lot of paper work to set it up.

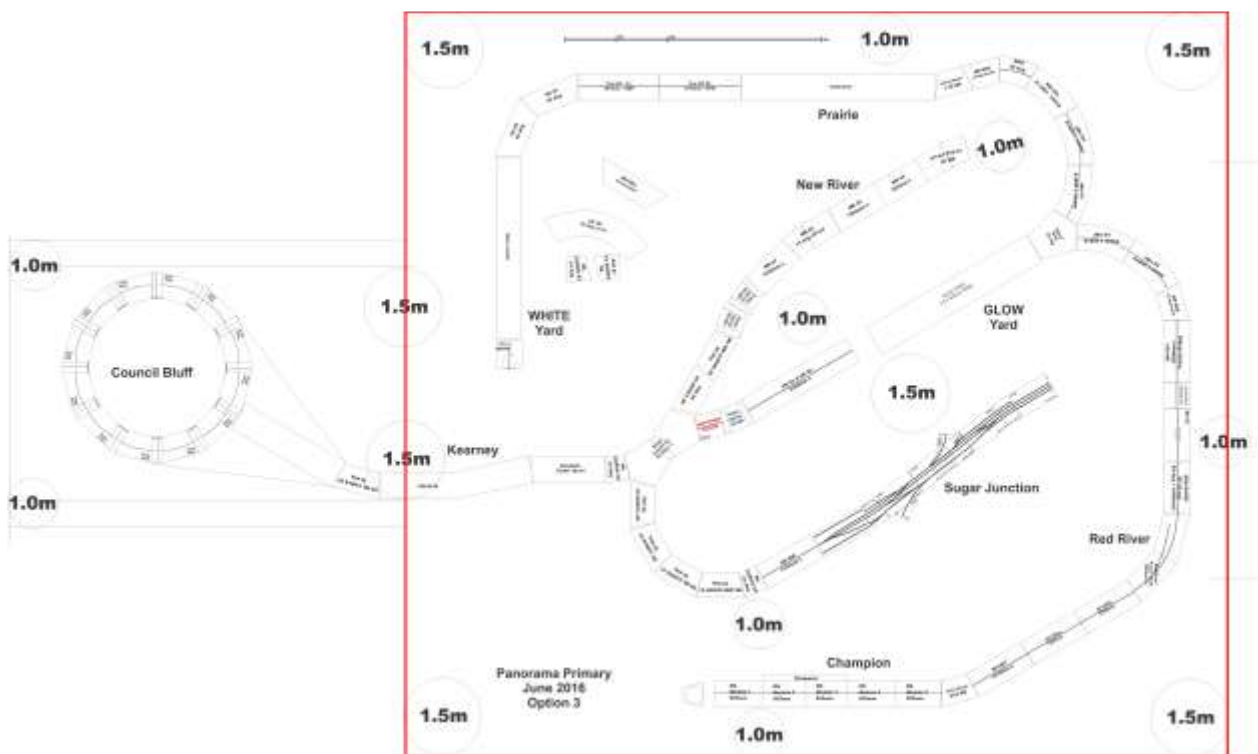
Initial set-up arrangements were achieved by trial and error to fit the available space. After a while, I collected the dimensions of all the modules available for a set-up, and prepared cardboard cut-outs, which I assembled in an appropriate arrangement. Subsequently, Herman prepared electronic representations of the available modules, and arranged them to fit the available space using Coral-Draw. Individual set-ups went through an evolution: first a list of potential members and the modules available, size details of which were provided. Herman then prepared an electronic representation of each module or group of modules in Coral-Draw, and arranged them according to the available space. He and I then made various adjustments according to operational requirements and the available space. Some of these sketches are attached to provide an example of how we worked out any particular set-up.



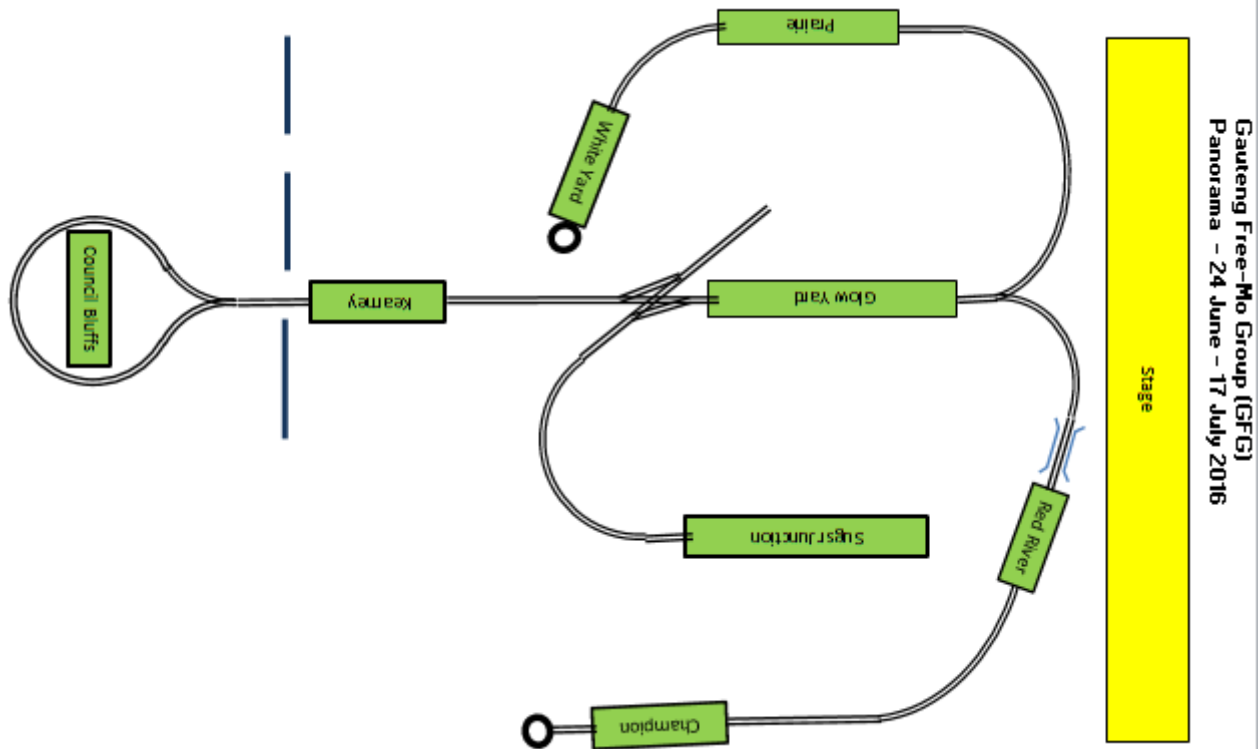
Initial layout planning for Panorama Primary School – June 2015 set-up



Layout planning options for Panorama Primary School – October 2015



Detail planning for Panorama School hall, June/July 2016



Final schematic for Panorama School hall, June/July 2016



.... and the layout set up per that plan in the Panorama Primary School hall, June/July 2016



GFG layout set up in Fairlands Laerskool hall, June 2017

With most of the modules being housed semi-permanently at Chamdor from late 2018, GFG effectively ceased to exist, although the Chamdor layout was operated according to some of GFG's original concepts, particularly the use of car-cards / waybills. When the Chamdor group's lease was terminated, all the modules were put in storage in a shed on Dave Flockhard's plot. Subsequently, however, thanks to Dave's generosity, some of the modules have been erected in his enclosed lapa, and are being operated there as per the original GFG concept, now as the Westrand Free-mo Group (WFG). (*Currently, more modules are being taken out of storage and incorporated into an additional layout under construction in a shed adjacent to Dave's lapa.*)



GFG modules incorporated in the WFG layout in Dave Flockhart's lapa (with Norbert Mohl turntables visible)



Thanks to Herman Steyn and Brian Dawson for additional comments and illustrations.

This article prepared by Mike as a memorial to those GFG members and friends who have subsequently passed away: John Mitchell, Trevor White, Richard Minter and Nick Twynham.

Appendix 1 – Rules Of The Gauteng Free-Mo Group (GFG)

Revision 3: 1 August 2017

1. NAME OF THE GROUP

Gauteng Free-Mo Group (Acronym = GFG)

2. PURPOSE OF THE GROUP

The GFG is a voluntary non-profit Group of model railroad enthusiasts formed for the purpose of constructing modules and operating model trains based on North American prototypes and in accordance with North American railroad practice during the period early 1950's to the end of the 1970's, utilising the Free-Mo modular concept. For further information refer to the GFG Standards as set out on the GFG Website: gfgsa.wordpress.com

3. ELIGIBILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP

Any person who has an interest in North American railroads and practice is eligible to apply for membership of the Group. All members undertake to abide by these Rules and Technical Standards of the Group. Proposed new members must be approved by the majority of the existing membership.

4. MEMBERSHIP

A person who pays the full fees as set out under 8 below and who undertakes to construct at least one module or related modules (such as a turntable etc.) to the Group's standards within the agreed time period, or in exceptional cases, provide some talent to the benefit of the Group, shall be entitled to membership of the Group. Such membership shall entitle the member to participate fully in all functions and activities of the Group including decision making and the determination of Group standards. Any member who fails to complete at least one module to the Group's operating standards within the agreed period after joining the Group, or who fails to abide by the Group's rules, standards and ethics, shall have his or her continued membership of the Group being subject to review by all members.

Former Associated Members shall be entitled to participate fully in all activities of the Group including the running of trains but may not participate in decision-making or in the determination of the Group's Technical Standards. (This class of membership has been discontinued.)



Membership list

Current members shall be listed on the Membership List which shall be reviewed and approved annually by the Group at its first Group meeting in each financial year.

5. PROCEDURE TO APPLY FOR MEMBERSHIP

An applicant for membership should approach one of the Group members who will propose the applicant to the Group at a meeting of the Group.

6. NEW AND EXISTING MEMBERS – APPROVALS REQUIRED BY THE STANDARDS WORK GROUP

- Any new or existing member shall be required to have his/her module/s vetted by the Standards Work Group for the purpose of ensuring that the module/s conforms to the requirements of the Group.
- The type of module/s to be introduced by a new or an existing member must be vetted by the Group as a whole prior to the commencement of construction.
- An accurate dimensioned sketch of the module/s is to be provided to the designated layout planner at least one month before any proposed set-up.
- No new modules may be introduced into a set-up without inspection and the prior approval of the Standards Work Group, which approval shall not be unreasonably withheld.

7. LIMITATION ON MEMBERSHIP

The total number of members shall be limited to 25.

8. MEMBERSHIP FEES

- A one-off “Joining Fee”: Full Membership: R300.00 payable on acceptance as a member.
- Annual “Membership Fee”: R120.00 payable at the commencement of the GFG financial year. The annual Membership Fee payable by a new member in respect of the first year of membership shall be proportional based on the number of months of membership.
- The fees are subject to amendment as determined by the Group from time to time.
- By paying their membership fees, members confirm their commitment to abide by these Rules and Technical Standards of the Group.
- A once-off levy shall be applied to the membership from time-to-time should such need arise, subject to the agreement of the majority of members.

9. DUTY OF ALL MEMBERS TO CHECK LOCOMOTIVES AND ROLLING STOCK

It is incumbent on each member to check all his/her new and existing rolling stock and locomotives to ensure that their rolling stock and locomotives meet the Group’s standards prior to being introduced into a set up. No locomotives with a “03” address may be used on any set-up.

10. FINANCIAL YEAR OF THE GFG



1 January to 31 December

11. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The Group shall maintain accounting records of all income and expenditure and shall elect a Treasurer from one of the Group's members at a meeting of the Group for this purpose. The Treasurer shall circulate the Group's cash position for the financial year concerned to all members of the Group at least biannually.

12. UTILISATION OF THE GROUP'S FUNDS

The Group's Funds shall be utilised solely for the purposes of the Group as agreed at Group meetings and for no other purposes whatsoever.

13. CONTROL OF THE GROUP'S ASSETS

The Group shall maintain a Register of the Group Assets to be maintained by one of the members of the Group elected at a meeting of the Group for this purpose.

14. OFFICE BEARERS

The members shall elect such office bearers at a Group meeting as they may deem necessary. The office bearers, so elected, shall hold office for one year and be subject to re-election.

15. MEETINGS OF THE GROUP AND CHAIRMAN

Regular meetings of the Group (in addition to module set-ups) shall be held at such times and at such venues as may be determined by the Group. The Group shall elect a Chairman for the conduct of the Group meetings who shall hold office for one year. The Chairmanship shall rotate annually and a new chairman shall be appointed from one of the full members of the Group.

16. DECISIONS OF THE GROUP

All decisions of the Group shall be determined on a simple majority. The Chairman of the meeting shall have a casting vote, in addition to his own vote as a member, in the event of equality of votes.

17. WORK GROUPS

The Group shall be entitled to form Work Groups as may be required from time to time with the objective of facilitating the operations and functioning of the Group. The Work Groups to be formed, the composition thereof, as well as their terms of reference, shall be determined by the members at a Group meeting.

18. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

A member may terminate his/her membership at any time by furnishing written notice thereof to the
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Group at a Group meeting.

A member who terminates his/her membership prior to the dissolution of the Group as provided for in Rule 20 below forfeits any claim to any proceeds arising from the sale of the assets of the Group on dissolution and shall not be eligible for any refund of fees as set out under Rule 8 above.

19. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Any matters of dispute shall be dealt with by the Group nominating one of its members to attempt to resolve the issue/issues amicably with the party concerned. In the event of failure to achieve a satisfactory outcome, the Group shall decide such further action as it may deem fit.

20. DISSOLUTION

The Group may be dissolved should 75% of the full members be in favour of dissolution. In such event, the assets of the Group shall be sold and the proceeds thereof as well as the total Funds held by the Group as at the date of dissolution shall be distributed equally amongst those current members in good standing designated as full members as recorded on the membership list and who have been members for a minimum period of at least one year as at the date of dissolution.

No former member shall be entitled to participate in any proceeds arising from a dissolution in terms of this Rule.

Appendix 2 – GFG Module Builders Checklist

INTRODUCTION

This short guide and checklist should be used together with the GFG Standards while building a module. The checklist focuses mainly on the END PLATES and to a lesser extent on the electrical power wiring. It is the RESPONSIBILITY of the builder to arrange with the STANDARDS WORKING GROUP to have the new module checked and approved before taking part in the first module set-up.

END-PLATES

The checks below apply specifically to module end-plates which join to other modules. It is good practice to also use applicable checks for “internal” module ends.

1. Only end-plates supplied by GFG are to be used.
2. Minimum thickness is 12mm (laminating two end-plates if necessary).
3. Module construction, including strengthening of end-plates, MUST provide enough space for bolts and washers and generous access for spanners.
4. End-plates to be at EXACTLY 90 degrees to the module surface (carpenter’s square).

5. Track adjustment at the end of the module to be achieved by using the GFG TRACK GAUGE.

6. Track at the module end must be:

- i. 90 degrees to the end-plate
- ii. Straight for at least 100mm
- iii. Level for 100mm or more if possible

It is advisable to use wood, 100mm long, 40mm wide and 5mm thick to provide the ballast shape. Thereafter cork or closed cell rubber should be used.

7. Track ends to be soldered to either:

- i. Brass/brass plated flat top screws, or
- ii. Electrically gapped and firmly fixed PC board

8. Track ends to be flush with the outer surface of the end plate. The inside of the rails to be slightly chamfered.

9. Module height standing on its legs and pads is 1200mm from the floor to the top of the rails.

10. It is essential to bring a pair of spanners, matching the 10mm bolts (size 17 spanner) to each set-up and breakdown.

ELECTRICAL POWER WIRING

11. Each piece of track (however short) to have droppers to the two bus bars.

12. The ideal droppers are single strand bare copper wires (+/- 0.7mm) unravelled from un-insulated copper earth wire.

13. Droppers to be soldered to the track and the bus bar (use bare earth copper wire.)

14. Wiring to follow the inside/outside track principal. Colour coding is not necessary.

15. Each module to have one pair of loose male/male banana plug jumpers (300-500mm long) per one module end. The female plugs to be fitted firmly at the end and near the edges of the module, and connected to the two bus bars.

TRACK

16. Before installing points/switches, check the point for electrical continuity using a multi-meter or the voltage indicator light built by ColinTT. There must be complete continuity in electro-frogs (gap in continuity for insul-frogs) right through the point up to and including the two diverging legs.

Note: Current Peco Code 83 electro-frogs have a LIVE frog, the polarity of which is switched by the switch blades. Electro-frog points require insulating fish plates for the two INNER rails after the frog.

FINAL APPROVAL

17. Once all track and electrical wiring has been installed on the module and before “ballasting” and “scenicking”, such a “bare” module must be used in a “set-up” and allow trains to operate flawlessly across it. Once this has been achieved, the module can be finished.

Appendix 3 – GFG Operating Instructions: Set Up

4.1 Digitrax Set-Up: To be provided by:

4.2 Set-Up

A layout to be designed using scale cardboard cutouts, to fit the available space, by a member designated at the previous meeting. DCC module to be approx. in the centre of the layout.

Set up date and time to be agreed by members. All participating members to attend at that date and time.

To start the set-up, all modules to be placed on the floor in their planned position.

Whiteboard with layout diagram (industries) to be displayed.

Module owners are to provide:

- Legs (identified by colour or owner's initials).
- Bolts/nuts/clamps
- Power jumpers (identified with owner's initials).
- Loconet Cable (identified with owner's initials).
- Tools (spanners, etc.)

Set-up to be effected by two or more erection teams, and one or more electrical teams.

Set-up to start with the DCC module, set to the correct height (1200mm) floor to rail height and level.

Erecting teams to start assembling modules from either side of the DCC module.

Each free end to be checked for correct height.

Erection teams to ensure that all rail connections across modules are aligned horizontally and vertically and that modules are connected tightly.

Electrical team(s) to follow the erection teams, plugging in power bus jumpers and Loconet cables, and testing for continuity and shorts across all joins and junctions as it moves along.

Electrical team to connect the command module(s) and power up the layout. Check each UP5 with a tester and do a final loco test run from end to end.

Electrical team to release the layout for operation to the meeting co-ordinator.

4.3 Break Down.

All module owners to be present.

Break down to be performed in reverse order to the set up.

Electrical team to power down and disconnect the command module(s) from the layout

Electrical team(s) to remove all electrical/electronic connections from the modules, leaving jumper cables and Loconet cables on top of the appropriate modules.

Breakdown teams to:

- Undo bolts and leave them next to the modules
- Remove legs leaving them next to the modules on the floor.
- Leave modules in position on the floor

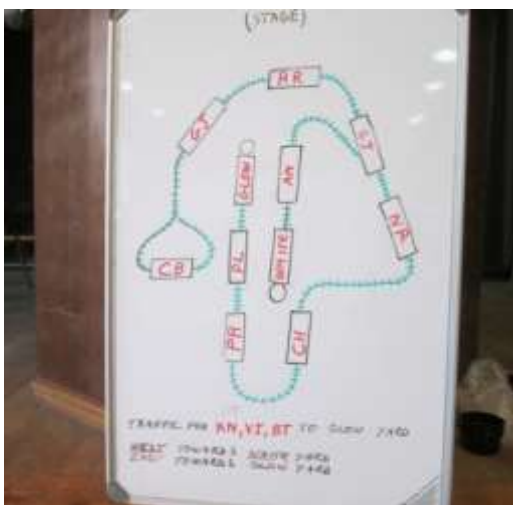
Owners to collect and remove their equipment.

Appendix 4 – GFG Operating Instructions: Operations

(Revision 2: 12 April 2014)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Before any operation commences each crew comprising an engineer and a conductor should familiarise themselves with the overall arrangement of yards and stations, making a sequence list, if necessary. They should also note the passing siding lengths in relation to the length of their train. This yard/station sequence will also be displayed on the "white board". The "white board" will also indicate which end of the set-up is defined as the "western" and "eastern" terminal points. Other junctions will not be given cardinal points at this stage.



The white board diagram, and car-cards set out – Panorama School, July 2015

1.2 Each crew must familiarise themselves with the car-card/waybill system. Each yard and station should have three boxes for car-cards, labelled "Pick-ups West", "Set-outs/Empties etc." and "Pick-ups East". Station owners may create boxes for a specific industry if they so desire. Pick-ups east or west are cars that have completed their assignment at the specific station and are ready to be picked up and conveyed further along the system in the direction indicated. "Set-outs" are cars that have not reached their destination in the station, and might be "Off-spots" (no space is available in their assigned siding), empties, or bad order cars (breakdowns like a hot-box, dropped couplings, etc.).



Car-card boxes on Erich Dokoupil's Kearney yard – June 2017

1.3 All empty cars set out at the start of an operating session must have their own car-card in a yard's or station's "Empty" box.

1.4 Waybills will be randomly drawn and allocated to the appropriate car type (e.g. gondola, reefer), initially in the staging yard and/or interchange (White or Glow Yard). Depending on the number of operators, additional randomly drawn waybills can be allocated to appropriate empty cars in the various stations.

1.5 Cars destined for stations not included in the session set-up should be sent to either of the allocated staging yards. This allocation will be displayed on the "white-board" at the start of a session.

1.6 If sufficient crews are available, crews could be assigned trains from any station operating as a turn/way-freight. They should make up their train based on the cars and the waybills in the yard and block as appropriate before departure.

2. SWITCHING

2.1 Each crew of Engineer/Conductor will be assigned a train of cars in the staging or interchange yard. They should examine the waybills, and if time is available before their departure, block the cars in accordance with the yard/station sequencing. They may also write out a separate switch list if they have the time and so desire.



2.2 Before commencing switching a yard/station, the crew must review all the car-cards in the boxes and in their train to determine which they are going to pick up, set out or leave behind.

2.3 Once a train arrives at a yard the crew must examine the "Pick-ups" and "Empties" car-cards of cars in the yard to see if they can add any to their train after making their "Set-outs", bearing in mind the length of their train and the length of subsequent passing loops. The maximum train length is ten cars excluding the caboose.

2.4 Once a car has been set out the crew must turn the waybill over to display the next sequential movement and place the car-card in the appropriate "Pick-up" box. Should the waybill have reached the end of its sequence of set-outs, it should be removed from the car-card and returned to the stock of unused waybills at the end of the session. The car-card must be placed in the "Empties" box.

2.5 Any set-outs at yards without passing loops should only be done for trailing turnouts/sidings. This will result in leaving part of the train on the main line while shunting the yard. All pick-ups on the trailing turnouts/sidings shall be removed (if you have sufficient space in your train) including those going in the opposite direction. They should be dropped off at the next yard and their car-card placed in the appropriate "Pick-up" box for the next crew going in the opposite direction to pick up. On arrival at the next yard or station, these cars should only be left in the appropriate siding and not on the main or passing loop.

2.6 On departure from a yard the crew must ensure that no cars are left on the main or passing siding and that all car-cards are in the correct box.

3. TRAIN ORDERS

3.1 All crews will be assigned an approximate departure time in an attempt to eliminate crowding or congestion of stations. All trains operate as "Extras" with no classification initially. At a later stage we will introduce higher priority trains, including passenger trains operating to a time table, and the "Extras" will have to observe classification rules, which will be defined later.

3.2 Before leaving any yard or station the train crew of an "Extra" must get clearance from the dispatcher. On arrival at a yard or station the crew must advise the dispatcher of their arrival time. At this stage no written train orders will be made, only verbal orders. All communication must be limited to the minimum. All trains should have a trailing caboose when moving between yards or stations.

4. WHISTLES & HORNS

The following whistles or horns must be used on the occasions indicated below:

Short	Apply brakes/stop
Long-long	Release brakes/proceed



Short-short-short Reversing/backing-up

Long-long-short-long Approaching grade crossing,
tunnel, obstruction, etc.

Long Approaching station, yard,
junction, etc.

The bell should be rung when approaching a grade crossing or a passenger depot.

5. SPEED LIMITS

The following speed limits shall be observed at all times:

In yards 15mph (approx 12 secs/metre)

Outside yards 25mph (approx 8 secs/metre)

Cars must not be coupled at a speed in excess of 4mph (walking speed)

6. MISCELLANEOUS

6.1 Note that the waybills do not distinguish between ice and mechanical reefers. If you have a mechanical reefer and the waybill directs you to an ice-track, skip that spot and go direct to the next set-out.



GFG layout on display at TGMTE in October 2016, Mike running a train

How It All Began For Me...

No story 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 Good-fellow – from HRCASA (February 2025), guest Michelle Lines-Dovey – from HRCASA (August 2025), Rene' Bosch (April 2026), Mervyn Mark (May 2026), and Paul Mollison (June 2026).

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 Pelser (Part 1)
- 2017 June Kobus Pelser (Part 2)
- 2017 July Kobus Pelser (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 Pelser (*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 29th August** **EMRIG Swap Meet, Benoni Junior School**
- **Sept/October School holidays** **Possible EMRIG layout set up at Benoni Junior School (TBC) (*)**
- **Weekend 26th - 27th September** **CSME Engineering Fair, Centurion**
- **Saturday 3rd October** **PMT Swap Meet, John Vorster Tech High School, Waverley, Pretoria**
- **Friday 23rd October** **Set up layout for TGMTE**



- Weekend 24th - 25th October The Great Model Train Expo, Wynand Marais Hall, Birchleigh (*)
- Wednesday 4th November Local Government Elections
- Saturday 7th November Richie's Toy Fair, Mosaic Church, Fairland (*)
- **Saturday 28th November** **EMRIG Swap Meet, Northmead Mall (*)**
- Saturday 12th December PMT Swap Meet, John Vorster Tech High School, Waverley, Pretoria

2026 Club Committee Contact details:-

The committee membership for 2026 remains 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	swapmeets@emrig.co.za
(now assisted by James Job)	

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 ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION FEE FOR 2026 IS R240,00. MEMBERS JOINING



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

A FAMILY MEMBERSHIP RATE DOES NO LONGER APPLY.

SO, IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE SO, IT REALLY IS 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!!!