

# MAGNORAIL

## ADDING A LITTLE “MAGIC” TO YOUR LAYOUT

Slowly the video pans across a beautifully constructed HO fine-scale recreation of the railways, buses, tramways of the Dutch city of Nijmegen in 1927. Suddenly a bicycle appears with a man actually pedaling his way along the layout’s road – and the crowds are mesmerized. An HO scale cyclist actually pedaling his bike on a layout – WOW!

The layout named as “De Hezelpoort 1927” by inventor and hobbyist Loek Bronkhorst depicted steam trains travelling across a viaduct whilst trams and buses move along the road into the town. First exhibited in February 2010 in Holland the layout and the little cyclists garnered interest all over Europe (A video of De Hezelpoort 1927’s appearance at the Warley National Model Railway Exhibition 2010 can be viewed on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/upmxMQQX71A>)



And so the Magnorail SYSTEM was launched into the hobbysphere.

The Magnorail company was founded in 2011 to commercialise Loek’s invention and was formed in the Netherlands by three model railway enthusiasts, each with his own specific know-how. Loek – an artisan fine-scale modeler who invented the model bicycle and its moving concept; Arno Otten – a gifted industrial designer, whose skills transformed the concept into a viable and reliable consumer product and David Hoogvorst – A model railroad geek, creator of the ‘AnyRail’ layout design program, and expertise in IT along with financial matters who set up the website and administration.

Being loyal to the Dutch economy they sourced local suppliers as much as possible. So the injection moulding parts such as the track, chain links, return loops et cetera are produced in Arnhem, only 10 kilometers from Magnorails’ home base. The metal plate parts are produced near Amsterdam.

During the seven years of Magnorail’s existence the team have continuously improved the finely engineered products and track system. A change from their initial red chain to a sleeker, lower profile version in blue and a material change of the biker plate from chrome steel to brass has seen the system run smoother at scale speeds.



As the Magnorail System took off their marketing became more professional changing a standard white box to a now custom-made full colour printed box with more appealing photographs and a complete descriptions of starter kits on the back.



The Magnorail System operates on a simple plastic interlocking chain links travelling inside a flexible plastic channeling. Each link contains a cavity to take either a strong 3mm square rare earth magnet or a smaller cylindrical one for smaller scales, which then draws bicycles and vehicles along the track surface through normal magnetic properties. The central clear wheel with the cyclists feet attached creates the pedaling action through the articulated knee and hip joints.

The track system is propelled by a 12volt motor that grips the side of the chain via rubber 'o' rings and can operate at a fixed speed by a 12v DC transformer with set speed motors of slow, medium and fast, or alternatively via a 12v DC variable controller to get correct scale speeds to suit your vehicles.

The Magnorail system and accessories has grown from the initial male cyclist to a range of fifteen units that now includes either kits or some limited, hand painted and assembled units like the ice cream vendor, a Santa towing a small cart with a Christmas tree as well as "Daisy" now on a tandem bicycle with her beau and not having to be dinked.



Magnorail has added other accessories over the years, such as brass vehicle sliders enabling die-cast vehicles, boats and even Orca whales to be animated on a layout. Whilst the bicycle kits require care and a steady hand to assemble, the track system is quite robust and very flexible.



The pedaling biker in HO and the moving system for N and even Z scale has been a hit with hobbyists all over the world. Animation in Z and N scales are limited mainly to train sets, however the Magnorail System allows vehicles and boats to cruise around these small-scale layouts. Loek commented that everywhere the system has been shown, the magical movement of the pedaling cyclists as well as scale, era-correct vehicles that are normally static but can now move along roadways and tracks, has amazed people.

Loek said "People speak about Magnorail as *the alternative for the Faller Car System* plus it is much cheaper to add vehicles to the Magnorail system, especially if you are modeling a particular era requiring specialist vehicles from the popular 1930's to 1960's eras."

Having originated in Holland Magnorail has a growing reputation in its local market and continues expanding in to Europe through a network of hobby shops and by showings at exhibitions including the large Dortmund Intermodellbau Fair each year.

Australia has been lucky to have a local reseller appointed, namely Magnorail-Oz, an internet based business operated by Clyde Humphries, which is focused on selling the Magnorail system direct to Australian hobbyists.

Clyde bought his first Magnorail starter set over three years ago and has created several iterations of his Echo Lakes exhibition layout using the system. He has also become the curator for Magnorail videos on YouTube, with nearly two hundred videos, which include the Magnorail system, with him producing nearly 40 videos on a range of subjects from building Echo Lakes to fixing Santa's leg. Check out his Klatchco56 channel <https://www.youtube.com/user/klatchco56>

Clyde is a member of the Grampian Model Railroaders and exhibits regularly at their shows in Stawell and Ararat. Apart from YouTube and Facebook, you can also find him with the Echo Lakes layout and his Magnorail display at various Victorian model railroad exhibitions.

Clyde says he is not a fine-scale modeler and is unable to solder cleanly but with the Magnorail System, he can easily get vehicles moving on his layout with the brass sliders. Pictured below is an example of the ice cream truck he bought when visiting Hamburg's Miniature Wonderland a few years ago. It features quite a lot in the earlier Echo Lakes videos chasing a lady cyclist!



He has also kit bashed such items as an Orca Killer Whale chasing water skiers on his lake, or a man with his ride-on mower pulling a trailer advertising gardening services – something the Faller System does not sell! Clyde admits he has several Faller cars that are in need of repair and he has no idea how to fix them with his limited skills but has no such problems with his Magnorail System.

“It really does bring a bit of *MAGIC* to a layout enthralling kids and adults alike who spend ten minutes or more watching all the activity on the small Echo Lakes layout.” Clyde went on to say “With the Magnorail System you can add a metre of magic to layouts with a bit of preplanning and creative thinking.”

MagnorailOz offers a free consultation service via email to anyone contemplating the Magnorail System. All you have to do is supply a track plan or photos with dimensions noted and Clyde will advise you of your options. Email contact is [magnorailoz@gmail.com.au](mailto:magnorailoz@gmail.com.au) or visit the web page at [magnorailoz.com.au](http://magnorailoz.com.au)

