

## Who Am I?

This page is a bit of a bio and is mainly aimed at attracting girls to me. So far I haven't had any results. I wonder why?

On with the story: I have been fascinated by trains since I was 11/2 years old. My grandparents gave my parents tickets for a short steam train shuttle trip from Epping. I was bouncing up and down trying to get closer to the locos.

When I was about 5 years old, my Dad bought some old Hornby and Triang OO trains, and we set it up on a big piece of plywood on the floor of our lounge room. We then acquired a simple loop of track on a plywood board from my cousin. That board is now in the roof of the garage, and represents a rollercoaster much better than a railway.

Ever since I could watch TV, I have watched Thomas The Tank Engine. The first video tape my family owned contained nothing but Thomas. I have about 20 books of 'The Railway Series', before it was ruined by American commercialisation.

In 1990, I was a mere 5 or 6 years old. I was given a magazine called 'Australian Model Railway Magazine'. Amongst the articles was a feature on the Wolgan Valley Railway, Shays, and converting a Roundhouse Shay to represent a Wolgan Valley Shay. Since then, I have held an interest in Shays and the Wolgan Valley (And I keep buying that mag too!).

When I was eight years old I was in a toyshop at Macquarie shopping centre when I spied an N gauge starter set called 'Tom Thumb'. It was a simple circle of track, 0-6-0ST steamer, a boxcar, tank car and a caboose. Do I have to say it came home with us?

Within a few days we had a pair of points, some extra track, an extra wagon or two, and I had bought my first locomotive. A Bachmann 2-8-0 lettered for Great Northern. It was \$58.00 at Yennora Hobbies.

I almost built a layout once. It was a sheet of plywood with a trackplan that I devised myself. After cutting the board to size, I realised the plan wouldn't work without adding an extra 10 centimetres (4 inches) to its length. I got to the stage of laying cork roadbed, making building

mock-ups, and laying track for the run-around loop and one siding. I still have the plywood, albeit warped, still with roadbed. It forms a handy shelf on my bedhead.

Over time, I collected books, magazines and videos of which several held pictures of Narrow Gauge railways around the world. One book had a chapter on Colorado NG, I drew plans for layouts based on D&RGW, bought more books and info, and promptly discovered Australian Narrow Gauge.

Some people believe Colorado has the best NG in the world, they obviously haven't seen Australia.

Around 2001 I started to get interested in Nn3, after finding an email group pertaining to said scale. Money kept me from actually acquiring any Nn3 models, but I did get a Shay from the US priced out. It was only going to be about \$400 landed. Big Money then, yet I now have a shay worth \$420 (at time of purchase)!

Anyway, I stayed with N scale till mid 2002, when I started looking around at other scales. I bought an HO Roundhouse Shay from Pete at Asquith Model Railways, considered various HO narrow gauges, mainly HOn30, before I found another email group, namely the On30 Conspiracy. I introduced myself, and a gentleman in the US offered me some track to get me started.

A month later, I received 10 lengths of Atlas flextrack from a certain Nick Biangel. Postage alone cost him \$US30. But without that act of kindness I would not have planted my feet in O scale dirt. Which leaves me where I am now.

I am now an On30 modeller, I have a bunch of locos, nearly as much rollingstock, I still have some of Nick Biangel's flex track left, and an assorted collection of detail parts, in both 1:43.5 and 1:48. I am now focusing on 1:43.5, and you can see my layout plan linked off my homepage [ed: Sassafras Gully].

I am a member of the ILRMS, and the NMRA NG-SIG, although I have yet to join the NMRA.

***Mark Kendrick, 2004***