

## Gerry Hopkins MMR 177

Gerry is only the second member to become an Master Model Railroader in the Australasian Region. His interest in railroads and model railroading has been in his blood since birth. For the first five years he lived alongside the South Wales to London mainline in the United Kingdom, during the steam era. His father and uncles all worked on the Great Western Railway. His first model railroad was a Graham Farish OO scale system, but this was later replaced by a Trix Twin system.

Model railroading was put on hold for a few years from 1966 due to marriage and a move to London. In 1971 another move occurred, this time to Australia. In 1978 Gerry got back into the hobby with British outline N scale, but soon changed to American prototype after joining a local N scale club. After a few years Gerry was bitten by the narrow gauge bug and commenced building in HOn30 in 1982.

Gerry's first narrow gauge layout was Rio Grande Miniland, a caricature of the

Rio Grande using locomotives and rolling stock from Joe Works of Japan. By 1983 Gerry had "found" the Maine two-footers and started to build an exhibition layout depicting the New England narrow gauge. This layout was called Franklin County and won many awards at exhibitions around Australia.

Gerry joined the NMRA in 1985 and became actively involved in the Achievement Program in 1988, and editor of the *Main Line* in the beginning of 1990. In 1991 he was also appointed to the position of contest chairman, just after receiving the Master Model Railroader Award. He achieved certificates for Scenery, Cars, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Prototype Modeler, Structures and Author.

A new layout was built and had its first exhibition in August 1990. This also depicts the Maine two-footers and is still being added to and improved. Gerry uses his electronic and instrument background to add animation and special

effects to the layout. These skills are also used to provide trouble-free running of the small locomotives. While at public exhibitions Gerry actively promotes the NMRA and the benefits of membership.

