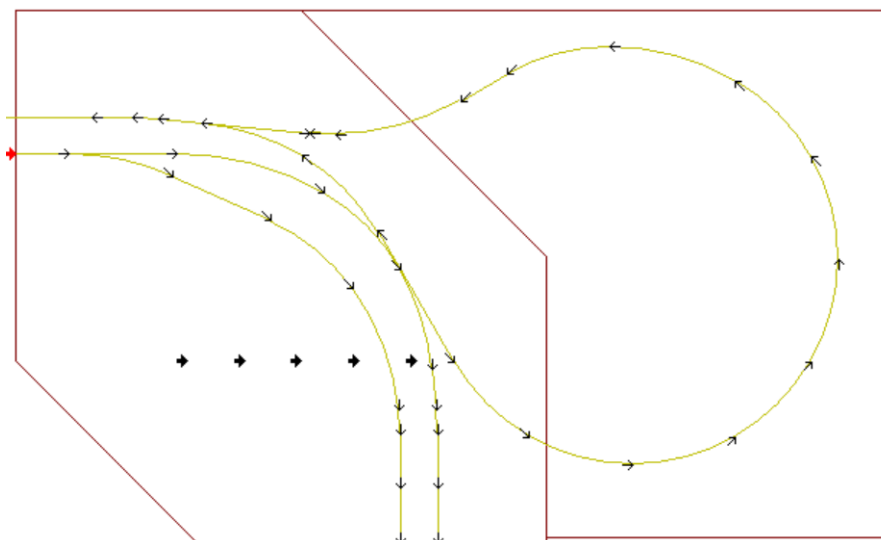


Andrew's Musings Part 5

Life has caught up with me . . . I was a couple of articles ahead of the Eurailer, but two months have passed by and Kevin is chasing me down for the next instalment. In the last article, I mentioned having 7 modules that I could put together in a 2 x 2 x 3 triangular arrangement. Create a 90 degree corner and a couple of 135 degree ones as well and we have a pretty reasonable home layout going. The trains will come out from the terminus station running clockwise around the inside line and get back into the terminus by . . . hang on, how are they going to get to the outside line, so they can come into the terminus? I needed to build a reversing loop or dogbone, which also incorporated itself into the triangular structure.

There are the two 135 degree corners, but these are either side of the station, so it would look odd for a train to exit and then immediately come around past the entryway. Which leaves the 90 degree corner. That's not a bad idea, because this corner is compatible with the existing club corners, so it provides another alternative with a dogbone for our ovals at exhibitions (to move trains easily between inside and outside lines), or for that matter we could have a second layout going in any crazy shape using dogbones at each end. Using TrainCAD again, it was a challenge to design a track plan for this corner / dogbone that was the same as the R4 / R5 plus joiners corner, but had an inside to outside line anti-clockwise dogbone angling off it. I can't remember the number of versions I went through to get to the final plan, but the result provides for some intricate but neat looking point work with associated overhead lines and some tight curves around the loop. Hmmmmm, these R1 curves are meant to remain hidden, but tight curves, a few points and overhead just has "Swiss mountain line station" written all over it. I had my "theme".



Scenery wise, the inside mainline curves past a small branch station before disappearing into a tunnel which takes the train below a steep mountain divide. A point within the station confines does allow a train to switch from the inside to the outside line, and another point inside the tunnel then takes the line off the main and onto the sides of a mountain pass, curving inwardly (and therefore not exposing the ugly gap between carriages that R1 likes to show off to the outer audience) around. It then crosses a nice arched span to join up with the opposite platform at the station, heading in

reverse direction on the outside line, which is what I needed if I was going to get back in to the terminus further up the mainline.



Like all mountain passes, we are talking about mountains and valleys, etched out over time by glacier and river. This module is no exception with a river down below. My next challenge was therefore going to be creating a realistic looking (static) river crashing through rapids (which never quite looks right, being frozen). Well that was the plan until Tom built his module with “live streaming”. I had been told that 1:1 scale water doesn’t look good at 1:87th scale, because the droplets don’t scale down, but Tom’s motion looks fantastic! So I am plagiarising Tom’s idea and incorporating it into this scene – not quite ready yet, but getting there.

Water is one of those things I have wanted to try modelling. As New Zealanders, we are surrounded by water, whether it be a stream, river, lake, coastline or ocean - we don’t go far before there is more water. So my modules were feel a bit “parched” without some form of moisture. Okay, so I have a river going on, but how about a lake of some sort somewhere on the layout? This brought me onto another idea which I have incorporated into this module – a second scene. In some ways it was the first scene, because initial thoughts were that I needed to hide away the R1 curves, therefore covering the complete dogbone in some form of landscape. A lake was the answer. Actually better than that. Where does all this electricity come from to power these trains? We need a hydro-electric dam! So I have already mentioned the Swiss branch line station, tunnels, mountain pass and arched bridge. That’s the first scene. But to change things mid exhibition, I can whip out the dam with associated lake and extra bit of mountain range and the original scene has disappeared underneath, much like old Cromwell township under Lake Dunstan in Central Otago. Or there is Reschen in Northern Italy with the top of the church spire sticking out of the middle of the reservoir, which is another whole story and worthy of more photos.



But bringing me back to the dogbone scenery wise, I now have another bit of motion on the layout. There are not just trains, but also animation by means of live water being pumped up the pass and flowing down the valley to a collection point lower down. Secondly I have the ability to change the scene, giving me the chance to try some other modelling, without having to create yet another module. I'm thinking of doing this again with a set of modules that Dominic and I are working on, the first having a motorway passing through below a city scene, the second slotting in a shorefront and marina instead of the motorway when the Faller cars need some time to recharge. You could possibly do the same to change seasons, possibly by having icicles and snow drift "things" to temporarily place on your roads and roofs . . . hmmm, it's got me thinking. The great thing with "scene changers" is it is still just the one module that you need to store, that is unless you are mad like me and keep coming up with more crazy ideas which mean more modules!

Next instalment? Going bananas with “controlled interaction” which happened on my next module. Oh, and by the way, the 135 degree corners are unscenicked at the moment, awaiting ideas and suggestions. One will have a point off the outside line going down to the port scene in front of the terminus station. The other? Possibly Neuschwanstein on top of its rock. Admittedly you see these models of Neuschwanstein surrounded by flat lawns. It is not flat! It is one incredible feat of engineering how they even built right on the edge. Imagine the scaffolding that we would have to have in place nowadays before even thinking about it!