

## Cane Railway Modelling Resources: The CaneSIG Collection

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#### Introduction

This presentation is an interactive exploration of the resources available for Queensland's sugar cane railway modellers on the CaneSIG web site. The session will begin with a short PowerPoint presentation, followed by an exploration of the web site itself. While Queensland's sugar cane railways will likely be the major focus, in keeping with the 'Then and Now: Queensland and Other Railways' theme of this Convention sugar cane railways in other countries can also be examined.

CaneSIG is the Cane Railway (Tramline) Modelling Special Interest Group. SIG membership (content provider) is open to any individual who supports the objective of preserving, developing and exchanging information for the modelling of sugar cane railways worldwide. The SIG's resources are freely available through its web site ([www.zelmeroz.com/CaneSIG](http://www.zelmeroz.com/CaneSIG)) and include several thousand images and drawings, modelling tips and industry information. Given its Australian base most of the SIG resources relate to Queensland's sugar cane railways. However there are more cane railway modellers, including probably modellers of Queensland's cane railways, living outside Australia than within.

CaneSIG has been in existence as a 'virtual' SIG since the 1990s and has grown from a small collection of modelling notes and images to the site that we will explore today. A copy of the site as it was early May 2010 has been optimised for off-line use and contains almost 650 Mb of image and data files. The on-line interactive image caption search and retrieval facility is not available on the CD but your browser's FIND function will allow you to retrieve images as desired.

The CaneSIG web site is just one of the rail-oriented sites I manage. Some, such as [/ngraill/](#) and [/timber/](#), are in the [zelmeroz.com](http://www.zelmeroz.com) domain. The Modelling the Railways of Queensland Convention, Australian Sugar

Cane Railway (Bundaberg), Archer Park Rail Museum and others are part of the [QldRailHeritage.com](http://QldRailHeritage.com) domain, which focuses on Queensland's tourist railways, museums, etc., while the ANGRMS site has its own domain ([www.ANGRMS.org.au](http://www.ANGRMS.org.au)). All have access to the rail heritage image collection, now comprising almost 8000 images with the majority being Queensland-oriented.

#### CaneSIG Resources

##### Handbooks and Members' Models

Bob Dow and Greg Stephenson, both well known to this convention, provided the major inspiration for my initial sugar cane railway/tramway modelling. Their 1990s convention presentations provided some of the initial CaneSIG modelling tips and, as I gained more practical experience, led directly to the Handbook series of illustrated modelling articles for downloading as pdf format files.

This Members' Models section of the web site shows what modellers have been able to accomplish with cane tram modelling in almost every scale from HOn30 to ride-on size. Most of the items came unsolicited from modellers who have been inspired by resources on the web site.

Some contributions also result in Handbook articles. The most recent contribution, for example, indicated that his HOn30 wholestick trucks, developed using a rapid prototyping 3D printer that builds a volume shape as a series of thin slices, were "based on the models made by Greg Stephenson". The Dutch modeller still needed to add details to his wholestick truck, but had already ordered two of them from a US computer-aided manufacturing company to ensure they would fit the a Roco HOe chassis.

While the materials for some of the articles came from modellers as far afield as Canberra and the United States, many of them are republished notes from prior

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Conventions. This gives local author modellers wider visibility, making their Convention presentations available to modellers worldwide and contributing to the number of overseas modellers of Queensland sugar cane rail/tramways.

The basic series, 'Modelling Cane Railways', has 29 parts with topics ranging from modelling sugar cane to building garden scale wholestick cane loaders, from HOn30/OO9 to 7/8" scale modelling and kitbashing or scratchbuilding rolling stock and locomotives.

The 'Railway Goods Sheds' convention notes (Jim Hutchinson and Jim Fainges) is a ten part series while 'Modelling Loco Depots' (Jim Hutchinson) is a seven part series. 'Goods Traffic on Cane and Shire Tramways' (Greg Stephenson) is three articles and 'Modern Cane Railways of Queensland' (Carl Millington) expanded into a 17 part series.

You may notice that there are only 28 basic parts on the CD. The Handbooks are regularly being expanded and I have several more items, including past convention notes, to include as I find time for the conversion to Handbook format.

### Images

Contributors normally send me prints, slides or negatives for scanning, which I return after scanning on professional level scanners along with a CD containing a copy of the scanned files. More current images have been taken with a digital camera and do not require scanning. Images are accepted in good faith and will be withdrawn or credited more appropriately in the event of a conflict.

Images are often scanned from prints that were made many years ago, thus have some fading, scratches, etc. Slides and negatives get brush cleaned before scanning but that doesn't remove mould, etc., and often fails to completely remove dust. I normally do not do any image restoration when optimising for the web site, although I do try to sharpen and lighten images, etc. Images from digital cameras may not need cleaning, but they do

require optimising and frequently need lightening in the shadows and sharpening.

My current preference is for jpeg images saved as 'high' quality with an image size of at least 1200 x whatever, and preferable 1600 x or better. This allows me to optimise the images for fast downloading when I'm adding the copyright/owner information. A higher resolution image may also allow me to supplement photographer-supplied captions with loco names or numbers, etc.

Internet speeds were much slower a decade or more ago, so I initially optimised the images to a 600 x size. Now that download speeds have improved I've standardised on 800 pixel wide images with only an occasional image [eg a mill panorama] at a larger size. This provides an acceptable image for most railfan and modeller purposes, while ensuring that the image cannot be reused for publication. Scanned text or plans are usually converted to pdf files to simplify distribution and printing.

I normally retain the original scanned image file as a backup and can sometimes make a higher resolution or enlarged detail image available to an individual researcher or modeller. Except for a small cadre of contributors, requests to publish images off the CaneSIG site are referred to the contributor.

Getting easy access to specific images has always been a problem and gets worse as the collection grows. Initially it was possible to list and link to individual images but as the collection reached roughly 1000 images I moved to an on-line database with the ability to search by subject and photographer. Unfortunately technologies change and the developers of the on-line database software failed to update it as the ISP's systems changed, so I resorted to manually maintained lists by topic and photographer.

This resulted in a major rod for my back! As the collection continued to grow I could not maintain over 300 individual lists or think of all the potential ways (search terms) that might be used to find a particular image. I've now reverted to an open source database

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system that must be manually updated every time images are added (or withdrawn) but at least is affordable for both my ISP and myself.

### **Drawings**

The main provider of cane and shire drawings on the site is Jim Fainges. Locomotives predominate but some are of rolling stock and structures. Jim's drawings are generally prepared from photographic sources and a limited number of dimensions. While potentially less accurate than drawings prepared from manufacturers' plans or extensive field dimensions, they are the only major source of Queensland sugar mill equipment drawings.

Many of Jim's drawings are available in both a low resolution format, scanned from paper copies, and in a higher resolution format prepared by redrawing plans on the computer. The Queensland buildings have been scanned from 'The Turntable' magazine, thus making those low-circulation drawings more widely available.

Jim's free downloadable card models (a Comeng loco, cane bins and buildings) are also part of the drawing collection and both are accessible from the Handbook page.

### **Mill Notes**

John Browning, David Mewes and Chris Walters have provided details of sugar mill locomotives over the decades to supplement Mill details. This is an area of the web site that needs more work, including adding mill maps and direct access to mill-oriented images.

### **Country Comparisons**

For obvious reasons, most of the information on the web site relates to Queensland and Queensland mills. However there is at least some information on sugar cane railways in Angola, Argentina, Cuba, Egypt, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, Taiwan, and the USA (Hawaii, Louisiana and Florida).

### **Finding What You Want**

Navigating a complex web site is seldom as simple as either the developer or the user would like. I continued to maintain the web site manually rather than using web management software. I still need to regularly refresh and reorganise the web site but I've avoided having to change from one management system to another and, by using a small local ISP I've avoided the difficulties that arise when large systems such as Geocities have been closed down.

In other words, I'm to blame if you have difficulties finding specific information on the web site. Unless, of course the information isn't on the web site. In that case, your assistance is requested to help find that information and make it more widely available.

The 'Home Page' is the most obvious starting point for navigating the site. Here you'll find links to the five major site sections: Getting Started, Members' Models, Modelling Resources, Industry Information and the Image Collection. As well, the home page has direct links to more than two dozen topics including an eight page 'Introduction to Cane Railway Modelling', country specific pages, a Queensland canefield locomotive list, etc.

'Modelling Resources' provides an alphabetic list/index that links to topics that may otherwise require navigating several pages to find. It's not a complete list, but does provide direct links to many of the most popular items on the site.

### **Rail Heritage and Site Promotion**

The CaneSIG web site, just as the QldRailHeritage.com site, was started as a way of personally promoting Queensland's rail heritage. It had an initial focus on modelling Queensland's sugar cane railways but it soon became obvious that Fijian cane railways needed inclusion, and then those in other sugar cane growing areas worldwide.

Australian and overseas conventions, as well as more local rail-oriented events, have provided other opportunities for a CaneSIG

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presence promoting the hobby and the heritage. The most significant displays have been at the Brisbane Train Show in 2009 and 2010 but there have also been regular displays at the Archer Park Rail Museum and one-off displays and/or clinics in Toronto (Canada), Eugene (Oregon), Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Albury, etc.

Site promotion is also important, and the word-of-mouth popularity of the image collection has resulted in the site becoming one of the few Australian rail heritage web sites to register on the US-centric Google ratings. This has been assisted by on-line cooperative marketing with two web 'rings'. The web rings require discrete advertisements at the foot of the home page, but in return ensure that the site is regularly indexed for use by most search engines.

The site also receives considerable word-of-mouth type support from individual modellers, on-line discussion groups, magazine articles (eg Narrow Gauge Down Under), authors of sugar cane related publications such as Ian Dunn's recently published book on Clyde locomotives in Fiji (Everleigh Press), etc.

### Renewal and the Future

CaneSIG has grown from the efforts of three or four individuals to include the efforts of more than a hundred modellers, railfans, photographers and illustrators. The actual mechanics of maintaining the web site may be the responsibility of a single individual, but just as with any other form of publication, the result is, and must continue to be, a joint effort.

A good web site is always a work in progress. The internet is much more like a daily newspaper or radio program than a book or movie, and visitors expect something new every time they visit. The CaneSIG web

site was last restructured in 2008 when site navigation had become convoluted, making it difficult to find some items. The site as represented by the CD distributed at this presentation is again cumbersome to navigate (let alone manage) and requires another makeover to simplify access to materials.

In a very real way the web site, and particularly the basic Handbook articles, chronicles my development as a modeller of sugar cane and shire railways over the past twenty years. I've recently been reintroduced to the art of modelling with card and am planning to build a low profile sugar mill using photorealistic card structures. Some of the results of that modelling should result in more personal contribution to the web site. Hopefully some of the participants in this presentation will be the source of other contributions.

Happy modelling!

### Image Captions

**Model Builders Preserving Queensland's Rail Heritage:** Portion of an 800 x 2000mm CaneSIG/QldRailHeritage.com promotional poster for the 2010 Brisbane Train Show.

**CaneSIG CD Home Page:** Shows general page design with one of the head images, navigation tools, links to special topics, etc.

**Selection of Member' Models:** models by Ron Aubrey (On2), Jim Russell (7/8"), Lynn Zelmer (On30), Jim Petropulos (15mm) and Shannon Simpson (HOn30).

**Selected Images:** Loading cane and trucks/bins by Tom Eagles (Okinawa), Martin Heier (Egypt), John Browning (Java), Chris Walters (Tully), Sugar Research Institute (long bin), Lynn Zelmer (Toft Loader and Isis Mill) and Jonathan Bayliss (Mackay).

# *Model Builders Preserving Queensland's Rail Heritage*



*Model building...  
make it a journey,  
not a destination!*

- *Research & planning*
- *Construction*
- *Trackwork/electrical*
- *Scenery & details*
- *Animation/people*
- *Locomotives & rolling stock*
- *Structures, etc.*

[\*www.zelmeroz.com/CaneSIG\*](http://www.zelmeroz.com/CaneSIG)

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Welcome to www.ZelmerOz.com/CaneSIG

file:///Volumes/Data\_1/2010/MRQC CaneSIG/index.html

Most Visited - Getting Started Latest Headlines

Welcome to www.ZelmerOz.com/C...

## CaneSIG

The Sugar Cane Railway (Tramline) Modelling Special Interest Group

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### CaneSIG CD Home Page

http://www.zelmeroz.com/CaneSIG



This CD version of the CaneSIG web site has been prepared for the **2010 Modelling the Railways of Queensland Convention**.

The CD a subset of the on-line web site and is designed for off-line use. The on-line caption search system and similar functions are not available on the CD. And just as on-line, there may be occasional broken links.

Links off the CD should have been disabled, with the url pasted into the text. Be aware that these links were valid when initially cited but were not verified when preparing the CD. The on-line CaneSIG site may have further details and updates.

CaneSIG is a free resource for modellers of the world's sugar cane railways and is a 'virtual' SIG with over 100 informally associated member contributors worldwide. The resources focus on Queensland or Fiji for reasons of access and convenience to contributors, but content is sought from all sugar producing areas with associated railways.

Please contact the Coordinator if you have resources that you would like to share or comments on the web site. Please be very explicit with urls and other details, and include the word "CaneSIG" in your e-mail subject heading, when sending queries.

While CaneSIG is affiliated with the NMRA as a Special Interest Group (SIG), membership is not required to participate or download resources.

Happy Modelling!

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CaneSIG materials have been provided by modellers and enthusiasts for the personal use of other modellers only. Please do not abuse this privilege; contact the Coordinator and the copyright holders for any other use.



Above: A selection of images from the Queensland sugar cane railways, including the Moreton Mill Loco Shed prior to closure, the Wallaville out-station, harvesting cane, and hauling cane, sugar and molasses. These and other images can be found in the Image Collection.

Getting Started Members' Models Modelling Resources Industry Information Image Collection

### Modelling the Railways of Queensland Convention, Saturday, 28 August 2010, Mt Gravatt Showgrounds, Qld

### 10th Australian Narrow Gauge Convention, 23-24 April 2011, Workshops Rail Museum, Ipswich, Queensland. Download this [form](#) to register your interest.

New in 2010: Jim Russell describes the building of 7/8" scale ex-73 Class *Netherdale* in the [28th Handbook article](#). Chris Walter's [Australian Canefield Locomotives](#) from Geocities (now closed).

#### Getting Started modelling sugar cane railways

- [Introduction to Cane Railway Modelling](#) (8 pages, prototype and model tips, 1.4 Mb pdf file)
- Members' [Models](#) and [Large Scale/Garden](#) railways
- [Handbooks](#): Modelling Queensland's cane railways (pdf files)
- [Modelling Resources](#), Alphabetic listing; and [Suppliers](#)

#### Image Collection: over 5000 images of Australian and overseas sugar cane railway locomotives, wagons, buildings, etc. [Complete listing]

#### Sugar Industry Information

- [Australian Sugar Mills](#): current and closed mills with John Browning's 1978 (with David Mewes), 2000 and 2005 loco lists, etc.
- Australian Canefield [Locomotives c 2004](#), list and ~180 images
- [Country notes](#): [Angola](#), [Argentina](#), [Australia](#), [Cuba](#), [Egypt](#), [Fiji](#), [India](#), [Indonesia](#), [Japan](#), [Philippines](#), [Taiwan](#), [USA](#)
- [Cane Tram Notes](#): Articles on the sugar cane industry (pdf files)
- [Scenic Locale](#) for a Realistic Sugar Cane Railway

#### Cane Train Safety

- **Be Aware** during the cane crushing season - usually May to November each year (in Queensland)
- **Look out for flashing lights** positioned at level crossings on major roads
- **Become familiar with cane train crossings** in your area, recognize the signs and be aware of crossings on less major roads that do not have flashing lights
- **Don't race a cane train**
- **Educate your children** to stay away from cane rail tracks and cane trains

Thanks to *Bundaberg Sugar* for these safety tips

#### CaneSIG FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

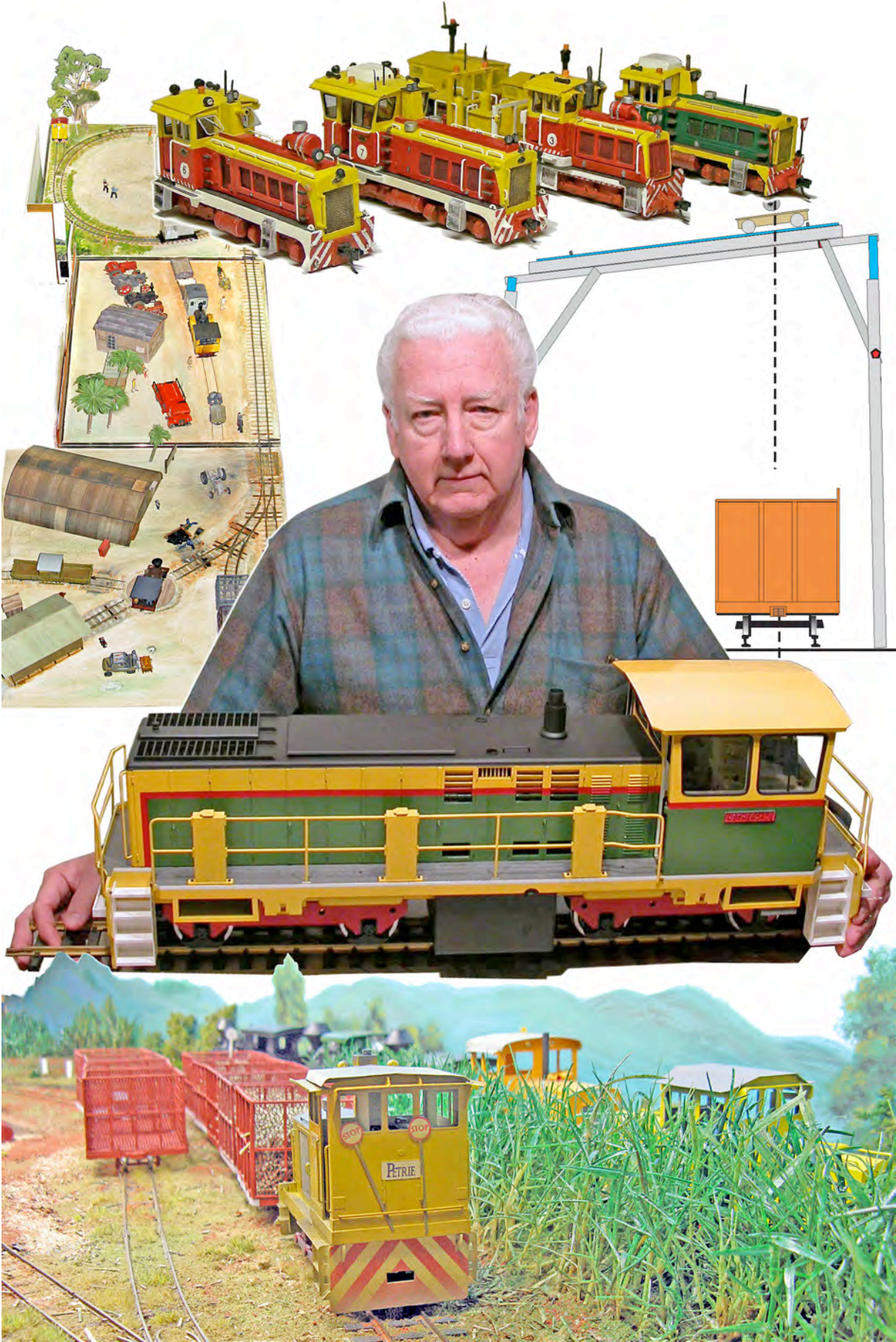
file:///Volumes/Data\_1/2010/MRQC%20CaneSIG/index.html: last updated: 12/05/10.



CaneSIG is a member of the TrainWeb's RAILring ([www.railing.com](http://www.railing.com)) and WebRing's ([dir.webring.com/rw](http://dir.webring.com/rw)) **16mm Garden Railway Webring** on-line marketing cooperatives.

Done

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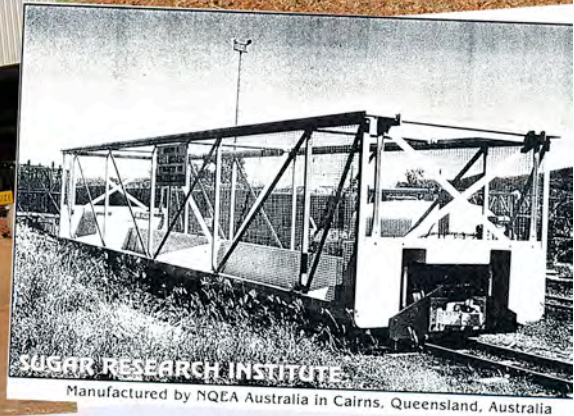
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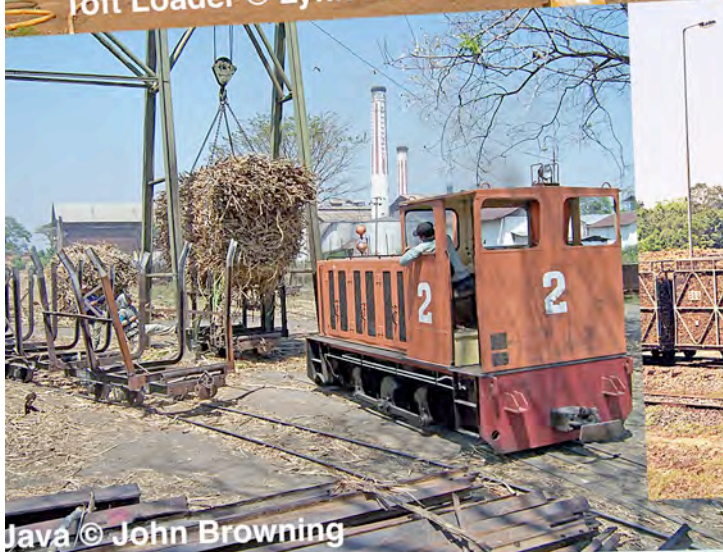
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