

Victorian Railways Searchlight Signal kits in HO scale from San Mateo Line, PO Box 2205, Mildura 3502. Email: sanvine@ncable.net.au. Prices in text.

The searchlight signal had its origins in the USA, its original purpose being to create automatic block posts. Essentially, it enabled trains to maintain a safe distance apart. Its use expanded to control train movements over turnouts at junctions. While mechanical signals told the train driver where the train was routed, the new signalling told the driver the speed to control the train over the trackwork ahead.

Victorian Railways searchlight signals can display red, yellow and green colours. In metropolitan areas each signal has two target heads. Where these are displayed on opposite sides of the mast the signal is automatically controlled. Where mounted one above the other, the signal is a 'home'.

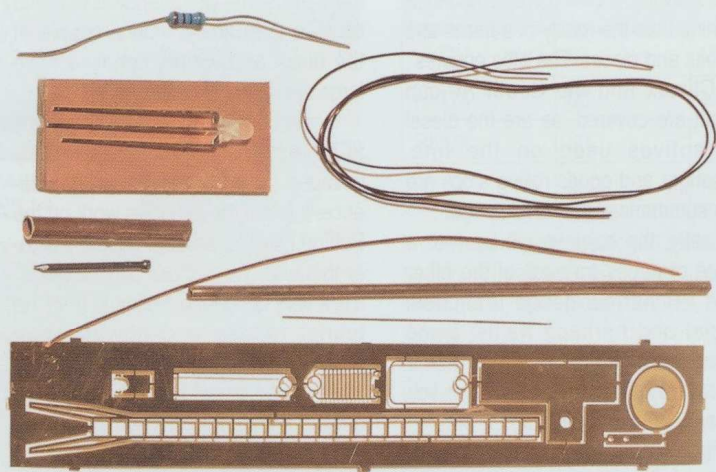
The top target indicates to the driver to travel at normal line speed. The lower indicates a medium speed (25mph). Where fitted, a third light (yellow) under the above two indicates low speed (5-10mph). The earliest example is believed to be situated at the up end of Platform 3 at Caulfield. Many hundreds now exist all over the Victorian system.

In country areas they were often situated in station areas adjacent to level crossings to enable shunting without unnecessary operation of flashing lights. Signals in country areas work on a 12V supply and the metro area on 110V + 12V a.c. supply.

A new kit for searchlight signals has been produced by Bill Dick, a member of the Mildura Railway Workshops group of modellers, in response to requests from those who have been impressed by the original scratchbuilt signals designed for his home layout.

Two kits have been produced for the construction of either single or double searchlights, both with marker lights. The signals are based on Victorian prototype, but they are also suitable for modification to South Australian practice by mounting the searchlights on the left hand side. The signals can be modified to suit other states where there are common elements in design.

The etched brass components were prepared by Model Etch and the quality of the etching is, as expected, of the highest standard. The etched brass fret contains the ladder with its supports, the backing disc with an etched stiffened rim, open grate footplate and handrail. Brass tube is provided for the light shield, a length of 2mm brass tube for the post (7in. diameter in HO scale), a pewter cast finial, tri-colour 3mm LED with its



The parts for a single head searchlight signal.

dropping resistor, a piece of copper clad board to solder everything to, and thin coated copper wire. A written set of instructions with diagrams is also supplied.

As part of this review, all signal types have been assembled by members of the Mildura Railway Workshops group, some being the first model of this type they have made. All were constructed without difficulty and look exceptionally good when painted. The kit has been tested on conventional and DCC operated layouts and works very well on both.

The signal kits can only be

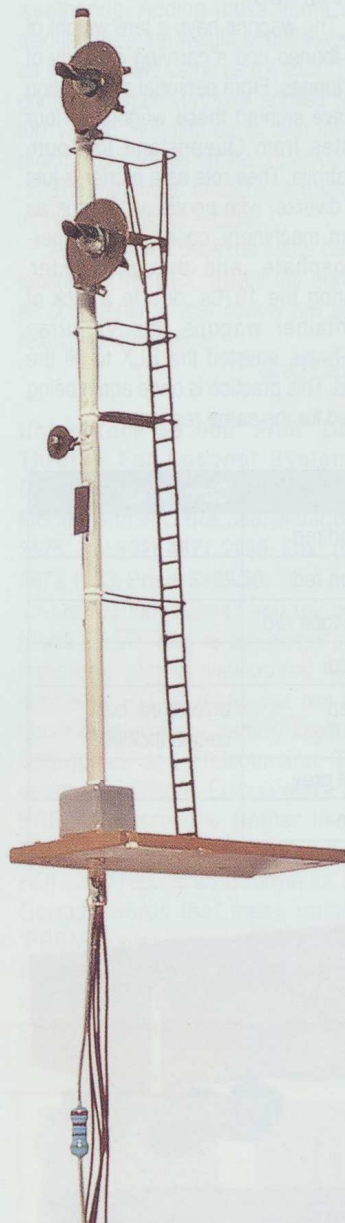
obtained directly from the producer at \$25.00 for the single light signal and \$28.00 for the double, postage included within Australia. The producer welcomes feedback on their construction and operation from purchasers.

Dean Schluter, Bruce McLean and Mark Burgess.

Signalling notes by Mike Saunders.



A completed VR single head searchlight signal ready to install on the layout.



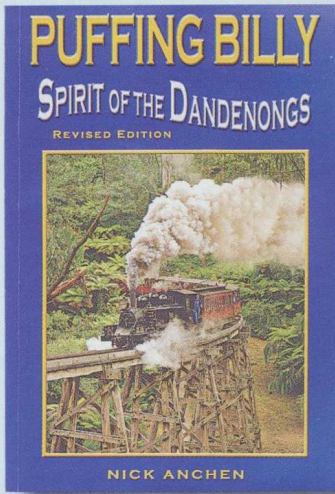
Ready to install, a completed and painted VR double head searchlight signal.

REVIEWS

***Puffing Billy Spirit of the Dandenongs* by Nick Anchen (revised edition). Published by Sierra Publishing, PO Box 8137, Ferntree Gully 3156. Ph: (03) 9752 3948. Website: www.sierraaustralia.com. Price: \$24.95.**

This is a soft-covered, perfect bound book of 72 pages, 17cm x 24.5cm in portrait format. The blurb claims it as a "comprehensive book and "an absolute must for anyone with a love of the Puffing Billy Railway and the Dandenong Ranges".

Starting with a timeline describing the key events in the history of the railway, the book follows with chapters covering the history of the line as a VR branch, and later in the preservation era. These two chapters total ten pages, with some wonderful archival photographs and some fascinating views of the work involved in reopening the line, in stages, through to Gembrook.



APOLOGY

The February 2009 issue of AMRM included a review of the new TrainOrama C-32 Class HO scale model. The review highlighted concerns over some dimensions and failed to take into account that the C-32 Class model in question is a 'generic' representation of the prototype when reframed, with all dimensions being within acceptable tolerances since no two locomotives in the class are exactly the same as regards to every aspect of detail.

Some other aspects of the review may have been seen by some readers as being overly critical of the products of Ozmodel and Trainorama, although a careful reading of the last paragraph of the original review would confirm that this was not the case. AMRM apologises for any inappropriate comments.

*J.J. Bevan
Chairman, Publication Committee
Southern Cross Model Railway
Association*