



THE BOOSTER

CLUB

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Jeff Barclay

VICE PRESIDENT

Warwick Graham

SECRETARY

Tony Mikolaj

secretary@adelaidemodelrailroaders.com

TREASURER

Warwick Graham

EDITOR

Ken House

0403 846 948

WEBSITE

adelaidemodelrailroaders.com



Ken House's Kanunda & Emu Flat HO scale layout. Kanunda is on the right, Emu Flat is on the left.

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EDITORIAL

Last month I reported that I had concerns with the way the committee had drafted a welcoming document for new members. This month I tabled a description of the Southern Central Railroad, the club's layout, and how it operates to be included. I feel that new members require a more practical introduction to the club and the SCR. It looks as if the the committee has taken my suggestion on board and will go even further, with, as they put it "nuts and bolts" issues. As a result it looks like the club may end up with a booklet useful for all members old and new. Not all of us know everything, so please get behind the committee in this project and share your knowledge.

All this gathering together of information made me realise that the AMR is currently in a transition stage from the old guard, Jeff and myself, the only ones left continuously from the club's days at the Mt Lofty railway station, to the new guard, Tony, Warwick and Paolo. Now is the time to collate as much information about the SCR and the club as possible. Jeff and myself will be around for sometime yet to help out.

Ken

VICE PRESIDENT'S VIEW

Another milestone has been achieved at the Club. Not only has a canopy has been constructed over the RHP steelmaking areas but power and provision for lighting have been installed in the former ladies toilet in preparation for the Unicorn mining/forestry layout extension.

A Saturday working bee was required to erect the framing in awkward circumstances and thanks must go to Wayne and Danny in particular who overcame the difficulties of accurately installing wall fixings from a plank whilst leaning over the layout. Others to help were Tony Mikolaj, Paul Wright and Peter Wilcox.

The new hard-wired lights are certainly very bright - far more than others around the layout. Future units will be the plug-in type so we won't need to have a costly electrician install them. They are not as bright.

Work can now continue on finishing modules 1 and 2 and commencing modules 3 and 4 of the steelmaking area under the new canopies. Ken is in charge of that project.

The next project will be constructing a timber floor over the broken concrete in the Unicorn room, commencing in late August. That will give us a more spacious, clean area for jobs such as our new kids layout for the AMRE show and for doing maintenance and improvements on the switching layout which is a little the worse for wear after the Show.

In all this talk of building projects let's not forget we are members because we enjoy running trains – right! So do your best to come along to the monthly operating session and to the increasingly popular 1st Saturday afternoon casual running session.

Warwick Graham

TREASURER'S TROVE

The AMRE organisers have given us a payment of \$200 for having an exhibit at the Show. That's less than last year, despite the much increased attendance. The reason given is that the hire cost for the pavilion is much greater than for the grandstand at Greyhound Park.

Would you believe it – the Treasurer has made a careless error! Back in April, a membership renewal fee of \$105 was requested for year 2026-27. Whilst going through the minutes of last year's AGM, it was discovered that the fee was supposed to increase to \$110 from 1 May 2026 (the official start of our financial year).

This error emerged at the last monthly meeting and some members have paid the extra \$5. Could the remainder of members please do the same at their earliest convenience.

Warwick Graham

AMR CLUB TRACK MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

by Paolo Arman

Pre-Cleaning and Application of INOX MX3 for Reliable DCC Operation

Objective

Establish a consistent method for:

- Deep cleaning of all track
- Correct application of INOX MX3
- **Avoiding over-application (critical)**
- Maintaining reliable DCC operation

Key Principles

- Clean first, apply second — never skip cleaning
- **Use extremely small amounts of INOX MX3**
- Aim for a **microscopic film**, not a coating
- Over-application causes dirt buildup and poor performance
- If you can see it, you have used too much

Materials Required

- Isopropyl alcohol ($\geq 90\%$)
 - Lint-free or microfiber cloths
 - Cotton buds (for detailed areas)
 - Track cleaning block (track rubber) **(use sparingly)**
 - INOX MX3
 - Clean dry cloth
-



AMR Club Track Maintenance Guidelines continued

Pre-Cleaning and Application of INOX MX3 for Reliable DCC Operation

Stage 1: Track pre-clean

1 Dry Clean

- Wipe all track with a dry cloth, Remove dust, debris, and loose ballast
- Vacuum where required

2 Wet Clean

- Lightly dampen cloth with isopropyl alcohol; Clean: Rail tops, Inner rail faces
- Rotate cloth frequently to avoid spreading dirt

3 Stubborn Areas

- Use track cleaning block (track rubber) only where necessary
- Immediately re-clean with alcohol afterward

4 Final Check

- Rails must be clean, dry, and residue-free, No visible dirt, oil, or streaks

Stage 2: INOX MX3 Application

1 Critical Rule

- You are **not** lubricating the track — you are applying a **microscopic conductive film.**

2 Application- Cloth Method

1. Place a **very small amount** (1 spray pulse) on a cloth
2. Wipe lightly along rail tops with INOX MX3 cloth - Spread over **1–2 metres of track only**
3. Immediately after wipe over with a clean cloth. This removes all excess product and leaving only a microscopic film. Therefore avoiding any dirt-attracting residue
4. Repeat process

3 Quantity Guide

- Rails must: Not look wet, Not feel oily, Show no visible residue

Stage 4: Ongoing Maintenance

1 Routine Care

- **Dry wipe** every 2–4 weeks
- **Alcohol clean only** when performance drops

2 Reapplication

- Only when needed: (Stalling, Hesitation, Poor pickup)
- *Typical interval: Every 3–6 months (often longer)*

Signs of Over-Application

- Rapid black residue buildup or Wheel slip or Poor electrical pickup or Oily-looking rails

Action: = Full alcohol clean

Prohibited Practices

Do not spray INOX directly onto track, **Do not apply heavy coatings**, Do not overuse abrasives, Do not mix with other products and **Do not apply to dirty track**

Summary

- Cleaning is more important than application
- INOX MX3 **application is almost invisible**
- Consistency across members is essential
- Please do not use any other product

FURTHER COMMENTS BY PAOLO.

Your editor asked Paolo for some clarification.

Track cleaning car is fine and yes, less chance of damage, although may not isolate the dirt from other areas of track when itself gets clogged up with gunk.

Track cleaning car to be used when we need to do a deep pre cleaning not when we do the maintenance wipe.

We only do a deep clean when we begin to experience problems. Until that happens we just run over the layout with a clean cloth that only contains virtually no to little inbox mx3.

If applied correctly the layout should run trouble free for at least a couple of months. Great news because less cleaning required on both track and loco wheels on a Wednesday night pre op night.

EDITORS COMMENTS

We all need to get behind Paolo and the AMR committee and strictly follow these guidelines. Paolo will have a laminated copy of the guidelines at the club if you can not remember all of them. I applaud the committee for providing this consistent approach to track cleaning it is long over due.

For many years I have been using Whal oil in a similar method on my home layout the K&EFR. A few weeks ago I decided to give Inox MX3 a go.

A few days before an operating session and after two months of not running trains on the K&EFR. I use cork blocks to clean track on the K&EFR. First I cleaned the track using a cork block with white spirits brushed liberally on to it. Then I sprayed another cork block liberally with Inox MX3 and dabbed the track in five places for about 5 centimetres each. I then ran a ten car train twice round the layout and left it until the next morning.

Next morning I placed a Powerline 830 class diesel that only picks up on four wheels (which were clean) just before one of the 5cm Inox MX3 applications and began running the 830 class. It ran less than a metre then stopped. When I looked at the 830s wheels the treads were black with a wet oily substance. Obviously I had over applied the Inox MX3! So then I wiped all the spots that I had applied the Inox to clean and dry. Then I cleaned the whole track again with white spirits, re-applied Inox in the same 5 spots for 5cm, but this time I wiped over with a lint free cloth so the Inoxed areas were dry. Come operating session, two days later, every train ran perfectly.

I will continue to try out Inox MX3. The moral of this story is to be careful not to over apply Inox MX3.

My only possible concern with the clubs new guidelines is the use of alcohol based solvents to clean the track. They do work, but can attract water which does not go with electricity. For the K&EFR I will stick with non-polar solvents like white spirits or kerosine to do the actual track cleaning. I have had better results since changing from Iso propyl alcohol and methylated sprits to white spirits.



JULY OPERATING SESSION

by Ken House

Wednesday night July 8 was a cold one, but still ten people came, a good roll up. School holidays helped with Tony Mikolaj bringing granddaughter Maddie and Danny Coppick bringing grandson Jackson. Kent Henschke was present although did not operate. Kent is a club stalwart who helps out with many small jobs that no one notices, an unsung hero.

For operating sessions it is nice to have everyone there by 7pm and after a short briefing and allocation of jobs trains should begin moving at 7.15pm. Which was the case on the eighth.

The crew line up was, Road crews, crew 1 Danny Coppick and Jackson, crews 2 & 3 Christiaan Werk, and Peter Kirkland, Port Douglas operators were Tony Mikolaj and Maddie, Kingston yardmaster, Warwick Graham, Houseman yardmaster, Paolo Arman, Prattis yardmaster Ken House.

This session was the third session required to complete the full sequence. There were six trains left in the eighteen train sequence to run. To make sure that we had enough trains to fill in two hours I added five trains back into the sequence. The five extras being optional. We ran the six trains and one more, the TOFC train.

Peter Kirkland ran the Houseman turn that was left out at Zieglersdorf last session on it's return trip to Kingston. He also had time to run the coal drag. Christiaan ran Merchandise 214 on it's new schedule, which departs Jefferson City, sets out 10 cars at Houseman then terminates in the return loop. He also ran the cattle train, Opie to Kingston and return. Danny and Jackson ran through freight 212 from Jefferson City then picked up Merchandise 215 from the return loop which picks up 10 cars going off line from Houseman before proceeding to Jefferson City. Warwick Graham was kept busy as Kingston yardmaster for the whole session. He had a thee cars left from the Kingston turn still to spot. Then he had the Houseman turn arriving as well as the cattle train. The rest of his work involved TOFC (trailers on flat cars) Both through freights either pick up or set out a piggy back car (TOFC) as well as the TOFC train itself. Being the end of the sequence neither Paolo Arman, Houseman yardmaster, and myself, Prattis yardmaster, had a great deal to do. This left me plenty of time to take photos and video and explain the theory of the SCR's car order system and how Houseman yard is integral to the system to Paolo. Then we both ran a train, Paolo a through freight and myself the steel train. Tony Mikolaj and Maddie gave us a master class on how to operate Port Douglas. They began by running a train of port industry cars then a car float train finishing up with running the Budd railcars from Jefferson City to Port Douglas and back. Top marks guys you have shown that it can be done.

Generally everything ran well with just a few problems with three locos. The GP38 on the through freight could have run better probably just dirty wheels, consolidation number 27 had wires hanging low enough to catch on turnouts. The consolidations have two holes in the tender draw bar. If the close coupling hole is used the decoder wires hang low. Until someone shortens the decoder wires these locos should be run using the further hole not close coupled as 27 was when Christian was running it. SCR 231, the black F unit, was noisy, needs lubrication possibly a spray of Inox on bearings may help.

Everyone seemed to enjoy the session which ended with the traditional cuppa and cookies.



above: Front to back: Houseman yard master Paolo Arman and road crew Danny Coppick and Jackson at Houseman.

below: Driven by Jackson the Mountain class off of manifest freight 215 is backing onto cars going off line in Houseman yard.





above: Christiaan Werk is running the cattle train seen heading east toward Phillips on the upper level.

below: Ippinitchie Creek 2-8-0 with the cattle train in Zielersdorf passing siding. It will set out two empty cattle cars at the cattle pens in Zieglersdorf.





above: Tony Mikolaj watches as Maddie expertly backs ACL 109 and idler cars down to the car float at Port Douglas.

below: Tony Mikolaj and grand daughter Maddie were the Pt Douglas crew.





above: Warwick Graham Kingston yardmaster was kept busy all session. Kingston switcher, Baldwin SW1200 number 122, can be seen exiting the passing siding.

below: Southern Central number 120 a Baldwin SW1200 was the switcher at Prattis yard. The Kingston turn delivered the box car that 120 is about to spot at the RPH ammonium sulphate shed in the coke ovens by-products plant.



WHAT'S IN A NAME 5 - HOUSEMAN

by Ken House

Locations, industries and structures on the AMR's Southern Central Railroad are mostly named after club members, both current and past. This month we will have a look at Houseman.

Houseman was named, in the original track plan of the Southern Central Railroad, by John Holland. after your editor Ken House. Firstly, for those readers who do not know me, I have been married to Margaret for fifty four years. We have a daughter and a son and three grandsons. Margaret and I have always enjoyed travel but now we live quietly in Adelaide's northeast suburbs with our Jack Russel terrier Max. When I left school I trained as a wool classer and spent ten years in that job travelling around most of South and Western Australia in shearing teams as well a working in the wool stores in Pt Adelaide and Fremantle. When I married in 1972 I joined the family business manufacturing ice, eventually taking the business over in 1985 until I retired in 2002.

My first modelling hobby was control line model aeroplanes. I began building and flying model aeroplanes at the age of fifteen eventually becoming twice national champion in team race. In 1984, aged forty, I changed hobbies to model railways and joined the Adelaide Model Railroaders. Initially I bought a few Santa Fe pieces but since the club was at the Mt Lofty railway station where we saw Australian National and V-Line trains passing by and Australian prototype models were becoming more available I soon took up modelling AN and V-line. I have always strived to have my own layout and have built four, all in HO scale. Only the first table top sized layout and my current Kanunda & Emu Flat Railway have got near to looking complete. I was a member of the NMRA for 21 years. I gained the NMRA's Golden Spike award for building a model railway and three achievement program awards. I am a member of the Operations Special Interest Group and have gained two OPSIG achievement awards. In November 2014 I resurrected the Booster for the AMR as an e-newsletter.

Houseman is reached after passing around the curve at Lower Kerry and is the end of double track working on the SCR. Cooke's Cut Off enters the mainline at Houseman and the return loop is reached upon departing Houseman, the rest of the track is single line from then on. During operating sessions Houseman is the main marshalling yard and as such is central to operations on the SCR. Trains are made up for the turns, way freights, two to Kingston and one to Jefferson City. Four trains to Pt Douglas are also made up at Houseman. The grain train and Kingston passenger train also begin their runs at Houseman. Plenty of work to keep the yard master busy.

Houseman West is a crossover a short distance west of Houseman yard that allows west bound trains to crossover to the right hand track after

departing from Houseman yard. Houseman yard has six classification tracks. At the western end of the yard is a team track, freight house, cattle pens and a long switching lead. At the eastern end there is a caboose track, loco ready tracks a turntable and a short switching lead. Across the double track main line are two industries, a large grain elevator and a passenger station.

Houseman runs mostly along the roadside wall of the former ladies waiting room. In 2014 it was decided to include a steel mill into the Southern Central Railroad. This decision required major alterations to John Holland's track plan. I was asked to undertake drawing up the new plan in which the mainline remained much as John had planned but the yards and sidings were changed dramatically to include the steel mill and improve the layout's operating potential.

We began putting L girder bench work up in June 2015 in the same manner as the rest of the layout. However while others were putting the bench work up I began building Houseman yard on four 19mm ply topped modules of differing lengths to suit the track geometry. Building the yard modularly allowed me to lay the track then turn the modules upside down to fit the turnout motors and wire the track. The others completed the bench work, installed the roadbed and laid the track in the final section of the SCR which runs through the large ladies waiting room and the small corridor room in mid 2018. I had the yard modules ready at that time and they were attached to the L girder bench work using risers in the same manner as the rest of the 19mm ply roadbed. On the December 2018 casual running night Amy Stanbridge ran the first train around the complete upper level of the SCR and I ran the first loco in the Houseman yard, SCR Baldwin switcher number 120.

below: Amy Stanbridge running her Roco pacific and German passenger carriages around the upper level of track in December 2018.





above: December 2018, SCR 120 heading up the ladder at the eastern end of Houseman yard on the first test run of the yard. The track to the turntable, which had not yet been installed, is not complete. The caboose track and the three ready tracks are in the foreground. All of the track is Shinohara code 83.

below: 2026, at the far west of Houseman is the Houseman West cross over that allows trains coming out of Houseman to cross over for right hand running to Jefferson City. The track here is code 100.





above: The Houseman cattle pens are a cut down Walthers kit.

below: Ken House scratch built the Houseman freight house from card using a plan in a 2020 NMRA magazine that he modified to fit the space



right: Houseman team track has a crane and a loading dock. The turnout on the left hand side goes to the freight house and switching lead. The nearest crossover goes to the eastbound mainline and the back cross over crosses over is from the eastbound main to the westbound main and is mainly used when coming off Cooke's Cut Off.



below right: The first three industries across the mainlines. West to east, Matthews Machine Co Ltd comes from the Mt Pleasant layout and is named after ex-member Matthew Redden, it could be making any kind of machines, the next structure, built by John Holland is Orr Limited named after ex-member David Orr and is probably some sort of warehouse, the third structure Daly Produce Co named after ex-member John Daly is not rail served, it is a Walthers machine shop cut in half and then joined end to end by Ken House this structure came from the estate of Ray Applebee. The tabs on the cars help the yard master keep track of the trains he is building.





above: *Kenton Co Op's large grain elevator (silos) was scratch built by Ken House from 50mm PVC pressure pipe and card.*

below: *The eastern end of Houseman yard. The station building is temporary until a suitable one can be found or built. In the yard is the Caboose track, loco ready tracks and the Flieschman turntable donated to the club by Jim Douglas.*





above: The turntable at Houseman.

below: Houseman facia with it's card boxes and rack for sorting cards. All the turnout toggles have LEDs to indicate routes. Tony Mikolaj has re-wired the turnout controls to make routes through the yard easier to navigate.



CALOUNDRA AND DISTRICT MRA

by Ken House

On my trip to Queensland I had the opportunity to visit the Caloundra club on a couple of Saturdays and Tuesdays during the day.

below: There are four layouts in the C&DMRC club room.



left: This layout being worked on uses Peco 12mm track for HOn31/2. The rolling stock sitting in the staging yard is TT scale. Track clearances are being made large enough for HO scale so that Queensland prototype 3'6" gauge trains can be run. Scenery will be HO scale even though some TT scale trains will be run from time to time.



above: The N scale layout's inner track is DC while the two outer tracks are NCE DCC.

below: The English OO scale layout uses NCE DCC



WORKING ON THE SOUTHERN CENTRAL RAILROAD by Ken House

Work on the SCR lately has centred around erecting a valance over the steel mill so that we have the same shadow box look right through out the layout.



***above:** On Wednesday night June 24 the valance supports were built.*

***below:** In the AMR's workshop are Paolo Arman, Tony Mikolaj and Warwick Graham who were the crew that built the supports on the 24th.*





above: Wayne Hoskin and Danny Coppick standing on a plank while fixing the valance's framework in place on Saturday June 27. photo: A Mikolaj

below: Flexi ply curved around the end of the valance.

photo: A Mikolaj





***above:** Wednesday night July 1. Wayne Hoskin is installing the ceiling inside the valance.*



***left:** Wayne was assisted by Warwick Graham.*



above: Wednesday night July 8. The electrician has been. The LED lighting is working. Really bright.

below: Saturday July 11. The valance is being test fitted and dropped 75mm
photo: A Mikolaj



VIDEOS Please click on images to view on YouTube



above: July operating session. Mountain class 4-8-2

below: Ken House's layout. Mustard Pot 830 class shunting at Wooldowie.



AMR TIMETABLE

Visitors welcome by prior arrangement

If club owned rolling stock is used during casual running it must be returned to it's exact position ready for the next operating session

SATURDAY AUGUST 1

Casual running and limited work session.

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 5

Operating session set up, track cleaning & limited work and running.

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 12

SCR operating session (no work or casual running) Please advise Tony Mikolaj secretary@adelaidemodelrailroaders.com by August 11 if you wish to take part.

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 19

General meeting & Casual running session, limited work, running priority

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 26

Work session, limited running (lift up bridges to remain up)

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 2

Operating session set up, track cleaning & limited work and running.

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 5

Casual running and limited work session.

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 9

SCR operating session (no work or informal running) Please advise Tony Mikolaj secretary@adelaidemodelrailroaders.com by Sept 8 if you wish to take part.

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