



Newsletter of THE PALMERSTON NORTH MODEL ENGINEERING CLUB INC

Managers of the "MARRINER RESERVE RAILWAY"

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February
2017
No 430

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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 January Meeting.

The President's BBQ went off very well. Fortunately the wind dropped in the late afternoon but Robert had erected a large marquee which meant that members were out of the chilly wind. During the evening a competition was run. A photo was displayed showing a steam locomotive, a stop block and a steam crane. Members had to decide where, when, what time of day, what type of locomotive and what had happened.

The year was 1959, the time can be seen on the clock in the Palmerston North Square and the locomotive was an NZR Bb. Chocolate fish were awarded to those with the best answers.

There were two Hot Air engines running both driving fans (the fans were not really necessary with the winds we have been having) and both engines were almost silent in their operation. One was built by Phillip Bealing and the other by Graeme Hall. Late in the evening Liam Puklowski was seen trying out Robert Edwards electric locomotive on the track that goes around Robert and Margaret's property.

Robert had set up a temporary pond and there was a Putt Putt boat challenge. The wind caused some problems but several boats showed potential. The manager of the Palmerston North branch of TechWeld had donated some prizes and there being three contestants all three benefited from TechWeld's generosity.

Thank you Sara.

Our hosts for the evening did us proud and it was an enjoyable evening especially with the variety of food and sweets!!



February Club Night

This will be held on the 23rd February. A visit to Rua Mudgway's Caterpillar Tractor museum has been arranged. Start time is 7pm as two of the sheds have no lighting. The address is 430 Milson Line, on the right about 1/2 a kilometre past the end of the Milson Airport runway heading out of Palmerston North. There are signs at the entrance and in the paddock. It will still be light so you should find the venue without difficulty.

COMING EVENTS

Track running at Marriner Reserve Railway

March 5th 1pm-4pm
March 19th 1pm-4pm

Open Weekends

Thames Small Gauge Railway

Open Weekend 18th-19th March

Palmerston North 'Locomotion'

Open Weekend 4th-5th March

Engine owners and drivers attending 'Locomotion' must have their boiler certificates, drivers licence and engine and trolley WoFs.

Locomotion 2017

4 + 5 March 9am - 5pm

The committee requests members for the following duties over the weekend.

Help with general setting up.

Station helpers

Ticket sellers.

Help out as hospitality Kitchen staff.

Steaming Bay Attendant

Parking Attendants.

The public will arrive from 10am so we need to have most things set up by then. Members are requested to bring a plate for morning or afternoon tea. There will be a BBQ Saturday night for members and their guests.

The closing date for the next issue of The Generator is Friday 10th March

This Month's Featured Model

By Doug Chambers

In January I was asked to make two components for a late model Ducati. They were clutch slave cylinder pistons. The two components are the hollow piston and the small ball race bearing. The bearing is an easy sliding fit in the piston and tapping the piston on the bench will see the bearing fall out. But after the piston has been in the gearbox for some time a build up of wax means that the bearing will no longer slide out. Usually a slide hammer will remove a bearing from down a blind hole but the bearing is nearly flush with the bottom face so the slide hammer is no use. In this case the piston had been drilled and a small hammer and punch had been used to remove the bearing. The original piston was made of duralumin, hardened and coated with a special coating. My cobbler, the Ducati Specialist was reluctant to blank the holes off because of the potential of an early failure and this would mean a major strip down. So he asked me to make two new pistons out of stainless steel and I agreed.

That night was a bad one for me as my back was giving me a lot of pain and in between getting up and walking around the house I gave a lot of thought to the problem of removing the bearing. My memory went back to 1969 when I was working in Melbourne and I had a similar problem to deal with. A component which came out of I think a Wilson pre-select gearbox was brought to Bayford Motors and it landed on my bench. It too had a bearing down a bore and it was neat fit up against the end of the bore.

I turned up a short length of bar and made the end a sliding fit in to the inner bore of the bearing. I drilled a hole right through the steel bar from end to end and at the end of the bar at the opposite end to the bearing I tapped a thread and fitted a grease nipple. I cleaned the inner bore of the bearing and applied some High Strength Loctite and then left it to harden. With the bar clamped in a vice I pumped a grease gun on the nipple and the bearing was forced out hydraulically.

Well, what had worked before should work again and I made a tool up to suit the Ducati. I only made one new clutch slave cylinder as the tool in the future would remove the bearing without doing any damage.

Letter from England

By Stan Compton.

Recently Fred took me to an open day at Alan Keefe Ltd located near Ross-on-Wye.

I think this must be the tidiest railway works I have ever visited. It has been organised to allow various restoration groups to put on display their projects, hoping to raise funds as these projects can be costly. The timber base-frame and roof bows for a passenger car to run on the 'Volks Electric Railway' on the sea front at Brighton, was a first class piece of work.

The recoverable roof-bows had their ends cleaned up, and were slotted to add a tenon for added strength. These were notched and screwed into the side rail so perfectly it was just possible to witness the thin film of glue.

The new built locomotive 'Lyn' for the 'Lynton and Barnstaple Railway' is progressing well. It is narrow gauge but of very solid construction but was difficult to photograph with so many visitors present. Various stalls displayed many rare railway books for sale. Posters cost sixty-five pounds!! Among the items outside for sale was a 28 foot steamboat. The hull was riveted and had a cover like a glasshouse for the helmsman. You would need this in our climate. A tidy two cylinder slide valve engine and boiler were under cover and there is an electric outboard motor on the stern. Complete with a trailer the total cost was £12,500 including the steam plant, £8,500 without.

On the re-aligned two foot gauge track 'Peter Pan' was in steam giving rides; only a short track but nice to hear the locomotive climb the short grade. This is the engine that used to be owned by a vicar of a country parish and he had a two foot gauge track around the vicarage. I expect it was the only vicarage to have a railway running around it.

During the days of National Service in this country young men had to do two years in our services. The late Fred Dibnah, the steeplejack was called up into the army and was trained as a cook!! When asked what his trade was he told them he was a bricklayer-joiner, but cooks were wanted so along with forty other young tradesmen they became frustrated cooks. Fred was sent out to Germany where he spent much of his time removing the 'eyes' from potatoes! To pass the time when off duty he would go walking in the countryside and one day he came across a junior officer from the same tank regiment who was examining a

large hole in the roof of an empty building. Fred asked why the Officer was interested in the building and the Officer told him that the Officers had a number of horses due to arrive and he was looking for dry stabling for these 'hunters'. Fred saw an opportunity to get out of the cookhouse so he told the Officer that he could repair the roof as it was his trade in civilian life if permission could be found to release him from his duties in the cookhouse. This was not a problem and a senior Officer arranged for building materials and Fred said goodbye to the cookhouse. Fred was now doing the work he liked and once the roof was repaired separate stalls had to be made to separate the 'Hunters'. Fred dragged the job out as long as he could because his next job was to feed the pack of 'hounds' imported from England. This involved boiling up pigs feet and intestines, and the hounds were always hungry and gave Fred a hard time. All he could think about was to get back home and get into steeple-jacking. Then, just when his two year stint was due to finish it was decided to have all National Servicemen serve an extra six months!!! I bet many people are unaware that many of these young men were sent out to fight in Korea.

Our running season at Hereford has finished except for 'Halloween' something new to us and the whole country. The tunnel is decorated with ghostly items and I gather the drivers hate it when the young passengers scream on passing through.

I have been reading a book about a man's lifetime working on tankers carrying petrol and fuel oil up the River Severn from Avonmouth Docks. I can recall these vessels when we camped alongside this river near Worcester as a boy. I had no idea of the problems faced by the skipper, especially during wartime. In times of flood they would sail right over the lock gates, but in time of drought keeping afloat needed knowledge of the river. I think the length of these vessels would be about ninety feet and the river is not very wide further inland. One day the author of the book turned his boat around to face upstream to tie up alongside a country pub for the night. Watching this manoeuvre was the owner of a yacht tied up at the dock. Later the two men got talking, the yacht owner was a Naval Officer who told the skipper "I have not got one man on my ship that could have turned and made fast like you did".

The skipper asked "What ship is that?" The reply was HMS Indefatigable!!

During floods on this river there is only one arch in the 'Worcester Bridge' that is usable and with empty tanks the high bow limits vision forwards. One day the tanker was running with the current and the skipper was trying to aim for the centre of the arch. He could not see a young couple rowing a small 'skiff' through the arch. The tanker cut the 'skiff' in two but luckily one of the tankers crew was painting steelwork forward in the bow and he was able to haul the couple on board, probably saving their lives.

One day the skipper saw a man who had his cabin cruiser stuck on the bank get his wife to push-off with a pole which got left stuck in the mud so impatiently the man pulled his shorts off, forgetting his lack of underpants and jumped into two feet of water!



Stan's workshop in the English 'Summer'



Stan's workshop in the English 'Winter'
The dark patches in the willow are 'Mistletoe'

A useful tip for Steam Locomotive Drivers

by Doug Chambers

Some of us have at times needed to 'drop' the fire in a hurry due to a broken gauge glass or a very low water level. Even if you have the good fortune to have an engine that the grate and ash pan can be dropped, this usually cannot be done while the engine is on the track. Getting the engine back to the steaming bay is not an option as while you are doing this the firebox crown sheet is exposed to the fire on one side and no water on the other with the potential for severe damage. The ash pan and grate can sometimes be dropped clear on to the track bed but then the locomotive and tender has to be lifted over the ash pan and grate and that is not a desirable option with a heavy engine.

Then you have the engines where the ash pan and grate cannot be dropped ie 'Britannia' 'Duchess', 'Flying Scotsman' NZR K and Ka and NZR Ab classes. These usually have a centre section of the grate which can be lifted up and turned on its edge and the fire can be discharged through a hatch in the bottom of the hopper. This operation is a difficult one and takes a while during which the crown sheet is still exposed to a lot of heat. Of a lesser consideration is the fact that the track is blocked by the failed engine and other trains are held up to the irritation of passengers.

I remember when I was preparing to sit my Traction Engine Driver's Ticket that if you wanted to get the fire out in a hurry you should shovel dirt, stones into the firebox until the fire was smothered. This is not practical in our situation as there is usually grass up to the edge of the track bed and the track bed is concrete. Some rails are laid on ballast (small stones) but if you start shovelling the ballast into the firebox you will get offside with the men who maintain the track alignment.

So what can you do to make the engine safe without damaging the boiler, delaying other engines and upsetting the 'gangers'?

The answer is quite simple. As soon as the problem arises stop the engine, put a small plate over the funnel and turn on the steam blower. A recent trial with a 3½" NZR K saw the fire completely out in less than 45 seconds. Then of course the engine can be safely removed from the track to the steaming bays for repairs. I do not claim the idea as one of my own. That must go to Dave Berry of the Steam Traction

Society and the idea was passed on to me by Mike Barnes who saw the idea put into practice. The 4nhp piston valve compound Aveling and Porter roller was being steamed after a boiler examination. The pressure had almost reached 200psi when the manhole door gasket started to 'blow' rather badly. The late Johnny McClune grabbed a piece of steel plate and covered the chimney and then placed a couple of bricks on top of the plate. He then turned on the steam blower and within minutes the fire was out and the pressure could be reduced so that hazard of the 'blow' ceased to be a problem. Hopefully you will never have to resort to this but it may be a good idea to have a piece of plate in the tender or on the driving truck just in case.

The American 4-4-0

On the 18th January Bob Owen brought his locomotive up from Masterton to get some driving tuition and a few laps under his belt. He was soon handling the engine very well and when he stopped for a cup of tea driving duties were handed over to Liam who also managed very well.



What's going on in the background (Ed)



Tr 38

By Neil Burn

There has been a bit of a gap since the last part of the saga of Tr38 but Neil has moved to Shannon from Opiki and that involved selling a property, buying another and finally the move to Shannon and all that involved. So here goes for the next part.

I had built a 7¼" gauge four wheel driving trolley for ground level track running while living in Nelson. The trolley seat was removed and the front, back and sides were altered in order to fit controls and batteries etc. I bought two 50 AH Deep Cycle batteries and a 24volt Smart Charger. The batteries were installed in the trolley and

wired in with a plug in lead to the locomotive motor using a car-trailer plug and socket.

A new seat had to be made to cover the batteries allowing some clearance over them.



The trolley had a manually operated brake fitted, but the brake lever had to be moved to allow the control box to be mounted in front of the new seat.

Next was to go back to DNC Systems to arrange the controls, wiring diagrams and manuals.

They supplied a pre-wired control box with forward and reverse, horn button, light switch, and speed controller which mounts in front of the driving truck seat. They also programmed the motor controller to suit my chain drive. The motor controller was mounted in the driving trolley. The battery charger leads were fitted with DC plugs for ease of charging.

So next it was off to the track for a test run.

In the Newsletters from other Clubs

Blastpipe

Petone A very good report of a 'Work Gangs' efforts on the 9th and 10th January. Photos record good old pick and shovel work and concrete breaking with a 'Kango' Hammer. Topsoil was brought in to level off depressions around the area.

Whangarei Model Engineers

After a long and wet winter they now complain of too much sun making for hard, hot work.

Havelock North Live Steamers

A very good report on their members visit to Palmerston North where they visited the Esplanade Railway and the PNME track at Marriner Reserve.

Marlborough Model Engineers

The flying section has been plagued with too much wind and the Rail group are unable to run steamers because of dry conditions.

Nelson Model Engineers

Nelson Model Engineers had their Spring Night Run rained out!!!! I thought it was always sunny Nelson!!!!

Eastern Bay of Plenty Model Engineers

New members have made their presence felt, taking on all sorts of different roles and spreading the load making life easier for all.

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