



Newsletter of THE PALMERSTON NORTH MODEL ENGINEERING CLUB INC

Managers of the "MARRINER RESERVE RAILWAY"

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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
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This Months Featured Model



Report on the July Meeting.

Bruce Geange gave a very interesting talk on his involvement with Meccano which had started in 1940 with a No7 set later followed by a No9 set. Later work and family obligations meant that Bruce had to lay aside the Meccano. In the 1980s a club was formed in Wanganui which included members in Taranaki and the Manawatu. In the 1990s a big exhibition was held in Wanganui and this proved very successful. Bruce has made many models and has had his plans published in New Zealand Meccano Club magazines and also the very prestigious English Meccano magazine. Bruce has also been awarded the 'Golden Spanner' an International Award that recognises services to the promotion of Meccano. Bruce explained the changes that Meccano have made to their product over the years and had with him for us to see some of his smaller models. Pictures of some of his larger models were shown on a screen which showed the diversity of his modelling ability.



Robert Edwards reminded members that they can get their PNME name badges through him. If you require one, contact him and he will arrange manufacture.

John Tweedie "The Treasurer" noted that subs are coming in and that if you haven't paid up yet please do so.

Robert Edwards thanked those members who assisted at the Rail-X display. Unfortunately weather conditions were against operating the portable track on the Sunday but there were plenty of members manning the stand indoors



where Barry Parker's 'Mountaineer' was posed in front of the boards that Richard Locket had prepared telling of the work that this class of locomotive carried out behind the front lines during World War 1.

August Club Night

The August Monthly Meeting will be a visit to **Ohakea Air Base** where **only** members of the **Palmerston North Model Engineers** will be shown over the **Catalina Flying Boat**, of World War 2 vintage, that is undergoing a Certification Check.

Because of security requirements at Ohakea, there is a procedure that we have to follow.

On the **25th August** members will assemble at the Main Gate between **7.00 - 7.15pm**.

Private cars will not be allowed onto the base.

A van will ferry members to the hangar. Bring your driver's licence for identification purposes.

Late arrivals will not be able to get onto the base.

COMING EVENTS

Track running at Marriner Reserve Railway

September 4th from 1pm to 3pm

September 18th from 1pm to 3pm

The closing date for the next issue of The Generator is Friday 9th September

Robert Edwards reminded members that the next event the PNME club is involved in is Feilding Rail's Open Weekend 5th & 6th November. Our portable track will be in action and once again members will be invited to be involved.

THIS MONTH'S FEATURED MODEL

By Phillip Bealing

"Hmm", Stirling hot air engines are not everybody's cup of tea. It was a bit of a challenge to make but with advice and encouragement from my friend Graham Hall perhaps I can build one. First to look for suitable model to build, there are plenty around but I wanted one to be attractive and useful. The Moriya design by Dr. J. Senft out of the book 'Steam & Stirling engines You Can Build' edited by William C. Fitt became my choice. Now to acquire the materials, luckily my wife's nephew was able to assist with a supply of free cutting aluminium from his die making job as a CNC machinist. After a lot of joyful hours of machining, the day came for an initial test run which was successful. This was followed by another successful run at a Palmerston North Model Engineers Club Night. Now there are a few finishing touches and a polish. Then my thoughts will turn towards the next project!!!

LETTER FROM ENGLAND

By Stan Compton

There is a real problem over here on the manufacture of steel at a loss due to cheap imports from China, this could lead to closure of blast furnaces in South Wales creating unemployment in the area. So often we see on TV a clip depicting a worker stirring a pot of molten steel, sparks flying etc. This is called 'puddleing' and reminds me of taking a course on acetylene welding in 1949. My instructor taught me a method of stirring a puddle of molten steel with a cranked welded rod, bent down about three inches in my left hand. My right hand held the welding torch steady while moving to the right. This method removed any oxides present, just the same as the steel worker was doing. My instructor told me I was a natural at what is today called 'multi-tasking' and this experience found me employment some years later in Canada when I was told by my new employer that arc welders were 'a dime a dozen' but if you can gas weld you have got a job. This allowed us to obtain a mortgage on our first house.

The variety of repair work was very interesting, from farm machinery to cracked cylinder blocks that had not been drained out and the night time temperature could get as low as 20 degrees below. One of the regular jobs was to weld logging chains that broke due to abuse and I used the method I had been taught with success. A fellow worker criticized this claiming I was causing too many sparks flying so it was suggested we each weld a test bar of 16mm diameter with oxy-acetylene. When complete the bars were to be bent around a 25mm spindle on a most useful machine called a 'Hossfeld Bender'. I later built two of these machines for my own use. Meanwhile we prepared our test bars, the other man had worked in California in the aircraft industry and he shaped his test bars like a pencil point while I shaped mine like a chisel forming a 'vee' when placed together. My colleague used a small flame applying small beads of metal taking an age to complete the weld. I carried on as usual stirring my puddle, sparks flying. When completed both bars were ground parallel and bent into a 'U' shape, well his broke in two and mine was still in one piece. When the boss got to hear about the test he regretted that I had not told him "I would have loved to see Don taken down a peg or two" was his comment!!

Later I was able to return to a local locomotive works erecting steam locomotives under the 'Columbo Plan' for India. The contract had been let to build ninety 'Pacific' steam locomotives of a very basic type, remember this was in the 1950s and India had their own supplies of coal. The location of the works was in Kingston, Ontario but the works could not compete and finally it closed down. Years ago it was a small city built where the St. Lawrence River joined Lake Ontario. This was on the border of USA, and in colonial days 'Old Fort Henry' had been erected and is still in use today as a tourist attraction. Local students were hired to be trained and dressed as soldiers of that era, given muskets they would re-enact methods of fighting by the British Army, with blank ammunition of course.

I have been reading a biography of Fred Dibnah by David Hall (Bantam Press). David Hall was his film producer for the BBC and I learnt a lot of the problems that entails. For example, do you recall the films they made visiting various sites of our engineering heritage? One was the

Finch Foundry at Sticklepath in Devon.

An ancient 'tilt-hammer' is their main machine and Fred was to demonstrate forging but he found that the driving belt from the water wheel was so slack it would not lift the hammer to its full height. Fred found that the foundry was being run by volunteers who had an academic background, not the tradesmen of old who of course were long gone.

On another occasion the film crew visited a derelict mine and the producer could not believe his eyes when he found that Fred had climbed the ninety foot high tower to examine the winding gear wheels. How about Health and Safety?

The producer would have been responsible but Fred just loved to climb things. He hated to destroy the factory chimneys but it was work and the public enjoyed the films of the action. One day the owner of a worn out car, although it looked smart, asked Fred if he could drop the chimney on the car. "Certainly" said Fred, "Just park it right there". The public watching could not believe their eyes when the chimney dropped and squashed the car flat. This suited the owner who could now dispose of it for scrap. "Did you like that?"

The last chimney that Fred dropped nearly cost him his life. It was built of concrete and steel and was 450 feet high at a disused power station down south. Fred did not want the job as he felt it should have gone to the explosive experts but the owner wanted Fred to use his old method of cutting into the base, propping it up with timbers and lighting a fire to burn the props away.

Something went wrong and when all the steel rods had been cut and part of the base had been removed bits of concrete and then larger lumps began to fall on the team. Fred yelled out "Run, this one is going down" but as he started running, Fred now over sixty years old tripped and fell flat on his face. The film production unit thought this is the end but Fred managed to get up and run clear. The grandstand that had been built for paying guests to watch the chimney fall the following day was never used.

We only have a six month running season over here and the usual crop of problems occur the first time a locomotive is taken out, usually stuck suction balls on mechanical and hand pumps. I used to fit a removable screw to be able to check if the stainless ball is free. One of our members had an unusual problem, one of the snifting valves fitted on top of the smokebox had stuck on his 'Maid of Kent' and would not close

when the throttle was opened. A snifting valve opens when the throttle is shut allowing cool air into the superheaters.

It is a thankless task being a voluntary boiler inspector. I was recently chatting to a man who had also taken on this duty and I found that he had the same problems I had had. Boilers presented for a hydraulic test that had not been tested due to the owner not having suitable blanking plugs and then being told that is your job. Many seem to be unaware that it is the duty of the owner of the boiler to perform an initial test. When doing a steam test one of the checks is to blow down the gauge glass and observe how quickly the water returns to its level, a slow return to the level indicates that the water-ways may be restricted or blocked. Once I was told, "Don't do that. It will break the gauge glass". One of the boiler mountings was not screwed up tight needing a copper washer to be added. I should have cancelled the test!!!!

One of our members from Mid – Wales brings his boilers in for a hydraulic test with his own test pressure gauge still in place and reading the correct test pressure!! Another of our members had a heavy 7¼" gauge locomotive fitted with a steel boiler built to modern E.U. standards and the boiler shell was 10mm thick. When he came to sell it the new owner sent in a professional boiler tester. I had gone along to watch and fortunately I had taken my own hydraulic pump. The professional inspector demanded every boiler fitting to be removed and the holes plugged off. The thickness was tested and found to be 9.99mm on a three year old boiler. The professional boiler inspector spent four hours examining the boiler and finally issued a Certificate for only **THREE MONTHS**.

I read an item recently in a daily paper about some boys who had been in trouble with the police and were put on a woodwork course. They each made a three-legged stool. This was the first time that they had made anything in their lives and they were so proud.

I remember when I was aged twelve I started woodwork classes at school. First we learnt how to use a tenon saw with a bench block to hold the work-piece and saw square across. From there I advanced to a smoothing plane, chisels, marking out etc. After a while we progressed to making a sea grass stool. I have a couple of these at home purchased from a charity shop and they are identical to the

ones we made when at school in Birmingham. I assume the ones I bought came to our town by men who retired out in the country, hundreds must have been made over the years. Sadly woodwork in schools has virtually ceased, a pupil may cut himself, a lot depends on the teacher, I listened to the teacher when he said always cut away from yourself and did as I was told!!! What happened to the stool I was so proud to take home after I left to join the Royal Navy in 1943, I have no idea.

Bill Frazer NZR Driver, Mountaineer and Photographer.

By Doug Chambers

One of the railway yarns that my uncle told me was about the runaway locomotive from the Otira Station. He didn't see the actual event but knew who was involved and what happened. In those days some of the heavier freight trains coming up to Otira from the Coast were banked by another steam engine. Both engines were taken off at Otira and the electric locomotives hauled the train through the tunnel to Arthur's Pass where steam locomotives took over again for the journey to Christchurch. On this occasion the banked freight train arrived in Otira at about 11.00am. The banking engine was turned on the turntable, the tender was topped up with water and the engine was left on a track just close to the station at mid-day. It was not due to leave until 1.00pm so the crew headed off for their lunch. The fireman being young and foolish went to the station cafeteria where he was 'doing a line' with one of the staff and the driver being older and wiser went over to the pub. Now the tender hand brake had not been wound fully on and the reversing lever was still in forward gear. A small amount of steam leaked through the regulator and just before 1pm the loco started to move off. The signalman saw it approaching and thinking that the crew were making an early start dropped the signal for the mainline and changed the points and as the locomotive continued drifting quietly along on its way as the crew arrived back on the station platform!!! Horrified that their engine had gone without them they rushed to Bill Frazer's house where Bill's son was home for lunch and his car was parked on the drive. After a quick explanation the car was cranked and a pursuit of the locomotive was started off. The car soon caught up with the locomotive which was only travelling at about four or five kph but it was necessary to get well

ahead because the crew had to negotiate a barbed wire fence, gorse and blackberries before the engine came along. The crew regained the footplate and continued on and apart from some cheek from fellow drivers and firemen the event was soon forgotten and laid to rest among other 'Legends of the Coast'. But many months later there came to Otira a relieving stationmaster who was one of those individuals who climbed to his elevated post through the misfortunes of others. He overheard enough in the pub to understand the details of the 'runaway', who were involved and the date. When he returned to Christchurch he made an official complaint to the Railway authorities. A Board of Inquiry was assembled and the inquiry took place in Otira. However news travelled quickly on the 'Coast' and everyone that was called upon to testify denied that they knew anything about what was alleged to have taken place. Even Bill's son was asked to appear and he was quick to point out that because he was not a New Zealand Railway employee he would not have anything to say. Although there was no concrete evidence of wrong doing the driver and fireman had their wages reduced for a month and that was that. In the 1960s Bill was now retired and living in Christchurch. One day while walking around the city centre Bill met the man who had led the Inquiry into the Otira 'runaway'. They had known one another for years and they promptly found a seat and caught up with their last days in the Railways and their ways of filling in their retirement years. As they rose to go their separate ways Bill's friend said there was just one thing that he regretted missing while he was with the New Zealand Railways, Bill asked "What was that?" His friend replied "Seeing the look on the faces of that driver and fireman on the platform at Otira when they realised that their locomotive had gone without them".

To be continued

Sunday 7th August

Running day at Marriner Reserve had a visit from Peter Anderson in his official capacity as Auditor. Three engines were in steam, Ian McLellan's 'Juliet', Doug Chambers 'Hunslet', and Richard Lockett's NZR 'W'. Fortunately the day was fine and the cool wind dropped after lunch. There were not a lot of passengers about and towards the end of running we noted a very serious look on Liam's face as he drove

Richard's NZR 'W' around the track with a sole passenger (Peter Anderson) watching Liam's every move. Peter was relaxed enough that he gave me a beaming smile as the train passed by, and I wished I had my camera with me. There were only a few spots of rain, just enough to get the 'Hunslet's' wheels slipping on the uphill grade on three laps, and of course the rain coincided with the only heavy loads I had all afternoon. It was good to see Dick Griffiths up from Levin for the afternoon as we hadn't seen him for some months.

In the Newsletters from other Clubs

Blastpipe Petone

Peter Targett is making dynamometer strain gauge so sometime in the future Petone may be running efficiency trials.

Maidstone EBoP Model Engineers

Are building three more 7¼" gauge passenger trolleys using bogies to Alan Kemp's design.

Whangarei Model Engineers

Members have been busy carrying out all sorts of maintenance and improvements on their site.

Marlborough Model Engineers

Their track extension is progressing well but due to muddy ground conditions placing of the hard fill is going to have to wait.

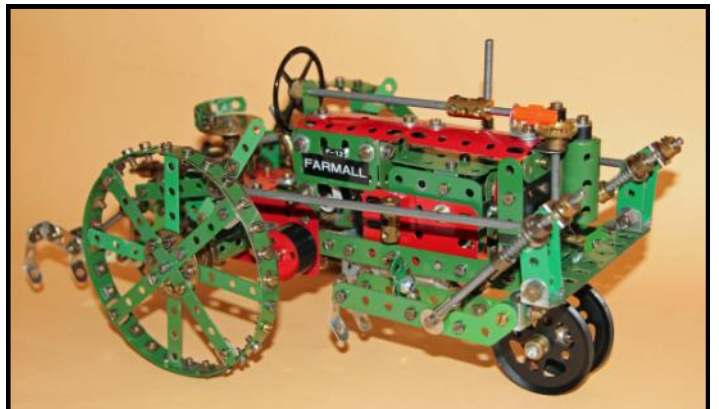
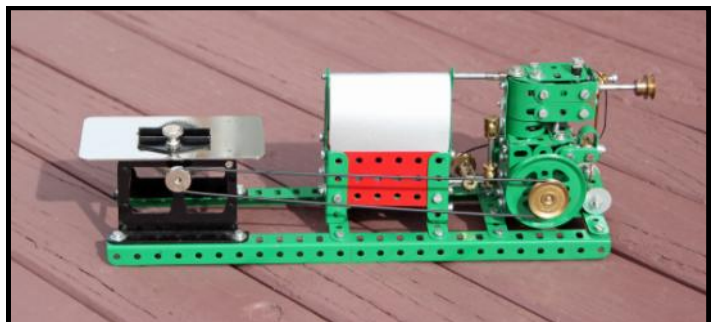
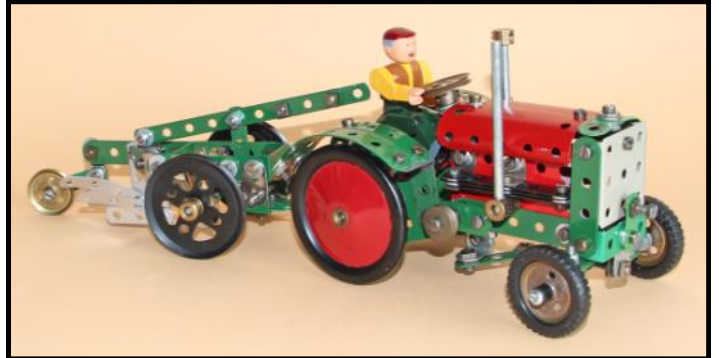
Hamilton Model Engineers

About forty years ago, a 14 year old Malcolm Whitehead watched Arthur Priest steaming his 3½" gauge 'Natal'. Now Malcolm owns that 'Natal'.

Eastern Bay of Plenty Model Engineers

Two of their members are getting practical instruction on driving steam locomotives with the intention of upgrading their licences to cover steam operation.

Some of Bruce Geange's smaller Meccano Models he had at the July club night.



For Sale

TMU3 universal D bit grinder \$800.00.
10" Elliot shaper with swivel vice \$750.
Contact Philip at 0274789004

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