

IN THIS ISSUE:

NEW ITEM! DIGITAL FOR ALL GAUGES

— New decoder panels convert most any model railroad system to Digital operation. See page 2.

NEW ITEMS! THE ORIENT EXPRESS AND RHEINGOLD

— Two of the most renowned trains in railroad history are now part of the Märklin collection. See page 2.

NEW ITEM! SUGAR BEET TRAIN

— One of Germany's most important agricultural trains, the Sugar Beet Train, also is added. See page 3.

NEW ITEMS! AMERICAN MINI-CLUB EXPANDS

— The historic NY Central steamer and caboose among six new prototypes added to Mini-Club. See page 3.

CLUB MEMBER Q&A

— Answers to questions about classification schemes, model design, and more! See page 4.

CLUB MEMBER HELPFUL HINTS

— Tips on installing taillights, crossing gates, plus how to weather trees on your layout. See page 6 and 7.

LOOKING FOR AN AUTHOR

— Greenberg Publishing Co. is looking for an author for a book on building Z-gauge layouts. See page 7.

NEW ITEMS VIDEO OFFER

— Many of the 1988 new items come to life in this 12-minute VHS video. For a special Club Member offer, see the insert.

STEPHEN BUTZLAFF WINS DEPOT GIVEAWAY

Congratulations to Club Member Stephen Butzlaff of Lake Bluff, Illinois, winner of a \$100 Märklin Gift Certificate in our 1987 Great Depot Giveaway.

Butzlaff, a banker, is an avid Z-gauge enthusiast whose private collection features an unusually wide range of European trains and accessories.

Plus, we'd like to thank all of the nearly 1,000 Club members who participated in this year's Depot Survey and Giveaway Contest. You're all winners! You can be sure your suggestions and comments have been taken seriously. That will be evident in subsequent issues of HotTraks when we announce the survey results and improvements with the Märklin Depot.

MÄRKLIN CLUB—USA

HOTTRAKS

March, 1988

Volume 4 Number 1

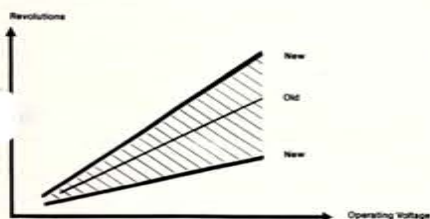
HOTTRAKS is the official quarterly newsletter of the Märklin Club, P.O. Box 795, Elm Grove, WI 53122

New Items Preview

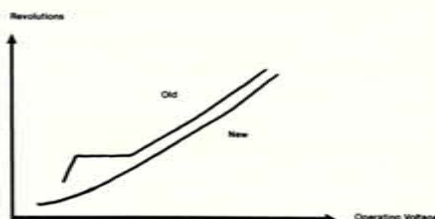
Technology Leads the Way in 1988!

This year, the key word is technology. Revolutionary technology. A new propulsion system that makes your HO locomotives operate, start to stop, as precisely as their prototypes. And Digital is expanded to HO-DC, Z-gauge, and I-gauge. Plus, this year Märklin will add some of the most historic, romantic, and luxurious trains in railroad history. For more details, read on!

Speed Selection



Acceleration Control



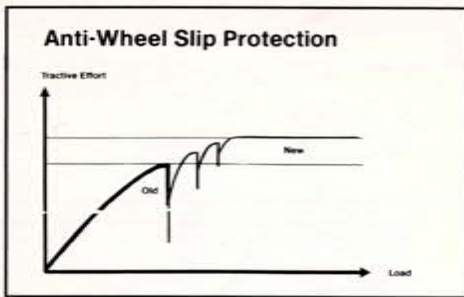
An infinite choice of speeds within a broad operating range.

A smooth rate of acceleration.

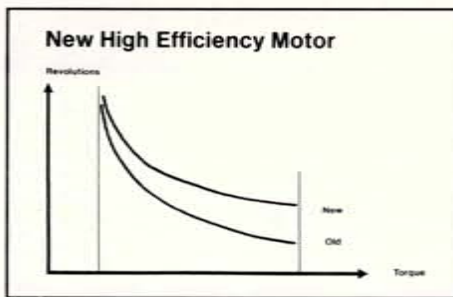
The Five-Star Propulsion System for HO

The train is just starting to roll out of the station. You are at the controls. You start slow, accelerating gradually. Your operation is smooth and silent. Once at top speed, you're able to keep your speed constant and your train under control — even on the steepest of grades. And regardless of your load, your traction is absolutely superb.

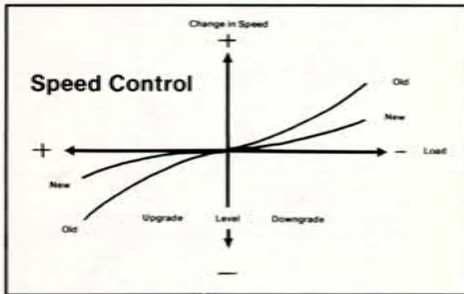
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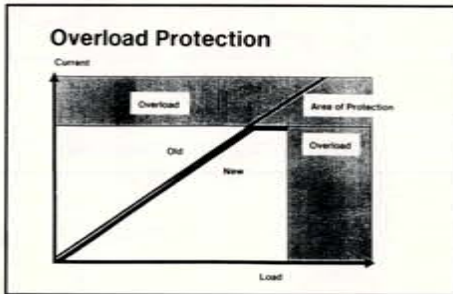
Senses loss of tractive effort and adjusts power output to maintain traction.



Produces more torque across the operating range.



Improved speed control on grades.



Automatically cuts power off in overload conditions.

New Items Preview

Now the big question: Are you at the controls of a prototype or a model?

Easy, right? Even someone with no more than a marginal interest can tell you that model trains do not operate as smoothly as their prototypes.

Until now... with the new Five-Star Propulsion System from Märklin. This is revolutionary technology. Advanced state-of-the-art electronics and a redesigned motor combine to create the prototypical propulsion system model railroaders have only dreamed of.

System is One of 114 New Items in 1988!

This new propulsion system tops the list of 1988 New Items from Märklin — a list that includes 114 new cars, trains, locomotives, and accessories. In this issue of HotTraks, we preview some specially selected new items. For an in-depth review of what to expect this year from Märklin, read the enclosed 1988 New Items Newspaper.

And, of course, for the most complete and up-to-date information on all our 1988 New Items, see your local authorized U.S. Märklin dealer.

Reserve Your New Items Now!

Only authorized U.S. Märklin dealers have product and delivery information on all the 1988 New Items. The best way to be sure you get the new Märklin trains and accessories you want is to reserve them in advance. So see your authorized dealer — and place your order.

Retro-fitting the New Propulsion System

In 1988, five new locomotives will be equipped with the Five-Star Propulsion

System. Plus, the system is designed so it can be retro-fitted into 47 current Märklin locomotives. Elsewhere on this page is a chart which lists the locomotives that can be converted to the Five-Star Propulsion System.

The new system ensures that your locomotives not only look, but operate like their prototypes. As soon as you turn your speed control knob, you get an entirely new perspective. The new system makes it possible to:

- Start and stop in precisely the same manner as the prototype for your model.
- Set a prototypical speed or set it for playing.
- Operate at higher efficiency levels and enjoy smooth running even at extremely slow speeds.
- Operate with complete confidence that high output will never destroy the propulsion system.
- Control your direction electrically, including the changing of headlights at locomotive ends.

More details about the new Five-Star Propulsion System can be found on Page 9 of your New Items Newspaper.

Digital Expands!

In 1988, Märklin will introduce new decoder panels that will make it possible to operate HO-DC and I-gauge with Märklin Digital. And in Z-gauge, the following items will be available in Digital this year: the #9108 Orient Express train; the #9112 Chiemgau Railcar Set; and the #9808 2-8-2 Mikado Locomotive.

You may recall some discussion late last year about Digital also expanding to N-gauge. Märklin earlier this year entered into an agreement with the Arnold Company,

which manufactures N-gauge, for Arnold to offer various control units for Digital operation of N-gauge trains in Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands — but not in the U.S. We will keep you posted on the potential availability of these units in the United States.

With Märklin Digital you can operate as many as 80 different trains simultaneously using either your Control 80 or, if you have the computer interface, your home computer. Either way, the Digital System is a fascinating way to expand your hobby.

Consider the new Digital Vista Dome Car (see page 7 of your New Items Newspaper). Just push a button and your waiter moves back and forth in the dome area to serve passengers — all while your train is rolling. You can even turn compartment lights and table lamps on and off. Only Märklin gives you this kind of sophisticated control. And now, everything is Digital.

For information on how you can convert your locomotives to the Märklin Digital System, visit the Certified Märklin Digital Dealer nearest you. For the name and address of that dealer, call 1-800-772-2490 or, for a complete list of our Certified Digital Dealers, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Certified Digital Dealers List, c/o the Märklin Club, P.O. Box 795, Elm Grove, WI 53122.

The Orient Express Resurrected in Z-Gauge

Mystery, fantasy, suspense, romance... it can only mean one thing — the Orient Express. In 1988, Märklin will resurrect the mystique of this legendary and luxurious land cruiser with production of the Orient Express in Z-gauge (back page of your New Items Newspaper).

This truly magnificent train is pulled by the historic Pacific Express Steamer with tender, and features a baggage car, dining car, pullman car, and a sleeping car — every detail corresponding to the prototype cars as they were operated in the 1920s and 1930s.

(An HO version of the Orient Express will be available in Primex; the locomotive and cars in this train will be different from the Z-gauge version.)

The Rheingold Express Rolls Again in HO

Along the Rhine River, in the Mittelgebirge Region of Germany, is some of the most storied landscape in all of Europe. One of the legends of the region is that of the Nibelungen treasure — the Rheingold. This exclusive train distinguished itself as one of the most luxurious of all the world's luxury trains.

This year, Märklin celebrates the 60th anniversary of the Rheingold legend with production of an HO version of this

toric train (see pages 2 & 3 of your New Items Newspaper). This special set includes five exquisitely-detailed long distance passenger cars as they appeared between 1928 and 1939. The Class 18-4 Pacifics were the primary motive power for the Rheingold and are modelled in the #3518 and #3618 (Digital) locomotives.

Sugar Beet Train Arrives in HO

A visitor traveling the German countryside in early to mid-October can't help but wonder if German farmers produce anything but sugar beets. They're everywhere. A very precise harvest and refining schedule must be followed to assure maximum yield—a schedule that requires a tremendous amount of coordination and teamwork between farmers and the railroad.

In 1988, Märklin commemorates this cooperation with its introduction of the Sugar Beet Train in HO (see page 5 of your New Items Newspaper). The train features a Sugar Refinery Diesel Hydraulic Switch Engine pulling four German gondolas and a Belgian gondola, each is numbered and weathered for added realism. Removable sugar beet load inserts are also included.

American Mini-Club Adds Six New Prototypes

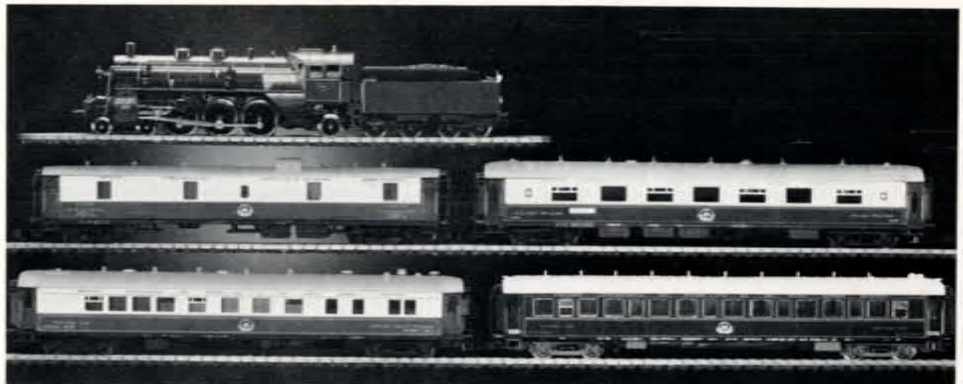
The New York Central Steam Locomotive, a USRA design Mikado 2-8-2 with tender, will be one of six new prototypes added to the American Mini-Club in 1988. Other models added this year include the New York Central caboose, RailGon-Gondola, RailBox-Boxcar, Mobilgas Tank Car and Illinois Central boxcar.

In 1988, the only place in the world you can acquire these new American Mini-Club prototypes is your U.S.

authorized Märklin dealer. For that reason, we strongly encourage you to visit your local dealer and reserve the new locomotive and cars you want.

Alpha Series Not Available in U.S. This Year

The new Alpha Adventure Railroad Series, featured in the special supplement to your New Items Newspaper, will not be available in the United States in 1988. Alpha trains are specially-designed for small children. The series is expected to be available from all U.S. authorized Märklin dealers by early 1989.



The Orient Express #8108



Locomotive for Rheingold Express #3318

Five-Star Propulsion System Retro-Fit Chart

The following chart lists the 47 Märklin locomotives which can be retro-fitted with the new Five-Star Propulsion System.

No.	Locomotive	No.	Locomotive
3035	Electric FS Italian	3308	Steam BR 85
3039	Electric BR 110	3309	Steam BR 85
3042	Electric BR 111	3310	Steam w/tender BR 050
3049	Electric BR 104	3312	Steam T 5
3058	Electric BR 151	3313	Steam BR 75
3082	Steam w/tender BR 41	3315	Steam w/tender BR 50
3084	Steam w/tender BR 050	3318	Steam w/tender BR 184 Rheingold
3085	Steam w/tender BR 003	3323	Electric SBB CL Re 4/4IV
3102	Steam w/tender BR 53	3324	Electric NS CL 1100
3104	Steam BR 89	3325	Electric SNCF CL BB 7200
3106	Steam BR 78	3326	Electric NS CL 1100
3107	Steam SNCF CL 232 TC	3327	Electric NS CL 1100
3109	Steam KPVE BR T18	3328	Electric SBB CL Re 4/4IV
3145	Diesel SNCF CL Y 50 100	3329	Electric BR 191
3146	Diesel BR V36	3330	Electric SBB CL Re 4/4IV
3153	Electric BR 120	3346	Diesel BR 236
3155	Electric BR 111	3352	Electric SBB CL Ce 6/8III
3156	Electric BR 140	3353	Electric BR 120
3157	Electric BR 160	3354	Electric BR 120.1
3163	Electric SNCB CL 16	3355	Electric BR 111
3165	Electric SNCF CL BB 9200	3356	Electric SBB CL Be 6/8III
3167	Electric SBB CL Ac 3/6II	3357	Electric BR 103
3172	Electric BR 111	3366	Electric BR 152
3304	Steam BR 80		

See Your Local Authorized Dealer Later This Spring for Information on Retro-Fitting Your Locomotives with the New Five-Star Propulsion System.



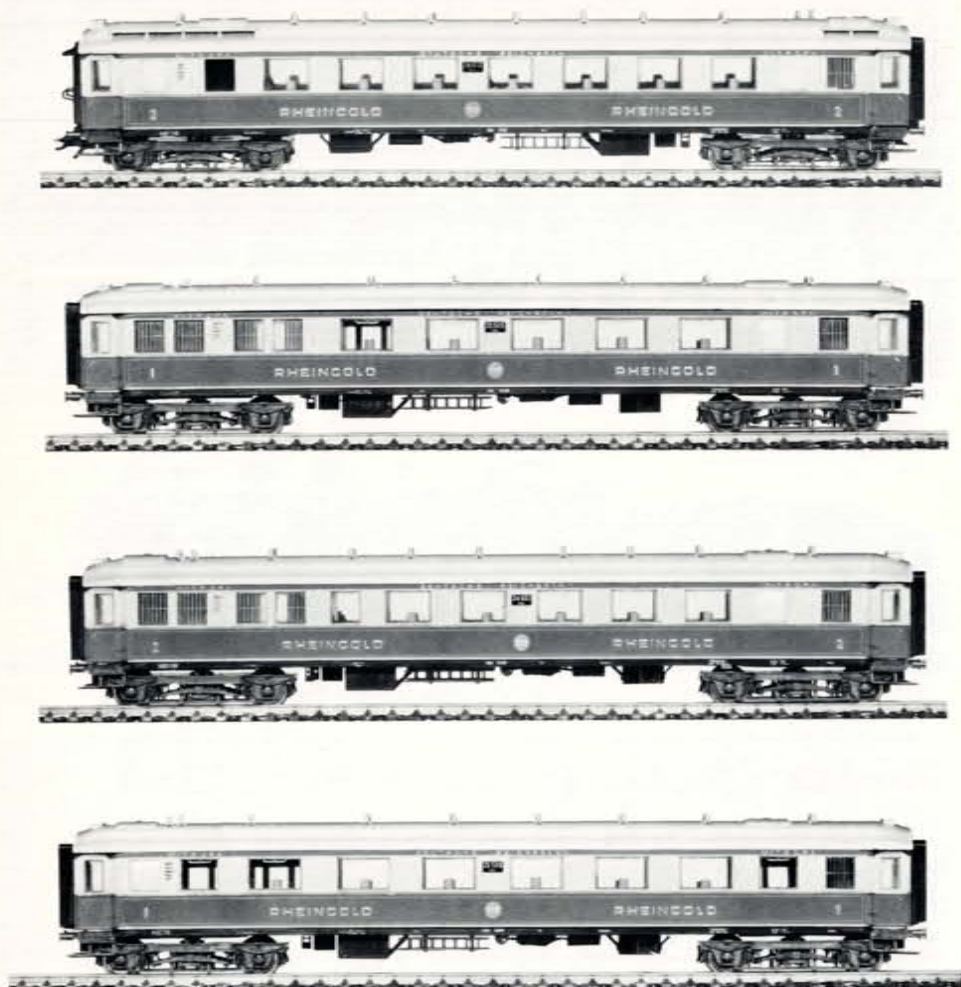
The Sugar Beet Train #2861

Special Club Members Offer!

See for Yourself With the 1988 New Items Video!

The fun and excitement doesn't end with the New Items Newspaper. This year, you have a chance to see the new items in action. In person. In your home. With the 1988 New Items Video. In 12 minutes, you'll see and hear all about the revolutionary technology that made possible the new Five-Star Propulsion System and the new "Everything is Digital" Decoder System. You'll also see and hear about the Rheingold Express, the Orient Express, the Sugar Beet Train, close couplers, the Vista Dome Car with moveable waiter, and more!

As a Club member, the tape, regularly \$12.95, is yours for only \$9.95 (plus shipping and handling)—if you order before May 1, 1988. Simply complete and return the special order form attached to this issue of HotTraks, or order toll free 800-772-2490. When you call, be sure to have your VISA or MasterCard ready. Order early. Our supply is limited and orders will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.



Rheingold Express Cars #4228

Answers to Your Questions

The following questions were submitted by Märklin Club members Frederick C. Pratt of Pompton Lakes, NJ, membership number 5696, and David P. Crowder of Fort Worth, TX, membership number 4806. Both will receive Märklin T-Shirts.

Question: Why do some Primex refrigerator cars have side ladders and others do not?

Answer: Primex refrigerator cars without side ladders represent another style or model of European car design. Not all cars in Europe come equipped with a brakeman's platform.

Question: Why do Märklin trains have so many different versions, such as the 4508?

Answer: The 4508 was produced from 1952 to 1975. Minor design changes were made from year to year, most often in the lettering and paint schemes. Changes were also made to the couplers and wheels. The different versions of the 4508 reflect these changes to provide enthusiasts with an authentic prototype car.

Question: Can you recommend a reference source that fully describes the meaning of locomotive class and coach type, as noted in the Märklin catalogs?

Answer: One of the reference sources available is the 1987/88 MIBA Märklin HO/00 collector's catalog (available only with German text).

For information on acquiring the catalog, write to the publisher, MIBA-Verlag, at Schanzackerstrasse 24-26, 8500 Nurnberg, West Germany.

The catalog details the history of locomotive classifications starting with combination of letters and numbers used in Germany until 1925. You'll also find details on the system used from 1925 through 1968 as well as the system implemented in 1968 and still in use today.

The tables and examples that follow were taken from the catalog to help you more thoroughly understand the classification systems and, hopefully, give you a better appreciation for your trains. We'll start with a table comparing the first two systems.

Locomotive Type	Pre-1925	1925-1967
Express	S	01-19
Passenger (ordinary)	P	20-39
Freight	G	40-59
Tank locomotive (express)	St	60-79
Tank locomotive (passenger)	Pt	60-79
Tank locomotive (freight)	Gt	80-86
Rack and pinion	Z	97
Branch line (sometimes privately owned)	L	98
Narrow gauge	K	99
Electric	E	E + No.
Diesel	V	V + No.

(Numbers 01 to 98 are major classification numbers)

Designations

The following table indicates designations for railcars and small diesel locomotives.

Designation	Description
DT	Steam powered railcars
ETA	Electric railcar with storage batteries
ESA	Control car for ETA
Kb	Small locomotive with "otto" motor

J	Small locomotive with diesel motor and spur gear drive
Kof	Small locomotive with diesel motor and hydraulic transmission
Koe	Small locomotive with diesel motor and electric transmission
VT	Railcar with internal combustion motor
VB	Trailer for VT

Computerized Numbering

On January 1, 1968, a computer numbering system was introduced in which each locomotive had a six digit identification number followed by a dash and a control number. The following tables show this system, which is still in effect today.

Major Group ID Number	Type of Locomotive
0	Steam
1	Electric
2	Diesel
3	Small
4	Electric railcar
5	Railcar with storage batteries
6	Diesel railcar
7	Railbus and maintenance car
8	Control, intermediate and trailer cars for electric railcars
9	Control, intermediate and trailer cars for diesel railcars and railbuses

Comparing Systems

Following is a comparison of the old classification system with the one that went into effect in January 1968 and is still in use today.

Steam Locomotives Old - New	Electric Locomotives Old - New	Diesel Locomotives Old - New
01-001	E03-103	ETA-515
03-003	E18-118	ESA-815
23-023	E40-140	V60-260
41-041	E63-163	VT95-795
50-050	E94-194	VB95-995

A Specific Example

An example of complete classification and operating numbers under the three systems, using the Bavarian Pacific and a 2-10-2 freight locomotive, would be:

For the pre-1925 era: S 3/6 3673
From 1925 to 1968: 18 478
From 1968 to today: 050 082-7

The European UIC Classification

What follows is a summary of information about passenger car classification numbering used by European railroads under the European UIC agreement. Each car has a 12 digit number, an alphabetic classification code, and, finally, a design number.

The First and Second Digits

The first two numbers indicate the cross-border use of the car.

- 50 Cars without RIC authority (not permitted in cross-border traffic).
- 51 Cars with RIC authority (permitted in cross-border traffic).
- 60 Maintenance and passenger cars used within the borders of specific country.
- 61 Trans European Express (TEE) cars and sleeping cars used within a specific country.
- 5 Auto carrier cars used on passenger trains.
- i Sleeping cars used in the European sleeping car pool.

The Third and Fourth Digits

Digits three and four indicate which rail system owns the car.

- 50 German (East) State Railroad
- 51 Polish State Railroad
- 52 Bulgarian State Railroad
- 53 Rumanian State Railroad
- 54 Czechoslovakian State Railroad
- 55 Hungarian State Railroad
- 63 Bern-Lotschberg-Simplon Railroad (Switzerland)
- 66 International Sleeping Car & Tourism Company (Wagon-Lit)
- 71 Spanish Railways
- 72 Yugoslavian Railways
- 73 Greek State Railways
- 74 Swedish State Railways
- 75 Turkish State Railways
- 76 Norwegian State Railroad
- 80 German Federal Railroad
- 81 Austrian Federal Railroad
- 82 Luxemburg Railroad
- 83 Italian State Railroad
- 84 Dutch Railroad
- 85 Swiss Federal Railroad
- 86 Danish State Railways
- 87 French State Railways
- 88 Belgian State Railways
- 94 Portuguese State Railways

The Fifth and Sixth Digits

In most instances, digits five and six give information about the type of car and its interior.

- 00 Mail car
- 06 Sleeping cars of the West German DSG not used in the international pool and not yet coded for the national roster
- 07 Same as 06
- 80 Hospital cars
- 81 1st class or 1st/2nd class car with baggage and mail compartment
- 82 2nd class car with baggage and mail compartment
- 83 2 or 3 axle 2nd class car with baggage and mail compartment
- 84 1st class car with kitchen and dining area
- 85 2nd class car with kitchen and dining area
- 88 Dining car
- 89 Entertainment or salon car

In all other instances, the fifth and sixth digits indicate the following:

The Fifth Digit

- 0 Privately owned car
- 1 1st class car
- 2 2nd class car
- 3 1st/2nd class car
- 4 Slumber coach, 1st and 1st/2nd class
- 5 Slumber coach, 2nd class
- 6 Sleeping car for railroad management use
- 8 Special design car
- 9 Baggage and special use cars

The Sixth Digit

By itself, the sixth digit gives information about the number of compartments in 1st and 1st/2nd class cars.

- 0 10 compartments
- 1 11 compartments
- 2 12 compartments
- 7 7 compartments
- 8 8 compartments
- 9 9 compartments

The Seventh Digit

The sixth and seventh digits are separated by a dash. The seventh digit gives information about the maximum speed permitted for the car.

- 1, 2, 3 Up to 120 km/h (75 mph)
- 4, 5, 6 Up to 140 km/h (87½ mph)
- 7, 8 Up to 160 km/h (100 mph)
- 9 More than 160 km/h (100 mph)

Eighth through 12th Digits

The eighth digit tells what type of heating and lighting the car has. The ninth through 11th numbers are the car's registry number, and the 12th digit (separated from the 11th digit by a dash) is a control number.

Types of Cars

Capital letters are used to indicate the type of car, while lower case letters are used to indicate the type of equipment in a car.

- A Day coach, 1st class
- AR Day coach, 1st class, with kitchen and dining area
- ARD Day Coach, 1st class, with kitchen, dining area, and baggage compartment
- AD Day coach, 1st/2nd class
- B Day coach, 2nd class
- Bc Slumber coach, 2nd class
- BD Day coach, 2nd class, with baggage compartment
- BR Day Coach, 2nd class, with kitchen and dining area
- D Baggage car
- Post Mail car
- DPost Baggage car with mail compartment
- DD Double-deck open auto transporter car for passenger trains
- WR Dining car
- WL Sleeping car
- WG Entertainment car
- WGS Entertainment car with special equipment (movies, etc.)
- b Car with additional brake line and electric control line
- bu Buffet car
- c Slumber coach
- e Car with electric heating
- f Car with engineer compartment for push/pull commuter operation
- g With "u" or "y," car with rubber diaphragm end corridor connections
- i Car with open corridor connections
- k Car with bar and kitchen compartments
- l With "y," car longer than 24 meters with two end entrances, middle entrance, and rubber diaphragm end corridor connections.
- m Express passenger car longer than 24 meters with rubber diaphragm end corridor connections
- n Commuter car longer than 24 meters with diaphragm end corridor connections
- p Express passenger car with open seating and middle entrance
- r With "y," mail cars with high efficiency KE-GPR design brakes
- s With "y," car with closed side corridor
- u Express passenger car with concertina end corridor connections
- v Express passenger car with less than 10A, 12B, 5A compartments (designation used with AB cars)
- x S-Bahn push/pull commuter cars
- y Ordinary passenger cars with open seating and concertina end corridor connections
- z car with central electrical power supply and heating

An Example

Here is a sample designation:

51 80 88—80 235—1
WRmh 132

The first two digits, 51, tell us this car is allowed in cross-border traffic (RIC). The next four digits, 80 and 88, indicate

this is a dining car owned by the German Federal Railroad. The WR further indicates the car is longer than 24 meters with rubber diaphragm end corridor connections (m) and has air conditioning (h). The 132 refers to a particular design series for this type of car. The seventh digit, an 8, indicates the maximum speed this car is

allowed to travel is 160 km/h (100 mph).

This information should make it easier for you to understand the origin and use of your Märklin trains. Again, if you'd like to obtain a copy of the 1987/88 MIBA Märklin HO/00 collector's catalog (German text only), write to the publisher at the address listed earlier in this article.

Club Member's How-To

By Frank M. Meek
Membership Number: 3708
Alexandria, VA

The following instructions show how to modify most Märklin Z-gauge electric locomotives (not #8856) and some diesel engines so they will have red end marker lights similar to the #8101 and #8107 Märklin locomotives.

You will need the following items for each locomotive being modified:

- Two (2) Märklin #60210 red bulbs (if red bulbs are not available, substitute with clear bulbs.)
- Two (2) sections of insulated wire about the same length as your locomotive.
- One (1) bottle DEKA-transparent paint, 29 crimson (available from most U.S. authorized Märklin dealers and/or local hobby stores).
- Tools: needle-nose pliers with a wire cutting blade; tweezers with pointed tips; tape; small piece of wood such as a popsicle stick; wire strippers; soldering iron and solder.

STEP ONE—Painting Clear Bulbs

Simply tape the leads to the popsicle stick so the bulb extends beyond the edge of the stick, then dip the bulb into whichever paint you're using and let dry overnight. One coat of paint is usually enough.

STEP TWO—Positioning the Wire

Remove the engine body and position the wire so that it extends from just below and in front of the headlight at one end of the car to the center of the metal plate at the other end of the circuit board. The wire should run along the board's edge. Once you have the length correct, remove

about 5mm to 7mm of insulation from each end of the wire. Make a small hook in one end of the wire. Solder both ends of the wire heavily. (This is a preventative measure for a later step when you will be soldering the wire to the circuit board. A heavily soldered wire now will require less heat later, reducing the likelihood of damaging the switching diodes.)

AN IMPORTANT NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Märklin Club Member Frank Meek offers excellent instructions for installing red end marker lights in certain Märklin Z-gauge locomotives. Due to the soldering expertise needed and the small confines of Z-gauge locomotives, we recommend it only for enthusiasts who have a thorough working knowledge of the internal workings of a locomotive as well as the ability to perform fine soldering techniques.

*Ken Brzenk
Maintenance Tip Editor*

STEP THREE—Securing the Connection

Take one of the red bulbs and cut one of the leads on it so that only 5mm to 7mm remains. Make a small hook in this shortened lead, hook it over the hooked end of the insulated wire, press together with the pliers, and touch with a hot soldering iron to secure the connection.

STEP FOUR—Positioning the Bulbs

Position the bulb so that it lies horizontally beneath the headlight and then bend the long lead along the side the red bulb. Solder the loose end of insulated wire to the metal plate at the opposite end of the circuit board—be careful, too much heat will prevent the bulb from lighting.

STEP FIVE—The Electrical Connection

Remove headlight. With pointed tweezers, pry up one of the two metal prongs that form the base of the electrical connection for the headlight. Thread the long lead under the prong, then reinsert headlight.

STEP SIX—Test Run

Run your locomotive. The red end marker light should come on when the clear bulb at the front end of the engine (the headlight) goes on. If all is OK, cut the excess lead, reinstall the body, then double-check everything to be certain all engine parts are secure.

Repeat the above steps for the other end of the locomotive. The installation of the red end marker lights has the added advantage of making a tighter fitting engine body. You may want to secure the insulated wire to the engine with a small piece of electrical tape.

This installation procedure will work on most Märklin Z-gauge electric and diesel locomotives.

Editor's Note: Club member Frank Meek will receive \$25 for submitting this how-to article.

Add a Touch of Realism to Your Layout By Giving Your Trees a Weathered Look

Frederick C. Pratt
Membership Number: 5696
Pompton Lakes, NJ

As a model railroad enthusiast, it's important for my layout to appear as authentic as possible. For me, that includes the scenery as well as my trains.

One way I've found to enhance the

realism of my layout is to give my trees a weathered look. It's a relatively simple process that requires no more than two or three bottles of paint (your choice of colors), a paint brush, glue, and landscaping dirt.

First, paint your tree trunks and branches all the same color (any color from dark brown to off white); second, add highlights or different colors to detail;

third, glue the tree to your layout; and fourth, dab glue around the tree's roots and sprinkle around the landscaping dirt.

When you're finished, your trees and your layout will have a much more realistic appearance.

Editor's Note: Club member Frederick Pratt will receive an official Märklin Club coffee mug for submitting this Helpful Hint.

The Advantages of Modeling European Railroads

By David G. Switzer
 Membership Number: 5590
 United States Armed Services
 Gelnhausen, West Germany

I received my first Märklin train set when I was a mere five years old, and ever since I have wondered what those European railways, landscapes, and structures were really like. I had to be satisfied with the photos of layouts and bits and pieces of information gleaned from catalogs and occasional books. You can imagine my delight when I got the opportunity to live in Germany for a few years. What I've discovered is there are many advantages to modeling European instead of American railways.

One major advantage is the variety of locomotives. For instance, if you model in the early 1960s era, you can have steam, diesel, as well as a beautiful variety of electric locomotives and be perfectly realistic.

Another advantage is train size. Since trains leave even the smallest village every few minutes, passenger trains are often only five or ten cars long and a local commuter may be only two cars long. Freight trains are similarly short, averaging in length between 15 to 20 cars. Thus, it is easy to model a prototype European train without having to purchase as many as three times the number of cars, as is often the case with assembling a prototype U.S. train.

In addition, the main line in Europe usually run on two or more tracks, making operation of multiple trains much easier. On the other hand, if you want a single line spur, these are very common to the smaller towns or isolated industries.

The European landscape also offers advantages, especially in the sense that

things are so close together. The Alps are a prime example of where a major city can be amongst some of the most spectacular scenery in the world. The compactness of the area allows a variety of cultures to be within a few miles of each other. So if you model an area near a border, you have the advantage of being able to use rolling stock of both nations, especially since trains often do mingle at the border.

I remember when I first saw photos of German model railways I thought the scenery was too perfect and too beautiful. Well, guess what — it is incredibly beautiful. Lots of green and flowers everywhere. Now, that's not to say the European landscape doesn't have its share of grime, but, when compared to the U.S., there just isn't as much junk.

The structures are one of my favorite aspects of European railways. Right next to that auto factory will be a thousand-year-old city wall. In the middle of town will be a modern post office and a thousand-year-old church. Every town seems to have a couple of churches and castles of some historical and architectural significance. So in the area of a small layout one can realistically model many spectacular, magnificent, and unusual buildings.

The ability to model such a wide variety of unusual structures in such a small area is not only unique, but makes modeling European trains a dream come true.

Editor's Note: Club member D.G. Switzer will receive \$25 for submitting this feature article.

Install 8992 Z-Gauge Crossing Gates in 5 Steps

By Ernest B. Pugh
 Membership Number: 2180
 DeBary, FL

I was very interested to read Jeff Stimson's "how-to" feature (*HotTraks*, September 1987) on "incorporating Z-gauge 8992 crossing gates." After reading the article, I experimented with methods of installation and developed my own procedure. Here it is in five easy-to-do steps:

STEP ONE—Draw a Diagram

Reproduce an enlarged diagram "to scale" on 20" x 20" piece of heavy duty cardboard. Use colored pencils to draw full wiring detail.

STEP TWO—Mounting Components

Mount your components (crossing gates, circuit tracks, relay switch, plugs, and sockets) on the cardboard at their designated positions.

STEP THREE—Wiring

Actually do the wiring on the cardboard, following precisely the colored lines. Make all connections, including those to the power pack (AC) located in the lower right-hand corner (use masking tape to hold the wires in place).

STEP FOUR—Layout Installation

Now remove the gates and circuit tracks from the cardboard diagram and transfer them to the surface of your train table and place them at the desired positions on your track layout.

STEP FIVE—Turn on the Power

You should have 10 connections to hookup. Add wire extensions as necessary, turn on power, and your crossing gates are ready for operation.

SPECIAL NOTE

I found that it's best to mount your cardboard diagram on 20" x 20" piece of plywood resting on a low stool on the floor beneath my train table. It is out of the way, yet easily accessible. And it provides added support for the power pack.

Editor's Note: Club member Ernest Pugh will receive an official Märklin Club coffee mug for submitting this Helpful Hint.

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If you're an experienced writer with an interest in building layouts for Märklin Z-gauge, Greenberg Publishing Company may have an opportunity for you.

Greenberg, publisher of "Greenberg's Guide to Märklin HO" (available through Märklin Depot, see page 8) has announced plans to publish a similar guide

for Z-gauge enthusiasts — but the company needs an author. If you would like to be considered for this opportunity, contact:

Bruce Greenberg
Greenberg Publishing Company
 7543 Main Street
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HOTTRAKS

Märklin Club, P.O. Box 795, Elm Grove, WI 53122

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