



Newsletter of THE PALMERSTON NORTH MODEL ENGINEERING CLUB INC

Managers of the "MARRINER RESERVE RAILWAY"
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October 2002

No 273

PNMEC Home Page www.pnmeec.org.nz

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TRACK RUNNING

This is held on the FIRST and THIRD Sunday of each month, from 1pm to 4pm Summer and 1pm to 3pm 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
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Coming Events

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

We have arranged a guest speaker from SKF Bearings to talk to us. As this will be an interesting evening all members are encouraged to attend.

Track Running. November 3rd 1pm – 4pm.

 November 17th 1pm – 4pm

Mid-week run November 26th 10.00 am to 2pm

 Members wishing to run are requested to contact Doug Chambers.

Tauranga Open Weekend. 9th and 10th November, 2002.

Welcome to the new format of **“The Generator.”** The committee has decided to have the clubs newsletters available on the internet, as do some of the other Model Engineering Clubs. This will be our first attempt at this exercise, so will see how it goes. Any comments would be much appreciated. For those who have access to the internet, one advantage will be that most of the pictures and pages will be in colour. If you wish to receive your personal copy of **“The Generator”** sent through cyber space, as an Acrobat PDF file, please e-mail the secretary at **“pnmec@clear.net.nz”** requesting this, including the e-mail address of where you wish it to be sent. Getting your newsletter sent direct to you this way each month will significantly reduce the costs involved in producing and posting **“The Generator”** to each member. Each month the new **“The Generator”** will be uploaded to the PNMEC website at **“www.pnmec.org.nz”** for all the world to access and enjoy.

SEPTEMBER MEETING REPORT

This was ‘our most treasured document’ evening. There was certainly a widely varied type of documents displayed and spoken about. There was a New Zealand Citizenship Certificate, an ‘A’ Grade Automotive Certificate, an Automotive Apprenticeship Contract, a Traction Engine Driver’s Certificate, a Meccano Guild Members Certificate, a Zeus Machinists ‘bible’ with plastic coated pages so that oily fingers do not discolour the print, a letter dictating early family history and a Bible that had been put into a ring binder to allow easy additions for writing sermons.

Also of interest was the device Graham Avery displayed. When heat was applied to it a small current was made. I have no idea why or how but Graham told us that it is quite an old idea.

Craig Moore showed us one side frame for his 7 ¼” gauge “Mountaineer”. The frame was about two metres long and was of 25mm thickness. Craig explained that for obvious reasons he would be unable to bring the completed chassis to a meeting. Definitely ‘hernia’ material !!!!!

TRACK RUNNING

The 6th October proved a fine day. Still a bit cool but with the sun starting to shine it looks as if summer is finally on it’s way. Murray Bold’s “Phantom” driven by Murray and Stewart Anderson, and Laurie Perkins’ NZR Wab handled the passenger traffic. Bruce Geange gave his “Abigail” a run and while he had a cup of coffee Stewart Anderson took over for a spell.

It was good to see Peter Hatton at the track after a year that has been a bit of a trial health wise.

FOR SALE

A kit of materials to build a stationary steam engine of the horizontal mill engine type.

G.P.Quayle of Auckland designed the engine, bore 20mm x stroke 20mm. The kit contains all the materials, screws and nuts, drawings and instructions. There are no castings. Ideal for the beginner who has just a small lathe, taps and dies and a few hand tools.

Price \$132 Apply to Chris Morton Phone 323 8001

PROPOSED DAY TRIP

A suggestion has been made that perhaps a group of P.N.M.E. members might like to go up the Whanganui River on the paddleboat “Waimarie”. This trip will take place during the summer, the date yet to be settled. Members interested in the trip should let the secretary, Murray Bold know.

OCTOBER MEETING

Our guest speaker will be a representative from SKF Bearings. I expect that the talk he gives will be of great interest to all and may be of help to decide the best type of bearing to use in the various projects we undertake.

Some of us are fortunate and have our model steam locomotives to drive on a Sunday afternoon. A quiet way of spending an afternoon except perhaps when more 'rambunctious' passengers disturb the tranquillity of driver enjoying the smell of steam, cylinder oil and coal smoke.

Some of us have been lucky enough to be invited onto the footplate of a full-size steam loco on the main line.

Fortunately few have had to drive steam locos in a theatre of war, in areas where enemy aircraft delighted in shooting up trains. The plume of smoke and steam from the funnel that we so admire these days was a sure invitation for attack.

In case any of you believe that the locomotive boiler was simply punctured by the 20mm cannon shells allowing the steam to escape to atmosphere, let me correct you.

The 20mm armour piercing explosive shell not only had little trouble passing through the boiler shell, but it also passed through the firebox or fire tube nest. This allowed the steam to enter the fire tubes and some steam would rush forward into the smoke box and up the chimney. The remainder rushed back into the firebox where it blasted the firebox door open and hurled the red-hot coals onto the footplate.

If the driver and fireman were able to jump clear they still had to avoid the ash and coals being ejected from the ash pan and the bullets from the aircraft still strafing the train.

The following is the story of one driver who worked steam engines in a theatre of war.

ONE SAPPER'S WAR.

By Bren Campbell

In 1935 I left secondary school in possession of an elementary qualification, Engineering Preliminary, which had I continued would have given me entry to study for professional examinations. I entered into a five year apprenticeship as an engineering tradesman with the Palmerston North firm of Jas. J. Niven and Co. Ltd.

In 1937 precisely halfway through my contract I broke it and joined the New Zealand Railway's locomotive branch at Taihape as a cleaner, which duty due to staff shortages I never performed, but quickly went on to fireman in charge of locomotive boilers in steam in the depot, the onto the station yard shunt engine and at nine months service onto the mainline firing on the Palmerston North, Taihape, Taumararua section of the North Island Main Trunk.

In 1939 I transferred from Taihape to Palmerston North and resumed firing duties over the southern North Island provincial network.

Following on from the outbreak of war in 1939 the first and second echelons of the second N.Z. Expeditionary Forces had departed for the Middle East and the United Kingdom.

By early 1940 the third echelon to form the final grouping for the main body was being inducted. The Minister of Defence sent out to all railwaymen notices inviting them to volunteer in forming a railway battalion to consist of two operating companies. The exercise was conducted in some urgency and the companies thus formed became the 16th and 17th Railway Operating Companies of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Forces. Each contained 400 troops holding the skills necessary for train running operations.

I became a member of the locomotive running section of the 16th Railway Operating Company. My proudly borne regimental number was 27452 and my rank, the ignominious title "Sapper". In fact we were field engineers and wore the field engineers' puggarees on that curse of our lives, our lemon squeezer hats.

Within a week we were in camp at Hopuhopu, a damp foggy place on the bank of the Waikato River between Ngaruawahia and Taupiri. We were issued basic kit, 1911 vintage Lee Enfield rifles, given a crash course in basic parade ground drill and sent home on embarkation leave.

The sailing date was deferred following the sinking off the Northland Coast of the Auckland - Vancouver liner, 'Niagara'. Our destination looked set for France and two or three weeks later we were again prepared for embarkation when France was over-run and Dunkirk became a legend.

There was talk of disbanding the railway battalion, however, another two weeks saw us onto a troop train for the overnight journey to Wellington to board the troop ship "Empress of Japan", which in company with the

then new "Mauritania" and the "Orcades", carried the third echelon to the Middle East. Later when Japan came into the War the name "Empress of Japan" was changed to "Empress of Scotland". She was a steam turbine ship of 26,000 tons and there were 3500 troops on board. Our unit was accommodated in a hold at the stern on "D" deck almost on the water line. The portholes could not be opened during rough weather because they frequently rolled beneath the waves. Access was via a cargo hatch with a jury rigged timber stairway. We slept in hammocks which had to be unrolled and slung from ceiling hooks so closely packed that one had to squirm up between the others to get into one's own. Once having mastered the art of getting into them without completing the roll and tumbling out the other side, it took three nights to become adapted to lying in the enforced banana shape. Finally sheer exhaustion took over and we actually achieved comfort in them. The noise from the propellers and drive system was horrendous and in the first few days we felt quite overwhelmed by it. We were fed three meals a day with each requiring five half our sittings and we took our places in the dining room according to the code on our boarding tickets. We did not know our destination, but on the day of sailing the German propaganda broadcaster "Lord Hawhaw" gave us the time of departure and the destination and assurance of a welcome. We were in transit for thirty-one days and were served thirty-one rabbit stews and sago puddings with a Sunday treat of sultanas added to the sago. For all our waking hours we carried our life preservers, which added to our personal bulks in the crowded conditions. Fortunately on the voyage we had no need to use those much-cursed encumbrances. After ten days of chronic sea-sickness for some, mild to none for others, and reactions from three inoculations, we arrived at Freemantle and were to go through withdrawal symptoms when the horrendous noise was replaced by the equally disturbing silence of the berthed ship. We were given shore leave for part of the thirty-six hours, while the ship was topped up with supplies. We presumed more rabbit meat and sago as the diet was not changed for the rest of the voyage.

We sailed in the morning heading out into the Indian Ocean, the course being generally north-west. We witnessed the ceremonial crossing of the equator and saw the shoals of flying fish skimming away from the passage of the ship.

About ten days from Freemantle we arrived at Bombay where we were greeted by the most terrific thunderstorm. The rain pelted down in such vast quantities that it temporarily defeated the exposed deck drainage system and flooded up to the doorsills. The shafts of lightning boring into the sea had to be seen to be believed. A party of six of us shared the hire of a taxi for the sum of the equivalent of 60 cents each, and toured the sights of Bombay.

On the fourth day we sailed for the Gulf of Aden and passed through the Red Sea noting its barren shore lines and red rock coastal hills. We duly arrived at the port of Suez with its overpowering reek of petroleum from the giant oil refineries. We were taken off the ship into barges and ferried to landings where we boarded trains for the three-hour journey to Cairo and then shunted the ten miles to our encampment at Maadi within sight of the Great Pyramids of Giza and the ancient dead city of Cairo.

We were kitted out for the summer, which was drawing to an end, and given orientation and routine procedures. There was plenty of space in the surrounding barren area with the company parade ground a long march from our encampment. One memorable morning in the first week I almost brought the weight of military wrath about my ears. In preparation for the morning parade I had slicked up my gear and trusty vintage Lee Enfield and dashed off on the long trek to the parade ground. When about to obey the command to fall in, someone noticed that the bolt was missing from the breech of my rifle. Sure enough I had left it in my tent. There was no way that I could survive the usual rifle inspection. Notices and standing orders were read out and the company stood to attention for inspection. The inspecting party, Commanding Officer, Orderly Officer of the Day, and the platoon sergeant this day conducted an inspection of the personal. After passing up and down the ranks they duly arrived at me, paused, murmured among themselves and continued to the completion of the tour, marched out to the front and faced the company.

"Sapper B.L. Campbell, regimental No 27452 two paces forward march." I stepped out, one two, one two and stood rigid.

"Who do you think you are, The Shell Oil Company? Blanco your name and number off the outside of your belt. Fall in."

I stepped back into line one two, one two and stood rigid. "Parade Dismiss". I turned to the right one two

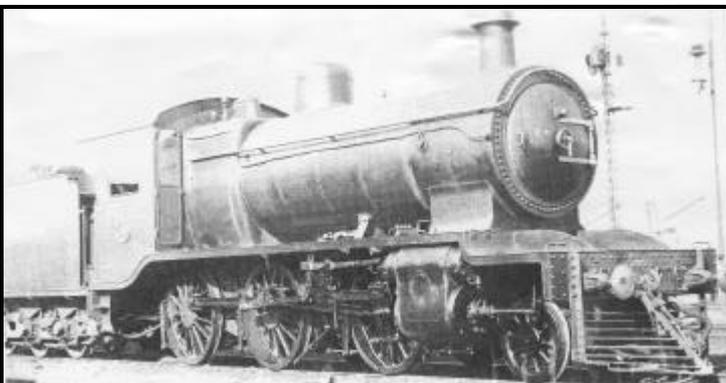
and marched off unscathed, returning to my tent where the rifle bolt was restored to the gaping breach and then I recommenced breathing again. We were about three weeks at Maadi awaiting



movement out to the Western Desert. In the meantime the company was generous with leave passes which enabled us to travel into Cairo, visit the Great Pyramids, museums, various ruins and sample the fantastic Brazilian coffee bars and wine shops where different Greek and Jewish hosts gave us top quality treatment. There we could eat good food and drink good wine in quietness and dignity. Through our time in the Middle East on the rare occasions that we were in the towns we found the canteens and social rooms run by the NAAFI, the YMCA, the Church Army and various patriotic organizations very welcome for their good clean food and recreational facilities.

The 16th Railway Operating Company was duly sent on the two hundred mile rail journey to El Daba in the western desert to monitor and eventually take over the war materials supply train workings over the eighty mile section of the Egyptian State Railway from El Daba to Mersah Matruh, the then western desert rail-head. At El Daba our base camp, the company embarked upon a program of internal assessment with the object of identifying commissioned and non-commissioned officer material and examining the potential of all ranks to see that square pegs and round pegs fitted the appropriate holes. Whilst I bore the rank of Sapper all the way through, which gratified my wish never to be placed in a position of authority over my fellows, especially in the Army, I managed to enjoy relative freedom of movement in some circumstances. Emerging from the interview covering previous work experiences, because of my engineering trade background, I was offered the choice of remaining with the locomotive running section or opting for the locomotive maintenance section. At the same time the Officer in Charge of the Operating section invited me to become his batman.

Of the three options I did not want anything to do with engine maintenance work, it was dirty, repetitious and confined one to a fixed area. Of the batman's job, this Officer was highly qualified professionally, one of the few I respected and I probably would have derived some benefit from sharing his company. I did not feel geared to such duty, and therefore declined and stayed with the locomotive running section which satisfied my ongoing quest for changes of scene and mobility albeit at some personal risk.



Egyptian State Railways operated these little 2 –6 –0 tender engines on the section El Daba to Mersa Matruh. Some of the later models were fitted with poppet valves. Bren's comment about the locos' was that they were smooth runners, but poor pullers.

Many civilian Egyptian labourers in their long flowing off-white robes were employed in various menial jobs around the military encampments concentrated in the area. Some belonged to organised work gangs of ten to twenty members overseen by one of their number who much to our outrage extracted 10% of each man's wages for himself. We were disturbed one day to see the action taken against a new young employee who on receiving his pay felt disinclined to pay the 10% to his Rais (Boss), who grappled with him and took possession of his pay packet, extracted the fixed amount there from and returned the balance to it's owner, end of fracas.

The eighty-mile length of railway between El Daba and Mersa Matruh was divided into six sections with more or less equally spaced passing loops with manned station hutments. Train separation was maintained by a token system similar to the automatic tablet system of our own New Zealand Railways. Egyptian personnel continued to man all the stations and small detachments of our own people duplicated the manning. There were five trains a day each way carrying troops, war materials, petrol and water westwards and returning with troops going on leave, damaged war equipment and Bedouin nomadic tribes being removed from the war zone.

To be continued.....

FOR SALE

The following items are from the late John Comrie's estate.

Lathe . Made in Taiwan. CT918 approximately the same size as a Myford ML7. 3 and 4 jaw chucks, face plate, fixed steady. Gearbox. Will cut both metric and imperial threads. Price \$1500 ono.

Bench mounted Mill-drill Chevpac. 250mm x 125mm. 12 speeds. Price \$600 ono

Hand operated shaper. "Perfecto" 4" stroke. Price \$200 ono

7 3/8" Ryobi wood cutting bandsaw. Price \$100 ono

Southern Pacific F 7 diesel outline locomotive. Battery electric powered. 7 1/4" gauge Price \$1500 ono

NZR Dsa Battery electric powered . 5" gauge Price \$1500 ono

All enquiries to Doug Chambers, phone 06 354 9379 Palmerston North.



Chris Rogers and his "GWR King George V" at a recent running day.



"Robyn" and Richard with some happy passengers.