

## NMRA DIVISION 1 (QUEENSLAND)

(www.Zelmeroz.com/anmra-1)



+  
**NOVEMBER 2008**

### **Coming Meetings**

\*

**15<sup>th</sup> November, at 10.30am, Colin Upton, Jimboomba.**

\*

**January (date & venue to be advised) Post Christmas Family Day**

\*

All meetings start at 1.30pm unless otherwise stated as above for our visit to Colin's layout.

### **Comment**

This year 2008, has been unofficially declared by some of our members as "The Year of the Layout". Some have been quietly planning their layouts for so long and are getting impatient, so they hoped that by making such a declaration, things would start to happen.

I have a sneaking suspicion that not too many of these long hoped for layouts are actually going to have a single nail or spot of carpenters' glue applied.

The story sounds pretty grim but there are some excuses and some very good reasons why this will be the case. Firstly, it takes a lot of cajoling and completion of more important jobs around the house before an approach for "real estate" can be made. We live in a time when there are numerous calls on our time, another excuse. Most of us have more than a single hobby interest and the other one takes time and effort too. This is especially so if you share that hobby with your spouse.

One way to change things around might be to share this hobby, model railroading, with your spouse. That would give you great liberties. Some years ago I read a Paint Shop article in Model Railroader by a woman and this article is the best painting article I have ever read. I've read some brilliant pieces by women about scenery and making structures and one or two about kit-bashing. Without being disrespectful, it makes me think I was born a generation too early! Women are becoming more involved and bring with them skills and conceptions that we men just don't have.

Back to the layout room. If you need work done to gouge out a piece of dirt under the house, there are so many ways of doing that these days. All sorts of techniques and tools are available. I saw a micro-bulldozer the other day that could get under the lowest house and didn't need the driver to ride it. It was connected to its operator by cables and he told me that radio control ones are sometimes used.

When I built my house no one used steel beams, acro jacks were still in the future and pumping ready-mix concrete was a thing for large buildings only.

These days too, the layout room doesn't have to look like an old storeroom nor place to put the lawn mower. Some of our members have excellent rooms and I'm sure they believe that every minute and every dollar spent making the room top class was worth the effort.

Maybe some of us, while thinking up grand designs, believe we are not quite up to actually doing it. Look at the railroads that have no scenery. Scenery seems to be the stumbling block for a lot of us. Yet making scenery seems to be so much fun and sloppiness is almost an essential skill!

Maybe our perceived personal standards are actually too high for us to achieve. Try lowering them a little. Perhaps if a start is made, by the time a few months have gone, our abilities will be closer to those original standards and the work we do from then on is pretty classy.

What's this all about. Well just remember we have cupboards full of wonderful rolling stock. We may have dozens of kits of buildings, bridges, etc. that we haven't built because we know it will fill the last bit of space our last cupboard has left.

When you think of it, a layout is a marvellous place to store rolling stock and all of those other kits. That will empty out your cupboards and then you have more room to clean up other things around your house.

This leads to a little suggestion. Notice how dusty rolling stock and buildings get on some layouts. Buy from a chain store one of those super soft brushes that are used by your daughter to put blushing on. They are great rolling stock brooms. Jaycar sell a kit of small vacuum cleaner heads that fit onto a standard vacuum cleaner for about \$25 and well worth it for your railroad and for your computer keyboard.

It seems that all of those reasons for not starting your railroad can be overcome. It will certainly take some compromises but it is all achievable. At the very least we should, yes I'm one of them, be able to build one of those Iain Rice layouts that offer great running and yard work in the absolute minimum of space.

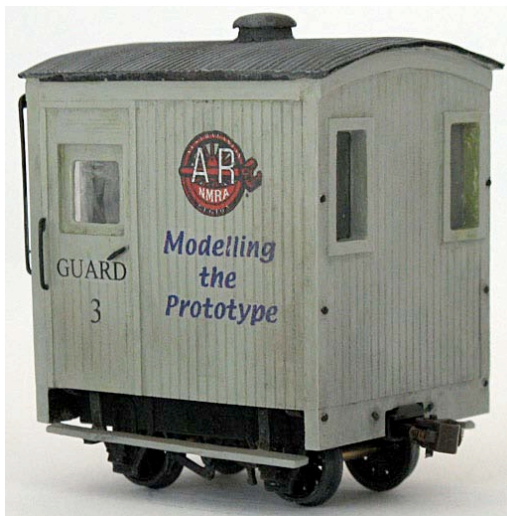
### Ideas Wanted!

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.

### A Convention Guards Van

At our recent convention, Ted Freeman as is often his way, very generously supplied every attendee with a set of his decals to commemorate the occasion. I don't know how many of those sets have been used so far but here is one example.



This little On30 beauty (RJ Models 7' Innisfail Guards Van kit) was built by Lynn Zelmer and features a cane rail guards van with Ted Freeman's convention decal. If anyone else wishes to send me a photo of their use of these decals, please do so and I'll publish it in Newsletter.

Lynn gave one of the clinics at the Convention on cane train modelling for which he is now famous.

### Convention 2009

Yes I know it's next October, but now is the time to start long range planning for a trip to Sydney for this great event. Look at the website on our national Convention and see just what interesting events are being lined up for you next year.

### Points

Several of our Division 1 members have bought Fast Tracks tools and equipment to facilitate hand-making points. This Canadian company have an excellent instruction CD that comes with some of the gear and a booklet on the use of their tools and equipment is available on their web-site. I'd be keen to see results of your use of these tools as I'm sure other members would. Please send in photos of your successes with Fast Track points tools.

### Peco points and DCC

For those using Peco points with electro-frogs and DCC, a good web-site about modifications is at:

[www.loystoys.com/peco/about-electrofrog.html](http://www.loystoys.com/peco/about-electrofrog.html)

You will get excellent diagrams and good information about modifications recommended for getting better results. All nice and simple too.

### Scratchbuilding

Before the art is completely lost, perhaps we should contemplate on what you can have if you occasionally scratchbuild a piece of rolling stock. These days just about everything is available so we hear, but is that really true. Reasons for making special pieces may be varied. The first photo shown here is because this boxcar wasn't available except in N scale and that one was way off. Being pretty pragmatic about what I have, I then had to dream up a reason why I needed this other than desire for a bit of exclusiveness. Well this company used to make pails, buckets, barrels, etc. So this is a tall 50' boxcar as a car full of such things would be mostly air. I've planned and industry that will need barrels – no it's not a brewery.



A scratchbuilt Menasha 50' boxcar. Built by Ian Venables from plans in Kalmbach's Model Railroad Cyclopedia 6<sup>th</sup> Edition 1950, lovingly referred to by we older modellers as "The Bible".

The next photo is of a PRR wooden reefer and none were available when I started this one. It

## NMRA DIVISION 1 (QUEENSLAND)

(www.Zelmeroz.com/anmra-1)

sat unfinished for about 10 years while I did other things and occasionally tried to work out how to make all of that complex outside bracing. If there is one benefit in our hobby it is the number of excuses you can have for not finishing a project!



The plans for this PRR wooden reefer appeared in MR April 1958. Built by Ian Venables, the outside bracing was made up bit-by-bit from Evergreen strips of several different sizes.

Both of these scratchbuilt pieces can service the same industry and add a lot of colour to operations.

Just in case you would rather dip your toe into scratchbuilding before trying a difficult job, consider kit-bashing. This comes in several degrees. There is light kit-bashing where just a few simple things are done to bring a bought product up to a better standard and more representative of a particular item of rolling stock.

There is heavy kit-bashing where the kit basics are used and you make or amend a lot of the model to get your particular piece.



This is the start of a heavy kit-bash. It is an undecorated Athearn 34' R/S hopper #5440.

You will notice that it now has a boxcar type roof built onto the top. The intention is for it to become a NYC covered hopper #880020.

This NYC covered hopper appears in Mainline Modeler March 1982 as a photo only. The article is about USRA 2 bay hoppers and this hopper was originally made from one.

Ultimately it will be painted pale grey with black lettering. The decal, and that came first, is a Microscale 87-368. This decal sheet is for three different hoppers, CCC & St L, VGN and NYC. This particular hopper is marked for cement only. A cement factory is one option or you can have a spur disappearing into the scenery to a dam construction site. Such sites exist for years and use lots of cement. This covered hopper should look eye-catching and prototypical in such a situation.

I'll bring you a photo when it is completed.

### NMRA Friendships

I've forgotten what year I joined the NMRA but it was a long time ago. Looking back, I can honestly say it has all been a pleasure largely to the friendliness and respect that members give to each other. There is always the bantering and good natured repartee, but I've formed friendships with people that are my most favoured and closest friendships.

Not long after I joined, I was in Sydney on the job for about a week. I rang John Saxon, who I had never spoken to at that time to ask how to get to Punchbowl Hobbies. I got the information about how to get there on public transport. Punchbowl Hobbies drove me back to Bankstown station, yet I didn't spend a mint there. They were a "NMRA shop" then. John had asked me to have lunch with him at his home on the next day, Sunday. That started a long and fruitful friendship that I cherish and was the introduction to other friendships.

One of the glories of Division 1 is its friendly atmosphere. You can disagree with someone on a small matter but the friendship stands. I find and I'm sure other do also, that I go to meetings and other places, firstly because my mates will be there. That's not just the few I am close to but all of them. Secondly, I go there because I know I am going to learn something without being preached at and in an atmosphere of genuine sharing. Thirdly I go because there is always something for me to see that I can honestly say, he did that better than I could. In other words, it helps to keep our feet on the ground.

There are several other reasons but look, it's the end of the page!