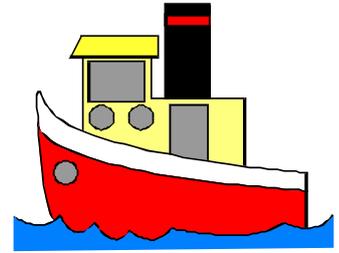


Wheels and Floats



Newsletter September 2018

TAURANGA MODEL MARINE AND ENGINEERING CLUB INC.

The Secretary
PO Box 15589
Tauranga 3112

Palmerville Station Phone 578 7293

Miniature Railway Memorial Park
Open to Public, weather permitting
Sundays in Summer: 10am to 4pm approximately
Winter: 10am to 3pm approximately
Website: www.tmmecc.org.nz

MEETINGS

General Members Meeting every first Tuesday 7pm.
Committee Meeting every second Thursday at 7pm.
Maintenance Tuesday mornings from 9am.
Engineering discussions Tuesday evenings 7.30pm.

COMMITTEE

President: Russell Prout 548 2881
Vice President: Mark Duncan 0211265501
Club Captain: Bruce McKerras 577 0134
Secretary: Jason Flannery 572 1165
Treasurer: Owen Bennett 544 9807
Committee: Chris Pattison, John Heald, Peter Jones, David Flockart, Max Donnelly, Brian Marriner, Bruce Harvey.
Boiler Committee: Peter Jones, Bruce McKerras, John Heald.
Safety Committee: Warren Karlsson, Bruce Harvey, Peter Jones, Chris Pattison, Brian Marriner, Russell Prout, Jason Flannery, Oliver Duncan.
Editor: Roy Robinson 07 5491182
royrobkk@gmail.com

CONVENERS

Workshop: John Nicol
Track: Bruce Harvey, John Stent.
Marine:
Librarian: Chris Pattison
Rolling Stock:
Website: Murray de Lues
Driver Training:

OPERATORS 2018

16 September M De Lues
23 September B Fitzpartick
30 September M Duncan
7 October D Harris
14 October B Harvey
21 October P Jones
28 October W Karlsson
4 November B McKerras
10 November D Flockart
11 November N Bush
18 November M De Lues
25 November M Duncan

President's Report :

August started off very wet and the first two Sunday runs were a washout but before you could write off the month we were blessed with some fine weather and our friends in the Bay came out in their droves to support our volunteers and enjoy the rides. A little under 1200 on a Sunday puts the team under some serious pressure and saw nearly all of the club locos running plus the Tamar and Bruce McKerras's Phantom. Nothing beats a fine day to bring public and club members out and about. Great to see everyone having a good time and thanks to the team for their tremendous support.

Whilst our club membership continues to grow we have some members who are feeling the cold and adverse weather and are poorly at this time. Our thoughts are with you and we understand you don't want to spread bugs around, but try to keep warm and dry, take care of your health and join us when you can.

If you know of members who are poorly please let our committee know so that support and friendship can be provided.

I for one have thoroughly enjoyed the ongoing glimpse into the working life of our dear friend Clive Goodley (may he Rest In Peace). I find myself drawn into the stories to the point where the heat, dirt, fatigue and illation become a part of the read. Clive's attention to detail was not limited to his model engineering. Enjoy the read as I am sure there are more stories coming your way.

Our club newsletters can be read front the web page so go back through those if you have missed an instalment.

Speaking of web sites and newsletters. As you know Roy Robinson is our newsletter editor and I would like to send him a very big thank you (on behalf of the club and other readers) for a thankless task done so well. Keep up the good work Roy.

A big thank you also to Murray De Lues for maintaining the website and Jason for the Facebook page updates.

We all have our stories to tell, please take a little time when you can to tell us your story. If you hand write it we will type, if you type we will print but if you just tell your story only the few present will hear. Stories are meant to be told and shared so tell us yours.....send them to Roy if you can or just pass them on to me.

As all volunteers past and present know, it is a thankless task that takes a massive chunk of your (so called) 'Free Time'. Well nothing in life is free so that time you all give and have given up for free has cost YOU something. Often that is the time you take away from family and that is so precious. Thank you to all extended family members for giving us your support and I would like you all to join us for the November open weekend so we can show our appreciation. More about that later.

A serious working bee in tunnel #1 saw the new floor being levelled and secured, 'what a difference a day makes' and the result is a continuous flat surface for all to walk on, especially in the low light conditions. Some preparation work is now underway at the entrance to Tunnel #1 to complete the ground levelling. Please make contact with John Stent if you are able to help with

this work as he will have working bees to suit. A very big thank you to those involved.

Photo showing the new plate flooring panels In Tunnel #1



Some handy work by Jason and his behind the scenes team in creating the first of several 'block Section Crossing'. this work involved reverse engineering of the track section, design and some serious milling of a 20mm plate insert. The photo speaks for itself. Many thanks Jason and to Warren, for his help in fitting this in place. We are all keen to hear the drivers comments so don't hold back.



Picture shows the new crossing installed on 25 Aug

Max Donnelly was out cleaning up the raised track and mowing the lawns around the station. A big improvement thanks Max.

John and Peter have made some track height adjustments at the exit of tunnel #1, so no more ride car scraping.

Aug 26th saw our 3rd consecutive Sunday of fine weather and the crowds were out in force again. I spent the day selling tickets and was very pleased to hear the many positive comments made about our track and the ride. This is a credit to our club members vision over the past 40 years and it is certainly a legacy that we can be proud of.

Club nights are one of the ways we can share the detail of our craft and receive feedback that is so often inspirational in continuing with our toils. Ashley Grant has encountered problems with laser cutting where the material thickness vs width of profile has resulted in burning of the edge. It looks like water jet cutting may be the answer to this problem, watch this space. Bruce McKerras continues to work on the Rob Roy and I recently caught up with him in his workshop where I was greeted with 'are Russell, do you have any 2mm rivets'. Not something I have needed for many

but critical to the Rob Roy's progress. Amongst the pieces needing the rivets were profiles for the valve gear. Well, with my big hands I struggled to pick up some of the pieces, let alone work with the fine detail. The careful crafting of such small pieces is what makes them work so well, after all in the small scale 0.001" may be the difference between an engine running sweet or not. I am pleased to hear that from Bruce's plea for help, Owen Bennett has taken on a chunk of work on the wheels and cranks. Thank you Bruce and Owen. Please let Bruce know if you too can tackle a small (or large) part of the Rob Roy club project.

Sat 1st Sept, a play day and Bruce M is no where to be found....rumour has it that his daughter was coming home from her OE, how can that be a priority over trains, just kidding Bruce, family first.

Time for new members to tackle driving these complex machines, well that's what we tell them in the preparation. Also time to try different locos too

Home workshops tend to be the last bastion for tinkering and somewhat private places where stocks of materials (Phil A, alias Lord Darby), unusual taps (cycle thread etc), vintage parts, old toys (locomotives, stationary engines, vintage machinery, cars) can be found, there often lurks a favourite machine or tool. Whilst I respect individuals reluctance to share these spaces, can I urge you all to take a look, a photo or just pick up one or more of those pieces and bring them along for club night show and tell. The stories behind them may be more colourful than the items themselves.

I recently stumbled upon a fine piece of model engineering, well actually it turned out to be jewellery but not as you would expect. Please, if you have the opportunity check out 'Russel Lords Ford' Russell lord mk2 escort - YouTube <https://www.youtube.com › playlist>

Until next month, keep up the good work, fight off the bugs and go and visit an old friend, shake their hand and see if they too are in good stead

Your President

Russell Prout

Show and Tell :



Well, yet another ball turning device came out of the woodwork or more correctly out of a workshop, that of Owen Bennett's. Owen advises that it works well, the only ball it has ever made is the one at the end of the lever!!!! One must surely get the feeling the ball turning devices are one of the steps in model engineering that all must take to complete their initiation!!!

From the Editor's desk.

There is a very good article in "The Shed" magazine on Win Holdway from Blenheim covering his model engineering workshop and what he has produced in it.

Don't forget our guest speaker at the next October Show and Tell who will be telling us all about tipped tools and tips. This should be very interesting for those of us who lack knowledge on this subject.

Steampunk the Thames

The "Steampunk the Thames" crew have organised their festival for 8-11 November this year. The Thames Small Gauge Railway Society intends to support this programme by having an additional run day over the weekend 10-11 November; that is, we will run on the Saturday in addition to the usual Sunday run day. ear.

The intention of this notification is to suggest to those with 'steamers' that you might like to consider supporting our efforts for the weekend by coming along with your steamer for either the Saturday or Sunday [or both?].

Disclaimer :

The views and opinions expressed in articles contained in this magazine are those of the author (s) and do not necessarily reflect the policy, position or opinion of the TMMEC or its officials.

My Railway Career by Clive Goodley

Part 6

The cleaner sleeps in

As there were no engines in steam in the depot from then on, no cleaner was on duty. A cleaner was booked on Sunday morning at 5.0.am, to light up our engine, which was still warm and would take only a couple of hours to get up steam. Hare Brown the e'dr and I got stuck in and lit the fire, but it was two hours before enough steam was raised to allow the blower to be used. From there it was not long before there was enough steam to operate the compressor so we could move the engine and top up the tender with coal and water. By then we had enough steam to trundle down to the station. Starting off the shift in such a manner is not ideal, especially in summer.

Hare said he did not want to get the cleaner into trouble and he had jacked up with T.C. to make up time on the road and fiddle our departure time accordingly. It all looked good on paper, but at Te Maunga a full load awaited us, which was unusual in that direction. A strong wind was blowing, which has a very noticeable effect on a long train of box wagons, of which our train consisted. That resulted in me shovelling constantly, all the way to Kawerau. Although I managed to keep Hare supplied with a full head of steam, we did not make up much time, if any.

Later, Hare told me he had received a blister (reprimand) for slow running that day. I think I fired close to seven tons of coal on the road that day, at least two tons more than normal, and more than I ever fired before, or after. I doubt that the cleaner ever thanked us. I probably also put a ton in the firebox before we topped the tender up that morning.

Coal we usually only dreamed about

Hard coal came from the west coast of the S. Island. It did not deteriorate like Waikato coal, but owing to its long journey, on arrival at Tauranga there was a fair amount of dust in it. The coal was heavier, harder and slower burning, but gave greater heat. It left no ash, but was liable to form clinker. With a thick firebed, fissures developed, these had to be filled by spot firing or by using the rake to prevent cold air coming through the grate, entering the firebox. Both types were fired with a big build up in the back corners, but soft coal needed a thicker bed across the fire-grate. Theoretically, Tauranga had an even mix of the two, but in reality, it could vary from 100% soft to 100% hard, at least at the start of a shift.

Harry Gates and I were booked to work 361, the same train that was my undoing on the Matapihi Bank. I found the tender filled with washed and graded hard coal, the lumps all between tennis and golf ball size. In contrast to the aforementioned trip, we arrived hassle free at Te Maunga, where I built up my fire while the train was reorganised by No35 shunt. Coal of this quality was not just unusual at Tauranga, it was unique, there were two wagons of it, ten tons in each. During my seven years as cleaner and fireman, I only ever saw it that once.

After setting off from Te Maunga with an average load, the engine needed firing just five times on the journey to Kawerau. That was at the most a third of normal. I had to do a bit more shovelling on the way home, as coal from the back tumbled down and mixed with the good stuff. Back at Tauranga, we put four buckets, two tons, of coal into the tender: if only all shifts were like that. I don't know if those two wagons were never meant for N.Z.G.R. or if the firemen down the S. Island always had the blessing of such coal.

Shovelling dust, dust and more dust

Changing over with the Frankton crew at Waihi one day, I saw that the fireman, a Maori, looked more like a Negro. The e'dr, a Pakeha, looked like a Maori. I asked the fireman what was going on. He pointed to the tender and said, "You will soon find out". The tender contained coal dust, and only coal dust. As I shoveled it into the firebox, more dust came down onto the shoveling plate: there was not one solid piece of coal.

The tender had been filled at Frankton with the remnants of an old coal stack. All the dross and dust from the weathered, crumbling coal above, had worked and washed down to ground level. It should have been dumped, but instead, finished up in the tender of the engine I was on. The previous fireman had removed enough coal (dust) from the tender to allow wind to eddy down into the tender and through the shoveling hole in the tender front, which was now uncovered. Once we were on the move the draught, eddying around the tender, picked up coal dust and took it into the cab where it swirled around. Watering it made no difference, as each shovelful taken uncovered more coal dust. Each swing of the shovel also sprayed even more dust into the cab. To make matters worse, if I fired while the engine was working, the strong draught on the fire sucked the dust off the shovel and blew it straight out of the chimney. If the firebed was allowed to get too thin, the dust fell through the grate and into the ash pan. Consequently I had to shovel more than usual, distributing even more dust around the cab.

The coal that stayed in the firebox long enough to get burnt, surprisingly created plenty of heat. We were never short of steam and water, so long as I paid special attention to when I fired. Needless to say, when we arrived at Tauranga, we were blacker than the Frankton crew.

Our whole trip home was made with dust blowing into the cab through the shovelling plate opening. Most of their journey was made with the opening covered by coal or coal dust, blocking any draught.

Swamp fires

We could be called upon to perform non-engine duties at times. One late afternoon when passing the Matua Swamp, we had to stop and put out a fire that was raging through the swamp grass. Our train had several petrol tank wagons in it and to take them through the flames would have been foolish. The e'dr. Reg Kawiti, the banker crew and I spent more than half an hour there, beating out the flames with shovels and sacking before continuing our journey. Spending half an hour of hot physical activity, with smoke choking my lungs and eyes, was not an ideal way to start an evening and night of shoveling coal in the summer heat.

Calf dozers in the ditch

Another job we were sometimes called upon to do outside our expected duties, was dragging calf dozers out of trackside drains. In those days track workers lived alongside the section of railway line for which they were responsible. One piece of equipment they used was a baby bulldozer, called a calf dozer, which occasionally got stuck in a drain. The ganger would stop the train and get us to pull it out with the train engine and a wire rope. We did not need to unhitch the engine from the train, as there was plenty of spare power to do the job.

Derailing at Kawerau

We did not need to call out the track gang when the rear tender wheels dropped off the end of the rails and into the pumice at Kawerau. Our engine on the 'Morepork' was a Ja oil burner and we were turning it on the triangle. The shunter was on my side of the engine as we backed into the blind end, which had no stop block. I had my head out of the window twisted round, facing rearwards, but momentarily dropped off to sleep. Wally Borrell the e'dr, had no reason to think I was not awake and was waiting for my instruction to stop the engine. A jolt woke me up to see the shunter frantically waving a red light. Wally managed to stop the engine before the next pair of wheels ran out of rail.

By packing pieces of iron and wood under the wheels we managed to drag them back where they belonged, on the track. We lost nearly half an hour of our rest break, but Wally did not complain. At the end of a week on that job, with a minimum of twelve hours a night, starting at dinner-time and finishing after breakfast, staying awake was not easy.

Of course it would not have happened on a coal burner, for I would have been too pumped up to fall asleep in those circumstances, of that I am sure.

Shift work and its effects

Although shunters had to put up with shift work, at least it was regular shifts. Engine crews and guards had broken shifts, with starting and finishing times changing as the week progressed. Working when nature designed us to be asleep was not helpful in our keeping good health. The blood donor centre would not accept my blood when I came off night shift and I was told to come back another time.

I remember changing over with a crew who had just booked on at seven o'clock in the morning; they were standing outside the depot waiting for us in short sleeved shirts. My fireman and I wore jackets and overcoats and still felt cold. That was when it hit me just how unhealthy our life-style was.

Trying to sleep in the daytime was rarely successful; a couple of two hour sessions was the most I could hope for. Regular social activities were very hard to participate in, because of the shift work and I think that may be why so much of railway workers social life was to be found in the pubs.

Other health hazards

In steam engine days, blowing the nose once was enough to turn the handkerchief dark gray or even black. On holiday it would take more than a week to clear, our lungs must have been permanently clogged with soot.

Cinders in the eyes were another health hazard and on the shunt, cast iron dust particles from the brake blocks were also a danger. Both were sometimes still red hot when entering the eye and that was even more damaging. I can see the scars on my retinas, moving around, when looking at a plain ceiling, paper, or a clear sky.

We were not allowed to wear sunglasses or earmuffs, unlike at Hamersley Iron, where they were supplied free.

Mushrooming

Sitting high up in the cab of a locomotive was a great place for spotting mushrooms. We never knew where they would be growing, but we would take note on the outward journey and take the appropriate action on the way home. George Riley and I were on 355, an early morning Kawerau train, we had run the same train the previous day and seen there were far more mushrooms than usual. The next day, on the same run, we were fully prepared, George and I had brought along plastic bags for the mushrooms.

We had a diesel engine, an English Electric Df, which allowed me to concentrate on picking mushrooms. The mushrooms were growing near the line over a distance of several miles between Kawerau and the main line.

George let the train drift on the slight downgrade at a slow walking pace, while I ran from one mushroom patch to the next picking the spoils and using my cap as a basket. Several times I had to return to the engine to unload, because although the cap expanded as it filled, there were just so many mushrooms and we were loathe to leave them behind. We divided our spoils during the trip home, with George, pulling rank,

having slightly more than I. As my share turned out to weigh over 10 lbs, I must have picked about 22lbs whilst keeping pace with the train.

Whakatane River Bridge

The Whakatane River rail bridge at Pekatahi was the only bridge over the river and so it served as a road bridge as well. It was several hundred metres long with a passing bay in the middle, which was wide enough for two cars to pass, but not a car and a train. The procedure was for the train to stop short of the bridge and the guard to come up, walk across the bridge and stop any vehicles crossing from the other end. Meanwhile the fireman stopped vehicles crossing from his end of the bridge.

One damp early morning George and I approached the bridge, which was covered by thick mist. He decided to save the guard a wet walk and started to take the train onto the bridge without stopping. A car appeared out of the mist, and hurriedly stopped and then reversed, George did the same with the train. I doubt that he tried a stunt like that again.

Whinging Pom and all that

In the 1960s anti Pom rhetoric was at its height: jokes, like sending us home as deck cargo on a submarine were an everyday bore. Recipients could take it as a burden, or accept it as a challenge, as I did. Dishing out insults and twisting snide remarks to put the instigator on the defensive became my forte. I was actually complemented on my quickness and expertise in that area by several of my workmates who had come off second best. The trick was, to stay one step ahead.

George and I booked on in the mid afternoon to run a train north, at that time of the day quite a few crews were coming and going. As one of only two Poms in sixty five loco staff, I knew I was in for a deluge of taunts and bad jokes. My usual attitude was, attack is the best form of defence, but that day I changed my strategy and said absolutely nothing.

When we finished our depot duties George and I eventually set off down the line, comfortable in our diesel engine.

Conversation was nil until George, half an hour down the track, opened up. "Are you alright mate?" Me "yeah, I'm okay". Several minutes later, "are you sure you're alright?" Me, "yeah I'm alright", several minutes later George, now sounding even more worried, repeated the question. I had to let him off the hook and tell him it was all part of my strategy. He was very relieved and although he was not averse to joining in the verbals, when it looked like I might not be handling it, he was prepared to be supportive. I think that would be the attitude of most of them, as they were a good bunch of people.

George

George was quite a small guy, but was one of the gutsiest people I have had the privilege of knowing. He suffered from asthma, quite badly at times, but he never let it get in the way of doing his job, or enjoying life. I have told how the Karangahake Tunnel affected my breathing, several of my trips through the tunnel were with George and I never saw it get the better of him.

One night at the end of our shift, I saw George carrying a couple of long lengths of four by two across the bridge from the loco depot to his car, cunningly parked at the other end of the bridge, rather than behind the station as usual. They had obviously fallen off a wagon and he was doing his duty by removing them to a safe place. By the time George, who was not much older than I, passed me, he was already wheezing and puffing. He was likely to kill himself, the way he was going and so I helped him carry them to his car. He then told me there were still some more to be moved, but by this time he was really gasping and so I finished up carrying them by myself. I think the mental stress of his nefarious activities brought on the asthma, rather than the physical exertions.

How to wake up a mate

Df locomotives were a heap of junk, even when new. One of their many design faults was the braking set up, which might have been alright for a fifty ton loco, but not one of a hundred and two tons. George was placing one in the running shed one night, when he got it all wrong and smacked into the stop block at the end of the shed. The stop block was pushed four feet into the end wall, which divided the shed from the locker room and pushed it six inches into the locker room.

Unfortunately, someone had gone straight to work from the pub and laid down to sleep, ready to start work on an early morning shift. It just happened to be Malcolm Rendell, who was a friend of George. He had settled himself between the lockers right next to the part of wall that George shifted and he was sound asleep when awoken by the horrendous crash. He was not physically hurt, but I bet his nerves were a bit jangly for a while.

Killing cattle at Waihi

Cattle straying on to the track, usually was more damaging to them than to us. Bruce O. Murdoch, known as Bomber and not just because of his initials, was driving as we left Waihi bound for Paeroa. Just after midnight, half way down the steep incline, west of the station yard, we ran into a mob of cattle.

The track at that point was on an embankment, as we plowed into the cattle some were knocked aside down the bank, others were pushed ahead and some were rammed under the cowcatcher. We could not go forward, as to do so would probably cause us to derail. The train coupled on behind, a full load, was too heavy for our loco to move back against the grade. Bomber telephoned T.C. to appraise him of the situation and organise a track gang to come out and remove the carcasses and clear the track.

The track gang, who had been dragged out of bed, eventually arrived and the injured beasts were killed. The ones wedged under the loco had to be cut into small pieces of three or four kilograms to be removed. This all took over three hours and we found out that out of twenty one head of cattle, fourteen finished up dead. Five of those had been jammed under the small space between the cowcatcher, the sleepers and the bogie.

The cattle had been unloaded into the pens in the station yard from a wagon dropped off by an earlier train. For a few shillings, the station agent (porter come tablet operator) did the unloading for the stock agent. He never checked the rear gate, which was open and so the stock wandered out, around the back lane, onto and along the track, where we encountered them. He was not flavour of the month for quite a while.

An upset guard

Guards had a life of ease, sitting back in comfort at the rear of the train, now and again having to wander up to the engine to shunt a siding or operate points for a crossing. As shunting was gradually eliminated in favour of through loads and Centralised Train Control (C.T.C.) it obviated the need for hands on points operation when crossing trains, and Guards lives became even easier. However their job had one great drawback, they sat at the back of the train where all the knocks and jolts were at their most damaging, as a later story demonstrates.

We stopped at Apata one day for shunting reasons and waited for the guard to walk up. When Jack arrived, he roundly abused Bomber and then challenged him to step down off the Df so he could knock Bomber's head off. Bomber was notorious for giving guards a rough ride, but that day his driving technique, if he had one, must have been worse than normal.

AN ENTHUSIAST'S SPECIAL FROM THE FOOTPLATE

In November 1966, I was rostered, or more likely volunteered, to fire on the last leg of an Auckland to Taneatua enthusiast special. My part was from Tauranga to Taneatua, then back to Awakaponga, up the branch line to Kawerau and back to Tauranga. I had six years service in by then, and although a third of that time was spent on diesels, I knew which way up to hold a shovel and I needed to on this trip.

The driver, the late Bomber Murdoch, and I, arrived at the depot on a lovely sunny morning, to find our engine, J 1202 ready coaled up with Waikato soft. A mix of half and half with South Island hard would have been preferable. Things were not looking good for other reasons also, 1202 was the last engine I would have chosen and Bomber was not known for having a gentle hand with the regulator (throttle). After preparation the engine was run down the yard and backed onto the train, which had meanwhile arrived from Auckland.

My big moment had now arrived. Although I had fired on expresses from Frankton to Taumarānui and back, and Frankton to Auckland with oil burning Ka,s and Ja,s respectively, I had never worked a coal burner on a passenger train, apart from the Huntly to Glen Afton school service. Most engine drivers like to show off now and again and Bomber's chance had arrived. The brake test had been completed, the departure signal showed green and the guard flagged "Right Away". With wide open regulator and the reverser right out, we blasted out of the station and roared around the curve under the cliffs, then along the Strand and over the harbour bridge.

It was a magnificent sight and sound (I am an enthusiast too). I am sure we were doing fifty mph by the time the last carriage cleared the platform. The only problem was, Bomber had blown out half my water and steam within the first mile. A fair bit of the fire had disappeared up the chimney too and the engine was still cold. An engine off shed takes at least ten miles to warm up and should be nursed until then. I now had to try and pull back fifty lbs of steam, at the same time refilling the boiler with cold water, rebuild the fire and all while the engine was still cold. Throwing fresh coal on top of unburnt coal just dampens it down, so it was not a matter of just heaving a lot of coal into the firebox.

I don't recall anything until past Te Puke, no doubt it was a case of head down and bum up, shoveling, juggling the injectors and in between looking out for signals, road crossings and left hand curves.

Looking back along the train near Rangiora and seeing a big black sausage like roll of smoke, lying at ground level alongside the track, is my first memory. The smoke was coming out of the

funnel so cold, it was actually heavier than the surrounding air and was subsequently, just rolling down the side of the train. Luckily we stopped soon after for a 'run through' and photo session, which entails setting back after letting off those passengers who want to detrain, driving past for a photo shoot and then setting back to pick them up. By the time we were off again, we had steam, water, a hot engine, (and hot fireman).

From then on the only thick smoke was at the request of the camera enthusiasts at 'run throughs'. That gets right up my nose, as it is a sign of a bad engine, bad coal, or bad firing, usually the latter. In fact, a fireman could be fined for allowing excessive smoke, as it is a waste of coal as well as causing pollution. After another photo stop and run through near Pukehina, we set off and had worked up a fair turn of speed by the time we had arrived at the top of the Otamarakau bank.

The speedometer needle would not go past 50 mph, so we were unaware of our actual speed at that stage. Down the 1 in 80 bank we flew, gaining even more speed, but riding quite comfortably on the 90 lb rail. At the bottom of the bank at the Otamarakau sand quarry siding points, the track changed to 55 lb rail.

Hurling over the points, all hell seemed to be let loose under the engine. Bomber and I did the classic Hollywood double take, glancing at each other with surprise and alarm on our faces. We both leaned out of our respective windows to look down at the wheels, looked at each other again in horror as ballast was flying in all directions, looked down at the wheels again, all in the second and a half it took to clear the points.

I have no idea how bad the ride was back in the carriages, but up front we both thought we had derailed. When it was obvious all was well, Bomber undeterred, kept hammering her along, rattling and bouncing on the light rail, as our old boss, Lionel Farr would have said, "rough as guts".

From Otamarakau to Matata the road and rail run together for nine miles, with pohutakawa clad cliffs on one side and the Pacific Ocean on the other. All along this stretch, which I usually had time to enjoy, we raced. I noticed White Island, as usual, was puffing out steam on the horizon into the clear blue sky.

Cars with rail enthusiasts and others just enjoying the sights on a Saturday afternoon drive, were pacing us. Stopping at Matata to take water and have another photo session, gave a chance for several of the car drivers to inform us we were cruising at 73 mph! I have often wondered if this is a record for controlled speed on 55 lb rail and 3ft 6 in gauge. Only the engine driver was out of control.

Leaving Matata we stormed up the 1 in 83 bank and then had an easy run down on to the Tarawera and Rangataiki river plains, cruising at a more sedate speed to Edgecumbe. I think Bomber got a bit of a fright when he learnt how high our previous speed had been.

The rest of the trip should have been a piece of cake, but it was not to be. While having a photo session and run through on the Rangataiki River bridge at Edgecumbe, ominous knocking and grating noises plus steam, came from the left side front end. Bomber thought the valve rings or piston rings had broken and so disconnected the valve rod from the linkage. Using the right side only, with steam shooting from the left side cylinder cocks, which were wedged open, we limped to Taneatua. The next week I heard that the valve rings had indeed broken and J 1202 had been towed to Frankton and withdrawn from service.

For the return journey J 1221 had been prepared for us by one of the Taneatua crews and after dumping 1202 we ran our replacement engine onto the head of the train. With the coupling up and brake test completed we ambled off to Awakaponga. There 1221 was run around the train and took it tender leading, up the branch to Kawerau, where we joined the passengers in a picnic lunch.

The trip back to Tauranga was uneventful, 1221 being one of our better engines, except that on approaching the junction with the main line, the live steam injector overheated and refused to work. To cool it entailed me clambering onto the running board in front of the cab and pouring cold water onto the injector from my billycan, which Bomber passed to me through the cab window. The over heating may have been my fault, if I had not allowed a sufficient water flow to the injector that would cause it to overheat. It never played up again and so that probably was the cause.

The speedometer on this engine was in working order, and so on the run home we kept to regulation speed. With a nonstop run from Matata home, and maintaining normal speed, I found it all very enjoyable. I do not know if the passengers enjoyed their day, but I certainly enjoyed mine, and I got paid for it.

Despite the clapped out condition of 1202, the ease with which she maintained 73 mph over some distance, suggests J and Ja loco's are capable of a lot more than has ever been asked of them. J 1202 was bought by a preservation group and is now restored to running order.

To be continued

Shifting Centurion Tanks for the NZ Army 1963

The eight Mk V Centurions were purchased in 1963 from British stocks held in Hong Kong, and it was decided to move them to Waiouru from Auckland (where they had been offloaded) and it would be completed in two phases. Firstly, a movement by heavy road haulage from Auckland to the rail depot at Manunui (near Taumarunui), and then secondly by NZ Railways. Defence used a commercial road operator who was used to moving very heavy loads for the NZ Electricity Department, at a cost of £6000. The rail component cost Defence a further £4000.



The road trip was necessary because there was a tunnel near Te Kuiti that was too small to fit the tanks through, and there were weak road bridges between Turangi and Waiouru (on the Desert Road). When the tanks were being loaded at Manunui, they had to be placed 18 inches to the right of centre of the wagons to account for the tunnel curves in the Raurimu Spiral. The tanks could only be moved two at a time and only on a Sunday, Monday and Tuesday (the days of least traffic on the Main Trunk Line).





The Editor wishes to acknowledge this article was prepared by Grant Hays who is Assistant Curator Vehicles, Artillery and Technology NAM. The information came from the archives at the National Army Museum in Waiouru





This pic is from the Clive Goodly collection with the caption of “Db’s at Tauranga”.

Upcoming Events

September :

29 Sept Kapiti Miniature Railway Twilight run

October :

2 Oct Guest speaker from Iscar talking on replaceable tungsten tips and tool holders,

20-22 Oct Nelson Open weekend and 60th Anniversary.

20-22 Oct New Plymouth Open weekend

20-22 Oct Keirunga Park Open weekend

November :

10—11 Nov TMMEC Open weekend

10—11 Nov Steampunk ion Thames

16-18 Nov CSMEE running all weekend

Note

The proposed trip in the William C Daldy awaits further information. Sooooo don't cross it off your to do list yet as more information will be forthcoming.



TMMEC 2018 CALENDAR

	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T						
JAN	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31					
FEB																																				
MAR																																				
APR							1 - Easter	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
MAY																																				
JUNE																																				
JULY																																				
AUG																																				
SEP																																				
OCT																																				
NOV																																				
DEC																																				

- SUNDAY RUNNING DAY – 10:00 – 16:00
- OFFICIAL CLUB PLAYDAY – FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH
- WORKING BEE – LIGHT MAINTENANCE LIST – TRACK TIGHTENING, VIADUCT BOLTS, PAINTING
- COMMITTEE MEETING – 19:00 START
- GENERAL MEETING – 19:00 START
- ENGINEERING TUESDAY -- 19:30 START
- OPEN WEEKEND
- CANCELLED
- AGM