

Australia's Saxon earns MMR 203

The Australasian Region's fourth MMR is John Saxon of Clontarf, a harborside suburb of Sydney, New South Wales with AP Certificates for Official, Volunteer, Author, Electrical Engineer, Scenery, Structures and Cars. John has been active in model railroading for nearly forty years with his introduction to the hobby via an uncle and father who had modelled the US prototype from the 1930's when modelling of local prototypes was virtually unknown. After suspending his involvement in O scale in his late teens, John's interest was exposed to his wife Toni shortly before the birth of their first son in 1961 when he arrived home one night with an HO Akane 0-6-0 ACL switcher, a Tenshodo NP reefer kit, an Athearn B&O hopper and three lengths of track. Apart from his interest in his home and family and his 1958 MGA, John's HO scale, mid 1950's Cedar Valley Short Lines has been his hobby ever since. He has been a member of the NMRA since 1963, a Life member since 1973 and lists this as one of the best investments he has ever made from both financial and personal viewpoints.

In 1967, as a consequence of some administrative difficulties at that time, NMRA official representation in Australia and New Zealand was lost with the disbanding of the former Southern Cross Region. Reacting to a 1976 Ballot question regarding cost of servicing the overseas membership, John initiated correspondence with the then NMRA "Brass" in an endeavor to expand the benefits available to the local membership. Despite little reaction, John persisted with many letters to various NMRA officials through to 1979 without success. Discussions during a visit to the US in early 1980 were also disappointing but his volunteering in response to a *Bulletin* request later that year for expansion of the Tape/Slide program led to him once again pursuing his new goal of a reactivated Region "Downunder". With guarded support from the more positive NMRA officials of 1981 and 1982, John got a small local team together in late 1982 which successfully canvassed all Australian and New Zealand members for their backing. In May, 1983 the

necessary petition to form the new Australasian Region was submitted to the US and in March, 1984 the NMRA Board of Trustee's mid-year meeting finally approved its establishment. John was appointed the new Region's President and Trustee in May 1984 and has

continued to fill the role of Trustee since, having relinquished that of President in 1988. He has a strong belief in the importance of the AP program to the NMRA, is Vice Chairman to AP Chairman Rick Shoup and is active in encouraging local involvement in the Program.

Visits from some US members in conjunction with the recent Regional convention, prodding from Rick Shoup and the support of his wife Toni who insisted he promptly finish his last two categories under the program rather than attend to the many other projects around their home were instrumental in John's making MMR. He points to his involvement in forming the new Region, the many local and overseas friends made through the Association and the improvement in his modelling skills leading to his MMR has the most memorable achievements of his thirty year membership.

