

NZAMRC National Model Railway Convention



St Andrews College

347 Papanui Road Christchurch

Friday 10th April - Monday 13th April



Newsletter No. 2

July 2019

Words from the Chairman

Kia ora,

Further to my comments in Newsletter No.1 I'm very happy to report that preparations for the *Rails from the Rubble* convention are progressing well.

Venue

The St Andrews College venue is now confirmed and the deposit paid. We're hoping the theatrette will be available for those sessions when we all get together but we now have an excellent alternative in the recently completed chapel (depicted below).

Special guest

Kathy Millatt's travel to Christchurch is all arranged and we have an outline of the part she will be playing. From the tone of her emails she's as excited to be coming as we are to be having her here.

Tour layouts

Layout owners have responded well to our call, but it is looking as if a bit of travel into the outer Christchurch area will be required to see some of the best layouts.

For those who book early the FreeMo layout at Skillwise, will be offering pre-convention running sessions all day Thursday April 9. This interesting layout will also be on one of the layout tours.

In-house layouts

Meanwhile, we already have some very good in-house layouts on offer and are still expecting others to confirm.

Clinics and workshops

We're planning on around 20 clinics and a good number of hands-on workshops as we continue to shoulder tap

presenters with the ability to join Kathy in bringing that special something to a balanced range of modelling topics.

Accommodation guide

Our website now has an accommodation guide. Most places listed are reasonably close to the venue but there are a few further out to give the widest range of cost/quality options. Remember, these are only a small selection of what the city has to offer, so don't be afraid to do your own Google search.

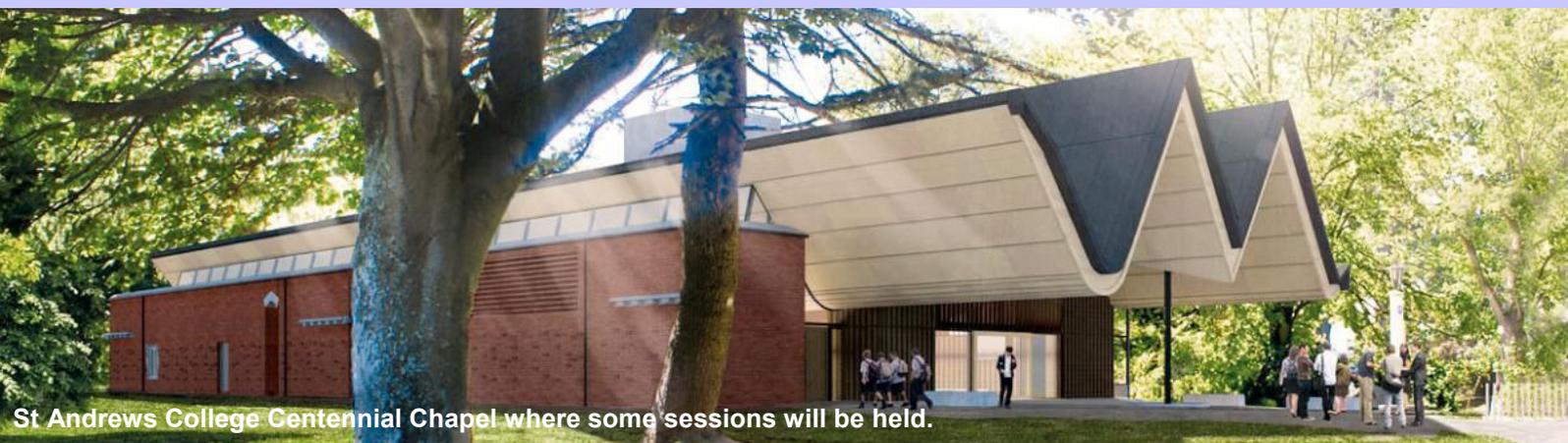
Ways you can help

1. The idea of the website and these newsletters is to make sure anyone with a possible interest in the convention gets to hear about it, and guess what? You can help with that. If you have a public event coming up or have a workplace notice board, do ask for some posters and flyers. Or if you prefer (often it's simpler), just download the files from the website and run off your own copies.
2. We've got a long list of local layouts but we don't kid ourselves that it's complete, so if you have a layout you'd like considered or know of one you'd like to see, please email johnududson1@gmail.com.
3. We also have a list of clinic topics and possible presenters but if you have something you'd like to present, or would like to suggest a topic or presenter, please email peter@inet.net.nz.

That's about it for now, as you can see it's all coming together very nicely.

Craig Galilee

Chairman, NZAMRC Convention 2020



St Andrews College Centennial Chapel where some sessions will be held.

From your perspective

While we're busy getting all our ducks in a row to give you the best time we can at next Easter's convention, we thought that just for a moment it might be a good idea to put ourselves in your shoes. For someone wondering about coming to the convention, what might make a difference to whether we decide yes or no?

Cost

Obviously cost is a big factor and we understand that like most of us you're probably on a budget. We can't give you a final figure for registration just yet but we can say it will be in line with previous conventions. Basic registration for the last three conventions has been in the \$110 - \$120 bracket and we expect to be at the low end of that.

As at other conventions, we will be offering prepaid lunches and dinners, with a further option for the convention banquet. These costs are beyond our control but look like being similar to those at the North Shore convention, which was \$145. Take out the banquet and you're looking at around \$95 for three lunches and two dinners, or about \$19/meal. These are not final figures but should give you a fair idea.

On-site meals *are* optional, but they are also a lot less hassle. And staying on site gives you more time with your fellow modellers. There's also a lot less pressure to avoid missing anything.

Bookings for air and ferry travel are already open, with some really low fares on offer right now, so that's worth considering, too.

Accommodations costs may also be more negotiable if you enquire early, but the gamblers among us will know that there can also be some pretty good last-minute deals. That one's up to you.

Maybe add on a South Island holiday?

For two-thirds of the population, coming to the Christchurch means crossing Cook Strait, so you can't just drive here. Although with such good ferry options you virtually can — and get a nice break from driving for a few hours as well.

No guarantees, but Easter is quite early next year so there should still be some Indian Summer to come. Either way you'll find vibrant autumn colours, particularly in Central Otago, a bit of snow on the Southern Alps, and maybe a magical West Coast sunset or two. In the South Island there are lots of things to see and do from Nelson all the way south via Queenstown to Invercargill or even Stewart Island and everywhere in between on both sides of the main divide.

Convention benefits

Modellers who have been to a convention before just long to come to another one. That's simply because they leave such wonderful lasting memories.

- The clinics and workshops almost always increase our knowledge and skills. We also gain confidence from actually being shown how and even having a go ourselves.

- To see all the many layouts and the ideas they embody inspires and recharges our batteries. Many even find great camaraderie in the car travelling between layouts!
- Then there's the convention model competitions. This is chance for those who don't mind a bit of friendly rivalry to have their modelling benchmarked against a set of well tried criteria. And even if competition is not your thing, viewing the entries is still a rare opportunity to see and appreciate a cross section of really fine modelling all in one place. And we get to vote for our favourite entry!
- Conventions always provide plenty of opportunities for retail therapy across a range of traders, many offering new products, and very often helpful discounts.
- In some ways more than anything else at a convention we can socialise. Catch up again with old friends, meet new ones and put faces to names we have only read about. In our hobby we can sometimes feel a bit isolated but at a convention we're never alone. Suddenly we're with several hundred guys and gals who all talk the same language, get excited by the same things and all want to hear from us as much as we want to hear from them. (Be sure to have some photos of your modelling ready on your phone.)
- The social side comes to a climax at the convention banquet where in a relaxed atmosphere over a good meal we pay tribute to the most successful competition entrants and are then challenged, inspired, entertained or all three by a top after dinner speaker.

Memories, they say, are priceless and a convention leaves us with some really great ones!

Wondering about registrations?

Registrations are not open yet, they will open in October.

Some things you can do to help

Clinic presenters/modelling demonstrators

As our chairman has said, we'd still like to hear your suggested clinic or workshop topics and/or presenters' names. Do you know someone who really knows their topic and is good at explaining it?

Don't wait to get their permission, we will do that as part of our selection process — the aim of which is to offer a good balanced range of topics from the best presenters.

So give us your suggestions and we'll go from there. Email these to peter@inet.net.nz, please.

Spread the word

There are still modellers out there who aren't on the list to receive this newsletter and may not even know about the convention so ...

Please do whatever you can to let friends, fellow club members, workmates or anyone possibly interested about our website: www.modelrailcon.co.nz or if you find it easier, simply Google "Christchurch convention 2020".

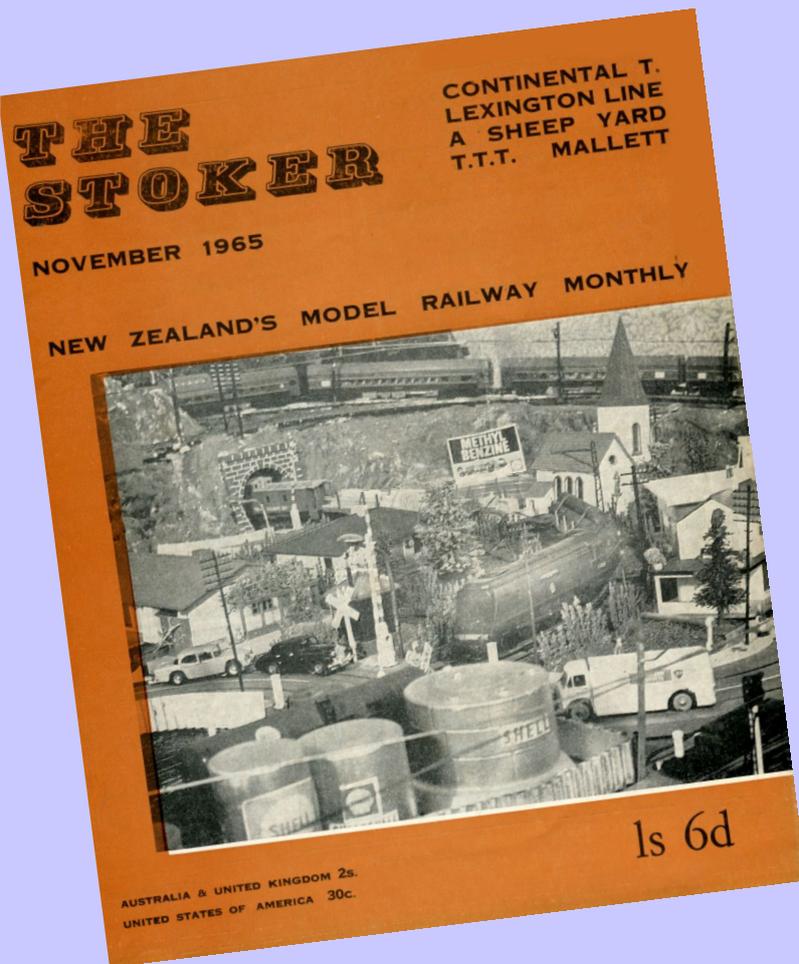
If you did **NOT** receive this newsletter by email direct from us, then:

Go to our website: www.modelrailcon.co.nz and complete the form to get on our email list

And remember, the website is always up to date if you need to know anything.

Some history

We thought it might be interesting to include in this newsletter some extracts from *The Stoker* magazine leading up to and reflecting on the first national convention back in 1966.



Editorial exhaust

Possibly one of the most useful objects achieved at the convention in Wellington was the realisation that the scope and activities of the New Zealand Model Railway Association should be expanded and its horizons broadened. Although there were minor differences of opinion on how best this might be achieved and in which directions to strive, there was unanimous agreement among those present that there was a need for a body to do what individuals and clubs cannot do for themselves.

What better organisers than the NZMRA which is firmly established and which already has an excellent record of service to the hobby. However at the present NZMRA only represents a fraction of the railway modellers in New Zealand and it was established at the convention that a definite policy on liberal terms to encourage clubs to affiliate with the Association was needed. This we are happy to say is already receiving the urgent attention of the NZMRA Committee.

It was also suggested that the NZMRA should approach the Government and endeavour to gain a separate import classification for models as distinct from toys. This is an urgent need or very shortly there will be no supplies for our hobby available in NZ. After all if you were an importer with a £1000 of licence for toys, would you rather bring in models from say the United Kingdom and make 50% profit on toys from Hong Kong or Japan for 40%.

Even if a relatively small percentage of the annual toy licence allocation was appropriated for models and modelling materials the position would improve tremendously. This is a matter which can be taken up by the NZMRA just as soon as it is strong enough to do so; the saying that the victory goes to the big battalions still holds good. If you are not a member already then why not join the Association and if you are a member of a club urge your fellow members to seek affiliation, for only when the NZMRA is in a position of strength can the conditions be created for the advancement of railway modelling in NZ. It is up to each individual modeller to take an active interest in the national aspect of our hobby.

Apathy, disinterest, and let's face it, sometimes just sheer laziness prevent many things that one knows should be done from getting done so let us lose none of the drive and enthusiasm generated by the convention among those present and give the NZMRA your unqualified support. Don't leave it to George, he may not read this magazine. Now may we present the NZMRA Convention ...

Dave Reddick (*The Stoker*, June 1966)

Editorial exhaust

Next Easter will be an exciting and enjoyable holiday for all our many readers who plan to attend the New Zealand Model Railway Association Convention in Wellington. We already know that a sizeable contingent will be attending from Auckland and that smaller groups from Hamilton, Kawerau, Rotorua, and Napier, and Palmerston North will be attending, and we don't doubt that there will be South Island centres represented at the convention too.

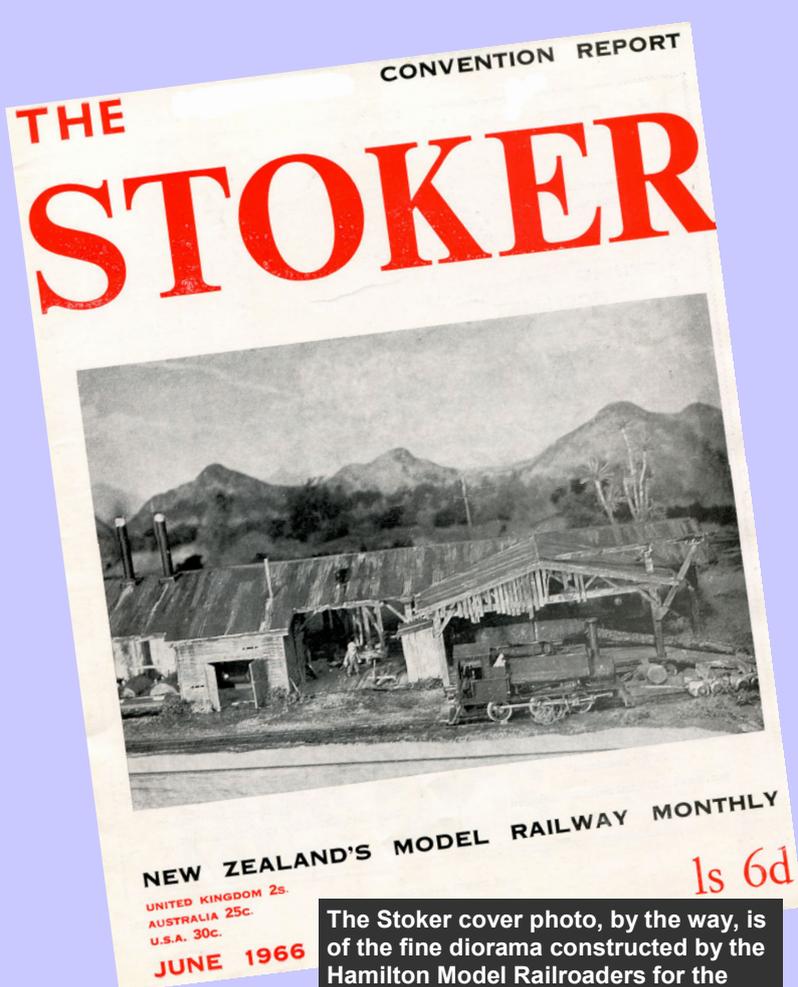
As everyone attending is expected to bring a model or models for display the resulting exhibition should be worth going for alone, apart from the layouts that will be there. Best of all on these occasions is that we meet other modellers, exchanging ideas, picking up tips and learning methods and techniques.

Our hosts in Wellington are sparing no efforts to ensure that the excellent programme will please everyone attending. Also during that weekend the agm of the NZMRA will be held, and it is hoped that every NZMRA member will make a special effort to be there.

For those who would like to make it a family trip, special sections are planned in the programme that will be of interest to the ladies. So come and bring the whole family for a most enjoyable Easter in Wellington. See you there.

Dave Reddick (*The Stoker*, November 1965)





The Stoker cover photo, by the way, is of the fine diorama constructed by the Hamilton Model Railroaders for the Easter 66 Convention.

Convention

On arriving at the Railway Social Hall everyone was given a warm welcome at the reception desk and a very handsome souvenir folio which contained a great deal of useful information about the weekend's programme and quite a few useful pamphlets from the NZR Publicity Branch, some of which we had not previously seen. In the hall upstairs a great deal of activity was taking place as the various displays were receiving the final touches to complete them in time for the official opening.

The centre of the hall was occupied by glass display cases kindly loaned by the Dominion Museum for the occasion which were filled with a truly magnificent stud of locomotives and quite an array of rolling stock. Down the right hand side of the hall ran the AMMRC layout based on Morningside Station on the North line. This layout although still in the throes of construction attracted considerable interest. On the opposite side of the hall the AMMRC British Railways Group layout was situated. This layout was more scenically complete and was operated on a sequence timetable.

Later in the day a yard ramble was much enjoyed including a visit to a signal box and at the due time the convention was officially opened by the NZMRA President, Mr Maurice Duston. On Friday evening two films on model railroading were screened and greatly enjoyed, as was a most interesting address given by Mr W W Stewart.

Saturday morning was largely devoted to the Annual General Meeting of the NZMRA. Undoubtedly this must have been one of the best attendances at this function ever recorded. It was a most stimulating meeting and after some worthwhile suggestions were put forward and some lengthy discussion it was decided that representatives of the clubs present should meet again at 9am the next morning to discuss some important issues concerning club participation in the Association.

After morning tea, a convention business meeting was held under the chairmanship of John Smythe and it was at this meeting that ideas and suggestions came thick and fast. One of the matters under discussion was how often and where should future conventions be held. An invitation to hold the next convention was given by Auckland, and other centres expressed a desire to be hosts in the future.

Another point raised was the desirability of pressing for a separate import classification for imported models. The Hamilton Model Railroaders said that they would not approve of anyone selling on a commercial basis fibreglass castings derived from a mould made from their master.

After lunch it was visitors' time and the hall, though large, became quite crowded and it was a real pleasure to see the way everybody enjoyed themselves, much nattering and exchanging of ideas was the order of the day.

Brian Cross gave various demonstrations of the casting technique he has developed and which is fast becoming known as the 'Cross Castings' method. Alec Salisbury gave demonstrations on building pointwork, and believe us his points are tip top both for appearance and performance.

All too soon the clock said 5pm and it was time to get back to the hotel and prepare oneself for the convention dinner. The dinner was a grand success from every point of view. The cuisine was excellent and was enjoyed to the full. At the conclusion of an excellent meal we listened to a most interesting address delivered by Dr Falla, the Director of the Dominion Museum. Among other things Dr Falla pointed out that modelling is a most useful medium for preserving for posterity things which cannot be preserved due to their size, nature or location. As examples he cited John Hefford's coal mine and the Hamilton Model Railroaders' sawmill diorama, both of which exemplified all that was finest in the modellers' art. Dr Falla said he thought that modelling was the keystone of museum preservation of such things. To close off the dinner Dr Falla presented the trophies that had been won in the competition. After the dinner the guests went their various ways and some retired to another room to just sit and talk trains. Altogether a most pleasant and convivial occasion.

Next morning at nine sharp the meeting of club representatives was held, while upstairs much photography was being undertaken by all and sundry, of the many fine models on display. It is just a passing thought but we did wonder just how much hard cash was represented by the exhibits. It must have been quite a sum.

Sunday after lunch and on Monday morning visits were paid to layouts of which you may read elsewhere in this issue. Much enjoyed was the live steam meeting at the Petone track where some fine engines were to be seen. This was on the Sunday afternoon and in the evening we were entertained by a colour slide show, the programme of which was varied and interesting.

All good things must come to an end and on the Monday afternoon soon after lunch at a short ceremony the convention was officially closed.

It was a grand weekend and the officers and committee of the NZMRA are to be warmly congratulated for a job well done. Here's to the next time so start saving up now and be determined to be there. Where? Auckland, Easter 1968.

Competitions

An outstanding feature of the convention was the competition held as a section of the programme. Without a doubt the judges' task must have been difficult, as the standard of all the entries was very high indeed, though of course a high standard was expected at such a gathering of keen modellers.

It was most noticeable that the vast majority of the models entered were of NZR prototypes and this is a trend we were pleased to see although we did wonder whether due to the abundance of ready built models that can be obtained (alas not in New Zealand), of other prototypes the scratchbuilding of these is as far as this country is concerned, a lost art.

A special award was created by the judges for group projects. This was brought about by the entry from the Hamilton Model Railroaders of a diorama of a typical New Zealand sawmill. This model is a masterpiece of craftsmanship and the creation of the special class and the award of the trophy to this model was very well deserved.

It was rather surprising to many modellers that the *Best Model in the Show* award went to the American 3ft gauge Shay. While this is a truly magnificent example of the model engineer's art, it is difficult to see how the judges reconciled it with all its small scale contemporaries. Possibly in the future the creation of a class to cater for leviathans might be considered.

In the locomotive class three absolutely first class models of NZR locomotives carried off the awards and the judges must have been hard put to it to decide the final placings. The winners were Ray Sofio in first place with his C class; Keith Andrewartha second with his W class, and Colin Zeff third with an A class (0-4-0 variety). There were two highly commended, Colin Zeff with an F class and Norm Cameron with a Ww class in 3/8" scale.

In the rolling stock section an international flavour was introduced by Tom Devilee of Rotorua with his Dutch diesel electric set carrying off the honours. In second place was Colin Zeff with a fine model of an NZR. car-van, and David Wighton also from Christchurch won third placing for a lovely rake of American HO passenger cars.

Highly commended in the rolling stock were John Hefford of Wellington for an NZR oil tank wagon and David Wighton for an American caboose.

In the structures class first place went to John Hefford for his coal mine in 3/6" scale. Second place was awarded to Norm Gaby of Hamilton for his now famous model of an NZR coal crane and yard, while the third place went to E Dunn of Wellington for a fine Western street scene.

Highly commended in the class were awarded to David Low of Napier for his model of a Midland signal box, which is described elsewhere in this issue and to Norm Gaby for an NZR wagon repair shop. Many other fine models were entered and to those who did not gain an award we would say 'tough luck' but do not be disheartened. Taking part is the big thing that really counts after all and if nobody entered there would be no competition.

This competition set a very high standard and was one of the convention highlights, so much so, that we are really looking forward to the next time.

Layout visits

Another of the features of the convention was the layout visits. We made a total of six visits on the Sunday afternoon and Monday morning. The organisers did a remarkable job in arranging for guides and in plotting out the routes so that as one party was leaving the next was coming in the door.

The first trip took us out into the hills somewhere behind Johnsonville where we visited Mr John Fitchett. Here we were treated to a display of a fine collection of Japanese imports. These locomotives are by no means uncommon these days, even in New Zealand but it is not often that you can see such a large number on one layout, a total of twenty-one, not less than six of them being articulated.

Next on the list was Trevor Walsh who is also interested in modelling the American prototype. The large L-shaped layout is situated in the garage and the beginnings of an Impressive line through mountainous (not just foothills) terrain are obvious. By mid-afternoon we had arrived at Petone for the live-steam meet organised by the Hutt Valley Model Engineering Society. There we spent a pleasant hour or two with the smell of coal burners and the hiss of steam, chatting to other modellers and to live-steam fans. The following morning, the last day of the convention. took us out to see Jack Dayman. Once more the scene is the United States for a well scenicked line. Jack and a friend have been building the line for some years now and have truly attained a high standard. One of the most impressive features of the layout is the track. Between stations it is laid on a lamination of two thicknesses of 3/16" ply pre-curved and glued with a strip of Pinex on each side, the surface being finished off with a Surform. All curves have transition approach and are superelevated, done by eye, no fancy mathematical calculations here. The final display was an Athearn railcar at top speed (somewhere near 200 smph) right round the layout to demonstrate how well the track was laid.

The second visit for the morning was to Raynor Dixon and his wife. Their layout, the B & R Railway is only a small 6ft x 4ft using 0-6-0 and 0-4-0 locos, on a point to point basis via a continuous run and a return loop; but with two control panels and a definite system of operation there's is a truly working railway. Raynor looks after the locos, rolling stock and track while Mrs Dixon tends to the signals scenery and buildings and often works out new electrical wiring diagrams on paper for her husband to action.

Our last layout was that of Jack Hunt. Unfortunately the line was not operating as he had not been able to get it back to a working form after a disastrous fire he had suffered twelve months before. a lesson why not to leave your soldering iron on when going to bed. However we were impressed by his scenic effects, particularly the use of styrene from television packing cases for cliff and mountain work. He uses a black cold-water glue, as used for floor tiles, to glue the pieces together. The layout is truly freelance with an American-Continental influence, and when operating includes some interesting operating accessories.

From *The Stoker*, June 1966

