

english supplemental

European N-Scale Convention 2018

A story about the great event in Stuttgart written by Gaby Ruthsatz and Ralf J. Klumb



Sunday evening at midnight:
The heroes at the storage - everything is back on place!



N-Scale Convention 2018 - ein einziges Highlight

GABY RUTHSATZ UND RALF J. KLUMB BERICHTEN ÜBER DIE EUROPEAN N-SCALE CONVENTION IN STUTTGART



For many N-gauge modellers, the nicest and most important event of the year is undoubtedly the N-Scale Convention in Stuttgart. This year, it took place from 22nd to 25th November, for the first time in hall number 10, the newly-erected Paul-Horn-Halle, for the second time under the name 'Modell+Technik' and for the thirteenth time overall. The number 13, however, did not in this case bring any bad luck; in fact, quite the opposite: any slight and larger difficulties were overcome with bravery and team spirit.

Behind the name of the fair, 'Modell+Technik', introduced two years ago, lies a more modern concept of the merging together of hobby types, which are related to each other to a certain extent. Exhibitors this year presented their range of products on the topics of computers, electronics, games, telecommunications, photography and, of course, model railways. Despite this immense variety of topics,

according to surveys conducted by the fair management, model railways remain in first place, with 45 percent, ahead of model aeroplanes and RC cars, and interest has actually increased. This is particularly noteworthy given that almost everything to do with model railways at the Stuttgart Fair revolves around the scale of 1:160. Other sizes are rather marginal.

Thus, the visiting N-gauge fans found almost everything that their railway modeller hearts desired at the event. Märklin/Minitrix, NOCH, Lemke and KATO, as well as several small series manufacturers and dealers from Germany, Italy, Spain, France, Japan and the Netherlands presented a colourful and international range, including various new items. Some participants, such as Pi.R.A.T.A. or FKS-Modellbau, have been staunch repeat offenders for many years. Others, such as REE modèles or Nordmodell, were new additions this year.

Long-time participants: Luca Patuzzi, Andrea Barella and Stefano Ramunno are the three bosses of the Italian brand Pi.R.A.T.A.



Handshake: Peter Csavajda was pleased to welcome company boss Hiroshi Kato to the N-Scale Convention again this year.





Lively customer debate: Helmut Schwinghammer from Fine Scale München was not too impressed with the neighbouring air show.

As usual, at the centre of the action and attention was N-Club International's N-Scale Convention. A total of twelve clubs and individuals from nine countries were present this year and demonstrated modular construction at its finest. Other figures, such as the length of the modules or the number of module builders, were not recorded this year. When asked about it, NCI President Peter Csavajda smiled: „Higher, faster, farther – we do not need that anymore.“ Addressing the view that there were fewer modules and exhibitors this time, he stated: „That was not so; on the contrary. But that impression was understandable because the new exhibition hall is one and a half times the size of the hall in which we exhibited until now.“

Most of the modules brought along were placed together in a large arrangement, which snaked across the whole exhibition space. Some layouts were separated for technical reasons. Their builders came from Spain, Italy, the UK, Belgium, Japan, Austria, Germany and Switzerland. But there were also colleagues from Denmark, Finland and Canada, who did not have their own modules this year. For many it's the taking part that counts; there were plenty of opportunities to help out, play and join the celebrations.

Anyone who has ever been there will keep coming back with new ideas on how they can participate. Whether it's the Christliches Modellbahnteam that quickly built two compatible modules to latch onto the arrangement after



Constantly packed: DM-Toys not only participated as a commercial exhibitor, but also proved to be a generous sponsor.



Flying the flag: it doesn't matter if there's another model railway fair happening elsewhere in Germany at the same time; Lemke is in Stuttgart.

making their debut two years ago, or the KüsteNbahner, whose imagination at times does somersaults. While the Christians, active throughout Germany, delighted younger audiences in particular with a fully-functioning chewy sweet factory, a Swiss submarine emerged from the Stuttgart water enthusiasts' marsh.

What you need is ideas: Hartmut Zeschky and Jan-Philipp Temme from Christliches Modellbahnteam presented a new module with a fictitious Maoam factory, including an ejection chute. They brought along six kilos of chewy sweets for those with a sweet tooth.





What's going on here: with the help of his binoculars, Hans Geyer from the KüsteNbahner has spotted a Swiss submarine in the marsh.

Rainer Braun, who had brought several square metres from his exhibition layout 'Stuttgart S' in Herrenberg, had a short journey to the fair. The Cannstatt Carré (a large shopping centre) appeared in all its glory and offered a glimpse of what one can expect when visiting Rainer Braun's hometown. Since the layout was inaugurated in September 2017, around 12,000 visitors have been counted, of which a third came from the Stuttgart area, another third were railway modellers and the last third were art lovers – because this layout, as has been repeatedly reported and written, and on which Wolfgang Frey, who sadly died much too early, reproduced the city centre of Stuttgart along with the corresponding N-gauge railway layouts, is a unique work of art.

Since January 2018, the layout has been extended with other parts which are gradually coming to light from the Stuttgart underground. So now the bridges by Wilhelma Park and the bends of the Neckar River can be seen. Railway modellers

among the visitors can look forward to 10 operational routes from now on. The focus now lies on repairs and adding the finishing touches, as many parts of the layout remained hidden for years. Further info can be found at www.stellwerk-s.de.

At Herrenberg Model Railway Club, which in recent years has vigorously tackled the reconstruction of Stuttgart S, Gerhard Ankert reported on the progress of construction work on the new clubhouse. By the time this article is printed, it should have been completed. Founded in 1977 and currently consisting of 27 members, the club now has more storage space and room for new builds.

Bernhard Roll presented Europe's largest collection of T-TRAK modules so far. Believe it or not, around 80 modules were joined together and integrated into the overall arrangement. Railway modellers from France, Japan, Germany, Canada, Austria, the USA, Denmark, Italy and the UK each contributed about a ninth of a square metre of creativity, often with humour as well. T-TRAK's focus is to arouse interest in model railways, especially among the younger generation, because a presentable result can be quickly produced with simple resources and in a small space. This system is also suitable for workshops/working groups, e.g. in schools. The module with the fire-damaged house, for instance, was built by a pupil who finished his module after the school club ended and obviously found enjoyment in the hobby. More

T-TRAK modules en masse: from Japan, Austria, France and Germany they came; the burning house resulted from school club activities.



This is art, it can't be thrown out: the Cannstatt Carré is part of the Stellwerk S show layout, where Wolfgang Frey's life's work is presented to the public. The N layout in Herrenberg is now regarded as a piece of art and receives a lot of attention.

information on this topic can be found at www.t-trak.de and www.t-trak.org

Similar to T-TRAK, the N-CAR-S team does not focus on modelling a railway, as members are concerned with its competition on the roads. Two years ago, Andreas Timmer from Emmerich began building the five-metre-long and up to 80-centimetre-deep module on display. The vehicles are essentially based on Falter's well-known Car System, but with various customisations and paint jobs. There were twelve or thirteen vehicles in action at the fair – the traffic coordinator did not know the precise number. Small gimmicks were spotted in the shape of the lawnmower-based cleaning vehicle in the OBI (a DIY store) car park or on the local archetypal roundabout 'Eimerich' (play on words; 'Eimer' is German for 'bucket'); even the petrol station and the OBI store itself were modelled on real-life versions in the Lower Rhine area. The eye of the beholder also enjoyed many other functional details, including the advertising mast with a rotating tip.

The guys from GermaNTRAK were also present. Their club chairman, Adrian Ritt, provided the statistical information: founded in 2002, around 25 members, eight of them present. For at least ten years, the group have „always liked to be here!“ according to Adrian Ritt. In the almost ten-metre-long arrangement of eight modules, well-known pieces by Markus Schiavo ('Cinema City') and Rainer Blechinger ('Mad Max') as well as 'Somewhere in Texas' by the chairman himself were found. On closer inspection, new details were discovered here and there.

Johannes Barth represented the N-Bahn-Club Rhein-Neckar on his own this year. It was not the first time that his two-metre bridge modules made an appearance, but they are still considered a milestone in the art of modelling; Barth is, to our knowledge, the only one who has dared to reproduce the bridge at Remagen in this scale. „The most difficult part was the transition from one module to another,“ said the railway modeller from Mannheim, but the model would not have been transportable otherwise.



No train in sight: Andreas Timmer proudly presented the N-CAR-S team's module, which has many impressive true-to-life details.



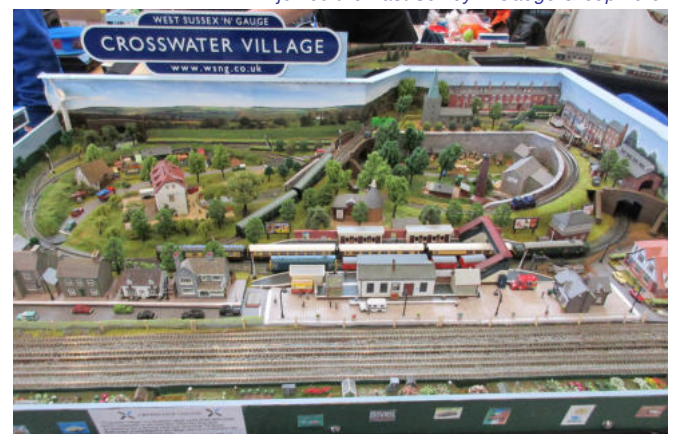
Accurately-scaled model: Johannes Barth from the N-Bahn-Club Rhein-Neckar e.V. displayed his bridge of Remagen, made completely out of wood.

Dazzling world of cinema: Markus Schiavo and Karin Katona presented the impressive „Cinema City“ as part of the GermaNTRAK modules.



Regulars are model railway fans from East Surrey. For 13 years now, they have been travelling with their modules. In any case, eight members of the 21-year-old East Surrey N Gauge Club were in attendance, led by its chairman Allan Dawes. The layout on display consisted of eleven modules, although one was „stolen“ from the West Sussex group. The approximately 15-metre-long layout, which connected to the Austrian layout by AMC Vienna at one end, used analogue control and was thematically quintessentially English.

Typical English idyll: Crosswater Village by the West Sussex N Gauge Group joined the East Surrey N Gauge Group here.





White leaves no room for mistakes: Daniela Ziesel from sNs gained this insight when building this snowy module. The Swiss modeller finished it just in time for the Stuttgart fair and thus established one of the highlights of the 2018 N-Scale Convention.

While the engine shed module called Eric (which could be located in several countries) was already a familiar sight for some visitors, and one module with obvious US influence definitely did not originate from the British Isles, the origin of Rochelle Park and Atlesford, for example, was unmistakable. Allan Dawes asked us to point out the club's show in April: on Saturday, 6th April 2019, Riddlesdown Collegiate in Purley will display more than 25 exhibits. So, if someone is in the UK at that time and stuck in the potential Brexit chaos, then there is a chance to experience some variety. Go to www.ngaugesoutheast.co.uk for more info.

The largest layout of 160 square metres was displayed by the sNs. The Swiss model railway club celebrated its 10th anniversary in Stuttgart and also had something new to offer in addition to its highly popular showpieces. One of the most beautiful new modules came from the gentle hand of Daniela

Ziesel. She did not want to spend a lot of time building the module itself. But after her husband, Jürg Bender, had duly done this and laid the tracks, within a year and a half she created the very finest snowy landscape on this foundation. The actual anniversary celebration of the sNs will take place on 18th and 19th May in Steinach am Bodensee Community Centre.

Not for the first – but certainly not the last – time, Pauline McKenna was in Stuttgart. As webmaster for the British N Gauge Society, she has made the club's website considerably more attractive and user-friendly. The fact that she can also create model railway layouts was shown through the module called Millfield Yard that was on display. For four years, her work has been presented at various exhibitions, but mostly in the UK. As well as building layouts, Pauline McKenna also focuses on the super-fine detailing and the short couplings on all her locomotives and carriages.

Super-fine detailing work: Pauline McKenna showed off her module Millfield Yard, on which she uses the short coupling she developed.



We spoke to Luc Vennekens from the Belgian N-Club N160. The club, which has been active for nine years, with seven members currently, was represented in the exhibition hall with its fourth or fifth project (many exhibitors don't know exactly how often they have already been there), showing three modules by individual members. The Comblain au Pont bridge emerged, which Jim van Bockstaele based on laser-cut parts as well as on buildings surrounding the original version. „There is no space to set up the modules at home. That's why it's all the more fun to put them on show and see them in action here!“ said Luc Vennekens. Further information about the club can be found at www.n160.be.

The Danes also never fail to take the opportunity to visit Stuttgart. Exhibitors and participants are particularly appreciative of their presence on the first evening of the fair. They have been involved for twelve years, according to Hans



Prize winners from Japan: it was not just their award-winning module that was a huge feat. Visibly nervous, Yusuke, Nobuyoshi, Ryo, Tomohiko, Kenta and Chihiro (from left to right) explained the origins and background of their work with Lena Bultmann's help.

Christensen, the leader of the group, which this time only consisted of two men; he had his son Kim Lee Christensen with him. Unfortunately, the colleague who normally drives the van and contributes many modules was ill, so that only one module could be shown this time: an idyllic Danish summer house, which was integrated into the T-TRAK arrangement mentioned previously.

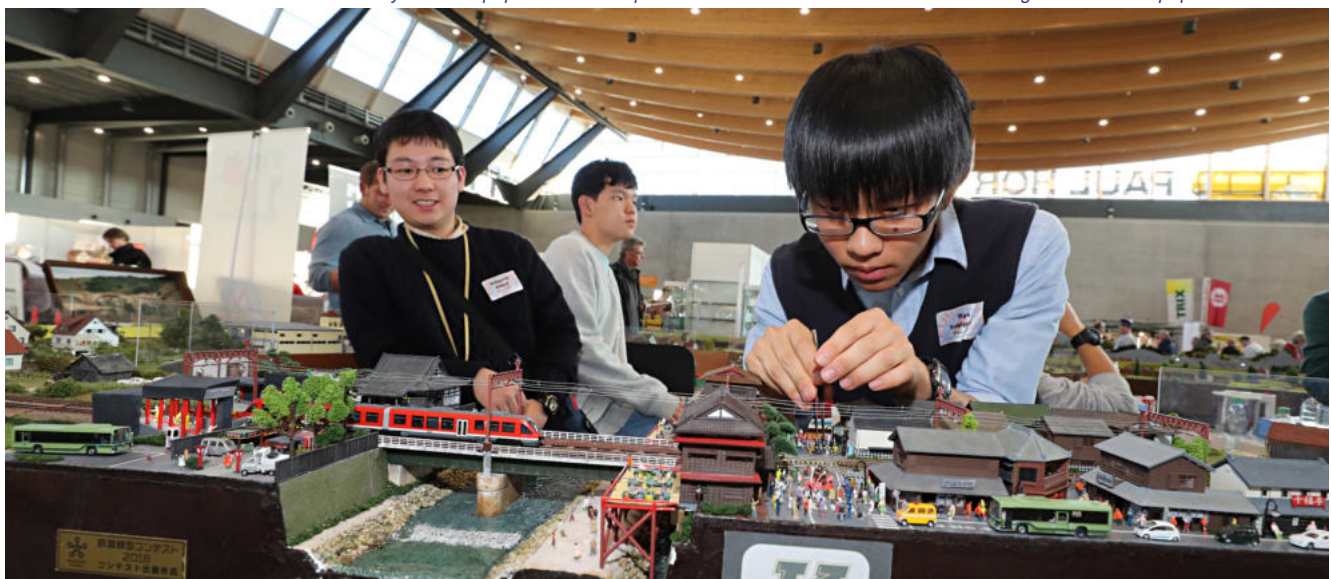
A very special gem had a particularly long journey: as was the case three years earlier, a group of schoolchildren who had won a competition sponsored by the manufacturer KATO travelled from Japan. Six boys from the Kanto Gakuin Mitsuura Junior & Senior High School in Yokohama represented the Railway Research Club, made up of 30 pupils between years 7 and 11. While the wonderfully designed module was placed in the middle of its European neighbours and was therefore traversed by trains from all over the world, the visibly nervous pupils presented their work in a speech held in English.

The interpreter was Lena Bultmann, who currently works as a sales assistant at KATO in Tokyo, and the cameraman,

who can be seen in the photo using his smartphone as a video camera, was none other than Mr Hiroshi Kato himself! Whenever he can arrange it, the boss of the Japanese company takes part in the N-Scale Convention for a day. This time, his visit fell on a Thursday when the evening party with international dishes, beverages, music and dance was a source of great enjoyment for him as well as all the other participants.

The versatile Railway Research Club consists of three teams: the model railway team, the garden railway team and the planning and design team. While the garden railway team is busy with 5" and 20" trains on the school grounds, and the planning and design team publishes the club magazine and organises the train ride that takes place every summer, the model railway team creates modules like the one on display at Stuttgart under the name 'The city of WA – the tradition of the Kyoto'. Work began in December 2017 and initially focused on planning, after which it was determined that the summertime Gion Festival would be recreated. This is one of the largest festivals in Japan, having taken place in July for more than 1,000 years.

Finesse is required: Nobuyoshi watched intently as Ryo placed a fallen figure in the crowd in 'The city of WA – the tradition of the Kyoto'. The pupils' module impressed with its wealth of details and building materials like paper and bamboo.



On the module are numerous elements that can be found in Kyoto in real life. Fushimi Inari station is reminiscent of the famous Fushimi Inari Taisha Shrine in Kyoto, the Land of the Rising Sun's most visited landmark. The surrounding development is modelled on the area called Gion, Kyoto's most popular district. The buildings were made of paper and bamboo, with the bridge spanning the river also made of paper. In addition, the masts and support structures for the catenary system were handmade by the pupils. On Friday, the second day of the fair, the group drove with Hiroshi Kato to Wangen for a factory tour of NOCH, whose managing director, Dr Rainer Noch, had also listened attentively to the presentation.



Management issue: Dr Rainer Noch and Hiroshi Kato made it possible for the team of Japanese model railway pupils to tour the NOCH factory.

Particular interest was aroused by this year's special mini/micro-layout show. The N fans from the border triangle region (Germany, France and Switzerland; their German name is 'N-ler im Dreiländereck') were placed here this time. Represented by Wolfgang Faller, the railway modellers exhibited six suitcases, including an original PIKO layout from 1964! Wolfgang Faller, who has been building suitcase layouts himself for many years, came across this rather unique kind of model building through one of the co-founders of the group from Schwenningen. This is how his first suitcase with donated Z-gauge houses came about around 30 years ago. N-ler im Dreiländereck will be celebrating their 25th anniversary in 2019 – albeit within their small circle.

N-ler im Dreiländereck celebrate 25 years: the railway modellers around Wolfgang Faller (left) and Martin Siegwolf, occupied here with the 'Faller Bros. Bicycle Factory GmbH' in one of the six suitcases that were brought along, look forward to the anniversary in 2019.



Good vintage: this very well-preserved suitcase by PIKO saw the light of day in 1964, like the author of these lines.

Ian Redman also specialises in suitcase layouts, having brought with him a whopping 22 micro-layouts with his business Small 'N' Working on behalf of the West Sussex Area Group of the British N Gauge Society! The smallest layout consisted of a track circuit in a coconut! Ian Redman began building micro-layouts in 2006. Since he and his wife Nicola are childminders, there were also a few representatives among the layouts that imaginatively cater to children with LEGO® bricks. His most recent layout had to be a bit bigger because he wanted to build something with more details, tracks, electronics, lighting and a canal. So the resourceful builder got a rifle case, disposed of the padding designed to hold guns and set to work. While his daughter helped with the LEGO® layouts, his wife lent a hand with the gardens and green spaces. So far, Ian Redman has built six or seven layouts for private customers and two more are currently under construction. His website www.smallnworking.co.uk provides much more information.



Firing without a licence: Ian Redman wanted to build something bigger after several mini suitcase layouts. The result was his latest creation, this rifle case, which factors in all of his wishes: more details, tracks, electronics, lighting and a canal.



Model railway and LEGO® united: sure, there is a LEGO® train, but it doesn't fit in a suitcase, Ian Redman said to himself.

On Sunday, the last day of the fair, a few N-enthusiasts provided a special treat on the large modular arrangement. In August 2015, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of electric trains in Sweden, a Swiss Crocodile made its way to the Railway Museum in Gävle, about 100 miles north of Stockholm. Since it was not able to drive on its own on German tracks, it was towed by Railadventure's BR 103 222-6. The Crocodile suffered bearing damage en route that could be repaired in Seddin. On the way back from its successful performance in Sweden, the Crocodile was towed from Berlin to Meiningen for a major inspection. It was not until November 2017 that it made it back home. Fleischmann's 103 model with its picture-perfect paintwork was created by a Dutch railway modeller and made an N-gauge dream come true for Hartmut Zeschky of the Christliches Modellbahnteam.



Droopy Crocodile: a scene from 2015, when a Swiss Crocodile rolled to Sweden, re-enacted in N-scale.

We would like to quote Marcel Hagemann from DM-Toys as a representative of the few larger manufacturers and dealers that were present. He was, as always, satisfied with the process, „but it's a pity that there aren't more N-gauge and accessories manufacturers present at the fair, because that's where the real heart of N is!“ Still, criticism was heard from a few smaller exhibitors: on the one hand, regarding the cost; on the other, regarding sharing the hall with others who at times made a lot of background noise. The somewhat remote location, far from the main entrance, also featured in the conversation of some participants. At least the latter will get better when the tram stops in front of Hall 10 from 2020!

The product offerings were rounded off by hands-on activities. It was not just small visitors who were able to participate in workshops on the topics of modelling trees, ballast or building houses. There was some prior scepticism among Peter Csavajda and his team as to whether this area would be accepted. But despite fewer early registrations, this concern was unfounded, the club president said. „People just came by spontaneously and joined in. On Saturday, we ran out of crafting material, but thanks to our sponsors NOCH and DM-Toys, we could top it up.“



Early practice: Micha Barth from the NCI guided year eight pupils from Dettingen an der Erms in the making of model trees.

As is customary with non-profit exhibitors, the NCI is subsidised by the fair. In principle, the idea is that it is a generous amount, which cannot remotely cover all costs for all participants. In addition to individuals' and clubs' personal involvement, sponsors contribute to the financial viability of the N-Scale Convention. According to Peter Csavajda, alongside NOCH and DM-Toys, it was primarily Hobbytrain, Minitrix (Märklin) and KATO who repeatedly showed their generosity. He added: „But fair management is always responsive; for example, if we have special requests, such as a cross-bar for our camera.“



We needed a bend: Dario Gremoli of the Associazione Nazionale Amici Scala N was facing this challenge with his new module.



Tram fan: Henri Janssens from Club N160 in Antwerp will soon start modelling work on a tram station.

For a good cause: these Christmas trains based on American models made their rounds at the NOCH stand.



Attention, concentration, men at work: Manfred Burghardt put the train on the track, Walter Flügel made sure the job was done right and had his hand on the controller, while Rudolf Fritscher supervised from afar. The Austrian AMC had both narrow-gauge and standard-gauge modules with them.





The organising trio: Peter Csavajda, Christian Weiß and Stefan Wörner greeted the teams before the buffet was opened.



In high spirits: on Thursday evening at the fair, international dishes and beverages, as well as live music, were extensively enjoyed. Peter Csavajda and Andrea Barella (Pi.R.A.T.A.) posed with editor Gaby Ruthsatz between them.



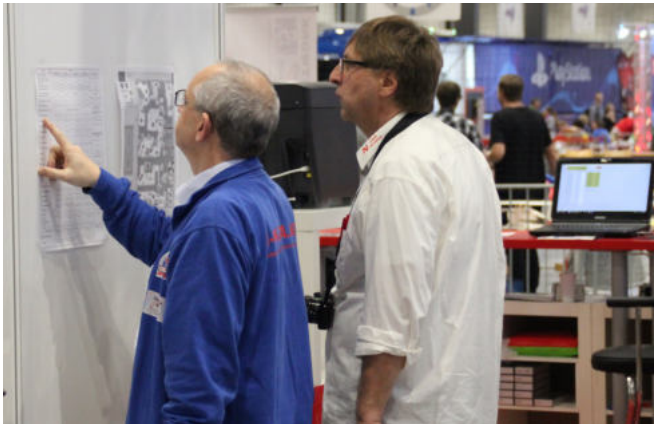
Visitors were allowed to watch: Francesco Carlucci from Paris worked on the announced last extension of his 'Trollstigen' fantasy module before visitors' eyes.

Brits in the midst of it: John, Ian, Mark and Nigel from the West Sussex Area Group of the N Gauge Society took care of the 22 layouts in the micro-layouts area, which appeared for the first time. Transporting them was certainly easier than conventional modules.



The NCI had no dedicated layout of its own this year, though, as usual, they presented countless modules making up the basic structure of the large modular arrangement. These included the backbone of the layout as well as various junction or transition modules. The 50 NCI members, who helped with the event and were supported by about ten family members or friends, were mainly responsible for monitoring the large layout arrangement's trouble areas during the event.

Christian Weiss, from the club responsible for organising the fair, was busy with the necessary operational planning for a fortnight before the event. A look behind the scenes proves that what seemed to the public to have been realised in a playfully light and rather accidental way is actually a meticulously planned, sophisticated system, with everyone in their place.



Nothing works without coordination: Christian Weiß and Peter Csavajda kept an eye on attendance with the plan of action at the information stall.

Of course, minor glitches arose again and again. Throughout the room, there were resounding calls of „There are no trains over here!“ or „Where is my replacement?“ A slightly bigger problem was caused by the neighbouring air show. You do not even need to be a railway modeller to understand the dismay as an Airbus circled above the model railway layouts with their partly valuable constructions and precious rolling stock.

After clarifying discussions, the flight operations over the NCI area were thankfully stopped; the not insignificant background noise remained, however. Peter Csavajda was unperturbed by it: „The floorplan can certainly be improved a little next time, but that doesn't fundamentally change anything. Our stall was right next to the air show and I think four times a day for half an hour each was bearable.“

If you asked the NCI President for his personal highlight with the expectation that he would name a particularly beautiful module, of which there were many once more this year, you would be surprised by the answer: „Actually, the entire event was one single highlight for me. But if I have to single one out, for me, it's the box initiative.“

It happened after 8 o'clock on Wednesday evening. The NCI had already built its part of the modular arrangement on Tuesday and on that day welcomed the clubs that were starting to flow in, helping to dock the modules and set up driving operations. The transport boxes for the modules had been stacked neatly and almost hidden at the edge of the hall, behind the commercial exhibitors' stands. But then, according to Peter Csavajda, „...the fire brigade came, saw the boxes and demanded that they be removed immediately. The Paul-Horn-Halle has a wooden roof and is subject to particularly strict fire protection codes. We were told that if the boxes were not immediately removed, the hall would not open the next morning.“

Yes, that could be nice: Stefan Wörner proudly displayed the miniaturised version of his own house and garden in Döffingen near Sindelfingen. He also brought along his very personal interpretation of Weißenstephan Brewery.





A little chat was required: Peter Csavajda explained the highlights of this year's fair to editors Gaby Ruthsatz and Ralf J. Klumb. He leaned back and smiled when asked about the length of modules or the number of participants at the N-Scale Convention.

In his mind, Csavajda saw himself and his people dragging boxes around half the night; their own vehicles had already been taken away the day before. However, he had an idea. He briefly and concisely explained the situation over the loudspeakers and a small miracle occurred: within a short space of time, about 50 people from the other clubs taking part had gathered in front of him, brought their lorries to the door and unceremoniously stored the module boxes there for four days. According to Peter Csavajda, the whole affair may have lasted an hour and: „It showed me once again what a great community we are.“

A final note: a huge thanks goes out to all the NCI helpers! Without them, an event like this would not be able to take place. And by that we don't only mean the diligent fairies

who have taken care of people's physical wellbeing, namely Elke Hein and Miri and Detlef Felten, but also all the others who made their contribution in the background! We look forward to the next time, from 21st to 24th November 2019.

Just as this article was going to press, Sven Franz from Lemke piped up. He reported that the visitors from Haan were „very satisfied, since it was a lot of fun, like every year.“ They were particularly pleased about the award for Peter Rohjans and „are, of course, looking forward“ to the next convention.

Text: Gabriele Ruthsatz / Ralf J. Klumb

Translation: Geraldine Klumb – www.wordworms.info

Pictures: Gabriele Ruthsatz / Ralf J. Klumb / Sören Strehlow / Messe Stuttgart / NCI

The finest food: Elke Hein's (second from right) team took care of the physical wellbeing of visitors from near and far, as in previous years. The scent of coffee drifted into the hall from the early morning, and everyone was happy about the supply of cake.



