

Modern Cane Railways of Queensland

Carl Millington's presentation at the Modelling the Railways of Queensland Convention, 2004

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Part 9: Odds and Ends

Choke Blocks: Choke blocks are found in some sidings with or without a slight grade. Their purpose is to stop bins from entering the main line. They are made up of either a U-shaped metal plate that is hinged and swings over one of the rails or a triangular metal plate that folds up onto the rail. Some of these choke blocks are fitted with key locks.

Siding Rollbacks: Similar to the ones you would find in a mill's full yard, they are used to stop bins from running out of sidings. They are most common at sidings where roll on/off transporters are used, and are normally found on the empty bin line.

The rollback is hinged so bins can be pushed over it in one direction only and are located in the middle of a sleeper. Moreton Mill had one very unusual type of rollback, in that it takes the form of a post made from a length of old rail with several links welded to it. The bins are shunted into the siding, which happens to be on a very steep grade. With the last bin hard up against the post, the crew places the link into the bin coupling and secures it with a pin, as though they were coupling bins together.

Buffers: Several mills place buffers at the end of their sidings in an attempt to stop runaway bins. These buffers can take the shape of a sleeper and a steel post placed across the track, steel frames, or buffers similar to those you may find on the mainline railways.

Cattle Grids: Mills that run through areas where livestock graze have installed cattle grids to stop the cattle from getting out of the paddocks which the tramline passes through. Grids are either a pre-fab metal construction or simply a trench under the track with a couple of rails and sleepers placed either side.

Floodgates: Several sugar mills that are situated in high rainfall areas have floodgates installed near their major river or creek crossing bridges to stop

floodwaters entering cane land. Most are installed within the cuttings leading to the bridge. They are made up of a high concrete wall with steel gates across the tramline, and are usually kept closed during the slack season.



Basic rail and sleeper cattle guard constructed in situ. A more elaborate example is shown below.



A siding on Bingera Mill's system that has both types of choke block at the one location.



Rollback at a truck dump



The unusual rollback used by Moreton Mill



Rail and timber buffer



Timber buffer



Fabricated rail buffer



Cattle guard constructed from dimension timber



The floodgate installed at Herbert River crossing on Victoria Mill's system.