

The CMRCI Bulletin



The Canberra Model Railway Club Inc. Newsletter

July 2022

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the CMRCI will be at 7:30 pm on Wednesday at the Kaleen Clubroom.

Peter Madsen will speak on "Modelling Madness - a bit of show and tell". Time permitting he may also include a snippet on NSWGR locomotives.

=====

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Canberra Model Railway Club Inc will be held at 7.45 pm at the CMRCI clubroom (UCHSK) on Wednesday 17 August 2022.

If you have an interest in becoming involved in the management of the club, nominate for a position on the Committee. Make your voice heard.

Formal notification of the meeting and nomination forms will be sent to members in July.

"I like trains. I like their rhythm, and I like the freedom of being suspended between two places, all anxieties of purpose taken care of: for this moment I know where I am going."

- Anna Funder, 'Stasiland: Stories from Behind the Berlin Wall.'

THE NEW LAYOUT

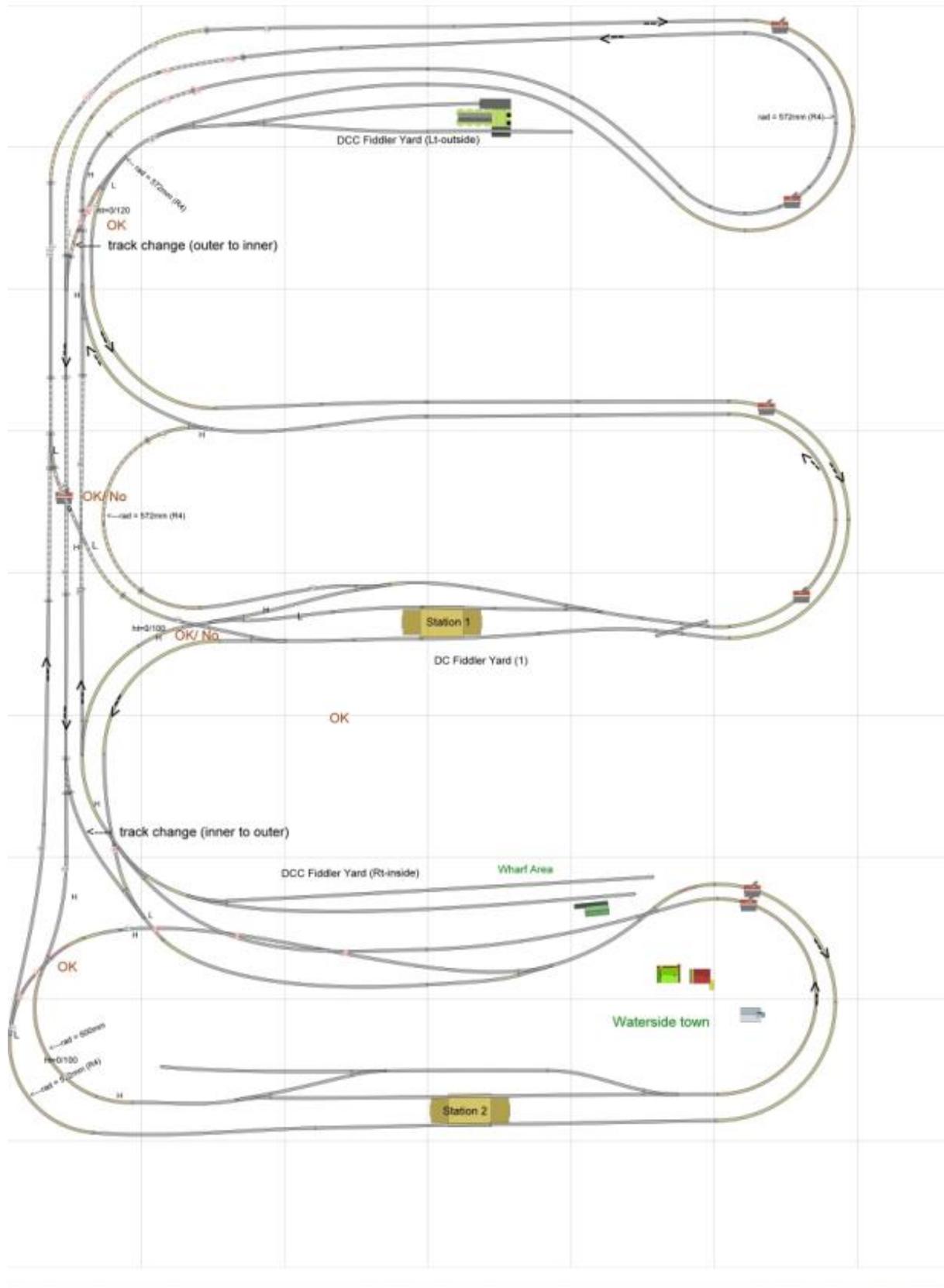
As you will be aware, there has been an interest in a new layout in the clubroom for some time. The possibility of having to move to a new location has delayed any action. However the Committee has made a decision to go ahead with planning for new layout.

After considerable analysis the following outline has been arrived at.



Look at the above diagram as the letter E. The various parts will be described as top, middle, lower and side sections in this article only.

There is sufficient room for the coffee area and for transit along the right-hand side. The aisles are as wide as space will permit, i.e., 1200mm in one and 1500mm in the other. The latter is constrained by a need for a loop (see Diagram) and is only 900mm at the open end.



The above track diagram is the first in what will doubtless be a number of minor changes. The layout will be built for operations, but with considerable scope for continuous running and testing. A DC track will also be an integral part of the layout.

The stations and towns shown are for discussion purposes at this stage.

It is emphasised that the project is in its very early stages, however a project plan is being developed. If you have views on the proposed outlines, or if there is something that you wish to include in the layout, talk to a committee member. If you have questions, talk to a committee member. It's your layout – be heard. Too late once it's up and running.

The Message is – get involved.



ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA

Engineer Australia is the peak body for professional engineers in Australia.

They recently published the second edition of Canberra's engineering Heritage. Dry as dust? Not at all. The publication covers:

1. Roads and bridges
2. Railways
3. Urban public transport
4. Lakes and dams
5. Water
6. Electricity
7. Public lighting and natural gas
8. Telecommunications
9. Military engineering
10. 10 Engineering education at RMC
11. Aviation
12. Space Tracking Station
13. The new Parliament House
14. The roads and bridges leading to the new Parliament House

Of these the chapter on railways is well worth a read, even if you are not interested in the rest.

The railway chapter starts with Walter Burley Griffin and the railways that were included in his great plan. It then discusses the Goulburn-Queanbeyan line (1887), and problems associated with moving passengers from Queanbeyan to Canberra by horse drawn vehicles over rough roads.

The Queanbeyan – Canberra line was completed in 1914. It was seen as a freight line to carry materials for the construction of Parliament House and public buildings in Canberra. The long story about the establishment of the line is a reflection of the politics of the day (of course!) and the money. The line was finally opened for passenger traffic in 1923. It is interesting to note that stagecoaches operated as late as 1916; buses took over after that.

Following chapter cover deviations, timetables, station buildings, the bridges over the Molongolo River and the City Railway. Did you know that Walter Burley Griffin included metropolitan railways serving the southern, eastern and northern parts of the city in his 1912 plan? The arguments about the feasibility, cost and routes of the City Railway went on for decades without result, although there were some interim routes. Looks like we are finally getting around to it with the light rail over 100 years later.

The publication then goes on to cover the Brick Works Railway and lesser known, mostly industrial railways around Canberra. Rolling stock and locomotives in use at the time are described. The capture of the Amiens Gun (8 August 1918) and its subsequent history has a section by itself.

Finally, and possibly the most interesting chapter is "Railways That Were Not Built". It includes the Arsenal Railway, the Canberra – Jervis Bay – Nowra line and the Canberra – Yass line.

Altogether a very interesting publication, well worth a read if you have any interest in the subject. Gives another perspective to our city. It is available on line – see <https://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/Communities-And-Groups/Special-Interest-Groups/Engineering-Heritage-Australia/Anything%2520is%2520Possible>

THE CHARLEVILLE RAILWAY AMBULANCE

Our wandering correspondent, George W., passed through Charleville in western Queensland recently and suggested that an article might be written in the Bulletin detailing an interesting railway service from times past – the Railway Ambulance.

George likes to discover interesting aspects in the towns and regions that he visits and forwarded some information and a photograph about the restored Charleville railway ambulance.

In the early 20th Century, travel in western Qld. could be difficult and slow due to the state of the roads, flooding, and the limits of available transport. An extensive railway network stretched throughout the state, and the following information is provided from historical records:

“Due to the state of roads and the river system in south-west Queensland, and with the railway lines extending to Quilpie, Cunnamulla and Morven, the Committee (**of the Charleville Ambulance service Board, formed in 1919**) decided in 1922 to purchase a rail motor ambulance. This rail unit was delivered in December 1922 and its approximate cost was £395. It proved to be very successful and remained in service until the late 1950s. It is presently housed at the Charleville Historical House and is being fully restored.”



Rail ambulance car

Photo source: History of the Queensland Ambulance compiled by Ernie Bradley, 1999, 2nd edition 2021.



The same ambulance vehicle in its QATB (Qld. Ambulance Transport Board) colouring. Note the cowcatcher in front and the clearance from the track, which would be useful when the track was slightly flooded.

The mining centre of Blair Athol is credited with having the first rail ambulance in Qld. in 1918, allowing injured people to be transported to the hospital at Clermont. This correspondent was able to identify at least 19 other centres in the state that had rail ambulances. They were often

driven by railway employees (imagine the “safe-working” issues that unscheduled ambulance trips may have caused) and staffed by volunteer ambulance bearers.

Ambulance committees were involved in fund raising to ensure that road and rail ambulance services were viable until reasonably recent times. They were also responsible for raising the funds to purchase new vehicles as road and rail conditions and extensive travel distances took their toll on existing vehicles.

Another aspect that rail ambulances had to contend with was how to change direction of travel if a turntable was not readily available. Smaller units could be turned with a good deal of manual effort, but the larger ones???

Also lend a thought to the daytime heat and sometimes lack of water (for the radiator), dust storms, flooding, grasshopper plagues, etc. The operators must have been tough and resourceful to transport their patients safely in the extremes of a western Qld. summer.

With the spread of road ambulance services throughout the state, the last rail ambulances were withdrawn from Mareeba and Blackall in 1990.



Blackall (Qld) railway ambulance 1989

Further reading:

- <https://www.ambulance.qld.gov.au/docs/history/Charleville.pdf> - PDF file
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rail_ambulance
- www.mulgattraining.com.au/historic
- <https://www.railpage.com.au/f-p610612.htm>
- [Queensland Railway Ambulances – Model Trains n Things](#)

=====

PLASTER BANDAGES FOR SCENERY FOUNDATION

Plaster bandage is something that most of us have seen and may have used. You probably know that it was originally used for casts to contain and stabilise broken bones.

Plaster bandages consist of a porous, loosely woven gauze impregnated with a thin layer of plaster of Paris. Some would argue that a product such as Chux, dipped in a solution of plaster of Paris serves as well. However the plaster bandage comes in rolls and is easily handled and cut into strips, squares or whatever shape you need and is not nearly as messy. But wear gloves anyway!

When you have the required shape, the bandage is dipped into a pan of water. This activates the plaster which is held in place by the gauze. The bandage is then draped over a base of some sort – formed Styrofoam, chicken wire in the required shape, cardboard strips, crumpled newspaper, etc.

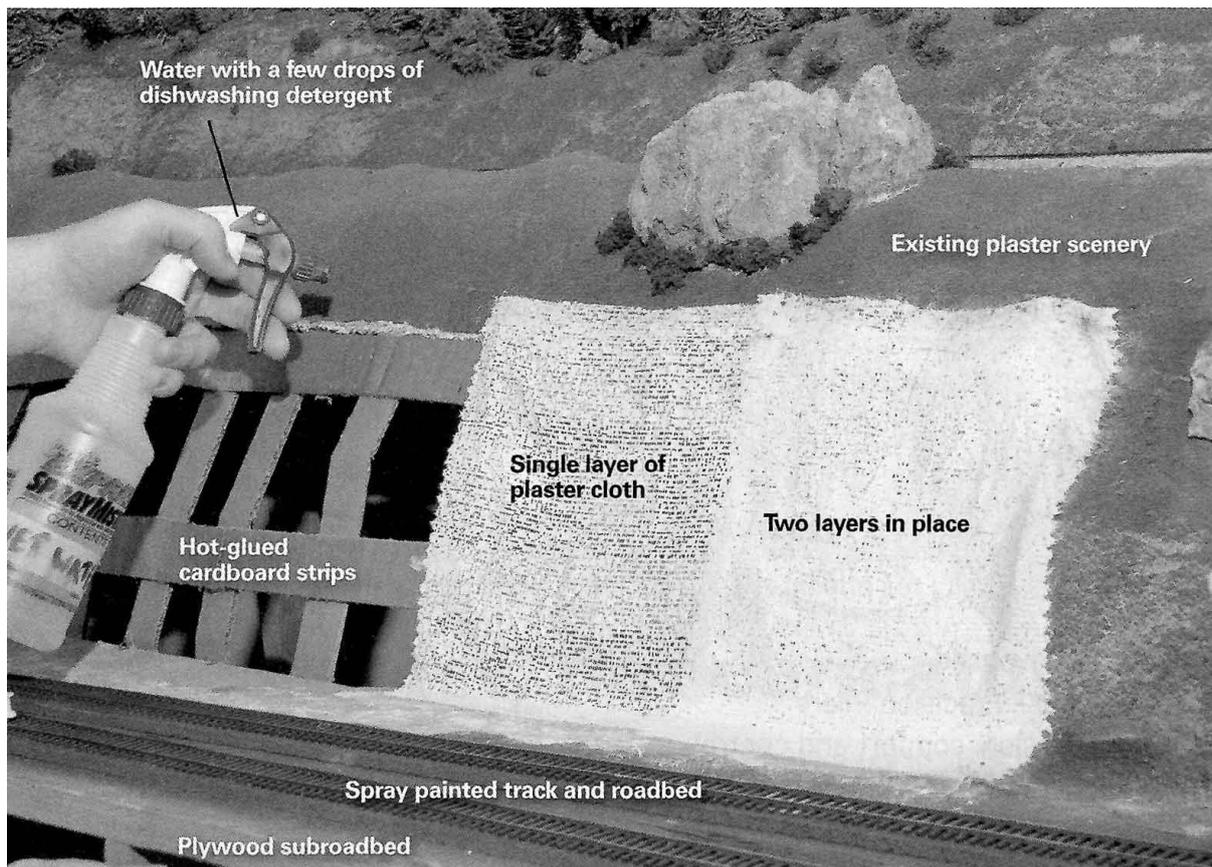


Photo courtesy of Model Railroader – March 2013

An alternative is to place the dry bandage where you need it and use warmish water applied with a spray bottle to thoroughly wet it. A few drops of detergent help the water to penetrate.

It is a good idea to cover your tracks and points to protect them. Plaster is relatively easy to remove, but it takes time and leaves white marks. Painter's tape works well to cover tracks, etc, but there are cheaper options such as cardboard cut to shape – use your imagination.

Provided that the plaster is well integrated with the gauze, (i.e., you can't see the gauze) one layer is usually enough. The surface on which the bandage is placed is a factor. Many applications will need two bandages in depth. You can always reinforce it with plaster of Paris as required. Also a messy process.

When the plaster bandage is dry, it easily takes paints (acrylics) and ground cover. If you are going to plant trees, electric light posts and the like, a thicker foundation is suggested. Rocks are better set-in place as you work so that they look like they are set in the ground and not just resting on it.

If you are building a rock face or cliff, plaster bandage is a good foundation for thicker plaster that can be used to form the cliffs using alfoil or moulds to create the effect you want.

Plaster bandages are available from model shops (Woodland Scenics have a good product) and sometimes your two-dollar shop has them. The latter will usually be out of date, but with a product like this, it doesn't matter.

It is a messy process but using plaster bandages makes it less so. The resultant gauze and plaster product is a strong and versatile product. Have fun.



Silly, I know and nothing to do with model railways, but.....

CMRCI OFFICE BEARERS

President: Bob Morton

Vice President: Chris Neil

Secretary: Peter Amey

Treasurer: Phil Young

Committee Members:

Danny Henskens, Herb Hobbs, Mal Irving, Noel Lee, Andrew Lund, Terry Smith, George Watts.

Life Members: Lloyd Sawyer, Ward Gainey, John Wishart, Tom Drury, Phil Felstead, John Webster

CMRCI Events and Activities

at the CMRCI Clubroom, University of Canberra High School Kaleen unless otherwise stated.

JULY 2022

5 July (Tues)	Continuing work on club layouts
6 July (Weds)	Club Meeting Topic – Peter MadsenTBA
9 July (Sat)	Open day for juniors – running day
12 July (Tues)	Continuing work on club layouts
19 July (Tues)	Continuing work on club layouts
20 July (Weds)	Running Night
26 July (Tues)	Continuing work on club layouts

AUGUST 2022

2 Aug (Tues)	Continuing work on club layouts
3 Aug (Weds)	Club meeting. Topic – Australian Railways at War. Dan Carmody
9 Aug (Tues)	Continuing work on club layouts
16 Aug (Tues)	Continuing work on club layouts

17 Aug (Wed)	Running night
23 Aug (Tues)	Continuing work on club layouts
30 Aug (Tues)	Continuing work on club layouts

Canberra Model Railway Club Inc.

Located at The University of Canberra High School Kaleen, 104 Baldwin Drive, Kaleen ACT 2617.

See website for further information - www.cmrci.info

Email: cmrcisecpra@gmail.com

Postal address: PO Box 7204, Kaleen ACT 2617

The opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Management Committee.