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SEPTEMBER 2007

Coming Meetings

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13th October Ian Wellings

17/18th November Div.1
Mini-Convention at John Lebsanft,
Bundaberg.

8th December Mark Ward

(All meetings start at 1.30pm unless advised)

Outing at Denis Lane's

The Westridge RR at Denis Lane's looked brilliant and many members had the chance to run a train or two through the Allegheny coalfields as represented on this top-class MR. Denis has managed to get a workable balance in his railroad with timber, coke and other small industries.

The sawmill that many of us saw some time back before completion is now a "working industry", in place and producing sawn lumber with typical sawmill debris and sounds. Denis has lavished a lot of skill, attention to detail and art on this installation and in the setting of the forested hills it is a real gem.

In the formal part of the gathering, Glenn, our superintendent, gave details of our planning for the 2008 Convention. He then talked about the Display layout and what now needs to be done. Geoff Aldridge has donated two gift vouchers worth \$140 each to be raffled, one at a time. These are to raise funds for the display layout. We thank Geoff for this generous donation and for his wonderful spirit in the tradition of NMRA.



Denis Lane's scratchbuilt sawmill, a new industry on his Westridge RR. The interior, partially exposed to the elements, is fully modelled authentically. The circular trimming saws are silver coloured dress sequins. Photo by Paul Skehan.

Show-and-tell was as eclectic as usual. Glenn Stevens showed brass B & O wagon-top boxcar and a B & O wagon-top caboose, each beautifully finished. Glenn also had a pair of brass B & O "sharknose" diesels to complete a train.

Graeme Prideaux had photos taken many moons ago of the Sunshine Division NMRA first display layout in 12mm gauge. This was used for the May show but sadly after a torrid summer that caused line expansion at its later home, it finished up in the rubbish tip at Thursday Island!

Laurie McLean is a regular in this section with quality scratchbuilt models and this time showed a styrene coach repair house and a sawmill made from wood, both exquisite models.

Phil Perry, another regular in this section showed a DCC 'N' scale Galloping Goose and this was finished to a very high standard. The Goose was actually smaller in size than a lot of decoders are!

After afternoon tea/coffee it was back to the train room as I can't imagine anyone not wishing to complete a run on this superb RR. Denis also had some of his many videos/DVD's playing so I think everyone came away reluctantly after a wonderful afternoon.

Thank you Denis for having us over, especially at short notice.

Comment

Have you ever noticed how a particular issue of the popular magazines is one that is loaded with good articles and another one doesn't have a lot of interest? The May 07 RMC that I

mentioned in the last Newsletter is one such issue. In our last Newsletter I mentioned the wonderful article by David Lambert about open deck bridges in RMC May 2007. One important thing that he says in that article is that we should honour the new generation of equipment with a setting consistent with their level of detail. That means bringing your rolling stock, structures, track and line side accessories, scenery, operating methods, etc. up to a level that matches the best of the equipment you have.

Much of our thinking on RR focus on the locomotive and that's understandable when you think of the size, colour, drama of its motion and power that it exerts. Few books concentrate on the rolling stock and in some circles freight cars are considered little more than a necessary evil behind the loco. That's why once again I wish to extol the virtues of the NMRA publication "The Postwar Freight Car Fleet".

The photos are taken just after WW II so are applicable to anyone modelling the "transitional" period give or take 10 years. I still see in the media and heard in conversation so many misconceptions about freight cars and the make-up of trains in this period. The RMC series "Essential Freight Cars" is also an excellent source of how to model the cars of this period.

Sometimes you see at model shows, a layout where all of the buildings and structures are modern. That's pretty unusual in the real world. Walk down Queen Street and you see vast glass shoebox shaped modern towers. But there are still some buildings dating back to the late 1800's and early 1900's. As the 20th century progressed new ideas using new materials began to be used. The further into the 20th century your layout is placed the more of the modern structures one would expect to see; but there would still be some oldies about. Similarly with line side accessories like signalling. Early in the century most of the signals were semaphore. As the century progressed more lights were seen. But there are the exceptions here too. There were certainly some wig-wag signals still going in the 1990's at road crossings and some may be still going. The SP was still using them on the Siskiyou Line at Ray Gold, Oregon. On the CSX there are still semaphores operating to this day.

I've never seen a layout with staff operation, yet the Bessemer & Lake Erie was still using this in 2000, AD not BC! Staff operation can require some outdoor fittings to be modelled.

Besides, it is an interesting operational method that I know I want to try on the JJ&E (when it's built).

Scenery on your MR could be modelled to the standard of your best equipment. I'm amazed at the proliferation of scenic materials on the market and much in this field can be obtained in your neighbourhood bush without spoiling its ecology. What needs to be done is to use it and fit it into a logical biographic form. That is, slow flowing streams on flatlands, shorter and sparser trees in deserts and drier areas, seasonal considerations, etc.

We are hosting the 2008 Convention next September and it is now that we should be looking at ways to bring our layouts up to scratch. After all that's only 12 months away. There will be layout tours and while yours may not be open for all visitors you are going to make friends with some visitors and in some cases are going to feel obliged to ask them home. And of course a visit to the train room is inevitable.

That gives you just a year to "honour the new generation of equipment with a setting consistent with their level of detail".

2007 Convention

This year's Convention draws closer. A good attendance by our Division could ensure a reciprocal attendance from down south when we hold our Convention next year. The 2007 Convention is in Wentworth Falls, The Blue Mountains on 6th October. Now this has to be a superb locality to encourage your partners to come. There is just so much for you and your partner to enjoy in The Blue Mountains.

We will be offering plenty of attractions to encourage people to come to our Convention next year. By making our Convention the centre of an extended Queensland holiday we should get good attendance. We have MR attractions in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Tropical North. We have arguably the second best railway museum in the world and if people wish to inspect we can arrange a "behind the scenes look". Attendees can go further north in Queenslander class on The Sunlander and experience the best railway cuisine in Australia.

Attending our convention can be part of a tour that could take in famous holiday places like the Gold Coast, Lamington N.P., Fraser Island,

The Barrier Reef, the Tropical North, the Stockman's Hall of Fame, etc.
So give serious thought to going to The Blue Mountains this year and be an ambassador for our 2008 Convention.

The Display Layout

Work continues on the display layout and we are firm that it will not be presented in public until we have the scenery in. At the moment Graham Emery is amending the points for more reliable DCC operation and they will be placed further back into the yard area to have better track flow and minimise the "S" bend factor we had.

The module ends have been trimmed to allow better connection with each other. We intend changing the track connections between modules for better running. As we have all of the scenic profiles down, we can soon start to build the scenery.

This has all been a learning experience but we are determined to have a layout of which you will all be justly proud.

Your Membership

I've just paid my annual subscription to NMRA and as I look over the various levels of membership, I'm struck by the opportunities we now have to join. Fortunately, I take the "full" subscription which brings me Scale Rails, the re-vamped Bulletin with the Bulletin pages about NMRA business still included. But with a lot more! There has been a huge improvement since the Board of Trustees courageously took the step for the magazine change and Stephen Priest took over as editor. I was happy with the previous editors but putting Scale Rails on a more business-like footing has worked wonders.

In the August issue there is a great article on how to build an oil refinery. Perhaps the most important thing isn't just the "recipe" of parts for this imposing yet not oversized structure; it is the philosophy behind the way things were done. There is a lot of "artistic deception and licence" taken. This gives the structure a realistic appearance but without slavishly following the exact placement of elements. And who would know the difference? This is the best oil refinery I've seen in the MR press. That well known modeller of the Monon, Mont Switzer has an article on a North Western

Refrigerator Line reefer that is a gem. And what a striking freight car it turns out to be. He starts off with a Branchline kit so you don't have to paint and decal it, even though as a perfectionist, he does.

A regular is MMR Pat Harriman, an architect, who draws wonderfully clear plans of structures. Every time I see one of Pat's drawings I say, "I've got to model that!" These plans are drawn in true perspective which brings them to life far better than flat drawings do.

Added to these three are other articles that make us proud to be NMRA members. Even the advertisements are to be scanned carefully. You have a lot of advertisements in Scale Rails which never make the big magazine, probably because they are about products that are made in small workshops. Believe me, there are a lot of very useful products out there that may only be made known to us through the pages of Scale Rails. So next time you are renewing your subscription, think seriously about taking a membership category that includes Scale Rails. It may well become your main magazine about MR – it's that good!

Looking Around

Did you notice from the photo caption above that Denis Lane used dress sequins as circular saws in his sawmill? It pays to browse in shops and in places you wouldn't normally be seen dead in. A bit of shopping with your partner earns a few "brownies" and could reveal just that odd thing you may want. Spot Light has a craft section that often stocks bits and pieces that we can use. The best and the cheapest forceps I've ever bought came from there. Also check out their hollow punches which come in very small sizes.

A bead shop has coils of fine brass wire at cheap prices and in some of those intermediate sizes you can't get in a hobby shop. Then there are sequins, beads for sub-station and pole insulators and various other oddities. Try a dental supply house for dozens of useful things, usually tools and dental "rock". I get several grades of sandpaper discs for getting into tight places here. Jewellery supplies are also a mine of useful things.

Other hobbies use items that are very useful to us. Aeroplane modellers have operation rods with ball clevises that are ideal for switch linkage. I bought my strip making cutter from

an aeroplane shop at Buranda and it is locally made and the best one I've ever seen and also the cheapest.

The plastic modellers expo on in Brisbane recently had plenty of white number and lettering decals that aren't usually carried at our shops but nonetheless are very useful. I saw white stars perfect for those steam locos that have them in their driver centres but these were made for military modellers. I bought shim lead for chimney flashing on structures. Also some unusual stone wall material not in HO scale but 1/35th scale. The stones were a scale 12" high so that's very suitable for foundations, etc. The Kippa-Ring RTV casting outlet had a stand there. There were paint colours not in the MR line but ideal for certain usages. One was called industrial grime and just looking at the bottle conjured up a foundry.

The Mini Convention

The Mini-convention at Bundaberg will be well-worth planning for. There are a lot of railway features in the city and John Lebsanft has some great things planned. You could go by Tilt Train for a RR experience. Those planning a car trip will probably make beautiful Childers for morning tea at the Fig Tree Café – delicious. If you want to spend more time in the area think about a few days on the coast at Bargara or at peaceful Woodgate.