MODELLING THE QR

COLOUR SCHEMES AND WEATHERING ON THE QR

Dennis Campbell

In keeping with the theme of this year's convention, this session will be looking more at the theoretical aspects of painting and weathering models of QR rollingstock. This means we will be looking at what colours and what weathering occurs on the real thing as a guide to what we can apply to our models

The approach of this session will be to view a number of colour slides and to discuss and highlight those features of the colour schemes but mainly to look at the effects of weathering.

It is not the intention to debate what colour is what, what were the official paint specification, or even when colour schemes were changed, mainly because I believe that it doesn't really matter from a modelling perspective so long as you achieve an approximation with which you are happy and given how paint changes over time, you should never be far out. For the purist of course, this is a different matter, but my comments are for the "average" modeller.

As modellers of the QR, you are all automatically granted a license to model things are you see fit, after all its your hobby (and money). However, if you have a desire for realism, then the idea is of course to see how close you can get your locomotives and rollingstock to look like the real thing. This is reasonable since some of the reasons for railway modelling is to re-create those aspects of the railway scene that have passed into history, relive some personal experiences of railway travel, or simply satisfy our interest in railways generally.

In some ways, you are lucky in modelling the Queensland Railway because there has been a reasonable consistency with colour schemes, unlike certain railway systems south of the border, where even today there is still contradiction in various publications about the difference between certain shades of red and when a certain colour scheme changed to another.

To set the scene for colour schemes and weathering, this now brings us to the issue of what aspects of the QR we actually want to model and how are we going present this through our models. This will be influenced by personal experiences, knowledge and interests.

As an example:
My own view of modelling the QR has been formed mainly by my experiences of train travel in the 1960s and 70s when I spent many a weekend either travelling on various branchlines such as the Brisbane Valley Branch, Kingaroy, Monto and other branchlines in the Toowoomba area, going on ARHS excursions, visits to various loco depots, motorcading and photographing trains in general. This was in an interesting period in which there were many major changes - the transition period in many ways - the change from steam to diesel, the introduction of modern steel

rollingstock to replace, in some cases, quite ancient wagons and carriages, and of course branchline operations that no longer run.

This means that I'm interested in re-creating this familiar period of the QR using models relevant to this period and includes such things as C17s, PB15s, first generation diesels, old wooden rollingstock, branchline operation, etc. It also means that some of my models will be of locomotives and wagons that were nearing the end of their working life when I saw them and I want to not just ensure the correct paint schemes but have appropriate weathering as well to represent the condition they were in at that time.

First of all, you individually might like to consider answers to the following:

What era of the QR do I want to model?

Do I want my models to looking brand new or at least as though they have only just rolled out of the paint shops?

Do I want my locos and rollingstock to look as though they have had a fair bit of service between paint jobs, or

Do I want everything to look positively derelict!

An alternative perhaps is a combination of the above, after all, the QR's locos and rollingstock were serviced at different times, and it was not uncommon for a newly outshopped loco to be seen hauling some grotty old worn-out wagons.

The answers to these questions will determine to some extent what colour schemes and weathering will be appropriate.

Once you have decided how you are going to approach QR modelling, then its time for some research - various railway publications from enthusiast groups, model railway clubs, official railway photos, fellow modellers, and railway museums will all be helpful.

The slides used in this presentation were taken mainly in the period 1966-70 and are all Ektacrome 64 asa slide film that has been processed at 125 asa. Reason: It was cheaper to push process instead of buying I2S asa film, to my eye Ektacrome reproduces dark colours such as blacks and blues more realistically, and the push processing tones down intense colours to what I believe is closer to the real thing.

Remember, not everyone sees colour and tones in the same way. It depends on several factors - light, film used, processing, individual perception, condition of your eyesight, etc.

A few basic historical starting points of interest for the period under discussion:

The QR logo started appearing from about 1973.

The QR began repainting older wooden goods rollingstock grey instead of the traditional red from about 1969/70.

Prior to this, and in general, wooden goods wagons were painted red except for insulated vans which were either white or grey, and some departmental stock such as ballast wagons which were black. Steel wagons were usually painted black.

Private owner wagons such as tankers, were either painted silver or black on which the company insignia was either directly painted or on boards mounted on the side. Most of the underframes for these were usually black.

Where the roof was galvanised iron, it started out as silver but weathered to grey fairly quickly and usually became rusty as well. If the roof was Melthoid, it was its natural dull black, but later this was painted on some wagons with the same colour red as the rest of the van.

Passenger carriages and some brake vans were also painted red which usually appeared to be different to that used for goods wagons probably because the passenger stock had varnish painted over the basic colour and more attention was given to priming the timber surface. As well, it is believed that a different base for the paint was used for passenger cars compared to that used for goods stock.

A query to the workshops some years ago over what red was used brought the reply that they used rust proofing red, i.e. ferric oxide red. In time and under the effects of the weather, the iron oxide turn brownish. This process was slowed down if coats of varnish were put over the paint, although the varnish it self would change over time to a darker shade.

Happy QR modelling.

RM 1815 *Photograph R. Dow 1996*

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SOME MISCELLANEOUS NOTES ON QR COLOUR SCHEMES

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Please note that the names of colours may not necessary be the official names, but are usually an interpretation according to the source of information.

Original scheme for Sunlander cars: externally painted in Soft Dove Grey with a 12" deep band in Glacier Blue above the windows which carries a narrow Bronze Yellow border. A 2½" wide Bronze Yellow band is repeated under the windows. The roof is a Deep Blue-Grey.

1800 Class Diesel Rail Motor Trains were painted in Aluminum with Royal Blue below windows and Bronze Yellow QR emblem.

1900 and 2000 class finished in natural Stainless Steel except for original set of 2000 class which was finished in Aluminum. Later, Royal Blue bands was added to ends of 1900 class.

Older type Rail Motors finished in the standard carriage red covered with varnish (originally) with yellow band along side under windows, curving down at front. Some had a cream colour above waist.

Sunshine Cars were originally (1930s) painted a Dulux Maroon (a darker red than other passenger stock) and later received the standard carriage red.

Red used on carriages, brake vans, baggage cars, and other cars used on passenger trains, was a flat ferric oxide red finished with varnish until modern enamels came into use.

Red used for wooden goods wagons was an oil-based flat ferric oxide red.

Wagons constructed of steel (e.g. FJS, HJS, etc.) were originally painted black. Any members of these classes after 1969 were gradually repainted standard goods wagon gray.

Insulated wagons constructed of wood (e.g. CM, CMI, CMC, CMB, etc.) were at one time painted white but most had light gray sides/ends with a dark gray roof.

Aluminum wagons were unpainted.

CLC type bogie wagons were originally in the same red as passenger car as they were designed for passenger services. Some were later painted into a special livery of gray and yellow and specially lettered-up for the Toowoomba Co-ordinated Service. After this service ceased, some were in an all-over yellow and in later years the remaining members of this class were in the standard goods wagon gray.

Later type steel wagons (ALY, BLC and QLX types) were originally in mid-gray when built.

Traditional red colour on goods wagons was replaced by a mid grey from 1969/70.

Wagons used for departmental purposes, e.g. ballast or work trains were usually painted black, whether wood or steel construction, and these were later painted standard gray.

B18¼ class originally were turned out with planished steel boiler cladding sheets which were polished. Later painted in black and then painted Light Brunswick Green with red lining from 1949

BB18¼ class built by Vulcan were in Hawthorn Green (slightly darker than Brunswick Green) with carmine lining, and those built by Walkers were in a slightly brighter Brunswick Green with vermilion lining originally. The few that received overhauls/repaints after 1967 were painted black.

The first DD17s were originally in deep royal blue, later "mid" blue i.e. midway between Royal Blue and Sky Blue and was made by mixing royal blue with white 4:1.

The later type C17 class, which were fitted with roller bearings and sedan cabs, first appeared in 1938, (Brown Bombers) were in a Medium Brown with Willow Green lining.

Beyer-Garretts were in "Midland" red, i.e. the maroon/crimson lake colour used by the Midland Railway Co. and later by the LMS Railway in the UK. These had chrome yellow lining and monograms.

White painted wheel rims were added after the 1950s to outshopped locos, especially those used for passenger work.

QR Diesel-Electric Locos were always painted QR Blue, QR Gray and QR White! ie. colours specified by the QR. These colours changed slightly according to the manufacturers interpretation so that variations were noticed over time with different suppliers, different batches, changes to the paint's components and what the railway workshops did with the paint. One notable event was the change from mineral based paints to synthetic based paints from 1983 which produced a variation in the QR diesel blue - the earlier mineral based blue was slightly darker but faded more rapidly.

QR logo was adopted in 1970 and believed added on locos and rollingstock from about 1973.

Other points to consider:

Red oxide paints fade to brown in time because of iron oxide pigments.
Red on carriages deepens in colour because of aging effect of varnish.
most other colours, e.g. blue and grays, fade to lighter colours because of the breakdown of pigments by ultra-violet rays.

References:

Various QR documents, reports, etc.
Triumph of the Narrow Gauge, J Kerr
Locomotives in the Tropics Vol 2, J Armstrong
Crimson Giants, A M West
ARHS Bulletin
ARHS Qld Div Sunshine Express