

The Generator

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July 2019



Palmerston Model Engineering Club
www.pnmec.org.nz - pnmec@trains.net.nz

Managers of the Marriner Reserve Railway - Marriner Street - Palmerston North
PO Box 4132 - Manawatu Mail Centre - Palmerston North 4442

The Palmerston North Model Engineering Club Upcoming Club Nights

25 July 2019

Bring along your current project and explain to the members how the construction/building/creation is coming along. What is going well and easily and what is proving to be more difficult.

“Show and Tell”

22 August 2019

Many of you have old photos covering significant times in the history of the club. Bring these along and entertain and regale the members with your memories as portrayed in the pictures.

“Photos of the Club History”

24 - 25 August 2019

“Model Mee”

At the Palmerston North Library. Come along and help setup
Friday from 2pm - 6pm

“With **three** diverse clubs involved,
this is shaping up to be an interesting and fun exhibition.”

Subs from 13 members are now overdue.

You should have received an invoice for these by email or in your posted newsletter. Please pay \$30.00 to the Treasurer or into the club bank account. **06-0996-0831663-00**
put your name in one of the fields. Thanks.

What's on this month and in the future PNMEC Club Calendar

Track running at Marriner Reserve Railway

Aug	4 th	1pm - 3pm
Aug	18 th	1pm - 3pm
Sep	1 st	1pm - 3pm
Sep	15 th	1pm - 3pm

Percy Godbar Photo Evening Follow Up Richard Lockett

Those of you who attended the June club night will recall this photograph of a bush tramway locomotive. I said I hadn't previously seen this locomotive and that I didn't know much about it.

Well, it appears that I was wrong as regards not having heard of this loco before. It appears on pages 132 and 133 of the ex-



cellent book by Paul Mahoney titled "The Era of the Bush Tram in New Zealand", which I have read at least twice, so my apologies.

With reference to Paul's book, the first of five locos built by the Auckland engineering firm of Gibbons and Harris (Marine Engineers) were built for the brother of Gibbon. He was a Northland sawmiller and contractor. They used second hand ships steering or winch engines. These were mounted under the boiler driving via spur gears directly to the front axle.

No two of these loco's were built to the same exact specification.

The above photograph was taken by Percy in 1911 at Hikurangi in Northland on the bush tram of R P Gibbons. It is hauling Kahikatea logs and burning coal sourced from the local Waro coal Mine, looks more like coal dust! Doesn't look to be much in the way of springing on the axles, so may have been an interesting ride on this tramway through a Kahikatea swamp.

This locomotive would make for an interesting model, any starters amongst us?

Letter from England

By Stan Compton

Let me take you back to December 1944. The group of tradesmen I was part of in the Royal Navy had completed our part of the D-Day invasion and were being sent out to India to prepare for the Japanese invasion of that country, but it never eventuated after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We started out from Hayling Island near Southampton at 16:30 to board a troop-train to Gourrock near Glasgow. This was interesting because our train went straight through London at a steady pace without stopping, carrying on up north. By the middle of the night we stopped at York where we were met by volunteer women who gave us sandwiches and tea in cleaned out beer bottles. All most welcome. I have often thought of the women who worked at night with snow about to feed us instead of being in a warm bed.

By 09:00 we arrived at Gourrock and could see the SS Orion anchored out in the River Clyde, our transport to India. It did not take long to board the vessel and find our allocated mess deck. Being Navel personnel we had out hammocks with us and our own bedding. Incidentally our hammock mattress was filled with horsehair that does not burn. Traditional Navel issue. The troops had bunks allocated.

Few of us had ever been to sea before and we engine-room staff were allocated duties to man the Bofors anti-aircraft guns while out in the Atlantic Ocean. Something we had no experience off. There were Royal artillerymen on board, but they would not be under Navel discipline. Our watches would be four hours on duty and eight hours off. Easy compared to crews on Atlantic convoys who had to perform four hours on and four hours off, very demanding. One never got a full night's sleep. We took on water at Gibraltar and many of us were glad to have a few hours ashore. By now it was nice and warm. A break at Port Said to go through the Suez Canal. As we passed through I realised the desert was so flat I visualised that in Biblical times the tides in the Mediterranean Sea must have retreated daily, there would be no need for a miracle.

Now the weather got really hot in the Red Sea. Fresh water was limited. Salt water showers were available but rarely used. This item amuses my wife. We found that fresh water was turned on at 16:00 hours, Some stripped off and queued-up at each of the wash basins to catch the trickle of fresh water, about a litre each, just enough to wash ourselves all over, but what a pleasure to feel clean again. I met a pupil from school while in the queue but never saw him again while on that voyage.

At Bombay we were sent to a transit camp to wait for a train to Cochin via Madras. This meant crossing the country twice. Now there is a direct route by rail down the west coast built at great difficulty by Indian Railways. I have mentioned before about the trip from Madras to Cochin, but you many not recall it. Halfway across our train was put into a siding where Army cooks had set up a field kitchen preparing stew for troops on board. Plates were handed out and we lined up to collect our meal, returning to our carriage to eat it. Meanwhile we became aware of numbers of poor children all holding an empty tin can waiting on the opposite side

to the wayside station, the only visible buildings in the area. Some of our sailors quickly realised what they hoped for and went back to the cooks for second helpings, returning to their carriage, leant out and poured the stew into the empty tins. Those children were hungry. One small boy had no tin can and a burly sailor asked by signs where did the child want the stew put. With no hesitation he grasped his little shirt to form a pocket and pointed with his other hand to pour the stew into his shirt, which is what was done and the child happily trotted off eating the stew with his hand as he went.

Finally arriving at a new Naval base built on reclaimed land near Cochin, it has a different name now, a new experience for all of us during the eighteen months of our stay there. To give us a break from the humid atmosphere we were sent to a hill station called Wellington in the Nilgiri Hills. It had been an Army barracks. One day two of us were taken by one of our bearers, who was a servant from his days with the troops, walking through what he called The Bush. We came across two men sawing a massive log into planks, mounted up on trestles. We had no idea pit-sawing was still in use, but it was pointed out to us that if a powered saw was used those men would be out of work. We were over 5,000 feet above the clouds and had travelled on the Nilgiri Mountain Rack Railway using narrow gauge steam locomotives built in Switzerland pre WWI and some of them are still in use today.

Tea planting would be the main industry with such a fine climate, warm days and cold nights, what a pleasure to see a log fire burning back at the barracks. The British out here let us use the golf course and tennis courts they had built which was kind of them, even though many of us did not play at home.

The narrow gauge was needed to bring passengers and supplies up as far as Ootacamund from the plains. Known always as "Ooty". One of our lecturers at Massey University spent his youth at the Boys College there, where his Mother was a teacher. Discipline was very strict. Back at the Naval base a swimming pool had been built. I must have contracted an ear infection from the water.

Many of us had minor infections and the burden on the sick-bay was great. I have told you before about one of our medical officers kept us free of Malaria by spraying old engine oil onto any swampy land near our base.

Ship Inspections

During a casual conversation at a club meeting on the topic of marine safety I outlined the process of inspection, insurance, and the underwriting of a ship's fitness for service. It was agreed by others that an article in the club magazine would be appropriate.

At regular intervals (usually on a yearly cycle), or at a period determined by the classification society and the ship's insurers every commercial, military, or insured ship is removed from the water, its undersides cleaned and inspected in accordance with rigid standards. This survey is carried out in conjunction with independent surveyors/inspectors who underwrite the state of the ship and its

fitness for its designated service.

The task of removing a ship from the water is a complicated and very expensive process. There are many ways of lifting a ship out of the water but three principal methodologies dominate.

So called “Railways” are the most common and the larger of these can haul vessels weighing several thousand tons out of the water. These mechanisms consist of a sloping and very heavily constructed railway running from the hard standing on the land out into the sea.

A carriage which is specially constructed to support a ship runs on this railway and is pulled along by very heavy duty winches at the land end of the track. The carriage is run out to sea and the ship is manoeuvred into a cradle on the carriage by tugs and manpower. The positioning of the ship is vital as the ship rests on a row of wooden blocks under its keel (which takes almost all of its weight).

When the ship is in position, and is sitting on the blocks correctly the carriage and ship is pulled up the sloping railway and onto the hard standing. Photo 01 and 02 show a bulk cargo freighter that has been winched up onto a hard standing and is undergoing its routine inspection. These photos were taken at the yard of “Atlantic Dry Dock” in Jacksonville Florida.

To be continued.
David Bell



Photo 01



Photo 02

If you would like to be notified when this newsletter is published, send us an email with your **Name, Club** and **Email** address to pnmec@trains.org.nz with “**Generator Please**” in the subject line.

For Sale - Hercus Lathe 9"

Gear Box. Power cross feed, V-bed,
4-way tool post, face plate, 4 jaw chuck,
6 speed back gear,
Lamp, live centre and tooling.
Has been fully restored and painted (light grey).
\$2,300.00 ono. Please contact David Nielsen,
8 Knowles Street, Palmerston North, 021-127-2846.

June Club Night

The June 27th Club Night was transferred from the Hearing Association to PN Girls High at the last minute due to the removal of all furniture from the Hearing Association apparently in preparation for recarpeting. Thanks to Robert for providing a venue at such short notice. The meeting opened late with an introduction from Robert (President) and Cynthia gave a short update on the progress with arrangements for Model Mee.

Richard discussed boilers that would be suitable for a boiler for an entry for the Les Moore challenge at the convention in January.

The main part of the evening was the slide presentation by Richard featuring pictures from the Percy Godber collection at the national library. Apparently there are 4500+ items in this collection which can only be accessed by opening the collection at the start and scrolling through one by one. An arduous task for which we are grateful to Richard. This was a very interesting talk and there were images of some old and unusual looking locomotives. Of local interest was a slide of the original (wooden) bridge over the Manawatu River at the end of Fitzherbert Avenue. This was built in 1878 of Totara milled at Aokautere. This bridge served until 1935 when it was replaced by the concrete arch bridge which was in turn replaced by the present structure during the 1990's. There was also a photo of the original wooden bridge across the Manawatu at the eastern end of the Manawatu Gorge. This was replaced in the 1930's by the present concrete bridge in the same location. Of course, this is no longer used for highway traffic due to the closure of the road through the gorge because of the instability of the hillside along which the road runs.

Many of the slides were of old and unusual locomotives used on bush and timber railways throughout New Zealand. Most of these have been scrapped but some have been preserved. Of interest were some archive pictures of the Hikitia floating crane. There was also a slide of the SS Devon ashore of Pencarrow Head at the entrance to Wellington harbour. The vessel was a total loss but no lives were lost.

The slide show was followed by a "**Bits and Pieces**" session.

Robert Edwards showed a power transistor block from a CNC mill he has recently purchased.

Chris Bjerga showed a grooved pulley and belt which was part of one of his machines.

Graeme Hall had a couple of 118° small jigs for sharpening very small drills on a carborundum stone. Very useful I thought. The plans were from an old copy of AME.

Fin Mason had a number of books culled from his library. Free to a good home.

Merv George showed a small tin with a close fitting lid that he thought would be suitable for the Les Moore challenge model.

The meeting closed and about 9.15 pm.