



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
Ian McLellan
(06)353-0606

SECRETARY
Murray Bold
(06)355-7000

TRACK CONVENOR
Richard Lockett
(06)323-0948

EDITOR
Doug Chambers
(06)354-9379

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PNMEC Home Page www.pnmeec.org.nz

Email:- pnmeec@clear.net.nz

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 onerous.

Visiting club members too, 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,

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Coming Events

Monthly Meeting : This will be held on January 23rd, 2003. A visit has been arranged to Graeme Hislop's home where we will be shown his garden railway layout. Graeme lives at 8 John F. Kennedy Drive. We will meet there at the earlier starting time of between 7 pm – 7.30 pm

Track Running Marriner Reserve: 2nd & 16th February 2003

Whanganui River Trip. 25th January 2003

Locomotion 2003. + Model Traction Engine Rally.

Will be held on the weekend of March 1st – 2nd.

Closing date for the next Generator is Friday 7th February

REPORT OF NOVEMBER MEETING

There was a good turn-out of members and wives at the final meeting for 2002. The evening was quite informal with members being able to talk amongst themselves and to partake of the ‘ wine and cheese’ provided.

A special thanks to Mrs. McLellan for her contribution to the supper.

It was good to see a new member, Laurie Gudsell and his wife Joan at the meeting.

JANUARY 2003 MEETING

A visit to Graeme Hislop’s home has been arranged where we will be shown his ‘G’ gauge garden railway.

Graeme’s address is 8 John F Kennedy Drive, Palmerston North and we are to meet there between 7 –7.30 pm, on the 23 rd January.

For those members from ‘out of town’ John F Kennedy Drive runs from Rangitikei Line to Milson Line and Graeme’s home is near the Milson Line intersection.

LOCOMOTION 2003

This will be held over the weekend March 1st and 2nd. Please note that PNME members and visiting members are invited to bring along their model Traction Engines to display and or steam. The more the merrier !! This may be the first Model Traction Engine Rally held in New Zealand.

Those not having a locomotive or a traction engine are welcome to come along anyway.

WHANGANUI RIVER OUTING

This is to take place on the Saturday 25th January 2003.



The paddle steamer “Waimarie” leaves at 2 pm. Fares are adult \$25. Senior citizens \$20 Children from 5 – 15 \$10.

PNMEC members wishing to go are asked to let Murray Bold or Richard Lockett know in advance.

We are proposing to have a picnic lunch at Motoua Gardens about 12.30 pm.

They all came out of the woodwork on Tuesday 26 November 2002.

Since the last AGM, the retired members wanted to have a midweek run day without the normal hassles of a Sunday. It was to be the 4th Tuesday of each month if the weather was fine. No good running in the rain. The first time the weather was kind enough was the 26th of November when there was an excellent turnout, twelve members in all. The locos present were "Malibu", "Maid of Kent" and "King George V". It was a day of discovery and repairs for one of the drivers. I won't mention any names, but Jim Curtis will know who I mean.



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photos and story by Murray Bold

The hotos

- 1 12 o'clock. Food, Cuppa and Chat.
- 2 Why is it falling off the rails?
- 3 Hmmmm, Maybe I should get my locos out of retirement.
- 4 The "King" has another outing.
- 5 John Couchman enjoying the day on the "Maid of Kent".

LETTER FROM ENGLAND

By Stan Compton

When I was a schoolboy living in Birmingham, I recall being taught that our water supply was brought by pipeline from Wales. It never occurred to the teacher to explain that if you build a dam across a valley to trap the rain-water you create a storage lake and also if the lake is a few hundred feet higher than the city we lived in, then the water would flow, by gravity, the eighty miles to it's destination. All the large cities located near mountains or hills did this. London obtained it's water supply from the underlying aquifer in the chalk that extends over a large area in the South. London's water is 'hard' compared to the soft rain-water falling on the Welsh mountains.

Recently we went to visit the Elan Valley, the source of that water supply; just two hours drive on what would have been a coaching-road years ago. The Visitor Centre is built of stone, actually the original workshops for the project, which was completed in 1904. The pipeline to Birmingham cost more than the original dam. Of course more dams have been built in the area as the demand for water has increased and one of them has two towers on it similar to the German dams that were attacked with Barnes Wallis's 'bouncing bomb', and was used by the fliers to practice on.

We took one of the walks, recommended for visitors, and found a very scenic route that went along one of the lake shores, then over a saddle, quite a stiff climb this, and back along the lanes to the starting point. It was supposed to take two hours but we managed it in less than that, not bad for two oldies!!

I had hopes of seeing the Redkites, birds of prey re-introduced to the Welsh hills with their forked tails and aerial acrobatics worth watching, but no luck. We did see ducks, called Goosanders, flying high. I had never heard the name before but it was on a marker board in the Visitor Centre for walkers to write down what they had seen.

Once again I was able to go to the Midlands Exhibition. I had only been there on the first day for ten minutes when I saw a 'sold' sign go onto a small vertical mill. This confirmed what I had been told that good used vertical mills are scarce. Small lathes are lower in price now but the market is flooded with imported machine tools. I suspect that Myford are finding the competition a problem. So many firms are either closing down or moving their production to countries where labour is cheaper.

Always plenty to see, the Trade stands alone are always busy. It is nice to know that men are still building models, but a lot of 'gray' hair is evident or in some cases none at all!!!!

There is plenty of room at this venue, it is well organized, plenty of car parking and credit must go to the catering contractors who provide good plain food and somewhere to sit, even those who bring their own sandwiches can buy a cup of tea and sit at a table. The staff are always cheerful and well organized.

Have I mentioned to you that I acquired the hull of a model of Captain Cook's second ship "Resolution". It needs to be rigged, something new to me, so I looked for early sailing ships to study and found three, a clipper, a carrack and a frigate all by Terence Orton. Beautiful workmanship!! I hope I can get somewhere near to his standard.

There were many powered models, one simple open fishing boat with a Chinese coolie sitting in the stern with rod and line. The name on the bow was "Wan Hung Lo". Interesting to see capital ships of the 1900 era right up to modern patrol vessels.

In the locomotive field, there were few models in the competition classes. It is noticeable that 71/4" gauge is getting very popular especially in the narrow gauge.

The Club stands are always worth seeing, such a variety of models, it takes a lot of effort to organize these stands.

This year I studied the full-size steamboats, this is a rich man's hobby now. The varnished hulls, the engines showing first class work. A Sissons engine had been restored to show finish. These were built in Gloucester and the quality of design was evident, made in the days when steam was 'King'.

One of our members criticized the shape of the side sheets on the cab of a GWR 5" gauge loco model. He claimed the shape was wrong and in full-size the base of the cutout would only reach up to the knees of the driver, yet it had won a third place award. I admitted that I had not noticed this fact, maybe the drawings he had worked to are incorrect, it must be a difficult job being a judge. Often the standards are so high that it must discourage new people from exhibiting. I would hate to hear my work being faulted.

Traction engine models get bigger every year, a lot of interest in the displays, the gauge 1 locos running

with long trains always look effective. The same men are there every year and enjoy the contact with others of similar interest. The display of historical steam engines by David Hulse is always worth spending time to study, the correctness and wealth of detail is amazing. This kind of work is so rare that photographs do not do it justice. He is a modest man to talk to, like a lot of talented people. It is nice to see his wife is always with him on the stand.

I have just heard that the GWR 4 – 4 – 0 on the 71/4” gauge stand has been sold for 45,000 pounds, (\$135,000 NZ)

To finish, here is a story I heard recently. “Life had not been very kind to Cinderella. She is well past her youth, short of cash and only her old cat for company. The Good Fairy appears and offers her three wishes. Of course she asked to be young and beautiful again, plenty of money and could her old cat be turned into a handsome prince?

No problem. She got her three wishes.

Then the handsome prince whispered in her ear. “I bet now you wish you hadn’t had me neutered!!!!”.

ONE SAPPER’S WAR cont.

Part 111

By Bren Campbell

In the second half of 1941 construction commenced on the westward extension of the Desert Railway to transport War supplies and materials nearer to the fighting zone. Mersah Matruh was at the foot of an escarpment, which presented a climb from the Port too steep for the railway, therefore, a branch off point eight miles back at a place called Similla was selected. From there the track took a more easily graded circuitous route of eighteen miles to the top of the plateau to arrive at Mohalfa.

The grade was 1 in 117 with an easement halfway at Siquifa to accommodate a passing loop. Mohalfa was the intersecting point with the north – south road from Mersa Matruh to Siwa Oasis a hundred miles south into the Egyptian Desert and the guardian point that prevented the enemy forces from advancing via a route around the southern extremity of the Quatara depression itself a natural barrier against an invading army.

Enemy scouting patrols attempting forays via carefully selected tracks through the swamplands were countered by the famous desert patrols.

I was a member of a small detachment of 16 Operating Company personnel comprising engine



At work on the new line

drivers, firemen, guards and camp maintenance staff based at Similla to work the supplies of railway track materials and equipment to the 10th and 13th Construction Units on the extension and the laying out of the marshalling yards and locomotive turning and servicing facilities at Similla and Mohalfa. Similla also became a water supply center with an underground reservoir kept topped up from railway tank wagon trains brought from Alexandria. Two British Army Engineers billeted with our detachment tended this point. They issued the water to small road tankers that served the multitude of field units throughout the war zone.

As soon as Mohalfa was functioning as a railhead, squadrons of 28 – 32 armored tanks were brought up by rail and off loaded for the road journey to Siwa Oasis. We ran two or three of these trains a week for several weeks, always during the early part of the night. The tank motors were started while approaching Mohalfa and the trains were quickly divided and the halves pushed into parallel spurs with a loading – unloading ramp across the ends. The tanks drove over the lengths of the wagons to the end ramp and then away to the Siwa Road. Meanwhile we turned our locomotives, reformed the empty train, and hastened out of there on the return journey to Similla. As though on cue the enemy bombers would fly in and plaster the yard area. Enemy agents supplying the information on these operations invariably miscalculated the timings for there were no incidents of trains or tanks being caught in the target area.



Dragging rails from the railhead to the Western Desert railway extension

There were occasions when the departing trains had only just cleared the railhead when the bombers homed in and it was usual to look back and see the train with its tail end brake-van in silhouette against the bomb flashes. Even the outline of the lonely and vulnerable guard was visible through the end doorways of his cabin.

Following one trip when the action was too close for his comfort, he joined us on the engine for the next night's return trip. Inadvertently 'he stepped out of the frying pan into the fire' for on the downhill run the engine brakes failed and left us with only a reversing lever to arrest a total runaway. Our guard did not appreciate the experience at all as he endured the hazardous journey clinging to the cab steps and hand rails prepared to 'bail-out' at the slightest display of doubt.

In these early days the locomotives and rolling stock belonged to the Egyptian State Railway who maintained an engineering inspection staff at the point where the trains passed out of their control and into military control. A covering army personnel staff was also based there. Their jobs were to record the particulars and condition of all rolling stock passing across the demarcation point to and from the war zone. Changes in condition and defects were charged against the War Department.

The situation was ready made for conflicts of interest between the Army and the Egyptian examiners. The latter invariably attempted to record all vehicles as being in first class condition at entry to the war zone and requiring major overhaul upon returning. In fact all the locomotives and rolling stock that the E.S.R. directed to this line were in generally run-down condition.

We were grateful to be supplied with a fleet of brand-new War Department main line locomotives built by British works to the L.M.S.R. 'Stanier' "8F" freight design. New four wheeled 20 to gross and eight wheeled 40 ton gross wagons and box cars and L.N.E.R. 25 ton brake vans also came onto the scene.

To be continued