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SEPTEMBER 2009

Coming Meetings

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September 19th Justin Walker this one starting at 10am.

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October 3/4/5 Sydney Anniversary Convention

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November 21st Ian Wellings this one starting at 10am.

All meetings start at 1.30pm unless otherwise stated. See two above.

Our First Overseas Outing

Well it was a long time coming and that is part of the reason there was a good roll up at the home of Graham and Audrey Emery on Macleay Island. Another reason is the fact that we could expect to see some ground breaking technology designed by Graham and we weren't disappointed.

It was one of those balmy days when the southern end of Moreton Bay looks like it might have the world's best scenery. Three waves of invaders (or asylum seekers) landed on Macleay Island and were treated to a grand tour of the island as well as arriving at Graham's home and layout.

After morning tea with delicious homemade cakes and biscuits by Audrey we had a very short management chat from our superintendent, Glenn Stevens. Next it was down to the train room. At this stage it looks promising and Graham has some very ambitious plans for the future.

Then we had a look at the latest development of Graham's signal system which I personally

would like to see become some sort of a standard.

This system is so versatile, is easy to maintain, is about as accident proof as you can get and is relatively easy to install.

Graham has also developed a points motor from cheap radio control escapements that are small and lightweight and very simple to set up. Both of these items are still being developed but you will hear more about them in the future.

There was a very short show-and-tell with Glenn Stevens showing a Weaver 'O' scale WM hopper alongside of a 'HO' scale WM hopper. Surprising there was very little difference in weight!

Next Ian Venables showed what can be done with a standard Athearn hopper by adding a few simple flat styrene pieces. This one will eventually be a NYC covered hopper. Bob Cuffe had a set of plans of old railway yards around Brisbane. These were both interesting and nostalgic particularly for we older folk. The extensive switching yard at Newstead was the subject of one set. This was just the thing for module switching layout builders. Bob also had Mayne yards, Central station and several others that brought back lots of memories and caused much discussion.

We then went upstairs again to an incredible lunch of soup and Italian goulash, both served hot with plenty of extras.

A few of us even went for a walk on the beach after. Then it was a car shuttle to get everyone back to the ferry on time. We even modelled on the way across the bay by ferry with discussion and photos taken of the cloud formations! Another leading discussion on the way back across the Bay was when are we going to do this again?

Comment

When we meet either as a group or as a couple of friends, our conversation is usually about things railroad. Engines, rolling stock, layout, DCC, scenery, techniques, etc. make up the subjects of our discussion.

But we should probably think occasionally of our fellow modellers and the things that

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interest them, the difficulties they might be having and how a small bunch of us might be able to help them on their layouts to give it a good shove towards conclusion.

All of this came home to me recently when talking on the phone to one of our senior members, Ross Evans. Ross has been an NMRA member longer than just about anyone. Some years ago he felt that his dream was not being realised. Offers of help were sadly curtailed when the possible helper had enough health problems to doubt his ability. In our recent talk, Ross mentioned that his eyes weren't as good, his deftness of hand was diminishing and his ability to crawl under the layout was just about over. We saw how Graham Emery's layout is planned and how a bit of help might give him a kick start to getting the whole thing running.

Even Bob Brown, owner of one of the bigger and best layouts and who is good at most things modelling has sometimes said how he would like help with scenery.

I wonder what sort of progress could be made on these layouts and others if small local gangs of us went in and worked maybe half a dozen days on each of these layouts.

Well for starters there would be a lot of ribbing and laughs and that is supposed to be good for us. Secondly, we would all come away with some new ideas.

Thirdly we should make sure that certain aims about the layout are met and maybe that would take away a great task and leave foreseeable work to conclude the layout in the not too distant future.

If Ross had his layout running, that is, all of the mainline and all of the sidings, at least he could run his collection all over the layout and perhaps put in a few industries to give him years of pleasure.

If Graham Emery got the track and the wiring for about half of his down he would be well on the way to meeting his aims.

If Bob had all of the open benchwork covered with ground and some vegetation, rock cuttings a few more trees, weeds and other scenic features, it would seem that much easier. Bob throws his layout open often for

us to run and I'm sure all of that would give him so much more pleasure.

In each of these jobs, the back of the major task would be broken. We all have callings on our time and our own MR callings are an important part of that.

Finishing our modules, for example, is a major concern for us but it's pretty close for each of these owners really.

A commitment to help is difficult because all sorts of problems can crop up and diminish our modelling time. I remember last year was going to be "the year of the layout" for a lot of us but it never eventuated!

Maybe we could achieve something by being in a 'layout helping flying gang'. Besides we would learn techniques that will be handy for each of us on the next "year of the layout".

Finally, why should we help? Simple! We owe it to these guys.

Award Well Deserved

We hear of various awards going to NMRA members both here and overseas. It is with great merit that our own Division 1 Superintendent Glenn Stevens and his wife Sandra are to receive the Annual Presidents Award for Exceptional Service to the NMRA. This prestigious award is to be presented to Glenn at the National Convention in Sydney.

Glenn has built this Division up from a few members to over 75 members plus those clubs and their members who have amalgamated with us for various reasons. Besides this increase over the time that Glenn has been at the tiller, we have become a much more active and friendly group. Also, we are a group who can rely on each other for all sorts of advice and help. For some of us, especially those retired and lacking the company of born comedians, our get togethers of the NMRA Division 1 group is a chance to push the grim reaper further away by good doses of humour and laughter.

Glenn and Sandra have been both part of all of this and much more. They have given us their time and hard work to ensure that our aims are met and that the Division runs smoothly.

Congratulations to both Glenn and Sandra and best wishes to them from us all for their future.

Useful Website

The web gets better and better for we modellers and it's good to find a site that covers a lot of useful information easy to find. For all you guys sitting up late at night detailing your rolling stock so that it doesn't look like plastic, nor as though it was shaken out of a blue or white or red or yellow box, here is a very useful website:

www.rpicturearchive.net/rs

Now you can ensure that the silver IC reefer you have does have its door hinges, ladders and grabs painted black, has a green logo and oddly could have a pink destination board!

There you go – Rivarossi was almost spot on years ago. Thank you to whoever it was that gave me one and all I have to do is paint that tack pink board!

Rolling Stock

After a discussion with other members, I decided to check how many freight cars I owned. Shock horror, this is something that can creep up you!

I found that I own over 300 cars. Many of them are propriety brands but they never enter service until they have modifications to enhance their prototypical appearance, get metal wheels, weighted correctly, get Kadee couplers, are properly weathered, etc. About 40% are scratch-built and a considerable number of those have never been released by any manufacturer to my knowledge.

Some are well-known brands but have extensive modifications to represent a prototype that simply isn't available, e.g. the NYC covered hopper of which there is a photo in Mainline Modeller, March 1982, page 27. It's made from an Athearn USRA type hopper and most of the rest is Evergreen styrene and Detail Associates brass wire. It's just been finished. Microscale did the decal for this one

in a set of four different hopper decals of which only one remains to be used. This is a Virginian hopper and the decal is sized for Athearn.

One of the scratchbuilt items is an Ohio Seamless Tubes gondola with a gantry over one end and decal by Walther. You can't buy that! The plan was in Model Railroader years ago and it is an attractive car.

Then finally there are a good number of them still boxed and untouched or almost so. I've been smart with some by throwing in four Kadee or Bachmann axles, maybe a packet of Kadee No.5's and some I know have a large chunk of lead already glued to the base to bring them up to NMRA standards.

However there is still a lot to be done. Will I ever live long enough to finish them? I suppose that's one incentive to keep alive! Harder to answer is, will I have the will-power not to get any more.

I already know the answer. There's a nice vinegar car I'd like to scratchbuild in a recent edition of Railroad Model Craftsman. I already have a pickling factory on my module so it's got to be built.

I pride myself in getting only locomotives that suit my ultimate goals but manufacturers keep bringing out these beautiful new freight cars.

There's really only one way out. Get the layout up so I can lavish bits and pieces and time on something else.

I just hope no one brings out a helium tank car and if you know of one out there, please don't bother to tell me about it.

Sydney Convention

Well it's only a couple of weeks away now and there is still time to make your bookings. I know several of us who are making the trip and I consider myself lucky to have the company of two very knowledgeable modellers.

There will be much RR conversation on the long trip but there will be a lot of laughs too.

We are staying at the Ibis, Thornleigh and as that is the main accommodation centre, I'm

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sure we will be chatting with guys we have never seen before.

There is a fantastic line-up of Clinics and then all of the usual delights of these conventions.

The layout tours will be interesting and a camera and notebook will be compulsory equipment.

We will report back to you our experiences in the next Newsletter.