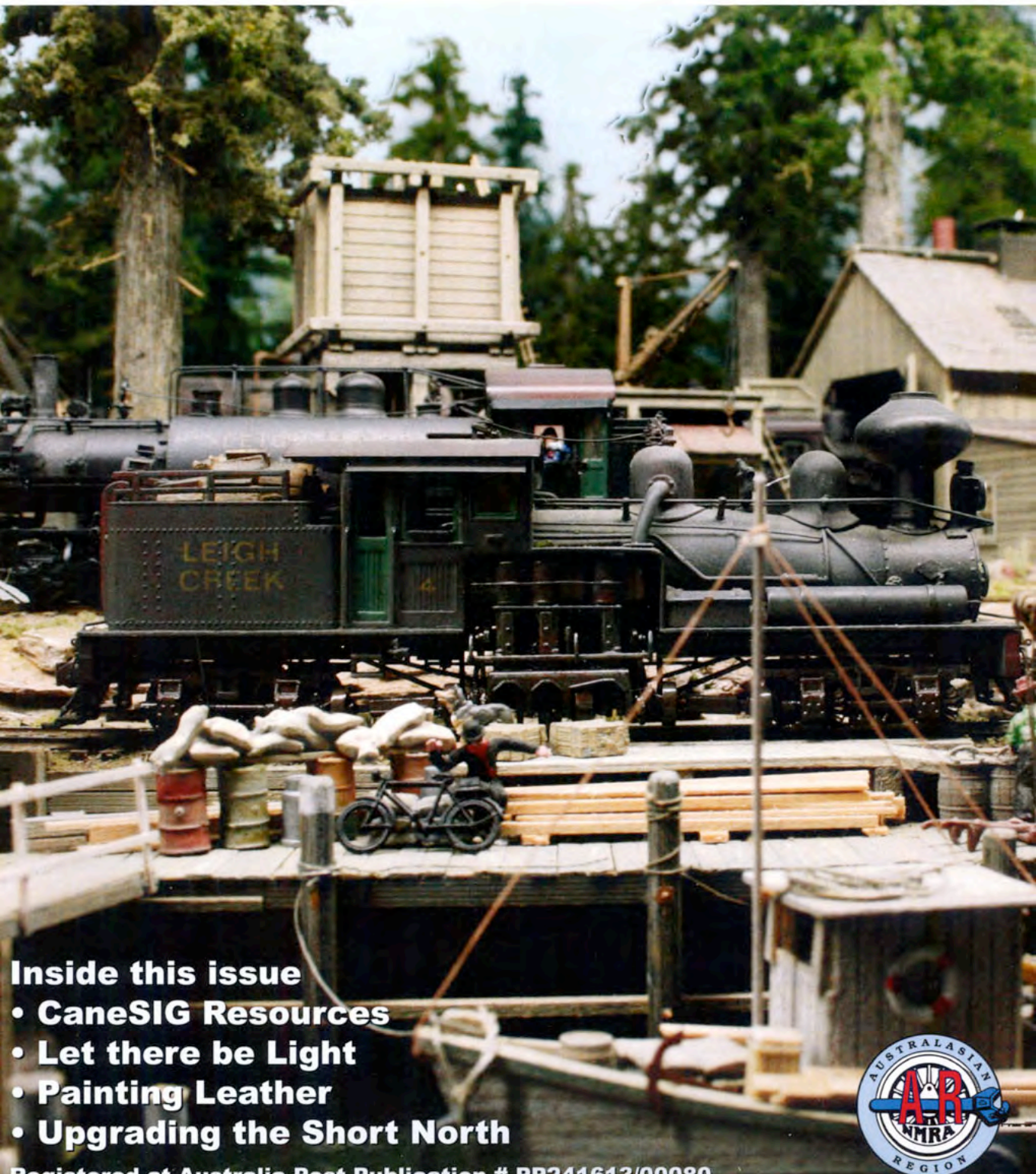


Main *Line*

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CaneSIG: Modelling Resources on the Internet

By A. C. Lynn Zelmer

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The May 2007 issue of Trains magazine contains an editorial and feature article on rail museums and their future. As editor Jim Wrinn says "Railway preservation has achieved some great successes... But railway preservation has also suffered from low interest, lack of money, and its own inability to make meaningful connections with the public." Wrinn suggests that "It's time for railway preservation to make some giant leaps forward, cleaning up junkyards masquerading as exhibits... and [begin] interpreting container traffic and coal trains." For a railway museum in Australia this would likely mean recognising that the Pacific National is also a Queensland railway and that QR National is an Australian railway company.

He might also have said that it is time model railroaders, who are similarly part of the rail preservation industry, looked at how they connect with the public to interpret their particular railway interest. We lament the lack of young modellers, but fail to capitalise on their interest in Thomas and computer-based train simulators. All too often at exhibitions and displays we focus on our own needs, generally operating trains and talking with enthusiasts, rather than interpreting the rail scene to the uninitiated. Also, model railroad publications generally fail to address the needs of potential or novice users.

One area where we can make an impact is on the Internet. The Region and Division web sites may not get a lot of traffic, but they do provide a glimpse into what is possible with model railroading and links to Australian modellers. Personal sites can be as basic as a the web equivalent of a postcard, or as complex as small business sites with a full [real or fictitious] history, photo album, video clips, operating manual and maybe even an interactive tour of the railway.

CaneSIG, the cane railway modellers special interest group (www.zelmeroz.com/canesig), is an NMRA-affiliated 'virtual' SIG. It's virtual in that it does not have the usual membership list, face-to-face meetings, newsletter, etc. Instead, for the last seven years, it has operated an online resource for Australian and overseas sugar cane railway modellers, and its 'members' are the individuals who contribute materials to the site.

Since starting with a 1992 article in the NMRA Bulletin, a computer-based clinic on Queensland's cane railways (1998-9), and 99 small resolution images (for quick downloading), the site has now grown to over 4300 medium resolution images (typically 800 x 600 pixels) from 60 photographers and draftsmen.

The site also includes a number of 'how-to' articles, modelling tips, layout and model photos, down-loadable card models, and industry information. Resources are still mostly Queensland-oriented, but countries such as Fiji, Cuba and the US are also represented. Related sites provide information on Queensland's rail heritage (QldRailHeritage.com) and modelling narrow gauge and timber railways.

CaneSIG was partly a response to the lack of readily available information on cane railways and partly a response to the disappearance of two photographic collections due to flooding and the death of a railfan photographer. A relatively low-resolution on-line photo album doesn't conflict with a photographer's desire to publish, but it can ensure that information and images last beyond a single convention clinic, natural disaster, or death.

The web site has been totally revised at least three times in the ten years, and is being redone again. That is part of the cost of posting anything on the web. You have to adapt as technologies change, and a web site that isn't regularly updated doesn't get repeat visits. The site still depends upon manually prepared pages (and images) and is hosted on a regional ISP. This conforms to the KISS principle and allows me to 'eyeball' the technician responsible for maintaining the electronic connection when necessary.

Costs are minimal. There is a charge for the 'domain name' (the equivalent of the telephone number for the web site) and the ISP charges an annual fee for storing the files and delivering them electronically on request. Search engine indexing is free, so the site resources can be easily found by anyone with the interest and an Internet connection. Beyond that it requires a computer, scanner, digital camera and software that I would probably have in any event. That just leaves my time, a significant investment that does take me away from my own modelling. However, I live in a regional centre without any nearby cane railway modellers, so the SIG members have become my model railroad club.

As well as the web site, SIG activities have included displays at NMRA conventions (National and Regional) in the US, clinics and displays at Australian conventions (Narrow Gauge and Queensland) and local exhibitions, regular displays at my local rail museum and articles in the modelling press.

Setting up and maintaining a web site isn't for everyone, but sugar cane railway modelling is a niche market interest, with enthusiasts scattered around the globe. CaneSIG members have provided resources that would otherwise be almost impossible to find, especially in one place. It performs most of the functions of a conventional SIG except for regular face-to-face meetings. I think that you'll agree the lack of face-to-face contact is well balanced by the availability of the SIG resources, without cost, to CaneSIG members, interested modellers and railfans anywhere in the world.

CaneSIG

The Cane Railway
(Tramline) Modelling
Special Interest Group



© Lynn Zelmer

Above: Truck loading point with three way stub points at Moreton Mill's Howard Street yard after closure of the mill

CaneSIG Home Page

Modelling ▾

Image Collection ▾

Industry ▾

Resources ▾

What is CaneSIG? ▾

Modelling Queensland's Sugar Cane Railways (trams)

Several of these links leave the CaneSIG web site. Additional Queensland-specific information can be found through the menu selections at left.

ANGRMS

The Australian Narrow Gauge Railway Museum has an extensive collection of [mostly] ex-cane railway equipment at their operating museum, Woodford QLD. CaneSIG coordinator's [photos](#) (slow loading, 115 thumbnail images).

Fainges Queensland Prototype [Locomotives and Rolling Stock](#) and [Buildings](#).

Jim Fainges' collection of scale drawings.

A J Hurst's Collection

Sugar cane railway [photos](#) taken in a 1978 trip to Queensland: Bli Bli preserved near Nambour; Coolum preserved at The Big Pineapple; Eudlo preserved (if that is the word?) at the Nambour Mill; Kalbo, The face of modern cane railways, near Nambour; and A Shay preserved at Nambour.

LRRSA Sugar Railways

The Light Rail Research Society of Australia (LRRSA) is the premier research organisation for Australia's narrow gauge railways and tramways. Their site has a number of background documents on the industry, transport, preserved locomotives and current activities.

Carl Millington's [Photo Collection](#)

A collection of Queensland cane railway photos.

Sample CaneSIG web page, May 2007. This page is from the Resources section of the web site and provides links to information, photos and drawings of Queensland cane railway motive power and equipment. The head photo was taken following the closure of Nambour's Moreton Mill.



An On30 Bachmann Porter modified for tropical operation, followed by a Shire tramway-inspired coach cum brake van kit-bashed from a Roger Chivers coach kit. The ute is an Australian-made 7mm cast metal model, suitably repainted. The Australian gum trees are from Trakside Trees (NSW). The background is a cane field photo modified in Photoshop and wrapped around the back and one end of the A4-sized mini-diorama. Lynn Zelmer models and photos.

Modelling Loco Depots

by Jim Hutchinson & Carl Millington

2
Traffic Office
& Operation

Adapted by A C Lynn Zelmer, CaneSIG coordinator

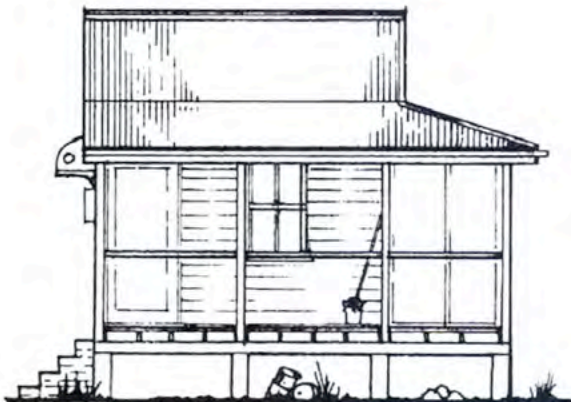
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CaneSIG: <http://www.zelmeroz.com/canesig>



SIDE ELEVATION

SCALE - HO 1:87



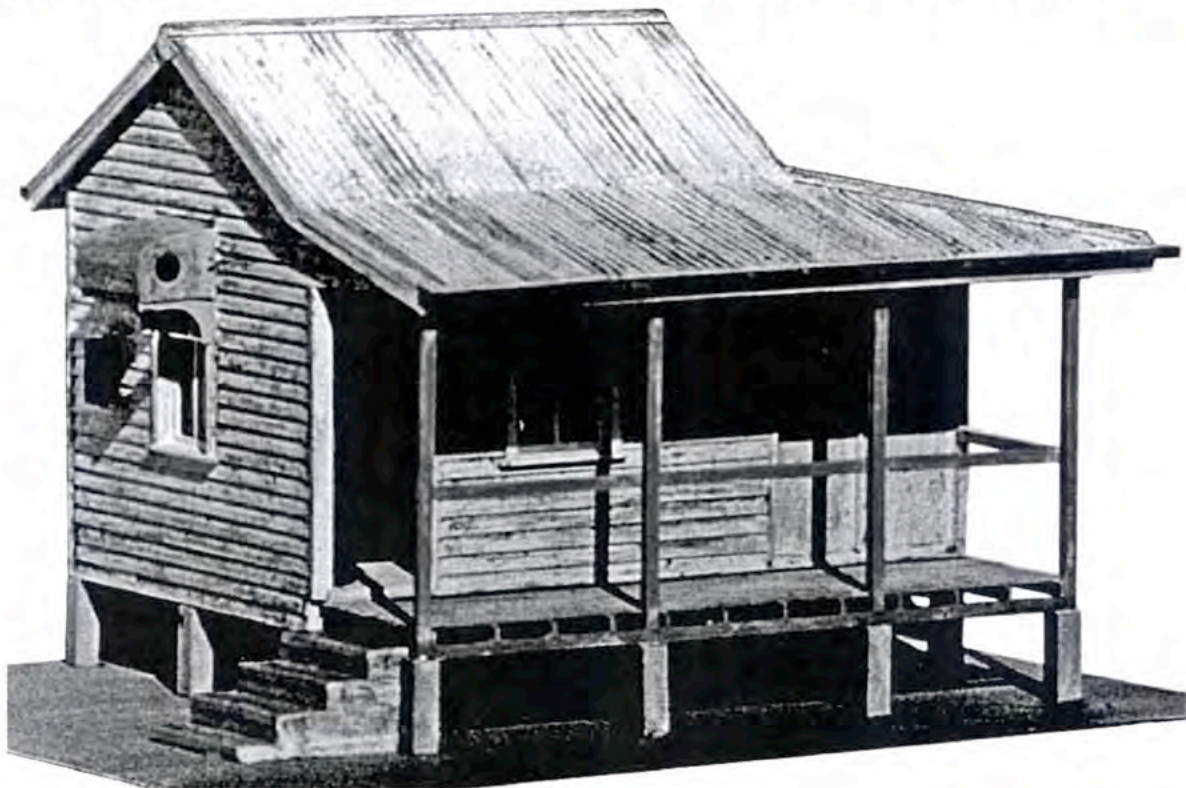
FRONT ELEVATION

South Johnstone Traffic Office c 1968

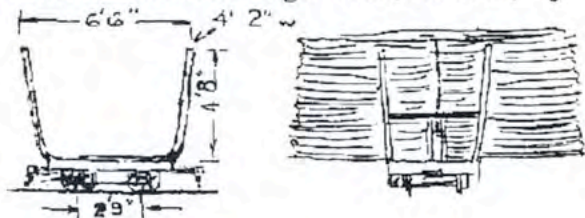
South Johnstone Traffic Office

Tramway movements have to be planned and controlled, and the little traffic office (now demolished) at South Johnstone mill was an ideal

subject to complement the freelance diorama in these notes. The basic model, except for the matchstick stumps, was fabricated from styrene.



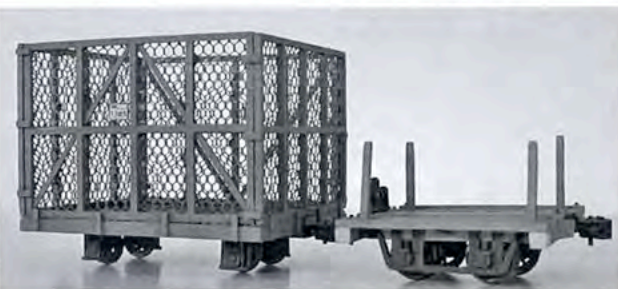
CSR: South Pacific Sugar Mills, Lautoka, Fiji



Colonial Sugar Refineries: South Pacific Sugar Mills, Lautoka, Fiji, drawing of wholestick cane truck, 15" wheels, some disc, most 7 spoke; some roller bearing journals. John Teichmoeller, an American modeller, provided sketches and photos from a 1963 visit that included a loco shed tour. Jim Fainges of Brisbane, has contributed several dozen motive power, rolling stock and building drawings, many of which are scaled from photographs and drawn with a CAD package.



CSR metal 'basket' type wholestick trucks at the Childers Museum, 2006. A chain or rope was thrown over the top and winched tight to hold the load. These trucks were not measured but the dimensions are likely fairly close to the Fijian truck measured by John Teichmoeller in 1963. The timber has been added for health and safety reasons and were not necessarily used when the trucks were in service. Lynn Zelmer photo.



On30 Moreton Mill (Nambour) 4 ton chopped cane bin and wholestick truck. Both are from RJ Models of Queensland and feature pewter components and spoked wheels. Lynn Zelmer built models and photos.

Unfinished, but still impressive, the Cuba Libre On30 display layout was a feature of the 6th Australian Narrow Gauge Convention, 2003. Cuban railways generally follow US practice. As a result, cane bins are metal, wood and mesh superstructures on a flat car type underframe. Ray Walter and Claus Kleinhapl models, Claus Kleinhapl photo.

