



JANUARY 2008 OUR CONVENTION YEAR

Coming Meetings

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19th January: Div 1 Post-Christmas Family Day at the Tramway Museum Ferny Grove – 10.30am.

9th February: Daniel Calvert, Carrara.

8th March: Buderim – Palmwoods Tramway visit with Garth Fraser (MMR), Buderim.

19/20th April – Northern Rivers NMRA Lismore, Alstonville and Ballina.

All meeting start at 1.30pm unless otherwise stated.

The Brotherhood

There is no doubt about it, the brotherhood of the NMRA is one of the main reasons for our membership. All of the other advantages and services are worth shouting about but the camaraderie and assistance one gets from fellow modellers is a top benefit. In the last Newsletter, I asked if anyone could help Ross Evans with a SP decal.

Bob Kollwyn from W.A. came to Ross's assistance with the appropriate bits and pieces in decals. A special thanks to Bob for feeling a part of our brotherhood even though living on the opposite side of the continent.

Toowoomba Visit

Each year we go to Toowoomba and there is always a good turnout. The two main reasons are, firstly, to see the progress on the Oma Lines of Mark Ward. From that, we learn or perhaps just dream of where we would like to go with our own home layouts.

Secondly, going to the Darling Downs MR Club is always a delight because of the nice people there, their many layouts and because this club must be one of the most resourceful in existence!

In the formal part of the meeting, Glenn talked about plans for our coming convention. The venue will be the Mount Gravatt Showgrounds and there should be 3 layouts on display at the venue, clinics, and the usual buy and sell, trade stands, etc. The dinner will be held at a suitable venue and there will be plenty of time from the last event until the dinner for people to dress up if they wish. On the Sunday morning layouts on the northside of the river will be visited and in the afternoon, layouts on the southside will be visited. We have made arrangements with Mark

Ward and the DDMRC that layouts in Toowoomba will be available for visits on Friday. Plans are underway for a conducted tour of the world-class Ipswich Railway Workshops Museum on the Monday.

In Show and Tell, Bob Brown had a new Walther F-7 and the superb Rapido passenger coaches.

Mark has "planted" many more trees on his mountains and the profiles are in for most of his as yet unfinished terrain. Signalling, control and supervision are very strong points on this layout. Mark has pre-planned effects on his Oma Lines so that prototype action is very realistically portrayed. Mark gave a thought provoking talk about "critical standards" and impressed how important it is to check all wheels for gauging before putting rolling stock on the layout. Back-to-back distance is also a very critical standard particularly for good rolling through turnouts. Mark has found a new way to make tunnels so that the interior near the mouths can be part of the scene realism. He has glued 72 laminations together to give him the compound tunnel curve he needed. The material he used is foam plastic coreboard.

During morning tea, John Roberts ran the DVD he produced from shots he took at the Detroit Convention and this made several of us rather sorry we didn't make a better effort to go there ourselves.

Without immediate access to a MR shop the Darling Downs MR Club, helped by some very inventive members, have solved many modelling mysteries in a most effective manner. Every time we go there we find something clever. It's also a place where trains have the space to "unwind" and behave more like their real-life counterparts. A couple of us had a great discussion with Ted Freeman, club secretary, about his decals which I have used on a couple of occasions and found essential. Ted uses an ALPS printer and can do very intricate work for anyone needing a special job. As I often say, I always get the decal first before I produce any rolling stock. There's no point in going to a lot of work only to find that you are left with a finished product without lettering. And as son of a railway sign-writer, that makes sense.



Bob Cuffe's magnificent NYC Twentieth Century Limited by Key Imports at speed on one of the DDMRC's HO layouts. [Larger version of this photo on page 3.]

With something of a craze for passenger trains that we are experiencing at the moment, the layouts here are large enough to show them off well. Bob Cuffe's 20th Century Ltd. has freewheeling and it was exciting to see it negotiate a downward spiral, accelerating yet remaining sure-footed all the way, thanks to its brass heaviness and good tuning.

The DDMRC layouts are in On3, HO and N and are quite large and sceniced to reflect many areas worldwide.

We urge visitors driving to Brisbane for this year's Convention in September to drive up the New England Highway and visit Toowoomba on the Friday before the Convention and take in the Toowoomba MR highlights. We are assured that both of the above venues will be operating for travellers by these friendly and knowledgeable modellers on the Friday. It will also be the time of the famous Carnival of Flowers so partners and I'm sure modellers will be enthralled by what Toowoomba has to offer. Toowoomba is also noted as an eating destination and a lunch there could be a memorable experience.

Finally, if you write anything on a computer about model railroads you will notice that the incorrect spelling red riggles come up pretty often. We do have our own language that only the initiated understand. Words like sceniced cop the riggle (so does riggle for that matter!).

Exhibition Layout

The exhibition layout is progressing and all of the yard points have been re-laid so that the "S" bend problem of trains entering the yard ladder has been eliminated. This has shortened the yard tracks by 9 inches but the small sacrifice was a fair price to pay for the more reliable operation. Further work will soon conclude the track work and then we can get onto the structures and scenery. Our co-ordinator, Paul Skehan has determined that we will not display the layout in public until it is such that we can all be proud of it.

Raffle

Tickets are still available in the Div 1 raffle. They are \$1 each and there are only 200 of them. Geoff Aldridge very generously donated the prize for this raffle which is a \$140 gift voucher at Astral Modelcraft. Get your tickets from Glenn, immediately.

Give him a ring to reserve your ticket on 2307 2442 and he will collect the cash off you later. The raffle will be drawn on the Family Day 19th January at the outing at the Tramway Museum.

Ideas Wanted!

Geoff Aldridge has recently shifted house and the layout room is as yet vacant, needing his ideal railroad. He is still looking for ideas, druthers, dos and don'ts. These could be profitable for us all. We will publish the best of them in Newsletter or some other way so that all will have your ideas.

Comment

Well this is it, the year we get to run the NMRA-AR convention in our division. What does it all mean for us. Is it going to mean anything at all? Well it should. Looking around our meetings it seems to me that everyone is getting something, perhaps a lot out of their NMRA membership. Now it is your chance to put a little back into the general knowledge of our Australian group.

Vladimir Vernadsky the Russian scientist invented a word "noosphere" meaning "the sphere of human thought". This was later taken up by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the great French philosopher and palaeontologist and he advanced the meaning to be "transhuman consciousness" – the interaction of human minds. If ever there was a collection of people whose interaction of their minds brought about the greater good of the group and others related, it is the NMRA.

It is now our turn to further that embraced noosphere and to extend our collective thoughts into a better appreciation of what we are about. We need to move the benchmark a bit higher, to set a new standard, to raise the bar a little. By doing this you can then pat yourself on the back after the event but more importantly you can do your own little bit or big bit to add to our NMRA noosphere

Now is the time that we need volunteers. Now is the time that we should make known our intentions about how we can help. Now is the time to open your MR up to visitors. Now is the time to clean up the train room, get the rolling stock running perfectly, dust down the structures, finish scenery and to ask your mates to come and help you bring your MR up to a standard that you feel comfortable with.

There are dozens of things that need doing. I would expect that we need a digital projector for presentations – any ideas? We need information about Queensland highlights as some interstate visitors will be making the convention a stop-off on a bigger tour of the state. We need ideas on putting together a snappy and inviting brochure to lure interstate members. We are going to need sweepers, ushers, "go-fors" and "go-between's", car pool drivers, door keepers, someone with first-aid knowledge (needs to be there but we hope we don't need this one!) and dozens of other jobs around the convention hall, the dinner and the layout visits.

If you don't think I've covered you, tell Glenn. Please, each one of you, give yourself twenty minutes to sit down quietly and picture the convention time in your mind. Then tell Glenn where you can help.

The programme is designed for each of us to learn a little more, even if something within that programme is of no particular interest to you. It's a bit like walking into a chandlers without an interest in boats. Inside you find fittings that are ideal for turnout linkages. In a haberdashery you have been "forced" into, you might find studs that make wonderful electrical connectors or very accurate and inexpensive forceps, etc. Try to get to all the presentations as there just might be some snippet of information you need.

Then at the dinner you get to meet people you might have only just heard of or who can help you with further information or even practical materials. Importantly, it will be a chance to show you partner that we are a responsible bunch and what a nice group of people we really are and mix with. In my own case, my wife, through going to an NMRA dinner, has made one of her strongest and most important friendships.

Finally, when the convention comes around in September please be at your best. Be friendly, be helpful, be pleasant and be open to others. If an opportunity arises to help someone, especially a visitor, go the extra mile. All of this will strengthen the regional group so that people whose interest may be flagging a little will get an extra boost. It will broaden the modelling outlook of us all. It will welcome new members. But most of all, it will increase your own modelling awareness and your own modelling satisfaction.

Snippet

Some signals are identified with a “G” or “P” printed on yellow-orange marker plates. These are often known as “grade signals” and are used on grades where certain freight trains are allowed to crawl at restricted speed rather than being brought to a complete stop. This prevents the train having difficulty starting with a heavily load on grades.

Resolutions

Prepare some achievable modelling resolutions for 2008! Here’s one repeated: With the New Year, some may be cleaning out their past magazines and catalogues. Don’t throw these away. Drop a few into each of your local dentist and doctors’ rooms to save some unfortunate fellow having to read Women’s Weekly or New Idea. You may start someone on a new voyage of discovery and interest.

And one final resolution that we should all have: I will help as much as possible at the September Convention and in preparations leading up to that.



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