

NOCH TRACK CLEANER

for HO/OO/On30, also for TT and N

Distributed by All Aboard Modellbahn, PO Box 388, Mittagong NSW 2575.

ALL OF US HAVE a problem keeping the track on our layouts clean, whether we run trains occasionally, or whether we have a busy exhibition layout. There are several track-cleaning systems out there, ranging from expensive specialist track cleaning vehicles (that may or may not work effectively) to simple abrasive rubbers or spirit-based fluids. Each system has its supporters who swear by it, and its knockers who say it never works. Whichever system you use to clean your tracks, how do you keep them clean?

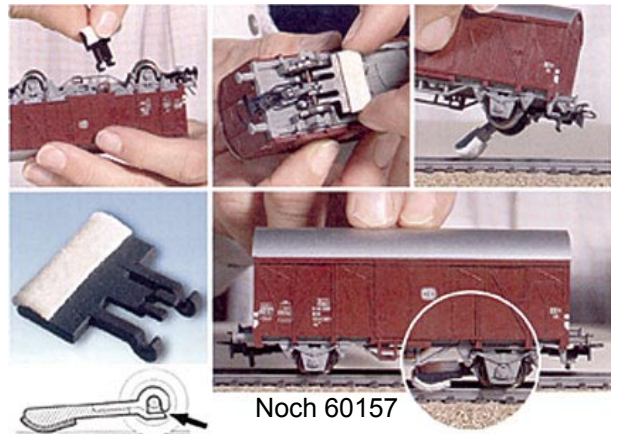
The well-known German firm of Noch has devised a simple and inexpensive device that is attached to the axle of a vehicle and dragged around the layout by that vehicle. The idea is not new, going back many decades to the legendary John Allen of Gorre and Daphetid fame. However, Noch have made a simple throw-away item that will keep clean track clean as long as the trains continue to run.

The track cleaner itself is a small plastic box containing a weight that is clipped onto the axle on any item of rolling stock. Attached to this unit is a coarse felt pad that rubs along the rail surface, keeping it clean. When the pad is completely worn and dirty, the unit is simply unclipped from the axle and thrown away.

They are sold in packs of five, so there are plenty of replacements available.

The first time I tried it, I cleaned my track thoroughly, then ran the unit round the layout under a vehicle. I was amazed to see how much dirt was on the pad, even though I had just cleaned all the track. In normal use, I would suggest having two vehicles fitted with these track cleaners which are then run around the layout in the normal course of operations. They should prove to be very effective.

These track cleaners are designed to clip on to 2mm diameter axles, which are the standard for most makes of HO/OO wheels, but not all. Also, I found that with Bachmann OO wheels, even though these have 2mm axles, there is a boss on the inside face of each wheel which prevents the cleaner from clipping on to the axle. The solution here (and for other makes of wheel with similar insulating bosses) is to file down the sides of the clips where they attach



a simple and inexpensive track cleaner attaches to the axle of a vehicle

to the axles. To work properly, these track cleaners must be able to hang freely from the axle and rotate freely around it. Always check this when fitting the cleaner, and touch up with a file if necessary to ensure free operation.

With these minor limitations, I have no hesitation in recommending the Noch track cleaner as a simple, effective and inexpensive way of keeping clean track clean on your layout while ever trains are running. Highly recommended. The price of a set of five track cleaners (Noch 60157) in August 2007 was \$12.30, but please check the current price on the [All Aboard Exclusive web site](#), or phone them on (02) 4871 2966.

For additional info visit the [Noch web site](#).

Phil Knife

