

# Meet Peter Pardoe-Matthews

By Alfred Barten

**T**o many he's simply known by his Trainz moniker, Narrowgauge. I first got to know Peter Pardoe-Matthews a year ago when I interrupted a narrow gauge thread on the Trainz Forum to express my puzzlement over the lack of Maine 2-foot gauge offerings in Trainz, or any other simulator for that matter. Peter responded by saying that if he had drawings I just might be surprised. Fortunately I DID have drawings and made arrangements offline with Peter to supply the needed information.



The rest is history. I was expecting a loco or perhaps a boxcar; what the community got was a roster of Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes equipment, which Peter released last fall in a blockbuster posting. Not only had Peter created a representative line of freight cars, passenger cars, and locos, but he had also rounded up his narrow gauge buddies who contributed expertise in certain areas and contributed some locos, cars, buildings, and routes of their own. Along the way Peter founded the Trainz Narrowgaugers as a way of keeping up communications within this group of fellow enthusiasts. I haven't made an exact survey, but I suspect there are now more items available for the Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes in Trainz than there are for any other railroad in any other train sim; and this is largely due to the efforts of one man -- Peter Pardoe Matthews.

Peter, now 75, is a retired widower who makes his home in Salisbury, Australia. An Australian citizen, he "lives with one dog who rules the roost" and he "Can't seem to get her interested in Trainz."

Peter graciously accepted our offer to tell us something about himself for the *Journal*. Here's what he had to say.

---

**AB.** How did you become involved with Trainz or train simulations?

**PPM.** I noticed an advert for MSTS and bought it, hoping it would provide the modeling pleasure I wanted. It failed. I then saw a TV advert for Trainz Community Edition, bought it prior to release, and never looked back. I never found the demo version that was around.



SR&RL 2-6-2 Baldwin and a variety of freight cars by Peter Pardoe-Matthews.

**AB.** What do you like best about train simulations?

**PPM.** They free you from the constraints of space and cost that are major factors in modeling railways. Another factor that weighed with me is that Trainz is a living room program, and meant I was sharing space and time with my wife. It also provided the drivability that "real models" lack; you can see your layout at track level, something that only a miniature video camera will allow in real life.

**AB.** Have you always been interested in narrow gauge?

**PPM.** No, I've always been interested in trains, and trains modeling. Remember, I was young when trains were all steam hauled; and if you wanted to travel, you traveled by train. My first model train set was given to me when I was about six years old, one of the first German models, can't remember the name. Later I had a Bassett Lowke O scale real steam loco that I ran in the attic. The potential fire risk appalls me now. I then progressed through Hornby O scale, some Hornby double-O, and then down still further to TT scale. When the first N scale models became available I changed again. For various reasons there was a long hiatus before I started again. Back into the much improved N scale for about five years, then I was sidetracked by

moving house, no space, and computers (they were new). It seemed serendipitous when Trainz came out and combined my two loves, trains and computers. Narrow gauge interest started when I first became aware of the Victorian 30-inch gauge lines, and from then on I was hooked. Not just hook, line and sinker -- I swallowed the boat!



Climax and Mann's Creek coal hoppers by Peter Pardoe-Matthews.

AB. Are you interested in standard gauge and/or other rail formats such as transit?

PPM. I was when nothing else was available. Now I'm not. Narrow gauge is quaint, outside the square, and I have always tended to think that way. Wide trains on narrow tracks -- that is bliss.

AB. When did you begin creating 3D models?

PPM. As soon as gmax became available. All of a sudden I was free to create. Surveyor was wonderful, but making the models, that was something else again. This is the part of Trainz that is my prime interest, and I must admit to having no interest in interactive industries, or waybills. I like to model. This is what sets Trainz apart from "real" modeling; I make one model, one hundred

people can download it, and each one can run one hundred model consists. That's ten thousand models I have made, and the cost is my time and online costs. My recompense -- intense satisfaction, particularly when the downloads from my web site via *TrainZone*, average out at about ten gigs a month.



Two-foot gauge diesel, the Mouse, by Peter Pardoe-Matthews.

AB. Did you have a prior background in graphics/3d modeling/computer graphics?

PPM. No. Far from it. I started with computers with a Commodore 64 and saw then that the potential for games like Trainz was there, but I would not have even dreamed then that simulations like Trainz would actually be possible, let alone on a home computer as powerful as those we now take for granted. My work with gmax is self-taught from the ground up, with a lot of willing help from people on the forum. There were no tutorials then. Those were the days when we were all learning, and I believe that the tone of the current fora is the result of those days. It's hard to remember that Trainz started in 2001 -- seems like a lifetime.

AB. What was your work before you retired?

PPM. I was originally apprenticed in heavy hydraulics engineering, got involved in

plastics, Technical Director then Managing Director of a plant in Northern Ireland, and finished up as a Technical Manager of a plastics molding company in Melbourne and finally Adelaide. It may be of interest that my various changes of jobs have moved my family into nine different towns, moved from England to Northern Ireland to England to Australia; and we have bought and sold eleven houses in the process. My kids loved it; they are all gypsies now.



Three-foot gauge Porter by Peter Pardoe-Matthews.

AB. Anything else you'd like people to know?

PPM. Yes, I'd like them to know I'm happy being me with Trainz and the friends I've made in the fora.

---



Two-foot gauge Puffing Billy by Peter Pardoe-Matthews.

All of Peter's work is available for free download at Sirgibby's *TrainZone* web site, <http://www.trainzone.co.nz/>.

We owe you a debt of gratitude, Peter, for your wonderful creations and the spirit with which you've created them and made them available. ***Cheers, Mate!***

***AI***

Article ©2004 Alfred Barten. All rights reserved.