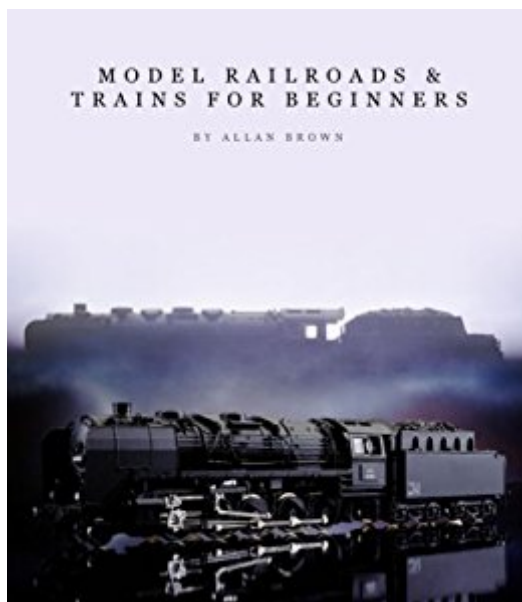


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Model Railroads & Trains For Beginners



Synopsis

No other mode of transportation has ever captured the imagination in quite the same way as trains. Maybe, it's because they were the first form of mechanized transportation. Whatever the reason, they have been source of fascination and been at the center of war, intrigue and romance since they were invented in the early 1800s in England. From there, railroads and trains spread to North America and then every continent on Earth (except Antarctica!). And in the process they've conquered every kind of terrain: rolling plains, lush grasslands, cathedral forests, dense jungles, jagged coastlines, soaring peaks, plunging canyons and the hearts of railroad fans who've wanted to capture just a bit of that majesty and beauty for themselves in their own homes. It was then that the hobby of model railroading itself was born—well almost. In the beginning (no, not that beginning) there was Lionel—the toy train that started it all for a lot of folks. There was a time that when kids asked for a train for Christmas, a Lionel was what they got because it was virtually the only one available. Oh, there were others: American Flyer or Marklin over in Germany, but Lionel dominated the marketplace. The trains and cars were of sturdy steel and easy for children to handle. The train track was durable and easy to assemble and to power up. Plus, there were plenty of really cool accessories with plenty of colored lights for everything—signal lights, lights on the controls, you name it. My dad had one of these sets and I looked forward with a combination of excitement and reverence to Christmas when the perfectly-preserved ancient boxes with their 1940s Lionel logos were opened one by one to reveal their ancient treasures inside. There were cars that dumped coal into coal elevators that scooped the coal one little lump at a time and carried it up to the storage area where it waited to be dumped with the press of a button into another waiting car that was hauled away as soon as it was full. This captivated the kids, but the adults noticed the tracks did not look anything like real train tracks. For one thing, there were three rails—not two like a real train and there were not railroad ties—the wooden cross members holding the rails together. There were just three unrealistically large metal ones instead of several more evenly-spaced and smaller ones. Nobody would ever mistake a skillfully taken trackside photo for the real thing. Also, the size of the Lionel trains were just too big to keep the set up all the time for most people's houses with wives, kids, and all the other stuff that comes with that. Then along came a new kind of train that was half the size of Lionel, but with twice the realism. The tracks had just two rails and railroad ties that looked exactly like real deal. It was called HO, or "half-O," which meant it was half the size of the O-Scale Lionel. We will go into more detail about scale in the first chapter. This is when "playing with trains" really became model railroading. HO trains were actually invented in 1935 in the United Kingdom, but they really gained their popularity in the 1950s in America. From

there model railroading has branched out all across the world in dozens of sizes and accessories. Model railroading is the greatest hobby because itâ™s so many hobbies in one and teaches you so many things: how to work with your hands, manual dexterity, the elements of design, carpentry, precisely realistic model making, principles of electric wiring, how to create realistic scenery, artistic principles by learning how to paint detailed scenery, how systems work, learn interesting bits of history, how to come up with solutions to different challenges, and, yes, even some computer programming if you choose. This book takes you on the journey from first selecting a model train and it's scale through to designing and building a railroad through to soldering and the electronics required.

Book Information

File Size: 242 KB

Print Length: 91 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publication Date: August 19, 2011

Sold by:Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B005I6UPHY

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #296,020 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #6 inÂ Kindle

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Customer Reviews

As a long-time model railroader, I have mixed feelings about this book. It really does cover a lot of ground. Model railroading is a unique hobby because it involves such a wide variety of activities. Most of them are introduced in this book. Now for the bad news. The book reads like a rough draft. A good clean-up by an editor would help a lot. Corrections by someone with more knowledge of electricity and steam locomotives would bring those sections up to the rest. For instance: the word

â œcircuitâ • DOES NOT refer to a lap around a loop of track. Rather it DOES refer to electricity traveling from one terminal of the power supply, through a wire to one rail, along that rail to the wheels of a locomotive, through the motor to the opposite wheels, along the second rail, and finally another wire to the other terminal of the power pack. This can take place on a straight piece of track not connected to any other track. Considerable text is devoted to the wiring for Dual Cab Control. Unfortunately, the description of the necessary electrical switches is incomplete. The DPDT switches must be CENTER OFF. If you buy switches without specifying center off, what you get will switch between left and right cabs, but without an off position in between. As to steam locomotives: the numerical classification system for wheels goes front to back. That is: a 4-8-2 has a four-wheel lead truck in front, eight drive wheels, and a two-wheel trailing truck at the rear. On the other hand, a 2-8-4 has a two-wheel truck in front, eight drivers, and a four-wheel trailing truck. Also, steam engines were usually positioned in a roundhouse with the front in first (toward the back wall) to open up more space around the parts needing the most maintenance. Please clean up this book. It would become a very useful primer for beginning model railroaders.

Enjoyed the straightforward introduction to model trains and the associated terminology. Nicely indexed, you can easily locate the chapters you are most interested in; for example, if you are interested in building a new board, adding landscape, design options using free CAD software, converting electrical to DCC, tips in using tools and getting the right accessories, etc. The early chapters provided a solid model train history and additional background, such as scale definitions and differences among various standards. Would have rated the book a full five stars if it had some supplementary photos to accompany the text. Again though, the narrative was good enough in most cases.

The authors have a hip style of writing and undoubtedly know model railroading. I am new to the hobby and about to create my first layout with the O-Scale Bachman starter set that was delivered today. The book whetted my appetite to learn more about wiring. I gave the book 3 stars because I learned little about the hands-on technical aspects of model railroading. That's ok because the new starter train will keep me occupied for awhile before I expand the simple oval track. A book touted for beginners should have lavish detailed illustrations as few who have never wired or soldered could envision these or other described technical tasks in their heads. The book is a good quick free Prime read and the authors entertained me with their quips and wordplay.

A modern and punny read, filled with great tips and tricks for novice railroad modelers! Very friendly and easy to understand.

This book really helped me understand model railroading, I highly recommend buying it.

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