

St Lukes Club Layouts

Introduction

Much of the background to the formation of St Luke's Railway Modellers is found here:

<https://stlukeschurch.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/MR-Show-History-Rev5.pdf>

Over the years, several layouts have been constructed by members to be shared and exhibited. A brief summary follows.

1st Up

St Luke's didn't construct a shared layout until 1997, due to a lack of on-site storage. However, when the family of one of our junior members offered the use of part of their garden shed, a simple table layout was built. Still under construction, it was shown at our Nov 1997 exhibition.

More complete, it featured in our 1998 show:



Nebuchadnezzar's Crossing (1999-2007)

Building upon experience, our members designed and built a replacement layout, which our junior members christened "Nebuchadnezzar's Crossing". It would be housed off-site in a member's shed or garage, requiring trailer transport to and from every fortnightly meeting. Here it is, under construction in Ron Morris' garage with Richie Dulin, Rob Evans and Milton Brown.



It was displayed in our Nov 1999 show and then at Wattle Grove show, April 2000 being operated by Tom Carlos.



It was also invited to the Marklin Club's show at Eastwood in Aug 2000. Here it is, being operated by Rick Lovelock and Chris Manchip:



This layout served well until 2007, when a new set of baseboards were constructed: "Defty".

Defty 1 (2008-2014)

It became clear that "Nebuchadnezzar' Crossing" was too small and its curves too sharp for long trains or express train speeds, so a new layout was designed and built. St Luke's Parish Council granted permission for us to construct a small cupboard in the back of the then church hall. Baseboard modules were constructed to simply slide in, before closing and locking the cupboard doors.



A similar-sized cupboard was also installed in the new church hall in 2014:



This newer cupboard remained in use until about 2020, when Parish Council asked us to empty it and remove all our equipment to our garden shed in the basement. Our fortnightly use of the hall also ceased around that time, so we also moved our activities to the basement.

Defty 1 comprised eight rectangular boards, bolted together around a central control space, with scenic area to the front and storage sidings to the rear. The idea was to provide a layout large enough for long trains and medium to high speed, suitable for such trains as TGV, HST, and Hornby live steam. It had gentle, sweeping curves and was suitable for a wide range of H0 and 00 commercial models, both current and historic.

All buildings were removable, so suitable dioramas could be selected to represent British, Aussie or US locations, to suit the mix of model trains displayed at various shows.

While 12V DC was the usual control system, DCC or Hornby live steam controllers could also be used.

Here it is, under construction in the old hall in 2008, with Jon Stanley and Ian Carlos:



On show, displaying scenic front and storage rear:



Live steamers on shed, while “Cock of the North” passes with an LNER express:



Temporary Layouts (2013-14)

In 2013, the old church hall was demolished. Milton Brown donated a garden shed, which was erected behind the church to temporarily store Defty and other club items. During construction, fortnightly meetings were held in the church, with small private layouts brought from time to time, as well as Hornby Dublo track laid onto table tennis tables for junior members to be able to operate. (“Defty” remained stored in the shed during this time.) Railway-themed videos were also screened from time to time. A somewhat restricted “Open Day” in the church took the place of the annual exhibition in Nov 2013.

Following the completion of the new hall, the garden shed was relocated into the basement beneath the hall for storage of bulky items.

Defty 2 (2015-2025)

Once meetings in the new hall recommenced, it became clear that Defty 1 was due for replacement. It was dismantled, recovering as much as possible for re-use. Tom Carlos designed a new “dog-bone” track plan that no longer required operators to duck under boards to reach the controls. Milton Brown designed a new set of baseboard frames, which he and Rob Evans constructed at Milton’s home.



Once location dowels and steel legs were attached, the modules were moved to St Luke's and erected in the hall for painting (in the basement) and tracklaying (in the hall).



It was operational in time for the Nov 2015 exhibition, as seen here with Tom and Ian Carlos:



Penguin's Halt (2008-2017)

This layout began as a donated Pola pre-formed H0 baseboard. Jenny and Robert Evans rebuilt and redecorated it for use as a novelty "U-Drive" layout for our annual exhibitions. It featured several penguin-themed dioramas and regularly displayed a rake of Lionel giraffe cars. It proved to be quite a hit with both parents and children who tried to work out how the giraffes knew when to duck their heads for the tunnel. After many exhibitions, it finally wore out and was dismantled.



Age Continplated (2002-25)

This historic Hornby Dublo layout was purchased "as is" by founding president Chris Manchip in the late 1990s. After his death in Feb 2002, his widow donated the layout to St Luke's Railway Modellers. It has since been exhibited by the club many times, as a reminder of where the hobby has come from, using mainly 1950s and 1960s 3-rail stock.

Models Expo, Wollongong, Feb 2006:



St Lukes Model Railway Show, May 2019:



U drive (2018-2025)

This layout began as a baseboard donated by parishioner Rick Williams with several ovals of H0 track. After the retirement of Penguins' Halt, this baseboard was refurbished by Rick Lovelock and was used with "Thomas" style locos and rolling stock at our 2018 and 2019 exhibitions. Here it is with Rick Lovelock supervising in 2019.



N Scale (2005)

This part-built layout was donated around 2004 and stored at Rick Lovelock's garage. At the time a few members were interested in N scale and so as a group we began working to complete it. Unfortunately, circumstances changed and our N-scalers departed. The layout was passed on to others several years later.



Another Layout (2025-)?

At the time of writing (mid-2025), our members are constructing a new sectional layout, comprised of six small boards, easy to transport and assemble. Carpentry and basic painting are complete and tracklaying is about to begin.

Watch this space.....!