



## Newsletter of **THE PALMERSTON NORTH MODEL ENGINEERING CLUB INC**

Managers of the "MARRINER RESERVE RAILWAY"  
Please address all correspondence to :- 22b Haydon St, Palmerston North.

**PRESIDENT**

Robert Edwards  
(06) 355-1489  
pnmec-president@trains.net.nz

**SECRETARY**

Fin Mason  
(06) 356-7849  
pnmec-secretary@trains.net.nz

**TREASURER**

John Tweedie  
(06) 358-0150  
pnmec-treasurer@trains.net.nz

**EDITOR**

Doug Chambers  
(06) 354-9379  
pnmec-editor@trains.net.nz

**August 2013**  
**No 392**

**PNMEC Home Page** [www.pnmec.org.nz](http://www.pnmec.org.nz)  
**Email:-** [pnmec@trains.net.nz](mailto:pnmec@trains.net.nz)

# **T H E G E N E R A T O R**

**TRACK RUNNING**

This is held on the FIRST and THIRD Sunday of each month, from 1 pm to 4 pm Summer and 1 pm to 3 pm during the Winter. All club members are welcome to attend and help out with loco coaling, watering and passenger marshalling - none of the tasks being at all difficult. We may even offer you a cuppa.

Visiting club members are always welcome at the track, at the monthly meeting, or if just visiting and wishing to make contact with members, please phone one of the above office bearers.

Sender:- PNMEC  
22b Haydon St,  
Palmerston North

Place  
stamp  
here

## **This Months Featured Model**



## Report on the July Meeting.

No less than three guest speakers!! From SAECO Precision were **Gordon** and **James**. The third was **Mark** who is the field rep for Loctite Products.

**Mark** led off with a detailed description of the Loctite Products, how they work and which product to use in different applications. He brought us up to date with the latest developments in the line and handouts were available to PNME club members.

**Gordon** then gave a brief but informative talk on how to select the right bearing for the application. The interference fitting for race type bearings and the allowance for end float in roller bearings where heat expansion increases side loading. Their presentation ended with a 'lucky draw' which saw Terry Jowett, Bruce Geange and your editor recipients of some useful gifts.



**Ian McLellan** had brought along the chassis of his 'Juliet'. The 'Juliet' is undergoing a 'Doncaster A class' overhaul and with re-machined horns and new cast iron axleboxes a lot of near fifty years wear has been eliminated. Ian was quick to point out to the Loctite rep that the wheels were held on to the axles with Loctite. The crankpins in the wheels are also held in with Loctite.

**Merv George** showed us a spray can that was particularly good for the removal of moisture from electrical components.

## August Club Night

7:30pm, Thursday 22 August 2013  
Hearing Association Rooms  
Church Street, Palmerston North

The theme for the evening is  
"Bits and Pieces"  
So bring along your current project  
for the members to see  
what you have been up to.

## MODEL MEE 2013

This will be held on August 24<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>. All members are asked to dust off their models, and be prepared to bring along the current project completed or not. Members are asked to bring along something suitable to share with others for morning and afternoon tea. Volunteers will be required for selling tickets for entry and also selling raffle tickets. Members are needed to mix with the public and answer questions about the models and about our hobby.

## COMING EVENTS

### Track running at Marriner Reserve Railway

September	1 <sup>st</sup>	from 1pm to 3pm
September	15 <sup>th</sup>	from 1pm to 3pm
October	6 <sup>th</sup>	from 1pm to 4pm

### Open Weekends

#### Kapiti Miniature Railway

Official Opening of their 7 1/4" gauge extension  
28<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> September.

#### Hawkes Bay Model Engineers

Open Weekend 5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> October.

#### Havelock North

Labour Weekend

#### New Plymouth

Labour Weekend

The closing date for the next issue of The Generator is Friday 13th September

## THIS MONTH'S FEATURED MODEL

By John Garner

In a book by Roy Darlington and Keith Strong titled *Stirling and Hot Air Engines*, a chapter is devoted to marble engines. I was quite taken with the idea of building one of these marble engines and chose the first model thinking it would not take too long to build.

As there were no specifications I found I had to guess measurements as I went along.

It took a little time to get a suitable test tube until a friend of mine came up with a box of five test tubes. However, it took a little longer to find some marbles that were all the same size, perfectly round, and of the right size to fit into the test tube with a small gap to allow the air to pass round them. I bought three packets from a two dollar shop and eventually found six marbles that would do the trick.

I also had a problem finding a flexible plastic tube to link up the power cylinder to the test-tube assembly. An ordinary plastic tube was too stiff and prevented the test tube from rocking.

Enquiries led me to the Stihl Shop in Main Street where a helpful member of the staff sorted out a short length of tube that proved ideal.

After many abortive trials, the marble engine surprised me. It did work and rocked backwards and forwards for fifteen minutes or so.

## LETTER FROM ENGLAND

By Stan Compton

We have all heard of the generosity of US servicemen overseas in World War 2. Harold Gasson wrote in his book *'Firing Days'* which is about his early life on the footplate of 'Great Western' locomotives. Prior to our D day invasion of France the US Army had taken over a small racecourse 'Newbury' in the south of England to use as a supply base, even installing a railway to move the enormous amount of material. Harold then aged about eighteen had been firing an industrial locomotive for a burly US Army sergeant. Lunch time and Harold got out his cheese sandwiches and his driver promptly threw them in the firebox. He then said to Harold, "Come with me for a proper meal." This consisted of a slice of ham a quarter of an inch thick, two eggs plus waffles that were like thick pancakes. After eating that lot compared to his normal wartime diet, young Harold could hardly bend to fire the engine!!!!

Later the driver provided him with US Army clothes and two pairs of soft leather boots,

most welcome in those wartime days.

Another story from the same book tells of the delivery of a pedigree cat to a large house located near a country station. A young porter opened the lid of the basket to have a look and the cat shot out and disappeared. What now? The station cat was bunged into the basket and the young porter was sent up to the large house to deliver the animal. There he was given a ten shilling note for his trouble and he was not there to see the basket opened. The station cat shot out, jumped through an open window to disappear!!!!

There used to be a member of the Worcester Model Engineering Society who was very active in his workshop. He built six 'Simplex' and two 'Speedy' locomotives, these being all sold off to subsidise his pension. When I visited him in his cottage, I knew I had found the right place because the brass doorknob was polished, as were the copper pipes in his kitchen. A widower living alone he made me welcome. He had been a farm worker and had taught himself workshop skills and he asked me for advice on how to achieve a good finish on his lathe work. I tried to help but found his grinding wheels were so blunt, I tried but could not achieve a sharp tool. What was worse was his worn out lathe, an American 'Atlas', the cross slide had so much back lash I could not control it. How he coped I have no idea but it was the only lathe he had ever used and he assumed it was alright. He had made up a home foundry and cast his cylinders from scrap aluminium, the resulting porosity was not a problem, the engines all ran and were sold.

We have a retired soldier at Hereford who was involved with transport; new to our locomotive world but a very willing worker, if you want a hole dug Fred is your man. He does an 8km walk every morning at a fast pace so is very fit. Last year he bought a 'Simplex' at an auction, a new engine but missing a few items. Now it is completed we call it 'Jacob' because of its red boiler, blue tanks and cab. Now he has bought a 5" gauge 'Hunslet' called 'Maid Marion' with no boiler certification! As these are my favourite locomotives I hope I can sort out this problem. It will need a lot of work to strip off all the cladding and fittings to examine and test every item on the boiler, yet it could still be failed if the workmanship is poor.

On our second running day a 5" gauge 'Springbok' was in steam passenger hauling when a visitor arrived. He was an ex BR Rail driver and he was greatly surprised to find the 'Springbok' was coal-fired. In his working life he drove engines of that class, not his favourites as they were very hard riding, but even so he was delighted to be able to examine the model in steam. He lives locally and I hope his grand-daughter brings him again; maybe we can give him a drive.

A month ago (this was written in June) we were still in winter and it was just 2 degrees Celsius when I started out on my morning walk. I noticed an 'Austin Seven' sports model being filled with petrol at a local garage. The car was plastered in mud, the driver and his wife were well wrapped up, and they were taking part in a local rally. Use of the starting crank handle, something we never see these days, gave us a healthy exhaust note. The driver climbed in and took-off with a roar, showing off to the old man who had learnt to drive in a 1930 four seater. I bet Mr. Austin never thought one of his cars would still be capable of being hard driven after all these years. I read once that the size of the original 'Austin Seven' was used, including wheels on a motor cycle combination, the opposition in those days.

I have recently read a book about life on the Western Front in France during World War 1. It was all about animals of all sizes affected by the battles and troop movements. Naturally the effect on horses and mules was terrible in 'modern' war; we can't conceive today anyone sending in a cavalry charge against German heavy weapons, as did happen, and not as depicted in the film 'War Horse'. Our troops hated to find their horses were sold to French farmers, when unfit for more service, they knew they would be badly treated.

Troops have always adopted stray cats and dogs but even on the front line wild creatures still carried on their lives as usual. One soldier wrote home to say that he found a thrush sitting on her eggs in the base of a shattered tree. Small things like this kept the sanity of troops in conditions of horror.

These days we hear of men who buy an aggressive dog as a prop to their own ego, an item on TV showed a 'Rottweiler pup' with its head stuck through the hole provided for a waste disposer, in a plastic sink-bench that had been

left in the back yard. The animal welfare people managed to remove the sink-bench with no harm done.

Years ago in England a special occasion was celebrated in a country area with an ox roast, a bullock was slaughtered, skinned and dressed, before being mounted on a pole with cart wheels each end to turn the beast over a fire of dry wood. In 1953 this was done in our local town to celebrate the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth 2. The fire was kept going for three days by three local butchers, the result was either burnt or nearly raw!!! I suspect that country people were not fussy years ago, any meat would be welcome.

One result of my new interest of clock building is I get clocks given to me by a local charity shop to clean up for sale. One on my bench is an 'Anniversary Clock' made by 'Kern' in Germany. I shall need help to get it to run, these clocks can be a problem with four brass balls oscillating on a laminated suspension strip, spring driven to run for 400 days, the principle is very simple but many professional repairers will not touch them!!!

## Some Odd Spots

From the Editor

The following are events I have heard about or been involved in.

The first was told to me by the late Hughie Rainey of Ashburton. Hughie was down at the Ashburton Railway Station when a 'slow' goods arrived. The locomotive was obviously very short of steam and the smoke coming out of the funnel had a greenish tinge to it. Hughie made his way along the platform to the now stationary engine and was able to see into the cab where the fireman was busy with the long slice trying to clean the bars and get the fire to brighten up. The same green smoke was coming out of the open firebox door and swirling around the drivers legs. Hughie was just in time to hear the driver snarl to the fireman, "Are you trying to smoke a ham?" The fireman snarled back, "No, I'm trying to smoke the whole damn pig!!" As relations on the footplate were evidently not too amiable, Hughie declined to interview the crew to find out the cause of their plight.

The next story also was related to me by

Hughie and also involves the NZR. Hughie was at the station when one of the new diesels (I guess it would be a Dg) pulled in with a very long train of goods vans. Hughie recognised the driver as an old friend and he commented on the large number of wagons. "Ah yes," replied the driver, "but they are all empty, if they were loaded this diesel wouldn't be able to move them."

This one concerns one of our members. He had built a beautiful little 5" gauge Hunslet of the 'Alice' class. The brakes on this engine were of the screw down variety and had been faithfully reproduced on the model. The engine had been steamed very successfully on several occasions but this time it didn't seem to want to go. This was in the days before the track at Marriner Reserve was extended. For the first two circuits the driver's face wore a puzzled frown, and then after the next lap a cheery grin and a comment to the onlookers, "I had the brakes partly screwed down."

Editor's Note. There must be something about these Hunslets as I too have built one, and I too have suffered an apparent power loss only to find that I had the brake partly applied. They do go a lot better when the brakes are fully off!!!

Most of you are aware that I worked in Melbourne for a couple of years. 1968-1970. We returned for a holiday in 1976 the visit being timed to coincide with a Traction Engine Rally at Lake Goldsmith near Ballarat. My wife and children were left staying with her parents and I went off to the Rally with an Aussie mate Brian, from Sydney. On the Sunday Jack Kirkpatrick told me that I was to operate his 8nhp Fowler compound traction engine for the day. During the afternoon, Brian introduced me to a couple of steam enthusiasts explaining that they were a driver and fireman from the 2 foot six inch gauge 'Puffing Billy Line' in the Dandenong Ranges on the outskirts of Melbourne. Brian and Jack indicated that I should take them on to the footplate and teach them to drive a traction engine. I remember telling them that it was just like a

railway engine but it had a steering wheel!!!! They managed very well but I did have to keep reminding them to keep their thumbs on the same side of the spoke on the steering wheel as if the front wheel dropped in a hole the steering wheel would spin around and break their thumbs.



A few days after the Rally, Brian and I met up with these two again, this time at 'Puffing Billy's headquarters at Belgrave, where I was told to drive the engine that was in steam that day.

I was a bit nervous as the carriages were loaded with passengers but I was assured by the regular crew that it is easier than a traction engine – no steering wheel to worry about!!! It was a thrill I remember clearly today especially as I was expected to fire as well as drive, and blow the whistle for the road crossings.

## In the Newsletters from other Clubs

**Blastpipe** Maidstone notes include problems with drainage, partly overcome with the aid of a 'Karcher' water blaster, and some fine tuning of their 'Tr' petrol engine shunter. At Petone on the 7<sup>th</sup> July Tony Brown was running his 'diesel-electric' under trial. The 3 cylinder 'Kubota' diesel engine impressed the members and the locomotive performed very well.

As yet it has not got any bodywork on it but Tony has that underway. Gavin McCabe has removed the firebox heat exchanger from his

Harold Sinclair built No 66. There was no way of blowing the heat exchanger down although it is the lowest point of the boiler. Gavin found that after 14 years the lower headers had become blocked with rust coloured fine sediment.

David Grant Taylor describes re-machining the expansion links for the ex PWD No 531 'Barclay'.

**Whangarei Model Engineers** A spell of wet weather on their running days finally ended and the sunshine saw the members busy giving rides. Some notes on the ship-breaking yard Chittagong, Bangladesh. John Wright late of the Havelock North Live Steamers has moved to Whangarei with the Swiss 'Crocodile' built by John Romanes that he now owns.

**Manakau Live Steamers** Greg Burrows has purchased Justin Parker's partly built 7¼" Mogul. Greg has altered the completed 'Briggs' boiler to a locomotive type. He has also fitted a larger diameter smokebox which suits the engine better. Bill Parker has a 'Springbok' copper boiler for sale. Brand new, and hydraulically tested.

**Christchurch Model Engineers.** Ducks have been causing problems. The 'ready lawn' turf has been destroyed by them. The new trolley shed is nearly completed thanks to the efforts of the Wednesday slaves. Due to cars 'cutting it a bit fine' on the rail crossing, train drivers have been advised to be ready to stop.

### RAIL GRINDING

By Mike Barnes.

The pictures show the Australian rail grinder at work near Feilding recently. The machine is operated by an Australian crew.

The grinding is being done to take the corrugations off the railhead.

The corrugations are caused by diesel locomotives having coil springs that have no damping causing a resonating bounce.

This is becoming more pronounced now due to the prevalence of rolling stock having coil springs and no damping. Some wagons have



shock absorbers to counteract the effect of the corrugations, but the older wagons had leaf springs which did not aggravate the problem.

The corrugations are not felt on the wagon body or by the load, but the bearings on the axles suffer badly and axles have been known to crack due to the vibration. Also the



horns and axleboxes wear prematurely. Rail grinding reduces the lifespan of the rail, but the smoother ride greatly reduces the wear and tear on all the rolling stock including locomotives and that more than offsets the cost of early rail replacement.

### A Bit of Heads Up

The Meeting in November is our usual Annual Club Dinner Outing.

This year it will be at the

Palmerston North Cosmopolitan Club

20 - 24 Linton St.

Further details will be given in the next

**"Generator"**.

If you would like an email when this newsletter is published, send us an email with **"Generator Please"** in the subject line with your **Name, Club and Email** address to [pnmec@trains.org.nz](mailto:pnmec@trains.org.nz)