



While a wide variety of information exist on the cane sugar industry (mill histories, locomotive and rolling stock plans, maps, photographs, etc.) the need for better modelling information led to CaneSIG, the cane railway (tramline) modelling special interest group, and the first drafts of my modeller's notes.

This version of those notes was prepared for the recent Modelling the Railways of Queensland Convention 2002 booklet as *From Field to Mill: Modelling Cane Railways*. They've been slightly revised and reformatted in 13 parts for distribution in pdf files. Readers are referred to the image search engine CaneSIG web site to access larger versions of the images; subsequent revisions and additions will also be available from that site.

As a young club modeller I was part of a sub-group promoting short lines and logging operations, particularly the West Coast variety. James Sabol's 1965 NMRA National Convention presentation, *From Timber to Tidewater: Some notes on North-west logging*, and Lyle Spears' locomotive and equipment drawings of the same era, *Logs A' Rollin'*, followed by publication of the work of modellers such as Jack Work, provided much of our inspiration.

I'm the kind of modeller who used to love the 'Dollar Models' in *Model Railroader* magazine and once built a fleet of log buggies for considerably less than a Canadian dollar each, including bogies and [dummy] couplers. I tell you this because while some of my modelling techniques and materials are quite current, others were acquired from a time when a dollar was worth a lot more than it is today and many modeller were more interesting in creating an illusion of reality than an exact prototypical scene.

Given that background, there was never any doubt that after moving to Queensland I'd model cane railways (tramlines) rather than QR's unit coal (or even general freight) trains. Modelling cane railways means that I can have some very idiosyncratic equipment representing the diverse operations of an industry that often moved passengers and freight as well as cane, bulk sugar, molasses and maintenance equipment.

Since 1989 I've been photographing cane railway operations from Nambour to Cairns and have discovered a network of modellers and others willing to share their information and resources. The cane modeller's special interest group web site

(<http://www.zelmeroz.com/canesig>) is one result, others include the dioramas and computer-based cane loco simulator I'm developing for the ANGRMS (Australian Narrow Gauge Railway Museum Society) museum at Woodford, QLD.

Most of the models and techniques presented in these notes are 1:87 scale (variously referred to as HOn30, 009 or HOe) but that's a matter of convenience; more than anything as I had a 'hoard' of 1:87 components when I started modelling cane. My eyesight isn't quite what it used to be, and I'm gradually shifting to larger scale (On30) modelling.

Incidentally, some modellers do use 2' gauge when modelling cane operations, but the more common pattern is to represent 2' gauge in HOn30 or On30, utilising N and HO gauge components (especially track and mechanisms) respectively. Some dimensions are oversize but so are many of the available components. Scale size HOn30 wheelsets, for example, are not readily available or likely practical.

As a once competent modeller newly come back into the hobby after a long absence, an illusion of reality is what I'm after and I hope to show you how this can be accomplished.

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Acknowledgments

These notes are dedicated to the many modellers and historians who have assisted me in beginning to understand cane railways and their modelling, particularly those who have contributed so selflessly to the resources on the CaneSIG web site.

All photographs and other images are by the author unless otherwise indicated.

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