

MAIN LINE

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE AUSTRALASIAN REGION

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EDITOR Bill Cooper



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Communication Through Coordination

This issue contains an article by Peter Weller-Lewis on the creation of "Cells" in the Region as a means of communication between modellers in close proximity to each other. It's true that only a small number have the opportunity to attend meetings in Sydney or Melbourne and I would be interested in receiving letters from members on Peters thoughts.

Sydney AMRA Exhibition

We again were represented at Liverpool and as a result attracted 13 new members. 40 others left their names and addresses with the intention of joining in the future.

We had pleasure in awarding our Encouragement Award (a plaque and a years membership) to the A'Becketts Creek layout which shows great potential for the future.

This year our exhibit was very professional thanks to the loan by Bruce Lovett of display panels etc. belonging to his employer. Thank you Bruce.

Convention

Plans are developing for our first mini-convention in Sydney on 17 and 18 May next. The next issue of Main Line will have full details. In the meantime, keep at least the Saturday free as we will have an excellent program to suit everybody.

The Cedar Valley

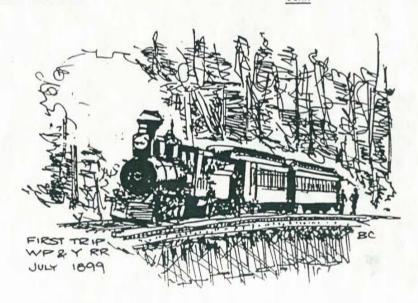
The notice inviting members to my home for the last Sydney meeting on 19 October said that "Perhaps evan the Cedar Valley could be operating!" As you would expect therefore Mr. Murphy and his Law arrived about an hour before the other 20 members and proceeded to impose a major short-circuit in the main control panel which defied a quick fix.

I am now in the middle of a complete re-wiring job to remove the many patched attachments to the circuit over the years. The lesson of course is that if you know you have the potential for a problem, fix it before it fixes you!

Nevertheless, I think everybody enjoyed themselves and we are looking forward to Bill Cooper's meeting on 30 November.

Until next time

JOHN



« EDITORIAL ... »

RESEARCH ♦ ♦

by Bill Cooper

Access to prototype information has never been better than now. One reason, of course, is that we are always adding to what has previously been available. But there is more to it than that. The means of transmitting information has also dramatically improved. Especially in the area of colour.

Whereas books on the prototype were once illustrated by small muddy half-tones, the trend today is towards large, crisp full-colour photos. Even the photos pre-dating colour (say, pre 1935) and back as far as the mid-1800's, are greatly enhanced by modern printing practice. This, with copious drawings and enlightened, detailed text has made the acquisition of knowledge a pleasure. Woe betide any author of vague, dubious information! They get short thrift from numerous erudite reviewers.

If books can convey the solid information needed for a modelling project, then videos can often provide the motivation. To see some distant, perhaps defunct prototype in operation on the TV can produce a strong urge towards realisation in three dimensions.

But is this highly refined research diet entirely good for us? Do we need to bulk it out a little?

I think we do.

We tend to develop a cargo cult mentality. There is so much good, readily obtained information, on a myriad of aspects, that it is just too easy to either sit and wait until what interests us appears, or to simply follow a well-covered prototype. If so, we are losing out on satisfaction. The satisfaction that comes from doing some of our own research.

We also lose out on prototype fidelity, a real problem if we build from kits or some 'how to do it' article in an older model magazine, without any reference to prototype data. An assembled Athearn or even Central Valley, boxcar may be a pleasure to behold, but the cruel camera will reveal its warts.

On the cover

'SERVICES SUSPENDED'.. GE 70-Tonner #900, of the ARKANSAS & OZARKS RAILWAY CORPORATION fell through bridge 73-2, in May 1956. A carload of strawberries teeters on the brink. The line's end was near (From a photo in 'The North Arkansas Line', HOWELL NORTH)

It just doesn't look right, because the prototype's proportions have been degraded. The Athearn car has plastic ledges for grab irons, thick steps and roof walks, oddly-proportioned doors and so on, whilst the CV car has a grotesque caricature of wood siding. It probably smells the same, though.

Returning to the satisfaction angle, how can we achieve this by our own means. What if our prototype is distant or long gone? Well, an English guy whose name escapes me, the father of modern geology, is supposed to have said 'The present is the key to the past!' Go and look at the real thing. It may be packed with Diseasels and Epileptics, have no guards vans, use non-metallic brake shoes and Pandrol Clips, but it is ALIVE. It is still more prototypical than any picture can be, because it exists, in three dimensions. It squeaks, groans, rattles. It OPERATES.

And REALLY COOK at it. Study the patterns of weather; the textures of the parts; the shiny points of wear; the sheer level of DETAIL. Though your fancy may be an ocean away, of a different gauge and era, it was on the same planet. There are more similarities than differences. But beware! Your bookbound fantasy may fade and you may embrace the common, taken-forgranted local product. A bit like discarding the Playboys when you get married.

Building a model, from one's own efforts at the prototype with tape and camera (while avoiding being killed and having obtained permission) ... now, thats REAL satisfaction!

CANBERRA CLAN ♦ ♦

NEXT MEETINGS - CANBERRA CLAN

Tuesday 3 December 1930

33 Hayley Crescent, Queanbeyan.

Bring along a model, kit, structure, book etc for discussion.

Tape Slide Clinic - also slides by Kerry McPherson of USA. Prototype view "ELKRUN" progress to date.

Tea and Coffee provided.

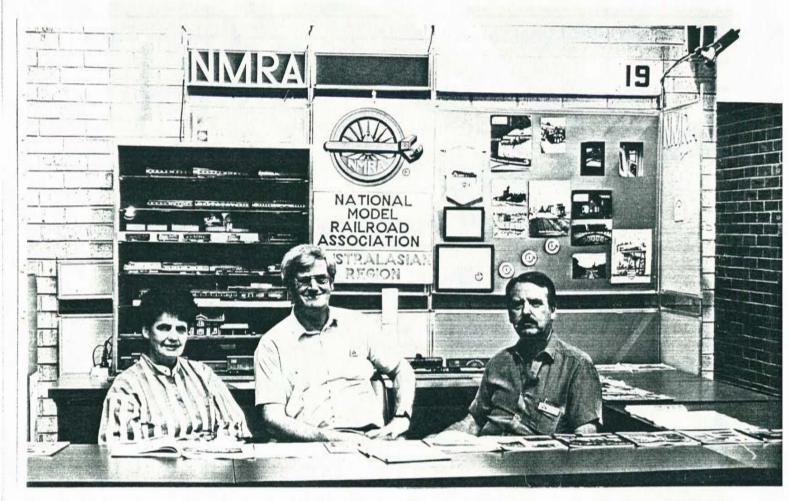
Tuesday 14 January 1930

59 Angophora Close, Rivett ACT

Darryl Chandler Host with his N.Guage Japanese Layout.
Bull Session (show off "Santa's Gifts?" If you bought any!)
Tea and Coffee provided.

Tuesday 25 February 1930

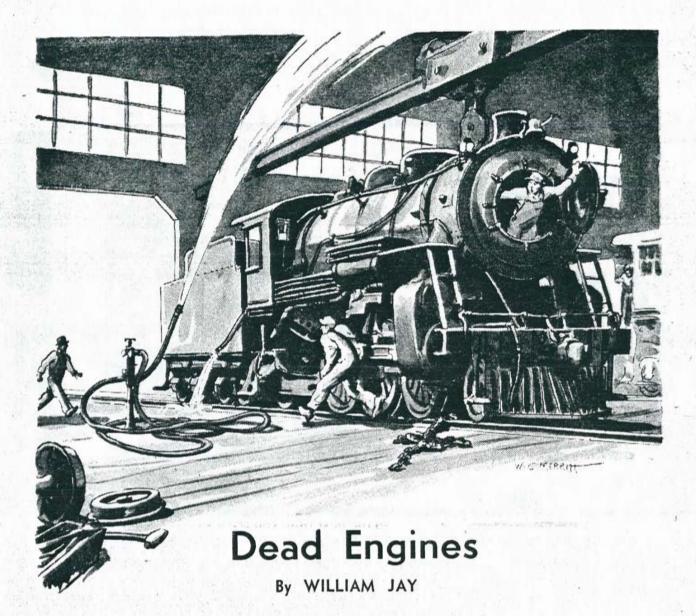
Venue to be confirmed.



'EVER WILLING TO SERVE...' Australasian region officers at the
AMRA EXHIBITION, Liverpool NSW, in October 1985. Left to right:
TONI SAXON

(Treasurer) (President)

ON PAGES 6, 7 and 8 is reproduced a few pages from an ancient copy of RAILROAD MAGAZINE (June 1948) now incorporated in Carstens Publications' RAILFAN magazine. These old mags, still occasionally available second-hand, are like a window on a past era. When issued, steam still ruled. The actions and incidents were often contemporary, though stories of the past, much closer then, were also common. The language was of, by, and for railroaders of the day. Now, it is powerfully nostalgic. This brief glimpse is offered as a tribute to that time.



A BIG boilermaker remarked that it doesn't take much to get a hog to move. And he related this story:

When an engine is in consistent trouble for not steaming, the most common cause is plugged flues. But plugged flues are not the only thing that will result in poor steaming qualities. We test first for no steam.

All the steam is blown off the boiler and then the boiler is filled with water from the house line in order to find leaks that could not be seen with invisible superheated steam blowing from them. Another operation requires the throttle to be opened to gage the exhaust pressure.

On one test, I'd crawled into the front end and hollered for my helper to open the throttle. Then I felt a bump and, looking around, I saw the roundhouse wall coming toward me, like something alive.

Screaming for my helper to shut her off, I ducked behind the protected boiler front and waited for the worst.

When she stopped the pilot was right against the wall. The house line was torn off and water was squirting over everything. After getting the water shut off I looked around to see what made that engine move so easily. We had four chains under the drivers but she'd crawled right over them and over the end block at the end of the pit. Then I saw what had given this engine so much pep. The reverse gear was in full forward motion, a violation of the roundhouse rule by the hostler who'd put the engine in the house. The water pressure had moved the engine.

The next storyteller was a little old engineer with a wrinkled face and gray



hair. He had been on the road for a long,

long time . . .

One night coming in on the westbound local (he said), we got a message to pick up a dead engine. Hours later I looked the engine over to make sure she would run. There wasn't a pound of steam on her and the fire was completely drawn. I poured some oil on the bottom guides and showed the brakeman how to cut the air through her. Then we coupled up, tried the air and proceeded at ten miles per hour to the terminal, where we left the train in the yard and took the dead engine to the roundhouse. The brakeman cut her off and I started to move on to the ashpit track with my own engine.

I'd gone about fifty feet when I heard someone yelling. There behind me was my brakeman. And back of him was that dead engine, that we had just left, rolling away at a good pace. Horsing over my engine, I raced back after her. The brakeman caught the tank footboard. We managed to overtake the runaway, couple on and get her stopped just before she ran through the running track switch.

We dragged that mill back to where we left it at first. This time I told the brakeman to put two pieces of two-by-four under the drivers. Before my own drivers had made two turns that dead hog started right over the blocking. This time I heard an exhaust shoot from her stack.

When we caught her I set the brakes on my engine and got down to see what was making this phantom engine run. I pulled myself into the cab of the runaway. My fireman and brakeman followed me up. And I'll be darned if that engine with a bare firebox and a cold boiler didn't have fifty pounds of pressure on the gage.

Well, after we got our minds back to working we found the throttle open a bit and the reverse gear in back motion. We had been towing the engine forward and all the while its pistons and gear, in back motion, was forcing air through the partly opened throttle into the boiler. The boiler stored up the air till it developed pressure. You know that was the darndest thing I ever saw. . .

Redball

AT THREE THIRTY-SEVEN I opened the gate

For Danny O'Toole and his manifest freight.

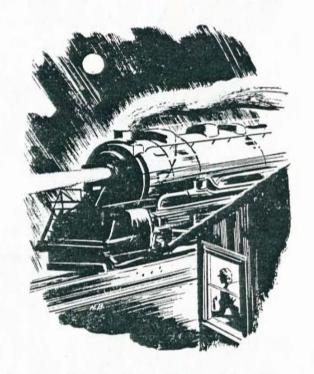
The hogger is Irish by habit and birth And hasn't a chance to inherit the earth. His engine was doggedly beating the main Like a Kansas tornado lambasting the plain.

The reefers went swooshing and swaying in sections;

Hell would tear loose if they missed their connections.

The engine screamed frantically half a mile east

And shortly thereafter the tempo increased.



My heart was a-pounding and jerking my vest

As all that vast tonnage poured out of the west.

My tonsils were hampered as though by a noose

When whipple-de-click went the demon caboose.

The moon was full bright and the prairie was clear

As an op softly swore at a damned engineer.

-By Charles Dulin

For 1986, MAIN LINE will feature a series on the underframe equipment of Electric Multiple-Unit trains. That may sound a big yawn to many modellers, but just stay tuned, folks, 'cause you may find yourself hooked by the lure of the singing wire. (Electric Traction is, judging by the few articles in more recent modelling mags, not as popular as it was back in the '50s, perhaps with the demise of many prototype lines. Yet overhead catenary is becoming quite common on many exhibition lines. Many of these are, of course, of Continental type, where Traction always has been strongly supported.)

Regional President Saxon has also been prevailed upon to produce a history of the various CEDAR VALLEY LINES that have shown promise over the years.

This and much more is on the way for '86. Contributions are solicited from readers..from anybody, for that matter. They don't need to be well written. Ignorance of journalism has not stopped us!

SYDNEY MEETING .

The next meeting of the Region in Sydney is to be held at Bill Cooper's home on Saturday afternoon, 30th November 1985, from 2.30 pm to 5.00 pm approximately.

All are welcome. There will be slides, a video and a general natter. Perhaps parts of the Fern Valley could be operating! Light eats and drinks provided.

The address is 2 Mason Avenue, Cheltenham (opposite Cheltenham Girls' High School on Beecroft Road) telephone 86 1724. Note the change of date, a week earlier than previously notified. It is now the 30th November.

MAIN LINE welcomes two new advertisers in this issue: Mike Eastwood, of STATION HOBBIES, Croydon NSW, and Darryl Nelson, of NORTHSIDE HOBBIES, Carlingford NSW. Mike's specialty is British prototype and Darryl favours Continental equipment, but both carry substantial stocks of small parts at modest prices (though it soon mounts up!) of interest to NMRA members. Both are recommended unreservedly.

If steep grades, sharp curves and light rail and...SHAY.. geared lokeys are your cup of tea, then the Wolgan Valley Railway Group may prove irresistable. They meet on Monday nights, at Factory 8, 185 Port Hacking Road. The secretary is Greg Ellis, 'phone (02)525 2009

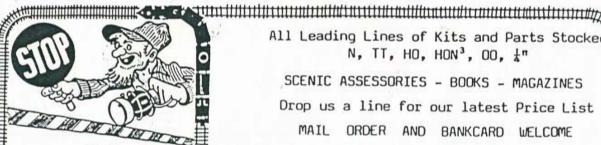
The standard gauge Wolgan Valley Railway ran for 32 miles through the rugged Blue Mountains of NSW, serving a shale oil plant. Between 1907 and 1924 or so, it moved passengers oil, coal, coke and other products along a spectacular right-of-way, using a fleet of four 3-truck shays. The company also operated a number of rod engines.

Several booklets on the line are available from the Australian Railway Historical Society's Bookshop, PO box E129 St. James NSW 2000. 'Phone (02) 212 1201

TAPE-SLIDE Clinics are still in strong demand, but most choices are available ex-stock. Why not check through the lists published previously (continuing next issue) and rent one for the edification of you and your friends? Incidentally, in last issue, Hal Riegger's clinic was misnumbered. It should have read:

780-54 OVERHEAD SYSTEMS FOR OPERATION

The SHAY drawing on page II of this issue is of a line that only operates in HO gauge! The odd amalgam of auto. coupler and buffers is an Australian 'Transition Coupler', used during the protracted change from English to US-style drawgear. For about 50 years after 1923, mixed couplers existed.



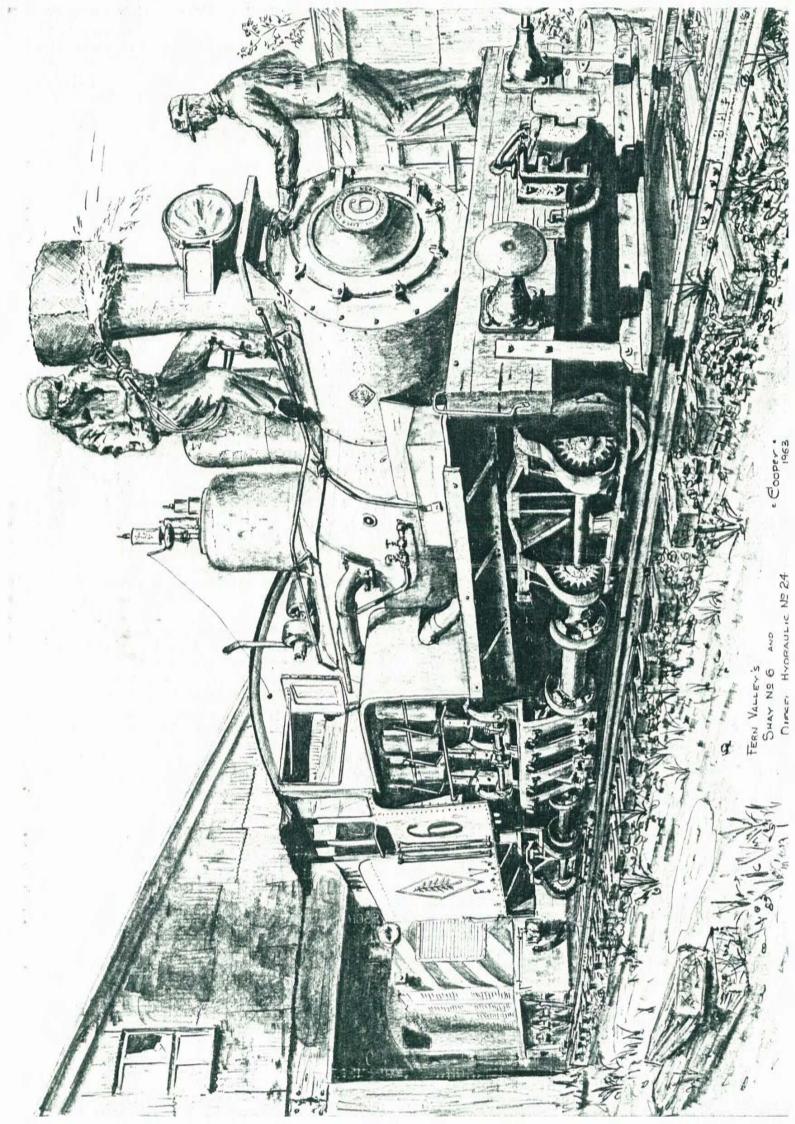
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COMMUNICATION THROUGH COORDINATION

Many fellow NMRA Modellers like myself, may read the NMRA Bulletin and notice the "Coming Events" in "Club Car". Perhaps like me they are most envious of the numerous Club Open House Meets, swap/sell or Mini Conventions.

Perhaps one day in the very distant future (assuming Australia stays with virtually zero national population growth) when Australia has a population of 230,000,000 people (as is the case in the USA), we would also take for granted the numerous events that take place all over the USA. We are also spared the trauma of deciding which local or interstate venue to attend every other week.

Our problem here at least in Australia (I cannot comment for our New Zealand Members across the Tasman) is distance. Not to mention a slight deficit of population of some odd 215,000,000. Area wise, we are on a par. I doubt if a modeller living in Montana for instance makes an annual trip to Florida for a convention. No more than a modeller in Broom or Darwin zooms off to the Melbourne Exhibition. So one is left with the problem of some one hundred and sixty members of the Australasian region scattered over this vast island of ours. Flying costs are prohibitive these days. Driving vast distances is also expensive in fuel and wear and tear on your vehicle, but most of all time consuming.

Add to this problem that the bulk of our membership is located in Sydney and Melbourne it would be ridiculous to hold an Annual Convention or plan a get together in say Alice Springs (it could be argued by West Australian, Northern Territory members that at least its a central location!)

So assuming that forty percent of our members were willing to attend an Annual Convention it would appear to me that the most obvious choice for location of the venue would be Sydney or Melbourne. However is this a fair assumption that a modeller, who, lets say, is committed to modelling USA prototype joins the NMRA and the Australasian Region. Due to the depreciated \$Aust this costs him \$35.00 Aust (more for New Zealand modellers). He receives his Bulletin every month and Main Line every three months. Lets say he lives in Albury He cannot attend the Annual Convention. He does not get to meet any other NMRA modellers. He will perhaps become disenchanted with both the NMRA and the Australasia Region. However should it occur that on joining the NMRA, very shortly after he is contacted by another NMRA modeller who lives lets say in Wangarratta, Victoria. Sure its interstate but it is also his nearest fellow member. They can meet by only travelling modest distance, exchange ideas etc. Before they know it they are "COMMUNICATING". So lets see if we can coordinate a system to ensure that both existing modellers and new members are coordinated into a working system.

Even prior to the Second World War the Soviets had a thoroughly simple, yet highly effective espionage system. Not just throughout the western world as we know it, but also through so called friends and neighbour countries. The whole idea was based on a cathedral organ. Every pipe had a different note due to the variation in the pipes length and diameter. (Have you ever seen a large cathedral organ? They are vast.) If you every study a large organ it

becomes all the more amazing that the whole thing is controlled by one man "The Organist". Not a bad idea for a country dedicated to the destruction
of all religious beliefs. The Soviets operated their espionage system by
the so called spy or agent passing on all information along his pipe. All
members of that "pipeline" (for want of a better word), were totally ignorant
of the identities of anyone outside of their pipeline. Indeed they were
ignorant of the identity of the Head of their pipeline. Needless to say from
the security point of view it worked most effectively.

If one pipe was discovered or exposed the organ still operated. In time the pipe was then replaced with another pipeline. If you ever wondered why Russians are a secretive people, the organ system manipulated by the organist who would be the Head of the KGB would have one pipe in every batch of two or three whose sole job it was to spy and track down the operating pipes. All very ingenious, dangerous but not exactly the ideal job for an agent hoping to retire on a nice pension with his little Datcha (a small holiday home) in the country. What has espionage to do with our hobby or railway modelling? Nothing at all. I just wished to emphasise that most often the most successive way over or around a problem is invariably a most simple method.

To our north, in Asia are teeming millions of Asians who have many languages, religions and cultures. They also have civilised societies in what was the dim past for caucasians. Even so their lifestyles of utter simplicity are all the more obvious apparent in so much the visible shock of seeing their cultures existing alongside the technicological revolution. Perhaps I can reflect to a very bitter war in our recent past. Vietnam.

Unlike the Chinese in Korea who sent over wave after wave of soldiers to be slaughtered as long as the allies did not run out of amunition, the regular Vietnam Army is very highly trained, tenacious and rigidly disciplined. However instead of stopping at so many companies for a battalion etc., they would further desiminate from a company down to a "CELL" usually consisting of one junior NCO and two Privates.

For the guerilla tactics used so effectively in Vietnam the outcome speaks for itself. The Vietnamese operated on patrol in these small cells picking their own targets and generally tying up superior forces. The Cells would group for combined attacks on large targets and melt away into the jungle back to being localised Cells.

How can we apply a similar Cell structure to help us both maintain membership and hopefully recruit new members? Some time ago I wrote to Ray Brownbill, Director of Division IV Incorporating (SA, WA and NT). I floated a Cell idea to him for his reactions. Now he has one very big backyard to look after (eat your hearts out Lone Star region). I would not dare to hazard a guess at how many thousands of square miles. How on earth could Ray organise a divisional meet? Enough said.

As an alternative, however, lets make up a hypothetical situation. Lets say a member lives at Pinnaroo SA, near the Victorian border. You would hardly expect that member to drive several hours for an evening get together in say Adelaide. Lets say Ray has another member also in SA living at Tailem Bend, some 144 km from Pinnaroo. A third member lives at Meningie 44 km south of Tailem Bend.

Hardly next door but certainly within distance for a day long get together between the three members. Likewise between the three of them they could arrange for use of a Tape/Slide Clinic, BBQ or perhaps billet one another overnight on a two or three monthly basis. They could perhaps jointly share petrol costs to attend an exhibition in Adelaide.

A similar set up could always be arranged between modellers in the other States and Territories. One of the members of a Cell could be nominated to keep the Director or President informed (preferably both). In the denselv populated areas this system would be even more simple to initiate between For a little effort by the individual members they would I am sure find it rewarding from the exchange of ideas. An example which would otherwise never come to any fruition without some effort of the individual members. No doubt there will be a member somewhere (especially in Ray's division) who would have several hundred miles of dirt road to cover to get within a Cooee! of his nearest fellow modeller. However for the bulk of our members the Cell system would prove beneficial. For instance driving through or across Sydney, Melbourne or Brisbane could be more traumatic than hours of driving on country But our city dwelling members could form into Cells. Close to each other for evening meets. As well as attending bi monthly divisional meets hence more participation, enjoyment and satisfaction for the individual modellers.

To initiate such a scheme throws the ball into the court of the B O D. would be imperative that a new member should be informed of a Cell in his The onus would then be on the divisional Director and members of that Cell to arrange a time and date for an introduction and welcome to a Cell. Should members in a Cell recruit other members they could enlarge the Cell or split the Cell. There would be no restriction of a member in close proximity of two or three Cells participating in one or more. Involvement of members would no doubt produce more enjoyment of the hobby, which in turn would appear to the prospective modeller all the more attractive an organisation to join. There are thousands of clubs, groups, organisations, pertaining Lets face it. to every hobby or interest. Some exist solely by the "Old Guard" collecting joining fees from new members who then become disenchanted and fail to renew their subscriptions. There are also those who love to "Belong" to any club of any sort with the view that it builds their prestige at social functions to say "Oh yes, I'm a member you know"!!

I have every wish to see the Australasian Region continue to grow by providing a means for modellers to help each other. By involving members in outlying areas to share in with what can be gained from our organization I believe modellers will feel it worthwhile to belong. In this day and age the modellers budget is rather thin. There are many attractions also after the leisure dollar. To help ouselves improve our region and improve our modelling we have to be prepared to get off our butts and pitch in. Surprisingly one finds (as I have done over the years), the more you pitch in, the more people you meet, thus a bigger exchange of ideas and techniques which in turn helps you improve your hobby.

In short you help yourself. I hope this article will be of help to our members. Should it bring together new members or help recruit new members then I can feel very smug and pleased that some fellow modellers somewhere got together and enjoyed the experience. Happy Modelling!

Victoria - from Max Gottliebsen

The last meeting of the Division was held at Bob Dall's home at Vermont South where Bob gave a demonstration on how to hand-lay points - very interesting and my thanks to Bob.

We continue to meet usually on the first Friday evening of the month but the next meeting will be on a Saturday afternoon as it is to be at Ballarat (see the separate notice).

Our layout for the AMRA Camberwell exhibition is moving along well and I would recommend a visit on either the 7,8,9 or 10 March next as the exhibition is usually firstclass. Because of the exhibition, our March meeting will be held on Friday 14 March.

Finally, for members who wish to attend any of our regular meetings, please phone me on (03) 763.0736 any evening for details.

New Zealand - from Keith Oman

We recently visited the meeting at Palmerston where we had the pleasure of seeing 9 excellent layouts in Palmerston & Fielding. Unfortunately the event was not well attended but those of those who went also enjoyed films in the evening including the Burlington Northern and the NZR.

A group of railfans has just returned from the U.S. where they shot about 50 hours of professional video on contemporary railroading. I have seen part of the first run and it is top class and I know they will sell well when shortly released.

The next major meeting is to be that in Wellington at Easter and I recommend attendance. If any Australian members want more details or help in anyway, please drop me a line.

VICTORIAN MEETING

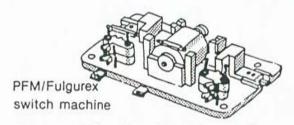
The next meeting of the Division is to be held at Dave Goddard's home on Saturday afternoon 7 December, 1985 commencing at 2.00 p.m.

The address is 311 Eddy Avenue, Mt. Helen, Ballarat and enquiries can be made to Max Gottliebsen on (03) 763.0736



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You can join both the National Model Railroad Association and the Australasian Region by completing the application form below and mailing it with your payment to the Baulkham Hills address.

The cost of \$35 for one year's membership includes the \$US20 for the NMRA and \$A5 for the Region. Unfortunately with today's exchange rates, airmail postage and bank drafts, \$US20 plus \$A5 equals \$A35!

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