



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.

February 2003
No 276

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,	Place stamp here
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Coming Events

Monthly Meeting; This will be held on the **27 February** at 7.30 pm in the Hearing Association Rooms, Church Street, Palmerston North. It is to be a 'Bits and Pieces' evening. What you did during the Christmas Holidays.

Mid Week Run at Marriner Reserve Railway: **25 February** between 10 am and 2 pm.
 Please contact Doug Chambers for details.

Track running at Marriner Reserve Railway: "Locomotion 2003" 1st and 2nd March
 10 am to 4 am
 Night running on the Saturday evening.
16th March 1 pm to 4 pm.

Open Weekends:	Hamilton	15 - 16 March
	Havelock North	18 - 21 April
	Auckland Society of Model Engineers	18 - 21 April

The closing date for the March 2003 Generator is Friday 14th March

What you missed out on 23 Jan 2003

25+ members spent an interesting Club Night at Graeme Hislop's "G" gauge garden railway. Graeme has built the railway over the last 5 years. Nearly all of the buildings are scratch built.

The Saw Mill shown on the right has a boiler, vertical steam engine, flat belts, lay shafts and saw blades, all hand made. This part of the layout is the timber works with logging wagons ready for unloading at the mill. There



are many other things to be seen hidden around the track such as the hobo under the bridge, the gunfight in the street and the people on the station platforms waiting for the train to arrive. Members are welcome to call at Graeme's for a look during the day light hours if they want.

Murray Bold.

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. Palmerston North members are asked to bring a plate to contribute to the morning and afternoon teas for both Saturday and Sunday.

FEBRUARY MEETING

This will be on the 27th February and will be a 'Bits and Pieces' evening. Members are invited to bring along those projects that they were working on in their workshops over the Christmas period.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This will be held on the 24th April 03 in the Hearing Association Rooms, Church Street, Palmerston North at 7.30 pm.

We will require a new President this year as Ian McLellan has indicated that he will step down after this term.

Also members should be thinking about whom they think a fitting recipient for the 'Compton Shield' (Awarded to the club member of the year) would be.

FOR SALE

37 castings for 1½" scale Allchin plus drawings. Contact Bruce Geange (06) 357-0566

A weekend with the Maidstone Model Engineers

The railway at Maidstone Park is a 7¼ ground level and a 5 & 3½ inch raised track, they are both oval shaped tracks with sidings for the 7¼ and steaming bays shared by both tracks.

Saturday had a good turn out with people from the Maidstone club and the public of Upper Hutt. Bruce Geange ran his traction engine, Richard ran Robin with assistance from Barry and me. Murray and Janice arrived with the Phantom around 3 pm and ran for two hours. Doug had a big trip on his Ducati down there to have a look; Cynthia came for the day, as did Chris and Paulette Morton and Ken and Joyce Neilsen. Chris and Pam Rogers



stayed for the both days.

It has good to see Harold Sinclair at the track. On Sunday there was a “Blues, Brews and BBQs” concert in the park and the passengers were coming steadily all day, the Phantom did 43 km that day around the track, the most ever in one day. On Monday most people went home and the Maidstone members started tidying up e track. Thanks Maidstone Club for a great weekend. Stuart Anderson.



Tim from Havelock Nth with a load of kids

Waimarie River Trip

On the 25th January 2003, members along with their families took a trip on the paddle steamer up the Whanganui river, after having a picnic lunch at Motoua gardens adjacent to the river boat wharf.

Before we boarded the “Waimarie” , we all took a look through the museum about the Paddle Steamers of New Zealand. The most interesting thing was out the back. It was the original “Yarrow” boiler from the “Waimarie” which had been in the mud for 41 years.

The members who went on this trip were Richard Lockett, Murray & Janice Bold,

Fred & Mrs. Kemp, Stuart Anderson & his Grandfather, Laurie Perkins & Family and Cynthia Cooper. Sadly Chris & Pat Rogers couldn't make it due to a family bereavement While on the three hour trip, most of the members went down to the engine room and had a go at stoking the fire, which eats coal at 1/4 tons per hour.

This was a great trip that I believe should be a bi-annual event with the club.

Simon Power.



The Generator

LETTER FROM ENGLAND

By Stan Compton

We have seen some of New Zealand on T.V. recently, a pity the program with “Duggan” the policeman was shown in the afternoon. The plot was weak, but the setting in the Marlborough Sounds is magnificent with shots of the “Arahura” setting out from Picton. For the first time in my memory we saw the Picton track in use, the one on the waterfront. It is such a nice little track and the children were enjoying their ride. Over here we get more adults than children and it makes for hard work.

The shots of the old “Edwin Fox” reminded me of watching a group of students moving the blocks of cast iron ballast out of the hold when we were returning from the first National model locomotive rally held in Blenheim. I was concerned that one of these castings would slip off the sack barrow and crash down on the volunteers cleaning out the bilges below!! Also a BBC program called “Rough Science” was worth watching. A group had been flown out to the West Coast of the South Island to look for gold. This meant using the old techniques to sieve the gold bearing gravel that had been put through their homemade rocker. The project ended up after six weeks work with minimal results. The gold was then melted in a home built furnace using West Coast coal and the made into some rough jewellery. This did look rough but they did succeed in the end and learned a lot from the exercise. We only saw progress when the weather was good for filming of course and the ‘back-drop’ of the Southern Alps was most spectacular.

The tourist program with a young man taking a camper van from Wellington to the Bay of Islands was a ‘damp squib’. It rained up in the north and what young man would take a holiday on his own this way?

Our son Chris in Wellington sent me a copy of “Heritage of Industry” by Nigel Smith. It makes fascinating reading, I had no idea that the Denniston Incline started down a length of two kilometres at 1 : 1.3 flattening out to fall 550 metres moving 1000 tons of coal every working day. In the 87 years of its life 12.6 million tons of coal was moved.

On the front of the book is a photograph of a Bush loco in the Rarimu area and sitting on the track in front is the photographer’s dog, I suspect that he is quite a character.

Doug Chambers sent me a copy of “The First Twenty-five Years of the Palmerston North Model Engineering Club. “Full Marks” to him and everyone concerned with producing it. You can all be proud of what you achieved over that time. I recall that it was George Dowd and Don Dudley who did the original survey of the track at Marriner Reserve. It rained all day and the moisture got into the level making it very hard to take readings.

In those days we tried anything to make money. Once we set up my 4” scale traction engine and baler to make small bales of hay to sell to pet shops. It was not a good idea and our profit was minimal.

One day last summer we were in Ironbridge, where the famous bridge is, when I heard the unmistakable sound of a hefty single cylinder motorcycle. It was an Enfield 500cc, made in India. Fitted to it was a side chair, only the side chair was a bath sporting a showerhead and sign writing displaying the fact that the owner was a plumber!!! What a good idea, it attracted a lot of attention!! I gather that the Royal part of the original name has been dropped but these bikes are now exported back to the U.K. and everywhere. A practical basic machine that is simple to maintain for some one who wants to relive the old days By the way, the bath was made of fibreglass and his mate was sitting in it !!

There is no activity at the Hereford track-site in winter but the club “Sweet Pea” gets some use running on the portable tracks. A booking had been made to run in the small country

town we live in, but I had my doubts on whether it would be worthwhile in the middle of winter to run for "Save the Children Fund". I duly offered to help set up in the car-park next to an old Hospice that was built in 1320, the walls are over a meter thick and I for one was grateful for the modern toilet facilities available on a cold day!!

Our pair of stalwarts duly arrived with a Ford Transit van towing the loaded trailer, five of us pitched in to set up on sloping ground using timber off-cuts to level up. Meanwhile other people were also setting up Merry-go-rounds, a bouncy castle, hot dog stall etc. I had looked for advertising in the local paper but there was none. The organizer had no idea what was required to get people to support such a venture; we were in the old town centre behind the almshouses, modernized and very comfortable incidentally. A few balloons had been hung out nearby and the Town crier, dressed in knee breaches, scarlet coat and tricorne hat did his best ringing his bell and calling out in a lusty voice what was happening in town that day. It was all a bit pathetic and we only carried about thirty passengers all-day and packed up early. The organiser refused to pay the set fee for a turnout and all the other attractions lost on the deal.

One bright spot for us was when a group of Appalachian Clogdancers turned up to perform, mostly middle-aged these women gave of their best and were a sight worth seeing. The band that provided the music was good as well. One of our new members drove some distance to help, did get the chance to have a drive, poor old "Sweet Pea" was in a poor state, the pumps needed new O-rings and the injector water feed pipe was split, but somehow it was kept going.

The floods have mercifully not been a real problem at Hereford track-site so far this winter, a successful 'End of Year' party was held in the clubhouse, all the ladies provided food and drink and a good chance for members wives to meet up again. One member has bought three locomotives from a deceased estate, a "Doris" 3 1/2" Black Five, a "Brighton Atlantic" in 3 1/2" and a 5" gauge 'Dock Tank'. He tried running the "Doris" and had some success, I told him he would need to make up plugs to test the boilers, as usual these always get lost. He was going to make up a pair of 7 1/4" gauge "Black Fives" but changed his mind when he realised what was involved.

I should explain that the local Town Crier is paid as a tourist gimmick.

ONE SAPPER'S WAR

Part IV

By Bren Campbell

By Christmas 1941 railway construction had proceeded 80 miles past Mohalfa to Masheifa on the desert plateau 25 miles south in the desert from the small coastal village of Sidi Barrani. The route traversed generally stony desert with gentle descents and ascents across wide, shallow wadis and a final twelve-mile climb to the railhead.

A vast supplies and distributing dump was established at Masheifa with train arrival and dispersal roads and a balloon loop of about two miles diameter with four curved sidings for train unloading. This circular feature was decided upon in order to present relatively difficult targets for enemy aircraft to align themselves on. While I saw none of the trains parked in these sidings come under air attack, I was involved in incidents when trains on the straight arrival, departure and shunting roads came under fire.

Locomotive servicing and a turning triangle were also installed. A spur line branched out to the north-west to a point about four miles away where there was established an elaborate dummy railhead manned by a unit of South African field engineers who from very secure

bunkers ventured out to continually change the positions of dummy rail wagons, motor trucks, armoured tanks and supplies dumps consisting of stacks of empty petrol cans as well as genuine war wreckage and fake and real anti-aircraft gun emplacements.

During the many air raids the intrepid engineers set off most convincing explosions and fires. It is probably conservative to estimate that for every ton of bombs dropped on the real railhead, four tons were dropped on the dummy. Lord Haw Haw the English traitor and German propagandist consistently reported the total destruction of the railhead complex.

The 16th Railway Company was moved from El Daba to Similla to run the Similla to Masheifa desert railway. The El Daba- Similla-Mersa Matruh section was handed over to a British 'Tommy' railway-operating unit.

I became part of a small detachment that was transferred to Masheifa to work materials and supply trains on a further 70 mile extension from there to Fort Capuzzo on the Egyptian – Libyan border. As the line progressed a section of the 17th railway operating company to complete the section and work the trains past Masheifa. Our detachment was returned to Similla to continue with the regular train workings from there to Masheifa. Five to eight trains each way a day were run. The loads were troops and their equipment, aviation and motor transport fuel, aerial bombs, tanks, field guns, railway construction materials, army food rations, NAAFI canteen stores and two or three ambulance trains each week to relieve the forward casualty clearing stations.

The return journeys brought out troops being relieved, war wreckage of tanks, armoured vehicles, motor transport and aircraft as well as enemy prisoners of war and their equipment. Among items that were brought out under heavy guard were an eight wheeled high speed armoured car, a Focke-Wulf 190 fighter aircraft, half track troop carriers and long range mobile guns.

In general the trains were made up equivalent to 60 to 65 four wheeled wagons. A double bogie wagon was counted as two four wheelers. Thus train weights were 1200 to 1300 tons. They were totally unbraked except for the steam-operated brakes on the engines and tenders and handbrakes on the guard's vans.

Depending on the tension on the coupling links and hooks and compression on the buffers the distance between adjacent wagons could vary by more than 1½ feet, which caused the train length to vary by more than 100 feet. Starting and stopping always demanded careful judgement. No instant stops were possible and the official speed limit was 25 mph. On descending grades approaching known stopping places preparations to take control were initiated about two miles out.

The locomotives with tenders weighed 127 tons and carried nine tons of coal and 4000 gallons of water. Permanently coupled and piped to each loco were two 4000 gallon four wheeled tank wagons described as water batteries. These supplies had to last the Similla-Masheifa- Similla round trip of 196 miles which depending on war conditions could take between two and four days. For reasons of safety and to conserve the train engine supplies a helper locomotive was attached to the rear of each train to assist it up the 18 mile 1: 117 climb from Similla to Mohalfa. At the all clear signal to proceed, the pusher engine had to start first to close the buffers to the point of nudging the lead engine which then gradually opened up to take its share of the load. This avoided the risk of snatching the bank engine with the consequent damage to draw gear. At the top the bank engine was detached and the train proceeded on its way over generally flat terrain.

To be continued.