



NOVEMBER 2006

### Next Meetings

**4<sup>th</sup> November:** Darling Downs MR Club, Bailey Henderson Centre (northern end of Tor St)

12:00 noon Lunch available (\$2-\$3)

14:30: Our meeting with Show & Tell

Bring your own trains if you want a run!

### Report on Visit to All-Gauge

On 9<sup>th</sup> September, upon an invitation, we NMRA members visited the All Gauge model Railway Club at Carina.

Division 1 Superintendent Glenn put up a proposal that we host a convention in September 2007. This was later changed to September 2008 as Sydney has already got a convention at the proposed time. Like most conventions ours will have clinics and contests on the Saturday, a social gathering on Saturday evening and layout tours, probably drive yourself, on the Sunday. Ideas are sought and eventually a committee will be appointed to plan this.

Show-and-tell was a bit light this month but Phil Perry had some good work to show. His N gauge DCC and sound equipped UP E-7 and his Canadian cast FP-45 shell were well received. However his DCC Shay in which he found room for added weight was amazing. Bob Deakin showed photos from his recent Melbourne trip and of particular interest were those of a PRR K-4 live steamer in the making. Bob reports that the Melbourne NMRA members treated him royally.

After afternoon tea we all had a good look at the layouts belonging to All Gauge. These all seemed to be very well executed with good scenery and track conditions. I was struck by the cleanliness of the whole area especially the layouts. The club rooms are a credit to the members and the concept of using city council buildings in the middle of a sporting complex balances the diverse usage of this area.

### Convention 2006

Five Division 1 members attended Convention 2006 at Niagara Park, a suburb of Gosford, NSW. We arrived during a heat wave but I'm sure all found the presentations enlightening and interesting. There were three talks given at each session so it was impossible to hear everything. Featuring conspicuously were DCC, scenery, lineside accessories and rolling stock.



Four of the Division 1 attendees having eaten their dinner plates clean, at the Niagara Park Convention.

On the Sunday there was a drive-yourself tour of layouts. I saw some beauties modelling NSW, US and Britain. Most were excellent operating pikes and a few featured remarkable ingenuity. Over the coming months I will probably mention some of the things I saw and heard but I will credit those from whom I learnt.

Our own Ted Freeman from Toowoomba donated a set of free decals to every participant and is following that up with a modelling contest using those decals. I visited John Parker's Santa Fe layout rather late on Sunday and he was still sparking and enthusiastic after a whole day of visitors. John is full of innovative ideas and a visit to his web-site at [www.users.bigpond.net.au/jfparker](http://www.users.bigpond.net.au/jfparker) might be useful. I hope that John puts some of his great ideas into Mainline as there is so much of clever use for us all.

Gerry Hopkins, helped by his wife Lauris and others, was the organiser. Although I did hear it was rather a one-man band, he/they did a wonderful job and probably slept all day Monday. Gerry's Great Northern was kept going all day Sunday – thank God. Wonderful operating possibilities are a feature of this layout.

John Saxon's Cedar Valley Lines based on Tony Koester's Allegheny Midland had nearly 60 guests so that gives you an idea of the scrutiny layouts get. John's features coal and through operations in the east.

One layout of immense promise is David Swinfield's modern Burlington Northern. Modelling 22 miles between Las Vegas and La Junta, he managed to get 4 scale miles of mainline which takes over 10 real minutes to negotiate.

In an area so full of DCC it was refreshing to see that David Lord ran his old British DC locos with the same smoothness as the best DCC locos on other layouts. Super tuning paid off with some very old three pole Triang motors.

I saw two NSW layouts one belonging to Denis Clarke with jewel-like DJH locos in typical scenes and the other Jack Parker (not to be confused with John)

with exquisite scenes that I was sure I had seen during my drive south. Jack also showed a few of his remarkable photographs of NSWGR and they really are up there with O. Winston Link and others.

There is a lot of hand-laid track including points in this area. Some modellers use very fine rail. Sadly I did not see the other layouts that were open but I came away realising that this Gosford group have been able to learn so much from each other and that their contribution to MR in Australia is immense. I just hope that this Convention gave them all the thanks they deserve by our enthusiasm for what they have achieved.

Twelve layouts were open and each property was marked with a white cross-buck on the footpath at the entrance. I must thank all of the presenters, organisers, officials and hosts for their help and friendliness and the trouble they went to ensuring that we got a lot from this Convention. John and Toni Saxon were as always wonderful hosts and introduced us to many people as well as ensuring we were well looked after.

### **The Display Layout**

While our display layout made it to the Toowoomba Show, there are many things we now know could have been done differently. These improvements and further work to finish the layout have been progressing slowly but with good purpose.

We are now ensuring that the rail near module joints is flexible enough for good alignment. Slide switches are being installed to operate and electrically switch the yard area. Dangerous sharp edges and screw points have been removed from under the layout. New ties have been placed where we broke some on our first outing. But most of all we are enjoying each others company and learning a lot as we go.

We haven't got into the scenery yet but that will be done once the fundamentals are done. Some of the methods discussed at the Convention should make things easier, lighter and stronger here. Doing a job like this gives us a chance to learn each others strengths and that will help us all in future endeavours. At this stage I don't know where the next outing will be but it seems that the layout will go together faster than it did last time.

### **Promoting This Hobby**

What do you do with your old MR magazines, catalogues and such things? Rather than throw them out leave them your local doctor's or dentist's waiting rooms. Usually these are overloaded with New Ideas and Womans Weekly so you have male patients sitting there eagerly wanting something to read. Imagine the interesting new world you can conjure up for somebody if they are looking through your old

Walthers Catalogues. You could start them on a new hobby and that's got to be good for all of us.

### **Comment**

Somewhere, there must be one heck of a big pile of model dirt. If I could find it, I would make a fortune selling it for fill and extracting the minerals from it. How do I know that this great mountain exists? Because most model railroads have lots of cuttings and tunnels but no fills!

We like to model the dramatic. So cuttings with erosion furrows and strata rocks and overburden are fun to make and happen to be one thing most of us can play God with reasonably convincingly. Let's face it they do look good. On the prototype, the earth removed from these features is mostly used to fill gullies and depressions to keep the track as level as possible. But they have one drawback from the modellers point of view. Fills are pretty ordinary.

Just trying to think where I saw one leaves me wondering if I've ever seen one at all on a layout. We have areas with single sided cuttings where you could say the dirt has been used to prop up the line but these hardly qualify.

When we come to a depression, bridges are favoured because once again, they can look dramatic. And there are so many types of bridges we can model. Besides this, you can see beyond the bridge.

How then can we come to consider fills? Trees and shrubbery go well as do scree slopes and wood cribbing and sometimes a culvert or pipe drain are used. These are normally on the facing side but what happens on the other side and that side usually beyond the track?

If you want a culvert/pipe on the viewing side then a stream or pool of water is appropriate for the higher side. If there is no water coming out of the pipe on the lower side then this pool will be stagnant and a lower level than the pipe inlet or just dry. Try a pool of bright green algae or a pool with floating growth.

But for something completely different, have the viewing side also the higher side so that you look down on the track. This is often the way we look at real railroads and more in keeping with the way we view, somewhat downwards, upon our model railroads.

### **Perhaps - the Last Ten Questions!**

1. Which steam locomotive holds the world's record single loco haulage record of 18,000 tons?
2. What railroad was the first transcontinental railroad in North America?
3. What was the number of the ex-Southern Pacific GS-4 4-8-4 that pulled the American Freedom Train during 1976?

4. What was the name of a “fallen flag” railroad once named after a race horse?
5. On what line was the Whyte designation for a 4-8-4 called a Pocono?
6. On what line was the Whyte designation for a 4-8-4 called a Glider?
7. What railroad pioneered ditch lights in North America in 1956?
8. What railroad was known as “The Old Reliable”?
9. In 1901 an Atlantic Coast Line train averaged over 100 miles per hour for 5 miles near Little Satilla River, Georgia while in a contest with the Seaboard Air Line for the Cuban mail contract. What was that average speed?
10. What famous train hired an Indian chief in full regalia to tell children stories en route?

### **Answers to Last Issues Questions**

1. New York Susquehanna & Western.
2. Dunnage is shelving, blocking, bracing, padding, partitioning, sawdust, straw and other portable loose material used to protect shipments in transit.
3. Less than carload.
4. No, but they did in almost every other country involved.
5. Pikes Peak, Colorado at 14,110 feet.
6. Near Salton and Imperial Valley, California on the former SP at 199.2 feet below sea level.
7. Boston & Maine.
8. The “Old and Weary”.
9. Tank car – Union Tank Line.
10. Electric Railway Presidents Conference Committee which determined the need for such a car in 1929. The plans were completed in 1935.

### **Air Brakes**

I received the following information from Glenn which may be of use for those interested in anything railroad and for those wishing to run trains in a prototypical manner.

“Tons per operative brake” (TOB) is calculated by dividing the total tons by the operative air brakes in the train. For instance, if a vehicle train has 70 cars and it weighs 5590 tons, then it is 79.8 TOB (5590 divided by 70) and the train qualifies for 70mph.

If the train had one of the air brakes cut out on a car, then it would only have 69 operative brakes instead of 70 and the TOB would be 81 instead of 79.8 and the speed would be reduced to 55mph if all the cars are loaded.

If they are all intermodal trains or trains with auto racks, then the TOB is raised to 90 TOB for qualifying to run 70mph.

If the vehicle train has boxcars in it, then it falls under the 80 TOB guideline.

Intermodal cars are different for figuring operative brakes. A five pack car has three brake valves, so it is considered as three cars. Most three packs have two brake valves, so they are considered as two cars.

If the cars are non-articulated, like TTEX cars, they also have two brake valves and are two cars. If the train is a solid double stack train, then it can be up to 105 TOB and still run 70mph.

From Keel Middleton – BNSF Engineer, through Lindy Rhodes.

### **Our 2008 Convention**

The 2008 Convention is a long way out but lets all give it some thought and be prepared to think and plan and give your contributions. We can make this a memorable Convention.

If you think there is some job that you will be good at or that you are willing to do, put your hand up now.

At least by being involved you will meet more attendees, people who in the future might be of great help to you. But help them now with your ideas, your labour, your enthusiasm, your interest and your friendship. Now is the time for us all to help each other and pull together so that we can collectively give all of our visitors a wonderful experience.

It’s a long time before the Proposed Convention but give Glenn a month or so to finish off his exams then let him know how you can contribute.