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JULY 2008 - OUR CONVENTION YEAR

**Coming Meetings**

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12<sup>th</sup> July – Laurie Mclean, Timberwah,  
>>10.00am<<<

Ph.5471 0212 or e-mail  
mcleanlw@bigpond.com

12/13/14/15th September, Australasian  
Regional Convention, Brisbane.

8<sup>th</sup> November, Colin Upton, Jimboomba.

All meeting start at 1.30pm unless otherwise stated.

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>>>>> Now is the time to carefully consider how you can help Glenn in preparation for and at the Convention in September. Glenn has been shouldering much of the work himself with a little help from others and I'm sure there are plenty of easy chores you can assist him with. Give him a ring on 3207 2442.<<<<<<

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**Convention Extra**

Our Australasian Convention 2008 is well advertised in the latest edition of "Mainline" on page 7 and dates are as above.

On page 15 of "Mainline" is a fuller programme stating what activities are available on each day. A short version is:-  
Friday 12<sup>th</sup> September – Visit Toowoomba to see Mark Wards remarkable OMA Belt Lines and the Darling Downs Model Railway Club.

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September – The convention proper with all of the usual highlights and attractions plus the dinner on Saturday night.

Guest speaker is retired CEO QR Mr. Vince O'Rourke.

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September – Layout visits; morning north side of the river and afternoon south side of the river.

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> September – Visit to the Ipswich Railway Workshop Museum and a special and fascinating "Behind the scenes" inspection with one of the Museums own experts

**Directions to Laurie Mclean's**

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As well as seeing Laurie's great HOn3 D&RGW there will be some talk about our coming Convention and you will have a further opportunity to talk to Glenn about how you can help, especially those planning layouts. Here, you can put some of your theories in practice without having the commitment yourself!

**Congratulations**

Congratulations to two of Division 1's members, **Grahame Davis** and **Laurie McLean**. Both have gained accreditation as MR authors. I know they are both very close to being inducted as full MMR's and this award might just give them the honour they deserve.

**Exhibition Layout**

The layout went to the Toowoomba Train Show and was quicker to erect than previously due to the many detailed changes made by Paul Skehan and his team. The layout performed well all weekend and recent improvements by track supervisor Graham Emery have proved to be worthwhile. Disassembly was also quick and the layout was on the road just after 5pm. After a short break now we will begin work on the scenery in earnest and make the odd adjustment so that the layout will perform even better.

## NMRA Patent Challenge

Our Association goes to great lengths to ensure that we enjoy equipment compatibility. In doing this it is able to bring about great advantages to the most number of hobbyists. Some of our fees go towards the cost of this and it is therefore only natural that the NMRA defend the work and expense it has incurred to make you happier in your hobby.

Recently there has been an attempt for one company to usurp the NMRA's intellectual property to its own advantage. Consequently the NMRA has defended its property and that must have cost it some really unavoidable expense. Below is a release from Chattanooga concerning this subject.

June 6, 2008

### **NMRA Patent Challenge Update: Real Rail Effects fails to respond to NMRA DCC-sound patent challenge**

The deadline for Real Rail Effects, Ltd. (RRE) to respond to an NMRA patent challenge has passed, with no response from RRE.

RRE was granted a patent by the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) based upon a claim that the technology for using sound with DCC was invented by RRE. The NMRA, with the technical and financial support of a number of DCC manufacturers and hobbyists around the world, filed a challenge to the RRE patent.

The NMRA filed the challenge because we believe that the claims in the RRE patent application were not supported by the facts. The NMR was aware that prior art and other evidence existed which negated RRE's patent.

The NMRA felt that, should it remain in force, the RRE patent posed a threat to modelers and manufacturers of DCC equipment because it would both increase the cost to modelers and unfairly restrict manufacturers who provide decoders with sound. Therefore, the NMRA co-ordinated an industry – and hobbywide effort to have the patent overturned. The NMRA submitted evidence from a number of sources raising substantial questions about the validity of the patent.

On February 11, 2008, the USPTO issued a ruling granting the NMRA's patent re-examination request. The examiner stated in the ruling that there was a substantial likelihood that a reasonable examiner would consider prior art important in determining the patentability of the application of RRE.

After the examiner at the USPTO determined that the position of the NMRA had merit and compelled a new analysis of the patent, RRE had two months to respond to the re-examination request. The deadline for a response has come and gone, and RRE made no reply. The NMRA is now very hopeful that a favorable decision will be announced and that the position of the NMRA and its supporters will be vindicated.

The NMRA considers this a clear triumph for the modeller and the model railroad industry. We are proud to have led the challenge team that has made this victory possible.

Robert J. Amsler, Jr.  
General Counsel, NMRA Inc.s

## Comment

It seems that almost everything we do in this era is dictated by fashion. Amazingly, even a scientific interest I have is governed to some extent by fashion. At least fashion changes here are not as random as they might be in the dressing world!

Even our thrusts and interests in MR are dictated to some extent by fashion. And once again there are some good reasons why we make changes to the emphasis we put on various aspect of our hobby. We conduct ourselves in our hobby in a more scientific way than the clothing mob seem to do in their fashion world.

When I first became interested in MR everyone seemed to be frantically sourcing scratchbuilding bits and pieces to make rolling stock. Many of the manufacturers of the items we needed back then are no longer in business. The truth is partly that many pieces were made in backyard factories and the individual helping us along has long passed on.

I remember buying from Americas Hobby Centre such things as cast white metal

## NMRA DIVISION 1 (QUEENSLAND)

(www.Zelmeroz.com/anmra-1)

dreadnaught ends, reefer hinges, roof ribs, etc. What the heck are they I hear some of you ask. One of my greatest acquisitions was the Kemtron catalogues of brass investment castings. I've kept editions 4 and 5 because they are still great sources of information when I scratchbuild a part. Another great reference was the early Walthers Decal catalogues. Yes and I still have a couple of these as they too contained some good reference material. I'm talking 1950's here.

Suddenly there was a fashion for brass locos. The first to come to Brisbane was an Akane 2-8-2 in 1955 and it didn't work. It belonged to the Scientific Hobbies stock and Ian Carver, the then manager asked Ross Evans and myself to try and sort it out for him. The fault turned out to be one reversed driver. But the impression that brass loco made on us three was indelible. It seemed far superior in detail than anything we had seen until then, the peak was probably what Hornby issued. Suddenly everyone wanted to buy or become an agent for brass. I wonder were all that brass finished up because for a while Brisbane seemed to be awash with brass.

Then came a craze for getting American plastic rolling stock. Varney, MDC Roundhouse and Athearn were brands of note.

For a while there was an outside fashion which slowed down the import of MR gear for a while. In the mid 1950's Alban Adam's of M.R.R.C. in England told me I was his first Australian customer. He was the first manufacturer of slot car parts. A lot of us tried slot cars either alongside trains or some ditched trains at the time. The slot car fad disappeared when a complete disregard for models that looked like real racing cars became to norm. A lot of us with a foot in both camps returned to trains exclusively.

The advantages of DCC brought in a another new craze. As people become used to the new jargon and methods of DCC it became just a normal part of the MR scene and is less of a craze.

A recent fad with Division 1 AR modellers is the passenger train fad. At Toowoomba recently, it was wonderful to see so many superbly modelled passenger trains running on the NMRA display layout. There are KCS colourful trains, AT&SF Chiefs, GN Empire Builders, NYC 20<sup>th</sup> Century Limiteds, SP Daylights, UP Cities and several others.

Maybe nearly as many as there were in real life!

However one fad that Division 1 has sadly not taken up in a big way is the American craze for authentic freight cars. The NMRA has published its classic "The Post War Freight Car Fleet" and RMC run regular "Essential Freight Car" series, yet there seems to be a reluctance for people to become involved in super-detailing their fleets. At Toowoomba there were more passenger trains run than freight trains. Now that is an imbalance! The passenger stock is certainly eye-catching but the freight train can be too.

I would love to see a full reefer hotshot or a NYC Pacemaker set. Or even a freight train with cars all from the one period and geographically adjacent.

I wonder what the next MR fad will be?

### Snippets

How prototypical is your freight car mix? Many of us model the transition period to allow use of steam and diesel. In 1949 the mix was:

Boxcars inc. auto	36.4%
Hoppers inc. CH	27.1%
Gondola	16.5%
Tank	7.1%
Refrigerator	6.7%
Stock and Poultry	2.7%
Flat	3.5%

Another useful table is the ages of freight cars. You can have some quite old cars in your fleet and still be prototypical. In 1947 the ratios for years of service were:

	16-34	35+
Boxcars	58.9%	4.5%
Hoppers	45.4%	19.7%
Gondola	53.6%	18.4%
Stock	73.8%	19.9%
Flat	47.0%	21.5%

So you can see that railroads kept their freight cars going for a long time wherever possible. If we consider boxcars, then think back 34 years with 58% in the 16-34 year period, you will appreciate that there are a lot of different models covered by that grouping, e.g. X-29's, AAR '34's, PS-0, etc.

### **DCC Problems**

A couple of issues back I recommended that DCC users consider carefully the article in Scale Rails February 2008 on page 17 concerning H.F. Frequency filters. Regarding some of the problems I now hear, it is time that users re-read this insightful article.

### **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, do's 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.

Now so far Geoff hasn't been overwhelmed with responses yet I know many of you have heaps of ideas. So please get in touch.